

# AS THE WORLD ENDS...

a gm-optional storytelling game about grief, loss, & hope in the apocalypse for 3+ players.

As *The World Ends...* probably won't end happy. It isn't meant to. It's a chance to explore things we normally don't allow ourselves to. Things we hide. Things we cling to. Moments we live for. Sadness. Regret. Hope. This is about hoping against hope. By the end, you may have nothing physical left. But you might have some feelings that you finally dug into and examined. Hopefully, that gets you something or somewhere you may not have otherwise.

A GM isn't necessary for this game but having one may make play easier to guide and help keep things on track. Alternately, if one person feels comfortable enough in the roll, they can play a character as well as guide the story.

*The world is ending around you and you're trying to make your way to some place you consider safe. You're not sure if it is safe but you've heard rumors.*

Major Touchstone: Train to Busan/Busanhaeng (Yeon Sang-ho, 2016)

## BEFORE IT BEGINS...

Before the world can end, we have to know what it was first.

First, **describe the apocalypse**:

- » When did this *start*?
- » What *happened*?
- » Who does it *affect*?
- » How does it *spread* itself?
- » Does it *follow* you?

Next, **describe where you start**:

- » Did the apocalypse *start here* or *spread here*?
- » When did most people *become aware* of it?
- » How did people start to *become aware* of it?
- » How do people *refer* to what's happening?

Then, **describe where you're hoping to get to**:

- » How *far away* is it?
- » What are the *rumors* about it?
- » How does it *keep itself safe*?
- » What are *fears* about this place when you get there?

Finally, **describe your characters**:

- » Who are *you*?
- » What did you do *before* this apocalypse?
- » How did you *end up* where you start?
- » What is something that you *regret*?

## WHAT YOU BRING...

You have three things with you to help your through: a **special physical item**, a **particular skill**, and a **connection or memory**. At least two of these will be left behind as you run. During play, you can also give **yourself**. There's no way around this. Just as in life, things and people get left behind whether we want to let them go or not.

Your **special physical item** is something that can't be found everywhere, something unique to your character. This item is never something that can be commonly found in a situation, like a cell phone in a zombie attack in modern times. When rolling, this gives a **+2** but can only be rolled once in the game.

*Examples: sword, baseball bat, gun, riot shield.*

Your **particular skill** is also something unique to your character, something you alone are capable of doing at a high level. When rolling, this gives a **+1** but can be used once per scene.

*Examples: all-state runner, chemist, kind of famous, fast talker.*

Your **connection or memory** doesn't need to be unique to you but it should be something held near and dear to your heart. They can be with you, they can be far away and only able to be contacted occasionally as you run, or it can be a physical memento with only sentimental value. When rolling, this can give either a **+1 once per scene** or **+3 and never be used or mentioned again** save during **Final Moments**.

*Examples: loved one, memento, video, song.*

The final thing you have as a character is **yourself**. At any point during play, may give up yourself and your life to help those around you survive and give them a **+5** on the roll. When this occurs, narrate your **Final Moments**, your last bits of time in this world. This will *remove you as an active part of the "cast"* but you still remain as part of those telling the story.

You can also give any items you have to another player to use as they see fit. When those objects come up, *narrate with the player they have been given to*.

## WHAT IT IS...

There are 3 core dangers to an apocalypse: the **Threat**, the **Creep**, and the **Spread**. Answer the following questions about each to give them detail:

- » What gives the danger its **Threat**?
- » What pace does the danger move and **Creep** at?
- » How quickly can the danger **Spread** to people or areas?

Next, **assign one value to each** based on your answers to further detail the dangers:

- » A rank of **1** means this is dangerous but a low consideration.
- » A rank of **2** means that the danger is always a worry.
- » A rank of **3** means that this is the most pressing danger.

## HOW IT GOES...

The game is structured into five acts where you face the dangers of the apocalypse and try to make your way to your end goal. During each act, characters can roll to overcome danger and make their way through to the end.

### THE FIRST ACT

The **Rank 2 danger** is the focus.

- » What made the danger of the apocalypse *obvious*?
- » Who finds out about the *rumor of a safe place* and how?

### THE SECOND ACT

The **Rank 3 danger** is the focus.

- » How does this *greater threat* reveal itself?
- » Someone or something is *lost along the way*, what is it?

### THE THIRD ACT

The **Rank 1 danger** is the focus.

- » What is starting to *become routine* now?
- » What have you come to *miss*?

### THE FOURTH ACT

The **Rank 2 danger** is the focus.

- » What slams you *back into your reality*?
- » How do you *try to hold on* to your old life?

### THE FINAL ACT

The **Rank 3 danger** is the focus.

- » How have things *finally caught up* to you?
- » How has the apocalypse morphed to *feel insurmountable*?

## MAKE YOUR WAY...

There are no stats that set you apart here. As you try to make your way to the rumored safe place, things will get in your way. There will be circumstances and obstacles to overcome. Each character will face at least one thing in each act this journey though they may face them together or apart.

To try to persevere through the adversities of the apocalypse and overcome its dangers, roll 2d6. Before or after rolling, you can commit your special physical item, particular skill, connection or memory, or yourself. After each roll, narrate its outcome.

*Optional rule:* When many people are with you and you work together to achieve something, take +1 forward on that roll.

On a roll of **10+**, the danger is avoided entirely. **Choose 2** of the following:

- » You find *something to help* you, what is it?
- » You find *someone you lost*, what happened to them?
- » You've heard a *new heartening rumor* about where you're running to, what is it?
- » You've found something that *reminds you of things* before, what is it?

On a **7 to 9**, the danger is mostly avoided. Something has to be given up, what is it? **Choose 1 each** from the 10+ and 6- lists.

On a **6-**, the danger is only narrowly avoided. **Choose 2** of the following:

- » *Someone is lost*, though they could be found again; who are they?
- » You've *lost track of something* incredibly precious, what is it?
- » You've heard a *new discouraging rumor* about where you're running to, what is it?
- » The way you've tried to go is *blocked in some way*, where will you turn now?

## AS YOU FADE...

In your *Final Moments* (or once you reach your final destination), share one thing that kept or keeps **Hope** alive with a brief scene. This is what has driven you to try to find safety in a world that seems to have been stripped of such things. It can be something from within the framework of the game, before, or something still to come that the future may hold. It can be small, like the taste of your favorite food, or it can be large, like the name of a loved one. Either way, it is meaningful to you.

## CHARACTER SHEET

Name

Description

Special Physical Item

Particular Skill

Connection/Memory

Hope

Before the world was ending...

During the First Act...

During the Second Act...

During the Third Act...

During the Fourth Act...

During the Final Act...

## WORLD SHEET

About the apocalypse...

About where we started...

About where we're going...

Threat:

Rank: 1 ○ | 2 ○ | 3 ○

Creep:

Rank: 1 ○ | 2 ○ | 3 ○

Spread:

Rank: 1 ○ | 2 ○ | 3 ○

Other Notes