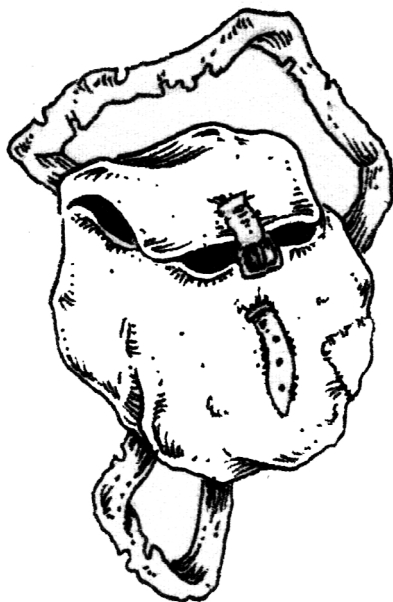




GUILD MARCHES

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What are Guild Marches

A Guild Marches campaign (based on the West Marches style of play designed by Ben Robbins) is a way of structuring games of Doomsong around an entire community of players rather than a small group. Instead of running sessions for the same party each week, the GM instead opens the game up to as many people as are willing to play. The players, rather than the GM, organise sessions. Each game session is separate from the last but they remain connected by a central organisation: your Guild. If you have more potential players than you know what to do with, or want to foster a more casual 'drop-in-drop-out' style of game, Guild Marches might be right for you.

Before we dive into the specifics of running a Guild Marches campaign, here are some philosophies that are good to take with you into the game as a GM:

STRUCTURE NOT STORY. When setting up a Guild, you will not be thinking of grand designs or complex plots. Instead, the game will focus on bite-sized adventures that may in time build toward something greater. To this end, your schedule and the structure of your Guild are more important than the overarching story.

OFFLOAD AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. As GM, it is your responsibility to run games. That is the only core responsibility you have. Keeping track of maps? A player could do that. Storage and inventory management? Definitely a player's job. Keeping track of NPC names? Organising sessions? Journaling? Everything can be a player's responsibility if you either incentivise the activity or tell someone to do it.

EMPOWER PLAYERS. This is good advice for many games but holds particularly true for a Guild Marches campaign. Your players will be deciding where to go and what to do about the terrible things they find there. As the GM, it is your job to ensure the decisions they make matter, for better or for worse. There is nothing better than a player (or faction within your Guild) deciding they want to build a keep or send a missive to the local lord. If players decide to do something, reward them with interesting consequences that affect the Guild as a whole

CENTRALISE COMMUNICATION. In setup on the next page, we suggest setting up a Discord server, but it is doubly important that you use it! Any information you want to share with one player can be shared to everyone (with only a few exceptions). Similarly, encourage players to use the central hub for as much of their communication as possible. This means that players who cannot make games as often are kept up-to-date and are tempted to join in on missions. It also helps create a living lore for your world and extends the campaign outside of scheduled sessions.



Running a Campaign



Set Up

The first thing you'll need to do is choose an adventure to run. All of our *Doomsong* adventures (such as *Lord Have Mercy Upon Us*) are designed with Guild Marches in mind, and so should work nicely! If you want to make your own piece of Painyme, we encourage you to create a map outlining the location the game will take place in, a Guildhall the parties will operate out of and a few points of interest that players can latch onto during the first few sessions, before they start coming up with their own plans.

You don't need to spend weeks crafting an intricate and detailed world. Rather, you only need to establish the outlines of a region that is highly player-focused. Through play, the parties will explore what they find interesting, and you can spend your efforts on aspects they will actually see. Of course if you are using a published campaign, a lot of that work will already be there for you to take and tweak.

HUB. Once you have a world, lay it out in a shareable format like an editable document, a forum or a group message. We personally use a Discord group, as having multiple channels comes in pretty handy (and changing people's nicknames to match their character names is quite fun). It is up to you how you present the information, but making it accessible and introductory means you can send it to potential new players later on.

CODE OF CONDUCT. It can be useful to establish ground rules for behaviour and content, so that GMs and players alike know the boundaries of the campaign. This is particularly useful if you are starting a game with people you've not played with before. The form this code takes and the material it addresses is entirely dependent on your group's collective sensibilities, and may change if new players join. We've provided some helpful resources on our website.



