Intro (read to players)

This is a game about telling a story. The story that you will tell is not a kind one, and far from a happy one. It is the sort of story that has sharp edges. The kind that lingers long after it's gone, nesting in nightmares and drifting on every shadow. The kind that no one wants to tell. The kind that needs to be told.

This is a story about what happens in the dark. This is a story about survivors trying to light up their little corner of the world and do something meaningful within it in the few hours they have left. This is a story about desperation. It is a story about people like you and I fighting back against the darkness, only to inevitably and inescapably be consumed by it.

The setting for Ten Candles is in the middle of a sunless apocalypse. The sky has darkened and turned against you. Satellites have gone quiet, leaving you without solar power, cell phones, internet, GPS, and many other luxuries that the world has grown accustomed to. Power grids have failed on a global scale against the demand and the world has been left in darkness. And now, They have come. It is uncertain what They are, but They're out there in the dark, and They're coming for you.

Read before character creation.

Module: Night Studies

The city is quiet now that the evacuations have emptied the streets. The world is dark and you have stayed behind. A group of scientists, researchers, and the muscle to protect them. Volunteers. The sky is black and They prowl the darkness.

Module: Night Studies (cont)

Someone's got to stop Them. Someone's got to figure this all out. And that someone is you. Professionals in your fields, bunkered down in a small lab off of the main street. No answers yet, just more questions. Infuriating questions. Maybe if you had one of Them to examine. Perhaps if you could get to the library one town over, the largest in the state, there might be some answers on their shelves. Or even up to the old observatory in the mountains. But you've learned all you can here. And the lights have begun to dim. The generator is on its last legs. It's time to move. They are coming, and if anyone can figure out what's happened to the world, it's you.. Areas of Note: Lab, library, road up the mountain, old observatory

Goal: Figure out some truth behind Them and what darkened the sky

The Final Recording

Once the scene has been set and before fully diving into the narrative, the survivors have one last task before them: To record a parting message for the world they will inevitably leave behind. For this recording, pass the digital voice recorder around the table allowing each player to leave one final message as their character.

Creating Characters

Step One: Write Traits (Light Three Candles)

Virtue/Vice: One solves more problems, one causes more problems.

Virtue: Lucky, Resourceful, Watchful, Merciful, Daring, Committed, Handsome, Hardy, Subtle, Streetwise, Strong

Vice: Afraid, Greedy, Regretful, Addicted, Naive, Controlling, Worrisome, Compulsive, Claustrophobic, Rash

Virtues go left, vices go right.

Step Two: Introduce Module

Read chosen module to players

Step Three: Create Concepts

1. Name: What's their name or what are they called?

2. Look: What do they look like at a quick glance?

3. Concept: In a few words, who are they? What are they?

Step Four: Plan Moments (Light Three Candles)

"I will find hope when…"

Ex: "in a moment of prayer at a quiet church" "when one of Them lies dead at my feet" "when the truth of the sky is revealed to me" "when I find my sister, dead or alive" "in the contents of my stash, back home" "when the fallout shelter's door closes"

An event that would be reasonable to achieve, and kept succinct and clear to provide strong direction. However, all Moments should also have the potential for failure.

Creating Characters (cont)

Step Five: Discover Brinks (Light Three Candles)

"I have seen you / Them…"
Ex (player): Kill, Abandon, Rage, Lie, Hide, Cry, Sacrifice, Betray, Freeze, Promise, Collapse, Fight, Run "I have seen you destroy what you care about most. I saw you on trial, before the world went dark. Three dead. Your family. You monster." "I have seen you break down. While we were on the run, you lost it over this dead dog. You cried for hours. I almost left you behind." "I have seen you worship Them. You didn't see me, but I saw you. Whispering prayers for Them to spare your life. I saw Them give you something, but couldn't make out what it was."
Ex (them): "move like shadows" "shape-shift in front of me" "howl at the pale moon" "consume the dead" "possess the living" "and I know this is all an experi-ment" "and They serve the witch of the woods" "and They are the gods made manifest"
Brinks for Them can only establish a strength, power, or identity. It can never establish a weakness. They only have one weakness. The light.
A single word and/or short descriptive phrase. Don't worry about making them too specific. Write a short explanation outlining when or where you saw your neighbor's Brink. Brinks go left.

Step Six: Arrange Stacks

Ideally no more than 1 moment on top at the start of the game. All Brinks are on the bottom.

Step Seven: Inventory Supplies (Light the Final Candle)

You have whatever you've got in your pockets. It begins.

Changing Scenes

Any time a candle darkens and a new scene begins, two events occur.
1. Everyone collectively speaks new truths through the Establishing Truths phase.
2. The communal pool of player dice refills up to the number of currently lit candles. (The GM's pool also fills)
Establishing Truths:
- "These things are true. The world is dark."
- Establish # of truths = lit candles, starting with active player.
- A truth is one irrefutable fact pertaining to just one change in story.
- The last truth always is "And we are alive"

Resolving Conflict and Narration

Resolving Conflicts

Roll dice equal to the number of lit candles. If any dice land on 6 the conflict is successful. Any dice that come up 1 are removed.

Narration Rights

If you rolled more 6's than the GM, you describe what happens as a result of the conflict. Keep the narration simple, reasonable, and interesting. Remember: you aren't playing to win, but to tell a good story.

Seizing Narration

If you succeed but the GM wins narration rights, you may darken a candle to seize narration rights. The scene ends afterw-ards.

Burning Traits

Use Traits to reroll all dice that land on 1. Bring your Trait into the conflict narration in some significant way. Burn the Trait regardless of the outcome.

Resolving Conflict and Narration (cont)

Living your Moment

Living your Moment allows you to make a conflict roll. On a success, gain a Hope die. Failure means the scene ends as usual. Hope dice succeed on a 5 or 6 and are not lost when they come up 1 (but are lost on a failed Brink reroll). Burn the Moment regardless of the outcome.

Embrace your Brink

Embrace your Brink to reroll all dice. Bring your Brink into the conflict narration in some significant way. You keep the Brink if you succeed. If you fail, immediately darken a candle, burn the Brink, and lose your hope die.

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