



INFECTED

WHAT WILL YOU DO
TO SURVIVE?



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Written and Designed by: Oliver R. Shead

Cover Art (and interiors): Andy Walsh

Other Artists: Joshua Meehan, Alexander Chelyshev, Bram
"Boco" Sels

Playtesters and Assistant Game Designers:

Stuart Holbrook, Daniel Milne, Jet Liberson, Rein Drafall

SAMPLER



Welcome to this Reviewers' Copy of our upcoming setting *Infected!* a nightmarish vision of the zombie apocalypse, designed as a Tabletop Role Playing Game. This is a game suited for new and experienced gamers alike.

Infected! is the first RPG setting for Immersion RPG, a totally universal, classless and limitless RPG system which has been a passion project of myself and my dedicated playtesters and designers for some four years now (has it really been that long?). It grew out of a desire to have more flexibility in the game without sacrificing on detail - and to have a high level of realism.

After quite a lot of trial, error, playtesting, frustration and then moments of enlightenment, these aims have now been achieved in the Immersion RPG system - and so it is with some real pleasure that we can now present to you a taste of what is to come.

This Sampler book contains information on the world of *Infected!*, as well as a quick rundown of the rules and an adventure with some sample characters, so you can get a feel of the game and see how it runs. It's also something of a showcase, to present to you the quality of the design and the artwork.

I sincerely hope you enjoy reading it. It has been a heck of a lot of fun to create.

There is a Kickstarter coming soon, planned for early 2015, and it is my hope that through that the full *Infected!* book will be released as a full-colour, hardcover book with premium quality art by the end of the year. And of course, there will be an e-book available too!

If you would like to see more of our projects, check out the Immersion RPG website here: <http://immersion-rpg.com>

Any feedback, discussion, or whatever you'd like to say, can be posted on our facebook or G+ pages. I always love to hear from those who have read the materials.

I hope you have many games of heart-stopping action, suspense and survival in the ruins of humanity. Remember...run faster than your friends, and save one bullet for emergencies (in case they're faster than you, you can always tip the odds back in your favour!).

- Oliver R. Shead



Chapter Two

Outbreak

DAY ONE:

The virus comes out of nowhere. At first appearing vaguely similar to a much worse strain of the flu virus, it appears first in China, then rapidly spreads to Mexico, Brazil, Europe, North America - really, everywhere.

Theories for its origins point to several individuals who may have been some of the first to be exposed. However, within hours of their exposure their symptoms made the virus airborne, as they coughed and sneezed, spreading the sickness on to countless others.

Within a day, upwards of two hundred people are carrying the virus. At least three of these get onto international plane flights, and whilst they are in the air, their symptoms emerge. Coughing and sneezing, their airborne particles saturate the planes, infecting hundreds more.

As of yet, no health organisations have any clue of its existence.

DAY SEVEN:

Within a week, the virus has spread dramatically. Already over ten thousand people are infected. By now, the medical authorities from several nations have started to notice it. Because after several days, one of its most noticeable symptoms emerges, as the victims break out in itchy, pus-leaking sores. By this time, the sneezing has stopped, and the virus is no longer airborne. However, the pus and blood from those sores is far, far more infectious. Should any of it enter a person's mouth or blood stream, they will almost certainly become infected themselves.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) issues a memo advising investigation begin on this new "Super Flu."

DAY TEN:

Within ten days, the outbreak has reached across the entire globe. Tens of thousands are infected, and the rate of expansion is exponential. Health organisations are left scrambling to react. Still unsure of the full nature of the epidemic, the nations of the developed world immediately begin strict quarantine rules in all hospitals. Medical personnel dress in hazmat suits and instigate stringent new procedures for all those found to have this "Super Flu."



People are worried and the media plays up to that fear, updating people on the latest progress of the sickness, the number of new cases, as they soar up into the high hundreds of thousands, then millions. The symptoms of those with the illness are increasingly bad, and include horrendous joint and muscle pain, nausea, vomiting and weakness. The first deaths are now also reported – at first just a trickle, then a flood.

The number of cases in many major cities is already starting to overwhelm hospitals. There are long cues. Wards are filling up, crammed well over capacity. Some people wait for days, and still no space is available. Others are turned away.

The WHO issues a pandemic alert. But it is already too late.

DAY FOURTEEN:

Two weeks into the outbreak, the infection gives its next surprise. En masse, patients start slipping into comas. And as the days pass by, they begin to waste away and die.

Everywhere, on news reports updating every few minutes, there are coloured depictions of the hot spots, where the outbreaks are worst across each city and country. Some cities and towns, further away from the population centres, are still uninfected, but as the days continue on, more and more of them report an outbreak, and then the cases start to climb.

There are millions of cases across the globe. Tens of millions. Hospitals are now so full of patients that they are laying them in corridors, and even outside. But there is little they could do for any of them. As yet, there is no cure - the infection is just too new, and too different.

Thousands are dying every single day and the super flu is now seen for what it is: the worst killer since the Black Death.

DAY EIGHTEEN

Countless buildings are now covered in enclosing scaffolding, quarantining them and preventing access in or out except by health authorities in hazmat suits.

There are posters and constant announcements over tv and radio telling people to bring infected individuals to quarantine centres, where massive tents have been set up to deal with the overflow of numbers. Some places don't have such facilities and the bodies pile up all around, both living and dead.

People stay inside, and only went out when there was no other choice. Even then, they cover their faces, wear masks and move furtively. Every cough, every sneeze is cause for alarm. A runny nose and a sniffle could mean death. The police are worked overtime trying to bring in those who have not reported to quarantine centres.

Most businesses have closed, along with all schools. Here and there, looters smash things and take what they want. In the Developing World, bloody riots are flaring into life in city after city, and there is no putting them down.

Countless people make runs on the supermarkets, stocking up on canned food, bottled water, petrol, and any supplies that might be useful. Banks close as their customers try to withdraw all their savings. The stock market crashes, sending yet more economic woe through society, and further fuelling the rush for comestibles and equipment.

Many people miss out on food stocks, on water, and their fear rapidly turns to resentment and violence. Lootings become commonplace - as does armed robbery, hijackings and murders. Police respond with force, and riots flare into life, rapidly spiraling out of control. They aren't isolated either – in some places they overrun the police stations themselves. In some cities, it grows even more ugly, as people attack hospitals in an attempt to kill those already infected.

The image of frenzied mobs outside blazing buildings rockets around the globe. But when the people go outside, into their streets, many of them can see the smoke, hear the sounds of the violence. It's no longer happening "over there," it's happening in their own back yards and neighbourhoods.

Desperate, most nations declare Martial Law and call in the National Guard, the Reserves, the Riot Police – really anyone who could possibly restore order out of the looming anarchy.

DAY TWENTY-ONE

Three weeks after the outbreak of the Super Flu, amazingly, some of the infected start to *wake up*. They are thin, as the virus has burnt away much of their muscle and fat. Their eyes are sunken into their head and sores ooze pus over sallow skin.

For a moment, hope rises in those around them. *They have survived!*

But it's their eyes that shows the true change in them. They're bloodshot. Red. There is no recognition in them. Only a terrible hunger.

Their bodies are already close to death, just on the precipice, and are hanging on by the smallest of margins. Whoever they once were has been stripped away by the horrors of the infection. Whether they still remember anything of their former lives seems unlikely – as though the person within is no longer there, leaving only a very, very hungry and desperate organic being.

The waking Infected waste no time at all before launching themselves at people and attempting to feed. They bite and scratch in a frenzy, tearing at flesh with a strength that should be impossible. And there is just so much blood.

If there was panic before, now it goes through the roof. Horrified and revolted, governments rapidly close up security on the hospitals, and many began "euthanizing" infected patients en masse. They try to keep it hushed up, moving infected patients to secure buildings, where they slaughter them in the dozens or hundreds, then burn or bury the piles of bodies.

But nothing of that scale can be totally hushed up. Word gets out. A rumour, but a persistent one.

At this stage, only some 5-10% of most populaces have been infected, and it is thought that they can contain it with harsh quarantine methods. But those numbers are still immense - out of the USA's population of 350 million, over seventeen and a half million people are already infected. In a small city of a million people, there would be some fifty thousand cases, scattered all across the city. And those are only the ones they know about.

The governments act fast to try to round up the sick, shut down quarantined areas and create safe zones, where there is no infection and none will enter. Now there is no attempt to hide the thousands of sick that they are exterminating.

Despite the horror of it, it works. The virus slows down.

But it does not stop.

DAY TWENTY-EIGHT

Four weeks into the outbreak, the world's governments are doing their best to keep the media hushed up, prevent panic, and to combat the spread.

But the virus just refuses to stop.

By now, millions of Infected are loose, attacking at will throughout densely packed cities and towns, hunting and striking with all the cunning of wolves. The police and military are overwhelmed trying to protect vast populations.

Massive checkpoints, blockades and hastily-made walls are being set up across cities and towns throughout the world. Huge Green Zones are being erected, where the military presence is strongest, and where they can be absolutely sure that no Infected will penetrate. From here they spread outwards, setting up walled districts, cordoning off street and suburb, one by one, in an attempt to keep things under control.

The walled districts are made with pre-fabbed metal plates or concrete blocks put in place, usually about 3-5 metres high and often topped with razor wire. Some were large enough to have walkways, or had watch towers installed.

The military is only present in a few areas, however, and whilst there are a lot of safe zones, there are not nearly enough for everyone. There are long queues to get access, and many people are turned away - there's simply not enough space, food or other supplies for them.

Shock, upset and fear rapidly turns to hate. It's never nice to realise that you and your family are the expendable ones. In these undefended areas, the military and police make patrols, try to stem the violence and cull the Infected - but people there are basically on their own. Finding food is tough. In some lucky places there are food handouts for a while, but eventually these all stop. And then even the walled townships are starting to starve.

Those who are not caught up in the military web tend to head away from the population centres, seeking safety in the country and other places. However, they only take the virus with them, and begin the nightmare anew.

In small villages and towns, far away from major population centres, many people have started banding together to keep their homes safe. Some are already rejecting newcomers, setting up their own barricades on the roads. Sheriffs and local military forces are finding that there are no orders coming down. The scale of the problem is horrendous. No one knows *what* to do, except try to hold on.

DAY SIXTY

Two months on, and the world is slipping into anarchy, one baby step at a time. Society is resilient, people fight the infection with everything at their disposal. But the writing is on the wall. This thing just will not go away.

Again and again, an area is cleared, only to have the virus pop up yet again, forcing people to go back in, check as many people as possible for the virus, remove anyone infected, then check anyone who had been exposed to them for signs of the virus. But there is no handy test to show the troops whether someone is definitely infected or not, so half the time they've either got to leave the possibly infected person, or shoot them on the spot.

There is no longer any secret as to the fate of those who are sick. If the military doesn't do it, everyone else will. In the filthy, garbage-strewn

apartment blocks and walled townships within the cities, countless infected people are killed by terrified mobs. Many are burnt alive. Sometimes the military stops them - sometimes not. Most are too exhausted to care.

The military is fighting desperately for countless areas of their countries. Places where there aren't yet any walls, and no lines of battle. The infection is riddled deep into the woodwork, and it's like fighting an insurgency, which is everywhere, and unrelenting.

By now, it is estimated that some twenty percent of the world's population is infected. Globally, that is nearly one and a half billion people. Across the USA, that figure is seventy million.

It is well known now that only a portion of those infected with the virus actually wake up, hungry and frenzied. But that is still a very, very large number of people.

In some areas, major population centres, where control is tightest, the virus is not too bad. Harsh, stringent quarantine is the only solution. Within the walled townships, absolute martial law is the order of the day. Every scrap of food, every sip of water and every last bullet is rationed. Most are in contact with their neighbouring townships and local commanders, and that's it. The rest has almost completely broken down.

There's no tv, no radio, intermittent power and the water supply is shaky. In the best of these areas, the control is tight but the township can still function. In the worst ones, there is starvation, regular outbreaks of the infection, massacres and other atrocities committed by troops, and, generally they are like the worst sort of dictatorship.

Still, living outside the townships is worse. There is no law there. The Infected are growing in numbers and they roam in packs through gutted, rubbish-filled streets. The roads are littered with wrecked and burnt out cars. Countless buildings lie empty, shattered. Soldiers move with armoured vehicles, patrolling the streets and killing any Infected they see. They keep some sort of order where they are, respond to sounds of violence, and generally are the only safe point in a sea of trouble.

That is of course where there is any military at all. All too often, the troops are so dramatically overwhelmed by the sheer numbers around them, that they can barely make an impression.

Most people are simply on their own. There is no food except what they can find. There is intermittent power supply, if any at all, and no law and order. Armed thugs rule. Driving a car is dangerous, and liable to wind up in a carjacking, or worse.

The streets are quiet, not only because most people try to stay inside, with their doors barricaded, but also because so many people have either died or left.

Anyone discovered to have the infection is killed immediately. There is no mercy these days. No one can afford that luxury.

Countless buildings lie almost empty, falling into ruin, filled with rubbish and the signs of human habitation. Where dozens of families once lived, now there is but one or two left.

Some areas of the cities have been claimed by the Infected. The subways are often such an area. Dark and hard to defend, they make the perfect delivery system for Infected to penetrate deep into cities and find fresh victims. Because of this, most subway entrances are blockaded, walled up and generally obstructed.

Few people ever go into the subways, unless they're truly desperate.



There are other areas that the Infected alone rule. Places where there were too many of them, and everyone else had to leave. These places are gutted wrecks, and the Infected shelter there whilst they hunt down fresh prey, attacking vulnerable areas close by, and spreading their virus yet again.

The death count from the virus is astronomical. Everyone knows people who have died. Everyone has seen the countless bodybags, and the corpses that lie in orderly lines under sheets, or under nothing at all. Most people have seen the burnings, where dozens of infected, terrified people were shot then immolated.

Countless more people are dying from starvation, privation and a variety of diseases - the worst killers in history. Already, at least ten percent of the world has succumbed.

Outside the walled townships and the green zones, many desperate people wait in impromptu shanty towns, hoping for a chance to get in. They are a sea of tents, lean-tos and sleeping bags, rank with the stench of sewerage, cook fires and fear.

Every day in these tents, people die. Sometimes the infection gets in, and if the military doesn't come out and start their brutally efficient executions, then other people will.

Sometimes, too, woken Infected (sometimes known as "**Screamers**" for their terrible shrieks) attack these camps. Usually in the middle of the night, when everything is dark and panic is easy to start. Sometimes this starts a stampede on the townships - and the soldiers open up on everyone outside.

Those shanty towns are hell.

DAY 100

Over three months have passed, and the outbreak has turned from an epidemic, into something with a life of its own.

Despite the most brutal of quarantines, despite the military cracking down, despite walled townships and green zones, the infection continues to spread. There is just too much populace and not enough men or supplies to protect and control them all.

Some thirty-four percent of the entire world is now either infected from the virus, or have perished from it (or from the quarantine).

At least another two percent of the world - countless millions - have died from other means.

Troops in the cities and towns are exhausted, low on ammunition, on starvation rations, and pushed to the absolute limit, trying to stave off the Infected at every turn. Whole cities are turning into mausoleums. Panic and chaos is taking hold.

In most major cities, the militaries hold on in their Green Zones and walled townships, and try to maintain control of their closest areas with intense patrolling. But the numbers of people getting infected every day is only increasing. It never stops, only grows more and more.

Whole city blocks are now empty, derelict, filled with rubbish and only picked through by looters, scavengers or packs of Infected. These become known as the Black Zones - places you *do not* want to go. They are picked through by scavengers, bandits and Infected, who all tread carefully.

The packs of Screamers eat anything and everything. They tear through the rubbish, consume the dead, eat cats, dogs, rats and birds. Anything they can catch, they will consume.

The size of their packs are growing large, and when they start to assault a city district, attacking here and there, retreating, attacking again, from all over the place - there is very little the military patrols can do unless they bring more numbers to bear. But even when they do beat off an assault, killing dozens of Infected, they will then have to respond



to another crisis in another section of the city, and the pack will simply return, and begin attacking again.

For people stuck in these city sections, the writing is most definitely on the wall. The Infected are getting closer. Most people are already starving, living on a knife's edge, dominated by armed gangs and thugs - and the Infected are the last straw.

But where else can they go?

Some attempt to flee down the clogged highways, but this has already been attempted months ago by countless others. The Infected know the highways. They know prey uses those routes. And they wait there, ready for their next meal.

Most people have stayed put this long, and they have no other plan anyway. They have stockpiles of food, have barricaded their homes, many have impromptu weapons, if not actual firearms - and all are ready to fight.

Some people realise that the only way to survive this is to band together, and defend their communities on their own. Such places build their own defences. The ones that survive tend to keep themselves in one large building. The entrances are barricaded, and armed guards keep a lookout from on high. This keeps the Infected, thugs and the army out. They are, essentially, a city within a city.

It is the scouts and salvagers who keep these communities alive, slipping out into the rest of the city to find food, supplies and equipment. Though things are going to hell, there are still plenty of people living in the cities, outside the walls. Danger is high for salvagers, because gangs control different areas and will likely attempt to take their goods - not to mention the possibility of running into an Infected pack. But it's more than worth it to keep their loved ones safe.

DAY 150

Whole cities have now been lost to the Super Flu. Some forty percent of the entire world has been infected, or has died.

In areas with green zones and walled townships, there is some measure of control, but hysteria is a constant presence beneath the surface.

The military have started bombing runs on cities and districts that have been totally lost to the virus. Cities burn, or seethe with gases. Countless Infected die - along with many more civilians caught in the crossfire.

Some countries even employ nukes.

This slows the virus down, but it does not stop it.

Most walled townships and green zones are now islands in a sea of anarchy. Beyond them, cities burn as military units attempt to staunch the tide of Infected through any means necessary. Artillery levels whole city blocks, napalm burns through suburbs swarming with the creatures.

Ash rains from grey skies.

The military are in street-to-street battles with packs of Infected. Many units are, finally, breaking down from sheer exhaustion, stress and a non-existent supply chain. Vehicles run out of fuel in the middle of the street, men find themselves down to their last few bullets, with few more supplies forthcoming. Sheer exhaustion grinds them down.

The scale of the chaos is hard for anyone to even comprehend - some people stay put and barricade themselves in, while hundreds of millions - possibly billions - choose to flee in immense columns of refugees,

spilling out over the countrysides, pushing their ways across closed borders. There have already been refugees on the roads for months, but by now the sheer number of them is immense. Some settle down in small impromptu tent cities. Some try to fortify themselves. In the months that come, many fall apart, are ravaged by the infection or consumed by packs of infected. The wreckage of such tent cities are a common sight.

In many areas, military and police are now mingled with the refugees, as lost and desperate as anyone else. At night people huddle around fires with strangers, or people they just met on the road. They stay together as long as they trust each other, and as long as they provide common protection. Many such trusting souls find themselves getting robbed, murdered or raped, and those who survive quickly learn to be on their guard.

Food is the most valuable asset here. There is nowhere near enough of it, and everyone is starving. Honest people now consider killing for a can of beans, or a hunk of meat. Hunger will do terrible things to you.

Around these refugees are the signs of carnage. Bodies lie stiff and silent on the road. Some have been eaten. Columns of smoke smear the sky from bombings, fires and wars.

And that's the other thing. As the central governments start to lose control and millions of refugees cross borders, new groups start springing up. Generals, commanders, thugs and petty warlords seem to crawl out of the woodwork. Cities, towns, districts, and even whole states are claimed by these new leaders, who typically use their newfound freedom to crush any resistance to their rule. Many are looted by the very people coming there for sanctuary. There are simply too many mouths to feed.

Most governments are already overwhelmed, but few want to cede whole territories without a fight and so crucially needed troops are turned about and told to reclaim territory.

Civil war is the worst kind of all. Brutal, bloody and filled with hatred. Both sides consider the other one is betraying them.

At first many central governments have the upper hand, but with the infection continuing to spread out of control, conducting organised military operations is all-but impossible.

