

You were having a nice day.
Everybody was having a nice day.
But now it's all

Gone to Hell

Playtest Version 0.2

A storygame of gratuitous violence
by David J Prokopetz

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Credits & Acknowledgements

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What the Hell Is Going On?

Gone to Hell started with a simple question: what if *Doom* were a narrativist storygame?

The answer to that question ended up being a 24-hour RPG, unimaginatively dubbed *Doomguy*, that was basically a joke revolving around taking a straightforward gorefest like *Doom* and cramming in as many storygame clichés as possible, from diceless resolution to rotating GMs to collaborative question-and-answer worldbuilding. Somewhere along the line, though, I realised I might actually have something there, and started working on it in earnest.

This is the result of that work: an initial playtest-worthy pass at a revised and expanded *Doomguy* that takes its mission statement slightly – but only slightly – more seriously, and broadens its horizons by incorporating more diverse source material, including *Metroid*, *Bayonetta*, and even a dash of *Sonic the Hedgehog*. (Yes, really!) At its core, however, the same idea remains: you're telling an action-packed story of one person against the apocalypse, and though you may occasionally do things *other* than rip and tear, in the end it all comes down to blowing stuff up.

Everything's gone to hell, and it's time to give 'em hell right back.

The Game

This is the part where I explain how to play the game.

What You'll Need

- ☠ 2–4 people, yourself included
- ☠ Copies of all the playsheets
- ☠ A pile of tokens – beads, coins, poker chips, or (ideally) little plastic skulls
- ☠ No dice

Setup

Usually you'd start with character creation, and *Gone to Hell* is no exception. Things are going to work a little differently from what you might be used to, though, because rather than having one Gamemaster and multiple players, *Gone to Hell* has one player and multiple GMs! Here's how it works:

1. Go around the table and have each player pick an Opposing Force playsheet (p. 16). This is the facet of the apocalypse you'll be responsible for in play. There's no separate GM role, so *every* player has to choose one! If there are more players than Opposing Force playsheets, or if some of the available playsheets don't seem appropriate for the game you have in mind, see the Optional Rules section (p. 11) for some ways around that.
2. Underline your choices in the **choose one or more** lines on your Opposing Force playsheet. If none of the options on a given line appeal to you, you can write your own at the end of the line and underline it instead.
3. You'll see a fill-in-the-blanks section called **Your Hunger, Your Instruments, Your Laws, or Your Damage**, depending on your playsheet. Fill in just the first line; the others will be filled in during play whenever inspiration strikes
4. Optionally, cross off and re-write one (and only one) of your Opposing Force's **Agendas** to better suit your personal vision for them. This can change how your Opposing Force plays pretty significantly, so it's okay if you leave the Agendas as-is the first time you play.
5. Give your Opposing Force a suitably sinister title.
6. Write your name on the playsheet so you don't forget whose is whose, and pass it around the table so everybody can see your choices.

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7. Once everybody's Opposing Force playsheet is filled out, spend a few minutes brainstorming what sort of world the apocalypse is taking place in and how the various Opposing Forces fit together. Don't pin anything down too firmly, though – everything could change once you start playing!
8. Make any final adjustments to your Opposing Force playsheet that came out of the brainstorming phase.
9. Bring out the Slayer playsheets (p. 27) and decide as a group what sort of Slayer would work best for your game. Each one lends itself to a different sort of story – the Slayer playsheets section will outline how.
10. Collaboratively work through the **choose one or more** lines on the Slayer playsheet in the same way as above. You can either collectively brainstorm a choice for each line, or go around the table and have each player choose one at a time.
11. Answer as many questions as you wish from the **Your Legend** section of the Slayer playsheet. Again, you can collectively brainstorm each answer, or take turns. Any questions you don't answer now can be filled in during play.
12. As with Opposing Forces, you have the option to cross off and re-write one Agenda; decide as a group.
13. Give your Slayer a name and an appropriately terrifying epithet. (“The Slayer” is always an appropriate epithet, if an unimaginative one!)
14. Decide on the order in which players will take turns being the Slayer; this is called the **scene order**. It can be any order you want, but I recommend starting with whoever owns the most metal albums.
15. Whoever's first in the scene order, pick up the Slayer playsheet, and set your Opposing Force playsheet aside for the moment.
16. Also pick up one token from the pile and put it in front of the Slayer player.
17. Start the first scene!

How to Play

Gone to Hell plays out as a structured conversation. There are no dice, nor any other randomisers. If you're holding the Slayer playsheet, you're the Slayer. Your Opposing Force fades into the background for the duration; they're still a factor in the story, but they're not currently driving the plot. (No playing two roles at once!) Conversely, if

– The Game –

you're *not* holding the Slayer playsheet, you and the other Opposing Forces (if any) act as co-GMs to challenge and react to the Slayer.

Play is divided into **scenes**, which work a little like this:

1. At the start of each scene, the Opposing Forces collaborate to describe the utter bullshit situation the Slayer finds before them. The scene need not drop the Slayer directly into a fight, but should include some real and present danger.
2. The Slayer will investigate the situation, ask questions about what they see, and talk to any non-Slayer characters who might be present (if they're the talkative sort), and the Opposing Forces players will answer. After a minute or two of this, the Slayer will ideally take an action (see below); if they don't, refer to your Opposing Force playsheet to find out how to handle the Slayer stalling for time!
3. The Slayer takes an **action** according to the rules on the Slayer playsheet.
4. One or more Opposing Forces respond by taking **reactions** according to the rules on the Opposing Force playsheets.
5. Play returns to freeform question-and-answer mode until the next time the Slayer takes an action (or gets caught stalling for time).
6. After several action-reaction cycles, the Slayer will trigger the end of the scene – your Opposing Force playsheet will explain how. One of the Opposing Forces will step forward and wrap up the scene according to which scene-ending trigger the Slayer hit.
7. Pass the Slayer playsheet to the next player in the scene order. They are now the Slayer, and the former Slayer picks up their Opposing Force playsheet.
8. Also move any unspent tokens in front of the new Slayer player, and add one more from the pile.
9. Start the next scene!
10. Repeat steps 1–9 until each player has been the Slayer at least once. After this, you can collaboratively narrate a cliffhanger or epilogue to end the session whenever it feels like you've reached a good stopping point.

