

A Modest Proposal

the farm is a horror roleplaying game about the lives and deaths of people trapped in a mysterious place called "the Farm." Players start the game knowing precious little of their environment or their fellow captives.

Over the course of the game, they'll learn more about the dire situation in which they now find themselves. They'll make hard choices, see horrific things and maybe, just maybe, they'll make their escape.

Eventually, everyone leaves the Farm.

Survival of the Fittest

the farm is a game about survival against all odds and at all costs. The player characters in this game are average human beings from all walks of life. The one thing they all share in common is that they have all been brought to a place called the Farm.

Awareness

You awake in a strange place.

A light flickers overhead. Your skin is cold. You hear the sounds of other people as they wake up. You smell sweat. The ringing in your ears begins to fade. Your head hurts.

Your eyes soon grow accustomed to the darkness and vague shapes sharpen into focus. Your stomach aches, as if you haven't eaten for days. Your throat is dry.

You wear unfamiliar clothing. Gray pants and a gray shirt, both with a black stripe running down the side. What is this?

Someone coughs, clearing their throat. You hear footsteps from outside the room. Then, a knock on the door. A smiling man enters. He wears a gold-striped shirt and pants.

He speaks, and you realize where you are.

The Heart of the Matter

the farm

The Heart of the Matter...

...is that the residents of the Farm have been captured and brought here so they may be slaughtered and eaten by a mysterious group of people called the Headmasters.

Game Mechanics

the farm uses six-sided dice and each player needs a minimum of four dice. As these dice can be gathered into a shared pool, it helps if each player's dice are unique in some way (this distinction is not necessary if one person is supplying the dice for the entire group). The GM should keep a separate group of between six and ten dice.

Skills

Skills fall under the headings of either Stamina (for physical skills) or Psyche (for mental skills). This score represents the number of dice rolled when attempting any skill under that heading.

A rating of 0 in either Psyche or Stamina prevents the player from rolling any dice when attempting certain skills.

Each skill is listed with a number between 1 and 6. Rather than represent a measure of ability in the skill, this number acts as the target needed to score a success.

For instance, if your Athletics skill number is 4, then whenever you roll the dice for an Athletics test, you need at least one die to come up 4. Multiple 4's (in this cast) would net multiple successes.

The six skills (grouped by heading) are:

Stamina

Athletics: physical fitness and agility.

Combat: fighting ability.

Stealth: ability to conceal oneself or to conceal other things.



the farm

a roleplaying game of hunger and horror

the farm

Skills - Psyche

Psyche

Knowledge: general education and/or intelligence.

Perception: ability to notice details.

Willpower: ability to resist mental fatigue or even stronger wills.

Leaders, Loners & Followers

The Leader holds a unique position in the players' social group. Whenever a test is declared, players may choose not to roll the dice themselves. Instead, they may hand their dice to the Leader who then rolls them as a large pool of dice.

Players who contribute to the Leader's die pool are called Followers. Those that choose not to contribute are called Loners.

After the Leader rolls the dice he should sort them all out according to number (all the 1's are sorted together, all the 2's are sorted together, etc.).

He then asks each player what number they need. The Leader hands-out a number of successes to each player, usually based on that player's request.

Players cannot receive more than one number (if the Leader rolls four 3's, four 5's and two 6's, the Leader may only give successes that count as either 3 or 5 or 6).

The Leader is in no way obligated to give the players what they request. The Leader gets whatever successes are left at the end of the hand-out (but may only use one of the numbers depending on the skill he wants to use).

The Leader is voted into office by the group during any of the three feeding times. The Leader can be recalled (and a new one elected) at any subsequent feeding time. Other forms of election may take place should the players decide to abandon democratic concepts.

Each point of Strain temporarily reduces the character's Psyche by one point. Characters may not fall below 0 Psyche.

The GM can call for a simple Strain test any time a character experiences or witnesses a traumatic event. In a simple Strain test, the player must roll Psyche and score at least one Willpower success.

If the roll fails, reduce the character's Psyche by one point.

If player involved in a die pool is ordered to do something traumatic by a Leader, there is no Strain test.

Torture

Even the strongest character cannot hold out forever. Torturers use either Knowledge or Combat (depending on their methods). Victims resist using their Willpower.