Still, governments have not always been known for their skill at accepting defeat. Even when they do, many local commanders take matters into their own hands, and go after the rebels on their own. Still, there are simply so many AWOL troops now that retaining control is almost impossible. Bandits roam the countryside and the empty cities, dodging the Infected where they can. Where the AWOL troops and bandits are numerous, they take control, and rule like brutal kings.

The battles between them and the central government forces continue on and off for months, if anything more savage than any of the other fighting. But for every town the government forces reclaim, another town is taken by rebels, another district breaks away, another military commander suffers a mutiny. Worse, all of this conflict does nothing but increase the amount of people infected, and their numbers rapidly escalate out of control. Where different factions were vying for dominance, now both attempt to merely survive - and all too often, fail.

Within the Green Zones and walled townships, starvation, disease and privation are becoming intolerable. Despite the martial law, and the promise of lethal force for any troublemakers, some areas stage protests against their brutal treatment. Most are summarily dispersed



with high fatalities. The military is out of patience - if the people don't like the walls, then they can bloody well live outside them!

Outside the walls, people live as refugees in their cities, hiding in the ruins, barricading themselves in, listening to the roar and thunder of artillery and hoping it doesn't fall on them.

DAY 300

Fifty percent of the world is infected with the virus, or have died from it. At least another ten percent have died from other causes.

The world is a battleground.

Most military units are down to the very last dregs of their supplies. But still, they hold on. The cities around them are gutted wrecks, destroyed by months of fighting to contain the infection. Despite this, many people still live in these ruins. The military still does their best to protect these people, though now they find themselves targeted by the gangs, by over protective community gunmen, and by zealots.

All these efforts have not stopped the virus, but they have certainly slowed it down. The problem is, the numbers of Infected are now at a critical mass point. They are still much less in number than people (for remember, only a minor amount of those with the virus ever become Infected, and countless numbers of these have been slain in the fighting), but still, their numbers are immense, and they hunt in packs that can overwhelm the splintered fragments of human society.

Day by day, society slips further into the brink. Day by day, the Infected grow more numerous, their attacks more bold.

Many Infected make strong attacks on the Green Zones and walled townships. Despite horrendous losses, some succeed. Even then, most incursions are put down immediately, and anyone newly infected is killed.

But the attacks have only just begun.

DAY 400

Sixty percent of the world is infected. Of those, another sixty percent have perished, or will perish from the virus alone. Countless more will die from guns, bombs and privation. Despite stringent quarantines, search and destroy missions, bombings and the unleashing of weapons of mass destruction, the Infected are still here. And they seem to be *everywhere*.

That's not to say that they can't be contained. They can be, and they are - and in fact, they have been successfully contained for months in many areas. But it's not stopping, and outbreaks continue to occur. Beyond the walls, beyond the barricaded communities, the empty, eerie cities are not all that empty. Packs of Infected prowl, waiting for darkness, waiting for a chance to hunt and feed.

Many do not wait for darkness. They are so numerous, the remaining people in these areas so few, that their packs roam the streets during the day, hunting anyone they see. They are dozens, sometimes hundreds, even thousands strong.



A sense of siege has settled into the surviving communities. Most still send out patrols, but they are in force, and they rarely go out without coming under attack. Soon, only armoured vehicles are truly safe.

Connection with nearby communities becomes stretched, and sometimes fades out altogether.

Scavengers leaving their fortified communities must move carefully and quietly through the empty, eerie streets. The Infected leave out sentries and scouts - just as do many gangs, and they can be stealthy.

It's a deadly game of cat and mouse to find a meal in these places - for many people, you *are* that meal.

Some nuclear reactors have started to melt down over the last few weeks and months. With no one to tend them, and with war, disaster and the Infected obstructing any attention on them, the worst comes to pass. With that comes a pall of grey and a light radioactive fallout in the closest areas. The fallout turns the rain to sulfuric acid, burning skin, creating vast amounts of discomfort, and killing plantlife.

If food was hard to find before, now it is *impossible*.

Added to the reactors melting down are the bombings. Nukes are no longer considered to be such a bad idea. Not when millions of people have succumbed to the virus and are potentially heading your way.

The destruction of whole cities buys some time and slows the infection. But it does not stop it.

The sky is grey. The rain burns. And the outbreak carries right on.

DAY 500+

Amazingly, civilisation still carries on. No one knows the death toll anymore. No one cares. They are alive, and that's all that matters.

In fact, the rate of infection has actually slowed - in large part because so much of the population has already succumbed to the outbreak, getting new hosts is now more difficult.

Those who are left are hardy, and hunkered down for the long haul. They cling to life in their defensive settlements, with tough quarantines a part of life. Those who don't keep such rules, rapidly become a statistic.

Even so, the numbers of Infected continues to grow, as more and more are woken from their comas. These numbers in some places are proving telling. They overwhelm districts and assault settlements, again and again, probing for weakness. They are as desperate and as starving as everyone else.

In most cases, such mobs are still defeated by strong walls and high powered guns, so the Infected retreat, and wait.

Most bombings have slowed, if not stopped altogether. Fuel is getting scarce and supply lines have all but disappeared in many cases. There are countless intricate processes required to get the oil out of the ground and into the planes and tanks, and after nearly a year of the outbreak, those processes just aren't happening.

Global starvation is now the major threat. There are few crops being grown, and export and import has ceased to exist. Populations have to be totally self-sustaining, or they simply will not make it.

Some communities pull together, creating farms on rooftops, carparks, throughout city areas, fishing and hunting - whatever they can. But the skies are grey, filled with ash and in many places radioactive fallout. Across the entire planet, temperatures are inching lower as a sooty blanket smothers the atmosphere.

Desperate people watch as crops wither and die, trees lose their leaves, animals grow sick - and then many of their own people grow sick in turn, with radiation poisoning.

This is a slow, agonising way to die. There is never enough food. Someone is always going hungry, leading to desperation, fighting and in many cases outright conflict.

The leadership of such communities now becomes a dangerous, mercurial thing. Assassinations, coups and even outright battles are fought for control. No sooner is one leader made, than he is torn down, murdered or cast out.

Some settlements devolve even further and descend into cannibalism. The weak feed the strong.

You might think that there are no governments in such a time. But in fact, there are. Many remain, keeping control of key areas and keeping anarchy at bay - but still only just.

In times of such upheaval, you might think that everything has fallen, that nearly everyone is dead and there are no organisation left, no governments - nothing but Infected.

In fact, the reality is quite different. The world carries on. It is harsh, cold and bleak, but there is still a lot of it left. Whole sections of cities have been wiped out, but other parts are still very much intact. Sometimes partly walled, sometimes not. Those without walls to protect themselves keep their homes barricaded. Many of them rarely see an Infected - they're mainly over in another section of the city, where things are bad.

Bandits, gangs and the ruthless are just as much threat - if not more - than the Infected themselves.

The world is a fractured place, teetering on the edge of total anarchy.

Some try to keep civilisation going. Others help it burn.

Surviving The Now

Several years on from the outbreak, the world is a very different place. Not so much destroyed, as different. Society still exists in cities, towns and countless tiny

holdfasts. They are far smaller than what they once were, surrounded by the ruins of humanity - but amazingly enough, the framework of society still somehow holds together.

Though life can be incredibly hard, usually without running water, electricity or basic sanitation, most people are making the best of things and are grateful to be alive.

There is light in the darkness. But there is still a lot of darkness.

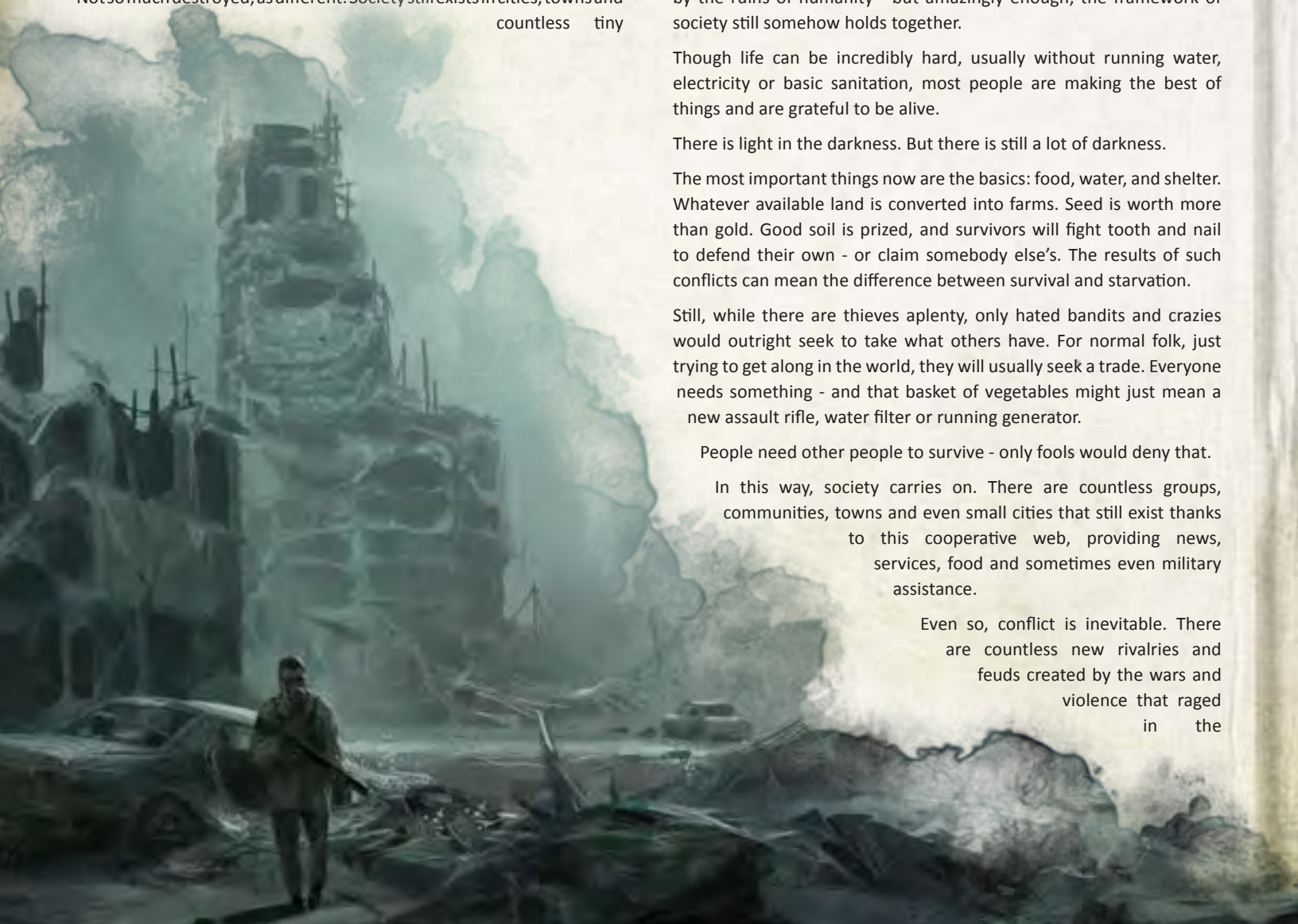
The most important things now are the basics: food, water, and shelter. Whatever available land is converted into farms. Seed is worth more than gold. Good soil is prized, and survivors will fight tooth and nail to defend their own - or claim somebody else's. The results of such conflicts can mean the difference between survival and starvation.

Still, while there are thieves aplenty, only hated bandits and crazies would outright seek to take what others have. For normal folk, just trying to get along in the world, they will usually seek a trade. Everyone needs something - and that basket of vegetables might just mean a new assault rifle, water filter or running generator.

People need other people to survive - only fools would deny that.

In this way, society carries on. There are countless groups, communities, towns and even small cities that still exist thanks to this cooperative web, providing news, services, food and sometimes even military assistance.

Even so, conflict is inevitable. There are countless new rivalries and feuds created by the wars and violence that raged in the



wake of the outbreak, and this complex web of tit-for-tat fighting can seem to have no beginning, middle, or end. Often, preying on your neighbours can seem to be the only option, and when faced with that or starvation, there really is no choice.

Further, the rule of law is thin in this new world, and it is remarkably easy to burn your bridges - if you're bold enough to seek out an entirely new place. Word of mouth travels slowly, there aren't any feds or unified police force to catch up with you - and there's no record anymore. Escaping your past can be easy, if you're willing to brave the wilds and find a new place to settle.

Most communities have a steady stream of traders, visitors, mercenaries and the like travelling to and fro. Trade routes and well-used roads have become highly lucrative - and are, in fact, the lifeblood of what would be otherwise highly isolated groups. Sometimes settlements spring up out of whole cloth on a busy route. Other times, they compete with each other to be the dominant group down a trade route.

With travellers comes the opportunity for merchandise, accommodation, guards and many other jobs that would simply not be present otherwise.

The real wild card in the mix is the presence of the Infected, and their virus. Their numbers have been massively decimated in the years following the outbreak. Bombings, soldiers, gas weapons and nukes were used against them. Many simply died from the ravages of the infection itself.

But still, pockets of them remain. Some such pockets are large hordes, moving in huge swarms from one place to the next. But such examples are few and generally don't last long before they are drastically culled.

No, most Infected exist in smallish packs from a few dozen to a few hundred in numbers, surviving off anything they can consume. Ironically, one of the first ways survivors realise that Infected are in the area is when their crops are attacked and consumed. They will eat anything and everything - but meat is the greatest source of protein and this is what they crave.

Bizarrely, though survivors know the Infected are out there, and often know the territories of certain packs, they rarely worry too much about them. They are remarkably tenacious creatures, refusing to go away. When survivors send out hunter-killer patrols, they find the Infected simply melt away, or lure them into brutal ambushes. The Infected live in the dark places of the world, where people fear to go. The tunnels, the sewers - the lightless, ruined places of the

world. There are many places to hide in this comparatively empty new world and the Infected are masters at it.

Most settlements are well fortified. Few have enough resources to construct perimeter walls, but all of them are well experienced in keeping invaders at bay. Windows and doors are barricaded. There are firing ports and fall-back points, panic rooms and secure areas to hide in.

But you can't stay cooped up in your bunker forever. People need food, water, and countless other supplies to keep themselves going. Besides, the Infected are unlikely to make an assault on a whole settlement unless their numbers are overwhelming. Thus, even if one or two people go missing every now and then, it's no cause for panic. The Infected are a well-known hazard, just as are bandits, cannibals packs, crazies and burners. In the old world people had car accidents and died all the time - but the roads just cleaned up the wreckage and moved on.

The real danger doesn't so much lie with the Infected as with the virus they carry. Though many are now resistant to it, it is still incredibly lethal - and airborne in its initial stages. A single sneeze can infect half a dozen people. If some mucus or blood gets into the water supply, a whole settlement can come down with the sickness.



A burgeoning settlement can be gutted in a matter of days by the virus sweeping through it. One person sneezes, infecting many others, and by the time he starts breaking out in boils and gets quarantined, there are several dozen others also sneezing and spreading the sickness on.

Most survivors have learnt to watch for that first warning sneeze. Masks are always to hand, and no matter who you are, if you sneeze you're likely to find yourself locked away in a quarantined area - if you're lucky.

Despite this, no one wants their loved ones to be killed or exiled, particularly not when they're sick. Even if they *are* infected with the virus, there's a chance they may pull through! A small number of people do after all, particularly if they have medical attention. Because of this, many survivors choose to hide their friends and family if they get sick. Even if they are discovered and cast out, they may go with them - or fight tooth and nail to stop them being executed, as so many are.

In tight knit communities, the pain of these hard choices is something that is felt all too keenly by too many. But what else can they do?

THE INFECTED

It appears that the Infected operate in some sort of cohesion with each other, even following strict pecking orders within their "packs." Leaders will emerge, and these will tend to be the very smartest of them. They are known as the **Alphas**. Somehow, these Infected have held onto some of their ability to reason and like a cunning wolf they plan their attacks with frightening precision. Obedience to an Alpha is absolute, and interestingly, among the Infected, the Alphas show the greatest regard for their own lives. Many will seek to retreat, or will send another Infected to attack something they desire whilst they wait and watch.

Those who have observed the Infected behaving around Alphas have been alarmed to notice there is even some sort of communication between them, and they behave remarkably like an animal pack - even if they rarely show any true signs of relaxing.

There is another strange thing about them - with a lack of available food sources in their vicinity, a pack will go into some sort of hibernation, gathering in small groups to sleep and conserve their energy, whilst only a few maintain a vigil. At the slightest disturbance however, the entire pack will wake, ready to feed once more.

At the same time, they will also send out Hunters. These are Infected who go in search of food in small groups. When they find their prey, they will return to the main pack and lead the entire group to the new source, where they will attack in concert. Unlike most Infected, Hunters rarely stay together with other Infected. They are fast - frighteningly so. But they rarely attack prey themselves, unless starving, desperate or confident of their success.

As the Infected get older, their bodies come under increasing strain from the virus. They slow down, growing heavier, their bodies becoming covered in pus and fluid-filled sacs. The worst of these tend to be on their heads and shoulders, and the truly old Infected have absolutely massive sacs bulging from necks, face, shoulders and back. Under impact, these will burst, spraying highly contagious fluid onto anyone standing close by. These are known as **Busters**, or **Shamblers** when they are particularly disgusting - for obvious reasons.

Still others have adapted in yet another way, as **Mimics**. Rare as these are, they are among the most hated and feared, for these Infected

have retained control over their voices and can mimic the sounds of their prey - which is you. Usually each mimic has only learnt a few sounds and phrases, which they use again and again. But this is truly one of the most terrifying aspects to the Infected - for a survivor in the ruins may hear a young girl crying, pleading for help, only to turn the corner and find a hideous creature crouched and waiting, with a dozen more of its friends ready for the ambush.

The Infected also occasionally use weaponry. Poles, rocks, bricks, bits of timber - whatever's to hand at the time. Some people even claim they've seen Infected using the occasional tool, even creating things, like pitfalls, punji stakes, and other rudimentary traps for their prey. Whether this is true or not remains to be seen, but it is certainly the case that the longer people observe the Infected, the more they see an eerie reflection of humanity itself.

THE GOVERNMENTS

There are a number of governments and their vestiges still carrying on. But they are, by and large, feeble things, barely holding together.

With transport becoming increasingly difficult - cars, spare parts and fuel all coming at a premium - governments have a hard time enforcing their control. With no currency and rarely much of a centralised army left, governments are reduced to being so many words on a page. Their authority grows increasingly weak.

The fortified townships that once formed the government mainstays are growing increasingly independent. Any loyalty they have comes from a sense of community and tradition rather than from any actual chain of command.

Of course, there are exceptions, but by and large, the world is segmenting, falling into smaller and smaller divisions. Most large communities are the greatest influences in their regions, supporting or dominating the townships and settlements around them, with little regard for the commands of their ruling government.

Not all governments are willing to take this lying down. Those who still have influence and resources are desperate to retain their authority. Particularly if they are based in a relatively large city with thousands of people - they need the support of all the communities and townships beneath them.

To make their control felt, some government groups have resorted to age-old tactics, by sending in overseers to watch and report on the management of settlements. Like kings of old, their military forces now come mainly from the loyalty of dozens of similar communities all across their lands, and if they call upon them this can assemble quite a force.

What keeps the loyalty of all these disparate groups? Well, that is a tricky thing. The bonds of loyalty are a very confusing, complicated thing. Some governments rule by threat and force, the strength of assassination and sheer military dominance - no one person quite certain if they can muster enough allies to throw off the government yoke.

The shifting tides of power and loyalty are a constant, dangerous undercurrent, and all too often result in brutal nights of bared daggers.

MATERIEL

Equipment and materiel is a huge problem in a world without factories and mass production. Many of the things once taken for granted are

now unique items, never again to be produced. Tools like spanners, screw drivers and hammers are all made with metal parts, carefully forged and machined. Few people are capable of replicating such a complicated cycle - sourcing the ore, smelting and refining it, then smithing it into a usable part of such high precision.

