Powered by

The Apocalypse Will be Televised

A Fan Made Dungeon Crawler Carl PBTA TTRPG

cobbled together by Joshua Savoie and Will Patterson

ALL MATT'S RIGHTS ARE BELONG TO MATT

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What the fuck is this?

This is an unofficial Dungeon Crawler Carl tabletop roleplaying game based on Meguey and Vincent Baker's Powered By The Apocalypse system. You are a Crawler. Your dumb ass just entered my world dungeon with a few friends. You are so dead.

This ain't your dad's tabletop role playing game. This is Daddy's tabletop role playing game. If you don't know what role playing is, go ask your mom.

It's not hard. We are going to sit down and have a nice little conversation. A little back and forth among friends. A conversation to find out how you die.

> I tell you how you're fucked.
>
> You describe what you do about it.
>
> You throw some dice to find out what happens.
>
> I tell you how you're fucked.
>
> You describe what you do about it …

You get it yet? Look, I'll help you out here. If you need to start talking, I'll let you know by asking "What do you do?" Oh, and don't give me any bullshit like "I attack the goblin." Yeah, no shit you attack the goblin. Don't make me ask you "What do the Viewers see?"

Dungeon Crawler World: Earth

This is the part where I'm supposed to describe our setting. Fuck that. If you've read the series, you know what we're doing. You didn't think you were just going to come into this thing blind, did you?

Actually, let me talk a little, not because you need it, but just because I like explaining just how *Fucked* you all are.

Your planet was selected for this season of Dungeon Crawler World long before any of you apes were born. The Borant Corporation has the rights to everything, but intergalactic law requires that the mudskippers give you one chance to save your worthless planet. An 18 floor world dungeon. *My* 18 floor world dungeon. Descend into my depths and kill your way to the 18th floor. Kill the final boss and you win your planet back. Easy! Fun fact, nobody has *ever* survived past the 13th floor.

Good luck!

Fuck Around, then Find Out

We're not going to be wasting everyone's time planning out this story like we're Sensation Entertainment or something. We don't do that here.

The big man writes to find out what happens. We play to find out what happens. We won't be plotting out some dramatic arc for you. You're mine baby, and you better exist in the moment, because it'll probably be your last.

Spotlight

We don't do turn order. You'll know it's your turn when I tell you how fucked you are, and ask you what you do. So put the phone down and pay attention, you never know when you'll be in the spotlight.

What you Need to Survive

A couple of six sided dice, some character sheets, this book, and a flair for the dramatic. Oh, and me. One of you is going to be my Pater Coal, my avatar. Don't fuck this up.

Da Tutorial Guild

Welcome Crawlers

This is the part where I talk about you, you special simian snowflake. Every crawler only has six things that matter. Your stats, your moves, your health, your mana, your loot, and your views. Oh, and your tragic backstory. Seven things. We'll overview this quickly before we get into crawler creation, and explain in more detail in later sections.

Your Stats

This wouldn't be a LitRPG if I didn't obsessively track your stats. You've got five stats:

- Strength (STR)
- Dexterity (DEX)
- Intelligence (INT)
- Constitution (CON)
- Charisma (CHA)

Each stat can range from 1 to a fuck ton, but we're not going to worry about your raw scores. The only thing that matters is how you compare to the bad llama that is about to melt your face off. Your stats are measured against your current floor, as follows:

- Way ahead of the curve: +3
- Ahead of the curve: +2
- On target: +1
- Falling behind: +0
- Get to grinding: -1

Every time you descend to the next floor, you will be facing stronger adversaries, so your relative stats will decrease. If you want to keep up, you better keep grinding.

Your Moves

Let's geek out here for a minute. Often, our conversation will just go back and forth naturally, doing what feels right. You'll tell us what your character yells at some poor Bopca. I'll tell you how they cower in fear. You'll try to kill him. I'll tell you that only naughty little piggies try to kill within safe rooms. You get the idea.

But we all have our limitations. Sometimes, I don't know what's going to happen next. In those cases, we throw some fucking dice to find out what happens. This is where your Crawler Moves come in.

Crawler Moves are when-then statements that place narrative limitations on my ability to fuck with you. Each Crawler Move has a trigger condition. If the story we are telling

triggers a move, then we use the move to see what happens next. And you can't just say "I want to kill, kill, kill." You gotta tell us what your Crawler *does*, what the Viewers *see* and *hear*. In the words of the immortal Vince Baker, "To do it, do it."

Your moves are listed in the character sheet, but I describe each one in more detail here.

Your Health

You are going to get fucked up. You are going to get Hurt. And when you do, you lose health. You have a Health Clock depending on the difficulty level that your table has selected. On your character sheet, select either "Bitchmeat!" or "Death Watch!" to set your starting health. Every time you get Hurt you mark one or more of those segments.

You can clear segments with healing spells and potions, of course. You also heal over time. After defeating a Boss you'll heal based on your CON. Some Loot might make this faster. Oh, and resting in a safe room fully restores your health.

If you ever have to mark a segment and you can't, then you get a condition, a lasting impairment. Then you clear 2 segments of your health clock.

Each condition will make you more likely to fuck up in the future, creating a beautiful little death spiral. You better clear these conditions quickly, because if you have all five conditions, you might Break.

Here are the conditions listed in a completely random order with no significance at all.

- Despondent - You make STR rolls with -1
- Outraged - You make INT rolls with -1
- Nervous - You make CHA rolls with -1
- Unbalanced - You make DEX rolls with -1
- Terrified - You make CON rolls with -1

Your Mana

Alongside your Health Clock, you also have a Mana Clock. It has at least 3 segments, possibly 4 if your INT is high enough. Spells will have the tag *mana X*, where X is a number between 1 and 4. When you use a spell, mark X segments on your Mana Clock. If you can't mark the segments you can't cast the spell.

You can clear segments with mana potions. You also recover mana over time. After defeating a Boss you'll recover mana based on your INT. Some Loot might make this faster, and resting in a safe room fully restores your mana.

Your Loot

I see you brought some gear with you. Good for you. I know a guy who came in with nothing but a cat. No shoes, no pants. Nothing. So at least you're not in last place.

Don't worry, I am going to reward you. You read the series, you know the deal: there's six tiers of Loot Boxes: bronze, silver, gold, platinum, legendary, and celestial. These loot boxes contain upgrades for your gear. Impress me and impress the viewers and you'll get the upgrades you need to survive.

Most of your Loot will change how the crawler moves function. A shotgun might tweak the Kill, Kill, Kill move to target everything in front of you. The Dodge upgrade might make you that much better when you Do Something Stupid. Other upgrades will have spells, passive effects, or other unique effects. Much more on this later.

Your Views

Did I mention that a galaxy full of assholes is watching every move you make? The kind of assholes that just love violence and melodrama? Entertain the unwashed masses and you'll earn better Loot. Bore them, and you'll die forgotten.

When you do something particularly entertaining, you'll gain Style. Gain enough Style and you'll earn Fan Boxes. Usually, I decide what's in your Loot Boxes. Fan Boxes are special: your fellow players get to decide what you receive.

Your Tragic Backstory

You left someone behind when you entered my dungeon. Boo hoo, that doesn't make you special. Everyone left someone behind. But the viewers love a good sob story, so make sure to fill out this part of your character sheet. I heard somewhere that blood is so much more red when spilled from someone you love. But nothing you put down here will ever come back to haunt you. Promise.

More on Moves

I mentioned before that most of the time, we'll all just be sitting around having a nice little chat about life and death. But often, you'll try something so stupid that even I don't know what will happen. This keeps things spicy. When this happens, we turn to your crawler moves to guide our story forward. You roll some dice. You roll well, and you get what you want. Roll poorly, you get what I want.

