THE END OF THE WORLD
ALIEN INVASION

ROLEPLAYING GAME

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INTRODUCTION

"They run everything, man! They've been running it all since before we even knew there were things to be run! They're the Illuminati, the Skulls, the Masons! They're all of 'em and then some, man! They're the secret society that runs the secret societies. We're all just pawns in their game. What's that? Yeah, of course they know I know... But I know that they know that I know. They'll never see me coming!"

–A concerned member of the intelligence community.

"Have you guys seen this?" Megan asks, holding her cell phone out toward us.

I sigh. "You know I wish you wouldn't look at your phone while we're playing," I say, peering over my Game Master's screen.

"I'm serious." She starts playing a video. It's a somewhat grainy image of a little grey alien speaking in...not English or any other language I recognize.

"I saw that during our last break," says Robert. "It's just viral marketing for a new movie or something. What's that one, Aliens in the Outfield?"

Madhavi and Marcos nod their heads in agreement. Megan sighs and sits back in her chair. "I don't know… people online are saying it's real, that it's, like, a warning or something."

"They can do a lot with CG these days," counters Madhavi.

"But people have seen saucers," says Megan.

"It's probably just part of the marketing campaign," I cut in. "Can we please get back to the game? I was just about to describe the death and destruction."

I clear my throat, and a car alarm goes off outside. Everyone jumps a little, but especially Megan. I sigh and shake my head.

"Someone will get it in a minute. Anyway…" I'm interrupted by the sound of a scream from next door. Now, everyone is up out of their chair. Madhavi and Rob go over to the window and peer out. Their faces go pale. I get up and join them, and my breath catches in my throat. There's an arm sticking out from under the neighbor's garage, laying in the driveway, all flesh seems to have been vaporized and all that remains are pale bones.

"Early Halloween prank…" I swallow.

Madhavi is on her phone, calling 911. She looks worried.

"All the circuits are busy...I think. Is that what this sound means?" She starts to hold the phone toward Rob, when I gasp. Something short just ran by between the houses.

Megan and Marcos crowd around the window to see what's happening, and Marcos screams at the sight of the arm. I clamp my hand over his mouth, but I'm too late. If there is anything out there, it heard us. Assuming it can hear.

I head into the kitchen to grab a knife. Not really sure how much help that's going to be, but it makes me feel better. As I'm pulling one out of the tray, the back door starts to sizzle and suddenly bursts into ash. A short, large-headed creature with big, almond-shaped eyes is staring at me, and it's pointing a smooth pistol at me. It has a tiny satellite dish where the barrel should be. I scream and dive out of the room as it pulls the trigger and the refrigerator disintegrates behind me.

Madhavi and Marcos bolt out the front door while Megan helps me up, and Robert is frantically trying everyone's phones, which were left sitting out on the table, with no luck. The rest of us run out the front door as the alien—I guess that's what it is—blasts the table.

"No—my books!" Robert cries out, and we have to practically drag him out the front door, just before another blast vaporizes it behind us.

"I told you!" shouts Megan.

"What the hell was that?" yells Marcos.

As we head toward the cars, a bright light shines down from above. Everyone freezes in panic for a moment, but then I realize I can't move.

As the others scream and grab at me, I start to float up in the air, toward the saucer waiting overhead. I crane my head up and see an opening, with more of the little grey aliens crowded around it, holding an array of wicked and horrible-looking instruments.

I wish I could say it's the last thing I ever see.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Alien Invasion. By picking up this book, you've doomed yourself and everyone you know to a horrible end. But don't worry–it's all in good fun. Alien Invasion is a roleplaying game in which you and your friends try to survive the end of the world and not get vaporized by aliens (a key aspect of survival, of course). Unlike in other games, the players won't be portraying mighty heroes or dangerous outlaws, but themselves! Likewise, the locations and other characters they encounter during the game are largely based on people and places they know in real life. So, in a game of Alien Invasion, the players portray themselves trying to survive as aliens attack their town (and the rest of the world), running and fighting their way through familiar streets during a horrifying event. An easy-to-learn, flexible, and narrative-focused rule set propels the action along, keeping the focus on the story and the players' actions, without bogging things down in unnecessary bookkeeping.

If you've ever wondered how you and your friends would do during an alien invasion, keep reading and find out!

THE END OF THE WORLD?

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Alien Invasion is the third in a series of roleplaying games called The End of the World. Each game in the series is a standalone play experience, but they share a set of simple, narrative rules and the titular theme. Each book in the series explores a different, exciting way the world of humans might come to an end. This book deals with aliens, obviously, and with how an extraterrestrial invasion of Earth might unfold. Other books cover different threats and, like this one, each explores multiple scenarios involving different takes on the threat.

WHAT IS AN RPG?

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

PLAYER CHARACTERS

Each player in an RPG creates a Player Character, also known as a PC, to control during the game. The PCs are the protagonists of the story and the players' primary means by which to influence its events. Each PC has game characteristics that represent their relative strengths and weaknesses and determine their likelihood to succeed at various tasks. Most games would mention here that PCs have their own backstories and motivations, but in The End of the World, the PCs are based on the players themselves! Obviously, getting into the head of, well, yourself, should come more naturally than contemplating the mindset of a thousand-year-old elven warrior-mage.

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

THE GAME MASTER

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

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

SCENARIOS

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

This book includes five scenarios describing different ways aliens might bring about the end of the world as we know it. These scenarios include all the information the GM needs regarding what the aliens are, what sort of technology they have, and how they destroy, conquer, or enslave the world, but the GM needs to fill in the details about people and locations, since the game takes place wherever the players happen to be. In addition to these scenarios, GMs can come up with their own take on an alien invasion to really keep players on their toes.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME DIFFERENT?

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

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

Whereas RPGs often focus on some goal or mission, be it saving the world from supervillains or just acquiring a lot of treasure, THE END OF THE WORLD is really about putting the PCs in a difficult situation and seeing how they deal with it. There's no stopping the apocalypse—the PCs are regular people, and the best they can hope for is to be among the few to survive.

THE END OF THE WORLD features a fast, narrative rules set to keep the players engaged and the story moving. While tactical, detailed combat works great for some games, that's not the focus here. You don't want to get into a protracted back-and-forth fight with an alien—you want to shoot it, avoid getting zapped or eaten in return, and keep moving. If you get stuck in close with an alien, whether it be a Grey with a deadly heat ray or a giant ant with chompy mandibles, you've probably already lost.

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

You'll need the following to play Alien Invasion:

- ☻ This book (check!)
- ☻ At least two other people (preferably human).
- ☻ Three or four hours set aside to play (or more, if the world really has ended and you have lots of free time).
- ☻ A handful of six-sided dice of two different colors (or different sizes, as long as you can tell them apart).
- ☻ Some paper, pencils, and erasers (ink is a little too permanent for use on a character sheet).
- ☻ Snacks (preferably something humans, not aliens, like to eat).

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

Players use the same characters for all five scenarios—after all, they're just playing themselves. Each scenario presents a completely different take on an alien invasion, making for five very different game experiences. In effect, each scenario hits the reset button and changes reality. This puts the players in the unusual situation of experiencing a somewhat similar challenge, but with different details. This keeps things fresh without requiring the players to learn new rules or a new setting, or even to create new characters. Of course, the PCs, like the players, are familiar with the idea of aliens and unearthly invaders. But they can't know all the details of the particular aliens they face. Figuring out how to defeat them while staying alive presents a great opportunity for players to use their own knowledge of the genre without "cheating."

Getting Started

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

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

What's in this Book?

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

CHAPTER I: PLAYING THE GAME

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

HUMAN AFFAIRS ARE NOT BEING WATCHED FROM THE TIMELESS WORLDS OF SPACE

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

It should go without saying that the events of ALIEN INVASION are fictitious. Aliens aren't real (or at least we haven't found them yet), and the world (probably) won't end because of them. This is a game, and it's purely meant for fun. Of course, the resemblance to real people, both living and extraterrestrial, is not a coincidence in this case, which can blur the lines in a way other games don't. Before playing, it's a good idea to talk with the other players about expectations for the game, to make sure no one is upset by events described during play. If some players aren't comfortable with detailed descriptions of people they know being vaporized by heat rays, leave it vague. If someone wants to play a more fictionalized version of themselves than the others, that's fine. The events of an alien invasion are pretty horrifying if taken literally, so don't be afraid to approach them in a lighthearted, even comical way, if that's what everyone prefers. The important thing is that everyone has fun, and the PCs all have at least a fighting chance.

CHAPTER II: RUNNING THE GAME

Chapter II is specifically for the GM. It includes plenty of useful advice on running ALIEN INVASION, including how to tailor the game to the players and town, pace the story and encounters, use the rules to enhance the story, and address questions and disputes about the rules (and situations not covered by the rules).

CHAPTER III: SCENARIOS

The final chapter presents five different scenarios in which aliens bring about the end of the world. The scenarios present different takes on the idea of an alien invasion—and what happens afterward. Each one features a different kind of alien, from giant ants, to little Greys, to spore-based Visages and more. The scenarios each include all the information the GM needs about the aliens, their technology, their weaknesses, and how things unfold once the invasion begins. Each scenario presents new surprises and challenges for players. Playing them all allows the players to see how different survival strategies work out and to explore different parts of their world during and after the apocalypse.

WHY ALIENS?

Why ALIEN INVASION? The idea of invaders from the stars has captivated humanity for well over a century, and hundreds of books, movies, and games have been created based on the idea. Everyone is familiar with at least a few of these stories and the tropes they contain, whether they be Martian tripods or pod people. This means that regardless of the specifics, players have at least some familiarity with the concept of an alien invasion.

On another level, the idea of an alien invasion represents our deepest fears about the other, and the dehumanizing effects of war. In the course of an alien invasion, neither side is "human" to the other, whether they see their opponents as beasts, grotesque monsters, or something else. All the horrors of battle are amplified when there is no shared humanity to fall back on. It's the ultimate expression of war: merciless violence that strips both sides of their inherent worth, of their very essence.

That sounds a little depressing, so here's a lighter take. Aliens have been done to death. All those hundreds of stories mentioned earlier? They've just about exhausted the topic. While it's certainly possible to put a new spin on the subject, aliens are almost comfortable in their familiarity. When someone mentions a "Grey" or a "body snatcher" or a "Reptilian," most people immediately know what to expect. This familiarity keeps things easier, allowing the GM to play around with familiar tropes in a new way, or just to let the players experience their favorite alien invasion stories for themselves.

And most importantly, because aliens are cool.

PLAYING THE GAME

CHAPTER I

PLAYING THE GAME

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

In Alien Invasion, you play as yourself as you attempt to survive the invasion of earth by alien species from across the galaxy. As a player, you control the actions of your character (you). You listen to the narrative presented by the Game Master (GM) and indicate how you react to the events as they unfold, rolling dice to determine how well you perform at the various challenges you face. In the end, shaping the story in Alien Invasion is a collaborative process, in which you and the other players work with the GM to create the most thrilling, horrifying, and entertaining end of the world possible.

PERFORMING TASKS

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

The GM decides when you need to make a test, though you should feel free to suggest one when you think it would be appropriate. In general, tests should be reserved for important or exciting moments, when your success or failure matters to the story or to your character. Note that the same task might require a test in one context but not in another. For example, if you are lifting heavy boxes one day at work, whether or not you move all the boxes successfully is unlikely to have a significant effect on the story, so you would not make a test. However, if you are frantically piloting a stolen saucer ship as you are chased by Martian Greys, how well you handle the ship matters a lot more, and you will likely need to make a test.

THE TEST

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

- ☻ The GM determines the characteristic appropriate for the test.

- ☻ You assemble a pool of positive and negative dice.

- ☻ You roll the dice, and after all factors have been accounted for, if at least one positive die has a result equal to or lower than the target characteristic, the task succeeds.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

THE DICE

Tests in ALIEN INVASION require you to roll two different types of six-sided dice (or d6s): positive dice and negative dice. To roll for a test at the table, you will need several d6s of two different colors. Contrasting colors, one to represent "positive" and the other to represent "negative," are recommended, but you may use whatever color d6s you have on hand, so lon as you can tell the two types of dice apart.

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

STEP 1: DETERMINE THE TASK

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

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

STEP 2: ASSEMBLE THE DICE POOL

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

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

- ☻ **Positive Features:** Each positive feature on your character sheet that could help you perform the task adds a single positive die to the pool. Usually, this feature shares a category with the characteristic being used for the test. However, if the GM allows it, you may use applicable features from other categories as well.

- ☻ **Equipment:** Each piece of readily available equipment that can help you with the task adds a single positive die to the pool.

- ☻ **Assistance:** Each additional character who assists you with the task adds a single positive die to the pool.

- ☻ **Situational Benefits:** Each environmental effect present that could make the task easier also adds a positive die to the pool.

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

- ☻ **Task Danger and Difficulty:** The innate danger or difficulty of the task can add one or more negative dice, depending on what you are attempting. The higher the task's probability of causing you physical, mental, or social stress, the more negative dice are added. (See page 44 for more specific guidance on adding negative dice due to danger or difficulty.)

- ☻ **Negative Features:** Each negative feature on your character sheet that could hamper you in performing the task adds a single negative die to the pool. As with positive features, a negative feature likely shares a category with the characteristic being used for the test. However, features from other categories can add negative dice if they are applicable to the task.

- ☻ **Traumas:** Each trauma that currently affects your character and shares a category with the characteristic used for the test adds a single negative die to the pool.

- ☻ **Situational Hindrances:** Each environmental effect present that could make the task more difficult or stressful also adds a negative die to the pool.

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

STEP 3: ROLL AND RESOLVE

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

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

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

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

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

PUSHING YOURSELF

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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

EXAMPLE 👽

The PCs, fleeing from a swarm of voracious Myrmidons, attempt to lock themselves in a secure building. As they enter, Joan tries to slam the door shut behind them, before the Myrmidons reach the group. Unfortunately, the door is stuck! Gordon, the GM, has Joan make a Dexterity test to force the door closed. Joan starts with the single positive die and then adds two additional positive dice: one for her Athlete feature and another because Joan "pushes" herself and takes a running start before slamming her shoulder into the door. Then, the GM adds two negative dice to the pool: one for the innate difficulty of the task and the other for the risk involved in Joan's "pushing" herself into a wild charge at the door.

Joan rolls the dice, getting "2," "2," and "6" on her positive dice, and "2" and "5" on her negative dice. She removes the negative "2" along with one of the matching positive "2" results. Joan has a Dexterity characteristic of 4, so the one remaining positive "2" in her final pool means Joan succeeds at the test and slams the door shut! However, the remaining uncanceled negative die indicates that Joan takes a single physical stress point due to the force needed to hammer the door closed.

OPPOSED TESTS

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

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

MULTIPLE OPPONENTS

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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

EXAMPLE 👽

Brooke is staring down her friend Donald and the Visage that has duplicated him. Unfortunately, she can't tell them apart. Philip, the GM, calls for Donald to make an opposed test against his Visage using Charisma (a characteristic in which Donald has a 3) to convince Brooke that he's the original Donald. Donald adds a positive die to his pool as he tries to appeal to Brooke, since he has known her for years. However, Philip adds a negative die to Donald's pool because of the chaotic struggle Brooke found him and his Visage in when she arrived, confusing the whole matter.

The Visage, who only has a Charisma of 2 (since he's slightly more drone-like than the original), adds one positive die to its pool because of the general paranoia caused by the Visages' mass infiltration. However, the Visage also gets one negative die due to the chaos and commotion.

Donald and the GM roll their dice. Donald rolls a positive "5" and "6" and a negative "5," canceling out any stress, but failing the test. The GM rolls a positive "2" and "4" and a negative "5" for the Visage, suffering one stress but getting one success. With one more success than Donald, the Visage succeeds, and Brooke takes her shot. Donald falls to the ground.

CREATING CHARACTERS

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

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

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

Once all of these steps are finished, you are ready to take on the ALIEN INVASION!

STEP 1: DETERMINE CHARACTERISTICS

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

PHYSICAL

- ☺ **Dexterity (offensive):** Dexterity is your coordination and general motor skills. Balance, speed, and grace are all governed by Dexterity.

- ☺ **Vitality (defensive):** Vitality is your physical strength and toughness. It determines elements of your character ranging from how much weight you can lift to how well you resist disease and toxins.

MENTAL

- ☺ **Logic (offensive):** Logic is your awareness of your surroundings and ability to think on your feet. If you are hacking into a secure computer system or noticing an ambush, Logic is the characteristic you are using.

- ☺ **Willpower (defensive):** Willpower represents your memory and mental resilience. Everything from resisting the horrors of the world to recalling specific information from years ago uses Willpower.

SOCIAL

- ☺ **Charisma (offensive):** Charisma is your general demeanor and social skills. It governs how easily you can use words and actions to sway others, whether through careful negotiation or harsh threats.

- ☺ **Empathy (defensive):** Empathy is your ability to understand and sympathize with others. From determining whether someone is lying to predicting an adversary's next move, it can be very useful.

FICTIONAL CHARACTERS

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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

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

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

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

DISTRIBUTE POINTS

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

VOTE

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

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

- ☺ **Positive Die:** One of the two characteristics in the category should be raised.

- ☺ **Negative Die:** One of the two characteristics should be lowered.

- ☺ **Both Dice:** The two characteristics should stay the same.

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

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

STEP 2: CHOOSE FEATURES

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

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

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

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

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

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

STEP 3: RECORD EQUIPMENT

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

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

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

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

STEP 4: RECORD TRAUMAS

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

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

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

PERSONAL INFORMATION

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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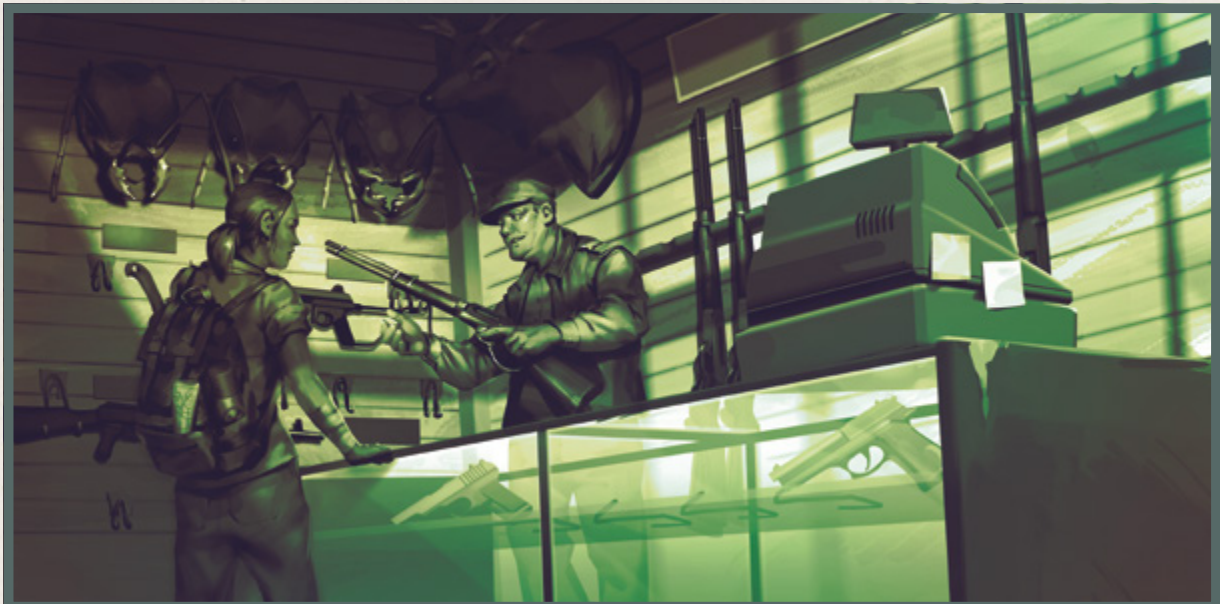
THE CHARACTER SHEET

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

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

CATEGORIES

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

1 CHARACTERISTICS (PAGE 21)

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

2 FEATURES (PAGE 25)

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

3 STRESS (PAGE 30)

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

4 TRAUMAS (PAGE 32)

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

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

5 EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES (PAGE 27)

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

CHARACTER SHEET

FEATURES

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

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

POSITIVE FEATURES

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

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

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

TABLE 1: POSITIVE FEATURE EXAMPLES

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

Negative Features

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

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

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

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

TABLE 2: NEGATIVE FEATURE EXAMPLES

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

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

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

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

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

GEAR

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

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

Table 3: Common Gear offers suggestions on different pieces of common gear a group of survivors might end up needing or using. It also recommends the category each piece of gear would likely be most helpful in, as

TABLE 3: COMMON GEAR

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

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

NOT ALL GEAR IS CREATED EQUAL

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

CARRYING CAPACITY

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

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

WEAPONS

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

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

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

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

TRACKING SMALL DETAILS

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

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

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

TABLE 4: WEAPONS

TYPE OF WEAPON	EXAMPLES	ADDED DICE	DAMAGE
SMALL-BLADED MELEE	POCKETKNIFE, KITCHEN KNIFE	1 POSITIVE DIE	+2
LARGE-BLADED MELEE	MACHETE, HEDGE CLIPPERS	2 POSITIVE DICE	+3
SMALL IMPROVISED MELEE	BEER BOTTLE, TIRE IRON	N/A	+1
LARGE IMPROVISED MELEE	BASEBALL BAT, CHAINSAW	1 NEGATIVE DIE	+4
THROWN OBJECT	ROCK, TOASTER, EMPTY BOTTLE	N/A	–1
PISTOL	GLOCK 19, M1911	1 POSITIVE DIE	+3
SHOTGUN	REMINGTON 12 GAUGE	N/A	+4
SINGLE-SHOT RIFLE	AMERICAN LONG RIFLE, RUGER NO. 1	2 POSITIVE DICE	+4
AUTOMATIC RIFLE	M4, AK-47	1 NEGATIVE DIE	+5
ROCKET-PROPELLED GRENADE	M72 LAW, RPG-7 LAUNCHER	1 NEGATIVE DIE	+7
SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE LAUNCHER	FIM-92 STINGER MISSILE LAUNCHER	1 POSITIVE DIE	+6

WEAPON RANGES

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

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

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

ARMOR

While very few people will find themselves wearing any form of armor when they become aware the world is ending, armor can quickly become necessary to survival. Armor might not be actual medieval armor or bulletproof vests, but simply heavy, protective clothing that will help guard you against the dangers you face every day. When you are wearing any armor sturdy enough to protect you from physical harm, it adds a bonus to your physical resistance value (see Resistance, page 31).

TABLE 5: ARMOR

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

This bonus is usually pretty small but can make a huge difference in the long run. Table 5: Armor lists some examples of different armor types and the resistance bonuses they provide.

STRESS, DEATH, AND TRAUMAS

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

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

STRESS

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

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

THE STRESS TRACK

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

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

SUSTAINING STRESS

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

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

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

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

RECOVERING FROM STRESS

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

RESISTANCE

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

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

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

EXAMPLE 👽

Jack is having a bad day. He has accumulated 7 physical stress after a close call with a pack of Martians Greys, and he is now running for his life. He finds himself cornered on the roof of a building, and he decides to jump to the next building rather than face the ray guns of his pursuers. He lands hard, suffering 3 physical stress from the impact. However, he already has two tiers of his physical stress track filled in due to his 7 stress, and so has two points of resistance. He subtracts his 2 resistance from the stress sustained, reducing it to just 1. Now at 8 physical stress, Jack is injured after the fall, but still alive!

DEATH

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

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

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

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

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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

OVERFLOW STRESS

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

TRAUMAS

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

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

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

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

ACQUIRING TRAUMAS

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

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

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

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

TABLE 6: TRAUMA EXAMPLES

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

RECOVERING FROM TRAUMAS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

PERMANENT EFFECTS OF TRAUMAS

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

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

CONFLICT

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

TIMING

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

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

DETERMINING INITIATIVE

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

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

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

TAKING TURNS

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

During your turn, you have approximately ten seconds (in game) to attempt whatever you want to do. This is usually enough time to move around a bit and then attempt a single task. In general, you have enough time in a turn to attempt no more than a single task that requires some form of test. If you describe to the GM what you want to do with your turn, and it seems like it would require more than a single test, it is likely something that needs to be broken into multiple turns. For more guidance on exactly what you can fit into your turn, along with recommendations on how to handle several common tasks, see the Tasks section, on page 35.

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

STANDOFF

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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

TASKS

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

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

MOVEMENT AND POSITIONING

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

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

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

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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Many of the NPCs in **Chapter 3: Scenarios** are, in fact, not characters at all, but rather vehicles that feature in the various alien invasions. These vehicles use a normal NPC profile, but with a series of unique features and special abilities. Most noticeably, as they are complex tools that can be used by other characters, rather than being thinking, reasoning individuals, vehicles do not have mental or social characteristics of their own. Instead, vehicles require a pilot or crew to operate them. When a vehicle is being piloted or crewed by one or more characters, physical tasks are performed by the vehicle (using the vehicle's Dexterity and Vitality) and any physical stress is suffered by the vehicle and recorded on its stress track. Mental and social tasks are performed by the pilot or crew (using their Logic, Willpower, Charisma, and Empathy), and any mental or social stress is suffered by the pilot and any affected crew members and recorded on their mental or social stress tracks.

When a piloted vehicle is destroyed (when its stress track is filled), the pilot is assumed to make a heroic (or dastardly) exit before it is entirely ruined. Of course, circumstances may prevent such an escape, or the escape might put the character in even greater danger, but such things are best left up to the GM to decide.

ATTACKING

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

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

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

NON-PHYSICAL ATTACKS

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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

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

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

EXAMPLE 👽

The group is discovered by a squad of Atlantean soldiers while attempting to sneak past their fortified position. Stephanie pulls out her target pistol and starts firing to cover her friends' escape. She adds three positive dice to her pool: one for the pistol, one for her Crack Shot feature, and one for being at nearly point-blank range. Then, Tim (the GM) adds one negative die to her pool for the sandbag emplacement the Atlanteans have constructed.

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

OTHER EXAMPLE TASKS

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

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

TABLE 7: EXAMPLE TASKS

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

RUNNING THE GAME

CHAPTER II

RUNNING THE GAME

This section of ALIEN INVASION is all about being the Game Master (or GM). If you are the GM, your job is a bit different from that of the other players. It's your job to run the game, narrating the story as it unfolds, playing the roles of all Non-Player Characters (NPCs), and deciding on the outcomes of the players' tests and actions. The basic role of the GM is outlined in the Introduction (see page 10), but this chapter goes into greater detail, offering guidance on how best to use the resources and adjudicate the rules provided in this book.

STORY STRUCTURE

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

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

ENCOUNTERS

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

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

SOCIAL

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

EXPLORATION

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

SURVIVAL

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

DOWNTIME

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

NARRATIVE

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

THE BEGINNING

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

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

SETTING GOALS

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

WHAT ABOUT ME?

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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

So how do you deal with this issue? Well, there's a pretty easy solution...but you might not like it. Most characters in movies about the end of the world are skeptical of the severity of the situation until they witness its brutality first hand. What better way to introduce the apocalypse to your players than with yourself? A beam of light could paralyze and levitate you out through the living room window as your players look on in horror. Or, midway through the first session, one of the Player Characters could discover that you are, in fact, a seven-foot-tall reptilian monstrosity, shape-shifted to look like their beloved GM. Alternatively, you could always just have your character quickly leave to find a loved one when the news of the apocalypse hits, but where's the fun in that?

location, there are several overarching needs that most groups must work to fulfill in games of ALIEN INVASION:

- **Acquire Weapons:** Once the first UFOs and aliens appear, weapons beyond a frying pan become a necessity. The first outing to a sporting goods store or a relative's house to find guns can be the most dangerous, since most of the PCs won't be armed yet.

- **Gather Food and Medicine:** Everyone has to eat. Scavenging food, water, and medicine is usually the primary motivation at the beginning of a game. Finding renewable sources of these things is a good goal later on. You can create new driving forces for the PCs by depleting one of these resources or having a PC fall ill mid-game.

- **Establish a Safe House:** With the world invaded by hostile creatures from outer space, finding someplace safe to stay, even if only temporary, is a necessity. Properly outfitting a location for more long-term use is a good objective for an ongoing game.

- **Find Long-Term Safety:** Ultimately, the PCs will want to find a permanent solution for their survival—a goal beyond that of escaping death each day. Depending on the scenario, a solution might be to start a community amid the rubble of civilization, or to find a military base that is still functional. Goals like these are good for campaigns in which the PCs have survived the initial pandemonium of the apocalypse and must now look to the future.

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

USING LOCATIONS

Each scenario in this book delineates a series of locations to help you in setting up encounters for that scenario. Each location is presented as an example of a type of area your PCs might find themselves in while playing the game. These location descriptions are left generic enough that they can be adapted to your area of the world. For example, in the **Skitter** scenario, one of the locations is an urban neighborhood; this can easily be adapted to represent whatever part of town your PCs find themselves in within your game.

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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

TRACKING TOOLS

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

RUNNING TESTS

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

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

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

WHEN TO ADD POSITIVE DICE

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

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

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

WHEN TO ADD NEGATIVE DICE

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

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

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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

DIFFICULTY WITHOUT STRESS

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

PACING NEGATIVE DICE

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

TABLE 8: DIFFICULTIES

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

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

DETERMINING RESULTS

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

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

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

TESTING INSANITY

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The horrible things that survivors of the apocalypse have to do and witness to survive often push at their sanity. Depending on the type of game you want to run, the mental stability of your PCs could be an integral part of the game experience, particularly in the **Visages** scenario. When having PCs make tests to withstand the horrors they see around them, use the Willpower characteristic. These tests should often have quite a few negative dice added to represent the mental strain of dealing with these issues, and even if a PC remains composed, the experience can still cause some serious mental damage.

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

MANAGING NPCS

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

NPC PROFILES

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

NPC SPECIAL ABILITIES

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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

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

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

NPCS AND TRAUMAS

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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

BUT WHAT ABOUT MONSTERS?

When you read through ALIEN INVASION, it may seem strange that we spend so much time talking about characters and NPCs, but we never mention monsters. In a game that includes creatures such as Myrmidons, Anunnaki heirophants, and Red biomechanical walkers, it may appear odd that there is no mention of monsters and how to handle them. The reason for this is very simple. Monsters are NPCs. Every being the players encounter in an ALIEN INVASION scenario is a character in the story, played by the GM. So, the spore-clone Visages replacing your neighbors are NPCs. Those Atlantean fish-people with their powered armor and high-tech weaponry are militaristic NPCs. Even the enormous Anunnaki heirophants that once enslaved the entire human race are NPCs, albeit extremely powerful ones.

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

THE CAMPAIGN

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

CAMPAIGN LENGTH

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

In general, the lengths of campaigns you can run with ALIEN INVASION are broken into three categories:

- **Single-Session:** Also known as "one-shots," these are stories that last for a single session. They usually deal only with surviving the initial disaster and immediate aftermath. Single-session games can often end with many of the PCs dying in dramatic fashion.

- **Multi-Session:** Usually taking between two and four sessions, multi-session campaigns let you tell a complete story arc with a definitive end. One great way to run multi-session campaigns is to run one or two of the sessions using one of the **Apocalypse** sections of **Chapter III: Scenarios** and then run the other one or two sessions with a **Post-Apocalypse** section. You can have a substantial amount of game-world time pass between the two sections of the campaign, allowing you and your group to explore how your characters change over that time as they struggle to endure in the post-apocalyptic world.

- **Ongoing Survival:** Ongoing survival campaigns last five or more sessions, and they often don't have a predetermined endpoint. In these campaigns, your PCs are challenged with surviving long-term in the end times, starting with the initial signs of the coming cataclysm and going from there. These campaigns usually transition naturally from the **Apocalypse** sections into the **Post-Apocalypse** sections of **Chapter III: Scenarios**, with the PCs facing ongoing challenges to endure the end times.

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

ADVANCING CHARACTERS

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

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

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

- **If the PC doesn't have the feature:** The player adds the feature to the PC's character sheet, marking it negative or positive, as appropriate.

- **If the PC already has the feature:** The player chooses one of the characteristics in the corresponding category, adding 1 to the characteristic if the feature is positive, or subtracting 1 if the feature is negative. This change cannot lower a characteristic below 1 or increase a characteristic above 5. If adding or subtracting would do so, then the characteristic remains the same.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

CHARACTER DEATH

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

SCENARIOS

CHAPTER III

SCENARIOS

Over the years, the theme of the apocalypse in the form of alien contact and invasion has been played out in film, television, literature, and graphic novels. Simultaneously, the post-apocalyptic subgenre has become one of the most well known of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Hundreds, if not thousands, of stories exist that tell of the terrors that await us among the stars.