Though you may think equipment is everywhere, just left lying around, in fact the world has been in upheaval for several years, through waves of war and plague, and most usable items are long gone. Those that have survived have learnt to treasure what they have, for they may never get it again.

Power tools are a luxury that few have used in a long time - even if they had the tools, few people have the power. Batteries run low, get flat, and are never recharged. By the time some power is restored, they are corroded and useless.

Firearms are something that many, many people acquired during the outbreak. Those with firearms stood a chance in all that horror. But even so, nobody is churning out new bullets, nobody is machining new breeches, bolts and barrels. Despite the countless millions of guns across the world, they are rapidly dwindling in numbers and effectiveness.

Some governments are still trying to resurrect factories, to bring back their weapon capabilities, and some have had some success. Even so, it is in limited numbers - but just enough to give themselves the edge that they desperately need to hang on to power. Those who continue to have firearms in the years ahead will be the new superpowers.

At this stage, a few years on, there are still plenty of firearms in existence, but their ammunition is expended only with the greatest of care. Bullet-guzzling machineguns are a curse. Even if they have ammunition, it won't be for long. Explosives, grenades and the like are like gold - completely irreplaceable, and few in number.

Melee weapons and bows are starting to make a comeback. Still just a backup, there are more and more people turning to them in their moment of need. An axe doesn't run out of ammunition.

As the months turn into years, cars are also rapidly reducing in number, destroyed by breakdowns, insufficient parts and rust. Most cars are just useless hunks of junk blocking the roads - often in huge blockages, stretching for miles. Such places are avoided if at all possible - they are likely to be home to an Infected pack or a band of bandits.

It's the same with military vehicles like tanks, which are becoming too expensive in petrol to even move. Many tanks use four liters of petrol to the mile - a prohibitive amount when you're thinking long term. It's for that reason many are becoming stationary pillboxes anchoring defences, unmoving for months or years, until their tracks are completely overgrown with weeds, and they're half-sunk into the earth. Finding abandoned military vehicles is so common in some parts that nobody even looks at them twice.

Planes are even rarer. The military used plenty of them during the opening stages of the outbreak. Fleets of bombers were sent out again and again, to demolish the very cities they were originally built to protect. Missiles, nukes, napalm, gas - they tried it all. And it all required an immense amount of petrol and resources. When the support structure for these things collapsed around them, there was no way that they could keep going.

Many powerful cities and remnant nations still have helicopters, and even a few planes, but they grow more and more difficult to maintain and supply. Their days are numbered.

Now most airfields lie barren and empty, casually scattered with all sorts of aircraft, like the discarded toys of some massive child. Planes lie on their sides, piled into each other, rusting and blackened after devastating fires or just sitting quietly at their stations, still waiting for a crew that will never arrive.

Most people travel on foot. Some have taken to riding on horseback, if they can catch the animals. There are, in fact, small tribes of horsemen forming in various places around the globe - returning to the old ways of bow and spear. Those who never left these ways are truly in a unique position.

WATER

When society starts to slip, even for just a moment, people realise just how much they need water. For survivors in the years that follow, water is what they need above all else. You can't live without water for more than a few days.

Societies revolve around water. When the plumbing stops working, people start realising that they can't just live anywhere. They need fresh water close by. Collecting rainwater is a good idea - but you need a big enough tank, and enough of it coming down.

Settlements now huddle close to rivers and lakes. Most people are a short walk away from some sort of water supply. Those with a well are truly fortunate indeed.

Water containers are life-blood. Most places have huge barrels and countless water containers, which are protected carefully. Purification systems, even simple ones like running the water through sand, are soon learnt - and when people can't purify it, they're lucky to get away with a case of hideously aching guts.

Those who live upstream have a commanding position. Should they choose to dam the rivers, or divert it, or pollute it, then those downriver are virtually helpless.

Water is life. Water is power.

THE NIGHT IS FOR HUNTING

Something that few people in the Developed World fully realised until the outbreak, was that the night is truly very, very dark. Cities made it seem light. Electricity gave them a control over darkness that simply does not exist without it. Fires and lamps provide poor substitutes. They require fuel to burn. Most settlements do not have power, and virtually no-one living in the wilds has any power either.

The night is dark. And it is a time for hunting. The light of a campfire can be an incredible comfort, but it will also advertise your presence - even a light as small as a candle is bright enough to be noticed from hundreds of metres, if not kilometres away. Only the foolish advertise for trouble.

The Infected hunt in the night, making it just that more terrifying. Darkness protects them from the punishment of firearms. The shrieks of their packs are often heard from settlements as the night passes. Sometimes very close by - and sometimes with the screams of their victims.

Few settlements welcome strangers after dark. No one wants to compromise their security - and who in their right mind travels in the darkness?

ESCAPE TO THE SEA

A major form of transport in the world is by sea, but sadly, being that a ship is a very confined space, usually with air conditioning systems pumping through every room, it is also the ideal breeding ground for the infection. The virus caught so many people unawares, countless major vessels were stricken before anyone truly had a clue what was happening. By the time people started showing the sores and were quarantined, they had already infected dozens around them with the airborne virus. These people then infected dozens more before they showed the sores as well, and so it went until the whole vessel was utterly contaminated.

Naval vessels were no exception. Many were completely compromised, along with whole naval bases, long before they were given the order to go to sea and escape the mayhem there, in complete isolation.

Naval vessels are uniquely designed to be completely defensible inside and out, but even so, locking oneself away in a room is only a good idea if you're on the bridge and you have some sort of way out. Greatly outnumbered and and slowly starving to death, many survivors simply killed themselves or attempted to go out with a bang. Others grounded their ships or even charged the shore, hoping to somehow survive the collision.

Many such death ships still wander the seas, drifting aimlessly, packed with dozens, if not hundreds or even thousands of Infected. Many have since starved to death - or slowly consumed each other and all the dead in order to survive. They can survive for quite some time in hibernation - and any visitors would be more than welcome.

Despite such dangers, many people have survived on the open water. Though most now use sail power, as finding enough fuel for a *ship* is a daunting task over months and years.

There are many communities that have been formed out of the hulks of ships grounded on islands or coastlines. The ships form sanctuaries for the survivors, who build homes out of the metal hulls. Soon

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covered in plants, buckets of water, washing lines and the general mess of society.

Some large communities have even been formed out of ship graveyards - hulks lying together in a bay or dock, tied to each other to form floating cities connected to the shore, with walkways, platforms, bridges and passageways through hulls. Small ships dart in amongst these man-made islands, coming and going with people, supplies, news, trade and the like. Most such places, like all communities, are rough and tumble, with a wide range of different folk - depending on what you're looking for. There are tough guys, thieves, killers for hire, murderers, drug-dealers, prostitutes, pimps and informants - as well as farmers, fishermen, healers, law-bringers, couriers, soldiers, diplomats and everything else under the sun.

Such places are havens for people. Highly defensible, they can only really be besieged by pirates - and few pirates truly have the numbers to take on a whole community. Even so, pirates are a genuine presence on the lakes, rivers and seas. Countless people with guns have access to small, high-speed boats, and these require but a little fuel. Pirates are a very real threat. They want your food, your fuel, your guns, and your women. And they're more than prepared to murder you for them. Not all are black-hearted killers - some are thieves, with a shred of honour. But the result is the same - goods rapidly change hands.

Many communities actually trade with pirates, turning a blind eye to their activities. Often these goods are sold to a fence, who then legitimizes his items. Of course, most everybody *knows* it came from piracy... but they *do* need that extra gallon of diesel for the generators, and they can't be *sure* where it came from, can they?

IMMUNITY...?

Amazingly, there *are* actually people who are immune to the virus. Making up a tiny percentage of the population (less than 0.01%), they are completely impervious to the airborne and blood-borne strains of the disease. The exact number of these people actually still left alive is open to question, as many of them would have died in the apocalypse that followed. But those that are immune, and still alive, are some of the luckiest people in the entire world.

They're also the subject of intense scientific study - making them also some of the unluckiest people on the planet. Governments and groups across the globe have become aware of them and have reacted in a variety of ways. Most have decided to do extensive testing - but some have taken it a step further and turned them into lab rats or subjects of vivisection. So far all of these tests have failed.

There are also those who are resistant to the disease, and many people are certainly this, as their bodies rapidly adapted to cope with constant exposure to some form of it or



another. Almost no-one would have survived without this immune resistance.

This doesn't mean the virus is less deadly – not at all. But it is just a little bit harder to infect most survivors these days. The people who are left alive are the ones who aren't likely to succumb to a single sneeze, or a bit of blood on their face. They might...but it would be unlikely. Instead, they would need to actually ingest some of the blood or mucous, or have someone sneeze repeatedly and closely around them. A bite or scratch that draws blood is one such way the virus spreads. This is nearly always a death sentence.

DISINFECTANT

Survivors have also learnt that there are some very specific, very brutal, ways to keep the virus from getting a hold. Some of these are probably more superstition than anything else. Others legitimately work. Generally this involves dousing the wounded area in whatever disinfectant, bleach or other cleaning liquid is to hand. Sometimes it involves boiling water on the affected area. Other times, if a survivor has been bitten, they will simply cut away the affected area of flesh. Others bleed themselves in that area, to clean the blood of the virus before it has a chance to circulate around their body.

Also, after much painful experience with the infection, getting to a working hospital is now your best bet at making it - or at least, so they say. On your own, chances are that your body is just going to consume itself when the coma hits. In a hospital, they will keep you fed, hydrated, give you drugs - whatever they can to keep you alive, with their limited resources.

Some hospitals have reported fairly high success rates - even as much as 50%. But few places have enough resources to warrant the cost in fluid, blood and drugs. Drugs are truly *priceless* these days... so why waste buckets of them on someone who might just die anyway?

THIS IS NOT THE END

With society still clinging on by its fingernails, it is quite apparent that this is not the end of the world. It is merely a new beginning. The question is, whether society will collapse into total barbarism, or whether it will claw its way back from the darkness.

This is the world that you find yourself in. Will you try to save what's left of society? Or will you help it burn?



I USED TO BE A FIREFIGHTER . SEEMS LIKE A LONG TIME AGO NOW. A DIFFERENT LIFETIME PERHAPS? STILL. THOSE SKILLS HAVE COME IN HANDY FROM TIME TO TIME.

WE WERE BEING CHASED - HUNTED REALLY - BY THESE GOONS FROM GRENTON. THEY KINDA THOUGHT OF THEMSELVES AS SOLDIERS. EVEN HAD A FANCY PATCH ON THEIR ARMS. CAN'T REMEMBER WHAT IT SAID.

THEY HAD ALREADY SHOT JESSE - PUT A RED MESS THROUGH HIS RIGHT ARM AND FORCED US TO CARRY HIM. DUNNO WHAT THEY WERE PLANNING FOR THE REST OF US. BUT I CAN IMAGINE THEIR INTENTIONS TOWARDS THE GIRLS WEREN'T EXACTLY HONOURABLE.

THEY WERE CHASING US THROUGH THIS THICK WOOD. WITH LOTS OF UNDERGROWTH. AND I GOT TO THINKING ABOUT HOW MANY TIMES I HAD FOUGHT FIRES IN PLACES LIKE THIS - THEY WERE POWDER KEGS WAITING FOR A MATCH.

BUT WAIT A SECOND. I THOUGHT - I HAVE A MATCH!

SO I LIT IT. AND LET THAT LITTLE FIRE BLOSSOM. I KNOW HOW TO PUT 'EM OUT - BUT I ALSO KNOW HOW TO MAKE THEM BURN. MAN. AND BY GOD DID THAT FIRE BURN.

THOSE GRENTON LADS WON'T BE BOTHERING US NO MORE. THAT I CAN ASSURE YOU.



Chapter Three

Essentials

So what are rock-bottom basics of *Infected!*? How does it work?

Here are the essential elements of the rules, in basic form so you have a good idea of the mechanics when getting started.

Characters have Statistics. These are: Attributes, Skills, Circumstances, Vital Statistics and Advantages/Disadvantages.

FOR NEW GAMERS

New gamers may be wondering what the rules are all about, but here's what it is in a nutshell: the rules represent a *character* who is being played by one of the players in your gaming group. That might be you, or it might even be your Narrator, who runs everyone that's not being run by a player (think of the Narrator as a movie director in charge of everyone but the main characters).

In order to determine what characters can or can't do, they have statistics (which represent their abilities) and dice are rolled with those statistics, to represent the factor of luck.

ATTRIBUTES

Attributes are a character's innate qualities.

Physical

Strength - A character's raw physical power.

Dexterity - Nimbleness, speed and grace with body and hands.

Constitution - Endurance, toughness, healthiness.

Social

Charisma - Charm, magnetism, smoothness.

Tact - Skill with words, argument, reasoning, persuading.

Beauty - Physical appeal, or lack thereof.



Mental



Awareness - Perception, keenness of the senses and mind.

Intelligence - Smarts. Quickness of mind.

Wisdom - Reasoning power, memory, wits.

Spiritual



Resolve - Focus, intention, drive.

Courage - Bravery, sheer guts, ability to endure pain, whether physical or mental.

Luck - Good fortune or lack thereof. One's power over fate.

Chapter 4: Character Creation, will go over the Statistics of a Character in more detail, including **Hit Points** (*level of health, durability*), **Morality** (*level of sanity and humanity*) and **Circumstances** (*friends, associates, equipment, finance, etc.*), **Advantages and Disadvantages** (*quirks of a character, such as a limp, strong right arm, etc.*) can be found at the back of the book.

Attributes Help Determine "Character"

Attributes determine who a character really is, deep down. They give clues for roleplaying, and help to make it that much easier to depict characters.

For instance, having a character with a high Intelligence naturally means he's quite smart, but also having a low Wisdom will mean he's somewhat scatterbrained, forgetful and sometimes foolish.

Having a high Resolve means a character is extremely focused and determined. However, that coupled with low Courage will mean that he finds it hard to push through obstacles and is easily intimidated - but yet will probably not give up even if he is stopped regularly.

Having a high Charisma and a low Awareness can mean that a person is overly chatty and bumbles on well past the point that he should. He doesn't notice when his audience have gone cold.

These are all different tools for the Narrator and his players to breathe life into their characters, and the world.

SKILLS

Skills are the things a character knows or has learnt.

They are easier to develop than Attributes, which take more time to develop. They are also used less broadly.

Animal Handling - Skill in controlling and taming animals.

Athletics - Fitness, running, climbing, swimming, jumping.

Command - Leadership, authority, politics organisation.

Computer - Use of computer, internet, circuits.

Construction - Making things, constructing things, including professional knowledge.

Deception - Lying, subterfuge, manipulation, twisting words.

Deduction - Sensing motive, seeing beneath the surface, reading hidden meanings.

Diplomacy - Persuasive conversation, making friends, bargaining.

Dodge - Ducking, weaving, avoiding getting hit.

Domestic - Basic life skills such as cooking, cleaning, balancing a chequebook, handling a mortgage.

Hand to Hand - Punching, kicking, wrestling.

Investigation - Searching, tracking down clues, hunting through rubble.

Knowledge - Things you know, including some whole professions.

Language - Different tongues.

Medical - The art of healing, using medicine, stretches, binding wounds.

Melee - Using weapons like knives, axes, bats.

Observation - The skill in knowing where to look and what to look at.

Perform - Acting, dancing, singing, writing.

Pilot - Driving, riding or flying a vehicle.

Presence - Being scary, awe inspiring, dominating.

Ranged: Firearms - Shooting guns of any sort.

Ranged: Simple - Using bows, slings, javelins.

Rogue - Picking locks, picking pockets, breaking security codes.

Seduction - Getting friendly with the opposite sex.

Stealth - Being sneaky and quiet.

Streetwise - Knowing drug dealers, players, con artists and the "law" of the street.

Wilderness - Knowing the forests and plains. Hunting, trapping, making fires, cooking food.

STATISTIC LEVELS

All Attributes and Skills have levels from 1-10.

Here is a quick way of interpreting what those levels represent.

0 - No skill at all.

1-3 - Novice, fairly unskilled.

4-6 - Average skill. High level of ability for most people.

7-9 - Highly experienced, elite or professional. Few people ever reach this level.

10 - Consummate mastery, requiring almost superhuman practice, dedication and ability.

Using Attributes with Skills

Attributes are used more broadly than Skills. An Attribute such as Awareness can be used together with Observation to notice what's going on, Deduction to see what someone *really* means by that statement, Wilderness to track someone down - and really, countless other skills, in countless situations.

Skills do not particularly affect a character's personality. Rather, this reflects the person's career path and other learned proficiencies that he has spent time practicing to achieve.

Attributes and Skills are used together to resolve an action. When determining what to roll, the Narrator can determine which Attribute should go with which Skill. The player can describe his action in such a way that favours certain Statistics, and if this is convincing the Narrator may allow them to use these in the roll.

For example, he might say he's trying to persuade the bandits to not kill him, rather than charm them - thus using *Tact* instead of *Charisma*.

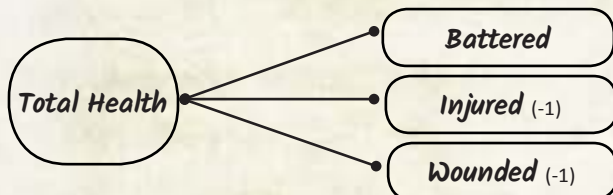
Overlap of Skills

There are many Skills which can be used for the same action - just performed in different ways. You could use *Stealth* to follow a target from afar, or *Deception* to pretend not to be following them in a crowd. The way the player describes *how* he is performing the action is what the Narrator should use to determine what Statistics to use in the roll, as well as how the action turns out.

HIT POINTS

Constitution + Luck = HP

Hit Points are the amount of Damage a person can take. This is divided as evenly as possible into three categories: Battered, Injured, Wounded.



Damage is first subtracted from Battered, then Injured, then Wounded.

At Injured, characters suffer -1 on all actions. At Wounded, they suffer another -1 on all actions.

Going to 0

When characters go to 0 HP, they fall unconscious and are unable to act. Every so often (could be a minute, ten minutes or an hour), they must make a Constitution check (-4, with an additional -1 per minute) or they will lose -1 HP.

Other characters can help these checks with Medical checks. Every 2 successes gives +1/+0.

Going negative equal to your Constitution kills you.

Healing

Constitution + Medical

1 Success = 1 HP returned.

Each HP category heals at a different rate. Roll a check at the following intervals:

Battered heals once per hour.

Injured heals once per day.

Wounded heals once per 3 days.

Note that if you do not take the time to treat your wounds and rest them, then you can only roll Constitution, and cannot add the Medical skill.

MORALITY

Morality measures a character's ethical level. His humanity, empathy and sanity too. In this horrid dark era, all too often people will do whatever it takes to survive - and end up destroying themselves spiritually.

Choose Morality 0-20

0 Morality is most likely catatonic, 5 is vile, 10 is moral, 16 is highly ethical, 20 is saintly.

People must follow the dictates of their inner conscience - or suffer the consequences. Doing actions that go against your morality will require you to make a **Morality Check**.

Roll 2D10 and get under Morality.

Failure means your character has permanently lost a point of Morality - and your demeanour changes. Screw those guys. Whatever. It didn't matter anyway.

Passing means you keep your morality, but feel terrible guilt for what you have done.

Narrators can automatically take off Morality points if a character does something that directly and blatantly goes against their Morality.

MOST ACTIONS ROLL 2D10

Attribute + Skill



Almost every action in the Immersion RPG system uses 2D10 to determine its resolution. *Sometimes* there can be more (for instance, when firing long bursts with assault rifles you can add Skill dice to the roll to Strike), but there are rarely less.

Usually one die is rolled for an **Attribute** and one for a **Skill**, however, there are occasional situations where the roll is made with an Attribute and a Circumstance, or two Attributes together.

There are also occasions where more than 2 dice will be rolled. An Attribute must always be rolled in any action.

The 2D10 used are called the **Primary Dice**.

