

WALLS OF NEVERMORE

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Story Brief

Nevermore is a city by the sea that, protected inside its tall walls, long endured the rising of a shadow that engulfed everything else in the world. This shadow, usually called the Dark, is a mysterious force capable of many terrible feats, such as dimming light, possessing people and beast, corrupting them into ravenous ghouls and creating doubles of them.

For a long time king Theodore has commanded the defenses of the city, and even led expeditions beyond the walls in search of knowledge and survivors. Many believe that is how the Dark finally breached and cracked the walls. Devastation was quick to hit after the walls fell. Fear consumed men and women, panic spread, and even the gargoyles were possessed and became minions of the Dark. The last hope died as king Theodore himself went missing, but it soon got worse as many Theodore kings began to appear – doubles, no doubt – each amassing forces and plummeting what was left of the town further into civil war.

When the time was darkest, though, a gleam of hope appeared. Gregory, a mere Pawn in the king's army, fled his duties to hide in the cemetery. There he found the old king Theodore, who had been left for dead. The king, knowing he had no chance of survival, appointed Gregory as the new king, giving him the command to gather the army and reclaim their city.

King Gregory, who is the protagonist, must then convince other warriors – Pawns, Knights, Bishops, Rooks and Queen – to join him, while fighting forces led by false kings. His quest takes him to find the Ancient Sword Annabel, the one object that can reveal the true king.

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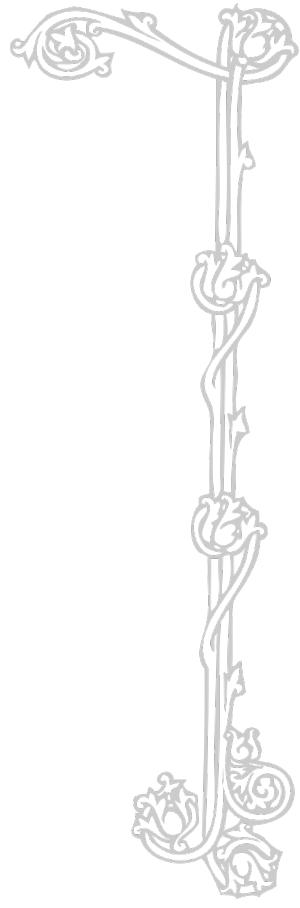
Game Setting

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her highborn kinsmen came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
In this kingdom by the sea.

– Edgar Allan Poe

THE DARK

It is said the world was once green and beautiful and that it once had a name. As far as anyone can remember, though, it has been engulfed in a mysterious and terrifying mist, or force, called the Dark. It first caused people and animals in the wilderness to change, becoming cunning, heartless, sorrowful and evil. At first the Dark only came during the night, but then it started dimming the lights, then the very sun, and so even the day became dangerous.



One by one, empires and nations collapsed as traveling became increasingly difficult. With the passing years, only city-states endured the Dark, locked away within mighty walls. Magic circles helped keeping the Dark away, but most effective was the tall Chapels, gargoyles, statuary, murals, stained glass and chanting. The Dark was attracted by the darkness inside people's hearts, and attempts at the sublime could keep it at bay, at least temporarily.

In time, the few remaining cities became unrecognizable. All joy and laughter had given way to solemnity, to stone arches, flying buttresses and the chanting of old men – in order for the light to glow brighter, the world had to become more somber. But even then, the Dark eventually breached the tall walls and peoples' hearts, and the cities started to collapse.

THE CITY OF NEVERMORE

But one remained longer than any other – a city accustomed to sorrow: Nevermore. The city had been founded centuries earlier by a fabled hero who was given a fantastic sword by the Heights, with which he were to slay a dragon that inhabited a hill by the sea. He did slay the beast, retrieve the sword and freed a young lady the dragon had made captive, a half-human beauty called Annabel.

The hero founded a city on the hill, as ordained by the Heights, but both humans and Others grew to hate the marriage of the hero king and Annabel. After a plague hit the city, the people directed the blame towards that abomination of a marriage. They abducted and slayed the queen, using the king's sword to do the deed.

It is said that Annabel's spirit was trapped inside the blade, from where she plotted her revenge. She arranged the king to remarry, and then put him and his new wife to rest, taking their only child as pupil. It is the sword, they say, that rules the kingdom from the shadows behind the throne. A supernatural force filled with sorrow and regret, and given to feats of poetic justice. It is Annabel who chooses the king, and Annabel who rules the king.

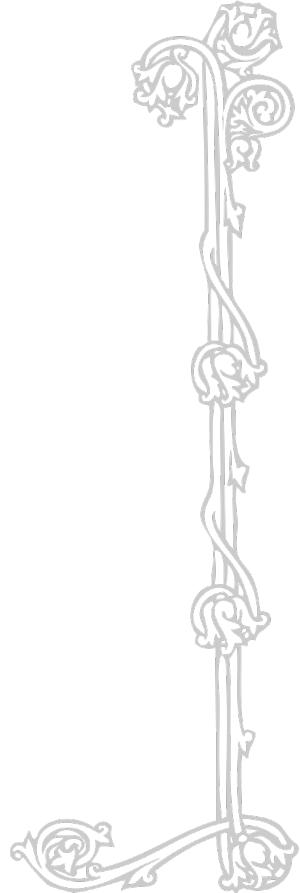
THE LEGEND GOES ON...

There's more about this founding myth to be told. The Others, being jealous and afraid of the might of the dragon, created the sword as a way to steal its victims' souls and powers. After the hero slew the beast, the sword itself became immensely powerful, and it convinced the hero to keep it for his own sake. When the sword was used to kill Annabel, who was both the dragon's daughter and prisoner, their souls merged together, creating a third personality – as sweet as Annabel and as evil as the dragon. Furious with the king's refusal to return the sword, the Others placed on it many curses, one of which being that Nevermore would be the last human city to be destroyed, so that it would have to endure the most whatever it is that is fated to destroy mankind.

The city was renamed by the fabled king in memory of the joy he no longer possessed: it was to be called Nevermore. It is situated on a hill by the sea, surrounded by two very high walls, black as night, that dance around each other, culminating at the Lonely Palace, and on top of the tallest tower of the keep, lies the Solitude Chamber, where Annabel is kept.

It was Nevermore's Fate to be the last city to collapse, for it is its Fate to endure the most hardship. That happened during the reign of Theodore king, after the last friendly city had vanished. The king, convinced that there were civilized survivors in the ruins of the nameless world, started sending excursions to the Outside. The Dark used the opportunity to enter the city and possess the gargoyles, caryatids and statuary, planting sentinels within the walls. Fear and hatred started to breed, the walls started to crack and, as Fate dictated, the city fell.

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As the walls of Nevermore cracked, king Theodore went missing, presumably abducted by evil things. From the chaos that ensued, several kings emerged, all claiming to be king Theodore himself. These pretenders, doubles created by the Dark, amassed armies and started fighting each other. Each of them claims the Dark can't be defeated until they can unify the city under their banner. And so, civil war began.

CHAPELS

The only places actually safe within the city are the Chapels. These are usually tall buildings, with dark naves adorned with statuary and surrounded by stained glass. Most people now seek refuge in Chapels when night comes, and so for the would-be kings it is essential to acquire them. Ruling over a Chapel means having underlings, soldiers and resources. Multiplayer battles are fought over Chapels: a player may choose to attack other players' Chapels, and must defend his own against invaders.

FATE

To understand the nameless world, it is important to understand their people. The inhabitant's of Nevermore are devout believers in a force they call 'Fate'. Some believe 'Others' or the 'Heights' have a plan for everything, while others believe even the supernatural is itself bound by Fate, which rules all. The belief in Fate has many repercussions. For example, people tend to be terribly loyal, until they find evidence that Fate is pending toward a different master, which would prompt them to switch allegiances in a heartbeat.

Fate also reinforces two other very important aspects: class and suit.

CLASSES

Each person in the nameless world is born with a set of talents and preferences that places him in one of six distinct classes, ordered here from lowest to highest:

Pawns are the usual nobody. Not very bright and not very skilled, they yet tend to be lawful, industrious and resilient. Most people are Pawns, including those in the army.

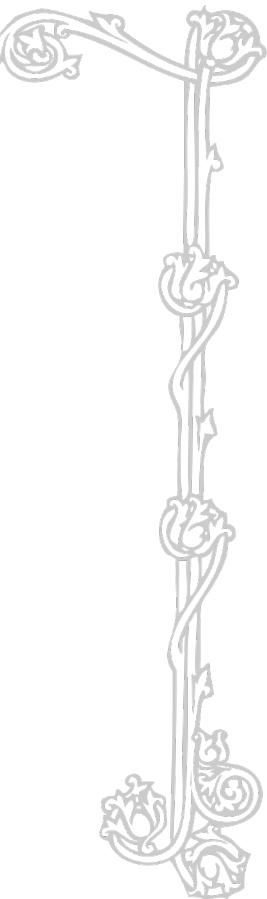
Knights are very agile, swift and witted individuals. They tend to be quick in the feet and in the mind, but are also the most chaotic. These swashbuckling types are somewhat common – many join the army and even more become outlaws.

Bishops are intelligent and perceptive, and most think they are also very wise. They are usually bound by many codes, ethics and rules, which they compensate by wielding supernatural powers – using both attack, defense and support magic. Bishops are really as common as Knights, but few outside the army develop powers useful in battle.

Rooks are strong and sturdy individual, slow to act but almost unstoppable when fighting. They tend to be tall, muscular and... well, round in the abdomen, but can still move swiftly and strike ferociously. Rooks are somewhat rare, and most join the army, which values them immensely.

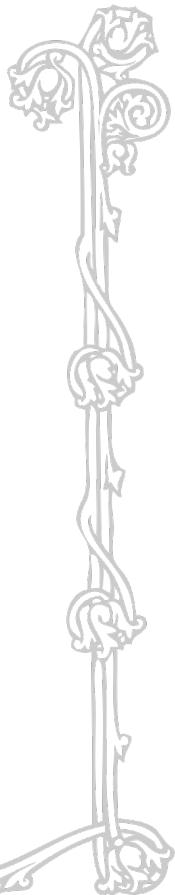
Queens are fast, strong, intelligent and have no sense of humor. They are usually multi-talented, very skillful and able to intimidate a raging bear. Although they are extremely useful in the battlefield, Queens are also very rare, and are usually deployed only as a last resort.

It is important not to confuse the class Queen with the title given to a monarch. Although Queens tend to be of noble or royal blood (even if they were born in poverty, they are usually given a title once discovered), people are 'born' to the Queen class. It is in their veins. By contrast, being a queen monarch only requires marrying a king.



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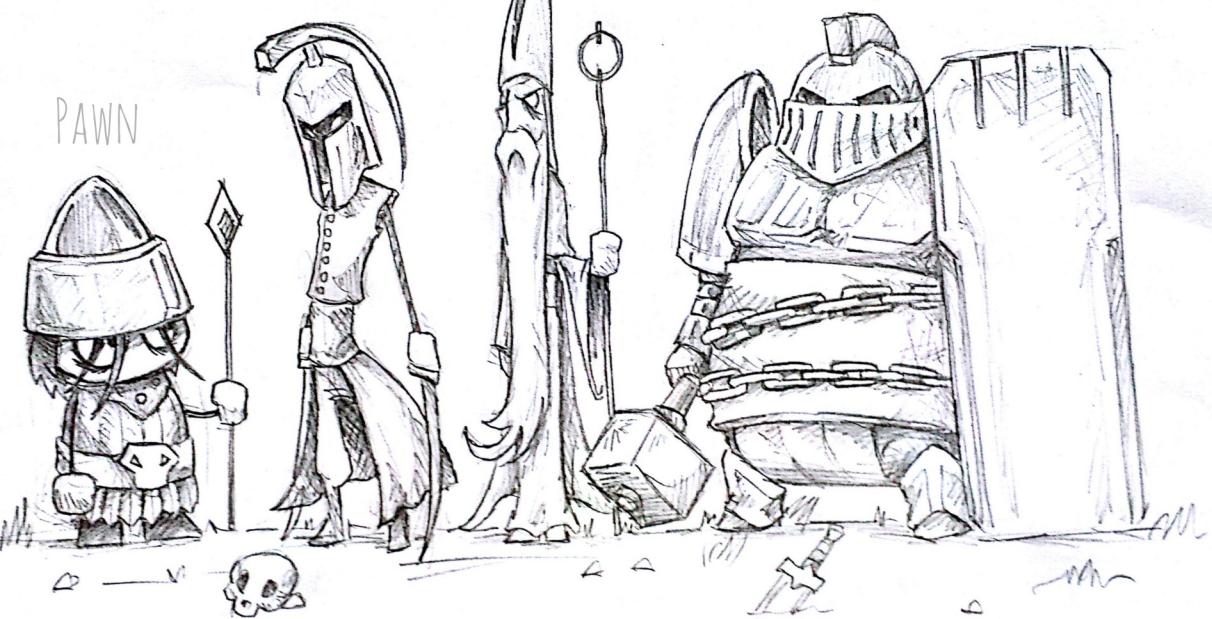


BISHOP

KNIGHT

ROOK

PAWN



Kings are powerful and cunning, but tend to be sluggish, overconfident and jealous. It is extremely rare for a King to be born outside a royal family, and no two adult Kings (aside from father and son) are allowed to take permanent residence in a given city or country. Having more than one King has always been perceived as a prelude to war.

Knights, Bishops and Rooks can be either male or female. That is also true of Pawns, although these are very alike in appearance and behavior, to a point that the best way to know a Pawn's gender is by its name. Queens can only be female and Kings can only be male.

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There is one more twist to the class system. Pawn-born characters can be promoted later in life, depending on personal achievements. Most promoted Pawns become Knights, and some become Queens, but very few ever become Bishops and Rooks. Promoting into a King is almost unheard of.

SUITS

The second way Fate is perceived to determine people's life is through suits. A suit is an augury placed upon a person according to the circumstances of their birth, much like a zodiacal sign. There are four suits available:

Spades are born heroes, expected to be energetic, full of life and even belligerent. They are usually expected to join the army or live dangerous lifestyles. (They have greater attack score.)

Hearts are born poets, expected to be cunning, dramatic, skillful and even treacherous. They are usually expected to become artists and scholars. (They have greater skill score.)

Diamonds are born leaders, expected to be tough, stern, truthful and even single-minded. They are usually expected to lead or run groups in the army, in enterprises or organizations. (They have greater defense score.)

Clubs are born workers, expected to be resilient, relentless, crafty, and even stubborn. They are usually expected to be the ones to get the hands dirty on the job, and to amass greater common sense during their lives. (They have greater hit points.)

DEVIANTS

Rare people, about one in ten thousand, are what they call 'Deviants'. These are people who do not conform to the roles assigned to them by Fate – they might not belong to any class, or have a personality typical of another suit, for example. Deviants are usually more powerful than Regulars, but are seen with disdain as the portents of great disaster. Annabel, from the founding myth of Nevermore, is an obvious Deviant, being half-human, half-Other. Gregory, the main character in the game, is also a Deviant, having been promoted from Pawn to King. Many heroes of legends are Deviants also, filling the books with tragic and sorrowful tales.

FAIRIES

Outside of the safety of city walls, few people still survive. Having had centuries to adapt to the rising Dark, they had to develop strange and unique powers in order to survive. They are all Deviants – a special kind, called Fairies. It is believed the source of a Fairy's power lies in pacts made with Others, allowing them to access classes of their own. Among the Fairy classes are the Amazon, the Dragon and the Cannon.

Differently from other classes, there's only one Amazon, Dragon and Cannon to be recruited throughout the game, although the player can capture more Dragons and Cannons (but not Amazons) in multiplayer battles.

ATMOSPHERE

The Walls of Nevermore is a game intended to evoke an atmosphere of ephemeral sadness, remembering the player of how fragile the world is. Most of all, the game intends to inspire the player to build a last beacon of order into a world that is spiraling down to Chaos. To accomplish that, the game is heavily inspired in Goth aesthetics.

WHAT IS GOTH?

Goth is a subculture bound together by an aesthetic appeal that is described as dark, morbid and romantic. They embrace horror poetry, Victorian garments, mystery and mysticism, literature such as Lord Byron and Edgar Allan Poe, and Gothic architecture (hence the name). The sadness and sorrow a person feels when contemplating the transient nature of the world is, for them, a powerful source of aesthetic pleasure.

Characters' names are also used to give an old, eerie sensation. Every character in the game gets a unique name, and although these are not so unusual in themselves, they are mostly taken from a list of common 1890s names. These names, chosen for being somewhat antiquated, don't convey much by themselves, but when taken as a group, they should convey the idea of a time lost, of antiquity.

Male names include Aloysius, Archibald, Bartholomew, Benedict, Bernard, Cicero, Cornelius, Ellsworth, Emmet, Enoch, Godfrey, Hobart, Lawrence, Mortimer, Nathaniel, Percival, Thaddeus, and Vincent.

Female names include Acantha, Amoret, Aurora, Margaret, Elizabeth, Emmanuele, Clarice, Mildred, Josephine, Margareth, Beatrice, Catherine, Charlotte, Bernice, Marjorie, Genevieve, Isabel, Lorena, Daphne and Lilith.

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Plots

Walls of Nevermore is mostly a multiplayer tactics game, in which paying attention to the plot is not necessary for playing. In spite of that, the plot is rich enough to please those desiring a good story. There is one main plot in the game, and five lesser plots: the Introduction, the Knights' Joust, the Bishops' Cathedral, the Rooks' Wall and the Queen's King.

INTRODUCTION

Boss: Aurelius

Gregory, once a Pawn in the kings army, is terrified of the battles that rage in the ongoing civil war. He cowardly flees to the graveyard (note that cowardice is a Deviant trait) where he meets king Theodore. After failing to help him, the king decided to crown Gregory the new king, so that the town would have a chance of unifying and resisting the Dark. Gregory is promoted to king just before the game begins.

Aurelius, a former army instructor, encounters Gregory, recognizing him as a mediocre and pathetic would-be king. Gregory is so helpless that Aurelius ends up trying to help him, teaching the basics of the game. He then tasks him to kill some ghouls that are terrorizing villagers, in a maneuver to gather a few Pawns to his army. As Aurelius best years are behind him, Gregory is able to lead his Pawns to beat Aurelius and, according to the rules of Fate, convinces him to join his cause.

Aurelius says that, before challenging the kings, he must gather some “good troops”, either Knights, Bishops or Rooks, or he would fail “catastrophically”. This opens the plots “the Knights' Joust”, “the Bishops' Cathedral” and “the Rooks' Wall”. The player must beat at least one before being able to play the game in multi-player mode.

THE KNIGHT'S JOUST

Boss: a fake Theodore King

Many fake Kings decide to settle their personality theft issues with a jousting tournament, in which the greatest champion of each King would fight to the death. In order to attend, king Gregory must find a “fine and brave” Knight to fight for him. As there is none, Aurelius advises Gregory to choose a Pawn and lead him through many perils in order for him to promote. (Promoted characters keep bonuses gained as Pawns, so they tend to be stronger than their natural-born counterparts.)

With his promoted Knight, Gregory must enter and win the jousts, but before he can do it, one fake Theodore King slays the others and claims their Knights. After defeating him, Gregory gets the ability to recruit Knights.

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THE BISHOP'S CATHEDRAL

Boss: a fake Theodore King

Some Bishops have taken many civilians to the catacombs under the Cathedral in order protect them. One of the civilians turned out to be Theodore King in disguise, who successfully convinced many to join him going deeper under the catacombs. These soon returned as ghouls to eat the flesh of the remaining civilians.

The Bishops do not have the power to contain the ghouls and decided to collapse the catacombs, but someone must first enter and save as many survivors as possible. Before going in, Gregory must steal explosives, which he sets inside the cathedral's catacombs. He must then defeat the fake Theodore King and lead the people out. After defeating him, Gregory gets the ability to recruit Bishops.

THE ROOKS' WALL

Boss: a fake Theodore King

The intersecting walls of Nevermore delineate many districts, each separated from the others by the walls. One such a district remained with intact walls and inside is said to reign the real king Theodore. The problem is the Rook guards let nobody in, and those who do sneak in never leave again.

Gregory is asked by Aurelius to infiltrate the walled district and open the gates to more refugees.

After successfully infiltrating by the sewers, the player discovers the situation is even more dramatic inside the walls, and the Rooks are actually keeping things in. He finds a fake Theodore King is luring citizen inside to feed his army of ghouls and gargoyles. Gregory tricks the fake king into revealing himself by offering a way past the Rooks guarded gate. He then leads the Rooks against the fake King and his beasts. After defeating him, Gregory gets the ability to recruit Rooks.

THE QUEEN'S KINGS

Boss: princess Samantha

After completing one of the three previous quests, king Gregory becomes very famous, and doubles of him start appearing all over town to claim the throne. Princess Samantha, a notorious Deviant Queen, decides to lure them into traps in order to kill who she sees as usurpers.

FAKE GREGORY KINGS?

After finishing a quest, the player unlocks online multiplaying. In this mode, two players, both controlling Gregory kings, face each other for resources. From each player's perspective, there will be two kinds of fake king antagonists: Theodore kings, which are NPCs; and Gregory kings, which are (mostly) PCs.

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Gregory is summoned to kill a creature that has supposedly been slaying innocent citizens, but he is drawn to an arena where multiple Theodore and Gregory kings are fighting each other, while they are targeted by arrows fired from Queens led by Samantha. After breaking free, Gregory discovers that he inadvertently released the fake, ghoulish kings into a populated area. He has to kill these kings and at the same time try to escape Samantha's blows.

Regardless of the result Samantha does not join Gregory, but if he can save enough people, and kill enough fake kings, she'll let him recruit from her Queens. If he manages to kill all fleeing kings, Samantha becomes infatuated with Gregory.

THE MAIN PLOT

Boss: the Sentinel

After Gregory has unlocked multi-player battles, Aurelius disappears for a while (until enough battles are fought), and reappears with news. He apparently discovered a way to unlock the doors to the Solitude Hall, where the Annabel sword is kept. If the sword accepts him as king, he'd finally be able to unify the city.

Opening the doors requires him to finish "The King's Queen" quest – trying to do so before getting on good terms with the Princess only means more and more guards keep appearing to fight. The player will also have to leave a sacrifice in an altar outside of town, so the Others won't come and collect the sword themselves – trying to do so will spawn a series of endless battles of powerful avatars of the Others. This visit to the outside world gives the player the chance to find and recruit three fairy allies: the Amazon, the Dragon and the Cannon.

At any time, the character may attempt to enter the Solitude Chamber to claim Annabel, where he is confronted by the Sentinel, which is an Other placed as the last defense against usurpers. It is impossible to actually beat the Sentinel, and the player's goal is to fight long and well enough to draw Annabel's attention, leading to the endgame.

THE ENDGAME

There are three possible endings to the game. In the first (default) ending, Gregory demands the sword to accept him as king, which she doesn't. Instead she reveals that the Theodore king who promoted Gregory was himself a double, so that Gregory is nothing more than a usurper. Gregory decides he is too close to unifying the city, and decides he will start a new dynasty without Annabel's consent. He locks the sword back in the Chamber and return to his quest. In this ending, further multiplayer battles will include a darker version of Gregory, the Usurper, which demotes back to Pawn.

The second possible ending is achieved if the Gregory succeeds on recruiting all three fairy characters before placing the offering to the others. In this case, the player may choose to return Annabel to the Others. As a token of friendship the Others retrieve the souls (and powers) of Annabel and the Dragon and let Gregory keep the sword, which they call Gram. In this ending, further multiplayer battles will include a regent Gregory bearing Gram, which greatly improves his attack score.

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The third ending is achieved if Gregory is able win the heart of princess Samantha by making (near) perfect performances in the maps that include her. In this case, after Annabel refuses acknowledging Gregory as king, Samantha intervenes, pleading the sword to acknowledge her unborn son as king, which Annabel accepts. Samantha marries Gregory and bears him a son, Alphonse. The couple is then put to rest, leaving Alphonse at the sword's care. In this ending, further multiplayer battles will include king Alphonse.

Player Characters

GREGORY

King class, Clubs suit, Deviant

The main character starts his journey as a Deviant King of the Clubs suit. Gregory was a (very) unexperienced Pawn before being promoted, and showed symptoms of being a Deviant, such as his tendency to question everything that is told to him, the notable exception being the identity of the false Theodore king that promoted him. He is also cowardly in the beginning of the game, becoming braver as the game progresses.

Gregory promotes to King, and stays as such during the whole campaign. He soon takes Aurelius as a mentor, and may develop stronger bonds with princess Samantha or the Amazon Gwendolyn. By the end of the game, Gregory will again change into one of two personalities, or he may die in exchange of a new character. This means players get to choose which main character they will use in multiplayer battles after finishing the campaign.

Gregory, the Usurper, is the default after-game character. He becomes much darker and grimmer than his old self, and much less naive. He demotes back to Pawn, while still retaining his might, and cast aside any pretense of being the true king. Instead, he claims the right to rule comes from his deed and prowess, and that he's starting a new dynasty that will see the end of the world. He also abandons his sword to use an axe, instead. The advantage of choosing Gregory, the Usurper, is precisely that he demotes to Pawn, and is able to promote again to either Knight, Bishop or Rook. With every promotion (or demotion), he gets to level up in his new class, and after going through three classes, Gregory will have traits much above average, and a vast number of feats.

Gregory, the regent, is attainable if the player recruits all the Fairies and makes a sacrifice to the Others. As regent, Gregory is still somewhat timid, and become increasingly recluse. He reveals he is not the true king, but that he shall govern the people until the day the king returns (it is implied that the Others hid the true king and his daughter, so that the regent will keep the throne. Gregory now wields Gram, which raises his attack power beyond reason (allowing him to slay almost any opponent with a single stroke), but no other trait is improved. As the Regent keeps his King class, he does not get to level up further than normal, being comparatively weaker in all traits other than attack.



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ALPHONSE

King class, Spade suit, Deviant

Son of Gregory and Samantha, Alphonse is born King and raised by Annabel in the midst of a raging civil war. Alphonse is cold and merciless, pragmatic and straightforward. He is very young and knows little of the tale of his parents (who were put to rest soon after his birth). Annabel raised Alphonse to be a deadly and fearless warrior – a role that perfectly fits his natural talents.

After finishing the main plot, the player may choose to play with one of three characters, Gregory the Regent, Gregory the Usurper or Alphonse the King. The advantage of choosing king Alphonse is that he is an über character, whose skill traits are way above normal. On the other hand, since Alphonse is born king, and with no chance of promotion, his selection of feats is very limited.

AURELIUS

Pawn class, Hearts suit, Deviant

Formerly one of the highest ranking Rooks in Theodore kings army, Aurelius was already retired when the Walls of Nevermore cracked. He then reenlisted, hoping to train Pawns to his king's service, but his soon demotion to a Pawn was not taken well. He was exposed as a Deviant (something he himself had no clue about), and because of that he was sent to patrol the ghoul graveyard – a job as good as a death sentence.

At first, Aurelius finds Gregory “pathetic” and, taking pity on him, decides to teach him the basics of battle. In this way, Aurelius acts as a tutorial on the basics of the game. Aurelius helps Gregory recruit a few Pawns, and then is challenged by him to battle. After losing to Gregory's band of ragged warriors, Aurelius decides to help him on his quest “to make sure Gregory doesn't die in too disgraceful a manner”.

As Aurelius is a unique character, he can't be recruited again if killed. He only becomes a playable character later in the game – he will leave Gregory after he completes one of the lesser quests, and returns after a predefined number of multiplayer games is fought. From this time on, Aurelius becomes a playable character: a powerful Pawn unable to be promoted.

Gwendolyn

Amazon class, Diamond suit, Fairy

She is the leader of a fairy group that live in the outskirts of the city. She is strong willed and straightforward, spirited and bold – a full grown, armor clad tomboy armed to the teeth. After making the offering to the Others in the main story, Gregory is assaulted by a swarm of ghouls, and two fairies (the Dragon and the Cannon) jump in to help them. The player is then given the choice to “tame” and recruit them. If he chooses to do so, Gwendolyn steps in and attacks him.

During the battle, Gwendolyn will constantly taunt Gregory, telling to run “to ya's Mumma skirts”, and “flee before ya'r crush'd like fat berry”. She is an overwhelmingly powerful opponent (less powerful only than Alphonse king), and cannot be defeated before the Dragon and Cannon are both captured.

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After being recruited, Gwendolyn will develop romantic feelings for Gregory, and be very straightforward about them. This will allow the player to choose surrendering Annabel to the Others, at Gwendolyn's request, and become the city's regent. If Gwendolyn is recruited, princess Samantha will have a 'disagreement' with her. After she helps Gregory open the doors to the Solitude chamber the princess will leave to never reappear (she's actually spirited away by Others who wish to see Gwendolyn as queen).

Non-player Characters

SAMANTHA

Queen class, Diamond suit, Deviant

She is the daughter of Theodore king. A rebel at heart, Samantha has refused her father's attempts at controlling her for as long as she can remember. After the king vanished, Samantha, decides she did not need a king, and pursued to hunt down would-be kings. She is genuinely concerned with the well-being of her people, but is very narrow-minded and hasty.

Samantha cannot be recruited, but she will appear from time to time, and will fall in love with Gregory if he can save the townsmen in the maps she appears. She is jealous of the Amazon Gwendolyn, and will not fall for Gregory (or will fall out of love) if he recruits the Amazon. Samantha was given keys to the Solitude Chamber by her father, and her help is necessary in order to reach Annabel.

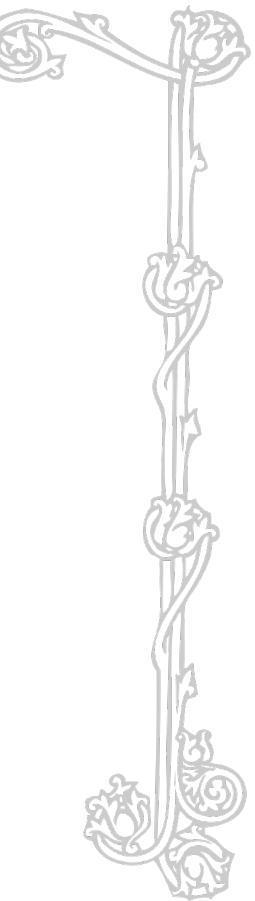
If Samantha is in love with Gregory, both of them will die in the endgame, but their son Alphonse – the stronger character in the game – will be unlocked. If she is not in love with Gregory, he will become a usurper in the end and demote back to Pawn. If Gwendolyn is chosen over Samantha, the Others will spirit her away never to be seen again.

THEODORE

King class, Hearts suit, Regular

The real king never appears in the game, being spirited away by Others before this story unfolds (the Other believed Theodore, wielding Annabel, could be possessed by the Dark, becoming an adversary too terrible to imagine). He was an old, gentle chap, as brave as could be. For a long time Theodore intended on sending expeditions to the ruins of other cities, looking for survivors, but Annabel wouldn't allow it. One day he locked her in the Solitude chamber and decided to lead himself the expeditions (without his powerful weapon), a decision that would ultimately result in the fall of Nevermore.

Throughout the game, several fake Theodore kings appear, three times as quest bosses. They mimic perfectly the old king's abilities, and all have exactly the same traits. As far as Aurelius is able to tell "all these fake kings are not fake in their own hearts – all hold the deceptive belief they are indeed our deceased king Theodore".



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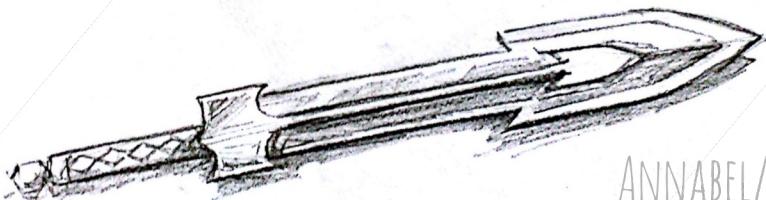
ANNABEL

classless, Hearts suit, Deviant

Long ago Annabel was a half-human. The estranged daughter of a notoriously powerful Other, she was an obvious Deviant from her very first day. That her mother's kin would not accept her angered her father deeply, causing him to kill all her family (including her mother), and take the girl as his prisoner. When the hero king came forth to slay her father, Annabel helped him. She tried to keep her father's identity a secret as much as she could, and to this day very few people know the truth.

Because the hero refused to return the magic sword Gram to the Others, they instilled hatred into the hearts of people, and send them to kill Annabel, but they failed to retrieve the sword after that. Since Annabel was herself half-Other, her soul too was trapped inside Gram, merged with her hated father's. She decided the king had to die, but first arranged for him to have an heir that she could mold to her liking,

Annabel hates the Dark, she hates the Others and she hates herself. But she loves the city and is hellbent in conserving the royal line. She is inclined to tolerate Gregory as a (interesting) lesser evil while she searches for the true king. She will be destroyed by the Others if Gregory decides to surrender her to them, but not before warning him she suspects that it were the Others who took the king and princess Samantha – a thought that would haunt the regent forever. If Samantha and Gregory marry, she will kill them gently and raise their son Alphonse to be one of the most powerful warriors of all time.



ANNABEL/GRAM

THE SENTINEL

classless, suitless, Construct

The Sentinel is a Golem-like creature forged by the best smiths and wizards, using the scales and fangs of the slain dragon. It was created at the behest of the hero king, and presumably of Annabel herself, to guard the sword against Others. Although he means Gregory no harm, he is the final boss in the campaign.

The Sentinel is able, but not willing, to speak. He will battle Gregory when he tries to enter the Solitude Chamber, while summoning guards to help him. Before this battle, Aurelius warns Gregory that "you stand no chance of defeating him whatsoever, but that does not mean you can't win". During the battle, Gregory is trying to prove to Annabel he is worthy of an audience, by lasting as long as he can, delivering a few punches to the Sentinel and not backing down. When Annabel is convinced, she orders the Sentinel to stop, to which he promptly complies.

If the player chooses the Usurper or Alphonse in the end, they complain the Sentinel does not obey them, but "to this day is a servant of Annabel only". If Gregory allies himself with the Others and becomes regent, the Sentinel leaves the city, seeking revenge on the killers of her master.

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WALLS OF NEVERMORE

OTHERS

Other is the name given to any supernatural being or race that is beyond human comprehension and knowledge. Many of these beings are godlike, and others are terrible monsters – such as the dragon slayed by the hero king. Others are only occasionally worshiped by humans, but are always feared. A concept close to Others is Heights, or sometimes Heavens. This is a reference to something eternal and beyond comprehension, before which human problems are petty and insignificant. It is sometimes used as an embodiment of Fate.

GARGOYLES

classless, suitless, Construct

The Dark has adapted its powers of possession, taking statuaries and making them servants. They are patrolling every street in the city, seeking targets of interesting. They also have the power of making unease anyone within its gaze. Gargoyles were instrumental in bringing down the city as spies and saboteurs, but they are also decent warriors, with very high defenses. Sometimes, if battles take too long, gargoyles start joining the fight, attacking both sides randomly.

GHOULS

classless, suitless,, Undead

These terrifying creatures are what's left after the Dark possesses someone for so long that their souls are completely devoured. Ghouls were once men, but are now shells, with partial memory of their former lives and an insatiable hunger for the flesh of the living. They lurk on dark places, preying on the helpless, and appear to have very low sense of self preservation.

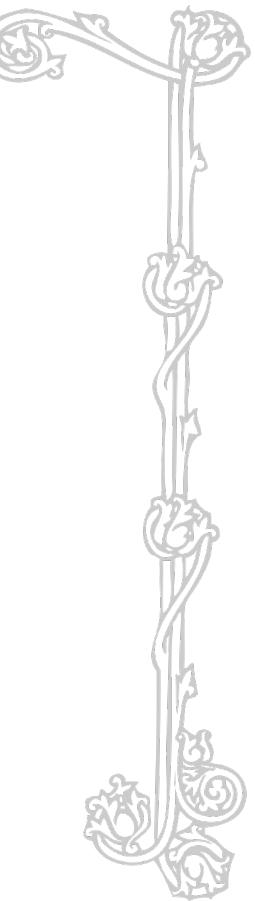
Ghouls cannot enter Chapels, and so are not found in multiplayer battles. In the campaign, they take the role of minions, serving more as a ladder to level up than a real threat.

GRAM

sword

The dragon was once a notoriously powerful and chaotic Other, whose inability to restrain himself led the Others to plan his murder. They forged a powerful sword capable of destroying the worldly flesh of the Others, and imprison their spirits so their powers became available to the wielder. The called this sword Gram.

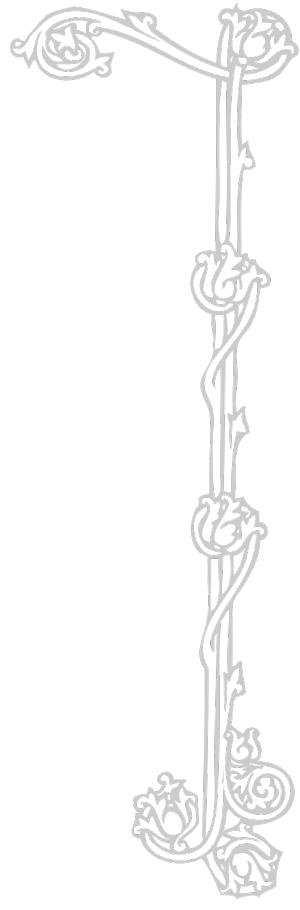
The hero slayed the dragon with the help of her daughter Annabel, but the dragon convinced the hero not to surrender it to the Others. In spite of Annabel's warnings, he claimed the sword, founded a kingdom on the hill and had the Sentinel built to help protecting Gram. It was of little use, because the Others had the people of the city steal the sword for them and kill Annabel in the process, locking her soul as well.



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WALLS OF NEVERMORE





During the campaign, Gram carries the merged souls of the dragon and Annabel (it even calls itself Annabel). The Other have placed so many curses on it, though, that it made the sword mostly unusable, accept as an advisor. Besides the dragon's spectacular magic, it has Annabel's charming spells and it controls the Sentinel, making it a powerful character in its own right.

If Gregory returns Gram to the Others, they will remove and destroy the trapped souls (which they can't control). They will remove the sword's curses and its ability to trap souls, and then return the sword to Gregory as payment for his services. Even this watered down version of Gram is the most powerful weapon in the city, which the regent now carries into battle.

About the Mechanics

Wall of Nevermore's plot, setting and mechanics were developed together in order to have them complement each other. This section illustrates some of instances where this dialogue can be observed.

Classes. Wall of Nevermore uses a chess-like theme, including the types of pieces (Pawns, Knights etc) being incorporated as character classes. If your target stands in a space analogous to one your piece type can move to (for example, diagonals, if you're a Bishop, or orthogonals, if you're a Rook), than the player deals extra damage to that target. In this way, it is advantageous to mimic the movements of a chess game.

Fairy Pieces. In chess there are (a lot of) pieces called 'fairy pieces'. These are pieces used in variant games, with specific kinds of movements. In Walls of Nevermore the fairy pieces are born in the wild and have strange powers, resembling the fae of celtic mythology.

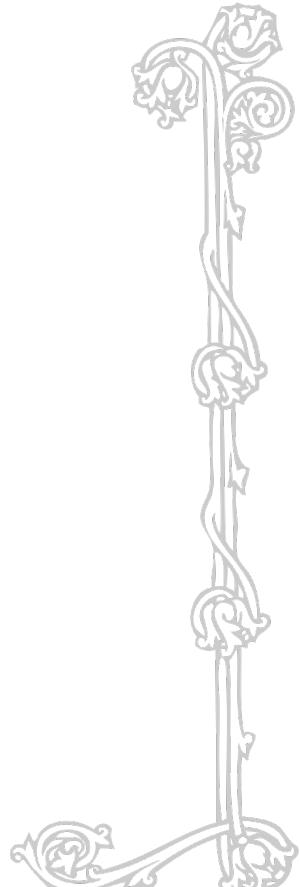
Drop rule. In the game of Shogi (Japanese chess), there's a rule in which you get to keep the pieces you capture, then introduce them in the game, on your side. This led to the concept of Fate, which gives a philosophical explanation to why previously loyal pieces would change sides at a moment's notice.

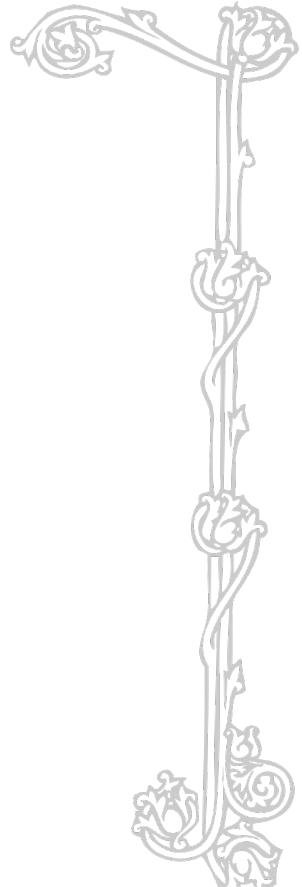
Deviant. A deviant piece is basically one that makes illegal chess moves – something that disrupts the game and is, thus, frowned upon.

Chapels. Walls of Nevermore was originally conceived to be a simple tactics game in which players fight for the ownership of the battle ground. For this to work, there must be a reason why locations are so limited, leading to the idea that a dark force has blighted all non-sacred terrain. Them being chapels allows for the use imagery to evoke a Goth ambient.

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WALLS OF NEVERMORE





Suits. To make the game complex, while keeping the individual rules simple, there is a juxtaposition of mechanics: the base layer is a tactics game; on top of that there's a chess-like layer of mechanics; then there's positioning; and finally a last layer analogous to “rock–paper–scissor”. Because the classic game of chess was already in use, the equally classic suits of cards were chosen. Spades beats Hearts, who beats Clubs, who beats Diamonds, who beats Spade.

But suits have to represent something. It's been defined as a mix of personality, skill and energy, much like the Augury of the Werewolf RPG. This also allowed for the inclusion of character compatibility. When fighting alongside others of the same suit, character gain in-game bonuses.

Feats. Characters can level up, as in most tactics game, and when doing so they get what we call feats. These are special abilities that mimic both rules of chess and standard RPG abilities. For example, a Pawn can get a feat that allows him to take one free move (like the Pawn's double move in chess), or to attack diagonally (the 'en passant' rule), and the King may choose a feat that allows him to swap position with other troops (inspired by the chess rule of castling). Likewise, Bishops may choose to cast healing spells and Knight may choose to damage all enemies around them in a whirlwind strike – which are staple moves in RPGs.

Fake kings. An important aspect of the game is online duels. The problems is that both will end up using the same character, Gregory. For this to work, there must be a reason why the same character appears on both sides, which lead to the idea of evil doubles created by a dark force, just a step away from a civil war, in case the King himself is cloned.

Permadeath. One of the most important rules in Wall of Nevermore is that characters die. Each have a distinct name, his own traits and feats, and you get to play with them and raise their levels. And they die. Sometimes they even change sides and are stolen by your opponent. This is so in order to convey a sense of mortality and urgency on the player – he must play for “this” instant, win “this” battle, enjoy “this” moment, for things can take a turn for the worst and the opportunity be lost.