

no myth





## Acknowledgements

The cover page uses the fonts Circuitry (© Matthew Desmond 1997) and AfterLastWar (© M. Klein 2005)

Many thanks to Paul Czege for organising the Threeforged RPG Design Challenge, without which this game would not have been possible.

<http://www.halfmeme.com/threeforged.html>

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
The Big Questions.....	3
Characters .....	4
Supplies .....	6
Situations.....	7
Basic Play .....	9



## Introduction

Your team was a contingency against global disaster. You were supposed to survive, and rebuild. You were put into a state of suspended animation. Technically, you were clinically dead. Then you were revived, brought back to life.

There was no magic in your long slumber, nor your awakening. Your blood was drained and replaced with a coolant, to preserve your body. If it hadn't been done just right, you would have never come back.

A tech-head would tell you that that none of what you see out here is really magic either. Rattle off some quote about how any 'sufficiently advanced' tech looks like magic. Maybe. But what about 'sufficiently *weird*' tech?

It was hard to predict what the world would be like after the Event; but you didn't expect *this*, a land of mutants and... *things*. Hieronymus Bosch on LSD could not have dreamed up this place - a land populated by giant mantises with the faces of human children, sapient chords of sound, and beings even stranger still. A land where the hills have eyes... literally.

To those that live in this world, your civilisation is barely a legend. But you can show them that you are *No Myth*.

This game is designed to facilitate a collaborative style of short-form storytelling. The premise, and the reason it's called *No Myth*, is this: few things exist outside of that which the players create. *No Myth* does not have a single player controlling the setting and non-player characters. This role (called the GM's role in a traditional RPG) will be divided between everyone at the table.

The game focuses on sandbox-style play, where the player characters have a lot of options and can explore at will. The goal is to allow sandbox play in a more improvised style, without quite as much preparation.

Now, there are a few facts established by this text, but we've tried to keep them to a minimum. There are some procedures to follow and choices to make, purely to make it easier to get started and to keep going. As the players become more familiar with *No Myth*, they can alter (or even ignore) these procedures as they wish.



## The Big Questions

Before the game begins the group needs to answer two important questions:

### **What type of ‘apocalypse’ was your group designed as a contingency against?**

Nuclear war? Global socioeconomic collapse? The end of the world's fossil fuel supply? Alien invasion? Plague? The answer to this question will determine many of the specifics about the player characters and their *Bunker* (see below) as well as character equipment, training, etc.

### **Who prepared/recruited the team?**

A national government? A forward-thinking corporation? A religious cult? An eccentric billionaire? This question will have a strong influence on the characters. A military team will have a different set of skills and a different way of interacting with an unfamiliar world than a group who were sent to repopulate the world on behalf of their faith.

These questions should be answered by consensus among the players. Try to ensure that the scenario you choose allows each player to create a character that appeals to them.

It is important to note that whatever the characters were expecting, that isn't what they have found. In fact, at the start of the game, no one (or, almost no one) knows what ‘actually’ happened.



## Characters

Each player controls a single character, one member of the team that was chosen to survive the Event. These characters do not have ‘statistics’ or character sheets as such, but players should take some time to decide what skills and traits their character will bring to the group. Having an idea of the character’s personality is essential, as it will help you understand how they would react to strange and or stressful events.

There are many possible character archetypes you can choose from. A few are listed below, but you should feel free to create your own or modify the ones you see here as you wish. It is recommended that the players each choose characters with substantially different skills, so that everyone contributes to the story in a unique way.

