

Siege Mentality II

a two-hour mini-larp for up to 10 players

by J. Tuomas Harviainen and Roger Gammans

Contact address: jiituomas@gmail.com

Overview

The basic idea is simple: The game takes place in the area where it is played, and to go outside the door means you die. If you're in a convention center, the rest of the building is full of zombies ready to eat your flesh. If you're at a cabin, the windows are boarded (draw the curtains in front of them), and the hordes are waiting right outside. As time goes on, the mood inside the shelter gets more and more tense, and eventually someone - or everyone - will inevitably die.

This scenario starts from the moment when everyone has just run into the safety of the playing area from various directions, whatever it is. One of the characters slams the door shut, and then the play begins. It is therefore important to take note of any shared traits before the game starts, as those should be unveiled at the very beginning. *"You! Out of all the people in the world to survive! You bastard, who left me at the altar!"* is a great way to kick things off, for example.

Mechanics

Most of the game mechanics in Siege Mentality are very simple: If you need to discuss something outside the game's reality, do it with statements that begin with the word "Meta". For example: "Meta: I hit you in the stomach.", after which you can act out the punch together. As in a story like this it's often more entertaining to lose, and to die stylishly rather than to triumph (after all, it's the most boring character who usually survives a horror movie), actual combat mechanics are not really necessary.

In cases where there are multiple opponents - and those are likely to happen - the majority always wins (do act it out, though), unless someone has a special Trait that counters this.

The zombie plague is of a very traditional kind, meaning people who die from bites rise as zombies, if the corpse is still intact enough after the attack. Likewise, a bite will cause the victim to die some hour later, after a short period of flu-like symptoms. A zombie will die only from being either hacked to pieces, or by a serious wound to the head. Too bad that none of the characters have any suitable weaponry at hand any more, and nothing in this temporary safety zone can be used to kill a person, let alone a zombie. Furthermore, it is not certain that a person killed by other means will not also rise as a zombie, as none of you know the cause of the zombie plague. So be careful. All in all, you do not know much about the form, function or spread of the plague. It may all be local, or spread already world-wide.

Furthermore, there is one essential game mechanic: After the first time, every time you open the door, you will have to beat the game master in a Rock-Paper-Scissors match. This simulates the risk of zombies hording into the safe zone as soon as a barrier is removed.

Think of this game as an extreme version of a Reality TV show, at least from the perspective of the characters. Some people will very likely be "voted out". Play that well. Feel free to use any language you want during play, as one never knows with whom one ends up sharing a shelter during a zombie apocalypse, and feel free to be as impolite as you want, even though it's not the main point of this game. If your character has been thrown or sent out, die screaming and then silently return inside in off-game mode, if you want to watch the rest of the game.

Feel free to flesh out your characters in both nature and background, and to change the name if you feel like it. This is written as an adaptable convention game, so local additions are not only welcome, but necessary.

Each of you will be given two character traits at random, one A and one B. Some are positive, some negative, but they all enrich play. Before the game starts, if you gain a trait connected to someone else (such as "vengeful" or "former lovers"), discuss the nature and background of that trait with that other person. Even inappropriate connections will make sense with some pre-planning. Some characters also have special traits by way of their background. If you get a matching extra trait, simply keep it, and it has no extra effect (Example: Doc may get the "First Aid" trait, in which case she's just as good at medicine as she would have been without it, but is now the sole person able to heal others). At least one trait in group B will be left out, more if there are less than ten players

The characters. (All of them are of the same gender as their players.)

Character	Player	Phone
Chris, the consultant (31 years)	_____	_____
Robin, the phys.ed. teacher (45)	_____	_____
"Sarge", the sergeant (26)	_____	_____
Charly, the activist (22)	_____	_____
Pauly, the anthropologist (36)	_____	_____
Doc, the doctor (32)	_____	_____
Emerson, the pensioner (65)	_____	_____
Wiz, the occultist (19)	_____	_____
Bull, the trucker (33)	_____	_____
Red, the care worker (39)	_____	_____

Chris

You are the leader of a highly successful corporate consulting firm, Instruction House Ltd. You run the ship with an iron fist, demanding that all employees "give the firm their full commitment". In essence, it's a cult, centered on your persona. People are given "motivational talks" and repetitive task, as well as strongly required to neglect their families and other social relationships, if they want to stay employed and rise in rank. You pay so well, though, that surprisingly many people stay on board.

