

That Oh So Little Death

A Dessert RPG of the Sacred and Profane

an Iron Game Chef Entry for 2006

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Forward

This game is the last in a Full Course of Love and Death, a quintology of RPGs. It is the dessert, and has been design to add a delightful twist to the chronicles of Love and Death through which the players have already ventured. What the other games have danced around, That Oh So Little Death embraces. When played as the dessert, each player should choose a character from a previous RPG in the course, and should remake them for this game. In many cases, the archetypes below will make that an easy matter. As playing That Oh So Little Death in this way, consider how the events of the previous game could have been simply a metaphor for the activities in this one. Like all games in this Full Course, That Oh So Little Death is intended for five players, ideally the same five who started this journey with Escape from Prince Charming.

As a game designed for Iron Game Chef 2006, it is necessary to discuss the allotments made for that contest. Indeed, for the theme of time, That Oh So Little Death fulfills the single session of 2 hours requirement. And it uses all of the contest terms: Glass, Committee, Ancient, Emotion, Law, Actor, Steel, and Team.

Author's Note

That Oh So Little Death is a RPG about sex. Simply put, the players all take on the roles of characters who are engaging in sex, seeking heights of emotional, physical, and spiritual pleasures. And at the most basic level, that's all it is. But many things in art and fiction are metaphor for sex, and sex itself is a metaphor for many things. This is a game that explores those boundaries, and uses them to allow the players to break down the entire arena that is sex, and see it as it is, as interactions between people.

Games are languages, and RPGs are especially languages of what they express. With the sexual, words often fail us. What That Oh So Little Death attempts to do is provide a language of relationships, not words, and so gives another way to understand and communicate. If it helps, then I am glad. But either way, I hope you enjoy this game.

Into the Fray

A game of That Oh So Little Death consists of a single short session, with each character attempting to provide the others with various pleasure of the emotional, physical, and spiritual kinds. Characters are simply a name and an archetype and what ever description the player wishes to add. Play goes around the group, as each player describes what his or her character is attempting to do, and determines how well the action is received.

For example:

A's character Vera, an angel has just enticed and B's character Doran, a beast, with the emotional foreplay by blowing across his back. It's now B's turn to narrate.

B: Alright, Doran's going to reciprocate. He turns to Vera and lays her down on a cushion. Loosening her robe he runs his fingers along her stomach and chest, he's trying to get her ready for more physical activity.

B decides that this is a d6 emotion roll, and following the Law of Glass, reaches for a d4 physical and a d1 spiritual. Rolling all of them, B gets a 3 on the d6 and a 4 on the d4. Vera's pleasures are at 3 emotion, 2 physical, and 4 spiritual. So that gives her +1 emotion, since B's roll equaled or exceeded her emotion, and a -1 physical because Law of Stone comes into effect with a roll at least double. Doran's exuberance caused a loss of one pleasure in that category, but Doran can use his beast archetype to re-roll his physical die, and does so, rolling a 1. That's not enough for Vera to gain physical pleasure, but it ensures she doesn't lose any.

A decides that Vera wants more, and plays one of Vera's preference cards. It turns out to be a turn-off.

A: Unfortunately Vera has a very ticklish stomach, and she starts chuckling uncontrollably as Doran runs his fingers down it.

The turn-off reverses the emotional gain, putting Vera at 2 emotion, 2 physical, and 4 spiritual. If it had been a turn on then her emotional gain would have doubled, giving her a 5 emotion.

Because That Oh So Little Death involves sensitive themes, it is important for players to set some ground rules. All the players should agree to what sort of language will be used. This can run from innuendo only, through technical terms only, as far as nothing banned. It is important to set these limits before playing, and especially listing any words which a player wishes to never be used. A second limitation is how far the characters will go. This is best done by going around the group a few times and having each person say a thing they would rather not have in the game. Everyone must add at least one thing to this list, and ideally two. This way a player with a specific concern will not feel singled out.

