



DOOMSONG

WORLD • MORGAN FINLEY
 ART • MORITZ KREBS
 RULES • JACK CESAR
 DESIGN • CHRIS CESAR
 PROOFREADING • TIM GRAY

Doomsong

At the start of all things o-ur ce-a - tor they were mur-dered the-n in-terred
 fol-low-ing this ba-tal and the tur-tles re-joined they were un-cha-ined no re-stant
 See-ing from the world cried out Death stay'd not his hand yes he cap-tured and se-cured

and they were placed with hate upon the waves of Lam'be and Allu-mour within a sha-llow grave where no one goes
 and all the world was tossed upon the waves of atk were held at Not sent by these fiends
 Lam'be and Allu-mour atk were held at boy with-in Death's f'call so now we sit and

wait e-ver pass-ing nec-et last-ing ☉ cor-pus a - ri - nus

one day all this will pass and un-til then we must hold fast

by David McEw

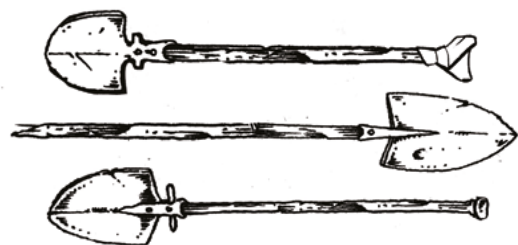


SILENCE IN
 HEAVEN

Contents



Introduction.....	5
Getting Started.....	6
THE GRAVEDIGGERS' GUILD.....	10
The Character Sheet	12
Creating Your Character.....	14
RULES.....	38
Standard Checks.....	40
Special Checks	44
Combat	54
NPCs	60
Gear	62
Weapons.....	64
Armour	66
Traits and Conditions	68
Example Traits	70
Abilities	72
Occult Abilities	76
THE LAST MEAL.....	84
Starting Your Adventure	94
Castle Lethe: Caverns.....	96
Castle Lethe: Grounds.....	98
Castle Lethe: First Floor	100
Castle Lethe: Second Floor	102
Castle Lethe: Third Floor.....	104
CASTLE RESIDENTS.....	106
The Lice Mother	108
Troizel & Cresseid	110
Gardeners.....	112
Unquiet Dead: Sefts	114
Unquiet Dead: Lythe	116
Birds	118
INDEX.....	120



Introduction

You hold in your hands a dark missive sent forth in complete earnestness: the demo book for *Doomsong*, a love letter to medieval horror set in a world that was dying even as it was born. As this demo has found its way into your hands, only you can help. We need everyone—from TTRPG veterans to those for whom the letters ‘TTRPG’ are a complete mystery (tabletop roleplaying game, if you were wondering)—to read this book, create characters and run the introductory adventure found within.

By reading and running the contents of this demo, you will get a sneak preview of the world of Painyme. Grab your friends or join us for one of the frequent playtests we run over on [Discord](#). You can tell us all about the experiences you had with this advanced preview: the good, the bad and the grotesque. We’ll take all your feedback and use it to improve *Doomsong*. You have our eternal gratitude for getting involved, and if you’re comfortable sharing your name (or social media handle) with us, we’ll be sure to thank you publicly when the full product hits Kickstarter later this year.

A Roleplay Macabre

Doomsong is an exploration of medieval horror that is set in a realm just askew enough from reality to impart a sense of the unknown. It is a system of cruel fate, where heroism and glory are made precious by their rarity. Players create characters who have joined the Gravediggers’ Guild, an organisation that sends its members to the most forlorn places of the world. Its aim? Restoring dignity to death. There are many forces in Painyme that seek to profane this solemn state: blasphemous entities, unholy philosophies, untethered souls. It is up to the gravediggers to banish such evils to Heall.

Put simply, *Doomsong* is a roleplaying game, a narrative experience in which one player acts as the Game Master (GM) and the other 2-5 participants as Player Characters (PCs). Larger or smaller groups can work, but the sweet spot is about 4 PCs. Each player controls one character while the GM frames the story and controls all the Non-Player Characters (NPCs). Think of PCs as the main characters in a novel and NPCs as a host of villains, monsters, and side characters that help, hinder, and obstruct the PCs. The GM? They are a cruel and vengeful god.

This demo has everything you need to take up the mantle of GM. However, if you do not plan on running a game, you can read everything except the adventure that begins on page [84](#), which contains secrets you will have more fun discovering with friends.

Getting Started



As a GM, sending your gravediggers off into the world of Painyme is as much about entering the mindset of an overworked and unsympathetic taskmaster as it is the practicalities of rules and dice. We suggest you get your other ledgers in order and brew something strong before attending to the information in this tome; gravediggers can be an unruly lot and they need a steady hand to keep everything in order.

What You Need

To run a game of *Doomsong*, you will need the following:

DICE. This game uses D6s. These are six-sided dice found in most board games and gambling halls. You will need three dice per player and a handful for the GM.

DOOMCOIN. A coin with heads and tails. Ideally this coin should be large, weighty, and full of ominous foreboding.

NOTE-TAKING TOOLS. Pencils, erasers, and paper. Some players like to use a dedicated journal for their notes, while others prefer using scraps of paper they lose immediately.

CHARACTER SHEETS. These form a record of a character's strengths and weaknesses. Find free character sheets [here](#).

THIS BOOK. For rules, advice, adventure, creature stats, and map locations.

Terminology

In this book, we use a bit of terminology.

CHECKS. These are used to determine the result of actions where the outcome is uncertain. Checks involve rolling dice. For more information, see page 40.

TRAITS. Characters have traits like LIGHT-FINGERED or RECKLESS, which can affect the outcome of a check. Throughout the book, traits are always written in THIS FONT.

ABILITIES. Characters also gain various abilities, such as the Study ability or the Protect ability (see page 72 for a list of abilities). Characters with abilities have special rules that change how they are able to interact with the game.

CONDITIONS. Characters can suffer from conditions, the most common of which are various injuries. Conditions are temporary effects that can be treated or removed, whereas traits and abilities are permanent.

Running *Doomsong*

As GM, it is up to you to run the game (though it is everyone's responsibility to make it fun). To do so, follow these simple steps.

READ THE RULES. Once you have collected the components together, you will want to read ahead and get a sense of the game's rules. You do not need to read all of the rules, but having a basic knowledge helps when it comes to sharing with your group. It is a good idea for players to read the rules as well, to keep things running smoothly.

READ THE ADVENTURE. Starting on page 84, you will find a short demo adventure adapted from *Lord Have Mercy Upon Us*, the full-length adventure that will be hitting Kickstarter alongside *Doomsong*. Reading through these pages will help you run the adventure but, as with the rules, don't feel that you need to memorise the whole thing verbatim!

CREATE CHARACTERS. This is the first stage that will require the other players. Up until now you've been reading the book and getting to grips with the system, but now it's time to gather your friends and dive in! Together, begin character creation by turning to page 14 and running your players through the process of creating their gravediggers.

VENTURE FORTH. With characters made, it's time to start the adventure. Everything that happens next is up to you and your players. We can offer you guidance, we can offer you prayers, but only you can forge this world into reality—we trust you.



SPREAD THE WORD. After you have played a game or two, please get in touch, either informally on [Discord](#) or through email at info@caesarink.com. If you liked what you played we would also be eternally grateful if you could let everyone know about *Doomsong*! We are a small team and word of mouth is super important to us; we can't make this thing a success without you.



The Conversation

Most of *Doomsong* is played through the conversation. If you are familiar with TTRPGs, this conversation will be one you have had many times. As GM, you will lay out the scene and ask the players what their characters will be doing. In the majority of cases, no rolling of dice is required. Players will make decisions and you decide the outcome of their actions.

However, there will be times in which the conversation isn't enough: it won't be obvious whether a character can leap a chasm, smite a foe or charm the merchant into giving them what they want. In these situations, players will have to roll the dice to determine the outcome.

We have explained the process of rolling dice and making checks on page 40. For now, though, it's important to remember that the conversation is your most powerful tool. As long as people are talking and having fun, you're doing it right.



Rulings not Rules

The rules of *Doomsong* cover all manner of situations, but there will always be the occasional outlier that goes beyond what we have written here. Instead of trying to come up with strict rules for every possibility, we urge you, as the GM, to make decisions based on your instincts, using this book as a set of guidelines and inspiration.

This isn't to say you should be making things up as you go along—consistent and fair rulings will help your players feel they can make decisions that matter—but neither do you have to stress about getting every little thing right. An off-the-cuff ruling that preserves the flow of the game's conversation can go a long way toward ensuring the players are having a good time.



Lost Rite

What is dead is dead,
What was said is said,

Our hopes not yet drowned, we now must remember our last rite,
In darkness our purpose found, stood fast in the fallen's flight,
Embers to ashes, our duty bound through the endless night,
With grace our instruments at hand, we gravediggers embrace our command,

We will end this world's blight, guided by the immortal light,
Never will we lose sight, we find solace in our last rite,
Our own hope must burn bright, to survive the eternal fight,
From the dirt will rise another, as we rise from the ashes of our brothers,

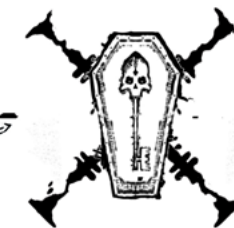
On our hearts the pain will weigh, in sombre tones we now pray,
With not a moments delay, tools in hand we join the fray,
The debt they will not repay, we will survive this last day,
Valiantly we take our guard, sacrificing our lives for every yard,

This forsaken place, we muster our remaining power,
With a bloodied face, we will stand tall, never to cower,
Spared by Death's embrace, we witness the world's final hour,
Our mere guild ascends to a corps, we are tasked to fight this great war,
(As the immortal creates no more)

A weight has now cast over us, we must not fear our fate,

(In unison)

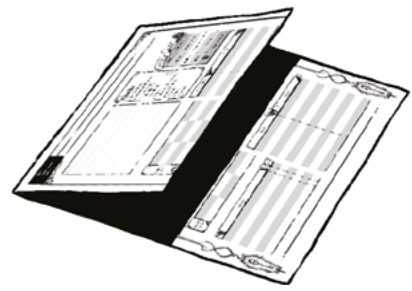
With grace our instruments at hand, us gravediggers embrace our command,
From the dirt will rise another, as we rise from the ashes of our brothers,
Valiantly we take our guard, sacrificing our lives for every yard,
Our mere guild ascends to a corps, we are tasked to fight this great war.



by Caetano Capurro

The Character Sheet

In *Doomsong*, each player needs a character sheet before making their PC. To prepare the sheet for use, tear it from the character pad (not available in demo) or download and print a double-sided copy [here](#) Next, fold along the central line as shown. After folding, the 'Stowed Gear' and 'Ready Gear' grid segments should line up to form a single gear grid. Character sheets contain the following elements:



- ❶ **CHARACTER DETAILS.** Birth name, player name, heresy and any costs related to that heresy. The other side continues with a character's chosen name and their goals.
- ❷ **COMBAT REFERENCE.** A reminder of the steps in a combat round. See page 56.

- ❸ **ACTION BLOCK.** The actions available to a PC during combat.
- ❹ **ATTACK AND RECOVER TABLE.** Effect tables used when making an [attack] or [recover] check. See pages 46-47 and 50.
- ❺ **COMBAT STATS.** See page 55.
- ❻ **GEAR.** See pages 62-67.
- ❼ **ABILITIES.** See page 72-83.
- ❽ **TRAITS.** See page 68.
- ❾ **CONDITIONS.** See page 68.
- ❿ **STANDARD TABLE.** The effect table used when making a standard check. See page 43.
- ⓫ **CHECK REFERENCE.** A reminder of the steps in a standard check. See page 41.
- ⓬ **NOTES.** Everything from important names to various marginalia.
- ⓭ **CONTRACT.** This is signed during character creation. It is utterly binding.



Creating Your Character



All player characters begin the game as members of the Gravediggers' Guild. This guild accepts anyone. Prosperous business owner, hardened criminal, desperate heretic: all are welcomed here. All players will need a character before they can play *Doomsong*.

A character is made by resolving a series of paths, starting on page 16 with their 'Origin' and finishing on page 34 with a 'Gravedigger'. The page opposite explains this process more fully, breaking down the elements of a path. The first time a player creates a character, we suggest that the GM runs them through the process, but it can also be completed solo by finding this character creation section [here](#).

Updating Your Sheet

As a player's character progresses through their history, the player will have to record some things on their character sheet.

TRAITS. These are always in THIS FONT. When a player gains a trait, they write it on their character sheet under 'Traits'. If a trait is gained twice, underline it to mark it as 'defining'. A player could have more than one defining trait by the end.

GEAR. This is always 'added to your gear'. When a player adds gear, they write it on their character sheet under 'Stowed Gear'. More information on gear is provided at the end of character creation.

ABILITIES. These names are always followed by the word 'ability'. When a player gains an ability, they write it on their character sheet under 'Abilities'. Then write the number 1 under 'Level'. If an ability is gained twice, update it to level 2. At the end of character creation, look up and record abilities (pp. 72-83).

HERESY. If a player meddles with the Traitor Gods, they will add the god's name under 'Heresy' on their character sheet. If a second heresy is gained, the player may choose whether to replace or keep the original heresy.

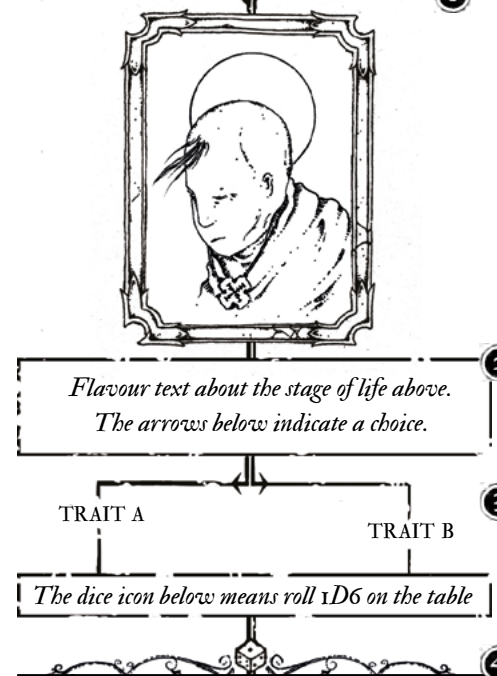
Resolving a Path

This page describes how Life Paths are resolved. When resolving a path, start at the top and work your way down.

- 1 **TITLE.** The name of the path. The title is not recorded on your character sheet.
- 2 **FLAVOUR TEXT.** This italicised text gives context to choices the player must make.
- 3 **TRAIT CHOICE.** When two traits are presented below like so, the player chooses to gain either Trait A or Trait B.
- 4 **TABLE.** To generate a result, roll 1D6 and resolve the text in the matching table entry. If an entry presents a path, which is always followed by a page number, and the player chooses it, immediately turn to the indicated page and resolve that path. Otherwise, once you have finished resolving the rolled table entry, continue down the page.
- 5 **PATH OPTIONS.** If you reach the bottom of the page, the player chooses one of the options in this box. Turn to the page number indicated. If the page number indicated is 'Bookmark', you return to the last path you bookmarked and choose one of the path options on that page instead.

Please note that some paths are locked off in the demo. If you find a path leading to page 'N/A', it is not available and you cannot select this option during the demo. At the moment these are teasers only, intended to whet your appetite for the process of gravedigger character creation.

Path Example



1	EVENT 1. For instance, you are given a choice of two traits, TRAIT C and TRAIT D. Immediately write down the one you choose.
2	EVENT 2. For instance, you may become a Poacher (p. 24). To do so, turn to page 24 and resolve the Poacher path found there.
3	EVENT 3. For instance, you must bookmark this path and resolve an Injury (p. 28). To do this, place the bookmark ribbon in this page and turn to page 28.
-	EVENT 4. Table entries with a dash cannot be rolled. They are not available in the demo.
4-5	EVENT 5. Table entries with a range of numbers are resolved if any of those numbers are rolled (in this case a 4, 5 or 6).
6	EVENT 6. For instance, you gain an ability or piece of gear. Immediately write down the selected option under abilities or 'Stowed Gear'.

Paths

GRAVEDIGGER..... 34
This is the last path for every character.

RETURN..... **BOOKMARK**
Return to last path and choose an option there.



Origin



Welcome, stranger. The Gravediggers' Guild takes anyone seeking sanctuary within its walls. We have highborn and low, the scum of the earth and those who would turn their backs on the clawing existence of daily life. Whatever has brought you here will not surprise us.

Well, let's have it. Where did your story begin?

- I-2 **WILD THING.** You were born in the Weald, the untamed wilderness beyond civilisation. Your early years were spent eking out an existence in harsh lands that despise humanity. Choose your birth name* and record it on your character sheet. Add BORDERBORN as a trait and resolve the Borderborn path on page 17.
- 3-4 **GUTTERSNIPE.** You were just another drop in the effluent flow that is the slums of Assartum. Only the quick, the clever and the brutal survive there, and even they need luck. Choose your birth name* and record it on your character sheet. Add SLUMCASTE as a trait and resolve the Slumcaste path on page 18.
- **FARMING FAMILY.** You were born to work the dry ground and surly woods of the Heartlands. Honest toil and a healthy dose of suspicion kept you safe. Choose your birth name* and record it on your character sheet. Add COUNTRYFOLK as a trait and resolve the Countryfolk path. Not available in this demo.
- 5-6 **MIDDLE CLASS.** You were wedged comfortably between the unfortunates below and the landed families above. While you had to work to survive, it was not backbreaking toil. Choose your birth name* and record it on your character sheet. Add MENALTY as a trait and resolve the Menalty path on page 19.
- **WEALTHY ELITE.** You were born with more than most, including expectations to fulfil and a name to uphold. However, those at the top have the furthest to fall. Choose your birth name* and record it on your character sheet. Add LANDED as a trait and resolve the Landed path. Not available in this demo.
- **STAR-CROSSED BABE.** Heretical beings took note of your birth. Perhaps you were born to inherit a border kingdom, or perhaps you were shadowed by odd forces. You would be hard-pressed to say whether your existence has been cursed or blessed. Choose your birth name* and record it on your character sheet. Add UNUSUAL as a trait and resolve the Unusual path. Not available in this demo.

*CHOOSING A BIRTH NAME. *This is the name you were given by those present at your birth. After you have completed the character creation process, you will choose a name for day-to-day use. In the full game, advice on various birth names for different origins will be available.*

Borderborn



Growing up beyond the bordercastles brought as much peculiar freedom as it did danger. Concepts like law and ownership were foreign to you, and folk expect you to be uncultured and unpredictable.

Tell us, what was the defining moment of your childhood?

- **A CRIPPLING ILLNESS.** You caught a dreaded disease—the wracking—at a young age. There are few cures for this affliction, none of which are available so far from civilisation. You found yourself drifting into the realm of the Ecclesiarchy, entering the Heartlands in search of charity. Not available in this demo.
- I **A CHILDHOOD INJURY.** The Weald is no place for a child who refuses to learn, and you were taught a brutal lesson early in life. Bookmark this path and resolve an Injury (p. 28). Record any traits you gain there and then return to this page to pick a path below.
- **A CULT BRAND.** Your parents worshipped one of the heretical gods who strangled the Immortal. You inherited these beliefs and cannot bring yourself to submit to the teachings of the Ecclesiarchy. Branded by a cult and shunned by polite society, your life began in the shadows. Not available in this demo.
- 2-3 **A SECRET ROUTE.** During a childhood game, you discovered a covert way past the bordercastles. This provided endless entertainment in your youth, but when you became an adult it offered new prospects. You may become a Smuggler (by turning to the path on page 26) or gain the HONEST trait.
- **A LIFE DEBT.** You saved the life of a passing Reeve, offering them shelter in a time of need. As thanks for your aid, they promised you a position if ever you needed work. Not available in this demo.
- 4-6 **A SILKY WHISPER.** You heard what others could not: promises of power offered up by beings who, in exchange, wanted only your loyalty. Their world was one of beauty, danger and granted wishes. The price of entry was your soul. You may become a Wycce (by turning to the path on page 31) or gain the HAUNTED trait.

Paths

- WAIF**.....27 *The capital city of Assartum offered prospects you could not hope to match at home.*
- POACHER**.....24 *The Heartlands were rich pickings, protected only by laws you didn't care to understand.*
- SCAVENGER**.....N/A *The debris left by others contains treasures aplenty for those who care to look.*
- BANDIT**.....N/A *The Weald provided the perfect place from which to conduct raids.*

Slumcaste



They say the streets of Assartum are paved in gold. Having slept on those streets, you know that is a lie. Your existence was desperate and clawing, and folk expect you to be untrustworthy and cruel.

Tell us, what was the defining moment of your childhood?

- **A GUILTY VERDICT.** You felt the vice-like grip of a guard's hand about your scrawny arm, then you were bundled off to St. Repentance. The judge's vacant expression and her cursory sentencing left no room for your pleas of innocence. Not available in this demo.
- I **A GRIM ACCEPTANCE.** You had no one to guide you through the perils of city life, and your existence trod the narrow line between danger and insignificance. One day, you slipped. You may become a Waif (by turning to the path on page 27) or bookmark this page and resolve an Injury on page 28.
- 2-3 **A SKILFUL DISPLAY.** Your earliest memories were of begging from strangers. Then you realised that a well-timed grovel and a performance that catered to their neverending thirst for entertainment was more profitable. You may become a Performer (by turning to the path on page 24) or gain the PROUD trait.
- **A THOUSAND DEATHS.** You don't remember joining the ratcatchers, but a small frame made you invaluable to their work. Your forearms are covered with scars from vermin that died by your hand. Not available in this demo.
- 4-5 **A WELL-TIMED TIP.** Informing to the city watch is a risky business, but either conscience or greed pushed you through their doors. As you grew older, it became clearer where your bread was buttered. You may become a Watchman (by turning to the path on page 27) or gain the SUSPICIOUS trait.
- 6 **A LUCKY STREAK.** The clack of dice in your palms, the feel of cards in your hand, the rush of winning. For a time, you had everyone beat. As your pockets filled, resentments grew in equal measure. You may become a Young Gravedigger (by turning to page 32). If you do, you may roll twice on each table in that path.

Paths

- | | |
|--|---|
| CUTPURSE 21
<i>With so much wealth so near to hand, you would have been a fool not to take it.</i> | FOOT SOLDIER 22
<i>The recruiter offered you a silver coin, and war couldn't be worse than the gutters.</i> |
| SAILOR N/A
<i>The seas promised adventure, profit and, if you were lucky, fame.</i> | LABOURER N/A
<i>There's always work to be found at the docks, for those who don't mind blood and sweat.</i> |

Menalty



LITERATE

The life of the middle class is precarious at best and perilous at worst. Your life came with more opportunities than most, and folk expect you to be shrewd and adaptable.

Tell us, what was the defining moment of your childhood?

- I-2 **A SILVER COIN.** The recruiter offered her listeners a life of adventure and independence. Then she held up the silver coin all soldiers receive when they sign up, casually glossing over the mud, the tedium and the horror of battle. You may become a Foot Soldier (by turning to the path on page 22) or gain the FEARFUL trait.
- 3-4 **A FAMILY NAME.** Your parents were artisans with a hard-earned reputation for durable craftsmanship and tasteful wares. It was always expected that you would follow in their footsteps. If you choose the Apprentice path below, you may roll twice on that path table and take whichever result you prefer.
- 5-6 **A RAPT AUDIENCE.** You always felt a spark of joy at making others laugh. After an improvisational bout of song with a wandering minstrel, you wondered if the life of an entertainer was for you. You may become a Performer (by turning to the path on page 24) or gain the AMBITIOUS trait.
- **AN INKY STAIN.** Your quick mind and fastidious quillmanship won you a job as messenger running notes for the Ecclesiarch's own scholars. Then you were offered a scribe's position. Not available in this demo.
- **AN ARTISTIC BENT.** Your early years were spent mixing dyes for the artists of the Ecclesiarchy. When disaster struck and an artist fell ill, you had learned all you needed to step into his shoes. Not available in this demo.
- **A HEDONISTIC STREAK.** You were young when you heard the call of the dice, felt the quiet pull of the cards and found solace and elation in the racing of scythounds. Your parents' meagre wealth bought you a seat in these places. Not available in this demo.

Paths

- | | |
|---|---|
| APPRENTICE 20
<i>Your hands were skilled and clever, and so your turned to a life of craftsmanship.</i> | WATCHMAN 27
<i>Keeping the peace in Assartum's treacherous streets requires constant vigilance.</i> |
| GROOM N/A
<i>The stables of the wealthy pay those who can withstand the smell.</i> | SERVANT N/A
<i>All you required was a crisp uniform, a pleasing demeanour and a suppression of pride.</i> |

Apothecary



With ash and mercury, you battled disease and moral weakness.

BARBER SURGEON

ALCHEMIST

Tell us, what did you discover?

- 1 **LONGEVITY.** You may become an Aged Gravedigger (p. 33). If you do, roll twice on the first table and gain both results.
- 2 **LEECHING.** The application of leeches can slow disease. Gain the Leeching ability and add 3 leeches to your gear.
- 3 **INCANDESCENCE.** Gain the Phlegethary ability and add 3 alchemical reagents to your gear.
- 4 **BONESETTING.** When mixed carefully, chalk and bile can seal even the most brutal of breaks. Gain the Bonesetting ability.
- 5 **PLAGUE-BAGS.** Gain the Plague Chemistry ability. Add 2 alchemical reagents to your gear.
- 6 **THE LIMITS OF POTENTIAL.** You pushed your own body to the limits of reason and dogma. Gain either the SPY or BURLY trait.

Paths

GRAVEDIGGER.....34
Your skills with salves meant you could name the price of your service to the Guild.

Apprentice



Gain one of the following traits: BLACKSMITH, CARPENTER, TAILOR, JEWELLER, BAKER or pick another type of trade.

Tell us, what do you remember of your training?

- 1-2 **RESEARCH.** A special commission taught you strange powders and unguents. You may become an Apothecary (p. 20) or gain the SIMPLE trait.
- 3-4 **PAIN.** Bookmark this page and resolve an Injury (p. 28). If you have the UNUSUAL trait, you may gain the HAUNTED trait to ignore this result.
- **BOREDOM.** You found the city unpleasant and wished to further your trade in far-off lands. Not available in this demo.
- **DUPPLICITY.** Mastering your craft felt less attractive than a life of crime. Not available in this demo.
- 5-6 **OPPORTUNITY.** You secured a loan and created a business of your own. You may become a Merchant (p. 22) or gain the NAIVE trait.
- **HERESY.** Your craft opened up avenues of learning not sanctioned by the Ecclesiarchy. Not available in this demo.

Paths

ARTISAN..... N/A
You went on to master your chosen trade.

YOUNG GRAVEDIGGER..... 32
Your craft proved useful to the gravediggers.

Butcher



There is always work for those who can extract all but the squeal.

COOK

BURLY

Tell us, why did you stop?

- 1 **MUTILATION.** The thunk of the cleaver felt no different slicing through your own flesh. Bookmark this path and resolve an Injury (p. 28).
- 2 **SCARCITY.** You tried to keep the business running with tainted meat, but even that ran out. Gain either the IRON STOMACH or LIAR trait.
- 3 **MONOTONY.** The work was an unending slog through bone and viscera. Gain either the RECKLESS or RUTHLESS trait.
- 4 **ARSON.** You missed a payment to the Silt Kings and your business went up in flames. Gain either the SUSPICIOUS or BRAVE trait.
- 5 **DEVOTION.** With a failing business, the Guild agreed to care for your family. Gain either the COMPASSIONATE or NAIVE trait.
- 6 **AGE.** You realised you could go to the gravediggers now or later, but go you would. You may become an Aged Gravedigger (p. 33).

Paths

GRAVEDIGGER.....34
Dirt was cleaner than blood, perhaps.

Cutpurse



Pickpockets don't last long without fast fingers, and yours snatched something special.

QUICK-FINGERED

LIGHT-FOOTED

Tell us, what did you steal?

- 1 **A CHAINED POUCH.** You didn't hear the clink until it was too late. Either go to St. Repentance (p. 25) or gain the MISSING HAND trait.
- 2 **A SILVER LOCKET.** You suspected it was too recognisable to sell. Either become an Exile (p. 22) or gain the MISSING HAND trait.
- 3 **A SECRET.** The knowledge you gleaned was valuable to certain individuals. You may either become a Spy (p. 26) or gain the SUSPICIOUS trait.
- 4-5 **AN INHERITANCE.** Gold aplenty, enough to start a business of your own. You may either become a Merchant (p. 22) or gain the RECKLESS trait.
- 6 **A TRINKET.** A foul object, brimming with power. You may either bookmark this page and gain a Profane Relic (p. 29) or gain the FEARFUL trait.
- **THEIR RESPECT.** Your name was spoken with reverence; you could have become someone who mattered. Not available in this demo.