EACH DIE ROLLS INDEPENDENTLY VS 10

Roll 1d10 + Attribute vs Difficulty 10.

Roll 1d10 + Skill vs Difficulty 10.

Each point gotten over 10 = 1 success.

Each die wants to beat 10. Every point gotten above 10 is a single success.

For example: Jimmy is trying to jump to reach a ledge before a pack of Infected reaches him. He rolls 1d10 + Dexterity (level 6) and 1d10 + Athletics (level 5).

The Dexterity die rolls a 5.

Dexterity 6 + Die Roll 5 = Successes 1

Adding the level of his Dexterity (6) to the roll, ends up with an 11. That's 1 success.

The Athletics die rolls a 9.



Adding 9 to the level of his Athletics (5), he gets 14. That's 4 more successes.

In total, Jimmy got 5 successes, which is a pretty decent level of success.



LEVEL OF SUCCESS

The number of successes achieved determines how well you have managed to perform your action.

0 - Failure. You did not succeed.

1-5 - Mere success. Very average.

6-10 - Fairly accomplished success. Well done.

11-15 - A professional achievement. Smooth.

16-20 - Consummate mastery, requiring almost superhuman practice, dedication and ability.

NARRATOR DETERMINES RESULT



Once an action has been rolled for, the Narrator (also known as a Game Master or GM) determines the result. This might result in new complications, if the roll only barely succeeded - or it may succeed magnificently, with no problems. It is up to the Narrator to determine exactly how the action unfolds.

BONUSES AND PENALTIES

Certain things can make an action more or less difficult. For instance, shooting a kneeling victim is a lot easier than one who is running frantically (and shooting back). The Narrator assigns bonuses and/or penalties.

Bonuses

For things that make an action easier, bonuses can be given to the roll. These bonuses are always divided up as evenly as possibly between the two Primary Dice.

These look like +1/+0, +1/+1, etc.

For example, +1/+0 would add +1 to the first die (the Attribute), but no bonus to the second die (the Skill).

+1/+1 would give +1 to the Attribute, and +1 to the Skill.

LEVEL OF BONUS

The number of successes achieved determines how well you have managed to perform your action. There can be higher bonuses than this, but the Narrator should take care not to award bonuses too freely - they make a big impact.

+1/+0 - Minor

+1/+1 - Moderate

+2/+1 - Major

+2/+2 - Dramatic

Penalties

Things that make an action more difficult are represented with penalties. Penalties are subtracted from the total number of successes made by the character.

Example: Jillian is trying to hide from a group of looters going through a building she's in. However, she hurt her knee earlier, which is affecting her. She is suffering -1 to her rolls. When rolling Dexterity + Stealth to stay hidden, she gets 5 successes. She takes 1 success off this, and gets 4 total.

If an action doesn't get enough actions to succeed due to penalties, it still fails.

LEVEL OF PENALTY

-1 = Minor.

-2 = Moderate.

-3 = Dramatic.

-4 = Major.

-5 = Huge.

BUNGLES

No Successes and Roll 1 = Potential Bungle

A Bungle is a stuff up. A major mistake. Dropping the grenade on your foot, shooting your pal by accident, getting a gun jam or some other catastrophe.

If a character makes no successes on his roll, and also rolls a Natural 1 with at least one of the D10, then it is a Potential Bungle.

Roll Luck Check or Spend Point to Avoid Bungle.

To confirm the Bungle, the player may choose to either temporarily spend a point of Luck to avoid the Bungle, or make a Luck check (one die only, using the current level). If the check is unsuccessful, the Bungle takes place!

The exact ramifications of this can be easily determined by seeing what the player rolled on their Luck check. The lower the roll, the worse the

Bungle. The Narrator should use his logic when determining this effect. Realistic Bungles are such things as fumbling when going to draw your gun, dropping your weapon, having a stoppage (a jam), slipping on something and that sort of thing. Only a *terrible* roll would see the Bungle result in someone dying or getting seriously maimed by it.

Players should also ensure they play in character when they roll a Bungle. Whilst *they* know that the scary men in the woods are certainly up to no good, their characters trust them anyway, and walk blithely on to their dooms...*play it out*. Things that are obvious to people watching the movie or reading the book are not always obvious to those in it (or so it seems). That doesn't lessen the interest of the game though!

ROLLING A NATURAL 10

Rolling a Natural (unmodified) 10 means you've done particularly well. At this point you can pump the air and shout, "Natch TEN!"

Rolling a Natural 10 gives +1/+0 to your roll.

This will automatically result in at least 1 success, no matter if you would normally have succeeded or not (unless no check was possible).

Roll 2 Natural 10's means you have made a perfect attempt, hit the bull's eye, fluked it.

ROLLING A NATURAL 1

Rolling a natural 1 is an automatic failure for that die. No matter the number of bonuses for that die, it will not succeed on that roll.

LEVELS HIGHER THAN 10

It can happen that statistics end up (through bonuses) as higher than 10.

If this happens, the die still only counts as a 10, and any points above this can get transferred to the other Primary Die, so long as it is below 10.

If both dice end up at 10, and there are still bonuses, then these bonuses will count towards a whole new die.

This is called *Filling the Dice*.

Just think 10s. Make as many 10s as possible, using as few dice as possible. A quick way to work it out is to add the Attribute and Skill together, then divide them by ten.

Example: Rickie is preparing herself to ambush several soldiers passing by her. She has a Dexterity of 9 and a Ranged: Firearms of 6. Through some very clever positioning, and several good rolls, she gets a +3/+3 on her first Strike roll against the soldiers.

This would mean she has +12/+9 to her roll. But remember, dice only go up to 10.

$12+9 = 21$. Divide that into 10's and we get +10/+10/+1.

Example: James has an Awareness of 6 and a Deduction of 9. He really lays the groundwork and does a lot of investigation when looking into a new group of survivors staying in the settlement, trying to work out what their designs are. The Narrator decides to give him +2/+2 to his Deduction roll.

This would appear to result in his Awareness counting as 8, and his Deduction as 11.

Instead, his Awareness would be 9 and his Deduction 10. ($8+11 = 19$. Divided into 10's = 9/10)

SPIRITUAL ATTRIBUTES

Spiritual Attributes are one of the things that give characters an edge in the harsh world of *Infected*. They provide wellsprings of sheer intention, heroism and x-factor luck that can keep them alive when lesser people would go down.

Only Player Characters and main Non-Player Characters (particularly antagonists) can use Spiritual Attributes.

These are *spent* temporarily to gain a bonus, re-roll, negate a penalty, etc.

Resolve:

Spend a point to gain +2/+2 to one roll.

Courage:

Spend a point to remove any combat, pain or exhaustion penalties for 3 rounds.

Spend a point to automatically succeed on a Courage check to not panic or overcome terror.

Luck

Spend a point to automatically succeed on a luck check to avoid a Bungle.

Spend a point to gain a re-roll (of a non-Bungled roll).

Recovery:

Spiritual Attributes recover at a rate of 1 point per day.

Narrators can award players with a restored point of Resolve, Courage and Luck for performing some particularly heroic action, surviving something suicidal or something equally inspiring.

COMBAT



There are plenty of chances for combat in the end of the world. It proceeds in much the same way as every other action - with a couple of differences.

THE ROUND

Combat is broken down into rounds. Each round is roughly 2-10 seconds (time seems flexible and weird in high-tense situations).

Characters can perform 1 Standard Action per round.

A **Standard Action** is anything that takes concentration to perform - throwing a rock, punching someone, firing a gun, drawing a knife, etc.

Free Actions are things that take no time at all. Like dropping something, shouting a warning, etc. These do not cost actions.

When combat starts, this is the sequence:

1. Roll Initiative

1d10 + Base Initiative + Modifiers

Everyone declares their actions to the Narrator before rolling Initiative. They are bound by this (though may abort do a Defensive Action).

Everyone rolls 1d10 + their **Base Initiative** (Dexterity + Awareness added together) plus any modifiers for weapons or situations.

Narrator should give bonuses or penalties for advantageous and disadvantageous situations, range, high ground, surprise, ambushes and so on. This can often be the difference in a previous skill check (such as a Stealth roll, opposed by another's Awareness, the winner may get to add their successes to their Initiative roll).

MULTIPLE ACTIONS

Performing multiple actions in the same round is possible, but inflicts penalties on the character's actions. The first action suffers penalties equal to the total actions, and each subsequent action suffers an additional -1.

-2/-3 2 Actions
-3/-4/-5 3 Actions
-4/-5/-6/-7 4 Actions
-5/-6/-7/-8/-9 5 Actions

2. Roll to Strike

Anyone wishing to attack can roll to Strike. This is usually **Dexterity + relevant Skill**.

This could be Dex + Melee for using a sword, Dex + Ranged: Firearms for using a gun, Dex + Hand to Hand for punching, wrestling, etc.

3. Roll to Defend



Defenders may roll to Defend if they wish (and if they are aware of the attack). Even if they declared that they were doing a different action, they can abort to a Defensive action.

Roll **Dexterity + relevant Skill**.

This may be Dex + Dodge, to physically avoid the strike, dive behind a table, etc. or Dex + Hand to Hand to block a punch, Dex + Melee to parry an axe with a chair, etc.

This costs them their action that round. Unless they declared at the beginning of the round that they would be performing a multi-action.

Every success gained by the Defender negates a success by the Attacker.

Defender wins ties.

Defender may Defend against multiple attacks in the same round, with a penalty of -2 for each attack beyond the first.

4. Roll for Damage

Attacker rolls for Damage with **Strength + Melee Weapon** or **Hand to Hand weapon**.

Alternately, Attacker can roll for Damage with the listed Damage statistic of a firearm. This is usually 2 dice, sometimes more.

For every success gained in the strike, the attacker *adds Carryover Damage* to the Damage Roll. This counts as a bonus (so is split as evenly as possible, and dice are filled where necessary).

5. Roll to Absorb

Roll Constitution (+ Athletics if spend an Action).

If possible, the victim can roll to **Absorb** the damage. This is done with Constitution, (+ Athletics if the character braces and uses a Defensive Action).

Each success removes one point of Damage.

If the character is wearing armour, he may roll to Absorb with that armour first. Armour rolls two dice to Absorb.

Your ability to Absorb will depend on the **Hardness Rating** of the attack.

DEFENSIVE ACTIONS

Characters can always abort to a Defensive Action if they have not yet acted this Round.

If they have already acted this round, then they cannot perform a Defensive Action unless it was declared at the beginning of the round as part of a Multiple Action.

Characters can make one Defensive roll and apply its successes against any attack coming in at them that round, with a penalty of -2 for each attacker beyond the first (and so long as the type of Defensive Action could prevent the incoming attack - obviously, Parrying with a sword is not going to stop bullets).

HARDNESS RATING

Some things are harder and tougher than others. A sword is far more dangerous to people than a stick, and this is reflected with Hardness Rating (HR).

0 = *Flesh/Organic Life*
1 = *Blunt*
2 = *Cutting*
3 = *Lethal*
4 = *Armoured*
5 = *Destructive*
6 = *Nuclear*

The level of Hardness Rating affects whether you can Absorb something, or if something can Absorb you.

1 Above:

Attacking a target which is 1 HR above you or your weapon means you inflict only 1/2 damage.

Example: Sam attacks a Cannibal with his fist (HR 0), but the Cannibal is wearing hockey armour (HR 1). So Sam only deals 1/2 damage.

Likewise, if the attacker's weapon is 1 HR above the Defender's HR, the Defender can only Absorb 1/2.

Example: Angelina shoots the Cannibal (HR 1) in the chest with a handgun (HR 2). The Cannibal can only Absorb 1/2.

2 Above:

Attacking a target which is 2 HR above you or your weapon means you inflict **NO DAMAGE**.

Example: Sarah tries to punch (HR 0) Joe, who's wearing a bullet proof vest. She punches his protected chest and can't do any Damage.

Attacking a target which is 2 HR below you or your weapon means they **CAN'T ABSORB**.

Example: Billy uses a knife (HR 2) to stab Joanne (HR 0) over a bowl of fruit. She can't Absorb.

3+ Above:

Attacking a target which is 3 HR or more above you or your weapon means you inflict **NO DAMAGE**, and may harm yourself or your weapon (Roll to Absorb against half the amount of Damage you dealt, unless using ranged weapons)!

Example: Sarah (HR 0) punches a tank (HR 5). Silly. She rolls for Damage and then rolls to Absorb half that Damage herself - breaking a knuckle.

Attacking a target which is 3 HR or more below you or your weapons means you inflict **+1 Die Damage**, at the level of your weapon.

Example: Joanne has an assault rifle (HR 3) and shoots it into Jackie's chest (HR 0). She deals 3 dice Damage at the level of the rifle, plus any carryover damage!

HARDNESS RATING

Attacking:

Attacker 1 HR Above = Absorb 1/2

Attacker 2 HR Above = NO ABSORB

Attacker 3 HR Above = +1 Die Damage at weapon level.

Defending:

Defender 1 HR Above = Attacker deals 1/2 Damage.

Defender 2 HR Above = NO DAMAGE DEALT

Defender 3+ HR Above = Attacker may suffer Damage.



SAMPLE RANGED WEAPONS

Weapon	Initiative	Strike	Damage	Range	ROF	Ma	Size	HR
Compound Crossbow	-2 (+4)	+1/+1	+9/+9	50m (+10m)	Single	1	M	3
.38 Revolver	+1	-	+5/+5	15m (+5m)	Short	6	T	2
9mm pistol	+1	+1/+0	+4/+4	20m (+5m)	Long	20	S	2
.45 pistol			+5/+5	20m (+5m)	Short	15	S	3
9mm sub-machinegun	+1	+1/+0	+6/+6	40m (+10m)	Full Clip	30	M	2
7.62mm assault rifle			+8/+8	100m (+40m)	Full Clip	30	M	3
5.56mm assault rifle	+1	+1/+0	+6/+6	75m (+30m)	Full Clip	30	M	3
.50cal machinegun			+10/+10	100m (+50m)	Full Clip	belt	L	4
Hunting Rifle		+1/+0	+9/+9	100m (+50m)	Single	8	M	3
Shotgun	+1		+10/+10	20m (+5m)	Single or Short	2, 8 or 10	M	3

Initiative:

The bonus or penalty to Base Initiative when using this weapon.

Strike:

The bonus or penalty to Strike with the weapon.

Damage:

The amount of Damage the weapon does.

Range:

The initial range that the weapon can fire at without penalty. The figure in parentheses after the "+" is the range increments beyond this which will incur a penalty of -2 to Strike.

ROF:

Rate of Fire. Single = single shots only. Short = Single shots or short bursts. Long = Single shots, short and long bursts. Full Clip = all of the above.

Mag:

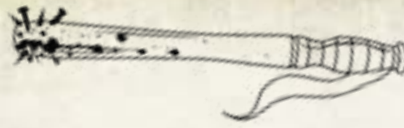
The size of the magazine.

Size:

From Tiny to Gargantuan, the relative scale of the weapon. Tiny is a pistol, Small is a sub-machinegun, Medium is a rifle, Large is a machinegun.

HR:

The Hardness Rating of the weapon's attack.



SAMPLE MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon	Initiative	Strike	Parry	Damage	Size	HR
Knife	+1	-	-	+2	T	2
Dagger	+1	-	-1	+4	T	2
Katana	+1	+1/+0	+1/+0	+6	M	2
Machete	+1	+1/+0	-	+4	S	2
Cleaver	-	-	-	+3	S	2
Axe	-2	-	-2	+6 (+2)	M	2
Hatchet	-	-	-2	+4 (+1)	S	2
Shovel	-2	-1	-1	+8	M	1
Lead Pipe	-1	-	-1	+6	M	1
Hammer	-	-	-2	+4	T	2
Bat	-1	-	-2	+7	M	1

Initiative:

The bonus or penalty to Base Initiative with this weapon. Note that for weapons with greater reach (i.e. a shovel vs a bat), the Narrator may give an Initiative bonus to the one with the longer weapons, unless their opponent gets in too close. This only counts if the weapon is being directly used in the combat.

Strike:

The bonus or penalty to Strike with the weapon (that's with Dexterity + Melee).

Parry:

Melee weapons can be used to parry incoming physical attacks. This is the bonus or penalty for such weapons.

Damage:

The amount of Damage the weapon does. This is only one die, so another die is added from the Strength Attribute. Thus, you roll Strength + Weapon for damage.

Size:

From Tiny to Gargantuan, the relative scale of the weapon. Tiny is a pistol, Small is a sub-machinegun, Medium is a rifle, Large is a machinegun.

HR:

The Hardness Rating of the weapon's attack.

Axes:

Axes are slightly different to other melee weapons. Because of their extra weight, they give a bonus to the Strength die of their wielder for Damage. So an axe will roll a die for Strength (with a bonus of +2), and a die at +6 for the Axe.

Sample Characters

The following are a set of sample characters for you to play. The full book will have complete rules on how to create a character of your own.

Please feel free to make use of these characters in the sample adventure also provided (*Fight or Flight*), or in whatever dark concoctions your Narrator chooses to create!



LIZZY RANDALL

Lizzy Randall was the spoilt daughter of a billionaire before the outbreak. During it, she lost absolutely everything she cared about. For a long while she just drifted with thousands of other refugees, seeing and being a part of things so horrible she has simply blotted them out of her mind.

She considered killing herself to put an end to it, but ended up deciding it would be a dishonour to her father, a religious man.

When she met Terence, a True Believer, he showed her there could be a different way. This was simply another test from the Lord and it was their job to scour away the blight in the souls of men.

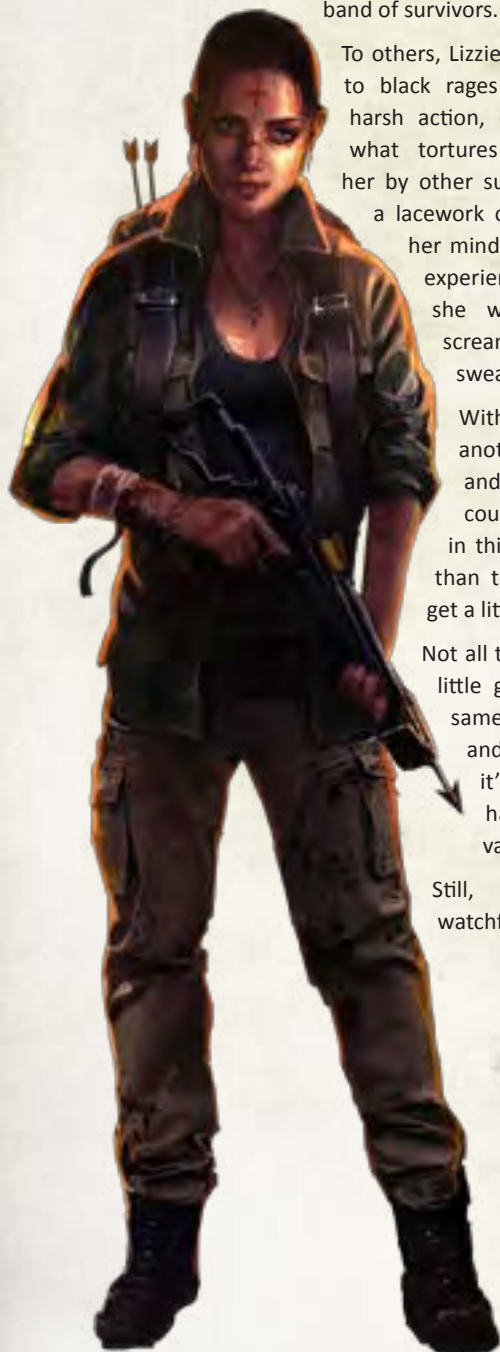
Lizzie took to this new calling with a vengeance, working hard to share her weight of the duties with Terence's small band of survivors.

To others, Lizzie is an enigma. Prone to black rages and quick to take harsh action, only Terence knows what tortures were inflicted on her by other survivors. Her body is a lacework of brutal scars - and her mind is wracked by those experiences as well. Often she will wake at night, screaming and soaked in sweat.