Five apocalyptic scenarios are detailed in the pages that follow. Each scenario covers the events of the apocalypse and of the days, weeks, months, and years that follow it, each brought about by the violent conflict between humanity and extraterrestrial life forms. Timelines that provide details of the broader events of each scenario, as well as lists of locations and NPCs, give the GM the tools to lay the groundwork for the players.

Each apocalypse scenario is followed by a scenario dedicated to the state of the world in the post-apocalypse, after the human race has fought back against the alien invaders. Post-apocalypse locations and NPCs offer a framework upon which GMs can build stories that take place in the aftermath of the end of the world.

IT WORKED IN THE MOVIE!

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Science fiction movies use a number of tried-and-true approaches to build tension and excitement: fake scares, punctuated action-cut editing, and—of course—the musical score. Although some of these translate well to roleplaying games, others do not. For instance, although many GMs play appropriate background music during their games, it's unlikely that you can time a sudden crescendo with an exciting event in-game (except as a happy coincidence). Another problem is that many of the classic tricks rely on the characters' ignorance of the threat facing them. So, while a character in a movie who sees a slack-faced, dead-eyed copy of a trusted loved one might mistake them for the real thing for a scene or two, a player is likely to catch on that they're a Visage as soon as the GM mentions the odd stare, the vaguely threatening tone of the voice, or other such features. Even if darkness or some other cause obscures details, a player are likely to figure it out from the slightest clue, especially if he knows what sort of scenario he is playing in.

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

WAR BETWEEN WORLDS

War between Worlds

Flying saucers, death rays, and little Greys. It almost seems like something out of an old science fiction movie—but it's all too real. At first, they almost seemed comical—but no one is laughing now. When NASA first spotted them in the skies, it seemed like a moment to celebrate—but no one is… Well, you get the idea.

It was a momentous event. Proof of alien life! And our close neighbors, no less. But after they ignored all our attempts at communication, things started to look a little less positive. People were still hopeful, of course, in their ignorance. Experts said that an advanced alien civilization would surely come in peace. Others said the number of ships was evidence of an invasion force. I think most of us just didn't know what to expect.

Excitement soon turned to horror. The Martians attacked us without warning, saucers appearing above everything from major cities to small towns and demonstrating the power of their terrible heat rays. We don't know what they want. Our planet? Our eradication? Our celebrities? Their blank-eyed faces are hard to read, but it almost seems like they enjoy this.

As I sit here behind this energy field (which I learned quickly really stings), the excitement of being aboard a flying saucer is really ruined by the overwhelming, gut-wrenching terror. One by one, the Greys have come and dragged away my fellow prisoners, and I'm the only one left. Sort of makes me jealous of my friends who got vaporized. At least that's a quick way to go. Lucky jerks.

War between Worlds is a classic scenario of alien invasion. Inscrutable Martians attack with little warning, overcoming Earth's defenses with their advanced technology. Flying saucers, ray guns, Greys with big heads and almond eyes–these should all be very familiar to Player Characters, but they take on an all-new significance and frightfulness when confronted in reality. Of course, there's also a certain absurdity to running for your life from creatures straight out of old movies and comics. But underestimating them would be a terrible mistake.

Player Characters must move fast and think faster to survive against the unearthly technology of the Greys. Heat rays, disintegration beams, immobilizing beams of light, and even stranger weapons beyond human understanding could all spell the end for an incautious or unlucky PC. Even unluckier characters might find themselves prisoners of the strange, diminutive aliens.

The big question is "why?" But PCs are likely too busy running and fighting for their lives to ponder this for long.

THE EXPERIENCE

The WAR BETWEEN WORLDS begins quite unexpectedly for humanity. After losing contact with the Mars rover *Curiosity*, NASA detects objects on a course for Earth, apparently originating from Mars. These—well—unidentified flying objects are soon revealed to be saucer-shaped craft with reflective chrome exteriors. After attempts to contact them meet with silence, the Martian saucers destroy a number of communication satellites, and the invasion begins. If the government knew about the Greys, that knowledge certainly wasn't prepared for the unearthly onslaught. The Greys attack with awe-inspiringly advanced technology, and it seems that no one is safe.

WHAT THE PLAYER CHARACTERS SEE

With almost no warning, flying saucers appear around the world and within a day begin attacking everything from military bases and government offices to suburban neighborhoods. In some places, the saucers begin their wanton destruction as soon as they arrive. In others, they hover above cities or particular buildings for minutes, hours, or even days. This gives people plenty of time to panic, congregate, organize music festivals, and so on.

The Player Characters might read posts about it on social media, hear an emergency broadcast on the radio, or see video footage on the news. Alternatively, the PCs could have a close encounter of their own before they hear about the invasion. Perhaps they are the unlucky targets of Grey advance scouts or an abduction saucer that happens to be in the area when the call to war goes out. The game could begin with the Game Master being pulled through an open window by a beam of light, a heat ray obliterating a nearby building, or a small, grey creature creeping by outside the window. To build suspense, the GM could begin the invasion with abductions and other strange events before the attack begins in earnest. Alter-

natively the PCs might only see saucers at first, leaving them to wonder about the appearance of the occupants. After witnessing the devastation wrought by the saucers' disintegration beam and heat rays, the PCs might be quite surprised the first time they see a diminutive, grey alien.

Depending on where they live, the PCs might be unfortunate enough to be caught in the midst of a full-scale attack, or they might only have to contend with a small raiding or scouting force. For the most part, the aliens hit major cities the hardest. However, despite the years they have spent studying Earth, the Greys know surprisingly little about human society. Consequently, their decisions about where to attack seem to make little strategic sense. This means that wherever the PCs are, they could face a serious attack, even if the Greys are simply destroying homes and massacring civilians with no apparent objective.

Although Greys are slight and individually weaker than humans, their powerful weapons and craft give them a decided advantage even over Earth's finest militaries. Fleeing PCs might see people disintegrating all around them, buildings collapsing, and other calamities. They are likely to experience astounding displays of the aliens' advanced technology, such as beams of light abducting people from cars and homes and invisible energy fields that render humans utterly immobile.

Most areas sooner or later fall to chaos and destruction as flying saucers devastate vehicles and buildings. After an initial aerial attack, Greys deploy on foot to search for survivors. They take many back to their ships and disintegrate those who resist. PCs might see friends, family, and allies taken aboard saucers, whether levitated by beams of light or manually carried up ramps (while unconscious, that is—the Greys aren't that strong).

Some rural areas manage to survive relatively unscathed, though few are lucky enough to avoid the occasional fly-by disintegration. Also, inexplicably, the

Greys have a penchant for terrorizing and abducting cattle. It is almost as strong as their penchant for terrorizing and abducting ranchers. Nevertheless, PCs in less populated areas, or who flee population centers during the destruction, might face an easier time than survivors in larger cities. Of course, they are also more likely to face any Greys they do encounter on their own, without the support of police or military forces.

WHAT IS EVERYONE ELSE DOING?

Unsurprisingly, panic sweeps the country almost as soon as the invasion begins. The mere sight of alien spacecraft hovering over cities is enough to incite a panic, even before those spacecraft start firing their death rays.. However, not everyone has such a reaction, at least not at first. Especially in places where the saucers spend some time hovering ominously before attacking, large numbers of people flock to greet the visitors. These assemblages generally result in subsequent eradication and, however briefly, no small amount of disappointment.

Civilians are not merely caught in the middle of a battle between the Greys and the military: the aliens actively attack them. It seems that no one is safe. It's not clear what the invaders want, and they appear to be just as focused on terrorizing the civilian population as on attacking military forces. Assisted living facilities are as likely to be attacked as city hall. Nowhere is safe. The Greys abduct people from their homes and disintegrate buildings. Panicking citizens flood the streets and clog highways as the aliens attack indiscriminately. Some people hole up in their homes, but even the sturdiest walls might as well be cardboard for all the protection they provide against disintegration beams. The only hope is to be overlooked by the Greys.

Even as the invasion unfolds, authorities desperately try to keep order. The police and National Guard order civilians to remain in their homes while they try to hold off the Martians, which they can never do for long. Hospitals quickly fill with casualties resulting from collateral damage—collapsing buildings, car crashes, and such—since direct hits by Martian weaponry are universally lethal. Of course, many hospitals are blasted in the onslaught.

A number of television personalities and Hollywood celebrities take to the airwaves to plead with the "visitors" for peace. While these efforts are generally lauded by the public, it appears that either the Martians don't understand the celebrities' "importance" or their words (or both), or they don't care. However, some Greys seem to go out of their way to abduct or obliterate such celebrities while they are in public view, which suggests they may have more understanding of our popular culture than most people assume.

While skyscrapers tumble and neighborhoods explode, vehicles flood the highways and interstates. This quickly leads to traffic congestion and pileups, leaving stranded motorists easy targets for the Greys' saucers. As they blast long lines of traffic with their heat rays, the Martians also collapse bridges and overpasses to cut off escape.

As horrifying as the invasion is, it's also an unprecedented scientific discovery. Some argue that the government should focus on achieving communication and a peaceful resolution rather than counterattacking. A number of scientists are, in fact, researching methods for establishing communication with the aliens. Field-testing these communication methods, however, usually ends in vaporization for the unfortunate scientists (or, more often, lab assistants).

WHAT CAN THE PLAYER CHARACTERS DO?

It seems that there is little the Player Characters can hope to accomplish against the Greys. The Martians' advanced technology makes a mockery of Earth's greatest weapons and military vehicles. Yet, although the PCs can't strike any serious blows against the full invading force, they might get the opportunity to fight back in smaller ways. In the meantime, their immediate survival clearly must be their primary goal—and it's not easy with death rays zapping all over the place.

Although the Greys are safe inside their saucers from all but the most powerful weapons, for some reason (perhaps arrogance, or a desire to see the looks on humans' faces as they are vaporized), they tend to deploy on foot. Their handheld death rays are horrifying weapons, but the Greys themselves aren't particularly physically intimidating. Their large heads are also both unprotected and make great targets. (Really, with all their advanced technology, it's surprising they don't have personal force fields. Or helmets.) PCs who can avoid being disintegrated might find some degree of satisfaction in shooting, stabbing, running over, or just pummeling Greys. Of course, the PCs aren't going to stop the invasion by killing a few Greys, but it's sure to feel good.

Despite its sophistication and alien origin, Martian technology shares a surprising number of basic operating principals with Earth's. Disintegrator rifles are fired by pulling a trigger, and despite the bewildering array of buttons and lights on its control panel, a saucer ship is essentially controlled via a yoke and throttle. This is all quite convenient for enterprising PCs who take up the weapons of dead Greys, or even abscond with a ship (of course, a joyride is likely to end quite badly unless one of the PCs has experience flying aircraft).

This isn't to say the PCs are likely to go around kicking alien butt, especially at first. The Greys wield devastating weaponry. The PCs are sure to spend a lot of time running and dodging death rays. Of course, this is exactly what their fellow panicked citizens do as well. The PCs are likely to see people around them being disintegrated, atomized, blasted, or abducted, or suffering other horrible fates. Wrenchingly, there is nothing the PCs can do, at least without practically guaranteeing their own destruction. With doom almost a certainty, however, some PCs might decide at least to go out fighting.

THE TRUTH

As familiar as flying saucers and Greys are from popular culture, there is still plenty of information about them yet to be discovered. Further, the similarities between legend and reality probably raise more questions than answers. One thing the Martians don't possess, even with all their advanced technology, is a universal translator. That means humanity's questions about them must remain unanswered, at least until experts figure out a way to talk to them. Even then, they tend to avoid disclosing much.

BASEMENT PROJECTS

Shockingly—or not, depending on one's views about conspiracy theories—the US government has been aware of the Greys since the 1940s. Saucers and bodies recovered from Roswell and other crash sites have provided physical proof of extraterrestrial life, but little more. (The Greys have a surprisingly high incidence of crashes, considering their intellects and the sophistication of their technology.) The government has never successfully communicated with the Greys, even when recovering survivors from crash sites.

Before the invasion, top scientists reached a number of conclusions about the aliens, many of them wrong. These scientists were certain, especially in more recent years, that the aliens must come from beyond the solar system. They were also certain that the Greys' intentions were basically peaceful. After all, in all those decades, they never made any direct attacks. Abductions, sure, but they usually returned the abductees sooner or later.

Despite what some conspiracy theorists might say, reverse–engineering alien technology is not easily done. Still, Earth did attain some advancements by studying downed Grey ships. Microwave ovens, transistors, and some innovations in nuclear power owe their invention to Grey technology. The secrets of Martian antigravity and propulsion systems remain a mystery, however.

Unfortunately, these years of study have done little to prepare governments for the Grey invasion. Understanding of Grey technology continues to elude Earth's scientists and militaries, and researchers have little to no grasp of their culture and motivations. Necropsies on Grey corpses have confirmed, however, that their physiology is similar to that of life on Earth, including humans. Although they vary from us in many ways, the fundamental takeaway is that the same things injure or kill them. Stabbing makes them bleed (a blackish color); blunt force can break their bones (in fact, they seem more fragile than the average human); and shooting, burning, and even drowning are all effective. Also, like humans' eyes, theirs are quite sensitive, though they are much easier targets due to their size.

CATCH AND RELEASE

The Greys have been visiting Earth for decades. Their primary objective has been to study humans for scientific curiosity and sport. The Greys view humans as inferior beings, little more than animals. Consequently, they have no reservations about taking people against their will and without explanation; studying and experimenting on them; and implanting them with devices that track them and measure and record their biological processes before returning them.

Abductees are both at an advantage and a disadvantage during the invasion. Those with implants can be tracked by the Greys, making it impossible to hide. However, the Greys assigned to monitor abductees, particularly repeat abductees, have a tendency to develop a fondness for them, almost as for a pet. Such Greys may take steps to ensure that their research subjects are spared during the massacre. Of course, they might have them captured for their own safety.

It's possible that the sight of the Greys might awaken forgotten memories of abductions aboard an alien ship in one of the PCs. An implant might allow the Greys to track the PC, such that the group needs to find a way to remove it. A character with a history of abductions might even have an advantage in communicating with the Greys due to previous experience, or even a subtle psychic link. However, such advantages shouldn't help with anything much more complex than wild gesticulations indicating "don't shoot!"

A BIG MISUNDERSTANDING

So, why did the Greys finally attack us?

The catalyst was the rover *Curiosity*. The Greys saw it as a spy vehicle: maybe even a weapon, perhaps the prelude to an attack, but certainly a violation of their territory and an act of aggression. Yes, this is hugely hypocritical, considering their visitations to Earth and mistreatment of humans. So, hypocrisy is something they have in common with us.

It's not quite that simple, though. The Greys' drastic overreaction stems from the history of Martian warfare. The Greys were once decimated by an advanced, ultra-aggressive species they know only as "the Reds" (in the Martian language). These other aliens are not from the solar system, or even the Milky Way galaxy, but from another dimension entirely.

Centuries ago, the Reds' warships materialized in this dimension, and the Reds launched an unprovoked attack on Mars. The Reds ignored their pleas for mercy as they obliterated the Greys' civilization and terrorized their civilian population. The war was devastating and drove the surviving Greys underground. As the Greys fell to the Reds' assault, the invaders began a campaign of systematically stripping Mars of its resources, reducing the lush planet to a barren desert. Eventually, the Reds departed. In the years since, the Greys have remained underground. During this time, the Greys have reverse-engineered Red technology, leading to the terrifyingly destructive weapons they now wield, as well as interplanetary saucer craft.

The predations of the interdimensional bullies permanently scarred the Martian psyche. It left the Greys with a deep and lasting paranoia and xenophobia, and has resulted in a spate of interplanetary violence that would provide a

field day for any psychologist (or daytime talk show host). The suffering the Reds inflicted goes some distance toward explaining the Greys' more vicious treatment of humans during their invasion of Earth, as well as the invasion itself.

While the Greys might not be attacking out of pure malice, this doesn't excuse their vicious behavior. Though their invasion may be due in part to their collective trauma, it is still the case that they view us as little more than animals. Further, they undoubtedly take a certain delight in their destruction, and in terrorizing and massacring the human population. Still, they aren't as bad as the Reds...

THE INITIAL RESPONSE

Despite the government's awareness of the Greys (at least at the highest levels), the invasion takes it quite by surprise. After all, the aliens weren't believed to have originated on Mars, or to be particularly hostile. The government does not immediately inform the public of its preexisting knowledge of the Greys, although the news does eventually come out.

While waiting to see the Greys' intentions before starting an interplanetary war, the US government places all branches of its armed forces on high alert, deploying forces and calling up reserves. When the Greys begin their attack, most militaries are able to respond immediately. Ground troops deploy in major cities and fighter jets scramble to intercept the Grey saucers. All this, however, does little to slow the devastation.

Police try in vain to maintain order as the Martians terrorize the nation. Authorities direct citizens to shelters that offer little protection. The Greys obliterate many police stations, throwing law enforcement into chaos. As it becomes increasingly clear that both police and military forces are unequipped to stop the invaders, Earth's population increases its level of panic. Police soon are stuck between fighting off Martians and protecting the population from itself.

Although the Greys' weapons make a mockery of Earth's best armored fighting vehicles and incinerate whole swaths of troops, the aliens are not invulnerable. The militaries of the human nations are able to strike blows against the Greys, including bringing down a number of saucers. The saucer ships' armor is superior to any armour found on Earth, but, Earth's most advanced weapons are able to breach it, or to disrupt saucers' maneuvers enough to cause a crash. However, these small victories are far outweighed by losses, with Greys destroying or pushing back Earth's forces around the globe.

GREY TECHNOLOGY

The Greys possess frighteningly advanced technology, much of it adapted from that of the Reds. This gives them quite an advantage over the Earth's defenders, just as it gave the Reds the upper hand when they attacked Mars. GMs should feel free to come up with whatever

spectacular equipment and effects they like, regardless of how impossible such things might seem.

The Greys' mastery of gravity is evident in their saucers, which are able to accelerate, change direction, and generally display a degree of speed and agility far beyond anything conceived by human engineers. Although the Greys must reduce their speed or remain stationary in order to hit targets with heat rays and disintegration beams, their saucers are fully capable of escaping retribution, even outrunning jets. On the rare occasions the military is able to bring down a saucer, it is probably due to luck or to overconfidence on the Greys' part.

Similar weapons come in both handheld and vehicle-mounted versions, the primary difference being the scope of the weapon's power. For instance, a disintegration rifle might annihilate a human-sized target or blast a hole in the side of a truck, while a saucer-mounted version could annihilate an entire house or even bring a skyscraper crashing down. The primary weapons of the Greys are heat rays and disintegration beams. The effects of the former should be obvious—they channel an intense heat capable of immolating nearly any target. The latter work by breaking down the molecular bonds in a target, rendering it into its composite atoms. Although more advanced, it's actually a less painful way to go.

COMMUNICATIONS BREAKTHROUGH

As the invasion proceeds, governments and many private groups continue to desperately try to establish contact with the Martians. SETI is particularly red-faced and frustrated. In fact, the Greys are receiving Earth's broadcasts, but since they can't translate them, they just ignore them and keep blasting away.

After months of collaboration between government scientists and a software giant, researchers come up with software capable of translating English into Martian and vice versa. Of course, it is far from perfect, and many words' nuances are lost, but it is enough to get the job done. Time is of the essence, so the software goes almost straight to field testing, and the researchers broadcast a message calling for peace. After a short time, nearby Martians cease their attacks. Perhaps the software worked?

The software takes a few seconds to translate a phrase before replaying it in the destination language. In this stop-and-go manner, government officials enter into talks with Grey leaders. Soon, the reason for the Greys' attack is revealed. When government officials explain that *Curiosity* was purely a research tool and that the US had no inkling there was intelligent life on Mars, the Greys take some offense at the notion, but they eventually apologize for their reaction. However, they continue to evince some skepticism that humanity had no idea they existed, and they insist Earth should have done something to announce itself before landing on their soil. As uncomfortable and unpleasant as the talks are, they do result in the end of the Greys' open hostilities. Many countries' leaders praise the new era of peace and understanding between the two planets.

TIMELINE

From the time the US draws the Greys' attention, events unfold with horrifying quickness.

00:00:00	The rover Curiosity transmits an image of an unidentified metallic object just before NASA loses contact with it.
13:47:31	Telescopes detect metallic objects in Mars's orbit, just before they seem to vanish.
DAY 2	Officials debate whether the metallic objects are evidence of extraterrestrial life and what the implications are, particularly if they are headed for Earth, as some scientists propose.
DAY 3	The US government begins making arrangements to welcome Earth's interplanetary neighbors, just in case.
DAY 5	Astronomers detect a sudden impact on the Moon's surface, complete with an impressive fireball.
DAY 6	Earth loses contact with a number of satellites.
DAY 6	Gleaming saucer ships are spotted above major cities and other locations around the globe.
DAY 6	The US government tries to make contact with the extraterrestrials using a number of frequencies and technologies, but all communications go unanswered.
DAY 7	Saucers around the world open fire, obliterating buildings and blasting major thoroughfares. Military forces immediately respond, with relatively little effect. Panicking people flood the streets.
DAY 7	Overcrowding and collisions on highways and interstates bring traffic to a stop. Panicked motorists abandon vehicles. Town streets become blocked by cars and the debris generated in collisions.
DAY 8	National Guard forces attempt to secure evacuation routes for major cities.
DAY 8	Many public figures and decision-makers, and others who seem chosen at random, are abducted.
DAY 8	The US federal government declares a national state of emergency.
DAY 9	Congress calls an emergency joint session. During the opening address, a saucer moves into position above the Capitol building and destroys it with a disintegration beam.
DAY 10	NATO forces go into action against the Martian invaders.
DAY 11	Saucers destroy the PCs' state capitol building.
DAY 12	The President of the United States authorizes a nuclear strike.
DAY 12	The US launches a barrage of nuclear missiles at the Martian ships in orbit. The saucers immobilize the missiles with tractor beams and disintegrate them, rendering them harmless.
DAY 14	Protesters come out in force in cities across the country, including Washington, DC, blaming the government for the current crisis due to its past cover-up of the Greys' existence.
DAY 17	The President appears on television to apologize for the government's involvement in hiding the existence of the Greys. The President assures the people that the government has done, and continues to do, everything it can to protect the people from the Martians.
DAY 32	Showing considerably more restraint than in most attacks, Greys infiltrate the Pentagon while leaving it intact, almost as if there's something inside they want.
DAY 41	With military forces in disarray and many major cities in ruins, it is clear to most people that we have lost the war. But as the Greys are still ignoring communications attempts, it seems surrender is not an option.
DAY 56	Scientists experience limited success with the Martian translator software, but those involved in the field testing are all killed or captured due to a mistranslation.
DAY 72	Researchers successfully test the translator software. Greys in the vicinity begin to halt their attacks.
DAY 73	The Greys begin reducing their attacks worldwide.
DAY 77	Grey leaders meet with the United Nations to discuss terms for a cease-fire.
DAY 81	A mistranslation during negotiations leads to a brief flare-up of violence.
DAY 93	The UN and Greys agree on the terms of a cease-fire. It is, unsurprisingly, quite generous to the Greys, although it does call for the release of human prisoners.
DAY 124	A self-appointed militia launches an attack against Greys, leading to brief battles in several parts of the United States and threatening to reignite the war.
DAY 127	FBI and National Guard forces arrest militia members and leaders, charging them with a number of offenses.
DAY 159	The first of a number of peaceful (at least publicly) anti-Grey groups arises, to considerable popular support.
DAY 346	A massive alien warship of a type unlike—and vastly eclipsing—anything in the Grey fleet appears without warning above Washington, DC.

HOME

As anyone familiar with the phenomenon of alien abductions can tell you, no home is safe from the Greys. Still, whether it is the home of a PC at the start of the invasion or an abandoned house or apartment during the course of the game, the characters might find themselves in a home for any of a number of reasons. They might be meeting up with friends, checking on family, or combining forces with other survivors. And they might even think it is a safe place to ride out events, at least at first. But no amount of boarding up windows and doors can keep out the Greys. One can only hope they pass the house by without much inspection.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The home is suddenly bathed in a blinding light.

- The power begins to fluctuate wildly, perhaps even with bulbs and appliances exploding in sprays of sparks.

- One or more people are suddenly immobilized, before a beam of light begins to carry them out a window.

- A small creature is seen or heard moving about in the yard or halls outside the PCs' abode.

- A saucer or group of Greys on foot moves through the neighborhood, zapping houses seemingly at random.

- People realize their watches have stopped or the time displayed on their cell phones has jumped ahead by a considerable amount. No one has any recollection of what happened during the missing time.

- Someone—perhaps a person who has a history of abductions or who has recently reappeared after vanishing at the beginning of the invasion—begins acting strangely.

- Additional survivors bang on the door, asking for shelter, supplies, or other help.

- The house shudders and cracks apart as a tractor beam pulls it from its foundation.

MASSACRE!

Although their faces are fairly lacking in expression by human standards, the Greys do seem almost gleeful about unleashing their death rays on the populace. They show absolutely no compassion for civilians, and indeed often don't seem to distinguish between military and civilian targets. With so much destruction occurring worldwide, whether the PCs are caught in the middle or are at a relatively safe distance, they are almost certain to experience a massacre—or its aftermath—during the Grey invasion.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- A saucer easily keeps pace with the fleeing people below, zapping them here and there, toying with them instead of obliterating them outright. In fact, it almost seems to be herding them toward something...

- A PC begins choking after inhaling a cloud of ash left over from a vaporized victim.

- After immobilizing several people with a beam of energy, a group of Greys seem to debate what to do with them, perhaps allowing the PCs a chance to act.

- The PCs encounter an armed and angry group of people planning to strike back and avenge their family and neighbors.

- After chasing off or destroying almost everyone in a neighborhood, the Greys begin to pick through the area, trying to figure out how cars work, testing food from a gas station, and generally experimenting with the items left behind.

- The PCs come across a field of charred skeletons. Several Greys comb through the devastation as though searching for something.

- One of the PCs trips over someone who is playing dead, possibly blowing the person's ruse.

FLEEING!

MILITARY ENGAGEMENT

CHAOS and panic is everywhere as people frantically flee from the Greys' butchery. Those who try to stand and fight back are almost always quickly vaporized. Even the bravest PCs are sure to find themselves running from the Greys at some point or another, or at least caught in the midst of terrorized people chaotically fleeing the alien onslaught.

Whether the PCs try to get away on foot or by vehicle, they are likely to be hampered by other panicking citizens as much as by the ruined roads and collapsed buildings the Greys leave in their wake. Then, of course, there's the threat of running into what they're fleeing from in the first place.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☻ A panicked group begs the PCs for help in hiding from the Greys pursuing them.

- ☻ Just as they think they've gotten away, the PCs come across a bunch of charred skeletons. Well, hopefully heat rays don't strike the same place twice…

- ☻ The PCs see a group of Greys on foot, blasting away with their heat rays at fleeing civilians. Interfering would be extremely dangerous, but the Greys have left themselves exposed.

- ☻ The PCs receive a request for help from a friend or family member, but doing anything about it would mean reversing direction and heading back toward the Martians.

- ☻ The PCs realize they have led their pursuers right into another group's hiding spot.

- ☻ The PCs find their way blocked by members of the National Guard or police, who are frustratingly unwilling to listen to their warnings about the aliens right behind them.

ALTHOUGH the Greys' saucers are fully capable of outrunning anything Earth's militaries can throw at them, the Greys often choose to stay and fight, likely trusting that their superior technology will triumph. In most cases, of course, they're right, and in those in which they aren't, by the time it becomes clear, it's probably too late to get away. Plus, they have to slow down in order to blast targets, and that gives humanity a chance to fight back.

As advanced as they are, the Greys' saucers are not invulnerable. Concentrated antiaircraft fire can breach even the ultra-strong alloy that makes up their hulls.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☻ Antiaircraft fire brings down a saucer—and it's heading right for the PCs!

- ☻ The PCs have the opportunity to abscond with weapons or vehicles left behind by slain soldiers.

- ☻ The PCs are the only people fortunate enough to remain alive in the area after a Grey massacre. Unfortunately, the military begins bombing the place to strike at the Greys while the aliens are on foot.

- ☻ The PCs find their way blocked by tanks and other military forces engaged in battle with the Greys, and more Martians are heading toward them.

- ☻ Fighter jets and saucers engage in aerial battle above the PCs, raining fire, debris, and wreckage down on top of them.

- ☻ Military forces attack a saucer that recently abducted friends or family members of the PCs. They need to convince the commanding officers not to simply destroy it.

- ☻ The PCs come across a downed saucer. Perhaps it holds weapons or even valuable information.

ABOARD A SAUCER
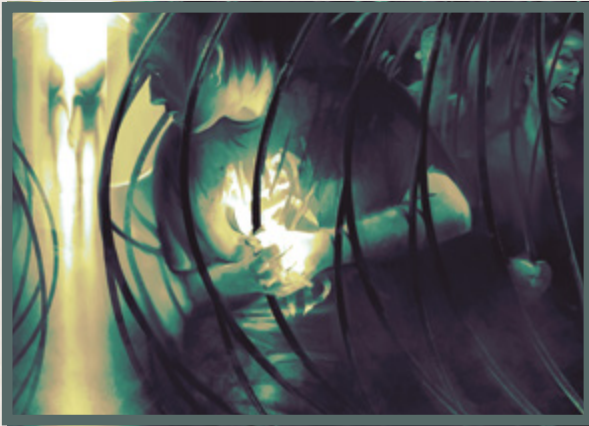
Although it's not somewhere humans want to find themselves by any means, at least being inside a saucer means a person is safe from immediate disintegration (assuming that person is a prisoner on good behavior). The PCs are most likely to end up aboard a saucer against their will, after being abducted. If they could get free, who knows what kind of trouble they could cause?

The interior of a Grey saucer ship is cold, metallic, brightly lit, and sterile. There are no windows, and day and night seem to have no meaning for the disturbingly industrious Greys. PCs are likely to see only the insides of holding cells and—worse—labs. However, the Greys don't anticipate any escapes, and outside the holding area, security is surprisingly lax.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The PCs wake up in a cage or behind an energy field, with no knowledge of how they got there.
- After the PCs witness friends or loved ones being abducted, they know the only way to get them back is to somehow get aboard the saucer.
- After being taken away, a prisoner is returned to the holding cells—and is in a disturbingly cheerful mood.
- The PCs find a saucer aground with its ramp extended, apparently abandoned.
- The only hope of escape from a saucer is convincing the other prisoners to work together, but they're all either frenzied with panic or completely despondent.
- Humans aren't the only prisoners aboard. It appears the Greys raided a zoo, but what do they plan to do with the animals?

THE WHITE HOUSE

Of course, access to the White House is tightly restricted, even when humanity isn't at war with extraterrestrials. However, the PCs might find themselves invited to the White House if they discover weaknesses or other useful information about the Greys, or if they win any significant victories. Then again, the more likely way for PCs to experience the White House during the invasion is through a television screen when the President meets the press or addresses the nation—as the President does several times during the invasion.

Although one might expect the White House to be quickly annihilated by the Greys, for whatever reason, they leave it alone. Perhaps they don't realize its significance—or perhaps they do, and they hope to receive an invitation when the country officially surrenders.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- As some of the few people to survive a Grey attack—or perhaps to successfully fight back—the PCs are brought to the White House to brief government officials.
- Despite having been invited to the White House, the PCs encounter Secret Service agents or military generals who don't trust them in the building, and certainly don't want them in the war room.
- The President addresses the nation to announce that the US has reached peace with the Martians and everyone can relax. This seems quite at odds with the continuing destruction outside. What's going on?
- Both the President and Vice President have been killed in Grey attacks, but the government doesn't want to cause any additional panic among the populace.
- The President appears on TV to plead with the aliens for peace.
- In the aftermath of the invasion, the PCs are awarded medals for their contributions.

GREY SAUCER SHIP

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

Features: +Antigravity Propulsion, +Easy to Pilot, +Tractor Beam, −Large, +/−Vehicle.

Equipment: Disintegration cannon (1 negative die, +6 damage), saucer plating (+4 physical resistance).

Catastrophic Disintegration: If the Grey saucer ship deals damage with its disintegration cannon and has 2 uncanceled positive dice from the attack roll, the target is entirely physically disintegrated.

Extreme Mobility: So long as a grey saucer ship has room to maneuver freely, it adds 2 negative dice to attacks made against it.

Piloted: This vehicle must be operated by a single pilot (see the **Pilots and Vehicles** sidebar on page 36).

