



MC
PLAYBOOK
(ALPHA 6.14.2012)

THE AFTERBORN
YOUNG ADULTS IN APOCALYPSE WORLD

YOU CARRY THE BURDEN OF THE FUTURE

Apocalypse World is no place to raise children. Sometimes, though, a hardholder or scavenger brood makes a pact—with the blasted heath, with the poisoned ground, with the Psychic Maelstrom itself—and the pact is this: OBEY THE LAW AND YOU WILL SURVIVE.

And so a haven is created amidst all the want and suffering, a hardhold of sorts but something more, something almost civilized. Children are born and raised within its limits, taught to fear the world beyond and to obey the law, taught the means of survival. Generations go by, and yet the people remain.

But humanity is curious and heedless; they do not obey the law but break it—in part or in full—every day. And thus every day the broken world chips away at this mote of security and stability, awaiting the moment when it will be consumed in desperation and darkness.

The ones known as the Angel, the Battlebabe, and so on... maybe they were born and raised in a place such as this, a place long ago and far away, a place without the constant fear of death and want, a place long since consumed. If so, these are the stories they tell no one, the stories of what they used to be before the broken world made them hard, cool, hot, and weird, the stories of growing up.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: THANKS FOR THESE DARK DREAMS

- *The White Mountains* (1967) by John Christopher
- *Clay's Ark* (1984) by Octavia E. Butler
- *Invitation to the Game* (1990) by Monica Hughes
- *The Giver* (1993) by Lowis Lowry
- *Reign of Fire* (2002), directed by Rob Bowman
- *City of Ember* (2003) by Jeanne DuPrau
- *The Village* (2004), directed by M. Night Shyamalan
- *The Hunger Games* (2008) by Suzanne Collins
- *The Forest of Hands and Teeth* (2009) by Carrie Ryan
- *The Passage* (2010), parts III-VI, by Justin Cronin
- *After the Apocalypse* (2011) by Maureen McHugh
- “The Villager” for *Dungeon World* (2012) by Jason Morningstar

THE LAW: WRITING PRECEPTS

Roughly determining the nature of the apocalypse and begin sketching out a map of your community and the surrounding region. Make sure the map includes practical reasons to leave the safety of the community (food, fuel, supplies, repairing barriers, searching for something, etc).

As you are sketching the map, work together as a group to brainstorm the possible contents of the Triune Law, but the MC has the ultimate authority to determine what it is, since the characters have little say in choosing to live under it. Remember that the law was written, in theory, to allow the community to survive (not individual people, necessarily).

The Triune Law is composed of three precepts. Write the precepts to be short, punchy, and memorable, since you will probably end up memorizing them. Below is an outline of a typical assortment of precepts (power, sex, and security), with defaults if this is your first time playing or you want to ensure a solid mixture.

- one precepts about hierarchy, authority, or class (*default: a precept that gives different rights to children and adults*)
- one precept about love, sex, marriage, procreation, and the care of the young (*default: a precept about who can procreate with whom*)
- one precepts about something you absolutely cannot do, no matter the situation (*default: a precept that enforces the community's separation from the broken world beyond*)

Before play begins, the MC should decide—on their own, or with the other players—how the law is currently being broken. For this, use the “Town Creation” guidelines in *Dogs in the Vineyard* (replacing demons with the broken world) and increase “pride” until the community feels at serious risk but not in danger of imminent collapse (yet).

[Eventually this section will be fleshed out with simple guidelines that won't make you think about things in *Dogs* terms.]

BREAKING THE LAW AND THOUGHTCRIME

When characters (including NPCs) break the law, the MC makes a move* as established. This can be any move, but the following are suggested as often being appropriate:

- *demonstrate the practical reasons why the law should be followed* (i.e. violate the security of the community)
- *demonstrate the social fallout from breaking the law* (i.e. people freak out, someone must be punished)
- *threaten badness* (i.e. work towards violating the security of the community at some future date)
- *demonstrate the possible consequences and ask* (i.e. “okay, so XYZ look like they’re going to happen soon; what do you do?”)