Paths

YOUNG GRAVEDIGGER..... 32
You went to the Gravediggers' Guild early.

BURGLAR..... N/A
An old thief is a careful thief.

Exile



You left Assartum a pariah, unable to return until they'd forgotten your face.

NAVIGATOR LIAR

Tell us, why did you return?

- I **LONGING.** The passage of time brought the fear of dying alone. You may become an Aged Gravedigger (p. 33) or gain the FEARFUL trait.
- 2-3 **SELFLESSNESS.** The Weald made you strong and you wished to put this toward helping others. Gain either the BEASTWISE or HARDY trait.
- **PURSUIT.** You attracted the ire of a bautenlobbe. It is following you and wishes you dead. Tell the GM (they may do with this as they wish) and gain either the FEARFUL or BRAVE trait.
- 4 **PAIN.** Disaster in the Weald required an expertise found only in civilised quarters. Bookmark this page and resolve an Injury (p. 28).
- 5 **VENGEANCE.** They made a mistake, letting you live. Gain either the RUTHLESS or PROUD trait.
- 6 **FOREWARNING.** In the wilderness, you dreamed of a great evil gaining strength. Gain either the HAUNTED or RIGHTEOUS trait.

Paths

GRAVEDIGGER.....34
It is noble to protect that which has spurned you.

Foot Soldier



Service in the Ecclesiarch's army involved long marches, bad meals and terrible violence.

MELEE FIGHTER MARKSMAN

Tell us, what did you learn from the battlefield?

- I **HOW TO LOSE.** Your service was cut short by an agonising blow but at least you returned home. Bookmark this path and resolve an Injury (p. 28).
- 2 **HOW TO WIN.** You lost many comrades but at least your side prevailed. Bookmark this page and resolve an Injury (p. 28).
- **HOW TO SERVE.** Cold efficiency is prized in some quarters. When a royal executioner was needed, your name made the list. Not available in demo.
- 3-5 **HOW TO STEAL.** The pay was poor but regular looting offered an escape. You may become a Merchant (p. 23) or gain the RECKLESS trait.
- **HOW TO LEAD.** Your courage and determination elevated you above your peers, earning you a commission. Not available in demo.
- 6 **HOW TO HIDE.** You found a heretical item on a fallen foe. Bookmark this path and gain a Profane Relic (p. 29) or gain the RIGHTEOUS trait.

Paths

OLD HAND.....23
You became a veteran of war.
YOUNG GRAVEDIGGER32
The Guild is always in need of warriors.

Merchant



Buy from the wasteful and sell to the desperate. Your life became one of gold and power.

MATHEMATICAL CHARMING

Tell us, how did your life crumble around you?

- I **DEBT.** Erratic spending or incompetent book-keeping: the coffers ran dry and bailiffs came knocking. Gain the SUSPICIOUS or NAIVE trait.
- 2 **VANDALISM.** Forgetfulness or carelessness: you awoke to find everything stolen or destroyed. Gain the VENGEFUL or SUSPICIOUS trait.
- 3 **CHARITY.** Every gift brought you closer to debtors' prison. You may become an Aged Gravedigger (p. 33) or gain the COMPASSIONATE trait.
- 4 **LOATHING.** Eventually, you learned that all the gold in the world would never bring you happiness. Gain the FEARFUL or HAUNTED trait.
- 5 **FRAUD.** Honest mistake or convenient misunderstanding: eventually they found you out. Gain either the NAIVE or CONNING trait.
- 6 **MASTERY.** Even after you made yourself a pillar in the world of business, it wasn't enough. Gain either the PROUD or RECKLESS trait.

Paths

GRAVEDIGGER.....34
Wealth gone, you were forced to the Guild.

Old Hand



Fighting and killing made you hard but growing old can change a person.

MELEE FIGHTER MARKSMAN

Tell us, why did you finally leave?

- I **MAIMING.** It was only a matter of time before you fell during an enemy onslaught. Bookmark this path and resolve an Injury (p. 28).
- 2 **POVERTY.** Your pension never came. You may become an Aged Gravedigger (p. 33) or gain the SUSPICIOUS trait.
- 3 **INDIFFERENCE.** There came a time when you saw little difference between man and beast. Gain either the RUTHLESS or HAUNTED trait.
- 4 **EXPERTISE.** You perfected the arts of warfare. Gain either the Protector ability or the Precise Aim ability.
- 5-6 **GLORY.** You left the army with the pride of your peers. Gain either the PROUD or BRAVE trait. Add medal to your gear.
- **COMPULSION.** In battle, you heard a voice that promised much more than the Divine Corpse could offer. Not available in this demo.

Paths

GRAVEDIGGER.....34
Life as a civilian was hard. It was time.

Performer



The people of Painyme are always in need of distraction from their woes.

SPRY

MUSICAL

Tell us, what did you inspire in others?

- I **FEAR.** Your art was deemed heretical and you were clapped in irons. You may either become an Exile (p. 22) or go to St. Repentance (p. 25).
- **GENEROSITY.** A bed in every inn, beer aplenty, companionship. Those who lived in lonely places welcomed you. Not available in this demo.
- **FASCINATION.** The eyes of the audience went wherever you bid, allowing your hands to help themselves. Not available in this demo.
- 2-3 **OBEDIENCE.** Your silver tongue brought out a willingness to believe, no matter how outrageous the words. Gain the LIAR or CHARMING trait.
- 4-6 **GREGARIOUSNESS.** Your openness and ability to blend in brought forth many secrets. You may either become a Spy (p. 26) or gain the VAIN trait.
- **PASSIVITY.** Charisma can be intoxicating. You realised that very little stood between you and a flock. Not available in this demo.

Paths

- MINSTREL N/A
You furthered the skills you gained in song.
- YOUNG GRAVEDIGGER 32
The Guild needs levity as much as any.

Poacher



The law made hunting a dangerous prospect, but you thought yourself above such concerns.

MARKSMAN

LIGHT-FOOTED

Tell us, what was your greatest trophy?

- I-2 **SCYTHOUND.** Its noble owner took revenge. Either bookmark this page and resolve an Injury (p. 28) or become an Exile (p. 22).
- 3-4 **BEAR.** The risk was great but the hefty beast eventually lay dead before you. Gain either the BRAVE or TRAPPER trait.
- **BAUTENLOBBE.** You hunted down a mankiller, too late to save a stranger in plate but not too late to take their name. Not available in demo.
- **EOTENMUTTER.** Those who can bring down one of the Weald's giantesses are considered heroes. Not available in demo.
- **REEVE.** It takes a thief to catch one. Pockets laden with gold, you realised you might excel at such a pursuit. Not available in demo.
- 5-6 **FAILURE.** Hunger and desperation were all you found. You may become a Young Gravedigger (p. 32) or gain the STUBBORN trait.

Paths

- BUTCHER 21
A safer, more profitable alternative.
- WOODSMAN N/A
Your knowledge of the Weald is valuable.

St. Repentance



The bars were thick and daily life introduced new meaning to the word 'brutality'.

BURLY

QUICK-FINGERED

Tell us, how did you leave that place?

- I **WEATHERED.** When you finally saw the light of day, it was with grey hair and dulled eyes. You may become an Aged Gravedigger (p. 33).
- 2 **WRACKED.** Those who become infected often find themselves ousted at the first opportunity. Gain the LIAR or SICKLY trait.
- 3 **INJURED.** The infirmary was more than happy to offload a maimed prisoner. Bookmark this page and resolve an Injury (p. 28).
- 4 **DARING.** You climbed the wall, fought a guard and swam your way to freedom. Gain the RECKLESS or SPRY trait.
- 5 **VICTORIOUS.** Champions of the prison pit fights are promised the chance to join the gravediggers. Gain the MELEE FIGHTER or SPRY trait.
- 6 **CONNECTED.** Friends in low places can get you anything in St. Repentance, including a way out. Gain the RUTHLESS or LIAR trait.

Paths

- GRAVEDIGGER 34
The Guild's ranks are filled with criminals.



Smuggler



There will always be a need for the covert movement of goods past tollroads and bordercastles.

NAVIGATOR LIGHT-FOOTED

Tell us, what made you stop?

- I-2 **BETRAYAL.** Instead of the pick-up you were promised, you were met by Reeves. Either go to St. Repentance (p. 25) or flee into Exile (p. 22).
- **CLOSE CALL.** You lost a shipment worth more than your life and, to top it all, the Reeves picked up your scent. Not available in demo.
- **CONSCIENCE.** The pay was high but the cargo was alive. You had to choose. Not available in demo.
- 3-4 **ESPIONAGE.** A step up in the world only cost you the name of an old friend. You may become a Spy (p. 26) or gain the COMPASSIONATE trait.
- **SUCCESS.** You travelled far and returned with exotic cargo. It was worth the risk to see your competitors froth. Not available in demo.
- 5-6 **GREED.** The worn reliquary was too tempting not to peek. Either bookmark this path and gain a Profane Relic (p. 29) or gain the HONEST trait.

Paths

- LEECHER..... N/A
The great city, Assartum, called your name.
- MERCHANT..... 23
Legitimacy was an obvious next step.

Spy



Those who sell secrets dangle between dignity and a knife in the back.

LITERATE SHARP EARS

Tell us, what did you escape with?

- I-2 **DISTRUST.** Abandoned by your handlers, you could only remain safe by disappearing. Gain the SUSPICIOUS or LIGHT-FOOTED trait.
- 3 **VIGILANCE.** The web of lies is invisible to the fly. Were you ever the spider, or only prey? Gain the HAUNTED or TWITCHY trait.
- 4 **ENDURANCE.** In your line of work, long life requires patience. You may become an Aged Gravedigger (p. 33) or gain the RECKLESS trait.
- 5-6 **MUTABILITY.** Everyone you met walked away with a different idea of who you were. Gain the LIAR or INCONSPICUOUS trait.
- **LOYALTY.** Faithful servant of the Divine Corpse, skilled in passing secrets to the Ecclesiarch's own staff. Not available in this demo.
- **RUINOUS SECRETS.** You found the lever that tore a member of the gentry from their perch, allowing you their place. Not available in demo.

Paths

- GRAVEDIGGER..... 34
A new master will fit neatly atop your old life.

Waif



The gutters of Assartum were a gaping maw, waiting to drag you down.

IRON STOMACH LIGHT-FOOTED

Tell us, how did you survive?

- I **IMPATIENCE.** The guards thought you were up to no good. Go to St. Repentance (p. 25) or bookmark this page and resolve an Injury (p. 28).
- 2-3 **SERVICE.** You had the right temperament for slucing blood and slicing ligament. Become a Butcher (p. 21) or gain the COMPASSIONATE trait.
- **COMMERCE.** Leechers always welcome a healthy specimen for their dark arts. Not available in demo.
- 4 **EAVESDROPPING.** No one pays attention to the gutters. You grew to know the shape of secrets. Become a Spy (p. 26) or gain the HONEST trait.
- 5-6 **PERFORMANCE.** Though you earned half the coin of a taunted beast, it was enough to get by. Gain either the MUSICAL or SPRY trait.
- **PROVIDENCE.** You lay dying in the street, forgotten by all except something heretical. Not available in this demo.

Paths

- YOUNG GRAVEDIGGER..... 32
You joined the gravediggers early.
- CULTIST..... N/A
A hot meal is the first step to damnation.

Watchman



You chose to become first line of defence against Assartum's own people.

MELEE FIGHTER INVESTIGATOR

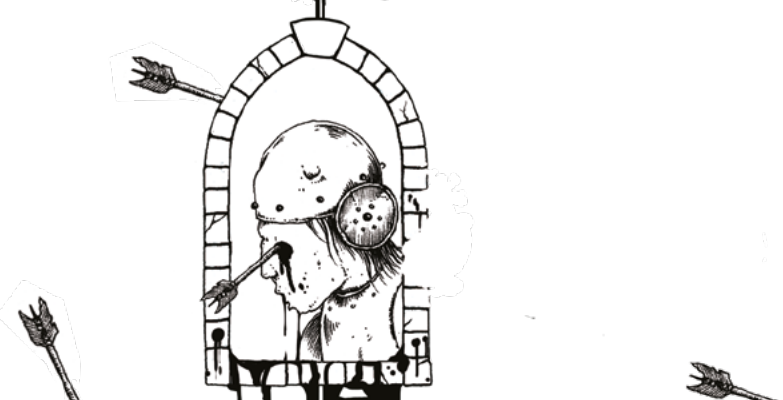
Tell us, why did you abandon your post?

- I-2 **DANGER.** The knife was sharp, the pay low. Become a Young Gravedigger (p. 32) and gain the FEARFUL trait, or resolve an Injury (p. 28).
- 3-4 **TRUTH.** Destroying the trust of a friend could lead to important arrests. Either become a Spy (p. 26) or gain the COMPASSIONATE trait.
- **TRAVEL.** When promotions were announced, it threatened to take you far from what you knew. Not available in this demo.
- 5-6 **WEALTH.** A few years on the take would allow you to move up in the world. Either become a Merchant (p. 23) or gain the HONEST trait.
- **AUTHORITY.** Your control over other people was built upon their own perceptions. Not available in this demo.
- **RANK.** You had the chance to get a seat at the table. All it would cost is every friend you had. Not available in this demo.

Paths

- OLD HAND..... 23
You never did get that promotion.
- BODYGUARD..... N/A
In the end, protecting one person was easier.

Injury



Your life was interrupted by a flash of blinding pain. For some, these moments are a terrifying reminder of their own mortality; for others, a reminder that they're alive.

Where were you harmed?

1	2	4	5-6
LEGS. The injury affected one of your legs. Decide which one, unless you only have one left.	ARMS. The injury affected one of your arms. Decide which one, unless you only have one left.	TORSO. The injury affected a location on your torso.	HEAD. The injury affected a location on your head, neck or face.

How bad was it?

1	CRUSHED LEG. You gain MISSING LEG as a trait*.	MUTILATED ARM. You gain MISSING ARM as a trait*.	DEAD FOR A DAY. You did not return alone. You gain HAUNTED as a trait*.	KNOCKED OUT. You gain SIMPLE as a trait*.
2	SMASHED FOOT. You gain MISSING FOOT as a trait*.	MANGLED HAND. You gain MISSING HAND as a trait*.	COLLAPSED RIBS. You gain BAD LUNGS as a trait*.	PUNCTURED EYE. You gain MISSING EYE as a trait*.
3	FRAGMENTED TOES. Roll D6, then gain MISSING X TOES as a trait* where X is the number rolled.	SEVERED FINGERS. Roll D6, then gain MISSING X FINGERS as a trait* where X is the number rolled.	BROKEN BACK. You were bedridden for over a year. If you have the BURLY or SPRY traits, lose one and gain the LITERATE trait.	MISSING EAR. You gain MISSING EAR as a trait*.
4	TWISTED LEG. You gain CROOKED LEG as a trait*.	BROKEN ARM. You gain CROOKED ARM as a trait*.	SHATTERED SPINE. You gain CROOKED BACK as a trait*.	MANGLED FACE. You gain GROTESQUE as a trait*.
5-6	SCARRED. You make a full recovery. Gain SCARRED X as a trait* with X being the rolled location.			

Paths

RETURN BOOKMARK GRAVEDIGGER 34
You refused to be broken. They were the only ones who would take you.

*NOT A CONDITION. Traits on this page are not gained as conditions because they have already healed as best they can. They are traits because they are the permanent after-effects of injury, rather than still-weeping wounds.

Profane Relic



Relics of power are rare and forbidden. Each is tied to a Sublime or Dread, claiming a part of their essential nature and tethering it to mortal hands.

Flip the Doomcoin and roll on the corresponding table. Add the relic under 'Gear' on your sheet.



1	LANGUOR'S PALLID FLOWER. This asphodel bloom, when burned and inhaled, gives a human the Silent Song ability.	1	OBLIVION'S BURIAL SHROUD. It is impossible to recall the face of anyone wearing this scrap of rough-woven winding sheet.
2	TOIL'S DAILY BURDEN. When exposed to sunlight, this small weight becomes immovable.	2	FEAST'S DRINKING HORN. Any liquid drunk from this horn will taste of honeyed wine.
3	HOPE'S BLADE. This serrated dagger causes no pain. Any living matter cut with it stays alive: plants continue to flourish, body parts don't rot.	3	FRENZY'S SPEAR. Wounds opened by this glass-tipped spear never stop bleeding and cannot be treated by mortal means.
4	HONOUR'S IRON GAUNTLET. Once donned, this black gauntlet cannot be removed until death. Its wearer counts as if they are holding a shield even if they are not.	4	PERCEPTION'S MOTTLED PEARL. Whoever owns this pearl can see through it by closing their left eye. At sunset, ownership is reset and the next human to touch it becomes its new owner.
5	PANIC'S LANTERN. When a lit candle is placed in this lantern, it plunges the area into darkness. Only the candle itself is visible to anyone nearby.	5	JUSTICE'S RING AND TORC. This simple copper ring always tugs gently toward the bronze neck piece, no matter the distance put between them.
6	ROT'S FALSE CROWN. This green-bronze crown, when worn, will either heal a human of all their wounds or dissolve them into dust. Flip the Doomcoin to determine which.	6	CHANCE'S CHARM. A small golden spider charm. Once per sunset, the owner is spontaneously lucky. After flipping the Doomcoin, you may use this luck to re-flip the result.

Paths

RETURN BOOKMARK GRAVEDIGGER 34
Relic safely stashed, you continued your life. The Guild will overlook your new possession.



Wycces



The Traitor Gods rarely bestow power on mortals. When they do, they secure the loyalty of their wycces with binding pacts, overseen by watchful familiars.

A wycc's power comes from a heretical god. Flip the Doomcoin and roll on the corresponding table.



- 1 **LANGUOR.** Add Languor under 'Heresy' and gain the Silent Song ability.
- 2 **TOIL.** Add Toil under 'Heresy' and gain the Kincraft ability.
- 3 **HOPE.** Add Hope under 'Heresy' and gain the Vivomancy ability.
- 4 **HONOUR.** Add Honour under 'Heresy' and gain the Pact of Retribution ability.
- 5 **PANIC.** Add Panic under 'Heresy' and gain the Wildfyre ability.
- 6 **ROT.** Add Rot under 'Heresy' and gain the Spoil ability. Do not get a familiar during next step.

- 1 **OBVIOUS.** Add Oblivion under 'Heresy' and gain the Oblivion's Grasp ability.
- 2 **FEAST.** Add Feast under 'Heresy' and gain the Bounty ability.
- 3 **FRENZY.** Add Frenzy under 'Heresy' and gain the Blood Rage ability.
- 4 **PERCEPTION.** Add Perception under 'Heresy' and gain the Augury ability.
- 5 **JUSTICE.** Add Justice under 'Heresy' and gain the Long Hunt ability.
- 6 **CHANCE.** Add Chance under 'Heresy' and gain the Aspect of the Laceworker ability.

FAMILIAR. Gain the Familiar ability. You can choose the form your familiar takes at the end of character creation.

Paths

YOUNG GRAVEDIGGER 32 <i>Your past heresies would be absolved.</i>	EXILE 22 <i>You fled to the Weald, where few cared.</i>
---	---



Young Gravedigger



The gravediggers will not refuse those who wish to throw their lives away, as long as they are old enough to wield a spade. The young invigorate the Guild; their recklessness can be put to good use.

Tell us, what were your gifts?

1	SMALL. Your stature allows you to slip unseen between the cracks. Gain the SMALL trait.
2	SPRY. Your thin frame allows nimbleness at the cost of brute force. Gain the SPRY trait.
3	TWITCHY. Always the first to act, even when action isn't warranted. Gain the TWITCHY trait.
4	SHARP-EYED. Very little escapes your notice. Gain the SHARP-EYED trait.
5	IRON STOMACH. Illness takes hold in others, but not you. Gain the IRON STOMACH trait.
6	EYE-CATCHING. Being memorable is a blessing and a curse. Gain the EYE-CATCHING trait.

And how was this gift wasted?

1	NAIVE. Believing the best of others comes naturally to you. Gain the NAIVE trait.
2	RECKLESS. You have yet to understand the sting of loss. Gain the RECKLESS trait.
3	FEARFUL. Choose what you fear most or pick general cowardice. Gain the FEARFUL trait.
4	PROUD. To those at life's pinnacle, down is all that remains. Gain the PROUD trait.
5	SIMPLE. It takes you longer to pick up on things happening around you. Gain the SIMPLE trait.
6	COMPASSIONATE. You have yet to harden your heart. Gain the COMPASSIONATE trait.

Paths

GRAVEDIGGER.....34
You did not wait for the inevitable outcome.

Aged Gravedigger



Clutch at the sands of time, it will do no good. You know much of the ways of the world, having seen many examples of its brutal precariousness. The Guild can put your experience to good use.

Tell us, what were your insights?

1	KNOWLEDGEABLE. Gain either the NAVIGATOR, BEASTWISE, LITERATE or MATHEMATICAL trait.
2	FIXED. You are set in your ways. Gain the METICULOUS or RIGHTEOUS trait.
3	GROWTH. Choose one trait you have and lose it. You cannot choose any Injuries you have resolved.
4	INSTINCTS. You have spent a lot of time with people. Gain the SUSPICIOUS or CHARMING trait.
5	HOBBY. You picked up some skills later in life. Gain either the CARPENTER, TAILOR or COOK trait.
6	STUBBORN. You understand that this, too, will likely pass. Gain the HARDY trait.

And what did this knowledge cost you?

1	DECREPITUDE. Roll twice more on this table, ignoring any further results of 1.
2	WEAK. Lose either the SPRY or BURLY trait. If you do not have either, gain the WEAK trait.
3	HALF-BLIND. You cannot see well. Gain HALF-BLIND. If you roll this twice, it is a defining trait.
4	HALF-DEAF. You cannot hear well. Gain HALF-DEAF. If you roll this twice, it is a defining trait.
5	FRAIL. Your body needs no excuse to fail. Gain FRAIL. If you roll this twice, it is a defining trait.
6	SICKLY. Your stomach grows fussier with each passing year. Gain SICKLY. If you roll this result twice, your PC has a single year left to live. It is up to you if they know this, but it cannot be prevented except by miraculous means.

Paths

GRAVEDIGGER.....34
You put it off as long as you were able.

Gravedigger



You stood at the threshold of the Gravediggers' Guild, throwing the rest of your life away to the vagaries of fate. Whether you felt relief or dread when they accepted you, we do not know.

DEFINING TRAIT. Reflect upon the life you have lived. Choose one of your traits and underline it to mark it as a defining trait. This will give you a bonus on checks involving this trait.

Choose whether they taught you to fight or filled you with knowledge.

Fighting would keep your team alive.

Knowledge is our greatest weapon.

Roll twice and choose either result.

Roll twice and choose either result.

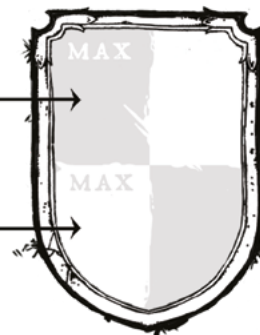
1	BRAWLING. You gain the Underhanded Strike ability. Add 3 dirks to your gear.
2	WARFARE. You gain the Measured Strike ability. Add a mace and hard leather to your gear.
3	DUELLING. You gain the Flowing Strike ability. Add a rapier to your gear.
4	POSITIONING. You gain the Burst of Speed ability. Add a sling and linen armour to your gear.
5	PROTECTION. You gain the Protect ability. Add scale armour, a short spear and shield to gear.
6	MARKSMANSHIP. You gain the Precise Aim ability. Add a bow and soft leather armour to gear.

1-2	MEDICINE. You gain the Bonesetting ability. Add a bonesaw, needle and thread to gear.
3	FOLKLORE. You gain the Fable ability. Add a lantern, rope, and walking stick to gear.
4	STUDYING. If you have the LITERATE trait, gain the Study ability. Otherwise, gain the LITERATE trait. Add a diary, quill, and inks to your gear.
5-6	TRACKING. You gain the Discovery ability. Add a spyglass, flint and tinder to your gear.
-	LEADERSHIP. You gain the Leader ability. If you are the only player with this ability, you are in charge. Add a light coinpurse to your gear.

CHOSEN NAME. Many years ago, your parents gave you a name. It is likely you now go by something else. Choose a name for your character and write it under 'Name' on your character sheet.

DEFENCE. The standard maximum defence for a human is 4. Record this under 'Defence' on your character sheet. Defence is spent to increase the difficulty of attacks against you (see page 33).

TOUGHNESS. The standard maximum toughness for a human is 4. Record this under 'Toughness' on your character sheet. This is how difficult your character is to harm with attacks, before spending defence.



ITEMS OF OFFICE. You gain a badge marking you as a member of the Gravediggers' Guild as well as a long-handled, serviceable spade.



Your days will soon be filled with travel and toil: digging graves for the dead, and ensuring the dead go to their graves. You aid in small ways those who fall on the peripheries of the Ecclesiarch's notice.

You won't be forced to bear this life alone, however. Gravediggers work in teams; it is time you met yours. Whatever you think of your allies, you understand there is a good chance that the rest of your life will be spent in their company.

STOP!

Unless the last player has created their character, begin character creation with the next player. Continue until all players have reached this point. If all players have created a gravedigger, continue together.

This path concludes on the next page.



Are you starting a new party or joining an existing one?

New Party

Roll on the table below to create a goal. Each goal connects your PC to another character (X) in the party. For these, you may decide whether your characters knew one another before joining the Guild or if the connection is more recent.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | RIVAL. Choose a PC to share a friendly rivalry with. Add 'To prove I am better than X' under 'Goals'. |
| 2 | INDEBTED. Choose a PC to have saved your life in the past. Add 'Save X's life' under 'Goals'. |
| 3 | KNOWLEDGE. Choose a PC to know a secret about you. Add 'Secure the silence of X' under 'Goals'. |
| 4 | STUDENT. Choose another PC that has some skill you wish to learn. Add 'Learn a valuable lesson from X' under 'Goals'. |
| 5 | ADMIRATION. Choose another PC to secretly admire. Add 'Gain the mutual admiration of X' under 'Goals'. |
| 6 | FAMILY. Choose another PC to be your family, whether by blood or not. Add 'Sacrifice my own opportunity for X's happiness' under 'Goals'. |

Existing Party

Choose a result or roll on the table below to decide how you met the party. If more than one player is making a character at the same time, it can be a good idea to choose the same result.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | LAST SURVIVOR. Some local danger, as decided by the GM, ripped your last party limb from limb, leaving you alone. The party come across you as you are finishing the last of their graves. Gain the VENGEFUL trait. |
| 2 | REINFORCEMENT. You were sent directly from the Guild to bolster the party's efforts. You bring with you valuable information about their current quest. |
| 3 | LONESOME SCOUT. You were sent to this land alone in order to scout it out. Add maps of the local area to your gear. |
| 4 | QUIET WORK. You have just finished an arduous but uneventful task burying bodies for the nearest settlement. They know you there and are willing to perform small favours for you. |
| 5 | ACQUAINTANCE. You are wandering, lost, when the party come across you. You already know a member of the party. Roll on the table to the left to determine your relationship and goal. |
| 6 | BURDEN. You have been sent by the Guild to deliver an important item (as decided by the GM) that will be useful in the party's adventure. |

LOOK UP TRAITS. Your character now has a list of traits that will help or hinder them during certain checks. If you are unsure what any traits mean, see the glossary on page 70 to learn what kinds of checks we imagine specific traits will be useful for.

LOOK UP ABILITIES. Your character also has a list of abilities that give them special rules. A list of abilities and their effects can be found on pages 72-83.

LOOK UP HERESIES. If you committed heresy during character creation, you will have filled in 'Heresy' on your character sheet. Find your Traitor God on pages 76-83. Record the relevant cost under 'Cost' on your character sheet; this is a rule you must follow if you wish to keep using any of your occult abilities. Breaking this rule means you cannot access occult abilities until your god has been appeased (as decided by the GM).