Organizing a Session

Establish the times you are willing to run sessions. Some GMs are happy with a consistent “I can run sessions every Monday until the end of time” while others prefer the flexibility of “This Tuesday and Thursday are good for me, next week might be different.” Either way is fine, as long as all players have a chance to see the potential times!

Next, the players should suggest potential missions to the group as a whole, stating a goal they want to achieve along with the timeslot they can fill. For example, one player may suggest that the Guild investigate Tombstone Mill. If 2-4 other players are interested in this mission and can agree on a time to play, they inform the GM (giving them enough time to prepare). In turn, the GM tells everyone else the slot has been filled.

STAGGERING TABLE TIME. It may be that some of your players have schedules that line up serendipitously with your own, meaning they are available for more games than others. For this reason, we suggest giving priority those who played the fewest games during the last month. It may be worth establishing this rule alongside the code of conduct and other organisational rules you devise!

Alternatively, a player who is keen to make every game could be a useful ally if they are interested in co-running the game (see Multiple GMs on page 8).

AVOIDING CLIQUES. It is natural for players to want to play with their friends and people they have played with before, which can lead to set groups forming within your Guild. In general, it is best to keep an eye on this and communicate about it openly. If you want to encourage more mingling, you could introduce a rule giving players 3xp at the end of sessions in which they played with members of the Guild they had never played with before. This rule has the added benefit of incentivising people to find new members of the Guild!

Time Passing

After each session (or some other arbitrary amount of time), the GM should advance in-game time by D6 days, collectively updating the calendar to keep track of injuries and other developments. During play, this might mean some characters get “ahead” of the calendar but in general we urge you not to worry about this too much.

Navigation

Navigating the world and getting sidetracked by random encounters is a fun way to inject danger and costs into travel, but this can work against the nature of shorter, self-contained Guild Marches sessions. For this reason, if a player gets a critical success on any [navigate] check, we recommend applying that result to the entire Guild, thereafter tracking the regions players will never have to [navigate] through ever again.




End of Session

After the game, the party make their way back to the Guildhall. Optionally, you can roll a D66 on the table below to discover a party's fate during the journey back, editing the result as needed to suit your dirty little corner of Painyme. Note that you can share as little or as much of the travel event as you like; it exists to spark intrigue and further adventure. If the party ended a session in combat or another form of danger not easy to [retreat] from, flip the Doomcoin.

CREST. The party return to the Guildhall safely.

SKULL. The party become trapped, captured or lost; the actual outcome is up to you. Investigating this party's disappearance could be the perfect setup for another mission.

