The Blight

A skirmish game of Refuges, raids and the things that grow. For two or more players, a handful of miniatures each, and a fistful of six-sided dice.

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PART ONE

The World

The Blight

On the Night of Glass the sky rained seed-glass. By spring the Blight had swallowed the city: grey-green growth that climbs, roots, breathes and *listens*. Where it grows, the electricity dies. Batteries drain overnight, engines cough and stall, radios hiss with something that sounds like singing. Survivors call it **the Hush**.

The people who are left live in **Refuges** at the edges of the growth: a church with the doors nailed shut, a tower block with the stairwells cut away, a supermarket that still smells of the old world. They raid into **the Overgrowth** for what was left behind: tins, medicine, ammunition. And Amber, the resin the Blight weeps, which the desperate trade and the foolish drink.

Spend long enough in the Overgrowth and the Blight roots in you. It gives: senses that aren't human, strength that isn't yours. It takes: your skin, your voice, your sleep. Somewhere beneath it all, something vast is dreaming. The Choir sings to it. They call it **the Deep Root**.

The Blight is a skirmish game for two players (or more) with a handful of miniatures each. Two Refuges raid the same patch of Overgrowth for the same prize, and the Blight's creatures come for whoever makes the most noise.

The Night of Glass

Nobody agrees on the date any more. The calendars went with the power, and the people who kept them went with the calendars. Most Refuges count from **the Night of Glass**, the autumn evening when the sky over the city went the colour of a bruise and began, very quietly, to rain.

It wasn't rain. It fell like sleet and rang like broken bottles: millions of slivers of something clear and faintly green, none longer than a fingernail. **Seed-glass**. It settled in gutters and on car roofs and in the hair of people standing at bus stops looking up. It was warm to the touch. Children collected it in jam jars.

By morning the slivers had split open. What followed, the weeks when the city went green, everyone calls **the Bloom**. By the end of the week the gutters were full of pale shoots, and the shoots had found the drains, the cable ducts, the cracks in the motorway, and the people who'd picked the glass out of their hair.

> *"The first thing I noticed was the birds had stopped. The second thing was that my neighbour's hedge was growing over the street lamp, and the street lamp was off, and it had been on a minute ago."*
> *(from a notebook kept by a reporter at the Fallowmere Refuge)*

The authorities had perhaps three weeks of functioning government. Long enough for cordons, curfews, a televised address in which a tired minister said the word "contained" eleven times. Then the televisions went dark, one district at a time, as the growth reached them.

The Hush

Where the Blight grows, electricity dies. Survivors call it **the Hush**.

It doesn't happen all at once. A torch dims over a few minutes. A phone's battery drains as you watch. Car engines cough, misfire and stop a few streets into the growth, and won't start again until they're dragged out. Power lines carry nothing. Generators run for an hour, then seize, their windings furred with fine grey filaments. Nobody knows whether the Blight *eats* the current or simply *can't stand* it. Both theories have their priests.

So the world went backwards. What works in the Overgrowth is what worked a century ago:

- **Springs, levers and muscle**: crossbows, bows, crowbars, bicycles, hand-pumps.
- **Black powder and brass**: guns still fire, because a cartridge doesn't care about electricity. But nobody is making new cartridges, and every round fired is one fewer in the world.
- **Fire**, which the Blight fears, and which survivors carry like a talisman.

The Hush thins out at the edges. A wind-up radio might pick up a crackle a mile from the growth. A car might run for a few minutes on the ring road. These scraps of the old world are worth more than gold, and they are what Refuges fight each other for.

The radios that do work pick up something else as well. Under the static, on every frequency, there's a sound like a great many people humming the same note, very far away.

The Overgrowth

The city is drowned in growth now, like a reef. Survivors divide it, roughly, into rings.

The Pale

The outer fringe, where the Blight is thin: grey moss on brickwork, shoots in the potholes, vines feeling along the guttering. Most Refuges are here, or just beyond. The Hush is weak; a careful Refuge can run a generator for an evening. Husks wander in from deeper in, and Thornhounds hunt the alleys at night.

The Thicket

Streets where the growth closes over the road and the light comes through it green. **Glass-trees** stand where lamp posts did, translucent trunks with something moving slowly inside. Root-mats lift the tarmac in waves. Spore drifts settle in hollows like snow and rise in clouds when disturbed. This is where the good salvage is: the shops and flats that were never emptied, because nobody who went in to empty them came back out. Raids happen here.

The Throat

The heart of the city, where the growth is oldest. Survivors who've seen its edges describe buildings bent like wax, streets that curve back on themselves, and **Amber falls**: whole faces of tower blocks weeping slow golden resin. Somewhere in the Throat the Choir sings. No Refuge raids there. Some survivors walk in on their own, usually at night, usually smiling.

Blight terrain

On the table, all of this becomes **Spore terrain** (drifts and clouds that root in your lungs), **Lairs** (the burrows, nests and splits in the road where creatures wait), and the dense growth that blocks sight and slows movement.

Refuges

People survive in **Refuges**: small groups dug into whatever building could be made to keep the Blight out. A Refuge might be thirty people in a Victorian church with the windows bricked up, or six in the top floors of a tower block with the stairs cut away below the ninth. Each one is its own small country, with its own rules, its own grudges and its own way of burying the dead.

They have things in common, because the things that kill Refuges are the same everywhere:

- **The Ledger.** Every Refuge keeps one: who ate what, who owes what, how many rounds are left. A Refuge that loses track of its stores starves without noticing.
- **The Quiet Hours.** From dusk to dawn, nobody speaks above a whisper. Doors are opened slowly. Pans are not dropped. The Blight is always listening, and it listens hardest in the dark.
- **Burning.** The dead are burned, always, quickly. The Blight takes what's left in the ground.
- **The Watch.** Every survivor takes a turn on the roof, listening for gravel shifting under the road.

Refuges trade with each other, marry into each other, and raid each other. There isn't enough of anything to go round. When two Refuges hear of the same cache, the same working radio, the same unlooted pharmacy, both send their best into the Thicket, and they meet there, among the creatures, with their guns half-loaded and their hearts going like drums.

The Flyover Market

On the ring road, where an elevated junction stands above the growth on concrete legs, there's a market. Every Refuge sends traders; by custom, nobody fights on the Flyover. Here salvage becomes medicine, Amber becomes bullets, and news travels. The Market is run by nobody in particular, which is to say by whoever has the most guns that week.

The Touched

The Blight gets into people. Through wounds, through lungs, through Amber held too long in a bare hand. A survivor who has spent enough time in the Overgrowth starts to change, and the Refuges have words for each stage.

Touched survivors have a grey-green thread in the whites of their eyes, and wake from dreams of falling upwards. They hear better than they should. Their cuts heal with a faint sheen, like sap.

Bloomed survivors can't hide it any more. Bark-like patches on the forearms, a smell of crushed leaves, pale shoots in the hairline that grow back when cut. They're stronger and stranger: some can call the roots to grab an enemy's ankles, some breathe spores, some move without a sound. They also have bad days: the coughing, the whispering, the hunger for sap that nothing else satisfies.

Overgrown survivors are more Blight than person. Refuges keep them because they're the best raiders anyone has, and fear them for the same reason. Some Refuges won't let them sleep inside.

And then, one day, they **Turn**. It's fast, once it happens. They stop mid-sentence, tilt their heads as though listening to music, and walk away into the growth. Or they don't walk away. Survivors who have Turned come back as **Hollowed**: still wearing their faces, still knowing the way home.

Every Refuge argues about the Touched. Cut them out early (the Doctors try; it rarely takes). Use them while they last. Burn them before they Turn. There's no right answer, only the one you can live with.

Amber

The Blight weeps a slow golden resin wherever it grows thick. Survivors call it **Amber**. It's warm, faintly luminous, and smells like honey and wet stone.

Amber is the closest thing the city has to money. It burns hotter and longer than any fuel left in the world. Ground fine, it stops bleeding. Dissolved in spirits, it brings visions. Held in the mouth, it makes the Hush recede for a few minutes: a dead torch will flicker, a radio will clear.

It also carries the Blight. Every Refuge has a story about someone who handled too much Amber and went quiet. And every Refuge has someone who **drinks** it on purpose: to reach for a Gift, to see what the Choir sees, or because they're already Touched and the hunger has started.

The Deep Root

Nobody knows what the Blight is. These are the things survivors whisper.

That the seed-glass didn't come *down*. It came *up*, through the sky's underside, from somewhere the sky had been covering.

That the growth isn't many plants but **one**, and it goes down further than the sewers, further than the clay, further than anyone has dug, and then on, past where *down* stops meaning anything. At the bottom of it is something that the Choir calls **the Deep Root**: not a god, not an animal, a *place that thinks*. It was old when the stars it came from were young. It has been here before, and slept, and the city was built over the bed where it sleeps. It is dreaming. The Blight is what grows in the shape of its dream.

That the Deep Root is not hostile, any more than a tide is. It simply doesn't distinguish between us and the soil.

That it is waking up.

The **Choir** sings to it. The first one was found in the cathedral in the Throat: perhaps forty Husks fused at the shoulders and hips into a single swaying mass, every mouth open, every throat producing the same low note. Others have been seen since. When a Choir moves, the Husks around it move in time.

