THE SOUTH WILL
RISE AGAIN

A scenario about American Southern stereotypes... and zombies.

Exploring the humanity behind the stereotype, and sacrificing it to survive.

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Version 1.0 Everything in place, but could be clearer. All feedback welcome!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This is a zombie larp, focussing on the living. The setting is the American south, and all those stereotypes. It's an exploration of humans sacrificing what it means to be human, in order to survive. But it's also a story about breaking out of stereotypes and freeing yourself from social structures.

SOMEWHAT LONGER

This is a zombie larp, inspired by the Romero 'dead'-movies. But good zombie movies are never about zombies. They are an exploration of something else, in this case what it means to be human. Over the movie series, we can see the humans sacrificing what it means to be human, in order to survive. In a way they are becoming less and less human as the movies progress. At the same time, the zombies are getting more and more human traits. In this larp we explore what it means to be human, and what you are willing to sacrifice. At the same time it is a story about change, and what happens to stereotypes when a socially restrictive society no longer sets the rules for who you are and what you can do. Through breaking stereotypes and preconceptions of characters we question who our characters really are, and what they are capable of, for good and for bad.

The scenario is set in the American south, to a large extent because we have many preconceptions and stereotypes of that area. You might have to play on uncomfortable themes, such as racism, sexism and power structures. But you will also have the chance to confront and change those structures within your group. To what extent this happens is dependent on the player group.

PLAYING STYLE

The game is played on two levels. On one hand, the game is a classic 'Nordic Larp', played in a set of consecutive scenes with a strong focus on creating a good experience and 'playing to lose'. But in between of these scenes the game is played as a betting game with a strong focus on winning. This happens out of character, but what you are betting is a strong part of your character. The idea is that the betting system will help in making the conflicts feel 'real', and thereby up the ante of the roleplaying scenes.

PREPARATIONS TO RUN THE GAME

BEFORE THE GAME

To be able to play the game, you need the following material:

- Cards to write humanity.
    - 16 per player. Preferably blank playing cards to get the feel of betting, but other card will do. You may create them by folding an A4 paper four times, and cut/tear them apart. Plus some extra cards, about four per player.
- 1 pen or pencil per player
- Print this manuscript file
    - Print the characters and zombies
    - Cut out the characters and zombies

Not absolutely needed, but highly useful is the following:

- A music player, for example a computer with Spotify.
- Loudspeakers, or another solution for playing music.
- A music playlists with country and western music. Most important is the music for the in between scenes music. This could be changed according to the playing style you want, the original intention is to play: Johnny Cash – Ain't No Grave. Some playlist are linked later in this file.
- A rope, to use to separate different parts of the room into different parts of a scene.
- Some chairs and/or tables to build scenes
- Some plastic weapons: Shotgun, gun, knife, machete, chainsaw.

AT THE LOCATION, BEFORE THE GAME

- Put cards/papers in piles of 16
- Place the blank cards/papers, and the pens available for the players.
- Have the characters available for the players to chose one
- Make sure to have the zombies ready for when they are needed
- Make sure to have the rest of the scene building material available (ropes, chairs, tables, weapons etc)
- Prepare the music player

GAME STRUCTURE

The game consist of three acts: preparation, play, and de-roleing. During the first act the players chose characters, learn the play style and rules, and build a personal role from the character. During the play short scenes are played with a rule based outcome and game system in between each scene. During the de-roleing the game is discussed and cooled down.

PREPARATION

(About 1 hour)

During the preparation phase the players chose their archetypes, they get a feeling for the archetype and they develop that archetype into a playable character. They also get to try out the game system.

TRY OUT GAME SYSTEM

Give every player 4 blank cards (about, it may be unequal). Sit down in a circle and explain the rules:

- The game is played in turns.
- Each turn the players can bet any amount of cards. They do this in secret.
- The player with the most amount of cards wins. The player(s) with the least amount of cards is kicked out of the game. If the least amount is equal among several, all of them is kicked out.
- All cards that are betted are lost, giving the players less cards for the next round. Drop the played cards on the floor.
- The game is played until only one player is left.

This should give the players a 'feel' for the system. After the system give each player 16 cards. (in total, there is no bonus cards for having them left after the game). Tell the players to keep the cards safe, we will get back to them later.