	
11	A CALAMITOUS JOURNEY. Roll twice more on this table and combine the results.
12	DEATH OR DISHONOUR. A bautenlobbe (DS:230) and her cubs stumble across the party as they rest, surprising them. Each PC rolls a D6. The player or players that roll lowest are on watch at the time. They may warn the party or flee. If they warn the party, they put themselves in peril; otherwise, the rest of the party is in peril. Each PC in peril flips the Doomcoin. Anyone who gets a skull dies.
13	BROKEN. The party are ambushed by a foe and barely escape with their lives. Each member of the party must suffer damage (DS:96) of a random type. If a character fails to resist [death] due to any injuries gained during this event, their character is killed.
14	TRAPPED. If the party can become trapped in their location, they do! Ask the party how many rations they have. For each full ration per trapped character, the party will survive D6 days. If the party run out of rations before they are saved, they may need to resort to cannibalism. Allow them to decide among themselves. If there is only one survivor following a bout of cannibalism, that PC may become a wycce of Voracity (DS:190).
15	RANSOM. The party are captured in the night by desperate folk. Upon learning of their Guild affiliations, the kidnappers will send a note to the Guild, asking for a ransom of a fat coinpurse. In D6 weeks, they will run out of patience and kill the captives.
16	GRAVE ILLNESS. A random member of the party becomes sick on the journey home. They cannot travel for fear of death. The PCs should decide who will stay with the PC (if anyone) and who will return to the Guildhall to fetch help (if any). The PC will die in D6 weeks unless a doctor or cure is found.
21	LEECHERS. The party are waylaid on their way back to the Guildhall. They are taken to a nearby location in order to fatten leeches that will be sold in Assartum. Unless saved in D6 weeks, they will be exsanguinated.
22	LOST. The party become lost the wilderness. They will find their way back to the Guildhall in D6 weeks.
23	SURVIVOR. A foe the party faced (or who secretly observed them, if the party didn't get into any fights) during the session survived the encounter. The survivor will tell the Guild's enemies of their wrongdoing. If this foe is encountered again, the survivor gains +1 toughness and becomes a Major NPC (DS:218).
24	DESERTERS. An opportunity to leave the Guild rears its head. Each PC may choose to slip into the night, deserting the Guild. If they do, their new character gains 10xp after completing character creation.
25	PORTALWEB ASSAULT. The party are set upon by a group of portalweb laceworkers (DS:244). These portalwebs have a nest in an interesting location nearby, and will devour the PCs in D6 weeks unless they are saved.
26	COMPLICATIONS. The party return safe and sound. If they succeeded in their mission, some hidden complication reveals itself at the Guildhall, establishing that their goal remains unfulfilled.
31	BITE OF THE OPURI. A creature (opuri squab, DS:262) bites a random PC while they camp. It flees before the PCs can rally themselves to attack. The PC gains the Aspect of the Opuri ability (DS:258).
32	RUIN. A well-known landmark the party passes on their way to the Guildhall has been burnt to the ground. Rumour has it that the Silt Kings (DS:214) are setting up in the area and set it alight to make a statement. At the start of the next session, a pair of thugs will arrive at the Guild, seeking payment. They are running a protection racket and any resistance will cause escalation.



33	THIEVES. The party have their most precious item stolen from them in the dead of night. If the Guild has enemies, the culprit was likely employed by this individual or faction. If the Guild is currently on good terms with everyone, then the thief is unaffiliated and will sell the item in the largest settlement in the region.
34	MOREL-BARDHA. The party camp near a large colony of mushrooms, perhaps even gathering some as [forage] before heading back to the Guildhall. Randomly choose a character in the party. In D6 days a fungal simulacrum (morel-bardha, DS:287) of this character will grow from this colony and wander out into the world.