Vehicle: A Grey saucer ship is a machine and does not suffer physical traumas related to biological injury, disease, dismemberment, or infirmity.

GREY

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

Features: +Rowdy, −Diminutive.

Equipment: Cigar, tiny spacesuit, heat ray gun (+6 damage) or disintegration beamer (1 negative die, +7 damage).

Disintegration: If a Grey deals damage with a disintegration beamer and has 2 uncanceled positive dice from the attack, the target gains a severity 3 Dinsintegrated Limb physical trauma [see the **Permanent Effects of Traumas** sidebar, on page 33]).

F-16 FIGHTER JET

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
3	4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Features: +Avionics Suite, +Supersonic Flight, –Difficult to Pilot, –Large, +/–Vehicle.

Equipment: 20mm Vulcan cannon (1 negative die, +5 damage), 6 AIM-120 AMRAAM missiles (3 positive dice, +6 damage), armor plating (+3 physical resistance).

Piloted: This vehicle must be operated by a single pilot (see the **Pilots and Vehicles** sidebar on page 36).

Vehicle: An F-16 fighter jet is a machine and does not suffer physical traumas related to biological injury, disease, dismemberment, or infirmity.

GEPARD 35MM ANTIAIRCRAFT BATTERY

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
3	4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Features: +Treaded, –Large, +/–Vehicle.

Equipment: 35mm antiaircraft guns (2 negative dice, +6 damage), armor plating (+4 physical resistance).

Crewed: This vehicle must be operated by a crew of 3 characters (see the **Pilots and Vehicles** sidebar on page 36).

Flak Barrage: The operator of a Gepard antiaircraft battery can choose to bracket a section of the sky with disrupting flak fire. Any aircraft flying through the bracket must make a Vitality test with 3 negative dice. If the aircraft fails, it suffers a severity 1 physical trauma.

Vehicle: A Gepard antiaircraft battery is a machine and does not suffer physical traumas related to biological injury, disease, dismemberment, or infirmity.

SOLDIER

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

Features: +Military Training, +Voice of Authority, –By the Book.

Equipment: M16A4 rifle (1 negative die, +5 damage), FIM-92 Stinger missile launcher (1 positive die, +6 damage), numerous magazines, military body armor (+1 physical resistance), uniform, MREs, canteen.

WAR BETWEEN WORLDS

War between Worlds

No one would have believed that even as we made peace with the Greys and set about the monumental task of rebuilding, an even more advanced race was watching us from across the boundaries of the dimensions. Studying us and coveting our planet's resources. Making ready to annihilate us. I mean, really, what are the chances? But as we eventually learned, these events were actually quite connected, for the previous attacks of the so-called Reds had laid the foundation for the Martian Greys' attack on us.

We thought the Greys had been bad. Their invasion was nothing next to the Reds'.

Perhaps the actions of the Greys drew the Reds' attention, or maybe they had already set their sights on Earth. Either way, humans had scarcely begun to recover from the Greys' attack when an even worse foe appeared. The Reds, as they are known to the Greys—and now, to us—are a horrific biomechanical species from another dimension, intent on utter conquest and destruction.

Although they left us weakened, the Greys are now probably the only thing keeping us from being completely overrun. Whether they are helping us out of guilt for their earlier actions, or simply due to their hatred of the Reds, the Greys and their advanced technology at least stand a chance against the interdimensional invaders. But the Reds are seemingly endless in number, and equipped for war on a scale scarcely imaginable. It seems to be only a matter of time before they destroy us all, humans and Martians alike.

WORKING THINGS OUT

While many of the Greys withdrew after the truce, they didn't leave Earth entirely. The Martians instead decided to take advantage of the newfound "friendship" (and the fact that humans are terrified of angering them and beginning another war) to enjoy all Earth has to offer. As it turns out, Greys love cigars and alcohol—neither of which they have on Mars—among other human creations. As the Martians learn more about Earth's cultures, they realize they had been missing out on lots of great things by dedicating their previous visits simply to abductions and experiments. Many Greys find enjoyment in the same entertainment humans do, gorging on Earth's catalog of movies and visiting places like Las Vegas in large numbers. Truly, it seems life on Mars is pretty boring, as even simple games of cards and pool are fascinating to the Greys. After centuries of living underground on a barren planet, they also quite like the beaches, parks, resorts, and other places where they can enjoy the Earth's natural beauty.

Many humans are, understandably, uncomfortable around Greys. After all, they did almost annihilate Earth. A lot of people lost friends and family in the invasion. Aside from that, something about their alien appearance naturally causes unease in many humans. Most people realize, however, that further war would go just as badly for humanity, and they do whatever seems necessary to keep the Greys happy. For businesses, this often means providing free goods and services. Even individuals often find Greys taking an interest in—and wandering off

with—their stuff. Unsurprisingly, not everyone trusts the Greys to honor the truce, and an undercurrent of tension follows Greys almost everywhere. Humans with the most vehemently anti-alien sentiments form organizations—some violent, some political—to oppose the Greys.

The translator software is soon modified with additional languages and is eventually made available as an app, allowing almost anyone with a smartphone to communicate with a Grey should the need arise. And the need does arise for many people, particularly those in the service industry, as the Greys make themselves at home on Earth.

One thing the Greys aren't disposed to do is share their technology with Earth, and humanity is in no position to make demands on them. Still, humans who are working to improve relations with the Martians hope to gain from the relationship and establish proper trade sooner or later. For now, an end to abductions is about the best we can do.

THE ENEMY OF MY FORMER ENEMY IS ALSO MY ENEMY

The war with the Greys left Earth's militaries and general self-defense capabilities greatly weakened. However, considering Earth couldn't hold its own against the Greys, even at its peak it would have been no match for the hyperdestructive Reds. Fortunately, the Greys are now humanity's uneasy allies, and for their own reasons, they are willing to fight to defend Earth against the Reds.

Having had their own planet forever ruined by the Reds, the Greys decide to refuse to allow the same thing to happen to the relative paradise of Earth, now that they have begun enjoying its bounty. Bringing all their military might and technological prowess to bear, the Greys fight alongside the people of Earth against the marauding Reds. However, it might not be enough. The Reds are numerous, even more advanced than the Greys, and apparently completely without fear or pity.

If the Greys are creepy looking, then the Reds are downright horrifying. Standing ten feet tall or more, the bony, spiny Reds have three gruesome claws on each limb and three glowing eyes. They are utterly inhuman. No emotion is discernible on their featureless faces, and it's questionable whether they experience emotions at all. As humans soon learn, the Reds are no naturally evolved species (at least not by the laws of this dimension), but fusions of biology and technology that humanity can only hope to someday understand.

MERCY IS AN ALIEN CONCEPT

While the Greys were often content to devastate an area and move on, the Reds don't stop at simple conquest. Just as they did with Mars centuries ago, the Reds intend to strip Earth of its biological resources and take them back to their own dimension for who knows what awful purposes.

Obviously, the first thing Earth tries to do is communicate with the Reds using the universal translator developed to talk to the Greys. The only intelligible response among the harsh, metallic screeching is something that roughly translates to, "Quiet, food." This is no misunderstanding.

When the Reds first appear, their warships materializing in several places around the globe, the number of Greys on Earth and in orbit is relatively small. Although the Greys immediately recognize their age-old enemies and leap to Earth's defense (or to the attack, depending on their motivations), their numbers are too few to halt the Reds. Warships are lost on both sides, but the Reds push through the Greys' and Earth's defenses to quickly establish their presence on the planet.

Within a few days, reinforcements from Mars arrive, but by then more Red warships have appeared. Some Red warships move to intercept Martian reinforcements, resulting in devastating space battles. All the while, Red tripods continue to land in cities around the globe, annihilating everything around them. More and more, it looks like the Greys' invasion was just a warm-up for Earth's true apocalypse.

RED TECHNOLOGY

The most obvious evidence of the Reds' advanced technology is in their gargantuan warships and fearsome tripods. The walkers are capable of retracting their legs and flying using the same antigravity principles of the Greys' saucers. But whereas the Greys' craft are almost familiar at first glance, the Reds' warships and tripods are sharp, jagged, terrifying things. And the horrifically destructive energy weapons the Reds' ships employ are worthy of the vehicles' fearsome appearance.

The Greys' own advanced technology is the result of re-verse-engineering that of the Reds. Thanks to this, they are much more prepared this time to fight the Reds. Still, the full scope of the Reds' technology is beyond the Greys. And the Reds have taken an appalling step shunned by the Greys. Their very bodies are biotechno-logically engineered living weapons. When, why, and how this development came about is a mystery, but the result is terrifying. Whereas the Greys are diminutive and physically weak, the Reds are towering, brutally strong, incredibly tough, and capable of projecting fear-some heat rays from their biosynthetic eyes. Whether all Reds are like this, or only the soldiers involved in the interdimensional invasion are, is another mystery.

The Red warriors seem to share a certain technological design with their biomechanical walkers. Whether the Reds designed their walkers to resemble them or long ago modified their own appearance to meet the same aesthetic, no one can say. The result, however, is terri-fying to behold. Even the movements of the Reds and that of their war machines are similar. The reason soon becomes clear, as scientists examine the wreckage of tripods and the bodies of Reds. Just as the Reds are bio-technological beings, their tripods, too, are cybernetic constructs, incorporating organic matter in a number of ways Earth's scientists can only begin to comprehend.

With regard to both the Reds and their machines, hu-mans cannot reliably differentiate what is "natural," what is genetically engineered, what is constructed from proteins, and what is purely mechanical. Most of their physiology and technology is so alien to humanity that, well, it could only come from another dimension. As some scientists disturbingly point out, the only rea-son Earth assumes the bipedal Reds to be a species is due to humanity's own preconceptions.

STRANGE

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In the months since the truce was struck between the greys and the humans, the diminutive Martians have actually settled in rather well. In fact, given their gregarious nature, it's perfectly likely that they have endeared themselves to the Player Characters. If the PCs find themselves able to look past the violent misunderstanding of the previous year, they might find themselves with some strange new friends. If the players seem amenable to such a possibility, the GM should feel free to create a few grey NPCs that interact closely with the PCs. Come to think of it, this might be a great way to get a player whose character died in the Apocalypse back into the game. That is, if they're interested in playing a piña colada-drinking, cigar-smoking, heat ray-wielding alien...but who wouldn't be?

RED ATTACK

THE Red attacks are somehow even worse than those of the Greys. As cruel as the Martians were, the Reds are completely without mercy—and they have no interest in taking prisoners. Attacks are horrifying experiences. Tripod walkers march through the streets, blasting ev-erything with their prehensile heat ray emitters, as Reds on foot hunt swiftly through the alleys to incinerate or eviscerate anyone they can find.

No matter how much confidence the PCs have or what kinds of weapons, they are unlikely to want to fight the Reds. While the Greys are physically weak and vulnerable, the Reds are anything but. Running and hiding are really the only options, and even those aren't likely to succeed.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The Reds use their dimensional shifting capabilities to launch a surprise attack.
- The PCs or other survivors are trapped on the upper floors of a building, and a tripod begins scaling it like a huge, metal insect.
- The PCs must dodge falling rubble from damaged buildings as quick-moving Reds pursue them.
- Since the Reds do not have handheld weapons, there's little for the PCs to salvage from defeat-ed Reds—if they can even find any—unless, that is, the Reds' integrated weapons can somehow be de-tached and activated after death...
- The Reds are clever and patient hunters. To ensure no survivors escape, they set ambushes by the routes out of the city.
- When the Greys intervene, the PCs end up caught in the crossfire.
- Just when the combined forces of the Greys and military seem to have won a battle, a Red warship blots out the sun overhead.

Harvest Site
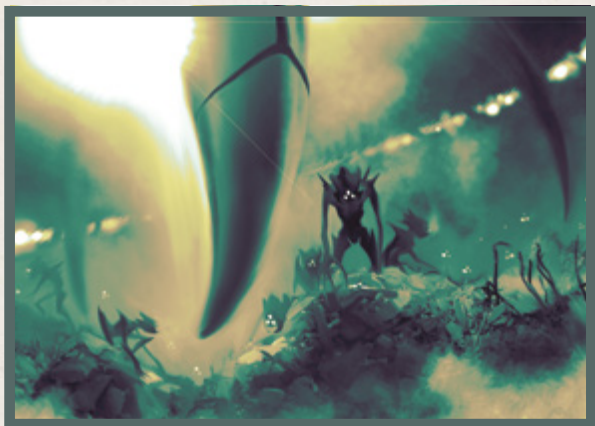
AFTER quashing all resistance in an area, the Reds set about their true work: systematically stripping an area of all biological resources. These include any human (or Grey) survivors, as well as the dead (even piles of ashes). Using a variety of strange, advanced, and frightening tools, the Reds collect all animals and plants—even microorganisms—in the area, before going so far as to strip the soil of nutrients, ensuring nothing will grow there again. Once an area is thoroughly harvested, the Reds move on to the next target.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- Someone the PCs know is trapped at the site of an ongoing harvest, and surely doesn't have long to live.

- During a harvest, a tripod or tripods remain immobile and open to infiltration.

- Some people played dead during the attack, but that means they are going to be harvested if someone doesn't do something.

- The PCs witness the horrible fate of trapped survivors as the harvest begins. In order to escape, they need to keep calm in spite of the gruesome sight.

- Jets scramble to bomb the Reds as they are busy harvesting, and somewhat vulnerable, but the PCs and anyone else in the area will be caught in the blast.

- While utterly desolate, a site that has already been harvested should at least be safe from further Red attacks, as long as people don't gather in large numbers.

- In order for the rest to escape, someone is going to have to distract the Reds.

Sewer Refuge

FOR whatever reason—perhaps their impressive height—the Reds tend to avoid going into enclosed spaces, particularly those underground. This quirk is perhaps the only thing that allowed the Greys to survive as a species after the Reds attacked Mars. It also makes sewers and similar places at least somewhat feasible refuges from the Reds. Sewers and tunnels are far from completely safe, though, as the PCs are certain to discover if they decide to wait things out underground.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- Military forces order civilians to evacuate the sewers, despite the danger of collapse in the turmoil above.

- Having discovered a human's hiding place, the Reds begin blasting their way down.

- Hiding in the sewers has kept them safe, but now the PCs and their fellow survivors need supplies, and someone has to draw the short straw.

- In desperation, someone suggests eating the Greys who are also trapped in the sewer.

- A traumatized survivor reaches a breaking point and begins trying to draw the Reds' attention.

- Quite by accident, a tripod leg breaks through the weakened street and comes down right in the middle of the refuge.

- Despite their usual aversion to enclosed spaces, several Reds infiltrate the sewers in search of prey.

- Another group of survivors attacks, either to steal supplies or out of hatred for any Greys at the site.

- As the battle rages above, debris comes crashing down, trapping survivors amid the rubble.

- Those tripod necks can telescopically extend quite far.

RED MOTHERSHIP

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

Features: +Antigravity Propulsion, +Sophisticated Sensors, +/–Biomechanical, +/–Massive, +/–Vehicle.

Equipment: Complement of 65 Red biomechanical walkers, numerous antiaircraft turrets (1 negative die, +6 damage), biomechanical chitin (+4 phyiscal resistance).

Biomechanical: A Red mothership is a living thing and can act independently and has its own mental and social characteristics. However, it can be crewed by several hundred characters as though it were a vehicle (see the **Pilots and Vehicles** sidebar on page 36).

Colossal: Each of a Red mothership's stress tracks has six tiers of of three boxes each. Once all eighteen of these boxes are filled, the Red mothership is destroyed.
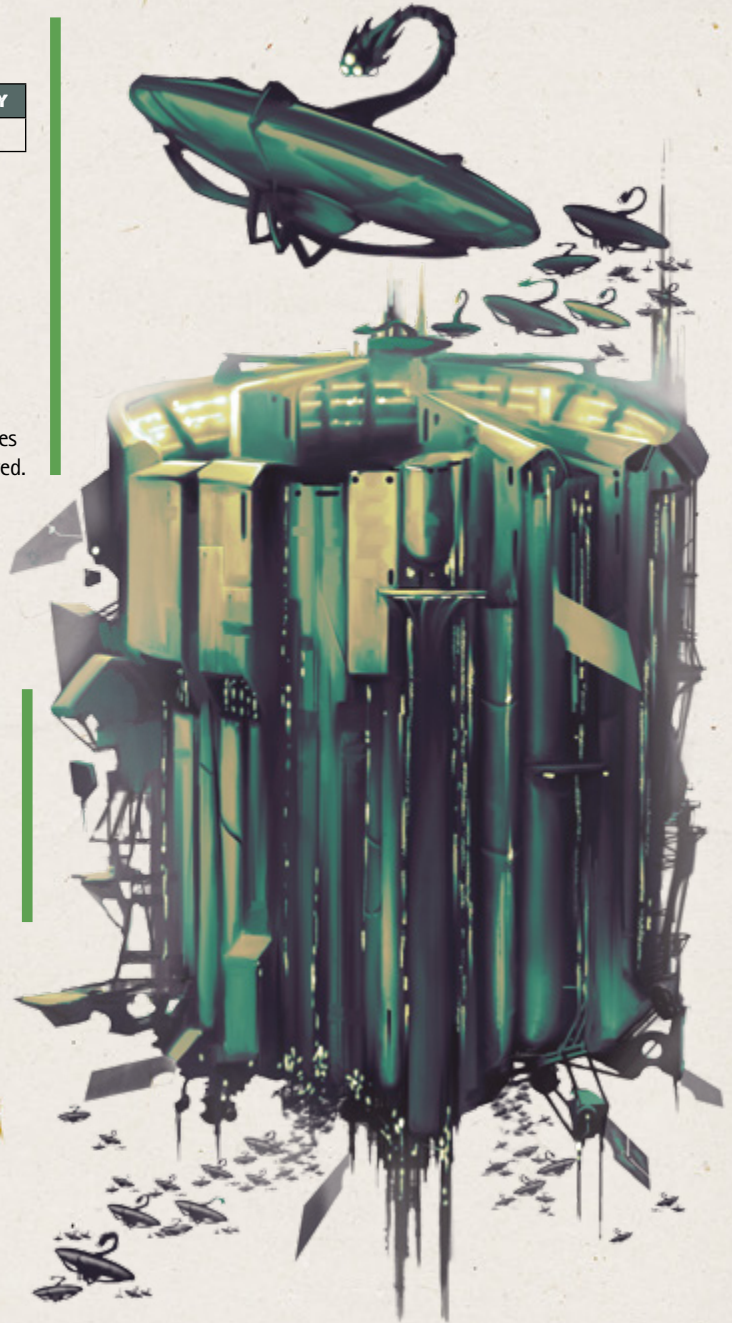
RED WARRIOR

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

Features: +Natural Predator, –Single-Minded, +/–Born to Kill.

Equipment: Eye-laser (1 positive die, +4 damage), chitinous talons (1 positive die, +3 damage), alien carapace (+3 physical resistance).

RED BIOMECHANICAL WALKER

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

Features: +Antigravity Propulsion, +Walker, –Large, +/–Biomechanical, +/–Vehicle.

Equipment: Eye-stalk laser (2 positive dice, +5 damage), biomechanical chitin (+4 physical resistance).

Biomechanical: A Red biomechanical walker is a living thing. It can act independently and has its own mental and social characteristics. However, it can be piloted by a single pilot as though it were a vehicle (see the **Pilots and Vehicles** sidebar on page 36).
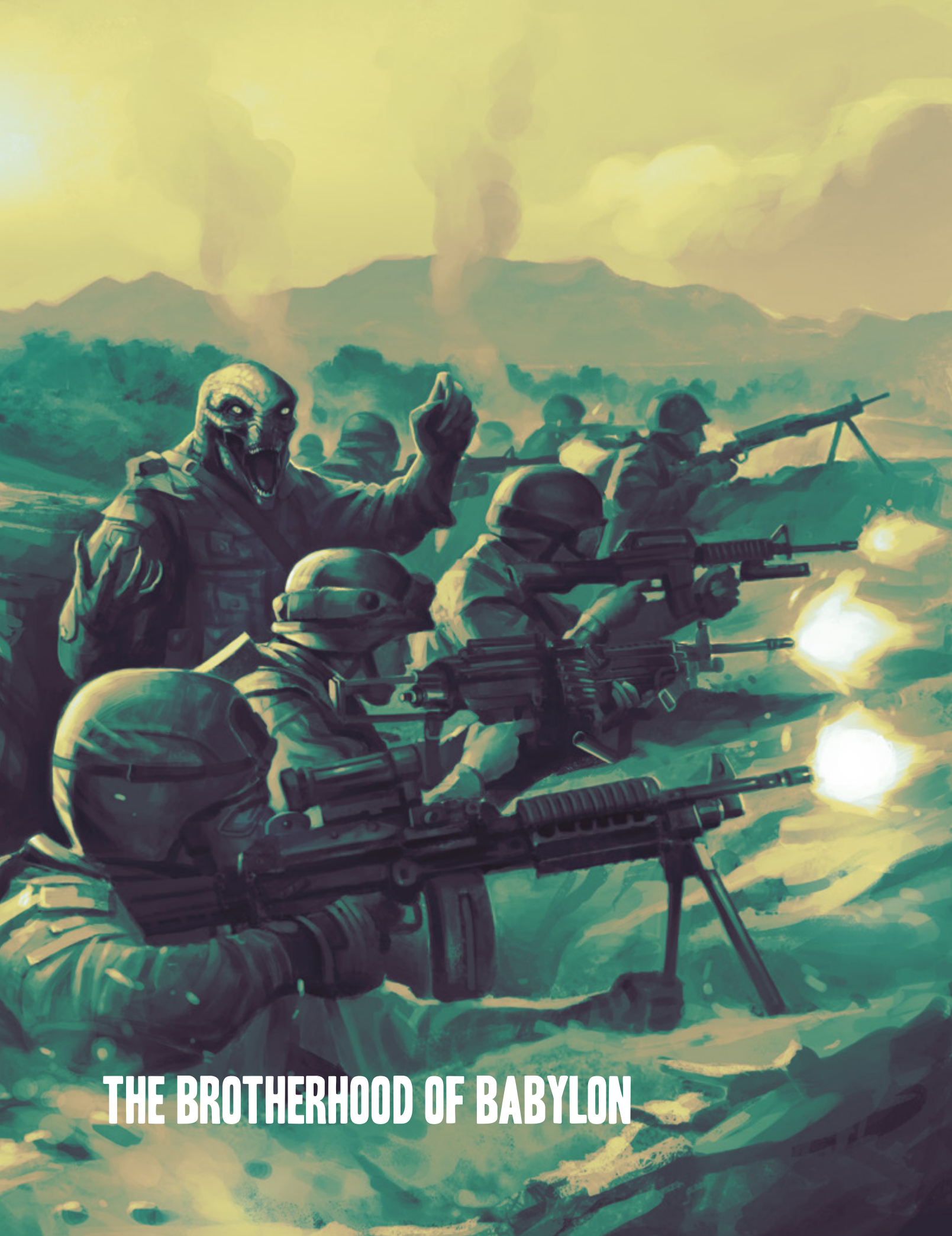
THE BROTHERHOOD OF BABYLON

THE BROTHERHOOD OF BABYLON

APOCALYPSE

It's hard to believe they've been here this whole time, manipulating us and basically running the world. How many politicians and rulers, how many spiritual leaders, how many revered heroes were Reptilians? And how could we not have seen it?

Well, I would say that no one could have seen it coming, but that's just not true. A lot of people actually did see it coming. But the majority of us just laughed at them. It's ridiculous, right? Crackpot conspiracy theorists. But they were so close to the truth. If only we had listened, perhaps things might have turned out differently.

But I also think even those who suspected some of the truth probably didn't expect things to get so bad so fast. I mean, the Reptilians had been manipulating things since, well, forever, apparently. But I guess their plan had to have some sort of an ultimate goal. Some people thought the extraterrestrials might prove to be peaceful, even helpful. But that couldn't be more wrong. And now everyone knows the truth, believers and skeptics alike.

If only I weren't alive to see it.

In THE BROTHERHOOD OF BABYLON, an alien species that has shaped human civilization since our beginnings returns to claim its place as masters of the Earth. Thousands of years ago, these creatures lived as gods among us, using their advanced technology to display their superiority. Monuments were built to them, sacrifices made. They left, but not entirely. Even as the world forgot about them, or relegated them to myth, infiltrators in the highest positions of power continued to guide the development of civilization while concealing their true nature.

Now, the whole planet burns in anticipation of their return. The PCs must survive amid an all-encompassing war that, in itself, might be enough to end the world. But they must also grapple with the truth of the war's cause, accepting the fact that Reptilians have ruled Earth since ancient times and, as they did so many times in the past, are now sacrificing millions of people in orchestrated wars for their own inscrutable ends.

To make things even worse, the full-blooded Anunnaki return in their city-shadowing battleships, ready to crush any lingering resistance with their truly godlike technology. Will the PCs fight back against these alien overlords, or is doing so simply denying the truth of humanity's past and future?

The Experience

All-out world war is only the beginning of humanity's problems, as ancient alien infiltrators set the stage for the long-awaited return of their progenitors. Of course, most people wouldn't even begin to suspect the true cause behind the strife engulfing the world, while those who do are widely decried as foolish or delusional. But when the President of the United States falls to an assassin's bullet, the truth is revealed—or at least a glimpse of it. The President is no human at all, but a scaly, hideous Reptilian.

This revelation throws the world even further into chaos, but it's already far too late to stop the infiltrators, too late by at least a few thousand years, in fact. As war and confusion reign, the true lizard people return: the full-blooded aliens, the Anunnaki. And like the gods they once were, they quickly reestablish their sovereignty over humanity.

WHAT THE PLAYER CHARACTERS SEE

It's difficult to pinpoint a beginning for this apocalypse, since the Anunnaki have been influencing human civilization since the dawn of history. The GM will have to choose exactly when in their timeline to begin the game, though the likeliest points are when the Reptilian-engineered war first begins to directly threaten the PCs, or when the US President's true form is revealed after the assassination. Depending on the GM's preference, the game might begin with the PCs' social media accounts being bombarded with video and images of the President's scaly form, or with bombs falling on their neighborhood. If the GM wants (and thinks the players would enjoy it), the PCs might have to spend some time surviving a seemingly mundane world war for some time before the alien threat reveals itself.

Although thousands of years in the making, the end really begins when the fragile peace that has held for much of the world finally—and catastrophically—breaks. It all happens so fast that even those involved at the highest levels—those who aren't really Reptilians—likely don't quite grasp what is happening, and most ordinary people are completely blown away in some cases figuratively, in other cases liter-

ally. To put it briefly, the escalating turmoil in the Middle East spills out into the rest of the world, and countries that have been allies for decades turn against each other. Alliances shift and break, new alliances are formed, and countries are dragged into war by allies new and old.

All this strife provides the perfect reason for the United Nations to assume a more active role, with the United States and other key countries using their extensive militaries to try to enforce peace (ostensibly). As the situation worsens, the federal government declares a state of emergency and declares martial law. Curfews are imposed, roads blocked, and surveillance increased. Fear of terrorists and traitors floods the media, government, and law enforcement, providing a convenient excuse for further restrictions.

During a televised Presidential speech concerning recent regrettable but necessary measures taken in the interest of national security, an assassin shoots down the President of the United States. The President's body transforms into a green-scaled lizard-like monster. Secret Service members immediately move to confiscate all recording devices as they secure the scene, but not before some images and video are broadcast by news crews and uploaded from witnesses' phones.

The video of the President's death and subsequent transformation goes beyond viral online. However, no mainstream media sources report it, since they are all ultimately under the control of the Reptilians. Some social media sites and popular video services also move to take down and prevent the spread of the footage. But even the efforts of a global cabal aren't enough to stop the news from spreading.

After the US President's true nature is revealed, people begin to see reports of Reptilians more frequently, often with video evidence to back them up. This occurs partially because incidents really are increasing in frequency, and partially because they are not being simply ignored and written off as delusional, as they used to be. PCs are certain to hear about such encounters online or from friends (though, again, not from the mainstream media).

Sooner or later, the PCs are bound to interact with a Reptilian directly, although they might not know it. While most Reptilians hold positions of power, over the millennia they have filtered throughout society. It's even possible, though rare, for people with Reptilian blood not to realize their true nature. The PCs might interact with a Reptilian in the local government, among the military forces stationed in their area, or even in the guise of a friend. The PCs could learn about a Reptilian's true nature in any of a number of ways. The Reptilians' disguises are almost perfect, but not quite. Sometimes, a Reptilian's eyes take on a serpentlike appearance as a result of a change in the light, sharp teeth become visible, or a hand or other body part appears scaly. Observant PCs might pick up on these telltale signs, but then have to decide what to do with the information. Since the authorities are primarily under Reptilian control, attempts to report a Reptilian might lead to the PCs' arrest.

Eventually, with the whole world engulfed in war, confusion and paranoia about the Reptilians reigning, and things generally looking like they couldn't get any worse, massive disc-shaped ships enter Earth's atmosphere, taking position above major cities around the world. A broadcast from the aliens interrupts stations around the globe, calling for humanity's surrender to the Anunnaki. With few exceptions, governments immediately acquiesce, even welcoming the alien overlords. Of course, many people realize that these governments are submitting because they are already under Reptilian control. In nations cross the Earth, people rise up to resist, including many military units that defy orders to fight against the alien invaders. Unfortunately, these efforts are short-lived once the Anunnaki soon demonstrate their power. Disc ships destroy entire cities with beams of energy to serve as examples, and swift attack drones hunt down resistance forces wherever they are found.

WHAT IS EVERYONE ELSE DOING?

Between World War III and sightings of Reptilians, things get pretty chaotic. The federal government continues to clamp down on freedoms. Civil unrest grows, as the population increasingly mistrusts the government and (quite rightly) suspects the whole apparatus of being under Reptilian control. Riots spring up around the country, and police and military forces suppress them with unprecedented harshness. In fact, orders for dealing with the unrest are so merciless that many officers and soldiers disobey them, even joining the side of the resistance against those loyal (knowingly or not) to the Reptilian world government.

Amid this cycle of violence and government suppression, the disc ships of the Anunnaki arrive. Some witnesses stand in stunned silence, others collapse in weeping heaps, and still others run. Some military forces, defying orders, attack the battleships, only to be shot down by attack drones or obliterated by energy beams.

Soon, most people are rounded up for who knows what purposes by Reptilians and military forces. Those who aren't ready to give up flee, seeking some form of refuge in which to regroup and make preparations to fight back.

WHAT CAN THE PLAYER CHARACTERS DO?

There is not much the PCs can do to stop an entire planet at war. Obviously, those with military careers are almost certain to be called up. The GM can keep such PCs from being separated from the rest by having an attack on the closest base or some other disaster that disrupts the chain of command. As events get worse, and especially once the President's true form is revealed, many soldiers and entire units go AWOL, refusing to follow orders that, for all they know, originated with a Reptilian.

PCs who aren't called on to fight must concern themselves with simply surviving. At first, the PCs might not be in any immediate danger. Sooner or later, however, the war comes to their doorstep, and they might have to contend with bombs, hostile troops, or even paranoid soldiers and government agents seeing traitors and terrorists everywhere.

Once the Reptilians are revealed, things get even more complicated. It soon becomes apparent that Reptilians can be found throughout society, and the PCs might even suspect each other. Even if they maintain trust among their group, they must be suspicious of those outside it. Soldiers, police, and others representing the government might be acting under Reptilian orders, and incautious PCs might find themselves placed under arrest or rounded up in an internment camp.

THE TRUTH

As events proceed, some part of the truth behind the current state of affairs becomes apparent. In fact, much of the truth was already known to a certain open-minded segment of the population. Still, even they did not comprehend the full extent of the Reptilians' terrible plans for humanity.

ANCIENT HISTORY

Thousands of years ago, before the days of ancient Mesopotamia, a race of enormous reptilian aliens, the Anunnaki, came to Earth from a distant planet called Nibiru. Primitive humanity witnessed the incredible technological sophistication of the aliens and saw it as magic, hailing the Anunnaki as gods. The Anunnaki embraced this perception. They were not benevolent rulers, and commanded humans to engage in backbreaking labors to glorify them with monuments to their vanity.

Their true purpose for coming to Earth, however, was not to be worshiped as gods—although they found this quite to their liking—but to obtain gold and other precious metals needed to sustain their technology. The Anunnaki enslaved humanity to mine for them, in some cases providing them with advanced devices to make this easier, while in others callously forcing them to do it with only primitive tools. Those who defied their alien masters were quickly put down and, over the centuries, many ancient cities were eradicated as an example to those who dared rebel.

