

KidWorld In Brief

Style- KidWorld is a dark and desperate place where people have nobody they can turn to for help and may have to do terrible things to survive. It is a shattered society where PC's do not know what they will run into when they wander into the next town. It is a world of great variety, where peaceful democracies exist just miles away from cruel dictatorships. Above all it is a world where human nature: the kindness, curiosity and hope for the future along with the cruelty, prejudice and tendency to give in to peer pressure, have come to the forefront and pulse in raw form across KidWorld.

Background- KidWorld takes place 4 years after the emergence of the Plague. This mysterious disease quickly spread throughout the world. A majority of the world's adults died and all those that survived were struck blind. As adults were going blind and realized that kids were not, there was widespread fear that America's enemies would create child armies and use them to invade the country. So as to not be caught defenseless, the army scrambled to capture kids and induct them into the army. Yet the army grabbed more kids than they could control or care for. The kids rebelled and escaped. This led to a society in which both kids and adults thought their only option was to enslave or be enslaved. There are four basic types of communities in KidWorld:

-Those where there are only kids. Adults have either not shown up or have been driven away. This is by far the most common kind. Kid communities range from those who are peaceful and prosperous to those ruled by violence, prejudice and madness.

-Communities ruled by kids where kids enslave adults, using them for manual labor or taking advantage of their knowledge but never really trusting them.

-Communities where there are only adults. They most likely want kids to live with them and help them but are unable to find any willing to. Most survive by subsistence farming.

-Communities where adults enslave kids, using them as their eyes and keeping them in bondage to prevent escapes.

The Plague is still in the people of KidWorld: sighted kids know they will slowly go blind as they approach physical maturity.

Tech Level- Electricity grids have failed, national and international trade (including agricultural trade) has stopped, and consumables that are not being replenished (e.g. gasoline, ammunition, pharmaceuticals) are becoming increasingly rare. A few communities have created a source of electricity (e.g. solar panels, a windmill or even hand-cranked generators) to run appliances and even communicate with other communities via short-wave radio. It is primarily communities where adults enslave kids which have this high level of tech (since they have the knowledge to design the tech and sight to implement it). Most communities, however, rely on candles and bonfires for light, scrounge in abandoned buildings for tools, weapons and clothing and have only books, acoustic instruments and each other for entertainment.

Some communities have figured out how to grow food or gather it from the wild, and this food is often traded to other communities. Some adult communities, who plant and gather by feel, are only barely able to create enough food to keep themselves alive. Not enough people are producing food and many (mostly kids) are forced to use up rapidly diminishing stores of preserved Pre-Plague food to avoid starvation.

Many adult communities use slavery to deal with their lack of sight. They force kids to navigate for them, read for them, repair technology for them, even perform surgery for them. Those adult communities without kid slaves are forced to come up with creative means of doing things without sight. Some of these innovations include: sentries attached to a web of strings

that allow them to feel any intruders, bicycles attached to rope and pulley systems so that blind adults can bike around communities at high speed, clay bas-relief maps with "you are here" stars at every street-corner, and many more.

Organizations- Most communities are completely autonomous. Some have very little contact with other communities, others have contact mostly via traveling traders. Because travel is arduous and long distance communication rare, there are very few organizations that can extend their reach beyond a town or city. Among those rare organizations are remnants of the military, cults (including the doomsday cult that has claimed responsibility for the Plague) and new religions (including God's War, an anti-adult religion originating from Miami).

Dangers- Threats to the residents of KidWorld include wild animals, diseases, traps (both recent and those created during the initial chaos to protect from looters), apocalyptic cults, slavers, bandits and eye eaters (adults who eat the eyes of children to temporarily regain vision). Yet the most common danger in KidWorld is kids. Some kids are dangerous for the same reasons typical of adults (fanaticism, prejudice, cruelty, greed, desperation). Yet kids are most dangerous because of their propensity to give in to peer pressure. Kids often do or believe things just because other kids do and this can lead kid communities into insane or grossly immoral behavior.

Player Characters- PCs can either play sighted children, partially blind adolescents or fully blind adults. The primary goal of all PCs is to survive. Secondary goals may include finding lost family, trying to rebuild civilization or trying to find a cure for the Plague. Kid character classes correspond to "professions" or primary means of survival, e.g. Builders build, Horse Riders have horses, Scouts have wilderness survival skills, etc. Adult classes correspond to the strengths that have most helped the PC survive to this point: Brains have survived through knowledge or quick wits, Brawns have survived via physical strength or ability to defend themselves and Mouths by being able to organize or manipulate people.

Character Creation- Players choose an age. This sets the amount of attribute points, caps on certain attributes and possible blindness penalties. Then players choose a character class, which sets skill costs and resources. The class system is very flexible, making certain options cheaper but not rigidly defining who the character is or what the character can do. Players then buy skills and equipment and round out the PC with advantages and disadvantages. Experience points can be used to increase attributes and skills. They also cause kids to age (200 XP = one birthday), giving more attributes but also moving kid PCs closer to being blind adults.

Game Mechanics- All mechanics are based on a simple system. The sum of attribute + skill or other factor + 1d20 must be equal to or higher than the difficulty of the proposed action. Opposed rolls are made when two actions are in conflict with each other: each party tries to get more above their difficulty than the other party. Fighting is made up of opposed actions and reactions with different difficulties and effects. In combat, for each round each character gets one action to make against an enemy and one reaction if someone else does something to them.

Setting Options- KidNight is an optional appendix in which the beliefs of kids concerning luck, wishes, ghosts, monsters, etc. are true. Kids have access to supernatural skills and other supernatural character creation options. KidSurreal is an optional setting in which, instead of a Plague, the perfect summer afternoon has dilated kids' sense of time to such a degree that kid empires can rise and fall before adults even get around to noticing what kids are doing.

