DESPERATE JOURNEYS

A Role Playing Game of Perilous Travel

A

24-HOUR RPG 2014

By
Ryan Shellito

INTRODUCTION

A red light began flashing on the dash. "Shit!" Johnny muttered. He eased up on the throttle. "Kev, Tanya," He shouted over the engine noise, "Getting a fuel warning! We're going to have to fight our way out!"

Kev cursed. Tonya racked back the slide on her .45. Johnny wondered how she could be so calm. The Spiders were known for cannibalism.

* * *

Captain Amaterasu Shiro looked over Corporal Benson's shoulder at the thermal contact screen, it did not look good.

"Ma'am,"Bensen said, "Looks like 3 cruisers, probably Nova class, and 8 smaller ships of various sorts, gunships mostly. Looks like the Veen knew we were coming. It's going to be rough getting past them."

Captain Shiro stared at the screen for a few minutes, then she asked, "Benson, do we still the equipment from the training missions we ran in Saturn's orbit last year?"

"Yes Ma'am," Bensen replied, "But how are a bunch of inflatable target dummies going to..." he trailed off understanding what the captain had in mind. The Captain smile.

* * *

The small group hurried through the predawn mist. The Gray rock clan had been unprepared. They'd been celebrating the harvest until moon set and drinking to much of their fermented goat milk. The members of the Coyote clan had easily crept in to the Gray Rock camp and stolen the fire. By now the Gray Rock would know what happened. They'd be rounding up their spears and clubs and would give chase. It would take the Coyote most of the day to reach their camp, but is nothing when wrong they though they could keep ahead of the Gray Rock. But only if nothing went wrong.

Welcome to **DESPERATE JOURNEYS** the role playing game of perilous travel!

DESPERATE JOURNEYS is a story telling game designed to tell the tale of a group trying to complete a mission through dangerous country. This could be the tale of heroic fantasy where the heroes must deliver an artifact to save the world, or a post apocalyptic tale of crossing to the other side of a ruined city to take control of gasoline refinery or anything in between.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

To get playing you'll need a few things.

-A Journey (Either write one yourself or use an example provided in this game)
-A standard deck of cards with jokers removed.
-Some tokens or glass beads in two colors (Preferably in white and black)
-Some paper
-Some pencils or pens
-3-5 players (it could work with 6 but might run long. More than 6 nd you'll need to combine two decks of cards, and my be better off with two groups).

A quick note on language. There is cursing in this game. If it offends you, pleas note that you were forwarned.

HOW TO PLAY

This is a game of generating a narrative. It is designed to create a story, there are no winners and loosers. Each player should be playing to generate a story. This is a GMless game.

Once you've decided you are ready to start, each player should have four cards dealt to the from a well shuffled deck of cards. This is the start of character generation. Each card can represent either a character trait or a relationship. Each character will have at least one and no more than two traits, and a relationship between their character and at least one other character at the table. There is no maximum number of relationships as long as very character ends with at least one. Give each player a chance to look over their cards and look over the trait and relationship options Journey that they are going to play. Starting with the player that dealt the cards, and proceeding to that player's left each player players one card as a relationship or trait until each player has a relationship with the character to the left and right and has two character traits.

When playing relationships and traits, you play a trait on any other player as long as they do not already have two traits or you may play a relationship between any two characters. The only limitation on relationships is that every character has at least one.

At this time there should be a brief discussion about where it is that the characters are trying to get to and why. Each journey will have a few suggestions, but they are not set in stone. The Journey will have a few notes about the setting as well.

Reshuffle the cards and deal 4 cards to each player. Players should keep the value of the cards they were dealt a secret. Place the remaining cards in the center of the table. Place a pile of light stones on one side of the deck. This is where the cards for challenges that have been successfully passed will be placed. Place a pile of dark stones on the opposite side of the deck. This is where the cards for challenges that were failed are placed. There should be a third place away from the other cards for a general discard pile.

