

This Is My Final Recording

A game about found audio, office politics, and getting killed by horrible
monsters



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You are part of the Mount Qaf Exploitation Project. Months ago, your corporate backers discovered something marvelous. Something miraculous. A method to tunnel into another realm, into the legendary Mount Qaf, the barrier between the worlds of man and djinn. An opportunity to connect with another species! To leapfrog our understanding of metaphysics! History! Ourselves! A thing with unlimited potential to advance the human condition!

Naturally, you started doing horribly unethical science experiments and bickering over funding. This will probably kill you, and it will probably suck, but that isn't important.

What is important is this: When they pick over the ruins of this horror show, you will have named the creatures gnawing at your bones.

Basics of Play

In this game, you play Employees of the Mount Qaf Exploitation Project as they are stalked and murdered by horrible monsters whose existence can be fairly laid at their feet. This game does not require a DM and can be played with friends while isolated via online dice rollers, messaging apps, and shared writing software or internet forums.

To play this game, you will need many d6s (Or an online dice roller) and a shared document or piece of paper that everyone can write on and reference (The Tally). Ideally, you may want letters, recorded conversations, a dedicated messaging app, discord server or equivalent, forum thread, or email chain so you can save your messages, but this is not necessary.

You should be aware of three mechanics before you make your characters: Doom, Creatures, and The Timeline. Record all of these on your group's Tally.

Doom measures how much an Employee has learned about their situation and how close that situation is to killing them. Every Employee starts with 1 Doom but gains more as time goes on. Moves are only available upon reaching 5 or more Doom. As such, you will be at risk of immediate and unpleasant death before you can take meaningful action. Whenever you initiate a scene, you roll d6 equal to your Doom.

I should apologize for this, but I won't.

Creatures are the horrible things associated with the project that will shortly begin murdering all of you. They can be literal or metaphorical, singular or multiple, willing actors, or an environmental hazard. What is important is that they are lethal and unknown. They begin the game identified only by a number.

The Timeline is a book-keeping tool more than a game mechanic. At the start of the game, one player will note When the Killing Started. Note this on the Timeline and give it a date (T-0,

Incident Alpha, Judgement Day, etc. Timestamps are acceptable). Whenever a scene happens, note its date on the Timeline, as well as if anyone Died or was Saved during that scene.

This primarily exists so to prevent continuity errors and accidental time travel. It's also useful for keeping track of important events, what you know about the Creatures at a given point in time, the progression of relationships, and reviewing the final timeline of your gameplay session once you're done.

If you plan to use your session of This Is My Final Recording as a prop for another game, I highly recommend maintaining a timeline.

Whenever a player rolls a 1, that player defines one feature of one Creature on the Tally. They cannot give it a name but may suggest nicknames. These changes should be added to the Tally, and further definitions may not contradict them (But can expand upon them). You may define a single feature per 1 rolled.

Whenever two or more 1s are rolled, someone dies. It does not have to be the initiating player, but it must be an Employee or NPC defined during character creation.

When a Creature is Named, replace its number on the tally with its new, official, *legal* name, and add all details provided in the Naming to the Tally. These details follow the normal rules regarding defining a Creature's features.

Character Creation

Each player describes their Employee and decides on their role in The Project. Write down names and identifying characteristics in the Tally.

Your Employee will almost certainly die. Keep this in mind throughout character creation. Maybe make them huge assholes who deserve what's coming. Maybe don't get too attached. Maybe turn them into a razor-sharp knife aimed at the hearts of the other players. You do you.

Declare your motivations for working on The Project. Whoever has the most venal motivation begins the first round. The player with the least venal motivation ends it. If this is not clear, decide as a group. Before you start the first round, each player may choose to add a Creature to The Tally. If no-one does, start with one Creature.

During the first round, each turn consists of the player answering a question about the project or their Employee. The first player also answers the question, "What is the nature of The Project." The last player also answers the question, 'When did The Creatures start killing people.' Additionally, each player may define an important NPC linked to their question. Other players may create their own or choose one from the list below.

1. Management is wildly violating OSHA guidelines. How? Why?
2. If you die, why will the world be a better place?
3. You think one of the experiments is self-aware. What cruelty did you inflict upon it?
4. You care deeply for someone in the facility. Who?
5. How do you relieve stress while off-duty? Who makes this difficult?
6. A series of barriers divide the facility. How do you cross?
7. There was a terrible accident recently. How were you culpable? Who died or got hurt?
8. Why is communication with the outside world difficult? What relationship did that ruin?
9. You're indebted to the Company. What do you owe them?
10. You know the code for an area you shouldn't know exists. What's the area and the code?

