

-WORDS TO THE MUD-

What is this?

A GM-less, one page RPG about fighters, grief and honouring the dead, in a Grimdark fantasy world, where wars are constant, heroes are few, regrets and bloody deeds follow a person, all the way till their death. Inspired by the First Law book series by Joe Abercrombie.

Who are we?

You play as fighters, warriors and sort of mercenaries who've ended up working in a group, known as a **'dozen'**. You've fought in battles, raids and sieges, together and generally, your days are spent, travelling, fighting, surviving. You trekked and fought yesterday, you will trek and fight today, and probably do the same again tomorrow. But... yesterday your group's leader, your chief, died.

To honour them, you have buried them and sent them **'back to mud'**. With the burial complete the time has come to say some words over the grave, and share tales of the fights you've fought, the lessons you've learned and to speak aloud how you really felt about the chief. Each of you in turn will speak your words to the mud.

Time: 45 mins - 1.5 hours

Number of Players: 2-4

Themes: Memory, Death, Grief, War and Violence,

Tools needed: A small token, some d6 (1 for each player+1 that is different in appearance from the other), paper and pencil

How do we do this?

You will generate individual characters and a shared chief, using the tables below. You will then each generate the structure of an adventure/event from your time under this chief. Each player takes turns to tell their tale, speaking their words to the mud.

There is one **SPEAKER** who tells each tale, other players become **LISTENERS**. The **SPEAKER** can accept or prompt suggestions from **LISTENERS** but the **SPEAKER** is the final authority on what is true or not in their narrative. Throughout a tale whenever complication is reached every player rolls a d6, with the **SPEAKER** rolling 2 d6, 1 for them and another for the chief.

For scoring, 1-3 is considered a **Knockback** with 4-6 being considered a **Push Ahead**. The **SPEAKER** then moves the token along the Adventure meter, +1 for every **Push Ahead**, -1 for every **Knockback**

**If players prefer to use a GM, the GM can take responsibility for generating shared content (THE CHIEF and TALES) and guiding SPEAKERS through their tales using traditional GM methods, eg: playing other roles, describing scenes or by asking questions to generate the content such as "How big was the castle?" / "Did it have a name?" / "How did you react to X?"*

FIGHTER'S NAME GENERATOR - (use to generate the names of Player characters and the Chief)

Use these options as inspiration for earned "Names". The words provided in the tables are suggestive. Players can choose any word that is even remotely associated with the prompt. It is really up to the player themselves whether a name matches the roll they made. Other players can offer suggestions to play, rearrange, shorten, or informalise the name as you see fit, but ultimately each player rolls and chooses their own name.

The Player Character's name should be drawn from 2 columns. (We suggest starting with column 2+3.)

The Chief's name should be drawn from all 4 columns. Where each player, oldest to youngest, can roll 1 d6 to decide the chief's name. It is possible for the chief to have two different names.

#	1 - Title	2 - Descriptor	3 - Thing / Actions	4 - Of / In / From	Examples for the chief : (3, 1, 4, 1) - Gorm Black Tree of the Valley (4, 2, 5, 5) - Four Angry Dogs (6, 6, 6, 6) - The Screaming Hand of Morning
1	A First Name	Colour	Clothing / Food	A place / Place Name	
2	-	Size	Action / Attack / Movement	-	
3	A First Name	Texture/Sensation	Object / Weapon	Family Name	
4	A number	Emotion	Flora/Vegetation	-	
5	-	Flavour/Scent	Animal or Animal Part	-	
6	"The"	Noise	Human Body Part	A Season / Time of Day	

YOU AND THE DOZEN - (Each player rolls for their own character)

You are one of a group of fighters and warriors, You will each have the following aspects:

A NAME

You've earned this name through your deeds and adventures. How did you earn it? Do you like it?

A ROLE

Everyone in the dozen has a role within the group. This informs your actions/duties within a tale.

An ATTRIBUTE

How would anyone tell you apart from your companions?

A REASON (for joining)

Why or how did you end up in this group?

A GOAL

How do you want to be perceived by those around you? What kind of reputation are you trying to build for yourself?

YOUR CHARACTER

	Your role	Attribute	Reason	* I try to be...
1	The Scout	Clothing	I had nowhere else to go	Trustworthy
2	The Spy	Weapon / Tool	Fighting is all I've known	Friendly
3	The Friendly One	Body part	I'm paying off a debt	Honest
4	The Tactician	Unique skill	I needed money	Despised
5	The Negotiator	Silence / Talkativeness	I owed the chief my life	Feared
6	The Brawler	A past event	Not much use at anything else	Safe

When telling a story the **SPEAKER** can invoke any aspects of their character to gain a +1 to their die, but can only invoke each aspect once per story. "I'm a spy, and I knew of a secret weakness"

LISTENERS can invoke one of their aspects for +1 to their own die roll when another **SPEAKER** is telling their story. But they can only do this once per tale.

