

D. VINCENT BAKER
APOCALYPSE WORLD
THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES
PLAYBOOK

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Apocalypse World
the Master of Ceremonies Playbook

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a lumpley game

for Meguey
the rest of you are just lucky.

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THE BASICS

APOCALYPSE WORLD

Nobody remembers how or why. Maybe nobody ever knew. The oldest living survivors have childhood memories of it: cities burning, society in chaos then collapse, families set to panicked flight, the weird nights when the smoldering sky made midnight into a blood-colored half-day.

Now the world is not what it was. Look around you: evidently, certainly, not what it was. But also close your eyes, open your brain: something is wrong. At the limits of perception, something howling, everpresent, full of hate and terror. From this, the world's psychic maelstrom, we none of us have shelter.



THE ANGEL

When you're lying in the dust of Apocalypse World guts aspillied, for whom do you pray? The gods? They're long gone. Your beloved comrades? Fuckers all, or you wouldn't be here to begin with. Your precious old mother? She's a darling but she can't put an intestine back inside so it'll stay. No you pray for some grinning kid or veteran or just *someone* with a heartshocker and a hand with sutures and a 6-pack of morphine. And when that someone comes, *that's* an angel.

THE BATTLEBABE

Even in a place as dangerous as Apocalypse World, battlebabes are, well. They're the ones you should walk away from, eyes down, but you can't. They're the ones like the seductive blue crackling light, y'know? You mistake looking at them for falling in love, and you get too close and it's a zillion volts and your wings burn off like paper.

Dangerous.



THE BRAINER

Brainers are the weird psycho psychic mindfucks of Apocalypse World. They have brain control, puppet strings, creepy hearts, dead souls, and eyes like broken things. They stand in your peripheral vision and whisper into your head, staring. They clamp lenses over your eyes and read your secrets.

They're just the sort of tasteful accoutrement that no well-appointed hardhold can do without.



THE CHOPPER

Apocalypse World is all scarcity, of course it is. There's not enough wholesome food, not enough untainted water, not enough security, not enough light, not enough electricity, not enough children, not enough hope.

However, the Golden Age Past did leave us two things: enough gasoline, enough bullets. Come the end, I guess the fuckers didn't need them like they thought they would.

So chopper, there you are. Enough for you.



THE HARDHOLDER

There is no government, no society, in Apocalypse World. When hardholders ruled whole continents, when they waged war on the other side of the world instead of with the hold across the burn-flat, when their armies numbered in the hundreds of thousands and they had fucking *boats* to hold their fucking *airplanes* on, that was the golden age of legend. Now, anyone with a concrete compound and a gang of gunluggers can claim the title. You, you got something to say about it?

THE DRIVER

Came the apocalypse, and the infrastructure of the Golden Age tore apart. Roads heaved and split. Lines of life and communication shattered. Cities, cut off from one another, raged like smashed anthills, then burned, then fell.

A few living still remember it: every horizon scorching hot with civilization in flames, light to put out the stars and moon, smoke to put out the sun.

In Apocalypse World the horizons are dark, and no roads go to them.



THE HOCUS

Now it should be crystal fucking obvious that the gods have abandoned Apocalypse World. Maybe in the golden age, with its one nation under god and its in god we trust, maybe then the gods were real. Fucked if I know. All I know is that now they're gone daddy gone.

My theory is that these weird hocus fuckers, when they say "the gods," what they really mean is the miasma left over from the explosion of psychic hate and desperation that gave Apocalypse World its birth. Friends, *that's* our creator now.



THE GUNLUGGER

Apocalypse World is a mean, ugly, violent place. Law and society have broken down completely. What's yours is yours only while you can hold it in your hands. There's no peace. There's no stability but what you carve, inch by inch, out of the concrete and dirt, and then defend with murder and blood.

Sometimes the obvious move is the right one.



THE OPERATOR

In Apocalypse World, here's what you've got, right? You've got Dremmer and Balls on one side, warlord slaver and his skinny fucking enforcer, raiding from their stronghold of concrete and iron spikes. On the other side you've got the barge people, living their short disease-crippled lives up and down the dead poisoned river. Further along and you've got Lighthouse, a men-and-women hunger cult gone wrong barricaded in on the edge of the breeding pit burn flats.

You, you just want to make your way and have some freedom — but this is what you've got to work with. Not fucking rosy.



THE SAVVYHEAD

If there's one fucking thing you can count on in Apocalypse World, it's: things break.

THE SKINNER

Even in the filth of Apocalypse World, there's food that isn't death on a spit, music that isn't shrieking hyenas, thoughts that aren't afraid, bodies that aren't used meat, sex that isn't rutting, dancing that's real. There are moments that are more than stench, smoke, rage and blood.

Anything beautiful left in this ugly ass world, skimmers hold it. Will they share it with you? What do *you* offer *them*?



THE BASICS

SETTING UP TO PLAY

Get 3 or more players, including you. Choose one player to be the Master of Ceremonies. Since this is the Master of Ceremonies' playbook, from now on I'm going to call the MC "you."

The game takes quite a few sessions to play, so choose friends with space in their schedules for a commitment. I don't figure it's much of a game until 6 sessions, and it can go much longer.

Print and assemble a batch of character playbooks, one of each. Pass them around. Have everybody choose one, no duplicates allowed.

Print your pullouts too: a 1st session worksheet, an MC playsheet. Maybe print a fronts sheet too, although you won't need it yet. Fronts are your prep for play, starting after the first session. (Think "I'm fighting on three fronts! I'm fucked!")

You'll also need notepaper, pencils, and some 6-sided dice, at least two of them.

THE CONVERSATION

You probably know this already: roleplaying is a conversation. You and the other players go back and forth, talking about these fictional characters in their fictional circumstances doing whatever it is that they do. Like any conversation, you take turns, but it's not like *taking turns*, right? Sometimes you talk over each other, interrupt, build on each others' ideas, monopolize. All fine.

All these rules do is mediate the conversation. They kick in when someone says some particular things, and they impose constraints on what everyone should say after. Makes sense, right?

MOVES AND DICE

The particular things that make these rules kick in are called **moves**.

All of the character playbooks list the same set of basic moves, plus each playbook lists special moves for just that character. Your fronts might list special moves too. When a player says that her character does something listed as a move, that's when she rolls, and that's the only time she does.

The rule for moves is **to do it, do it**. In order for it to be a move and for the player to roll dice, the character has to do something that counts as that move; and whenever the character does something that counts as a move, it's the move and the player rolls dice.

Usually it's unambiguous: "dammit, I guess I crawl out there. I try to keep my head down. I'm doing it under fire?" "Yep." But there are two ways they sometimes don't line up, and it's your job as MC to deal with them.

First is when a player says only that her character makes a move, without having her character actually take any such action. For instance: "I go aggro on him." Your answer then should be "cool, what do you do?" "I seize the radio by force." "Cool, what do you do?" "I try to seduce him." "Cool, what do you do?"

Second is when a player has her character take action that counts as a move, but doesn't realize it, or doesn't intend it to be a move. For instance: "I shove him out of my way." Your answer then should be "cool, you're going aggro?" "I pout. 'Well if you really don't like me...'" "Cool, you're trying to manipulate him?" "I squeeze way back between the tractor and the wall so they don't see me." "Cool, you're acting under fire?"

You don't ask in order to give the player a chance to decline to roll, you ask in order to give the player a chance to revise her character's action if she really didn't mean to make the move. "Cool, you're going aggro?" Legit: "oh! No, no, if he's really blocking the door, whatever, I'll go the other way." Not legit: "well no, I'm just shoving him out of my way, I don't want to roll for it." The rule for moves is **if you do it, you do it**, so make with the dice.

Great. So now, check the moves' listings. Each move says which stat the player should add to its roll. To roll+a stat, the player rolls 2 dice, adds them, and adds the stat. If the sum total is 6 or less, that's a miss. If it's 7 or more, it's a hit. 7-9 is a weak hit, 10+ is a strong hit.

All the moves list what should happen on a hit, 7-9 or 10+, so follow them. A few of them list what happens on a miss, so follow those too. For the rest, for now, tell the players this: "on a miss, I'll tell you what happens." If you want, just so nobody has any incorrect expectations, you can add this: "...and I promise you won't like it."

Sometimes you'll come across something that says "take +1 forward" or "take -1 ongoing while..." or the like. +1 or -1 forward just means to add 1 or subtract 1 from your very next roll. +1 or -1 ongoing means to add 1 or subtract 1 from all your rolls, from now until whatever's giving you the bonus or penalty changes.

Each of the characters also has a special move that kicks in when they have sex with someone. For most of the characters, the special sex moves apply when they have sex with another player's character, not with oh just anybody, but for a few of them, oh just anybody will do.

See the moves chapters for full descriptions: the basic moves, page 189, and the character moves, page 215.

THE STATS

The stats are:

- **Cool**, meaning cool under fire, rational, clearthinking, calm, calculating, unfazed.
- **Hard**, meaning hard-hearted, violent, aggressive, strong-willed, mean, physically and emotionally strong.
- **Hot**, meaning fucking hot, attractive, subtle, gracious, sexy, beautiful, inspiring, exciting.
- **Sharp**, meaning sharp-witted, clever, alert, smart, perceptive, educated, skilled, trained.
- **Weird**, meaning a weirdo, psychic, genius, uncanny, lucky, strange, prophetic, touched.
- **Hx**, meaning history (like Rx means prescription and Dx means diagnosis), particularly shared history, how well one character knows another. It doesn't mean how well your character *likes* the other, just how well your character *knows* the other. It's also asymmetrical: my character might know yours very well, like Hx+2, while yours doesn't know mine well at all, like Hx-1.

○	COOL	do something under fire (p86)
○	HARD	go aggro, seize by force (p86)
○	HOT	seduce or manipulate (p87)
○	SHARP	read a sitch, read a person (p87)
○	WEIRD	open your brain (p88)
	HX	help, interfere, session end (p88)

The maximum for any stat is +3, and the minimum is -3. Most will be -1 to +2.

Notation: cool-2 means that your cool is -2; weird=0 means that your weird is 0; Hx+1 means that your Hx (with someone) is +1. Some rules call for you to modify your stats, in which case the modifier appears before the stat name: +1cool means to add 1 to your cool; -2weird means to subtract 2 from your weird.

Each player highlights two of her character's stats: one chosen by another player, one chosen by you, the MC. The character's development over time depends on her highlighted stats. For details, see the character creation chapter, page 105, and the improvement chapter, page 178.

GEAR AND OTHER CRAP

All of the different character types come with their own assortment of gear and other crap, including holdings, gangs, gigs, followers, crews, workspaces, weapons, and specialized equipment.

BIKE, GANG & GEAR

Most individual items of gear or crap get a little list of descriptive tags, like *magnum* (3-harm close reload loud) or *followers* (fortune+2 surplus: 1-barter augury want: judgment savagery). Those tags work in 3 different ways. Some of them are straightforwardly mechanical, like 3-harm, fortune+2, surplus and want. Some note the circumstances under which the thing can be useful, like close and reload. Some tell you, the MC, things to say when the character uses the thing, like loud, 1-barter, augury, judgment and savagery.

See the crap chapter for full descriptions, page 235.

HARM AND HEALING

When a character gets hurt, the player marks segments in her harm countdown clock. Mark one full segment for each 1-harm, starting with the segment 12:00 to 3:00.

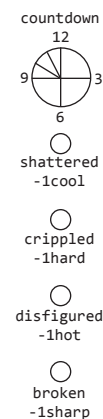
Harm before 6:00 heals automatically with time. Harm after 9:00 gets worse with time, unless stabilized. If the player marks the segment 11:00 to 12:00, it means that the character's dead but can still be revived. Any harm past that and the character's dead for reals.

Typically, when a character takes harm, it's equal to the harm rating of the weapon, attack, or mishap, minus the armor rating of the character's armor. This is called *harm as established*.

Instead of taking harm, sometimes the player can choose to mark a debility. Debilities are permanent.

Angels are all about healing and stabilizing harm.

See the harm & healing chapter for complete rules, page 159.



CHARACTER IMPROVEMENT

experience (P24) ○○○○⊙ >>improve

A player marks experience — fills in one of the little experience bubbles on her character sheet — under like three circumstances in play. First is when she rolls one of her two highlighted stats. Second is when her Hx with someone goes to +4 or -4. Third is when a move tells her to.

When a player marks her fifth experience bubble, she improves her character. Toward the back of each playbook are the rules for that character's improvement: she can choose new moves, sometimes get a gang or holding or whatever, improve her stats, things like that. When she improves, she erases all her little experience bubbles and starts over at 0.

Once a character's improved 5 times, as MC you'll open new options for her. See the ungiven future section of the improvement chapter for details, page 182.

WHY TO PLAY

One: Because the characters are fucking hot.

Two: Because hot as they are, the characters are best and hottest when you put them together. Lovers, rivals, friends, enemies, blood and sex — that's the good shit.

Three: Because the characters are together against a horrific world. They're carving out their little space of hope and freedom in the filth and violence, and they're trying to hold onto it. Do they have it in them? What are they going to have to do to hold it together? Are they prepared, tough enough, strong enough and willing?

Four: Because they're together, sure, but they're desperate and they're under a lot of pressure. If there's not enough to go around (and is there ever?), who'll stick together and who'll turn on whom? Who *do* you trust, and who *should* you trust, and what if you get it wrong?

Five: Because there's something really wrong with the world, and I don't know what it is. The world wasn't always like this, blasted

and brutal. There wasn't always a psychic maelstrom howling just out of your perception, waiting for you to open your brain so that it can rush in. Who fucked the world up, and how? Is there a way back? A way forward? If anybody's going to ever find out, it's you and your characters.

That's why.

THE CHARACTERS

Introducing
THE ANGEL

When you're lying in the dust of Apocalypse World guts aspilled, for whom do you pray? The gods? They're long gone. Your beloved comrades? Fuckers all, or you wouldn't be here to begin with. Your precious old mother? She's a darling but she can't put an intestine back inside so it'll stay. No you pray for some grinning kid or veteran or just someone with a heartshocker and a hand with sutures and a 6-pack of morphine. And when that someone comes, that's an angel.

CREATING AN ANGEL

To create your angel, choose name, look, stats, moves, gear, and Hx.

NAME

Dou, Bon, Abe, Boo, T, Kal, Bai, Char, Jav, Ruth, Wei, Jay, Nee, Kim, Lan, Di, or Dez.

Doc, Core, Wheels, Buzz, Key, Gabe, Biz, Bish, Line, Inch, Grip, or Setter.

LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, transgressing, or concealed.

Utility wear, casual wear plus utility, scrounge wear plus utility.

NAME -
LOOK

highlight>>
☐ **COOL**
☐ **HARD**
☐ **HOT**
☐ **SHARP**
☐ **WEIRD**

do something under fire (p86)

go aggro, seize by force (p86)

seduce or manipulate (p87)

read a sitch, read a person (p87)

open your brain (p88)

countdown
12
9 6 3
shattered
-1cool
crippled
-1hard
disfigured
-1hot
broken
-1sharp

if you have sex see p24.

STATS - MOVES - HARM

ANGEL MOVES

GEAR & ANGEL KIT

HX
help, interfere, session end (p88)

ANGEL

Experience (P24) ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ >>improve

Kind face, strong face, rugged face, haggard face, pretty face, or lively face.

Quick eyes, hard eyes, caring eyes, bright eyes, laughing eyes, or clear eyes.

Compact body, stout body, spare body, big body, rangy body, or sturdy body.

STATS

Choose one set:

- Cool+1 Hard=0 Hot+1 Sharp+2 Weird-1
- Cool+1 Hard+1 Hot=0 Sharp+2 Weird-1
- Cool-1 Hard+1 Hot=0 Sharp+2 Weird+1
- Cool+2 Hard=0 Hot-1 Sharp+2 Weird-1

BASIC MOVES

You get all the basic moves (p86–88).

ANGEL MOVES

Choose 2:

Sixth sense: when you open your brain to the world's psychic maelstrom, roll+sharp instead of roll+weird.

Infirmery: you get an infirmery, a workspace with life support, a drug lab and a crew of 2 (Shigusa & Mox, maybe). Get patients into it and you can work on them like a savvyhead on tech (cf).

Professional compassion: you can choose to roll+sharp instead of roll+Hx when you help someone who's rolling.

Battlefield grace: while you are caring for people, not fighting, you get +1armor.

Healing touch: when you put your hands skin-to-skin on a wounded person and open your brain to them, roll+weird. On a 10+, heal 1 segment. On a 7–9, heal 1 segment, but you're acting under fire from your patient's brain. On a miss: first, you don't heal them. Second, you've opened both your brain and theirs to the world's psychic maelstrom, without protection or preparation. For you, and for your patient if your patient's a fellow player's character, treat it as though you've made that move and missed the roll. For patients belonging to the MC, their experience and fate are up to the MC.

Touched by death: whenever someone in your care dies, you get +1weird (max +3).

GEAR

You get:

- angel kit
- 1 small practical weapon
- oddments worth 1-barter
- fashion suitable to your look, including at your option a piece worth 1-armor (you detail)

Small practical weapons (choose 1):

- .38 revolver (2-harm close reload loud)
- 9mm (2-harm close loud)
- big knife (2-harm hand)
- sawed-off (3-harm close reload messy)
- stun gun (s-harm hand reload)

ANGEL KIT

Your angel kit has all kinds of crap in it: scissors, rags, tape, needles, clamps, gloves, chill coils, wipes, alcohol, injectable tourniquets & bloodslower, instant blood packets (coffee reddener), tubes of meatmesh, bonepins & site injectors, biostabs, chemostabs, narcostabs (chillstabs) in quantity, and a roll of heart jumpshock patches for when it comes to that. It's big enough to fill the trunk of a car. When you use it, spend its stock; you can spend 0–3 of its stock per use. You can resupply it for 1-barter per 2-stock, if your circumstances let you barter for medical supplies.

It begins play holding 6-stock.

To use it to stabilize and heal someone at 9:00 or past: roll+stock spent. On a hit, they will stabilize and heal to 6:00, but the MC will choose 1 (on a 10+) or 2 (on a 7–9):

- *they need to be physically stabilized before you can move them.*
- *even narcostabbed, they fight you; you're acting under fire.*
- *they'll be in and out of consciousness for 24 hours.*
- *stabilizing them eats up your stock; spend 1-stock more.*
- *they'll be bedridden, out of action, for at least a week.*
- *they'll need constant monitoring and care for 36 hours.*

On a miss, they take 1-harm instead.

To use it to speed the recovery of someone at 3:00 or 6:00: don't roll. They choose: spend 4 days (3:00) or 1 week (6:00) blissed out on chillstabs, immobile but happy, or do their time like everyone else.

To use it to revive someone who's died (at 12:00, not beyond): roll+stock spent. On a 10+, they recover to 10:00. On a 7–9, they recover to 11:00. On a miss, you've done everything you can for them, and they're still dead.

Hx

Everyone introduces their characters by name, look and outlook. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for Hx. On your turn, choose 1, 2, or all 3:

- One of them put a hand in when it mattered, and helped you save a life. Tell that player Hx+2.
- One of them has been beside you and has seen everything you've seen. Tell that player Hx+2.
- One of them, you figure doomed to self-destruction. Tell that player Hx-1.

Tell everyone else Hx+1. You're an open book.

On the others' turns:

- You try not to get too attached. Whatever number they tell you, give it -1 and write it next to their character's name.

At the end, find the character with the highest Hx on your sheet. Ask that player which of your stats is most interesting, and highlight it. The MC will have you highlight a second stat too.

ANGEL SPECIAL

If you and another character have sex, your Hx with them on your sheet goes immediately to +3, and they immediately get +1 to their Hx with you on their sheet. If that brings their Hx with you to +4, they reset it to +1 instead, as usual, and so mark experience.

ANGEL IMPROVEMENT

Whenever you roll a highlighted stat, and whenever you reset your Hx with someone, mark an experience circle. When you mark the 5th, improve and erase.

Each time you improve, choose one of the following. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

- ___ get +1sharp (max sharp+3)
- ___ get +1cool (max cool+2)
- ___ get +1hard (max hard+2)
- ___ get +1hard (max hard+2)
- ___ get +1weird (max weird+2)
- ___ get a new angel move
- ___ get a new angel move
- ___ get 2 gigs (detail) and **moonlighting**
- ___ get a move from another playbook
- ___ get a move from another playbook

BARTER

If you're charging someone wealthy for your services, 1-barter is the going rate for: *one successful resuscitation (plus material costs); one week's full around-the-clock care (plus material costs); one month's employment as angel on call (plus material costs, if any).*

1-barter will cover a month's living expenses, if your tastes aren't too grand.

As a one-time expenditure, and very subject to availability, 1-barter might count for: *two refills for your angel kit; a night in high luxury & company; any weapon, gear or fashion not valuable or hi-tech; repair of a piece of hi-tech gear by a savvyhead; a week's hire of the protective companionship of a battlebabe or gunlugger; a year's tribute to a warlord; a month's maintenance and repairs for a hi-performance vehicle well-used; bribes, fees and gifts sufficient to get you into almost anyone's presence.*

For better stuff, you should expect to make particular arrangements. You can't just wander around the commons of some hardhold with oddments ajangle and expect to find hi-tech or luxe eternal.

Introducing THE BATTLEBABE

Even in a place as dangerous as Apocalypse World, battlebabes are, well. They're the ones you should walk away from, eyes down, but you can't. They're the ones like the seductive blue crackling light, y'know? You mistake looking at them for falling in love, and you get too close and it's a zillion volts and your wings burn off like paper.

Dangerous.

CREATING A BATTLEBABE

To create your battlebabe, choose name, look, stats, moves, gear, and Hx.

NAME

Snow, Crimson, Shadow, Azure, Midnight, Scarlet, Violetta, Amber, Rouge, Damson, Sunset, Emerald, or Ruby.

Raksha, Kickskirt, Kite, Monsoon, Smith, Beastie, Baaba, Melody, Mar, Tavi, Absinthe, or Honeytree.

LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, or transgressing.

Formal wear, display wear, luxe wear, casual wear, or showy armor.

NAME -
LOOK

STATS - MOVES - HARM		BATTLEBABE MOVES	
<input type="radio"/> COOL	do something under fire (p86)	countdown 12 9 6 3 <input type="radio"/> shattered -1cool <input type="radio"/> crippled -1hard <input type="radio"/> disfigured -1hot <input type="radio"/> broken -1sharp	if you have sex see p30.
<input type="radio"/> HARD	go aggro, seize by force (p86)		
<input type="radio"/> HOT	seduce or manipulate (p87)		
<input type="radio"/> SHARP	read a sitch, read a person (p87)		
<input type="radio"/> WEIRD	open your brain (p88)		
Experience (P30) <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> >>improve			
HX help, interfere, session end (p88)		GEAR	
		BATTLEBABE	

Smooth face, sweet face, handsome face, sharp face, girlish face, boyish face, striking face.

Calculating eyes, merciless eyes, frosty eyes, arresting eyes, or indifferent eyes.

Sweet body, slim body, gorgeous body, muscular body, or angular body.

STATS

Choose one set:

- Cool+3 Hard-1 Hot+1 Sharp+1 Weird=0
- Cool+3 Hard-1 Hot+2 Sharp=0 Weird-1
- Cool+3 Hard-2 Hot+1 Sharp+1 Weird+1
- Cool+3 Hard=0 Hot+1 Sharp+1 Weird-1

BASIC MOVES

You get all the basic moves (p86–88).

BATTLEBABE MOVES

Choose 2:

Dangerous & sexy: when you enter into a charged situation, roll+hot. On a 10+, hold 2. On a 7–9, hold 1. Spend your hold 1 for 1 to make eye contact with an NPC present, who freezes or flinches and can't take action until you break it off. On a miss, your enemies identify you immediately as their foremost threat.

Ice cold: when you go aggro on an NPC, roll+cool instead of roll+hard. When you go aggro on another player's character, roll+Hx instead of roll+hard.

Merciless: when you inflict harm, inflict +1harm.

Visions of death: when you go into battle, roll+weird. On a 10+, name one person who'll die and one who'll live. On a 7–9, name one person who'll die OR one person who'll live. Don't name a player's character; name NPCs only. The MC will make your vision come true, if it's even remotely possible. On a miss, you foresee your own death, and accordingly take -1 throughout the battle.

Perfect instincts: when you've read a charged situation and you're acting on the MC's answers, take +2 instead of +1.

Impossible reflexes: the way you move unencumbered counts as armor. If you're naked or nearly naked, 2-armor; if you're wearing non-armor fashion, 1-armor. If you're wearing armor, use it instead.

GEAR

You get:

- 2 custom weapons
- oddments worth 2-barter
- fashion suitable to your look, including at your option
fashion worth 1-armor or armor worth 2-armor (you detail)

Custom firearms

Base (choose 1):

- handgun (2-harm close reload loud)
- shotgun (3-harm close reload messy)
- rifle (2-harm far reload loud)

Options (choose 2):

- ornate (+valuable)
- antique (+valuable)
- semiautomatic (-reload)
- 3-round burst (close/far)
- automatic (+area)
- silenced (-loud)
- hi-powered (+1harm)
- ap ammo (+ap)
- scoped (+far, or +1harm at far)
- big (+1harm)

Custom hand weapons

Base (choose 1):

- staff (1-harm hand area)
- haft (1-harm hand)
- handle (1-harm hand)
- chain (1-harm hand area)

Options (choose 2):

- ornate (+valuable)
- antique (+valuable)
- head (+1harm)
- spikes (+1harm)
- blade (+1harm)
- long blade* (+2harm)
- heavy blade* (+2harm)
- blades* (+2harm)
- hidden (+infinite)

*counts as 2 options

HX

Everyone introduces their characters by name, look and outlook. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for Hx. On your turn:

- Tell everyone Hx+1. You put yourself out in the public view.

On the others' turns:

- Choose the character you trust the least. Whatever number that player tells you, ignore it; write Hx+3 next to the character's name instead.
- Everyone else, write whatever number they tell you next to their character's name.

At the end, find the character with the highest Hx on your sheet. Ask that player which of your stats is most interesting, and highlight it. The MC will have you highlight a second stat too.

BATTLEBABE SPECIAL

If you and another character have sex, nullify the other character's sex move. Whatever it is, it just doesn't happen.

BATTLEBABE IMPROVEMENT

Whenever you roll a highlighted stat, and whenever you reset your Hx with someone, mark an experience circle. When you mark the 5th, improve and erase.

Each time you improve, choose one of the following. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

- ___ get +1hard (max +2)
- ___ get +1hot (max +2)
- ___ get +1sharp (max +2)
- ___ get +1weird (max +2)
- ___ get a new battlebabe move
- ___ get a new battlebabe move
- ___ get 2 gigs (detail) and **moonlighting**
- ___ get a gang (detail) and **leadership**
- ___ get a move from another playbook
- ___ get a move from another playbook

BARTER

If you're charging someone wealthy for your services, 1-barter is the going rate for *one murder executed* or *one week's employment as bodyguard*.

1-barter will cover a month's living expenses, if your tastes aren't too grand.

As a one-time expenditure, and very subject to availability, 1-barter might count for: *a night in high luxury & company; any weapon, gear or fashion not valuable or hi-tech; the material costs of resuscitation by an angel; repair of a piece of hi-tech gear by a savvyhead; a year's tribute to a warlord; a month's maintenance and repairs for a hi-performance vehicle well-used; bribes, fees and gifts sufficient to get you into almost anyone's presence.*

For better stuff, you should expect to make particular arrangements. You can't just wander around the commons of some hardhold with oddments ajangle and expect to find hi-tech or luxe eternal.

Introducing
THE BRAINER

Brainers are the weird psycho psychic mindfucks of Apocalypse World. They have brain control, puppet strings, creepy hearts, dead souls, and eyes like broken things. They stand in your peripheral vision and whisper into your head, staring. They clamp lenses over your eyes and read your secrets.

They're just the sort of tasteful accoutrement that no well-appointed hardhold can do without.

CREATING A BRAINER

To create your brainer, choose name, look, stats, moves, gear, and Hx.

NAME

Smith, Jones, Jackson, Marsh, Lively, Burroughs, or Gritch.

Joyette, Iris, Marie, Amiette, Suselle, or Cybelle.

Pallor, Sin, Charmer, Pity, Brace, or Sundown.

LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, transgressing, or concealed.

High formal wear, clinical wear, fetish-bondage wear, or environmental wear improper to the local environment.

NAME -

LOOK

STATS - MOVES - HARM		BRAINER MOVES
<input type="radio"/> COOL	do something under fire (p86)	<div>countdown 12 9 3 6 <input type="radio"/> shattered -1cool <input type="radio"/> crippled -1hard <input type="radio"/> disfigured -1hot <input type="radio"/> broken -1sharp</div> <div>if you have sex see p36.</div>
<input type="radio"/> HARD	go aggro, seize by force (p86)	
<input type="radio"/> HOT	seduce or manipulate (p87)	
<input type="radio"/> SHARP	read a sitch, read a person (p87)	
<input type="radio"/> WEIRD	open your brain (p88)	<div>GEAR</div> <div>BRAINER</div>
Experience (P36) <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> >>improve		
HX	help, interfere, session end (p88)	

Scarred face, smooth face, pale face, bony face, plump moist face, or sweet face.

Soft eyes, dead eyes, deep eyes, caring eyes, pale eyes, ruined eyes, or wet eyes.

Awkward angular body, soft body, slight body, crippled body, or fat body.

STATS

Choose one set:

- Cool+1 Hard+1 Hot-2 Sharp+1 Weird+2
- Cool=0 Hard=0 Hot+1 Sharp=0 Weird+2
- Cool+1 Hard-2 Hot-1 Sharp+2 Weird+2
- Cool+2 Hard-1 Hot-1 Sharp=0 Weird+2

BASIC MOVES

You get all the basic moves (p86–88).

BRAINER MOVES

Choose 2:

Unnatural lust transfixion: when you try to seduce someone, roll+weird instead of roll+hot.

Casual brain receptivity: when you read someone, roll+weird instead of roll+sharp. Your victim has to be able to see you, but you don't have to interact.

Preternatural at-will brain attunement: you get +1weird (weird+3).

Deep brain scan: when you have time and physical intimacy with someone — mutual intimacy like holding them in your arms, or 1-sided intimacy like they're restrained to a table — you can read them more deeply than normal. Roll+weird. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7–9, hold 1. While you're reading them, spend your hold to ask their player questions, 1 for 1:

- *what was your character's lowest moment?*
- *for what does your character crave forgiveness, and of whom?*
- *what are your character's secret pains?*
- *in what ways are your character's mind and soul vulnerable?*

On a miss, you inflict 1-harm (ap) upon your subject, to no benefit.

Direct-brain whisper projection: you can roll+weird to get the effects of going aggro, without going aggro. Your victim has to be able to see you, but you don't have to interact. If your victim forces your hand, your mind counts as a weapon (1-harm ap close loud-optional).

In-brain puppet strings: when you have time and physical intimacy with someone — again, mutual or 1-sided — you can plant a command inside their mind. Roll+weird. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7–9, hold 1. At your will, no matter the circumstances, you can spend your hold 1 for 1:

- *inflict 1-harm (ap)*
- *they take -1 right now*

If they fulfill your command, that counts for all your remaining hold. On a miss, you inflict 1-harm (ap) upon your subject, to no benefit.

GEAR

You get:

- 1 small fancy weapon
- 2 brainer gear
- oddments worth 5-barter
- fashion suitable to your look, including at your option a piece worth 1-armor (you detail)

Small fancy weapons (choose 1):

- silenced 9mm (2-harm close hi-tech)
- ornate dagger (2-harm hand valuable)
- hidden knives (2-harm hand infinite)
- scalpels (3-harm intimate hi-tech)
- antique handgun (2-harm close reload loud valuable)

Brainer gear (choose 2):

- implant syringe (tag hi-tech)
After you've tagged someone, if a brainer move allows you to inflict harm on them, inflict +1harm.
- brain relay (area close hi-tech)
For purposes of brainer moves, if someone can see your brain relay, they can see you.
- receptivity drugs (tag hi-tech)
Tagging someone gives you +1hold if you then use a brainer move on them.
- violation glove (hand hi-tech)
For purposes of brainer moves, mere skin contact counts as time and intimacy.
- pain-wave projector (1-harm ap area loud reload hi-tech)
Goes off like a reusable grenade. Hits everyone but you.
- deep ear plugs (worn hi-tech)
Protects the wearer from all brainer moves and gear.

HX

Everyone introduces their characters by name, look and outlook. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for Hx. On your turn:

- Tell everyone Hx-1. You keep yourself secret.

On the others' turns, choose 1, 2 or all 3:

- One of them has slept in your presence (knowingly or un-). Whatever number that player tells you, ignore it; write Hx+3 next to the character's name instead.
- One of them, you've been watching carefully for some time, in secret. Whatever number that player tells you, ignore it; write Hx+3 next to the character's name instead.
- One of them quite evidently dislikes and distrusts you. Whatever number that player tells you, ignore it; write Hx+3 next to the character's name instead.

Everyone else, whatever number they tell you, add 1 to it and write it next to their character's name. You know everyone better than normal.

At the end, find the character with the highest Hx on your sheet. Ask that player which of your stats is most interesting, and highlight it. The MC will have you highlight a second stat too.

BRAINER SPECIAL

If you and another character have sex, you automatically do a **deep brain scan** (p34) on them, whether you have the move or not. Roll+weird as normal. However, the MC chooses which questions the other character's player answers.

BRAINER IMPROVEMENT

Whenever you roll a highlighted stat, and whenever you reset your Hx with someone, mark an experience circle. When you mark the 5th, improve and erase.

Each time you improve, choose one of the following. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

- ___ get +1cool (max cool+2)
- ___ get +1sharp (max sharp+2)
- ___ get +1hard (max hard+2)
- ___ get +1hard (max hard+2)
- ___ get a new brainer move
- ___ get a new brainer move
- ___ get 2 gigs (detail) and **moonlighting**
- ___ get a holding (detail) and **wealth**
- ___ get a move from another playbook
- ___ get a move from another playbook

BARTER

If you're charging someone wealthy for your services, 1-barter is the going rate for: *one successful deep brain scan; one in-brain puppet command, upon its execution; one week's employment as kept brainer.*

1-barter will cover a month's living expenses, if your tastes aren't too grand.

As a one-time expenditure, and very subject to availability, 1-barter might count for: *a night in high luxury & company; any weapon, gear or fashion not valuable or hi-tech; the material costs of a crash resuscitation by an angel; repair of a piece of hi-tech gear by a savvyhead; a week's hire of the protective companionship of a battlebabe or gunlugger; a year's tribute to a warlord; a month's maintenance and repairs for a hi-performance vehicle well-used; bribes, fees and gifts sufficient to get you into almost anyone's presence.*

For better stuff, you should expect to make particular arrangements. You can't just wander around the commons of some hardhold with oddments ajangle and expect to find hi-tech or luxe eternal.

Introducing THE CHOPPER

Apocalypse World is all scarcity, of course it is. There's not enough wholesome food, not enough untainted water, not enough security, not enough light, not enough electricity, not enough children, not enough hope.

However, the Golden Age Past did leave us two things: enough gasoline, enough bullets. Come the end, I guess the fuckers didn't need them like they thought they would.

So chopper, there you are. Enough for you.

CREATING A CHOPPER

To create your chopper, choose name, look, stats, moves, bike, gang, and Hx.

NAME

Dog, Domino, T-bone, Stinky, Satan, Lars, Bullet, Dice, Shit head, Half pint, Shooter, Diamond, Goldie, Tinker, Loose, Baby, Juck, Hammer, Hooch, Snake eyes, Pinkie, Wire, Blues.

LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, or transgressing.

Combat biker wear, showy biker wear, scrounge biker wear, or S&M biker wear.

NAME -
LOOK

STATS - MOVES - HARM		CHOPPER MOVES
<input type="radio"/> COOL	do something under fire (p86)	<div>countdown</div> <div>12</div> <div>9 6 3</div> <div>shattered -1cool</div>
<input type="radio"/> HARD	go aggro, seize by force (p86)	
<input type="radio"/> HOT	seduce or manipulate (p87)	<div>crippled -1hard</div>
<input type="radio"/> SHARP	read a sitch, read a person (p87)	<div>disfigured -1hot</div>
<input type="radio"/> WEIRD	open your brain (p88)	<div>broken -1sharp</div>
Experience (P42) <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> >>improve		
<div>HX</div> <div>help, interfere, session end (p88)</div>		<div>BIKE, GANG & GEAR</div> <div>CHOPPER</div>

Weathered face, strong face, rugged face, narrow face, or busted face.

Narrow eyes, scorched eyes, calculating eyes, weary eyes, or kind eyes.

Squat body, rangy body, wiry body, sturdy body, or fat body.

STATS

Choose one set:

- Cool+1 Hard+2 Hot-1 Sharp+1 Weird=0
- Cool+1 Hard+2 Hot+1 Sharp=0 Weird-1
- Cool+1 Hard+2 Hot=0 Sharp+1 Weird-1
- Cool+2 Hard+2 Hot-1 Sharp=0 Weird-1

BASIC MOVES

You get all the basic moves (p86–88).

CHOPPER MOVES

You get both:

Pack alpha: when you try to impose your will on your gang, roll+hard. On a 10+, all 3. On a 7–9, choose 1:

- *they do what you want*
- *they don't fight back over it*
- *you don't have to make an example of one of them*

On a miss, someone in your gang makes a dedicated bid to replace you for alpha.

Fucking thieves: when you have your gang search their pockets and saddlebags for something, roll+hard. It has to be something small enough to fit. On a 10+, one of you happens to have just the thing, or close enough. On a 7–9, one of you happens to have something pretty close, unless what you're looking for is hi-tech, in which case no dice. On a miss, one of you used to have just the thing, but it turns out that some asswipe stole it from you.

BIKE

Strengths (choose 1 or 2): fast, rugged, aggressive, tight, huge, responsive.

Looks (choose 1 or 2): sleek, vintage, massively chopped, roaring, fat-ass, muscular, flashy, luxe.

Weakness (choose 1): slow, sloppy, guzzler, skinny, bucking, lazy, unreliable.

If for some reason you need your bike's profile (by default you don't), it's power+1 looks+1 1-armor weakness+1

In addition to your bike, detail your personal fashion, worth 1-armor or 2-armor, your choice. Choose 2 no-nonsense weapons:

- magnum (3-harm close reload loud)
- smg (2-harm close area loud)
- sawed-off (3-harm close reload messy)
- crowbar (2-harm hand messy)
- machete (3-harm hand messy)

GANG

By default, your gang consists of about 15 violent bastards with scavenged and makeshift weapons and armor, and no fucking discipline at all (2-harm gang small savage 1-armor). Then, choose 2:

- your gang consists of 30 or so violent bastards. Medium instead of small.
- your gang's well-armed. +1harm.
- your gang's well-armored. +1armor.
- your gang's well-disciplined. Drop savage.
- your gang's nomadic at heart, and able to maintain and repair its own bikes without a home base. It gets +mobile.
- your gang's self-sufficient, able to provide for itself by raiding and scavenging. It gets +rich.

And choose 1:

- your gang's bikes are in bad shape and need constant attention. Vulnerable: breakdown.
- your gang's bikes are picky and high-maintenance. Vulnerable: grounded.
- your gang's loose-knit, with members coming and going as they choose. Vulnerable: desertion.
- your gang is in significant debt to someone powerful. Vulnerable: obligation.
- your gang is filthy and unwell. Vulnerable: disease.

HX

Everyone introduces their characters by name, look and outlook. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for Hx. On your turn:

- Tell everyone Hx+1. You're not that complicated.

On the others' turns:

- One of them has stood up to you, gang and all. Whatever number that player tells you, give it +1 and write it next to the character's name.
- Everyone else, whatever number they tell you, give it -1 and write it next to their character's name. By default, you don't really care much about, y'know, people.

At the end, find the character with the highest Hx on your sheet. Ask that player which of your stats is most interesting, and highlight it. The MC will have you highlight a second stat too.

CHOPPER SPECIAL

If you and another character have sex, they immediately change their sheet to say Hx+3 with you. They also choose whether to give you -1 or +1 to your Hx with them, on your sheet.

CHOPPER IMPROVEMENT

Whenever you roll a highlighted stat, and whenever you reset your Hx with someone, mark an experience circle. When you mark the 5th, improve and erase.

Each time you improve, choose one of the following. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

- ___ get +1hard (max hard+3)
- ___ get +1cool (max cool+2)
- ___ get +1sharp (max sharp+2)
- ___ get +1weird (max weird+2)
- ___ get +1weird (max weird+2)
- ___ choose a new option for your gang
- ___ get 2 gigs (detail) and **moonlighting**
- ___ get a holding (detail) and **wealth**
- ___ get a move from another playbook
- ___ get a move from another playbook

BARTER

If you're charging someone wealthy for your services, 1-barter is the going rate for: *one raiding expedition, one convoy led through hostile territory, one threat delivered (loud and clear), one week's employment of your gang as thugs and enforcers.*

1-barter will cover a month's living expenses, if your tastes aren't too grand.

As a one-time expenditure, and very subject to availability, 1-barter might count for: *a night in high luxury and company; any weapon, gear or fashion not valuable or hi-tech; the material costs of a crash resuscitation by an angel; a week's hire of the protective companionship of a battlebabe or gunlugger; repair of a piece of hi-tech gear by a savvyhead; a year's tribute to a warlord; a month's maintenance and repairs for a hi-performance vehicle well-used; bribes, fees and gifts sufficient to get you into almost anyone's presence.*

For better stuff, you should expect to make particular arrangements. You can't just wander around the commons of some hardhold with oddments ajangle and expect to find hi-tech or luxe eternal.

Introducing

THE DRIVER

Came the apocalypse, and the infrastructure of the Golden Age tore apart. Roads heaved and split. Lines of life and communication shattered. Cities, cut off from one another, raged like smashed anthills, then burned, then fell.

A few living still remember it: every horizon scorching hot with civilization in flames, light to put out the stars and moon, smoke to put out the sun.

In Apocalypse World the horizons are dark, and no roads go to them.

CREATING A DRIVER

To create your driver, choose name, look, stats, moves, gear, car, and Hx.

NAME

Lauren, Audrey, Farley, Sammy, Katherine, Marilyn, James, Bridget, Paul, Annette, Marlene, Frankie, Marlon, Kim, Errol, or Humphrey.

Phoenix, Mustang, Impala, Suv, Cougar, Cobra, Dart, Gremlin, Grand Cherokee, Jag, or Beemer.

NAME -

LOOK

STATS - MOVES - HARM		DRIVER MOVES
<input type="radio"/> COOL	do something under fire (p86)	<div>countdown 12 9 3 6 shattered -1cool</div>
<input type="radio"/> HARD	go aggro, seize by force (p86)	
<input type="radio"/> HOT	seduce or manipulate (p87)	<div>crippled -1hard</div>
<input type="radio"/> SHARP	read a sitch, read a person (p87)	
<input type="radio"/> WEIRD	open your brain (p88)	<div>disfigured -1hot broken -1sharp</div>
Experience (P48) <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> >>improve		
<div>HX</div> <div>help, interfere, session end (p88)</div>		<div>CAR - POWER LOOKS ARMOR WEAKNESS</div> <div>countdown 12 9 3 6 DRIVER</div>

LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, or transgressing.

Vintage wear, casual wear, utility wear, leather wear, or showy scrounge wear.

Handsome face, gorgeous face, stern face, fine-boned face, worn face, or crooked face.

Cool eyes, hooded eyes, hard eyes, sad eyes, cold eyes, or pale eyes.

Slim body, pudgy body, stocky body, solid body, tall body, or strong body.

STATS

Choose one set:

- Cool=0 Hard-1 Hot+1 Sharp+2 Weird=0
- Cool+1 Hard=0 Hot=0 Sharp+2 Weird-1
- Cool=0 Hard+1 Hot-1 Sharp+2 Weird-1
- Cool+1 Hard-2 Hot=0 Sharp+2 Weird+1

BASIC MOVES

You get all the basic moves (p86–88).

DRIVER MOVES

You get this 1:

A no shit driver: when behind the wheel...

- ...if you do something under fire, add your car's power to your roll.
- ...if you try to seize something by force, add your car's power to your roll.
- ...if you go aggro, add your car's power to your roll.
- ...if you try to seduce or manipulate someone, add your car's looks to your roll.
- ...if you help or interfere with someone, add your car's power to your roll.
- ...if someone interferes with you, add your car's weakness to their roll.

Then choose 1:

Good in the clinch: when you do something under fire, roll+sharp instead of roll+cool.

Weather eye: when you open your brain to the world's psychic maelstrom, roll+sharp instead of roll+weird.

Daredevil: if you go straight into danger without hedging your bets, you get +1armor. If you happen to be leading a gang or convoy, it gets +1armor too.

Collector: you get 2 additional cars.

My other car is a tank: you get an additional car. Give it mounted machine guns (3-harm close/far area messy) or grenade launchers (4-harm close area messy) and +1armor.

GEAR

You get:

- 1 handy weapon
- oddments worth 2-barter
- fashion suitable to your look (you detail)

Handy weapons (choose 1):

- .38 revolver (2-harm close reload loud)
- 9mm (2-harm close loud)
- big knife (2-harm hand)
- sawed-off (3-harm close reload messy)
- machete (3-harm hand messy)
- magnum (3-harm close reload loud)

CAR

Choose one of these profiles:

- Power+2 looks+1 1-armor weakness+1
- Power+2 looks+2 0-armor weakness+1
- Power+1 looks+2 1-armor weakness+1
- Power+2 looks+1 2-armor weakness+2

Choose its frame:

Coupe, compact, sedan, jeep, pickup, van, semi, bus, limo, ambulance, 4x4, tractor, construction/utility.

