



DREAM ASKEW

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PLAYTEST KIT
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Dream Askew gives us ruined buildings, haunted faces, strange new psychic powers, fierce queer love, and turbulent skies, asking *"What do you do next?"*

Imagine that the collapse of civilization didn't happen everywhere at the same time. Instead, it's happening in waves. Every day, more people fall out of the society intact. We queers were always living in the margins of that society, finding solidarity, love, and meaning in the strangest of places. Apocalypse didn't come for us first, but it did come for us.

Gangs roam the apocalyptic wasteland, and scarcity is becoming the norm. The world is getting scarier, and just beyond our everyday perception, howling and hungry, there exists a psychic maelstrom.

We banded together to form a queer enclave - a place to live, sleep, and hopefully heal. More than ever before, each of us is responsible for the survival and fate of our community. What lies in the rubble? For this queer enclave, could it be utopia?

HOW TO PLAY

SET EVERYTHING UP

To start, read the overview. Next, randomly distribute the six character roles and six setting elements to everyone at the table. Take turns reading the italicized intro text for each character, then each setting element. Once they've all been read, each player selects one character role and one setting element to be theirs. Any unused character sheets are removed from the game, and any unused setting elements are placed in the middle of the table.

To create your character, go down the middle column of the sheet, circling things as instructed. Talk about your answers as you do so - naming your choices to the group, and adding some extra details about what you're imagining. Choose your question to ask to the left, but don't ask it just yet.

To flesh out the setting element, circle two things which it desires. Mention your choices aloud to the group. If there are any setting elements that remain blank in the middle of the table, the first person to pick them up during play will circle two their desires at that point.

Next, the whole group moves on to the Enclave Worksheet. As the group chooses visuals, discuss the emerging landscape. You can even begin sketching if you want to. Next, choose three forces that are in triangular conflict within your community. Define some details about how that conflict manifests, and what the factions involved are like. Is this a petty squabble between neighbours, or a town divided by rival ideologies?

Before play, read your Lure aloud to the group.

The process of setting everything up should take about one hour total.

BUILD UPON CURIOSITY

The prompts you circle on the Enclave worksheet lead into worldbuilding: enthusiastically making up details, asking one another questions, and sketching out a map of the area together. As this process unfolds, each player is also invited to ask to the person on their left the question they chose when creating their character. Players can ask in any order.

Build upon your curiosity. Maybe you want to know more about a key relationship, or discover exactly what was said during a recent interaction between two characters. Ask questions. Build on the answers that others give. If it seems like there's a scene worth exploring, dive in. Don't worry about everyone even getting to ask their question to the left, if you've already found a scene you want to explore. You can always come back.

LEAP INTO SCENES

With everyone building upon their curiosity, asking questions and excitedly fleshing out the dream, scene ideas will emerge. Maybe something will seem especially poignant or exciting. Maybe the answer to a question is clouded by uncertainty, or it just feels too big to make an arbitrary decision about. Leap into playing out that scene in full - narrating where the characters are when a question gets asked, speaking as your character, continuing to ask questions about the setting. Scenes can be brief snippets or rolling storylines.

PLAY YOUR CHARACTER

Read the tips for your character, and trust your storytelling instincts. Describe your character's appearance and mannerisms, narrate their actions, and speak their words. Play to find out who they are and what they do next.

Whenever you take action, that's you making a move. Moves are how the story unfolds. By default, a lot of the moves you make are "take action, leaving yourself vulnerable." But any time you're called upon to act, you can look at your list of moves and choose a different one to inspire your narration.

You start the game with zero tokens. When you make a Weak Move, gain a token. In order to make a Strong move, you need to spend a token.

You can also gain tokens by playing into someone else's Lure. Occasionally remind people of your Lure, and how they can earn a token from it. Lures encourage people to set one another's characters up to really shine.

Some moves are italicized questions. These are asked from one player to another, and the answer is always given honestly (even if their character remains cagey about it). It's knowledge that your character deduces, intuits, or manages to get out of someone else through conversation.

STEP IN TO PLAY MINOR CHARACTERS

Whenever a minor character comes up in the story, anyone can step in to play them. Just say, "I'll play Freckle during this scene!" If a minor character is obviously tied to a setting element, whoever holds that element can play them. You can always rotate ownership of minor characters!