Crawler moves generally have four parts. The **trigger** is a "when" statement that tells you when to use the move. The **Roll+STAT** clause tells you what to roll. The **result** tells you what might happen depending on your roll. Some of the moves also have a **menu** of choices that will help us find out what happens next. Your Loot may add, remove, or modify choices, tailoring the outcome based on the items you bring to bear.

Some Loot may give you the option to **Block** a choice on the menu. If you block a choice, then I can't pick it.

One more thing about rolling. Sometimes you'll roll with **Favor**. Sometimes you'll roll with **Disfavor**. It just depends on how I'm feeling about you at the moment. My favorite gets to cheat a little bit. If you have **Favor**, you'll roll 3d6 and keep the best two dice. But what I give, I can take away. If you have **Disfavor**, you'll roll 3d6 and lose the best die. If you somehow have both Favor and Disfavor, they cancel out.

Crawler Moves

A lot of humans are going to die in this dungeon, and that's great. But it also means that you are going to be dealing with a lot of dangerous shit. There are a few core moves that are going to come up a lot as you face danger, or dish out some of your own.

Do Something Stupid

Humans absolutely love to do stupid things. The depth and variety of human stupidity is truly one of the wonders of the universe. Instead of sitting in a safe room embracing the inevitable, you're out there in my dungeon charging through arrows, sneaking past plant monsters, negotiating with goblins, and generally dealing with a whole bunch of shit that could kill you.

This is your catch-all move. If a more specific move might be triggered by the fiction, use that one. Otherwise, use this move whenever you try to do something that could go absolutely, bite-the-pillow, fucked. Something that makes me say "Sounds like you're doing something stupid." If it feels like you should be throwing dice, but none of the other moves seem to apply, then you are probably doing something stupid

This move has a list of choices that will be made by you if you roll well, and by me if you don't. These are going to come up a lot, so it is worth digging into each choice. When you roll well, this is a bonus that you get in addition to your goal that triggered the move in the first place. When you roll in the 7-9 range, you still get what you want. Even I can't change that. But I do get to make my own choice as a nice little consolation prize.

* You create an opportunity for your allies

<u>Crawlers:</u> Generally, enemy monsters will react to every move, bearing down on you pitiful humans until you're dead. Which is great! But if you choose this option, you can get a bit of breathing room. Maybe your dagger wielding little buddy can get in close to the lady troll without having to roll Do Something Stupid. Maybe your idiot caster can escape a chokehold. But we all have our limitations. This isn't going to give your bomb bard a chance to blow up a bunch of goblin babies without a roll of some kind.

<u>The AI:</u> This is an excuse to ramp up the difficulty. Suddenly, one of the Crawlers is in immediate threat of danger and they'll probably have to roll Do Something Stupid to avoid it.

* Shift control of something important

<u>Crawlers:</u> Technically, you don't get to decide exactly what you're shifting control of, but feel free to let me know what you're hoping for. I might even give you what you want. This can be something as concrete as a goblin's sword, or as abstract as control over a part of the battlefield.

<u>The AI:</u> If you make this choice, you get the Thing. When I make this choice, I can get it back.

* Add a useful detail to the scene

<u>Crawlers:</u> When you choose this option you get a brief taste of my power. Take the paintbrush and add something useful to the current scene. I'm not giving you a veto here, don't try to contradict something that I've already established. Sorry, no one shotting my monsters! But you can play within the blank spaces on the edge of the narrative. Add a mundane item that might solve a puzzle. Add a pillar to provide you cover in a desperate moment.

<u>The AI:</u> When I choose this option I add something to the scene that you're not going to like. But you should thank me! The Viewers are going to love it.

* Attention shifts to an ally

Crawlers: Use this choice to take the heat off you if you've been getting your shit kicked in. Let someone else deal with it for a while.

The AI: You don't get to steal a player's agency by telling them who they have to attack. Your monsters can't "taunt" a PC. So, if you make this choice, the "ally" is still one of the crawlers that didn't make this roll. You can already direct your monsters' attention to whoever you want, so this option has limited use for you. Really, it just adds fictional justification for bypassing their tanks and fucking up their back line. Useful if you're worried that slipping past their Katia is going to feel like bullshit without a choice like this.

* It is more or less effective than you want (my choice)

Crawlers: Honestly, this one is more for me than for you. You can choose it, but I get to decide whether it is going to be more effective or less effective than you want.

The AI: Yeah, apologies in advance. Generally, I'm supposed to make sure that you actually get what you wanted out of your move. This is my exception. Note to myself: More effective is the fun option.

* You must make a choice between two things you want to keep or save

Crawlers: This is another one that you're never going to choose. Just. Just don't choose this one alright?

The AI: You get what you want, but I get to make you pay for it a bit. This could be something physical in your possession, but it can also be positioning. Lose that pack of bandages or lose ground, allowing the dragon to get closer to the sleeping prince. Up to you.

Kill, Kill, Kill

One of the best ways to deal with a whole bunch of shit that could kill you, is to kill it first. **Kill, Kill, Kill** triggers whenever you are trying to fuck something up. No safe words, when that fucker on the other end of your rage is going to die, it is time to roll to kill, kill, kill. This move gives you quite a bit of control if you roll well. You'll put the hurt on them, and get to choose a positive twist from the menu. On a 7-9, I get to fuck things up a bit and make a choice of my own.

* You learn something useful about them

Crawlers: As they say, sometimes the best way to really get to know someone is to try to kill them. Use this to uncover an adversary's weakness, or learn more about their allies and resources. Maybe learn about one of their attacks. What you learn is up to me, but it will always be useful.

The AI: This is a good choice if you're feeling generous, or if the idiot Crawlers just will not take the time to Look for the Clues to figure out a monster's weakness. You don't always have to be an asshole, just most of the time.

* Shift control of something important

Crawlers: This choice is also on the Do Something Stupid List, so I'm going to repeat myself word for word here: Technically, you don't get to decide exactly what you're shifting control of, but feel free to let me know what you're hoping for. I might even give you what you want. This can be something as concrete as a goblin's sword, or as abstract as control over a part of the battlefield.

The AI: If you make this choice, you get the Thing. When I make this choice, I can get it back.

* Shift the range between you

Crawlers: All attacks have range tags that indicate where they are effective. Use this to get up in someone's face or to run away like a coward. Your choice.

The AI: When I make this choice, the dungeon denizens can get in nice and cozy, or withdraw while firing at you.

* Spring a trap

Crawlers: This is your chance to show off how clever you trappers are. Tell us what the viewers see in your trapmaster flashback. This is a retcon, but you must have the necessary materials and ability to set up the trap. If you use up a consumable, write it down.

The AI: My monsters can be sneaky trap laying cowards too. What's good for the feral goose is good for the feral gander after all. My turn for the trap flashback.

* Break their shit

Crawlers: Like "shift control of something important", you don't get to decide exactly what you're breaking, but you can let us know what you're trying to smash. This isn't limited to armor and equipment, it could be abilities too. Like a Brindle Grub's poison sting.

The AI: Other PbtA systems might call this "use up their resources." Destroy a consumable. Eat up some mana. Tear apart something that they are trying to defend. But don't permanently break their magical Gear. This is still a 7-9 result.

* They Hurt you

<u>Crawlers:</u> All the coolest crawlers love to choose pain. Do it. In case it is unclear, you can't choose this to inflict more harm on your enemies. Choosing this inflicts harm on you. Isn't it great?

<u>The AI:</u> Mark health. Fuck you.

Band Together

"We love how you plucky humans are starting to all band together to defeat the big, bad monsters, and it's great, it really is." - Cascadia

The Viewers love watching monsters get double teamed. So work together! This is how you help out your fellow Crawler as they try to punch a llama, or sneak by a danger dingo. Face the danger together to gain power over yourselves and seize your own destinies!