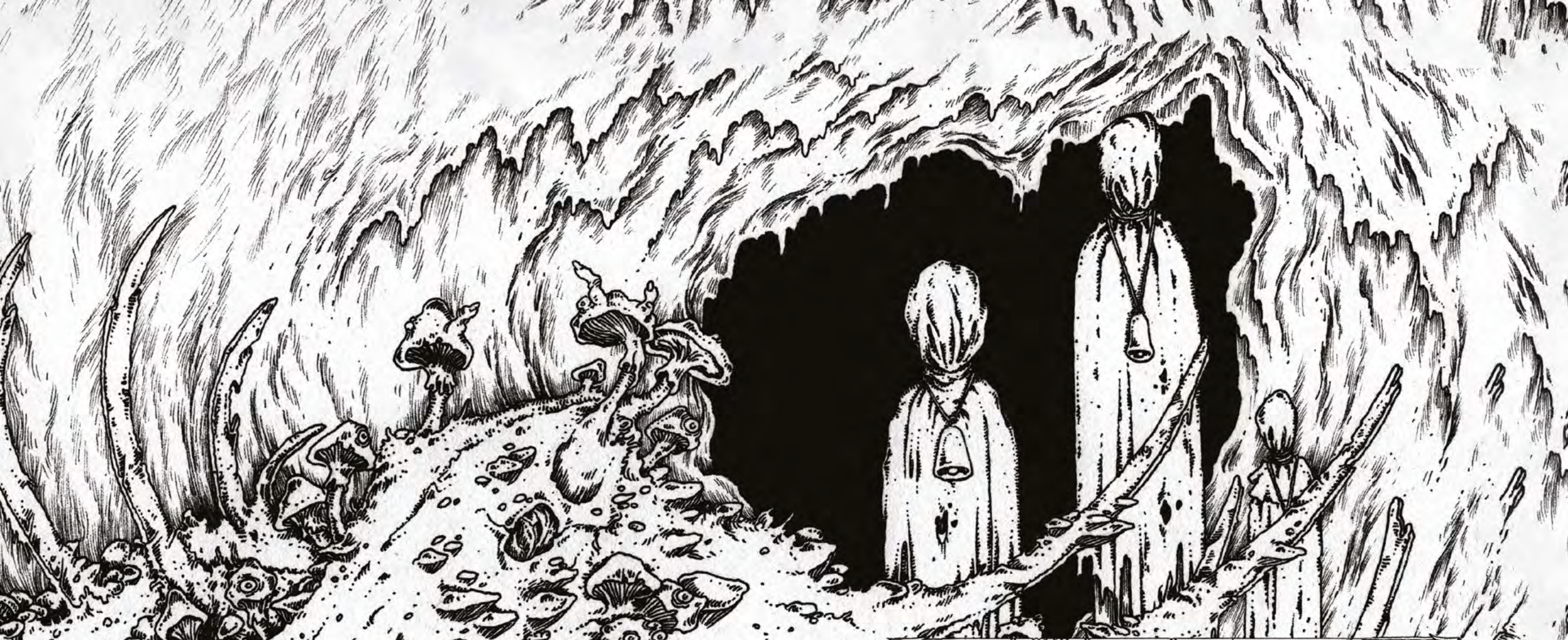
*The Guild welcomes you with open arms.
Many pass through these doors looking for an honest trade;
as long as you work hard, the opportunities are endless.
There is one last thing you must do before we can call you family,
and, truly, it is just a small matter of formality.
You see, we need your signature on this contract...*

On the back of your character sheet you will find a Contract of Employment. If your character has the LITERATE trait, you may read the contract before signing it. Regardless of your traits, you must sign it. The GM will then sign on behalf of the Guildmaster. At this point, you have officially joined the Gravediggers' Guild.

*Now get out of my sight, gravedigger.
The dead aren't going to bury themselves.*

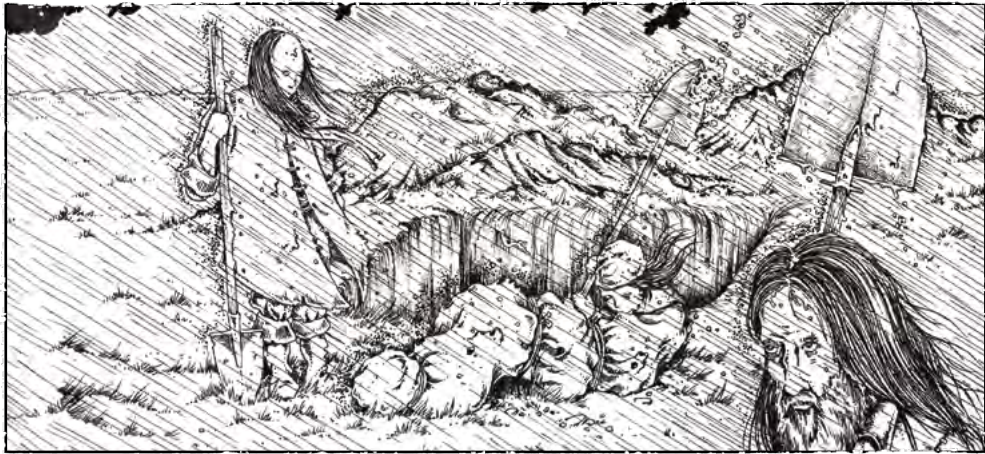
You are now ready to begin your adventure. A sample adventure, *The Last Meal*, has been provided on page 84.





Rules

All of us are fettered by the dictates of tradition and the Ecclesiarch. You claw at these bindings but, when freed, discover they did not tie humanity to the ground. To your horror, you find we were always suspended over an abyss, endless fall prevented only by our chains.



Checks are at the heart of the *Doomsong* system. Players will perform them both in and out of combat. They provide a way to infuse a scene with interesting twists and turns, even if there are no physical dangers to overcome. When you need to resolve the outcome of a task, use the standard check summarised on the page opposite and explained fully overleaf.

Never ask a player to roll a die if the task is either impossible or completely without risk. If one of these is the case, the matter should be resolved with a simple 'You succeed due to the...' or 'You fail because...'

Impossible Tasks

Certain tasks, such as drinking the Euxinean Sea, are not possible for humans to do. Perhaps they can change their situation to make such feats feasible, but don't be afraid to set sensible limits on your world.

Grenth wants to pull down a statue of the Ecclesiarch with his bare hands. The GM says this is impossible unless Grenth finds a useful tool or gets help from allies.

Risk-Free Tasks

Certain tasks will not incur risk if they are failed. Instead of asking players to roll, you can either have the character succeed or introduce some form of risk to make failure interesting.

Eunice wants to open a locked reliquary. The GM knows that she has a set of burglar's keys and the knowledge of how to use them. If the party is camped, the GM might allow her to open the reliquary without making a roll. On the other hand, if she wants to open the lock during a heist, the risk of discovery is now very real. Failure has become interesting, so the GM would now require Eunice to roll.

The Check Steps

Follow these steps when making a check:

- 1. DIFFICULTY.** The standard difficulty of a check is 5. The GM may increase or decrease this as they see fit.
- 2. MODIFIERS.**
 - TRAIT.**
 - Helpful.* +1
 - Perfect.* +2
 - Defining and Perfect.* +3
 - GEAR.**
 - Helpful.* +1
 - Perfect.* +2
 - HELPFUL ALLIES.** +1 per ally.
 - HINDERING TRAIT.** -1 or, if defining, -2.
 - CONDITIONS.** -1 per condition.
- 3. ROLL.**
 - FOCUSED CHECK.** Roll 2D6, use highest.
 - HASTY CHECK.** Roll 2D6, use lowest.
 - STANDARD CHECK.** Roll 1D6.
- 4. APPLY MODIFIERS.** Apply modifiers determined in step 2.
- 5. RESULT.** Compare the total to the difficulty set in step 1.
 - UNDER.** Failure with cost.
 - EQUAL.** Success with cost.
 - OVER.** Success.
- 6. DOOM.** Decide whether to flip the Doomcoin.
- 7. EFFECT.** Resolve the outcome of your actions.



These steps are outlined in more detail on the next page.

1. Difficulty

After describing the situation and listening to what the player is trying to do, the GM sets and states the difficulty for the check.

The typical difficulty of a check is 5, though the GM should increase or decrease this based on the situation. This is something you will get a feel for over time. When in doubt, bump the difficulty by 2 for each notable factor.

OPPOSED CHECKS. If a check is directly opposed by an NPC, the difficulty should be increased by 2 when the opponent has a useful trait. For example, if a player tries to convince a heretic they worship the same god, you might increase the difficulty to 7 if the heretic has the SUSPICIOUS trait. The same is true for the opposite situation, reducing the difficulty to 3 if they are NAIVE.



2. Modifiers

Determine modifiers that will affect this check, adding together all that apply. Potential modifiers include:

TRAIT. The player may choose one of their PC's traits to use in the check. The GM decides if its bonus is incidental (+0), helpful (+1) or perfect (+2). If a trait is perfect and also a defining trait, the PC gains +3 to the check. Deciding the bonus for a trait is up to the GM but if in doubt, the trait is helpful (+1).

GEAR. The player may choose one piece of gear to use in the check. The GM decides if its bonus is incidental (+0), helpful (+1) or perfect (+2).

HELPFUL ALLIES. The PC receives a +1 if an ally is helping with the check, or +2 if multiple allies are helping. If in doubt about whether an ally can help, use common sense. During combat, allies may only help if they have taken the Aid action (page 56).

HINDERING TRAIT. If the PC has a trait that would hinder the check, they suffer a -1 penalty. A PC cannot be hindered by more than one trait, but if it is a defining trait, the penalty increases to -2.

CONDITIONS. The player receives a -1 penalty for each condition that might hinder them. These are often injuries.

Daunting or Trivial Checks

After determining modifiers, if the difficulty of the check is so high that a roll of a 6 would still not reach it, the check is considered daunting. Similarly, if the difficulty is equal or below the total modifiers (making failure impossible) the check is considered trivial.

For daunting and trivial checks, skip straight to Step 5, treating the result as 'under' or 'over' respectively. During Step 6, the player *must* flip the Doomcoin.

Oftentimes, a daunting or trivial check is a sign that the roll wasn't necessary. The GM can always decide that an action happens automatically or is truly impossible.

3. Roll

Decide if the check is focused, hasty or standard.

FOCUSED. If the PC has enough time to complete the check at their own pace or has some situational advantage, it is considered a focused check. They roll 2D6 and take the highest result.

HASTY. If the PC is rushed or otherwise hindered, it is a hasty check. They roll 2D6 and take the lowest result.

STANDARD. If the timeframe falls somewhere between, it is a standard check. They roll 1D6. This is the most common type of check in combat.

4. Apply Modifiers

The total modifier determined in Step 2 is applied to the result showing on the die.

5. Result

Compare the modified result with the difficulty and check the table below. The player has rolled either under, equal or over. Note that the top and bottom results cannot be rolled directly. Instead, these results can be achieved in Step 6.

EFFECT	STEP 7
UNDER	CRITICAL FAIL. They fail at their goal in a catastrophic way.
EQUAL	FAIL WITH COST. They fail at their goal and incur some cost in doing so.
OVER	SUCCESS WITH COST. They succeed at their goal, but at some cost.
	SUCCESS. They succeed at their goal.
	CRITICAL SUCCESS. They succeed at their goal and gain an extra advantage.

6. Doom

After learning the result of their check, that player may choose to take the Doomcoin and flip it.

If a crest is flipped, the result of the check is treated as one better on the table. If skull, it is treated as one worse. Flipping the Doomcoin is therefore the only way to get critical results.

The player keeps the Doomcoin after flipping it. They are now doomed. If any other player was doomed before, they lose this status.

DOOMED. If a doomed player decides not to flip the Doomcoin after learning the result of their check, the GM may force them to flip it. After doing so, the Doomcoin returns to the GM and that player is no longer doomed.

DAUNTING OR TRIVIAL. If the check is daunting or trivial (see previous page) the player *must* flip the Doomcoin.



7. Effect

Finally, resolve the effects of the check as shown on the table. If this was a special check (see next page) use the table on the special check page.

If the PC had a trait that hindered this check, they gain 1 experience (xp), or 2xp if it was defining. Experience is not used in this demo.

S Special Checks



The standard check on page 40 can be used to resolve most situations the party will encounter; it could be used to run an entire game. The special checks outlined in this section are standard checks that have been tweaked to streamline the process for commonly encountered situations.

For example, you could use the standard check to resolve a player trying to discern whether an NPC is lying to them. Alternatively, you can have the player [judge] the NPC's words using the special check found on page 49. The process is exactly the same; certain steps are modified or predefined so as to speed things up.

Identifying Special Checks

The presence of square brackets, such as [judge] in the paragraph above, indicates that a named special check should be made.

Fixed Values

When a special check is identified in text, the name of the check may be accompanied by either a fixed difficulty or modifier (but never both) within the square brackets. Therefore a special check could appear as [resist fear, difficulty 7] or [attack, +3]. These indicate the GM doesn't need to decide difficulty or modifiers for this check.

Resolving a Special Check

Follow all the steps for a standard check, as shown to the right, but make the adjustments specified by the description of the special check. The difficulty, modifiers and effects can all differ from those of a standard check.



DIFFICULTY 1

Many special checks found in the following pages have guidelines on how to set the difficulty. We have listed factors that can increase or decrease the difficulty. As always, the GM has final say.

REMEMBER: If the special check has a fixed difficulty, like [struggle, difficulty 7], you can skip this!

MODIFIERS 2

Many special checks found in the following pages have suggestions for the traits and gear that could be useful (+1) or perfect (+2) in the check. As always, however, the final decision is up to the GM.

REMEMBER: If the special check has a fixed modifier, like [attack, +3], you can skip this!

EFFECT 7

The most important part of a special check is the result table. These work in the same way as the standard check table on page 43, but the effects of rolling over, equal or under can be quite different.

Standard Check Steps

1. DIFFICULTY. The typical difficulty of a check is 5. A GM may increase or decrease this as needed.

2. MODIFIERS.

-TRAIT.

- Helpful. +1
- Perfect. +2
- Defining and Perfect. +3

-GEAR.

- Helpful. +1
- Perfect. +2

-HELPFUL ALLIES. +1 per ally.

-HINDERING TRAIT.

- Hindering. -1
- Defining and hindering. -2

-CONDITIONS. -1 per condition.

3. ROLL.

- FOCUSED.** Roll 2D6, use highest.
- HASTY.** Roll 2D6, use lowest.
- STANDARD.** Roll 1D6.

4. APPLY MODIFIERS. Apply modifiers determined in step 2.

5. RESULT. Compare the total to the difficulty established in step 1.

- UNDER.** Failure with cost.
- EQUAL.** Success with cost.
- OVER.** Success.

6. DOOM. Decide whether you will to flip the Doomcoin.

7. EFFECT. Resolve the outcome of your actions, as shown on the table.

Attack

If I am to be buried, then I shall not be buried a coward. Let us go forth with hearts unbound and ire unleashed. Onwards! Tear down any who stand against our righteous cause!



An [attack] check is made whenever a character tries to harm another character with a weapon or unarmed strike. Usually this occurs during an Act in the combat round (p. 56)

DIFFICULTY

1

Equals the total of the defender's current toughness and protection. The defender's protection is doubled if the attack is light. The defender may choose to dodge or block, if able, to increase the difficulty further.

DODGE. Must be standing, able to move freely, and spend at least one defence.

- Spend Defence.* Increase the difficulty by +1 for each defence spent.
- Helpful Trait.* Increase the difficulty by +1 if the defender has a helpful trait (FEARFUL, TWITCHY), and +2 if they have a perfect trait (SPRY, SMALL).
- Duck!* Increase the difficulty by +1 if the defender chooses to fall prone.
- Heavy Attack.* Heavy attacks are easier to dodge. If the attack is heavy, all above bonuses to the attacks difficulty are doubled.

BLOCK. Must have something to block the attack with, such as a weapon or shield, and spend at least one defence.

- Spend Defence.* Increase the difficulty by +1 for each defence spent.
- Helpful Trait.* Increase the difficulty by +1 if the defender has a helpful trait (FEARFUL, HARDY), and +2 if they have a perfect trait (BURLY, MELEE FIGHTER).
- Shield.* Increase the difficulty by +1 if the defender has a shield.

MODIFIERS

2

TRAITS. SPRY, MELEE FIGHTER, MARKSMAN, BURLY

GEAR. Most weapons are helpful (+1). Also, they may receive other modifiers depending on their properties (see Weapons on page 64).

NPCs do not use traits or gear during their attacks. These bonuses have already been worked into the action block. If this is a free attack (see page 58) use any NPC action that involves an attack.

EFFECT

7

	FUMBLE. If this was a ranged attack, you must make a free [attack] against the nearest unintended target. If this was a melee attack, one adjacent enemy may make a free [attack] against you.
UNDER	OFF BALANCE. You fail to hurt your target and overextend yourself. Lower your defence by 1.
EQUAL	FLINCH. Lower your own defence by 1. The target loses 1 toughness.
1 OVER	GRAZE. Target loses 1 toughness.
2 OVER	SCRATCH. Target loses 2 toughness.
3 OVER	DEEP WOUND. Target gains the major injury 'scar'.
4 OVER	FACE. Target gains the major injury 'missing ear', 'missing eye', or 'missing nose', at GM's choice.
5 OVER	LEG. Target gains the injury 'injured leg'. They cannot stand without a crutch until this injury is treated.
6 OVER	ARM. Target drops something they are holding and gains the injury 'injured arm'.
7 OVER	SHATTERED. Target gains major injury 'missing arm', 'missing hand', or 'missing foot' at GM's choice.
8 OVER	INCAPACITATED. The target gains major injury 'missing leg' or 'broken spine', at GM's choice.
9 OVER	BLEEDING OUT. Target gains the injury 'open wounds'. Until this injury is treated, all attempts to [resist death] are hasty.
10 OVER	DEATH. The blow hits a vital mark. The target dies instantly.

The Attack Effect Table

The table above works like any other effect table (see page 43). However, you should keep track of how much 'over' the difficulty a player rolls. For example, rolling 8 on a difficulty 4 check means that you should resolve the '4 over' result on the effect table above.

THE DOOMCOIN. If an 'over' result is rolled on this table and the Doomcoin is then flipped, the result is treated as one better or worse, as normal. For example, in the previous section a crest would be treated as '5 over' and a skull as '3 over'.

DAMAGE. Anything that rolls 'over' the target difficulty is considered to have caused 'damage'. This has no extra effect, but some abilities and rules require an [attack] to have caused damage in order to apply.

Commune

Wrench the answers you need from foul forces beyond your comprehension.



[Commune] is used when a character seeks knowledge from creatures not of the natural world: the unquiet dead, Traitor Gods or stranger beings still.

DIFFICULTY

STEP 1

Set by GM or ability.

MODIFIERS

STEP 2

TRAITS. CHARMING, BRAVE, HAUNTED, METICULOUS

GEAR. Ritual candles, god's idol or charm

EFFECT

STEP 7

✖	HAUNTED. If you do not have the HAUNTED trait, gain it. Otherwise, choose a non-physical trait and lose it. If you have no traits to lose, you die.
UNDER	HARROWED. The whispers just won't stop. All checks you make are hasty until you get a full night's rest.
EQUAL	HARROWING REPLY. You receive an answer to your question, though it is cryptic. All checks you make are hasty until you get a full night's rest.
OVER	CRYPTIC ANSWER. You receive an answer to your question but it is veiled in obscurity.
👑	CLEAR ANSWER. You get a clear and concise answer to your question.

First Aid

Though it may be difficult to believe right now, you're actually very lucky.



[First aid] is used when a character wants to stop another from dying or restore toughness. This check can be made during combat, though one adjacent enemy may make a free [attack] against either the character or their patient.

DIFFICULTY

STEP 1

Increased by 2 if the target is of a different species to the healer.

MODIFIERS

STEP 2

TRAITS. BARBER SURGEON, TAILOR, QUICK-FINGERED, COMPASSIONATE

GEAR. Bandages, rags, medicine

EFFECT

STEP 7

✖	ERROR IN JUDGEMENT. If the patient is dying, they die in your arms. It was your fault. Otherwise, they lose 2 toughness.
UNDER	FUMBLE. You make matters worse. The patient loses 2 toughness. They cannot gain toughness until they rest and receive more [first aid].
EQUAL	STABILISE. If the patient is dying, they stop as long as you remain adjacent to them.
OVER	HELP. Restore D6 toughness to the target or stabilise them.
👑	GOOD AS NEW. Restore the target to full toughness and stabilise them.

Judge

Fault lies not at the feet of your betrayer, but with you for trusting them.



[Judge] is used when a player tries to determine the motives of another creature. Note that this check does not inform the player of whether a target is deceiving them unless they get the 'Truth' result.

DIFFICULTY

STEP 1

Increased by 2 if the target has a helpful trait, like LIAR or CONNING. Decreased by 2 if the target has a hindering trait, like SIMPLE or HONEST.

MODIFIERS

STEP 2

TRAITS. COMPASSIONATE, SUSPICIOUS

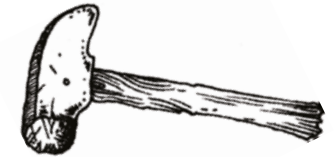
EFFECT

STEP 7

✖	MISUNDERSTANDING. You misjudge the target in the worst possible way.
UNDER	BIAS. You project your own worldview on to the target's intentions. For example, if you used SUSPICIOUS in the check, you suspect the target of lying; whereas if you used COMPASSIONATE, you believe they mean well.
EQUAL	INKLING. You correctly judge whether the target has any hidden motives.
OVER	INSIGHT. You correctly judge the target's true motives.
👑	TRUTH. You correctly judge the target's true motives as well as whether or not they are lying to you.

Knockback

Hold your ground, give no quarter. Drive them into the sea and let Oblivion take them.



[Knockback] is used when a character attempts to push a foe using brute force, oftentimes from a high ledge or into some other hazard.

DIFFICULTY

STEP 1

The toughness of the target, ignoring protection. This check can be dodged or blocked as if it were an [attack].

MODIFIERS

STEP 2

TRAITS. BURLY, MELEE FIGHTER

GEAR. Heavy armour, shield, heavy weapon, two-handed weapon

EFFECT

STEP 7

✖	TRIP. The target dodges and you fall hard. You lose 2 defence and 1 toughness.
UNDER	OFF BALANCE. You lose 2 defence.
EQUAL	SHOVE. Lose 2 defence, then push the target a short distance.
OVER	KNOCKBACK. You push the target a short distance.
👑	CRITICAL HIT. The target is pushed a short distance. They lose 2 defence.

Knockdown

You are always larger than a man on his back. Break the knees, then break the bastard.



[Knockdown] is used when a character attempts to floor a foe by wrestling or tripping them. Going from prone to standing in combat costs an action.

DIFFICULTY 1

The toughness of the target, ignoring protection. This check can be dodged or blocked as if it were an [attack].

MODIFIERS 2

TRAITS. BURLY, MELEE FIGHTER, SPRY, CONNVING

GEAR. A hooked weapon, heavy weapon, two-handed weapon, rope

EFFECT 7

✖	TRIP. The target dodges and you fall hard. You lose 2 defence and 1 toughness.
UNDER	OFF BALANCE. You lose 2 defence.
EQUAL	TUMBLE. You lose 2 defence. Then the target falls to the ground.
OVER	KNOCKDOWN. The target falls to the ground.
👑	CRITICAL HIT. The target falls hard, losing 2 defence.

Recover

I've no use at all for a fighter who can't take a beating. Get up or I'll kill you myself.



[Recover] is used when a character takes the Recover action (see page 56).

DIFFICULTY 1

Equal to twice the current defence of the character making this check.

MODIFIERS 2

TRAITS. MELEE FIGHTER, TWITCHY, SPRY, FEARFUL, SMALL, BURLY

GEAR. Swords and other hilted weapons are helpful (+1) for recovering defence, whereas shields are perfect (+2).

EFFECT 7

✖	PANIC. Lose 1 defence.
UNDER	HARRIED. Your next check is hasty.
EQUAL	FIND FOOTING. Gain 1 defence or 2 defence if there are no adjacent enemies.
OVER	SECOND WIND. Gain 2 defence or 3 defence if there are no adjacent enemies.
👑	UNBREAKABLE DEFENCE. Gain 4 defence.

Resist Death

There is no light at the end of the tunnel, only a slow loss of self as your blood soaks the ground.



[Resist death] is used when a character takes an injury or does something foolish.

DIFFICULTY 1

Equal to thrice the number of injuries a character has.

MODIFIERS 2

TRAITS. BURLY, RIGHTEOUS, HARDY, BARBER SURGEON

GEAR. A holy symbol, bandages, the Gravediggers' Guild badge of office

EFFECT 7

✖	INSTANT DEATH. You die, instantly.
UNDER	DYING. You fall unconscious. The GM secretly rolls a D6. You will die in this many rounds' time unless you receive [first aid], as on page 48.
EQUAL	NOT TODAY. If you have two action dice, you lose one action die.
OVER	HOLD OUT. If you take an action before you receive [first aid], you must [resist death] again.
👑	MOMENT OF HEROISM. If you have one action die, you gain an action die.

Resist Fear

There are things in this world that will shake the bravest of hearts. You stand no chance.



[Resist fear] is used when a character faces an otherworldly horror or insurmountable odds, often as a result of an enemy ability.

DIFFICULTY 1

Set by GM or ability.

MODIFIERS 2

TRAITS. RIGHTEOUS, PROUD, BRAVE, VENGEFUL

GEAR. A holy symbol, a weapon or item that can harm the source of fear

EFFECT 7

✖	FLIGHT. You [retreat] immediately. If this check was made outside of combat, gain the FEARFUL trait.
UNDER	FREEZE. Discard any remaining action dice. If you have none, gain no action dice next round.
UNDER	If this check was made outside of combat, all checks you make are hasty until you get a full night's rest.
EQUAL	FIGHT. Fear quickens your reflexes. Gain 1 defence.
OVER	BOLD. You cannot be frightened by this specific source of fear until sunset.
👑	UNSHAKEABLE. You can never be frightened by this specific source of fear again.

Retreat

A coward dies a hundred timid deaths. A hero dies once in a blaze that shakes the land entire.



[Retreat] is used when characters are trying to flee. If multiple characters are fleeing at the same time, choose a leader and roll once on the check.

DIFFICULTY 1

Increase by 1 for each dangerous opponent within short range of a retreating character. Decrease by 2 if there is a way to break the enemy's line of sight during the retreat.

MODIFIERS 2

TRAITS. LIGHT-FOOTED, FEARFUL

EFFECT 7

✖	CUT OFF. As below, except every enemy can move and make a free action.
UNDER	COSTLY ESCAPE. One enemy in the combat can move and make a free action. If, as part of this action, a fleeing character suffers an injury or becomes unable to move, they cannot retreat. All other fleeing characters can choose whether to escape successfully (see page 57) or stay for another round.
EQUAL	ROUT. The characters make their escape in a disorderly fashion. If they enter combat again during the next minute, they are surprised (see page 55).
OVER	WITHDRAW. The characters escape with grace and speed.
👑	FEINT. The characters successfully retreat and also shake off any pursuers.

Sneak

Pass unseen by those who mean you harm. Leave valour for warriors and kings.



[Sneak] is used when a character wants to hide some action from a watcher, such as thieving a coinpurse. There must be darkness, distance, cover or distraction. If multiple characters wish to sneak, choose a leader and roll once on the check.

DIFFICULTY 1

Increase by 2 if the watcher has a useful trait, such as SHARP-EYED or SUSPICIOUS. Decrease by 2 if the watcher has a hindering trait, such as HALF-BLIND or DEAF. Increase by 1 for each extra character involved in the check.

MODIFIERS 2

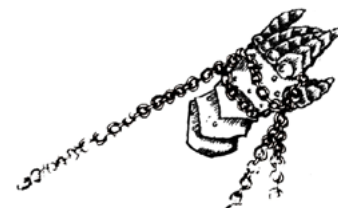
TRAITS. SPRY, LIGHT-FOOTED, SMALL

EFFECT 7

✖	SPOTTED. You are spotted at the worst possible moment of your endeavour.
UNDER	IMPOSSIBLE. Surveying the task, you determine it too great a risk. This check is impossible until circumstances change or you flip the Doomcoin.
EQUAL	NOTICED. You successfully perform the hidden action but leave some trace that is soon noticed.
OVER	SILENT. You perform the hidden task.
👑	INTO THE SHADOWS. You successfully perform the hidden task and may immediately perform a second without requiring a check.

Struggle

Resist with muscle, force of will, and the knowledge that failure means the end of you.



[Struggle] is used when a character resists an enemy's physical action, typically an attempt to push or pull that character somewhere they don't want to be.

DIFFICULTY 1

Set by the GM or ability.

