

After the Fall

A 1980s Style Post-Apocalyptic RPG v0.1

Send feedback to jonny.bloozit@gmail.com Please indicate whether the feedback arises from playtesting, or is purely theoretical. If you have run the game and would like credit as a playtester, please indicate the name you would like to be credited under.



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1 Design Goals

- The distinction between PC, NPC, and monster is unnecessary. The world contains no stable species anymore, except pure humans. All other creatures start with a base genus, and add mutations.
- The goal is to accumulate tech. The tech is a proxy for everything.
- There are no experience points—characters advance by finding tech.
- Skills are not worth keeping track of. The goal is to find a shotgun, not become a master swordsman.
- Charisma is unnecessary. If you roll into town with a nylon jacket, Gore-Tex boots, a Stetson hat, and a rifle, everyone can see you are a badass adventurer. It's like rolling up to the club in a Ferrari. Tech confers social status, respect, and admiration. Nobody gives a shit how charming you are.
- Intelligence is a property of the player, not the character

2 Salient Features of the World

- No one remembers exactly what caused the apocalypse—everyone you ask seems to have a different story. In the end, it doesn't matter what it was, time is forever divided into before and after the Fall.
- Mutated humans, called humanoids, live in small bands or tribes. No one thinks of rebuilding the lost world of the Ancients, that is impossible. Ancient ruins are taboo lands, said to be plagued by radiation, and protected by supernatural forces.
- The last remaining humans live in and around these ruins. They still speak and read the ancient language, they're the last who do. They are considered otherworldly, mythical.
- In the wilderness are sentient mutated animals and plants, living alone or in groups according to the preferences of their kind.
- Towns exist, as in the Wild West, where all types come to trade. Powerful interests maintain a semblance of order, and such towns strike their own silver coins. The purity and weight is guaranteed by the coiner, but coins are always valued more highly than their raw metal content, because taxes and fees must be paid in coin.
- In the hinterland, people who know each other trade on credit, and settle up using whatever they have, but strangers trade by barter. The prices of goods in town, in silver, are known, but most people in such places have no silver, and may never have seen it. The prices are merely a convenience, so that one knows how many ballpoint pens are worth a pair of scissors, or a barrel of clean water. Non-working watches, light-up belt buckles, nylon jackets, plastic sunglasses, are all coveted jewelry, and confer status. Everything is worth something to someone.

- The state of medicine is comparable to the Wild West. Settlements have doctors who can try to extract arrows and bullets, but outside of med tech, medicine is limited to medicinal herbs and simple drugs of dubious effectiveness.
- Some go adventuring as a rite of passage, others out of desperation. Your fellows may think you mad. Perhaps you are.

2.1 Cults

Every tribe, village, and town has its patron gods, but the world after the Fall is also full of weird religions, strange cults, and secret societies. Some settlements are ruled by a cult. It is rare for them to be helpful, and even the helpful ones can be a hindrance.

Name	Membership	Core Beliefs	Sacraments	Taboos
Commonists	Unrestricted	Autocratic rule is necessary to ensure order, equality, and peace. Paradoxically, violence is sometimes necessary.	Order, obedience, control	Chaos, individuality, non-conformity
Desolation Angels of the Benevolent St. Grampus	Unrestricted	Mercy, benevolence	Providing food, water, and medical attention to strangers in the wasteland	Violence, destruction. They will give you grief for carrying weapons.
Doomsday Prophets	Unrestricted	The real end is nigh. The gods are coming back to finish the job.	Prepping	Acting as though you believe there is a future
Hammermen	Humans	Human supremacy, tech god worship	Technology, purity, human supremacy	Mutants
Green Party	Mutated plants	Creatures that need to eat and defecate are an abomination.	Planting	Lowly creatures that cannot survive on the sun and rain which is free to all
Neomorphs	Mutants	Mutant supremacy, worship of the Metamorphic God	Mutation, radiation baptism, the Great Wheel of Change	Stability, stagnation, unmutated life

Nihilists	Unrestricted	Sentient life is a pestilence. The gods were right to try to destroy us. It would be better had nothing begun at all.	Death, entropy, destruction	Life
Red Claw	Mutated animals	The Anthropocene age is over, the Age of Beasts has begun.	Animal supremacy, living wild and free	Humans, humanoids, and their ways: living in settlements, transacting in coin, wearing clothing
Worshippers of the Messiah	Unrestricted	The King of the Old Ones will return to lead us into Paradise	Patience, tradition, fatalism	Doing anything for yourself to improve your life here and now

