

In order to survive, many will perish.

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Only a few would be

left alive

the starting point

For our first assignment, we were required to postulate our ideas about a tabletop genre of games that would appeal to both the creator and player. After a 5 minute stint of brainstorming at a personal level, using nothing but a pen, a sticky note, and the far reaches of my intellectual capacity(hardcore sarcasam), I concocted a game idea that involved the primordial necessity to survive based on a Plane Crash-induced survival story.

Having grown up playing the game Settlers of Catan® with friends, discovering the game's simple, versatile ability to create a sense of necessity, desperation and exploration, I envisioned to replicate that feeling and sentiment towards the game, albeit with more focus on the element of survival, and introducing one key difference: we were not settling or colonizing, we were adapting to survive a land that deceived the players into thinking it a tropical paradise by day, yet revealed itself to be a chaotic life-and-death scenario by night. When looking at stories related to plane crashes and survival, such as the plot of ABC's Lost, that element is touched upon by giving the viewers the aesthetics of being on a tropical island with relatively pleasant weather and gorgeous vistas, however, by the time the sun set on the island, the characters were scrambling to find shelter, stay hydrated and in good nutrition and, most emphatically, praying to whatever deity they believed in so that they may survive the night.

After making my ation to the class (as well as having my idea peer-reviewed), I was surprised to find out that other students were excited to create the same type of game, thus began our quest to create the most wondrous board game in all the land (Tomorrow, the universe).



We planned the next few days' worth of meeting to brainstorm the game and its mechanics/structure in hopes of beginning the prototyping phase as fast as possible. Our first official meeting was set Uno, where we spent an hour discussing mechanics, our desired aesthetics, and more over lunch and drinks. Later that day, we endeavored on the notorious Green Line to Summit Avenue, hoping to discover Knight Moves, a café whose name was whispered in legend from those who were lucky to return. Arriving at our destination, our party was overjoyed to enter the café, only to find it decked wall-to-wall in board games. Choosing Settlers of Catan and Rampage, the adventurers commenced several hours of entertainment, more drinks, and discovery.

Following the completion of our second game, Rampage, the group then broke into a serious discussion regarding the creation of mechanics for the game we wished to create. We settled on the original title, "Left Alive", and began to discuss many different aspects of the game from the most primordial of concepts, including (but not limited to) board design, resources, play styles, etc.

The following day, we ventured to the library to further describe the concepts of the game. To start, our consensus was that the game is composed of 4-6 players, and would be set on an island following an undisclosed disaster. Players come to the realization that rescue would not be until at least 20 days (pending). We chose 20 days because we figured that 20 rounds (one per day) would last around 60-90 minutes, an adequate time range for a tabletop game. As of now, we have the following idea and concept for a game.

the concept

While running over the premise of the game, we decided that players would measure their life and survival by using Energy as a resource, resulting from a combination of resources (meat and fish for example), once the player reaches zero energy, he or she is dead, and withdraws from the game.

In order to acquire and preserve energy, the players are tasked to spend their days exploring the island for resources, such as wood, stone, leaves and food (fish/meat or fruit). As night falls, the players must use their resources to create shelters to avoid the dangers of night cards, event-based cards that each player must draw individually following the conclusion of each day. The night cards are random, but almost always involve dangers and negative events, including (but not limited to) Animal attacks, Indigenous people attacking, Weather (thunderstorms, hurricanes), and much more. If a player has prepared for nightfall, his or her night phase should ideally be easy to survive and counter, however, if a player has ventured too far (it's a tile-based game, and movement mechanics are to be divulged later), does not have food for the night, or has not protected him or herself in shelter, the night cards will be much more difficult to overcome, and will likely result in the player losing energy.

