



Helios 13u

PIAGA 1348



In the Europe of 1348, everyone died twice: first from the black plague, and second from the merciful blade of a member of the mysterious warrior company known as the **Ordo Mortis**. Yes, in *this* particular 1348, the world is infested by Revenants and, for some unfathomable reason, you brandish the sword of justice. Will you be able to use it wisely?

Piaga 1348 is a historic fantasy role-playing Game for **3–5 players** that transports you to a grotesque, dramatic and sinister version of the Middle Ages. It has few rules and requires no preparation, with each Session unfolding as a shared narrative.

In this book you'll find:

- * All the rules necessary to create your own Soldier of the Ordo Mortis or take the seat of the Ludi Magister.
- * 12 creepy ready-to-play Scenarios, which take you deep into *this* 1348, scourged by the plague.
- * A selection of historical essays, which give you the tools to bring the grim reality of the 14th century to life with chilling historical accuracy.

R 18+

Content Warning: contains illustrated and written content of a mature nature, including violence, sexual themes, and strong language. Reader discretion is advised.

NG **NEED
GAMES!**

**HELIOS
GAMES**

ISBN 979-12-5598-112-1



9 791255 981121 >



STYVA II

GAME DESIGN

Helios Du

ART DIRECTION
AND GRAPHICS

Giovanni Nava

COVER ART

Davide Schileo

INTERIOR ART

**Sofia Buratti,
Davide Schileo,
Mimir, Sgorbio**

MAPS

Mimir

PUBLISHER

Nicola Degobbis

CHIEF OF OPERATIONS

Marco Munari

TRANSLATION

Francesco Castelli

EDITING

Neil Kingham

LAYOUT

Erica Viotto

SENSITIVITY READING
& PROOFREADING

Marta Palvarini



Content Warning: contains illustrated and written content of a mature nature, including violence, sexual themes, and strong language. Reader discretion is advised.



**NEED
GAMES!**

**HELIOS
GAMES**

© 2025 Need Games and Helios Games. Reproduction without the written consent of the publisher is expressly forbidden. This is a game of fiction. Any similarities to past or present events portrayed herein without satiric intent are strictly coincidental.

First printing: August 2025

ISBN: 979-12-5598-112-1



Author's Foreword



Wow, what you have in your hands is a game.

I know that the first things that catch the eye are the magnificent illustrations created by engravers and tattoo artists. But, soon, you will notice also the art direction and layout, the result of sweat, blood and many caffeine fueled nights.

What about the writing? Well, the editing and proofreading were nothing short of painstaking.

All of this makes this book magnificent, perhaps the most beautiful I've ever worked on.

However, the aim is to bring (back) to life the world of *Piaga 1348* and in order to do that you are going to need the most rare and valuable resources in the universe: some players.

It's up to you to read what we have written in these pages and put it into practice, because I know no other way to put the *play in role-playing games*.

Helios Du

Your Humble Emperor Mundi



Quod advertat Deus.

Gather ye round and heed my words. Thy very life doth hang upon them.

Thou cannot flee.

Cease thy prayers: the Almighty hath forsaken thee.

Think not to find sanctuary in the church or in the palace of Duke Marco of Catalani. The dead shall find thee and rend thee asunder.

What dost thou say, Master Berto? What counsel do I give?

'Tis quite plain: take up thy mightiest weapon, thy wit, and purchase this tome, of course.

The learned among ye shall teach the unlettered how to toil together and how to continue this tale, if but for one more day.

Thou shall learn to fight with what tools be at hand, even if 'tis but the needle of St. Erica. Thy bravery shall rival that of Sir Matteo of Sestola, who faced dire hordes with naught but a tankard, or of Don Francesco, who swayed the heathens with the power of speech alone.

What be a handful of copper florins when weighed against the means to fight the Plague itself?

May, I swear to thee, thou dost not gamble with this purchase... for gambles be wild and uncertain.

Good then. I thank thee for thy coin. Now I must away - I journey across Europe: all must be warned of what befalls us, lest we fail to cleanse the Plague from our lands.

May God deliver us from evil.

Nicola DeGobbis

Town Crier and Peddler





Contents

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Preface.....	13
What You Need to Play..	14
Glossary.....	14
Other Game Terms.....	15
Truth and Verisimilitude.....	15
Safety and Coherence...	16
Choosing the Tone.....	18
Who is Going to be the Ludi Magister?.....	20

Chapter 2 – World Creation

Spreading of the Plague ...	23
The Church	24
The Pontifex	26
The Ordo Mortis	28
Size of the Ordo.....	28
The Motto of the Ordo....	29
Missions	30
Spread Level: Drop.....	30
Spread Level: Squirt.....	30
Spread Level: Stain.....	31
Spread Level: Tide.....	31
Campaigns	32
Taking Notes	32
Optional Rule	32

Chapter 3 – Soldier Creation

Soldier Sheet	35
Description.....	36
Name.....	38
Weapon and Armor.....	40
What I Want.....	42
What I Don't Want.....	43
Ties with the Mission....	44
Taking Traumas.....	46
Introductions	48
Being the Captain.....	49

Chapter 4 – The Game

Soldier on Duty (SoD) ...	51
Passing the Token.....	51
Ludi Magister	52
Secondaries.....	55
The Turn's Conflict	56
Starting a Conflict.....	58
Facing a Conflict.....	60
Morale Pool.....	62
Gamble.....	65
Sacrifice.....	67
The Relic.....	67
Soldier	68
Entering the Scene.....	68
Asking Questions.....	69
Help.....	69
Clashes Among Soldiers.	70
Traumas	72
Leaving the Scene	74
Being Wounded by a Revenant.....	74
What Happens After Leaving the Scene.....	75
Ludi Magister's Interlude	76
End of the Round	77
Pause.....	77
The End.....	77
Judgment	78
Optional Rule: Survival Mode	79

Chapter 5 – Game Resources

Being the Ludi Magister ..	81
Changing the Setting... ..	83
Optional Rule: Nightmare.....	85
Hints for the LM.....	86
Narrative Hints	88
Beliefs and Prejudices..	88
Hallmarks of the Ordo Mortis.....	90
State of the World.....	92
Patron Saints.....	94

Chapter 6 – Scenarios

Abbey of the Proclate, 1349 A.D.	98
The Eyes of St. Lucy ...	100
Free Modena from the Necropope!	102
Dawn of the Dead, 1348 A.D.	104
The Sixth Soldier	106
Postuma Praedicatio, 1381 A.D.	108
The Roman Reclamation of 1377 A.D.	110
The Devils' Church	112
Danse Macabre	114
The Rat King	116
Brother Devil	118
Trolls, 1402 A.D.	120

Appendix – Historical Essays

The 14 th Century	124
Oppression: The Miseries of Power..	126
War: A Century of Battles.....	128
Famine: the Insatiable Hunger..	130
Pestilence: Cito, Longe et Tarde.....	132
Danse Macabre: The Triumph of Death ..	136

Quick Start	138
Designer's Notes	140
Special Thanks	141
Soldier Sheet	142
Codex Magistrī	143



With the last remnant of her might, Clara did bind the Revenant to the wooden post in the middle o' the chamber. She cast a sorrowful gaze upon him, as warm tears traced lines upon her cheeks.

“Pray, give me cause to set thee free, show me thou art yet thyself.”

The creature that, ere last night, had been a pious and toiling farmer, answered his own daughter by grinding his teeth thrice.

All at once the door behind Clara burst wide and four cloaked figures rushed forth.

“Art thou—”

“Aye, we be,” replied a voice colder than the abyss.

“Canst thou save my father?” cried Clara.

“We bear the remedy.”

“Oh, a thousand thanks, good sir knight—”

The hiss of the holy blade filled the air, and two heads rolled 'cross the floor, one drooling, the other weeping.

An ashen mask in the semblance of a crow appeared from one of the hoods: "Curse thee, Boldrino! We know not if she be tainted. We might've saved her."

"Doctor," Boldrino grinned, wiping his sword on a foul rag, "I mean not to risk my life for ease of conscience."

"Thou... thou vile knave! Thou hast forgotten the essence of humanity!"

"Nay, 'tis not I, but the world that hath forgotten!" quoth Boldrino, raising his right hand and tracing a circle with his finger twice.

"Set a torch to this wretched place. We must depart and finish the task that the Almighty Himself now shuns."



Plague 1348

(which translates to *Plague, 1348*) is a narrative tabletop role-playing game. During a conversation around a table, players embody

fictional characters, taking turns to narrate their actions and weaving together a story set in an imaginary world. The rules in this booklet explain how to craft the many interlocking elements of this shared narrative, what kind of world your characters live in, and how to influence it together.





In **Piaga 1348**, you assume the roles of Soldiers of the **Ordo Mortis**, an undercover army fighting a secret war to eradicate the **Revenant Plague** and its grim consequences. One player, known as the **Ludi Magister**, has the task of presenting and describing the world in which these Soldiers carry out their deeds and tell their stories.

This game has very few rules, but you have to follow them to the letter. Any element beyond the rules is left to your judgment and discernment. To make the game experience more personal, we encourage you to take full advantage of your imagination, aesthetic sensibility, and ability to negotiate and narrate. Go nuts in filling these blank spaces. This will allow you and your fellow players to make the most of your collective imagination, reinforcing and highlighting how this setting and this original story belong to you all.





Introduction



rom history books,

we have learned that during the 14th century, a devastating epidemic killed almost one-third of Europe's population. This deadly disease, known as the black plague or the bubonic plague, took its names from its most visible symptoms: black spots on the skin and swollen lymph nodes called buboes. At the time, many considered the plague to be divine punishment for humani-

ty's sins, reshaping the then-known world, and plunging Europe into a state of frustration, abject fear, and impotence.

What no document of the time tells – those that did were burned as “heretical texts” – is that those who died from the plague **came back to life**, slobbering like rabid dogs and with an overpowering hunger for living flesh.

The **Revenant Plague** (a name lost to history) began as a minor outbreak but spread like wildfire, eventually engulfing entire regions and nations. This game doesn't say where the Plague originated from, how long it took to spread, nor its one true origin: these details are for you to decide during the world-building phase. For now, just know that the Plague spread so far that the Church itself was forced to create a secret international army to eradicate it and conceal the existence of the Revenants from the common folk.

Maintaining the utmost secrecy about this army and its mission was paramount in order to prevent widespread panic among the population and avert potential invasions from hostile neighboring nations who would have been all too keen to exploit this desperate situation. However, it soon became apparent that keeping these secrets was as difficult as fighting the Plague itself.

The name of this army is **Ordo Mortis** (sometimes abbreviated to **OM** on signet rings and sword handles) and you are part of it. At least, you will be until the Pontifex decides to dissolve the Ordo, much like the Knights Templar before it.

As players, your goal is to recount the chilling experiences of the members of the Ordo Mortis in this supernatural retelling of the Middle Ages, exploring together the events of the time, and perhaps even altering the course of history and the fate of the world.



What You Need to Play

- * This book
- * 3–5 players, including the Ludi Magister
- * A dozen six-sided dice (at least one of a different color)
- * 2–4 Soldier Sheets (see page 124)
- * 1 Codex Magistrī (page 143)
- * 1 token to identify the Soldier on Duty
- * Enough pencils and erasers for all players

Player: All the people sitting around the gaming table (or in the chat if you play online).

Soldier (with capital S): One of the main characters of the story, a member of the Ordo Mortis; also any player other than the Ludi Magister.

Soldier on Duty (or SoD): The current player, whose Soldier is the protagonist of the current scene.

Ludi Magister (or LM): The player in charge of guiding the story, describing the world surrounding the Soldiers, and playing the Secondaries. This role shifts after each Mission.

Secondary: Any character inhabiting this fictional world who possesses free will but isn't a Soldier. They are usually played by the Ludi Magister, but there are a few exceptions.

Characters: An umbrella term for Soldiers and Secondaries.

Session: The period of time between sitting down at the gaming table and leaving (or turning on and off your webcam during online games). Also known as a “game”.

Mission: The ultimate goal of the Soldiers, which they will either complete or die trying. A Mission might develop over the course of multiple Sessions.

Campaign: A series of linked Missions. The role of Ludi Magister may change between one Mission and the next.

Other Game Terms

* **Next** means “the next player (or Soldier) going clockwise, i.e. to the left of the current player/Soldier”.

* **Check** means putting a mark (usually a cross or a check mark) in a specific box on the Soldier Sheet or Codex Magistrī to indicate that a certain ability has been used. **Uncheck** means deleting the existing mark from the indicated box.

- * All words written in *italics* or with a Capital letter should be interpreted as game terms, not according to their usual meaning (e.g. soldier and Soldier).
- * **Voting** means that you have to decide which option to choose from among those available. You can do this by a show of hands or other method of your choice. In case of a tie, discuss the options briefly and vote again. In case of another tie, roll a die and compare the result with the numbers (from 1 to 6) next to the available options and let fate pick one for you.



Plaga 1348 is set in a supernatural-horror version of the late Middle Ages, but it is not intended to be historically accurate. This world includes visual and background elements that are out of place in the 14th century. For example, both the famous beaky plague doctor masks and spyglasses appear in our setting, despite only emerging in Europe during the 17th century. As such, you are free to add more anachronistic elements, drawing on past or future events, such as introducing the Jesuit Order almost two centuries before its actual inception, or transforming the Crusades in the Holy Land into an eternal war, now on its fortieth expedition.

This game does not provide a detailed list of what might be acceptable and what is a step too far. Such details are for you and your fellow players at the table to decide, according to your personal tastes and what you consider enjoyable.

As long as you remain within the spirit of a medieval world, with its limited technology, outdated medical practices, and a strict separation between the holy and the unholy, every other detail unanimously accepted by the group should be included in your story, even if it diverges from the historical truth. Any choice you make forms the narrative truth of your world.

The most important thing to remember is that, depending on these choices, the story you're about to tell might change significantly. Every choice has consequences and adds unique nuances to your tale.

Truth and Verisimilitude



Safety & Coherence

The rules are the game – without their active and conscious application the very act of gaming would not exist. However, there is one element that takes precedence over every rule: **the emotional safety of the players.**

We are human beings before we are gamers and our priority should be to enjoy the time we spend playing with others without feeling any anxiety or apprehension. To this end, we use two **catchphrases**, which allow you to signal the rest of the group when an element or theme of the story doesn't suit you, either emotionally or psychologically.

Before you start, you should always discuss any themes that you do not want to include in the story, so that all the other players, especially the Rudi Magister, know from the start what boundaries should not be crossed and what themes should be veiled. For example, one of your players might not feel comfortable with excessive gore or might have a specific phobia. The Rudi Magister should open each Session by asking: *"Is there anything that might make you uncomfortable or compromise your emotional well-being?".* Listen carefully and honor all answers, because it promotes the collective well-being of the entire group.



I'm Uncomfortable:

If you're feeling uncomfortable, your fellow players will often notice and make adjustments without any prompting, but you may also just say **I'm Uncomfortable** when something enters the narrative that you find disturbing or offensive, or which might adversely affect the normal flow of the game. This is not censorship, but rather a way to protect yourself. This catchphrase can also be used as a simple request not to delve too deeply into a topic that makes you uneasy or anxious.

This Looks Out of Context:

You may use the sentence **This Looks Out of Context** to highlight an inconsistency in the narrative. You can use it if a new element enters the scene which doesn't feel connected to the story's main themes, or if it seems to stretch the limits of the genre a bit too much. For example, the appearance of a crusader knight from Jerusalem with a thick Texan accent and glowing tattoos on his face, or the revelation that the Benedictine monastery where the Soldiers are resting is actually a base for Nazi flying saucers.

In these situations, if you want to bring the story back to the historical-horror setting, you can say **This Looks Out of Context**, adding more details if necessary to clarify what seems incongruous or absurd, or what you feel is breaking your suspension of disbelief. Some elements might be considered *borderline*, like introducing an Ordo Mortis flying brigade armed with Da Vinci style flying machines and vials of holy water to bombard the Rev-enants. **This Looks Out of Context** for a group that has agreed on historical accuracy, but for a different group it might be only marginally absurd (and only because it's anachronistic).

Choosing

Tone means the emotional resonance of your story. In *Piaga 1348* this is not a purely aesthetic choice, it sets the general atmosphere which, in turn, guides and colors every interaction between the characters, and determines the core themes of the story.

This choice also implies an appropriate register, that is, a series of linguistic choices that reinforce the Tone and help you delve deeper into the game. For example, a **Dramatic** Tone might require a more solemn and somber choice of words, while a **Grotesque** Tone can be played out with less formal, everyday language and more use or irony. However, you should feel free to switch register according to the situation at hand and your own enjoyment.

Before starting, you should make sure you are all on the same page, **voting** for which Tone your Mission should have. Take your time to discuss this until you reach a compromise that you can all agree to. The three main Tones for *Piaga 1348* are:

Dramatic

A **grim, dark** atmosphere pervades everything. You should play as if you're recounting epic tales from an ancient tome, with the bleakness of the plague and the crushing weight of your choices front and center. Each and every decision should feel like it has historical and spiritual consequences. If you choose this Tone, we encourage you to dive deeply into your characters' emotions and face every challenge, exploring themes of hope, sacrifice and determination. The atmosphere should be full of pathos, like a great Greek tragedy, where humanity challenges the divine will and the adversities of fate.

Sinister

The atmosphere is **creepy** and **mysterious**, like a thriller or an horror story. Corruption is both physical and moral, touching even the relationships between the characters and influencing their choices. Evil lurks everywhere, heralded by sinister omens. The Soldiers should look for answers not just among the ruins of a society decimated by the plague, but also in the most remote corners of the fragile human psyche, where faith and desperation compete, locked in a deadly embrace. Nothing is what it appears.

Grotesque

Imagine this Tone like a **trash** action movie with plenty of **splatter** details, maybe with some terrible one-liners as the cherry on top. This approach lets you explore the tragedy of the black death through absurd humor, turning the horror and the macabre into an opportunity for over-the-top adventure and comedic moments. A touch of black humor helps to sidestep the historical tragedy and can help you to play with history in unexpected and creative ways.

the **Tone**



Your company arrives at the cathedral in the heart of the empty town, the stormy sky above mirroring your Soldier's inner turmoil. As you walk toward the entrance, your steps echo across the empty esplanade and you offer a silent prayer, calling on the saints to protect you in the coming ordeal. Time and again, you utter the Motto "We are on a mission from God" in a deep, solemn voice.

Sources of inspiration:

- * **The Name of the Rose** (novel; 1980) by Umberto Eco, also the movie and TV series based upon it.
- * **Black Death** (movie; 2010), directed by Christopher Smith.
- * **The Plague Ships** (comic; 2017) from the **Baltimore** series by Mike Mignola.

As you flit between the shadows of a narrow alley, the wind seems to carry the whispers of lost souls. You can just make out a fragment of a prayer before it is lost among the wailing. As you gaze into the darkness, you try to understand the motives of the hooded figure who has offered to guide you. Might they be hiding a terrible secret? Something darker and more lethal than even the plague itself? There is something unholy in their trembling voice as they dismissively utter your Motto: "We are on a mission from God..."

Sources of inspiration:

- * **Company of Liars** (novel; 2008) by Karen Maitland.
- * **Bloodborne** (videogame; 2015) by Hidetaka Miyazaki.
- * **Pestilence** (comic; 2018) by Frank Tieri and Oleg Okunev.

As you cross what's left of Siena's Piazza del Campo, you bump into a group of locals playing with a severed head as a ball. Their maniacal laughter echoes among the ruins, making the ruined square feel like a carnival of horrors. Unable to resist, one of you shouts: "We're on a mission from God, pass the ball!". Only then you realize that they are all infected, and close to transforming. Their skin is a cobweb of dark spots and buboes, and as they turn their hollow gazes upon you, you see the hunger in their eyes...

Sources of inspiration:

- * **Hard to be a God** (novel; 1964) by Arkadij and Boris Strugackij.
- * **Army of Darkness** (movie; 1992) directed by Sam Raimi.
- * **Monty Python and the Holy Grail** (movie; 1975) directed by Terry Gilliam and Terry Jones.



Who is Going to be the Ludi Magister?

If you haven't already done so, it's time to decide who is going to take the all-important role of Ludi Magister (LM) for this Mission. The LM plays a pivotal role in guiding the narrative and facilitating the interactions between the players and the setting. A detailed analysis of the Ludi Magister's **responsibilities and advice** on how to best carry out this role starts on page 52.

A single Mission might take multiple Sessions, but there is an important rule to keep the game balanced and allow everyone to experience being a LM: **the same player cannot be the Ludi Magister for two consecutive Missions.** This allows all the players to enjoy the game from different perspectives and enjoy a multitude of storytelling and decision-making styles, creating a richer and more fulfilling experience.

Never choose the Ludi Magister at random. They will have a slightly heavier workload than the other players, so the player who feels most inspired should take the role.



nce more doth night drape upon the town like a heavy cloak of gloom. Mine errand seemeth ever more impossible, yet I shall not yield. Not now.

I tremble as I cross the empty lanes. Somethin' be amiss. I grip the hilt of my sword, poised to fight for my life. Behind me, a few foot-falls do sunder the hush of night. I spin 'round and spy naught but a shadow flitting 'twixt the alleys aglow with torches. My wits grow addled – fear and weariness conjure foul trickery when they turn their gaze upon thee.

I tread on 'till at last I stand 'fore the graveyard, a realm of death and sorrow. The church bells toll in the chill night's air. Surely, such a grim sound can but herald the end of days. They ought not toll so late, yet... what hour is this?

As I step within the graveyard, I sense the Revenants drawing nigh. I see them not, yet I know full well that they lurk about, awaitin' for their next feast. Why came I hither? What folly led me to this accursed place?

I turn to flee, but they have closed in about me. 'Tis a snare. No way out.

