HOPE INHUMANITY



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HOPE INHUMANITY

A CARD GAME ABOUT HOPE, HUMANITY, HARM, AND HUNGER IN THE BEGINNING AFTER THE END

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Hope Inhumanity was inspired by the novel **The Road** by Cormac McCarthy. This game grew out of my desire to incorporate into a roleplaying game central themes and elements of that book.

No game is an island, and this one owes a lot to the many great games (and their authors) that inspired it. **Burning Wheel**, **Fiasco**, **Mouse Guard**, and **A Penny for My Thoughts** all inspired ideas or mechanics in Hope Inhumanity. I also owe a huge debt to Patrick Riegert for his editing skills and for helping me transform a game mechanic into an interesting game. This game would not exist without his contributions.

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Content Warning - This game deals with mature themes such as starvation, drug use, et cetera.

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CONTENTS

Quick Start Guide

Introduction 4
What's Included 4
What Else You Need 4
Game Setup 4
Round Sequence 4
The End of the Round 5
The End of the Game 5

Welcome to the End

What You Need to Play 6
Rule Cards, Humanity Cards, and the Hope Dice Pool Card 6

Game Elements

Humanity 6
Hope 6
Hunger and Harm 6
Assets 7
Hardship 7
Hardship Modifiers 7

How Did the World End?

Character Creation

Traits 8
Character Relationships 8
Character Details 8

Playing the Game

Order of Play 9
Drawing a Scene Card 9
Unavoidable Scene Cards 9
Garnering Support and Gathering Dice 9
Resolving the Scene 10
Scenes Without Hardship Ratings 10
The Next Scene 10
The End of the Round 10
Character Death 10
Grace of Innocence Rule 10
Gift from the Grave 11
The End of the Game 11

QUICK START GUIDE

Introduction

Hope Inhumanity is a cooperative card-based game for 3 to 5 players, and it will take one to two hours to complete. To play, you will need the game cards, available for purchase online through hope-inhumanity.com, and a lot of six-sided dice – approximately 8 per player.

What's Included?

» 43 Scene Cards

» 13 Asset Cards

» 10 Relationship Cards

» 26 Trait Cards

» 10 Condition Cards

» 5 Humanity Dice Cards

» 1 Hope Dice Pool Card

What Else You Need

» Eight (8) uniquely colored Humanity dice for each player.

» Seven (7) dice of another color for Hope dice.

» Scrap paper to note character information or game details.

» A few dice or tokens to count rounds and track Asset usage.

Game Setup

Card Setup

» Each player places a Humanity dice card in front of them.

» Place the Hope dice card in the center of the table.

» Split Scene cards into shuffled mini-decks, one for each terrain type.

» Place Asset cards in a pile near the Scene decks.

» Place Hunger and Harm condition cards nearby – you're going to need them.

» Set aside the remaining Trait and Relationship cards.

Each Player:

» Place five (5) Humanity dice on your Humanity dice card in the space provided.

» Randomly draw three (3) Trait cards and don't reveal them to the other players.

» Randomly draw one (1) Relationship card. Place it face up on the table between you and the player to your left.

» Write details like name, age, and a short description of your character on a scrap of paper.

Hope Dice Pool

» To seed the Hope dice pool, place on the Hope dice card as many dice as there are players.

Introduce your character to the other players. Discuss your character's background and how they all relate to one another. Use Traits and Relationships as prompts.

Round Sequence

The game plays out over the course of five rounds. Play proceeds clockwise.

Turn Sequence

» On your turn, draw a Scene card. Silently read to yourself the scenario outlined on it.

» Choose whether you will Act or Avoid. Scene cards tagged as Unavoidable must be Acted upon.

» If you decide to Act, read or interpret for everyone the callout text at the top of the card, omitting the Refuse, Succeed, Fail or Accept details.

» If no dice roll is necessary, each player chooses in turn how they will respond to the Scene. Hand out rewards and penalties according to the card text. The turn ends.

