

CLAUDIO PUSTORINO

VILEBORN

EMBRACE YOUR DARKNESS



QUICKSTART



VILEBORN

EMBRACE YOUR DARKNESS

WELCOME TO VILEBORN!

The game is currently under development and your opinion is crucial!
Join our VILEBORN Discord community to share your thoughts on the game,
ask questions, and find other people to play with.

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ABOUT THIS QUICKSTART

*Welcome to **Lex Umbrae**, an introductory adventure for **VILEBORN**. After a quick presentation of the game setting, you will embark on an adventure that will teach you how to play step by step!*

VILEBORN is a tabletop role-playing game with the gritty and adventurous flavor of a nobledark coming-of-age novel. By playing it, you will experience the adventures of young heroes who must face the darkness of the world and learn to grapple with that within them. VILEBORN is designed to tell stories of the hero's journey: the hard training and the conflictual relationship with your mentors, the exploration of your dark heritage and the fear of the urges that come from it, the camaraderie and bonds that only adventures in a dangerous world can forge.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

- Gather between 3 and 5 people, including you.
- Print the **character sheets** that you will find attached to this Quickstart, or that you can download at **horribleguild.com**.
- Keep something handy for taking notes, like paper, eraser, and pencils, or electronic devices.
- Procure a few **polyhedral dice** or a dice-rolling app. Ideally, you should have 3 six-sided dice (d6), 3 eight-sided dice (d8), 3 ten-sided dice (d10), and 1 twelve-sided die (d12).



What is Vileborn?

It is a role-playing game

VILEBORN is a collaborative storytelling game. It's perfect for those who enjoy role-playing games with intuitive yet deep rules systems. Despite its dark themes, VILEBORN isn't necessarily about a descent into corruption. Instead, it's a game about characters exploring their darker sides to discover, for better or worse, their true selves and what sets them apart.

It is a game because

There are rules to follow; though they are few and straightforward. You'll refer to your character sheet, which describes the character you embody, and roll dice to determine the outcomes of important actions in the story.

It is role-playing because

As you play, you'll step into the shoes of the protagonists of this story. You'll adopt their perspectives, make decisions on their behalf, develop their personalities, define their goals, and describe their actions.

It's the game for you if

You enjoy nobledark coming-of-age novels. You love adventurous, character-focused RPGs. You want to narrate memorable stories with your fellow players, without pressure and anxiety about your performance.



INTRODUCTION

THE END AND THE BEGINNING

*"You said that you handed me over to the Order to protect me.
Admit it: you did it because you were afraid of me."*

- Antoine Lecourt, Vileborn



A PERFECT STORM

Egas Empire,

Year 1498 of the Redeemer calendar.

Five years have passed since darkness shrouded the skies above Egas, plunging the Empire into an unprecedented crisis. Temperatures are plummeting, food is scarce, and the reviled roam freely. Vampires, fallen, shapeshifters — every creature of darkness has crawled out of its lair, eager to seize power in these days of waning sunlight.

You are vileborn: half human, half reviled. Mere children when your corrupted heritage manifested itself, your lives were irrevocably changed, tearing you from those you loved. The Luminarian Church, the Empire's spiritual guide, now fuels a wave of moral fervor, inciting the world to hunt and persecute you in the name of faith.

Desperate for a weapon in the war against the reviled, the Empress of Egas defied the Church and issued the *Lex Umbræ*, a decree conscripting all vileborn into the Order of Dusk — an ancient society sworn to protect the Empire.

You are the first vileborn enlisted into the Order of Dusk.
You stand at the center of a growing rift between Church and Empire.
You are at odds with your nature, feared and despised by all.
What will you do with the darkness that dwells within you?



LEX UMBRÆ

IMPERIAL DECREE OF MERCY FOR THE VILEBORN

Victraine de Valois, First of her name, Empress of Egas, Queen of Valois, thrice blessed by the grace of Saint Aurélie,

Hereby grants each and every vileborn the opportunity to absolve themselves of their birth sin and dark heritage by dedicating their lives to service within the Order of Dusk.

All Vileborn are commanded to surrender to the Imperial Authority, where they shall be granted amnesty and safe passage to the House of the Order.

Trials and summary executions of Vileborn are henceforth forbidden. Any Vileborn who deserts or resists conscription will be put to death.





WHO YOU ARE

VILEBORN

*Young adults with a dark heritage,
in a world that both despises and needs you.*

TOUCHED BY DARKNESS

Your dark heritage awakened with the advent of the darkness, granting you mysterious powers and overwhelming urges. Each of you experiences something different: a thirst for blood, an affinity for the realm of the dead, a feral urge to hunt, or a connection to the shadows. While many claim to know your true nature, the origins of the vileborn remain a mystery; it's up to you to uncover the truth.

YOUNG ENOUGH, OLD ENOUGH

Your childhood ended as you witnessed the world crumble, shattering the convictions of your parents. Your adolescence was spent watching children grow, blissfully unaware of the world that existed before darkness consumed it. You carry the weight of the past, yet you are ready to adapt and transform.

A NECESSARY EVIL

The Empire offers you immunity in exchange for lifelong service among the ranks of the Order of Dusk, a society with a long history of devotion to the Luminarian Church and the protection of the Empire. You are given this choice solely because you are deemed a powerful weapon in the war against the reviled.

A shattered world, fractured families where you don't belong, mentors who seek to mold you to their will, and dark urges that both tempt and terrify you. These elements create good hooks for exploring generational conflict and weaving tales of personal growth and self-discovery.

WHERE YOU ARE

INTO DARKNESS

*A world ravaged by a crisis
that the adults around you are powerless to confront.*

DARKNESS GATHERS IN THE SKY

In the beginning it was just a faint haze. Your parents reassured you, claiming it was a fleeting phenomenon. Yet, the shadows persisted, growing and weakening the sun's light. If this continues, only darkness will remain.

DARKNESS WALKS AMONG US

They are called the reviled. Vampires, shapeshifters, fallen: the children of darkness are crawling out of their lairs to claim what was once daylight. Early experiments with gunpowder-based weapons are proving insufficient to stop them; this war cannot be won with armies alone.

DARKNESS POISONS PEOPLE'S HEARTS

Some seek solace in the moral teachings of the Luminarian Church, while others succumb to wretchedness in order to survive: they steal, murder, and exploit the latest experiments in artificial lighting, powered by the light stolen from the eyes of the dying.

VILEBORN's setting is designed to evoke familiar elements and folklore from our world. Immersing yourself in VILEBORN will thus be intuitive and immediate, allowing you to explore the aspects of the game that most intrigue you and make them your own.





THE PILLARS OF VILEBORN

Change, Conflict, and Adventure: these three pillars form the vibrant core of VILEBORN. Keep them in mind and follow the rules to unlock the full potential of this game!

CHANGE

The world has changed, whether you like it or not: shape it with your choices! Your dark heritage has awakened: dare to explore its depths! The balance of power teeters on the brink: test its limits!





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CONFLICT

The threat of the reviled grows ever stronger. The Order of Dusk, devoted to the Church yet serving the Empire, is torn by internal tensions after enlisting vileborn like you. Your dark heritage both tempts and frightens you. Bring these conflicts into play!

ADVENTURE

Accomplish memorable feats, confront terrifying threats, and ultimately forge your own truth, defying the constraints imposed upon you. Create unique bonds, surpass your limits, and find out who you truly are.

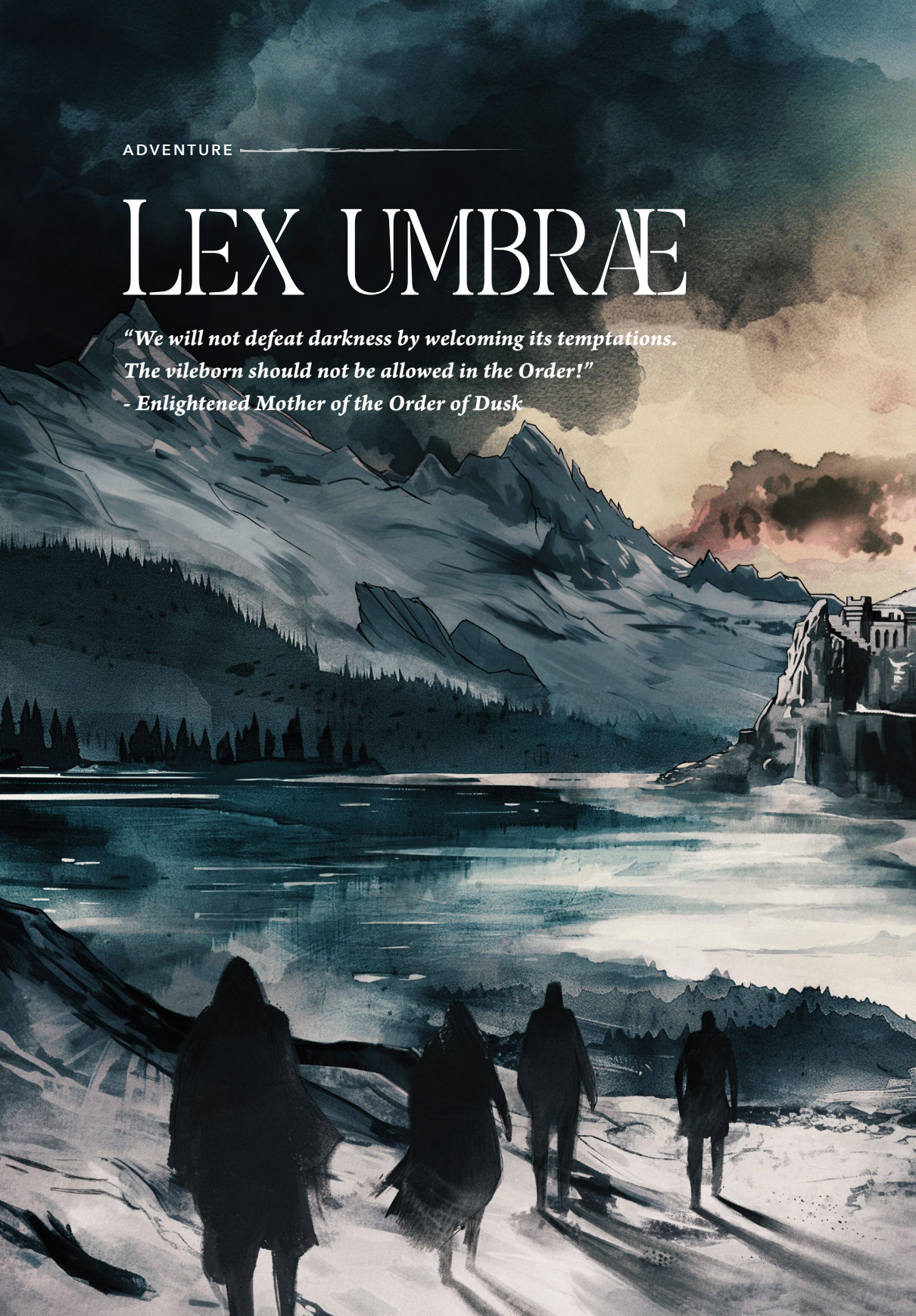
ADVENTURE

LEX UMBRAE

"We will not defeat darkness by welcoming its temptations.

The vileborn should not be allowed in the Order!"

- Enlightened Mother of the Order of Dusk





PICK YOUR ROLE

*One of you will play the Darkness,
everybody else will play a Vileborn.*

IF YOU PLAY THE DARKNESS

- Thoroughly read this entire manual before playing.
- Read some sections of this manual aloud to the group.
- Portray all characters encountered by the Vileborn, emphasizing their personalities, distinctive traits, and goals.
- Bring the world around the Vileborn to life, enriching the descriptions and situations provided in this adventure.
- Support the players and give them space to express themselves.
- Challenge each Vileborn to highlight their importance in the story and inspire all players.