A few survivors have started to sing back. They call themselves the **Gardeners**, and they believe the Blight is a mercy: that when the Deep Root wakes, everyone it has grown into will wake with it. They are tending the growth on purpose. They are recruiting.

Older Than the Glass

The Bloom was not the first time.

The Reporter at Fallowmere found it in the county archive, in a box nobody had opened since the nineteen-thirties: a parish register from 1666 with three pages cut out, and a note in the margin of the fourth. *"The glasse rain came agen upon the Feast of St Luke. The Ministers have closed the wells. God forgive us what we have planted."* The pages after it are in a different hand, and the hand gets worse.

Once you know to look, the signs are everywhere in the old city. The same seven-pointed mark carved over the doors of the oldest churches, worn almost smooth. Medieval street names that make no sense: Rootgate, Seedwell Lane, the Hushings. A Victorian engineer's report on the sewers, abandoned because the tunnels under the cathedral *"descend further than the survey permits, and the men will not go down."* A 1974 council planning file on the Fallowmere estate, approved, and then a single typed line: *"Foundations not to exceed six feet. On no account to disturb the clay."*

Somebody knew. Somebody has always known, and kept a lid on it, and the lid came off.

The Ward-signs

The seven-pointed mark works. Nobody can say why. Chalked on a door, it seems to make Husks hesitate; scratched into a bullet, it seems to make the Stalk flinch. Salt and iron help too, the way the old stories say. The Refuges that use them don't talk about it much. It feels like admitting something.

Wrong places

The Blight does things to space. In the Thicket, a street can be longer walking out than it was walking in. A stairwell can have one landing too many. Survivors who've been deep enough swear the Throat has *more inside it than outside it*, and that the cathedral's spire points in a direction that isn't up. Compasses spin near the Amber falls. Watches lose time, or gain it.

People who look too long at these things start to understand them, and understanding is the problem. The Blight doesn't only get in through the skin.

The Gardeners

They started appearing at the Flyover Market in Year 5: quiet, clean, smiling people with jam jars of seed-glass, offering it free to anyone who'd take it. Most people threw it in the canal. Some didn't.

The Gardeners believe the Blight is not an invasion but a **harvest**. The Deep Root is waking, they say, and everything it has grown into will wake with it, whole and unafraid. To fight the growth is to refuse the only future left. To tend it is mercy.

Congregations

Gardeners live in **Congregations** of a dozen to forty, out in the Thicket where no Refuge would last a week. They sleep in the old greenhouses at the botanical gardens, in the drowned leisure centre on Carrow Fields, in the nave of a church that has a tree growing through the altar. The growth doesn't touch them, or touches them gently. Their Touched are honoured, their Bloomed are revered, and when one of them Turns they hold a service and walk them to the Throat.

Each Congregation has its roles:

- **Tenders** keep the growth: pruning, clearing, protecting it from fire and from Refuges.
- **Seed-Bearers** carry the seed-glass gathered every Glassfall to wherever the growth is thin, and plant it.
- **Hymnwardens** sing the Choir's note. Where they sing, the growth listens.
- **The Verdant Mother** leads. She is always a woman, always older, always somehow kind. Survivors who have met one say she knew their name.

What they want from you

The Gardeners don't want to kill survivors. They want to **plant** them. A survivor taken Down by a Gardener wakes up with more Blight than they had. A Refuge that loses

someone to the Gardeners sometimes sees them again, months later, clean and smiling at the Flyover, offering jam jars.

They take Amber from anyone carrying it; to them it's sacred. They go for the Touched first, the way you'd go for a lost lamb.

Fighting them

Gardeners are people. They bleed. They don't Rout and they don't scare, because they believe. Refuges are divided about killing them: some see them as worse than the Choir, some as just another Refuge with stranger rules, and a few, quietly, start to wonder whether they're right.

> *"She held my hand and told me I was already halfway home. I've got 7 Blight. I think about it every night."*
> *(a raider from Wharfside, after The Planting at Rootgate)*

The Things That Grow

The Blight makes its creatures out of whatever it finds. Most were something else once.

- **Husks** were people. The growth fills them and walks them, slowly, along the routes they used to take. They're weak alone and terrible in numbers, and their touch carries the Blight.
- **Thornhounds** were the city's dogs. They hunt in packs by sound, and a pack has a mother: the swollen **Thorn Matriarch**, heavy with seed-pods full of Amber.
- **Lantern Moths** drift in clouds through the Thicket at night, drawn to light and noise. Their dust gets in your lungs and shows you things.
- **Strangler Vines** and **Censer Blooms** grow at doorways and stairwells, as though placed there. Perhaps they were.
- **Rootmaws** move under the road. The tarmac goes soft before they surface.
- **The Stalk** is too tall, too thin, and always closer than it was. Nobody has seen it walk.
- **The Choir**, the singing cathedral of the dead.

The Bestiary is where they're described for play. It will grow, draft by draft.

Since the Night of Glass

Refuge reckoning, in years since the Night of Glass. Not everyone agrees.

- **Year 0, autumn**: the Night of Glass. Growth everywhere within a week.
- **Year 0, winter**: the **Silent Winter**. The Hush spreads; the city goes dark; the cordons fail. Most of the dying happens now, of cold and hunger as much as the Blight.
- **Year 1**: the **Grey Spring**. The first Refuges dig in. The first Husks are seen walking home.
- **Year 2**: the Flyover Market is founded. Amber becomes currency.
- **Year 3**: the first Choir is heard from the Throat. Radios in the Pale pick up the humming.
- **Year 4**: the Thornhound winter. Two Refuges in the north of the city fall in a week.

- **Year 5**: the first Gardeners appear at the Flyover, offering seed-glass in jam jars. By winter there are Congregations in the botanical gardens and on Carrow Fields.
- **Year 6, now**: the growth is spreading again, faster. Caches in the Pale are picked clean. Every Refuge is raiding deeper into the Thicket, and meeting every other Refuge there.

Voices from the Refuges

> *"Rules of the House. One: Quiet Hours are sacred. Two: what comes back from a raid goes in the Ledger before it goes in a pocket. Three: if you find glass in your hair, you tell Ma, you don't hide it. Four: we burn our own."*
> *(painted on the vestry door, St Aldric's Refuge)*

> *"Thirty-one rounds of nine millimetre. Fourteen shotgun shells. Two arrows we can't straighten. That's what stands between us and Hollins Estate, and Hollins know it."*
> *(the Ledger, Wharfside Refuge)*

> *"I don't pray for the Blight to go. I pray for it to be quick, when it comes for Danny."*
> *(overheard at the Flyover Market)*

> *"It's not singing to us. That's what nobody gets. It's singing to the thing underneath, and we just happen to be standing in the way of the sound."*
> *(an Overgrown raider, shortly before he walked into the Throat)*

PART TWO

The Rules

Dice

The game uses ordinary six-sided dice (d6). A few rolls ask for **d3** (a d6 halved, rounding up) or a **d66**-style roll of two dice, read as described.

Dice pools

Most rolls are **pools**: roll a number of dice equal to a stat (Fight, Shoot, Wits or Nerve), add or remove dice for the situation, and count **successes**:

- every **4, 5 or 6** is a success;
- every **6** is also a **Crit**. Crits count as successes and some weapons and rules give them extra effects. Crits are harder to block (see Armour).

Modifiers always add or remove dice, never change the 4+. If a pool would drop below 1 die, roll 1 die anyway, which only succeeds on a 6 (a **desperate roll**).

Tests

A **test** is a pool with a target: "test Nerve (2)" means roll the Nerve pool and score at least 2 successes. A test with no number needs 1.

Re-rolls

No die can be re-rolled more than once.

Blight dice

Survivors with Blight in them can call on it. Use dice of a different colour. Before rolling any pool, a survivor may add up to **their Blight tier** in Blight dice (1 at Touched, 2 at Bloomed, 3 at Overgrown). They succeed and Crit like any other die, but **every 1 on a Blight die gives the survivor +1 Blight**. Gifts that say *Call the Blight* are always rolled as a pool of Blight dice equal to the tier and need 1 success.

Survivors

Each survivor has a profile:

- **Move (M)**: inches moved by a Move action.

- **Fight (F)**: dice rolled in close combat.
- **Shoot (S)**: dice rolled when shooting or throwing.
- **Wits (W)**: dice for Initiative, Searching and using things.
- **Nerve (N)**: dice for holding your nerve against horror and pressure.
- **Health (H)**: how much damage they can take before they go Down.
- **Armour (A)**: dice rolled to block hits, from what they wear.
- **Blight**: 0 to 12. How far the Blight has rooted in them.

The base survivor is **M5 F2 S2 W2 N2 H2**. Their **background** (what they were before the Bloom) changes some of that, gives them a **Knack**, and sets the two skill lists they can learn from.