» If there is a Hardship rating on the Scene card, then a dice roll is necessary. Commit one or more of your Humanity dice toward resolving the Scene. Push those dice to the middle of the table.

» Other players decide whether they support you, and they may describe how, if they wish. If they support you, they decide how much Humanity to commit. They support you with as many dice as they like, but they cannot exceed the amount you have committed. They add their committed dice to yours in the middle of the table. Players who want to support you but have no Humanity left can invoke the Last Hope rule at this time to use one (1) Hope die instead of Humanity.

» You now have the option to use one or more dice from the Hope dice pool.

» Calculate the total hardship by adding to the Scene hardship any Harm and Hunger condition penalties you're suffering. Do not apply any helpers' condition penalties. Then apply any relevant Relationship effects and decide if you'll use a Trait.

» Roll all the dice you've amassed. Count the successes – 4s, 5s, and 6s. If the number of successes equals or

exceeds the total hardship, you're successful. Otherwise, you fail.

» Players who refused to support you suffer the Refuse penalty.

» If you succeed, any committed Humanity dice are lost. Set them aside and return the support dice to the other players to be set aside, also. You and everyone who supported you gain the Succeed benefits of the Scene card.

» If the Scene ends in failure, committed Humanity dice are lost. Set them aside and return the support dice to the other players to be set aside, also. You and those who supported you suffer the Fail penalty as defined on the Scene card.

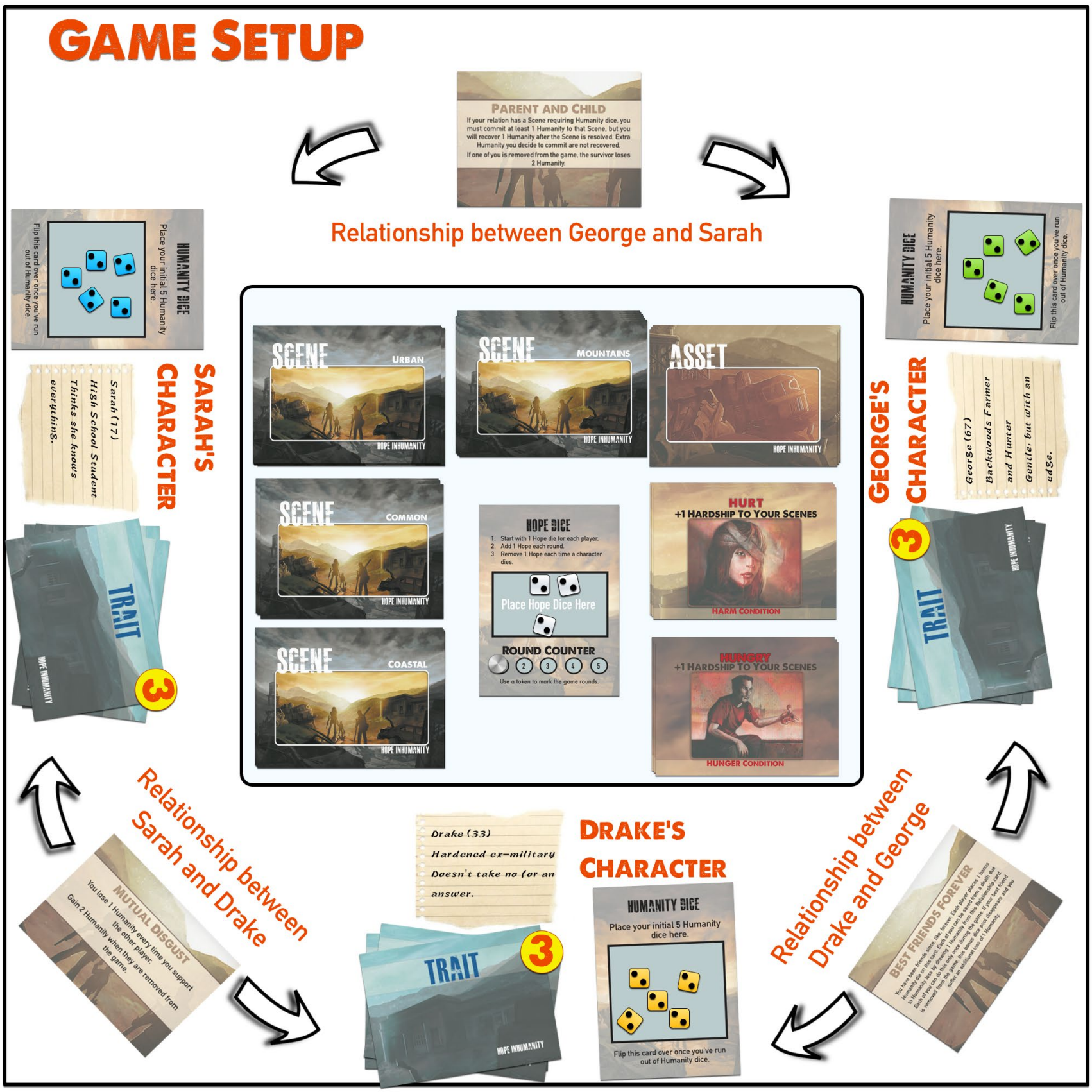
» Unless a Scene card is marked Unavoidable, you may choose to Avoid a Scene card you've drawn. In this case, discard the Scene card and everyone (including you) suffers the Refuse penalty for that Scene. Your turn is over and play proceeds with the player to your left.

