



# NEWSIES & BOOTBLACKS FIRST GAME

J. BASTIEN-LEPAGE

London 1887



# Newsies & Bootblacks: The Primer

by Miguel de Luis Espinosa

February 25, 2011

a MiniM Role-playing Game

For the homeless children of every age and time and for  
those who work for them, in gratitude.

## Acknowledgments

Newsies & Bootblacks will not be a quarter as good without the kind help of many people encouraging me to keep on, finding my mistakes, suggesting improvements and finding great ways to do things. In every minute of fun this game provides, they have a share. Among them are: Tonisan Padial, Hugo (Ze\_Mighty\_Vegetable), Davina Haisell, Joe Murphy, Jim Kernan, Brian Gross, Pandora Caitiff, ZombieButch, Sean 2009, Destriarch, Moth\_Devil, DJorgensen, Steve Conan Trustrum, Mike Laff, Harlan Quinn, Joyce A Martin, Tammy Warren, The people from La Marca del Este, The people from 1 thousand monkeys, The people from Obsidian Portal, Alejandro, Juanjo and Rayco from Sueños de Papel.

## Credits

Proofreading: Davina Haisell

Cover: J Bastien Le Page (Cover) and Webtreats (texture)

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# Introduction

Hey, thank you, let's play

Thanks for giving *Newsies & Bootblacks* a try. You might be wondering what this game is all about. Look at the title: this is a role-playing game about newsies and bootblacks. So yes, you are young, very young, and poor. It's around 1905, everybody reads newspapers and that's what you sell, even if you have to walk through narrow alleys at five o'clock in the morning. Was that noise a cat or a mugger? Scared? Do you need super-powers to be a hero? You know you don't. The city of New Paris, south of New York<sup>1</sup>, is filled with rumors of secret treasures, zombies, steamworks-men and sinister conspiracies. These rumors are often not exactly true but yet you must be ready for anything, because New Paris will not survive without you.



This is what you have to do

1. Learn about role-playing games

If you are not sure of what a role-playing game is, you should ask a friend or consult the [wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Role-playing_game), which hosts a very good [article](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Role-playing_game) on role-playing<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>Just check any *fantastically good* map

<sup>2</sup>[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Role-playing\\_game\\_%28pen\\_and\\_paper%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Role-playing_game_%28pen_and_paper%29)

2. Choose somebody to be the game master.  
The game master is like a referee and narrator. He or she must know the rules well and should read this booklet before the start of the game, so he can teach everybody else. Whenever the rules fail, there are doubts or the players do something unexpected, the game master uses his imagination and good sense to keep the game on. That's something a computer game can't do.
3. Learn about New Paris.  
That's the city where our adventures will usually take place, so it is a good idea to be familiar with it. Read its section .
4. Learn the Rules. They aren't that hard, just two small chapters "Basic Rules" [on page 16](#) and "Fights and chases" [on page 26](#).
5. Prepare the adventure.  
Most players should choose the character they will role-play [on page 38](#) and get a few supplies like dice and writing materials. The game master should read the adventure thoroughly, make notes and add his own ideas to it.
6. Then call everybody, set a time and place and let the dice roll.
  - Pay a visit to the [MiniM Role-playing blog](http://minimrpg.com) on <http://minimrpg.com> for much more information; not to mention the main game.
  - Share [in Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#)

## This is New Paris

An introduction to the world of Newsies & Bootblacks

### Foreword

It's some year between 1889 and 1914, somewhere south of New York and north of Virginia lies the state and city of New Paris. This very first line reveals the spirit of this section; New Paris City is not and will not ever be defined. It's yours to develop, explore and live. I know there are many who prefer to have everything set up for them, and they are lucky because there are many excellent settings for them to choose.

There will be one book dedicated to New Paris. Such book is being developed and will contain much more information than this booklet could ever hope to display. That guide book should be understood as a toolbox for your imagination.



I believe in the power of suggestion. Every work of fiction suggests: from Beowulf through Oliver Twist to the last bestseller, an author kindle the spark of imagination that resides in readers. It is them who finish his work, ever new with each generation and person. A narrative game, such as this, should do exactly that. My role as a game designer is to provide the essential materials the game master needs to, in turn, spark the story in the imaginations of his gaming group who help him to create the adventure, to unfold the world and to build a better setting.

Who am I to fetter all that imagination in words of stone?

### A bit of history

New Paris began its life as a French settlement in the mouth of the River Onhatan. Isolated from other French possessions, too close to Virginia, it was promptly taken by the British, despite its magnificent defenses. Since then it has shared the destiny of what it would become the United States of America.

The state of New Paris was spared the worst of the Civil War, with only a few skirmishes fought inside its borders, and since then it has grown rapidly, to rival the likes of Chicago or New York

### A bit of technology

New Paris, as the rest of the nation, is experiencing a period of technological progress. Though, this has come in different speeds: the wealthy take it faster, the poor slower. The first automobiles run alongside mule-drawn carts and while a few mansions can sport the novelty of electric light bulbs, most people still use petrol lamps. Pocket watches exist as luxury novelties while most people resort to church bells or the townhall clock to keep track of time. Steamers have taken their place as ships of the line and transatlantic traders, but sails are still a common sight in every harbor.

The common people is fascinated and frightened by all this new technology and the changes it's bringing. Science is boundless; and who knows what some scientist could be doing somewhere: thinking cabinets?, flying machines?, ships that could reach the Moon?, Mars?, Jupiter?, the far stars? Can electricity bring back the dead to life? Or is the world to die through the negligence of some too enthusiastic doctor?

### New Paris and its precincts.

New Paris is divided into six rough areas as seen on the map that follows this section: Royal Island, Inner Expanses, Western Gate, Outer Expanses, Concordia and the Decree Slums. Royal Island is a modernist dream: the place of the

wealthy and the learned, filled with gaudy buildings, fashionable parks, libraries and museums. The seat of the New Paris Government is there, along with the main offices of the largest and more conservative corporations. A few newsboys are born into this place, the unfortunate children of a too trusting young maid and a too bold young heir, or that's what the prune ladies say.

In any case, the Inner Expanses is the natural birthplace of the independent young boy. This, previously affluent area, is now home to mansions turned into tenement buildings by ever dividing their interiors into smaller and smaller one-room home.

Western Gate has risen to become the home of a new class of entrepreneurs. The New Paris Stock Exchange is located there, along with the most important newspapers and lawyers. Money is the blood of Western Gate and its heart is always pumping. There is not a day or hour in which you can not find someone working in a new business, dreaming grand or raising up from failure.

A sea of factories and warehouses, of smoke and rushed traffic, that's the first impression a visitor gets from the Outer Expanses. And yet the new, and most important harbor of the city is there as there are more than a few rows of tall yet dirty and squalid apartment buildings. Many factory workers only walk as far as to their job, and back to their apartment, with little hope but saving so their children can have a chance.

Concordia lies south of the River Onhattan. Nice, ordered, clean, Concordia is much more mixed and varied than any of the other areas of the city. Concordians consider themselves tolerant, hard-working, lovers of innovation and change. Not all change is always welcomed, like the traditional small shops facing a tougher and tougher competition from the department stores. Shopping and small workshops aside, the other major income of Concordia is recreation, in which the New Paris beach plays a large role. Though limited to the Summer season, the beach and its promenade attracts crowds of vacationers of every station in life.

And then we have Decree, locked between the sea and the New Paris dump. Once, they were the home of the wealthiest, until the Great Plague of New Paris changed all that. Abandoned in days, it took years for the homeless, the poor, the criminal and the desperate to slowly fill it. Year after year, New Paris forgot about Decree, referring to it as if a country beyond the sea. Soon, street fights turned into wars among gangs continue today. This is a den of poverty, sickness and crime. Violence is rampant and rumor has it, that some of their children, end up as slaves in some exotic corner of Earth. The newsboys, bootblacks and others who run from this place often keep their origins to themselves and make a point of not ever returning.



## The Newsboy Lodge

New Paris may be rich, but that's not the case of every of its inhabitants. Located poverty, bankruptcies, immigration and sickness has put many children to the streets, homeless and with no adult to care for them. They are just a minority among the thousands of working children in every conceivable trade. But these have no place to call home, nobody to guide them, and little earnings to rent even a squalid room in the Inner Expanses. It's no wonder many of them ended dead or in reform schools.

The members of the New Paris Society for Children (NPSC), seeing the need, pooled their money to buy an old manor home, near Newspaper Row, a street in Western Gate, and set it to house the newsboys. The boys -and girls- can have for a small payment room and board, a place to play and hang out, consult with adult volunteers and, for a little extra, attend a night school.

It should be noted that, despite its name, everybody younger than 16, with no criminal record is welcomed there.

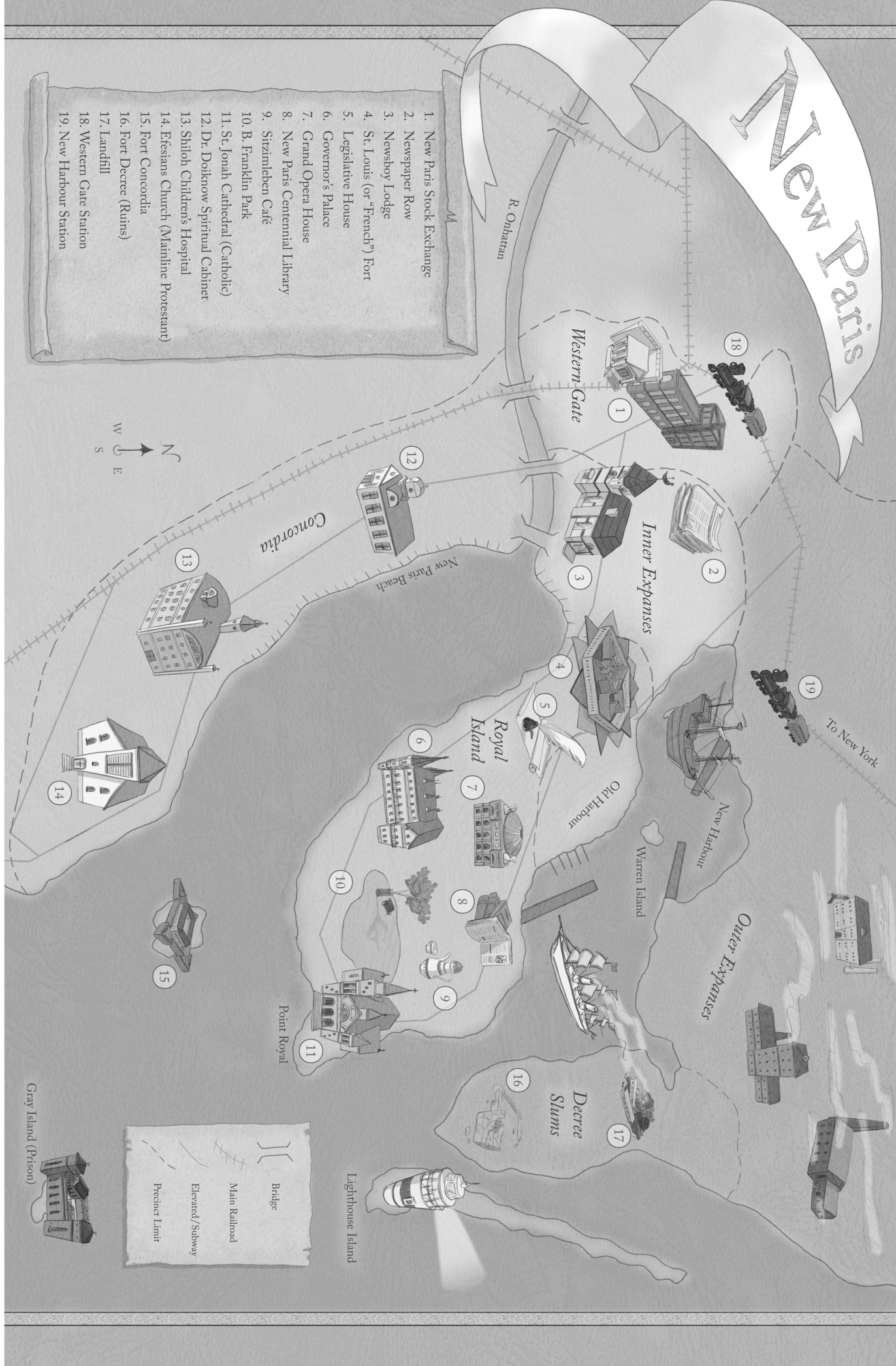
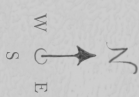
## A few random facts about New Paris

1. Halloween is not a big tradition in New Paris, but kids don't seem to notice.
2. It is common to see children younger than 15 walking barefoot almost anywhere.
3. It is common to see people fully clothed to hat and coat walking on the sands of the beach.
4. Most people rise up at 5:00 AM.
5. In the Inner Expanses, Western Gate and the Outer Expanses, all children are welcomed in any public place to buy whatever they can pay.
6. Children of any age can be clients of a bank with little restrictions, no matter how small the deposit. Many newsboys, peddlers and bootblacks hold saving accounts.
7. The New Paris sewers is a world in itself, with secret passages and chambers and, some say, hidden treasures.
8. Rumor has it that... New Paris has a hoard of urban legends, a few of which are actually true.
9. New Paris is the home of the Utopian Party, a technophile movement which wants to change the world, though into what is still hotly debated.

10. The New Paris Elevated Train company has, in fact, a number of underground lines.
11. The New Paris beach does extend into the inner expanses, yet that area is contaminated with the trash of the ships and only a few daredevil poor kids swim there.
12. Outside of Royal Island, Western Gate and Concordia, many streets are still unpaved, either because they never were or because the pavement has been stolen as building materials -like in the Inner Expanses.

# New Paris

1. New Paris Stock Exchange
2. Newspaper Row
3. Newsboy Lodge
4. St. Louis (or "French") Fort
5. Legislative House
6. Governor's Palace
7. Grand Opera House
8. New Paris Centennial Library
9. Strainleben Café
10. B. Franklin Park
11. St. Jonah Cathedral (Catholic)
12. Dr. Doiknow Spiritual Cabinet
13. Shiloh Children's Hospital
14. Efesians Church (Mainline Protestant)
15. Fort Concordia
16. Fort Decree (Ruins)
17. Landfill
18. Western Gate Station
19. New Harbour Station



Bridge  
 Main Railroad  
 Elevated/ Subway  
 Precinct Limit

Gray Island (Prison)



# Basic Rules

These are the essential rules you need to play the adventure included in this booklet. The *Newsies & Bootblacks Rulebook*, will expand on these to allow you to play an wide variety of games.

## Using dice, the *Newsies & Bootblacks* way

You need dice, the kind you use to play parcheesee. *Newsies & Bootblacks* uses normal six-sided dice. They are made stronger or weaker than regular dice, just by the way you read them.

- Fool Dice (fd) : When you roll fool dice ignore any result higher than 4. That means if you roll a 5 or 6 you read it as if it were a 4.
- Weak Dice (wd) : When you roll weak dice ignore any result higher than 5. That means if you roll a 6, you read it as if it were a 5.
- Normal Dice (nd) : These you read normally; a 1 is a 1, a 2 is a 2, a 6 is a 6, and so on. (Also known as OK dice.)
- Swell Dice (sd) : When you roll any swell dice, ignore any result lower than 3. That means when you roll a 1 or a 2 you read the die as if it were a 3.

## Attributes

Attributes are the figures that define your character's basic capabilities. It is important that you understand what each one of these is used for.

**Strength (STR):** Measures how strong you are. A character can use Strength to lift a heavy weight, break things, throw a stone to see how far it goes or fight off a bully. Adults tend to be much stronger than any newsboy. As far as this game is concerned, girls can be just as strong as any boy.

**Health (HTH):** A measure of your character's resistance to sickness, fatigue, poisons, bullets and thrown cream cakes. Your character could be exposed to all of these and worse.



Agility (AGI): Tells you how graciously your character moves. A character with low Agility will never be a good athlete. Agility is also important to handle a bike, ride, run or hide from a band of gangsters.

Education (EDU): Measures how much the character knows about the world. Anything that can be known and learned falls within the range of Education. If you want your character to be a mechanic or know how to dress a wound, you'll want his Education attribute to be as high as possible<sup>3</sup>.

Eyes & Ears (E&E): Measures how well your character can understand what's going on around him. Please remember that it does include *all five senses*<sup>4</sup>; not just sight and hearing. If your newsie needs to find a secret message hidden under a rubble stone, follow the scent of a solvent to the secret laboratory of a mad scientist or listen to the whisper of a foreign spy, you'd better have an Eyes & Ears attribute as strong as possible.

Charisma (CHA): Measures how cute, swell, nice, handsome, cheerful, good-looking and cool your character is, all rolled into one attribute. Charisma is great when you want to sell papers to the public, learn a new language, sign, beg, convince or juggle for money and fun.

## Skills

These are your skills

Skills are stats just like attributes, only less broad. Agility (an attribute), tells us how well you move in general, while Riding (skill), tells us how good you are at handling a bike.

Characters can be *good at*, *bad at*, or *OK at* these skills; these three categories will determine the dice your character gets as it will be explained in Basic Checks on page 16.

This game has 21 skills open to player characters:

FISTICUFFS (STR), THROWING (STR), ATHLETICS (AGI), CLIMBING (AGI),  
DODGING (AGI), LOCKS (AGI), PICKPOCKETS (AGI), RIDING (AGI), STEALTH  
(AGI), SWIMMING (AGI), VEHICLES (AGI), ACADEMICS (EDU), CRAFTS

---

<sup>3</sup>What about intelligence? I believe only the player can provide that.

<sup>4</sup>So why Eyes & Ears? Because sight and hearing will be by far, the most used of the five senses. This name is easier for children to understand than awareness.

(EDU), HEALING (EDU), MECHANICS (EDU), STREETWISE (EDU), OBSERVATION (E&E), SHOOTING (E&E), LANGUAGES (CHA), PERFORMANCE (CHA) AND SWEET TALK (CHA)

You will figure out that Athletics is good for running, jumping and playing football;; Fisticuffs comes in handy for brawling and Healing helps to fix people after that brawling. The main rulebook explains these in further details that cannot be covered here due to shortage of space.

Every skill is linked to an attribute that is shown in brackets. For example, Academics (EDU) is a skill linked to the Education attribute. That means if you are *good at* Academics (an Education skill), you roll using your Education dice, but upgraded.

## Using skills and attributes

Some friends are sitting at a table; one of them is the game master, the rest are the players, each one playing the role of a player character. The game master describes the scene:

"You enter the alley with soft feet and wild hearts, trembling at what could be waiting for you among the shadows. The air is filled with the stench of the putrid fruit piled against a corner. What could be hiding behind it? Ghosts are supposed to exist only in fairy tales, but right now you aren't so sure. Was that a step you heard? Tell me, what are you going to do?"

Rick, one of the player characters, decides to take the lead. "I am going to shoot at the fruit pile with my slingshot and if anything moves, I say we run away like crazy."

If the game master is sure about the success of an action he grants a success and that's that; no dice required<sup>5</sup>. If on the other hand, the action is believed impossible, the game master forbids it.

In this case the game master is sure that Rick can't miss hitting the fruit pile. He answers "OK, Rick". You point and shoot and the stone hits the rotting fruit pile. After a split second, you all see a ferocious, rabid cat emerging from the fruit pile, foam coming out of its mouth. Now tell me, what are you going to do?"

---

<sup>5</sup>If a player says his character wants to walk to an apple stand, the game master will probably grant it without asking for a dice roll.

The group's answer is unanimous: "Run for it!" Perhaps the game master is exaggerating a bit on his description of the cat, but they aren't taking any chances with a rabid feline.

Now the game master has a small problem; will the players be able to outrun the cat through the maze of trash-ridden alleys? That's why we have rules. They help you to decide who can do what and what the results of those actions could be, striving to be fair, fast and fun.

## Basic checks

### Choosing the skill and the dice

Basic checks<sup>6</sup> allow us to know whether a character has been successful when attempting an action or not. It is one of the most used rules in every game session, so pay attention.

1. Make sure you know what *action* the player character is attempting and what the *consequences* of that action could be. For example: if a player shoots a rat with his slingshot, the action would be shooting and the possible consequences are either a hit or a miss – and the effects of that hit. The game master might want to ask the player to make sure he understands what he's trying to do.
2. The game master is the only one who can determine the consequences of any attempted action.
3. The game master then determines which *skill* is more appropriate for the *action* being attempted<sup>7</sup>.
4. *If there's no appropriate skill*, the game master should choose an *attribute* instead<sup>8</sup>. Again, the game master's decision is final.
5. Use the dice of the attribute linked to the skill, *upgrading* or *downgrading* them:
  - If the character is *good at* the appropriate skill, upgrade the dice of the linked attribute. Weak dice become normal dice (OK dice), while normal dice become swell dice.

---

<sup>6</sup>Also known as skill tests.

<sup>7</sup>Shooting is appropriate when the action is shooting a rat with your slingshot. Academics is appropriate for reading.

<sup>8</sup>Suppose a newsboy finds one of the first photographic inventions and wants to take a picture of his friends. There is no skill for photography so the game master might decide that you use your Education attribute for this action.

- If the character is *bad at* the appropriate skill, downgrade the dice of the linked attribute. Weak dice become fool dice and normal dice become weak dice.
- If the character is *OK at* the appropriate skill, use the dice of the linked attribute without any modifications.

Example: Allan is good at *Sweet Talk*, a skill linked to the Charisma attribute. He has four weak dice in his Charisma attribute. When he tries any *Sweet Talk* action, such as asking a boothblack girl for a date, he upgrades those four weak dice to four normal dice.

Note: It is a good idea to note down the modified dice on your character sheet before the start of the game.

### The target number

The game master then determines a target number (TN). If the player rolls equal or higher than the target number, he succeeds. If he rolls less than the target number, he fails. A task of average difficulty will demand a TN of 10, a very easy task could use a TN of 4, while a difficult task can only be achieved with a TN of 14 or more. (Refer to the Target Number Table [on the next page](#).)

The game master does *not* need to share the target number with the players. That way, for example, if the characters are searching for something and find anything at all, they can't be sure if there was nothing to find.

Example: Suppose Rick is shooting a can with a slingshot. Since Shooting is the appropriate skill for this, the game master chooses it to carry out the action. Shooting is linked to Eyes & Ears. Rick's character sheet shows that he has three weak dice in Eyes & Ears. Rick is also *good at* Shooting, so he upgrades those three weak dice to normal dice. The game master announces that hitting the can will require a TN of 11 because it's quite far away. Rick rolls his three normal dice and gets a 13, hitting the can right in the middle with a satisfying noise, watching as it falls and rolls along the pavement. Had Rick been *bad at* Shooting, he would have had a problem because he would have downgraded his weak dice to fool dice.

### When not to roll dice

If the game master is sure you will succeed (or fail), you don't have to roll any dice. To speed up the game, the game master may decide that a player character (not a non-player character) automatically succeeds at an easy task. Reserve rolling dice for the important stuff only. This is how it goes:



**Impossible Tasks:** The attempt is genuinely impossible, such as flapping your arms to fly. The attempt fails automatically, whether the dice is rolled or the chits are spent.

**Trivial Tasks:** These are so easy, you are guaranteed to succeed. The game master does not need to require a die roll, except if the task is attempted under stress such as during a fight or in an emergency.

**Very Easy Tasks:** The game master may decide that the player character succeeds automatically, except if the task is attempted under stress such as during a fight or in an emergency.

### Target Number Table

This table is a guideline for the game master when he has to determine a target number. You can use a TN of 5 or 7 if you think that would be the most appropriate for any given situation<sup>9</sup>.

Difficulty	Suggested Target Number
Trivial	4
Very easy	6
Easy	8
Average	10
Hard	12
Very hard	14
Experts only	15 or more

<sup>9</sup>Note that average (normal) difficulty means average for an adult without special training. Dressing a wound would be of average difficulty using the Healing skill. In any case, these guidelines are not the Bible. The game master can change this table or disregard it altogether.

### The fumble

You fumble when you roll 7 points lower than your target number, or you roll a 1 with each and every one of your dice<sup>10</sup>.

A fumble could not mean anything more serious than making a fool of yourself before your friends; falling off your bike, tripping, or answering to your teacher that King George the Fifth was the first US President. However, it could have very dear consequences, especially when running away from a ghost or in a fight, so avoid attempting actions where you could easily fumble<sup>11</sup>.

### The spectacular success

The spectacular success is the opposite of the fumble. *You get a spectacular success when you roll 7 points over the target number, or you roll a 6 with each and every one of your dice.*

A spectacular success gives you additional benefits; you'll sell newspapers much faster (giving you time to do something else or just sell more papers), you don't only know about George Washington, but you can tell your teacher the size of his shoes. In an emergency, a spectacular success could save the day.

### In short

- The player tells the game master what action his character is attempting.
- The game master determines the appropriate skill to carry out that action. If there is no appropriate skill, he chooses an attribute.
- If the character is *good at* the skill, he upgrades<sup>12</sup> the dice of his linked attribute.
- If the character is *bad at* the skill, he downgrades the dice of his linked attribute.<sup>13</sup>
- If the character is *OK at* the skill or is using an attribute, he rolls the dice of the linked attribute without upgrading or downgrading.

---

<sup>10</sup>It's a good thing that swell dice do not have any 1s. Plus, if you have three weak dice in Education and you are *good at* Academics, it would be unlikely for you to fumble unless you face a difficult task.

<sup>11</sup>Please not that a fumble is much worse than a basic failure. You fail if you get any number less than the TN up to 7, which then becomes a fumble and has worse – or funnier – consequences.

<sup>12</sup>Normal dice become swell dice and weak dice become normal dice.

<sup>13</sup>Normal dice become weak dice and weak dice become fool dice.

- The game master determines the target number of the action as he sees fit<sup>14</sup>.
- The player rolls his dice, adding the results. He succeeds if the total is equal to or greater than the target number, and fails if the total is less than the target number.
- If the total is 7 points less than the TN or all your dice show 1s, it's a fumble.
- If the total is 7 points greater than the TN or all your dice show 6s, it's a spectacular success.
- Fumbles carry additional penalties, while a spectacular success provides extra benefits.

## Scenes

A scene is any goal attempted by a character or group of characters that requires more than one simple action and involves more than one skill. Normally, you role play and simulate each and every action attempted. Sometimes, to speed up the game, the game master and the players agree to solve the whole scene with just one single dice roll.

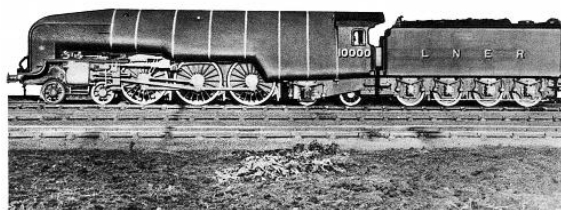
## Rules

1. The game master describes the situation as he or she always does, and the players share what their characters intend to do, as usual.
2. A player or the game master proposes to solve the situation as a scene.
3. The game master assigns a number from 1 to 6, that the players must roll in one single normal die. He warns the players of the consequences if they fail.
4. The players vote. If at least half plus one of the players agree with the proposal of the game master, accepting the possible consequences of a failure, the situation can be solved as a scene; otherwise it must be played as normal.
5. The youngest player rolls the dice.
6. The game master applies the consequences of success or failure according to the result of the dice roll.

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<sup>14</sup>A TN of 10 is average, 14 is very hard and 6 is very easy.

Let's suppose the player characters are following a suspected spy to sneak into his hideout. That would require several skills (Stealth and Observation) and actions. You would probably want to role play that scene in detail, but let's suppose it's late in the evening and you are running out of real time to play. After hearing the players' plan and assessing the situation, the game master believes they have a fair chance of succeeding. He tells the players they need to roll a 4 or better with one normal die. If they fail, they will be captured by the spy and imprisoned in some dirty cellar. The players are OK with it, so they roll the dice.



## Travel

Average Times	Walking	Urban Trains	Carriage or Omnibus
Within Concordia or Outer Expanses	1 hour	15 min	25 min to 1 hour
Within other areas	30 min	5 min	15 min to 30 min
To an adjacent area	1 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> hour	30 min	30 min to 1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>3</sub> hour
To a non adjacent area	2 hours	45 min	1 hour

## Chits

The player characters of this game are luckier than average. It's like the world wants to compensate them for having it rough. Perhaps their guardian angels are better than average. Explain it however you wish. In any case, when things get



really tough they more often than not, escape safe and sound until their special star fades.

The Newsies & Bootblacks rulebook will offer more exciting ways to use Chits.

### Using chits

When a player character wants to purchase one favor, he announces it to the game master, who must then approve the request. The game master would do so, as long as the player is not asking for anything weird, uncanny, unsporting or against the rules. The player then pays the favor's price in chits to the game master<sup>15</sup>, who will then grant it. The benefits of such a favor should be narrated in a way that shows the role that luck played<sup>16</sup>.

You may use markers, pawns or fake money to represent chits, or you could simply keep track of them on the character sheet.

The following table details how many chits you can use for any such favor. You aren't limited by the table; the players should feel free to ask for any favor not listed in this table, as long as the game master approves them... for a fair price in chits.

Using Chits Table

Chits Spent	Favor Won
1	Give me a clue
1	Re-roll
2	Still breathing
1	Double or nothing
1	Let me try something cool
1	I'm a hero

<sup>15</sup>The Chits used are spent up and must be immediately marked off the character sheet

<sup>16</sup>The game master will say something like, "Luckily, the bullet is defective and drops to the ground, harmlessly." Or, "The assassin forgot to load his revolver." Or whatever feels appropriate to the situation.

## Explanations

*Give me a clue* For 1 chit you can ask the game master to give you a clue about some secret or mystery, or some other element of the plot. The game master can be as straightforward or enigmatic as the story requires. For example: instead of just saying “The butler did it”, the game master could say something like “The master of politeness is stained in red”.

*Re-roll* Choose any dice you have already rolled and re-roll them at a cost of 1 chit per die. You can re-roll all your dice for a total cost of 3 chits.

*Still breathing* When the game master announces your character is dead for any reason, you can pay 2 chits to keep them alive<sup>17</sup>. Instead of dying, your character is Hurt<sup>18</sup>.

*Double or nothing* Just as it says, pay 1 chit for the opportunity to double the result of all your dice. The whole thing is a gamble that could turn against you if you are unlucky again. See how it goes.

1. If after rolling your dice you don't like the results and want a chance for *Double or nothing*, you tell the game master.
2. He then would announce what is at stake. Usually you would just lose 1 to 5 extra chits and fumble at your attempt. However, the game master could say your character is hurt, or might just fail spectacularly before all your friends. If you agree with the consequences, you spend your chit and roll one normal die.
3. On an even result you can double your original throw.
4. On an odd result, however, you'll face the consequences that the game master announced.

Let's say you are playing baseball. You rolled a mere 8 (according to the game master, just enough to advance to first base). However, the game master told you that a 15 would grant you a home run and you desperately want that. So, you announce that you are taking your chances at *Double or nothing* and want to know what the consequence of failure could be. The game master, perhaps in a mischievous mood, announces that if you roll an odd number, your pants will fall down for the general merriment of your friends and rivals watching the game.

<sup>17</sup>This rule changes in the main rulebook.

<sup>18</sup>See the Damage Scale [on page 32](#)

Plus, you'll have to pay 1 extra chit. You agree to those terms. Thankfully, this time you roll a 4 (an even result), and double your original throw for a total of  $8 \times 2 = 16$  chits; more than enough for a home run.

*Let me try something cool* Sometimes you just need to do something cool, like jumping on a horse and then through a window to dodge a particularly nasty bully. The problem is that the game master can assign an impossible target number to such daredevil actions. In that case you can pay 1 chit to lower that TN to 12.

The game master must agree that:

- a) Your action is cool enough (dangerous is not always cool); and
- b) It has to be physically possible (even if unlikely) for a human.

*I'm a hero* For heroic actions in which your character, out of the goodness of his heart and without motive for any reward, risks his life for the sake of others or some noble ideal, you can pay 1 chit to lower the TN to 10.

As in *Let me try something cool* the game master must agree that:

- The action is heroic enough; and
- It has to be physically possible (however unlikely) for a human.

In short

When your player needs a favor, refer to the favor table, pay the chits and follow the rules. If the favor is not included in the table, the game master may (or may not) concede at a reasonable cost in chits, using the table as a guideline.

Chits are points you use to buy favors from the game master, the greater the favor, the greater the price. If it's something small like rolling again 1 single die you pay 1 chit. For other favors, you should negotiate with your game master.

When a player character wants to purchase one favor, he announces it to the game master, who must then approve the request. The game master would do so, as long as the player is not asking for anything weird, uncanny, unsporting or against the rules and pays the price in chits. The player then pays the favor's price in chits to the game master, who will then grant it. The benefits of such a favor should be narrated in a way that shows the role that luck played<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup>Suppose a player character was hit by a bullet and his player pays some chits so his character isn't hit. The game master then will say something like, "Luckily, the bullet is defective and drops to the ground, harmlessly." Or, "The assassin forgot to load his revolver." Or whatever feels appropriate to the situation.

### Losing Chits

Chits are spent every time they are used. However they can also be lost if your character faces tragic circumstances, such as those detailed below.

- **Stealing:** Caught or not, your character loses 3 chits the first time he steals.
- **Begging:** When your character has to beg for money from strangers (the very first time), your character loses 1 chit for the humiliation.
- **Going Hungry:** Every night you go to bed without having been able to eat at least one full meal, you lose 1 chit; 2 if the weather is cold.
- **Going Homeless:** The first night your character is homeless you lose 1 chit.



# Fights and chases

Fights and chases are chaotic and dangerous. One single shooting in the whole adventure could be deadly to every character. Needless to say, *Newsies & Bootblacks* is not a game about killing monsters and plundering their treasure, so combat could well be limited to slingshots, water buckets and cream cakes.

Sometimes there are no better alternatives. If you deal with nefarious spies, mad scientists, or rabid cats, or you dodge a band of young bullies, sooner or later you could end up in a fight. A bully would probably limit himself to knock you down and steal your stuff, but an evil wizard and his zombies might be less kind. Bottom line: even if it's not essential to the stories, we need to address combat with care.

Bear in mind that *Newsies & Bootblacks* does not attempt to mimic real life. Players are trying to simulate stories, comics and films. As such, and in the name of good fun, I'd ask the adults to remember the fun they had when they were 10 years old; when they made their toys fight each other.

## Sequence

To have some control in the chaos of combat, *Newsies & Bootblacks* has a sequence of actions. Use it as a to-do list for combat. You first have to do something, then you do something else. I know that it's a bit artificial to say you first shoot, move and then fight, or that fire "fights" when it burns, but many games use a similar structure and it works out quite nicely. Let me introduce you to the full sequence below:

1. Initiative roll
2. Shooting / Throwing / Ranged attacks
3. Movement / Reaction phase
4. Close combat
5. Checking for victory

## Initiative

1. Every character rolls for Athletics.<sup>20</sup>
2. Characters act in sequence according to their totals.
3. In the event of a tie:
  - Player characters act first, if still tied.
  - Younger characters act first, if still tied.
  - The character with the most chits acts first, if still tied.
  - Roll again until you break the tie.

## Shooting, throwing and ranged attacks

1. Attacks by shooting are resolved just like any other skill check, using the appropriate skill.
2. In *Newsies & Bootblacks* all weapons are considered to be in range<sup>21</sup>.

## Target number

1. For most weapons, the TN is  $6 + 1$  for every full 10 yards of distance.
2. For short-range weapons, the TN is  $6 + 1$  for every full five yards of distance.
3. For extreme short range weapons the TN is  $4 + 1$  for every full two yards of distance.
4. Add 1 if the target is crouching or taking cover under a table, behind a low wall or something like that.
5. Add 2 if the target is smaller than a head. (Or, if you can only see the head of your target.)
6. Add 4 if you cannot see your target but it's still possible to hit the target; lobbing a stone, for example.

Example: Pip wants to hit a can that is 30 yards away, using his slingshot. The slingshot is a short-range weapon, so the TN for this roll is  $6 + (30/5) + 2 = 6 + 6 + 2 = 14$ . Had he tried to do the same with a huge rock, an extreme short-range weapon, the TN would have been  $4 + (30/2) + 2 = 4 + 15 + 2 = 21$ . Wish him luck.

<sup>20</sup>If using a bicycle or vehicle use the appropriate skill to ride them.

<sup>21</sup>You can always try to hit, no matter how far away the target is.

### Dodging ranged attacks

1. All missile and thrown attacks can be dodged<sup>22</sup>, provided the character is aware of the attack and can see his attacker.
2. The target number to dodge an attack is the number the attacker rolled.
3. Double the target number if dodging a bullet.

### Movement and reaction phase

Every character, animal or vehicle in this game moves one pace per turn at their normal speed. The trick lies in that some paces are longer than others. For anybody younger than nine; one pace equals two yards per turn; for nine to 11, that's three yards per turn; for 12 to 14 it's four yards per turn, while those 15 years of age and older move at five yards per turn. The following table demonstrates some examples. The game master may adapt those for anything not covered here.

That explains your basic walking movement, but there could be times when you want to go much faster. In those cases you have to roll on Athletics, Riding or Vehicles. Your choice depends on whether you are on your feet or using some modern vehicle. The target number should be determined by the game master, taking into account the state of the ground, the weather and any other appropriate circumstances. If everything is normal the TN should be 10.

After passing the test, the character doubles his pace<sup>23</sup>. Triple the pace if the character achieves a spectacular success.

However, if you fumble you only move half your pace and then suffer a mishap. If you are running or riding a bicycle when you suffer the mishap, you trip or fall to the ground, possibly getting a few bruises. Inside a vehicle, both driver and passengers could suffer life-threatening wounds<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup>Yes, this includes bullets and ninja stars.

<sup>23</sup>Or that of the vehicle he's using.

<sup>24</sup>Details can be found in Section [on the next page](#).

**6.5.1 Movement Table**

You are / You are using	Pace
9 to 11 years old	3 yards
12 to 14 years old	4 yards
15 and older	5 yards
Swimming	Take 2 from your usual pace
Bicycle	Double your usual pace

**Close combat**

1. Every character can only attack once per turn<sup>25</sup>.
2. A character who is facing an enemy at less than *two yards* or so, can attack in close combat.
3. The attacker rolls for Fisticuffs, wether fighting armed or unarmed.
4. The attacker should add or subtract the appropriate modifiers that the game master imposes on the roll, to provide for special circumstances.
5. The defender rolls, using his Dodging skill.
6. If the defender rolls higher or equal to the attacker, the attack has failed.
7. If the attacker rolls higher than the defender, the attack has been successful and the defender will probably suffer some form of harm.

**Damage**

When your character gets hit, he will more than likely suffer some damage and in some cases death (unless you use one of your handy chits). Combat in this game, as in real life, can be quite deadly. Fortunately, most often you will not be using real weapons. Honest traders do not sell real weapons of any kind to children, and weapon possession while lawful, is not common in New Paris City. Rarely, in most campaigns, will you ever see a gun used in anger. If you do you'd better run because those things kill fast.

<sup>25</sup>Except in very special cases, as determined by the game master

### The damage roll

- Test your Health against the damage rank of the weapon that hit you.
- The damage rank of unarmed attacks is equal to a roll of the attacker's Strength dice (STR)<sup>26</sup>.
- The damage rank of most hand-to-hand weapons is equal to a roll of the attacker's Strength dice plus some modifier.
- The damage rank of most missile weapons is a fixed number.
- The effects depend on the nature of the weapon and your roll.

**Non-Lethal Weapons:** Such weapons which in a novel or story do not normally kill an adult.

**Success:** If your character has passed the Health check he is uninjured. He was tough enough and there's nothing to worry about.

**Fail:** If your character has failed the Health check you will receive a bruise. Each bruise gives you a malus of 1 for all your actions.

For example: you are involved in a fight with a band of bullies. They hit you seven times in the face (ouch!). That means you have to test your Health seven times. You are lucky (or tough) enough to pass five of these checks. But you failed two of these so you received two bruises. Now you are at *minus 2*, so every time you roll the dice to check for a skill or attribute, you subtract 2 points to every roll. If you later receive another bruise, you'll be at *minus 3* and you'll have to subtract 3 points to every roll, and so on.

**Fumble:** If you fumble the check you move down one step in the damage scale. This is explained in Section 6.7.2. It means you go from swell to hurt, from hurt to grave and from grave to dead.

**Toy Weapons:** These are objects that can only cause embarrassment<sup>27</sup>. We are speaking of such terrible instruments as cakes, rotten tomatoes and such.

**Success:** If your character has passed the Health check he is uninjured. He was tough enough and there's nothing to worry about.

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<sup>26</sup>Pip's Strength is three weak dice, so when he hits an opponent he'll roll three weak dice; the total being the damage rank of the attack.

<sup>27</sup>In a story! In real life accidents are always possible

**Fail:** If your character has failed the Health check you will receive a bruise. Each bruise gives you a malus of 1 for all your actions. However, unlike the case of non-lethal weapons, all the *damage* that toy weapons cause is *healed* right after the end of the fight. Remember to record toy weapons damage separately.

**Fumble:** Your character is so embarrassed that he will not be able to act for one turn, and may be either crying as a baby or shouting ferocious, angry threats.

**Toy Weapons vs Lethal Weapons:** If any lethal or extremely lethal weapon is used in the action, toy weapons cease to cause any harm at all. When you see a shotgun nobody cares about being hit by a cake.

**Lethal Weapons:** Weapons that can kill somebody in a story, though most times the afflicted character survives. We are speaking of knives, the teeth of a strong dog and very small pistols such as a derringer.

**Spectacular Success:** Luckily, the attack was too weak and your character is unharmed.

**Success:** If your character passes the Health check he is still bruised and you receive a -1 bruise.

**Fail:** If your character fails the Health check he moves down one step in the damage scale that moves in succession from swell to hurt to grave and finally, to dead<sup>28</sup>.

**Fumble:** If your character fumbles, he will die unless you spend a chit right away.

**Extremely Lethal Weapons:** Weapons that can kill an adult in one single attack, and often do so in stories. Examples include swords, revolvers, rifles or large fires. You are advised to be very careful when somebody uses them.

**Spectacular Success:** Even with a spectacular success your character receives one bruise. Consider it a scratch.

**Success:** If your character passes the Health check he moves up one step in the damage scale.

**Fail or Fumble:** If your character fails or fumbles he will die unless you spend a chit right away.

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<sup>28</sup>More details are found in section [on the following page](#)



## Weapons (and other sources of damage)

Weapon	Type	Damage	Range
Animal	Non-lethal	STR	-
Cane or stick	Non-lethal	STR +1	-
Knuckle-duster	Non-lethal	STR +2	-
Stone or brick	Non-lethal	STR -1	Short
Large rock	Lethal	STR -1	Extreme short
Knife	Lethal	STR +1	-
Knife (thrown)	Lethal	STR	Short
Sword	Extreme	STR +1	-
Derringer	Lethal	13	Short
Revolver	Extreme	15	Short
Rifle	Extreme	15	Normal
Shotgun	Extreme	18	Short
Fall	Lethal	2 per 3 feet	-
Small fire	Lethal	13	-
Large fire	Extreme	13	-
Falling off a bike	Non-lethal	12	-
Falling while running	Non-lethal	9	-
Slingshot <sup>29</sup>	Toy	10	Short
Cake	Toy	15	Extreme short range
Bucket of water	Toy	12	Extreme short range

## The damage scale

The damage scale is an easy way to say how hurt a character is. Every player starts at swell and during game time, they may be downgraded to hurt. From

<sup>29</sup>Lethal for small animals; starving kids use them for hunting rats, sparrows and such.

hurt a player worsens to grave, which is a serious condition, and then finally, dead. Each of these conditions have an effect on what a character can do. An explanation of these follows.

**Swell:** Your character is perfectly healthy and you have nothing to worry about. Bruises are kept from the damage scale, so no matter how many bruises you get, you retain your swell status. You can be swell and still be at 5 bruises.

**Hurt:** Your character is suffering from a wound or sickness that is serious enough to hinder your actions, but not to endanger your life. You are at -5 for all your actions (in addition to any bruises). So, if you have -3 bruises, you are down to -8.

**Grave:** Your character is in real trouble. You are wounded and at -5 for all your actions plus any bruises, just as when you are *Hurt*. However, it hurts so much you need to roll for Health with a TN of 10, just for standing up. Walking requires a TN of 12. Running and other strenuous physical activities are next to impossible.

**Dead:** If you don't spend 2 chits immediately your character is quite dead. There is nothing your friends can do about it, except to arrange for a decent burial. The game master might let you say up to 25 last words.

### Effects of damage on non-living objects

For non-living objects, the game master should assign a fake Health attribute. Bruised items will only need a paint job, suffering no harm. Hurt items lose one level of quality. Grave items lose two levels of quality. Dead items are considered destroyed for all functional purposes.

If an item drops lower than E-grade, it is also destroyed.

## Healing

**Bruises:** Healed after a good full night of rest, no medical attention needed.

**Bruises from Toy Weapons:** These are healed *immediately* after the fight is ended. (Write a small "t" on your character sheet to tell these from regular bruises.)

**Hurt or Grave:** A hurt or grave character needs some form of medical attention. The healer (doctor, nurse or amateur) should roll for Healing with a TN of 11 if the character is hurt or 14 if he is grave. This roll encompasses all the Healing attempts in any given day and can only be tried once a day.

Fumble: The character's condition worsens. Hurt worsens to grave and grave worsens to dead (unless the character spends 1 chit).

Fail: Roll one die. On a roll of 1 the character's condition worsens, as if the healer had fumbled. On a roll of 2 to 4 the character remains hurt or grave. On a roll of 5 to 6, the character's condition improves. Grave worsens to hurt and hurt recovers to swell, but with five bruises that will heal normally after a good full night of rest.

Success: The character's condition improves. Grave improves to hurt and hurt recovers to swell, but with five bruises that will heal normally after a good full night of rest.

Exceptional Success: The character's condition improves. Grave recovers to swell, but with five bruises that will heal normally after a good full night of rest; hurt recovers immediately.

If the character receives no medical attention, roll one die. On a roll of 1 or 2 the character's condition worsens. On a roll of 3 to 5 the character remains hurt or grave. On a roll of 6, the character's condition improves one rank: e.g. from Grave to Hurt.



# Equipment

## Definitions

Large Object: A large object is anything that would not fit inside a pocket.

Small Object: A small object is anything that would fit inside a pocket.

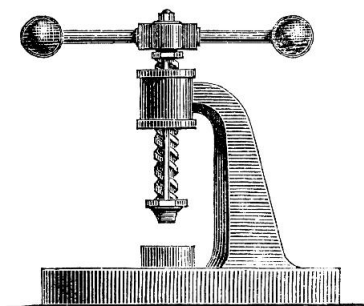
## Limits

- Large object: A character can carry as many large objects as dice he has allocated to Strength, whether these are weak or normal dice. Using a bag or backpack doubles that number.
- Small object: A character can carry up to 12 small objects; any number, if he is using a bag or backpack.
- Clothes do not count as objects if worn.

Note: These limits are a guideline for the game master, who can use his good judgement to disallow any newsboy to carry an elephant as if it were just one large object.

## Equipment quality

- A: Good quality product; exclusive service.
- B: Standard quality product; first-class service.
- C: Cheap, mass-produced product; second-class service.
- D: Second-hand or badly manufactured product; third-class safe.
- E: Barely usable, worn-out or unsafe product; unsafe service, such as riding on the top of a train car.



Price Table

Name	Size	Price	Quality	Notes
Clothing D	Large	\$2.50	D	No shoes
Clothing C	Large	\$7	C	No shoes
Clothing B	Large	\$10	B	
Clothing A	Large	\$20	A	Rare
Shoes	Large	\$3.50	D	
Sport shoes	Large	\$5	B	
Candle	Small	5 cents	C	
Deluxe slingshot	Small	\$2.00	B	
Street fast food	Small	45 cents	D	
Cafeteria meal	Large	60 cents	C	
Deluxe breakfast	Large	\$2	A	
Small Room - Rent	—	\$3	D	Per week
Guest House	—	\$8	C	Room & Board, per week
Small Tool	Small	\$1.50	C	
Newspaper bag	-	Free	C	Has Newspaper logo.
Backpack	-	\$2 C	D	
Newspaper Bundle	Large	\$1		100 bundle
Newspaper	Small	2 cents		





# Prepare the Adventure

## Choose your character.

Distribute the characters among yourselves: everybody should get one. Don't make a fuss if everybody wants the same character let a friendly dice roll set the matter up. Some characters are better skilled than others, exactly as in real life, but don't worry too much about that. You are playing with your friends, not against them, and each character has an unique contribution to make.

Once you have chosen your character, print a Character Sheet<sup>30</sup> and write down his stats on it.



## A common background

All the characters of this game come from the Waddington family. The Waddingtons live in a mansion in Royal Island, the most fashionable quarter in New Paris. They are great students with a loving family, free of preoccupations. Everything seems well; well it seems...

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<sup>30</sup>This is located on the last page of this book.

### Daniel Waddington

Age 9 Gender: Boy Chits 11 Pace 3

STR 2 wd    AGI 4 wd    HLT 2 wd    E&E 3 wd    EDU 2 wd    CHA 3 wd

Good at: Athletics, Climbing, Fisticuffs

Bad at: Academics, Craft, Healing, Languages, Locks, Performance, Picpockets, Swimming, Vehicles

OK at: Every other skill.

Equipment: School Uniform (B), Satchel with school supplies, Wooden Sword (Non Lethal, Damage STR+1), "Zorro" mask, \$0.20

### Lucy Waddington

Age 10 Gender: Girl Chits 10 Pace 3

STR 2 wd    AGI 3 wd    HLT 2 wd    E&E 3 wd    EDU 3 wd    CHA 4 wd

Good at: Athletics, Healing, Sweet Talk, Performance

Bad at: Craft, Dodging, Fisticuffs, Locks, Mechanics, Pickpockets, Riding, Streetwise

OK at: Every other skill.

Equipment: School Uniform (B), Satchel with school supplies, Sewing Kit, Booklets: "First aid for girl scouts", \$0.25.

### Benjamin Waddington

Age 11 Gender: Boy Chits 9 Pace 3

STR 2 wd    AGI 4 wd    HLT 3 wd    E&E 3 wd    EDU 3 wd 1 d    CHA 2 wd

Good at: Academics, Locks, Pickpockets, Stealth, Shooting.

Bad at: Athletics, Craft, Fisticuffs, Healing, Riding, Streetwise

OK at: Every other skill.

Equipment: School Uniform, brand new (Quality A), Satchel with School supplies, Lockpicks, Bag of Toffees, \$0.40, Swiss Army Knife

Timothy Waddington

Age 12 Gender: Boy Chits 8 Pace 4

STR 3 wd AGI 3 wd HLT 3 wd E&E 3 wd EDU 3 wd CHA 3 wd

Good at: Athletics, Craft, Dodging, Fisticuffs, Stealth, Shooting

Bad at: Locks, Pickpockets, Riding, Swimming, Streetwise, Throwing

OK at: Every other skill.

Equipment: School Uniform (Quality B), Satchel with school supplies, Map of New Paris, Slingshot, \$0.60

Diana Waddington

Age 13 Gender: Girl Chits 7 Pace 4

STR 3 wd AGI 4 wd HLT 3 wd E&E 4 wd EDU 3 wd CHA 3 wd

Good at: Athletics, Academics, Craft, Dodging, Observation, Performance, Sweet Talk

Bad at: Fisticuffs, Locks, Pickpockets, Riding, Shooting

OK at: Every other skill.

Equipment: School Uniform (B), Satchel with school supplies, make-up kit, Slingshot, \$0.80.

James Waddington

Age 14 Gender: Boy Chits 6 Pace 4

STR 4 wd AGI 4 wd HLT 3 wd E&E 3 wd EDU 3wd CHA 4 wd

Good at: Athletics, Climbing, Fisticuffs, Healing, Swimming, Shooting, Sweet Talk, Throwing

Bad at: Craft, Dodging, Locks, Pickpockets

OK at: Every other skill.

Equipment: School Uniform (B), Satchel with school supplies, sport shoes, \$1.20

## Get Some useful stuff

You may want to get a table, chairs, a few blank sheets of paper to draw maps and take notes and some pencils and an eraser. None of that is strictly necessary to play but they will help.



# Forsaken!

Wait in the name of good gaming! Only the game master should read the secrets of this adventure. Else, you would be cheating, and worse, the game would be much less fun to you.

## Introduction

Forsaken is an adventure for a small group of players. It is divided into fifteen scenes, a few of which are optional. The game master should read them all and adapt them to the needs of the players. A few scenes *might* be too scary for very young players; these are marked with a star: ★.

Before the start of the adventure, the game master should introduce the players to the setting – they city of New Paris – and explain the most basic rules to the players. There is no need to explain everything as players can learn most things as they go.

## Scene 1 A cold welcome.

- Season Fall. Date: The day before Halloween. Some year around 1905.

You may read the following paragraph to the players, or just explain the situation as you see it's best.

*You are coming back from school, tidy and well dressed, as good children should be. It has been raining all day, but the skies are clear and the streets are shining with the evening sun. St Louis Street, in Royal Island – the best part of New Paris – is decorated with elegant pumpkin heads and golden witches cauldrons are before every shop. The stiff, conservative Royal Island adults might not like Halloween much, but their children certainly do and there's good money to be made from rich kids, like you. Just the thought of the candy you will get and the grand ball that expects you tomorrow makes your soul dance with anticipation. Have not been for your rigorous education, you will be dancing as you walk.*

Let the players explore their surroundings or go straight home. St Louis street is home to more of two dozen business, ground level specialized shops targeted

at the wealth. There is a small table with useful things to buy [on page 36](#), if they want to buy something else you will need to improvise. Just remember there are things no responsible adult will ever sell to children, at least not in Royal Island. In any case, make sure they know their first step towards the adventure is to go back home, if they would rather not, let them meet their parents on the street.

Once home, their butler Mr George Arundel, who they all call uncle Georgy, will open the door. The shock will come as he will not recognize any of them nor let them come in. If the player-characters don't leave right away, their parents (Joseph and Mary) will come at the door and state in no uncertain terms that they don't know who they are, that all their children died five years ago the night before Halloween and that they find this situation "*a felonious prank of very bad taste*". If further pressed the butler will just close the door and call the cops<sup>31</sup>. Nobody else in the world, even friends and neighbours<sup>32</sup>, know who they are, they are forsaken and their first task is to find a place to sleep.

## Scene 2 Wandering in New Paris

- The day before Halloween. Late evening into night.
- Location: Somewhere in New Paris.
- ★ Consider skipping or adapting this scene if playing with very young players.

Ask the players what they want to do now. It's getting late and the kind of hotels they are used to will not accept them for the pocket money they carry, but let them try. After they have tried a few times and failed, *Jeroen*, an emaciated messenger boy<sup>33</sup>, scared like a piglet before a butcher, will appear riding his bicycle, whistle and wave at them, and then throw an envelope before riding away at top speed. Once opened, it would reveal to be an opal black paper written with a golden ink which reads:

*Dread the morrow; thy angst shall be my servant; I shall taste thy tears.*

Just as they end reading the note, a band of twice as many young muggers<sup>34</sup> as player characters will appear at the end of the street. They will come with obvious hostile intentions, but nobody else on the street would notice or care.

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<sup>31</sup>These will be here 2 sd turns

<sup>32</sup>Show the players but letting them run into a friend and/or a teacher

<sup>33</sup>His stats are located on [page 55](#)

<sup>34</sup>Their stats are located [on page 55](#)



If the players want to run away from the gangsters, ask them for their plan. If they have no plan beyond running as fast as they can, the TN would be 11, else the TN can be as low as 7 for a very good plan or 13 for something really stupid.

- Running from muggers: Athletics, TN 7 to 13.

Any attempt to negotiate will be met with cold silence. The gangsters expect a magnificent payment and there is nothing the players can offer to stop them.

If the players are caught, they will be forced to fight. Draw some narrow alley, sparkle it with some trash, an emergency ladder should be nearby, hanging from one of the buildings; that should be the fighting ground. The players lose the battle when they either give in, or they have 5 bruises each or worse. The muggers will run away as soon as 4 or more of them have 5 bruises each or worse. If the players lose, the muggers will take their money along with their shoes and coats<sup>35</sup>. Then, at once, the gangsters will run away to dissolve into the shadows.

- Calling for police: If called, the police will be there in 10 + 1 sd turns, chasing the muggers away, as soon as they arrive.

## Scene 3 A newsboy and a bootblack

- Date: The night before Halloween.

Once the dust clears, the sun almost set below the New Paris skyline, Robin, a newsboy and Simon, a bootblack, with a honest, friendly and caring outlook<sup>36</sup>, on their way back to the lodge, will rush to offer their help.

Some of the sentences the newcomers might use include: “Did they hurt you?” and “Why ain’t you home?” or “Got lost?”

If the players are totally honest, they would not be believed, of course, Robin and Simon would suppose they have just been abandoned – just as many of their friends –, only that these pampered rich kids didn’t see it coming and are in shock. In any case, they will offer guide them to the Newsboy Lodge. They will explain that it’s a decent place to stay when you can’t be with your parents; that the Lodge would even lend them a bit of money so they can pay for their stay and have enough to buy a bundle of papers to sell tomorrow.

- The Lodge asks for \$1 per week. That covers three square meals and all the services, but school, which is an extra<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>35</sup>Clothes grade lowered to D

<sup>36</sup>Their stats are located [on page 56](#)

<sup>37</sup>A shared single room dusty “apartment” with no furniture or heating in the Impoverished Area of New Paris is at least \$5.00 per week, plus \$1.50 per day to survive on street food

Robin and Simon have a honest look and seem genuinely interested in the player characters well being. They have had it quite rough too and would rather spare anybody from the bad experiences they went through. However, if they aren't trusted they would not press the matter.

## Scene 4 a The Newsboy Lodge

- Date: The night before Halloween

The player characters would have to check in with Mr Goodman<sup>38</sup>, the Lodge Warden. After that, they will go straight to dinner, and then Mr Goodman will invite them to sleep in the Lodge's clock tower, with the other new-comers. The place is a bare, square room, with four windows, one of which has a breached pane that let the cold in. An old smelly stove gives some heat. Lined against the walls there are twelve mattresses which lay directly on the floor, the bedding neatly folded on them.

"This is just for the first few days", the warden will tell them, "just until we know you can respect the rules. The first of which is that we want no fuss at night. When we see we can trust you, you'll have your own bed with the rest of the regulars".

The task could seem simple, but one hour later, when the petrol lamps are already extinguished, and our heroes soundly asleep, Mr Goodman will appear escorting John Brickfists<sup>39</sup>. This newsboy will come in, wait for the warden to get away, and then he will wake everybody up, taunt the players and challenge everybody to a fight. He will not actually begin the fight, though. If the players fall for it, they would be in trouble as the warden will arrive in 1 sd turns with 2 other adults. They could even be sent out if they don't say the right words or act as if they didn't care.

In fact, all John Brickfists want is to be listened. He has had a rough day. His long absentee father came for a short visit, invited him to chocolate, played nice and then faded away as fast with an excuse. Just a couple of hours ago, John learned that his father was arrested for damaging his mother's tomb-stone with a hammer. John has a problem controlling himself and as a result he has been taken from his bed at the regular room in the Lodge to the tower, with the newcomers. That's usually a signal good enough, but John's soul is far too crumbled down to care. If the player-character do listen, he will share his story, come down in tears and then quietly fall into slumber.

- Grant every character one chit if the players are able to calm John down.

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<sup>38</sup>His stats are located [on page 56](#)

<sup>39</sup>His stats are located [on page 57](#)

What if the players refuse to sleep in the Lodge?

In that case, the adventure would be tougher for them, beginning with finding a place to sleep, possibly going homeless and being forced to beg or steal<sup>40</sup>. I will not make further references to their situation, as I believe most players would choose the Lodge in the streets without a second thought. If this happen you will have to adapt the adventure to their specific situation. But don't worry the penalties of not going to the Lodge are so hard it is unlikely the players will stay out more than one night.

## Scene 5 A New Dawn

- Date: Halloween, Dawn to early morning.

5 A.M. time to rise up, wash the upper part of their bodies<sup>41</sup> and take breakfast. Player-characters can ask up to \$1.40<sup>42</sup> each, due – without interest – in one week. The money is enough to buy a bundle of a common newspaper<sup>43</sup>. Robin would offer to guide them in their first day, but he would not push the matter if the characters refuse.

To sell their newspapers, ask the players their plans. Then ask *each one* to roll for Sweet Talk against a TN of 10 if they have some sort of good selling plan, or 12 if they lack it. Add 1 to the dice roll if Robin is with them. Add 1 if they are still wearing B grade clothing. Subtract 1 if they are wearing D grade clothing.

- Selling. Sweet Talk 10 to 12, according to plan. +1 if Robin is with them. +1 if wearing B grade clothing -1 if wearing D grade Clothing.
- You could also use the Scene Resolution rules described [on page 20](#) to save time.

Characters who fail the roll only sell 4 weak dice (from 4 to 20) of newspapers each. Successful ones, however, roll 4 swell dice and add 50 to the total (from 62 to 74)<sup>44</sup>.

They can repeat this test once per two hours dedicated to selling. As they started on 6 AM, they will be able to try up to three times before the beginning of the next scene.

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<sup>40</sup>With the associated penalties as detailed

<sup>41</sup>Full baths are taken only on Sundays.

<sup>42</sup>Mr Goodman first offer will be \$0.70

<sup>43</sup>See the Price Table [on page 36](#)

<sup>44</sup>These rules assume the player-characters are spending from 5:30 to 11:00 trying to sell their newspapers, adjust accordingly.

## Scene 6 Picking a pocket or two

- Date; Halloween, Noon.

Make each player roll for Observation; the player who gets the lowest roll will get his pockets picked. A quick rub with something hard and cold on the forehead, and setting his pockets empty would be all that he'd notice as he sees *an emaciated girl of 11*<sup>45</sup>, dirty as a cockroach, running away as if she feared for her life. One second later, a *fat salesman* would begin yelling: "*Stop Thief!*"<sup>46</sup>

Supposing the pcs are running after the girl, make each one roll for Athletics against a TN of 9 to 15 according to how fast they react. Those who fail would lose trace of the pickpocket girl and their friends and can't participate in the persecution. Those who kept up, would have to brace for up to three funny complications such as<sup>47</sup>:

1. A large music band playing "*Under the double Eagle*" or "*Stars and Stripes*", marching as they cover half the width of the street. The pickpocket girl would sneak through them. Unless the players have a better plan, getting into the band as they march needs a roll of Dodging against a TN of 10. Those who fail would lose trace of the pickpocket girl.
2. Two men are turning the corner carrying a fragile, huge, glass panel. Dodging them requires a TN of 7, but failing means a mess of expensive broken glass and a lot of questions to answer.
3. A crowd gathered around a peddler stand selling "*Dragon Blood*", bottled, to heal all the ailments. The pickpocket girl would try to hide amongst this and would fool her persecutors if nobody passes an observation roll against a TN of 11.
4. A cream cake is cooling by a window. The girl would take the opportunity to take it and throw it at the strongest runner in the player-character group. Make the target roll for Dodging against a TN of 9, failure means the persecutors have to break the chase.

If the at least one player-character is able to go through all the complications you throw at them, the pickpocket would try and all or nothing sprint. The game master should roll for the pickpocket's Athletics skill, and the persecutors would do the same, the pickpocket would have to beat each persecutor's total

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<sup>45</sup>See her stats [on page 57](#)

<sup>46</sup>If you want to make things even tougher for your players let the salesman be in the service of the Gold Witch. In that case he would point at the player character who just got stolen.

<sup>47</sup>Use as many as you want. Feel free to use complications of your own.

to escape. If caught, she would try to wrestle, bite, scratch and kick in you-know-where. However, all it's lost for her, as two burly members of the New Paris Constabulary would proceed to arrest her, return the money to the player characters and escort her to court. If the player-characters mention something about a golden box, the cops will search her, but they will find nothing.

- To catch the pickpocket, the character should roll for Athletics and roll higher than her.

If she outraces everybody else, she will disappear in the dark sewers.

- A roll of Observation beating a TN of 9 will allow the players to spot Jeroen running away from them.

## Scene 7 A lost golden box

- Date Halloween, afternoon.

The players should return to work, to finish off their sales<sup>48</sup>. Use the same rules as in Scene 5 but raise the TN by 1 unless they are selling the evening edition. Tell them that they need to make the money to pay for the Lodge and re-pay their debts.

As they are through it, they will spot *Jeroen*, the messenger boy, frantically searching for something among dust bins. Persecuting him, is impossible, he will get to his bike and get away before the players can even get close. Searching the bins would yield a golden box<sup>49</sup>.

The box is a small golden cube engraved with terrible monsters and demons kneeling before a crowned woman. There is a little crank on one of the protruding from the woman right hand.

The golden box can't be opened no matter what the players try except by winding it. Once winded the clockwork mechanism will spring the cover up. The box is filled with mercury, on the surface of the liquid, moving images will form. First, the players will see themselves in their former lives, swimming by the New Paris beach, their parents on watch; running around on Benjamin Franklin's Park or sharing a game of billiards in the exclusive *Falconet Club*. Then the images will turn to the first scene, when their parents did not recognize them, then the rest of the adventure. After that they will see a mansion somewhere in the Decree Slums, a den of perdition filled with decrepit houses, trash, mud, despair,

<sup>48</sup>If they run out of papers, remember they can buy some evening edition bundles

<sup>49</sup>If the players refuse to search anything in the trash bin, come up with a scene in which Jeroen somehow loses this box, as it is essential for the adventure.

mobsters, houses of low reputation, and all kinds of criminals. The image will dissolve and the players will see themselves quivering in fear and cold, locked in a damp, dark cell, rats eating their food. Finally they'll see *Jeroen* the messenger boy throwing their dirty, scar covered, paralyzed bodies to a dump, even as they beg for mercy<sup>50</sup>.

As long as the mercury is kept in the box the players will be able to see these images. For everybody else it's a curious antique filled with mercury for some weird reason.

Ask the players what they want to do. They probably would like to gather information about the Decree Slums, and what's there. Rolling for streetwise (TN 10) would only reveal that it's extremely dangerous place, specially at night; an spectacular success would yield that there are rumors about witchcraft, slavery and rampant sickness there. If they want more information mention that many among the inhabitants of the Lodge have come from Decree

## Scene 8 The Halloween Party

- Date Halloween. Night.

The players have returned to the Lodge, where the evening schedule playing games, then school and dinner. If they ask anybody about the Decree Slums, everybody will try his best to stop them to go there, specially at night, but nobody seems to know anything about a mansion there. If the players persist they will find that Robin and Simon grew up in Decree Slums. They share that there used to be many mansions in Decree, back when the rich lived there, before the epidemic, but that there are all in ruins now, except one: the "witch castle", nobody ever goes there because it gives "bad luck". The players might want to recruit Robin and Samuel to accompany them, ask them what reasons they offer to their friends and make them roll for Sweet Talk, with a TN of 9 to 13, according to these.

The usual dinner in the Lodge is replaced by short, modest Halloween Party: tomorrow there are newspapers to sell.

What if the players won't go to the witch?

In that unlikely case the witch will find a way to make their lives miserable. They will be robbed, beaten, framed for crimes, horses will be drawn to run over them. Every time the players should be able to spot either the messenger boy or the witch until they understand they can't hide from her grasp. The witch will always keep two rules. First, she will never be involved herself and second, she will try to keep them alive, as she literally feeds on their misery.

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<sup>50</sup> Adapt these images to the ages of the players.



## Scene 9 To the Witch Castle

- ★ Consider adapting or skipping this scene if playing with very young players.

Walking from the Lodge to the northeast rim of the Outer Expanses could take them a few hours, but 2 cents would pay a ride in the NPET<sup>51</sup> to Outer Expanses, the most industrialized area of New Paris. From there, the players will have to walk for two hours to the landfill, which interrupts the way to the slums. An old worker, on guessing their route could say something like *“Not that way! Not that way! It’s dangerous. You are going to the slums, pinheads!”*

### The Landfill

The giant landfill extends like a nauseous bog with a narrow, winding, muddy path crossing it through its center. Scores of rats, bugs, crows and seagulls roam the place. The fresh rain and the sea breeze have made a winter alliance against the heroes<sup>52</sup>. If Robin is with the players he will say something like *“Odd, there are no piglets, must be the rain”*. By piglets he means the scores of kid from the slums who search for anything valuable in the landfill.

Halfway, the players they will hear a pathetic, barely audible call of help from a kid: *“Help, please, why nobody helps me? I’m sick, help, please”*.

After the players spend time investigating, half a mile from the path, their feet sinking in the trash to their knees, they will find *Jeroen*, the messenger boy half buried in orange peels, rotten sardines and old sackcloth, his arms hanging like if a ragdoll. The boy will seem terribly scared at the players arrival, but all he will do is to close his eyes.

Jeroen is paralyzed neck down, he has been cursed by the witch for losing the box and then dumped there by a sinister servant<sup>53</sup> of the witch to die of starvation and thirst. The curse will last until somebody does something kind for him, though he doesn’t know this. If addressed, he’ll only be able to come out with excuses for helping the witch, and only after being assured they aren’t going to hurt him, he’ll be able to share anything useful.

If the players take Jeroen to a hospital, interrupting their mission, Jeroen will recover instantly, will be ever thankful and ask the players to join them in their plans to defeat the witch.

<sup>51</sup>The New Paris Elevated Train Company

<sup>52</sup>Those who D clothes or worse, are at -1 for the cold during this scene

<sup>53</sup>A masked, corpulent figure, masked and clothed in black from head to toe that will not further appear on this adventure.

- Reward every player with 1 Chit each if they take Jeroen to hospital or a similar institution.

## Scene 10 Dodging bullies

- These scenes (10a and 10b) are optional. Consider skipping them if you are short on time.

Once the players are beyond the landfill, they will have to negotiate the slums to the Witch Castle. Their chances would vary according to their timing and those helping them.

### Scene 10a Decree by night.

Robin would never agree to guide the players during the night. Jeroen would, but not without trying his best to discourage them. Should the players go on, they will be ambushed in an alley by 4 to 8 teenagers<sup>54</sup>, who would rob them, strip them of everything but their undies and then, chained, take them to an underground cellar to be locked up and then sold to a Chinese slaver to work as servants in some Asian palace, ending the adventure.

- If the players want to run away from the gangsters, ask them for their plan. If they have no plan beyond running as fast as they can, the TN would be 13, else the TN can be as low as 12 for a very good plan or 16 for something really stupid. The character with the worst stat at Athletics should roll the dice.

Play the fight like in Scene 2. Only this time the map should be dotted with huts, clothes lines, barricades of trash, open fireplaces, pits, mud and rubble. On these muddy alleys it's hard to run, rise the TN for running to 13<sup>55</sup>. The fight will keep on until the players surrender or they are all hurt or worse.

### Scene 10b Decree by day.

If the players are on their own, make them roll for Streetwise TN 13. Failure means they get to the wrong places, and will be challenged by a few bully teenagers. They will test the player characters by pushing them, insulting and "politely asking for money" while taking their hands to their necks mimicking the slash of a dagger. If the player characters keep their heads, they will move away eventually. If not, proceed like in Scene 10a, but lower the TN by 3.

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<sup>54</sup>See their stats [on page 57](#)

<sup>55</sup>See Movement and Reaction

If either Robin is with them, the passage will be uneventful, as he guides them through a strange path: climbing into roofs, jumping into buildings, sneaking through underground corridors and getting through narrow alleys. The Game Master might add some complications, in the shape of obstacles to jump over, cross or sneak under.

## Scene 11 The Witch Castle

The *witch castle* looks much more unimpressive than as it appeared on the mercury. What the players have before them is a large bleak house of condemned windows and barred doors. The garden which surrounds it, is in a wild state, populated with stinging nettles, rats and crows; the exterior wall, an ancient but firm structure of solid stones without a gate, is decorated with cats' bones and skulls.

Gruesome, as it might look, climbing the wall is easy (Climbing TN of 8, or 6 if helped). In the garden, there are seven serpents. These are not poisonous and would not attack players unless attacked first<sup>56</sup>, would slither away at the first opportunity.

Stinging nettles can be recognized with an easy Education roll (TN of 6) They should not be a problem if the players avoid them. If somebody tries to hide, run or sneak through them, roll 1 fd, the result being the bruises the player suffer<sup>57</sup>.

The players might want to break in by forcing the windows or doors. In that case let them, but stress that they will be making much noise and it will take them a long time to do it. *Jeroen*, if present, will make clear the folly of it, as it would alert the witch. If the players keep on, nevertheless, proceed to Scene 12 B.

The alternative is a nettle covered cellar door. The players should find a way to deal with these and then enter in the cellar, proceed to Scene 12 A

## Scene 12 The lair of the beast

### Scene 12 A Breaking and Entering

The witch<sup>58</sup> will be ready for them, hiding in the shadows. (Observation TN 14 to locate her). She'll fight with all at her disposal, cursing if possible, resorting to her golden staff as a last resort.

If, at any point, everybody is at -10 (even if only for certain actions), the witch would have won. She would then take the players to the cellar to chain and lock

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<sup>56</sup>See stats [on page 58](#)

<sup>57</sup>So if a player gets a 2, he'll be at -2 to all his dice rolls.

<sup>58</sup>Stats and special rules are located [on page 58](#)



them there. Proceed to Scene 13. The witch can only be defeated according to the special rules governing this character.

#### Scene 12 B The back door

The cellar will receive them with the putrid air of old urine. It's terribly dark, and unless they brought candles, the players will not be able to see anything beyond one yard or so, or nothing at all if they are trying it in the night. To their right and left there are six cells, two of which are occupied by one child each<sup>59</sup>, chained to the wall by the ankle<sup>60</sup>. All of the inmates are sick and can barely walk much less help in any way. The grates of the cells are, of course, locked<sup>61</sup>.

The passage ends in a sturdy oak door, closed but unlocked. It opens to stairs leading to an old library. A quick search will yield an assortment of ancient, handwritten occult books and scrolls, many of which are in scripts that do not seem to belong to this world. There are no chairs, just an ambon on which rests a diary. Its last entry, dated in 1799, ends with an invocation to hell and the selling of a soul in exchange for blasphemous powers, *"thy evil I accept as mine, on earth I shall be eternal, gladly I sell my soul, summon on me the crown of gold"*. Then, in another, uncannily beautiful script, written in something that looks like silver, a bible quote.

- Touching this script gives 1 chit (only once per character).

*This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver,  
his belly and his thighs of brass, His legs of iron, his feet part of iron  
and part of clay. (Dan 2:32-33)*

<sup>59</sup>Or substitute with teddy bears.

<sup>60</sup>Locks TN 12 using picklocks, 16 without them

<sup>61</sup>Locks TN 13 using picklocks, 17 without them

Then the witch<sup>62</sup> will approach through the mansion's main corridor to check the noise. The game master should make a *secret roll* for each character's Eyes & Ears against a TN of 10. Those who pass it will notice the witch's steps allowing the players to prepare. She will be surprised to see the characters there, and will not attack during the first turn of the fight. If Jeroen is present the first thing the witch would do, if at all possible, is to thank him for bringing the players to their doom. Jeroen would protest with a "*Don't believe her, she's lying*"; the witch would answer with nothing but a mischievous smile. After that, the battle will begin as in the previous scene yet this time the players are much closer to the witch, know where she is and, hopefully have been able to guess her weak spots: crown and feet.

- If, at any point, everybody is at -10 (even if only for certain actions), the witch would have won. She would then take the players to the cellar to chain and lock them there. Proceed to Scene 13.
- If the players defeat the witch proceed to Scene 15.

## Scene 13 A narrow escape

- One week after fighting the witch, night.

This scene is only to be used to give the players a second chance. Strict game masters may prefer to leave the players to enjoy their doom.

The players are chained and locked together in one of the cells. Three cookies each to eat, an earthen jar of water to share. Rats, lice and fleas. They've been there for almost a week, and they are about to lose all hope. This time the witch will come with as many lengths of strong rope as characters, all prepared with a ready hangman knot and three long nails. She will hand these through the bars and say something like "See if you can solve your own miseries with this". Then, she will go back to her room. The witch is, of course, playing with the desperation of the characters, but that could be her last mistake if the players are able to figure out a escape plan with these tools.

Continue in Scene 14

## Scene 14 Freedom

If the players are able to escape, the game master should make it pain that they will never recover their parents or even survive as long as the witch is still around. The witch, of course, will be there in no time and it's up to them to set

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<sup>62</sup>See her stats and special rules [on page 58](#)

up a plan which could defeat her. If the players have not yet been in the library, the game master should suggest them to explore the house (if they do, proceed like in Scene 12B).

## Epilogue Back at home

The end of the witch will not bring great news to the player characters. Except for the witch's defeat, the disappearance of her gold, her tools and all her curses everything seems as it was. But as they return to the Lodge, perhaps in a station of the NPET, they'll notice everybody is looking at them. On the walls, or on a newspaper almost everywhere there are "Missing children" displaying their pictures...

There will be sweets, hot chocolate, parties and hot baths with perfumes.

## Friends, Foes and Innocent Bystanders

By order of appearance.

Jeroen, the bike boy

Age 12 Gender: Boy Pace 4

STR 3 wd AGI 4 wd HLT 3 wd E&E 3 wd EDU 3 wd CHA 3 wd

Good at: Athletics, Riding, Streetwise, Stealth

Bad at: Craft, Performance, Pickpockets, Swimming, Vehicles

OK at: Every other skill.

Equipment: Messenger Uniform (B), whistle

Mugger, average

Age 11-13 Gender: Boy-Girl Pace 4

STR 4 wd AGI 4 wd HLT 4 wd E&E 2 wd EDU 2 wd CHA 2 wd

Good at: Fisticuffs, Dodging, Streetwise

Bad at: Every other skill.

OK at: Pickpockets.

Equipment: Clothes (D to B), a few carry improvised weapons (Non Lethal, Damage STR+1); \$0 to \$2

Robin, the newsboy

Age 12 Gender: Boy Pace 4

STR 3 wd AGI 4 wd HLT 2 wd E&E 4 wd EDU 2 wd CHA 4 wd

Good at: Athletics, Performance, Sweet Talk, Shooting

Bad at: Academics

OK at: Every other skill.

Equipment: Clothing (C), baseball, newspaper bag, \$2; \$10 in the bank.

Simon, the bootblack

Age 12 Gender: Boy Pace 4

STR 3 wd AGI 3 wd HLT 3 wd E&E 2 wd EDU 4 wd CHA 4 wd

Good at: Academics, Performance, Sweet Talk

Bad at: Swimming

OK at: Every other skill.

Equipment: Clothing (C), bag, ragged school book. \$1.50, \$4 in the bank.  
Simon would be happy to buy school supplies if they come cheap.

Mr Goodman

Age 45 Gender: Boy Pace 4

STR 2d 2wd AGI 4 wd HLT 1d 3wd E&E 3 wd EDU 4 d CHA 3 wd

OK at: Every skill.

Equipment: Clothing (C), \$2; \$30 in the bank.

John Brickfists

Age 14 Gender: Boy Pace 4

STR 2 d 2 wd AGI 4 wd HLT 3 wd E&E 3 wd EDU 2 wd CHA 3 wd

Good at: Fisticuffs, Dodging

Bad at: Academics

OK at: Every other skill.

Equipment: Clothing (C), \$0.40.

The pickpocket girl

Age 11 Gender: Girl Pace 4

STR 2 wd AGI 4 wd HLT 3 wd E&E 4 wd EDU 2 wd CHA 2 wd

Good at: Athletics, Dodging, Observation, Pickpockets

Bad at: Academics

OK at: Every other skill.

Equipment: Clothing (E).

Mugger, teenager, average

Age 16 Gender: Boy-Girl Pace 4

STR 1d 3 wd AGI 4 wd HLT 1d 3 wd E&E 4 wd EDU 2 wd CHA 2 wd

Good at: Fisticuffs, Dodging, Pickpockets

Bad at: Academics, Craft, Mechanics, Performance, Sweet Talk, Swimming, Riding

OK at: Every other skill.

Equipment: Clothes (D to B), Manacles, ropes, all carry knives, one *could* carry a derringer; \$3 to \$5



Serpent, small, non poisonous

Age ? Gender: Male or Female Pace 3

STR 2 wd    AGI 5 wd    HLT 2 wd    E&E 4 wd    EDU 1 fd    CHA 1 fd

Good at: Athletics, Fisticuffs, Dodge, Stealth

Bad at: Every other skill

OK at: Swimming

The golden witch

Age ? Gender: Woman Pace 4

STR 4 d    AGI 3 wd    HLT 4 d    E&E 3 wd    EDU 4 d    CHA 4 d

Good at: Academics, Craft, Languages, Performance, Stealth, Sweet Talk

Bad at: Swimming, Streetwise.

OK at: Every other skill

Equipment: Princely Clothes (A), Crown (A). Gold Staff (Non Lethal, Damage STR+2). Her clay legs have a HLT of 2 wd; on a "Hurt" result, these will break down. Golden box.

Powers: The witch can place any of these curses, 1 per turn. Unless otherwise noted:

1. Curses can only be placed once per day.
2. Each Curse wears off in five turns.
3. The witch can place up to thirteen curses per day.

She will reserve the last one to open a *Gate to Hell* to flee there if everything seems lost. Curses marked with a \* would have already been placed by the time the players meet the witch and can't be casted again for the duration of the adventure.

1. *Forsaken*. \* The victim is forgotten by everybody who is not with him at the time of the curse. The witch can only place this curse once per season; though it will remain for life unless the witch is defeated.

2. *Sick*. The victim will burst out in a sudden fever, pain and dizziness. All his actions are at -5.
3. *Blindness*. The victim can't see for 1 turn. All the actions that are dependent on sight will be at -10.
4. *Triumph of the will*. The victim will freeze in place until somebody commands him something. He'll then proceed to complete the task assigned to his most ability.
5. *Fear*. The victim is engulfed by terror. All actions that require bravery will be at -3.
6. *Nettle*. The room will be *instantly* covered with nettles, blocking the way. The nettles will wither away and die in 3 turns. This curse can be placed thrice per day.
7. *Sloth*. The afflicted player will fall in a slumber, not being able to act.
8. *Avarice*. Gold nuggets will fall from the ceiling. Those who fail to avoid them (Dodge TN of 9) will suffer bruises for a -1 malus. This malus will not heal until a good night of rest. This curse can be placed thrice per day.
9. *Gates to Hell*. A door will open in the middle of the room. Through it, the players will be able to see hell and its thousands of demons. The demons can't enter to earth, but if anybody steps there willingly or unwillingly, there's no way back.
10. *Rag doll*. \* The afflicted character is paralyzed from the neck down. This curse lasts until somebody does something kind for the afflicted person. The witch can no longer use this curse during this season.
11. *Despair*. The victim will begin to feel incredibly sad, bursting into tears, lose 1d chits.

After each curse she will sip from a golden box; she draws her power from the desperation of children

**Special Rules** The witch is, in fact, a woman turned into a demon, and cannot be defeated by normal means. In other words, she can only suffer Bruises consider any Hurt, Grave or Dead result as a -1 Bruise<sup>63</sup>. She has only two weak points: casting her crown to the ground and breaking his feet. Without her crown, she can't place any curses. Further, if her crown ever touches the ground, she will

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<sup>63</sup>Unless the players target her feet, see below

take her true hellish form, open a gate of hell and fly away there. Her clay feet will break if targeted vigorously<sup>64</sup>. If the players are able to obtain a *hurt* result specifically targeting the feet, the witch will topple down and fall into the ground, breaking into smithereens which will immediately burn and disappear.

Once defeated, all the effects of her curses will disappear at once, along with any gold item still existing.

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<sup>64</sup>All attacks directed against the witch feet are considered to be made with Lethal Weapons

Name:

Age

Pace:

Background

### Attributes

Bruises  
Hurt  
Grave  
Dead

STR:

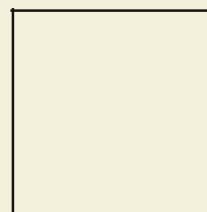
AGI:

HLT:

E&E

EDU:

CHA:



### Skills

Athletics (AGI)  
Craft (EDU)  
Healing (EDU)  
Mechanics (EDU)  
Pickpockets (AGI)  
Swimming (AGI)  
Sweet Talk (CHA)

Academics (EDU)  
Dodging (AGI)  
Languages (CHA)  
Observation (E&E)  
Riding (AGI)  
Streetwise (EDU)  
Throwing (STR)

Climbing (AGI)  
Fistcuffs (STR)  
Locks (AGI)  
Performance (CHA)  
Stealth (AGI)  
Shooting (E&E)  
Vehicles (AGI)

### Stuff

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*Liza*

Chits: