

# M BRIMSTONE

a *game* about *ash* and *rising* from it

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# EVERYTHING IS GONE

That's right. Your phone, your car, your daily stop at your favorite place for coffee is gone. That is all she wrote for the world of man. Everything we had built was burned to the ground in a matter of days when the Dragons came. No one knows what hole they crawled out of, or has any idea where they came from. In the end we only knew that they were more than a match for us.

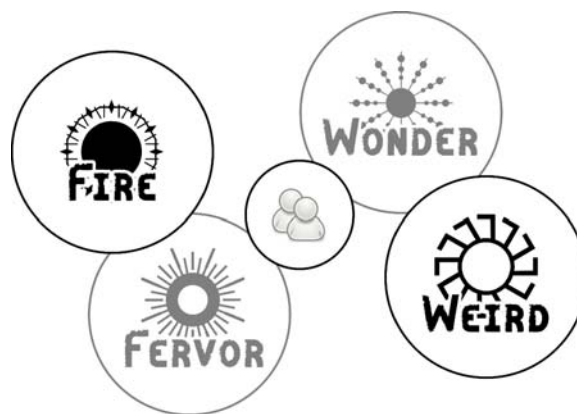
The world is now a place full of ash, the one thing the Dragons left the few that remained. From that point on humanity has survived but never flourished, living in a twilight of what might come. Any attempt to rebuild cities larger than meager townships is met with swift destruction, usually from the fire of those cursed beasts. People toil for their daily bread but never stop dreaming of the golden age now long gone.

However, the Dragons aren't the only force in the ruined world. They are just one of several, and while you will find all are dangerous, some can be bent to your needs.

*Ok, so while the text of the game is going to explain all the rules, I'm a helping voice. When I appear I'm going to offer up advice and ideas to stoke your imagination and fuel your ambition. Just think of me as a spider hanging out by your ear, and if that freaks you out, all the better.*

# THE FORCES OF THE RUINED WORLD

While the Dragons are the most amazing spectacle in the ruined world, they aren't the only new force to shape it. You also won't hear people saying Dragon too much, in general they are just called the Fire. You are also going to encounter the Weird, the Fervor, and the Wonder. These forces are all connected, and can be placed in a diagram like so:



You can say humanity is in the middle and directly connected to Fervor and Wonder, but not Fire and Weird. **Fire** and **Weird** are natural forces of the universe. **Fervor** and **Wonder** are what happens when humans embrace these natural forces. That doesn't tell you much about them, but here are hard rules for what the natural forces mean when you encounter them in the ruined world:

◆ **Fire always arrests or ruins.**

The force of fire can only stop and destroy, nothing else. Dragons are the agents of Fire. When you see a Dragon, you can fight it, but it is always going to stop or ruin.

◆ **Weird always transforms or obscures.**

The force of weird can only alter or hide, nothing else. Demons are the agents of Weird. When you see a Demon, you can fight it, but it is always going to transform or obscure.

The forces of Fervor and Wonder are kept in the heart of man, so their rules are a little more personal in nature. You must follow these when people embrace either Fervor or Wonder (or both):

◆ **Fervor always empowers the body and inspires audacious plans.**

When a person embraces Fervor, they gain physical power but succumb to reckless and daring plans.

◆ **Wonder always empowers the mind and inspires doubt.**

When a person embraces Wonder, they gain mental power but succumb to doubt and distrust.

*These rules are very important to keep in your mind. You will see them again and again in the rules, since they are the basis of the game in many ways. As you play, keep in mind that these are absolutes and can never be broken. Most rules in the game can be adjusted as you play, and you are expected to change them. Don't do that with these.*

*When the player in charge of the game (the Devil) decides your character embraces Fervor or Wonder, you'll be given a tough choice. They will never directly tell you what your character does, but they will make you choose between two interesting options.*

# NEW LEGENDS OF THE RUINED WORLD

This is a game about making stories. Not romance comedy love stories, but epic tales of battle and hardship. It's not that you can't have love or comedy, it just that all that rides above the backbone of blood, sweat, and tears. In this game you'll either take on the role of the Devil or a Hero. The Devil runs the world about the Heroes, and weaves a world full of darkness and wonder.

You are playing Heroes if you aren't the Devil. You aren't going to sit down to a game of Brimstone and tell the tale of some lowly farmer trying to manage his field from year to year. If you play a lowly farmer they won't be a lowly farmer for long, because either they or someone else detected the potential in them to become something special - a legend.

Each player that is taking on the role of Hero needs to pick a card from the deck of Twelve Legends. This card gives your Hero a role in the game. The cards have rules on them, but don't worry about that now. You just need to read the description. The twelve Legends are as follows:

- ◆ **Maverick** [Fighter] I  
The maverick is a fighter that doesn't rely on strength or speed, but uses human ingenuity to succeed. You play a maverick if you want to show the forces of the world man can beat them without help. They have no affinities for any Forces, and earn more Glory in return.
  
- ◆ **Champion** [Fighter] V  
The champion has honed their body to a fine edge, embracing strength and speed to become a better warrior. You play a champion to beat back the forces of the world with pure might. They have an affinity for Fervor, letting them earn more Glory when embracing it.
  