Ultimately That Oh So Little Death is a game about trust. For this reason, the last

thing the players should do before starting playing this game is to agree on a safe word, like “aardvark” or “safeword”. Sometimes another player brings up something you would have mentioned as forbidden, but it never even occurred to you. In that case just say the safe word, and roll things back to before the narration. Add the problem area to the list, and continuing playing once everyone is ready. That Oh So Little Death works only if the players work toward trusting each other, and remain aware of each other’s responses. You may want to have your boundaries pushed, but that doesn’t mean letting yourself be emotionally harmed.

There is nothing wrong with calling the safe word, and using it shows the other players that you trust them enough not to push that button. Sometimes however, trust fails. If a player continues to push something placed on the list, then the game should be stopped. Not every group will be able to play That Oh So Little Death, and the players should not be afraid to stop playing if they find themselves within a group which cannot.

Choosing Who You Are

Making your character in That Oh So Little Death is a simple matter. First choose a name. Then choose an archetype card, from the following list. This card gives you room to record your emotional, physical, and spiritual pleasure, as well as a special ability.

- **The Actor** - The actor is most at home in someone else’s identity. The actor approaches sex as a series of roles, each building on the last, perhaps leading toward a time when masks are not longer needed. The actor starts with 2 emotional, 4 physical, and 3 spiritual pleasure. When narrating a scene the actor may impose roles on both everyone involved. When doing this, the actor chooses a color. When the dice are rolled, the actor may re-roll a die of that color.
- **The Ancient** - The ancient is the most knowledgeable of the lovers. As the elder, the ancient brings a wide array of experiences, but this can be a mixed bag. The ancient starts with 3 emotional, 3 physical, and 3 spiritual pleasure. The ancient contributes and is dealt a total of six preferences.
- **The Angel** - A creature of refined spirituality, the angel seeks to elevate the act of sex into an almost religious experience. The angel starts with 3 emotional, 2 physical, and 4 spiritual pleasure. When narrating, the angel may re-roll a spiritual die.
- **The Beast** - A creature of animalistic drives, the beast is focused on the physical, on lusts and passions. This focus gives the beast a special insight into the pleasures of the body. The beast starts with 3 emotional, 4 physical, and 2 spiritual pleasure. When narrating, the beast may re-roll a physical die.
- **The Fiend** - The fiend is warped and twisted monster. So obsessed with pain and pleasure, the fiend knows how in the heights of passion the two can be mixed. The fiend starts with 2 emotion, 3 physical, and 4 spiritual pleasure. The fiend may use turn-offs of other characters as though they were turn-ons.

- **The God** - Passionate and bold, the god is always getting into trouble. Especially romantic trouble. Ever ready, gods are all too willing to engage in any sort of physical pleasure, and are just as ready to abandon it. The god starts with 2 emotional, 4 physical, and 1 spiritual pleasure. The god is immune to the effects of the law of stone.
- **The Goddess** - Sensual and sultry, the goddess is always looking for her own brand of special pleasures. But she is as fickle as her counterpart. The goddess starts with 4 emotional, 2 physical, and 1 spiritual pleasure. The goddess is immune to the effects of the law of stone.
- **The Innocent** - The opposite of the ancient, the innocent has the least experience with the pleasures of the flesh and soul. This also means the innocent lacks the bad experiences that laden others. The innocent starts with 2 emotional, 2 physical, and 2 spiritual pleasure. The innocent contributes and is dealt a total of two preferences, and all the innocent's preferences are turn-ons.
- **The Legend** - A steeped in heroic deeds and dashing manner, the legend walks a path that is truly larger than life. The legend's presence alone is alluring, but seduction only masks an inner loneliness. The legend starts with 4 emotional, 3 physical, and 2 spiritual pleasure. When narrating, the legend may re-roll a emotional die.
- **The Noble** - Refined and decadent, the noble is well used to being served by others, both mundanely and in the ways of desire. But this very way of the life leaves the noble less able to connect with others. The noble starts with 3 emotional, 3 physical, and 1 spiritual pleasure. The noble may re-roll one die when the subject of an action using law of the team.
- **The Servant** - Reserved and passive, the servant is unused to being the subject of other's attentions. The servant has learned to predict and understand others, but is also used to being neglected. The servant starts with 4 emotional, 2 physical, and 3 spiritual pleasure. The servant may re-roll one die when narrating an action using law of the committee.

Once you've chosen an archetype take two black playing cards and two red playing cards. The Innocent only takes one of each, while the Ancient takes three of each. Then one player takes all the cards and shuffles them, dealing the same number back as each player contributed face down in front of the player. These cards are the character's preferences, various turn-ons (red cards) and turn-offs (black cards). No player may look at these cards until they are revealed using the law of preference.

Mind, Body, and Soul

The goal of That Oh So Little Death is to reach the upper heights of pleasure. Pleasure comes in three colors. Emotional pleasure is the pleasure of sensuality and the mind. It is the pleasure of sights and sounds and seduction. Physical pleasure is the pleasure of the body. It is direct and unabashed. Spiritual pleasure is the pleasure of connection and unity.

It is found in shared looks and rhythms and in the loss of self. Pleasure is counted in these three colors, and all the characters seek to gain more and more pleasure hopefully leading to the perfect ten.

When preparing a session of That Oh So Little Death, a small number of dice and tokens of three colors should be gathered. Each color should be associated with a color of pleasure, and when rolls are made to increase pleasure, they will be made using dice of the appropriate color. In each color of pleasure there should be a d12, a d10, a d8, a d6, and a d4. There should also be a token or bead of that color as well, acting as the d1. Only one die of each size and color will be needed.

Once these are prepared, the game is ready to begin.

Laws of Love

Once everyone is ready to begin to play That Oh So Little Death, choose one player to begin, and then have each player in turn narrate and resolve a short attempt to pleasure one or more characters. Each attempt is resolved using the Laws of Love, and then the next player has the chance to narrate.

- **Law of Pleasure** - Pleasure builds scene after scene. That is the underlying movement of That Oh So Little Death. But to build pleasure, everything must become more intense. When a die is rolled to increase a character's pleasure, if it equals or exceeds the current pleasure of that color, then that color pleasure increases by one. If it rolls lower then it has no effect. **Equal or Above** → +1
- **Law of Glass** - The mind is the greatest ally, and greatest barrier, to sexuality. It is the window to the deeper levels, but it is fragile. When a player narrates a sensual or verbal activity he or she chooses any emotion die. The law of glass then adds the next smallest physical die, and the spiritual die two sizes smaller, if possible. For example, a sensual narration can provide a d8 emotion, d6 physical, and a d4 spiritual or it can provide a d4 emotion, d1 physical, and no spiritual, but it cannot provide a d8 emotion, d6 spiritual, and d4 physical. To put it another way, the emotional leads to physical pleasure, leading to spiritual pleasure, the body cannot be bypassed. **Emotional** → **Physical** → **Spiritual**
- **Law of Steel** - Sexuality is an innately physical thing, and the body is the driving force behind it. It pushes, but can push too far and too fast. When a player narrates a physical activity he or she chooses any physical die. The law of steel then adds the next smallest spiritual die, and the emotional die two sizes smaller, if possible. For example, a physical narration can provide a d8 physical, d6 spiritual, and a d4 emotional or it can provide a d4 physical, d1 spiritual, and no emotional, but it cannot provide a d8 physical, d6 emotional, and d4 spiritual. To put it another way, the physical leads to the connection needed for spiritual pleasure, leading to emotional pleasure, but this connection cannot be bypassed. **Physical** → **Spiritual** → **Emotional**
- **Law of Light** - Sexuality is about contact and connection, and spiritual pleasure is exactly that. But that same connection can be terrifying for the unprepared. When a

player narrates a connection building between his or her character and another, he or she chooses any physical die. The law of light then adds the next smallest emotional die, and the physical die two sizes smaller, if possible. For example, a narration of connection can provide a d8 spiritual, d6 emotional, and a d4 physical or it can provide a d4 spiritual, d1 emotional, and no physical, but it cannot provide a d8 spiritual, d6 emotional, and d4 physical. To put it another way, the spiritual connection leads to the sensuality of emotion, leading to physical pleasure, but the mind cannot be bypassed. **Spiritual → Emotional → Physical**

