Quick Summary

Cooperative Storytelling: The game focuses around shared narrative control. Everyone will share the mantle of storyteller and has an equal hand in telling this dark story.

THOUGH YOU KNOW YOUR CHARACTERS WILL DIE, YOU MUST HAVE HOPE THAT THEY WILL SURVIVE

Game Materials

10 unlit tea candles and 10 identical 6-sided dice

5 index cards, 1 marker, and 1 unique 6-sided die *per player*

Introduction (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 the game 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, mobile phones, internet, GPS, and many other luxuries that the world has grown accustomed to.

Power grids have failed on a global scale against 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.

Character Creation

Step One: Write Traits

Pick and write down one Virtue and one Vice on two of the index cards.
One **solves** more problems, one **causes** more problems.

- **Tips**: A single word, a descriptive adjective. Keep it vague.
- **Use**: Burn to reroll all dice that landed on 1.

Example Virtues: Lucky, Resourceful, Watchful, Merciful, Daring, Committed, Handsome, Hardy, Subtle, Streetwise, Strong
Example Vices: Afraid, Greedy, Regretful, Addicted, Naive, Contro lling, Worrisome, Compulsive, Claustrophobic, Rash

After finishing: Virtues go **left**, vices go **right**.

Step Two: Introduce Module

Read chosen module to players (see next section).

Step Three: Create Character 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?

Write on a third index card.

Step Four: Plan Moments

"I will find hope..."

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.

Write down on a fourth index card.

Examples: "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"

Step Five: Discover Brinks

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Character Creation (cont)

"I have seen you / Them..." (GM is included)

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 (to the left) Brink.

Brinks go left and and kept secret.

Player Examples: 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.”

Them Examples: “move like shadows” “shapeshift in front of me” “howl at the pale moon” “consume the dead” “possess the living” “and I know this is all an experiment” “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.

Step Six: Arrange Stacks

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

Step Seven: Inventory Supplies

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

Module Introduction

No one’s coming. Not anymore. The radio’s gone dead, and you’re on your own now. There’s only one option left: Fort Victor.
All the chatter on the radio seemed to imply that the MoD Boscombe Down RAF Station is the place to be. But you’re a good few hours out; over the river and through the woods – literally.
Everyone else has packed up and left by now. The Trowbridge Town Hall is slim pickings. Not enough food to last the next few days, not to mention the fact that the generator’s been acting up. Maybe a few supplies could still be scavenged, but one thing’s for sure: it’s time to leave.

Areas of Note: The town hall, bridge out of town, dark woods, RAF station

Goal: Discover what has become of the military forces at MoD

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 voice recorder around the table allowing each player to leave one final message as their character.

Mechanics

Darkening Candles

Whenever a candle is darkened for any reason, the current scene ends and a new scene begins. **Once darkened, candles may never be relit**.

A candle must be darkened if a player fails a conflict roll.

A player may also choose to darken a candle after a successful conflict roll in which they would lose narration rights in order to seize narrative control from the GM.

When only one candle remains lit, the game only one candle remains lit, the game enters **The Last Stand**, but this is the GM's domain...

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)

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 **1s** are removed.

Narration Rights

If you rolled more **6s** 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 afterwards.

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Mechanics (cont)

Using Traits

You can use your traits to reroll **all dice that land on 1s**.

Bring your Trait into the conflict narration in some significant way.

Burn the Trait regardless of the outcome.

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 **5s or 6s** and are **not lost when they come up on 1s** (but are lost on a failed Brink reroll). Burn the Moment regardless of the outcome.

Embracing your Brink

Once all other cards are burnt you can *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.

Establishing Truths

THESE THINGS ARE TRUE. THE WORLD IS DARK...

• Establish the number of truths, equal to the number of lit candles, starting with player who rolled last.
• A truth is one irrefutable fact pertaining to just one change in story.
• The last truth always is "And we are alive"

The Last Stand

When only one candle remains, **The Last Stand** begins.

There is one final establishing truths phase, but since only one candle remains lit, the only truth spoken is the collective *"and we are alive."*

At this point, a full attack by Them should be starting, or underway. The character's flashlights have gone out, or are useless. The darkest among Them have come.

The Last Stand (cont)

For **The Last Stand** there is a single rules change, but it is an important one. Make this known:

Play continues normally, except that unsuccessful conflicts no longer result in a darkened candle. Instead, they result in the **character's death.**

The End

When the final character dies, darken the final candle, and say this:

These things are true. The world is dark.

At this point, play the **final message recording**.

This ends the game.

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