

# WINGS OF BLOOD

by Paolo Davolio

The Stormlands are a world of flying islands, mountains of earth and stone, big and small, floating naturally in an endless sky without an horizon. A people, whose civilization has stopped at feudalism, lives here and strives to survive, almost only from hunting, farming, and what little commerce is possible. A people that respects, worships and draws power from his Ancestors and from the Spirits of the surrounding world.

A strange people. You are one of them.

A people of humanoid reptiles, each one different from the others: they are the Saurids, the Sons of the lizards.

No Saurid is like another: tall or smalls, snake-like or brawny, with two or four arms, with small or protuberant eyes, with vivid or shy colors... The most variable combinations are possibles.

And some have wings. Not everyone, but some have them. They are very little, and many of them abuse of their freedom.

Who has wings, is one step above the others. He can travel, he can communicate, he can visit the islands searching for others like him, and gather them to subjugate the weaks.

In the Stormlands, who has wings often goes searching power and wealth. They are warlords, power-hungry aristocrats, tainted sciamans, greedy assassins and who knows what else.

Then one day, the massacre came to your home. The blood knocks at your door. It's the blood of your relatives, shed from who have wings and use them to make other suffer.

But the blood knocked to the wrong door.  
Because you have wings too.

So you can try the impossible: unlike all the others, you can track from island to island who killed your loved ones, you can search for him far away and in the end kill him without mercy. You can fly searching for your revenge, driven by your fury, because you have nothing to lose anymore (or maybe not, who knows).

And here starts your story.

## THE GAME

Welcome to *Wings of Blood*, a roleplaying game about freedom, death, revenge (and maybe compassion too), where all characters are monsters with weird, exotic features.

The game is designed for at least three persons (at least two players, each one keeping the parts of a different character, and a GM, handling the rest of the world in the perspective of showing at the players interesting situations where they can throw their characters).

Game after game, you will guide your character flying from island to island, trying to satisfy a deep desire of revenge, to kill your nemesis, the one who killed your loved ones. On your way, you will meet his best men (the main antagonists), but also a lot of overpowered people in the same condition as yours (only, without any chance to leave as you did). You will be the one who decides what to do, and who deserves to die.

To play, each player (and the GM) needs some sheets of paper to keep record of the characters features and his death oath (and maybe a sketch too) plus some pencils, rubbers and at least one twenty-sided die (d20), two would be better (one for the players, one for the GM).

## DEMOCRACY AMONG SAURIDS AT THE TABLE: THE AUDIENCE OPINION

In the game, you will be asked to "show" everyone, telling it, how a feature of your character could apply in a certain fictional situation to acquire some peculiar mechanical benefits. At this regard, it is duty of the audience to be vigilant and to take a critical look: if they think (one or more players not actually on stage) this peculiar Aptitude/Physical feature/object/etc. doesn't apply plausibly in the running situation, they can (and they should) point it out. The same applies for the narrations of the GM, he is not "above" the rules in any way.

When this happens, No Problem! Talk about it, try to describe it in another way, and if the other players don't like it anyway, try to call for another feature or (why not) just forget it.

## CHARACTER GENERATION

Each player build up his own character, in public, with all the others; while you do it, share opinions, suggestions and comments with the other players about your and their characters.

To start, let's discover something more about your character through his...

### DEATH OATH

*I was born...*

(phrase: explain where you were born, the place where you spent your childhood)

*...I was raised as...*

(phrase: explain where you grew up, how you were educated, how you spent your youth)

*Finché un triste giorno, la morte è entrata nella mia vita, per colpa di (nemesi): egli ha ucciso* (spiegare chi e come).

*Non glielo posso perdonare, poiché...* (frase: spiega perché queste uccisioni hanno scatenato la tua ira).

*Volerò via, di isola in isola, di terra in terra, e lo cercherò fino a quando non risponderà a me dei suoi crimini, poiché sangue chiama sangue.*

*Il primo passo, sarà...* (spiegare qual'è il primo passo che vuoi compiere per cercare di raggiungere la tua nemesi: sarà ciò che farai all'inizio del gioco)

*Until, a sad day, death entered in my life, and it was (nemesi) fault: he killed* (explain who and how).

*I can't forgive this, because...* (phrase: explain why these killings have unleashed your rage).