With Terence, she found another way. A new path - and she realised that she could make a difference in this harsh world. More than that, she might even get a little vengeance.

Not all the members of their little group believe in the same way that Terence and Lizzy do. But for now, it's enough to finally have comrades with a vaguely similar path.

Still, she keeps herself watchful.



Attributes

Lizzie Randall

Strength 5
Dexterity 5
Constitution 5
Charisma 4
Tact 3
Beauty 6
Awareness 4
Intelligence 6
Wisdom 4
Resolve 4
Courage 6
Luck 4

Disposition: *Saviour*

Circumstances

Crossbow, 20 bolts 4
Clothes and survival gear 3
(incl. gas mask, flashlight, fire starter kit, cooking gear.)

Advantages and Disadvantages

Nightmares -4
Body Scars -3
Angry -4

Morality: 8
Base Init: 9

Skills

Animal Handling 0
Athletics 6
Command 3
Computer 0
Construction 3
Deception 4
Deduction 3
Diplomacy 4
Dodge 5
Hand to Hand 4
Investigation 3
Knowledge 4
Language 0
Medical 3
Melee 5
Military 0
Observation 6
Perform 2
Pilot: Light Vehicles 5
Presence: 4
Ranged: Simple 5
Ranged: Firearms 4
Rogue 5
Seduction 2
Stealth 6
Streetwise 4
Wilderness 5

Total Health

Constitution + Luck			9
Battered	Injured	Wounded	
3	3	3	
	-1	-1	

Total Exp: 1200

Nightmares

The character has trouble sleeping and is plagued with horrifying nightmares of the things she has seen and done.

Every night she must make a Courage check (Current Courage) or suffer from her nightmares and be fatigued the next day (-1 to all rolls).

Body Scars

The character is covered with horrendous scars to her body. If these are visible, her Beauty drops by -2. There may be some harsh reactions from those who see such marks.

Angry

She has a short fuse and can fire up quickly.

-1 on Wisdom checks to avoid being provoked or going into a rage when things don't work out, are frustrating, etc.

TERENCE MULGRAVE

Terence was an alcoholic and a failed father before the outbreak. During it, he was jolted out of his apathy by the sheer necessity for survival.

It was only when he picked up an old Bible, while he was starving and freezing on the ruined streets, that Terence realised what was afoot.

God was punishing them, like Sodom of old.

It was clear then that it would be his job to salvage what souls he could and bring them to the revelation of the Lord.

So far, Terence has had little success at gathering an army of the faith, which has regularly plunged him into dark melancholies. He often feels that the world is hopeless, the situation too far gone - though he has never mentioned this to Lizzy or the others.

Instead, he keeps up a strong front, always full of bluster and noise - which tends to make everyone think he's the most confident. He's certainly got a mouth on him and it's gotten them all into trouble a few times.

But even despite that, he has earned the respect of the others - and grudgingly admires them back - but that's not to say he wouldn't kill them if he had to.

Makeshift Armour

This armour is made from several different materials - hockey armour mixed with other bits and pieces.

This Absorbs attacks made to the character (though strikes targeting unprotected areas can still get through).

**+6/+6,
HR 1**

Terence Mulgrave

Attributes

Strength 6
Dexterity 5
Constitution 5
Charisma 6
Tact 4
Beauty 4
Awareness 5
Intelligence 5
Wisdom 4
Resolve 5
Courage 4
Luck 4

Morality: 8
Base Init: 10

Animal Handling 4
Athletics 5
Command 6
Computer 0
Construction 2
Deception 5
Deduction 4
Diplomacy 5
Dodge 4
Hand to Hand 4
Investigation 2
Knowledge 4
Language Spanish 4
Medical 4

Total Health

Constitution + Luck

9

Battered Injured Wounded

3

3

3

-1

-1

Total Exp: 1198
(2 unspent)

Disposition: Commander

Circumstances

Hunting Rifle, 50 bullets 5
Makeshift Armour 4
Clothes and survival gear 3
(incl. gas mask, flashlight, fire starter kit, cooking gear.)
Reputation 4

Advantages and Disadvantages

Melancholy -5
Drinker -4
Angry -4
Callous -5

Skills

Melee 3
Military 2
Observation 5
Perform 0
Pilot: Light Vehicles 5
Presence: 5
Ranged: Simple 0
Ranged: Firearms 6
Rogue 3
Seduction 3
Stealth 4
Streetwise 4
Wilderness 5

Melancholy

The character has bouts of a dark, unhappy mood.

Every few days the Narrator should have the character make a Courage check (Current Courage). Failure means he's feeling really down and suffers -1 to all social interaction rolls until he succeeds on one of the daily checks.

Drinker

The character is an alcoholic, and will get drunk at every opportunity. When faced with available liquor, the character must make a Wisdom check at -2 or get stuck into it. This can naturally result in getting drunk.

Angry

See Lizzy Randall's page.

Callous

He cares little. Suffers a -1 on all social interaction rolls based on trust. Also suffers -1 on Morality checks, but gains +1/+0 to Presence rolls for Intimidation.

BLAKE POLLICK

A former military man, Blake had been retired for a decade and was doing his best to drink himself into an early grave when the outbreak hit.

Shit got real fast and Blake's old instincts came into play. He was not about to let some crazy bastard bite his face off - and he wasn't going to starve either.

At some point, Blake headed off into the wilds and didn't emerge again for months. He finds his thoughts are clearer there. The buzzing of voices in cities - and particularly in cramped survivor settlements - start to make him go stir crazy.

Taciturn to the extreme, Blake can go for whole days without speaking. Why talk when you've got nothing really to say?

Ferocious to the extreme, Blake daubs himself with warpaint when going out on expedition or expecting trouble. He's practical, no-nonsense and seems to feel absolutely nothing.

Blake has made occasional cryptic comments about what he will do for food when the chips are down. None of them doubt him capable of it.

Blake's only real friend is his hunting dog, Bram. A heavy rottweiler with a penchant for Infected flesh, he's a nasty one-eyed beast who watches Blake's back - particularly when he's sleeping like a log.

Blake Pollick

Attributes

Strength 7
Dexterity 5
Constitution 6
Charisma 3
Tact 3
Beauty 3
Awareness 5
Intelligence 4
Wisdom 5
Resolve 4
Courage 5
Luck 4

Morality: 7
Base Init: 10

Disposition: *Lone Wolf*

Circumstances

Hunting Dog "Bram" 7
(see page ## for dogs)
Shotgun, 40 rounds 6
Clothes and survival gear 3
(incl. gas mask, flashlight, water filtration pills, etc.)
Toolkit 1
9mm pistol, 2 clips 5

Advantages and Disadvantages

Heavy Sleeper -5
Eerie Presence -4
Machine 2

Skills

Animal Handling 6	Melee 5
Athletics 5	Military 0
Command 2	Observation 5
Computer 0	Perform 0
Construction 5	Pilot: Light Vehicles 4
Deception 2	Presence: 5
Deduction 4	Ranged: Simple 0
Diplomacy 3	Ranged: Firearms 6
Dodge 4	Rogue 3
Hand to Hand 4	Seduction 0
Investigation 2	Stealth 5
Knowledge 4	Streetwise 2
Language 0	Wilderness 6
Medical 4	

Total Health

Constitution + Luck

10

Total Exp: 1200

Battered

Injured

Wounded

3

3

4

-1

-1

Bram, Hunting Dog

Str 7 Dex 7 Con 7 Hand to Hand 6, Athletics 14, Wilderness (tracking) 15 HP 8

Heavy Sleeper

Blake falls into a deep sleep and cannot easily be roused. He suffers -2 to all checks to wake up, and even then is groggy, suffering -2 on all actions unless he makes a Courage check with -4 (the penalty reduces by -1 each round), or spends a point of Courage.

Eerie Presence

There is something creepy about the character.

Character receives -1 on all rolls to interact with people.

Machine

He can soldier on past the point of a normal person's collapse.

He may ignore the first check for fatigue that he is required to make.



ALEX MALONEY

Alex was a young, model officer with a beautiful new wife and a two year old child when the outbreak began.

Now he's a drifter, lost, doing everything he can just to hang on to a shred of hope.

He's not sure if his wife and son are dead. They may have gotten out just before everything went bad.

But just where they could have gone he doesn't know, and that lack of knowledge is eating at him.

Alex has joined up with the other unhinged members of this group out of sheer necessity for survival. He's one man, alone, isolated from his unit. Whether even that's left, he doubts. How long could he survive like that?

Of them all, he is the most haunted by what he's seen and he's had to do. He has trouble sleeping at all, and often wakes with visions of his buddies eating off his face, or staring at him accusingly with their dead eyes.

He feels like a traitor, and knows that he's little different from every other deserter, renegade or bandit out there. There's really not much distinction anymore. If he had wanted to join back up, he could have months ago - but he doesn't even know who these other units are. And he needs to find his family. That's the only thing keeping him going now.

Alex Maloney

Attributes

Strength 6
Dexterity 6
Constitution 5
Charisma 4
Tact 4
Beauty 5
Awareness 5
Intelligence 4
Wisdom 4
Resolve 4
Courage 4
Luck 4

Morality: 9
Base Init: 11

Disposition: *Rebel*

Circumstances

M4A1, 5.56mm assault rifle 6
Clothes and military-issue survival gear (incl. gas mask, flashlight, camelbak) 5
Military Helmet 2
.45 pistol, 2 clips 6

Advantages and Disadvantages

Guilty Conscience -3
Insomnia -4
Nightmares -4

Skills

Animal Handling 0
Athletics 6
Command 3
Computer 0
Construction 3
Deception 3
Deduction 5
Diplomacy 4
Dodge 5
Hand to Hand 4
Investigation 6
Knowledge 4
Language 0
Medical 3
Melee 4
Military 4
Observation 5
Perform 0
Pilot: Light Vehicles 5
Presence: 3
Ranged: Simple 0
Ranged: Firearms 6
Rogue 3
Seduction 0
Stealth 5
Streetwise 3
Wilderness 6

Total Health

10

Constitution + Luck

Battered Injured Wounded

3

3

4

-1

-1

Total Exp: 1198
(2 unspent)

Guilty Conscience

The character is plagued by the bad things he has done. He may be driven to atone for them, or simply feel an overwhelming sense of guilt. In situations that might require a Morality check, the player must make a Courage check or be overwhelmed with guilt. He will seek to ease that in his own way. Should someone discover the secret of this guilt, they will have a powerful hold over the character.

Enemy

Alex has made a powerful enemy in the form of The Red Hand, an anarchistic army intent on conquering as much of the USA as they can. In particular, there is a powerful local commander who has a beef with Alex for the deaths of several of his soldiers.

He's going to come after Alex for a full beat down. Anyone around him at the time will also be fair game.

PHIL MONROVY

Phil is a survivor, pure and simple. Born in Alabama, with a long, nasally Southern drawl, Phil isn't particularly fit or strong, but he knows he's got the sharpest mind out of anyone he's yet met.

Phil knows well that people are likely to target anyone who could be a threat, so he does his best to be as unthreatening as possible - whilst also not being an easy target.

Doing this keeps him out of the way of the chest-puffing alpha males out to be the leaders of whatever godforsaken town or group he's with - and allows him to pass somewhat undetected. He has a talent for being unnoticed, for being able to watch and observe. Meanwhile, his mind is moving fast.

Behind the scenes, Phil is skillful at manipulating events. Say the right thing to this guy *here*, and then to this guy *here*, and *voila!* Suddenly two enemies are at each others' throats.

Phil doesn't want to be a leader - but he does want to keep in control of the situation. A very careful balance.

That's also not to say that Phil can't be loyal - he is. But if his friends and associates end up dragging him down, he'll bail. It's only common sense after all!

So far he's spotted the signs in three different settlements before things have turned dark - and he got out *fast*. Of course, he may have actually caused a couple of those situations to occur... but that's neither here nor there!

Phil Monrovoy

Attributes

Strength 4
Dexterity 5
Constitution 5
Charisma 6
Tact 7
Beauty 4
Awareness 4
Intelligence 6
Wisdom 4
Resolve 4
Courage 3
Luck 6

Morality: 7
Base Init: 10

Disposition: *Pragmatist*

Circumstances

Lead Pipe 2
Clothes and survival gear 3
(incl. gas mask, flashlight, fire starter kit, cooking gear.)
Secret Stash (black market style goods) 3
3.38 Revolver, 25 rounds 4

Advantages and Disadvantages

Glib 4
Born Liar 4

Skills

Animal Handling 0
Athletics 5
Command 3
Computer 3
Construction 3
Deception 5
Deduction 5
Diplomacy 6
Dodge 4
Hand to Hand 3
Investigation 5
Knowledge 5
Language 0
Medical 3
Melee 4
Military 0
Observation 5
Perform 0
Pilot: Light Vehicles 4
Presence: 3
Ranged: Simple 0
Ranged: Firearms 3
Rogue 3
Seduction 0
Stealth 4
Streetwise 3
Wilderness 3

Total Health

Constitution + Luck

11

Battered Injured Wounded

3

4

4

-1

-1

Total Exp: 1200

Glib

The character is quick with his words - if insincere. He would make a great used car salesman. He gains +1/+0 on three Diplomacy rolls per game (when convincing others).

Born Liar

The character is a gifted fibber. He gains +1/+0 on three Deception rolls per game.



RUNNER

Runners are at the first stage of the infection. They have woken from their comas anywhere up to a year ago. Their name is a dead giveaway - these are the fast ones. As they get older, they get more and more covered with pus-filled boils and their bodies grow more swollen and heavy as the virus starts to break them down.

Just like all Infected, Runners tend to scream to the rest of their pack when they've found prey. That brings the rest of them at a rapid pace. If you want to survive around these guys, make sure you kill them before they get a chance to scream - and kill them *quietly*.

Whenever there's a new outbreak, Runners are the first wave of Infected to appear - and amongst the most dreaded.

Though they are hype-aggressive, Runners aren't stupid and over the years seem to have grown more and more cunning. They know the art of ambush - and of patience.

Infected don't have Spiritual Attributes, though they are considered to automatically make any Courage checks they are required to make.

For Hit Points, they are assumed to have a Luck of 4.

Runner

Attributes	Skills
Strength 5	
Dexterity 5	
Constitution 4	Athletics 6
Charisma 0	Deduction 3
Tact 0	Dodge 5
Beauty 1	Hand to Hand 4
Awareness 5	Melee 3
Intelligence 0	Observation 5
Wisdom 0	Stealth 5
Resolve -	Wilderness 3
Courage -	
Luck -	

Base Init: 10

Total Health

Constitution + Luck

Battered	Injured	Wounded
2	3	3
	-1	-1

Mob Rules

Generally Infected attack as a pack. In this case, the Narrator can roll for them as one attack. Roll 2 dice for the first Infected, and then an additional one for each Infected beyond the first (use the Skill die for each extra die).

Claw

Strike: Dexterity + Hand to Hand

Damage: Strength + (5) HR 0

Special: Infection

Using its nails and fists, the Infected attacks its victims with a savagery that few could match. They can push their bodies to the

limits of death in their assault. This does damage of one die for Strength and one die for the Claw at level 5.

Bite

Strike: Dexterity + Hand to Hand (-2)

Damage: Strength + (5) HR 1

Special: Infection

Biting is a common tactic. The Infected are hungry. Their teeth have a power unknown to most humans. This is difficult to land, so suffers -2 to Strike.

Infection

When the Infected attack a person, any contact they have with skin - any chance of transferring their blood or pus to the victim, require a Constitution + Athletics check with 1 success needed per 2 points of Damage sustained. Failure means... you're Infected!



BURSTER

As the months and years pass, the Infected are steadily consumed by the virus. It eats their bodies, making them swollen with liquids and gases. They are covered in repulsive boils, and quite often their whole bodies become quite distended with built-up gases.

This makes them a hazard to be around. To attack them is to risk having their boils burst on you - or worse, their whole body rupturing as the high-pressure gases are released. This results in any bystanders getting showered in highly contagious gore.

It is theorised by some that this is an attempt by the virus to spread yet further, before its host is ultimately destroyed.

They are slower than the younger Infected, but are still frighteningly fast when they see an opportunity for a meal.

With all that extra weight, Bursters are remarkably strong. The other Infected also seem to know *exactly* what they are, and tend to use them to greatest effect. Quite often Bursters are sent in when people are cornered or hunkered down behind cover. When attacking an enclosed space, Bursters go in first - then the rest come in to clean up the mess.

Bursters also very rarely attempt to defend themselves. Unlike younger Infected, who will grab and wrestle with people, dodging their attacks where possible, Bursters are content to be struck. The virus *wants* them to get hit. It wants them to claim new victims.

Burster

Attributes

Strength 7
Dexterity 4
Constitution 6
Charisma 0
Tact 0
Beauty 1
Awareness 4
Intelligence 0
Wisdom 0
Resolve -
Courage -
Luck -

Skills

Athletics 5
Deduction 2
Dodge 3
Hand to Hand 5
Melee 3
Observation 5
Stealth 3
Wilderness 2

Base Init: 8

Total Health

Constitution + Luck

10

Battered Injured Wounded

3	3	4
	-1	-1

Explosion

Strike: +7/+7

Damage: +7/+7 HR 1

Special: Infection

Many Bursters tend to explode when attacked. They are a bomb just waiting to go off. This is not all Bursters! Only the ones who are swollen and ready to pop like a cork.

When Bursters take damage from such an attack (one capable of piercing their skin), then the Narrator should roll a Constitution check for the Burster against the amount of damage received. If that damage is HR 2 or higher, then the successes will need to be double the damage received.

Failure indicates that the Burster has burst! Everyone in a radius of 10 metres will need to make a Dodge check against the Strike. Those very close to the explosion will suffer -4.

Getting hit may result in damage and also in possible infection!

Splatter

Strike: Special (1/2 Damage received)

Damage: None

Special: Infection

Bursters that aren't ready to explode will still splatter their assailants with pus from their many boils.

Anyone within five feet of a Burster when he is dealt damage should make a Dexterity (+Athletics) check to avoid being splattered.

1 success is needed per two points of damage to the creature.

(Note that the Athletics is in parentheses because you can add that die if you make the action a Defensive Action. If you have already attempted a Defensive Action that round, you may also add the die on this roll. Otherwise, just roll the Dexterity die.)

Mob Rules

As with the Runner.

Claw

As with the Runner.

Bite

As with the Runner.



SHAMBLER

The final stage of an Infected is the Shambler.

A Burster with an incredibly long life span will eventually be so totally covered in boils, so distended and twisted with gases, that they become utterly unrecognisable.

They are, at this point, a Shambler.

Virtually every square inch of their body is now covered in revolting, massive boils and pus sacs. Their body is liable to rupture and burst its contents over everyone nearby.

They are, in short, a serious hazard.

However, they are also incredibly slow. The virus has almost killed them, making them stiff and painful in their movements.

Despite this, they are also horrendously strong, and utterly contagious.

Shamblers usually take between two to five years to fully form.

Having many of them is a symptom of a very long-lived infestation of Infected, and despite being horrendous, is really a sign that the worst is almost past... so long as no-one else gets affected in the spray.



Shambler

Attributes

Strength 8
Dexterity 4
Constitution 8
Charisma 0
Tact 0
Beauty 1
Awareness 3
Intelligence 0
Wisdom 0
Resolve -
Courage -
Luck -

Skills

Athletics 3
Deduction 0
Dodge 0
Hand to Hand 4
Melee 0
Observation 4
Stealth 0
Wilderness 0

Base Init: 7

Total Health

Constitution + Luck

12

Battered

Injured

Wounded

4

4

4

-1

-1

Explosion

Strike: +10/+10

Damage: +10/+10 HR 1

Special: Infection

This has the same effect as the Burster's explosion, save that it has a larger radius, of about 20 metres - and more damage.

Splatter

As with Burster.

Mob Rules

As with Runner.

Claw

As with the Runner.

Bite

As with the Runner.

