



PRISM

Whitney Marie Delaglio



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by

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Little Wish Productions

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Content Warning

Mature Themes: Positive Sexuality, Partial Nudity, Intimacy, and Emotional Vulnerability



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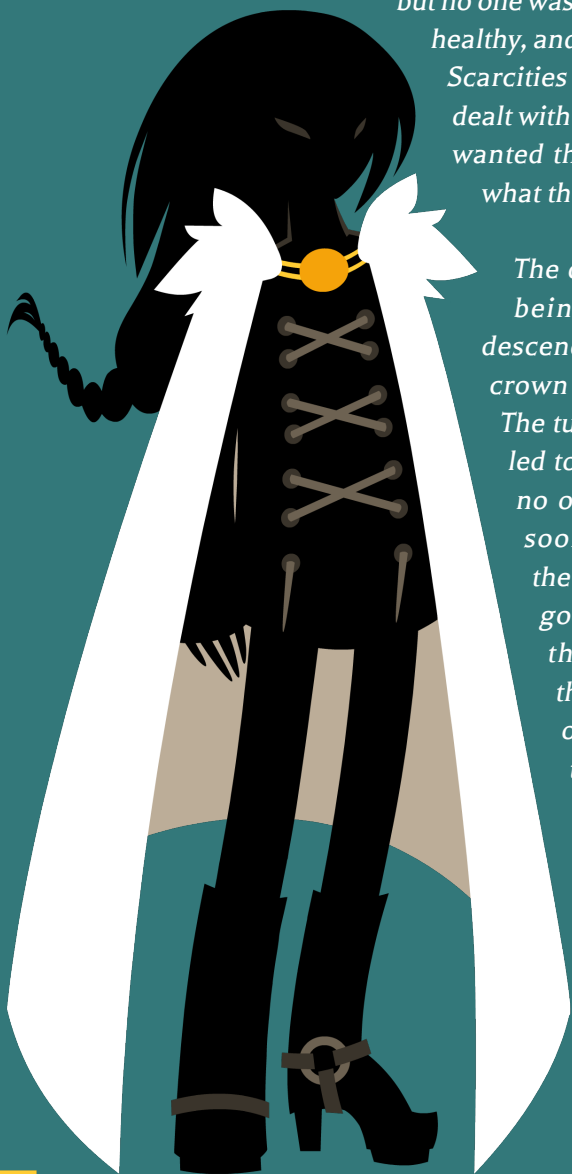
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INTRODUCTION

Once upon a time, there was a barren planet without life, an ocean, or vegetation. Six gods in coalition made the world habitable. Once they gave it life, they lived there as mortals until their deaths, returning to their godly forms to observe from afar. Their descendants became the peak of this world's hierarchy, outranking those not related by blood. There was to be a royal court, but they were to serve the people. There were to be highborn, but no one was to live without. Trade was to be healthy, and each realm was to contribute. Scarcities and difficult times were to be dealt with together. This is what the gods wanted the world to be, but that is not what they left behind.

The dukes and duchesses disliked being lower in status than the descendants and disapproved of the crown being secured by birthright. The turmoil between those in power led to the people they ruled having no one to keep them in line, and soon they began disrespecting the ideals of their realms and the gods who created them. Though the gods had tried to involve themselves in the world's affairs only indirectly, they saw a need to intervene, and those who misbehaved would soon rue the day they infuriated a god.



Then there was the incessant fear of the Punishment: a deadly contagion with no known remedy, the monument to the unhappiness of the Dark Prince. Raised by spiders that thrived in the snow, the Prince was a friend to creatures that hid from the sun. While a young lad, the Prince found a tiny Princeling trapped beneath a frozen lake. Instead of leaving the little one to freeze, the Prince made up his mind to care for him. As time went by, they fell in love. On the day they both came of age, the Prince proposed to the Princeling, but tragedy soon struck.

At the wedding, villagers who were afraid of the Prince came to end him, but the Princeling stood in their way. Their weapons pierced through both the Prince and Princeling's hearts, but the gaping hollow in the Prince's chest filled itself with malice. That was the day the Punishment came into the world, and he became known as the Dark Prince. Now a silhouette, he wanders about the realms, spreading his contagion to willing hosts who are eager for retribution.

In lieu of dreaming of his honeymoon, the Princeling searches the realms for his fiancé. To the living, he might appear as a child or an enchanting young man. His hope is to take the Prince as a husband and restore his heart so the world can be rid of the Punishment and they can finally slumber side by side.



ABOUT THE GAME

Prism is a diceless roleplaying game about evolving relationships, polytheism, and the restless dead in an aquatic world. It's best suited for 1 to 4 players, along with a GM.

To play, the GM will need a copy of the rules and spare character sheets and relationship sheets for notable non-player characters (NPCs). The players will each need a character sheet and a relationship sheet. Everyone at the table will need a writing utensil.

THE TEA PARTY

The Tea Party prepares everyone to make characters. Players, your player characters (PCs) can be of noble birth, but they will not be descendants of the gods and goddesses, though they could be on good terms with a member of the royal court or with a god or goddess.

As a group, you'll first build a setting based on your collective expectations and the characters you want to play. Here are some questions to think about:

- What do you want your character to do?
- What kind of story are you looking to tell?
- Do you want only platonic relationships?
- Do you want to find love along the way?

GM, you'll want to learn how the characters are related to each other and how they view the world they live in. Players, as you make your characters, consider questions such as these:

- Does your character owe their life to a god or goddess?
- What is your character's inner conflict or goal?
- Who raised your character or taught them their skills?
- What vows has your character made, and to whom?

As you're doing this, you might invite the players to invent some mythology for the world of Prism.

Once you've discussed expectations with the players, take a moment to ask them if they are comfortable with intimacy. Ask them what kinds of intimate acts—like biting, cuddling, or flirting—they feel safe roleplaying or seeing roleplayed. Getting enthusiastic consent is essential.

CONSENT DURING PLAY

During play, keep an index card with an X drawn on it in the center of the table. If anyone feels uncomfortable for any reason, they can pick up or tap the card to signal that they want to pause or stop the scene. For example, if a player said they were comfortable with descriptions of other characters making love, they can change their mind if the scene playing out starts to make them feel uncomfortable.

For more information on the X-Card (by John Stavropoulos), visit this website:

tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg

Note: The traditional greeting in Prism, especially at formal occasions, is pressing foreheads together. If two players in a relationship are comfortable with it, they can touch foreheads to demonstrate bonding.

After you finish setting expectations and discussing the kind of game you'd all like to play, run through creating characters as follows:

1. Explain the six realms and their favored skills, then have each player pick one.
2. Explain the four character templates and their traits, then have each player pick one.
3. Explain the six families and their traits, then have each player pick one.
4. Explain the six vocations and their favored skills, then have each player pick one.
5. Explain the relationship track, then have each player form at least one relationship.
6. Explain skills and expertise, then have each player finish choosing skills.

You'll find details for all of these steps as you read onward.

STEP 1: REALM

Choose a loyalty to one realm—where you were born, live, or pursued your profession. Your choice of realm will improve one of your skills by +3 (page 20) and will affect how you get blessings and curses in play (page 28).

BLUE

Favored Skill: Dexterity

In the **Blue Realm**, folk take pride in their efficiency and chivalry. They provide the most seafood, renowned musicians, and decorative arts. The Blue Realm is home to the king or queen, a descendant of the God of the Sea. The God of the Sea gave the planet air, ice, snow, and water. He is known for finding mortals endearing, but like a loving parent he is not afraid to discipline them for their transgressions.



- **This Realm Values:** Yielding to avoid blood, respecting enemies.
- **This Realm Resents:** Favoring unkind ethics, abandoning allies.

GOLD

Favored Skill: Survival

The **Gold Realm** is where young ones are sent to hide them from harmful adults and to prevent them from mirroring their destructive caretakers. It is a beachside haven, protected by guardians. They provide the most tropical fruits, eggs, and dairy. The Gold Realm is home to the Gold viceroy or vicereine, a descendant of the God of Life. He is known for being magnanimous and sincerely altruistic.



- **This Realm Values:** Looking out for others, using gracious manners.
- **This Realm Resents:** Hunting just for sport, harming the helpless.

GREEN

Favored Skill: Etiquette

The **Green Realm** is where most of the pompous Plant Folk work, living lavish lifestyles. They provide the most crops, theater, and precious gems. The Green Realm is home to the Green viceroy or vicereine, a descendant of the Goddess of the Forest. The Goddess of the Forest gave the population a lush environment to live out their days contently. She is known for being poised and quite curt.

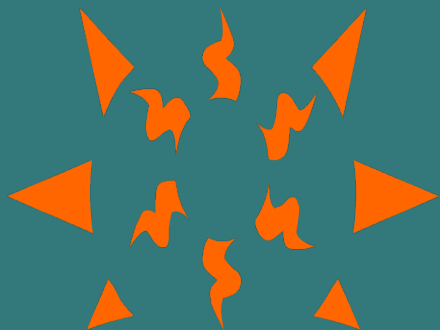


- **This Realm Values:** Putting familial obligations first, showing decorum.
- **This Realm Resents:** Losing your temper, showing concern for strangers.

ORANGE

Favored Skill: Might

In the **Orange Realm** folk work hard and welcome those who have fallen on hard times. They provide the most craftspeople, metal ores, and spas. The Orange Realm is home to the Orange viceroy or vicereine, a descendant of the Goddess of the Sun. The Goddess of the Sun gave the planet fire, its own star, and dark mountains with glowing cores. She is known for being straightforward and motherly.



- **This Realm Values:** Walking off an injury, committing to a task.
- **This Realm Resents:** Refusing to aid those in need, freeloading.

ROUGE

Favored Skill: Aptitude

In the **Rouge Realm**, folk need no reason to have a celebration, and they treat friends like family. They provide the most lounges, love hotels, and nightclubs. The Rouge Realm is home to the Rouge viceroy or vicereine, a descendant of the Goddess of Blood. The Goddess of Blood gave all creatures with a heart the capacity to think and feel for themselves. She is known for being cheerful and optimistic.



- **This Realm Values:** Living in the moment, indulging in pleasures.
- **This Realm Resents:** Mistreating your brethren, being cruel.

VIOLET

Favored Skill: Insight

The **Violet Realm** is home only to the Nocturnal, silhouettes of the dead, and creatures that prefer the night. The Violet Realm has a small populace, and sees no need for an authority figure. However, a descendant of the God of the Moon will speak on their behalf of their realm, if it is necessary. The God of the Moon represents darkness and death, known as the Eternal Slumber. He is known for being somber and soft-spoken.



- **This Realm Values:** Showing respect for the sick and the deceased.
- **This Realm Resents:** Acting out due to insensitive preconceptions.

THE CULTURE OF THE REALMS

Five of the six gods each took an island for their own and molded it into the home they wanted to leave behind, for the life they had created and for the generations to come. The Blue Realm was created beneath the waves, built atop sand. Folk often travel from place to place by swimming, by water vessel, by carriage, on foot, or on the backs of sturdy land or sea creatures.

Devotion to one's realm encompasses its ethics, its ruler, and the deity that watches over it. The rulers are descendants of the gods, and their birthright is much like a birthmark, as they are born with the symbol of their realm on their body. If there is no descendant present to lead the realm, a duke or duchess is appointed.

In all six realms, gender never decides who earns the income in a family, who takes care of the household, and who is in command. Neither does it dictate the aesthetic and style of clothing one feels comfortable wearing. Exotic dancing and sex work is as legitimate of a profession as being a swordsmith or pastry chef. In fact, highborn of every realm often take up such vocations to escape protocol. This subject matter is not meant to cause conflict.

GM, while the six deities are known for having firm dispositions, the royal regime and the royalty's personalities are completely up to you. You could have a viceroy whose one law is retaliation authorized by their decree. Or you could have a queen who warmly embraces the wishes of the common folk.



STEP 2: TEMPLATE

Pick from one of the four templates. Your choice of template will give you a unique trait.



PRIMAL

Trait: Cultured — Primal Folk gain +1 to the skill linked to their loyalty.

Primal Folk are the most connected to their realm and have a close bond with their family. They dedicate themselves to honing their expertise in the skills favored by their realm. They are also known for being the most religious, and they take the values of their realm and their family very seriously. However, they are not zealots and make it a point to not force their devotion onto others.

GUARDIAN

Trait: Feathered — Guardians have a pair of wings, given to them by their patron god.

Guardians have retired from their line of work but wish to share their years of experience with the next generation. Where their loyalty lies is made obvious by the color of their wings. Many of them reside in the Gold Realm, looking after the young ones there, and preparing them for independence once they are old enough. They do not often have romantic interests since they are more focused on their calling.



INFECTED

Trait: Relentless — Infected gain the initiative if they become threatened and wish to escalate the situation.

Infected Folk are those suffering the Punishment, which awakens the most destructive emotion hidden in their heart, turning their blood black and their eyes a golden hue. Infected are typically treated with fear and hostility by everyone but family and friends. Knowing their end is near, and distracted by their own selfish sentiments, they will often push anyone who cares for them away.



NOCTURNAL

Trait: Composed — Nocturnal gain the initiative if they become threatened and wish to de-escalate the situation.



Nocturnal Folk are known for their glowing eyes, their bond with the afterlife, and their inclination toward solitude. They favor healthy relationships but tend not to exaggerate their feelings or make grand gestures of affection. They also prefer to discuss issues calmly to avoid fights. However, if a relationship becomes difficult, then it obviously doesn't suit them, and they would rather just be alone.

STEP 3: FAMILY

Pick from one of the six families. Your choice of family will give you a unique trait.

CHAMELEON

Trait: Magical — When you create a Chameleon, choose hail, inferno, or seism. You can cast the chosen spell type even if you're not a mage, but only when attempting tasks of Simple difficulty.

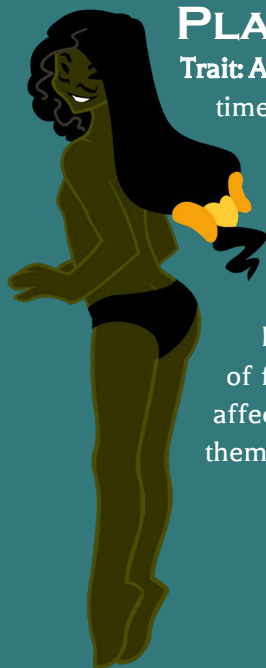
Chameleons are jovial humanoids with pearly white skin that allows them to mimic the element of the spell they have chosen. They love to entertain others almost as much as they love showing off. Using their innate ability to cast spells, they create dazzling displays while performing for crowds and audiences. Chameleons are friends for life, generous to others, and unabashed about their sensuality.



PLANT FOLK

Trait: Aloof — You can ignore emotional pain three times per day.

Plant Folk are humanoids with the physical attributes of flowers, plants, or trees. They are well known for their large egos as well as their ability to pollinate, which allows one of any gender to reproduce. Plant Folk tend to care only about family and small circles of friends. Everyone else is unimportant. To show their affection, Plant Folk often pamper their mates, showering them with luxurious gifts.





WEED FOLK

Trait: Stubborn — You can ignore physical pain three times per day.

Weed Folk are humanoids with freckled skin and a gray complexion. They are often looked down upon by Plant Folk, who believe Weeds are their inferiors. The other families do not feel the same way. Weed Folk can pollinate like Plants can, but they are more robust. They sometimes overestimate themselves and will overexert for the sake of a friend or loved one. Still, their favorite thing to do is snuggle the day away.

BARBED FISH

Trait: Fish Form — At will, you can turn into a tiny cephalopod, jellyfish, lionfish, or seahorse.

Barbed Fish are bioluminescent humanoids that maintain some of their fish-like qualities in their human form, such as tentacles for hair. These aquatic creatures prefer politics and the arts over combat. They are quite affectionate sea folk and absolutely love to dote, but they are known for being clingy. In their fish form, they can speak, but they are small enough to fit in the palm of a newborn, so they cannot cause harm.



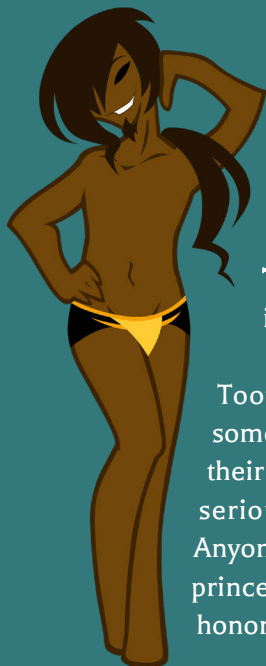
SEA MAMMAL

Trait: Slippery Tail — At will, you can turn your legs into the tail of a dolphin, seal, or whale.

Sea Mammals are humanoids that are some of the most hostile or most docile of all the sea folk, depending on the individual. Preferring a carefree and easygoing lifestyle, they take pleasure in serenading those around them. However, they tend to be defensive toward any potential threats to their loved ones. If all is well, though, the world does not exist—it is just them and the one they care about.



Note: All six families are amphibious and can breathe both underwater and on land.



TOOTHED FISH

Trait: Leathery Tail — At will, you can turn your legs into the tail of an eel or shark.

Toothed Fish have sharp rows of teeth, but they are some of the most courteous sea folk and never harm for their own enjoyment. They take any kind of commitment seriously and understand the worth of camaraderie. Anyone they court would undoubtedly feel like a prince or princess. They consider the affection of another to be an honor, and only the Eternal Slumber would separate them.

STEP 4: VOCATION

Pick from one of the six vocations. Your choice of vocation will give you a unique talent and will improve one of your skills by +2.



BRAWLER

Favored Skill: Might

Talent: Coping — Three times per day, when you take physical pain, you can heal an equal amount of emotional pain.

Brawlers excel in savage hand-to-hand combat, preferring the use of claws and fangs. Usually making their living as bouncers or escorts, they often enjoy a good rumble, since agony gives them great pleasure.

DIPLOMAT

Favored Skill: Etiquette

Talent: Traveled — Once per day, you can ignore the consequences of a curse.

Diplomats excel at ambassadorial affairs and do their best to be respectful. They usually make their living as knights or hosting convivial events for nobility. However, they prefer the company of common folk.





HUNTER

Favored Skill: Survival

Talent: Concentration — Once per day, you can declare that any task has Typical difficulty.

Hunters excel at braving unfavorable conditions. Often living off the land or sea, they prefer quiet contemplation over conversation so they can hone their senses and focus on their proficiencies.

MAGE

Favored Skill: Aptitude

Talent: Spellcasting — You can cast any of the three spells at any difficulty tier. If you are also a Chameleon, gain +1 to Aptitude.

Mages excel in the art of elemental enchantments, and usually make their living as performers or doing dangerous tasks. They are difficult to ruffle, but their aura can be terrifying if they are ever enraged.

Players are encouraged to describe how their character casts spells, such as through belly dancing or by playing a horsehead fiddle.

Spells

- **Hail:** Manipulate ice, snow, and water.
- **Inferno:** Manipulate fire and lava.
- **Seism:** Manipulate plants, sand, and soil.



MEDIC

Favored Skill: Insight

Talent: Treating — Using Insight, you can remove physical pain, as follows, from yourself or another.

Medics excel at handling violent situations and the resulting injuries. They usually make their living tending to the wounded, but at times they work alongside Diplomats to mediate gatherings.

Removing Pain

Treating physical pain is a task with the following difficulty:

- **Simple:** You can take your time, or the injury is minor.
- **Typical:** You are out in the field, or the injury is moderate.
- **Hard:** You have no time to spare, or the injury is serious.
- **Tough:** You are surrounded by chaos, or the injury is lethal.

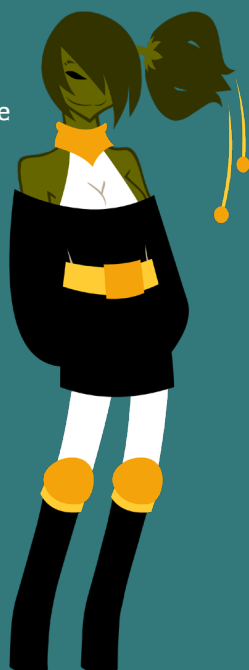


PICAROON

Favored Skill: Dexterity

Talent: Solitude — Three times per day, when you take emotional pain, you can heal an equal amount of physical pain.

Picaroons excel at circumspection and agile feats. They often make their living by doing under-the-table errands others are unwilling to, and so they often seek comfort from within their own, since it is a lonely profession.



STEP 5: SKILLS

Your character accomplishes tasks and solves problems by using skills. This is a game about intimacy and resolving interpersonal conflicts, so keep in mind that social combat will often be more common than physical. Here are the six skills:

- **Aptitude:** Dancing, singing, playing musical instruments, and rousing crowds.
- **Dexterity:** Climbing, running, swimming, doing acrobatics, and being stealthy.
- **Etiquette:** Following protocol and communicating with charm, deceit, or spite.
- **Insight:** Identifying the moods of others, mastering lore, and spotting deceit.
- **Might:** Pushing, lifting, grappling, and physically intimidating others.
- **Survival:** Cooking, persisting, seafaring, tracking, and keeping aware of surroundings.

SEDUCTION

There is no seduction skill, as any of the six skills can be used to seduce. Aptitude can be used to perform a brazen and sensual dance as a seductive distraction. Might can be used to seduce another with feats of strength and muscle. Insight can be used to learn desires.

Skills also affect **endurance**, the maximum amount of pain your character can take before becoming incapacitated or preoccupied. Aptitude, Dexterity, and Might add to physical endurance, while Etiquette, Insight, and Survival add to emotional endurance.

You'll find more about endurance on page 25.

Your initial expertise in each skill depends on your loyalty, vocation, and relationships, as follows:

1. Set your realm's favored skill to +3. Remember to add +I if you are Primal.
2. Set your vocation's favored skill to +2. If this is your realm's favored skill, add +I instead.
3. Select one character that you have a relationship with, and agree upon one skill. Both of you get +2 to this skill. If this is your realm's or vocation's favored skill, add +I instead.
4. Set one skill of your choice to +0 (no expertise).
5. Set all other skills to +I.

IMPROVING SKILLS

During play, you can increase your expertise in a skill by asking an NPC, or another PC with greater expertise, to teach you. This involves dedicating a day of game time with them, practicing a task that can be done with that skill. For example, you could bake together to improve Survival, or learn how to swim past aquatic predators undetected to improve Dexterity.

Once the instructional session is done, any PCs involved can increase their expertise in the skill practiced by +1.

GM, do not make it too effortless for a character to increase their expertise with the aid of an NPC. If a player is interested in increasing their expertise in a skill, feel free to present them with an NPC relevant to the story. That said, make sure that it's plausible and advances the story—NPCs aren't just sitting around waiting to teach a character how to bake sweet treats.

STEP 6: RELATIONSHIP

Your character starts with at least one relationship with another PC or NPC. Come up with a relationship that another player or the GM agrees to. If you want a relationship with an NPC, discuss with the GM about what the NPC is like. You can have up to three relationships at a time.

Then, decide whether your character is happy or unhappy with the other character in the relationship, regardless of what the other character feels about your character.

- If your character feels happy, mark the rightmost space of your relationship track.
- If your character feels unhappy, mark the leftmost space.
- If your character feels neutral, mark the middle space.

You'll find more about how relationships work in play on page 29.

TAKING ACTION

Characters will interact with other characters and animals to overcome challenges, form relationships, and achieve their goals. To take action, the GM sets the difficulty, the player picks a skill, and they negotiate the outcome together.

How tricky a task or problem is to accomplish or solve is represented by its **difficulty**:

- **Simple:** Success requires at least one expertise.
- **Typical:** Success requires at least three expertise.
- **Hard:** Success requires at least five expertise.
- **Tough:** Success requires at least six expertise.

Players, what you can do with a skill depends on your expertise in it. For instance, if you have one expertise in a skill, your expertise is about average. If you have four, you are better at it than most.

- If you have **more expertise** than the task's difficulty, you and the GM can agree upon a **bonus**, such as causing the target to become preoccupied, or completing the task swiftly or with a flourish that impresses others. How good the bonus is should reflect how much your expertise is above the difficulty.
- If you have **less expertise** than the task's difficulty, you can still complete the task by agreeing on a **complication**, such as alerting the guards or injuring yourself. How big the risk is should reflect how much your expertise is below the difficulty.
- If you have **exactly the expertise** needed, then you complete the task without bonuses or complications.



You can declare that you use two skills on the task, combining their expertise, with the GM's approval.

Andy wants their character to perform a pole-dancing routine to impress a duchess. The GM says that this a Hard task, requiring at least five expertise, but Andy's character only has +3 Aptitude.

Andy points out that pole-dancing requires strength and wishes to add their character's +2 Might. The GM wholeheartedly agrees, so Andy's character can now impress the duchess.

Note: You can interact with animals using any of the same skills you could when interacting with other folk. Animals can even understand speech!

Bonuses and complications can happen immediately or later. For example, killing someone very important could bring bounties on your character's head, or the ruler might give them a reward.

OPPOSED ACTION

If your action is being opposed by somebody else, you and your opponent will compare expertise. If there is a tie, it goes to the person who initiated the action. If there is no initiator, the tie goes to the character with the higher endurance related to that skill. For example, at a soiree, Cassidy is being challenged by an NPC, but her Insight is greater than their Etiquette, so she knows that their threat is a bluff. She uses hostile language to communicate that a skirmish would be unwise, and the NPC backs off to avoid a beatdown.

MOVEMENT

Characters can move around freely unless their movement is somehow impeded, such as when swimming through a narrow trench or getting stuck in mud. You don't need to treat movement as a task unless you need to be particularly swift, such as if you're dodging an attack or running from palace guards.

INITIATIVE

You can determine initiative when it matters who goes first in a scene, often only when a character is threatened. After each involved player declares what they would like to do, determine initiative order based on who has the greatest expertise in the skill they are using.

Infected and Nocturnal gain initiative automatically if they themselves are threatened, and depending on whether they escalate or de-escalate the situation (page I3). A character in a positive relationship gains initiative automatically if the person they are in a relationship with is being threatened.

Break ties by determining who has the most endurance linked to the relevant skill. If a tie cannot be broken that way, initiative is negotiated with the GM.

Batu is in a positive relationship with his mate, Lilli. An NPC is envious of Lilli for getting the lead in a theatrical drama they both wanted to be in. The NPC goes to take it out on her verbally, but Lilli intends to fight back just the same. Each rival has a +2 to Etiquette, but Lilli has more emotional endurance. However, Batu knows this will put his mate's reputation in jeopardy, and with the initiative bonus received from being in a positive relationship with her, he gets in between them and uses Survival to endure the emotional pain on behalf of his mate.

MULTIPLE SOLUTIONS

Most challenges will have more than one solution, so weigh the options at hand. How the character interacts with others may affect progression, cause problems, or lead to something good. A character could free a fox from a trap, and it might do them a favor later.

An NPC has a lollipop in their possession, and the PC desires to consume it. Here are some possible outcomes:

- *The PC is kind to them, so they give them the lollipop gladly.*
- *The PC offers their services and asks for the lollipop as payment.*
- *The PC slays the NPC and takes the lollipop from their corpse.*
- *The PC steals the lollipop while another PC distracts the NPC.*

PAIN AND ENDURANCE

Throughout play, your character will accumulate emotional pain and physical pain. Prism is not a high-fatality game, so most physical and verbal attacks, as well as other undesired outcomes, such as a hard fall, will only deal 1 pain. Horrible outcomes should not deal more than 3 pain.

Your character can only stand so much pain, though, represented by endurance:

- Your physical pain endurance is the sum of your expertise in Aptitude, Dexterity, and Might. When you would suffer physical pain beyond your endurance, you become incapacitated.
- Your emotional pain endurance is the sum of your expertise in Etiquette, Insight, and Survival. When you would suffer emotional pain beyond your endurance, you become preoccupied (page 26).

You cannot increase your physical or emotional pain endurance beyond 12.

You can remove 1 physical pain by eating a meal, sleeping, or doing anything else the GM deems plausible.

You can remove 2 emotional pain by watching a performance, spending quality time with someone else, or doing anything else the GM deems plausible.

INCAPACITATED

When you would suffer physical pain beyond your endurance, you become **incapacitated** until any physical pain is removed. While incapacitated, you cannot do anything. A PC or an NPC can choose to yield before becoming incapacitated if the situation allows it.

If a PC incapacitates an NPC, they get to decide the NPC's fate. Here are some examples:

- The PC allows them to yield, and they offer the desired item or info.
- The PC chooses to end their life, either painfully or painlessly.
- The PC deals justice instead of death by delivering them to a ruler.
- The PC tries to make peace with them.

If a player wishes to slay an NPC that is not incapacitated, the GM can allow it.

PREOCCUPIED

When you would suffer emotional pain beyond your endurance, you become **preoccupied** until any emotional pain is removed. You could also become preoccupied in other ways, such as:

- Getting pinned down or restrained.
- Getting sidetracked by a street performance.
- Traveling during harsh weather.

While you are preoccupied, the difficulty of every task you attempt increases by one tier.

How you can stop being preoccupied depends on why you are preoccupied. It could take days or it might stop at the end of the scene. As an example, if you are entranced by a singer, becoming preoccupied, someone could just slap you to snap you out of it.

Conditions that cause preoccupation stack, but the penalty will not. So, if you've had too much to drink, and you're in the middle of a barroom brawl, you will be preoccupied until both conditions are resolved.

If you become incapacitated, you cease being preoccupied, and you cannot become preoccupied while you are incapacitated.

Preoccupation is less of a forced status ailment, and more the way the character feels at the time. So, a character can always stop being preoccupied if the player and the GM deem it plausible, such as if someone close to the character gives them a supportive hug.



BECOMING THREATENED

When you are in danger of physical or emotional harm, you become **threatened**. This can happen suddenly or gradually. For example, if a cougar approaches a character to sniff the dried meat in their backpack, this isn't necessarily threatening. Same if the cougar is offered the dried meat. But if a character provokes the cougar when it approaches them, the character becomes threatened. The player now must decide how to avoid injuries.

A PC can threaten another PC, but this does not usually happen unless the characters are at odds in their relationship.

A character stops being threatened once the situation reaches a conclusion, whether desirable or undesirable. Here are a few examples of how a threatened situation can be resolved:

Example 1: A pirate sneaks in to try to catch a character unawares.

- *The character has enough expertise in Survival to spot them.*
- *They avoid being caught off guard and get the upper hand.*
- *The defeated pirate gives up.*

Example 2: The floor is about to collapse underfoot.

- *The character tumbles once they reach the bottom by using Dexterity.*
- *They do not have enough expertise. The GM offers success with a risk.*
- *The player agrees that their character will avoid pain, but the fall will leave them disoriented.*



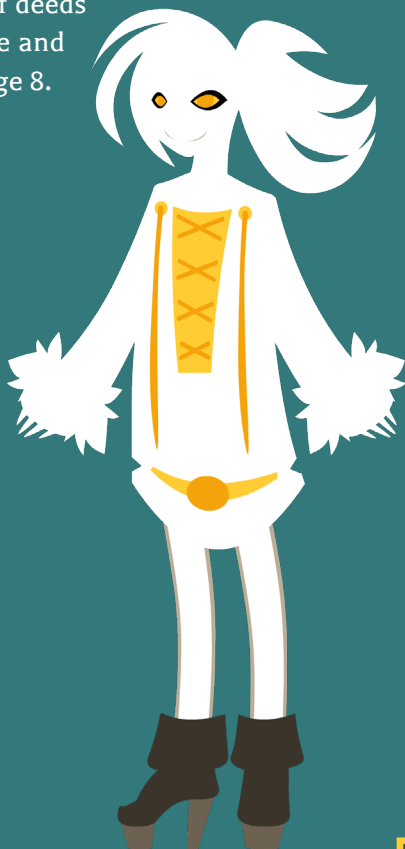
BLESSINGS AND CURSES

If you perform deeds that are valued by your realm, you will receive a **blessing** until the end of the scene. While you have a blessing, the favored skill of your realm gains a bonus determined by the GM.

If you perform deeds that are resented by your realm or the realm you are visiting, you will receive a **curse**. However, your realm will usually look the other way if you're trying to respect the customs of the realm you are visiting. While you have a curse, the favored skill of the respective realm suffers a penalty determined by the GM.

To remove a curse, you must atone for it, either by making right what you did wrong or by performing an act that pleases the disappointed deity. For example, one loyal to the Blue Realm who abandoned a comrade in combat would get a curse, which could be removed by rescuing the comrade.

You'll find the sorts of deeds that the realms value and resent starting on page 8.



RELATIONSHIPS

Any two characters can be in a relationship—the realms do not discriminate by gender. Some relationships are between friends and family, and some are romantic. The two characters in the relationship receive bonuses depending on how they view the relationship, as follows.

- **Both tracks are positive (allies, lovers, happily married, etc.).** If one of you is about to be physically or emotionally harmed, the other will gain initiative to use a skill to try to protect you or get you out of the way, or to use a trait or talent to suffer the injury on your behalf.
- **Yours is positive but theirs is neutral or negative (codependent, unrequited, etc.).** While trying to get them to notice you, your expertise on the current task doubles, but so does the emotional pain you take.
- **Yours is neutral (coworker, travel companion, etc.).** If they are attempting a task and you have expertise in a relevant skill, you may offer to add it to theirs, even if they are using the same skill.
- **Yours is negative but theirs is neutral or positive (frustrated, heartbroken, etc.).** While you are caught up in yourself, you take double emotional pain, but you cannot become preoccupied.
- **Both are negative (despised, estranged, frenemies, etc.).** If you are trying to show them up, you may use a third skill on a task with the GM's permission.

Note: Keep in mind that you can know a character without having an official relationship with them. Your positive or negative association can add to the story, but the relationship will not give your character an advantage unless the GM thinks it makes sense. For example, a social task with an NPC you've met before might get a lower difficulty.

CHANGING RELATIONSHIPS

At the end of each session, the players assess where their relationships stand and decide if any have changed. If either player in a relationship feels that it has changed, they can move their own relationship one space to the left or right. If plausible, they can even flip the relationship—for example, from -2 to +2.

You can also end a relationship, clearing its track, or start a new relationship. For instance, a character with an unrequited crush could decide the pain is not worth it and move on.

If you form a new relationship during play, discuss how both characters feel, and start the relationship from there. If you would like your character to know an NPC you meet along the way, you cannot just declare it. The reason your character knows them should be plausible.

THE RESTLESS DEAD

When a creature dies, their body remains until their silhouette, their spiritual shadow, can find rest. Once the silhouette has found peace, the body will disappear. If the creature was bound by land or sky, their body turns to ash. If they were a creature of the sea, their body turns to sand. The remains are then made into a sculpture or keepsake by those still living that loved them.

When a creature first passes away, they are said to be “sleeping.” When their silhouette has found rest, and their body turns to ash or sand, they are now “dreaming.” However, not all find an immediate peaceful slumber. These restless silhouettes appear to others as solid and in good health. Unless their body was found, it would be as if they never died. They are often not hostile, but each one has a reason that it cannot sleep peacefully.

Note: Silhouettes aren’t meant to be beasts to fight. Use them to encourage emotional conflict and resolution.



A **Cinder** is the silhouette of person who perished while suffering from grief or anguish. One whose heart was broken, whose loved one had passed, whose untimely death meant a promise went unkept, who had given up hope. A Cinder will often go about doing what the person did before they passed, in a passive state, until what caused them to perish elicits from them a smoldering hostility. They have a family and a vocation. If they do inflict pain, it is always emotional pain, never physical.

A **Regret** is a silhouette that remembers the delights of its past life. It refuses to believe that its once-exuberant life has ended, and it does not want to enjoy the pleasures of life alone. The Regret will either try to seduce a character or tempt them with an activity they enjoy, using any related skill. If the Regret is successful, the character goes into a trance and becomes preoccupied. Regrets have a family and a vocation, and some say those who are attuned to the dead can see the shadow of a Regret becoming a hypnotic gaze.





A **Shade** is a silhouette of an animal, devoutly bound to a person, a place, or an item. They will not attack unless provoked. Shades come in a variety of beasts of the land, sea, and sky, though they were not necessarily beasts of burden in life—they may have been pets or the allies of travelers. Some are night creatures that were allies of the Dark Prince, embodying their sworn dedication to their comrade, and so carry the shame of being unable to protect him in his and his lover's hour of need.

A **Wraith** is a silhouette that helps other apparitions find rest, or remains alongside their loved ones.

Many of them have also tasked themselves with comforting those who are near their end if there is no one present to do so, and with delivering messages from the dead to the living. Still, it is only a matter of time before their eyelids become heavy or their dreams begin calling to them. They have a family, and their vocation is like a Medic, but instead they tend to heal emotional pain. The Princeling is a Wraith.



THE GAME MASTER

A good day to you, GM—or as we like to say, Master of the Game. In this section, we provide materials on brainstorming, deity involvement, and the Punishment.

HELPING THE PLAYERS

Players are encouraged to take the situation by the reins, but as the GM, make sure the desired goal or outcome is made obvious. If the plot has stagnated, throw in a tense situation and let it escalate. You might explore whether a character is willing to abandon their moral tenets to save another. Here are some questions to think about:

- Do you want their quest to be aiding one of the restless dead?
- Do you want them to be the cause of change within the hierarchy?
- Do you want them to deal with the Punishment? Or find a cure?
- What are the sorts of problems you want the players to address?



Create opportunities for characters to do things alone and with others. Let characters explore intimate moments in their relationships so that together they can take on tougher challenges. Let them take risks to accomplish tasks with high difficulties so they know they will improve with more expertise. Some players will be too shy or quiet to say that they should be able to combine expertise from two skills in order to accomplish a more difficult task. Encourage them to do so. Negotiating penalties and bonuses based on a character's expertise is half the fun of the game.

PLAYING THE GODS

The gods prefer observation over intervention, by watching through the eyes of statues and statuettes crafted in their honor, by walking amongst their people by posing as mortals, by listening to their prayers. According to those loyal to the gods, the descendants both speak to the gods and speak on their behalf. However, the gods will not act unless they are moved or disturbed by an event or action. This does not mean they are unfeeling, though, as they will whisper words of encouragement at times.

Likewise, the gods are not capricious or malicious, and they base punishment on the severity of the slight. They are not conniving, nor are they rivals with one another, so they will not harm someone loyal to a fellow deity without good cause. While the gods do not have a court, they do pay visits to each other to mingle on occasion, as would parents who are proud of, or disappointed in, their children.

GM, it is up to you to say when the gods help or hinder and whether they involve themselves directly or indirectly. They do not need to be a constant presence if you wish them not to be. They are like the restless dead—use them to further character development and the story. A simple way to make their existence known is to have one or more of them be present when a character receives a blessing or a curse (page 28). For example, a violet blessing could be that the moon seems to smile down at you, and an orange curse could be that you feel an agonizing burning sensation.

THE PUNISHMENT

You are welcome to invent ways a character can become infected with the Punishment, changing their template to Infected (page 13). The Dark Prince might find them in their time of need, and offer them the ability to make the ones who have hurt them suffer. However, the Dark Prince does not always approach folk who suffer as he does—the contagion is called the Punishment for a reason. At first, he only targeted cruel folk whom he felt deserved to suffer, for those who are infected inevitably succumb to the contagion.

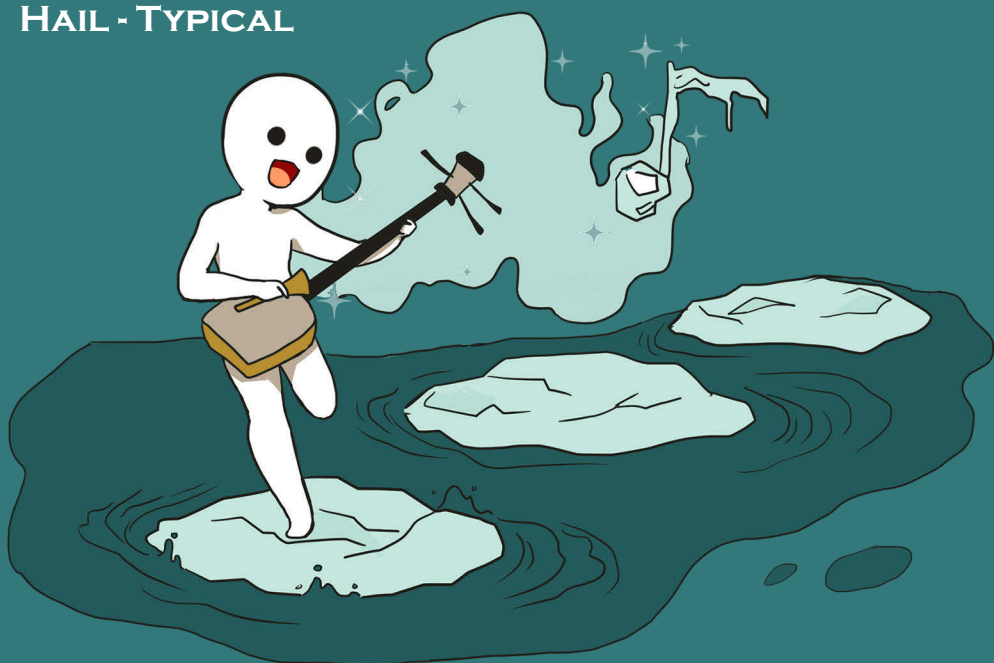
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HAIL - SIMPLE

HAIL - TYPICAL



HAIL - HARD



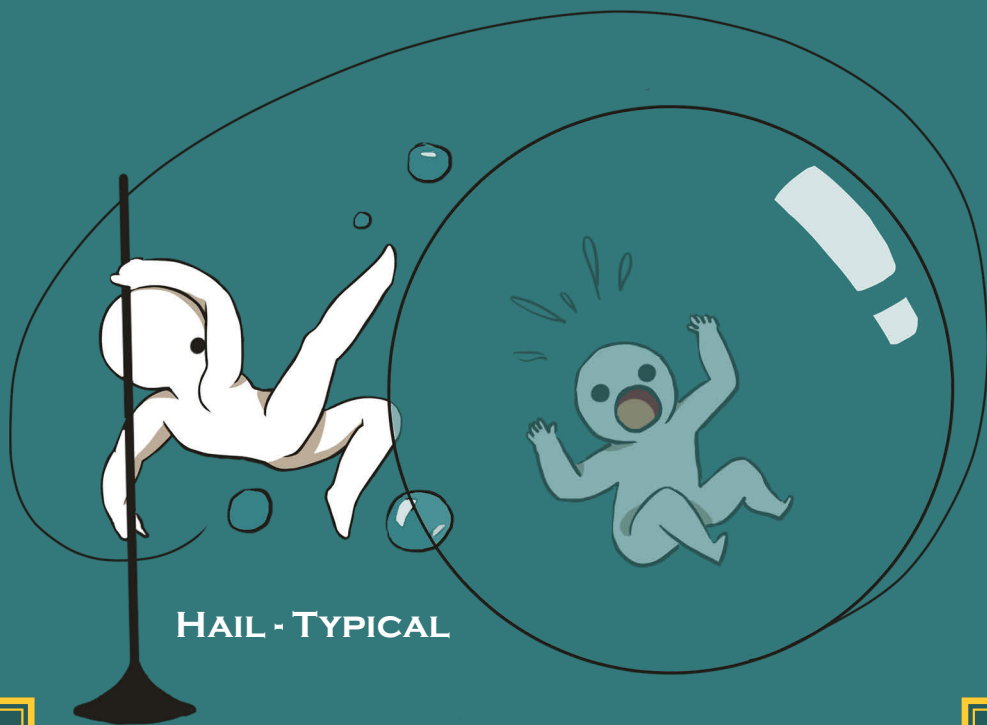
HAIL - TOUGH



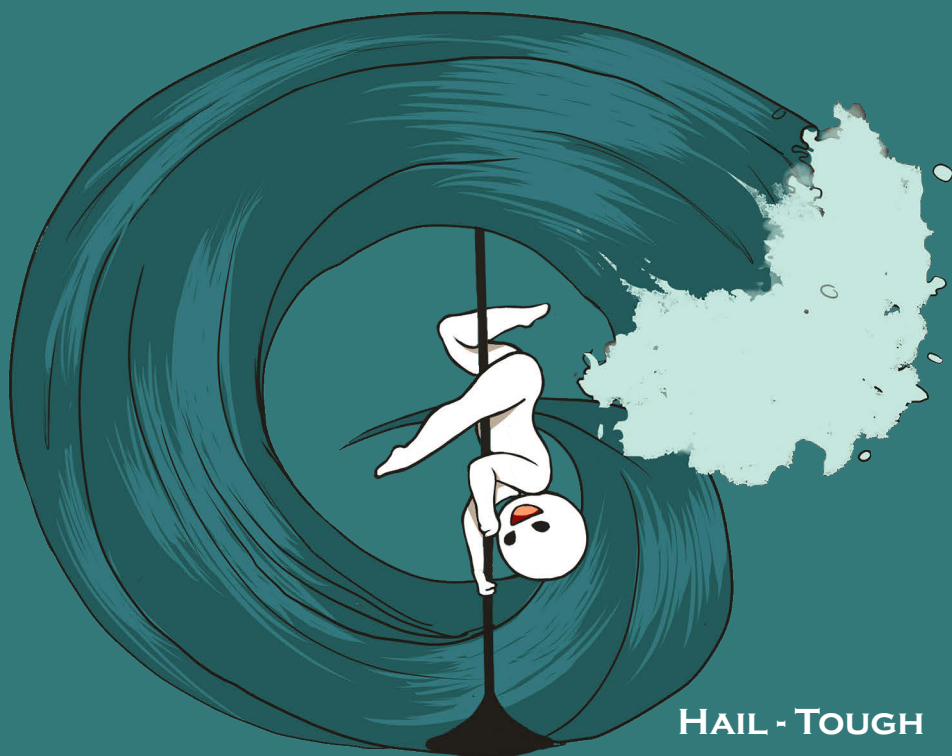
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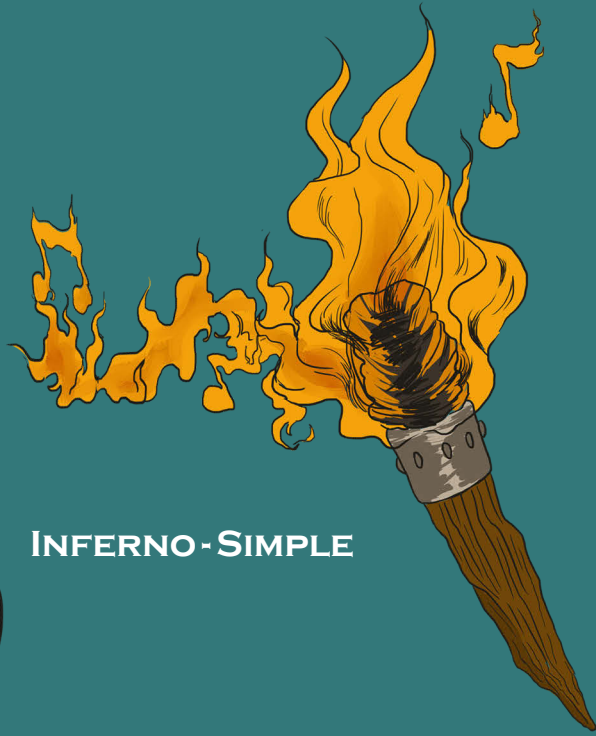
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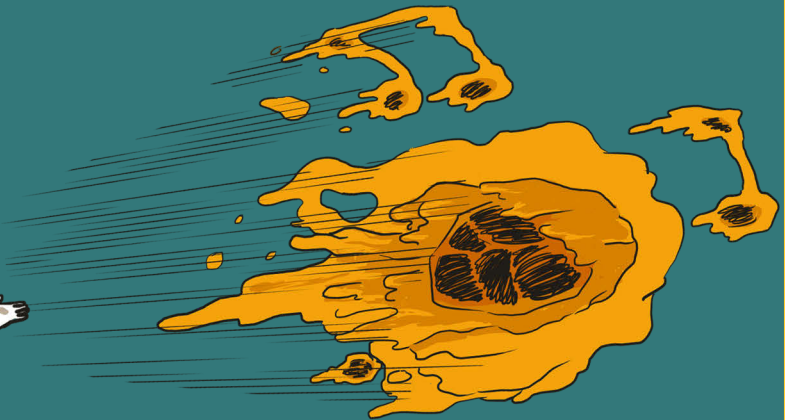
HAIL - HARD



HAIL - TOUGH

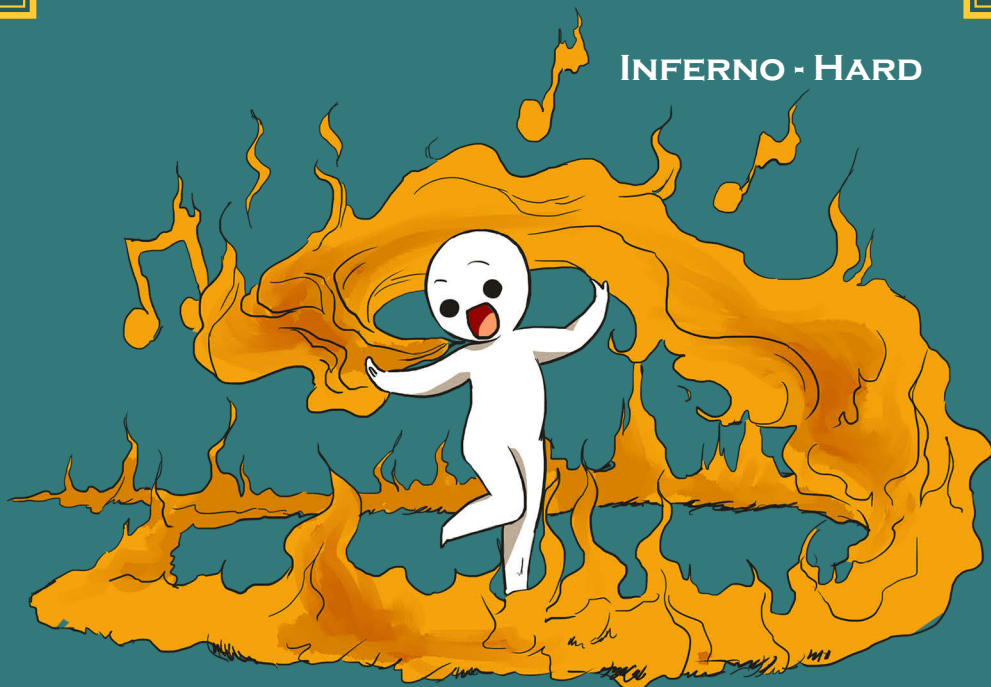


INFERNO - SIMPLE

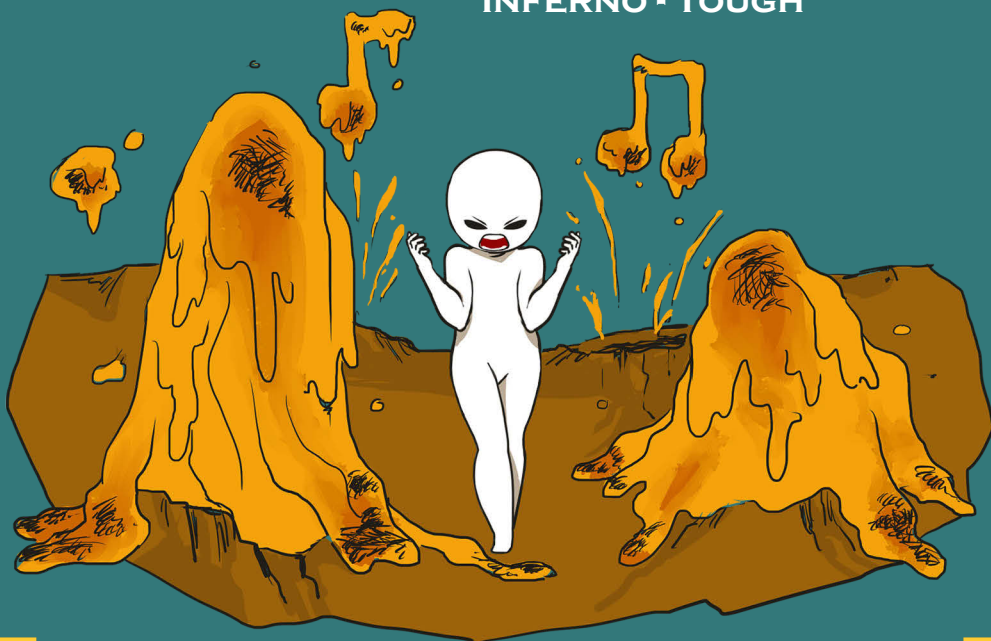


INFERNO - TYPICAL

INFERNO - HARD



INFERNO - TOUGH



SEISM - SIMPLE



SEISM - TYPICAL



SEISM - HARD



SEISM - TOUGH

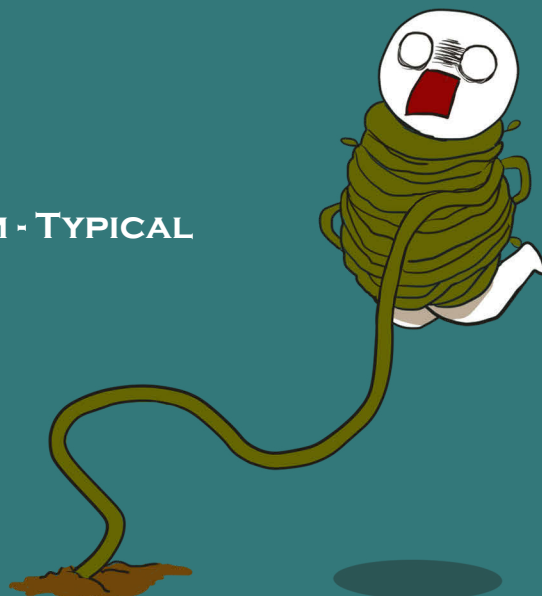
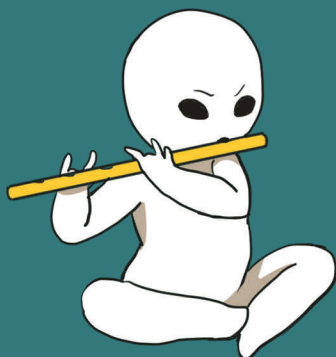


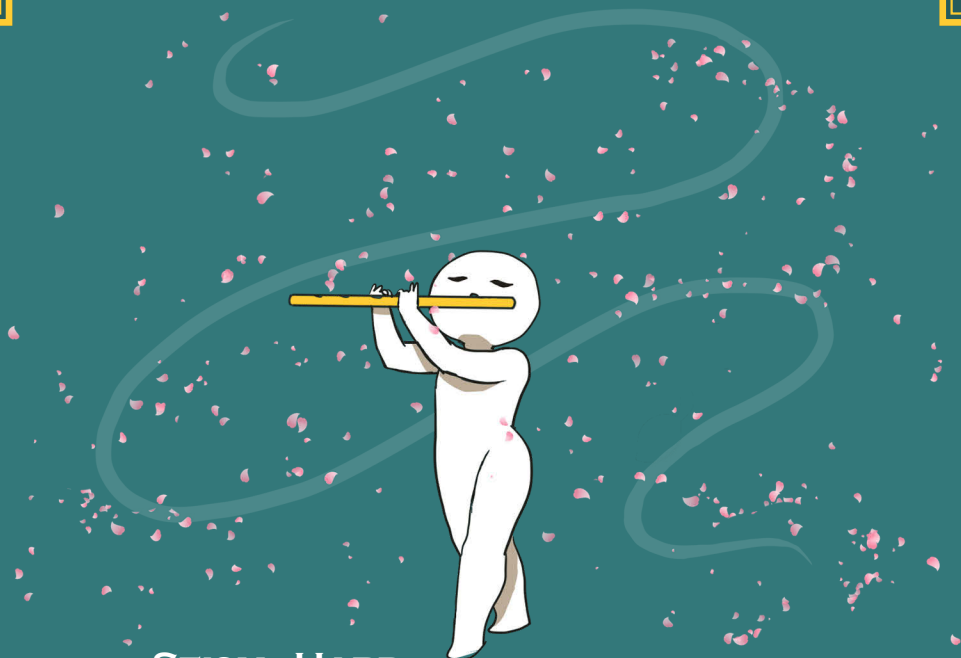


SEISM - SIMPLE



SEISM - TYPICAL





SEISM - HARD

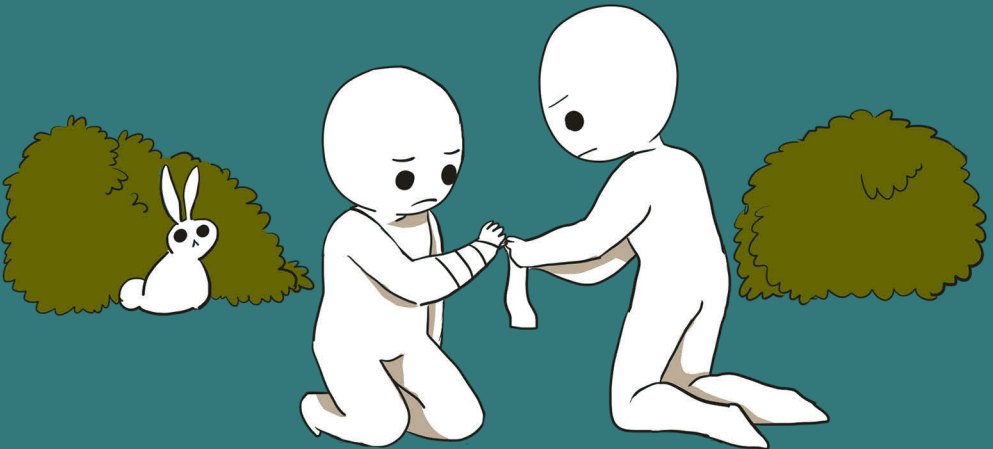


SEISM - TOUGH

TREAT - SIMPLE



TREAT - TYPICAL



TREAT - HARD



TREAT - TOUGH





Prism is a diceless roleplaying game about conflict resolution and relationships.



Set in an aquatic world with its own deities, ethical cultures, and unique families.



Recommended for those who enjoy intimacy and supportive character interactions.



Players: 1-4



Ages: 18+



Mature Themes: Positive Sexuality, Partial Nudity, and Emotional Vulnerability