The complete VILEBORN rulebook will provide comprehensive tools to create original stories, unique scenarios, and memorable characters. To facilitate learning, this adventure features a pre-set structure designed to gradually familiarize you with the game mechanics.



IF YOU PLAY A VILEBORN

- Choose and play one of the four pre-generated Vileborn characters presented in the following pages.
- Engage with your Vileborn, test their limits, and explore their **DARK HERITAGE**.
- Customize your Vileborn by adding details about their **BACKGROUND**, **PERSONALITY**, **TRAINING**, and **MOTIVES**.
- Collaborate with the group and allow space for other players to contribute
- Embrace the **SUCCESSES** and **COMPLICATIONS** your Vileborn encounters, as they are both crucial for creating a compelling narrative.

The complete VILEBORN rulebook will enable you to create unique Vileborn characters tailored to your preferences. To facilitate learning, this adventure includes four pre-generated Vileborn character sheets optimized for learning how to play one step at a time.

WILD ROUGH FURIOUS LUNATIC BEAST



"The whole gang feared her! She was a wild, rough, furious, lunatic beast."

- Confession of Seraf, an outlaw

CELENE CERVANTES

“Learn to hunt or prepare to run.”

BACKGROUND

Celene grew up among outlaws. Her character was forged by hardship, and she learned to never show weakness. She's fiercely loyal to her gang and determined to confront the horrors of the unforgiving world that raised her.

DARK HERITAGE

Celene is a Clawshrouder. Since the advent of darkness, she has grappled with a nightly urge to hunt. Her sense of smell has sharpened, her body has become more resilient, and the predator within her constantly yearns for fresh prey.

PLAY CELENE IF...

- You want to defend your group by fighting tooth and nail.
- You want to challenge those who see you as merely a savage beast.
- You want to learn to control the primal call of the hunt.

RAPHAËL DE NORMANTE

"All ends in blood."

BACKGROUND

Raphaël hails from nobility. Firstborn of the Duke of Normante, he has learned to wield authority and shield himself from his cold and ruthless father. Raphaël's bravery and conflictual relationship with his father have often gotten him into trouble.

DARK HERITAGE

Raphaël is a Bloodsinger. Since the advent of darkness, the scent of human blood both intoxicates and lures him. He possesses preternatural charisma and can unleash the power within his own blood, even at the risk of his human body.

PLAY RAPHAËL IF...

- You want to assert yourself and unleash the fury within you.
- You want to grapple with the privilege and burden of your noble name.
- You want to confront the dark allure of bloodlust.

STUPID
SPOILED
BLOOD
SUCKING
PARASITE



*"I hand over to you my firstborn: a stupid,
spoiled, blood-sucking parasite."*

—Excerpt from a letter by the Duke of Normante



*"A true devotee... and an unholy
monster corrupted by the shadows."
- Excerpt from the diaries
of Mother Aléne*



LUCIEN DEIACROIX

“Every shadow is born out of light.”

BACKGROUND

Lucien grew up surrounded by believers. The rigor of a life dedicated to faith and the study of sacred texts sharpened his mind and strengthened his resolve. Among the Luminarian Church's followers, Lucien is the most unlikely, and undoubtedly the most feared and despised.

DARK HERITAGE

Lucien is a Shadowdancer. For him, shadows are living entities: he can communicate with them, shape them, and he understands their icy coldness and devouring hunger. Terror accompanies Lucien's every step, both the fear he instills in others and what he feels for himself.

PLAY LUCIEN IF...

- You want to aid your group by manipulating the shadows around you.
- You want to play a character torn between faith and reason.
- You want to confront the whispers of the terror-hungry shadows.

THALIA SEULEFILLE

"Death is a door to another life."

BACKGROUND

Thalia grew up as an orphan. She relied solely on her resourcefulness to survive on the streets of Arenbourg. A life of hardship forged her character, making her far stronger than she appears.

DARK HERITAGE

Thalia is a Ghostwalker. Since the advent of darkness, the veil between life and death has thinned for Thalia. She can commune with the afterlife and summon spirits into the world of the living — but this has made her indifferent to the value of life.

PLAY THALIA IF...

- You want to discover the truths that the spirits of the dead can reveal.
- You want to portray a self-reliant person capable of great strength.
- You want to seek balance between the world of the living and the dead.

WRETCHED
JINX
DEAD
WOMAN
WALKING

*"I am glad that wretched jinx is gone.
She looked like a dead woman walking."
—A resident of Arenbourg*

LEX UMBRÆ

An adventure designed to be played in two sessions.

FIRST SESSION

While playing this session, you will familiarize yourself with the basics of the game. You will follow a narrative optimized to introduce the rules step by step. This session is suitable for an introductory one shot and includes the first four SCENES of the adventure:

- **Prologue:** in which you will learn how to face TESTS.
- **On the Road:** in which you will customize your Vileborn and define your MOTIVES.
- **Ordeal:** in which you will use your DARK HERITAGE and face a CHALLENGE.
- **Sacrament:** in which you will discover what reverie is.

SECOND SESSION

This session will allow you to put into practice what you have previously learned and to delve deeper into some advanced rules. It includes the last three SCENES of the adventure:

- **Training:** in which you will create BONDS.
- **Investigation:** in which you will apply what you have learned.
- **On the Hunt:** in which you will conclude this adventure.

PLAYING LEX UMBRÆ

Lex Umræ is designed to introduce and explain the rules one step at a time; however, if you are experienced role-players and prefer a more fluid style of play, you may read all the rules in advance and play the adventure more freely.

THALIA SEULEFILLE

"Death is a door to another life"

FORCE d6

WILLPOWER d8

INFLUENCE d6

REASON d8

PRECISION d8

PERSONALITY

- Shrewd
- Indifferent

CONDITIONS

- Anger**
-1 to reason, precision and subterfuge rolls
- Exhaustion**
-1 to force, willpower and influence rolls
- Shame**
You cannot use your **PERSONALITY**
- Fear**
You cannot use your **TRAINING**
- Insecurity**
You cannot use your **MOTIVES**

WOUNDS

-
-
-

BACKGROUND

You were raised among believers
You can mark shame to get a willpower SUCCESS

MOTIVES

Aspiration
Mark it to heal a WOUND

Duty
Mark it to heal a CONDITION

RESOURCES

A Luminarian pendant
When interacting with Luminarian believers, you roll with +1

LUCIEN DELACROIX

"Every shadow is born out of light"

FORCE d6

WILLPOWER d10

INFLUENCE d8

REASON d8

PRECISION d6

SUBTERFUGE d8

PERSONALITY

- Honest
- Intense

CONDITIONS

- Anger**
-1 to reason, precision and subterfuge rolls
- Exhaustion**
-1 to force, willpower and influence rolls
- Shame**
You cannot use your **PERSONALITY**
- Fear**
You cannot use your **TRAINING**
- Insecurity**
You cannot use your **MOTIVES**

WOUNDS

-
-
-

Out of play
You cannot act nor face TESTS

BACKGROUND

You were raised among believers
You can mark shame to get a willpower SUCCESS

MOTIVES

Aspiration
Mark it to heal a WOUND

Duty
Mark it to heal a CONDITION

RESOURCES

A Luminarian pendant
When interacting with Luminarian believers, you roll with +1

DARK HERITAGE

Shadowdancer

Mark your DARK HERITAGE and face a TEST that involves darkness to explore the mysterious powers that it grants. The darkness die create a COMPLICATION if you roll 9+ with one mark, 6+ with two, and 3+ with three.

Examples: give life and texture to your shadow, explore the non-places hidden in the shadows, weave shadows around you

GIFT

Cloak of shadows

Shroud a target in shadows, concealing them from sight until they draw attention to themselves.

However the shadows are hungry: Roll 1d6; if you roll 1, the target suffers a WOUND.

URGES

You return to terrorise people.

When you do so, remove all marks from DARK HERITAGE and GIFTS.

THE CHARACTER SHEET

This is a preview of the character sheets that you will learn to use throughout the adventure. Around the image of each Vileborn you will find their **APPROACHES** (top), **PERSONALITY** (left), and **TRAINING** (right). To the far left are **CONDITIONS** and **WOUNDS**; to the far right are **BACKGROUND**, **MOTIVES**, and **RESOURCES**. At the bottom you can find their **DARK HERITAGE**, **GIFTS**, and **URGES**.

PROLOGUE

Find out how to face a TEST.

Darkness, address the group and read aloud or paraphrase:

Our story begins on a bleak afternoon: the sky is a bruised tapestry of dark clouds, oppressed by the encroaching darkness. Igritte, the Warden of Dusk who recruited you less than a week ago, appears troubled. "We'll have to make do," she says, looking at the abandoned hunting hut you stumbled upon in the woods.

They are pursuing you, you're certain: men and women consumed by hatred for your kind, zealots driven by religious fervor, determined to purge Egas of your existence. The light is fading, and time is running out.

Now ask each Vileborn to describe themselves as they dismount from Igritte's cart. You have just set up a SCENE! After listening to your players' answers, read aloud or paraphrase:

"Help me secure this place," Igritte orders, running a hand along the rotting wooden walls of the building. "Cover our tracks, bolster our defenses, and set some traps if necessary. Avoid using your gifts; they'll only attract more darkness and piss off the assholes chasing us. I'd rather deter them than fight them head-on."

Darkness, ask each Vileborn what they do to help Igritte. It's time for a TEST!

TESTS

TESTS are used to determine if a Vileborn SUCCEEDS in their goals and whether they encounter COMPLICATIONS.

Vileborn, when you face a TEST:

1

Describe how you act and choose the most suitable **APPROACH** among **force, willpower, influence, reason, precision, and subterfuge**.

"I try to create a false trail to lead them away from us: I use Subterfuge!"

2

Roll 1 to 3 dice of the size of your chosen **APPROACH**.

1 base die granted by the **APPROACH**, +1 die if you use your **PERSONALITY**,
+1 die if you use your **TRAINING**.



*"I have a d8 for Subterfuge and I am 'shrewd', so I use my **PERSONALITY** but not my **TRAINING**. I roll 2d8!"*

3

Keep the die showing the highest result and compare it with the **DIFFICULTY** chosen by the Darkness (4 easy, 5 normal, 6 difficult, 7 very difficult).



*"The results of the dice roll are 2 and 5. I keep the 5, which equals the **DIFFICULTY**."*

4

If the result is above the **DIFFICULTY** target, you will narrate a **SUCCESS**.

If it is below, the Darkness will narrate a **COMPLICATION**.

If it is equal, you will both narrate.

"I create a false trail, which leads away towards the woods."

"In doing so, you notice strange claw marks: mark fear."

1 Choosing the **APPROACH**

Vileborn, on your character sheet, you will find six **APPROACHES**, each associated with a different die size (d6, d8, or d10) that represents your aptitude for that way of acting. When you face a test, choose the **APPROACH** that is most consistent with the action you described.

- **Force**: when you impose yourself violently and give your all.
- **Willpower**: when you summon your inner strength and push yourself over the limit.
- **Influence**: when you resort to words and the ability to persuade.
- **Reason**: when you use logic, knowledge, and analysis.
- **Precision**: when you act carefully or meticulously.
- **Subterfuge**: when you bypass the rules and play dirty.

*For example, observing an opponent to find their weak spot is a **reason TEST**, while reaching an agreement with a dignitary by conversing with her is an **influence TEST**.*



2 PERSONALITY and TRAINING

Vileborn, on your character sheet, under the APPROACHES, you will find some keywords: those on the left describe your PERSONALITY, those on the right your TRAINING.

- PERSONALITY is defined by adjectives, such as *Unsettling*, *Stubborn*, or *Intuitive*. You may bring your PERSONALITY into play if at least one of the words that describe it is related to the TEST.
- TRAINING is defined by verbs such as *Spying*, or by nouns such as *Hunt*. You can bring your TRAINING into play if at least one of the words that describe it is related to the TEST.

During a fight, you want to pick up your opponent and slam them violently against the wall. You are Shrewd, Cold, and Unsettling. None of these words is related to what you are doing, so you cannot bring your PERSONALITY into play. You are trained to Hide, Hunt, and Brawl. Brawl is related to what you are doing, so you can use your TRAINING.

When you face a TEST, you are the one to choose whether a word is related to it or not. Don't be afraid to describe actions that align with your PERSONALITY and TRAINING whenever you can. At the same time, don't overdo it: rolling lots of dice is less important than playing in a way that is relevant to the development of the story.

3 *Setting the DIFFICULTY*

Darkness, set the DIFFICULTY of a TEST based on how it is described, on the context in which it happens, and on any suggestions you find in the manual.

- 4 if it's **easy**.
- 5 if it's **normal**.
- 6 if it's **difficult**.
- 7 if it's **very difficult**.

*Opening a rudimentary lock is **easy** (4), breaking into the front door of a house is **normal** (5), unlocking a safety box is **difficult** (6), breaking into a vault is **very difficult** (7).*

If you believe that a TEST is **impossible**, don't hesitate to say so. This allows Vileborn to adapt the narrative and adjust their goals accordingly.

4 *Narrating the outcomes*

NARRATING A SUCCESS

Vileborn, you will narrate your SUCCESSES. You can do this in three ways:

- **Describe how you accomplish the goal of the TEST.**
- **Ask the Darkness to reveal a piece of information:** this option is particularly useful if you are investigating.
- **Remove a CONDITION or a WOUND, either yours or from another Vileborn.** Use this option only when you have declared this goal before facing the TEST.

NARRATING A COMPLICATION

Darkness, use COMPLICATIONS to liven up the story, without ever invalidating the SUCCESSES previously obtained during TESTS. You can play a COMPLICATION in three ways:

- **Impose a CONDITION** choosing among **anger**, **exhaustion**, **shame**, **fear**, and **insecurity**. The effects of the CONDITIONS are listed on the Vileborn character sheets, and it is up to the players to keep track of them.
- **Inflict a WOUND**. A WOUND can represent a physical, social, or emotional trauma. If a Vileborn has already suffered 3 WOUNDS and receives a fourth one, they are OUT OF PLAY (you'll see what that means on page 53).
- **Enliven the SCENE**, by narrating unwelcome developments, plot twists, or long-term consequences. This option has no mechanical effects, but is useful to develop the story.

With your SUCCESS, you lift your opponent and you slam them against the wall. You feel their bones creak and their breath rushing out of their lungs.

*With a COMPLICATION, the Darkness could give you the CONDITION **anger** due to the fury of the fight, inflict a WOUND on you after a well-placed kick by your opponent, or enliven the SCENE by having more enemies arrive.*

Each **Vileborn** has the last word when narrating SUCCESSES, while the **Darkness** has final authority when narrating COMPLICATIONS. However, you can always help each other out. When you narrate the outcomes of a TEST, feel free to ask for help and to accept ideas from anyone in the group.



Concluding the scene

Darkness, if at least two Vileborn got a SUCCESS in the previous TEST, they will be able to throw their pursuers off track. Read aloud or paraphrase:

As darkness envelops the forest, you hear hurried footsteps approaching the hunting hut. "Those bastards got away," a frustrated voice whispers.

"Hey, what's that?" someone shouts from a distance. At first, you fear you've been discovered, but then you hear alarmed cries and, peering through the boarded-up windows, you see the group fleeing in terror.

A sudden chill fills the air, and sinister hisses echo outside. The reviled have arrived, but they've been diverted, chasing your pursuers instead. You are safe, at least for tonight.

Otherwise, the group will be found. Read aloud or paraphrase:

As darkness envelops the forest, you realize that you have left too many tracks: "Come out, you wicked bastards!" a voice shouts, "or we will burn this shack to the ground!"

Then, a sudden chill fills the air, and sinister hisses echo outside. "Reviled! Run!" the pursuers scream. You hear wet and revolting sounds, punctuated by the screams of your pursuers and the terrified neighing of the horse you'd hidden in the barn.

Igritte grits her teeth, a mix of anger and guilt flashing in her eyes, but she gestures for you not to intervene. The reviled have come and while you're safe for now, they've butchered your pursuers and your horse.

This is an example of how the outcome of a TEST can influence the narrative in the short, medium, and long term. Traveling with or without a horse, being chased or not, could lead to your story developing in completely different ways.



ON THE ROAD

Define PERSONALITY, TRAINING, and MOTIVES.

Darkness, read aloud or paraphrase:

After a night spent at the hunting hut, Igritte guides you toward Mont Aurelie, the renowned fortress city and home of the Order of Dusk. Together, you traverse barren plains, somber woods, and crumbling villages.

As you gaze upon the enduring scars that darkness has inflicted on these lands, your thoughts turn to the past you are leaving behind. Each step takes you further away from home and the life you've lived so far.

Vileborn, it is time to find out something more about you! The time has come to define your **aspirations**, discover your **duty**, and enrich your **PERSONALITY** and **TRAINING**.

PLAYING IGRITTE

Igritte behaves like an older sister, strict but fair.

For most members of the Order, the vileborn are something to be despised, or exploited at best. But not for Igritte: she is a righteous but not a moralist Warden, gifted with a genuine and biting humor. She treats the characters fairly, without prejudice and never condescending. She is sorry that they were forced to enlist, but she sees enormous potential in them and wants to help them develop it.

Motives

Vileborn, **aspiration** and **duty** are MOTIVES that push you to give your best and help you get through difficult times. The two may be compatible, or diverge.

ASPIRATION

Aspiration represents your personal goal. If it is related to the situation you are facing, you can bring it into play and mark it to instantly heal a WOUND.

My aspiration is “I will protect Amelie” and I am facing a Vampire intent on killing her. I mark the box next to my aspiration, remove a WOUND, and narrate that, as I pop my dislocated shoulder back in place, I whisper, “Not today, leech.”

DUTY

Duty represents the task that the Order asks you to complete. If it is related to the situation you are facing, you can bring it into play and mark it to instantly heal a CONDITION.

My duty is to “Kill the Beast of Arenbourg”. I must go into its den, but I am marked by fear. I mark the box next to my duty, remove the CONDITION fear, and enter the lair.

RESTORING THE USE OF ASPIRATION AND DUTY

In this adventure, you can bring your **aspiration** and **duty** into play only once, but in the complete rulebook you will discover how to restore their use and evolve them over time.



Raphaël de Normante

You were born among the comforts of court life. Your father disowned you when he discovered your dark heritage.

How did your dark heritage manifest itself?

To answer, take inspiration from the GIFTS listed on your character sheet.

What do you remember about life at court?

Add to your PERSONALITY *Diplomatic, Cunning, Hedonist* — or make up your own.

Add to your TRAINING *History, Scheming, Leadership* — or make up your own.

What do you remember of when Igritte recruited you?

If you wish, invent and write down your **aspiration**.

Write down your current **duty**: *Complete your training.*



Thalia Seulefille

You grew up on the muddy streets of Arenbourg. Yours was a life of sacrifice and expedients.

How did your dark heritage manifest itself?

To answer, take inspiration from the GIFTS listed on your character sheet.

What has your life on the streets of Arenbourg taught you?

Add to your PERSONALITY *Quiet, Ruthless, Stubborn* — or make up your own.

Add to your TRAINING *Stealing, Hiding, Repairing* — or make up your own.

What do you remember of when Igritte recruited you?

If you wish, invent and write down your **aspiration**.

Write down your current **duty**: *Complete your training.*

Lucien Delacroix

*You spent your childhood in the rigor of a Luminarian monastery.
They tried to exorcise the shadow that lives inside you.*



How did your dark heritage manifest itself?

To answer, take inspiration from the GIFTS listed on your character sheet.

What aspects of your life in the monastery have left a mark on you?

Add to your PERSONALITY *Believer, Skeptical, Selfless* — or make up your own.

Add to your TRAINING *Enduring, History, Evangelizing* — or make up your own.

What do you remember of when Igritte recruited you?

If you wish, invent and write down your **aspiration**.

Write down your current **duty**: *Complete your training.*

Celene Cervantes

*You have lived a life of poaching. On your worst days
you struggled to tell a deer from a human.*



How did your dark heritage manifest itself?

To answer, take inspiration from the GIFTS listed on your character sheet.

How did you live your life as an outlaw?

Add to your PERSONALITY *Opportunist, Violent, Honorable* — or make up your own.

Add to your TRAINING *Traps, Threatening, Poisons* — or make up your own.

What do you remember of when Igritte recruited you?

If you wish, invent and write down your **aspiration**.

Write down your current **duty**: *Complete your training.*

Narrating the journey

Vileborn, now that you have explored who you are, briefly describe how you behave during the journey; what is your attitude and your way of acting. If you wish, share what you have written on your character sheet.

Darkness, after each Vileborn has updated their character sheet and shared the information they wish, read aloud or paraphrase:

Under a sky heavy with dark clouds, you finally reach Mont Aurelie, the fortress city of the Order of Dusk. Perched atop a rock in the middle of a frozen lake, it looms over you like a promise.

Igritte guides you through the citadel's narrow streets, where the eyes of inhabitants and fellow recruits fall upon you: some curious, some wary, and others filled with disdain.

After ascending the citadel, Igritte pauses before the imposing cathedral dedicated to Saint Aurélie. "I hate to be the bearer of bad news," she says with a wistful smile, "but there's no time for a well-deserved rest or nourishment. You will face your ordeal immediately, where it will be determined if you are worthy of joining the Order of Dusk." Her gaze is clouded with guilt as she leans in to whisper: "If you have questions to ask me, ask them now. Once you enter, I won't be able to help you."

Darkness, if the Vileborn ask questions, use the information that you will find on the next page to answer. There is no need to list everything on the page, only share details when the Vileborn are curious.

THREE AUTHORITIES WILL BE PRESENT AT THE TEST

- **The Enlightened Mother**, the spiritual guide of the Order who thinks that admitting vileborn into its ranks is an insult to the faith.
- **The Imperial Envoy**, sent by the Empress to ensure that each vileborn is trained swiftly and with the best resources.
- **The Grand Master**, the highest-ranking member in the Order: he is a just and wise veteran, intent on reconciling the differences between Church and Empire.

YOU ARE THE FIRST VILEBORN EVER RECRUITED

No Vileborn has ever faced this test before. After the Lex Umbrae was issued, Igritte volunteered to find a group of Vileborn to train: she has great faith in the characters' skills and believes that, if trained in the right way, they could make a difference.

THE INITIATION WILL BE BLOODY

Igritte is forbidden to reveal details about the trial, but will tell the characters to expect the worst and give it everything they have.

Concluding the scene

Darkness, read aloud or paraphrase:

Igritte casts an oblique glance at you. "Your dark heritage is your most powerful weapon," she tells you. "Make use of it, for this test will be as merciless as the reviled we will train you to hunt." After that, she guides you inside the cathedral.

This is an important moment! Before playing the next SCENE, it's time to find out what happens when darkness comes into play and how your DARK HERITAGES work.

When darkness comes into play

Darkness, when a Vileborn interacts with the darkness, you will have to roll a special die that will make everything more dangerous and interesting. It is the only d12 of the whole game, and it's called the **darkness die**. Roll the darkness die when:

- A Vileborn faces a TEST in which they explore their DARK HERITAGE (you will find more details in the next few pages).
- A Vileborn faces a TEST in which they interact with a reviled or with the darkness in any of its forms.
- The manual explicitly states to do so.

HOW TO USE THE DARKNESS DIE

Rolling the darkness die adds to the normal flow of a TEST. While a Vileborn faces the TEST as usual, follow these rules:

- Roll the darkness die at the same time as the Vileborn rolls their dice.
- Check the result of the darkness die while the Vileborn checks the result of their dice.
- Narrate the outcome of the darkness die in addition to any SUCCESSES and COMPLICATIONS generated by the Vileborn's dice roll.

CHECKING THE RESULTS OF THE DARKNESS DIE

Whenever a Vileborn explores their DARK HERITAGE, faces a reviled, or anytime the manual specifies to roll the darkness die, you will always find precise instructions on how to check and narrate its outcome.

With your SUCCESS, your Silversteel blade tears through the Shapeshifter's flesh, but the darkness die just rolled a 6! A sound halfway between a scream and a growl comes out of its throat: pass a normal (5) willpower TEST or mark the CONDITION fear.

IMPROVISING THE RESULTS OF THE DARKNESS DIE

Darkness, during the game you may decide to roll the darkness die without explicit instructions from the manual. These are exceptions, in which you decide to improvise based on your sensibility and what is happening in the SCENE.

In these cases, simply compare the result of the darkness die to an imaginary intensity scale. The more powerful the darkness, the more likely the darkness die will generate a single COMPLICATION that you will narrate in addition to the result of the dice rolled by the Vileborn.

The darkness die will create a COMPLICATION:

- With a result of 9 or more if the darkness is weak
- With a result of 6 or more if the darkness is normal
- With a result of 3 or more if the darkness is strong

*A Vileborn grabs a sword which is said to have slaughtered countless reviled and to still retain the memories of their deaths. As soon as they place their hands on the hilt of the sword, the Vileborn is assailed by countless memories of violence and must face a **normal (5) willpower TEST** to keep them at bay. You decide to roll the darkness die to emphasize the moment.*

*You reckon the echoes of darkness to be weak, so the darkness die will create a COMPLICATION with a result of 9 or more. The Vileborn rolls a 5, a SUCCESS and a COMPLICATION. The darkness die rolls a 10, a COMPLICATION. The Vileborn imposes their will on the echoes, which fall silent. However, with two COMPLICATIONS, they suffer **fear and insecurity**. The memories now press at the edge of their mind: was holding the sword a wise idea?*

Dark Heritages

Vileborn, your DARK HERITAGE describes your connection to darkness. It is located in the bottom part of your character sheet, under the character's portrait.

By exploring your DARK HERITAGE, you'll be able to accomplish impossible feats for a normal human being and discover more about your true nature.

When you explore your DARK HERITAGE, you must face a TEST involving darkness. Follow these instructions:

- Mark one of the boxes just under the name of your DARK HERITAGE.
- Take inspiration from the list of suggestions from your DARK HERITAGE to state what you try to do.
- Face a TEST in which the Darkness will roll the darkness die, which will cause a COMPLICATION on 9+ with one mark, 6+ with two marks, and 3+ with three marks. As usual, the APPROACH you will choose and the DIFFICULTY of the TEST depend on what you describe and on the situation around you.
- Share any SUCCESSES to narrate how you manage to awaken and give form to the power hidden inside you.
- Let the Darkness tell you about any COMPLICATIONS to discover the dramatic and exciting consequences of your actions.

*Raphaël is chasing after an outlaw. Even if wounded, the fugitive is outrunning Raphaël who, determined not to let him escape, faces a TEST to focus on the smell of his blood and follow its trail. Raphaël marks the first box of his DARK HERITAGE and faces a **difficult (6) precision TEST**. He rolls a 7, a **SUCCESS**. The result of the darkness die is 10, a **COMPLICATION**. Raphaël clearly identifies the intoxicating aroma of the fugitive's blood, but the Darkness narrates that his canines visibly lengthen, his eyes become red, and the people he passes on the street flee in horror at the sight of him. Raphaël suffers **shame**.*

Gifts

Vileborn, GIFTS are aspects of your DARK HERITAGE that you have already explored and mastered. Each GIFT grants you a unique power, which you can activate by marking the box under its title.

Activating a GIFT never requires a TEST: just mark the box under the GIFT to instantly activate its effects (you can also do it while you are facing a TEST). Each GIFT has a positive effect and a small negative effect, which makes it interesting and multifaceted.

*One of Raphaël's GIFTS is that he can hear a subject's heartbeat and deduce whether they are telling the truth. However, focusing on the blood distracts him: as long as the GIFT is marked, Raphaël has a -1 modifier on **precision TEST** die rolls. A small price to pay for such an advantage.*

Urges

At the bottom of your character sheet, you will find an URGE: an impulse that you feel growing inside you when you mark the boxes of your DARK HERITAGE or your GIFTS. As you add marks, narrate how you feel your URGE becoming stronger: playing out this aspect of yourself will greatly enrich the story.

When you give in to your URGE, clear all the marks on your DARK HERITAGE and GIFTS. Succumbing to your URGE should always be a dramatic moment of strong inner conflict.

Raphaël has marked all the boxes above the description of his DARK HERITAGE and one of the boxes of his GIFTS: the thirst screams inside him. Drinking human blood would placate his URGE and allow him to clear all marks, but he is disgusted by the idea of giving in to his bloodthirst.

ORDEAL

Face a **CHALLENGE** and use your **DARK HERITAGE**.

Darkness, address the group and read aloud or paraphrase:

The austere Cathedral of Mont Aurelie is dimly lit by the filtered light of rose windows and flickering candles, the air heavy with incense. Igritte steps to the side, as three figures who radiate authority loom over you.

In the center, the Grand Master of the Order calmly observes you. He looks like a veteran soldier, wise and stern. His scars hint at a bloody past, while his dominant position underscores that he is the highest authority here.

A step below and to his right stands the Enlightened Mother of the Order, silent as a secret. Her white robes and golden mask, in which you see your own distorted reflection, create an unsettling aura. Her posture exudes an air of unwavering judgment.

On the opposite side, the Imperial Envoy stands level with the Enlightened Mother, his eyes fixed on her with the cunning of a fox. His ornate attire seems out of place in this stark setting. He embodies imperial power and the Lex Umbræ.

Darkness, tell the group that the Grand Master thanks each of them for being there after the long journey, and asks them to introduce themselves. As each Vileborn speaks, have the Enlightened Mother interject during the conversation. The Enlightened Mother believes that the presence of the Vileborn within the Order is an insult to the precepts of the Luminarian Church, which preaches a total rejection of any form of darkness.



Whenever she has the opportunity, the Enlightened Mother will press the Vileborn by asking how they plan to serve the Order, given that their own presence is an insult to its traditions. Listen to their answers and let them face TESTS to make their opinion count. If you find it interesting, have the Imperial Envoy intervene in their defense with some unfortunate expressions, such as: “Enlightened Mother, even worthless creatures like these can serve a higher purpose!” then read:

The Grand Master impatiently raises a hand: “We have talked enough, the time has come for you to face your initiation.” His gaze guides you towards Igritte, who now stands before you, her eyes as cold as the steel of the sword she holds in her hand.

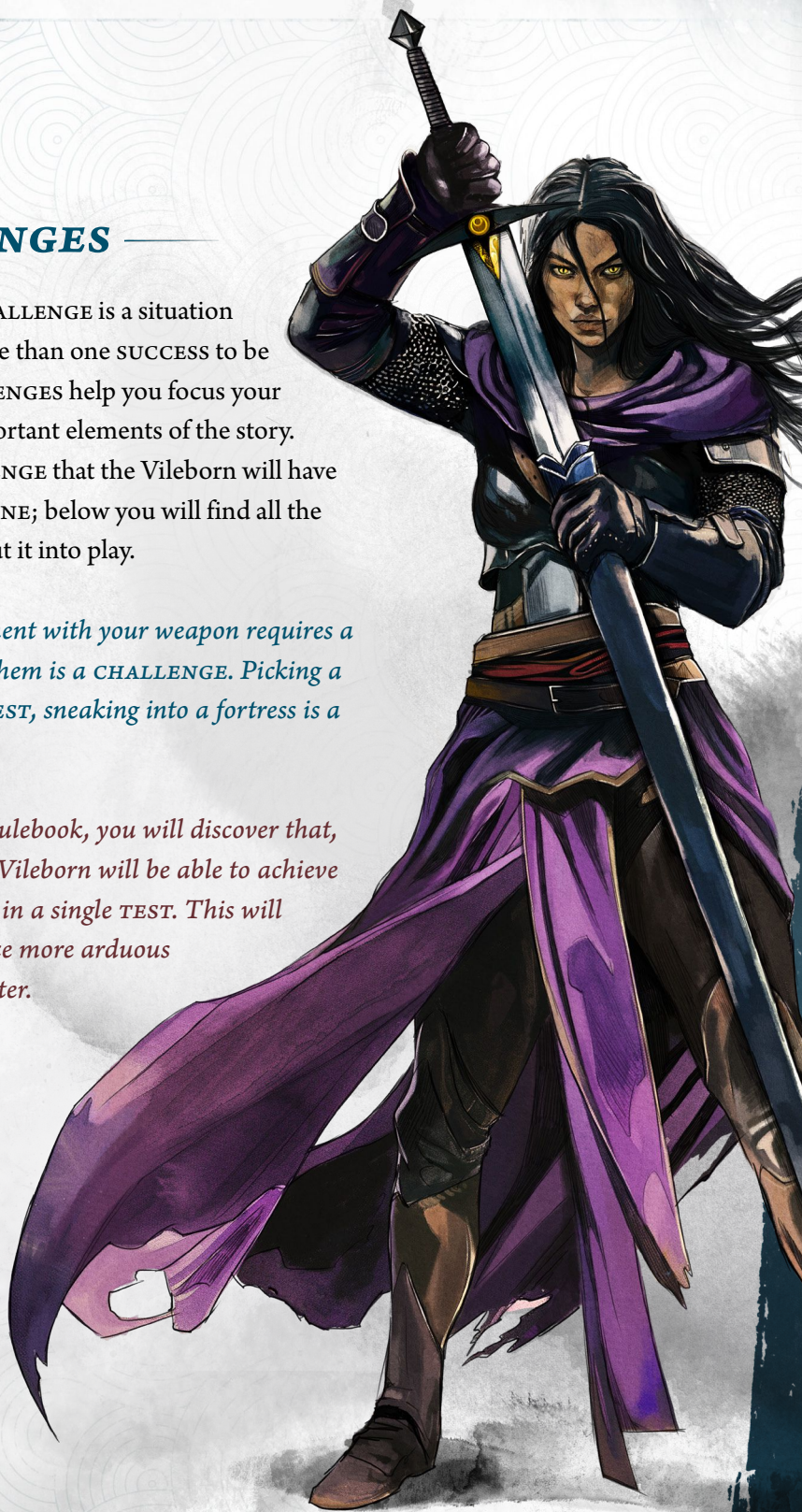
Vileborn, it's time to face a CHALLENGE!

CHALLENGES

Darkness, a CHALLENGE is a situation that requires more than one SUCCESS to be resolved. CHALLENGES help you focus your attention on important elements of the story. Read the CHALLENGE that the Vileborn will have to face in this SCENE; below you will find all the instructions to put it into play.

Hitting an opponent with your weapon requires a TEST, defeating them is a CHALLENGE. Picking a lock requires a TEST, sneaking into a fortress is a CHALLENGE.

In the complete rulebook, you will discover that, as they grow up, Vileborn will be able to achieve more SUCCESSES in a single TEST. This will allow them to face more arduous CHALLENGES faster.



IGRITTE

Standing up to Igritte long enough to pass the initiation requires 5 SUCCESSES.



DESCRIPTION

- Facing Igritte is **difficult** (6), dissuading her from fighting is **impossible**.
- On the 3rd **SUCCESS**, Igritte reveals herself as a vileborn and transforms into a creature halfway between a woman and a panther; fighting against her now becomes **very difficult** (7) and every **TEST** against her will now include darkness.

COMPLICATIONS

- Igritte hits you with her sword or claws; mark a **WOUND**.
- You see a homicidal light in Igritte's eyes; mark **fear**.
- Igritte chases you as fast as a snake; mark **exhaustion**.
- The gaze of the Enlightened Mother weighs on you; mark **shame**.
- The Imperial Envoy applauds with amusement; mark **anger**.

DARKNESS DIE

*Roll the d12 for each **TEST** after Igritte has transformed. If you roll 6+, invent a **COMPLICATION** or play out one of the following:*

- 6+ A sound halfway between a scream and a growl comes out of Igritte's throat; all of you must pass a **normal** (5) **willpower** **TEST** or mark **fear**.
- 9+ Igritte throws you with astonishing force against one of your companions; you hear your bones creak and you both mark a **WOUND**.
- 12 Igritte is crushing you in her jaws; mark a **WOUND**. Furthermore, you cannot move unless you pass a **difficult** (6) **TEST** to free yourself.

How to narrate a CHALLENGE

Darkness, below you will find some advice on how to run a CHALLENGE.

Let's say that you are narrating a CHALLENGE where the Vileborn are trying to bypass guards to sneak into an enemy fortress.

Start the CHALLENGE by inviting the Vileborn to act.

The entrance is beyond the garden, which is swarming with guards. Soon they will close the gate for the night. What do you do?

Have the Vileborn take turns and make sure each of them faces a TEST before starting a new turn.

Lucien, wait: everyone has acted except Celene. Before you tell me what else you want to do, let's ask Celene if she wants to do something.

Keep track of SUCCESSES and use them to narrate their progress.

When marking the third box out of six, tell them: "The entrance door is in sight, but still far: you are about halfway there!"

If the narration stalls, get it moving again and request a TEST.

You've been still for too long, and a guard passes right by where you are crouching. What do you do to avoid being discovered?

Never invalidate previous SUCCESSES; build on COMPLICATIONS.

You stunned the guard before they could raise the alarm, gaining some time. But in a few minutes, the other guards will start wondering where they went.

Draw inspiration from the suggested DIFFICULTIES and COMPLICATIONS, but remember you are always free to invent.

*Sneaking unseen through the bushes is **normal** (5), but since you just distracted the guards, now it's **easy** (4). Unfortunately, you encountered a **COMPLICATION**: you find yourself in a dead end. A guard, still unaware, blocks the only available escape route behind you. Mark **fear**.*

When a CHALLENGE contains instructions or rules, make sure to use them. They will help you make the CHALLENGE unique and memorable.

*You've collected the third **COMPLICATION**, and the guards become suspicious; from now on, every **subterfuge** TEST is **very difficult** (7).*

Out of play

Vileborn, when you face CHALLENGES and dangerous situations, you might suffer multiple WOUNDS or the same CONDITION multiple times.

- If you suffer a CONDITION that has been marked previously, mark a WOUND instead.
- If you have already suffered three WOUNDS and suffer another, mark the fourth box in the WOUNDS section and go OUT OF PLAY.

GOING OUT OF PLAY

Vileborn, when you mark the fourth box in the WOUNDS section, you go OUT OF PLAY. When you are OUT OF PLAY, you lose the ability to act, face TESTS, and, more generally, influence the SCENE.

Narratively speaking, being OUT OF PLAY is serious but not definitive, like losing consciousness, being thrown out of a noble hall, or becoming isolated from the rest of the group due to a collapse.

RETURNING TO PLAY

Vileborn, you RETURN TO PLAY when the SCENE concludes, or if another Vileborn rolls a SUCCESS to bring you back into play. When you RETURN TO PLAY, clear the OUT OF PLAY box, but keep all other CONDITIONS and WOUNDS you have suffered.

In VILEBORN, your fate cannot be sealed by an unlucky dice roll.

In coming-of-age novels, the death of a character is a defining moment, which marks the story in a dramatic way.

The complete rulebook will equip you with all the tools and guidance necessary to develop and close your narrative arc.

SACRAMENT

Learn what reverie is.

Darkness, if the Vileborn overcome the CHALLENGE with Igritte, read or paraphrase:

The Grand Master raises a hand and says: "That will be enough." Igritte immediately restrains her fury; she approaches him and kneels meekly, despite her monstrous appearance.

If instead at least two Vileborn are OUT OF PLAY, read or paraphrase:

The Grand Master raises a hand and says: "That will be enough." Igritte immediately restrains her fury, moving away from you.

Afterward, read or paraphrase:

The Grand Master produces an ornate pipe, lights the wick, and ignites it. A plume of dark smoke unfurls, carrying a scent of iron, aromatic herbs, and dark chocolate.

He offers the pipe to Igritte, who inhales deeply. Incredibly, you see her return to a human form and her wounds heal with unnatural speed.

Turning to you, the Grand Master explains: "This is reverie, the most important sacrament for the Wardens of Dusk. It allows us to heal every ailment and it keeps the darkness at bay." He then offers you the pipe.

Consuming Reverie

Vileborn, when you consume reverie, you instantly clear all marks from your GIFTS and your DARK HERITAGE; furthermore, you heal all WOUNDS you have suffered.

Closing the scene

Darkness, the Grand Master will reveal to the Vileborn that reverie is an alchemical mixture created with secret ingredients, the most important of which is the blood of the reviled. Once distilled, reverie can be ingested, smoked, drunk, or injected. Its effectiveness is incredible; for a long time, it has been the most precious sacrament of the Order of Dusk.

Reverie was initially created as a potent remedy for the grievous wounds sustained by the Wardens in battle. However, after discovering her Vileborn nature, Igritte realized that consuming reverie also appeased her turbulent urges. This was a revelation for her: Igritte sees reverie as a means to control her impulses while serving the Empire and safeguarding its future.

But is Reverie really the answer or is it just a palliative? What are its side effects? You will answer this question in the future.

This is a great time to conclude the first game session! You have familiarized yourself with all the basic rules and all the key elements of the setting. If you wish, play the following SCENES in a second session, so you can further experience what you have learned so far and explore the game system more in depth!



TRAINING

Discover something about your training and forge BONDS.

Darkness, in this interlude SCENE, describe in a few words some days of training within the Order. Read aloud or paraphrase:

The days following your initiation are a blur, so intense that they pass in a flash, yet so brutal that they feel like stretching on for weeks. The life you left behind fades into a distant memory, replaced by this intense and all-consuming new normality.

The recurring topic in every lesson is the reviled: how to defend against them, hunt them, and kill them. You quickly learn that combat prowess alone is not enough to defeat them.

To hunt a Vampire, mastery of courtly intrigue is as crucial as proper skill with a blade. Fighting a Shapeshifter requires strength, but also a deep understanding of nature's secrets. Alchemy and subterfuge are needed to unravel the Fae's tangled plots, meditation and prayer to counter the Shadows' insidious influence, sacred rites and exorcisms to placate the restless spirits of the Fallen.

The list of your duties is impressive. Endless study sessions in the most diverse fields alternate with bloody training in sword fighting.

Vileborn, which discipline calls to you most strongly?
Add a new trait to your TRAINING.

With dismay, you realize that the human recruits of the Order see the grueling training regimen you endure not as hardship, but as privilege.

Fueled by reverie, the Order subjects you to a pace that would shatter ordinary people. This constant use of the sacrament is only allowed to you, perhaps because the Empress ordered you to be trained quickly, or perhaps because the Order wants to prevent you from giving in to your urges. Whatever the reason, all this breeds resentment, not camaraderie.

During the lessons, you are strictly forbidden from using your gifts, and the older recruits relish the opportunity to humiliate you, picking on you harshly.

Officially, this restriction is meant to teach you all the aspects of a Warden's training, but you suspect that there is something else beneath the surface. Your mentors, for all their skill, harbor deep-seated prejudices. In their eyes, you are but a reflection of the very creatures you are being trained to destroy.

Vileborn, how do you navigate this situation?

Add a new trait to your PERSONALITY.

Closing the scene

Darkness, read aloud or paraphrase:

Igritte is the only one who seems to truly understand you. She doesn't interfere with your lessons, but she follows every aspect of your training, advising and supporting you.

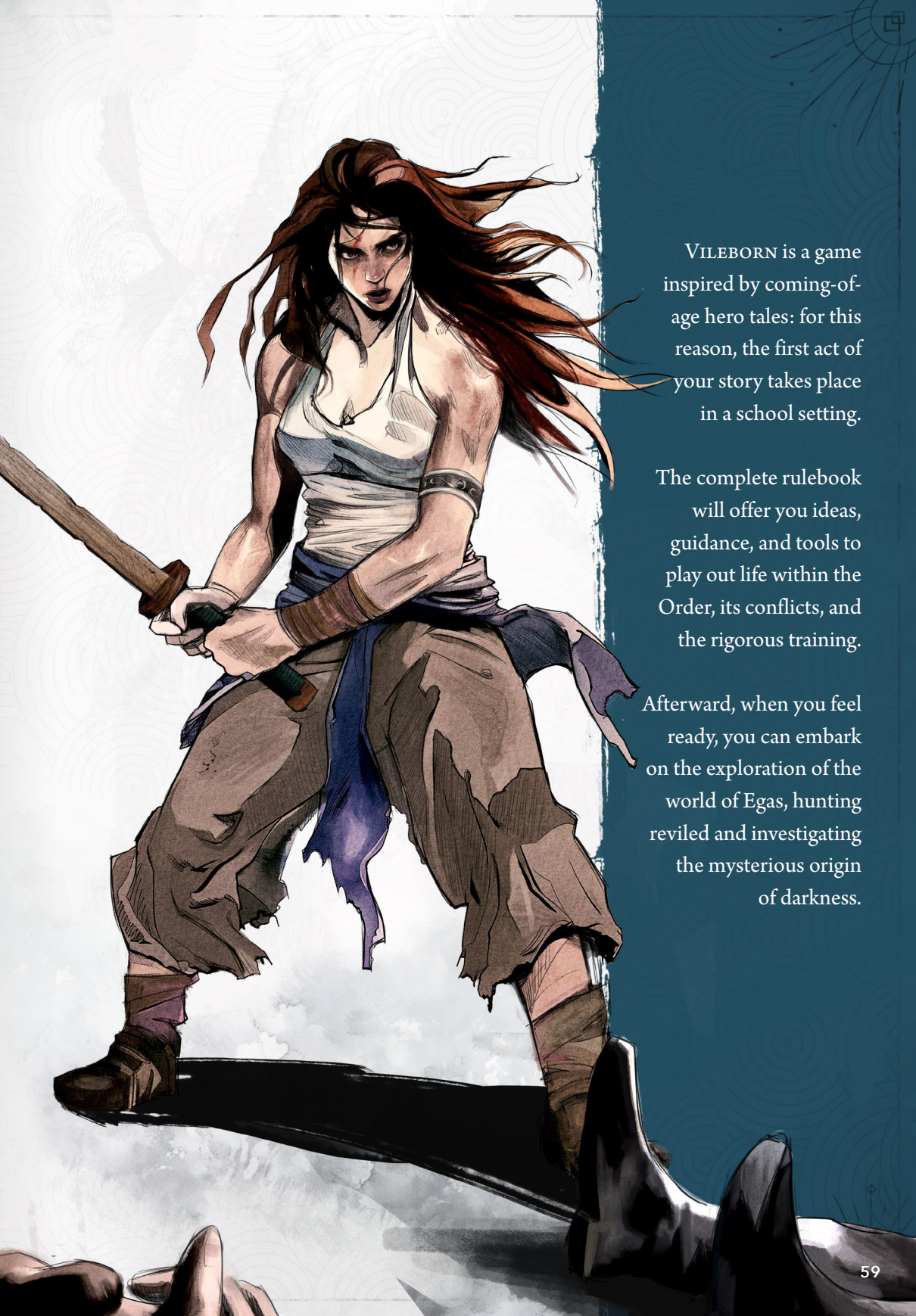
She spends time with you each day after the last meal, teaching you how to cope with your nature and how to explore your dark heritage. She candidly admits she doesn't have all the answers you need, but she's happy to share what she has learned.

Under her tutelage, your skills sharpen, and you begin to function as a team. Over time, the ties between you strengthen, and you realize that you are becoming a cohesive group.

Vileborn, the adventures you will experience together will forge BONDS between you. The complete rulebook will delve deeper into the many ways you can interact besides regular TESTS: helping each other, competing, collaborating towards a common goal, and even fighting each other.

Your BONDS of **affinity** and **rivalry** will grant you advantages when you interact with each other, giving you feedback on how your relationships will evolve over time. This quickstart will not explore this aspect in detail, but the complete rulebook will provide you with the tools to do so.

For now, simply describe whether you feel affinity or rivalry towards another Vileborn, and how you behave towards them.



VILEBORN is a game inspired by coming-of-age hero tales: for this reason, the first act of your story takes place in a school setting.

The complete rulebook will offer you ideas, guidance, and tools to play out life within the Order, its conflicts, and the rigorous training.

Afterward, when you feel ready, you can embark on the exploration of the world of Egas, hunting reviled and investigating the mysterious origin of darkness.

ON THE HUNT

Put into practice what you have learned so far.

The harsh training routine of the Vileborn is suddenly disrupted by a peculiar request from Igritte. The Warden suspects that Bastien Moreau, one of the Order's most promising cadets, has deserted. She asks the Vileborn to locate Bastien and bring him back to Mont Aurelie.

Bastien had been granted a single night's leave for a hunting trip, but two days have passed and he has not yet returned. Soon the Order will send someone to search for him, and Igritte fears the dire consequences that await Bastien if he really tried to abandon Mont Aurelie: the penalty for desertion is death.

As recruits, the Vileborn could conduct their investigation discreetly and unofficially; finding Bastien before the Order could mean saving his life.

Igritte will provide a brief description of Bastien: red hair, a scar over one eye, and a swallow tattooed on his shoulder. His difficult character drew him to a group of disreputable cadets: questioning them could reveal useful information.

Vileborn, it's time to investigate Bastien's disappearance!



Bastien's secret

Darkness, Bastien harbors a secret: just like the protagonists of our story, he is a vileborn. His dark heritage connects him with the fae and goblins; he is a **Fateweaver**.

He can bend fortune to his will, weave fleeting illusions, and even shapeshift into small creatures for brief periods.

Bastien has kept his nature secret his entire life, but the arrival of Igritte and the Vileborn at Mont Aurelie was too much for him. Terrified of being discovered, Bastien has fled.

Narrating the investigation

Darkness, as the Vileborn investigate, subtly weave in hints that might reveal Bastien's motives for fleeing the Order.

Draw inspiration from the following leads, selecting those that best suit your narrative. Discovering Bastien's whereabouts requires 3 to 5 **SUCCESSSES**, but feel free to adjust this number based on the desired pace of the investigation.

GATHERING CLUES

- **Bastien's fellow recruits**, if questioned, will try to hinder the investigation. With the right pressure, a recruit named Lisanne will admit to having feigned illness at Bastien's request, to leave him alone during the hunting trip. Questioning Bastien's friends directly is **difficult** (6), but eavesdropping on their conversations is **easy** (4).
- **Bastien's mentors are annoyed by his indolence** and his reliance on natural talent and blatant luck, rather than hard work and discipline. Obtaining this information is **easy** (4).
- **Investigating Bastien's room** will reveal the charred remnants of a handwritten note, resembling a scribbled map, in the fireplace. Finding the note is **normal** (5).
- **The quartermaster of Mont Aurelie**, if questioned about the supplies for the hunting trip, will admit to providing Bastien with extra food at his request, due to his fondness for the boy. Convincing the quartermaster to confess is **easy** (4).
- **The Order's official records** concerning Bastien mention Morsellet, a village two days' walk from Mont Aurelie, where Bastien once resided. Accessing the records through official channels is **very difficult** (7), but asking Igritte for help makes it **easy** (4).

THE SOLUTION TO THE ENIGMA

Darkness, when the Vileborn have gathered enough clues, have Lisanne intervene. The young recruit is in love with Bastien and is the only one who knows about his vileborn nature. Lisanne wants to protect Bastien at all costs; recognizing the Vileborn's determination to find him, she decides to confess and ask for their help.

Lisanne will reveal that Bastien is a vileborn and that he went to Morsellet in search of a way to escape the Order forever. She will implore the Vileborn to reach Bastien and retrieve something from him that will convince the Order that he has been killed. Even though they are condemned to remain in the Order, Bastien deserves a chance at life.

Closing the scene

Should the Vileborn choose to help Lisanne, Igritte will readily grant them permission to leave Mont Aurelie to look for Bastien. It will be up to them to decide what to share with Igritte about what they have discovered.

If they tell Igritte everything they have discovered, she will ask them to go to Morsellet to persuade Bastien to abandon his suicidal plan and return to the Order. Should he return to Mont Aurelie and confess his vileborn nature, Igritte can invoke the Lex Umbrae to protect him and train him, just like she is doing with the group.

REVEILED

Face a reviled and conclude this adventure.

Darkness, address the group and read aloud or paraphrase:

As you set foot in Morsellet, you immediately understand that something has gone terribly wrong. The terrified screams of the villagers guide you towards the center of the village, running through alleyways slick with mud and lined with houses made of wood and slate.

Reaching the village square, you are faced with a nightmarish scene: a gnarled tree in the center of the square writhes disturbingly, as if breathing. Beside it, a young woman whose body seems to have been ravaged by crows is floating a few meters above the ground.

Her body bears the gruesome marks of a cruel lynching and her neck is grotesquely twisted; yet her face is contorted into a macabre rictus, her eyes emanating a cold, murderous light.

Bastien stands before her, his back to you. Before you can intervene, you see the woman's hand slash through the air, as one of the branches of the tree twists and hurls itself towards one of the villagers. Bastien instinctively lunges forward, shielding the villager with his own body; he is slammed by the branch with such violence that he falls unconscious.

Vileborn, you are about to face a reviled for the first time!

The horrors of Morsellet

Despite what people like to believe, it is often the worst of human nature that fuels darkness. This is especially true for the Fallen, spirits tormented by unresolved grievances, unavenged wrongs, and unfulfilled debts. The Vileborn are now facing a Revenant: a Fallen that has clawed its way back into its own corpse, driven by a burning need for revenge.

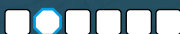
A young woman named Marielle was lynched and hanged yesterday, after being unjustly accused of witchcraft and undergoing a summary trial by her fellow villagers. The driving force behind her demise was her own brother, who exploited the superstitious fear of the community for his personal gain. Left to rot upon the tree in Morsellet square, Marielle's corpse now serves as a vessel for her vengeful spirit, which will find no peace until she has killed her brother.

Darkness, during their training, the Vileborn have learned that a Revenant can be banished by destroying the body it inhabits. However, they also know that satisfying its revenge will instantly appease it.

The Vileborn are free to choose what to do. Should they engage the Revenant in combat, offer no guidance. However, if they decide to investigate the root of her rage and the events that led to her tragic end, allow this narrative thread to unfurl during the CHALLENGE. Marielle's brother is present in the square, concealed behind a stack of firewood. Communicating with the Revenant requires TESTS and could generate COMPLICATIONS, just like fighting it. Her fury is immense, and her thirst for revenge will be unleashed on anyone who crosses her path.

REVENANT

Revenants are spirits that return to inhabit their corpses, looking for revenge. Defeating them requires 6 SUCCESSES.



DESCRIPTION

- Facing the Revenant is **difficult** (6) and always involves darkness.
- On the 2nd **SUCCESS**, the Revenant becomes intangible. Physically interacting with her becomes **impossible**, DARK HERITAGES still work.
- Using Saltpeter against the Revenant is **easy** (4) and forces her back into a tangible form.
- If the Revenant gets her revenge, she vanishes instantly.

COMPLICATIONS

- The Revenant's spectral hands pass through you; mark a **WOUND**.
- You experience someone else's memory, the feeling of a noose tightening around your neck; mark **fear**.
- The Revenant drains part of your life force; mark **exhaustion**.

DARKNESS DIE

*Roll the d12 for each TEST against the Revenant. If you roll 6+, invent a **COMPLICATION** of your choice or play out one of the following:*

- 6+ The Revenant floods your mind with images of her lynching; pass a **normal** (5) **willpower** TEST or mark **insecurity**.
- 8+ The Revenant's rage infuses the nearby tree, causing its branches to lash out at you; pass a **difficult** (6) TEST or mark a **WOUND**.
- 11+ The Revenant forces you to relive the agony of her lynching, inflicting grievous wounds on your flesh; everyone suffers a **WOUND**. Pass a **normal** (5) **willpower** TEST or also mark **fear**.



Closing the scene

Darkness, read aloud or paraphrase:

The specter of the Witch of Morsellet dissolves before your eyes, leaving you facing Bastien. Though conscious, he is unable to move, his fate resting entirely in your hands.

Bastien looks at you furtively, tears of frustration streaming down his face. In his eyes you glimpse the pain of a life marked by difficult choices, spent searching for the lesser evil.

Through clenched teeth, he pleads: "Don't you see? They'll send us to our deaths! The Order doesn't care about us, no one does! They know about you, but not about me... I beg you, let me go."

Vileborn, Bastien is at your mercy.

You now face a choice: will you bring Bastien back to the Order or let him go? You could even decide to run away with him. Make your decision and narrate the end of this adventure together!

To help you develop the epilogue of the story, consider these guiding questions:

- What do you think of Bastien's words?
- What is your opinion of the Order of Dusk?
- What do you think is the right thing to do?
- Ultimately, what will you choose to do?

You have completed Lex Umbrae!

This adventure has come to an end, but an even greater one has just begun! If you wish, take a moment to reflect on your experience.

How did you find the game? Which aspects intrigued you the most?

To experience the rules step by step, you played a very guided adventure. The complete rulebook, however, will allow you to tell your own story, create your own Vileborn, and see them grow and evolve.

Train with the Order of Dusk, learn from your mentors, treasure what they can teach you, but don't be afraid to question their perspective.

Venture into the world of Egas, investigate the true nature of darkness, and experience a journey of growth and discovery.

Thank you for playing VILEBORN!

VILEBORN delves into the blurred lines between monster and human, exploring the monstrous within us all.

Darkness mirrors our own complexities, and Egas, a world painted in shades of gray, challenges our understanding of morality.

The vileborn embody the turmoil of adolescence: its temptations, fears, and beauty. This is where your adventure begins!



PREVIEW

IN THE COMPLETE RULEBOOK



A COMING-OF-AGE STORY

BACKGROUNDS and **DARK HERITAGES** will provide you with inspiration to create multifaceted Vileborn, each with a unique story to tell, untapped potential to unleash, and inner conflicts to resolve.

BACKGROUNDS

BACKGROUNDS speak of your past. Each one suggests something about your roots, giving you unique ways to approach **CHALLENGES** and providing intriguing stimuli to develop your Vileborn's psychology, intertwining with your **DARK HERITAGE**.

DARK HERITAGES

There are seven DARK HERITAGES. You have already played four, one has been briefly introduced, and the remaining two will be revealed later. Each **DARK HERITAGE** is more than a mere collection of powers and abilities; it represents our darkest impulses and offers a way to explore them throughout the game.

GROWTH

Adventures in VILEBORN are transformative journeys of growth. In the complete rulebook, you will learn how to refine your **APPROACHES**, evolve your **PERSONALITY** and **TRAINING**, and most importantly, delve into your **DARK HERITAGE**, discover new **GIFTS**, and embrace your own darkness.





A THREE-ACT STRUCTURE

Like many coming-of-age stories, *VILEBORN* unfolds in three acts that can be played in a variable number of sessions, at your discretion: in the first act you recount your training, in the second you claim your independence, and in the third you conclude the story.

THE ORDER

The first act chronicles your training with the Order of Dusk. Navigate the complexities of your relationships with mentors and fellow recruits, learn to confront the reviled, and question the Order's stringent rules.

THE HUNT

The second act leads you to explore the perilous world of Egas. Whether you have become a Warden or have chosen to abandon the Order, you will embark on a treacherous journey, fighting against the threat of the reviled.

THE DARKNESS

The third act marks the conclusion of your story. You will resolve the narrative threads woven throughout the previous acts and, if you wish, uncover the origins of the encroaching darkness and seek ways to confront it. Above all, this act marks the end of your personal development arc.

FEARSOME ENEMIES

The CHALLENGES you face will give your campaign a unique flavor. Each type of reviled presents a distinct narrative thread that you can explore to your liking.

- **Vampires:** Confront cunning, ruthless, and refined creatures. Challenge ancient and terrible powers. Create adventures involving courts, intrigue, politics, investigation, and action.
- **Shapeshifters:** Explore the dichotomy between savagery and control and venture into the untamed wilderness of Egas. Narrate dramatic and bloody stories of change and shapeshifting.
- **Fallen:** Delve into unresolved matters, tormented souls, and paranormal events. Facing the Fallen means bridging the past and present, where the pain of today stems from the sins of yesterday.
- **Fae:** Navigate the superstitious world of bewitched agreements, misfortunes, and ill-omens. When the Fae come into play, you will grapple with unspeakable pacts, malicious trickery, and the price of human greed.
- **Shadows:** Confront pure darkness, alive and hungry for terror, and explore the most horrific dimension of the game. Shadows gather where negative feelings are strongest and amplify them to nourish themselves.



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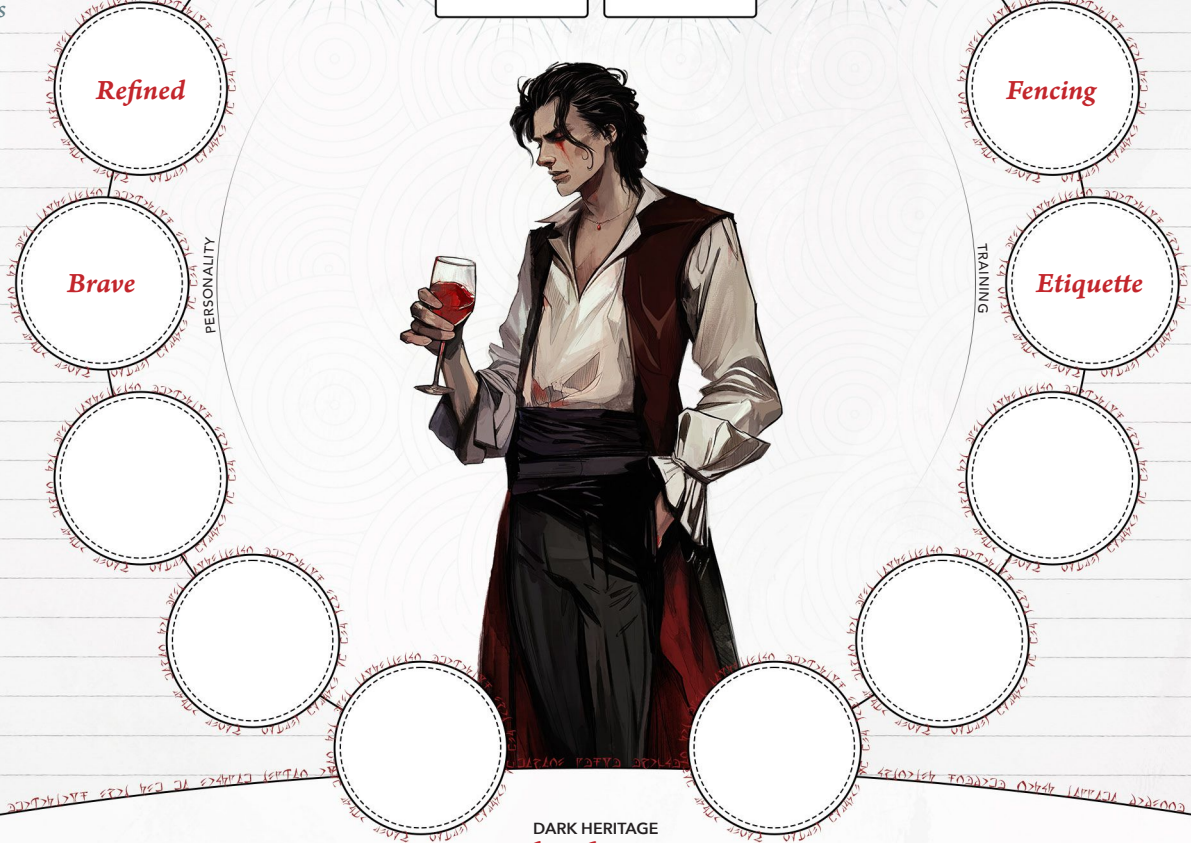
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Quickstart version 1.02 (July 31, 2024)

RAPHAËL DE NORMANTE

"All ends in blood."



CONDITIONS

- Anger**
-1 to reason, precision, and subterfuge rolls
- Exhaustion**
-1 to force, willpower, and influence rolls
- Shame**
You cannot use your PERSONALITY
- Fear**
You cannot use your TRAINING
- Insecurity**
You cannot use your MOTIVES

WOUNDS

-
-
-
- Out of play**
You cannot act nor face TESTS

BACKGROUND

You are of noble birth
You can mark anger to get an influence SUCCESS

MOTIVES

Aspiration

Mark it to heal a WOUND

Duty

Mark it to heal a CONDITION

RESOURCES

A Normante signet ring
When conversing with military and high-ranking people, you roll with +1

DARK HERITAGE Bloodsinger



GIFT

A heartbeat from the truth

Mark this GIFT to sense a target's heartbeat. For this SCENE you can discern if they're being truthful.

However, the rushing blood distracts you. Apply -1 to **precision** rolls as long as this GIFT is marked.

Mark your DARK HERITAGE and face a TEST that involves darkness to explore the mysterious powers that it grants. The darkness die creates a COMPLICATION if you roll 9+ with one mark, 6+ with two, and 3+ with three.

Examples: Unleash the power of your blood, affect the emotions in those around you, control the flow of blood around you.

URGE

You yearn to drink human blood.

When you do so, remove all marks from DARK HERITAGE and GIFTS.

GIFT

Power of blood

Mark this gift to become incredibly strong for a moment. You get a **force** SUCCESS.

However, you put your heart under duress. Roll 1d6; If you roll 1, you suffer **exhaustion**.

BLOODSINGER

RAPHAËL DE NORMANTE

You were born among the comforts of court life.

Your father disowned you when he discovered your dark heritage.

How did your **DARK HERITAGE** manifest itself?

Take inspiration from the **GIFTS** listed on your character sheet.

What do you remember about life at court?

- Add to your **PERSONALITY** one of the following:
Diplomatic, Cunning, Hedonist - or make up your own.
- Add to your **TRAINING** one of the following:
History, Scheming, Leadership - or make up your own.

What do you remember of when **Igritte** recruited you?

- If you wish, invent and write down your **aspiration**.
- Write down your current **duty**: *"Complete your training"*.

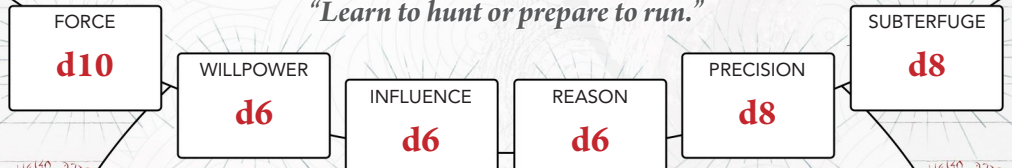


"I hand over to you my firstborn: a stupid, spoiled, blood-sucking parasite."

- Excerpt from a letter by the Duke of Normante

CELENE CERVANTES

"Learn to hunt or prepare to run."



- CONDITIONS**
- Anger**
-1 to reason, precision, and subterfuge rolls
 - Exhaustion**
-1 to force, willpower, and influence rolls
 - Shame**
You cannot use your PERSONALITY
 - Fear**
You cannot use your TRAINING
 - Insecurity**
You cannot use your MOTIVES

- WOUNDS**
- -
 -
 - Out of play**
You cannot act nor face TESTS

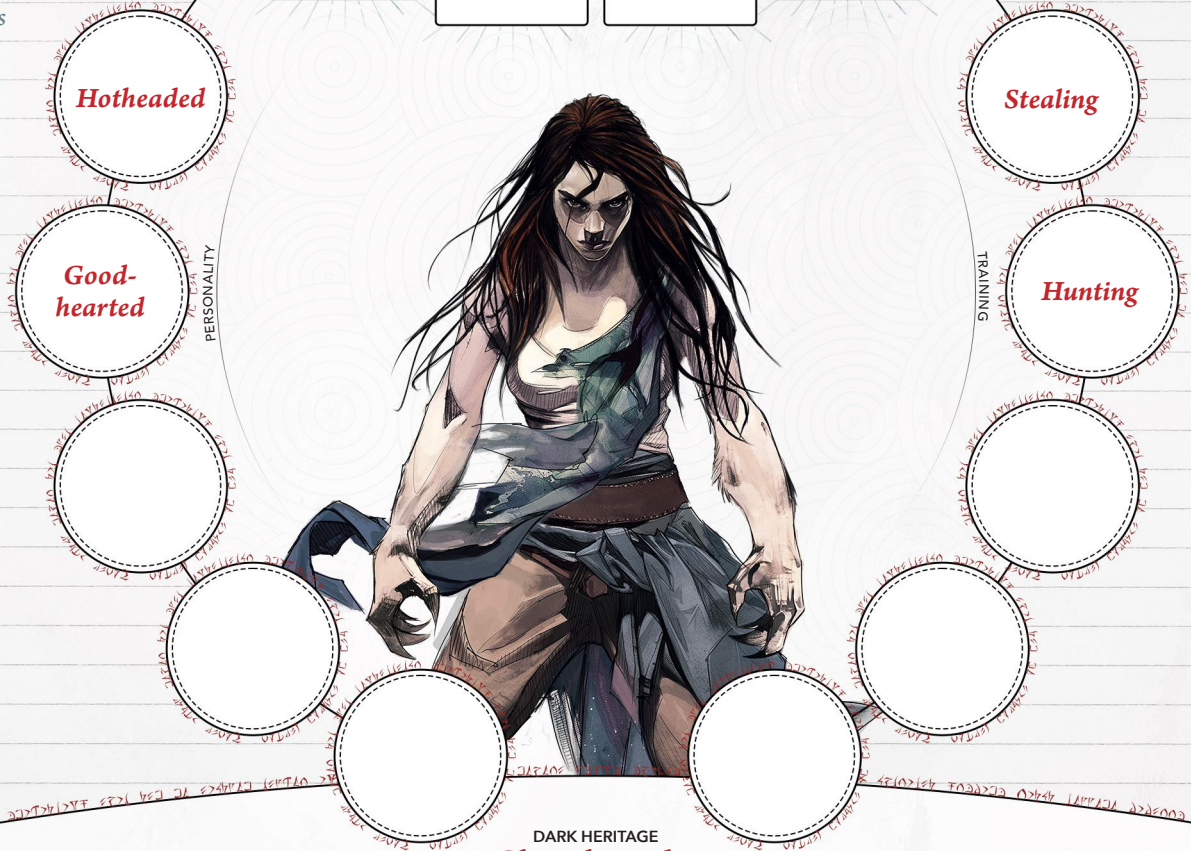
BACKGROUND

You were raised by outlaws
When you'd suffer shame, roll 1d6;
if you roll 5 or 6, it doesn't apply

- MOTIVES**
- Aspiration**
Mark it to heal a WOUND
 - Duty**
Mark it to heal a CONDITION

RESOURCES

A dagger made of Silversteel
When using it to wound Shapeshifters
or Clawshrouders, you roll with +1



DARK HERITAGE
Clawshrouder



GIFT

Beast form

You grow fangs and claws. Apply +1 to **force** rolls and ignore any **exhaustion** effects for this SCENE.