— The Game —

You've no doubt noticed that the Opposing Forces are largely reactive. After each scene begins, everything is driven by Slayer actions; the Opposing Forces can't initiate unless the Slayer is stalling, and even then, they're limited in what they can do. This is very much intentional: though the Opposing Forces act as co-GMs, the Slayer drives the plot. Don't worry, though – you'll get your turn as the Slayer soon enough!

All of the above notwithstanding, you may *always* ask questions or offer suggestions to help another player out when they're stuck. This does not count as your action or reaction, and overrides every other rule. If you're wondering how to square this with the “stalling for time” rule, it's simple: if it's the *Slayer* who's spinning their wheels, hit 'em where it hurts. If it's the *Slayer's player* who's floundering, throw them a lifeline!

Random Advice

The previous sections cover how to play the game. This one includes some pointers, observations, and miscellaneous long-winded blather about how to get the most out of those rules.

For Everybody

- ☠ Since *Gone to Hell* doesn't depend on pre-written scenarios, pre-game discussion is super important for getting everybody on the same page. There's a reason the setup instructions are longer than the actual rules of play!
- ☠ Take notes. Which role you're playing is going to be ping-ponging all over the place, and it's easy to lose track of important stuff.
- ☠ Always build on what the other players are doing rather than blocking or reversing. If somebody's taking the game in a direction that totally torpedoes your vision, call a sidebar and talk it out; trying to use your rules-based actions or reactions to yank the plot back on your favoured track will just piss people off.
- ☠ Given much of the source material's preoccupation with sex and violence, it's easy for *Gone to Hell* to go places people aren't comfortable with. There are any number of tools that can be used to tackle this issue; I don't advocate any one in particular, because I don't know your group, and the wrong approach for the wrong group can hurt more than it helps, but as a starting point you can fire up your favourite search engine and look up “The X Card” and “Lines and Veils”.

— The Game —

For Opposing Forces

- ☠ The scene-opening description is the only time you get to introduce a major threat or obstacle without waiting for the Slayer to drop a Light Action for you to react to. Take shameless advantage of it.
- ☠ Switch between in-character and out-of-character voice as needed, and take advantage of environmental descriptions to express your reactions without dialogue. Very few reactions require any particular mouthpiece character to be present – even your leading questions can be asked OOC, if need be. If nothing else works, don't be afraid to resort to a mysterious voice over an intercom. It's a popular trope in *Gone to Hell's* source material for a reason!
- ☠ Use index cards to represent any named non-Slayer characters you introduce. Ask for permission before permanently killing off somebody else's named character – it's just good form.
- ☠ If two Opposing Forces come into conflict during a scene, always focus on how the fallout of their scuffle affects the Slayer. Don't let it turn into a cutscene where the Slayer is stuck watching!
- ☠ This one isn't advice so much as pointing out a slightly subtle interaction, but: since the scene-ending triggers are tied to specific reaction types, you can decline a trigger simply by not taking the relevant reaction. You shouldn't do so often, since it messes with the token economy, and you *definitely* shouldn't do it to deprive the Slayer of a victory they're clearly gunning for, but you're not required to cut short a scene that's still got legs just because a trigger came up.
- ☠ Unless you're the only Opposing Force in play, don't feel obligated to react to every single thing the Slayer does. It's 100% okay to sit a reaction phase out if you've got nothing to add. Just don't make a regular habit of it!

For the Slayer

- ☠ Remember that you're in the driver's seat. *Gone to Hell* changes it up compared to many other tabletop RPGs by making the player role the proactive one: once the scene is set, the Slayer does stuff, and the Opposing Forces react.

— The Game —

- ☠ Whether you're going to have a boss fight is totally up to you – the Slayer always has the option of spending a token to wipe away any threat. The general flow of a boss fight is to get your ass kicked for a while by taking a couple of Light Actions in a row, then rally with a Heavy Action to finish the fight. Note that this means boss fights will often result in a net gain of tokens; this is intended!
- ☠ For a *multi-stage* boss fight, use the leading question that appears as the final Light Action on every Slayer playsheet to prompt for the next phase.
- ☠ Speaking of the Slayer's leading questions, you can and should throw in a bit of narration establishing how you're seeking the information you've requested. This won't affect whether you get it (Slayer actions always succeed!), but it will inform how the Opposing Forces describe it. For example, the questions on THE HUNTER's playsheet could be framed as the output of a high-tech scanner just as easily as the result of deductive reasoning.
- ☠ Note that owing to the way the game's token economy works, losing is always a choice. You can theoretically break even on every scene in which the Slayer emerges victorious: gain one token when the scene starts, plus two more for Light Actions, and spend all three on Heavy Actions for the win. If you'd prefer a grittier game, see the optional rules for alternative scene pacing (p. 11) for some suggestions on how to adjust this.

Optional Rules

The preceding chapter should give you the tools you need to handle most situations. Here are some extra rules for a few edge cases that are likely to come up.

Alternative Scene Pacing

The pace of *Gone to Hell* is mostly determined by the the action economy within each scene. The Slayer can take at most five Heavy or Light actions before hitting a scene-ending trigger, and will often reach it before that, which puts a cap on the number of significant events that can occur in each scene. An enthusiastic Slayer can burn through them in a real hurry!

As noted in the Random Advice section (p. 8), the token economy also determines the Slayer's expected ratio of wins and losses. I'm going to cover some options for adjusting that as well.

For Longer Scenes

If you're interested in longer individual scenes, your first impulse might be to bump up the number of actions of a particular type that are needed to end a scene, to four or even five. That doesn't always work out in practice, though: requiring a very large number of the same type of action may strain the Slayer's creative resources.

A better option is to institute a rule that the Slayer can't take two of the *same type of action* in a row. Here "type" refers to Heavy, Routine, or Light. There's still nothing to stop the Slayer from taking nothing but Heavy Actions (or, conversely, nothing but Light Actions) whenever the opportunity arises, but they'll have to do other stuff in between, thus preventing scenarios where a scene is over in three cycles flat. This rule can be relaxed during boss fights and high-tension scenes.

For Grittier Games

While fiddling with the scene-ending triggers isn't the best way to adjust the pace of the game, it's a *great* way to adjust the tone. As noted earlier, the Slayer can theoretically emerge victorious in every scene if you're careful to always break even with your tokens. For a game where the Slayer is obliged to take some losses, you can use different thresholds for victory and disaster: for example, it might take three Heavy Actions to emerge victorious, but only two Light Actions to end a scene in catastrophe – or four Heavy Actions to win and three Light Actions to lose, for slightly less tension.

— Optional Rules —

This can be extended to even larger imbalances, but even a one-point difference is enough to ensure that the Slayer will lose fairly often. In particular, if the Slayer ends a scene with zero tokens, it becomes *impossible* for them to emerge victorious in the following scene. Even with the free token to start the scene, you can't gather enough tokens to win without triggering a loss in the process. A bigger imbalance expands that guaranteed-loss threshold accordingly.

Removing the free token at the start of each scene will have the same effect on the token economy as unbalanced scene-ending triggers, but it feels harsher, so it's best reserved for games on the grimmer end of the scale. If you decide to institute unbalanced scene-ending triggers *and* remove the free token at the same time... well, it's your funeral!

For Fluffier Games

All of the preceding advice can be applied in reverse to achieve a game where the Slayer literally never loses: either skew the scene-ending triggers in favour of victory (e.g., three Heavy Actions to win, but four Light Actions to lose), or increase the number of free tokens awarded at the start of each scene to two.

Variable Grittiness

If your group is prepared to put in some extra work, you can decide whether to use unbalanced scene-ending triggers on a scene by scene basis. Just bear in mind that if the imbalance you decide on is bigger than the number of tokens the Slayer finished the previous scene with, the next scene becomes unwinnable! This can create an incentive for the Slayer to accept some early losses and hang onto a few extra tokens, just in case.

Doubling Up on Opposing Forces

If you're playing with a very large group, or if a smaller group has a specific scenario in mind where some of the Opposing Force playsheets don't fit, you can allow multiple players to choose the same Opposing Force. There are two specific changes to the usual setup process that need to happen here:

- ☠ Each player still handles the choose-or-or-more and fill-in-the-blank sections of their copy of the doubled-up Opposing Force playsheet individually. After those sections are finished on both playsheets, the players should confer and decide whether they're playing as different factions of the same Opposing Force, or as two unrelated Opposing Forces that just happen to have similar *modi operandi*. (They're treated as separate Opposing Forces for rules purposes regardless of what they decide, though!)

— Optional Rules —

- ☠ Erasing and re-writing an Agenda becomes non-optional for the doubled-up Opposing Forces, and each player must erase and re-write a *different* Agenda. The end result should be that the two copies of the Opposing Force playsheet have three Agendas in common and two that differ.

I don't recommend doubling up like this in two-player games, nor that three or more players pick the same Opposing Force. If you've come up with a premise where that would actually be a good idea, I'd love to hear about it!

Two-Slayer Co-op

Sometimes you might feel like playing with multiple Slayers – you know, get a little of that two-player co-op action going. That's totally doable, but it complicates the process of play a fair bit. Here are the high points:

- ☠ During the setup phase, the group can collaboratively create both Slayers, or divide into two roughly equal-size groups to create one Slayer each.
- ☠ The two Slayers share a single pool of tokens; if either one takes a Light Action, the token goes into the same pool, and both spend from the same pool to take Heavy Actions.
- ☠ Both Slayers can take actions in each action-reaction cycle, but they may only take one Heavy or Light Action between them. The other can take a Routine Action to help, hinder or react to the main action. I recommend using some sort of tangible marker – an action figure works well! – and passing it back and forth after each cycle to keep track of whose turn it is to take a Heavy or Light Action.
- ☠ Both Slayers share in the benefits of each Heavy Action and the consequences of each Light Action.
- ☠ Rotating the Slayer role becomes a two-step process. First, whoever's been playing a Slayer longest hands their Slayer playsheet to the other Slayer player. Second, the other Slayer player (i.e., the one who's been playing a Slayer for the shorter amount of time) hands their Slayer playsheet to the next Opposing Forces player in the scene order. Thus, each player gets to play as both Slayers, one after the other.

— Optional Rules —

- ☠ If one of the Slayers is suborned or turns coat, it's generally best to handle that by removing their playsheet from the game and treating them as an additional major threat option for an appropriate Opposing Force thereafter. If it makes sense story-wise, you can instead take a moment to re-rewrite them as THE RIVAL (p. 23) and swap them for one of the existing Opposing Forces.
- ☠ Slayer-on-Slayer PVP is beyond the scope of these rules. If your game goes there, you're on your own!

The game's narrative flow strongly depends on having at least as many Opposing Forces as Slayers, so two-Slayer co-op is recommended for groups with at least four players. (This may require doubling up on Opposing Forces – see above.) If you're thinking about running a six-player group with *three* Slayers, you're a braver soul than I.

Branching Paths

An alternative way to handle multiple Slayers in a single game is to take a page from those video games where multiple protagonists are pursuing the same or related goals, but via different routes that only occasionally intersect. In this variant, the role of the Slayer doesn't rotate, but the narrative spotlight does.

- ☠ Each player should create their own Slayer, rather than collaborating on a single Slayer for the whole group.
- ☠ At the end of each scene, rather than handing off your Slayer playsheet, the “camera” simply shifts to the next player's Slayer to see what they're up to.
- ☠ Unlike the co-op variant, each player maintains their own separate supply of tokens. You can only gain and spend tokens during scenes where the spotlight is on your Slayer.
- ☠ If your Slayer happens to show up during a different Slayer's spotlight scene, they're treated as a non-Slayer character. Any Opposing Force (including you) can incorporate them into their reactions just like any other non-Slayer character.
- ☠ You retain veto power if an Opposing Force other than you wants something horrible to happen to your Slayer during a scene where they're a non-Slayer character.

Note that your Slayer will never directly face your own Opposing Force, since you can't play both roles at once. Put some thought into why this should be the case story-wise.

— Optional Rules —

I don't recommend this variant for groups larger than three. Partly this is because there are only three Slayer archetypes in the core game, but mostly it's because every additional narrative branch multiplies the amount of information you need to keep track of. It's by no means unmanageable, but if you decide to pull a *Game of Thrones* at your table, don't say I didn't warn you!