35	BAD NEWS. The party return safe and sound but rumours of a crime they committed have reached the Guildhall ahead of them. These rumours may be true or false, serious or ridiculous.
36	NEW RECRUIT. On their return journey, the party pick up a new Guild Recruit (DS:220). This NPC is secretly a spy working on behalf of the Guild's enemies, but only out of fear for their loved ones.
41	NEW RECRUIT. In their return journey, the party pick up a new Guild Recruit (DS:220). This NPC has a sought-after skill that is useful to the Guild.
42	HOUNDED. The group are separated by a pack of scythounds (DS:266). Each player rolls a D6; the player or players that roll lowest are forced to abandon all their equipment in order to survive.
43	SEPARATED. Each player must roll on this table individually.
44	INFECTION. A character with a newly treated or open wound gets an infection. They gain the Infected Wound condition for 2D6 days. If left untreated, they die on the final day.
45	ACCIDENT. If there is a doomed character, they twist their ankle on the journey back to the Guildhall. They gain the Twisted Ankle condition for 2D6 days. If left untreated, this becomes the Weak Ankle trait.
46	INFORMANT. A passing traveller tells the party something interesting regarding a nearby location. The party may ask a single question; the GM must answer it honestly.
51	MERCHANT IN NEED. A group of merchants have been slaughtered; there is a single penniless survivor. If the party give her shelter, she will fetch a reeve (DS:209) and give the party a handsome reward.
52	FAILED AMBUSH. The party are set upon in the night, but during the struggle they manage to take a prisoner. The captured foe knows important information about a nearby location or a plan being made by Guild enemies.
53	WELL-TRAVELLED. The party make copious notes of the route they travelled. Future parties never need to [navigate] the areas visited during this session.
54	A TALE TO TELL. The party make camp and tell stories of bravery and skill around the fire. Each PC gains 1xp.
55	MYSTERIOUS TRAVELLER. A bedraggled citizen in need of shelter hails the party. If they offer aid to this person, roll a die. On a 1, the traveller is a cultist and crafts a Hex (DS:166) that uses the hair of one of the party members. On a 6, the traveller is a landed noble and donates a gift to the Guild. On any other result, the traveller thanks the party and goes their own way at dawn.
56	WYCEFINDER. The party return to find a writ nailed to the door of the Guildhall, announcing that wycefinders (DS:211) are in the area. There will soon be an investigation to ensure the Guild is not committing heresy.
61	TREASURE. Someone fell victim to the elements; their loss is the party's gain. Roll three times on an appropriate loot table or tell the party they found a chest of stolen jewellery worth a fat coinpurse.
62	WHISPERS. The party return safely. Secretly choose a character. This PC has gained the attention of a Traitor God (choose from those described on DS:168-191; the patron will vary depending on the PC's personality or deeds). Communicate with that player secretly, offering them power in exchange for the appropriate vow. If they accept the offer, they may become a wyce (DS:166). All other PCs have an uneventful journey.
63	MAP. The party come across an intimidating-looking figure. He is dead, pinned by a large spear to a tree on the side of the road. In one of his boots, the party find a map that details a nearby location. An area on this map is marked. Secretly flip the Doomcoin. On a crest, it leads to a buried chest containing Church relics; on a skull, it marks the location of a hidden opiri nest (DS:258).
64	INSPIRATION. Something sparks in the minds of the party. The players may resolve Result 6 on either the Training or Discovery Tables (DS:115).
65	HIDDEN DEPTHS. The party discover the mouth a cave on their way home. It is up to the GM what terrors or treasures may lie within. At the very least, it is a secret place to take shelter.
66	BANQUET. A local ally offers the party rest and recuperation for the next week. Each character to return to the Guildhall with either the Bolstered, Bloated, Drunk, Energetic or Euphoric condition. Mark the ally's location on the map; unless every PC chooses to gain the Drunk condition, they are happy to host further banquets.

