

A MAN CALLED TRIBE
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FOR GAME-CHEF
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Timescale: Game is completely playable in just 1 Session of 2 Hours

Ingredients: Package 1: Emotion, Glass, Ancient (plus a hint of Committee)

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A MAN CALLED TRIBE is a lovely game set on the glass shores of chaotic green seas, where you play the group consciousness of the **Joyful** neolithic tribes that fight the Wurms in a barbaric post-post-modern world.

Who are you? What is joy? What is the world's fate? When the silver not-moon blocks the sun and the green seas recede for a time, you will know. You are and will be a Man called Tribe.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

You need at least one six-sized die (1d6). Also, a watch or clock to track the 2-hour game time limit (and ensure everyone moves into the 'Awakening' end game at 1:45). Pencils and paper are also needed.

SETTING:

All the tribes live on the melted glass plains that surround the ancient Dead Places. Your plains are surrounded by the green Seas. If your tribe enters the twisted metal and concrete of the Dead Places, you die. This brings you sorrow. If your tribe enters the green Seas, you die. This also brings you sorrow.

Thus your tribe lives in the Middle Lands, the glass plains that are your home. The middle lands are a joyful place. Even your dreamers, those who sleep for the tribe, feel the joy.

Wurms form from the green Seas and visit your glass plains. Your hunters kill them and your tribe eats them. This gives you sustenance and brings you joy. Sometimes, they kill your hunters. This brings you sorrow.

When you meet other tribes, that is a time of celebration. You can procreate. You can war with them. You can trade. These are joyous things.

Sometimes your scouts find relics from the Ancient Times. This is handy and also brings you joy. And sometimes a scout will find an Outcast-- a person who is not of any tribe. Giving the Outcast a tribe brings joy to all.

When the silver not-moon covers the sun, the green seas recede and your dreamers stir. This is called the Awakening, when all tribes go to the not-Dead Place under the sea. Things change then. Joy is expressed. Outcasts appear. A small silver not-Star rises. The whole tribe sleeps. The ancient term for this is Death. It is a joyous thing, for a new tribe will awaken.

GOAL:

You are the tribe. You seek to increase the tribe's **Joy** and the tribe's Size through effective use of your tribe's abilities. The game ends at the Awakening, when your tribe goes with the others to compete for **Joy** and achieving singular consciousness.

There are three stages to the game, and a full game takes exactly 2 hours.

- 1) Character creation. Takes as long as needed.
- 2) Tribe actions and game play. Lasts until 1 hour 45 minutes.
- 3) "The Awakening", the end game, starts at 1 hour 45 min.

CHARACTER CREATION:

1. SIZE: Roll 3 six-sided dice (3d6) and add them. That is the number of humans in your Tribe, your tribe Size. **Size=3d6**

2. Starting Joy: Subtract your Size from 20, that is your starting **Joy**. **Starting Joy=20-Size.**

3. ROLES: Assign a role for each person in your tribe, one role per person. Roles, briefly, are:

Dreamers: carry the tribe's dreams

Hunters: hunt Wurms for food

Procreators: breed with other tribes

Warriors: capture tribe members from other tribes

Scouts: locate other tribes or ancient relics

Finders: find ancient relics

Roles cannot be changed after character creation. Some Roles may become empty if those tribe members die. New tribe members may appear, however, during some Actions.

4. ACTIONS: During play, you will take Actions based on the Roles in your Tribe, in order to accumulate **Joy**.

5. GREETING: Choose a tribe greeting, the way your Tribe members recognize each other from afar. It can be a hand gesture, a body position, a shout, or similar.

6. NAME: Now, perform that greeting for the other players. They will invent a Tribe name based on how they see you action.

For example, if your action is “thumbs up”, they may call you '*The Thumb Tribe*'. Or they may choose something more profane. If more than one player suggests a name, you get to choose your favorite among the names suggested.

Note to other players: be nice here, please!

