

CHAPTER ONE

THE BASICS



The world your forebears knew is gone, ravaged by a catastrophe so wide-ranging few living even know its origins.

The new world is twisted and strange, filled with the distorted remains of the world before and the strange new things created by the Fall.

Into this world step the survivors, bound together by blood or ideology or desperation into something new. You will play through their stories, and as they explore new realms, suffer dark times and celebrate great victories you will craft a new world together. At the heart of all of those will be your characters; learned or savage, diplomatic or dictatorial, your family's history will be filled with the characters you make. As the ages turn, their legacy will shape the world.

Fiction inspiration comes from video games (Fallout, STALKER, Horizon: Zero Dawn and Civilization), books (N. K. Jemisin's The Fifth Season, Walter Miller Jr's A Canticle for Leibowitz), and film/TV (Mad Max , 9, Enter the Badlands). Any sort of post-apocalypse setting which has an eye to how people have adapted decades and generations after can definitely be mined for ideas!

The system is heavily inspired by Vincent Baker's Apocalypse World, as well as offshoots like Dungeon World and Monsterhearts. Other ideas have been inspired by Mummy: the Curse, Tenra Bansho Zero, Burning Wheel Gold, Danger Patrol and more – give them a read and see what inspires you!

game structure

Each player controls a family: a group of survivors bound together by blood, ideology or practicality. Your particular family playbook says how your family were changed by the fall, and what they held to in order to survive - was it faith, science, might, or something else?

The game starts with the first generation of survivors able to look beyond the next day and their immediate survival. Starting with that first age of discovery, you'll tell the story of your families building a new world from the old world's ashes.

Each age will present new challenges, and you'll move between the actions of the family at large and specific heroic characters from their ranks as you tell that age's story. Sometimes characters from multiple player's families will work together; other times the story will focus on a particular player's family, and other players will pick up more disposable quick characters to fill out the cast.

As your characters work to protect their family, undermine their enemies and explore the wasteland they may move between different roles in their family, changing the family's makeup and gaining more experience. As characters die or step back from an active role in the family, they leave behind a relic - a tool of theirs future family members can use to remember them and call on their skills.

When the drama of the current age has been resolved or someone completes a grand project, the ages turn. You move the clock forward a significant chunk of time - maybe a few years, a generation, even a century. Each family goes through trials and fortunes determined by their resources, and this determines how they begin the new age. The game moves back to the family and character levels, and the story continues...

A BRIEF PRIMER TO THE APOCALYPSE

To play, you'll need some friends and at least two six-sided dice (2d6), although two per person is better. You'll also want some paper, some pencils, and preferably the printed out handouts available free online. One of you will be the Game Master (GM) and the rest will be the players. The GM is tasked with keeping track of the setting, providing resistance and challenges to the characters, and making sure all the players get equal amounts of screen time and chances to shine. The players make families and characters and play through their stories.

The conversation

Legacy draws on the rule design philosophy of D. Vincent Baker's *Apocalypse World*, which means that it concerns itself first and foremost with the conversation that's happening at the table.

Legacy is a roleplaying game: a conversation between the players and the GM, working together to build a story and see what happens to the world. Most of the time you'll be talking without calling on any rules: the players will describe the actions their character or family is taking or ask questions about the world, the GM describes how those actions change things or provides extra detail, and the conversation continues.

Sometimes events in the ongoing conversation will activate a discrete chunk of rules (called a "move") that guides the story in a particular direction based on the player's dice rolls, choices or established fictional circumstances. Each move has an in-fiction trigger – something your character or family has to be doing in the story for the mechanics to start up. Often the consequences of moves will be just as much fictional (gaining you enemies, allies, or information) as they will be mechanical (giving you bonuses or penalties to your character's traits).

Your position in the fiction is very powerful: making use of previously-established short-cuts and resources already present in the environment can enable you to do great things without ever triggering a move. On the other hand, if it's been established that you're in a bad situation – say, tied to a chair with your hands behind your back – your ability to hit your move's triggers and reshape the fiction will be severely limited.

When you're thinking about what actions are available to you, remember what's been established: your personality, your capabilities, your possessions, your location in the environment, the environment's features, their allies, and so on. Gaining backup or a home territory advantage can be far more powerful than a bonus to dice rolls.