When characters (including NPCs) discuss breaking the law or make preparations to do so, the MC makes a move* as established. This can be any move, but the following are suggested as often being appropriate:

- *someone can’t stop thinking about it*
- *someone finds out about it, in part or in full*
- *someone is thinking the same thing, seperately or independently, and is making their own plans*
- *someone suspects (without proof) that you’re up to something*
- *someone decides to take matters into their own hands*
- *someone takes measures to prevent just such a violation of the law*

Note that when the MC has NPCs break the law, it should—as always—clearly follow from what’s already been established in the fiction. This doesn’t always mean that the PCs have a fair chance to stop the violation (Apocalypse World isn’t a fair place), but the MC shouldn’t arbitrarily screw everything up. Things going to hell isn’t all that interesting; what’s interesting is what desparate things the characters decide to do about it. When in doubt, *threaten badness*, or *demonstrate the possible consequences and ask* (“you know person Y is plotting sedition, right?”).

*This hack assumes a distinction between “hard” and “regular” moves close to what John Harper describes here—<http://mightyatom.blogspot.com/2011/05/apocalypse-world-guide-to-hard-moves.html>—and lawbreaking MC moves are generally harder than thoughtcrime moves.

CHANGING THE LAW AND MARTIAL LAW

Sometimes the law is changed in a way that is fair and just, renewing the survival pact the community originally made with Apocalypse World. If so, terrific. More often, however, the community will arbitrarily change specific precepts based on short-term needs without consulting the world beyond. In the latter case (including declarations of “martial law” and the like), Apocalypse World does not recognise that the law has changed and continues to operate according to the original pact and its precepts. If people following the “new law” violate the original pact, Apocalypse World is happy to demonstrate the errors of their ways.

CREATING FRONTS AND THREATS

There are only two fronts in this hack: the *homefront* (the community itself and all its problems) and the *frontline* (the broken world, which inevitable seeks to violate the security of your community). Some threats *cross the boundary* between these two fronts (for example, if people from your community are consorting with outsiders), but all threats are understood in relation to them.

Before play begins, the MC should take the details about the apocalypse, the community, and the broken world that have been determined by the group and use them to generate three threats: one for the *homefront* (based on the nature of the community), one for the *frontline* (based on the most immediate threat in the broken world around them), and one that *crosses the boundary* between them (based on the most prominent way in which the law is currently being broken OR a desparate need the community has, a need that requires something from outside).

These are the only threats necessary for playing the first session, and the MC should pick their front types and draw on their front moves as normal (is the community a *cult* or a *family*? are they plagued by an *alpha wolf* or a *breeding pit*?).

Between sessions, the MC is free to come up with additional threats to match those that have been revealed in the fiction, assigning them to one or both of the fronts. There are never any other fronts in this hack, even if new sets of interests appear, but once the *homefront* has utterly collapsed or more than half of the players have chosen new playbooks, you should switch to the standard rules for playing *Apocalypse World*.