Play begins with the player who dealt the cards turning over the top card in the deck. This card represents both the nature of the challenge and it's difficulty. The difficulty of the challenge is equal to the numeric value of the card (Jacks=11, Queens = 12, Kings =13, and Aces are 15 not 1 or 14.)

The Suits:

Spades:	A conflict of of a dangerous nature. A player who fails a Spades challenge must take two Black Stones.
Diamonds:	A potential Boon for the players. A player who is passes a Diamonds challenge may take two White Stones
Hearts:	A potential for help or possibly allies. A player who passes a Heats challenge may take the top card of the deck into their hand.
Clubs:	An unforeseen obstacle or betrayal. A player failing a Clubs challenges must play a random card from their hand into the failed challenge deck.

The current player should frame a scene based on the card drawn. After a bit of play, the player should play a card from their hand. If the value of the card played meets or exceeds the value of the challenge than than the challenge successful, and the card is placed face up in the success pile next to the white stones. If the value is is less than the value of of the challenge the challenge is failed, and the card is place in the failed challenge pile face up.

Before active player plays a card other players have the opportunity to contribute a card. The active player may call for help, or the non active players may decide to play a card because of role play

or they don't like the odds (for instance if the active player has no cards left). Cards played to help are played face down in front of the active player. Players should not discuss the value of the card, only that they want to help. Regardless, the players should role play and narrate exactly how they were able to help. Once the active player has played their card the cards from other players are revealed and totaled up. This total all is compared to challenge value and resolved normally.

If a player has no cards in their hand, they automatically fail the challenge unless other players help during the challenge.

Once a player has completed a challenge and the results of the challenge are roleplayed out play passes to the player on the left. Play continues until each player has has the opportunity to be the active player and frame a scene 4 times.

Using stones. White stones can be used in two ways. They may be used after an active player has revealed a card. Each white stone spent adds one to to the value of the active players card for purposes of the challenge. If a white stone is spent at the end of the game. Each stone adds 3 tot he value of the success pile. Black stones are also used two ways. Each black stone spent on an active player's challenge subtracts two from the total. At the end of the game an additional card is added to the failure pile for each black stone that has not been spent.

After the final round the combined numeric value of all of the card in the failure pile is subtracted from the combined numeric value of the cards from the success pile. This will generate a value that can be compared to the table below to see how success the final outcome of their Journey was.

26 and up	Fame and fortune. Not only did you make it, but you showed up at the prefect moment and made it look easy. Every one loves you. Life's going to be pretty good going forward.
21 to 25	Victory! You did what you set out to do, and it turned out better than expected.
16 to 20	Over the line. You've completed your journey, but one or two of you won't be quite the same, still, a win is a win and it's a party tonight.
11 to 15	It was rough, you're bruised and battered, but you did it.
6 to 10	The nick of time. You just made it. You succeeded, but a lot of people paid a price.
1 to 5	You made it. You got to where you set out to go. Your efforts improve the situation, but not as much as people hope.
0	What's the point of it all. Turns out everything you did was for nothing. It meant nothing in the grand scheme. Nothing changes. You were only a decoy, or your goal was so far off base even you are surprised.
-1 to -5	You made it, but your efforts have little or no real impact on things. Tomorrow you'll need to star over again.
-6 to -10	Far away, so close. You can see the finish line, but you know your never going to make it. Either there is to much in the way, you're to run down, or just plain old to late.
-11 to -15	Wait where were we going? Somewhere you go turned around. You got there, only “there” wasn't where you needed to. Some of you were hurt bad in the process.

-16 to -20	Death, for some. Not all of you walk away from this one. Those that survive do so with the knowledge that not only is it their fault, but the dead died for nothing.
-21 to -25	Death and lots of it. You fucked up bad. Real bad. This whole thing was a mistake.
-26 and down	Worse than death. Yeah, you survived, but you never made it to where you were going, and frankly, it would be better if you'd never set out on this whole mess. Everyone knows who you are, and they know what happened was your fault.