My blade doth strike swift, and heads tumble 'pon the earth. There be so many... too many. They press upon me.

Sudden, I feel a chill hand upon my shoulder. I pry open mine eyes. 'Tis my wife. 'Twas but a dream.

"Beatrice," I call unto her.

"Braaaaahhh!" she doth answer, with hollow gaze and froth spillin' from her lips.

That be why her hand be so cold.

The dream hath ended, and the nightmare doth begin.

II



World Creation



erein, this chapter

presents many suggestions on how to create your gaming world. We often set our game in Italy, but you are free to explore the known world of the 14th century to your heart's content, just be careful to avoid taking too many liberties with history.


Some of the elements presented here are linchpins – essential narrative elements that cannot be removed without twisting the game out of shape. Further suggestions on how to build this world can be found in **Chapter 5 – Game Resources** (page 80), but you can start playing straight away just by reading the next paragraph.

Start by **voting** on how widespread the **Revenant Plague** actually is, choosing from among the four levels presented below. It's important that all the players are happy with the decision, since it will drastically change what kind of Session or Campaign you're going to play, as well as the size of the **Ordo Mortis**. In case of a tie, roll a die.

Spreading

1	Drop	<i>A single outbreak: nobody seems to know what is going on. Your orders are to investigate and keep everything under wraps.</i>
2-3	Squirt	<i>A few outbreaks: strange tales and superstitions start to spread. The disease must be contained and the common folk kept in the dark.</i>
4-5	Stain	<i>Multiple outbreaks: many towns are quarantined, others besieged by the Revenants. Eyewitness accounts and rumors spread like wildfire, and people start panicking.</i>
6	Tide	<i>The disease is everywhere: the end of days is upon us!</i>

Ordo Mortis



The Church

The word **“Church”** indicates a religious institution with a strict hierarchy, many centuries old, that worships a single deity and possesses great spiritual, cultural, political and economic power. Its members have access to the highest levels of education and cultural resources. They all speak fluent Latin as a second language and can teach it to others. They also control considerable tracts of lands, wealth and resources.

The Church wraps itself in spirituality. Its presence is so intrinsic to the everyday life of the common folk that it inspires comforting ideas like: *“When a holy man doth come nigh, all shall be well.”*



If the parallels with the Roman Catholic Church create friction at the table due to the personal beliefs of one or more players, you may replace the Church with a fictional organization with a name something like: the Celestial Empire, the Bone Path, the Eternal Cult of Helios, etc. The same is true for the Pontifex, who can be renamed as: Ecclesiarch, Patriarch, Prophet, Pharaoh, Old Man of the Mountain, etc. ***The important thing is that both entities maintain the characteristics presented in this chapter.***



The Pontifex



Undiciously selected, the **Pontifex** served as the spiritual leader of the Church. The Pontifex, together with the most illustrious prelates (senior clergy) – and with the support of the sovereigns of the major states of the time – created the **Ordo Mortis** to eradicate the Revenant Plague before the common folk started to panic. The Pontifex's personality will most likely influence the tactics and operational procedures of the Ordo, and the players can use these details to flesh out their Soldiers' thoughts, motivations and methods.

The Soldier on the Ludi Magister's **left** chooses the Pontifex's personality from the following list and the LM copies it onto the Codex Magistri.

- 1.** The Pontifex is a warrior-monk. They returned from a holy war with a tidy sum and used it to buy their political-spiritual seat.
- 2.** The Pontifex is a charismatic leader, but nobody has ever seen their face. Despite their charisma, they seem to be absolutely subservient to the Ordo.
- 3.** The Pontifex is an aristocrat who lost their position and influence following a betrayal. Now, they renounce luxuries of all kinds and preach compassion and forgiveness.
- 4.** The Pontifex was a high prelate who climbed the hierarchy incredibly fast, leaving many unexplained deaths in their wake.
- 5.** In their youth, the Pontifex was an anchorite. Their behavior is bizarre, but they are apparently able to perform miracles and heal the sick.
- 6.** The Pontifex is a sadistic tyrant. The rumours that circulate about their private habits provoke fierce debates among both the clergy and the common folk.

The **next** Soldier chooses
a name from the list below
and the LM copies it
on the Codex Magistri.

Acedius	Invidius
Avaritius	Liberius
Carnificus	Luxurius
Clement	Gluttonus
Cornelius	Omnipotentius
Crucifix	Pius
Formosus	Simplicius
Gregorius	Superbius
Innocent	Urbanus
Iratus	Zombimutatus

You may add the title “Magnus” (meaning “great” or “mighty”) and/or a Roman numeral between I and XXX to the name (e.g. Magnus Irancodus IV).

As you probably noticed, some of these names are ironic or *slightly* blasphemous. If your group opted for a **Dramatic** or **Sinister** Tone, you may wish to choose more historically plausible alternatives.



The Ordo Mortis



The Ordo Mortis was founded in an attempt to destroy the Revenant threat and hide the truth of the Plague from the common folk. In the beginning, it was just a small cadre of scholars, holy people and soldiers but, as the Plague began to spread, it took over the role and characteristics of a true army, with multiple Chapters¹ all over the known world.

Now it is time to **vote** to establish the size of the Ordo. The LM adds this information to the Codex Magistri. Keep in mind that the current spread of the Plague (established in the Spreading section on page 23) limits your choices.

Size of the Ordo

¹ In this section, the word "Chapter" is used in its medieval meaning of "a body of canons supervising a church", that is, a group of clerics or monks appointed to help the prelates in charge of a specific sanctuary. They are responsible for various religious functions – in the case of the Ordo Mortis, to eradicate the Plague.

1	<i>An elite team of 5–15 specialists ready to face the Plague and the Revenants (only at Drop or Squirt level).</i>
2-3	<i>A small, heterogeneous army composed mostly of infantry (only at Squirt or Stain level).</i>
4-5	<i>A true army of 3–5 Chapters including both infantry and cavalry, with secret chapter houses in several major European capitals (only at Stain or Tide level).</i>
6	<i>A massive international army with a Chapter in every state. Each Chapter controls multiple safe houses and companies, and some have a following of fanatical flagellants (only at Tide level).</i>

The Ordo Mortis has a **Motto**, a source of guidance and inspiration for all its Soldiers. It might be carved onto the blades of their swords or penned on a scroll given to each of them before a mission, or it could be a simple battlecry or, better yet, a secret password to distinguish the initiated from impostors.

The **next** Soldier establishes the Motto and how the members of the Ordo use it. If they need inspiration, they may ask the rest of the players for help or use one of the following examples:

- + Heaven awaits us! +
- + The word of the Lord guides me! +
- + Semper Fidelis! +
- + In Absentia Luci, Tenebrae Vincunt! +
- + Memento mori! +
- + Strike. Hard. Always. +
- + Get busy living, or get busy dying. +
- + Blood of your blood! +
- + No past, no future! +
- + We are ready for death! +
- + Ad vitam aeternam! +
- + Vade retro, plaga! +

After choosing a Motto, each player writes it down on their Soldier Sheet and the LM adds it to the Codex Magistri.

The Motto of the Ordo

Missions

The Ordo's current assignment, given to them by the Pontifex, is called the "**Mission**", and this is the main goal of the game Session. Consult the appropriate list, depending on how widespread the Plague is (see page 23), and **vote** to establish which Mission to undertake. **In this instance the LM's vote counts as two. In case of a tie, roll a die.**



Spread Level: Drop

1	Assemble the core of the Ordo Mortis, finding additional specialists to fill the ranks.
2	Deliver an urgent message about the disease to a politically influential individual.
3	Interrogate a coven of witches about their dark rituals (perhaps they are spreading the disease in the name of Satan).
4	Exorcise the Devil from the abbey to put a stop to the strange disease afflicting the monks.
5	Kill the necromancer and all members of the Coven of the Resurrection of the Dark Flesh.
6	Recover a cure for the plague from a mysterious herbalist living as a hermit in a remote forest.



Spread Level: Quint

1	Uncover what these mysterious "Revenants" are and determine whether, as the rumors suggest, they truly are linked to the black plague.
2	Extract an important individual from a location threatened by Revenants.
3	Deliver a plea for help to a group of politically influential individuals.
4	Investigate the inhabitants of a certain region, who seem somehow resistant to the plague.
5	Extract (with extreme prejudice) a group of people who are somehow resistant to the plague.
6	Change the mind of some scholars who are spreading the strange idea that the plague is actually caused by minuscule organisms lodged in the respiratory system or the blood.

Spread Level: Stain



1	Convert, using only words, a group of suspected heretics who are spreading the idea that the plague is in fact a gift from God, and it should be carried far and wide.
2	Exterminate a sect preaching the heretical idea that the Revenants are actually blessed and that, once integrated into society, they should be revered as saints.
3	Found a new Chapter of the Ordo Mortis. Secrecy is of the utmost importance.
4	Assassinate a powerful individual or group that is taking advantage of the plague to amass troops to wage war against the Church (perhaps using Revenants as soldiers...).
5	Rescue a group of God-fearing individuals from an abbey besieged by Revenants.
6	Rescue a monarch and their court from a fortress besieged by Revenants.



Spread Level: Tide

1	Survive the night in your besieged safe house. Reinforcements will arrive at dawn.
2	Free a holy city or major capital, eradicating the local infestation of Revenants.
3	Escape to a land of milk and honey on an arc or with a caravan of refugees.
4	Fight an open battle against an endless horde of Revenants.
5	Go on a quest to find the only relic capable of driving away the Beast of the Apocalypse, who is using the disease to bolster the ranks of its army for the end times.
6	Retake control of a number of fiefdoms contaminated by the dead, and return the regions to the living.

Campaigns

If this is your first game of *Piaga 1348*, you can ignore this section.

If, thanks to divine intervention, your Soldier survived and you want to play more Missions to create a Campaign, follow these instructions:

- a. Each Mission must follow the last in chronological order.
- b. Keep playing the same Soldier, adjusting them according to the rules in the **Judgment** section (page 78).
- c. Before each game, follow all the rules as if it was the first game, discussing which parts of the setting you want to keep and which ones to change (the Pontifex might die, or the spread of the disease reduces, etc.).
- d. **The Ludi Magister of the new Mission cannot be the same as the last one.** The role should rotate around all the players. The old LM should create their own Soldier (perhaps upgrading a recurring Secondary).
- e. If you all agree to **go back in time**, and play a prequel, each player *must* create a new Soldier, because the Soldier Sheets are a snapshot of the current state of the Character. If you'd like to preserve a sense of continuity, you can link past and present Characters by blood or friendship.

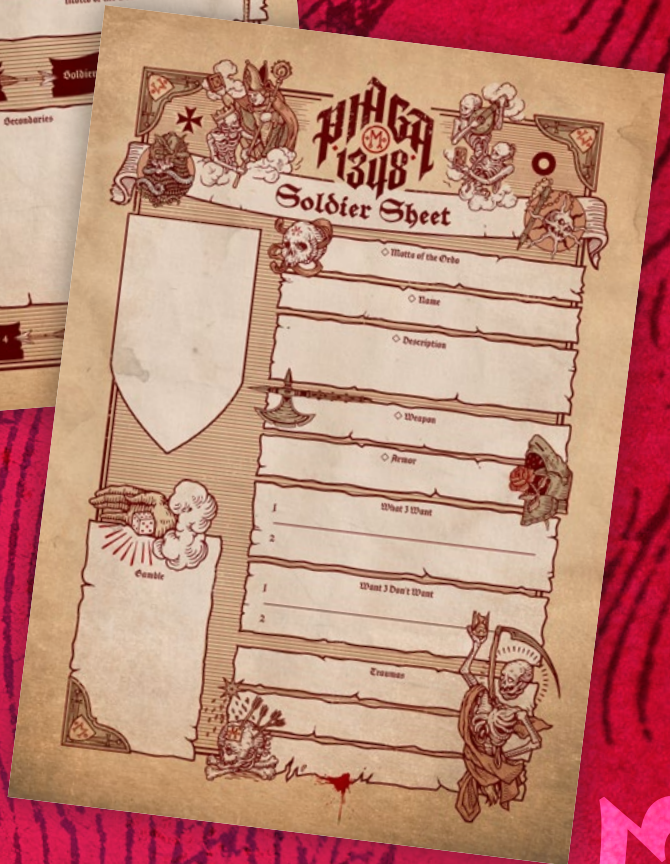
No Taking Notes

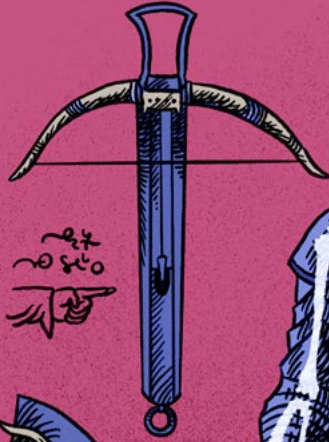
The deeds of the Ordo Mortis are secret and they will not be recorded for posterity, so **there should be no pieces of paper or notes on the table**, except the **Soldier Sheets** and the **Codex Magistri**.

Optional Rule

If you want to play multiple Sessions and you worry about forgetting the details of the previous ones, you can take notes, but at the end of the Campaign, you have to physically destroy them all. No trace of the Ordo's deeds should survive. Rip the notes apart, toss them in the fire, or delete every last one of them.

Between Sessions, keep all your notes safely hidden where no one else will see them. Put them in your shoes, in a safe, or keep them in your pocket at all times. The people of today must be kept in the dark. Those who don't follow this rule have failed the Ordo Mortis and, for their sake, should go underground.





Hand-drawn scribbles and a pointing hand icon.

Hand-drawn scribbles and symbols.



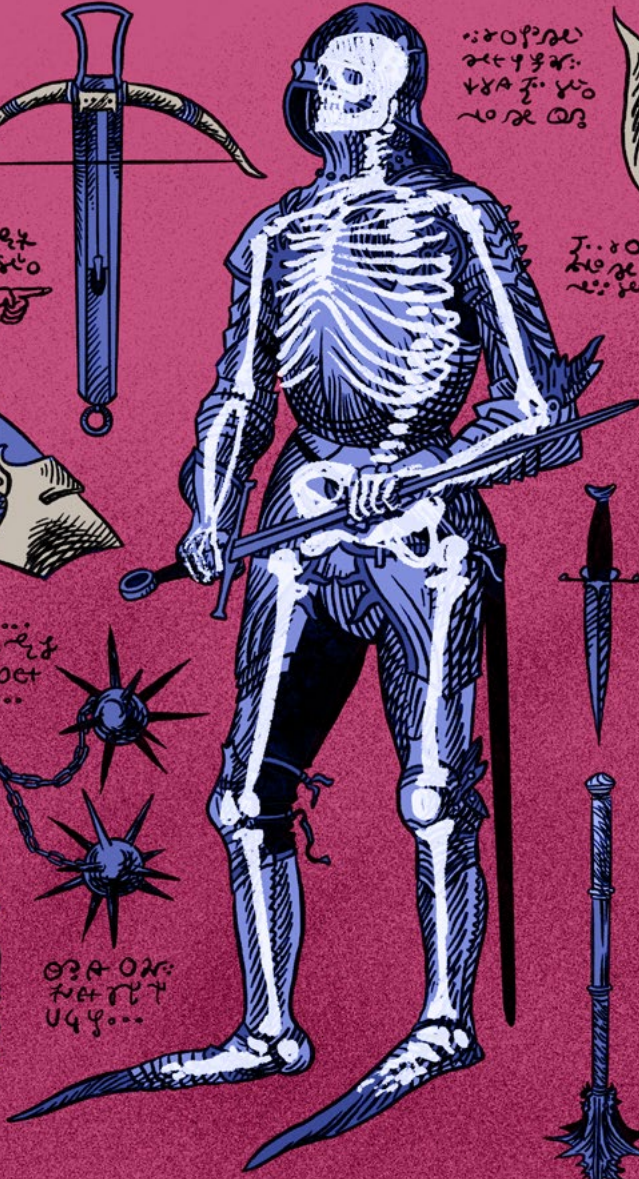
Hand-drawn scribbles and symbols.



Hand-drawn scribbles and symbols.



Hand-drawn scribbles and symbols.



Soldier Creation



You have two ways to create your Soldiers: the **standard mode** (presented below) and the **quick start** (see page 138).

SOLDIER SHEET

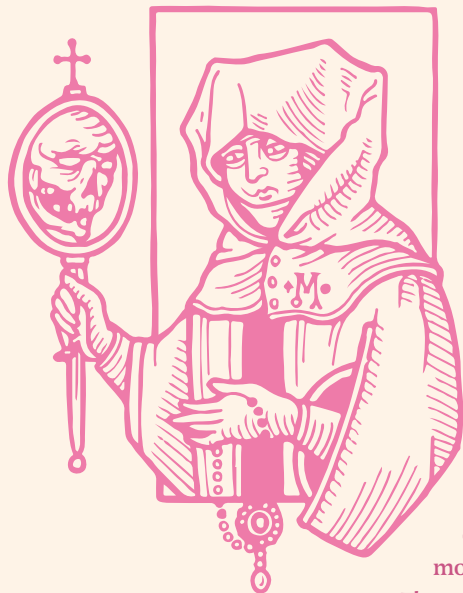
✱ Soldiers of the Ordo Mortis usually keep a low profile to avoid inciting panic among the common folk. Yet they are equipped like proper knights: sword, helmet, several days' worth of iron rations, and perhaps a rosary for reciting chaplets when their faith is shaken, or a palfrey for long journeys. This is considered standard equipment and doesn't need to be recorded on the Soldier Sheet.

Print a copy of the Sheet for every Soldier (you can find it at page 142) or, if you play online, you can find the fillable PDF at need.games!

The Soldier Sheet is divided into eight parts.

- ✱ **Motto of the Ordo** (page 29) The core moral principle for all members of the Ordo, which guides their actions and decisions.
- ✱ **Name** (page 38) Your Soldier's first name, last name, and moniker, forming their core identity.
- ✱ **Description** (page 36) Your most distinctive skill, along with your physical and behavioral quirks.
- ✱ **Weapon** (page 40) The weapon or ability that you use to tackle most challenges.
- ✱ **Armor** (page 41) The armor or personal quality that protects you from adversities.
- ✱ **What I Want** (page 42) The goal or aspiration that drives you.
- ✱ **What I Don't Want** (page 43) Your greatest fear, or a situation that you try to avoid at all costs.
- ✱ **Traumas** (page 72) The physical, psychological, or social wounds your Soldier suffers when you lose a Conflict.

Each of the first five elements (Motto, Name, Description, Weapon, and Armor) features a checkbox. You may **check** one of them to add 1 die to your **pool** during the **Turn's Conflict** (page 56) or to **Help** another Soldier (page 69).



DESCRIPTION

This is what you know about your Soldier when the game begins. Each Description should be unique, but they usually include at least one physical element, one distinctive behavior and, sometimes, a few unusual abilities.

Each player, starting with the one **next** to whoever decided on the Motto, creates a random Soldier by rolling two six-sided dice and consulting the table on page 37.

After filling in the Description section of your Soldier Sheet, you may add more details to bring your Character to life.

These details should always be up front and visible, not tied to feelings, secrets or anything else that would be hidden or not obvious to the other Soldiers. Suitable details include clothes, eye or hair color, wounds, tattoos, missing limbs, nervous twitches, mannerisms, the tone of your voice, unusual pieces of equipment, or having a pet animal or faithful servant (who are considered **Secondaries**, see page 55).

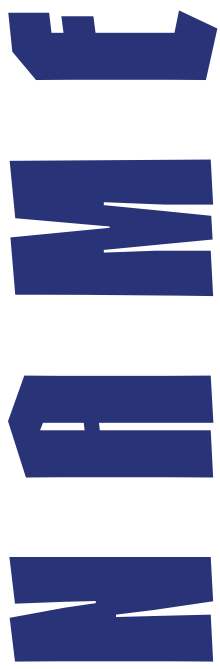
Each Soldier is unique and associated with a specific player. If you get the same result as another player on the Description table, just flip the results of your dice. If this causes another tie, roll again until you obtain a different result.

If you and your friends have already played a few games of **Piaga 1348** and you all agree, you can ignore the table on page 37 and **create your Soldiers from scratch**. Remember to share the Descriptions of your Soldiers with the rest of the table and come to an agreement on what kind of team you want to play, so that you are all on the same page when it comes to who is who and what kind of story you are going to tell.

CREATING
A SOLDIER FROM
SCRATCH



Die 1	Die 2	Description
1	1-2	A silent mercenary with shifty eyes.
	3-4	A former executioner, now mercenary , with an impressive physique.
	5-6	An extravagant mercenary with an unusual accent.
2	1-2	A delusional Templar knight wearing too many layers of clothes.
	3-4	A haughty and aristocratic Teutonic knight with mirror-polished sword and helmet.
	5-6	A vain Hospitaller knight certain that they are blessed.
3	1-2	A brusque, old knight with one good eye.
	3-4	A brave knight with no master, with a fierce and defiant expression.
	5-6	A mysterious knight who never removes their helmet or armor in public.
4	1-2	A brusque young inquisitor with a cruel gaze.
	3-4	A mysterious witch-hunter , stern and incorruptible.
	5-6	A humble wandering healer , missing a limb.
5	1-2	A troubled novice monk , with scars covering their face and hands.
	3-4	A strict and erudite priest , acting as a spiritual counselor.
	5-6	A young and stealthy soldier , the illegitimate son of a bishop.
6	1-2	A foreign assassin , expert in poisons and camouflage.
	3-4	A sinister plague doctor , who specializes in herbs and ointments.
	5-6	An inexperienced and arrogant squire from a noble lineage.



First Name

Choose one from the list.