If a character is tortured, roll Psyche and score at least one Willpower success to keep from breaking under the strain. This success is necessary even if the torturer scores no successes. Reduce the torturer's successes by the victim's success. The victim gains this amount of Strain.

If the torturer scores no successes, the victim suffers a Wound (see below) - even if the victim did roll successes.

Like I said, no one can hold out forever.

Wounds

Physical trauma is dealt in "Wounds." Each Wound you receive drops your Stamina by one point. If your Stamina is ever reduced to 0, make a Psyche roll. You need to score one Willpower success to remain conscious.

Combat

the farm

If your Stamina drops below 0, your character falls unconscious and is at risk of dying. Make a Psyche roll, looking for a number of Willpower successes equal to the negative Stamina. If you fail this roll, your character dies. Success on this roll enables your character to remain alive, albeit unconscious.

Example:

A character's Stamina has fallen to -2. He must score two Willpower successes to remain alive.

Combat

The Combat skill is used to fight and to kill. Roll Stamina dice against your opponent. Your opponent resists with either his Athletics skill (to dodge) or Combat skill (to try and kill you before you kill him).

Dodging:

Roll Stamina. Each Athletics success reduces the number of Wounds suffered by one. If you roll as many Athletics success (or more) than your opponent's Combat successes, you avoid taking any Wounds.

Counter-attacks:

Roll Stamina. Each Combat success results in a Wound for the other combatant. If these Wounds would reduce your opponent's Stamina to -1 or lower, you suffer Strain instead of Wounds. If both combatants would be reduced to Stamina -1 or lower, both combatants suffer the full number of Wounds.

Non-lethal fights:

If the fight is non-lethal in nature (GM's call), those involved by choose to suffer Strain instead of Wounds. Any Strain sustained in a lethal or non-lethal fight that would reduce your Psyche to -1 or below results in Wounds instead.

If there is no Leader chosen for the group, then the group cannot use the shared die pool rules.

The Pig

At any time during the hand-out (but before they themselves receive successes), a player can announce to the group: "I am a pig. Give me all the..." followed by a number. That player receives all the successes rolled for that number. The other players cannot interrupt this process. The current Leader can never be the Pig.

Skill Debt

It's possible to "loan" successes to other players in order to help them out. This act of charity will cause you to go into Skill Debt. If you roll the dice and receive three 5's and another player needs 5's to make their roll, you may give them any or all of those successes in order to help them out.

Unfortunately, this means that you are "down" that many successes on that particular skill. So if I give the player those 5's and my number 5 skill is Knowledge, I'll be at -3 when making a Knowledge roll.

You may not pay back another player's Skill Debt. Nor may a Leader give you dice to pay back Skill Debt. You must either roll that number during a test (each successes removes a point of Skill Debt) or you must be the Pig during the hand-out from the Leader's die pool. Until the Skill Debt is paid, you will be unable to score any successes using that skill.

Strain

Strain represents the mental trauma and exhaustion that plagues characters. Strain can be gained from several sources: exertion, torture, prolonged periods without food or sleep and other kinds of stress.

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Weapons & Equipment

The weapons and equipment rules are quite simple: a character or NPC that uses weapons or equipment gains an automatic success when performing relevant actions.

Recovery

Characters recover from Strain at a rate of three Psyche points per day (once at breakfast, once at lunch and once at dinner). Leaders regain Psyche at a rate of once/day (player's choice as to when the recovery takes place).

Stamina points are re-gained at a rate of once per day provided the character is able to eat, rest and (if the character is seriously injured) have access to medical care (i.e.: Hospital).

Characters at Stamina 0 or lower can be aided by another person using the Knowledge skill.

A single Knowledge success is required to heal a character from Stamina 0 to Stamina 1. To heal someone with negative Stamina by one point, the healer must score

that many Knowledge successes (e.g. to heal someone with Stamina -3, three Knowledge successes must be rolled). Failing this roll puts the patient in jeopardy and forces that player to make a Psyche roll to stay alive.

If feeding time is missed for some reason, Recovery cannot take place.

Hide & Seek

The skills of Stealth and Perception always oppose one another. If one character uses Stealth to hide, another character can use Perception to try and spot him. Stealth can also be used to hide things (extra rations, escape equipment or a trap of some kind).

...then this means that when I roll my Athletics skill, I want to roll as many 1's as possible on four dice. If I need to make a Perception roll, I want to roll as many 5's as possible on four dice.

Starting the Game

When residents of the Farm first arrive, they are members of Group 6. As time progresses, they change groups (Group 6 becomes Group 5...all the way to Group 1). Each time the game is played, the players move to the next group.

Groups share sleeping space in the Dormitory and eat together at one table. If the group survives to reach Group 1, they will be killed and served to the Headmasters as food at the end of the game.

Each character also has a Personal Number (a number between 1 and 6) used to designate their position at the group's table and in Dormitory, where the group sleeps.

Players should sit in order of their characters' Personal Numbers.

At the start of the game, the players should (as a group) decide how long they've been at the Farm. This translates into the maximum number of game sessions that the group will play. Normally, the players start as members of Group 6.

Tokens

If the group chooses to start at another number, the group gets one "Token" for each step closer to Group 1 (Group 5 members receive one Token, Group 1 members receive five Tokens). These Tokens are shared by the group and are usually held by the Leader.

Tokens may also be spent to "buy" extra meals (and heal Strain) or to purchase other material goods or favors from the Tenders. When the group moves up a step, unused Tokens are lost and new Tokens are given out.

Identification

Residents of the Farm, although free to use their real names, are addressed by the Headmasters, Minders and Tenders by number. Because of the high turnover at the Farm, the Headmasters adopted this numbering system to expedite administrative tasks.

This number (acquired at the time of processing) is composed of the Group Number, followed by a dash, and ending with a resident's Personal Number. For example, a resident in the fourth seat of Group 5 would be identified as 5-4. Residents refer to one another by both name and number (e.g. Carlos 5-5 or Jane 2-1). Last names are never used.

New Characters

When a seat within a group becomes available due to unforeseen circumstances, it is filled by a resident with the same Personal Number from the next Group down (Resident 5-5 leaves Group 5 and becomes Resident 4-5).

This is called "promotion." The new group member is separated from his or her former compatriots and joins the new group.

Note: It is common for members of Group 1 to refer to one another by name and Personal Number (e.g. Vernon 6 or Peggy-Sue 3).

NPC's

Non-player characters include residents of the Farm, guards (called Minders), people who run the Farm's daily operations (Tenders) and those who rule over the Farm, the Headmasters. For purposes of die rolling, treat all NPC's as having these skills:

Athletics	1	Knowledge	4
Combat	2	Perception	5
Stealth	3	Willpower	6

Only the Psyche and Stamina scores will change from NPC to NPC.

Character Creation

The Farm uses a fairly simple character creation system. Characters in this game are average people from all walks of life and the system is meant to be an abstract appraisal of their overall physical and mental health. There are no "experts" in any particular skill, merely men and women

who are either more physically or mentally capable. Although this is not a "play yourself" roleplaying game, players should use their own names and ages when playing the game.

Establishing Psyche and Stamina

It's always assumed that six people are playing this game. You may play with less than six but never more than six. There are 48 points for the entire group to use for their Psyche and Stamina scores. Psyche and Stamina are used to determine how many dice a player rolls when performing an action.

It is highly suggested that each player puts four points into both their Psyche and their Stamina scores.

Individual players may wish to start with more or less but the group total cannot exceed the number of players x 8.

Establishing Skills

There are three Stamina (physical) skills and three Psyche (mental) skills. You should number each of these skills from 1 to 6. No one skill may share the same number as another skill.

This number represents the target number needed when rolling the dice. If my skills are laid out like this:

Stamina	4	Psyche	4
Athletics	1	Knowledge	4
Combat	2	Perception	5
Stealth	3	Willpower	6

Establishing Skills

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Tenders

The euphemism for "prisoner" or "captive" at the Farm is "resident." The other residents are typical people with similar backgrounds as the player characters. They dress in the same gray, black-striped clothing and tennis shoes (no laces) and must follow the same rules and regulations. They will also meet the same fate as the PC's when they reach Group 1.

Residents have Psyche and Stamina scores of 4. Some of them may be Strained or Wounded and will have decreased scores. All residents' numbers are sewn to their shirts.

