GONE APE

A Non-Ape Apeworld for the *Terra Primate* RPG {Eden Studios, Inc.}

By TexasZombie

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WARNING: Some language and ideas herein may be offensive to some. Exercise personal responsibility and read at your own risk.

THE BEGINNING

A Visit to the Emergency Room

"Do you think it is safe?" Chandrajit asked.

"No." Roland seemed more terse and tense than usual. He gripped his shotgun so tightly his knuckles had turned white and his hands shook.

"You are right, my friend, but there is no choice. You and the others set fire to that row of houses and try to distract them. I will make a run for the hospital and try to find the necessary equipment and supplies. Perhaps I can also find a paramedic's kit."

"Here. Take these." Roland handed Doctor Chandrajit a handful of shotgun shells. "You'll need 'em."

"I-Alright. Thank you, Roland. Go quietly and be careful."

"*You* be careful, Doc. We need you."

Chandrajit took a deep breath and took one last quick glance across the parking lot from his position in the drainage ditch. There were five or six visible, all of them armed with clubs and spears, and all of them highly alert.

They've smelt us, he thought, *they know we're here*.

But there was nothing to do but wait, and then try to get inside before he was seen.

And pray there are no more waiting inside, the nagging voice of fear inside his head reminded him.

But Roland's wife was in labor, and she was developing complications.

I cannot let her die.

I cannot.

Moments later the group in the parking lot spun and, silently, without a word, turned toward the cloud of smoke. They ran silently, gracefully.

Like animals. Like beasts. No! They are…were…human…once.

Chandrajit carefully loaded his own shotgun, took a last deep breath, and ran for the hospital doors. The last thing he truly expected was to suddenly see a spear protruding from his ribs. Animal howls erupted from inside the hospital as Chandrajit sank slowly to his knees, unable even to raise his weapon.

The filthy, ragged mob surged outside and toward him without breaking stride. There was no hesitation. No fear.

I hope that they will kill me before they butcher me, Chandrajit thought. His blood made his shotgun hard to hold, but he managed to get it turned around.

Barrel in mouth…finger on trigger. Round already chambered…safety off…hurry…first one only yards away…I am so sorry Roland…sorry Becky…

The shotgun functioned flawlessly. It was Chandrajit's lucky day.

ARCHETYPES

Any Pre-Heroic or Heroic Archetypes are suitable for use in this Apeworld, but must be modified in the following manner: All Cast Members must have a Willpower score of at least 4 (see below). Use of Powered or other supra-human characters or intelligent apes is not recommended.

THE CHANGE

It started simply enough. One day tempers began to fray, responsibility began to vanish, and people began to Change.

A wave of madness, of no determinate cause or point of origin, had spread around the world, affecting 90% of the population. People seemed to simply forget who they were, what they did, and in many cases, did not seem to be "human" any longer.

There was nothing to be done – doctors, politicians, soldiers and criminals were equally affected. Overnight civilization and 10,000 years of technological achievement were simply forgotten. No theories were advanced. No treatments were attempted. Anyone who hadn't Changed simply tried to survive.

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

This Apeworld is probably best utilized as a "Oh my god, what just happened" setting. This means the action will start on or about Change Day. The search for other survivors will be epic adventure in and of itself, but more campaign ideas are listed at the end of this Apeworld.

Some people have an innately high Willpower. They are not always the people one might except. Lawyers, doctors, submariners and astronauts? Of course! What about criminal recidivists who have never been "broken" by the penal system? What about the insane who are unshakable in their beliefs? Religious zealots? Revolutionaries? Idealists? Trained soldiers and missile crews? Emergency rescue crews? Mountain climbers and other extreme athletes? Exceptionally unruly "problem" children? Autistic savants?

Any combination of Cast Members and Extras could find themselves struggling side by side to survive. This presents a great opportunity for creative role-playing and sounds like the start of a joke: *"An astronaut, a death row inmate, and an evangelical minister walk into a bar…"*

As for the Changed, after the first winter their numbers will start to decline. Some will survive. As for what happens next, who knows? Maybe they'll start to "remember" new things…

THE CHANGED

When the Change occurred, anyone with a Willpower rating of less than 4 was affected in some way. The lower one's Willpower, the more drastic the Change. A person dropped to one of these levels can progress to the next lowest level if, for example, something causes their Willpower to drop further.

There are several levels of Changed in this Apeworld. These are presented below as Quality/Drawback Packages with notes on game play. Where applicable, these Quality/Drawbacks are cumulative. An Extra (or unlucky Cast Member) who becomes Changed looses any skills not in the Allowable Skills category, and must "relearn"

allowable skills from other Changed. This can result in savages who are unable to hunt or barbarians that aren't able to effectively fight.

They must evolve or die.

The Changed are all natural warriors and hunters. Given sufficient resources, they'll manage to support viable populations after a massive die-off from famine and disease. In rural areas they may attack "normals" but will prefer to hunt non-human prey. In urban areas, on the other hand, where the only food to be found is other humans, both "normals" and Changed, the Changed adopt cannibalism.

Barbarian
(Willpower 3) – 0-Point Quality/Drawback

Drawbacks: Aggressive, Atavism, Low Intellect, Cruel (2), Weird Delusions (Destroy Technology) 3, Obsession – Destroy Technology (2)

Qualities: 12 points of "Allowable" skills representing "innate" abilities.

Allowable Skills: Acrobatics, Brawling, Cheating, Climbing, Craft (Simple*), Dancing (War Dances and Celebrations), Dodge, Escapism, Haggling, Hand Weapon (primitive weapons only), Intimidation, Myth and Legend (incomprehensible to outsiders), Notice, Rituals (of their tribe), Running (both types), Seduction, Singing, Sleight of Hand, Stealth, Storytelling, Surveillance, Survival, Swimming, Throwing (primitive weapons only), Tracking, Traps, Unconventional Medicine, Weight Lifting

*Examples: Improvise Armor, Improvise Weapons, Improvise Clothing, Improvise Shelter, Flint Knapping, etc.

Notes: Barbarians still understand the concept of machines, but they seem unable to effectively utilize anything more complicated than bows and arrows or the ability to scavenge for potential weapons and tools. A group of Barbarians resembles an Iron Age mob, with improvised padded armor and crudely fashioned metal weapons. They have no knowledge of livestock or agriculture, and their minds seem obsessed with holding territory, destroying advanced machinery, and unrelenting aggression against others, including non-Barbarians.

Barbarians may remember part of their name, but most have taken new names based on their new lifestyle, such as "Skull Breaker" or "Runs Fast". They are able to improvise simple machines, but seem unable to resist the ability to destroy anything more complicated than a bow or a simple lever.

Savage
(Willpower 2) – 0-Point Quality/Drawback

Drawbacks: Aggressive, Atavism, Impaired Speech, Low Intellect, Cruel (2), Weird Delusions (Destroy Technology) 3, Obsession – Destroy Technology (2)

Qualities/Skills: +1 Dexterity, Acute Sense (Smell), Resistance (Cold) 2, Skill: Survival (Local Area) 2, Skill: Weight Lifting 3 (Specialty: Break Things) 5, 2 more skill levels from Allowable Skills

Allowable Skills: Acrobatics, Brawling, Climbing, Craft (Simple**), Dancing (War Dances and Celebrations), Dodge, Escapism, Hand Weapon (primitive weapons only), Intimidation, Notice, Rituals (of their tribe), Running (both types), Stealth, Surveillance, Survival, Swimming, Throwing (primitive weapons only), Tracking, Weight Lifting

**Examples: Improvise Armor, Improvise Clothing, Make War Club, Make Spear, etc.

Notes: This individual has reverted to abilities that resemble those of a primitive form of human. They retain some ability to communicate but are unable to use words that pertain to abstract ideas (such as emotions) or technology (machines have become objects to be destroyed). These individuals will utilize simple tools such as clubs and other improvised weapons, and any sort of physical (i.e. human powered) hand weapon (knives, machetes, axes, swords).

Animal
(Willpower 0-1) – 0-Point Quality/Drawback

Drawbacks: Aggressive, Atavism, Animal Communication, Animal Intellect, Carnivore, Cruel (2)

Qualities/Skills: +2 Dexterity, +2 Constitution, Acute Senses (Smell), Situational Awareness, Skill – Notice 3, Skill - Stealth 3, Skill – Tracking 2, Survival (Local Area) 3

Allowable Skills: Brawling, Climbing, Dodge, Escapism, Hand Weapon (primitive weapons only), Intimidation, Notice, Running (both types), Stealth, Surveillance, Survival, Swimming, Throwing (primitive weapons only), Tracking, Weight Lifting

Notes: No longer human, this individual has become a highly aggressive bipedal primate that may resemble a modern human only after being caught out in a heavy rain. In behavior and activities, these individuals are no different than other non-human predators with the exception that they will kill and injure for sheer pleasure.

These Changed do not seek to destroy machines. They no longer seem aware of technological items unless the devices make a loud noise, in which case the Animal will probably flee.

Random Encounters

When necessary, use the following tables to generate random encounters with animals, "normal" people, and Changed.

I. Basic Encounters: Roll 2d6. Subtract 2 if encounter is in rural area; add 2 if encounter is in urban area.

Roll - Encounter

0-5 Animals (Go to II)
6 People (Go to III)
7 Changed (Go to IV)
8 None
9-13 Changed (Go to IV)
14 Animals (Go to II)

II - Animals: Roll 2d6. Subtract 2 if encounter is in rural area; add 2 if encounter is in urban area.

2-7 Domestic (harmless) - example: sheep, cows, horses, chickens, tame pigs
8 Domestic (dangerous) - example: dogs, feral pigs
9-11 Feral (harmless) - example: reindeer, rabbits, quail, wild turkey, ducks
12 Feral (dangerous) - example: rattlesnakes, coyotes, bears, alligator, wild dogs
13 Exotic (harmless) - example: escaped zoo antelope, llamas, emus
14 Exotic (dangerous) - example: escaped zoo animals: lion pride, tiger, hyena mob, rhinoceros

III - People: Roll 2d6. Subtract 2 if encounter is in rural area; add 2 if encounter is in urban area. Roll another 2D6 to determine the Attitude of the "normal" people encountered..

> **Attitude:** Roll 2d6. Subtract 2 from rolls made in "good" situations (such as dealing with nonviolent people). Add 2 in "desperate" situations (such as dealing with violent people).
> **Roll – Attitude.**
> 0-3 Helpful (will assist to one degree or another, even if it's simply by not attacking)
> 4-7 Neutral (probably won't help, but not likely to attack, would like to ignore Cast Members)
> 8-11 Hostile (might attack if situation is favorable, if opportunity presents itself, or if tensions rise)
> 12-14 Violent (will attack)

Table IV Changed: Roll 2d6.
2-5 = "Animal"*
6-11 = "Savage"*
12 = Barbarian** (1D6X10 Barbarians)

> ***Numbers**
> 2 Encounter 1d6 Changed
> 3-5 Encounter 1d6 X1d6 Changed
> 6-9 Encounter 1d6 X 10 Changed
> 10-11 Encounter 1d100 Changed
> 12 Encounter 1d100 X 10 Changed

Alternative Version, or "Hey! Where'd All Those Cavemen Come From?"

In formerly high-population urban areas, for every fifteen minutes the Cast Members are exposed and moving openly or engaged in noisy physical activity (boarding up windows, for example), there is an 80% chance that 1d6X10 Changed will be attracted to the movement and sounds. Once Changed are attracted, every fifteen minutes there is a 50% chance that another 1d6X10 Changed will arrive on the scene.

In suburban areas, for every fifteen minutes the Cast Members are exposed and moving openly, there is a 70% chance that 1d3X5 Changed will be attracted to the movement and sounds. Once Changed are attracted, every fifteen minutes another 2d6 Changed will be attracted.

In populated rural areas, for every hour the Cast Members are exposed and moving openly, there is a 10% chance of attracting 1d6 Changed. After the first Changed are attracted, there is a 10% chance every fifteen minutes of attracting 1d3 more Changed.

In unpopulated rural areas, there aren't that many Changed around. There is a base 1% chance per day of attracting one or more Changed. In a national park, it is more possible there could be dead folks about than out in the desert fifty miles from the nearest road and sixty miles from the nearest town.

Obviously, it pays to be quiet and stay out of sight as much as possible. If the Cast Members are taking efforts to move silently, under available cover, use padded hammers, operating at night, etc. the chances above are cut by ¼ to ½.

Other files and AFMBE Deadworlds on this website have more extensive random encounter tables, along with charts for vehicles, buildings, searching/scrounging, and expanded firearms tables. With a little tweaking these would also be suitable for this Apeworld.

CAMPAIGNS

There are several basic types of campaigns that can be developed for this Apeworld. The first step is answering the following questions.

1. Is the Change reversible?

   Can afflicted individuals be treated (assuming a treatment can be developed) or is the Change permanent?

   Is the Change truly worldwide or does it just seem that way? Perhaps the Change only affects people in densely populated areas. Can Changed be cured by being removed from other Changed?

2. Does the Change affect infants and very young children?

   In a very grim version of this Apeworld, newborns would never develop enough Willpower to resist the Change and would develop into Animal Changed every time. This means the extinction of the "human" race will occur in one generation if a treatment or other solution is not found.

   Note that newborn infants and very young children might not be noticeably different from pre-Change children. Until one of them gets old enough to hold things and finds a weapon…

3. What caused the Change?

    Is the Change natural or deliberate?

    Is the Change a result of an overpowering denial of technological advancement and a desire to return to the forests, or is it the result of a weapon or experiment gone awry?

    One suggestion is to make the Change the result of an alien artifact that has moved into low Earth orbit. "Normal" Cast Members and Extras would perhaps notice that a much smaller "moon" has appeared. Such a scenario might eventually evolve into an attempt to find enough people with the right stuff to retake a NASA or other space launch center, refurbish a spacecraft, then hurl themselves into orbit to destroy or disable it. This could take years of campaign time, as simply finding, defending, and training enough skilled workers would be its own series of adventures.

    The big question then would be…will destroying the object stop its effects, or is the Change permanent?

    How might whoever or whatever created this device respond? It might be a "mercy killing " of sorts to prevent the spread of human beings into space. It might be part of some alien belief system that seeks to return things (including humans) to their native state before finally destroying their own intelligence.

    Or is the artifact intelligent? Or inhabited? What if the launch facility finds itself surrounded by an ever-growing siege army of the Changed?

4. If a safe location can be found, can enough "normal" survivors be located to maintain a technological society? Should anyone even bother?

    Missions into Changed areas looking for "normals" would be a campaign in and of itself, with the search for a solution to the problem being a background issue. This is a good setting for action-oriented gaming groups.

    Is it possible to somehow "infiltrate" the Changed to discover more about them?

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None of my work is their fault. They're nice folks.