

# WRETCHED WASTELAND



WRETCHED  
& ALONE





"The trouble you're expecting never happens; it's always something that sneaks up the other way."

– **George R. Stewart, Earth Abides**

"I survived because the fire inside burned brighter than the fire around me. I fell down into that dark chasm, but the flame burned on and on"

– **Joshua Graham, Fallout: New Vegas**

"Men can be brilliant and strong, they whispered to one another. But men can be mad, as well. And the mad ones can ruin the world."

– **David Brin, The Postman**

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# Who?

You are a scout from a post-apocalyptic compound, and you have just discovered a large raider camp, it is your job to get back to The Compound and warn your people.

There is a vast dangerous wasteland that separates you from your goal. Mutated animals, a burning hot sun, treacherous ruined land, wanderers of the waste, lack of water...

And a raider has just spotted the reflection of your binoculars.

You're low on supplies, out of ammo, and trying to keep two steps ahead of a pack of raiders while dodging the worst the wasteland can conjure.

You'll be right, kid.

# What?

Wretched Wasteland is a game about survival. Survival in a world torn apart by war. It is a game about the few people that still inhabit the Earth and the dangers they face.

Your character is a scout from The Compound, a small bastion of civilisation. As a scout, you have seen what the wasteland has done to people. How it has infected their minds and turned them into murderers, thieves, and cannibals. You know what horrors exist out in the wastes.

A scout knows that patience and a slow pace are key to survival. However, you must move at a dangerous speed to make it back in time.

Wretched Wasteland is a re-skin [The Wretched](#) by Chris Bessitte. It takes inspiration from video games Fallout 1 & Fallout 2 by Interplay, the music of [The Goondock Saint](#) & [Mark Morgan](#), and books *The Postman* by David Brin, *Earth Abides* by George R. Stewart, and *The Gunslinger* by Stephen King.

# When?

April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1985 the fighting started.

They fought for the control of fossil fuels and the domination of their cultural philosophies. It started with the *Mega-Mechs*. Huge mechanical war machines designed to reduce the loss of life. Titans that fought with lasers, fire, and rockets.

But it did not take long before the thermo-nuclear weapons were deployed & destroyed large sections of civilisation. The nuclear fallout quickly killed those nearby and lead to a nuclear winter.

Sickness spread across the globe and the human race dwindled.

Small bastions of hope survived and over the last 200 hundred years, they have been scrounging and scavenging. The world as we knew it was gone. The few remaining humans carve out a living however they can.

The Wasteland is a cruel master.



# How?

To play you'll need a standard deck of cards with no jokers, a single 6-sided die, a tumbling block tower, and token of some kind to mark your progress on the map. You may want to print out a copy of the map as well, but that's not essential.

You will also need some way to record your game. Audio or video logs work best, speaking into a microphone or a camera at the end of each day, but use whatever you prefer – a physical journal, or social media. The world stopped in 1985, so a Walkman would also work well.

There is only one way out of this situation, and everything is a barrier to your success. You must reach The Compound before the raiders catch up with you.

There are many ways to die in the wastes.

# The Map

The map represents your progress through the wasteland. Your token will start at the top on the X tile. At the end of each day, you must roll a six-sided dice to move your token to the next tile.

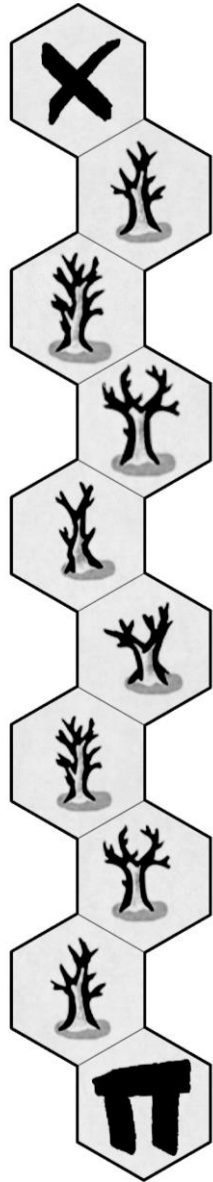
On the **first two tiles**, rolling a 4, 5, or 6 will advance you to the next tile.

On **the next two tiles** rolling a 5 or 6 will advance you to the next tile.

On **all other tiles**, you must roll a 6 to advance to the next tile.

Rolling a 1 represents **getting lost and you move your token back one tile**. Reasons for this may include a bridge collapsing, sandstorms, heavy rains, being chased by savages, or any other interference that appropriately suits your journey.

**When you make it to the last tile, you win.**

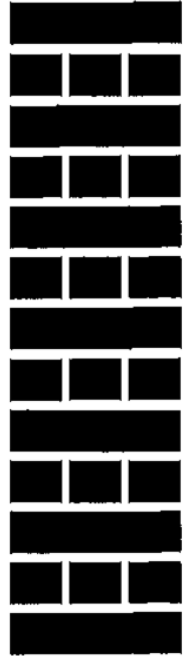


# It Begins

Set up the tumbling block tower as you normally would for games of that nature. Roll your die, and complete that many pulls from the tower. The tower represents **your physical and mental health** as move through the wasteland.

If it falls at any time, you have given up all hope or sustained too many injuries, and it results in your death and the game is over. You will become another pile of dried bones for the wastes to consume. If you do not have access to a tumbling block tower you do not need to use one and may ignore any instances where you are asked to pull from the tower. The wasteland or the raiders will take you instead.

Shuffle the deck of playing cards and place them face down within easy reach. If you wish to play a shorter game, make sure the Ace of Hearts is the top card of the deck.



# The Log

Record your first audio log, reading from the script as follows:

*First day of return trip, Scout (Your name) reporting. I've spotted a large raider camp roughly ten days out from The Compound. One of them saw me. They'll be on my tail. I've got no ammo left, a little food, and a little water. However, if the weather stays in-check, and I don't come across anything too nasty, I can make it back in time. (your name) out.*

All subsequent reports should begin with the statement "X day of return trip, Scout (your name) reporting". Should you die in the wasteland, and another scout finds your remains, they can use the information you have discovered to help The Compound. The information you put into the log is your choice, but at least cover the events of the day.

Now you are ready to begin.

# The Day

The game is divided into days. Each day has two phases: The Journey, and The Log.

## Phase One: The Journey

- Roll your die and draw that number of cards from the deck, lay them out face up.
- This where you build the narrative of the day. Consult the Survival Guide to see what each card means.
- Resolve each card in the order that you believe builds the best narrative.
- When you have completed all events for the day, discard the cards you have used unless you are told otherwise.
- Roll your die to check your progress on the map, refer to The Map page for details.

## Phase Two: The Log

- Take a moment to consider the events of the day, think about what you had to do, and how that would have impacted you physically and mentally.
- Record your audio log for the day.

# The Survival Guide

You will consult The Survival Guide every time you draw a card. The guide will assign you a task that must complete. These tasks may require you to pull a brick from the tower. Some will pose questions or problems that need solving. Others are different again; nothing is certain in the wastes.

## Hearts

Hearts represent your **Daily Struggle** to survive in the wasteland. When you draw a heart, you are struggling to survive in the wastes; locating water and food, and handling the harsh environment.



## Diamonds

Diamonds represent the **Relics of the Past** you discover in the wastes. When you draw a diamond, you are finding locations and items from a lost civilisation.



## Clubs

Clubs represent **The Raiders**, the vilest bunch of murderers in the wastes. They are close behind you. They are hunting you and toying with you.



## Spades

Spades represent the weirdness that can be found in the wastes, **the Wasteland Wonders**. When you draw a spade, you are interacting with the wonders of the wasteland; for good or for worse.



# Daily Struggle



- A** You discover a battered but serviceable compass! With this, you will be able to ensure you're on the right path. ***Pull from the tower. Do not discard this card—*** instead, place it next to your map as a reminder.
- You can no longer get lost while traveling in the wastes and rolling a 1 no longer pushes you back a tile.
- 2** Water... Water running freely in the wastes. You have discovered a small natural spring. The water looks clean, but do you drink it?
- 3** You drop the small canteen of water you carry, and it cracks, the precious liquid inside leaking away. You must spend the remainder of the day repairing it. How do you repair it? ***Pull from the tower. Do not roll to move to the next tile.***
- 4** In the backroom of an old grocery store, long since ransacked, you discover three tins of dog food. This is a rare find. Did you enjoy eating it?
- 5** No food today. What happened? How did it run out? Or what events stopped you from eating? ***Pull from the tower.***
- 6** The hunger has gotten too much, and you decided to hunt for food. What do you use? What do you find?
- 7** While traversing a steep incline on a gravelly hill, you lose your footing and tumble to the bottom, grazing and bruising your leg. What do you do when you reach the bottom? ***Pull from the tower.***
- 8** The wind howls and picks up speed, blasting sand across the wastes. The sky turns that familiar orange. Sandstorm approaches. Where do you wait out the storm? ***Do not roll to move to the next tile.***
- 9** Waste sickness is upon you... your skin is red and puffy. Your stomach churns and you are short of breath. You know this can kill. What do you have in your pack to help you?
- 10** The bridge you used coming through this way has collapsed since you last crossed it. Do you try to swim across and ***pull from the tower*** or walk along the river to the next bridge and ***do not roll to move to the next tile?***
- J** You find the tracks of a large beast in the sand. Much larger than you and it has been through recently, very recently. You can't hear it... and you don't want to see it. How do you ensure you will avoid it? What do you think it is? ***Pull from the tower.***
- Q** You sit and eat in the shade. Your stomach fills and you feel a strange sense of peace. What goes through your mind as contemplate the days ahead?
- K** A bullet ricochets of the wall beside you, fragments of brick scatter across your face. The Raiders are upon you! What do you do to evade them? ***Do not discard this card.*** Place it where you can see it. If this is the fourth King you have drawn, the Raiders have caught you. The game is over.

# Relics of the Past



- A** A bunker sealed and empty. With a bed. You could spend the night sleeping in a bed. Do you stay? **Roll the dice twice to move to the next tile and take the highest result.**
- 2** The remains of a children's playground in the valley. The wind blows the swings, and the merry-go-round whines as the rusted metal slowly turn. This was a place of happiness in the Old World. What does it look like to you now?
- 3** A huge building sticks out from the rubble. Above two large double doors is a sign that reads 'Now Showing: Die Hard'. The door hangs open, do you go in? What do you see?
- 4** The remains of a two-story school loom in the distance, one half of it collapsed. Paper skitters and floats along the ground, propelled by the wind. Its classrooms and halls empty. Do you enter? What do you see?
- 5** A small lunch box. The content rattles as you pick it up. A small padlock and a lot of tape have sealed it shut but eventually, you pry it open. It is filled with a collection of bottle caps. What do you do with this discovery?
- 6** The charred remains of a robotic assistant lay in the dirt. Its circuitry exposed, its dead eyes staring straight at you. What do its lifeless eyes remind you of?
- 7** A collection of large hardcover books falls out of a turned over bookshelf. They seem to be reference manuals filled with paintings of horrid creatures. Did these things once roam the old world? What do you do with the books?
- 8** You see one of the mega-mechs the Old Worlorder's used in battle as you crest a hill. Once an intricate machine of war and destruction it now just a huge pile of scrap metal. What images does the sight conjure in your mind?
- 9** Someone's home. You can tell which rooms were for sleeping and which were shared. A family lived here perhaps. They enjoyed a peaceful life. Does that matter anymore? Will you stay there?
- 10** A bike! The rubber tyres have rusted out, but you can still ride it. If you know how to ride, then **roll the dice twice to move to the next tile and take the highest result.**
- J** The charred remains of the forest stretch out for miles. There is something fundamentally wrong with the land. You've only seen it in pictures. But you know these places were once green and filled with life. How does this make you feel?
- Q** A city, off in the distance. Smoke billows from it, you can hear the occasional gunshots. Those ancient ruined cities are dangerous, too many people converge on them in search of supplies. Have you ever been? Do you want to?
- K** They are on you. Their feet pound the ground behind you. You can smell their sour body odour. You run, and run, and push yourself. Do they get you? ***Do not discard this card.*** Place it where you can see it. If this is the fourth King you have drawn, the Raiders have caught you. The game is over.



# The Raiders



- A** In the early morning, a lone raider approaches your small camp. They come with their hands up. A deserter, they want to join you on your way back to the compound. What do you do? **Pull from the tower. Roll the dice twice to move to the next tile.**
- 2** A thick black smoke begins to engulf you. The Raiders have set fire to pile of tyres to smoke you how. Your eyes sting and your lungs burn. How do you react? **Pull from the tower.**
- 3** A crackle and then a hiss. A voice comes booming through the ruined streets. They're using some sort of voice modulator to taunt you. They make strange sounds and describe what they will do to you. **Pull from the tower.**
- 4** The knife glimmers in the sunlight. Somehow this Raider got right to you. They slash at you with the jagged blade. Through cunning, brawn, or dumb luck you manage to escape. How did you get away? **Pull from the tower.**
- 5** You don't hear or see any sign of the Raiders for hours that day. How does it make you feel? Is it a false comfort or a lingering sense of unease? **You decide whether you pull from the tower.**
- 6** As you lay and rest you hear them. They have set up their camp just on the other side of the hill. They are so close you can hear them talking. What do they say? **Pull from the tower.**
- 7** Bullets pepper the ground behind you. The Raiders are taking potshots at you from a distance. They could get you whenever they wanted, but they want to have fun. How do you respond? **Pull from the tower.**
- 8** You hear the howl of their dogs. The rabid, starving mongrels they have trained to hunt and kill. Their guttural growls and barks pierce through the silence of the wastes. Upon hearing them, what goes through your mind and what do you do? **Pull from the tower.**
- 9** The dogs are on you! They bite at your heels and their barks assault your ears. If you manage to evade them, how did you do it? **Pull from the tower.**
- 10** You hear the mad, violent outcry of the Raiders as you rest. It's almost as if they are celebrating but in the most brutal way. Excessive rotgut whiskey and chems fuelling their madness. What does it sound like? **Pull from the tower.**
- J** Violence. It is their way of life. You can hear them fighting and their shouting escalates until, finally, you hear a gunshot. They kill their own with no thought on consequence or camaraderie. **Pull from the tower.**
- Q** Rain. Toxic and poisonous, but at least you know what even the Raiders will be out in it. Today you can be at ease, so long as you have shelter.
- K** They came as the sun rose. Three of them dressed in leathers with helmets fashioned from scrap metal. Makeshift guns and batons of steel. **Do not discard this card.** Place it where you can see it. If this is the fourth King you have drawn, the Raiders have caught you. The game is over.

# Wasteland Wonders



- A** You are taken as you sleep. You feel their hands wrap around your ankles first. Then your face is covered. **You have drawn the death card. The game is over.**
- 2** You find a small cache of homemade hallucinogens. They look potent, and like someone will be coming back for them. What do you do?
- 3** A friendly face is a strange occurrence, sometimes the wastes bless you. It's another scout out on patrol. They supply information on the surrounding area. **Pull from the tower. Roll the dice twice to move to the next tile.**
- 4** The something vile growing in the wastes. Its pungent stench drifts over the land. A mutation of vegetation, a living mass of the carnivorous plant. Many have spoken of it, but never seen it, until now. What does it look like?
- 5** Their gibbering and ranting echoes through the wasted streets. They come shuffling toward you, another loner who has lost their mind while wandering the decimated landscape. They ask, 'Have you seen the broken light of the forgotten Mothers?' How do you respond? **Pull from the tower.**
- 6** You smell them first. A fallen scout in the rubble, no sign of conflict, just another casualty of the wasteland. You search their pack, as per scout protocol, recover some water and their recordings. They know the area well, **roll the dice twice to move to the next tile.**
- 7** 'Drop your stuff, all of it.' You are confronted by a man in road leathers, brandishing a sawn-off shotgun. He is breathing heavily, sweat beads, and drips off his brow. How do you get out of this situation? **Pull from the tower.**
- 8** White fur covers their sleek bodies. Radiation and the struggle for survival have mutated the rats in their area. They scamper as you walk through the area. They look delicious. What do you do?
- 9** You stand in what looks like the crater from a bomb blast. But when you step back... it's a gigantic clawed footprint. Something huge has grown in the deep wastes and made its way thought here. You are small and insignificant. **Pull from the tower.**
- 10** He kneels beside an open grave and weeps, the body that lays in it is covered. The mismatched armour and ramshackle weapons brand them as a Raider. They haven't noticed you yet. What do you do?
- J** They are gathered in a circle, chanting in a language you do not understand. Eight of them dressed in dark robes covering bodies. The chanting gets louder until they are screaming. Then one of them falls to the ground and the others jump on them tearing them apart and eating their flesh. **Pull from the tower.**
- Q** A tiny flash of green. Looking down you see the sapling growing through the rough soil. Fresh plant life growing in the wastes. What do you do with it?
- K** The bullet hits you and you fall to the ground. The hot sun-scorched sand burns your skin. **Do not discard this card.** Place it where you can see it. If this is the fourth King you have drawn, the Raiders have caught you. The game is over.



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