3 Character Creation Steps

- Pick a species. We do this first because players generally have in mind a species they would like to play.
- Roll 3d6 four times, and arrange the numbers as you wish, for STR, NIM, TOU, MEC. Add the attribute bonuses for your species (if any). No attribute may exceed 18.
- We allow the arrangement of scores because there is no point playing a *human* with no *mechanical aptitude*, or a mutated bearoid with very low *strength*. The character should not be a total misfit for the role the player wants to play.
- Mutant species start with 2d4 mutations. Roll these randomly on the mutation table. There is one table for humanoids and mutated animals, and another one for mutated plants.
- If the character is so pathetic that survival is impossible, the GM may allow you to take it behind the wood shed and shoot it. Roll a new character.
- If the mutations give you any attribute bonuses, record those.
- Record the penalty or bonus conferred by STR and NIM, if either of these values is under 6 or over 15.
- You get 2 hit points for each point of TOU. Record that now.
- You can carry one normal-sized item for every two points of STR. Record that.

3.1 Attributes

For *strength* and *nimbleness*, Values under 6 impose a penalty, and values over 15 provide a bonus, when performing actions related to that attribute. The actions to which these modifiers apply, are described more fully in the descriptions of each attribute.

Attribute	Penalty or Bonus
3	-3
4	-2
5	-1
16	+1
17	+2
18	3

3.2 Testing Attributes to Avoid Hazards (*Saving Throws*)

- Test the relevant attribute to avoid harm, by rolling under the attribute with a d20.
- *Difficult* hazards may impose a +N modifier on the roll, while *easy* hazards allow a -N modifier.
- For an average hazard, use the *natural* roll.
- This is also called a *saving throw*.

3.2.1 Strength (STR)

- You may carry one average-sized item for every two points of *strength*
- Very strong characters get a damage bonus when using muscle-powered weapons, and very weak characters get a penalty. This includes bows: a strong archer can use a bow with a heavier draw.
- Feats of brute strength typically require a minimum *strength* to perform—you won't generally *test strength* as there is no randomness involved in whether or not one can lift a given amount of weight.

3.2.2 Nimbleness (NIM)

- Encapsulates speed, dexterity, reaction time
- Very nimble characters get a bonus when trying to hit enemies, and impose a penalty on enemies who try to hit them (provided the attack is not an ambush with a ranged weapon). The reverse is true for very clumsy characters. The bonus does not apply when wearing armor heavier than *armor class 1*, or carrying more than STR/4 items (i.e. more than half your carrying capacity).
- Test *nimbleness* to avoid harm from collapsing walls and floors, and so forth.

3.2.3 Toughness (TOU)

- Encapsulates muscular endurance, and resistance to radiation, poison, and disease.
- You get 2 *hit points* per point of *toughness*.

3.2.4 Mechanical Aptitude (MEC)

- *Mechanical aptitude* is not the same thing as intelligence—we've all met professors who can't figure out which end of a screwdriver to hold. Intelligence is a property of the player, not the character.
- *Test mechanical aptitude* when trying to figure out how to use a piece of old tech without hurting yourself or damaging the item.

3.3 Species

3.3.1 Humans

- Immune to mutation
- Can speak and read English
- Can use med tech
- Will be recognized by security systems as human, with the proper ID
- Get a +3 bonus each to *toughness* and *mechanical aptitude*, not to exceed 18
- Live in their own communities in and around ancient ruins, and have some familiarity with old tech. Mutant species consider these taboo lands, so interaction between humans and mutants is uncommon.
- All humans know how to change batteries, use solar battery chargers, and use/clean firearms.

3.3.2 Humanoids

- Mutations which alter the human shape hinder the use of tech.
- Med tech only works half the time.
- Will be rejected by security systems with biometrics, regardless of ID
- Consider ancient ruins taboo lands, and the humans who live there supernatural beings
- Speak only the *common* language
- Only scribes can read or do arithmetic. Most humanoids (including PCs) are illiterate, and can only count well enough to trade goods.

3.3.3 Mutated Animals

Each mutated animal type gets stock abilities, in addition to the allotted 2d4 mutations from the table. All PC mutated animals are assumed to be:

- Able to speak some *common*, less well than humans and humanoids
- About the size of an average human
- Can't use med tech
- Will be rejected by security systems with biometrics, regardless of ID
- Live in small semi-nomadic bands that may have some interaction with *humanoids*.