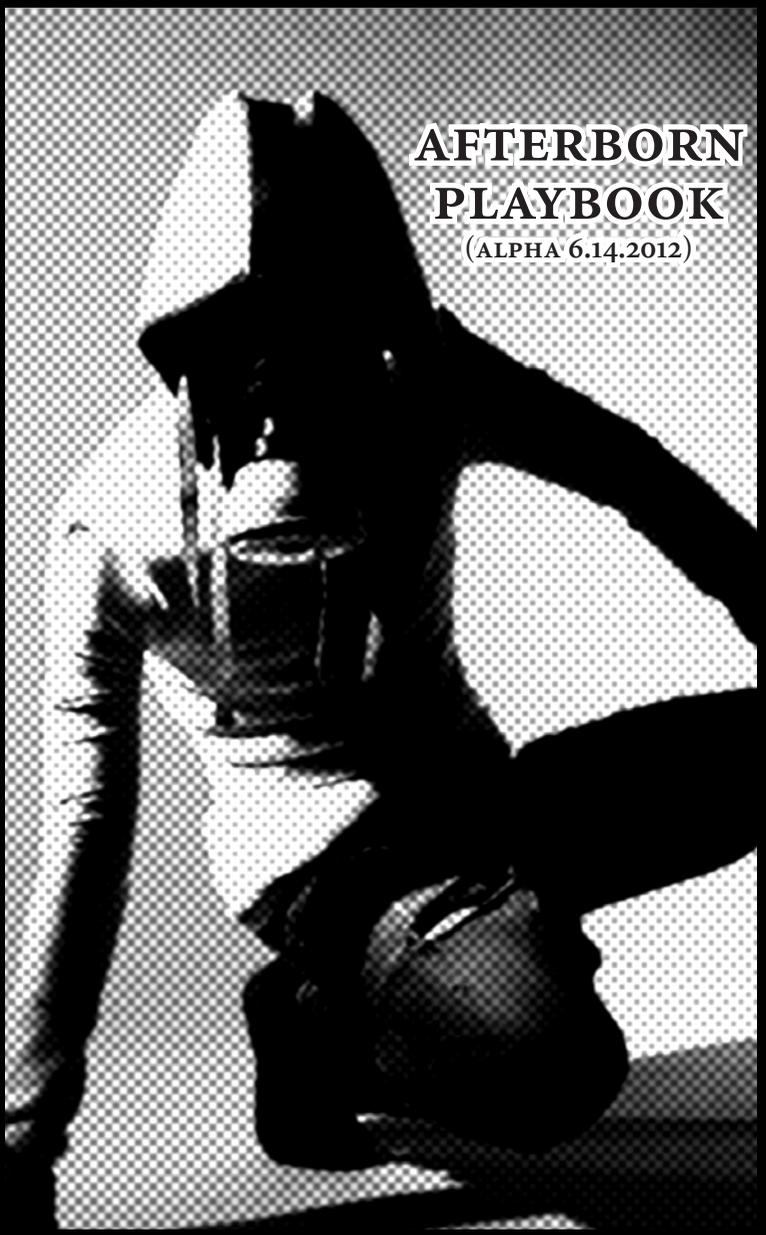
NEED THESE PRECEPTS FOR THEY ARE THE LAW

1.

2.

3.

The MC may find it useful to note significant violations and violators of the Triune Law on this sheet, next to the precepts.



AFTERBORN PLAYBOOK

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ADVANCED MOVES FOR YOUTH

- When you read a person
- When you go aggro
- When you seize by force
- When you act under fire
- When you seduce or manipulate
- When you open your brain
- When you suffer harm

[Eventually these moves will be listed here.]

CREATING AN AFTERBORN

NAME

Parker, Darla, Chet, Chance, Wayne, Ervin, Raquel, Mist, Lane, Bristol, Buck, Nevaeh, Carlisle, Micah, Axl, June, Maitreya, Michelin, Fergus, Cody, Price, Jo Dee, Sloan, Merle, Kit, Artie, Elmore, Atticus, Fable, Panther, Lawrence, Faith, Tiawanna, Vince, Cricket, Grey, Kyla, Trish, Mace, Kin, Paige, Ziggy, Keesha

LOOK

Girl, boy, ambiguous, transgressing, or concealed

Utility wear, scrounge wear, vintage wear, combat wear, homemade wear, mismatched wear, or tattered wear

Kind face, strong face, rugged face, pretty face, lively face, striking face, scarred face, determined face, dirty face, smooth face, or honest face

Quick eyes, kind eyes, bright eyes, laughing eyes, clear eyes, burning eyes, deep eyes, cool eyes, wise eyes, sad eyes, commanding eyes, guarded eyes, dark eyes, or appraising eyes

Compact body, sturdy body, sweet body, slim body, muscular body, wiry body, slight body, angular body, tall body, pudgy body, massive body, stumpy body, big body, graceful body, fit body, or undeveloped body

STATS

Youth are taught to be sharp and strong. Choose one set:

- sharp+1, strong+1
- sharp+1, strong+2
- sharp+1, strong+0
- sharp+2, strong+0
- sharp+2, strong+1

STATUS

marked, abandoned, adopted, tragic, confused, disturbed, rejected, lackey, chosen, last chance, nobody, young, dangerous, gifted, dabbler, firstborn, favoured, awoken

HX

Say if you are open (give everyone Hx+1 with you to start) or private. Then each player chooses 2 or 3.