ALPHA

The most cunning of all the Infected are the Alphas. Whereas most Infected were reduced to a state below that of an animal, Alphas retained some of their human intellect.

Behind those bloodshot eyes lurks a ferocious, hungry intellect. They watch, and they plot, with frightening cunning.

For a long time people didn't believe that Alphas even existed. Even when a few isolated survivors reported an occasional Infected appearing to give instructions to the others around it, they were dismissed. Everyone knew the Infected were mindless, ravenous beasts.

But as settlements hunkered down for survival over the long term, and a siege mentality came in, people started to realise the awful truth.

The Infected were actively, cunningly, *hunting* them. They seemed mindless, yes, but there was an undeniable intelligence behind their strikes, their retreats and their deadly ambushes.

Eventually, people came to realise that the Infected were far, far more than mindless beasts. They were hunters. An evolution, or deevolution of humanity into primeval hunters.

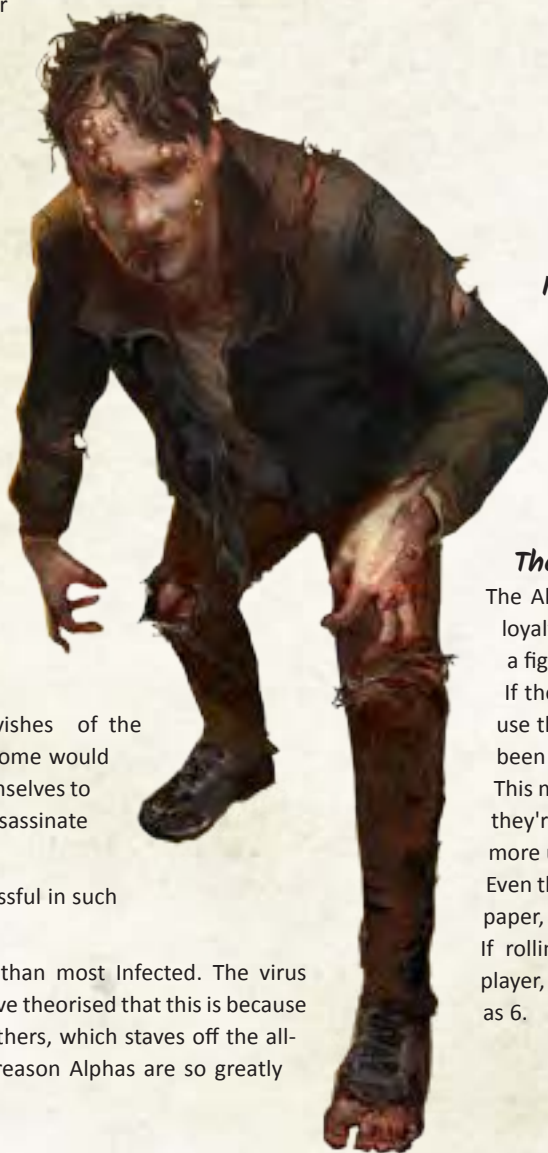
Now it is common knowledge that not all the Infected are mindless. There are a small proportion of them that have retained their ability to calculate and even plan ahead. Survivors know that every pack is run by an Alpha. Larger packs have many Alphas, each of which has its own distinct area of command.

The guiding principle now is simple - kill the head, and the body will wither. Take out the Alphas and the packs will disintegrate into chaos.

Most people just try to survive the ravishes of the Infected - but there are some brave (some would say insane) souls who take it upon themselves to prevent a rising pack and go out to assassinate the Alphas.

Needless to say, not everyone is successful in such a job.

Strangely Alphas tend to live longer than most Infected. The virus consumes them more slowly - some have theorised that this is because the Alphas are given food before all others, which staves off the all-consuming virus. This is yet another reason Alphas are so greatly feared.



Alpha

Attributes

Strength 5
Dexterity 6
Constitution 6
Charisma 0
Tact 0
Beauty 1
Awareness 6
Intelligence 2 (6)
Wisdom 2 (7)
Resolve -
Courage -
Luck -

Skills

Athletics 6
Deduction 3
Dodge 6
Hand to Hand 6
Melee 5
Observation 6
Stealth 5
Wilderness 5

Base Init: 12

Total Health

Constitution + Luck

10

Battered Injured Wounded

3

3

4

-1

-1

Mob Rules

As with the Runner.

Claw

As with the Runner.

Bite

As with the Runner.

The Leader

The Alpha is the leader of its pack and commands utter loyalty from its subordinates. Alphas generally stay out of a fight until it's won.

If they find themselves under threat, Alphas will usually use their full pack to try to protect themselves, and have been known to retreat.

This makes them a real menace, for once they've escaped, they're liable to return again and again, with more and more understanding of the survivors nearby.

Even though their Intelligence and Wisdom are very low on paper, they act with a far higher cunning.

If rolling to determine whether they have out-witted a player, you may treat their Intelligence and Wisdom scores as 6.

MIMIC

Mimics are a bizarre twist in the evolution of the Infected. Unlike most Infected, who can only shriek, scream and grunt, the Mimic has retained some use of its vocal cords.

Mimics are able to say some sentences and phrases that sound totally human. While not able to actually converse with people, they can mimic the sounds that humans make.

Sometimes they may sound like a little girl, a frightened boy, a crying woman or a man calling out for help. Those coming to their aid will find themselves face to face with a grinning horror - and probably plenty of his mates.

Mimics are often used by the Infected to create the perfect ambush. They scream and shriek, beg and plead with survivors to come and help them, luring them further and further away from safety. Then the pack strikes.

They are not a very common variant of the Infected - at least, not yet. Those who know of them don't trust the sounds they hear, and refuse to go to the aid of anyone they can't see - often with tragic consequences.

Some Mimics only know a very basic set of phrases, whilst others know much more. Some can even mimic sounds they have only just heard - like a person's voice. This can lead to incredible danger.

Naturally, for this reason Mimics are hated beyond any other Infected, and are destroyed as soon as possible. Many survivors will take extraordinary risks to wipe out an Infected - and those that don't sometimes go quite mad from the strain of having these voices call to them.

Just like the Alphas, Mimics don't usually get involved in mass mob assaults - not until the fight is clearly won. Also, lesser Infected will fight tooth and nail, and sacrifice themselves without a second thought to protect their Mimic.

Further, Mimics tend to survive the ravages of the infection longer than most. Whereas most Infected swell up and turn into Bursters and Shamblers, the Mimics tend to become emaciated, scrawny and weak from it. Their throats, however, often become thick and quite powerful - making their screams quite deafening.

Shriek

Roll: Charisma + Shriek (7)

Opposed By: Dexterity + Athletics

The Mimic can shriek with painful volume, leaving victims stunned for a vital moment - and possibly with permanent hearing damage.

Those failing their opposing roll will suffer a penalty of -1 to their next action for every success they failed to reach. The next round this penalty will halve, and thereafter reduces at a rate of a single -1 per round.



Mimic

Attributes

Strength 4
Dexterity 5
Constitution 4
Charisma 0 (6)
Tact 0
Beauty 1
Awareness 5
Intelligence 2 (4)
Wisdom 2 (5)
Resolve -
Courage -
Luck -

Skills

Athletics 5
Deception 7
Deduction 5
Dodge 5
Hand to Hand 3
Melee 3
Observation 4
Stealth 5
Wilderness 3

Base Init: 12

Total Health

Constitution + Luck	8	
Battered	Injured	Wounded
2	3	3
	-1	-1

Mob Rules

As with the Runner.

Claw

As with the Runner.

Bite

As with the Runner.

Mimic

Roll: Charisma + Deception

Opposed By: Awareness + Deduction

The Mimic can attempt to Deceive listeners with its voice, making itself sound like any of a number of different things. Some of them are quite genius, and utterly convincing. Others are more simplistic. Succeeding on a Charisma + Deception check will mean that victims are *convinced* that it is a real person out there, calling to them, "Help me! Help me! Please! Somebody!"

Of course, such mental assaults can truly affect the minds of people already under great stress. Not acting according to their Morality may still affect people adversely, and require Morality checks - failure will of course result in lowered Morality, and possibly some Mental or Spiritual Disadvantages.

Survival of the Fittest

The following is an adventure to give you a taste of the world of *Infected!*. We recommend using the sample pre-generated characters at this stage, as the rules for creating characters from scratch have not been fully explained in this brief summary.

AN OPEN WORLD

The adventure setting that we present here is given with a main theme in mind, but with all of the elements of the world explained so that the Narrator can allow players full flexibility in their style of play. We don't want to restrict you, as you can almost never tell *what* exactly players are going to do! After all, some may end up deciding to become dark villains, only to pull through as antiheroes in the end, whilst others may start off good only to go really bad... and that's not to mention the sheer amount of possible choices available to players.

We encourage Narrators to read through the adventure, get an understanding for the various main forces and dramatis personae involved in the story, and then bring the players into it, allowing them to work out what they do as they go along.

APPLESBY

The story is set in the ruins of Los Angeles, around a small settlement called Applesby. It is a stopover on the way to the much larger Baker's Town about two days' walk (or several hours' drive) further into the city centre.

Applesby is a complex of several buildings that were once a sprawling high school. Several buildings lie in ruins, but the largest are well populated and strongly reinforced, even if they are filthy and crowded. The school's sporting grounds have since been converted into struggling crop fields that barely support the settlement's eighty-odd inhabitants. They are fenced in with mesh, though they provide no real obstacle to determined assailants.

The settlement is an occasional stopover for people travelling further into LA, looking to reach Baker's Town, the largest settlement in the city - and a place where many people think they can start anew.

Applesby does a small trade with food and general equipment for those passing through. They are fairly welcoming during daylight hours, though much more cautious when the sun is down. Their rule is simple - don't go out at night.

The people who live here are mostly survivors from the local area, who went here when the outbreak started, and have been here ever since. They run the full gamut of society, and though life is hard, they stick together no matter what.

Despite their hardy disposition, Applesby has several major threats to its survival. The first comes from the Infected. There are several strong packs in the region and they have had regular incursions from them.

Another major threat is from a group of anarchists known as the Red Hand. Part of a much larger movement spreading across the continent, they espouse complete freedom, but in reality are brutal thugs who want what others have. There is a strong group of them nearby, and

they have been making regular "trips" to Applesby. Though Applesby's population is more numerous, there are fewer fighters, and their weapons are not a strong match. Most of the Red Hands are AWOL from either the National Guard or the Army, and they have kept a good number of their weaponry.

One of the stabilising forces in the region is Baker's Army - groups of soldiers sent occasionally from Baker's Town to keep the law and order in the area, and help the settlement stay afloat.

Unfortunately, there aren't any of these soldiers in Applesby at the moment, and both the Red Hand and the Infected know it...

THE FIFTY HANDS

The Red Hands in this area are a mixed bag. Originally they were a group of survivors similar to Applesby, located in a small complex of buildings several kilometres away, just trying to stay alive and stave off the Infected baying at their door. Month after month they struggled on, watching their crops wither and die, waiting for their salvage squads to come back, only to find few ever did.

The entire group was in danger of self-destructing. They were close to starvation, without any hope of salvation, and many were even contemplating killing themselves before a powerful new leader took command.

That was **Ernest Young**, a powerfully-built, charismatic lieutenant from the National Guard, who had only arrived in the community for a week when he saw what was happening and decided to act.

He initiated a coup d'état, killing the former leader of the Red Hands and anyone who he suspected still supported him. In a single night, six men and women were gunned down or knifed in their sleep.

The next morning, Young and his armed supporters gathered everyone together, and Young explained the new rules to them. They were going to survive. That was final. But to do so they would have to leave behind their old world. There was no place in this new world for weakness and pity. That shit would get you killed.

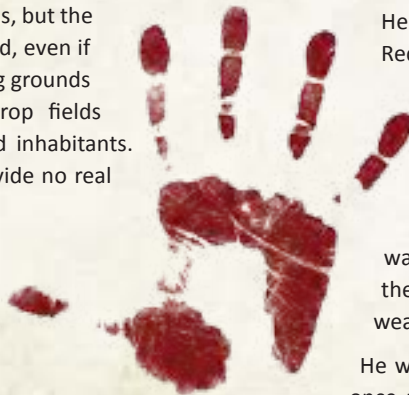
He would see them through this hell, and they would grow once more. But there would be no useless mouths to feed. Everyone would pull their weight, or they would be exiled. Everyone would fight for the cause.

They were Red Hands now, and he was **The Captain**.

Those who protested were gathered together then executed against a far wall, while the whole community were forced to watch. Young then had them each come forward and daubed them with the red hand prints - painted in the blood of their former comrades.

Since that time, in order to survive, they have become marauders, preying on nearby communities, capturing people and forcing them to become Red Hands themselves, and stealing whatever food and equipment that can come across.

Their philosophy is simple - freedom and compassion are wasted emotions. Survival is all that matters. Take what you need, and use whatever force you have to.



There are now about fifty of them - all that has survived their harsh careers. They are desperate, hungry people, who have long been used to doing whatever they must. Compassion is looked at as virtually a crime - taking food, taking what you want, that is considered a mark of strength.

They call themselves **The Fifty Hands**.

THE PCS

The pcs arrive at Applesby towards the end of a long day of travel. It is up to the Narrator whether they have already been travelling together for a while, or have never met before, but whatever their situation, they have all been on the road, headed for Baker's Town. If the players are using the Sample Characters earlier in the chapter, then that will give some clues as to why they may be headed there.

The pcs know about the Applesby settlement, and know that it is welcoming to travellers. If any of the pcs succeed on making an Intelligence + Knowledge check, then the Narrator may inform them about the Red Hand and the Infected packs nearby - and also that there is a large Black Zone nearby, which was bombed with nerve gas during the height of the outbreak. It hasn't stopped packs of Infected returning to set up shop though.

THE HOOK

The pcs are just approaching the Applesby area when they hear the sounds of a commotion up ahead. A woman screams, there are angry shouts and the sharp report of a firearm (an Awareness + Observation check will identify it as an M4A1 carbine, which is a 5.56mm assault rifle). As the pcs draw nearer, they hear harsh laughs, and a woman sobbing.

The scene in front of them is one all of them have seen before. Two men and one woman, all armed, have surrounded several people in the middle of a four-way intersection of a ruined street. One of the men (Jonathan) is middle-aged, balding and thick around the middle. He is armed with a .45 handgun, and is busy looming over a young girl whilst he shows her the business end of it. His laugh is loud, deep and full of satisfaction.

The other (Stefan) is thin and wiry like old leather and carrying a shotgun. He's laughing at the girl as she tries to squirm away from the pistol, and is egging the other man on. He's also busy searching through a pack that is obviously the property of a man who lies bleeding on the ground - possibly the father of the young girl.

The woman (Jacqueline) is in her thirties and quite pretty in a harsh, pale way. She is dressed in military fatigues, chest and back armour and has her hair tied back in a severe pony tail. She is in the middle of telling the two men that they don't have time to play around, and to just dispatch them both.

They wear a mix of civilian and military clothing, with their only truly distinguishing feature being the mark of a red hand on their clothes. Close inspection will reveal that they are painted in blood (again, an Int

+ Knowledge check will allow the Narrator to explain some information about this symbol).

The Hands have not yet noticed the pcs, though will get Awareness + Observation checks to notice them as the pcs draw closer (opposed by the pcs Dexterity + Stealth if they're being sneaky).

At this point in time the pcs have the upper hand. What they do is up to them, but the Narrator has a vested interest in seeing to it that they come into conflict with the Red Hands.

Going around the Hands will require doubling back some distance through the streets, meaning they will quite likely not get to Applesby before dark. If they stay and watch, or try to sneak past, they will quickly notice the Red Hands getting more and more aggressive, particularly to the girl, who they start roughing up. Their intentions are clearly not honourable.

Should the pcs decide to avoid this conflict, it should require a morality check. Passing the check will mean they feel a tremendous guilt and know that what they are doing is wrong - even if it's better for their own survival.

Failing the check will mean they care little. Stuff 'em, why not walk away?

Even if they do walk away, however (with the sounds of the soldiers and the girl lingering behind them), they will be met by several other Red Hands (the Reinforcements - see ahead).

It is possible that the pcs could talk their way out of this situation, but unlikely. The Hands are out on a raid and their haul has so far been pitifully small. They want everything the pcs have, and are willing to fight and kill to get it.

INITIAL SKIRMISH

In all likelihood, a fight ensues between the pcs and the group of Hands. The Hands around the survivors are likely to immediately head for cover in the nearby buildings, which are all shattered two-storey shops, with a few taller apartment buildings here and there. There is a fair bit grass, lots of ruined cars and some new shrubbery here and there which makes the firing lines not so clear.

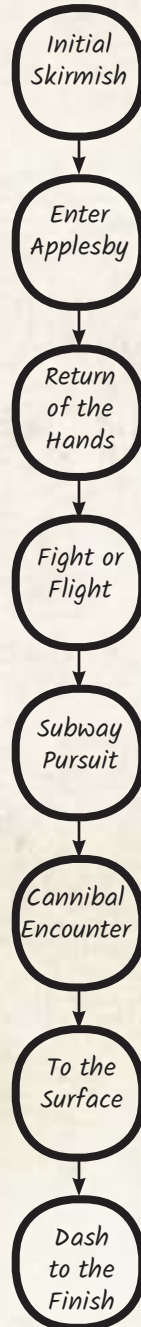
The Red Hands know that there are two others of their group who will come running as soon as the fighting starts (the Reinforcements). Likewise, if the Reinforcements end up encountering the pcs first, then they know the other three will come running to help out.

Either way, the pcs have a few rounds before more Red Hands appear (Narrators should give them between 3-6 rounds, more or less depending on the drama of the situation. A good time for them to appear is when the pcs seem to be winning or about to win.).

The number of Red Hands should be roughly the same as the number of pcs, so if there are less than 4 or 5 pcs in the group, decrease the number of Hands.

The Hands can possibly be defused by talking, but even then, it will only be because they feel the pcs are too strong to take. Attempting to reason with them will require Charisma and/or Tact + Diplomacy rolls (-4), opposed by their Courage + Presence (for intimidation and force).

Possible Sequence of Events



Attempting to scare them off with a show of force, by looking scary, talking tough, etc., will require a Charisma + Presence roll (or Tact + Presence if they "talk them through" how bad things will go), opposed by the Hands Courage + Presence.

A good rule of thumb for the Narrator would be to give the Hands a bonus of +1/+1 to these rolls for every soldier they have over the pcs numbers (so if they have 2 more soldiers than the pcs, they'll have +2/+2 on these rolls).

In all likelihood, they will end up in a firefight which will only end when several of the Hands have been killed, forcing them to withdraw.

When they do retreat, the Hands will shout threats at the pcs, promising that they've seen their faces and that they'll regret going against "the Fifty." They might also shout that "You'll be sorry when the Captain gets his hands on you!"

Red Hand Soldier

Attributes

Skills

Strength 5

Dexterity 5 (6)*

Constitution 6

Charisma 4 (6)

Tact 3 (4)

Beauty 4 (5)

Awareness 5

Intelligence 4 (5)

Wisdom 4

Resolve 4 (5)

Courage 5

Luck 3 (5)

Athletics 5

Deception 4 (5)

Deduction 4 (5)

Diplomacy 4 (5)

Dodge 5 (6)

Hand to Hand 5

Melee 5

Observation 5

Presence 4 (5)

Ranged: Firearms: 5 (6)

Stealth 5

Wilderness 5

Base Init: 10 (11)

Total Health

Constitution + Luck

9 (11)

Battered

Injured

Wounded

3

3 (4)

3 (4)

-1

-1

*Numbers in parentheses are for the leader of the Red Hand group (Jacqueline).

Main Force:

Heavy Ballistic Armour

This is the armour Jacqueline (and a number of other Hands) wears. It is a heavy suit with several ceramic or steel plates in the chest and back, providing basic, but solid protection.

Attacks can still be made to unprotected areas for a penalty to Strike. If successful, no Absorb is possible.