Playing the Game

Every scene in This Is My Final Recording consists of an audio recording, found message, or series of digital communications (Emails, text messages, etc.). Play consists of rounds of initiating scenes, in which every player will initiate a single scene. Initiating a scene plays out like this:

1. Roll d6 equal to Your Doom.
2. If any Dice are 1s, choose a Creature. It will make an appearance in the scene, and you may define one feature about it on the Tally, as noted in the Basics of Play section.
3. Decide which characters are going to be in the scene and who's going to play any NPCs.
4. If two or more Dice are 1s, a character in the scene dies. This defaults to the initiating player's Employee, but that player may choose an NPC from Character Creation, or another player may volunteer their Employee.
5. If you have 5 or more Doom, decide if you want to take a Move.
6. Determine when, how, and (If applicable) where the scene takes place.
7. Play out the Scene
8. The initiating player gains 1 Doom. If they rolled at least one 1, they gain 1 additional Doom. If someone died, everyone else also gains 1 Doom.
9. Select who goes next (They cannot have gone this round)

Moves

If you begin Step Five of your turn with 5 or more Doom, you may make one of the following Moves.

Name the Unknown

Choose a Creature on the Tally. Replace its number with a name of your choice, then define as many facts about it as you'd like. Reduce your Doom by 2.

Define the End

Requirements: An employee has performed the Name the Unknown move.

Define how to end the crisis. This is always something difficult, dangerous, and awkwardly convoluted. Maybe you need to trigger a self-destruct and run for the shuttles. Maybe you need to complete three rituals in three parts of the facility to close the gate to Mount Qaf. Maybe you need to inject a custom-tailored poison into the hive-mind of the Creatures.

The important thing is that it's deeply inconvenient for whoever survives long enough to attempt it.

At the end of the scene, increase your Doom by 1.

Save A Life

Requirements: At least one Employee has died. An Employee has used Define the End.

Choose an NPC or another Player's Employee who has not died, pick a point in the timeline after everything they've done so far. The Scene revolves around how they get to safety. Talk with them about what form this safety takes and if they escape or simply survive long enough for someone to save the day. Reduce your Doom by 1.

Saved characters cannot perform this Move. Like Dying, being Saved is the last thing on your timeline.

Running Scenes

Scenes should be reasonably short and focused. Stick to one topic, don't go longer than three replies on each side before moving on. You can always return to the topic with another scene.

Actions don't have to be explicit in the scene. They can be implied, have happened beforehand, or interrupt the scene's end. A saved draft being the last sign of a murder victim, a note from someone else who found the body, an automated end-of-life notice, or an 'I'll be right back' and then horrified screaming are all wholly appropriate ways to convey a death. A Creature's influence could include moved documents, the discovery of Weird Goop, or the haunting knowledge that something is speaking to you in your dreams. Documents can be after-action reports or, for Saved characters, excerpts from interviews of survivors. Anything that would fit in a found-footage horror movie, video game collectible menu, or found-audio podcast is valid framing for a scene.

Double-check your timeline before you start a scene to make sure no-one's dead during it. Or to purposefully flout continuity. Hallucinating a conversation with a dead colleague is, after all, entirely thematically appropriate.

You can define new NPCs during scenes! However, they do not interact with game mechanics and cannot absorb kill results when initiating a scene. Similarly, you may kill them at any time, no matter the dice, though you must ensure that other players are OK with this.

Dying

So you're dead.

Bad news, the obvious. My condolences to your Employee's next of kin.

Good news, you're still playing the game, accumulating Doom, and getting people killed. Your next scenes can be from earlier in the timeline, and you can still accumulate and spend Doom Tokens to save other players. If you don't want to do this, initiate scenes as an NPC or, if a Creature can leave messages or communicate, the PoV of a Creature. If you roll two 1s as the Creature, you must choose an NPC to kill, or a player must volunteer an Employee to die. If no-one volunteers and there are no more NPCs, you choose.

End of the Game

If all Creatures are Named and you've Defined the End, or if everyone's Employees have died or escaped, you may want to end the game. Discuss where each scene might be found or discovered when people work their way through the wreck of the complex. Is that last, doomed holo-call found on your corpse? The desperate declaration of love thrown in the trash of its recipient? Your notes on the easy way through the sealed airlocks on the wrong side of the sealed airlocks?

If you have a record of all of your scenes, back them up somewhere. Use them as props for a future game, spread them throughout the grounds of a LARP (With permission), or just spread them around your house or place of work as a fun surprise for others.

Variant Rules

Heroism

If you want a definitive ending, having an Employee attempt to save the day may be appropriate. If so, add the following Move to your game.

End the Threat

Requirements: At least one Employee has died. An Employee has used Define the End.

Play out a scene as you prepare for your attempt to end the Threat. Roll twice your Doom in d6. If they get at least two sixes, they succeed. If they don't roll any 1s, they survive the attempt and are Saved. Afterward, everyone who hasn't been Saved dies.

Group Doom

If you'd prefer to simplify the game and create an experience more reminiscent of *Dread*, with its fully shared escalation, try this alternative:

Doom is a shared resource tracking how perilous the Exploitation Project has become. It starts at 1 and increases by one at the end of every round. Additionally, for each of the following that are true at the end of each round consult this list and increase Doom by one for each that is true:

- Did an Employee roll a 1?
- Did an Employee die?
- Was the End defined *or* was an Employee saved?

Additionally, Name the Unknown and Save a Life may only reduce Doom once per round.