Choose its strength or strengths:

Fast, rugged, aggressive, tight, huge, off-road, responsive, uncomplaining, capacious, workhorse, easily repaired.

Choose as many as its power.

Choose its look or looks:

Sleek, vintage, pristine, powerful, luxe, flashy, muscular, quirky, pretty, handcrafted, spikes & plates, garish. Choose as many as its looks.

Choose its weakness or weaknesses:

Slow, fragile, sloppy, lazy, cramped, picky, guzzler, unreliable, loud, rabbit. Choose as many as its weakness.

HX

Everyone introduces their characters by name, look and outlook. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for Hx. On your turn, choose 1 or both:

- One of them has been with you for days on the road. Tell that player Hx+2.
- One of them once got you out of some serious shit. Tell that player Hx+2.

Tell everyone else Hx+1. Everybody knows a bit about who you are and where you've been.

On the others' turns:

- You aren't naturally inclined to get too close to too many people. Whatever number they tell you, give it -1 and write it next to their character's name.

At the end, find the character with the highest Hx on your sheet. Ask that player which of your stats is most interesting, and highlight it. The MC will have you highlight a second stat too.

DRIVER SPECIAL

If you and another character have sex, roll+cool. On a 10+, it's cool, no big deal. On a 7-9, give them +1 to their Hx with you on their sheet, but give yourself -1 to your Hx with them on yours. On a miss, you gotta go: take -1 ongoing, until you prove that it's not like they *own* you or nothing.

DRIVER IMPROVEMENT

Whenever you roll a highlighted stat, and whenever you reset your Hx with someone, mark an experience circle. When you mark the 5th, improve and erase.

Each time you improve, choose one of the following. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

- ___ get +1cool (max cool+2)
- ___ get +1hard (max hard+2)
- ___ get +1hot (max hot+2)
- ___ get +1weird (max weird+2)
- ___ get a new driver move
- ___ get a new driver move
- ___ get 2 gigs (detail) and **moonlighting**
- ___ get a garage (workspace, detail) and crew
- ___ get a move from another playbook
- ___ get a move from another playbook

BARTER

If you're charging someone wealthy for your services, 1-barter is the going rate for: *one message or valuable delivered; one convoy led through hostile territory; one month's employment as personal driver.*

1-barter will cover a month's living expenses, if your tastes aren't too grand. As a one-time expenditure, and very subject to availability, 1-barter might count for: *restoration of a damaged or neglected vehicle to working order, a month's maintenance of a hi-performance vehicle well-used but not damaged; a night in high luxury & company; any weapon, gear or fashion not valuable or hi-tech; repair of a piece of hi-tech gear by a savvyhead; a week's hire of the protective companionship of a battlebabe or gunlugger; a year's tribute to a warlord; bribes, fees and gifts sufficient to get you into almost anyone's presence.*

For better stuff, you should expect to make particular arrangements. You can't just wander around the commons of some hardhold with oddments ajangle and expect to find hi-tech or luxe eternal.

Introducing

THE GUNLUgger

Apocalypse World is a mean, ugly, violent place. Law and society have broken down completely. What's yours is yours only while you can hold it in your hands. There's no peace. There's no stability but what you carve, inch by inch, out of the concrete and dirt, and then defend with murder and blood.

Sometimes the obvious move is the right one.

CREATING A GUNLUgger

To create your gunlugger, choose name, look, stats, moves, gear, and Hx.

NAME

Vonk the Sculptor, Batty, Jonker, A.T., Rue Wakeman, Navarre, Man, Kartak, Barbarossa, Keeler, Grekkor, Crille, Doom, or Chaplain.

Rex, Fido, Spot, Boxer, Doberman, Trey, Killer, Butch, Fifi, Fluffy, Duke, Wolf, Rover, Max, or Buddy.

LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, transgressing, or concealed.

Scrounged mismatched armor, battered old armor, or custom homemade armor.

NAME -

LOOK

STATS - MOVES - HARM		GUNLUgger MOVES	
<input type="radio"/> COOL	do something under fire (p86)	countdown 12 9 6 3	if you have sex see p54.
<input type="radio"/> HARD	go aggro, seize by force (p86)	shattered -1cool	
<input type="radio"/> HOT	seduce or manipulate (p87)	crippled -1hard	
<input type="radio"/> SHARP	read a sitch, read a person (p87)	disfigured -1hot	
<input type="radio"/> WEIRD	open your brain (p88)	broken -1sharp	GEAR
Experience (P54) ○○○○○○ >>>improve			
HX help, interfere, session end (p88)		GUNLUgger	

Scarred face, blunt face, bony face, dull face, worn face, or blasted face.

Mad eyes, raging eyes, wise eyes, sad eyes, little piggy eyes, or cunning eyes.

Hard body, stocky body, stringy body, battered body, overbuilt body, compact body, or huge body.

STATS

Choose one set:

- Cool+1 Hard+2 Hot-1 Sharp+1 Weird=0
- Cool-1 Hard+2 Hot-2 Sharp+1 Weird+2
- Cool+1 Hard+2 Hot-2 Sharp+2 Weird-1
- Cool+2 Hard+2 Hot-2 Sharp=0 Weird=0

BASIC MOVES

You get all the basic moves (p86–88).

GUNLUGGER MOVES

Choose 3:

Battle-hardened: when you act under fire, roll+hard instead of roll+cool.

Fuck this shit: name your escape route and roll+hard. On a 10+, sweet, you're gone. On a 7–9, you can go or stay, but if you go it costs you: leave something behind, or take something with you, the MC will tell you what. On a miss, you're caught vulnerable, half in and half out.

Battlefield instincts: when you open your brain to the world's psychic maelstrom, roll+hard instead of roll+weird, but only in battle.

Insano like Drano: you get +1hard (hard+3).

Prepared for the inevitable: you have a well-stocked and high-quality first aid kit. It counts as an angel kit (*cf*) with a capacity of 2-stock.

Bloodcrazed: whenever you inflict harm, inflict +1harm.

NOT TO BE FUCKED WITH: in battle, you count as a gang (3-harm gang small), with armor according to the circumstances.

GEAR

You get:

- 1 fuck-off big gun
- 2 serious guns
- 1 backup weapon
- armor worth 2-armor (you detail)
- oddments worth 1-barter

Fuck-off big guns (choose 1):

- silenced sniper rifle (3-harm far hi-tech)
- mg (3-harm close/far area messy)
- assault rifle (3-harm close loud autofire)
- grenade launcher (4-harm close area messy)

Serious guns (choose 2):

- hunting rifle (2-harm far loud)
- shotgun (3-harm close messy)
- smg (2-harm close area loud)
- magnum (3-harm close reload loud)
- grenade tube (4-harm close area reload messy)
- ap ammo (ap) Add ap to all your guns.
- silencer (hi-tech) Remove loud from any of your guns.

Backup weapons (choose 1):

- 9mm (2-harm close loud)
- big-ass knife (2-harm hand)
- machete (3-harm hand messy)
- many knives (2-harm hand infinite)
- grenades (4-harm hand area reload messy)

HX

Everyone introduces their characters by name, look and outlook. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for Hx. On your turn, choose 1, 2 or all 3:

- One of them has fought shoulder to shoulder with you. Tell that player Hx+2.
- One of them once left you bleeding and did nothing for you. Tell that player Hx-2.
- Choose which one of them you think is prettiest. Tell that player Hx+2.

Tell everyone else Hx=0.

On the others' turns:

- Choose which character you think is smartest. Whatever number that player tells you, add 1 to it and write it next to the character's name.
- Everyone else, whatever number they tell you, write it next to their character's name.

At the end, find the character with the highest Hx on your sheet. Ask that player which of your stats is most interesting, and highlight it. The MC will have you highlight a second stat too.

GUNLUGGER SPECIAL

If you and another character have sex, you take +1 forward. At your option, they take +1 forward too.

GUNLUGGER IMPROVEMENT

Whenever you roll a highlighted stat, and whenever you reset your Hx with someone, mark an experience circle. When you mark the 5th, improve and erase.

Each time you improve, choose one of the following. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

- ___ get +1cool (max cool+2)
- ___ get +1sharp (max sharp+2)
- ___ get +1weird (max weird+2)
- ___ get a new gunlugger move
- ___ get a new gunlugger move
- ___ get 2 gigs (detail) and **moonlighting**
- ___ get a holding (detail) and **wealth**
- ___ get a gang (detail) and **pack alpha**
- ___ get a move from another playbook
- ___ get a move from another playbook

BARTER

If you're charging someone wealthy for your services, 1-barter is the going rate for *one act of murder, extortion or other violence; one week's employment as bodyguard or gang leader; one month's employment as thug-on-hand.*

1-barter will cover a month's living expenses, if your tastes aren't too grand.

As a one-time expenditure, and very subject to availability, 1-barter might count for: *a night in high luxury & company; any weapon, gear or fashion not valuable or hi-tech; the material costs of resuscitation by an angel; repair of a piece of hi-tech gear by a savvyhead; a year's tribute to a warlord; a month's maintenance and repairs for a hi-performance vehicle well-used; bribes, fees and gifts sufficient to get you into almost anyone's presence.*

For better stuff, you should expect to make particular arrangements. You can't just wander around the commons of some hardhold with oddments ajangle and expect to find hi-tech or luxe eternal.

Introducing THE HARDHOLDER

There is no government, no society, in Apocalypse World. When hardholders ruled whole continents, when they waged war on the other side of the world instead of with the hold across the burn-flat, when their armies numbered in the hundreds of thousands and they had fucking boats to hold their fucking airplanes on, that was the golden age of legend. Now, anyone with a concrete compound and a gang of gunluggers can claim the title. What other authority is there?

CREATING A HARDHOLDER

To create your hardholder, choose name, look, stats, moves, holding, and Hx.

NAME

Nbeke, Allison, Kobe, Kreider, Trinh, Marco, Sadiq, Vega, Lang, Lin, or Jackson.

Madame, Barbecue, Grandma, Uncle, Parson, Barnum, Colonel, or Mother Superior.

LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, or transgressing.

Luxe wear, display wear, fetish wear, casual wear, or junta wear.

Strong face, stern face, cruel face, soft face, aristocratic face, or gorgeous face.

NAME -
LOOK

STATS - MOVES - HARM		HARDHOLDER MOVES
<input type="radio"/> COOL	do something under fire (p86)	<div>countdown</div> <div>12</div> <div>9 6 3</div> <div>shattered</div> <div>-1cool</div>
<input type="radio"/> HARD	go aggro, seize by force (p86)	
<input type="radio"/> HOT	seduce or manipulate (p87)	<div>crippled</div> <div>-1hard</div>
<input type="radio"/> SHARP	read a sitch, read a person (p87)	<div>disfigured</div> <div>-1hot</div>
<input type="radio"/> WEIRD	open your brain (p88)	<div>broken</div> <div>-1sharp</div>
Experience (P60) <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> >>improve		
<div>HX</div> <div>help, interfere, session end (p88)</div>		<div>HOLDING</div> <div>HARDHOLDER</div>

Cool eyes, commanding eyes, languid eyes, sharp eyes, forgiving eyes, or generous eyes.

Massive body, soft body, wiry body, fat body, tall spare body, or sensual body.

STATS

Choose one set:

- Cool-1 Hard+2 Hot+1 Sharp+1 Weird=0
- Cool+1 Hard+2 Hot+1 Sharp+1 Weird-2
- Cool-2 Hard+2 Hot=0 Sharp+2 Weird=0
- Cool=0 Hard+2 Hot+1 Sharp-1 Weird+1

BASIC MOVES

You get all the basic moves (p86–88).

HARDHOLDER MOVES

You get both:

Leadership: when your gang fights for you, roll+hard. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7–9, hold 1. Over the course of the fight, spend your hold 1 for 1 to make your gang:

- *make a hard advance*
- *stand strong against a hard advance*
- *make an organized retreat*
- *show mercy to their defeated enemies*
- *fight and die to the last*

On a miss, your gang turns on you or tries to hand you over to your enemy.

Wealth: If your hold is secure and your rule unchallenged, at the beginning of the session, roll+hard. On a 10+, you have surplus at hand and available for the needs of the session. On a 7–9, you have surplus, but choose 1 want. On a miss, or if your hold is compromised or your rule contested, your hold is in want. The precise values of your surplus and want depend on your holding, as follows.

HOLDING

By default, your holding has:

- 75-150 souls.
- for gigs, a mix of hunting, crude farming, and scavenging (surplus: 1-barter, want: hungry).
- a makeshift compound of concrete, sheet metal and rebar. Your gang gets +1armor when fighting in its defense.
- an armory of scavenged and makeshift weapons.
- a gang of about 40 violent people (3-harm gang medium unruly 1-armor).

Choose 4:

- your population is large, 200-300 souls. Surplus: +1barter, want: +disease.
- your population is small, 50-60 souls. Want: anxiety instead of want: hungry.

- for gigs, add lucrative raiding. Surplus: +1barter, want: +reprisals.
- for gigs, add protection tribute. Surplus: +1barter, want: +obligation.
- for gigs, add a manufactory. Surplus: +1barter, want: +idle.
- for gigs, add a bustling, widely-known market commons. Surplus: +1barter, want: +idle.
- your gang is large instead of medium, 60 violent people or so.
- your gang is well-disciplined. Drop unruly.
- your armory is sophisticated and extensive. Your gang gets +1harm.
- your compound is tall, deep and mighty, of stone and iron. Your gang gets +2armor when fighting in its defense.

And choose 2:

- your population is filthy and unwell. Want: +disease.
- your population is lazy and drug-stupored. Want: +famine.
- your population is decadent and perverse. Surplus: -1barter, want: savagery.
- your holding owes protection tribute. Surplus: -1barter, want: +reprisals.
- your gang is small instead of medium, only 10-20 violent people.
- your gang is a pack of fucking hyenas. Want: savagery.
- your armory is for shit. Your gang gets -1harm.
- your compound is mostly tents, lean-tos and wooden walls. Your gang gets no armor bonus when fighting to defend it.

Also detail your personal fashion. You can have, for your personal use, with the MC's approval, a few pieces of non-specialized gear or weapons from any character playbook.

Hx

Everyone introduces their characters by name, look and outlook. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for Hx. On your turn:

- Choose whether you are by nature generous with your trust and resources, or reserved. If the former, then tell everyone Hx+1. If the latter, then tell everyone Hx=0.

On the others' turns, choose 1 or both:

- One of them has been with you since before. Whatever number that player tells you, give it +1 and write it next to the character's name.
- One of them once betrayed you or stole from you. Whatever number that player tells you, ignore it; write Hx+3 next to the character's name instead.

Everyone else, whatever number they tell you, write it next to their character's name.

At the end, find the character with the highest Hx on your sheet. Ask that player which of your stats is most interesting, and highlight it. The MC will have you highlight a second stat too.

HARDHOLDER SPECIAL

If you and another character have sex, you can give the other character gifts worth 1-barter, at no cost to you.

HARDHOLDER IMPROVEMENT

Whenever you roll a highlighted stat, and whenever you reset your Hx with someone, mark an experience circle. When you mark the 5th, improve and erase.

Each time you improve, choose one of the following. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

- ___ get +1hard (max hard+3)
- ___ get +1weird (max weird+2)
- ___ get +1cool (max cool+2)
- ___ get +1hot(max hot+2)
- ___ get +1sharp (max sharp+2)
- ___ choose a new option for your holding
- ___ choose a new option for your holding
- ___ erase an option from your holding
- ___ get a move from another playbook
- ___ get a move from another playbook

BARTER

Your holding provides for your day-to-day living, so while you're there governing it there's no need for you to concern yourself with that.

When you give gifts, here's what might count as a gift worth 1-barter: *a month's hospitality, including a place to live and meals in common with others; a night in high luxury & company; any weapon, gear or fashion not valuable or hi-tech; repair of a piece of hi-tech gear by your fave savvyhead; a week's bestowal of the protective companionship of one of your battlebabes or gunluggers; a month's maintenance and repairs for a hi-performance vehicle well-used; a half-hour's worth of your undivided attention, in private audience; or, of course, oddments worth 1-barter.*

In times of abundance, your holding's surplus is yours to spend personally as you see fit. (Suppose that your citizen's lives are the more abundant too, in proportion.) You can see what 1-barter is worth, from the above. For better stuff, be prepared to make unique arrangements, probably by treating with another hardholder nearby.

Introducing

THE HOCUS

Now it should be crystal fucking obvious that the gods have abandoned Apocalypse World. Maybe in the golden age, with its one nation under god and its in god we trust, maybe then the gods were real. Fucked if I know. All I know is that now they're gone daddy gone.

My theory is that these weird hocus fuckers, when they say "the gods," what they really mean is the miasma left over from the explosion of psychic hate and desperation that gave Apocalypse World its birth. Friends, that's our creator now.

CREATING A HOCUS

To create your hocus, choose name, look, stats, moves, followers, and Hx.

NAME

Vision, Hope, Dust, Truth, Found, Always, Lost, Want, Must, Bright, or Sorrow.

Horse, Rabbit, Trout, Cat, Spider, Snake, Bat, Lizard, Jackal, Weaver Bird, or Lark.

LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, transgressing, or concealed.

NAME -
LOOK

STATS - MOVES - HARM		HOCUS MOVES
<input type="radio"/> COOL	do something under fire (p86)	<div>countdown 12 9 6 3 shattered -1cool crippled -1hard disfigured -1hot broken -1sharp if you have sex see p66.</div>
<input type="radio"/> HARD	go aggro, seize by force (p86)	
<input type="radio"/> HOT	seduce or manipulate (p87)	
<input type="radio"/> SHARP	read a sitch, read a person (p87)	
<input type="radio"/> WEIRD	open your brain (p88)	<div>FOLLOWERS</div>
Experience (P66) <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> >>improve		
<div>HX</div> <div>help, interfere, session end (p88)</div>		<div>HOCUS</div>

Tattered vestments, formal vestments, scrounge vestments, fetish vestments, or tech vestments.

Innocent face, dirty face, determined face, open face, severe face, or ascetic face.

Mesmerizing eyes, dazed eyes, forgiving eyes, suspicious eyes, clear eyes, or burning eyes.

Bony body, lanky body, soft body, fit body, graceful body, or fat body.

STATS

Choose one set:

- Cool=0 Hard+1 Hot-1 Sharp+1 Weird+2
- Cool+1 Hard-1 Hot+1 Sharp=0 Weird+2
- Cool-1 Hard+1 Hot=0 Sharp+1 Weird+2
- Cool+1 Hard=0 Hot+1 Sharp-1 Weird+2

BASIC MOVES

You get all the basic moves (p86–88).

HOCUS MOVES

You get this 1:

Fortunes: *fortune, surplus and want all depend on your followers.* At the beginning of the session, roll+fortune. On a 10+, your followers have surplus. On a 7–9, they have surplus, but choose 1 want. On a miss, they are in want. If their surplus lists barter, like 1-barter or 2-barter, that's your personal share.

Then choose 2:

Frenzy: When you speak the truth to a mob, roll+weird. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7–9, hold 1. Spend your hold 1 for 1 to make the mob:

- *bring people forward and deliver them.*
- *bring forward all their precious things.*
- *unite and fight for you as a gang (2-harm 0-armor size appropriate).*
- *fall into an orgy of uninhibited emotion: fucking, lamenting, fighting, sharing, celebrating, as you choose.*
- *go quietly back to their lives.*

On a miss, the mob turns on you.

Charismatic: when you try to manipulate someone, roll+weird instead of roll+hot.

Fucking wacknut: you get +1weird (weird+3).

Seeing souls: when you help or interfere with someone, roll+weird instead of roll+Hx.

Divine protection: your gods give you 1-armor. If you wear armor, use that instead, they don't add.

FOLLOWERS

By default you have around 20 followers, loyal to you but not fanatical. They have their own lives apart from you, integrated in the local population (fortune+1 surplus: 1-barter want: desertion).

Characterize them: your cult, your family, your students, your scene, your staff, your court. If you travel, decide whether they travel with you or congregate in their own communities.

Choose 2:

- Your followers are dedicated to you. Surplus: +1barter, and replace want: desertion with want: hunger.
- Your followers are involved in successful commerce. +1fortune.
- Your followers, taken as a body, constitute a powerful psychic antenna. Surplus: +augury.
- Your followers are joyous and celebratory. Surplus: +party.
- Your followers are rigorous and argumentative. Surplus: +insight.
- Your followers are hard-working, no-nonsense. Surplus: +1barter.
- Your followers are eager, enthusiastic, and successful recruiters. Surplus: +growth.

Choose 2:

- You have few followers, 10 or fewer. Surplus: -1barter.
- Your followers aren't really yours, more like you're theirs. Want: judgment instead of want: desertion.
- Your followers rely entirely on you for their lives and needs. Want: +desperation.
- Your followers are drug-fixated. Surplus: +stupor.
- Your followers disdain fashion, luxury and convention. Want: +disease.
- Your followers disdain law, peace, reason and society. Surplus: +violence.
- Your followers are decadent and perverse. Want: +savagery.

Also, detail your fashion according to your look. You have oddments worth 2-barter, but no gear to speak of.

HX

Everyone introduces their characters by name, look and outlook. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for Hx. On your turn:

- Any of them who are your followers, tell their players Hx+2.
- Tell everyone else Hx=0.

On the others' turns:

- Choose the character whose soul you've seen. Whatever number that player tells you, ignore it; write Hx+3 next to the character's name instead.
- Everyone else, whatever number they tell you, give it +1 and write it next to their character's name. You're a good and quick judge of others.

At the end, find the character with the highest Hx on your sheet. Ask that player which of your stats is most interesting, and highlight it. The MC will have you highlight a second stat too.

HOCUS SPECIAL

If you and another character have sex, you each hold 1. Either of you can spend your hold any time to help or interfere with the other, at a distance or despite any barriers that would normally prevent it.

HOCUS IMPROVEMENT

Whenever you roll a highlighted stat, and whenever you reset your Hx with someone, mark an experience circle. When you mark the 5th, improve and erase.

Each time you improve, choose one of the following. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

- ___ get +1cool (max cool+2)
- ___ get +1hard (max hard+2)
- ___ get +1sharp (max sharp+2)
- ___ get a new hocus move
- ___ get a new hocus move
- ___ choose a new option for your followers

- ___ choose a new option for your followers
- ___ get a holding (detail) and **wealth**
- ___ get a move from another playbook
- ___ get a move from another playbook

BARTER

If you're charging someone wealthy for your services, 1-barter is the going rate for: *one circumstance foretold, revealed and come true; a month's employment as auger and advisor; a month's employment as ceremonist.*

1-barter will cover a month's living expenses, if your tastes aren't too grand.

As a one-time expenditure, and very subject to availability, 1-barter might count for: *any weapon, gear or fashion not valuable or hi-tech; the material costs of a crash resuscitation by an angel; repair of a piece of hi-tech gear by a savvyhead; a week's hire of the protective companionship of a battlebabe or gunlugger; a year's tribute to a warlord; a month's maintenance and repairs for a hi-performance vehicle well-used; bribes, fees and gifts sufficient to get you into almost anyone's presence.*

For better stuff, you should expect to make particular arrangements. You can't just wander around the commons of some hardhold with oddments ajangle and expect to find hi-tech or luxe eternal.

Introducing

THE OPERATOR

In Apocalypse World, here's what you've got, right? You've got Dremmer and Balls on one side, warlord slaver and his skinny fucking enforcer, raiding from their stronghold of concrete and iron spikes. On the other side you've got the barge people, living their short disease-crippled lives up and down the dead poisoned river. Further along and you've got Lighthouse, a men-and-women hunger cult gone wrong barricaded in on the edge of the breeding pit burn flats.

You, you just want to make your way and have some freedom — but this is what you've got to work with. Not fucking rosy.

CREATING AN OPERATOR

To create your operator, choose name, look, stats, moves, gigs, crew/contacts, gear, and Hx.

NAME

Berg, Waters, Lafferty, Ebbs, Wilson, Marshall, Dolarhyde, Jesus, Bendrix, Proust, Steed, Nero.

Amalia, Katinka, Dagny, Fox, Christine, Clover, Olympias, Illeana, Franky, Sway, Acid Burn, Cash

NAME -		LOOK	
highlight>> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	STATS -	MOVES -	HARM
	COOL	do something under fire (p86)	countdown 12 9 3 6
	HARD	go aggro, seize by force (p86)	<input type="radio"/> shattered -1cool
	HOT	seduce or manipulate (p87)	<input type="radio"/> crippled -1hard
	SHARP	read a sitch, read a person (p87)	<input type="radio"/> disfigured -1hot
	WEIRD	open your brain (p88)	<input type="radio"/> broken -1sharp
Experience (P73) <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> >>improve			
HX		help, interfere, session end (p88)	
		OPERATOR MOVES	
		if you have sex see p72.	
		GIGS, CREW & GEAR	
		JUGGLING _____	
		OPERATOR	

LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, or transgressing.

Casual wear, utility wear, vintage wear, signature wear, or scrounge wear.

Worn face, pretty face, honest face, rough face, hard face, or open face.

Calculating eyes, warm eyes, sharp eyes, guarded eyes, cold eyes, or weary eyes.

muscular body, rangy body, full body, energetic body, or sturdy body.

STATS

Choose one set:

- Cool+2 Hard=0 Hot-1 Sharp+2 Weird-1
- Cool+2 Hard+1 Hot+1 Sharp=0 Weird-1
- Cool+2 Hard-1 Hot+1 Sharp+1 Weird=0
- Cool+2 Hard=0 Hot=0 Sharp+1 Weird-1

BASIC MOVES

You get all the basic moves (p86–88).

OPERATOR MOVES

You get this 1:

Moonlighting: you get 2-juggling. Whenever there's a stretch of downtime in play, or between sessions, choose a number of your gigs to work. Choose no more than your juggling. Roll+cool. On a 10+, you get profit from all the gigs you chose. On a 7–9, you get profit from at least 1; if you chose more, you get catastrophe from 1 and profit from the rest. On a miss, catastrophe all around. The gigs you aren't working give you neither profit nor catastrophe. Whenever you get a new gig, you also get +1juggling.

And choose 1:

Easy to trust: when you try to seduce or manipulate another player's character, roll+Hx instead of roll+hot. An NPC, roll+cool instead of roll+hot.

Eye on the door: name your escape route and roll+cool. On a 10+ you're gone. On a 7–9, you can go or stay, but if you go it costs you: leave something behind, or take something with you, the MC will tell you what. On a miss, you're caught vulnerable, half in and half out.

Opportunistic: when you interfere with someone who's rolling, roll+cool instead of roll+Hx. Asshole.

Reputation: when you meet someone important (your call), roll+cool. On a hit, they've heard of you, and you say what they've heard; the MC will have them respond accordingly. On a 10+, you take +1forward for dealing with them as well. On a miss, they've heard of you, but the MC will decide what they've heard.

GIGS

(Profit / catastrophe)

Choose 3 paying gigs:

- Bodyguarding (1-barter / embattled)
- Surveillance (1-barter / deceived)
- Raiding (1-barter / embattled)
- Enforcement (1-barter / overthrown)
- Honest work (1-barter / impoverished)
- Companionship (1-barter / entangled)
- Deliveries (1-barter / bushwacked)
- Infiltration (1-barter / discovered)
- Scavenging (1-barter / impoverished)
- Brokering deals (1-barter / shut out)
- Technical work (2-barter / shut out)
- Fucking (2-barter / entangled)
- Compound defense (2-barter / infiltrated)
- Doing murders (3-barter / embattled)

And choose 1 obligation gig:

- Avoiding someone (you keep well clear / they catch you in a bad spot)
- Paying debts (you keep up with them / they come due)
- Revenge (you victimize someone / they humiliate you)
- Protecting someone (nothing bad happens to them / they're gone)
- Pursuing luxury (beauty in your life / you wind up in a bad spot)
- Maintaining your honor (you keep your word and your name / you cross a line)
- Seeking answers (you get a clue / you chase a red herring)

CREW/CONTACTS

Your crew or contacts can consist entirely of the other players' characters, or entirely of the MC's characters, or any mix. If they include any of the MC's characters, sketch them out — names (eg Gabble, Jaim, Pe, Wasted) and 1-line descriptions — with the MC. Make sure they're competent and suited to the gigs you've chosen.

GEAR

You get:

- 9mm (2-harm close loud) or a signature weapon (detail with the MC)
- oddments worth 1-barter
- fashion suitable to your look, including at your option a piece worth 1-armor (you detail)

Hx

Everyone introduces their characters by name, look and outlook. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for Hx. On your turn, choose 1 or both:

- One of them once faced down dedicated violence to get you out of a fix. Tell that player Hx+2.
- One of them once let you down in a pinch and left you holding the bill. Tell that player Hx-1.

Tell everyone else Hx+1.

On the others' turns:

- Whatever number everyone tells you, give it +1 and write it next to their character's name. You depend upon clear relationships.

At the end, find the character with the highest Hx on your sheet. Ask that player which of your stats is most interesting, and highlight it. The MC will have you highlight a second stat too.

OPERATOR SPECIAL

If you and another character have sex, get a new obligation gig: keeping [their name] happy (you keep them happy / you fucking blow it).

If you and the same character have sex again, don't get duplicate gigs. Just the first time.

OPERATOR IMPROVEMENT

Whenever you roll a highlighted stat, and whenever you reset your Hx with someone, mark an experience circle. When you mark the 5th, improve and erase.

Each time you improve, choose one of the following. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

- ___ get +1cool (max cool+3)
- ___ get +1hard (max hard+2)
- ___ get +1sharp (max sharp+2)
- ___ get a new operator move
- ___ get a new operator move
- ___ add a gig and you may change your crew
- ___ add a gig and you may change your crew
- ___ abandon or resolve an obligation gig for good
- ___ get a move from another playbook
- ___ get a move from another playbook

BARTER

1-barter will cover a month's living expenses, if your tastes aren't too grand. 1-barter will also cover your crew's cut of a couple three four profitable gigs.

As a one-time expenditure, and very subject to availability, 1-barter might count for: *a night in high luxury and company; any weapon, gear or fashion not valuable or hi-tech; the material costs of a crash resuscitation by an angel; a week's hire of the protective companionship of a battlebabe or gunlugger; repair of a piece of hi-tech gear by a savvyhead; a year's tribute to a warlord; a month's maintenance and repairs for a hi-performance vehicle well-used; bribes, fees and gifts sufficient to get you into almost anyone's presence.*

For better stuff, you should expect to make particular arrangements. You can't just wander around the commons of some hardhold with oddments ajangle and expect to find hi-tech or luxe eternal.

Introducing
THE SAVVYHEAD

If there's one fucking thing you can count on in Apocalypse World, it's: things break.

CREATING A SAVVYHEAD

To create your savvyhead, choose name, look, stats, moves, workspace, projects, and Hx.

NAME

Leah, Joshua, Tai, Ethan, Bran, Jeremy, Amanuel, Justin, Jessica, Eliza, Dylan, Adnan, Alan, Nils, Ellen, Lee, Kim, Adele

Leone, Burdick, Oliver, Goldman, Whiting, Fauci, Hossfield, Lemma, Morrell, Ozair, Robinson, Lemieux, Whitmont, Cullen, Spector

LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, or transgressing.

Utility wear plus tech, scrounge wear plus tech, vintage wear plus tech, tech wear.

Plain face, pretty face, open face, or expressive face.

Squinty eyes, calm eyes, dancing eyes, quick eyes, or appraising eyes.

NAME -
LOOK

STATS - MOVES - HARM		SAVVYHEAD MOVES
<input type="radio"/> COOL	do something under fire (p86)	<div>countdown 12 9 3 6 ○ shattered -1cool ○ crippled -1hard ○ disfigured -1hot ○ broken -1sharp</div> <div>if you have sex see p78.</div>
<input type="radio"/> HARD	go aggro, seize by force (p86)	
<input type="radio"/> HOT	seduce or manipulate (p87)	
<input type="radio"/> SHARP	read a sitch, read a person (p87)	
<input type="radio"/> WEIRD	open your brain (p88)	WORKSPACE
Experience (P78) ○○○○>>>improve		
HX help, interfere, session end (p88)		SAVVYHEAD

Fat body, slight body, hunched body, wiry body, stumpy body, or strange body.

STATS

Choose one set:

- Cool-1 Hard=0 Hot+1 Sharp+1 Weird+2
- Cool=0 Hard-1 Hot-1 Sharp+2 Weird+2
- Cool+1 Hard-1 Hot=0 Sharp+1 Weird+2
- Cool+1 Hard+1 Hot-1 Sharp=0 Weird+2

BASIC MOVES

You get all the basic moves (p86–88).

SAVVYHEAD MOVES

Choose 2:

Things speak: whenever you handle or examine something interesting, roll+weird. On a hit, you can ask the MC questions.

On a 10+, ask 3. On a 7–9, ask 1:

- *who handled this last before me?*
- *who made this?*
- *what strong emotions have been most recently nearby this?*
- *what words have been said most recently nearby this?*
- *what has been done most recently with this, or to this?*
- *what's wrong with this, and how might I fix it?*

Treat a miss as though you've opened your brain to the world's psychic maelstrom and missed the roll.

Bonefeel: at the beginning of the session, roll+weird. On a 10+, hold 1+1. On a 7–9, hold 1. At any time, either you or the MC can spend your hold to have you already be there, with the proper tools and knowledge, with or without any clear explanation why. If your hold was 1+1, take +1forward now. On a miss, the MC holds 1, and can spend it to have you already be there, but somehow pinned, caught or trapped.

Oftener right: when a character comes to you for advice, tell them what you honestly think the best course is. If they do it, they take +1 to any rolls they make in the doing, and you mark an experience circle.

Reality's fraying edge: some component of your workspace, or some arrangement of components, is uniquely receptive to the world's psychic maelstrom (+augury). Choose and name it, or else leave it for the MC to reveal during play.

Spooky intense: when you do something under fire, roll+weird instead of roll+cool.

Deep insights: you get +1weird (weird+3).

WORKSPACE

Choose which of the following your workspace includes. Choose 3: a garage, a darkroom, a controlled growing environment, skilled labor (Carna, Thuy, Pamming, *eg*), a junkyard of raw materials, a truck or van, weird-ass electronica, machining tools, transmitters & receivers, a proving range, a relic of the golden age past, booby traps.

When you go into your workspace and dedicate yourself to making a thing, or to getting to the bottom of some shit, decide what and tell the MC. The MC will tell you “sure, no problem, but...” and then 1 to 4 of the following:

- it's going to take hours/days/weeks/months of work;
- first you'll have to get/build/fix/figure out ____;
- you're going to need ____ to help you with it;
- it's going to cost you a fuckton of jingle;
- the best you'll be able to do is a crap version, weak and unreliable;
- it's going to mean exposing yourself (plus colleagues) to serious danger;
- you're going to have to add ____ to your workplace first;
- it's going to take several/dozens/hundreds of tries;
- you're going to have to take ____ apart to do it.

The MC might connect them all with “and,” or might throw in a merciful “or.”

Once you've accomplished the necessities, you can go ahead and accomplish the thing itself. The MC will stat it up, or spill, or whatever it calls for.

Also detail your personal fashion. You have oddments worth 3-barter, and any personal piece or three of normal gear or weaponry.

HX

Everyone introduces their characters by name, look and outlook. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for Hx. On your turn:

- Choose the character you find most strange. Tell that player Hx+1.
- Tell everyone else Hx-1. You're kind of strange yourself.

On the others' turns:

- Choose the character you figure for the biggest potential problem. Whatever number that player tells you, give it +1 and write it next to the character's name.
- Everyone else, whatever number they tell you, give it -1 and write it next to their character's name. You've got other stuff to do and other stuff to learn.

At the end, find the character with the highest Hx on your sheet. Ask that player which of your stats is most interesting, and highlight it. The MC will have you highlight a second stat too.

SAVVYHEAD SPECIAL

If you and another character have sex, they automatically speak to you (p76), as though they were a thing and you'd rolled a 10+, whether you have the move or not. The other player and the MC will answer your questions between them.

Otherwise, that move never works on people, only things.

SAVVYHEAD IMPROVEMENT

Whenever you roll a highlighted stat, and whenever you reset your Hx with someone, mark an experience circle. When you mark the 5th, improve and erase.

Each time you improve, choose one of the following. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

- ___ get +1cool (max cool+2)
- ___ get +1hard (max hard+2)
- ___ get +1sharp (max sharp+2)
- ___ get a new savvyhead move
- ___ get a new savvyhead move

- ___ get 2 gigs (detail) and **moonlighting**
- ___ get a gang (detail) for security, and **leadership**
- ___ add life support to your workspace, and now you can work on people there too
- ___ get a move from another playbook
- ___ get a move from another playbook

BARTER

If you're charging someone wealthy for your services, 1-barter is the going rate for: *one piece of hi-tech gear repaired, a week's maintenance of finicky and delicate tech; a month's employment as technician on call; one solid, reliable and true answer.*

1-barter will cover a month's living expenses, if your tastes aren't too grand.

As a one-time expenditure, and very subject to availability, 1-barter might count for: *a night in high luxury and company; any weapon, gear or fashion not valuable or hi-tech; the material costs of a crash resuscitation by an angel; a week's hire of the protective companionship of a battlebabe or gunlugger; a year's tribute to a warlord; bribes, fees and gifts sufficient to get you into almost anyone's presence.*

For better stuff, you should expect to make particular arrangements. You can't just wander around the commons of some hardhold with oddments ajangle and expect to find hi-tech or luxe eternal.

Introducing

THE SKINNER

Even in the filth of Apocalypse World, there's food that isn't death on a spit, music that isn't shrieking hyenas, thoughts that aren't afraid, bodies that aren't used meat, sex that isn't rutting, dancing that's real. There are moments that are more than stench, smoke, rage and blood.

Anything beautiful left in this ugly ass world, skimmers hold it. Will they share it with you? What do you offer them?

CREATING A SKINNER

To create your skinner, choose name, look, stats, moves, gear, and Hx.

NAME

October, Venus, Mercury, Dune, Shade, Heron, Plum, Orchid, Storm, Dusk, Sword, Midnight, Hide, Frost, Lawn, June, Icicle, Tern, Lavender, Spice, Gazelle, Lion, Peacock, or Grace.

LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, transgressing, or androgyne.

Display wear, showy scrounge wear, luxe wear, fetish wear, or casual wear.

Striking face, sweet face, strange face, cute face, or beautiful face.

NAME -
LOOK

highlight>>
☐ COOL
☐ HARD
☐ HOT
☐ SHARP
☐ WEIRD

STATS - MOVES - HARM

do something under fire (p86)
go aggro, seize by force (p86)
seduce or manipulate (p87)
read a sitch, read a person (p87)
open your brain (p88)
Experience (P84) ☐☐☐☐☐ >>improve

countdown
12
9 6 3
☐ shattered
-1cool
☐ crippled
-1hard
☐ disfigured
-1hot
☐ broken
-1sharp

help, interfere, session end (p88)

SKINNER MOVES

if you have sex see p84.

GEAR

SKINNER

Laughing eyes, mocking eyes, dark eyes, shadowed eyes, troubled eyes, arresting eyes, bright eyes, or cool eyes.

Strong hands, expressive hands, quick hands, calloused hands, or steady hands.

Slim body, toned body, fat body, unnatural body, young body, or lush body.

STATS

Choose one set:

- Cool+1 Hard-1 Hot+2 Sharp+1 Weird=0
- Cool=0 Hard=0 Hot+2 Sharp=0 Weird+1
- Cool-1 Hard=0 Hot+2 Sharp+2 Weird-1
- Cool+1 Hard+1 Hot+2 Sharp+1 Weird-2

BASIC MOVES

You get all the basic moves (p86–88).

SKINNER MOVES

Choose 2:

Breathtaking: you get +1hot (hot+3).

Lost: when you whisper someone's name to the world's psychic maelstrom, roll+weird. On a hit, they come to you, with or without any clear explanation why. On a 10+, take +1forward against them. On a miss, the MC will ask you 3 questions; answer them truthfully.

Artful & gracious: when you perform your chosen art — any act of expression or culture — or when you put its product before an audience, roll+hot. On a 10+, spend 3. On a 7–9, spend 1. Spend 1 to name an NPC member of your audience and choose one:

- *this person must meet me*
- *this person must have my services*
- *this person loves me*
- *this person must give me a gift*
- *this person admires my patron*

On a miss, you gain no benefit, but suffer no harm or lost opportunity. You simply perform very well.

An arresting skinner: when you remove a piece of clothing, your own or someone else's, no one who can see you can do anything but watch. You command their absolute attention. If you choose, you can exempt individual people, by name.

Hypnotic: when you have time and solitude with someone, they become fixated upon you. Roll+hot. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7–9, hold 2. They can spend your hold, 1 for 1, by:

- giving you something you want
- acting as your eyes and ears
- fighting to protect you
- doing something you tell them to

For NPCs, while you have hold over them they can't act against you. For PCs, instead, any time you like you can spend your hold, 1 for 1:

- they distract themselves with the thought of you. They're acting under fire.
- they inspire themselves with the thought of you. They take +1 right now.

On a miss, they hold 2 over you, on the exact same terms.

GEAR

You get:

- 1 gracious weapon
- 2 luxe gear
- oddments worth 1-barter
- fashion suitable to your look (you detail)

Gracious weapons (choose 1):

- sleeve pistol (2-harm close reload loud)
- ornate dagger (2-harm hand valuable)
- hidden knives (2-harm hand infinite)
- ornate sword (3-harm hand valuable)
- antique handgun (2-harm close reload loud valuable)

Luxe gear (choose 2):

- antique coins (worn valuable)
Drilled with holes for jewelry.
- eyeglasses (worn valuable)
You may use these for +1sharp when your eyesight matters, but if you do, without them you get -1sharp when your eyesight matters.
- long gorgeous coat (worn valuable)
- spectacular tattoos (implanted)
- skin & hair kit (applied valuable)
Soaps, ochres, paints, creams, salves. Using it lets you take +1hot forward.
- a pet (valuable alive)
Your choice and yours to detail.

Hx

Everyone introduces their characters by name, look and outlook. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for Hx. On your turn, choose 1, 2 or all 3:

- One of them is your friend. Tell that player Hx+2.
- One of them is your lover. Tell that player Hx+1.
- One of them is in love with you. Tell that player Hx-1.
- Tell everyone else Hx=0.

On the others' turns:

- For everyone, whatever number they tell you, give it -1 or +1 and write it next to the character's name. Your choice for each.

At the end, find the character with the highest Hx on your sheet. Ask that player which of your stats is most interesting, and highlight it. The MC will have you highlight a second stat too.

SKINNER SPECIAL

If you and another character have sex, choose one:

- You take +1 forward and so do they.
- You take +1 forward; they take -1.
- They must give you a gift worth at least 1-barter.
- You can **hypnotize** (p83) them as though you'd rolled a 10+, even if you haven't chosen to get the move.

SKINNER IMPROVEMENT

Whenever you roll a highlighted stat, and whenever you reset your Hx with someone, mark an experience circle. When you mark the 5th, improve and erase.

Each time you improve, choose one of the following. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

- ___ get +1cool (max cool+2)
- ___ get +1cool (max cool+2)
- ___ get +1hard (max hard+2)
- ___ get +1sharp (max sharp+2)
- ___ get a new skinner move
- ___ get a new skinner move

- ___ get 2 gigs (detail) and **moonlighting**
- ___ get followers (detail) and **fortunes**
- ___ get a move from another playbook
- ___ get a move from another playbook

BARTER

If you're charging someone wealthy for your services, 1-barter is the going rate for: *one night's intimate companionship, an evening's or a weekend's entertainment for a group (without touching), a month's casual employment as an enlivening presence.*

1-barter will cover a month's living expenses, if your tastes aren't too grand.

As a one-time expenditure, and very subject to availability, 1-barter might count for: *any weapon, gear or fashion not valuable or hi-tech; the material costs of a crash resuscitation by an angel; repair of a piece of hi-tech gear by a savvyhead; a week's hire of the protective companionship of a battlebabe or gunlugger; a year's tribute to a warlord; a month's maintenance and repairs for a hi-performance vehicle well-used; bribes, fees and gifts sufficient to get you into almost anyone's presence.*

For better stuff, you should expect to make particular arrangements. You can't just wander around the commons of some hardhold with oddments ajangle and expect to find hi-tech or luxe eternal.

BASIC MOVES

Every character gets all the basic moves:

DO SOMETHING UNDER FIRE

When you **do something under fire**, or dig in to endure fire, roll+cool. On a 10+, you do it. On a 7–9, you flinch, hesitate, or stall: the MC can offer you a worse outcome, a hard bargain, or an ugly choice.

GO AGGRO

When you **go aggro on someone**, roll+hard. On a 10+, they have to choose: force your hand and suck it up, or cave and do what you want. On a 7–9, they can instead choose 1:

- *get the hell out of your way*
- *barricade themselves securely in*
- *give you something they think you want*
- *back off calmly, hands where you can see*
- *tell you what you want to know (or what you want to hear)*

SEIZE BY FORCE

When you try to **seize something by force**, or to secure your hold on something, roll+hard. On a hit, choose options. On a 10+, choose 3. On a 7–9, choose 2:

- *you take definite hold of it*
- *you suffer little harm*
- *you inflict terrible harm*
- *you impress, dismay or frighten your enemy*

SEDUCE OR MANIPULATE

When you **try to seduce or manipulate someone**, tell them what you want and roll+hot. For NPCs: on a hit, they ask you to promise something first, and do it if you promise. On a 10+, whether you keep your promise is up to you, later. On a 7–9, they need some concrete assurance right now. For PCs: on a 10+, both. On a 7–9, choose 1:

- *if they do it, they mark experience*
- *if they refuse, it's acting under fire*

What they do then is up to them.