+6/+6, HR 3, -3 Movement Penalty

(Movement Penalties apply to all Athletics checks, and checks for basic motion including Dodging. They do not apply for attack or parry rolls, etc.)



x2 Red Hands (Stefan, shotgun) (Jonathan, .45 pistol, dagger)

x1 Red Hand Leader (Jacqueline) (5.56mm assault rifle)

Reinforcements:

x3 Red Hands (shotgun, hunting rifle, 5.56mm assault rifle)

The young girl's name is Margaret, and so long as she hasn't been kidnapped by the Hands, she will be exceptionally grateful, though a little wary and quite shaken by the experience. She will take them back to Applesby with her father, Jake, who has been shot in the leg and beaten. He is in serious danger of bleeding to death (even in the settlement).

Pcs attempting to help Jake recover in the town (or on the street itself), will be able to make three rolls. Roll, Dex, Int and Wis + Medical, each at -4 (with good medical equipment, that can be reduced to -2). A total of 7 successes is needed to save his life.

ENTER APPLESBY

Applesby normally closes up after dark, but if the pcs arrive with Margaret and Jake in tow, they will be welcomed in. Otherwise, they're likely to be told to leave (and have rifles pointed at them from the tops of roofs).

There are only two survivors standing guard at this point in time, but if a commotion starts, they will be joined by half a dozen others. They are armed with shotguns, pistols, a couple of rifles and one or two assault rifles. Enough to make the pcs life miserable if they should wish it. If given trouble, they will tend to stay inside the buildings, firing back from windows and doorways until the pcs go away.

Once inside Applesby, the pcs will be able to relax and unwind a little. There is plenty of space for them in the "visitors' quarters," which are sectioned off from the rest of the settlement a little ways, have mouldy old mattresses and musty, damp rooms. Even despite this, they are far more comfortable than sleeping out on the road and for the first time in many days, the pcs can get some actual proper sleep. They can also purchase some more ammunition for their weapons, buy food and other supplies. People here are happy to help.

If the pcs wander the grounds at all, they will find high mesh fences enclose all the grounds, with plenty of signs of damage, blood and the like. There are struggling crops, old collapsing buildings - and in one area there's a big crater that digs a gaping hole into a subway tunnel passing beneath the settlement. Most areas are covered in grass and weeds, rusting and broken. There is also a prison, constructed out of an old bathroom complex situated between a couple of different green areas.

Listening to the people in the town, someone may also mention that there's a group of cannibals in the streets outside, who ate a few people from a nearby settlement. That's why the Baker's Town Soldiers left - to kill the evil bastards. There's also crazy burners out there, setting people on fire to cleanse them of the infection (even if they're not infected yet), and other things more horrible than the bogeyman.

Some of the people in Applesby:

THE RED HAND

Starting somewhere in the Midwest, the Red Hand began as a group of soldiers who decided they'd had enough of taking orders and dying like flies - they wanted to be free of the slavery and drudgery of the pre-outbreak world.

They declared their independence from everyone and everything. There were no rules, no laws, no restrictions. For them, they were free. It proved a popular ideology, and many others also took up the cause, spreading it like a second virus across North America. The Red Hand became a beacon for many, who saw it as a chance to remake the world, to make things *better*.

It was a nice idea.

Since that time its motto of "freedom" has come to mean the exact opposite for those who live in the shadow of these warlords. No rules means no repercussions, giving them a license to beat, murder, rape and steal with impunity.

Now the Red Hand symbol has become rather confused. For many idealists, it is still a thing of hope and true freedom, while for many others, it is something to be feared and despised. Often both groups can be in the same camp - and this sometimes erupts into bloody violence.

Conway - The pseudo leader of Applesby (which is actually supposed to be run by majority vote), Reg is a middle aged man with a brutally scarred face from some horror that happened during the outbreak. The stress of having so many people looking to him for leadership is clearly weighing heavily on him. He seems tense most of the time, and worried, staring off into space as he tries to work out how everyone is going to survive the next week, and the week after that.

Henrietta - The foster mother for some eight orphaned children in the settlement, Henrietta is a caring individual who seems as gentle as your own grandmother. In fact though, she has a heart of steel and often tells the children that she would kill for them if necessary. "Right or wrong, I would kill for you." She brooks no nonsense from those who cross her and has a harsh teacher's voice when needed.

Bart Telvin - A disgruntled man in his fifties, Bart is all skin and bone and darting eyes. He dislikes the way Reg (and Henrietta) is leading the settlement, and regularly complains to those who will listen. He also knows virtually everything that is going on, who is sleeping with who, who has stolen what, and is not only an information broker, but also a peddler of hidden weapons and food.

Giles - A big, quiet man, Giles was once a stockbroker - now he's Applesby's best soldier. His stint in the National Guard served him well, enabling him to train the people in Applesby on how to use firearms. Giles is fiercely protective of the town, and everyone in it.

Freddie - The only prisoner in Applesby's jail, Freddie is somewhat of a drunkard and a thief. But he is tolerated because he knows his way around the area better than anyone. He's doing a few days in the lockup because he stole someone else's liquor, and is still pretty sloshed from it. He sings off-key melodies and appears like a fool - but he's managed to survive hardships few others here have known. If the pcs are good to Freddie, he *might* just be persuaded to guide them in their flight from the town the next day.

RETURN OF THE HANDS

The Hands that fled back to their base camp managed to get there by vehicle. That night they spend working out what to do, and in the end they decide that they need to make a show of force. The pcs have humiliated them and broken their grip over Applesby - so it's time to show them where the true power lies around here.

Just before dawn, some forty of them arm and armour themselves with as much kit as they can, then drive out in a column of battered vehicles to Applesby. They set themselves up in several strong positions

where they can cover all the exits from the town - and then they make their presence known.

The first the pcs know of the attack, there's a loud blast and the entire settlement shakes. Several long bursts of machinegun fire rattle through the still morning air, raising shouts and screams from the people in Applesby.

Racing to the windows, the pcs find it hard to see what's going on in the pre-dawn gloom. A successful Awareness + Observation check (-2) will result in the pcs more or less (depending on how many successes) seeing that there are several vehicles parked outside Applesby. One of them is a Hum Vee with a .50 on top.

Further inspection finds that there are four cars, each positioned at a different corner of the block - meaning they're surrounded.

Getting 10 successes or more on the Awareness check will mean the pc has spotted Young himself, and/or Jacqueline (if she survived the skirmish), hunkered down behind the Hum Vee. A shot *might* just be possible to hit either of them, but it would be at -10 to Strike, due to the range and the cover of the vehicles (and both Young and Jacqueline are armoured - attempting to hit the head would incur another -2).

It turns out the blast was from a grenade launcher, which blasted a piece of the main building's roof in Applesby, starting a small fire. Realising they're heavily outgunned, the people of Applesby begin to panic.

The Ultimatum

Young wastes no time in broadcasting his message.

"People of Applesby, it appears you have with you several trouble makers. Killers who have stained their hands with the lives of my men. This is something I cannot allow. You say you want peace between us, then you harbour fugitives! I demand that you release them into my custody for suitable punishment. Fail to do this, and I will lay waste to your pathetic excuse of a town. Do not test me. You have five minutes to respond!"

Fear is a powerful weapon. The people of Applesby don't know how many Hands there are outside, and are all too aware of their own inadequate defences. They have only a few automatic weapons, not nearly enough ammunition, and poor training. The Hands have been raiding them for months and always turn out on top.

Many people will call for the pcs to be sent out to the Hands. Others try to calm them and call for reason - but ultimately the hysteria is mounting. They may be poorly armed, but there are enough of them to kill or capture the pcs.

CREATING AN EERIE ATMOSPHERE

Creating an eerie, terrifying atmosphere is a lot harder than it sounds. It's quite simple for players to crack jokes and dismiss the dangers they are facing, and so dispel the tension. The Narrator should not stop this, but should not let up in his portrayal of the environment around them. Don't ham it up. Just continue to describe what's around them. The sounds, the sensations. What something *looks* like out of the corner of their eye, what something *sounds* like down the tunnel?

Roll dice without them knowing what they're for. *What's she rolling for?! Is there going to be an ambush?! Leave them wondering what's going on.*

And then, slowly, introduce more tension. Bit by bit. Those sounds get more clear. *Something's out there!* Increase the volume of your voice, the speed of your descriptions. But continue to make it drag slightly, so the tension continues to build, build, build, until the pc's are jumping at noises, wound up tighter than a spring.

And then just scare the hell out of them with a sudden attack. One tried and true tactic is to speak softer and softer, leaning forward, then suddenly shout, "*BAH! Something grabs you by the ankle!*" If that doesn't scare the hell out of them, nothing will!

What happens next will depend on how the pcs handle the situation (requiring some Charisma/Tact + Diplomacy/Presence rolls, or other social rolls as the Narrator sees fit). If they saved Margaret and her father last night, that will give them some definite credit, and some allies (giving the pcs bonuses to their rolls).

The Narrator is encouraged to play up the sensation of hysteria, how the mob mentality comes into play, leaving the pcs feeling trapped and out of control. Convincing the people here not to turn the pcs over will require some great roleplaying.

FIGHT OR FLIGHT

There are a few different options now open to the pcs. They could stay and fight, trying to lead the townsfolk in a battle against the Hands. This will be difficult, but not impossible (but even if successful, it will result in even more attacks by the rest of the Hands). In all likelihood, even if they do choose this option, they will rapidly find themselves outgunned by the automatic gunfire of the Hands, who will pick off Applesby's defenders one by one and riddle their buildings with gunfire, possibly innocents.

The buildings are fairly low, and are somewhat shielded by the sport fields around them, which are higher up, but even so, they cannot withstand the heavy machinegun fire that will come at them from the Hum Vee's .50 cal.

In the case of such a battle, the Narrator should emphasise the chaotic nature of the firefight, how hard it is to see and hit targets (give penalties of between -4 to -10 to hit hard targets), and really dramatise the shock, noise and horror of the battle.

If the Hands pick off most of the defenders, they will start to advance, creeping from cover to cover, and using "leapfrog" tactics to keep the defenders under constant fire (one group moves forward while another puts down fire from behind them, then the closer group fires while the second group advances past them again). This could end up with Hands busting down the doors, pegging grenades through windows, and brutal hand-to-hand fighting through the entire school complex.

If they put up a stout resistance, the Hands may be pushed back again, but ultimately, a lull in the fighting will only result in the people of Applesby realising that they're on the losing side.

Either way, unless the pcs make some *incredible* Command, Presence and/or Diplomacy checks (with appropriate Attributes), the people of Applesby will show them the door. They're unlikely to sacrifice themselves for people they've only just met, no matter how likeable or heroic.

need to flee.

But where?

Flight

Ultimately, flight is the only response possible. But where can they run to? The Hands are covering all the exits.

There is one possibility - but it is a desperate one. They can attempt to take the subway. Naturally, this is an action of dire last resort. It's pitch black down there, a maze of twisting tunnels that are famously used as highways by the Infected and crazies. Only the insane would venture within.

But the only other option is to fight their way out, and with the Hands having such a strong force, that will likely result in suicide (but hey, it's worth a shot...right guys?).

There is a way into the subway through the settlement itself. Sometime during the outbreak, an artillery round landed in the school's grounds, digging up the earth and busting a hole in a subway tunnel passing beneath. It still sits there, barely noticeable, overgrown and boarded up to prevent any undesirables getting in. But occasionally there has been a need for it.

Getting there requires some stealth (Dex + Stealth checks, opposed by the Hands' Awareness + Obs) not to get shot up by the Hands. If they have occupied parts of the green, then this will be quite difficult, and will require a strong attack by the pcs and the townsfolk to dislodge them.

Once there, they will be fairly protected from gunfire because of the steep slopes of the crater. The townsfolk will tell them to shift the timbers to make space, then tie a rope around one of the other timbers and use it to climb down.

It's a drop of about twenty feet, into a tunnel partially filled with scummy, stinking water. It's clear from the reek that the settlement's latrine pits have leaked in here.

The townsfolk give them directions of where to go. If they have been good to the people there, then they give them good directions. Otherwise, they give them directions sure to see them getting lost in the unrelenting darkness.

SUBWAY PURSUIT

Trekking through the subway requires a source of light. Even with it, there is an overwhelming sense of darkness all around. The shadows

seem to move and twist. Things drip, distant noises echo through the endless tunnels, sounding like *things* in the tunnel with them.

The Narrator should play up the sheer eeriness of the subway. The horror of its endless maze. The darkness. Distant sounds.

After some distance following the directions that the townsfolk gave them, and having finally left the sludgy water behind (but now totally soaked, cold and filthy - not to mention possibly exhausted and wounded from the battle), the pcs will start to hear sounds from down the tunnel. There will be a distant shriek (the Infected calling the pack together), and then, occasionally, other sounds... a soft splash, rocks being kicked, the sound of a foot slapping the ground.

There is, in fact, a small Infected pack tailing the pcs (x the pcs' numbers). They are starving hungry, and upon seeing the light rush after the pcs and begin to shadow them, waiting for a good opportunity to strike. Among them is a Mimic.

The Little Girl

By the time the pcs reach a crossroads in the subway system, where it branches out into several other tunnels, they will no doubt be on edge. They know there's something out here. They know their light is clearly visible.

As they move into the crossroads, they will hear the sound of a little girl crying. She's sobbing, gasping for breath, and she sounds truly *desperate*. She starts to call for her mummy, and then starts to beg the pcs for help, *"Please...I'm all alone...please help me...I miss my Mummy...oh please, I don't know where I am! Please!"*

The pcs will see a small figure moving towards them from the middle of the train tracks. There is a train sitting motionless on its tracks, all smashed and broken. The figure coming towards them has the appearance of a young girl with tangled blonde hair and a little backpack.

Players may roll an Awareness + Deduction check (opposed by the Mimic's Charisma + Deception) to be able to tell if it truly is a little girl or not. It will be *very* convincing, including shying away as they draw closer, putting her hands in front of her face from the light (but really to hide the signs of the infection).

The Mimic won't converse with them. Instead it resorts to its script of sobbing, begging and acting the part of a terrified little girl, separated from her family. She may even start to ramble on in a confused manner - but nothing she says will make a full story or be totally coherent.

If the pcs fail their Deduction checks, they are convinced. Leaving her at this point will require them to make a Morality check (even though she's actually an Infected). However, if they take her in or draw within hand's reach, she'll launch into a *Scream* attack, attempting to deafen and stun the pcs. In that first attack, the pcs will have a penalty to their Initiative rolls of -1 for every success she got on her Deception roll above that of their Deduction rolls (*so if she got 6 successes to Deceive them, and they got 3, 4 and 5 successes to Deduce her motive, they would suffer -3, -2 and -1 respectively on their Initiative checks*).

This will be followed by the Mimic attempting to bite the closest person in the next round, and with shrieks of triumph coming from the tunnels all around as the rest of the pack come pouring in to feed.

Infected Pack:

Runners 1x pcs numbers

Bursters 1x or 2

Alpha 1x

They will come surging in from all directions, hoping to overwhelm the pcs by sheer numbers and ferocity. The Narrator should describe how grotesque they are in the half-seen light, as the flashlights wave wildly in the gloom. In such harsh light, the Infected will seem even more like monsters, shrieking, hissing, attempting to claw and bite and tear at the pcs.

Remember to use *Mob Rules*, as listed under the Runner description, and also the *Infected* rule, also listed there. No one wants to get bitten!!

If anyone *does* get bitten, this will provoke a moral quandary for anyone who's left. There *are* apparently some cures - if they can get the person to a good hospital (like the one in Baker's Town). But the person will soon become contagious... so what to do?

Again, play up the horror of such a decision. Killing a fellow pc or leaving them behind to get eaten is a really tough thing to do, and weighs heavily on your mind. Make sure they pay the moral price for their actions, no matter how logical.

At the end of the skirmish, the pcs will find themselves gasping, terrified and quite exhausted, surrounded by the stinking bodies of Infected - and possibly minus a character or two (hopefully not). If anyone noticed the Alpha giving directions, they will also notice that it did not join in the attack, but instead slipped away (unless it was shot of course...).

The Alpha wears an old business suit, complete with the expensive leather shoes and a chewed tie still hanging about its neck. The stains of its revolting meals are evident all down the front of a disintegrating shirt.

Observant pcs (with good Awareness + Obs or Awareness + Deduction rolls) will have noticed the Alpha giving directions then slipping away, and using the Burster to cover its retreat.

This spells trouble.

Impelled Onwards

There is little time for the pcs to rest. They soon hear more sounds coming down the tunnels, including distant, hungry shrieks. There are plenty more Infected where that came from.

Now the eerie suspenseful journey becomes a terrifying pursuit, with jack-in-the-box surprises. The pcs have to think fast to work out which tunnel to take (which one doesn't have Infected coming down it, and which one will take them where they need to go).

An Awareness + Observation check (-2) will be needed to work out which of the several tunnels doesn't have Infected coming down it, while a Wisdom + Knowledge check will help them work out the map to get them where they need to go (unless they just pick the empty tunnel and rush down it).

Have them make several Constitution + Athletics checks during the flight to determine how they're holding up. Give penalties of between -1 to -5 for each check beyond the first (possibly even the first if the fight was intense). Those going slower will slip behind the rest... will they get left behind? They will start to hear the pack gaining behind them, will hear the shrieks, the patter of feet, the gasping and howling.

There are several more encounters along the way. The Narrator can use all, some or none of them, as he prefers. Try not to just kill the pcs, but give them a sense of constant threat, to the point of terror.

THE ALPHA

The Alpha running the pack hunting the pcs should be introduced in the first attack. Wearing a business suit, twisted and deformed by the virus, it yet has a look of sharp predatory intelligence in its bloody eyes.

The Narrator would do well to keep this Alpha alive, don't throw him away in the assault. It will be far more frightening for the pcs to have that single Alpha still out there, still gathering other Infected to finish off the pcs. He is hunting them down, one by one, in a determined, calculated manner.

To prove that he's still orchestrating the attacks, give them brief glimpses of him whenever a major attack comes. A brief flicker of that business jacket, that chewed-off tie.

Then, in the final flight from the subway (which by that point will seem like a complete and utter death trap), they will have their chance to kill the ghastly thing.

Other Possible Encounters:

Approaching Packs

There are several approaching packs of 1.5x to 2x the pcs numbers of Runners and Bursters. If they succeed on their own Constitution + Athletics checks (you should add +2 dice at the level of Athletics to represent the different speedier ones in the pack), by a cumulative total of 10 successes more than any of pcs, then they will catch up with them and attempt to eat them.

Abandoned Train

There are several abandoned trains lying dark and empty on the tracks. These can be both refuge and trap for pcs. If a pack is getting close, then the pc or pcs can shelter in here and attempt to hold out. The problem is, the doors are generally left wide open, meaning it's hard to keep them out - and once inside, it will be a terrifying game of cat and mouse between carriages.

If the bigger pack hasn't caught up to the pcs yet, then there can also be some lone Infected hiding in the carriages. They might launch out of a dark doorway at a pc who's passing by (this is even more terrifying if it's a kid). Alternately, they might creep up on pcs who are trying to hide in the carriages.

Single Shambler

A single Shambler lies in wait for the pcs. Immensely grotesque, it can only move very slowly - but is extremely dangerous in enclosed spaces. It could be hiding in a train carriage - or might move in to block the exit from one, then lumber down towards them clumsily. If anyone shoots it...well, things get messy.

Isolated Character

It can happen that one of the pcs gets isolated from everyone else - trapped in a carriage, or hiding underneath one, somehow split up from the rest. This can be a truly great opportunity for suspense, with that sole character moving around with great care, trying to join up with others, while the Infected try to hunt him down and eat him.

Does he use his flashlight or not? Run or not?

This can also prove a great counterpoint to moments of intense fleeing and action - the dragging suspense of another character creeping through the gloom.

Just be careful not to let separate storylines slow the game down too much (and *hopefully* join them back up again before too long...then again, you could just be evil to that solitary player... *bwa hahahaha*).

