A Good Old Plague

The Black Death ravages the land, killing tens of thousands. The dead pile up in the streets and the diseased are shunned from society.

The High Council of Merestria appoints the Order of Salvation to find the source of the pestilence and to put an end to it. The members of the Order are specially selected from the elite of the Empire's servants: the Surgeon General, the Captain of the Purple Guard, their Eminence the High Inquisitor, and the Master of Secrets.

Order of Salvation

Each player chooses a character, making note of their talents, beliefs and starting Strength.

Surgeon

Considered the highest authority in the land in the sciences of the body, the Surgeon General is already hard at work studying the plague, from the Great Sanitarium of Merestria.

The Surgeon is particularly skilled in anatomy, studying diseases, knowledge of remedies, administering first aid and performing surgery.

The Surgeon knows for a fact that the plague is caused by miasmatic emanations from the Aluvian Pits, and is carried by rodents and flying insects.

The Surgeon General starts the game at Vitality 4.

Captain

The Purple Guard, normally tasked with protecting the land and its denizens, is fully employed at gathering the dead and the dying, burning the former and containing the latter.

The Captain of the Purple Guard is an expert at sword fighting, combat tactics, intimidation, rallying troops.

The Captain thinks that the plague is the cowardly work of the Kingdom of Harun, in a final desperate attempt to re-establish their domination over Merestria.

The Captain starts the game at Courage 8.

Inquisitor

The Inquisition upholds above all their sacred duty to understand the Divine, interpret its commandments and ensure that the people of the Empire follow them. The Priests commune and educate, the Exalted share their enlightenment, the Inquisitors seek heresy and the Enforcers restore the Divine's rightful designs when they are violated.

The High Inquisitor is second to none in the arts of comforting the lost, exuding authority, captivating the masses, extracting information from unwilling parties.

It is the Inquisitor's deepest belief that the plague is caused by the wrath of God, as the Empire strays from the path of righteousness.

The Inquisitor starts the game at Faith 6.

Master of Secrets

The Master of Secrets reports directly to the Emperoratrix, and as such their identity – or even existence – is itself a highly guarded secret. It is said that peace, within and without the borders, would collapse in a day if not for the webs of deception spun by the Empire's spies.

The Master of Secrets excels at telling and recognising lies, befriending unlikely allies, sprawling unseen, conjuring blades out of thin air and putting them to good use.

The Master of Secrets suspects that the plague is pure rumour and complete fabrication by House Maragoth, spouted to destabilise the powers that be.

The Master of Secrets starts the game at Confidence 5.

Playing the game

Rolling dice

The game master describes situations and events, and the players tell how they want their characters to react to them. Whenever the game master deems an action to have an uncertain outcome, they can ask for a roll. Rolls are made with six-sided dice, and a normal roll is made with two dice. If the given task is among the character's fortes, three dice are rolled instead, and inversely only one die if they are out of their depth. Additionally, the game master can give or take a die to reflect the particular circumstances of the action.

If any side comes up a 5 or a 6, the action is successful, and the player controls the narration of its outcome. Otherwise, the action is a failure, and the game master tells how things go from bad to worse.

Shifting convictions

When a character if faced with their own incompetence, bewilderment, or are otherwise shaken to their core in their convictions, they lose one Strength point. When a character loses all their Strength, they must abandon their quest. The player tells why and how. The fate of Merestria is now out of their hands.

Inversely, when a character is comforted in their convictions, overcomes challenges exceptionally well or makes significant progress in their quest, they regain a lost Strength point, but no more than their initial count.

Players and game master can suggest and discuss the gain and loss of Strength, although the game master has final say.

Ending the plague

Both game master and players get to shape the world and the narrative: one by describing the situations the characters find themselves in, and the others when their rolls are successful. Although all parts should keep to the agreed tone of the game, and refrain from contradicting facts already established, they should all feel free to lead the game in the direction they like.

The game ends if at least half the characters lose their way, forcing the Order to disband, allowing the unchecked plague to decimate the Empire; or, if the Order successfully identifies and eliminates the source of the plague, giving a chance for the Empire to recover from its losses.



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