- *The Brain:* Maybe you're an engineer, a scientist, a doctor, or all three. But the reality you're used to, and the technology needed to support it, is mostly gone. Any way you slice it, you have a lot to learn.
- *The Empath:* You are extremely sensitive to emotions and feel things deeply. If anyone can communicate with the inhabitants of this world, it's you. But can you handle opening yourself up to their alien psyches? And how will you cope with exposure to the raw emotions of your team?
- *The Fist:* Whether a trained soldier or an enthusiastic amateur, you have learned to use violence to oppose what was wrong. But everything in this world seems wrong. What happened here, and how can you put things right?
- *The Head:* You were supposed to be in charge. You have access to things the rest of your team do not. But does that old authority matter anymore? Are the other members of your team asking themselves the same question? How will you maintain control?
- *The True Believer:* Some might say it was science that saved you and brought you to this... place. But *you* know it was faith! The fact that none of the beings here share that faith makes your devotion all the more important. Just pray your higher power hasn't forsaken you like they did the rest of humanity.
- *The Survivalist:* You're trained to thrive in every environment on Earth. You can find nourishment, create shelter, and survive any weather. But are you up to the challenge of a

world in which the very laws of physics have changed? Can you keep yourself *and* the rest of the team alive?

- *The Artist:* Rebuilding humanity is about more than maintaining the gene pool and preserving knowledge. You represent the heart and soul of human civilisation - music, poetry, sculpture, architecture. What kind of beauty can you find in this strange new world... if any?



## Supplies

No one could have predicted exactly how the End would reshape and reorder the world. The designers tried to plan for every foreseeable eventuality. You're about to discover that their foresight was not enough.

Every character controls part of the stockpile left in the bunker for your emergence. These are not equipment - they are finite supplies intended to help you take your first tentative steps into this new world, and no more. Perhaps it's a cache of medicine or fuel which your team will desperately need in the dangerous days ahead. Maybe it's something rare and beautiful which can be traded with the new lifeforms you'll meet. It could be a precious piece of the world you once knew, to remind you of your mission. Whatever it is, it's yours and you can do with it as you see fit.

You may choose to tell your team about your supplies, and allow them to influence when and how they are used. Or, you may keep all knowledge of your supplies to yourself. Your team will know you have something valuable, but they won't know what.

At the end of this document you will find a series of cards. Each describes a type of supply item - you may print these and select from them, either randomly or openly, for your game. These are broad categories, rather than specific items; this ensures that each character controls a unique supply item within the game, while giving the players the freedom to come up with the details.

Blank cards are included, so you can add your own ideas. Or, you can simply come up with your own supply assignments as a group without using the cards. Your supplies can be whatever you like - as long as they're unique physical items which are somehow expendable or tradable. This will make them rare and valuable within your story.

Define your supply items before gameplay starts, so you can work them into your story as it evolves.



## Situations

Each player is assigned a Situation to control: a part of the world and the Non-Player Characters (NPCs) associated with it, if any. Whenever the characters encounter or are involved in a Situation, the controlling player for that Situation is the one to describe the scene and narrate the actions of the NPCs. If all players agree, a given player may be assigned more than one Situation.

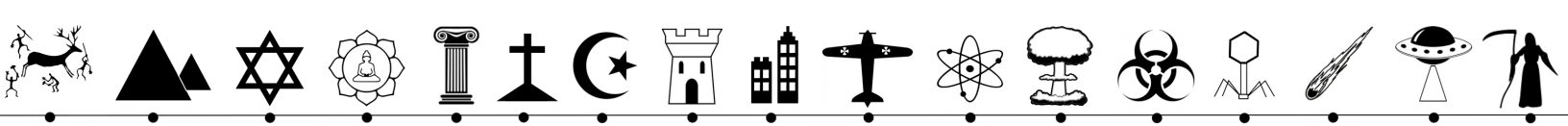
If there is a conflict about which Situation is most applicable at a given time, control goes to the smallest-scale Situation. For example, if a group of Others are in the Bunker the controller of the Others Situation is in control. Not every Situation below needs to be part of the game, although the Bunker and the Map are usually indispensable.