-WORDS TO THE MUD-

THE CHIEF - (oldest to youngest players roll for Chiefs Aspects. Each player rolls for their own Private and Secret Thoughts)

THE NAME *

The Chief's name should be drawn from all 4 columns above. Where each player, oldest to youngest, can roll 1 d6 to decide the chief's name. It is possible for the chief to have two different names.

How were they KILLED

How appropriate, likely, or unsatisfying is this death?

Where is the BURIAL SITE / NEARBY

Does the place have a name?
How fitting is it that they are buried here?

PUBLICLY they were...

A reputation, known among other fighters and warriors across the land.

PRIVATELY they were...

Each player rolls for this, as they will have each insight into the private life of the chief...

SECRETLY I... Them

Each player rolls separately for this.
How did you feel about the chief secretly?

Players do not have to share their private or secret opinions, but it should affect the tale they tell.

	Killed in/ by	Burial	Nearby	Publicly	Privately*	Secretly I...*
1	A long illness	On a hill	An empty plain	Feared	Friendly	Admired
2	A Brawl	In a bog	Surrounded by trees	Respected	Cautious	Worshipped
3	A Duel	In a forest	A cave	Ambitious	Mad	Never trusted
4	A Battle	In a valley	a lake	Fair	Cunning	Always Trusted
5	An avoidable accident	The base of mountain	Cliffs	Mysterious	Afraid	Loved
6	Painfully, Causes Unknown	Halfway up a mountain	standing stones	Celebrated	Ruthless	Hated

Before tales are told players can elaborate on any of the above, through discussion and questioning. Try to avoid correcting or dictating to each other, remember that personalities and actions can contradict, and two interpretations of the same event can exist/ If two players have two separate answers, such as the name of hill, how an event happened then it's possible that both things are true at once.

Throughout a story, the SPEAKER, rolls for the actions of the chief, using a specific CHIEF dices

The SPEAKER MUST invoke at least 2 Aspects of the Chief at some point in their story. Their NAME, and one of their REPUTATIONS. These **MUST** be invoked evenly, in opposite ways, Positively adding +2 to their roll, or Negatively subtracting -2 from their roll. Highlighting where the chief's actions were helpful, or not so helpful... The SPEAKER must weave these results into the narrative.

TALES TOLD AND WORDS SAID

Each tale comes in 5 parts or beats. Players can add any details they wish, but ultimately the shortest tale might only be 5 sentences long.

A THEME:

A purpose and relevance for the story at the burial site.

THE BEGINNING:

A setup to what was going on with the dozen at the time.

An EVENTUAL complication:

Something that happened to cause problems.
How did the group/chief resolve it?

A LATER complication

Another problem, towards the end of the event!
How did the group/chief resolve it?

An AFTERWARD, consequence

What were we left with and how hard was it to cope

#	A time when the chief...*	It began with...	But, eventually ...	Therefore, later...	Afterwards...
1	Saved your life	A siege	Betrayal	A retreat	Exhausted
2	Taught you a lesson	An ambush (by us)	Bad planning	A hasty retreat	Lost a lot of respect
3	Showed you respect	A raid on a village/camp	Bad information	Separated	Injured for
4	Gave you a new name	A negotiation	Outnumbered	A grievous injury	Important person killed
5	Nearly killed you	An assassination (by us)	One very tough enemy	Trapped	On the run
6	Needed saving by you	A long Journey	An awkward conversation	Imprisoned	Everything was burned

NB - Each of the current players' characters should be present in the story, and should all survive the tale.

SPEAKERS can ask, or LISTENERS can offer details, "Where were you when this happened? What did you do?" etc. SPEAKERS should feel free to invent other characters and details (using the tables above) to add to your tale.

THE WEIGHT OF THE PAST - How did the story above actually happen

To START place a tracker between 3 and 4. Whenever the TALE arrives at a new story beat each player rolls a d6. To see how they reacted to that beat. For every **Push Forward** (4-6) move the tracker forward +1. For every **Knockback** (1-3) move the tracker by -1. Each player can describe how they were knocked back or how they pushed ahead. Narratively, Knockbacks are not failures with a harsh death, but obstacles that made the overall task more difficult.

The position of the tracker, after rolling, dictates how each complication unfolds, and how well the group is doing.

0-3 The complication it went against the players - (we had to retreat, we were betrayed, we were trapped)

4-7 The complication was actually in the players' favour - (they had to retreat, they were betrayed, they were trapped)

If the tracker ever moves below 0 or past 7 the tale wraps up immediately and you must roll for 2 consequences. 0 is a loss, with 0 being a catastrophic loss, and 7 being a great victory. Someone should be recording the overall number of victories and losses.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Almost Lost	Lost	Losing	Almost Surviving	Surviving	Winning	Winning	Almost Won

DISCUSSION and DECISION

With the Tales told players must end the game by asking these questions of each other

What will you miss?

What has the world lost?

Were they a good leader?

Will the group stay together or go their separate ways?

Will there be a new leader?

Which of you might that be?