

Episode 0 A Primer

Hi, I'm Coop your GM and this episode serves as an introduction to the world and mechanics of the tabletop role playing game, Degenesis, developed by Berlin-based studio SixMoreVodka. There is an extended history behind the development of the game, which was conceived in the early 2000s as the brainchild of Marko Jurr-jah-vikk and Christian Gunther. The initial core rulebook released in 2004 followed by supplemental background books featuring NPCs, expanded rulesets and campaign outlines. Fast forward almost 10 years to 2014 and a new version of the game is released, labeled Degenesis: Rebirth. It was an integral reworking of the game, consisting of two tomes: *Primal Punk*, which describes the setting in detail and *Katharsys*, which provides information about the game system and further advice for the [Game Master](#), along with a prepared adventure.

My exposure to the Rebirth Edition of the game came at 2019's GenCon in Indianapolis. The artwork caught my eye, but the world and lore drew me in. Ever since, I have been hooked on the extensive lore and simple pick-up-and-play style. Although the hype train and fandom persist in places like the Degenesis Discord server, SixMoreVodka studios has shuttered production on any new Degenesis franchise material since October 2021. But, hope is a central theme in Degenesis, despite the apocalyptic setting, and I can only do as much when I think about the future of the IP. However, businesses need to make money, and despite SixMoreVodka's best efforts to offer free-to-play models for all of their game content, livestreams, community involvement and Hollywood-level trailer production, it sadly wasn't turning a profit like they had wanted. I'm not worried though, and you shouldn't be either! There's never been a better time to jump into table top roleplaying games, or TTRPGs for short. There are still hundreds of pages of amazing world-building with which to weave tales in the Degenesis universe.

If you're new to the TTRPG community, welcome! In this community, I found lasting friendships that encourage creativity and self-expression as well as a reason to stay in on Friday and Saturday nights around a table, or a webcam. As much as I love being as

a player character, or PC, I've always loved storytelling more and found myself leaning toward bigger GM, or game master, roles. I'd voraciously consume the foundational mechanics of the game to craft robust gameplay sessions for my PCs. This has extended into this experiment you're listening to now! I felt that the combination of apocalyptic audio-drama and solo play RPG really lends itself to this system and it's diverse cast of characters that encourages more roleplaying with less dice-rolling. Thankfully, I found encouragement to pursue this type of storytelling by other similar podcasts. I'd like to give a shoutout to Red Moon Roleplaying and Tale of the Manticore, specifically, for their inspired approaches to storytelling in this space. So, without further adieu, let's sink our teeth into the world of Degeneration.

Part 1: What is Degeneration?

The TTRPG game is categorized by (and it's first rulebook labeled as "Primal Punk"). This label details a world in which humanity struggles for survival in a land filled with perils both human and alien.

The game is set in the regions of Europe and North Africa at the end of the 26th century, more than 500 years after a major asteroid impact devastated the face of the Earth. These 5 centuries are bookended by the ensuing chaos and conflict surrounding the event that reset human civilization at the cusp of transhumanism. From the ashes of the old world, new cultures emerge and fight for survival.

Furthermore, an alien entity, dubbed The Primer, has travelled within the asteroids, and its interaction with Earth's lifeforms pushes them to mutate and evolve. The Primer is a menace to the human species, for when it infects a human embryo the resulting spawn is a new cross-breed: A terrifying hybrid known as Homo Degeneration.

Players who create their characters avatars within the universe are shaped by three different ideals: culture, cult and concept. Culture is defined as a home region, or a pedigree of sorts, of which there are 7. The cult a character belongs to is their tribe in the wastes or government behind the barricades—think of it as a team, faction or organization that gives them purpose or direction. With a whopping 13 cults to choose from, you're not likely to get bored in this game! The concept is the character's personal

background theme that influences how they behave inside the cult or in their region with 21 different flavors. Each character makes their way through the world trying to rise in the ranks of their respective cult. As the Palebird on Youtube would describe it, these ranks are not goals that every player or NPC will be trying to achieve. Think of it as a totem pole of power that influences how different ranks interact with each other in a hierarchy. But perhaps it's more accurate to say that characters simply try to survive in this shell of our former world, as the threat of exile or humiliation is just as real as the one of wild Gendo dog packs trying to rip out their throat. Violence is a common thread through many stories told here and is often employed as a quick means to an end by the people in power. However, violence in low-level characters should be avoided when possible, as combat is extremely deadly in this game with high-damage weapons, refreshed initiative orders, and special abilities, which we'll cover as time goes on.