The Situations, in order from smallest to largest scale, are:

- *The Descendants*: So, it turns out there are humans left, though their society has been twisted by this new world. Perhaps they've regressed to a more primitive state - or, at least, what appears primitive to your eyes. They may fear, revere, or hate you... maybe even all three. The players may not have much in common with these distant relatives, but they at least they're people. The characters will need to decide if they have any responsibility to these people (and visa-versa). Can the player characters help them find their way? Can they help you find yours?
- *The Others*: What sort of sapient beings exist in this world? How do they react to the player characters? Can you communicate with them, and if so what can you learn from them? If the world has been theirs for a time, what place do you (or humanity as whole) have in it? The Others may represent a source of salvation, a terrible threat, or both.
- *The Bunker*: This is the player characters' home base. It contains all the equipment that the designers thought would be needed to survive after The End, as well as enough supplies to help you establish yourselves in this new world. Of course, that End wasn't the one that came, and after all this time some of the equipment might not even function. The place in which the team wake up might not even be the *only* bunker...
- *The End*: You control a great secret: what really happened to the world you knew. You get to interject hints as the game goes on, no matter how strange or contradictory. You might not even know yourself what the secret is, to start. The controller of this Situation is rarely in charge of scene, but exerts a more subtle influence on all of the other Situations.



- *The Map*: You are the land, plants, animals, weather, the very air. You are the laws of physics, twisted though they may have become. Don't think you only get to play things with a 'personality'. Something is different about the world, and it has a will all its own - which may not bode well for your characters.



## Basic Play

Players take turns framing scenes, starting with the controller of the largest-scale Situation. Each scene you frame must contain your character, your Situation, or both. Describe what's going on and what happens in the first few moments, then let the other players take charge of their characters.

Always remember – the player characters are the stars of the show. Having any of them die or be severely impaired should be a major event. If a player *does* lose their character, the group should try to make sure that player's Situation comes into play more often.

Develop your story as you roleplay in a freeform manner. Each player can introduce NPCs or other elements as appropriate for their Situation, or ask others to play NPCs. The scene framer can also ask that bit roles be played.

If you feel the Situation has changed to one which falls under your control, simply raise a hand. The other players will give you a quick thumbs-up or thumbs-down to let you know whether a new Situation is dominant.

Watch for opportunities to use your Supplies as the story unfolds. Supplies can be expended for great dramatic effect, so don't be afraid to use them - but each should only be used once per game. As your supplies dwindle the situation for your team becomes more and more serious. Once all of your supplies are expended your team will need to strike out and make its own way in this new world, or die trying.

At some point something in a scene will come to a head, and a conflict or argument will break out. Roll a die (d6) to randomly pick a player. That player becomes the lead for the scene, and gains temporary control of all the Situations in the scene. That player decides the result of any conflict.

Any player whose Situation has been temporarily usurped can challenge the rulings of the lead related to their Situation. Each player rolls 2d6, and the player with the highest roll wins. On the first challenge in a scene, the original Situation owner wins ties. After that, the lead wins all ties within the scene.

End scenes when it seems natural to do so - when the main conflict or threat has been resolved, the locale has changed, or the players want the story to move ahead in time (or, they want a flashback). Allow a new player to frame the next scene, shifting focus to other characters and Situations in a way that makes sense within your developing story.

While players can of course choose their own scenes, below are some examples that can be used as building-blocks for your story:

- *Emergence:* The characters wake up. They may be in the Bunker, or they may have been moved. How much of their equipment survived? How much time has passed? How will everyone deal with the fact that everyone they knew is gone? Can the characters even get out?
- *First-steps:* This is the first time the characters see the new, changed world into which they have emerged. First impressions are important, but they can also be deceptive. This scene is about setting the tone of the world – awe, terror, hope, utter confusion or any combination of emotions you want the setting to invoke.
- *Harsh realities:* Characters won't necessarily know what kinds of dangers and challenges this new world brings. The world is bound to teach them a thing or two. This can range from lessons as simple as 'do not eat the green fruits' to strange events such as storm-clouds under which gravity is increased threefold.
- *Close encounters:* This is when the characters get to meet NPCs. Whether they are other people or other sentient beings, there will be challenges to overcome. Can you communicate with them? Would you want to? Even if you can communicate, can they be trusted?
- *Making our mark:* Whatever course the characters decide to pursue, there will be obstacles to their achieving it. How much are they willing to give to make their vision come true? Is there a price the inhabitants of this world will also have to pay?
- *Where do we go from here?:* This scene is about reconciling the characters' original mission with the realities of the world in which they have found themselves. Conflict in this type of scene is as likely to come from within the group as from outside of it, and is made more intense as your supplies dwindle.
- *Epilogue:* This scene is one of the few that may not even contain any of the characters. It shows the lasting changes that the characters have made on the world, for good or for ill. Use this scene to allude to the team's future, if they have one. After they've exhausted their supplies they will need to leave the Bunker; how will they fend for themselves in this new world? Will they be able to re-establish humanity as they knew it, in some form, or were they simply the last gasp of a civilisation destined to fade into Myth after all?

## Supply Cards



### Medicine

Sooner or later someone - or something - is going to get hurt or sick. You've got the medicines which could help. But can they heal you and your team in this weird new world? Can they heal the inhabitants of this world at all? You may hold the power of life and death in your hands - use it wisely.



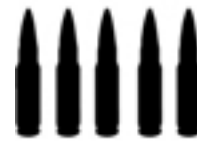
### Intoxicant

Humans have always enjoyed altering their brain chemistry - particularly when the going gets tough. You hold the rare and precious gift of happiness, forgetfulness, and peace - temporary though it may be. Perhaps it's drugs, or alcohol. Will you share it? If you do, what will you get in return? Or, will you keep it to yourself as an escape from this terrifying new world?



### Explosive

Whether you need to get into (or out of) someplace, completely destroy something, or simply kill something big - this should do the trick. Use them carefully, though - they're as dangerous as they are useful.



### Ammunition

Guns are useful, but not without something to shoot from them. You control the bullets - which means, in a way, you also control the guns. The bullets will eventually run out - how will you use them, and what will you do when they're all gone?



### Trinket

Some things are valuable not for what they do, but for how they make you feel. You control something special and beautiful, which evokes fond memories of a world which is no more. Maybe it's jewellery, a child's toy, or a photograph. It has sentimental value for you and your team - and perhaps it's worth something to the inhabitants of this world, too.



### Delicacy

Chocolate. Tobacco. Coffee. Tea. These are the small pleasures and comforts from your old life which you'd give anything for one more taste of... and your team might give anything for, too. You might try to share them with the other inhabitants of this new world - but who knows how they'll react, or what it will do to their strange biology?

## Supply Cards



### Fuel

Maybe some of the old equipment around here needs fuel to run. Or, maybe you just need help starting fires - for warmth, for protection, or as a weapon. You control the limited supply of fuel, which could make you a very important person indeed.



### Fertility Drugs

In order to rebuild the human race your team will need to have children. These drugs will give you the best chance to reproduce - maybe even with the Descendants. You hold the power of fertility. How will you choose who should reproduce and become the potential forebears of a new human race?



### Life Support System

You might be able to survive in the atmosphere in the bunker - at least for now - but what about outside? Can you breathe out there? Are there inhospitable places you need to explore? This life support system will get you there and back - once - without suffocating or being poisoned.



### Paper and Ink

There may be equipment in the bunker filled with human knowledge. Someday power will run out and circuits will fail; but what you write and draw could last for generations. And she who controls history...



### Amusement

There are many ways to take your mind off your current situation without resorting to chemicals. Games, books, pornography - all represent different forms of escape. You possess such a means of 'escape'. How can you use it to your advantage here?



### Artefact

You hold a rare and precious artefact - proof of the world which once was. Perhaps it's a religious icon, a fossil, or a symbol of authority. Whatever it is, it connects you to a time long past - which may grant you power within your team, or over the inhabitants of this strange new world.

## Blank Supply Cards