The End of the Round

A round ends when all players have taken a turn drawing a Scene card. Begin a new round by adding a single die to the Hope dice pool.

The End of the Game

The game is won if at least one character survives all five rounds. The surviving character(s) have reached the destination.



WELCOME TO THE END

In Hope Inhumanity, you play characters bound together on a journey through the desolation of a post-apocalyptic landscape toward a destination where hope still exists.

What You Need to Play

Aside from two to four other people, all you need to play are an understanding of these rules, the Hope Inhumanity cards, and a bunch of six-sided dice.

You need a minimum of five (5) dice per player, plus a few extra. These are each individual player's Humanity dice. A further five (5) to eight (8) dice are required for the communal Hope dice pool. It helps to have multiple colors for the dice. Each player ought to have a distinct dice color, size, or style for their Humanity, and the Hope dice must also be a unique color, size, et cetera. Many hosts will not have that many six-sided dice, so players should bring their own if possible.

Within the card deck are Scene cards, Trait cards, Asset cards, and Hunger and Harm condition cards (Hungry/Starving and Hurt/Crippled, respectively). Separate these card types into their own decks. Printed on the back of each Scene card is a terrain type: Urban, Mountainous, Wilderness, Coastal, or Any Terrain. Sort these into individually shuffled mini-decks and place them within reach of everyone.

Rule Cards, Humanity Cards, and the Hope Dice Pool Card

Included in the Hope Inhumanity card deck are some rule summary cards that provide references to the most common rules. One card summarizes character creation and death rules; another card lays out the rules for turn sequence and how to play a Scene. There are also Humanity dice cards for each player that provide a place to keep Humanity dice while also summarizing important rules regarding Humanity dice and the Last Hope Rule. Finally, there is a Hope dice card that lists rules for the Hope dice pool, a spot to place the Hope dice, and a round counter reference to help you track the game's progress.

GAME ELEMENTS

Humanity is a personal pool of dice used to resolve your Scene cards and support others when they resolve theirs. Hope is a shared pool of dice from which players may draw. Harm and Hunger are rubric terms under which two tiers of negative conditions can (and will) be foisted upon the characters during the course of the game. Hardship is a measure of a Scene's difficulty or danger. Assets can be used to affect the hardship of Scenes and alter outcomes. Relationships have mechanics that affect how players choose to interact with one another, and Traits are single-use game-altering advantages or abilities.

