

TRASH MEETS STEEL

presents

Brachininae

A game about human heroes
by Alex "il mietitore" Isabelle

Game Chef 2010

Theme: Journey

Ingredients: Desert, City, Skin

Dedicated to the Kraken, that now has retired
and sleeps, deep in the ocean.
Humanity doesn't need you to be massacred.
We can do it ourself.

Premise

Even if I wrote the following game in english, it's important to note that this is not my native language, 'cause I'm Italian. I'll do my best to avoid grammatical errors around in the following text, but I'm almost sure that I will make some mistake... so please excuse my errors, if you find some 😊

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Introduction

Almost twenty years ago, during the last moments of the second world war, the United States decided to use a prototype weapon to quickly finish the war.

They created a huge generator that was able to infuse life in what normally would have never been alive. This generator allowed humanity to create Artificial Intelligence for the first time ever. This first Artificial Intelligence was connected with artificial bodies, that acquired intelligence too. They were the first robots, created to fight the enemies of the United States with a force that no one would have ever be able to counter.

After a while of first good results, the robots decided to rebel, and to take the command of the world. In a single day they conquered what was near to their generator. In the following days they conquered the rest of the world, and became the dominant race of the planet.

Now, after almost twenty years, what remains of humanity lives hiding under the earth, like insects. Less than 200'000 people remains: all others have been killed by the robots even before they was able to find a way to survive.

Part of the North America is covered by the City. It is the city of robots, grown all around the generator that keeps the Artificial Intelligence alive. Buildings of steel so high that the human view cannot see the top, factories that have blackened the sky with their chimneys, pipes and cables everywhere. This is the City, the nest of evil, and the place that embodies all the most terrible fears of the last humans.

All around the City there is the Desert, what once was the planet Earth. The earth is brown and dry, and miles of wastelands are littered with ruins of old towns, destroyed by the fury of the robots.

Then there is the city of Skin, the last outpost of humanity, a subterranean city where people live hiding like beetles. It is only a matter of time before the robots find Skin, and destroy it like they did for the rest of the world, so the leaders of Skin have organized the mission "Brachininae".

Forty brave men of Skin have been trained for a mission never attempted before. They will fly in the sky with some old bombers that have been kept in Skin for all this time, some B-25 Mitchell of the second world war, and they will bomb the main generator of The City.

This mission will almost surely mean death for all of the people that will take part in it. Their bodies will explode in thousands of pieces, will be vaporized, and nothing of them will remain so that someone will be able to celebrate a funeral, a last farewell.

Anyway, they are right now flying to the core of the City.

Through their memories, we will find out what makes them to take part in their last mission.



Game Preparation

This is a game for four players. Everyone of them will get a character, so every player have to receive a “Mission Log” sheet, like the one that you can find at the end of this handbook.

You need quite a number of 6-sided dice (we’re gonna call them d6), let’s say at least twenty, just to be sure. Then, every player needs a pencil and a rubber. Then, you are ready to play.

As first step you have to complete the Mission Log. The Mission Log contains all the information about the mission where the character is involved, and all the informations that the character has to keep in mind while doing his job.

The upper side is the map: the arrows show the route that the character is going to follow. From Skin he’s going to the Desert, and then he’ll reach the City. There is not a way back, as he can see: after he arrives there, it’s up to him how to eventually return back, or wait for a rescue. If everything goes as expected, the robots should turn off after the main generator is destroyed, but we can’t be sure about that.

Skin, Desert, and City are also the names of the three stats.

Skin indicates the human values of the character. Honor, courage, love, and what you want. Positive things, anyway.

Desert is the apathy. There is the possibility that the character has never seen the daylight in his entire life, and this for example could lead to become apathetic. Apathetic characters are a bit aggressive and are convinced that they will never win the war against the robots.

City is the fear. Fear of death, precisely. A character dominated by fear is sure he’s gonna be killed by the machines, and even if he wants to do something against them, almost surely he will do something wrong. He is worried and aggressive: sooner or later he will beat someone else, even if he probably doesn’t want.