The game ends at the Awakening, which starts after 1 hour and 45 minutes has passed. As this end game is brief, a game session fits neatly into 2 hours, from character creation through the end of the game.

ROLES AND ACTIONS:

Actions and Roles are intertwined. A given Role can do a specific Action. *Dreamers* just sleep. *Hunters* hunt for food. *Scouts* seek other tribes. *Procreators*, if you meet with another Tribe, bring **Joy** and new tribe members. *Warriors* can capture new tribe members from other tribes. And *Finders* discover ancient relics.

Each turn, all tribes (players) take turns doing their full set of Actions. Just go around the circle. You can take as many Actions as you have Roles. For example, if you have 4 *Hunters* and 1 *Scout*, you can take 1 Hunting Action (or none, if you wish), and 1 Scout Action (or none, if you wish). After you finish all your Actions, the next tribe gets to do all their Actions. Keep playing around the circle until the game ends.

Most actions cost your tribe 1 **Joy** due to exertion. Hopefully, many actions will also gain you **Joy** and thus be worthwhile.

Below are roles, followed by the results and possible Actions you can take based on the number of that Role in your tribe. Note the Tribe often receives penalties if you have no people fulfilling a given Role. In general, you do actions in this order:

*DREAMERS * HUNTERS * SCOUTS * PROCREATORS * WARRIORS * FINDERS*

DREAMERS:

* 1 or more *Dreamers*: Your tribe is rested and sane. No actions needed.

* 0 *Dreamers* in tribe: Your tribe is insane. Only *Scouts* can do actions.

HUNTERS:

* 1 or more *Hunters*: You can hunt Wurms at the edge of the green sea. You succeed, the tribe is well fed. This action costs 1 **Joy** to do.

Roll 1d6 to see if you gain or lose **Joy**:

*Amount of **Joy** = Number of Hunters - 1d6.*

(If this number is over 0, you gain **Joy**. If it is less than 0, you lose **Joy**.)

* 0 *Hunters* in tribe or chooses not to hunt: Your tribe goes hungry. Lose 1 **Joy** this turn.

SCOUTS:

* 1 or more *Scouts*: you may Find Other Tribes. This action costs the 1 **Joy** to do.

To Find Other Tribes: Roll 1d6 and subtract your number of *Scouts* in your Tribe. You can find any tribe of your choice with that number of *Warriors* or more (warriors being the noisier sorts).

*Found: any with Warriors equal to or over (1d6- your # Scouts)
enables: Trading, also Warrior and Procreator Actions*

If you Find one or more other Tribes, you get to choose which tribe and which War or Procreating actions to do. The other tribe(s) cannot refuse this. See '*Warriors*' and '*Procreators*'.

You can also Trade people with another Tribe (player). If both parties agree, any swap can be done (e.g. 'one of my *Hunters* for one of your *Scouts*'). Trades can be uneven (2-for-1, et cetera) so long as both sides agree. If neither side agrees after bargaining, naturally no trade occurs.

Note that you can War with, Procreate with, and/or Trade with any tribe or tribes you find. You can only War on one tribe; you can only Procreate with one tribe; you can only Trade with one tribe-- however, each Action (War/Procreate/Trade) can be with the same or a different tribe than the other Actions.

For example, if you Find 4 tribes, you can choose one with War with, choose the same or another to Procreate, choose the same or another to Trade, or even skip any of these actions and ignore. “Finding” just tells you which possible Tribes you can do further actions with.

* 0 *Scouts* in tribe: no Scout actions possible.

PROCREATORS: (only act if *Scouts* Found Another Tribe)

* 1 or more *Procreators*: If your *Scouts* Found Another Tribe, you can procreate with them. You gain either 1 **Joy** or 1 Tribe member for each *Procreator* in your Tribe, your choice of mix. This action costs 1 **Joy** to do.

For example, if you procreate and have 2 *Procreators*, you can choose 1 **Joy** plus gain 1 Tribe person, or two **Joy**, or 2 new Tribe members.