Humanity

In a devastated environment where every decision can be a matter of life and death, it's a battle to maintain your humanity. Your Humanity is represented by a pool of dice that you keep in the open in front of you on the table. During your Scenes, you'll commit a chosen number of your Humanity dice and roll those to determine the outcome. You lose those dice regardless of the results of the roll. You also commit (and lose) Humanity dice when you support other players during their Scenes.

You begin the game with five (5) Humanity. You can stay in the game with zero Humanity, but if your Humanity dice are reduced below zero, your character is out of the game at the beginning of the next player's turn. Your character has caused or suffered too much harm, witnessed too many horrors, and has been overcome by guilt and shame. You may narrate how your character departs the game.

Hope

Hope dice represent the group's collective optimism about their chances for survival. When the game begins, seed the Hope dice pool with as many dice as there are players. Choose a color or size of dice that is different than those used for the players' Humanity dice. Remove a Hope die each time a character is removed from the game, as each loss of human life in the game reduces the collective expectancy of survival. At the beginning of each new round, add a Hope die to represent the rise in hope as the group nears their destination.

A player can take dice from the Hope dice pool during their turn to boost the amount of dice they're rolling. When used, Hope dice are considered spent and are not returned to the pool.

Hunger and Harm

Hunger is represented by the successively worse conditions Hungry and Starving, while Harm is represented by Hurt and Crippled. Your character starts the game without conditions, so you won't have any condition cards in front of you. Scene failure and refusal to support another player's Scenes can result in you suffering one or both of these conditions. In such a case, take the appropriate condition card and place it openly in front of you. Being Hungry or Hurt makes it more difficult for you to succeed during your Scene, as represented by the +1 H (for hardship) printed on the card. It is important to note that your own conditions do not affect another player when you're supporting them.

If you already have a condition and you suffer an additional condition penalty of the same type (Hunger or Harm), flip the card over to reveal the more severe condition, which carries an increased penalty: +2 H. Your life just got a lot worse. If you're unlucky enough to incur additional Hunger when

Hunger Conditions



Harm Conditions



you're Starving or additional Harm when you're Crippled, your character dies and you are out of the game.

Some Scene cards, Traits, or Assets allow you to remove or outright avoid Hunger conditions. Being Hurt can be also alleviated or avoided, but once you're Crippled, it's permanent; you cannot recover from it, even if an event in the game would otherwise remove a Harm condition.

Condition hardships are cumulative, so if you are Hungry and Crippled, you incur +3 H to your rolls.

Assets

Some Scene cards provide an Asset as a reward. Each Asset includes a description of the benefit(s) it provides, whether it is a Personal or Group item, and the number of times it can be used. Use a token such as a glass bead or coin to track an Asset's capacity or remaining uses. An Asset card marked as Personal is owned by the player whose Scene yielded it as a reward. Only the Personal Asset's owner can use it, though it can be used by that player during other players' turns, subject to the rules on the card. An Asset card marked as Group is collectively owned by all the players; any player may use a Group Asset during a Scene, even if it is another player's turn.

Stealing an Asset - During their turn, a player may steal another player's Personal Asset card. To steal the Asset and become its new owner, the thief gives up one (1) Humanity. They may then use the Asset card immediately or save it for later in the game.

Hardship

Many Scene cards list a hardship rating, written as "H" followed by a number, such as H1, H2, et cetera. These are noted in the upper right-hand corner of Scene cards. Hardship is a measure of how difficult or dangerous it is to achieve success if you decide to Act on the Scene card. More specifically, it represents how many successes you must roll in order to prevail. When you roll the dice, each die is considered a success if you roll a 4, 5, or 6. To succeed, you must roll a number of successes equal to or higher than the hardship for the Scene. Anything less is a failure. Note that additional successes beyond the hardship do not grant a greater degree of success, unless noted on a particular card.

Scenes without a hardship rating are special and might not require you to commit any Humanity dice. These Scenes don't require a roll at all and specify what actions you can choose from.