READ A SITCH

When you **read a charged situation**, roll+sharp. On a hit, you can ask the MC questions. Whenever you act on one of the MC's answers, take +1. On a 10+, ask 3. On a 7–9, ask 1:

- *where's my best escape route / way in / way past?*
- *which enemy is most vulnerable to me?*
- *which enemy is the biggest threat?*
- *what should I be on the lookout for?*
- *what's my enemy's true position?*
- *who's in control here?*

READ A PERSON

When you **read a person** in a charged interaction, roll+sharp. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7–9, hold 1. While you're interacting with them, spend your hold to ask their player questions, 1 for 1:

- *is your character telling the truth?*
- *what's your character really feeling?*
- *what does your character intend to do?*
- *what does your character wish I'd do?*
- *how could I get your character to ___?*

OPEN YOUR BRAIN

When you **open your brain to the world's psychic maelstrom**, roll+weird. On a hit, the MC will tell you something new and interesting about the current situation, and might ask you a question or two; answer them. On a 10+, the MC will give you good detail. On a 7–9, the MC will give you an impression. If you already know all there is to know, the MC will tell you that.

HELP OR INTERFERE

When you **help** or **interfere with** someone who's making a roll, roll+Hx. On a hit, they take +1 (help) or -2 (interfere) now. On a 7–9, you also expose yourself to fire, danger, retribution or cost.

SESSION END

At the end of every session, choose a character who knows you better than they used to. If there's more than one, choose one at your whim. Tell that player to add +1 to their Hx with you on their sheet. If this brings them to Hx+4, they reset to Hx+1 (and therefore mark experience).

PERIPHERAL MOVES

HARM & HEALING MOVES

By default, the harm & healing moves are in play. The MC might decide to forego them, case by case.

This move is unusual in that a hit is bad for the player and a miss is good:

When you **suffer harm**, roll+harm suffered (after armor, if you're wearing any). On a 10+, the MC can choose 1:

- *You're out of action: unconscious, trapped, incoherent or panicked.*
- *It's worse than it seemed. Take an additional 1-harm.*
- *Choose 2 from the 7–9 list below.*

On a 7–9, the MC can choose 1:

- *You lose your footing.*
- *You lose your grip on whatever you're holding.*
- *You lose track of someone or something you're attending to.*
- *You miss noticing something important.*

On a miss, the MC can nevertheless choose something from the 7–9 list above. If she does, though, it's instead of some of the harm you're suffering, so you take -1harm.

When you **inflict harm on another player's character**, the other character gets +1Hx with you (on their sheet) for every segment of harm you inflict. If this brings them to Hx+4, they reset to Hx+1 as usual, and therefore mark experience.

When you **heal another player's character's harm**, you get +1Hx with them (on your sheet) for every segment of harm you heal. If this brings you to Hx+4, you reset to Hx+1 as usual, and therefore mark experience.

When you hurt someone, they see you more clearly. When you heal someone, you see them more clearly.

BARTER MOVES

By default, characters have access to the barter moves, but the MC might decide to limit them.

When you **give 1-barter to someone, but with strings attached**, it counts as manipulating them and hitting the roll with a 10+, no roll required.

When you **go into a holding's bustling market**, looking for some particular thing to buy, and it's not obvious whether you should be able to just like go buy one like that, roll+sharp. On a 10+, yes, you can just go can buy it like that. On a 7–9, the MC chooses one of the following:

- *it costs 1-barter more than you'd expect*
- *it's available, but only if you meet with a guy who knows a guy*
- *damn, I had one, I just sold it to this guy named Rolfball, maybe you can go get it off him?*
- *sorry, I don't have that, but maybe this will do instead?*

When you **make known that you want a thing and drop jingle to speed it on its way**, roll+barter spent (max roll+3). It has to be a thing you could legitimately get this way. On a 10+ it comes to you, no strings attached. On a 7–9 it comes to you, or something pretty close. On a miss, it comes to you, but with strings very much attached.

AUGURY

By default, nobody has access to augury, but a hocus' followers or a savvyhead's workspace might give it.

When you use your followers or your workspace for **augury**, roll+weird. On a hit, you can choose 1:

- *Reach through the world's psychic maelstrom to something or someone connected to it.*
- *Isolate and protect a person or thing from the world's psychic maelstrom.*
- *Isolate and contain a fragment of the world's psychic maelstrom itself.*
- *Insert information into the world's psychic maelstrom.*
- *Open a window into the world's psychic maelstrom.*

By default, the effect will last only as long as you maintain it, will reach only shallowly into the world's psychic maelstrom as it is local to you, and will bleed instability. On a 10+, choose 2; on a 7–9, choose 1:

- *It'll persist (for a while) without your actively maintaining it.*
- *It reaches deep into the world's psychic maelstrom.*
- *It reaches broadly throughout the world's psychic maelstrom.*
- *It's stable and contained, no bleeding.*

On a miss, whatever bad happens, your antenna takes the brunt of it.

INSIGHT

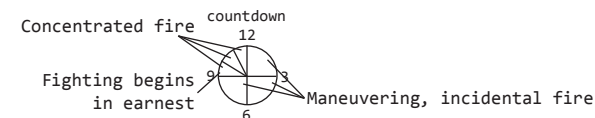
By default, nobody has access to insight, but a hocus' followers might give it.

When you use your followers for **insight**, ask your followers what they think your best course is, and the MC will tell you. If you pursue that course, take +1 to any rolls you make in the pursuit. If you pursue that course but don't accomplish your ends, you mark experience.

OPTIONAL BATTLE MOVES

By default, the optional battle moves and battle countdown are not in play. The MC may decide to bring them into play.

Battle countdown:



Incidental fire means 0-harm or 1-harm (ricochets connecting, bullets spun by cover, bullets fired from far-off on dim chance). Concentrated fire means the enemy's full harm, as established by their weapons and their numbers, as normal.

When you **provide covering fire for someone**, roll+cool. On a 10+, you keep them from coming under concentrated fire, even past 9:00. On a 7–9, their position or course is untenable, and they proceed accordingly. On a miss, they suffer concentrated fire now. (If it's before 9:00, now it's 9:00.)

When you **maintain an untenable position or course**, roll+hard. On a 10+, you can hold it, and for 3 ticks you'll come under only incidental fire, even past 9:00. On a 7–9, you can hold it, and for a tick you'll come under only incidental fire. Either way you can abandon it before your time is up to avoid concentrated fire. On a miss, abandon it now or suffer concentrated fire. (If it's before 9:00, now it's 9:00.)

When you **stay the fuck down**, roll+sharp. On a hit, you're in a relatively safe spot for the rest of the battle. On a 10+, you come under no fire. On a 7–9, you come under only incidental fire. On a miss, you have to break position now or come under concentrated fire.

When you **follow through on someone else's move**, roll+Hx. If it's one of the MC's characters', roll+sharp. On a 10+, the MC chooses one of the following for you, as appropriate:

- you inflict +1harm
- you dominate someone's position
- you make an untenable position or course secure
- you avoid all fire
- you create an opportunity and follow through to full effect

On a 7–9, you create an opportunity, but you haven't seized it or followed through on it yet. The MC will tell you what it is. On a miss, the MC chooses one of the above for an appropriate character of her own.

CHANGING HIGHLIGHTS

At the beginning of any session, or at the end if you forgot, anyone can say, "hey, let's change highlighted stats." Any player, and you can feel free to say it too as MC. When someone says it, do it. Go around the circle again, following the same procedure you used to highlight them in the first place: the high-Hx player highlights one stat, and you as MC highlight another.

EXPANDED IMPROVEMENT

You can keep choosing the improvement options in your playbook as long as you like, or until they run out. Starting with your 6th improvement, though, you can choose from these options too:

- ___ get +1 to any stat, to a maximum of +3.
- ___ retire your character (to safety), and create a new character to play.
- ___ create a second character to play, so now you're playing two.
- ___ change your character to a new type.
- ___ choose 3 basic moves and advance them.
- ___ advance the other 4 basic moves.

Advancing a basic move means adding a new level of success to it, for rolls that hit with a 12+. The moves you can choose to advance are:

- **Doing something under fire**
- **Going aggro on someone**
- **Seizing something by force**
- **Seducing or manipulating someone**
- **Reading a charged situation**
- **Reading a person**
- **Opening your brain to the world's psychic maelstrom**

When you advance a move, the MC will tell you about its new capabilities.

**CHARACTER
CREATION**

CHARACTER CREATION

Pass out the character playbooks and have everybody choose one. No duplicates allowed.

For the most part, the players will be able to create their characters fine just by working through their books, so let 'em. Your job for now is to answer questions and maybe think a little about your own prep for play.

SAY THIS FIRST AND OFTEN

To the players: your job is to play your characters as though they were real people, in whatever circumstances they find themselves — cool, competent, dangerous people, but real.

My job as MC is to treat your characters as though they were real people too, and to act as though Apocalypse World were real.

THE APOCALYPSE

Somebody's sure to ask.

The apocalypse happened about 50 years ago. The oldest people still around have childhood memories of it. Nobody knows what really happened or why, though. Maybe nobody ever knew.

“Hey Vincent, it says here ‘the world’s psychic maelstrom’ — what’s that?”

I dunno, what’s it sound like it is? It’s everywhere, just out of your perception, and if you open your brain up to it you can learn things from it. It from you, too. If you know how, you can reach out into it to make things happen. It caused the apocalypse, or else the apocalypse caused it, nobody knows.

BRIEF INTROS

Use these when the players are curious about a character but can’t figure it out just with a quick casual look.

Angels are medics. If you want everybody to love you, or at least rely on you, play an angel. Warning: if things are going well, maybe nobody will rely on you. Make interesting relationships so you’ll stay relevant. Or sabotage things, I guess.

Battlebabes are good in battle, of course, but they’re wicked social too. If you want to play somebody dangerous and provocative, play a battlebabe. Warning: you might find that you’re better at making trouble than getting out of it. If you want to play the baddest ass, play a gunlugger instead.



Damson, a battlebabe



Wilson, an operator

Brainers are spooky, weird, and really fun to play. Their moves are powerful but strange. If you want everybody else to be at least a little bit afraid of you, a brainer is a good choice. Warning: you'll be happy anyway, but you'll be happiest if somebody wants to have sex with you even though you're a brainer. Angle for that if you can.

Choppers lead biker gangs. They're powerful but lots of their power is external, in their gang. If you want weight to throw around, play a chopper — but if you want to be really

in charge, play a hardholder instead. Warning: externalizing your power means drama. Expect drama.

Drivers have cars, meaning mobility, freedom, and places to go. If you can't see the post-apocalypse without cars, you gotta be a driver. Warning: your car's going to be awesome, but you'll be at a pretty significant disadvantage when you aren't behind the wheel, so be prepared for that.

Gunluggers are the baddest asses. Their moves are simple, direct and violent. Crude, even. If you want to take no shit, play a gunlugger. Warning: like angels, if things are going well, you might be kicking your heels. Interesting relationships can keep you in the scene.

Hardholders are landlords, warlords, governors of their own little strongholds. If anybody plays a hardholder, the game's going to have a serious and immobile home base. If you want to be the one who owns it, it better be you. Warning: don't be a hardholder unless you want the burdens.

Hocuses have cult followers the way choppers have gangs. They're strange, social, public and compelling. If you want to sway mobs, play a hocus. Warning: things are going to come looking for you. Being a cult leader means having to deal with your fucking cult.

Operators are freelancers, moonlighters, odd jobbers, schemers and fixers. They've always got one thing cooking, one thing in

prep, and one thing on the verge of going wrong. If you play an operator you'll always have something to do; unlike angels and gunluggers, you make your own business. Warning: your life is half getting ahead and half going under. Expect to swallow your share of water.

Savvyheads are techies. They have really cool abilities in the form of their workspace, and a couple of fun reality-bending moves. Play a savvyhead if you want to be powerful and useful as an ally, but maybe not the leader yourself. Warning: your workspace depends on resources, and lots of them, so make friends with everyone you can.

Skinners are pure hot. They're entirely social and they have great, directly manipulative moves. Play a skinner if you want to be *unignorable*. Warning: skinners have the tools, but unlike hardholders, operators and hocuses, they don't have a steady influx of motivation. You'll have most fun if you can roll your own.

Other characters: You may find, come a time, that you're sitting down to play the game and you've got a character playbook in the mix that doesn't appear here. Use your best judgment.



Dune, a skinner

Naturally I can't endorse any and all, sight unseen, but you can rest comfy that I won't myself publish new character playbooks unless they're balanced with these, interesting, and worth your consideration.

THE STATS

This is a plain cut and paste from page 14. I coulda just referred you there, but then you'd be flipping pages and irritated.

The stats are:

- **Cool**, meaning cool under fire, calm, rational, clearthinking, calculating, unfazed.
- **Hard**, meaning hard-hearted, strong-willed, violent, aggressive, mean, physically and emotionally strong.
- **Hot**, meaning fucking hot, attractive, subtle, gracious, sexy, beautiful, inspiring, interesting.
- **Sharp**, meaning sharp-witted, clever, alert, smart, perceptive, educated, skilled, trained.
- **Weird**, meaning a weirdo, psychic, genius, uncanny, lucky, strange, prophetic, touched.
- **Hx**, meaning history (like Rx means prescription and Dx means diagnosis), particularly shared history, how well one character knows another. It doesn't mean how well your character *likes* the other, just how well your character *knows* the other. It's also asymmetrical: my character might know yours very well, like Hx+2, while yours doesn't know mine well at all, like Hx-1.

Notation: cool-2 means that your cool is -2; weird=0 means that your weird is 0; Hx+1 means that your Hx (with someone) is +1. Some rules call for you to modify your stats, in which case the modifier appears before the stat name: +1cool means to add 1 to your cool; -2weird means to subtract 2 from your weird.

THE MOVES AND THE CRAP

And now I AM going to just refer you, because they're such big topics. For questions about a character's move, look it up in the appropriate moves chapter, starting on page 189 (basic moves) or page 215 (character moves).

For questions about gear, weapons, gangs, holdings and the rest of the crap, look it up in the crap chapter, starting page 235.

The character playbooks also say things like "oddmments worth 1-barter." Barter, as it appears in the playbooks and in these rules, is just an abstraction of whatever your Apocalypse World values for exchange. It might be barter proper (a dozen of my rock-turtle eggs if you'll repair my shoes) or it might be some currency, some medium, hence "oddmments." 1-barter is quite a bit of scratch, equivalent to a month's food supplies plus a warm and dry place to sleep.

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 they should be basically 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*.



Bran, a savvyhead

- Hey, see where it says you have "oddmments 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 Wilson, you're an operator, is there some currency you like to take payment in?

• 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!

INTRODUCTIONS

Once everybody's finished creating their characters, it's time to introduce them.

Before they start, make it clear: they all know each other. If they're traveling, they're traveling together. If they live in a holding, they associate with one another. They're friends or at

least colleagues. If one's an operator, the others can be her crew, for instance; if one's a hardholder, the others can be her lieutenants. The Hx rules will help make this happen too, but get it up-front and make sure everybody's on board.

Go around the circle. Have every player introduce her character by name, look and outlook. Ask each a couple of questions about her character. You're after a relatively coherent picture of who these people are and how they fit together.



Marie, a brainer

Examples: How old are you? What do you do for scratch? How long have you been doing that? How long have you two been working together? Where do you live? Who lives with you? So people, like, come to you all the time? So shit, you remember the apocalypse a little? So you two are sisters?

Oh — if your group's like mine, you're going to have a straggler who hasn't finished making her character yet. Don't make everybody wait. Just roll your eyes and go ahead with the introductions, she can finish up as you go.

Hx

Every player's character has Hx, history, with every other player's character. Your Hx with someone says how well you know them.

It's based on three things, in some combination: how closely you've been observing them, how open they've been to you, and specific moments or episodes in your shared past. Your Hx with them, written on your character sheet, says how well you know them; theirs with you, on their sheet, says how well they know you. It doesn't say how long you've known them, how much you like them, how positive your history together has been, or anything else necessarily, just how well you *get* them. If your Hx with somebody is negative, that means that you really don't know them and can't predict what they'll do. Thus, you can't effectively help them OR screw them over. Hx is asymmetrical — My character might know yours Hx+2, but yours might know mine Hx-1, or whatever.



Keeler, a gunlugger

Okay! Go around again to set Hx. MC, your job is just to oversee and give everybody their turn.

All of the characters have their own rules for setting Hx with each other. Many of them call for the players to decide things about their characters' relationships with one another; the players can and ought to bring each other into it when they're making their choices. Let's take the brainer's for an example:

On your turn:

- *Tell everyone Hx-1. You keep yourself secret.*

On the others' turns, choose 1, 2 or all 3:

- *One of them has slept in your presence (knowingly or un-). Whatever number that player tells you, ignore it; write Hx+3 next to the character's name instead.*
- *One of them, you've been watching carefully for some time, in secret. Whatever number that player tells you, ignore it; write Hx+3 next to the character's name instead.*

- One of them quite evidently dislikes and distrusts you. Whatever number that player tells you, ignore it; write Hx+3 next to the character's name instead.

Everyone else, whatever number they tell you, add 1 to it and write it next to their character's name. You know everyone better than normal.

"Hey Keeler, have you ever slept in my presence?" Marie's player might say, on Keeler's turn. And on Bran's, "Bran, it seems to me like you might quite evidently dislike and distrust me, do you think so?"



Bish, an angel

Here are the gunlugger's Hx rules next, for Keeler:

On your turn, choose 1, 2 or all 3:

- One of them has fought shoulder to shoulder with you. Tell that player Hx+2.
- One of them once left you bleeding and did nothing for you. Tell that player Hx-2.
- Choose which one of them you think is prettiest. Tell that player Hx+2.

Tell everyone else Hx=0.

On the others' turns:

- Choose which character you think is smartest. Whatever number that player tells you, add 1 to it and write it next to the character's name.
- Everyone else, whatever number they tell you, write it next to their character's name.

"Damson, have we fought shoulder to shoulder? Dune, I think maybe one time you left me bleeding, does that make sense to you? And Bran, just so you know, I think you're prettiest, and smartest too."

As MC, pay attention as the characters' Hx are developing, this is great stuff, and jump in with questions and contributions of your own: "hey, when Dune left Keeler bleeding, was that the time that [choosing a name at random] Preen attacked the holding, or a different time?"

At the end, all the players will have lists like these on their sheets:

on Marie's sheet:

Keeler Hx+3

Bran Hx+3

Dune Hx=0

Damson Hx+2

on Keeler's sheet:

Marie Hx-1

Bran Hx=0

Dune Hx-2

Damson Hx+1

And so on, plus you'll have good material to work with as you launch into the session proper.

HIGHLIGHTING STATS

Go around the table one last time. Every player finds the character her character knows the best, the one with the highest Hx on her own sheet (resolving ties by whim). That other player says which of the character's stats is most interesting to her, to highlight.

Then, MC, you choose a second stat to highlight. It's your choice; choose the stat you find most interesting for that character yourself.

So: Marie, whom does she know best? She knows Keeler and Bran both with Hx+3, so she gets to choose one of them. She chooses Bran, maybe out of perversity. "Bran, which of my stats is most interesting to you?" Bran's player chooses Marie's Weird, because sometimes the obvious choice is the good choice. As MC I choose Marie's cool, because I like to see characters act under fire. Marie's player marks both on her character sheet.

Whom does Keeler know best? Damson, with Hx+1. "Damson, you get to highlight one of my stats, which one?" Damson's player chooses Keeler's hard, I suppose hoping to see Keeler in fights. As MC I choose Keeler's weird, and Keeler's player marks both on her sheet.

All the way around, everybody gets their highlighted stats, and that's it. Character creation's done, time to play.

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES

That's you, the MC, Apocalypse World's GM.

There are a million ways to GM games; Apocalypse World calls for one way in particular. This chapter is it. Follow these as rules. The whole rest of the game is built upon this.

AGENDA

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

Everything you say, you should do it to accomplish these three, and no other. It's not, for instance, your agenda to make the players lose, or to deny them what they want, or to punish them, or to control them, or to get them through your pre-planned storyline (DO NOT pre-plan a storyline, and I'm not fucking around). It's not your job to put their characters in double-binds or dead ends, or to yank the rug out from under their feet. Go chasing after any of those, you'll wind up with a boring game that makes Apocalypse World seem contrived, and you'll be pre-deciding what happens by yourself, not playing to find out.

Play to find out: there's a certain discipline you need in order to MC Apocalypse World. You have to commit yourself to the

game's fiction's own internal logic and causality, driven by the players' characters. You have to open yourself to caring what happens, but when it comes time to *say* what happens, you have to set what you hope for aside.

The reward for MCing, for this kind of GMing, comes with the discipline. When you find something you genuinely care about — a question about what will happen that you genuinely want to *find out* — letting the game's fiction decide it is uniquely satisfying.

ALWAYS SAY

- **What the principles demand (*as follow*).**
- **What the rules demand.**
- **What your prep demands.**
- **What honesty demands.**

Apocalypse World divvies the conversation up in a strict and pretty traditional way. The players' job is to say what their characters say and undertake to do, first and exclusively; to say what their characters think, feel and remember, also exclusively; and to answer your questions about their characters' lives and surroundings. Your job as MC is to say everything else: everything about the world, and what everyone in the whole damned world says and does *except* the players' characters.

Always be scrupulous, even generous, with the truth. The players depend on you to give them real information they can really use, about their characters' surroundings, about what's happening when and where. Same with the game's rules: play with integrity

and an open hand. The players are entitled to the full benefits of their moves, their rolls, their characters' strengths and resources. Don't chisel them, don't weasel, don't play gotcha.

If you're playing the game as the players' *adversary*, your decision-making responsibilities and your rules-oversight constitute a conflict of interests. Play the game with the players, not against them.

THE PRINCIPLES

- **Barf forth apocalyptic.**
- **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.**
- **Barf forth apocalyptic.** Cultivate an imagination full of harsh landscapes, garish bloody images, and grotesque juxtapositions. In Apocalypse World, when the rain falls it's full of fine black grit like toner, and all the plants' leaves turn gray from absorbing it. Out among the wrecked cars, wild dogs fight for territory, with each other and with the rats, and one of the breeds is developing a protective inner eyelid of blank bone. If you get too close to them you can hear the click-click when they blink.
- **Address yourself to the characters, not the players.** "Marie, where are you this morning?" not "Julia, where's Marie this morning?" "A woman comes up to you, her name's Pelt, and she's anxious to get back to her family. It's obvious she is." *It's obvious she is* makes this something the character knows and sees in Pelt, not exposition straight from you to the player.
- **Make your move, but misdirect.** Of course the real reason why you choose a move exists in the real world. Somebody

has her character go someplace new, somebody misses a roll, somebody hits a roll that calls for you to answer, everybody's looking to you to say something, so you choose a move to make. Real-world reasons. However, misdirect: pretend that you're making your move for reasons entirely within the game's fiction instead. Maybe your move is to **separate them**, for instance; never say "you missed your roll, so you two get separated." Instead, maybe say "you try to grab his gun" — this was the PC's move — "but he kicks you down. While they're stomping on you, they drag Damson away." The effect's the same, they're separated, but you've cannily misrepresented the cause. Make like it's the game's fiction that chooses your move for you, and so correspondingly always choose a move that the game's fiction makes possible.

- **Make your move, but never speak its name.** Maybe your move is to **separate them**, but you should never just say that. Instead, say how Foster's thugs drags one of them off, and Foster invites the other to eat lunch with her. Maybe your move is to **announce future badness**, but for god sake never say the words "future badness." Instead, say how this morning, filthy, stinking black smoke is rising from somewhere in the car yard, and I wonder what's brewing over there?

These two principles are cause and effect. The truth is that you've chosen a move and made it. Pretend, though, that there's a fictional cause; pretend that it has a fictional effect.

Together, the purpose of these two principles is to create an illusion for the players, not to hide your intentions from them. Certainly never to hide your NPCs' actions, or developments in the characters' world, from the players' characters! No; always say what honesty demands. When it comes to what's happening to and around the players' characters, always be as honest as you can be.

Your MC moves are not at all the same thing as the players' moves. I'll list your moves and tell you how to choose one in just a sec.

- **Look through crosshairs.** Whenever your attention lands on someone or something that you own — an NPC or a feature of the landscape, material or social — consider first killing it,

overthrowing it, burning it down, blowing it up, or burying it in the poisoned ground. An individual NPC, a faction of NPCs, some arrangement between NPCs, even an entire rival holding and its NPC warlord: crosshairs. It's one of the game's slogans: "there are no status quos in Apocalypse World." You can let the players think that some arrangement or institution is reliable, if they're that foolish, but for you yourself: everything you own is, first, always and overwhelmingly, a target.

- **Name everyone, make everyone human.** The first step toward making your NPCs seem real is to name them. There's a list of good NPC names on the 1st session worksheet, and feel free to scavenge unused names from the character playbooks too. Every NPC who gets even a single line or a single significant on-screen action, give a name.

Make your NPCs human by giving them straightforward, sensible self-interests. Take Roark, one of my favorite NPCs. Roark comes back from burning down the neighboring hold, unleashing chaos upon us all, and he's beaming because he's really just not that complicated. He wanted to burn it down, so he did, and now he wants a bubble bath because he's all sooty, and that's his entire deal. In your game, make all your NPCs *just not that complicated*. They do what they want to do, when they want to do it, and if something gets in their way, well, they deal with that now. What they do in life is follow their parts around — their noses, their stomachs, their hearts, their clits & dicks, their guts, their ears, their inner children, their visions.

Then, you can make PC–NPC–PC triangles — and make your NPCs even more human — just by making sure that their uncomplicated self-interests involve the players' characters individually, not as a group. Show different sides of their personalities to the players' different characters. Roark loves Marie, who has ambitions, but he serves Uncle, who wants people in their places. Roark goes to Uncle to boast, to Bish to feel superior, to Marie for bubble baths. Foster wants to overthrow Uncle and take his holding, but would prefer everyone else — Bish, Marie, Damson, Dune — to stay on under her rule. These are the kinds of triangles that give the players' characters something to talk about.

- **Ask provocative questions and build on the answers.** Start simple: "What's your living space like?" "Who's known each other longest?" But as play proceeds, ask for immediate and intimate details of the characters' experiences. In his playtest, Mikael made himself a list of question prompts: "*Feeling, Sound, Detail: thing, Thoughts, Pose, Smell, Need, Irritant, Texture, In sight, Relations, Taste, Detail: place.*" They led him to ask questions like "Why can you only fit two people in the cabin of the Tank?" "How do the people of the Tent City make you feel?" "How do her lips feel under your palm?" Very good stuff.

Once you have the player's answer, build on it. I mean three things by that: (1) barf apocalyptica upon it, by adding details and imagery of your own; (2) refer to it later in play, bringing it back into currency; and (3) use it to inform your own developing apocalyptic aesthetic, incorporating it — and more importantly, its implications — into your own vision.

It's especially important to ask, the first time each character opens her brain to the world's psychic maelstrom, what that's like for her. Maybe it's the same for everybody, maybe it's different. And after the first time, always, always add details of your own.

- **Respond with fuckery and intermittent rewards.** As in "fuck around with," not "fuck over." This is like when you barf apocalyptica onto someone's answer, but do it all the time. How about an example?

Marie makes it super clear to Roark that she doesn't care who he kills, but he's to bring Joe's Girl (an NPC) back to her alive. For "questioning" or "examination" or something — Marie wants access to Joe's Girl's living brain. So Roark goes out, murders a batch of people, and comes back with Joe's Girl alive. Here's where I fuck around, though: he's beaten the SHIT out of her. Marie has access to her brain (because always give the characters what they work for) but she's in a coma, her back is broken, her face is smashed in. Joe's Girl is alive for now, but ruined for good. I gave Marie what she worked for, but not really what she hoped for. See it? Throw curves. Put your bloody fingerprints all over everything you touch.

Intermittently, though, right, give one of the players' characters exactly what she hoped for, and maybe go a little beyond. Do it just enough, and not when they expect it, so that they always hope that *this time* is one of the times that it'll work out. A third of the time? Half? Not rare, just not predictable.

- **Be a fan of the players' characters.** "Make the characters' lives not boring" does not mean "always worse." Sometimes worse, sure, of course. Always? Definitely not.

The worst way there is to make a character's life more interesting is to take away the things that made the character cool to begin with. The gunlugger's guns, but also the gunlugger's collection of ancient photographs — what makes the character match our expectations and also what makes the character rise above them. Don't take those away.

The other worst way is to deny the character success when the character's fought for it and won it. Always give the characters what they work for! No, the way to make a character's success interesting is to make it *consequential*. When a character accomplishes something, have all of your NPCs respond. Reevaluate all those PC-NPC-PC triangles you've been creating. Whose needs change? Whose opinions change? Who was an enemy, but now is afraid; who was an enemy, but now sees better opportunities as an ally? Let the characters' successes make waves outward, let them topple the already unstable situation. There are no status quos in Apocalypse World! Even life doesn't always suck.

"Make as hard and direct a move as you like" means just that. As hard and direct *as you like*. It doesn't mean "make the worst move you can think of." Apocalypse World is already out to get the players' characters. So are the game's rules. If you, the MC, are out to get them too, they're plain fucked.

This goes for highlighting stats, too. When you highlight a character's stats, try to choose one that'll show off who the character is. Switch up often — for certain don't just choose the lowest stat and stick with it — and try to make sure that the character usually has at least one high stat highlighted.

- **Think offscreen too.** When it's time for you to make a move, imagine what your many various NPCs must have been doing meanwhile. Have any of them done something offscreen that

now becomes evident? Are any of them doing things offscreen that, while invisible to the players' characters, deserve your quiet notice? This is part of making Apocalypse World seem real — and if you pay attention to your fronts, it's part of making the characters' lives not boring too.

- **Sometimes, disclaim 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**, you can **put it in the players' hands**, you can **create a countdown**, or you can **make it a stakes question**.

Say that there's an NPC whose life the players have come to care about, for instance, and you don't feel right about just deciding when and whether to kill her off:

You can (1) **put it in your NPCs' hands**. Just ask yourself, in this circumstance, is Birdie really going to kill her? If the answer's yes, she dies. If it's no, she lives. Yes, this leaves the decision in your hands, but it gives you a way to make it with integrity.

You can (2) **put it in the players' hands**. For instance, "Dou's been shot, yeah, she's shuddering and going into shock. What do you do?" If the character helps her, she lives; if the character doesn't or can't, she dies. You could even create a custom move for it, if you wanted, to serve the exact circumstances. See the moves snowball chapter, page 151, and the advanced fuckery chapter, page 267.

You can (3) **create a countdown**. See the countdown section in the fronts chapter, page 143. Just sketch a quick countdown clock. Mark 9:00 with "she gets hurt," 12:00 with "she dies." Tick it up every time she goes into danger, and jump to 9:00 if she's in the line of fire. This leaves it in your hands, but gives you a considered and concrete plan, instead of leaving it to your whim.

Or you can (4) **make it a stakes question**. See the stakes section in the fronts chapter, page 145. "Will Dou live through all this?" Now you've promised yourself not to just answer it yourself, yes or no, she lives or she dies. Whenever it comes up, you *must* give the answer over to your NPCs, to the players' characters, to the game's moves, or to a countdown, no cheating.

So those are 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.**

Whenever someone turns and looks to you to say something, always say what the principles demand.

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 fronts*).**
- **After every move: "what do you do?"**

Whenever there's a pause in the conversation and everyone looks to you to say something, choose one of these things and say it. They aren't technical terms or jargon: "announce future badness," for instance, means think of something bad that's

probably going to happen in the future, and announce it. "Make them buy" means the thing they want? They're looking to you to tell them if they can have it? If they want it, they have to buy it. And so on.

Then, "what do you do?"

Remember the principles. Remember to address yourself to the characters, remember to misdirect, and remember to never speak your move's name. Say what happens to the characters as though it were *their* world that's the real one.

Here are guidelines for choosing your moves:

Always choose a move that can follow logically from what's going on in the game's fiction. It doesn't have to be the only one, or the most likely, but it does have to make at least some kind of sense.

Generally, limit yourself to a move that'll (a) set you up for a future harder move, and (b) give the players' characters some opportunity to act and react. A start to the action, not its conclusion.

However, when a player's character hands you the perfect opportunity on a golden plate, make as hard and direct a move as you like. It's not the meaner the better, although mean is often good. Best is: make it irrevocable.

When a player's character makes a move and the player misses the roll, that's the cleanest and clearest example there is of an opportunity on a plate. When you've been setting something up and it comes together without interference, that counts as an opportunity on a plate too.

But again, unless a player's character has handed you the opportunity, limit yourself to a move that sets up future moves, your own and the players' characters'.

The most important and versatile setup move is **announce future badness**. If you don't have another move already at hand, announce future badness:

"Someone's in there, you hear them moving. What do you do?"

"Oh, hey, Keeler, Ribs is looking for you.' What do you do?"

“She’s about to figure out where you are. What do you do?”

“Dude you have a split second before that thing gets its teeth into your arm. What do you do?”

“Hey boss, it’s cool, but I don’t think everybody’s happy. There’ve been more fights down in the stews, I think somebody’s maybe trying to move in on somebody else’s biz.’ What do you do?”

“You hear a dog outside, sniffing and whining. ‘You found something, boy?’ What do you do?”

Announcing off-screen badness is good too. After all, badness elsewhere now will usually become badness here later:

“You hear gunfire, not too far away. Maybe Hison’s people, hard to know. What do you do?”

“Sometime in the night, an explosion wakes you all up. It’s not in the holding, but it’s nearby. Everything shakes. What do you do?”

“What’s up this morning? Oh yeah, I remember. There’s a pillar of black smoke on the horizon, and if you look through binoculars you can see refugees. What do you do?”

EXAMPLES OF MC MOVES

- **Separate them.**

“Oh, hold on, you’re far enough apart by now that you can’t hear each other. What do you do instead?”

“Keeler, you get back, but Wilson, you’re still out dealing with the gasoline tribe. Keeler, wanna do anything while you wait?”

- **Capture someone.**

“Dremmer’s gang takes cover all around, it looks like they’re settling in for a seige. Pop your head out and they’ll take a shot at it. What do you do?”

“When you get up to go, she throws herself in front of the door. What do you do?”

- **Put someone in a spot.**

“Bran, you’re walking between the poor stalls in the marketplace and you see Ribs coming toward you. Glance around, her people are closing in behind and to the sides. What do you do?”

“You and Whychurch are neck and neck, but the roadway on your left is broken and jagged and he keeps grinding his truck against your right, to push you over there. What do you do?”

- **Trade harm for harm (as established).**

“You make it to cover behind the fallen wall. At least one of Dremmer’s people went down, but you took a solid bullet yourself on the way, for 2-harm. You’re bleeding and having trouble breathing, what do you do?”

“In the scramble, he manages to nail you with his elbow, right in the armored corset, for 0-harm, and he manages to cut his hand wide open on your scalpel...”

- **Inflict harm (as established).**

“Oh Jesus, Wilson, they’ve got a sharpshooter above you. You find out about it when Mamo grunts and sits down hard, and doesn’t move again. What do you do?”

For the details of trading and inflicting harm, see the harm & healing chapter, page 159.

- **Take away their stuff.**

“You’re walking out to your car, right? One of Dremmer’s guys is fucking standing on the roof, holding an assault rifle. Hison, maybe his name is. What do you do?”

“So of course they kick in your door while you and Amni are hot at it. You’re naked, they kick your guns out of the way. They’re putting their crowbars in your face and Amni’s screaming...”

- **Make them buy.**

“So Keeler, you’ve just resupplied on ammo with Grammer — that’s 1-barter — and as you’re leaving...”

“Jangry keeps you good and narcostabbed for like 3 days, and you come out of it at 6:00 on your harm countdown. ‘That’ll be 3-barter and that’s the friends rate,’ she says...”

- **Activate their stuff's downside.**

"She's too close for you to bring your rifle to bear, she's right on top of you. She has a hatchet made out of, like, a meat cleaver lashed onto the back of a claw hammer. What do you do instead?"

- **Tell them the possible consequences and ask.**

"You go out there, you're completely exposed, you realize that, right? Do you go?"

"Yes, you can push on to Hatchet City if you want, but you'll be below E when you get there. You won't be able to leave again if something goes wrong. Is that still what you do?"

- **Offer an opportunity, with or without a cost.**

"You don't think he knows you're there yet. You can get the drop on him, if you don't mind leaving Amni here. Wanna?"

"Oh man, the looks they're giving each other, they are not happy about this. This would be a perfect time to press them. Do you?"

- **Turn their move back on them.**

Hison's standing on Keeler's car, and rather than just shoot him off, Keeler decides to play it safe and read the sitch. Her player blows the roll, though. "Ask me questions anyway," I say. "But if you act on my answers, you get no bonus, and if you don't, you get -1."

- **Make a threat move** (from one of your fronts).

See the threats section of the fronts chapter, page 138.

RULES AND YOUR PREP

The game's rules will tell you things to say. When a player's character goes aggro on someone and the player rolls 7–9, for instance, the rules give you a list of things to choose from. Choose one of them, and that's what you say. Say it according to the principles as always. For instance, for *they get the hell out of your way*: "she dives into the mucky ditch and elbow-crawls away." Or, for *they give you what you want*: "she puts the night-vision goggles down in front of you. 'Fine, I didn't realize

you needed 'em so fucking bad,' she says. 'But don't come over tonight, asshole, swear to god.'"

Your fronts will tell you things to say, too. When a player's character opens her brain to the world's psychic maelstrom, for instance, the rules might tell you to reveal something interesting. Something interesting? Look to your fronts: Joe's Girl has joined the water cult, I'll bet they didn't know *that*. So say that, and of course say it according to the principles. Maybe "deep under the brain-howling, you come to hear ... is it chanting? A list of people's names, chanted over and over by a hundred subliminal voices. 'Tum Tum ... Gnarly ... Fleece ... Lala ... Forner ... Joe's Girl ... Shan ...'" (Player: "wait, Joe's Girl? Shit FUCK.")

A FEW MORE THINGS TO DO

These aren't principles or moves. They're just good practice and I recommend them.

Make maps like crazy. Have the players make maps like crazy too. And sketches, and diagrams, and any kind of ephemera that seems good.

Turn questions back on the asker or over to the group at large. "Good question, actually. What *does* the rag-waste outside the holding look like?"

Digress occasionally. Include details sometimes as though you were looking idly at a scene and some detail, something not at all the point, caught your attention. "She's pinned rat furs to her wall. The pins are, like, souvenir push pins, the heads are tiny glass lenses with pictures of national monuments under them. Mount Rushmore, the Lincoln Memorial..."

Elide the action sometimes, and zoom in on its details other times. Play out a battle in precise and exacting detail, but in the middle of it say "so they keep you both pinned down there until nightfall." Sometimes pick one session up in the moments where the last left off, other times let days or weeks pass in between.

This goes for moves, too. Making a dash under fire might mean crossing 3 meters of open ground in view of one of Dremmer's snipers, it might mean crossing 100 meters of broken ground

with his gang arrayed thereupon, it might mean crossing the whole damned burn flat with Dog Head and his grinning-dingo cannibals in pursuit. Let the moves expand and contract in time, all through the range from their smallest logical limit to their greatest.

Go around the table. Over the course of a session, make sure that everybody gets some good dedicated screen time. “While this is going on, Dune, where are you? What are you doing?” When interesting things are happening simultaneously, cut back and forth between them.

Take breaks and take your time. Breaks are important, they let everybody reflect on what’s happened and plan a little about what their characters might do next. Little breaks in play when someone else’s character is on screen, longer play-stopping breaks for tea cigs or pee, breaks between sessions, even taking a whole session off now and then. A player worn out and at a loss now, after a break might have great ideas and enthusiasm. Better to call a break early, even, than to go past anyone’s endurance.

1st THE
SESSION

THE 1ST SESSION

The players have it easy. They have these fun little books 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.

BEFORE THE 1ST SESSION:

Print and assemble a set of the character playbooks. Read them if you haven't! They're the core of the game. Print a 1st session worksheet, an MC playsheet and a front sheet.

(Go to apocalypse-world.com for downloads.)

Read this whole book. You can skim the chapters on the characters' moves and crap, they're for reference during character creation and later, but do skim them at least. Read the rest as carefully as you can.

Familiarize yourself with the rules for creating fronts, but DO NOT create one.

Daydream some apocalyptic imagery, but DO NOT commit yourself to any storyline or particular characters.

DURING THE 1ST SESSION:

Oversee character creation. Answer questions. Open this book to the character creation chapter but put bookmarks in the characters' moves and crap chapters.

Go around for introductions, do the Hx thing, highlight stats.

Then I'd just say it outright to your players: "your setup's easy and now you've already done it. Mine's harder so I'm going to take this whole session to do it. So no high-tension kick off from me, let's follow the characters around for a day and get to know them. Cool?"

A couple of you groaned, I could hear you from way over here. Oh great, *getting to know the characters*, that's a recipe for *will anything ever happen?* Following the characters around for a day and getting to know them, it could mean establishing a whole unwieldy mass of status quo, right?

It could mean that but it doesn't. Say it with me: there are no status quos in Apocalypse World.

What it means instead: it's your job to create a fractured, tilting landscape of inequalities, incompatible interests, PC-NPC-PC triangles, untenable arrangements. A dynamic opening situation, not a status quo you're going to have to put your shoulder against and somehow shift, like pushing a futon up a ladder. No: an unstable mass, already charged with potential energy and ready to split and slide, not a mass at rest.

Here's how.

First and always, do everything it says to do in the master of ceremonies chapter (page 107). This is crucial. “Let’s just follow the characters around for a day” — in Apocalypse World, that’s automatically dangerous. It’s automatically a bad day.

Just because it’s the first session, whatever, you’re still actually playing the game.

- **MC the game. Bring it.**

But especially do these:

- **Describe. Barf forth apocalyptic.**
- **Springboard off character creation.**
- **Ask questions like crazy.**
- **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.**
- **Fill up your 1st session worksheet.**

- **Describe. Barf forth apocalyptic.** You already have a lot of good material to work with. Everything the players have come up with between them and introduced at the end of character creation, plus everything I’ve given you, plus the stuff you thought about yourself before the game.

Talk about the landscape, the sky, the people, their broken lives. Say what the weather’s like, say what time of day, say what the walls look like, what the rag-waste smells like, how the plastic canvasses snap and hiss, how many people are at the well and which of them have guns.

Say everything, and remember to...

- **Springboard off character creation.** The players’ characters are made of interesting details you can build on. Look at the hardholder’s gigs, for instance: each of those gigs has people responsible for it, crews that answer to the hardholder and have names and relationships and all kinds of loose ends. Name everyone! Make everyone human! Look at the Chopper’s gang, the operator’s crew, the hocus’ followers. Look at what the players created when they were doing Hx with each other. Look at where they come from and what must be around them.

Look closely, but you can’t know everything, so...

- **Ask questions like crazy.** Ask about the landscape, the sky, the people and their broken lives too, don’t just tell, share. Turn a player’s question over to the group: “I don’t know, where DO you get your food?”

But especially, anything you want to know, ask. Anything you think might be interesting later, ask. Anything a player says that sticks out, anything that seems like the tip of an iceberg, or like fish moving under water, ask. Start to cultivate an apocalyptic aesthetic in your players too.

Ask questions, but also...

- **Leave yourself things to wonder about.** You’ll know it when it happens. A player will say something and you’ll be like, hey wait, there are fish swimming down there. So you’ll ask, and the player will answer, but you’ll be like ...I don’t think that’s the fish I’m after. I think the fish I’m after is still down there, deeper than I thought, and bigger than I thought too.

Sometimes it’ll happen with one of your own NPCs. You’ll be talking along, and you’ll suddenly be like, hold on, this guy Scrimp is kind of a weasely fuck, but he isn’t afraid of Marie *at all*. How can that be?

You don’t need an explanation right now! Don’t look too deep, this is just session 1. Nod to yourself and back away, fixing the spot in your memory. (Which means to note it down on your worksheet under “I wonder.”)

Don’t explain everything, but do...

- **Look for where they’re not in control.** If yours are like mine, they’ll want to be in control of everything, all tidy and secure. Of course they can’t be. What’s on their perimeter, on their borders, their horizon? What reaches into their little slice of world, what passes through it? What does it depend upon? Who do they need, and who else needs what they have?

“I wonder what they’ll do when their neighbors get hungry.” “I wonder what they’ll do when the weather goes wrong.” “I wonder what they’d do to protect their well.” “I wonder what will happen

when Dog Head stops taking orders from Keeler.” “I wonder what would happen if Bran couldn’t get power to his weirdshop.”

And...

- **Push there.** The MC move for pushing is **announce future badness**. “Wilson, you’re down collecting the day’s water from the well and do you feel like reading a charged situation? Something seems off this morning.” “Keeler, Dog Head does what you say, but, it’s like, he keeps looking at you for a minute after you give him the order. What do you do?” “Bran, while you’re working, just for a few seconds all your lights dim and the constant low hum of your workspace? You hear it just start to slow. Everything kicks back in after just a second or two and you can keep working. What do you do?”

