



RIPE

**AN RPG OF ELDERS
FIGHTING AGAINST THE HARVEST**

YOUR HARVESTER IS COMING TO TAKE YOU AWAY. AND YOU HOPE YOU'RE READY.

The past few years of training have been brutal. You underwent physical, mental, and magical therapies; how to lift objects without hurting your back, how to move quickly on weak ankles, how to keep your heart rate low while under extreme pressure, how to channel powerful magic through brittle bones.

It won't be enough. Harvesters descend from the skies and carry a murderous hatred for every living thing in its sight. Each one is a different horror; tailored specifically to find and capture you. You can't do this alone.

Yesterday was your 70th birthday. It was also your funeral. You said goodbye to your family, packed your things, and left your old life behind you. If you're lucky then you will meet up with the Caravan on its yearly circuit. If you're unlucky then you made the perilous trip alone.

Either way, you eventually arrived at the Poineri Este, often referred to as "The Silver Keep". It's a place for Elders to come together and battle their Harvesters.

**WELCOME TO THE KEEP, ELDER
TOGETHER WE FIGHT, WE LIVE, WE DIE...
BUT WE SHALL NOT BE TAKEN!**

**THIS GAME IS STILL UNDER DEVELOPMENT.
PLEASE ADDRESS QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS TO
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Name: _____

Birth-Month: _____ Age: _____

TO WORK ON A TASK...

Describe what you're doing, roll a d20. Consult the Numbers below. If you roll a Marked Number, then something terrible happens.

20	Great Success! Apply 10 effort to the task and Mark one of the boxes below. <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> If all four are Marked , then your Harvester is coming to take you away!
19	Great Success! Apply 9 effort to the task. <input type="checkbox"/> If Marked , suffer a heart attack after Task is complete; Elders must revive you (10 effort, 4 Roll Limit).
18	Great Success! Apply 8 effort to the task. <input type="checkbox"/> If Marked , Destroy a Memento or a Spell. <i>Was this due to dementia? Or a magical curse? Something else?</i>
17	Success. Apply 7 effort to the task. <input type="checkbox"/> If Marked , Destroy all mundane items in your pack. <i>Did you fall and break your pack? Were they stolen?</i>
16	Success. Apply 6 effort to the task. <input type="checkbox"/> If Marked , Mark another Number. <i>Simply bad luck? Or a foolish mistake on your part?</i>
15	Success. Apply 5 effort to the task. <input type="checkbox"/> If Marked , a terrible mistake ruins this task; it cannot be worked on any more, and may have consequences.
14	Success. Apply 4 effort to the task. <input type="checkbox"/> If Marked , Create a Burden related to a physical injury.
13	Minor Success. Apply 3 effort to the task. <input type="checkbox"/> If Marked , Create a Burden related to mental stress.
12	Minor Success. Apply 2 effort to the task. <input type="checkbox"/> If Marked , Create a Burden related to your past.
11	Minor Success. Apply 1 effort to the task. <input type="checkbox"/> If Marked , Create a Burden related to your past.
10	Life takes its toll on you. Mark a Number. <i>If all your Numbers are Marked, then your Elder is dying.</i>

CARRY ITEMS IN YOUR PACK SLOTS

Elders start with 1 Memento, 1 Spell, and 1 Burden.

Large items (bigger than a gallon of milk) take up 2 Slots.

Items **allow you** to attempt something you couldn't do on your own...

OR they **assist you** in your attempt (roll twice, choose one)

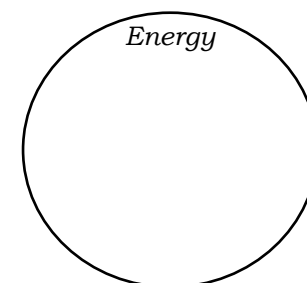
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

SPEND ENERGY TO IMPROVE ROLLS

Elders start with 7 energy.

Spend 1 Energy to add +1 to your roll (up to 20).
Avoid Marked Numbers or turn failure into success.

Spend 3 Energy to discover a simple item buried deep within your Pack (as long as the rest of the group agrees with it).



MAKE CAMP TO REST AND PLAN

Elders spend ALL their Energy to create a safe and restful campsite. After that they gain these benefits (in this order):

- ▶ **Nap:** Gain 1 Energy for each empty Slot.
- ▶ **Meditate/Train:** Roll a d20 (If you rolled 10 or lower add +10 to that number.) Unmark a number below the result.
- ▶ **Work on a Project:** Describe how you're working on this project. Make a single roll on any Memento/Spell/Burden/custom project (even another Elder's).

HOW TO PLAY

RIPE is a game about Elders going on dangerous adventures. One player is the GM, and the rest create and control an Elder. You will guide your Elder through dice rolls and difficult decisions.