BACKGROUND	COST	PROFILE	KNACK	SKILLS
Soldier	30	M5 F2 S3 W2 N3 H2	**Drilled.** Once per activation, Reload as a free action.	Marksman, Grit
Police Officer	28	M5 F3 S3 W2 N2 H2	**Command Voice.** Use: one enemy survivor within 6" that can hear you tests Nerve (1) or becomes Shaken. Makes 1 Noise.	Brawn, Marksman
Paramedic	25	M5 F2 S2 W3 N2 H2	**Triage.** First aid (Use) needs no test and restores 2 Health.	Savvy, Grit
Doctor	25	M5 F1 S2 W3 N2 H2	**Field Surgeon.** In the Aftermath, if this survivor isn't Down, one Casualty roll for the Refuge gets +1. Can carry out the Purge errand.	Savvy, Lore
Reporter	22	M5 F2 S2 W3 N3 H2	**Nose for a Story.** +1 die to Search, and +1 die to Nerve tests against Dread. They've seen worse, and written it down.	Savvy, Stealth
Waitress	18	M6 F2 S2 W3 N2 H2	**Ten Tables at Once.** Once per activation, a free Use to hand an item, a Reload or Loot to a friend within 1".	Stealth, Savvy
Office Worker	12	M5 F2 S2 W2 N2 H2	**Overlooked.** Enemies shooting at this survivor roll –1 die if another visible target is closer to them.	Savvy, Grit
Mechanic	20	M5 F3 S2 W2 N2 H2	**Jury-rig.** Clear a Jam as a free action. +1 die to Use on doors, machines and objectives.	Brawn, Savvy
Farmer	22	M5 F3 S2 W2 N2 H3	**Green Thumb.** Ignore the first Blight gained from Spore terrain each battle. +1 die to Search in Blight terrain.	Brawn, Lore
Chef	20	M5 F3 S2 W2 N2 H2	**Knife Work.** Crits with Blade weapons cause +1 Damage.	Brawn, Stealth
Student	14	M5 F2 S2 W3 N2 H2	**Quick Study.** +1 Experience in each Aftermath this survivor lives through.	Savvy, Lore
Priest	20	M5 F2 S2 W2 N4 H2	**Last Rites.** Once per round, a friend within 6" may test Nerve with this survivor's pool.	Grit, Lore

BACKGROUND	COST	PROFILE	KNACK	SKILLS
Athlete	22	M6 F3 S2 W2 N2 H2	**Second Wind.** Sprint adds 4" instead of 3" and makes no Noise.	Brawn, Stealth
Gamekeeper	26	M5 F2 S3 W3 N2 H2	**Still Hunter.** Aim gives +2 dice. Bows and crossbows gain +3" range.	Marksman, Stealth
Bouncer	25	M5 F3 S2 W2 N2 H3	**Heavy Hands.** On winning a Fight, you may also push the loser 2"; they become Shaken.	Brawn, Grit
Firefighter	25	M5 F2 S2 W2 N3 H3	**Smoke-eater.** Immune to Spore terrain, spore clouds and Fire.	Grit, Brawn
Thief	22	M6 F2 S2 W3 N2 H2	**Light Fingers.** Once per activation, Search as a free action.	Stealth, Savvy
Teacher	20	M5 F2 S2 W3 N3 H2	**Calm Voice.** Friends within 3" get +1 die to Nerve tests.	Savvy, Lore
Courier	18	M6 F2 S2 W2 N2 H2	**Knows the Streets.** Deploy anywhere up to 6" beyond your deployment zone, or make a free 3" move before the first round.	Stealth, Marksman
Labourer	18	M5 F3 S2 W1 N2 H3	**Pack Mule.** Carrying Loot doesn't slow this survivor, and they can carry two.	Brawn, Grit

The Leader

[[leader]]

The Round

A battle is played in **rounds** (usually six). Each round has three phases.

1. Initiative

Each Refuge rolls its Leader's **Wits** as a pool (plus any bonus dice from Home, kit or improvements). Every creature brood on the table has a fixed **Initiative** number from the bestiary instead of rolling.

Put every side (both Refuges and each brood) in order, **highest first**. A Refuge's score is its successes. Ties between Refuges: roll off. Ties between a Refuge and creatures: **creatures go first**. The Blight is patient, and it is always listening.

2. Activations

Starting at the top of the order, the first side activates **one** model, then the next side activates one model, and so on down the order, then back to the top. A side with nothing left to activate is skipped. The phase ends when every model has activated.

Each creature activates on its own, in its brood's place in the order. Creatures follow their **behaviour** (see the Bestiary). Whichever player is not their target moves them, honestly.

Down survivors don't activate.

3. End Phase

In this order:

1. **The Din**: total the Noise made this round and roll that many dice (see Noise). Creatures may come.
2. **Spores**: each survivor in Spore terrain or a spore cloud rolls a die: on 1–2, +1 Blight.
3. **Rout**: a Refuge with half or more of its survivors Down or gone tests to stay (see Nerve).
4. **Clear**: remove all Noise, Hidden stays, fires go out, scenario effects happen.

Actions

An activating survivor takes **two actions**, one after the other. The same action can be taken twice, except that a survivor can only make **one attack** (Shoot, Fight, or an attacking Gift) per activation.

- **Move**: up to M inches. Climbing costs double. Moving is Quiet.
- **Sprint**: up to M+3 inches. Makes **1 Noise**. You can't Shoot in an activation in which you Sprint.
- **Shoot**: attack with a ranged or thrown weapon (see Shooting).
- **Fight**: attack an enemy in contact (see Fighting). Moving into contact and Fighting in one activation is a **Charge**: +1 die.
- **Aim**: +1 die to your next Shoot this activation.
- **Reload**: refill a weapon's magazine with one Reload you carry (or ready a bow or crossbow).
- **Search**: at a Loot token in contact, test Wits (1). Pass: pick it up. A survivor can carry 1 Loot; carrying it costs –1" Move.
- **Hide**: if in cover and no enemy within 6" can see you, become **Hidden**: enemies more than 6" away can't target you. You stop being Hidden when you make Noise, attack, or end a move in the open.
- **Use**: open a door (Wits test), give first aid (see Damage), hand an item to a friend in contact, work an objective, clear a Jam.
- **Steady**: stop being Shaken.
- **Gift**: use a Blight Gift that says it takes an action.

Shaken survivors get only one action in their next activation, after which they stop being Shaken.

Shooting

Pick a target in range and line of sight. Roll **Shoot + the weapon's dice**, adjusted:

- **Aim**: +1 die (some rules give more).
- **Long range** (more than half the weapon's range): –1 die.

- **Cover**: target partly hidden, –1 die; mostly hidden, –2 dice.
- **Moved this activation**: no change. Sprinted: you can't shoot.
- **Into a fight**: –1 die, and each 1 rolled hits a friend in that fight instead (if there is one).

Each success is a **hit**. The target then rolls **armour** (see Damage). Every hit not blocked takes the weapon's **Damage** in Health.

Ammunition

Firearms have a **magazine**: the number of shots before they're empty. Each Shoot uses one shot. An empty gun needs a **Reload** action and a Reload carried by the shooter.

Ammunition is scarce. Before a battle, every magazine loaded and every spare Reload carried comes out of the **Refuge's stores**. Reloads still in pockets afterwards (and magazines never fired from) go back; anything fired from is spent.

Bows hold one arrow and need a Reload action after every shot, but arrows are gathered back up, so they never use the stores.

Crossbows hold one bolt, and every shot uses it: loading the next is a Reload action that takes a **Bolt** the shooter carries. Bolts are drawn from the stores at set-up like Reloads, unused ones come home, and fired ones are gone. A Refuge makes them at home: **5 Bolts for 1 Salvage**, no Errand needed.

Jams

Scrap weapons Jam if the Shoot roll shows two or more 1s. A Jammed weapon can't fire until a Use action clears it.

Noise

Each shot makes the weapon's Noise (see Noise).

Fighting

Close combat is a contest. The attacker and defender both roll **Fight + their weapon's dice**:

- **Charge**: the attacker moved into contact this activation, +1 die.
- **Outnumbering**: +1 die for each other friend in contact with the enemy (max +2).
- **Shaken**: –1 die.
- **Down** defenders don't roll; a survivor who Fights a Down enemy **Finishes** them: they're taken out of the battle, and their Casualty roll has –1.

Compare successes. The side with more wins, and the difference is the number of **hits** on the loser (armour applies; Crits among the winner's dice stay Crits). A tie: nothing happens beyond the noise.

Melee weapons make their Noise for both fighters.

Armour, Damage and Down

Armour

The target of hits rolls its **Armour** in dice. Each 4+ blocks one ordinary hit. **Crits can only be blocked by a 6** (a Helmet makes it 5+). Hits that aren't blocked each take the weapon's Damage from Health.

Down

At 0 Health a survivor is **Down**: lay the model on its side. Down survivors don't activate, can't be targeted by shooting, and drop any Loot they carry. A friend in contact can drag them along with a Move action (both move at half speed).

First aid

Use on a friend in contact: test Wits (1). Pass: they regain 1 Health, or stand up from Down with 1 Health. Med kits and some Knacks skip the test.

Creatures

A creature at 0 Health is slain. Remove it.

Infection

Every hit from an **Infectious** creature that isn't blocked also gives its Infectious value in **Blight**.