Keeping It Intense

The pursuit through the subway should be handled fast, with moments of dragging tension and periods of respite, followed by intense action. You don't want it getting tedious or overly long - rather, you want your players shrieking, jumping, shouting, "Gogogogogogooooo!!!" And generally taking the tempo up to a frenzy.

CANNIBAL ENCOUNTER

Just when things are getting too much. Just when the players are resigning themselves to being caught and eaten down here, they will see some light up ahead.



At this point, a pursuing pack should be right behind the pcs, howling and preparing for a big feed. Terror and exhaustion will likely have convinced the pcs that if they don't get out of here now, they'll certainly die.

The light is in fact coming from a train carriage parked beside a gloomy station, where a small group of unhinged survivors are temporarily staying. They're currently in the process of cooking a meal.

There are four men, three women and two children (a boy and a girl). All are filthy, look totally starved, and are armed with an assortment of melee and ranged weapons that include a shotgun, an uzi, an automatic rifle, a katana, several bats and axes, etc. They immediately move to repulse the pcs, and will scare the pcs away unless the pcs are successful on a Tact + Diplomacy roll (-2). This may take some persuading, as the survivors here don't want the Infected coming and don't want more mouths to feed.

If the pcs are successful they are allowed into the carriage, and must immediately set about defending it from the pack that has been pursuing them this whole time (double the total numbers of all characters, with several Bursters).

Once the Infected have a lost around half their numbers, and if they

Cannibal

Attributes	Skills
Strength 5 (6)*	
Dexterity 5 (6)	
Constitution 4	Athletics 5
Charisma 4 (6)	Deception 4 (5)
Tact 5 (4)	Deduction 4 (5)
Beauty 4	Diplomacy 4 (5)
Awareness 5	Dodge 5 (6)
Intelligence 4 (5)	Hand to Hand 5 (6)
Wisdom 4	Melee 5 (6)
Resolve 4 (5)	Observation 5
Courage 5	Presence 4 (6)
Luck 3 (5)	Ranged: Firearms: 5 (6)
	Stealth 5
	Wilderness 5
Base Init: 10 (11)	
Total Health	
Constitution + Luck 9 (11)	
Battered	Injured
3	3 (4)
	-1
	-1

*Numbers in parentheses are for Mirk, the leader of the Cannibals.

walks of life. All have lost everyone they know. All have no hope for their own survival.

Starving, desperate, they were driven to cannibalism. They first started by killing and eating a sick man. Then, consumed with guilt they swore never to do it again. But there just wasn't enough food. Starving again, they came across two people huddled around a campfire, cooking food. Attempting to steal the food, they killed one of them in the struggle and badly wounded the other. He was an enemy, so they finished him off - and then ate them both.

are not having any success, they will retreat back down the tunnel - some will head into the station platform.

Now that they're there, the survivors will start to see a glimmer of opportunity in them. The pcs are exhausted, beat-up and close to the end. They could be an easy meal ticket.

The Cannibals

This group was brought together as wandering refugees, moving from one place to the next. Over the last few

months they ended up coming together from all sorts of different

It's not exactly a strategy they have, but rather an act of desperation.

After prowling around this area for some months, they came to the attention of the people in Applesby and a couple of other settlements, so some of the soldiers from Baker's Town set out to hunt them down. They were pretty effective, and the Cannibals' numbers were drastically thinned. Those who survived fled down into the subway. They've been wandering down here for over a week, fending off Infected and slowly starving.

Several days ago their hunger got too great and they set upon one of their own, killing him while he slept then cooking and eating him. They're just finishing off the last of this meal when the pcs arrive - providing a brand new source of food.

Being actually at a train platform means that the pcs could exit through it and back to the surface, so the cannibals try to persuade them not to.

"Yeah, we lost Barry yesterday when we tried to get up there. There's a whole pack upstairs."

Actually, that part is true. They did try to get upstairs, and one of their own did get eaten - except he was eaten by *them*.

It's been a long day of battle, running and more fighting. The cannibals offer the pcs some cherished meat (there's not much left, and they stare at it with undisguised intensity), and try to act normal while they persuade the pcs to settle down for the night.

These people are quite clearly deranged. Skinny, fidgety, muttering to themselves and twitching, they are much like junkies, the way they fight amongst each other. However, to the pcs they put on their best smiley faces, and unless the pcs succeed on an Awareness + Deduction roll (opposed by the Cannibals' Tact + Deception), they will be unaware of the true extent of their insanity.

The leader of the cannibals is a big bearded guy called **Mirk**, who has kept his strong frame despite the starvation rations - because he has insisted that he keep fed and strong. He has a katana that he keeps over his back, as well as a hunting rifle that he is remarkably accurate with. He does well at hiding his cannibalistic nature, and his desperate hunger, and does most of the talking. Others are silenced with a glance if they start to spill the beans.

Sleeping With the Enemy

Should the pcs actually sleep, then the cannibals will wait an hour or two then creep up on them to slit their throats. Anyone truly sleeping will need to make an Awareness + Observation check (-4), against the cannibals' Dexterity + Stealth. Even if they succeed, unless they get 5+ successes, they will be groggy (-1 to all actions for one round per success less than 5).

Those trying not to sleep will have a hard time, because they are truly exhausted. They must roll a Courage + Athletics check (-4). Failure means they sleep anyway (hope they're not the one on watch). Alternately they can spend a point of Courage.

If they are not asleep, they can make the Awareness + Obs check without penalty. However, if they are pretending to sleep, they will need to fool the Cannibals, which may require a Tact + Deception roll (opposed by the Cannibals' Awareness + Deduction).

It will be Mirk and a couple of others who try to quietly murder the pc's in the middle of the night. The rest of the cannibals will watch on, half terrified. They are not particularly brave, but they are psychotically

desperate. They will attack if they think they can win quickly, but if the tide turns against them (and if Mirk is defeated or killed) then they are quite likely to attempt to flee, or to just give up, collapsing on the floor and shrieking, screaming things, begging, pleading. The point is that they've lost their marbles, but they are actually still people, no matter how revolting and nuts.

Should the pc's capture some of them, they will be left with yet another dilemma. Do they kill them, or let them loose? Or do they leave them for the Infected? If they don't kill these Cannibals, then they're likely to kill some other hapless traveller. But is murdering them the right thing to do.

Again, while killing them may be a convenient solution, it will still (probably) provoke a Morality check. Failing will mean they grow colder, harsher, and would happily do such an action again (and possibly even worse). Passing it means they retain their sense of right and wrong, and feel terrible about what they've done, which has its own ramifications.

One other thing to remember is that when any cannibals flee, they are going directly into a waiting pack. A few minutes later, their shrieks will come echoing down from the station or tunnel. And they will go on for some time.

TO THE SURFACE

Having survived the cannibals, and feeling suitably horrified and paranoid, the pcs will now make for the surface.

It's not far, up the platform, passing several other platforms on the way. But it is still an eerie and frightening place - and there is still a pack on the loose out here.

If the Narrator has been keeping the Alpha in the business jacket as a continuing antagonist, this is when he can spring his trap. Even if he's already dead, the Infected will still assault here, though it will have more impact if they know it's coming from *that* Alpha.

This, again, is a great opportunity for an eerie atmosphere. It's utterly dark, there's lots of rubbish, things blocking some of the escalators and stairs, making the way up a little tricky, and narrow.

That narrow closeness is what makes this so deadly. The Infected could be right around a corner, or just at the top of the stairs, waiting to pounce, giving no time for the pcs react.

They will likely move carefully and slowly, trying to maximise their arcs of fire, sticking close together. That will make it all the easier to spook the hell out of them.

If they go fast, like bats out of hell, then things will go explosive really fast.

The thing is, there are plenty of Infected in the station, and they are more than ready for the pcs. If the cannibals fled here earlier, then likely the Infected have already eaten a few of them. The pcs will have heard their screams, and now will pass signs of the struggle. There are bloodstains, and footprints tracking through it, leaving a godawful mess. These bloodstains will be all up and down the escalators, where the Infected have been travelling.

Again, bring the tension to boiling point with half-heard sounds, letting them roll checks to see what they can hear, what they notice, but only giving a few clues. If the pcs roll well (on Awa + Obs, opposed by the Infecteds' Dex + Stealth), they will detect the site of the ambush at the top of a flight of stairs, and may also realise that there are some tailing them from behind as well. This gives them a choice - do they double-back and take a different route? Or blast their way through?

Taking a different route will simply mean the Infected relocate as well, because they can easily see the light from the pcs. Truly trying to avoid them will mean they'll need to turn off their lights. In such a case, the Infected will be just as blind as the pcs, but will post sentries at all the exits. Over the last few years, the Infected down in these places have started to evolve into a heightened awareness of dark spaces, so they actually know where they're going.

This will still give a chance to the pcs to avoid their hunters, and will give them the opportunity to slip up a thinly-manned staircase. However, everything will be by feel, and they will have to slip past Infected at the top, which is not very likely.

Ultimately, they're likely to get detected, attacked in the dark, and then it will turn into a chaotic battle on a staircase. *Not* where they want to be!

Closing the Net

The Infected here are extremely cunning led by their Alpha in the business suit. This is the pcs' chance to exact vengeance on him for the horrors that they've suffered so far.

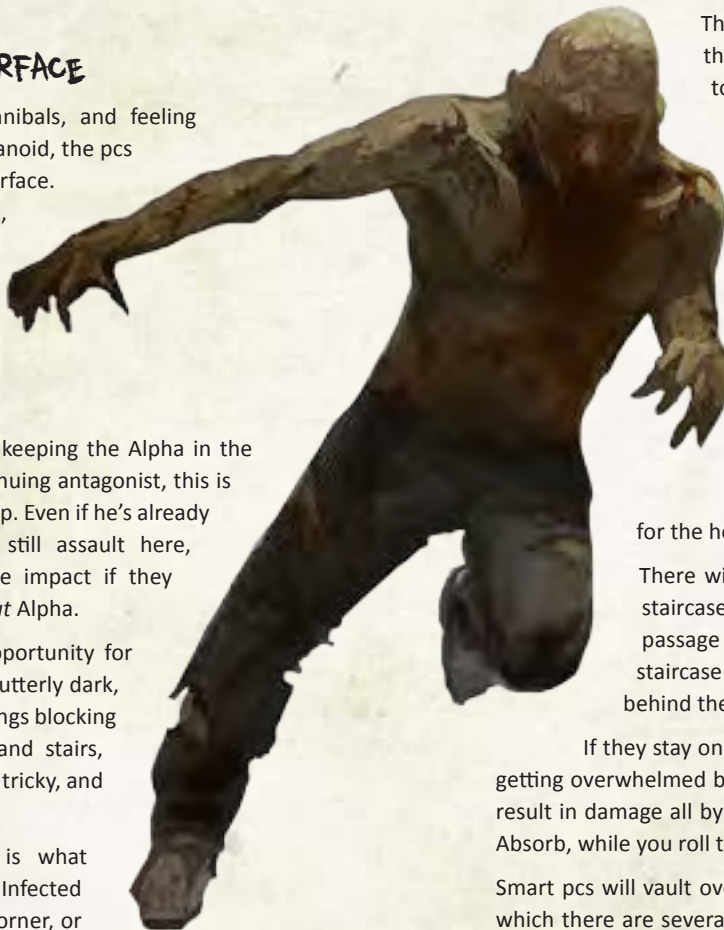
There will be a Shambler positioned at the top of the staircase or escalator, attempting to block the pcs passage up it, while Runners come pouring down the staircase around it, and several more come up from behind the pcs.

If they stay on the staircase, they have a very good chance of getting overwhelmed by the mob, tackled down the stairs (which can result in damage all by itself - get them to roll Constitution checks to Absorb, while you roll two dice at level 4 for Damage).

Smart pcs will vault over the staircase and onto another platform, of which there are several that their staircase goes past on the way up. Their train was on the bottom floor, allowing them to pass through half a dozen others to get to the top. Jumping (with a Dexterity + Athletics check) will allow them to reach one of those other platforms and will force the Infected to come after them.

Even then, it will be a game of running, fighting and running again. Trying to wear down the pack is not a great idea - they just keep coming.

There will be roughly 30 to 50 Infected in the station. Feel free to change the numbers to more accurately reflect the strengths of your



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group. This is not a pack they want to fight their way through, though they will be forced to to some degree. Rather, they must use their wits and reflexes to find a way out of the trap they're in.

Runners x6-x10 pcs numbers

Alpha x1

Shambler x2-x5

Bursters x2-x5

The Infected will utilise the Bursters and Shamblers at strategic moments to block off paths of possible escape or retreat. Sometimes that will lumber out from behind an outcrop and come at the pcs - particularly at close range. This is a particularly horrifying experience.

The Infected will come on in waves. Not all are committed at the same time. Some were sent to block different exits, and will only arrive at the fighting after several rounds. Each wave will consist of roughly x1.5 the pcs numbers, sometimes more, sometimes less. The Narrator could roll for it, or just decide.

However, the more Infected that are drawn from their positions guarding exits will mean that the more exits are actually free - if the pcs can escape the Infected coming after them.

Killing the Alpha at this point will send the pack into disarray. Those nearest to the pcs will still attempt to feed on them, and will barely notice. Others will get confused. Some may even attack each other. The most noticeable thing will be that their tactics simply disintegrate. All the Infected come after them from everywhere. None are left to block or ambush.

This may not seem like such a great bonus for having killed the vile bastard, but it is in fact a blessing - if they can get past the main horde!

Exit

The exit will be on the top platform. There may even be some light there, depending on the time of day.

The Infected may pursue them down the street, but if the pcs keep outdistancing them, they will give up before too long, then return to the subway's gloom to lick their wounds.

DASH TO THE FINISH

The pcs will probably think it's over now. The Narrator should let them relax finally, laugh about the horrors they just went through, eat whatever rations they have left, and generally let themselves feel triumphant.

They are not far from Baker's Town. There are signs pointing the way, and likely the pcs will limp gratefully in that direction. If they have Freddie the guide with them, he will tell them that it's only a couple of hours' walk, and that the station stop was about as close as they could get - any further up and they would have encountered a cave-in anyway (created by the soldiers of Baker's Town).

The pcs may make an Awareness + Observation check at this point to notice that they are actually being watched. They must get at least 10 successes to detect the well-hidden figure peering at them with binoculars from a decaying old building fronting onto the station.

That is, in fact, a Red Hand scout who is even now radioing in to his pals that the pcs have made it through the subway.

Trouble is coming.

The first thing the pcs will notice is the engine. Again, have them roll Awareness + Observation checks to see how quickly they notice, and how much they notice. If they fail, the vehicle will be almost on top of them before they realise.

It's a small white pickup truck, beatup and bearing the countless scars and marks of all vehicles living in these times. It is also covered in metal plating, with steel mesh over the windows - and there's a prominent

The Vehicle

+6/+6 Absorb, HR 3 (main body)
+4/+4 Absorb, HR 2 (windows)
+4/+4 Absorb, HR 1 (tyres)

The Hands arrive in an armoured pickup truck and use it aggressively to try and run down the pcs, with gunmen shooting from the back.

Vehicles operate much like people. They have Health (called Damage Points), and a certain Absorb rating. However, it takes substantially more to destroy vehicles than people! Putting a few holes in them is unlikely to break them. This vehicle has an Absorb of +6/+6 at HR 3, for its main body. Bullets will just bounce off (remember, most guns are HR 2, so only do half damage to HR 3 targets like the truck.

However, the windows have an Absorb of +4/+4 HR 2, so are a much easier target. Any damage not Absorbed by the windows will of course go right through (so the shooters should roll to hit the people inside, which is difficult and incurs at least a -2 penalty, or double that if the people are keeping low). Shooting out the tyres is difficult if the vehicle is moving (between -2 to -5, plus any range penalties). However, doing even 1 damage will flatten them, giving the driver -2 to his Pilot checks. Doing more than 5 damage will blow them out in a blast, forcing the driver to make a pilot check (-2) or lose control, veer into something, etc.

Vehicles can be destroyed in their own right, but those rules aren't really necessary for this intro game. As it is in this one, the Narrator can be free to use his logic to work out how this vehicle will fare.

Red Hand marking on its hood.

From the back, crowded with soldiers, comes a sharp rattle of gunfire and a shout of triumph from **The Captain**.

The Captain

Attributes	Skills
Strength 7	Athletics 6
Dexterity 6	Deception 6
Constitution 6	Deduction 5
Charisma 7	Diplomacy 7
Tact 5	Dodge 6
Beauty 5	Hand to Hand 6
Awareness 6	Melee 5
Intelligence 5	Observation 6
Wisdom 5	Presence 7
Resolve 4	Ranged: Firearms 6
Courage 5	Ranged: Simple 7
Luck 5	Stealth 5
	Wilderness 5

Base Init: 10 (11)

Total Health

Constitution + Luck + Extra Health (+5) 16

Battered	Injured	Wounded
5	5	6
	-1	-1

“DID YOU THINK I’D FORGOTTEN ABOUT YOU?! I’m going to make you pay for what you did!”

They will be almost within sight of Baker’s Town when the Hands are on them, meaning that they can attempt to flee, or fight. It is likely to end up like a bit of both.

There are plenty of ruins on the way to the town, and at a hard run they would get there in less than ten minutes. But that’s a long time in a firefight.

The Hands will attack much like at Applesby,

with military tactics and overwhelming firepower. When they pin the pcs in place with fire, they will then send flanking troops around the sides - and often into higher buildings to get good enfilading fire.

They will make good use of cover, hiding from the pcs and making careful, accurate fire on them whenever they show their heads. This will result in the pcs feeling pinned down, barraged with gunfire and close to death at any moment.

The Hands will attempt to advance if they can - and even better, will take any pcs prisoner, so they can suffer as slaves, or be tortured to death as an example to others.

They will fight until the Captain is slain or defeated.

The Captain will direct the fighting, and will position himself carefully in sniper positions to try and pick the pcs off with his crossbow.

If the pcs flee, the Hands will chase them down relentlessly.

Red Hand Soldiers 1.5x pc numbers (armed with hunting rifles, 5.56mm assault rifles, 7.62mm assault rifles and shotguns)

The Captain (armed with a crossbow and a .45 handgun)

Remember, unlike "Goons" like the normal Red Hand soldiers, The Captain (and any other main character or antagonist - essentially a "Hero" NPC) can spend their Resolve, Courage and Luck Attributes, just like pcs can.

Salvation

Soldiers from Baker's Town will hear the commotion outside their walls and will rush out to help the pcs. However, that will still take precious minutes. These are the cavalry coming to save the pcs (if any of them are still alive), and if the pcs are being totally overwhelmed, they can arrive just in the nick of time.

That being said, don't just use these soldiers as a sure-fire mechanism to save the pcs. They've still got to earn their survival and scabble, claw and bleed their way to freedom in Baker's Town.

Baker's Town

One of the largest surviving settlements in LA, Baker's Town is run by General Baker, who managed to lift this part of the city from the fires of the outbreak. Within its battered walls are some ten thousand people, crammed into filthy buildings, streets and even tunnels. There is a thriving market, brothels, drug dens, gun mechanics and people offering every sort of vice and contraband imaginable. Despite being heavily policed by Baker's soldiers, it is riddled with criminal gangs (many actually run by soldiers) and all sorts of sects, cults and madmen.

But it is relatively safe, and the hub of life in LA, supporting dozens of communities near and far, and ensuring humanity doesn't collapse into complete anarchy here.

This is a great place for the pcs to begin their adventures in the post-outbreak world. The town is full of people who need things done, not to mention its feuds, vendettas, contracts and sly deals.

EPILOGUE

Whoever survives the horrors of this journey will have been baptised into the world of *Infected!*. Well done! They've lived through what countless others have not.

We hope you have enjoyed this sample adventure, and the sample book. May you tell many tales of horror, action and survival in the days to come.



THANKS FOR CHECKING OUT OUR SAMPLER!

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS PROJECT:

infected.immersion-rpg.com

KICKSTARTER COMING AUGUST 16

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(thanks for the granola bar, sucker)