- * Albrecht / Adalheidis
- * Bartolomeo / Bartolomea
- * Bencivenne / Benedetta
- * Boldrino / Bianca
- * Bonaccorso / Beatrice
- * Braccio / Brigida
- * Carlos / Carlotta
- * Domenico / Domenica
- * Erasmo / Ermelinda
- * Federico / Mathilda
- * Filippo / Filippa
- * Francesco / Francesca
- * Gerard / Gertrude
- * Gunther / Gudrun
- * Giovanni / Giovanna
- * Guido / Giuditta
- * Jacopo / Giacinta
- * Jean Claude / Jeanne
- * Leone / Leonora
- * Niccolò / Nina
- * Orso / Orsola
- * Ottobono / Ottavia
- * Pierre / Perette
- * Pietro / Petra
- * Roland / Rosalind
- * Salvador / Salvadora
- * Siegfried / Sigrid
- * Ugucione / Ugolina
- * Yago / Ysabel
- * Yusef / Yusra

Last Name

Create your last name by adding "of" after your first name and choosing one of the following towns. This might be your birthplace or the place where you became famous (or infamous) for your deeds.

- * Aleppo
- * Alexandria
- * Avignon
- * Baghdad
- * Barcelona
- * Basel
- * Belgrade
- * Bologna
- * Canterbury
- * Cologne
- * Constantinople
- * Florence
- * Frankfurt
- * Hamburg
- * Jerusalem
- * Kraków
- * London
- * Lyon
- * Madrid
- * Messina
- * Milan
- * Monaco
- * Naples
- * Palermo
- * Paris
- * Pisa
- * Prague
- * Rome
- * Seville
- * Stockholm
- * Toledo
- * Tunis
- * Valencia
- * Venice
- * Warsaw
- * York



You can invent your own moniker or choose one from the list below. The moniker can be used as a nickname, added before the first name (“*Wild Carlos of Madrid*”), or inserted between first and last name with “the” (“*Gerard the Compassionate, of York*”).



- * Avenger
- * Bane
- * Beautiful
- * Black
- * Bloody
- * Butcher
- * Compassionate
- * Daring
- * Deadeater
- * Furious
- * Halfling
- * Headsman
- * Impaler
- * Norse
- * Philaderer
- * Silent
- * Stranger
- * Strongarm
- * Tenderskin
- * Unrelenting
- * Wanderer
- * Wild

Note: you might change one or more elements of your Soldier's Name during or after a Mission. You might be forced to use a different first name for secrecy, or change your last name because your daring and heroic feats become associated with the region where the Mission or Campaign is set. As for the moniker, you might change it when another Soldier or Secondary gives you a new nickname or because you feel that something inside of your Soldier changed and the old moniker no longer fits.



WEAPON...



In **Piaga 1348**, a Soldier's Weapons and Armor can be either physical or **metaphorical**. The terms "Figurative Weapon" and "Figurative Armor" represent the strategies, knowledge, secrets, resources, or ideas that you might employ to attack or defend, both on a supernatural battlefield or when facing and overcoming more mundane challenges. They represent your Soldier's personal, mental, emotional, and tactical resources, and as such they aren't just essential tools and strategies, but an intrinsic part of your Soldier's personality which influences their behavior.

Every Soldier can carry multiple implements of war, but only one Weapon and one Armor (Figurative or not). These are so personal and distinctive that they become an iconic part of the Soldier's appearance and color their view of the world. Take your time to consider how your chosen Weapon and Armor might inform the strategies and tactics your Soldier uses to survive in the hostile world of **Piaga 1348**.

Write on your Sheet which Figurative Weapon your Soldier employs to tackle the challenges of the world. Here are some examples:

- + Always hide behind a facade.
- + Fear can stop armies.
- + For every detail, a lens.
- + I see everyone's weak spot.
- + I have a seductive look.
- + I have the heart of a lion.
- + I know the dead better than the living.
- + I'm a loudmouth.
- + I'm driven to obsession.
- + My determination is unshakable.
- + My reputation precedes me.
- + My words are sharper than knives.
- + Strike first, strike hard, no mercy.
- + Truth is my guide.

Example: *I see everyone's weak spot* is Figurative Weapon. It represents the ability to read people and situations and identify possible vulnerabilities to exploit. This is not a mere combat advantage, but rather a soft skill that you might apply in various contexts, from a negotiation to an attempt at seducing someone. A Soldier with this Weapon has enhanced their perception and become more and more attentive to small details, such as non-verbal expressions, changes in other people's voice and other clues, which most people are unaware of.



If you believe that using Figurative Weapons and Armor might make the game too abstract or it doesn't gel with your preferred Tone, you can instead arm your Soldier with a conventional Weapon and Armor. For example, both *My family's ancestral sword* and a *Lance carved with depictions of biblical episodes* are perfectly legitimate physical Weapons. In the same vein *Battered plate armor* or *Chainmail with the insignia of the Teutonic Order* are good choices for Armor.



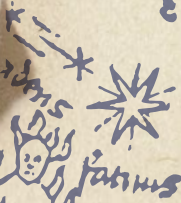
... & ARMOR

What is the Figurative Armor that protects you from the hardships of the world? Here are some examples:

- * Always hide behind a facade.
- * Healthy as an ox.
- * Keep an ace up your sleeve.
- * Knowledge is power.
- * Appearances can be deceiving.
- * Money opens every door.
- * It's best to shift the blame.
- * Natural born negotiator.
- * Cold as ice.
- * Nondescript appearance.
- * For every storm, a cloak.
- * Silence can disarm everyone.
- * For every wound, a bandage.
- * Subterfuge and deception.

Example: As Figurative Armor, *Cold as ice* represents the ability to remain emotionally detached, completely unfazed by attacks or taunts, and yet perfectly lucid, aware, and in control of the situation.

Note: using the Figurative rules, some Weapons might work as Armor or the other way around. You cannot use the same sentence as both Weapon and Armor, although it is possible to use a physical Weapon and a Figurative Armor or vice versa.





This section on your Sheet is for your short- or long-term goal, something that drives your actions but that you cannot achieve right now. It should be something almost within reach that you lost or were forced to abandon for the foreseeable future and wish to return to. People, places, status, wealth, power, or specific items are all valid goals. It is important that your goal is concrete, even if intangible, and not too vague, allegorical, or figurative. Here are some examples.

- * To become rich.
- * To complete the Mission, no matter the cost.
- * To demonstrate that I'm trustworthy.
- * To escape to a truly safe place.
- * To find my daughter.
- * To gain a higher status.
- * To go back home and work the land.
- * To pay off my family's debts.
- * To reach the place where my family is hiding.
- * To repay my debt to the Church.
- * To return home to my loved ones.
- * To show the world that I was right about the plague.

- + *To see the faces I killed in my dreams.*
- + *For them to run away without me.*
- + *For this war to end.*
- + *To be betrayed.*
- + *To be ordered around.*
- + *To come back as a Revenant.*
- + *To go back home.*
- + *To have to save their life again.*
- + *To kill innocents.*
- + *To lose my honor, again.*
- + *To see more of my comrades die.*
- + *To see that hideous face ever again.*

Note: Your choice of *What I Want* and *What I Don't Want* should be related to two completely different situations. For example if you want *To return home to my family*, you cannot also choose that you don't want *To be prevented from going back home to my family*.

It's possible to have up to two entries in both *What I Want* and *What I Don't Want*, but during **Soldier Creation** you only choose one of each. You might add a second one later as a consequence of a **Gamble** (page 64) or during the **Judgment** phase (page 78), after discussing with the LM how the consequences of a particularly significant moment have impacted your Soldier.

These sentences reveal extremely personal and intimate details about your Soldier, and form the foundation of their morality. Once set, they cannot normally be changed or updated, however, if something happens during a **Mission** that makes one of your choices completely invalid or unreachable, talk with the LM and the other players to choose a different sentence to replace the one that no longer works.

What I Don't Want

Next, write on your Sheet what you do not want to happen to you or your loved ones, or something you despise with every fiber of your being. It can be about the consequences of a choice or the direct or indirect fallout of your actions, or maybe a rational or irrational phobia or obsession. It should be something that has a chance of occurring during play – in which case it would change your soldier in a significant way.





Ties with the MISSION



t this point, the LM should ask all the players, starting with the one **next** to them:

*“How does your **What I Want** and/or **What I Don’t Want** tie in with the goal of this Mission?”*

The tie with the Mission is an additional, non-mandatory incentive beyond their responsibilities to the Ordo Mortis that motivates a Soldier to dive deeper into their current task and pushes them to reach their goal. For example, a Soldier who wants *To repay my debt to the Church* (What I Want) or *Not lose my honor, again* (What I Don't Want) might be especially driven to achieve a goal such as *Assemble the initial core of the Ordo Mortis*. If all players agree, it's also possible to establish a common tie for the entire group.



It's not mandatory to have a tie with the Mission, but it's important to ask the players this question. It's food for thought, and might help them to have a richer and more fulfilling gaming experience. The Ludi Magister adds all the answers to the Notes section of the Codex Magistrī.

Taking TRAUMAS

Every time a **Conflict** (page 60) ends in failure, the SoD suffers a **Trauma** (page 72). Traumas resulting from combat or an action scene are usually of a physical nature – wounds or injuries of some kind – while other circumstances might have psychological or social consequences, such as shock, shame or slander.



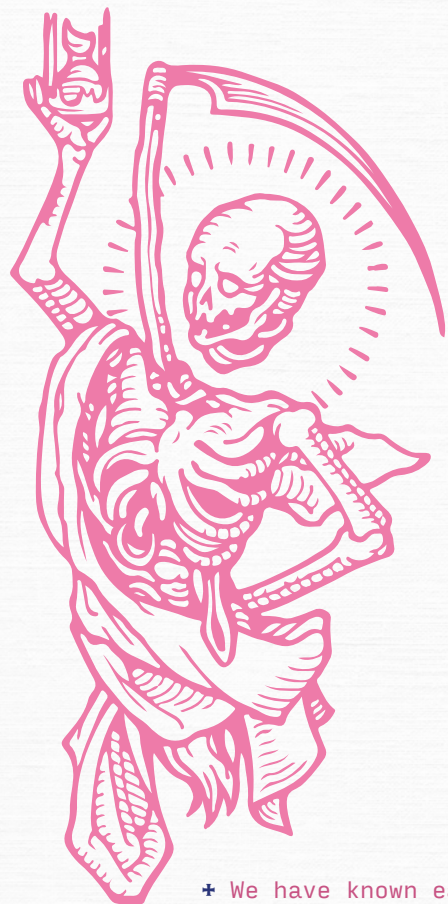
Each Soldier can only withstand 3 Traumas, no matter the type. When they receive the third they have to leave the scene.

If the third Trauma is physical, “leaving the scene” often means a horrific, excruciating demise; If it is psychological or social, the Soldier will live on, but so completely exhausted or overwhelmed by the conflict that they have to bow out from the Mission. When this happens, the player can continue the game as a Tutelary (page 75).



The world is a
dangerous
place





Introductions

Now that all the Soldier Sheets are complete and the foundations of the game established, each player should **read aloud** what they have written so far and describe the appearance of their Soldier. If this process triggers any interesting new ideas about your Soldier, add them to your Description. This is also the perfect time to discuss anything that still needs to be clarified or defined.

At the end of each introduction, the players discuss how long their Soldiers have known the Soldier just introduced. You can start from scratch or choose one element from the list below.

- + We have known each other since childhood.
- + We studied together at the seminar.
- + We trained together in the art of the sword.
- + We fought in the last crusade.
- + We met when I left my old master.
- + We met when they saved my life.
- + Once, they stumbled into trouble and I had to save them.
- + We have known each other for a long time, but only by name.
- + Their father made me swear to protect them.
- + We just met.

If you like, you can take a minute or two to delve a bit deeper into these relationships. They are excellent cues for the Ludi Magister and the players to build the Soldiers' stories.

BEING THE CAPTAIN



It's time to choose who is going to be the Captain of the Chapter or their representative. Depending on your decisions so far, this role might be filled by one of the Soldiers, a recurring Secondary (page 55) - which puts this responsibility squarely on the Ludi Magister's shoulders - or a mysterious figure that gives you orders only via letters.

You must choose a Captain before each Mission, with a vote if necessary. It's customary for the same Character to remain as Captain for the entire duration of a Campaign but, since there are no mechanical consequences, you may change the Captain whenever you choose.

IV



The Game

Soldier on Duty (SoD)

When you become the SoD, you take on the mantle of the main character for the current portion of the story and narrate your Soldier's words and actions. First, pick up the On Duty Token, which shows that it is your turn to lead.

Next, the Ludi Magister asks: *"What do you perceive with two of your senses?"* Based on your answers, the LM frames the scene, much like in a movie or a novel, while you and the other players describe how your respective Soldiers enter the scene and how you interact with it, and what you do or what you say to any Secondaries (page 55) in the scene. This continues until you reach the **Turn's Conflict** (page 56).

Passing the Token

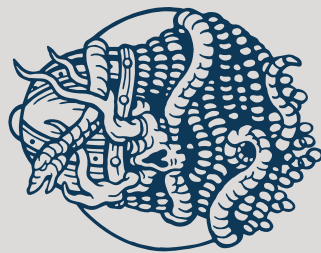
At the end of your turn, after you've faced the Conflict but **before** passing the On Duty Token to the next player, take a look at your Sheet: **if all five checkboxes are marked, uncheck them** so that you may use them again starting with the next Soldier's turn.

Only the SoD can **uncheck** boxes on their Sheet. This means that if you are not the SoD and you have **checked** your last box to **Help** (page 69) another Soldier, you will start your next turn with no resources and you will automatically fail the Conflict, unless:

- a. Another Soldier on the scene Helps you.
- b. You take a **Gamble** (page 64).
- c. You use some dice from the **Morale Pool** (page 62).

All of these rules are explained in the **Conflict** section (starting at page 56).

In general, all Soldiers (whether SoD or not) are considered **highly qualified and knowledgeable** individuals. This means that you don't have to roll any dice to determine if you succeed in a task that falls within the range of normal human abilities. The only exception is the **Conflict**, which is a pivotal moment where the story can take different directions depending on the outcome.



Ludi Magister



esteemed



Ludi Magister, your first task during the game is to ask the SoD: "What do you perceive with two of your senses?" For the sake of clarity, when we say **senses**, we mean sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. Use the SoD's answer as a prompt to answer the following questions:



1. *Where are the Soldiers?*
2. *How much time has passed since the last turn (except if it's the first turn, of course)?*
3. *What time is it?*
4. *What is the weather like?*
5. *Are there any Secondaries on the scene? What are they doing or saying? How do they interact with the SoD and the other Soldiers on the scene?*

Make your description as **vivid** as possible to make the scene **engaging** and **lively**. Use significant details to bring the world to life: your goal is to make the other players feel as if they are living in the time and place you are describing.

It is important to avoid narrating the intentions or inner thoughts of the Secondaries – let their actions and other visible details suggest what is going on in their minds. For example, instead of saying “*Brother Jacopone is nervous*”, you should describe how he keeps tapping his fingers on the table or how his gaze flits around the room, looking for something or someone. This makes the story much more engaging and helps the players feel closer to their Soldiers.



If you are running low on ideas, you can ask the other players to add **more details**. In this way, the game becomes even more of a shared narrative, where every participant actively contributes to the story. This approach makes for a far richer story and reinforces the group’s engagement and sense of ownership of the narrative, resulting in a far more complete and dynamic experience.

If this is the first scene of the first Session, you can take the opportunity to narrate the first encounter between the members of the Ordo Mortis and an emissary of the Church (or the Pontifex themselves, why not?), who gives them their Mission.

Example A

SoD: (puts the On Duty Token in front of themselves)

LM: What do you perceive with two of your senses?

SoD: I hear the sound of metal cutting through flesh and inhuman screams. I also taste blood.

LM: It's the dead of night. The only light comes from the torches carried by your group, the others have fallen to the ground. You are facing a group of farmers turned Revenants.

SoD: How many?



LM: There is too much confusion to count their exact number, but you notice that, beside the torches, there are a few swords laying on the ground. Many of your fellow soldiers have been killed and now crawl forward to devour you. Are there any other Soldiers on the scene?

Another Soldier: If the SoD is ok with it, we are back to back.

SoD: Sure. I start chopping the farmers to pieces with my sword. As for the soldiers, I drive the tip through the slits of their helmets, into the face or eye to reach the brain [...]

Example B

SoD: (puts the On Duty Token in front of themselves)

LM: What do you perceive with two of your senses?

SoD (imagining they are resting on a bed): I feel a soft mattress under me and I smell hot food coming through the door.

LM: The door is a visual detail. Choose if you smell the food or see the door.

SoD: I smell the food.



LM: It's morning and the sunlight peeks through the heavy curtains hanging at the window. Two days have passed since your battle at the seat of the Church itself. The Pontifex is sitting on his bed, wolfing down boiled meat seasoned with sauces from a tray resting on his legs. Also in the room are the Captain of the Ordo, right next to you, and two guards at the side of the door behind you. As he chews his food, the Pontifex addresses you: "Son, take your hands off my bed. Have you not seen a feather mattress before? We summoned you to hear your report about the losses in the last battle. You said that over half the soldiers of the Ordo became Revenants, didn't you?"

SoD: "Yes, I believe that's exactly what happened." [...]



Secondaries

The most interesting interactions, and often the most relevant to the game, are those between the Soldiers – meaning the players at the table. However, there are many more members of the Ordo, not to mention the scores of other possible encounters during a Mission: farmers, workers, sailors, innkeepers, fugitives, aristocrats, priests, brigands, rogues, swindlers and more...

In this game, anyone who isn't a Soldier is a **Secondary** (short for Secondary Character), a minor extra without a dedicated Sheet. Unlike the Soldiers, who are controlled by the players, Secondaries are typically played by the Ludi Magister.

When a Secondary enters the scene, the LM establishes their name (using the table on page 38 as inspiration) and appearance, adding a few adjectives to help the Soldiers imagine what they see.

Sample adjectives: *arrogant, beaten-up, charming, cheerful, disgusting, disturbing, eccentric, elegant, enigmatic, extravagant, frail, frowning, gregarious, grumpy, haughty, hostile, imposing, insolent, kind, sad, scruffy, shy, slimy, stern, subservient, threatening.*

Note: if a Soldier is not in the current scene, you can give their player control of a Secondary so that they can stay involved and continue to contribute to the story. Bear in mind that this isn't intended to create additional conflicts or unforeseen complications, but rather to help the SoD to move the story along.

The Turn's Conflict



Conflict is a moment in the story when the SoD wants something that they can't automatically obtain, or must compete against someone else who wants it even more.

This can be an opponent that actively opposes them or a more subtle challenge that hinges upon the strength of their character or exposes their weaknesses.

Conflicts are **pivotal moments** in the story, filled with significant dangers, tests of skill, and verbal or physical confrontations. There are many possible goals to the conflict, for instance dealing or avoiding injuries, asserting your superiority, unveiling the truth, or enhancing your social status.

Each turn features a Conflict involving the SoD. It's the goal, the culmination of that part of the story, and the LM should actively work to reach it. How that unfolds depends on the situation at hand. If another player thinks that you are taking too long to reach the Conflict, they can say so.

A Conflict has only two possible outcomes: **success** or **failure**.

If **neither outcome is interesting**, there is no reason to consider the situation as a true Conflict, at least from the SoD's point of view. **Any action that can be performed without direct consequences isn't a Conflict.**

For example, kicking down a door in a calm and collected situation isn't a Conflict; doing so while under attack and with a Secondary barring the Soldiers' way *is* a Conflict.

A blue skull and an hourglass are positioned on a red background with circular, concentric patterns. The skull is on the left, and the hourglass is on the right. The text "Time as an Obstacle" is written in a white, gothic-style font across the middle of the skull and hourglass.

Time as an Obstacle

If **time** is a relevant factor in the scene (for example, if the Soldier only has a few seconds to pass through a door before the enemies arrive), you can start a Conflict to determine how long the action will take. Will the SoD achieve their goal before the looming threat materializes?

57

Star Troy a

War

fl ct



A Conflict arises when a specific situation or series of events forces the SoD to stop and say one or more variations of “No”, like: “No, I don’t want the story to develop in this way” or “No, I don’t want this to happen”. This marks the start of the Conflict and the SoD then declares how they intend to tackle it.

To get the SoD to say “No”, the Ludi Magister can set the scene so that it includes something the SoD wants to achieve or escape from. This is where the *Description*, *What I Want* and *What I Don’t Want* from the Soldier Sheet come to the fore. If none of these triggers can be applied, survival, secrecy, the Mission, and the continued existence of the Ordo are excellent alternatives.

Although the Ludi Magister sets up the Conflict, the most important thing is what the SoD considers to be a Conflict (i.e. what pushes them to say “No”). However, the Ludi Magister can **voice their opinion** saying “For me, this looks like a Conflict” or “If you want the story to go that way, get your dice pool ready” or even “You can’t do it without overcoming a Conflict”.



Example A

continued from page 54

God: Sure. I start chopping the farmers to pieces with my sword. As for the soldiers, I drive the tip through the slits of their helmets, into the face or eye to reach the brain.

LM: Being so precise slows you down and pretty soon you're surrounded.

God: I go for the legs. If I get them down on the ground, I'll have time to chop off the heads.

LM: You're trying to do too many things at once, if you want to succeed, you'd better get your dice pool ready [...].

Example B

continued from page 54

God: "Yes, I believe that's exactly what happened."

LM (playing the Pontifex): "What do you mean 'believe'? Weren't you there? Are you a traitor, perhaps? Guards, arrest this man!"

God: No!

LM: Do you mean that your Soldier shouts "No!" Or that you don't want the story to continue this way?

God: I don't want the story to continue this way. It's a Conflict.

[...]

Facing a Conflict



When facing a Conflict, the SoD assembles a *dice pool*.

The entire Conflict is resolved with a **single roll**. To assemble the *dice pool*, the SoD declares which elements of their Sheet come into play by **checking** the relevant boxes. Then, they add 1 die to the pool for each box they *just checked* and briefly explain **why** these specific elements might assist them – a more detailed description of **how** that happens emerges only if they succeed (page 61).

The LM must decide whether these elements are **relevant** to the current scene, and may disallow *checking* any boxes that don't fit the narrative.

Note: it is possible to have a *dice pool* of 0, because either you don't have any available box to check or you have no effective way to leverage the elements from your Sheet. In this case, you **automatically fail** this Conflict.

After rolling the dice, **any die showing a 5 or 6 is counted as a Success**. This roll has two possible outcomes:

Result	Outcome
No Successes	Failure: The Ludi Magister narrates how the SoD fails to overcome the Conflict and explains the type of Trauma they suffer as a result.
At Least 1 Success	Success: The SoD narrates how they overcome the Conflict, including how any Secondaries on the scene are involved, if necessary.

At the end of the Conflict, the Ludi Magister may add a **brief commentary**. After that, the turn (and the On Duty Token) passes to the *next* player, going clockwise.

Narrating a Failure

Failing a Conflict should never make the story grind to a complete stop, or lead to a dead end with no way out. The Ludi Magister should take this opportunity to advance the story and create new clues or reveal pertinent information, especially for the *upcoming* SoD. A simple “*nothing happens*” or “*you just fail*” kills the pace of the story, and can be frustrating or boring for the players. It is far more effective to use failures as tools to steer the players' ideas in unexpected and interesting new directions, creating even more tension and engagement in the story.

Example A > continued from page 59

LM: You're trying to do too many things at once, if you want to succeed you'd better get your dice pool ready.

SoD: I'm going to check my Description, As a mercenary I know how to swing a sword; then my Weapon Strike first, strike hard, no mercy, which means I'm faster than these rotten meatballs; and finally my Nondescript appearance Armor, because people always notice me last, even in combat.

LM: You're already in the thick of the fight. Nondescript appearance would be useful to get away, not to fight...

SoD: Yeah, I guess... hum... I'll check my Name. I'm known as "The Butcher" when I start chopping, nobody can stop me.

LM: That works.

SoD: Godfrey (another Soldier), are you going to help me?

Godfrey: I'm at your side. I'll help you by checking Old knight. I've learned the hard way how best to strike and I'll impart my tactical knowledge to you.

SoD: (Rolling four dice): 1, 3, 5, 5.

LM: Two Successes. One lets you narrate how you overcome this Conflict, the other goes into the Morale Pool.

SoD: I slash the kneecaps of the two Revenants in front of me, forcing them to the ground, giving Godfrey the chance to smash their heads with a mace when they get too close to my shins. Meantwhile, we continue to mow down more Revenants. [...]

Morale Pool

Morale represents the collective pool of spiritual strength, enthusiasm and willpower available to the Soldier on Duty when facing a Conflict. The **Morale Pool** is the mechanical abstraction of this supply of determination, representing the Soldiers' ability to inspire each other even in the most dire of circumstances.

When the SoD scores more than 1 Success during a Conflict, each additional Success die beyond the first is set aside. At the end of the SoD's turn, these dice are placed in the center of the table, to form the Morale Pool (adding to any dice already there). These dice are the physical representation of the positive reinforcement gained from a truly exceptional success.

At any point in the game, any SoD can take one or more of these dice and add them to their *dice pool*. Once used, these dice don't go back to the Morale Pool, but any additional successes scored by any SoD add new dice to the pool.

The maximum number of dice in the Morale Pool at any given time is equal to the number of Soldiers at the table.

Between Sessions, you **empty** the Morale Pool, because this supply represents the effects of recent events and might vary significantly over time.

Note: if you don't have enough dice, you can use tokens to represent the "missing" dice, or you can simply note the size of the Morale Pool on the Codex Magistrī.

Example B

Continued from page 59

SoD: I don't want the story to continue this way. It's a Conflict.

LM: Which elements do you want to use to assemble your dice pool?

SoD: I'm checking my Weapon, My lineage — as a noble I have a certain authority. Then, I'll go with my last free box, my Name. Since I'm "of Hamburg", the Pontifex should remember that I'm a veteran of a famous battle, where I saved many prelates...

LM: That's a bit of a stretch, but I like that you're adding some context. How many dice do you have?

SoD: Just two dice. Since there are no other Soldiers on the scene to Help me, I'll add one more die with a Gamble. [...]





During a Conflict, you can increase your chances of success by taking a **Gamble** and adding a die of a **different color** to your *dice pool*. This is not without risk, and there is a chance that it could expose your Soldier to unforeseen dangers or reveal something you'd rather keep to yourself.

- A.** If the Gamble die shows a **1, 2, or 3**, nothing happens beyond the standard resolution of the Conflict.
- B.** If the Gamble die shows a **4, 5 or 6**, you are **exposed**. The Ludi Magister chooses one of the effects from the following table or rolls two dice, adding the result together, and tells you what to note in the Gamble section of your Sheet (a result of 5 or 6 still counts as a Success).

Note: if the Gamble die scores an additional Success, don't put it in the Morale Pool. Add normal dice instead, so that the special one is always available for Gambles.

Choose who is going to narrate the Gamble's Outcome, and when. Is this going to happen during the Conflict resolution, or later?



Result	Gamble's Outcome
2	You overreached. You can't use any more Gambles until the end of the Mission.
3	Your Weapon (even if Figurative) breaks and is lost forever – delete it from your Sheet and check the Weapon box. If you want to replace it with a new physical Weapon, you might find one at the end of the Conflict, in which case this field remains empty until then. Alternatively, the Ludi Magister can provide you with a new Figurative Weapon
4	Someone that you're about to arrest, torture or kill has ties to one of your fellow Soldiers. You can't take any dice from the Morale Pool until the end of the Mission.
5	Add another What I Don't Want to your Sheet. If you don't have an empty space, delete one of the old entries and replace it with a new one.
6	Your seemingly good relationship with another Soldier turns out to be a lie. The Ludi Magister explains how the truth emerges, or can ask another Soldier on the scene to do so. The Ludi Magister might change a part of your Name.
7	You can't receive any Help until the end of the Mission. Explain why your reputation is now in tatters.
8	One of your What I Wants becomes harder or impossible to reach. Adjust it accordingly.
9	One of your What I Don't Wants comes into play or is reinforced or magnified. The Ludi Magister narrates how this happens, but you may contribute your ideas.
10	A Revenant you're about to destroy was a good friend of yours or of another Soldier. You can't add any dice from the Morale Pool until the end of the Mission.
11	Your Armor (even if Figurative) breaks and is lost forever – delete it from your Sheet and check the Armor box. If you want to replace it with new physical Armor, you might find some at the end of the Conflict, in which case this field remains empty until then. Alternatively, the Ludi Magister can provide you with new Figurative Armor.
12	You are wounded and infected by a Revenant. Add this as a new Trauma (regardless of the Conflict's outcome, which might cause an additional Trauma).

Example A

alternate version from page 61

SoD: Godfrey, are you going to help me?

Godfrey: I only have one unchecked box, I'd rather keep it for my next turn. Otherwise I'll have nothing.

SoD: Suit yourself. I've got three dice already, and I'll go for a Gamble to make it four dice in total.

LM: The Gamble die should be a different color, but since we are playing online, we'll consider the last result as the Gamble die.

SoD: I got 2, 3, 6, and a 5 for the Gamble.

LM: You got two Successes, so you can narrate how you overcome this Conflict, and you have a die to add to the Morale Pool at the end of your turn, but since the Gamble dice was a 5, I'm going to add one unexpected consequence.

SoD: I slash the kneecaps of the two Revenants bearing down on me, forcing them to the ground. This gives me time to stab them in the head and wipe out the others around me.

LM: Unfortunately, as a consequence of the Gamble, there was a little girl among the Revenants you butchered. This goes against your *What I Don't Want* (killing children), so you'll have to live with your guilt.

Example B

continued from page 62

SoD: Just two dice. Since there are no other Soldiers on the scene to Help me, I'll add one more die with a Gamble. So, now I roll three. I got 1, 2, and 4 with the Gamble dice.

LM: It's a Failure. Before you can explain, the guards grab you and drag you away. The Pontifex whispers to the Captain: "We trusted a traitor". You gain the Trauma: *Accused of high treason*. Also, as a consequence of the Gamble, the guards seize your Weapon – delete it from your Sheet and *check* the Weapon box. Now, do you want to wait and gain a new Weapon when you get out of jail? Or do you prefer to get a Figurative one right now?

SoD: I'll take the Figurative one.

LM: Well then, add *Anger burns in my soul* to your Sheet.



Sacrifice



Sometimes, overcoming a Conflict is essential – even more important than one's life – for example, because the consequences of a Failure might involve the entire Ordo, or because this is your last change of redemption. In these cases, you may choose to Sacrifice yourself, **adding 3 dice** either to your own pool or another Soldier's, if you are **Helping** them (page 69).

No matter how many Traumas your Soldier has, the Sacrifice kills them and you must apply the rules for **leaving the scene** (page 75).

Regardless of the result of the Conflict, **a Soldier always gets to narrate their own death** (but they might still come back as a Revenant, at the LM's choice).



When a Soldier dies, they always leave behind a Relic. If they were a holy person, this might be a piece of clothing or a bone from their martyred body, while the Relic from a man-at-arms might be a weapon or a jewel. No matter what form it takes, **the new Soldier created to replace the fallen one inherits the Relic**. If there is no time to create a new Soldier or the player doesn't want to, one of their comrades inherits the Relic instead.

If you receive a Relic add it to your Description, or if it is a Weapon or Armor, replace your current one instead (a Relic is always **non-figurative**). A Relic used in this fashion **will never break as a consequence of a Gamble**.

Other Soldiers



You still get to play your Soldier, giving them a voice and describing their actions, even when you are neither the SoD nor the Ludi Magister. **You are the only one who can decide what your Soldier does, says, thinks, remembers, and perceives, unless you temporarily relinquish this authority to another player.**

You might choose to do this when the SoD is narrating with great panache how you overcome a Conflict together and you prefer to let them decide how your Soldier contributed, rather than interrupt them with your descriptions. In the same way, you can relinquish control to the Ludi Magister during a Failure. This kind of “friendly trespassing” is very common when you play with old friends who know you very well.



Entering the Scene

Although the members of a Chapter of the Ordo normally operate together, depending how the story unfolds, you might become separated from the SoD when the Ludi Magister frames a new scene. In this case there are two things you can do:

- 1. Ask permission to enter the scene later.**
- 2. Inquire if you can play a Secondary to help develop the story and the Conflict.**

In either case the Ludi Magister might say no to maintain the consistency and continuity of the story.

Asking Questions

You can ask the Ludi Magister questions at any time, whether you need more details, feel that a description is confusing or incomplete, or you want to know what the goal of a certain course of action is.

When in doubt, don't be afraid to ask. It's part of the game.

For example, you might need a bit more information about the layout of the room you're in, or how a particular action scene is panning out. A clear exchange of information is vital to make sure everyone has fun. An unanswered question or doubt is a missed opportunity to make a great choice and/or create an epic scene.



If you are on the scene during a Conflict, you can Help the SoD. To do so *check* one (and only one!) of your available boxes, then explain how your Soldier uses this particular element to assist the SoD in the current Conflict. **If both the SoD and the LM consider your explanation fitting, the SoD adds 1 die to their pool.**

If you have no idea how your Soldier might be able to Help, don't *check* the box. The internal consistency of the story is paramount and it must flow in the most natural and logical way without stretching the verisimilitude. If there is any uncertainty or ambiguity, **the Ludi Magister has the final say on what constitutes a plausible description and, by extension, if the proposed course of action is valid or requires clarification.**

Help

Clashes among Soldiers



ne Mission, one goal. *Piaga 1348* is built on the assumption that the Soldiers are going to work together as a unit. However, it's possible for one Soldier on the scene

to have a different goal than the SoD and this might cause a **clash among Soldiers**.

In this case, the general guidelines are as follows: if you intend to cause any kind of harm to another Soldier, **you must describe clearly what you want to achieve and how**. Then, the other player decides what the actual result of this clash is. In this way, the nature of the "harm" caused is left to the recipient. Nobody rolls any dice to resolve this situation.

A clash among Soldiers can be the core of the Turn's Conflict.

Example

SoD (to another Soldier):

"We know a Revenant bit you ~ it's only a matter of time before you change and attack us. Leave the Ordo Mortis, never to return, or I will execute you right here and now."

Other Soldier: "I'm fine.

"'Tis but a scratch. I can still fight as I did before. I won't leave until buboes cover my skin!"



LM (after a bit of back and forth among the players): This is clearly a clash among Soldiers. SoD, what are you going to do?

SoD: Since they aren't gonna leave on their own, I pull out my blade and decapitate them.

LM: Very well, other Soldier, are you okay with this outcome? Or do you want to change the result of the SoD's action?

Other Soldier: No, I'm not okay with that. When the SoD striges, I quickly step aside and sweep their legs. As they are on the ground, I pick up their sword and point the blade at their face, saying: "See. I can still fight as I did before."



Usually, one such sequence is enough to clarify the players' intentions, defuse any tension and move the game forward. However, it's important to reiterate that **nobody can arbitrarily kill another player's Soldier**. Sentences like "I stab you to death!" or "I kill you!" only become true if the other player agrees.

The goal of this rule isn't to enforce one Soldier's will over the other's, but to tell a story together, both the good and the bad bits. Like any other part of the story, the result of a clash should always be a team effort not an argument.

If, despite this, the clash causes a prolonged stalemate and neither Soldier is willing to back down, **the Ludi Magister should decide the final outcome**.

Since it's not a proper Conflict, a clash among Soldiers never causes Trauma to the recipient.



As a consequence of a failed Conflict, the SoD suffers a Trauma – a **physical**, **psychological**, or **social** wound that the Ludi Magister invents on the spot and the player records on their Sheet.

To ensure the continuity of the story, the Trauma should be **coherent** with both the situation at hand and the SoD's actions. The Ludi Magister should consider which elements are most important to the Soldier on Duty, consulting their Sheet if necessary, and then weave them together with the current situation to create a Trauma that provides the player with an interesting new narrative prompt.

Example: If, as a result of a Failed Conflict, a horde of Revenants manages to unhorse the SoD, the consequent Trauma might be physical and linked to the situation at hand (like a *Concussion*), or physical, with long terms effect for the entire Mission

Physical Trauma

- Bitten by a Revenant
- Blinded
- Burst eardrum
- Broken right leg
- Burned hands
- Cracked ribs
- Cut on the left shoulder
- Dislocated shoulder
- Gash on the face
- Internal bleeding
- Overcome by nausea
- Missing finger

Psychological Trauma

- Afraid of the dead
- Amnesia
- Crushing guilt
- Escapist fantasies
- Fear of heights
- Feeling of persecution
- Insomnia
- Loss of confidence
- Mystical visions
- Paranoia
- Placophobia (fear of tombstones)
- Recurring nightmares



(like *Bitten and scratched by Revenants*). However, if the Soldier in question is fond of boasting about how they are the best rider and horseback fighter in the entire Chapter, the Trauma might be social (*Humbled on the battlefield*). Alternatively, a psychological Trauma might have to do with a personal failure instead (*I failed as a leader*).

In addition to the Traumas introduced in the examples so far, the tables below provide a number of ideas you can use as inspiration.

It's also possible for a Trauma to affect the other Soldiers on the scene or those who are close to SoD, but they don't have to add anything to their Sheets. For them, the effect is purely narrative, with no mechanical consequences. For instance, the Ludi Magister might describe how the other members of the group are hindered or suffer harm as a result of the failure.

Social Trauma

- Banished from the community
- Betrayed by a fellow Soldier
- Branded as a heretic
- Despised by your child
- Disinherited
- Excommunicated by the Pontifex
- Falsely accused
- Humiliated by the Captain
- Labeled as untrustworthy
- Loss of reputation
- Loss of your title
- Slander

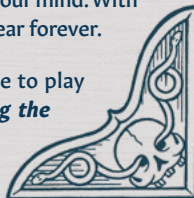


Leaving the Scene

When you suffer your **third** Trauma, it is the end: the war has either killed you or completely worn you down. Unless you overcame a Conflict by *Sacrificing yourself* (page 67), the Ludi Magister narrates what happens to your Soldier, using your Traumas as guidelines.

Physical Trauma always results in the death of the Soldier, while **psychological Traumas** push you beyond the edge of sanity, causing you to lose your mind. With **Social Traumas** you'll probably defect from the Ordo and disappear forever.

Regardless, you **have to leave the scene**. but you may continue to play following the rules presented in *What Happens After Leaving the Scene* (page 75).



Being Wounded by a Revenant

If a Soldier suffers something to the effect of "Bitten/scratched/wounded by a Revenant" as their first or second Trauma, **there are no immediate consequences**. You don't turn in a ravenous monster right there and then, but you become a **carrier** of the disease. If no other Soldier saw what happened, you may try to hide the infection. However, **if you die for any reason**, you come back as a **Revenant** during the **next SoD's turn**.

A former Soldier turned Revenant is a special kind of Secondary, who doesn't speak nor think. The only thing they do is try to tear the closest living being to shreds.

What Happens After Leaving the Scene

When you leave the scene for good after defecting, going insane, or dying, you can choose one of the following options:



1. *Playing a Tutelary.*

A Tutelary is a spirit tasked to protect a particular place, individual, family, institution, or even an entire city. In Piaga 1348, a Tutelary is the soul of a dead Soldier who continues to serve the Ordo Mortis from beyond the grave, protecting their former brothers-in-arms.

2. Become a Spectator. As a spectator you can watch and listen to the rest of the Session, without interfering.

In either case, when you receive the On Duty Token, instead of playing a normal turn as the SoD, you may tell a **flashback**. This is a short scene highlighting a single aspect of your deceased Soldier's life, or a series of images, like snapshots frozen in time. The goal is to provide the other players with new narrative cues.

Also, during another Soldier's turn, if they ask your Help, you may come to the rescue as a supernatural protector, adding 1 die to their *pool*. Either one of you narrates how this happens, following the standard rules for Help.

You can only Help each individual Soldier once until the end of the Mission.



uring play, the On Duty Token keeps getting passed clockwise around the table until each Soldier has been the SoD once.

At the end of each of these rounds, the LM may add a brief scene, showcasing events outside of the Soldiers' perception. They might happen in the past, be a glimpse of things to come, or offer a brief insight into someone plotting in the shadows.

The goal of these Interludes is to give your players a moment of respite, but without letting the tension or engagement drop. An Interlude can also be used at the end of a Session or Mission as an epilogue to the story.

On Duty Interludes Assisters'

End of the Round

At the end of each round, all players should stop for a moment, look around, stretch their legs and take a **vote** on whether they want to continue playing or not.

In case of a **tie**, the Ludi Magister rolls a die, making sure that everyone can see it. With a result of **1-3** the **game stops here**; with **4-6** the **Mission continues**.

If **the game stops here** (1-3), you decide together if:

- A.** This is the end of the Mission. Read the **End** paragraph below.
- B.** You're going to continue the Mission in another Session. Read the **Pause** section.

Pause

Like in a video game or a chess match, everything stops. **Do not** delete any *checkmark* from your Sheet, nor any other new element. The only thing that changes between Sessions is the Morale Pool, which is **reset** to zero. If you know that you won't be able to play the next Session soon, you may **take notes** (page 32) on the back of the Soldier Sheets or the Codex Magistri.

The End

This is the end of the game. Did you accomplish your Mission? Are you satisfied with the results? Do you believe that your Chapter of the Ordo Mortis might come back for another adventure? If the last answer is yes, go to the **Judgment** phase and get ready for your next Mission.

Judgment



J if you died during the Mission, now is the time to create a new Soldier following the rules on page 35, unless it's your turn in the Ludi Magister seat or you wish to keep playing a Tutelary in the upcoming Missions.

If you somehow survived, follow these steps:

- 1. Delete all the checkmarks from your Sheet.**
- 2. Delete all the Traumas, except those to the effect of "Bitten/scratched/wounded by a Revenant". Those are permanent. If any Trauma changed your appearance, psychology or behavior, update your Description accordingly.**
- 3. With the help of the other players, think how this Mission might have changed your Soldier. After this self-examination you may do one or more of the following.**

- + Change one or more parts of your **Name**.
- + Change your **Weapon**.
- + Change your **Armor**.
- + Change or delete your **What I Want** and/or **What I Don't Want** (see below).
- + Add another **What I Want** or another **What I Don't Want** (but not both).

If you need ideas, ask the other players for their opinions. At the end of this phase, you must have at least one What I Want and one What I Don't Want on your Sheet.

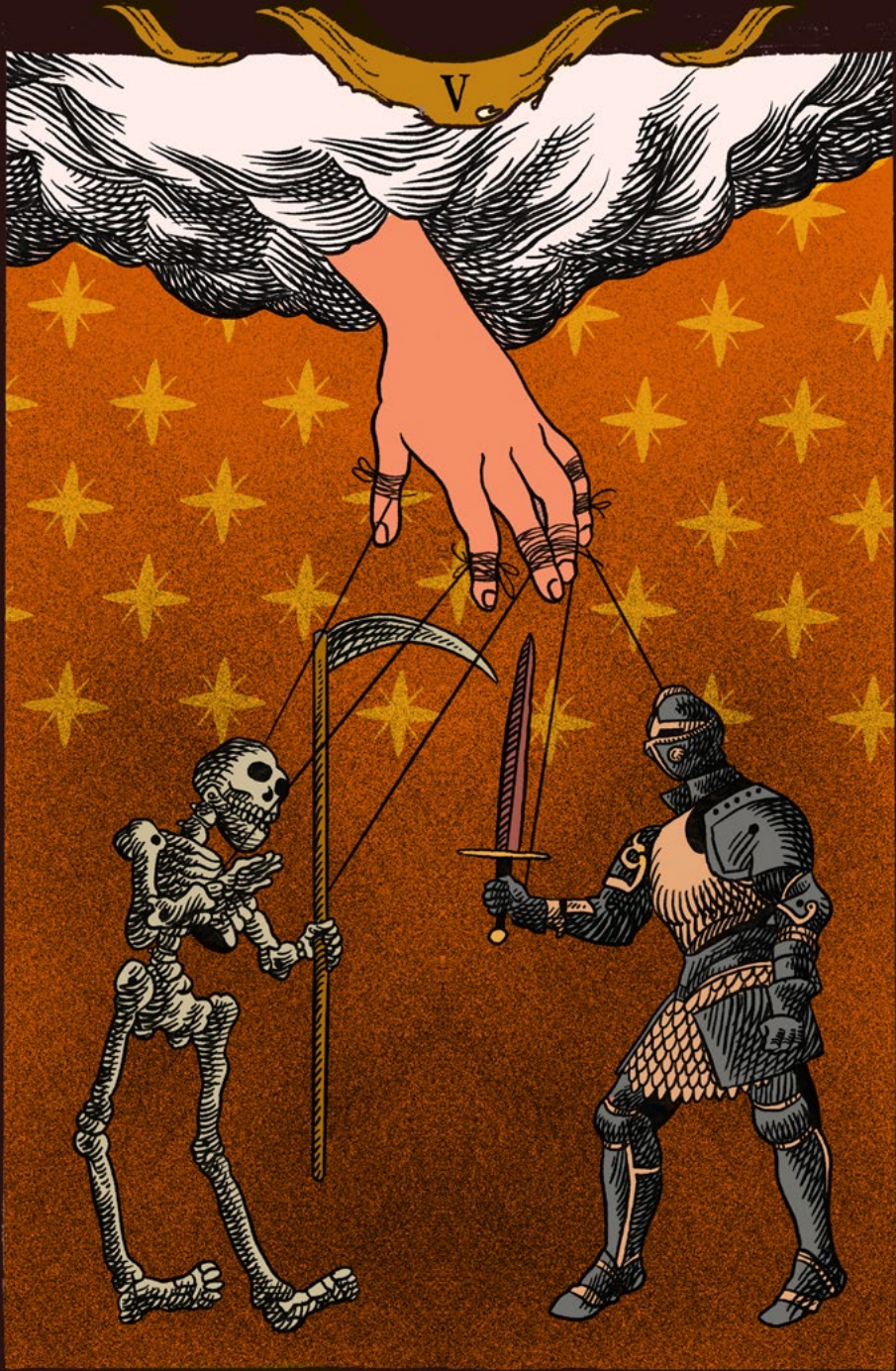
All this information will help the next Ludi Magister to create a new Mission.



Optional Rule: Survival Mode

If you have already played a few games of *Piaga 1348* or if you want to feel the cold fingers of death caressing your Soldier's spine (and maybe yours as well) you can try this optional rule: **only a result of 6 counts as a Success**, instead of 5-6.

This deceptively simple change **completely modifies the game experience**. The chances of failure increase significantly and, as a consequence, every scene is tense, and every choice has high stakes. This works extremely well for **convention** games.



Game Resources

BEING THE Ludi Magister

We designed the role of Ludi Magister to be as simple and accessible as possible, with almost no preparation required, so that anyone can spontaneously decide to run a game. We also designed the rules to create a recurring cycle of play that makes it easier for the Ludi Magister to respond to the other players' choices and the emerging narrative, without the need to write down the entire plot beforehand. In addition to the core rules found in the previous chapters, this section includes some additional suggestions that go beyond the game mechanics, which should help you to embrace and enjoy the experience of being the Ludi Magister.



irst and foremost, remember that each Soldier is a highly competent hero who can achieve everything they set out to do. Well, almost everything. The only exception is the **Conflict** (page 56), one of those tense moments that might change the course of the game and, by extension, the entire story.



olling the dice only once per scene simplifies the flow of the game and allows the Ludi Magister to make quick decisions, which makes the story more engaging and rewards role-playing, creativity, inventiveness, and good decision making over sheer luck.



CHANGING the Setting

Diaga 1328 is a *very freeform* game and it's designed to allow every single player – *not just the LM* – to provide inputs to the story, collectively reshaping it to create a shared world and a compelling tale.

Here are two examples:

1

The LM asks the SoD what they perceive with two of their senses.

Imagining a great open-air banquet in honor of the Ordo, the SoD says that they smell roasted meat and feel the heat of flames caressing their skin.

The LM, instead, frames the scene in the following way: *"You and your comrades-in-arms are bound at the stake. Another person accused of witchcraft is already burning. And you're next..."*

2

The LM asks the SoD what they perceive with two of their senses.

The SoD answers that they hear people shouting their name and see their own left hand lifting up the head of the Pontifex. It's still dripping blood.

Both of these answers are absolutely legitimate. They might look extreme from a certain point of view, but neither player overstepped their narrative authority. Starting from the SoD's ideas, the Ludi Magister paints a picture of the scene, creating the entire gaming world along with the other players, never taking away their inventiveness and initiative.

“What do you perceive with two of your senses?” There are countless ways to answer such a question. *“I smell blood and see the severed head of a Revenant in front of me....”* is a completely legitimate answer... but imagine how different the scene could be if the SoD comes up with an unusual and creative response? For example, *“I smell freshly baked bread and cakes and I hear the voice of an old lady humming a chilling lullaby.”* This answer is correct as well, but although it presents a bit more of a challenge for the LM, it also gives them much greater scope to describe an unusual and engaging scene. The LM might answer this prompt with: *“You and your fellow Soldiers are prisoners in an old bakery. Your arms and legs are bound. Right in front of you, an old lady hums a lullaby while emptying the skull of a Revenant into a pot. She’s using the brain as a filling for her pies...”*

TWO SENSES



endless possi bilities

As an LM, you have to remember that you're not here to “get one over” on the other players. The game should be tailored to the players, not the other way around. Playing should always be a pleasure, not a way to outdo the other players, or use them as stepping stones to some kind of victory. In a world where chilling presences and supernatural omens haunt our Soldiers, the aim of the game is to discover “what happens next”?

OPTIONAL RULE: Nightmare

Once per Session, the LM may frame the events of a Soldier's turn as a nightmare, instead of the real world. This is not a way to hint at the existence of a supernatural dimension, but rather a tool to explore the inner turmoils and fears of that particular Soldier.

Technically, there is no difference in how nightmare scenes are framed, except for a little more creative freedom. As always **THE LUDI MAGISTER HAS NO AUTHORITY OVER WHAT THE SOLDIERS SAY OR DO**, but given the nature of this particular situation, it is much easier to overstep your narrative authority.

A Soldier that suffers their third Trauma in a nightmare dies. It's up to the LM to explain what happens in the real world. In the example on this page, the SoD might drown in the bathtub or be killed by a Revenant who slipped into the room.

If you don't think you're up to the task of creating a convincing nightmare, you can simply avoid using these scenes in your game, or you might strictly limit the number of players in the scene, for instance involving only the SoD, which will make for a much shorter and more controllable turn.

EXAMPLE

LM: What do you perceive with two of your senses?

SoD: I feel my body chill and, right in front of me, I see a dark castle, with crimson flames pouring out of the windows.

LM (pushing it a bit): You're immersed in a bathtub full of cold water, set on a wagon pulled by four skeletons. The flames spewing from the castle reach the sky, turning into red-skinned devils that dive toward you.

SoD: I look around, searching for my brothers-in-arms.

LM: There is no one else on the scene. Only you and a burning forest.

Other Soldier: Can I enter the scene by calling the SoD's name?

LM: No, this time our friend is alone.

SoD: I jump out of the bathtub and off the wagon.

LM: You try, but your ankles are chained to the bottom of the bathtub [...].

The scene continues with an escalation of hellish and apocalyptic visions until the end of the turn, when the LM reveals that it was just a nightmare: the SoD wakes up gasping, and realises that they fell asleep while they were in the bath.

FOR THE



The goal of **Piagn 1348** is to help both the LM and the Soldiers to tell a choral story, where everyone has multiple ways to influence the narrative. However, the participants might sometimes find themselves short on inspiration and ideas. For those moments, this section includes various tables of hints and prompts to frame the opening scene of each turn, plus a few reminders of what the priorities of the game are, in case any of the players start getting lost in the weeds.

Core Priorities

The two most important elements to guide a scene and the adventure are:

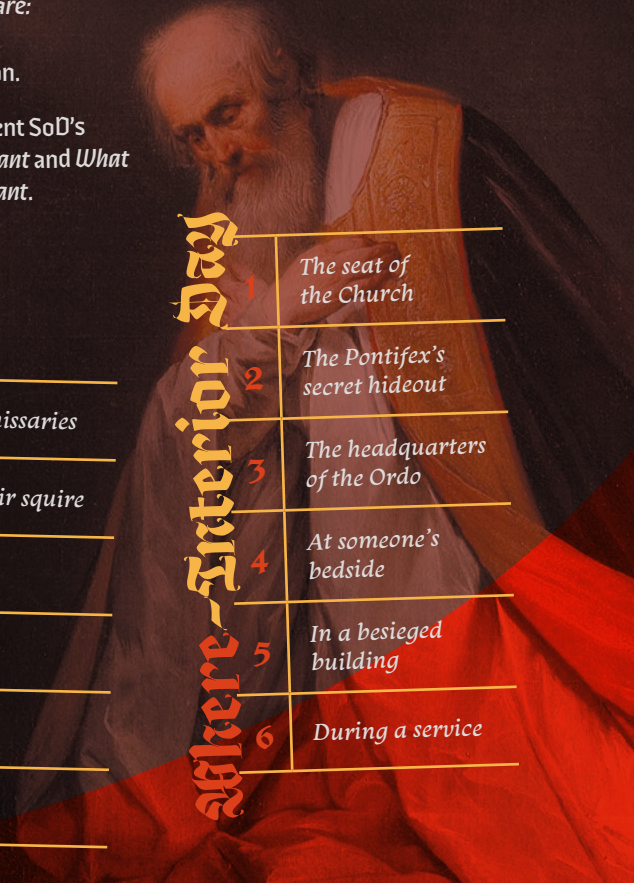
1. The Mission.
2. The current SoD's *What I Want* and *What I Don't Want*.

Who

1	The Pontifex or one of their emissaries
2	The Captain of the Ordo or their squire
3	A Soldier in the scene
4	A Soldier out of the scene
5	A Soldier of the Ordo
6	Another Secondary

Where - Anterior

1	The seat of the Church
2	The Pontifex's secret hideout
3	The headquarters of the Ordo
4	At someone's bedside
5	In a besieged building
6	During a service



Where-Int. Night

1	In an inn or hospice ²
2	In a monastery or abbey
3	In a home seized by force
4	In a home recently cleared of Revenants
5	In a stable or barn
6	In a crypt or mausoleum



² In the Middle Ages, hospices often provided food and lodgings for travelers, in addition to taking care of the sick.

Where-Ext. Night

1	In a military encampment
2	In a makeshift encampment
3	In the woods, under the trees
4	In the woods, at the top of a tree
5	In a hermit's cave
6	In a graveyard

Where-Exterior Day

1	At the heart of a battle
2	Among the dead, after a battle
3	During a long journey
4	At the beginning of a journey
5	Outside the city walls
6	In a makeshift shelter

What

1	Who is in danger?
2	What is about to change?
3	Who is behaving in a different way than expected?
4	Who is not where they should be?
5	Who wants something they can't have?
6	Who doesn't want to give something up?



NARRATIVE

Hints



eenly, this section presents a few ideas on how the people living in the world of *Piaga 1348* think. These aren't absolute truths and they're not meant to be "canon", they are just a series of hints that you can use in different ways, depending on what you need at the moment. You can even use them in other role-playing games, if you like. These suggestions are meant to be **useful for all players**, not just the Ludi Magister. They can be used during **World Creation** (page 22) or to provide more structure to the setting, scenes, Secondaries and Soldiers.

Today, we know that the cause of the black plague was the bacteria *Yersinia pestis*, which was spread by fleas and lice carried by rats. We also know that this bacteria does not reanimate the dead, nor cause them to go *berserk*. *And yet... are we really sure of it? Or do we know only what the chroniclers of the time choose to write in their books?*

Anyway, at the time this game is set, no medic, physician, barber-surgeon or witch-doctor has the faintest clue about how the disease spreads. Even the greatest scholars of 1348 are clueless about the cause of the Revenant Plague. Every city or region the Soldiers visit has its own ideas, usually based on some kind of **cultural prejudice**, completely inaccurate but nonetheless (or rather, precisely because of this) incredibly ingrained among the local people.

What follows are just a few of the bizarre but historically documented ideas of the time, with just a tad of exaggeration, along with some truths that went against the prejudices of the time. If you find these kinds of stereotypical and irreverent representations of past people and ideas not to your liking, you can replace them with more fantastical examples, which may be better for the emotional well-being of the entire table.

BELEFS AND PREJUDICES

1. God

The black plague is part of the Lord's plan. We have to teach everybody that it's not a bane but a gift. It's part of His divine design, which is unfathomable to our limited minds. We have to stay strong in our faith and let the infected die... maybe even help to spread the disease.

2. Witches

Vile witches are at fault – followers of Satan, secret conspirators and practitioners of witchcraft and black magic. They rob the dead of their belongings and harvest their organs, which they use to perform dark rituals in woods and crypts, killing even more innocents. The only way to survive are massive public executions: capture the offenders at the first sign of witchcraft and burn the unclean wretches at the stake.

3. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Certain communities put greater emphasis on personal hygiene, mainly for religious reasons, making their members less likely to become infected with the black plague. However, most people can't see the link between these two facts and instead accuse these communities of spreading the disease, precisely because they seem less affected. The common wisdom is to banish these scapegoats from the cities or segregate them in certain specific districts.

4. The Apocalypse

The Beast of Revelation is already among us, spreading its vile contagion to as many as possible, because every corpse reclaimed by the black death is the shell of a demon who will join the ranks of Satan's army on Earth. No one can stop the Apocalypse, but by studying the prophecies we might be able to mitigate its effects and learn which miraculous quest we need to undertake in the name of the Almighty.

5. Nature

The idea that the black plague comes from the earth is beginning to take hold in some rural areas of the Nordic countries. Mother Nature is punishing her children because they forgot to show her respect and exploited her resources. Animals, and perhaps even some toxic plants, are heralds of death and one must be wary of their presence.

6. Disease

Some universities are developing a bizarre and heretical theory: the black plague is just a disease caused by some kind of microscopic organisms that fester in the respiratory system and blood. These physicians are drawing monstrous conclusions from the initial experimental data, without contemplating any form of divine intervention.

HALLMARKS OF THE Ordo Mortis

These are just a few examples of the kinds of trinkets that might be standard equipment for members of the Ordo Mortis. You can choose a few at random, change them, or use them as inspiration to create your own unique and distinctive items.

1. Cloaks

All Soldiers wear a black cloak with the Ordo's crest on the back, long enough to cover the entire body and made of a very durable fabric. However, a Chapter operating in the ice and snow might switch them for white wool capes to help the Soldiers survive the extreme cold and move unseen in the snow; meanwhile, those working in the desert might prefer ochre yellow capes made of linen, and scarves to protect the Soldiers' mouths and noses during a sandstorm.

4. Black Helmets

Ordo Soldiers wear black metal helmets with full iron visors that cover the face. They provide excellent protection from Revenants, and also hide the identity of the Soldiers.

2. Leather Belts

All members of the Ordo wear a thick leather belt with many pouches and bags, so that their hands are free to carry weapons. The leather is extremely thick and durable, which also helps to protect the abdomen in battle. The letters OM are fire-branded into the leather.

3. Iron Gauntlets

Members of the Ordo wear long gauntlets covered in iron plates that protect both hands and forearms. They provide excellent protection from both weapons and Revenant bites.

5. IRON MASKS

Instead of helmets, some higher-ranking members of the Ordo Mortis wear iron masks which cover the entire face, often carved with symbols of death. These masks make the wearer far more sinister and mysterious, demanding respect and striking fear into those that see them. Aside from providing a measure of protection in battle, they ensure anonymity, reinforcing the sense of unity within the Ordo. Wearing an iron mask is an important symbol of status in the Ordo Mortis.

6. Rings of Justice

The most notorious symbol of the Ordo are the four rings worn by a Soldier, made to the exact measurement of their fingers and connected by a heavy metal plate. In essence, they are heavy brass knuckles. The rings and plate are made of iron, sometimes in an alloy or decorated with silver or gold, depending on the Soldier's rank and personal superstitions. Each ring is carved with icons favored by the Ordo, like skulls, the visages of saints, Templar crosses, alchemical symbols, eyes, and crossed bones. The most aggressive members add points, crow skulls, and spikes to the plate to make each strike more devastating, while the older members add gemstones. Indeed, divine retribution can take many forms.



FROM THE STATE WORLD

This section presents a few suggestions that might come in handy if you and your friends have very different ideas on how to create the setting and you need an *impartial* option. But please bear in mind, they are tools to help get you all onto the same page, not a series of constraints.

At the start of the game, after reading them, you might also establish that the truth is the exact opposite of what we suggest here.

Vita nova

According to the taxonomy established by the Ordo Mortis, the Revenants fall into two broad categories: the Reanimated and the Possessed.

The **Reanimated** are those who died a long time ago, and as such, they present visible signs of decomposition. Some are almost skeletons, others are so old they reek of mold rather than putrefaction. These Revenants are very slow and completely unable to speak or think.

The **Possessed** are the recently deceased and, at first glance, it's easy to mistake them for living human beings, until you notice their jerky, twitchy movements. Some seem to be possessed by the berserker rage of the Norse – they are fast, strong and ravenous. A few show signs of logical thinking, especially when it comes to avoiding or setting up ambushes.

The Second Death

The Revenants stop moving and biting only when they are beheaded, chopped into tiny pieces, reduced to a pulp, or turned to ash. In any other instance, they continue to harass the living and won't find peace even at the bottom of the sea.

Unequal Opportunities

Unless she is a member of the Ordo, a lonely woman in this world is probably a damsel in distress, even when there are no Revenants around.

Elders and children are always helpless.

God

Each Soldier is an agent of the Ordo Mortis which, in turn, is an agent of the Church that enacts God's will upon Earth. Whether He exists or not is immaterial – true faith has very tangible effects, regardless.

Magic

Contrary to many other fantasy worlds, magic doesn't exist in *Piaga 1348* but superstition and mysticism sometimes have very powerful effects on people's lives, just like true faith.

Alchemy

Alchemy can't turn lead into gold, nor make you omniscient. It is just a rudimentary form of chemistry that, once purged of its esoteric and philosophical aspects, can achieve some consistent empirical results.

Relics and Blessings

Tools like holy water, blessings, the Holy Grail and the Shroud of Turin only have psychological or morale-boosting effects. They can't be used to perform miracles.

Non-Human Creatures

Elves, ogres, satyrs, gnomes and the like exist only in fairy tales.





Patron Saints



uring the Middle Ages, it was common practice for knights and crusaders to devote themselves to a specific patron saint, and members of the Ordo Mortis do the same in their service to God and the Church. The most devout Soldiers often carry emblems or symbols of their patron as lucky charms or incorporate them into their personal heraldry.

The following twelve saints were extremely well-known in the Middle Ages. Each description includes a short invocation that a particularly devout Soldier might use as a *Figurative Weapon* or *Armor* (page 40-41) .

Saint George (c. 275 A.D., Cappadocia - c. 303 A.D., Nicomedia)

"Saint George, let your courage be my shield."

Patron saint of knights, soldiers and warriors. He's often invoked to ward off evil and as a symbol of bravery and victory.

Saint Michael the Archangel

"Saint Michael, bring light into the darkness."

Patron saint of holy warriors and first of the archangels, guardian of the Lord's flock and protector against the forces of evil.

Saint Catherine of Alexandria (c. 287 A.D. - c. 305 A.D., Alexandria)

"Saint Catherine, wise and knowledgeable guide."

Patron saint of philosophers, students, theologians and teachers. She's usually invoked by those who seek knowledge and wisdom.

Saint Christopher (unknown - c. 250 A.D., Lycia)

"Saint Christopher, reliable guide on any road."

Patron saint of travelers, pilgrims and coachmen. He's often depicted as a giant carrying the infant Jesus upon his shoulders while crossing a river.

Saint Sebastian (c. 256 A.D., Narbonne - c. 288 A.D., Rome)

"San Sebastian, let my aim be peerless."

Protects against all diseases, especially the plague. He's also worshiped as a warrior saint and patron of the archers.





Saint John the Baptist (c. 6 B.C. - 30 A.D., Judea)

"Saint John, your prophetic words are my guide."

Patron saint of baptisms, precursor to Jesus Christ, prophet and martyr.

Saint Peter (c. 1 A.D., Betsaida - 64 A.D., Rome)

"Saint Peter, cornerstone of the one true Church."

Patron saint of fishermen, sailors and the entire Catholic Church, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus and first Pope of the Catholic Church.

Saint Margaret of Antioch (c. 275 A.D. - 307 A.D., Antioch)

"Saint Margaret, protect all new life."

Patron saint of midwives and pregnant women, who protects against illness during pregnancy. She's very often invoked during childbirth.

Saint Nicholas of Bari (c. 270 A.D., Patara - 343 A.D., Myra)

"Saint Nicholas, keeper of seas and hearts."

Patron saint of sailors, merchants and children. He's also worshiped as a protector of the helpless.

St. Elizabeth of Hungary (1207 A.D., Sárospatak - 1231 A.D., Marburg)

"Saint Elizabeth, grant us your help and charity."

Patron saint of the downtrodden, the homeless, and the sick. In life, she became famous for her charitable work and her dedication to the poor.

Saint Martin of Tours (c. 316 A.D., Savaria - 397 A.D., Candes)

"Saint Martin, bring kindness and generosity."

Patron saint of riders, horses, and beggars. He's most famous for cutting his cloak in half to share it with a beggar.

Saint Barbara (3rd century A.D. – 3rd-4th century A.D., Nicomedia)

"Saint Barbara, protect us with your grace."

Patron saint of artillerymen, miners and architects. She is often invoked to protect houses from storms, lightning and fire.





Scenariós



n Plaga 1348

there are no pre-written adventure modules, as the game was designed to be built entirely around the players' choices, creating an "emerging narrative", without requiring any preparation.

- * Title and author of the Scenario.
- * Basic information on how far the Plague has spread, the size of the Ordo and the current Mission.
- * A short prologue to quickly establish the context of the story.
- * Six iconic locations to explore during the Mission.
- * Six Secondaries that the Soldier might encounter.
- * Six rumors and superstitions widespread among the region's inhabitants.

That said, if this is your first experience as Ludi Magister, a few prompts might be useful, so we have created a number of **Scenarios**, which include basic background information and a short prologue (which you may decide to keep secret from the other players if you're playing a more investigative game) and a few tables with prompts and suggestions that can be used in different Sessions and Missions. As usual, the entire group choose the Tone of the game.

The following Scenarios were written by some great friends and game designers. They vary in length, but the layout is always the same (as shown in the box).

Abbey of the Protoclete, 1349 A.D.

by Helios Pu

Basic Information

Spread	Size of the Ordo	Mission
Stain	Small, heterogeneous army	<i>Pope Clement XIII instructed the Ordo to rescue a small congregation besieged by Revenants from the Abbey of St. Andrew the Proclete.</i>



Iconic Locations

86	Location
1	A rather bare Gothic church, with some creepy wooden statues.
2	A square cloister courtyard, with pillars covered in moss and vines.
3	The refectory, with a large table covered in old dishware and crawling with rats.
4	The scriptorium, with manuscripts and tomes strewn everywhere.
5	The chapter hall, with many corpses... still sitting in the wooden chairs.
6	The dormitory, with a series of single cells, some closed, some open.

Prologue

Cuneo is lost: the black plague killed almost the entire population of the city. However, a note has been delivered to the papal seat of Avignon, begging them to send help to the Abbey of St. Andrew the Protoclete, a monastery famous for its great library. Apparently, the monks and a few scores of refugees find shelter here.

Secordaries

ð6	Secondary
1	Abbot Giovanni of Florence, spiritual guide and administrator of this monastic community.
2	Brother Matteo of Magonza, a serious and studious monk, responsible for copying manuscripts.
3	Novice Pietro, a young monk sent here with an introduction written by the Pope himself. He's still learning the rules of the order.
4	Marcolfo, a highly skilled woodworker, who works regularly for the abbey. Apparently mute.
5	Anna, a young woman in charge of distributing alms to those in need.
6	Friedrich, a German knight and guest of the abbey. He arrived just a few days ago, looking for temporary accommodation.

ð6	Rumor
1	The black plague is a divine punishment.
2	Praying makes you immune to the disease.
3	Although he denies it, the abbot has had nightmares about the Revenant Plague for months.
4	The Devil has been hiding in the abbey from the start.
5	In the hidden crypt there is a relic that can defeat any supernatural threat.
6	Lightning struck the tree in the middle of the cloister. This is a sign that there are unwanted guests.

Rumors and Superstitions



by Raffaele Vacca

The Eyes of San Donato

Basic Information

Spread	Size of the Ordo	Mission
Squirt	An elite team of 5–15 specialists	<i>Discover why the inhabitants of the island of San Giorgio Maggiore seem less likely to become infected.</i>

Iconic Locations

Id	Location
1	The island's lonely pier, right in front of San Marco Square, surrounded by mist rising from the lagoon.
2	The garden labyrinth. It's easy to get lost among its branching paths.
3	The chapter hall, with waxed benches and monks with a sinister look.
4	The sacristy. Perhaps the wooden furniture and the precious canvas hide some secrets.
5	The bell tower. The door is inexplicably barred and there are vermin hiding in the walls.
6	The now desecrated crypt. The relic was stolen and there is fresh blood on the walls.

Prologue

According to the letters sent by abbot Morosini to the curia, the island of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice seems immune to the pestilent wind. The head of the monastery claims that a mysterious holy relic, the eyes of St. Lucy, protects the monks, but he also fears that the Devil is conspiring to steal it. Worried, Pope Benedict XII has given the order to protect the relic at all costs.

Secondary

86	Secondary
1	Abbot Giovanni Morosini, master of the island and spiritual guide of the monastery.
2	Bartolomeo Gradenigo, the "fixer Doge" of Venice, currently on retreat on the island.
3	Andrea, a local craftsman who maintains the pier and gardens.
4	Francesca, a prostitute very dear to the Doge, who followed him to the island.
5	Brother Nicolò, a monk profoundly devout to the Rule of St. Benedict, ora et lobora ("pray and work"), and longterm resident of the island.
6	Novice Marco, a young monk that the abbot brought to the island as a baby. He has just started his spiritual journey.

86	Rumor
1	Some monks whisper that the relic has already been desecrated and that divine retribution is coming.
2	Wearing a hair vest pleases God and prevents you from falling ill.
3	The Devil possessed some of the corpses tossed in the canals. Now they're swimming toward the island to desecrate it.
4	The Doge hides it, but Francesca is infected and she can only pray for Providence.
5	Do not enter the labyrinth at night. There is something evil hiding inside.
6	Stay away from the bell tower. The whispers of the damned echo inside....

Rumors and Superstitions

Free Modena from the Necropope!

by Jacopo "Faust" Buttiglieri

Basic Information

Spread	Size of the Ordo	Mission
Tide	A massive international army, with a Chapter in every state. Each Chapter has multiple safe houses and companies across the land. Some Chapters have a following of fanatical flagellants.	Pope Omnipotentius has instructed the Ordo to take control of Modena and kill Duke Aldobrandino III in the name of the holy Church.



Iconic Locations

Id	Location
1	The Ducal Palace, a grim building of dark stone and barred windows.
2	The main gate, its bars covered in blood and decomposing viscera.
3	The cathedral, with its crumbling stone walls.
4	The Piazza Grande, its cobblestones slick with mud and blood.
5	The mires around the city, crawling with Revenants.
6	The Secchia river, polluted with corpses tossed from the city walls.

Prologue

Despite its meager resources, Modena has managed to fend off the unstoppable tide of Revenants for quite some time. Pope Omnipotentius wants to take control of the city, but Duke Aldobrandino III, protected by the city walls and besieged by hordes of undead, laughs at the papal requests. Modena must be purified by such evil!

Secordaries

d6	Secondary
1	Droctulfo Shortspear, the middle-aged captain of the militia. He's depressed and has an apathetic expression.
2	Tommaso of Myésier, a French alchemist who took refuge in Modena. His emaciated face seems to be perpetually locked in an anxious expression.
3	Beatrice of Camino, Duke Aldobrandino's wife. A group of ladies-in-waiting follow her everywhere. If she finds you interesting, she will talk to you for hours.
4	Orlando of Rome, a knight devoted to the Duke. He never speaks, nor removes his helmet.
5	Paolo the Ironworker, a humble craftsman from Modena. He has a visible hyphosis, speaks fast, and his eyes are large and fish-like.
6	Isabella Corpshifter, a gravedigger. She is a giant of a woman with short blonde hair, who walks around the city pulling her cart full of corpses.

d6	Rumor
1	The Duke is actually the "Necropope of the Cult of Resurrection".
2	The Duke's alchemists brew strange, blasphemous concoctions.
3	The Revenants encircle Modena, but never push their attacks. Why?
4	The Secchia river is overflowing as a punishment to the Duke.
5	There is a secret passage running under the walls of Modena.
6	Orlando of Rome isn't a true knight, but a Revenant in disguise.

suoinns.radnS pue s.iowmyE

Dawn of the Dead, 1348 A.D.

by Davide Pierantoni

Basic Information

Spread	Size of the Ordo	Mission
Drop	An elite team of five specialists	<i>Pope Gregorius Magnus I has issued the order to assemble the first core of the Ordo Mortis. Suitable specialists need to be located and recruited.</i>

Prologue

Rumors about a new disease spreading in southern France have reached the Pope in Avignon. Apparently, there was an outbreak of the black plague in the city of Arles and Cardinal De Montgrand sent a letter to Pope Gregorius explaining the difficulties they were having containing the disease. The letter also contained details of a series of strange events at the graveyard next to the cathedral of Saint-Trophime. According to the Cardinal, the dead rose from their graves, not by the power of the Lord, but rather that of the Devil! Shaken and afraid, the Pope has summoned five specialists and sent them in search of more brave souls to face the supernatural threat that plagues Arles.

Iconic Locations

Id	Location
1	The road to Arles, in the middle of the Provencal countryside, with all its dirt and dung.
2	A wood outside of Arles, inhabited by a group of animated refugees.
3	A small graveyard next to an equally small church in a rural hamlet.
4	On the banks of the Rhone, in front of an island with an ancient Roman mausoleum.
5	The estate of Viscount Lucien, a remarkably well-preserved castle near Aix-en-Provence.
6	The alleyways of Marseille's harbour, crowded, smelly, and infested with rats.

Records

86	Secondary
1	Jamal the Black, a nimble mercenary recently arrived at Marseille and looking for work.
2	Helmut of Freiburg, master weaponsmith. He moved to France looking for work.
3	Gustave D'Orange, a soldier who left France to fight against the Kingdom of England, but was forced to return home after losing an arm in battle.
4	Father Cyprien, personal agent of Pope Gregorius Magnus, the eyes and ears of the Pontifex.
5	Olderico of Pinerolo, an impoverished Italian knight looking for adventure in the land of the Franks.
6	Viscount Lucien of Aquí, young scion of the noble families of Aix-en-Provence. He commands a small group of trusted men-at-arms.

86	Rumor
1	Cardinal De Montgrand died and came back as a Revenant and the cathedral of St. Trophime is now desecrated.
2	Among the refugees living in the woods there is a blessed child. Apparently the Revenants ignore her completely.
3	Below Marseille there is a nest of plague rats that seem to have a glimpse of intelligence in their wicked red eyes.
4	Viscount Lucien's small army is actually a group of expensive mercenaries. Is the Pope ready to pay their exorbitant fee?
5	The Pope wants this new elite group of soldiers to take the name of "Ordo Mortis", because what is dead must remain so. The Ordo will be the hand of God Himself.
6	There's something bizarre about Father Cyprien's behavior. Perhaps he has some privileged information about these strange events.

Rumors and Superstitions



by Renato Ligas

The Sixth Order

Basic Information

Spread	Size of the Ordo	Mission
Drop	An elite team of five specialists	<i>Pope Clement V has given the order to find Petra Lione, a member of the Ordo carrying a very important letter that should have arrived over ten days ago.</i>

Prologue

Petra was last seen two weeks ago in a small town in northern Italy. The same night she arrived, some of the locals reported the appearance of a creature “not alive, but not dead either”. Some say that it’s due to the evil influence of the small, deconsecrated church in town, which is now affecting even the afterlife. If this is true, Petra is probably hiding and waiting for reinforcements before she can complete her mission. She might be hurt... or worse.

Iconic Locations

Id	Location
1	A small deconsecrated church known as “of the Fallen”.
2	A large farmhouse in the countryside, far from the town walls.
3	The market square in the middle of the town.
4	The underground tunnel that runs between the parish house and the nearby graveyard.
5	The town’s church.
6	A leper colony established by Pope Innocent III.

Secondaries

dc	Secondary
1	Francesco Cicolondrio, keeper of the lazaretto and, when the need arises, assistant to the local priest.
2	Father Crescenzio, the local priest, keeper of the church of St. Nicholas.
3	Gustav, one of the most famous merchants in the region.
4	Madame Aliana, a respected pillar of the community. She keeps the church clean in service of the Lord.
5	Rico Martinez, a stranger who has lived around town for a long time; known as a shrewd con man and tomb robber.
6	Giovanni of Seville, claims to be a former member of a secret order, but as he's always drunk, nobody believes him.

dc	Rumor
1	Father Crescenzio was sent here after he committed "unspeakable acts" in his old community.
2	The dead were woken by the hatred seeping down from the town into the ground.
3	Someone in town is looking for disciples to create a new sect, and they are planning to reopen the deconsecrated church.
4	The plague is the Devil's answer to the growing power of the Church in the region.
5	The "undead" aren't the only scourge that the Devil has unleashed against the inhabitants of this region. For example, many whisper that the blacksmith Josef Muller hails from a long line of werewolves.
6	While the inhabitants are very superstitious, they don't seem motivated to do anything to protect themselves. The ancient warding rituals have been replaced by the protection of the Church. Father Crescenzio has never been very popular, but most people seem to think he's the best solution to the current predicament.

Rumors and Superstitions

Postuma Praedicatio, 1381 A.D.

by Daniele Maviglia



Basic Information

Spread	Size of the Ordo	Mission
Stain	An elite team of 5–15 specialists, ready to confront any occult threat.	Pope Urban VI has instructed the Ordo to deal with a sect preaching the idea that the disease is a gift from God and must be spread even further. The Soldiers must stop this most pernicious heresy – peacefully if possible, or by exterminating the sect if not.

Iconic Locations

Id	Location
1	The cathedral of San Domenico. Its tall naves are impressive, ominous, and infested with Revenants.
2	San Domenico Square, closed by order of the Noveschi, the oligarchs of Siena, with barriers and armed guards.
3	The reliquary chapel, where the head of St. Catherine mumbles and bites.
4	The Palazzo Pubblico of the Republic of Siena. A prestigious building filled with frescoes, its great halls oozing with history, mysteries, and intrigue, not to mention clues.
5	The Medici Fortress, built by the eponymous family to protect the city. It has great walls and high watchtowers, but is currently under siege by Revenants.
6	The narrow, meandering streets of Siena, an excellent place to shake off the Revenants, hide, or set up an ambush.

Prologue

After St. Catherine of Siena's death, her head was preserved as a relic in the cathedral of San Domenico in Siena. Recently, the head has started to move and all those who touch it become Revenants. Inexplicably, the high prelates of the city consider this a miracle and, rather than exterminating the Revenants (twelve so far), they opted to seal them in the catacombs under the cathedral, saying that they are new apostles, worthy of veneration.

Records

86	Secondary
1	Jacopone of Siena, first magistrate of the republic. Powerful and respected, he's trying to maintain a semblance of order, but he's failing, and his decisions will have dramatic consequences.
2	Bishop Bastianazzo Regi is old, confused, and easy to manipulate. He's not lucid enough to understand what's going on.
3	Banker Nardo Sansoni is the richest and most influential man in Siena. He is trying to protect his own interests, but money won't protect him from the horrors of a world that venerates the reanimated head of a saint.
4	Giovanni, a merchant who lost everything during the epidemic, is ready to do anything to survive, including betraying his closest friends and allies.
5	Captain Francesco was sent here from Florence to find out what's going on. He's a brave warrior, but his investigation might force him to kill some true believers or expose them to the disease.
6	Brother Lorenzo of Monteriggioni is trying to help the survivors, but his faith won't protect him from the horrors of the heresy.

86	Rumor
1	Some say that St. Catherine is furious because the Avignon Papacy has gone on too long.
2	The bishop of Florence has decided to take the matter into his own hands and is coming to Siena.
3	Twelve Revenants protect St. Catherine's head while it keeps babbling and praying.
4	Some people want to take St. Catherine's head to Rome on pilgrimage.
5	Something similar is happening with St. Anne's head, preserved in the cathedral of Chartres in France.
6	The Revenants fear fire and will flee if presented with a dead dog.

Rumors and Superstitions

Basic Information

Spread	Size of the Ordo	Mission
<i>Tide. This is the European Apocalypse.</i>	<i>A massive international army, with a Chapter in every state. The Soldiers are part of a well-armed Chapter and have a following of fanatical flagellants who have pulled out their teeth and nails to avoid infecting others after the transformation.</i>	<i>Free Rome and the "true" Pope from the siege of the Revenants.</i>

The Roman Reclamation of 1377 A.D.

by Helios Pu

Iconic Locations

d6	Location
1	St. Peter's Basilica and the nearby palaces are one of the last bastions of the Church. The Pope is trapped there, along with an entire order of nuns, a handful of pilgrims and a number of cardinals and bishops.
2	The Colosseum is a deathtrap. Revenants leap out from the archways without warning in what seem to be coordinated ambushes.
3	The ruins of the old Roman forum look like a ghost town and anyone exploring the area must be careful of the Revenants. Each step might be your last.
4	The Pantheon is infested and the streets around echo with the screams of the Revenants, a chilling reminder of the constant threat.
5	The Sant'Angelo Bridge is a death trap. The angelic statues now look like demons ready to pounce.
6	It's best to avoid the winding roads of the Trastevere District. The Revenants hide among the ruined buildings, leaping on their victims without warning and dragging them into darkness.

Prologue

After 68 years of dual papacy, Avignon fell to the hordes of Revenants. Now, the remaining seat of the Church calls for help: Pope Gorgonius Magnus is besieged inside St. Peter's Basilica and the nearby palaces, along with a number of cardinals and bishops.

The Ordo Mortis has grown so large that wiping the Eternal City clean won't be a problem, but when the Soldiers arrive before of the Pope... they are in for a surprise.

Records

86	Secondary
1	Pope Gorgonius Magnus is actually a Revenant, but miraculously, his mind is almost intact. Every morning he puts on makeup to look alive.
2	The old and wizened Cardinal Esperio Bolaffi, the Pope's closest friend, is a Revenant as well. Every morning they help each other to get their makeup straight.
3	Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere is one of the coldest, shrewdest, and most calculating politicians in Rome. He suspects that the Pope is hiding something...
4	Anacleto the Anchorite is a fanatic who has taken the Franciscan ideal of poverty to its extreme. He runs around naked, surrounded by a fetid miasma that extends for several meters. The Pope protects him because Anacleto's smell covers his holiness' scent of decay.
5	Behind her smile, Sister Serafina hides a secret: the Revenants never attack her and she uses this ability – and the knowledge of a secret tunnel – to bring food to the survivors.
6	Alessandra de Medici is an elegant young woman with a keen interest in alchemy and occultism. Thanks to her family's wealth, she was able to purchase forbidden, ancient tomes which have taught her many secrets of the occult world.

86	Rumor
1	Some say that the blood of the Poor Clares Sisters has miraculous properties and can heal the wounds inflicted by the Revenants.
2	Alessandra de Medici is considered a witch, but some say that she knows how to put an end to the plague.
3	According to popular legend, a person who touches the tombstone of St. Peter can gain temporary immunity to the Revenants' attacks.
4	Anacleto claims that those who rest in the shadow of the Pantheon's dome will temporarily turn into Revenants.
5	Hidden in the plinths of some of the now demonic statues of Sant'Angelo Bridge are vials of an ointment that confers temporary superhuman speed.
6	Rumor has it that in the heart of Trastevere there is an ancient church, with a holy candle. The light it emits is believed to repel Revenants.

Rumors and Superstitions



The Devils' Church

by Leonardo Lucci



Basic Information

Spread	Size of the Ordo	Mission
Drop	An elite team of five specialists	<i>Pope Innocent V has instructed the team to investigate a mysterious church known as "The Devils' Church", in the city of Arezzo.</i>

Secondaries

dc	Secondary
1.	Buoso degli Ubertini, bishop of Arezzo.
2	Ippolita degli Azzi, warden and protector of the citizens of Arezzo.
3	Onofrio Camaiani, talented craftsman and merchant.
4	Pier Saccone Tarlati, Ghibelline nobleman.
5	Federico Bobini, known as "Gnicche", brigand.
6	Margherita of Cortona, Franciscan nun (and the future St. Margaret of Cortona).

Prologue

Arezzo hides a secret. All the local nobles know something is going on, but no one talks about it. Apparently, the bishop Buoso degli Ubertini has hidden something, or someone, in the mysterious crypt known as "The Devils' Church".

Iconic Locations

Id	Location
1	The Corso, a long rise that reaches the cathedral. Its cobblestones are slick and uneven. Various workshops line the road, but the local craftsmen are surly and don't talk to strangers.
2	The majestic Gothic cathedral of the Saints Peter and Donatus. Large archways divide this massive sandstone building into three naves. It's silent and dimly lit.
3	Piazza Grande, the central square of Arezzo. It's a tilted trapezoid shape to help with rainwater run-off. It's the heart of many events, fairs, tournaments, and, when needed, the public pillory.
4	The ruins on Colle del Pionta are the remains of the first cathedral of Arezzo. After its destruction it became a hideout for local bandits. Here, you can buy anything for a few coins and a favor.
5	Piazza Guido D'Arezzo. Not far from the city walls, it's dominated by a statue of the famous monk who invented musical notation, now covered in soot and vines. The square is "presided over" by a group of armed men.
6	The Devils' Church. Hidden near piazza Guida D'Arezzo, this underground complex is both a crypt and a dungeon. Its most important feature is a giant fresco, a copy of Giotto's "Cacciata dei Diavoli da Arezzo".

Id	Rumor
1	Buoso degli Ubertini is hiding a monster somewhere.
2	The Colle del Pionta is cursed.
3	There is a group of cutthroats working for the Church.
4	According to the nobles, all strangers are enemies of Arezzo.
5	A local craftsman created a "wonder" that can rebuke demons and monsters.
6	The only way to open the door of "The Devils' Church" is a mysterious nursery rhyme.

Rumors and Superstitions

Danse Macabre

by Cipriano Pagano

Basic Information

Spread	Size of the Ordo	Mission
Squirt	An elite team of five learned specialists, ready to face the occult threat.	In 1392, shortly before abdicating, Pope Absentious III instructed the team to protect Genoa from a new outbreak of the black plague.



Iconic Locations

d6	Location
1	The harbor of Genoa, where you can find more rumormongers than sailors.
2	The church of St. Matthew, crowded with monks but otherwise very basic. Apparently, someone ransacked it.
3	The sewers of Genoa, where rats, filth, and bones coexist in harmony.
4	The Hall of Offerings, a luxurious basement where rich people come to barter.
5	The Macabre Theater, a place for feasts, rituals, and ceremonies. It seems ready for a new performance.
6	The Dance Hall, filled with magnificent dresses and nobody to wear them... for now.

Prologue

Genoa is covered in strange Latin graffiti "nos autem quid eris, ut essemus quid tu es" (we are what you will be; we were what you are). Some say that skeletons dance through the streets, heralding the Apocalypse.

Secondary

86	Secondary
1	Guido Macabeus, a failed English playwright looking for a meal and another chance. He carries a bundle of his comedies that he often quotes.
2	Father Clelio of Bourgogne, a French clergyman who is distancing himself from Avignon. He's trying to atone for his sins with the help of the Franciscans of St. Matthew's.
3	Lucio of Fulci, commander of the local watch, but very unpopular with the papacy. He often uses the services of prostitutes.
4	Zanna, captain of the ship Eastern Brass. He is constantly juggling his many debts and even more dubious shenanigans.
5	Cecilia of Bortone, impoverished Neapolitan fortune teller. She has a glass eye, with which she can see just fine.
6	The Cripple, an unnamed deckhand from a ship that ran aground near Genoa. He's mute.

86	Rumor
1	Some say that the Grim Reaper kissed the Cripple.
2	Commander Fulci asked for the hand of a long-dead prostitute in marriage.
3	During the night, skeletons march across the harbor. None ever dares to get close.
4	Zanna is a very skilled smuggler and often works for the local nobility.
5	If you listen carefully during the night at the harbor, you can hear a song.
6	Guido Macabeus loves to act, even in everyday life. It's no wonder that some people call him Giuda (Judas) or Maccabeus.

Rumors and Superstitions





by Cipriano Pagano

Basic Information

Spread	Size of the Ordo	Mission
Stain	A small, heterogeneous army.	Pope Omnipotentius IV has given the order to purify the fief of the Mazzapiccaro near Foggia. The infestation from the castle of Mazzapiccaro is spreading across the region.

The Rat Bites

Jeonic Locations

Id	Location
1	The Bellacosta estate, a small mansion overlooking the disaster that is the lands of the Mazzapiccaro.
2	The Death Fields. All the region's crops are rotting, disgusting to both eye and nose.
3	The Castle of Mazzapiccaro. A "living town" in the middle of the dead.
4	The homes of the local farmers. Strangely quiet.
5	The Dining Halls. There is a fully-laid table in every room of the castle.
6	The Underground Throne. This was once a jail, but now the whole place is just a shapeless mass of flesh.

Prologue

At the beginning of the epidemic, Antonio Luci Mazzapiccaro, lord of the eponymous family, decided to imprison the infected in his famous dungeon. From there the disease spread to the entire region.

Secories

dc	Secondary
1	Clarissa of Veria, known as the Sword Saint, led the common folk away from the castle when the "thing" took control of it.
2	Filippo of Mellicone, a servant in the castle, saw what happened. During the night, he screams that something or someone is eating him alive.
3	Telescrio of Rivaronga, the Captain of the Ordo Mortis in charge of Mazzapiccaro, is a veteran of the war against the plague.
4	Celina is a local seven-yearold girl. She lives in the castle with her brother and they seem completely normal.
5	The Count of Colanella left his fief in northern Italy and came here to help the Church.
6	Death's Head is a Revenant who carries their own head in a birdcage.

dc	Rumor
1	The true master of the castle is the Rat King, who devoured Antonio Mazzapiccaro.
2	Monstrous creatures infest the castle.
3	The inhabitants of the castle and the countryside live a normal life... It's just their diet that is unusual.
4	The castle cook is ready to cook anything for anyone who asks... and we do mean anything.
5	The castle and the countryside smell of decay.
6	The bell tower chimes at the strangest times, night and day. People say that's because it is always dinnertime.

Rumors and Superstitions



Brother Devil

by Andrea Tortoreto

Basic Information

Spread	Size of the Ordo	Mission
Stain	A small, heterogeneous army.	Egidio Albornoz has asked the Ordo for help in freeing Narni from the Plague.

Prologue

1353 A.D. - Pope Innocent VI has entrusted Egidio Albornoz, the powerful legate and vicar general of the Papal States, to regain control of all the States of the Church and prevent further spreading of the Plague. While crossing the lands of the rebellious Giovanni of Vico, the prefect and usurper from Rome, he comes face to face with the nightmare that is Narni. A self-proclaimed preacher called Brother Devil is spreading apocalyptic ideas among the few survivors, saying that the Revenants will save the world, it's all part of God's plan. Somehow, this self-proclaimed monk seems able to control the dead. Narni is in disarray and Brother Devil is hiding in the underground halls of the old ecclesiastical court. Albornoz immediately sends a letter to Rome asking the assistance of the Ordo.

Iconic Locations

ds	Location
1	Albornoz's siege camp around Narni.
2	Ternana Gate, the main entrance to Narni.
3	The city walls. They are hard to reach, since Narni is perched on a cliff and infested with Revenants.
4	The cathedral of St. Juvenal, a majestic Gothic church. From the crypt, you can reach Brother Devil's underground hideout.
5	The Palace of the Podestà on Piazza dei Priori. The few survivors untouched by the plague are hiding here.
6	The church of St. Augustine and its famous chapel dedicated to St. Sebastian, the subject of many folk tales.

Secondary

Id	Secondary
1	Egidio Alborno, the papal legate in charge of bringing the Papal States to heel. Currently besieging Narni.
2	Brother Devil, a mysterious monk, apparently able to control Revenants.
3	Enrico Consacchi, podestà of Narni, who is trying to keep the few remaining citizens safe.
4	Master Giovanni, known as "Tuderte", legendary weaponsmith and fighter. He's the last defender of the survivors.
5	Barbara, a young woman hiding with other survivors in the Palace of the Podestà. She is brave, bold, and ready to help the Soldiers.
6	Berengario, an old monk with a peerless education. He's doing all he can to protect the survivor's souls.

Id	Rumor
1	Brother Devil is a herald of Satan himself.
2	The plague is divine punishment for the sins Narni's citizens.
3	Brother Devil is immune to the Plague.
4	Brother Devil can control the Revenants.
5	Brother Devil possesses an ancient relic, the cross of St. Sebastian, that gives him incredible powers.
6	The survivors are safe thanks to Berengario's faith and knowledge.

Rumors and Superstitions

Troll

1402 A.D.

by Helios Pu

Prologue

Iceland, 1402 A.D. Twenty generations have passed since the first Norwegian colony and now almost 50,000 souls, many still pagan, live on the island.

The black plague arrived a few weeks ago and the first dead have started to rise and kill. Half of those who hear such news speak of the Apocalypse, the other half of Ragnarök.

However, according to the rumors, a number of Revenants skulking around farms in the night were eaten by trolls. These rock monsters have proven invaluable, if unexpected and probably unwitting, allies. They might become an excellent weapon against the hordes of Revenants emerging from the Norwegian Sea, reduced to skeletons by saltwater but still hungry for human flesh.

The Soldiers of the Ordo can be locals or part of an expedition from the continent to save this last fortress-island.

Basic Information

Spread	Size of the Ordo	Mission
Stain	A small, heterogeneous army.	Persuade the trolls to help the Ordo against the Revenants' invasion.

Iconic Locations

86	Location
1	Skálholt, in the southern half of the island. One of the most important cultural and religious centers in Iceland and its first bishopric.
2	Hafnarfjörður, a natural harbor near Reykjavik. A fishing and commercial hub.
3	Snæfellsjökull, a volcano on the Snæfellsnes peninsula, often considered sacred.
4	Hverir, near lake Mývatn. An area of steaming hot springs and boiling mud pools which has inspired many folk tales about magical creatures.
5	Vatnajökull, the largest glacier in Europe. Some say the powerful ice trolls sleep underneath.
6	Hekla, an active volcano often considered a door to the afterlife and connected with many other supernatural locations.

Secordaries

dc	Secondary
1	Archbishop Olaf, a severe prelate who spoke on behalf of the Pope, who has apparently died.
2	Ragnar Ravnsson, an old troll hunter with one good eye and a braided beard (it should be white, but the amount of blood he has spilled has made it maroon).
3	Mjölknir, a sentient warhammer that communicates telepathically with its wielder, promising to grant them the power of Thor.
4	Gudrun the Seer. After becoming a widow, she started experiencing prophetic dreams and visions.
5	Thorunn the Healer, a Christian nun who became a hermit. She lives in the woods and is able to cure any wound or ailment using herbs and prayers.
6	Ingrid Jónsdóttir, a young, athletic hunter of relics and mythological items.

dc	Rumor
1	The common trolls fear and respect the ice trolls.
2	Revenant giants, over 9 meters tall, are about to arrive from Hekla. They are the children of Surtr, the fire giant, and Hel, queen of hell.
3	Having lost his hammer, Thor walks among the mortals without any memories of who he is.
4	Although he denies it, Ragnar Ravnsson was a berserker and feels ashamed of being the last one.
5	Gudrun's prophecies always come true because she's in league with the Devil.
6	Thorunn can heal any ailment because she's in league with the Devil.

Rumors and Superstitions



Appendix



Appendix

Historical Essays

Foreword



shepherds and farmers, ladies and knights, as discussed in **Chapter 1 – Truth and Verisimilitude** (page 15),

Piaga 1348 is set in a supernatural-horror version of the late Middle Ages, but its goal isn't to present an accurate version of history, nor force the players adhere to “reality”.

However, if you do decide on stark realism and want to embrace the grim environment of one of the darkest centuries of Europe, the following essays by Daniele “DM” Maviglia are exactly what you need.

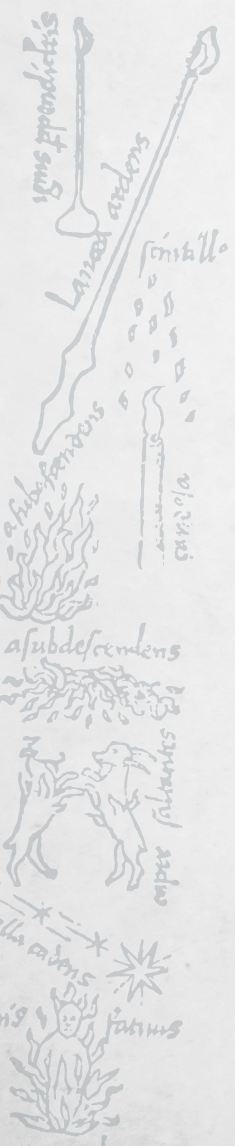
They're also a great source of inspiration.

The 14th Century



watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, “Come!”²I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.³When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, “Come!”⁴Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make people kill each other. To him was given a large sword.⁵When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come!” I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand.⁶Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, “Two pounds[a] of wheat for a day’s wages,[b] and six pounds[c] of barley for a day’s wages,[d] and do not damage the oil and the wine!”⁷When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, “Come!”⁸I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

(Revelation 6:1-8)





The 14th century was the winter of the Middle Ages, a time of desperation and ferocity, screams and blood, mourning and wars without end. It was the century that saw the ancient feudal world beginning to crumble, with multiple intersectional causes stretching society's capacities to their limit. The four riders of the Apocalypse are a perfect metaphor for what happened: the white horse represents political struggle and oppression, the red one, violence and massacres, the black one, famine, and the green one, the plague. It was a time of crises with no apparent end, and the old feudal system was simply no longer able to ensure the prosperity and stability of Europe. First things first, my dear student, let us explore this tragic time.



Oppression: The Miseries of Power

“Power always thinks that it is doing God’s service when it is violating all his laws.” (John Adams)



The beginning of the 14th century was defined by a game of power and oppression which became the defining feature of the 1300s: the political clash between church and state.

At the heart of this conflict was Pope Boniface VIII. He was autocratic, unscrupulous, cynical, and greedy, and yet one of the most influential popes of the Middle Ages. Boniface persuaded his predecessor, Celestine V, to abdicate and was elected by the Conclave at the fourth vote. He then imprisoned Celestine in the castle of Fumone, where the meek former Benedictine Monk died of starvation after ten months of suffering.

Boniface immediately made it clear what his idea of papal power was: he considered himself the supreme authority, superior to any and all Christian monarchs, who had to obey him without question. This point of view was not received well by Philip IV of France, who was in the process of consolidating and reinforcing his royal authority.

The relationship between the Roman papacy and the kingdom of France deteriorated with the papal bull *Clericis Laicos*, in which Boniface stated that lay

people couldn't tax the clergy and that clergymen had to refuse any such request. Philip IV answered with a royal decree that prohibited exporting coins and precious metals outside of France, effectively preventing Rome from collecting church tithes. Things escalated even further after Philip signed an alliance with Emperor Albert I of Hapsburg and levied extremely heavy taxes on the French clergy.

Boniface then issued the *Salvador Mundi* bull, revoking all the king of France's privileges, followed by the *Ausculat Fili*, which called for a synod in Rome the following year. The goal was clear: put the king on trial in the court of the vicar of Jesus Christ. Philip acted quickly, secretly destroying the two original bulls and publishing an altered version, called *Deum Time*, which caused a popular uprising against the Pope.

Boniface VIII was equally fast in issuing the famous *Unam Sanctum*, the bull that established once and for all the absolute theological supremacy of the Pope over the entire Christian world. Unable to stall any longer, Philip summoned the French Council of State to put the Pope on trial *in absentia*, accusing Boniface of many crimes and heresies. His ultimate goal was to depose his rival.



To put his plan in motion, Philip sent numerous agents to Italy to arrest Boniface and drag him to France. Hounded and forced to flee, the Pope penned a letter, officially excommunicating Philip. However, the king of France decided to accelerate the trial even further, summoning the *Estates General* and publicly accusing Boniface of the death of Celestine V. The guilty verdict was unanimous. In September of 1303, Philip's agents broke into the papal residence, beat up Boniface and arrested him. The Pope died in captivity just three days later.

However, Philip IV didn't stop there. The trial continued *post mortem*, and the king managed to persuade the new Pope, the Frenchman Clement V, to move the papal seat from Rome to Avignon. This was

the beginning of the so-called "Avignon Papacy", which lasted until 1376, with seven French popes, all officially endorsed by and under the protection of the king of France. In 1377, Gregory XI returned the papal seat to Rome but, after his demise, the French cardinals rejected the election of Urban VI, an Italian, and flocked to their own candidate, Clement VII, who brought the seat to Avignon once again.

As a result, the Catholic Church had a Pope and an Antipope, not to mention two Colleges of Cardinals, and each European state had to choose which one to follow: Germany, England, Flanders, Poland, Hungary and most of the Italian States recognized Urban VI's claim; while France, the kingdom of Naples, the Iberian Kingdoms and Scotland followed Clement VII.





War: A Century of Battles

*“When the rich wage war, it’s the poor who die.”
(Jean-Paul Sartre)*



Started, the 14th century saw one of the longest conflicts in the history of Europe: the Hundred Years War – this is how later historians labeled the apparently unending struggle between England and France. The conflict had a combination of political, dynastic and economical causes, lasted for over a century, and became the quintessential medieval war. Its incredible duration and brutality left deep scars in both countries and in the collective unconscious of the entire continent.

The causes of this war were many, complex and intertwined, from control over Flanders – economically tied to England, but a vassal of the French crown – to long-standing feudal and dynastic problems. Edward III of England claimed lordship over a number of French fiefs, inherited by his Norman ancestors and from Richard I (later known as “the Lionheart”) and John Lackland, sons of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine. At the same time, the French king planned to push the English out of continental Europe. Philip IV had already seized control of the Duchy of Normandy, but the tension reached its peak when Edward III claimed to be the one true king of France, accusing Philip of usurping the throne. War became inevitable.

The first decades of the conflict saw the English dominating the battlefields, thanks to a fast-moving army supported by their exception-



al archers. Although the French army was superior in many ways, it was less disciplined and many of its officers acted on impulse, without a coherent strategy.

In 1337, the English crossed the Channel, claiming many victories and conquering a number of important cities. Philip IV died in 1350 and was succeeded by his son John II, who was captured just six years later during the Battle of Poitiers and brought to London in chains. Nicknamed “John the Good” for his kindness and generosity, in his youth he had been an officer, and later general, in the French army, fighting in Brittany and in the Languedoc.

For his ransom, the English asked the outrageous sum of three million *écu d’or*, a sum far beyond what France could pay. John II signed a treaty, promising to pay the ransom in installments, leaving his sons John and Louis as hostages. In 1363, one of the sons escaped from London, breaking the terms of the treaty.

Compelled by his famous sense of honor, John II voluntarily surrendered himself to the English and was held in London as a prisoner in accordance with the treaty. He died a few months later.

These events ensured nine years of peace, but soon France was struck by one of the deadliest epidemics of the time, along with numerous revolts as peasants demanded better living conditions. Meanwhile, Charles V had succeeded John II and, when he returned to France, the situation was dire: a devastating economic recession, peasant revolts, the English controlling vast swaths of French territory and nobles scheming to take the throne. In spite of all of this, Charles V decided that a show of force against the English was paramount and took to the field in 1369.

From the first engagements it became clear that the English no longer had military superiority. The French avoided pitched battles in favor of smaller scale hit-and-run tactics, which allowed them to recover almost all the lost territories. However, just when a French victory seemed inevitable, another peasant revolt, paid for and sponsored by French aristocrats on the English payroll, flipped the board.

The war continued, but both kingdoms were exhausted, unable to ask any more from their officers and people. Edward III proposed a truce, offering to return the Duchy of Aquitaine, but France refused. The situation remained unchanged until new kings rose to the thrones of both countries: Richard II of England in 1377 and Charles VI of France in 1380. Shortly after taking the throne, the new king of France showed signs of mental illness. His uncle, Philip II, Duke of Burgundy, became regent but frequently clashed



with the king's brother, Louis, Duke of Orléans. Meanwhile, in 1381, the king of England had to face his own sudden and violent peasant uprising. The situation on both fronts grew more and more dire, so in order to calm their respective domestic crises, the two monarchs signed a truce.

The devastation caused by the revolts in both towns and countryside added to the carnage of the battlefields. There were spontaneous revolts against the rural aristocracy, the mercantile oligarchies, the clergy, and the king himself, who had bled the people dry with higher and higher taxes to sponsor new wars and an increasingly complex bureaucratic apparatus.



Famine: The Insatiable Hunger

*“A dry March, a wet April and a cool May fill the barn and cellar
and bring much hay.” (popular saying)*



Up until the beginning of the 14th century, agriculture was the cornerstone of the European economy and yet, ironically, it was the first foundation of the old world that failed. The great famines, together with many peasant revolts, gave birth to a terrible era where nature seemed unable or unwilling to provide food for all.

At the start of the 1300s, only the powerful lords were landowners. They were often incredibly rich, but uninterested in modernizing or increasing the amount of cultivated land, in spite of the constant growth of the population, which required more and more food to avoid starvation.

Up until the first decade of the 14th century, the situation was still comparatively favorable. There was a general increase in prosperity, and the population grew unchecked. The climate was conducive to agriculture, and during the best seasons each grain of wheat produced seven.

However, during the worst years each seed produced barely two, and you couldn't eat both, since you had to pay taxes and needed seeds to plant the next year. By the end of the 13th century, things had started to deteriorate. The price of flour increased significantly, causing a decrease in food production, and the climate grew worse, causing unprecedented damage to the crops: during the first decade of the 1300s, a series of catastrophic meteorological disasters caused a massive decline in the grain production.

The Great Famine hit Europe hard between 1309 and 1311 – death by starvation at the side of the road became a common occurrence. Immediately after, between 1312 and 1315, a prolonged drought brought agriculture to its knees. Meanwhile, in the first months of 1315, heavy rains swept Europe, preventing the wheat from ripening.

The bad weather continued all throughout 1317, when the famine reached its apex.

Up until this point, people had managed to find ways to survive, often resorting to cannibalism, according to the chroniclers of the period. Now, exhausted and weakened by starvation and constant illnesses, very few lived for long. The Great Famine had devastating effects. With too much rain in spring, plus cold summers, the crops failed time and again. During the long winters, an untold number died of starvation and hunger along the roads. Nothing like it had ever been seen before. The average life expectancy plummeted to under thirty and many barely reached eighteen years old. The primary sources are far from exact, but we can estimate that almost 20% of the population of Europe died.

As hunger took its toll, governments proved unable to provide for the people, who had grown far too numerous just as food became scarcer and scarcer. Every institution – from the Catholic Church, to the states, even the communes created by the people themselves – was shaken to its core. The reputation of the church took the worst blow, since no amount of prayers seemed enough to stop this terrible tragedy. The need to survive during the famine pushed many to commit acts completely outside any acceptable social norm, from infanticide in order to have less mouths to feed, to cannibalism to survive until spring. When hunger became unbearable, the line between *mundus* (spiritually clean) and *immundus* (spiritually unclean) became thinner and thinner. At first, people ate *immundia animalia* (unclean animals), but eventually they resorted to the supreme abominable act: eating another human being. Such unholy acts were relatively common in the late Middle Ages, not only among the most degenerate individuals, but also “good Christians, knights and kings, young maidens, citizens and the sick”.

According to the mentality of the time, the ties between natural and supernatural were so binding that many everyday events were considered to have divine, diabolical or ineffable influences. A natural disaster, like a famine or the plague, was considered an omens or a divine punishment, meant to warn people or chastise them for their sins. Cannibalism was considered a subversion of the natural order and yet part of God’s plan. It was a tool He used to punish the wicked in accordance with His ineffable justice, a way to separate the strong from the weak by seeing who would resort to unclean practices such as necrophagia and cannibalism.

The victims of these “grim repasts” were often outsiders, strangers, pilgrims and travelers from outside the community, or children lured with gifts. There are reports of mothers pushed so far by the hunger

and madness that they ate their own children. In addition, since the 11th century, many heretical movements had been appearing throughout Europe and accusations of cannibalism were often ascribed to the heretics. The common belief was that these people practiced an unholy parody of the Eucharist, eating communion wafers made with the blood and the ashes of their own children sacrificed to Satan.

As a result of all of these influences, trade languished and the price of food doubled. Salt became far more expensive as well, since rain and humidity prevented salt water from crystallizing, rendering salt ponds useless and making food preservation far more difficult. The price of flour tripled and the remaining stockpiles became available only to the richest. Those of lesser means were forced to rely upon nature, foraging for roots, nuts, berries, and any other even remotely edible plant. Criminality grew out of control: whether wicked or God-fearing, people had very little choice if they wanted to feed their families.

By the end of these grim and tumultuous times, the people of Europe had become far tougher, more violent and much more ruthless.





Pestilence: Cito, Longe et Tarde

“Everyone has inside it himself this plague, because no one in the world, no one, can ever be immune.” (Albert Camus)



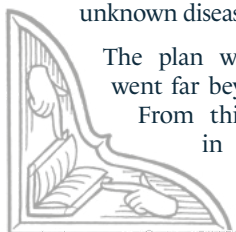
Cito, longe *fugeas et tarde redeas*” (fly quickly, go far and return slowly) became a very common saying among the people of the late Middle Ages, a warning and encouragement to avoid large cities and other dangerous places. In the decades prior, there had been several epidemics of cholera, typhus, diphtheria, poliomyelitis and many dangerous variants of the flu, but their impact was marginal compared to the black death that swept across Europe in 1348.

The plague was so devastating that for centuries it became the disease par excellence and one of the greatest catastrophes of the Middle Ages. Even in ancient times, small outbreaks were common in Asia and the disease reached as far as the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. However, what happened in 1347 was without precedent. Earlier that year, the Mongol raiders assaulted the Genoese trade colony of Kaffa on the Black Sea and Janibek Khan, leader of the Mongols, had the idea of using mangonels to toss the corpse of his own soldiers, who died of an unknown disease, beyond the walls.

The plan worked, but its effect went far beyond the fall of Kaffa. From this great trading hub in modern day Crimea,

the plague spread, carried by the Genoese galleys that plowed the trading routes of the Mediterranean Sea. The sailors brought the disease with them to all the ports they stopped at during their return trip to Genoa. By the end of the year the plague had reached Constantinople, and then Messina, quickly sweeping the entire Italian peninsula up to Florence.

Today, we know that it is rats that carry the plague. The bacterium infects the rats and is carried from one to another by fleas and lice. One animal can infect an entire colony and, when they die, their fleas migrate toward other species, including humans. When the plague moved from rats to humans it mutated, making even the saliva of the infected contagious. Touching a diseased individual, or even being close to them, was enough to become infected. The spread was further compounded by the fact that a flea can survive up to thirty days without a host and they often took refuge among clothes, in beds, etc. When the temperature drops under 10° Celsius fleas go into hibernation, which is why the plague spread more slowly in winter and contagion spikes often happened in late autumn. Thanks to this biological mechanism, the worst winters slowed these massive epidemics, but spring brought with it a new outbreak ready to wipe out those who had survived the winter.

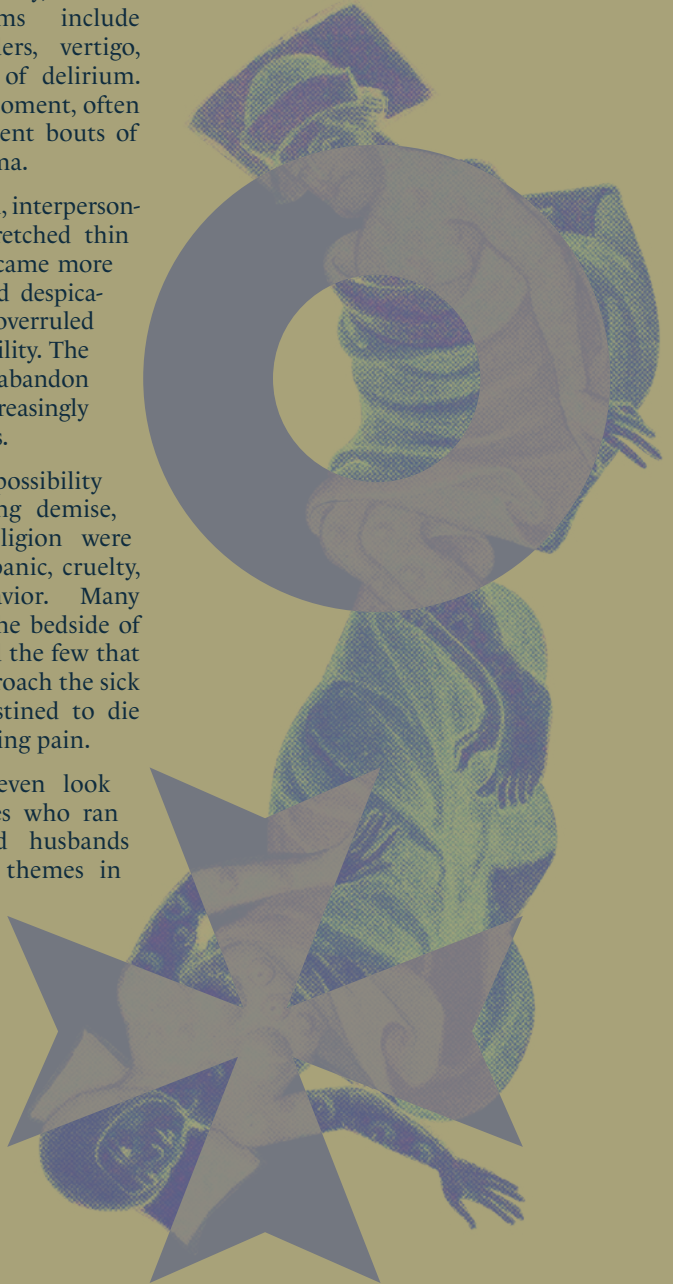


The first symptom of the disease is a powerful fever, followed by headaches, vomiting, diarrhea and, finally, buboes. Other surefire symptoms include petechia, digestive disorders, vertigo, hallucinations, and bouts of delirium. Death could come at any moment, often heralded by incredibly violent bouts of delirium or a prolonged coma.

In this nightmarish situation, interpersonal relationships, already stretched thin due to war and famines, became more and more strained, vile, and despicable. The fear of contagion overruled law, morality, and responsibility. The black death made people abandon morality as they became increasingly barbaric, cruel, and merciless.

When facing the very real possibility and fear of an excruciating demise, culture, tradition, and religion were rarely enough to prevent panic, cruelty, and reprehensible behavior. Many parents refused to stay at the bedside of their own sick children, and the few that had enough courage to approach the sick often became infected, destined to die after a few days of excruciating pain.

Fathers who refused to even look at their children and wives who ran away from their infected husbands quickly became recurring themes in the literature of the time. It was a massacre, and not even dogs, cats, chickens, rabbits, or other domesticated animals were immune.



Many scholars and legal experts of the time were utterly flabbergasted by the collapse of traditional morality and the faltering of centuries of Christian morality and tradition. The looming feeling of being the object of divine retribution, the impoverishment of trading, the general feeling of helplessness in the face of doom, the destruction of familial obligations, and the constant fear of death quickly and irreversibly changed both the people and the collective unconscious.

During the second half of the 1300s, the terrified population reacted in the most bizarre ways as they tried to explain the origin of this disaster. Some believed it was divine punishment for moral corruption, others a plague sent by Satan himself, or the beginning of the end of the world, already prophesized in the year 1000 A.D. Others thought it was the work of sinister characters known in Italy as untori (plague spreaders). Jews, Muslims and other minorities were also accused of spreading the disease and cruelly persecuted. At the same time, religious zealotry reached an all-time high: from long masses with endless prayers, to days of continuous penance and self-flagellation, often accompanied by violent acts of contrition and repentance. Confronted with the unstoppable tide of the plague, many adopted a fatalist and hedonistic attitude: opposed to those driven by their faith to self-harming and fanaticism, they gave themselves fully to debauchery. Finally, there were those who believed that the plague was caused by the miasma, the foul air that poisoned people, a theory that had its roots in ancient medicine.

Medical treatments of the time involved expunging impurities and bad humors through purging, vomiting and bloodletting. Of course, in reality these practices were extremely harmful and often proved fatal to already undernourished and weakened individuals. The only thing really known about the disease was how contagious it was, and the physicians of the time clearly saw the magnitude of the disaster. The idea of running away spread like wildfire: every time there was an outbreak, the only way to avoid contagion altogether was run away, as soon, as fast, and as far away as possible, then remain isolated for a while, only returning after a long period of time. Unfortunately, only the aristocrats could afford this solution which made the plague a “socially discriminating” disease which struck primarily the lowest strata of the population: the poor, the hungry and the weak. Children, elders, the sick, women, the poor, and the malnourished had very little chance of survival.

From 1348 until the end of the century, several tides of plague washed over Europe. The consequences were the collapse of society, economic crisis, famine, and the depopulation of vast tracts of land all over the continent, where nature took over. After killing at least two-thirds of the European population, the plague relented. Some believe that the cause was the gradual disappearance of the black rat in favor of the brown rat, or Norwegian rat, which was far more resistant to the disease.

The disappearance of over twenty million people left the economy in shambles, causing a massive drop in demand. Suddenly there was an excess of goods in comparison to the number of potential buyers. Production tools and real estate also became overabundant, and it became relatively common for poor families to occupy large mansions, left empty after the original owners died of the plague. Similarly, many farmers appropriated animals, tools, and other means of production from farmsteads that no one could lay claim to. Paradoxically, the survivors had a lot more resources at their disposal, enjoyed more job opportunities,

and received higher salaries. Prices also dropped in the decades following the pandemic, creating the premises for the 15th century presented in the *Fahrenheit 1451* role-playing game. By the time it was finished, the black plague had completely changed medieval Europe, redefining it as much as the two World Wars did during the 20th century: never before had beggars, farmers, wanderers, merchants, scholars, popes, kings and emperors, nobles and craftsmen, clergy and secular authorities felt so threatened by the same danger. Never before had they been so afraid to face the inescapable end of their existence, of their entire world.



Danse Macabre: The Triumph of Death

"Birth is never as certain as death. And this is the reason why being born is not enough. It is to be reborn that we were born." (Pablo Neruda)



he danse macabre is one of most emblematic iconographic motifs of 14th century Europe, a time of death and destruction. These artworks, full of skeletons and dead bodies, portrayed the absolute triumph of Death in all its merciless cruelty. Their main goal was the *memento mori*, a constant reminder of the transience of life and how inevitable its end is. This idea was already well developed in the 1200s, but it reached its apex during the many tides of the black plague of the 1300s. This deadly disease caused people to reconsider the inevitability of death from a new and more concrete perspective. Now, anyone could die, at any moment, no matter their age or social status.

Compared to the apocalyptic representations of the early Middle Ages, the *danse macabre* has a more personal, almost humorous, undertone, especially toward the elites. According to some sources, its origin traces back to the story of the *Three Dead Kings*, or *The Three Living and the Three Dead*, brought to France by traveling Franciscan monks returning from south-east Asia. From there, the tale spread to the rest of the Christian world. In the story, during a hunting trip, three kings meet three talking skeletons, who admonish them by foretelling what awaits them in the future: *"We are what you will be; we were what you are."*

Another recurring theme tied to Death was a parade of people of every conceivable gender, age, and social status accompanied by a skeleton that is leading them all in an endless dance toward the edge of a cliff. The meaning of such

imagery is very clear and simple: the uncontested supremacy of Death over human life. It's no coincidence that these representations were so similar to those of the Apocalypse, with Death ruling the world, but not aggressively. These parades often portray the skeletons as happy, some even smiling, while the living appear to be distressed and grieving.

The *danse macabre* is a grim reminder of the fragility of human life and the looming presence of Death. In a time of war, famine, disease, and strife, these images were an ever-present admonishment about the precariousness of the human condition. Death was always waiting, ready to strike, with no regard for age or social status. The *danse macabre* shows the absolute indifference of Death and its sovereignty over human fate. Many artists included the image of Jesus Christ dying on the cross not far from the throne of the Grim Reaper, to

remind us all that nobody, not even the Redeemer himself, was able to avoid the scythe, and everyone has to bow to the world's ultimate power.

While most of the population was illiterate, everyone could easily understand the meaning of the frescoes in the churches: the artists realized works of profound educational value, meant to encourage the faithful to reflect, and reminding them of the transience of life. It doesn't matter who you are or what you're doing, your life will end when you least expect it and you'll lose everything, so devote yourself to good Christian work, because you may die today and neither youth nor wealth will delay the Grim Reaper. The satirical undertones added to many of these works were meant to show how useless it was for the arrogant, the rich, and the powerful to offer money and wealth to Death. The danse macabre became a tool to mock the rich and provide a meager comeuppance for the common folk, even if only in artistic form.

Daniele "DM" Maviglia





Quick Start



o you need another game mode for **conventions** and **demo games** just a few hours long (so-called *one-shots*)? Here it is!

1 Read aloud the **Foreword** section (page **13**).

2 Read aloud the **Safety and Coherence** section (page **16**).

3 Choose the **Tone** of the game (page **18**).

4 Read aloud the **Basic Information** of two **Scenarios** (from page **98**) and ask your players to *vote* on which one they would like to play. If they need more information, read the **Prologues** as well.

5 Vote for the **Pontifex's** personality (page **26**). If you think that the name given in the **Scenario** doesn't match the **Tone**, you can change it as explained on page **27**.

Each player except the Ludi Magister picks one Sheet at random, which will be their Soldier for this Mission. You may find pregenerated Soldiers on need.games. If anyone doesn't like what they pick, they can pick another one or trade Sheets with another player. The Ludi Magister can use any remaining Soldiers as Secondaries.

6

Quickly explain what the different parts of the **Soldier Sheet** mean (page 35).

7

Ask each player to **Introduce their Soldier** (page 48).

8

9 Ask each Soldier if they carry the **Motto of the Ordo** (page 29) and the OM monogram, and if so, what form do they take?

Quickly explain the core game **procedures**: what Soldier on Duty means (page 51); passing the Token; why you ask the players to give you two sensory prompts to frame the scene (page 55); the general rules for **Conflicts** (page 56), without explaining **Sacrifice** (page 67) and the **Morale Pool** (page 62) which will come up later; finally, explain that you are going to play in **Survival Mode** (page 79).

10

139

Designer's Notes



The idea for **Piaga 1348** came to me while reading the “Trimphus Mortis” case study in Mauro Longo’s **Giochi di ruolo** (Dino Audino editore, 2020).

Other major sources of inspiration were the **Savage Worlds - Ultima Forsan** setting by Mauro Longo and Giuseppe Rotondo (published by Space Orange 42), the board game **Zombicide Black Plague** by Raphaël Guiton, Jean-Baptiste Lullien, and Nicolas Raoult (CMON) and the comic **Pestilence** by Frank Tieri and Oleg Okunev (Aftershock Comics).

The original consequence table for Gambles was based on the Secret from **We That Remain** by Grant Howitt (Rowan, Rook and Decard).

I stole the idea of the Ludi Magister’s Interlude from **Fabula Ultima** by Emanuele Galletto (Need Games!).

The resolution of Clashes Among Soldiers comes from **Follow** by Ben Robbins (<https://lamemage.itch.io/follow>).

The design of the Tone section was greatly influenced by **The Breach** by Matteo Scutteri (Need Games!).

I’m pretty sure that **Microfiction** by Luca Bonisoli (Dreamlord Press) helped me in defining the first versions of this book.

The entire **World Creation** chapter is inspired by the concept of Lore Moves from **Undying** by Paul Riddle (Enigma Machinations).

The name *Omnipotentius* and the Armor tag *Money opens every door* are my personal homages to the **Ignoranza Eroica** series of novels and their setting, the Kingdom of Taglia.

To my Patreon patrons of every tier for their continued support and precious ideas:

Alberto Brescancin, Alberto Zanini, Alessandro_F_RE, Alessandro Zanon, Andrea Carbone, Andrea Tortoreto, Cipriano Pagano, Cristian Sisto, Daniele Cracchi, Daniele Maviglia, Davide Maria Varni, Differenzo GDR, Edoardo Cremaschi, Emanuele Galletto, Eufemia Riccio, Federico Dinucci, Foxtrot 056, Francalbina Pellegrino, Gianluca Torrente, Gianmario Marrelli, Jacopo "Faust" Buttiglieri, Leonardo Lucci, Lorenz Klopfenstein, Luca Brasiliano, Marcello Bertocchi, Marzio Morganti, Mauro Barrui, Morghan, Murphy700018, Paolo Castelli, Pier Paolo Cordelli, Pippo_jedi, Raffaele Vacca, Renato Ligas, Riccardo Canton, Riccardo Gasparini, Scriba del Fato, Stefano Vetrini, Troi de slacai, Valerio Lucido.

To the Helios Games Community Telegram chat for the many suggestions.

To all those who read and commented on this work: Alessandro Patalani, Andrea Micaloni, Fabio Villa, Giovanni Micolucci, Ian Hathaway, Leonardo Lucci and Marco Molinaro.

To my playtesters: Adele Pelizzoni, Alberto Volpato, Alberto Zanchi, Alessia Ale Soko, Alessandro Ballarin, Amylee, Andrea Bertuccini, Andrea Marcaggi, Andrea Stefanczyk, Angelica Montoro, Antonio Cirillo, Christian Angeli, Cipriano Pagano, Claudia Polo, Daniel Romano, Daniele Barbaglia, Daniele Cenciarelli, Daniele Coldagelli, Daniele Costantini, Daniele Maviglia, Davide Balugani, Davide Pierantoni, Elio Iadarola, Elisa Merzetti, Elisa Paoletti, Emanuele Orso, Erik Bargagni, Fabio Gemesio, Fabio Renzetti, Federico "Batta" Battaglia, Federico Casaluci, Federico Cortonesi, Federico Ferretti, Francesco Pignati, Francisco Pettigiani, Gabriele "Millennia" Marchi, Gabriele Terlati, Gabriele Ugnani, Gabriele Volante, Gianluca Giovannini, Jimmy Mancini, Giorgio Pallini, Giorgio Vingiani, Giovanna Birarelli, Giulia Felet, Giuseppe Savarese, Jack Asshole / Giacomo Gentile, Jacopo Buttiglieri, Lorenzo Aretini, Lorenzo Trenti, Luca Brasili, Luca Mulazzani, Luca Noschese, Luigi "Klevius" Alboreto, Marco Ghezzi, Maria Luisa Marra, Maria Rosaria "Tathrenin" De Simone, Martina "Jackie" Massa, Marzio Morganti, Massimo Scuri, Matteo Girelli, Mattia Lorenzini, Mauro Fornoni, Michele De Stefano, Nicola Degobbis, Noemi Fusari, Patrick Giovannini, Riccardo Allegretti, Roberto Bongiovanni, Salvatore Cuomo, Samuele Tebaldi, Samuele Vitale, Stefano Bordandini, Stefano Cacciaguerra, Stefano Dallavalle, Stefano Pancaldi, Stefano Vetrini.

To those who asked to be playtesters: Alessandro Bonanni, Alessandro Rocchi, Alessandro Zanon, Antonino Blesi, Dawid Dazzani, Federico Ferretti, Katia D'Introno, Lorenzo Mannella, Michele Tunzi, Renato Ligas, Roberta Lai, Roberto Di Salvatore, Silvio Colombini, Tommaso Monaci, Valerio Lucido, Victorian Fox ludopub, William Raggi.

Above all else, I have to thank my shameless creativity.

I'm my own muse and that's never enough.

Too bad we have to die. I almost wish we could all be born again.



◇ Motto of the Ordo

◇ Name

◇ Description



◇ Weapon

◇ Armor



What I Want

- 1 _____
- 2 _____

Want I Don't Want

- 1 _____
- 2 _____

Traumas



Gamble



Mission

Ludi Magister

Spreading of the Plague

Pontifex

Notes

Size of the Ordo

Motto of the Ordo

Soldier 1

Soldier 2

Secondaries

Soldier 4

Soldier 3

“Water noster, qui es in caelis”

Me sword did cleave the crown of don Giosualdo,
who but this morn was chanting the Mass with the choir lads.

“Sanctificetur Nomen Tuum”

Me gauntlet did smite the head of Gelmina the Meek,
whose smile made me forget the strife.

“Adueniat Regnum Tuum”

Until yesternight, Filippo did currycomb me steed
with those small hands, which I hewed with a single stroke.

“Fiat voluntas Tua”

Another clean stroke finished him.

“Sicut in caelo”

The souls of the last few, I sent up to Heaven.

“Et in terra”

From the church's front door, the tide of the dead did pour upon me.

“Panem nostrum cotidianum da nobis hodie”

I struck the once-living without mercy.

“Et dimitte nobis debita nostra”

One of 'em clamped down on me ankle.

“Sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris”

I booted his noggin clean off.

“Et ne nos inducas in tentationem”

In the light, I found me saving grace.

“Sed libera nos a Malo.”

I shut the door tight and let the flames follow me steps.

“Amen.”

Magnum Immundum Regnum