The Anunnaki remained on Earth for thousands of years. Sometimes they were present in great numbers, and sometimes they all but disappeared for centuries. During this era, humans constructed great monuments and dredged up countless tons of precious metals. Yet, elsewhere in the Anunnaki's interstellar empire, a great rebellion was threatening to free multiple planets from Anunnaki rule. The Anunnaki departed Earth, but before doing so, they concocted a plan to ensure that humanity would be ready for their eventual return. To this end, the aliens genetically engineered a caste of Anunnaki-human hybrids and placed them on Earth as monarchs and emperors.

Their subjects believed these Reptilians to have the blood of the gods running in their veins. For this reason, early civilizations revered them and respected their authority. The Reptilians established dynasties, and the importance of noble breeding became ingrained in the human psyche. However, in subsequent years, humanity came to regard divine succession as mere myth, forgetting the Anunnaki's time on Earth. Though their "divine" nature has been forgotten, the Reptilians have nevertheless maintained their positions of power, and not only in the royalty of many countries. Having adapted to different forms of government, they have also maintained power in the political dynasties of the United States and elsewhere.

The Reptilians were left in place to guide humanity and control its destiny in a less overt way than the Anunnaki had. Under careful Reptilian control, human civilization was to be allowed to develop until such time as the Anunnaki could deal with the rebellion and return. When they did, having learned from the rebellion, the Anunnaki knew they could not allow humans to become too technologically advanced if they hoped to once again enslave them.

The hidden organization of Reptilians is known as the Babylonian Brotherhood, though few outside it have ever learned of its existence. Many theories have come close to the truth, sometimes ascribing a different name or overlooking the most important detail: the extraterrestrial connection.

MONUMENTS AND TEMPLES

Anunnaki influenced human culture as it spread around the globe. Evidence of their impact can be found in similarities in architecture and mythology in numerous ancient cultures, and even through to the present. Pyramids, in particular, are a sign of Anunnaki influence, for this is the favored structure of the aliens, taken from the architecture on their homeworld of Nibiru. Even in the modern day, under the direction of the Babylonian Brotherhood, pyramids have been constructed in the United States in the guise of missile defense bases. As the Brotherhood begins its preparations for the Anunnaki's return, the governments and private interests of many countries, including the US, have set about constructing modern pyramids to serve as Anunnaki landing sites and bases of operation during the reconquest of Earth. New pyramids also include military facilities, sports arenas, and even luxury hotels.

NEW WORLD ORDER

When the signal of the Anunnaki return arrived, the Babylonian Brotherhood set about their preparations. Their plan calls for the weakening of humanity through worldwide war and widespread strife, ensuring minimal resistance upon the aliens' return.

Other facets of the plan call for the construction of hidden or disguised facilities for Anunnaki use during and after their invasion of Earth. These include pyramid complexes in the US Midwest, high-tech skyscrapers in the Middle East, and hidden underground facilities around the world. Laborers involved in the construction of these complexes are legally bound to secrecy, or disappear after they finish work.

Although the Babylonian Brotherhood orchestrated the conflict that engulfs the world, the conflict is not entirely under their control. As events progress, a number of Reptilians who have grown fond of humanity disobey their age-old orders. After all, the Reptilians have as much of a genetic link with humans as they do with the Anunnaki—more, in many cases, after centuries of intermingling. This leads to strife within the ranks of the Brotherhood. Of course, those Reptilians who side with humanity can hardly reveal themselves and hope to be trusted by humans, and so must continue to operate clandestinely.

THE SECRET'S OUT

The assassination of the US President is, of course, not part of the Babylonian Brotherhood's plan. Although the warring nations are all ultimately under the influence of the Reptilians, they can't predict or control the behavior of every individual. When one rash individual takes action that, well, doesn't ultimately do much to stop them, it does give humanity some little warning of what's to come.

Despite the revelation of the President's Reptilian nature, the Babylonian Brotherhood ultimately retains its stranglehold on world governance. Incidents of civil unrest and rebellion increase in response to the exposure of the Reptilians' existence; however, with increased police and military control around the world, such resistance movements have a difficult time finding a toehold. Groups attempting to further expose the Reptilians or simply to resist the increasing loss of freedoms are ruthlessly suppressed.

Even once the existence of Reptilians becomes common knowledge, most people don't understand more than the smallest sliver of what's happening. Centuries of secrecy shield the Babylonian Brotherhood—indeed, even its name is known and used primarily only by those few who were aware of its existence before the apocalypse began.

Depending on the GM's preferences, Player Characters might learn a lot of the truth, perhaps from a good-hearted Reptilian, or they might learn little more than the rest of the population. Since they are mostly concerned with simply surviving, many PCs won't have much time to worry about the causes behind the global war, after all. And once the Anunnaki return, the point is somewhat moot.

THE INITIAL RESPONSE

In this apocalypse, there is no real response from the authorities to the threat—the authorities *are* the threat. Still, at all levels of the government, some individuals and organizations, particularly those not fully under the Brotherhood's sway, stymie the Reptilians' efforts or even fight back in whatever ways are available to them.

Things become even more complicated once the Anunnaki warships arrive. The governments of the world (or perhaps more accurately, the world government) are, for the most part, complicit in the invasion. World leaders welcome the Anunnaki "saviors," and militaries are ordered to lay down their arms. Still, most individuals are not so willing to give up the planet to alien domination.

By this point, there is little pretense—everyone knows the world is controlled by the Reptilians. And after the Anunnaki's televised appearance calling for humanity's surrender, the link between them is all too clear.

TIMELINE

The events of the apocalypse were set in motion at the very dawn of human civilization. Still, they escalate quite a bit more quickly as the Anunnaki ships draw closer.

00:00:00	Jordan launches an offensive against Iraq.
09:32:00	The President of the United States condemns Jordan's actions in a press conference.
Day 2	The United Nations begins talks to impose sanctions against Jordan.
Day 5	Saudi Arabia initiates air strikes against Iran.
Day 12	The United States begins an air offensive against Jordan.
Day 13	Russian submarines attack US Navy vessels in the Mediterranean. The US declares war on Russia hours later.
Day 27	China launches air strikes against Japan. Japan retaliates within hours.
Day 36	Scotland declares its independence from the United Kingdom. Great Britain launches an invasion of Scotland.
Day 52	The President of the United States is assassinated during a press conference and transforms into a Reptilian. The event is caught on camera by multiple sources.
Day 63	The assassin is gunned down by Secret Service agents.
Day 64	Footage of the President's metamorphosis is widely circulated on the Internet, but is completely ignored by the news media in its reports on the assassination.
Day 73	It is revealed that the assassin was a member of a number of online conspiracy theorist communities. The mainstream media uses this to cast aspersions on the assassin and the assassin's ideas.
Day 73	Protests occur in cities across the United States, demanding answers regarding the President.
Day 74	A former assistant to the Russian President comes forward with testimony that he is, in fact, a Reptilian.
Day 82	A Jordanian general is killed by a US air strike. Shaky footage from the scene reveals him to be a Reptilian.
Day 90	The new President of the United States addresses the nation to deny the existence of Reptilians. It is the first time the federal government has recognized the issue in any way.
Day 103	Anunnaki warships enter Earth's atmosphere and take up positions above major cities and military installations.
Day 113	The Anunnaki demand Earth's surrender.
Day 119	Despite mass protests around the world, the United Nations unconditionally surrenders to the Anunnaki.
Day 167	Apparently in response to riots targeting the UN headquarters, an Anunnaki warship fires on New York City.
Day 198	An Anunnaki ship sockets into position at the top of the Burj Khalifa skyscraper in Dubai. One hour later, an electromagnetic pulse knocks out power to all other structures in the region.
Day 199	Large portions of the United States' Armed Forces attack the Anunnaki, in defiance of orders.
Day 200	In an act of defiance, US ir Force Global Strike Command personnel launch a nuclear missile at an Anunnaki battleship over Chicago. The impact of the crashing ship and the fallout devastate the area for hundreds of miles.
Day 202	All US nuclear silos are shut down or destroyed by forces loyal to the Reptilians
Day 203	Countries around the world, including the United States, begin rounding up citizens in "safety" camps.
Day 207	Anunnaki descend to capitals around the world, where power is handed over to them in elaborate ceremonies.
Day 221	A single theocratic world government is established under the Anunnaki, who declare themselves god-kings.
Day 254	The Anunnaki establish their worldwide headquarters at Giza.
Day 260	The majority of the human population has been interned in heavily secured slave camps. Slaves are forced to mine precious metals or construct monuments to the Anunnaki.

SHOPPING CENTER

ANNUNAKI BATTLESHIP

WITH the threat of war—and later, of Reptilians and Anunnaki—looming, people try to stock up on supplies of everything from food and water to guns and ammo. Many stores soon run low on stock, however, as the worldwide conflict disrupts shipping and supply chains. In the early days, stores are simply busy, but as the situation gets worse, shopping centers become dangerous places overrun by looters.

The PCs are most likely to visit a shopping center in the early days of the apocalypse in order to gather supplies, intending either to fortify a home or to hit the road and travel somewhere safer. Unfortunately, everyone else has the same idea, and there isn't enough to go around.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☻ The PCs vitally need something from the store, but they arrive to see someone else grabbing the last one off the shelf.

- ☻ The PCs witness people being literally trampled by a herd of shoppers, and those who have fallen underfoot might very well die without help.

- ☻ Another group attacks the PCs, trying to steal the supplies right out of their shopping cart.

- ☻ The PCs are shopping when others begin looting, and police soon arrive to arrest everyone—guilty or not.

- ☻ Amid a clash between rioters and police, someone—either a cop or a civilian—is knocked out or killed, and transforms into a Reptilian.

- ☻ As the PCs return from a trip to the shopping center, an armed mugger approaches them and demands their wallets and purses, plus all their supplies.

CASTING a shadow over an entire city, an Anunnaki warship is as much a location as a vehicle. Of course, the PCs are much more likely to be in its terrifying shadow than aboard it (which is just as terrifying). The battleships are massive, disc-shaped vessels, ranging from hundreds of meters up to multiple kilometers across. Hundreds of Anunnaki might be aboard, although the ship's impossibly advanced systems allow it to operate quite well with only minimal crew. Technology inconceivable to humans allows the massive ship to simply defy gravity, hovering in place with no visible means of propulsion or lift. When in motion, and sometimes for no apparent reason, the ship emits a variety of deep, loud, and frightening sounds.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☻ Horribly misguided people, perhaps owing to a subconscious inherited memory, gather beneath the ship and raise their arms skyward in praise and awe.

- ☻ The massive cannon on the ship's underbelly begins to glow as it collects energy, giving the PCs mere minutes to flee the area or be destroyed.

- ☻ The PCs are mistaken for Reptilians (possibly because they are amid a group of such) and taken aboard the ship.

- ☻ After hours spent hanging in eerie silence above the PCs' location, the ship emits a deep, reverberating, rumbling sound.

- ☻ Out of spite, the warship fires on a modern human monument that doesn't honor the Anunnaki, such as the Statue of Liberty or any major skyscraper or stadium.

RURAL FIELD

As war rages—and especially once the Anunnaki ships arrive—many people flee the cities for safer rural areas. A rural field might seem safe, but it has unique challenges. If the PCs want to get by on their own, perhaps due to paranoia about Reptilians, they must avoid the areas claimed by other refugees. Without easy access to supplies, the PCs might have to turn to foraging and hunting.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The PCs are caught up amid thousands of refugees fleeing war-torn cities.

- The Air Force drops food and supplies for refugees, but can the government be trusted? Is the food safe?

- The land the PCs are on belongs to someone, and the owner isn't too happy about all these strangers on the property.

- A supply plane is shot down by military jets or Anunnaki attack drones. The supplies might be salvageable, but getting to them means traveling many miles over difficult terrain.

- The PCs meet another group of seemingly friendly refugees, but they are, in fact, Reptilians with nefarious purposes.

- Another survivor accuses one of the PCs of being a Reptilian.

- The PCs spot an apparently abandoned farmhouse, which could be a good source of supplies and shelter.

- The PCs come across the site of a huge pyramid under construction, but for what purpose?

- An Anunnaki ship or Reptilian forces patrol the area in search of anyone who has escaped being rounded up for the slave camps.

HOSPITAL

With war reaching every part of the globe, hospitals are soon filled to overcrowding. The PCs are likely to know someone who has been sent to the hospital, even if none of the PCs have. As events become more chaotic, visiting people in the hospital or just getting information about them might prove difficult.

For many people, organized healthcare represents part of the establishment. Thus, as the truth of the Reptilians' presence and influence becomes more apparent, hospitals become widely seen as untrustworthy. This leads to everything from people dangerously ignoring the advice of their doctors to riots that target hospitals.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- When the PCs or someone they know goes to check out, they discover the hospital is no longer permitting patients to leave, and the police at all the exits are enforcing this policy.

- The government is using the local hospital for horrible human testing and experimentation under Reptilian direction.

- Doctors struggle with what to do about Reptilian patients, both from a moral and medical perspective. Providing treatment to injured Reptilians angers some people, who attack the hospital in response.

- One of the PCs is seriously injured. Can the PCs trust the hospital, or is it under Reptilian control?

- One of the PCs, or someone they know, suspects their doctor is a Reptilian.

- While hundreds of people are still inside the hospital, an Anunnaki warship moves into attack position above it.

- While one of the PCs is being treated, it is revealed that the PC is a Reptilian. Did they know?

GOVERNMENT OFFICES

Government offices play a key role in the apocalypse. Whether the workers realize it or not, they are all ultimately under the control of the Reptilians. This can put them in a difficult position as the government's policies become more draconian and the news of the Reptilians becomes harder to ignore. Those who do their jobs must become complicit in the horrible actions unfolding.

There are many reasons why PCs might visit government offices, whether willingly or not. Whether they are government workers themselves, prisoners, or informing on their fellow citizens, the PCs might find more than they were counting on when visiting a government office.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☻ The PCs are arrested for no apparent reason and brought to a secret government facility. They are denied access to a lawyer and generally have their rights ignored. There is also something awfully cold-blooded about the agents questioning them.

- ☻ Conspiracy theorists ask for the PCs' help in assassinating a highly placed Reptilian.

- ☻ The PCs are being held in a government office when combat breaks out between Reptilian and human agents.

- ☻ The PCs become aware of an impending policy that will strip citizens of their civil rights.

- ☻ An agent approaches the PCs and asks for their help in stopping the agent's Reptilian supervisor.

- ☻ After the Anunnaki take over, some government workers are allowed to retain a portion of their freedom—if they can prove their loyalty.

- ☻ An agent or agents reveal themselves to be Reptilians, but try to convince the PCs that they are on the PCs' side and want to help them.

BOMBING TARGET

With the whole world engulfed in war, everywhere is a potential bombing target. The ways of the Reptilians are cruel and mysterious, and even places that seem to have little strategic value might be targeted, threatening no small number of civilians.

Of course, a bombing target is not somewhere the PCs want to be, but it's likely too late by the time they learn what's happening. In fact, nearly any of the other locations the PCs might visit could become a bombing target—quite suddenly, from the PCs' perspective. Government offices are likely targets for foreign powers or even because of Reptilian infighting, while resistance forces targeting an Anunnaki ship might inadvertently become a threat to civilians in the area.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☻ Without warning, the PCs spot jets overhead and see explosions in the distance. The jets are coming their way.

- ☻ In the aftermath of the bombing, injured and dying people are everywhere. Will the PCs try to help them, or will they only save their own skins?

- ☻ The PCs have advance warning that their area will be bombed by its own government, but can they convince their fellow citizens to evacuate?

- ☻ Mere hours after a devastating bomb attack, more jets appear on the horizon.

- ☻ An injured Reptilian is trapped in the rubble. Other survivors, enraged, want to kill it. What will the PCs do?

- ☻ A Reptilian warns the PCs of an impending bomb attack, but do they trust it?

- ☻ Human jets are bad enough, but certain Anunnaki attack drones have devastating plasma bombs.
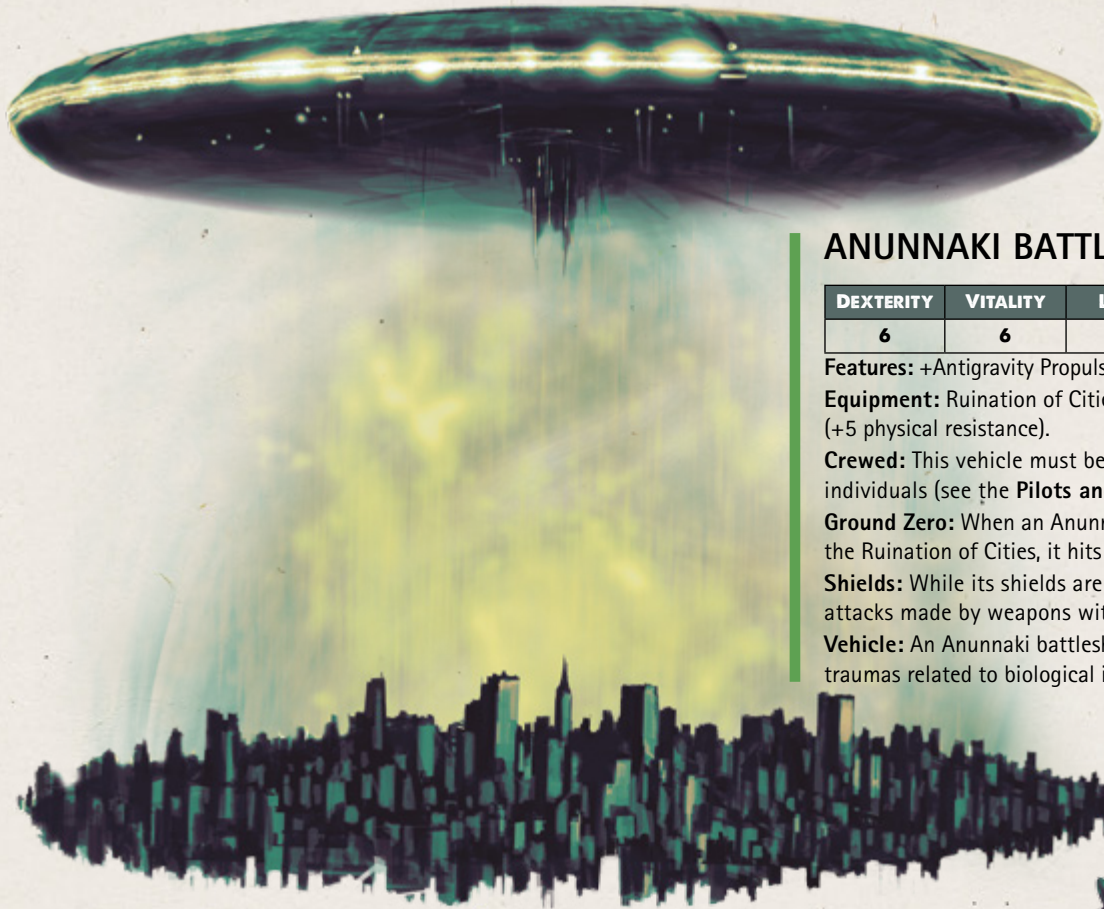
ANUNNAKI BATTLESHIP

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

Features: +Antigravity Propulsion, +Colossal, −Too User Friendly, +/−Vehicle.

Equipment: Ruination of Cities (3 positive dice, +15 damage), armored hull (+5 physical resistance).

Crewed: This vehicle must be operated by a crew consisting of hundreds of individuals (see the **Pilots and Vehicles** sidebar on page 36).

Ground Zero: When an Anunnaki battleship makes a successful attack with the Ruination of Cities, it hits everyone within 10 miles of the target point.

Shields: While its shields are active, an Anunnaki battleship ignores all attacks made by weapons with a damage modifier of +6 or less.

Vehicle: An Anunnaki battleship is a machine and does not suffer physical traumas related to biological injury, disease, dismemberment, or infirmity.

ANUNNAKI REPTILIAN

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

Features: +Bred to Lead, −Imperfect Facade.

Equipment: Reptilian claws (1 negative die, +3 damage), scaly skin (+1 physical resistance), expensive business suit.

Human Facade: Anunnaki Reptilians can transform themselves to look entirely human, though observant characters might spot brief glimpses of a Reptilian's true nature, like slitted pupils, sharp teeth, or a patch of scaly skin. When in human form, a Reptilian loses its reptilian claws. When a Reptilian dies, its body reverts to its natural form.

ANUNNAKI ATTACK DRONE

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
3	4	1	N/A	N/A	N/A

Features: +Networked Intelligence, −Single-Minded.

Equipment: Laser blaster (1 negative die, +5 damage).

Master Drone: One drone in each squadron is designated a Master Drone. This drone is notable due to its plethora of antennae. While a Master Drone is active in a squadron, all drones in the squadron treat their Logic as 3, and remove 1 negative die from their laser blaster attack rolls.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF BABYLON

The Brotherhood of Babylon

In ancient times, we worshiped them as gods, building monuments to honor them, even beseeching them to return. Perhaps the Anunnaki knew we wouldn't view them as gods upon their return—knew that we had advanced too far and could never see them the same way again. Maybe that's why they came instead as conquerors. The Reptilians paved the way for them, ensuring that there would be only minimal resistance. And here we are. Utterly subservient to the Anunnaki, serving their every whim. Enslaved. They live as kings. No, they live as gods, no matter what we think. We have to treat them like gods—we have no choice.

ALIEN GODHEAD

The human race is in a bad way. The Babylonian Brotherhood ensured that the Anunnaki would conquer Earth with little difficulty upon their return, and things went just as planned. Massive numbers of people died in the wars leading up to their arrival, and more died to serve as an example once they got here–the Anunnaki destroyed entire cities to ensure there would be no resistance. This left the human population greatly depleted, and completely vulnerable.

After showing Earth what they were capable of, the Anunnaki, largely through their Reptilian servants, rounded up the surviving humans as slaves. Human civilization is no more. Now, there is only Anunnaki civilization. The similarities to ancient human cultures, however, are painfully clear. Perhaps humans never had a civilization of their own at all. Maybe they were just borrowing it from the Anunnaki.

The Anunnaki are as living gods, obeyed and sometimes even worshiped out of fear. After conquering Earth with their powerful ships, the Anunnaki descended to live on Earth's surface, at least for a time. Humans can only hope they will someday leave once again, but that doesn't seem to be their plan.

Some Anunnaki dwellings had already been prepared by the Babylonian Brotherhood before they arrived, and the Anunnaki are directing their new slaves in the construction of additional palaces. The Anunnaki dwell in these, as well as in certain ancient structures they utilized thousands of years ago, most notably the Great Pyramid at Giza. In some cases, these structures are augmented with advanced Anunnaki technology.

The Anunnaki consider many of humans' modern construction methods to be debased and barbaric. They find concrete repugnant. Around the world, the Anunnaki demolish cities without a historic pedigree, forcing human slaves to painstakingly build in their place palaces and other structures of massive stone blocks. Meanwhile, the Anunnaki chastise humanity for its pathetic accomplishments, for forgetting what they taught, for forgetting them. Perhaps they perceive that humanity, as a species, needs to be punished for these transgressions. That might explain some of the cruelty they show to humans, forcing them to toil endlessly when Anunnaki technology could achieve the same results in a fraction of the time. Perhaps, though, they simply like that handcrafted touch.

Likewise, any monuments to humanity's achievements—any that fail to somehow exalt the Anunnaki—are destroyed, and often replaced. Mount Rushmore now sports the heads of four great Anunnaki hierophants. Museums around the world are looted, and items from antiquity are returned to their places of origin or used as the Anunnaki see fit. Later works of art that depart from Anunnaki styles are simply destroyed.

The Anunnaki indeed view themselves as gods. Consequently, a vein of religiosity runs through everything they do, from wearing robes that recall liturgical vestments to conducting lavish rituals both alone and in view of legions of enslaved humans. The Reptilians are correspondingly treated as demigods. Any human who fails to show the proper reverence for an Anunnaki or Reptilian is brutally punished, or even executed, depending on the whims of the offended alien.

GOLD STANDARD

As much as the Anunnaki seem to enjoy living as gods, their primary purpose in visiting Earth, both originally and now, is to mine gold and other precious metals, which have a variety of important uses in Anunnaki technology. Consequently, the majority of human slaves are funneled into camps by mining sites.

The Anunnaki home planet of Nibiru was long ago depleted of gold and other metals, which are used for everything from technological components, to fuel, to decoration. They passed this love of gold and shiny decorations

in general on to human cultures. The Earth is a plentiful source of these metals, and it has a ready-made labor force for extracting them. But the most important use for gold is in the machinery that sustains the irrevocably damaged atmosphere of Nibiru. While it is true that the Anunnaki could abandon their homeworld in favor of one of the many planets that compose their empire, Nibiru's spiritual significance is too important—and the Anunnaki's pride too great—for the Anunnaki to do so.

Despite all the advances humans have made—and the technology the Anunnaki could bend to the purpose—for the most part, human slaves are forced to mine with only basic, even primitive, tools. This backbreaking labor is conducted under the supervision of Reptilians, trusted human slave bosses, and sometimes Anunnaki themselves. Slaves who collapse from exhaustion, or whose performance is otherwise seen as lacking, are severely punished, and some are dragged away never to be seen again. Fear keeps the slaves in line, while slave bosses receive small rewards in exchange for their continued loyalty.

The conditions in the slave camps are, unsurprisingly, appalling. Stripped of all modern conveniences, the people must live as their most unfortunate ancestors did in ancient times. There is no temperature control, and conditions range from sweltering heat to freezing cold depending on a camp's location and the seasons. Rations are meager, consisting of little more than bread, water, and occasionally gruel. These conditions sometimes lead slaves to revolt, but if the slaves don't have the aid of the rebellion (see below), the Anunnaki ruthlessly put them down. Slave camps are heavily secured, guarded by Reptilians, human slave guards, and attack drones, typically making revolts short-lived. Likewise, slaves attempting to escape seldom make it far.

LONG LIVE THE REBELLION

Although many people resisted when the Anunnaki returned to Earth, most humans were eventually killed, enslaved, or driven into hiding. After a few short weeks, the resistance, such as it was, was crushed. There was also no real organized resistance in the first place—the Babylonian Brotherhood and the confusion it sowed made sure of that.

However, in the months following the Anunnaki's arrival, an organized rebellion began to form. It continues to fight for human independence, although it is severely outclassed and outgunned. Key to this rebellion and to any chance of success it might have is the assistance, indeed the membership, of certain Reptilians who sympathize with their human relatives and are horrified at

the way the Anunnaki treat them. Some of these are the same Reptilians who fought their peers within the Babylonian Brotherhood in the prelude to the Anunnaki's return, while others only switched sides after seeing firsthand what the Anunnaki had in store for humanity.

The rebellion owes its organization and genesis to one woman in particular, an archaeologist and scholar known in academic circles for her outlandish theories about ancient astronauts. Of course, these theories have now been proven largely true. Sophia Kostopoulos has long studied the Anunnaki and their influence on ancient human cultures, as well as the Babylonian Brotherhood's continued influence. She believed that the Anunnaki would one day return, and she saw the signs of impending change in the actions of the hidden worldwide government.

Kostopoulos did not have the resources to fight back against the impending Anunnaki conquest. Worse, her public speaking on her theories garnered the attention of the Babylonian Brotherhood. Along with many of her fellow scholars and conspiracy theorists, Kostopoulos was forced to go into hiding to escape arrest and an undoubtedly unpleasant fate at the hands of the Reptilians. Following the Anunnaki conquest, Kostopoulos and others fell off the Babylonian Brotherhood's radar—after all, their warnings had gone unheeded, and it was now too late for them to do anything.

In the following months, Kostopoulos and her small group reestablished contact with surviving theorists and resistance fighters around the world to begin pulling together an organized rebellion. With the assistance of sympathetic Reptilians (although arranging peaceful contact was no simple feat), the rebellion has grown in numbers and resources, while maintaining contact among cells scattered across the globe. Some of the Reptilian members of the rebellion still hold positions of power in Earth's new world government, making their participation particularly valuable.

Many soldiers have joined the rebellion, and many civilians have begun to receive instruction in combat. Although its resources are scant, the rebellion has been able to strike at the Anunnaki to a limited extent. It uses the element of surprise and intelligence from allies in the Reptilian government to avoid facing the destructive power of Anunnaki advanced technology. So far, the rebellion's raids have focused primarily on freeing slaves, many of whom join the rebellion. However, Kostopoulos and her allies have more expansive plans. They refuse to give up hope that the human race might be free once again.

REBEL REFUGE
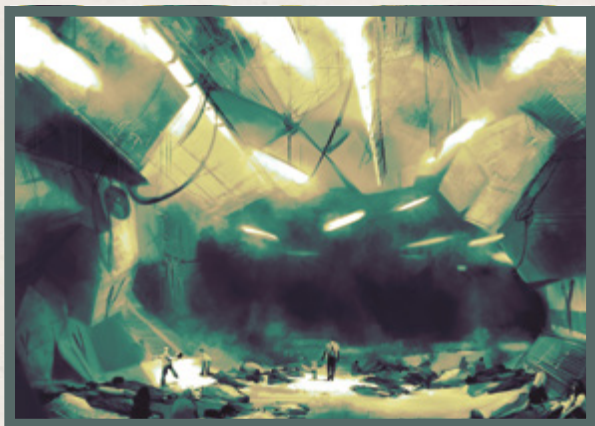
A number of rebel refuges exist across the globe, concealed from the Anunnaki. Most are hidden underground, but others exist amid the rubble of abandoned cities. Rebel strongholds vary in size from those holding just a handful of armed survivors to great subterranean warrens with hundreds or even thousands of freedom fighters. Some are little more than caverns or sewers; others occupy forgotten military bunkers.

The rebellion recruits from all kinds. Whether or not someone has military experience or useful survival skills, the most important quality is a burning desire for freedom, though hatred for the Anunnaki doesn't hurt either. The PCs might join the rebellion if they were fighting with the resistance at the outset of the invasion or, if they have been enslaved, after being freed.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- Contact with another rebel refuge has been lost, and the PCs are sent to investigate.

- The de facto leader of the rebellion, Sophia Kostopoulos, sets out from her headquarters to visit the refuge. This means security needs to be higher than ever. Of course, if anyone were planning to sell out Kostopoulos to the Anunnaki in return for favor and maybe even freedom, this would be the opportunity...

- A Reptilian loyal to the Anunnaki has infiltrated the rebels. No one knows which rebel is the spy, and everyone is a suspect.

- The refuge is running low on supplies. Volunteers are needed to secure new rations, ammo, and more—possibly by scavenging it from city ruins, or even by stealing from the Anunnaki.

- The refuge has been detected, and the rebels must either abandon it or prepare for an Anunnaki attack. Volunteers may have to sacrifice their lives to hold off the attack long enough for the others to escape.

- While tunneling out a new section of the refuge, the rebels discover an ancient Anunnaki relic. Could it be a weapon, or even hold the secret to an Anunnaki defeat?

ANUNNAKI PALACE

The influence of Anunnaki architecture on human antiquity is evident once again in their lavish palaces built by human slave labor. These structures reflect the greatest architectural accomplishments of the ancient world, though many are even grander in scope. Palaces are located around the globe, most frequently on sites of ancient power and on the ruins of human capitols. The largest palace in North America takes up a large part of central Washington, DC (a city named after a famous Reptilian). It was built according to plans drafted by Reptilian architects in the 1790's.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The PCs have been appointed to serve within the halls of an Anunnaki palace. Such a relatively easy and luxurious position is much coveted among the slaves, and usually a sign of the Anunnaki's trust. Slaves in these positions receive a bit more freedom and less oversight, providing a good opportunity to strike back...

- A Reptilian, or even an Anunnaki, has been murdered within the halls of the palace, and all the slaves are suspects. The Anunnaki would rather kill them all than let the culprit escape, if that's what it comes to.

- A particular Anunnaki hierophant has decided that humans are actually quite delicious, as evidenced by the high turnover rate for enslaved palace personnel.

- A rebel attack on the palace threatens the safety of the human slaves inside, and the slaves are certain to be punished after the attack, should it fail.

- The PCs are contacted by the rebel underground, which wants inside personnel to help assassinate an Anunnaki hierophant.

- The Anunnaki suspect one of the slaves of stealing, perhaps even to help supply the rebels.

- An Anunnaki hierophant's statue has been defaced.

GIZA

Although the Anunnaki government is widely dispersed across the planet and beyond, if it does have an Earth headquarters, it is the Great Pyramid at Giza. Apparently built for the same purpose thousands of years ago, this wonder of the ancient world has been reclaimed by the Anunnaki and outfitted with advanced technology to aid in communications, energy transference, and even more esoteric matters. Most importantly, Giza functions as an interstellar communications hub—just as it did thousands of years ago.

