

The setting of Mad about the boy

This document describes the world of the game as imagined by the larp creators. It can be read by participants in advance, but this is not necessary if you include a session on the world of the larp in the pre-game workshop.

The Death of Men: The Day of the Disaster

The death of men happened very quickly and without warning. 3 years ago all men in the world started coughing and crying blood. Within minutes they were all dead, and many women with them. As they died, the men also lost control of vehicles they were driving or flying. The roads became immediate and enormous disaster areas. As almost all airline pilots are men, very few planes made it safely to the ground that day. Some of those planes crashed in highly populated areas, and took thousands of women on the ground with them in death. From one moment to the next society as we know it was gone and the survivors was left with pain, loss and chaos. In most places the electricity was cut and cell phone networks went down almost immediately.

The immediate reactions from the survivors were varied. Some desperately tried in vain to save the lives of dying men around them. Some became paralyzed and unable to move or do anything as they watched the world around them collapse. Self-preservation was the strongest instinct for many, fleeing to wherever might be safer than where they were now. Some stopped to help women around them. Others trampled the dead and dying as they were fleeing.

The Struggle for Survival - The first few months after the Disaster

The women of the world who survived the cataclysm faced two huge challenges in the weeks immediately afterwards. One was the emotional trauma of seeing more than half the worlds population die in one day. Husbands, sons, fathers and friends were all dead. The other was the practical difficulties they had to deal with while in a state of shock and sorrow.

Streets and apartments were filled with corpses. There were too many to give them proper funerals, so in a few days gigantic pyres for the dead were lit in parks and sports stadiums around the world. Removing all the dead was only one of the practical challenges faced by the survivors. The roads were filled with car wrecks. Electricity and phone lines were down in most parts of the world, and transport of food and other essential goods became a huge problem. Hunger soon became an issue in the cities and many fled to the countryside to look for food. As people became desperate many stores and warehouses were looted and a number of women were hurt or killed in these fights.

The governments of the world, as well as military and police organizations were of course reeling from the pressure of the crisis. The fact that police and military forces almost everywhere are so male dominated increased the difficulties. In most parts of the world prominent female politicians were eventually able to consolidate power and start getting the government up and functioning again.

But for the first few months after the disaster few national or regional structures were able to provide much relief or services, and women had to ally with others in their immediate communities to be able to survive. In the first months, there was little electricity available. As governments started functioning again, electricity supply became better, but still there is hardly one day without blackouts. When an area experiences a black-out it can take many weeks before power is restored.

It is still not known what caused the disease which killed all the men. There are still sperm stored in sperm banks many places in the world, but governments have been reluctant to make use of it so far as tests indicate that still only girl children could be born as male fetuses would still succumb to the disease. Some sperm banks have been raided by gangs of armed women, so security is usually very strict to avoid more sperm being lost. The Nordic governments have recently decided to use some of the sperm in a pilot programme, the one the characters of the larp have applied to.

Making sense of it all - Religions in a world without men

The apocalypse is no longer a dire warning of what is in the future for humanity, it is a reality which has arrived and which the survivors are trying to cope with every day. What has happened and what will become of the world now, is wide open to interpretations, both religious and secular.

Scientific and religious theories on why all the men died compete with each other. The death of men has resulted in a loss of faith in God for many people. In others it has led to religious fever and new religious movements emerging with a renewed call to believers.

Most traditional religions were very male dominated and the death of men has led to a collapse in the established hierarchies. The Roman catholic church has splintered. One wing have started to ordain female priests and has even named a new female pope, while others decree this as heresy and await the return of the Son of man.

Islam has fared better than many would have guessed. There is a lot of infighting between different muslim groups on how to correctly interpret what has happened and what should be the correct interpretation of sharia in the current situation, but that is nothing new. The death of men seem not to have shaken the belief in God among most muslim women.

More purely feminist religious traditions like different wicca movements have gained a lot of ground and there is more dancing under the full moon than ever before. Some of these wicca groups are concerned about the reestablishment of the balance in the world now that one half of the hieros gamos is no more directly represented in the world. Others are focusing on the rebirth of the world now that the Mother Goddess rules supreme. A more extreme form of this way of thinking actively celebrates the death of men. Some groups has even conducted terrorist attacks against sperm banks to stop men from ever returning to the face of the Earth.