However, you risk being overcome by your hunting instinct. Roll 1d6; if you roll 1, you suffer **anger**.

Mark your **DARK HERITAGE** and face a **TEST** that involves darkness to explore the mysterious powers that it grants. The darkness die creates a **COMPLICATION** if you roll 9+ with one mark, 6+ with two, and 3+ with three.

Examples: Awaken the ancient predator inside you, connect with nature, push your senses and your muscles over the edge.

GIFT

Danger sense

You smell any threats nearby. You get a clue as to their nature, and you can tell if they are reviled.

However, your hunting instinct awakes. Apply -1 to **reason** rolls as long as this **GIFT** is marked.

URGE

You yearn to hunt human beings.
When you do so, remove all marks from **DARK HERITAGE** and **GIFTS**.

WILD
ROUGH
FURIOUS
LONELY
BEST

CLAWSHOUDER

CELENE CERVANTES

You have lived a life of poaching. On your worst days, you struggled to tell a deer from a human.

How did your DARK HERITAGE manifest itself?

Take inspiration from the GIFTS listed on your character sheet.

How did you live your life as an outlaw?

- Add to your PERSONALITY one of the following:
Opportunist, Violent, Honorable - or make up your own.
- Add to your TRAINING one of the following:
Traps, Threatening, Poisons - or make up your own.

What do you remember of when Igritte recruited you?

- If you wish, invent and write down your **aspiration**.
- Write down your current **duty**: *"Complete your training"*.



*"The whole gang feared her! She was a wild, rough, furious, lunatic beast."
- Confession of Seraf, an outlaw*

LUCIEN DELACROIX

"Every shadow is born out of light."

FORCE
d6

WILLPOWER
d10

INFLUENCE
d8

REASON
d8

PRECISION
d6

SUBTERFUGE
d8

Honest

Intense

Sacred scripture

Frightening

PERSONALITY

TRAINING



CONDITIONS

- Anger**
-1 to reason, precision, and subterfuge rolls
- Exhaustion**
-1 to force, willpower, and influence rolls
- Shame**
You cannot use your PERSONALITY
- Fear**
You cannot use your TRAINING
- Insecurity**
You cannot use your MOTIVES

WOUNDS

-
-
-
- Out of play**
You cannot act nor face TESTS

BACKGROUND

You were raised among believers
You can mark shame to get
a willpower SUCCESS

MOTIVES

Aspiration

Mark it to heal a WOUND

Duty

Mark it to heal a CONDITION

RESOURCES

A Luminarian pendant

When interacting with Luminarian
believers, you roll with +1

DARK HERITAGE

Shadowdancer

○○○

GIFT

Icy blood

○

Your shadow devours your emotions.
Remove two **conditions** and apply
+1 to **reason** rolls for this SCENE.

However, a deep chill pervades you.
You cannot use your MOTIVES
as long as this GIFT is marked.

GIFT

Cloak of shadows

○

Shroud a target in shadows,
concealing them from sight until they
draw attention to themselves.

However, the shadows are hungry.
Roll 1d6; if you roll 1,
the target suffers a WOUND.

Mark your DARK HERITAGE and face a TEST that involves
darkness to explore the mysterious powers that it grants.
The darkness die creates a COMPLICATION if you roll
9+ with one mark, 6+ with two, and 3+ with three.

*Examples: Give life and texture to your shadow, explore the
non-places hidden in the shadows, weave shadows around you.*

URGE

You yearn to terrorize people.

When you do so, remove all marks from DARK HERITAGE and GIFTS.



SHADOWDANCER

LUCIEN DEIACROIX

You spent your childhood in the rigor of a Luminarian monastery. They tried to exorcise the shadow that lives inside you.

How did your **DARK HERITAGE** manifest itself?

Take inspiration from the **GIFTS** listed on your character sheet.

What aspects of your life in the monastery have left a mark on you?

- Add to your **PERSONALITY** one of the following:
Believer, Skeptical, Selfless - or make up your own.
- Add to your **TRAINING** one of the following:
Enduring, History, Evangelizing - or make up your own.

What do you remember of when Igritte recruited you?

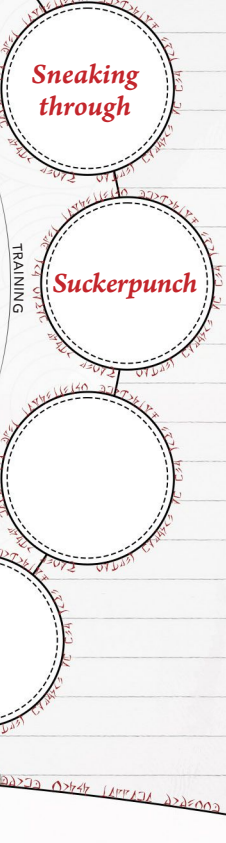
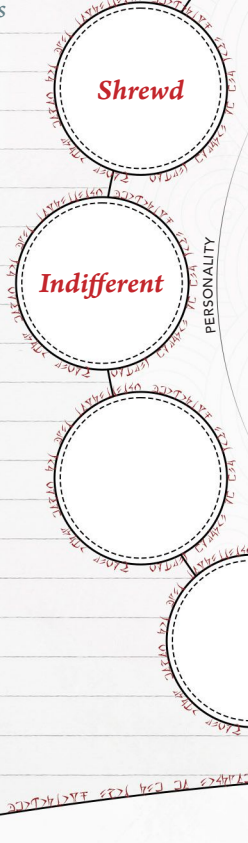
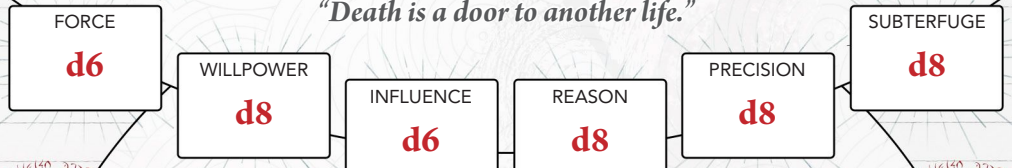
- If you wish, invent and write down your **aspiration**.
- Write down your current **duty**: "*Complete your training*".

"A true devotee... and an unholy monster corrupted by shadows."

- Excerpt from the diaries of Mother Alène

THALIA SEULEFILLE

"Death is a door to another life."



DARK HERITAGE
Ghostwalker

CONDITIONS

- Anger**
-1 to reason, precision, and subterfuge rolls
- Exhaustion**
-1 to force, willpower, and influence rolls
- Shame**
You cannot use your PERSONALITY
- Fear**
You cannot use your TRAINING
- Insecurity**
You cannot use your MOTIVES

WOUNDS

-
-
-
- Out of play**
You cannot act nor face TESTS

BACKGROUND

You were an orphan
You can mark fear to get a subterfuge SUCCESS

MOTIVES

- Aspiration**
Mark it to heal a WOUND
- Duty**
Mark it to heal a CONDITION

RESOURCES

A bag of Saltpeter
If you pass an easy TEST, you can force a Fallen to materialize

GIFT

Pale whispers

○
Ask a question to a ghost, they are bound to answer truthfully

However, you look pale and unsettling. Apply -1 to **influence** rolls as long as this GIFT is marked.

○○○

Mark your DARK HERITAGE and face a TEST that involves darkness to explore the mysterious powers that it grants. The darkness die creates a COMPLICATION if you roll 9+ with one mark, 6+ with two, and 3+ with three.

Examples: Tear down the veil between the world of the living and the dead, become immaterial for a moment, connect with ghosts

URGE

You feel the urge to obey the spirits.
When you do so, remove all marks from DARK HERITAGE and GIFTS.

GIFT

Poltergeist

○
Materialize a ghost. Until you act again, it disrupts or pushes a target of your choice a few meters.

However, you expose yourself to the agony of the ghost you evoked. Roll 1d6; if you roll 1, you suffer **fear**.



GHOSTWALKER

THALIA SEULEFILLE

*You grew up on the muddy streets of Arenbourg.
Yours was a life of sacrifice and expedients.*

How did your **DARK HERITAGE** manifest itself?

Take inspiration from the **GIFTS** listed on your character sheet.

What has your life on the streets of Arenbourg taught you?

- Add to your **PERSONALITY** one of the following:
Quiet, Ruthless, Stubborn - or make up your own.
- Add to your **TRAINING** one of the following:
Stealing, Hiding, Repairing - or make up your own.

What do you remember of when Igritte recruited you?

- If you wish, invent and write down your **aspiration**.
- Write down your current **duty**: *"Complete your training"*.

*"I am glad that wretched jinx is gone.
She looked like a dead woman walking."
- A resident of Arenbourg*

DARKNESS

Rules summary and COMPLICATIONS prompts

Tests

Ask for a TEST in uncertain and interesting situations. Choose the DIFFICULTY based on what was described, what is happening in the SCENE, and the suggestions in the rulebook.

- **Easy:** 4
- **Normal:** 5
- **Difficult:** 6
- **Very difficult:** 7
- **Impossible:** you cannot get a SUCCESS

If the TEST generates a COMPLICATION inflict a CONDITION or a WOUND.

CONDITIONS

- **Anger**
- **Exhaustion**
- **Shame**
- **Fear**
- **Insecurity**

WOUNDS

Describe a physical consequence (sore shoulder, cracked rib, bleeding, etc.) or a social consequence (reprimanded, viewed poorly, wanted, etc.). If you have no ideas, simply suggest marking a WOUND.

Darkness die

Roll 1d12 when darkness is present. Follow the suggestions in the corebook or improvise a COMPLICATION on a roll of 9+ if the darkness is weak, 6+ if it's normal, 3+ if it's strong.

Vileborn

Roll the darkness die when the Vileborn face TESTS in order to explore their DARK HERITAGES.



Raphaël de Normante
Bloodsinger

Narrate his thirst for blood and the toll it takes on his body to control the power rushing through their veins. Here are some examples:

- The smell of blood threatens to overwhelm you; mark **shame**/**insecurity**.
- Your body struggles to contain the power of your blood; mark **exhaustion**/a WOUND.
- Your thirst for blood awakens your primal instincts; mark **anger**.
- Your canines visibly lengthen
- Mirrors no longer reflect your image, at least for now.
- Make up your own.



Celene Cervantes
Clawshrouder

Narrate about her hunting instinct and how her body undergoes painful and uncontrollable changes. Here are some examples:

- Your feral form manifests uncontrollably and painfully; mark a WOUND.
- Your body is wracked by involuntary, animalistic spasms; mark **shame**/**exhaustion**.
- Your predatory instinct makes your blood boil; mark **rage**.
- You involuntarily frighten those close to you; mark **shame**.
- Your scent becomes more intense, wild, like that of an animal.
- Make up your own.



Thalia Seulfille
Ghostwalker

Narrate the difficulty of being caught between two worlds and the constant interference from the spirits of the deceased. Here are some examples:

- The memories of tormented ghosts haunt you; mark **exhaustion**.
- You struggle to distinguish the world of the living and the dead; mark **insecurity**.
- You have a vision of the violence the ghosts suffered in life; mark **fear**.
- The rage of the dead becomes your own; mark **anger**.
- The contact with the afterlife makes you question the value of life.
- Make up your own.



Lucien Delacroix
Shadowdancer

Narrate the insatiable cold and hunger that lurk in the shadows, and how they demand satisfaction. Here are some examples:

- The shadows whisper to you to do unspeakable things; mark **fear**.
- A layer of icy frost forms around you, the cold gripping you tightly; mark **exhaustion**/a WOUND.
- The world around you suddenly becomes dark.
- The shadows you manipulate slip from your grasp, inflicting **fear** or a WOUND to an ally.
- You become hypersensitive to light
- Make up your own.