- **Law of Stone** - Intensity drives to higher passions, but too much too quickly can quell those same passions. Care must be used to build the intensity, not simply rush ahead. If a die is rolled to increase a character's pleasure and it equal or exceeds twice the character's pleasure of the same color, then the Law of Pleasure is not used, and the pleasure is reduced by one. **Double or Above → -1**
- **Law of the Team** - The essence of the team is to cooperate on a common goal. And when that goal is pleasure the work can be that much sweeter. But team members must work together. When you narrate, you may invite as many other characters as your revealed preferences, each may participate, but only one of each die and color can be used. So for example, if the narrator is doing an emotional d8, and the teammate is trying a spiritual d6, the law of glass and the law of light would have them both roll a physical d4, but only one such die is rolled. **Invite Teammates up to Revealed & Only One of Each Die Size and Type**
- **Law of the Committee** - A committee evaluates a topic of interest, and decides if it is sufficient. When the topic leans to pleasure the evaluation become even harsher. When you narrate you may affect additional characters up to your revealed preferences, using the same dice. But you always use the worst result for each color of pleasure. For example, if you rolled above the Actor's emotional pleasure, but not the Angel's, then neither of them would gain emotional pleasure. **Extra Subjects up to Revealed → One Roll, Use Worst Results for Each Color**
- **Law of Preference** - People rarely come into sex without biases. These can be helpful, giving their partners a useful way to enhance their enjoyment. They can also be catastrophic, causing an innocuous act to become threatening. Preference cards are these biases. Whenever a character is the subject of a narration and the dice have been rolled, a preference card can be revealed. If it is red, then the current activity is a turn-on, and is written as such on the archetype card. Revealing a turn-on doubles the pleasure gains of the narration. If the card is black, then the current activity is a turn-off, and is also written on the archetype card. Revealing a turn-off reverses the pleasure gains, subtracting rather than adding. Lastly, once revealed a turn-on can be used in a narration one more time when that character is the subject. This also doubles the pleasure gains, but the turn-on must be used before dice are rolled. **Revealing After Roll → Red = Turn-on Doubles, Black = Turn-off Reverses & Narrate Revealed Turn-on → Doubles**

- **Law of Experience** - Like any activity, sex is something people can get better at. Experience can be beneficial, and using that experience can help give that extra little push. When a narrator has more revealed preferences than all subjects, that player may modify one die roll by 1, after they are rolled. **More Revealed → Modify a Die by 1**
- **Law of Self** - While pleasuring others is the central activity of That Oh So Little Death, self-pleasure is something which has a place. When a player narrates, he or she may choose to have the character self-stimulate, or reign things in. If the first case, the player may roll any one emotion or physical die. Spiritual pleasure can never be gained alone. Alternatively, the player may choose a pleasure color and reduce it by the value of a d4. This is especially useful if his or her character has been pleased past 10. **Roll Either Emotion or Physical *or* Reduce One Pleasure by d4**

In Search of Something

That Oh So Little Death uses rotating narration. Each player in turn gets to add an action, and then passing to the next player. As pleasure builds it is important to keep thing flowing. What does is the elusive goal of the perfect ten. While each pleasure rating goes up to 12, the perfect ten is when all the pleasures are 10 at the once. This is a subtle state, and a game of Oh So Little Death lasts until a character achieves it.

What happens then? Perfect ten has many different meanings. It could be the attainment of the perfect pleasure. It could be surpassing the boundaries of self. It could be a little death. Or it could be the big one. Which is up to you to decide.

That Oh So Little Death Play Contract

Language: _____

Bannings: _____

Safe Word: _____

The Actor

When narrating a scene the actor may impose roles on both everyone involved. When doing this, the actor chooses a color. When the dice are rolled, the actor may re-roll a die of that color.

Pleasure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<i>Emotional</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Physical</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Spiritual</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Preferences:	type	used
_____	on / off	0
_____	on / off	0
_____	on / off	0
_____	on / off	0

The Ancient

The ancient contributes and is dealt a total of six preferences.

Pleasure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<i>Emotional</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Physical</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Spiritual</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Preferences:	type	used
_____	on / off	0
_____	on / off	0
_____	on / off	0
_____	on / off	0
_____	on / off	0

The Angel

When narrating, the angel may re-roll a spiritual die.

Pleasure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<i>Emotional</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Physical</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Spiritual</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Preferences:	type	used
_____	on / off	0
_____	on / off	0
_____	on / off	0
_____	on / off	0

The Beast

When narrating, the beast may re-roll a physical die.

Pleasure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<i>Emotional</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Physical</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Spiritual</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Preferences:	type	used
_____	on / off	0
_____	on / off	0
_____	on / off	0
_____	on / off	0

The Fiend

The fiend may use revealed turn-offs as turn-ons.

Pleasure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<i>Emotional</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Physical</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Spiritual</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Preferences:	type	used
_____	on / off	0
_____	on / off	0
_____	on / off	0
_____	on / off	0

The God

The god is immune to the effects of the law of stone.

Pleasure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<i>Emotional</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Physical</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Spiritual</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Preferences:	type	used
_____	on / off	0
_____	on / off	0
_____	on / off	0
_____	on / off	0

The Goddess

The goddess is immune to the effects of the law of stone.

Pleasure 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Emotional 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Physical 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Spiritual 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Preferences: type used

_____ on / off 0

_____ on / off 0

_____ on / off 0

_____ on / off 0

The Innocent

The innocent contributes and is dealt a total of two preferences, and all the innocent's preferences are turn-ons.

Pleasure 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Emotional 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Physical 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Spiritual 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Preferences: type used

_____ on 0

_____ on 0

The Legend

When narrating, the legend may re-roll a emotional die.

Pleasure 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Emotional 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Physical 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Spiritual 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Preferences: type used

_____ on / off 0

_____ on / off 0

_____ on / off 0

_____ on / off 0

The Noble

The noble may re-roll one die when the subject of an action using law of the team.

Pleasure 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Emotional 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Physical 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Spiritual 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Preferences: type used

_____ on / off 0

_____ on / off 0

_____ on / off 0

_____ on / off 0

The Servant

The servant may re-roll one die when narrating an action using law of the committee.

Pleasure 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Emotional 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Physical 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Spiritual 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Preferences: type used

_____ on / off 0

_____ on / off 0

_____ on / off 0

_____ on / off 0

The Other

Make Your Own: _____

Pleasure 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Emotional 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Physical 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Spiritual 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Preferences: type used

_____ on / off 0

_____ on / off 0

_____ on / off 0

_____ on / off 0

Laws of Love Cheat Sheet

- **Law of Pleasure** - Equal or Above $\rightarrow +1$
- **Law of Glass** - Emotional \rightarrow Physical \rightarrow Spiritual
- **Law of Steel** - Physical \rightarrow Spiritual \rightarrow Emotional
- **Law of Light** - Spiritual \rightarrow Emotional \rightarrow Physical
- **Law of Stone** - Double or Above $\rightarrow -1$
- **Law of the Team** - Invite Teammates up to Revealed & Only One of Each Die Size and Type
- **Law of the Committee** - Extra Subjects up to Revealed \rightarrow One Roll, Use Worst Results for Each Color
- **Law of Preference** - Revealing After Roll \rightarrow Red = Turn-on Doubles, Black = Turn-off Reverses & Narrate Revealed Turn-on \rightarrow Doubles
- **Law of Experience** - More Revealed \rightarrow Modify a Die by 1
- **Law of Self** - Roll Either Emotion or Physical *or* Reduce One Pleasure by d4