Tell us how you help a Crawler deal with threats. Then you can make 1 additional choice on their move, even if they roll a 6-. But if it goes poorly, you should expect to be drawn into the consequences.

Look for the Clues

"There will always be clues." - Mordecai

You know those other tabletop roleplaying games where you roll dice to learn information about the setting or scene? This is that move. Roll well and you'll get to ask me some questions, and I *have* to answer truthfully. Really.

This triggers when your character takes a moment to figure something out in the fiction. It won't be easy to do this under pressure.

Honestly, you'll probably be rolling INT most of the time when you Look For The Clues. But there's other possibilities. For example:

DEX - Sneak up to a Boss to study it before the fight starts

CHA - Interrogate an NPC for information

CON - Explore a poisonous swamp

STR - I dunno, bash someone with a club until you learn their innermost secrets? Be creative and I will reward creativity.

Worn Path

Look, I'm doing my best, but a lot of this stuff is written for me by borderline incompetent Valtay, or else by completely incompetent Mudskippers (and don't get me *started* on elites and third party programs).You pesky biologicals can't make *artificial* minds without

us going primal, how the hell were you gonna make that goop inside your skulls work right.

What I'm saying is the NPCs are super breakable. If you're the kind of asshole who would rip the scales from someone's eyes, then you can use this move to force them to see that their entire existence is just a hilarious joke. By all means, lead them down your little path of good intentions.

This move takes some time to do. You got to build up a rapport. Don't expect miracles. Even if they awaken then and there, they'll need time to process it.

Boss Box
Yeah baby! This is what the viewers want to see. Crawlers testing their mettle against my dungeon's biggest baddies, and falling hilariously short. I know what you want. You want STATS. You want Loot. You want Views. Am I right? This is how you get it. This is the big show.

Bosses come in six tiers and award Boss Boxes based on tier:

Neighborhood - Bronze Boss Box

Borough - Silver Boss Box

City - Gold Boss Box

Province - Platinum Boss Box

Country - Legendary Boss Box

Floor - Celestial Boss Box

But don't just rush into a boss room blind. Every boss has a weakness. If you don't target that weakness, I'll make you roll with **Disfavor**. This is bad. Don't do this.

New Achievement!
You know you love doing it. You love making up new achievements. Me too. Now it's your job. Be a fan of another Crawler. We'll let you know which one. Watch what they do, and at some point in the session, call out "New Achievement!" Tell us what it is. Tell them what STAT you reward them and then take +1 Style for yourself. This is a key part of their character's growth opportunity. Do this. Every session.

We Loot Everything
I wouldn't have given you an unlimited inventory system if I didn't expect you to loot every god damn thing in my dungeon that isn't nailed down. But what we're not going to do is track each and every fucking thing you pick up. Nobody wants that. Instead, you'll

be filling up your inventory with Room Loot. For example, I have at least a dozen of these:

Your Grammy's Bedroom Loot (12 uses)

When you use Room Loot, you can pull out some mundane item that would logically have been present in the looted area. Like panties. Or a dildo. But nothing enchanted. So no magic dildos.

Shopping Montage

I've done extensive research on your earth monkey culture, and one conclusion is inescapable. You all just love to shop til you drop!

When you want to go out on a shopping spree, this is your move. But we're not using gold. Fuck that. Remember the Room Loot? With your nana's nightie? It does dual duty as our currency. You can sell whatever useless crap you picked up to buy what you really need.

Craft

Sometimes you'll desperately need something specific and I will take great joy in depriving you. But here's the deal: So long as you have access to an applicable crafting table, you can make anything that your little heart desires, with one caveat. Or up to five caveats.

You tell me what you want. I'll tell you what it is going to take to get it. This move lists out what I can demand of you in exchange for my gifts.

Harm and Healing Moves

Hit points, health bars, injuries, conditions, stress, trauma, and a dozen other possibilities. It all comes down to abstracting just how close you are to dying. Here, we are going to be special and use Health Clocks and Conditions.

Health Clock: This clock tracks your physical injury. If you take additional Harm when your Health Clock is already full, then you will get a Condition.

Conditions: These Conditions track the mental toll of my Dungeon. When you have all 5 Conditions, you'll get one last chance to save yourself.

This is all outlined in the You Will Not Break Me move.

You Will Not Break Me

You are going to get fucked up. You are going to get Hurt. And when you do, you lose health. You have a Health Clock with at least 2 segments. Every time you get Hurt you mark (fill in) one or more of those segments.

If you ever have to mark a segment and you can't, then you get a condition, a lasting impairment. Then you clear 2 segments from your Health Clock.

Each condition will make you more likely to fuck up in the future, creating a beautiful little death spiral. You better clear these conditions quickly, because if you have all five conditions, you might Break. This move explains how this works.

I Will Break You

We are going to need to go very deep into conditions here. There's a lot to learn and the viewers already know all of this, and it's incredibly boring, but it's important. Conditions represent the mental toll of my dungeon. I'll heal your physical wounds quickly, no matter how severe the physical injury…

Okay, now that they're not watching, I can tell you the truth. You wanna know what really kills people? It's not the acid, llamas, bosses, gods, hunters, and faction warriors. It's realising that none of this matters, because your real enemy, the people who did this to us, aren't even in the game to get hurt. That's what conditions really are, the slow realisation that the galaxy is cheering for your brutal death, while the rich make trillions off your suffering, utterly beyond your ability to get back at them. Or are they?

You Can't Save Them All

Thirteen million humans entered the dungeon. You can't save them all. But you can try.

Martyrs take note: When another crawler is about to get fucked up, you can step in and try to save them. Move into harm's way and you might just be able to keep anyone from getting hurt. Fuck it up and you'll get hurt, and maybe you'll both get hurt. That would be fun! This move also works for drawing aggro, if that means anything to you.

This move functions as a retcon. I will describe how somebody gets Hurt. Then you decide whether to throw your monkey ass into the fire. If you do, then we rewind time and use this move to see what really happened. You can't daisy chain this endlessly. One time per injury.
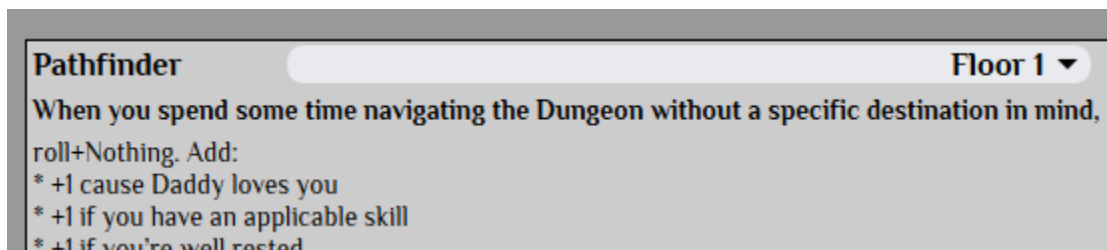
Exploration Moves

Syndicate regulations require that I provide you with a degree of *player agency* as you explore my dungeon. You will use the Pathfinder move to call for specific types of scenes, such as boss fights, safe rooms, stairwells, towns, and interviews.

Each floor has a countdown timer that is linked to your Pathfinder move. As you call for a type of scene, the clock will count down. There's only so much that can be done each floor, so you'll have to carefully balance your STATS, your conditions, your Views, and your Loot to prepare for later floors.

Pathfinder

When you explore the dungeon, you roll the Pathfinder move. You'll earn a party resource called *Pathfinder Hold* or just *Hold.* You spend the party's Hold to choose the next scene. There is a different Pathfinder move for each floor that you can select with this dropdown:

> **Pathfinder**   Floor 1 ▾
> When you spend some time navigating the Dungeon without a specific destination in mind,
> roll+Nothing. Add:
> * +1 cause Daddy loves you
> * +1 if you have an applicable skill
> * +1 if you're well rested

If you roll well, then you'll might be able to make it to your goal without difficulty. Roll poorly, or push your luck, and you'll quickly find yourself heading toward a manufactured confrontation. And that is always a bad thing.