- ◆ **Wizard** [Fighter] IX  
The wizard has opened their mind to the Weird, embracing the enhanced mental powers to become a formidable opponent. You play a wizard to control the forces of the world through the wonder of a new age. They have an affinity for Wonder, letting them earn more Glory when embracing it.
  
- ◆ **Pioneer** [Leader] II  
The pioneer is a leader that relies only on themselves and dreams big enough to get everyone's attention. You play a pioneer to lead men into a brave new world where motivation equals success. They have no affinities for any Forces, and earn more Glory in return.

- ◆ **Luminary** [Leader] VI  
The luminary is a paragon of speed and strength, but does not embrace war. Instead they inspire others to action through their amazing deeds. You play a luminary to lead others into a new world of your vision. They have an affinity for Fervor, letting them earn more Glory when embracing it.
- ◆ **Tycoon** [Leader] X  
The tycoon has worked with the forces of Weird in the world to earn a place above men, exploiting Wonder for power and profit. You play a tycoon to create a new world of men where you can stand on top. They have an affinity for Wonder, letting them earn more Glory when embracing it.
- ◆ **Engineer** [Artisan] III  
The engineer takes what is left of scrap copper and wire, building analog circuits from the ancient times. You play an engineer return the glory of human technology to the world. They have no affinities for any Forces, and earn more Glory in return.
- ◆ **Smith** [Artisan] VII  
The smith has honed their body into a heart of a forge, working metal and stone to force their vision onto the world. You play a smith to build a new beautiful world of castles and keeps like no one has ever seen. They have an affinity for Fervor, letting them earn more Glory when embracing it.
- ◆ **Enchanter** [Artisan] XI  
The enchanter has not just talked with demons, they have learned from them. They use Wonder to enhance and amaze. You play an enchanter to create a new world of Wonder the likes of which has never been known. They have an affinity for Wonder, letting them earn more Glory when embracing it.
- ◆ **Merchant** [Maven] IV  
The merchant doesn't dream of changing the world, just thriving in it by smart buying and selling of goods. You play a merchant to earn more financial success and secure your future in the ruined world. They have no affinities for any Forces, and earn more Glory in return.

◆ **Outlaw** [Maven] VIII

The outlaw isn't a criminal per se, but an expert that has found something they love in the ruined world. You play an outlaw to further hone those skills and become a paragon in the ruined world. They have an affinity for Fervor, letting them earn more Glory when embracing it.

◆ **Oracle** [Maven] XII

The oracle can't see all futures, but they can get a glimpse of what is coming through the veil of the Wonder. You play an oracle to scheme and conspire to build a better future for yourself in the ruined world. They have an affinity for Wonder, letting them earn more Glory when embracing it.

At the core, there are four character types you can choose from and three variants of each. You choose to play a Fighter, a Leader, an Artisan, or a Maven. The first three want to do something about the ruin of the world, and the last simply wants to improve their fit into the current one.

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**Fighters** want to change the world by fighting back the forces that destroy and ruin it.

**Leaders** want to lead humanity back into an age where the glory of society shines once more.

**Artisans** want to shape the world into their vision, creating their art to change the world.

**Mavens** want to improve themselves, securing their place in the ruined world of today.

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You can't assume that Mavens are against the first three types, but instead usually they see them as a tool to be used in their own schemes. Generally they are smart enough to know that real change is unlikely as Fighters, Leaders, and Artisans generally fail at some point.

*There are a lot of types of characters covered by the Legend cards, but don't worry too much if you can't find a perfect fit. It's totally possible that among these there just isn't something that calls out to you. In this case pick one you think you can work with and then talk to the Devil about your problems. Likely you will be able to fix them in the next step.*

# CLAIM YOUR LEGEND

For the players playing Heroes, start with the oldest and go around the table. When your turn comes up, claim a Legend from the deck of Twelve for your own. This is the Legend of the Hero you will play. Yes, this means that if your friend takes Champion then you cannot. No two players can take the same Legend in the same game of Brimstone.

Now that you have taken a Legend for your Hero, you must **claim** it. It isn't enough to take Engineer, name your Hero, and start playing. You need to make the Legend your own, claiming it for yourself. Each Legend is just a vague idea of who your Hero is and lacks real substance. You need to reach within yourself and add that substance to the Hero. Lets go over the method step by step. There are only five, you no need to get all worked up, it is easy! All you will need for this is an index card and a pen or pencil.

1. Create a Concept for your Hero that fits their Legend. If you took the Legend: Champion, perhaps you could create the Concept: "The undefeated Hero of the north." You are allowed a wide latitude to create something that fits your vision here. However, you must always include the word Hero.
2. Choose a simple one word name for your Hero. Don't worry about last names or such details right now, but think about what their friends call them. The Devil may have ideas on what is acceptable here, so consult with them.
3. Record the full title of your Hero on the index card, like so: <rank>: <name>, <legend>, <concept>. For example: *IV: Samuel, Merchant, The Savvy wandering Hero of the golden valley*. You can find the rank listed on the Legend you chose. It is the roman numeral.
4. You also need to create one to three Aspects for your Hero. These are short phrases that describe their qualities. "A heart of gold", "Strength of Olympus", or "Never loses a gamble" are all great Aspects. Negative qualities that still give your Hero advantage are fine too: "Could steal from his own Mother" works.
5. Once you have all created Heros using the first four steps, you have to nominate Advocates. Find the player with the Hero of lowest rank and start with them, going around the table so everyone has a turn. When it is your turn, you nominate another player's Hero to be your Hero's Advocate. This means they hold your Hero is high regard. Talk to that player about what they think their Hero really feels toward yours and record a summary of that. Then ask them about what happened between them that made their hero into an Advocate. Record a summary of that too.

After all this is done, at the bottom of your index card, you place a track for Destiny. Leave space below it for more Destiny tracks. This is just nine open spots. Something like this: [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]. You will fill these with either a -(dash) for Hope, \*(dot) for Zeal, or a /(slash) for Ruin. When Destiny is filled, the Devil will have to create a Crisis for your Hero from it based on both what is happening in the story and a special draw from Fate. Basically you would like it to be full of Zeal and Hope, and no Ruin. That is best for your Hero.

*You can see you have a lot of flexibility here in these steps to tailor a Legend into the Hero you want to play. Step one has the requirement of putting Hero into your concept, but a clever player can skirt that and that is totally allowed. For instance, something like “Odd little girl, a reluctant Hero” works fine, or “Young farm boy of dusting sand planet, rising Hero”.*

*Keep in mind that the world we know is gone, so using references to stuff from our world is a faux pas of the highest order. However, myths and legends from our world persist so feel free to reference stories and ancient myth freely.*

*The more Aspects you create, the more penalized you are by the mechanics. Think of this as gaining flexibility and losing effectiveness, the old jack-of-many-trades trap! Really though, you aren’t screwed just penalized slightly, so no need to cry yet.*

*Advocates are a very important part of play. There are many times the rules will call on an Advocate to decide something about your Hero. In a way, they co-own your Hero as a sort of backseat driver. All aboard the Hero train! Choo choo!*



# BASICS OF PLAY

The play of the game centers on the following ideas: **Ash**, **Dreams**, and **Glory**. Each of these is measured in chips:

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The chips of **Ash are red**, they denote the rule of Fire and the power of Fervor.

The chips of **Dreams are blue**, they mark the rule of Weird and the power of Wonder.

The chips of **Glory are white**, they mark the rise of Humanity and the power of Invention.

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These chips only have meaning in the story when they are drawn from **Fate**. Fate is an opaque bag, cup, or box that holds chips. During play you will be asked to draw one or more chips from Fate and that will determine the outcome of actions where risk and chance dominate. The type of chips drawn determines the outcome, like so:

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You draw a **red** chip of **Ash** and ask the Devil the consequences **or** take Ruin and draw again.

You draw a **blue** chip of **Dream** and the Devil gives you a **Dilemma**.

You draw a **white** chip of **Glory** and choose what was earned **or** take Hope and let the Devil Decide.

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Let me expand on that summary.

- When you pull a **red** chip, it's all Ash and that is bad for the Hero. You either take Ruin that either eventually kills your Hero or their goals and draw again, or take the consequences that the Devil dishes out.

- When you pull a **blue** chip, Dream creeps in and things get awfully crazy. You can only count on one thing: that the outcome is going to be unexpected. The Devil is going to take a moment and offer you a Dilemma. This means two outcomes and you'll have to pick the one that sucks the least in your opinion.

- When you pull a **white** chip, it's all Glory and that is good for the Hero. You choose what you earned from the good outcome or take Hope for your Hero and let the Devil Decide the outcome.

There is one more option when asked to draw from Fate: You can elect to let the Devil Decide and place a chip of any type on your Legend. This is saying that you aren't that interested in the outcome and instead are looking forward to what's next. The other advantage to doing this is involved with Wishes, but that comes later.

## **DEALING WITH FATE**

The contents of Fate are volatile however, and therefore at the core of the game. You control through your choices as a player what chips are placed into Fate and therefore the odds of outcomes when you draw from it. All of this has an impact on your Hero, through either draws from Fate or setting the stage for those draws.

Fate is wiped clean at the end of each scene, which is to say, once the Devil decides the current issues at hand are dealt with and no player takes action with their Hero to challenge that. This means you remove all the chips and return those to the Devil's Playground (the play space of the Devil). They then are charged with loading Fate the next time a scene starts.

## **THE DEVIL'S DECK OF WISHES**

The Devil has a deck of Wishes, each a card which can be placed in play for a scene. At the start of a scene, they get to pick Wish for each player and place it into play and then place one random one for each player into play as well. The text of each card has a title, naming the Wish. Then under that are Rules of what the card does when its claimed in play by a player for their Hero. Finally another block is what the Devil needs to do when its claimed in play, called the Rider. Each Wish when claimed by a player is kept for their Hero until the end of the scene or they dismiss it. In the latter case a new random one is placed into play.

Each of these is a little wish a Hero might wish for themselves or others during an ordeal. "The Strength of Many" is a wish, as is "The Smile of Lady Luck".