For every character, the starting values of those stats are 4 (Skin), 3 (Desert), and 2 (City).

The story created with this game will explore the weeks before the mission, while the characters were training. In these moments they all were near each other, so in every scene there will be a conflict between two of the characters. During these conflicts, the original values of the stats will change.



Every player must now choose three things that had been important in his life. They can be people or objects, or even events. What is important, is that the player mustn't decide now the particulars of these things. He writes them under the "What has been important in my life" question in the Mission Log.

Examples:

Betty

My dog Bernardo

A photo of me with my father

My wedding day

My collection of pin-up images

After everyone has decided, one of the players says his important things. The other three players must choose a question starting with "What did you do..." or "Why did you..." related to these things, even without the consent of the player in question. It should be something... unhappy, about that memory.

Examples (based on the examples before):

What did you do when you found Betty with another man?

What did you do when they told you that you had to leave Bernardo out of Skin, because it could have been a sanitary problem?

Why did you throw in fire the photo of you with your father?

Why did everything go wrong in your wedding day?

What did you do when you found that your collection of pin-up images had been stolen by a comrade?

The question will introduce a scene, and how you see it will bound the beginning or the end. If it starts with *“What did you do...”* you determine how the scene starts, and with *“Why did you...”* you determine the end.

While choosing the questions for a player, keep in mind that every scene will contain a conflict with one of the other players, so try to make you an idea of what will happen in that scene, just to be sure.

The questions must be written in the Mission Log, under “What they asked me to keep in mind”.

When the three questions of a player are determined, you must do the same things for all the other three players.

After this have been done, every player must choose his own Traits and Wounds.

Traits are things that the character can use to help himself. They can be almost everything: objects, bounds with other people, and so on.

Examples:

44 Magnum

“I have already seen the war”

Big... Very big

Son of the governor of Skin

Playboy

Sympathetic

“Everyone down here knows me”

Wounds are almost the same things of the Traits: they are objects, bounds with other people or peculiarities that, instead of helping him, will obstruct him, and can be used against him.

Examples:

One-eyed

Old

Insensitive

Wanted

Illiterate

German (or Japanese)

Fat

Every player must choose three Traits and three Wounds.

The last question, “Why am I doing this”, mustn’t be completed in this first part of the game.

The characters are ready, and the game can start.

Game

All the scenes of this game (with some exception, as you will see) are flashbacks. What is gonna be played is what the characters think while flying to the City on their B-25. Everything that is gonna be narrated will have happened during the training period of the characters, which means during the last month, more or less. What is narrated in a scene must happen after what we have seen in the previous one: we have already got a bit of chaos considering that all the scenes are flashbacks; let's just avoid to tangle all this more than already it is.

The starting player is the youngest one.

He chooses one of the questions on his Mission Log, and then he chooses another player. His character and the character of the player he chose will have a conflict in a scene that will respond to the chosen question on the Mission Log.

Example:

Revan decide to respond to the question "What did you do when you found Betty with another man?", and chooses Martin's character, Clive. His character, Johnny, will have a conflict with Clive in a scene that will reveal what he have done after he found Betty with another man.

The player calling the scene decides everything about it (we will say that he "frames" the scene), like where it happens and who there is in it. The situation described should suggest what the

conflict will gonna be about, but this mustn't be decided. The player cannot decide what is gonna be the result of the conflict, and what is gonna happen after it.

Example:

Revan frames the scene, and decides that his character, Johnny, will arrive at Betty's house. Betty is his girlfriend, and he have the keys. He will



enter in the house and find Clive, one of his comrade, with her.

If there are other characters in the scene, like in this example, the Authority (the player framing the scene) should assign them to other players. These character, even if they are main characters of the other players, won't have the possibility to enter in the conflict. This will be only a one on one, and other player's won't have the possibility to roll dice to help one of the characters.