MODIFIERS 2

TRAITS. SPRY, BURLY, TWITCHY, MELEE FIGHTER

GEAR. Heavy armour, a light weapon, or a shield

EFFECT 7

✖	SLIP. You suffer the effects of the creature's action and lose 2 defence. At the GM's discretion, you may instead suffer some other heightened effect.
UNDER	FAILURE. You suffer the effects of the creature's action.
EQUAL	ONE STEP. You shrug off the effects of the creature's action but any further checks you make this round are hasty.
OVER	IMMOVABLE. You shrug off the effects of the creature's action.
👑	INDOMITABLE. If the enemy is adjacent to you, make a free [attack] against them.

Surgery

If you thought an arrow was the most painful thing you'd experience, I bear bad tidings.



[Surgery] is used when a character wants to treat a patient for an injury. This check can only be made once per day per injury.

DIFFICULTY 1

Increase by 1 per injury the patient has.

MODIFIERS 2

TRAITS. BARBER SURGEON, METICULOUS, TAILOR, COOK

GEAR. Bandages, cleaver, needle and thread, medicine, alchemical reagents

EFFECT 7

✖	SLIPPED BLADE. You make matters worse. The target gains the major injury 'missing X', where X is the location you were treating.
UNDER	COSTLY RECOVERY. Reduce the patient's maximum toughness by 1, then resolve the 'On the Mend' result below
EQUAL	COMPLICATIONS. Reduce the patient's maximum defence by 1, then resolve the 'On the Mend' result below
OVER	ON THE MEND. If the injury is already on the mend, resolve the result below. Otherwise, mark the injury as "on the mend" on the patient's character sheet.
👑	HEALED. The injury is treated successfully; remove it from the character's list of conditions. If it was a major injury, it becomes a trait of the same name (see page 59).



Painyme is harsh and the Traitor Gods uncaring. Players will frequently find themselves in conflict with others who reside in these lands. Sometimes combat is made unavoidable by a particular situation. At other times, it is the logical conclusion of a failed check.

Out-of-Combat Attacks

If a character wants to make an attack outside of combat, perhaps by surprising an opponent, they should always make a relevant check beforehand (see page 40). Succeeding on this check means the player can immediately make a free [attack] as described on page 58.

Usually, an out-of-combat [attack] cannot be dodged or blocked, since the defender does not have any defence before the start of combat. The GM may also decide to ignore the protection of the defender.

Out-of-combat attacks can be daunting or trivial, just like any other check. If the attack has no real chance of failure, such as when the opponent is sleeping, there is no reason to get the dice involved.

After this [attack] is resolved, the GM assesses the situation to see if combat should begin.



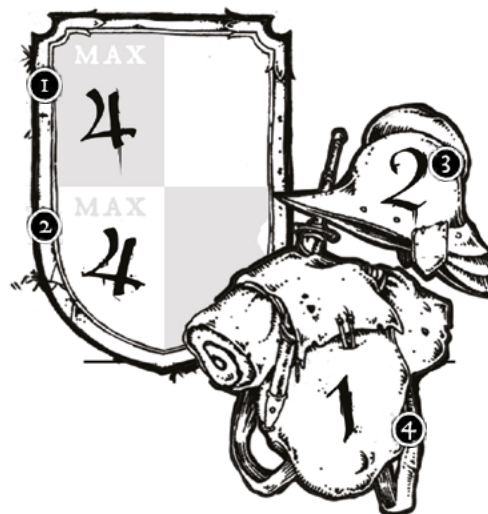
Start of Combat

Combat is initiated as soon as the order in which characters act becomes important. Typically, this will occur immediately after a PC or NPC makes their violent intentions known.

At the start of combat, each character sets their defence to its maximum value minus bulk (see right). Then each character who was surprised loses 3 defence. Generally, if the combat was started by an out-of-combat [attack], the target of that attack is surprised. The GM may decide (at their discretion) one or more characters are surprised.

Once all defence has been set, combat proceeds in rounds. Each round consists of all characters—PCs and NPCs alike—selecting what they would like to do and resolving those actions.

See next page for the full combat round.



Combat Stats

Combat makes use of certain stats: toughness and defence, which are innate to a character; as well as protection and bulk, which are determined by the armour a character is wearing. More information on armour can be found on page 66.

1 TOUGHNESS. Most PCs have a maximum toughness of 4. All characters have a toughness value, which determines how difficult they are to harm with an [attack]. See page 46 for more information. When lost, toughness is only regained through [first aid] or from eating a good meal and getting a full night's rest, each of which heal 1 toughness. If a character is reduced to 0 toughness, they fall unconscious until they gain at least 1 toughness.

2 DEFENCE. All characters have a maximum defence value. This determines how much defence they gain at the start of combat and how much defence they are reduced to at the end of each combat round. Defence can be spent to defend against an [attack]. See page 46 for more information. Characters cannot spend more defence than they currently have, so characters at 0 defence cannot spend defence at all. Unlike toughness, defence is much easier to regain, as with [recover] on page 50.

3 PROTECTION. Added to toughness when defending against an [attack].

4 BULK. Subtracted from a character's maximum defence.

The Combat Round

The combat round is made up of the following stages:

ROUND BEGINS
SET ACTION DICE
ACTS 1-6
END OF ROUND
RETREAT



Start Here

Round Begins

Each PC gains 2 action dice (see page 58). The GM gains 1 action die for each NPC involved in the combat.

Set Action Dice

First, the GM examines the relevant NPC action blocks (such as the laceworker block on page 61) and sets each die to match the numbered segments containing something they would like that NPC to do during the round. Alternatively, they can roll the dice and randomly assign one to each NPC (this can be good for animal NPCs or speeding up less important combatants).

Then, players discuss what they would like to accomplish as a party during the round. Each player sets their available action dice to the number(s) that match the desired segments in the PC action block found on their character sheet. They cannot place two dice on the same segment.

PC ACTION BLOCK. All PCs have access to the following actions while in combat. These blocks are printed on each player's character sheet.

- **AID.** Ready this die. You may spend it to add +1 to an ally's check.
- **DRAW.** Draw or stow up to two pieces of ready gear, or draw one piece of stowed gear.
- **DASH.** Move a short distance (for a total of two moves this act).
- **HASTY ACTION.** Perform an open action (see page 58). If it requires a check, it is hasty.
- **LIGHT ATTACK.** Make a hasty [attack] with a non-heavy weapon (p. 46).
- **RECOVER.** [Recover] your defence. The difficulty equals twice your current defence.
- **STANDARD ATTACK.** Make an [attack] as discussed on page 46.
- **STANDARD ACTION.** Perform an open action. If it requires a check, it is standard.
- **HEAVY ATTACK.** Make an [attack] with a non-light weapon, doubling all modifiers in the attack. If the defender dodges, they increase the difficulty of the attack by double the normal amount.
- **FOCUSED ACTION.** Perform an open action. If it requires a check, it is focused.

Retreat

The GM decides if any NPCs are going to [retreat] or surrender. If all NPCs do, the combat immediately ends.

Then, any or all PCs may [retreat] or surrender. If all PCs do, combat ends. Pretending to surrender should be resolved as an open action instead of using this step.

If the party retreats, they may not be out of danger entirely. A new combat begins if they re-encounter the enemy or tensions flare anew.

End of round

After spending and resolving any action dice set to ■, the round ends. At this time, resolve any effects that occur at the end of the round.

If any characters have a defence higher than their max defence value, it is now reduced to the max defence.

PCs may now share an in-character hurried word with each other, parley with the enemy and take small, inconsequential actions. Some GMs like to keep this short and sweet; others allow players to hold entire conversations with foes mid-combat for a more theatrical experience.

Acts

Once all action dice have been set, players who have selected ■ may spend that die to move a short distance (see 59) and then perform one action found in that segment. If more than one PC has selected ■, they may proceed in any order they wish. Once all PC dice showing a ■ have been spent, the GM does the same for NPC action dice set to ■, moving each corresponding NPC a short distance and resolving an action found in that segment of the NPC action block.

This is repeated for ■, ■, ■, ■ and ■.

Action Dice

During combat, actions are determined by PC and NPC action dice, which are the same as the D6s used to make checks. Below we have included some terminology that relate to action dice:

SPEND. To spend an action die means to put it to one side of the player. This is usually to do something listed on an action block. Spent dice return to the player at the start of each combat round.

DISCARD. Very similar to spending, except that discarded dice do not resolve an effect. Discarded dice also return to the player at the start of each combat round. Discarding dice is usually the result of a failed check or enemy action.

LOSE. To lose an action die means to remove it from combat entirely. It is only returned at the end of combat. This commonly occurs when a character must [resist death], as on page 51.

READY. To ready an action die means to place it in front of the player. The action or ability that readies a die will specify when it can be spent and the effect it will have. Players can only have one readied die in front of them at any time, but they can retain this die between combat rounds if they choose.

Free Actions

When a character gets a free action, they may complete any action in their action block without spending a die. They do not get a free move with this action.



Free Attacks

When a PC gets a free [attack], they may make the check on page 46 immediately. A PC cannot flip the Doomcoin on this check, even if it is daunting or trivial.

For NPCs, a free [attack] means they take a free action. The action they perform must involve an [attack] of some kind.

Open Actions

An open action (such as those found in the Hasty, Standard and Focused Action segments on the PC action block) is any action that takes a small amount of time or requires a check. This could be barring a door, performing [first aid] or any number of little things a character wants to do during combat.

Many abilities and enemy effects can be performed 'as an open action'. Characters can do these freely outside of combat. However, whilst in combat, they can only be performed by resolving an open action.

Movement

In *Doomsong*, movement depends largely upon your group's style of play.

If you are not using miniatures in your game, movement is used in a narrative sense. A short distance will get a character to a treeline, up a ladder, or to the edge of a skirmish. A good rule of thumb is to treat a 'short distance' as the shortest distance that matters in the current scene. It will therefore mean something a little different in an open battlefield as opposed to claustrophobic catacombs.

If you are using miniatures and a TTRPG battlegrid (traditionally marked in 1 inch increments), you can treat a short distance as 3 unobstructed squares or hexes.

In both cases, specific measurements are less important than consistency.

CONDITIONS. Use common sense to determine whether a character's conditions and injuries would impede their movement.

OBSTACLES. Certain terrain may restrict a character's movement. Depending on the terrain, it may require the PC to use one move to enter or scale the obstacle, then use a second to go past it. Alternatively, the GM could have them resolve a check to ignore the restriction.

PINNED AND PRONE. Certain enemies may knock a character down, pin them in place, or impose some other movement restriction upon them. A prone PC can stand as an open action. Other movement restrictions may require a check, as decided by the GM.

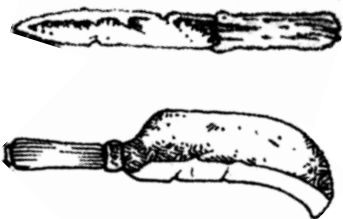
Injuries

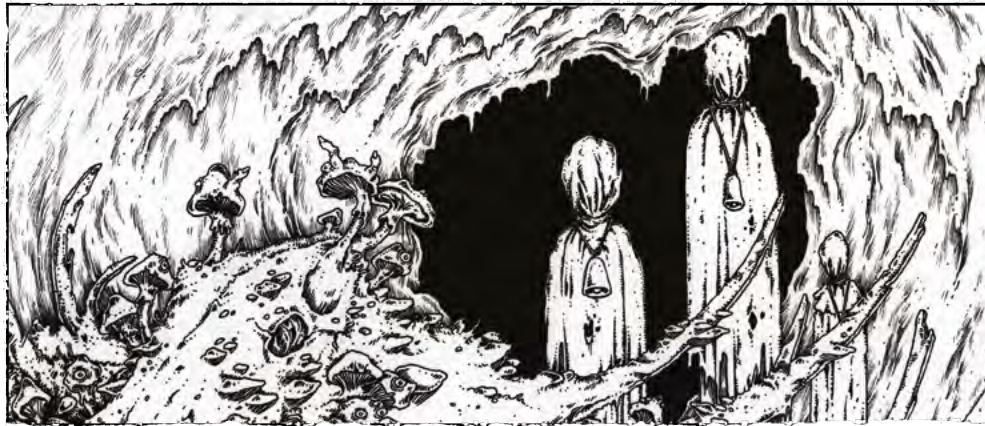
During combat, characters may gain injuries, a type of condition (see page 68) most commonly received after being damaged by an [attack]. When a non-major NPC gains an injury, they are defeated in a manner of the GM's choosing, such as surrender, death or incapacitation.

When a major NPC gains an injury, they lose an action die. If they lose their last action die, they are defeated.

When a PC gains an injury, make a note of it under 'Conditions'. Then they must [resist death] as on page 51.

MAJOR INJURIES. These work just like injuries, but after a successful [surgery], as on page 53, they become traits instead of being removed entirely. For example, if you treated the 'missing hand' injury, it would become the MISSING HAND trait and work like any other.





NPCs are everything the PCs meet in their adventure, from rabid beasts to noble scions. Essentially, an NPC is any character controlled by the GM throughout the game. They work much the same as PCs. However, instead of a character sheet, they have a statblock in the rulebook that details their traits, stats, abilities and action block.

Running NPCs

For much of the game, NPCs do not require rules. Their actions and the difficulties of any check involving them are decided by the GM and simply folded into the conversation (see page 8). NPCs have their own wants and fears; they should be thought of as characters in their own right. The PCs believe themselves the heroes of their own story, but Painyme's NPCs feel otherwise.

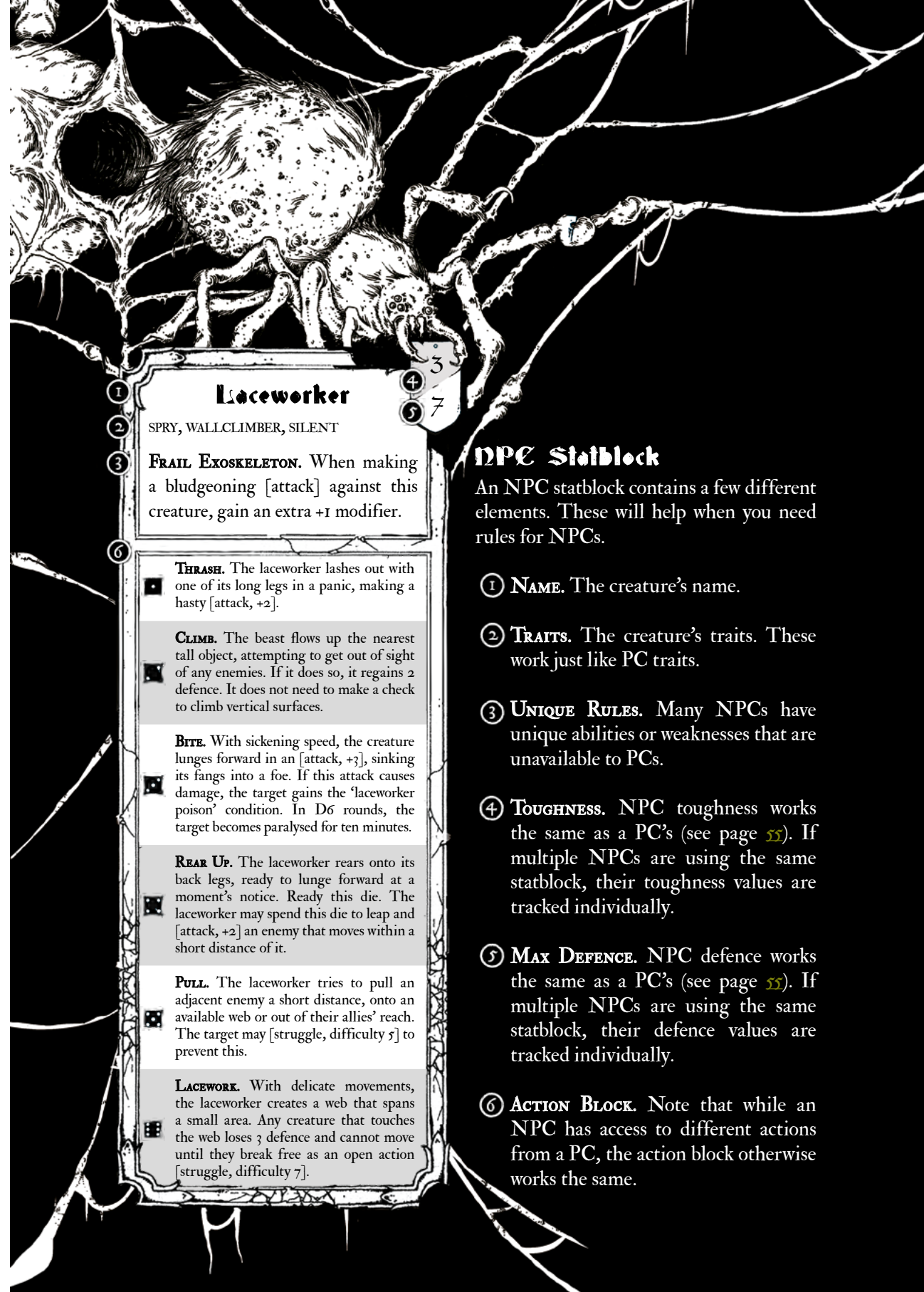


NPC Checks

When an NPC attempts a check, follow the same rules a PC would use (page 40). However, NPCs cannot flip the Doomcoin unless they are making a check that directly affects a doomed PC, usually an [attack]. After flipping the Doomcoin, the GM places it in front of themselves and the player who originally had it is no longer doomed.

NPCs in Combat

Each NPC has a unique action block, found on their page. This means their options are different from those available to PCs; they may do something the players don't expect. When running an NPC in combat, keep their goal in mind. Remember, retreat is always an option!



Laceworker

SPRY, WALLCLIMBER, SILENT

FRAIL EXOSKELETON. When making a bludgeoning [attack] against this creature, gain an extra +1 modifier.

THRASH. The laceworker lashes out with one of its long legs in a panic, making a hasty [attack, +2].

CLIMB. The beast flows up the nearest tall object, attempting to get out of sight of any enemies. If it does so, it regains 2 defence. It does not need to make a check to climb vertical surfaces.

BITE. With sickening speed, the creature lunges forward in an [attack, +3], sinking its fangs into a foe. If this attack causes damage, the target gains the 'laceworker poison' condition. In D6 rounds, the target becomes paralysed for ten minutes.

REAR UP. The laceworker rears onto its back legs, ready to lunge forward at a moment's notice. Ready this die. The laceworker may spend this die to leap and [attack, +2] an enemy that moves within a short distance of it.

PULL. The laceworker tries to pull an adjacent enemy a short distance, onto an available web or out of their allies' reach. The target may [struggle, difficulty 5] to prevent this.

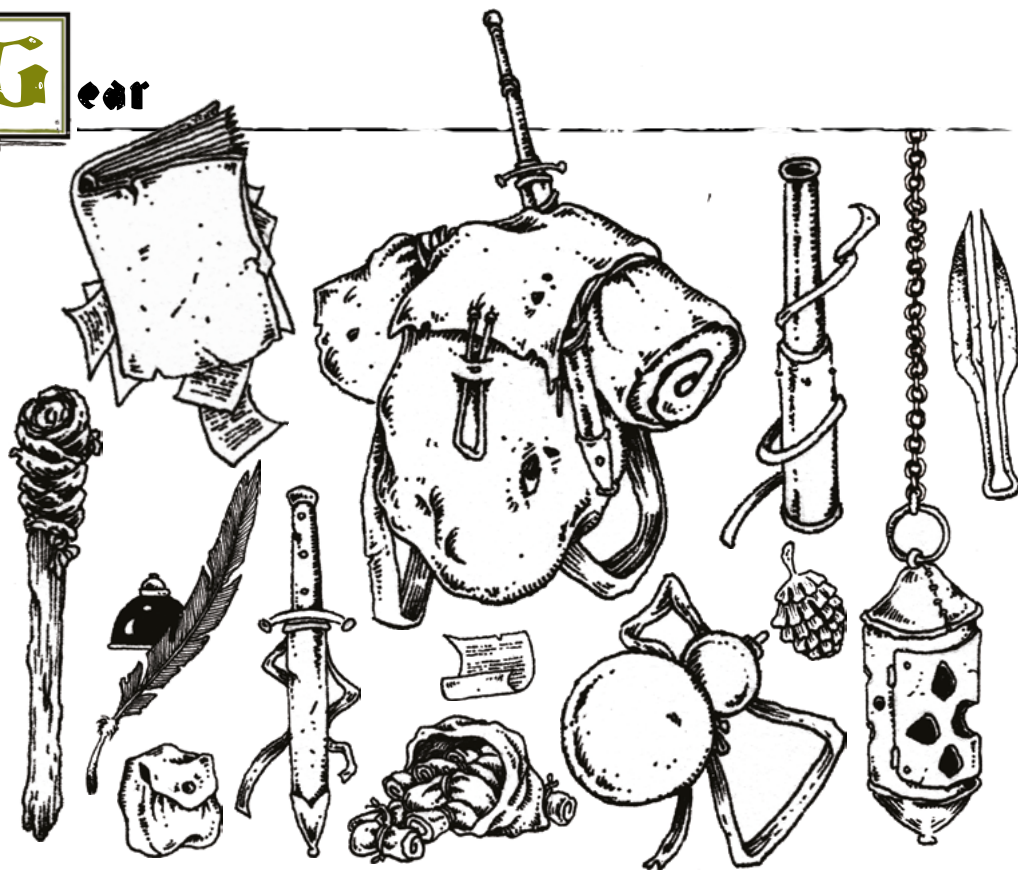
LACEWORK. With delicate movements, the laceworker creates a web that spans a small area. Any creature that touches the web loses 3 defence and cannot move until they break free as an open action [struggle, difficulty 7].

NPC Statblock

An NPC statblock contains a few different elements. These will help when you need rules for NPCs.

- 1 **NAME.** The creature's name.
- 2 **TRAITS.** The creature's traits. These work just like PC traits.
- 3 **UNIQUE RULES.** Many NPCs have unique abilities or weaknesses that are unavailable to PCs.
- 4 **TOUGHNESS.** NPC toughness works the same as a PC's (see page 55). If multiple NPCs are using the same statblock, their toughness values are tracked individually.
- 5 **MAX DEFENCE.** NPC defence works the same as a PC's (see page 55). If multiple NPCs are using the same statblock, their defence values are tracked individually.
- 6 **ACTION BLOCK.** Note that while an NPC has access to different actions from a PC, the action block otherwise works the same.

Gear



With the exception of weapons and armour, most gear in *Doomsong* does not have specific rules. It is up to the GM and players to decide what effects that gear has, using common sense and case-by-case rulings.

The Gear Grid

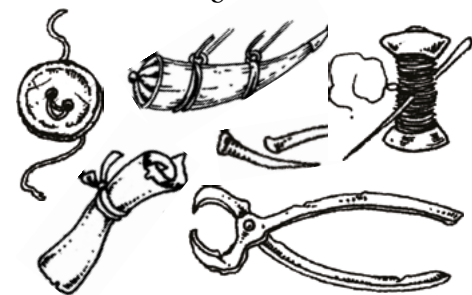
Each character sheet has two sections of their gear grid: ready and stowed. When a PC picks up a piece of gear they intend to keep, the player adds it either of these sections. Ready gear are the items that a PC has easy access to, either held, worn or sheathed. Stowed gear are items carried in

the PC's backpack. During combat, gear can be drawn or stowed using the Draw action (see page 56).

Small items, or those easily held in one hand, take up one space on the grid. Bulky items are written across two adjacent spaces on the grid.

Weapons

If a PC picks up a weapon they intend to use, they should add it under 'Weapon' on their character sheet as well as their gear grid. See page 64 for more details.



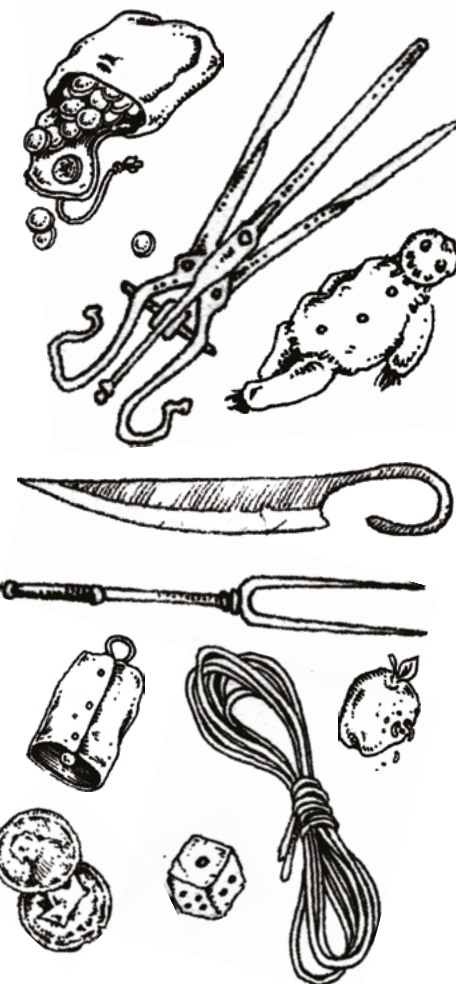
Trade

Painyme's currency is measured in obol, but it is not expected that players will collect and count their coin with any great accuracy. When PCs gain any worthwhile quantity of wealth, they should record one of the following types of gear:

LIGHT COINPURSE. This is enough money for a standard piece of gear or a small bribe. Characters can also use light coinpurses to support a meagre lifestyle without trading away the entire purse.

AVERAGE COINPURSE. This is enough money for a head of livestock or a fine piece of jewellery. Characters can also use average coinpurses to support a modest lifestyle without trading away the entire purse.

FAT COINPURSE. This is enough money for a piece of land or a noble dowry. Characters can also use fat coinpurses to support a lavish lifestyle without trading away the entire purse.

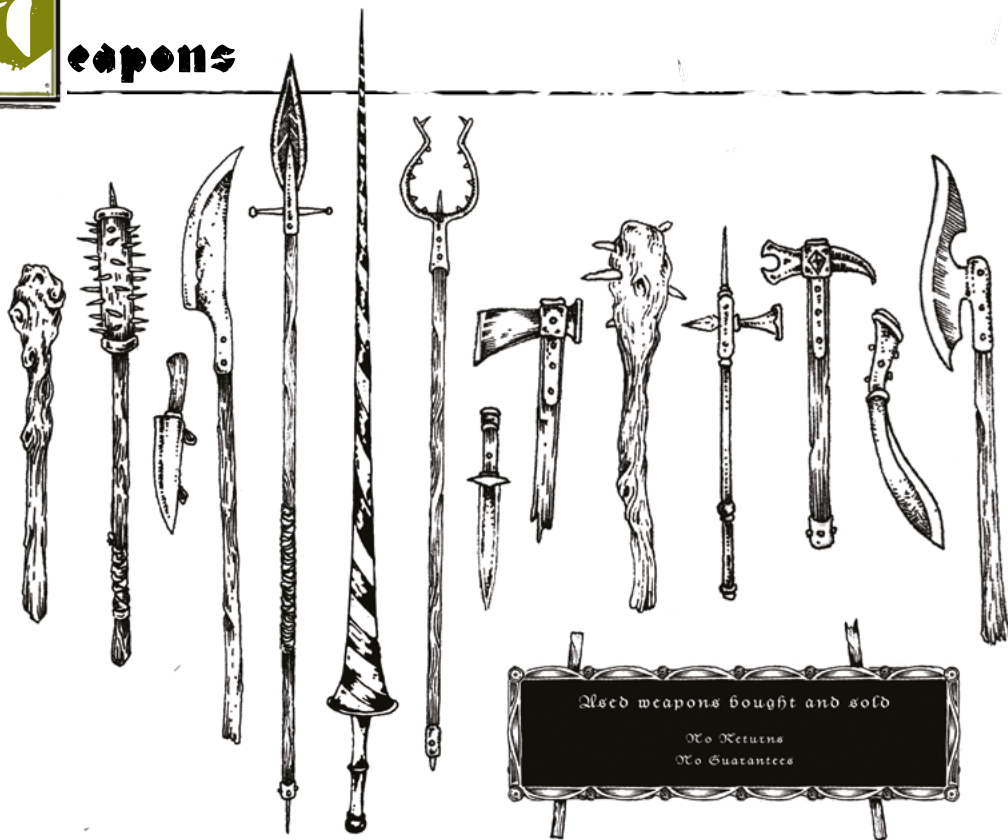


Armour

Unlike other gear, armour is removed from a PC's gear grid when it is donned.

After a PC dons armour, the player should add the name of the armour under 'Armour' as well as the protection and bulk values to their character sheet under 'Protection' and 'Bulk' (found next to their toughness and defence). See page 55 for more details.

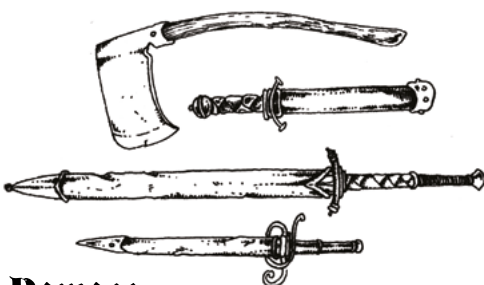




When a PC gains a weapon they intend to use, it is up to the GM to decide its damage and properties (if any). These rules allow for any kind of weapon, but it can be quicker to choose a weapon from the table on the opposite page.

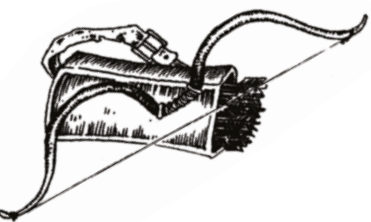
Using Weapons

Unless otherwise stated, weapons are considered helpful (+1) in an [attack], as on page 46. The GM may decide that a particular weapon is perfect (+2) for a certain situation even if it doesn't have a property denoting it so, as discussed on the opposite page.



Damage

As standard, weapons can have one of three damage types: slashing, bludgeoning or piercing. For the purposes of this demo, damage types only change the flavour of combat. To record the damage type of a weapon, the player should write S, B, or P under 'D' next to the weapon name on their character sheet.



Properties

When adding a weapon to their character sheet, the GM chooses which (if any) of the following properties it has.

HEAVY. This weapon is perfect (+2) for heavy attacks but cannot make light attacks.

LIGHT. This weapon is perfect (+2) for light attacks but cannot make heavy attacks.

IMPROVISED. This weapon suffers a -1 penalty to each [attack].

UNARMED. If you roll under a target's difficulty and they did not dodge, you lose 1 toughness.

REACH. This weapon is perfect (+2) for attacks at the end of its reach but incidental (+0) for attacks against adjacent targets.

TWO-HANDED. This weapon applies a +1 bonus to each [attack] but requires two hands to wield.

RANGED. This weapon (usually a bow or similar) can be used to make an [attack] at range but it cannot be used in melee.

RELOAD. This weapon requires an open action to load between each [attack].

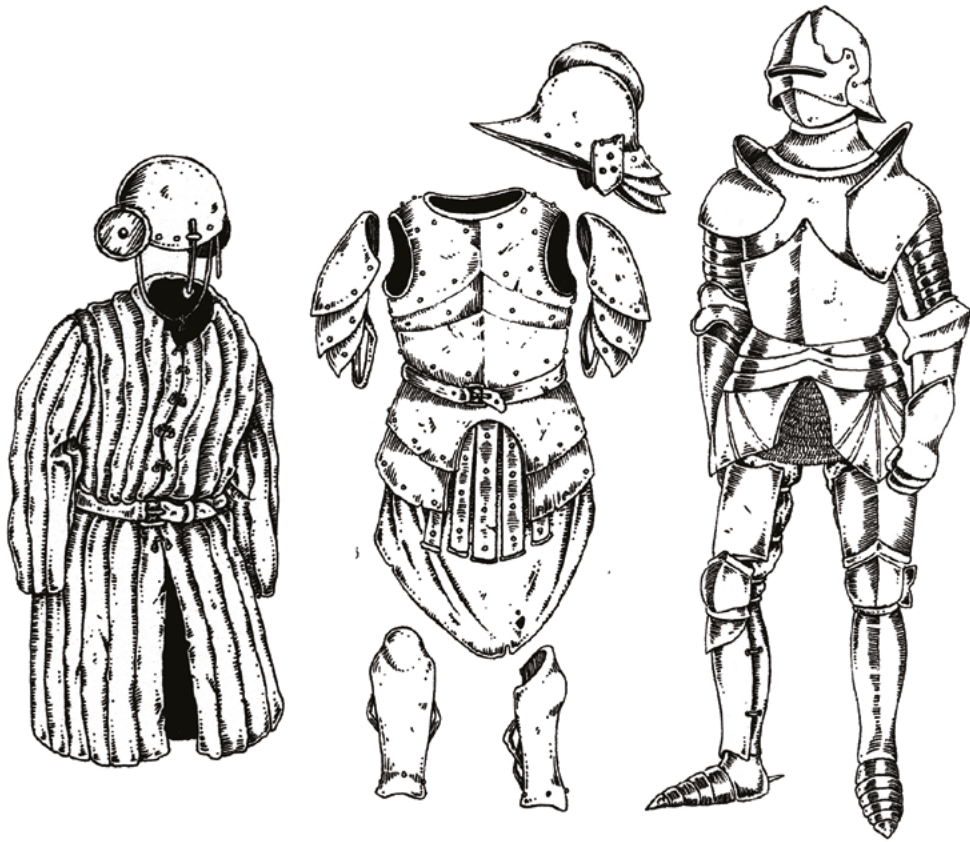
CASTLE-FORGED. This weapon applies +1 to all attacks but is expensive or rare.



Example Weapons

Find below a list of example weapons. This is not an exhaustive list of weapons found throughout the world, but rather a guide to give you an idea of how to apply weapon properties. When in doubt, you can choose the closest weapon from this list.

	D	PROPERTIES
UNARMED	B	Improvised (-1), unarmed
BROKEN BOTTLE	P	Improvised (-1)
SHEARS	S	Improvised (-1)
DIRK	P	Light
SHORTSPEAR	P	
WARPICK	P	Heavy
RAPIER	P	Castle-forged (+1)
RAZOR	S	Light
SABRE	S	
BATTLEAXE	S	Heavy
CLUB	B	Improvised (-1)
WHIP	B	Reach, improvised (-1)
MACE	B	
WARHAMMER	B	Heavy
ARMING SWORD	S	
PITCHFORK	P	Improvised (-1), two-handed (+1)
SPADE	B	Improvised (-1), two-handed (+1)
FLAMBERGE	S	Castle-forged (+1), two-handed (+1)
MAUL	B	Heavy, two-handed (+1)
PIKE	P	Reach, two-handed (+1)
SLING	B	Ranged, light
HUNTING BOW	P	Improvised (-1), ranged, two-handed (+1)
BOW	P	Ranged, two-handed (+1)
LONGBOW	P	Ranged, heavy, two-handed (+1)
LIGHT CROSSBOW	P	Castle-forged (+1), ranged, reload
CROSSBOW	P	Castle-forged (+1), ranged, two-handed (+1), reload



When a PC gains armour they intend to wear, it is up to the GM to decide its protection, bulk and properties (if any). These rules allow for any kind of armour, but it can be quicker to choose an armour from the table on the opposite page.

Protection

The main benefit of armour is its protection, which contributes to a PC's toughness against an [attack], as shown on page 46. The standard protection for armour is 4, which may be modified by properties the armour has.

An armour's total protection should be recorded under 'Protection', next to 'Toughness' on a player's character sheet.

Bulk

The main downside to armour is its bulk, which is deducted from a PC's maximum defence and may, at the GM's discretion, hinder physical checks the character makes (swimming, climbing, etc). A high bulk value is bad. The standard bulk for armour is 1.

An armour's bulk should be recorded under 'Bulk', next to 'Defence' on a player's character sheet.

Properties

When a player adds armour to their character sheet, the GM should choose which (if any) of the following properties the armour should have:

ILL-FITTING. +1 bulk, until fitted.

DECAYED. +1 bulk, until fixed.

CASTLE-FORGED. +1 protection.

LIGHT. -2 protection, -1 bulk.

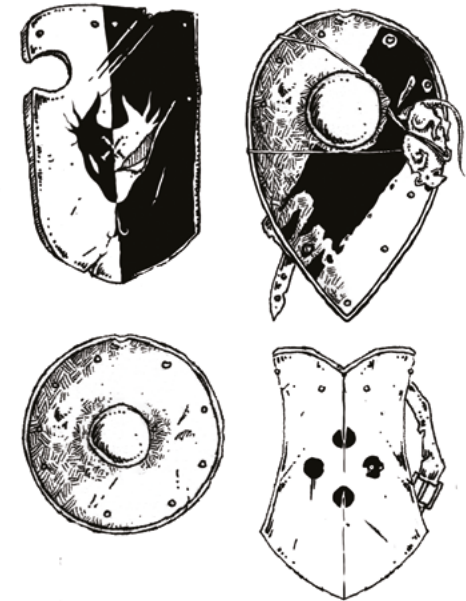
HEAVY. +2 protection, +1 bulk.

PIECEMEAL. -1 bulk. If an enemy flips a crest on the Doomcoin during an [attack] against the wearer that would deal damage, their result is moved up a number of steps equal to the protection of this armour (instead of one step).

SLASH RESISTANCE. +2 protection against attacks from slashing weapons. This cannot be applied to heavy armour.

Example Armour

To the right, find a list of example armour. This is not an exhaustive list of armour that can be found throughout the world, but rather a guide for how to apply armour properties. When in doubt, you can simply choose the closest armour set from this list.



	P	B	PROPERTIES
SOFT LEATHER	+2	0	Light
SCAVENGED LEATHER	+2	1	Light, ill-fitting
ROTTED QUILTS	+2	1	Light, decayed
HARD LEATHER	+2	0	Light, slash resistance (+2)
WEALD PATCHWORK	+2	0	Light, piecemeal
LINEN	+2	0	Light
GAMBESON	+3	0	Light, castle-forged
SCALE ARMOUR	+4	1	
CHAINMAIL	+4	1	Slash resistance (+2)
RUSTED CHAIN	+4	2	Decayed
BRIGANDINE	+6	2	Heavy
FULL PLATE	+7	2	Heavy, castle-forged
SCAVENGED PLATE	+6	2	Heavy, piecemeal, ill-fitting



Craits and Conditions



Traits and conditions are what make individual characters unique. They cover everything from skills and personality to health and injuries. The main difference between traits and conditions is permanence, with traits being the intrinsic elements of a character and conditions being the fleeting needs and hurts of a character's mortal frame.

Traits

Usually, a trait can only be added or removed by spending XP (not available in this demo) and is listed under 'Traits' on a player's character sheet. These modify checks in a negative or positive way, as discussed on page 42, and a list of example traits is provided on the following page.

Traits also have a less mechanical effect on the game's conversation. When deciding the outcome of a PC's action, the GM may decide not to make a player roll for a check because of a certain trait. Likewise, they might consider certain things impossible. For example, a player with the LITERATE trait wouldn't be asked to roll a check in order to read a sign. Nor would a player with the HALF-BLIND trait, though the outcome would be very different.

Conditions

Conditions are temporary effects that can be applied by the GM for failing a check or making a poor choice. For example, a PC missing a night's sleep may gain the condition 'exhausted'. This is recorded on their character sheet, to be removed when the PC gets a full night's rest. Conditions act as negative modifiers on checks, as described on page 42.

The most common conditions are injuries, as described on page 59.



Example Traits



Most traits are self-explanatory. Below we've provided examples of checks and situations in which a particular trait may be relevant. As always, the GM has final say over whether a trait is hindering (-1), incidental (+0), helpful (+1) or perfect (+2) for a particular check.

Aa

ALCHEMIST. Chemicals, [surgery].



Bb

BAD LUNGS. Hinders [recover] and checks to do with endurance.

BARBER SURGEON. [Surgery], [first aid].

BEASTWISE. Handling, tracking, empathy.

BLACKSMITH. Metalworking, resisting heat.

BORDERBORN. Interacting with folk beyond civilisation's grasp.

BRAVE. [Resist fear], bolstering allies.

BURLY. Lifting, pushing, arm wrestling.

Cc

CARPENTER. Woodworking, crafting.

CHARMING. Hagglng, making friends.

COMPASSIONATE. [Judge], making friends, [first aid].

CONNIVING. Lying, planning, tricks.

COOK. Using knives, [surgery], preparing meals.

CROOKED X. Hinders checks to do with nimbleness.

Ee

EYE-CATCHING. Interacting with folk influenced by ordinary beauty.

Ff

FEARFUL. Reflexes, [retreat].

FRAIL. Hinders [resist death].

Gg

GOOD MEMORY. Studying, recognition.

GROTESQUE. Hinders interactions with folk influenced by ordinary beauty.

Hh

HALF-BLIND. Hinders checks based on sight. If defining, the character can barely see or is completely blind.

HALF-DEAF. Hinders checks based on hearing. If defining, the character can barely hear or is fully deaf.

HAUNTED. You are haunted by occult forces. Literal gods whisper to you at night, meaning you cannot trust your own mind.

HARDY. [Resist death], endurance.

Ii

INCONSPICUOUS. Escaping notice, [sneak].

INVESTIGATOR. Spotting, solving, [judge].

IRON STOMACH. Resisting poison, disease.

Ll

LIAR. Disguising, charming, mimicking.

LIGHT-FOOTED. Balance, [sneak], [retreat].

LITERATE. You can read and write.

Mm

MARKSMAN. [Attack] with a ranged weapon.

MATHEMATICAL. Studying, gambling.

MELEE FIGHTER. [Attack] with a melee weapon, [knockback], [knockdown].

MENALTY. Interacting with other middle-class folk.

METICULOUS. Studying, planning, patience.

MISSING X. You cannot use this body part, usually gained through a major injury.

MUSICAL. Performing, making friends



Nn

NAIVE. Hinders [judge]

NAVIGATOR. Tracking, camp-making, maps

Pp

PROUD. Confidence, bullying.

Qq

QUICK-FINGERED. Performance, lockpicking.

Rr

RECKLESS. Reflexes, decisiveness.

RIGHTEOUS. Resisting pain, intimidation.

RUTHLESS. Hurting others, intimidation.



Ss

SCARRED X. Intimidation, hinders checks involving remaining inconspicuous.

SHARP-EYED. Spotting.

SICKLY. Hinders [resist death].

SIMPLE. Hinders checks based on memory.

SLUMCASTE. Interacting with other downtrodden folk.

SMALL. Dodging, [sneak], squeezing.

SPRY. Dodging, reflexes, [attack] with a light weapon, nimbleness.

SUSPICIOUS. [Judge], hagglng.

Tt

TAILOR. Making clothes, [surgery].

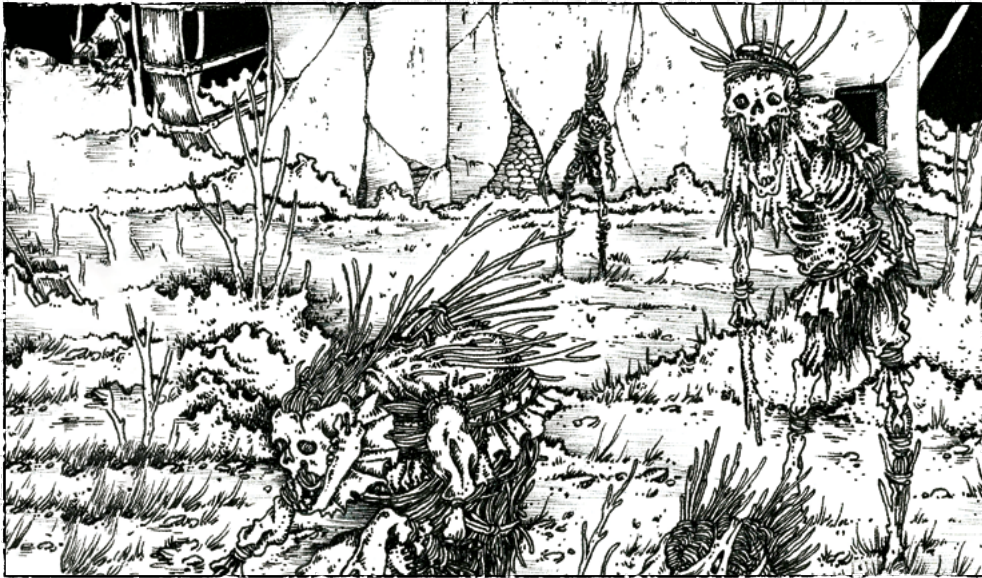
TWITCHY. Hinders checks based on patience.

Vv

VENGEFUL. Checks aimed against the target of your ire

Ww

WEAK. Hinders checks based on strength.



Abilities are special talents that PCs can gain during character creation or through training (not available in this demo). Abilities change how characters interact with the game and range from martial techniques to dark gifts from the Traitor Gods (see occult abilities on page 76).

A player with an ability gains access to the rules listed in this section. If an ability contradicts another rule in the book, the ability takes precedence.

Levels

Whenever a PC gains an ability, their player should add it to their character sheet under 'Abilities' and mark it as level 1 under 'Level'. If they would gain an ability but already have it, instead update the ability to level 2 (keeping any level 1 effects). If the ability is gained a third time, it is updated to level 3. In the demo, abilities cannot go above level 3.

Bonesetting

After you perform [surgery] on a patient, you may choose an injury that is 'on the mend' and immediately heal it.



Burst of Speed

LEVEL 1. After taking the Dash action, you may roll the spent action die and place it back into your action block.

LEVEL 2. Instead of rolling the spent die, you may now turn it to a side of your choosing.

Discover

When you flip the Doomcoin on a check to find tracks, a clue, or some other piece of physical information, you may re-flip the Doomcoin once.

Fable

Once per creature, you may choose to recall a fable containing useful information. Flip the Doomcoin. You are now doomed.

If you flip a crest, you remember a story with a useful piece of information about the creature, as decided by the GM.

If you flip a skull, you learn something useful but are doomed for the rest of the session (even after you have lost the Doomcoin). You may not use this ability again during the session.



Flowing Strike

LEVEL 1. When an enemy chooses to dodge a light melee [attack] of yours, move the target a short distance. This movement cannot force the target into a location that is inherently dangerous, such as over a cliff.

LEVEL 2. When using Flowing Strike, you may now force your opponent into an inherently dangerous location.

Leeching

LEVEL 1. You may use a leech to perform [surgery] on a disease as if it was an injury (see page 52). Leeches cannot be reused.

LEVEL 2. As an open action, you may use a leech to extract excess blood from a human. The target loses 1 toughness; all their checks are focused until the end of combat or, if not in combat, for a few minutes.

LEVEL 3. You can clean leeches using alchemical reagents, which are lost during this process. Cleaned leeches may be reused once but then die.

Measured Strike

LEVEL 1. When making a non-heavy [attack], you may choose to gain +1 to the check. If you do, you can only get a maximum of 3 over the target's difficulty.

LEVEL 2. When making a non-heavy [attack], you may choose to gain +2 to the check. If you do, you can only get a maximum of 2 over the target's difficulty.



Phlegethary

As an open action, if you have alchemical reagents to hand, you coat a weapon or piece of ammunition with flame. The next [attack] made with the weapon ignores protection and deals fire damage (fire damage is not part of this demo).

Plague Chemstry

LEVEL 1. As an open action, if you have alchemical reagents to hand, you may soak a handkerchief in incense. Any creature holding this handkerchief to their face, usually with a spare hand or plague mask, cannot catch a disease. The incense stays potent for 10 minutes.

LEVEL 2. As an open action, if you have alchemical reagents and a free hand, you may fill a censer with your concoction and swing it to spread protective vapours. No creature within a short distance can catch a disease until you stop. Continuing to swing the censer does not require another action, but does require a free hand.

Precise Aim

LEVEL 1. At the start of a combat round, you may ready a die and announce a target. You may spend this die during an [attack] against your target to gain +1 bonus to the check. If you move before spending the die, discard it instead. Note: Spending this die gives a bonus to an [attack]; it does not initiate the [attack].

LEVEL 2. Increase the bonus of Precise Aim to +2.



Protect

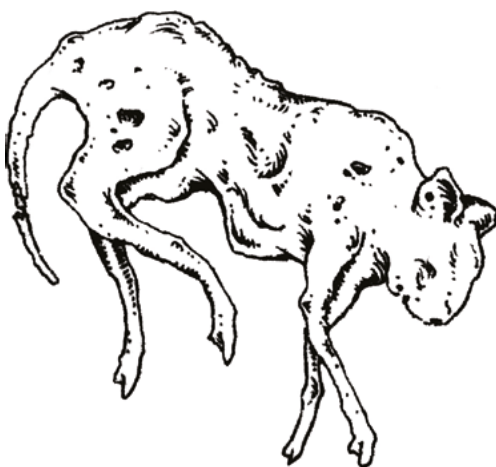
LEVEL 1. After you [recover], you may choose an adjacent ally to gain the recovered defence instead of you.

LEVEL 2. Gain +1 defence yourself when you use this ability.

Underhanded Strike

LEVEL 1. When making a free [attack] with a light weapon, gain +2 to the check.

LEVEL 2. After an enemy rolls 'under' your difficulty with an [attack], you may force them to flip the Doomcoin. This follows normal rules for flipping the Doomcoin: a skull will push the result to 'fumble' and a crest to 'flinch'.



Study

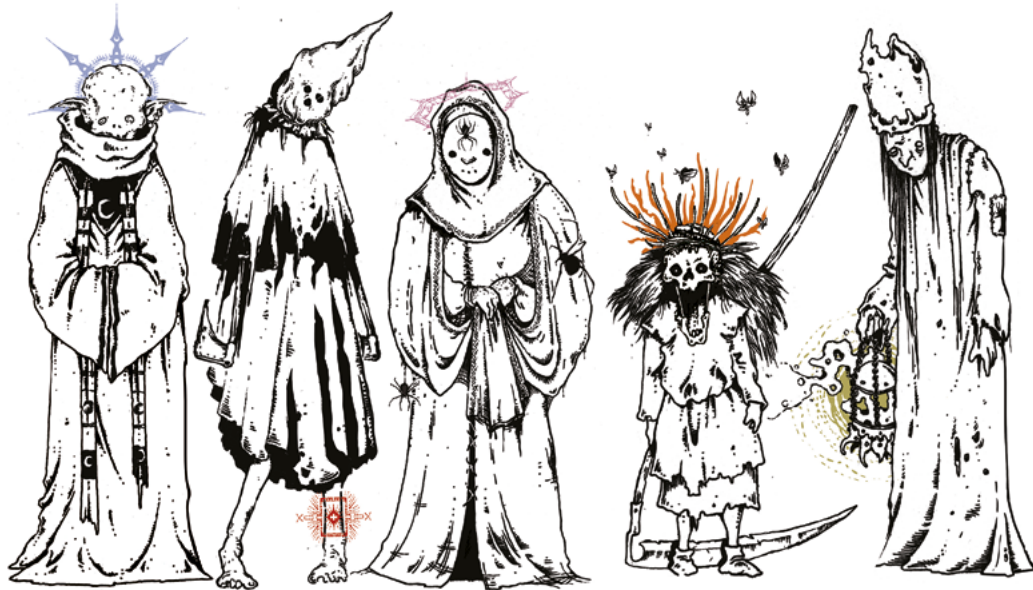
LEVEL 1. When you have access to a library, private study, or other collection of books, you may take a miscellaneous book and add it to your gear as 'nameless book'. When making a check involving knowledge, you may use the book as a piece of perfect (+2) gear. When you do, name the book and update it in your gear. It can be used for other checks in the future but its contents are now fixed.

LEVEL 2. You can now have two 'nameless books' in your gear at the same time.





Occult Abilities



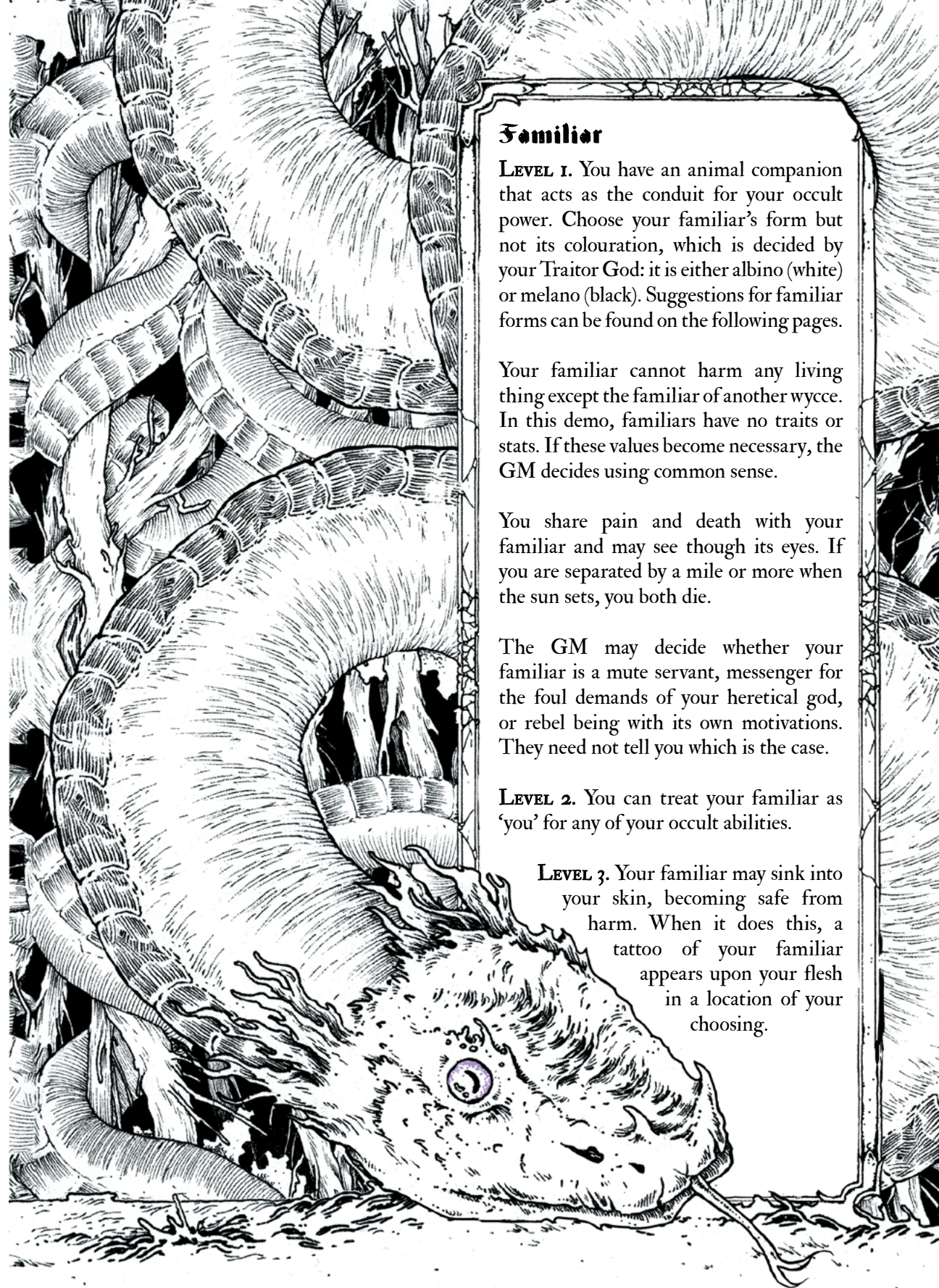
Occult abilities are bestowed upon mortals by the Traitor Gods; these powers are considered heretical by law-abiding citizens of Painyme. As gravediggers, the PCs have been absolved of any past heresies they may have perpetrated, but further use of these abilities is prohibited. Gravediggers are not exempt from the laws of the Ecclesiarch; it is not unheard of to find them lashed to a wycefinder's pyre.

Gaining Occult Abilities

PCs cannot gain abilities from more than one Traitor God. When they gain their first occult ability, they must write down the cost associated with that god. For example, a player whose PC gains the 'Blood Rage' ability on page 79 must write 'Frenzy' under 'Heresy' on their character sheet. Then they must write 'Give defeated enemies no quarter' under 'Cost'. There are 12 Traitor Gods included in this demo: Chance, Feast, Frenzy, Honour, Hope, Justice, Languor, Oblivion, Panic, Perception, Rot and Toil.

Cost

If a wyce—as that PC has just become by gaining favour with a Traitor God—does not fulfil the cost imposed by that god, they lose access to their occult abilities. Any effects caused by an occult ability remain in place, but the PC cannot use the ability again until they appease their god. These rules are intentionally vague. The Traitor Gods are inscrutable and the GM is their conduit into sessions of *Doomsong*.



Familiar

LEVEL 1. You have an animal companion that acts as the conduit for your occult power. Choose your familiar's form but not its colouration, which is decided by your Traitor God: it is either albino (white) or melano (black). Suggestions for familiar forms can be found on the following pages.

Your familiar cannot harm any living thing except the familiar of another wyce. In this demo, familiars have no traits or stats. If these values become necessary, the GM decides using common sense.

You share pain and death with your familiar and may see through its eyes. If you are separated by a mile or more when the sun sets, you both die.

The GM may decide whether your familiar is a mute servant, messenger for the foul demands of your heretical god, or rebel being with its own motivations. They need not tell you which is the case.