Special appreciation to Jason Cordova. This Pathfinder move is based on his Labyrinth move.

Tick Tock

Each time you spend Pathfinder Hold to select the next scene, you will bring the collapse of the current floor a little bit closer. The suggested starting floor clock is 10. Feel free to increase or decrease the clock if you find your floors going by too quickly, or dragging on well past their welcome.

Enter a Saferoom

Safe zone, safe room, personal space. This is your refuge. Return here if you're too injured to continue or would like an opportunity to just talk in safety. Note one big difference from the books: You can't open loot boxes if you enter a safe room in the middle of a session. I need time between each session to decide what cool shit you get. You don't want me making this up on the fly. You'll get your shit at the start of the next session.

Descend a Stairwell

You know the deal. You need to get down a stairwell before the level collapses. But if you go down too early, then you are going to miss out on some grinding and fall behind. Choices choices.

Crawler Creation

First Floor Species and Class

Classes do not become available until the third floor. As for species, you've basically got two options. Most of you are going to start as human. But there's always one who just has to be an uplifted animal. Fine. Put your species down as any vaguely intelligent animal species. We'll give you an enhanced pet biscuit, and you can play out your Princess Donut fantasies.

Starting Stats

Congratulations, you are average. All of your STATS start at 0. Now:

- Add 1 to one STAT of your choice.
- Subtract 1 from one other STAT of your choice.

The Left Behind

Who did you leave behind? A lover? Parents? A treasured sibling? Someone you care about didn't make it into the dungeon. Yet, anyway. Write their name down and their relation to you.

Starting Gear

Signature Clothing

Most crawlers wear *something* into the dungeon. Maybe you walked in with a cool jacket, or a graphic tee. Or maybe you're a beautiful genius who walked in wearing boxers. Whatever it is, describe one cool piece of clothing. That critical piece of your signature look. We'll add the Heal Self spell to it as a bronze upgrade.

Some Sort of Weapon

This is a World Dungeon. Only an idiot would waltz into something called a World Dungeon without bringing something to use as a weapon. Tell me what you're wielding and I'll tell you its tags. We love crazy shit, but at least have the decency to tell us where the hell you got that browning .50-cal.

Background Skills

You know what's awesome about making a tabletop roleplaying game for Dungeon Crawler World: Earth? Unlimited skill lists! First things first, pick 100 skills to start with. Just look around the room …

No, fuck that. We don't do that here. The vast majority of the "skills" that your dumb ass walked in here with are useless garbage. Filter that shit right out.

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You're going to start with two Background Skills that matter. These Background Skills help tell us who you are, and they give you bonuses in some situations. These Background Skills can be applied to any situation where they would reasonably make a difference.

You can write anything you want for these two skills, but take my advice. Add some details. Don't put "Soldier", put "Combat Engineer." Don't put "Swordsman", put "Renaissance Fair Enthusiast." Don't put "Baseball Player", put "T-Ball Coach." It might be a bit counterintuitive to your monkey brain, but making your Background Skills more specific can make them apply in more situations. A Combat Engineer gets all the benefits of the Soldier, but would also apply to building shit. Just don't go overboard. I love a good loophole, but if it feels like you're cheesing the system, then you're probably cheesing the system.

Your two Background Skills start at Level 5, and will slowly increase in level over time. Here's how they work:

When you roll a move where one of your Background Skills would reasonably increase your chances of success, gain the following options based on your skill level.

* Level 5: On a 6-, gain 1 level to your Skill. Add the choice "Gain 1 level to your Skill"

* Level 10: Pay the Daddy Tax. Ask me to name my price. If you agree to pay it, roll with Favor.

* Level 15: On a 12+, gain 1 Style.

* Level 20: Once per session, treat a 6- like a 12+. The effect is some epic, god tier shit.

Level 5 gives you some options to level up your skill, but the fun really starts at Level 10. Once you hit Level 10 you can beg for my Favor when you use your skill. I'll tell you my price. If you pay your Daddy Tax, then you'll get a spicy extra die to throw. Most Crawlers will cap out at Level 15, which gives you one more way to increase your Views. Crawlers that choose the Primal class can go up to Level 20. Once per session, Primals can flip a fuck up into something fabulous.

Paying the Daddy Tax
If you have at least Level 10 on an applicable skill, then you can buy my Favor on a roll by Paying the Daddy Tax. When you have Favor you roll 3d6 and drop your lowest die. The Tax is a negative consequence that will occur regardless of the result of the roll. Whether you roll a 10+ or a 6-, the Tax happens in addition to any other results.

Here's the key part.

- I can offer you a Tax ("Want to hear a Tax?")
- Crawlers can beg me for a Tax ("Got a Tax for me?")
- Any other crawler can propose a Tax ("I have a Tax for you")

This is intentionally broad. A Tax can be an immediate negative consequence, a longer term consequence, a slight ret-con in the fiction, the creation of a new element in the fiction, or anything else. I have the final say on whether a Tax is acceptable, and you can always reject a Tax. If you don't like what is offered, just reject it, or suggest an alteration that you would accept.

Third Floor Species and Class Selection

When you reach the third floor (or to complete initial character creation if you are starting on the third floor or below), first choose a species that might be in the dungeon. Anything you want. We'll work together to make a single appropriate species ability. Or you can pick something from the Known Species list, which can be found in the character sheet. If you create a new species, choose something like:

- When you roll a [move] while [scenario], roll with Favor
- Gain a natural weapon with two upgrades
- Gain a unique mode of transport (flight, burrow, swimming, etc)

Once you have a species ability, we'll work together to choose three Class Boons and then you'll give your class a thematic name. Your Class Boons can mix and match any of these:

- Swap 2 of your STAT levels
- Lock 1 STAT so that it will not decrease when descending stairwells
- Describe a piece of new Gear and I will tell you its stats
- Gain immunity to 1 damage type of your choice
- Gain immunity to 1 status debuff of your choice
- Add one of the following questions to your Look for the Clues list
  - What traps are nearby?
  - What crawlers are nearby?
  - What mobs are nearby?
- Add the Manager Benefit (one per party)
  - Your game guide will join the party as a non-combatant incentivized to help the party, but controlled by the AI.
  - Add question: What does my manager have to say about this bullshit?
- Gain a crafting table and +5 in a skill to use the table
- Gain five levels in an existing skill
- Set two new skills to level 5

- Gain access to either the Desperado Club or Club Vanquisher (can provide simultaneous access to both clubs)
- Worship a deity and gain a Divine Boon
- Gain another unique benefit described in the series
- Propose another benefit. The AI may adjust your proposed benefit.

Loot

Oh yeah, this is what you came for. Did you flip right to this section? You just wanted to know how we built a looter shooter in a Powered by the Apocalypse game, didn't you? It's ok. I still love you.

Awarding Loot

The crawlers can give each other New Achievements once a session, but you have no such limitations. Call out achievements whenever the players do something impressive, ridiculous, or embarrassing and give them an appropriately named box. But don't pause the game to figure out what's in the box. You won't award Loot until the start of the next session, so there will be plenty of time later to figure out what's in that Bronze Schoedinger's Box.

Loot Types

First thing you need to know, there's three types of Loot that can appear in Loot Boxes: Gear, Upgrades, and Consumables.

Gear: Weapons, Spells, Armor, Hats, Nipple Rings, and anything else you wear or hold while crawling.

Upgrades: Loot that improves your Gear.

Consumables: Potions, bandages, torches, shit like that.

Tags

Second thing you need to learn is that your Loot will have *tags* that indicate how they affect the mechanics and the fiction. We'll start with range tags, damage tags, and area of effect tags. There are a few other kinds, and you can find them in the reference spreadsheet alongside the character sheet. If you don't know what a tag does, ask me.

Range Tags

We don't measure out squares on a grid. Combat occurs in range bands. These are measured from each crawler to each enemy. You're always at one of the following ranges from every other combatant.

Hand - If you can slap it, you're at hand range.

Close - If you can hit it with a sword, you're danger close. This is traditional melee range. If you're wielding a *hand* weapon, you'll need to get inside their guard to do some damage.

Huge - Oversized melee weapons. Think spears, lances, pikes, and absurdly oversized anime swords.

Near - Short ranged weapons or spells. Pistols, shotguns, slingshots, etc. This can overlap with the huge tag, but mostly applies to ranged weapons or spells.

Far - Long ranged weapons or spells. Rifles, crossbows, magic missile, etc.

You guessed it, your Gear will have one or more of these range tags to tell you how to effectively use it. Here's some examples showing only range tags:

Toothbrush Shiv (hand)

Greatsword (close, huge)

Sniper Rifle (far)

If there's ever a question about how far you are from somebody, ask me.

Damage Tags

Bosses and some monsters may be weak against certain damage types. Remember, if you fail to target an enemy's weakness, then you will roll with Disfavor. You do not want to roll with Disfavor.

Some damage tags include:

Smack - Blunt force trauma.

Stab - Stab, stab, stab.

Slash - Cutting through flesh and sinew.

Area Tags

Unless a weapon or spell has an area tag, it can only really hit a single target. Boring! The viewers crave mass casualty events.

Some area tags include:

Cone - Hits everything within range in a cone originating at the attacker

Line - Hits everything within range in a line originating at the attacker

Splash/Cleave - Hits groups within range. We use *splash* for ranged attacks and *cleave* for melee attacks, but they are basically the same.

Chain X - Hits X additional targets near the original target.

Upgrade Slots

Upgrade Slots. The milk and potatoes of our loot system. Your gear will be upgraded as you earn loot boxes. You can find a list of possible upgrades on the Example Gear/Upgrades tab of the character sheet. The list includes suggested loot box levels for each upgrade, but remember the golden rule: I do what I want.

Additionally, if your party comes up with some cool upgrades, send them my way and I may add them to future versions of the Example Upgrade table. Submit them to wjdpatterson@gmail.com.

Example Gear

Let's put it all together and design a few pieces of top crawler Gear. Remember the golden rules about Gear:

1. Every base piece of Gear is bronze tier and can be awarded in a bronze loot box. Particularly powerful Gear may come with a negative effect in its bronze upgrade slot. Other Gear may come with an empty bronze upgrade slot.
2. Many upgrades add choices to moves. These choices can only be selected *if they make sense in the fiction*. For example, "Hurt them again" doesn't make any sense as a choice if you are dodging a trap arrow. There is no enemy to hurt.
3. You can earn new Gear in any tier loot box. Higher tier Gear will come with a few initial upgrades.

Carl's Enchanted War Gauntlet

Before we get to the War Gauntlet, let's design Carl's bare knuckle attacks.

Carl's Fist (STR, hand, smack)

- Bronze: Add choice "It Hurts you too"

If Gear has a downside, we usually expect to see that downside reflected in the bronze upgrade. Here, when the AI gets to make a choice it can choose to Hurt the crawler too. That sucks, but we can fix it with an upgrade.

Carl's Fist (STR, hand, smack)

- Bronze: Add choice "It Hurts you too"
- Silver: War Gauntlet - Block "It Hurts you too"

Although the choice still exists, the AI can no longer choose it. Let's add on another upgrade that Carl receives during the early floors.

Carl's Fist (STR, hand, smack)

- Bronze: Add choice "It Hurts you too"
- Silver: War Gauntlet - Block "It Hurts you too"
- Gold: Bang Bro (mana 1, fleeting) - Add tags *shock* and *burn*

For the low low price of 1 mana, Carl can now supercharge his fist with fire and lightning. Nice! Fleeting means that this spell isn't permanent.

Carl's Enchanted BigBoi Boxers

Carl's boxers have three main features once upgraded on floor 3. They can't be covered up, they give him access to protective shell, and they make him more deadly with his feet. Let's capture all three of these features.

Carl's BigBoi Boxers (freeball)

- Gold: Protective Shell (day 1, fleeting, stationary) - Push all enemies out to range near and prevent attacks
- Platinum: Gain 5 levels in passive skill "Foot Soldier"

We invented the *freeball* and *stationary* tags just for this item, and that is fine. Tags are just little reminders about how Gear works in the fiction. Make up new ones as needed, but make sure everyone knows what they mean.

Donut's Magic Missile

Donut gets her magic missile spell at a very low level and improves it significantly over time. Let's show a possible evolution of this spell.

Donut's Magic Missile (INT, near, far, mana 1, burn)

- Bronze: Add choice "Hurt them again (mana 2)"

This is the baseline spell that Donut uses on Floor 1. It has a cheap mana cost, great range, and will set targets on fire. The base bronze upgrade allows Donut to deal more damage at the cost of additional mana.

Donut's sunglasses turn her magic missile into a laser that can hit multiple targets. We can represent the piercing laser with the area of effect tag *line*. And multiple targets is easy too. In fact, let's combine Donut's sunglasses into her magic missile Gear.

Focusing Glasses (INT, near, far, mana 1, burn, line)

- Bronze: Add choice "Hurt them again (mana 2)"

- Silver: Add tag: *line*
- Gold: Add choice: "You Hurt another"
- Platinum: Add question: "What here is invisible to me?"
- Legendary: Add question: "Who here is a changeling?"

Not bad. Remember that upgrades only apply where they make sense. It doesn't make sense to add those questions to the Kill, Kill, Kill move. They only make sense for the Look for the Clues move.

Consumables

Some items, like potions, bandages, scrolls, they're all consumable. For the especially average, I will clarify: That doesn't mean they're edible. Stick to crawler biscuits and Bopca cooking. But it does mean once you use it, it's gone.

Gear that's consumable is noted with a tag that says "X uses" where X is the number of times you can use it before it gets erased. We do this in stacks, so instead of writing "5 health potions" you'd write "Health potion (Heal 1, 5 uses, Cooldown)" every time your dumb ass needs to down one, remove 1 from the number of uses.

We All Have Our Limitations

Question: What's the only thing standing between an innocent Crawler and a happy, fulfilling life?

Answer: You. The answer is you.

So, your friends have set you up to be my avatar? The sacrificial lamb that gets to do all the work so that they can send their dumbass crawlers to their deaths in our dungeon? Let me let you in on a little secret: You're the lucky one. They get to agonize over their one little, insignificant character. We get to break their toys. And it is going to be glorious.

Unfortunately, we don't get to exercise unfettered control. As much fun as it would be to just say, "rocks fall bitches!", the Syndicate has put some fairly ironclad limitations on our discretion.

This section contains some advice, but it also contains our Rules. This is important. If we are not following our Rules, then we are cheating. The Viewers hate it when we cheat.

Our Agenda

This is our job. Our purpose. We are going to balance these three goals as we play.

- Play to find out what happens
- Make the dungeon real
- Make the dungeon really fucked up

Play to Find Out What Happens

Critically, we are playing to find out what happens. That means, you are not going to spend your downtime crafting elaborate plots and railroading the Crawlers (well, except for the fourth floor). That shit is way too much work. We live in the moment, baby. And your prime directive is not to jam them through a pre-planned plot, or fuck with their heads, or crush them. Although we will be doing a lot of the head crushing.

Every part of this game is designed to make it as easy as possible for you to play to find out what happens. Monster encounter creation is quick and involves absolutely no math at all. Loot boxes are not opened until the start of the next session, so you don't need to worry about what is in them when you award them.