Downtime Scenes

Gone to Hell's basic format is a headlong rush into endless peril where something is trying to kill you in every scene. If you'd prefer to take a breather now and then, you can institute **downtime scenes**, which work like this:

- ☠ After each player has been the Slayer once, the next scene is a downtime scene. This might represent returning to a safe location after completing an objective, or just finding a temporary refuge in the midst of danger.
- ☠ A downtime scene doesn't count as any particular player's turn – it's outside the regular scene rotation. You can continue with whoever was playing the Slayer most recently, or pass the Slayer role from player to player as needed.
- ☠ There are no threats or scene-ending triggers in a downtime scene, and the Slayer can't spend or earn tokens. The whole scene is played out in freeform question-and-answer mode, and ends by mutual agreement.
- ☠ At the end of the scene, recover any crossed-off actions on the Slayer playsheet, and optionally erase any custom actions that are no longer needed, freeing up that action slot.
- ☠ Reset the Slayer's token pool to one, and start the next scene!

A downtime scene is a great opportunity to take stock of the Slayer's next objective, interact with NPCs without something horrible breathing down your neck, and brainstorm ideas for the following scenes. It's also a good time to decide whether anything that happened during the previous set of scenes warrants answering any unanswered questions from the **Your Legend** section of the Slayer playsheet, or filling in any remaining blanks on the Opposing Force playsheets.

Finally, if you're using the branching paths variant (p. 14) in your game – and if it makes sense to do so – you can use a downtime scene to have different players' Slayers meet up!

Opposing Force Playsheets

Opposing Forces in *Gone to Hell* fall into one of five main archetypes:

- ☠ THE HORDE (p. 17) – Robots, zombies, robot zombies, and anything else that wants to eat your brain, metaphorically or otherwise. No apocalypse is complete without it! **Media Inspirations:** The Hellspawn (*Doom*), The Ing (*Metroid Prime*), The Flood (*Halo*)
- ☠ THE ESTABLISHMENT (p. 19) – The ones who think they can profit from the apocalypse; traditionally a cyberpunk megacorp or a paramilitary death cult, but it's flexible. **Media Inspirations:** The Union Aerospace Corporation (*Doom*), The Galactic Federation (*Metroid*), The Patriots (*Metal Gear Solid*)
- ☠ THE CIPHER (p. 21) – The enigmatic architects who've foreseen everything that's transpired, or possibly just a bunch of judgemental alien pricks. **Media Inspirations:** The Maykrs (*Doom*); The First Kingdom (*Darksiders*); The Chozo (*Metroid*)
- ☠ THE RIVAL (p. 23) – A playsheet for games with three or more players, representing the jerkass rival who follows you around making everything worse. **Media Inspirations:** Vergil (*Devil May Cry*); Adam and Eve (*Nier: Automata*); Shadow the Hedgehog (*Sonic the Hedgehog*)
- ☠ THE WORLD (p. 25) – A hostile reality that wants to subsume or overwrite our own. Use as an alternative to THE HORDE, or pair them up for extra fun! **Media Inspirations:** Dark Aether (*Metroid Prime*); Castle Dracula (*Castlevania*); The Hiss (*Control*)

This section will be updated with links to additional and fan-created Opposing Force playsheets as they become available – watch this space!

The Horde

Your Name: _____ **Your Player:** _____

You are the apocalypse. Some might think they can fight you, or control you, but in the end all they are is meat.

Your Nature (choose one or more): An alien virus; an assimilating hive-mind; a rampant AI; an ontological infection; the literal forces of Hell

Your Aesthetic (choose one or more): Fire and brimstone; suppurating rot; flesh melded with machinery; crawling shadows; tentacles and too many eyes

Your Mood (choose one or more): Gruesome; desolate; haunting; feral; obscene

Your Hunger

The essential act of the Horde is to take – freedom, memory, dignity, lives. Tell us what gets your juices flowing:













Your Agendas

As you play, let these principles guide you:

-  Inflict pain
-  Enforce hierarchy
-  Self-sabotage through brutality
-  Display the majesty of the apocalypse
-  Consume
-  _____

Taking Reactions

Each time the Slayer takes an action, each Opposing Force may react. Some reactions may be taken once *in total* per Slayer action, not once per Opposing Force; if this is the case, the Opposing Forces should work out amongst themselves who gets to take it. After each reaction, the last Opposing Force to react asks the Slayer “what do you do?”

Also, you may always ask questions or offer suggestions to help another player out when they're stuck. This does not count as your reaction.

Heavy Reactions — When the Slayer takes a Light Action, you may:

- ☠ Introduce a new greater threat – a giant monster; a locus of infection; a speaker for the swarm
- ☠ Transform the environment into a hellish maze
- ☠ Reveal that your corruption runs far deeper than it seems
- ☠ Monologue about your own glory
- ☠ *If the Slayer has taken at least three Light Actions this scene*, describe how things get catastrophically worse, and end the scene

The Opposing Forces may collectively take at most one Heavy Reaction per Slayer action.

Routine Reactions — In response to any Slayer action, you may:

- ☠ Introduce new lesser threats – brainjacked zombies; infected machinery; hordes of petty monsters
- ☠ Obstruct the Slayer's path with your varied grotesqueries
- ☠ Describe the creeping advance of your corruption
- ☠ Interject details into another player's narration according to your mood and aesthetic
- ☠ Ask the Slayer a leading question. They can either answer in character, or expand on their most recent action to illustrate their answer. Either way, responding doesn't count as an action.
 - ☠ “Did you enjoy that?”
 - ☠ “Why don't you join us?”
 - ☠ “What's holding you back?”
 - ☠ Something else, based on whatever the Slayer just did

You may also take a Routine Reaction without waiting for the Slayer to act if the game's pace flags or the Slayer seems to be stalling for time.

Light Reactions — When the Slayer takes a Heavy Action, you may:

- ☠ Foreshadow greater horrors to come
- ☠ Add an ironic twist to the Slayer's victory
- ☠ Present an opportunity, with a terrible price
- ☠ Ineffectually lash out
- ☠ *If the Slayer has taken at least three Heavy Actions this scene*, describe how the Opposing Forces are pushed back or thrown into disarray, and end the scene

The Opposing Forces may collectively take at most one Light Reaction per Slayer action.

The Establishment

Your Name: _____ **Your Player:** _____

The way people talk, you'd think it was the end of the world out there! No, even this can be made to serve your purposes. Everything is under control.

Your Nature (choose one or more): A failing empire; a corporate oligarchy; a paramilitary death cult; a glorified philosophers' club; the power behind the throne

Your Aesthetic (choose one or more): Bristling weapons; slogans and shareholder reports; fashionable uniforms; chrome and white plastic; skulls

Your Mood (choose one or more): Bleak; dehumanising; conspiratorial; debauched; mundane

Your Instruments

You have tools at your disposal that give you power over the apocalypse. Tell us what they are – and the price that was paid for them:







Your Agendas

As you play, let these principles guide you:

- Wield influence
- Protect the interests of those you serve
- Self-sabotage through overconfidence
- Demonstrate the truth of your ideology
- Control



Taking Reactions

Each time the Slayer takes an action, each Opposing Force may react. Some reactions may be taken once *in total* per Slayer action, not once per Opposing Force; if this is the case, the Opposing Forces should work out amongst themselves who gets to take it. After each reaction, the last Opposing Force to react asks the Slayer “what do you do?”

Also, you may always ask questions or offer suggestions to help another player out when they're stuck. This does not count as your reaction.

Heavy Reactions — When the Slayer takes a Light Action, you may:

- ☠ Introduce a new greater threat – a parahuman kill team; a fortified superweapon; a stolen asset, poorly controlled
- ☠ Put innocents in danger, through negligence or by design
- ☠ Reveal the full extent of your hubris
- ☠ Lecture about the greater good
- ☠ *If the Slayer has taken at least three Light Actions this scene*, describe how things get catastrophically worse, and end the scene

The Opposing Forces may collectively take at most one Heavy Reaction per Slayer action.

Routine Reactions — In response to any Slayer action, you may:

- ☠ Introduce new lesser threats – disposable footsoldiers; booby traps; magic or technology gone haywire
- ☠ Obstruct the Slayer's path with hostile infrastructure
- ☠ Describe the human cost of the apocalypse
- ☠ Interject details into another player's narration according to your mood and aesthetic
- ☠ Ask the Slayer a leading question. They can either answer in character, or expand on their most recent action to illustrate their answer. Either way, responding doesn't count as an action.
 - ☠ “Who benefits from this?”
 - ☠ “Why do you care?”
 - ☠ “Haven't you done enough?”
 - ☠ Something else, based on whatever the Slayer just did

You may also take a Routine Reaction without waiting for the Slayer to act if the game's pace flags or the Slayer seems to be stalling for time.

Light Reactions — When the Slayer takes a Heavy Action, you may:

- ☠ Report what the Slayer's actions have cost
- ☠ Take credit for the Slayer's victory
- ☠ Retaliate by withholding resources
- ☠ Sputter in shock at the Slayer's recklessness
- ☠ *If the Slayer has taken at least three Heavy Actions this scene*, describe how the Opposing Forces are pushed back or thrown into disarray, and end the scene

The Opposing Forces may collectively take at most one Light Reaction per Slayer action.

The Cipher

Your Name: _____ **Your Player:** _____

You've been planning for the apocalypse since before the people facing it were born. All this has happened before.

Your Nature (choose one or more): Immortal precursors; alien ghosts; an ancient secret society; a huge brain in a jar; actual, no-shit angels

Your Aesthetic (choose one or more): Crystals and holograms; rust-streaked metal; crowns and wings; expressionless masks; rune-scrawled stone

Your Mood (choose one or more): Cryptic; ethereal; grandiose; contemptuous; creepy

YOUR LAWS

You're bound by the laws of your nature – things your agents always do, never do, or are driven to do. Describe them here:







YOUR AGENDAS

As you play, let these principles guide you:

- ☠ Uphold your traditions
- ☠ Manipulate from the shadows
- ☠ Self-sabotage through dogmatism
- ☠ Bring forth revelations
- ☠ Judge



Taking Reactions

Each time the Slayer takes an action, each Opposing Force may react. Some reactions may be taken once *in total* per Slayer action, not once per Opposing Force; if this is the case, the Opposing Forces should work out amongst themselves who gets to take it. After each reaction, the last Opposing Force to react asks the Slayer "what do you do?"

Also, you may always ask questions or offer suggestions to help another player out when they're stuck. This does not count as your reaction.

Heavy Reactions — When the Slayer takes a Light Action, you may:

- ☠ Introduce a new greater threat – an instrument of your judgement; a break from reality; a dangerous artifact in careless hands
- ☠ Force the Slayer to prove their worth
- ☠ Reveal plans long since set in motion
- ☠ Pontificate about the futility of the Slayer's struggle
- ☠ *If the Slayer has taken at least three Light Actions this scene*, describe how things get catastrophically worse, and end the scene

The Opposing Forces may collectively take at most one Heavy Reaction per Slayer action.

Routine Reactions — In response to any Slayer action, you may:

- ☠ Introduce new lesser threats – weird energies; hidden agents; servitors armed with bullshit space magic
- ☠ Obstruct the Slayer's path with puzzles and illusions
- ☠ Describe the otherworldliness of the apocalypse
- ☠ Interject details into another player's narration according to your mood and aesthetic
- ☠ Ask the Slayer a leading question. They can either answer in character, or expand on their most recent action to illustrate their answer. Either way, responding doesn't count as an action.
 - ☠ "Why do you persist?"
 - ☠ "What gives you the right?"
 - ☠ "Was it worth it?"
 - ☠ Something else, based on whatever the Slayer just did

You may also take a Routine Reaction without waiting for the Slayer to act if the game's pace flags or the Slayer seems to be stalling for time.

Light Reactions — When the Slayer takes a Heavy Action, you may:

- ☠ Pronounce judgement on the Slayer
- ☠ Warn of what the Slayer's victory will unleash
- ☠ Frame a callback to the Slayer's needlessly complicated backstory
- ☠ Offer backhanded praise
- ☠ *If the Slayer has taken at least three Heavy Actions this scene*, describe how the Opposing Forces are pushed back or thrown into disarray, and end the scene

The Opposing Forces may collectively take at most one Light Reaction per Slayer action.

The Rival

Your Name: _____ **Your Player:** _____

Your whole life has been building to this moment. There's a reckoning coming, and the end of the world means there's nowhere to run.

Special: This playsheet is recommended for games with three or more players – many of the Rival's reactions need another Opposing Force to play off of.

Your Nature (choose one or more): A former ally; a crazed ideologue; a lost sibling; a spurned admirer; an evil clone

Your Aesthetic (choose one or more): Scars and cybernetics; a shining aura; a weapon just like the Slayer's; a cloak to dramatically cast aside; numerous belts

Your Mood (choose one or more): Furious; tragic; austere; theatrical; absurd

Your Damage

What exactly is your beef with the Slayer? Air your grievances here:

- ☠ _____
- ☠ _____
- ☠ _____

Your Agendas

As you play, let these principles guide you:

- ☠ Prove your superiority
- ☠ Take what the world owes you
- ☠ Self-sabotage through obsession
- ☠ Display the shortcomings of the Slayer's ethos
- ☠ Scorn
- ☠ _____

Taking Reactions

Each time the Slayer takes an action, each Opposing Force may react. Some reactions may be taken once *in total* per Slayer action, not once per Opposing Force; if this is the case, the Opposing Forces should work out amongst themselves who gets to take it. After each reaction, the last Opposing Force to react asks the Slayer "what do you do?"

Also, you may always ask questions or offer suggestions to help another player out when they're stuck. This does not count as your reaction.

Heavy Reactions — When the Slayer takes a Light Action, you may:

- ☠ Introduce a new greater threat – yourself, or something you've unleashed
- ☠ Personally intervene to make a bad situation worse
- ☠ Reveal that you reached the Slayer's objective first
- ☠ Mock the Slayer's personal inadequacies
- ☠ *If the Slayer has taken at least three Light Actions this scene*, describe how things get catastrophically worse, and end the scene

The Opposing Forces may collectively take at most one Heavy Reaction per Slayer action.

Routine Reactions — In response to any Slayer action, you may:

- ☠ Introduce new lesser threats – hoodwinked followers; subjugated horrors; something you've lead to this place
- ☠ Obstruct the Slayer's path with the fallout of your actions
- ☠ Describe how the apocalypse reflects the Slayer's heart
- ☠ Interject details into another player's narration according to your mood and aesthetic
- ☠ Ask the Slayer a leading question. They can either answer in character, or expand on their most recent action to illustrate their answer. Either way, responding doesn't count as an action.
 - ☠ "Where did you learn that?"
 - ☠ "What makes this personal?"
 - ☠ "Why stop there?"
 - ☠ Something else, based on whatever the Slayer just did

You may also take a Routine Reaction without waiting for the Slayer to act if the game's pace flags or the Slayer seems to be stalling for time.

Light Reactions — When the Slayer takes a Heavy Action, you may:

- ☠ Question the Slayer's motives
- ☠ Steal a portion of the Slayer's glory
- ☠ Be forced into a momentary alliance
- ☠ Gracelessly retreat with promises of future reckoning
- ☠ *If the Slayer has taken at least three Heavy Actions this scene*, describe how the Opposing Forces are pushed back or thrown into disarray, and end the scene

The Opposing Forces may collectively take at most one Light Reaction per Slayer action.

The World

Your Name: _____ **Your Player:** _____

The apocalypse is only the beginning. One world must die for another to be born: you are that world, and you will not be denied.

Your Nature (choose one or more): A broken dimension; a hellish fortress; a parasitic timeline; the dream of an elder god; the new law

Your Aesthetic (choose one or more): Locks and chains; impossible angles; gratuitous lens flares; knife-edged silence; quivering meat

Your Mood (choose one or more): Inchoate; oppressive; glorious; disorienting; hateful

Your Demands

The dross of the old world will be burnt away to forge the iron of the new. Tell us what you require of those who dwell in you:

- ☠ _____
- ☠ _____
- ☠ _____

Your Agendas

As you play, let these principles guide you:

- ☠ Impose your demands
- ☠ Make that which is not yourself into yourself
- ☠ Self-sabotage through unreason
- ☠ Whisper the promises of the new age
- ☠ Be
- ☠ _____

Taking Reactions

Each time the Slayer takes an action, each Opposing Force may react. Some reactions may be taken once *in total* per Slayer action, not once per Opposing Force; if this is the case, the Opposing Forces should work out amongst themselves who gets to take it. After each reaction, the last Opposing Force to react asks the Slayer "what do you do?"

Also, you may always ask questions or offer suggestions to help another player out when they're stuck. This does not count as your reaction.

Heavy Reactions — When the Slayer takes a Light Action, you may:

- ☠ Introduce a new greater threat – an embodied avatar; a force of your nature; an unwilling vessel
- ☠ Plunge the surroundings into your depths
- ☠ Reveal the consequences of defying your laws
- ☠ Grant visions of the world to come
- ☠ *If the Slayer has taken at least three Light Actions this scene*, describe how things get catastrophically worse, and end the scene

The Opposing Forces may collectively take at most one Heavy Reaction per Slayer action.

Routine Reactions — In response to any Slayer action, you may:

- ☠ Introduce new lesser threats – your stolen glories; your willing acolytes; your native beasts
- ☠ Obstruct the Slayer's path with intrusive manifestations of yourself
- ☠ Describe how the apocalypse heralds your coming
- ☠ Interject details into another player's narration according to your mood and aesthetic
- ☠ Ask the Slayer a leading question. They can either answer in character, or expand on their most recent action to illustrate their answer. Either way, responding doesn't count as an action.
 - ☠ "What are you?"
 - ☠ "Why do you defy me?"
 - ☠ "What are you willing to sacrifice?"
 - ☠ Something else, based on whatever the Slayer just did

You may also take a Routine Reaction without waiting for the Slayer to act if the game's pace flags or the Slayer seems to be stalling for time.

Light Reactions — When the Slayer takes a Heavy Action, you may:

- ☠ Display signs and symbols acknowledging the Slayer's power
- ☠ Give the Slayer an unasked-for gift
- ☠ Permit the Slayer to choose their fate
- ☠ Abruptly recede, leaving no evidence of what just transpired
- ☠ *If the Slayer has taken at least three Heavy Actions this scene*, describe how the Opposing Forces are pushed back or thrown into disarray, and end the scene

The Opposing Forces may collectively take at most one Light Reaction per Slayer action.

Slayer Playsheets

Gone to Hell includes three basic Slayer archetypes:

- ☠ THE AVENGER (p. 28) – The classic rage-fuelled killmonster. This is considered to be *Gone to Hell*'s default Slayer, and makes for a straightforward introduction to the game. **Media Inspirations:** Doomguy (*Doom*), Kratos (*God of War*), Senua (*Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice*)
- ☠ THE HUNTER (p. 30) – A no-nonsense professional who's here to do a job. This playsheet typically results in less gonzo, more deliberately paced stories. **Media Inspirations:** Samus Aran (*Metroid*), Master Chief (*Halo*), YoRHa No.2 Type B (*Nier: Automata*)
- ☠ THE THRILLSEEKER (p. 32) – On the other hand, if your group wants *all* the gonzo, this is the playsheet for you. **Media Inspirations:** Bayonetta (*Bayonetta*), Dante (*Devil May Cry*), Ruby Rose (*RWBY*)

This section will be updated with links to additional and fan-created Slayer playsheets as they become available – watch this space!

The Avenger

Your Name: _____ **Your Epithet:** _____

For you, the apocalypse is personal. Somebody's responsible for this, and that somebody needs to die. You're coming for them, and heaven help anyone who gets in your way.

Your Look (choose one or more): Bulky armour; spikes and chains; rippling muscles; scars and tattoos; a torn, filthy uniform

Your Attitude (choose one or more): Earnest conviction; grumpy impatience; disturbing enthusiasm; grim determination; frothing rage

Your Weapons (choose one or more): All the fucking guns; a roughly forged sword; fire, and lots of it; your own enhanced physiology; whatever you can lay hands on

Your Idiom (choose one or more): Capturing experimental hardware; upgrading your cybernetic implants; recovering mementos of your past; taking the strength of your defeated foes; getting so angry you spontaneously develop super powers

Your Legend

Answer these questions:

☠ What have the forces of the apocalypse taken from you?

☠ How have your trials made you more than human?

☠ What's the one thing you'd give anything to protect?

Your Agendas

As you play, let these principles guide you:

- ☠ Destroy your targets
- ☠ Protect the innocent
- ☠ Disrespect authority
- ☠ Strike fear into the hearts of your enemies
- ☠ Rip and tear

☠ _____

Taking Action

Any time the Opposing Forces ask “what do you do?”, describe what you do. Your actions are divided into three types: *Heavy Actions*, which require you to spend a token and return it to the pile; *Light Actions*, which let you pick up a token from the pile and add it to your supply; and *Routine Actions*, which do neither of those things. After each action, the Opposing Forces get to react.

Also, you may always ask questions or offer suggestions to help another player out when they're stuck. This does not count as your action.

Heavy Actions — Spend a token to:

- Annihilate a single greater threat in an ungodly display of carnage
- Wrest open a path to any objective you can see, even if there's no reasonable way to get there from here
- Resolve a complex problem through escalation of force, and *not* have that come back to bite you later
- Power up according to your idiom; write a new Heavy Action and add it to the Slayer playsheet for the rest of the session, or recover a previously crossed off one
- Ask the Opposing Forces “what here is my highest priority target?” They'll set an objective marker.
- _____
- _____

Routine Actions — You may always:

- Casually destroy any lesser threats within reach
- Perform improbable feats of strength and athletic prowess
- Simplify a problem by breaking something important
- Catch a reprieve according to your idiom; write a new Routine Action and add it to the Slayer playsheet for the rest of the session, or recover a previously crossed off one
- Ask the Opposing Forces “what's my best way out of here?” They'll update your map.
- _____
- _____

Light Actions — Gain a token when you:

- Get thrown back or forced to make a tactical retreat
- Walk into an obvious trap
- Impulsively destroy something you really ought not have destroyed
- Run out of ammunition or momentum; cross off one Routine or Heavy Action from the Slayer playsheet
- Ask the Opposing Forces “what don't I know that's about to screw me over?” They'll clue you in.

Doing Other Stuff

Between actions, you can ask the Opposing Forces what you see, talk to non-Slayer characters (if you're the talkative sort), and perform incidental tasks to investigate and move about your environment. This doesn't count as your action unless you ask one of the three questions the Opposing Forces are bound to answer honestly – or unless you're stalling for time!

The Hunter

Your Name: _____ **Your Epithet:** _____

Some people confront the apocalypse because they have something to protect, or something to prove, or because they have no choice. You? You do it because it's your goddamn job.

Your Look (choose one or more): Sleek power armour; Gothic finery; an immaculate military uniform; an eye-concealing mask; a long, tattered coat

Your Attitude (choose one or more): Detached curiosity; smug composure; stoic angst; trenchant courtesy; deadpan snark

Your Weapons (choose one or more): Modern military hardware; a transforming multi-gun; flying combat drones; a finely wrought sword; your bare hands

Your Idiom (choose one or more): Finding and assimilating alien technology; dynamically adapting to novel threats; improvising tools and weapons from whatever's handy; downloading combat programs from a central database; copying your enemies' special abilities

Your Legend

Answer these questions:

☠ Why has your mission brought you here?

☠ What line won't you cross in pursuit of your mission?

☠ What personal connection threatens your objectivity?

Your Agendas

As you play, let these principles guide you:

- ☠ Pursue the mission
- ☠ Minimise civilian casualties
- ☠ Don't let anything stand in your way
- ☠ Comport yourself with professionalism
- ☠ Have a plan to kill everyone you meet

☠ _____

Taking Action

Any time the Opposing Forces ask “what do you do?”, describe what you do. Your actions are divided into three types: *Heavy Actions*, which require you to spend a token and return it to the pile; *Light Actions*, which let you pick up a token from the pile and add it to your supply; and *Routine Actions*, which do neither of those things. After each action, the Opposing Forces get to react.

Also, you may always ask questions or offer suggestions to help another player out when they're stuck. This does not count as your action.

Heavy Actions — Spend a token to:

- Neutralise or evade a single greater threat with precision and grace
- Discover or create a secret path that takes you where you need to be
- Reveal that you already have a complex problem's solution in hand
- Power up according to your idiom; write a new Heavy Action and add it to the Slayer playsheet for the rest of the session, or recover a previously crossed off one
- Ask the Opposing Forces “what here is your hidden weakness?” Whatever they tell you will be true.
- _____
- _____

Routine Actions — You may always:

- Neutralise or evade any lesser threats within reach
- Demonstrate your mastery of the skills of your trade
- Redirect a problem by changing the rules of engagement
- Recover according to your idiom; write a new Routine Action and add it to the Slayer playsheet for the rest of the session, or recover a previously crossed off one
- Ask the Opposing Forces “what here is most useful to me?” They'll point you in the right direction.
- _____
- _____

Light Actions — Gain a token when you:

- Ineffectively assault a superior foe
- Realise that where you've ended up isn't where you intended to be
- Attempt a clever solution that just makes the problem worse
- Suffer injury or equipment damage; cross off one Routine or Heavy Action from the Slayer playsheet
- Ask the Opposing Forces “how is this more complicated than it seems?” They'll explain.

Doing Other Stuff

Between actions, you can ask the Opposing Forces what you see, talk to non-Slayer characters (if you're the talkative sort), and perform incidental tasks to investigate and move about your environment. This doesn't count as your action unless you ask one of the three questions the Opposing Forces are bound to answer honestly – or unless you're stalling for time!

The Thrillseeker

Your Name: _____ **Your Epithet:** _____

In the midst of so much death, you've never felt more alive. The apocalypse? Sounds like a challenge worthy of your considerable talents – bring it on!

Your Look (choose one or more): Trendy threads; exposed skin; leather and studs; ratty jeans; bondage chic

Your Attitude (choose one or more): Calculated coolness; theatrical pomp; sensual swagger; bubbly optimism; gruesome glee

Your Weapons (choose one or more): Blades and bullets; super-speed; cinematic martial arts; body-horror transformations; a kickass laser sword

Your Idiom (choose one or more): Taking trophies from your enemies; drawing from places of power; inventing new techniques on the fly; unlocking your true form; revealing you could always do that and just didn't feel like it

Your Legend

Answer these questions:

☠ How is your strength tied to the forces of the apocalypse?

☠ Be honest – how is this mess really kind of your fault?

☠ What signature weapon or technique of yours has a name and legend of its own?

Your Agendas

As you play, let these principles guide you:

☠ Charge headlong into danger

☠ Let no insult go unanswered

☠ Assert your dominance

☠ Put on a show

☠ Just come out to have a good time

☠ _____

Taking Action

Any time the Opposing Forces ask “what do you do?”, describe what you do. Your actions are divided into three types: *Heavy Actions*, which require you to spend a token and return it to the pile; *Light Actions*, which let you pick up a token from the pile and add it to your supply; and *Routine Actions*, which do neither of those things. After each action, the Opposing Forces get to react.

Also, you may always ask questions or offer suggestions to help another player out when they're stuck. This does not count as your action.

Heavy Actions — Spend a token to:

- Dispatch a single greater threat with an extravagant special move
- Overcome a series of impassable obstacles through death-defying stunts
- Sort out a complex problem by cutting through the bullshit – figuratively or otherwise!
- Power up according to your idiom; write a new Heavy Action and add it to the Slayer playsheet for the rest of the session, or recover a previously crossed off one
- Ask the Opposing Forces “what here is most valuable to you?” They'll give up the goods.

Routine Actions — You may always:

- Elaborately dispatch any lesser threats within reach
- Dance through danger without a hair out of place
- Render a problem moot by causing a more pressing one – for yourself and others
- Catch a reprieve according to your idiom; write a new Routine Action and add it to the Slayer playsheet for the rest of the session, or recover a previously crossed off one
- Ask the Opposing Forces “how can I get your attention?” They'll tell you the truth.

Light Actions — Gain a token when you:

- Take your best shot and have your target totally no-sell it
- Get sidetracked by something shiny
- Do something foolish or self-destructive out of pride
- Get beat like a drum; cross off one Routine or Heavy Action from the Slayer playsheet
- Ask the Opposing Forces “what's crept up on me while I was distracted?” It's always some damn thing!

Doing Other Stuff

Between actions, you can ask the Opposing Forces what you see, talk to non-Slayer characters (if you're the talkative sort), and perform incidental tasks to investigate and move about your environment. This doesn't count as your action unless you ask one of the three questions the Opposing Forces are bound to answer honestly – or unless you're stalling for time!

Changelog

If you're terribly curious how the game has been revised over time, you've come to the right place.

Version 0.2, 2020-04-15

- ☠ Added a fifth Opposing Force playsheet: THE WORLD (p. 25).
- ☠ Tweaked THE HUNTER (p. 30) to make it more flexible for characters who aren't straight Samus Aran clones; the third question under **Your Legend** has been made more general, the “neutralise or evade” option has been extended to greater threats as well as lesser, and the “demonstrate your mastery of stealth and acrobatics” Routine Action is now “demonstrate your mastery of the skills of your trade”.
- ☠ Revised the discussion of the game's token economy to make it more clear that breaking even on victories is an intentional mechanic, and updated your options on how to adjust that.
- ☠ Added an optional rule for variable grittiness (p. 12).
- ☠ Added optional rules for downtime scenes (p. 15).
- ☠ More consistent and less redundant phrasing when addressing players. (e.g., rather than “Opposing Forces player”, just say “Opposing Force” – it should be clear from context when we mean the player!)
- ☠ Switched to non-justified/ragged right paragraph alignment in the PDF version for better readability.
- ☠ Dialed back abuse of the word “generally”.
- ☠ Various typographic fixes.

Version 0.1, 2020-04-12

- ☠ The first “official” playtest draft! For changes earlier than this, you'll have to refer to the changelog for *Doomguy*, if I ever get around to posting one.
- ☠ Acknowledgements section should be more complete now – please let me know if I missed you!

— Changelog —

- ☠ Added numerous customisation options to both Opposing Force and Slayer playsheets.
- ☠ Scrubbed most of the *Doom*-specific setting assumptions out of the Opposing Force playsheets, making adjustments to Agendas and Reactions as necessary.
- ☠ Updated the wording of the Taking Reactions section of the Opposing Forces playsheets to make it clearer who gets to react and when.
- ☠ There are now multiple Slayer playsheets to choose from; modified the order of the setup instructions accordingly.
- ☠ Setup instructions now include an optional step for modifying Agendas.
- ☠ Added a variety of optional rules and general gameplay advice.
- ☠ 30% less gratuitous swearing.