Black Dogs

Unofficial house-rules and materials for
Lamentations of the Flame Princess

Issue V

by Daimon Games

Black Dogs is a dark fantasy collection of house-rules, materials, adventures and monsters, a toolbox to generate new content for OSR systems, particularly focused on Lamentations of the Flame Princess.

Issue V contains: short house-rules for sorcery
the Turn-Dice rules for the GM
complete summary of all Black Dogs rules
character sheets for your campaign
characters' careers for quicker char-gen
how to present adventures to players

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BLACK DOGS #5

AUGUST 2018

Unofficial house-rules and materials for
Lamentations of the Flame Princess

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Contents

INTRODUCTION

Black Dogs is a dark fantasy collection of house-rules, materials, adventures, monsters, and together a toolbox to generate new content for OSR systems, particularly focused on **Lamentations of the Flame Princess**. Black Dogs shares a common set of rules and aesthetics with Lamentations, but it has its distinct flavor. Whenever a rule is not found (or not presented yet) in the Black Dogs 'zine, just use the default from Lamentations or whatever OSR system you're running.

Issue V (number 5) of the Black Dogs is of a different sort, compared to the previous ones. This issue covers only two new topics: the basic guidelines for sorcery and magic (not mentioned until now), and presents the Turn-Dice concept for the Game Master.

Besides those two chapters, this issue contains a **summary of the rules** and **character sheets** to be printed for the players. The character sheets are to be printed as follows: print many copies of the front (which is the same for every class) then print around half as many on the rear for fighters, the other half for sorcerers. Print many.

Finally, there is a handy chapter with random **characters' careers** if you want a faster, funnier, character generation process.

Using these, you can setup your Black Dogs campaign, and kick it off with all the adventures and seeds presented so far, and give the random tables from issue 3 a test ride to generate new adventures.

Future issues will further expand the topics of magic (perhaps) and provide additional materials for the Game Master, in terms of adventures, random tables, and creatures.

Content

This is an index of topics as presented in the various issues of the Black Dogs zine.

SORCERY RULES

In dealing with sorcery, the Black Dogs house-rules try to present this subject both in technical terms, giving some precise indications about spells and about casting them, and at the same time to provide just enough flavor to convey a grim, dark taste of everything magical. Sorcery is not about casting fireballs and building a powerful character; sorcery is about dealing with demons, channeling their powers, and trying to remain human in the process.

A special mention goes to Paolo Greco, of Lost Pages, for the great magic supplements *Wonder & Wickedness* and *Marvel & Malisons*

If you're wondering what spells to implement in your campaign, do yourself a favor and buy those books

Some people believe in God (one or another, or many), some people believe in angels, or in elfs, or in gold or steel. Most people believe in spirits. All people believe, or should believe, in demons, for they are real and **sorcery is the proof of their existence**. Humans do not have the power to create, to evoke the energy necessary for sorcery; humans obey the simple laws of physics: objects fall, matter decays and breaks, flesh bleeds and dies.

Unless, somehow, through arcane rituals and powerful words, through inhumane gestures and blasphemous thoughts, a demon is bent to the human will and forced to exert its power in a way that a human can channel. This is sorcery. And because a sorcerer is dealing with demons, extreme care must be taken or dire consequences will bestow upon them - or upon those unwise enough to be in their proximity.

This sorcery system is built around a few basic rules and assumptions:

- ❖ There is only **one caster class**: it's called sorcerer but depending on which type of magic they will use, every sorcerer grows into a different type of character
- ❖ Magic power is **inhuman**: only by channeling the power of demons can humans perform sorcery
- ❖ There is **no cast & forget**, but the usual Vancian spells can be used, or any other OSR-compatible spells lists
- ❖ There are **no levels for spells**: all spells are potentially available, their power scales with the sorcerer's Level
- ❖ Sorcerers learn spells and can cast each known spell **once per day**; there are of course **pricey exceptions** to this rule

Every sorcerer draws their spells from demons: basically, every night before going to sleep, a sorcerer meditates and evokes demons in some form. Some visualize demons, others recite their names, or perform ritual invocations and so on. So, the rules are quite simple:

- ❖ A demon can be evoked once per day; because each spells is a different demon, **each known spell can be used once per day**
- ❖ When the sorcerer has the possibility to perform a long rest, they are implicitly also allowed to perform whatever they do to evoke once again the power of every demon they know. Therefore, **after a long rest all known spells are available again**

No Cast & Forget

No Spells' Levels

Cast each known spell once per day

Regardless of how they do it, sorcerers need to evoke those demons and hold them in their mind, so that later on they can summon a specific one and channel its power into a specific spell

Casting spells

When casting a spell a sorcerer releases the power of a demon previously evoked, and channels its energy in the way they need to obtain a certain effect. As previously explained, every known spell can be used **once per day**.

Every long rest allows the sorcerer to refresh the power of their spells. If a sorcerer knows multiple spells, they can cast each of them daily, with **no limit** related to their Level.

Casting a spell is **automatically successful** when performed with the appropriate rituals and taking **at least one Turn** (10 minutes or so) of uninterrupted concentration.

If the sorcerer needs to release the power of a demon in an instant, they can do so. To cast a spell as an action **in a single combat round** (10 seconds or so) or **as an immediate action** (for example in case of an emergency or danger), the sorcerer must **pass an Ability Check on Intelligence**.

Failing to pass the check means that the spell is not cast properly and it is spent for the day anyway. Remember that the Ability Check is only when casting in one round, not a Turn.
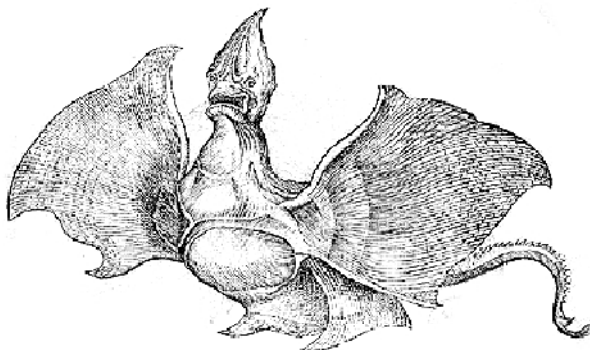
A sorcerer can discard magic energy to inflict damage or to generate a magical defense. At any moment the sorcerer can mark **one available spell as used for the day** (until the next long rest) and instead (with a check on Intelligence **if casting instantly**):

- ❖ Cast an instant magic missile for 1d6+Level damage

- ❖ Cast an instant defense to negate 1d4+Level magical damage or to allow a Save at advantage against magic

Finally, marking **two spells as used for the day** (until the next long rest) allows a sorcerer to cast again a spell **that was already used in that day**, by forcing two demons to evoke and bend the power of the one that is recalled again.

A sorcerer begins with the following:

- ❖ **Two simple demons**: these are the most familiar and simple demons to evoke. As long as there is no dedicated list of Black Dogs spells, those should be **randomly determined** among Level One spells

- ❖ **One advanced demon**: these are less common and subject to different specialization, and offer a greater variety of power. Again this is **determined randomly**: roll for an MU or Cleric spell of Level Two

- ❖ **A second advanced demon**: only if the sorcerer INT modifier is +3 or the CHA modifier is +1 or more. This is also **determined randomly**. The player decides if to roll on Level One or Level Two lists

Learning new spells

Sorcerers constantly study new rituals and demons, to be able to have new powers at their disposal.

The simple progression is the following:

One spell at level-up

- ❖ A sorcerer automatically **adds one spell** to the list of the known spells, every time they level-up; it can be of any Level equal or lower than the caster's new Level
- ❖ This is **a free option** and has no impact on other level-up options (such as increasing ability scores or saves, adding skills or specials, etc…)

A second new spell

- ❖ Among other, mutually exclusive, level-up options, there is the possibility to learn a second new spell

Select the list, the spell is random

- ❖ The sorcerer decides **from which list** to add the spell, the spell itself (within that list) is determined **randomly**
- ❖ Other spells might be found during adventures and might require an INT ability check to be learned

TURN-DICE

This is heavily influenced by the Necropraxis Productions Hazard System v0.2, and is intended to replace completely all the rolls for encounters and at the same time introduce an abstract measurement for lights, fatigue, rations, spells and effects durations, etc. The Turn-Dice rule goes like this:

d12 each turn

Scouting and planning protect the characters

Pushing further (1 HP) allows to avoid effects marked with (*)

Use a d20 instead of a d12 if you want to give your characters a chance to take a break (13-20 means no danger)

If for any reason the intended effect makes no sense, just ignore the result and treat the Turn as safe (for now)

❖ **At the start of every exploration Turn,** the players' leader or the GM should roll a d12
❖ **Ignore the effect** if it is in contrast with some scouting and/or planning that the characters made (they deserve safety if they earned it); otherwise **declare** the effect
❖ Effects marked with **(*) can be avoided** by having all characters pushing further with additional effort or taking an alternative route, represented by everyone (characters, hirelings, allies) **losing 1 Hit Point**
❖ **Apply the effect** if is not avoided, and if it makes sense in the context of the situation

Note that this Turn-Dice replaces standard durations for lights, for rations and fatigue and requirements for rest, for spells and other effects, and so on.

There are **two different tables** to use: one is for The Wild (or any highly dangerous location) where problematic encounters are more likely, and one is for other locations (villages and towns, and any relatively safe area).

THE WILD TURN-DICE

d12	Effect
1 *	Introduce a terrain/location threat or difficulty
2 *	Signs, traces of a hostile creature; roll a d8 next Turn
3	Neutral creature, standard initiative if needed
4 *	Hostile creature, characters may surprise it
5	Hostile creature, characters may avoid being surprised
6	Hostile creature, characters are surprised
7	Kill one light (candles and small lights first)
8	Kill two lights (lamps and torches first)
9	Kill a spell or an effect
10	Kill a spell or effect, and two lights
11 *	Hunger, characters need a ration (max twice per day)
12 *	Fatigue: require a short rest of 1 Turn

OTHER TURN-DICE

d12	Effect
1	Kill one light (candles and small lights first)
2	Kill two lights (lamps and torches first)
3	Kill a spell or an effect
4	Kill a spell or effect, and two lights
5 *	Hunger, characters need a ration (max twice per day)
6 *	Introduce a terrain/location threat or difficulty
7 *	Fatigue: require a short rest of 1 Turn
8	No danger
9	No danger
10	No danger
11	Potentially useful or friendly encounter if reasonable
12	Encounter as appropriate, standard initiative if needed

Push forward (1 HP) to avoid effects marked with (*)

RULES SUMMARY

This section contains a brief summary of all the house-rules published so far in the Black Dogs 'zines, for an easy reference at the table. For each topic, you can see the page number in this section, and reference to the original Black Dogs 'zine issue where it was first presented.

When you attempt an action, usually you **roll a d20**, trying to roll **equal or under** your ability (a 1 is always a success, a 20 always a failure).

- ❖ **Charisma**: vs. any kind of charming and possession effect, including spells of petrification or paralysis
- ❖ **Constitution**: vs. physical damage that is already inflicted (like poison or being hit by a trap). Includes ultimate saves against death
- ❖ **Dexterity**: vs. all danger that can be dodged or avoided (including area effects like certain spells and most traps)
- ❖ **Intelligence**: resisting spells and spell-like effects (most magic, including magic items) that are not purely elemental (for example save vs. a curse, but not vs. paralysis or vs. a fireball) and are not possession
- ❖ **Strength**: vs. any kind of physical damage that cannot be avoided, but just resisted for a short time or endured (like burning, drowning, freezing and similar)
- ❖ **Wisdom**: vs. all kind of deception and illusions (including magical ones), and against all cleric-like abilities or spells, including most undead magic

Saving Throws

A Save is rolled with a d6 and must be equal or under the Save score to be successful

Use the Save score of the ability related to the danger

When there is a **clear advantage or disadvantage**, you **roll 2 dice** instead of one (for anything: an ability check, a saving throw, a to-hit roll, a damage roll...). Keep the better result if you have the advantage, the worse if you're at disadvantage.

Advantages & Disadvantages

Advantages and disadvantages cancel each other out

17

Encumbrance

Using the over-encumbered slots carry penalties

- ❖ Characters can carry a number of **slots** equal to their Constitution **ability score** + Strength **modifier**
- ❖ An item takes **one slot**, heavy or big items require **2 or more slots**, 3 **small items** go together in one slot
- ❖ **Over-encumbrance boxes** by default have one slot each + the CON or STR modifier (whichever is higher)

Skills

Use skills to have the equivalent of a specialist in your game

- ❖ A **basic skill** is +2 bonus to Ability checks (+1 for Save)
- ❖ **Advanced skill** is +4 bonus (+2 for Save)
- ❖ A roll of 20 is always a failure, and so is a 6 with Saves

Charisma	Constitution	Dexterity
Persuasion and Seduction	Intimidation	Sleight of hand and Tinkering
Deception and Disguise	Resistant to poison and hunger (*)	Sneak attack and Stealth
Read NPCs' intentions	Resistant to cold and heat (*)	Athletics and Acrobatics

Intelligence	Strength	Wisdom
Investigation and Architecture	Open doors and Break stuff	Perception and Searching
Languages and Cultures	Climbing	Bushcraft and Survival
Knowledge and Arcana	Swimming	First aid and Medicine

(*) Apply to Saves

- Divide a sheet in 3 Zones: **Front**, **Body**, **Rearguard**
- Put a token for each character on the paper
- Do the same for the adversaries
- Roll for surprise and reaction; roll initiative

- **in Front**: roll to-hit or damage (your choice) with Advantage, but -1 AC for every enemy present
- **in Body**: no scores adjustments
- **in Rear**: +1 AC for every ally in the fight

- A combatant in **Front** can attack anyone
- A combatant in **Body** can attack anyone in Front or Body
- A combatant in **Rear** can attack only someone in Front

- Target anyone, **except Rear to Rear**
- Target is random (size matters) among those in the zone
- **Aiming** requires one round; choose target, still roll to hit
- When you suffer damage, your next ranged attack is at disadvantage **and** you drop to last in initiative order

- After a **successful melée attack**, a combatant **must** move ahead of one zone; this is a free mandatory action
- If they don't, they drop to last in the initiative order
- **Moving ahead** one zone is free; **moving back** means dropping to last in initiative order, but is a free action

Initiative

If someone drops to last in initiative, erase them and write them again at the very end, after the last in order

- ❖ Every character rolls a d6 + DEX modifier
- ❖ For monsters and NPCs, the GM rolls a d6 + mod, if any
- ❖ Put together monsters and NPCs of the same type
- ❖ Make a list from highest to lowest Initiative
- ❖ If someone gives up an attack, **they move at the top**

Other combat options

The cover bonus of +2 or +4 depends on the situation, as judged by the GM

- ❖ **Offense**: gain +2 to-hit, but -3 AC
- ❖ **Savage**: roll double damage, but -3 AC
- ❖ **Defense**: gain +2 AC, but -4 to-hit
- ❖ **Backstab/Sneak attack**: gain +4 to-hit and double damage
- ❖ **Cover**: get +2 or +4 AC
- ❖ **Better weapon**: have the better weapon, forfeit this attack, the next hit automatically + roll damage with adv

Danger Die

- ❖ In the first round take a d6 and place it showing one
- ❖ When **someone misses**, increase the Danger die by one
- ❖ When the Danger Die reaches 6, reset it to 1, and:
- ❖ Everyone **in Front** gets a **d6**
- ❖ Everyone **in Body** gets a **+2 token**
- ❖ Spend the d6 or +2 token at any time for to-hit or damage rolls

Morale for NPCs & Monsters

It's in the interest of players to remind the GM

For the NPCs and monsters' morale, do a **Save vs HP**: the GM rolls a d6 equal or lower than the HP left and the NPC stays in the fight, roll higher and the NPC will try to escape or surrender, depending on the situation.

- When **below zero** with negative HP, roll the class Hit Die each round, or each turn during exploration
- If the roll is equal or higher than the absolute HP value nothing more happens
- If the roll is lower than the absolute HP value, the character will die in a **number of rounds** equal to level

- Mark the Wound on an ability, it counts as a **persistent disadvantage**. The wound affects ability checks and saves and any roll that has the ability modifier applied
- A wound can be taken only once on each ability
- Maximum of **three wounds in total**: player chooses the ability for the 1st, the GM decides 2nd and 3rd

- Short rest lasts two Turns only
- Long rest requires several hours and sleep
- Regain one Hit Point
- Regain a second HP if a ration is consumed
- If a ration is consumed, and a Save on CON is passed, regain a third HP **or** remove one Wound

Hit Points

When a character hits zero HP, nothing happens

Instead of suffering damage on HP, the player can take a Wound. A wound reduces the damage by 1d6 HP

Healing

Take a maximum of one short rest and one long rest every day

Sorcery

Sorcerers can cast each known spell once per day

After a long rest, all known spells are available again

- ❖ Casting a spell is automatically successful when taking at least **one Turn** (10 minutes or so) of uninterrupted concentration
- ❖ Casting in **a single combat round** (10 seconds or so) or as **an immediate action**, requires passing an ability check on Intelligence
- ❖ **Failing** to pass the check means that the spell is not cast properly and it is spent for the day anyway

Flexible casting

The sorcerer can mark one spell as used for the day to attack or defend

- ❖ Cast an instant magic missile for 1d6+Level damage
- ❖ Cast an instant defense to negate 1d4+Level magical damage or to allow a Save at advantage against magic

Re-using a spell

- ❖ Marking **two spells as used for the day** allows a sorcerer to cast again a spell **that was already used in that day**

Learn new spells

- ❖ **Add one spell** to the list of the known spells, at level-up, as a free option regardless of other advancements (of any level equal or lower than the caster's new Level)
- ❖ The sorcerer decides **from which list** to add the spell, the spell itself (within that list) is determined **randomly**
- ❖ Other spells might be found during adventures and might require an INT ability check to be learned

22

CHARACTER SHEETS

This section contains a summary of the rules for character generation, and both the Recruits sheet (making new characters) and ad-hoc character sheets (finally!) for the Black Dogs. Note that you can use these rules with **whatever class system** you like (integrate them with LotFP or other OSR), but you can also just follow the instructions on the character sheets and **use only fighter/sorcerer classes**.

Character creation

Do not play the same character as in the previous adventure

- Every player, including the GM, generate **two characters** at the start of the first session, and **another character** before starting the second adventure
- **In the first adventure**, every player must play one of the characters they've made, and if that character dies, they can use their second character or one made by the GM
- **After the first adventure**, every player can choose any character from the group; all are available, including those made by the GM

Procedure for stats

- Take 6d6 and roll them: assign each number to one of the boxes (Luck, Talent, Save) of any ability you desire
- You cannot assign a 6 to a Save, but you can assign it to Luck or Talent
- For every ability, **in order**, roll the other 2d6
- This time, the lowest score must go to Save, or if already written, to the Talent value
- HP: 1d10 for fighters, 1d6 for magic users
- Starting money: Charisma score x10

- ❖ **Luck** is used for re-rolls: burn a point of Luck to re-roll with the related ability
- ❖ **Talent** is used for better scores: at level-up burn a point to increase the related Ability, or the related Save, by one
- ❖ **Save** is for Saving Throws: it's in the 1-6 range; a save is rolled with a d6 and must be **equal or under** the score

Score/Modifier

3-4 / -3	9-10 / -0	13-14 / +1
5-6 / -2	11-12 / +0	15-16 / +2
7-8 / -1		17-18 / +3

Setup the encumbrance slots as follows:

- ❖ Characters can carry a number of items equal to their Constitution **ability score** + Strength **modifier**
- ❖ **Over-encumbrance boxes** by default have one slot each + the CON or STR modifier (whichever is higher)

A character has a number of starting skills as follows:

Fighter (and specialists)	Magic Users (and clerics)
A number of skills for STR equal to its modifier	A number of skills for INT equal to its modifier
A number of skills for CON **or** DEX equal to its modifier	A number of skills for WIS equal to its modifier
One skill for each other ability with positive modifier	One skill for each other ability with positive modifier
	One skill on any ability for every point of CHA modifier

NEW RECRUITS SHEET

Print three for every player, GM included.

Character name:

Ability	Luck	Talent	Save	SCORE	Mod.
Charisma					
Constitution					
Dexterity					
Intelligence					
Strength					
Wisdom					

Class:

HD and
Hit Points:

Alignment:

Starting money:

NEW RECRUITS SHEET

Print three for every player, GM included.

Character name:

Ability	Luck	Talent	Save	SCORE	Mod.
Charisma					
Constitution					
Dexterity					
Intelligence					
Strength					
Wisdom					

Class: HD and Hit Points:

Alignment: Starting money:

CHARACTER SHEET (FRONT)

Name: Level: XP:

Class: Alignment:

Ability	Luck	Talent	Save	Mod.
CHARISMA				
	Lead 2 hirelings ± mod; Hireling's loyalty ± mod; Reaction rolls ± mod			
CONSTITUTION				
	Improve HP Improve AC with shield			
DEXTERITY				
	Initiative ± mod; Improve ranged to-hit Improve AC when not using shield			
INTELLIGENCE				
	Improve languages			
STRENGTH				
	Improve melée to-hit Improve inventory slots			
WISDOM				
	Perception & search ± mod			

Inventory Avail. slots = CON score + STR mod

1	8	15
2	9	16
3	10	17
4	11	18
5	12	19
6	13	20
7	14	

Encumbrance Each box has slots = 1 + CON or STR mod

Light	*Medium*	*Heavy*
-1 to combat rolls	-2 to all rolls	All rolls at disadv
1	1	1
2	2	2
3	3	3
4	4	4

Encounters
Perception:
Reaction:
Initiative:

Armor Class
Basic AC (10):
bonus w/shield:
　w/o shield:

Flesh&Blood
Hit Dice:
HP max:
Current:

Bonus
Melée to-hit:
Melée damage:
Ranged to-hit:
Ranged damage:

Armor AC:
Shield AC:
Other/Total:

Wounds:

Rest taken:

Skills/Spells

THE FIGHTER (REAR)

At character creation, you get Specials as if spending CON, DEX, or STR modifier (whichever is higher) x 100 XP.

☒ **Hit Dice**: d10 + Constitution modifier

To gain XP:
● 1 XP every 1 silver wasted
● XP 20xHD defeated monster
● And as per the section below
When you marked at least 3, get XP on the next occasion; clear all marks

☐ **Leader**: lead 2 or more hirelings into battle (100 XP); ☐ **Losing them**: lose 2 or more hirelings (150 XP); ☐ **One for the team**: take damage for another character or for a hireling (100 XP)
☐ **Pain**: suffer a critic from an adversary (100 XP); ☐ **Brutal Pain**: suffer 10+ HP damage in one round (200 XP)
☐ **Bleeding**: suffer a wound on CHA, CON or STR (150 XP); ☐ **Stunned**: suffer a wound on DEX, INT or WIS (150 XP)
☐ **Best aim**: roll a critic with a missile weapon (100 XP); ☐ **Best fight**: roll a critic with a melée weapon (100 XP)
☐ **Search**: find or discover something secret (200 XP); ☐ **Curiosity**: open a door against better judgment (200 XP)
☐ **Daring**: face an enemy as tempted by the GM (200 XP); ☐ **Reckless**: face a risk as tempted by the GM (200 XP)

New Level: spend current LVL x 1,000 XP
● Write new level
● Add 1 HP ± CON mod

Then select one option:
● Burn a Talent point, add 1 to an ability; pay new ability score x10 XP
● Burn a Talent point, add 1 to a Save; pay new save score x100 XP
● Roll your class HD ± CON mod and add to HP; pay Level x100 XP
● Add a new basic skill (pay Level x50 XP) or improve a skill to advcd. (pay Level x100 XP)
● Add a new special (an ability, a power, a talent) for your class, paying its XP cost

Each +50 XP for physical, not digital:
☐ **Mapping**: 100 XP per session; 200 XP per adventure for beautiful maps
☐ **Drawings**: 100 XP per session; 200 XP per session for complex drawings
☐ **Reports**: 100 XP per session; 200 XP per adventure for better writing

☐ **Pure fighter**: add your Strength modifier to damage in melée (200 XP)

☐ **Your weapon**: it has one of these qualities (200 XP):
○ +1 to-hit; ○ +1 damage; ○ 1 slot lighter; ○ worth +100 sp

☐ **Striker**: add your Level to the to-hit roll, either for:
○ melée; ○ ranged attacks (200 XP)

☐ **Improve your training**: add your Level to the to-hit roll for the other type of attack (400 XP)

☐ **Brutal**: add your Level to damage rolls (400 XP)

☐ **Steel-trained**: any armor made of metal counts only as 1 slot of encumbrance (300 XP)

☐ **Robust**: roll all Saving Throws with STR or CON with a bonus of +1 (400 XP)

☐ **Multiple attacks**: make multiple attacks as long as targets' HD total is equal or lower than your Level (800 XP)

☐ **Thief**: w/the appropriate tools (rogue tools, ropes, etc.) all rogue actions get +2 on d20 & +1 on Saves (400 XP)

☐ **Backstab**: gain to-hit **and** damage bonus equal to your Level if you backstab or sneak attack an enemy (600 XP)

☐ **Leather armor**: leather armor grants +1 AC (200 XP)

☐ **Lucky bastard**: roll all Saving Throws with DEX or CHA with a bonus of +1 (300 XP)

☐ **Resistant**: for 3 days (o o o) you heal in short and long rests as if consuming a ration even if you don't (200 XP)

☐ **Nature-wise**: all actions related to nature (hunting, fishing, foraging, tracking, etc.) gain a +2 on d20 and +1 on Saves while outdoor, incl. in The Wild (300 XP)

☐ **Dodge**: as long as you wear nothing more than furs and have no shield, you gain +1 AC (300 XP)

☐ **Defender**: protect another character in the same zone with a +2 AC if you take -2 to-hit in the same round (400 XP)

THE SORCERER (REAR)

At character creation, you get Specials as if spending CHA, INT, or WIS modifier (whichever is higher) x 100 XP.

☒ **Hit Dice**: d6 + Constitution modifier

To gain XP:
● 1 XP every 1 silver wasted
● XP 20xHD defeated monster
● And as per the section below
When you marked at least 3, get XP on the next occasion; clear all marks

☐ **Leader**: lead 2 or more hirelings into battle (100 XP); ☐ **Losing them**: lose 2 or more hirelings (150 XP); ☐ **One for the team**: take damage for another character or for a hireling (100 XP)

☐ **Pain**: suffer a critic from an adversary (100 XP); ☐ **Brutal Pain**: suffer 10+ HP damage in one round (200 XP)

☐ **Bleeding**: suffer a wound on CHA, CON or STR (150 XP); ☐ **Stunned**: suffer a wound on DEX, INT or WIS (150 XP)

☐ **Best aim**: roll a critic with a missile weapon (100 XP); ☐ **Best fight**: roll a critic with a melée weapon (100 XP)

☐ **Search**: find or discover something secret (200 XP); ☐ **Curiosity**: open a door against better judgment (200 XP)

☐ **Daring**: face an enemy as tempted by the GM (200 XP); ☐ **Reckless**: face a risk as tempted by the GM (200 XP)

New Level: spend current LVL x 1,000 XP
● Write new level
● Add 1 HP ± CON mod

Then select one option:
● Burn a Talent point, add 1 to an ability; pay new ability score x10 XP
● Burn a Talent point, add 1 to a Save; pay new save score x100 XP
● Roll your class HD ± CON mod and add to HP; pay Level x100 XP
● Add a new basic skill (pay Level x50 XP) or improve a skill to advcd. (pay Level x100 XP)
● Add a new special (an ability, a power, a talent) for your class, paying its XP cost
● Add a spell of your choosing (in addition to the random one of your new level)

Each +50 XP for physical, not digital:
☐ **Mapping**: 100 XP per session; 200 XP per adventure for beautiful maps
☐ **Drawings**: 100 XP per session; 200 XP per session for complex drawings
☐ **Reports**: 100 XP per session; 200 XP per adventure for better writing

☒ **Sorcerer**: cast each known spell once per day

☒ **Studious**: every time you gain a Level, add a new random spell; if you want you may give up other level-up options and also select one more spell of your choosing

☒ **Magic Energy:** discard a spell until next long rest to cast an instant magic missile for 1d6+Level damage

☒ **Magic Defense:** discard a spell until next long rest to cast an instant defense to negate 1d4+Level magical damage or to allow a Save at advantage against magic

☒ **Flexibility:** discard two avail. spells to cast the same spell again in the same period of time

☐ **Detect Magic**: you can detect magic in anything or anyone as long as you can touch it (300 XP)

☐ **Extend Magic**: you can extend (double) the duration of a spell by discarding one any other spell (600 XP)

☐ **Expand Magic**: you can expand (double) the effects of a spell (its range, or damage, or effect, etc.) by discarding another spell at the time of casting (800 XP)

☐ **Wisdom**: cast and learn spells using WIS instead of INT, but you must be somehow religious or holy (300 XP)

☐ **Blood Magic**: transform 3 HP worth of blood (willing or not) in the equivalent of discarding a spell (300 XP)

☐ **Turn Undead:** discard any spell until next long rest to cast Turn Undead at any time (300 XP)

☐ **Bless:** discard any spell until next long rest to cast Bless at any time (300 XP)

☐ **Vicious**: blunt weapons in your hands inflict +2 damage (300 XP)

☐ **The hand of God**: once per session change a failed roll into a natural 1 or 20 - a full success or a critical (300 XP)

☐ **Blessed**: roll Saving Throws against magic or supernatural powers with a bonus of +1 (300 XP)

☐ **Detect Evil**: you can detect evil in anything or anyone as long as you can touch it (300 XP)

CAREERS

This section contains a series of Warhammer Fantasy RPG in-spired careers - what characters were doing (or failing to do properly) before becoming adventurers and being enlisted in the ranks of the Black Dogs. They are not to be chosen but deter-mined randomly and they should speed up the creation of new characters, plus give them a little bit of a background so you can start your campaign even faster.

To determine the previous career of a character, generate the scores as usual (with the d6 rolls and scores for Luck, Talent, Save and totals for the abilities).

<div style="float:right">Once the scores are written</div>

❖ Select the ability with the highest Talent score
❖ If more than one ability share the highest score, the player decides which one to use
❖ Roll a d6 and see the corresponding career for that ability

All Black Dogs have:
❖ Regular clothes (AC none)
❖ A knife or dagger (1 slot, 1d4 damage)
❖ A pouch with flint and steel and coins
❖ Backpack with:
❖ 4 rations (1 slot each)
❖ Bedroll (2 slots)
❖ 3 torches (1 slot) or 5 candles (small item)
❖ A short rope (1 slot)
❖ One of the following: crowbar (2 slots), or hammer (or any light tool, 1 slot), or pick or shovel (or any heavy tool, 2 slots)

<div style="float:right">Once the first adventure has ended, everyone is free to hit the market, but if you use careers, use gear as presented here at the start</div>

Charisma careers

Roll a d6 here if Charisma is the ability with the highest Talent score; this is your previous career and what comes with it.

1-2-3
Entertainer

There is always spare coin, a plate and a roof for those who can sing and play, act and dance. But you're not a puppet anymore. *What was your favorite performance and how did it offend someone so important you had to disappear?*

Gear: fancy clothes, stage clothes, small weapon. Coin: CHA mod +1 x10 sp. Also: musical instrument, short rope, bell, some fake jewels.

4-5
Agitator

You have a way with people and words; speeches and slogans come easy to your mouth. *But you've worked for the losing side one too many times; who's after you now?*

Gear: clothes, fancy spare clothes, small weapon. Coin: CHA mod +2 x10 sp. Also: mirror, tobacco, whistle, 3 gunpowder in a bottle but no fire weapon, and a love letter addressed to a fake identity of yours.

6
Noble

You had the fancy life and the respect of people; you had it easy, somehow. Or that's what others say. *That life didn't suit you; but why exactly did you leave comfort?*

Gear: fancy clothes, silver dagger, sword or rapier, chainmail or cuirass, pistol w/3 gunpowder, beautiful cape. Coin: 1d20 x10 sp. Also: book, holy symbol, tobacco, and the portrait of a former lover that speaks to you once a month.

Roll a d6 here if Constitution is the ability with the highest Talent score; this is your previous career and what comes with it.

You just wanted to live a simple, peaceful life, to make a family, to grow old. *Then the war came. Which scars, which lust for blood and need of atonement do you carry with you?*
Gear: clothes, small weapon, short bow w/10 arrows, furs. Coin: CON mod +1 x10 sp. Also: hunting dog, mule with saddlebags, 4 rations, short rope, *a sense for the weather (3/6 on guessing the weather for tomorrow or any upcoming change).*

By foot or on horse, by coach or by boat, you know your way and how to protect those who travel with you. *But the last caravan entered some cursed place and your skills were just enough to get only you out alive. Who now hunts you for the loss of that caravan?*
Gear: practical clothes, spare clothes, small weapon, missile weapon w/10 arrows/darts, leather armor. Coin: CON mod +2 x10 sp. Also: pole, short rope, tent (for 1), a mysterious map.

You've seen what prisons look like, as a convict and then as a guard; perhaps as a torturer. *But that last prisoner has changed you. Something they said - or their silence - has touched your hardened soul. Tell us how.*
Gear: practical clothes, large weapon, another weapon of your choice, leather or mail armor. Coin: CON mod +2 x10 sp. Also: hammer, nails, lantern, oil, and a long bone (works as a club) probably not human.

Dexterity careers

Roll a d6 here if Dexterity is the ability with the highest Talent score; this is your previous career and what comes with it.

1-2-3
Thief

Anything that is not protected enough is basically for you to grab, and you feel no shame in that. *You had a gang and a guild: how did you betray them or they you?*

Gear: dark clothes, dagger, missile weapon w/10 arrows/darts, cape. Coin: DEX mod +1 x10 sp. Also: crowbar, grappling hook, short rope, chalk, rogue tools and *a standard dexterity skill (or Sleight of hand and Tinkering, or Sneak attack and Stealth, or Athletics and Acrobatics).*

4-5
Smuggler

There is no way a border, laws or guards will stop you from trading. *Your last cargo was a nightmarish surprise, though. What was it, how did you dispose of it, and who's after you now?*

Gear: clothes, dagger, axe or sword or pistol w/3 gunpowder, elegant or dark cape. Coin: CHA mod +2 x10 sp. Also: chalk, ink and parchment, sealing wax, spikes, tobacco, and either a disguise as the opposite sex or as a monk.

6
Gambler

Dice and cards are just another way to make an honest living. For you, it was a living, though not often honest. *Your last victim has left something on you: name a curse or a price on your head.*

Gear: elegant clothes, dice and cards apt to cheating, silver dagger, elegant cape. Coin: CHA mod +4 x10 sp. Also: chalk, lock, manacles, tobacco, and a mirror that once per day lets you see behind a locked door or a solid wall.

Roll a d6 here if Intelligence is the ability with the highest Talent score; this is your previous career and what comes with it.

You honestly cannot tell if it was real magic or just tricks and lies. *But at least once, you've seen beyond the veil of reality, and right there you knew you had to fight. Tell us what you saw.*
Gear: clothes, ink and parchment, book, magnifying glass, sealing wax. Coin: INT mod +2 x10 sp. Also: a sweet wine (mild charm), a bitter root (regain 1 HP today, lose 2 tomorrow), a broken book of prophecies (right 20% of the times) or a cape with many hidden pockets.

More often than not, instead of practicing the alchemist's arts, you just ran errands and served. *But apparently, you knew a thing or two about potions and poisons. Who did you kill or charm and why is your former master angry at you?*
Gear: elegant clothes, ink and parchment, magnifying glass, hourglass, garlic. Coin: INT mod +2 x10 sp. Also: a charm potion, a dose of bitter paste poison (1d10+2 damage) and a dose of liquid tasteless poison (1d8 damage).

Your talent attracted attention from your early years; someone has taken care of your training. *They sure loved your talent and trained you; why have they in the end tossed you out in despair?*
Gear: ragged clothes, a club or staff, a silver dagger, tobacco. Coin: INT mod +2 x10 sp. Also: a potion to see the invisible, a potion to detect evil, enough arcane salts to guard once against demons and undead.

Strength careers

Roll a d6 here if Strength is the ability with the highest Talent score; this is your previous career and what comes with it.

1-2-3
Mercenary

The army is a recipe for disaster and poverty, but serving the right captain of fortune can make a man rich. Alas, not you. *In which war did you fight and how did you lose all that plunder?*

Gear: colorful clothing, dagger, sword or pike, 50% mail or 50% cuirasses, musket w/3 gunpowder. Coin: STR mod +1 x10 sp. Also: lantern, pole, short chain, and *the ability to always be able to spot which one is the toughest (highest HD) of your opponents.*

4-5
Bodyguard

You know the popular, the rich, the noble; one time too many you've protected them even while they harmed others. *Whoever you were protecting died recently. Tell us how.*

Gear: 70% leather armor or 30% mail, sword or axe or similar, small shield; if leather armor also pistol w/3 gunpowder. Coin: STR mod +2 x10 sp. Also: a ring from your past (worth 100 silver) or a +1 blade with a story but no hilt.

6
Bounty hunter

Criminals, outlaws, sometimes even monsters. You captured or killed them, for a reward. *Now you do the same, but follow a code of honor and get paid less. What happened to your former self?*

Gear: 30% leather armor or 70% mail, sword or axe or similar, small shield or silver dagger, and also pistol or arquebus w/3 gunpowder or another missile weapon w/10 arrows/darts. Coin: STR mod +3 x10 sp. Also: short chain, manacles, lock, an antidote, a riding horse.

Roll a d6 here if Wisdom is the ability with the highest Talent score; this is your previous career and what comes with it.

Many have forgotten the ways of God, the love of His mercy and the strength of His wrath. You did not. *You've taken the vows in the monastery but why did you turn your back to the Order?*
Gear: plain clothes, religious clothes, holy water, holy symbol, a staff. Coin: WIS mod +1 x10 sp. Also:a silver dagger and a vow not to use it against man.

You opened up dead bodies to learn, and did your best to save the living ones. But in the end, death wins. *Someone's dead eyes still haunt you in your sleep. Who did you fail to save?*
Gear: practical clothes, spare clothes, small weapon, chalk, tobacco, ink and parchment, magnifying glass. Coin: WIS mod +1 x10 sp. Also: a potion that detects poison, 3 doses of medical herbs (regain 1 HP), quicksilver poison (1d10 damage, or 2d10 against monsters).

For most of your life, you've been living out there in The Wild; you learned to respect it, you know how to survive it. *But the last time you were the quarry, not the hunter. What attacked you?*
Gear: heavy clothes (+1 AC), leather armor or simple shield, spear, hunting bow or crossbow w/10 arrows/darts, long rope. Coin: WIS mod +1 x10 sp. Also: spikes, tobacco, whistle, fishing gear, tent for 1, *a sense for the weather (4/6 on guessing the weather for tomorrow or any upcoming change).*

For a faster character generation process, randomly choose names for your characters.

As an optional rule for traits: roll a d20 and take the positive trait if the result is even, the negative trait if the result is odd. Then roll again and this time the player decides whether to take the positive or negative trait.

After the personality traits, roll one last time on the table for **visible negative trait**; skip this roll if Charisma is 15 or more.

Rolls for traits have no mechanical purposes but add flavor to new, unknown characters

d20	Name (male)	Name (female)	Positive trait	Negative trait	Visible negative
1	Abraham	Anis	Dignified	Sloppy	Broken teeth
2	Bartram	Annabell	Resolute	Messy	Broken nose
3	Cecil	Blanchet	Measured	Vain	Burn scars
4	Erasmus	Bridget	Loyal	Lustful	Strange tattoos
5	Felix	Cecily	Precise	Impatient	Missing ear(s)
6	Godfrey	Diana	Friendly	Vengeful	Squeaky voice
7	Isaac	Eunice	Wise	Merciless	Big feet
8	Judah	Grisell	Logical	Rude	Acid scars
9	Laurence	Leah	Fair	Aggressive	Smelly
10	Leonard	Leticia	Stoic	Zealous	Weak stomach
11	Maurice	Marina	Tenacious	Shameless	Scarred face
12	Moses	Mirabel	Confident	Reckless	Raspy voice
13	Olivier	Pauline	Kind	Lazy	Long nose
14	Osmund	Philippa	Refined	Anxious	Multiple scars
15	Paul	Phoebe	Diplomatic	Dishonest	Twisted face
16	Roger	Priscilla	Eloquent	Brutish	Black teeth
17	Solomon	Rosamond	Helpful	Envious	Missing eye
18	Tobias	Ursula	Pragmatic	Moody	Large head
19	Vincent	Valentine	Patient	Insecure	Light limp
20	Wolfric	Veronica	Beautiful	Superstitious	Missing finger(s)

CAMPAIGN GUIDE

This section lists several adventures that you can present to your players to get your campaign started. With the attitude for minimum prep outlined in previous issues of this 'zine, and hoping to find players with the proper approach and spirit, the suggestion is to proceed as follows.

Minimum prep

Do not plan or prepare a campaign in details, before you have actually started to play. Instead, keep your prep to a minimum: just pick two or three adventures and have those ready. Then gather your group, **and play**.

Have the players make characters, and if you follow the Circle of Hands procedure outlined in the Black Dogs 'zine issue I, make two characters yourself, as GM. Those two characters will be available after the first adventure.

Start simple

Once characters are ready, present two or three adventures, that you have prepared.

Let the players decide where they want to start. Play that adventure. See how it goes.

If the players were undecided, if they were really torn between this or that adventure, even better. As a second adventure, that's the one you'll offer them. It means you have already prepared it, and that you are on the right path: your choices were well received by the players.

Keep it simple

Continue in the same way: come to the table with two or three adventures ready. Ask the players to decide between those. No need for you to design the whole world in advance.

If the players like the game and your GMing style, if they like the adventures and the spirit of the Black Dogs; if you enjoy preparing a few adventures without the need for a campaign design, if you like the way the players interact with the world through the characters, the campaign will pick up on its own. You will all - players and GM alike - be interested to see what will happen to your characters.

There is no need for plotting a major story arch. It might emerge spontaneously, or not. It doesn't matter.

The Black Dogs is focused **on a limited number of characters** and the group will come to a natural end.

It might even end too soon. It's not the end of the world: just make another group and start again; play new adventures but feel free to bring back stuff from your previous campaign.

Presenting the adventures is an important part of your game. It's not the game itself - but a good presentation might make the difference between an adventure being played or not.

Present the adventures

Sometimes, a good presentation is all it takes to get the players excited and in the right spirit. Sometimes, it's all you need to get new players to the table.

Keep your presentations short and focused, and talk mostly about what makes this adventure unique or original, and what has made you excited about it. These two elements are the crucial part of your presentation.

In issue III the presentation of a single adventure was framed more precisely, as saying at least two or three of those things:

- ❖ Something you're excited about, perhaps only that you just bought this and it's cool!
- ❖ Something about the location or atmosphere of the adventure
- ❖ Something about a cool NPC or a weird or dangerous monster
- ❖ Something about a peculiar situation, or interesting opportunity
- ❖ Something that would actually motivate the characters

Don't be afraid of spoilers. Of course, do not give away the core of the adventure, but if there's something cool about a part of the setting, say it. Of course, you don't need to be always direct and obvious about it, you can drop hints and suggestions.

If there's a traitor in the village and they're going to figure it out fast enough, and traitors are a selling point for your players, say it.

If the mysterious monster terrorizing the town is an undead vampire horse with time-travel abilities and you were blown away by its description and mechanics, say it. If the vampire horse is deadly, say it.

If the adventure is potentially a gateway for another cool part of the setting, say it. If a certain location is crucial, say it. If there's a mysterious cave which opens to the underworld and then you will play Veins of the Earth after this adventure, say it.

In this four pages, you will find a brief presentation of **some LotFP adventures** that I find particularly easy to prepare and that will fit well within the framework of a Black Dogs campaign. Of course, you can use my presentation to sell the adventure to your players, or you can come up with your own.

Note to the GM: a single book and three well connected adventures. They fit the spirit of the Black Dogs very well, both as setting and tone of the adventures. I'd play the three of them with the following caveats:

❖ *Part I: Small Town Murder* is a simple starting point. It works well to set the tone, but I would keep it short (like a single session) unless your players are really excited about this investigation

❖ *Part II: The Great Games* has a really great background in the games; they show how twisted towns and NPCs can be. Don't miss on this one, and if your players find the "dragon", even better!

❖ *Part III: A Lonely House On A Lonely Hill* is more traditional; I'd use it to fill a session or only if the players stick around in this area

For Part I: *I have a short interesting adventure that will lead you into a new town, Pembrooktonshire. It's going to be quite weird, I assure you. If you're up for a little investigation - nothing too fancy - this will be the perfect introduction.*

For Part II: *Oh, it was so nice we came to Pembrooktonshire. Now if you're staying in town just a few more days, there's the Great Games coming up. You'll love it: people here compete to death. Literally. There's a lot to learn about the best families in town... and a great surprise up the mountain.*

For Part III: *Well, since we're here, I see no reason why not to play a little adventure with some horror, exploration and treasures. This will be our final trip in Pembrooktonshire... at least for now.*

Tower of
the Stargazer

This is a simple and introductory adventure. It's great as a starting point or as an encounter in The Wild.

What to say

There's this wizard tower. In the wild. Do I need to say more? There are a lot of classic tropes of fantasy adventures, and it will give you a good chance to gather some loot. It's the ABC of how Raggi sees adventures, so let's go there.

The God
That Crawls

A dangerous dungeon, with an abomination of a monster chasing your players, and a lot of interesting treasures and curses. Even if you don't get to fully explore the adventure, because the characters escape, there's a lot of recyclable material in here. If I had to bait my characters to go down in the dungeon (and I didn't), I'd say some other adventurers are already down there. Will they be the ones getting all the treasure?

What to say

There is a dungeon and a monster within; I am sure the monster will surprise you and I dare you to make it out alive from this hole! I would even advise you against going down there... except that there is so much treasure waiting for you.

This works very well once you've got several adventures under your belt. Actually, if you see that your campaign stalls a little or needs a bit of fresh air, Thulian Echoes will do wonders.

You will all get new characters, and explore the island of a great magician of the past. There's a huge treasure waiting for you, and lots of deadly traps. The good thing is that you will play those new characters as your avant-garde. Later on you'll find their diary, with all the information that you discovered thanks to their exploration and deaths. Perhaps with that knowledge your characters will solve the puzzle, and make it out alive and rich.

I bet it's time to bring some classic witch-hunt to your game. When I played this, I actually made a change to the adventure as it's written, by making the ritual something that must be completed at all costs to avoid a dark fate falling upon the entire region. I didn't like too much that the ritual was fundamentally something to be stopped (and by extension, that the witches were somehow the enemy, even if they're not presented as evil in the book). In turn, it also made stopping the witch-hunt important, but still, my players of course wanted access to the Priory to get the treasure.

You will be trapped in a small area full of riddles and treasures, with witches and abominations, with blood-thirsty peasants and horrible monsters. And treasures, yes, otherwise why bother? I'm sure you're up for it.

This is something you can prepare quickly, on 30 minutes notice or even faster. It's a simple but potentially deadly location, with enough treasure, an interesting magic rapier and a book that might change the way your magic users and clerics deal with magic. Plus it gives players an opportunity to come up with horror stories of their own (which sometimes I twist and recycle for other groups).

But instead of playing this as a "planned" adventure, I often use it as an encounter.
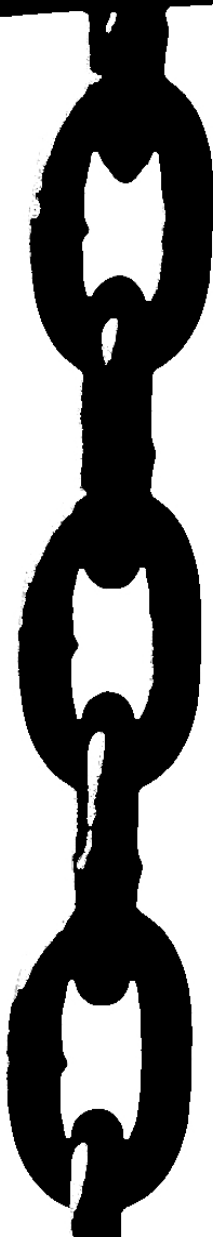
Say nothing, this time; just describe the cornfield as the characters are passing by.

In fact, by presenting adventures in advance and letting my players decide which one to play, sometimes the element of surprise gets lost. It allows you, as the GM, to count on players' buy-in but at the same time takes away a bit of the wonders of exploring a dangerous world.

For this reason, I also like to play small adventures as encounters, presenting to the players the opportunity to enter in them. When I do this, I play "dirty" and do not let them know in advance: I describe the adventure location somehow as related to what they're expecting close to the planned adventure location, but if indeed they get caught in the premises of the alternative setup, they see me switching module and know something is afoot.

Of course, if the players do not follow the premises of the setup, I let them just walk away from the adventure hook, and recycle it some other time in the future (once, the cornfield became an elegant garden, the farmhouse a villa, and the scarecrow a statue).

The next time we're going to talk about a few other adventures, this time not official LotFP. There are many just as good as the original LotFP material. **Usually I prefer to alternate** two or three non-LotFP adventures to an official one. Otherwise the weird and strange of LotFP becomes too common.

Non-official adventures