To play, simple tell the GM what you want your Elder to do. For most stuff the GM will tell you what happens and how the world changes to respond to your actions.

HOW you do something is just as important as WHAT you are doing. The rules are simple, but stories are complex and ever-changing.

As an example, say you want to work on this Task: “Convince the Merchant to give you a discount. (6 effort)”

The rules tell you to roll a d20 and (hopefully) apply effort to this task. Once enough effort is applied, the task is complete, and the Merchant gives you a discount.

But you need to explain what your Elder is doing to convince the Merchant. Are they using threats? Bribes? Friendliness? Truth serum? Either way you roll dice and apply effort. But HOW you do something matters just as much.

For example, if you threatened the Merchant you’ll still get your discount, but later other merchants might avoid you completely. Likewise if you befriend the Merchant, you might be expected to help them out in the future.

This reliance on the fiction is what makes RIPE work. It takes priority over the rules of the game. So be sure to give the GM lots of details and let those details matter!

If your Elder wants to attempt something difficult or dangerous, then you'll need to use the rules of the game. We use these rules because it's fun to fail; otherwise there's no challenge or drama.

WORKING ON TASKS

Tasks require a certain amount of Effort to complete. Elders roll dice and spend energy to apply effort towards a Task. Some Tasks have a Roll Limit, and if it’s not complete in time then things get worse!

Any Elder can work on a Task as long as it makes sense. Negotiate with your group about the best way to accomplish something, and share the load between everyone.

Describe what your Elder is doing and roll a twenty sided die. Consult the Numbers listed on your character sheet and see what happens.

11-20: You succeeded in your action and made progress on this Task. The higher your roll, the more progress you made.

1-10: Something went wrong. No effort is applied, no progress made. You also have to Mark a Number to reflect this setback.

MARKED NUMBERS

If you ever roll a Number that has been Marked, then something bad happens after your action is complete. Rolling an unmarked Number has no effect; nothing happens until you roll a Marked Number.

Marked Numbers are unpredictable and scary. They represent the stress your aging body and mind endure. You might roll dozens of times without rolling a Marked Number...or you might roll a bunch in a row.

Your best defense against this is to spend your Energy wisely.

ENERGY

You have a limited amount of Energy that you can spend to improve your rolls. Spend 1 Energy to improve your roll by +1, up to a max of 20. Use Energy to turn a failure into success or to avoid a Marked Number.

The more items you carry the less energy you have; but it's worth it because items are extremely useful!

ITEMS

You can use one item with every roll you make.

Items **allow you** to attempt something you couldn’t do on your own...
Breathe underwater, fly, outrun a tiger, cut through metal, shoot fireballs

OR they **assist you** in your attempt (roll twice, choose one)
Climb a mountain, injure a foe, dig a hole, start a fire, resist poison, etc.

This distinction is important. A burning torch might allow you to melt ice, or it could aid you while seeing in the dark. It depends on the situation, and is up to negotiation by the rest of the group.

In general, think if you could accomplish this task while totally naked. If you could do it, then any items will aid you. If you couldn’t do it, then they allow you.

If you really need a simple item but don’t have it, you can spend Energy to “discover” it buried in your pack. Make sure the rest of the group is okay with it.

Some items are more powerful and flexible than others. Mementos, Spells, and Bonds are much more than common items.

MEMENTOS

Mementos are items associated with past experiences and skills. They can be used for any action related to those memories. To create a new Memento pick a mundane item in your pack. Describe what memories you'll associate with this Memento and write "20" next to it. This Mement will require 20 effort to complete.

Busch's Uniform

Was the servant of a wicked ruler. *Servant manners, pickpocket, manipulate leaders, easily forgotten*

Heather's Hat

Dozens of years as a Lady of the court. *Social cunning, form alliances, passive aggressive wordplay*

Alexa's Deck

Ran a legal gambling den. *Handling finances, managing employees, catch cheaters, plan events*

Josie's Poems

Author of many beloved stories. *Avoid or embrace fame, charm others, forge courtly papers, lie*

Gruff's Compass

Sailed the 5 oceans. *Navigate by the stars, tie strong knots, ship repair, predict weather*

Lauren's Makeup

Performed in troupes all across the land. *Alter appearance, entertain a crowd, dances/shows from different regions*

SPELLS

Spells are stored in an item. All spells are named in the ADJECTIVE NOUN format. The spell can be cast to do anything related to its name. To create a new Spell pick a mundane item in your pack. Name the Spell and write "20" next to it. This Spell will require 20 effort to complete.

HOWLING MOON

a small pendant of a white wolf. *Turn into a wolf, generate noise, provide light, emit a piercing howl*

ANGRY GROWTH

a jar of seeds that shudder and shake. *Quickly grow vines, tangle foes, infest an area with deadly ivy*

BURNT QUESTIONS

a charred book of ancient riddles. *Ignite flammable materials, confuse an enemy, entertain a dragon*

COLORFUL BREATH

dull grey mask that covers the face. *Breathe underwater, change the color of an object, mark a path*

STALKING EARTH

fossilized footprint of an ancient beast. *Track a target, summon golem, shake the ground*

SLEEPING DEPTHS

a spyglass filled with inky liquid. *See through fog or water, change the weather, taunt a leviathan*

BONDS

Bonds are items that represent your connection with another Elder. If you have a Bond with an Elder, then you can use their Mementos and Spells as if they were your own.

To create a Bond, both Elders pick a mundane item in their packs and give it to the other one. Both write "20" next to it. BOTH Elders must complete their Bond before it's useful (40 effort total).

BURDENS

Burdens are memories, habits, injuries, and ideas that weigh you down. They CANNOT be used with rolls; they take up space and waste your energy. To create a Burden, pick a mundane item in your pack. Describe it and write "20" next to it. This Burden will require 20 effort to get rid of.

Twisted Ankle

You have to fight through the pain just to keep going.

Unsent Letter

Written to a lost love. Will you let it go?

Damp Boarding Pass

The trip you never took. Maybe there is still time?

Half-empty Vial

You're running low. Can you get more?

Familiar Nightmares

Sleep is worse than just being tired.

Ivory Pipe

A smoke is the only way you can truly relax. Is it time to drop this habit?

Blinded Eye

You can still see, but the world's more dull than it used to be.

Old Fear

How much longer you can keep avoiding it?

A Deep Lie

Something false you believe about the world...or yourself.

Bad Memories

Your Mementos remind you of the good times and the terrible times.

Elder Conflict

You keep having the same fights.

Magical Curse

Perhaps your Spells have been reckless...

CAMPING AND RESTING

While items can be useful, they take up Slots and reduce your energy when you camp. Elders spend ALL their Energy to create a safe and restful campsite.

- **Meditate/Train:** Roll a d20 (If you rolled 10 or lower add +10 to that number.) Unmark a number below the result.
- **Nap:** Gain 1 Energy for each empty Slot.
- **Work on a Project:** Describe how you're working on this project. Make a single roll on any Memento/Spell/Burden/custom project (even someone else's).

ADVICE AND TIPS

Add depth to your Elder. They've lived a long, full life and accomplished many great things! Use Mementos and Spells to make them shine. They take a lot of work, but they're worth it!

Work together. It's tempting to try and finish a task on your own, but you'll get better results if you share the load with your group.

Spend Energy wisely. It's tempting to spend it all on a single task, but unless your at the roll limit, why not save it for when you really need it. After all, you might roll a Marked Number...

GM GUIDE

You didn't hear this from me, but being the GM is the best part of RIPE. Congratulations! And major kudos for taking on this responsibility; your gaming group is lucky to have you.

I know being a GM can be intimidating, but RIPE offers a lot of handy tools that simplify your job. Let's take a look at the basic structure of play:

FLOW OF PLAY

1. The GM describes the current situation.
2. Ask the players what they want to do. Listen to their ideas, ask clarifying questions
3. Create a Task from their ideas.
4. The players roll and attempt to complete the Task. Describe what happens and how the world changes. Start back to step 1.

1. DESCRIBE THE SITUATION

- Mention any threats nearby. *Hazards, monsters, mysteries*
- List opportunities. *Paths, valuables, clues*
- Add interesting details. *Unexpected, weird, fun*

This is easier than you think. Just say the obvious stuff. Players will ask additional questions as needed, so you can stick to simple descriptions; flowery and complicated language is just confusing.

If the players ask you a question that you don't know the answer to, respond with "I'm not sure. Give me a few minutes to check my notes." Never be afraid to pause the game and think about what you want to say. You're not a computer!

It's also okay to turn things back around on the players. This technique is powerful with the right group. If their Elder might know the answer, then let the player decide.

Player: "Do I see any strange plants or fruits nearby?"

GM: "I'm not sure. Julie, your Elder is a gardener, right? Do they notice any strange or useful plants nearby?"

The pressure isn't all on you. Let the players help you create a fun and engaging world. It will be more fun for them, and more fun for you!

2. ASK THE PLAYERS

After everyone understands the current situation, ask the players what they want to do. Listen to their ideas. Ask clarifying questions. Make sure you understand the reasons behind their actions.

For example:

The Elders approach an abandoned fort. They want to see if any monsters are hiding in the fort. Some good questions:

- "Do you want to remain hidden? Or just flush them out of the fort?"
If they don't mind being seen, then it could be a straightforward task; just run in and see what happens.
- "Do you plan to attack? Or do you just want information?"
If they want to set up an Ambush that might be a separate Task altogether. It's possible the players want to do several Tasks at once; which it completely fine.
- "What about valuables? Or are you just looking for dangers?"
Looting valuables while scouting for danger could be extra tricky.

