

APOCALYPSE GALACTICA

FORWARD

I'm not a game designer. Someday maybe, but not today and not this game. This isn't a complete creation like Dungeon World or Monsterhearts, it's a reskin of Apocalypse World to fit in the Battlestar Galactica universe. None of the playbooks are direct cut overs and I did make a couple of changes to the basic moves, but I'll detail all of that below, and you'll see it isn't much.

This is my own hack that I love and enjoy and want to share. However, I don't own any of it. I built it on the backs of giants before me. Go buy Apocalypse World written by Vincent Baker. It is awesome and you can't play this without it. Also, if you haven't seen it already, watch the re-imagined Battlestar Galactica series owned by Syfy. I borrowed a lot of ideas (crisis, some of the moves, etc) from the Battlestar Galactica board game by Fantasy Flight Games. Go buy and play that game. It's a blast. Those folks own all the copyrights to all of this.

WHAT I'VE DONE

What Apocalypse Galactica does is give you is some ready-to-go playbooks for the player characters, the fleet and the Battlestar. It also includes some fronts (which I've called crises), Cylon playbooks (for characters that reveal themselves as Cylons), and love letters I've written for the two scenarios that I've run.

WHAT I STILL NEED TO DO

What Apocalypse Galactica still needs is Cylon playbooks for the existing

models. I'm starting on Six right now, but I hope to have all seven of them done in the future.

I also need feedback on some particular sticking points that I'm still not sure about. So, if you play the game and have ideas, please share them with me.

WHAT HAS CHANGED FROM APOCALYPSE WORLD

Some things have just been renamed but are otherwise identical:

- Weird has been renamed to Faith
- Front has been renamed to Crisis
- Other minor flavor changes to reflect the setting of BSG.

Some things have changed on a mechanical level

Hx is assigned differently. There are default values between each playbook and PCs. When creating characters, the player can change one of those to +3 and explain why they care about the other PC (I butt up against, I command, I don't trust, I am in love with, etc).

Hx can be highlighted like a stat to mark experience for helping or interfering.

There is an improvement option called "Reveal yourself as a Cylon" and a Cylon playbook the character then takes. When say "reveal" I mean to the players. The characters find out through play. Also, nobody is going to tell you what to do as a Cylon. If you've seen the show, you know what to do. If not imagine you're self as a double agent working for the other side. Maybe you're a sleeper agent who just realized that all along they were trained to betray the people they love, or maybe you've been hiding it all along. Either way, even though the humans will call you a machine, and hate you for your very existence, you feel just as much as they do, and the bonds you've created with them are very real to you, even if they reject you. Play that up.

Most of the playbooks have been cobbled together with moves from the Apocalypse World playbooks, but some moves have been created using those moves as a template or inspiration. If you've played Apocalypse World,

you'll recognize most of them.

Since there are MANY leader characters (Commander, CAG, XO, if/when I create the book, and potentially the President, Captain and Pilot) I have made the Hardholder's "Leadership" move into a Basic move. (Note to self: So far nobody has used it, so I'm thinking about removing it.)

WORKING WITH CANON

Most folks I have talked to don't feel comfortable planning the canon characters (Apollo, Starbuck, Rosslyn, etc). So, I've created a Fleet playbook that allows the group to create a fleet of their own, including the rationale for why your fleet is the last remaining survivors being chased down by the Cylons. You can play without the Fleet playbook if your game is going to be on a smaller scale (a single ship for instance) but it's there if you want it.

I also have a Battlestar playbook, for much the same purpose. When I play a "main cast" game, I use both of them and let the players be the Commander, President and other important figures. They like having crazy power and as the MC that makes your job incredibly easy, as their power also means they have ludicrous responsibility.

LOVE LETTERS

I've written two sets of love letters. One is for a mixed group of civilian and military characters that command the fleet (I require one player to play either the Commander or President, both can be played as well). The letters deal with both fleet-wide and personal crises. The scenario is named after this hack: Apocalypse Galactica

The second set is for a very specific scenario. If you are a fan of the show, and I hope you are, you'll remember the first episode of Season One (after the miniseries) called "33.. These love letters are written to the crew and passengers of the Olympic Carrier, the ship that was destroyed at the end of the episode by Apollo. The letters beg the question: What happened onboard the Olympic Carrier? This scenario is named after the episode: 33

FEEDBACK I'M LOOKING FOR

Should the XO be a playbook? Right now "a loyal XO" is an option on the Commanders playbook. Should he have a book of his own? Should I make the Commander playbook more flexible to cover either the Commander or the XO (calling him a Military Leader, etc)?

Should the CAG lead with hot rather than sharp? Currently the CAG is good at leading his pilots through strategy. If you've played any of John Harper's military hack The Regiment, the CAG was designed with the Lieutenant in mind. The more I think of him though, the more I want him to lead with hot, as a passionate and emotional leader rather than a tough as bricks (hard) or cunning (sharp) leader.

Should the "Leadership" move even exist as a basic move? Since multiple characters might do it, I moved it to basic moves, but I've never seen anyone use it. Insubordination happens in Battlestar Galactica but it isn't a common outcome and when it does come up, the consequences are usually very extreme. That said I usually assume troops will follow orders and perform actions (like seize by force, go agro, and act under fire) and don't need Leadership to send them into action. On the flip side, if someone is insubordinate or even mutinous, I want to see the leaders cracking down on them personally. For all those reasons, I think Leadership may be superfluous.

IN CLOSING

Please enjoy this hack. If you have feedback, send it to me at seannittner@gmail.com. Also, check back often, as this document and the playbooks will be updated as I work things out. Thank you for playing and go waste some frakking toasters.

SO SAY WE ALL!