LEVEL 2. You can treat your familiar as 'you' for any of your occult abilities.

LEVEL 3. Your familiar may sink into your skin, becoming safe from harm. When it does this, a tattoo of your familiar appears upon your flesh in a location of your choosing.



Chance

*In delicate threads, we find design:
Chance's tapestry, spun upon a dreadful loom.*

MELANO FAMILIAR. Miniature laceworker.

COST. Do not allow harm to befall a laceworker (see page 61).

Lacespeech

LEVEL 1. You may talk to laceworkers directly or by touching their webs.

LEVEL 2. Laceworkers see you as one of their own. They will go out of their way to warn you of danger or protect you.

LEVEL 3. As an open action, you may call upon a laceworker you have met previously to come to your aid. The laceworker will insist on being fed a live meal afterwards.

Aspect of the Laceworker

LEVEL 1. Your bite can be used as a light piercing weapon. If this bite punctures the skin of a creature, that creature is immediately paralysed for an hour.

LEVEL 2. Small black eyes appear on your temples, allowing you to see in near-pitch darkness.

LEVEL 3. Your bare palms and the soles of your feet stick to walls, allowing you to climb in the most unnatural fashion.



Feast

*A seat at the table, anticipation in his eyes,
But as Feast unfolds, a dreadful surprise.*

MELANO FAMILIAR. Crow, fly swarm, boar.

COST. You must feed the hungry.

Devour

LEVEL 1. You may eat and digest anything you can swallow and never get ill from rotten food.

LEVEL 2. You are immune to ingested poisons and, as an open action, can regurgitate anything you have swallowed.

LEVEL 3. You can eat unendingly, even sharp or impossible items. If you spend ten minutes gorging, treat all injuries.

Bounty

LEVEL 1. Any meal you share can feed up to ten people; any drinkable liquid you pour never runs out.

LEVEL 2. Whenever you break bread with a person, they taste it as bitterest ash if they currently mean you harm.

LEVEL 3. Whenever someone eats food you have given them, you may choose to have them choke on it. They will die in a minute unless you are killed or decide to stop the effect.



Frenzy

*No prayer will end your suffering.
No plea will calm her storm.*

MELANO FAMILIARS. Badger, infant opiri.

COST. Give defeated enemies no quarter.

Blood Rage

LEVEL 1. During combat, gain an extra +4 to [resist death].

LEVEL 2. If you gained a major injury during combat, lose all other injuries at the end of that combat.

LEVEL 3. If you die due to injury during combat, gain +4 to all checks and delay your death until the end of that combat.

Aspect of the Opiri

LEVEL 1. You create no sound when you move, even when running.

LEVEL 2. Your ears grow to resemble those of an opiri, allowing you to hear quiet sounds up to 100 feet away.

LEVEL 3. Your face grows to resemble that of an opiri. You can now smell any blood within a mile.



Honour

Honour can break anything except your word.

ALBINO FAMILIARS. Falcon, horse, wasps.

COST. Never heal a wound taken in penance.

Pact of Retribution

LEVEL 1. When making a heavy [attack], you may triple your modifiers to the check. Unless the [attack] was against an oathbreaker, you lose access to this ability until you remove one of your fingers in penance. An oathbreaker is any sapient creature that has broken an express promise within the last 7 days.

LEVEL 2. Creatures that have lied within the last day are also considered oathbreakers.

LEVEL 3. Creatures who have ever broken an express promise to you are considered oathbreakers.

Pact of Truth

LEVEL 1. Any lie told within earshot of you causes inky smoke to spill from the liar's mouth. If you lie, you lose access to this ability until you burn 'LIAR' into your forearm in penance.

LEVEL 2. The smoke is now invisible to others unless you choose to make it visible.

LEVEL 3. If visible, the smoke now chokes the liar. The next check they make is hasty.



Hope

*Hope offers his hand when reason and strength fail.
All he asks in return is unwavering faith.*

ALBINO FAMILIARS. Snake, deer, raven.

COST. Answer the pleas of those in mortal peril.

Vivomancy

LEVEL 1. When you successfully perform [surgery] on an ally with a missing body part, remove the MISSING X trait if you have a suitable replacement part.

LEVEL 2. The replacement part you use does not need to be from the same type of creature as the ally you are treating. A missing leg could be replaced with a dog's, a hand with cruel talons, etc. The exact effect of this is up to the GM.

LEVEL 3. You can control and use the senses of any body parts you have replaced.

Meld Minds

LEVEL 1. If you touch a sapient creature, you learn all of their traits.

LEVEL 2. If you touch a sapient creature, you also learn their greatest hope.

LEVEL 3. Once per target and as an open action, you may remove a non-physical, non-defining trait from a sapient creature you are touching.



Justice

*He grinds his axe on the bones of the world,
Patient, knowing: Justice will prevail.*

MELANO FAMILIARS. Wulf, jackal, dog.

COST. The guilty must die, no matter the price paid by the innocent.

Fated Beast

LEVEL 1. Your familiar takes on the statistics of a wulf (not available in demo) and can now harm non-familiar creatures.

LEVEL 2. When your familiar makes an [attack] against a target adjacent to you, it is focused.

LEVEL 3. When your familiar would die, it is instead reborn as a pup that burrows its way out of the old familiar's ribcage. It takes a full day to grow to adulthood; if it dies within this time, you both die as normal.

Long Hunt

LEVEL 1. Choose a creature whose blood your familiar has tasted to be your quarry. You always know its general direction. You may not select a new quarry until the first is dead.

LEVEL 2. Any [attack] you make against your quarry is focused.

LEVEL 3. You always know the exact location of your quarry.



Languor

*Let Languor's lull be but a fleeting stay,
A respite for weary souls before they slip away.*

ALBINO FAMILIARS. Cat, cow, bear cub.

COST. Do not cause undue suffering and end the suffering of others.

Silent Song

LEVEL 1. By touching a treasured item, you may speak to its owner if they died more than 7 days ago. Ask a single question, then [commune, difficulty 5].

LEVEL 2. As an open action, you may speak to a human that died within the last combat round, before their seft begins its journey to Heall. Ask a single question, then [commune, difficulty 4].

LEVEL 3. When you [commune], you get a result two higher (rather than one) when flipping a crest on the Doomcoin.

Sleep of Ages

LEVEL 1. You can store sleep for later use; for example, you can sleep for an extra 8 hours then go without the day after.

LEVEL 2. If you sleep for a full day and night, remove all non-major injuries.

LEVEL 3. If you sleep for a full week, remove all major injuries.



Oblivion

*Naught but Oblivion can remain, his borrowed eye
To open only when there is nothing left to see.*

MELANO FAMILIARS. Hyena, snail, albatross.

COST. Accept any loss, reject all wealth.

Oblivion's Grasp

LEVEL 1. As an open action, you can remove an inanimate object you are touching from the universe. The object must be smaller than yourself and out of view of all other sapient creatures.

LEVEL 2. When you use this ability, all living creatures except you forget the object ever existed.

LEVEL 3. You may now use this ability on objects that can be seen by others, as long as they fit in your hand.

Threshold Witness

LEVEL 1. You can both touch and harm the incorporeal dead (see sefts, page 114).

LEVEL 2. If you damage the unquiet dead with an [attack], that creature is immediately destroyed.

LEVEL 3. The unquiet dead do not regard you as a foe unless compelled by another entity.



Panic

*She crested the hill before the gathered host
And order gave way to the sweet flames of Panic.*

ALBINO FAMILIARS. Squirrel, mouse, goat.

COST. Let cowards flee, let the brave burn.

Lost Candle

LEVEL 1. When you light a candle, you may choose for it to be bright enough to clearly illuminate a large hall.

LEVEL 2. As an open action, you may force a living creature that can see your lit candle to [resist fear, difficulty 6].

LEVEL 3. When your candle is snuffed, the surrounding area is plunged into darkness irrespective of other sources of light.

Wildfyre

LEVEL 1. As an open action, you can conjure a candle-sized flame anywhere you can see.

LEVEL 2. You can use this ability to ignite a creature wearing cloth or similar. This flame is treated as a ranged weapon that ignores protection. If you 'fumble' an [attack] with this flame, you must then make a free [attack] against yourself.

LEVEL 3. As an open action, you can make any flame that you can see burn violet and hot enough to melt steel.



Perception

*His gaze, driven through night's pinprick'd veil,
Sees deeper than Sleep ever dared.*

MELANO FAMILIARS. Owl, fox, vulture.

COST. Chase knowledge, no matter the cost.

Augury

LEVEL 1. Each night you are visited by prophetic dreams. When you sleep, you may ask one question about the coming day, then [commune, difficulty 5]. You cannot be woken until dawn.

LEVEL 2. If you prepare ritual candles before you [commune], you may ask any question about the past. If the candles go out during your night of dreaming, you automatically get the 'haunted' result.

LEVEL 3. When you are sleeping, you can see the mortal world as well as your prophecies. You may speak but cannot act.

Eye of Jet

LEVEL 1. Your left eye is now pitch black. It sees the world as it was exactly one day ago.

LEVEL 2. Your left eye is blurred by visions, too many to make sense of. This ability is rendered useless until level 3.

LEVEL 3. Your left eye can now see the world as it was at any time in the last 100 years.



Rot

*A putrid dance where decay unfolds,
The haunting spectre that Rot beholds.*

FAMILIAR. None but the rot (see cost).

COST. You have a white rot across your left hand, harmless but growing. Mark your rot at 1 under 'cost'. Each time you 'suffer rot', update this value. If you gain 50 rot, the rot covers your whole body and you die at sunset of that day.

Spoil

LEVEL 1. As an open action, you may suffer D6 rot and touch plantmatter. This withers any connected amount within a short distance to nothing.

LEVEL 2. When you damage a living creature with an unarmed [attack], you may suffer D6 rot to kill it.

LEVEL 3. As an open action, you may suffer D6 rot and touch metal. This rusts any connected amount of it to nothing.

Hollow Strength

LEVEL 1. As an open action, gain D6 rot. Then gain one: D6 toughness; D6 defence; or heal an injury.

LEVEL 2. Whenever you gain rot for any reason, roll twice and gain the lower value.

LEVEL 3. You die at 100 rot rather than 50.



Coil

*A day's work must be broken upon Toil's wheel.
To slow its turning is to invite Destruction.*

MELANO FAMILIARS. Horse, sparrow, crab.

COST. You must finish every task you start.

Kincraft

LEVEL 1. You can whittle, smelt or bake knee-high creatures called mannekin. Each can perform one non-violent task that takes no longer than a day. After completing its task, the mannekin goes limp and lifeless.

LEVEL 2. Mannekin can be re-used and perform tasks that last longer than a day.

LEVEL 3. Mannekin you make can be the size of a human and gain +1 to all checks.

Bonebreak

LEVEL 1. Your aching muscles are stronger than the bones that anchor them. You may, after flipping the Doomcoin on a physical check, treat the result as one step higher. Then roll a free bludgeoning [attack, +0] against yourself, ignoring protection.

LEVEL 2. You may now treat the result as two steps higher if you make a free bludgeoning [attack, +2] against yourself, ignoring protection.

LEVEL 3. To the horror of onlookers, broken bones no longer hinder your checks.



The Last Meal

An excerpt from *Lord Have Mercy Upon Us*

The loss of Castle Lethe is a tale told in whispers tinged with bitterness and fear. It is a story that teaches children to fear heretical promises murmured after dark. It is a story about a place so lost no one could find it. And yet here we are...



O

nce upon a time, there was a beautiful princess who lived in a castle with her father, a kind and merciful king.



B

ut the princess nursed a broken heart.



Her anguish grew and grew until she met a stranger who recognised the bitter seeds inside her.



The words of this stranger stayed with her until a day came when misery overwhelmed all thoughts of duty or sense.



S

he performed an unholy ceremony, offering up pieces of herself for the chance to inflict her despair on others.



N

ow, bound heart and soul to the malicious being she summoned, she rules over a land of her own making.



Sea of Bultchflot

Adram's Wode

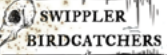
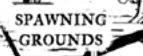
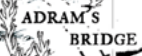
No-Fly Forest

Wyrekin Wood

Collow's Gogge

Forest of Modren

Nithemest



S

Starting Your Adventure

This stranger creeps in wretched shroud, striding with ease through gathered crowd. To house and home, rich and poor, the doctor comes to every door. There is no portent quite so grim; when you hear the knock, you know it's him.



Before You Begin

This demo adventure assumes that your players have created characters by going through the character creation process on pages 16-37. It also assumes you've read the rules on pages 40-83. If you are not the GM, stop here! If you are the GM, you will find it useful to read the adventure ahead of time in order to get a feel for the overall themes.

When you are ready, proceed to the next page to begin your adventure. Remember: if you're having fun, you're doing it right!

In-text References

Lord Have Mercy Upon Us uses a layout that makes it easy to run. On the left-hand page of each location, you will find a map, important points of interest, and a description of the location as a whole. Throughout the text, some words will be highlighted LIKE THIS, which denotes there is more information on the right-hand page.

If a map location links directly to another map, the page number will always be given like this (p. xxx).



Open World Adventure

In the full adventure, players will be able to explore the entirety of the lost kingdom of Lethe in an open-world fashion. However, this demo limits exploration to just one location: Castle Lethe itself. If you like what you see and are curious to learn more, follow us on Kickstarter [here](#), join our Discord server [here](#) and tell everyone you know. Every little bit of support will help make this project a success!

Castle Lethe

This location is the oldest in Father Plague's realm, the seed from which the rest of the plaguescape sprung (not available in demo). It was here that Princess Euthelia grew up and here where she performed a heretical ritual to summon Father Plague into being.

The castle and its grounds are trapped in the exact moment the ritual was completed. The PCs will know that Castle Lethe was once one of the five great bordercastles of Painyme, and that it disappeared from the real world half a lifetime ago.

In Medias Res

To get things started for this demo, we have foregone the slow build-up of discovery and exploration in favour of placing the party below Castle Lethe with a clear task before them. When you and your players are ready to begin, read the following aloud:

You are gravediggers, charged with a serious task: to bury the dead, unquiet or otherwise. While on this course, you uncovered one of the seven totems that bind Father Plague, a Lamentide of great power, to this world.

The totem is an odd thing: the last meal of his consort, the Lice Mother. To cleanse it, you know it must be eaten by her true love. If you succeed in this task, Father Plague will be thrust one step closer to mortality and the Gravediggers' Guild will inch toward the goal of burying a body that is centuries due for its grave.

You awake in darkness, cold stone beneath your aching bones and the earthy smell of a well-stocked pantry around you. You remember not how you came to this place.

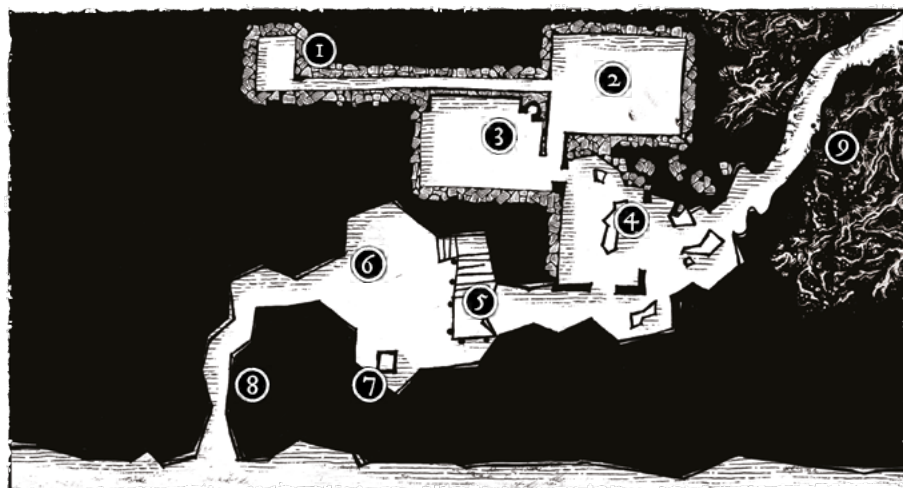
The party begins (with their gear) in the root cellar of Castle Lethe (p. 96). One PC has in their possession a dried sheep's stomach filled with cheese, torn bread, strips of pork and wine. This is the totem the party must cleanse in order to survive the castle. To cleanse it, they must feed it to Troizel (p. 110), but the party should work this out for themselves using clues scattered throughout the castle.



Castle Lethe

Caverns

The musty smell of underground air assaults your nose. A torch gutters on the wall, revealing laid stone that gives way to natural caverns. There are shelves of fresh-smelling food and drink here. From the darkness beyond this room, you hear the echoes of your own stirring.



The PCs awaken in the root cellar, the DRIED EWE'S STOMACH in their possession.

- ① **ROOT CELLAR.** Stockpiled vegetables and grains. A ladderless trapdoor in the 7ft ceiling leads to the bakehouse (p. 98).
- ② **CASTLE CELLARS.** This section of the cellars is in perfect condition and stocked with FRESH FOOD.
- ③ **SERVANT'S STAIRWELL.** Leads to the first floor of Castle Lethe (p. 100).
- ④ **COLLAPSED CELLARS.** Brick walls and archways are visible amidst the rubble.
- ⑤ **SCAFFOLDING.** A rough-hewn wooden platform with stairs descending 20 feet to the cavern floor. Underneath the scaffolding is a dense, soft nest of leafy branches, moss and wildgrass with a sleeping CRESSEID inside.
- ⑥ **MAIN CAVERN.** Large and open, once used as a staging post for the buying and selling of goods from Castle Lethe.
- ⑦ **TROIZEL'S CAGE.** A 4x4x7 foot iron cage with TROIZEL inside. The hinges and padlock have rusted solid. TROIZEL will scream incoherently at anyone he sees, which will awaken CRESSEID.
- ⑧ **PASSAGE.** Roughly 10 feet tall and 10 feet wide. The floor has been worn smooth. Further down the passage, it can be seen that a cave-in blocks the way (the outside is not available in this demo).
- ⑨ **WELL BOTTOM.** At the end of the cave, a light can be seen above (p. 100). An old rope hanging down is strong enough to hold one person's weight.



Dried Ewe's Stomach

Dried, bulging sheep stomach. Both ends of the stomach are tied shut with red woollen thread. It contains Princess Euthelia's (p. 108) last uneaten meal (cheese, torn bread, strips of pork, wine). To cleanse this totem, the stomach must be consumed by Troizel. Once cleansed, the castle will begin to crumble into the ground, becoming an ancient ruin that appears to have been abandoned for centuries. The Lice Mother regains her mortality and will hunt down the party in a rage. If they can successfully escape the crumbling castle or kill the Lice Mother: congratulations, you have completed this demo excerpt of *Lord Have Mercy Upon Us*.

Cresseid

The monstrous bear-like creature known as Cresseid (p. 110) sleeps much of the time, watching over her husband, Troizel. Before Castle Lethe was stolen from the world, Cresseid was a human maid of little status. Though capable of intelligent thought, she cannot speak. Cresseid isn't necessarily hostile towards trespassers but will become so if they attempt to harm Troizel, free him from his cage, or mention the name 'Euthelia'.

Troizel

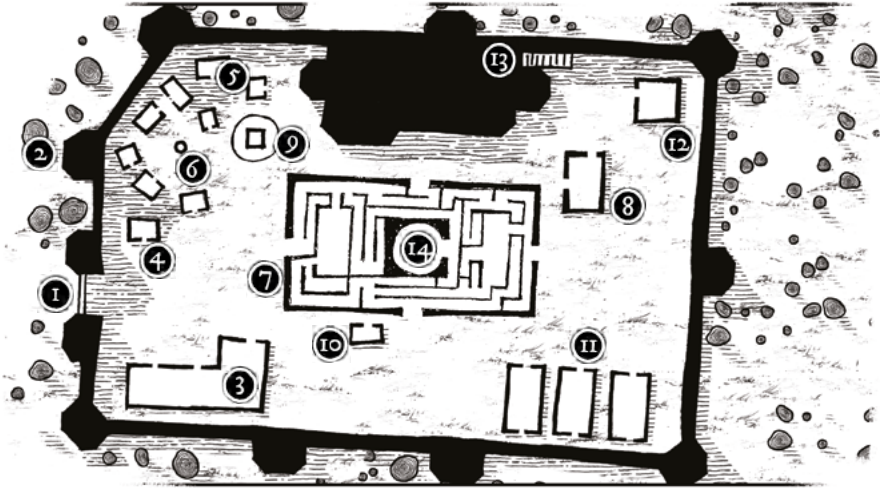
Troizel (p. 110) is a handsome blonde youth in a cage, maddened to the state of a mere beast. He gnaws raw meat from a bone, utterly transfixed by this task. If disturbed, he will scream excitedly at any visitors, waking Cresseid. He does not remember his former life, marrying Cresseid, or spurning Princess Euthelia.

Fresh Food

1	An untapped cask of red wine
2	Four burlap sacks of potatoes
3	Three covered bowls of butter
4	A barrel of apples
5	Four slabs of dried, salted pork
6	A stack of fresh, uncut linen



Aside from the smokey orange sky, everything looks as if it belongs outside the plaguescape. The grounds are silent but look as though guardsmen might bustle into sight at any moment. A castle sits atop a small promontory, with a large stained-glass window overlooking the gardens.



This area is trapped in the moment when Princess Euthelia became the Lice Mother (p. 108). If the players try to leave the castle, politely inform them that the wider plaguescape is not available in this demo.

- ① **GATEHOUSE.** 30 feet high. The metal portcullis lies at an oblique angle.
- ② **WALLS.** 25 feet high. Exteriors are crumbling, interiors are smooth. The towers are collapsing and bare.
- ③ **STABLES.** Empty and undisturbed.
- ④ **CHURCH.** Contains RELIGIOUS GEAR.
- ⑤ **COTTAGES.** Contains PEASANT GEAR.
- ⑥ **WELL.** A rope strong enough to hold one person leads to the bottom (p. 96).
- ⑦ **HEDGE MAZE.** 10-foot high hedges. Rectangular areas contain FLOWER BEDS. GARDENERS roam the paths.
- ⑧ **BAKEHOUSE.** Empty and undisturbed. A trapdoor leads to the root cellar (p. 96).
- ⑨ **KENNELS.** Raised a foot off the ground and surrounded by a tall fence. THE VALRAVN roosts in the rafters.
- ⑩ **SHED.** Contains GARDENER GEAR.
- ⑪ **BARRACKS.** Contains MILITARY GEAR.
- ⑫ **ALEHOUSE.** Contains casks of ale.
- ⑬ **CASTLE DOORS.** Leads to the first floor of the castle (p. 100). Solid oak, unbarred.
- ⑭ **CULVERHOUSE.** Stone building with thatch roof. Pigeons roost inside. The HEAD GARDENER is here.

The Valravn

The Valravn (p. 118) observes the party from a safe distance. If they speak to it, it will happily pass the time with minor frivolities. It takes a keen interest in those of noble blood or with occult powers. Some time after they leave the castle (not available in demo), it will approach the party again, bargaining for flesh of the Lamentide Father Plague. It will offer knowledge of his weaknesses or secret locations within the plaguescape.

Flower Beds

OUR-LADY-IN-THE-SHADE. Low-growing plant with small leaves. Produces medium-sized flowers in rich shades of blue and purple. The only known location of this plant is Castle Lethe. Offering it to the Lice Mother (p. 108) will stay her hand for up to an hour.



Gardeners

Gardeners (p. 112) roam the perfect hedgerows in groups of 6. Plants here do not grow or require pruning. This lack of work has driven the gardeners mad. They will violate the personal space of intruders and follow them, violently defending the plants from anyone who is not wearing the Head Gardener's shawl.

HEAD GARDENER. Bleddyn (p. 112) is never rational, believing it to be a normal day at Castle Lethe. To those who play along with his delusions, Bleddyn will share a great deal of gossip about the castle. He knows Princess Euthelia (p. 108) and Troizel (p. 110) used to meet behind the culverhouse. He also knows the princess will have to marry the prince of a neighbouring region, Cocytus, to solve border disputes.

If Bleddyn hears any slander against the princess, he will fly into a rage, rampaging through the gardens and tearing up everything in sight. Despite this, other gardeners will not harm him due to the lacy shawl he wears, which was woven by Princess Euthelia.

Gear

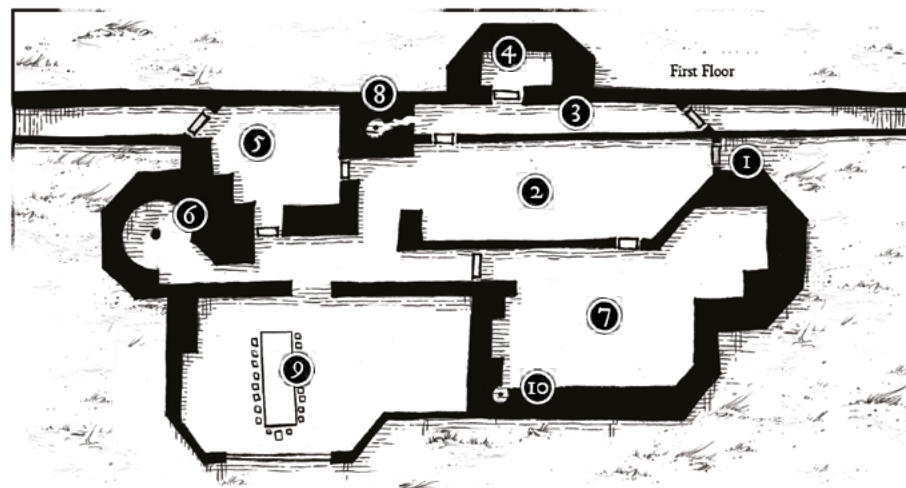
	RELIGIOUS	MILITARY	PEASANT	GARDENER
1	A stack of indulgences	A longbow	Ladle and iron pot	Sturdy pitchfork
2	An alchemical reagent	A whetstone	Thick woollen blanket	A sharpened trowel
3	Three votive candles	A battered helmet	Three loaves of bread	Potting soil
4	Dark ink and quill	Fine leather boots	Hunting bow	A small hatchet
5	Sacramental wine	An arming sword	Coil of rope	A shovel
6	A skein of holy water	A gambling I.O.U.	A large wicker basket	A pile of ash stakes



Castle Lethe

First Floor

The first floor of the castle appears as though it were abandoned only recently. Laundry drips on the line, fires burn merrily in hearths. Foodstuffs stew, simmer and bake in an eternal stasis. Sounds echo a great deal against the bare stone architecture and glass windows.



- 1 **CASTLE DOORS.** Large stone steps lead out to the castle grounds (p. 98).
- 2 **ENTRANCE HALL.** Grand architecture with banners hanging from the walls. These display the royal family's crest.
- 3 **GUARD'S HALLWAY.** Bare, stone passages for defending the castle. Closed doors lead on to the castle walls (p. 98).
- 4 **LAUNDRY.** Contains two washtubs and a stack of washboards. Wet clothes, sheets, towels, and tablecloths hang from lines, still dripping. Upon entry, this room will echo: GOSSIPMONGERS.
- 5 **PLACE OF ARMS.** An area where noble guests or guardsmen gather. Weapons are displayed on the walls. Upon entry, this room will echo: ORDERS.
- 6 **MAIN STAIRWELL.** Large stone steps leading to the second floor (p. 102).
- 7 **KITCHEN.** In disarray, as if only just completing a feast. The fireplace is lit and A SCARRED COOK shambles around.
- 8 **SECRET STAIRWELL.** Tiny staircase hidden behind a wall. Opened by a loose brick and emerges in the chapel (p. 102).
- 9 **GREAT HALL.** Contains a long table laid for a feast. The southern wall contains a stained-glass window overlooking the gardens (p. 98). Eighteen MOULDERING REMAINS dot the room.
- 10 **SERVANT'S STAIRWELL.** Leads to the cellars (p. 96) and the second floor (p. 102). The door to the third floor is locked (p. 104).

Echo: Gossipmongers

Echoes (p. 114) of scullery maids sit on stools, scrubbing sheets in a washtub. One is a human Cresseid (p. 110), who looks as she did before Castle Lethe disappeared.

VALORA: Cresseid, listen, I heard they meet behind the culverhouse.

CRESSEID: Nonsense! That's the least romantic place I can think of. All those pigeons!

VALORA: Well, she is a princess. And he's just a dog-boy. They can't be seen together.

CRESSEID: I suppose he is quite handsome...

Echo: Orders

The echo (p. 114) of a man wearing robes with a fur collar approaches an on-duty guard.

STEWARD: Alice reported seeing that dog-boy skulking around the kitchens again. Post a guard to all three stairwells—make sure he doesn't bother the princess.