Once you have a solid grasp on what the players want to do, you can create a Task.

3. CREATE A TASK

Create a Task from the players' ideas. For example:

- > Task: "Detect any threats in the fort without being noticed."

If the players agree, then we assign this Task an Effort cost. **By default a Task requires 7 Effort to complete.** This number works fine for basically all Tasks. But if you want to tweak it a bit:

- - **5 Effort** if it's an everyday challenge.
- + **5 Effort** if it's particularly difficult.
- + **5 Effort** if it's complex or requires preparation.
- **If something is easy**, then it's probably not a Task; just let the players' do what they want. Not worth rolling for the small stuff. *Talking to people, traveling somewhere nearby, reading a book, etc.*

For our fort example, we'll say that scouting the Fort is complex, but not necessarily difficult. It's more about staying stealthy than anything else.

- > Task: "Detect any threats in the fort without being noticed. (12 Effort)"

3. CREATE A TASK - CONTINUED

Next we set a Roll Limit to the Task. This determines how many rolls can be made while working on this Task. ANY Elder can make these rolls; the same Elder can roll a bunch of times in a row, or Elders can take turns working on the Task.

A Roll Limit is meant to set stakes for the Task, usually because of limited time or dangerous consequences. **By default a Task has no Roll Limit.** Only add a limit if you can think of some consequence for not finishing in time.

- ▶ **1 Roll Limit** if it must be completed immediately.
- ▶ **3 Roll Limit** if it must be completely fairly quickly.
- ▶ **6 Roll Limit** if it must be completed eventually.
- ▶ **No Roll Limit** if you can't think of a consequence.

For our fort example, a consequence might be that the Players are seen by the threats inside, or that they don't notice the threats before it attacks. Of course, if this fort doesn't have any threats, then I wouldn't set a Roll Limit at all; they still complete the task, but there's no rush.

Let's assume that there are some monsters sleeping inside, and give it a 6 Roll Limit.

> Task: "Detect any threats in the fort without being noticed. (12 Effort, 6 Roll Limit)"

It's important to keep in mind that there's no "right" way to create a Task. Here are several similar Tasks from the same situation:

> Task: "Loot any valuables in the fort without being noticed. (14 Effort, 4 Roll Limit)" *Stealing is more difficult than staring. And they'll have to be quicker.*

> Task: "Watch the fort from a distance. (6 Effort, No Roll Limit)" *Simply watching the fort is pretty easy. And I can't think of any negative consequences of just watching the fort.*

> Task: "Eliminate all threats in the fort without being noticed." *I would stop and ask the players to break this down into smaller Tasks; maybe start with scouting, then take each threat down one at a time.*

> Task: "Walk into the fort." *This isn't really a Task; they can just walk right in. There might be consequences to this action, but it doesn't require much effort.*

4. THE PLAYERS ROLL

This part is easy. While the players are rolling dice and spending energy you should be planning your next moves. Hopefully all the hard work you did in steps 1-3 should make this next part obvious.

And it's okay if something is obvious; don't try to be clever or unpredictable. The players wanted this, and they worked hard for it. Give them what they expect. Of course, if things go wrong, that's your chance to get sneaky.

If they succeed, describe their success. Did they gain any new items? Did they learn valuable information? Did they gain some advantage in the fiction? Let them revel in their victory, and describe what comes next.

If they failed, then lay the consequences on thick.

Consequences: Things should get worse, tensions rise, the stakes get higher, and doom is just over the next hill.

Importantly, consequences are almost never physical harm. It's common in a lot of games to threaten players with "10 fire damage" or whatever. But RIPE doesn't have that stuff. Here are some ideas for consequences:

- ▶ **Create a new threat.** An enemy appears, a storm arrives, or an ally is in danger. They have more work to do...
- ▶ **Lose this Opportunity.** Whatever they were trying, it's impossible now. They must find some other way to accomplish their goal.
- ▶ **Remove an advantage.** Did the players know what was coming? Something else happens instead. Did someone powerful owe them a favor? Now they don't. Did players have a backup plan? Their plan falls apart.
- ▶ **Offer a Tough Choice.** Maybe the Elders can still get what they want, but they'll have to give up something or make things worse. This is a good option if they ALMOST succeeded.
- ▶ **Secret Doom.** If you have big plans for a terrible event, use this failure to justify it. You can even treat it like a countdown and every failure brings them closer and closer. This option is great for GMs who like to plan things in advance.
- ▶ **Can't think of anything?** Then this Task probably didn't need a Roll Limit. Keep that in mind for next time; some Tasks just require effort.

Whether the players succeed or fail, describe how the world changes as a result of their actions and start back at Step 1.