Kitfox Games

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A Cruel Fate

Emergent tragedies in **The Shrouded Isle**

Kitfox Games

SHATTERED PLANET

MOON HUNTERS

Boyfriend DUNGEON

THE SHROUDED ISLE

SUNKEN SINS

Start

Settings

Quit

SOME SAY THE GODS
ARE RANDOM

THE SHROUDED ISLE

SUNKEN SINS

Start

Settings

Quit

Neutral	Satisfied	Satisfied	Satisfied	Satisfied
Kegnni	Iosefka	Cadwell	Efferson	Blackborn
Ignorance	Fervor	Discipline	Penitence	Obedience

House Kegnni

Responsibility:
Ignorance

X

Who do you wish to join your council this season?

Vadim Kegnni
??????
??????

Kasmira Kegnni
Full of Fervor?
??????

Svante Kegnni
Disciplined?
??????

Nadege Kegnni
??????
Unrepentant?

Hana Kegnni
??????
Knows too much?

Andrei Kegnni
??????
??????

Preben Kegnni
Full of Fervor?
??????

Karel Kegnni
Obedient?
??????

Matron Kegnni

Inquiries Remaining: 2

Approval: Satisfied

Begin Inquiry

Rename Villager

Confine
(3 Open Vaults)

Appoint Advisor

Satisfied
Kegnni
Ignorance

Satisfied
Iosefka
Fervor

Satisfied
Cadwell
Discipline

Satisfied
Efferson
Penitence

Neutral
Blackborn
Obedience

House Leader Reactions

Finish Results

Matron Kegnni	Adjudicator Iosefka	Lord Cadwell	Vicar Efferson	Inquisitor Blackborn
+36	68	+28	+36	+11
Satisfied	Rebellious	Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral
Satisfied	Rebellious	Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral
Kegnni	Iosefka	Cadwell	Efferson	Blackborn
Ignorance	Fervor	Discipline	Penitence	Obedience

The Shrouded Isle

- August 2015: Prototype made during Ludum Dare 33
- August 2017: *The Shrouded Isle* released.
- November 2017: *Sunken Sins* expansion released.
- January 2019: Switch version released.

Emergent Tragedies

- **Theme:** “You are the Monster”
- **Ludonarrative Congruence:** Tell the narrative through the gameplay.
- **Utopian** Design elements undermined **Tragic** narrative.

Dystopian

- Stagnation
- Division
- Failure

Utopian

- Growth
- Unity
- Triumph

Why Emergent Tragedies?

- Depict dystopias and moral greyness
- Achieve **ludonarrative congruence.**
- More impactful experience since the player creates their own downfall.
- Challenging, due to requiring alternative gameplay elements.

Overview

1. Psychological Resources
2. Character-oriented Mechanics
3. Progression through Information

1. Psychological Resources

Cadwell
Efferson
Blackborn
Iosefka
Kegnni
Physical Resources
Population: 100
Food
Shelter
Current Season
Equinox
End Turn
Year 1845
Happiness
Secrecy

Psychological resources

Satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Satisfied	Satisfied
Kegnni	Iosefka	Cadwell	Efferson	Blackborn
Ignorance	Fervor	Discipline	Penitence	Obedience

Select a seasonal Advisor from each House.

The Cathedral

Kegnni Estate

Iosefka Estate

Efferson Estate

Blackborn Estate

Cadwell Estate

5 Years Remaining

Spring

Religious Values

	Iosefka	Cadwell	Efferson	Blackborn
	utral	Satisfied	Satisfied	Satisfied
Ignorance	Fervor	Discipline	Penitence	Obedience

Select a seasonal Advisor from each House.

The Cathedral

Kegnni Estate

Iosefka Estate

Cadwell Estate

Efferson Estate

Blackborn Estate

5 Years Remaining

Spring

House Opinion

Satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Satisfied	Satisfied
Kegnni	Iosefka	Cadwell	Efferson	Blackborn
Ignorance	Fervor	Discipline	Penitence	Obedience

Psychological Resources

- Makes the player embrace the cult's values.
- Divorced from objective reality or survival.
- Dissociates player's interests from the villagers' interests.

Volatile Stagnation

- Alternative to sustained economic growth.
- Overall size of economy is stagnant.
- Individual resources can fluctuate greatly.
- Dynamically creates cascading crises.

Select 1 to 3 Advisors

Begin Month

Chessa Kegnni

Sadist(+15)
Rebellious(-30)

Burn Books

Karel Iosefka

? ? ? ? ? ?
Lacking Fervor?

Build Monument

Svante Cadwell

? ? ? ? ? ?
Knows too much?

Confiscate Goods

Wendelin Efferson

Disciplined?
Unrepentant?

Flagellate Sinners

Miko Blackborn

? ? ? ? ? ?
? ? ? ? ? ?

Investigate Heresy

Satisfied
Kegnni
Ignorance

Neutral
Iosefka
Fervor

Neutral
Cadwell
Discipline

Dissatisfied
Efferson
Penitence

Satisfied
Blackborn
Obedience

Select 1 to 3 Advisors

Begin Month

Chessa Kegnni

Sadist(+15)
Rebellious(-30)

Burn Books
Ignorance +10
Fervor +15
Obedience -30

Karel Iosefka

??????
Lacking Fervor?

Build Monument

Svante Cadwell

??????
Knows too much?

Confiscate Goods

Wendelin Efferson

Disciplined?
Unrepentant?

Flagellate Sinners

Miko Blackborn

??????
??????

Investigate Heresy

Zealous	Neutral	Neutral	Rebellious	Satisfied
Kegnni	Iosefka	Cadwell	Efferson	Blackborn
Ignorance	Fervor	Discipline	Penitence	Obedience

Select 1 to 3 Advisors

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Rebellious(-30)

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Ignorance +10

Fervor +15

Obedience -30

Karel Iosefka

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Kegnni	Iosefka	Cadwell	Efferson	Blackborn
Ignorance	Fervor	Discipline	Penitence	Obedience

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??????

??????

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Zealous	Neutral	Neutral	Rebellious	Satisfied
Kegnni	Iosefka	Cadwell	Efferson	Blackborn
Ignorance	Fervor	Discipline	Penitence	Obedience

Select 1 to 3 Advisors

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??????
??????

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Kegnni	Iosefka	Cadwell	Efferson	Blackborn
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??????
??????

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Zealous	Neutral	Neutral	Rebellious	Satisfied
Kegnni	Iosefka	Cadwell	Efferson	Blackborn
Ignorance	Fervor	Discipline	Penitence	Obedience

Volatile Stagnation

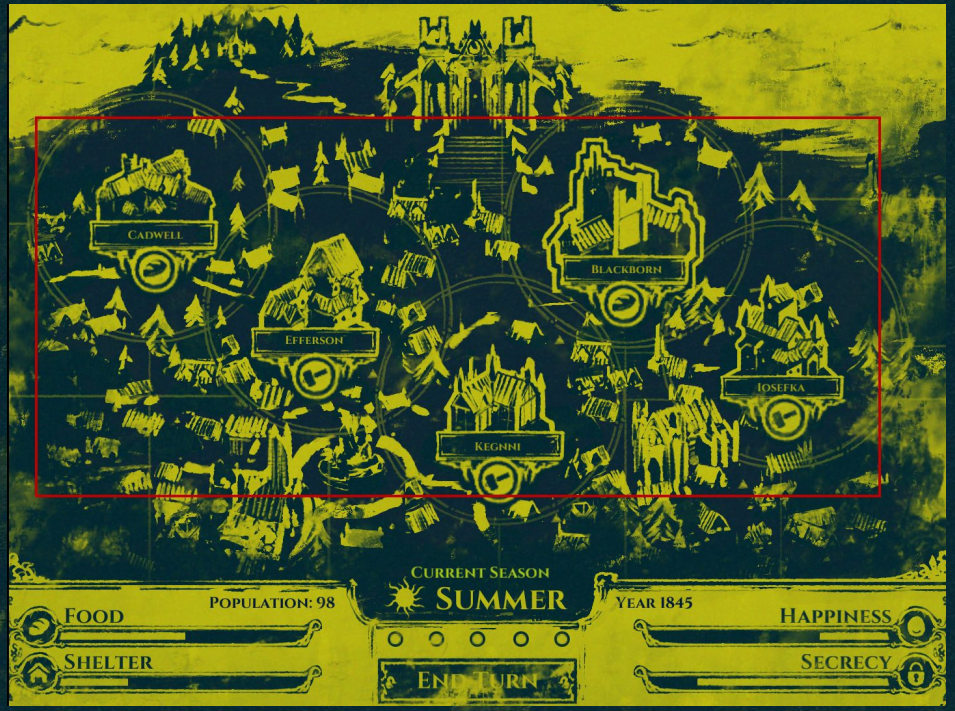
- Simple choice given dramatic nuance through high volatility.
- Stagnant economy prevents spiraling growth or collapse.
- Psychological resources easier to justify as being interconnected than physical resources.

Reigns

- Combines physical resources with faction strength.
- Punishes for both maxing out or bottoming out.
- Sudden Death: volatility without stagnation

2. Character-Oriented Mechanics

Process-Oriented



Character-oriented

- Goal: Dramatize resource management via unpredictable characters.
- All actions involve characters.
- The player can order characters, but not directly control them.

House Kegnni

Responsibility:
Ignorance

X

Edin Kegnni
??????
??????

Nadya Kegnni
??????
Knows too much?

Sagan Kegnni
??????
Disobedient?

Chessa Kegnni
Full of Fervor?
Disobedient?

Nicholai Kegnni
??????
??????

Sometimes I hear the sea call to me...

Matron Kegnni

Inquiries Remaining: 0

Approval: Neutral

Begin Inquiry

Rename Villager

Confine
(3 Open Vaults)

Change Advisor

Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Satisfied
Kegnni	Iosefka	Cadwell	Efferson	Blackborn
Ignorance	Fervor	Discipline	Penitence	Obedience

Select 1 to 3 Advisors

Begin Month

I'll prepare my notes. A sermon is in order.

Chessa Kegnni

Full of Fervor?
Disobedient?

Burn Books
Ignorance +10
Fervor +? !
Obedience –? !

Karel Iosefka

? ? ? ? ? ?
Lacking Fervor?

Build Monument

Svante Cadwell

? ? ? ? ? ?
Knows too much?

Confiscate Goods

Wendelin Efferson

Disciplined?
Unrepentant?

Flagellate Sinners

Miko Blackborn

? ? ? ? ? ?
? ? ? ? ? ?

Investigate Heresy

Satisfied	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Satisfied
Kegnni	Iosefka	Cadwell	Efferson	Blackborn
Ignorance	Fervor	Discipline	Penitence	Obedience

Chessa Kegnni
Full of Fervor?
Disobedient?

Begin Inquiry

Burn Books

(Poor Outcome) Chessa found only a few scribbled scraps of old world literature. There were no bonfires. Ignorance -5

Chessa's Virtue

Chessa spends extra time at the monument construction sites. Fervor + ?!

Chessa's Vice

Chessa revises the code of laws with a new, more confusing interpretation. Obedience - ?!

Next Result

Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Satisfied
Kegnni	Iosefka	Cadwell	Efferson	Blackborn
Ignorance	Fervor	Discipline	Penitence	Obedience

Expectations and Betrayal

- Player's engagement results in implicit trust.
- Mismatched expectations cause a sense of betrayal.
- Adds narrative context to otherwise banal resource acquisition.

Wilma
Grave Robber
1
2
3
4
5
20.0 / 20.0
10.0 / 100
ACC 90
CRIT 10%
DMG 4-7
DODGE 10
PROT 0%
SPD 4
1
1

3. Progression through Information

3. Progression

- Conventional approach: Wide (Expansion) or Tall (Upgrade)
- Incompatible with narrative: The island is isolated and has a dwindling population.
- Progression through information gathering.

Hidden Traits and Inquiries

Changing Perceptions

- Character will behaves the same, but...
- **Change in Player's Perception:** Player can more accurately predict impact of using character.
- **Change in Villagers' Perception:** Sacrificing fully investigated characters gives bigger bonuses or lower penalties.

Chessa Kegnni
Full of Fervor?
Disobedient?

Begin Inquiry

Burn Books

(Poor Outcome) Chessa found only a few scribbled scraps of old world literature. There were no bonfires. Ignorance -5

Chessa's Virtue

Chessa spends extra time at the monument construction sites. Fervor + ?!

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Chessa revises the code of laws with a new, more confusing interpretation. Obedience - ?!