INVOKE SETTING ELEMENTS WHEN IT FEELS RIGHT

Setting elements have a trigger for when to pick it up and take an active hand in playing it, and when to give it away in order to focus on playing your character. A setting element might not come up very much in a session, or it might be what drives the entire plot forward. Either is great.

Setting elements have moves, just like characters. When you act on behalf of the setting element, make a move. Setting elements don't gain or spend tokens.

WELCOME TO THE ENCLAVE

CIRCLE 3-5 VISUALS

an abandoned complex, individual homes, shanties + tents, a bustling market, glass + concrete, overgrowth, swamp, reclaimed green space, community gardens, tunnels, moldy tarps, rust, quietude, wreckage, wilds, blockades, squalor, heavy industry, outdoor kitchens, shrines, splendor, high-rises, a train station, trailers, remnants of war, bonfires, the ocean, wastelands, scrub, flooding, mutant plants blooming, farmland, raging parties, piles of trash, eerie warning signs, running water, repurposed plastics, coarse fibres, synanthropes

CIRCLE 3 THINGS THAT ARE IN CONFLICT IN THE ENCLAVE

psychic privacy, gender abolition, spaces for women, religious customs, goddess cults, racial identity, indigenous land rights, revolutionary fervor, mutants, scarcity thinking, politics of the void, reckless hedonism, the need for purity, party culture, barriers to access, the use of violence, food justice, trauma, the limitless possibilities of queer sex, known abusers, desiring a return to society

**SCRAWL NOTES AS YOU NEED.
DRAW A MAP TO THE RIGHT.**

INTRODUCING THE IRIS

The psychic maelstrom touches us all, but the Iris has been indelibly marked and changed. Their gifts are unprecedented and inexplicable, but may hold the secret to our healing. What is everyone so afraid of?

The Iris is an unnerving individual. Their power is mysterious, ephemeral, and unprecedented.

PLAY TO FIND OUT

Are you calculating, rash, or opportunistic?

Do your psychic gifts help or hurt your community?

Is your heart pure?

CHOOSE A NAME

Shadow, Lively, Smith, Pallor, Azure, Damson, Raksha, Kite, Monsoon, Micaela, Burroughs, Tion, Pity, Brace

CHOOSE A LOOK

slim frame, angular frame, disfigured frame, soft frame, steely frame, willowy frame

calculating eyes, dead eyes, wet eyes, arresting eyes, caring eyes, pale eyes, luminous eyes, ruined eyes

CHOOSE A GENDER

androgynous, emerging, ice femme, void, gargoyle

CHOOSE 2 WARDROBE STYLES

formal attire, leather, casual wear, ceremonial garb, medical wear, bondage gear, hoods and robes, a slender weapon carefully concealed, a bronze censer

CHOOSE 2 PSYCHIC GIFTS

Shared Dreams, Memory Harvesting, Lucky Guesses, Ghost Echoes, Unearthing, Astral Travel, Absolution, Brain Whispers, Fortune Telling, Storm Sheltering

DECIDE WHAT THE WORLD'S PSYCHIC MAELSTROM TOLD YOU

- That it needed me for a higher purpose.
- That it would shelter me from any repercussions.
- That I could swallow their pain away.
- How and when I would die.
- That love is the only salvation.
- That power is the only salvation.

CHOOSE 2 KEY RELATIONSHIPS

the slowly-dying drag mama whose pain I ease, our recently-exiled elder, the weird-eater I created, a wasteland mercenary who makes use of my talents, the weepy trans girl whose past I'm erasing, an impure soul I monitor carefully, my submissive

CHOOSE ONE TO ASK LEFT

- What secret did I learn about you yesterday?
- How have I unsettled you in recent days?

TIPS

- Find people in their moments of weakness or need, and offer them your strange gifts.
- Explore deviance, difference, and vulnerability.
- Make your character fallible and relatable.

LURE

Whenever someone invites you to use your psychic gifts on them, they gain a token.

STRONG MOVES

SPEND A TOKEN

- Get out of harm's way.
- Move unseen.
- Use your psychic gifts with artful precision.
- Restrain someone, physically or psychically.
- Abruptly call forth the world's psychic maelstrom.

Ask "What does your character secretly desire right now?"

Ask "What does your character wish I would do next?"