- **Nudge the players to have their characters make moves.** Start with the characters with beginning-of-session moves: the hardholder, the operator, the hocus, the savvyhead, if you’ve got them. That’s now, the first beginning of the first session. Have them make those moves and follow what happens.

Then throughout the session, remind everyone to look at their character sheets to see what moves they might make. Especially, listen in on the characters’ conversations. As soon as you hear a note of tension, jump in and have everybody read everybody. “So that was kind of a sharp thing to say. Anybody want to read anybody?” Situations too: “hey, this situation seems kind of charged to me. Want to read it?”

- **Give every character good screen time with other characters.** Bring them onscreen in pairs and triples, in obvious groupings and unlikely ones too. Play with their natural hierarchies and bring them into circumstances where they might have something to say to each other. Here are a few ways you can do it:

Build on what the players said when they introduced their characters. “So Keeler, Marie, you two have this raiding thing out on the wilderness road, where Marie stands lookout and Keeler attacks travelers in the night? Let’s see that. It’s before dawn...”

Invent bad news for one character to give to another. “Marie, you’re walking past the armory (Keeler, you’re in charge of the armory, of course) and you notice the lock’s been smashed off. What do you do?”

Make a pairing or tripling that you like, then ask the players to justify it. “Marie, Bran, you two are trapped outside of the holding, you’re hunkered down inside an old gutted RV. Outside, six of Dremmer’s gang are setting up camp, looks like they’re settling in. They don’t know you’re there, they just blundered in on top of you. What are you two doing out here, anyway?”

- **Leap forward with named, human NPCs.** Just choose a name from the list on your worksheet or make one up.

Here’s Shreyas about names: “In Apocalypse World, it’s like they have cultural references without the cultural referents. They don’t know what a mother superior is, so they think it’s reasonable to name the baby it.”

Remember how to make NPCs human? Give them straightforward, understandable self-interests. Choose a body part — their stomach, their gut, their dick or clit, their nose, their time-ticking womb, their fearful cowardly heart (or their generous caring heart, or their bold big heart) — and have them just follow it around wherever it goes.

“Scrimp comes into the room. He’s been out scouting and he has something urgent to tell you, Keeler, but he gets distracted. He looks at all three of you and he’s got this look. Jesus, you know he’s speculating which of you might let him show you his dick.”

And as always, use them to make PC-NPC-PC triangles: “He seems to come to a decision. He’s like, ‘hey Marie, how’s it? Or can I call you Madam Miss Hot Bitch Baby?’” Keeler’s player: “You said he has something urgent to tell me?” Me: “He sure does, but right now he’s making his smoothest on Marie. ‘Hey Keeler Sweet Stuff, wait in line, you can have me for leftovers.’” Keeler’s player: “is this guy useful? Will somebody miss him?”

- **Hell, have a fight.** Just because it’s the first session doesn’t mean you can’t.

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Here's a fun thing to do: "Keeler, this person named III corners you that night. She's fucking pissed off, she comes straight at you, fists first. What did you do to her?"

Maybe Keeler's player will answer with something. "Dude, sure, I've been sleeping with her guy." Great! Away you go. Or maybe she'll say "what? Nothing. I don't know." That's cool too, must be a case of mistaken identity. Maybe Dog Head stole a can of pineapple from III but she thinks that Keeler did it. Say, "great! You don't know why. Here she comes, though. What do you do?"

Just keep all your NPCs' motivations simple and you can have them do whatever you want, fights included.

Save the big deal fighting until you have a whole front to back it up, though. I don't recommend that you have the rival gang invade now, for instance. For the first session, keep the fights down to maybe 1-on-1 and 2-on-2. I also don't recommend the optional battle moves for the first session, strongly, absolutely. Have it out with just basic moves: reading the sitch, going aggro, seizing by force, acting under fire.

- **Fill up your 1st session worksheet.** List the players' characters in the center circle. Think of the space around them as a map, but with scarcity and lack instead of cardinal directions. As you name NPCs, place them on the map around the PCs, according to the fundamental scarcity that makes them a threat to the PCs.

Like take the example 1st session worksheet opposite. Foster's a threat to the PCs because of her envy. When Bran's crew or Uncle's raiders are a threat to the PCs, it's because of their ambition or their hunger, respectively. The burn flats are a threat to anyone who goes out there; I listed it somewhere between thirst and ignorance because they both sounded right. And the water cult is threatening because of decay, because of the decay it represents.

While you're there, put down a quick couple-word description or any other notes you need, so you don't forget what you meant. There's also a place to list things you wonder about.

(You can write yours so that it's all rightside up, of course, instead of half on its side like my example.)

RESOURCES

meat, salt, grain, fresh roads, stable food, water, ask, drinking water, hot water, liberty, leisure, fuel, heat, security, time, health, medical supplies, information, status, specialized skills, weapons, gasoline, weapons, labor, skilled labor, acclaim, loyalty, blood kin, strategic position, drugs, work animals, livestock, know-how, walls, living space, storage, tools, technology, connections, ideas, raw materials, books

WONDER...

- WHO DO THEY RAID?
- WHAT DOES THE WATER DO?
- FOSTER: DOES SHE HAVE A PLAN, OR WHAT?
- WILL ANY PCs JOIN THE CULT?
- WHAT'S WITH MARIE & JOE'S GIRL?
- WILL ROARK DO WHAT BRAN ASKS?

HUNGER

AMBITION

CARNA, THUY, PAMMING & BRAN'S CREW (FAMILY?)

FOSTER & CO. (ALPHA WOLF) RIVAL HOLDING

THE PCs & THEIR RESOURCES

UNCLE (HARDHOLDER)
MARIE (BRAINER)
BRAN (SAVVYHEAD)
KEELER (GUNLUGGER)

THIRST

THE BURN FLATS (FURNACE?)
(BREEDING PIT?)

ENEMY

IGNORANCE

FEAR

DESPAIR

DECAY

THREAT TYPES

MarLords:

- Slave, Hive queen, Prophet, Dictator, Collector, Alpha wolf
- Indegress, Gambler, Mutant
- Pain addict, Disease vector, Mindfucker, Perversion of birth

Landscapes:

- Prison, Breeding pit, Furnace, Mirage, Maze, Fortress
- Places:**
- Discern, Condition, Custom, Delusion, Sacrifice, Barrier

Brutes:

- Hunting pack, Sybarites, Enforcers, Cult, Mob, Family

Sheet Reads:

PCs: Uncle (hardholder) Marie (brainer) Bran (savvyhead) Keeler (gunlugger)

Threats, clockwise from Hunger:

Uncle's raiders • Roark (hunting pack) • Dustwich The burn flats (furnace?) (breeding pit?) The water cult (cult) • Tum Tum • Joe's Girl Foster & co. (alpha wolf) rival holding Carna, Thuy, Pamming • Bran's crew (family?)

I wonder...

- Who do they raid?
- What does the water do?
- Foster: does she have a plan, or what?
- Will any PCs join the water cult?
- What's with Marie & Joe's Girl?
- Will Roark do what Bran asks?

AFTER THE 1ST SESSION:

Not, like, immediately after. Give it some time to sink in. I generally think about it idly all through work the next day.

See the list of resources? Listing each threat's available resources will give you insight into who they are, what they need, and what they can do to get it. It's especially useful to give some threats resources that the PCs need but don't have.

Now go back over it all. Pull it into its pieces. Solidify them into threats, following the rules in the next chapter — so now, in the cold light of day, are Uncle's raiders really a hunting pack, or are they sybarites instead? Are Bran's crew a family after all, or are they something weirder, like Carna is a hive queen and Pamming and Thuy are her drones? Are the burn flats a furnace or a breeding pit?

Take these solid threats and build them up into fronts. Take the things you wonder about and rewrite them as stakes. Add countdowns and custom moves as you need.

The rules for fronts and threats follow, next chapter, page 135.

FOR THE 2ND SESSION & SUBSEQUENT:

Do much the same — give all the characters time, look for where they're not in control, leap forward with named, human NPCs — but now you've got fronts so bring them into play too. Ta da.

RESOURCES

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

I WONDER...

WHO DO THEY RAID?
WHAT DOES THE WATER DO?
FOSTER: DOES SHE HAVE A PLAN, OR WHAT?
WILL ANY PCs JOIN THE CULT?
WHAT'S WITH MARIE & JOE'S GIRL?
WILL ROARK DO WHAT BRAN ASKS?

Sheet Reads:

Threat resources, clockwise from Hunger:

Uncle's raiders: some staples • liberty • fuel, gasoline • weaponry • machinery (bikes) • goods
The burn flats: time • strategic position
The water cult: access (water) • loyalty • blood kin • drugs (water) • strategic position (inside holding, access to cistern)
Foster & co.: shelter • security • loyalty • weaponry • strategic position • walls
Carna, Thuy, Pamming: skilled labor • know-how • workshop

I wonder...

• Who do they raid?
• What does the water do?
• Foster: does she have a plan, or what?
• Will any PCs join the water cult?
• What's with Marie & Joe's Girl?
• Will Roark do what Bran asks?

**PREP FOR PLAY:
FRONTS**

PREP FOR PLAY: FRONTS

A front is a set of linked threats. Threats are people, places and conditions that, because of where they are and what they're doing, inevitably threaten the players' characters — so a front is all of the individual threats that arise from a single given threatening situation.

Creating a front means making decisions about backstory and about NPC motivations. Real decisions, binding ones, that call for creativity, attention and care. You do it outside of play, between sessions, so that you have the time and space to think.

A front has some apparently mechanical components, but it's fundamentally conceptual, not mechanical. The purpose of your prep is to give you interesting things to say. As MC you're going to be playing your fronts, playing your threats, but that doesn't mean anything mechanical. It means saying what they do. It means offering opportunities to the players to have their characters do interesting things, and it means responding in interesting ways to what the players have their characters do.

Accordingly, when you create a front, follow your own inspiration. Choose the things that are suggestive to you, that put you in mind of apocalyptic, romance, violence, gore, danger, trauma. Choose the things you'd just fucking kill to see well done on the big screen, and skip the things that don't spark your interest.

CREATING FRONTS

To create a front, grab a fronts sheet and:

- Choose a fundamental scarcity.
- Create 3 or 4 threats.
- Write its agenda / dark future.
- Write 2–4 stakes questions.
- List the front's cast.
- Create the front's overall countdowns.

There's also the home front:

- No fundamental scarcity.
- No agenda / dark future.
- No overall countdowns.
- All the otherwise front-less NPCs listed as threats.
- General custom moves, not attached to any threat.
- Additional stakes questions as you need them.

FUNDAMENTAL SCARCITY

Underlying every front is a fundamental scarcity. Choose 1:

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| • Hunger | • Decay |
| • Thirst | • Despair |
| • Ignorance | • Envy |
| • Fear | • Ambition |

Ask yourself: whose hunger threatens the players' characters? Whose thirst threatens them? Whose ignorance does? And so on down the list. Pretty soon, bammo, something will hit you — “oh of COURSE. There's some rival hardholder whose envy threatens them. Sweet!”

So copy down that scarcity and create that rival hardholder, or whomever, as the front's first threat. Keep creating threats until you've created 3 or 4 threats for the front.

THREATS

There are 5 categories of threat. When you create a threat, choose 1:

- Warlord
- Grotesque
- Landscape
- Affliction
- Brutes

WARLORDS

A warlord threat is the warlord plus the gang and other people under the warlord's control. Choose which kind of warlord:

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

MC Moves for warlords:

- 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.

Warlords act primarily through their people, acting directly themselves only when cornered or caught out in the open.

GROTESQUES

A grotesque is a person — remember fundamentally *a person*, human, not a monster — whose humanity has been nevertheless somehow crippled. Choose which kind of grotesque:

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

MC Moves for grotesques:

- 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.

LANDSCAPES

A landscape threat can be natural or constructed, and whatever size you need. The burn flats, the ruins of Las Uncles, a poison'd canal, the holding's bustling marketplace, the warrens of a grotesque's den in its depths. Choose which kind of landscape:

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

MC Moves for landscapes:

- 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.

AFFLICTIONS

An affliction threat isn't a person, it's something threatening that people are doing, or that is happening, or that has come to be. Choose which kind of affliction:

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

A condition is any bad practical circumstance. The holding's water filtration breaks down? A bomb-blast weakens the infirmary's foundation? There's not enough food to get through the dry season? Conditions.

MC Moves for afflictions:

- 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.

"Someone" in these moves will usually be an afflicted NPC.

BRUTES

A brutes threat is a group of people, with or without a leader, acting in crude, perhaps provisional, concert. Choose which kind of brutes:

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

An individual person within a group of brutes might not share the group's impulse, and might even fight against it. It's the group's impulse, not necessarily any person's.

MC Moves for brutes:

- 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.

MC THREAT MOVES

For all the MC threat moves, the object of the move, the "someone," can be a PC or an NPC, no special difference between them, as circumstances suggest. The "something" can be something beautiful or valuable, or something terrible. It can be a basic resource, a luxury, a person, a creature, information, evidence, access, status, or anything else. Whatever's to hand.

Bear in mind that you can have the NPCs take action, or not, but either way you're the one making the move. To **display the contents of a grotesque's heart**, for instance, you can have the grotesque run up to someone and start expositing itself, or else you can show us where it lives, and how; what it pins to its walls, what it values. Show us what it tries to protect when someone threatens it. You can display the contents of its heart with or without its own participation.

Otherwise, make moves for your threats exactly like you make your regular moves:

- When it's time for you to talk, choose a move (a regular move or a threat move, it makes no difference) and make it happen.
- If the players have handed you a golden opportunity (like if they blow a roll, or if they let you set something up and follow through on it), make as hard and direct a move as you like, the more irrevocable the better. Otherwise, make your move to set yourself up and to offer *them* the opportunity to react.
- Address yourself to the character not the player, misdirect, and never speak your move's name. Always.

For instance, Monk is a grotesque: pain addict, so his impulse is to seek pain. Maybe the move I choose for him just now is **attack someone from behind**: "Damson, someone steps up behind you in the line for showers and loops a wire around your throat. What do you do?" Dog Head is a member of some brutes: hunting pack, so his impulse is to victimize someone who stands out. Maybe I just choose to **announce off-screen badness**: "Marie, when you see Isle that morning her face is a mess. Somebody cut her cheek open with a heated knife. She won't say who." The rag-waste is a landscape: breeding pit, so its impulse is to generate badness. Maybe I have it **disgorge something**: "Keeler, you were out scavenging yesterday? Cool. You wake up before morning, there are these weird bugs all through your room. They're about this big, black and red, a little like tiny crayfish. They're in all your crap, your food, your clothing, your bed which is what woke you up..."

DESCRIPTION & CAST

Write a quick sentence describing the threat, if you like, and list the names of the people involved somehow with the threat.

If the threat includes weapons, armor, a gang, a vehicle, list it here with its description in the terms you'd use to list a character's crap. See the characters' crap chapter, page 235, for details.

COUNTDOWN CLOCKS

A countdown clock is a reminder to you as MC that your threats have impulse, direction, plans, intentions, the will to sustain action and to respond coherently to others'.

When you create a threat, if you have a vision of its future, give it a countdown clock. You can also add countdown clocks to threats you've already created.

Around the clock, note some things that'll happen:

- Before 9:00, that thing's coming, but preventable. What are the clues? What are the triggers? What are the steps?
- Between 9:00 and 12:00, that thing is inevitable, but there's still time to brace for impact. What signifies it?
- At 12:00, the threat gets its full, active expression. What is it?

As you play, advance the clocks, each at their own pace, by marking their segments.

Countdown clocks are both descriptive and prescriptive. Descriptive: when something you've listed happens, advance the clock to that point. Prescriptive: when you advance the clock otherwise, it causes the things you've listed. Furthermore, countdown clocks can be derailed: when something happens that changes circumstances so that the countdown no longer makes sense, just scribble it out.

For the most part, list things that are beyond the players' characters' control: NPCs' decisions and actions, conditions in a population or a landscape, off-screen relations between rival compounds, the instability of a window into the world's psychic maelstrom. When you list something within the players' characters' control, always list it with an "if," implied or explicit: "if Bish goes out into the ruins," not "Bish goes out into the ruins." Prep circumstances, pressures, developing NPC actions, not (and again, I'm not fucking around here) NOT future scenes you intend to lead the PCs to.

CUSTOM MOVES

Some threats will call for custom moves. You create these. They're new moves for the PCs, not for you. When a player's character does [specify], they roll+[specify]. On a 10+, [specify]. On a 7–9, [specify]. On a miss, [specify]. Generally, on a 10+ they're fine, on a miss they're fucked, and on a 7–9 something in between.

Here are a few examples:

*When you **go into Dremmer's territory**, roll+sharp. On a 10+, you can spot and avoid ambush. On a 7–9, you spot the ambush in time to prepare or flee. On a miss, you blunder into it.*

*When **one of Siso's Children touches you**, roll+weird. On a 10+, your brain protects you and it's just a touch. On a 7–9, I tell you what to do: if you do it, mark experience; if you don't, you're acting under fire from brain-weirdness. On a miss, you come to, some time later, having done whatever Siso's child wants you to have done.*

*If you **drink the water** out here, roll+hard. On a 10+, spend a few minutes barfing but you'll be fine. On a 7–9, take 1-harm (ap) now and 1-harm (ap) again in a little while. On a miss, take 3-harm (ap) now and 3-harm (ap) again in a little while.*

You can also follow the patterns of the various non-rolling character moves:

*When you **try to read Monk** you have to roll+weird instead of rolling+sharp. Fucker just does not have normal body language.*

*If you **harm a hollow daughter with a gun**, it blows through: inflict 1-harm on her and the rest of its harm on whatever's behind her.*

Whenever you make a disease threat or a disease-like threat, you should create a custom move for it like “when you use an angel kit to treat someone infected...” You can follow the pattern of the existing angel kit moves, if you like, or start from scratch.

For a more in-depth look at custom moves, see the advanced fuckery chapter, page 267.

If you come up with good custom moves, post them online so we can all use them, yeah?

AGENDA / DARK FUTURE

Once you've created 3 or 4 threats, come back to the front overall. Name it, and by “agenda / dark future” write a sentence or two about the hell it'll create if nobody does anything about it.

STAKES

These are based very closely on stakes in Ron Edwards' game Trollbabe.

Write 2-4 questions about the fates of different characters you're interested in, NPCs and the PCs but mostly NPCs, by name.

You can write your stakes at a wide range of scales, but for now, to start, limit yourself to these:

- A person's or a small group's circumstances or living conditions.
- A person's life or the lives of a small group of people.
- The safety, success, failure, growth, or decline, in some particular, of an organized group of people.

And if one of the players is playing a hardholder, include:

- The safety, growth, or decline, in some particular, of the entire holding.

Examples: Will Birdie get a better place to live? Will Roark live through this? Who will join Tum Tum's cult? Will Foster break Uncle's holding?

Stakes should be concrete, absolute, irrevocable in their consequences. People's lives. Maybe not necessarily their lives *or deaths*, at least not every time, but always materially significant changes to their lives. Resolving the outstanding question means that nothing will ever be the same for them.

They should also be things you're genuinely interested in finding out, not in deciding. It's the central act of discipline that MCing Apocalypse World requires: when you write a question as a stake, you're committing to not answer it yourself. You're committing to let the game's fiction's own internal logic and causality, driven by the players' characters, answer it.

That's the discipline and also the reward. Your control over your NPCs' fates is absolute. They're your little toys, you can do anything to them you choose. Raise them up and mow them down. Disclaiming responsibility for the two or three of them you like best is a relief. And when you write down a question you're genuinely interested in, letting the game's fiction answer it is uniquely satisfying.

CAST

List the names of all the NPCs involved with the front, from all its threats.

OVERALL COUNTDOWNS

Use these clocks to coordinate threats and events across your fronts.

NEW FRONTS & THE HOME FRONT

As you play, you'll leap forward with all kinds of named NPCs, right? Many of them won't amount to anything, they'll be just names, quick characterizations, simple motivations. That's fine.

Whenever an NPC develops agency, though, list her as a threat. There are 3 possibilities.

Possibility 1: She represents an entire new fundamental-scarcity-expressing threatening situation, and implies other individual threats. In this case, create a new front, listing this particular NPC as one of its threats.

Possibility 2: She fits perfectly well into a front that you've already created. In this case, list her as a new threat in that front.

Possibility 3: She doesn't do either. In this case, list her as a threat on the home front — the home front is a place for otherwise homeless threats.

The home front is just a front with:

- No fundamental scarcity.
- No agenda / dark future.
- No overall countdowns.
- Otherwise front-less NPCs listed as threats.
- Stakes questions as you need them.
- Custom moves that aren't attached to any particular threat.

AN EXAMPLE FRONT

Front One

Is called: inside Hatchet City

Expresses: corruption

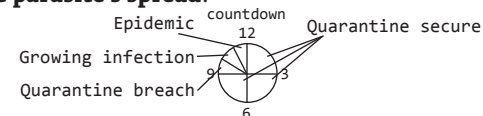
Dark future / agenda: Between the mud-fish parasite and Dustwich's influence, the population turns against Uncle Dustwich of course can't stand up to outside threats and pretty soon Hatchet City is just another part of the ruins.

Stakes: Who will fall prey to the mud-fish parasite? Will Dustwich get a better life for her people? Will Grief's cover get blown? Will Snug stay married to Brimful?

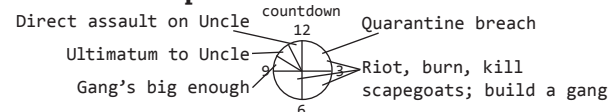
Cast: PCs: Uncle the hardholder, Bish the angel, Dune the skinner. The waders, Brimful & family, Dustwich & co. Bish's friend Grief.

Overall countdowns

The parasite's spread:



Dustwich's response:



Threat 1

Is called: the waders

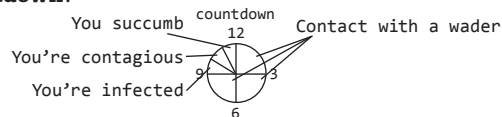
Kind: grotesque: disease vector

Impulse: craves contact, intimate and/or anonymous

Description & Cast: The waders are mud-fishers, they provide a staple of Hatchet City's cuisine (heh). The waders' boss-collective: Pak, Rum, Fianelly. Other waders: Pantridge, Chin, Look, Matilda.

Custom move: the first time you interact with a wader (or anyone infected), roll+weird. On a 10+, you're immune to the parasite utterly. On a 7-9, you're resistant, start the countdown at 0:00. On a miss, the parasite owns your shit, start the countdown at 9:00.

Countdown:



Threat 2

Is called: the mud-fish parasite

Kind: affliction: disease

Impulse: to saturate Hatchet City

Description & Cast: mud-fish suck, they're these meter-long snaky bastards who live in the mud. Sprinkle waste meat on the surface and grab 'em when they come up to fight for it. Their parasite includes a stage where you projectile-cough spores and bloody spray.

Custom move: once you're infected, roll+weird at the start of every session. On a 10+, your body+brain kills the parasite: you're no longer infected. On a 7-9, your body+brain are fighting: your infection doesn't advance. On a miss, your infection advances (per the countdown above).

Custom move: when you use an angel kit to treat someone infected by the mud-fish parasite, roll+stock spent. On a 10+, you kill the parasite: they'll recover fully in a day or two. On a 7-9, you'll have to chemostab the hell out of them: spend 1-stock more and you've killed it, or else you've wasted your effort. On a miss, you can do nothing for them.

Threat 3




Is called: Brimful's family

Kind: brutes: enforcers

Impulse: to victimize anyone who stands out

Description & Cast: Brimful's family is enforcing the quarantine on the waders & infected. Brimful's wives: Arbys, Snug. Brimful's gang: Mammoth (boss), Pants, Angler, 10 more (2-harm gang medium 1-armor).

Custom move: “stands out” means “has been seen associating with waders.”

<p>FRONT</p> <p>IS CALLED: INSIDE WATERNET CITY</p> <p>IMPRESSES: <u>COLLAPSED</u></p> <p>DARK FUTURE / AGENCIA: THE POPULATION TURNS AGAINST ULCIE. DISTURB GRAY STAFF, WATERNET CITY FANS TO Dying.</p> <p>STAKES</p> <p>WHO WILL FAN FLY TO THE PARASITE?</p> <p>WILL DISTURB GET A BETTER LIFE FOR REAL PEOPLE?</p> <p>WILL GRAY'S COVER GET BLOWN?</p> <p>WILL SNUKE GET MARRIED TO BLOOMFELD?</p>	<p>THREAT 1</p> <p>CALLED: THE WARRIORS</p> <p>KIND: GORGESQUE / DISCRE VECTAL.</p> <p>IMPULSE: ULCAVES CONTACT.</p> <p>DESCRIPTION & CAST: BOSS-CONSCIENCE. PAK, RUM, FANWU. WARRIORS: PANTERIDGE, CIVIL, LOOK, MARILOA.</p> <p>CUSTOM MOVE: 1ST TIME YOU INTERACT WITH A WARRIOR, FAN+WARRIOR. 10+: YOU'RE INVINCIBLE. 7-9: RESISTANT, STAFF CONFOUND. MISS: STAFF CONFUSED AT 9:00.</p> <p>COUNTDOWN:  SUCKING CONTOURS INFECTED COUNTDOWN</p>	<p>THREAT 2</p> <p>CALLED: THE MID-FIRM PARASITINE</p> <p>KIND: AFFECTION / DISCRE.</p> <p>IMPULSE: SATURATE WATERNET CITY.</p> <p>DESCRIPTION & CAST: MID-FIRM SUCK. TRILL PARASITINE INCUBATES A STAGE WHERE YOU LOSE BLOOD & SPORES.</p> <p>CUSTOM MOVE: ONCE INFECTED, PARASITINE AT THE STAGE OF EVERY SESSION. 10+: YOU RECOVER. 7-9: INFECTED DOESN'T ADVANCE. MISS: INFECTED ADVANCES</p> <p>COUNTDOWN:  10+: DANCE 7-9: SPREAD 1-5: STOCK MORE MISS: NO GOOD</p>
<p>CAST</p> <p>PLs: ULCIE, BIRD, DANE.</p> <p>THE WARRIORS.</p> <p>BLOOMFELD & FANWU.</p> <p>DISTURB & CO.</p> <p>BIRD'S FATHER AND GRIEF.</p>	<p>THREAT 3</p> <p>CALLED: BLOOMFELD'S FAMILY</p> <p>KIND: BROTHERS / BROTHERS.</p> <p>IMPULSE: VICTIMIZE ANYONE WHO STANDS OUT.</p> <p>DESCRIPTION & CAST: PARASITINE BIRD'S PARASITINE. BLOOMFELD, WIVES, ALBYS & SNUG. GAME. MARILOA, FANWU, ANGER, HO.</p> <p>CUSTOM MOVE: 2-HARM GAME MEDIUM 1-AHORN. "STANDY OUT" MEANS "H4S BEEN SEEN WITH WARRIORS."</p>	<p>OVERALL COUNTDOWNS</p> <p>EPIDEMIC COUNTDOWN</p> <p>INFECTION COUNTDOWN</p> <p>ASSAULT COUNTDOWN</p> <p>WARRIORS COUNTDOWN</p> <p>GRAY COUNTDOWN</p> <p>BLIND A GAME SCARFOLD</p> <p>COUNTDOWN</p> <p></p>

A FRONT

Sheet Reads:

Front: inside Hatchet City, as reproduced in text.

150 - APOCALYPSE WORLD

Threat 4

Is called: Dustwich & her people

Kind: brutes: mob

Impulse: to riot, burn, kill scapegoats

Description & Cast: Dustwich is Uncle's former gang boss, now gathering power to overthrow him. Her people: Grief (Bish's friend, infiltrating), Goodry, Hammer, Swiss Miss.

Custom move: getting info to or from Grief means acting under fire. A miss means that you've blown Grief's cover.

RULES OF PLAY
MOVES SNOWBALL

RULES OF PLAY: MOVES SNOWBALL

Any given conflict between characters, one move alone probably won't resolve it. Very often it'll take several moves and counter-moves, a whole back-and-forth between them. Hitting rolls on a 7–9, especially, usually leaves a whole lot unresolved, primed for followthrough or a counterstrike.

The moves cascade very naturally. Holds overlap, outcomes nest and double up and flow seamlessly into new moves. Just remember the rule — **if you do it, you do it; to do it, you have to do it** — and see their logic through.

Here's an extended example. (It uses basic moves, brainer moves and MC moves, so you might want to refresh yourself; see page 86, page 34, and page 116, respectively. It also uses the harm rules pretty extensively; see pages 160–172):

Marie the brainer goes looking for Isle, to visit grief upon her, and finds her eating canned peaches on the roof of the car shed with her brother Mill and her lover Plover (all NPCs).

"I **read the situation**," her player says.

"You do? It's charged?" I say.

"It is now."

"Ahh," I say. I understand perfectly: the three NPCs don't realize it, but Marie's arrival charges the situation. If it were a movie, the sound track would be picking up, getting sinister.

She rolls+sharp and hits with a 7–9, so she gets to ask me one question from that move's list. "Which of my enemies is the biggest threat?" she says.

"Plover," I say. "No doubt. He's out of his armor, but he has a little gun in his boot and he's a hard fucker. Mill's just 12 and he's not a violent kid. Isle's tougher, but not like Plover." (See me **misdirect**! I just chose one capriciously, then pointed to fictional details as though they'd made the decision. We've never even seen Mill onscreen before, I just now made up that he's 12 and not violent.)

"Hm, now I want an escape route. Can I read the situation again?"

"Of course not." Once is what you get, unless the situation substantially changes.

"Okay. I do **direct-brain whisper projection** on Isle."

"Cool, what do you do?"

"Uh — we don't have to interact, so I'm walking past under their feet where she can see me, and I whisper into her brain without looking up." She rolls+weird and hits a 10+.

"What's your whisper?"

"Follow me," she says.

"Yeah," I say. "She inches her butt forward to drop down behind you, but then tips her head like she's thinking of something—"

"Don't do it," Marie's player says.

“She forces your hand,” I say. “She takes 1-harm, right? Loud-optional, right? So, loud or not?”

“Isle, god damn it. Not loud.”

“Sweet. Plover thinks she’s just leaning her head on his shoulder, but she’s bleeding out her ears and eventually he’ll notice his shirt sticking to his shoulder from her blood. Do you stick around?” I’m **telling possible consequences and asking**.

“Fuck no.”

“Where do you go?”

“I go home, I guess.”

“So you’re home an hour later?” See me setting up my future move! I’m **thinking offscreen**: how long is it going to take Plover to get a crew together?

“Hold on, it was only 1-harm—”

“I know. She’ll be okay. It’s Plover who’s the biggest threat.” This is **what honesty demands**. “Are you home an hour later or where?”

“Shit. Yes, home.”

“Having tea?” **Ask questions like crazy!**

“No tea. Pacing. I have my gun and my pain grenade and the door’s triple-locked. I wish Roark were here.”

“Cool. Keeler—” turning to Keeler’s player “—you’re passing by your armory and you hear people in there. It’s Plover, Church Head and Whackoff, arming themselves. What do you do?” I’m **announcing future badness**.

“Hey, what’s up?” Keeler’s player says.

“Marie attacked Isle,” I say, in Plover’s blunt, heavy voice. And in my own: “he stops what he’s doing and looks square at you, he’s still got a shotgun in his hand. Church Head and Whackoff, you know they’re going to back him up.”

Here’s my big plan, by the way. Isle’s listed in the cast for a threat called Isle’s family, which is a brute: family (naturally enough).

Its impulse, accordingly, is to **close ranks and protect their own**. What’s most fun is that I’m acting on that impulse but I’m using Plover, Church Head and Whackoff — members of Keeler’s gang! — as Isle’s family’s weapon. It’s just like when Keeler uses them to go aggro or seize by force, only I’m the one doing it.

If Keeler lets me, that is. Keeler thinks about **imposing her will upon her gang** to stop them, her player thinks about it too. She twists her mouth around, thinking about it.

Finally, instead, “knock yourself out,” she says.

Marie’s player: “damn it, Keeler.”

“So, Marie: at home, pacing, armed, locked in, yeah? They arrive suddenly at your door with a solid kick, your whole door rattles. You hear Whackoff’s voice: ‘she’s expecting us I guess.’” I’m **announcing future badness**.

“I go to the peep hole,” she says. “There are three of them?”

“Yep,” I say. “Whackoff on your left, Plover and Church Head are doing something on your right, Plover’s back’s to you — and you hear a cough-cough-rrrrar sound and Plover’s at the door with a chainsaw. What do you do?” I’m **putting her in a spot**.

“I **read the situation**. What’s my best escape route?” She rolls+sharp and — shit — misses. “Oh no,” she says.

I can make as hard and direct a move as I like. The brutes’ threat move I like for this is **make a coordinated attack with a coherent objective**, so here it comes.

“You’re looking out your (barred, 4th-story) window as though it were an escape route,” I say, “and they don’t chop your door all the way down, just through the top hinge, and then they lean on it to make a 6-inch space. The door’s creaking and snapping at the bottom hinge. And they put a grenade through like this—” I hold up my fist for the grenade and slap it with my other hand, like whacking a croquet ball.

“I dive for—”

Sorry, I’m still making my hard move. This is all misdirection.

"Nope. They cooked it off and it goes off practically at your feet. Let's see ... 4-harm area messy, a grenade. You have armor?"

"1-armor."

"Oh yes, your armored corset. Good! You take 3-harm." She marks it on her character sheet. "Make **the harm move**. Roll+3."

She hits the roll with a 9. I get to choose from the move's 7-9 list, and I decide that she **loses her footing**.

"For a minute you can't tell what's wrong, and you have this sensation, it seems absurd now but I guess it makes sense, that you hit the ceiling. Maybe you tripped on something and fell, and hit it that way? Then gradually you get your senses back, and that noise you thought was your skull cracking is actually your door splitting and splintering down, and that noise you thought was your blood is their chainsaw. What do you do?"

"I set off my pain-wave projector."

"Sweet," I say. "That's..."

"1-harm area loud ap."

"The loud is their screaming," I say. "They're like—" and I hold my hands over my ears. On a whim, **looking through crosshairs**, I add, "Church Head isn't. He looks paralyzed, he's rigid and silent, his eyes are rolling around in their sockets but otherwise he's not moving." Taking 1-harm is much worse for NPCs than it is for PCs; see pages 167-168. "What do you do?"

"I have my violation glove on," she says. I don't dispute: of course she does, she always does. "I pick my way over to Plover and put my hand on his cheek. I do **in-brain puppet strings** to him: protect me." She rolls+weird, hits a 10+, and smiles sweetly and with malice.

A subtle thing just happened. I've been saying what they do and then asking Marie's player what Marie does, but here she's seized initiative from me. It isn't mechanically significant, we'll still both just keep making our moves in turn. It's just worth noticing.

"Hot," I say. "Whackoff grabs you from behind to pull you off of him, but Plover jumps on her." (I hadn't mentioned before that

Whackoff's a woman, but she has been all along in my head. Ha ha, gotcha.) "He's punching her in the face, she's falling back, she's like, the fuck? This uses up your hold over Plover, right?"

"Right," Marie's player says. "That's okay. I pick up his chainsaw and chop into them both."

Damn. I'm impressed.

"That'll be **seizing something by force**. Their, um, meat. Roll it," I say.

I have absolutely no interest in saving these NPCs, none. I'm looking at them through crosshairs, and much as I like them, I do not make them safe.

She rolls+hard and hits a 7-9. "How much harm will I inflict?" she says. She has to decide which seize-by-force option to choose, and first wants to know what's what.

"With a chainsaw? 3-harm. Messy, so you might hit one or both of them. They're wearing armor, though, 1-armor."

"And I'll suffer...?"

"Well, none from Plover, you'll hit him first and since he dropped the chainsaw he's unarmed anyway. Whackoff still has her handgun, it's just a 9mm, so 2-harm from her."

"That's fine. I'll choose to inflict terrible harm, and to impress, dismay or frighten my enemy."

"You got it," I say. 3-harm for the chainsaw, +1harm for the terrible harm, -1harm for their armor, for a total of 3-harm. "They've already both taken 1-harm, so 2-harm more will do for them. You tear Plover from ribs to spine—" I draw a line on my chest with my hand, from my side under my arm to my solar plexus. "So he's dead. Whackoff shoots you point blank under Plover's arm. Make **the harm move**, 2-harm minus 1-armor, so roll+1."

She misses the roll. Remember that missing the roll+harm is good for her. I get to decide whether to inflict my 1-harm or else choose something from the harm move's 7-9 list. I choose to have her lose her grip on what she's holding.

“Don’t mark the harm,” I say. “Instead, she shoots you while you’re trying to jerk the chainsaw out of Plover’s ribs, it feels like a baseball hitting your chest, and you lose your grip. Plover’s carcass falls with the chainsaw still wedged in it.” I’m **taking away her stuff**. “What do you do?””

“I grab her arm—”

“You’re going for violation glove on skin?” I’m about to say that Marie is **acting under fire**, but at the last second I remember that Whackoff is impressed, dismayed or frightened. “She’s just staring down at him, covered in gore, she’s not even thinking,” I say.

“Oh, yeah, instead I just lay my hand on her face. So gently. I do **in-brain puppet strings**. ‘Whackoff. Go to sleep.’” She rolls+weird but gets a 3 on the dice, so even with her weird+3 it’s a miss.

“What happens with that move on a miss?” I say. She has her playbook open and is looking right at it.

“I inflict 1-harm to no benefit, it says.”

“That puts Whackoff at 2-harm,” I say. For NPCs, 2-harm is usually fatal, occasionally immediately fatal, and I’m looking through crosshairs. “She has a massive catastrophic stroke. You’re touching the left side of her face? So it’s in the left side of her brain. The right side of her body collapses, utterly and suddenly. She falls. She’s covered in Plover’s blood. She can’t talk but she looks terrified, absolutely terrified, on the left side of her face. She’ll live for like 10 minutes, if you want to try to help her. Otherwise she’s dead.” I’m **telling consequences and asking**.

“I let her die.”

Okay! Scratch Plover, scratch Whackoff. Keeler’s player is scowling and shaking her head — they were both members of her gang.

“What do you do with Church Head?” I say.

RULES OF PLAY: HARM AND HEALING

RULES OF PLAY: HARM AND HEALING

HARM

How might a player's character suffer harm?

- She does something under fire, her player rolls+cool and gets a 7–9, and you give her an outcome that includes her suffering harm.
- She seizes something by force, her player rolls+hard, and she winds up suffering harm.
- Another player's character seizes something by force and inflicts harm, and she's the one to suffer it (or one of the ones).
- Another player's character goes aggro on her, and she forces his hand and sucks it up.
- The outcome of a character move, either her own or another character's, or a threat's custom move, includes her suffering harm.
- It's your turn to make a move, and you decide that inflicting harm on her is the one.

How much harm?

Harm equals the inflicter's weapon's harm minus the sufferer's armor.

If the weapon has ap (armor piercing), ignore the armor.

When you've already established what weapon the attacker's using, obviously use its harm. For example:

Keeler's finally had enough of Bran's shit and puts her pistol in his face. She's going aggro so she rolls+hard. He rolls+Hx to interfere, but his Hx with her is -1 and he misses the roll. (I decide not to make a move, though; Keeler's running the show and I'm quite content.) Anyway she aces her roll. She tells Bran to do something she knows he'll never go along with, and like a good little fucker he rises to the occasion. "Fuck that. Shit, fuck you. FUCK Y–"

Her pistol's just her 9mm. It's listed as 2-harm close loud, and he's not wearing armor. (The circumstances — the gun in his face — give it ap anyway. See going aggro in the basic moves chapter, page 193.) He suffers 2-harm.

Occasionally, though, you'll get this far without having already established what weapon the attacker's using. In those cases, establish it now and *check if anybody wants to change their mind*, since they should have known. Here's an example of what I mean:

Keeler's player, to Bran's: "I've had enough of your shit. I put my gun in your face. 'Time to let Jeanette go,' I say."

She rolls+hard and aces the roll. "Cave or suck it," she says.

"Well I'm not going to cave, so: 'fuck that. Shit, fuck you. FUCK Y–"

"Yeah I shoot you."

Now, Keeler's a gunlugger and so has at least 4 guns at her ready disposal. "Which gun did you say?" I say.

"Oh, my shotgun of course."

Bran's player: "Your SHOTGUN? You put your SHOTGUN in my face and I said fuck you? Uh, no, no. I thought you just meant your pistol. Can I get a do-overs?"

Yes, of course he can.

If the established weapon doesn't have a listed harm, make a quick, simple judgment of its seriousness. Use these examples for a guide:

0-harm:

grappling, dragging, physically restraining
kids throwing rocks

1-harm:

a dedicated guy with his fists
adults throwing rocks
a tumble down the stairs (ap)
a ricochet
being out in the desert sun all day with no water (ap)

2-harm:

a guy with a hammer, a crossbow, a handgun, a smg.
a 1-story fall onto your back (ap)

3-harm:

a guy with a shotgun, an assault rifle, or a sniper rifle
a 2-story fall onto jagged ground (ap)
a glancing hit from a car (ap)

4-harm:

a grenade in your lap
serious fucking automatic fire
a 3-story fall onto your head (ap)
being hit by a truck (ap)

5-harm and more:

big explosions
being run over by a train (ap)
being tied down and chopped in half with an axe
drowning (ap)

When a PC suffers harm

Harm equals the inflicter's weapon's harm minus the sufferer's armor.

If the weapon has ap (armor piercing), ignore the armor.

So getting shot with a shotgun (3-harm) while wearing fashion worth 1-armor means suffering 2-harm. Getting punched by some guy (1-harm) while wearing armor worth 2-armor means suffering no harm. Getting hit by a truck means 4-harm no matter what you're wearing.

For each 1-harm the character suffers, the player marks a segment of her harm countdown clock. Start in the 12:00–3:00 segment and continue around clockwise — no skipping segments, no multiple marks in the same segment, just marching right around segment by segment.

Keeler's shot Bran in the head with her 9mm. Bran takes 2-harm. His player marks 2 segments: the one from 12:00 to 3:00 and the one from 3:00 to 6:00.

The three segments before 9:00 are less serious, the three segments after 9:00 are more serious. Mark the 11:00–12:00 segment and your character's dead, but can still be revived. Any more harm than that, though, and she's dead dead dead.

Before 6:00, harm will go away by itself with time. 6:00–9:00, the harm won't get worse or better by itself. After 9:00, unstabilized harm will get worse by itself, stabilized harm will not, and it'll get better only with medical treatment.

"With time" and "by itself" are largely up to you as MC, but you should make them asymmetrical: harm should heal slowly, but get worse rapidly. If the character's up and running around, that should make harm get worse more quickly, but get better more slowly.

Because Bran's harm is before 6:00, it'll get better by itself with time. If he doesn't get help, maybe I'll let his player erase the 3:00–6:00 mark at the beginning of the next session, and maybe the 12:00–3:00 mark in the session after, depending what happens.

Notice that the way these numbers work, a player's character can take one bullet for free, essentially; the second bullet (or the third, with armor) is the serious one. This is straightforward old-fashioned cinematic causality.

The harm moves

When you **suffer harm**, roll+harm suffered (after armor, if you're wearing any). On a 10+, the MC can choose 1:

- You're out of action: unconscious, trapped, incoherent or panicked.
- It's worse than it seemed. Take an additional 1-harm.
- Choose 2 from the 7–9 list below.

On a 7–9, the MC can choose 1:

- You lose your footing.
- You lose your grip on whatever you're holding.
- You lose track of someone or something you're attending to.
- You miss noticing something important.

On a miss, the MC can nevertheless choose something from the 7–9 list above. If she does, though, it's instead of some of the harm you're suffering, so you take -1harm.

The suffering harm move adds a wrinkle, a little unpredictability, to the baseline of harm above.

Occasionally a player's character will suffer 0-harm. A 2-harm attack against 2-armor, for instance. When that happens, you can choose to have the player roll+0 for the suffering harm move, if you want to. You can even have the player roll-1 for a 1-harm attack against 2-armor, if circumstances seem to warrant it. In those cases, only a hit matters. A miss means nothing new — you can't choose to inflict less than no harm.

When Keeler shoots Bran, he takes 2-harm, so Bran's player rolls+2. He rolls a 9 on the dice for a total of 11, which is good for the harm, bad for Bran. I choose to put him out of action, not to inflict additional harm. So: when she shoots him he flinches away (of course) and the bullet lays open his scalp from eyebrow to hairline, to the skull but not through it. He falls down, covering his head, dazed but alive. If Keeler's not satisfied with this, she'll have to shoot him again.

There's also the Hx-for-harm move:

*When you **inflict harm on another player's character**, the other character gets +1Hx with you (on their sheet) for every segment of harm you inflict. If this brings them to Hx+4, they reset to Hx+1 as usual, and therefore mark experience.*

Keeler's inflicted 2 segments' harm, so Bran adds 2 to his Hx with Keeler. He had Hx-1 with her, so this brings it to Hx+1.

Debilities

When the character's harm countdown crosses 9:00, the player can choose to mark a debility. If she does, she gets the debility, but the harm stops sharp at 9:00 on the countdown. Once she's past 9:00, she can choose to take a debility instead of any new wound.

Debilities are permanent. The debilities are:

- Shattered: -1cool
- Crippled: -1hard
- Disfigured: -1hot
- Broken: -1sharp

Mark the debility, adjust the stat, and get used to it.

It's always the player's choice whether to take a debility, no one else's. The only time I'd really expect a player to take a debility is when otherwise her character would probably take harm to or past 12:00, and she'd rather have her character permanently fucked than killed.

Bran's lying there bleeding from a gunshot wound to the head, but still alive, and Keeler decides to finish the job. "I go over and get my shotgun out of my saddlebag. I'm whistling."

Jesus. I knew she was mad at him, but Jesus.

"So, what?" Keeler's player says. "I'm going aggro? I just put the shotgun to his head and pull the trigger. What's the move?"

"Well," I say. "If Bran were capable of reaction, yeah, you'd be going aggro, and what you'd want Bran to do is die in an explosion of brains. But he's helpless. You're just doing it, you aren't even making a move."

"Really?"

Bran's player: "Really?"

"Really really. How much harm does your shotgun do?"

A shotgun does 3-harm, so Bran takes 3-harm more. His player rolls+3 for the harm move and gets a 12. I choose to inflict +1harm, since he's already out of the fight, for a total of 4-harm.

The Hx-for-harm move gives him +4Hx with Keeler. This brings him to Hx+5, which means that he rolls over to Hx+2 and marks experience.

He's suffered 2-harm already. 4-harm more puts him at 12:00, dead, and Keeler's not likely to call Bish the angel to get him revived.

Bran's player: "Damn. Well shit. When I cross 9:00, I can take a debility instead, right? I'm going to take 'crippled.' That'll put me at 9:00, not dead?"

It will, exactly right.

He'll still be harmed to 9:00, which means that his wounds won't get better by themselves, but also won't get worse. Furthermore, he gets -1hard, forever. He had hard+0, so he changes it to hard-1.

"So. Keeler, he's lying at your feet, mangled and bloody, not moving. He might still be alive, it's hard to tell. What do you do?"

"Good enough!" she says. "I go pack my stuff back in my saddle-bags. I'm still whistling. I go."

"Damn, Keeler," Bran's player says.

Bran comes to, later, and drags himself to Bish. Bish patches him up. He's had some serious head trauma, though, and it'll affect his body. He'll limp, move more slowly, suffer chronic pain and shakes and fatigue. Hard-1 from now on.

The examples in this section so far, they've featured two PCs so that I can show you both sides of it. In play, most fights will probably be between a PC and an NPC (or groups of the same) — I've never in real life seen a fight between PCs go as far as this example. The rules for NPCs are different.

WHEN AN NPC ATTACKS

One of your moves is **inflict harm**. You're accordingly allowed to say, like, "Fisty opens fire on you. Take 2-harm," but very rarely will you want to. Usually what you'll do instead is put someone in a spot: "Fisty opens fire on you. What do you do?"

If the character does anything much, she's doing it under fire.

Maybe she'll straight-out run, maybe try to manipulate him, maybe go aggro on him to get him to run instead, maybe try to seize something by force (like his gun or an escape). That's cool, then she rolls, and you follow the rules for her move. Maybe you inflict harm then.

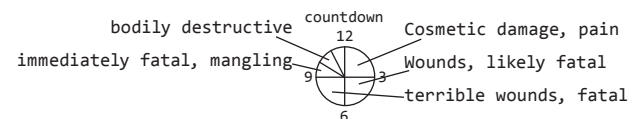
Maybe she won't make any move, though. Maybe she'll be like "peh, Fisty. Shoot away." Of course if she does that, she's giving you a beautiful opportunity on a plate, and you should inflict harm with enthusiasm.

How might an NPC suffer harm?

- A player's character seizes something from her by force.
- A player's character goes aggro on her, and she forces his hand and sucks it up.
- The outcome of a player's character move or a custom move include her suffering harm.
- It's your turn to make a move, and you decide that inflicting harm on her is the one.

NPCs suffer harm as established — weapon minus armor — same as PCs.

When an NPC suffers harm



NPCs don't get to take the first hit effectively for free the way PCs do. When Keeler shoots an NPC in the face with her 9mm, not like Bran, the poor bastard is *done*.

1-harm: cosmetic damage, pain, concussion, fear if the NPC's likely to be afraid of pain.

2-harm: wounds, unconsciousness, bad pain, broken bones, shock. Likely fatal, occasionally immediately fatal.

3-harm: give it 50-50 it's immediately fatal. Otherwise, terrible wounds, shock, death soon.

4-harm: usually immediately fatal, but sometimes the poor fuck has to wait to die, mangled and ruined.

5-harm and more: fatal and bodily destructive.

If you don't like deciding arbitrarily, you can roll for it. Consider all the probability words above in d6 terms, trying to roll high: "generally" and "likely" mean on a 2-6; "50-50" means on a 4-6; "sometimes" means on a 5-6; "occasionally" means on a 6. But I think you can decide just fine for yourself if you want to.

Hison is standing on top of Keeler's car with his assault rifle. "Fuck him," Keeler's player says. "I have an assault rifle too." She rolls+hard to seize by force, hits the roll with a 7-9, and chooses to inflict terrible harm.

Both assault rifles inflict 3-harm. Hison and Keeler are both wearing armor worth 2-armor. Keeler suffers 1-harm, but because she's inflicting terrible harm she inflicts 2-harm.

Keeler's player marks the first segment of her harm countdown and rolls+1 for the harm move. She rolls badly (for her): a 13 total. "It's worse than you thought," I say. "You took a bullet in the ribs, you thought your armor stopped it but no, you're bleeding." She marks the second segment, she's at 6:00 harm.

Hison, though. He takes 2-harm, so: wounds, unconsciousness, bad pain, broken bones, shock. Likely fatal, occasionally immediately fatal, it says. And me, I'm looking at him through crosshairs, I'm not trying to protect him. "He pitches backward off the top of your car. You can hear him on the ground, maybe trying to get up, struggling to breathe. He stops trying to move and after a little while you can't hear him at all anymore."

When a gang suffers or inflicts harm

See the crap chapter for details about gangs, page 249, and about how to use a gang as a weapon, page 253.

If there's a size mismatch, each step the attacker is bigger adds +1harm, and each step the attacker is smaller knocks off -1harm:

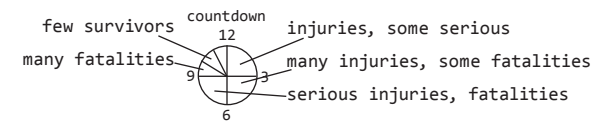
A guy or two hits a small gang for -1harm. A small gang hits a guy or two for +1harm.

A guy or two hits a medium gang for -2harm. A medium gang hits a guy or two for +2harm.

A small gang hits a large gang for -2harm. A large gang hits a small gang for +2harm.

...And so on.

When a gang suffers harm



1-harm: a few injuries, one or two serious, no fatalities.

2-harm: many injuries, several serious, a couple of fatalities.

3-harm: widespread injuries, many serious, several fatalities.

4-harm: widespread serious injuries, many fatalities.

5-harm and more: widespread fatalities, few survivors.

With a strong, present leader, a gang will hold together if it suffers up to 4-harm. If the leader is weak or absent, it'll hold together if it suffers up to 3-harm. If the leader is both weak *and* absent, it'll hold together if it suffers 1- or 2-harm. If it has no leader, it'll hold together if it suffers 1-harm, but no more.

If the gang's leader is a PC, she can hold the gang together with **leadership** or by imposing her will on it as its **pack alpha**.

If a PC is a member of a gang taking harm, how much harm the PC takes depends on her role in the gang. If she's a leader or a prominent, visible member, she suffers the same harm the gang does. If she's just someone in the gang, or if she's intentionally protecting herself from harm instead of fighting with the gang, she suffers 1-harm less.

*Dremmer launches a raid against one of Uncle's scouting parties. Uncle rolls+hard for **leadership** and hits with a 10+. "Great. We hold firm against a hard advance. It's a hard advance, right?"*

It sure the fuck is. My move is to **exchange harm for harm**, straight up.

This isn't Uncle's whole gang, just a scouting party: 3-harm gang small 1-armor. Dremmer's pretty fucking serious about his raiding, though: 2-harm medium 2-armor.

Uncle's gang inflicts 3-harm, -1harm because it's smaller, -2harm for Dremmer's gang's 2-armor, for a total of 0-harm to Dremmer's gang.

Dremmer's gang inflicts 2-harm, +1harm because it's bigger, -1harm for Uncle's gang's 1-armor, for a total of 2-harm to Uncle's gang. That means a couple of fatalities and all the serious wounds I want to dish out, plus 2-harm to Uncle himself since he's leading his gang. With him as its strong, present leader, the gang will hold together just fine through this exchange, and through another one like it. The danger to this gang is that they'll be massacred, not that they'll break.

"Well, you hold firm," I say. "Mifflin and Putrid go down — Putrid's guts are all over you — and Pallor and a couple of others are badly hurt. You take a bullet yourself for 2-harm. Your gang badly wants to bug out, not endure another strike. As far as you can tell, you've done no damage at all to the attackers, you've just broken their momentum. They go to ground all over the place, you're coming under fire from 3 directions. What do you do?"

(In real life, this would be happening in a well-described, concrete location, with landmarks and tactical features and probably a map. Uncle would roll+2 for the harm move, and he'd read the situation, and who knows what else, but for sake of example let me keep it brief.)

"We make an organized retreat," Uncle's player says. This uses up the second of his 3 hold.

"Great. You're withdrawing, bringing your dead and wounded, covering each other, all good. Here's the thing." I point at the map. I'm **offering an opportunity, with a cost**. "Here's you, here's your escape route, here's a zone of withering fire. You can get out that way [the opportunity], but you'll be acting under fire [the cost]. Or if there's something you want to do instead?"

Uncle's player groans. Uncle isn't cool, to the tune of cool-2. He loses his shit under fire. We all know this. I'm not fooling around, it's a real cost.

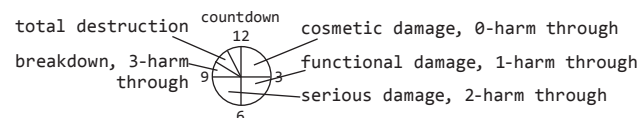
"I suppose I could have them fight and die to the last to cover my escape, but that'd suck," Uncle's player says. "Making our escape under fire it is."

...But of course he blows the roll. My hard, direct move is to just **exchange harm for harm** again. Widespread injuries, many fatalities, although the gang hangs together even so. "It's a bloodbath," I say. "You manage to drag along your wounded, but you can't make do anything for your dead. You take another couple of bullets, one here and one here. By the time you make it to safety you're swaying and dizzy, you can barely walk. Mahaki and Shooter are the only two unhurt, and a couple more are hit but still on their feet. What do you do?"

He still has 1 hold, if he wants Mahaki and Shooter to, I dunno, launch a hard advance, but probably they're just going to go home.

When a vehicle suffers harm

See the crap chapter for details about vehicles, page 246.



1-harm: cosmetic damage. Bullet holes, broken glass, smoke. 0-harm can blow through to passengers.

2-harm: functional damage. Fuel leak, shot-out tires, engine stall, problems with steering, braking or acceleration. Can be field-patched. 1-harm can blow through to passengers.

3-harm: serious damage. Functional damage affecting multiple functions, but can be field-patched. 2-harm can blow through to passengers.

4-harm: breakdown. Catastrophic functional damage, can be repaired in a garage but not in the field, or can be used for parts. 3-harm can blow through to passengers.

5-harm and more: total destruction. Full harm can blow through to passengers, plus they can suffer additional harm if the vehicle explodes or crashes.

Whether harm blows through to a vehicle's driver and passengers, doesn't blow through, or just hits them too without having to blow through, depends on your judgment of the circumstances and the vehicle.

Bran comes under fire while he's driving over the burn flats in his truck. It's just one of the burn flat's raving hunger-prophets with a hunting rifle (3-harm). Bran's truck has 2-armor, so it takes just 1-harm. "Bullets spack off it. One dents the hood, one smashes the shotgun-side mirror. 0-harm blows through, so you aren't hit, but there's broken glass and distraction. Roll+0 for the harm move!"

Or perhaps instead:

Bran comes under fire while he's tearing across the burn flats on his motorcycle. It's just one of the burn flat's raving hunger-prophets with a hunting rifle (3-harm). Bran's bike has 1-armor, so it takes 2-harm. 1-harm could blow through to Bran, but on the other hand, the bike isn't really protecting him at all. I decide that he just takes 3-harm same as his bike. "Bullets as fast as the guy can work the bolt. Mostly missing, hitting the dust all around you. One hits you high in the thigh, and a second later one hits your bike amidsthips and down you both go. Roll+3 for the harm move!"

HEALING

By an angel

Here's a wounded person. Let's say it's Uncle, dragging himself back to his holding after his run-in with Dremmer's gang:



He's taken 4-harm total. Since he's harmed past 9:00, and since his wounds aren't stabilized, leave him alone and he'll get worse, not better.

And here's an angel's kit, let's say it's Bish's:

An angel kit has all kinds of crap in it: scissors, rags, tape, needles, clamps, gloves, chill coils, wipes, alcohol, injectable tourniquets & bloodslower, instant blood packets (coffee reddener), tubes of meatmesh, bonepins & site injectors, biostabs, chemostabs, narcostabs (chillstabs) in quantity, and a roll of heart jumpshock patches for when it comes to that. When you use it, spend its stock; you can spend 0-3 of its stock per use. You can resupply it for 1-barter per 2-stock, if your circumstances let you barter for medical supplies.

To use an angel kit to **stabilize and heal someone at 9:00 or past**: roll+stock spent. On a hit, they will stabilize and heal to 6:00, but the MC will choose 1 (on a 10+) or 2 (on a 7-9):

- they need to be physically stabilized before you can move them.
- even narcostabbed, they fight you; you're acting under fire.
- they'll be in and out of consciousness for 24 hours, maybe longer.
- stabilizing them eats up your stock; spend 1-stock more.
- they'll be bedridden, out of action, for at least a week.
- they'll need constant monitoring and care for 36 hours.

On a miss, they take 1-harm instead.

To use an angel kit to **speed the recovery of someone at 3:00 or 6:00**: don't roll. They choose: spend 4 days (3:00) or 1 week (6:00) blissed out on chillstabs, immobile but happy, or do their time like everyone else.

To use an angel kit to **revive someone who's died** (at 12:00, not beyond): roll+stock spent. On a 10+, they recover to 10:00. On a 7-9, they recover to 11:00. On a miss, you've done everything you can for them, and they're still dead.

So that's what's what. Here's Bish and Uncle:

Bish's player: "Damn, Uncle, you're lucky you didn't bleed out." It's true; I probably should have hit him with another 1-harm during the trip home, because his wounds are getting worse with time and exertion. Oh well. "First thing, I narcostab you. We all know you lose your shit under fire. I'm going to spend, oh, 2-stock to stabilize and heal you."

"Can I roll+Hx to help?" Uncle's player says.

"Not narcostabbed, you can't," I say. "I guess you could act under fire to help."

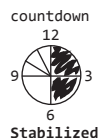
Uncle's player, Bish's player, in unison: "no!"

Bish's player rolls +2 and hits it with a 7-9. A 7, in fact, and he's glad he spent 2-stock not 1!

"Let's see," I say. "What are my choices... Ah, yes. Even narcostabbed, he fights you, and that's even though you use up substantial stock trying to keep him chill. Roll to act under fire and spend 1-stock more."

Bish's cool. He hits the roll with a 7-9. "In the struggle, Uncle blacks your eye," I say. "It's not harm, but take -1forward, yeah?"

Bish's player pantomimes stabbing Uncle very hard with a narcostab. "Lie STILL, fucker."



"Uncle, you come to a couple of hours later," I say. "You ache all over, you try to sit up but you have to try again before you can do it."

"Heppy?" Bish's player says. He has his hand over his eye. "You better be. You're my worst patient and I'm not using up any more of my resources making you comfortable. You should rest. One week?" She looks at me. I shrug kind of a noncommittal no. "Two weeks at least. Bed rest, strict, or don't come whining back to me."

"Well, okay, thanks," Uncle's player says. "I owe you one—"

"You wish. You owe me for the narcostabs, the bloodslower, the meatmesh, the instablood, my time, and this shiner. With the friend discount, that's 2-barter, although you should know I'm reconsidering the friend discount. I know you're good for it, yeah?"

Plus there's the Hx-for-healing move:

When you **heal another player's character's harm**, you get +1Hx with them (on your sheet) for every segment of harm you heal. If this brings you to Hx+4, you reset to Hx+1 as usual, and therefore mark experience.

Bish healed 2 segments' harm, so he gets +2Hx with Uncle. He had Hx-1 with Uncle, so it goes up to Hx+1.

If there's no angel

If there's no player character angel, healing falls entirely to you. Here are your choices, case by case:

- **No healing available.** They're shit out of luck.
- **There's a particular NPC medic.** Name this person, make her human, make PC-NPC-PC triangles with her. List her as a threat on a front or on the home front.

Don't give her an angel kit or play it out like you would with a PC angel. I usually just go with 1-barter cost (**make them buy**) plus appropriate time and care per segment healed.

- **There's an NPC medic, but she isn't important.** Medical care is pretty much an abstract given, they pay their barter and erase their segments. You should still give her a name, but don't list her as a threat unless she develops into a real someone.

RULES OF PLAY: IMPROVEMENT

RULES OF PLAY: IMPROVEMENT

PRESCRIPTIVE & DESCRIPTIVE

The players' character sheets, like your front countdowns, are both prescriptive and descriptive. Prescriptive: changes to the character's sheet mean changes to the character's fictional circumstances and capabilities; that's the game's experience and improvement rules, following. Descriptive too: when the character's fictional circumstances or capabilities change naturally, within the character's fictional world, the player can and should change her character sheet to match.

Bran bolts a machinegun onto his truck. I tell his player its stats.

The holding takes in refugees, and some of them naturally gravitate to Keeler's gang, doubling its size. I tell Keeler's player to change the gang from small to medium.

Uncle invests time and scratch in improving his holding, building up and armoring its walls. I give his gang the appropriate 2-armor bonus when they fight to defend it.

Fair's fair, though!

Bish's ambulance-infirmery gets blown up. I tell his player to cross it out.

Uncle's manufactory workers rise up, overthrowing their overseers and seizing the manufactory for themselves. I tell Uncle's player he's lost the gig and its surplus.

The warlord for whom Wilson runs compound defense winds up at the wrong end of a sniper's sights. I tell Wilson's player that he can still work the gig if he wants, but for no profit. Nobody's paying.

EXPERIENCE

A player marks experience when:

- **She rolls a highlighted stat.**
- **Her Hx with someone resets from Hx+4 to Hx+1 or from Hx-4 to Hx-1.**
- **A move tells her to. One of her own, someone else's, or a custom move.**

At the end of character creation, you went around the circle and everybody highlighted two stats on their character sheet. Whenever a player rolls one of her highlighted stats, she marks experience. That means that she fills in one of the little experience circles on her character sheet.

One of the basic moves is, at the end of every session, everybody adjusts one other person's Hx with their character, +1Hx or -1Hx. Whenever somebody's Hx with somebody else goes up to +4 or down to -4, she resets it to +1 or -1, respectively, and she marks experience too.

A couple of the moves call for someone to mark experience. **Seduce or manipulate** does, a savvyhead's **oftener right**, a hocus' followers' **insight**. Custom moves can too.

Changing highlighted stats

At the beginning of any session, or at the end if you forgot, anyone can say, “hey, let’s change highlighted stats.” Any player, and you can feel free to say it too as MC. When someone says it, do it. Go around the circle again, following the same procedure you used to highlight them in the first place: the high-Hx player highlights one stat, and you as MC highlight another.

When you’re highlighting stats, highlight one that you genuinely think will be interesting — and you can tell the players this, it goes for them too. If the character never rolls, or can’t roll, a stat, it’s obviously not going to be interesting to highlight it. You probably won’t remember the details of which characters have moves to substitute which stats for which, so be sure that all the players know to speak up.

Now, MC, you’re the characters’ fan, right? You aren’t highlighting stats to screw them over, you’re highlighting stats so that you get to see every side of them. Change your choice often, and over time try to hit as many different combinations as you can.

As a group, you can negotiate highlighted stats as explicitly as you like. “Hey, would somebody highlight my cool? I’m sick of having my hot highlighted when I’m not into anybody that way.” “Oh, yeah, sure thing. And I think we’re about to get serious with Dremmer, so MC, would you mind highlighting my hard?” “Nah, but I’ll highlight your cool. I think you’ll get to roll it just as much.” “Gee, what a pal.”

CHARACTER IMPROVEMENT

Whenever a player fills in her fifth improvement circle, she improves her character and erases all her circles. (It’s a funny fact of human nature that there need to be 5 circles, even though as soon as you fill in the 5th you erase it again. I tried it with 4 circles on the sheet and no matter how many times I explained, everybody thought that you improve your character when you fill in your 4th. Because that’s how many circles there were. Funny.)

Anyway, each of the character playbooks lists that character’s available improvements. Most of them are self-explanatory, maybe all of them, but here are some notes anyway.

___ get +1[stat] (max [stat]+3)

___ get +1[stat] (max [stat]+2)

If some combination of moves has put your stat in question up to 3 already, you can’t choose these improvements for your character. You’ve already outgrown them.

___ get a new [character] move

___ get a move from another playbook

If there’s a move in another playbook and it makes no mechanical sense for your character — like **fortunes** but you have no followers, for instance — then for goodness sweet sake don’t choose it. Choose a different move, one you can actually make.

___ get a crew (detail)

Crews are in the operator’s playbook, page 71, and in the crap chapter, page 262.

___ get followers (detail) and **fortunes**

Followers and **fortunes** are in the hocus’ playbook, page 65, and in the crap chapter, page 258.

___ get a gang (detail) and **leadership**

Gangs and **leadership** are in the hardholder’s playbook, page 58, in the character moves chapter, page 226, and in the crap chapter, page 249. Use the rules for creating a new gang.

___ get a gang (detail) and **pack alpha**

Gangs and **pack alpha** are in the chopper’s playbook, page 40, in the character moves chapter, page 221, and in the crap chapter, page 249. Use the rules for creating a new gang.

___ get a garage (workspace, detail) and crew

Workspaces and their crews are in the savvyhead’s playbook, page 77, and in the crap chapter, page 247.

___ get 2 gigs (detail) and **moonlighting**

Gigs and **moonlighting** are in the operator’s playbook, page 70, in the character moves chapter, page 229, and in the crap chapter, page 262.

___ get a holding (detail) and **Wealth**

Holdings and **wealth** are in the hardholder’s playbook, page 58, in the character moves chapter, page 226, and in the crap chapter, page 258. Use the rules for creating a new small holding.

For this last batch, just have the player go back into her playbook, everything she needs is in there.

- ___ get a new car (detail)
- ___ choose a new option for your gang
- ___ choose a new option for your holding
- ___ erase an option from your holding
- ___ choose a new option for your followers
- ___ add a gig and you may change your crew
- ___ abandon or resolve an obligation gig for good
- ___ add life support to your workspace, and now you can work on people there too

When a player chooses one of her character's improvements, have her mark it off; like the playbooks say, you can choose each improvement once only.

Some improvements can happen immediately, in that very moment of play, like the +1stat ones. Others, like getting a gang or a new holding, feel free to tell the player that it'll come true between sessions.

Once a player's improved her character five times, it's time to open up some new options. Lift your eyes and take new bearing on the horizon.

THE UNGIVEN FUTURE

You can keep choosing the improvement options in your playbook as long as you like, or until they run out. Starting with your 6th improvement, though, you can choose from these options too:

- ___ get +1 to any stat, to a maximum of +3.
- ___ retire your character (to safety), and create a new character to play.
- ___ create a second character to play, so now you're playing two.
- ___ change your character to a new type.
- ___ choose 3 basic moves and advance them.
- ___ advance the other 4 basic moves.

RETIRING A CHARACTER

___ retire your character (to safety), and create a new character to play

When a player chooses this, take some time with the retiring character. Talk to her player about her future, or at least about her plans, intentions and dreams. Is she staying around, or departing from the other characters too? If the former, what's her new role to be to them? If the latter, hell, maybe you should send her off in play, in character, in style.

"To safety" means two things. First, it means the retiring character's safety: as MC, you promise not to kill her off just because now she's yours and technically you could. No fair decorating your up-and-coming new warlord's pike with her head.

Second, it means the player's characters' safety: as MC, you promise not to turn her into their enemy, just because now she's yours and technically you could. No fair making her *be* your up-and-coming new warlord either.

...And then have the player choose a new character playbook and make a new character.

PLAYING 2 CHARACTERS

___ create a second character to play, so now you're playing two

Oh like it's such a big shocker or so difficult to do. I mean, shit, you're the MC, you have 30 characters at a time, and your players shy away from playing 2? The real question is, why don't people usually play with more than 1?

Characters belonging to the same player don't have Hx with one another and can't help or interfere with one another. Long experience has taught me that if you're going to play multiple characters, you should play *each others'* friends, not your own.

Conceivably the player could choose this option again for her second character, down the road, and thus have 3 characters to play. Then 4, then 5, then 6...

NEW CHARACTERS' HX

The new character will need Hx with everybody else and everybody else will need Hx with her. Here's how:

- The player introduces her new character, by name, look and outlook.
- She goes through her Hx rules and makes all the requisite decisions — it's her "your turn."
- Everybody else takes a turn, but just tells her Hx-1 if their characters aren't acquainted, Hx+1 if they are.
- Sum as normal, and ta da.

Use this procedure whenever someone creates a new character.

When a new player joins a game already underway, everybody else will have to introduce their characters too, naturally.

CHANGING CHARACTER TYPE

___ change your character to a new type

The player keeps her old character playbook for reference, and transfers her character into a new playbook, or else to the expanded character sheet (at apocalypse-world.com).

The idea is that the character:

- **Keeps everything belonging to her intrinsic self.** Her stats, including Hx, her moves, her improvements, all for sure. Many other things too.
- **Leaves behind everything belonging to her old life.** For instance, if a hardholder becomes a driver, she leaves her holding behind. (Maybe that's the point.)
- **Gets everything belonging to her new life.** Her new moves, as she chooses them; her new gear and other new crap.

It's up to you to work out with the player which of her character's things are in which category.

ADVANCING MOVES

___ choose 3 moves and advance them

___ advance the other 4 moves

You can choose to advance most of the basic moves:

- **Doing something under fire**
- **Seizing something by force**
- **Going aggro on someone**
- **Seducing or manipulating someone**
- **Reading a charged situation**
- **Reading a person**
- **Opening your brain to the world's psychic maelstrom**

Advancing a move means adding a new clause to it, for when you hit with a 12+.

The advanced moves:

*When you **do something under fire**, or dig in to endure fire, roll+cool. On a 10–11, you do it. On a 7–9, you flinch, hesitate, or stall: the MC can offer you a worse outcome, a hard bargain, or an ugly choice.*

On a 12+, you transcend the danger, the pressure, the possibility of harm. You do what you set out to do, and the MC will offer you a better outcome, true beauty, or a moment of grace.

Tall order! So much depends on the details of the character's actions and the circumstances. If you know what the character's hoping for beyond the immediate, you can give it to her, that's probably easiest. Another thing you can do is have what the player's character does affect the NPCs witnessing it — they're struck, awed, moved, taken aback, left breathless.

*When you **try to seize something by force**, or to secure your hold on something, roll+hard. On a hit, choose options. On a 10–11, choose 3. On a 7–9, choose 2:*

- *you take definite hold of it*
- *you suffer little harm*
- *you inflict terrible harm*
- *you impress, dismay or frighten your enemy*

On a 12+, you get all 4, plus choose 1 for double effect.

Taking doubly definite hold of it would mean, I dunno, marking it as the character's in some profound existential way. The player won't choose this unless it makes sense, so that's good.

Suffering doubly little harm means -2harm instead of -1harm.

Inflicting doubly terrible harm means +2harm instead of +1harm.

Doubly impressing, dismaying or frightening your enemy means truly overawing them. They should be face down in abject worship or fetal in abject terror.

*When you **go aggro on someone**, roll+hard. On a 10–11, they have to choose: force your hand and suck it up, or cave and do what you want. On a 7–9, they have to choose 1:*

- *get the hell out of your way*
- *barricade themselves securely in*
- *hand over something they think you want*
- *back off calmly, hands where you can see*
- *tell you what you want to know (or what you want to hear)*
- *force your hand and suck it up*

On a 12+, they have to cave and do what you want. You've overwhelmed them; they can't possibly bring themselves to force your hand.

When the character goes aggro on another player's character, do your best to remind the other player that this is a possible outcome. It's the only place in the whole game where one player can simply tell another player what to have her character do, so it'll go best if you warn her and make sure she's ready.

*When you **try to seduce or manipulate someone**, tell them what you want and roll+hot. For NPCs: on a hit, they ask you to promise something first, and do it if you promise. On a 10+, whether you keep your promise is up to you, later. On a 7–9, they need some concrete assurance right now. For PCs: on a 10+, both. On a 7–9, choose 1:*

- *if they do it, they mark improvement*
- *if they refuse, it's acting under fire*

What they do then is up to them.

On a 12+, only if they're an NPC, they do it, and furthermore you change their nature. Choose one of the following; tell the MC to erase their threat type altogether and write it in instead.

- *ally: friend (impulse: to back you up)*
- *ally: lover (impulse: to give you shelter & comfort)*
- *ally: right hand (impulse: to follow through on your intentions)*

- *ally: representative (impulse: to pursue your interests in your absence)*
- *ally: guardian (impulse: to intercept danger)*
- *ally: confidante (impulse: to give you advice, perspective, or absolution.)*

This is serious business and don't risk the players' trust by fucking around with it. Take that NPC out of whatever front she's in, list her in a whole new place, *home* instead of *the home front*.

Furthermore, stop looking at this NPC through crosshairs. She has been set apart, safe from casual death, to a higher purpose. By now the players are bone weary from knowing that every single NPC is, at her heart, only a potential threat to them. Now, this one person, they can breathe.

*When you **read a charged situation**, roll+sharp. On a hit, you can ask the MC questions. Whenever you act on one of the MC's answers, take +1. On a 10–11, ask 3. On a 7–9, ask 1:*

- *where's my best escape route?*
- *which enemy is most vulnerable to me?*
- *which enemy is the biggest threat?*
- *what should I be on the lookout for?*
- *who's in control here?*

On a 12+, ask any 3 questions you want, not limited to the list.

And...

*When you **read a person**, roll+sharp. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7–9, hold 1. While you're interacting with them, spend your hold to ask their player questions, 1 for 1:*

- *is your character telling the truth?*
- *what's your character really feeling?*
- *what does your character intend to do?*
- *what does your character wish I'd do?*

On a 12+, hold 3, but spend them 1 for 1 to ask any question you want, not limited to the list.

If your players are like mine, they'll be excited to expand these two moves. They'll have felt for the whole game that these two lists are too limited. But once they get to ask whatever they want, here's my prediction: mostly, in some form or other, they'll ask basically the questions from the lists. I might be wrong, but that's my prediction.

Finally...

*When you **open your brain to the world's psychic maelstrom**, roll+weird. On a hit, the MC will tell you something new and interesting about the current situation, and ask you a question or two; answer them. On a 10–11, the MC will give you good detail. On a 7–9, the MC will give you an impression. If you already know all there is to know, the MC will tell you that.*

On a 12+, you reach through the world's psychic maelstrom to what's beyond it.

I envy your finding out.

RULES OF PLAY:
BASIC MOVES

RULES OF PLAY: BASIC MOVES

Always remember the rule for moves: **to do it, do it**. Also true in reverse: **if you do it, you do it**, so make with the dice.

To roll+a stat, the player rolls two dice, adds them, and adds the stat. If the sum is 6 or less, that's a miss; 7 or more, a hit. If it's 7–9, that's a weak hit; 10+, a strong hit.

Finally, when a player misses a roll, generally — unless the move specifies otherwise — what happens is that you get to make a move yourself, and as hard and direct a move as you like. For details, see the master of ceremonies chapter, page 116.

BASIC MOVES

Everybody gets all of these.

ACT UNDER FIRE

*When you **do something under fire**, or dig in to endure fire, roll+cool. On a 10+, you do it. On a 7–9, you flinch, hesitate, or stall: the MC can offer you a worse outcome, a hard bargain, or an ugly choice.*

You can read “under fire” to mean any kind of serious pressure at all. Call for this move whenever someone does something requiring unusual discipline, resolve, endurance or care. I often

say things like “okay, roll to act under fire, and the fire is just how badly that’s going to hurt,” “...and the fire is, can you really get that close to her without her noticing?” or “...and the fire is, if you fuck it up, they’ll be ON your ass.”

Whenever a character does something that obviously demands a roll, but you don’t quite see how to deal with it, double check first whether it counts as doing something under fire. Come here first.

On a 7–9, when it comes to the worse outcome, hard bargain, or ugly choice, you’ll need to look at the circumstances and find something fun. It should be easy to find something; if there weren’t things to go wrong, nobody’d be rolling dice. It can include suffering harm or making another move. However, remember that a 7–9 is a hit, not a miss; whatever you offer should be fundamentally a success, not fundamentally a failure.

Examples:

Foster’s gang opens fire on Marie the brainer and Roark her friend picnicking on the burn. Roark’s hit, and Marie tries to drag him to cover. (On a 7–9, maybe I give her a hard bargain: she can get him to safety, but only if she takes a bullet herself.) She misses the roll. I make my hard move: I **tell her the possible consequences and ask what she does**. “So you can’t drag him, he’s fighting you and trying to get to his weapons, even though he’s been hit badly. Do you abandon him? He can’t possibly get to his guns and into cover. Or do you keep fighting to drag him, so you’re both exposed?”

Keeler the gunlugger's taken off her shoes and she's sneaking into Dremmer's camp, armed as they say to the upper teeth. If they hear her, she's fucked. (On a 7–9, maybe I give her an ugly choice between alerting the camp and murdering an innocent teenage sentry.) She hits the roll with an 8, so the ugly choice it is. "There's some kid out here, huddled under this flimsy tin roof with a mug of who-knows-what. You think you're past him but he startles and looks right at you. You can kill him before he makes a noise, but you'll have to do it right this second. Do you?" "Yes, duh," she says. "Great. You leave him dead and make your way in. You're crouching down by a big piece of fallen wall, looking into Dremmer's camp. He's eating with a couple other guys, they have no idea you're here."

Bran the savvyhead's got less than a minute to get Frankie's car started again before Balls and friends are on them. (On a 7–9, maybe I give him a worse outcome: he gets the car started, but Balls' first couple of people are there already. I picture him tearing away with Poor Skimla clinging to the boot.) He hits the roll with a 10, so good for him. "The engine coughs, coughs, catches, starts," I say. "Poor Skimla thinks she can still catch you, but she can't, she just looks stupid sprinting after you."

An example of a mistake & correction:

Wilson the operator's blundered into Dremmer's territory and gone to earth. He's lying up against a wall amid the debris with a plastic tarp over him, trying to look like not-a-person-at-all, while a 2-thug patrol of Dremmer's gang passes by. If they spot him they'll drag him to Dremmer and he wants that zero at all. He hits the roll with a 9, so I get to offer him a worse outcome, a hard bargain, or an ugly choice. "Yeah," I say. "So you're holding still and you can't really keep them in your sight. They, um, they spot you, but you don't realize it." I think about this for a second. It doesn't seem quite right, and Wilson's player is looking at me like I might be cheating. "Actually wait wait. You hit the roll, you didn't miss it." "I was gonna say," Wilson's player says. "So no," I say. "Instead, they haven't spotted you, but they're getting closer and closer. They'll be on top of you in just a minute but if you do something right this second you'll have the drop on them. What do you do?"

GO AGGRO

*When you **go aggro on someone**, roll+hard. On a 10+, they have to choose: force your hand and suck it up, or cave and do what you want. On a 7–9, they can instead choose 1:*

- *get the hell out of your way*
- *barricade themselves securely in*
- *give you something they think you want*
- *back off calmly, hands where you can see*
- *tell you what you want to know (or what you want to hear)*

Going aggro means using violence or the threat of violence to control somebody else's behavior, without (or before) fighting. If the character has the drop on her enemy, or if the enemy won't fight back, or if the character is making a show of force but isn't disposed to *really fight*, it's going aggro.

On a 7–9, the victim can still choose to cave or to force the character's hand and suck it up.

If the target forces the character's hand and sucks it up, that means that the character inflicts harm upon the target as normal, determined by her weapon and her subject's armor. At this point, the player can't decide not to inflict harm, it's gone too far for that.

At your call as MC, the details of the circumstances can give the character's weapon ap (armor piercing). Suppose Keeler holds a gun to someone's forehead and tells them what to do, and they force her hand and suck it up. The gun's to their unarmored forehead, where their body armor isn't going to help them, so you should declare the damage ap.

When somebody tries to kill somebody without their fighting back, going aggro is the move. It's like the player said "I'm going aggro" — by shooting from way over here with a scoped rifle, by looping piano wire around his throat from behind, by whatever one-sided murderous act — "and what I want him to do is fall down bleeding and die." If he forces her hand, he forces her hand; if he caves and does what she wants, he takes harm just the same.

For the details of taking and inflicting harm, see the harm & healing chapter, page 159.

Examples:

Marie walks up behind Joe's Girl and pokes her in the ribs with her scalpel. "Come with me," she says. She misses the roll, though, so I get to make as hard a move as I like in response. I choose to **inflict harm** and (bonus) **put her in a spot**. "Damn, Joe's Girl is fast," I say. "She slams you in the face with her elbow — take 1-harm — knocks you down, kicks your scalpel away, and by the time you realize what's happened she's kneeling over you with her pistol up under your jaw. What do you do?"

Keeler's hidden in a little nest outside Dremmer's compound, she's been watching the compound courtyard through the scope of her rifle. When I say that this guy Balls sits down in there with his lunch, "there he is," her player says. They have history. "I blow his brains out." She hits the roll with a 9, so I get to choose. I choose to have him barricade himself securely in: "no brains, but he leaves his lunch and scrambles into the compound, squeaking. He won't be coming out again any time soon." I make a note to myself, on my front sheet for Dremmer's gang, that Balls is taking himself off active duty. I think that we might never see him again.

Bran yells at Fleece, calls her a stupid slut and threatens to push her off the roof. He hits the roll with a 12. "She falls to her knees, she's crying," I say. "She'll do whatever you want. Jesus Bran, you're a piece of work."

An example of a mistake & correction:

Wilson corners Monk. "I scream at him, shove him, call him names. 'Stay THE FUCK away from Amni, you creepy little turd.' I'm going aggro on him." "Cool," I say. "Do you pull a weapon, or is it just shoving and yelling?" "Oh, yeah, no, it's just shoving and yelling." "Well, that's fine," I say, "but if he forces your hand, he takes 0-harm. I'm pretty sure that's what he's going to do. Do you want to roll for it anyway? Do you want to bring a weapon to bear after all? Oh hold on — I think you're actually using the threat as leverage, you're manipulating him, not going aggro. Want to roll+hot for that?" "Oh!" Wilson's player says. "Yeah, yeah, that makes sense. Right on."

SEIZE BY FORCE

*When you try **to seize something by force**, or to secure your hold on something, roll+hard. On a hit, choose options. On a 10+, choose 3. On a 7–9, choose 2:*

- *you take definite hold of it*
- *you suffer little harm*
- *you inflict terrible harm*
- *you impress, dismay or frighten your enemy*

Read "seize something" broadly — a character can seize the upper hand, seize momentum, or even seize the moment — but "by force" is strict. This is a move for when the guns and knives and crowbars are already out on both sides.

If she doesn't choose to take definite hold of it, she still gets her hands on it, but it's not in her exclusive power. You can (and probably should) try to take it away from her again. If the thing's abstract, like "the moment," you'll need to figure out case-by-case just what it means to have it but not have it *definitely*.

If she doesn't choose to suffer little harm, she suffers the normal amount of harm, as determined by her enemy's weapons and her own armor. Suffering little harm means -1harm.

If she doesn't choose to inflict terrible harm, she inflicts the normal amount of harm, as determined by her weapon and her enemy's armor. Inflicting terrible harm means +1harm.

An impressed, dismayed or frightened NPC enemy *absolutely must* change her behavior, but it's up to you how. For PCs, pressing the attack when they're impressed, dismayed or frightened counts as doing something under fire.

For the details of taking and inflicting harm, see the harm & healing chapter, page 159.

Examples:

Marie wants her violation glove back from Birdie, so she punches her in the face. She misses the roll, so I make as hard a move as I like. Birdie's a threat, a mindfucker; she craves mastery. I choose one of the grotesques' threat moves: she **seizes and holds someone**, which snowballs immediately into **turning one of Marie's moves back on her**. "Dude, Marie, she catches your arm

and twists it behind you and remember that *she's wearing the violation glove*," I say. "You can feel her in your brain, she's like tearing through your personal things in there. Did she already know about you and Roark?" "Oh shit. She knew I liked him, but she didn't know I was trying to get pregnant by him." "Really! I didn't know that either. That's GREAT."

Keeler wants to take Balls' bunker away from him, so she lobs a grenade in there and follows it up with some serious spray. She hits the roll with a 9, so chooses 2. "I take definite hold and I impress, dismay or frighten them," she says. "Fantastic," I say. "They abandon the bunker to you in disarray. They take [calculating] 1-harm, so I guess they dive out of there as soon as you open up, they don't like stay and suck it up. You take 4-harm minus your armor equals 2-harm, though, so one of them lands a shot, you feel a slug crack one of your ribs." "But I'm in the bunker?" "You are, and they're still on the run."

Bran needs 10 minutes alone with Jeanette's body, so he opens fire on H and Marser. He hits the roll with an 11. "Take definite hold, suffer little harm, impress dismay or frighten," he says. "Fantastic," I say. "You hit H for 2-harm and he goes down, Marser drags him away. Marser heaved his crowbar at you, but you could, like, turn it aside with your arm. You take 1-harm. It'll bruise but whatever."

An example of a mistake & correction:

Wilson wants the prime spot in the watchover, but this guy Laster is camped on it. "I'm going to seize that shit by force," Wilson's player says. "I put my gun in his face, I'm yelling at him, I'm going to kill him right now if he doesn't clear the fuck out. I roll ... an 11! Suck it, Laster." "Uh," I say. "That's not seizing by force, that's going aggro. To seize by force you have to go straight to shooting." "Oh, right. Uh, okay, I'm happy going aggro. Can I keep my 11?" Of course he can! I'm looking at Laster through crosshairs, I'm not going to insist on a re-roll on *his* account.

ACTING WITH VIOLENCE

Seizing by force is very strictly only for fights, times when characters move with violence directly against people able to defend themselves. If the situation doesn't allow for a full exchange of blows, attack for attack, harm for harm, toe to toe, it's not seizing by force.

Going aggro is the more general move. It's for direct threats when the character can and will follow up with violence. The victim may or may not be able to defend herself, that's fine either way — what's crucial is that the victim isn't defending herself yet. It may or may not include preliminary violence, to get the victim's attention and make the point, that's fine either way too. It may be just that the character wants to murder the victim without giving him the chance to fight back.

Bluffing counts as seducing or manipulating, using the threat of violence for leverage. It's legit for you to ask the player whether the character's bluffing before letting her make the roll.

SEDUCE OR MANIPULATE

*When you **try to seduce or manipulate someone**, tell them what you want and roll+hot. For NPCs: on a hit, they ask you to promise something first, and do it if you promise. On a 10+, whether you keep your promise is up to you, later. On a 7–9, they need some concrete assurance right now. For PCs: on a 10+, both. On a 7–9, choose 1:*

- *if they do it, they mark experience [the carrot]*
- *if they refuse, it's acting under fire [the stick]*

What they do then is up to them.

Seducing someone, here, means using sex to get them to do what you want, not (or not just) trying to get them to fuck you.

Asking someone straight to do something isn't trying to seduce or manipulate them. To seduce or manipulate, the character needs leverage — sex, or a threat, or a promise, something that the manipulator can really do that the victim really wants or really doesn't want.

Absent leverage, they're just talking, and you should have your NPCs agree or accede, decline or refuse, according to their own self-interests.

The promise the NPC asks for should directly address the leverage the player's character is using. The leverage is sex? The promise should be sexual. The leverage is violence? "Just promise you won't hurt me."

The whole process of asking for and making promises can be explicit or implicit. Explicit: "okay, I'll let you through," he says. 'Just promise you won't tell Keeler it was me.'" Implicit: "she takes your hand and nods toward the bed. 'After you,' she says."

"Mark experience" means to fill in an experience circle on the character sheet, of course.

Examples:

Marie draws Roark a bath and joins him in it, with dandelion wine. She wants him to bring Joe's Girl to her. She misses the roll, so I get to make as hard a move as I like, and I choose to **separate them**. "As soon as Joe's Girl comes up in conversation, he sees what you're up to," I say. "He shoves you out of his way and stomps out of your rooms. He takes his shotgun with him but doesn't even bother to get dressed. He's muttering the whole way down the hall, like 'fuckin Marie, shoulda known, fuckin trusted her, fuckin Joe's Girl...'"

Keeler confesses her crush to Bran. She wants him to like her back. She hits the roll with a 7. "If you like me back, mark experience," she says. "Wow I'd like to," Bran's player says, "and you're sweet and all, but..." "Oh no!" Keeler's player says. "Crushed!"

Bran tells Keeler that if she wants even a shot at him, she'll have to bring him night-vision goggles, and then we'll see. He hits the roll with a 10. "So if I go get Damson's goggles, I mark experience, and if I don't, it's acting under fire?" Keeler's player says. "Exactly," I say. "What do you do?"

An example of a mistake & correction:

Wilson's heard of this establishment deep in the watchover where you can get a fresh salad, and he wants one bad. This woman named Dustwich has the door, though, and I'm pretty

sure she knows her business. "I go up to her," Wilson's player says. "I'm like, let me in, I know what's what. Can I roll to manipulate her?" "Well, no," I say. "So far you're just asking her to let you in, you've got no leverage. She tells you to fuck off, but without any real animosity. You're not positive she's even really looked at you. Want to threaten her or offer her something, or something? Then you can roll."

READ A SITCH

When you **read a charged situation**, roll+sharp. On a hit, you can ask the MC questions. Whenever you act on one of the MC's answers, take +1. On a 10+, ask 3. On a 7-9, ask 1:

- where's my best escape route / way in / way past?
- which enemy is most vulnerable to me?
- which enemy is the biggest threat?
- what should I be on the lookout for?
- what's my enemy's true position?
- who's in control here?

Reading a situation can mean carefully checking things out, studying and analyzing, or it can mean a quick look over the wall and going by gut. Depends on the character.

As MC, sometimes you'll already know the answers to these and sometimes you won't. Either way, you do have to commit to the answers when you give them. The +1 is there to make it concrete.

Spring sudden unhappy revelations on people every chance you get. That's the best.

A character can't read the same charged situation more than once.

If the situation is partly other players' characters' making, you can ask them to help you answer. "I don't know, actually. [Turning to Bran's player] hey, would you say that Bran is vulnerable to Keeler right now?"

Examples:

"So that's weird," Marie's player says, at some point. "What IS going on with Birdie?" "Roll to read a sitch," I say. She misses the

roll, so I get to make as hard a move as I like. A good one here is to **turn the move back on her**, so that's what I choose. "I dunno what's up with her," I say. "I mean, I do, but she's opaque to you. Anyway, where would you say you're most vulnerable to her?"

Keeler's feeling like she's doing good but she double checks just to reassure herself. She hits the roll with a 9. I'm pretty sure that she should be on the lookout for an ambush, don't you think?

Bran doesn't like the way things are going, so he takes a quick look around. He hits the roll with an 11, so let's see. Tum Tum isn't his biggest threat, Tum Tum's psychically-linked cultist-bodyguards are. His enemy's true position is closing in slowly around Tum Tum's temple, where they're talking. And if things go to shit? I think his best escape route would be to take one or the other of Tum Tum hostage. (Bran's player: "Aw fuck.")

An example of a mistakes & corrections:

Wilson's got an old plastic box, like an interoffice mail box, with 2 dozen fresh apples in it. He brokered them from somewhere and now he's delivering them to his client Partridge, but there's as usual a stretch of way he has to go through that's in Dremmer's territory. He stops at a safe spot and reads the way forward, and hits with a 10. "Cool. What should I be on the lookout for?" "Dremmer sends patrols through here, of course," I say. "You should be on the lookout for a patrol." "Makes sense. How far will I have to go exposed?" "A few hundred yards, it looks like," I say. "Okay," he says. "Question 3—" "Oh no, no," I say. "That didn't use up any of your hold, I was just telling you what you see." "Oh! Great. How often do the patrols come through?" I shake my head. "You don't know. Could be whenever." "But can't I make that my question, so you have to answer it?" "Nope!" I say. "You can spend your hold to make me answer questions from the list. Other questions don't use up your hold, but I get to answer them or not, depending on whatever." "Okay, I get it," he says. "So I'm on question 2 still? What's my enemy's true position?"

READ A PERSON

*When you **read a person** in a charged interaction, roll+sharp.*

On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7–9, hold 1. While you're interacting with them, spend your hold to ask their player questions, 1 for 1:

- *is your character telling the truth?*
- *what's your character really feeling?*
- *what does your character intend to do?*
- *what does your character wish I'd do?*
- *how could I get your character to __?*

Reading a person is an investment in time. It means studying them carefully through the whole conversation, noticing changes in their tone, the movements of their eyes and hands, their most fleeting expressions. In play, have the player roll this move only (a) when the interaction is genuinely charged, and (b) when you're going to play the interaction through.

Again, you might already know the answers to these questions, you might not. Either way, once you've said them you've committed to them and they're true.

Also again, a character can't just keep reading and rereading someone. Reread someone only when there's been some significant change in between.

The player can make the roll at the very beginning of the conversation, or at any point during it. Her hold lasts until she spends it or until the conversation ends, so there's no rush. It's fair for her to sit on her hold until just the right opportunity for just the right question.

If it's two players' characters interacting, they can totally read each other at the same time. Both roll, both hold, both ask, both answer, no prob.

"Dude, sorry, no way" is a legit answer to "how could I get your character to __?"

And again: unhappy revelations, every chance you get.

Examples:

Marie is trying to reconcile with Roark after fucking it up with Joe's Girl, and going into the conversation she reads him, of course. She misses the roll. Roark, out of his own self-interests, is ready to let bygones be, but now no way I'm telling her that. I get to make as hard a move as I like, and I choose to **offer an opportunity, very much with a cost**. "It's obvious, he hasn't even opened his mouth and it's obvious, he's not going to listen to you," I say. "You can have him back, but you're going to have to in-brain puppet strings him to do it."

Keeler's sitting back watching Foster give orders and receive reports, all business. Keeler pays attention to her manner, mood, body language, and hits the roll with a 7. She asks almost idly what Foster's really feeling. "She's scared," I say. "Scared? Of what?" she says. "Of Marie," I say, as honesty demands. "She is?" she says. "But that would mean ...Oh shit."

Bran promises to reboot Jeanette's brain off Tum Tums', but it's definitely worth knowing what Tum Tum intends, so he watches them carefully while they're talking. He asks what they're feeling, and it's a mix of malice, impatience and hope. He's like, "malice?" so he asks what they intend. "It becomes increasingly clear, the way they shoot these subtle looks back and forth between them or something, but you're pretty sure they intend to kill you afterward." They keep talking and he asks "how could I get them to let me go?" Good luck with that, buddy.

An example of a mistake & correction:

Wilson's connected with Keeler to ask for her help, and she's reluctant, so he decides to read her. He hits with an 11. "Okay! So how could I get you to help me, what do you intend to do, and I guess what are you really feeling—" "Whoa stop," I say. "Hold onto those, ask them during the conversation, not all up front. You can ask one now if you want, but then you two keep talking. Ask them as you go."

READING A SITCH OR A PERSON

When a character reads a charged situation, the player asks all the questions up-front, right then. When a character reads a person, though, the player holds onto the questions and asks them one by one during their interaction. You may have to remind the players a few times before they get in the habit.

Strictly speaking, the player should ask questions from the lists, and no other. Some players, you'll find, won't do this naturally, they'll just out and ask whatever's on their mind. My recommendation is to take it in stride: the rules require you to *answer* a question from the list, even if the player *asks* some other question, and there's no need for you to draw attention to it.

For instance, let's say that Keeler's about to step out into some hotly contested territory, so she reads the sitch. "Am I about to walk into an ambush?" her player says. I could be a picky stickly and insist that she choose a question verbatim, but fuck that, right? I'll just pretend she asked "what's my enemy's true position" and answer as though she had. "There's a fantastic spot for an ambush, a chokepoint you'll have to pass through," maybe I say. "I'd bet a hundred jingle that Disember's fuckers are there waiting."

When the player blows the roll to read a sitch or read a person, one of my favorite moves is to **turn the questions back on them**. "Hey by the way, where are you most vulnerable? Also, what should Roark be on the lookout for? And while I'm at it, what's his best escape route?" and then use the player's answers to just fucking bring it *home*.

OPEN YOUR BRAIN

*When you **open your brain to the world's psychic maelstrom**, roll+weird. On a hit, the MC will tell you something new and interesting about the current situation, and might ask you a question or two; answer them. On a 10+, the MC will give you good detail. On a 7–9, the MC will give you an impression. If you already know all there is to know, the MC will tell you that.*

The player will want to choose a topic, naturally. She'll say "I open my brain *about* Tum Tum" or something. It's fine to give her what she wants, much of the time — after all, you want everybody to be opening their brains, you don't want to chase them away from it — but not all the time. Sometimes you should tell them about your favorite topic instead, and sometimes you should tell them what they need to know, if only they knew to ask.

Remember to respond with fuckery and put your bloody fingerprints on it no matter what.

At first when you ask questions, they can be simply to establish facts and images, questions like "what's the psychic maelstrom like (for you)?" and "how do you learn things from it?" As the game progresses, though, ask questions about the characters' lives, pasts, psyches, souls. "Who was your first kiss? Tell about it." "Are you happy?" "What's the worst hurt you've suffered that you can't remember?" "If you could take one conversation back, undo it, what would it be?" "If you were to kill Bran right this minute, how would you do it?" Make time for the players' answers, and don't let the players squirm out of them just because they never thought about it. "I know you don't know who your first kiss was. Make it up!"

Also take full advantage of the characters' open brains to barf forth apocalyptic. What if there's somebody in the maelstrom that they know? What if some part of the maelstrom stays inside their brain when they close it again? What if the maelstrom sweeps a certain key memory out of their brain while it's in there, or gives them a brand new fresh one?

As to the good details versus the impressions, look to your fronts to provide them. The "you already know all there is to know" clause is there, but I've never used it and I hope you never do too.

Examples:

Marie practically keeps house in the world's psychic maelstrom. She thinks ghosts live in there and maybe she's right. She goes in there to consult with them, and (unusually) misses the roll. I'm tempted to **capture her**, but instead for my hard move I decide to **announce future badness** — not often a hard move, but in this case it counts. We play out her conversation with the ghosts, but they aren't helpful and she comes out frustrated. "Roark's there," I say. "He looks happy, his face has this look of wonder on it. 'Marie!' he says. 'Marie, such a gift you've given me!'" "I what?" she says. "'Roark, are you okay?'" "'I'm not Roark,'" I say, and not in Roark's voice. "'It's me, Monk!'"

Keeler, against every instinct in her body and soul, opens her brain once to the world's psychic maelstrom, because she's once-in-a-lifetime desperate. She hits with a 9. I tell her that the vultures are circling and they aren't real, but they all have the faces of Tum Tum. "What?" she says. "What does Tum Tum have to do with this shit? Jesus, cryptic much?"

Bran wants to know if his crazy ass scheme to reboot Jeanette's brain can possibly work. He opens his brain and hits with a 12. The world's psychic maelstrom is of the opinion not only that it will work, but that it's a *really great idea*.

HELP OR INTERFERE

*When you **help or interfere with** someone who's making a roll, roll+Hx. On a hit, they take +1 (help) or -2 (interfere) now. On a 7–9, you also expose yourself to fire, danger, retribution or cost.*

Always ask how! To do it, you've got to do it. "I'm helping" is the same kind of unacceptably vague as "I'm going aggro" — you answer them both with "cool, what do you do?"

Rolling+Hx means rolling plus the Hx with them you have on your sheet.

It's best if both the players — the acting one, the helping or interfering one — roll at the same time, but don't be a nit about it. If the player's like "oh wait a second! I provide covering fire

of course, am I too late to roll to help?” the answer’s no, not too late.

If more than one person helps somebody, hooray! They’re popular. But they still get only the single +1. Same with interfering, just the single -2. Also don’t let helping and interfering nest. Someone helps someone make their move, they don’t help someone help someone or help someone interfere with someone or any such shit.

There will occasionally be times when the player rolls a 7–9, but there’s no fire, danger, retribution or cost that you can come up with. Think hard: seriously no cost at all? If seriously none, shrug and move on. She caught a break.

Examples:

Marie’s helping Keeler get into the water cult house by talking animatedly with Tum Tum, trying to hold their attention while Keeler sneaks behind them. (On a 7–9, maybe Tum Tum start pressing her for ... unsavory commitments, with threats to back them up.) Marie misses the roll, so I get to make as hard a move as I like. I choose to **put Keeler in a spot**. “Do you glance Keeler’s way? Or do they read your mind? Or what? Anyway, one of them turns, very deliberately, and Keeler, looks right at you. What do you do?”

Bran’s going aggro on Marser, threatening his life, his family’s lives, the lives of everyone he’s ever known. Keeler’s helping by sitting nearby, idly loading gun after gun. (Maybe on a 7–9, Marser decides the real threat is Keeler and the only way to be safe is to get rid of her.) In fact Keeler hits the roll with an 8, so Bran gets the +1 to his aggro roll, but Marser does indeed so decide. He’ll move against Keeler first chance he gets.

Keeler’s trying to get out of a firefight with Dremmer and Balls with her skin more or less intact. Bran’s interfering with her by shining a targeting laser on her. (Maybe on a 7–9, she notices.) He hits with an 11, so Keeler gets the -2.

MUTUAL INTERFERENCE

A character’s allowed to interfere with someone making a roll against her. That’s as close as this game gets to opposed rolls.

Here’s an example that’s likely to come up: one character pulls out her smg and opens up on another. “Jesus! I dive behind, like, the old tractor, and try to make my way around behind you.” MC: “Roll+cool to do something under fire.” “Like I just stand here and wait for you to get away? No way. I chase after you, I jump up on top of the tractor, I rain hell down—” MC: “Roll+Hx to interfere.”

It works exactly the same way when both characters (or indeed any number) interfere with one another. If the character under attack responds by returning fire, for instance, you could call for both players to roll+cool to act under fire and roll+Hx to interfere with the other. Or imagine two players’ characters sitting down to negotiate the fate of some contested, valuable NPC. Both try to read the other, and both try their best to be unreadable. Same thing: both roll+sharp to read a person, and both roll+Hx to interfere with the other’s roll.

SESSION END

At the end of every session, choose a character who knows you better than they used to. If there’s more than one, choose one at your whim. Tell that player to add +1 to their Hx with you on their sheet. If this brings them to Hx+4, they reset to Hx+1 (and therefore mark experience).

If you forget to do this at the end of a session, be sure to do it at the beginning of the next. It’s important.

Every player has to choose someone, no skips.

By default, every player chooses someone who knows her character better, like it says. However, it’s also acceptable for a player to choose someone who knows her character worse, or who showed that they didn’t know her character as well as they thought, and give them -1Hx. In that case, Hx-4 resets to Hx-1.

When someone’s Hx goes to +4 or -4 and she resets it, she also marks experience. That’s in the improvement section in the character playbooks. Don’t overlook it.

Resetting Hx from +4 to +1 doesn’t mean that now you know them less than you did, obviously not. It means that you’ve

crossed a threshold of knowing them, kind of like how both of your brothers know you better than a coworker does, but you can still say that one of them knows you better than the other.

Also, you get to mark experience, and without this reset the helping and interfering rules would crash, so don't complain.

Examples:

During the session, Marie and Keeler had a light-but-honest conversation, and Marie said maybe something that wasn't a big deal, but she'd never said it to anyone before. Marie's player tells Keeler's to take +1Hx.

Keeler, however, was completely appalled by what Marie said, and withdrew from her abruptly. Marie didn't even notice but kept right on talking. Keeler's player tells Marie's to take -1Hx.

During the session, Bran pursued his own interests mostly apart from the other two, enlisting them both occasionally but without really revealing himself to either. If he could, he'd pass, but he can't. He chooses to tell Marie's player to take the +1Hx, more or less arbitrarily, and figures he'll choose Keeler next time.

PERIPHERAL MOVES

These are basic moves that might or might not be in play.

HARM & HEALING MOVES

By default, the harm & healing moves are in play. You can choose to forego them case by case, when you think that they'll slow the action.

This first harm move is unusual in that a hit is bad for the player and a miss is good. If you find that your players have trouble with this quirk of the move, roll it yourself against them, no grief.

*When you **suffer harm**, roll+harm suffered (after armor, if you're wearing any). On a 10+, the MC can choose 1:*

- *You're out of action: unconscious, trapped, incoherent or panicked.*
- *It's worse than it seemed. Take an additional 1-harm.*
- *Choose 2 from the 7-9 list below.*

On a 7-9, the MC can choose 1:

- *You lose your footing.*
- *You lose your grip on whatever you're holding.*
- *You lose track of someone or something you're attending to.*
- *You miss noticing something important.*

On a miss, the MC can nevertheless choose something from the 7-9 list above. If she does, though, it's instead of some of the harm you're suffering, so you take -1harm.

On a miss, do often choose something from the 7-9 list, even though it gives the player the -1harm. Those effects on the character are usually much more interesting than the mere mechanical harm.

*When you **inflict harm on another player's character**, the other character gets +1Hx with you (on their sheet) for every segment of harm you inflict. If this brings them to Hx+4, they reset to Hx+1 as usual, and therefore mark experience.*

When you **heal another player's character's harm**, you get +1Hx with them (on your sheet) for every segment of harm you heal. If this brings you to Hx+4, you reset to Hx+1 as usual, and therefore mark experience.

You can remember it like this: when you hurt someone, they see you more clearly: now they know what you'll do to them. When you heal someone, you see them more clearly: there's nobody so uniquely vulnerable and exposed as an injured person in your care.

BARTER MOVES

By default, characters have access to the barter moves, but you can limit or ignore them if you think they might not suit your Apocalypse World.

When you **give 1-barter to someone, but with strings attached**, it counts as manipulating them and hitting the roll with a 10+, no roll required.

When you **go into a holding's bustling market**, looking for some particular thing to buy, and it's not obvious whether you should be able to just like go buy one like that, roll+sharp. On a 10+, yes, you can just go can buy it like that. On a 7–9, the MC chooses one of the following:

- it costs 1-barter more than you'd expect
- it's available, but only if you meet with a guy who knows a guy
- damn, I had one, I just sold it to this guy named Rolfball, maybe you can go get it off him?
- sorry, I don't have that, but maybe this will do instead?

Choose someone other than Rolfball if you like.

When it's obvious whether the character can just go buy the thing, it might be obvious that she can, or obvious that she can't. "Obvious" is for you to decide, but do remember that your agenda is to make Apocalypse World seem real and to make the characters' lives interesting, not to arbitrarily deny them things they want or would find useful.

When you **make known that you want a thing and drop jingle to speed it on its way**, roll+barter spent (max roll+3). It has to be a thing you could legitimately get this way. On a 10+ it comes to you, no strings attached. On a 7–9 it comes to you, or something pretty close. On a miss, it comes to you, but with strings very much attached.

"Strings very much attached," of course, is just another way to say that you can make as hard and direct a move as you like.

AUGURY

By default, nobody has access to augury, but a hocus' followers, a savvyhead's workspace, or other circumstances might give it.

When you use your followers or your workspace for **augury**, roll+weird. On a hit, you can choose 1:

- Reach through the world's psychic maelstrom to something or someone connected to it.
- Isolate and protect a person or thing from the world's psychic maelstrom.
- Isolate and contain a fragment of the world's psychic maelstrom itself.
- Insert information into the world's psychic maelstrom.
- Open a window into the world's psychic maelstrom.

By default, the effect will last only as long as you maintain it, will reach only shallowly into the world's psychic maelstrom as it is local to you, and will bleed instability. On a 10+, choose 2; on a 7–9, choose 1:

- It'll persist (for a while) without your actively maintaining it.
- It reaches deep into the world's psychic maelstrom.
- It reaches broadly throughout the world's psychic maelstrom.
- It's stable and contained, no bleeding.

On a miss, whatever bad happens, your antenna takes the brunt of it.

This move is big crazy fun, and a fantastic opportunity for you to barf forth apocalyptica. It may call for you to make snap decisions about the workings of the world's psychic maelstrom. Do.

INSIGHT

By default, nobody has access to insight, but a hocus' followers or other circumstances might give it.

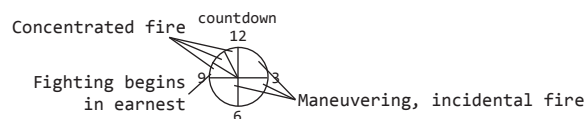
*When you use your followers for **insight**, ask your followers what they think your best course is, and the MC will tell you. If you pursue that course, take +1 to any rolls you make in the pursuit. If you pursue that course, but don't accomplish your ends, you mark experience.*

Unless there's a good reason for the followers to be in the dark, you should use your behind-the-scenes knowledge to give good advice.

OPTIONAL BATTLE MOVES

It's very easy to play out a battle using only basic moves and the characters' moves. Reading a charged situation, doing something under fire, going aggro, seizing something by force, helping and interfering, especially — you can get through any battle with just those. So by default, the optional battle moves and battle countdown are not in play. They come into play only if you as MC find that your play wants them. I especially don't recommend them for the first session.

Battle countdown:



Use a countdown clock to manage the battle. Before 9:00 is for positioning, setup and maneuvering. It can include some incidental fire and snap attacks, but no fighting in earnest. At 9:00, everyone's positions are settled and final; now you're fighting in earnest, with coordinated attacks and concentrated fire. At 12:00 the battle ends.

In every countdown segment, everybody gets to do one thing. It may be a move, may be part of a move — like spending 1 hold — or may be a single action that counts as more than one move. During each segment, everybody's actions are simultaneous,

and everybody who's rolling dice rolls them at the same time. Once everyone's done their one thing, advance the clock.

Read the clock both prescriptively and descriptively. Prescriptively: if you come to 9:00 by advancing the clock naturally, set everyone's positions now as final and bring the fighting in earnest. If you're before 9:00 though, and yet someone starts fighting in earnest, organizing their attacks and concentrating their fire, bam, you're at 9:00 now, all abruptly, descriptively. *Here's* everyone's final positions, whether they like it or not.

At 12:00 the battle ends. Make the dispositions of the sides at that moment final. If one side's dominating the other, that's how it ends, with that side dominating and the other dominated. If it's a stalemate, the battle ends stalemated, with both sides withdrawing or entrenching. If it's a bloodbath, at 12:00 there's nobody really left whose blood to let. Make whatever moves you need to make to get there.

Read the clock prescriptively and descriptively here too. If you come to 12:00 by counting down, make the battle end; if the battle ends itself sooner, make the countdown abruptly to 12:00.

There can be another battle immediately, but make it a new battle on its own terms, not a refighting of the one that's over.

*When you **provide covering fire for someone**, roll+cool. On a 10+, you keep them from coming under concentrated fire, even past 9:00. On a 7–9, their position or course is untenable, and they proceed accordingly. On a miss, they suffer concentrated fire now. (If it's before 9:00, now it's 9:00.)*

*When you **maintain an untenable position or course**, roll+hard. On a 10+, you can hold it, and for 3 ticks you'll come under only incidental fire, even past 9:00. On a 7–9, you can hold it, and for a tick you'll come under only incidental fire. Either way you can abandon it before your time is up to avoid concentrated fire. On a miss, abandon it now or suffer concentrated fire. (If it's before 9:00, now it's 9:00.)*

*When you **stay the fuck down**, roll+sharp. On a hit, you're in a relatively safe spot for the rest of the battle. On a 10+, you come under no fire. On a 7–9, you come under only incidental fire. On a miss, you have to break position now or come under concentrated fire.*

When you **follow through on someone else's move**, roll+Hx. If it's one of the MC's characters', roll+sharp. On a 10+, the MC chooses one of the following for you, as appropriate:

- you inflict +1harm
- you dominate someone's position
- you make an untenable position or course secure
- you avoid all fire
- you create an opportunity and follow through to full effect

On a 7–9, you create an opportunity, but you haven't seized it or followed through on it yet. The MC will tell you what it is.

On a miss, the MC chooses one of the above for an appropriate character of her own.

Understand these moves far more strictly than you understand the basic moves. Doing something under fire, “under fire” can mean any kind of pressure or hostility, right? But providing covering fire, “covering fire” means, very strictly, bullets in the air. When you're maintaining an untenable position or course, “untenable position or course” means that you'll get killed, not like an untenable *rhetorical* position or a destructive *relationship* course.

Also, they're pretty much bullet-oriented. They mostly aren't appropriate for hand-to-hand fighting — hand-to-hand fighting is best served by the basic moves.

If these battle moves don't make immediate sense to you, don't use them. If you do use them, use them only to supplement, not to replace or supersede, the basic moves.

INCIDENTAL AND CONCENTRATED FIRE

Incidental fire means 0-harm (bullets snapping overhead and all around, smacking into the fallen back hoe you're down behind, that kind of thing) or 1-harm (ricochets connecting, or bullets spun by cover or fired from far-off on dim chance), at the plain whim of you, the MC. Remember your principles.

Concentrated fire means the enemy's full harm, as established by their weapons and their numbers, as normal.

**RULES OF PLAY:
CHARACTER
MOVES**

RULES OF PLAY: CHARACTER MOVES

Many of these should be self-explanatory. They let the player roll+a different stat when her character does a given basic move, for instance, or change the harm the character inflicts, or give the character special armor. Straightforward.

For the rest, my notes.

ANGEL MOVES

The angel chooses 2 of these:

Sixth sense: *when you open your brain to the world's psychic maelstrom, roll+sharp instead of roll+weird.*

Infirmary: *you get an infirmary, a workspace with life support, a drug lab and a crew of 2 (Shigusa & Mox, maybe). Get patients into it and you can work on them like a savvyhead on tech (cf).*

See workspaces in the crap chapter for details, page 247.

The infirmary's crew can include PCs and NPCs. Shigusa and Mox are just name suggestions — if you already have other suitable NPCs, feel free to use them instead.

Professional compassion: *you can roll+sharp instead of roll+Hx when you help someone who's rolling.*

Battlefield grace: *while you are caring for people, not fighting, you get +1armor.*

Unlike several of the other characters' "you get armor" moves, this one adds to any real armor the angel's wearing.

Healing touch: *when you put your hands skin-to-skin on a wounded person and open your brain to them, roll+weird. On a 10+, heal 1 segment. On a 7–9, heal 1 segment, but you're acting under fire from your patient's brain. On a miss: first, you don't heal them. Second, you've opened both your brain and theirs to the world's psychic maelstrom, without protection or preparation. For you, and for your patient if your patient's a fellow player's character, treat it as though you've made that move and missed the roll. For patients belonging to the MC, their experience and fate is up to the MC.*

See the harm & healing chapter for details, page 172.

When you get the opportunity to open an NPC's brain to the world's psychic maelstrom, oh man, take that fucker. That's an opportunity to break the fabric of the world, to show how wrong things really are.

Touched by death: *whenever someone in your care dies, you get +1weird (max +3).*

If the angel kills her on purpose, no, that doesn't really count as "in her care." Just being in the angel's presence doesn't count as in her care either.

When a player takes this move, I make it a personal goal to get her to weird+3 by session 5.

And here's the angel's sex move:

If you and another character have sex, your Hx with them on your sheet goes immediately to +3, and they immediately get +1 to their Hx with you on their sheet. If that brings their Hx with you to +4, they reset it to +1 instead, and so mark experience.

This'll happen during the session, naturally, so it's in addition to the end-of-session basic move.

If an angel and an NPC have sex, there's no mechanical effect.

BATTLEBABE MOVES

The battlebabe chooses 2 of these:

Dangerous & sexy: *when you enter into a charged situation, roll+hot. On a 10+, hold 2. On a 7-9, hold 1. Spend your hold 1 for 1 to make eye contact with an NPC present, who freezes or flinches and can't take action until you break it off. On a miss, your enemies identify you immediately as their foremost threat.*

If the battlebabe does something like, I dunno, jumping from one moving truck to another or throwing a machete into a dude's face, you can just insist that the battlebabe has broken off eye contact. For iffy cases, you can have the battlebabe act under fire to maintain it.

Ice cold: *when you go aggro on an NPC, roll+cool instead of roll+hard. When you go aggro on another player's character, roll+Hx instead of roll+hard.*

Merciless: *when you inflict harm, inflict +1harm.*

Visions of death: *when you go into battle, roll+weird. On a 10+, name one person who'll die and one who'll live. On a 7-9, name one person who'll die OR one person who'll live. Don't name a player's character; name NPCs only. The MC will make your vision come true, if it's even remotely possible. On a miss, you foresee your own death, and accordingly take -1 throughout the battle.*

This move is a love letter from the player to you. Be delighted and grateful, and kill, kill, kill.

"Take -1 throughout the battle," as you'd expect, means that the player subtracts 1 from every single roll she makes until the battle's over.

Perfect instincts: *when you've read a charged situation and you're acting on the MC's answers, take +2 instead of +1.*

Impossible reflexes: *the way you move unencumbered counts as armor. If you're naked or nearly naked, 2-armor; if you're wearing non-armor fashion, 1-armor. If you're wearing armor, use it instead.*

And here's the battlebabe's sex move:

If you and another character have sex, nullify the other character's sex move. Whatever it is, it just doesn't happen.

For example, when a hardholder and a battlebabe have sex, the hardholder gives the battlebabe no gift; when a driver and a battlebabe have sex, the driver doesn't roll+cool; when a savvyhead and a battlebabe have sex, the savvyhead doesn't get to read her.

If a battlebabe and an NPC have sex, there's no mechanical effect. Um, still. Either. Also.

BRAINER MOVES

The brainer chooses 2 of these:

Unnatural lust transfixion: *when you try to seduce someone, roll+weird instead of roll+hot.*

Notice that this is only for trying to seduce, not for trying to manipulate non-sexually.

For NPCs, I like to give this move non-mechanical long-term effects, in keeping with its name. I'm already looking at them through crosshairs, right? Letting a brainer completely alter their sexual proclivities is no stretch.

Casual brain receptivity: *when you read someone, roll+weird instead of roll+sharp. Your victim has to be able to see you, but you don't have to interact.*

Preternatural at-will brain attunement: you get +1weird (weird+3).

Because brainers already have weird+2, +1weird gives them weird+3. If somebody else takes this move, though, it doesn't give them weird+3, it just gives them +1 to their existing weird, to a *maximum* of weird+3.

Deep brain scan: when you have time and physical intimacy with someone — mutual intimacy like holding them in your arms, or 1-sided intimacy like they're restrained to a table — you can read them more deeply than normal. Roll+weird. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7–9, hold 1. While you're reading them, spend your hold to ask their player questions, 1 for 1:

- what was your character's lowest moment?
- for what does your character crave forgiveness, and of whom?
- what are your character's secret pains?
- in what ways are your character's mind and soul vulnerable?

On a miss, you inflict 1-harm (ap) upon your subject, to no benefit.

These questions are also good for when someone opens their brain to the world's psychic maelstrom and you want something intimate to ask them.

In-brain puppet strings: when you have time and physical intimacy with someone — again, mutual or 1-sided — you can plant a command inside their mind. Roll+weird. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7–9, hold 1. At your will, no matter the circumstances, you can spend your hold 1 for 1:

- inflict 1-harm (ap)
- they take -1 right now

If they fulfill your command, that counts for all your remaining hold. On a miss, you inflict 1-harm (ap) upon your subject, to no benefit.

Since you never roll dice for NPCs, the -1 right now option is for PCs only. NPCs, the brainer can only hurt.

AP means armor piercing, so when these moves inflict harm, they ignore armor.

Direct-brain whisper projection: you can roll+weird to get the effects of going aggro, without going aggro. Your victim has to be able to see you, but you don't have to interact. If your victim

forces your hand, your mind counts as a weapon (1-harm ap close loud-optional).

Loud-optional means that the player gets to choose loud or not loud, case-by-case. If she chooses loud, it's the victim making all that noise.

And here's the brainer's sex move:

If you and another character have sex, you automatically do a **deep brain scan** on them, whether you have the move or not. Roll+weird as normal. However, the MC chooses which questions the other character's player answers.

This move applies if the brainer and an NPC have sex.

CHOPPER MOVES

The chopper gets both of these:

Pack alpha: when you try to impose your will on your gang, roll+hard. On a 10+, all 3. On a 7–9, choose 1:

- they do what you want
- they don't fight back over it
- you don't have to make an example of one of them

On a miss, someone in your gang makes a dedicated bid to replace you for alpha.

See the crap chapter for details about gangs, page 249, and about how to use a gang as a weapon, page 253.

"When you try to impose your will," not "whenever you give an order." Most of the time a gang should follow its alpha's orders without this move. The move is for orders that contradict the gang's instincts or strong self-interests.

If the gang fights back over it, as MC you have a choice: (1) summarize the fight. They just inflict harm as normal, determined by their weapons and your armor (you can have them choose not to go all the way with their weapons, if the circumstances don't call for a full-on battle). Or else (2) zoom in on the fight, playing it out in full, with the chopper making moves and the gang making moves, and attending to all the consequences of all of the moves they make.

Either way, the harm & healing chapter has details, page 159.

If the chopper makes an example of one of them, that means inflicting harm as normal, determined by her weapon and the gang member's armor. But it better be enough to really make an example.

Just to lay it right out: on a 7–9, the player's choices are (1) they do what you want, after a fight in which they beat the shit out of you but you make an example of one of them; (2) they don't do what you want, but you make an example of one of them and so they don't beat the shit out of you; (3) you don't make an example of one of them, so they beat the shit out of you and don't do what you want.

"Makes a dedicated bid" doesn't mean "takes on as an all-consuming life goal" or anything like that. It just means one fully intent challenge to the character's authority.

Fucking thieves: *when you have your gang search their pockets and saddlebags for something, roll+hard. It has to be something small enough to fit. On a 10+, one of you happens to have just the thing, or close enough. On a 7–9, one of you happens to have something pretty close, unless what you're looking for is hi-tech, in which case no dice. On a miss, one of you used to have just the thing, but it turns out that some asswipe stole it from you.*

Be sure to have the aggrieved party — the robbed NPC gang member — name the asswipe it must have been. Or, you know, whoever comes to mind.

"Oh shit, remember that fuckin guy, what was his name? Bran? Fucker must have swiped it when we were parked around that time. Let's fuck him up." (Bran's player: "I wha? I did not. Shit.")

Meanwhile, you should also decide who actually did steal it.

And here's the chopper's sex move:

If you and another character have sex, they immediately change their sheet to say Hx+3 with you. They also choose whether to give you -1 or +1 to your Hx with them, on your sheet.

If a chopper and an NPC have sex, there's no mechanical effect.

DRIVER MOVES

The driver gets this one:

A no shit driver: *when behind the wheel...*

...if you do something under fire, add your car's power to your roll.

...if you try to seize something by force, add your car's power to your roll.

...if you go aggro, add your car's power to your roll.

...if you try to seduce or manipulate someone, add your car's looks to your roll.

...if you help or interfere with someone, add your car's power to your roll.

...if someone interferes with you, add your car's weakness to their roll.

If you're using the optional battle moves (for which, see the peripheral moves section of the basic moves chapter, page 212), add these:

...if you provide covering fire for someone, add your car's power to your cool.

...if you maintain an untenable position or course, add your car's power to your hard.

...if you follow through on someone else's move, add your car's power to your Hx.

Drivers get to add their cars' stats to most of their basic moves — notably excluding the ones that call for a roll+sharp or a roll+weird — but not to any of their special moves.

And the driver chooses 1 of these:

Good in the clinch: *when you do something under fire, roll+sharp instead of roll+cool.*

Weather eye: *when you open your brain to the world's psychic maelstrom, roll+sharp instead of roll+weird.*

Daredevil: *if you go straight into danger without hedging your bets, you get +1armor. If you happen to be leading a gang or convoy, it gets +1armor too.*

This special armor adds to any real armor that the driver's wearing, the driver's car provides, and the gang or convoy has.

Collector: you get 2 additional cars.

My other car is a tank: you get an additional car. Give it mounted machine guns (3-harm messy) or grenade launchers (3-harm area loud) and +1armor.

The player creates additional cars with the same usual car creation rules. They're in the playbook, and they're also in this book in the crap chapter, page 246.

And here's the driver's sex move:

If you and another character have sex, roll+cool. On a 10+, it's cool, no big deal. On a 7-9, give them +1 to their Hx with you on their sheet, but give yourself -1 to your Hx with them on yours. On a miss, you gotta go: take -1 ongoing, until you prove that it's not like they own you or nothing.

MC, you're the judge of whether she's proved it. Remember that your agenda is to make Apocalypse World seem real and to make the characters' lives not boring, not to make the players jump through stupid hoops.

This move applies if the driver and an NPC have sex, but a 7-9 just counts as a 10+.

GUNLUGGER MOVES

The gunlugger chooses 3 of these:

Battle-hardened: when you act under fire, roll+hard instead of roll+cool.

Fuck this shit: name your escape route and roll+hard. On a 10+, sweet, you're gone. On a 7-9, you can go or stay, but if you go it costs you: leave something behind, or take something with you, the MC will tell you what. On a miss, you're caught vulnerable, half in and half out.

"Take something with you" can mean that the gunlugger suffers harm on her way out. She'd suffer harm as normal, determined by her enemy's weapon and her armor. It can mean taking a person too, like "I can get you through that door, but you gotta take me with you."

"Caught vulnerable" is just another name for "MC, you get to make a move yourself, and as hard and direct a move as you like."

Battlefield instincts: when you open your brain to the world's psychic maelstrom, roll+hard instead of roll+weird, but only in battle.

Insano like Drano: you get +1hard (hard+3).

Because gunluggers already have hard+2, +1hard gives them hard+3. If somebody else takes this move, though, it doesn't give them hard+3, it just gives them +1 to their existing hard, to a maximum of hard+3.

Prepared for the inevitable: you have a well-stocked and high-quality first aid kit. It counts as an angel kit (cf) with a capacity of 2-stock.

For angel kits, see the crap chapter, page 244.

Bloodcrazed: whenever you inflict harm, inflict +1harm.

NOT TO BE FUCKED WITH: in battle, you count as a gang (3-harm gang small), with armor according to the circumstances.

This is true, but going aggro on someone or acting under fire or even seizing something by force doesn't make it automatically a battle. It has to be a *battle*.

And here's the gunlugger's sex move:

If you and another character have sex, you take +1 forward. At your option, they take +1 forward too.

Recall that "take +1forward" just means that they add 1 to their single next roll. This move applies if the gunlugger and an NPC have sex, but obviously NPCs can't take +1 forward.

HARDHOLDER MOVES

The hardholder gets both of these:

Leadership: *when your gang fights for you, roll+hard. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7–9, hold 1. Over the course of the fight, spend your hold 1 for 1 to make your gang:*

- *make a hard advance*
- *stand strong against a hard advance*
- *make an organized retreat*
- *show mercy to their defeated enemies*
- *fight and die to the last*

On a miss, your gang turns on you or tries to hand you over to your enemy.

Each one of those things can be a move on the part of the hardholder. For instance, “we storm their encampment, we gotta get through that wall” is both making a hard advance and seizing something by force, so the player spends 1 hold and rolls+hard.

When the gang is fighting but the hardholder doesn’t spend hold, they fight conservatively, for their own survival, or else they fight according to their impulse as a threat.

See the crap chapter for details about gangs, including about how to use a gang as a weapon, page 249. See the fronts chapter for details about threats’ impulses, page 138.

Here’s Graham: “My interpretation of [missing the roll], by the way, is that a missed roll doesn’t necessarily mean your gang turning on you completely, ousting you, taking over the headquarters... Instead, it means one of your lieutenants stands up to you, or they abandon you in a fight, or something. So it’s a temporary and significant disloyalty, but it doesn’t mean you’ve lost your gang.”

He’s exactly right.

Wealth: *If your hold is secure and your rule unchallenged, at the beginning of the session, roll+hard. On a 10+, you have surplus at hand and available for the needs of the session. On a 7–9, you have surplus, but choose 1 want. On a miss, or if your hold is compromised or your rule contested, your hold is in want. The precise values of your surplus and want depend on your holding, as follows.*

Have the hardholder make this move at the beginning of session 1, of course.

It’s not cool for you to open a session with the hardholder’s hold being *newly* insecure or her rule being *newly* challenged, when at the end of the last session it wasn’t. Those are the kinds of things that can only, and should only, happen in play, during the session.

See the crap chapter for details about holdings’ surplus and want, page 258.

And here’s the hardholder’s sex move:

If you and another character have sex, you can give the other character gifts worth 1-barter, at no cost to you.

It doesn’t matter how impoverished the holding is, there’s always some 1-barter thing the hardholder can give as a gift. However, it’s legit for you as MC to insist that she come up with something at least plausible.

See the crap chapter for a big list of things worth 1-barter, page 235.

This move applies if the hardholder and an NPC have sex.

HOCUS MOVES

The hocus gets this one:

Fortunes: *fortune, surplus and want all depend on your followers. At the beginning of the session, roll+fortune. On a 10+, your followers have surplus. On a 7–9, they have surplus, but choose 1 want. On a miss, they are in want. If their surplus lists barter, like 1-barter or 2-barter, that’s your personal share.*

Have the hocus make this move at the beginning of session 1, of course.

Fortune is the stat followers have. This move is the only thing fortune is for.

See the crap chapter for details about followers, surplus and want, page 258.

And the hocus chooses 2 of these:

Frenzy: *When you speak the truth to a mob, roll+weird. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7–9, hold 1. Spend your hold 1 for 1 to make the mob:*

- *bring people forward and deliver them.*
 - *bring forward all their precious things.*
 - *unite and fight for you as a gang (2-harm 0-armor size appropriate).*
 - *fall into an orgy of uninhibited emotion: fucking, lamenting, fighting, sharing, celebrating, as you choose.*
 - *go quietly back to their lives.*
- On a miss, the mob turns on you.*

MC, you're the judge whether the hocus is speaking truth to a mob. Remember that your agenda is to make Apocalypse World seem real, and to make the characters' lives not boring, NOT to preserve your NPCs' lives, dignity, self-determination or status quo. There are no status quos in Apocalypse World.

If the hocus makes the mob bring people forward and deliver them, they have to be people within the mob's reach, and few enough that the mob can overpower them. Otherwise, you're allowed to have the mob decline or its victims resist; this doesn't use up any of the hocus' hold.

For gang size, 10–25 people means small, 25–50 people means medium, and more than 50 people means large.

If the mob happens to be a gang, or include a gang, you can use the gang's existing stats instead of the stats listed in the move.

Charismatic: *when you try to manipulate someone, roll+weird instead of roll+hot.*

Fucking wacknut: *you get +1weird (weird+3).*

Because hocuses already have weird+2, +1weird gives them weird+3. If somebody else takes this move, though, it doesn't give them weird+3, it just gives them +1 to their existing weird, to a *maximum* of weird+3.

Seeing souls: *when you help or interfere with someone, roll+weird instead of roll+Hx.*

Divine protection: *your gods give you 1-armor. If you wear armor, use that instead, they don't add.*

And here's the hocus' sex move:

If you and another character have sex, you each hold 1. Either of you can spend your hold any time to help or interfere with the other, at a distance or despite any barriers that would normally prevent it.

Psychically! Roll+Hx as normal; this gives them the opportunity to help or interfere, not guaranteed success.

If a hocus and an NPC have sex, there's no mechanical effect.

OPERATOR MOVES

The operator gets this one:

Moonlighting: *you get 2-juggling. Whenever there's a stretch of downtime in play, or between sessions, choose a number of your gigs to work. Choose no more than your juggling. Roll+cool. On a 10+, you get profit from all the gigs you chose. On a 7–9, you get profit from at least 1; if you chose more than 1, you get catastrophe from 1 and profit from the rest. On a miss, catastrophe all around. The gigs you aren't working give you neither profit nor catastrophe. Whenever you get a new gig, you also get +1juggling.*

Have the operator make this move at the beginning of the session 1, of course.

See the crap chapter for details about gigs, including profit, catastrophe and neither, page 262.

Moonlighting happens at a natural break in the action — *Whenever there's a stretch of downtime in play, or between sessions*, as the move says — and it gives you good stuff to work with going forward. Give the operator her downtime stretches regularly, you'll be glad you did.

Lots of the characters can get 2 gigs plus moonlighting when they improve. When they do, they get 2-juggling, and if they add more gigs, they get +1juggling for each, just as the move says.

And the operator chooses 1 of these:

Easy to trust: *when you try to seduce or manipulate another player's character, roll+Hx instead of roll+hot. An NPC, roll+cool instead of roll+hot.*

Eye on the door: *name your escape route and roll+cool. On a 10+ you're gone. On a 7-9, you can go or stay, but if you go it costs you: leave something behind, or take something with you, the MC will tell you what. On a miss, you're caught vulnerable, half in and half out.*

"Take something with you" can mean that the operator suffers harm on her way out. She'd suffer harm as normal, determined by her enemy's weapon and her armor. It can mean taking a person too, like "I can get you through that door, but you gotta take me with you."

"Caught vulnerable" is just another name for "MC, you get to make a move yourself, and as hard and direct a move as you like."

Opportunistic: *when you interfere with someone who's rolling, roll+cool instead of roll+Hx. Asshole.*

Reputation: *when you meet someone important (your call), roll+cool. On a hit, they've heard of you, and you say what they've heard; the MC will have them respond accordingly. On a 10+, you take +1forward for dealing with them as well. On a miss, they've heard of you, but the MC will decide what they've heard.*

This move doesn't make the person in question important in any absolute sense, it's just whether the operator thinks she is.

If the operator somehow uses this move on another PC, it's that player, not the MC, who has the character respond, naturally.

And here's the operator's sex move:

If you and another character have sex, get a new obligation gig: keeping [their name] happy (you keep them happy / you fucking blow it).

If you and the same character have sex again, don't get duplicate gigs. Just the first time.

This move totally applies if the operator and an NPC have sex.

See the crap chapter for details about gigs, page 262.

SAVVYHEAD MOVES

The savvyhead chooses 2 of these:

Things speak: *whenever you handle or examine something interesting, roll+weird. On a hit, you can ask the MC questions. On a 10+, ask 3. On a 7-9, ask 1:*

- *who handled this last before me?*
- *who made this?*
- *what strong emotions have been most recently nearby this?*
- *what words have been said most recently nearby this?*
- *what has been done most recently with this, or to this?*
- *what's wrong with this, and how might I fix it?*

Treat a miss as though you've opened your brain to the world's psychic maelstrom and missed the roll.

As with reading a charged sitch: (a) You should enlist the other players' help answering, if they'd know the answers better than you. (b) Don't be super picky about the player asking one of these stock questions, just pretend they asked the nearest one when you give your answer. And (c) whether you already knew the answer or you're making it up now on the spot, you've committed to it.

Bonefeel: *at the beginning of the session, roll+weird. On a 10+, hold 1+1. On a 7-9, hold 1. At any time, either you or the MC can spend your hold to have you already be there, with the proper tools and knowledge, with or without any clear explanation why. If your hold was 1+1, take +1forward now. On a miss, the MC holds 1, and can spend it to have you already be there, but somehow pinned, caught or trapped.*

Have the savvyhead make this move at the beginning of session 1, of course, if she has it.

If the savvyhead is already at the scene, she can use this move to happen to have exactly the right tools with her, more or less retroactively.

"Pinned, caught or trapped" can even include harm, if circumstances are dangerous.

It's best to spend this hold as early in the session as you can, while it's fresh in your mind.

Oftener right: *when a character comes to you for advice, tell them what you honestly think the best course is. If they do it, they take +1 to any rolls they make in the doing, and you mark experience.*

Notice that it's the savvyhead who marks experience and the other character who gets the +1.

"Comes to you for advice" means a whole 2-sided conversation, unhurried and thoughtful, about something relatively significant. Shouting out for advice in the middle of a fight doesn't count, nor does asking the savvyhead whether to dine upon pigmaggot or screwfish tonight.

Reality's fraying edge: *some component of your workspace, or some arrangement of components, is uniquely receptive to the world's psychic maelstrom (+augury). Choose and name it, or else leave it for the MC to reveal during play.*

I don't imagine you'll have any trouble with that.

Augury is a special move that lets you do some crazy shit with the world's psychic maelstrom. The only people who have access to it are savvyheads who choose this move and hocuses who choose the appropriate option for their followers. See the peripheral moves section of the basic moves chapter for details, page 211.

Spooky intense: *when you do something under fire, roll+weird instead of roll+cool.*

Deep insights: *you get +1weird (weird+3).*

Because savvyheads already have weird+2, +1weird gives them weird+3. If somebody else takes this move, though, it doesn't give them weird+3, it just gives them +1 to their existing weird, to a *maximum* of weird+3.

And here's the savvyhead's sex move:

If you and another character have sex, they automatically speak to you, as though they were a thing and you'd rolled a 10+, whether you have the move or not. The other player and the MC will answer your questions between them. (Otherwise, that move never works on people, only things.)

This move applies if the savvyhead and an NPC have sex.

SKINNER MOVES

The skinner chooses 2 of these:

Breathtaking: *you get +1hot (hot+3).*

Because skimmers already have hot+2, +1hot gives them hot+3. If somebody else takes this move, though, it doesn't give them hot+3, it gives them +1 to their existing hot, to a *maximum* of hot+3.

Lost: *when you whisper someone's name to the world's psychic maelstrom, roll+weird. On a hit, they come to you, with or without any clear explanation why. On a 10+, take +1forward against them. On a miss, the MC will ask you 3 questions; answer them truthfully.*

You need to be really serious about those 3 questions. This is hardcore psychic maelstrom shit. Only apocalyptica will do.

Artful & gracious: *when you perform your chosen art — any act of expression or culture — or when you put its product before an audience, roll+hot. On a 10+, spend 3. On a 7–9, spend 1. Spend 1 to name an NPC member of your audience and choose one:*

- *this person must meet me*
- *this person must have my services*
- *this person loves me*
- *this person must give me a gift*
- *this person admires my patron*

On a miss, you gain no benefit, but suffer no harm or lost opportunity. You simply perform very well.

This move works only on NPCs, as it says. You're responsible for the effect it has on them, so make good. Look at them through crosshairs, don't try to protect them or preserve their dignity.

Here are some example arts: singing or performing music, dancing, making jewelry, creating functional and beautiful tools, working fur or leather, training dogs or birds — any craft or art that suits the environment and the character.

An arresting skinner: *when you remove a piece of clothing, your own or someone else's, no one who can see you can do anything but watch. You command their absolute attention. If you choose, you can exempt individual people, by name.*

This move affects other players' characters too, not only NPCs.

Hypnotic: when you have time and solitude with someone, they become fixated upon you. Roll+hot. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7–9, hold 2. They can spend your hold, 1 for 1, by:

- giving you something you want
- acting as your eyes and ears
- fighting to protect you
- doing something you tell them to

For NPCs, while you have hold over them they can't act against you. For PCs, instead, any time you like you can spend your hold, 1 for 1:

- they distract themselves with the thought of you. They're acting under fire.
- they inspire themselves with the thought of you. They take +1 right now.

On a miss, they hold 2 over you, on the exact same terms.

Most complicated move in the damn game!

Notice that it's the subject who spends the hold, mostly, not the skinner. The skinner doesn't get to say "I spend 1 hold so now you fight to protect me"; instead, the subject says "I fight to protect you so that uses up 1 of your hold." The skinner gets to spend her hold only if her subject's a PC, and then only to distract or inspire her.

Take care to have your NPCs not act against the skinner when she's hypnotized them, though. Fuck around with this shit and the players stop trusting you to play the game fair, and then the game's done.

And here's the skinner's sex move:

If you and another character have sex, choose one:

- You take +1 forward and so do they.
- You take +1 forward; they take -1.
- They must give you a gift worth at least 1-barter.
- You can **hypnotize** them as though you'd rolled a 10+, even if you haven't chosen to get the move.

This move applies if the skinner and an NPC have sex, but obviously the NPC can't take +1 or -1 forward.

RULES OF PLAY:
CHARACTERS'
CRAP

RULES OF PLAY: THE CHARACTERS' CRAP BARTER

The players are going to expect and want barter to be a game mechanic, but it's not one. It's just a loose measure of who'll generally be able to get what stuff. Things pretty, portable, and convenient to trade are called "oddmments." In character creation, the players can describe what their characters' oddmments are, or just list "oddmments worth n -barter" and leave them to be described later on, if ever.

You should treat the characters' getting new gear and other stuff the same way you treat everything they do. That is, make Apocalypse World seem real and make the characters' lives not boring; address yourself to the character, not the player; make your move but misdirect and never speak its name; say what the principles, the rules and your prep demand.

Your players should keep track of their own oddmments on their character sheets, of course, and you're under absolutely no obligation to provide them with any, after character creation. If somebody feels poor, they're going to have to come up with a way to scratch some up, that's all.

THINGS WORTH 1-BARTER

- *a month's living expenses, if your tastes aren't too grand.*
- *any one weapon, gear or fashion not valuable or hi-tech.*
- *a year's tribute to a warlord.*
- *a month's maintenance and repairs for a hi-performance vehicle well-used.*
- *bribes, fees and gifts sufficient to get you into almost anyone's presence.*
- *successful resuscitation by an angel (plus material costs).*
- *a week's full around-the-clock care from an angel (plus material costs).*
- *a month's employment of an angel on call.*
- *2-stock for an angel kit.*
- *an act of murder, extortion, threat or violence executed by a battlebabe, chopper or gunlugger.*
- *a week's employment of a battlebabe or gunlugger as bodyguard, gang leader, or thug-on-hand.*
- *a successful deep brain scan by a brainer.*
- *a brainer's in-brain puppet command, upon its execution.*
- *a week's employment of a kept brainer.*
- *a raiding expedition carried out by a chopper.*
- *a convoy led through hostile territory by a chopper or driver.*
- *a week's employment of a gang as thugs and enforcers.*
- *a message or valuable delivered by a driver.*
- *a month's employment of a personal driver.*
- *a circumstance foretold and revealed by a hocus, if it comes true.*
- *a month's employment of a hocus as auger, advisor, or ceremonist.*
- *a piece of hi-tech gear repaired by a savvyhead.*
- *a week's maintenance by a savvyhead of finicky and delicate tech.*
- *a month's employment of a savvyhead as technician on call.*

- *the intimate companionship of a skinner for one night.*
- *the employment of a skinner as entertainment for a group (without touching) for an evening or a weekend.*
- *the casual employment of a skinner as an enlivening presence for a month.*
- *a working crew's cut of a couple three four profitable gigs.*
- *a month's hospitality, including a place to live and meals in common with others.*

For better stuff, (so say the playbooks), you should expect to make particular arrangements. You can't just wander around the commons of some hardhold with oddments ajangle and expect to find hi-tech or luxe eternal.

Take "a month's living expenses, if your tastes aren't too grand" to be a cue. At some point, you're going to make a **make them buy** move, because you'll figure it's been about a month in play. Don't track time, but do make that move when it seems right.

If you make your **make them buy** move and one of the characters doesn't have the barter to maintain her standard of living, follow up with another, harder move against that character. **Take away their stuff** is an obvious choice, but not the only choice.

THINGS' DESCRIPTIVE TAGS

Weapons' and gear's descriptive tags fall into 3 categories. First, the plain *mechanical*; second, *constraints* on when the characters can use them; third, *cues* recommending something for you to say about them.

In the listings that follow, **+tag**, like **+valuable** or **+infinite**, means simply to add that tag to the thing's description. **-tag**, like **-loud** or **-reload**, means to remove it. **+nharm**, like **+1harm** or **+2harm**, means to add **n** to the thing's existing harm. For instance, if you create a custom weapon whose base has 1-harm and give it an option with +1harm, list 2-harm in its final description.

Ranges (constraint) let you know when and whether the character can bring the weapon or gear to bear. The ranges, nearest to farthest, are **intimate**, **hand**, **close**, **close/far**, **far** (*cf*).

n-armor (1-armor, 2-armor etc.) (mechanical): reduces incoming harm by *n*-much.

n-harm (1-harm, 2-harm etc.) (mechanical): inflicts *n*-much harm.

+nharm (+1harm, +2harm) (mechanical): adds *n* to the harm it inflicts.

+bonus (+1hot forward, +1sharp when eyesight matters, +1 to going aggro etc.) (mechanical): adds to a particular stat or a particular move's roll, under the specified conditions.

Alive (cue): it's a living creature.

AP (mechanical): it ignores its target's armor, inflicting its full harm.

Applied (constraint): it takes intimacy and uninterrupted time for the character to use it. You'd better have a willing subject, or restrained. Contrast *tag*.

Area (mechanical, constraint): its target or subject is an area, not a person; it fully affects everyone and everything there.

An area weapon used against a larger gang inflicts its full harm, provided that the gang is crowded into the area in question.

Autofire (mechanical, cue, constraint): at the character's option, the weapon makes an **area** attack (*cf*), but must immediately **reload** (*cf*).

Close (constraint, a range): she can bring it to bear only when she's pretty close to her target or subject. If they could call to one another and have a shouted conversation, they're close enough.

Close/far (constraint, a range): she can bring it to bear at both close and far range.

Far (constraint, a range): she can bring it to bear only when she's pretty far from her target or subject. If she can see the whites of his eyes, they're too close together.

Hand (constraint, a range): she can bring it to bear only when she's within arm's reach of her target or subject.

Hi-tech (constraint, cue): it's high tech, not the kind of simple machine that can be easily manufactured in these crude times. It's also worth more than 1-barter, probably, but that's incidental.

Implanted (constraint): it's permanently implanted in its user's skin, body, or brain. Contrast *worn*.

Infinite (constraint): throw one away, the character has another one, and another, and another; she has as many as she needs.

It's important to distinguish an infinite thing, as one item, from any one of its individual members. Take infinite valuable knives, for instance: the character can throw one knife away and have more, indefinitely, but if she throws all her knives away *as an item*, they're all gone. Similarly, it's all her knives *as an item*, not any individual knife, that are valuable. Treat any one knife as disposable, transient, not even really a thing.

Intimate (constraint, a range): she can bring it to bear only when she's very close to her target or subject, close enough to hold, kiss or grapple him. Arm's reach isn't close enough.

Loud (cue): everyone nearby hears it, and can potentially identify what made the noise. It wakes up sleeping people, startles people who aren't expecting it, makes small children cry, and is generally distinctive and unignorable.

Messy (cue): it's loud (*cf*). Furthermore, it might hit every person in its area but might miss any given person in its area; and it leaves a mess behind — cosmetic property damage, blood and gore, barf or shit or other bodily produce, or some other kind of mess as appropriate.

Refill (mechanical): using it uses it up. The character can't use it again unless she has a refill.

Reload (constraint): using it means the character has to take specific action to reload or reset it before she can use it again.

Remote (constraint): the character can use it at a distance by remote control, or maybe it can operate at a distance autonomously.

S-harm (cue): it disables its target without causing any harm. Use it on a PC, and doing anything at all means doing it under fire; the fire is "you're stunned."

Tag (constraint): the character has to touch her target to use it, but only an instant of time, and there's no need for the subject or target to cooperate. Contrast *applied*.

Valuable (constraint, cue): it's worth more than 1-barter.

Worn (constraint): to use it, the character has to be wearing it. Contrast *implanted*.

WEAPONS AND ARMOR

Common firearms

- .38 revolver (2-harm close reload loud)
- 9mm (2-harm close loud)
- hunting rifle (2-harm far loud)
- magnum (3-harm close reload loud)
- sawed-off (3-harm close reload messy)
- shotgun (3-harm close messy)
- sleeve pistol (2-harm close reload loud)
- smg (2-harm close autofire loud)

Other common weapons

- big knife (2-harm hand)
- crowbar (2-harm hand messy)
- grenades (4-harm hand area reload messy)
- machete (3-harm hand messy)
- many knives (2-harm hand infinite)
- stun gun (s-harm hand reload)

I say .38 and 9mm but of course what I really mean is any revolver or semiautomatic handgun (respectively). I don't actually give a shit about caliber. Also, smg means submachine gun.

I'd just go ahead and let everyone in Apocalypse World have easy access to any or all of the above. If you feel like making them buy, 1-barter should cover it. Maybe 2-barter for a smg. I never make anybody buy a crowbar. Also, the hardholder playbook says "a few pieces of non-specialized gear or weapons from any character playbook" — any of these above certainly qualify.

Armor

- fashion worth 1-armor
- armor worth 1-armor
- armor worth 2-armor

These are all common too.

Fashion and armor worth 1-armor includes motorcycle jackets, chaps, layers of canvas and leather, armor plates made of plastic barrels, the like.

2-armor always looks like serious armor. It could be real body armor left over from the golden age, it could be homemade. Flak jackets, riot gear, welding masks, breastplates made of layered stop signs.

Bomb squad suits and the like would be armor worth 3-armor, if you feel like including such things, but they'd be pretty rare. Nobody gets them by default.

Distinctive weapons

- antique handgun (2-harm close reload loud valuable)
- hidden knives (2-harm hand infinite)
- ornate dagger (2-harm hand valuable)
- ornate sword (3-harm hand valuable)
- scalpels (3-harm intimate hi-tech)

None of these are more effective than their common counterparts, so they exist solely to give your characters character.

Operators get a "signature weapon." It might be one of these distinctive weapons, or it might be some other weapon made distinctive and personal.

Firearms to give you pause

- ap ammo (applied) Add ap to all your guns.
- assault rifle (3-harm close loud autofire)
- grenade launcher (4-harm close/far area messy)
- grenade tube (4-harm close area reload messy)
- mg (3-harm close/far autofire messy)
- silenced 9mm (2-harm close hi-tech)
- silenced sniper rifle (3-harm far hi-tech)

A grenade launcher is the kind like a gigantic revolver that lets you lob off several grenades without reloading. A grenade tube is either the kind that attaches to your assault rifle or else a single-shot breach-loading thing like a flare gun for grenades. MG stands for machine gun, of course, and it means a belt-fed but luggable thing like an M-60.

Serious stuff. Suitable for organized gangs with plenty of resources, and for uniquely serious individuals.

Custom firearms

Battlebabes get custom weapons.

Base (choose 1):

- handgun (2-harm close reload loud)
- shotgun (3-harm close reload messy)
- rifle (2-harm far reload loud)

Options (choose 2):

- ornate (+valuable)
- antique (+valuable)
- semiautomatic (-reload)
- 3-round burst (close/far)
- automatic (+autofire)
- silenced (-loud)
- hi-powered (+1harm)
- ap ammo (+ap)
- scoped (+far, or +1harm at far)
- big (+1harm)

Custom hand weapons

Base (choose 1):

- staff (1-harm hand area)
- haft (1-harm hand)
- handle (1-harm hand)
- chain (1-harm hand area)

Options (choose 2):

- ornate (+valuable)
- antique (+valuable)
- head (+1harm)
- spikes (+1harm)
- blade (+1harm)
- long blade* (+2harm)
- heavy blade* (+2harm)
- blades* (+2harm)
- hidden (+infinite)

**counts as 2 options*

It's possible to combine options to make head-scratchers, but that's on you. I don't really recommend it.

SPECIALTY GEAR

Hardholders and savvyheads both get “non-specialized” or “normal” gear and weaponry. These are the kinds of things that they might not get. (Honestly though I never quibble with what they want, life’s too short.)

When someone uses specialty gear they aren’t accustomed to — a non-angel using an angel kit, a non-brainer using brainer gear — it’s reasonable to say that it counts as acting under fire.

Angel kit

An angel kit has all kinds of crap in it: scissors, rags, tape, needles, clamps, gloves, chill coils, wipes, alcohol, injectable tourniquets & bloodslower, instant blood packets (coffee reddener), tubes of meatmesh, bonepins & site injectors, biostabs, chemostabs, narcostabs (chillstabs) in quantity, and a roll of heart jumpshock patches for when it comes to that. When you use it, spend its stock; you can spend 0–3 of its stock per use. You can resupply it for 1-barter per 2-stock, if your circumstances let you barter for medical supplies.

A full-size angel kit is big enough to fill the trunk of a car; its capacity is 6-stock. A stripped-down kit has a capacity of 4-stock and fills a big backpack. A first aid kit might count as an angel kit, if it’s high enough quality, but with a capacity of 2-stock or even 0-stock. Whatever the case, it probably oughta come into play fully stocked.

*To use an angel kit to **stabilize and heal someone at 9:00 or past**: roll+stock spent. On a hit, they will stabilize and heal to 6:00, but the MC will choose 1 (on a 10+) or 2 (on a 7–9):*

- *they need to be physically stabilized before you can move them.*
- *even narcostabbed, they fight you; you’re acting under fire.*
- *they’ll be unconscious for 24 hours, maybe longer.*
- *stabilizing them eats up your stock; spend 1-stock more.*
- *they’ll be bedridden, out of action, for at least a week.*
- *they’ll need constant monitoring and care for 36 hours.*

*To use an angel kit to **revive someone who’s died** (at 12:00, not beyond): roll+stock spent. On a 10+, they recover to 10:00. On a 7–9, they recover to 11:00. On a miss, you’ve done everything you can for them, and they’re still dead.*

*To use an angel kit to **speed the recovery of someone at 3:00 or 6:00**: don’t roll. They choose: spend 4 days (3:00) or 1 week (6:00) blissed out on chillstabs, immobile but happy, or do their time like everyone else.*

See the harm & healing chapter for details, page 172.

Brainer gear

- **implant syringe** (tag hi-tech)
After you’ve tagged someone, if a brainer move allows you to inflict harm on them, inflict +1harm.
- **brain relay** (area close hi-tech)
For purposes of brainer moves, if someone can see your brain relay, they can see you.
- **receptivity drugs** (tag hi-tech)
Tagging someone gives you +1hold if you then use a brainer move on them.
- **violation glove** (hand hi-tech)
For purposes of brainer moves, mere skin contact counts as time and intimacy.
- **pain-wave projector** (1-harm ap area loud reload hi-tech)
Goes off like a reusable grenade. Hits everyone but you.
- **deep ear plugs** (worn hi-tech)
Protects the wearer from all brainer moves and gear.

Luxe gear

- **antique coins** (worn valuable)
Drilled with holes for jewelry.
- **eyeglasses** (worn valuable)
You may use these for +1sharp when your eyesight matters, but if you do, without them you get -1sharp when your eyesight matters.
- **long gorgeous coat** (worn valuable)
- **spectacular tattoos** (implanted)
- **skin & hair kit** (applied valuable)
Soaps, ochres, paints, creams, salves. Using it lets you take +1hot forward.
- **a pet** (valuable alive)
Your choice and yours to detail.

VEHICLES

Only one move uses a vehicle's stat profile:

A no shit driver (driver): *when behind the wheel...*

...if you do something under fire, add your car's power to your roll.

...if you try to seize something by force, add your car's power to your roll.

...if you go aggro, add your car's power to your roll.

...if you try to seduce or manipulate someone, add your car's looks to your roll.

...if you help or interfere with someone, add your car's power to your roll.

...if someone interferes with you, add your car's weakness to their roll.

Cars

Choose one of these profiles:

- Power+2 looks+1 1-armor weakness+1
- Power+2 looks+2 0-armor weakness+1
- Power+1 looks+2 1-armor weakness+1
- Power+2 looks+1 2-armor weakness+2

Choose its frame:

Coupe, compact, sedan, jeep, pickup, van, semi, bus, limo, ambulance, 4x4, tractor, construction/utility.

Choose its strength or strengths:

Fast, rugged, aggressive, tight, huge, off-road, responsive, uncomplaining, capacious, workhorse, easily repaired.

Choose as many as its power.

Choose its look or looks:

Sleek, vintage, pristine, powerful, luxe, flashy, muscular, quirky, pretty, handcrafted, spikes & plates, garish. Choose as many as its looks.

Choose its weakness or weaknesses:

Slow, fragile, sloppy, lazy, cramped, picky, guzzler, unreliable, loud, rabby. Choose as many as its weakness.

Bikes

Choose one of these profiles:

- Power+1 looks+1 1-armor weakness+1

Strengths (choose 1 or 2): fast, rugged, aggressive, tight, huge, responsive.

Looks (choose 1 or 2): sleek, vintage, massively chopped, roaring, fat-ass, muscular, flashy, luxe.

Weakness (choose 1): slow, sloppy, guzzler, skinny, bucking, lazy, unreliable.

The only reason a player would need a bike's stat profile is if her character has the no shit driver move.

Vehicles' descriptions are all simple cues, for you to use in what you say. It's your responsibility to give them their significance, in your moves and in your misdirection.

Other vehicles

A savvyhead with a proper workspace can create more extreme vehicles than cars and bikes, with stats up to +3 and who knows what all attached to it. Driver or chopper + savvyhead with a garage, that's a fun game.

Examples

After some sessions, Bran grabs collector out of the driver's playbook. "Hey, can I have a car and a bike instead of two cars?" The answer is, of course he can.

So he builds a bike. It's fast, rugged, vintage and unreliable: power+1 looks+1 1-armor weakness+1.

And he builds a car. Pickup frame, it's off-road, a workhorse, powerful, but cramped and loud: power+2 looks+1 2-armor weakness+2.

WORKSPACES

Choose which of the following your workspace includes. Choose 3: a garage, a darkroom, a controlled growing environment, skilled labor (Carna, Thuy, Pamming), a junkyard of raw materials, a truck or van, weird-ass electronica, machining tools, transmitters & receivers, a proving range, a relic of the golden age past, booby traps.

A workspace might also include (a) life support, which allows the character to work on people in them, following the same rules as for working on tech; and (b) a component or arrangement of components that comprise a powerful psychic antenna, which

gives the character access to the **augury** peripheral move (for which see page 211).

Carna, Thuy and Pamming are just name suggestions. If you already have some suitable NPCs, feel free to use them instead.

Using a workspace

When you go into your workspace and dedicate yourself to making a thing, or to getting to the bottom of some shit, decide what and tell the MC. The MC will tell you “sure, no problem, but...” and then 1 to 4 of the following:

- *it’s going to take hours/days/weeks/months of work;*
- *first you’ll have to get/build/fix/figure out ____;*
- *you’re going to need ____ to help you with it;*
- *it’s going to cost you a fuckton of jingle;*
- *the best you’ll be able to do is a crap version, weak and unreliable;*
- *it’s going to mean exposing yourself (plus colleagues) to serious danger;*
- *you’re going to have to add ____ to your workplace first;*
- *it’s going to take several/dozens/hundreds of tries;*
- *you’re going to have to take ____ apart to do it.*

The MC might connect them all with “and,” or might throw in a merciful “or.”

Once you’ve accomplished the necessities, you can go ahead and accomplish the thing itself. The MC will stat it up, or spill, or whatever it calls for.

For the easiest projects, you can choose just 1, but consider choosing 2 and connecting them with an “or.” “Sure, no problem, but you’re going to need Marie to help you with it or else it’s going to mean exposing yourself to serious danger while you experiment.”

Stringing 4 together all with “and” would make a project really, really hard, so hard that you probably ought to just say no instead. For the hardest realistic projects, 4 with an “or” in the mix should be hard enough: “Sure, no problem, but first you’ll have to figure out how the brain-pulse isolator works, and then it’s going to take months of work plus either you’ll need Marie’s help or else you’ll have to take Ba’s brain apart. I’m up for it if you are!”

“You’re going to have to add ____ to your workspace first” is for those projects where the character’s workspace includes a junkyard, machining tools and a proving range, but the character wants to probe Ba’s brain or whatever. “Sure, no problem, but you’re going to have to add a brain-probrium to your workspace first.” Fortunately for the character, expanding a workspace is just a project in the workspace: “Sure, you can add a brain-probrium to your workspace, no problem, but you’re going to need Marie to help you, and assembling the components is going to cost you a fuckton of jingle.”

Remember your agenda when you’re making all these conditions, though. Your job is to make Apocalypse World seem real and to make the characters’ lives not boring, not to deny them what they want or could use.

When it comes time to write up a savvyhead’s new creations:

- If it’s a weapon or gear, use the descriptive tags for weapons and gear, and add a custom move if it calls for one.
- If it’s a vehicle, give it its profile, and you can go up to +3 for power, looks and weakness, and up to like 4-armor or some crazy shit — plus whatever’s mounted on it. Give it its frame, strengths, looks and weaknesses, and you aren’t limited to the lists available to choppers and drivers. Expand them as seems good.
- If it’s something else, you should almost certainly create a custom move or two to give it its function. For details about creating custom moves, see the advanced fuckery chapter, page 267.

GANGS

Gangs’ descriptive tags:

Sizes (mechanical): when different-sized gangs fight, the smaller inflicts less harm than usual upon the bigger, but the bigger inflicts more harm than usual upon the smaller. Each step’s difference is worth +1harm and -1harm. The sizes, in order, are: a guy or two, a small gang, a medium gang, a large gang (*cf*). See the harm & healing chapter for details, page 168.

n-armor (1-armor, 2-armor etc.) (mechanical): when the gang takes harm, it reduces it by *n*-much.

n-harm (1-harm, 2-harm etc.) (mechanical): when the gang inflicts harm, it inflicts *n*-much.

+nharm (+1harm, +2harm) (mechanical): adds *n* to the harm the gang inflicts.

Large (mechanical, a size): the gang inflicts +3harm upon a guy or two, +2harm upon a small gang, +1harm upon a medium gang, and normal harm upon another large gang.

Medium (mechanical, a size): the gang inflicts +2harm upon a guy or two, +1harm upon a small gang, normal harm upon another medium gang, and -1harm upon a large gang.

Mobile (constraint): the gang's not tied to a home base. Significantly, gangs lacking mobile ARE tied to a home base; that's where the constraint comes in.

Rich (cue): outside of battle, the gang always has a little scratch, a little jingle.

Savage (cue): the gang fights brutally, viciously, without mercy, discipline or honor. Presume that they loot and violate (and eat?) the dead, and that they proudly display the trophies of their kills.

Small (mechanical, a size): the gang inflicts +1harm upon a guy or two, normal harm upon another small gang, -1harm upon a medium gang, and -2harm upon a large gang.

Unruly (cue): the gang has internal factions that dislike one another and some of its members are ambitious beyond their loyalty. Create these factions and ambitious bastards as threats and have them act sometimes on their impulses. See the fronts chapter, page 138, for details.

Vulnerable: [specify] (cue, constraint): when things go badly for the gang, this is how they react. The alpha can try to impose her will upon the gang to make them overcome, or the leader can make them stand strong against it.

- **Breakdown:** if the gang doesn't have time and resources, their bikes fall apart and they lose their ability to fight effectively on the go.
- **Desertion:** if the gang loses a fight or if its alpha or leader presses it too hard, its members ditch out by 1s and 2s.
- **Disease:** if the gang's alpha or leader doesn't take particular care of them, they get sick, poor dears. (Of course the

diseases in Apocalypse World tend to be rather worse than the sniffles, so I shouldn't joke.)

- **Grounded:** if the weather or the terrain is wrong, the gang won't take its bikes out into it.
- **Obligation:** somebody else has power over the gang's alpha or leader, and can demand the gang's service. Choose a bad time.
- **Reprisals:** whenever the gang's alpha or leader relaxes vigilance, the gangs' victims and enemies murder the gang's members by 1s and 2s.

A chopper's gang

Pack alpha (chopper): when you try to impose your will on your gang, roll+hard. On a 10+, all 3. On a 7-9, choose 1:

- they do what you want
 - they don't fight back over it
 - you don't have to make an example of one of them
- On a miss, someone in your gang makes a dedicated bid to replace you for alpha.

By default, your gang consists of about 15 violent bastards with scavenged and makeshift weapons and armor, and no fucking discipline at all (2-harm gang small savage 1-armor). Then, choose 2:

- your gang consists of 30 or so violent bastards. Medium instead of small.
- your gang's well-armed. +1harm.
- your gang's well-armored. +1armor.
- your gang's well-disciplined. Drop savage.
- your gang's nomadic at heart, and able to maintain and repair its own bikes without a home base. It gets +mobile.
- your gang's self-sufficient, able to provide for itself by raiding and scavenging. It gets +rich.

And choose 1:

- your gang's bikes are in bad shape and need constant attention. Vulnerable: breakdown.
- your gang's bikes are picky and high-maintenance. Vulnerable: grounded.
- your gang's loose-knit, with members coming and going as they choose. Vulnerable: desertion.
- your gang is in significant debt to someone powerful. Vulnerable: obligation.
- your gang is filthy and unwell. Vulnerable: disease.

Here's a gang belonging to a chopper named Stinky. It consists of 30 or so well-disciplined bastards, but it's loose-knit. 2-harm gang medium 1-armor vulnerable: desertion.

A hardholder's gang

Leadership (hardholder): when your gang fights for you, roll+hard. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7–9, hold 1. Over the course of the fight, spend your hold 1 for 1 to make your gang:

- make a hard advance
- stand strong against a hard advance
- make an organized retreat
- show mercy to their defeated enemies
- fight and die to the last

On a miss, your gang turns on you or tries to hand you over to your enemy.

A hardholder's gang is part of her holding. To create and describe it, see below, under holdings.

A new gang

A couple of the characters can get a new gang, plus either pack alpha or leadership, as one of their improvements. When that happens, use these following rules:

By default, your gang consists of about 15 violent bastards with scavenged and makeshift weapons and armor (2-harm gang small 1-armor). Then, choose 2:

- your gang consists of 30 or so violent bastards. Medium instead of small.
- your gang's well-armed. +1harm.
- your gang's well-armored. +1armor.
- your gang's self-sufficient, able to provide for itself by raiding and scavenging. It gets +rich.

And choose 1:

- your gang's armory is for shit. It gets -1harm.
- your gang disdains armor (why? are they fucking stupid?). It gets -1armor.
- your gang is a pack of fucking hyenas. It gets +savage.
- your gang's loose-knit, with members coming and going as they choose. Vulnerable: desertion.
- your gang is in significant debt to someone powerful. Vulnerable: obligation.
- your gang is filthy and unwell. Vulnerable: disease.

- your gang is lax about security and likes to drink and brag. Vulnerable: reprisals.

Here's a new gang, it belongs to Keeler. It consists of 30 or so bastards and it's self-sufficient, but it's lax about security and it sure does love to drink and brag: 2-harm gang medium 1-armor rich vulnerable: reprisals.

Gangs and fronts

For the notable people within a player's character's gang, follow the usual rules for NPCs and fronts:

Whenever an NPC develops agency, list her as a threat. There are 3 possibilities.

Possibility 1: She represents an entire new fundamental-scarcity-expressing threatening situation, and implies other individual threats. In this case, create a new front, listing this particular NPC as one of its threats.

Possibility 2: She fits perfectly well into a front that you've already created. In this case, list her as a new threat in that front.

Possibility 3: She doesn't do either. In this case, list her as a threat on the home front — the home front is a place for otherwise homeless threats.

This is from page 146.

Most of the time, a character's gang's people will fit best in the home front, and they'll be some flavor or other of brutes. It's a fun question to ask the player, in fact: "Hey Keeler, would you say that your gang is more a gang of enforcers, more a hunting pack, or more a bunch of sybarites?" (Keeler's player: "are those my only choices? How about a gang of loyal, good-hearted, upright boy scouts?" Me: "oh, so like, a cult? That's cool.")

USING A GANG AS A WEAPON

When a character makes an aggressive move — goes aggro, for instance, or seizes something by force — the weapon she's using determines how much harm she inflicts, and her armor determines how much harm she suffers. Same thing with gangs.

If she seizes something by force, for instance, using her gang instead of weapon and armor, it's her gang that inflicts and suffers harm, according to its own and its enemy's numbers.

For example:

A couple of sessions in, Keeler's gotten a gang (2-harm gang medium 1-armor rich vulnerable: reprisals) and pack alpha. She uses her gang to go aggro upon III: "I've had enough of III's shit. I get Plover, Whackoff, Church Head and Fisty and kick her door in. We stand around her bed, we're armed with crowbars and 5-pound hammers."

Keeler's player rolls+hard and hits a 10+.

If III decides to force Keeler's hand and suck it up, here's how much harm she'll take:

- 2-harm, from the gang's listing, for its crowbars and hammers;
- +1harm for the gang's size versus III's size. (Since Keeler's not using her whole gang, it counts as small, not medium);
- -nothing because III doesn't sleep in her armor;
- For a grand total of 3-harm.

If it turns into a fight, here's how much harm III will inflict:

- 2-harm for the pistol she keeps under her pillow;
- -1harm for her size versus the gang's;
- -1harm for the gang's 1-armor;
- For a grand total of 0-harm.

Not good for III.

However, a gang isn't just a thing like a sawed-off or a crowbar, it's made of people. Recall your principles: name everyone, make everyone human.

For example:

Keeler wants to root Hison's people out of a bunker they've established on the rag-waste. "Plover, take Church Head, Fisty, and 10 more out there and dig those assholes out."

Plover's like, "the fuck? 13 of us against like 35 of them, and they're already dug in? Are you fucked?"

"Plover? Now."

Keeler rolls+hard to impose her will. She hits a 10+, so they do what she wants, they don't fight back, and she doesn't have to make an example of Plover.

"Jesus, boss. Goodbye, tell Isle I... Uh, tell her hey for me."

Now Keeler's player rolls+hard to seize the bunker by force. She's not there, but she's still making the move, she's just using her gang to do it. She hits a 7-9. "Shit," she says.

I make like a walkie talkie. "Boss, we're in, but... Shit boss this sucks fucking ass. Please advise."

Keeler's player and I do quick calculations. Here's how much harm she's inflicting:

- 2-harm, from the gang's listing, for its weapons;
- -1harm for its size versus the enemy (again, she's not using her whole gang, so it counts as small);
- -1harm for Hison's gang's 1-armor bunker;
- For a grand total of 0-harm.
- If she chooses to inflict terrible harm, make it 1-harm.

Here's how much harm she's suffering:

- 3-harm for Hison's gang's listing;
- +1harm for its size versus her gang's;
- -1harm for her gang's 1-armor;
- For a grand total of 3-harm;
- Which is really bad.
- If she chooses to suffer little harm, make it 2-harm, still bad.

Keeler has to make her seize-by-force choice. I don't envy her, but whatever. It was a pretty damn dumb move.

"Boss? Permission to bug the fuck out of here? Please?"

To sum up: a gang works pretty much exactly like a weapon and armor, but has its NPCs' personalities, and they're the ones who suffer the harm.

For the nitty-gritty of what happens when a gang suffers harm, see the harm & healing chapter, page 168.

SURPLUS AND WANT

These are the rules for holdings and followers who come to be in surplus or in want.

MC, your job as always is to take these and make them come true. Address yourself to the characters, not the players; misdirect; have names for people in the holding and among the followers, and use them. “Your followers’ society is breaking down” is not the thing to say. “In the night, Marser chops Jackabacka’s hand off because he wants Jackabacka’s 3-year-old for his own. Jackabacka’s in your tent now, bloody-stumped, he’s sobbing like a little kid.”

Growth and desertion *should* always change the size of the population, but anything *can* change it. Add and subtract people less than 10% of the population whenever you want, often, and not just in times of surplus or want. You can add or subtract people more than 10% too, when it strikes you to do so, but make that kind of rare.

Surplus

Augury: when your people are in surplus, you get access to the *augury* peripheral move. See page 211 for details.

Barter (1-barter, -1barter, +1barter etc.): when your holding or your followers are in surplus, you get this much barter to spend. It’s your personal share of their surplus.

Growth: when your people are in surplus, their number grows. As a general rule, each period of surplus, they should grow a small but noticeable amount, around 10-15%.

Insight: when your people are in surplus, you get access to the *insight* peripheral move. See page 212 for details.

Party: when your people are in surplus, they party. Maybe private parties, maybe public.

Stupor: when your people are in surplus, they drug themselves into a stupor.

Violence: when your people are in surplus, they “celebrate” by going on violent rampages.

Want

Anxiety: when your people are in want, they freak the hell out. They become paranoid, they hoard, they fear for their survival.

Desertion: when your people are in want, they ditch out on you. Figure on losing 10-15% per period of want.

Desperation: when your people are in want, they’ll do anything to secure their future, including turning on their own.

Disease: when your people are in want, their collective health collapses.

Famine: famine is like super-hunger. There’s a massive shortage of food and water; none of your people can meet even their most basic needs.

Hunger: when your people are in want, they don’t have enough to eat. Getting food becomes their foremost concern.

Idle: when your people are in want, they don’t have anything useful to do with their time. They occupy themselves with whatever seems diverting: they act on their various threat impulses. See the fronts chapter for details, page 138.

Judgment: when your people are in want, they blame you and do not fuck around about it.

Obligation: your responsibilities to someone outside of your group become urgent and demanding, where they’re normally easily fulfilled.

Reprisals: your past victims and enemies find a spot where your ass is vulnerable, and hit you there as hard as they can.

Savagery: when your people are in want, their society collapses. Social conventions and basic human relationships break down.

FOLLOWERS AND HOLDINGS

Followers

Fortunes (hocus): fortune, surplus and want all depend on your followers. At the beginning of the session, roll+fortune. On a 10+, your followers have surplus. On a 7–9, they have surplus, but choose 1 want. On a miss, they are in want. If their surplus lists barter, like 1-barter or 2-barter, that's your personal share.

By default you have around 20 followers, loyal to you but not fanatical, and they have their own lives apart from you (fortune+1 surplus: 1-barter want: desertion).

Characterize them: your cult, your family, your students, your scene, your staff, your court.

Choose 2:

- Your followers are dedicated to you. Surplus: +1barter, and replace want: desertion with want: hunger.
- Your followers are involved in successful commerce. +1fortune.
- Your followers, taken as a body, constitute a powerful psychic antenna. Surplus: +augury.
- Your followers are joyous and celebratory. Surplus: +party.
- Your followers are rigorous and argumentative. Surplus: +insight.
- Your followers are hard-working, no-nonsense. Surplus: +1barter.
- Your followers are eager, enthusiastic, and successful recruiters. Surplus: +growth.

Choose 2:

- You have few followers, 10 or fewer. Surplus: -1barter.
- Your followers aren't really yours, more like you're theirs. Want: +judgment.
- Your followers rely entirely on you for their lives and needs. Want: +desperation.
- Your followers are drug-fixated. Surplus: +stupor.
- Your followers disdain fashion, luxury and convention. Want: +disease.
- Your followers disdain law, peace, reason and society. Surplus: +violence.
- Your followers are decadent and perverse. Want: +savagery.

Here are the followers of a hocus named Dust, a sun-and-wind desert prophet. They're his cult. They're dedicated to him and they constitute a powerful psychic antenna, but they're few and they disdain fashion, luxury and convention: fortune+1 surplus: 1-barter augury want: hunger disease.

At the beginning of the session, when Dust makes his **fortunes** roll, here are the possible outcomes:

On a 10+, Dust gets 1-barter and augury.

On a 7–9, Dust gets 1-barter and augury, but has to choose either hunger or disease.

On a miss, Dust gets no barter and no augury, but Dust's followers are both hungry and diseased.

A hardholder's holding

Wealth (hardholder): If your hold is secure and your rule unchallenged, at the beginning of the session, roll+hard. On a 10+, you have surplus at hand and available for the needs of the session. On a 7–9, you have surplus, but choose 1 want. On a miss, or if your hold is compromised or your rule contested, your hold is in want. The precise values of your surplus and want depend on your holding, as follows.

By default, your holding has:

- 75-150 souls
- for gigs, a mix of hunting, crude farming, and scavenging (surplus: 1-barter, want: hungry)
- a makeshift compound of concrete, sheet metal and rebar
- an armory of scavenged and makeshift weapons
- a gang of about 40 violent people (3-harm gang medium unruly 1-armor)

Choose 4:

- your population is large, 200-300 souls. Surplus: +1barter, want: +disease.
- your population is small, 50-60 souls. Want: anxiety instead of want: hungry.
- for gigs, add lucrative raiding. Surplus: +1barter, want: +reprisals.
- for gigs, add protection tribute. Surplus: +1barter, want: +obligation.
- for gigs, add a manufactory. Surplus: +1barter, want: +idle.

- for gigs, add a bustling, widely-known market commons. Surplus: +1barter, want: +idle.
- your gang is large instead of medium, 60 violent people or so.
- your gang is well-disciplined. Drop unruly.
- your armory is sophisticated and extensive. Your gang gets +1harm.
- your compound is tall, deep and mighty, of stone and iron. Your gang gets +2armor when fighting in its defense.

And choose 2:

- your population is filthy and unwell. Want: +disease.
- your population is lazy and drug-stupored. Want: +famine.
- your population is decadent and perverse. Surplus: -1barter, want: savagery.
- your holding owes protection tribute. Surplus: -1barter, want: +reprisals.
- your gang is small instead of medium, only 10-20 violent people.
- your gang is a pack of fucking hyenas. Want: savagery.
- your armory is for shit. Your gang gets -1harm.
- your compound is mostly tents, lean-tos and wooden walls. Your gang gets -1armor when fighting to defend it.

Here's the holding and gang of a hardholder named Uncle. The holding is large, it conducts lucrative raiding, it has a bustling public market, and its compound is tall, deep and mighty. However, its population is filthy and unwell and his gang is a pack of fucking hyenas. Holding: surplus: 3-barter want: hungry reprisals idle savagery. Gang: 3-harm gang medium unruly 1-armor (3-armor defending the holding).

*At the beginning of the session, when Uncle makes his **wealth** roll, here are the possible outcomes:*

On a 10+, Uncle gets 3-barter for the session.

On a 7-9, Uncle gets 3-barter for the session, but has to choose one: hungry, reprisals, idle or savagery.

On a miss, Uncle gets no barter, but gets hungry, reprisals, idle and savagery, all four.

A small holding

Several of the characters can get a holding plus wealth as one of their improvements. When that happens, generally you should have them use these rules, not the hardholder's, to create their holding. These holdings are smaller than a hardholder's, and don't include a gang.

By default, your holding has:

- 60-80 souls
- for gigs, scavenging, crude farming, and some minor trade (surplus: 1-barter, want: anxiety)
- a relatively secure house or small compound

Choose 2:

- your population is kind of big, around 100 souls. Surplus: +1barter, want: +hunger.
- your population is tiny, 20-25 souls. Remove want: anxiety.
- for gigs, add protection tribute. Surplus: +1barter, want: +obligation.
- for gigs, add a manufactory. Surplus: +1barter, want: +idle.
- for gigs, add some technical expertise or trade in some particular valuable commodity. Surplus: +1barter, want: +idle.
- for gigs, add a thriving underground market. Surplus: +1barter, want: +obligation.
- your people include eager, enthusiastic, and successful recruiters. Surplus: +growth.

And choose 1:

- your population is filthy and unwell. Want: +disease.
- your population is lazy and drug-stupored. Want: +famine.
- your population is decadent and perverse. Surplus: -1barter, want: savagery.
- your holding owes protection tribute. Surplus: -1barter, want: +reprisals.
- your people depend entirely on you for their lives and needs. Want: +desperation.

*After some sessions of play, Marie gets a small holding and **wealth**. Its population is tiny, they're eager recruiters, and they're decadent and perverse. Surplus: 1-barter growth want: savagery.*

*At the beginning of the session, when Marie makes her **wealth** roll, here are the possible outcomes:*

On a 10+, Marie gets 1-barter for the session and her holding's population grows.

On a 7-9, Marie gets 1-barter for the session and her holding's population grows, but they're also savage.

On a miss, Marie gets no barter and her holding doesn't grow; they're savage instead.

Holdings' gigs

Holdings' gigs aren't mechanically the same as operators', because they belong to the holding's population, not the player's character. The character's wealth move covers the holding's gigs' success and failure.

CREWS AND GIGS

Crews/contacts

Your crew or contacts can consist entirely of the other players' characters, or entirely of the MC's characters, or any mix. If they include any of the MC's characters, sketch them out — names (eg Gabble, Jaim, Pe, Wasted) and 1-line descriptions — with the MC. Make sure they're competent and suited to the gigs you've chosen.