The GM's role

The GM doesn't make moves, but instead has reactions. These are codified ways of guiding the story to provide a fun experience that

suits Legacy's themes. The GM never rolls dice, and activates reactions in response to the players' actions: when a player rolls a 6 or below, when everyone looks to the GM to say what happens next, or when the players do something with previously-established immediate consequences (a 'golden opportunity').

Each GM reaction is a way of raising the stakes, shaking up the situation and providing adversity using standard GM tricks you may be familiar with from other games: splitting up the characters, revealing unwelcome secrets, offering opportunities with prices, and so on. Check out the GM sheet to see more details on these.

MAKING YOUR MOVE

Moves exist on a continuum of complexity. The simplest don't have any sort of dice roll or choices; they just state that this fiction trigger will lead to this outcome. Others may give you a choice to make, or use dice to make the outcome less predictable. When a move uses dice, you'll be told to roll +Stat. This means you take two six-sided dice, roll them, and add the total to the stat. In general, the result has three categories:

A 6 or lower is a setback - the GM will make some kind of reaction, and though that may not involve your action failing it'll definitely make your life more complicated.

A 7-9 is a mixed success - you don't succeed as much as you could have, there may be an unfortunate cost, or there may be unwanted consequences.

A 10+ is a full success - you succeed with grace and style, and maybe learn something about the world.

Jargon note: if something gives you +1 Forward, your next appropriate roll gets +1 to its result. If it's +1 Ongoing, all rolls that hit the condition get +1 to their result.

Move Example: Forge a Path¹

When you find a way up, through or over precarious terrain², roll +Force. On a hit³ you make it to your destination, but on a 10+ pick one, on a 7-9 pick two:

- You're exposed to danger as you travel.
 - The route you took is lost.
 - You can't take gear/other characters with you.
 - You take a lot longer than you expected.
1. The name of the move.
 2. The fiction trigger for the move. If your character does this, you must carry out the move; if you want to roll the move, you need to perform the trigger.
 3. A 'hit' is a result of 7 or above.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

The wasteland is a parched desert, scoured of life after weather control devices went out of control. A recent attempt by the players to bring rain has had disastrous effects: swarms of giant insects hibernating beneath the earth were awakened by their moisture and are now hunting for more, threatening to devour the homeland's crops, livestock, and maybe even populace.

The GM starts by asking questions to set the ball rolling.

GM: You've seen what those swarms have done to the outlying settlements. You think you only have a month or so before they hit you. How are you dealing with the refugees?

Erika: (controlling The Players, a travelling Guilded Company of Merchants that trade in performance and music). We don't have any land to house them but we do need for recruits. Any refugee willing to sign on will be well-fed and trained up.

GM: OK, that gets you a dozen or so rookies, though they'll need some training before you can mark off that need. How about you, Morton?

Zach: (Playing The Academy, an Enclave of Fallen Lore who conduct their experiments in an underground bunker). We're pretty resource-stretched down here already. I'll cash in some of my treaties with the farmers around here to get them to take the refugees in.

GM: Alright, so the immediate crisis is kept under control but those bugs are out there. What's the plan?

Zach: I think we can put something together: I'm using Weird Science to build a nerve agent that'll eradicate the bugs but leave us unharmed.

GM: I pick what you need to make that, right? I'll choose 'It'll take weeks to build' and 'you'll need to erase a certain surplus' - specifically, Rare Materials. You need particular chemicals for this.

Zach: Hm. Well, might as well ask around to see if anyone's heard of a good place to find them.

The Academy send agents out to their allies for information, triggering the Diplomacy basic move. Zach rolls two dice and gets 8; that plus his Reach of 2 makes 10, a full success.

Zach: Alright, I'll choose that I learn an opportunity for profit; I get +1 Forward acting on it, and 1 Data.

GM: Cool. You hear from some traders that the Well has recently found a hidden cache of scientific supplies, which they're selling for a high price.

Zach: Great, I'll need a negotiator. Erika, you want to help out?

Erika: Sure. We'll send a truck from our convoy with your people. We have friends at the Well that can help.

GM: Sounds like you're triggering Diplomacy.

Zach: As I'm sending people I'll help out.

He rolls +Treaty with the Players and gets an 11; Erika gets +1 to her roll.

Erika: Thanks! So I add that to my Reach of 1 and a... 6 on the dice. An 8. I get a meeting with a VIP at the Well, but we needed the Dust Devils to vouch for us so they get 1 Treaty on us.

GM: OK, let's Zoom In there.

When you move from the family to the character level you set the scene, say which characters are there, and decide what gear they're carrying.

GM: After a week of travelling through the parched desert wasteland, you arrived at the Well - a giant hole bored into the earth with a settlement around its rim. It's Rex and Dubree, I assume?

Erika: (Playing Rex, an Envoy) Yep, plus some extra support from the Players. I've brought some utilitarian but hardy travelling clothes and one of our sturdier trucks, piled with the devices Dupree's brought to trade.

Zach: (Playing Dupree, a Seeker) Not before I've had a change to see the chemicals though! I'm perfectly comfortable in my temperature-controlled biosuit, though it's not subtle. I also put together our intel on the Well before leaving in case it helped negotiations.

GM: Right, so you've driven into the town around the borehole and parked outside the foreman's mansion. You head inside, stepping over drugged-up people and around gaudy drapes hanging down, and reach the foreman. He's lying on cushions surrounded by followers who are currently topping up an incense burner that's filling this area with mind-numbing smoke.

Erika: I'll take the lead. "You eminence, we have travelled far to trade with you. You have recently extracted strange resources from the world before, but I doubt that they are of much use to you. We will happily take them, and in exchange give you potent tools used by the ancients of old and far more useful to your current circumstances."

GM: Sounds like you're trying to Find Common Ground. Roll it!

Rex has a Sway of +2, but that's not much help when the dice come up 3.

GM: The Foreman's small eyes glower at you. He says, "I got no



patience for outsiders telling me what I need. Leave the toys here. If they're as good as you say, maybe we can make a deal. Maybe."

Erika: I bow graciously. "Thank you, your eminence. If you please, my friend and I will retreat and discuss your most kind offer." Then I drag Dupree out of there before he opens his mouth and gets us in trouble.

Zach: Once we're by the truck I turn to Rex. "Well, I guess we're not going with that, eh?"

Erika: "Only if you want to leave here with nothing." I try and remember what happened last time I was here with Long Memories. 5 on the dice plus a Lore of 2 gives me 7; I name a secret and an enemy of the foreman's. Let's say... the foreman picked up a taste for a strange drug of the before, and has been sending secret crews to search the borehole for more of it. Some of the crews are getting angry at risking their lives for their boss' addiction, and have starting plotting against them.

Zach: Would be good to have a backup plan too. I Research my intel - how does the mining gear work?

GM: OK, you spend a point of intel and read through a scout report. Apparently there's mechanical crawlers that abseil down the side of the borehole, carrying dozens of miners at a time. The scout managed to sketch a diagram of the controls complete with operating instructions.

Zach: Great. Let's send the truck out of the city so they don't steal out stuff, then go and meet these angry miners.

The two head out into the settlement, and the game goes on...

HOW TO GET STARTED

To play Legacy, you'll need at least 2 players, one of whom takes the GM role: managing the fiction, describing the world's response to the player's actions, and helping adjudicate rules.

You'll also need copies of the Family and Character playbooks, the basic moves handouts, the Homeland sheet and at least two six-sided dice.

Here's how to make your world and start your game:

Step 1: Family Creation

Each non-GM player takes a different Family playbook. Place the Homeland sheet where everyone can see it.

Pick Stats. Your choice says something about the world: when you pick a stat array, read its description out to the group.

Pick Traditions: these give you an idea of their style, how they're organised, and how new members enter the family.

Look at your Landmarks. Each player picks an option from a category and marks the Homeland map accordingly. Repeat until each player's picked one option for each category. As a group decide if there's any other landmarks you'd like to add.

Your History tells you their recent fortunes and their relationship with the other Families. Pick other Families for your History questions, and gain and give points of Treaty.

Your Resources say what advantages your Family has, and what they lack. Pick two Surpluses, gain the rest as Needs, and add a point in a relevant gear category for each Surplus.

Decide your Family's culture and lifestyle. Pick a Doctrine that suits your overall philosophy, and a Lifestyle according to your position on the map: settled, dispersed or nomadic.

Finally, pick Family moves. You'll either get free choice of two, or one core move for your playbook and one free choice.

Now that you know your Family's ideals, strengths and limits, give them a name and introduce them to the group.

Step 2: Broad Strokes

Now that you have an idea what your world is like, fill in a few extra details:

What was the World Before? Are you on Earth or somewhere Earth-like, an alien planet, somewhere stranger?

What technology defined it? What sort of strange things did they build, and what's your tech level after the Fall? Do you have guns, telecommunications, farming, medicine?

What caused the Fall? Technology gone too far, internal revolution, slave race revolt, natural disaster, invasion? This will colour the threats you find in the wasteland, but remember to leave room for it to go weird.

Step 3: Characters

Each family has one member the game pays special attention to: your Character, chosen to deal with the family's current tribulations.

This nomination may be formal or informal: it's up to you if the family's obliged to obey your character or if they're a maverick who won't grudging respect. Either way, they're able to dictate the family's actions and trigger family moves.

Each non-GM player takes a different Character playbook.

Select their Role in the Family. Are they a Leader, an Agent, a Rebel or an Outsider? Trigger the linked Role Move to show their place in the family and what they're currently doing.

Pick two Moves to start play with.

Pick Stats: Your character's proficiency with their moves.

Choose Backstory: You have history with the other Characters.

Decide an option that sounds interesting for each one, and fill in details with the help of the other player.

Pick Looks: How your character appears to the world.

Name them and describe them to the other players.

Step 4: Begin

Once all the characters are made, it's time to start the game. The character's role moves should give each of them a driving mission to work on, and each Family's needs tell you what things they're trying to find in the wasteland.

For your first age, start with the characters helping each other out to pursue their role missions, taking occasional breaks to show the family level and work out what sort of things they're working on. The GM should bear in mind the threats created as you built the homeland when they think of ways to complicate the character's pursuit of their desires.

Your first age should be a short one - the threats shouldn't contain many hidden surprises, and as a group focus on exploring the world over fighting each other for supplies and resources.

Flesh out each family through their interactions with the characters, get used to the game's moves and the setting you've built, and then trigger The Turning of Ages to enter your second era. Now all bets are off - threats will be many and varied, the political situation can be as thorny as you like, and this is a great time to start working on one of the wonders described in Chapter 10.

Player Agenda

When playing roleplaying games it's often easy to fall into safe methods of play. You act conservatively, carefully husband your resources, and are leery of making new allies or breaking old relationships. Legacy will work a lot better with proactive players who are willing to risk everything, so here's some tips to bear in mind:

Use your Family to get information and set up your plans; use your Character to dive deeper into specific bits of your setting and seal the deal.

Even if your Families are at odds, establish good reasons to work with the other Characters.

Think about what's driving the other Characters, and how you can build on that.

Provide details of your place in the family and in the world.

Always follow the fiction.

Play pro-actively, act dangerously.

Ask questions, and imagine the answers.

GM Agenda

If you're the GM, your job in the first session will be mostly reactive. Give the players space to fill out what their character's daily lives are like, how their family deals with each other and outsiders, how the characters relate to each other and how they begin working on their family's objectives.

Keep an eye out for triggers for the basic moves. Also look for opportunities to get players to describe their family and character and respond with your own ideas.

Look out for conflicts and scarcities in the world, for use as future plot seeds. Make a list of everything the families need, and everything the characters want. They can't have those things. Why not? And what will the characters do about that?

The GM chapter goes in-depth about how to run Legacy and you should read up on it between sessions, but for now here's some guiding principles to get you going:

Get comfortable with the basic moves, and get players to roll them a few times.

Write down every detail.

Vary the time scale: sweeps of weeks and months give Families room to breathe, while zoomed-in minutes and hours give Characters a chance to shine.

Turn the players' questions back on them.

Firmly establish each Family's Surpluses and Needs, strengths and weaknesses.

Ask questions about Surpluses to flesh out the world.

Build on Needs to bring urgency to the characters' lives.

Give every character screen time with the other characters.

Put interesting NPCs in the players' Families and hailing from other factions.

Look for seeds you can use for future conflicts.

Twist their ideas by splicing them with ones of your own.

Give them chances to pursue their objectives, with a cost.

You're here to keep the creative juices flowing, and to make sure people don't fall back onto clichés when creating the world. Remember that you're a player too; give yourself a chance to make your own details and get invested in the game.