REGULAR MOVES

- Take action, leaving yourself vulnerable.
- Stare into someone's eyes without blinking.
- Quietly gather clues or information.
- Open your brain to the world's psychic maelstrom.
- Use your psychic gifts with unexpected side effects.

Ask "What should I be on the lookout for?"

Ask "Is your character telling the truth?"

WEAK MOVES

GAIN A TOKEN

- Draw unwanted attention to your movements.
- Experience psychic flashbacks.
- Lend someone your signature weapon.
- Temporarily lose control of your psychic abilities.
- Cave to someone else's desires.

Ask "What makes me vulnerable in this situation?"

INTRODUCING THE HAWKER

The market failed. The shops and restaurants and factories closed their doors. And into that void stepped the Hawker, hustling and working odd jobs and pulling a livelihood out of the rubble of apocalypse.

*The Hawker is an industrious individual.
Their power is material, social, and contingent.*

PLAY TO FIND OUT

*How do you stay in business amidst all this chaos?
Who do you prioritize when resources get scarce?
Are you a provider or a gatekeeper?*

CHOOSE A NAME

Angler, Cookie, Devraj, Chief, Jackbird, Sugar, Esme, Proper, Proust, Lafferty, Waters, Fancy, Zachariah, Zola

CHOOSE A LOOK

pinched face, warm face, tired face, honest face, scarred-up face, friendly face, flawless face

quick hands, precise hands, tattooed hands, calloused hands, slight hands, fresh manicure

CHOOSE A GENDER

high femme, genderfluid, dagger daddy, stud, raven

CHOOSE 2 WARDROBE STYLES

immaculate whites, a stained apron, vintage formal, leather, gold chains, street wear, scrounge-ups, a signature colour, flawless makeup, stilettos

CHOOSE 3 THINGS YOU PROVIDE

a venue, easy food, luxury food, liquor, coffee, fantasy, nostalgia, surveillance, companionship, enforcement, deliveries, body-guarding, expertise, guns and ammo, art, a thriving social scene, lodgings, tobacco, smut, hard drugs, whatever people are chasing at the time

CHOOSE 2 DESIRED CURRENCIES

cash up front, lingering debts, whispered secrets, protection, dependency, barter, work-trade, fawning adoration, something weirder

CHOOSE 1-2 KEY RELATIONSHIPS

the old queen I drove out of business, my kids, the wasteland salvager who brings in what I need, my ingénue assistant, the pissy killjoy next door, the society types who come here to slum it, the loan-shark who finally tracked me down

CHOOSE ONE TO ASK LEFT

- What do I regularly hook you up with?
- Why have I been sizing you up recently?
- How are you integral to my supply line?

TIPS

- Look for opportunities to provide for others, but also to hustle your wares.
- Foolishly overextend yourself from time to time.
- Make your character fallible and relatable.

LURE

Whenever someone offers you a new gig, or gets hooked on your supply, they gain a token.

STRONG MOVES

SPEND A TOKEN

- Get out of harm's way.
- Bring out supplies that no one knew you had.
- Draw a weapon before anyone can react.
- Lace something with undetectable poison.
- Call in a timely favour from a powerful friend.

Ask "How could I put your character at ease?"

Ask "What does your character have that I might want?"

REGULAR MOVES

- Take action, leaving yourself vulnerable.
- Deal with a routine and uneventful job.
- Cave to someone's demands.
- Lie fairly convincingly.
- Bolt for the nearest exit.

Ask "What does your character need right now?"

WEAK MOVES

GAIN A TOKEN

- Get caught lying, cheating, or sneaking.
- Lose track of something very important.
- Walk into a situation unarmed and unprepared.
- Accidentally open your brain to the world's psychic maelstrom.
- Beg for mercy.

Ask "How have I earned your character's ire?"