Love, Sexuality and New Families

The death of all the men was the death of all the boyfriends, husbands and male lovers of the world. It was also the death of future possible heterosexual love relationships. As many women are still experiencing a lot of grief for those lost and for many of them questions of love and sexuality are something primarily of the past and surrounded by loss and nostalgia.

For lesbian women what has primarily changed in this area is the increasing number of potential partners. Those women who are attracted to both men and women and who might previously have chosen men now of course only have women as potential partners. And some women who previously thought of themselves as exclusively heterosexuals have found that finding someone to love and be loved by is a more attractive prospect than pining for men who aren't there. This has created a cultural distinction between "real lesbians" and "lesbians of convenience". Of course many will vehemently protest against making such a distinction. With the disappearance of men most of the sex industry collapsed and previous sex workers have had to find other means of survival. One phenomenon which has grown into prominence however, are male impersonators. Some women are working hard to perfect the embodiment of the men who are no longer in their own bodies. Many of them are lovers for hire or potential "boyfriends" fought over by many women who desire their love and masculine sexuality.

Women who are living in a love relationship with each other often live together as a couple just like in the world before the disaster. Many others have formed new families with other foundations than romance or sex. Good friends have moved together and share a different and stronger bond than what was usual before when friends shared an apartment. It doesn't have the same feel of being a temporary arrangement, as none of them are going to move out next week because they found a man. Mothers and daughters have often moved back together. The same goes for two or more sisters. Even sisters who were hardly on speaking terms find themselves realising that these are the bonds that matters the most now. These changes are all very new to everyone and unity and tensions live side by side just like in the old families.

The Nordic Union

The Nordic countries were comparatively less severely hit during the aftermath of the crisis than many other parts of the world. Being countries with a higher degree of gender equality than other parts of the world; the Nordic governments were able to become functioning entities again more quickly. As almost half of the politicians were women all the essential positions left vacant by the dead men were quickly filled.

As in other parts of the world however, the reconstruction work suffered in areas where almost all skilled personnel had been men. Training programs were quickly begun to enable more women to do work in areas such as heavy transport, engineering and policing. Of the Nordic countries Denmark has struggled the most with power and water supplies. Transport and food distribution has been an easier challenge for the Danish government to solve than in the larger countries with a more dispersed population. It soon became apparent to the Nordic

governments that both the EU and NATO had stopped functioning as meaningful entities. A Nordic union was thus formed a year ago with all of the 5 Nordic countries as members to better be able to solve common challenges and handle any external threats that might arise in a world much more unstable and unpredictable than before. A disintegrating Russia to the east has become an increasing concern as streams of refugees are fleeing nuclear meltdowns in parts of the country and hunger disasters.

The Nordic prime ministers rotate on a yearly basis serving as the chairperson of the union and the foreign ministers meet on a monthly basis if possible to coordinate and decide on the most important projects of the Union.

The New Economy

The global financial markets immediately collapsed as a result of the disaster. Most currencies lost their value overnight and in most places, including in the Nordic countries, people had to barter goods and services, as there was no longer any confidence in money being worth much anymore.

After the first few months of near anarchy the governments had resumed sufficient control to start introduce rationing on some basic goods. These ration slips have evolved into a form of new currency and people have started to use them in many forms of trade. There are many goods not available with these "new kroner", however. On the black market you need real valuables to barter to have any hope of acquiring desired items. The market for used goods has increased. Redesigned men's wear has come into fashion. A lot of women have been able to make a living from repairing old things and from creating new items out of old ones.

International trade has to some extent been renewed, but at only a fraction of what it used to be. Some shipping lanes have reopened and in continental Europe the main roads have been sufficiently cleared for lorries to be able to transport goods from one country to another. Imported goods, like food not grown in Northern Europe, is very expensive, if available at all. Norway has managed to restart some of its offshore oil industry even though parts of coastline is still severely polluted from a major blow-out on one of the platforms on the day of the crisis. Oil is now one of the most valuable commodities in the world and if transported safely to a buyer it is possible to get almost anything in exchange for it. One of the first oil tankers sent abroad was captured by pirates, and the fate of the crew remains unknown. After this incident no ships will leave the Nordic countries with valuable goods without heavily armed guards.