Multiple GMs

A unique feature of Guild Marches campaigns is that they can be run with multiple GMs. To do this, inform the group of the GMs' shared timetable and then ensure you are in communication with one another! One of the most important factors is to ensure that all GMs are working with consistent information, so after each sessions ends, the GM who ran it should send a quick message to any others (usually in secret) to let them know pertinent information, such as changes to the world map.

Guild Roles

We introduced Guild Roles in *Lord Have Mercy Upon Us*, which are specific occupations that gave PCs unique abilities and goals to achieve. If you are using these (or want to create something similar for your own game) we suggest giving them to players who attend regularly. This ensures new players don't get overwhelmed.

Extra XP Rewards

In Guild Marches campaigns, xp can be a useful method for delegating out-of-game responsibilities. If you find that any part of running the campaign is becoming a burden, you can come up with an xp reward and give it to those players who help you out. We've provided some examples below, but let us know if you come up with any ingenious used for xp rewards! We'd love your input on what works and what doesn't.

QUARTERMASTER. The player who updates the Guild storage with any equipment lost and gained during the game, helping to maintain continuity between groups.

DOOMSINGER. Any player who brings a new person to the game.

TOWN CRIER. Any player who, at the start of a session, volunteers to give the group a full recap of the Guild's progress so far.

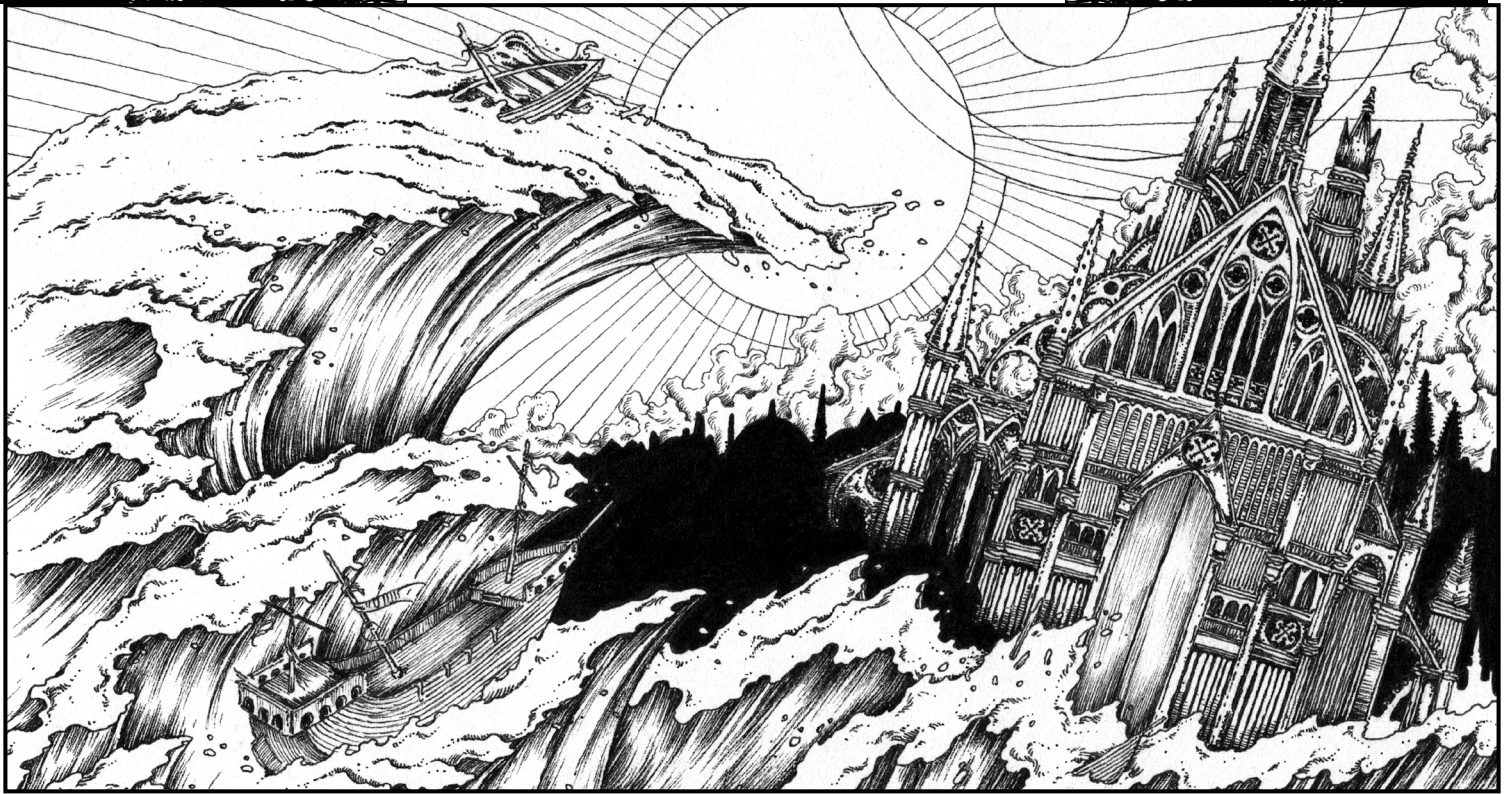
NOTARY. Any player who fills out one of the notices found at the end of this document.

SAGE. Any player who brings a rulebook, pencils, dice and character sheets, then helps in teaching the game to others. Note that whilst it can be very handy having someone who knows "the rules as written", the GM still has final say on how the game works mechanically, even if their ruling contradicts the core rulebook. The book is not in charge, you are.

CARTOGRAPHER. Any player who updates the Guild map with new locations.



The End is Nigh



Join the Guild

Doomsong is a Roleplay Macabre set in a collapsing medieval world. A new Guildhall is opening in your area! Will you answer the call?

If you're looking to join a horror RPG with a rotating cast of players all working together to survive in a Biblical apocalypse, then take make note of the contact address below.

CONTACT. _____

Notice

ATTENTION ALL GUILD MEMBERS

☐ BE WARNED ☐ UNFINISHED BUSINESS ☐ MISSION

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