INTRODUCING THE STITCHER

*Things break. Supplies run out. Bodies get wounded.
The Stitcher is there - fixing, mending, making,
re-purposing. They have a workshop and an
uncanny intuition.*

*The Stitcher is a resourceful individual.
Their power is technical, material, and reactive.*

PLAY TO FIND OUT

*Where does your meticulous focus come from?
Do you ever try to fix things that aren't broken?
Does your life have balance?*

CHOOSE A NAME

Nils, Tai, Spector, Lemieux, Dremmer, Sander, Spook, Grip, Corey, Robyn, Depot, Jane, Garon, Aiden, Knots

CHOOSE A LOOK

knowing eyes, appraising eyes, skittish eyes, covered eyes, modified eyes, red eyes

scarred hands, clean hands, greasy hands, gloved hands, worn hands, busy hands

CHOOSE A GENDER

bigender, agender, cyber dyke, transgressing, raven

CHOOSE 2 WARDROBE STYLES

scrounge-ups, duck canvas, fucked-up hair, oil stains, countless pockets, a repurposed uniform, visible tech, scrubs, overalls, minimalist chic, symbiotes

CHOOSE 2 WORKSHOP FUNCTIONS

vehicle repair, bicycle repair, art space, infirmary, firearms, tech assembly, hydroponics, broadcasting, brewing + preserving, body upkeep, metalworking, hacking, recycling, psionics, chemistry, woodworking

DECIDE WHERE YOU GET THE BULK OF YOUR SUPPLIES

- I scavenge ruined buildings in abandoned districts.
- I barter with those still living in the society intact.
- People bring me the weirdest shit.
- I take apart the old to furnish the new.
- I have access to a partially-excavated landfill.
- I steal what I need.

CHOOSE 1-2 KEY RELATIONSHIPS

twin apprentices, a ghost who haunts my workspace, the beautiful boy who makes me trip up my words, the black marketeer to whom I owe a small fortune, the void kid who needs my maintenance to stay alive, my terminally-ill lover, my sobriety circle

CHOOSE ONE TO ASK LEFT

- What broken thing do you have that I could fix?
- What did I lend to you recently?

TIPS

- Establish meaningful, personal relationships with your tools, supplies, and workshop ephemera.
- Involve fellow players in brainstorming interesting risks or complications when you tinker with things.
- Make your character fallible and relatable.

LURE

Whenever someone comes to you with something precious that needs fixing, they gain a token.

STRONG MOVES

SPEND A TOKEN

- Get out of harm's way.
- Ease somebody's pain.
- Have everything required to fix or make a thing right away with no compromises or sacrifices.
- Jury-rig a temporary solution while under duress.
- Decipher the hidden logic of a troubling situation.

Ask "What supplies does your character have that I need?"

REGULAR MOVES

- Take action, leaving yourself vulnerable.
- Fix or make something, partially or shoddily.
- Open your brain to the world's psychic maelstrom.
- Head out to scavenge or barter for supplies.
- Appeal to justice and reason.

*Ask "What does your character have that needs fixing?"
While your character holds an object, ask "What powerful emotion has this recently absorbed?"*

WEAK MOVES

GAIN A TOKEN

- Take apart something crucial to repurpose its parts.
- Tinker with an object, leaving it volatile or broken.
- Isolate yourself to work on a secret personal project.
- Treat someone like a project instead of a person.

Ask "What has your character lost forever?"

INTRODUCING THE TIGER

The police fled the neighbourhood. Things were scary for a while. Now, the Tiger and their gang own the streets around here. Is that ownership still contested?

*The Tiger is a wicked fierce individual.
Their power is social, violent, and hard-won.*

PLAY TO FIND OUT

*Where does your militancy stem from?
Are you a guardian or a troublemaker?
Do you know how to yield and make compromises?*

CHOOSE A NAME

Domino, Tyrus, Blues, Keegan, Smith, Duke, Tawny, Cheshire, Vigo, Boston, Impala, Diesel, Mia, Aadita

CHOOSE A LOOK

scarred face, baby face, pretty face, weathered face, tattooed face, masked face, tough face, narrow face

slender arms, burned arms, jacked arms, solid arms, tattooed arms, shot-up arms, a busted arm

CHOOSE A GENDER

hard femme, butch queen, two-spirit, masc, gargoyle

CHOOSE 2 WARDROBE STYLES

leather, velour, scrounge-ups, militant wear, armour, tailored suits, breathable athletics, flashy acquisitions, a gang logo back patch, neon hair, black bloc attire

CHOOSE 2 GANG TRAPPINGS

motorcycles, bicycles, guns, riot gear, a safehouse, medical supplies, clean drugs, chains + rusty pipes, slingshots + baseball bats, megaphones + banners

DECIDE YOUR GANG'S BIG FLAW

- We owe a lot of debts that we can't pay.
- Since that unsettling murder, I've lost some trust.
- The enclave isn't entirely on board with our vision.
- The gang is addicted to something dangerous.
- Our actions bleed psychic instability into the area.
- The gang is agitating to become an autonomous collective, but it's not clear how to make that work.

