

# VOIDHEART SYMPHONY

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Voidheart Symphony v0.1.4 - Full Deck.

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**Orchestra of Oblivion** and **Choir of Souls** by Maria Rivera

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# INTRODUCTION





# WELCOME TO THE AGE OF OBIVION

**There's a wound in the world, and nobody cares.** If they have to step over the homeless on their way to work, if the rich grow ever more wealthy while children starve, if the authorities destroy lives not just through negligence but through malice... isn't that just the way of the world?

You don't have the luxury of thinking that way. Maybe you're a second-class citizen, forced to work yourself to the bone for the money to live. Maybe you have to hide your truth, for fear of what would happen if you were exposed - or maybe you're out, and are living with those consequences every day. Maybe you just can't close your eyes and ignore the suffering.

But the main reason is because you've seen the wound: a strange border between this world and another, tucked away in backstreets and disused stairwells. The taint of the void seeps out, sickening and twisting those unfortunate enough to live nearby. And it seems to conform to the will of the biggest predator in the area, hurting their enemies and victims and bringing them fortune whether they realise it or not.

But, if people are causing pain with unearned power, so what? You're used to having to fight for respect, survival, your safety and the safety of your community. You'll dive into that wound, steal its power and strength, and see how that predator topples when the void abandons them.

And what then? Will you go back to the daily grind, putting out the fires that spread while you were focused on the other realm? Hold close to those dear to you, and form new connections? Or rest and heal, preparing for the next time? Because the wound is still there, and so long as someone is profiting off the suffering of others the void will have plenty of avatars to empower.

# MONSTERS OF THE MODERN AGE

Long ago, there was a castle that invaded our world once each generation, tainting the world until heroes from legendary bloodlines pushed it back. They fought this cycle of invasion and repulsion, until something changed. Maybe one side achieved a great victory, though it's impossible to tell which.

These days there's no gothic castle filled with monsters and blood, and no secret cabal of heroes pushing back the darkness. That nightmare realm's tendrils are spread through our entire society, and instead of a single Vassal it is commanded by a whole feudal system of a hundred different Vassals.

And what of those who fought to push it back? If those heroes still exist, they're not here. Maybe they're busy. We just have the rabble willing to charge into hell's teeth armed with a baseball bat and hope – and if they're to survive, they'll have to take the void's power and turn it on **the castle's** creatures.

## HOW THIS WORKS

**Voidheart Symphony** is a cooperative storytelling game for 3 to 6 players, who'll build up characters and tell their stories together.

Most of the players control a **rebel** - someone who has seen the tendrils of **the castle** spreading throughout their city and lending occult power to predatory vassals, and have decided to fight back. They start with nothing except that willingness to take a stand, but as **the castle's** void seeps into their heart and they deepen their connections with confidantes, they'll gather extraordinary powers.

One player is the **Architect**. They're here to keep track of the setting, provide resistance and challenge to the characters, and make sure all the players get an equal chance to shine. They're also there to portray supporting characters, voicing them in conversations and giving the players someone to play off of. It's a role with a different set of responsibilities, detailed in their own chapter of this book.

The game unfolds through **Investigations**. Each begins with a new invasion of **the castle** in your territory. You'll delve into that nightmare realm, use clues there to identify the vassal, probe their weak spots and ruin their plans in the mortal world, and eventually wrest control of **the castle**-shard from them - instead using it to heal, protect and expand your territory. All while trying to avoid suffering irreparable harm to your health, your finances and your relationships.

Between Investigations, you'll rest up, grow up, try to work some meaningful social change, and look for the next extrusion of **the castle**.



## THE CONVERSATION

**Voidheart Symphony** draws on the rule design philosophy of Vincent and Meguey Baker's *Apocalypse World*, which means that it concerns itself first and foremost with the conversation that's happening at the table. This is a roleplaying game: a conversation between the players and the Architect, working together to build a story and see what happens to the world. Most of the time you'll be talking without using any rules. The players describe the actions their characters or families are taking, the Architect describes how those actions change the situation, and the conversation continues.

Sometimes events in the ongoing conversation will activate a discrete chunk of rules (called a "**move**") that guides the story based on the player's dice rolls, choices or established fictional circumstances. Each move has an in-fiction **trigger**. This is something your character or family has to do in the story for the mechanics to start up. The consequences of moves are often just as much fictional as mechanical.

It's vital to note that you can make big changes to the world without triggering any moves by building on elements already established in the story. If someone's already handed you their prized baseball bat, you don't need to roll **Gearing Up**; if you've put a marble pillar between yourself and an adversary, you don't need to roll **Dodge** to avoid their flames. Other times you may want to use a particular move, but be unable to. If you're in a bad situation – say, tied to a chair with your hands behind your back – your ability to hit your moves' triggers and use them to move the story in a favourable direction will be severely limited.

Simply put: everything in the game starts and ends with the story you're telling. Moves tell you how particular flashpoints in the story play out.

## THE ARCHITECT'S ROLE

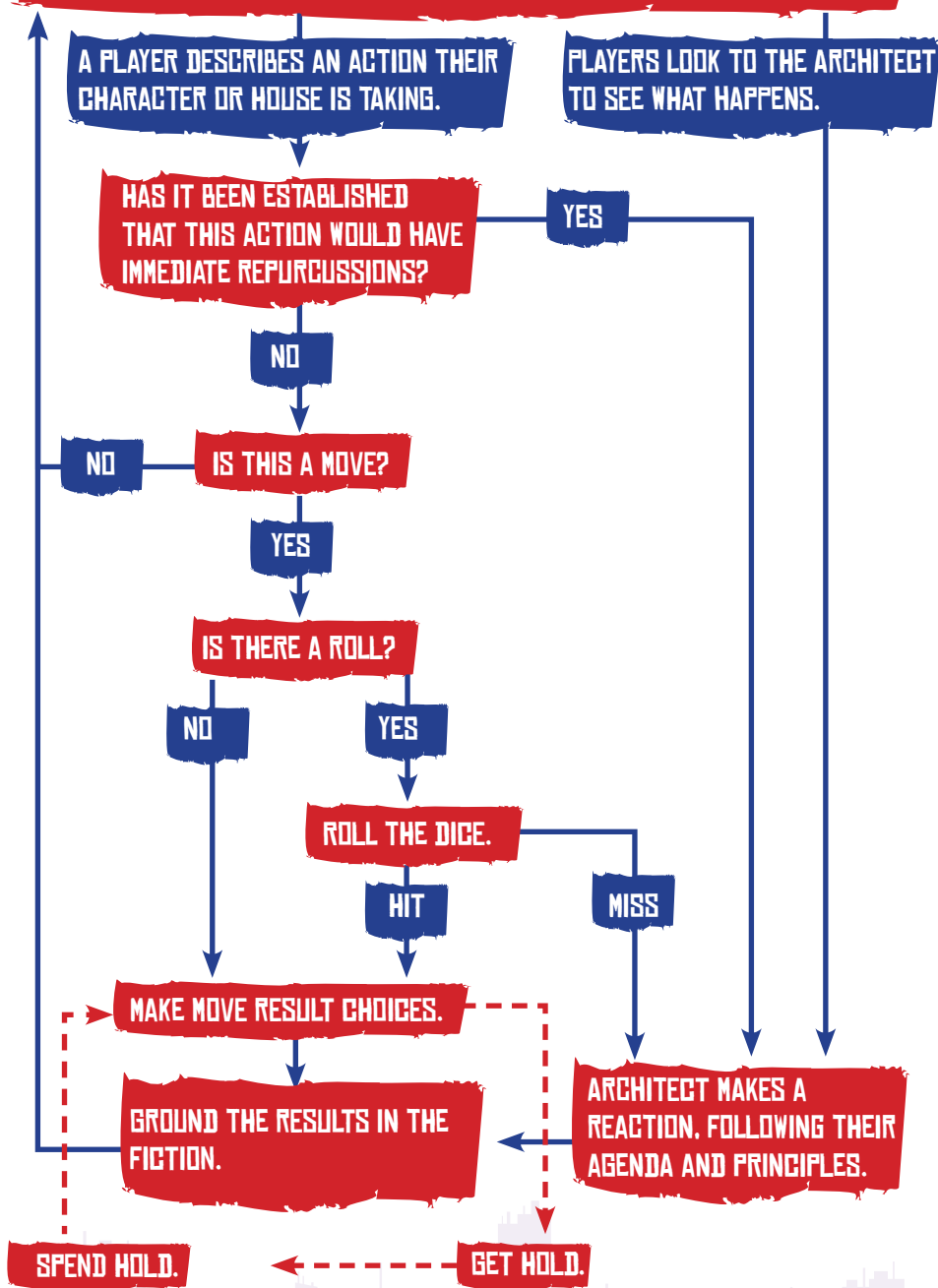
The Architect doesn't make moves, but instead has **reactions**. These are specific ways to guide the story towards **Voidheart Symphony**'s themes and create a fun experience. The Architect never rolls dice, and instead uses reactions in response to the players' actions: when a player rolls a 6 or below, when everyone looks to them to say what happens next, or when the players do something with already established consequences (a 'golden opportunity').

Each Architect reaction is a way of raising the stakes, shaking up the situation and providing adversity. Check out Chapter 5 to see more details on these.



# THE FLOW OF THE CONVERSATION

THE CONVERSATION: ARCHITECT AND PLAYERS DISCUSSING WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW, THE FACTS OF THE SCENE, THE REACTIONS OF THEIR CHARACTERS ETC.



# DICE MECHANICS

In Voidheart Symphony, the way you resolve moves depends on whether you're in **the city** or in **the castle**.

In the city, success depends on overcoming the pressures that society's systems are placing on you. When you turn to dice in the city, you make a **check** against one of your stress gauges – you roll two six-sided dice, and count how many come up over your ticks in that gauge. If both are over, that's a **strong hit**; if one does, that's a **weak hit**; if neither do, that's a **miss**. If a result takes about 'any hit', that's a strong hit or a weak hit.

Milli has evidence that a doctor at the hospital is using patients as her personal test subjects, and is trying to get the hospital administrator to listen. But as Milli is a high school student, she's having issues getting the man to pay attention. She keeps pushing, and so triggers *Make A Stand* (p. 17). She has two ticks in her Infamy gauge, and when she rolls the dice she gets a 2 and a 5 - a weak hit. She decides that the administrator won't be able to dismiss what she says, but he'll still be distracted and make trouble for Milli as he calls security to escort her out.

In **the castle**, you're cut free of those fetters, and only have your own skills to draw on. When you trigger a move in **the castle**, you'll be asked to roll+Stat. That means you roll two six-sided dice, sum the value on the dice, and see which category it falls into. If the sum is 6 or less, that's a **miss**. If it's between 7 and 9, that's a **weak hit**, and if it's 10 or above that's a **strong hit**.

In the Castle, Milli is facing down the rogue doctor's nightmare avatar - a looming, gaunt figure wielding a syringe dripping noxious chemicals (see p. 25). As the avatar summons hordes of orderlies to hold Milli down, her player describes how she plants her staff in the chest of an orderly and uses it to vault over the horde towards the surgeon. That triggers *Dodge* (p. 27), so she rolls two six-sided dice and adds her Wands stat. With a 6 and a 3 plus her Wands of 1, that's a 10 - a strong hit. She decides she avoids danger and creates an opening to attack the surgeon, but in the process she's separated from her allies.

Occasionally, specific effects might make things harder - or easier for your character. These come in two different forms:

- **Advantage:** When you're benefiting from Advantage, you roll three dice and pick the highest two. For example, if you rolled three dice and get 2, 4 and 5 you'd discard the 2, then sum the 4 and 5 if in **the castle** or chem them against your gauge if in the city.
- **Disadvantage:** This is similar to Advantage, but you discard the highest dice instead of the lowest one. For a result of 2, 4 and 5, you'd discard the 5.

These effects can be **fleeting** or **lasting**; fleeting effects are used up the first time they take effect, while lasting effects keep affecting the specified rolls until a condition is met.

# GAME SETUP

To get your game of Voidheart Symphony started, follow these steps:

## 1: DISCUSS EXPECTATIONS

Are you planning a one-shot, a short story, a long-term campaign? How do people feel about antagonism between characters? **Voidheart Symphony** is a game about people pushing back against those oppressing them and benefiting from their misery - are there any topics and themes that people don't want touched on, or even mentioned? Any topics that don't want to appear on-screen, even if you can still mention them.

This is also a good time to decide on the broad strokes of your setting. Are you in London, Tokyo, Buenos Aires, a fictional city? Is it the present, the recent past, the near future? Put down a basic map to draw on - a blank sheet of paper is fine, or a satellite map of the city in question.

## 2: PICK PLAYBOOKS

The next thing to do is select who you'll be playing. Everyone except the Architect picks a Rebel Playbook (p. 30) that fits their basic idea for their character. There's no doubling up - each of you is unique in what you add to the group. As you pick your playbook, maybe read out its blurb to let the group know what its deal is, or summarise in your own words.

## 3: CHARACTER AND CITY CREATION

Work through your playbook's 'Creating the X' section.

**Start with your the Role section**, choosing first the general category **the castle** would place you into and then the specific way you express that. Place down on the map a location important to your role - your workplace, or school, or bar. On your trouble tracks, make sure to fill in the first red box of the track you get a black mark in.

**In the Look section**, also consider what other things might be apparent about your character. Markers of religion, or experience. Pronouns they use, whether assigned or chosen. Anything that helps you flesh them out. Once you've decided your look and given your character a name, also mark the map with your character's home. These homes don't need to be near to each other, or far away - both are fine.

**For Resistance**, you pick one of two meters to have a bit of a buffer in. If you're having trouble deciding, consider which you'd be interested in seeing your character struggle with, or which you'd rather they avoid having to deal with. Note that Black Marks and Resistance don't cancel each other out; if you pick the same meter for both, you'll start with a point marked but can soak the next one you'd take.

**Your Bonds are your strongest connections** - they're what bind the group of rebels together. You have a choice of three; it's up to you if you get a volunteer first and let them pick which question they prefer, or pick a few you particularly like and see who wants to volunteer for it.

**Contacts are other bonds to Architect-controlled characters.** They're less strong, but still important. Mark down on the map a new location important to the contact, or pick an existing place that's relevant to them and add an extra detail. Once you've defined your contact you go around again and pick another player's contact, saying how you know them and picking another arcana from your list to deepen your relationship.

**Once all of these are down,** draw rough boundaries around distinct neighbourhoods. Between 3 and 5 different regions is good! Decide how people travel between neighbourhoods - in cars, buses, trams, by foot?

## 4: YOUR FIRST FOE

The player characters have a common enemy - a Vassal of **the castle**, a petty tyrant who is profiting from your suffering. Have a volunteer to go first; they answer question 1, and you go clockwise answering questions until everyone has answered one.

1. How did the Vassal hurt you? Why did you feel powerless to stop them?
2. When did you notice the first player's hurt, and how did you comfort them?
3. How did you realise there was more to the Vassal's cruelty than meets the eye?
4. Who is the Vassal going after now? Why must you protect their target?
5. What's your personal connection to the Vassal? Were they always this way?

## 5: DIVE INTO DARKNESS

Your characters have, together, found a gate to **the castle** - a door, alley, window, loose floorboard etc that leads to the nightmare dimension that's empowering the Vassal. You've been lead here by a key to the Vassal's heart, a mundane object imbued with shadowy power and connected to their psyche.

**Architect:** have a moment to think about the aesthetics of this shard, drawing on the vassal's personality. Also think up what minions and adversaries might be lurking there.

**Players:** decide what your rebel brought with them to the confrontation. This is more aesthetic than anything - your gear won't have mechanical weight until you awaken your own Shadow.

## 6: START THE DELVE!

You enter **the castle** - begin with one player volunteering to guide the group, and triggering **Travel the Labyrinth**. From there, you'll press deeper into this nightmare realm, fight its inhabitants and learn how this whole thing works.

Remember that you must **mark static** - and level up your Shadow - in order to unlock your true power. **While you're at Shadow 0**, whenever you use a stat you haven't used before, **mark static** and assign one of these values to it - +1, 0, 0 and -1.

## 7: THE FINAL BATTLE

Once the rebels reach the heart of **the castle** shard, they can use the key to summon the Vassal's avatar - that part of the Vassal that's swollen with **the castle's** power. Architect: pick three of these Qualities to define the avatar. Check out **Confrontation** Moves to see the rules governing this fight.

### BESTIAL

The Vassal is aggressive, angry, and twisted into an animalistic form.

- Leap across the arena.
- Hit with devastating force.

### ARCANE

The Vassal can shapeshift and use supernatural forces.

- Lash out with crimson fire.
- Summon walls of boiling blood.

### COMMANDING

The Vassal has hordes of minions.

- Mob a rebel and isolate them from the party.
- Place a wall of minions between the Vassal and the rebels.

### DARK

The Vassal is insidious and controls shadows.

- Teleport from one shadow to another.
- Disappear in a cloud of choking poison.

### DRAMATIC

The Vassal is devoted to style, grace and acclaim.

- Dazzle a rebel.
- Travel at impossible angles.

### ARMoured

The Vassal has potent defences.

- Knock a rebel far back when they hit you.
- Redirect an attack to hit another rebel.

## 8: THE AFTERMATH

This battle will have one of two outcomes:

**If the players defeat the Vassal:** Every rebel can raise Shadow, if they like. The castle shard's heart shatters, and the power swirls around seeking a new host. See **Rivers in the Desert** (p. 28).

**If the Vassal defeats the players:** They wake up where they entered the shard, with the gate disappeared. The Architect picks an option from **Darkness Falls** (p. 28). If the players investigate the Vassal, they will find they've reached a new rank – they now count as a Tier 2 target (see **Dark Feudalism**, p. 95).

Either way, skip forward some time (a few weeks, maybe) and have the characters spot another target. Having tasted the shadow, they can now see its signs in others. This time they don't have a key to the Vassal's heart – they'll need to dive into their shard, find clues to their heart using **Drink Deep**, and match those clues in the mundane world, all the while dealing with the challenges of their life in the city.

GREAT SEATS NOW AVAILABLE

GREAT SEATS NOW AVAILABLE

Madame Tene?

BROADWAY MAGIC

THE WISHFULFILLMENT

# RULES OF THE CITY









## THE MUNDANE WORLD

Your rebels have lived their life so far in the mundane world - the streets and buildings of this city. It's only recently that they have become aware of **the castle**'s intrusions into this world, and though they may be heroes pushing it back they must still contend with the frailties of their health and the demands of their everyday obligations.

### STRESS GAUGES

You have five gauges tracking your rebel's well-being, each with 6 ticks:

- **Blood:** How healthy you are. The more ticks, the closer you are to incapacitation.
- **Lack:** The precarity of your social situation. The more ticks, the closer you are to homelessness and deprivation.
- **Infamy:** Are you famed, tolerated or reviled? The more ticks, the more you risk becoming shunned by society.
- **Heat:** How aware hostile elements are of your interference in their activities. The more ticks, the closer the Vassal (and the rest of **the castle**'s minions) are to finding out your identity.
- **Contamination:** The depth to which **the castle** has penetrated your subconscious. As you accumulate ticks, you grow more likely to see others only as resources to exploit for your own benefit – and lose all care for community, kindness and joy.

**When a gauge hits 6 ticks**, you're taken out - in hospital, prison, on the run. Until the rest of the group deals with the problem, you automatically miss any check with the affected gauge and have disadvantage on all other gauge.

### HEALING CLOCKS

**When you refresh a gauge**, remove a tick from it.

**If you have unmarked resistance in a gauge**, you can mark the resistance box instead of the gauge.

**When the group agrees to take a break from the investigation to recover**, each rebel can describe what they got up to and remove a tick in two different gauges. The Architect will describe a sign of **the castle**'s spreading corruption, and tick the Vassal's clock.

**Note: you can assume most Vassal clocks take 6 ticks to complete their plan.**

### BLACK MARKS

Some effects – such as the Role **the castle** assigns to your rebel – make life permanently more difficult for them.

**Each gauge starts with a black mark in it.** Your very existence as a rebel strains your health, finances, reputation, and faith in humanity.

**When you receive another black mark**, shift any existing marks one step right, then fill in the leftmost box in a way that makes it clearly different from other marks (e.g. a different colour).

## MUNDANE MOVES

### MAKE A STAND

When you *Make a Stand* to force someone to pay attention to you, check against Infamy. On a weak hit choose one, on a strong hit choose two:

- They don't cause you problems.
- They can't dismiss what you say.
- They focus only on you.

### REBEL EYES

When you *size up* a person or situation, check against Heat. On a weak hit hold 1, on a strong hit hold 2. As you interact with the person or situation, spend your hold to ask one of the following:

- Who's in charge here?
- Who/what can I make use of here?
- How can I get out of this?
- What am I overlooking?

Get fleeting Advantage when acting on the answer, or pass it to another.

If you are watching the vassal themselves, spend 1 hold to turn an attuned token retrieved from their castle-shard into a key to their heart. The Architect will describe what the token reveals about the vassal.

### PUT THE CLUES TOGETHER

When you try to *Put the Clues Together*, say who you're going to and check against Infamy. On a hit they'll be free and willing to talk to you; on a weak hit pick one:

- They're dealing with their own problems.
- They'll need something from you first.
- Their information is incomplete.

### LET YOUR HAIR DOWN

When you *Let Your Hair Down*, check against Contamination. On a weak hit, pick one from the list below; on a strong hit pick two.

- You realise a truth about yourself; lose 1-Shadow and say how your self-perception has changed.
- You meet someone new. Decide their appearance and role, or their arcana; the Architect picks the other. If the interaction goes well, form a Covenant with them.
- You hear a rumour of corruption and darkness; gain fleeting advantage when you follow it for your investigation.

On a weak hit or a miss, the GM picks one:

- Society disapproves; tick your Heat gauge.
- The castle hurts or taints someone you care for.
- You overindulge; take ongoing disadvantage on your rolls tomorrow.

## CHECK IN

When you hang out with one of your Covenants, trigger their Hangout move and check against Contamination. On a strong hit you set the covenant Rank to 2, on a weak hit set it to 1. On a miss, set the Rank to 1 but the covenant will ask you for help. If you fail to do what they need, **Risk the Covenant**.

## DUCK OUT

When you fail an obligation, check against Lack. On a strong hit nobody notices, or cut you slack. On a weak hit, tick your Lack or Infamy gauge, and the Architect chooses one:

- Someone important is disappointed in you.
- One of your dreams or hopes is threatened.
- Someone covers for you, but makes clear what they feel you owe them.

On a miss, you've really messed up. Tick your Lack or Infamy gauge, and lose a Rank on a Covenant of the Architect's choice.

## VENT

When you call on the void's power in the mundane world, choose options up to your points in Shadow:

- Those present are terrified of you.
- Your identity is concealed from all onlookers.
- You can evoke a power of your shadow form.
- You can perceive something you could not otherwise sense.
- You may resist harm that would otherwise wound you.

Check against Contamination; on a hit, lose a point of Shadow, and on a weak hit choose one:

- The darkness changes some part of your form as it leaves you.
- A strange quirk of fate inflicts suffering on one of your Confidants.
- A part of the departing shadow will appear the next time you're in **the castle**.
- A part of the departing shadow flees into an animal, granting it smarts and malice.
- Some of the shadow lingers; tick your Contamination gauge.

## GAPS IN THE MOVES

If you're doing something important but it's not triggering a move, remember the conversation flowchart (p. 9). It's important that the Architect uses their moves to keep the pace of the game going and maintain the desired tone. If a player is doing something that seems like it should have a cost, or feel difficult? Just Tell them the consequences and ask, or Mark a gauge.

## GEARING UP

*When you try to obtain new gear by...*

- *Dipping into your reserves*, check against Lack.
- *Working extra hours*, check against Blood.
- *Stealing it from others*, check against Contamination.

On a strong hit, you get it. On a weak hit, the Architect picks one:

- You'll need to tick a gauge to get it.
- It's not openly for sale, but you find someone who can lead you to someone selling it.
- It's not openly for sale, but you find someone who recently sold it and may be willing to introduce you to their previous buyer.
- It's not available for sale, but you find something similar. Will it do?

On a miss, the Architect picks one and ticks your Infamy or Heat as your desperation is noticed.

Gear bought in the mundane world is unlikely to be an effective weapon in **the castle**, but utility items (a motorbike, rope, flashlights, etc) can still be really useful.

## DIVE INTO DARKNESS

*When you travel across the border between reality and **the castle***, check against Blood. On a weak hit, pick two; on a strong hit pick three.

- You appear in the same place as another rebel.
- You don't draw castle denizens to your location.
- You don't **mark static**.
- You reinforce a piece of mundane gear.

When you reinforce a piece of mundane gear, you can do one of:

- Make mundane clothing grant 1 armour.
- Give a mundane object a weapon perk and flaw.
- Give a tool particular potency and 2 charges; spend a charge to do something useful with it that makes sense for the tool in question.

The boost only lasts for the length of this delve.

## INTO THE CASTLE

### SHADOW STATS

When you dive through a breach into a castle shard suspended in the void, you no longer act by struggling against the fetters of society. Instead you can take direct, dynamic action, empowered by your soul and your desires. While in **the castle**, you use these stats:

- **Swords:** Your ability to take direct action against your foes. When exploring, you use it to fight hordes. When fighting a powerful adversary, use this to get in their face and throw them off-balance.
- **Coins:** Your ability to use the world around you to your advantage. When exploring, use it to find your way through and assess your surroundings. When fighting a powerful adversary, use it to spot openings and help your allies exploit them.
- **Wands:** Your ability to be quick-thinking and creative. When exploring, use it to find safe refuge from **the castle's** inhabitants and turn the environment to your advantage; when fighting, use it to dodge away from blows and use trickery and guile.
- **Cups:** The strength of your passions and ability to open your heart to the world around you. When exploring, use it to understand the Vassal's psyche and reshape the labyrinth. When fighting a powerful adversary, use it to pull allies from danger.
- **Shadow:** tracks how corrupted your rebel has been by **the castle's** power. As it increases you unlock advances, gaining improved stats and strange gifts, but risk falling under the permanent sway of the Vassal.

When you're asked to 'roll +Stat', you roll two dice and add the total to your stat. For example, if you were rolling +Wands you might get a 2 and 5 on the dice and add your Wands of 1 to get 8.

# CASTLE MOVES

## FACE THE HORDE

When you attack a group of castle denizens, roll **+Swords**. On a hit, you tear through them - say how. On a 7-9 pick 2, on a 10+ pick 1:

- They hit back - suffer harm.
- You get some on you - **mark static**.
- You're separated, trapped or imperilled.

## SEE CLEAR

When you try to read a dangerous situation, roll **+Coins**. On a hit, you can ask the Architect questions. On a 7-9 ask 1, on a 10+ ask 3, on a miss, ask 1 but prepare for the worst:

- Which exit takes me to my goal?
- What here is valuable?
- What can the enemies here do?
- What should I be on the lookout for?

Get fleeting advantage when you act on each answer.

## FLOW LIKE WATER

When you risk danger to change your environment or your position in it, roll **+Wands**. On a hit, pick one:

- You're where you need to be.
- Another rebel has a clear path to you.
- A particular threat isn't a problem any longer.

On a 7-9 the Architect will give your action a cost: harm, static or lost gear.

## DRINK DEEP

When you attune yourself to a token of the mundane world, roll **+Cups**. On a hit, attune to the token and ask a question:

- What did the Castle promise the Vassal?
- What is the Vassal doing right now?
- What does this item mean to the Vassal?

The Architect will answer; when you use this knowledge to warp this castle shard, **mark static** and describe what you want to happen.

## TRAVEL THE LABYRINTH

When you navigate the labyrinthine corridors of *the castle*, roll **+static marked** (max 3). On a hit, say what you understand better about this ward and gain 1 Trace. On a 7-9 pick 1, on a 10+ pick 2:

- There's something valuable in the next area.
- You'll see what's in the area before entering it.
- You'll be able to easily leave the area once you enter.
- There's a potential ally in the next area.

Spend these Traces to pick where you go when you **Find Shelter**.

## FIND SHELTER

When you search for a safe space to recover, roll **+Wands**. On a hit, each rebel picks 1:

- Treat another rebel: they heal 2 Harm, or their lightest Wound.
- Encourage another rebel - they get fleeting advantage.
- Use your playbook's Shelter move.

On a 7-9, your foes take advantage of your distraction to work on their own plans. Tick the Vassal's clock.

Each rebel checks over their covenant nurture/betrayal triggers, and see if any have been hit since they last rested.

When you leave the shelter, pick one:

- **Return to Reality**.
- **Travel the Labyrinth**.
- Spend 1 Trace to return somewhere you've been before.
- Spend 2 Traces to arrive at something precious to the Vassal.
- Spend 3 Traces to arrive at the heart of this shard.

Once in the heart of the shard, use a key to the Vassal's heart to summon them for a final battle for ownership.

## RETURN TO REALITY

When you leave *the castle*, remove all Harm and Void. If your most severe wound is...

- ...minor: you feel worn out, grouchy or headache, like you've pulled a late night.
- ...major: you find it hard to focus, and keep seeing flashes of **the castle** in the corners of your eyes. Pick a gauge; you check against it with Disadvantage until you've had a night's sleep.
- ...deadly: you're woozy, or numb, or heartbroken. You have disadvantage on all checks until you've been treated by your doctor, therapist, or cleric.



## HARM AND WOUNDS

Glancing blows, exhaustion, stress and curses all deal you Harm. Harm has a rating from 1 to 5 - when you take damage, you mark off a number of boxes equal to its rating. Armour works as a phantom harm box: if you have 1 Armour and take 2 Harm, you can mark off the armour box and only one harm box. A marked armour is useless: refresh it by finding **Shelter** or leaving **the castle**.

## WOUNDS

When you take harm, you can choose to mitigate it by taking a wound. Wounds are harder to heal, and whenever they would interfere with your actions you take disadvantage on the roll.

Alongside **Deadly Wounds** there are two other types, each mitigating some amount of harm:

**Minor wounds** reduce the harm by 1. You're confused, bleeding, sprained, bruised. When you take a minor wound, choose:

- Get infected and mark contamination.
- Fall back and recuperate, healing 1 Harm.

**Major wounds** reduce the harm by 3. Your leg's broken, you're blinded, you're absolutely terrified. When you take a major wound, choose:

- Frenzy and get fleeting advantage on your next attack.
- Play possum, making foes focus on someone else.

## GETTING KNOCKED OUT

**When you mark your fifth harm box**, you're on the verge of death. Choose one:

- Accept the void into your heart. Mark your Contamination gauge, but heal all harm. The Architect will tell you one covenant that means less to you now; degrade it by a rank.
- Collapse unconscious until the current danger has passed. Heal all harm but mark your **Deadly Wound** box: so long as it's marked, you can't take action unless another rebel is assisting you

## EXAMPLE OF HARM

Rose is fresh and healthy:

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ☼ **Wounds:** ☐ Minor | ☐ Major | ☐ Deadly

As she faces down a pack of hellhounds, she chooses 'They hit back - suffer harm' - in this case, 2. Wanting to shepherd her resources, she takes a minor wound to bring that down to 1 harm.

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ☼ **Wounds:** ☒ Minor | ☐ Major | ☐ Deadly

After a gruelling journey through the vassal's junkyard, she's better equipped with 1 Armour but finds herself facing down an adversary: the Junklady of the Pack. As the adversary rakes her claws across Rose's belly - 3 harm - Rose declares the claws glanced off the breastplate she'd found. She marks 1 armour box and 2 harm boxes, taking her to 3 harm.

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ☼ **Wounds:** ☒ Minor | ☐ Major | ☐ Deadly

## WEAPONS

Your armaments in **Voidheart Symphony** are simple, defined by *perk* tags and *flaw* tags. Your starting gear has one of each, but better weapons can have many perks or no flaws.

Weapon tags govern the situations where your weapon is effective, and the effects attacks with it have on your target and you.

### PERKS

<b>Cleave</b>	Can slice through many foes in a single swing.
<b>Flexible</b>	It wraps around defences and can be redirected mid-swing.
<b>Hefty</b>	Knocks an enemy back on a hit.
<b>Holy</b>	Causes intense pain against a particular foe. This tag is only accessible via moves.
<b>Lingering</b>	It causes ongoing pain: if you hit someone with it they'll try to stay away from you.
<b>Piercing</b>	Can penetrate armour and thick hide.
<b>Ranged</b>	Can attack any foe in eyesight.
<b>Stun</b>	Makes enemies slow and sluggish on a hit.
<b>Tether</b>	After you hit, you can easily hold onto/keep pace with the foe.

### FLAWS

<b>Ammo or Fragile</b>	If any dice on an attack come up 1, the weapon's useless until you Shelter or leave.
<b>Brace</b>	You need to stand on steady ground to use it.
<b>Close</b>	You need the enemy to be within arm's reach to use it.
<b>Grazing</b>	It only deals surface harm, not deep wounds.
<b>Talisman</b>	It's formed from an item that's important to you. If you lose it, get ongoing disadvantage to one gauge until you recover it.
<b>Painful</b>	If any dice on an attack come up 6, take 1 Harm.
<b>Reload</b>	You need to take action to attack again after using it.
<b>Thrown</b>	Once you attack with it, you need to recover it.
<b>Unstable</b>	You're vulnerable and unable to move after using it.

# YOUR FOES

## MINIONS

As you explore **the castle** you'll encounter the rank and file of the vassal's **minions**: skeletons and ghouls, wraiths and beasts, crazed cultists and eldritch demons. They need very little prep - just a description and a few reactions they can use to hurt the rebels:

### EXAMPLE MINION: BURNING SKELETONS

*A skeleton walking in defiance of the natural order, surrounded by viridian flames.*

- Hurl a burning skull at the rebels.
- Set something important on fire.
- Travel between fires.

## SIGNIFICANT ADVERSARIES

**Adversaries** are more detailed. One of these foes is **the vassal's avatar**, but they only manifest once you can steal a **token** from within the shard, understand it and use it to summon them.

Unfortunately for you, the vassal also has **enforcers**: important fragments of their personality, obsessions or fears that walk **the castle's** halls as a kind of immune system.

Each adversary has:

- A description guiding their actions in the fiction.
- A rating for how much Harm their attacks deal to rebels.
- One or more qualities: packages of reactions tied to a particular strength of the adversary. When all qualities are destroyed, the adversary's defeated.

### EXAMPLE VASSAL: THE SURGEON

*A maniacal medic whose real-life failings were exploited by **the castle's** promise of forbidden knowledge. While she pushes her real-life victims through deeply unethical drug trials to prove her genius, her avatar conducts nightmare surgeries to create a horde of servile orderlies.*

#### QUALITY 1: ORDERLIES

- Mob a character and isolate them.
- Stab a character in the back (2 harm).

#### QUALITY 2: PARALYTIC VENOM

- Numb a limb.
- Stab them with a needle.
- Trigger a stabbed needle (3 harm).

#### QUALITY 3: OVERDRIVE SERUM

- Leap across the room.
- Hit with devastating force (2 harm)

## CONFRONTATION MOVES

**Face the Horde** lets you deal with **the castle's** minions, but what about the adversaries? To give those fights appropriate weight, you add these **confrontation moves** to the regular set whenever you fight the vassal and their acolytes.

In these fights, your rebels must find **Openings** to attack as they weather the foe's assault. These **Openings** don't stack: you have one, or you don't. Each successful **strike** against the foe strips away one of their qualities, bringing you closer to victory even as the foe grows more frenzied and deadly.

### STRIKE

**When you take advantage of an Opening with...**

- **Stealth and guile**, roll **+Wands**.
- **Physical force**, roll **+Swords**.
- **Precise insight**, roll **+Coins**.
- **Sorcery or sacrifice**, roll **+Cups**.

On a hit, you damage one of the foe's qualities - if you destroy its final quality, it's dead. The Opening's now gone. On a 7-9, the Architect picks 1:

- The foe lashes out at you: take Harm appropriate to the enemy.
- The foe separates you from the others or puts you in a spot.
- The foe frenzies, dealing +1 Harm for the rest of the fight.

### LINE IT UP

**When you size up the enemy to locate a weak spot**, roll **+Coins**. On a hit you find an Opening. Say where it's coming from - the environment, a chink in their armour, a flaw in their fighting style. On a 7-9, pick 2, on a 10+ pick 1:

- The foe makes you its highest priority.
- The Opening only lasts a few moments.
- Attempts to use the Opening without one weapon perk have Disadvantage.

## CONFRONT

**When you confront danger head-on**, roll **+Swords**. On a hit, you throw the foe off-balance and create an Opening, but take the brunt of their attack. On a 7-9 pick 1, on a 10+ pick 2:

- You roll with the blow: take 1 less harm.
- You are fearsome and commanding: the foe will focus only on you.
- Your mind is steel: you don't **mark static**.

## DODGE

**When you try to avoid incoming danger**, roll **+Wands**. On a hit pick 1, on 10+ pick 2:

- You avoid taking harm.
- You avoid getting separated from the others or losing something valuable.
- The foe's heedless in pursuit of you: create an Opening.

## STAND WITH ME

**When you heal, encourage or aid an ally**, roll **+Cups**. On a hit, pick 1:

- They're rescued from danger: a precipice, poison, a curse, etc.
- They heal their lightest wound.
- They heal 2 harm.

On a 10+ the camaraderie shown gives your ally fleeting Advantage.

## FLEE

**When you use an Opening to retreat**, any and all characters can flee the battle. Advance the Vassal's clock by one.

## VICTORY

**When the foe is defeated**, everyone still living may add 1 to Shadow and their Bond with everyone present.

## THE AFTERMATH

### RIVERS IN THE DESERT

When you defeat a Vassal's avatar, the power they've gathered is yours to control - to bring new life to this city.

If this is the first Vassal you've defeated, this shard is now yours, and reshapes itself to suit your group's personalities. It'll be a safe haven that only you can enter, from an entrance placed by the rebel with highest Shadow.

Starting with the rebel with the highest Shadow and working down, a number of rebels equal to the Vassal's rank may pick one of these:

- **Reformation:** The Vassal grows a new-found conscience. They'll publicly confess to their crimes, and likely will make reparations for injuries they inflicted on you during the investigation. Roll the Retaliation check with Disadvantage as **the castle's** forces focus on the turncoat in their ranks.
- **Urban renewal:** you push **the castle** out of the neighbourhood your safe haven is placed in - bringing new opportunities, equality, health, wealth or happiness to its residents. Place or change a landmark on the map to record this. Gain a covenant with the World, or raise its rank if you already have one.
- **Healing:** The power removes a long-term affliction (crushing debt, chronic illness, criminal record, etc) from you or one of your covenants. Erase one of your black marks.
- **Expropriation:** You rise in station; work out with the Architect what your new Role is, and gain Resistance in an appropriate trouble gauge.
- **Expansion:** Your safe haven grows an entrance in another neighbourhood. Describe what new amenities its interior grows to reflect the new neighbourhood.
- **Encounter:** Pick an NPC Covenant - they appear in your safe haven, and reveal their true nature.

Anyone who chooses to use the power also gains a Covenant with the Void, or raises its rank if they already have it. As for the Vassal, they're stripped of their castle-given power, and cannot gain its power ever again.

### DARKNESS FALLS

If the Vassal's clock fills, their plan comes to pass in the city. Pick one:

- They lash out at the rebels and cost them status and opportunities. Each rebel changes Role to something less prestigious, and gains a black mark in Lack, Infamy or Health.
- They make a neighbourhood more in tune with the Castle. Say how it changes to be less friendly, vibrant, diverse or communal, and pick a location to mark down as ruined, abandoned, or annexed.
- They cover up all evidence of past misdeeds, and ensure they'll move into a new position easily able to commit further crimes.

The Vassal is promoted to a higher level in the Castle's hierarchy, and brings in new blood to replace them in the tier they just vacated.

# DOWNTIME

## RETALIATION

The castle is a jealous master, and will not tolerate rebels misusing its power. *Following a successful investigation*, roll a check against the highest Shadow in the group.

**On a strong hit**, your rebels pass beneath notice. The Architect will narrate some other crisis that takes up **the castle's** attention.

**On a weak hit**, **the castle** passively makes life harder for you. Each rebel looks up their highest trouble clock:

- If it's at 1-2, things get tough for a bit, but you're able to handle it.
- If it's at 3-4, your resources are tested - say which covenant came through for you, but you'll start the next investigation owing them a favour.
- If it's at 5-6, things get nasty. You get a black mark in this track as whatever problems you have become a long-running issue.

**On a miss**, **the castle's** vassals actively move in on you. As on a weak hit, but also a vassal of a higher tier than the one you just defeated starts disrupting your neighbourhood.

## PEACE AND QUIET

*In the downtime between missions*, your rebels can attend to the concerns of their normal lives. Clear out all of your trouble clocks and go round the table, giving the table a glimpse of what your character's day-to-day is like. If you like, you can pick one of your covenants that had a rank of 2+ at the end of the investigation, and turn it into a sworn covenant.

Finally, set the stage for your next Investigation. Roll +Tier of the last Vassal.

**On a 6-** the rebels catch wind of the Vassal's plan with plenty of freedom to investigate.

**On a 7-9** the Vassal's plan has already started having effects - one rebel's covenant has been hurt, corrupted or entangled in the Vassal's plans.

**On a 10+** the Vassal's plan is directly targeting your characters, whether they know it or not. Each rebel marks a tick of Heat, and the Vassal knows their identities.



# REBEL PLAYBOOKS





# PLAYBOOK ANATOMY

Here's what goes into each playbook in **Voidheart Symphony**:

## LOOK

What do you look like? When others first glance at you, what's their impression?

Details that are more core to your identity are worth thinking about, but can't be given justice in a narrow list. This game is – in places – an explicit metaphor for marginalisation, and the way your character's marginalisation has robbed them of the luxury of ignoring **the castle**. Think about the ways your character might be marginalised, and the ways they might not be – and what those mean for your character and your story. Are they disabled? Queer? A member of a minority ethnicity or religion? When playing a character who experiences avenues of marginalisation you do not, remember to be respectful and do your research.

If you wish to give these vectors of marginalisation a presence in the mechanics – and it's fine not to – you can gain a Black Mark in a relevant gauge. Blood for something that affects your physical fortitude, Infamy that causes people to discount you, Lack for something that affects your ability to have steady employment, and so on.

## RESISTANCES

Everyone has one particular flavour of the world's bullshit they're better able to deal with. Pick one gauge to gain resistance in, and mark that on your playbook.

## BONDS

Your strength flows from your relationship with others. Your playbook will give you three different relationships to pick from – choose one to have with a volunteer from among the other players. They'll get a Sworn Covenant with you with an Arcana fitting the relationship's dynamics, meaning that it's always available at the start of each investigation (see Covenants, p. 42).

## CONTACTS

This is a list of potential starting contacts. As in *Nature*, you'll gain one of these as a level 1 Covenant – gain the starting ability of the appropriate arcanum (see p. 42). If you have an idea for another that isn't on the list, feel free to make your own.

## ROLE

Characters in **Voidheart Symphony** fall into one of three overlapping age categories, according to how **the castle** would dismiss them:

**Delinquents** are generally between 15 and 25. They're likely still in high school, though may have dropped out or at the upper end moved onto college/university. Their main challenge is *powerlessness*: others will ignore them, take their things from them, load them down with make-work and threaten the entire course of their future.

**Delinquents have a black mark in Infamy.**

**Prodigals** are generally somewhere between 20 and 30. They may be university students, young professionals, NEETs or gangsters. Their main challenge is *disenfranchisement*: they're expected to stand on their own two feet and provide for themselves, but the support structures that are meant to help them have been defunded and devoured by a system that only values them as exploitable workers. **Prodigals have a black mark in Lack.**

**Traitors** are generally 25 and older. Their main challenge is *complicity*: their identity is bound up in the same systems that **the castle** has permeated and used as a weapon. They must struggle against the reflex to keep their head down when others are hurt, or find justifications for the atrocities that maintain their comfortable lifestyle. **Traitors have a black mark in Contamination.**

## SHADOW

When you enter **the castle**, you feel power stirring within you. Your capabilities here are measured by four stats: Swords, Coins, Cups and Wands (see p. 20). Every time you use a Shadow stat for the first time, you'll give it one of these four ratings: +1, 0, 0, -1 (you can only use each number once). Also **mark static** as the Castle's power seeps into you. Move results will also tell you to **mark static** as an option or cost.

When you mark your fifth point of **static**, your Shadow emerges and becomes one with you: a manifestation of **the castle's** promise to fulfil your desires. Will you use this power to better understand your truth and appropriate **the castle's** power to heal the world, or will it seduce and master you?

At the point of your shadow's first manifestation, work through these:

- Add 1 to a stat of your choice.
- Decide your Shadow Look: your rebel's appearance when they dive into **the castle**.
- Pick a Shadow Move: a special ability you can use when in **the castle**.
- Gain a trademark weapon with a perk and flaw of your choice (see weapons, p. 23). This could represent an existing tool gaining new strengths, or a new armament called forth from the darkness.

You'll continue gaining **static** as you explore. Each time you hit 5 static, clear it to 0 and raise Shadow by 1. This will give you further stat advances or powerful Shadow Moves, but be careful. When Shadow hits 5 it starts eating away at your mortal form, and each point of **static** you would take deals you a point of harm instead.

## THE PLAYBOOKS

Each rebel is unique, formed from their own particular pressures and drives. But for ease of play, **Voidheart Symphony** presents seven different Rebel Playbooks for you to pick from:

### THE AUTHORITY

The Authority pushes back against **the castle** by building their own kingdom. They're an inspiring leader, or a wise mentor, or an intimidating gang leader. In **the castle**, they can guide or inspire their allies, or exert authority over the actions of their foes.

### THE HERETIC

The Heretic rebels against **the castle**'s insidious tendrils by spurning all authority and forging their own path in life. They might be a class troublemaker, a political agitator, or a grifter. In **the castle**, they misdirect foes, find hidden paths, and lay traps for the opposition.

### THE ICON

The Icon is adored by society – but that adoration can be its own set of chains. They might be a top athlete, a model or a celebrity. In **the castle**, they may be a paragon of excellence, an opponent their foes cannot ignore, or an unassailable beacon of perfection.

### THE PROVIDER

Sometimes the best you can do is to keep those close to you safe. Whether they're a parent, a volunteer or a carer, the Provider spends their time protecting and nurturing those that depend on them. In **the castle**, they heal, protect and avenge their companions.

## THE HARLEQUIN

Maybe they don't think your little rebellion is going to change anything. Maybe they're trying to keep morale up. Or maybe they think a revolution without dancing is no revolution at all. Either way, the Harlequin tries not to take things too seriously. In the mundane world, they might be the class clown, a slacker, or a provocative artist; in **the castle**, they're great at finding alternative solutions to problems, clowning on their foes, and keeping allies upbeat.

## THE INHUMAN

The strange forces of the void sometimes find root in unexpected places, gifting sentience to animals, forces of nature and the spirits of the unquiet dead. Most of these newborn creatures end up recruited as a minion or a vassal, but some break free of those fetters and seek out others rebelling against **the castle**. They walk disguised in the mundane world - as an animal, or with a fake body, or possessing a willing partner. In **the castle**, they can blend in with the vassal's minions, gain insights into their enemy's motivations and use mystical powers.

## THE WATCHER

The signs of **the castle** are everywhere, if you know how to look. The Watcher has developed the keen insight to match their hunger to know more - useful in their daily life as a nerd, an academic, or maybe an investigator, but also a great asset in navigating and surviving **the castle**.



# THE AUTHORITY

*I know that you're lost and desperate. Don't worry, I'm here now.*

## MAKING THE AUTHORITY ROLE

*Pick a category and a vocation:*

### DELINQUENT *Black mark in Infamy*

- ☐ **Class President:** *When you help other students with their studies, refresh Infamy.*
- ☐ **Team Captain:** *When you practice with your team, refresh Blood.*
- ☐ **Gang Leader:** *When your gang dominates another, refresh Lack.*

### PRODIGAL *Black mark in Lack*

- ☐ **Store Manager:** *When you put in extra hours to hit your quotas, refresh Lack.*
- ☐ **Apprentice:** *When you impress your tutor, refresh Contamination.*
- ☐ **Vigilante:** *When you take down a criminal, refresh Heat.*

### TRAITOR *Black mark in Contamination*

- ☐ **Lawyer:** *When you win a case, refresh Lack.*
- ☐ **Politician:** *When you get your side of the story broadcast by the press, refresh Infamy.*
- ☐ **Doctor:** *When you diagnose and treat someone's illness, refresh Blood.*

## LOOK

*Pick one from each:*

Feminine, Masculine, Ambiguous,  
Concealed.  
Pristine uniform, a symbol of authority,  
rumpled and overworked.  
Bright eyes, ruthless eyes, kind eyes,  
watchful eyes.

## RESISTANCE

You're self-assured and resourceful. Gain resistance in either **Infamy** or **Lack**.

## BONDS

*Pick one to ask the other players:*

**Which of you works for me?** The one who volunteers gains a Sworn **Emperor** covenant with you.

**Which of you did I help find justice or escape injustice?** The one who volunteers gains a Sworn **Justice** covenant with you.

**Which of you regularly comes to me for advice?** The one who volunteers gains a Sworn **Hierophant** covenant with you.

## CONTACTS

*Pick one to add to your covenants, and give them a name:*

- ☐ **The Chariot:** The rival who spurs you to greater heights.
- ☐ **The Fool:** The novice who's depending on you to teach them.
- ☐ **The Magician:** The headhunter trying to get you to work for them.

*Then pick another entry above to represent your covenant with another rebel's contact.*





## DARK AWAKENING

Every time you use a stat you haven't used before, **mark static** and assign it one of these: +1, 0, 0, -1.

Whenever you hit 5 Static, erase them and gain 1 Shadow.

When this takes you from 0 to 1, add 1 to a stat of your choice, pick your first Shadow Look, two Castle Moves and your trademark Gear.

When you gain Shadow 2-5, add 1 to a stat or gain a Shadow Move, and elaborate on your Shadow Look.

If you're at Shadow 5, **mark harm** instead of **static**.

## SHELTER MOVE

You inspire the others and uplift their hearts. The next time they would **mark static**, they may ignore it.

## SHADOW LOOK

Mark a number of categories equal to Shadow, then pick an option from each or make your own.

- ☐ **Myth:** Angel halo, dragon skin, infernal horns, vampire grin.
- ☐ **Clothes:** Regal vestments, military dress uniform, academic robes, haute couture.
- ☐ **Accessories:** Wings, constellations, echoing voice, mirrored eyes.
- ☐ **Mien:** More glorious, more terrifying, more true, more serene.

## GEAR

When you hit Shadow 1, gain a weapon of your choice (1 perk, 1 flaw) plus one:

- A noble sword (piercing, close).
- Metal plates (1 Armour).
- A banner (advantage on **Stand With Me**, disadvantage on **Confront**).

## CASTLE MOVES

*Pick two when you go from Shadow 0 to 1:*

### ☐ FIRST IN THE FRAY

*When you're the first to attack a horde or an Adversary, you can give up a chance to deal it harm in order to give all your companions fleeting advantage.*

### ☐ INSPIRING HEALER

*Whenever you roll a 12+, pick another rebel nearby who heals 2 Harm.*

### ☐ TACTICAL GENIUS

*When you carefully explain your plan to your allies, roll +Coins. On a 7-9 hold 1, on a 10+ hold 3. You may spend 1 hold to cancel Disadvantage on anyone's roll, or retroactively add Advantage to a roll (rolling another die).*

### ☐ AND NEXT YOU'LL SAY...

*When you tell an opponent what they'll do next, roll +Coins. On a hit, they pick one: do exactly what you predicted, or stumble, hesitate or flinch.*

On a 10+, reveal a trap you set up to take advantage of your prediction. If they do what you predicted, it'll take them out if they're a minion, or create an opening if they're an Adversary.

## SHADOW MOVES

*Each time you raise Shadow above 1, pick one of these or add 1 to a stat:*

### ☐ JUST YOU AND ME

*If a foe's within arm's reach, you can **mark static** to reshape **the castle** and trap you both within an empty room. The previous state is restored when you will it, or when you take a major wound.*

### ☐ HEROIC INTERVENTION

*When an Adversary is bearing down on an ally, you can **mark static** to force them to target you instead.*

### ☐ WAR CRY

*When you let out an intimidating war cry, **mark static** to choose an option from **Stand With Me** and apply it to yourself.*

### ☐ VOICE OF COMMAND

*Once per delve into **the castle**, you may **mark static** to command a minion of **the castle** to serve you. When they fight alongside you, your attacks gain the cleave tag. When you send them to act independently of you, the Architect will decide how well they do. When you take Harm, you can choose to have them be destroyed instead.*

# PLAYING THE AUTHORITY

<TBA>

# THE HERETIC

Stand with me and we'll burn this whole rotten thing down.

## MAKING THE HERETIC ROLE

Pick a category and a vocation:

### DELINQUENT *Black mark in Infamy*

- ☐ **Runaway:** When you find a safer place to live, refresh Lack.
- ☐ **Hoodlum:** When you get even with someone who's wronged you, refresh Infamy.
- ☐ **Defiant:** When you show that your way is better than an adult's, refresh Contamination.

### PRODIGAL *Black mark in Lack*

- ☐ **Punk:** When you practice or perform your art, refresh Infamy.
- ☐ **Activist:** When you provide aid and comfort to the afflicted, refresh Blood.
- ☐ **Thief:** When you get someone the item they wanted, refresh Heat.

### TRAITOR *Black mark in Contamination*

- ☐ **Thinker:** When you help someone see the injustice in society, refresh Lack.
- ☐ **Scene Mom:** When you protect and comfort a fledgling in your scene, refresh Infamy.
- ☐ **Whistleblower:** When you get evidence of injustice broadcast by the press, refresh Contamination.

## LOOK

Pick one from each:

Feminine, Masculine, Ambiguous,  
Concealed.  
Distressed uniform, alternative fashion,  
identity-hiding mask.  
Sardonic eyes, wary eyes, fiery eyes,  
frightened eyes.

## RESISTANCE

You live for the fight. Gain resistance in either **Heat** or **Contamination**.

## BONDS

Pick one to ask the other players:

*Which of you gives me comfort when it gets too much?* The volunteer gains a Sworn **Devil** covenant with you.

*Which of you depends on my talents?* The volunteer gains a sworn **Justice** covenant with you.

*Which of you helped me put my life back together?* The volunteer gains a sworn **Tower** covenant with you.

## CONTACTS

Pick one to add to your covenants, and give them a name:

- ☐ **The Chariot:** The Hanged Man: An old friend battling chronic illness.
- ☐ **The Sun:** The visionary firebrand who fills you with righteousness.
- ☐ **The High Priestess:** The artist who helps you see a better world.

Then pick another entry above to represent your covenant with another rebel's contact.



## DARK AWAKENING

Every time you use a stat you haven't used before, **mark static** and assign it one of these: +1, 0, 0, -1.

Whenever you hit 5 Static, erase them and gain 1 Shadow.

When this takes you from 0 to 1, add 1 to a stat of your choice, pick your first Shadow Look, two Castle Moves and your trademark Gear.

When you gain Shadow 2-5, add 1 to a stat or gain a Shadow Move, and elaborate on your Shadow Look.

If you're at Shadow 5, **mark harm** instead of **static**.

## SHELTER MOVE

Ask the Architect: what danger should we most be on the lookout for? They must answer honestly.

## SHADOW LOOK

Pick a number of categories equal to Shadow, then pick an option from each or make your own.

- ☐ **Myth:** Lupine claws, promethean fire, gorgon hair, skeleton grin.
- ☐ **Clothes:** Assassin robes, insurgent fatigues, punk motley, outlaw coat.
- ☐ **Accessories:** Shadow tendrils, mirage duplicates, pyrotechnics, shifting face.
- ☐ **Mien:** More glorious, more terrifying, more true, more serene.

## GEAR

When you hit Shadow 1, gain a weapon of your choice (1 perk, 1 flaw) plus one:

- ☐ Improvised bombs (cleave, ammo).
- ☐ Reinforced coat (1 Armour).
- ☐ A disguise (once per delve, can pass as a castle minion).

## CASTLE MOVES

Pick two when you hit Shadow 1:

### □ FREE RUNNING

When you **Flow Like Water**, on a 10+ hold 1. Spend it later to pick a **Flow Like Water** option without having to roll.

### □ RADICAL EMPATHY

When you would inflict the killing blow on an Adversary, you may stay your hand. If you do, roll **+Cups**. On a 7-9 they get enough control to tell you how they can be saved, or how the Vassal's plans can be set back. They then retreat into the shard's depths.

On a 10+ they change sides and work alongside you, though they cannot act directly against the Vassal.

### □ RESOURCEFUL

When you dig through your pockets for something useful, roll **+Coins**. On a 10+ you have it, basically. On a 7-9 it'll make do, but any moves to use it have Disadvantage.

### □ HEY, ASSHOLE!

When you insult or distract an enemy, roll **+Wands**. On a hit, they focus on you. On a 7-9 pick 1, on a 10+ pick 2:

- They can't bring their full might to bear on you.
- They reveal a weak spot to your allies.
- You have a clear escape route.

## SHADOW MOVES

Each time you raise Shadow above 1, pick one of these or add 1 to a stat:

### □ SHADOW STEP

When you hide in the shadows, you can **mark static** to reappear from any other shadow in sight.

### □ AVENGER'S RESOLVE

When another rebel takes a major or deadly wound, you may **mark static** to heal a wound of your own.

### □ A SHADOW LIKE A MIRROR

When you **Flow Like Water**, you may **mark static** to leave a duplicate of yourself in place. You can **mark static** again to reveal that the 'duplicate' was the real you.

### □ SUBVERSIVE WHISPER

When you spy on minions of *the castle* unobserved, you can **mark static** to whisper an incendiary secret into their minds and turn them against a target of your choosing.

# PLAYING THE HERETIC

<TBA>

# THE ICON

## MAKING THE ICON

### ROLE

Pick an age category and a vocation:

#### DELINQUENT *Black mark in Infamy*

- ☐ **Track Champ:** When you train with your team, refresh Blood.
- ☐ **Diva:** When you get someone new to join your clique, refresh Lack.
- ☐ **Vandal:** When you mark a place impressively hard to reach, refresh Infamy.

#### PRODIGAL *Black mark in Lack*

- ☐ **Athlete:** When you beat your personal best, refresh Health.
- ☐ **Influencer:** When you make a deal with a new sponsor, refresh Lack.
- ☐ **Streamer:** When you direct your followers towards a cause you care about, refresh Contamination.

#### TRAITOR *Black mark in Contamination*

- ☐ **Author:** When you resolve a problem with your draft, refresh Lack.
- ☐ **Celeb:** When you spend a full day in public with no-one recognising you, refresh Contamination.
- ☐ **Pundit:** When you get someone to reveal their corruption on air, refresh Infamy.

### LOOK

Pick one from each:

Feminine, Masculine, Ambiguous, Concealed.  
Customised uniform, athletic gear, stunning cosmetics.  
Bright eyes, intense eyes, laughing eyes, sunCoins-hidden eyes.

### RESISTANCE

You're spotless. Gain resistance in either **Infamy** or **Blood**.

### BONDS

Pick one to ask the other players, or read them all out and see which appeals:

*Which of you am I teaching confidence and resilience?* The volunteer gains a Sworn **Strength** covenant with you.

*Which of you gives me a place to crash when home is too far away or too much of a burden?* The volunteer gains a sworn **Chariot** covenant with you.

*Which of you is in a committed relationship with me?* The volunteer gains a sworn **Lovers** covenant with you.

As with all Lover covenants, remember when you're setting this up that this is likely a romantic relationship, and there can be a significant age difference between your rebels. This is a game about fighting against oppressive social structures and abusive power dynamics - please make sure you're not setting up those dynamics within the group of rebels!

### CONTACTS

Pick one to add to your covenants, and give them a name:

- ☐ **The Emperor:** The manager or coach who is guiding your development.
- ☐ **Wheel of Fortune:** Your past rival, now fallen on hard times.
- ☐ **The Star:** A new talent, naive in the ways of your trade.

Then pick another entry above to represent your covenant with another rebel's contact.





## DARK AWAKENING

Every time you use a stat you haven't used before, **mark static** and assign it one of these: +1, 0, -1.

Whenever you hit 5 Static, erase them and gain 1 Shadow.

When this takes you from 0 to 1, add 1 to a stat of your choice, pick your first Shadow Look, two Castle Moves and your trademark Gear.

When you gain Shadow 2-5, add 1 to a stat or gain a Shadow Move, and elaborate on your Shadow Look.

If you're at Shadow 5, **mark harm** instead of **static**.

## SHELTER MOVE

You may ask the Architect – what is the Vassal currently feeling most guilty about? They will answer honestly, and you gain fleeting advantage acting on it.

## SHADOW LOOK

Pick a number of categories equal to Shadow, then pick an option from each or make your own.

- ☐ **Myth:** Siren voice, Sylph wings, white stag's antlers, infernal hooves/tail.
- ☐ **Clothes:** Wrestler's costume, diva's gown, sharpest suit, trendsetting style.
- ☐ **Accessories:** Champion's laurels, spectral backing singers, gleaming medals and awards, glorious jewellery.
- ☐ **Mien:** More glorious, more terrifying, more true, more serene.

## GEAR

When you hit Shadow 1, gain a weapon of your choice (1 perk, 1 flaw) plus one:

- ☐ Microphone (stun, grazing).
- ☐ Bulletproof confidence (1 armour).
- ☐ Loyal fans (can be sent to do simple tasks).

## CASTLE MOVES

*Pick two when you hit Shadow 1:*

### □ EYES ON ME

When you perform, **the castle's** minions and monsters can't keep their attention away from you. Your allies have fleeting advantage making use of this distraction - though if they fail, the Architect may make a move against you.

### □ REFLECTED GLORY

Whenever you roll a 12+, pick another Rebel nearby to inspire. They gain fleeting advantage, and can raise the rank of their covenant with you.

### □ WORDS OF FIRE

When you score any hit on **Stand With Me**, you can pick an extra option.

When you **Find Shelter**, you can encourage all your allies instead of just one.

### □ BEST OF THE BEST

When you attempt an impossible feat of grace, strength or endurance, roll **+Swords**. On a 7-9 pick one, on a 10+ pick two:

- For as long as the feat takes, you have +1 Armour.
- You can easily stop performing the feat if you need to.
- It doesn't overexert yourself - else, take 1-3 Harm (Architect decides).

## SHADOW MOVES

*Each time you raise Shadow above 1, pick one of these or add 1 to a stat:*

### □ IMPOSSIBLE PERFECTION

You are impossibly beautiful, and that perfection cannot be marred. *So long as you don't have any wounds marked*, you can **mark 1-5 static** instead of marking an equal amount of harm.

### □ STEAL YOUR HEART

When you attempt to sway, dazzle or seduce a minion of **the castle**, **mark static** and roll **+Cups**. On a hit, they're enamoured with you - pick one:

- They'll actively fight other minions.
- They'll see your allies as friendly too.
- They tell you something useful.

On a 7-9, your influence only lasts a few moments - and once it's broken they'll hate you for the manipulation.

### □ AUDACITY

While in a shard's heart or when you roll 10+ on **Drink Deep**, you can **mark static** to summon the vassal's avatar for a conversation. Pick one:

- You shadow self takes their ire away from your city identity; refresh Heat.
- They let slip how you can remove a tick from their clock.
- They reveal the strengths they can bring to bear in a fight, and their Enforcer's roles.

### □ IMPROVISATION

It's a poor idol that's failed by their tools.

When your weapon doesn't fit your needs, you can **mark static** to change its perk or its flaw.

# PLAYING THE ICON

<TBA>

## THE PROVIDER

<quote>

### MAKING THE PROVIDER ROLE

Pick an age category and a vocation:

#### DELINQUENT *Black mark in Infamy*

- ☐ **Big Sister/Brother:** When you solve a problem in your sibling's life, refresh Infamy.
- ☐ **Tender:** When you feed strays or tend your garden, refresh Contamination.
- ☐ **Carer:** When you take on a responsibility your parent/guardian can't, refresh Lack.

#### PRODIGAL *Black mark in Lack*

- ☐ **Teaching Assistant:** When you help a student reach a new understanding, refresh Lack.
- ☐ **Bartender:** When you let a regular vent their worries without judgement, refresh Heat.
- ☐ **Medic:** When you complete a long shift on the ward, refresh Infamy.

#### TRAITOR *Black mark in Contamination*

- ☐ **Emergency Responder:** When you dive into danger to save a life, refresh Infamy.
- ☐ **Parent:** When you put your kid's needs first, refresh Lack.
- ☐ **Cleric:** When you show your faithful how they can act to improve society, refresh Heat.

### LOOK

Pick one from each:

Feminine, Masculine, Ambiguous, Concealed.

Practical uniform, a bag of supplies, rumpled and overworked.

Kind eyes, weary eyes, hooded eyes, intense eyes.

### RESISTANCE

You're driven. Gain resistance in either **Contamination** or **Blood**.

### BONDS

Pick one to ask the other players:

*Which of you feels you can always come to me to feel cared for?* The volunteer gains a Sworn **Empress** covenant with you.

*Which of you trusts me to rein you in when you go too far?* The volunteer gains a sworn **Temperance** covenant with you.

*Which of you did I guide through misfortune?* The volunteer gains a sworn **Wheel of Fortune** covenant with you.

### CONTACTS

Pick one to add to your covenants, and give them a name:

- ☐ **The Tower:** The charity case you can't help but take care of.
- ☐ **Death:** A critically-ill confidante, unsure if they'll be able to find treatment.
- ☐ **The Lovers:** Your paramour/partner who you can trust implicitly.

Then pick another entry above to represent your covenant with another rebel's contact.



## DARK AWAKENING

Every time you use a stat you haven't used before, **mark static** and assign it one of these: +1, 0, 0, -1.

Whenever you hit 5 Static, erase them and gain 1 Shadow.

When this takes you from 0 to 1, add 1 to a stat of your choice, pick your first Shadow Look, two Castle Moves and your trademark Gear.

When you gain Shadow 2-5, add 1 to a stat or gain a Shadow Move, and elaborate on your Shadow Look.

If you're at Shadow 5, **mark harm** instead of **static**.

## SHELTER MOVE

Ask the other rebels: who has a problem with another rebel? If you help them work through their problems, they rank up their Covenant with each other.

## SHADOW LOOK

Pick a number of categories equal to Shadow, then pick an option from each or make your own.

- ☐ **Myth:** Medusa hair, dryad bark, spider eyes, merfolk scales.
- ☐ **Clothes:** Blue temple robes, doctor's coat, quartermaster's bandoleers, bodyguard's armour.
- ☐ **Accessories:** Flocks of doves, floral wreaths, belts of potions, a caduceus.
- ☐ **Mien:** More glorious, more terrifying, more true, more serene.

## GEAR

When you hit Shadow 1, gain a weapon of your choice (1 perk, 1 flaw) plus one:

- ☐ Home cooking (Share and consume when you take **Shelter** to pick an extra option).
- ☐ Hard-wearing clothes (Armour 1).
- ☐ Sanctified bow (ranged, brace).

## CASTLE MOVES

*Pick two when you hit Shadow 1:*

### □ SOOTHING PRESENCE

When you **Help or Hinder** an ally or use **Stand With Me**, they erase 1 Harm and 1 Static no matter what else happens.

### □ MOTHER KNOWS BEST

When you give another rebel advice and they follow through with it, they gain fleeting advantage.

### □ SELF-SACRIFICING

When you jump in front of a blow that'd hit another rebel, roll **+Cups**. On a hit you're struck instead of your Ally; on a 10+ you have 1 Armour against the attack.

### □ HEART TO HEART

When you **Drink Deep**, you can also ask: 'Who does the Vassal most cherish?' On future uses of **Drink Deep** you can ask follow-up questions.

When you act on the answers in mundane world, roll with fleeting Advantage.

## SHADOW MOVES

*Each time you raise Shadow above 1, pick one of these or add 1 to a stat:*

### □ HELP TO HEAL

When you treat someone else's wounds, **mark static** to heal yourself for the same amount.

### □ MAMA BEAR

You can **mark static** to augment your strength and stability, letting you carry any weight. Leverage may still present issues.

### □ TUTOR

When you **Drink Deep**, you can **mark static** to share the ability learned with your allies.

### □ MOTHER OF MONSTERS

You can **mark static** to craft a loyal creature from the swirling chaos of the void. They'll follow your orders, but have needs and desires of their own. They have a weapon (one perk and one flaw of your choice), and you can sacrifice them to apply 1 Armour to a single blow.

# PLAYING THE PROVIDER

<TBA>



<quote>

## MAKING THE HARLEQUIN ROLE

Pick an age category and a vocation:

### DELINQUENT *Black mark in Infamy*

- ☐ **Class Clown:** When an authority figure singles you out for punishment, refresh Infamy.
- ☐ **Dropout:** When you let your responsibilities lapse despite knowing the consequences, refresh Heat.
- ☐ **Dreamer:** When you lose yourself in daydreams and let the Architect say where you wake up, refresh Contamination.

### PRODIGAL *Black mark in Lack*

- ☐ **Stoner:** When you self-medicate to ignore responsibilities or unwind, refresh Heat.
- ☐ **Artist:** When you are finally satisfied with an artwork and release it, refresh Lack.
- ☐ **Temp:** When you make a good impression at a new workplace, refresh Infamy.

### TRAITOR *Black mark in Contamination*

- ☐ **'Independent Means':** When you tap into your reserves of wealth to make a problem go away, refresh Heat.
- ☐ **Scam(?) Psychic:** When your spiritual guidance helps a client, refresh Lack.
- ☐ **Cashier:** When you turn a blind eye or bend the rules to help someone in need, refresh Contamination.

## LOOK

Pick one from each:

Feminine, Masculine, Ambiguous,  
Concealed.  
Threadbare uniform, comfortable clothes,  
weird clothes.  
Laughing eyes, bloodshot eyes, sleepy  
eyes, bright eyes.

## RESISTANCE

You laugh it all off. Gain resistance in either **Heat** or **Infamy**.

## BONDS

Pick one to ask the other players:

*Which of you did I believe in, when no one else would?* The volunteer gains a Sworn **Fool** covenant with you.

*Which of you enjoys wasting time with me?* The volunteer gains a sworn **Hanged Man** covenant with you.

*Who was struggling with a dilemma when I showed them a third way?* The volunteer gains a sworn **High Priestess** covenant with you.

## CONTACTS

Pick one to add to your covenants, and give them a name:

- ☐ **Temperance:** The co-worker/classmate who's always free to hang.
- ☐ **The Hermit:** The recluse you bonded with over a common interest.
- ☐ **The Moon:** The fellow survivor who reminds you of a time you'd rather forget.

Then pick another entry above to represent your covenant with another rebel's contact.





## DARK AWAKENING

Every time you use a stat you haven't used before, **mark static** and assign it one of these: +1, 0, 0, -1.

Whenever you hit 5 Static, erase them and gain 1 Shadow.

When this takes you from 0 to 1, add 1 to a stat of your choice, pick your first Shadow Look, two Castle Moves and your trademark Gear.

When you gain Shadow 2-5, add 1 to a stat or gain a Shadow Move, and elaborate on your Shadow Look.

If you're at Shadow 5, **mark harm** instead of **static**.

## SHELTER MOVE

You kick back and relax, say how. Anyone who joins you loses 1d6 Static at the cost of gaining fleeting disadvantage.

## SHADOW LOOK

Pick a number of categories equal to Shadow, then pick an option from each or make your own.

- ☐ **Myth:** Will'o'the'wisp aura, siren scales, rabbit ears, monkey tail.
- ☐ **Clothes:** Jester motley, shapeless habit, catwalk fashion, dandy coat.
- ☐ **Accessories:** Laugh track, narcotic haze, prismatic eyes, quicksilver mask.
- ☐ **Mien:** More glorious, more terrifying, more true, more serene.

## GEAR

When you hit Shadow 1, gain a weapon of your choice (1 perk, 1 flaw) plus one:

- ☐ A fancy jacket (1 Armour)
- ☐ Confusing fighting style (cleave, close).
- ☐ Lucky charm (destroy to reroll a missed roll).

## CASTLE MOVES

*Pick two when you hit Shadow 1:*

### ☐ I CAN DO THAT BETTER

*When you observe another rebel's miss, if you do the same thing, make that move with fleeting advantage.*

### ☐ AGE UP MY SLEEVE

*When you hold the enemy's attention with trickery or sleight of hand, **Line It Up** with Wands instead of Coins.*

### ☐ TRUMP CARD

*When you pull out a last-ditch weapon, say what it is and roll **+Wands**. Whatever the result, you defeat the Adversary by the skin of your teeth. On a 9 or less, it costs you a lot: immediately max out Lack, Heat or Contamination, depending on whether your trick used your tools, your connections or the void. On a 6 or less, you mess up real bad: mark your Deadly Wound box too.*

*Once you've used this, you can't reuse it until you've completely cleared the appropriate track (black marks don't count).*

### ☐ LAUGH THROUGH THE PAIN

*When you take harm from an adversary, hold 1. Spend 1 to reveal a weakness in their fighting style and give an ally advantage against them. Spend 3 to create an Opening.*

## SHADOW MOVES

*Each time you raise Shadow above 1, pick one of these or add 1 to a stat:*

### ☐ MADE YOU LOOK

*When you make yourself the centre of attention, **mark static** to pick one:*

- The enemy reveals a hidden weakness or limitation.
- The enemy turns their attention away from your allies.

*The enemy will act against you, of course. That can't be helped.*

### ☐ TEARS OF A CLOWN

*When you put on a pantomime of emotion in front of a minion or Adversary, **mark static** to strike to the heart of them. They'll be overcome with the emotion you were performing; each Rebel gets fleeting Advantage taking advantage of it.*

### ☐ I WAS NEVER HERE

*When you roll a 10+ on **Dodge**, **mark static** to leave a duplicate in your place to be the target of the enemy's attack. **Mark static** again to blow it up (Stun, Close).*

### ☐ WILD CARD

*Choose a Shadow Move from another Rebel playbook.*

# PLAYING THE HARLEQUIN

<tba>

## THE INHUMAN

<quote>

### MAKING THE INHUMAN ROLE

Pick a category and a vocation:

#### PRETENDER *Black mark in Infamy*

You try to blend in with humanity, and prevent them from realising something's off with you. Get advantage on Lack, but disadvantage on Contamination.

- ☐ **Ordinary High School Student:** When you get an unexceptional grade on a major assignment, refresh Infamy.
- ☐ **Office Drone:** When you celebrate with your co-workers, refresh Lack.
- ☐ **Pensioner:** When you learn something important from your peer's stories of their lives, refresh Contamination.

#### INTERLOPER *Black mark in Blood*

You're on the fringes of society, revelling in your strangeness. Get advantage on Heat, but disadvantage on Infamy.

- ☐ **Midnight Carnival:** When you use your performances to show someone a new way to live, refresh Infamy.
- ☐ **Mystical Consultant:** When you confront the supernatural cause of a client's problems, refresh Contamination.
- ☐ **Nomad:** When you find a new and willing host, refresh Lack.

#### LURKER *Black mark in Heat*

You don't even pretend to be human, haunting the city's alleys and rooftops. Get advantage on Contamination, but disadvantage on Lack.

- ☐ **Stray:** When your animal form lets you learn crucial information, refresh Heat.
- ☐ **Haunter:** When you get someone to confess and face consequences, refresh Blood.
- ☐ **Monster:** When you use force to protect someone, refresh Infamy.

### LOOK

Pick one from each:

Feminine, Masculine, Agender, Concealed.  
Animal, construct, spirit, ghost, dream.  
Human imposter, mundane animal,  
bizarre creature.

### RESISTANCE

You're not completely real. Gain resistance in either **Blood** or **Lack**.

### BONDS

Pick one to ask the other players:

*Which of you is obsessed with me, and doesn't quite know why?* The volunteer gains a Sworn **Moon** covenant with you.

*Who is trying to bring out my potential?* The volunteer gains a sworn **Star** covenant with you.

*Who remembers me as I used to be?* The volunteer gains a sworn **Death** covenant with you.

### CONTACTS

Pick one to add to your covenants at level 1, and give them a name:

- ☐ **Judgement:** An ancient inhuman, ambivalent to humanity.
- ☐ **The Hierophant:** A humble shop owner teaching you how to be human.
- ☐ **Strength:** An activist ostracised from human society as you, but still standing firm.

Then pick another entry above to represent your covenant with another rebel's contact.



## DARK AWAKENING

Every time you use a stat you haven't used before, **mark static** and assign it one of these: +1, 0, 0, -1.

Whenever you hit 5 Static, erase them and gain 1 Shadow.

When this takes you from 0 to 1, add 1 to a stat of your choice, pick your first Shadow Look, two Castle Moves and your trademark Gear.

When you gain Shadow 2-5, add 1 to a stat or gain a Shadow Move, and elaborate on your Shadow Look.

If you're at Shadow 5, **mark harm** instead of **static**.

## SHELTER MOVE

You tap into the thoughts of the nearest Adversary. The Architect will describe what they can see and hear, and you may ask a question about what the Adversary is thinking and feeling.

## SHADOW LOOK

Pick a number of categories equal to Shadow, then pick an option from each or make your own.

- ☐ **Myth:** Ghostly veil, animal gait, cosmos eyes, automaton gears.
- ☐ **Clothes:** Something archaic, something futuristic, nothing at all.
- ☐ **Accessories:** Lesser spirits, eerie music, localised storms, runic halo.
- ☐ **Mien:** More mundane, more pleasant, less true, more chaotic.

## GEAR

When you hit Shadow 1, gain a weapon of your choice (1 perk, 1 flaw) plus one:

- ☐ Gleaming claws (piercing, close).
- ☐ Hardened skin (1 Armour).
- ☐ A disguise (once per delve, can pass as a castle minion).

## CASTLE MOVES

*Pick two when you hit Shadow 1:*

### □ CASTLE GUIDE

The nightmare landscape of the Castle feels like home to you. *When your group Travels the Labyrinth*, they gain a Trace even on a miss, and you can ask the Architect a single question about the area you arrive in.

### □ SOUL BOND

Choose a rebel you have a Covenant with, and one of their moves. *While the Covenant is at least level 1*, you have access to that move, and you can **Help or Hinder** them after they roll.

### □ UNNATURAL FORM

*When you take advantage of your inhuman body to move quickly, powerfully or strangely*, gain advantage on **Dodge** and **Flow Like Water**.

### □ CHILD OF LILITH

You have kinship with all things descended from the void. *When you spare a minion or Adversary's life*, roll **+Cups** - on a hit, gain 1 Bond with them, and you can visit them during the mundane world phase.

## SHADOW MOVES

*Each time you raise Shadow above 1, pick one of these or add 1 to a stat:*

### □ MY TRUE FORM

You realise that the Castle had a stronger hand in your creation than you thought. Describe how your Shadow Look changes to reflect this. You may **mark static** to grow an organ or limb - arms, tentacles, eyes, wings, mouths or similar.

### □ GHOST EATER

*When you defeat a minion of the Vassal*, you can consume its body and roll **+Cups**. On a hit, you ingest it; on a 7-9, it taints you and you **mark static**. So long as the creature is ingested, you can freely use one of its moves. When you **mark static** you can destroy the ingested creature instead. You must destroy your currently ingested creature to catch another.

### □ PSYCHOPOMP

You can **mark static** and spend 2 Traces to guide your group to or from: an individual's psyche, the land of the dead, **the castle's** home.

### □ APPARITION'S BLADE

You are a conduit for the hunger of the Void. **Mark static** to channel its full power into an attack, giving it Advantage and a tag of your choice.

# PLAYING THE INHUMAN

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<quote>

## MAKING THE WATCHER ROLE

Pick a category and a vocation:

### DELINQUENT *Black mark in Infamy*

- ☐ **Star Pupil:** When you win an award for your school, refresh Infamy.
- ☐ **Nerd:** When you find someone who shares your passions, refresh Contamination.
- ☐ **Junior Reporter:** When your advisor supports you in pursuing a divisive subject, refresh Heat.

### PRODIGAL *Black mark in Lack*

- ☐ **Blogger:** When you make an important subject approachable for a broader audience, refresh Lack.
- ☐ **Hacker:** When you get a client the data/access they want, refresh Heat.
- ☐ **Researcher:** When you get your findings published, refresh Infamy.

### TRAITOR *Black mark in Contamination*

- ☐ **PI:** When you solve a case for a client, refresh Lack.
- ☐ **Professor:** When you talk a student through a problem they're having, refresh Blood.
- ☐ **Conspiracist:** When you explain your theories to someone without alienating them, refresh Contamination.

## LOOK

Pick one from each:

Feminine, Masculine, Agender, Concealed.  
Sturdy coat, drab camouflage, nerd chic.  
Shiny Coinses, hooded eyes, piercing eyes.

## RESISTANCE

You maintain your distance. Gain resistance in either **Infamy** or **Heat**.

## BONDS

Pick one to ask the other players:

*Which of you knew me by my handle long before we met IRL?* The one who volunteers gains a Sworn **Hermit** covenant with you.

*Which of you found fortune through my advice?* The one who volunteers gains a Sworn **Sun** covenant with you.

*Which of you am I tasked with assessing?* The one who volunteers gains a Sworn **Judgement** covenant with you.

## CONTACTS

Pick one to add to your covenants at level 1, and give them a name:

- ☐ **Devil:** The journalist who pays you to dig up dirt.
- ☐ **Empress:** The (surrogate?) parent who makes sure you're safe and well.
- ☐ **Justice:** The civil servant who leaks you intel on what's really going on.

Then pick another entry above to represent your covenant with another rebel's contact.



## DARK AWAKENING

Every time you use a stat you haven't used before, **mark static** and assign it one of these: +1, 0, 0, -1.

Whenever you hit 5 Static, erase them and gain 1 Shadow.

When this takes you from 0 to 1, add 1 to a stat of your choice, pick your first Shadow Look, two Castle Moves and your trademark Gear.

When you gain Shadow 2-5, add 1 to a stat or gain a Shadow Move, and elaborate on your Shadow Look.

If you're at Shadow 5, **mark harm** instead of **static**.

## SHELTER MOVE

You submerge your mind in the shifting chaos of the labyrinth. Roll 2d6; on a 7+ gain a Trace, on a 6- **mark static**. Either way, tell the group what you understand better about this castle shard or the vassal.

## SHADOW LOOK

Pick a number of categories equal to Shadow, then pick an option from each or make your own.

- ☐ **Myth:** Grigori eyes, gargoyle skin, mothman wings, ghost translucence.
- ☐ **Clothes:** Street camo, PI longcoat, cyberpunk apparel, urban explorer rigging.
- ☐ **Accessories:** Hacker tech, goggles and lenses, satchels of books, occult junk.
- ☐ **Mien:** More glorious, more terrifying, more true, more serene.

## GEAR

When you hit Shadow 1, gain a weapon of your choice (1 perk, 1 flaw) plus one:

- ☐ Detailed notebook (Once per delve, use to get advantage on **See Clear**).
- ☐ Smoke bomb (Once per delve, use to disappear from sight).
- ☐ Hunting rifle (*ranged, ammo*).

## CASTLE MOVES

*Pick two when you hit Shadow 1:*

### □ RESHAPE CHAOS

The shifting nightmare of **the castle** bends to your will. Spend a Trace to uncover one of these close to hand:

- A mechanism that will close off a passage.
- A secret passage or trapdoor to shelter from harm.
- An environmental hazard ready to be triggered.

### □ BEND TIME

*When you roll 10+ on **Dodge**, time seems to slow for everyone except you. If you can perform your next action within a few seconds, it'll have Advantage.*

### □ PINNING FIRE

*When you attack a foe with a ranged weapon, they must choose: hunker down/stay in cover, or get knocked out (if a minion)/provide an Opening (if an adversary)*

### □ TRIAGE

*When you study a wound another character has taken, roll **+Coins**. On a 10+, choose 3. On a 7-9, choose 1.*

- Ask a question from the **See Clear** list.
- You treat their wounds. They heal 2 Harm.
- The next time they would **mark static**, they ignore it.

## SHADOW MOVES

*Each time you raise Shadow above 1, pick one of these or add 1 to a stat:*

### □ BRAIN RADIO

If there's static, there's signal. *When you're in **the castle**, you can **mark static** to talk to any one person who's felt **the castle's** touch - rebels, vassals, covenants etc.*

### □ EYES ON THE INSIDE

You can **mark static** to perceive the intangible and immaterial. *When you use this sight to guide your mystic arts, roll **+Coins** instead of **+Cups** on **Drink Deep**.*

### □ CHAOS EYES

The shifting chaos of **the castle** bleeds out of your mind and into those that meet your gaze. Your eyes are a weapon with *ranged, piercing, painful*.

### □ ASTRAL PROJECTION

You may **mark static** to send your soul out into **the castle**. As long as you concentrate you can see through its eyes and - with effort - pull switches, open doors, move small object, etc. Most castle minions won't be able to see or interact with it. Most.

# PLAYING THE WATCHER

<tba>

# COVENANTS







# COVENANTS

Covenants are the core social drivers of **Voidheart Symphony**. They're the bonds that hold your ragtag group of rebels together, and the outside connections they can call on when they're in trouble, or need to blow off steam.

You track your most important connections on your character sheet. Each covenant is in one direction: they represent the benefits your character has gained from the relationship with the other character. They might have a matching covenant for you, or might not.

Each covenant has:

- **An Arcanum:** A general sense of the covenant. What sort of person are they? How do they improve your life?
- **Nurture/Betray triggers:** When you hit the nurture tag, raise the Rank of the covenant; when you hit the betray tag, you will likely **Risk the Covenant**.
- **A Rank:** How deep your connection goes. The higher the rank, the better you'll be at using the covenant. Covenants start each investigation at Rank 0 and inactive unless they're Sworn, in which case they start at Rank 1.
- **Moves:** One that triggers when you hang out, one that's usable in the City, and one that's usable in the Castle. When you use the Castle move, it's up to you how that manifests - using their training in unexpected ways, a phantom version of the contact appearing and lending you their aid, drawing on magical power within you?

All Covenants give you access to these moves:

## HELP OR HINDER

*When you help or hinder another rebel, give them a dice to roll as per dis/advantage. If the dice you gave comes up highest, say how you helped and your covenant goes up a rank (max +3); if it's the lowest, the acting player says how you messed things up for them and you **Risk the Covenant**.*

## RISK THE COVENANT

*When your relationship is strained, roll +Rank. On a hit, you both remember some moment in your past that puts your current actions in perspective; on a 10+, raise the Rank (max +3). On a miss, lower the Rank by 1.*

## EVOKE THE COVENANT

*Once per Delve, you may draw on a covenant for strength in **the castle**. Roll +Rank instead of another stat. If the roll still fails, lose a Rank in that covenant - your bond's strength wasn't enough.*

## SUMMON AID

*When you call on your covenants for help, distant (or dead) rebels can answer. If they do, an avatar of that covenant steps from the shadows near you as a wraith, controlled by that rebel's player. They take action as normal, but can't take wounds. The first harm they take weakens them; the second harm banishes them, weakening the covenant by a rank.*





**At their best**, the Fool is inquisitive, courageous and honest, showing people new ways and unseen alternatives.

**At their worst**, the Fool is reckless and proudly ignorant, risking things important to them when they should know better.

**Nurture this covenant when...** you do something spontaneous together, at your prompting or theirs.

**Betray this covenant when...** they ask you to do something foolhardy and you refuse, or you abandon them when they need you.

## HANGOUT

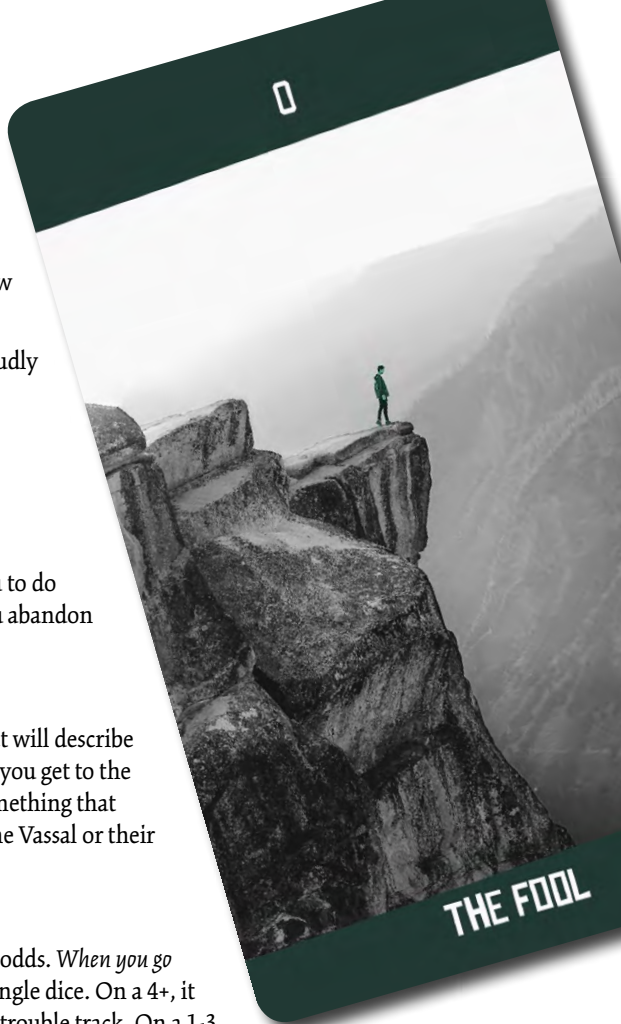
*When you hang out with the Fool*, the Architect will describe a strange coincidence that strikes nearby. If you get to the truth of what happened, you'll discover something that refreshes a gauge or gives information on the Vassal or their Victims.

## CITY MOVE

Sometimes things just work out, against all odds. *When you go over the top to fix a problem in your life*, roll a single dice. On a 4+, it somehow works - clear out the appropriate trouble track. On a 1-3 things go very wrong - max out the track instead.

## CASTLE MOVE

You live a charmed life. *When you search for a way out of lethal danger*, roll **+Fool**. No matter what, you'll be removed from the situation; on a 10+ you say what state you're in when you return, on a 7-9 the Architect will. On a 6- we'll next see you in the Vassal's company.



## MAGICIAN

**At their best,** the Magician is inspiring, resourceful, and driven.

**At their worst,** they're manipulative, egotistical and power-hungry.

**Nurture this covenant when...** you collaborate with the Magician to create something better than either of you could make on your own.

**Betray this covenant when...** you use the Magician's work without crediting them, or you sabotage their efforts.

### HANGOUT

*When you help the Magician with a project of theirs,* they teach you a mundane skill you didn't know before (lock-picking, painting, mixing music, etc). The next time you use it, roll with advantage.

### CITY MOVE

The Magician inspires you to go beyond. *When you put extra effort into finishing a project,* check against Lack. On a hit pick one:

- It's impressive - refresh Infamy.
- It's appreciated - raise the Rank of a covenant with a co-worker.
- It's enticing - someone you pick who sees it wants to meet.

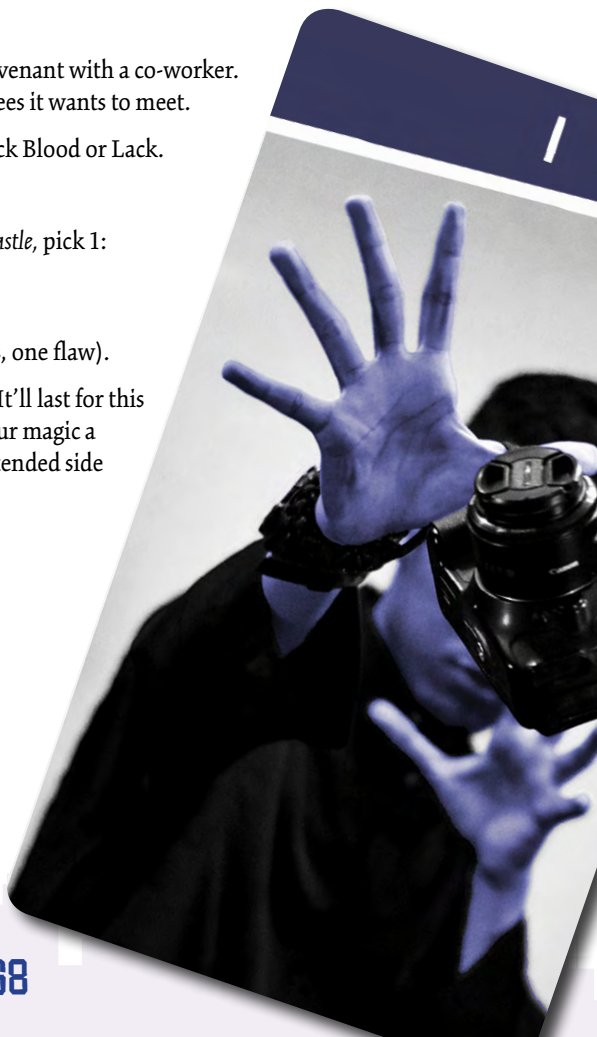
On a weak hit, the extra effort hurts - check Blood or Lack.

### CASTLE MOVE

*When you improvise a ritual with bits of the castle,* pick 1:

- It'll protect from harm.
- It'll grant a supernatural ability
- It'll create a potent weapon (two perks, one flaw).

Then roll **+Magician**. On a hit, it works! It'll last for this delve. On a 7-9 the Architect will twist your magic a little - give it a weakness, a quirk, or unintended side effects.



# HIGH PRIESTESS

**At their best**, the high priestess is empathetic, insightful and intuitive, helping you understand your motivations.

**At their worst**, the high priestess is withdrawn, secretive and indecisive, disregarding facts and trusting in gossip.

**Nurture this covenant when...** you reveal something significant to them about your dreams, hopes or ambitions.

**Betray this covenant when..** you value the material over the spiritual, or are too busy with your mundane obligations to heed their advice.

## HANGOUT

*When you let the High Priestess show you a hidden place in the city, their player will describe what makes it beautiful, and how it's in danger. When you magnify its beauty or protect it from danger, refresh a stress gauge.*

## CITY MOVE

*Once per investigation, you can declare that you had a dream about your current situation. Ask the Architect a question in the form of 'What will happen if I \_\_\_\_' - they'll relate an element of your dream that answers your question. If you go ahead with your proposed action, roll with advantage.*

## CASTLE MOVE

*When your make your faith manifest, roll +High Priestess. On a hit, radiant light prevents creatures of **the castle** from coming within a few metres of you. On a 7-9 pick 2, on a 10+ pick 1:*

- You can't move without breaking the shield.
- You can't attack without breaking the shield.
- It only shields you.



## EMPRESS

**At their best**, the Empress gives others a supporting, nurturing environment that lets them grow into their true potential.

**At their worst**, the Empress constructs stifling relationships, quashing potential so that it doesn't threaten their authority.

**Nurture this covenant when...** you grow into greater beauty or strength with their support, or cultivate a person (or creature) to a significant milestone following the Empress' example.

**Betray this covenant when...** you ruin your own chances out of spite, or try to control another's growth.

### HANGOUT

*When you visit the Empress*, they give you something impractical but important; a book, an accessory, a pot plant, etc. Making it part of your life becomes another obligation (see **Duck Out**), but when you tend to it or understand it better you refresh a stress gauge of your choice.

### CITY MOVE

*When you spend a few hours tending to someone*, they refresh gauges of your choice equal to your Empress rank. There's a cost - pick one:

- You use up something that'll be hard to replace - tick Lack.
- You resent them a little for needing this - tick Contamination.
- You grow protective of them - the next time they mark a wound, get lasting Disadvantage until you tend to them.

### CASTLE MOVE

The Empress haunts you, gauzy and insubstantial. *When you ask the spirit for advice*, roll **+Empress**. On a hit, ask a question and the Architect will answer. On a 7-9 pick one:



# EMPEROR

**At their best**, the Emperor brings structure, stability, and wisdom into other's lives.

**At their worst**, the Emperor is inflexible in their opinions and seeks to control the actions of others.

**Nurture this covenant when...** you teach the Emperor something new, or thank them for the success their advice has brought you.

**Betray this covenant when...** you respect someone else's advice over the Emperor's, or suffer by doing something they told you not to.

## HANGOUT

*When you spend time with the Emperor, they can offer you a job to help their organisation. They get to decide what it is, you decide if you want to take it. If you carry it out, you both refresh Infamy or Lack on top of any other outcomes.*

## CITY MOVE

You draw a strong sense of structure and certainty from your relationship with the Emperor. *When you comprehensively reject a group identity society has placed on you in favour of one you have found for yourself, remove notches in Contamination equal to your Emperor rank.*

## CASTLE MOVE

*When you have an opening on an Adversary, roll +Emperor. On a hit, remove the opening and gain 3-Insight. So long as you have Insight, that Adversary's attacks cannot hurt you. Spend a point of Insight to:*

- Redirect the Adversary's attack towards you.
- Reveal their weakness and give an ally fleeting advantage.





## COVENANTS

### HIEROPHANT

**At their best**, the Hierophant passes down wisdom and initiates their wards into a higher station.

**At their worst**, the Hierophant is a gatekeeper, only passing down wisdom to those who meet their biases or standards.

**Nurture this covenant when...** you let the Hierophant teachings guide you in making a significant decision.

**Betray this covenant when...** you spurn tradition, or burn bridges with an institution you're a member of.

#### HANGOUT

*When you go to the Hierophant asking for their advice with a problem, they can tell you what to do. While you are following this advice, you roll with advantage.*

#### CITY MOVE

The Hierophant has given you access to a exclusive group. *When you use your membership of this group to open doors, gain advantage on any Infamy check. If you miss the check, the Architect will say how this ends up hurting the group.*

#### CASTLE MOVE

With the Hierophant influence you can better understand the nightmare physics of the castle. *When you use **Drink Deep** to warp the castle, also gain 1 Trace.*



# LOVERS

**At their best**, the Lover is a reliable partner and paramour, helping their companion be the best they can be.

**At their worst**, the Lover may be needy or distant, but always frames the problems in their life around their partner.

**Nurture this covenant when...** you take time to bond with The Lover, making them feel valued.

**Betray this covenant when...** you let the Lover down on a promise, or make them feel like a resource instead of a partner.

## HANGOUT

*When you spend time with the Lover, ask them: what do you most love about me? When you act in line with the vision of you they see, roll with fleeting advantage.*

## CITY MOVE

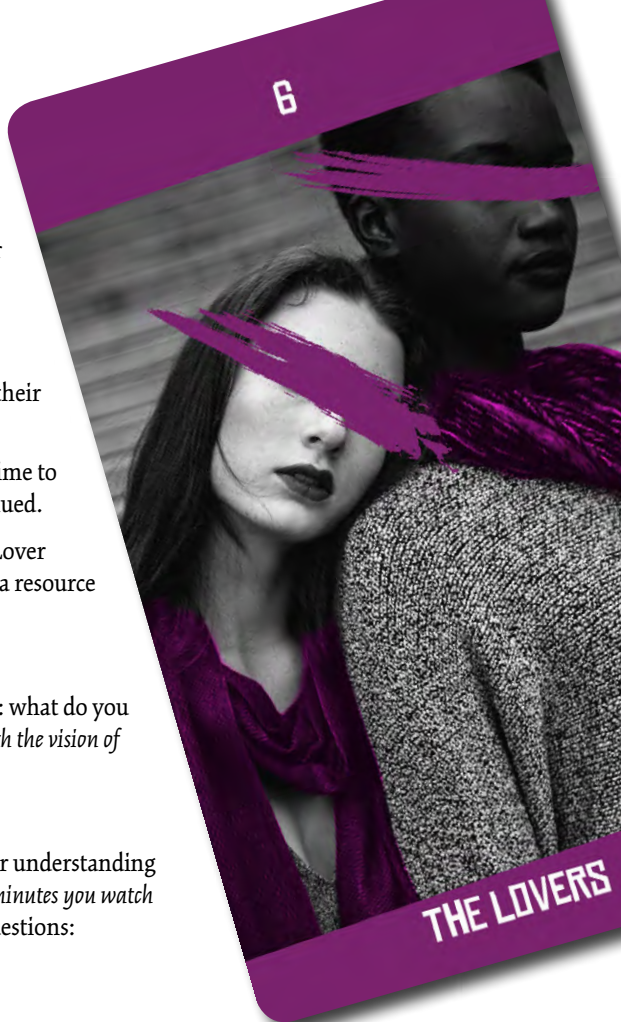
With The Lover held close, you gain a better understanding of what others hold precious. *For every five minutes you watch someone socialise, you can ask one of these questions:*

- *Are you in love?*
- *Are you satisfied with your life?*
- *What is most precious to you?*
- *Who here do you most rely on?*

Their player will answer honestly.

## CASTLE MOVE

The Lover gives you the resolve to endure. *When you mark off a wound, roll +Lover.* On a hit, you draw strength from your relationship; erase a less severe wound or get fleeting advantage. On a 7-9, promise the Lover something you'll do for them when you get out of here. If you break it, you betray the covenant.



## CHARIOT

**At their best**, the Chariot is independent and self-contained, fully determined to achieve their goals.

**At their worst**, the Chariot is either pig-headed and stubborn, or all too willing to move on when things get tough.

**Nurture this covenant when...** you go somewhere new together, somewhere neither of you have gone before.

**Betray this covenant when...** you realise you don't know what you want, or give up on achieving a goal because it's too hard.

### HANGOUT

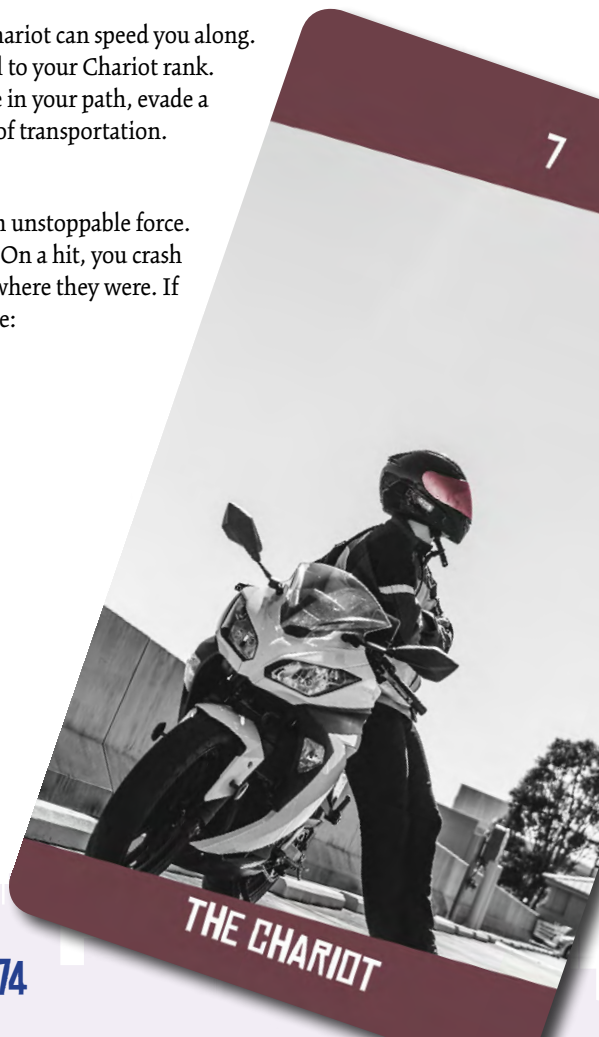
*When you hang out with the Chariot*, they can dare you to do something dangerous. If you go through with the dare, raise this covenant's Rank; if you stand your ground and refuse, they'll respect it but the next dare will be riskier.

### CITY MOVE

*When you need to get somewhere fast*, the Chariot can speed you along. As you begin your sprint, gain Hold equal to your Chariot rank. Spend 1 hold to dodge around an obstacle in your path, evade a pursuer, or gain definite hold of a means of transportation.

### CASTLE MOVE

Against an unbeatable foe, you become an unstoppable force. *When you charge an enemy*, roll **+Chariot**. On a hit, you crash into them and push them far away from where they were. If you had an opening, exhaust it to pick one:





# STRENGTH

**At their best**, Strength knows which challengers they can overcome and brings endless determination to bear against them.

**At their worst**, they have lost confidence in their ability to make changes to their world, and sink into a depressive funk.

**Nurture this covenant when...** you overcome a great obstacle through stamina and persistence.

**Betray this covenant when...** you use your strength without intention, lashing out and causing suffering.

## HANGOUT

*When you hang out with Strength, you can bring up an intense emotion you're struggling with. The next time you miss a move while indulging in that emotion, you can collect yourself and upgrade the result to a weak hit/7-9.*

## CITY MOVE

Strength teaches you how use the solidarity of your allies. *So long as you are standing side by side with allies*, you pick an extra option on **Make a Stand** - two on a weak hit, three on a strong hit.

## CASTLE MOVE

You have the strength to be there when your friends need you most. *When another rebel is hit by a blow that would take off their last point of harm*, you can take the blow instead. You have Armour against this blow equal to your ranks in Strength.



# COVENANTS



**At their best**, the Hermit has used their isolation to gain perspective and self-discovery, sharing their insights with a select group of friends.

**At their worst**, the Hermit disdains broader society, viewing themselves as superior and ignoring the broader social fabric they rely on.

**Nurture this covenant when...** you give them something that helps them follow their interests, or help them cope when a social situation becomes too much.

**Betray this covenant when...** you invade their privacy, or share with others something they meant for you alone.

## HANGOUT

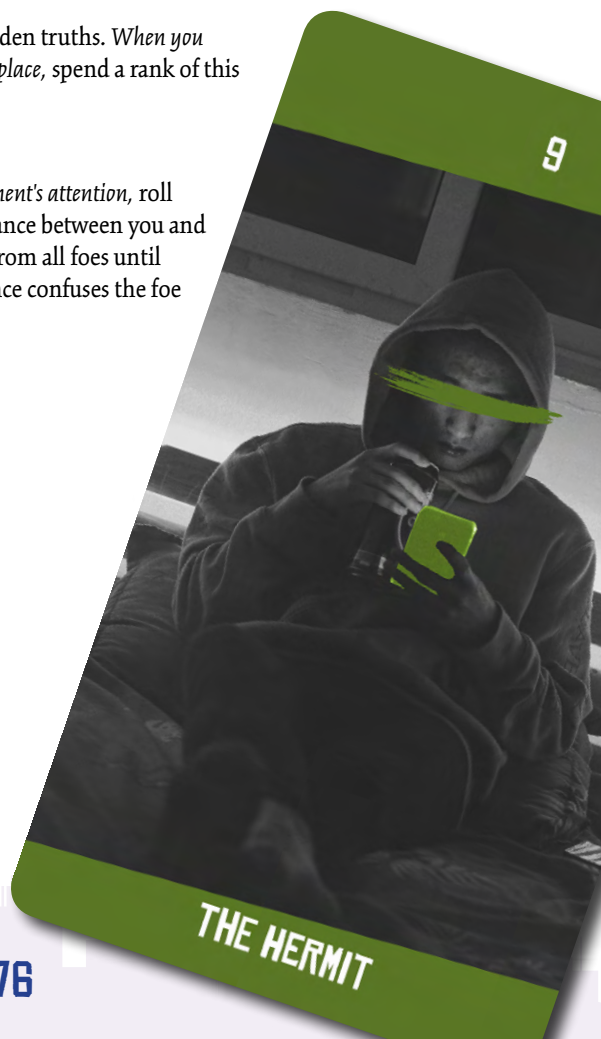
*When you hang out with the Hermit*, in-person or online they'll tell you something interesting they spotted recently - about a location, a local celebrity, or a new social trend. Get fleeting advantage when you make use of the lead.

## CITY MOVE

The Hermit's shown you how to spot hidden truths. *When you search for a hidden entryway, exit, or hiding place*, spend a rank of this covenant to immediately find it.

## CASTLE MOVE

*When you use a distraction to escape an opponent's attention*, roll +Hermit. On a hit you can put a safe distance between you and them. On a 10+ pick one: you're hidden from all foes until you next take action, or your disappearance confuses the foe giving your allies breathing room.



# WHEEL OF FORTUNE

**At their best**, the Wheel of Fortune is frugal in times of plenty and giving in times of trial.

**At their worst**, the Wheel of Fortune is passive and unwilling to act, trusting in destiny to fix their problems for them.

**Nurture this covenant when...** you find a way to turn a tragedy into victory, or find dreadful failure despite your best efforts.

**Betray this covenant when...** you hold onto a plan when it time and again results in failure, or refuse to help a friend who has fallen on hard times.

## HANGOUT

*When you hang out with the Wheel of Fortune, flip a coin. On heads, they show you an opportunity you hadn't considered. On tails, they show you how the course you're on might lead to disaster. Gain fleeting advantage acting on their insights.*

## CITY MOVE

*When you help someone in need, hold 1. Spend 1 hold to declare that someone offers you unexpected charity or camaraderie, giving you fleeting advantage on **Gearing Up** or **Let Your Hair Down**.*

## CASTLE MOVE

*When your roll result is within [Wheel of Fortune ranks] of a lower success category, you may downgrade your result and hold 1.*

*When your roll result is within [Wheel of Fortune ranks] of a higher success category, you may spend 1 hold to upgrade your result category.*

**For example, if your Rank is 2 you can use this to turn a 10 or 11 into a 7-9 result and get 1 hold, and then spend that hold later to turn a 5 or 6 into a 7-9.**



## JUSTICE

**At their best**, Justice gathers power so that they can help others and bring low those that use society's structures to cause pain and misery.

**At their worst**, Justice trusts in and supports the structures of society without recognising the institutional harm they propagate.

**Nurture this covenant when...** you get them evidence or a lead that helps them fight injustice.

**Betray this covenant when...** you avoid responsibility for the suffering you have caused.

### HANGOUT

*When you spend time with Justice*, you can help them talk through the details of their current case or sit in on a meeting with community members. Pick one to learn about: the vassal's current activities, a potential new covenant, a threat to another rebel's role.

### CITY MOVE

The systems of this city are unjust and perpetuate inequality, but with Justice you can – for a moment – force them to work towards their putative lofty goals. *When you have bureaucratic leverage over a public servant*, you can **Make a Stand** checking against Contamination instead of Infamy.

### CASTLE MOVE

Where a community comes together to support each other and correct the scales, Justice is there with them. *When you use an adversary's crimes to spur your allies to action*, spend a point of Justice rank to get a 10+ on **Stand With Me** without needing to roll.



# HANGED MAN

**At their best**, the Hanged Man is calm, collected and observant. They never rush into things, but their perspective is often valuable.

**At their worst**, the Hanged Man is passive and apathetic, unwilling to risk the disruption action might bring.

**Nurture this covenant when...** you find peace or insight by surrendering to the whims of fate.

**Betray this covenant when...** you demand they change when they don't want to, or suffer burnout from pushing yourself too hard.

## HANGOUT

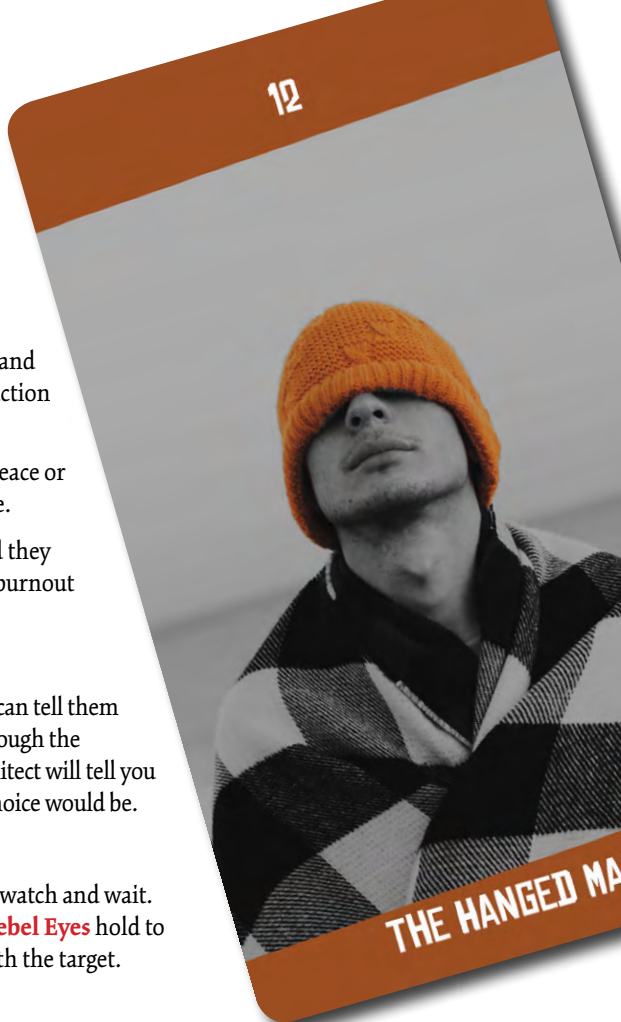
*When you hang out with the Hanged Man, you can tell them about a dilemma you're facing. Whether through the Hanged Man's advice or otherwise, the Architect will tell you what the immediate consequences of each choice would be.*

## CITY MOVE

The Hanged Man gives you the patience to watch and wait. *When you stake out a target*, you can spend **Rebel Eyes** hold to ask questions without having to interact with the target.

## CASTLE MOVE

The Hanged Man teaches you serenity in pain. *When you take harm from an adversary*, hold 1. Spend 1 to reveal a weakness in their fighting style and give another Rebel advantage against them. Spend 3 to create an Opening.





## DEATH

**At their best,** Death shows you which parts of your life are causing pain or holding you back, and helps you let go of them.

**At their worst,** Death is brutal and callous, pressuring you into changes so that you can be who they want you to be.

**Nurture this covenant when...** you show willingness to make significant changes to your life.

**Betray this covenant when...** you cling to your status quo even as it causes you pain or misery.

### HANGOUT

*When you spend time with Death, they can ask you one of these: what's your biggest regret, who do you wish wasn't in your life, what's your biggest worry about the future. You don't have to answer honestly, but both of you will know if you lie.*

### CITY MOVE

*When you confront someone with evidence that their way of life is hurting them, pick options up to your Death rank:*

- They're driven to change things.
- They don't resent you.
- There's a clear route to a better life.
- They have the support they need to make the change.

### CASTLE MOVE

Sometimes part must die for the whole to live. *When you surgically amputate part of someone, deal them a Major Wound and pick one:*

- They heal all harm.
- They refresh Blood.
- Remove a rank of Void covenant from them.

Any amputated part returns in the city - but the scar lingers.



# TEMPERANCE

**At their best,** Temperance is a moderating force in other's lives, bringing them balance, patience and stability.

**At their worst,** Temperance ignores the root causes of other's joy and sorrow, instead pushing them to stop harshing Temperance's mood.

**Nurture this covenant when...** you reconcile a conflict between friends, or your patience and vision bears fruit.

**Betray this covenant when...** an excess of emotion leads you into disaster, or you alienate a friend by holding firm to your beliefs.

## HANGOUT

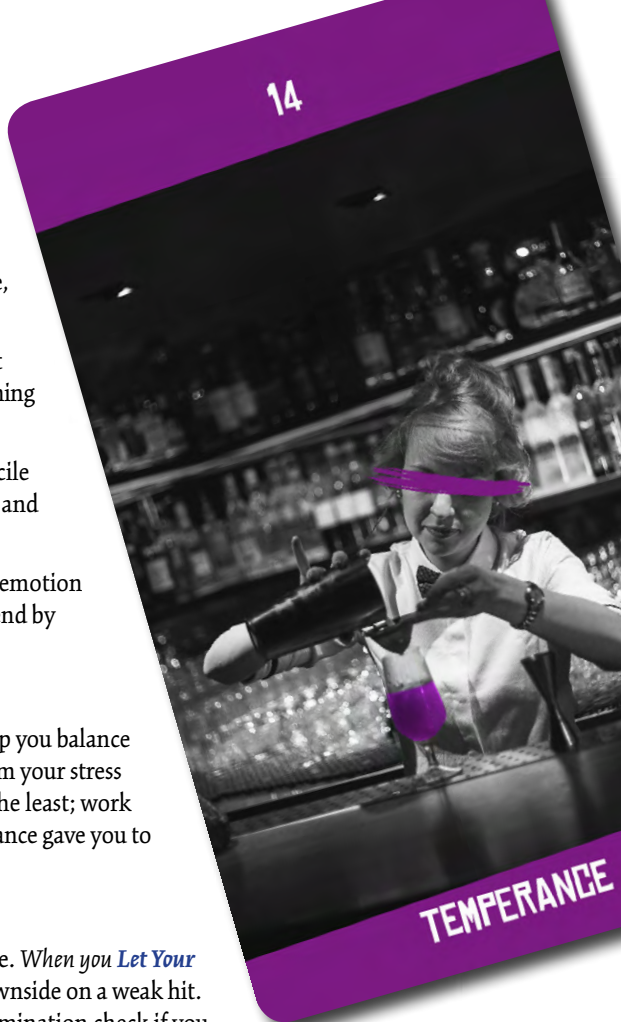
*When you hang out with Temperance, they help you balance out the worries in your life. Move a tick from your stress gauge with the most ticks to the one with the least; work out with the Architect what advice Temperance gave you to effect this change.*

## CITY MOVE

Temperance teaches you... well, temperance. *When you **Let Your Hair Down**, the Architect doesn't pick a downside on a weak hit. When you **Vent**, get advantage on the Contamination check if you picked fewer options than your Shadow score allowed for.*

## CASTLE MOVE

*When you act as a mediating force between your friends, you can work a strange alchemy. Add up the static or the harm between everyone who talks to you, subtract your Temperance rank, and distribute it equally back to them.*





**At their best**, the Devil's temptations show you a part of yourself you were in denial over - rejecting society's conditioning to embrace who your truly are.

**At their worst**, the Devil seeks to break down your self-image so that they can be the one who defines who you are.

**Nurture this covenant when...** you realise something life-changing about yourself - and follow through on it.

**Betray this covenant when...** you place the needs of others or society as a whole above your own self-actualisation.

## HANGOUT

*When you hang out with the Devil*, they tend to test your boundaries. The Architect secretly decides if it's going to be helpful or hurtful; you secretly decide if you're receptive or dismissive. *If you're receptive and they're helpful*, it's better than you expected - refresh Contamination and raise Shadow. *If you're receptive and they're hurtful*, it's worse than expected - mark Contamination and lose your ranks in this covenant. Otherwise, it's a pretty normal hang.

## CITY MOVE

The Devil teaches you to recognise and reject the influences and attachments weighing you down. *When you Duck Out*, you get to pick what your consequences are instead of the Architect. If a miss costs you the last point of Bond in a covenant, you can choose to erase the covenant to strengthen your Devil covenant.

## CASTLE MOVE

The Devil wants you to embrace your Shadow, no matter what others say. *When you mark static*, you can mark extra points equal to your Devil rank.





# TOWER

**At their best**, the Tower is a resolute and steadfast friend when things are going bad - they've seen it all.

**At their worst**, the Tower is a constant drain on their friends, always having a new sob story to explain why their life is off track.

**Nurture this covenant when...** you meet the Tower on their own terms, without judgement or condescension.

**Betray this covenant when...** you do something to try and fix their life without their consent, or abandon them in a moment of need.

## HANGOUT

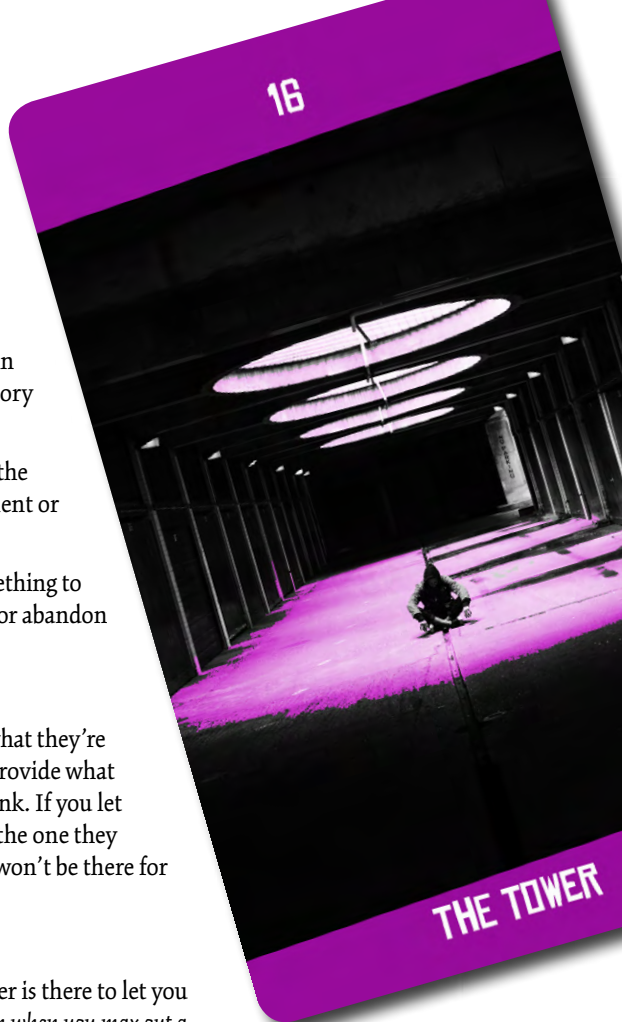
*When you hang out with the Tower*, they say what they're looking for: escapism or assistance. If you provide what they're looking for, raise this covenant's Rank. If you let them down - and especially if you push for the one they didn't pick - they may not push it but they won't be there for you next time you need them.

## CITY MOVE

When you're at your lowest point, the Tower is there to let you know you're not alone. *Once per investigation when you max out a trouble gauge*, the Tower will appear and help with your problems - refresh ticks in the affected gauge equal to your Tower Rank.

## CASTLE MOVE

There's power in destruction, even when it's indiscriminate. *When you accept pain in order to achieve your goals*, you can mark your Deadly Wound box to automatically succeed at a move as if you'd rolled a 10+.



# COVENANTS

## STAR

**At their best**, the Star is a creative genius, their raw potential shining through their unsophisticated art and bringing hope and life to those around them.

**At their worst**, the Star is naive and amateurish, and unwilling to accept other's advice or instruction.

**Nurture this covenant when...** you bring a change of perspective to someone's life and help them find a new way to be happy.

**Betray this covenant when...** you see someone in crisis and hoard resources you could have used to help them out of it.

### HANGOUT

*When you hang out with the Star*, they'll say what they're in the process of creating. It might be a new project, or the next stage of a familiar one. At some point in the scene they'll ask you what you think; answer honestly, and connect your response to another of your Covenants, to gain a point in that Covenant as you understand the bond better.

### CITY MOVE

The Star lets you find unexpected paths when you think you're lost. *If you find yourself unsure where to go or can't see a way out*, spend a point of Bond in this Covenant. The Architect will give you a possible way forward or way out, and you get fleeting advantage acting on it.

### CASTLE MOVE

The Star awakens inner potential. *Once per delve when you spend some moments meditating on who you want to be*, pick a Castle Move from a playbook no-one else is using. You can use that move a number of times equal to your current Star rank, and then you lose it.





**At their best**, the Moon brings subconscious insights to the fore and puts you in touch with something larger than yourself - primal, vast and mysterious.

**At their worst**, the Moon offers only illusions and doubts, trapping you in your own anxieties.

**Nurture this covenant when...** you trust in your instincts in the face of danger and your common sense.

**Betray this covenant when...** you wallow in the Moon's illusions and weirdness to the point it harms your mental health.

## HANGOUT

*When you hang out with the Moon*, anything can happen. It might be a hallucination, a vision, or the world's wonders becoming visible. Either way, stick with the Moon and you'll see things you never saw before.

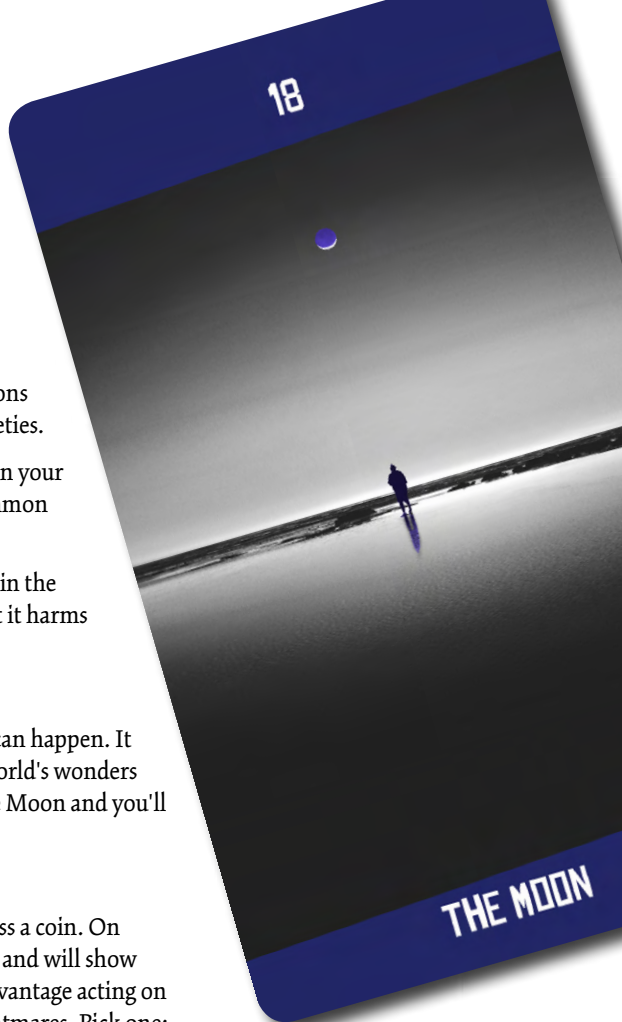
## CITY MOVE

*When you consult your dreams for guidance*, toss a coin. On heads, the Moon is present in your dreams, and will show you something important. Gain fleeting advantage acting on their message. On tails, the dreams are nightmares. Pick one: gain fleeting disadvantage the next game, or realise something uncomfortable about yourself.

## CASTLE MOVE

*When you push your body beyond humanity*, describe how it twists and changes. Gain hold equal to Moon, and spend it to:

- Gain 1 Armour against a single hit.
- Go somewhere it'd be impossible for you to go normally.
- Turn your limbs into mercurial weapons (*tether, flexible, close*).





**At their best**, the Sun brings clarity and optimism to your life and clears out your doubts and uncertainties.

**At their worst**, the Sun is idealistic and uncompromising, showing an almost childlike stubbornness to deviate from their ideals.

**Nurture this covenant when...** you join the Sun in enthusiastically celebrating their ideals through art, protest, celebration or labour.

**Betray this covenant when...** you compromise your ideals in service to the 'greater good'.

## HANGOUT

*When you spend time with The Sun*, at any point in the conversation you can ask them one of these questions:

- Who's really behind \_\_\_\_ ?
- What's the connection between \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ ?
- Who's keeping \_\_\_\_ a mystery?

The Sun will do their best to answer, and their answer will be more right than wrong.

**If the Sun is another Rebel, they're allowed to consult with the Architect before answering.**

## CITY MOVE

*When you speak truly and honestly to someone with power over you*, pick an extra option from the **Make a Stand** list.

## CASTLE MOVE

*When you bring out the light within*, roll **+Sun**. On a hit, you illuminate the area with warm yellow light. On a 7-9 pick one, on a 10+ pick two:

- You burn away illusions and shadow.
- The light illuminates something useful to you.
- Hostile creatures may only see you.
- You can wield the light as a weapon (*ranged, stun, grazing*).



# JUDGEMENT

**At their best,** Judgement calls on you to move beyond the mundane and seek a higher power.

**At their worst,** Judgement is disdainful of the day-to-day lives of regular people, only seeing them as raw materials to be refined by their fire.

**Nurture this covenant when...** you cast aside a large part of your life to become something greater.

**Betray this covenant when...** you put off making a choice until it's too late, or return to a situation or relationship that was harmful to you.

## HANGOUT

*When you meet with Judgement, it'll be in a liminal space only lightly touching the mundane world. If you ask them to, they can perform a ritual to change one of your Castle Moves (or Shadow Moves) for another.*

## CITY MOVE

Judgement lets you peer into the disposition of souls. The Architect will let you know when someone you're talking to has been empowered by **the castle**, and you may spend a point of Judgement Bond to isolate your target from **the castle's** influence.

## CASTLE MOVE

Judgement encourages you to take the long view and see the greater good. *When you intentionally betray a covenant in order to teach them a hard lesson, gain advantage on the roll to **Risk the Covenant**.*





## WORLD

The World is what surrounds you. It's the city, but not its bricks and mortar and tarmac. It's what those buildings and streets mean to the people who live in them. This covenant represents your growing connection to those people – your understanding of their desires and hopes, and their increasingly active participation in your revolution.

**Nurture this covenant when...** you take significant steps to improve the lives of people in a neighbourhood of the city, giving them self-determination and salving their hurts. This is particularly relevant when you steal **the castle's** power and use it to heal the world (see **Rivers in the Desert**).

**Betray this covenant when...** you treat the people who have come to depend on you as expendable resources, or build your own systems of control around them.

Unlike other Covenants, the World's rank does not fluctuate up and down between investigations, and cannot be **Evoked** or used to **Summon Aid**. Instead, it unlocks more power at each rank:

### RANK 1

*When you're desperate and your back is against the wall, you can call on the world for help. If you do, pick one:*

- The person who helps you suffers greatly for it.
- The castle taints the area you flee through.
- You leave something valuable behind.

### RANK 2

You know hidden paths through the city. *When you lead the group down these secret ways, you can shake any pursuer, and the backstreets will hold shops, clubs and hostels that would astound the city's everyday inhabitants.*

### RANK 3

You can use the World's reality to reject the invasion of the void. *While you're in the Castle, you can forcibly bring everyone around you back to reality. Minions and adversaries will be stripped of their powers and made very mortal, but so will your fellow rebels. If a Vassal's avatar is killed in the city, the Vassal dies with them. If minions or adversaries escape and cause harm in the City, lose a point of Bond in this Covenant.*





The Void covets our world. It is entropy and hunger. It is spite and rage. It is endless, anhedonic consumption that cannot ever be satiated. It is your enemy, and also the source of your powers.

**Nurture this covenant when...** you accept **the castle**'s power after ousting a vassal (see **Rivers in the Desert**), or sacrifice the well-being of someone you care for while you intentionally call out to the void.

**Betray this covenant when...** you give up power and authority willingly and freely.

Unlike other Covenants, the Void's rank does not fluctuate up and down between investigations, and cannot be **Evoked** or used to **Summon Aid**. Instead, it unlocks more power at each rank:

## RANK 1

The darkness erodes moral codes and social contracts. When you **Vent**, you can choose not to lose a point of Shadow, and you may select this option:

- Someone here stops worrying about guilt, obligation or propriety. They'll do what they want to do and nothing else.

## RANK 2

The void builds hierarchies of consumption where the greatest eat their lessers. You can participate in this. *When someone accepts that you are their superior*, pick a move or resource of theirs; you can freely use that as if it were your own.

*If they ever disobey or betray you*, you must punish them severely or else lose the move or resource *and* the ability to ever gain any more from them.

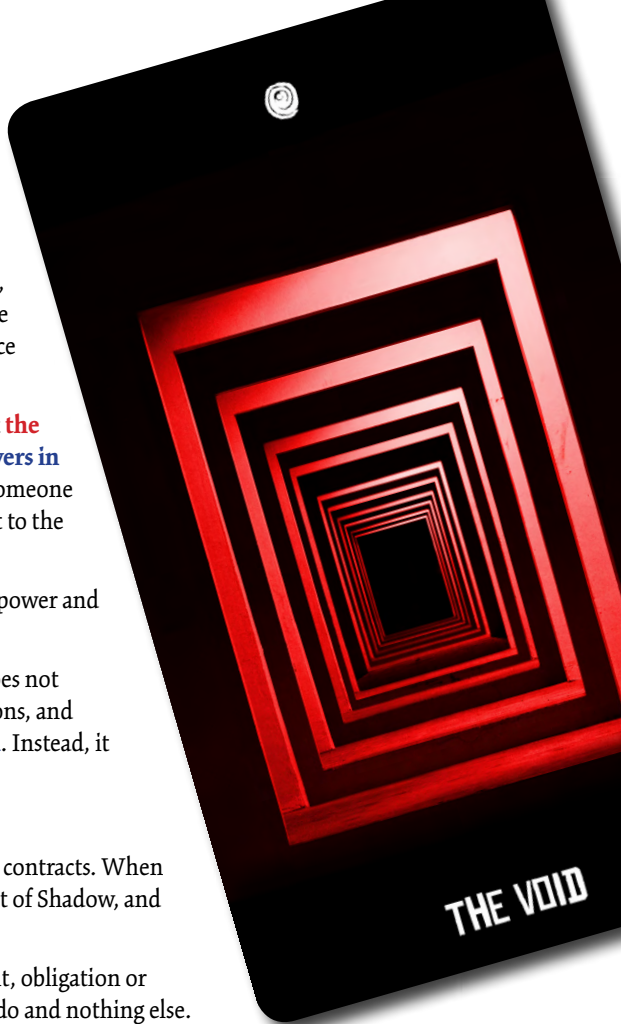
## RANK 3

All that matters is the individual, and their right to exercise their will. All else is lies.

*When you would mark your final harm box with another rebel in arm's reach*, you can declare they suffer it instead.

Add these options to **Vent**:

- All shackles, restraints or restrictions on your free movement fall away.
- Creatures of void and hunger emerge from the shadows to do your bidding.





# THE ARCHITECT





## YOUR LEADING LIGHTS

### AGENDA

You have three guiding rules as you run this game:

- Make the city feel real.
- Make their revolution feel necessary - and possible.
- Play to find out what happens.

You **make the city feel real** by using your narration to highlight the quirks and routines of the city's inhabitants, by grounding the characters in their day-to-day life, by taking the troubles assailing the rebels and their friends as seriously as they deserve. You do it by treating the city as a place that could exist, and staying true to the city that your group has built up in their minds.

Voidheart is a game about revolution. That's why it's important to **make their revolution feel necessary - and possible**. The first part means that **the castle's** vassals shouldn't be a mere annoyance, a thing you go and fight because you're bored and it sounds like fun. They should represent an existential threat to the rebel's way of life and to the society they'd want to live in. But they can be fought. Make the revolution possible by showing the weaknesses and corners cut in the vassal's operations, by showing how a group of psychonautic revolutionaries can worm beneath their defences and tear their plans apart.

Finally, this is a game that thrives on the story being wild, untamed, able to push in any direction that takes its fancy. You **play to find out what happens** by rejecting any notion of a pre-planned plot, and giving your shared conversation and the game's moves the authority to decide where your game ends up.

### WHAT TO SAY

- What your prep demands.
- What the rules demand.
- What honesty demands.

## PRINCIPLES

- Build tension in the city.
- Bring catharsis in **the castle**.
- Begin and end with the fiction.
- Show the cost of using power to cut corners.
- Show **the castle** *and* the city in every Vassal.
- Give **the castle**'s victims passions and drives.
- Covenants must be cultivated with care.
- Address rebels, not players.
- Be a fan of the characters.
- Be flexible with your responsibilities.
- Make your reactions look natural.
- Ask questions and use the answers.
- Begin and end with the fiction.
- Think off-screen too.

## REACTIONS

As the Architect you're here to manage the pacing of the game, push the players into interesting decisions, and portray the world and its inhabitants. As such you don't make proactive moves so much as reactions. You make reactions in four situations:

- When a player rolls a 6- on a move.
- When everyone's looking to you to find out what happens next.
- When the vassal's clock ticks.
- When the players offer you up a golden opportunity.

To explain that fourth point, it's when the fiction so far has established that an action will have a specific and direct consequence. If it's been previously established that stepping on a pressure plate will trigger a trap, and a player describes their character stepping on the plate, that's a golden opportunity.

The difference between this and the first two categories is that the Architect can actively interrupt a player's narration to give an immediate reaction. The Architect should only do this when the trigger has been firmly established in the fiction.

## THE STRENGTH OF A REACTION

When you make a reaction, it can be **hard** or **soft**.

**A soft reaction** is one that leaves room for the players to react - for example, describing a treasure chest the characters spot on the other side of a gate (Offer an Opportunity), or that a werewolf bares her fangs and charges the Icon (Put Someone in a Spot). Once you've described the reaction, you ask the players what they do and work through the actions they describe.

**A hard reaction** is one that cuts straight to the consequences. They tread on a weak floor section and fall into the cavern below (Separate Them), or they get home and find that their brother's lost their food stocks on a bet (Erase a Surplus). Often enough, a threat introduced by a soft reaction can lead to hard reactions down the line if the players overlook it or decide to focus their efforts on other dangers.

## REACTION LIST

- Use a reaction from a minion or foe.
- Reveal an unwelcome truth.
- Forecast doom.
- Deal harm as established.
- Mark a trouble gauge.
- Take away their stuff.
- Turn their move back on them.
- Separate them.
- Put someone in a spot.
- Highlight a weakness of their gear.
- Give them an opportunity fitting their strengths.
- Offer an opportunity, with or without cost.
- Strike at their mortal allies.
- After every reaction: "what do you do?"

# DARK FEUDALISM

## THE VASSAL TIER

The first thing to decide with a Vassal is their Tier - how powerful they are in the Castle's feudal system.

**Tier 1 vassals** (knights) are entry-level monsters, barely touched with the Castle's power. Its halls haunt their dreams, urging them to be ambitious in their monstrosity. They might be petty, tyrannical managers, mentors who steal their student's works, or extortionist gang leaders.

- Knights have a castle shard with a single ward, and one enforcer within it.
- Knights are unaware of **the castle**, and their only city-side boon is that their underlings will not flip on them without exceptional effort from the players.

**Tier 2 vassals** (nobles) have learned that they will be richly rewarded for inflicting pain and misery. The nightmare architecture of **the castle** spreads into their waking mind, showing the world through the lens of master and serf. They might be local politicians, police chiefs, or established mobsters.

- Nobles have a castle shard with two wards, each with its own enforcer.
- Nobles know there's a dark power behind their success, and have embraced it. Their underlings fear them, and one or two have inhuman abilities - supernatural strength, agility, resilience or perception - along with some hard-to-conceal sign of their augmentation.

**Tier 3 vassals** (monarchs) tread the halls of society's elite, wielding **the castle's** power as a weapon to maintain their position and accumulate ever-more wealth and prestige. They're likely to be CEOs, top-level government officials, generals and media celebrities.

- Monarchs have a castle shard with three wards, each with its own enforcer.
- Monarchs are fully aware of **the castle**, and has embraced the power it gives them to reshape society. Along with a whole squad of empowered minions (see nobles), the Monarch can call on their Shadow form's qualities similarly to a rebel using Vent - though it removes a tick from their clock if they do so.

## MOTIVATIONS

**What's their Drive?** Each vassal has an intense desire burning in their heart. As **the castle** whispers poison into their minds, even the noblest goals are soon twisted into a blight on the world. Here's some ideas:

- **Dominion:** The Vassal seeks power, authority and acclaim.  
**Impulse: Offer rewards for service.**
- **Excellence:** The Vassal wants to be the best - the best soprano, the best duellist, the best painter in the world. **Impulse: seize a chance to demonstrate their skill.**
- **Insight:** The Vassal wants to know why something happened, or who was truly behind a crime, or how the world really works.  
**Impulse: Relentlessly pursue hints to their goal.**
- **Avarice:** Is it the most luxurious food, silks and wines the Vassal desires? Or is there a particular work of art, luxury, or even person that they seek to own?  
**Impulse: Covet the most precious possessions of others.**

**What's their plan?** Each Vassal has a reason they took **the castle's** aid, and a plot they're working towards. Take a look at the options in **Darkness Falls** and pick out which one you're working towards for now, though be willing to switch things round depending on how the Vassal's interactions with the rebels go.

## QUALITIES

The Vassal has a base of three qualities. They may be granted extra qualities by their Enforcers - see the next page. The Vassal is the end boss of your generation and the climax of these character's stories, so don't be afraid to make their qualities explosive, dramatic and awe-inspiring.

## ENFORCERS

The Enforcers of the Vassal are far more potent than their minions, and trusted with far more responsibility. Each rules over one ward of their castle shard, and is more than a match for a single rebel. Each should also represent some aspect of the vassal's personality, or be a representation of how the vassal sees an important figure in the rebel's lives.

The Vassal hasn't just manifested the Enforcers so that they have companionship. Each Enforcer plays some part in the Vassal's plan - pick one:

- **The Enforcer strengthens the Vassal.** Give the Vassal an extra quality, so long as this Enforcer is still serving them.
- **The Enforcer guards the Vassal.** While the Enforcer is serving the Vassal, it will ambush the rebels when they attempt to travel to **the castle's** heart.
- **The Enforcer speeds the world's blight.** If the Enforcer still serves the Vassal when the clock has ticked a certain number of times, it will enter the city and cause terror, ruin and corruption. At best, this will strike at one of the player's covenants or the homes. At worst, it will trigger one of the options listed under **Darkness Falls**. The first Enforcer given this role triggers on the 5th tick, the second on the 4th tick, and the third on the 3rd tick.



## QUALITIES

All Enforcers have three qualities. Each should represent some aspect of the adversary's behaviour and abilities that is clear to the players - any quality's loss should markedly affect how the Enforcer fights.

A basic setup is something like this:

1. A quality representing the main way they attack.
2. A quality giving them useful movement abilities, letting them close the gap with the rebels or escape close combat.
3. A quality that lets them alter the battlefield: plunge it into darkness, open fissures, command hordes of minions, unleashing traps.

To mix things up, try one of these:

- They have a defensive quality that the rebels must remove to target their other qualities.
- Only one quality is active at any one time. As the rebels strip each one away, the next one activates and the battle enters a new stage. Each individual quality will need to pull more weight here, so write ones that give offense and defence.
- The acolyte is multiple individuals. Maybe each individual is represented by their own quality - remove the quality, remove the adversary. Or maybe the rebels are striking away their formation, their cohesion, their armaments.

Or some hybrid of the above!

## ATTACKS

Each quality should give the adversary some kind of attack, to which you should assign a harm rating. Here's some guidelines - though feel free to adjust up and down depending on the circumstances in play.

- **1 harm:** An adversary may deal one harm if they are particularly weak in a certain circumstance - for example, if a fire demon is attacking you while you're underwater.
- **2 harm:** The default. Stick with this if you don't have reason to change it.
- **3 harm:** If an adversary's attacks are particularly effective in a certain circumstance - for example, if a lightning demon is attacking you while you're underwater.
- **4 harm:** An attack that the adversary needed to take some action setting up. For example, if a flesh demon needs to merge with your flesh before bursting out in shower of gore.
- **5 harm:** Attacks that need setup before using, give plenty of opportunity for the players to get away, and that destroy one of the adversary's qualities.

## SAMPLE ENFORCERS

Here's a basic Enforcer:

### MAN-BAT

One of the Vassal 's experimental subjects, its body twisted with the muscles needed to support its wingspan. A withered human head begs for mercy as the maw in its chest hisses and bites.

### BEATING WINGS

- Take to the skies.
- Push them back with a gust of wind (1 Harm).

### BEAST MAW

- Bite deep (3 Harm).
- Inject lingering infection.

### FLOCK OF BATS

- Mob an rebel.
- Pull them up into the sky.

Here's an Enforcer with multiple stages:

### THUNDER WOLF

A crackling beast made of solid lightning, bound and imprisoned within an articulated cage of copper wiring. It paces its cell, waiting for its chance to escape and rejoin its pack in the clouds.

### COPPER CAGE ARMOUR

- Lash out with sparks (2 harm)
- Bat them away with a paw.
- When destroyed: activate Voltaic Beast.

### VOLTAIC BEAST

- Surge as fast as lightning.
- Breathe deep.
- After breathing deep, exhale a torrent of plasma (4 harm)

### STORM'S HOWL

- Deafen them.
- Terrify them.



## MINIONS

The minions of **the castle** come from three broad origins:

The castle is blasphemous: minions may be people from the mortal world, twisted by vice and lust for power. The castle may have given them strange abilities to match their desires: a greedy merchant may be armoured in flowing gold, while an angry mob may find their fingers lengthening into claws as they sniff out the scent of their foes.

The castle is alive: just as **the castle** has a dark intelligence within its stones, it can grant life to the inanimate. Exposed to its blood, **the castle** can make suits of armour walk and fight, chandeliers fall and roll with malevolent intent, and the earth itself rise up to consume unwary rebels.

The castle is otherworldly: it comes from a place outside reality, and there's no need for its denizens to obey the laws of physics and reason. You can make minions from shifting anomalies that defy comprehension, singing crystals that ossify any flesh that touches them, or strange elfin creatures that summon the wrath of stars to fall on the rebels.

When you're making a minion, pick one of these for its origin and then theme it to with the ward it's lurking in: a masquerade ball should have skeletal waiters, ghost dancers, animate chandeliers, corrupted courtiers. A barracks should have demonic soldiers, minotaur generals, zombie conscripts.

Also, maybe pick an overriding theme stemming from the Vassal: if **the castle** is ruled by a feral werewolf, minions from every ward could have fangs, a lupine gait, or a hunting motif. If an arcanist is working on a grand ritual using **the castle**, maybe each ward carries signs of scrolls, crystals, and arcane insight. This way each generation's castle is set apart even if the same Context is chosen.

## REACTIONS

The reactions available to minions set out how they present a threat different from the standard. As such, these are great things to build reactions from:

- Special movement abilities: teleportation, flight, wall crawling etc.
- Special attack options: ranged attacks, triggering traps, lingering poisons etc.
- Complications: Summoning more enemies, setting fire to the environment, performing another step of a ritual, etc.
- Interference: Special immunities to particular attacks, splitting up players, etc.

## ASSIGNING HARM

Minions deal 1 Harm by default. Add 1 for each:

- The minion is towering and powerful.
- The minion empowers its attacks with magical force.
- The attack is close-range and brutal.