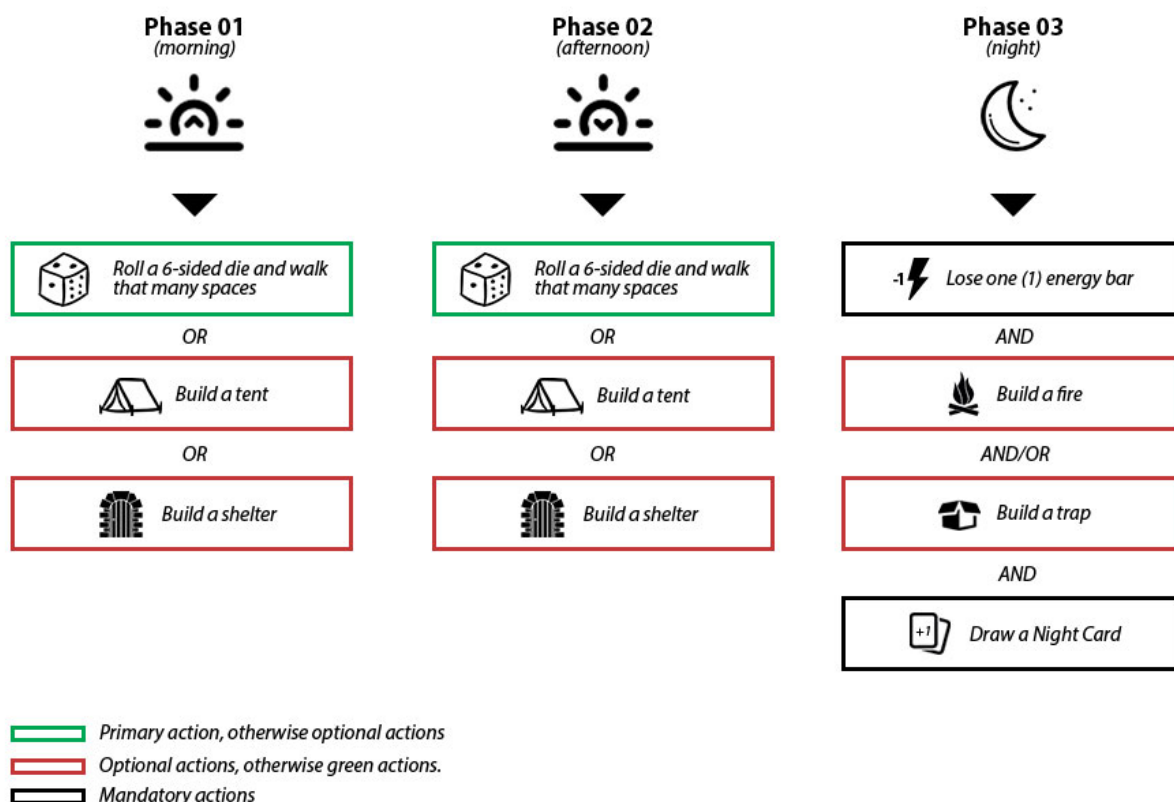
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What we wanted to do was create a mixture of dynamics so the resulting aesthetics would make the game entertaining, yet competitive at the same time. One of our favorite aspects of tabletop games is the ability of said games to sometimes have more than one winner, enabling the players to work together to get through the conflict (such as RPGs). Another possibility is to allow players to team up, form alliances and declare war on the other players. The utility that this creates allows the players to change the dynamics based on what he or she wants to do in order to get to the end alive. The most important concern players have, above all else, is survival. This instills the players with a sense of fear, angst, uncertainty, apprehension, and, most importantly, desperation. The goal of every player in the game is to survive past the final round, going on to a presumable rescue, together or alone. While it

may seem like an obvious decision is to work together to accomplish a goal, the amount of resources in the game, while not fully determined yet, will ultimately not be enough for all players to make it out alive. Without scarcity, there is no desperation, and without desperation, there is no survival.

While player-player interaction is still in the pipeline, our player-environment interaction is more fleshed out. Players spending their day rounds by rolling dice and moving from one hexagonal tile to the next in search of resources. Players may skip rolling for one day in order to create a shelter to come back to that night, helping them to avoid the negative repercussions of night cards. In order to explore the intricacies of a player turn for day phases, feel free to examine the attached player turn card. While the

Player Turn Explained



Night phase has not been 100% nailed down yet either, the idea is that we want to have the players slowly lose energy naturally, and have some night cards which make that even more of a challenge, such as an animal attack which hurts players without a fire for 2 times as much energy. This makes the game very difficult to win, yet all the more satisfying to the player when they do.

future plans

We plan on going into more depth regarding playtesting and prototyping the game next week, as we will have a loose goal of having a conceptualized board made for the game by seminar time next week at the absolute latest. After playing the game in its primordial sense, we will discuss what we like, dislike, etc. and cut and tailor the game based on our observations of said notions. We should have the final idea of the game conceptualized by next Friday, and will plan on introducing the second prototype on the following Monday.

As we discussed, our number one goal for this game is survival. Associating it with the idea of Aesthetics, we would love to have certain scenarios invigorate the player on the idea of his or her triumph of the harsh wilderness, yet at the same time have a handful of events that make the players desperate to stay alive, and to give them the same feeling of both isolation and depravity that many stranded survivors feel. In the end, the desperation of each player will have a profound effect on his or her survival, and only playing the game will show the player who faces the certainty of death, and who, finally, will be Left Alive.