Hardship Modifiers

Various factors may increase or decrease the hardship. Most often, condition penalties you've incurred are the notable contributing modifier, increasing the hardship of a Scene. For instance, if you are Hungry (+1 H) and Crippled (+2 H), your H2 Scene becomes H5, requiring you to roll five or more

Asset Card



successes. Other modifiers may apply, based on character Traits, Relationships, or other factors.

The hardship of a Scene could be reduced to zero through the use of various Traits or Relationships. An H0, whether noted on the Scene card or as modified, simply means you cannot possibly fail. However, each player who doesn't Refuse must still commit one (1) Humanity to the acting player. Those Humanity dice are discarded as though they had been rolled. There's no such thing as a free lunch after the apocalypse.

HOW DID THE WORLD END?

The world of Hope Inhumanity is set in the aftermath of an apocalypse. Civilization and most of the infrastructure that kept it running was wiped out very suddenly. How this happened isn't critical to play, but you are certainly free to work it into your game if you'd like. The options are endless! It doesn't even have to be global or continental in scale; you could decide to play in an Ireland devastated by a massive earthquake, trying to make it one hundred miles to the coast to find help. Alternatively, you could go with full-on nuclear devastation or a plague. What matters is that you are a group of people journeying from a place of devastation and misery toward a more hopeful destination.

As a group, agree on how the world ended. The characters may not have this knowledge, but knowing the details might be informative when Scenes are being played out. Choose an apocalyptic theme, and use it to add interesting details as you play.

You can find some ideas for starting scenarios on the game website:

`http://hope-inhumanity.com/setup_scenarios`

CHARACTER CREATION

A Hope Inhumanity character is defined by a player's actions, Relationships with others, and Traits. You don't need a dedicated character sheet, per se, but it's recommended that you jot down some key information, such as a name, a description (including age, if relevant), and perhaps motivations.

Traits

Shuffle the deck of Trait cards and deal three random cards to each player.

Traits remain secret until you play them. In a challenging situation like the end of the world, we often discover things about our friends and loved ones (not to mention ourselves) that never would have surfaced in the day-to-day humdrum of life-that-was. Those things are represented by Traits. These cards give your character one-time abilities or advantages that help you and/or your companions scratch by when the going gets tough.

You can play your Traits at any time, regardless of whose turn it is. The Trait takes effect as soon as it is played, subject to the text on the card. Once your card has been played, discard it face up near your Humanity. This forms a simple record of your character's revealed nuances. Trait cards do not represent ongoing effects; they are single-use advantages or one-off game-changers. The spent card is not replaced.

Trait Card



Character Relationships

After everyone has their Traits, randomly draw a Relationship card and place it openly on the table between you and the player to your left. That card outlines how that player is bound to you and what effects such an association entails. Discuss the Relationship with the affected player to work out the details. Every Relationship card grants benefits or penalties to both parties equally.

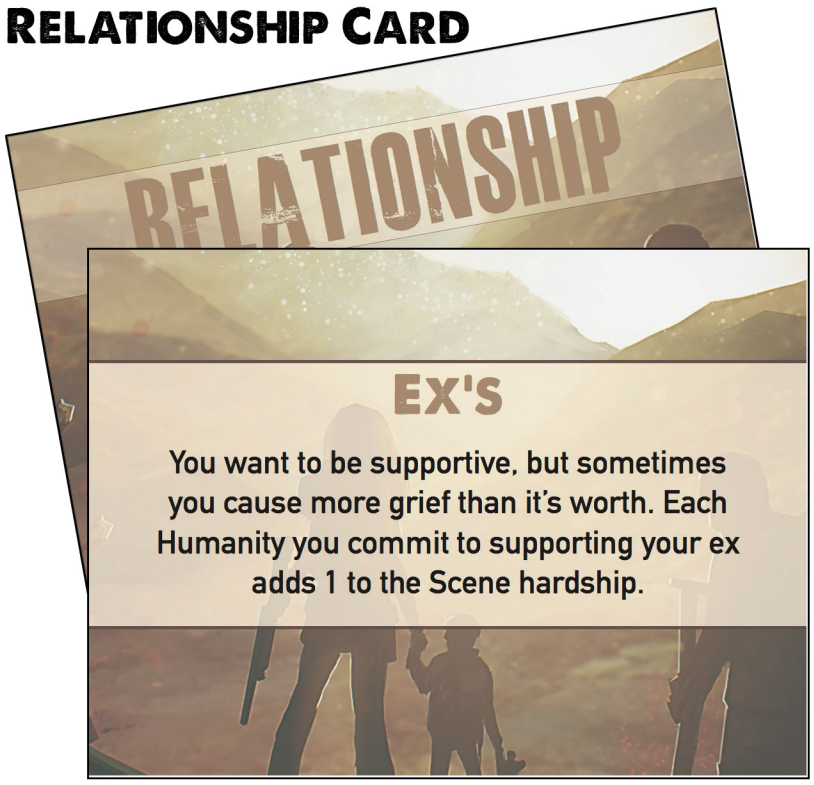
Character Details

Now that you have Traits and Relationships, figure out who your character is. Come up with a name. Decide how old they are. What did they do before the world went to hell? How did they end up with the other characters in the group? Write on a scrap of paper the character's name and age, as well as a brief description, and place it in front of you so everyone can see it. Don't reveal the contents of your Trait cards, but you may hint at them in your description. Take turns introducing your characters to everyone at the table, and discuss how the group came together. For example, they might have all been at a hospital, as staff, visitors, or patients, and perhaps everyone lived off the hospital supplies until they were depleted, forcing the group to leave together to find a more permanent and sustaining locale.

At this point, every character should have three (3) Trait cards

and there should be a Relationship card positioned between each of the players at the table, in addition to each player's five (5) Humanity dice and the Hope dice pool.

Relationship Card



PLAYING THE GAME

A game lasts five (5) rounds. A round ends after each player has drawn a Scene card and either Avoided or Acted on the outlined situation. If at least one player's character is still alive at the end of the fifth round, the game ends as a success of sorts, with the character(s) having arrived at their destination.

Order of Play

For the first round, choose a player at random to draw the first Scene card. For the duration of the game, continue taking turns by going around the table clockwise.

Drawing a Scene Card

On your turn, draw a Scene card from one of the terrain decks on the table. Choose the terrain type that fits best into the narrative of the game so far. Your choices are Wilderness, Mountainous, Coastal, Urban, and Any Terrain. The Any Terrain Scene card text could apply to any location in your game. If you run out of a particular terrain type, you must choose a new type; Scene cards cannot be re-used.

Once you've drawn a Scene card, silently read it over. Unless it is tagged as Unavoidable, you have two choices: Act or Avoid. If you Act, only describe the boxed callout text at the top of the card; don't reveal the hardship rating or any of the mechanical effects below: Accept, Refuse, Succeed, and Fail. The information regarding those effects is for you alone to know. Some Succeed or Refuse results might seem obvious from the description of the situation, but don't reveal specific outcomes until after the roll has been made to resolve the Scene. The other players have to take their chances and make decisions without that meta information.

If you decide to Avoid the Scene entirely, everyone (including you) suffers the Refuse or All Refuse penalty. The round then continues with the player to your left drawing a Scene card. A player who Avoids their Scene doesn't pass that card on, and they don't draw another Scene card.

Unavoidable Scene Cards

Some Scene cards are marked Unavoidable, and you do not have a choice between Acting or Avoiding; you must play the Scene out and fulfill whatever the card requires of you and the group.

Special Case: Unavoidable Scenes with No Hope or Humanity

If you pull an unavoidable Scene card requiring a dice roll but have no Humanity or Hope dice available to commit, everyone at the table automatically suffers the Failure penalty written on the card.