Next Result

Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Satisfied
Kegnni	Iosefka	Cadwell	Efferson	Blackborn
Ignorance	Fervor	Discipline	Penitence	Obedience

Burn Books
Next Result
X
craps of old world
tion sites. Fervor
nfusing
Chessa Kegnni
Full of Fervor?, Disobedient?
Inquire about Virtue (Kegnni -3)
Inquire about Vice (Kegnni -6)
Neutral
Kegnni
Ignorance
Neutral
Iosefka
Fervor
Neutral
Cadwell
Discipline
Neutral
Efferson
Penitence
Satisfied
Blackborn
Obedience

Burn Books
Next Result
If you were a better leader, I wouldn't have to rebel.
X
Chessa Kegnni
Full of Fervor?, Rebellious(-30)
Inquire about Virtue (Kegnni -3)
Inquire about Vice (Kegnni -6)
Neutral
Kegnni
Ignorance
Neutral
Iosefka
Fervor
Neutral
Cadwell
Discipline
Neutral
Efferson
Penitence
Satisfied
Blackborn
Obedience

The Gathering Convenes...
Who will be the Sacrifice this Season?

Chessa Kegnni

Full of Fervor?
***Rebellious*(-30)**

Karel Iosefka

??????
Lacking Fervor?

Svante Cadwell

??????
Knows too much?

Wendelin Efferson

Disciplined?
Unrepentant?

Miko Blackborn

??????
??????

X

Chessa Kegnni

Full of Fervor?, Rebellious(-30)

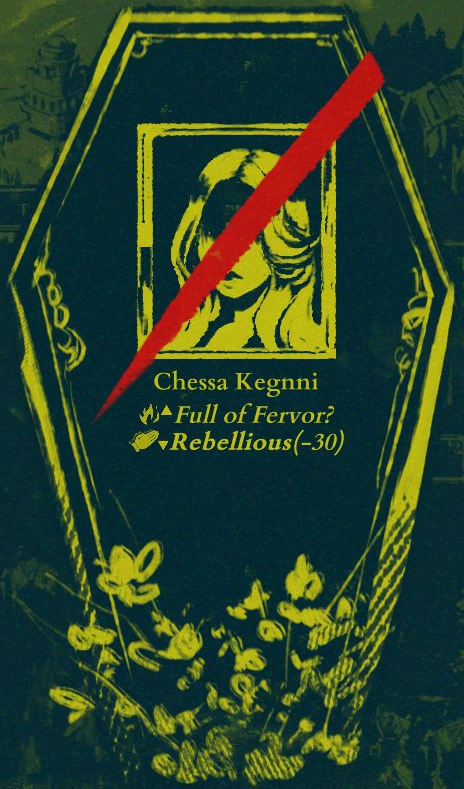
• (Uncertain Virtue) Villagers who trust Chessa's reputation will feel conflicted and lose **Fervor.**

• (Major Vice) The villagers will be inspired to greater **Obedience** through the purging of this sinner.

• House Kegnni will grudgingly submit to my decision.

Sacrifice | Spare

Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Satisfied
Kegnni	Iosefka	Cadwell	Efferson	Blackborn
Ignorance	Fervor	Discipline	Penitence	Obedience



Through Sacrifice, Thy will be done

We sacrificed the life of Chessa in the name of Chernobog and the good of our people. Our condolences to House Kegnni.

(Just Sacrifice) House Kegnni solemnly mourns Chessa.
(House Kegnni Approval -30, Other Houses Approval +5)