GUARD: Yes, sir. Immediately, sir.

STEWARD: And get a message to the houndmaster that I want to see him. We can't have boys-of-the-leash flouncing around the castle like they own the place.

A Scarred Cook

In the castle kitchens, a scarred woman (Alice, p. 116) shambles from station to station, painstakingly checking on dishes that will never finish. Her movements are laborious, often painful. She will stare in confusion at any intruders, responding with 'My name is Alice' to any question. The key to the locked door on the third floor is in her apron pocket; she will not stop anyone who attempts to take it.



Mouldering Remains

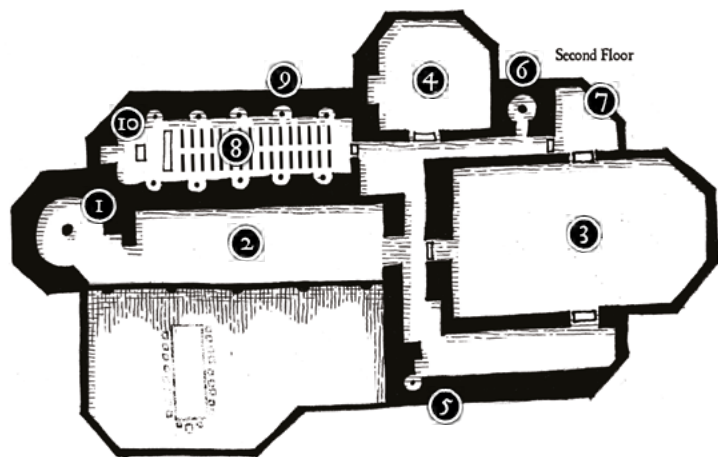
Spread throughout the Great Hall are 18 piles of human remains. A mask lies atop each pile (rabbit, wulf, raven, etc.), splattered in blood but otherwise undeteriorated. When the PCs pass through the room for the first time, these piles will remain inert. However, when the PCs climb the Main Stairwell they will reform into silent guests (p. 116) wearing masks.

If the PCs enter the Long Gallery a second time after witnessing the echoes on the third floor of the castle, the Lice Mother stands in the centre of the Great Hall while the gathered guests applaud her and compliment her dress. If her feast is interrupted, she will point at the intruders with her bonesaw.

On this command, the 18 guests (p. 116) will lurch forward to attack the intruders while the Lice Mother watches, only involving herself if she is directly attacked.



Once, much of the kingdom's business occurred on the second floor of the castle, either during formal discussions in the council chamber or while conversing in the solar, chapel, or Long Gallery. The air is silent and still; any conversation will echo faintly off the ornate ceilings.



The Lice Mother (p. 108) is STALKING THE HALLS, hoping to alleviate her boredom.

- ① **MAIN STAIRWELL.** Large stone steps leading to the first floor (p. 100). They go no higher than the second floor.
- ② **THE LONG GALLERY.** Overlooks the Great Hall (p. 100) and its stained glass window. Contains benches and chairs.
- ③ **KING'S COUNCIL CHAMBER.** Richly furnished room containing a large table. Carved chairs are drawn up around the table and plain chairs line the walls.
- ④ **SOLAR.** A room for personal visits with the royal family. Contains a fireplace, wall hangings depicting hunting scenes, a table, and cushioned chairs.
- ⑤ **SERVANT'S STAIRWELL.** Leads to the first floor (p. 100) and the third floor (p. 104).
- ⑥ **PRIVATE STAIRWELL.** Stone steps leading to the third floor (p. 104).
- ⑦ **ANTECHAMBER.** Where the king dressed and rested before meetings. Upon entering, the room will echo: I TRUST HER.
- ⑧ **CHAPEL.** Alcoves line the walls, each containing the statue of a female saint. Upon entry, the room will echo: SECRET TRYST.
- ⑨ **SECRET STAIRWELL.** Hidden from the outside, a lever in the small of a statue's back will open hidden stairs leading to the first floor (p. 100).
- ⑩ **ALTAR.** Basin of water that reflects the Ecclesia Virulentis (not in this demo).

Stalking the Halls

The Lice Mother (p. 108) prowls the halls of her old home, passing the time with random acts of cruelty and maddening violence. Whenever an intruder enters a new room or makes a loud sound, roll a D6. On the roll of a 1, the Lice Mother is nearby and will search the area. If she finds an intruder, she will fight until they are badly wounded, then let them go.

She hates the castle echoes (p. 114) and will avoid them if possible, leaving the area entirely if one is activated.

Echo: I Trust Her

The seft (p. 114) of King Adram is removing a set of elaborate robes. He turns as the echo (p. 114) of a man wearing fine robes with a fur collar enters the room.

KING: What is it?

STEWARD: Your Royal Highness, I'm afraid I have news of a... delicate nature.

KING: Go on.

STEWARD: Your daughter, sir. It appears she's been sneaking one of the dog-boys into the castle.

KING: Oh, I know all about the dog-boy. Don't worry.

STEWARD: Sir!

KING: I trust her.

STEWARD: Sir, they were using the statue stairwell, a secret not suited to a dog-boy.

KING: I trust her, and Troizel seems a good-ish sort. Gentle, hardly the kind to engage in treason. They can never marry, of course, but what's the harm in a few youthful trysts? I remember sneaking a few scullery maids about the place myself, when I was her age...

Echo: Secret Tryst

The echo (p. 114) of a handsome youth with blonde hair steps out of the alcove in which a secret stairwell is hidden. He approaches a young woman with dark hair.

TROIZEL: Euthelia, we can't keep doing this.

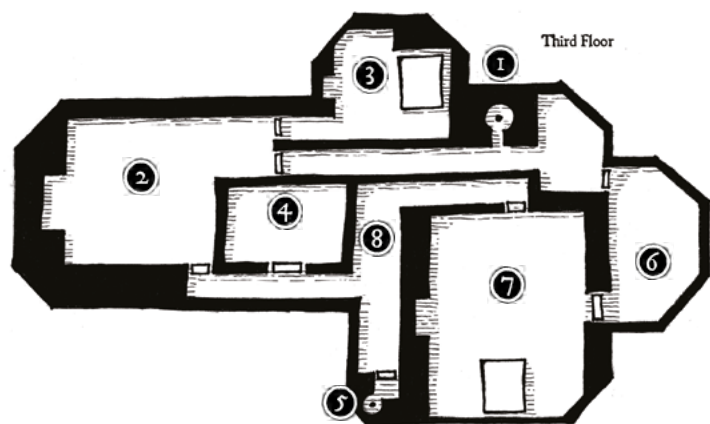
PRINCESS: I'm so glad you came, Troizel!

TROIZEL: Your damn steward is going to report me to the houndmaster, and Alice reports me every time she sees me in the kitchens! Euthelia, we can't meet anymore. I'll lose my position, or worse, be thrown into the dungeon!

PRINCESS: They are caverns, not a dungeon... Fine, we'll just meet in the gardens from now on, where you gave me that bouquet of Our-Lady-in-the-Shade.

TROIZEL: Euthelia...

The uppermost floor of the castle is given over to the royal family's private chambers. Here, the air is cold and the scent of fresh blood occasionally lies thick and heavy in the back of one's throat. The rich furnishings dampen all sound, stunting voice and footstep alike.



- ① **PRIVATE STAIRWELL.** Stone steps leading to the second floor (p. 102). Unlit torches hang from sconces along the walls.
- ② **EUTHELIA'S BOUDOIR.** A room for receiving high-born ladies. It contains a fireplace, wall hangings, and a well-drawn sketch of Troizel (p. 110).
- ③ **EUTHELIA'S BEDROOM.** Contains a wardrobe, a large four-poster bed, and lots of blood. On her pillow lies a lock of perfect golden hair that matches Troizel's (p. 110). Upon entry, the room will echo: A SUMMONING.
- ④ **BUTTERY.** Contains wine racks and shelves of fine brandy, port, and whisky. There is a table for preparing drinks.
- ⑤ **SERVANT'S STAIRWELL.** Stone steps leading to the second floor. It is locked; Alice (p. 116) has the key.
- ⑥ **KING'S SOLAR.** Well-kept study with a desk containing reports on border raids and dwindling grain supplies. Upon entry, the room will echo: A BETROTHAL.
- ⑦ **KING'S BEDROOM.** The corpse of King Adram (p. 114) lies on the bed. It is fresh and undecayed, as if he died only last night. His face has been severely pecked by the Valraven (p. 118). Upon entry, this room will echo: A WEDDING.
- ⑧ **SERVANT'S HALLWAY.** Stone passage allowing discreet entry. Contains linen chests, wardrobes, and unused candles.

Echo: A Summoning

An echo (p. 114) of the princess kneels in a pool of blood. Her left hand has been severed at the wrist and lies with a jumble of totems, including the last meal that the PCs are here to cleanse. An eight-foot tall plague doctor stands before her.

DOCTOR: So, my little butterfly, you finally decided to call me. Was it the marriage that tipped it? Yours or his?

PRINCESS: *(tongueless gurgling)*

DOCTOR: *(deep, rich laughter)* Never mind. Come, my sweet. For my part of the bargain, Cresseid shall be transformed to monstrosity. Your Troizel will never love her as he did you. Both will live out their days beneath your notice. For your part, though, a change of attire is in order. You have a feast to attend, after all.

Father Plague helps her up. The princess' torn and bloody nightdress turns into a gown. White gloves appear on her arms and something solid replaces her left hand. Finally, he plucks up a hedgehog mask and fixes it in place, then hands her the bloody bonesaw.

Echo: A Betrothal

The king's seft (p. 114) is seated in a chair. The echo (p. 114) of the princess enters the room. She curtsies and approaches.

King: Euthelia, thank you. I'm sure you've heard the news, and wished to avoid this.
 Princess: I am to marry.
 King: I'm afraid it is set. You will marry Theote Wallande.
 Princess: And this will bring an end to the trouble with Cocytus?
 King: I have been assured this union will foster a new closeness between our kingdoms.
 Princess: *(silence)*
 King: I'd hoped to give you more time. I know it hasn't been easy seeing Troizel mar-
 Princess: Nonsense. I know my duty. I will marry this prince and forge peace.
 King: Your mother would be so proud. Come, we must plan some kind of celebration. How about a feast? A masked ball, perhaps?

Echo: A Wedding

The echo (p. 114) of Father Plague stands over the king, who has been flung backwards upon his bed. Euthelia watches from a doorway, wearing a gown and a hedgehog mask.

Doctor: Do you, Adram Lubentina, giveth your only daughter to me, Father Plague, to have and to hold, to keep and to covet, in sickness and terror, forevermore?

King: No, no, I do not! Guards! Guards!

Doctor: *(laughter)* Unfortunately, permission for this union has already been given.



Castle Residents

The plaguescape is home to many beings. Some individuals have rallied weaker souls to whatever cause they feel is right. Some will try to manipulate you, others may want to kill you and feast on the remains. A few may need your help to bring about the end of Father Plague's evil.

The Lice Mother

Princess Euthelia Lubentina

Silent, malicious, elegant, bloodthirsty, unflinching, menacing, mournful, toying



The Lice Mother is cold and cruel. She is utterly loyal to Father Plague as his consort and second-in-command. She has a sickly, unwholesome appearance and remains silent during the campaign until her Severed Tongue is cleansed (not available in demo).

The Lice Mother was once a human woman named Euthelia Lubentina, only daughter of King Adram (p. 114) and princess of Castle Lethe. She summoned Father Plague and initiated the events that led to the disappearance of Lethe from Painyme.

Originally she was given the summoning incantation by The Puppet-Man (not in demo). She completed the ritual only after her paramour abandoned her to marry another (Troizel & Cresseid, p. 110) and she learnt she would have to marry a prince.

Part of her bargain with Father Plague was that Prince Theote Wallande's (not in this demo) suffering would never end. This is why Father Plague cannot kill this disruptive individual.

During combat, the Lice Mother is more occupied with distraction from her endless boredom than with killing her prey. She has full trust in her apparent immortality and little regard for her own safety.

WANTS: To feel something. Anything.
HATES: Echoes, the Puppet-Man, Cresseid

The Lice Mother



HAUNTED • MELEE FIGHTER • SPY • GENTRY • TWITCHY

MAJOR. The Lice Mother gains two action dice at the start of a combat round, rather than one.

CONSORT OF THE LAMENTIDE. The Lice Mother cannot be killed by ordinary means. If she would die, she falls to the ground, seemingly dead. She heals all injuries (including major injuries) at sunset, black bultchmatter oozing out to close wounds and re-attach any missing body parts.

OPEN STANCE. The Lice Mother opens her arms in greeting, making herself vulnerable. Ready this die. Spend this die the next time the Lice Mother suffers an [attack]. The Lice Mother cannot dodge or block, but regains all defence and does not need to [resist death] if she suffers an injury. The weapon used during the [attack] is stuck in her form, irretrievable until the Lice Mother is incapacitated.

BRUTAL DISARM. The Lice Mother performs an [attack, +4], trying to disarm the nearest character by dragging the teeth of her bonesaw across that character's hand. Before the [attack], the target can drop their weapon out of reach to ignore it entirely.

DOUBLE-JOINTED GRAPPLE. The Lice Mother leaps onto the back of a target within a short distance. The target must [struggle, difficulty 7] or she will latch on to them. While the Lice Mother is latched on to a target, each [attack] made against her must involve a flip of the Doomcoin. Anyone who fumbles an [attack] against the Lice Mother must then roll a free focused [attack] against the latched target.

A creature may [struggle, difficulty 6] as an open action to remove the Lice Mother or free an ally from her grasp.

SAVOUR THE SANGUINE. If the Lice Mother has caused an injury since the last time she used this action, she drips blood from the blade of her bonesaw into her tongueless mouth. Black oozing bultchmatter creeps across an injury the Lice Mother has received, healing it completely. She regains any lost action dice then forces any enemies she has injured to [resist fear, difficulty 5].

VITAL ARTERIES. The Lice Mother lashes out with her bonesaw in a vicious [attack, +5], aiming for the femoral arteries. If the [attack] results in an injury, her target's attempt to [resist death] is hasty.

LEAPING ACTION. With unnatural speed and dexterity, the Lice Mother leaps a short distance, gains 2 defence, then performs an open action. The Lice Mother can end this action clinging to a wall or ceiling with ease.

Troizel & Cresseid

These were Father Plague's first victims. Troizel was once a boy-of-the-leash at Castle Lethe, responsible for looking after the king's hounds. Cresseid was a maidservant in the castle.

Their marriage vows have partly protected the couple since the castle was plunged into occult infection; they share everything 'in sickness and in health'. Therefore, Troizel has suffered only the mental effects—he is a handsome youth without a shred of sanity—and Cresseid only the physical.

Troizel

Animalistic, wild, babbling, hungry, cursed

Before the vanishing of Castle Lethe, Troizel was a handsome young man who took care of the royal hounds. He had a secret relationship with Princess Euthelia (p. 108) but ended it so he could marry Cresseid, a maid much nearer his station. He loved Cresseid and their marriage was a happy one, though cut short by the princess' ritual.

Now Troizel is a broken wretch. Mind wiped clean by Father Plague's influence, he now cares only that his base needs are met. He no longer recognises Cresseid.

In combat, Troizel is little more than a liability, ignoring any danger that is not currently causing him pain.

WANTS: Food, to be freed from his cage
HATES: Loud noises, being hungry

Cresseid

Devoted, furred, strong, clawed, protective, cursed

Cresseid used to be a maid in Castle Lethe, happy enough with her lot in life. She fell in love and married Troizel, thinking her life a fairy tale for the short time before the region disappeared.

Now, Cresseid has been transformed into a monstrous form larger than a bear. She retains her mind but has no way to communicate her thoughts, incapable of speech (and illiterate even before her transformation). The only thing left to this character is to protect her beloved and wait for the day Euthelia is destroyed.

In combat, Cresseid will use her massive bulk to scare off intruders. She attacks all who threaten her precious Troizel.

WANTS: To protect Troizel
HATES: Princess Euthelia



Troizel

STARVED • EYE-CATCHING • SPRY • WEAK

LOVER. If Troizel is killed, Cresseid's attacks against his murderer become focused for the rest of time.

BABBLE. Troizel does nothing of use, distracted by some fleeting interest.

STUMBLING DASH. Troizel moves a short distance. Any adjacent character may spend an action die to trip him during this move.

COWER. Troizel readies this die. At the end of the round, if not adjacent to any enemies, he spends it to regain all defence.

NEEDY GRAB. Troizel clutches at the nearest creature. They must [struggle, difficulty 3] or be pinned by him.

RAVENOUS. Troizel tries to grab the nearest and tastiest thing. If it is a character, he bites into them with relish [attack, +0].

NEEDY WHINE. If Cresseid is within earshot, her next [attack] must be against the source of Troizel's distress.

Cresseid

MONSTROUS • METICULOUS • BRAWNY

MAJOR. Cresseid gains two action dice at the start of a combat round.

MIGHTY ROAR. Each adjacent enemy must [resist fear, difficulty 4].

PIN. An adjacent enemy must [struggle, difficulty 6] or they are pinned to the floor. A creature may [struggle, difficulty 5] as an open action to escape her claws or free an ally.

CRUSH. The monstrous bear-like creature leans her entire weight against a breakable object (such as scaffolding). The object is smashed utterly.

LUMBERING CHARGE. Cresseid bites in a powerful [attack, +8]. This is a heavy attack so bonuses from dodge are doubled.

WIDE SWIPE. Cresseid swipes furiously with her claws in a wide [attack, +4]. This attack can be made against two adjacent enemies.

POUND. Cresseid rears up on hind legs. Ready this die but discard it if Cresseid moves. Spend this die when making an [attack] to make it focused.



Gardeners

Grubby, begrimed, grasping, garwping, staring, intense gaze, filthy, muttering, grumbling

Original domestic servants from before Castle Lethe fell to the plague. Since the castle was trapped in time, no vegetation ever (re-)grows, and the gardeners have been driven mad by a lack of work. They never leave the gardens, do not need food, and sleep in messy communal heaps at the centre of the hedge maze.

There are 24 gardeners but they generally gather in groups of 6 or fewer, each wearing the muddied, torn remnants of their gardening uniforms. They will follow closely behind anyone entering the castle gardens; if an intruder so much as crushes a blade of grass, the gardeners will attack en masse. Only someone wearing Bleddyn's lacy shawl can take plant cuttings without being attacked.

In combat, gardeners will focus their attentions on those who have damaged any plants. If forced to retreat, they will flee into the hedge maze and regroup for another attack.

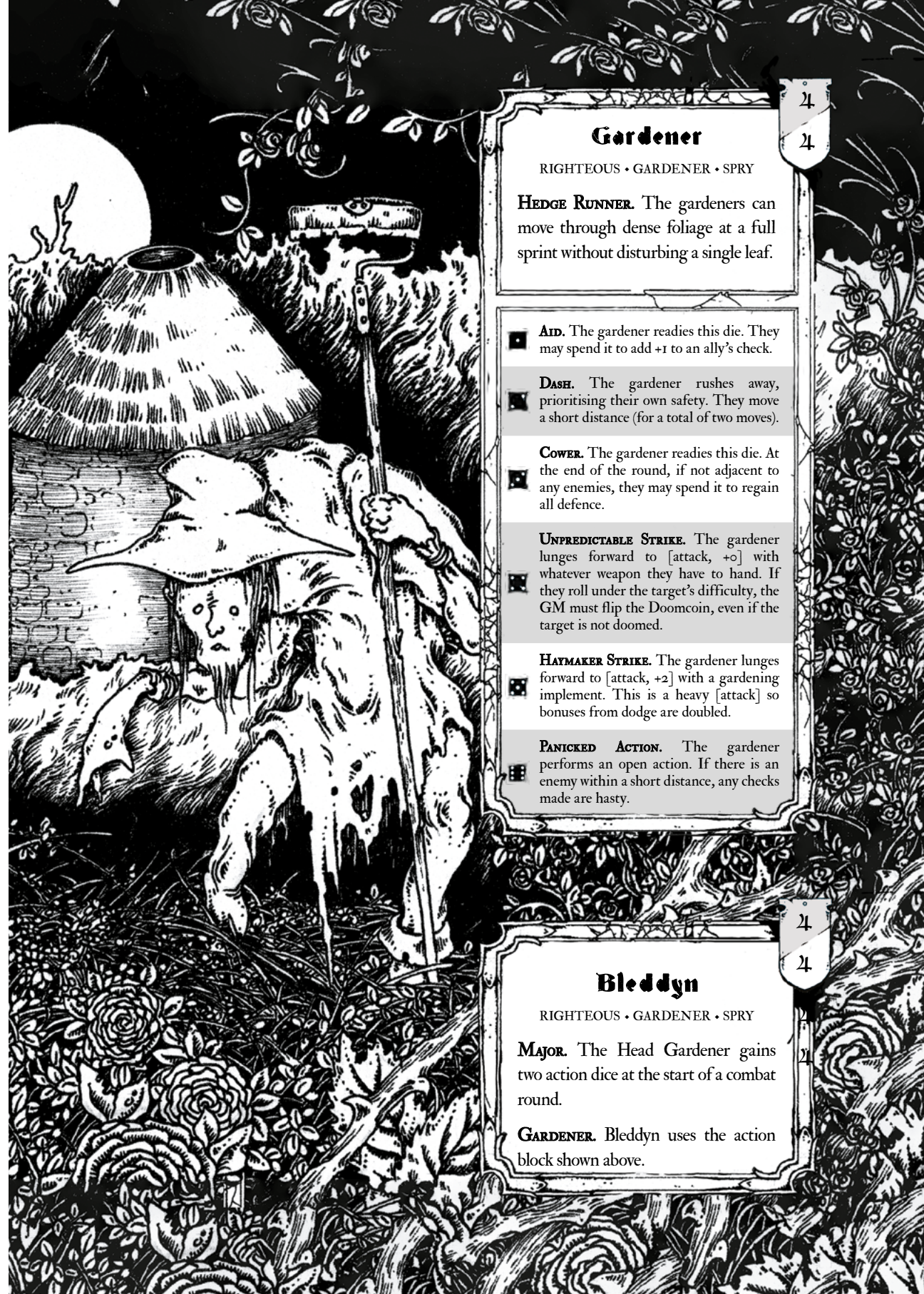
WANTS: To protect Castle Lethe's plants
HATES: The scent of chemicals, heavy boots

Bleddyn

The Head Gardener is the most coherent of the gardeners and can hold full conversations. However, he believes all is well at the castle and tries to ignore any evidence to the contrary. He wears a fine lace shawl given to him by Princess Euthelia (p. 108) in return for his silence regarding her nightly activities behind the culverhouse.

In combat, Bleddyn fights with a righteous anger, as if killing anyone who admits something is wrong at the castle will return it to its former glory.

WANTS: To live in his delusions forever
HATES: Disrespect towards royalty



Gardener

RIGHTEOUS • GARDENER • SPRY

HEDGE RUNNER. The gardeners can move through dense foliage at a full sprint without disturbing a single leaf.

■ **AID.** The gardener reads this die. They may spend it to add +1 to an ally's check.

■ **DASH.** The gardener rushes away, prioritising their own safety. They move a short distance (for a total of two moves).

■ **COWER.** The gardener reads this die. At the end of the round, if not adjacent to any enemies, they may spend it to regain all defence.

■ **UNPREDICTABLE STRIKE.** The gardener lunges forward to [attack, +0] with whatever weapon they have to hand. If they roll under the target's difficulty, the GM must flip the Doomcoin, even if the target is not doomed.

■ **HAYMAKER STRIKE.** The gardener lunges forward to [attack, +2] with a gardening implement. This is a heavy [attack] so bonuses from dodge are doubled.

■ **PANICKED ACTION.** The gardener performs an open action. If there is an enemy within a short distance, any checks made are hasty.

Bleddyn

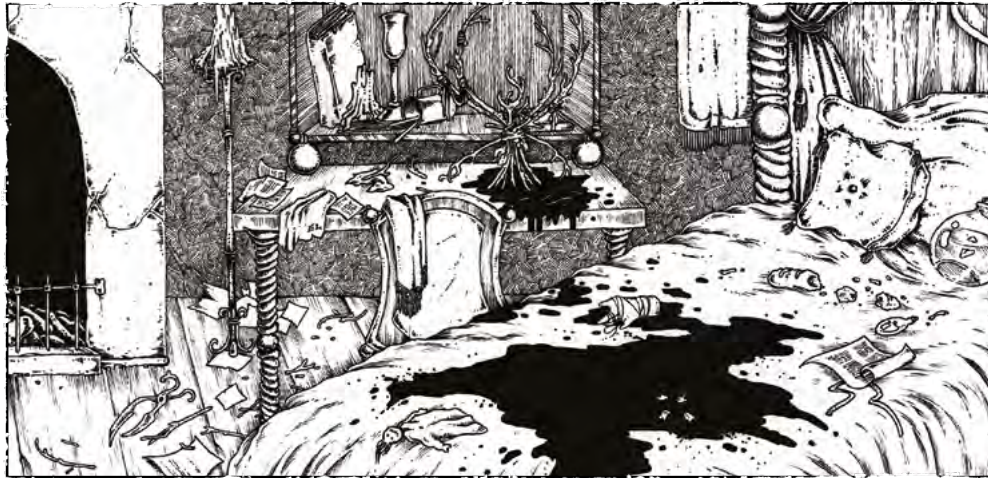
RIGHTEOUS • GARDENER • SPRY

MAJOR. The Head Gardener gains two action dice at the start of a combat round.

GARDENER. Bleddyn uses the action block shown above.

Unquiet Dead

Sefts



If a body goes unburied, the once-attached soul will become a member of the unquiet dead. When a powerful soul returns without a corpse or prepared vessel to inhabit, it becomes a seft. These beings are incorporeal and show varying degrees of awareness, intelligence and regret.

Adram Lubentina

Unhappy, restless, bound, baggard, sorrowful, kind, royal, duty-bound

King Adram is a true seft, the bound soul of a human that has been turned away at the closed gates of Heall. His form is similar to that of the echoes but more substantial, falling just short of corporeality. The only certain way to shake him into recognition and conversation is by mentioning his daughter, Princess Euthelia (p. 108).

Adram had a calm disposition in life but he is haunted by his own failure to protect Euthelia from heretical forces. He will attack those who openly demonstrate their allegiance to a Traitor God.

WANTS: To be laid to rest
HATES: Father Plague

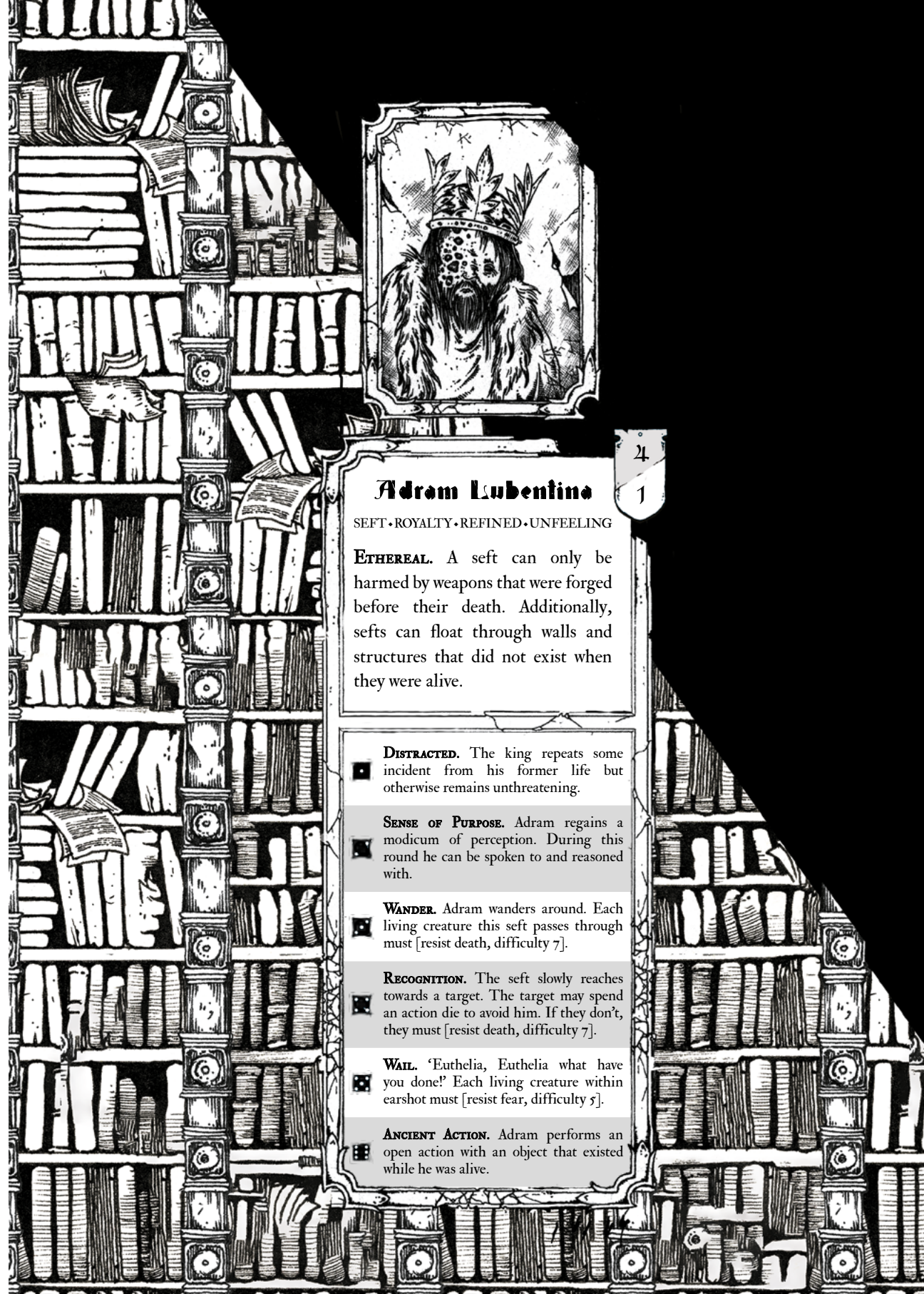
Echo

Emotional phantasms, residual images, trapped remnants, unknowing, memory loops

Memories cling to Castle Lethe, forming echoes that act out conversations and events from happier times. These echoes do not interact with or acknowledge intruders; they are not sentient in any way. These echoes are linked to the soul of King Adram, the royal heart of both the castle and the region. If his seft is destroyed, each echo will wink out of existence in a wisp of effervescent smoke, leaving the castle in utter silence.