The pyramid and the surrounding area are heavily fortified and patrolled by attack drones. Relatively few slaves are used within the pyramid, and those who are must pass many tests of trust before being permitted on the sacred stone. Unless the PCs have something big planned, it's probably not somewhere they want to be.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The Anunnaki emperor itself is visiting Earth for the first time and will be staying at Giza. Killing it would strike a great blow against the Anunnaki, and would shatter their illusion of godlike invulnerability.

- Sophia Kostopoulos has been captured by the Anunnaki and brought to Giza for interrogation.

- Getting into the pyramid means evading numerous attack drones, sneaking past Reptilians, and overcoming sophisticated security measures.

- The rebel underground has made contact with a slave working at Giza. The rebels hope to launch an unprecedented attack on Anunnaki HQ.

- With the help of Reptilians, the rebellion has gotten its hands on a powerful Anunnaki fusion bomb. They need volunteers to plant it in the Great Pyramid, but it's almost certainly a suicide mission.

- Additions to the pyramid are intended to fulfill some ancient purpose beyond communication—but what is it, and how bad is it for humanity?

ANUNNAKI HIEROPHANT

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

Features: +Apex Conqueror, +Mighty, −Arrogant, −Decadent, +/−Imposing.
Equipment: Reptilian claws (1 negative die, +3 damage), scaly hide (+2 physical resistance).

THE END OF THE WORLD

HUMAN SLAVE BOSS

Dexterity	Vitality	Logic	Willpower	Charisma	Empathy
2	2	2	1	3	2

Features: +Inured to Pain, –Broken Will, –Wretched.
Equipment: Filthy rags, primitive tools (2 negative dice, +2 damage).

HUMAN SLAVES

Dexterity	Vitality	Logic	Willpower	Charisma	Empathy
2	2	2	2	2	2

Features: +Inured to Pain, +Strength in Numbers, +Will to Resist, – –Extremely Wretched.
Equipment: Filthy rags, primitive tools (2 negative dice, +2 damage).

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OFFICER OF THE REBELLION

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

Features: +Military Training, +Natural Leader, +Will to Resist, −Distrustful, −Heavy Burden.

Equipment: Beretta M9 (1 positive die, +3 damage), maps and charts, military fatigues, a well-stocked liquor cabinet.

REBELLION SOLDIER

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

Features: +Military Training, +Will to Resist, −Distrustful.

Equipment: HK MP7 (1 negative die, +4 damage), 4 magazines, full body armor (+2 physical resistance), military fatigues, MREs.

RISING TIDES

RISING TIDES

APOCALYPSE

I guess it's a little ironic that a place most people thought was mere myth ended up causing the end of civilization as we know it. Stories of underwater cities have been around for thousands of years, but "mainstream" archaeologists assured us they were just that—stories. Sure, a few theorists said there was some truth to the tales, but they were written off as kooks and crackpots. But Atlantis is very real. Too real. If only we had listened to them, we might at least have been prepared.

Then again, some people did know something. It's clear the government was expecting the attack—it just didn't bother to warn the rest of us. But how much did it really know? A lot of people think the government had diplomatic relations with the Atlanteans, maybe traded for technology. If that's true, the Atlanteans clearly held out on us with their best stuff, because our armies' materiel can't compare to their vehicles and weapons. If the government knew, it should have told us. The people have a right to know. Maybe we would have done things differently—not pissed the Atlanteans off so much. I mean, we didn't think anyone lived in the oceans except for fish!

Maybe we stood a chance before the flood, but now we're fighting on their territory. Everything is underwater now, pretty much. But so much of the world has always been underwater—why weren't we more concerned with what's down there? Why did we think an alien invasion would come from the stars, when there's such a large unexplored frontier right below us?

In Rising Tides, the PCs—and the rest of the world—face a different kind of alien threat: a threat not from the stars, but from the depths of the sea. Of course, the Atlanteans originally came from space, but we've shared the planet with them for so long, it might as well be theirs, too. And it will be theirs—just theirs—if something isn't done to stop them.

As the Atlanteans rise from the seas, the PCs must contend not only with advanced alien war machines and weapons, but with the fury of the ocean itself. To expand their territory, the Atlanteans use their advanced technology to finish what we started and melt the polar ice caps—quickly. The resulting rise in the sea level obliterates coastal areas and leaves much of human civilization underwater. Which, in itself, makes it Atlantean territory.

THE EXPERIENCE

The end of the world is a frightening and strange experience that evolves all too quickly. After an increase in military preparedness and alert—just enough to tip most people off that something is about to happen—the Atlanteans attack in full force. Deadly energy weapons and high-powered torpedoes devastate the coasts before hover tanks and troops deploy en masse. Earth's land forces are pushed back, while its navies are outclassed and lose craft after craft. The coastal communities have it the worst, of course—and things only decline further when the flooding begins.

The realization that governments knew about the aquatic aliens and kept it a secret for decades almost gets ignored in all the chaos. But plenty of people are upset about it—and plenty say "we told you so." What can they do, though, when the government is now busy trying to defend the populace from a full-scale invasion from the deep?

WHAT THE PLAYER CHARACTERS SEE

The first clue that something is wrong comes from increased military readiness in the United States and several other countries. National Guard reservists are called up, Navy patrols are increased, and Army forces are stationed near coastal cities on high alert. Something significant is clearly going on, but the government isn't talking. "Just training maneuvers," officials claim once the media catches wind of the activity. The preparations aren't preceded by announcements. The government is clearly trying to keep them quiet, and only talks about them once it becomes impossible to pretend nothing is happening.

Depending on the PCs' level of interest in world affairs and whether any of them have military connections or themselves serve, they might be very aware that military activity is unusually high for the current state of world affairs. Soon, the Atlanteans begin their assault. As much as governments might want to, it is impossible to cover up the large-scale devastation of naval bases and coastal cities around the world. Soon, the US President addresses the nation to announce it is under attack by extraterrestrials. The fact that these extraterrestrials seem to be coming from underwater is not clearly explained.

Obviously, how the PCs experience the start of the invasion depends on where they live, or where they happen to be vacationing. If the PCs are on the coast, they are likely to bear the full brunt of the assault. Energy beams ruin roads, bombs collapse bridges, and hover tanks destroy everything in sight. PCs in these areas face constant danger, and getting inland is likely their top priority. In the meantime, they will have to avoid being disintegrated or crushed by collapsing buildings.

If the PCs are farther inland, the danger might seem more remote at first. The preliminary attacks are consigned primarily to coastal areas, but not exclusively. The Atlanteans launch long-range missiles against inland military targets, posing a risk to communities near military bases. Even if the PCs aren't particularly close to a base, there is a chance a missile could veer off course and strike their location. Eventually, the Atlantean forces reach them. Because the Atlanteans invade from each coast, there is nowhere to run.

What makes the Atlantean invasion especially strange—and tips people off that the government knows more than it's been letting on—is the visual resemblance between the Atlanteans' weapons and vehicles and human military technology of the twentieth century. Atlantean battleships, hover tanks, and even hover bikes look like they came right out of the 1960s, some perhaps as early as the '40s. Of course, the crew of these vehicles are protected by domes that enclose them in water and by high-tech energy fields, but the similarities are enough to get people wondering who copied whom.

After a few days of fighting—which seems like an eternity—the situation gets even worse. The Atlanteans use their advanced thermal technology to catastrophically accelerate the melting of the polar ice caps. While this is sure to have negative effects on the Atlanteans' aquatic neighbors, the Atlanteans are clearly more concerned with depriving humanity of territory and its ability to defend itself than with the effect on fish and other aquatic denizens.

Suddenly, ocean levels around the world surge, and massive tidal waves engulf coastal cities. The PCs—perhaps relieved that they escaped in time—might be fortunate enough to simply see footage of these events on TV or online. But if the PCs are anywhere near the coast, they have to contend with sudden flooding and towering waves. Nowhere is safe, as massive tsunamis can bring whole buildings down. Further, the Atlanteans continue their assault, even as the floodwaters wash away soldiers and tanks and drown the civilian population. Caught between the rising waters and the hover tanks of the Atlanteans, coastal denizens have few places to run.

WHAT IS EVERYONE ELSE DOING?

Not everyone is completely surprised by the Atlanteans' attack. It's clear that the government had some warning, at least enough to begin preparing defenses. There are many people who believed—quite rightly—that aliens visited Earth in the distant past, and some of these people also knew the truth that they never left. Of these, a certain number suspected the aliens remained out of sight in the last unexplored place on Earth: the bottom of the sea. Some of these astute individuals correctly believed that the military buildup was evidence that the Atlanteans were preparing to attack. Their warnings, however, were written off as crazy, even as the government prepared for the assault.

Once the aliens reveal themselves, such "preposterous" theories suddenly gain a lot of credence. Obviously, the existence of the aliens is a huge scientific discovery—and scientists are furious at the government for concealing it.

Soon, the obvious connection between the stories of Atlantis and the underwater aliens catches on, and many people begin calling them "Atlanteans" rather than "aliens."

As fascinating as the Atlantis connection may be, people on the coasts are far too busy fleeing for their lives to stop and wonder at it. Even farther inland, panic begins to build. Civilians start to stockpile supplies, fighting over available items and even rioting. The people clamor for reassurances from the government, but few are forthcoming. The US President, press secretary, and other politicians all reassure the American people that the armed forces are doing all they can to stop the invasion.

People flee coastal communities in droves, even before official evacuations are ordered. Of course, some insist on staying behind, refusing to give up their homes. Even when the floodwaters come, some refuse to budge, but others frantically try to get away. The, well, flood of refugees puts a strain on communities farther inland and clogs highways. In some cases, people are still stuck in traffic when the Atlantean hover tanks arrive.

It's not just the United States that comes under attack. Few, if any, countries are spared. First world nations and world powers are the primary targets; Europe's coastal countries as well as Russia, China, and Japan are hit just as hard as the US. It is, without doubt, a worldwide invasion from the deep.

Even as the invasion proceeds, many people are outraged that the government clearly kept the Atlanteans' existence a secret. Some even suspect, rightfully so, that the current war is the government's fault, at least in part. Protests take place around the country, and congressional inquiries are held. Of course, it's far too late for these to do any good. The Atlanteans are past the point of negotiation.

WHAT CAN THE PLAYER CHARACTERS DO?

What the PCs do depends largely on where they are when events begin. If they are on or near the coast, getting inland is likely priority one. PCs who are already far from the ocean have a little more time to prepare—but how? Any direction they might flee will eventually bring them toward the ocean. With Atlanteans invading from every coast, it might seem there is nowhere to run.

PCs on the coast must contend with panicking crowds, as everyone else tries to flee as well, clogging highways and causing numerous accidents. Of course, the PCs might decide to hole up and stay put. If so, they may be passed over by initial Atlantean forces, which are focused on combating the military. However, the PCs are likely to regret such a decision when the ocean levels suddenly swell to unprecedented heights.

Even PCs in the country's interior might have to deal with errant missiles meant for military installations, or even advance Atlantean scouting forces. With their swift hover tanks and hover bikes, Atlantean scouts range far ahead of the main force. While their primary objective may be reconnaissance, they still pose a great danger to any humans who get in their way.

As far as fighting the Atlanteans goes, the PCs are not going to have an easy time. The Atlanteans primarily attack in their hover vehicles, which are heavily armored and energy shielded. Even the military is hard pressed to counter these vehicles, as only its heaviest weapons are capable of damaging them. If PCs are confronted with a hover tank, their only hope is probably to run. Atlantean scouts on hover bikes are somewhat more vulnerable, although the pilots wear armored uniforms that provide a good deal of protection against bullets.

THE TRUTH

Although forgotten by history and relegated to the realm of myth and legend, the Atlanteans' impact on human history and development cannot be overstated. Mainstream archaeologists have long ignored the evidence of their influence, although so-called "ancient astronaut" theorists have had some success in piecing together parts of the puzzle. Even they lack the full picture, however, and many of these believers would not have thought the aliens remained on Earth in such large numbers.

Of course, the government is not quick to admit what has happened, or why, and much of the following information might never be known to the PCs (or they may only learn part of the story). They might discover bits and pieces from friends or newfound allies, or even from contacts within the government once things get desperate enough. Then again, it might be something of a moot point if the Atlanteans succeed in erasing humanity from the face of the Earth.

ANCIENT HISTORY

The Atlanteans first came to Earth thousands of years ago, sometime in the third millennium BCE. They had destroyed their own planet's environment through unchecked pollution, and to them, the Earth seemed an unsullied paradise. So, they decided to settle Earth, living alongside its native inhabitants. For a time, the Atlanteans and humans had peaceful and even productive interactions. They learned from humans about Earth and its native species of flora and fauna, while teaching humanity in the areas of the arts and sciences. Many of the greatest accomplishments of the ancient world can be traced directly or indirectly to the Atlanteans' influence.

Soon after arriving on Earth, the Atlanteans set about establishing undersea cities, for they are aquatic, humanoid piscene creatures who evolved to live in the oceans of their homeworld. They brought some humans to visit their great cities on Earth, giving rise to legends of a beautiful and highly advanced underwater metropolis. Of course, there is no single city of Atlantis, but an entire civilization with numerous cities throughout the world's oceans.

After centuries of peace, something went wrong. Humans, in their greed, sought to steal the Atlanteans' greatest secrets and technologies. The Atlanteans punished the humans in the very same way they do now—by raising the sea levels. This engendered flood myths in many cultures.

HIDDEN NEIGHBORS

The ancient floods killed many, but did not wipe out humanity. In the aftermath, the Atlanteans decided to withdraw, feeling that humans were not yet ready for the technology they could offer. For thousands of years, they remained out of sight. On the surface, the Atlanteans were largely forgotten, and humans got by on their own. Without the help of the Atlanteans—and because of the flood's destruction—humanity forgot much of what it had learned.

After a time, Earth's civilization began to rediscover some of the great arts and sciences of the Atlanteans. Progress started to overcome superstition and ignorance. The Atlanteans saw this and saw promise, but they also saw danger. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution, humans entered an era in which they were at risk of doing exactly what the Atlanteans had done—ruin their home planet's environment.

REDISCOVERY

To shepherd humanity through this era of progress, beginning in the late eighteenth century, the Atlanteans began to reestablish contact with humanity on a very limited basis. Communication was conducted primarily with the major governments of the world, which agreed with the Atlanteans that it would be best to continue to keep their existence a secret from the masses.

In exchange for promises to protect the world and, in particular, its oceans, the Atlanteans began to share their technology once again, leading to the greatest breakthroughs of the nineteenth through twenty-first centuries. From microwave ovens, to nuclear power, to cell phones, humanity owes a lot to the Atlanteans. Of course, military technology was a major focus. The great military advances of the twentieth century came from the Atlanteans, as evidenced by the similarities in the appearance of humanity's vehicles and weapons of war—if not always in function.

Yet, officials at the highest levels who knew of the Atlanteans' existence failed to honor their end of the bargain. Partly because of the increasing power and independence of corporations, pollution levels increased and the oceans suffered. Certain members of Congress, who possessed knowledge of the Atlanteans, failed to follow whispered suggestions and quiet demands. The situation continued to strain relations between humanity and the Atlanteans.

Around the dawn of the new millennium, the Atlanteans warned their contacts in the government of the United States and other countries that things had to change. In truth, they had given humanity many chances, but humans continued to ignore them while enjoying the technology they had shared. Years went by as the Atlanteans negotiated for protection for the world's oceans, but humanity continued to pollute them and ignored the results of industrial expansion.

Finally, the Atlanteans had had enough. They warned officials that they would take action to stop further harm to the world's oceans. Governments took umbrage and broke off negotiations, and the situation got worse from there. The Atlanteans have decided to finish what they started millennia ago in order to protect the world from humanity and its arrogance.

THE INITIAL RESPONSE

While the US and other world governments knew the Atlanteans would attack, they underestimated the scale of the assault. In particular, while they assumed the Atlanteans had held back on their military technology, they did not realize how much more advanced than humanity's it had become. They also didn't expect, or even conceive, that the Atlanteans would melt the ice caps to drown the world.

In the weeks leading up to the invasion, the US puts its armed forces on high alert and builds up defenses along the nation's coasts. Only at the highest levels do military leaders and politicians know what is behind the escalation.

Congress begins questioning the buildup and demands an explanation from the executive branch, which stalls until the attack begins and the answer becomes clear.

Perhaps due in part to lack of communication about the nature of the enemy, and certainly due to disparities in technology levels, the military is not prepared to hold back the Atlanteans. As Atlantean battleships emerge from the depths and hover tanks come ashore, the Army and Navy struggle to keep up. Atlantean energy beams cut through Navy destroyers and Army tanks alike, while humanity's weapons fail to penetrate the Atlanteans' energy shields and advanced armor alloys.

This is not to say that the Atlanteans are invulnerable, however. Their technology is not infallible, and they are flesh and blood, just like humans (or fish). Concentrated fire from the strongest military weapons can damage or bring down their vehicles, but only in rare circumstances. Lucky shots may do so as well. However, it's hard to get in those hits without first being eradicated by an energy beam or plasma torpedo.

The initial stages of the Atlantean invasion rely primarily on vehicles. Once military defenses have been pushed back, however, some Atlantean foot soldiers appear. Although they are more vulnerable than their vehicles, their thick personal armor provides substantial protection for the Atlantean soldiers, far more than that of human troops. At least they don't have personal energy fields like those protecting their vehicles.

Perhaps the Atlanteans' greatest weakness is their need for liquid water to survive. Atlantean soldiers' armor includes a reserve of water that pumps through their glass-domed helmets. These helmets are the most vulnerable part of the armor. Puncturing the glass puts an Atlantean in a bad situation; shattering it can lead to suffocation on dry land. Of course, as sea levels rise, the Atlanteans have fewer worries about being caught out of water, and humanity worries increasingly about being caught away from land.

Even in the initial stages of the invasion, humanity's military forces are consistently pushed back, though they bring down the occasional hover tank. When Atlantean foot soldiers deploy, they generally suffer minor casualties. However, by and large, human military forces must continuously give ground while suffering high casualties. Of course, the flow of battle varies from place to place, and in some locations humans manage to maintain a toehold on a coast—at least until the ice caps melt. As sea levels rise, humanity pulls back and abandons the coasts.

Prior to the melting of the ice caps, most coastal cities are evacuated; even before that, many people flee voluntarily under the barrage of torpedoes and plasma blasts. Military forces assist with the evacuations and try to protect the people from the Atlanteans. Fortunately, civilians are not a major target for the Atlanteans, who figure that problem will be dealt with when the sea swallows the land.

TIMELINE

When the Atlantean invasion begins, their plan unfolds far too fast. The following is a breakdown of when and where some of the notable events of the invasion of or affecting the US occur.

00:00:00	Under direct orders from the President of the United States, military forces begin to deploy along the Eastern and Western seaboards.
00:09:13	Beaches begin to close along the western seaboard.
Day 1	All major public beaches on the East and West Coasts are closed.
Day 2	Congress passes a motion requesting an explanation for the recent military activity.
Day 3	Local leaders and businesspeople in coastal communities join the chorus demanding to know what's going on.
Day 4	Protests occur in cities along the coasts as people demand to know why they are being kept off the beaches.
Day 5	Air Force and Navy surveillance of the Atlantic and Pacific increases dramatically.
Day 9	The first sighting of an Atlantean battleship occurs off the West Coast of the United States.
Day 10	Missiles launched from Atlantean battleships and undersea hidden silos rain down on coastal targets.
Day 10	The President is moved to a secure location.
Day 11	The President of the United States declares a national state of emergency.
Day 12	A plasma bolt reduces the upper third of the Statue of Liberty to a slagged ruin.
Day 13	Contact is lost with forces stationed on the island of Oahu.
Day 14	Most cities along both coasts are evacuated.
Day 15	Atlantean hover tanks rampage through Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.
Day 16	Atlantean forces come ashore from the Gulf of Mexico.
Day 16	Atlantean forces bombard Anchorage, Alaska.
Day 17	Atlantean forces push up through the Florida Panhandle.
Day 19	Anchorage falls.
Day 20	Orlando, Florida, including its theme parks, falls to somewhat perplexed Atlantean invaders.
Day 22	Power outages are rampant along the coasts and in areas under Atlantean attack. Communications are disrupted.
Day 22	The Pentagon is evacuated.
Day 23	Atlantean bombardment levels the White House and the Pentagon.
Day 25	All remaining essential personnel are evacuated from Washington, DC.
Day 27	Most Navy installations in California have fallen to the Atlanteans.
Day 38	Without warning, the polar ice caps begin melting rapidly, causing sea levels to rise.
Day 39	The island of Manhattan is completely submerged.
Day 40	A flood of refugees into the interior states precedes the literal flood.
Day 40	The rising seas submerge California up to 28 miles inland.
Day 41	The US government holds ceasefire talks with Atlantean diplomats.
Day 42	The East and West Coasts are underwater to a distance of roughly 80 miles.
Day 43	The ceasefire talks break down, and the Atlantean diplomats withdraw. US forces use the opportunity to launch an attack against the Atlantean leaders, resulting in a massacre for both sides.
Day 45	The East and West Coasts are submerged to a distance more than 200 miles inland from the previous coastline.
Day 50	Atlantean battleships use the newly flooded coast to increase their effective reach, and Atlantean ground forces push farther inland in advance of the rising waters.
Day 50	The West Coast is flooded to the Rockies, the East to the Appalacians. The Mississippi River Valley is entirely flooded.
Day 52	Rivers and lakes throughout the country rise above their banks; flooding is widespread even in inland regions.
Day 60	Although it has lost much in the way of personnel and infrastructure, the federal government survives in the form of the military.
Day 90	A number of countries have entirely ceased to exist, and refugees can be found on seafaring vessels of all kinds.
Day 365	Although not all of their member countries still exist in any meaningful capacity, both the United Nations and NATO continue to function, albeit with significant difficulty.

BATTLEFRONT

THE front lines are not where the PCs likely want to be. Even if the PCs are members of the armed forces, after they see the Atlanteans in action, it should be clear the military doesn't stand a chance. Still, every branch does its part to try to hold back the encroaching aliens. Tanks are deployed, artillery is set up, and ground forces dig in. Wherever Atlanteans and humans engage, the fighting is fierce, if somewhat one-sided.

The PCs might find themselves caught up in a war zone while trying to flee, or they might look to benefit from military protection after deciding there isn't anywhere to run to. Some of the PCs might even be called up to active duty—although hopefully that doesn't split up the group!

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The PCs see military convoys moving into the area; clearly, a battle is coming.

- Caught near an artillery blast, the PCs find themselves temporarily deafened.

- The PCs come across an overturned truck full of supplies, guns, and ammo.

- A wounded soldier begs the PCs for help, but the Atlanteans are closing in fast.

- As the PCs flee the scene of the battle, an Atlantean hover tank crests a hill in front of them.

- The PCs come across an Atlantean hover tank undergoing repairs. If they can sneak by or fight their way past the crew, they may be able to take it for a spin. After all, humanity's vehicle technology is based on theirs, so the controls should be familiar!

- Soldiers attempt to take the PCs into custody "for their own good."

THE HIGHWAY

EARLY in the invasion, highways become completely congested as panicking residents attempt to flee farther inland. This phenomenon only gets worse when the ice caps begin melting. PCs attempting to travel by highway are sure to find themselves stuck in endless traffic, becoming sitting ducks.

With so many frightened and angry motorists stuck together, the tension is palpable. Incidents of road rage are all too common, as are collisions. And with emergency services overwhelmed by the invasion, there is little help to be had.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- A street preacher moves down the rows of cars, ranting about the end of days.

- As traffic is at a standstill, Atlantean plasma bombardments begin raining down on the idling cars.

- An angry motorist tries to pick a fight with the PCs.

- An Atlantean hover tank zooms down the highway, passing over cars when necessary. It seems to be intent on reaching its destination, as long as no one does anything to get the crew's attention.

- A military convoy comes down the road, forcing cars out of the way or even becoming stuck with the rest of them.

- The PCs see a convenience store off the highway being looted. It might be their only chance at supplies for miles.

- As reports of rising sea levels come in, motorists panic further, even attempting to ram each other out of the way.

ATLANTEAN BATTLESHIP

Not merely vehicles, the fearsome Atlantean battle-ships represent entire adventure locations—or cataclysmic events—in their own right. These huge ships bear a striking resemblance to human-built navy vessels of the mid- to late twentieth century, but they are encased in glasslike domes and bristling with much more potent weaponry.

Crews of scores of Atlanteans keep these ships running and handle the various guns and cannons. Many battleships house additional, smaller attack craft, which can be deployed as the situation warrants. A single Atlantean battleship can be more than a match for many times its number in human naval craft.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- When the situation couldn't get much worse, an Atlantean battleship rises out of the water nearby, guns charging up.

- The half-drowned PCs are fished out of the sea and brought aboard an Atlantean battleship, but why?

- The battleship's hull opens to release hover tanks, providing a way aboard for anyone brave or foolhardy enough to attempt to sabotage the ship.

- The Navy begins a concentrated bombing campaign against the ship, which might even be enough to sink it. Are the PCs still aboard?

- An Atlantean battleship bears down on a civilian boat. Is there anything the PCs can do without sacrificing themselves?

- An Atlantean battleship provides the only stable surface above the water within reach of the PCs.

- The PCs witness a weakness in the Atlantean battleships. Now, they have to survive long enough to get the information to someone who can do something with it.

ATLANTEAN BEACHHEAD

In order to support their invasion, the Atlanteans establish beachheads along all of the US coasts. The beachheads resemble those of World War II in their use of sandbags and gun nests (for beam guns). However, near the more antiquated elements are high-tech Atlantean structures of alloy and glass. These domed barracks and forward bases provide places for the Atlanteans to plan and prepare for coming battles, while remaining largely protected from counterattack by emplaced force field generators. Alongside the temporary structures, hover tanks and other vehicles come and go from the water, bringing supplies and fresh troops.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- Under fierce counterassault, the Atlanteans just need to hold out until the rising sea level floods the area and secures their victory.

- If someone could deactivate the force field protecting the beachhead, it would be vulnerable to US military attack.

- The PCs are captured by Atlanteans and brought to a beach command post, where their fate will be decided.

- The PCs come across the Atlanteans' weapon storage at the beachhead. Conveniently, the weapons' trigger mechanisms are just like those of human-made guns.

- Friends or family of the PCs have been captured and are being held at a beachhead.

- After rising sea levels flood the coasts, the Atlanteans establish new beachheads farther in, possibly near the PCs.

- A sympathetic Atlantean soldier wants to help the PCs get to safety, but there may be communication difficulties...

FLOODING CITIES

THERE are few sights more horrifying than an entire city flooding beneath massive waves. Obviously, the PCs don't want to be caught up in such an event, but it happens so fast once the Atlanteans begin melting the ice caps that they might not have a choice. Escaping, of course, is priority one.

As gargantuan tidal waves batter buildings and even bring them down, panicking motorists and pedestrians frantically try to outrun the floodwaters, only to be swept away. Some people try to take refuge in the upper levels of buildings, but they often end up trapped, as there is no telling how high the waters may rise. The waters come in fast and high, flooding entire cities within minutes.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- Without warning, the PCs see a massive wave coming in toward their location.

- Someone screams for help as the floodwaters drag them under, but what can the PCs do?

- Even as the floodwaters drown the city, Atlantean attack craft ride the waves and fire on military and civilian targets.

- The PCs get stuck in traffic, and the floodwaters are coming in fast.

- The building the PCs are in begins to crack and buckle as floodwaters slam into it and batter it with cars and debris.

- In the aftermath of the flooding, the PCs sight a rescue chopper overhead. Can they get its attention and escape in it before Atlanteans shoot it down?

- As the floodwaters come in, panicking people turn against each other in a bid for safety and escape.

TO THE HIGH GROUND

AS the coasts flood, the first priority for anyone who hopes to survive is to reach the high ground. This might simply mean getting farther inland, but in many places, the water is rising faster than people can hope to travel. Be it a hilltop, mountainside, or plateau, high ground might be the only hope for survival. Tall buildings may seem to offer some protection, but the violent waves could bring them down at any minute, and the weapons of the Atlanteans certainly can, if put to that purpose.

The PCs might be on their own when it comes to reaching high ground, or they might be able to rely on others for assistance. They could even be in a position to assist others—or they might have to make hard decisions about allocating the available space.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The PCs must choose between helping others and getting themselves to high ground in time.

- The PCs need rope or climbing equipment in order to scale the rest of way to high ground, and they need it fast.

- Reaching high ground was great at the time, but now the PCs are stranded.

- Someone slips and falls into the roiling waters below.

- As the waters continue to rise, it looks like the PCs' chosen spot might not be high enough.

- The PCs see a flare, fire, or smoke coming from another area of high ground not too far off. Is it a cry for help, a warning, or something else?

ATLANTEAN SOLDIER

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

**Features:** ++Atlantean Tech, +Military Training, +/–Aquatic.
Equipment: Atlantean plasma rifle (1 negative die, +5 damage), sealed combat suit (+2 physical resistance).

HUMAN ALLIANCE SOLDIER

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

Features: +Military Training, +Multilingual, –By the Book.
Equipment: Beretta M9 (1 positive die, +3 damage), M16A4 rifle (1 negative die, +5 damage), bulletproof vest (+1 physical resistance), 4 extra magazines, MREs, pack of cigarettes.

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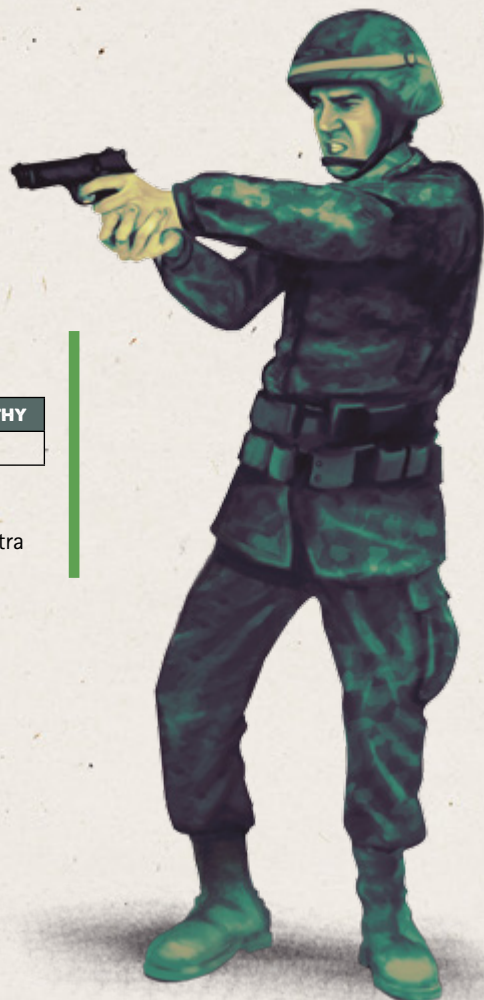
ATLANTEAN HOVER BIKE

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

Features: +Atlantean Tech, +Hover, +/−Open-Topped, +/−Vehicle.

Equipment: Sealed sidecar, mechanical chassis (+2 physical resistance).

Energy Shielded: While its shield is active, an Atlantean hover bike ignores all attacks made by weapons with a damage modifier of +3 or less.

Mobility: As long as an Atlantean hover bike has room to maneuver freely, it adds 1 negative die to attacks made against it.

Piloted: This vehicle must be operated by a single pilot (see the **Pilots and Vehicles** sidebar on page 36).

Vehicle: An Atlantean hover bike is a machine and does not suffer physical traumas related to biological injury, disease, dismemberment, or infirmity.

ATLANTEAN HOVER TANK

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

Features: +Atlantean Tech, +Hoverer, −Large, +/−Vehicle.

Equipment: Plasma cannon (1 negative die, +7 damage), heavy armored plating (+4 physical resistance).

Energy Shielded: While its shield is active, an Atlantean hover tank ignores all attacks made by weapons with a damage modifier of +5 or less.

Piloted: This vehicle must be operated by a single pilot (see the **Pilots and Vehicles** sidebar on page 36).

Vehicle: An Atlantean hover tank is a machine and does not suffer physical traumas related to biological injury, disease, dismemberment, or infirmity.

RISING TIDES

RISING TIDES

From myth to conqueror: Atlantis changed the world. The face of the planet is different now—a lot more blue. When they first attacked, we were scared, but now...I think we're more angry. They not only took our world from us, they took the land away. Now, we're fighting back. Those same scientists who had ignored the evidence of Atlantis for so long might have made up for their mistake. They've figured out how to harness the Atlanteans' technology and turn it against them. We might just stand a chance, after all. But we'll have to get used to the water either way.