Garnering Support and Gathering Dice

If you decide to Act upon a Scene card that has a hardship rating, decide and declare how many of your Humanity dice you are committing. Slide those dice forward so that other players can clearly see how many dice you're willing to bring to bear. No matter what happens next, you are committed and cannot take back your Humanity dice. Others may now throw their lot in with you, or you may have to try to convince them to support you. Those who support you place their committed Humanity dice next to yours. They can each provide you with up to as many dice as you have committed but not more. For example, if you commit two Humanity to try to resolve the Scene, each other player can only commit one or two dice.

You cannot refuse support from other players and thus force the Refuse penalties upon their characters. If a player wants to support you, they support you.

The Last Hope Rule

If you want to Act or support but have no Humanity left, you may invoke the Last Hope rule to draw a single die from the Hope dice pool in lieu of Humanity. When it comes to support, if there's a shortage of Hope dice, the player whose character has the least condition penalties gets the first option to take a Hope die.

After support has been given (or not), and only after the other players have had a chance invoke the Last Hope rule, you now have the option to take as many dice as you want from the Hope dice pool to increase your chances of success. Hope dice used are gone and no longer available to other players for their own Scenes.

Resolving the Scene

Once all the players have declared their intentions and the dice are collected, calculate the final hardship for the Scene and roll the dice. If the number of successful dice meets or exceeds the hardship, you've succeeded. Narrate the Succeed outcome on the Scene card and apply any specific benefits.

Anyone who refused to support you suffers the Refuse penalty on the Scene card. These players do not benefit or suffer from Success or Fail results.

If your Scene ends in failure, only those players who committed Humanity dice to the Scene suffer the Fail consequences on the Scene card. You can describe how the brilliant plan went awry.

Dice committed are lost, regardless of success or failure.

Scenes Without Hardship Ratings

A number of Scene cards do not have a hardship rating. Most of those bear the "No Humanity Roll" tag, which means that no Humanity dice need to be committed during that Scene. Often, these Scenes pose a question to the group, such as "Will you search for me and attempt a rescue?" or "Should we share food with him?" During such Scenes, each player must decide how to respond. The player who drew the Scene card answers last. Once everyone has made their choices, dish out the rewards and consequences. Some results are individual and some may be triggered by group dynamics such as All Refuse.

The Next Scene

Once the roll and consequences for your Scene have been resolved, the player to your left draws a Scene card and takes the spotlight.

The End of the Round

A round is over once all players have drawn a Scene card and either Avoided or Acted to resolve the Scene. Since the end of a round is effectively the start of a new one, add an extra die to the Hope dice pool. Play continues clockwise.

Character Death

Characters can die in two different ways: They can suffer too much from a particular condition (Hunger or Harm), or they can run out of Humanity. If your character is Starving and suffers Hunger (or if your character is Hungry and suffers 2 Hunger), you die. If your character is Crippled and suffers Harm (or if your character is Hurt and suffers 2 Harm), you die. A condition-related death occurs immediately.