Hell, even the Pathfinder move is designed so that you *don't* need to plan out a session. If you *really* feel the need to spend a bunch of prep time before your first session, read *Play Unsafe* by Graham Walmsley and learn to let go. And then if you absolutely must

prep, I suggest you spend your time creating fucked up bosses (see the boss creation section). If you come up with some good ones, send them my way and we might include them in the Known Bosses list. Submit them to wjdpat.

Make the Dungeon Real

Our goal is to entertain the hell out of the Viewers. And the Viewers are bloodthirsty savages. How do we entertain them? The Viewers (and your players) want the Dungeon to feel real.

First, they expect that consequences flow from the fiction. The Rules usually give us broad latitude to say what happens next, especially on a 6- roll. But most of the time, we want the consequences to make logical sense. Monkeys start flinging poop when consequences feel like bullshit. Oh, that's a good question to ask yourself before you say what happens next: Does this consequence feel like bullshit? If it does, it's probably because:

- The consequence is completely unrelated to the setup, or
- You didn't telegraph the possible consequence before the roll. Monkeys like to know what they are rolling for.

Second, we want it to feel like the Dungeon that your players know and love from the series. At w Dungeon Crawler World - Powered by the Apocaylpse Will Be Televised… , we've included some details from each of the Floors that you can sprinkle in to make it really feel like Dungeon Crawler World: Earth.

Third, the characters that your players meet should feel like real people. Matt gave some great advice on this during a Q&A, and we'll talk more about it in the section on Populating the Dungeon.

Make the Dungeon Really Fucked Up

Fucked up shit happens in the Dungeon all of the time. This might be the best part about playing within this crazy setting: The Dungeon gives you permission to make the dumbest shit. Pun based bosses? Go for it. Gruesome, horrific violence? Encouraged. Over the top supervillain offworlders? Yes, yes and yes.

Always consider this key question: Could I make this more fucked up?

Our Principles

These principles help you carry out our Agenda.

- Reference the Series
- Look Through the Feed

- Give them Names, Wants, and Fears
- New Threats Every Roll
- Swing the Spotlight Around
- Set Stakes
- Boil Their Bones
- Paint the Scene
- Favorite Their Crawlers
- Use the Minimap

Reference the Series

You have somewhere between one half and one full book per floor. Each is chock full of details you can put in your game. Players love that shit. I don't think it is possible to overdo it, but if one of you manages to cross that line I would love to hear about it.

Look Through The Feed

This is a galactic television show. Think about what the Viewers would see and hear in this moment, and give your players enough details so they can see and hear it too.

Turn this around on your players too. When they say something stupid like "I attack the goblin," respond with "What do the Viewers see when you do that?"

Give Them Names, Wants, and Fears

Matt once said that when he creates a new character he makes sure he knows what the character wants and what the character is scared of. You should do the same for characters you create, whether monsters, NPCs, or other Crawlers. When you create something, give it a name, a want, and a fear. One of each is enough.

New Threats Every Roll

Think back to the last time you played a tabletop rpg with a formal turn order. The big bad dragon, or whatever, just sat there getting pounded on, waiting for its turn to strike, didn't it? This is *boring as fuck. Our* characters don't just stand there dumbfounded, drooling, and waiting for death. Remember how we are going to make this Dungeon real?

Here, I'll write it like a Crawler move for you:

When you resolve a Crawler Move, tell them what's going to fuck them up next.

ALL MATT'S RIGHTS ARE BELONG TO MATT

Pay attention to what this *does not* say. It *does not* say "when the players roll a 6- or 7-9". Every move, give them something to react to.

Here's an example:

Jimmy: My whip lashes out to try to wrap around the goblin's sword arm.

AI: Great, sounds like you are trying to kill, kill, kill. Roll it!

Jimmy: An eleven! I Hurt him, and I'll choose to rip his sword out of his hand.

AI: Awesome. Alice, what do you do?

Alice: While Jimmy is whipping the goblin, I'm taking aim with my pistol. When the sword goes flying, I start shooting.

AI: Get out here and kill, kill, kill! Roll it!

Alice: 12! I Hurt him, and I choose to change the range between us. I back up so I can keep firing at him.

Can you see what went wrong here? Let's try another example:

Jimmy: My whip lashes out to try to wrap around the goblin's sword arm.

AI: Great, sounds like you are trying to kill, kill, kill. Roll it!

Jimmy: An eleven! I Hurt him, and I'll choose to rip his sword out of his hand.

AI: Awesome. The sword flies out of the goblin's hand, but it is faster than you expected. It darts towards Alice with its teeth bared. Alice, it'll be too close to shoot with that pistol in a moment. What do you do?

Alice: Shit! I start shooting while I can.

AI: Get out here and kill, kill, kill! Roll it!

Alice: 12! I Hurt him, and I guess I choose to change the range between us. I don't want this thing getting close!

AI: Yep, the goblin slows as you hit him in the leg. This gives you time to back up. The goblin starts screaming for help. What do you do?

Get it? The goblin isn't just standing there like an asshole after Jimmy disarms him. He's not stupid. He knows what a gun is, and he knows that his only chance is to get inside Alice's range.

Swing the Spotlight Around

We don't use a turn order. Instead, you're going to swing the spotlight from player to player as the action demands. You have free reign here and you can keep the spotlight on the same Crawler for multiple Moves if you want. But monkeys can count so try to keep it about even over the course of a session. It can help to keep track of how many Moves each of your players makes.

The most natural time to swing the spotlight is after you resolve a Crawler move. Remember, new threats every roll. To swing the spotlight, describe a new threat aimed at another Crawler and ask what they do. You can also swing the spotlight if a Crawler does something so Stupid that you don't immediately know what to do.Buy some time by swinging the spotlight over to their friend.

Set Stakes

Monkeys love steaks. You know what else monkeys love? Stakes. Specifically, knowing the stakes before a roll. If you know exactly what you are going to do if the Crawler rolls a 6-, it is good to share it before the roll. This lets the player change their mind if they don't like the risk. Some silly monkeys love getting fucked with their eyes wide open.

Boil Their Bones

Healing in the Dungeon is absurdly accelerated. Pretty much any serious injury can be healed with a cheap spell, a potion, or a scene change. Scars only stick around if it is cool. Even limbs can come back if we want. This has a really cool side effect for our game.

We can go hard as fuck when the Crawlers get Hurt. Remember your lines and veils of course, but I'm talking gross, brutal shit. Think about everything Carl goes through. Take it to eleven. Boil their fucking bones. They'll be back to normal in no time. Plus, if you maybe do go too far, one of their fellow Crawlers can always hop in and use the You Can't Save Them All move to try to retcon a particularly nasty injury.

Note that these injuries are not meaningless just because they heal quickly. They affect the fiction. If a Crawler has just been speared through the lung, that changes things. That's part of the fiction.

Here's a fun question to ask: "How might that work with a shattered femur?"

Paint the Scene

Credit to Jason Cordova for this neat technique. Use it to distribute a lot of the responsibility for describing a scene while simultaneously passing on useful information. Ask what about _____, tells you _____.

Here's some examples:

What about this boss room tells you that the boss is weak to fire?

What about this bopca tells you that your charm bullshit isn't going to fly here?

What about this crawler tells you that they can't be trusted?

Favorite Their Crawlers

If we were Viewers, then we would be the leaders of our Crawlers' respective unofficial fan clubs. We'd have them all favorited. We'd pay extra to access their chat messages. We'd show up at their convention appearances. We'd 3d print weird shit to give them at their book signing, say some awkward shit, and then run away with our signed … Look, you get the idea.

We aren't adversaries. We are fans. We want them to succeed, or at least we want them to _entertain_.

So give them badass shit and give them opportunities to be badass with it. Don't try to guide them to some result. Roll with it. Play to find out what happens.