3.3.3.1 Amphibian

- *Sticky hands and feet*
- *Increased taste*
- Stay submerged up to 30 minutes

3.3.3.2 Avian

Huge bird, too big to fly, but able to glide

- Heavy beak, treat as short sword
- *Wings, partially functional*
- No hands at all

3.3.3.3 Crustacean

Includes arthropods, most of which are beetles

- *Exoskeleton*
- Pincer claws, treat as dagger
- *Increased vibration sensitivity*
- No hands at all

3.3.3.4 Mammalian

Large, furry animal, like a bear or very large dog

- Claws or bite (or both), treat as dagger
- Tough hide, *armor class 1*
- Crude hands, incapable of fine manipulation, or of operating most tech
- *+2 strength*
- *Increased smell*

3.3.3.5 Reptilian

- Claws or bite (or both), treat as dagger
- Scales, *armor class 1*
- Crude hands, incapable of fine manipulation, or of operating most tech
- *+2 nimbleness*
- Tail provides *increased balance*

- No temperature regulation, cannot tolerate the cold

4 Mutations

If the same mutation is rolled twice, the GM can give the character a more potent version of that mutation, or allow a re-roll in instances where that doesn't make sense, or a limit has been reached

d100	Defect	Description	In-Game Effects
1		Bioluminescence	You can generate a dim yellow-green light, equivalent to a candle.
2		Camouflage	Change color like a chameleon to blend in with your surroundings, but you must be wearing very little clothing for this to be effective.
3	X	Decreased hearing	It's easy to sneak up on you
4-5	X	Decreased infection resistance	Character responds to infection and disease at half toughness (rounded up)
6-7	X	Decreased poison resistance	Character responds to poison at half toughness (rounded up)
8-9	X	Decreased radiation resistance	Character responds to radiation at half toughness (rounded up)
10	X	Decreased vision	You can make out general shapes if they are relatively close. -3 to hit with ranged weapons, impossible to hit anything more than 4 meters away.
11		Echolocation	You have sonar, and also large ears, like a bat. The clicking sounds you make are audible, and the environment must be quiet enough to hear the echoes.
12-13		Electric eel shock	Once per turn, you can deliver a 1d4 shock to any being that is touching you, or is connected through a conductive medium such as metal or water.
14		Empathy	You know what others are feeling, but not what they are thinking.
15		Exoskeleton	Natural armor, <i>armor class 2</i>
16-17		Fast healing	You heal at double the normal rate. If med tech works on you, it will be twice as effective as normal.
18-19	X	Hostility pheromones	You excrete chemicals that generate anger in others, friends and foes. You are disliked, and often assaulted. The effect is worse indoors. Bathing helps for a while, but nobody bathes regularly after the <i>Fall</i> .
20		Increased balance	Fearlessly traverse catwalks, never fall into a pit or a collapsing floor, always land on your feet.
21-22	X	Increased bulk	-3 <i>nimbleness</i> (min. 3), opponents get +1 to hit with ranged weapons, decreased endurance
23		Increased hearing	You cannot be surprised

d100	Defect	Description	In-Game Effects
24-25	X	Increased metabolism	You have to eat twice as much as normal. After every 5 th round of combat, you have to spend one round cramming something down your pie hole, or take 2 HP damage every round thereafter.
26		Increased <i>nimbleness</i>	+3 bonus (max. 18)
27	X	Increased pain sensitivity	Every time you are injured, test <i>toughness</i> to avoid an extra d4 damage.
28-30		Increased running speed	Abnormally long legs; run twice as fast as an average man
31		Increased smell	Track like a bloodhound, smell any creature upwind of you from 60 m. away
32=37		Increased <i>strength</i>	+3 bonus (max. 18)
38		Increased taste	You can gain a great deal of information by tasting things, e.g. whether a doorknob has been used recently. Everyone thinks you are a weirdo because you're always licking things.
39-42		Increased <i>toughness</i>	+3 bonus (max. 18)
43		Increased vibration sensitivity	You can feel the movements of any creature up to 60 m away, through the vibrations in the ground, provided your party stops moving around you. You can feel machines running from a great distance away. You can tell whether a structure is occupied, by feeling the wall.
44		Increased vision	See like a hawk
45		Infrared vision	You can see sources of heat and differences in temperature
46-47		Multiple body parts	Confers an advantage but hinders use of tech
48-52		New body parts	Claws, horns, tentacles, tail, scales, etc. Confers an advantage but may hinder use of tech.
53-54	X	No nerve endings	You cannot feel pain, or anything else: -1 penalty to all rolls except tests of <i>toughness</i> . You won't know if you're attacked from behind, or if you have been wounded.
55		Oversized arm	One arm performs like a club
56-57		Photosynthesis	You have green skin and can get all the nutrients you need from the sun.
58-59	X	Poor breathing	You have to stop to catch your breath after 5 rounds of combat, or test <i>toughness</i> every round thereafter to avoid passing out.
60		Precognition	You have an eerie premonition of what is about to happen—get a +1 bonus to all rolls except tests of <i>toughness</i> .
61		Pyrokinesis	If allowed to concentrate, you can start tiny fires (about as much power as a wooden match) within 10 m.
62		Quills	Treat as a bonus dagger counterattack to any creature that grapples you, bites you, or attacks you from behind.

d100	Defect	Description	In-Game Effects
63		Screech attack	You can emit a painful, high-pitched shriek that causes enemies to lose initiative. You can't do this in the midst of heavy physical exertion, such as combat.
74-67		Shorter	You are chest-high to an average man. Opponents get a -1 penalty when trying to hit you with ranged weapons.
68	X	Single eye	No depth perception, -3 to hit with ranged weapons
69	X	Skin Defect	Photosensitivity, water solubility, thin skin, luminescent skin that reveals position but does not illuminate, etc
70-71		Skunk spray	<i>Weapon class 6.</i> Opponents who are hit must test <i>toughness</i> to avoid having to flee, gagging and retching. You can do this once per hour, but it will not make you popular.
72	X	Slow healing	You heal at half the normal rate. Med tech is half as effective on you, if it even works at all.
73		Sneaky jabber	You have a knack for spotting weak points: +1d4 damage with any weapon.
74		Sticky hands and feet	Crawl up walls and on ceilings like a fly. You must remove your boots and gloves, and drop excessive weight.
75-80		Taller	An average man reaches your solar plexus. +2 <i>strength</i> (max. 18), long strides mean faster running speed.
81-82	X	Tasty smell	Your body odor attracts carnivores
83-84		Telekinesis	If allowed to concentrate, you can lift objects weighing 50 g within a 10 m distance: flip a switch, actuate a button, pull a lever, toss a small stone.
85		Ultraviolet vision	You can see sources of radiation and power (batteries, microfusion reactors)
86-87	X	Uncontrolled bleeding	Once wounded, you continue to take 1 HP damage per round until you stop to bind your wound.
88		Venom	Snake fangs, scorpion tail, or insect stinger. TODO: poison effectiveness. You can expel one dose of venom per hour.
89	X	Vertigo	-3 penalty to saving throws involving heights and falling
90		Wings, partially functional	You weigh too much to fly, but can glide down, or perform wing-assisted jumps. You will not be harmed by falling.
91-94		Roll a random beneficial mutation	
95-100		Pick any mutation	

5 Violence

5.1 Armor

- A shield increases your armor class by 1, but makes the use of two-handed weapons impossible (unless you have more than two arms).
- Medieval plate armor is not a thing. It weighs as much as full fireman gear, and makes breathing difficult. You cannot possibly wear such a thing while adventuring.

Armor Class	Type	Examples
0	No armor	
1	Heavy outer clothing	Furs, leather, natural hide or fur, natural scales
2	Metal-reinforced leather	Metal strips (e.g. from traffic signs) attached to jacket/pants, natural carapace or exoskeleton
3	Police/military	Ballistic cloth, flack jacket
4	Police/military + shield	Riot control gear with plexi shield
5	Non-ruggedized bot	Bot not built for security or hostile environments
6	Ruggedized bot	Security bot, heavy construction bot, mining bot

5.2 Weapons

Fully automatic rifles are non-existent—military installations were the first locations destroyed in the Fall, and you couldn't afford to waste the ammunition anyway. Almost all rifles are bolt-action, shotguns are double-barrel.

5.2.1 Weapon Class Table

Weapon Class	Type	Examples
0	Fists	
1	Primitive Bludgeons	Club, hammer, mace, natural clubbing tail
2	Primitive Sharps	Arrow, axe, dagger, spear, sword, natural claws, natural horns, natural fangs
3	Powered Sharps	Chainsaw, circular saw
4	Handguns	Auto pistol, revolver
5	Rifles	Bolt action rifle, semi-automatic rifle
6	Scatter (things you don't have to aim)	Flame thrower, grenade, shotgun

5.2.2 Weapon Damage Table

Weapon Type	Includes	Damage	Comments
Fist		1d2	
Small sharps	Dagger, bayonet, arrow, shank, shiv	1d4	
Medium sharps	Short sword, spear, machete	1d6	
Large sharps	Two-handed sword	1d8	
Bludgeons	Club, hammer, crowbar, staff	1d6	
Powered sharps	Chainsaw, circular saw	1d8	Needs batteries
Handgun, small caliber	9mm, .38 spl, .380 auto	1d8	
Handgun, large caliber	.45 auto, .357 magnum	1d10	
Rifle, shotgun		1d12	You cannot operate the bolt of a bolt action rifle during hand-to-hand combat. After one shot, the rifle becomes a club, or a spear if you have a bayonet affixed.
Flamethrower		1d8	If hit, target catches fire and takes 1d4 additional damage every round until extinguished. Needs batteries and fuel.
Grenade		1d20	Treat as a separate attack against everyone in a 5 m radius.

5.2.3 Weapon Range Table

Weapon	Range in m
Arrow	25
Handgun	10
Shotgun	10
Spear	8
Rifle	250

5.2.4 Consequences of Wounds

- Wounds must be cleaned and dressed, otherwise the injured must test *toughness* to avoid infection. This makes medicinal herbs, soap, and bandages particularly valuable. Old tech first aid kits are particularly valuable.

- Infected wounds will no longer heal, and will result in the loss of 1 HP/day. The infected must test *toughness* daily to avoid gangrene, which is not survivable without med tech.
- If a projectile does not go clean through, it must be extracted by a doctor. A daily test of *toughness* must be made to avoid infection for every day the projectile remains in place.
- Getting shot is a serious thing.

Projectile	Chance of going clean through	Damage upon removal
Arrow	No chance	1d4
Handgun bullet	2 in 4	1d8
Rifle bullet	3 in 4	1d8
Shot/Shrapnel	1 in 4	1d6

5.2.4.1 Healing

With adequate food, water, and rest, *hit points* are recovered at the rate of one per day.

5.3 Attack Matrix

- A natural 20 is a *critical hit*, which does double damage and degrades the target's *armor class* by 1. Natural armor will heal, man-made armor needs repair.
- A natural 0 is a *fumble*: you drop or break your weapon, your gun misfires (semi-auto or pump-action weapons require you to waste a combat round clearing the jam, which cannot be done at all under hand-to-hand combat pressure).

Attacker's Weapon Class

Target's armor class ↓	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
0	10	9	8	8	10	8	6
1	12	11	10	8	10	8	6
2	14	13	12	10	10	8	8
3	16	15	14	12	14	10	10
4	18	17	16	14	14	10	12
5	20	19	18	14	10	8	6
6	X	X	20	16	14	10	12

6 Environmental Hazards

Hazard Intensity

TOU ↓	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
3	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4	15	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
5	14	15	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
6	13	14	15	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
7	12	13	14	15	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
8	11	12	13	14	15	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
10	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
11	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
12	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
13	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	X	X	X	X	X	X
14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	X	X	X	X	X
15	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	X	X	X	X
16	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	X	X	X
17	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	X	X
18	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	X

- The common hazards are poison, radiation, and disease.
- On the hazard table above, cross-index the intensity of the hazard (row) with the character's *toughness* (column).
- A number indicates the number of HP damage sustained.
- An X indicates maximum damage, and the character must test *toughness* to avoid a critical outcome. For poison, this is death. For radiation, it is the acquisition of a new mutation (humans are immune).
- The effects can be mitigated by quickly administering antivenom or anti-radiation drugs (which have only a 50% chance of working on humanoids, and don't work on mutated animals at all).
- Diseases are mainly a problem in towns, where crowds come together and sanitation is medieval. Characters test *toughness* to avoid getting sick. If that fails, the number in the table indicates how many days the character will be sick unless some treatment is administered. An X indicates maximum down-time, and character must test *toughness* to avoid death.

7 Old Tech

7.1 Learning How to Use

- A *round* represents an hour of game time
- Each *round*, test MEC to attempt to use the device.
- If this fails, test MEC again to avoid injuring yourself, or damaging the device.

7.2 Ancient Weapons

7.3 Ancient Med Tech

7.4 Other Gear

7.5 Bots