Nerve and Dread

Dread

Some creatures have **Dread**. The first time in a battle a survivor sees a creature of that kind within 12", it tests **Nerve (Dread)**. Fail: **Shaken**. Fail with no successes and any 1: **Panic**: move a full Move directly away from it, then Shaken.

Friends within 6" of the Leader may use the Leader's Nerve pool.

Rout

In the End Phase, a Refuge with **half or more** of its starting survivors Down, Turned or off the table must test the Leader's Nerve (1) (or the highest Nerve standing if the Leader is Down). Fail: the Refuge **Routs** and loses. Its survivors leave the table with what they carry.

A Refuge can choose to **withdraw** at the start of any of its turns. That counts as a Rout.

Noise and the Din

The Blight listens. Every action that makes Noise puts that many **Noise tokens** by the model:

- **Quiet (0)**: moving, knives, bows, Searching, Hiding.
- **Loud (1)**: Sprinting, most melee weapons, pistols, nail guns, forcing a door, Command Voice.
- **Very loud (2)**: shotguns, rifles, revolvers, flare guns.
- **Deafening (3)**: chainsaws, explosives.

Creatures hunt Noise

Most creatures go for **the survivor with the most Noise within their Senses**. Noise stays by a model until the End Phase, so the survivor who fires first in a round is the one that gets hunted.

The Din

In the End Phase, total every Noise token on the table. That is the **Din**. Roll that many dice (maximum 12; some scenarios add more):

- **No 6s**: the Blight stays still.
- **One 6**: something heard. Roll on the **Lesser Encounter** table.
- **Two or more 6s**: something big heard. Roll on the **Greater Encounter** table.

The Season can move these thresholds: in the Silence the Blight sleeps, and it takes two 6s to wake anything.

Then clear all Noise.

The Blight

A survivor's **Blight** runs from 0 to 12.

Survivors gain Blight from:

- Each 1 rolled on a Blight die: +1 Blight.
- Each unblocked hit from an Infectious creature: + its Infectious value.
- Ending an activation in Spore terrain or a spore cloud: roll a die, on 1–2 gain +1 Blight.
- Casualty roll of Infected in the Aftermath: +2 Blight.
- Carrying Amber home: roll a die for each Amber carried, on a 1 the carrier gains +1 Blight.
- Drinking Amber (an Errand): +1 Blight by choice.

Tiers

- **0–2 Clean**: no Blight dice.
- **3–5 Touched**: 1 Blight die. One Gift, one Mark.
- **6–8 Bloomed**: 2 Blight dice. Two Gifts, two Marks.
- **9–11 Overgrown**: 3 Blight dice. Three Gifts, three Marks.

- **12 Turned**: the survivor is lost (see below).

Each time a survivor's Blight reaches **3, 6 or 9**, they gain a **Gift** and a **Mark**, rolled in the Aftermath (or at once, if you prefer it that way and are tracking the battle). Roll two dice for each: the first picks the half of the table (1–3 or 4–6), the second picks the entry. Roll again on a duplicate.

Turning

At **12 Blight** the survivor **Turns**, at once, wherever they are. Replace them with a **Hollowed** creature that hunts like any other, starting with their old Refuge. They're gone from the roster. The campaign keeps their name, and they come back: see **The Hollowed return** in the Bestiary.

ROLL	GIFT	EFFECT
1–3 · 1	**Thornskin**	Bark-hard plates under the skin: +1 armour die against Fight hits.
1–3 · 2	**Rootsense**	You feel footsteps through the ground. Hidden enemies within 8" are not Hidden to you, and you can't be Ambushed.
1–3 · 3	**Spore Breath**	Call the Blight (action): every enemy within 3" in front of you tests Nerve (1) or is Shaken. Quiet.
1–3 · 4	**Lashvine**	Call the Blight (action): pull a model within 6" up to 3" towards you. You may Fight at 2".
1–3 · 5	**Mend-sap**	At the start of your activation, if you are wounded, roll one Blight die: on 4+ regain 1 Health.
1–3 · 6	**Hush**	The Blight muffles you. Your actions make 1 less Noise (minimum 0).
4–6 · 1	**Chorus**	You hear the Blight singing. Once per battle, when an Encounter is rolled, choose which Blight edge or Lair it arrives at.
4–6 · 2	**Bloodbloom**	Your blood blooms in the air: when you lose Health in a Fight, the attacker takes 1 hit (armour applies).
4–6 · 3	**Grasping Roots**	Call the Blight (action): a model within 8" is Held (can't move) until it spends an action and passes a Fight test (1).
4–6 · 4	**Glowcap Eyes**	Your eyes glow faintly. Darkness doesn't limit your sight, and +1 die to Shoot at targets over 12" away.
4–6 · 5	**Hollow Strength**	Something else moves your muscles: +1 Fight, and your unarmed attacks cause 2 Damage.
4–6 · 6	**Pollen Veil**	A haze of pollen follows you. Enemies shooting at you always count you as in cover.

ROLL	MARK	EFFECT
1–3 · 1	**Weeping Bark**	Your joints stiffen with sap: −1 Move.

ROLL	MARK	EFFECT
1–3 · 2	**Spore Cough**	At the start of each of your activations roll a die: on a 1 you make 1 Noise.
1–3 · 3	**The Whispers**	Something speaks in the quiet: −1 die to Nerve tests.
1–3 · 4	**Light-sick**	Your eyes have changed: −1 Shoot.
1–3 · 5	**Sap Hunger**	In each Upkeep you need 2 Rations instead of 1, or gain +1 Blight.
1–3 · 6	**Root-bound**	You can't Sprint.
4–6 · 1	**Shunned**	Friends won't stand close: friends within 2" of you get −1 die to Nerve tests. Recruiting costs the Refuge +3 Salvage while you live there.
4–6 · 2	**Lure**	The Blight calls its own: creatures treat you as making 1 more Noise.
4–6 · 3	**Brittle**	Your bones hollow out: −1 Health (minimum 1).
4–6 · 4	**Fugue**	If any Blight die you roll shows a 1, you lose the rest of this activation as well as gaining Blight.
4–6 · 5	**Fevered**	Test Nerve (1) at the start of each battle or start it Shaken.
4–6 · 6	**Sprouting**	Pale shoots push through your skin: enemies get +1 die to Shoot at you.

Creatures

Creatures belong to nobody. They attack whoever their behaviour points them at, of either Refuge.

- They activate in their **brood's place** in the initiative order, one creature at a time.
- They never take Nerve tests and never Rout.
- They have no Wits: if a rule needs one, use 1 die.
- When one is slain, the survivor who did it gains its XP in the Aftermath.

Creatures arrive at a Lair or a Blight edge (each scenario says where these are). Use the one nearest the noisiest survivor, unless a rule says otherwise. They activate in their place in the initiative order from the next round; if they arrive during set-up they act from round 1.

The full Bestiary, with behaviours and Encounter tables, is its own page.

Skills

Survivors learn skills as they advance, from the two lists their background allows.

SKILL	LIST	EFFECT
Bruiser	Brawn	Charging gives +2 dice instead of +1.
Shove	Brawn	On winning a Fight, you may push the loser 3" directly away instead of causing hits.
Iron Grip	Brawn	Ignore Held and Grasping. Two-handed weapons don't stop you carrying Loot.
Berserker	Brawn	Once you have lost any Health this battle, +1 die to Fight.
Steady Aim	Marksman	Aim gives +2 dice instead of +1.
Snap Shot	Marksman	You may Shoot in an activation in which you Sprinted, with −1 die.
Ammo Miser	Marksman	If a Shoot roll includes any Crit, the shot doesn't use up the magazine.
Quick Reload	Marksman	Once per activation, Reload as a free action.
Scrounger	Savvy	+1 die to Search. In the Aftermath, roll one extra Loot die and pick which to keep.
Medic	Savvy	First aid (Use) needs no test and restores 2 Health.
Tinkerer	Savvy	Clear a Jam as a free action. +1 die to Use on doors, machines and objectives.
Barterer	Savvy	While this survivor is in the Refuge, Market items cost 1 Salvage less (minimum 1).
Light Step	Stealth	Sprinting makes no Noise.
Shadow	Stealth	You may Hide without cover if no enemy is within 8".
Ambush	Stealth	+2 dice to Fight if you were Hidden at the start of this activation.
Quiet Kill	Stealth	Your Fight actions make no Noise, whatever the weapon.
Tough	Grit	+1 Health (this can take you above the usual cap of 4).
Unshakeable	Grit	Once per battle, re-roll a failed Nerve test.
Hard to Kill	Grit	+1 to your Casualty rolls in the Aftermath.
Last Stand	Grit	When Down, roll a die at the start of each of your side's turns: on a 6 you stand up with 1 Health (and may activate).
Spore-wise	Lore	Spore terrain and spore clouds only give you Blight on a 1 (not 1–2).
Read the Growth	Lore	+1 die to Search in Blight terrain. Ambushers can't emerge within 3" of you.
Steady the Bloom	Lore	Once per battle, re-roll one Blight die.
Ward-sign	Lore	Friends within 3" of you test Dread as if it were 1 lower.

The Market

Costs are in Salvage. **Noise**: 0 Quiet, 1 Loud, 2 Very loud, 3 Deafening. **Mag**: shots per magazine.