Like gang members, once an NPC crew member or contact has a personality, you should list her as a threat. Generally a home front threat, but occasionally she'll fit perfectly into a front proper, so list her there.

Gigs

Moonlighting: *you get 2-juggling. Whenever there's a stretch of downtime in play, or between sessions, choose a number of your gigs to work. Choose no more than your juggling. Roll+cool. On a 10+, you get profit from all the gigs you chose. On a 7–9, you get profit from at least 1; if you chose more than 1, you get catastrophe from 1 and profit from the rest. On a miss, catastrophe all around. The gigs you aren't working give you neither profit nor catastrophe. Whenever you get a new gig, you also get +1juggling.*

Moonlighting happens at a break in the action, and gives you good things to come back in on:

Paying gigs on screen:

- Profit: you can choose whether to come in on the end of the successful gig, or let the whole gig happen in summary, off-screen.
- Catastrophe: you can come in on the moment when the gig goes south, or you can summarize the gig going south and come in on the aftermath.

- Unworked: ignore them; unworked paying gigs aren't a thing.

Obligations on screen:

- Profit: you can choose whether to come in on the end of the character's accomplishing it, or let it pass without much remark.
- Catastrophe: you should come in on the moment when it goes south, as a rule.
- Unworked: an unworked obligation is an opportunity and you should take the player up on it.

When the player announces the gigs her character's working, be sure to get enough information from her to tell her what comes of it. If she's like "I'm brokering deals," stop her before she rolls and ask her what deals she's brokering, between whom and whom, for what? If she hasn't already planned it out, you and she can have a little brainstorming session.

A gig's catastrophe is like any move you'd make: address yourself to the character, not the player; make your move but misdirect and don't speak its name.

Gigs are listed like (profit / catastrophe).

Paying gigs:

- Bodyguarding (1-barter / embattled)
- Surveillance (1-barter / deceived)
- Raiding (1-barter / embattled)
- Enforcement (1-barter / overthrown)
- Honest work (1-barter / impoverished)
- Companionship (1-barter / entangled)
- Deliveries (1-barter / bushwacked)
- Infiltration (1-barter / discovered)
- Scavenging (1-barter / impoverished)
- Brokering deals (1-barter / shut out)
- Technical work (2-barter / shut out)
- Fucking (2-barter / entangled)
- Compound defense (2-barter / infiltrated)
- Doing murders (3-barter / embattled)

Bushwacked: someone's waiting for the crew along the route or at its destination, to rob it of its delivery.

Deceived: based on its surveillance the crew thinks that everything's fine and under control, but it really, really isn't.

Discovered: the crew's exposed. It might be just a sign, a door ajar that shouldn't be or a smudgy footprint, or it could be spotlights, screaming, full-blown exposure.

Embattled: it should have been a decisive action without much resistance or any, but instead the crew gets trapped, pinned down or hung up.

Entangled: it should have been impersonal, but no, someone's emotions come into play. The crew's, the client's, or someone's attached to the client. (You can ask the operator: "is it *your* emotions?")

Impoverished: work as hard as they might, maybe they don't get paid, maybe the market drops out, maybe whatever — there's nothing in it for them after all.

Infiltrated: somebody's inside who oughtn't be. Maybe the crew realizes it, maybe they don't yet.

Overthrown: whomever the crew was to keep down, they don't stay down. The crew loses control of the situation and the others seize it.

Shut out: the crew's done its part, but some other asshole has undercut them and shut them out. Now they're stuck with the labor or the goods, and no buyer who'll make good.

Obligation gigs:

- **Avoiding someone** (you keep well clear / they catch you in a bad spot). **Unworked:** they're all over the place, looking for you; it'll be an effort in play to avoid them.
- **Paying debts** (you keep up with them / they come due). **Unworked:** you're falling behind; the sharks come looking for you in play to make sure you're going to make good.
- **Revenge** (you victimize someone / they humiliate you). **Unworked:** your vengeance goes undelivered. They're around, in play, the ones who wronged you; you see them around and they seem happy. Are they gloating? Laughing at you behind their hand?
- **Protecting someone** (nothing bad happens to them / they're gone). **Unworked:** something bad happens to them, or they're in urgent danger and you have to deal with it in play.
- **Pursuing luxury** (beauty in your life / you wind up in a bad spot). **Unworked:** your life remains ugly, inconvenient and unsatisfying.
- **Maintaining your honor** (you keep your word and your name / you cross a line). **Unworked:** someone's spreading lies about you, or you've made some compromise — not *crossing* the line,

maybe, but right up to it — and it's getting around. In play, you start to hear bad things about yourself, and people aren't reacting to you the way you'd hope.

- **Seeking answers** (you get a clue / you chase a red herring). **Unworked:** the mystery deepens, or something casts your assembled clues in a new, more complicated light. You've been wrong all this time.
- **Keeping [someone] happy** (you keep them happy / you fucking blow it). **Unworked:** you let them down in some small way. They feel it. (This gig is a consequence of the operator's sex move.)

Wilson has these gigs: honest work (1-barter / impoverished), deliveries (1-barter / bushwacked), brokering deals (1-barter / shut out), and pursuing luxury (beauty in your life / you wind up in a bad spot / unworked: your life remains ugly). He has 2-juggling.

*At the beginning of the first session, Wilson makes his **moon-lighting** roll. He can choose 1 or 2 gigs to work, because he has 2-juggling. He chooses 2: brokering deals and deliveries. Here are the possible outcomes:*

On a 10+, Wilson brokers deals and makes deliveries, for 2-barter.

On a 7–9, Wilson gets catastrophe from 1 and profit from the rest (that is, the other 1). He chooses: 1-barter for brokering deals, but bushwacked while making deliveries; or else 1-barter for making deliveries, but shut out of brokering deals.

On a miss, Wilson gets bushwacked while making deliveries and shut out of brokering deals.

Wilson didn't choose to work his obligation gig, so no matter what happens with the roll, his life remains ugly, inconvenient and unsatisfying.

**ADVANCED
FUCKERY**

ADVANCED FUCKERY

Custom threat moves are great and good, but the power of custom moves goes far beyond “if you go out into Dremmer’s territory, roll+sharp to notice the ambush before it happens.”

CHANGING THE ACTION

Here’s a custom threat move. People new to the game occasionally ask me for this one. It’s general, it modifies nearly every other move:

Things are tough. *Whenever a player’s character makes a move, the MC judges it normal, difficult, or crazy difficult. If it’s difficult, the player takes -1 to the roll. If it’s crazy difficult, the player takes -2 to the roll.*

Several groups in playtest wanted this move or one like it. All of them abandoned it after only one session. It didn’t add anything fun to the game, but did add a little hassle to every single move. So it’s a legal custom move, of course, and you can try it if you like, but I wouldn’t expect you to stick with it.

Here’s a similar custom threat move, still quite general, but focused at least upon the characters involved:

Whenever a player’s character makes a move against an NPC where the NPC is strong, the NPC can interfere. Treat it as though the NPC had hit a roll+Hx with a 10+: the player takes -2 to the roll.

This one is for when, like, you’re in a fist fight with Rolfball, with his fists like big wedges of stone, or you’ve been tied to a table by Grome, who is really very practiced at tying people to tables.

These two would both be threat moves in the home front, since they aren’t linked to any particular threat.

Custom threat moves linked to particular threats are naturally the most focused yet:

*If **you’re in a fist fight with Rolfball** and you take harm, you take s-harm (ap) in addition to the usual harm.*

s-harm means stun harm, recall. The effect is: if you just stagger around in a concussed daze, cool; if you do anything else you’re acting under fire.

Or:

*If **Grome gets his hands on you**, he ties you to a table and you know he’s really fucking good at that. If you try to escape, roll+hard. On a hit, you can escape, but at a cost. On a 10+, choose 1; on a 7–9, choose 2:*

- it takes you over an hour and leaves you exhausted. Take s-harm (ap).*
- you suffer for it; your arms and legs are torn bloody before you’re done. Take 1-harm (ap).*
- ultimately you need to bribe Ipe, Grome’s sister, to help you. It costs you 1-barter.*

• **Custom threat moves can be general or specific, broad or focused. List general ones in the home front.**

• **Custom moves can be legal but nevertheless not fun in play. Ditch them if they aren’t contributing.**

FILLING SPACES IN THE WORLD

Here are a couple of mirror-image custom peripheral moves by Johnstone Metzger, who found the game's basic treatment of stealth ("you're acting under fire, and the fire is, do they notice?") insufficient:

When you **infiltrate a place by stealth**, roll+cool. On a 10+, both. On a 7–9, choose 1:

- you get in
- you go unnoticed

On a miss, neither.

When you try to **steal something**, roll+cool. On a 10+, both. On a 7–9, choose 1:

- you get it
- you get away clean

On a miss, neither.

Here are a handful of custom peripheral moves by John Harper, designed to play up the scarcity in his Apocalypse World:

After you go into battle with your vehicles, guns, and gear, roll+sharp. On a 10+, you conserved your resources. Good job.

On a 7–9, choose 1:

- You're running dangerously low on fuel
- You're running dangerously low on ammo
- Your gear needs maintenance and repair

On a miss, the MC makes a hard move as usual (or says it's all three, or says you're flat out of one thing).

When your gang or followers are **besotted on their particular pleasures**, take +1 ongoing when rolling against them.

When you **scavenge in the ruins**, roll+sharp.

On a 10+, choose two and find an oddment worth 1-barter. On a 7–9, choose one and find an oddment worth 1-barter:

- You find it quickly.
- You find it with relatively little trouble.
- You find an item that is valuable.
- You find an item that is hi-tech

• **Create custom peripheral moves to bring out your own vision of Apocalypse World.**

...AND IN THE CHARACTERS

Here's a custom character move by John Harper and Brandon Amancio. It was character improvement time for Brandon's driver-turned-gunlugger Drake, and Brandon wanted a new move for her, but he wanted a NEW new move. So:

Assassin: When you attack from hiding or from a circumstance prepared by you in advance, your harm is armor piercing.

Here's a custom character move by Ben Wray. Same kind of deal, with a brainer named Smith:

Chamber Of Fun: You've got a place set up somewhere (a cold slab, intimidating equipment) in which you can figure out and make adjustments to captive and helpless people's minds, using the savvyhead workspace rules.

Both of those served as character improvement. I don't happen to know in either case whether the player marked an improvement option in his playbook, or if so which one. If you create custom character moves like this, you can handle it however makes sense to you at the time.

But custom character moves mightn't count as improvement at all. Here's one I created for Harry Lee's angel Gabe. Gabe had just used **healing touch** for the very first time ever, trying to help his friend Jessica, a savvyhead, but Harry blew the roll. By the rules, he'd just opened both of their brains to the world's psychic maelstrom, unprepared.

The world's psychic maelstrom in that game was all about love.

"Now, I'm not going to tell you that you fall in love with her," I said. "That's up to you. But":

Close to Jessica's soul: whenever you do anything that puts Jessica's interests above your own, mark an experience circle.

Gabe was already a white-knight angel, not a bitter hard angel, and he took to it like crazy.

• **You can create custom character moves for the players' existing characters.**

• **They can count as character improvement or not, depending on the function they're to serve.**

NEW CHARACTERS

Here are some possible character moves for some new character types:

Everybody eats, even that guy: when you want to know something about someone important (your call), roll+hot. On a hit, you can ask the MC questions. On a 10+, ask 3. On a 7–9, ask 1:

- how are they doing? what's up with them?
- what or who do they love best?
- who do they know, like and/or trust?
- when next should I expect to see them?
- how could I get to them, physically or emotionally?

Just give me a motive: name somebody who might conceivably eat, drink, or otherwise ingest something you've touched. If it's an NPC, roll+hard; a PC, roll+Hx. On a 10+, they do, and suffer 4-harm (ap) sometime during the next 24 hours. On a 7–9, it's 2-harm (ap). On a miss, some several people of the MC's choice, maybe including your intended victim, maybe not, get it, and all suffer 3-harm (ap).

Blood Rage: whenever you take harm, roll+harm taken. On a 10+, take +1 ongoing until you heal any harm. On a 7–9, take +1 forward. On a miss, take 1-harm or take -1 ongoing until you heal any harm, your choice. [by Ben Wray]

Vindicated: whenever another player rolls to interfere with you, fill an experience circle. [by Ben Wray]

It's not just murder, it's an art: whenever you have some time off-screen, name an NPC, say briefly how you'd kill her, and roll+cool. On a 10+, it's happened, just as you said. On a 7–9, choose 1:

- you've killed her, but you haven't gotten out. You're in kind of a spot.
 - you've killed her and gotten out, but that means you had to ____ as well (the MC will tell you what).
 - instead, you abort early. You get out safely, unnoticed, and having left no evidence.
- On a miss, you're caught vulnerable, in the act.

• **When you make new character moves, play up the characters' strengths. Don't try to protect other characters from them, especially NPCs.**

CATCHING UP, SETTING UP

Here's a batch of custom setup moves. They're from a game I ran where we missed several weeks in a row. Our collective memory was running dim and we'd lost collective momentum, so when we finally came back together to play I passed these out. They refer to people and events we'd already established in play:

Dear Keeler, please roll+cool. On a 10+, choose 1. On a 7–9, choose 2:

- the headaches are getting seriously worse.
 - you're missing time, sometimes hours out of a day, more and more.
 - you've been eating some really weird-ass stuff.
- On a miss, I'll choose 2 for you.

Love and kisses, your MC

Dear Lafferty, please roll+sharp. On a 10+, choose 2. On a 7–9, choose 1:

- you've found someone else to work with, now that Corwin's gone missing.
- you've organized a charged battery for the helicopter, you have it in a box.
- as yet, you know more about Scanner than he knows about you.

On a miss, choose 1 anyway, but not the one about Scanner.

Love and kisses, your MC

Dear Rose, please roll+hard. On a 10+, choose 1. On a 7–9, choose 2:

- your mother has people hanging around your place, keeping a watch out for Keeler.
- Aitch has started doing what Ell tells him to do.
- you've been totally relying on Gams for fresh veg.

On a miss, yeah, pretty much all 3.

Love and kisses, your MC

Dear Vega, please roll+hard. On a 10+, choose 1. On a 7–9, choose 2:

- Rolfball's people have sprung him, inflicting some casualties.
- the 1st-comers in your marketplace aren't taking the best spots. They're saving them for people Kettle likes. Everybody wants to be someone Kettle likes.
- Your newest steady, Cola, was just murdered in your rooms.

On a miss, all 3, ha ha.

Love and kisses, your MC

They worked perfectly. They reminded us what had gone on, and kicked us into the new session with shit already happening.

You can also use custom moves to set play up from go. These are from a scenario called Blind Blue and Hatchet City, to be handed out with the character playbooks:

Dear hardholder,

Go ahead and create your character, following the rules in your playbook, with 2 quick exceptions: your holding is named Hatchet City, and don't choose to make your gang small.

You've been waging a bloody gang-to-gang war with a rival warlord named Ambergrease. Ambergrease holds a compound a couple of miles away, across the river. His gang doesn't fight in numbers, but with viciousness beyond all reason. You've captured at least one person as his spy — a girl named Michi, who revealed herself by stabbing you.

After you've made your character, before the session starts, I'll ask you how you're doing, what with Michi having stabbed you and all. Roll+cool. On a 10+, tell me that you're fine, you got the knife away from her before she managed to do you any harm. On a 7–9, tell me that you're fine, she cut your hand but the angel stitched it up and no real harm. On a miss, tell me that she got the knife between your ribs and you aren't really sure how well you're doing.

I'll also ask you how the war has been going. Roll+hard. On a hit, choose some of the following to be true. On a 10+, choose 2; on a 7–9, choose 3:

- *Your border patrol, a good squad under your friend Ba, has fallen to Ambergrease's gang. No survivors.*
- *Ambergrease has managed to establish fortified bunkers within firing range of your compound, and is harassing you whenever you lift your head.*
- *Ambergrease has seized and locked down the river, cutting your holding off from traffic, trade and resupply.*
- *Other than Michi, you have no idea how many more spies remain, or who they might be.*
- *Your former lieutenant Dustwich is telling your population that she can make peace with Ambergrease and save them all, and that your time as hardholder is done. She's gaining support. On a miss, all 5 are true. Good luck, sucker.*

Love and kisses, your MC

Dear brainer,

Go ahead and create your character, following the rules in your playbook.

You live in a holding called Hatchet City. Hatchet City is at war with this rival warlord named Ambergrease, whose gang fights with a viciousness beyond all reason. You're in charge of some important prisoners — a presumed spy, a captured enemy gang boss, maybe others. However and more interestingly, the world's psychic maelstrom itself seems to have turned against Hatchet City.

After you've made your character, before the session starts, I'll ask you what you've figured out. Roll+weird. On a hit, ask me some of the following questions. On a 10+, ask 3; on a 7–9, ask 2:

- *Is Michi really a spy for Ambergrease?*
 - *Why is it that Ambergrease's fanatics fight so ... thoroughly?*
 - *Upon what or whom is the world's psychic maelstrom so intent?*
 - *Who are some other people implicated in this situation?*
- On a miss, ask 2 anyway, but also you are yourself implicated in the situation.*

Furthermore, the I'll tell you the names and circumstances of some NPCs. Choose at least 3 of the following:

- *Which one is in love with you?*
- *Which one have you enslaved?*
- *Which one are you going to kill?*
- *Which one have you fallen in love with?*

Love and kisses, your MC

The scenario includes custom setup moves like these for an angel, a skinner, and a violent person (gunlugger, chopper or battlebabe) as well.

- **Custom moves can be large-scale, situational, personal, and single-use.**

PLAYING WITH THE FORM

Here's a pretty interesting custom peripheral move:

*When you **declare retroactively that you've already set something up**, roll+sharp. On a 10+, it's just as you say. On a 7-9, you set it up, yes, but here at the crucial moment the MC can introduce some hitch or delay. On a miss, you set it up, yes, but since then things you don't know about have seriously changed.*

This is for times when the player springs things on you in the moment, like “say Rolfball, see that red dot on your chest? That's the sniper I brought with me” or “oh, of course I gassed the beast up before we left Hatchet City.” This move lets you as MC go with it, but without always giving the player her way. Sometimes you have to say “wow, so you did! A sniper!” but other times you get to say “yeah, about that? You've been waiting for that dot to appear, but it hasn't yet. What do you do?”

It's not nuts to have a move follow what's happening at the table in the real world, not what's happening in the characters' fictional world, like this one does. After all, a hardholder's **wealth** move — “at the beginning of the session” — does the same, with no problems. I will note though that this move in particular changes the creative dynamic of the game. It's small but fundamental. It means that the players have to be a little less careful what they launch their characters into, and you as MC have to be a little more willing to reimagine situations as you go. It's not for everyone's Apocalypse World.

Anyhow, making it a roll+sharp is fine, but here's another way:

*When you **declare retroactively that you've already set something up**, roll+barter spent...*

Making it a roll+barter spent means that it's both more democratic — anybody might have a couple loose barter, but not everybody gets sharp+2 — and more harsh, more cynical. You get to play with retroactivity because you're rich, not because you're smart.

Or check this shit out:

*When you **declare retroactively that you've already set something up**, roll+Hx...*

Now knowing someone well means not only that you can help and interfere with their dice, it means that you can help or interfere with them *like this*. Retroactively and in serious I-brought-a-sniper or I-remembered-to-fill-up-the-tank ways. That's a pretty exciting use for Hx, isn't it?

It leaves a hole though — NPCs. This custom basic move adds a section to reading a person:

*When you **read a person** in a charged interaction, roll+sharp. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7-9, hold 1. While you're interacting with them, spend your hold to ask their player questions, 1 for 1:*

- *is your character telling the truth?*
- *what's your character really feeling?*
- *what does your character intend to do?*
- *what does your character wish I'd do?*
- *how could I get your character to ___?*

If you're reading an NPC, on a 10+, in addition to your hold, you can:

- *give yourself Hx=0 with them, if you have no Hx with them*
- *add +1 to your Hx with them, if you do have one (max Hx+3)*

So now PCs have Hx with NPCs. Better pass out the notepaper!

This makes a second small but fundamental change to how the game plays. Now the players can have their characters take retroactive precautions, and now the players can invest mechanically in NPCs. The subtle effect of either is to expand the player's, like, area of involvement: into the past and the off-screen, into the MC's characters. They move toward a new game, a game based on, but no longer, Apocalypse World.

- **Custom moves can change or replace existing moves.**
- **Custom moves can refer to what the characters do, or what the players do, or both.**
- **Custom moves can add and use new stats.**
- **Custom moves can change the game's creative dynamics in subtle ways. Be thoughtful.**

NOT EVEN APOCALYPSE WORLD

So, yeah, based on Apocalypse World, but Apocalypse World no longer? Fuck yeah.

Here's a new setup move by Ben Wray, for use in an Apocalypse World-based zombie game:

Whoever is in charge, roll +hard. How callous are you about allowing liabilities into the group of survivors? On a 10+, pick 1. On a 7–9, pick 2. On a miss, you've got all 4 automatically, sucker.

- A pregnant woman
 - A couple, totally in love, irrational about the other going into danger
 - A douchebag who'll screw you all over to save their own skin
 - Someone hiding the tiniest of bites. You don't know who.
- For each extra one you pick beyond the ones you have to, everybody in the group marks an experience circle.

Here's a new basic move, for use in an Apocalypse World-based Iron-age Celtic fantasy game I'm thinking about:

When you **sit in council**, roll+good. On 10+, hold 3. On 7–9, hold 2. Whenever anyone proposes a course of action, spend your hold 1 for 1:

- bank +1 in that course of action.
- bank -1 in that course of action.

At the end of counsel, any course of action can have at most +4 or -4 banked, so discard the excess.

When you're taking a course of action, you can spend its bank 1 for 1 to take +1 to a roll.

Here are a couple of basic moves by Matt Wilson, for use in an Apocalypse World-based spaceship adventure kind of game:

Schmooze or Impress Someone

Schmoozing takes time. Important people and aliens aren't likely to welcome you as an ally. Roll+smooth.

- On a 10+, take +1 rapport with them at the end of the conversation.
- On a 7–9, take +1 rapport with them at the end of the conversation, but your schmoozing draws the attention of their enemies.
- On a 6-, the MC makes an appropriate hard move.

Call In a Favor

As you accrue favor with NPCs, you can spend it to gain favor from them in return. When you call in a favor, roll +rapport.

- On a 10+, the NPC provides the favor, no problemo.
- On a 7–9, the NPC provides the favor, and the MC picks one:
 - The NPC is annoyed and demands +1 favor more than usual.
 - The NPC can't immediately provide the favor because of a little problem they're having.
- On a 6-, the MC makes an appropriate hard move.

Here are a few new character moves by Tony Dowler, for use in an Apocalypse World-based old-school dungeon crawl game:

Magic User: Cast a spell (intelligence)

Arcane magic comes from the use of formulae, ritual, and the magic user's own life force.

Roll 7–9: Player chooses 1

Roll 10+: Player chooses 2

- The spell is not forgotten
- The spell has a powerful effect (maximize dice)
- The spell has a large effect (double range, duration, or number affected)
- The spell does not misfire

Ranger: Hunt and Track (wisdom)

The ranger may hold and spend so long as he/she continues to track. As long as the ranger holds, he/she may not be ambushed or misled from the trail (though spending may be required to keep the trail).

Roll 7–9: Player chooses 2

Roll 10+: Player chooses 3

- Follow the creature's trail until there's a significant change in its direction or mode of travel
- Gain an impression of the target as accurate as if the ranger were able to observe them briefly from several yards away
- Determine what direction the creature took when it changed its mode of travel, tried to escape pursuit, or made a major change of direction

Cleric: Turn Undead

The Cleric may use Go Aggro on undead using Wisdom instead of Strength (this is called turning). The damage associated with such an action is equal to 2d6 per Cleric level and may be divided any way the cleric wants among the affected undead.

Here are some new basic moves by John Harper, for an Apocalypse World-based parkour game he's working on:

When you traverse with **parkour**, roll+quick. On a hit, you get Flow. On a 10+, three Flow. On a 7–9, one Flow. While you're running, spend your Flow on the following:

- Avoid harm.
- Bypass an obstacle.
- Use your speed and momentum to take +1 forward to your next move.
- Maintain your speed and momentum when you otherwise wouldn't.
- Make less noise than you should.

When you stop running, you lose all your Flow.

When you need to **haul ass**, roll+quick. On a 10+ you gain distance or catch up. On a 7–9, you gain distance or catch up, but you need to **keep your shit together** or **push yourself**, depending on the circumstances. On a miss, you lose distance or fall behind and the MC will make a hard move as usual.

When you're tired but you need to **push yourself**, roll+rough. On a 10+, you're a little winded but can keep going. On a 7–9, take a short break now or suffer -1 ongoing until you do.

When you take **violent action**, roll+rough. On a hit, you inflict harm (as established), make noise, expend your energy, stop moving forward, and must recover before acting again. Also, on a 10+ choose one thing to be true:

- You inflict terrible harm.
- You inflict harm to every target you choose within reach of your weapon.
- You suffer little harm in return.
- You recover quickly and can act again right away.
- You conserve your energy.

Cool stuff.

- **Making a new Apocalypse World-based game means making custom moves. A game's characters, stats, crap, and whatnot all exist to serve its moves.**

MOVES' ARCHITECTURE

Here's a quick look at the structure of Apocalypse World's moves. All moves take the form "when __, then __." For example:

Act under fire [basic]

When you do something under fire, or dig in to endure fire

Then roll+cool

On a 10+ you do it

On a 7–9 you flinch, hesitate or stall

And the MC can offer you a worse outcome, a hard bargain, or an ugly choice

On a miss the MC can make as hard and direct a move as she likes

WHEN...

When the character acts. Examples: *go aggro* [basic], *things speak* [savvyhead], *an arresting skinner* [skinner].

When the character acts, and circumstances dictate. Examples: *Act under fire* [basic], *deep brain scan* [brainer], *moonlighting* [operator].

The circumstances might be in the character's world (*deep brain scan's* "when you have time and physical intimacy with someone"), in the real world, at the table (*moonlighting's* "whenever there's a stretch of downtime in play, or between sessions"), or both.

When circumstances dictate, no action required. Examples: *session end* [basic], *touched by death* [angel], *wealth* [hardholder].

Again, the circumstances might be in the character's world (*touched by death's* "whenever someone in your care dies"), in the real world, at the table (*wealth's* "at the beginning of the session"), or both.

When the character uses a thing. Examples: *augury* [peripheral], *angel kit* [peripheral], *workspace* [peripheral], *eyeglasses*, *skin & hair kit* [peripheral].

From now on. Examples: *merciless* [battlebabe], *NOT TO BE FUCKED WITH* [gunlugger], *fucking wacknut* [hocus].

Right now and done. Examples: *infirmary* [angel], *my other car is a tank* [driver], *reality's fraying edge* [savvyhead].

THEN...

Roll. Examples: *seduce or manipulate* [basic], *when you take harm* [peripheral], *fortunes* [hocus]. Use 10+ (strong hit), 7–9 (weak hit), and miss; or use 12+ (exceptional hit), 10–11 (strong hit), 7–9 (weak hit), and miss.

Substitute stats. Examples: *unnatural lust transfixion* [brainer], *easy to trust* [operator], *spooky intense* [savvyhead].

Substitute or invoke another move. Examples: *seduce or manipulate* (another PC, if they refuse) [basic], *give 1-barter to someone, but with strings attached* [peripheral], *direct-brain whisper projection* [brainer], *things speak* (on a miss) [savvyhead], *hypnotic* (another PC) [skinner].

Activate something's tags. Examples: *wealth* [hardholder], *fortunes* [hocus], *moonlighting* [operator].

Change a stat, stat highlight, equipment, tags, etc. Examples: *session end* [basic], *impossible reflexes* [battlebabe], *fucking thieves* [chopper], *collector* [driver], *insano like drano* [gunlugger], *reality's fraying edge* [savvyhead].

Inflict harm. Examples: *go aggro* [basic], *merciless* [battlebabe], *in-brain puppet strings* [brainer].

Heal harm. Examples: *angel kit* [peripheral], *healing touch* [angel].

Modify a roll or rolls. Examples: *read a sitch* [basic], *help or interfere* [basic], *perfect instincts* [battlebabe], *a no shit driver* [driver], *reputation* [operator].

Choose options. Examples: *seize by force* [basic], *go into a holding's bustling market* [peripheral], *augury* [peripheral], *pack alpha* [chopper], *moonlighting* (on a 7–9) [operator].

Hold & spend. Examples: *read a person* [basic], *frenzy* [hocus], *bonefeel* [savvyhead], *hypnotic* [skinner].

Ask & answer. Examples: *read a person* [basic], *open your brain to the world's psychic maelstrom* [basic], *deep brain scan* [brainer].

Change circumstances directly. Examples: *act under fire* [basic], *seize by force* [basic], *dangerous & sexy* [battlebabe], *pack alpha* [chopper], *reputation* [operator], *lost* [skinner].

Mark an experience circle. Examples: *seduce or manipulate* (another PC) [basic], *session end* [basic], *insight* [peripheral], *oftener right* [savvyhead].

Call for specific details. Examples: *seduce or manipulate* (tell them what you want them to do) [basic], *session end* (name another PC) [basic], *in-brain puppet strings* (plant a command inside their mind) [brainer], *fuck this shit* (name your escape route) [gunlugger], *artful & gracious* (name an NPC) [skinner].

NOTES & ANALYSIS

A complicated character move might use quite a few of these options, depending on the results of a roll or a series of choices. For example:

In-brain puppet strings [brainer]

When *you have time and physical intimacy with someone* [circumstances dictate]

And *you plant a command inside their mind* [the character acts]

Then *roll+weird* [roll]

On a 10+ *hold 3* [hold & spend]

On a 7–9 *hold 1* [hold & spend]

And *at your will, no matter the circumstances, you can spend your hold 1 for 1* [hold & spend]

To [choose options]

• *inflict 1-harm (ap)* [inflict harm]

• *they take -1 right now* [modify a roll or rolls]

Or else when *they fulfill your command* [the character acts (for a PC) or circumstances dictate (for an NPC)]

Then *that counts for all your remaining hold* [hold & spend]

On a miss *you inflict 1-harm (ap) upon your subject, to no benefit* [inflict harm]

I don't recommend diagramming your own new moves out like this, by the way, unless you figure it'll really help you understand them. I never do.

A character move might also call upon different players to make its various decisions. For example:

Reputation [operator]

When you meet someone important (your call) [player's decision]

Then roll+cool

On a hit they've heard of you, and you say what they've heard [player's decision]

And the MC will have them respond accordingly [MC's decision]

On a 10+ you take +1 forward for dealing with them as well

On a miss they've heard of you, but the MC will decide what they've heard [MC's decision]

For moves that let one PC directly attack or control another PC, it's important to trade decision-making back and forth between the players. It's *especially* important to give the victim decisions to make or the power to influence outcomes when the attacker wins:

Seduce or manipulate [basic]

When you try to seduce or manipulate someone

Then roll+hot

For an NPC

On a hit they ask you to promise something first [MC's decision]

And do it if you promise [player's decision]

On a 7-9 they need some concrete assurance [MC's decision]

And do it if you provide some [player's decision]

For a PC

On a 10+ both

On a 7-9 choose 1 [attacker's decision]

- if they do it, they mark experience [defender's decision]
- if they refuse, it's acting under fire [defender's decision]

On a miss the MC can make as hard and direct a move as she likes [MC's decision]

Look through the moves, you'll see this pattern over and over. Pass decision-making to the victim, the defender, the loser. Nobody should get to win *and* win, nobody should have to lose *and* get cut out of the action.

LUDO-
GRAPHY

LUDOGRAPHY

QUOTES

Graham Walmsley, Mikael Honkala, Shreyas Sampat.

EXAMPLE CUSTOM MOVES

Ben Wray, John Harper, Johnstone Metzger, Matt Wilson, Tony Dowler. Used with their kind permission.

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If I’ve missed your name, I’m sorry! Drop me a note, I’ll get you into future printings.

IMMEDIATE GAME INFLUENCES

3:16, Gregor Hutton
Ars Magica, Lion Rampant
Bacchanal, Paul Czege
The Burning Wheel, Luke Crane
The Mountain Witch, Timothy Kleinert
Mouse Guard, Luke Crane
Primetime Adventures, Matt Wilson
Shadow of Yesterday, Clinton R. Nixon
Sorcerer; Sorcerer’s Soul; Sex & Sorcery, Ron Edwards
Spione, Ron Edwards
Talislanta, Bard Games
Trollbabe, Ron Edwards
XXXXtreme Street Luge, Ben Lehman

Character moves are based on secrets in *The Shadow of Yesterday*, by Clinton R. Nixon. Highlighted stats work very much like keys in the same.

Highlighted stats also follow fan mail in *Primetime Adventures*, by Matt Wilson.

Hx is based on trust in *The Mountain Witch*, by Timothy Kleinart.

Stakes questions are based on stakes in *Trollbabe*, by Ron Edwards.

Threat countdowns are based on bangs in *Sorcerer*, by Ron Edwards.

Holding creation (et al) is based on covenant creation in *Ars Magica* (2nd Edition), by Lion Rampant.

The character sex moves were inspired by *Sex & Sorcerer*, by Ron Edwards.

The character playbooks were inspired by *XXXXtreme Street Luge*, by Ben Lehman.

“Tell them the possible consequences and ask” and “offer an opportunity, with or without a cost” are based partly on “Taxi Service on Al Amarja” by Jonathan Tweet.

The entire game design follows from “Narrativism: Story Now” by Ron Edwards.

Online resources:

The Forge (indie-rpgs.com)

The Game Design Studio (glyphpress.com/talk/forum/)

Story Games (story-games.com)

Barf Forth Apocalyptica (apocalypse-world.com)

Book, illustration, and conceptual help and inspiration: Ben Lehman, Bret Gillan, Christopher Kubasik, Elizabeth Shoemaker, Jason Morningstar, John Harper, Joshua A.C. Newman, Keith Senkowski, Matt Wilson, Simon Carryer.

Sean M.: “My experience with porn is that people’s opinions on sex suck so trying to make a movie out of it will suck as well. Unless you’re covered in mud and have a gas mask on. Then you will have loads of fun and make bus change.”

Thank you all.

IMMEDIATE MEDIA INFLUENCES

I’d recommend some of these enthusiastically, some reservedly, and some not at all. You know how it is.

12 Monkeys (1995)

28 Days Later (2002)

Aeon Flux (1991)

Blindness (2008)

Blood Meridian, Cormac McCarthy (1985)

Bone Machine, Tom Waits (1992)

The Book of Eli (2010)

Children of Men (2006)

City of Ember (2008)

The City of Lost Children (1995)

Dollhouse (2009–2010)

Domino (2005)

Doomsday (2008)

“Ecce Homo,” “Hydroxizinium City,” Job Karma (2004, 2005)

Engine Summer, John Crowley (1979)

Far North (2007)

The Fifth Element (1997)

Firefly (2002–2003)

The Forest of Hands and Teeth, Carrie Ryan (2009)

I Am Legend (2007)

Jacob’s Ladder (1990)

Lost (2004–2010)

Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind (1984)

Pandora Radio, properly seeded

Princess Mononoke (1997)

The Proposition, Nick Cave & Warren Ellis (2005)

Red of Tooth and Claw, Murder By Death (2008)

The Road, Cormac McCarthy

The Road Warrior (1981)

Serenity (2005)

The Signal (2007)

Sons of Anarchy (2008–2010)

The Supernaturalist, Eoin Colfer (2005)

Who Will Survive, and What Will Be Left of Them? Murder by Death (2003)

THE COUNTDOWN CLOCK



If you aren't a child of the 80s, you might not know that we had a countdown clock then, the way that these days we have colorful alert levels. 12:00 midnight meant mutual US & USSR nuclear annihilation. Thing is, they never set the clock to any time before 11:45, just like they've never set the threat level cooler than yellow. The countdown clock, unlike a real clock, wasn't evenly distributed, 1 unit detail per 6°. Before 11:45 it was abstract, even notional; all the real details came after 11:45.

That's why Apocalypse World's countdown clock is the way it is.

GASOLINE

Someone pointed out to me, rather late in development, that gasoline evaporates like crazy. 50 years after the apocalypse? Not a drop of refined gas left.

It turns out that I can live with it.

If it bugs you, pretend that I meant biodiesel all along. I guess that biodiesel doesn't evaporate like gas does, or something. So maybe in the preapocalypse we converted wholesale to bio, yeah? I guess it didn't save us after all.

INDIE RPG PUBLISHING

This kind of RPG publishing was pioneered in large part by Ron Edwards and Clinton R. Nixon. Without their work, investment and support, I for one would still be fucking hand-collating my books on my living room floor.

For resources for designing and publishing your own game, visit indie-rpgs.com.

APOPALYPSE CORN

Make popcorn. Melt butter. To the melting butter, add sriracha hot sauce, a good squirt or two. Don't skimp, this is Apocalypse World.

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Battle-hardened [gunlugger] 52, 224, hard for cool.

Battlefield grace [angel] 22, 217, armor.

Battlefield instincts [gunlugger] 52, 225, hard for weird.

Bloodcrazed [gunlugger] 52, 225, harm.

Bonefeel [savvyhead] 76, 231, weird.

Breathtaking [skinner] 82, 233, hot.

Casual brain receptivity [brainer] 34, 219, weird for sharp.

Charismatic [hocus] 64, 228, weird for hot.

Collector [driver] 46, 224, vehicle.

Dangerous & sexy [battlebabe] 28, 218, hot.

Daredevil [driver] 46, 223, armor.

Deep brain scan [brainer] 34, 220, weird.

Deep insights [savvyhead] 76, 232, weird.

Direct brain-whisper projection [brainer] 34, 220, weird.

Divine Protection [hocus] 64, 229, armor.

Do something under fire [basic] 86, 190, hot.

Advanced, 185.

Easy to trust [operator] 70, 230, cool for hot, Hx for hot.

Eye on the door [operator] 70, 230, cool.

Follow through on someone else's move [peripheral, optional battle] 92, 214, Hx.

Fortunes [hocus] 64, 227, followers.

Fuck this shit [gunlugger] 52, 224, hard.

Fucking thieves [chopper] 40, 222, hard, gang.

Fucking wacknut [hocus] 64, 228, weird.

Frenzy [hocus] 64, 228, weird.

Give 1-barter to someone [peripheral, barter] 89, 210, barter for hot.

Go aggro on someone [basic] 86, 193, hard.

Advanced, 186.

Go into a holding's market [peripheral, barter] 90, 210, sharp.

Good in the clinch [driver] 46, 223, sharp for cool.

Heal another character's harm [peripheral, harm & healing] 89, 210, Hx.

Healing touch [angel] 22, 217, weird.

Help or interfere [basic] 88, 205, Hx.

Hypnotic [skinner] 83, 234, hot.

Ice cold [battlebabe] 28, 218, cool for hard, Hx for hard.

Impossible reflexes [battlebabe] 28, 219, armor.

In-brain puppet strings [brainer] 35, 220, weird.

Infirmity [angel] 22, 216, workspace.

Inflict harm on another character [peripheral, harm & healing] 89, 209, Hx.

Insano like Drano [gunlugger] 52, 225, hard.
Insight [peripheral, followers] 91, 212, bonus.
Leadership [hardholder] 58, 226, hard, gang.
Lost [skinner] 82, 233, weird.
Maintain an untenable position or course [peripheral, optional battle] 91, 213, hard.
Make known you want a thing [peripheral, barter] 90, 211, barter.
Merciless [battlebabe] 28, 218, harm.
Moonlighting [operator] 70, 229, cool, gigs.
My other car is a tank [driver] 46, 224, vehicle.
NOT TO BE FUCKED WITH [gunlugger] 52, 225, harm.
Oftener right [savvyhead] 76, 232, bonus.
Open your brain to the world's psychic maelstrom [basic] 88, 204, weird.
Advanced, 188.
Opportunistic [operator] 70, 230, cool fof Hx.
Pack alpha [chopper] 40, 221, hard, gang.
Perfect instincts [battlebabe] 28, 219, sharp.
Prepared for the inevitable [gunlugger] 52, 225, angel kit.
Preternatural at-will brain attunement [brainer] 34, 220, weird.
Professional compassion [angel] 22, 216, sharp for Hx.
Provide covering fire [peripheral, optional battle] 91, 213, cool.
Read a charged situation [basic] 87, 199 sharp.
Advanced, 187.
Read a person [basic] 87, 201, sharp.
Advanced, 187.
Reality's fraying edge [savvyhead] 76, 232, workspace.
Reputation [operator] 70, 230, cool.
Seeing souls [hocus] 64, 228, weird for Hx.
Seduce or manipulate someone [basic] 87, 197, hot.
Advanced, 186.

Seize something by force [basic] 86, 195, hard.
Advanced, 185.
Session end [basic] 88, 207, Hx.
Sixth sense [angel] 22, 216, sharp for weird.
Spooky intense [savvyhead] 76, 232, weird for cool.
Stay the fuck down [peripheral, optional battle] 91, 213, sharp.
Suffer harm [peripheral, harm & healing] 89, 209, harm.
Things speak [savvyhead] 76, 231, weird.
Touched by death [angel] 22, 217, weird.
Unnatural lust transfixion [brainer] 34, 219, weird for hot.
Visions of death [battlebabe] 28, 218, weird.
Wealth [hardholder] 58, 226, hard, holding.
Weather eye [driver] 46, 223, sharp for weird.

CHARACTER MOVES BY STAT

COOL

Battle-hardened [gunlugger] 52, 224, hard for cool.
Easy to trust [operator] 70, 230, cool for hot, Hx for hot.
Eye on the door [operator] 70, 230, cool.
Good in the clinch [driver] 46, 223, sharp for cool.
Moonlighting [operator] 70, 229, cool, gigs.
Opportunistic [operator] 70, 230, cool fof Hx.
Reputation [operator] 70, 230, cool.
Spooky intense [savvyhead] 76, 232, weird for cool.

HARD

Battle-hardened [gunlugger] 52, 224, hard for cool.
Battlefield instincts [gunlugger] 52, 225, hard for weird.
Fuck this shit [gunlugger] 52, 224, hard.
Fucking thieves [chopper] 40, 222, hard, gang.
Ice cold [battlebabe] 28, 218, cool for hard, Hx for hard.

Insano like Drano [gunlugger] 52, 225, hard.

Leadership [hardholder] 58, 226, hard, gang.

Pack alpha [chopper] 40, 221, hard, gang.

Wealth [hardholder] 58, 226, hard, holding.

HOT

Artful & gracious [skinner] 82, 233, hot.

Breathtaking [skinner] 82, 233, hot.

Charismatic [hocus] 64, 228, weird for hot.

Dangerous & sexy [battlebabe] 28, 218, hot.

Easy to trust [operator] 70, 230, cool for hot, Hx for hot.

Hypnotic [skinner] 83, 234, hot.

Unnatural lust transfixion [brainer] 34, 219, weird for hot.

SHARP

Casual brain receptivity [brainer] 34, 219, weird for sharp.

Good in the clinch [driver] 46, 223, sharp for cool.

Perfect instincts [battlebabe] 28, 219, sharp.

Professional compassion [angel] 22, 216, sharp for Hx.

Sixth sense [angel] 22, 216, sharp for weird.

Weather eye [driver] 46, 223, sharp for weird.

WEIRD

Battlefield instincts [gunlugger] 52, 225, hard for weird.

Bonefeel [savvyhead] 76, 231, weird.

Casual brain receptivity [brainer] 34, 219, weird for sharp.

Charismatic [hocus] 64, 228, weird for hot.

Deep brain scan [brainer] 34, 220, weird.

Deep insights [savvyhead] 76, 232, weird.

Direct brain-whisper projection [brainer] 34, 220, weird.

Fucking wacknut [hocus] 64, 228, weird.

Frenzy [hocus] 64, 228, weird.

Healing touch [angel] 22, 217, weird.

In-brain puppet strings [brainer] 35, 220, weird.

Lost [skinner] 82, 233, weird.

Preternatural at-will brain attunement [brainer] 34, 220, weird.

Seeing souls [hocus] 64, 228, weird for Hx.

Sixth sense [angel] 22, 216, sharp for weird.

Spooky intense [savvyhead] 76, 232, weird for cool.

Things speak [savvyhead] 76, 231, weird.

Touched by death [angel] 22, 217, weird.

Unnatural lust transfixion [brainer] 34, 219, weird for hot.

Visions of death [battlebabe] 28, 218, weird.

Weather eye [driver] 46, 223, sharp for weird.

NO-STAT CHARACTER MOVES

A no shit driver [driver] 46, 223, vehicle.

An arresting skinner [skinner] 82, 233, effect.

Battlefield grace [angel] 22, 217, armor.

Bloodcrazed [gunlugger] 52, 225, harm.

Collector [driver] 46, 224, vehicle.

Daredevil [driver] 46, 223, armor.

Divine Protection [hocus] 64, 229, armor.

Fortunes [hocus] 64, 227, followers.

Impossible reflexes [battlebabe] 28, 219, armor.

Infirmity [angel] 22, 216, workspace.

Merciless [battlebabe] 28, 218, harm.

My other car is a tank [driver] 46, 224, vehicle.

NOT TO BE FUCKED WITH [gunlugger] 52, 225, harm.

Oftener right [savvyhead] 76, 232, bonus.

Prepared for the inevitable [gunlugger] 52, 225, angel kit.

Reality's fraying edge [savvyhead] 76, 232, workspace.

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FIN