*I'll fly away, from island to island, from land to land, and I'll search for him until he'll answer to me about his crimes, because blood calls blood.*

*The first step, will be...* (explain what will be the first step that you want to take to strive to reach your nemesi: this will be what you will do first in this game).

Once you shall resolve or give up what you choose as "first step" (or in a following step) add the following:

*My next step, will be...* (explain as below)

## PHYSICAL FEATURES

### *Wings*

You have them necessarily, they are what makes you special, above the others.

Describe them carefully: what's their shape? How big are they? What colour are they?

Enjoy yourself. They will be unique, nobody will have them like yours. You can make them up right now if you already know how they are, or you can define them after the rest of the character, after seeing how he's like.

Every other physical features are, at the beginning, generated randomly rolling a d20:

### *Body*

---

#### **Build**

1-4 Tall  
5-8 Small  
9-12 Big  
13-16 Thin  
17-20 Visible muscles

#### **Sheds**

1-4 Almost invisible  
6-7 Boned squares  
8-10 Sharped  
11-14 Glowing  
15-17 Slimy  
18-20 Sawed

#### **Neck**

1-5 Absent  
5-10 Long  
11-15 Flexible  
16-20 Stubby

#### **Arms**

1-4 Big  
5-8 Two pairs  
9-12 Long  
13-16 Short  
17-20 Two elbows per arm

#### **Hands**

1-3 Delicate and thin

#### fingers

4-7 Webbed  
8-10 With adhesives  
11-13 Big  
14-17 Three fingers  
18-20 Six fingers (one more opposing thumb after the little finger)

#### **Tail**

1-4 Long  
5-8 Snake-like  
9-12 Short  
13-16 Sawed  
17-20 Smooth and glowing

#### **Legs**

1-3 Big  
4-7 Two pairs  
8-10 Long  
11-13 Short  
14-16 Two knees per leg  
17-20 Reversed knees (like horses)

#### **Feet**

1-4 Webbed  
5-7 With adhesives  
8-10 Big  
11-14 Three fingers  
15-17 Six fingers  
18-20 Clogs

## Details

---

<b>Horns</b>		5-8	Very big
1-4	Stubby	9-12	Protuberant
5-8	Spiked	13-16	Two pairs
9-12	Multiples	17-20	Telescopic (small tentacles with the eyes in the end)
13-16	Hooked		
17-20	Long	<b>Fangs</b>	
<b>Crest</b>		1-5	Sawed
1-3	With small bony knobs	6-10	More teeth rows
4-6	Overwhelming big	11-15	Protruding canines
7-9	Very small	16-20	Very small
10-13	Fish-like	<b>Claws</b>	
14-17	With big bony sheds	1-5	Retractile
18-20	Of colored fur	6-10	Long
<b>Eyes</b>		11-15	Hooked
1-4	Very small	16-20	Stubby

---

For one feature between *Body* and *Detail* you can roll *again*, acquiring two traits from the list instead of one. If a contradictory element comes out (like *long short arms*) roll again.

*Colors* (choose these three, plus one more at your choice, to color your body parts in broad terms)

1-4	Green, grey, light blue
5-8	Red, brown, purple
9-12	Blue, black, purple
13-16	Yellow, white, orange
17-20	Orange, yellow, purple

All physical features have to be created randomly, but once you have rolled for them you can change them (if you want to) in the following ways (max. five times)

- establishing that one rolled feature is "normal", with nothing special (max two times)
- choose freely one trait from the list, as long as there is some similarity with another rolled trait (max two times)
- roll again from that list until something different (and non-contradictory) ends up (max three times)

## DRESS

Choose what are you wearing, thinking about where and how you were born and raised.

## ATTITUDES

Things that you are good at, or that you are accustomed to. Choose them thinking about how you were raised, or about what you (as-a-player) found most exciting, as long as you can explain how you became it. Each Attitude has some limitations about when and how they can be applied.

*Interacting with the spirits:* to do it you need calm, time and preparation.

*Brute force:* is a direct physical action.

*Cunning:* requires preparation, deceiving or some other trick.

*Speed:* requires the ability to move.

*Influence others:* applies only when you can interact with other people.

Each one starts at zero; assign among them one 8 and two 4s.

