

# Zombie Cataclysm

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*Zombie Hunters or Zombie Hunted?*

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*Sword, shotgun and tomahawk. Be sure to have the right one in hand when the zombies attack.*

## Introduction

Have you ever wondered what you would do if zombies invaded your neighborhood?

Of course I'm assuming here that you know that zombies aren't real. If you are actually so far gone that you think that zombies are real then you should probably stop reading about them before you go completely over the edge and shoot the paper boy because you think that he is after your brains.

Is the crazy guy gone? Good. As I was saying, have you ever wondered what you would do if zombies invaded or what it would be like to be in a zombie movie? If you are reading this you obviously think that zombies are neat. You may have just seen a few Romero zombie movies or you may be a full-on zombie geek that can recite every line from Return of the Living Dead II. Either way, what would you do in a zombie cataclysm? Where would you go? How would you survive? Here's the important part; how would you know if your plans are good enough or you would end up joining the legions of walking dead?

This game is a zombie simulation. You can either play yourself or if you want to be some star from a zombie movie you can play them. Hell, you can play your own grandfather if you want. Just about anything you can plan in real life you can attempt to do in game. The simple game system lets you know how successful you are... or if you die screaming while being chewed apart!

Since the game is a simulation it must allow you to do just about anything you can think of. Let's face it, sooner or later someone is going to want to park a combine harvester (the ones with the really big blades in front) against the hospital door and make noise so all the zombies come out and puree themselves into a giant zombie slushy. To do this we have built a system with ideas taken from role playing games. Traditional role playing games started out being fun games but over the years publishers have started selling games so they can market fifty books to hardcore players who are willing to buy all fifty books so they can have the most kick ass character in the game, even if it takes them twenty hours in their mom's basement to

make it. We are not trying to sell you fifty books. We made a game that is simple to play for non-geeks, fun to play for all zombie fans and a decently realistic simulation of what would happen in an actual zombie attack.

## Section 1: Things You Should Know

### If You've Never Played a Role Playing Game Before...

Maybe you've never had a chance to play this kind of game before. Maybe you were scared away by a game that had many complex rules that had to be memorized before you could play. Maybe you got scared off by the thought of 30-year-old men who have never seen a real girl naked doing odd things in some basement somewhere.

Sadly enough there are those kinds of players, but this is not their game. This is a very simple system made for people who want to have fun killing zombies, not remembering a lot of rules. You don't even have to read most of this book just the "Things you should know" section.

This is how it works. Look around and find the nearest doorway to yourself. Unless you're currently mountain climbing it shouldn't be too far. A zombie comes through that door, looks at you and starts building up a good puddle of drool. What would you do?

This game is really just a series of hypothetical situations like that, but they are tied together to form a story. So for instance if you decide to dive out the nearest window (and I really hope that means you are on the ground floor) then you find yourself outside. The game master will then describe what you see out there and ask what you want to do next.

Who is the game master? He's the one who is narrating the game and playing all the zombies. Don't worry; once you play the game a couple of times you will get a chance to be the game master too. We know that you secretly want to be a zombie, especially if it means you get to eat your boss.

Sometimes you want to do something that you might fail at. It's fine if you decide to attack

the zombie with the chair you are sitting on, but how do you know who wins? This is where the dice come in! Your game master will tell you what dice to roll and what they mean. You will probably get the hang of the dice by the end of the second or third game you play, until then don't worry about them too much. Just try to do whatever seems like a good idea and the game master will tell you if you succeed. Well, unless the game master has fallen asleep. Then you can throw the dice at him to wake him up. See? The dice are your friends.

That's the basics. Skip over "If you have played a role playing game before" and go right on to starting the game, but don't worry too much. Playing *Zombie Cataclysm* is like riding a bicycle. I can write a whole book on how to ride the bike, but until you jump on and try you just won't get it. If you are confused at first don't worry, you will get the hang of it quickly and then you will be having fun.

## If You Have Played a Role Playing Game Before...

Let's face it, role playing games were originally written by and for students, namely people who have extra time on their hands. The one central concept to all role playing games is that of the game master. This poor guy or gal has to spend more time on each campaign than most of us spend doing our income taxes. As the gaming community matures most of us are no longer in school and no longer have time to game master a campaign. If you are lucky you have someone who is willing to put the time into running a game, or at least grabbing the latest *Dungeon Crawl Classic* module and running that. If you are unlucky you have to find ways to cajole someone in your group into running a game that is often cancelled because the next dungeon level is just not ready yet.

*Zombie Cataclysm* is designed to be ready with fifteen minutes of preparation for any given game night. Character generation is simple and doesn't require hours of poring over game books figuring out how many points to put in what. More importantly, *Zombie Cataclysm* requires almost no preparation by the game master so the game master changes every session. At the beginning of every game night each player rolls a d20. Whoever rolls

lowest is the game master for the night. By the time you set up the snacks and get drinks for everyone that game master is ready to run the game. How is this possible? Read on.