WEAPON	COST	RARITY	DICE	DMG	RANGE	NOISE	MAG	RULES
Unarmed	free	Common	-1	1	contact	0 (Quiet)		Every survivor can fight unarmed.
Improvised weapon	free	Common	0	1	contact	1 (Loud)		Pipe, bat, rolling pin, table leg. Every survivor starts with one for free.
Knife	3	Common	0	1	contact	0 (Quiet)		Quiet.
Machete	6	Common	0	1	contact	0 (Quiet)		Cleave: Crits cause +1 Damage. Good for cutting through growth: +1 die to Use on overgrown doors.
Fire axe	10	Common	+1	2	contact	1 (Loud)		Two-handed.
Sledgehammer	10	Common	+1	2	contact	1 (Loud)		Two-handed. Knockback: when you win a Fight, push the loser 2" after hits are worked out.
Spear	5	Common	0	1	contact	0 (Quiet)		Two-handed. Reach: Fight enemies up to 2" away. Enemies charging you lose their Charge bonus.

WEAPON	COST	RARITY	DICE	DMG	RANGE	NOISE	MAG	RULES
Chainsaw	25	Rare	+2	2	contact	3 (Deafening)		Two-handed. Hush: the Blight drinks engines. If a Fight roll shows two or more 1s, the saw dies for the rest of the battle (use Unarmed).
Thrown junk	free	Common	-1	1	6"	0 (Quiet)		Bricks and bottles. Never runs out.
Molotov	6	Uncommon	0	1	6"	1 (Loud)		Single use. Pick a point in range: every model within 2" takes a 2-dice attack (armour applies). Fire: creatures with Fire weakness take double Damage. Leaves a 2" fire until the End Phase.
Pipe bomb	12	Rare	0	2	6"	3 (Deafening)		Single use. Every model within 3" of the point takes a 3-dice attack.
Bow	10	Common	0	1	18"	0 (Quiet)	1	Two-handed. Quiet. Needs a Reload action after every shot, but arrows are gathered back up, so it never uses Reloads.

WEAPON	COST	RARITY	DICE	DMG	RANGE	NOISE	MAG	RULES
Crossbow	15	Uncommon	+1	1	18"	0 (Quiet)	1	Two-handed. Quiet. Punch: Crits cause +1 Damage. Holds one bolt: every shot uses a bolt, and loading the next is a Reload action. Bolts come from the stores (5 for 1 Salvage), not Reloads.
Pistol	12	Common	0	1	12"	1 (Loud)	3	
Revolver	12	Common	0	1	12"	2 (Very loud)	2	Punch: Crits cause +1 Damage. Never Jams.
Shotgun	18	Common	+1	1	10"	2 (Very loud)	2	Two-handed. Spread: +1 more die against targets within 4".
Sawn-off	12	Uncommon	+2	1	6"	2 (Very loud)	1	One-handed. Spread: +1 more die within 4".
Hunting rifle	22	Uncommon	0	2	24"	2 (Very loud)	3	Two-handed. Scoped: Aim gives one extra die.
Assault rifle	35	Rare	+1	1	24"	2 (Very loud)	4	Two-handed. Burst: spend 2 shots on one Shoot for +2 dice.
Nail gun	10	Uncommon	0	1	8"	1 (Loud)	3	Scrap: two or more 1s on a Shoot roll Jam it (Use to clear).
Pipe gun	6	Common	0	1	10"	2 (Very loud)	1	Home-made. Scrap: two or more 1s on a Shoot roll Jam it (Use to clear).

WEAPON	COST	RARITY	DICE	DMG	RANGE	NOISE	MAG	RULES
Flare gun	10	Uncommon	0	1	18"	2 (Very loud)	1	Flare: instead of attacking, fire at a point. Until the End Phase, creatures hunting by Noise go towards the flare instead.

ARMOUR & KIT	COST	RARITY	EFFECT
Padded jacket	6	Common	Armour 1. Motorcycle leathers, quilted coats, layers of duct tape.
Stab vest	10	Uncommon	Armour 1. Armour 1, and 2 against Fight hits.
Riot gear	15	Uncommon	Armour 2. -1 Move.
Helmet	5	Common	Crits against you can be blocked on a 5+ instead of only a 6.
Gas mask	8	Uncommon	Immune to Spore terrain and spore clouds. −1 die to Search (you can't see a thing).
Med kit	8	Common	Two uses each battle: first aid needs no test.
Lantern	2	Common	In Dark scenarios you see and shoot to 18" instead of 12". Creatures that hunt light treat you as making 1 more Noise.
Crowbar	3	Common	+1 die to Use on doors and caches. Counts as an Improvised weapon.
Rope & grapple	4	Common	Climbing costs no extra movement.
Binoculars	6	Uncommon	If the survivor rolling Initiative carries these, +1 die.
Backpack	4	Common	Carry one Loot without being slowed.
Smoke canister	5	Uncommon	Single use. Use: a 3" cloud within 6" blocks line of sight until the End Phase.
Salt & iron charm	6	Uncommon	Old superstition that seems to work. Once per battle, re-roll a failed Dread test.

PART THREE

The Bestiary

Creatures of the Overgrowth

- **Hunter.** Moves towards the survivor with the most Noise within its Senses (ties: the nearest) and Fights it. If nobody within its Senses has Noise, it goes for the nearest survivor it can see. If it can't see anyone, it drifts its full Move towards the centre of the table.
- **Stalker.** Moves towards the most isolated survivor it can see (the one with no friend within 3", then the furthest from its friends) and Fights it. Noise only draws it if it can see nobody.
- **Ambusher.** Starts hidden (not on the table). When a survivor makes Noise or ends a move within its Senses of the Lair, it emerges in contact with the noisiest such survivor and Fights at once. Once out, it acts as a Hunter.
- **Guardian.** Never leaves 6" of where it was placed. Attacks the noisiest model within reach; otherwise does nothing.
- **Swarm.** Moves towards the noisiest survivor or the nearest light (Lantern, Flare, fire) within its Senses, and Fights every model in contact with it, rolling separately for each.
- **Horror.** Moves towards the largest group of survivors it can see (the most within 6" of one point) and Fights the one with most Noise. Its special rules say more.
- **Tender.** Gardeners keep the growth. Each goes for, in order: a survivor carrying Amber or Loot; a survivor with 3+ Blight (they want the Touched); the survivor nearest Spore terrain or a Lair. It Fights if it can reach, and never ends a move more than 12" from Spore terrain or a Lair. Gardeners never attack each other or the Blight's creatures, and creatures ignore them.

Encounter tables

Roll on the **Lesser** table when the Din shows one 6, and for each creature lurking at set-up. Roll on the **Greater** table when the Din shows two or more 6s.

Lesser

D6	ARRIVES	NUMBER
1	**Husk**	d3+1
2	**Husk**	d3+2
3	**Thornhound**	2
4	**Lantern Moth Swarm**	1

Greater

D6	ARRIVES	NUMBER
1	**Husk**. A Husk horde.	d3+4
2	**Censer Bloom**. Placed within 6" of the noisiest survivor.	d3
3	**Thornhound**. A full pack.	3

D6	ARRIVES	NUMBER
5	**Strangler Vine**. Grows at the Lair nearest the noisiest survivor.	1
6	**Rootmaw**	1

D6	ARRIVES	NUMBER
4	**Thorn Matriarch**. With a Thornhound at her heel (add one Thornhound).	1
5	**The Stalk**	1
6	**The Choir**. If The Choir is already on the table, roll again.	1

The creatures

Husk

Hollowed people, walking because the roots tell them to.

M	F	H	A	Init	Dread	Infect	Senses
4"	2	1	0	0	-	1	12"

HUNTER · ARRIVES D3+1 · 1 XP

- **Grasping.** A survivor that starts its activation in contact with a Husk has –2" Move.
- **Brood.** Husks that arrive together act as one brood, each activating separately.

They still wear their work clothes. Some of them still carry their keys. The Blight fills them like water fills a jug, and leaves just enough of the person to know the way home.

Thornhound

Dogs, once. Now thorn, sinew and hunger.

M	F	H	A	Init	Dread	Infect	Senses
8"	3	2	1	3	-	-	18"

HUNTER · ARRIVES 2 · 1 XP

- **Thorned Hide.** A survivor that loses a Fight against a Thornhound takes 1 extra hit (armour applies).
- **Pack.** +1 die to Fight for each other Thornhound in contact with the same target.

The Blight took the strays first. The thorns grow inward as well as out; you can hear them whimpering before they charge.

Lantern Moth Swarm

A cloud of pale wings and cold light.

M	F	H	A	Init	Dread	Infect	Senses
6"	2	3	0	2	1	-	24"

SWARM · ARRIVES 1 · 2 XP

- **Flying.** Ignores terrain when moving.
- **Choking Dust.** Any survivor that loses Health to the swarm is also Shaken.
- **Weak to Fire.** Fire weapons cause double Damage. Shooting at it with anything else: –1 die.

They come to light and to sound, which is all a survivor is. The dust gets into your lungs and shows you things.