Joy or new members gained = # *Procreators*

You may assign a Role to any new Tribe member.

If you choose not to Procreate, there is no penalty.

* 0 *Procreators* in your tribe: No procreation possible. Lose 1 **Joy** per turn due to general Tribe unrest.

WARRIORS: (only act if *Scouts* Found Another Tribe)

1 or more *Warriors*: You can joyfully attack the other Tribe. Roll 1d6 to determine how many of their Tribe you capture for your Tribe. This action costs 1 **Joy** to do.

$Number\ Captured = 1d6 + your\ number\ of\ Warriors - their\ number\ of\ Warriors$

If this number is positive, they must give you that number of people from their Tribe. They get to choose which Roles to hand over.

The new person's Roles do not change.

If this number is negative, you lose that amount of **Joy** but do not lose any people from your Tribe. This represents a crushing lose.

0 *Warriors*: no war possible

FINDERS:

1 or more *Finders*: *Finders* look for ancient relics. Roll 1d6, add your number of *Finders* in your Tribe, and check this table. This action costs 1 **Joy** to do.

0 *Finders*: no searching possible.

FINDER TABLE ***(versus 1d6+ number of Finders)***

- 1: Wurm eats *Finder*-- lose 1 *Finder* and lose 1 **Joy**.
 - 2: Nothing found, tribe sad-- lose 1 **Joy**.
 - 3: Found good glass for making glass knives: +1 **Joy**.
 - 4: Nothing found, but search was en**Joy**able. No effect.
 - 5: Ancient Relic found, of cold metal. It is pretty. +1 **Joy**.
 - 6: *Finder* encounters Wurm and escapes. No effect.
 - 7: Outcast found and brought into tribe: Tribe gains 1 *Dreamer*.
 - 8: Edges of green sea explored safely. No effect.
 - 9: Ancient Relic found, a 'book': convert 1 *Dreamer* to any Role you wish.
 - 10+: *Finder* ventured into Dead Place and lived. +1 **Joy**.
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145- THE AWAKENING, THE END-GAME.

First, note that any tribe that does not have at least 1 *Dreamer* cannot enter this end game, sorry.

There should be no player communication during this portion of the game. This part includes a secret ballot that works best when no players tell each other their plans. We also recommend that first-time players not read this section until it is actually played during the game.

After one hour and 45 minutes, all tribe Actions stop as their *Dreamers* awaken. The green seas have begun to recede and all tribes are drawn to the Not-Dead Place that is now revealed; like the ancient Dead Places, but still cold and alive. This stirs dim memories within your *Dreamers*.

At the Not-Dead Place, your Tribe must make a choice. No tribe can talk to each other; the choice must be made privately and secretly. One tribe's *Dreamer* will achieve individual consciousness and rejoin mankind's brethren among the stars as a True Man. One Tribe will be chosen to follow. The bright will fall as Outcasts. And the Tribes will mingle until the next Awakening.

This is according to the ancient prophecy, written into cold metal in the ancient script that only *Dreamers* can read [have one player read this or pass this page around to all players]:

**TO THOSE WE LEFT BEHIND, WE ALSO LEAVE THE
MEANS TO JOIN US. IT TAKES TIME TO CREATE A SHIP,
AND IT CAN FLY ONLY WHEN WE ARE IN POSITION. THAT
TIME IS NOW.**

**TO THE ONE AMONG YOU WHO BEST UNDERSTANDS
THIS, YOUR ORDERS ARE TO COMMAND THE SHIP AND
BRING WITH YOU THE GROUP THAT HAS THE HIGHEST
MORAL, AND THUS THE HIGHEST POTENTIAL OF
REJOINING HUMANITY.**

**THIS MEANS YOU LIKELY WILL HAVE TO LEAVE YOUR
OWN PEOPLE BEHIND, BUT WITH YOUR NEW-FOUND
INTELLIGENCE, YOU REALIZE THIS IS RIGHT AND
NECESSARY. THE SHOCK OF CHANGE IS GREAT, AND
ONLY THOSE MOST JOYOUS CAN HOPE TO SURVIVE AND
REJOIN US.**

**LAUNCH INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOW. HURRY, AS WE WILL
NOT BE IN POSITION LONG.**

In terms of mechanics, each player can convert as much of their Tribe's "**Joy**" into Intelligence (IQ). This IQ resides in one of that Tribe's *Dreamers*, the equivalent of the Tribe's "self" or "mind" (or "you").