Tenders

Tenders are among the most frequently encountered residents of the Farm (other than residents). They serve as cafeteria workers, custodians, nurses, groundskeepers and in other menial capacities. They are easily recognized by the different-colored stripes on their uniforms:

C-Class Tenders wear green and blue stripes and serve as electricians, landscapers, and mechanics. They help keep the Farm running in an efficient manner (Stamina 4 Psyche 4).

B-Class Tenders wear red and white stripes. These are the doctors and other personnel assigned to Hospital (Stamina 3 Psyche 5).

A-Class Tenders wear the double gold stripe and act as guides for newcomers to the Farm (Stamina 2 Psyche 6). A-Class Tenders are also used by the Headmasters to provide counseling for "difficult" residents.

Tenders are addressed by a title (Mister, Miss or Doctor) followed by a short word starting with either the letter "A," the letter "B" or the letter "C." So C-Class Tender might be called Mister Carp while an A-Class Counselor might be referred to as Miss Apple. Tender names are also sewn onto their shirts.

Some Headmasters are sadistic and cruel. Others are cool and detached. A precious few seem to almost care for their charges and will speak with them at length about their feelings.

Headmasters are almost always accompanied by two to four Minders whose sole purpose is both to protect the Headmaster and to make sure that charges are observing the Rules of Conduct. It's a rare occasion when a captive meets one-on-one with a Headmaster. It is rumored some Headmasters masquerade as residents.

Headmasters have unlisted Stamina and Psyche scores and never come into conflict with residents. That's what the Minders and Tenders are for.

Rules of Conduct

The Farm has several rules that must be followed at all times:

- Residents may not eat meat. Although there are animals on the Farm and in the surrounding areas, any resident caught consuming flesh shall be executed.
- Residents may not have personal belongings other than those given to them by the Tenders. Extraneous items shall be confiscated.
- Residents in need of fresh clothing are to report to Laundry Station so that their clothing may be cleaned, mended or replaced as necessary. Failure to do so will result in mandatory work detail on the Farm.
- Residents must bathe daily every morning in Shower Station. Failure to do so will result in removal of meal privileges.
- Loss of more than 20% of body weight from self-imposed hunger strikes shall result in mandatory treatment at Hospital and summary execution of a random resident.

Rules of Conduct - Sexual activity

- Residents may not engage in sexual activity at any time. If this is discovered, all members of the guilty parties' respective Groups shall be publicly disrobed, restrained and flogged by the Minders.
- Escape attempts shall be dealt with harshly. If an escape attempt is made, the guilty party and another resident chosen by the guilty party shall be executed. If the guilty party refuses to comply then that resident's entire group shall be executed.
- Striking a Tender will result in loss of meal privileges and public flogging.
- Suicide attempts shall be met with the same punishment as engaging in a self-imposed hunger strike.

New rules and regulations may be implemented or modified as the need arises.

Where is the Farm?

the farm could be anywhere: a bombed-out, abandoned city in a foreign no-man's land, a mysterious island off the coast of Portugal, a remote area in the heart of the Pacific Northwest or somewhere out in space. Some factors should remain consistent no matter where you place the setting of the game.

- The Farm exists in a secret location many miles away from civilization
- The Farm's Headmasters have somehow been allowed to continue operations or have simply never been discovered
- Escape from the Farm, while not impossible, is highly unlikely and (despite rumors to the contrary) has never been accomplished
- There is no access to the outside world available to the residents

Minders

Minders make up the security force of the Farm and are selected for their size, strength and brutality. Minders wear a stark and imposing uniform: white coveralls, black boots, black gloves and a black leather apron. Each Minder also wears a helmet equipped with a visor, respirator and two-way radio communicator. Common weapons and equipment found of their persons include:

- Hard rubber truncheons
- Hand/foot restraints
- 12-gauge shotguns
- Assault rifles or submachine guns
- Cattleprods (Strain damage only)
- Bullwhips

The psychological profile for a Minder is fairly straightforward: loyal, brutal, and sadistic. Minders have Stamina 6 and Psyche 2.