CHOOSE 1-2 KEY RELATIONSHIPS

my son, my pastor, my hungry-for-blood sibling, the wasteland biker pack I have an uneasy truce with, the second-in-command who covets my title, my leather daddy, my poz support crew, the aging dyke who cooks me dinner sometimes

CHOOSE ONE TO ASK LEFT

- What have you recently contributed to the cause?
- How did I capture your attention yesterday?
- Why don't you trust me?

TIPS

- Explore both your kindness and your cruelty.
- Sometimes ask the other players about whether your gang willingly follows your commands.
- Make your character fallible and relatable.

LURE

Whenever someone relies on you to solve one of their biggest problems, they gain a token.

STRONG MOVES

SPEND A TOKEN

- Get yourself or your gang out of harm's way.
- Lead your gang into battle or confrontation.
- Say just the right thing to extinguish someone's fear and bolster their confidence.
- Kill someone.

*Ask "How can I get your character to do what I want?"
Ask "What resources is your character making do without right now?"*

REGULAR MOVES

- Take action, leaving yourself vulnerable.
- Attempt to recruit someone into your service.
- Tenderly care for someone.
- Make an example of someone.
- Give something away.

Ask "Who's really in control here?"

Ask "How is your character vulnerable to me right now?"

WEAK MOVES

GAIN A TOKEN

- Reveal your secret vulnerability to someone.
- Promise something you can't possibly deliver.
- Get high at the worst possible moment.
- Trigger the memory of a past trauma.

Ask "What makes me vulnerable in this situation?"

Ask "Whose motives should I second-guess right now?"

INTRODUCING THE TORCH

All routines and mundane knowledges crumble under the weight of apocalypse. But the Torch has answers. Are they ancient teachings, ecstatic fantasy, or a new faith dawning? Followers draw near to their warm glow.

The Torch is a compelling individual.
Their power is spiritual, social, and mystical.

PLAY TO FIND OUT

Do your teachings offer the enclave a path forward?
Do you know when to lead and when to listen?
How do you get along with non-followers?

CHOOSE A NAME

Hope, Noni, Lucia, Dian, Chester, Always, Wynn, Cass, Vase, Eita, Rabbit, Rhyme, Sibyl, Sissy, Mischa, Spoke

CHOOSE A LOOK

calm eyes, faraway eyes, forgiving eyes, mournful eyes, blotted eyes, flickering eyes, dilated eyes, fiery eyes

open face, covered face, sober face, wrinkled face, gentle face, ashen face, unwashed face, marked face

CHOOSE A GENDER

predestined, transgressing, femme, goddess, warrior

CHOOSE 2 WARDROBE STYLES

tattered vestments, scrounge-ups, fetish wear, robes, beautiful fabrics, coarse fibers, striking colours, traditional garb, drawn sigils, rave wear, witch chic

CHOOSE 2 RITUALS YOU LEAD

Boiling the Bones, Letting the Blood, Street Wards, Close Reading of the Holy Texts, Glitter Bombing, Rites of Passage, Tea Ceremony, Augury, Bacchanal, Tripping the Circuit, Dirty Flutter, Handfasting, Truth

DECIDE WHAT LOOMING THREAT YOU ALONE TRULY UNDERSTAND

- Our souls have begun to rot inside our bodies.
- The psychic maelstrom sends wolves to devour us.
- We're replicating the oppressions of our old society.
- Hope and mischief are fires that we must keep ever-burning, or we will face eternal darkness.
- When we abandon our historical rites and bonds, evil things grow in the empty spaces left behind.

CHOOSE 1-2 KEY RELATIONSHIPS

the lovers I must please, the students I must teach, my chosen sisters, the faeries who've taken me in, a bitter ex, the herbalist who distills my tinctures, the coven I was asked to leave, my feral muse

CHOOSE ONE TO ASK LEFT

- Are you among my followers and devotees?
- Why did we break up?

TIPS

- Use your rituals to bring people closer together.
- Make yourself valued and needed.
- Make your character fallible and relatable.