The tribe that has the highest **Joy** (which typically is the one that converted little or none into IQ) become the passengers taken by the highest IQ dreamer.

All other *Dreamers* who have IQ (because their tribe spent **Joy** to grant it to them) become Outcasts, for there can be only one leader today. Too bright to fit into a tribe but unable to leave this world, they must wander the glassy plains until they are once more able to survive what their world is now.

All other tribes are left behind, with no *Dreamers* to give them purpose. But as the eclipse ends and the tribes return to the glassy plains, new *Dreamers* will arise and new Tribes will gather, to form the next cycle of growth and awakening.

Perhaps someday all of this world will join their brethren. Perhaps.

Summary:

- * Secret ballot, no discussion.
- * Each player decides how much **Joy** to convert to IQ.
- * Highest IQ becomes Leader to fly the ship.
- * All others with IQ become Outcasts.
- * Tribe with highest remaining **Joy** launch to join the True Men.
- * Remaining tribes disband and return to the glassy plains.

POST-GAME DEBRIEFING:

After the game, we suggest first-time players relate how they feel about the end, whether they feel good or bad towards the players who Awakened, and whether they felt the ending was 'fair'. The concept of 'winning' is flexible in this, as with all RPGs.

Is it 'winning' if your *Dreamer* awakens to lead others to a new future,

but leaves her tribe behind? Is it 'winning' if your tribe leaves this world but lacks the intelligence to understand who they are? Is it 'winning' to have tried, but failed, to lead-- or is it 'winning' if you never tried? Is it best just to have Joy and live on the world in bliss, or is the quest for intelligence worth pursuing?

GAME VARIATIONS:

Cultural Variations:

As written, this game assumes a warlike race. You preferentially find (and thus trade) with the more warlike tribes. To try a different social mix, change it so Scouts find tribes based on the other tribe's number of Scouts (for a high exploration culture), Hunters (for a more classic nomadic culture), Procreators (for a bunny-like hedonistic culture), or Sleepers (for a stagnant, inert culture).

End-game Variations:

The 'Awakening' end game is designed under a secret ballot, where no player knows what actions the others may take. This is similar to classic problems such as Axelrod's "Prisoner's Dilemma". For variety, however...

The Diplomatic Game

Allow discussion and negotiation between players during the Awakening, but still have the actual tally (of **Joy** to convert to IQ) remain secret. This allows a diplomatic variation to the game.

The Bidding Game

Have the final tally be 'bidding'. For this, each player rolls 1d6 and the highest number goes first. Play proceeds clockwise from that player. On their turn, each player may bid some of their **Joy** to convert to IQ. The turn then passes to the next player. Any **Joy** spent is truly spent (and converted to IQ), but each player can continue to bid on subsequent rounds, or pass (but retain the right to bid on subsequent rounds). The bidding ends when each player has 'passed'; tally the results and the game ends.

OPTIONAL BACKSTORY:

The author suggests you skip this section entirely, for knowing the past can ruin the mystery that a Tribe Called Man enjoys. But for those who are curious, there are tales that explain how it came to be.

My mother told me many legends of our origins. She says Earth ran into trouble with self-replicating photosynthetic nanobots, that turned all carbon into chlorophyll copies of itself. So a handful of men fled to space, nuking Earth's deserts to silica plains to give the left-behind a safe haven to try to live. Man de-evolved to survive, while the nanos tried to evolve sessile forms to explore the land.

But every now and then, our station eclipses the sun for long enough to shrink the green nanoseas that surround the glassy plains, and the old launch pads are uncovered. Some of the primitives are able to figure it out and, taking the most adaptable of their kin, join us.

But then she tells me of how mankind was lonely among the stars. So we fired terraforming probes onto oceanic alien worlds. Their impact would cause eruptions to form volcanic obsidian land, and also release chemicals prompting faster evolution from the seas of primitive blue-green algae. The seas would create sessile creatures that, if they survived, grew more complex, almost human-like. She says we left a craft in orbit, and perhaps some of the locals might one day learn how to operate the original probe to return to space. Then we could meet them and not be alone in the universe.

She also tells me that mankind has evolved on Earth at least four times. Each time, they fall prey to war and bomb themselves back to the stone age. Sometimes, all the radiation causes new adversity for them to overcome. In the process of regaining intelligence and civilization, they also sometimes find artifacts of previous epochs and think they have kin.

But mother assures me these are all lies, and we are all alone.

RPG CONVENTIONS:

Some aspects of this game vary from RPG conventions. In particular, we note the ideas of stats/skills, damage, experience, the concept of trade, treasure, and mapping.

In 'Tribe', your primary 'stat' is your tribe size, 'skills' are the roles in your tribe, and the level of your skill is the number of members in a given role. Damage is handled by losing stats and skills-- losing tribe members-- as well as losing **Joy**. Experience is the gaining of new tribe members and thus boosting both 'stats' and 'skills'. Through trade with other tribes, you can swap skills with friendly players. Treasure in 'Tribe' is the **Joy** you accumulate, useful for the end game.

And, there is no map or fixed location. As a Tribe is by nature not a single entity, it has no single location. Therefore, locations are always relative. Your hunters are near the green seas. Your scouts are far away. Other tribes are found by their noise and encountered by whomever you send. So there is no tactical movement, however, there is tactical planning of your tribe's "profile", through choosing how many Warriors you have.

Play therefore includes the tactics of choosing the mix of roles and strength in roles, combined with how you use them against other tribes. Stance (warlike, friendly, cunning) strongly affects the group response to your tribe. You are a Man Called Tribe, but no man is a tribe alone.

CHARACTER SHEET FOR A MAN CALLED TRIBE

TRIBE NAME: _____ GREETING: _____

CURRENT SIZE: _____
CURRENT JOY: _____

TRIBE MEMBERS:

DREAMERS: _____ D: _____
□ = ONLY SCOUTS CAN ACT

SCOUTS: _____ S: _____
1+ = CAN FIND OTHER TRIBES WITH WARRIORS >= 1D6 - # SCOUTS
COSTS 1 JOY TO ACT

HUNTERS: _____ H: _____
1+ = HUNT WORM: JOY = #HUNTERS - 1D6
COSTS 1 JOY TO ACT

PROCREATORS: _____ P: _____
1+ AND (OTHER TRIBE FOUND) = + #PROCREATORS IN JOY OR NEW
COSTS 1 JOY TO ACT

WARRIORS: _____ W: _____
1+ AND (OTHER TRIBE FOUND) = CAPTURE 1D6 + (DIFF IN # WARRIORS)
COSTS 1 JOY TO ACT

FINDERS: _____ F: _____
1+ = CAN LOOK FOR ANCIENT RELICS (SEE TABLE)
COSTS 1 JOY TO ACT

FINDER TABLE (versus 1d6+ number of Finders)

- 1: Wurm eats *Finder*-- lose 1 Finder and lose 1 Joy.
- 2: Nothing found, tribe sad-- lose 1 Joy.
- 3: Found good glass for making glass knives: +1 Joy.
- 4: Nothing found, but search was enjoyable. No effect.
- 5: Ancient Relic found, of cold metal. It is pretty. +1 Joy.
- 6: *Finder* encounters Wurm and escapes. No effect.
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