If an echo touches a living creature, that creature must [resist death, difficulty 5].

WANTS: Nothing
HATES: Nothing



Adram Lubentina

SEFT • ROYALTY • REFINED • UNFEELING

ETHEREAL. A seft can only be harmed by weapons that were forged before their death. Additionally, sefts can float through walls and structures that did not exist when they were alive.

DISTRACTED. The king repeats some incident from his former life but otherwise remains unthreatening.

SENSE OF PURPOSE. Adram regains a modicum of perception. During this round he can be spoken to and reasoned with.

WANDER. Adram wanders around. Each living creature this seft passes through must [resist death, difficulty 7].

RECOGNITION. The seft slowly reaches towards a target. The target may spend an action die to avoid him. If they don't, they must [resist death, difficulty 7].

WAIL. 'Euthelia, Euthelia what have you done!' Each living creature within earshot must [resist fear, difficulty 5].

ANCIENT ACTION. Adram performs an open action with an object that existed while he was alive.

4

1

Unquiet Dead

Lythe

Not all souls are strong enough to become incorporeal sefts (p. 114). Most require a corpse or properly prepared vessel to contain them. These are called lythe.

Lythe result when the soul of a human is forced to inhabit an object; most commonly its own corpse, though dolls, scarecrows, suits of armour, and so on can also be used. If the possessed object is destroyed, its lythe will try to find another vessel to inhabit. Only burying its original corpse or the vessel it inhabits will prevent the lythe from escaping. All but the greenest of gravediggers have had to do this in the course of performing their duties.

Though lythe often resemble and mimic the person they were in life, they are no longer sensate and feel no true emotions. A soul can only feel when it is at rest in Heall or before death, in its living body. Now, both are out of reach for the unquiet dead.



Alice

Grubby, broken, lurching, unfeeling, puzzled

Stooped, shuffling husk of a woman. Her mind is broken and she can only repeat her name. Thick scars disfigure her entire body, obtained from the Lice Mother (p. 108) before her death as punishment for snitching on Troizel (p. 110).


WANTS: To finish cooking
HATES: Nothing


Guests

Ravenous, shambling, masked, jewelled

Assembled for a betrothal feast on the night the Lice Mother (p. 108) summoned Father Plague. They first appear as piles of mouldering remains, then revive into men and women wearing masquerade masks of various animals.

WANTS: To fulfil the bride's wishes
HATES: Rudeness, party crashers, peasants





4

Guests

UNQUIET DEAD • REFINED

HORDE. Treat up to three guests as one creature, sharing movement and a single action die. A guest is killed when it loses any toughness or suffers an injury, but the action die is only lost when all three guests are killed.

- **PAINED HOWL.** Any enemies surrounded by three or more guests must [resist fear, difficulty 4].
- **SWARM.** Each guest moves a short distance, attempting to end their movement adjacent to the same enemy.
- **CLUMSY BLOWS.** A guest strikes out to [attack, +0] an adjacent enemy. This attack gains +1 for each adjacent guest.
- **CLAWING HANDS.** Ready this die. While this die is readied, enemies must [struggle, difficulty 5] to move away from a guest. This die is discarded if a foe succeeds on this check.
- **SUDDEN RUSH.** An adjacent target must [struggle, difficulty 4] or be dragged a short distance.
- **BEATDOWN.** A guest lashes out in an [attack, +1]. If the defender is adjacent to three or more guests, they cannot dodge.

4

The Cook

UNQUIET DEAD • COOK

MY NAME IS ALICE. If the cook is injured, she will stare past her attacker, tell them her name is Alice and then crumble into a grey powder.

- **MY NAME IS ALICE.** The cook stares forlornly, muttering the words, 'My name is Alice.'
- **MY NAME IS ALICE.** The cook raises her cleaver limply. After a moment she lowers it again, stating, 'My name is Alice.'
- **MY NAME IS ALICE.** The cook shouts gruffly, 'My name is Alice!'
- **MY NAME IS ALICE.** The cook lurches unpredictably to one side. 'My name is Alice,' she intones at a bubbling stewpot.
- **MY NAME IS ALICE.** The cook says, 'My name is Alice,' but her words seem more of a question than a statement of fact.
- **MY NAME IS ALICE.** The cook slowly moves as if to leave the room. She mutters something, but you cannot catch the words.

Birds

Feathered, flying, curious, inquisitive, pecking, nest-building

Only three types of bird can now be found in Lethe: magpies, pigeons and ravens.

All three species are extremely intelligent. They generally mate for life and two of the species (magpies and ravens) prefer establishing a single nest that they return to repeatedly.

All three species consume meat, though pigeons do so out of necessity rather than preference. Magpies and ravens, on the other hand, are avid carrion-eaters. Particularly opportunistic flocks will work together to bring down living animals, often targeting small mammals like lambs and calves.

Ravens

Birds capable of imitating human speech. Largest known length of 2 feet, largest known wingspan of 4 feet.

Ravens are territorial, often establishing a single nest and defending that area from perceived threats. Their most popular breeding site is at the Pillory Cliffs (not in this demo), though nests can be found all over the plaguescape.

They will mimic spoken words to draw people away from nests or toward danger.



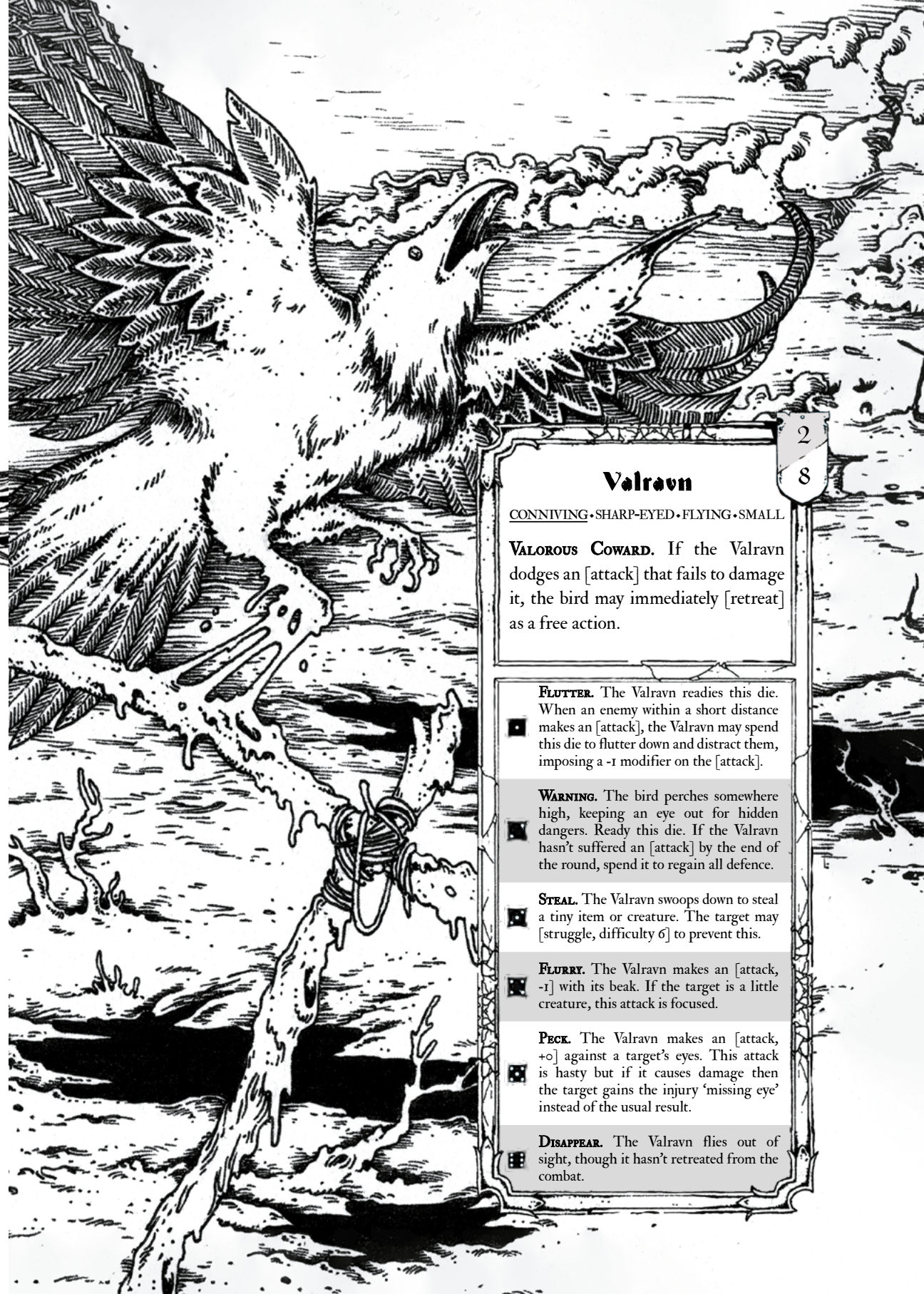
The Valraven

Unique raven considerably larger than its peers with a length of 3 feet and wingspan of 5. It is capable of human reasoning and speech, though it speaks with the voice of King Adram (p. 114).

A Valraven is created when a normal raven feeds on the corpse of royalty. The one trapped in the plaguescape fed on the corpse of King Adram.

This animal will bargain, coerce and coax for Immortal flesh (in this case, Father Plague). If it consumes this, it will gain immortality.

NEEDS: To outwit Death himself
HATES: Normal ravens



Valraven

CONNIVING • SHARP-EYED • FLYING • SMALL

VALOROUS COWARD. If the Valraven dodges an [attack] that fails to damage it, the bird may immediately [retreat] as a free action.

FLUTTER. The Valraven readsies this die. When an enemy within a short distance makes an [attack], the Valraven may spend this die to flutter down and distract them, imposing a -1 modifier on the [attack].

WARNING. The bird perches somewhere high, keeping an eye out for hidden dangers. Ready this die. If the Valraven hasn't suffered an [attack] by the end of the round, spend it to regain all defence.

STEAL. The Valraven swoops down to steal a tiny item or creature. The target may [struggle, difficulty 6] to prevent this.

FLURRY. The Valraven makes an [attack, -1] with its beak. If the target is a little creature, this attack is focused.

PECK. The Valraven makes an [attack, +0] against a target's eyes. This attack is hasty but if it causes damage then the target gains the injury 'missing eye' instead of the usual result.

DISAPPEAR. The Valraven flies out of sight, though it hasn't retreated from the combat.

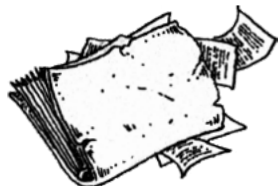
2
8

Aa

Abilities6, 14, 72-75
 Action Dice.....56, 58
 Alice the Scarred Cook.....116
 Armour66-67
 –Armour Properties.....67
 [Attack].....46

Bb

Birds118
 Blocking.....46
 Bulk55, 66



Cc

Castle Lethe.....96-105
 Character Sheet.....12-13
 Checks.....6
 –Daunting and Trivial Checks.....42
 –Check Modifiers.....42, 45
 –NPC Checks.....60
 –Opposed Checks.....42
 –Special Checks.....44-53
 –Standard Checks.....40-43
 Conditions.....6, 42, 59, 68
 Combat.....54-59
 –Combat Round.....56-57
 –Combat Stats.....55
 [Commune].....48
 Creating Your Character.....14-37
 Cresseid.....110
 Critical Results.....43

Dd

Damage, Attacks.....47
 Damage, Weapons64
 Defence.....35, 55, 57
 Difficulty.....42, 45
 Dodging.....46
 Doom, Doomcoin.....6, 43
 –Critical Results.....43

Ee

Effect Table.....43, 47

Ff

[First aid].....48
 Fixed Values.....44
 Focused Roll.....43
 Free Actions.....58
 Free Attacks.....58

Gg

Gardeners.....112
 Gear14, 62-63
 –PC Gear Grid.....62
 Getting Started.....6-8
 Guests.....116

Hh

Hasty Roll.....43
 Heresy.....14, 31

Ii

Injuries.....47, 59
 Introduction.....5

Jj

[Judge].....49

Kk

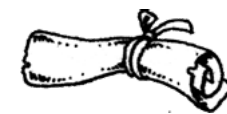
King Adram Lubentina.....114
 [Knockback].....49
 [Knockdown].....50

Ll

Last Meal Sample Adventure84-105
 –Starting Your Adventure.....94
 Lice Mother.....108
 Life Path: Example.....15
 Life Path: Gravedigger.....34
 Life Path: Injury.....28
 Life Path: Origin.....16
 Life Path: Profane Relic.....29

Mm

Major Injuries.....47, 59
 Modifiers.....42, 45
 Movement.....59



Nn

NPCs.....60
 –Example NPC Statblock.....61

Oo

Occult Abilities.....76-83
 Open Actions.....58
 Out-of-Combat Attacks.....54

Pp

PC Action Block.....56
 Princess Euthelia Lubentina.....108
 Protection.....55, 66

Rr

[Recover].....50
 [Resist Death].....51
 [Resist Fear].....51
 [Retreat].....52
 Rules.....40-83

Ss

Standard Roll.....43
 [Sneak].....52
 [Struggle].....53
 [Surgery].....53
 Surprised.....55

Tt

Toughness.....35, 55
 Traitor Gods.....78-83
 Traits.....6, 14, 68
 –Defining Traits.....14, 34, 42
 –Example Traits.....70-71
 Troizel.....110

Uu

Unquiet Dead: Lythe.....116
 Unquiet Dead: Sefts.....114

Vv

Weapons.....64-65
 –Weapon Properties.....65

Doomsong: A Roleplay Macabre

Thank you for playing this *Doomsong* demo! We hope your time in the Gravediggers' Guild has been as disquieting and dramatic as it was enjoyable. To learn more, go to [this page](#) and click 'Notify Me' to get an email when the Kickstarter goes live in October. Backers can look forward to:

- *Doomsong*, a deluxe hardback book with 200+ pages
- *Lord Have Mercy Upon Us*, a deluxe hardback campaign with 300+ pages
- A cloth map for the *Lord Have Mercy Upon Us* campaign
- A metal Doomcoin, complete with ominous curse
- A pad of customised character sheets
- A few surprises!

Want to be part of the conversation? Want to share your experiences with character creation, rules or combat? You can also join our [Discord](#)!

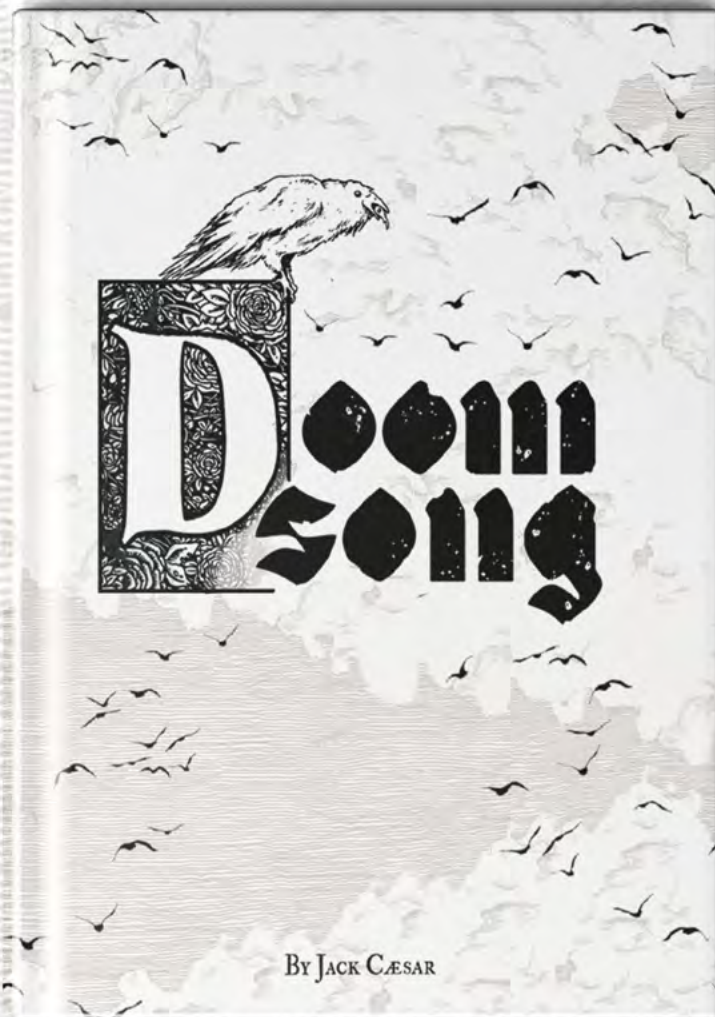


COMING TO
KICKSTARTER


Doomsong: Corebook

Foul beings stalk the land. Dire portents come thick and fast. Heresy festers and breeds in steadfast hearts. Meanwhile, the Ecclesiarch remains shuttered in his grand cathedral, the Sepulchre Reverentia, leaving his priests and beadsmen to keep the populace calm.

But you are gravediggers, tasked with burying the dead. You know better than most how wrong the world has become. The recently deceased return from Heall, turned away from gates that are closed against them. In spite of this, a gravedigger you remain...



NPCs



NPCs are everything the PCs meet in their adventure, from rabid beasts to noble scions. Essentially, an NPC is any character controlled by the GM throughout the game. They work much the same as PCs. However, instead of a character sheet, they have a statblock in the rulebook that details their traits, stats, abilities and action block.

Running NPCs


For much of the game, NPCs do not require rules. Their actions and the difficulties of any check involving them are decided by the GM and simply folded into the conversation (see page @@). NPCs have their own wants and fears; they should be thought of as characters in their own right. The PCs believe themselves the heroes of their own story but Painyme's NPCs feel otherwise.

NPC Checks

When an NPC attempts a check, follow the same rules a PC would use (page @@). However, NPCs cannot flip the Doomcoin unless they are making a check that directly affects a doomed PC, usually an [attack]. After flipping the Doomcoin, the GM places it in front of themselves and the player who originally had it is no longer doomed.

NPCs in Combat

Each NPC has a unique action block, found on their page. This means their options are different from those available to PCs; they may do something the players don't expect. When running an NPC in combat, keep their goal in mind. Remember, retreat is always an option!



Laceworker

LACEWORKER, WALL CLIMBER, SILENT

FRAIL EXOSKELETON. When making a bludgeoning [attack] against the laceworker, gain an extra +1 modifier.

THRESH. The laceworker lashes out with one of its long legs in a panic, making a hasty [attack, +2].

CLIMB. The beast flows up the nearest tall object, attempting to get out of sight of any enemies. If it does so, it regains a defence. It does not need to make a check to climb vertical surfaces.

BITE. With sickening speed, the creature lunges forward in an [attack, +2], sinking its fangs into a foe. If this attack causes damage, the target gains the 'laceworker poison' condition. In D6 rounds, the target becomes paralyzed for ten minutes.

REAR UP. The laceworker rears onto its back legs, ready to lunge forward at a moment's notice. Ready this die. The laceworker may spend this die to leap and [attack, +2] an enemy that moves within a short distance of it.

PULL. The laceworker tries to pull an adjacent enemy a short distance, onto an available web or out of their allies' reach. The target may [struggle, difficulty 7] to prevent this.

LACEWORK. With delicate movements, the laceworker creates a web that spans a small area. Any creature that touches the web loses 1 defence and cannot move until they break free as an open action [struggle, difficulty 7].

NPC Statblock

An NPC statblock contains a few different elements. These will help when you need rules for NPCs.

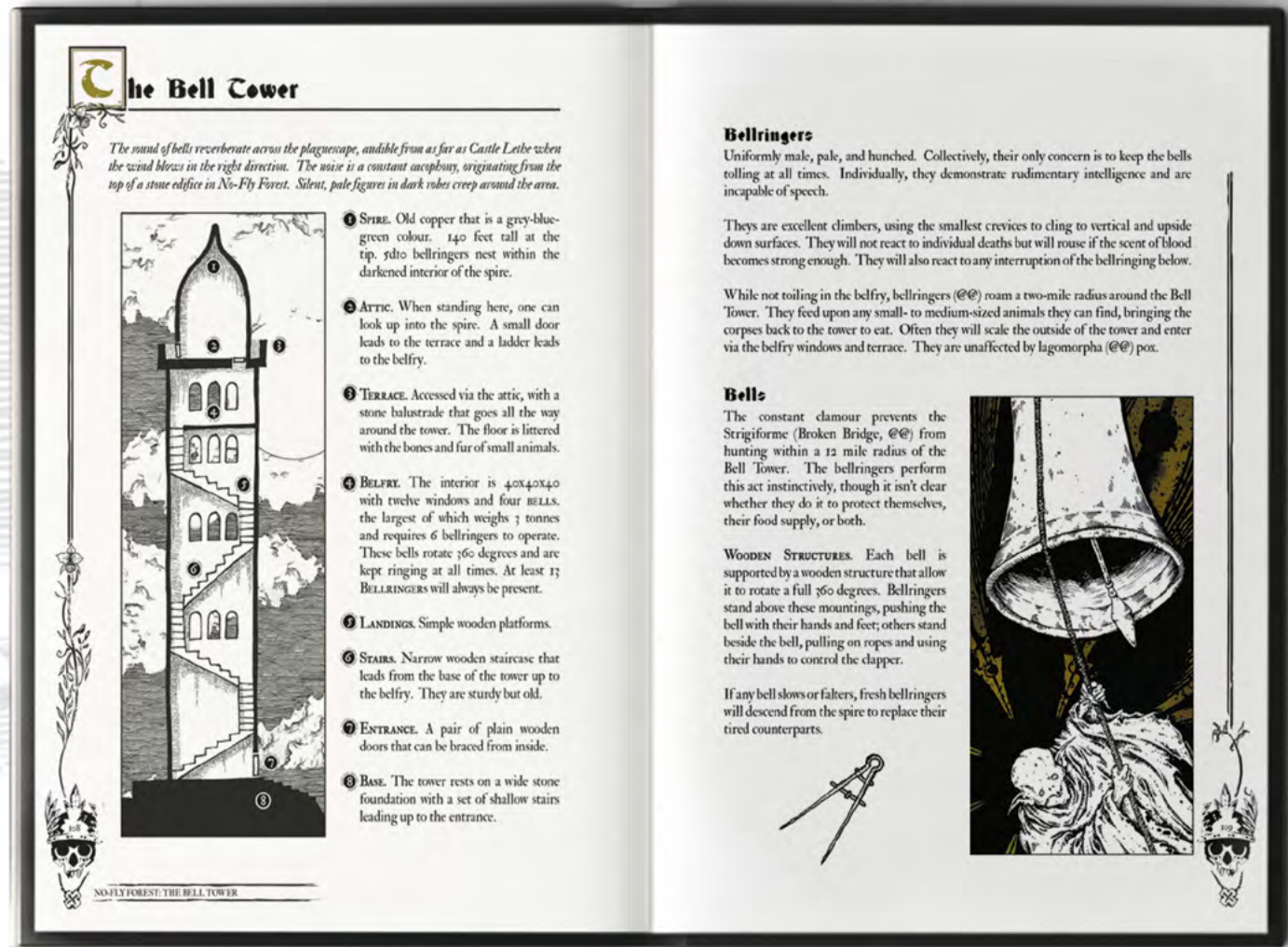
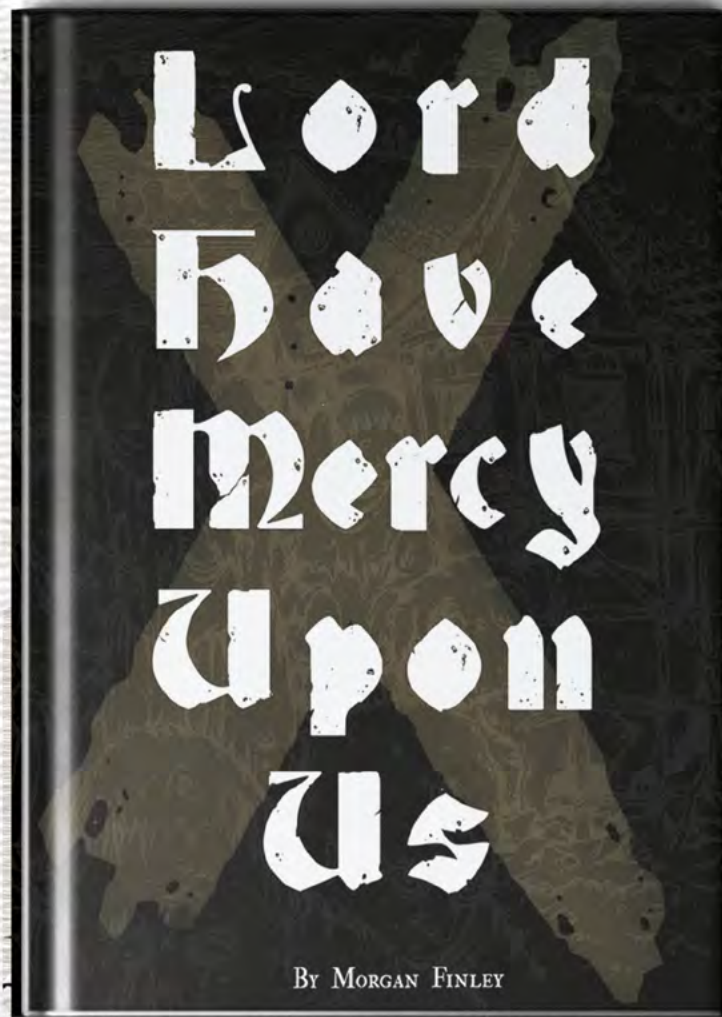
- 1 NAME. The creature's name.
- 2 TRAITS. The creature's traits. These work just like PC traits.
- 3 UNIQUE RULES. Many NPCs have unique abilities or weaknesses that are unavailable to PCs.
- 4 TOUGHNESS. NPC toughness works the same as a PC's (see page @@). If multiple NPCs are using the same statblock, their toughness values are tracked separately.
- 5 MAX DEFENCE. NPC defence works the same as a PC's (see page @@). If multiple NPCs are using the same statblock, their defence values are tracked separately.
- 6 ACTION BLOCK. Note that while an NPC has access to different actions than a PC, the action block otherwise works the same.

COMING TO

KICKSTARTER

Doomsong: Lord Have Mercy Upon Us

If your gravediggers enjoyed their torment in Castle Lethe, there is much more to come. More totems, more locations, more creatures hungering in the dark. *Lord Have Mercy Upon Us* will contain 300+ pages set in the lost kingdom of Lethe, which has turned feral and pestilential under the tender ministrations of Father Plague. [Get notified when our Kickstarter goes live!](#) Be one of the first to taste the terrible things to come...



COMING TO
KICKSTARTER