You are a malignant narcissist who thrives on controlling others. You completely lack the ability to feel other's pain, but you are rather adapt at anticipating their emotional reactions. You manipulate people more out of a pleasurable habit than any real need, and will do so under any circumstance, even when you should just stay quiet.

You have no illusions about the gravity of the current situation. You are more likely than not to die, but at least you can choose the way you are going to die, and just how many people you will be taking with you.

Robin

You are the over-critical parent, despite not having any children of your own - or a spouse, for that matter. You work as a high-school gym teacher, and in your spare time coach the school swimming team. You have a love of success, and are extremely harsh towards people who do not meet your criteria. Very few do. The fact that you too are a wash-out - a wannabe professional athlete who never was quite good enough - simply makes you more mean. You do not understand what a hypocrite you are.

You have now found yourself trapped with a bunch of people, most of whom are the weak links in life's chain. They should simply be kicked out, so that people like you can survive and triumph. Darwinism in

action. You will probably need allies here, as by yourself you can get mobbed by either the zombies or the losers around you.

You are really, really terrified of dying.

"Sarge"

You are a professional soldier, but you have no actual combat experience. You overcompensate through strict discipline, an image (true or false) of personal perfection, and bold claims. You demand the same from everyone else, too, but are often far harsher to them than yourself, despite what you think. You are very good at deceiving yourself, and therefore you never have to lie. You simply convince yourself of something being true, or the best course of action.

You like clear command structures, preferably ones with yourself on top. If there is none, you try and organize one, as that is the only way towards success. And, in this case, survival. You see the other people here as resources, not real persons.

Pauly

You are an anthropologist from the nearest university. The whole situation fascinates you far more than it frightens. It is sure to pass, and a local problem only, despite what the news may have claimed. You approach everything from an academic perspective, analyzing, dissecting and rationalizing things. In fact, you are not really good with practical things that deal with actual people, even when you are studying them. You have a spouse who is not here, and surely has survived, so you do not worry about anything except surviving long enough to publish a study on human behavior in zombie-surrounded areas, or maybe something on zombie sociology.

You speak in precise terms. Everything is always stated as "the essence of the situation", the "primary task", etc. You do not use idle words.

Charly

You are a rather stereotypical young eco-activist, preaching anti-authoritarianism, vegan commitment and political suspicion. You have always gotten along rather well with people your own age, even ones you strongly disagree with, but have serious problems with older people and anyone who tries to claim sole authority over any situation. You see yourself as the voice of confident reason, and that reason is always on the side of confident anarchy. You are not a believer in democratic means of resolving things (as most people are too stupid to be allowed a vote), but rather favor an approach where everyone gets their say, and then you guide the consensus to the right conclusion.

You really want to survive this catastrophe. In addition, you want to make sure that the good people survive it, too, as long as that does not compromise your own survival. and You'd love to see all the bad guys die,

as painfully as possible.

Bull

You are a professional truck-driver, owner of a big rig. You are a tough person, take no shit from anyone and follow your own lead in life. You have a tendency to make up your mind about something and then stick to that opinion, no matter what, but when survival is at stake, you are willing to adapt. You hate empty words and idle banter, always striving directly for the point. You have taken all that you needed in life by playing it fair and firm, and a bunch of zombies is not going to stop you.

While not saying it out loud, you look down upon people who do not work with their hands. You made your way here, to safety, by beating up zombies with your bare hands, and are damn proud of it. You can easily handle a few zombies, but in truth are quite frightened of the hordes outside. And the more insecure you get, the more aggressive you become.

Doc

You are a professional doctor, working at a public hospital. You are not very good at what you do, but have not committed any serious mistakes. Yet. You have come to believe that you would make a better researcher than a practitioner, even though you do have decent people skills. You are also rather ambitious, and looking for opportunities to shine everywhere. The current zombie crisis both frightens and inspires you. On one hand, you are really afraid of dying, on the other you see opportunity knocking. Being a rational person, you can't think of this as the end of the world, so at some point all of your first-hand knowledge of zombies will come in really handy. You wish you had paid more attention during the pathology lessons, though.

You have very strongly internalized the arrogant idea about medical doctors being essentially gods who can choose who gets to live and who does not. While you try to sound equal, that sense of superiority has a tendency to slip through.

You have the extra ability to fix small wounds without needing more tools, so that if people are hurt during play, you can keep them functional. You also recognize bite marks for what they are (use "meta", if necessary).

Emerson

You are a mechanical engineer, very recently retired. You spent your life fixing mostly air conditioning units, and feel happy about having contributed to the well-being of others. You have a slight tendency to look down on people with less life experience (i.e. nearly everyone), but you do respect professionalism when you see it. You have already accepted the idea that you are going to die soon, but you are terrified about becoming a zombie, a blasphemy of restful oblivion. You are a very devoted atheist, and all of this is thus partially funny, partially very scary.

You play to your strengths, and try to fit in with all kinds of people. To highly educated types you are the consummate trained, older professional, to fanatic blue-collar types you play the aspect of being a hands-on worker. You want to stand out and shine in any crowd, but always as a part of that crowd.

Red

You are a nurse who works at a dementia ward, so you are more a caregiver and a councilor than a medical professional these days. You are highly nurturing and supportive, but underneath it all is a very firm, tight edge. You simultaneously want to honestly help everyone and harbor an anger and frustration inside you. You hold in particular contempt those whom you see as emotional vampires, parasites who only take advantage of others by playing weak or falsifying a need. Caring about people who will never recover has also made you very cynical, and you do not hold high hopes of anyone's survival. You do not, however, want to become a zombie, as that may affect whether you get to heaven or not. For a devoted Christian like you, that is a very significant question, and one you'd be happy to debate with other people.

Cynical or not, you do not think lightly of human life, and oppose killing in all its forms. But if push comes to shove, you'd rather see someone evil die in your stead. You're kind and caring, not suicidal or stupid.

Wiz

You are a young, arrogant person who thinks (s)he's far more of an interesting outsider than actually is. You live with your parents, have just failed an university entrance exam (choose which), and work as a telemarketer. Your true calling, however, is magic. You are a very devoted, if unschooled, occultist (of a school of thought of your choice). You have high hopes that if you can watch someone turn into a zombie, or dissect a few of them, you can either put down the zombies for good - or learn how to control them and become the ruler of the world.

You are easily inspired, willing to obey authorities and play along in the short term, and very eager to survive. At the core, however, you are young and extremely arrogant. You simply try your best to be seen as a Devil's Advocate, the loyal opposition, rather than a threat. And in a situation like this, it is even more important.

Strangest of all, you really do have a bit of magical ability. Once, and once only, during the game, you can utter a spell and either kill a zombie or turn a failed door-opening into a safe one. You are not aware yourself of the fact that you can't repeat that success. Use "meta" to convey this effect, if/when you decide to use it.

A - Former lovers - You and another character here (lift up your right hand, palm open, both of you, to find each other) used to be lovers, but you broke up on bad terms. Some tension, both attraction and anger, is still in the air between the two of you. Agree with each other on your shared history before the game begins, but the two of you only recognize each other as the door closes the first time.

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A - Racist - You are an outspoken racist, possibly even a member of an openly violent racist group or a political party. You think all of this is "their" fault, whoever they may be. You can choose to either hate people from all other ethnic groups, or just a select group of people such as a religion or ethnicity. You are very outspoken about who should be blamed, and if there are members of that group present amongst the characters, you will be hostile towards them.

A - Misogynist/misandric - You hate the opposite sex, and consider them of far less value than your own. This may or may not reflect your sexual orientation (choose before the game). You take almost every opportunity to belittle their skills and contributions, and can get very ad hominem about it.

A - Vengeful - Someone here (both of you hold up your left hand in a fist, so as to find each other) has terribly hurt you in the past, either emotionally or physically, and you want revenge. Agree between the two of you how this has happened, and under which circumstances, before play begins.

A - Wrongdoer - You have hurt someone here (both of you hold up your left hand in a fist, so as to find each other) in the past very badly, either physically or emotionally. Agree between the two of you how and when before the game. You get to choose how you feel about this - you can choose to be ignorant of it, remorseful or proud. Do not tell the victim's player that part before the game.

A - Technical skills - You know how to operate and repair machinery really well, and that means any group of survivors should include you in it. You are not shy about this ability, and will seek out stuff to tinker with whenever you can, in addition to speaking about it.

A - Combat skill - You have formal combat training of some kind, to a very strong degree, and are thus able to defeat a group of attackers up to a size of two. Three people or more, however, can still throw you out or restrain you. If you're an attacker against someone living, you count as two people. Use "meta" to describe your skills when they come to play, and, if you can, act out the cool moves.

A - Marksman - You are a crack shot with a firearm. Too bad you do not have a weapon with you right now, but it would make you extremely valuable, should you have access to one later on. Use this to your advantage.

A - First Aid - You are able to heal small wounds and bruises, and are able to recognize the bite marks of a zombie for what they are, if you see them (use "meta" to use this trait).

B - Fresh trauma - coming here, you experienced something really unpleasant (decide what), which has left you in a mentally weakened condition. You will repeatedly mention this problem, but are able to hold your mouth for a while before the thoughts creep up again. If threatened with the same situation, you will either panic or become very aggressive. Examples include witnessing a friend being eaten by a horde of zombies, being forced to kill someone you love or a child zombie, etc. Be very graphic about the experience when you speak of it.

B - Bitten - you were bitten by a zombie just before you got here, and have hidden the wound (choose its location, and if you are forced to show it, "meta" tell anyone seeing that you have a bite-like wound there). About 30 minutes after the game starts, you begin to feel a feverish chill, which grows slowly worse. At about an hour, you die and become a zombie (choose how fast). The zombie is slow, but will require at least three people to throw out safely. You do not get a chance to bite anyone, but do not tell the other players that. Let them worry. If your character is killed inside the room prematurely, you also rise a few moments later as a zombie.

B - Claustrophobic - You have a fear of enclosed spaces, and being here like a caged tiger is slowly driving you insane. You are still very much aware of the zombies outside, so you are not going to panic and run away either. Pace around the area, as if looking for a secret way out, and mention the way all of you are surrounded and slowly being surely crushed, several times.

B - Survivor - If you are thrown or sent out, you actually survive! You are not, however, aware of this yourself, so do not be willing to be killed. You will resist by any means necessary being forced to leave. When thrown out, shout in surprised triumph from the outside that the way is free, instead of the normal screams of being ripped to shreds. If you for some reason do leave of your own volition, you die just like anyone else.

B - Zombieified love - one person very dear to you is right outside, as a zombie. Choose who. This shocks you a lot, and you speak about it often. None of the others have surely encountered this thing on such a personal level, so if they say it's insignificant, you become angered.

B - Sick - You are sick with a fever and some coughing, but it's just a normal flu, not the zombie plague. Cough and shiver on occasion. If examined, you will feel warm to the touch, but there are no bite or scratch marks on you anywhere (use "meta" to describe these). The sickness is so mild that it does not affect your physical or mental faculties in any way.

B - Scavenger - You are really good with scavenging stuff, and getting by in adverse circumstances. If it weren't for the zombies, you could live quite well outside on your own until a natural death due to old age. You would thus also be a very useful person to any group of survivors, so feel free to advertise this skill of yours.

B - Escape vehicle - You have access to a very good escape vehicle of some kind nearby, one you know

how to use. Choose what it is before the game begins, and tell it to the GM. The problem is that you need at least one other character with you to get to it (and a safe escape from here somehow), but it has room only for up to (number of players in the game, minus two) people. You think you and any people tagging along could slip to that vehicle, if you'd throw a couple of other people to the zombies as bait, and really run for it then.

B - Cold Turkey - You are addicted to either a strong drug or alcohol, and are already suffering withdrawal. You'll feel shivers and nausea, so play along these. You are ashamed of this problem, and thus not really willing to talk about it. You have no physical marks to prove that the symptoms come from your addiction (i.e. if you for example use intravenous drugs, you inject them into areas where no permanent marks form, or at least have not so far formed.)

B - Pilot - You know how to fly small planes and even helicopters, so if you had access to one, you could get to safety. You are very proud of this hobby of yours, but you do not own a plane or a helicopter yourself.

B - Armory - You have access to a significant cache of firearms, within a reasonable driving distance from here. There are enough guns to protect about five people for a long time.