LURE

Whenever someone participates in one of your rituals for the first time, they gain a token.

STRONG MOVES

SPEND A TOKEN

- Get out of harm's way.
- Psychically summon your followers.
- Soothe someone's pain or duress.
- Incite your followers into violent action.
- Enact a cunning diversion.

Ask "What is your character's greatest fear?"

Ask "Who or what does your character secretly love?"

REGULAR MOVES

- Take action, leaving yourself vulnerable.
- Commence a ritual.
- Gather supplies.
- Share food or advice with someone.
- Open your brain to the world's psychic maelstrom.

Ask "How could I deepen your character's sense of belonging and purpose in this place?"

WEAK MOVES

GAIN A TOKEN

- Ostracize one of your followers.
- Admit you don't have the answer to someone's question or problem.
- Botch a ritual, exposing yourself to risk or ridicule.
- Threaten someone or something far too powerful.
- Appeal to prophecy or cosmic forces.

Ask "What does your character think of me?"

INTRODUCING THE ARRIVAL

When society shoves you out, you don't really have time to process. You need food, shelter, friends. The Arrival found their way to the enclave. Can they barter a measure of amnesty into a permanent home?

*The Arrival is an individual in flux.
Their power is contingent, technical, and suspect.*

PLAY TO FIND OUT

*How well do you cope with stress and change?
Will you ever return to the society intact?
What new possibilities does the enclave offer you?*

CHOOSE A NAME

Burton, Audi, Yeong, Bishop, Deshaun, Lark, Rutger, Kayla, Jordan, Tahani, Javier, Fai, Maria, Dremmer

CHOOSE A LOOK

tired frame, starved frame, sturdy frame, plump frame, muscular frame, hunched frame, bandaged frame

calloused hands, polished hands, gloved hands, scabby hands, capable hands, trembling hands

CHOOSE A GENDER

ambiguous, transitioning, man, woman, tomboy

CHOOSE 2 WARDROBE STYLES

standard issue, scrounge-ups, rumpled suits, scrubs, hiking gear, long sleeves, shoplifted club clothes, my old uniform, prison jumpsuit, bloodstains

DECIDE HOW YOU KNEW THAT THE ENCLAVE EXISTED

- I used to drive an armoured grocery truck through the area every week.
- I used to be a cop, policing the borders of society.
- I was a scavenger, living alone before injury forced me to seek out a bigger community.
- I used to come out here for the parties.
- My daughter has been living here for a few years.

CHOOSE 2 THINGS YOU BROUGHT WITH YOU WHEN YOU FLED

old pistol, water purifier, my inhaler, concealed knife, truck, photo albums, a phone that's still got service, holy book, stockpiles of food, my dog, stolen money

CHOOSE 1-2 KEY RELATIONSHIPS

the people I fled from, the spouse I left behind, the gentle soul who invited me to share their bed, the twinkly trans guy who has me questioning things, the first person to offer me a stiff drink, my guide

CHOOSE ONE TO ASK LEFT

- Why do you wish I had never arrived?
- What was the first thing you noticed about me?

TIPS

- Tell the other players the secrets of your character's past, so they can help incorporate it into the story.
- Discover the enclave's implicit social rules through earnest trial and error.
- Make your character fallible and relatable.

LURE

Whenever someone gives you an opportunity to prove yourself to the community, they gain a token.

STRONG MOVES

SPEND A TOKEN

- Get out of harm's way.
- Reveal a previously unmentioned skill.
- Work hard and get the job done.
- Eavesdrop undetected on a conversation.
- Leap forward to shield someone else from harm.

*Ask "What does your character wish I would do next?"
Ask "What should my character be on the lookout for?"*

REGULAR MOVES

- Take action, leaving yourself vulnerable.
- Step in to negotiate with outsiders.
- Offer someone a cigarette.
- Attempt to lend a helping hand.
- Let someone see you at your most vulnerable.

Ask "What does your character need help with currently?"

WEAK MOVES

GAIN A TOKEN

- Confess something and seek forgiveness.
- Threaten or coerce someone.
- Accidentally open your brain to the world's psychic maelstrom.
- Run out of something that the queer enclave doesn't have steady access to.
- Demand an explanation from someone.

Ask "Does your character feel okay with me being here right now?"

