

88 PROSTHETIC ARMS

In the night, the ship you were travelling in sank with stunning rapidity. You and a few lucky survivors managed to make it to a tiny, uncharted island lost in the freezing swells of the North Atlantic. Washed up with you are a couple of crates loosed from the hold of the ship. You crack them open to reveal your one resource for surviving on the cold, barren island until rescue arrives – 88 PROSTHETIC ARMS.

THE ISLAND

The island is a rocky shelf of black basalt one and a half miles across. No humans live there, but there are native plants and animals, the population of which are decided at the beginning of the game. On the rocky shore is a colony of HARTFOOT SEALS (pop. d10+10 adult females, 1d6+3 pups and 1 monstrous, belligerent adult male) In the centre of the island, deep inside basalt cracks, live ATLANTIC CLEFT CRABS (pop. D20+20). On the high cliffs of the island live colonies of SEABIRDS.

These animals are not immediately obvious and must be discovered by the Castaways. All populations, save for sea birds, diminish over time and are at risk of dying out.

One animal provides the following units of food:

ADULT SEAL (female) 4

ADULT SEAL (male) 10

PUP 2

CLEFT CRAB 2

SEABIRD 1

Raw food spoils by the next morning. Cooked food lasts for an extra day, with the sole exception of CRAB which always spoils by the next morning.

There is no natural source of fresh water on the island. The sole source of liquid comes from the fruit of the ATLANTIC NUTMEG BUSH, a thorny shrub that grows in the basalt clefts. There are 1d10 + 10 bushes on the island, each of which provides 1d6 units of water before being exhausted.

There are no trees on the island and the soil is thin. There are no caves, no sandy beaches. The lee of a rocky outcrop at the centre of the island provides the sole respite from the elements.

THE CASTAWAYS

Each Castaway has the same stats: HEALTH, HUNGER, THIRST, SANITY

HEALTH: HEALTH begins at 3. Castaways may become injured through their actions (falling, eating spoiled meat, slapped by a bull seal). If Castaways rest for consecutive phases in any two days, eat 1 unit of food and consume 1 unit of water in this time, their health remains stable at 3. If they fail to do any of the above, their HEALTH drops by 1 point. CASTAWAYS at 1 HEALTH become WEAK (see below) Once HEALTH reaches 0 the Castaway dies. Dead Castaways provide 4 units of food. Castaways have a chance of arriving at the island injured from the wreck. At the beginning of the game a D6 is rolled for each Castaway. On a roll of 1, the Castaway has a minor injury and arrives having already lost 1 HEALTH. Lost HEALTH cannot be recovered.

HUNGER: HUNGER begins at 0. Castaways must consume 1 unit of food per day. HUNGER rises by 1 point for every day a Castaway does not eat. At 3, a Castaway becomes WEAK (see below). At 6, a Castaway dies. Eating 1 unit of food maintains Hunger at the current level. A Castaway may eat 2 units of food to reduce their Hunger by 1 point. A Castaway may eat more than 2 units of food per day, but it has no effect other than reduce their stock.

THIRST: THIRST begins at 0. Castaways must consume 1 unit of water per day. THIRST rises by 1 point for every day a Castaway does not drink. At 3, a Castaway dies. Drinking 1 unit of water maintains Thirst at the current level. A Castaway may drink 2 units of water to reduce their Thirst by 1 point. A Castaway may drink more than 2 units of water per day, but it has no effect other than reduce their stock.

SANITY: At the beginning of the game, the GM rolls a D6 for each Castaway to determine their SANITY. 1-2: SANITY of 3, 3-4: SANITY of 4, 4-6: SANITY of 5. This score is kept secret from the Castaways. (They do not know their mental reserves until they are tested.) Whenever a player witnesses or partakes in a Traumatic Event for the first time, roll a D6. On a 1, they lose a point of Sanity. These Traumatic Events include but are not limited to:

The first time they must kill for food.

Sustaining an injury.

Becoming weak from lack of food.

Running out of water.

Losing a particularly heated argument.

The fire goes out.

The GM determines if an event is Traumatic.

When a Castaway is reduced to a SANITY of 1, the GM first informs the group as a whole that someone is starting to lose their grip, then informs each of the players secretly whether they are the one at risk of going insane or not. The at-risk individual may inform the group they are going mad or keep it to themselves. When a Castaway reaches 0 SANITY, they go ISLAND MAD. (see below)

Only one Castaway can go mad. If a Traumatic event causes multiple Castaways to go mad, the Castaway with the lowest initial Sanity goes mad. If multiple Castaways have the same initial SANITY, the mad Castaway is randomly chosen.

TRINKETS: Each Castaway washes up on the island with one trinket on their person, randomly rolled from the table below. Multiple Castaways can have the same result.

1 – Dead mobile phone. Can be used to bludgeon. (2 uses before it breaks)

2 – Watch (roll another d6 – 4+ it still works!)

3 – Picture of a loved one (its loss counts as a Traumatic event)

4 – Silver Jewellery – Can be used once a day to lure a crab out of its cleft – each time it is used roll a D6. On a 5-6, the jewellery is lost.

5 – Handful of coins – Can be chucked at a seabird to automatically bring it down. (2 uses)

6 – Cigarette lighter (2 uses)

THE ARMS

The Castaways begin with 88 PROSTHETIC ARMS at their disposal. ARMS are made from plastic with metal joins within and are used as implements to achieve various tasks – they can be used to bludgeon, to dig, as floatation devices (though there is nowhere to float to, and this ends the game immediately as everyone immediately dies) They can be taken apart to get at the finicky metal joints inside. They can be used to uproot Nutmeg bushes and to grind their fruit to free the liquid inside. They can be lobbed at birds. They can even be hollowed out and used as rain catchers (each ARM takes a morning to hollow out and can hold 2 units of water. Trapped water leaks out by the next morning)

Each day on the island is split into two halves, morning and evening. A Castaway can attempt one action per half (foraging for food or water, scouting the island, building a fire etc) At the end of the evening Castaways eat and drink, if they are able. This does not count as an action.

Every action undertaken with ARMS has a chance of success and a separate chance of breaking the ARM. For every action, a Castaway rolls a D6 and adds their HEALTH. They must get equal or greater than the difficulty level assigned to the action by the GM – 6 for easy, 7 for hard, 8 for difficult. Multiple Castaways may engage in the same action, as long as they both wield ARMS. No matter how many Castaways join the same action, only one roll is made. Each Castaway that is not WEAK adds +1 to this action roll.

A second roll determines if ARMS break from all this unintended use. A D6 is rolled for each ARM used and is added to the difficulty of the task. If the result is 11 or more, the ARM has broken and cannot be fixed. Broken arms can only be used as fuel for fire. Additionally, ARMS that are flung must be recovered before they are discovered to have broken or not. On a D6 roll of 1, the ARM has been thrown over a cliff or has fallen down a basalt grike and is unrecoverable.

ARMS, both broken and unbroken, can be used for fire. A fire that lasts from night to morning requires 4 ARMS to burn, if it is raining (see below), this rises to 6. ARMS can be used to create SOS signs. This takes up an entire morning or evening to construct, but automatically succeeds without need for a roll. There must be at least 20 ARMS to create a visible SOS sign.

It is incumbent on the Castaways to keep track of how many ARMS remain. If they must ask the GM at any point for a total, the GM subtracts 1d4 ARMS from the total due to 'spoilage.'

Such is the harsh nature of the island that actions attempted without ARMS never add any bonuses and only succeed on a D6 roll of 6. This never makes the Castaway more skilled (see below)

Arms are cumbersome. A Castaway can only even hold 4 at once.

ISLAND SKILLS: If a singular Castaway attempts an action and naturally rolls a 6, they become ADEPT at that action. Repeating the same action on subsequent days adds a +1 to the roll. A subsequent natural 6 grants a further +1, making the Castaway SKILLED at that particular action. Castaways can be adept at as many tasks as they like, but only skilled in 3. Skills may be swapped out.

WEAKNESS: Weak Castaways can act in the morning or the evening of a single day, never both. Weak Castaways gain no bonuses from being ADEPT or SKILLED. Weak Castaways cannot retrieve broken PROSTHETIC ARMS.

ISLAND MADNESS

Normally, the Goal of the game is for all Castaways to get off the island together.

That all changes, however, when a Castaway loses their last point of SANITY and becomes victim of ISLAND MADNESS. The unfortunate Castaway no longer works in concert with the other Castaways, but instead seeks only one thing – to become undisputed KING OF THE ISLAND. They no longer care about eating or drinking, they only wish to hunt down their fellow Islanders and rob them of their ARMS – ISLAND KINGS will fashion WEIRD REGALIA out of PROSTHETIC ARMS – clattering skirts of arms, and great crowns of fingers, they will create SCEPTERES and MANTLES and towering THRONES at the centre of the island.

Luckily, when one Castaway loses their mind, the others are no longer susceptible – the sudden threat sharpens their wits, and they can never have SANITY lower than 1. Traumatic events that would previously cause Sanity to drop to 0 will instead inflict WEAKNESS on the Castaway.

A lack of concern for their own safety grants the ISLAND KING immunity from WEAKNESS and grants extra time before they are incapacitated by HUNGER and THIRST. They can last 8 days without eating, and 5 without drinking.

The Castaways continue to communicate their actions to the GM as usual, while the ISLAND KING now communicates theirs secretly to the GM and always after the Castaways have declared theirs.

The ISLAND KING wins the game by securing all PROSTHETIC ARMS or by killing all the Castaways.

The Castaways win by at least one of them surviving to escape the island.

WEATHER

The only variable that truly matters is whether it is raining or not. The game begins in the last days of summer, making rain less frequent. At the beginning of the day, the GM rolls a D6. On a roll of 6 the day is rainy, increasing the difficulty of tasks and making maintaining a fire harder. After seven days the weather takes a notable turn for the worse. Rainy days now occur on a roll of 4 or more. Simple traversal becomes difficult, with the bare rock becoming treacherous, making injury more likely.

RESCUE

Initially, the search for survivors takes place in the wrong area. Only after 1d4+2 days is the search widened to take in the area around the island. This starts a countdown until the survivors are inevitably found. At the end of each day, the GM rolls 2d6 and adds the number of days since the countdown began. If the total is equal to or greater than 15, a boat of rescuers will appear at first light the following morning, arriving between the morning and evening phases. If the Castaways have lit a fire, +1 is added to the roll, and if they have made a+1 visible sign (made with 20 ARMS or more) a further +1 is added to the roll. If it is raining, visibility is poor and 1 is subtracted from the roll.

The ISLAND KING may disrupt any attempt at rescue, extinguishing fires, erasing signs. This takes an entire morning or evening if he or she is not stopped...