## MOTIVATIONS

What keeps you away from giving up.

*Rage:* your anger, what drives you in searching a bloody revenge. Starts at 4.

*Heart:* your ability to stay in relation and in dialogue with the surrounding world, despite your desire of revenge. Starts at 3.

These numbers represent your capacity to go on and endure the whips of fate.

Rage is the max number of times that you can *grit your teeth* when on screen there is a main antagonist, your nemesis or one of their direct subordinate which is acting in their name, and it is the max number of wounds that you can endure in the same struggle against them before you have to *give up forever*.

Heart, is the same thing but worth for all the other struggles.

During play, these two numbers will go up and down and they'll be the generic indicator of the will to keep going of every player character. A powerful Rage is needed to

increase your chances to defeat your nemesis and his minions, but Heart is needed to keep fighting in all the other aspects of your existence. They can reach a max of 6, and they can go down to 1.

As soon as you do some good to the innocents, the weaks and the overpowered, mark it somewhere to remember it: at the end of the chapter it could mean a Heart increase. Instead, if you didn't help them, or if you hurt them, mark it anyway, because your Heart will surely go down.

All the table, audience included, has to keep an eye on these fictional moments and ask that they are "marked" immediately, when they happen, because time is not a good adviser: the best time to clarify if a deed is altruistic or cruel is when it's just happened in the fiction, not later.

## EQUIPMENT AT THE BEGINNING

Other than your clothes, you start with one big/heavy object and three small/light objects (see below in the *Equipment* section for the explanation)

## CHARACTER'S NAME

Think of an appropriate name. Not some fantasy random meaningless syllables put together, but a name made from common words, like an object/animal + adjective. For example, *Flaming crest*, or *Blue bird*, or *Son of the mud*.

## SWEAR THE OATH

Once you have reached the end of the chargen, play a brief scene without struggles in which you pronounce solemnly, at high voice (all the table shall hear it), your *death oath*. You decide the precise when/where; on the grave of your dears, at your little sister survived from the massacre, at yourself, at the Spirits... Provided that it's solemn, resounding and exciting.

## NEMESIS AND OTHER NPCS

The GM, during play, will establish the features of the NPCs:

- For main antagonists and other important foes, assign at an Attitude a value between 4 and 8, and to the others the half. He can establish the physical features rolling for them if he prepares it in advance, or he can choose two or three freely from the lists.
- For the tokens, assign 2 at everything. He can choose a physical feature if he wants to.

In a given chapter, the GM can place unlimited tokens, and can place-up to three antagonists with Attitude 4, two with 6 and one with 8. The main antagonists (the lieutenants and the aides of the nemesis) generally will have a 6 or a 8, and they always have wings.

The nemesis is build up with special rules. The GM generates it like it was a playing character, but with an Attitude at 10, two at 6, one at 4 and one at 0. He has no Motivations. The GM rolls for all the physical features normally, but you are the one who chooses if and how the modifications and the rerolls apply, not the GM. Do it after ending your chargen. The nemesis has always wings, like you: the GM describes how they are made, in the end. Then obviously, he's name is the one that you choose in your *death oath*.

The GM can equip the NPCs, without exaggerating (generally one big/heavy object and one or two small ones are enough).

# PLAYING THE GAME

## CHAPTERS AND ISSUES

The game is divided in chapters; each chapter of the game for you character starts when you reach a new flying island to achieve your current "step" as you write it in your death oath. The game will be about it, until you decide to fly away.

It's the GM's job to prepare the situations which you will discover and play, and which you can dive into with your character. You can be sure that there will be a main antagonist somewhere, a bunch of minions and a lot of overpowered, innocent people, who is suffering as you suffered (or as you ARE suffering), and that will ask you for help if they can.

The issue here, is that they don't have wings, so they have difficulty to strive against their oppressors, and most of all *they can't go away*. Instead, you have wings, you travelled, you are strong, determined and well-equipped... They'll ask you to become an hero, if they are able to. What will you do?

## SCENES

The game will go on scene after scene: when it's your turn, you say what you do and where you go, the the GM describes what you can sense and the situation around you, all very smoothly. Once reached a natural slow point in the game, the GM will close the scene and pass to the next player.

It goes on like this, one player at a time (so, with only on playing character in the scene at a time).

## NEW CHAPTER

You open a new chapter when you fly away from the current island and decide to write on your sheet the new way chosen by your character, his next step. Generally, you will want to do it after killing one main antagonist, but it's not fixed.

With the new chapter, all the wounds left are erased and the GM will be able to deploy new NPCs. Then, you will erase all your "Better object" and write them in your "Normal objects".

If you "win" in the passed chapter (if you succeeded in what you established yourself in the "step" you wrote in the death oath), your Rage is raised by 1. If, instead, you gave up and decided to fly elsewhere, your Rage goes down by 1.

Also, if in the past chapter you couldn't (or wouldn't) help the weaks, the overpowered and the innocents (or even if you hurt them), your Heart goes down by 1. If, instead, you succeeded in improving their conditions and relieve their pain, your Heart goes up by 1. If you made boths, your Heart goes down by 1 (do you remember when I asked you to mark it? This is why).

## CHOOSE THE "NEXT STEP"

At the end of the chapter, you are asked to choose the next step. What will it be? Think about what your character could desire the most to succeed in his revenge, in the most natural and interesting way for you-as-a-player.

Nothing will forbid you to go straight hunting down your nemesis to kill him, but this would be very hard at the beginning. It's much easier to take the "long way", to spread blood among his hierarchy one step at a time, searching for better Equipment and making your Rage grow slowly: you will need all of it, for the the final struggle.

## WHEN DOES IT ENDS?

The game, for your character, ends when you killed your nemesis (in the best case scenario, at least). After that, you can make up a new character with a new *death oath*, or take the place of the GM, or even stay as audience only and enjoy the stories and the pain of the other characters.

At the end of the scene in which you killed your nemesis, you will play a brief scene without struggles in which you come back to the place where you swore you *death oath*, and there, you will pronounce the epilogue, the sentence that will close your oath, forever.

## THE STRUGGLE

You will succeed in everything you will try to do, unless something or someone tries to stop you. When, in the fiction, something or someone is trying to prevent you from doing what you are doing, a *struggle* is opened.

### SHOW, THEN ROLL

Every thing that influences the rolls, as every variation of any numeric value at anytime, has to pass necessarily through the fiction.

First, you say what you do, then you choose the Attitude to roll (if any). First, you tell how you hold out and how you try again, then you reroll for *gritting your teeth*... And so on.

When you talk to narrate what happens and how, show, don't tell. Imagine being your character inside the tv: the audience of this film (your friends at the table with you) has to be able to understand why this peculiar physical feature is helping you and how, by seeing it.

No die shall touch the table and no modifier shall be applied, until it's clear to all the table what's happening inside the fiction (the audience opinion will be indicative of that). However, there is no need to tell a poem each time you have to roll, a brief explanation will be enough.

### RESOLUTION

You roll a d20; before rolling, you can choose between trusting luck (a simple roll) or focusing on what you can do: in the latter, you roll the d20, but you consider only the first digit (0 to 9) and you sum up the emerging Attitude (see up there for when and how you can apply it).

If your opponent can't maneuver in air, you can show how flying is helping you, and add freely a +1 to your roll.

If you are struggling against an NPC, you must roll higher than him to win; if what's hampering you is not an NPC, you have to roll 10+ (so: the obstacle difficulty is 10).

You can show how one of your physical features is helping you, to roll again the die after seeing the result; to do this, emphasize it in the fiction, make clear how it could make the difference.

If you fail, you can accept your defeat or *grit the teeth* to roll again. It means that you endure, you try again or you strive to make it despite the negative consequences you took after the initial defeat. The fiction goes on (you describe what you do *now*, and your foe does the same) and you roll again, eventually on another Attitude (you are trying again in the fiction too, so explain how the struggle proceeds and what the character is doing). Know, if you want to, you could even use another physical feature to retry at this new roll.

But, if you choose to *grit your teeth*, you will suffer some consequences: stress, injury, shame or fear. The GM chooses which one and explains how it is emerging in the fiction, OR you choose it and you explain it if you have another idea (but only if you have that in mind immediately: if you put more than ten seconds in it, then it's up to the GM). Then, the GM marks this wound and your character's name; he will be able to "spend" it once:

- in this same struggle, to give a +2 to the roll of an NPC, or to the difficulty of the obstacle. To do it, he has to show in the fiction how the NPC is taking advantage of it.
- In another struggle, to make you reroll a succeeding d20 (but before the eventual reroll for the physical feature). To do it, he has to show in the fiction how the wound is stumbling you.

In a given struggle, you can *grit your teeth* a max number of times equal to the Motivation in play; and, if you receive in the same struggle (and only in the same struggle) a number of wounds equal to the Motivation in play, your character will *give up forever*, meaning that he leaves the game. You choose if he dies, if he decides to give up is journey fought by desperation, or what else; he will be no longer able to strive for his desire of revenge, forever.

So, before *gritting your teeth* for the last time, think twice: this could be really be your last time.

Even the GM can, if he wants to, *grit his teeth* when he fails with a character who is not a token, for a max number of times equal to half his higher Attitude (this is also the max number of wounds that he can take before giving up forever); you too can mark the wounds inflicted to a given NPC and you will be able to spend them in the same way the GM does (but only against THIS NPC). This doesn't work against your nemesis: you have to kill him in a single struggle, and the wounds you inflict to him will be erased after the end of the struggle.

## STRUGGLE AGAINST MORE OPPONENTS

More tokens, are worth one token, period.

For other NPCs, the GM plays the one with the higher Attitude, while every other NPC (or group of tokens) gave it a +1 to the roll if the GM shows how this helps to the struggle.

## EQUIPMENT

In a world of little resources, knowing what to carry (and how much) is very important. You are skilled, but that's not enough. The issue is that you must travel light because you have to fly from island to island.

You have *room* equal to 5. Every big/heavy object, keeps one room point. Every two small/light objects, keeps one room point. Write all of them under "Normal objects". Having the right equipment will enable you to go over your limits and to face challenges with more confidence. Apart from the dress, you are carrying what you write on your sheet, and only that. You can leave or pick up new items at any time.

Big/heavy objects works on a big scale (like ignoring/rerolling a d20).

Smaller objects works on a lower scale (like adding/ignoring a +2).

A given object can't be spent more than once per encounter, and you can't use more than one object per roll.

Equipment can be "used" in three different ways (and as always, you have to show how):

- offense: you can reroll a 20 (big objects) or add a +2 to your roll (small objects).
- protection: you can ignore a wound you just took (small objects only deny the +2 effect of the wound spent in the same struggle).
- support: to aide yourself in your everyday life; out of a struggle, in a calm situation, they enable you to remove a wound the GM marked on you. The big ones, enable you to remove two of them at once.

You can call for these bonuses in a given "way" (offense, defense, support) only up to three times per chapter.

The way to bypass this cap for a given category of objects, is to go searching for objects that are *more powerful*: when you find one of them and you decide to carry it, write it under "Better objects". These objects can be spent with their own spend cap per chapter.

Founding new equipment could be hard and could lead to a *struggle* (often if it's a powerful one) but never impossible. For example, if you are asking around for the island to find a better weapon, the GM can't just "say no". But he could say that, for instance, there is a mighty magic weapon, keepen at safe in the local Temple of the Spirits, protected by faithful and strong armored guardians... So you will be able to try to reach it!

*Examples of objects*

---

**Big/Heavy**

A woodsman axe  
A lot of gold  
The magic staff of your  
sciaman ancestor  
Your father's chainmail

**Small/Light**

A bedroll  
A mask  
Travel food  
A scroll of a magic ritual  
The bloody headscarf that your sister gave  
you before dying  
A ring with the family seal  
An oil lamp

---

Remember that all the objects that you want to effectively use, must be compatible with your physical features. A pair of gloves aren't good if you have *long claws*, and a "traditional" cape is pretty uncomfortable if you have an *overwhelming big crest*. However, this should not restrict your choice: just make sure that your objects are ok with (or adapted to) your peculiar physiognomy.

*This was:*

*Wings of Blood v0.1, by Paolo Davolio, made for the february Ronnies 2011, using the words "Wings" and "Murder".*

*Sorry for the english, I'm Italian ad I tried to do best.*

*Thanks to my beloved one and to my friends: they were very patient with me in the last 24 hours ;-)*