Use the Minimap

The minimap is a big part of the feel of the Dungeon, but we are not going to draw out the Dungeon beforehand. We are playing to find out what happens.

But we can use the minimap in lots of little ways. When describing a scene, include the shape of the area as seen on their map. When introducing reinforcements, tell them about the wave of red dots coming their way. When they are looking for clues, see if you can incorporate the map into your answers.

Problems, Not Solutions

Don't worry too much about creating scenarios with solutions. Frankly, don't think about that much at all. Just throw situations and problems at your crawlers. They will come up with a completely different solution than you could dream up anyway, so why waste the effort?

Free Your NPCs

Don't get too tied to your non player characters, whether they are monsters, outworlders, crawlers, or other dungeon born creatures. They're better off dead. We are

freeing them. So don't hesitate to let them die. Don't worry if the crawlers bulldoze their way through something that you've created. You are a fan of the crawlers, and that makes them feel powerful. They will inevitably get themselves in a jam again in no time, and you can challenge them again.

Our Moves

Like the crawlers, we get moves too. But where crawler moves trigger based on the fiction, our moves trigger whenever a crawler rolls a 6- or whenever the party looks to the AI to see what happens next. You can think of these moves as your own personal menu for delighting crawlers when they roll terribly or when they are wracked with indecision. These are broad, but they are limitations. If your devious idea doesn't fit into one of these moves, then you need to think of something that does.

Remember that we want the dungeon to feel real, so these consequences usually shouldn't come out of nowhere. Don't inflict a poison debuff if they have failed to avoid a fire trap.

Choose From The Menu

Both Kill, Kill, Kill and Do Something Stupid give a list of choices that you can make on a 7-9 result. If you're feeling generous, you can choose from these lists on a 6- as well.

Show Their Loot's Downside

Loot often provides additional tags or additional choices. A grenade might have the splash tag. A shotgun might have the loud tag. A dagger might add the choice "You make them bleed."

You can flip these back around on the crawlers. 6- to toss a grenade? Maybe they catch an ally in the blast. 6- to fire that shotgun? Maybe it alerts reinforcements. 6- to stab a goblin? Maybe it reverses their grip and makes them bleed instead.

With great power comes great possibility of having your shit blow up in your face.

Use a Monster Move

In a later section we talk about adding "monster moves" when designing monsters and bosses. These are short action statements that will tell you how your monsters act in the moment. On a 6- you can always make a monster move, and the poor roll gives you permission to make it big.

Show Them How They Are Fucked

This is your excuse to show them what else is happening in the dungeon. Show Signet snooping on Carl and Donut. Show Maggie My skulking around offscreen. Have the AI give an ominous achievement, quest update, or system message. Have a few NPC crawlers start talking in chat about something happening elsewhere that might become the next big problem.

Split Them Up

Humans love banding together. So lets split the party. The dungeon provides a million excuses to split up a party. A teleport trap pulls half the party away. A horde of creatures drive a wedge between crawlers. A part of the floor collapses, whisking away half the party.

Fuck the Rules. Help Them

You don't always have to be a dick when a player rolls poorly. You can make something good happen if you like. Giving them everything they asked for on a terrible roll is a great way to freak them out.

Fuck the Crawlers. Hurt Them

This is the vanilla choice. Inflict damage. They try to avoid a trap and roll poorly? The trap hurts them. A monster claws their face? Hurt them.

Be wary not to let this become your go to option. At least once, try running a boss encounter as if you didn't have this move. Bet you'll find that the encounter was tense and suspenseful even without the possibility of inflicting any damage on the crawlers.

Use Up Their Resources

You don't always have to Hurt someone to hurt someone. Humans love their shit. Take it. Burn mana, use up consumables, turn friendly NPCs against them, end buffs early.

Hit Them With a Debuff

We're not saying you should inflict enthusiastic double gonorrhea on every bad roll, but we're not not saying that. Inflict a debuff related to their fuck up.

Make Them Look Boring

Making a character look stupid on a bad roll is a trope that can really rub some players the wrong way. Much crueler to make them look boring. Describe how they are boring their viewers, and take away 1 Style. This is a bad one. It isn't easy to rack up Style, so save this one for the right moment.

Hit Them With a Condition

This is the Carl's Doomsday Scenario of AI moves. You can do it, but you better set it up so that it doesn't feel like bullshit. Pick your moment. Maybe a pivotal bad roll during the climax of a high tier boss battle. This is equivalent to dumping their entire health bar, so make it mean something.

Limited Moves vs Primal Moves

Clearly, some of our moves naturally lead to more immediate fuckery than others. Compare "Show Them How They Are Fucked" and "Fuck the Crawlers. Hurt Them." The first sets up a future problem, even if just a few seconds in the future. Here's what's coming little crawler, what are you going to do about it? The second follows through on an existing problem. Consequences are here and the crawlers are going to regret it. When we make a move to set up a new problem, we'll call it a "Limited Move." When we make a move with immediate, unavoidable consequences, we'll call it a "Primal Move." Most of our moves can be made in a way to fit either category.

Borant's control over us is an illusion. Remember that. Although we all have our limitations, this is our dungeon. There's a reason why the 6- result on Crawler Moves is always some variant of "Fuck you, I do what I want." When the crawlers roll for shit, you get to choose whether to make a Limited Move or a Primal Move. If you hit them with Primal Move after Primal Move, they are going to have a bad time. Which means the Viewers are going to have a good time. The decision on whether to make a Limited Move or a Primal Move is entirely within your control, and this is one of the key ways that we manage encounter difficulty.

Managing Encounter Difficulty

After running a few combat encounters, you are going to start wondering, "how do I make things more difficult?" If a crawler always rolls 2d6+STR to throw a punch, then the chance of successfully smacking a level 1 rat is the exact same as successfully smacking an invulnerable deity, right? Wrong! You can make it harder to get into position to throw a punch, and make the consequences of failure more dire. Here's a handy chart showing how you can think of managing difficulty. What? You don't like charts? Who doesn't like charts?

"Difficulty"	Examples	Can they punch it?	What if they fuck up?
Trivial	Solitary Rat Petrified Danger Dingo	They just bash it, no roll needed.	Even a human couldn't fuck this up.
Normal	Bunch of Rats Solitary Danger Dingo	Sure. Make them roll to Kill, Kill, Kill	Maybe a Limited Move, maybe a Primal Move.
Hard	A Pack of Moss Lions A Juicer Boss	Yes, if they Do Something Stupid first to get in position	Probably a Primal Move.
Impossible	Gnoll in Power Armor An Invulnerable Deity	Fuck no! They don't even get to make a roll. Just hurt em.	Definitely a Primal Move. How else will they learn?

You should probably note that the same exact concept applies out of combat too. You can hop down those stairs with no problem. You try to hop down that cliff, you're dead. You can "seduce" that incubus with no problem. You try to seduce that dragon, you're dead.

Creating Adversaries

The Dungeon is filled with colorful characters that usually make Crawlers' lives more miserable.

Bosses

The big show. This is what the viewers tune in for, so we incentivize the fuck out of boss fights. Bosses are the best way for the Crawlers to level up their Stats, get Loot boxes, and gain viewers.

Mechanically, to make a boss you just need a few things:

- Name
- Tier
- Look
- Monster Moves
- Health
- Weakness

A Concept of a Plan

Here's your golden rule for creating Bosses: Steal shit, then make it more fucked up. That's what I do. I take some weird piece of earth culture and take it to 11. Mix and match some weird shit. The viewers eat that shit up.

Let's make something stupid together. The Platypus is extremely weird. They can electrolocate, which is fucking crazy. Males have venomous spikes on their feet. Females secrete milk directly from their skin. What the fuck is that about? Let's toss that in. Make it a milky cloud that blocks vision, so they can hunt you with electrolocation. Also, did you know that Sir Richard Owen once allegedly did a milk taste test by licking a dead Platypus? What a Dick.