Minders patrol the Farm on foot in pairs or in four-man electric carts. Minders assigned to general guard duty are always found in and around buildings such as Dormitory, Hospital, the three Stations and Bell Tower. The Armory (where the Minders reside) is the most heavily guarded building and its location has been kept secret. An accepted rumor is that the Armory is located somewhere outside the Farm itself.

Residents of the Farm often call Minders "Butcher Boys" but other than that the Minders simply refer to one another by their alpha-numeric designation codes. Names are never used and faces are never seen. A Minder's designation code is affixed to both his helmet and to his chest.

Headmasters

It is infrequent but not uncommon for one of the Headmasters to take a more active role in operations of the Farm.

Headmasters

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Dormitory

The default setting for *the farm* is a forested island in a temperate zone. The size of the Farm is equivalent to a small city.

Dormitory

Dormitory is composed of six squat, concrete bunkers with room for a total of 216 residents. Each bunker is designed to hold thirty-six captives (six rooms per bunker, six persons per room) and placement is decided by Group and Personal numbers.

The beds are steel double bunks and are securely bolted to the walls and floor. There are no blankets. Recessed fluorescents in the ceiling flicker on and off automatically, depending on time of day or night and the whims of the Masters. Each room also contains a stainless steel toilet and a small sink. Showers are housed in an adjacent building called Shower Station.

There are no mirrors and both the sink and the toilet operate via motion sensors. The room has been specifically designed to ensure safe living and there is precious little in the room that can be scavenged for use as a weapon or in a suicide attempt.

Feeding Station

Feeding Station is where all 216 residents eat their meals, three times a day. The food is unexciting but nutritious fare made from corn, soybeans, wheat flour, fresh vegetables (raised in the Greenhouse), lentils and other organically-grown items. No meat or dairy is served on the farm. Residents must eat with their hands (utensils are neither provided nor allowed) and vitamin supplements are a part of every meal.

Recreation

Residents engage in forced daily exercise at Gymnasium, always under the watchful and unseen eyes of the Minders.

Credits & Acknowledgements

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A horror roleplaying game by Jared A. Sorensen / © Memento Mori Theatricks 2004

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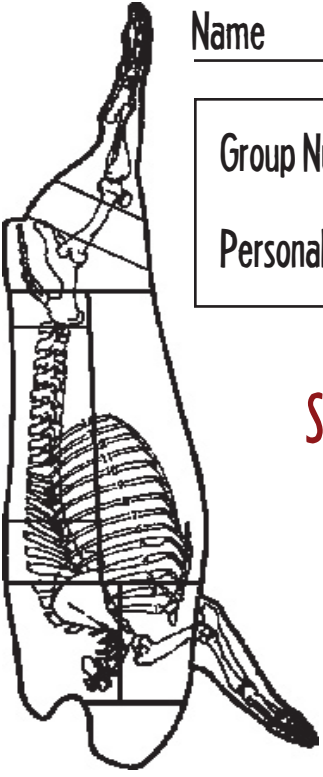
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Resident Sheet

the farm



Name

Group Number	6	5	4	3	2	1
Personal Number	6	5	4	3	2	1

Stamina

 Athletics
 Combat
 Stealth
Wounds

Psyche

 Knowledge
 Perception
 Willpower
Strain

Tokens

Skill Debt

Athletics

Combat

Stealth

Knowledge

Perception

Willpower

Swimming and group sports are available, as are other activities (board games, books, art supplies) are available for the residents' use during their stay at the Farm. The Headmasters say that you can taste fear in the meat.

Bell Tower

Bell Tower is an old church compound that has been converted into a base of operations for the Headmasters. Nothing is known about the interior of Bell Tower because no resident has been known to enter and live to tell about what he or she has seen.

Building Ten

Building Ten is the processing facility for outgoing residents. Rumor has it that members of Group 1 are taken to Building Ten and give a choice of two doors: one leads to freedom, the other leads to the slaughterhouse.

Escape

The goal of this game is to escape from the Headmasters and the dark fate that awaits each resident. As of this writing, no one has escaped from the Farm.

Is it impossible? I'd like to believe that escape is an option. The alternative is too horrible to contemplate. But...escape?

Who knows? Perhaps a group could work together, plan an escape and free themselves from the Farm.

But I don't think so. Human beings don't work that way,

Maybe one person can make it to freedom.

Maybe.

End.