

GREY RANKS



Section 1. The territories occupied by German troops shall be subject to the authority of the Governor General of the occupied Polish territories, except insofar as they are incorporated within the German Reich.

Section 2. (1) I appoint Reich Minister Dr. Frank as Governor General of the occupied Polish territories. (2) As Deputy Governor General I appoint Reich Minister Dr. Seyss-Inquart.

Section 3. (1) The Governor General shall be directly responsible to me. (2) All branches of the administration shall be directed by the Governor General.

—Adolf Hitler, 12 October 1939

It is my sincere wish to serve God and Poland with the whole of my life, to give my willing help to other people, and to obey the Scout and Guide Law. I also swear to you that I shall serve with the Grey Ranks, I shall keep the secrets of the organization, follow orders and not risk my life.

—The Scout and Guide Oath

War is not a thing one wants.

—Hans Frank, 18 April 1946

Dedication

Tę grę dedykuję Szarym Szeregom, z całym moim respektem i podziwem.

(This game is dedicated to the *Szare Szeregi*, with all my respect and admiration.)

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GREY RANKS

by Jason Morningstar

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Janek and Jadwiga, caught in the act beneath a statue of Zawisza, the Black Knight.

Credits

Production

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Grey Ranks in a Nutshell

In this game, you will assume the role of a young Polish partisan before, during, and after the disastrous 1944 Uprising against the Germans. Together with your friends, you'll create the story of a group of teens who fight to free their city, one of countless Grey Ranks "crews" that take up arms. Your characters—child soldiers—will have all the faults and enthusiasms of youth. Across sixty days of armed rebellion, they will grow up fast—or die.

The story you create is informed by many factors. Grey Ranks has a chapter structure, and each of ten corresponds to a specific date in 1944. A broadcast of the Polish underground radio station, Radio Lightning, prefaces each chapter and provides some background. In addition to Radio Lightning, you'll choose historical and dramatic elements that pique your interest to include in each scene. The game is collaborative, and together with your friends you'll work to create challenging, exciting, and poignant scenes for your crew—some mission-oriented, and some strictly personal.

As the game progresses, success becomes increasingly difficult and you'll be faced with difficult choices. Is achieving a goal worth destroying the thing your character holds dear? How will reputations change over time as youngsters have adulthood thrust upon them? The emotional state of your crew is tied to the grid, which tracks their individual condition as they are drawn to the opposing extremes of love and hate, enthusiasm and exhaustion. Success or failure will pull them in unexpected directions, and where these strong currents intersect lie death and heartbreak.

 **New to Roleplaying?**
Don't sweat it—if you follow the instructions for framing scenes and handling dice, you'll be fine! One thing to note is the way dice are described in the rules: d4 means a four-sided die, d12 means a twelve-sided die, and you can probably figure out the dice in between. If you have questions, bring them to the Bully Pulpit Games forum or send us mail at info@bullypulpitgames.com.

A Strong Word of Caution

Grey Ranks is a game that addresses mature themes. It is essential that you and your friends have an open discussion before play to establish comfort levels and ways of handling difficult subject matter, should it arise. Discuss your group's comfort with topics such as racism, anti-Semitism, and totalitarianism. Specifically bring up Nazism and the Holocaust, and how the fate of Poland's Jews will (or will not) factor into play.

Love and the portrayal of teenage sexuality are central to the game. Violence by and toward children, including death, is also central. While neither of these aspects can be removed from play entirely in a game about child soldiers, they can be addressed more or less obliquely.

It's possible that everyone will be open to any situation that arises in play, but it is equally possible that someone will have limits about what they wish to explore and experience. As a group, you may want to draw a hard line concerning particular sorts of content, expressly forbidding their appearance in play. Alternately, you may have topics that you prefer to draw a veil over—allowing them to occur, but keeping them strictly off-camera. Common “lines and veils” material includes sexual violence, torture, and casual racism, all of which could easily appear in a game of Grey Ranks.

How to Use This Text

There are sidebars with two sorts of additional material throughout the text. The first sort, marked by the *Kotwica*—the anchor symbol of the Home Army—contains historical background and quotations. Many of the

quotes are from Hans Frank, who served as Governor General of occupied Poland and was tried and executed for his crimes after the war. The second sort, marked by a lightning symbol, contains comments and suggestions for making your game great.

You don't actually need to read the history and background material. Jump straight to the rules in part two if you prefer—they begin on page 27. Part one is there to provide context and detail for those who want it, and can also serve as a reference in play if you suddenly need a street name or bit of detail.

Preparing to Play

Grey Ranks is designed for four players. You can play with three or five, but it works best with four. If you have more than five, split into two groups and run parallel games, maybe switching a character or two from group to group between sessions. Every player in a Grey Ranks game will create and play a character of his or her own. There is no game master role—everyone has equal authority and responsibility at the table.

A full, ten chapter game can be played out in three sessions. Shorter, single-session games are also possible (see page 78 for suggestions). In general, plan on roughly an hour per chapter.

At the table, you'll need a single copy of the grid (page 135), and a unique token for each player. The Radio Lightning transcripts (page 87) should be handy, as should the situation generation lists (page 93; you can bookmark these if you like, or make hard copies). You'll want to have a few dozen dice around, too, with sides ranging from four to twelve.

⚡ Global vs. Personal

To play Grey Ranks is to be saturated in a very particular time and place—63 days in and around Warsaw, Poland, from high summer until the early frost, in 1944. There is a tragic and enormous sweep of history behind the events you'll take part in, but you won't be expected to be conversant in the geopolitics of the Second World War. The game is set up to provide enough salient detail on the fly to satisfy the need for verisimilitude. Of course the more you know, the more you can contribute, and there is a lot of in-depth back-story to absorb should you be so inclined. This is the global view—explore it, incorporate it, and don't worry about mangling the language.

Conversely, much of the game will focus intensely on the personal view, and for that, the big picture hardly matters. Everyone has known love, and you've probably known the pain of losing love. For the personal view, no preparation is necessary beyond a willingness to remember what it was like to be sixteen.



At the Czerniakowska Street checkpoint, Janek's forged papers almost cost a German soldier his life.

PART ONE: HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

As the Game Begins...

July, 1944. In Warsaw, both German oppressor and Polish oppressed prepare for an uncertain, violent future. The Uprising, long awaited, is only a month away. Germany's defeats on both fronts are bringing his monstrous hubris into stark relief. Millions have been killed. There isn't a person in Poland who doesn't have a relative in a work camp—or a cemetery.

Among the Grey Ranks, the weakening grip of the Germans means greater opportunities to inconvenience and humiliate the hated occupiers. The Uprising is coming. Preparations are in place and missions have been assigned. It's only a matter of time before the real battle begins—an all-out struggle to free Warsaw before the Russians arrive. The Home Army says it will take a week or so, and it will be a splendid, glorious victory.

So what led up to this state of affairs?

Invasion and Occupation

On 1 September 1939, Germany invaded Poland and started the Second World War. Sixteen days later the Soviets began a pre-arranged invasion from the east, and after six weeks Poland ceased to exist. Huge chunks in the west were folded into the Reich; the east was incorporated into the USSR, and the center—including Warsaw—became the General Government, a *de facto* Nazi colony administered by Hans Frank.

✚ *Principally it can be said regarding the administration of the General Government: This territory in its entirety is booty of the German Reich...*

—Hans Frank
15 December 1939

‡ *Poland can only be administered by utilizing the country through means of ruthless exploitation, deportation of all supplies, raw materials, machines, factory installations etc. which are important for the German war economy.*

—Hans Frank
3 October 1939

‡ *Whenever there is the least attempt by the Poles to start anything, an enormous campaign of destruction will follow. Then I would not mind starting a regime of terror, or fear its consequences.*

—Hans Frank
8 March 1940

German policy toward the General Government was brutal—the grand vision was to use the Poles as a vast labor pool, sub-human and subservient. Education past primary school was forbidden and the Catholic Church was suppressed. Poland's Jews were systematically forced into ghettos, and then deported to labor or death camps. Three million were eventually killed.

The Home Army and People's Army

The Home Army (*Armia Krajowa* or AK) was the armed resistance loyal to the Polish government in exile in London. Almost 400,000 men were involved in the Home Army, all in great secrecy. The People's Army (*Armia Ludowa* or AL) was the military wing of the Polish Communist party, and was a puppet of the Soviets. Although the two shared the same general goals, they were constantly at odds. Soviet propaganda depicted the Home Army alternately as cowardly layabouts or fascist tools.

The Grey Ranks

When the Scouts and Guides were disbanded, Poland's youth organizations merged and went underground. The Grey Ranks (*Szare Szeregi*) operated in cells, in a modified version of pre-war scouting units. Since the penalty for being caught while on a mission was severe, parents might not even know what their children were up to. The Grey Ranks were self-sufficient, with their own courier networks, codes, and signals. They served the Home Army when asked, but often operated on their own. The oldest Scouts were formed into highly competent paramilitaries, and at that level the distinction between Scout and soldier began to blur.

Player characters form an operational cell, the smallest unit of organization, known as bees (*pszczoły*), or, colloquially, a crew (*paczka*). A collection of bee groups are the equivalent of a pre-war troop of Scouts or Guides, and all the bees in a neighborhood or village are known as a swarm (*rój*). All the bees in a city are called, appropriately, a beehive (*ul*).

The Headquarters of the Grey Ranks, hidden outside Warsaw, is called the Apiary (*Pasieka*). The Commander, Stanislaw Broniewski, is code-named *Orsza*. There are twenty beehives in occupied Poland, connected by a network of young couriers.

Youth in the Grey Ranks are assigned cells with others of their age. The youngest are called the *Zawiszacy*, after the famous Polish knight Zawisza Czarny. Children under 15 form the core of the *Zawiszacy*, and are not allowed to take part in active resistance activities. They are couriers, letter carriers, and—when on their own—pranksters.

The core members of the Grey Ranks are the fifteen to seventeen year olds, and it is on these youth that the game focuses. These cells, known as Battle Schools (*Bojowe Szkoły*) are given more dangerous tasks than the *Zawiszacy*—disinformation and propaganda actions, minor acts of sabotage, and general mayhem. Battle Schools are not expected to engage in active resistance, but the desperate circumstances of the Uprising make everyone a soldier.

Assault Groups (*Grupy Szturmowe*) are really paramilitary units that answer directly to the Home Army. They are formed into battalions and engage in large-scale sabotage, training for the day the general Uprising is called for.

⌘ (*The General Government is) closing all educational institutions, especially technical schools and colleges, in order to prevent the growth of the new Polish intelligentsia. The Polish Scouting Association and Association of Girl Guides have been disbanded. All youth associations within the General Government are hereby dissolved.*

—Hans Frank
3 October 1939

In many ways the Assault Groups are elite, highly motivated special forces within the Home Army, and take intense pride in their roles. Player characters might aspire to join an Assault Group, perhaps the famous battalions like *Zoska*, *Parasol* or *Wigry*, all of which play key roles in the Uprising.

War in the East

⌚ *Once we have won the war, the Poles, Ukrainians and all other people living around can be made into mincemeat, or anything else, as far as I am concerned.*

—Hans Frank
12 January 1944

⌚ *Severe measures must and will be adopted against Jews leaving the Ghettos. Death sentences pending against Jews for this reason must be carried out as quickly as possible. This order according to which every Jew found outside the Ghetto is to be executed, must be carried out without fail.*

—Hans Frank
16 December 1941

In late June of 1941, Germany invaded the Soviet Union. The General Government became first the front line, and then the key staging area for the massive battles of the eastern front. Despite early gains, the war in the east was an ill-considered adventure that was to end in disaster. By early 1943 the Soviets were in full offensive mode, pushing back the Germans across the Ukraine.

The Germans recognized that Warsaw was the strategic linchpin in the defense of western Poland. Using forced labor, they began the aggressive construction of fortifications around the city in 1943. This effort was hampered by the Polish underground, which engineered work stoppages and sabotage. Although riddled with concrete pillboxes and barbed-wire-topped bunkers around key German installations, the city was not in any condition to withstand a Soviet mechanized assault.

Throughout the German occupation the Polish Home Army chose to bide its time with selective resistance. A national uprising was the final goal of the Polish secret state. The original plan was to throw the country into chaos in advance of a British assault, but it became obvious by 1943 that this was not going to happen. Poland's liberators would come from the east.

The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

The Warsaw Ghetto rose up in April, 1943, more than a year before the events featured in this game. Thousands of Jewish partisans were killed, and perhaps 50,000 civilians were sent to death camps in the aftermath of the one-sided battle, joining the hundreds of thousands who preceded them. It was a desperate last stand by people who knew their complete liquidation was only a matter of time. It was also the single largest organized resistance to the Final Solution. The Warsaw Ghetto uprising was a humiliating episode for the Nazi regime, and provoked a savage response. By July 1944, the former ghetto was little more than a smoking, empty ruin.

In some ways the ghetto insurrection was antecedent to the general uprising of 1944, but the two should on no account be mistaken for one another. It's worth noting that a handful of ghetto survivors took up arms again in Warsaw to fight beside Home Army partisans. Regarding the courage and conviction of these people you can draw your own conclusions.

The Threat of Liberation

Poland and the Soviet Union had no love for one another. At various times in her history Poland was occupied or owned by imperial Russia, and a bloody war had been fought across their border following World War One, ending little over twenty years before the German invasion. In most quarters hatred of the Nazis overpowered hatred of the Soviets, but only Polish communists—and their People's Army—were excited by the prospect of “liberation” by the Soviets.

⚡ How the fate of Poland's Jews is addressed is an important part of your group's pre-game discussion, but this game, very consciously, is not about the Holocaust.

⌘ *As a matter of fact, the unfortunate Polish nation wanted nothing else but to live undisturbed by their two big neighbors. The Uprising, which broke out as the Red Army was approaching, was only intended to secure the future independence of Poland. Now, however, the Soviets were sitting close by Praga, the suburb of Warsaw, on the right bank of the Vistula River. The Soviets were watching, and not grudgingly, how the last class of Polish leaders and intellectuals were being slaughtered. They even prohibited the Anglo-American alliance, which wanted to help the insurgents, from using their airports.*

—Leutnant Hans Theime
Wehrmacht intelligence staff
203rd Infantry Division



For their part, the Soviets were very clear about their objectives—driving out the Germans and making Poland a puppet state. To this end the NKVD, the Soviet secret police, made a point of executing or imprisoning Polish officers whenever they encountered them. At Katyn Forest near Smolensk, 27,000 Polish officers, priests, and intellectuals were executed. This was widely known in Poland and led to the government in exile severing relations with the USSR in 1943.

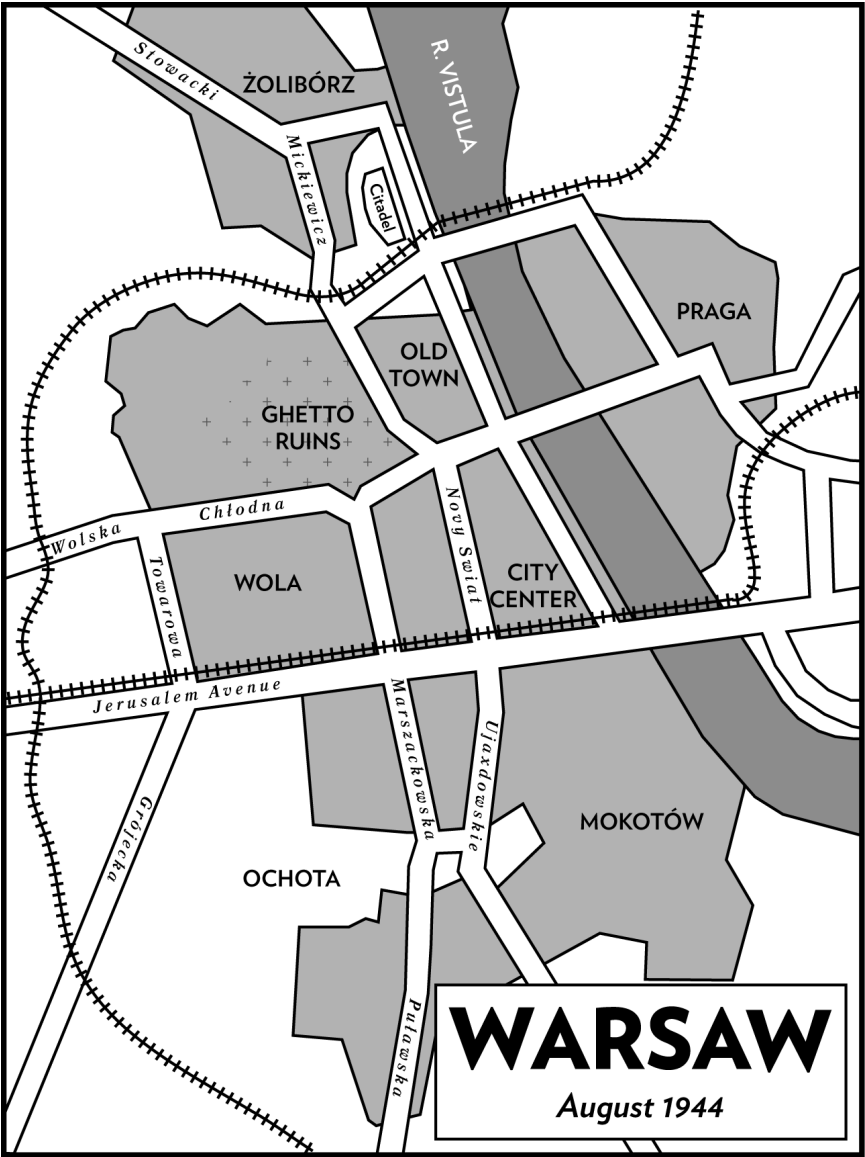
When the Soviets reached the old Polish border, the government in exile was faced with a difficult decision—to initiate a costly uprising in cooperation with the treacherous, murderous USSR, or see the Home Army be branded cowards and quislings. The Soviets demanded action by Polish partisans and ridiculed the Home Army as Soviet armor rolled toward Warsaw. For their part, the Home Army had long had a plan for a general uprising. In English, it was “Operation Tempest.” In Polish, it was *Plan Burza*.

Plan Burza

The Home Army, determined to greet the Soviets as guests rather than liberators, finally roared into action on 1 August, 1944.

In Warsaw they numbered perhaps fifty thousand, but years of German occupation and scant covert support meant that they were miserably equipped—at best, they had one weapon for every two soldiers. Warsaw’s machine shops had spent months manufacturing guns by hand, and Molotov cocktails were far more prevalent than grenades. Throughout Warsaw there were a grand total of seven belt-fed machine guns in Polish hands.

⚡ Chapter One begins a month before the uprising, on 1 July 1944. Open rebellion begins in Chapter Three.



(Grey indicates area under Home Army control)

Things did not begin auspiciously. The Germans were alerted by an informant an hour in advance, and the uncoordinated fighting began in daylight. German police were rapidly reinforced, and many Home Army objectives—most critically the *Okęcie* aerodrome south of the city—were never achieved. The City Center, Old Town, and Wola districts enjoyed the greatest successes, and these formed the core of the free city.

The Germans, furious over the stubborn resistance of Warsaw throughout the occupation, issued a brutal response. Hitler ordered the city to be recaptured and then completely razed—literally erased from the map. A campaign of terror began, designed to break the Home Army's will to fight. It included the mass execution of forty thousand civilians, the deliberate bombing of hospitals, and summary execution of captured soldiers. Rather than crush Warsaw's morale, these atrocities did just the opposite. Against unbelievable odds, the Home Army held on.