Transport and Communication

The first months after the disaster there were virtually no roads or highways that could be used by anything larger than a bike. Everywhere on Earth the roads were filled with car wrecks and the bodies of men and women who had died that day.

Trains were the first long distance mode of transport which became functioning again due to fewer wrecks that had to be cleared away on the railway tracks than

on the roads. One advantage of train transport is that it is not dependent on petrol to function. It is now the main mode of transport between cities in the Nordic countries.

The clearing of the roads is in no way complete, but it is now possible to drive between most larger towns and cities without problems. The wrecks lining the side of the roads still make this an emotionally unpleasant experience for most people though. This together with the limited availability and high price of petrol has resulted in making the roads mostly empty except for trucks transporting food and other essential goods. Many women have been retrained as truck drivers due to the importance of this task. As it is more complicated to train aircraft pilots there is still very few planes travelling the skies. There is no commercial air traffic anywhere in the world, the few planes operating are directly controlled by governments or very wealthy individuals.

On the day of the disaster cellphone networks as well as landlines broke down. In most places both are again functioning, but the development of new handsets have naturally grinded to a halt. It is often not possible to call between different countries and many cellphone towers and land lines which have been damaged have not been repaired leaving large areas without any reception.

The transatlantic internet cable is no longer functioning due to sabotage. It is not known who were responsible for this act, but there are many rumors and accusations have been made against extremist religious groups as well as anti-american political movements. The internet is quite well functioning within and between the Nordic countries. But due to the lack of qualified personell to do repairs and maintenance internet access is currently not functioning in many parts of the city or in entire regions. Internet access leeching has become a problem as a result of this.

The World Outside

The 24 hour news circle with instant updates on what is happening around the world is no more. There is often conflicting and unconfirmed information on what is happening in far off places of the world. What is known is that the death of all the men did not create a happy utopian worldwide sisterhood. There are still armed conflicts, and suspicion and prejudice between ethnic and religious groups are just as prevalent as they were before. With the breakdown of transport and communication most conflicts have become more local in nature. Conflicts are often ignited by the fight over limited resources in a world where things that were previously taken for granted by most people in the rich world are now scarce for everyone. Conspiracy theories about what or who might have caused the death of men is also an important reason for tensions both locally and internationally.

The parts of the world that had the highest level of gender equality have generally managed better than the most patriarchal societies. But even in the Nordic countries many professions were still largely male dominated, and it has been a challenge all over the world that there is now a critical lack of sufficient skilled personell in areas like engineering and piloting. The European Union has stopped functioning as a meaningful political entity as it has become a too unwieldy institution to be helpful in the current situation. As distances are

comparatively short in continental Europe there is still a lot of cooperation and trade between European countries, but on a more piecemeal basis.

Russia has experienced a more serious collapse and there are several breakaway regions not in any way controlled by the central government. There have also been several nuclear accidents which has made parts of the country very hazardous to live in. One big concern for Finland and other countries bordering Russia is the large influx of refugees fleeing the deteriorating conditions at home. In Southern Europe however, there are actually fewer refugees arriving from Africa than what was the case before. The largest African cities crumbled after the disaster as women fled back into the countryside. One strength for the people of Africa has been that rural women have the knowledge on how to farm the land and get food and other necessities with little technology or electric power. In Europe however this has been a struggle as many urban women who moved out to the countryside ended up starving as they didn't know the first thing about farming.

The United States have managed to stay united as one country for the most part. There are areas in some states with secessionist movements that have taken control over smaller areas and where the federal government has no say. But at least for now these areas remain small and isolated. What has changed is that the power of individual states has increased dramatically at the expense of the federal government. In many ways this is a return to how the power balance between these two levels of government was in earlier times.

There are a lot of rumours and unconfirmed reports about what is going on inside China. Some of these stories are quite horrible. Few foreigners are admitted to the country but it is clear that the Communist Party is still in control, and the country has remained unified.

Tensions still run high in the Middle East. With its mandatory military service for women, Israel has not lost the upper hand in these power struggles. A worry for Israel however is that relationships between different Palestinian factions as well as between Arab states have improved significantly and Israel is bracing itself for a possible future of having to defend itself against a more united front than was the case when men ran the show.