WATER WORLD

Despite their numerous victories and the flooding of the Earth's surface, the Atlanteans have not defeated humanity. The US and other countries are in ruins, their governments functioning on emergency powers and in the most unusual of situations, but they are still hanging on. Sometimes on orders from the top, sometimes independently and operating only on anger, military forces, joined by civilian militias, continue to fight back against the Atlanteans.

Due to breakthroughs from reverse-engineering Atlantean technology, humanity finally has the tools it needs to wage war against the Atlanteans on their own turf. With advanced subs and alien tech-enhanced tanks and ships, humans attack the Atlanteans' underwater cities. Perhaps, with some luck, Atlantis will once again be nothing more than a myth.

The Atlanteans succeeded in flooding the world; humanity couldn't stop them. Now, the surviving population—and it is greatly reduced—clings to life on areas of high ground and on flotillas of civilian ships and boats. It's a tough existence, and people struggle to survive. Fresh water, in particular, is in short supply, and it's not unheard of for violent conflicts to erupt over possession of this valuable resource. And even some countries—or what's left of them—have even endorsed such violence. Overall, fortunately, the nations of the world realize the enemy is still the Atlanteans.

Countless human cities are now watery graveyards beneath the tranquil surface of the world-spanning ocean. Many people go months without seeing dry land, and some haven't seen it at all in the almost three years since the great flood. Others struggle for survival within huge crowds packed into the small remaining areas of land. High-altitude locales that once supported small rural populations, from the Appalachians to the Himalayas, are now overcrowded with refugees who compete with the original inhabitants for resources.

The Atlanteans continue to wage war on humanity as their subs and battleships patrol all their newfound territory. Throughout the years, Earth's militaries have been pushed back and forced into hiding. Navies launch hit-and-run strikes when Atlantean forces are spotted, withdrawing again before they can be destroyed. The ceaseless fighting has left what few cities exist above water in ruins, and the Earth's population—that which hasn't been drowned—vastly depleted.

Battles are now, of course, primarily fought with naval vehicles and aircraft. Despite being outmatched, humanity has been forced to adapt its methods to meet the Atlanteans on their terms. In addition to the remaining forces of the world's navies and air forces, many civilian boats and ships have been retrofitted with weapons in order to join in the fight or to protect the flotillas of refugees.

NOWHERE TO RUN

Less than twenty percent of the Earth's former dry land is still above water. Despite the massive casualties suffered in the war and in the flooding, enough people have survived that they are overcrowded in the remaining dry areas. There is truly nowhere left to run from the Atlanteans. Human military forces worldwide try to protect the remaining governments and civilian populations, but when they are unable to—which is regretfully often thanks to the Atlanteans' long-range artillery—the death toll is immense. Each year, the population shrinks noticeably—but, hey, at least that leaves a little more room for the survivors.

With fresh water in high demand and short supply, countries with considerable desalinization infrastructure, such as the United Arab Emirates, have a definite advantage. Most of the world's freshwater sources have been tainted and are commingled with ocean water, leaving desalinization as one of the few remaining sources of fresh water. Desalinization equipment that hasn't been destroyed by the Atlanteans is put to overtime use. Countries with the best inventories of equipment have a strong bargaining position in international relations. They are also prime targets for thieves and pirates, and their control over such an essential as fresh water can lead to political strife.

Ironically, humanity's mistreatment of the environment, which so angered the Atlanteans in the first place, provides certain advantages that aid its survival. Several massive patches of floating garbage in the Pacific Ocean serve as artificial islands ready for habitation. Although not the most pleasant of accommodations, they are preferable to drowning. Many desperate refugees have been relocated to these islands of buoyant, largely plastic trash.

Their former headquarters underwater, the United Nations and the United States government have moved operations to Lebanon, Kansas. The city was chosen for its proximity to the geographic center of the former continental United States. Not only does it provide a strategically defensible position as far as possible from the waterfront battle lines, but it holds a certain symbolic significance as well.

FIGHTING WATER WITH WATER

Fortunately, a turning point has come, and maybe—just maybe—humanity can survive and rebuild from the waterlogged wreckage.

In air-sealed laboratories and on board naval vessels, scientists from around the world have spent the last few years studying the Atlanteans' advanced technology, and it has paid off. Although many of the Atlanteans' secrets are still little understood, if at all, these scientists have worked together to crack enough of the Atlanteans' tech to give humanity an edge. Weapons and vehicles have been retrofitted with newly built, reverse-engineered technology and with parts scavenged from wrecked Atlantean craft. Tanks, jets, helicopters, ships, and subs all benefit from tech that includes energy weapons, force fields, and reinforced hulls capable of surviving the crushing depths of the ocean. These technological wonders are known as "Atlantech."

So far, the deployment of these Atlantech vehicles and weapons has been primarily defensive, focused on the stationing of ships and subs around the remaining areas of dry land. Now, the ragtag forces of humanity are bringing the fight to the Atlanteans. Enough subs have been built or retrofitted that the remaining NATO and UN commands may have the ability to strike back effectively. These organizations are ready to give the attack order against the Atlanteans' undersea cities. While battleships and air forces contend with Atlantean forces on the surface, subs will dive and launch a full-scale assault on the cities of Atlantis themselves. Human forces are still weakened, and it's a desperate move. Every day, volunteers join the armed forces or the militias, eager to strike back, but it still might not be enough.

There's more, however. In order for the human race to rebuild and repopulate, it has to adapt to the changed environment. And that means living on—or under—the water. For this reason, some of the counterattacking forces have been ordered to take the Atlantean cities intact. This is both so humans can live in them and can learn from them in order to construct their own sea-cities. To this end, specially modified subs will carry complements of troops in diving suits. The hope is that if they can get in and secure the domes, they can begin pumping out the water, weakening the Atlanteans' position while strengthening humanity's.

ATLANTIS, ITSELF

The Atlantean cities and fortresses consist of numerous interconnected, domed habitations varying in size and shape. Of course, these domes aren't meant to keep the seawater out, but merely to keep the wildlife at bay. Within the domes are open park areas, wide boulevards—everything one might expect from a grand city. If the water can somehow be pumped out and replaced with air, then the domed habitations just might make adequate replacements for the human cities lost to the Atlanteans.

One way the Atlantean cities are different from human cities is in their use of vertical space. Atlanteans are, of course, great swimmers, and can traverse vertically just as easily as move along the ocean floor. Consequently, entrances to buildings are present at every level. In some cases, these are connected by tunnels that exist more to keep travelers on course than to provide a structure to walk on. Still, with some modification, they can provide a way for humans to get around.

The biggest challenge in liberating these underwater cities might come from the energy shields used to defend the domes. Any plan to conquer one of these cities needs to account for this, and infiltrating the city in order to shut down the force field is likely the first step of the plan. To prepare, the UN or NATO might send advance scouting parties to reconnoiter.

ABOARD A BATTLESHIP

In the postdiluvian world, the line between civilian and military is not as clear as it once was. PCs might find themselves on a battleship due to a new or continuing naval career, to carry out a rescue mission, because of some expertise they can offer, or as part of their duties in a citizen militia. Regardless of the circumstances, one thing is for certain: conditions on a battleship are never easy.

Depending on when the PCs climb aboard, they might be on an ordinary battleship or one retrofitted with advanced alien technology. In the latter case, the battleship might feature enhanced energy weapons, a protective force field, or even the ability to submerge entirely, like the Atlantean battleships.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The battleship takes a sudden barrage from hidden Atlantean attackers. Do the PCs try to help, or jump overboard and hope for the best?

- The battleship is testing some newly developed Atlantean-tech weaponry. If something goes wrong, the powerful energies involved could be as dangerous for the crew as for the enemy.

- In the dark of night, Atlantean commandos climb aboard the ship.

- An Atlantean sub attacks from beneath the waves.

- After losing radio contact with headquarters, the crew grows paranoid.

- Systems aboard the ship begin to fail, and sabotage is suspected.

- The ship receives an important mission to capture an Atlantean for interrogation.

DEEP SEA SIEGE

WITHIN AN ATLANTEAN FORTRESS

HAVING evened the odds through reverse-engineering Atlantean technology, the world's remaining naval forces are able to finally go on the offensive and take the fight to the Atlanteans. Squadrons of subs, many outfitted with alien devices, launch coordinated assaults on Atlantean cities and fortresses around the globe, hoping to incapacitate them before the Atlanteans can regroup.

Obviously, the most likely reason for the PCs to be involved in such a siege is because they are naval personnel, even if they weren't before the apocalypse. The line between civilian and solider is blurry in these harsh times, and many militia members are enlisted to help fight even if they were not soldiers before the apocolypse.

Regardless of the circumstances, a deep sea siege is a chaotic and frightening event. Torpedoes and plasma bolts detonate against force fields and subs' hulls, as glass domes fracture and Atlantean civilians are crushed by falling architecture.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☺ High-tech boarding torpedoes allow subs to quickly get soldiers inside the Atlantean domes.

- ☺ Volunteers are needed to infiltrate the city and bring down the force field protecting it.

- ☺ In the chaos, wires get crossed or orders misunderstood; the bombardment continues after the PCs are inside the dome, threatening to crush them under the weight of the ocean.

- ☺ An Atlantean sub of heretofore unseen proportions appears to defend the city.

- ☺ The PCs see the suffering of the Atlantean civilians. Even if they want to help, is there anything they can do?

- ☺ The Atlanteans counted on the reverse-engineering of their technology and developed an electromagnetic pulse (EMP) capable of shutting down all of humanity's advanced systems.

DEPENDING on whether it still constitutes hostile territory, an Atlantean fortress may or may not be a place the PCs want to be. The PCs might be part of an advance scouting group sent to infiltrate a fortress, or they might be prisoners. They may even be surveying their new home after human navies triumph over the Atlanteans.

Atlantean fortresses are similar to their cities, but as one might expect, they are much more secure. The sheer scope of the fortresses shows that the Atlanteans have long expected war, although whether they thought humans would be the aggressors, or even feared the return of ancient enemies, is unclear.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☺ The PCs are taken prisoner by the Atlanteans and, possibly mistaken for others, brought to a fortress for interrogation.

- ☺ Equipped with diving suits and other basic equipment, the PCs are asked to infiltrate a fortress and retrieve valuable information, or even to sabotage the fortress in advance of a coming attack.

- ☺ From observations and interactions, the PCs realize the Atlantean people aren't all that different from humans.

- ☺ Navy intelligence discovers that the Atlanteans are in the process of constructing new fortresses on what used to be US soil. This has to stop.

- ☺ While within the fortress or en route, the PCs start to run low on oxygen.

- ☺ A sympathetic Atlantean tries to help the PCs escape, but do they trust it?

- ☺ The PCs are asked, or possibly conscripted, to help in the running of a fortress after it is taken from the Atlanteans.

- ☺ After successfully taking a fortress, humans must prepare for the coming counterattack.

ATLANTECH SUBMARINE

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

Features: +Reverse-Engineered Atlantean Tech, +Submersible, +Sonar Array, −Pressure Sealed, +/−Titanic, +/−Vehicle.

Equipment: Atlantech torpedos (2 positive dice, +7 damage), submersible hull (+4 physical resistance).

Crewed: This vehicle must be operated by a crew of dozens of characters (see the **Pilots and Vehicles** sidebar on page 36).

Vehicle: An Atlantech submarine is a machine and does not suffer physical traumas related to biological injury, disease, dismemberment, or infirmity.

ATLANTEAN FORTRESS GUARD

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

Features: ++Atlantean Tech, +Disciplined, +Zealous, +/−Aquatic.

Equipment: Atlantean plasma rifle (1 negative die, +5 damage), sealed power armor (+3 physical resistance).

ATLANTECH MINI-SUB

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
3	4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Features: ++Advanced Sonar Suite, +Reverse-Engineered Atlantean Tech, +Submersible, +Pressure Sealed, +/−Vehicle.

Equipment: 4 Atlantech torpedoes (2 positive dice, +7 damage), mini-submersible hull (+3 physical resistance).

Crewed: This vehicle must be operated by a crew of two or three characters (see the **Pilots and Vehicles** sidebar on page 36).

Vehicle: An Atlantech submarine is a machine and does not suffer physical traumas related to biological injury, disease, dismemberment, or infirmity.
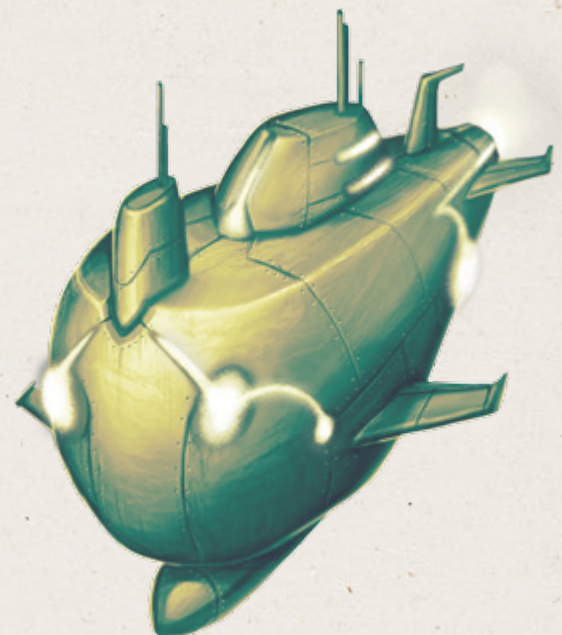
Skitter

APOCALYPSE

Millions of them, crawling over everything. Six legs, twitching antennae, clacking mandibles. It's enough to give you the creeps, if it weren't already flat-out horrifying. Ants, bigger than people, destroying everything, digging their tunnels, piling their mounds of earth until they blot out the sun. No one knows where they came from. I mean, aside from the obvious: space. How giant ants get from one planet to another...well, that's not entirely clear either. But those strange meteors came, and the ants emerged, immediately beginning their industrious labors.

They don't seem to be intelligent; there's no way to communicate with them. They just act like...well, ants. What we do know is that there are millions of them, too many to kill them all. And they are hungry: hungry for resources and food—including people. I only hope the people they drag down into their hives get a quick death.

SKITTER presents the Player Characters (and the rest of humanity) with an enemy at once all too familiar and utterly alien. The Myrmidons, gigantic ants larger than humans, have traveled across the vastness of space in their mound-like hive ships to reach a planet rich in resources to consume: Earth. These alien entities not only look like the minuscule ants so familiar on Earth, they act like them too—which is pretty terrifying at their scale. The innumerable creatures scavenge any available resources, just like common ants. But at their size, this means cutting down forests, consuming herds of livestock, and abducting the populations of entire towns. Against the overwhelming and intractable threat, there is little humanity can do except slow the advance. The arrival of such an unprecedented invasive species truly threatens the end of human civilization.

The Player Characters, like the rest of humanity, must somehow survive against the overwhelming swarm and avoid becoming ant food, paste to hold up a hive wall, or something equally unpleasant. The Myrmidons are not clever opponents, but they are tenacious and seemingly endless. The PCs are, of course, unlucky enough to live very close to the site of a hive ship crash, exposing them to the ants quickly. Running might seem like a good idea at first...but the ants are everywhere.

THE EXPERIENCE

The end of Earth as we know it begins with a meteor shower. Well, maybe more like a meteor storm. Hundreds of projectiles rain down over the course of days, landing around the globe. The strange meteorites resemble nothing so much as giant termite mounds. From the tunnels riddling the strange, extraterrestrial rocks, huge ants emerge, soon dubbed "Myrmidons" by the media, after a passing comment by a military leader. The Myrmidons quickly set about excavating huge, labyrinthine tunnels beneath the surface, while foraging above it for resources. Which, unfortunately, includes just about everything. Including humans.

WHAT THE PLAYER CHARACTERS SEE

For weeks, astronomers have predicted a major meteor shower. It's expected to be such a spectacle that even major news outlets are covering it. It's possible the PCs know about the meteor shower, and they may even have plans to view it. It's just as possible that they have no idea what's coming. It all depends on what seems right for the players and what the GM thinks would be more fun.

Whether they are expecting it or not, the PCs quickly become aware that something strange is happening. A meteor lands in the PCs' town or just outside it. Whether it flattens part of downtown or lands in an empty field, it's close enough that the PCs see the streaking meteor, hear the crash, or even feel the ground tremble. If the PCs are particularly unlucky, multiple meteors land in their area.

Depending on how close to the PCs a hive ship meteor lands, the PCs' first impressions of the newly arrived menace might come firsthand or from the media or online. Although a meteor shower was expected, it was not anticipated that the huge rocks would reach the surface, especially not in populated areas. Consequently, it quickly becomes a major news story and trending topic on social media. The PCs might see video or images from crash sites either online or on TV.

If a meteor lands close to the PCs, they might decide to check it out themselves. For hours after the crash, though, the crater is too hot to approach. Still, from a distance, they can see it's an odd-looking hunk of rock, dozens of meters across and riddled with holes. It's possible nothing stirs visibly in the crater—and who would expect it to?—but it's also possible the PCs might glimpse movement within the wide tunnels riddling the meteor, or see rock debris tumbling out.

Soon, strange things begin happening in the area. People and animals disappear, houses collapse, sinkholes open up in the street. It's not long before the enormous ants are spotted. Initial reports are met with disbelief, but soon video footage goes viral online. If the PCs are some of the first to spot the aliens, they might have a lot of trouble convincing others to believe them. After all, it sounds preposterous.

The creatures are numerous, however, and their presence soon becomes impossible to ignore. Gaping pits appear in the ground or atop enormous mounds of dirt and concrete. Depending on how many meteors have landed in the area—and what the GM thinks would make for a better game given the size of the town and available resources—there may only be a single nest entrance at first, providing a focal point for events. However, eventually more pits appear as the aliens establish additional entrances or entirely new nests.

Their presence established, the ants further terrorize the population. Not that there is any malice: the creatures are just following their instincts. Unfortunately, their instincts result in widespread destruction, as the alien bugs harvest resources—and resources include the human population. In a rural area, entire herds of livestock or fields of crops vanish. Whole forests fall, their trees dragged back to nests in endless lines. In a city, chaos reigns and traffic comes to a stop as massive insects swarm through the streets in search of food. Buildings collapse as the ants burrow through their support structures. And wherever the PCs are, humans are a prime food source. The PCs are certain to witness hapless citizens being dragged away—in some cases alive—by the ravenous bugs.

As the situation grows ever more dire and the ants delve deeper, they trigger earthquakes. Massive fissures open in streets, yards, and fields as the surface collapses into the tunnels below, bringing down buildings and killing or trapping countless inhabitants. Such events are only minor setbacks for the ants, who quickly excavate new tunnels.

WHAT IS EVERYONE ELSE DOING?

Unsurprisingly, the arrival of enormous, human-eating ants is cause for considerable concern among both the authorities and the general populace. The true scale of the threat to the very survival of the human species, however, is not immediately apparent to most. Simply containing the rapidly increasing Myrmidon population is enough to worry about.

Even before the giant ants emerge, in some areas the destructive impacts of the meteors lead to panic, emergency declarations, and rioting. In populated areas, the crashes inflict great damage to property and taking many lives. Things only get worse as the Myrmidons appear in ever-increasing numbers. Many people react at first with disbelief; the idea of giant killer ants from outer space is just too much to comprehend. Even as video and photographic evidence appears, some people insist the whole thing is a big hoax, a publicity stunt for an upcoming movie, or even a bizarre terrorist attack.

Most people respond either by fortifying their homes or fleeing them. Many stock up on supplies, such as bread and milk (both of which the Myrmidons find delicious) and batteries. Hardware stores rapidly run out of insecticides of all types, and gun stores experience record sales. Unfortunately for those stocking up on foodstuffs, grocery stores are quite attractive to the Myrmidons. Supermarkets soon become scenes of horror, as giant ants rampage through the aisles, carrying off anything edible—including the customers and employees. Warehouses, factories, and even trucks are likewise targets, leading to food shortages on top of everything else.

The appearance of the Myrmidons leads to utter chaos in most places. Parades of giant ants carry hundreds of victims down into their nests, while police try desperately to halt them. Myrmidons prowl the cities, leaving trails of destruction. Sinkholes open in streets and even beneath homes, plunging cars and surprised residents right into Myrmidon tunnels. People panic, emergency responders frantically try to deal with the damage and injuries, and police gun down huge ants only for more to emerge from beneath the ground.

Unlike ants, humans are not biologically compelled to seamlessly cooperate. This is apparent in the confused response and coordination problems among local authorities (and national ones, for that matter), and it becomes even more clear as civilians turn on each other. People fight with increasing violence over supplies and access to locations of assumed safety. In many towns and cities, rioters add to the chaos. Meanwhile, the ants work together seamlessly for the good of their colony. (Hey, maybe these alien visitors do have something to teach humanity, after all.)

Those who crowd the streets and highways in an attempt to flee the chaos and destruction are soon disappointed. Over the following days, more Myrmidons land around the globe, while their initial colonies quickly expand.

The public and most scientists react differently to the Myrmidons, though scientists do express concern for the damage and loss of life the ants cause. The confirmation of extraterrestrial life—and complex, multicelled organisms at that—is a momentous scientific discovery. The fact that the alien creatures are so similar (to put it mildly) to one of the most populous species of planet Earth raises a whole host of scientific questions about evolution, the nature of the insects with which we share our planet, space travel, and even the origins of life on Earth. Many scientists vocally disagree with the politicians and military leaders calling for extermination, insisting that a small number of Myrmidons be preserved for controlled scientific study. While some radical fringe elements speak in favor of observing the aliens in the wild, most of the scientific community agree that they are a dangerous invasive species. Some specialists present terrifying projections addressing the Myrmidons' probable long-term effects on the planet.

Other people have more unusual responses to the Myrmidons. New cults devoted to welcoming "our new insect overlords" form, and a number of established cults amend their beliefs for the same purpose. Most of these cults quickly become ant food (or "receive the divine transformation," as one sect puts it).

WHAT CAN THE PLAYER CHARACTERS DO?

As innumerable swarms of giant ants rapidly infest the planet, even simple survival is a tricky proposition for the Player Characters. Finding a secure place to hole up or traveling to an area still free of the human-eating ants probably keeps them plenty busy.

The PCs' town is overrun with Myrmidons, and the alien insects are reproducing faster than the authorities can kill them off. The ants can eat through almost anything, and they are ravenous. This means that it is next to impossible for the PCs to find a shelter that will actually provide protection. The Myrmidons might even burrow below the PCs' refuge, making the floor drop out from beneath and landing the humans right into in a Myrmidon nest. If not, and the PCs are lucky, they will realize the ants are chewing through the walls of their shelter in time to escape—assuming the place isn't completely surrounded. Myrmidons have a tendency to swarm.

The Myrmidons' digging of tunnels throughout the area makes travel difficult. The huge ants swarm over highways, while their tunnels destabilize bridges and cause huge sinkholes to form in the middle of streets. Depending on their timing—and luck—PCs attempting to flee the area or meet up with friends and family might find their way blocked by demolished cars, swarms of giant ants, or even a huge mound of dirt and asphalt.

There is one place PCs can go for a temporary reprieve, at least. Ants are not generally known for a fondness for water, and the considerably heavier Myrmidons have an even harder time with the stuff. PCs near a lake, ocean, or river can find safety from the alien invaders, at least for a time. Of course, the PCs might not be the only ones with this idea, and boats could be in high demand. Even if the PCs own a boat, they might arrive at its slip to find it gone, or have to fight for it. Once they have a boat secured, the PCs might be confronted with other people pleading for a spot on it. While a boat can provide some level of security, eventually the PCs are going to run out of supplies. At that point, a return to shore may reveal that things are in even worse shape than when they left. With resources in, well, short supply, the PCs must compete with the Myrmidons and their fellow survivors for food, clean water, and other essentials.

Of course, simple survival isn't enough for some people. PCs might have more grandiose ideas of poisoning hives, assassinating queens, or otherwise striking a blow against the Myrmidons. Any such undertaking should be challenging and fraught with danger, but not impossible. However, even if the PCs should succeed in their attempt, it is a temporary reprieve at best, for the Myrmidon swarms are endless and everywhere. If the PCs clear out an entire nest, more aliens soon arrive to repopulate it.

THE TRUTH

The basic situation is clear: giant alien ants from beyond the solar system have arrived on Earth, and they are making themselves at home. Beyond that, questions about this most unusual situation abound. The full truth will probably never be known, and much of it isn't directly relevant to humanity's battle for survival, anyway.

BIG BUGS FROM BEYOND

The Myrmidons don't have a master plan. Some people think they're more than they appear, that they must be intelligent to have come all this way. They're not. In fact, they are exactly what they seem to be: giant ants. And they do what ants do—just, well, bigger.

As soon as the first hive ships crash into Earth, the Myrmidons set about doing what their instincts tell them to do: establish colonies and then increase their size and population. As one might expect, this endeavor takes a considerable amount of resources and space. The Myrmidons need enormous quantities of food to sustain their ever-increasing population as they relentlessly expand their tunnel networks. For these voracious creatures, sustenance includes everything from crops, to trees, to animals of all kinds—including humans.

The Myrmidons possess the same impressive strength-to-size ratio as ordinary Earth ants: they are able to lift many times their own weight. Of course, at their size, this means they can easily lift cars and even buses. Entire trailer parks are dragged away, disappearing into Myrmidon mounds, never to be seen again.

With their thick exoskeletons and simple, efficient biologies, the Myrmidons are also highly resistant to injury. A Myrmidon can lose limbs or be crushed or shot and still go about its work. Myrmidons can still be killed, of course. Guns are effective against Myrmidon workers, although it often takes many shots to down one, even when some of the shots enter its brain. Improvised weapons can also work in a pinch, as can running a worker down (although that isn't easy on the vehicle). Myrmidon warriors, however, are a different story. Bigger and stronger, warriors are also much more violent and will pursue perceived enemies over great distances. With their oversized mandibles, warriors can easily rip people apart and tear through concrete, steel, and more. Oh, and they're tougher, too. Warriors' carapaces are so strong as to be almost immune to small-arms fire.

The Myrmidons are perhaps the perfect superorganisms. Each creature works together with the others seamlessly for the good of the colony. With such cooperation and single-minded purpose, the ants quickly and efficiently increase the size of their colony. New queens eventually leave to found new hives. In this manner, they spread across whatever world they inhabit, dominating the environment. The parallel evolution of ants on another planet would seem to indicate that they, and not humans, are the superior life form.

A SLIGHT INFESTATION

When the meteors crash, they create deep craters and are initially too hot to approach. This allows the alien ants to begin digging out under their nests so they can debark without being seen. Perhaps if the threat had been anticipated, governments could have acted swiftly to eradicate the hive ships before the Myrmidons were able to land and establish an infestation. But how could anyone have expected giant ants in the space rocks?

Over the course of roughly twenty-four hours, hundreds of hive ships of varying sizes have crashed around the world. There is no intelligence steering these meteors, meaning their landing spots are without rhyme or reason. By sheer chance, some land near major centers of culture or government, but others land in remote areas. And with the Earth's surface being mostly water, it's no surprise that many hive ships land in seas and lakes. More Myrmidons drown during their landing than survive. Millions of giant ants struggle in the seas before sinking to their doom. But this is of little consequence, since it still leaves millions on the world's dry land.

In places where the Myrmidon hive ships successfully land, the entire surrounding area is soon devastated. Convoys of worker Myrmidons, guarded by warriors, emerge to search for organic resources. In rural areas, entire fields are stripped to the dirt and herds carried away amid the sounds of braying animals. In suburban and urban areas, grocery stores, restaurants, and warehouses are torn apart. Humans, too, are a prime source of food for the Myrmidons, which demolish neighborhoods to collect them. In cities, some people look for safety in the higher floors of apartment complexes and office buildings. Of course, the Myrmidons have no problem scaling sheer surfaces; these individuals can, at best, buy themselves some brief time.

The Myrmidons' powerful mandibles mean there is little that can halt their progress, or even slow it. They tunnel through asphalt and concrete as easily as through dirt, and they find sewer tunnels and subways to be convenient, ready-made nests. In many places, Myrmidons tunnel into basements or crawlspaces, only to erupt up through the floor to attack human victims within.

As the huge ants expand their nests and gather food and resources, they reproduce at an alarming rate. Each nest has one queen—or sometimes more—that can lay hundreds of eggs a day. Within days, these eggs progress into larvae and then fully grown Myrmidons. While extremely vulnerable in their larval stage, the hive young are located deep within the nest and protected by warriors, making them difficult targets.

THE INITIAL RESPONSE

Before any sort of coordinated response can be mounted, the Myrmidons set about establishing their nests and increasing their numbers. In the early days of the invasion, humans are put on the defensive, unable to deal with the problem at its source because they are so busy trying to survive the hundreds or thousands—and soon millions—of enormous ants terrorizing each community close to a hive ship crash.

Local authorities lack the firepower and equipment to do much more than try to protect citizens. Police forces that mobilize quickly enough are able to help stem the tide of Myrmidons somewhat, but taking down even a single worker ant is difficult. In addition, only SWAT teams have the weapons to deal with warrior Myrmidons. However, for each Myrmidon killed, one or more soon arrive to take its place.

Emergency services are likewise taxed. Although the Myrmidons prefer to carry their human victims down into their nests for consumption, those who manage to survive a Myrmidon attack due to the intervention of police or other civilians often bear vicious injuries from mandibles. In some places, these survivors don't survive much longer, as Myrmidons view hospitals as great sources of food that is pleasantly easy to catch.

Once local and state governments overcome their disbelief, they call up National Guard units. Although these forces are better equipped to fight the ants, the swarms still seem endless. Predicting the Myrmidons' movements is also difficult. Although the ants are clearly attracted to food, solitary searchers and worker convoys seem to travel in random directions in search of resources.

Although they lack a strategy against or even an understanding of the importance of police and military installations, the Myrmidons nonetheless attack them. Of course, the Myrmidons just view them as a source of food, the same as they do any other human population. Still, as hordes of giant ants emerge from beneath the floor inside police stations and military bases, the troops or officers inside are overwhelmed or forced to evacuate. This does not help the overall defense effort.

It doesn't take long before tunneling Myrmidons sever underground power lines, data cables, and pipes. Their tunneling wreaks devastation above as well, collapsing streets, knocking down power and telephone lines, and even causing earthquakes. Power, running water, and working communication options become increasingly difficult to find.

TIMELINE

As industrious as one might expect, the Myrmidons waste no time establishing their colonies and gathering resources.

0:00:00	The first hive ships crash, and by sheer chance, one of the crash sites is not far from the PCs.
1:09:00	Additional hive ships begin to crash, spreading around the world as the Earth rotates. Those landing in populated areas cause great damage to infrastructure, not to mention injuries and deaths.
3:24:00	The first Myrmidon sightings are reported. They are quickly discounted as hoaxes or hallucinations.
5:03:00	The first people go missing. Soon, entire groups, such as families or passenger-filled buses, are reported missing.
9:47:00	The first sinkhole opens up in a major roadway or populated area.
16:23:00	Two animal control workers are placed on administrative leave after claiming their vehicle was carried off by an ant the size of a horse.
21:39:00	Witnesses report movement within the meteor crater near the PCs' location.
DAY 2	The last of the hive ships crashes somewhere in the Australian Outback.
DAY 2	Myrmidons begin to appear in large numbers, indiscriminately attacking people and raiding foodstuffs.
DAY 2	Stores sell out of insecticides, and exterminators are bombarded with phone calls.
DAY 3	Exterminators volunteer to assist against the Myrmidons. Many enter Myrmidon nests, never to be seen again.
DAY 3	Scattered blackouts occur as Myrmidons sever underground cables and bring down power lines.
DAY 3	All available police are put on duty, with orders to shoot the giant ants on sight.
DAY 4	Entrances to Myrmidon nests begin to appear throughout the areas near crash sites.
DAY 4	Government agencies and private pest control companies employ a range of chemicals in an effort to poison the Myrmidons, using crop dusters and other distribution methods. The chemicals are mostly ineffective.
DAY 4	Numerous people fall ill or die from exposure to high quantities of insecticides.
DAY 4	The National Association of Entomologists issues a statement saying that insects of this size are an impossibility.
DAY 4	NASA issues a statement that the recent meteor activity might be tied to the arrival of the oversized ants.
DAY 4	The National Organization for Ufologists is at a loss for words.
DAY 5	The governor of the PCs' state declares a state of emergency.
DAY 5	The US National Guard deploys around meteor crash sites and known nest entrances, but no matter how many they kill, the ants continue emerging.
DAY 6	Someone refers to the giant ants as "Myrmidons" during a congressional hearing. The media adopts the term.
DAY 7	The Army deploys in major cities across the US. The Myrmidon threat is so widespread that many smaller towns and rural areas are left to fend for themselves.
DAY 8	Burrowing Myrmidons trigger earthquakes near the sites of the initial crashes.
DAY 9	Power, water, and telephone lines are all out throughout many parts of the PCs' state.
DAY 10	The US Department of Defense activates Project GLASS (Global Light Amplification Strategic System), a network of satellites that use lenses to focus the sun's rays into devastating heat beams. The weapons are highly effective against Myrmidons on the surface, but their inability to penetrate underground limit their overall impact.
DAY 11	Myrmidons are spotted upwards of 300 miles from the closest meteor crash site.
DAY 14	The White House is evacuated when Myrmidon tunnels are detected nearby.
DAY 22	NATO member states debate whether the provisions of the treaty apply to the current situation.
DAY 27	The United Nations Security Council convenes an emergency meeting, which is evacuated when Myrmidons begin scaling UN Headquarters.
DAY 32	Congress passes a nonbinding resolution recognizing the Myrmidons as "a grave threat to the nation."
DAY 55	The Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool drains abruptly when Myrmidons accidentally tunnel into it. At least it drowns a few in the process.
DAY 97	A nuclear power plants suffers a meltdown after Myrmidons tunnel into it, resulting in radioactive giant alien ants.
DAY 103	The US federal government declares a state of emergency.
DAY 221	Myrmidons tunnel into the Pentagon, throwing the nation's defenses into disarray.
DAY 348	Myrmidon nests are present in almost every town and city in the US.
DAY 421	A young scientist leads the breakthrough to successfully synthesize Myrmidon pheromones.