The setting of *Zombie Cataclysm* is the real world town or city that you live in. This means that no one has to design a game world since everyone already knows your hometown.

*Zombie Cataclysm* is a player driven game, which means in zombie cataclysm the players usually choose their own missions, unlike a normal game which requires the game master to create a long thought out storyline or dungeon crawl. These missions are usually as simple as getting what they need to survive, such as food, weapons or Mountain Dew. The game master can also throw in occasional missions of his own, such as saving other survivors. Once the players have a mission then they use their knowledge of the local area to decide where to go to and how to perform that mission. A random system of deciding what opposition they might encounter means that the game master is carried along by the players' story. For most people, this "flying by the seat of your pants" game mastering is easier and more fun than running a traditional game.

*Zombie Cataclysm* is a very fast moving, exciting game and it's rules system is designed to support this. Most rolls are either a check or a competition. Figure out which and roll the dice. The simple rules system also encourages combat to be very fast and furious. It is very rare in *Zombie Cataclysm* that you will have to stop play to look up an obscure rule.

The rest of this section is written as if you never played a RPG before. We're not talking down to you like you are an idiot, it's just easier for new players to learn this way and this game is all about getting those people into the game who just won't play D&D with you. Yes, your girlfriend will like this game; assuming she likes zombies.

## Starting the Game

So this is your first game ever...

In the famous words of Douglas Adams, "Don't Panic!" Just read through this starting section. If you've played games like this before

you can start diving into the rules, but if you are new to this type of thing just stick with the starting the game section.

Show up and find a seat. Someone will hand you a character sheet and some dice and tell you to roll up a character. This is explained in the chapter mysteriously titled, "Rolling Up a Character." Once you have a character the game master for the night will explain what situation you are in and ask what you want to do. You can take it from there.

## Etiquette

Most gamers will be happier if you follow these guidelines and will be more likely to invite you back instead of duct taping you to a telephone pole in the bad part of town.

First, supply your own drinks and snacks. This takes the burden off the host who already has to rush to get the place vacuumed before you arrive. At least we hope you are not playing in a place with a carpet of old fast food wrappers and soda tops.

Be on time. Everyone else has to wait for you to get there to start.

Wait your turn. This can be confusing your first game, but try not to cut other people off mid-sentence, just like you were taught in elementary school. If you were home schooled you will just have to wing it. If you have questions it is sometimes better to ask another player who has more experience than you do.

Give everyone a chance to shine. There are several other players in the game and everyone wants to be the star, so everyone gets the chance. When someone else is in the spotlight let him be there; your chance will come soon enough.

If this is your first time, be patient. You will be a little lost. Try to sit next to someone with more experience that might help you out. If that person is cute that's even better. You will make stupid mistakes the first couple of games until you get it down. Don't worry about them. Everyone was a first time player once.

## The Character Sheet

After rolling up your character (which you are now happy to realize means rolling dice, not

rolling yourself in anything) you will have a character sheet that has some writing and a lot of confusing numbers. Don't Panic. Each of these numbers represents how good your character is at certain things. Most of the words should make sense to you. Strength is how strong your character is. Intelligence is how quick he figures things out. Knowledge is how much he knows. Willpower is how mentally strong he is, for instance at resisting torture or chocolate cake. Dexterity is how graceful he is physically. Speed is how fast he can run. Constitution is how much punishment his body can take. Beauty is how pretty or handsome he is. Senses include sight, smell, taste, touch, hearing and how aware he is of things around him.

Below these there will be skills. These will vary, but most are self-explanatory. For example, Drive Car is how well you drive a car.

All of these will have numbers next to them. These numbers are between three and eighteen. Three means you are horrible at it, ten means you are average and eighteen means you are incredible at it.

This leaves a few stragglers. Hit points is how healthy you are. When you are wounded you lose hit points. When you get to zero you start to die. Of course in this game death is usually temporary and you may soon be noshing on your previous friends.

Plus to damage is added every time you do damage with a hand to hand weapon (not a firearm) because you are so strong. Experience is blank to start with and can be ignored.

Don't worry too much about numbers the first game. Try to do things and sometimes the game master will ask what your numbers are and tell you to roll dice. Then he will tell you if you succeeded or not.

## The Dice

Whooweee! Look at all the pretty little dice! Zombie Cataclysm doesn't come with dice but you can get them at any game shop and there are plenty of free dice programs that will run on your computer. The game requires a four, six, eight, ten, twelve and twenty-sided die. In these rules we shorten these to the letter d and the number of sides of the die, so a d20 is a twenty-