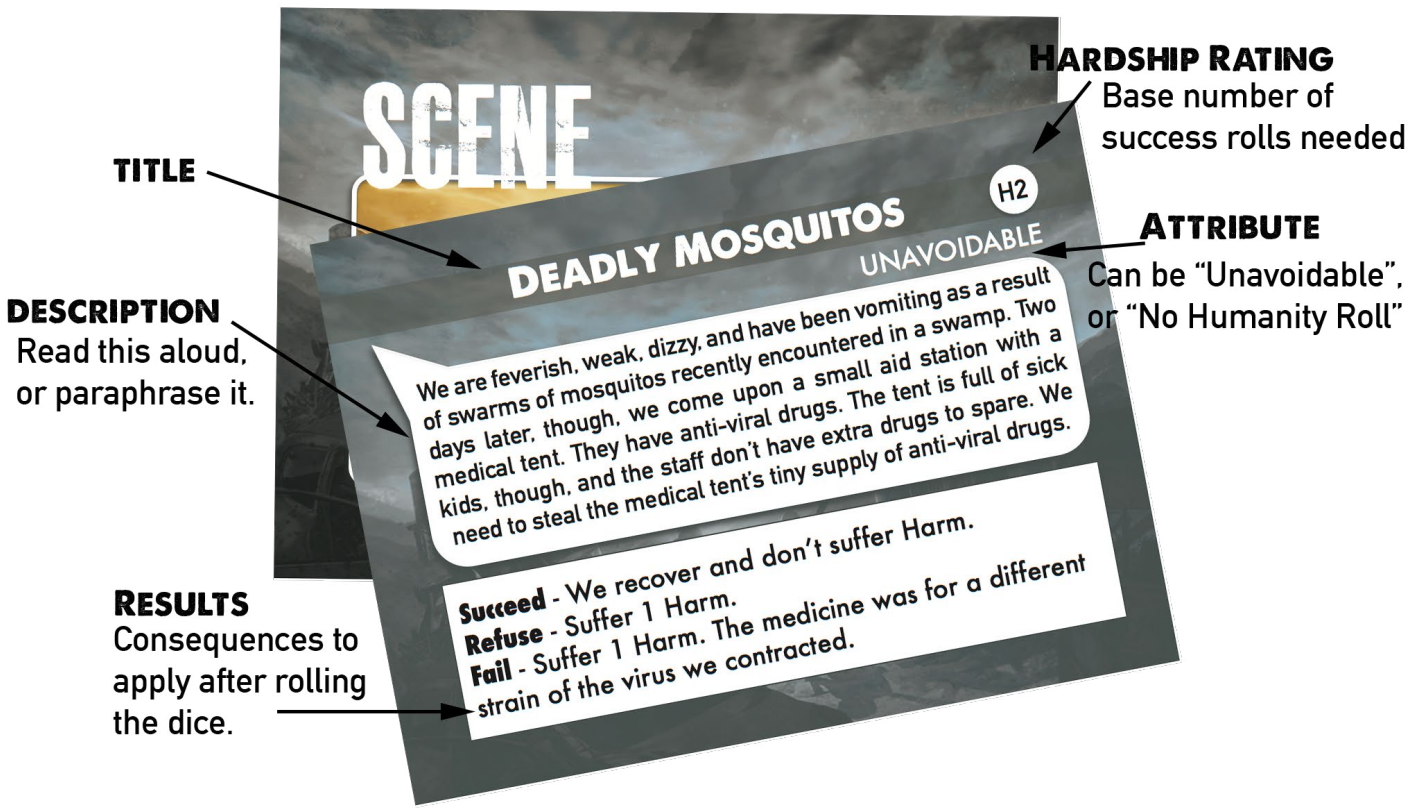
If you have no Humanity remaining and then lose Humanity, your character will be removed from the game at the beginning of the next player's turn. You have nothing left to give; you have lost all vestiges of humanity and cease to be able to function anymore. You have no empathy, compassion, or mercy left and will not survive. At this point, your character is out of the game, and you can narrate how your character's complete loss of humanity has devastated them.

If a character dies and the player possesses Personal Asset cards, that player chooses who inherits them.

Grace of Innocence Rule

If your character dies in round one or two of the game, you may create a new character to join the others. Start this character with only 3 Humanity dice, draw only two Trait cards, and do not draw a Relationship card. Decide as a group how this new character ends up joining the motley band. You may only start a new character like this once per game, and only if your original character is removed from the game during the first two rounds.

Anatomy of a Scene Card



Gift from the Grave

When your character dies, including during the first two rounds, you may randomly draw a Trait card from the deck and give it to a surviving player of your choice. This is your way of contributing even after you're gone and maybe even sticking it to those jerks who put you into the dirt.

The End of the Game

If at least one character survives to the end of round five, the survivor(s) reach their destination. Take turns narrating what happy events befall your characters after the journey has come to its merciful end. Pay tribute to those you lost along the way, and try to build a better world.

The game ends if all of the characters have been removed from play due to loss of Humanity or by having been pushed beyond Starving and/or Crippled. Chalk one up for the end of the world!