Neighborhood

Neighborhoods mean people, and that means hungry Myrmidons. Many neighborhoods evacuate early in the invasion, but some people stay behind out of sheer stubbornness or because they don't grasp the severity of the situation. Then again, nowhere is really safe, so they might have a point. Some neighborhoods are so close to crash sites that they have little chance to evacuate; residents' first inkling of a problem might be seeing a Myrmidon batter down the door—or chew through the wall.

The PCs, of course, likely start in one of their own neighborhoods. They might also travel to a neighborhood to save family or friends, or simply pass through one during their own escape.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The PCs are in a home or on the street when Myrmidons suddenly swarm the neighborhood from multiple directions, trapping them.

- The PCs have difficulty convincing a friend or loved one that evacuation is the best course of action.

- A single Myrmidon crawls around outside the house the PCs are in. Is it better to stay hidden or attack it?

- A police cruiser or military Humvee drives slowly down the street, ordering people to remain indoors.

- The PCs come across a seemingly abandoned neighborhood with damage indicative of a Myrmidon attack. If the ants have already passed through, perhaps it's safe to stay there?

- Scratching, scraping noises can be heard underneath the house or street.

- A neighbor's misguided attempt to fend off the Myrmidons results in a house fire.

- Before the PCs can leave, Myrmidons flip their car or cars over.

- Myrmidons are carrying off the neighbors. Do the PCs do something, or ignore their cries for help?

Interstate

Understandably, the first instinct for many people when their area is attacked by huge, human-eating ants is to flee. Unfortunately, this leads to congested highways, collisions, and complete traffic halts, making escape impossible and leaving motorists vulnerable.

The PCs might decide to take the interstate out of town in the interests of their own survival. Depending on their timing, they might encounter merely frustratingly slow traffic or a scene of complete devastation.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- Massive congestion has brought traffic to a standstill, leaving the PCs and other motorists in a bad position when they see a Myrmidon convoy rampaging through the vehicles, heading straight toward them.

- Traffic is actually moving along pretty nicely, right up until a Myrmidon skitters in front of the PCs or a car ahead of them, leading to a collision and a potential pileup.

- A truck laden with soda, maple syrup, or some other sugary treat overturns, spilling its contents all over the highway. This can't be good...

- A bridge has collapsed into a Myrmidon tunnel.

- Stalled traffic is blocking military reinforcements, who might resort to drastic measures to get through.

- The entrance to a Myrmidon nest has opened up right in the middle of the interstate.

- The PCs' way is blocked by wrecked cars, but they know there are Myrmidons back the way they came from.

- A hitchhiker or group of people on the roadside frantically waves down the PCs. Do they simply want a ride, or are their intentions more nefarious?

FARM

Farms are primary targets for Myrmidons with nests in rural areas. Crops and livestock make for concentrated food supplies that attract the giant ants. Some farmers escape while the Myrmidons are busy collecting their crops and animals, while others desperately try to defend their land and livelihood. Such attempts are doomed to failure, as once the Myrmidons discover a good food source, they don't stop coming until it is stripped bare.

PCs might visit a farm while fleeing the chaos of the city or because they live in a rural area. In either case, a farm is a dangerous place to be: if the ants haven't found it yet, they soon will.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

☻ The PCs pass by an eerily abandoned farm, completely stripped of crops and animals. It might be worth checking for supplies or survivors.

☻ The PCs come across a farmer desperately trying to drive off a group of Myrmidons. If the PCs help, the farmer offers them a place to stay, but the ants soon return in greater numbers.

☻ A cacophony of mooing, audible from some way off, is the first sign that the PCs' way is blocked by a convoy of Myrmidons carrying cows and other animals.

☻ A crop duster at a nearby farm offers a way to escape the Myrmidon swarms.

☻ The Myrmidons have left one farm's crops mysteriously untouched, but why?

☻ A farm might have enough insecticide to be useful.

☻ As surrounding roads are all blocked or collapsed, horses might be a better way to get around—if they haven't been eaten and their owner can be convinced.

HIVE SHIP CRASH SITE

Hive ships continue to come crashing down for hours after the initial impact. Depending on the surroundings, a crash might go unnoticed, or it might inflict terrible destruction and loss of life. The crash of a hive ship is a terrifying sight, shaking the ground, sending plumes of dirt high into the air, and hurtling debris hundreds of feet. It might bring buildings toppling down, collapse bridges, or flatten cars or homes. It is generally bad news for anyone in the vicinity. For hours afterward, the ship and its crater are dangerously hot, but Myrmidons soon emerge to forage for food.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

☻ If the PCs act quickly enough (or get someone else to), perhaps something can be done about the hive ship before its occupants establish a nest.

☻ While the PCs are stuck in traffic or holed up somewhere, a hive ship comes into view headed right for them, forcing them to abandon their vehicle or shelter.

☻ The PCs arrive at their destination, only to find a fresh crater in its place.

☻ The PCs find themselves in the midst of a shower of hive ships, with seemingly nowhere to run as the massive rocks crash all around them.

☻ The shockwave from a hive ship crash starts a chain reaction of toppling buildings.

☻ Smaller bits break off of a ship during its descent, showering the surrounding area. The pieces have enough mass and velocity to cause severe damage to vehicles and even buildings.

☻ A collision with an airliner destroys a hive ship, raining debris and Myrmidons down on the unfortunate people below.

ENTRANCE TO THE HIVE

A Myrmidon hive is probably the last place the PCs want to be, but that doesn't mean they won't stumble upon one by accident or enter one in desperation. The entrance could take the form of a massive hole in the ground or atop a towering mound of dirt, and the larger the above-ground mound entrance, the more extensive the subterranean labyrinth beneath is likely to be. Myrmidons can tunnel through just about everything, so a hive entrance might be found almost anywhere, from an isolated field, to the center of downtown, to the interior of a stadium, to the grounds of a military base.

Most of the time, a Myrmidon hive is busy with alien ants coming and going, but it could instead be eerily still. The surrounding area is likely devoid of life unless the hive entrance has only recently opened.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☻ The PCs arrive at what they anticipate to be a safe place, or the home of a friend, only to find a gaping hive entrance.

- ☻ Innocent people, maybe even ones the PCs know, are being carried into the nest. Any attempts to save them put the PCs in danger and could arouse the ire of the entire hive.

- ☻ The entrance is dozens of feet deep, maybe more. Getting inside requires some serious climbing gear.

- ☻ The PCs arrive just in time to see a winged queen emerge from the hive. If they can follow it or kill it, they can prevent the creation of an entire new colony.

- ☻ The PCs need to get into the hive, but the military has cordoned off the area and isn't letting anyone past.

INSIDE THE HIVE

The interior of a Myrmidon hive is really not somewhere the PCs want to be. Still, they might find themselves there against their will, or possibly even because of their own brave—or more likely foolhardy—actions. Unsurprisingly, the inside of a hive is a hostile place for humans. It is crawling with tens of thousands of Myrmidons or more, and it might seem utterly suicidal to be there. Myrmidons aren't smart, however, and tend to go about their duties with complete dedication and a certain amount of obliviousness. Clever and cautious PCs might be able to move about without coming under attack.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☻ In order to move around inside the hive undisturbed, the PCs need to disguise their scent. Perhaps coating themselves with Myrmidon guts would work?

- ☻ A friend or loved one of the PCs has been taken inside the hive. Since many of the Myrmidons' victims are taken alive, perhaps there is hope to rescue them.

- ☻ Incapacitated during a Myrmidon attack, the PCs awaken inside the hive. Finding a way out is no simple feat.

- ☻ Taking on an entire hive seems impossible, but perhaps killing the queen would have an effect.

- ☻ A tunnel opens into a chamber filled with thousands of huge larvae.

- ☻ The Myrmidons do a pretty good job excavating their hives, but that doesn't mean a tunnel collapse is impossible. Myrmidons might barely notice if they lose a few hundred in a cave-in, but it could be pretty bad for the PCs.

- ☻ While retracing their steps, the PCs find their path blocked or become hopelessly lost within the hive.

MYRMIDON QUEEN

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

Features: +Climber, +(Dis)proportionate Strength, +Gross, +Powerful Pheromones, −Large, −Ponderous.

Equipment: Mandibles (2 positive dice, +3 damage), enormous egg sack.

Powerful Pheromones: While within 10 miles of a Myrmidon queen, Myrmidon warrior and drones use the queen's mental characteristics instead of their own.

MYRMIDON WARRIOR

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

Features: +Bred to Kill, +Climber, +Gross, +(Dis)proportionate Strength, −Large −Single-Minded, −Controlled by Pheromones.

Equipment: Crushing mandibles (2 positive dice, +4 damage), armored chitin (+2 physical resistance).

MYRMIDON DRONE

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

Features: +Climber, +Gross, +(Dis)proportionate Strength, −Single-Minded, −Controlled by Pheromones.

Equipment: Mandibles (2 positive, +3 damage).

COP

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

Features: +Paramilitary Training, +Voice of Authority, –Hates Bugs, –Chip on Shoulder.

Equipment: Night stick (+1 damage), taser (1 negative die, +3 damage), GLOCK 27 (1 positive die, +3 damage), bulletproof vest (+1 physical resistance), aviator shades, radio, keys to a patrol car, handcuffs.

M1A1 ABRAMS TANK

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

Features: +Ballistic Range-finder Computer, +Treaded, –Large, +/–Vehicle.

Equipment: 120mm M256 smoothbore gun (1 negative die, +7 damage), Burlington composite armor (+4 physical resistance).

Crewed: This vehicle must be operated by a crew of four characters (see the **Pilots and Vehicles** sidebar on page 36).

Vehicle: An M1A1 Abrams tank is a machine and does not suffer physical traumas related to biological injury, disease, dismemberment, or infirmity.

SKITTER

Skitter

POST-APOCALYPSE

For a while there, it looked like the human race was doomed. Some people still say it is, that all we've done is bought a little time. Fighting off the Myrmidons was only slowing them down, and not by much, either. The military just couldn't kill them fast enough, no matter what weapons it used. The fact that the ants were either underground or in populated areas sure didn't help. Things changed after we figured out how to make the pheromones, though. We don't have to worry constantly about being eaten by giant ants, as long as we stick to the safe zones. Well, most of us don't, anyway. And I guess a lot of people still worry. After all, there are the occasional...accidents.

Human civilization was not destroyed by the alien insect invasion, but it was changed forever. Entire nations have collapsed, or combined, or simply lost contact with the rest of the world. The breakthrough that saved the human species came when scientists successfully synthesized the pheromones Myrmidons use to communicate. These pheromones allow humans to influence Myrmidon behavior, to an extent. Although some highly useful pheromones have been developed, a lot of Myrmidon communication is still a mystery. What has been developed, though, has been enough to stop them from destroying civilization completely. At least for now.

Ant World

Things were looking pretty dire, when US scientists finally succeeded in replicating the Myrmidon pheromones. Of course, the situation didn't improve immediately. It took some time to produce the pheromones in sufficient quantities and to distribute them. Soon, though, military bases and government installations were protected, and the United States shared the technology with its allies. Still, there isn't enough to protect every person and population center. The pheromones are carefully rationed, with areas of strategic importance and with larger populations given preference.

By the time the pheromones were in production, the Myrmidons had effectively conquered the world. Not that they care about conquest in the sense humans do. But billions of ants in thousands of colonies all over the world sure seems like conquest. The human population was decimated. Some countries, particularly those with less capable militaries, were all but wiped out. The population of the United States is a fraction of what it was. Many towns and cities are still abandoned ruins, and they probably always will be. The surviving population must stick to federally controlled safe zones or eke out a desperate living in Myrmidon territory.

Even with the advantages offered by the pheromones, the military can't kill the Myrmidons fast enough to reduce their overall population. And despite the military's claims to the contrary, that population is still growing. It might not be evident to those living in the safe zones and compounds, but out in the Myrmidon-controlled majority of the country, their numbers swell unimpeded. If the pheromones ever stop working, it might really be the end of humanity.

The Pheromones

To date, scientists have synthesized three pheromones that are effective against the Myrmidons. (Some lesser pheromones have been created, but the government has yet to find a use for pheromones that induce Myrmidon mating.) Research to develop additional types continues in government-run labs. The pheromones deliver the following messages to Myrmidons.

Danger! Keep Out!: Myrmidons use this pheromone to mark dangerous areas that lack sufficient resources to make the risk of danger worthwhile. The government uses this pheromone on the boundaries of safe zones and federal installations. The pheromone must be replaced regularly to ensure it remains effective, so even with factories working around the clock to produce it, there isn't enough to protect entire towns or cities. Instead, safe zones are established within cities. In some cases, safe zones might be contiguous, while in others, a city might be split into multiple safe zones with Myrmidon territory in between, making travel a problem. People are often crowded into areas much too small to comfortably accommodate them.

Do Not Eat!: Presumably used by the Myrmidons to indicate poisonous or otherwise inedible materials, the government uses this pheromone to protect military convoys, pheromone-hauling trucks and trains, and other important travelers. As long as the travelers' vehicles (or the travelers themselves if moving on foot) are marked with the pheromone, Myrmidons basically ignore them. They don't have anything against humans; they just view people as food. Take that away, and they don't have much interest in humans at all.

Good Food! Come Here!: Used by Myrmidons to mark the locations of food sources so that other workers can find them, this pheromone is employed by the military to lure Myrmidons into ambushes or trick them into taking poisoned food back to the colony. Unfortunately, it is only effective on workers, since it isn't warriors' job to find food. This limits its effectiveness somewhat.

The pheromones are produced in large quantities at several plants across the country. These factories are, of course, protected by pheromones, and they are also heavily guarded by the military. This is necessary because Myrmidons aren't the only threat to the pheromone plants: some vigilantes target the plants as well.

LIVE AND LET LIVE

While the pheromones can protect habitations and travelers, they are not one hundred percent effective. Myrmidons generally won't enter an area marked by Danger! pheromones, and they have no interest in people marked by Do Not Eat! pheromones. However, things change if Myrmidons perceive a threat. This is particularly true of warriors, which are less affected by food-related pheromones and ready to enter dangerous areas for the good of the hive. Myrmidons fight back if attacked by people marked with Do Not Eat! pheromones, and they might even invade an area marked by Danger! pheromones if a nearby hive is provoked.

Because of this continuing danger, federal decree prohibits civilians from attacking Myrmidons except in self-defense against immediate threat. The fear is that hurting a Myrmidon might raise the ire of an entire hive and put communities in danger. Many people are unhappy about this, and the decree has generated a good deal of unrest. A lot of people want all of the Myrmidons eradicated, and they continue to vocally insist on it despite the clear impossibility of the task. If the military could wipe out the Myrmidons, it would have by now. Still, some people think that the resources used on pheromone research and production should be instead put toward finding a way to exterminate the ants.

Some individuals are particularly opposed to the policy protecting the Myrmidons. Vigilantes take it upon themselves to kill the giant ants wherever possible. This not only can lead to exactly what the decree was established to prevent—large-scale Myrmidon attacks on safe zones—but it places the vigilantes in conflict with police and military. Rather than spending time and resources protecting humans against the Myrmidons, vigilantes and military spend them fighting and killing each other in pointless battles. In some cases, the military actually fights to protect Myrmidon nests—for the greater good.

In addition to throwing Molotov cocktails into hive entrances and gunning down worker ants, some vigilantes take even more radical measures. They believe that the government has betrayed the people, or even places the interests of the Myrmidons above those of citizens. Conspiracy theories abound among these groups, from claims that the Myrmidons were actually genetically engineered by the government—and aren't aliens at all—so that it could enact martial law, to the conviction that top officials are under the control of a Myrmidon queen. Regardless of their exact beliefs, these groups do everything from sabotaging government convoys, to forcing military units into conflict with Myrmidons, to attacking pheromone plants and distribution centers.

Of course, some Player Characters might sympathize with the anti-ant vigilantes, or even join them. And perhaps the vigilantes have a point—the policy of non-confrontation allows the Myrmidon population to continue growing, and some worry that the pheromones might not protect humanity forever.

OPEN ROAD

THE country's highways and interstates are all but devoid of traffic these days—they belong to the Myrmidons. Much of the country has been left desolate by the ravenous ants, and many once-lush areas have been reduced to desert. Everywhere outside the safe zones and compounds is Myrmidon territory.

Traveling without the protection of Do Not Eat! pheromones is highly dangerous. This is especially true in areas that have already been harvested, where hungry Myrmidons are ever alert for any sign of food. Many roads are difficult to traverse or even impassable because of wrecked cars, Myrmidon holes, and collapsed bridges.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The ground begins to shake. Hopefully, it doesn't portend the imminent opening of a tunnel entrance.

- A military convoy approaches the PCs. Perhaps it can provide protection or share a small supply of pheromones?

- The PCs see a line of Myrmidons heading in the direction of a settlement they recently visited, or carrying away victims from wherever the PCs are going.

- A band of desperate survivors piled in a variety of well-worn vehicles attack the PCs in an attempt to steal their supplies, and maybe worse.

- A sheriff believes the PCs are responsible for provoking a Myrmidon hive that recently wiped out a small settlement. The officer vows to bring them to justice.

- A group of vigilantes accosts the PCs, insisting that they help them attack a nearby hive, unless they are "ant lovers." (The vigilantes are not well-disposed toward those they perceive as ant lovers.)

- The PCs see someone riding a Myrmidon like a horse. How is this possible, and could it be the secret to saving humanity?

FARMLAND

ALTHOUGH the country's population is a mere fraction of what it used to be, people still need to eat, and that means farms. The number of operating farms has been drastically reduced since the Myrmidons arrived. In fact, almost all farms were devastated by the Myrmidons before the pheromones were developed, requiring rebuilding afterward. Farms vary greatly in size, from small family affairs to large industrial operations. However, the latter are much rarer than they used to be. The infrastructure needed for factory farming is largely unavailable as the country tries to recover from the devastation.

Farms are, of course, a prime target for Myrmidons, requiring extensive use of pheromones to keep the ants at bay. Getting the food to settlements and compounds poses another challenge, again requiring the use of pheromones whenever possible. Police, and military forces at some strategically important farms, protect the crops and livestock. Without the distribution infrastructure and food production rates of the past, the loss of even a single farm can be devastating.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- A settlement the PCs are visiting has lost contact with the farm that provides most of its food. If something isn't done to reestablish contact, inhabitants face starvation.

- A farmer believes that Myrmidon tunnels aerate the soil, improving crop yield. Using stolen pheromones, the farmer plans to lure the Myrmidons into the farmland. This can only end poorly.

- The PCs are hired to help guard a truck convoy. Unfortunately, the farm it is departing from hasn't received its regular pheromone delivery, and the convoy goes right through Myrmidon territory.

- The PCs catch wind of, or find themselves at, a highly illegal—and dangerous—Myrmidon rodeo.

- The PCs hear rumors of a farm using pheromones in an attempt to domesticate Myrmidons, possibly for food. Is this a government project or the work of some dangerously misguided individuals? (Not that those are necessarily mutually exclusive.)

PHEROMONE PLANT

ALTHOUGH controlled by the government, many pheromone plants were built under contract by what remains of the private sector. Still relatively few in number, these factories are vital to the country's survival and the military's current defense strategy. Building additional plants is a government priority, but it is made difficult by the ongoing chaos and limited infrastructure.

The plants vary in size, but all are heavily guarded by the military and sometimes hired security. The personnel at a plant includes both government employees and civilian workers. Because transporting the pheromones to safe zones and government installations around the country is of vital importance, most pheromone plants are situated alongside highways, railways, or airports.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The residents of a small community terrorized by Myrmidons beg the PCs for help in "acquiring" some pheromones.

- During a loading accident, a huge quantity of Good Food! Come Here! pheromone spills out. Hopefully it's not enough to overpower the Danger! pheromone protecting the plant...

- A batch of pheromones has gone missing (or has been sabotaged), and the plant is placed on lockdown. Everyone is a suspect, even—or maybe especially—the PCs.

- One of the workers—possibly a PC—falls into a vat of experimental pheromone. After waking up from a brief coma, the worker feels strangely compelled to visit the nearest Myrmidon hive.

- After a series of attacks by vigilantes, the plant needs extra security. The PCs are offered employment, perhaps in recognition of their past success against Myrmidons.

- As a quality control measure, a Myrmidon is kept within the plant to test the efficacy of new batches. But something goes wrong, and it escapes. If it gets away, it could lead its entire hive to the plant.

NATIONAL GUARDSMAN

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

Features: +Military Training, +Voice of Authority, –By the Book, –So Bored.
Equipment: M16A4 rifle (1 negative die, +5 damage), extra magazines, uniform, manufactured Myrmidon pheromone packets, photo from home.

VIGILANTE FIREBRAND

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

Features: +Indignant, +Inspiring, –Hot-headed, +/–Burn it All Down!
Equipment: Molotov cocktail (1 negative die, +5 damage), smelly bandanna, ratty but trendy clothing.

VIGILANTES

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

Features: +Indignant, +Strength in Numbers, –Literally Bonded to the Cause, –We Didn't Think This Through.
Equipment: An absurd length of chain (2 negative dice, +2 damage), ratty but trendy clothing.

Visages

Imagine one day, all of a sudden, everyone you know becomes someone different. Sure, they look the same, know all the same stuff, but there's something unmistakably different about them. You can see it in their eyes, in the way they behave and the way they talk. What do you do? Really, I need to know. I have no idea what to do. Something is very wrong. And it's not just my friends; I can see it in the eyes of strangers, in the way they act toward me. And I think they know I'm not one of them…yet. But they want me to be.

I can't trust anyone. Some of them are really good at hiding it, so I have to assume the worst. If I can figure out how it happens, maybe I can avoid it. But what then? How high does it go? Am I the only one left? They want to make me one of them; I can tell by the way they approach me, try to get me to go along with them. But how does it happen? There has to be a way to stay myself. Of course, that's assuming it's not already too late.

Some of my friends say they see it too, that we need to stick together. But can I trust them? What if it's all part of a plot to replace me? What if they are thinking the exact same thing? Even if we are all still human, can I trust them not to make a fatal mistake?

VISAGES confronts the Player Characters with a frightening world in which almost everyone they know and love has been replaced with an alien duplicate. These plantlike creatures look just like whomever they replace, down to the smallest detail, and they even have their memories. But something is decidedly off about them: an absence of emotion that's a sure sign they aren't who they seem to be.

An alien colony creature has distributed its spores far and wide. Once the spores infect someone, a duplicate begins to grow. Within hours, the duplicate takes the original's place…and that means disposing of the original. For the PCs to avoid this fate, they will have to be clever and cautious—and they still might not all make it.

The PCs must work together to navigate this awful situation, but can they trust one another? Even if they are all who they appear to be, they have to somehow make sure things stay that way. And that means figuring out what's happening. They might not be able to stop it, but maybe they can at least retain their identities. For now.

THE EXPERIENCE

It happens quite suddenly. People begin acting strangely, not quite like themselves. Soon, it becomes all too clear to the PCs that something is wrong, that people aren't who they appear to be. At first, it may seem that the PCs are the only normal humans still around, but that's not quite the case. Other humans have evaded whatever sinister plot has replaced so many, but with the change as extensive as it is, what can they do?

The survivors must quickly work to find each other and band together if there is to be any hope of preserving the human race. But with every hour, more hapless individuals are replaced. And those who haven't seen it for themselves simply refuse to believe—until it's too late.

WHAT THE PLAYER CHARACTERS SEE

When the game starts, the invasion should already be well underway. The PCs aren't the only humans left, of course, but they may very well think they are for a time. At the game's outset, most of the PCs' friends and family have already been replaced by alien Visages. From the PCs' perspective, that means that people they know are acting funny. There are a number of clues the PCs might pick up on, but the fundamental change is that people lack emotion or personality. They're just "flat." Of course, this is hardly a sure sign of alien invasion, and the PCs might struggle with their own perceptions.

Most people seem to be going about their daily lives, and simply observing them from a distance doesn't reveal any indication that something is wrong. The only real clue the PCs have is their own intuition. They may suspect some sort of possession at first. Other theories might include androids, mind control—who knows. But the GM should play up the uncertainty, building the paranoia. If the PCs think they have things figured out, the GM can throw a red herring their way. And even if the PCs figure out that humans are being replaced, others aren't going to believe them without solid evidence.

Realizing something is wrong and doing something about it are very different things. At first, the PCs have only their own suspicions. Until they see hard evidence, they might not even trust themselves—they might think they're experiencing delusions. Others certainly do. In fact, if others don't act shocked and concerned for PCs who say they suspect that people are being replaced, it's probably a sign that the listeners themselves have been replaced!

This is not to say that it should be obvious to the PCs that most people they know have been replaced. Far from it. The changes are subtle, and while they might be clear in friends and loved ones, the changes are much harder to identify when dealing with a stranger. Maybe that cop is emotionless and flat because she's an alien Visage, or maybe that's just her work face. The PCs should constantly be unsure who they can trust, who has been replaced, and who might betray them to the aliens through sheer ignorance.

During the initial stages of the apocalypse, it should become clear to the PCs that the situation is getting worse. They might talk to people who seem normal, only to return a few hours later and find them acting strangely. Through these types of interactions, the PCs should learn that the invasion is spreading, with an increasing number of people being replaced every hour. Whether the PCs realize it or not, the Visages' method of propagation ensures that their expansion is rapid.

WHAT IS EVERYONE ELSE DOING?

Most people are doing one of two things: acting as though nothing were wrong, or trying to act as though nothing were wrong. Those who realize that something very strange is happening quickly learn that the only way to remain unaffected is to hide the fact that they know. Those who don't figure it out, of course, act normally... right up until they are replaced, at which point they continue acting normally, at least to superficial observation.

Some people, of course, do panic once they realize something uncanny is occurring. This gives "friends," "family," or the authorities an excuse to restrain them or take them into protective custody. After all, they are clearly crazy, as everyone agrees. Subsequently, they are taken somewhere private. Reappearing a few hours later, they appear completely calm and are dismissive of their earlier behavior.

Those who have already been replaced make it their highest priority to ensure others are replaced as well. For the most part, this is done subtly. Overt violence is counterproductive, as it could alert other humans to the situation and lead to mass panic. Instead, Visages prefer to quietly replace people one by one to help avoid detection.

All this means that the PCs should have a difficult time noticing that anything is wrong. Even as the world is ending, most people go about their daily routines as though nothing unusual were happening. But in truth, that's because most of them have already been replaced.

If the PCs are very clever, very cautious, or very lucky, they might be able to connect with other unduplicated humans. Those individuals are certain to be slow to trust anyone, however, rightly suspecting that Visages would "play along" with survivors in order to gain their trust. Consequently, a meeting between remaining humans is likely to be tense, both sides mistrusting the other. And a meeting might be as far as it goes, as the paranoia could be too much to overcome. However, if the PCs can find other humans and earn their trust, it could greatly benefit their efforts to survive. After all, extra pairs of eyes can watch for signs of infiltration.

There's one other clue that could help the PCs figure out that humans are not being possessed or mind-controlled, but replaced. When a Visage first emerges from its cocoon, it immediately seeks to kill the human it has copied—its original. If the PCs see the two together, or witness the duplicate killing its original, it may help them understand what is happening. However, if the Visage becomes aware it has been caught in the act, it and its peers will make replacing the PCs a top priority, to be achieved by any means necessary.

WHAT CAN THE PLAYER CHARACTERS DO?

As in any apocalypse they might face, the PCs' first order of business will likely be simple survival. However, in light of a threat so insidious, surviving requires a different approach than it might in a less subtle situation. Boarding up the doors and windows and stockpiling supplies isn't a smart way to ride out this apocalypse—it's a sure way to get arrested or admitted, and thereafter replaced.

The PCs must behave as though everything were normal, even as they search for clues and try to prevent their own replacement. The more they let on that they know people are behaving oddly, the more the Visages will prioritize replacing them.

Though the PCs have no way of knowing this at first, the Visages are all telepathically linked. The aliens are all part of the same spore-seeding creature. The PCs might come to suspect telepathy upon observing the Visages' highly coordinated actions. If it comes down to it, the PCs might find themselves pursued by a large number of replaced townspeople, police officers, and others, all working in sync despite having no visible means of communication.

It's far beyond the PCs' abilities to stop the spread of the Visages. At best, they can hope to stay unaffected, and perhaps to save some others from this horrible fate. Understanding the root of the bizarre epidemic could prove helpful in these endeavors, and thus is likely to be a high priority for the PCs. Aside from observing people's strange behavior, snooping PCs might find the bodies of individuals who have been replaced, or even catch a Visage in the act of murdering its original.

The PCs might seek to spread the word about their discoveries. While noble, this is unlikely to have a major impact, as most of those in a position to act have already been replaced. Police, government officials, and members of the media all exhibit an eerily flat affect. Online strategies could have some limited effectiveness, but PCs' posts are likely to be bombarded with challenges or mysteriously deleted. Still, the Internet might be one of the best ways to locate fellow survivors...if they can be trusted.

THE TRUTH

Whether the PCs gradually realize that something is wrong or assume it from the outset, they certainly don't know the full extent of truth, at least not at first. It seems almost too strange to believe, which is part of the reason spreading the word is so difficult. Still, the more the PCs learn, the better equipped they are to remain human.

BEGINNING OF THE END

The alien invasion facing Earth comes not from an army, but from a single creature. Each duplicate the PCs see is only one part of a massive spore organism. The organism has a single hive mind, which is shared among all of its constituent parts. Thousands of years ago, this creature took over a distant planet, spreading across its entire surface. An asteroid shattered the planet and sent pieces of it spinning away into space. The hardy creature survived on these fragments hurtling through the void for thousands of years, until several of them reached Earth. The fragments burned up in the atmosphere, but in the process spread the spores across the planet. Within a few days, the spores adapted to Earth's environment and to the dominant life form—humans—in order to begin its colonization.

The PCs' area is just one of several locations initially affected. Events play out similarly in each of these regions, as the creature's many components share the same mind and purpose. The spores thrive in fresh water, and this is how they initially spread. A human ingests a spore, which begins studying the person's body. The spore transmits to the hive mind the information it gathers on human genetic and cellular makeup, conveying intelligence on everything from human bodies to human memories.

As an ingested spore studies a victim, the creature grows a cocoon, in which a Visage gestates. This initial cocoon might be some distance from the actual victim, but as the invasion spreads, duplicates are able to place cocoons close by, concealing them so that the Visage can grow in close proximity to the victim and replace its target immediately upon awakening. Replacement, of course, involves killing the original and disposing of the body (although this doesn't always preclude its turning up later).

This entire horrific process takes less than a day: as little as a few hours in some cases. The pods in which Visages grow look something like a cross between an insect cocoon and a bean pod, and they are about a meter long. As the invasion spreads, duplicates in some communities begin to openly move pods around, loading them onto trucks for transport to nearby towns. As pods release their occupants, they also release spores into the air. In areas that have already been affected, spores floating in the air can gather near infected victims and spontaneously form a pod. This means that even destroying all the pods in an area won't stop the Visages from spreading, though, thankfully, unlike the ingested spores, the airborne spores are not infectious.

