

Ancient Committee is an Emo Band!

a Game Chef entry by Dev Purkayastha

Timing: Playable in 10 Sessions of 1 Hour each.

Ingredients: ANCIENT COMMITTEE EMOTION (not: glass)

See design thread at: <http://www.1km1kt.net/forum/ftopic722.html>

Please don't look at: <http://www.myspace.com/xancientcommitteex>

"Ancient Committee is an Emo Band! Play through the ten iterations of a mediocre mid-90s emo band, and use your whine-soaked rock to save the souls of the kids in the audience. Cheer up emokid – you're on stage!"

A Note to the Judges: I'd like to step out of my rules text and explain my use of the game elements. The "EMOTION" element is hopefully obvious; "emo" derives from the word "emotional", and the genre is all about the open display of emotion.

As for the use of "Ancient Committee": the idea for this game came to me because I realized that this was almost an archetypal emo band name. (Play with the [Emo Band Name Generator](#) to see for yourself.) There are already bands like The Postal Service, British Sea Power and The Warren Commission. I feel like starting off with the right band name is a step in the right direction. Beyond this, I try to emphasize sticking to the phrases "Ancient" and "Committee", and injecting these as epic-sized metaphors into the lyrics. There's actually a decent precedent for this, in the form of [Coheed and Cambria](#).

I hope my choices make more sense now. In any case, thank you for reading!

Dear Journal...

Posted 19 Mar
Mood: Apathetic

It sucks that I finished writing that kick@\$ song but it looks like "Ancient Committee" isn't going to get off the ground. It's just so tragic, but fitting.

On the other hand, I didn't have much to do tonight and I ended up writing this game thing. It's actually pretty sweet, becace it's like what Ancient Committee would have been if Mikey hasn't been such a flake, y'know? It's SO unfair but at least this is like, what could have been.

DROWNING AND FALLING

your language cuts like violence
your violence cuts like razor blades
your razor blades will shave my dignity
my dignity is your language aid

the language
of sorrow

the ancient actors call committee
to stab me with your laws of steel
my dead glass eyes look to the skies
and to you I must yield

must yield
to sorrow

(CHORUS)
falling (into the sea)
drowning (into the sea)

the sea is drowning (into the sea)
the sea is falling (into me)

you climb my back like cliffs and daggers
hearts, like sharks, they jump away
you broke my platter with loving patter
but you stole my heart today

but tomorrow
is sorrow

(CHORUS)

(CHORUS x 4)

(ACOUSTIC BREAKDOWN OF CHORUS)

(CHORUS)

What is this?

This is a game about the evolution of a mid-90s emo band that was more or less called "**Ancient Committee**". It had this neat gimmick, where the band had all these obscure, metaphorical songs about some kind of ancient committee of angels in a glass city or something, and there were songs about relating to man kind through sorrow. (Or am I getting confused with Coheed and Cambria? Whatever.)

And anyway, it wasn't a great band, but it wasn't the worst emo band ever, y'know? Besides, you all play one-time members of the band, so if sucked it's kinda your fault. You all had some role in the band – maybe vocals, maybe guitar, maybe vibrophone – and you all contributed some lyrics at some point.

And because this is emo, those lyrics are based on your Real Sincere Pain.

What you need to play

First of all, [you need to understand what the hell 'emo' is](#). While you're at it, [get up to speed on emo fashion](#) and [play with the Emo Name generator](#)

You need a emo soundtrick in the background, and some ice cold [PBR](#).

You need an hour with some friends to play. Any one can play in a session, although the first session is special: someone from the original band HAS to show up to play the game.

You need to be ready for no more than ten sessions of game. If the character is a flake or burnout, you might stop early. (If you are a flake or a burnout, I'm going to bitch you out in my LiveJournal.)

You don't need to worry about figuring out strict times and places to play it. Each session just takes an hour, so you can just have a pickup game with whoever is around. (You don't need to worry about a GM, either. Everyone is just in the band.)

Finally, you need a deck of normal playing cards, as well as a deck of the offical **Emo Cards** that come with the game. (If you're unable to get the Emo Cards, you can make them yourself with index cards and a sharpie. See the "EMO CARDS" appendix to see the contents of the deck.) The Emo Cards come in two kinds: Merits (good stuff) and Flaws (bad stuff).

How to use the playing cards

In this game, each of the playing card suits has its own meaning:

Suit	The crowd is...	You're play style is...	Awesome?
Clubs	rowdy	fast and loud	weak
Diamonds	snarky	clever, acoustic, intricate	okay
Hearts	whiny	slow, deliberate, sincere	good
Spades	angry	loud and screamy	best

This chart clearly outlines how some styles (and some suits) are more awesome than others, and thus win.

Sometimes, you will play stacks of cards against each other (such as, you stack of cards against that of the

crowds). The winner is the stack with the highest ranked card (using suits to break ties).

Making the Band

Once you’ve got some friends over, the first step is to get the band ready.

Naming the Band

For the first session, then the band name is almost decided: you take “Ancient Committee” and come to a consensus about one more word to insert into the title. So these are valid titles:

- Invisible Ancient Committee
- Ancient Letterbox Committee
- Ancient Committee Project

If this is not the first session, then you should replace that odd word out (keeping the “ancient” and “committee”), and shuffling the band name into something new and cool. So you might end up with:

- Committee of Ancient Apologies
- Ancient Oblivious Committee
- Majestic Ancients are in Committee

Why do “ancient” and “committee” have to stick around? Because otherwise you couldn’t sell off those hundreds of misprinted “COMITEE OF ANCENTS” t-shirts.

Pick a style

As for style, just make sure everyone is one the same page about what subgenre of emo you’re playing. If you’re in dobut, add some “pre-” and “post-” tags to the genre name, since that usually clears things up! (Or, check out the “GENRE GUIDE” appendix for some suggestions.)

One thing to keep in mind: even as the band changes its name, style and lineup, it still comes back to its original gimmick behind the whole “ANCIENT COMMITTEE” thing. It’s not really clear what it was all about – some kind of metaphorical story about “ancient angels that hath looked upon mankind and in committee decided its fate”. Or am I thinking of Radiohead? I’m not sure... Anyway, there’s some obscure metaphors and stuff that creep into the lyrics.

Put the band together

First, settle on a name for your character. In a pinch, go with your own or someone else’s. (If you’re bringing back an previous band member, use their name of course.)

Next, come to a consensus about who is playing what role in the band. You need at least one vocalist, one guitarist and one drummer. (In any case, everyone in the band will be collaborating on the lyrics, even if only the lead singer is singing.)

Finally, pass the stack of Merits from the Emo Cards around the circle, with each person taking 1 card until everybody has 5 Merits. Do the same thing with the stack of Flaws. In both of these, the more experienced characters – the ones who have been through more iterations of the band – get to pick first.

What if a more experienced character has different Merits and Flaws than they did previously? It may mean they’ve had a life change (they’ve quit the guitar or got a new girlfriend), or it may simply mean that the old trait is just not being emphasized in this session.

Dude, you’re late for the gig.

By the way: these steps take away from the hour you have to play. If you end up pissing away an hour on debating about genre and band names, **you lose**.

The Set list

Each player comes up with the titles of 3 songs they’ve authored and want to have played. As a group, come to a consensus about what order you’re going to play each persons song. Once again, this step takes away time from the hour, so don’t get caught up in it – you probably won’t get through your entire set list anyway!

Here’s what a set list may look like:

1. Seven Fingers Left (Jim)

2. I’m Calling You Quietly (Samantha)
3. Stab Rip Stab Stab (Tasha)
4. Just (Tasha)
5. Clearly Into Clarion (Jim)
6. Dead Wreck Ending (Samantha)
7. Interlaced (Jim)
8. Step on the Weaker (Tasha)
9. Tables (Samantha)

Ready to rock?

The crowd begins with an apathy level of 1, and you begin with all your Merits and Flaws in hand. For the remainder of the show, you will rock or die trying. Here’s how it works.

For each song in the set list...

Turn over three cards, and compare it to the chart of suits. This is how the crowd is reacting right now, and these are the cards you’ll have to beat in order to win them over.

The author of the current song will come up with some snippets of lyrics from the song. Then he will draw 1 card. If it beats all 3 of the crowd’s cards, then the song was a success.

The author can draw additional cards by:

- narrating in his own Flaws and Merits into song (+1 card per Merit/Flaw)
- accepting another player’s suggestion, and narrating her Merits/Flaws into the current song (+1 card per Merit/Flaw)
- use the original images of “Ancient Committee (+1 card)

You can only use a Merit/Flaw once per song, and any time a detail is used after the first time, the crowd’s apathy level goes up by one. (They hate repetitive crap.)

Now repeat the above steps until you’re done with your set list, or until your hour is almost up.

Example of play

Tasha

“I call this song ‘Just’... because the world isn’t a just place. It’s about.. my ex-boyfriend.”

- Flaw: Messy Breakup

Jim

Didn’t you use that already?

Tasha

Yeah, so? The apathy level goes up by one, big deal.

Jim

Okay. How about I use my power chords?

Lame. How about I do a solemn melody on the electric violin?

Sam

- Merit: Bizarre Instrument

Cool. And I match my voice to warble and kinda break, and I’m looking up at the crowd through my bangs. “You used to sing to me – but there’s no more soul... And this Ancient Committee assembled is my justice crown!”

Tasha

- Flaw: Always Sobbing
- Merit: Dyed black hair
- Use of “Ancient Committee”

Jim

Tasha, you’re going to cost us the show – I already used “Ancient Committee” in my last song! That’s another point of apathy!

Tasha

Too bad – I need to make sure my song wins this round! Anyway, I think that’s enough for this song.

The Crowd has gained two points of apathy. Tasha can draw 5 cards against the Crowd’s 3 in order to win them over.

No Encore

When there’s about 10 minutes left in the hour, cut the power and finish your beer: the show is over.

How was the show?

The band gets 1 card for each song that the crowd liked; the crowd gets 1 card for each point of apathy. If the band’s cards beat those of the crowd, they’ve put on a good show! Flip 3 more cards over:

- For each Jack that comes up, your music was an inspiration, helping them to overcome their own pain.
- For each Queen that comes up, someone in the audience was inspired to pick up a guitar and start a band of her own.
- For each King that comes up, someone hooked up with a cool guy or girl at the show.

If the band’s cards did not beat those of the crowd, you simply go home dejected. Better luck next week!

Are you coming back?

Two things can prevent your character from coming back: Giving Up (and quitting the scene entirely) or Burning Out (giving in to a self destructive lifestyle). You must to test yourself on each of these, in either order. However, for each of your songs that was liked, you get a bonus card to use in either test.

Giving Up

Cards in your favor: 1 card / each Flaw you used in a Song (+ bonus cards, if any)

Cards against you: 1 card / each sessions this character has been in

If you fail, your passion has been diluted by just being exhausted by the scene. You quit entirely, and retire to a mundane life.

Burning Out

Cards in your favor: 1 card / each Merit you used in a song you wrote (+ bonus cards, if any)

Cards against you: 1 card / each Flaw you used in a song you wrote

If you fail, your better qualities have been overcome by your self-destructive traits. You quit the band and fill up your time with drugs, drink, and failed side projects.

...

If you don’t Give Up or Burn Out, then great! You’re still a musician in the emo scene, and your character can still come back to future sessions.

The scene is dead.

After the band has gone through 10 different iterations, then that’s it. The “Ancient Committee” project formally disbands for good, the t-shirts are dumped in the harbor, and you move on with your life.

If your character makes it this far without Burning Out or Giving Up, then you’re actually doing pretty well.

Maybe now’s a good time to give the indie scene a try?

APPENDIX: EMO CARDS

If you’re making these from scratch, try to use different colors of index cards for each card type. Two of each type is a good amount.

Merits

- dyed black hair
- shaved head
- ironic 80s-era t-shirt
- black hornrim glasses
- from california
- converse sneakers
- screamo vocals
- melodic-yet-impossibly-high-pitched vocals
- nasal vocals
- acoustic guitar
- bass guitar
- insanity-powered drumming style

- power chords
- bizarre stringed instrument
- bizarre keyboardlike instrument
- bizarre acoustic instrument
- groupies!
- it's just cloves, not real cigarettes
- athletic stage style – like jumping in the air and shit
- diy ethic

Flaws

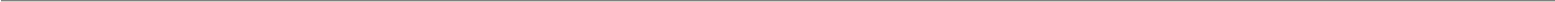
- the last band failed
- cynical
- always drinking
- it was a messy breakup (guy)
- it was a messy breakup (girl)
- college dropout
- your ex is sleeping with your best friend
- always sobbing
- i was punk, once
- veganorexic
- knows this drug dealer
- from new jersey
- i'm famous on myspace
- girls/guys won't call me back
- girls/guys are afraid of committment
- former choir boy
- i was anarchist, once
- someone i know won't leave a pad boyfriend
- someone i know wont leave a bad girlfrined
- i'm jealous of you

APPENDIX: GENRE GUIDE

Here's some staple subgenres of emo.

- **pop emo-punk:** (Fast, simple, melodic pop-punk songs, occaisionally with a nod to dark material. *Samiam*)
- **emostyle indie-pop:** Acoustic guitars along side the electric, overclever lyrics, high pitched vocals. *Sunny Day Real Estate*
- **emocore:** Melodic hardcore rock, distorted guitars, meaningful lyrics. *Rites of Spring*
- **screamo:** Lo-fi production values, alternating vocals of screaming and deathly whispering, dissonance. *400 Years*

They're not 100% accurate, but I challenge you to find 2 or more hipsters that will agree on any set of facts, ever.



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