After the result is determined play goes once more around the table with each player briefly describing the after effects of the journey on their character.

SAMPLE JOURNEY

THE DEAD ATE THE LIVING

A few weeks ago everything was normal. Then the dead got up and started eating anyone still alive. You've banded together with some folks, some you know, some you don't. You do know that there is a radio broadcast saying that there is safe haven, if only you can get there.

Setting: This is a zombie scenario. Where ever you are now, you can't stay. A promise of safety sounds to good to be true, but you have to try. You should descide befor hand what sort of zombies these are. Are they standard zombies? (like in the Romero movies.) or Fast Zombies (like Return of the Living Dead) Are they truly dead? Or are they "infected?" The only hard fast rule is that one bite, and you're going to die, and become one of the.

RELATIONSHIPS

SPADES:

2: Neighbors
3: Escaped Inmates
4: Club Kids
5: Cab Driver and Fare
6: Together for safety
7: Believes the other one was bitten
8: Long lost family
9: Acquaintances
10: "Never saw them before."
Jack: Step Siblings
Queen: Pretending they don't know each other
King: Delivery Person and the one who Ordered Pizza
Ace: Go to the same Dojo

DIAMONDS:

2: ex-employee and former boss
3: Fast Food Workers
4: Bankers
5: loan shark and debtor
6: Low Level criminal
7: Park Rangers
8: Lottery Winner and mooch
9: Celebrity and fan
10: Personal trainers
Jack: Lawn Care Professionals
Queen: IT guys
King: employee and boss
Ace: work friends

HEARTS:

2: Unfriendly Rivals

3: Secret Affair
4: Frenemies
5: Facebook friends
6: Former Lovers
7: Getting Divorced
8: Parent and Child
9: Best Friends
10: Siblings
Jack: Uncle/Aunt and Niece/Nephew
Queen: Lovers
King: Married
Ace: Friendly Rivals

CLUBS:

2: Handcuffed together
3: Wanted wo/men
4: bitterly divided siblings
5: Sargent and Lieutenant power struggle
6: Impersonating the Police
7: Frustrated Looters
8: Doctor and sick patient
9: Trapped Foreign Tourist
10: Elderly Couple
Jack: Clerks
Queen: New Age Healer and Patient
King: Biter Ex's
Ace: Car thieves

CHRACTER TRAITS

SPADES:

2: Violent Streak
3: No one else is important
4: Big Talker
5: Out of shape
6: Doesn't like blood
7: You've seen worse
8: Never back down From A Challenge
9: Big Dude
10: Survivalist
Jack: Gun Nut
Queen: Former MMA fighter
King: Police Officer
Ace: Active Duty Militay

DIAMONDS:

2: Only the Cloths on your Back
3: “Where is my car?”
4: “This will just take a minute.”
5: Always late
6: Secretly, this is the happiest day of your life.
7: Loved Zombie Movies
8: Can find food anywhere
9: “I can Fix it.”
10: Homeless before, frankly not much has changed
Jack: A Briefcase full of cash
Queen: Jack of all trades (master of none)
King: “We need to get to my stash!”
Ace: Very Well Equipped

HEARTS:

2: Cowardly
3: Atheist
4: Religious
5: Gamer
6: “We have to find my husband/wife!”
7: Dead Inside, but no one knows
8: Charming
9: Stand up member of the community
10: “Never Tell Me the odds!”
Jack: People Person
Queen: Know more than you've let on so far
King: Never Give Up, Never Surrender
Ace: Nothing Scares You

CLUBS:

2: Secretly bitten
3: Counter Culture
4: Racist
5: PTSD
6: Can't trust these people
7: “you go first”
8: Haven't slept in three days
9: Addict
10: Severe Pessimist
Jack: Always the last Survivor
Queen: Jaded
King: Seen This Before
Ace: Immune to their Bite