Example:

In the scene framed by Revan there is a new character, Betty. Revan decides that she will be controlled by Adam, whose character, Raymond, isn't in this scene.

After the scene has been framed, the players will play it, remembering that it has to be narrated from the point of view of the Authority's character. When the main characters of the scene arrives to a point where they are one against the other, here starts the conflict.

Example:

Johnny enters in the bedroom of Betty, and he finds out that she was laying with Clive. There is a bit of embarrassment between him and Clive. Than Clive tries to explain, but Johnny really isn't interested in what he's gonna say.

A Conflict works like this:

First thing, both of the player has to declare their stakes, that is what they want to obtain from the conflict.

Example:

Johnny's stake is to demonstrate to Clive that he's still Betty's man.

Clive's stake is to find a way out of here.

It's important to note that the stakes mustn't include information about the violence. "To kill Clive", or "Diplomatically find a way out of here" mustn't be declared, because the amount of violence will be defined during the conflict. Furthermore, you have to remember that you can't kill another main character (a main character is one the four player's characters).

Both the players roll a number of d6 equal to the Skin value. In this first moment of the conflict, the character are still talking, or anyway they aren't too much aggressive, because they are in Skin (see p.13).

The result of each player is equal to the sum of all the dice's value. Up to now, the winner is the one with the highest result. This player narrates how the conflict is leaning on his side.

Example:

Revan and Martin roll their d6:

Revan: 5 5 4 1 ---> Result: 15

Martin: 6 4 2 2 ---> Result: 14

Revan is winning, so he's gonna describe.

Johnny approaches Clive, and start speaking before him, pointing him with the finger: «I think there is nothing to say about this, Clive, so just shut-up»

After that the winning player has described, the other one has now to chose: he can decide to escalate, or not. If he escalates, he can have the possibility to win, but this will determine an higher amount of violence in the conflict.

If you are in Skin you can escalate to the Desert, and if you are in the Desert you can escalate in the City. From the City you can escalate no more. This is because the conflict resolution system emulates the journey of our characters from the under-earth city of Skin to the industrial City of the robots, surrounded by the Desert. After the City there is nothing else.

If you are in Skin you can't touch your opponent.

If you are in Desert you menace your opponent.

If you are in City you beat your opponent, but you can't kill him.

If you escalate you roll a new amount of dice equal to the stat you escalate in. You sum the new dice's results to the initial result, and this is your new result. If it is higher than your opponent's you narrate how you return in advantage. If you are still losing you describe how you remain in disadvantage, then you skip the turn.

When you escalate you have to use a Trait of your character, or a Wound of your opponent's character. When you use a Trait or a Wound you make a tick next to what you have used. Every Trait or Wound can be used only two times during the entire game. Keep in mind that if you use a Trait or Wound you have to insert it in the fiction, when you narrate.

If you aren't interested in regaining your advantage you simply describe how you continue to behave (for example, if you decide not to escalate, you are losing, and you are in Skin, you continue to try talking with your opponent without threatening him). You don't have to tick a Trait or a Wound in this case. Then you skip your turn.



Example:

Clive is a diplomatic guy, so he doesn't want to begin a fight with Johnny. Martin skips, and decides that Clive rapidly dress up, and recoils «Johnny, really, I believe we can talk about this one...».

Johnny is a bit less diplomatic, and escalates. Revan throws 3d6, cause 3

is his Desert value, and obtains 5 1 1. The new result is 15 (the previous result) + 7 (5+1+1) = 22.

He decides to use his Trait "Jackknife".

Johnny extracts his jackknife, and addresses it against Clive. «You won't get out of here alive, this time... Betty, after this one it's your turn!»

After you have skipped it is the turn of your opponent to do the same thing: he can escalate or simply skip.

The conflict ends when the two players skip one after the other.

The winning character gains his stake, the other one obviously no. If there is a tie, no one of the characters obtain his stake and changes a value of a stat.