Why humans? For one thing, they are among the first creatures the spores came in contact with. For another, animals are a lot more observant than humans. Initially, some animals are affected by the replication process. But solitary animals are not ideal for spreading the infestation, and it turns out that pack creatures other than humans have keener senses that let them detect that a Visage is not what it seems. Rather than allowing the spores to spread, animal duplicates are simply shunned or killed by their pack mates.

THIS IS NOT MY BEAUTIFUL WIFE!

Visages are physically identical to their originals, down to the smallest detail. Although their basic makeup is more plantlike than animal, the copies are convincing enough to pass a cursory medical inspection. And yes, they bleed red. (PCs who kill Visages might find themselves arrested and charged with murder!) In addition to having its target's physical appearance, a duplicate possesses all the memories and knowledge of the human it imitates. However, Visages lack true emotions and individual personalities. For instance, a Visage would possess all of a gamer's knowledge of RPGs, card games, and other games, but would display none of its victim's interest or passion for these hobbies—a dead giveaway to any other gamers!

While the Visages have no authentic emotions or personalities, they know enough to imitate them. The results might be comical if they weren't so disturbing. The duplicates showcase strange imitations of human facial expressions, but this mimicry is only convincing to strangers, and even then, it often comes across as "wrong." The strangeness isn't enough to necessarily scream "alien impostor" to observers. They might think the person is extremely tired, or drugged, or sick. But the closer a person has been to the (now deceased) target on whom a duplicate is based, the quicker that person can tell something is off, and the more certain that person is about it.

The spore organism shares a single hive mind among all of its constituent parts, but at the same time, it's not exactly intelligent, as humanity understands the term. The Visages possess brains and minds because humans do, and they are patterned on humans. This allows individual duplicates to behave as humans and even to use their hive mind connection to concoct plans to stifle survivors and spread the spore organism's influence. The spore organism itself, however, certainly didn't possess a human-like intelligence before arriving on Earth. It might not even be truly sentient. It's propelled only by the desire to reproduce and spread, until it covers whatever planet it currently inhabits.

Animals can sense something wrong with Visages, which is why the aliens generally don't target them for duplication. Animals tend to react very strongly to Visages. Dogs bark and growl; cats hiss and run; birds frantically fly away. As such, and because Visages have no feelings for the pets of their victims, roaming animals soon become common in areas affected by the spores. Clever PCs can use animals to confirm whether a subject is human or a Visage. A beloved pet that reacts to its owner with fierce hostility is a sure sign that the human has been supplanted by a Visage. What the PCs do about their suspicions is another matter.

SPREADING THE LOVE

The Visages' overriding goal is to spread the spore creature's influence by replacing more humans. To this end, they do whatever it takes to "infect" others. And how does the spore creature spread? In fresh water. The spores reproduce in fresh water, which also acts as the perfect medium for conveying them. In order for people to be replaced, they must ingest a spore from the creature. Once inside them, the spore begins "reading" their makeup and transmitting that information to nascent Visages gestating in nearby pods.

Although food can transmit the spores as well, heat can damage them. Consequently, cool water is the best way to spread the spores. To this end, Visages do everything they can to infest drinking water and get spores into people's bodies. They hand out contaminated bottles of water on city streets and at public events, they introduce spores into reservoirs and bottling plants, and they even pollute the drinking water at restaurants. Of course, one of the most common ways for a Visage to affect someone is to offer something to drink to an unsuspecting friend or loved one.

Perhaps the most disturbing thing about the whole situation is that there is no malice behind it. The spore creature isn't intelligent enough to be evil, and the Visages don't have any concept of good and evil, or of murder. They see replacing people as the most natural thing in the world; in fact, they seem to think people would be happier if they just "joined" the duplicates. When trying to replace those who are suspicious and, therefore, resistant, many Visages take the approach of trying to convince them to accept it, and not to fight. "I'm much happier now," they say. Never mind the fact that the original is lying somewhere with a broken neck—the Visages don't think about it that way.

THE INITIAL RESPONSE

Due to the nature of this apocalypse, there is no organized initial response. All around the world, the scene is much the same. People from local politicians to those at the highest levels of national governments are swiftly replaced by duplicates. From there, the chance of any real response, or even acknowledgment of a situation, drops to near zero.

The PCs, of course, might go to the authorities with their suspicions, or even proof, of the ongoing alien invasion. More likely than not, their concerns will be simply dismissed—and they will be offered a cool glass of water to calm their nerves. However, there is always a possibility that the PCs might find one of the few police officers, doctors, or even government officials who have not yet been replaced. Such a person could be a useful ally, but with the ranks of the person's agency doubtless already infiltrated, the ally's effectiveness is limited. Colleagues tell such people not to incite a panic, or even that they have been fooled by dangerously deluded individuals. Such an ally might soon begin to doubt the PCs—or simply ends up replaced.

While there is no official response to the invasion, individuals who manage to remain human are likely to band together to protect each other and make plans to combat the menace. At first, such gatherings are tense, as everyone suspects the others of being duplicates sent to infiltrate the ranks of the resistance. Actually, they never stop being tense, because every time a person loses sight of an ally for a little while, there's a chance the ally might get replaced. Nevertheless, meeting up with fellow survivors can improve the PCs' chances of living through the apocalypse.

TIMELINE

The invasion of the duplicates unfolds with frightening quickness, and it is already well underway before the PCs realize anything is wrong.

00:00:00	The first spore-asteroid breaks up in Earth's atmosphere, scattering spores over the PCs' region.
00:01:14	A wolf in the area is infected by spores.
00:02:37	The first human becomes infected by spores.
00:21:42	The spore creature learns much from its first victim, who dies as a result of the invasive examination.
Day 1	Additional people become infected through drinking contaminated water.
Day 1	A wolf Visage is killed by its pack.
Day 2	The first human Visages emerge and kill their originals.
Day 2	A second spore-asteroid breaks up upon atmospheric entry.
Day 3	The spore organism's influence spreads as Visages infect friends and family.
Day 3	Approximately ten percent of the population has been replaced.
Day 4	Emergency services notice a drastic uptick in the number of dog attacks in the area. Many more go unreported.
Day 5	Approximately thirty percent of the population has been replaced.
Day 5	Two more spore-asteroids enter the atmosphere.
Day 6	Helpful Visages hand out free bottles of water around town.
Day 7	Visages at the reservoir or water treatment plant infect the town's water supply.
Day 8	Approximately fifty percent of the population is now Visages.
Day 9	The President of the United States is killed by a Visage, with the assistance of Secret Service agent Visages.
Day 10	A number of local restaurants simultaneously "run out" of alcoholic drinks. They offer upset customers complimentary glasses of cool, refreshing water.
Day 10	Stories of "brainwashings," complete with footage of people allegedly acting out of character, go viral online.
Day 12	The Vice President is involuntarily admitted to the hospital for exhaustion.
Day 13	Most of the people posting about "brainwashings" online take down their content, and in some cases apologize for the "bad joke."
Day 14	A smiling Vice President makes her first public appearance since her hospitalization. She announces that she's fine—that everything is fine—and attributes her swift recovery to the relaxing effects of a cool glass of water.
Day 16	There is an awful lot of activity at the local landfill, mostly at night.
Day 17	Many people have taken up gardening, and neighborhoods are flush with strange, unattractive red fungus.
Day 18	Several conspiracy theory web forums light up with activity.
Day 18	Numerous television personalities, including doctors, speak about the health benefits of cool, unfiltered water.
Day 20	One town near the PCs breaks out in civil unrest.
Day 21	The National Guard is called in to quell the riots near the PCs.
Day 22	Approximately seventy percent of the population has been replaced by Visages.
Day 23	An internationally known scientist announces the discovery of a fungus-like infection among a high percentage of the population.
Day 24	The internationally known scientist retracts these findings, and in their place publishes a report on the health effects of cool, unfiltered water.
Day 27	NASA announces a bold new plan to launch a series of crewed exploratory missions over the coming years. The destinations are suspiciously vague.
Day 36	Peace is achieved in the Middle East. The negotiators celebrate with a round of cool, refreshing glasses of water.
Day 39	A small but organized resistance movement known as "The Originals" forms in the United States.
Day 42	Members of the US Armed Forces abandon their posts in large numbers, many of them joining the resistance.
Day 43	Resistance fighters discover that salt water is toxic to the Visages.
Day 52	Approximately eighty-five percent of the population has been replaced with Visages.
Day 67	The resistance movements known as "The Originals" and "The New Originals" launch a seagoing flotilla.

AMONG THE PEOPLE

THE real horror of this alien threat is that it's everywhere, and it's invisible. Among crowds of people, individuals might think they're safe, but they're really not. Anyone in that crowd could be a Visage—or they might all be, in which case a human joining it is really in trouble. The Visages look just like ordinary people, and those subtle signs that something's amiss become all but invisible in the bustle of a crowd.

As dangerous as crowds can be, they can offer some small amount of refuge, at least in the early days. Because the Visages don't want to cause a panic or reveal themselves, they are unlikely to forcefully take someone in public, but rather will try to convince that person to go somewhere private to be infected. But humans should be wary of crowd members proffering bottles of water.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- A good friend or other trusted person shows up and cheerily tries to pull one of the PCs aside for a chat.

- Someone runs through the crowd, screaming about aliens. Those nearby calmly try to reassure the person, even holding them down if necessary. And someone helpfully offers a bottle of water...

- A Visage realizes the PCs are onto them, and soon everyone in the crowd is moving in.

- A known Visage is pursuing the PCs; perhaps they can lose the Visage in the crowd.

- The PCs need to warn a friend or loved one about what's going on, but how can they do it when that person is out in public?

- The PCs are out in public when they notice everyone is staring at them...

- The PCs must quickly decide if making a scene in public will save them or just bring more attention to them.

SPORE COLONY
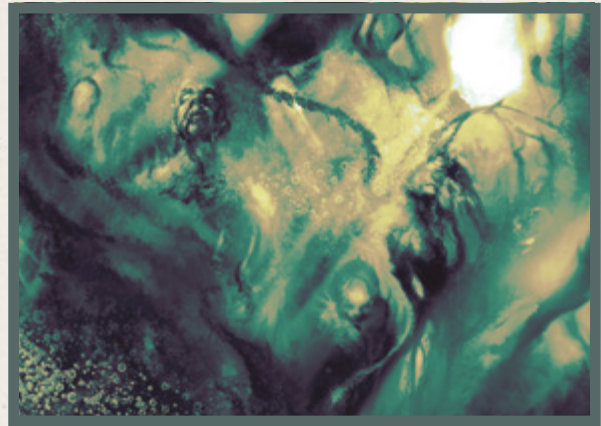
AMONG the most hideous sights the PCs might ever witness, spore colonies are places where the Visages house numerous pods in order to replace a whole group of people at once. As each pod opens, it releases thick clouds of spores, which form new pods. Thankfully, only transmission through water can infect a healthy person, but a cloud of spores this dense has a chance of infecting those already in poor health. At any moment, a pod in the colony might open to reveal a simulacrum of a human being. The PCs might also see translucent pods that provide a clear and gruesome view of the Visages developing within.

The PCs might happen upon such a macabre alien nursery by sheer chance, or they might seek one out in a brave, if misguided, attempt to halt the invasion. In either case, if the PCs manage to destroy all the pods and nascent Visages within, the GM should give them a brief period to savor their victory—and then have more Visages show up.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The ground under the PCs' feet gives way, dropping them into a cave or sewer filled with pods and airborne spores.

- By studying the nascent Visages, the PCs can gain insight into who is already infected. But will destroying the nascent duplicates halt the process, or merely delay it?

- A pod opens—to reveal a PC's exact duplicate!

- The PCs see a strange mist in the air outside a nearby basement.

- While examining the spore colony, the PCs are suddenly ambushed by Visages.

- The PCs witness a Visage they already killed emerging from a cocoon. Are these things unending? Did the PCs kill an original?

- Disgustingly, the spore colony is located in the city's water supply.

ON THE ROAD

ONCE the Visages infiltrate the police, it's not long before they discover the usefulness of roadblocks in catching those trying to avoid "adapting" to the new way of life. Around the country, police set up roadblocks to screen for those who have not yet been replaced. Simple, closeup observation is enough for a Visage to determine whether someone is authentic, making this an effective and efficient method for discerning people in need of replacement.

Obviously, the PCs don't want to be caught in a roadblock, but the true danger might not be apparent at first. After all, what if it's a genuine roadblock? Regardless, getting arrested is certainly the last thing they need (well, aside from being replaced by an alien duplicate).

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- A friendly officer insists on handing bottles of water to all the car's occupants and watching them drink. It's part of a new "stay hydrated" initiative between the police force and a local charity...

- The roadblock is genuine, which means nervous or odd behavior on the PCs' part could land them in hot water. And the police probably won't believe stories of human duplicators.

- Is the breathalyzer authentic, or yet another way to infect a human with spores?

- A motorist ahead panics and tries to run the roadblock.

- There's something happening up ahead, and it looks like the cops are going for their guns.

- If the Visages know the PCs are onto them, the roadblock could be just for them...

- The PCs recognize the car of a friend pulled over up ahead.

POLICE STATION

THERE are two likely reasons for the PCs to visit a police precinct: they've been arrested, or they are trying to warn the cops about the danger posed by the aliens. While these might seem very different, either one could end up with the PCs in a cell, since the police are likely to think they are on drugs—and there is a good chance the police have already been infiltrated. Even if the police haven't all been replaced yet, how can the PCs make sure they are talking to a real cop, and not an alien Visage?

The police station is likely to be a tense place, regardless of the exact circumstances that have brought the PCs there. They probably aren't the only ones trying to warn the cops, or being arrested so that they can be infected and replaced. An atmosphere of paranoia lies heavy over the station, and all the officers watch the PCs suspiciously—for one reason or another.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The PCs notice all the police seem to be drinking from the same water cooler, which could be very bad...

- The police move to restrain someone who is ranting and raving about family being replaced.

- An officer insists the PCs each have a drink of water from the cooler while they wait.

- A nervous officer hears the PCs out and appears to believe them—or is it just another trick?

- When the police act suspiciously, another survivor goes for a cop's gun.

- The PCs find a police officer who clearly hasn't been replaced yet, but it turns out the cop is a jerk and is not interested in hearing them out.

- The PCs notice the holding cells are full to bursting with frightened, normal-seeming people.

OUT AT SEA

RURAL FARM

SOONER or later, the PCs should figure out that the Visages—and the spores that create them—can't abide salt water. The PCs might be the first to figure this out, or they might learn of it from resistance fighters. In either case, the best way to guard against the Visages—and stay oneself—seems to be to take to sea. However, maritime excursions are never guaranteed to be safe, and the PCs might find themselves in danger of a different kind.

This sort of plan depends greatly on the PCs' own knowledge and that of their allies. PCs without boating experience might soon find themselves in over their heads (so that's where that expression comes from!), unless they have allies who can provide assistance. And while Visages don't like salt water, that doesn't stop them from using boats...

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- A group of heavily armed people approaches the PCs in a speedboat. They could be helpful allies, if they can be convinced to trust the PCs instead of shooting first.

- The group comes across a yacht or cruise ship, and the people aboard seem to have no idea what's going on. That means they must be unaffected, right?

- The PCs witness a fight between two boats or ships, but is it the resistance versus Visages, or survivors fighting over supplies? And who is who?

- After a few days at sea, the potable water is starting to run low.

- The PCs find an isolated island, but they soon realize they aren't the only ones on it.

- The PCs meet another boat of pleasant and helpful people, but they seem a little too eager to share their supply of bottled water.

- The PCs encounter members of the AquaCorps, a religiously affiliated group that has long known the importance of the ocean in defending against alien menaces.

As the crowd of the city serves as a perfect replicating ground for the Visages, the PCs might very well decide to try their luck in more rural areas. Likewise, PCs living in the country have more room to run if they figure out what's happening. In a rural area, the PCs can escape the ever-present crowd of Visages, but they also might feel much more vulnerable due to the isolation.

For PCs in the countryside, the GM can play up the encroaching horror of the situation in a different way. Rather than seeing obvious Visages all around them, the PCs might interact with just a small number of NPCs, but find it very difficult to tell which is and is not an alien replacement.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- Fleeing the city, the PCs come across an apparently abandoned farm that is well stocked with supplies. But the occupants soon return, or at least individuals who look like them.

- Just outside of town, the PCs witness a large number of residents emerging, naked, from a field and heading toward the village.

- A kindly farmer invites the PCs to sit down for supper while they calm down, and offers some refreshing, cool water to start with...

- The PCs find a well, but can they trust its contents?

- After speaking with the farming family, the PCs step outside and see an identical farming family emerging from the field.

- The farm animals react with hostility toward one of the PCs or an animal or NPC accompanying them.

- The PCs find a field full of gigantic, strange-looking bean pods.

POLITICIAN VISAGE

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

Features: +Hive Mind, +Elected Official, –Aloof, –Uncanny Behavior.

Equipment: Tailored business suit, nice haircut, high-quality briefcase.

Hive Mind: An NPC with the Hive Mind feature counts as assisting the actions of any other NPC with the Hive Mind feature in the encounter, even if not participating in the specific action. This is subject to GM discretion and only applies if it makes sense. For example, if an NPC with the Hive Mind feature is attempting to force open a locked door, other NPCs with the Hive Mind feature do not count as assisting unless they are physically attempting to force the door as well.

If an NPC with the Hive Mind feature dies, all other NPCs with the Hive Mind feature automatically suffer 1 mental stress. This stress is not reduced by any mental resistance.

SERVICE STAFF VISAGE

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

Features: +Hive Mind, +Unassuming, –Uncanny Behavior.

Equipment: Nice suit, aviator shades, keys to the limo.

Hive Mind: See **Politician Visage** NPC profile, above.

SOLDIER VISAGE

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

Features: +Hive Mind, +Voice of Authority, –Uncanny Behavior.

Equipment: M16A1 rifle (1 negative die, +5 damage), combat knife (1 postive die, +2 damage), helmet and pads (+1 physical resistance), military fatigues, radio.

Hive Mind: See **Politician Visage** NPC profile, above.

NASCENT VISAGE

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

Features: +Hive Mind, +Horrifying, −Unfinished Creation.

Equipment: None.

Hive Mind: See **Politician Visage** NPC profile, on page 134.

Unfinished Visage: Whenever a nascent Visage performs a task, it picks one character it can see. It usually chooses the character that is best suited to the task at hand. The nascent Visage then becomes a Visage of that character until the task is complete, or until it performs a new task to which another character is better suited. The nascent Visage has the characteristics and features of the chosen character as long as it is a Visage of that character.

PLAYER CHARACTER VISAGE

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
*	*	*	*	*	*

Features: +Hive Mind, −Uncanny Behavior, see **Familiar Face,** below*.

Equipment: See **Familiar Face**, below.

*Familiar Face: A Player Character Visage has the characteristics, features, and clothing of one of the Player Characters in addition to the +Hive Mind and −Uncanny Behavior features, and the **Hive Mind** special rule on page 134.

Hive Mind: See **Politician Visage** NPC profile, on page 134.

Visages

POST-APOCALYPSE

After the duplicates took over, these weird, fungus-like growths started popping up in the cities, covering everything. It's bad enough they replace us, but now they have to go and remake the landscape? Not that we can go back to the cities, anyway. They are crawling with those things. The only safe place is on the sea, but even that isn't truly safe. I watch everyone at all moments, always suspicious, never trusting.

I still don't know what they want, or what they are. The common consensus is that they're aliens, and that seems to satisfy most people. But do they really want to be us, or was it all just to pave the way for this fungus overgrowing everything? Have we really been defeated by a stupid plant?

CIVILIZATION has fallen to the Visages. Once nearly everyone had been replaced, the alien duplicates changed their behavior. They gave up their charade, for the most part. Cities fell into ruin and were overtaken by the spore creature itself, a strange, rhizomatic fungal growth that covers the land and chokes out all native plants and animals.

Humanity clings to a precarious existence in a few places around the globe. There are a handful of safe havens out in the wilderness, where new arrivals are thoroughly screened and tested. However, most survivors live at sea, where the Visages are loath to go. It's not a pleasant life, but it's better than becoming one of them.

AN ALIEN WORLD

The Visages' infiltration of humanity was successful. Although not everyone was replaced, enough were that the few remaining survivors had to flee, abandoning the cities and towns to the alien duplicates. Now, the spore-growth covers the land, climbing up skyscrapers and smothering neighborhoods. Why is the growth most severe in places that used to have the highest population density? Who can say, but it must have something to do with these being the birthplaces of the Visages.

FALLEN CITIES

The cities of the world are collapsing into ruin, as they are completely overgrown with the strange, alien fungus. Visages tend to the fungus, cultivating it, doting on it like adoring children. With each day, it spreads further, climbing higher up towers and creeping out into the suburbs and beyond. Rhizomatic growths crack mortar and stalks break through windows, while the weight of the fungus crushes vehicles and houses. It looks like the cities have been left to nature for centuries, but it's only been a few short years.

Strangely, the fungus is making the cities unlivable for the Visages. These creatures still need to eat and drink, but the spore-plant kills off all the native plants and animals in its vicinity, choking them out. Now, the Visages have to travel farther and farther afield to forage or hunt. Organized parties of hunter-gatherers make the trek into rural and wilderness areas, returning with bounty for the Visages tending to the massive, all-encompassing spore-beast.

As the cities have collapsed, the Visages have given up the pretenses of civilization. Everything from national governments down to local services has been abandoned. The Visages have no need of it, for the most part. A Visage might still very well approach the PCs claiming to be part of a secret government organization, a relief effort, or the like. But for the most part, all pretense of human civilization is gone.

And just what is the spore creature's goal? To spread. Once it has enveloped the Earth and wiped out humanity (and every other living thing beyond itself), it need only wait for an inevitable asteroid impact large enough to send chunks of it flying off into space toward its next destination planet. It's the cosmic circle of life, it seems.

HOLDOUTS OF HUMANITY

Humanity isn't extinct—yet. Those who wised up in time or escaped the Visages through sheer luck have banded together to survive. Of course, some people, quite understandably unable to trust anyone, strike out on their own, and some of these might even make it. But with the Visages everywhere and the spore-creature spreading, more likely than not they just make themselves easy prey.

Havens exist in a number of countries around the world (if they can still be considered countries). Most of these are relatively small, and their surroundings might range from isolated villages to remote hangar bays and underground bunkers. The one thing they all have in common is an aura of paranoia. New arrivals are subject to intense scrutiny, which generally involves being asked a number of hypothetical questions intended to elicit an emotional reaction. Even after arrivals pass the initial test, that's not the end of it. Everyone watches everyone, all the time. Most people are seldom alone, because who knows if the original will come back, or a duplicate?

However, in many of these groups, people separate to eat and drink. This might seem counterintuitive, but mealtimes are when people are at their most vulnerable. If a Visage were to infiltrate a community, adding spores to the food or drink of another could begin a chain reaction that would doom the settlement.

Of course, water is boiled thoroughly prior to drinking and guarded carefully by a group of people, usually no fewer than three at a time. Food is generally overcooked to the point of unpleasantness, and even raw fruits and vegetables generally aren't trusted.

While some communities get by on land, the majority of Earth's remaining population now lives at sea, in a number of mobile flotillas. Salt water is toxic to the spores, making the ocean the safest place to be. Visages tend to avoid it, as even a brief submersion could prove fatal. (Of course, no few people are drowned every year after being mistaken for Visages, but such is the price of security.) Boats and ships of all shapes and sizes travel the seas together, alongside makeshift rafts and even stranger vessels. As in the land-based settlements, people in the flotillas stay close together and watch each other carefully. Wanting to be alone is generally frowned upon and viewed with suspicion.

Most of the flotillas keep moving rather than stay in one place, in order to make it harder for Visages to find and infiltrate them. Of course, this also makes it more difficult for human survivors to catch up to a rumored flotilla, but this is seen as necessary. By staying on the move and on the ocean, they reduce the threat of the Visages—but they don't eliminate it. Visages have little regard for their own safety, after all, and can use boats. That's why all new arrivals, no matter how benign or earnest they may seem, are carefully screened before being admitted to the community. Those who don't pass the test—well, the screeners just hope they really were Visages.

There's another reason to keep moving. At first, the Visages relied on infiltration, but now they have enough numbers that they don't have to. Visages have replaced most of Earth's population. Further, many of them have military experience, and access to the hardware to use it. Land-based human holdouts often repel an initial infiltration only to be attacked en masse by armies of Visages using military equipment. Even the most well-protected communities can't hope to withstand such unending assault. It's better to keep moving, whether on land or on sea, and hope the Visage armies never catch up.

Methods of governance vary across the survivor communities. In some, an authority figure from before the collapse, such as a police officer, soldier, or politician, becomes the de facto leader. In others, governance adheres as closely as possible to a consensus-based democracy, although this leaves plenty of room for chaos when some people don't get their way. Some communities appoint respected members to lead, and for the most part, their decrees are followed. With all of these forms of governance and more, there is always the risk of disagreements turning violent and plunging a community into chaos, especially since no one completely trusts anyone. Disagree with the boss's plan? Suggest the boss is a Visage.

DEALING WITH VISAGES

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In this scenario, the major threat—being duplicated and killed by a Visage—remains much the same during and after the apocalypse. Regardless of whether the PCs try to survive on their own or join up with a flotilla or other community, paranoia is sure to be a constant. Just as they did during the apocalypse, the PCs must watch any new NPCs they meet closely, studying them for signs that anything is not as it seems. Each new encounter with an NPC, of course, also requires the same treatment, because he could have been replaced in the intervening time.

GMs should make a point of playing up the sense of paranoia that pervades communities. Now that everyone is either a Visage or knows about them, there are no bystanders. Suspicious behavior could subject a person to closer scrutiny or even death. After all, there is no organized justice system anymore, and most communities either listen to the counsel of the most respected members or function on some type of consensus basis. In either case, an angry mob is always a possibility. Those suspected of being Visages are likely to be drowned or killed some other way without anything resembling a fair trial.

GMs can reinforce the theme of paranoia and mistrust through the actions and behaviors of NPCs. NPCs might narrow their eyes at the PCs when meeting them again, examining them closely and watching their facial expressions. Some NPCs might insist on asking questions "only the real one would know the answer to"—not that this would actually detect a Visage.

The same holds true for the PCs: they are probably suspicious of everyone, all the time. Some GMs might decide that as time goes on, the Visages get better at mimicking human facial expressions, allowing them to infiltrate communities unnoticed. If this is true—or even if people just suspect it—then truly no one can be trusted.

Of course, there's another approach the GM might take in the post-apocalypse. The Visages succeeded in their initial plot, and they now have little reason to continue with the subtle infiltration. With billions of Visages out there, they can afford to simply attack human holdouts and try to drown them in bodies and bullets. For GMs who want to inject more action and violence into this scenario (which is perhaps lacking in the apocalypse), the post-apocalypse offers the perfect opportunity.

UNPLANNED OBSOLESCENCE

There is one flaw to the spore organism's "plan" that could be humanity's salvation. Although they do not age like humans, the Visages do have limited lifespans. In fact, they only live for about twenty years. As this end date approaches, the Visages begin to shrivel up, like desiccated plants. Finally, they just collapse.

What this means is that if humanity can hang on for just twenty years, the Visages will die off, and humans may have an opportunity to retake the planet. Without its Visages to spread the spores, the alien creature has a much harder time infecting people and spreading its own growths.

The PCs might never become aware of this. After all, it takes twenty years before the Visages start dying off, so they can't simply observe it happening early on and realize they just need to hang in there. However, there is always the possibility that one of the human refuges might be home to one or more scientists with the needed equipment to study the Visages. Alternatively, scientists could task the PCs with obtaining necessary pieces of scientific equipment or even with capturing a Visage, either of which would be quite a task in itself. The thorough dissection and study of a captured Visage might reveal that the plant-stuff of which it is composed has a limited shelf life.

Once this information is discovered, humanity has a goal and a reason for hope again—and not merely the hope of surviving for an uncertain future, but of outlasting and overcoming the enemy. Communities become re-energized, and people might even come to treat each other with a little decency. Though not too much, of course, because the Visages could take advantage of that.

Then again, if the GM prefers a more hopeless apocalypse, there's no need for the PCs to know. Regardless, if they make it twenty years, a new day for humanity will dawn. However, there will be a lot of Visage husks to clean up.

ABANDONED CITIES

As population centers, the cities fell hardest when the end came. After replacing everyone who failed to escape in time, the Visages made the cities centers of spore-creature cultivation. Grotesque, fibrous growths cover every surface, creeping down into the sewers and scaling skyscrapers. Amid this unappealing garden, Visages move this way and that, alternately tending to the fungus's growth and acting out half-remembered activities from their former lives.

Obviously, this is no place for humans. The air is heavy with spores, and Visages are everywhere. The PCs are unlikely to wish to visit such a city, although they might find they have no choice. Abandoned supplies are plentiful in cities, left there by Visages that have no use for them.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- An area of ground gives way, dropping the PCs into the center of a massive fungal growth.

- The PCs are sent to a city to retrieve some important supplies.

- The PCs meet another group exploring the city, but something about their story seems off.

- The PCs spot a Visage going about its original's everyday life, seemingly oblivious to its surroundings.

- An innocuous action by a PC draws the attention of Visages, brings a structurally unsound building toppling down, or both.

- The PCs see what look like friends or family eking out a living among the ruins, but surely they must be Visages?

- A Visage hunting party returns and spots the PCs, chasing them through the overgrown ruins.

"Safety"

In the grim post-apocalypse, no one can be trusted. Even PCs who have stuck together since the beginning must always eye one another suspiciously. Of course, this extends to all other characters they might encounter, and it runs both ways.

If the PCs decide to strike out on their own, they must sooner or later run into another group, possibly because they need supplies. When they do, their outsider status marks them as suspect, as potential Visages. The PCs can't automatically trust any community they encounter, either. It wouldn't be beyond the Visages to set up a fake holdout as a trap for unsuspecting humans, or to even keep all the members of a holdout in position after replacing them. Consequently, the PCs might reach a base they've been hearing about for years, only to find everyone acting strangely.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The PCs realize with horror that they are the only humans left in their holdout community.
- The PCs are mistaken for Visages and must escape or quickly pacify an angry mob.
- An expert in the community proposes changes to the test questions used to screen out Visages.
- The PCs run into an old friend or two they thought dead, who quickly insinuate themselves into the group.
- The PCs have reason to suspect one of their own is a Visage, but how can they be sure?
- When entering a new community or after returning from an excursion, one of the PCs fails the emotional reaction test.
- The PCs notice everyone staring at them, but is it the customary suspicion or something more sinister?

Spore Fields

In some of the more rural areas, crops have been replaced by great spore fields, where Visages tend to the reproductive process of the spore creature. Trucks haul off spore pods to deliver to those few areas that might remain untouched, continuing to spread the spores far and wide and ensure that no human goes unreplaced.

These spore fields have a strong superficial resemblance to farms and, in fact, are tended primarily by the Visages of farmers and laborers experienced in such work. Through their diligent labor, they ensure that the spore creature spreads to cover every inch of the Earth.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The PCs are asked to destroy a nearby spore field. Salt water seems a good option, but burning it might also work.
- A scientist has a theory that the so-called "spore fields" don't actually release spores, and are merely for growing the alien plant-creature. The scientist needs someone to test the theory.
- While searching for supplies, the PCs come across a spore field in which some commotion is occurring.
- The Visages ferociously defend the spore field from any perceived threat.
- The PCs spot someone from their holdout community at the spore field.
- The fresh water used to irrigate the spore field could be immensely valuable, as long as it isn't contaminated.
- Something has killed off the spore growths. Finding out what it is could be immensely valuable.

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EQUIPMENT

THE END OF THE WORLD is a series of roleplaying games unlike the traditional games you are used to. In THE END OF THE WORLD, you don't play a figure out of history or fantasy, you play yourself!

What are your chances of survival after everything you know has collapsed around you? Do you think your plan will get you through the catastrophe? Can you trust your friends to save you from the dangers of the apocalypse? Do you have what it takes to fight the horrors that await at THE END OF THE WORLD?

COULD YOU SURVIVE THE ALIEN INVASION?

It is the end of the world as we know it. We are not alone in the universe. Hostile visitors descend from the stars, their technology as inscrutable as their motives. They come with flying saucers and death rays to fight us in the streets. Ants the size of cars swarm entire continents. Reptilian shape-shifters infiltrate the highest eschalons of international business and government. What can mere mortals do in the face of extraterrestrial annihilation?

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