YOU ALSO PLAY THE VARIED SCARCITIES

There s no postal service. No municipal waste treatment. No reservoir operations manager to treat your water. No ecological impact survey team. No police. No road maintenance crew, and that means no refrigerated trucks hauling groceries into the area. No signal in the cell towers most days. The people who used to think about this stuff so you didn't have to? They're gone now.

CIRCLE 2 DESIRES

competition, paranoia, collaboration, uncomfortable bargains, scrappy diy, suffering without, a feral age

TIPS

- Introduce scavengers, hustlers, growers, and bandits. Make them all somewhat sympathetic.
- Explore what happens when everyday infrastructure no longer exists.
- Ask compelling questions and build on the answers that others give.

PICK UP WHEN

Someone wanders the wasteland, seeks a buyer, or visits a marketplace.

GIVE AWAY WHEN

You need something material and don't immediately know where to get it.

MOVES

- Show someone acting foolishly out of need and desperation.
- Introduce a traitorous individual.
- Spread disease.

After every move, ask "What do you do?"

YOU ALSO PLAY THE PSYCHIC MAELSTROM

Close your eyes, open your brain: something is wrong with the world. That something is the psychic maelstrom. It's just beyond our everyday perception, ever-present and howling.

It can offer guidance, protection, even flashes of brilliant inspiration. But it's hungry, and nobody knows what price it demands in return.

CIRCLE 2 DESIRES

human dependence, cosmic revelation, revenge, entropy, fervent intimacy, to be ushered into the world forever

TIPS

- Explore the subtle impact that the psychic maelstrom has on everyday people and places.
- When people open their brains to the psychic maelstrom, describe or ask about their sensory experiences.
- Ask compelling questions and build on the answers that others give.

PICK UP WHEN

Someone uses a psychic gift, seeks out the strange, or invokes the maelstrom.

GIVE AWAY WHEN

You're involved in any of the above or leave yourself psychically vulnerable.

MOVES

- Foreshadow a threat.
- Enter into someone's sensory experience at the right moment.
- Bleed psychic instability into the immediate area.

After every move, ask "What do you do?"

YOU ALSO PLAY THE SOCIETY INTACT

For some reason we thought the collapse was going to hit everybody at the same time. But nothing happens like that: neatly, evenly. Civilization crumbles in waves, eroding the peripheries of good society.

Apocalypse is only a distant nightmare for the privileged, a cautionary tale about what might happen to them if they should fall from the master's clutches. You'd be surprised what one of those people would do to keep their society intact.

CIRCLE 2 DESIRES

orthodoxy, ignorance of outsiders, profit eternal, self-preservation, a technological solution, hope renewed

TIPS

- Describe environments and people that feel at once familiar and alien.
- Make decisions about what you can still buy in conventional markets.
- Ask compelling questions and build on the answers that others give.

PICK UP WHEN

Someone wanders into the society intact, or you have an idea for why they might pay the enclave a visit.

GIVE AWAY WHEN

You need to deal with the society intact or they remember that you exist.

MOVES

- Introduce an authority figure.
- Announce future threats.
- Offer an opportunity, with or without a cost.

After every move, ask "What do you do?"

YOU ALSO PLAY THE DIGITAL REALM

Everything we'd ever known or said was embedded somewhere inside it. Even though the digital realm was young, it was hard to remember back to the way life was without it. It seemed as permanent as it was pervasive.

Apocalypse pulled the digital realm to pieces. Networks fell into disconnect. Satellites blinked out. Computers were ripped apart and stripped of their precious metal content. But humans are wily and resourceful. They know how to salvage, re-purpose, and rebuild. Maybe the digital realm still has a future.

CIRCLE 2 DESIRES

expanded networks, shared knowledge, escapism, trafficked secrets, fresh code, to reinvent the world in its image

TIPS

- Describe sketchy, patchwork ways that people gain access to the digital realm after infrastructure collapses.
- Give some people a reason to hate, fear, or mythologize the digital realm.
- Ask compelling questions and build on the answers that others give.

PICK UP WHEN

Someone interacts with a digital device, or you have an idea about how digitization shaped this environment.

GIVE AWAY WHEN

You interact with a digital device or recall memories of the digital realm.

MOVES

- Reveal something to be broken.
- Let the technology speak in turn.
- Introduce a glitch.

After every move, ask "What do you do?"

YOU ALSO PLAY THE OUTLYING GANGS

People had wildly differing ideas about what the collapse of law and order meant for their future. Some shuffled the mortal coil at the first sign of real danger. Others took to the hills, equipped with water purifiers and dried goji berries.

But some people stayed right where they were, armed and alert. Ready to carve out an empire by whatever means necessary. Stop whatever you're doing. Crane your neck just a tiny bit. You can probably hear their roaring in the distance.

CIRCLE 2 DESIRES

territory, unspoken fealty, splendor, the smell of fear, home-cooked meals, mutant blood, somewhere safe to sleep

TIPS

- Describe the varied aesthetics and ethics of the outlying gangs.
- Use the outlying gangs to explore and magnify tensions within the queer enclave.
- Ask compelling questions and build on the answers that others give.

PICK UP WHEN

Someone wanders the wasteland, takes a major road, or trespasses.

GIVE AWAY WHEN

You do any of the above or you have a gang debt that you run out of time on.

MOVES

- Put a gun in someone's hand.
- Bring gossip in from the wasteland.
- Give someone the very resources that a gang is hunting for.

After every move, ask "What do you do?"

YOU ALSO PLAY THE EARTH ITSELF

We built a new world upon its back, glass and steel stacked toward the heavens. We learned how to pull electricity out of every natural element, to mechanize, to automate. Some of us went whole days forgetting that anything existed outside our edifice.

We wounded the earth. We alienated ourselves from its touch and its harmonies. We broke holes in the sky. When it tried to warn us, we didn't listen. What now? Will apocalypse cement that alienation for all eternity, or finally bring us home?

CIRCLE 2 DESIRES

healing, reciprocity, strange new forms, the fall of man, eden renewed, carrion, trembling awe, to be reborn in fire

TIPS

- Describe the smells, colours, and scurrying movements of the world.
- Show how the earth responds to human activity, adapting or withering.
- Ask compelling questions and build on the answers that others give.

PICK UP WHEN

You want to describe weather, mutation, beasts, or the natural world.

GIVE AWAY WHEN

You brave the elements, investigate something organic, or walk in nature.

MOVES

- Abruptly storm.
- Reveal an abundance or serenity.
- Leave something wounded.

After every move, ask "What do you do?"

HOW THINGS BREAK

Electricity requires upkeep. Without human intervention, a coal plant would likely go down in less than a day, and a hydroelectric dam in less than a fortnight. Failures anywhere in the grid can affect the overall grid, potentially pulling the whole thing down. Private, off-grid power systems require knowledge and upkeep too, and parts will degrade over time.

Gasoline goes stale quick. Depending on oxygen exposure, temperature stability, container material, and whether there is an added fuel stabilizer, that time can vary from one month to a few years. You can't siphon usable gas out of a car that's been abandoned on the side of the road since last year.

Paved roads will last a few decades before breaking down to the point of being treacherous or impassable for cars. The exact timeline depends on weather, use, and the earth itself.

The amount of time it takes for **industrially-canned foods** to degrade depends upon the integrity of the container. While best before dates expire within a few years, the food inside can remain edible across many decades, though colour, texture, and flavour will degrade. Once the can becomes compromised or dented, however, oxygen and bacteria quickly invade and make the contents unsafe.

Dried foods can last a lifetime if kept in a cool, dry environment safe from oxygen and life, though their nutrients will slowly degrade over decades.

When things break down, how does your community react to their varied scarcities? Do they go without, broker uncomfortable deals with profiteers from the society intact, make their own from scratch, scavenge, or something else entirely? How do they prove themselves to be resourceful?

GENDERS OF THE APOCALYPSE

Creating a character in Dream Askew involves contending with gender, but it's a gender exploded, extracted from the society intact and made mutant. What do some of these words even mean?

Some carry storied legacies from the real world, already infused with meaning - femme, androgyne, bigender, genderfluid, and others. A few are tied to racial community, positioning a character intersectionally, like two-spirit and stud.

Others are genders of the apocalypse. Ice femme and dagger daddy take existing queer identities and recast them in ways the real world has yet to experience. Gargoyle and raven emerge entirely new.

When you encounter a gender word, imagine. Ask your fellow players. Flirt with a search engine. If nothing comes up, invent. No matter how you come to your initial understanding, it's yours to continue to define through play.