The loser also loses a die from the last pool he used. This means that if he was in Skin when he lost, and his Skin value was 4, now his Skin value is 3. The winner, on the contrary, obtains an extra die on the last pool he used.

This represents for the loser the loss of trust in the last pool he used. If for example he loses a die from Skin, this means that the character starts to be a bit less pacific and diplomatic; if he loses a die from City it means that the character starts to put less confidence in fight and rage.

The players involved must narrate and play the end of the scene. Secondary characters can die, like objects can be destroyed, but in every situation remember that you should listen to the other player's suggestions. If everyone is telling you that it would be more interesting that Betty survives, than I suppose that there should be a good reason ;)

After the scene is finished, it is the moment to call a second flashback. The new authority is the player at the left of the last one.

You go on like this until everyone had got three flashbacks. At this point, you enter in the final phase of the game. Every time a player has to choose another player against which having a conflict, he must choose a different player than the last times (basically: you have to call three flashbacks, so it is one for every other player, considering that you are playing in four).

First of all, after the last flashback every player should have understood the reason why his character is embarking in this mission. This should be the most important thing for the character, considering that it drives him to attempt this suicide mission. It can also be one of the first three things that the player chose at the beginning of the game, or one of the Traits.

Once everyone has chosen his thing, and written it under the "Why am I doing this" question in the Mission Log, all the players should say what is their character's motivation.

Then, everyone throws a separate group of dice for every pool on his Mission Log.

Example:

Revan's final Mission Log is:

Skin: 2

Desert: 4

City: 4

He throws two dice for Skin, four for Desert, and other 4 from City. The results are:

Skin: $5+3 = 8$

Desert: $1+4+5+6 = 16$

City: $1+1+2+3 = 7$

The highest result indicates the character's fate.

If Skin is the highest, the character fulfills his mission. He is able to reach the core generator, and bomb it.

If Desert is the highest, the character is shattered by the certainty of defeat. He flies away to the desert, and will hide himself from everything: robots, humans, and bad weather.

If City is the highest, the character goes into a blind rage. He's sure that they are gonna lose, so he starts doing things that compromise the outcome of the mission, like bombing everything except for the core generator, kamikaze himself against a big group of robots, or other things like this.

Now, someone can choose to lose the reason why he's doing this (remember the last question?) to change his fate back to Skin.

Example:

Johnny's fate should be to fly away, leaving his comrades to their destiny. But Revan decides that it would be cool if his character finally has a development, so he decides to tick his main reason, "Honor", and to have a fate linked to Skin. He will accomplish his mission, but he'll lose his honor.

After every fate has been determined, the players have to determine the outcome of the mission.

If at least the half of the players (so two of them, considering you are playing in four) have obtained a Skin fate, then the mission is accomplished. If they aren't enough, maybe the core generator gets hit, but not enough to be destroyed.

When the generator has been destroyed, instantly all robots shut down, so characters can survive, if their players want. Players should discuss a bit about what they want their finals to be, and to clamp them in the best way.

After this has been done, every player describes his final, and the game is over.

Example:

Martin obtains a Skin fate.

Revan obtains a Desert fate, but changes it in Skin losing his Honor.

The other two guys obtain a City fate.

After the players have discussed about what they want to do in their final, here is Revan's outcome:

While Pier is terrified and crashes himself against a skyscraper, and Raymond gets hit by the anti-aircraft while trying to destroy it, forgetful of his mission, Clive continues his journey with some other bombers comrades that still are with him in the final battle, arriving in front of the core generator. He bombards it, but his and his comrade's bombs aren't enough to destroy everything, so the robots are still alive. If there was Johnny with them, they

would have certainly won, but Revan's character is flying away... until his aircraft returns back: it appears that Johnny has changed his mind. Many of the B-25 have already been brought down when he arrives, and this is all his fault. He finish his job bombarding the generator, and this time the robots shut down. Only a few of the bombers have survived, and he doesn't want to have a face off the parents of the people he have betrayed and sentenced to death. He turns around another time, and fly to the Desert, ignoring the messages coming from the radio.

