

One hell of a night

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Ingredients:

System: 1. Characters are composed of a core that is augmented by templates that can be swapped (Mood), 2. Does not use numbers to represent skills or attributes in any way, 3. Must include an emotional connection mechanic binding characters together, 4. Reverse dice pool resolution, where all dice in a pool have to succeed. Penalties add dice, bonuses remove dice.

Genre Blender: Military & Invasion.

Misc: Game must be under 3 pages.

“One hell of a night” is a game designed for four players, and no Game Master. It deals with the interactions of a team of soldiers on their way back from a mission and to the extraction point, survivors off an attack of alien creatures.

“We never saw ‘em comin’. We were walking the last few clicks before we get to the extraction point, thinking about what we’re gonna eat when we get back to home base. Suddenly, everything went quite, and a second later the capt’n was dead with this... thing ...sticking out of his head.

The combat, if you can call the mess that went down there combat, was brutal. It didn’t look as if they cared if they win or lose, live or die. All they cared was that WE lost and WE died.

Only four of us were left standin’. We were pretty shell-shocked and just stood there, lookin’ at each other and that blue and green blood. It was the smack on my helmet from the Sarge who brought me back. ‘Suck it up boys. We’ll come back for them later. Say your prayers and let’s get going – this is going to be one hell of a night.’”

Setup:

Roles

There are four people left in the group, and each player should pick one to play. Each role has a special ability he can use in combat, and under each is listed his disposition towards the other members of the group.

The Roles are:

The Sarge	
Weapon	Remington 870 shotgun.
Special ability	Experience is everything: Can remove one special ability from a threat die.
Dispositions	The Heavy Gunner: Respect. The Sniper: Respect. The Rookie: Pity.

The Heavy Gunner	
Weapon	M240 Machinegun.
Special ability	A hail of lead: Can reduce two threat dice by one step.
Dispositions	The Sarge: Admire. The Sniper: Friend. The Rookie: pity.

The Sniper	
Weapon	M24 sniper rifle
Special ability	This is my boom stick: Can reduce one threat dice by two steps.
Dispositions	The Sarge: Respect. The Heavy Gunner: Friend. The Rookie: Despise.

The Rookie	
Weapon	M16 assault rifle
Special ability	Can't tell WHAT he'll do: Can reroll one threat die.
Dispositions	The Sarge: Admire. The Heavy Gunner: Friend. The Sniper: Fearful.

Dispositions:

Dispositions are how you view and what your opinions about other members of your group. They can change during the game, depending on your and there other's Mood.

Dispositions are ranked in steps: Friend -> Admire -> Respect -> Pity -> Despise -> Fearful.

Moods:

Mood represents how you decide to act during combat. Are you trying to be a hero and save the rest? Are you cynical and bitter, believing the line between "heroic" and "stupid" is nonexistent? Or are you determined to survive this, no matter the cost?

Each Mood has an effect on how you function in combat, and how much you might get hurt. Also, each Mood has a prerequisite that must be fulfilled before you can choose to be in this Mood.

The Moods are:

Suicidal	
Change in abilities	Can apply special ability twice.
Disposition modifiers	Cynical, Heroic: down one step. Survivor, suicidal: no change. Helpful, Panic: Up one step.
Prerequisites	Either 1. Your friend or someone who considered you a friend has died or close (one wound) to dying, or 2. Everyone else is dead.

Heroic	
Change in abilities	Can reduce one threat dice by one step.
Disposition modifiers	Cynical, Survivor: down one step. All the rest: up one step.
Prerequisites	Someone admires you, or you are a friend of someone, or you pity someone.

Helpful	
Change in abilities	None.
Disposition modifiers	Cynical, survivor: down one step. Panic, Suicidal: no change. Heroic, Helpful: up one step.
Prerequisites	You respect, admire or a friend of someone.

Cynical	
Change in abilities	None.
Disposition modifiers	Helpful, Heroic, Panic: down one step. All the rest: no change.
Prerequisites	Either 1. You not a friend of, or admire anyone, or 2. You despise someone.

Survivor	
Change in abilities	Increase one threat die one step.
Disposition modifiers	Helpful, Heroic, Panic: down one step. All the rest: no change.
Prerequisites	You not a friend of, or admire anyone.

Panic	
Change in abilities	Cannot apply special ability.
Disposition modifiers	Friend: no change. All the rest: down one step.
Prerequisites	Either 1. No one is your friend, admires or respects you, or 2. You are fearful of one person, or 3. Two people are dead. If you took your third wound, you MUST set your mood to panic.

Playing the game:

The creatures come in three waves over the night, which is the amount of time it takes the group to get to the extraction point. Each wave is composed of two phases.

Regroup and travel phase:

In this phase, the group gathers itself and tries to travel closer to the extraction point. This is the phase where the players adjust their disposition towards the other player's characters, roleplay their new dispositions and has a little down time to express their views on the situation. This is also the phase where they set their attitude before the next Encounter.

Encounter phase:

After the players have nothing more to play out, the journey continues quietly... for a while. Then, the creatures strike.

This phase is a combat – the small group attempts to disable the threat while each member tries to keep himself alive.

Encounter phase resolution:

Follow the following steps to resolve the Encounter phase:

Set Moods -> Create threat-> Apply Sarge's, Sniper's and Heavy gunner's abilities by any order -> Roll threat dice -> Apply Rookie special ability -> Take wounds by Mood order.

The players should feel free to narrate their special abilities' actions, the success and failures of the dice, the description of the attacking creatures and the wounds done to their characters.

Setting the mood:

Each player, in secret, decides what his character for the upcoming encounter.

Creating threat:

The base threat is 4d6 dice of threat.

Each threat die has 1d4-1 special abilities. For each of these special abilities, roll d6 and consult the following table (if something comes up more than once, reroll) :

1. Tough: +1 die step.
2. Heavy hitter/weapons: Deals two wounds on failure.
3. Horde: -1 die step, but +1 threat die (of the same type).
4. Stealth: Reroll die on success (before rookie).
5. Quick: Deals wounds to two different team members.
6. Extra Threat! Add 1d6 threat and repeat.

Knowing is half the battle: If it is the second time the team has encountered the same special ability combination on a threat it is assumed to be the same type of threat. Since they learned how to effectively fight it, they can ignore its special abilities.

Eliminating threat and Taking wounds:

A die which show the top possible numbers is a "success" which indicates that threat has been successfully eliminated, and the team will not take damage from it. Otherwise, it will cause a wound (or two, if it's a "heavy hitter" or "quick")

Minimum die size is d4. A d4 die which is reduced one step is automatically eliminated.

All the dice that show a “failure” deal damage to the team, according to their Mood.

Consult the Wound track flow: Suicidal -> Heroic-> Suicidal -> Helpful -> Heroic -> Cynical -> Survivor -> Panic.

Follow the track and apply wounds to team members which are in this Mood. If there is more than one team member in a given Mood, consult the Vulnerability order track: Rookie -> Sniper -> Heavy Gunner -> Sarge.

Each character can take three wounds. When a character takes its third wound, he is badly

injured and cannot participate in a fight anymore (basically, set his Mood to “panic”).

Ending the game:

Once all three encounters are over, there is one last “Regroup and travel” phase, in which the group arrives to the excretion point. Whether or not there is someone there to pick them up is up to the players to decide, on the basis of “what would be more fun to roleplay” – the pickup is there and everybody (left alive, that is) gets to go home, or the invasion was global, and you get there only to have a good view of the world going up in flames.