

Build Your Own Apocalypse

Build Your Own Apocalypse is a GM-less collaborative storytelling game. You decide on the setting. You decide on the characters involved, if any. The story is mainly about the events that bring about the decline and destruction of your setting. The characters you make up won't be able to stop it, but you could tell a story about the villains that make it happen. Build Your Own Apocalypse makes a great lead in for games such as Apocalypse World, Atomic Highway, Legacy: Life Among the Ruins, and many other post-apocalypse games with a mysterious precursor.

You Will Need

- Paper and a writing implement for each player
- A Harbinger token (anything but a die works)
- A pile of six sided dice for each player (about 1.5 times the number of rounds per person)

Set Up

To set up the game, decide on how many rounds you'll play. Use one round per player for a fast game, and two or more per player for something epic.

After deciding on game length, make up a setting. For the quickest start, use the modern world. That's already made up for you, and there are common reference points. If your group can't agree on the setting, you may want to play two or three rounds of an "Introduction" before moving into "Eve of Destruction." You could use BYOA as a kick off to a new post

apocalypse game and play it to create a rich history for your setting.

Finally, decide who will be the Harbinger. The Harbinger will be the first player to reveal how many dice they are rolling. The easiest way is to have the host start out. Give that player the Harbinger token. The Harbinger token will likely pass to a new player each round.

Game Mechanics

Once you've nailed down the setting and game length, you're ready to get started. Divide the rounds up between the chapters below, using just use one round in "The Lone Survivor," and split the rest up however you'd like. For longer games, you may want to add extra chapters. Chapters are meant as inspiration for the players and as a guide to story pacing. However, "The Lone Survivor" has a unique dice recovery mechanic.

Chapters

1. Introduction (optional)
2. Eve of Destruction (set the tone)
3. The Apocalypse (drop the bombs)
4. Fallout (end humanity)
5. The Lone Survivor (build hope)

Each round is broken up into four phases: creating events, bidding and rolling dice, revealing events, and crafting the story from the results.

Events Stir

First, each player secretly writes down an event that they want to see be the main motivation of the story this round. It can be as serious or frivolous as you like. Try to keep it on theme for the story you've crafted up to this point. If the

group's story is about a runaway AI deciding to eradicate drivers displaying Confederate flag bumper stickers, adding an event about dairy cows with chainsaws might derail things a bit. Once everyone is finished writing their event with as much detail as they need to explain it to the other players, move on to the dice.

Roll Some Dice

The dice are going to keep your apocalypse from being a popularity contest. It might mean that the best event isn't the main event, but we'll deal with that in the results phase.

The Harbinger begins by telling everyone how many dice they are rolling and pushing them forward. Moving clockwise, the next player does the same. This continues around the group until every player has bid a number of dice to roll. It could be one die. It could be all of the dice in their pool. It all depends on how much they want their event to be the defining element of this part of the story.

Once all players have announced their dice bid, roll them. Keep them in front of you. You'll get some of them back.

Reveal Events

After everyone has rolled, see who has the highest total. That person's event is the main event for this part of the story. The player with the highest roll should read their event to everyone. They also will become the Harbinger for the next round. Give them the Harbinger token. Moving clockwise, each player should read their event to the group in turn.

The Story Unfolds

After all events have been revealed, craft a narrative that uses the winning player's event as a focus. You can be as detailed as you like. You should also work any other player's event into the narrative that fits. This should be fun, collaborative, and as detailed as you want. If

you're using characters, move them around in the world. Have things happen to them. Grow them. Grow the setting. Destroy everything that you have a chance to destroy.

The player whose event was the focus of the story should circle their event. Any other players that had their event used in the narrative should place a check mark by that event.

Once the story is told for this round, everyone gets 1/6 of the dice you started with back (round down).

Repeat this process each round until you get to "The Lone Survivor".

The Lone Survivor

Prior to starting the last round, everyone should score their events. For every event you circled, take two points. For every event you checked, take one point. Total these points and refresh your dice pool with that many dice (up to the maximum).

Now begin the last round. This round focuses on someone or something emerging from the dust of destruction to give some indication of the future. It does not have to be a hopeful future. That's up to you.

Repeat the phases of the previous rounds. This is the last one. Everyone should bid all of their dice. The winner lays the seeds of the future with their event. As usual, feel free to use anyone or everyone else's elements in that part of the narrative. Have fun and remember that everyone likes to be part of the story.