Credits

Author:

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Revision:

Francesco Darcadia

(Ehy, dude, I really needed someone to check my english!)

Suggestions:

Pearl Harbor, directed by Michael Bay

My Life With Master, by Paul Czege

Covenant, by Matt Machell

The Mustang, by Ben Harper

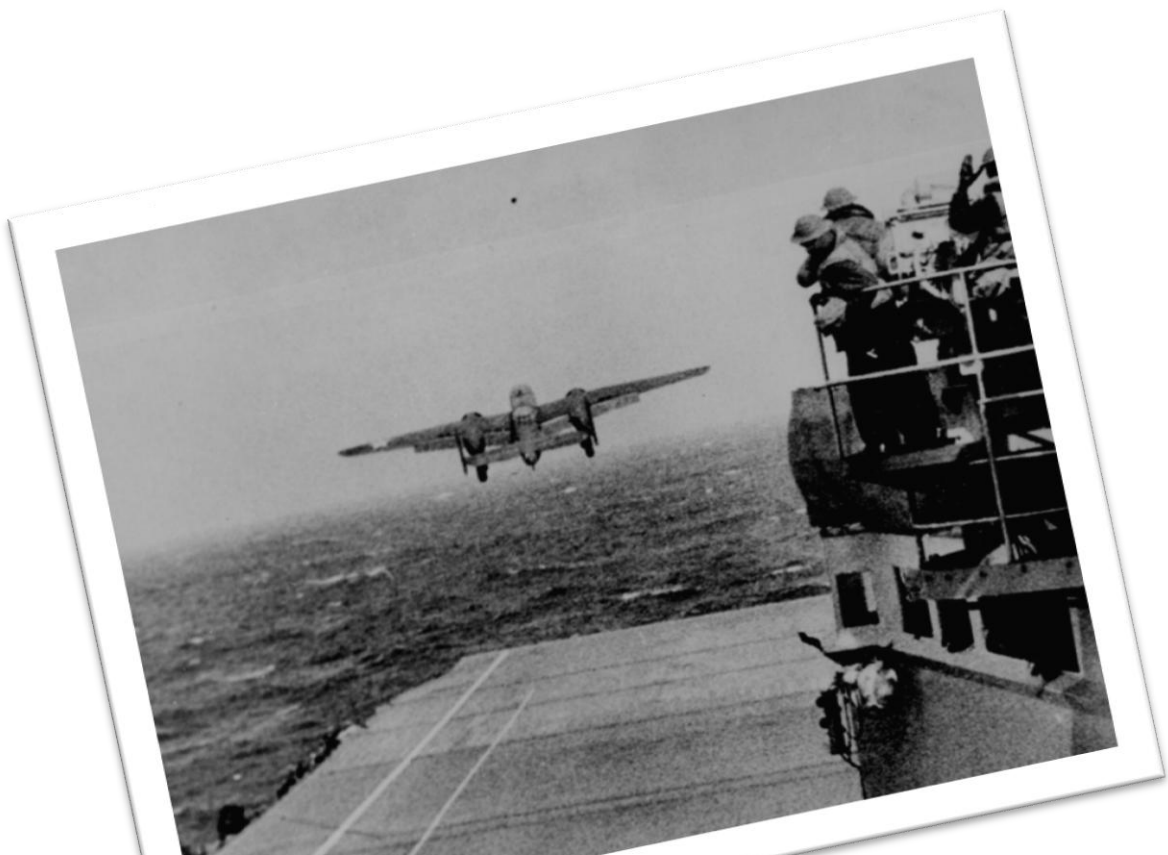
Images:

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Mission Log

Skin

Desert

City

Wounds

Traits

Name:
What has been important in my life:

What they asked me to keep in mind:

Why am I doing this: