

-A FORERUNNER-

They've set fire to the world. You smell the smoke — there's nothing left but the smoke, but the darkness, but the roaring wind, crackling with flame and hate.

NAME:

PRONOUNS:

1ST IMPRESSION

-STATS-----MOVES-

-AGGRO-

Confront someone
Try something challenging

-COOL-

Act under fire
Reason with someone

-HARD-

Attack someone
Do battle

-SHARP-

Read a person
Read a situation

-WEIRD-

Open your brain to the world's psychic maelstrom

Hx

Back someone's play
Interrupt someone

EFFECTS

-WEAPON-

-ARMOR-

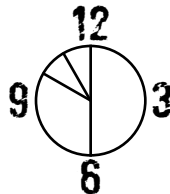
-Ψ-

-SCAVENGE

- You have **Barter-2**, and so does everyone else. No one is surviving yet.

HARM

Countdown



When life becomes untenable:
Return to play with a new
playbook.
Die.

-BARTER-

Live day to day, drop jingle

-FORERUNNER FEATURES

You get +1 to one of your stats (max +2).

You experience weird flashes, premonitions, insights, impossible knowledge. You get +1Ψ (max 1-Ψ).

You're a medic, with a field medic's kit (stock:).

You're trained with firearms and have a handgun (3-harm, close, loud, ammo:).

You're a hunter and have a hunter's 12 gauge (4-harm, close/far, loud, ammo:).

You have a half-empty box of additional bullets or shells (ammo:).

You have a rugged, practical vehicle, a car or truck (detail with the MC). You get **behind the wheel**.

You have a workspace (detail with the MC). You get **tinkering**.

You're outdoorsy, with solid outdoors survival skills.

You have a religious calling or strong religious faith.

You have a useful, valuable, uncommon technical skill. Name it:

You have a useless, impractical, niche technical skill. Name it:

You know a place away from danger where you could try to go. Name it:

-A FORERUNNER-

A person of our world, present and living when the apocalypse comes upon us.

If you're playing Forerunners, everyone's playing them. No other playbooks are in play.

To create your Forerunner, choose name & pronouns, 1st impression, stats, effects, moves, hard zone, Forerunner features, chopping block, and Hx.

NAME

Choose a normal name.

Choose your pronouns.

1ST IMPRESSION

Describe yourself briefly. On a 1st impression, what stands out about you?

STATS

Assign stats as you choose: +2, +1, +0, +0, -1.

EFFECTS

When you choose your Forerunner features, list your weapon, if any, including tags and harm.

By default you have 0-Ψ, but a Forerunner feature might give you 1-Ψ.

You have barter per your scavenge.

HARD ZONE

The hard zone in play is the World Alight.

MOVES

You get all the basic moves. Forerunner features might give you the standard moves **behind the wheel** and **tinkering** as well.

FEATURES

Choose 3 Forerunner features.

After you've chosen, you also get:

- Clothing you detail.
- A prosthesis or aid, if you choose.
- Other incidentals you detail, suitable to your personal needs and Forerunner features.

CHOPPING BLOCK

Make up the names of 3 or 4 people in your life, for the MC to put on the chopping block. Be prepared to answer casual questions about them.

Coordinate and overlap with the other characters as you choose.

When the MC's ready, tell them.

- .
- .
- .
- .

Hx

Everyone introduces their characters by name, pronouns, 1st impression and outlook. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for Hx. Ask each other how long you've known each other:

- We'll meet when play begins:** Both of you write Hx-1 for each other.
- A while, but not well:** Both of you write Hx=0 for each other.
- A while, as friends, colleagues, or extended family:** Both of you write Hx+2 for each other.
- Most or all of our lives:** Both of you write Hx+3 for each other.

IMPROVEMENT

Try to have goals for your character to pursue. Think about this session, the next few sessions, and the game overall.

You don't mark XP for rolling your stats.

Track Hx with the other characters, but you don't get XP when it rolls over.

At first, the only way to change to another playbook is for your life to become untenable. However, once one character has changed to another playbook, you all can. At the end of each session, if you've survived, choose whether to keep playing this character, change to another playbook, create a new character, or what.

—MC: THE WORLD ALIGHT—

The World Alight is the outline for the MC when you're playing Forerunners. It's the hard zone, the threat map, and the timeline of the early game.

RULES YOUR AGENDA

In addition to your usual agenda:

- Burn the world to the ground. Leave nothing unchanged.
- Play to find out who the characters become.

CHARACTER CREATION

In addition to your usual responsibilities:

- Build out the chopping block, as below.

Some PCs might have vehicles or workspaces. By default, they're limited to the following, but you can expand them to better fit their vision, if necessary, at your own discretion.

Vehicles:

Frame: 4x4, jeep, muscle car, sedan (massive=1 or massive=2). Ambulance, bus, construction/utility truck, semi (massive=3 or massive=4). 0-armor or 1-armor.

Choose 1:

- A bold brute (*impulse: dominate the road; defiance: stupidly resist*)
- A cagey ride (*impulse: protect what it carries; defiance: pick its own path*)
- A relentless machine (*impulse: outrun or escape; defiance: speed up, never stop*)
- A skittish creature (*impulse: defy danger; defiance: keep its secrets*)

Note that vehicles are threats even here in the pre-apocalypse. They always have been.

Impression (choose 2–4): *Aggressive, capacious, cramped, easily repaired, fast, flashy, garish, guzzler, handcrafted, huge, lazy, loud, luxe, muscular, off-road, picky, powerful, pretty, pristine, purring, quirky, rabbity, responsive, rugged, sleek, slow, tight, uncomplaining, unreliable, vintage, well-loved, well-used, workhorse.*

Workspaces:

- **Workspace: emergency medicine:** *In a clinic, a workspace: emergency medicine, you can treat people's injuries and diseases, give them the meds they need to survive, and try to support or extend their lives.*
- **Workspace: machinery:** *In a machine shop, a workspace: machinery, you can work with metal, ceramics, plastics, and other materials to create tools and machines.*
- **Workspace: vehicles:** *In a garage, a workspace: vehicles, you can build and repair engines, transmissions, frames, bodies — all parts of vehicles.*

RUNNING A SESSION

Follow your normal rules, except:

- Don't start the first session with **living day to day**. Bring that move into play when the world's collapsed into a state of scarcity and survival. This might be in the middle of a session; call for it then, and at the beginnings of sessions going forward.
- Similarly, no one can change their scavenge option until they've changed playbooks. Until then, at the end of the session, don't ask.
- Use the chopping block to change the world from our familiar world to a world of threats, as follows.
- Leave out gamechangers until a majority of the PCs have changed playbooks.

THE CHOPPING BLOCK

Use the chopping block instead of the normal threat map.

Before play begins, plan out the progress of the apocalypse. Over the course of the apocalypse, the world and the people in it are transformed into threats. In game terms, this is what the apocalypse is.

Plan the sequence of that transformation. Who'll become a threat first, who'll later? At what point will the familiar places of the world become landscape and terrain threats? At what point will the things we have and handle become pinpoints? What will signal the transformation from diseases to *diseases*, from the weather to *weather*? How will the transformation cascade?

- At the beginning of the game, vehicles are already vehicle threats.
- In play, one of the first signs of the coming apocalypse is that now people can **open their brains to the world's psychic maelstrom**. There's no need to mention this to the players. Instead, note for yourself when it happens — but if a PC makes the move first, they can, and it's happened now.
- There are no reliables. Reliables come into play only later, as the PCs change playbooks.
- Our institutions, including the entire infrastructure of our logistical world, won't survive. Instead, they collapse, fall, and burn, and new institutions arise. The former's the more important for the chopping block: list out when our institutions will disappear, but listing the emergence of new institutions is optional. Diseases and markets too.
- For each of the other threat types, list out when it comes into play. Note for yourself the cause and effect of this sequence, if you like.

At the end of character creation, ask the players to tell you about the people in their PCs' lives. Each player should name 3 or 4, and they can coordinate and overlap them if they choose. List them on the chopping block, with a note about their relationships, but don't assign them tags, threat types, or threat impulses yet.

Meanwhile, their impulse is to survive together.

During play, as you progress through the apocalypse, transform the world. Follow the sequence you've laid out, use the normal rules for creating threats, and create your threat map as you go.

- When it's time to transform the physical world around the PCs into landscape and terrain threats, decide which type they become. Add them to your threat map.
- When new institutions emerge, decide which type they are. Diseases and markets too. Add them to your threat map.
- When pinpoints come into play, decide which of the significant items in the PCs' lives become them, if any, and which type. Add them to your threat map.
- As the different threat types for people come into play, decide then which NPCs transform into them. For instance, if you have warlords coming into play at 6:00 and corrupters coming into play at 10:00, then Jan, one of the PC's sister, might become an *alpha wolf* at 6:00, or might remain just Jan until she becomes a *disease vector* at 10:00. Decide as you go. Give them their tags and impulses and add them to your threat map.

The transformation of people into threats includes changing their names, but casually. Choose their new apocalyptic name when they transform, but introduce it naturalistically and don't worry if it doesn't stick.

At 12:00, all the world's aflame. Leave the chopping block behind and transition to the normal threat map as the game continues.



Clans: cult, enforcers, family, hunting pack, mob, sybarites.

Corrupters: betrayer, disease vector, parasite, quarry, revenant, saboteur.

Diseases: addiction, delusion, frailty, infection, plague, prejudice.

Institutions: condemnation & judgment, hooks & leverage, offices & duties, rituals & observances, rules & laws, status & hierarchy.

Landscapes: breeding pit, fortress, furnace, maze, mirage, prison.

Markets: findeale, flea meet, outfittery, sharehouse, traderoad market, waypoint.

Pinpoints: cradle, doorway, hammer, mirror, searchlight, sickle.

☒ **Reliables:** *confidante, friend, guardian, lover, representative, right hand.*

Terrain: broken ground, an exposed place, a precipice, shifting ground, a torrent, a wall.

● **Vehicles:** bold —, cagey —, relentless —, skittish —, vicious —, wild —. Beast, brute, creature, devil, machine, ride.

Warlords: alpha wolf, collector, dictator, hive queen, prophet, slaver.

Weather changes landscapes and terrain.

<p>AT 3:00 (<i>play begins</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicles are threats (& always have been) • • 	<p>AT 6:00 (<i>the first signs</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now PCs can open their brains to the world's psychic maelstrom • •
<p>AT 9:00 (<i>early casualties</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<p>AT 10:00 (<i>the catching point</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
<p>AT 11:00 (<i>escalation & spread</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<p>AT 12:00 (<i>all the world's aflame</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •

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HARD ZONE: THE WORLD ALIGHT

The real world, our world, the world that the PCs live in and grew up in and know — but not anymore.

Personal locations:

Develop these locations in play with the players' active participation. Ask them some of the questions and answer some of them yourself.

- **Someone's childhood hometown.** Whose? How far away is it? What kind of town? How long since they left? Who did they leave behind who lives there still?
- **Someone's vacation spot.** Whose? How far away is it? What does it offer: hiking, skiing, fishing, beachgoing, swimming, shopping, stargazing, what? How long since they were there last? Who did they share it with who might be there now?
- **Someone's old haunts.** Whose? Are they city blocks, backwoods, a small town, a vacation spot off-season, an alma mater, what? When in their life were they here: as teenagers, in college, after college, as adults? Who did they haunt it with who might be there now?
- **Someone's workplace.** Whose? What kind of work? What resources are there that might be hard to find otherwise? Who else might be there now?
- **Someone's neighborhood.** Whose? What's it like? Who else is there now?

Familiar locations:

Invent your own freely and ask the players to too.

- **A hospital.** Trauma center, teaching hospital, research hospital, branch hospital, mental health facility, residential rehab, outpatient clinic, assisted living, doctor's office.
- **A city park.** Zoo, water park, sports stadium, public garden, skate park, dog park, town green, neighborhood playground.
- **A state park or national park.** Forest, beach, mountain, river, lake, desert, badlands, monument, history site, historical district.
- **A highway.** Divided interstate, artery, beltway, cloverleaf, overpass, railroad tracks, state highway, four-lane, two-lane, tunnel, bridge, rural route, back road, gravel road.
- **A shopping mall.** Commercial sprawl, shopping center, strip mall, big box store, downtown, tourist trap, specialty shops, wholesale outlet.
- **An industrial park.** Office complex, factory, warehouse, manufacturing center, dockyard, shipping hub, convention center, power plant, power station, storage facility, small business, car lot, garage, construction site, municipal site.
- **A governmental office.** Town hall, city offices, county seat, state capital, municipal building, courthouse, jail, prison, police barracks, national mall, archive, post office, RMV.
- **A university.** Liberal arts school, research university, public archive, state university, ivy league, community college, high school, elementary school.
- **An airport.** Transit hub, trainyard, bus station, harbor, ferry landing, regional runway.
- **An apartment building.** Residential neighborhood, high-rise, project, suburb, housing development, bedroom community, retirement community, apartment complex, hotel, motel, B&B, retreat, vacation home, seasonal resort, the rich part of town, the poor part of town.
- **A military base.** Normal or sinister.