Strangler Vine

A knot of grey tendrils that waits.

M	F	H	A	Init	Dread	Infect	Senses
0"	3	3	1	1	-	1	3"

GUARDIAN · ARRIVES 1 · 1 XP

- **Rooted.** Never moves. Fights any model within 3" (pick the noisiest).
- **Grapple.** A survivor that loses Health to it is Held: it can't move until it spends an action and passes a Fight test (1).
- **Weak to Fire.** Fire weapons cause double Damage.

Placed at doorways and stairwells as though someone planted them there. Perhaps someone did.

Censer Bloom

A swollen bulb that breathes out spores.

M	F	H	A	Init	Dread	Infect	Senses
0"	0	2	0	1	-	-	6"

GUARDIAN · ARRIVES D3 · 1 XP

- **Burst.** When it is hit, or a survivor makes 2+ Noise within 6" of it, it bursts: remove it and leave a 3" spore cloud until the end of the next round. Every model in the cloud tests for Blight (1–2: +1 Blight).
- **Harmless Otherwise.** It never activates. It counts for the Din like any creature.

They pulse slowly, in time with something. Burn them from a distance or walk very, very softly.

Rootmaw

Something under the tarmac with a mouth like a drain.

M	F	H	A	Init	Dread	Infect	Senses
6"	4	3	2	2	1	1	8"

AMBUSHER · ARRIVES 1 · 2 XP

- **Burrow.** Starts off the table at the nearest Lair. Emerges as an Ambusher.
- **Drag Under.** If it wins a Fight by 3 or more, the loser is taken Down at once.

The ground goes soft before it comes. Old hands listen for the gravel shifting.

The Stalk

Too tall. Too thin. Always just behind the last one in line.

M	F	H	A	Init	Dread	Infect	Senses
6"	4	4	1	4	2	1	24"

STALKER · ARRIVES 1 · 3 XP

- **Long Arms.** Fights enemies up to 2" away.
- **Wrong Angles.** Shooting at it from more than 6" away: −1 die.
- **Takes the Lost.** If it takes a survivor Down, it carries it 6" away at once.

Nobody has seen it walk. People see it standing, then see it closer.

Thorn Matriarch

The mother of the pack, swollen with seed-pods.

M	F	H	A	Init	Dread	Infect	Senses
7"	4	4	2	3	1	1	18"

HUNTER · ARRIVES 1 · 3 XP

- **Thorned Hide.** A survivor that loses a Fight against her takes 1 extra hit (armour applies).
- **Call the Pack.** Thornhounds within 12" of her get +1 die to Fight.
- **Seed-pods.** When she is slain, place a Loot token where she fell: it is always Amber.

Hunters who have seen her den say it is lined with collars.

The Choir

A cathedral of fused bodies, singing to the Deep Root.

M	F	H	A	Init	Dread	Infect	Senses
3"	5	8	2	5	3	2	24"

HORROR · ARRIVES 1 · 5 XP

- **The Song.** At the start of each round, every survivor within 12" tests Nerve (1) or is Shaken.
- **Conductor.** Husks within 12" get +1 die to Fight and +1" Move.
- **Vast.** It Fights every survivor in contact, rolling separately for each. It can't be pushed or Held.
- **Weak to Fire.** Fire weapons cause double Damage.

The song has words. Survivors who learn them don't come home, or come home and stop speaking.

Hollowed

A survivor who reached 12 Blight. Uses their Move, Fight +1 and Health +1, armour 1, and keeps their Gifts. Hunts by Noise. It remembers its old Refuge, and goes for them first if it can see them.

The Hollowed return. Whenever an Encounter roll is made in a campaign raid and the campaign has Hollowed who haven't been laid to rest, roll a die first. On a 6, one of them

(pick at random) answers instead of the Encounter. A Hollowed that is slain is laid to rest and never returns.

The Gardeners

People who tend the Blight on purpose. They fight as a third party, like creatures, using the **Tender** behaviour. Roll on the **Congregation** table when a scenario or event brings them.

D6	ARRIVES	NUMBER
1-2	**Gardener Tender**. A pruning party.	d3+1
3	**Gardener Tender**. A full working party.	d3+2
4	**Seed-Bearer**. With d3 Tenders.	1
5	**Hymnwarden**. With d3 Tenders.	1
6	**The Verdant Mother**. With 2 Tenders and a Seed-Bearer.	1

Gardener Tender

Hooded, barefoot, a pruning hook in each hand.

M	F	H	A	Init	Dread	Infect	Senses
5"	3	2	1	2	-	-	18"

TENDER · ARRIVES D3+1 · 2 XP

- **Grafting.** A survivor taken Down by a Gardener gains +1 Blight.
- **Faithful.** Gardeners have Nerve 3 for any rule that needs one, and never Rout. They don't take Dread tests.

They smile when they work. They call the Blight "the Garden" and survivors "the unplanted".

Seed-Bearer

Carries a jar of seed-glass against the chest like a child.

M	F	H	A	Init	Dread	Infect	Senses
5"	2	2	0	2	-	-	18"

TENDER · ARRIVES 1 · 3 XP

- **Sow.** At the end of each of its activations, place a 2" patch of Spore terrain in contact with it.
- **The Jar.** When slain, it drops an Amber Loot token. Breaking the jar (a Crit against it) also makes a 3" spore cloud on the spot.

Seed-glass, gathered every Glassfall from gutters and car roofs, carried to wherever the growth is thin.

Hymnwarden

Sings the Choir's note through a mouth grown over with moss.

M	F	H	A	Init	Dread	Infect	Senses
4"	3	3	1	3	1	-	18"

TENDER · ARRIVES 1 · 3 XP

- **Counter-song.** Gardeners within 6" get +1 die to Fight. Survivors within 6" roll –1 die to Nerve tests.
- **Hush the Unplanted.** Survivors within 6" can't use Command Voice, Calm Voice or Last Rites.

The Hymnwardens learned the Choir's song by heart. Some say the Choir taught them; some say it's the other way round.

The Verdant Mother

Crowned in living growth. She remembers your name.

M	F	H	A	Init	Dread	Infect	Senses
4"	4	6	2	4	2	2	24"

TENDER · ARRIVES 1 · 5 XP

- **Blessing.** At the start of each round, one survivor within 8" (the one with most Blight) tests Nerve (2). Fail: +1 Blight, and they move 3" towards her.
- **Mother of the Grove.** While she stands, Gardeners re-roll failed Fight dice that show a 1.
- **Bloom-crowned.** Husks within 12" of her are Gardeners for every rule: they go for the Touched and never attack Gardeners.

Before the Glass she was a hospice nurse. She says she is still easing people's passing. Most Congregations have one. None of them are the same woman.

PART FOUR

Raids

Setting up a Raid

1. Table about 3' × 3' (or 4' × 4' for 7+ survivors a side), dense with ruins, wrecks and Blight growth. Mark at least three patches of Spore terrain.
2. Each Refuge deploys within 6" of opposite table edges. The other two edges are Blight edges.
3. Place two Lairs (a burrow, a nest, a split in the road) in the two corners not touching your deployment zones' centres, or roll a die for each corner and use the two highest.
4. Place 5 Loot tokens: one each in turn, more than 6" from any deployment zone and 4" from each other.
5. Draw Reloads from the Refuge stores to load guns and fill pockets (see Ammunition).

Then make an Encounter roll on the **Lesser** table for each creature the scenario says is **lurking**, and place them at the Lairs.

Roll for Initiative and begin.

Ending the battle

The scenario says how long the battle lasts and who wins. A Refuge that Routs loses. Survivors still on the table at the end keep what they carry; Down survivors' Loot is lost.

Scenarios

The Cache

A sealed supply cache sits at the heart of a dead street. Both Refuges want it.

Rounds: 6 · **Lurking:** 1

Set-up. Standard set-up, and:

- Place the Cache (the objective) in the centre of the table.

Special rules.

- The Cache can't be moved. A survivor in contact may Use it (Wits test, 2) to crack it open: it becomes 2 Loot tokens on the spot.

Victory.

- At the end of round 6, the Refuge with more standing survivors within 3" of the Cache (or the Cache's spot) wins.
- If neither, the Refuge that carried off more Loot wins. Otherwise it's a draw.
- A Refuge that Routs or withdraws loses.

Rewards.

- Winner: +5 Salvage.

The Bloom Heart

A pulsing heart of Blight has grown over a crossroads. Burn it and the street is clean for a season. Harvest it and the Amber is yours.

Rounds: 6 · **Lurking:** 2

Set-up. Standard set-up, and:

- Place the Heart (a 3" growth) in the centre. It is Spore terrain.

Special rules.

- Burn: a Fire weapon attack that hits the Heart, or three Use actions by survivors in contact (any Refuge), burns it. The Refuge that finishes it gains the Burner's reward.
- Harvest: a survivor in contact may Use (Wits test, 1) to take an Amber Loot token (at most 3 in total). Each harvest makes 1 Noise.
- Each round the Heart still stands, add 2 dice to the Din.

Victory.

- The Refuge that burns the Heart wins. If nobody does, the Refuge with more Amber carried off wins. Otherwise a draw.

Rewards.