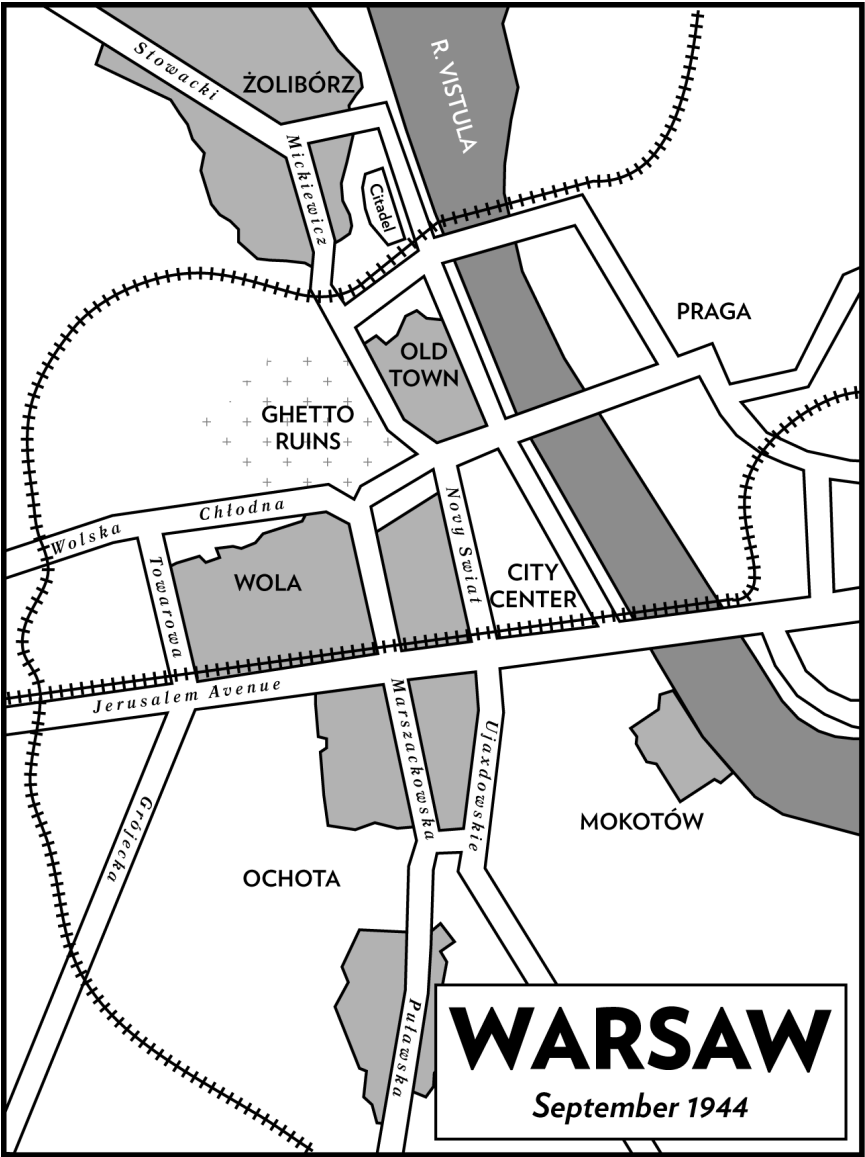
A fight that had been planned to last no more than seven days showed no signs of stopping. The battle for Warsaw's streets took place at close range and was horrific, with flamethrowers and explosives used indiscriminately. Fighting was often not just block to block, but room to room. August became September, and still the Home Army fought on, gradually giving ground until only Old Town and small adjacent parcels remained in Polish hands.

By mid-September the Soviets, by this time only a hundred meters away across the Vistula River, halted their offensive and watched. British and American planes made futile attempts to air drop supplies. The Soviets denied them permission to use their airspace or fields, and they flew all the way from Italy.

⚡ The initial success of the Polish partisans, and the initial German counter-attack, comprises Chapters Four, Five and Six. Chapter Seven begins on 14 August, as the situation deteriorates into brutal defeat.

✞ *We must not be squeamish when we learn that a total of 17,000 have been shot. We are now duty bound to hold together—we, who are gathered together here figure on Mr. Roosevelt's list of war criminals. I have the honor of being number one.*

—Hans Frank
25 January 1943



(Grey indicates area under Home Army control)

Capitulation

Home Army forces finally capitulated on 3 October, 1944, after 63 days of continuous fighting. During the uprising 18,000 Polish soldiers were killed and twice that many wounded. Perhaps 200,000 civilians died, many in mass executions carried out by German troops and auxiliaries.

Beginning on 3 October, the *Wehrmacht* began disarming the Home Army. Perhaps 5,000—a quarter of the surviving soldiers—managed to slip away and evade internment as prisoners of war. What remained of Warsaw was emptied on Hitler’s order. Perhaps half a million Poles were scattered across the General Government, with 150,000 destined for labor or death camps. The shell of the city itself, again on Hitler’s orders, was systematically demolished block by block. By the time the Soviets “liberated” the city on 17 January, 1945, Warsaw was completely destroyed.

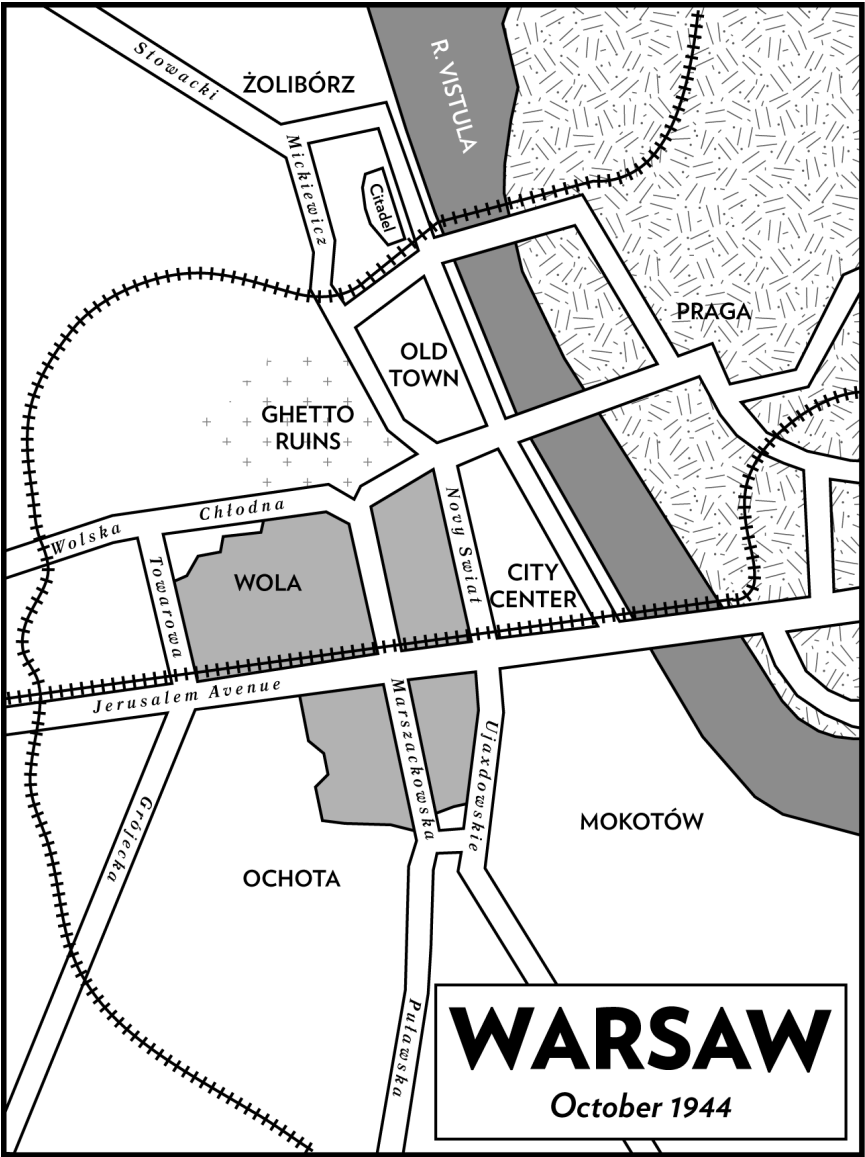
After this insurrection and its suppression, Warsaw will meet a deserved fate—total destruction.

—Hans Frank
5 August 1944

What’s Warsaw Like in 1944?

Warsaw is an old city and a resilient one. Situated at the crossroads of multiple empires, Warsaw was razed by the Swedish in 1655. The Praga district was destroyed, and her people massacred, by the Russians during the Kosciuszko Uprising in 1794. Battles were fought in her streets in 1831, 1915, and 1920, when the Soviets besieged the city.

In 1939, Warsaw was the “Paris of the North”—a beautiful, progressive European city to rival more well-known western capitals. Situated on the Vistula River, which bisects Poland from the Carpathians to the Baltic, Warsaw was, and remains, a transportation hub for Eastern Europe. Her citizens enjoyed



(Grey indicates area under Home Army control; east bank of the Vistula under Soviet control)

a high standard of living, and the city was the cultural and financial center of the nation.

When the Germans invaded, Warsaw put up a fight—and paid dearly for it. The city was besieged on 8 September, 1939, seven days after the German invasion, and viciously attacked from all sides. Luftwaffe bombers demolished civilian areas of Old Town and indiscriminate artillery barrages forced the city to capitulate.

Now occupied, Warsaw is a bit rough around the edges—shortages plague her markets, and the ever-present terror of the German police and their collaborationist auxiliaries heighten the misery. An efficient network of electric trams plies Warsaw's streets. Once the Uprising begins, many of them will be torn from the tracks and used as barricades—serving their city to the last.

Old Town

Old town is ancient, poor and cramped, with wooden shacks attached to older, crumbling buildings. It boasts all the features one might expect of a medieval city—St. John's cathedral, town hall, the royal castle—all of it heavily damaged by Luftwaffe terror bombing in 1939. Old Town long ago ceded its title as the heart of Warsaw to City Center, essentially abandoned to neglect and crushing poverty.

City Center

The true heart of Warsaw (and by extension, Varsovians invariably argue, all of Poland), City Center is both a beautiful and spacious district of broad streets and elegant parks

✚ In this country, we have one point from which every evil emanates. That point is Warsaw. If not for Warsaw in the General Government, we wouldn't have four-fifths of our current problems on that territory. Warsaw was and will be the center of chaos and a place from which opposition spreads throughout the rest of the country.

—Hans Frank
14 December 1943

✚ Interesting places in Old Town: The Waterfront (Wybrzeze Gdanskie). Royal Castle. Saxon Garden. The State Mint. Grzybowski Square. St. Lazarus Hospital. Church of the Holy Cross. Srednikowy Bridge. The ruins of the Powarkowska and Leszno Street ghettos, destroyed in 1943. Pawiak Prison. Brühl Palace.

⚓ Interesting places in City Center: Powisle Electrical Plant. Main Post Office. The Prudential High-rise Building. Central Station. Warsaw Polytechnic. The Bank of Poland. Palladium Theater. National Museum. Piłsudski Square. University of Warsaw. Mirow Hall. City Hall. Poniatowski Bridge. German Telephone Exchange, PAST. Central Police Barracks.

and a district of shocking ruins. The main thoroughfares are punctuated with pricy shops—stocked before the war with luxuries that could otherwise be obtained only in Paris or London. In stark contrast, City Center is also the location of the ghetto, recently home to 380,000 Jews and now a sea of ruins, the result of the brutally suppressed 1943 Uprising. In its Main Train Station, Warsaw boasts one of the most modern and advanced switching yards and passenger depots in Europe. The University and Polytechnic added a dash of the Bohemian to life in City Center, but both are now shuttered. At the start of the Uprising, most of City Center is in German hands, including the infamous Szucha Alley, local headquarters of the Gestapo. Łazienki Park separates City Center from Mokotów.

Żoliborz

⚓ Interesting places in Żolibórz: Gdansk Station (*Warszawa Gdańska*). Wilson Square. The armored ‘*Panzerzug 75*’ train. The Citadel (*Festung Warshaw*). Citadel Bridge.

An example of early urban planning, Żolibórz is the product of the early twentieth century vision of a free nation. Wide, carefully planned streets, plentiful parks and ponds, and thoughtful architecture make Żolibórz an attractive home for professionals and craftsmen. Żolibórz also contains some monolithic apartment blocks and The Citadel, a massive fortification that overlooks both the Vistula and Old Town.

Wola

⚓ Interesting places in Wola: Karceli Square. Powązki Cemetery. The Kammler Works. Police Barracks. The Gęsiówka Prison and KZ *Warshaw* Concentration Camp. Górczewska Street.

Like Mokotów, Wola is a workers borough, consisting of tenement houses and vast apartment complexes. A cramped district, Wola’s tortured urban topography favors the insurgent. Impromptu doors can easily be blown through paper thin walls, and warrens

of interconnected cellars span the whole district. In addition, Wola contains two large cemeteries, which provide plenty of cover and freedom of movement.

Ochota

A very elegant district centered on Narutowicz Square, Ochota was once a hub of Poland's intellectual and scientific elite. Today it is overrun with native Germans and collaborationist Poles. The district is so heavily infested with informers, turncoats, and German agents that the Uprising plans don't even call for its liberation—it is *de facto* enemy territory.

📍 Interesting places in Ochota: The gasworks. The waterworks. The auxiliary telephone exchange. The Marie Curie Institute, a cancer hospital for women. Jerozolimskie Avenue.

Mokotów

Mokotów is a rough-and-tumble industrial area, filled with factories and the tightly-packed tenements and row houses that house their workers. A key strategic objective, Mokotów lies between City Center, the airport, and communication lines to southern Poland.

📍 Interesting places in Mokotów: Warsaw Central Printing Plant. The police command post. Służewiec Industrial District. Czerniakowska Street.

Praga

Praga, across the Vistula from Warsaw proper, is a working-class amalgam of smaller districts. Primarily residential, Praga consists of solid apartment blocks—often communally owned by extended families—and well maintained streets. Wilenski Station is the gateway to points east, and the embarkation point for German troops headed to (and from) the eastern front.

📍 Interesting places in Praga: Wilenski Station. Kierbiedz Bridge. The Warsaw Zoological Garden, empty of animals but, thanks to enterprising zookeeper Jan Zabinski, a way-station for hidden Jews.

Greater Warsaw

⚔ Interesting places
in greater Warsaw:
Kampinos Forest, the
marshes and sand hills,
working farms, abandoned
farms, villas. The modern
Physical Health Academy
is located in Bielany.

The suburban districts, Marymont, Sadyba, Powazki, Bielany and Bemowo, are generally quiet enclaves out of harm's way. The land in the valley of the Vistula is fertile, and farms and vacation villas dot the countryside. Beyond Bielany to the northwest is the Kampinos forest, a huge swath of spruce and pine intermixed with sand hills and marshes. It is the home to countless partisans, who use the forest as a staging area from which to launch strikes on the Germans. Once a partisan is in the Kampinos, it is said, he is home free.

PART TWO: BUILDING A CREW

Creating Characters

Each player will create a character of their own. This process occurs before, during, and after Chapter One, which serves as a prologue.

Before Chapter One

1. Have a discussion about lines and veils (see *A Strong Word of Caution*, Page 8).
2. Choose your character's sex.
3. Choose an age for your character, either 15, 16, or 17.
4. Choose a name for your character, and a pseudonym.
5. Pick a neighborhood for your character to call home.
6. Place your characters on any of the four starting positions on the grid. More than one character can occupy the same space.
7. Choose situation elements from the special Chapter One list.

About Your Character

The character you create in a game of Grey Ranks will be shaped by your own ideas and those of your fellow players. Most of the decisions happen in play. Starting characters are only loosely defined.

⚔ The Real Grey Ranks: Spread out across this chapter are examples of actual boys and girls who served—and in some cases died—in the Grey Ranks during the Warsaw Uprising. Each was chosen as an example of a particular thing held dear (see page 40). Their stories are both horrifying and typical.

You'll contribute the most detail to your character—a name, personality, a background, and perhaps some goals. You'll decide what it is your character holds dear.

⚔ Danusia: *My Friends*

Danuta Raby was an eleven-year-old Girl Guide when the Germans invaded in 1939. She served in the Grey Ranks as a messenger during the Uprising and developed an intense camaraderie with her crew, often partying with other teens until dawn before reporting for duty. She participated in the house-to-house fighting in Wola and shot a German soldier in the head. Danusia spent time in a POW camp after the capitulation but survived the war.

Your fellow players will work with you to fill out your character. They are responsible for defining reputations that make your character unique. This will be based on their observations, along with motivations of their own. You will, of course, help define the reputations of their characters in return.

Finally, the game rules impose certain conditions that are intended to support and guide your collective story. The members of your Crew must:

- Be Polish. Your characters may be devout Catholics, or Jews, or even ethnic German Communists, but they will be Polish.
- Be 15, 16, or 17 years old. Any older, and they're in the Home Army. Any younger, and nobody is going to put a gun in their hands (with tragic and notable exceptions; see Varsovian, sidebar Page 44).
- Be members of the Grey Ranks. Perhaps imperfect or reluctant members, but members nonetheless.
- Want affection. Love and romance can't be avoided, nor should they.
- Be capable of hate. This really shouldn't be a problem. Even if you can't envision it as play begins, enough bad things will happen that by mid-game, hate will seem natural.



*Janek learns a hard lesson outside Number 25 Szucha Street—
Gestapo headquarters.*

⚡ Perhaps you'll read these rules and get excited about playing an emotionally dead 13-year-old Azeri Muslim orphan. Recognize that the narrow focus of this game is intended to expand, rather than constrain, the possibilities in play. Commonality is more important than uniqueness at first—differentiation will occur as the game progresses. Work within these parameters and you'll have a more successful game.

It is worthwhile to take a moment to consider what kind of a person you'd like to play. Consider the things you think are important, and how this can translate into things your character cares about and what makes this person remarkable. Direct your play toward these things in the first chapter and use them as signals for your fellow players, who are going to give your character reputations based on what you show them.

Age

The Grey Ranks are child soldiers, paramilitary auxiliaries to the Home Army. Your character's starting age will be fifteen, sixteen, or seventeen.

Fifteen-year-olds are ambitious and eager to prove themselves. They may still be unclear on the limits of their own abilities and take foolish risks as a result. These characters have little time (and little hope) for romantic entanglement.

Sixteen-year-olds have the same problems, advantages, and motivations as their younger and older comrades, but are at an time of transition in which the extremes are not so harsh.

Seventeen-year-olds are older, wiser, and topped off with raging hormones. These characters urgently want love, even if it leaves them distracted or unenthusiastic on missions. The gloss of youthful immortality has probably worn off.

Character age will impact play. If a character is fifteen, everyone has a responsibility to make mission scenes extraordinarily dangerous and hair-raising. Conversely, the player of a fifteen-

year-old should revel in awkwardness during personal scenes. If a character is seventeen, reverse this. Mission scenes for older teens should more closely resemble soap operas, full of angst as they confront their mortality and personal drama as they find and lose love. For more on scenes, see page 61.

Birthdays

Any fifteen or sixteen-year-old player character can celebrate their birthday once during the game if they wish. This can be combined with other narration as a side-note, or it can be a central theme of the scene. The birthday of a seventeen-year-old could be an appropriate end for a character, as they are inducted into the Home Army (See *When Your Character is Gone*, page 78).

Girl or Boy?

Your character's sex makes no difference—both Boy Scouts and Girl Guides are active members of the Grey Ranks in mixed crews.

Names

Choose a given name from the lists provided, or make your own. Choose a pseudonym as well—every member of the Grey Ranks is required to have one. You'll often refer to each other by these outlandish noms de guerre, so choose—or invent—a colorful one.

Neighborhood

Choose your character's home district. Crews are deliberately mixed so that youngsters may find refuge in multiple neighborhoods if they get in trouble. The choices are based on the Home Army's operational commands:

⌘ Although Girl Guides were sometimes expected to assume more domestic duties—serving as nurses and caregivers—a large number ended up as couriers and sewer guides, two of the most dangerous jobs during the Uprising, and many were killed in combat.

🍌 *Banana: My Faith*

Seventeen-year-old Zbigniew Banas was an enthusiastic Catholic scout even before the war. The leader of his crew, Zbigniew conducted high-risk operations centered around Powisle in City Center, the district of his birth. Banana was known across the city as a fearless courier who never hesitated to take on the toughest assignments, confident in God's protection. He was killed by a sniper on 17 August 1944.

Districts of Warsaw

- I. City Center and Old Town—the heart of the city.
- II. Żolibórz, North Warsaw.
- III. Wola, Northwest Warsaw.
- IV. Ochota, Southwest Warsaw.
- V. Mokotów, Southern Warsaw.
- VI. Praga, on the east bank of the Vistula.
- VII. Greater Warsaw—the suburbs, forests, and farms.

You may choose any of these, or your character can be a refugee from somewhere else. The choice is primarily background information, but you and your fellow players will have plenty of opportunities to introduce particular districts into scenes. Greater Warsaw, Praga and Ochota are effectively never in Polish hands, and the City Center and Old Town are the last bastions of resistance. Wola is the scene of horrific massacres, and Żolibórz and Mokotów both see bitter house-to-house fighting. (See “What’s Warsaw Like in 1944?” page 21)

The Grid

Central to Grey Ranks play is the grid, which tracks the mental and emotional state of the player characters. Each character is represented by some token on the grid, and their position will influence the game in several important ways discussed in Part Three. There are four starting positions on the grid. You should choose one for your character at the

beginning of the game, which is a signal to your friends about what sort of person you want to play. There can be overlap, although ideally each character will embody a different “type.” The placement need not mesh perfectly—it is only a starting point. Place a token on the appropriate space on the grid.

B2 is the best starting position for a physical, patriotic, or outgoing character. It is the space closest to martyrdom.

B4 is the best starting position for an intellectual, religious, or shy character. It is the space closest to nervous breakdown.

D2 is the best starting position for an outspoken, family-oriented, or aggressive character. It is the space closest to derangement.

D4 is the best starting position for a pessimistic, loner, or apathetic character. It is the space closest to suicide.

You’ll need to sketch, copy, or print out a grid for use during the game. Keeping it front and center during play allows everyone to instantly reference the general state of mind—and relative peril—of every player’s character.

Situation Elements

Although you’ll be using the grid to determine situation elements later in the game, there’s a fixed list for everybody to choose from prior to the first chapter. This list is at the beginning of the situation elements chapter, on page 93. Everyone should choose an element from this table that interests them to incorporate in Chapter One. If anyone chooses a character as a situation element, remember to write down their name for later use.

⚡ After you’ve played Grey Ranks a few times, go ahead and choose situation elements from the list associated with your character’s grid position for Chapter One. The special list for Chapter One is there to provide some commonality and kick-start the game with a good, balanced set of elements.

Wanda: *My Family*

Celina Pastuszko was the daughter of a wealthy family that chose to stay in Warsaw during the Uprising. At seventeen, she volunteered her parents flat at 11 Zurawia Street as a field hospital and communications outpost. Celina worked in her own home as an untrained nurse and medic, supporting both the Grey Ranks and the Home Army Bartkiewicz group. She was killed by artillery fire on 4 September 1944.

The Crew: Before Chapter One

DAVE: OK, I'm glad you guys could make it tonight. Let's get down to business here. We're going to rock out with some Grey Ranks, right?

SOPHIE: We're down for a full game, so that's three sessions. Sounds good to me.

DAVE: Right. Let's talk for a second about lines and veils. Up front, I'm really uncomfortable with sexual violence.

JOEL: Me, too. Let's just keep that out of our game completely. Hard line.

DAVE: Cool. Anything else?

SOPHIE: Mark, what about animals?

MARK: You're right, that could totally come up. It hadn't occurred to me, but it's a sore point. Animals getting hurt or killed—is it all right if we just keep that off-screen?

DAVE: Absolutely. I know we talked on and off all week about the history, fascism, the ghetto uprising and stuff—anything else we need to cover?

MARK: We are ready to go, Dave!

DAVE: All right, hold your horses, Mark. If something starts to feel weird or stressful, just remember we can stop and talk about it. Now who is playing who?

The four players check out their character sheets, pencils in hand. They consult the

lists of names starting on page 120.

SOPHIE: I know who I want to be—an older girl. Jadwiga. She's a seventeen-year-old from...Old Town, the heart of things.

DAVE: Sort of my opposite. I was thinking about a youngster, a bit of a clown. Janek, fifteen, from Mokotów.

MARK: Right on, guys—that's a good pair already. I want to play a girl named Irena; everybody calls her Irka. She's sixteen, from a working-class family.

DAVE: Maybe from Wola.

MARK: Wola, sounds good. Heavy fighting there, perfect.

JOEL: My guy is also sixteen. His name's Robert, but everybody knows him by his code name—"Pelikan."

SOPHIE: That's an awesome code name.

JOEL: He's from Żolibórz and he's very serious. Which is a nice segue to the grid. I think Pelikan is going on D4—sort of grim and mysterious. And Dave, Janek's obviously going on B2—he's totally going to be the enthusiastic comic relief.

DAVE: You read my mind, Joel.

SOPHIE: D2 for Jadwiga—she's tough and experienced.

MARK: As opposed to Irka, who is shy, shy, shy. She's an innocent slip of a girl. B4 for her.

♣ **Goliat: *My Country***

Julian Eugeniusz Kulski served in the Grey Ranks as an under-age partisan throughout the occupation. The son of Warsaw's mayor, Julian had a long history with the resistance prior to the Uprising—he'd even spent time in the Gestapo jail in Szucha alley. During the Uprising, he and his crew fought in Żolibórz before the order to surrender came. He was fifteen.

DAVE: Everybody happy with their characters so far?

SOPHIE: I can already see some interesting possibilities. Let's play chapter one!

DAVE: Easy, there, Sophie. We need to pick some situation elements first.

They consult the situation list for Chapter One, starting on page 93.

DAVE: Let me see. Ah: "A letter authorizing the bearer to break curfew."

SOPHIE: Nice. OK, good stuff—I'm picking "Jadwiga Ruffowa, patriotic slut."

MARK: No way!

SOPHIE: It's right there, and it totally refers to my character. I told you she was experienced.

MARK: Nice one, Sophie. That's fantastic. I'm picking "Gdansk station, amid a sea of German refugees from the east."

JOEL: "We're from different worlds, you and I" for Pelikan. I'll write these all down so we can refer to them.

Chapter One: Prologue

Play out Chapter One to introduce your characters. Since there are no extra characters yet, each scene should be exclusively focused on the crew of player characters. Chapter One, as an extended part of character generation,

consists of a single mission without personal scenes. You should use it as a risk-free opportunity to demonstrate the sort of person your character is. Since characters will be assigned reputations and things they hold dear immediately after chapter one, telegraphing preferences in play is a good idea. For instructions on playing out the chapter, see Part Three, beginning on Page 53.

The events in chapter one will be the last care-free moments in the character's lives.

The Crew: Chapter One

MARK: Who's going to read Radio Lightning?

DAVE: You are, Mark! You've got that killer radio voice. Let's hear it!

Mark reads the transcript for Chapter One with dramatic flair.

DAVE: OK, who's going to be named leader?

MARK: Why, you are, Dave! You've got that killer commanding stare.

Sophie and Joel gleefully concur. Dave thinks for a moment and flips through the history section beginning on page 11 for ideas.

DAVE: I've got a mission for us. Our crew is going to place stacks of forged German newspapers—promising swift death to anybody who opposes the Home Army—on the Kraków-Warsaw train.

JOEL: Sounds exciting. Fits our situation choices nicely.

⚔ Anna: *My First Love*

Lucyna Maciejewska was a Grey Ranks courier and medic. Her story revolves around her deep love for Zenon, a Scout she met in early 1944. They immediately knew they were meant for one another—she was sixteen and he was seventeen. During the Uprising Lucyna and Zenon were separated, and in the course of her duties she prayed he wouldn't be among the scores of badly injured boys she tended to daily. Zenon was captured and executed on Gibalskiego street in Wola, but not before writing Lucyna a final letter, telling her to wait for him. She survived the war and never married.

DAVE: Let's begin on the train—as we return to Warsaw from Kraków.

SOPHIE: OK. Now, since it is the first chapter, ultimate success is guaranteed—the purpose of Chapter One is to help flesh out our characters.

JOEL: And give us a taste of success!

DAVE: Cynic. Let me kick-start this game with a mission scene for Sophie. Joel, you're in there, too.

Dave sets up a moment early in the mission when Jadwiga and Irka must charm a German feldwebel into letting them enter a Germans-only car on the way back to Warsaw. She asks Joel to play the German, and they role-play approaching the gruff old soldier and coaxing him to let them pass, carrying stacks of newspapers.

JOEL: *Ausweis, bitte?*

MARK: What?

JOEL: For Pete's sake, Mark! It means "your papers, please."

SOPHIE: Oh man, Jadwiga is in trouble—she turns on the sexy. Shows a bit of leg.

JOEL: And is immediately mistaken for a prostitute. Is that cool with you?

SOPHIE: Oh hell yeah!

JOEL: This guy's a straight-laced functionary. He confiscates your obviously forged papers, and locks you in a bathroom while shouting for help.

SOPHIE: That's not good in the best way, Joel.

⚡ What, no conflict?

MARK: Irka drops her newspapers and runs away. She's breathlessly praying as she heads toward the back of the train. She's terrified.

Everyone gets a scene after the conclusion of Sophie's. Irka alerts the rest of the crew, and they make a plan to free Jadwiga while Pelikan distributes newspapers to bored German troops, his mind distracted by thoughts of a girl back in Warsaw and how alienated he feels from his own lively crew. Eventually only one scene remains—Dave's scene for Janek. Dave describes climbing on top of the train and wrenching out a bathroom vent to reach an astonished Jadwiga. He narrates the two of them riding on top of the train into Gdansk station, Janek beaming happily when the Prudential building comes into sight. Jadwiga's so flushed with victory that when a mischievous Janek produces paint and a brush, she agrees to help him add some graffiti to a statue outside Gdansk station. They are discovered and lead a soldier on a merry chase through Jadwiga's old neighborhood.

Well, no dice, anyway—conflict is always encouraged. You don't get to roll any dice until Chapter Two. This actually works out very well in play—you've got an opportunity to showcase your character in preparation for hashing out their reputations and things held dear, which are the only mechanically important bits they possess. One of your friends will be setting up your scene in Chapter One, so be sure to return the favor with a gripping, challenging, memorable scene for them to shine in.

DAVE: And that's a wrap for Chapter One. Anybody want a soda?

⚡ For more on mission scenes, see page 64.

After Chapter One

1. Choose a thing you hold dear for each character, based on what you learned in the first scene. The choice is individual but there can be no overlap, so some discussion and give-and-take is necessary. Once the things held dear have been decided, each player should outline why this is important to their character, and what the tangible

symbol of that thing is for them.

2. Choose two starting reputations for each character, working as a group. A player is not allowed to name reputations for their own character (although they can make suggestions). No overlap or duplication is allowed.
3. As a group, create some extra teens—one for each player. Make sure to include at least one boy and one girl. They need not be immediately connected to player characters, but they can be if desired. Assign each of them a reputation from those not chosen for player characters. A single word—“giving” or “cruel” will suffice. Teens you met in the first chapter are excellent candidates for extras.

The Thing Held Dear

There are six things your character might hold dear. You and your friends will each choose one for your individual characters, and they must be unique—they cannot overlap between characters. Faith, patriotism, love and duty are all tightly bound in the choice. It is literally the soul of who your character is. Losing the thing you hold dear will cause a permanent scar.

In play you will be forced to invoke, threaten and eventually destroy these things you collectively hold dear when your characters fail under pressure. The destruction, if it comes, will be complete. The thing you hold dear must have a concrete symbol—St. John’s cathedral, or your mother’s necklace, or your little sister, for example. When you lose it, this symbol will be lost as well, metaphor to the greater calamity. Choose something concrete that can be invested with great meaning, but

that can also conceivably be lost, and share this thing openly so that everyone knows what it is.

The thing you hold dear can appear as often as you like, but it can be introduced three times to specifically provide an advantage in play. The first time it is *invoked*—you must include it in your narration for the scene. Once invoked, the thing you hold dear is fair game for others to incorporate in their own scenes. The second time it is used, it is *threatened*—some danger menaces it. And the final time, it is irrevocably *destroyed*.

The things you hold dear, from a character's point of view, are:

My Faith

Religious life is central to who you are—parish priest, neighborhood church, Warsaw Cathedral, local soup kitchen, not to mention your personal relationship with the Lord are all wrapped up in faith. No matter how you define your faith, losing it represents a personal spiritual crisis of the first order. If you are a Christian or a Jew, for example, losing your faith means that you have stopped believing in God. It is also possible to have—and to lose—faith in world Communism, should you be inclined that way.

My Country

This includes the resistance, the Home Army, and anything related to the larger struggle for a free Poland. Poland is tightly bound up in your identity, and you are a zealous patriot. You treasure symbols of national pride—perhaps your mother's passport, or Bór, the leader of the Home Army, or Zygmunt's Column outside

⚔ **Wojtek: *My City***

Fifteen-year-old Wojciech Wajszczuk fought for a day and a night in Ochota before action in that district became untenable.

With nearly a hundred fellow insurgents, Wojtek tried to make his way through German lines to the safety of Greater Warsaw's thick forests.

There was a pitched battle near the suburban village of Pęcice, in which Grey Ranks scouts intimately familiar with the terrain formed the lead elements.

They were cut to ribbons by German machine guns.

The survivors, including Wojtek, were rounded up.

They were tortured and then summarily executed. Only twenty survived.

the Royal Castle. To lose this is to abandon the very idea of Polish sovereignty—it might cause you to forget your ideals, question authority, shirk your duty, or even betray your friends to the enemy.

My City

Dear Warsaw, Poland's great city and the only place you have ever known. Every square and alley is dear to you. Your city includes family friends, teachers, doctors, and all the people and places that make home, Home. To see what was once one of the most beautiful cities in Europe callously torn apart is heart-rending. Losing this will cause you to cease caring for yourself and your community, to become needlessly destructive, and to further the collapse and ruin.

My Family

This is principally your immediate family—mother, father, grandparents, brothers and sisters. This includes extended family—cousins, aunts and uncles, as well as more distant relatives—perhaps even displaced family completely unknown until they show up in Warsaw. When you lose your family you will probably be justifiably distraught, and you will almost certainly seek to create a new, less-than-healthy “family” as a replacement.

My Friends

This includes your scouting crew and perhaps some dear friends who are not in the Grey Ranks—probably older kids now in the regular resistance, or maybe some younger hell-raising *Zawiszacy*. Since your friends are the most important thing in your life, losing them will probably transform you into a bitter loner.



One way to get a rifle: Janek and Pelikan in a Gibalskiego Street apartment, Wola.

♂ Varsovian: *Zawisza* *turned Soldier*

Witold Modelski earned his prestigious nickname for fanatic devotion to his city during the Uprising.

Lying about his age to become a courier,

Witold demonstrated his fighting skill and was rapidly transferred to the

Parasol battalion and served with distinction, earning the Cross of

Valor. He was killed on 20 September 1944

defending one of the last Home Army strongpoints in City Center. He was twelve years old.

On the other hand, it might lead to attention seeking over-compensation in destructive ways. What do you have to live for, anyway?

My First Love

Your first love is a special person, probably someone active in the Grey Ranks. For this person to be the number one priority reflects either great passion or unhealthy obsession on your part, although you are certainly blind to the subtle distinction. Losing your first love is absolutely devastating. Your first love will never truly be replaced, although God knows you will probably try—again and again, in ever more foolish and ill-considered liaisons.

Reputations

Unlike the thing you hold dear, your reputations reflect the opinion of others. Each character has two initial reputation aspects, and they are chosen by other players. These initial aspects are universally negative. Like the thing you hold dear, there can be no duplication—each choice must be unique to a single character.

As an awkward teen, your character will begin the game with negative reputation aspects, but they will transform into positives over time. Before the Uprising is finished, all characters should have the chance to come into their own. Everyone will grow up fast. With your input, your friends will choose the two aspects of your character's reputation—perhaps she is weak and talkative, but has the potential to grow into a strong, articulate young woman.

At the beginning of a chapter, each player will choose one of their reputations and a d4—this is called the reputation die. It will be used to either contribute to the mission pool

or to resolve the character's personal scene. Regardless of where the die is allocated, the chosen reputation should come into play, for good or ill, in both mission and personal scene, ideally being included in descriptions and conflicts. The die size can also increase. For more on reputations in play, see page 57.

Reputation Suggestions

Below are sixteen suggested reputations from the character's point of view. Feel free to invent your own as well. It's also possible to adjust these—foolish to careful might be interesting, for example. Make sure that there is no duplication between characters.

Ugly to Attractive

At first you seem awkward, or maybe repellent with body odor or bad breath. Maybe you are just plain goofy looking. In time your true beauty will emerge.

Clumsy to Graceful

Clumsy, slow, and inaccurate—that's you. When it counts, you'll prove that you can hammer tacks with a rifle and slip through the rubble without a sound.

Weak to Strong

You're the one who is out of shape, maybe a little fat or a little skinny, maybe hungry or sick. You have hidden reserves though, and will grow strong as an ox once the fighting starts.

Timid To Tough

Some say you are a shrinking violet, or that you won't bear up under pressure. The truth is you are capable of steely resolve and are as tough as nails.

Careless to Careful

Everybody thinks you are preoccupied, thoughtless, or just brazenly trusting in fate to keep you safe. Over time you'll show them that you are capable of making good plans and staying safe.

Excitable to Calm

You're the jumpy one, the worrier, the one who gets over-excited. You can do better if you try, and there will be a point when you find a still place within yourself and let go of all the chaos.

Foolish to Clever

Maybe you do come up with half-baked schemes and crazy ideas. Maybe you look a little ridiculous to everyone else. You're smart, though—and your intelligence will save lives one day soon.

Eye-Catching to Inconspicuous

It's hard to miss you for some reason—maybe you're just loud and annoying, or maybe you are drop-dead gorgeous. Either way, you'll acquire a knack for fading into the background, whether evading a random café sweep or setting up a sniper's nest. This one could also be easily reversed in progression, going from wallflower to sexpot.

Talkative to Articulate

They think you just like to hear the sound of your own voice—maybe you’ve got a dramatic flair, or perhaps you’re just outspoken. Maybe you’re a whiner. But eventually your way with words will become a real asset.

Aloof to Friendly

People think you are stand-offish and a little self-righteous. You’re a little shy, a little taciturn, a little sarcastic. Beneath the bristly exterior you’re brimming over with warmth and wry humor, though—probably black humor, but refreshing just the same.

Immature to Experienced

Sure, you haven’t been around the block like some of the others—you’re a little provincial and spend more time talking than doing. That’s all about to change. Love and war are just around the corner.

Dull to Captivating

You aren’t very interesting. You’re probably unfashionable, maybe a bookworm or overly religious, a little naive. When people dig a little deeper though, there’s a fascinating person underneath just waiting to get out of the home-made clothes—hopefully not literally!

Inept to Talented

Despite your reputation as either a complete failure at everything you attempt or a loud-mouthed know-it-all, or both, you are actually really good at some things. Astonishingly good.

Obsessed to Loyal

At first your slavish devotion to the Underground is a little creepy, a little off-putting. But your zealous demeanor reflects a genuine, passionate loyalty, and that's worth its weight in gold. They'll see that eventually.

Unlucky to Lucky

Everybody thinks you labor under a curse—if something can go wrong, it will, and specifically to you, at the worst possible moment. But God has a plan for you, and in the end He'll keep you safe. Your luck will change when he decides it is time.

Selfish to Resourceful

You may take more than your share, and you may be a little wasteful and inconsiderate, but you give back more than you are given, by far—you'll show them just how good you are at scrounging up essential stuff.

Filling Out the Crew

The final step in character creation is to create a small group of extras. These characters will serve as rivals, foils, and love interests to the newly-established characters authored by the players, so they should be teens. As a group, create one extra per player to start. There should be at least one male and one female. Give these people names, and assign each a unique reputation. In play, they are community property and can be introduced into scenes wherever necessary. Their reputation can also change from negative to positive on a whim—it's intended as a starting point to kick-start their personality. Once you have a core group of interesting folks, you can gradually add more chapter by chapter.

Once you've gone through these steps, characters are complete. Chapter Two and the rest of the game await—go play!

The Crew: After Chapter One

JOEL: Chapter One was pretty fun.

MARK: I really liked Jadwiga getting locked in the train bathroom.

SOPHIE: And Janek messing around with the graffiti was a nice touch. We all got to show off a little.

JOEL: Pelikan was moody and sad. Janek was a goofball. Irka was shy and timid. Jadwiga was ... well, a patriotic slut.

DAVE: Excellent recap, Joel. Let's flesh these guys out. Things we hold dear?

Dave writes down everybody's things held dear on a spare sheet of paper as they are decided.

MARK: My Faith for Irka, no question.

DAVE: And I'd like to claim My City for Janek if that's OK.

SOPHIE: Hmm, she's a patriotic slut—so that's My Country for sure. How about you, moody and sad?

JOEL: You know it's gotta be My First Love!

MARK: Good call. Is it one of us?

JOEL: Mark, would you mind if he has a huge crush on Irka? And she'll be his concrete symbol, the actual thing he

⚡ Don't be shy about populating Warsaw with friends, enemies, family and mysterious strangers—and give them all names! It's extremely useful to establish relationships early in the game. Later on, you can look back and draw on an existing cast of characters to tie your stories together. Need a shop-keep? Maybe it's somebody's father. Maybe that cowardly black marketeer is married to a woman your character idolizes.

holds dear.

MARK: That's absolutely great.

JOEL: Cool. Dave?

DAVE: For Janek, the symbol of his city will be the Prudential Building, tallest in Poland.

SOPHIE: For Jadwiga, it will be her father's medal of valor, which she keeps close to her.

MARK: For Irka, I've got a weird idea. She's got a pacifier—it was the pacifier a nun gave her when she was a baby and she's had it all her life. It reminds her of her faith and she wears it pinned to her shirt.

DAVE: Where'd that come from?

⚡ For more on things held dear, see page 40.

MARK: I saw a photo from the actual Uprising of a girl with a pacifier. It seemed really poignant, kids facing death, but optimistic about the future, being a proper Catholic mom some day.

DAVE: That's really cool, Joel. Can I suggest a reputation for Irka, Mark? How about timid?

MARK: Naturally.

SOPHIE: And excitable!

⚡ For more on reputations, see page 44.

Mark writes down Irka's reputations on the character sheet, and everyone fills in the others as they are decided. Janek ends up with impulsive and ridiculous. Jadwiga is given simple and obvious; and Pelikan gets

aloof and single-minded.

JOEL: Let's work up a few extra characters.

SOPHIE: How about Halina...pretty Halina, whose reputation is eye-catching?

JOEL: She sounds delicious. Competition for Irka, maybe? I'll go with my irritating kid sister Mira.

DAVE: I have one. Slaz, a boy whose reputation is ugly.

MARK: And Ada, a girl whose reputation is clumsy. She'll be trouble.

SOPHIE: I'm going to make Halina Jadwiga's best friend.

DAVE: Fantastic. Let's jump back into it!



The crew celebrates outside the liberated Hotel Adria.

PART THREE: PLAYING GREY RANKS

Anatomy of a Game

Grey Ranks is intended to be played across three sessions. Each session has its own theme—resistance, uprising, and disaster. Each of the ten chapters in Grey Ranks takes place on a specific day during the uprising, and has an accompanying Radio Lightning broadcast (See page 87 for Radio Lightning information.)

Session One: Resistance

- ❖ **Chapter One:** 1 July.
Prologue: Monkey-Wrenching the Occupation.
- ❖ **Chapter Two:** 27 July.
The Nazis Begin to Get Nervous.
- ❖ **Chapter Three:** 1 August.
The Uprising Begins!

Session Two: Uprising

- ❖ **Chapter Four:** 2 August.
Desperate Street Fighting.
- ❖ **Chapter Five:** 4 August.
The High Water Mark of the Uprising.
- ❖ **Chapter Six:** 7 August.
German Tanks against Home-Made Rifles.

⚡ Here's a quick-and-dirty overview of everything you need to think about in each chapter:

1. Listen to Radio Lightning and choose a situation element.
2. Grab your grid and reputation dice. Reputation die starts at d4. Change character's reputation, if you use a reputation d8.
3. Choose a mission leader. If it's you, create a mission.
4. Take a personal scene, allocating one of your dice to it, and give a mission scene to another player, in any order.
5. For the mission scene given you by another player, narrate according to the die size you contribute. Final mission scene? Leader rolls the collective mission dice prior to the scene.
6. After the chapter, if you're leader, single someone out.
7. Move on the grid. Hit an edge? Move clockwise. Hit a corner? Go straight. Singled out? Move twice.

⚡ So you've got mission scenes and personal scenes, and they operate in different ways. How come? Primarily so that every session will have both individual and collective action. Personal scenes exist to showcase and explore a character's internal struggles, and they are ideally woven into the fabric of a huge, shared external struggle.

Session Three: Disaster

- ❖ **Chapter Seven:** 14 August.
Old Town Must Hold.
- ❖ **Chapter Eight:** 2 September.
Old Town Falls. The Sewers Become a Highway.
- ❖ **Chapter Nine:** 10 September.
The Soviets Reach the Vistula and Stop Cold.
- ❖ **Chapter Ten:** 3 October.
Epilogue: Capitulation.

Chapters Two through Nine are the body of the game. Chapters One and Ten serve as prologue and epilogue, and have special rules (See Beginning and Ending, page 55).

A chapter is consists of a number of scenes. Scenes come in two interrelated types—mission and personal. Every player has the responsibility to frame one of each type during every chapter.

Mission scenes are strung together into a collective enterprise which includes all the player characters. It is the action-oriented frame that usually begins and ends each chapter. Every player will have a mission scene—a moment when the spotlight is on their character. Missions are collective, and everyone contributes to group success or failure.

Personal scenes can occur at any time during the mission, interrupting the action, and they are often framed as flashbacks. They are relationship-focused moments affecting individual player characters.

Beginning and Ending

No dice are involved in Chapters One or Ten.

Chapter One, the prologue, takes place a full month before the Uprising. It serves as an extended part of character generation and consists exclusively of mission scenes, one per player, and a successful outcome is pre-ordained. No dice are rolled, and grid positions remain unchanged after its conclusion. For more on Chapter One, see page 27.

Chapter Ten, the epilogue, is every player's opportunity to describe how their character faces capitulation and to describe a future for them—assuming they have survived the Uprising. Chapter Ten should also include a debriefing conversation to address the player's experience with the game and bring up any personal or group issues that may have been discovered in play. For more on Chapter Ten, see page 85.

Procedure for Chapters Two through Nine

Before the Chapter

1. Read and discuss the Radio Lightning broadcast for the upcoming chapter.
2. Every player should choose a situation element based on the upcoming chapter and character grid positions. Share these and note them on scratch paper or the back of the Radio Lightning sheet.
3. Each player grabs a d4 as their character's reputation die and takes the appropriate grid die for the chapter.

⚡ It's worth noting that you have a grid die and a reputation die in each chapter, and a personal scene and a mission scene. Two dice, two scenes. You can apply either die to either scene without restriction. It'll help avoid confusion if you stick to these terms.

4. Choose a mission leader. As mission leader, you will outline the scope and particulars of the mission, with everyone's input. You will also collect dice contributed to the mission as players narrate their mission scenes.

Radio Lightning

⚡ Radio *Blyskawica* (Lightning) actually started broadcasting on 8 August, which in game terms is between scenes six and seven. History has been bent a little in the service of game play.

Radio Lightning was a clandestine radio station that operated throughout the Uprising, relaying information and encouragement to Warsaw's partisans. Each chapter of Grey Ranks has a brief Radio Lightning transcript that should be read out loud. Discuss which aspects of the events mentioned in the broadcast seem interesting and exciting to you as players, and which will be problematic and challenging for your characters. In addition to the situation elements, the broadcasts provide context for the scene. They should serve as inspiration for individual scenes of both kinds.

Two Dice Per Chapter

⚡ Players should grab a d4 for their reputation die by default, and then “upgrade” if they decide to use a larger one-time reputation die later in the chapter (see Using Reputations, page 57).

As a player, you have two dice to use in each chapter—one from your character's grid position and the other from the reputation you choose to use. These dice vary in size from d4 to d12, with a default d4 always being freely available. You should keep them displayed prominently in front of you during play, so that everyone can see at a glance how many scenes remain. You allocate one die toward a mission scene, which is always initiated for your character by another player, and the other toward your own character's personal scene, which you can initiate at any time.

The Grid Die

Each grid position has a die size printed on it. Each player must take a die of the appropriate size at the beginning of the chapter.

The Reputation Die

Using Reputations

A character's reputations both default to d4. You can always contribute a d4 as your reputation die, and doing so is a safe choice because you can “upgrade” at any time. Each reputation also has a d6, d8, and d10 associated with it. These are a one-use resource—when you choose to use one of these dice, it is gone forever. They must be used in sequence, so you cannot use the d10 in a particular reputation until the d6 and d8 have also been used. Although it is generally a terrible idea, a player can “burn” more than one reputation die in a scene if desired.

When you use a reputation's d8, you must also author a positive change to the reputation. Clumsy might become graceful, or—depending on the character's experiences—careful. This is an opportunity for each player to describe a positive change and a maturing outlook for the character.

A character who has already demonstrated the positive side of a reputation can still, by choice or necessity, use the standard d4. Such a character is reverting to childish and unflattering behavior, probably due to unbearable stress. Use the grid position as a guide.

⚡ The reputation die escalation means that you have six dice other than the default d4 to contribute across eight active scenes. Luckily, the d4 is pretty handy in the early scenes, and there's always the thing you hold dear (see *Modifying Die Rolls*, page 72). Running out of high dice in the final scenes will drive your character into a spiral of suicidal depression.

Situation Elements

There are situation elements associated with each grid position in Grey Ranks—ten unique elements for each, plus a special set for Chapter One. These take a variety of forms, some of which may be more compelling to a player than others. Some situation elements are relationship snippets. Others are names of objects, or places, or people. Many are pulled from actual history. There will be a few that are appropriate (and conversely, less than appropriate) at any given point in the game.

Before every chapter, excluding Chapter Ten, each player must choose a bit of situation to offer to the group. Any of the ten elements associated with a player's grid position is acceptable, and elements can be re-used—indeed, reintroducing situation elements from earlier chapters can lead to powerful moments in play.

⚡ It's not a problem if all the situation elements don't get used—it is, in fact, likely to happen. Don't feel compelled to frame a scene that uses a bunch of them, and similarly don't worry if your scene doesn't incorporate any.

Each player should choose and announce the situation element they are offering at the beginning of the scene. Write these down for everyone to review. Any player can introduce or reincorporate any situation element.

The Leader

Players choose a mission leader. When you are appointed leader, you will frame the overall operation based loosely on the Radio Lightning broadcast, situation elements, and your own ideas. The leader position should rotate—it is a player-based consideration and does not reflect actual command within the Grey Ranks (although it could be structured that way—individual crews have a lot of organizational flexibility). The simplest way to handle the leader role is to rotate the duty from chapter to chapter.

The leader has three jobs—to create and sketch out the actual mission, roll the dice in the mission pool before the final mission scene, and single someone out at the end of the chapter (see page 75 for more on singling someone out).

The Crew: Before Chapter Five

SOPHIE: OK, this is the high water mark of the Uprising, folks. Thanks for reading Radio Lightning, Mark. Let's pick cool situation stuff!

DAVE: I've got "A rooftop sniper is picking off Poles that try to reach the district's last functioning water pump."

MARK: I'm choosing "We have a secret now and forever." It's time for Irka and Pelikan to hook up!

JOEL: You think so, Mark? I'm choosing "It's puppy love, nothing more."

SOPHIE: Hubba, hubba! I've got "The Hotel Adria, German-only until this morning."

DAVE: What's the die situation? It's Chapter Five, so twenty is our target number. I've got a d8 from the grid and a d4 that I'm definitely going to turn into a d6 for my impulsive reputation.

JOEL: I've got a d6 from the grid and a d4 for aloof, but I'll be burning my d6 for that for sure.

MARK: d8 grid, and I know I'll be using the d6 for timid.

⚡ What's a good mission?
It depends a bit on you and your friends, but something "big picture" that has the potential to hit on character relationships and things held dear is a good place to start. A good mission is clear, evocative and open-ended: "We've got to find a way to stop a Waffen SS re-supply convoy from making it to Gdansk station" is a good mission.

SOPHIE: d8 grid, d4 for obvious. Jadwiga's seventeen, so I'm all about the personal scenes. I really need to win a personal scene, guys.

JOEL: Can I be the leader? Because I want to frame a really rough mission.

Nobody objects, and Joel rubs his hands with glee.

JOEL: OK, here's what's up. Our crew is part of the attack on the Hotel Adria, which is a fortified German stronghold just down the road from the Prudential Building.

DAVE: Oh, no.

JOEL: If anybody needs a quick d12, that's the thing Janek holds dear—the symbol of the city, the tallest building in Warsaw. So the mission is basically a suicide attack—they are throwing us against hardened machine gun emplacements on the ground floor.

DAVE: Thanks a lot, Joel. What's up with the sniper?

JOEL: I guess we'll find out.

⚡It's very important to remember that nobody is creating a mission scene for their own character. If you've got something unspeakably cool that you want your character to do, you can save it for incorporation into a personal scene.

During the Chapter

1. The chapter begins. The target number for the mission is equal to the chapter number times the number of players. Personal and mission scenes are available for any player motivated to initiate them, in any order. Personal scenes are initiated by a player for their character and are resolved individually at the conclusion of their

scene. Mission scenes are initiated by one player for another player's character. When another player initiates a mission scene for your character, hand your mission die to the leader.

2. The outcome of the mission is resolved immediately *prior* to the last player's mission scene. The mission leader rolls all the mission dice at one time and tallies the total, comparing it to the target number to determine collective success or failure.
3. Any remaining personal scenes can follow the final mission scene.
4. The chapter ends when each character has had a personal and mission scene.

Scenes

Every player character has two moments in the spotlight during each chapter, a personal and a mission scene. There is no proscribed order in which scenes should appear. You should create a personal scene for your own character, although input from other players is of course encouraged. You should also create a mission scene for a character other than your own. The chapter won't end until every character has had one scene of each type.

When you are framing the action you have the right to include anyone you wish. If an extra is brought in, you should assign that character to another player for the duration of the scene. Having the same player portray the same people across scenes and chapters is desirable but not essential.

⚡ You and your friends might find one scene type easier to get your brains around than the other. If you find a bunch of personal scenes "stacking up" at the end of a chapter, for example, spend a few minutes talking about your characters and their goals, dreams, and likely trajectories. If the reverse happens and mission scenes are a source of difficulty, take a few moments to read over some of the history, or browse the situation elements to mine them for ideas.

Personal Scenes

Personal scenes should revolve around a clear goal for which success and failure are both entertaining and interesting options. When the scene reaches the moment of conflict, the player who framed the scene rolls a die to determine the outcome.

Remember that a scene can occur at literally any time—even in the middle of somebody’s scene. In fact, interrupting a nail-bitingly tense moment with a poignant love scene is exactly what players should be striving for.

Personal scenes interrupt the narrative flow of a mission. In contrast to a mission scene, a personal scene should focus on the interior life and growth of the character. Most personal scenes don’t occur in direct progression the way mission scenes do. A good scene might be a flashback to events that happened off-camera during a preceding scene, or perhaps illuminate events before the game began. Each will also have an explicit goal stated by the player, like “I want to steal a kiss from Jadwiga.”

⚡ The classic progression is that of a romance—starting with puppy-love crushes and moving through first kisses, sweethearts, going steady, and finally the intimacy of lovers. Each personal scene can be tied to increasing intimacy with your partner, and success or failure will move the relationship along in interesting and dramatic directions.

Personal scenes can build on previous efforts, chapter by chapter. This can be especially fruitful if you tie a personal scene into your character’s grid position and general attitude.

Re-introducing previously-explored elements is encouraged. Scenes should be crafted to offer a compelling tie-in to, contrast, or commentary on, the mission. For example, perhaps the mission reaches a point where the whole crew is pinned down by machine gun fire. You might narrate the terror your character feels, and immediately jump into your personal scene, which focuses on how

your character overcame the fear of telling his girlfriend he loved her.

Moving in the opposite direction, personal scenes can be used to explore a character's darker side. A growing hatred might manifest itself in a tragic progression from blind obedience through violence, killing, murder, and finally derangement. A character moving in the direction of hate on the grid has a very different story to tell, but one that is equally valid and compelling.

Personal scenes can also tie into reputations, and focus on overcoming obstacles to maturity. Going from excitable to calm can encompass a variety of challenging moments, for example, any of which might make a great scene. If a reputation die is invoked, it should become part of the personal scene.

Outside of thematic exploration, a player can always choose to frame a personal scene around their birthday, perhaps celebrating with the other player characters. The conflict in such a scene could easily revolve around a reputation.

Of course, any of these themes can be explored from chapter to chapter, but a continuing narrative makes for exciting play.

Setting a Goal

A character must have a goal in each personal scene. You'll know when you've hit upon a good goal because it will be interesting regardless of outcome. When the status of this goal becomes crucial for understanding the resolution of your personal scene, roll a die. If you have already had your mission scene, roll your remaining die. If the personal scene

⚡ Stuck for a personal scene? Pick a reputation and frame a scene in which it will come into conflict with another player character's reputation. If your character is lazy and somebody else's character is trustworthy, recall a time when your character's indolence might have caused them to lie for you, and see what happens.

comes first, you have a choice of either die.

Remember that seventeen-year-olds should, in general, be more adept at personal scenes than their fifteen-year-old counterparts.

Resolving a Personal Scene

A roll *over* the chapter number is a success. The character will be moving toward enthusiasm and/or love on the grid.

A roll *under* the chapter number is a failure. The character will be moving toward exhaustion and/or hate on the grid.

A roll that ties the chapter number can be a success or failure at the player's discretion.

For more information on grid movement, see Page 73.

Mission Scenes

A mission is just that—some objective in the Uprising assigned by the Home Army, the Grey Ranks, your current crew leader, or plain desperation. The mission is established by the leader in the chapter. Each player is free to initiate a single mission scene for another player's character, including in it the player characters and extras as they choose (or creating new personalities to appear), and incorporating interesting situation elements. The spotlight character of the mission scene then takes the offered situation and runs with it, giving the leader a die.

⚡ Make your mission scenes strong! They should offer tantalizing opportunities for incorporating well-known extras and previously-visited locations. They should also have the potential to push the spotlight character's buttons, encroach on the things they hold dear, and illuminate their reputations.

Contributing to the Mission

The die size a player contributes guides their narrative—the smaller the die, the better the result should be. Since there is a limited choice of dice to contribute, players will be restricted in the sorts of results they can describe. Here are some guidelines:

Contributing a d4 should carry with it some triumph—something going right for the entire crew, or a critically important personal accomplishment. A good example of using a d4 might be finding a hidden cache of food and weapons, or being mentioned in dispatches to Home Army command.

Contributing a d6 should include some success—a particularly shining moment in the spotlight or a character achieving something worthwhile. A good example of using a d6 might be a moment of heroism and daring, or perhaps receiving a love note from a secret admirer.

Contributing a d8 should indicate some failure—something going wrong for which a character is to blame, or some task in their care being neglected. A good example of using a d8 might be missing a romantic rendezvous because of the demands of the mission—or vice versa.

Finally, contributing a d10 or d12 to the mission pool requires some disaster, probably for the entire crew—something very unpleasant or very tragic for everyone. A good example of using a d10 or d12 might be the death of a comrade.

Remember that seventeen-year-olds are probably not taking any chances, and fifteen-year-olds should be thrown into risky situations constantly.

⚡ This might seem counter-intuitive. The idea is to apply mechanical pressure to narration—making a strong choice to complicate the situation is rewarded. Hopefully there will be some temptation and a difficult decision, since the leader will be watching your contribution to determine who to single out. A situation where the crew has a string of utter disasters ending in success, or a string of triumphs ending in failure, is very cinematic in a Kurt Vonnegut sort of way. It might be more challenging to narrate, and it might stretch the bounds of plausibility, but hey—it's war. Bizarre, cruel, miraculous things happen.

⚡ *Everybody* contributes a die toward the mission. Alive, dead, the final player who hasn't had his scene yet, everybody. That final player is going to know the outcome of the mission, and that's OK.

Mission Scene Resolution

Immediately prior to the final player's mission scene, the mission leader will roll a handful of dice contributed by all the players for the mission.

Missions are collective. The group works together to reach a numeric objective equal to the number of players times the chapter number. Thus, in Chapter Seven in a four-player game, the objective is 28. The mission is a success if the cumulative score, rolled by the leader with dice contributed by the entire crew, is 28 or greater. The mission is a failure if the cumulative score is less than 28. Mission success or failure is shared by all the characters, and will impact their individual movement on the grid. It's up to the player with the final mission scene to tie it all together thematically.

The Crew: Chapter Five

JOEL: Who has a scene?

DAVE: I'll start us off with a mission scene for Sophie.

Sophie hands Mark, the leader, her d4.

JOEL: A d4? That's all you're contributing?

SOPHIE: What are you complaining about? It means I get to make us all look awesome. Dave? What's the situation?

DAVE: So we're starting right in the thick of it. The four of us are pressed against a wall inside a bombed-out printing

PART THREE: PLAYING GREY RANKS

plant. Third floor, plaster and rubble everywhere. There's an ear-splitting crack from somewhere nearby.

JOEL: What time is it?

DAVE: It's six AM.

SOPHIE: We're actually supposed to be at the rally point to assault the Hotel Adria right now.

JOEL: What are we doing in a printing plant, then?

DAVE: Hunting a sniper.

SOPHIE: Oh, yeah. Jadwiga nods to Pelikan and motions toward a doorway. He peers around the corner and, silhouetted against the morning light, is a German sniper team. The shooter and another guy spotting for him, with a little telescope and a sub-machine gun.

JOEL: I've got a knife. That's all I've got.

SOPHIE: We don't actually have any guns at all. I lost my pistol. I'm waving Irka toward another doorway and fixing Janek with a "don't move" stare.

DAVE: Janek's got his fireplace poker, and although he says there's no way you're leaving him out of this, he's terrified.

SOPHIE: We all sneak into position and Jadwiga counts down on her fingers. At zero she and Pelikan rush in!

MARK: Hold up! Stop the action. Cut to a flashback. personal scene.

⚡ Just a friendly reminder that interrupting mission scenes is not only acceptable, it's encouraged.

Mark puts forward his d8.

SOPHIE: Oh, for Pete's sake, Mark!

MARK: Enjoy the suspense. Joel, I want to frame a scene with Irka and Pelikan.

JOEL: Cutting to the chase, huh?

MARK: I've been waiting for this since last session. It's the summer of 1942. Irka's working on a farm outside Warsaw, getting Grey Ranks training at a secret school there.

SOPHIE: She's fourteen.

MARK: Right. And this boy comes in. He's a good looking guy, about her age, and there's some attraction there. His name is Robert. From Żolibórz.

JOEL: He's high class, and too cool to be caught hanging around a religious dork like Irka.

MARK: I like it. Let's set up a scene where she corners him in the hay loft. Are they going to kiss? That's what Irka's goal is.

Mark and Joel play out the scene, with Irka being affectionate and vaguely desperate, and Pelikan being evasive—but not too evasive. Eventually she pins him to a haystack, and the moment of truth arrives.

JOEL: Her face is inches from his. Pelikan can smell her body. It doesn't smell bad at all—she smells like hard work and clean linen. Roll your die, Mark.

PART THREE: PLAYING GREY RANKS

Mark rolls his d8. The result is a three—failure. Mark eyes the character sheet and considers destroying Janek’s thing held dear, but decides instead to invoke his own.

MARK: I’m invoking Irka’s Faith.

DAVE: You realize that if you win this and we lose the mission, Irka’s moving right on the grid, over to a corner, right?

MARK: Yep. We’ll win the mission, no problem. OK, she’s only fourteen, but this guy—he’s the one. She knows it, and he knows it. It’s part of God’s plan. Irka has her pacifier pinned to her blouse like always, and she thinks of Sister Elżbieta. She always spoke about the importance of marriage, about a family—Irka’s almost a grown woman now, and she’s found her man.

Mark rolls a d12; the result is a seven—success! He crosses out “Invoked” for Irka’s thing held dear.

MARK: And she leans in, and they share a brief, awkward kiss.

DAVE: That was sweet.

⚡ For more on personal scenes, see page 62.

MARK: Thanks. Back to killing Germans now!

SOPHIE: Right. As I recall, Jadwiga and Pelikan were making a mad dash to jump the German sniper team.

DAVE: The spotter spins around and sees you. He shouts and reaches for his gun.

SOPHIE: We're falling on them like a sack of hammers. Jadwiga's got a wicked club with nails stuck in it and she whacks him across the forehead.

JOEL: I stab the sniper in the leg. He cries out and flips around, and I stab him again. It's frantic.

SOPHIE: The spotter is momentarily stunned. Of course all this commotion has blown their hiding spot, and now Home Army soldiers are pouring fire into the blown-out windows all around us. A bullet catches the stumbling spotter and he's dead, just like that.

JOEL: I'm wrestling with the sniper.

MARK: He's screaming now, and there's blood everywhere. Bullets are chipping the plaster of the ceiling.

JOEL: I literally shove him out the window. The shooting from below stops and a ragged cheer goes up.

SOPHIE: There's a long moment as we catch our breath. Jadwiga instinctively looks for Janek, who was watching the whole thing with his mouth hanging open.

DAVE: Jadwiga...we gotta go.

Sophie glances at the grid and notices how very close Jadwiga is to the derangement corner.

SOPHIE: She's not done. Jadwiga's hitting the spotter with her club, big, overhand smashes, like she's splitting wood. And with every hit—she's pulverizing

this corpse—she’s saying a different name. Almost a hiss. People she knew, her father, friends. I hope you guys are OK with that.

The rest of the chapter is played out, scene by scene. In Dave’s mission scene the crew succeeds in storming the Hotel Adria thanks to Janek’s heroism. They enjoy a moment of celebration—Sophie’s personal scene has all four characters stomping a Nazi flag into the dirt.

MARK: Joel, I believe you have the final mission scene. I’ve got a good idea, too.

JOEL: Bring it on! (Joel hands Mark a d6.) What’s it going to be, leader? Do we succeed or do we fail? Four of us, Chapter Five, so you better roll up 20.

Mark rolls the collective dice—Sophie’s d4, Dave’s d6, Joel’s d6, and Mark’s d8. The results—1, 2, 6, and 3—total 12, and dismal failure.

MARK: Anybody want to burn a thing held dear? Burn up a reputation die? No? OK, we fail. That’s bad for you, Sophie. Here’s the scene...

⚡ For more on ways to use resources to impact die rolls, see page 72.

Mark narrates a vicious German counter-attack that drives them back to where they started. Despite their early successes, the overall mission fails.

Modifying Die Rolls

Depending on the circumstances, dice can be changed in size up or down or re-rolled entirely. Players won't always want to succeed—particularly in circumstances where success means losing a character. There are only a few ways to change a die roll.

Exposing the Thing You Hold Dear

Exposing the thing you hold dear allows you to re-roll any die already rolled during the scene, using either the same die or a d12. The die you re-roll need not be your own character's contribution. Only the character's player can expose a thing held dear.

Threatening and Destroying Something Held Dear

Threatening and destroying the thing any character holds dear follows the same rule for exposing a thing held dear—You may re-roll any die in the conflict, using the same die or a d12. It's important to note that unlike exposing, you can threaten or destroy another character's thing held dear as easily as your own.

⚡ Why wouldn't you use a d12 for your re-roll? Because sometimes you are going to want the roll to fail.

After the Chapter

1. Note reputation d8's used and subsequent changes from negative to positive.
2. The mission leader should announce who is to be singled out (see page 75), and explain the decision.
3. Note success and failure combinations and move characters on the grid accordingly, in preparation for the next scene. The singled out character moves twice.

Reputation

When the reputation d8 is used, it switches from negative (“aloof”) to positive (“friendly”). (See “Two Dice Per Chapter,” Page 56)

The Grid

The final step in each chapter is to adjust every character’s position on the grid. Every player character moves one space per chapter, and one will move two (See “Singled Out,” Page 75).

A character’s position on the grid indicates the size of a die they have to use in the following chapter, as well as the table from which they draw their next situation element. Success and failure move a character around the grid. The corners of the grid represent desperate, self-destructive extremes of emotion.

There are four directions on the grid—up and down (love and hate), and left and right (exhaustion and enthusiasm).

Dangerous Edges and Deadly Corners

In the upper left corner, where love and enthusiasm meet, is recklessness and martyrdom.

In the upper right corner, where love and exhaustion meet, await nervous breakdown and shell shock.

In the lower left corner, where hate and enthusiasm meet, is derangement and insanity.

In the lower right corner, where hate and

⚡ The grid should occupy a central position on the game table, where every player has access to it. You’ll need different-colored tokens to represent the characters. Character’s grid positions are great story hooks—winning a personal scene moves a character toward love, and losing moves him toward hate. Winning a mission scene moves all the characters toward enthusiasm. Losing moves them toward exhaustion. If somebody is drifting toward suicidal depression, frame a mission scene that gives them a reason to feel hope or despair.

⚡ Let's say your character ends a chapter in grid position A1. She wins both mission and personal scenes, and moves up. If she was in A2, she'd hit the "edge" and move clockwise to A3, but since she's in a corner, she moves from A1 to E1. Moving from martyrdom to derangement is a pretty potent hook for her behavior in the next chapter.

exhaustion meet, is suicidal depression.

If your character reaches an edge of the grid that is not a corner and is supposed to keep going, instead move parallel to the edge in a clockwise direction.

Corners are the only points where characters can "move through" the board. Unlike edge spaces, a character can jump from one corner to another. This isn't a good thing at all.

A character who visits the same corner twice during the game is written out of the story. This should occur the next time the character is in the spotlight—the next chapter at the latest. (See "When Your Character is Gone" page 78). The rules are slightly different for a short game, (also page 78.)

"Written out" could mean death, but it could also mean insanity, capture, crippling injury, graduation to the Home Army on their 18th

Grid Outcomes

The outcomes of personal and mission scenes, when combined, indicate the direction of movement:

- ⬆ **Winning a personal scene and winning the mission** moves a character up one space (toward love).
- ➡ **Winning a personal scene and losing the mission** moves a character right one space (toward enthusiasm).
- ⬇ **Losing a personal scene and losing the mission** moves a character down one space (toward hate).
- ⬅ **Losing a personal scene and winning the mission** moves a character left one space (toward exhaustion).

birthday, or some other permanent end to the character's Grey Ranks tale. This makes corners extraordinarily dangerous, since each is connected to two other corners—moving from one to another, and back, is not difficult. Moving from corner to corner indicates a wild swing in outlook—perhaps hysteria, or depression, or battle fatigue has taken hold.

Singled Out

In each scene, one player character will be singled out, for good or ill. The character singled out is determined by the mission leader immediately after the chapter concludes. As leader, you can choose your own character if you like. You must explain—but never defend—your decision. Unlike the other players, the character singled out moves double on the grid—twice in the same direction. This tends to lead to dangerous, wild mood swings and can be very unpleasant, but it can also be life-saving.

⚡ It's particularly fun to declare the conditions you are using to judge at the beginning of the chapter—perhaps you'll single out the character who puts the fewest other characters in danger in his mission scene. Perhaps you'll single out the character your guy has a crush on.

As the leader, you can use any criteria you like to decide who to single out—character-driven petty jealousy or admiration, a desire to see a fellow player in hot water or snatched from doom, or the whims of implacable fate.

The Crew: After Chapter Five

MARK: Mission over. Time for me to single somebody out. I'm going to go for Janek, because of that crazy stunt you pulled during the mission, and because Dave supplied the chips tonight.

DAVE: Thanks, Mark—Janek moves two on the grid, right past nervous breakdown and skipping over to martyrdom.



Irka and Pelikan escape an artillery barrage beneath the Parish House of the Church of the Redeemer, 37 Marszałkowska Street.

MARK: Glad to help.

SOPHIE: A couple of you guys just went up to a d8 reputation, didn't you?

DAVE: Janek did.

MARK: Everybody saw how he used that coal chute to infiltrate Hotel Adria, and he's killed a man.

DAVE: Right. Janek's nobody's fool now—he's not ridiculous, he's clever. But at the same time he's over in the nervous breakdown corner, absolutely shaken by his horrible experiences. I don't think Janek is going to make it, guys.

MARK: And little Irka's changing, too. She's over there in the nervous breakdown corner, too—that's real bad news. But there was nothing timid about storming a German machine gun nest. She's got a lot to live for, and a burning memory of a passionate kiss to motivate her. She's bold now.

SOPHIE: One last thing—Jadwiga's down in the derangement corner now. She basically beat a guy to death with a spiked club, and she's stopped pretending that it didn't feel good.

⚡ For more on the grid, see page 73.

DAVE: Yikes.

SOPHIE: So, on to Chapter Six? Our mission target will be 24. Our personal scene target is six. We are in sorry shape, guys. I know it's a little early in the game to be burning piles of resources, but can we up our dice a little bit? I'd really like to win a mission here.

⚡ Your departed character, whether alive or dead, is haunting those left behind. Play this up! Perhaps the same situation element re-appears, scene after scene. And don't forget that you are also still available to play extra characters, help with ideas and descriptions, and otherwise participate in game play normally.

When Your Character is Gone

If your character is written out of the story, you still get mission and personal scenes, but they should be about your character's absence. Feel free to include other characters and interact with them as the voice of their lost comrade. Your character's final grid position is an epitaph—draw situation elements from it for the remainder of the game. Reputations are similarly frozen wherever they happened to be when the character made his exit. You'll contribute one of these dice, as usual, to the overall mission. Since your grid position is frozen, winning or losing your personal scene has no mechanical consequence once your character is gone.

Playing a Short Game

There are several options for groups that wish to play a single session of Grey Ranks.

Slice of Life: Completely generate characters (going through the steps required both pre- and post-Chapter One) and jump right into a later scene, playing through three in succession. Playing all of session two (chapters Four, Five, and Six) drops the characters into action and provides a coherent narrative. Shifting to an even later point of attack (six, seven and eight, perhaps) ramps up the difficulty and danger.

Jump Cut: Sample various moments during the Uprising. In this mode, simply choose a chapter from each session to play out. Chapters two, five, and eight are a good combination. Be sure to read the intervening Radio Lightning transcripts if you go this route, to provide some context.

Fast Forward: Accelerate or fine tune play

by simply skipping scenes. If all players are in agreement, simply move past scenes that are either not engaging, or need to be edited for pacing reasons. Keep a balance between personal and mission scenes if you choose this approach, and make sure everybody is skipping an equal number of scenes.

Here are the changes you should make for any one-shot game of Grey Ranks, to maintain a fun level of challenge in any of the suggested modes:

1. Adjust the starting position for all characters on the grid. Have each player select a starting position as usual. Then move the tokens toward one of the adjacent spaces along the edge of the grid. For example, a token in position B2 would move to either A2 or B1, closer to the edge.
2. Mark off both reputation d6's in advance—the first time any reputation is invoked, the character will use a d8 and change.
3. Start with the thing held dear already invoked and ready for threatening by anyone at the table.
4. Change the rule for writing a character out of the story—ending any chapter in a corner means the character is marked—they must be written out before the game ends, although not necessarily in the current scene.

While all these options will be functional, playing a complete, ten-chapter, three session game is highly recommended.

The Crew: Before Chapter Eight

DAVE: Let's recap. Sophie, you hosed me and blew up the Prudential Building last session, costing Janek the thing he holds dear in Chapter Six and getting him killed in Chapter Seven. And then got singled out when Mark could have really used it!

SOPHIE: Hey, we won the mission, didn't we?

JOEL: Making your personal scene Janek's birthday was a nice touch.

DAVE: Thanks. Seemed like the right time.

MARK: I didn't want to fail—Irka moved back to a corner for the second time, so she's going out in this chapter. Man, did I try to avoid that.

DAVE: The dice were against me no matter how hard I tried. Anyway, you're on my list, Sophie—we lost half our crew in the last two chapters.

JOEL: More than half—if Irka's going, Pelikan's going with her.

DAVE: At least Janek was killed in action—he's was on the martyrdom corner, so that was fitting.

JOEL: We'll bury him in Old Town.

MARK: Irka's back to having a nervous breakdown. Here's what I'd like to see happen in Chapter Eight, if it's OK with you, Joel—Irka collapses, shell-shocked. And Pelikan, desperately in love, decides to get her out of Warsaw,

abandoning the crew. They probably won't make it.

JOEL: I like it, but this is gonna be a really short session!

MARK: We still need to see what happens, and how Jadwiga fares. Personally, I've been rooting for her all along. She's a tough old bird!

SOPHIE: Hey!

DAVE: And we'll still be with Jadwiga in spirit, all the way.

SOPHIE: So you aren't really mad at me?

DAVE: No. Well, just a little.

SOPHIE: I'll buy pizza next week, how about that? Let's get this show on the road. Three chapters to go!

⚡ For more on writing characters out of the story, see page 78.

The Crew: Chapter Eight

MARK: Old Town falls and the sewers become a highway. That's where we're at.

Mark reads the Radio Lightning transcript.

DAVE: The target number is 32—man, I'm glad I'm dead.

JOEL: Shouldn't it be 24? The three survivors, times the chapter number?

DAVE: Nope. Janek's position on the grid and reputations are frozen, but I still contribute and frame scenes.

JOEL: That's really weird. Cool, but weird.

SOPHIE: Situation? I'm picking "A nice private attic hideout" just for Irka and Pelikan.

MARK: "A group of Home Army troops has been cut off and is trapped in the sewers," of course.

JOEL: Aw, yeah—"Making love"!

DAVE: "Daniel Vollmann, vengeful surviving Jew."

SOPHIE: I think Jadwiga's going to meet him in the sewers.

They appoint Dave the leader, and he creates a mission involving moving young children through the sewers to safety. Joel frames a mission scene for Sophie and asks Dave to play Daniel Vollmann. Joel and Mark elaborate each other's mission scenes, creating a harrowing trip through the sewers surrounded by danger.

DAVE: OK, Janek's dead and gone, but he's going to be on your mind. Some of these kids are almost as old as he was when he died. Personal scene—a flashback. The first time Jadwiga and Janek met. What was that like, Sophie?

Sophie and Dave play out a brief but charming flashback. Since Janek is dead, Dave doesn't bother to roll a die—his grid position is fixed.

JOEL: Personal scene. The attic bedroom Irka shared with her sister. It's all blown to hell. The roof is literally missing, and houses across the street are on fire—this is Wola, it's firmly

PART THREE: PLAYING GREY RANKS

in German hands, even being here is lunacy.

MARK: Pelikan's there.

JOEL: Oh yeah. Irka's changed. She's broken. She needs help, bad.

DAVE: So you guys are sitting on Irka's little bed, right?

JOEL: Sure.

DAVE: There's a cross-stitch sampler on the wall, and a picture of a pony. It's a child's room.

MARK: We can't get Janek out of our minds—how he died, so horrible. I want to get out of here.

JOEL: And there's the conflict—I want to stay. Remember that Irka's doomed—she hit a corner twice. We're deciding how she leaves the story here. And—since you've tied Pelikan's fate to hers—how he leaves too.

SOPHIE: Guys, this is so sad.

JOEL: They know each other's bodies by now. Pelikan's keeping up a brave facade, right?

MARK: They're holding each other and kissing, like it's the last thing they'll ever do. Which it probably is.

DAVE: Sounds of distant gunfire. A machine gun, like ripping cloth.

Joel rolls a d10 and gets a 6—failure. He and Mark roleplay a heated conversation, which ends with Irka and Pelikan making a run for the forests that ring Warsaw.

DAVE: How is this going to end, guys?

JOEL: We're caught, of course. By RONA soldiers, basically criminals in uniform. They are probably drunk.

DAVE: Lines, guys. Just saying. Remember the stuff we want to keep out of our game.

JOEL: We don't need too much detail here anyway. I think we all get the picture.

MARK: May I? Irka and Pelikan are forced to dig their own graves, and then they are shot.

JOEL: Yeah, that's how their story ends. That seems right.

The Crew: After Chapter Eight

⚡ For more on singling someone out, see page 75.

DAVE: Wow. Everybody OK? To wrap up Chapter Eight, I guess I'm singling Jadwiga out, Sophie, since you are the only survivor at this point.

SOPHIE: No other changes—both my reputations are positive now—no longer simple and obvious, I'm complex and subtle. And loss, loss—Jadwiga's moving down toward hate. Ready for chapter nine? I really want you guys to fill the story with memories. Let's see how haunted Jadwiga is by the friends she's lost.

Chapter Ten: Epilogue

Chapter Ten is not a full chapter—as in Chapter One, no dice are rolled. It’s an opportunity to craft a future for your character, if there is to be any future at all. It’s also a chance to discuss among yourselves the experience of play, highlight particularly fun and challenging moments, and share your thoughts on what transpired.

Before Chapter Ten

Review the first nine chapters, recognizing highlights both in character and out. Re-reading situation elements and lists of extras is a good way to remember details of what happened. Radio Lightning is also helpful.

During Chapter Ten

The chapter begins. Each player with a surviving character has a personal scene to describe how their character faces capitulation and to describe a future for them.

After Chapter Ten

Have a debriefing conversation to address the player’s experience with the game and bring up any personal or group issues that may have been discovered in play. Make a point of also highlighting what was fun and awesome!

⚡ Chapter ten is primarily a chance to debrief and process what has probably been an intense experience. That said, don’t dismiss its value as a tool for resolving your character’s stories in ways you find truthful and satisfying.



Last stand on Filtrowa Street. Janek dies in Ochota.

PART FOUR: RADIO LIGHTNING

Radio Lightning broadcasts are your anchor to the rapidly-changing landscape of the Warsaw Uprising. Be sure to read them aloud before each chapter.

Session One: Resistance

Chapter One: Monkey-wrenching the Occupation

For Sunday, July second, 1944, this is Radio Lightning, voice of a free Poland. We are broadcasting from Warsaw, always one step ahead of the Gestapo. The following two persons have been sentenced to death by the Home Army Special Court: Commandant August Kretschmann of the Gesiówka concentration camp and Igo Sym, an actor who sold out his country for money. Radio Lightning thought better of you, Igo.

We have learned that some enterprising young patriot has managed to distribute forged German newspapers promising swift and certain death at the hands of the Home Army. We have no idea who the perpetrators are, but we salute your zeal. Soon may the day come.

This is Radio Lightning, the voice of the defiant Polish people.

⌚ On July second, Minsk, capital of the Belorussian SSR, fell to the Soviet army, trapping fifty thousand Germans.

Chapter Two: The Nazis Begin To Get Nervous

This is Radio Lightning for Thursday, July 27th, 1944. News flash from Radio Lightning! Four days ago Home Army forces in Lwów began an armed rising in cooperation with our Soviet allies. I have the pleasure to report that today Lwów is liberated. Radio Moscow continues to agitate for a general Uprising in Poland. The Home Army wisely bides its time—people of Poland, the Commander-in-Chief urges patience. You will not need to wait long. Of note this week—the rash of German flags torn down and stamped in the dirt. Also noted—lamp posts on the Poniatowski Bridge boasting brand new “For Hanging Germans” labels. Soon may it come true.

For free Poland, this is Radio Lightning.

Chapter Three: The Uprising Begins!

News flash from Radio Lightning! A message from the Commander-in-Chief, handed to me by a Home Army courier: Soldiers of Warsaw! Today, Tuesday, August first 1944, I have issued the order to begin open battle against Poland’s age-old enemy, the German invader. Today you will carry your arms in the open in order to free your country. Friends and patriots, it is W-Hour! All soldiers report to your rallying points! Late-breaking updates—Battalion KB has been disbanded due to lack of weapons. Attack group Hal is to report to their alternate rally point. Units in the Golski sector are to back up Sosna per original instructions.

Radio Lightning will keep you informed throughout the day—listeners, stay tuned.

Session Two: Uprising

Chapter Four: Desperate Street Fighting

This is Radio Lightning, broadcasting on Wednesday, August second from liberated Warsaw. The news: Despite lack of weapons, Polish forces continue to gain ground. In some places we have broken into German strongholds and captured much-needed arms and ammunition. The fighting is ferocious but spirits are high, and much of Warsaw is liberated at this hour. Grey Ranks couriers have even revived the postal service.

Moscow claims in a broadcast that only Polish Communists are fighting in Warsaw. This is not true. There are no troops of the People's Army engaged in any action in Warsaw. This from the Home Army: Surviving troops of battalion *Czata 49* are to report to Group Radoslaw headquarters.

Stay tuned to Radio Lightning, broadcasting from liberated Warsaw.

Chapter Five: The High Water Mark Of The Uprising

News updates for Friday, August fourth, 1944 from Radio Lightning, free Warsaw: Barricades have been erected throughout the city. Behind each wait determined troops of the Home Army with petrol bottles, which have caused the destruction of many German tanks so far.

The Germans continue their terror tactics. On Krolewska Street many houses have been burned. In one house a score of retired Polish professors were killed by the SS. Despite these

⌘ On 2 August, the First Belorussian Front established a bridgehead over the Vistula below Baranów.

⌘ On 4 August, the Soviet Army reached the Gulf of Riga. The Sixth Guards Army continued to envelop German troops in the Baltic, driving north. The First Belorussian Front stopped to rest and refit one hundred kilometers south of Warsaw.

horrors the morale of Home Army is high. The watch-word: death to the Germans. The Grey Ranks are doing work that is beyond all praise. Many young boys and girls have given their lives. They are keeping up the international tradition of the Scouts and Guides.

This is Radio Lightning.

Chapter Six: German Tanks against Home-Made Rifles

⚔ The Soviets had advanced into the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains, near the Slovak-Hungarian-Soviet border, by 7 August. There was no movement in central Poland.

Radio Lightning war news for Monday, August seventh. A message from the Commander-in-Chief, follows: Poles! The armed struggle for the liberation of the capital has begun. Three days of battle have brought us great successes. The Home Army has conquered the most of Warsaw and set free in every Polish heart enthusiasm for the struggle and faith in its success. Long Live Independent Poland!

The German forces have brutally murdered wounded men and women who were lying in St. Lazarus Hospital in Wolska Street, and Karol and Maria Hospital in Przejazd Street. To our listeners in liberated Europe and across the English Channel—please send us weapons and ammunition as soon as possible.

This is Radio Lightning.

Session Three: Disaster

Chapter Seven: Old Town Must Hold

Radio Lightning, August 14th, 1944. We have received news that the Germans have enveloped and destroyed the Soviet 3rd

Tank Corps at Wolomin, 15 kilometers from Warsaw. A special plea to our friends abroad: Airdrops are badly needed in the center of the city. The Prudential Building on Napoleon Square, the highest building in Warsaw, is completely burnt out. Warsaw is in ruins. In many places one cannot walk on the pavement without treading on fresh graves. Soldiers fighting to defend our barricades are dirty, hungry, and ragged. There are very few who have not received some wound. The morale of the soldiers is deteriorating.

This is Radio Lightning.

Chapter Eight: Old Town Falls and the Sewers Become A Highway

Today is Saturday, September second, and this is Radio Lightning's final broadcast. A message to Sir Archibald Sinclair, Britain's Minister for Air: Sir, in view of the extraordinary conditions we face, I take the liberty of addressing this radiogram directly to you. Sir, the situation here in Warsaw is critical. In a few days' time we shall be completely out of ammunition. Losses are colossal.

Yesterday I spoke to the survivors of a family who had been buried in ruins three times. Three of them were wounded and none of them had had any food for three days. Two of the family had been killed. The one question on all people's lips is: "My God, when will it end?"

Please help us. Radio Lightning signing off.

⌚ Around 14 August, the First Belorussian Front had finally returned to the offensive, driving north toward Warsaw. The Germans enveloped and destroyed the Soviet Third Tank Corps at Wolomin, 15 kilometers from Warsaw.

⌚ The remnants of German forces surrounded in the Kishinev pocket surrendered to the Soviet Army on 2 September. The First Belorussian Front reached Radom, south of Warsaw.

Chapter Nine: The Soviets Reach the Vistula and Stop Cold

A Home Army status report taken from the hand of a dead Grey Ranks courier:

10 September 1944. Food situation critical. Only water is from freshly dug wells. Epidemics are beginning to appear. Many wounded, and many killed. Varsovians living in ruins. Old Town completely destroyed. I personally today had first wash after six days and am considered lucky. Bread practically unheard of. Hospitals are in what were coal cellars a few weeks ago. Conditions are terrible. City Center still in Polish hands. Many streets systematically destroyed house by house. Signs of the Russians across the Vistula—my God, why don't they come?

Chapter Ten: Capitulation

Soldiers of Fighting Warsaw! Today, October third, I have decided to call a halt to the fighting. I hereby ask of all soldiers to obey in good order all commands that will be issued as a consequence of our decision to stop fighting. The civilian population is to obey all evacuation orders issued by me, the commanding officer of the city and the civilian administration. With faith in the final victory of our just cause, believing in our beloved, great and happy country, we will continue to be the soldiers and citizens of Free Poland, pledging allegiance to the flag of the Republic.

—Bór, Commander-in-Chief, Home Army

PART FIVE: SITUATION LISTS

Chapter One

⚡ Remember that you've got a common list for Chapter One, rather than situation elements based on grid positions.

- A brother puts his foot down.
- Maria Grekowa, an agonized neighbor.
- A letter authorizing the bearer to break curfew.
- A sturdy pair of boots, spotted with blood.
- A worker's cafe on Górczewska Street in Wola.
- Jadwiga Ruffowa, patriotic slut.
- Gdansk Station, amid a sea of German refugees from the east.
- Jerzy Nowicki, soft-spoken greengrocer who knows everyone.
- We're from different worlds, you and I
- Your parents want to kill me!

Row A

A1: d12, Martyrdom Corner

- Dozens of Polish children have been rounded up at their primary school and are being used as hostages.

- *SS-Sonderregiment Dirlewanger* is “hunting partisans”—by raping and looting.
- Ayaz Hesuinov, a particularly brutal Azeri officer of RONA, about to commit mass murder.
- Igo Sym, a delightful Polish actor and Nazi informant.
- Daniel Vollmann, vengeful surviving Jew.
- The Saxon Garden bunker, in Old Town.
- The Grzybowski Square checkpoint in Old Town.
- A Piotr Michalowski landscape painting in a gilt frame, stolen from a private collection.
- A valise containing German intelligence intercepts concerning the Soviet army’s plans.
- *SS-Hauptscharführer* August Kretschmann, commandant of the Gesiówka Concentration Camp.

⚓ Elements of Grey Ranks Assault Group Zoska attacked the Gesiówka Prison and concentration camp complex on 5 August, using a captured Panther tank (which they had named “Magda”). They freed 383 prisoners, 348 of whom were Jews.

A2: d12, Approaching Martyrdom

- The sewers beneath Old Town.
- Franciszek and Maria, misguided parents.
- A listening post above Pulsudski Square in City Center.

- A pair of dusty hard candies in colorful wrappers.
- An empty envelope, smelling of perfume.
- Driving away the one you love, for their own good.
- There's no barricade cutting off access to a district, but there needs to be—within the hour.
- A home-made gun, greasy and covered with tiny metal lathe shavings.
- The cellar of the police command post in Mokotów.
- A beautiful midnight blue party dress with a note pinned to the hem.

⌘ Warsaw's sewers were a life-line for besieged defenders in Old Town, and an escape route for thousands. Cramped and dangerous, the endless miles of sewer tunnel required experienced guides, who were more often than not Girl Guides in the Grey Ranks.

A3: d10, Midway between Martyrdom and Nervous Breakdown

- A serious talk about love, patriotism, and family.
- Maria Dunajewski, English teacher and dirty traitor.
- Grzednik's, on Ordynacka Street, a popular restaurant that seems to feed half of Warsaw for free.
- A rooftop above Wilson Square, in Żolibórz.
- Rada Mazowiecki is in labor and needs to be brought to a hospital. She is wanted by the Germans.

- An informant, Janek Weclawek, is on his way to alert the Germans of a planned operation.
- A criminal gang is robbing a neighborhood business.
- Obsession with another person.
- *Unterfeldwebel* Walter Singer, aggressive non-commissioned officer with a battle-hardened squad.
- A gold wedding ring.

A4: d8, Approaching Nervous Breakdown

- We have a secret now and forever.
- Amalia Fissler, an ambitious physician's wife and ardent Nazi.
- The Waterworks and Gasworks in Mokotów.
- A field kitchen with nothing to cook.
- A dented tin of English marmalade.
- A rooftop sniper is picking off Poles that try to reach the district's last functioning water pump.
- A fourteen-year-old deaf boy, Josef Augsberg, has lost his way in hostile territory.
- The Warsaw Special Court has sentenced your cousin to death as an informer for the Gestapo.

⌚ The Home Army maintained secret "Special Courts" that dispensed justice to collaborators, informants, and other pro-German ne'er-do-wells throughout the occupation. The accused were often abducted, tried, and executed on the same day.

- A thick and ancient family album, stuffed with photographs and birth certificates.
- A church on Karceli Square, in Ochota.

A5: d8, Nervous Breakdown Corner

- German police are abandoning Pawiak Prison, releasing hundreds of political prisoners and criminals.
- Elements of *SS-Sturmbrigade Dirlewanger* have fortified a building and are surrounded.
- Grenadier Herbert Müller, nervous foot soldier who misses the Bodensee.
- A lost child named Eva.
- The wine cellar of *Festung Warshaw*, the Citadel, overlooking the Vistula River.
- The “crooked lantern” field hospital.
- “Karl” Mortar, a 132 ton monstrosity capable of penetrating 100 inches of concrete.
- Stuka dive-bombers. Partisans are under strict orders not to waste precious ammunition shooting at them.
- A group of Home Army troops has been cut off and is trapped in the sewers.

⌘ *Dirlewanger stood with his men and laughed. The nurses from the hospital were rushed through the square, naked with hands on their heads. Blood ran down their legs. The doctor was dragged behind them with a noose on his neck...All were lead to the gallows where a few bodies were hanging already. When they were hanging one of the nurses, Dirlewanger kicked the bricks she was standing on.*

— Mathias Schenk
Sturmpionier
SS-Sturmbrigade Dirlewanger

- A badly injured German soldier, Horst Kuhn, is hiding in a ditch.

Row B

B1: d12, Approaching Martyrdom

- Our families don't matter.
- *Obergrenadier* Karl Witt, drunken soldier with something to prove.
- A private garden near the auxiliary telephone exchange in Mokotów.
- Tattered fragments of a Girl Guides handbook.
- An abandoned animal, all skin and bones and sad, rheumy eyes, sits next to a freshly-dug garden grave.
- An explosion has trapped an old German man, Otto Romeike, under a tram.
- A psychiatrist with two patients in tow, Dr. Rudolf Müller, is looking for a third before he evacuates.
- Sr. Lazarus', the only Warsaw hospital that refuses to cooperate with the German military.
- A German garrison in the village of Sadyba, a Warsaw suburb.
- A brief and surreal moment of peace.

⌚ The local and regional telephone exchanges were key objectives during the Uprising. The high-rise PAST Building, housing the German-controlled General Government exchange (*Polska Akcyjna Spółka Telefoniczna*), was at the epicenter of vicious fighting. The Home Army's Kiliński battalion finally captured it on 20 August.

B2: d10, Toward Love and Enthusiasm

- Edmund Telakowski, dashing partisan and liar.
- A resourceful grandparent with a gift.
- My parents are ashamed.
- A notebook crammed with observations of German military movements out of Praga station over four years.
- A best friend steps in.
- Why can't we talk to each other?
- The Bank of Poland in City Center, on family business.
- The Marie Curie Cancer Institute in Ochota.
- Rags, empty wine bottles, and ten liters of gasoline.
- Lacy undergarments.

B3: d10, Signs of Love

- True friends—more than lovebirds.
- Our friends want us to be a couple
- Grandfather's house, in Mokotów's Puławska neighborhood.
- The campus of Warsaw Polytechnic.
- A root cellar containing a happy surprise.
- A lock of hair bound with twine.

⌘ Warsaw Polytechnic's campus was used by the Germans, but underground classes were taught throughout the occupation. 198 engineers were graduated in secret between 1939 and 1945. The campus itself was one of the last bastions of German defense against the Soviet army in October.



A furtive rendezvous: Irka and Pelikan's last kiss, in Irka's ruined bedroom at number 12 Elekcyjna Street, Wola.

- My friends hate her.
- Pranks and flirting.
- Some home-made vodka in shampoo bottles, terrible tasting but potent.
- A chaste kiss, but an important one.

B4: d8, Toward Love and Exhaustion

- Karl-Heinz Lindenau, quiet sympathizer haunted by his past.
- An apartment near the ruins of the Leszno Street ghetto in Old Town.
- German officer's housing in the Polna neighborhood in Ochota.
- A tightly-bound collection of love letters, soaking in the gutter.
- Everyone is interested in our business.
- *Leutnant* Karl Thiel, thoughtful officer ashamed and proud of his duty.
- Her parents' bedroom.
- Wladyslaw Kostecki, wounded martyr with a tale to tell.
- Hearts unburdened, a passionate kiss—perhaps the last one ever.
- A solemn promise.

⌚ The Warsaw ghetto was a sea of ruins by August 1944. The adjacent cemeteries to the west—Jewish and Protestant—became Home Army redoubts and the scene of heavy fighting.

B5: d8, Approaching Nervous Breakdown

- Someone is lying, and she is believing.
- Georg Wohlgemuth, eager journalist who believes he can be apolitical.
- A warehouse adjacent to Mokotów's Łazienki Park.
- The last words of a dead man, written on a wall.
- A marriage certificate, awaiting a single signature.
- A Ukrainian woman, Marunia Kravchenko, forced to gather intelligence in Warsaw, has been captured.
- British and Polish Air Force planes are making poorly-aimed supply drops.
- Goliath remote-controlled mine-tanks. They contain explosives and are driven over barricades.
- An overturned tram in Mokotów's Pulawska neighborhood.
- The death of a hero.

⌚ Heroic efforts were made to resupply Warsaw's fighters. American and British planes flew to Warsaw from Italy, with horrendous losses, because the Soviets refused to allow them to land. Few of the canisters air-dropped in Warsaw found their targets.

Row C

C1: d10, Midway Between Martyrdom and Derangement

- Jerzy Białowiejski, irritating kid with important parents.
- A rail crossing outside the city.

- A butcher shop in Marymont, a rural suburb of Warsaw, decorated with a prominent German flag.
- Badly forged papers.
- Secret documents detailing KEDYW insertion points.
- An Opel truck carrying a squad of nervous Panzergrenadiers has gotten lost in the wrong part of town.
- A bronze statue of General Kosciuszko, Polish hero of the American Revolution, is about to be dynamited.
- A nice private attic hideout.
- The park where you first met, now covered in rubble.
- A well-loved toy airplane.

⌘ Most members of KEDYW (*Kierownictwo Dywersji*, the Directorate of Sabotage and Diversion) are former Scouts from the Grey Ranks. Many of the officers are trained in the United Kingdom and parachute into Poland for operations.

C2: d10, Signs of Enthusiasm

- Everybody said we should get together.
- We can heal the rift between our families.
- My family needs me.
- The Main post office, awaiting a letter.
- The shady grounds of Brühl Palace.
- A locked diary.
- Hearty sandwiches and fresh fruit.

⌚ Cultural life blossomed during the Uprising, particularly in the early days, when life in Old Town returned to a strange reflection of pre-war normality. Newspapers were published, the Grey Ranks ran a postal service, orchestras and theatrical troupes performed. There was a giddy sense of freedom. It was short-lived.

- A supervised visit.
- Fortune telling beneath warm August skies.
- A flower shop in the Długa neighborhood in Old Town.

C3: d8, The Center

- Finishing each other's sentences.
- Old friends—now something more?
- The Polonia football grounds on Konwiktorska Street.
- The sidewalk behind the royal castle in Old Town.
- A hastily-written love note.
- A flamboyant bouquet of cheap flowers.
- The world can wait. We're footloose and fancy-free!
- A well-used concert bassoon in a padded case.
- Stolen beer, still cold.
- Mutual attraction can't be denied.

C4: d6, Signs of Exhaustion

- Uncertainty and insecurity.
- Boating near the Palace on the Water in beautiful Łazienki Park.

- On Srednikowy Bridge beneath the moonlight.
- A tiny box of chocolates.
- A pack of Soviet cigarettes with cardboard filters.
- Mother, we're young and need to have fun.
- Gardening with his grandparents.
- A stack of carefully catalogued American records—Chick Webb, Artie Shaw's Moonglow, and others.
- A pilgrimage medal awarded by Pope Pius XII, tarnished by daily handling.
- Stacks of fake issues of German newspapers, as well as propaganda newspapers and leaflets.

⌘ Half a decade of occupation by the paperwork-obsessed Germans resulted in the Home Army's need for expert forgers. Some pre-war criminals saw their former crimes overlooked in the interest of resistance, and others started as talented amateurs—art students, mostly.

C5: d6, Midway Between Suicidal Depression and Nervous Breakdown

- Hans Tollsдорff, optimistic businessman so fat he can barely stand.
- A brothel in the Stoleczna neighborhood of Żolibórz.
- The Warsaw Central Printing Plant in Mokotów.
- A picnic basket with chocolate bars, salami, fresh fruit, wine, and a glass container full of laudanum.
- A staff car with motorcycle escort.

⚓ *In the large
concentration camps
formed by the Germans
on the city outskirts tens
of thousands of Polish
people are starving to
death, the enemy troops
supplying them with
no food whatever. All
Polish military prisoners
who fall into German
hands are murdered.*

—Waclaw Zagorski
Home Army
Chrobry II Battalion

- A house-to-house search is underway for something too big to hide and too important to abandon.
- Polish collaborationist scum from Lieutenant General Stahel's Warsaw garrison.
- Behind a barricade on Jerusalem Avenue.
- A torn up photograph.
- A Polish flag.

Row D

D1: d8, Approaching Derangement

- Gustav Kleffel, stoic veteran biding his time.
- The Europejski Hotel on Krakowskie Przedmiescie Street in Old Town.
- A pre-occupation Boy Scout leader's cap.
- A hastily-covered corpse.
- There is no more food.
- Home Army troops are retreating past a barricade that must be held with a pair of PIAT anti-tank weapons.
- If the Home Army and the People's Army don't start cooperating, people are going to die tonight.

- A Panther tank. The crew is forcing women to walk along side them as protection from partisan attack.
- The Hotel Adria, German-only until this morning.
- Our fighting is breaking my heart.

D2: d8, Toward Hate and Enthusiasm

- Anna Miesowicz, crippled beauty with a strange talent.
- A brother puts his foot down.
- An automobile bridge on the Krakow-Warsaw road.
- A ragged band of ghetto survivors is learning how to fight.
- A list of suspected collaborators is missing en route to Home Army headquarters.
- Father, she and I were made for each other!
- In the back of an armored, 3-ton Chevrolet German postal service bank truck.
- At the wall of the Powarkowska Street ghetto, with a package.
- A tearful farewell.
- A shared acquaintance muddies the waters.

⌘ This morning I saw tanks in Rynkowa and Ciepla Streets that were moving along behind a crowd of civilians, who were being driven ahead to provide cover for the Germans. Someone gave the order to fire. Some of the civilians were hit and left lying on the pavement.

—Waclaw Zagorski
Home Army
Chrobry II Battalion

D3: d6, Signs of Hate

- It's puppy love, nothing more.
- My parents disapprove.
- The National Museum, in sad disrepair.
- A Marsh on the outskirts of Greater Warsaw, near a fish camp.
- A German-only theater in City Center.
- A single, fragile gladiolus stem.
- A christening blanket.
- A drunken woman near the Under the Palm cafe on Grus Street, begging for a few *złotys* "for her children."
- Late for a funeral.
- A special pass to a German-only theater.

⚔ The Nazis viewed Poles—and Slavs in general—as something less than human, and conspicuously separated them from Germans wherever they could. In Warsaw there were German-only streetcars, movie theaters, and restaurants.

Nur für Deutsche (For Germans Only) was a common—and hated—sign in Warsaw. Grey Ranks pranksters were fond of painting the slogan on cemetery walls and lamp posts.

D4: d6, Toward Hate and Exhaustion

- Dr. Friedrich Uhlig, inquisitive police inspector with a list.
- Henryk Grzedzielski, reluctant hero and enthusiastic womanizer.
- An SS-operated farm outside the city proper.
- An apparel factory opposite the police barracks in Wola.

- Home-distilled 190 proof “bimber,” mixed with raspberry juice.
- Is he just an annoyance, or something more dangerous?
- A steamy make-out session.
- A coward shows his true colors.
- Eavesdropping and distrust.
- The ruins of your living room.

D5: d4, Approaching Suicidal Depression

- Anna Ostrowska, zealous Communist and morphine addict.
- Powazki Cemetery in Wola, a mass execution site.
- A list of Polish collaborators tucked in the frontispiece of a Lutheran bible.
- A full mail-bag belonging to the Scouting Postal Service.
- Somebody is pregnant.
- *SS-Gruppenführer* Reinefarth’s battle group is trying to push through an apartment block.
- A terrified hausfrau, Emma Kraus, is willing to pay any price for safe passage out of Warsaw.
- A freight train carrying horses and other war materiel east.

⌘ *SS-Gruppenführer*
Hans Reinefarth was one of only a handful of German officers who interpreted Hitler’s “raze Warsaw” order literally. His troops methodically killed about 40,000 civilians, many of them in the Wola football stadium.

- The John of God church in Old Town.
- A vicious rival gambles everything.

Row E

E1: d8, Derangement Corner

⚔ The so-called *Verbrennungskommando* consisted of conscripted Poles required to clean up after executions and massacres. Although assisting the Germans with so grisly and demeaning a task was hardly their choice, it didn't stop them from being reviled as collaborators.

- Polish men are working for the Germans, burying the dead. Some call them traitors.
- Tadeusz Stozek, rich coward with something to prove.
- Jan Krukowski, Home Army soldier bearing bad news.
- St. Zofia's Hospital, in Wola on Zelazna Street, which once contained a German police barracks.
- The sewers beneath the Prudential Building in City Center.
- A hidden room in the Krasinskiego neighborhood of Żolibórz.
- Church of the Holy Cross in Old Town.
- A brand new carton of German cigarettes.
- A rucksack stuffed with post cards from Jewish "evacuees" to Auschwitz.
- Men, women, and children are being methodically rounded-up and executed by German police.

E2: d8, Approaching Derangement

- Grenadier Gottfried Keussler, opera singer and guard.
- The fortified Powisle Electrical Plant in City Center, in Polish hands.
- A bucket of unsorted loose ammunition.
- The baroque altar salvaged from a demolished church.
- We're about to be killed, we cannot wait any longer.
- Battle Group Rohr nears the Stawki stores in Old Town. Greek Jews from Salonika work there.
- A truckload of machine-shop-made grenades is moving to a Home Army safe house across town.
- The *Panzerzug-75* armored train, on a rail siding in Gdansk Station.
- A restaurant command post in the Polna neighborhood of Ochota.
- Betrayal.

⌘ In the Twenties and Thirties the Polish army experimented with armored trains, and those that survived the 1939 invasion fell into German hands. Throughout the Uprising one of these sat in Gdansk station as a sort of ersatz strongpoint.

E3: d6, Midway Between Derangement and Suicidal Depression

- Aleksandr Kowalski, all-around suspicious character.
- A cigar box full of clippings and cast-offs from a Home Army forgery shop, the work of a traitor.

⚓ There was a platoon of Home Army volunteers drawn from the residents of Warsaw's Deaf and Dumb Institute. Their sergeant's pseudonym was "Yo-Yo." True!

- Karl Stillger, the paymaster of a group of collaborators, is making a hand-off.
- The 9 *Armee Obercommando* are marching into Warsaw. A vast throng of starving refugees precede them.
- A cattle car packed with camp-bound Jews is stranded, locked, on a siding.
- A hole dug into the foundation of the Pfeiffer tannery.
- The Chestnut Café, in the yard of the Deaf and Dumb Institute.
- A dog-eared pornographic magazine.
- A jeweled swastika brooch.
- A school in the Jerusalem Avenue neighborhood of City Center.

E4: d4, Approaching Suicidal Depression

- Adam Lomnicki, religious bully with a secret.
- The 'Goose Farm' concentration camp, Gesiówka, on the site of the cleared ghetto.
- A stylish black Polski Fiat 508 sedan.
- A crate of ammunition, missing but sought after.
- Making love.
- Heavy shelling has us pinned down.

- An empty Parabellum pistol.
- A box full of anti-venereal disease medical supplies.
- Inside newly-liberated Pawiak Prison.
- A makeshift field hospital in the Appeals Court building on Leszno Street.

E5: d4, Suicidal Depression Corner

- The Fourth Panzer Division, commanded by *Generalleutnant* Clemens Betzel, is rallying near Ochota.
- *SS-Gruppenführer* Heinz Reinefarth, commander of Gruppe Reinefarth, hunting partisans like quail.
- Berta Millberg, a hysterical woman with a blood-chilling story.
- A shattered pump station on the Vistula River.
- Gefreiter Karl Löwe, either a deserter with nowhere to turn—or an Abwehr spy.
- The PAST Telephone Exchange (*Polska Akcyjna Spółka Telefoniczna*) in City Center.
- The nun-staffed Hospital of the Knights of Malta, near Grzybowska Street.
- A cheap ceramic sculpture stuffed with *złotys* and jewelry.

⌚ *A sniper was shooting at us from the roof of a house across the street. We've hit him, he fell down but his leg caught on the construction beam. He was hanging upside down. He lived for a long time before he died. When we were returning, bodies of Poles were scattered all over the streets...in the heat they were decaying rapidly. The sun was covered with dust and smoke. Plenty of flies and worms. We were covered with blood. The uniforms were sticky.*

—Mathias Schenk
Sturmponier
SS-Sturmbrigade Dirlewanger

- A matched pair of simple white gold rings, bound with a lock of hair.
- An “abandoned” German tank, booby-trapped with thousands of pounds of explosives.

PART SIX: SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

Pronunciation Guide and Name Lists

Polish Pronunciation Guide

Vowels

a	as in father
ą	a nasal sound, as in the French word <i>bon</i>
e	as in echo
ę	a nasal sound, something like the en in the French word <i>bien</i>
i	like the i in Juliet
o	as in Oscar
u, ó	as in Zulu
y	like the i at the beginning of India; approaching the German ü

⚡ With apologies to native speakers! This guide uses the NATO phonetic alphabet for reference where possible.

Consonants

The consonants b, k, l, m, n, and p are unchanged from English.

c	like the ts in cats
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Irka and Pelikan are executed by Waffen-SS Brigade RONA Ukrainian auxiliaries.

cz, ć	like the ch in Charlie (ć is softer and more clipped)
g	as in g olf
h, ch	as in h otel, but slightly harder
j	like the y in yankee
ł	like the w in arrow
ń	like the ñ in El Niño
r	lightly rolled
s	like the s in Sierra
sz, ś	like the sh in sh ow (ś is softer and more clipped)
w	like the v in V ictor
z	like the s in bees
ż, ź	like the s in treasure (ź is softer and more clipped)
dż, drz, dź	like the j in J uliet (dź is softer and more clipped)

Dro's Guide to Polish

To get you in the game. Rough language ahead.

“Fuck off!”—*Odpiardol się!*

“Fuck up/ruin”—*spierdolić*

“Get over here!”—*Chodź tu!*

“Get the fuck out of here!” — *Wypierdalać!*

“Good day.” — *Dzień dobry.*

“Good.” — *dobrze*

“OK.” — *Dobra.*

“Goodbye.” — *Do widzenia.*

“Hello!” — *Cześć!* (or *Czołem!* for Scouts and Guides)

“Help!” — *Pomocy!*

“I don’t have a clue.” — *Nie mam zielonego pojęcia.*

“Idiot!” — *Idiota!*

“I’m so hungry I could eat a horse, hooves and all.” — *Jestem tak głony ze zjadłbym konia z kopytami.*

“Look out!” — *Uważaj!*

“No.” — *Nie.*

“No problem. — *Małe piwko* (literally, “small beer”).

“Shit!” — *Gówno!*

“Shit-eater!” — *Gównojad!*

“Thanks.” — *Dzięki.*

“To fuck” (have sexual intercourse) — *pierdolić*

“Yes.” — *Tak.*

Enno's Guide to German

More colorful expressions, so watch out.

"Are you a partisan?" — *Gehoeren Sie zu den Partisanen?*

"Cease fire!" — *Nicht Schiessen!*

"Fucking bandits!" — *Verdammte Banditen!*

"Get reinforcements!" — *Ruf Verstaerkung!*

"Halt! Come here." — *Halt! Kommen Sie hier!*

"Kneel!" — *Knie nieder!*

"No." — *Nein.*

"Papers, please." — *Papiere, bitte.*

"Search these houses!" — *Dursucht diese Haeuser!*

"Shit! Mow 'em all down!" — *Scheisse, metzelt sie alle nieder!*

"Surrender, or we'll kill you all." — *Ergebte euch, oder wir werden euch alle erschiessen!*

"They're children!" — *Es sind Kinder!*

"We're not German, we're Ukrainian!" — *Wir sind keine Deutschen, wir kommen aus der Ukraine!*

"Yes." — *Ja* (or *Jawoll* if obeying a military order)

"You are surrounded!" — *Ihr seid umzingelt!*

Name Lists

Surnames

Augustyńska

Zielewicz

Bartnik

Darda

Czerwińska

Małolepsza

Sawicka

Prochaska

Urbanowicz

Falewicz

Grudzińska

Marynowska

Bińkowska

Frycz

Łęska

Chmurzanka

Świdarska

Zmysłowska

Wysocka

Pastuszko

Stefanowska

Kasperska

Nauman

Laskowska

Kołodź

Więkowska

Sikorska

Jarkowska

Herman

Vorbrodt

Kieffer

Sidorowicz

Dudek

Kordulski

Hłasko

Gołebiewska

Lewandowski

Wajcowicz

Korzeniowska

Strachalska

Pietrasiewicz

Łempicka

Podkomorski

Karwicka

Grzeszczak

Kunicki

Polkowski

Słubicki

Wiwatowski

Sawicka

Hoffman

Kacprzak

Borowicz

Czarnecka

Wojnarowska

Zakrzewska

Ptaszyński

Raciborski

Krauze

Skiba

Kowalski

Pietrzyk

Samosarski

Lewińska

Malento

Kozicki

Dunin

Edelman

Huskowski

Jastrzębska

Butkiewicz

Cegłowska

Jaszczuk

Kabański

Gerbert

Krassowska

Meyer

Michałowska

Olszewska

Saski

Zapadko

Czechwicz

Zborowski

Dąbrowska

Kalinowska

Pindelska	Julia/Jula	Lilka
Góral	Stanisława	Guta
Grabowska	Danuta/Danusia	Jola
Kapusta	Dorota	Żubr
Zwoliński	Aldona/Ada	Nina
Female	Jolanta/Jola	Jenny
Janina/Jasia/ Janinka	Ludwika/Zenka	Jaga
Maria/Maja	Lidia/Lidka	Łosiów
Irena/Irka/ Irenka	Honorata/ Honoratka	Roma
Zofia/Zosia	Wanda	Rafał
Halina/Hala	Elżbieta/Żunia	Magda
Krystyna/ Krysia/ Srysia	Teresa	Monika
Hanna/Hanka/ Hania	Female Pseudonyms	Mewa
Irmina	Joanna	Boja
Alina/Antonia	Tosia	Ola
Kazimiera/Kaja	Diana	Male
Alicja/Ala	Halszka	Adam/Adaś
Eugenia	Kozak	Witold/Witek
Jadwiga	Łucja	Marek
Aleksandra/ Oleńka	Zeta	Jan/Janek
Stefania/Stefa	Małgorzata	Stefan
Walentyna/Wala	Ola	Eugeniusz/ Gienek
Anna	Bronka	Henryk/Henio
Barbara/Beata/ Basia	Diana	Janusz/Janek
	Mała	Jerzy/Jurek
	Danka	Włodzimierz/ Włodek
	Węgielek	Aleksander/Olek
	Poznańska	

GREY RANKS

Zenon/Zenek	Bamba	Wilhelm
Jeremi	Piła	Karl
Tadeusz/Tadzio	Śláz	Johannes
Wacław/Wacek	Granat	Alfred
Bronisław/ Bronek	Rost	Walter
Czesław/Czesiu	Mucha	Klaus
Roman	Gigant	German Female
Sławomir/ Sławek	Elektryk	Lotte
Bogusław/ Boguś	Gurt	Hannah
Juljan/Julek	Mar	Lise
Józef/Józek	Skaut	Bertha
Maciej/Maciek	Zodiak	Edith
Robert	Drab	Bergit
Mieczysław/ Mieciu	Kruk	Julia
Stanisław/Staś	Lot	Stefanie
Kazimierz/Kazio	Łada	Lena
Lech/Leszek	Mały	Susanne
Wiesław/Wiesiu	Jodła	German Surnames
Zygmunt/Zyga	Olcha	Kaufmann
Male Pseudonyms	Pelikan	Pfeifer
Elf	Skiba	Meyer
Grom	Wit	Jäger
Mustang	Zeus	Wagner
Biały	Ryba	Müller
Amor	German Male	Schmidt
Chromby	Jürgen	Becker
	Ingo	Fischer
	Hans	Köhler
	Gerd	

Glossary

Armia Krajowa (AK): “The Home Army.” The armed resistance loyal to the Polish government in exile in London. Almost 400,000 men are involved in the AK. Implacable enemies of the AL, despite their common goals.

Armia Ludowa (AL): “The People’s Army.” The military wing of the Polish Communist Party, backed by the Soviets. Constantly at odds with the AK, despite their mutual hatred of the occupation.

Bór: The code name of Brigadier-General Tadeusz Komorowski, Commander-in-Chief, Home Army.

Bojowe Szkoły (BS): “Battle Schools.” Fifteen to seventeen year olds, male and female, are the core of the Grey Ranks. Prior to the Uprising, *BS pszczoly* were given more dangerous tasks than the *Zawiszacy*—disinformation and propaganda actions, minor acts of sabotage, and general mayhem. Battle Schools were not expected to engage in active resistance, but once the shooting started, all bets were off.

Chapter: (Game term) A full game of Grey Ranks is divided into ten chapters, each of which contains one mission scene and one personal scene per player. Chapter One is the prologue and Chapter Ten is the epilogue.

Die size: The number of faces a die has, from four to twelve. “Increase die size by one” means, for example, to go from a d6 to a d8, the next-larger number of sides.

Dirlewanger, Dr. Oskar: *SS-Oberführer* and commander of *SS-Sturmbrigade Dirlewanger*, an anti-partisan unit composed of German

⌘ The Home Army and the Communist resistance ostensibly had the same objectives—to eject the Germans—but they were bitter rivals in every other respect. The AL took its marching orders from Moscow and enjoyed little popular support. As a Soviet proxy, it spent a good amount of time attempting to defame the AK and simultaneously take credit for its successes.

convicts, deviants, and poachers. Dirlewanger is himself a convicted rapist and child molester.

District: (Game term) A character's home turf, based on the Home Army's military command structure.

Extra: Any person introduced into the game who is not a player's character.

⌚ Governor-General
Hans Frank loathed
Warsaw. On his infrequent
visits, he stayed in the
former Czechoslovakian
legation on Chopin
Street. Ever-mindful of
security, Frank ordered
every man living in the
vicinity to be taken into
protective custody before
he arrived—typically
two thousand men
were arrested.

Frank, Hans: Governor General of the occupied Polish Territories (*Generalgouverneur für die besetzten polnischen Gebiete*). After Hitler, the most hated man in Poland. He issues decrees from a life of great luxury in Kraków, and will end his life at the end of a rope after trial in Nuremburg.

Grid: (Game term) A matrix with love and hate as one axis and enthusiasm and exhaustion as the other, the grid reflects the state of mind of the player's characters throughout the game. Movement on the grid is the result of success and/or failure in mission and personal scenes during the chapter.

Grupy Szturmowe (GS): Assault Groups. Although derived from the Grey Ranks, these are really paramilitary units comprised of eighteen-year-olds that answer directly to the Home Army. GS are formed into battalions and engaged in large-scale sabotage prior to the Uprising.

Mission: (Game term) An event during the Uprising—usually an actual job to be performed by the player's Grey Ranks crew.

Mission Pool: (Game term) The dice contributed by all the players as they are given mission scenes individually. The entire pool is rolled immediately prior to the final mission scene of the chapter.

Mission scene: (Game term) A scene framed by one player for another player's character, furthering the collective mission. The player of the character in the spotlight contributes a die to the mission pool, and the scene is roleplayed, guided by that contribution.

Monter: The code name of General Antoni Chrusciel, Home Army Chief of Staff and commander of the Uprising within Warsaw.

Orsza: The code name of Stanislaw Broniewski, Home Army commander of the Grey Ranks.

Paczka: "Crew." The slang term for a *pszczoly* cell.

Pasieka: "The Apiary." The headquarters of the Grey Ranks, hidden outside Warsaw.

Personal scene: (Game term) A scene created by a player for his or her own character, consisting of some private goal for which success or failure is resolved during the scene through roleplaying and the roll of a die.

Plan Burza: Operation Tempest. The code name for the General Uprising.

Pszczoly: "Bees." An operational Grey Ranks cell.

Reputation: (Game term) Each character has a pair of reputations, which begin negative and slowly transform into positive traits over the course of the game. Reputations, when invoked, provide important but finite in-game resources.

Rój: "Swarm." The equivalent of a pre-war troop of Scouts or Guides. All the *pszczoly* in a neighborhood or village.

⌘ A clandestine visit to the Apiary would make a good mission in an early chapter. Meeting *Orsza* would be a dream come true for patriotic Grey Ranks teens.

⚔ The worst atrocities were not carried out by Germans, but rather by former Soviets. Waffen-SS Brigade RONA (*Russkaya Osvoboditelnaya Narodnaya Armiya*), about 1,700 men strong, was composed of anti-Communist volunteers, former POWs, and Russian deserters. Under the command of Waffen *Brigadeführer* Bronislaw Kaminski, RONA troops went on a rape, murder, and robbery spree that stunned even their Nazi masters. RONA's behavior was so out of hand in Warsaw that the unit was later disbanded and Kaminski executed.

RONA: *Русская освободительная народная армия*, the Russian National Liberation Army, consisting of Russian, Ukrainian, and Azeri troops operating under nominal German control. Anti-partisan specialists and, by all accounts, vicious beasts.

Scene: (Game term) A roleplaying vignette within a chapter. See mission scene and personal scene.

Session: (Game term) A single play session, typically consisting of three chapters.

Stahel, Renier. Lieutenant General in overall command of the pre-Uprising Warsaw garrison.

Szare Szeregi: “Grey Ranks.” Eight thousand former Boy Scouts and Girl Guides scattered across Poland.

Thing you hold dear: (Game term) Both an overarching category and some concrete symbol of it, the thing a character holds dear is an important resource and a potent story hook.

Ul: “Beehive.” All the *pszczoły* in a city. There are twenty *ul* in occupied Poland, connected by a network of *Zawiszacy* couriers.

Vistula: (*Wisła* in Polish.) The broad river that separates the Praga district, on the eastern bank, from the rest of Warsaw.

Von Dem Bach, Erich: *SS-Obergruppenführer* and commander of all German troops suppressing the Warsaw Uprising.

Wehrmacht: The German armed forces.

Zawiszacy: Children in the Grey Ranks under

the age of fifteen, named after the famous Polish knight Zawisza Czarny. *Zawiszacy* are not allowed to take part in active resistance activities. They are couriers, letter carriers, and pranksters.

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Designer's Notes

Grey Ranks has been a labor of love for me, and I'm very proud of it. But it's beautifully laid out because of Patrick, and error-free (heh) because of Steve, and visually stunning because of Jeff. So heartfelt thanks to you guys for breathing life into this game with your talent and dedication.

The game combines many of my passions and interests, and I look forward to learning how you experience it in play. It has been my intention since the beginning to make something that will support a certain amount of empathy and introspection while still remaining captivating and fun. A secondary but personally meaningful goal for me is to shine some light on a tragic and awe-inspiring series of actual events.

I've spent a lot of time thinking about what it must have been like to be sixteen in Warsaw in 1944. What does it mean to serve a doomed ideal? What does it mean to die with a gun in your hands, having never even kissed a girl? More broadly, what are the limits of sacrifice? In some ways this game is my meditation on these questions.

If Grey Ranks intrigues you, I'd encourage you to check out other games with thematic or mechanical similarities. If the romance angle piqued your interest, Emily Care Boss' *Breaking the Ice* and *Shooting the Moon* are two to look for (you could actually play either game using Grey Ranks' setting easily). If you are interested in exploring how war changes a person, Nathan Paoletta's *Carry: A Game About War* enables powerful play. If you were drawn to Grey Ranks by the era and history, Ron Edwards' *Spione* is well worth your attention. If the idea of injecting concrete situation elements is appealing, track down Vincent Baker's *In A Wicked Age*. If exploring the lives of children interests you, Clinton R. Nixon's *The Prince's Kingdom* will put you in their shoes. And finally, if you enjoy GM-less play, Ben Lehman's *Polaris* should not be missed. All these games, as well as the energy of a supportive community of fellow enthusiasts, inform and influence Grey Ranks.

Finally, thanks very much to you for reading and playing Grey Ranks! I'd love to hear about your experiences with it—drop me a line at jason@bullypulpitgames.com, or visit our forums for some lively discussion.



Janek's above-ground grave, Krasinski Square, Old Town.

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Name _____ Pseudonym _____

Age 15 16 17

District..... *Old Town & City Ctr* | *Żolibórz* | *Wola* | *Ochota* | *Mokotów* | *Praga* | *Greater Warsaw*

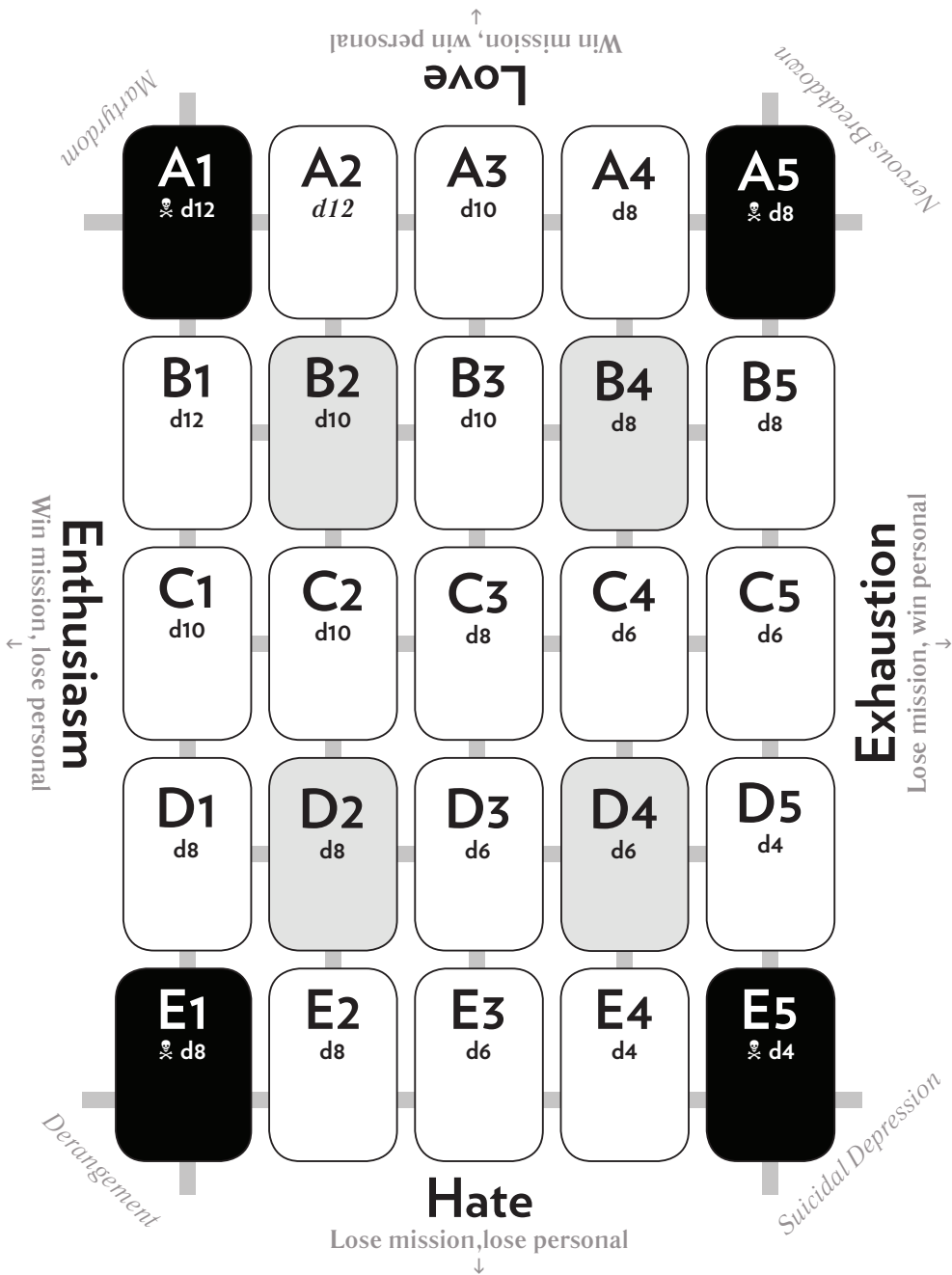
Thing you hold dear *Country* | *City* | *Faith* | *Family* | *Friends* | *First Love*

Symbol _____ Invoked ☐ Threatened ☐ Destroyed ☐

Reputation |
d4 Any time d6 ☐ d8 ☐ d10 ☐

Reputation |
d4 Any time d6 ☐ d8 ☐ d10 ☐







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*Intelligence from
the Committees of
Correspondence, in
Franklin's damn'd
Whist Code...*



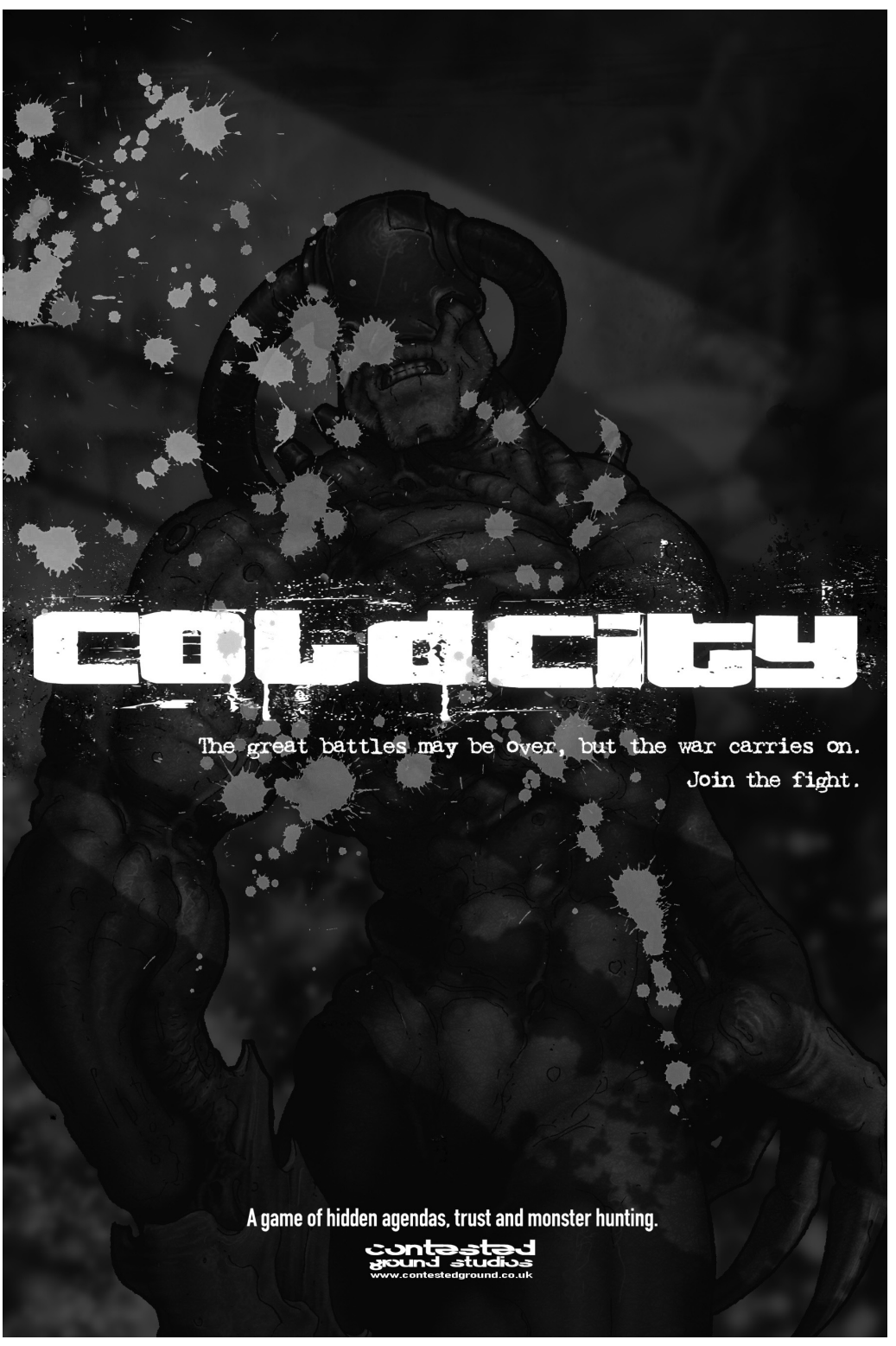
*If I read this
right, today it's
Mohawks, lost
arms caches, and
of course our best
friends the Redcoats.
This situation can't be
ignored.*

*Wake up, Franklin: you're
going to New Brunswick!*

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