**Basics and Abilities**

**STRength:** Add to melee weapon attacks AND damage.

**DEXterity:** Add to DEF, ranged weapon attacks AND damage, stealth, climbing, lockpicking, acrobatics, etc.

**CONstitution:** Saves v. poison and disease, you can carry items = CON + 10, for each day of rest you regain HP=CON.

**INTelligence:** Add to spellcasting rolls, history, knowledge, +1 indicates literacy.

**WISdom:** Add to mind-based Saving Throws, searching, perception & tracking.

**CHArisma:** Add to all reaction checks, charm, deception, intimidation, performance, persuasion.

*Your Ability Score IS your proficiency bonus, skill level, and natural ability. A +1 STR means you are proficient with ALL strength activities. A +1 DEX means you are proficient with acrobatics, climbing, stealth, etc.*

**Character Creation**

* All characters are human. No one can see in the dark.
* No clerics: the gods of Deathbringer are hostile or overstretched. Spellcasters have been hunted to *near* extinction.
* Start out with 8 “build points.” Distribute these as bonuses between your six Ability Scores, with no higher than +6 in any one Ability Score. Ability Scores range from 0 to +10.
  + Ex: STR +5, DEX +2, CON +1, INT 0, WIS, 0, CHA +1
* You choose a class for your character: Deathbringer, Grimscribe, Plague Doctor, Scoundrel, or Witch Hunter.
  + Based on your chosen class you gain a hit die. To determine your starting HP roll the hit die (re-roll 1’s) – this is your starting HP. If the roll is lower than your CON, you use your CON as the starting HP instead.
* Pick a Background and Misery for the section of the same name, roll one, or come up with your own.
* **Base Starting Equipment**: 1d6 gp, a waterskin, and d4 days’ worth of rations and water.

**Background and Misery**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Backgrounds | Miseries |
| * 1 Bounty Hunter * 2 Courtesan * 3 Duelist * 4 Executioner * 5 Farmer * 6 Grave Robber * 7 Leech Collector * 8 Mercenary * 9 Minor Noble * 10 Outlaw * 11 Performer * 12 Pit Fighter * 13 Pirate/Sailor * 14 Priest/nun/monk * 15 Rat Catcher * 16 Servant * 17 Student/Scholar * 18 Swineherd * 19 Soldier * 20 Urchin | * 1 Abandoned at birth * 2 Banished from home. * 3 Betrayed by a loved one. * 4 Cursed by vengeful witch. * 5 Disinherited or disowned. * 6 Escaped bondage or prison. * 7 Fled a scandal. * 8 Framed for a crime. * 9 Killed someone important. * 10 Left for dead. * 11 Locusts ate your crops. * 12 Owe someone money. * 13 Pursued by the law. * 14 Raised in the streets * 15 Reduced to poverty. * 16 Rejected by society. * 17 Ruined by vice. * 18 Suffering from amnesia. * 19 Survived a massacre. * 20 Town ravaged by plague. |

**Experience and Leveling**

* Completing a combat encounter, sneaking past a combat encounter, completing a dungeon, and completing a quest all grant 1 XP. At 10 XP the party levels up.
  + At the DM’s discretion, other moments may also warrant XP.
* When a character levels up:
  + They gain one additional hit die of health (re-roll 1s). If the roll is lower than your CON, you gain hit points equal to your CON.
  + They gain one additional Deathbringer die for their pool (maximum 10).
* At 10th level your character can find a mentor to teach them a second class, gaining all the benefits therein other than any starting equipment. This process typically takes a month and costs 10,000 gp

**Weapons**

Unarmed Strikes

* Unarmed strikes are attacks include punching, kicking, headbutting, and any other attack where your body is the weapon.
  + By default these attacks deal damage equal to your STR.
  + If you have neither weapons nor a shield in either hand, these attacks deal d4 + STR damage.

Melee Weapons

* Weapons are categorized by their damage
  + D4 + STR: Bone, club, dagger, whip, improvised weapon
  + D6 + STR: Mace, Hand axe, javelin(!), spear\*, staff\*
  + D8 + STR: Battle axe, rapier, sword
  + D10 + STR: Greatsword\*, warhammer\*
* \* This weapon requires two hands to wield
* (!) The javelin has a unique property that it can be thrown at a target up to 30 feet away or used as a melee weapon. Its damage profile is the same for both.

Ranged Weapons

* Weapons are categorized by their damage
  + D4 + DEX: Blowgun\*, dart, throwing knife, sling\*, improvised weapon
  + D6 + DEX: Short bow\*
  + D8 + DEX: Long bow\*
  + D10: + DEX: Crossbow\*
* \* This weapon requires two hands to wield

**Armor**

* **DEFense**= 10 + DEX + Armor. (DEF replaces AC)
* Armor is categorized by its DEF bonus
  + **Light** **(+1 DEF)**: Doublet, Leather, Studded Leather, Padded, Wood and Scrap Metal (10-20gp)
  + **Medium** **(+2 DEF)**: Breastplate, Chain Shirt, Hide, Gambeson, Scale Mail (50-100gp)
  + **Heavy (+3 DEF)**: Brigandine, Chain Mail, Ring Mail, Splint, Half Plate (100-200gp)
  + **Super Heavy (+4 DEF)**: Full field plate 1000+gp
  + **Shield (+1 DEF)**: Requires a free hand to hold it, (10-25gp)

**Combat**

* Rounds last 6 seconds (“real time”). At the start of each round each group rolls a d6 for initiative: highest roll wins. A tie means the two groups alternate with per creature.
* PCs can move up to 30 feet and attack in one round.
* Cover, low-light, and being unseen forces your attackers to roll with disadvantage.
* You can draw/switch/sheath weapons and shield once as a free action on your turn.
* **Stunts**: maneuvers such as pushing, disarming, tripping, blinding, etc. The GM rules whether the stunt is possible and if the player has advantage, disadvantage, or makes a clean roll. If the roll succeeds, the stunt is successful.
* 0 HP for a player character means they are *unconscious*, and negative HP means they are dead.
* If your attack roll is a 20 on the d20, it is a critical hit. This means it automatically defeats the target’s DEF despite any modifiers and you roll an additional d12 for your damage (re-roll 1s).

**Deathbringer Dice**

* Your character begins each day with a pool of Deathbringer dice (DB) equal to their level.
* You can expend DB to:
  + Add d6 to any roll (attack rolls, healing amounts, damage, etc.)
    - Natural 1s on a d20 cannot be modified by a DB.
  + Add d6 to your AC against one attack.
  + Reduce damage taken by d6.
  + Heal d6 hit points.
  + Perform some unusual or heroic feat, per DM’s discretion.

**Conditions**

* Blinded
  + You cannot see or successfully perform anything relying on sight.
  + Your attacks have disadvantage and attacks against you have advantage.
* Charmed
  + You cannot attack the charmer or target them with harmful abilities or effects.
  + The charmer has advantage on any roll to interact socially with you.
* Dazed
  + Replaces the 5e *stunned* condition.
  + Your movement speed is halved.
  + You cannot use DB.
* Deafened
  + You cannot hear or successfully perform anything relying on hearing.
* Exhaustion
  + 1: Disadvantage on ability checks
  + 2: Speed halved
  + 3: Disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws
  + 4: Hit point maximum halved
  + 5: Speed reduced to 0
  + 6: Death
* Frightened
  + You have disadvantage on rolls while you can see the source of your fear.
  + You cannot willingly move closer to the source of your fear.
* Grappled
  + Combines 5e *grappled* and *restrained*.
  + Your speed becomes 0, and you can’t use any bonus to its speed.
  + Attack rolls against you have advantage, and your attack rolls have disadvantage.
  + You have disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws.
* Invisible
  + Other creatures cannot see you.
  + Your attacks have advantage and attacks against you have disadvantage.
* Paralyzed
  + You cannot move, talk, or act: you forfeit your turn in combat.
  + You automatically fail STR and DEX saving throws.
  + Attack rolls against you have advantage.
* Petrified
  + See *paralyzed*.
* Poisoned
  + You have disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.
* Prone
  + Your movement speed is halved.
  + You can only attack if wielding a blowgun or crossbow.
  + Ranged attacks against you have disadvantage, while melee attacks against you have advantage.
* Unconscious
  + You cannot move, talk, or act: you forfeit your turn in combat.
  + You automatically fail saving throws.
  + Attack rolls against you have advantage. If you fall *prone* while unconscious, see the *prone* condition for attack rolls against you instead.

**Spells**

Learning Spells

* Learning a spell from a scroll, spell book, or willing creature requires a long rest. If using a scroll, upon successfully learning the spell it is incinerated and the new tattoo is seared into your skin simultaneously (you choose where). For spellbooks, only that particular page is destroyed.
* Any class can choose to learn a spell and risk the dangers of the Ruinous Powers. However, there are limitations for characters that are not Grimscribes:
  + You cannot cast spells higher than 3rd level.
  + Your cantrips do not gain the normal benefits of a higher character level (i.e. additional damage).

Casting Spells

* There are no spell slots. You can cast as often as you like (once per round), but there are risks and limitations.
* Once a spell is obtained, it can be cast at its minimum level or any higher level all the way to 9th level.
* The DC for casting a spell is 10 + the spell’s level. Cantrips are considered level 0.
  + For example, fireball is 3rd level and thus has a cast DC of 13. Trying to cast it at 6th level would have a DC of 16.
* If the cast attempt for a spell is failed, you can choose to succeed instead at the cost of 1 level of corruption. Critical miscasts cannot be reversed this way.

Miscasts

* Rolling a natural 1 on a spellcasting check increases your corruption level by 1 and causes a miscast. To determine the nature of the miscast, roll a d20 and consult the list below.
* 1-10: The spell fizzles and fails. Ghostly laughter fills the room.
* 11-15: The spell Backfires and the caster takes the damage or effect. This includes if the spell is meant to heal or protect.
* 16-19: Disaster strikes and the caster ages d20 years, gains a mutation, summons a hostile monster, disintegrates all armor with 100 feet, hits the wrong target, or something equally horrifying.
* 20: The casting is utterly catastrophic, and the caster explodes in a shower of gore.

Corruption

* Rolling a natural 1 on a spellcasting check or committing an evil act increases your corruption level by 1, to a maximum of 10
* At 10 levels of corruption, not only do you become an evil NPC, you summon 1d4 hostile creatures of the DM’s choosing.

Corruption Exemptions

* Spells that have a limited number of casts per day/rest cannot cause corruption.
* Casting a spell as a ritual (10 minutes of concentration) auto-succeeds and cannot cause corruption.

Removing Corruption

* Every time your character levels up, they remove one level of corruption.
* Heroic feats of sacrifice and humanity may also remove a level of corruption at the DM’s discretion.
  + Jumping in the way to damage for another.
  + Forfeiting one’s pay for a job to help others.
  + Etc.

**Disease**

* Contracting a disease can occur at any time, for a variety of reasons. Once you become sick, you gain one level of Exhaustion. During your next long rest, you make a DC 10 CON roll. On a success, you reduce your current Exhaustion by 1; on a failure you increase it by 1. If you reduce your Exhaustion to 0, you are no longer sick.

**Potions**

* Potions and bombs can be thrown up to 30 feet away without a STR roll. For a friendly creature to catch a potion it must have at least one hand free.
* Potions have had their healing amounts changed.
  + Healing: 2d6
  + Greater Healing: 4d6
  + Superior Healing: 8d6
  + Supreme Healing: 10d6

**Deathbringer**

* Hit Die: d10.
* Equipment Proficiencies: All weapons, armor, and shields.
* Starting Equipment (Choose ONE):
  + Light armor, shield, 3 weapons
  + Medium armor, shield, 2 weapons
  + Heavy armor, 1 weapon
* You can draw/switch/sheath weapons and shield twice as a free action on your turn.
* You can attack twice on your turn, instead of once.
* Your attacks are critical hits on d20 rolls of 19 or 20. When you kill a creature with a critical hit, you regain one expended Deathbringer die.
* Over the course of a week, you can teach a willing creature proficiency in a weapon of their choice. Armor takes a month; you cannot teach the use of shields or super heavy armor. Each day of this work requires a full 8 hours of undivided attention.
* **DB**: You can spend Deathbringer dice to make additional attacks on your turn (two extra attacks max).

**Grimscribe**

* Hit Die: d6.
* Equipment Proficiencies: Daggers
* Starting Equipment: Dagger
* Starting Spells:
  + Four cantrips (consult DM)
  + Two 1st-level spells of your choice.
* You auto-succeed Intelligence rolls to cast cantrips.
* You can cast spells higher than 3rd level.
* Your cantrips gain the normal benefits of a higher character level (i.e. additional damage at certain character levels).
* When you roll a natural 20 on a spellcasting check, you regain one expended Deathbringer die.
* **DB**: You can spend a Deathbringer die to gain advantage on a spell attack roll or give one target of a spell disadvantage on their saving throw. If the spell has multiple targets, you can spend another die for each additional target you wish to give disadvantage.

**Scoundrel**

* Hit Die: d8.
* Equipment Proficiencies: Light armor, bones, clubs, daggers, whips, blowguns, darts, throwing knives, slings, short bows, improvised weapons
* Starting Equipment: Light armor, 2 weapons, thieves’ tools, 3d6 gp
* Attacking from behind or while undetected grants advantage on the roll and a hit deals double damage. If you kill a creature this way you regain one expended Deathbringer die.
* You have advantage on ability checks to sneak, climb, eavesdrop, lockpick, search, detect/disarm nonmagical traps, barter, and lie. Mastery of genuinely persuasive arguments, however, continues to elude you.
* Climbing, swimming, difficult terrain, and ending the *prone* condition don’t cost you extra movement.
* When you roll a natural 20 on an ability check, you regain one expended Deathbringer die.
* **DB**: You can spend a Deathbringer die to auto-succeed an ability check you have advantage on, at the DM’s discretion.

**Witch Hunter**

* Hit Die: d6.
* Equipment Proficiencies: Light armor, medium armor, clubs, crossbows, daggers, javelins, spears, swords
* Starting Equipment: Light or medium armor, 2 weapons, holy symbol, 6 torches
* Starting Spells:
  + *Detect Evil and Good* (1/day): 1st level, 10 minutes concentration. You can sense the location aberrations, celestials, elementals, fey, fiends, or undead within 30 feet of you. Similarly, you know if there is a place or object within 30 feet of you that has been consecrated or desecrated.
  + *Protection from Evil and Good* (1/day): 1st level, 10 minutes concentration. One willing creature you touch is protected against certain types of creatures: aberrations, celestials, elementals, fey, fiends, and undead.
    - Creatures of those types have disadvantage on attack rolls against the target.
    - The target also can't be charmed, frightened, or possessed by them.
  + *Turn Undead* (at will): Each undead within 30 feet that can see or hear you must make a WIS saving throw (DC 8 + your WIS) or be *frightened* of you for 1 minute or until it takes damage.
* For every 2 levels of corruption a creature has, you gain a +1 bonus to ability checks to track it, detect its presence nearby, or determine its level of corruption, if any.
* You have advantage on rolls to resist corruption.
* Whenever you kill a creature make a straight d20 roll, DC 20 – the creature’s corruption level. On a success, you regain 1 expended Deathbringer die.
  + Ex: The DC for a slain undead (corruption 6) is 14.
* **DB**: You can spend a Deathbringer die to make a weapon/unarmed attack on the same turn you cast a spell.

Average Corruption Levels

* 0: Beasts, Celestials, Constructs, most Humanoids, Metallic Dragons
* 2: Elementals, Fey, Oozes, Plants
* 4: Evil humanoids, Gem Dragons, Giants, Fallen Celestials
* 6: Monstrosities, Undead
* 8: Chromatic Dragons, Fiends
* 10: Aberrations

**Plague Doctor**

* Hit Die: d6
* Equipment Proficiencies: Light armor, daggers.
* Starting Equipment: Leather beak mask and coat (light armor), dagger, medical kit, suspicious diploma.
* Starting Spells:
  + *Cure Wounds* (1/creature each day):
  + *Cure Disease* (1/day):
  + *Cure Poison* (1/day):
* Create d4 potions a day: Acid, Bomb (d10 damage, 10 ft radius), Hallucination, Healing, Sleep, or Venom.
  + Potions and bombs can be thrown up to 30 feet away without a STR roll. For a friendly creature to catch a potion it must have at least one hand free.
  + Acid reduces the target’s DEF by 1 if it is wearing armor.
  + Hallucination forces the target to make a WIS saving throw or spend its next turn attacking a randomly determined creature.
  + Venom deals d4 poison damage and the target must succeed a CON saving throw or be *poisoned* until the start of their next turn. To take effect, venom can be ingested or applied to a weapon/piece of ammo (only lasts one hit for melee, or one shot for ammo).
  + Sleep potions follow the rules for the Sleep spell (see “Spell Changes”).
* You have advantage on rolls to resist contracting a disease.
* You and creatures under your care have advantage on rolls to recover from diseases.
* When you cast Cure Wounds on a creature other than yourself and at least one of the dice lands on a 6, you regain one expended Deathbringer die.
* **DB**: When rolling for your daily potions, you can expend a Deathbringer die to combine two potion uses into a single, stronger potion.
  + Examples:
    - Instead of two potions of Healing, you can create one potion of Greater Healing.
    - Instead of two potions of sleep, you create one potion of sleep whose target has disadvantage.

**Spell Changes**

* **Bestow Curse**: 3rd level, 1 minute. The target must succeed a WIS saving throw or suffer disadvantage on all rolls for the duration.
  + When cast, both the target and caster suffer 1 level of corruption.
  + A remove curse spell ends this effect.
  + If cast as 5th level or higher, the duration is 8 hours and the corruption increases to 2 levels.
  + If cast as 7th level or higher, the duration is 24 hours and the corruption increases to 3 levels.
  + If cast as 9th level or higher, the curse is permanent until dispelled and the corruption increases to 5 levels.
* **Counterspell**: 3rd level spell, can be cast out of turn. You attempt to interrupt a creature casting a spell. If the spell is the same level or lower than what you cast Counterspell as, the target suffers a miscast. If it is casting a spell of higher level, nothing happens.
* **Detect Evil and Good**: 1st level, 10 minutes concentration. You can sense the location aberrations, celestials, elementals, feys, fiends, or undead within 30 feet of you. Similarly, you know if there is a place or object within 30 feet of you that has been consecrated or desecrated.
* **Protection from Good and Evil**: 1st level, 10 minutes concentration. One willing creature you touch is protected against certain types of creatures: aberrations, celestials, elementals, fey, fiends, and undead.
  + Creatures of those types have disadvantage on attack rolls against the target.
  + The target also can't be charmed, frightened, or possessed by them.
* **Sleep**: 1st level, 1 minute. One target of your choice within 90 ft makes a WIS saving throw or falls *unconscious* for 1 minute. The target wakes up if they take damage or another creature uses its action to wake it up.
  + Constructs, undead, creatures that do not need sleep, and creatures immune to being *charmed* aren’t affected by this spell.

**Lore**

There are five deities who lord over the world. The first four are the Ruinous Powers:

**Khorne** is the god of rage, war, and ironically, honorable combat. Equally at home convincing barbarian hordes to destroy cities and convincing acolytes to allow for fair one-on-one duels, seeks conflict and strife in all forms.

**Tzeentch** is the god of change, mutation, knowledge, trickery, and ambition. The source of most magic in the world, he is the patron of many dark Grimscribes and the reason why most hate and fear their kind. Tzeentch loves manipulating and supporting the schemes of mortals as they endlessly betray one another for piddling advances.

**Slaanesh** is neither a god nor a goddess, but something in between. The deity of pain, pleasure, obsession, gluttony, and lust, they fuel the primal desires of mortals and enjoy the thrill of replacing foresight with impulse.

**Nurgle** is the god of disease, decay, famine, and death. It is Nurgle who chuckles as mortals are forced into the endless rat race to buy more time for life, who sows drought and plague, who forces the dead to walk the earth once more.

There is a fifth deity; perhaps the only hope for the world. She is known as the Lady of the Light.

**Era** is the goddess of life, light, and all that is good. She is the one who created the world and its many peoples, but her power is strained to the limit keeping the Ruinous Powers at bay. Crops may grow, but they are wilted. The sun may rise, but it is dim. Clerics may worship her, but she has no miracles to spare them.