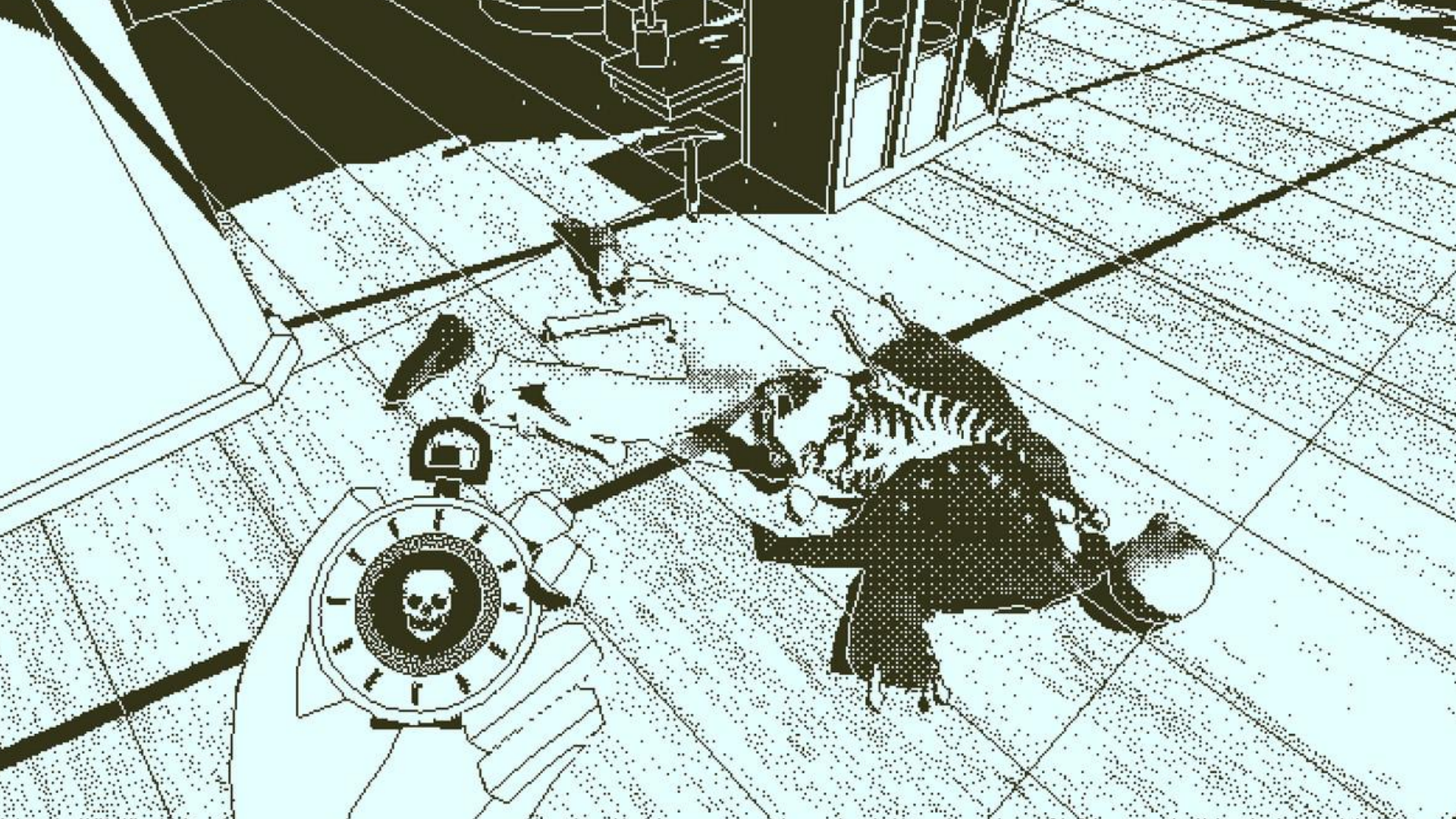
The villagers praise Chernobog for ridding their community of a blighted soul.
(Obedience +15, Fervor -10)

Accept

Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Satisfied
Kegnni	Iosefka	Cadwell	Efferson	Blackborn
Ignorance	Fervor	Discipline	Penitence	Obedience

Blinding the player

- Allow good intentions to go wrong.
- Encourage players to get to know characters.
- Reward prudence and foresight, if skilled players can make reasonable assumptions.



Takeaways

Emergent Tragedies allow players to create their own downfall.

1. **Psychological Resources** encourage players to embrace alternative paradigms.

2. **Character-Oriented Mechanics** dramatize resource management.

3. **Progression through Information allows players to improve over time without direct empowerment.**

46.37 FPS
CASE NOTES
Nerissa's Alibi
Welcome Inquisitor, how may I be of assistance?
This afternoon, at around 2 o'clock, I informed Abraham of the funeral scheduled for this evening.
Please, stop.
ACCUSE
CONTRADICT
ENTER SANCTUM
RESUME
LEAVE
2:25
2:50
3:15
3:40
4:05
4:30
4:55
5:20
5:45
6:10
Nerissa's Alibi
Prepare Body
Dismiss Abra...
Finish Preparations
Rush to Grave

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RESTING TIME 00:31
DAY 23
24
25
26
27
COMFORTABLE
LIVEABLE
CHILLY
COLD
VERY COLD
FREEZING
-76°F
FOOD AND HUNGER
1 of our people died!
0h 50m
11h 22m
Refugees
Resolve the situation with the incoming refugees (0 / 3)
Take care of the ill
Open a new Medical Post (0 / 4)
18
22
77
41
36%
DISCONTENT
HOPE
1
14
4 /258