- Burner: +8 Salvage and the street is clean (the next raid ignores Spore terrain).
- Amber harvested is kept as Loot (always Amber).

Signal in the Static

A radio that still works, in a world where the Hush kills electronics. It's worth more than a dozen guns.

Rounds: 6 · **Lurking:** 1

Set-up. Standard set-up, and:

- Place the Radio in the centre.

Special rules.

- A survivor in contact may Use to pick up the Radio. While carrying it they move −2" and can't Sprint. If they go Down it drops in contact.
- The Radio crackles: its carrier always counts as making at least 1 Noise.
- A survivor carrying it off their own table edge removes it from play.

Victory.

- The Refuge that carries the Radio off their edge, or holds it at the end of round 6, wins. Otherwise a draw.

Rewards.

- Winner gains the Radio: before each future raid, roll a die; on 4+ you may re-roll your first Initiative roll.

Someone in the Weeds

A survivor is trapped in the Overgrowth, calling for help. Whoever reaches them first gains a new member.

Rounds: 6 · **Lurking:** 1

Set-up. Standard set-up, and:

- Place the Stranger in the centre. They have the base profile and are Held by roots.

Special rules.

- A survivor in contact may Use (Fight or Wits test, 2) to free the Stranger. Once free, the Stranger moves with that survivor (stays in contact) and can't fight.
- The Stranger is a target like any survivor: 2 Health, no armour. If Down, they're lost.
- Free the Stranger and get them off your table edge to rescue them.

Victory.

- The Refuge that rescues the Stranger wins. Otherwise a draw.

Rewards.

- Winner: the Stranger joins the Refuge free, without an Errand. Roll on the Stranger table for their background, or pick any background that costs 20 Salvage or less.

The Stranger (d6). 1 Office Worker · 2 Student · 3 Waitress · 4 Courier · 5 Labourer · 6 any background costing 20 or less

Night Raid

Raiding by dark: harder to be seen, harder to see what's coming.

Rounds: 6 · **Lurking:** 1 · **Din:** +2 dice

Set-up. Standard set-up, and:

- As The Cache, at night.

Special rules.

- Dark: nobody can see or shoot further than 12" (Lanterns 18"; Glowcap Eyes ignore this).
- Every Din roll gets +2 dice. The night is when the Blight is awake.
- Lantern Moth Swarms hunt light: a survivor with a Lantern counts as making +1 Noise for them.

Victory.

- As The Cache.

Rewards.

- Winner: +5 Salvage and +1 Loot roll.

Overrun

A district is falling to the growth. Grab what you can and get out before it closes.

Rounds: 6 · **Lurking:** 3

Set-up. Standard set-up, and:

- No objective. Place 7 Loot tokens instead of 5.

Special rules.

- From round 3, make an Encounter roll at the end of every round as well as the Din roll.
- Survivors may leave the table from any edge (they're safe, with whatever they carry).

Victory.

- The Refuge that gets more Loot off the table wins. Equal: a draw. Routing doesn't lose on its own.

Rewards.

- Each Refuge: +1 Salvage per survivor that left the table standing.

The Planting

A Congregation of Gardeners is sowing a new Bloom Heart in the middle of the street. If it takes root, the street is lost. Both Refuges want them stopped, and both want what they're carrying.

Rounds: 6 · **Lurking:** 0

Set-up. Standard set-up, and:

- Mark the Planting (a 3" circle) in the centre. Roll once on the Congregation table and place them within 6" of it; there is always at least one Seed-Bearer (add one if the roll gave none).
- No creatures lurk at the start. The Din works as normal.

Special rules.

- The Rite: at the end of each round, if any Seed-Bearer or the Verdant Mother is within 3" of the Planting, the Rite advances by 1. Keep count.
- At Rite 4, the Heart takes root: the Planting becomes Spore terrain, every survivor within 6" gains +1 Blight, and make a Greater Encounter roll.
- Gardeners treat the Planting as a Lair (they stay within 12" of it).

Victory.

- If the Heart takes root, nobody wins: a draw, and both Refuges lose 1 Salvage each to the panic at home.
- Otherwise, the Refuge that slew more Gardeners (Seed-Bearers count double) wins. Equal: the Refuge that carried off more Loot.

Rewards.

- Winner: +6 Salvage, and the jars: +1 Amber for each Seed-Bearer the winner slew.
- Every Refuge: each Gardener slain is worth its XP to the survivor who slew it.

Gardeners. Roll once on the Congregation table at set-up.

PART FIVE

The Campaign

Founding a Refuge

- Start with **150 Salvage**.
- Pick a **Home** (below).
- Recruit **4–8 survivors**, paying each background's cost. No more than 2 of any one background.
- Choose one survivor as **Leader**.
- Buy weapons, armour and kit from the Market. Each survivor carries up to 2 weapons (Molotovs and bombs don't count), 1 armour and 2 pieces of kit. Everyone also has an Improvised weapon and Thrown junk for free.
- At founding, no Rare items and at most 2 Uncommon items across the whole Refuge.
- Buy **Reloads** at 4 Salvage each.
- The stores start with 1 Ration per survivor and 1 Meds, plus anything from your Home. Salvage left over stays in the stores.

Homes

Every Refuge has a **Home**: its base of operations, wherever four walls (or a tarpaulin) can be held against the Blight. A campsite in the park, an RV with the windows boarded, a flat on the sixth floor, a corner shop, a shopping mall, an office block, the local pub. The Home is picked at founding. It sets how many survivors the Refuge can hold, gives a perk, and has a drawback, and some Homes are much harder to keep warm or clear of growth when the Seasons turn.

HOME	HOLDS	PERK	DRAWBACK
Campsite	8	Travelling light: start with 15 extra Salvage (nothing to fix up). Break camp: once per Season you may move, and your next raid's deployment edge is yours to choose.	Canvas walls: Heat in the Silence costs half as much again.
RV	6	On the move: choose your deployment edge after your opponent. The engine sometimes turns over in the Long Days: once that Season, one survivor may start a raid 6" further on.	Cramped: holds only 6 survivors.
Apartment	8	Other people's cupboards: the rest of the block is still being picked over. +1 Ration each Upkeep.	Thin walls: the neighbours' Noise is yours. Spring burning costs 1 extra Salvage.

HOME	HOLDS	PERK	DRAWBACK
Corner Shop	8	Stockroom and till: start with 3 extra Rations, and sell gear back at the Market for its full cost.	Plate glass: survivors who were Laid Up rest badly. A Laid Up survivor misses the next raid on a 1–2 again (roll each Aftermath).
Shopping Mall	14	Plenty of room: holds 14, and starts with 10 Salvage, 2 Rations and 1 Meds extra.	Draughty and full of doors: Heat in the Silence and burning in the Waking both cost double.
Office Block	10	Meeting room: three Errands each turn instead of two. Somebody still keeps minutes.	Glass curtain walls: Heat in the Silence costs half as much again.
The Local	8	Everyone ends up at the pub: recruits cost 2 Salvage less. Dutch courage: once per raid, re-roll a failed Nerve test.	Last orders: each Upkeep, roll a die; on a 1 someone got into the cellar and 1 Ration is gone.
Church	10	Sanctuary: once per raid, one survivor may re-roll a failed Nerve test. Ward-signs on the doors: survivors of this Refuge test Dread as if it were 1 lower in their first raid of each Season.	Stone and stained glass: Heat in the Silence costs half as much again.
Supermarket	12	Back stock: start with 4 extra Rations; Upkeep costs 1 Ration less each turn.	Big and cold: Heat in the Silence costs half as much again.
Police Station	10	Evidence locker: start with 3 Reloads; Reloads cost 3 Salvage instead of 4.	Everyone knows where it is: Rival Refuges raiding near you deploy first and choose edges.
Hospital Wing	10	Ward: start with 2 extra Meds. One free Casualty re-roll in each Aftermath.	The Touched come here to die: once per Season, a Husk brood lurks at an extra Lair in your next raid.
Allotments	8	Growing season: +1 Ration each Upkeep (+2 in the Long Days, none in the Silence).	Sheds and polytunnels: Heat in the Silence costs half as much again, and the soil is where the growth wakes first: +1 Salvage to burn in the Waking.
Tower Block	12	Lookouts: +1 die to every Initiative roll.	Ninety stairs: survivors who were Laid Up need a Meds or miss a second raid.
Garage	8	Workshop: Scrap weapons never Jam for you, and cost half (round up).	Fumes: survivors living here start each raid with 1 Noise.
School	12	Lessons: in each Aftermath one survivor of your choice gains +1 Experience.	Too many windows: Heat in the Silence costs half as much again.

Playing a Congregation (draft)

> *This is a first sketch for v0.2.0. It isn't in the app's Refuge builder yet; play it by hand and tell us what breaks.*

A player can run a **Congregation of Gardeners** instead of a Refuge. They fight raids like a Refuge (they activate in initiative order, take Nerve tests for Rout, run an Aftermath) but play by the Garden's rules.

Founding a Congregation

- **150 Salvage**, 4–8 members, as a Refuge. Backgrounds are who they were before; every member starts **Touched**: 3 Blight, with one Gift and one Mark rolled at founding.
- One member is the **Verdant Mother** (instead of a Leader): +1 Nerve, and the Mother's Blessing below.
- **Home: the Grove.** Holds 10. It never needs fuel (the growth keeps it warm) and grows +1 Ration each Upkeep, but no Refuge will trade with you: you can't use the Market except to buy Common melee weapons and kit. Firearms come only from Loot.
- Members can't buy armour above Armour 1. They prefer the growth's protection: **Thornskin** and **Pollen Veil** may be chosen instead of rolled when they reach Bloomed.

In a raid

- **Faithful**: members never Panic, and the Congregation tests Rout only when three-quarters of it is Down.
- **Grafting**: an enemy survivor a member takes Down gains +1 Blight.
- **One with the Garden**: creatures that hunt by Noise ignore members with no Noise. Members don't roll for Spore terrain.
- **The Mother's Blessing**: once per round, a member within 6" of the Verdant Mother may add one extra Blight die to a pool (and its 1s still add Blight).

The cost

- Members gain Blight faster: every Aftermath, each member who took part rolls a die; on a 1–2, +1 Blight.
- A member who Turns doesn't become Hollowed. They walk into the Throat at the end of the raid and are gone, and the Congregation gains 1 Amber.
- **Rescue**: an enemy Refuge that takes a member Down may try to bring them home after the raid: on a 5+ they join that Refuge (with their Blight), shaken but free.

The Campaign

A campaign is a run of raids between Refuges. After every raid, each Refuge works through the **Aftermath**, then runs **Errands** before the next raid.

Aftermath

1. **Casualties**: everyone who was Down rolls on the Casualty table.
2. **Experience**: award XP. Every 5 XP is an Advance.
3. **The Blight**: roll Gifts and Marks for thresholds crossed. Survivors at 12 are lost.
4. **Loot**: roll on the Loot table for each Loot token carried home, then add the scenario's rewards.
5. **Ammunition**: Reloads spent come off the stores.
6. **Upkeep**: meet the Season's need (fuel, spoilage), then feed everyone.

ROLL	RESULT	EFFECT
1 or less	**Dead**	Gone. Their gear goes back to the stores.
2	**Lasting Injury**	Roll on the Injury table.
3	**Infected**	The wound took root: +2 Blight.
4	**Laid Up**	Misses the next raid while they recover.
5–6	**Patched Up**	No lasting harm.

- Every survivor who was Down at the end of the battle rolls a die.
- Finished (taken Out while Down): −1. Hard to Kill: +1. A Doctor who wasn't Down: +1 to one roll.
- Spend 1 Meds to re-roll a result (once per survivor).

ROLL	RESULT	EFFECT
1	**Old Wound**	−1 Health (minimum 1).
2	**Limp**	−1 Move.
3	**Shaky Hands**	−1 Shoot (minimum 1).
4	**Nightmares**	−1 Nerve (minimum 1).
5	**Busted Arm**	−1 Fight (minimum 1).
6	**Hardened**	A scar and a story: +1 Nerve.

EXPERIENCE	XP
Took part and lived	+1
Each enemy survivor taken Down	+1
Each creature slain: its XP value (1–5)	creature's XP
Each Loot carried off	+1
Held or carried the objective at the end	+1
Leader, if the Refuge won	+1

ROLL	RESULT	EFFECT
1–2	**Hardened**	+1 to Fight, Shoot, Wits or Nerve (your choice, max 5).
3–5	**Learned**	A new skill from one of the background's two lists.
6	**Tough as Nails**	+1 Health (max 4) or +1" Move (max 7), or take either result above.

ROLL	RESULT	EFFECT
1	**Junk**	+2 Salvage.
2	**Salvage**	+d6 Salvage.
3	**Ammunition**	+d3 Reloads.
4	**Tins**	+d3 Rations.
5	**Medicine**	+1 Meds.
6	**Amber**	+1 Amber. The carrier rolls a die: on a 1, +1 Blight.

Upkeep

[[upkeep]]

Seasons

[[seasons]]

Errands

Between raids each Refuge may run **two** errands (an Office Block allows three). They come back after the next Aftermath, and unused ones don't carry over. A **Trade** errand is one trip to the Market, however much is bought and sold on it; each survivor **Recruited** is an errand of its own. Spending at founding is the founding budget, not errands.

ERRAND	WHAT IT DOES
Trade	One trip to the Market: buy and sell as much as you like on the one errand (Common always; Uncommon on a 3+, Rare on a 5+, one roll per item). Sell gear for half its cost; sell Amber for 8 Salvage; buy Reloads.
Recruit	Hire one survivor for their background's cost, up to what your Home holds. Each new survivor is a separate errand.
Scavenge	Send one survivor who isn't Laid Up. Roll a die: 1 they come back hurt (Laid Up), 2–4 +d3 Salvage, 5–6 +d3 Rations.
Purge	Needs a Doctor or Paramedic and 1 Meds. One survivor loses 1 Blight on a 4+ (Gifts and Marks stay).

ERRAND	WHAT IT DOES
Drink the Amber	Spend 1 Amber: a survivor gains +1 Blight. If that crosses a threshold, choose the Gift instead of rolling (the Mark is still rolled).
Build	Pay for a Refuge improvement.

Improvements

[[table:improvements]]

Standings

A win scores 3, a draw 1, a loss 0. Ties are broken by total Experience across the roster.

REFERENCE

Appendix

Quick Reference

The round

1. **Initiative**: each Refuge rolls its Leader's Wits; creatures use their fixed Initiative. Highest first; creatures win ties.
2. **Activations**: one model per side, in order, cycling, until everyone has gone.
3. **End Phase**: the Din, Spores, Rout, clear Noise.

Two actions each

- Move · Sprint (M+3, 1 Noise, no Shoot) · Shoot · Fight (Charge +1) · Aim (+1) · Reload · Search (Wits) · Hide · Use · Steady · Gift
- One attack per activation. Shaken: one action, then clear.

Dice

- Every 4+ is a success, every 6 a Crit. Below 1 die: one die, needs a 6.
- Armour: 4+ blocks a hit; Crits need a 6 (5+ with a helmet).
- Blight dice: up to your tier; each 1 is +1 Blight.

Shooting modifiers

- Aim +1 · Long range −1 · Cover −1 / −2 · Into a fight −1

Noise

- 0 Quiet · 1 Loud · 2 Very loud · 3 Deafening. Din: roll total Noise (max 12). One 6: Lesser. Two+ 6s: Greater.

Draft History

v0.2.1 · 2026-10-24 · Bolts

- Crossbows no longer have endless ammunition: each shot uses a Bolt, and loading the next is a Reload action.

- Bolts are a new store, drawn at set-up like Reloads; unused bolts come home, fired ones are gone.
- Make bolts at home: 5 Bolts for 1 Salvage, without an Errand (also at founding). Bows still gather their arrows back.

v0.2.0 · 2026-10-24 · The Gardeners

- The Gardeners: lore, four new third-party units (Gardener Tender, Seed-Bearer, Hymnwarden, the Verdant Mother) and the Tender behaviour.
- New Congregation encounter table, with escorts.
- New scenario: The Planting. Stop the Rite before a Bloom Heart takes root.
- Playing a Congregation (draft): founding, the Grove, in-raid rules and costs. Not in the app's builder yet.
- The Hollowed return: on an Encounter roll in a campaign, a 6 brings back one of the campaign's Turned survivors instead; slain Hollowed are laid to rest.

v0.1.2 · 2026-10-24 · The Stranger

- Someone in the Weeds: the Stranger joins the winner free in the Aftermath, without an Errand.
- New d6 Stranger table: 1 Office Worker, 2 Student, 3 Waitress, 4 Courier, 5 Labourer, 6 any background costing 20 or less.

v0.1.1 · 2026-10-24 · Errands clarified

- Errands: two between raids (three in an Office Block), reset by the Aftermath; unused errands don't carry over.
- A Trade errand is one trip to the Market, covering all buying and selling (gear, Reloads, Amber) that turn.
- Each survivor recruited is a separate errand.

v0.1.0 · 2026-10-24 · First draft

- Core d6 dice-pool system: roll a pool, every 4+ is a success, every 6 a Crit.
- Blight dice, the 0–12 Blight track, 12 Gifts and 12 Marks, and Turning at 12.
- Alternating activations in initiative order, with creature broods taking their own place in the order.
- Noise per action, the Din roll in the End Phase, and creatures drawn to the loudest survivor.
- Limited ammunition: magazines, Reloads drawn from the Refuge stores, Jams on Scrap weapons.
- 20 backgrounds, 24 skills in 6 lists, the Market (weapons, armour, kit).
- Starter bestiary of 9 creatures, Lesser and Greater Encounter tables.
- 6 scenarios built around two Refuges contesting an objective.
- Campaign: Aftermath (casualties, injuries, experience, advances, Blight, loot, upkeep) and Errands.
- Four Seasons (the Waking, the Long Days, Glassfall, the Silence), each changing raids and asking a survival need of every Refuge.
- 15 Homes (bases of operations, from a campsite or an RV to a shopping mall), each with capacity, perk and drawback.

- The World: setting and lore, modern-day and Lovecraftian.