EVERYONE WANTS TO BE SARTRE

Everyone Wants to Be Sartre is an experimental roleplaying game of ennui and despair played out amongst the meaningless postmodern lives of androgynous high schoolers in the richest nation in the world. Players take turns trying to be the most passive agressive and angst-ridden "emos" they can be.

getting started

One player takes on the role of the gamemaster, hereafter refered to as Sartre. The remaining players are also tormented existentialists, here after refered to as "emos."

Each player makes one character each, including Sartre. The characters are all in high school, wear black, and listen to fugazi. The players should feel free to describe themselves and their attire however they like.

Each character needs a sheet of paper with the following information on it.

angst
cutting
drama
ennui
suffering

Angst represents the things that piss you off. **Cutting** represents how willing you are to hurt yourself to prove how different you are. **Drama** is the relative ease it takes for something small to become monumental. **Ennui** is the pointless of life. A high number here means you've read Camus, especially about Sissyphus. **Suffering** is your own personal suffering and how little people understand what you are going through.

Select three stats to start at 1, one to start at 2, and one to start at 0.

They must also select one form of art for which they are suffering. This could be as simple as drawing angel cats or as complicated as DJ Tears' mixed-tape demo collection which no one but you fully appreciates.

playing the game

EWTBS is played over several scenes, usually at a school or one of the emo's home. Sartre frames a scene for the emos, making sure to keep his character in the background or out of the scene entirely. Everyone else must be present. He also secretly selects two stats that will be used in the scene, but does not tell the emos.
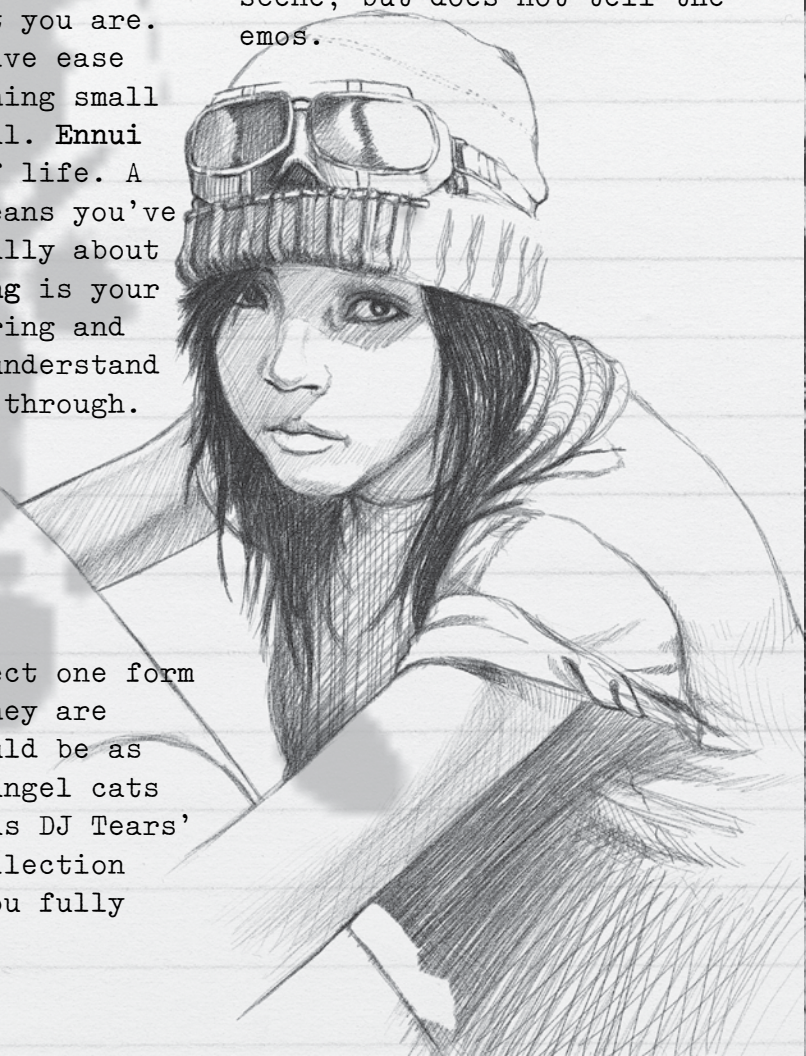
Emos play through the scene, using the most passive aggressive tools possible to ramp up the drama. At some point, Sartre introduces an external conflict. Conflicts that are metaphorical statements on the cosmos are especially good, but not necessary.

Sartre declares the two stats relevant to the conflict and the emos wrestle with their inner demons to avoid confronting the conflict. Everyone rolls dice equal to the appropriate stats for the conflict, giving narration rights to the emo who rolls the best (die off for ties).

d6s are best, but it doesn't really matter what dice you use, so long as everyone uses the same sized dice.

Sartre's option

Before the dice are rolled, Sartre has the option of giving one additional die to the player who he perceives to be the most emo. There is no hard and fast rule here, as each Sartre has a different perception of existentialism.

nothing matters

Emos that want to try and out-do their friends can choose to push the drama to new heights in order to "win" the scene. Doing so may cost the player a stat, but can change the tide of the scene. Any player who is not "winning" may bring in additional dice from any stat not being used in this scene. The emo explains how the stat is relevant (i.e. I go in the corner and start cutting myself) and rolls all the dice associated with that stat, adding the total to his scene total. He then removes one point from the associated stat permanently. Each emo may do this only once per scene, but any number of times during the game, so long as she has at least 1 point in the associated stat.

my dark place

Losing sucks. The emo who rolls the worst (dice off for ties) is called the worst emo and must go into his dark place. Every time he goes into his dark place, he gains a sadness token. Sadness tokens accumulate during play and can never go away. Players who collect too many Sadness tokens grow more and more emo.

The emo should take a moment to describe this dark place he has entered, but it should be relevant to the the stats used in the scene. The next scene may even branch from there. But that's up to Sartre.

ending the scene

Once the "best" emo has narrated the conclusion of the scene, things change. First, the best emo gains 1 point in any stat of his choosing. Second, he becomes the new Sartre and frames the next scene. Lastly, the worst emo gains 1 point in his worst stat (player's choice if there is a tie).

ending the game

The game ends when one emo collects five sadness tokens or another emo attains a five in any one stat, while having no more than one zero. This emo is said to be "too cool."

If an emo collects five sadness tokens, he takes his life, becomes Sartre, and runs one final scene detailing everyone's sadness over the emo's death.

If the game ends because an emo is becomes "too cool", the remaining emos kick him out of the group. He becomes Sartre and a scene is played where everyone else sucks, but you.

suffering more

Emos can suffer longer if they like by raising the value of the game's conclusion to 10 or 15. But such games will just go on and on in this writer's opinion. Which might magnifyi the pointlessness of this game.

notes

I can't really say for sure what this is. It doesn't sound like a fun game to play, but there might be something in the exploration of this design space. To be honest, I think it's far too deriative. But I wrote it in two hours (with graphics), so it's certainly no masterpiece.

Notes and comments are always welcome.

Have a cookie.

credits

text and graphics. jim pinto.

cover and emo girl with goggles. andy hepworth.

umbrella emo and sad emo. raven mimura.

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