CHOSE ARCHETYPES

Let each player chose an archetype. By random or choice, up to you and the players. After this let every character get a feel for the archetype. Focus on the 'outside' on what is projected towards other players, rather than on the inside (this comes later). This can be done in many ways. One way is to let the players move around the room as their archetypes, telling them to act different feelings (happy, angry, sad, scared etc.). Make sure to cover feelings typical for zombie movies, and make sure to have quite rapid changes between types of feelings.

DEVELOP ARCHETYPES

For each of the 16 cards we will write one thing their character values. This is the measurement of their humanity. Exactly what ends up on the cards is not important for the game system, each card is still worth the same, but this will give personal value to them for the players. This can be done in many ways, this is one way:

As the players are still moving around the room, ask them to bring forth their cards and a pen. Tell them to keep moving around the room as their characters.

Tell them we are going to focus on 'the inside', on turning the archetype into a character. Tell them to keep moving as their archetype, to project the image they have been written into, but to start thinking of their young years. On when they grew up. Where were they, who were there, the closest family, or also other relatives? Give them time.

1. Ask them to take one card and write **one of the important persons** on there. It can be a mother, father or a sibling. But also others. It can be a name or just the role.
2. Ask them to take another card and write **another person** on there.
3. Let them move around, thinking about how they project their image, and the difference to who they are. Stop them! Ask them to form groups of three or four with the closest people.
4. Tell them these are their childhood friends. Ask them to talk to each other. Start by saying a few words about who they are, friends, family and place. Let them say as much or as little as they wish. They might want to keep secrets. Focus on presenting the archetypes and grounding them in the background. Ask them to find something in common. How do they know each other? What has changed since they got to know each other? Do they like the others? Or do they hate them? **Ask them to write the name of the others, each on a separate card.**
5. Ask them to take a card and write **a feeling or attitude** that is important to them. A value that is kept above everything else. It could be pride, joy, freedom or patriotism. Or something completely different.
6. Ask them to think of a recent place, a place they spend time at nowadays. It should be a special and personal place. There can be other people in there, but mostly it is a place for yourself. **Ask them to write that place on a card.**
7. Ask them to move around again, thinking of their current life. Is there an animal in there somewhere? A dog, a cat, cattle? Something they care about. How do they care about it. **Ask them to write the animal on a card.**
8. Ask them to think about friend or family, either someone they thought of before but have not written down, or a new one. **Ask them to write that friend or family on a card.**
9. Ask them to move around. Feel the difference between archetype and character, and think about why they need to project their archetype. What is it that make them safe in the archetype. Ask them to stop! Ask them to form

pairs with the one closest to them. If you are uneven make one group of three.

10. Ask them to talk to each other, to get to know who the other is. Decide if you want to present yourself as an archetype, hiding your real self, or if you want to show this person who you really are. You may chose differently. Decide on how you know each other. Make this a personal bond, as deep as you wish. **Write the name of the other character on a card.**

11. Move around. Think about objects. Is there something you value high? A guitar or banjo, your car, your farm? **Write this object on a card.**

12. Do you have a feeling or attitude that is important. A value that you keep above everything else. Does this go in line with your archetype? It could be pride, joy, freedom or patriotism. Or something completely different. **Write this value on a card.**

13. Move around again, then form a circle.

14. Let everybody present themselves with a few short sentences. Focus on the image you project, not who you really are. As you do this ask the players to find one or two characters they have stronger feelings for, positive or negative, and let them **write these names on separate cards.** Also make sure everybody listens extra carefully to the players to their left and right.

15. Look at the player to your left. Think about what you feel about this character. **Write that name on one card.** You know this player will do the same to you.

16. Look at the player to your right. Think about what you feel about this character. **Write that name on one card.** You know this player will do the same to you.

17. You may now have a few cards left. Sit down by yourself and think about if there is something you are missing. Something during the process you never got to writ down or something new. It can be anything similar to any of the previous cards. **Fill out the rest of the card so that you have written on thing on all of them.**

EXPLAIN DETAILED GAME RULES AND START THE GAME

Every scene starts with a monologue. One player (the winner of the previous scene) talks to 'the audience' and tells them about when, where and what the conflict was. Present this as a speaker voice in a movie, make sure to point to the setting and to the main conflict in the scene. Something like:

> 'It was later the same week, the walkers had taken Red and the rest of us had fled to the old bomb shelter. We knew we couldn't stay forever, but for now everything was fine. That's when the fight about what to do next happened.'

After the monologue, the players pick the cards they plan to play in this scene. The may take as many or as few as they wish. But once they have chosen a number they can not change. They have to make a choice on what values they will put into play. Exactly what this means to them is up to them as individuals.

The scene is played out striving towards a conflict between groups. As people chose sides they move up behind the person you are supporting and they put their hand on their shoulder. A player may (and should) also support someone that supports someone else, and thereby form a chain. If no conflict evolves the scene always end with zombies attacking and the person with the least cards dying.

If you find a conflict it will be played up until it almost breaks out in full confrontation. The real confrontation will always happen between scenes. The game master will cut the scene (usually by bringing the music up). If someone have not made their choice at the cutting of the scene, they do it (quickly) then. When the scene is cut it is checked which group got the least cards and which group got the most cards. The leader of the winning side (with most cards) will be the presenter of the next scene. If a player feel the scene is so intense their only next move is confrontation, they may end the scene by shouting: CUT! From there the game master takes over as usual.

Before or during the scene the game master decides if someone will die. The game master can either keep this a secret or announce it openly. Depending on the look of the scene this will either be the player with the least amount of cards, or the player on the loosing side with the least amount of cards. As this is always decided before the cards are counted no one can be sure about who will die. Players who die will continue to play zombies, acting as game master characters and co-game masters.

After the scene all cards used in that scene are scrapped. In silence the players go through their cards. At this point they may exchange cards for other cards as long as this makes sense for their characters, and the amount is the same. As they end this process they drop the cards on the floor, creating a visualisation of the lost humanity.

The play then goes on to the next scene, and so on until the game time is over.

PLAY STRUCTURE

- The game should preferably begin with a few scenes where the threat is slowly rising. The very first scene could be played completely free from zombies, and with blank cards to warm up.
- The second and third scenes should not contain any zombies, but only distant threats moving closer. Ie radio chatter, something on the TV or something lurking in the shadows.
- After this the threat may come closer.
- Make sure there is difference in scenes, both in mode and in location. The players may jump forward in time, and the scenes do not need to follow directly after each others. This can be narrated in the monologue.

- About half-way through, make sure to have a scene where the players are aware there is no immediate danger (e.g. when in a boarded up house), and let them focus on the 'inward' game, developing relations and thinking about where they are, what they have done, and what will happen next. This break makes adds intense to the rest of the game.

CARD BETTING RULES

Every character has 16 cards.

Each card has the value of 1, but it also contains a human value (your dog, your cat, your father, your sister, pride, love, your guitar… or anything that you value). These are written by the players to give them a feeling for the character outside of the stereotype. This is workshoped during the Preparation phase.

Before each scene in the play phase every player takes an amount of cards into the scene. The winner of the previous scene sets the new scene with a short monologue. The scene is then played until the conflict mentioned in the monologue finds its form. The players chose side and then each sides cards are counted. Most cards win, and the leader will get the monologue for the next scene, deciding what happened and how they went forward. This can be winning an argument, but it can also be who survives the zombies. After the scene everybody trashes those cards involved, giving them less cards for the next scene.

TIPS TRICKS AND HACKS

- Don't mention the Z-word! Tell the players to avoid saying "zombie", and pretend they don't know anything about zombies. Zombies are always better if the characters in the story don't know what it is.

GAME MATERIAL

CHARACTERS

Nothing in these descriptions is holy! The players are free to change things as they wish. This is more a description of how they are perceived, than a picture of reality. They are deliberately archetypes, simplification and even racist. This should not be read as the authors view, but rather as a way to point to real life problems that do exist in everybody's everyday life, not only the American south!

FACE, THE COWBOY

A farmers son, never ever herded cows.
Listens to Country
Likes girls, boots, and looking good.

SMITH, THE GUN NUT

Just home from hunting. Drivin' big ol' truck with rebel flags.
Listens to Southern Rock
Likes huntin', beer, and freedom

BAMBI, THE GIRL NEXT DOOR

Looks even better than she thinks.
Smart, but hides it to fit in.
Listens to Country
Likes small clothes, boys, and being the center of attention

MAMA, THE SECRETLY SAD HOME BUILDER

Working the home, from mornin' 'til evenin'.
Listens to Southern Rock
Likes her family, Jesus, and drinking in secret.

RED, THE TRUCK DRIVER

Just passing through, the same place as he always pass through
Listens to Rebel Rock
Likes the local steakhouse, his cargo truck, freedom

REVEREND HEAT, THE RELIGIOUS NUT

Praising Jesus, and teaching Gods wrath upon us.
Listens to Gospel
Likes singin', prayin', and cursing all evil

POSH, THE BARTENDER

Too nice for this dump, 'though her background says otherwise.
Listens to Mainstream Soul
Likes brands, power, and sex.

RUNNING WIND, THE NATIVE AMERICAN

Descendant of the shaman, tries to live like everyone else.
Listens to Folk Music
Likes family, history, and freedom

JOHN DEER, THE FARMER

In town to buy manure. Practical and concrete.
Listens to Folk Music
Likes tractors, cows, and hating the government

ROCKY, THE REBEL

Listens to no-one, follows no-one.
Believed to be a shoplifter.
Listens to Rebel Country
Likes motorcycles, driving fast, and biker bars

SR., THE OIL MONEY

Looking for survival… and profit.
Listens to Country, but officially Classic Music
Likes money, power, and himself

MANSON, THE GOTH

Does not fit in.
Listens to Goth
Likes night, guns, and not being teased

LEX, ROCK 'N' ROLL POTHEAD

Stays in school, because she doesn't want a job.
Listens to Rock 'n' Roll
Likes music, pot, and skipping school.

TRACY, THE FUNNY BLACK

Can get a laugh out of anything, it's better than being disliked.
Listens to Hip-Hop
Likes sit-coms, hanging out, and to fit in

MARSHALL, THE SHERIFF

Knows what is wrong and right. This is his town after all!
Listens to the radio.
Likes slow days, bustin' bad guys and doughnuts.

ARMADILLO, THE PREPPER

Know something is happening, and is prepared for it.
Listens to podcasts
Likes canned food, IT-security and wants to own a bunker.

GAME MASTER MATERIAL

Althoug not necessary the game is meant to be played to music. The music needs to be in genres according to activity so that a change in activity can easily be changed in music background as well. There should preferably be the moaning of zombies in the background moving closer and closer.

PLAYLISTS

I play music (low volume) during scenes, and break scenes by changing song and raising the volume. I use Spotify, you may use whatever.

During scenes I play a mix of southern music. Between scenes I play *Johnny Cash – Ain't No Grave*, from the *American VI* album. I also got a special 'getaway music'-playlist for comedy driving scenes.

Here's links to my playlists. Beware, they may change:

- Main List:
  http://open.spotify.com/user/medpel/playlist/4u47B7urpeXELGhF10WCAc
- Getaway Music:
  http://open.spotify.com/user/medpel/playlist/4MSJjzyJkQnQnbJ1D6Ap81
- Between Scenes:
  http://open.spotify.com/user/medpel/playlist/1fVQx9nWquxLnvQpvq1J3G

EXAMPLES OF SCENES, YOU MAY USE THESE OR CHOSE YOURSELF

- Someone's home
- A bar
- The shopping mall
- In a car/truck/bus
- On the streets
- Atomic/tornado shelter
- Abandoned factory

ZOMBIES

Let players read the following page when they die. The page is repeated, as it might be useful to have a few copies in case there are several people that need to read.

ZOMBIES

You will from now on play the zombies. Zombies can be generic zombies, or they may be the zombified version of your previous character. This may alter between scenes. You are probably playing different zombies in different scenes.

Sit out the scene until you feel the zombies should attack. Try to coordinate with the game master, and the other zombie players. Play the zombie non-talking, maybe some words. Avoid 'braaaaiiiin', unless you are all deliberately playing in a comedy fashion.

- Zombies don't always attack! They only do this when they want to, or realize there is food nearby.
- Zombies are slow!
- If/when zombies attack, they can't kill. That happens between scenes as usual.
- The zombie does have personality, but usually no emotions (se below). Play your stereotype.
- Look at your remaining human values. These can temporarily awaken the old you, and maybe even some emotions, if someone talks or acts upon them. You are still a zombie though. To be a surprise, this should not happen in the beginning and then more often the later in the scenario it is.
- Talk to the other zombie players (if there are any), and decide together on the 'kind' of zombie you are playing. This may develop and change during play, a little bit every scene.

See yourselves as a form of game master, helping the players to get as good a scenario as possible, but make sure to have fun yourselves as well. The game master should give you as zombie player a lot of room for creative expression, you are part of shaping the. Run wild, but do it in collaboration with the game master and the other zombies! The best scenes often happen when the zombies are used in new and unusual ways. Do use this opportunity to "connect" with the living. That meeting between the undead version of your previous friend or loved one can make a lot for a scene.

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