Part 2: How will I play Degenesis?

Since this is an experiment in storytelling, and I'd like a compelling narrative for you listeners, I will plan out certain story beats with critical junctures that hinge on dice rolls. However, I think it is really crucial that the dice determine all the actions I will take—I'm taking a cue from Tale of the Manticore on this one. Player characters in this world would be wise to travel in a party or at least with a partner, as it increases their chances of survival. As you listeners will come to realize, the nature of some cults is very insular which makes survivability among the cast more uncertain. Speaking of the cast, I think implementing a rotating cast of characters will be a really cool way to showcase the different cultures, cults, and concepts I mentioned earlier. With some careful planning (and a good amount of luck), several characters may team up as stories overlap and common objectives become a little clearer! Character customization, expansive world setting, and gameplay progression can be a lot to take in. Thankfully, Degenesis uses a d6 pool system which keeps rolls localized to a single six-sided dice type. Similar to other tabletop games, dice rolls are set against a challenge rating to determine success. However, in Degenesis success and failures are counted up and given equal weight to determine the best (or worst) outcome. On a dice roll, 4s, 5s, and 6s are considered

successes while 3s, 2s, and 1s, are considered failures. Additionally, during gameplay you may hear me describe Triggers or Botches which are 6s and 1s, respectively. While nothing may happen if enough success or failures are counted toward the difficulty challenge, you can be sure some interesting effects will happen to the character with more Triggers or Botches!

Characters will be made using the Degeneration: Artifacts creation mechanic which is the most recent source book with appended rules. I will not be using any homebrew material for the foreseeable future, but I'll reserve the right to plug in interesting community-sponsored content because if the Degeneration community has proven anything, it's that they love this game to death!

Part 3: What can I expect from Echoes of Eschaton?

Since this is an audio-drama, storytelling will be key. Episodes will be short but action-packed to keep the narrative clipping along, because I think that an hour long episode could tend to drag on. Besides, I've got my mental health to think about in post production! Having said that, there will always be the odd episodes that run long or get cut a bit short, but to supplement, I've decided to do a sort of recap every few episodes to keep new listeners up to speed and continuing listeners apprised of the current story. It should provide a great structure to onboard new listeners with as little lore dumping as possible.

I've always thought that awesome music and great sound effects make for compelling listening, and Echoes of Eschaton will be no different. As an audio producer, I've made great use of creative commons libraries as well the generous work of audio designers whom I plan to give a shout out to at the end of every episode. Although there is a wealth of freemium content on the internet, I'm always keen to have people contribute something of their own to the show. You can send me a piece of artwork, music, or anything you've put some creative power into at echoesofeschaton@gmail.com

If you do any digging into the game Degeneration you'll realize it is as vast and imaginative a world as any. So, rather than slow down the pace of the game with excessive breaks to explain every facet of the system or world writ large, I plan to take diligent notes

about rolling stats, overworld beats, and character profiles. Breaks will still happen periodically in the episode to reinforce the narrative, but a combination of blogging recaps and audio should help alleviate any overwhelming introduction to the world—at least for the first few episodes

Lastly, I'd like to state a disclaimer about Echoes of Eschaton content contained in the audio drama. Make no mistake, Degenesis is a mature world that people live, sweat, bleed and die in. I will not shy away from descriptions of violence, gore, sex, drug and alcohol use, or abuse in the story. However, I can promise that I will not embrace gratuitous use of these elements if they do not benefit the story. There is plenty of pulp fiction to be found elsewhere, but I want to write and record something gripping and genuine. I hope you listeners feel the same.