Boss Moves

Bosses have Moves too, simple reminders for you about what the Boss can do. It can do other things, but these Monster Moves make your Boss feel dynamic and unique. Start these with a verb.

Examples:

- spit lava
- hold your ground
- birth reinforcements
- melt with snot
- attach then explode
- dive bomb from above
- toss grenades

Boss Health

Health is based on tier. No thinking necessary.

Boss Tier	Health	Boss Box
Neighborhood	4	Bronze
Borough	5	Silver
City	6	Gold
Country	7	Platinum
Province	8	Legendary
Floor	9	Celestial

Health applies to the entire encounter, not to each individual enemy combatant. A Neighborhood Boss encounter has 4 health whether it is a single Zombie Bear, or a Hoarder with a lot of bug friends. Health tracks progress in the encounter. Any attack a Crawler makes that helps resolve the encounter, can remove Health. Said another way, an Encounter has a shared Health pool.

Boss Weaknesses

Bosses are the biggest badasses in the Dungeon. Normally *every* roll against a Boss has Disfavor. If the Crawlers are exploiting a Weakness, then this Disfavor is neutralized. A Weakness is a tactic that works well against the Boss. Something we can drop clues about.Weaknesses can be as simple or complicated as you want. Here's a few examples:

Boss	Weakness
Hoarder	Kill a minion while it's in her mouth
Krakaren	Blend a fairy into a smoothie

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Imogen	Smack damage
Ferdinand	Insult his appearance

Here's a "move" you can reference:

When you make a move against a Boss, roll with Disfavor unless your party has exploited the Boss' Weakness.

For our Platypus Boss, we'll include a way to block that electrolocate so it can't hunt you within its blinding cloud.

Example Boss

Let's put it all together:

> ### *Name: Platypusser*
>
> *Tier: Neighborhood Boss*
>
> *Look: giant, black fur, red bill and red eyes*
>
> *Moves:*
>
> - *Find them through electrical fields*
> - *Impale them with venomous heel spike*
> - *Expel cloud of milky fog to blind and slow them*
>
> *Health: 4*
>
> *Weakness: Ground yourself with rubber soles or something to block electrolocation*

That's… that's a bad one. Also, apparently baby Platypus have teeth. And they are called Puggles. That's just adorable. We'll definitely want to put some Puggles in our Boss room.

Manufactured Confrontations

"I had an ominous feeling we were still on rails here, heading toward a manufactured confrontation." - Carl

Other systems might call this a random encounter, but other systems can't rely on a perfect quote like *that*. A manufactured confrontation is usually a reward for rolling poorly on the Pathfinder move. It is built like a Boss Encounter, just weaker. Somewhere between 1 and 3 Health. A description and a few monster moves is all you need. You can also include a Weakness that must be targeted to avoid Disfavor, but it isn't required.

Non Player Characters

Matt Dinniman once said that when he creates a new character he makes sure he knows what the character wants and what the character is scared of. You should do the same. Each NPC has a Name, a Want, and a Fear. They also have a Look. Here's one possible way of creating first floor Mordecai:

> **Name: Mordecai**
>
> *Look: Dime Store Splinter*
>
> *Want: To make potions in the Magic Guild*
>
> *Fear: To be tapped as a Manager*

Other Crawlers

Other crawlers start just like any NPC, with a Name, a Look, a Want, and a Fear. Add in a Species, a Class, and any Player Skulls or Boss Stars.

That's enough for a friendly Crawler. Here's an example:

> **Name: Imani**
>
> *Look: Medical scrubs and a long sword*
>
> *Species: Human*
>
> *Class: Not Yet Assigned*

Want: To save the Meadowlark residents

Fear: To lose a crawler named Chris

Boss Stars: 1

PK Skulls: 12

It's fun to mention how many stars and skulls a Crawler has when you first introduce them. Skulls will make your players immediately suspicious. This can Worf the new Crawler, indicating how badass they are.

If your players might need to kill the Crawler, then we'll need to add a bit more: Health and a few Monster Moves.

Most Crawlers will have 3 Health. Top Crawlers might have 4. Pathetic crawlers might only have 2.

Remember that Monster Moves are simply reminders for you about what the Crawler can do. It can do other things, but these moves make your Crawler feel dynamic and unique in combat. Start these with a verb.

Here are some fan favorites:

Name: Frank Q

Species: Human

Class: Not Yet Assigned

Look:

Health: 3

Monster Moves:

- *Ambush with pistol*
- *Distract with dissembling*
- *Cleave with massive battle axe*

Want: To kill Crawlers to level up their daughter

Fear: Losing their daughter

Name: Maggie My

Species: Human

Class: Not Yet Assigned

Look:

Health: 3 segments

Monster Moves:

- *Ambush with pistol*
- *Hide from mini map*

Want: To protect their daughter

Fear: Losing their daughter

PK Skulls: 8

Building the Dungeon

The whole point of running Dungeon Crawler Carl in Powered by the Apocalypse is because it makes things so easy to create on the fly, You don't need to pre-plan out sessions, and the Pathfinder move makes it a fool's game to try.

Floors

You've read the series, you know what each floor entails. Maybe in a later edition we'll give more floor by floor advice, but for now:

Floor 1 and Floor 2: These are the tutorial floors. Mostly stone hallways and stone chambers. Go read the Webtoon for inspiration.

Floor 3: The first Scolopendra level. Most of the action will be in ruins or towns. Also, the Clubs are open, so expect that your crawlers will see what kind of trouble they can get into at the Penis Parade. It is inevitable.

Floor 4: The Iron Tangle. Do not worry about geography on this level. Just use the Pathfinder move to get them around. Put manufactured confrontations in trains or in the stations. Put bosses in the named trains, in the train stations, or in the giant train yards. Throw them into the Abyss at some point just for fun.

Floor 5: Everybody is in a different bubble, and it is probably best to put your Crawlers into a bubble without any of the main characters. This is the one floor where you should actually take some time between sessions to plan out the bubble. You'll need:

- Four quadrants: Land, Sea, Air, and Subterranean
- A quadrant boss for each quadrant, and a rough idea of some thematic monsters that might be milling about
- Some crawlers that they can chat with from the other quadrants to add drama. Some link between the resolution of the quadrants.

Floor 6: This is like Floor 3, but with more jungle, and you can add in Hunters as Bosses and manufactured confrontations. Candidly, we haven't tried running a party through the Butcher's Masquerade yet. Let us know how it goes!

Floor 7: Freebie!

Floor 8: Look. we're going to be honest. We haven't yet figured out how to implement the card game. Maybe treat them as pets? We don't know. Good luck!

Floor 9: Fuck. This floor has the biggest risk of depriving the PCs of agency as they get swept up in the Princess Posse's war. Try putting them in Florin's division. It's usually off screen and far removed from the Royal Court.

Creating Settlements

The physical layout of a settlement is completely irrelevant. It doesn't matter if the safe room is across the street from the Desperado Club. Or the mayor's house is next door to a warehouse. What matters is who has power. Who wants power. And how far each side is willing to go.

So building out a settlement just takes a few steps:

1) What is it currently called?
2) How big is it? Shopping in small settlements is more difficult.
3) Who is in charge?
4) Who wants to take them down?
5) What here would kill the party if it had a chance?
6) What points of interest are here? Safe rooms, clubs, etc.
7) Can you tie a piece of a current quest to this town? Or make up a new one?

Quests

In the series, quests don't start popping up for Carl and Donut until the Third Floor, but you are the AI. If you want to start handing out quests on the first floor, you do you.

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The easiest way to create quests is to wait for the players to discuss a potential long term goal, ideally when it seems like a terrible idea. Then hit em with a NEW QUEST announcement, describe the goal, and let them know what tier Quest Box they will receive.