- someone is a friend (take +1 Hx)
- someone knows a thing about you (give +1 Hx)
- you want someone (give +1 Hx)
- someone wants to save you from a real danger (take +1 Hx)
- you watched someone while they slept (take +1 Hx)
- someone watched you do it or saw it happen to you (give +2 Hx and take +1 Hx)
- you owe someone (give +1 Hx)
- someone is a threat (take +1 Hx)
- you are keeping a careful eye on someone (take +1 Hx)

GEAR

You start with the gear that makes sense for your current status in the community, but track it carefully.

THE BASIC MOVES FOR YOUTH

When you suffer physical or emotional distress, say how it feels, mark XP, and roll+strong. On a 10+, you suck it up. On a 7-9, you manage to persevere, but pick one:

- you won't be able to stop thinking about it
- you make an impulsive fight-or-flight response (say how)
- it's even worse than you thought

On a failure, you are in shock and need comfort or it'll get worse. The MC picks one or more from the above or makes a move.

When you invoke status, a relationship, or the law against someone, the other player marks XP if they fulfill their social obligations. If they—in full knowledge and despite fair warning—defy those customs, then *the pressure's on and it falls to them to do a thing*.

When the pressure's on and it falls to you to do a thing, say what you are aspiring to be (hard, cool, hot, or weird) and roll+zero. On a 10+, you do it, and describe one of the following:

- you learn something about yourself
- you impress, dismay, or frighten them
- its irrevocable and changes things permanently

On a 7-9, you do it, but the MC describes one of the above.

When you read a charged situation, roll+sharp. On a hit, you can ask the MC questions. Whenever you act on one of the MC's answers, take +1. On a 10+, ask 3. On a 7-9, ask 1:

- where's my best escape route / way in / way past?
- how are they most vulnerable to me?
- which of them is the biggest threat?
- what should I be on the lookout for?
- who's in control here?

When you help or interfere with someone, roll+Hx. On a hit, they take +1 or -2 now. On a 7-9, you also expose yourself to danger or cost.

When your physical affections are accepted or returned, roll+0 and then use the sex move of the resulting playbook: 2-Angel, 3-Battlebabe, 4-Brainer, 5-Chopper, 6-Driver, 7-Gunlugger, 8-Hardholder, 9-Hocus, 10-Operator, 11-Savvyhead, 12-Skinner. That shit is confusing.

NAME	
STATUS	
SHARP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read a charged situation • read a person*
STRONG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suffer emotional distress
HARD*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • go aggro* • seize by force*
COOL*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • act under fire*
HOT*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seduce or manipulate*
WEIRD*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • open your brain*

* YOU DON'T BEGIN PLAY WITH ANY STATS OR MOVES MARKED WITH AN ASTERISK

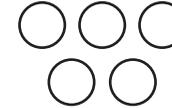
ADVANCES

- Get +1 Sharp or +1 Strong (up to +3, can be take multiple times).
- Take a **move from another playbook**, as long as you have the required stats and moves (can be taken multiple times).
 - Get **read a person**
 - Get Hard+1 and **go aggro**
 - If you already have **go aggro**, get +1 Hard and **seize by force**
 - Get Cool+1 and **act under fire**
 - Get Hot+1 and **seduce or manipulate**
 - Get Weird+1 and **open your brain**
 - Get **suffer harm** and a countdown clock
 - If you've marked 5 improvements, you may change your character to a new type (see p. 184) and now must use the adult basic moves
- Once your community has utterly collapsed or more than half of the players have chosen new playbooks, the group should switch to using the standard rules for playing *Apocalypse World*.

UNSPENT ADVANCES



XP



mark XP when:

- you suffer distress
- you succumb to status, a relationship, or the law
- you reset Hx

LOOK:

Hx:

MOVES FROM OTHER PLAYBOOKS:

BARTER AND GEAR: