



LUCEAT LUX VESTRA

A Roleplaying Game set in an
era of Christian persecution.

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PROLOGUE

It is said that to understand someone, one should walk a mile in their shoes. This game challenges the players to do just that: to walk a mile in the sandals of a fictional martyr.

While I am no bible scholar, the period of Christian Persecution was a time where the faithful were damned to terrible consequences for practicing their faith.

My hope for this game is for the players to appreciate the hard choices required from those who lived in such a time. Such dark days are behind us now, but the choices we make for our faith are rarely simple. Perhaps in playing the game, we may all learn a little more about ourselves and how we would tackle such dilemmas.

*To Christine and James, whose lives
matter more to me than my own.*



As with many stories, this one begins with fire.

The Great Fire of Rome burned for six days. Six days of death, despair and ruin to the greatest civilization that the world has ever known. On the seventh day, the Emperor Nero turned against us, blaming us for the incident, branding us as criminals.

It was easy to blame us, for we were few, we were different, and our ways ill-understood. They set the dogs upon us, and crucified or burned those that they captured.

They drove us into hiding, to practice our faith in secret.

Any sane person would have been satisfied by the secrecy, to hide their love for God in their hearts, keeping their heads bowed in public.

But we need to do more for Him, for we are always His loyal servants.

And so we act in secret, performing His will despite the odds.

We are the Light Bearers. And in His name we perform our duties to kindle the faith in Him who gave his life for the sins of mankind.

How could we possibly expect to give any less in return?

LUCEAT LUX VESTRA!
“LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE”

WELCOME TO LUCIEAT LUX VESTRA!

Lucieat Lux Vestra (Latin for, "Let Your Light Shine" as used in Matthew Ch. 5 V. 16) is a Roleplaying Game set in an era of Christian persecution. Here you take on the role of the Light Bearers, courageous special agents of the persecuted Christian faith in the Roman Empire. It is a time of great danger, where Christians are viewed with extreme prejudice, and where even the most baseless of charges can lead you to being crucified for your faith.

Yet despite this, His will must be done.

WHAT AM I READING?

Luceat Lux Vestra is a role-playing game, or RPG. This is a type of game where players take on the role of various heroes that go on thrilling adventures. Luceat Lux Vestra is different from most other role-playing games in the sense that there are no fantastical elements in the game. Instead, it presents a setting that is rooted in one of the darker chapters of Christian history.

However, Luceat Lux Vestra is also a great tool for examining your morals and beliefs. As heroes in extraordinary circumstances, the Light Bearers are forced to make difficult choices in the name of their faith. This gives the players insight as to how they would feel if they were to be put into similar (though hopefully less high-stakes!) situations in real life, and gives the group something to reflect upon and discuss in the context of Scripture after the session is over.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY?

Unlike board games, Luceat Lux Vestra does not have a special board or other components. All you need are a copy of this book, some pencils, two decks of playing cards (preferably with different colored backs) and some friends!

Once you've got this sorted out, one of you takes the role of the Game Master, or GM. This role is special as they act as the referee and the storyteller in the game. The GM is responsible for narrating the situations, acting out the lines of the other characters and adjudicating the rules. The rest of the players, on the other hand will be making the Light Bearers that work in secret in the Roman Empire to bring His word to those in need.

THE LIGHT BEARERS

The Light Bearers are volunteers who wish to spread the Word in a time of extreme danger. They swear by a code that outlines their mission:

His Word must be heard, persecution is no excuse

Deeds of altruism open the hearts of people in need, to better guide them to God's Grace

In recognition of the talents He has given them, the Light Bearers organize themselves into three roles:

Protectors - These are the Light Bearers that seek to defend their fellow man, regardless of creed. While they are perhaps the most able in combat, their focus lies in fighting to save lives rather than taking them. In these times of persecution, the Protectors are an integral part in the survival of the faith.

Scholars - The Brother and Sister Scholars are those that seek knowledge. They keep the scriptures and the teachings of God, finding opportunities to do good through practical skills rather than those of war. They hold themselves by the value of teaching a man to fish, so that they may never go hungry.

Speakers - These are the most skilled in spreading the Word, living testimonies to His glory. Charismatic, clever and kindhearted, they seek to turn hatred into acceptance, and acceptance into love. They take the greatest risks of all by virtue of their preference of avoiding physical conflict in order to establish dialogue, an act that has led to many of our martyrs.

To live as a Christian is to serve His Glory through spreading the word. Light Bearers have adopted several strategies by which to enable them to quietly perform their tasks while avoiding the tortures of Nero's soldiers and the suspicion of the Roman population.



HUMBLE VOCATIONS

Light Bearers often find it best to hide in plain sight by taking on quiet professions. Whether as a dockworker, a scribe, or even a wine merchant in the marketplace, the Light Bearers place themselves where they can be closest to the people. His light shines best in the darkest of places, so the Light Bearers avoid being too far away from the pulse of humanity to be of use.

God's Grace is a personal affair, one that is best experienced from one soul to another. Light Bearers find those in trouble and help them first, without expecting anything from them. These deeds of altruism are what allow them to make a connection with the person.

While this might seem simple or even easy, Rome in Nero's time was a troubled city, where his soldiers would rampage unopposed, taking from citizens without fear and able to casually murder someone in cold blood.

As such the Light Bearers work to right such wrongs and protect those in need. These could be any number of scenarios:

Aiding in the escape of a Gladiator who no longer wishes to kill for the glory of his handler

Putting an end to a crime ring who has held a shopkeeper trapped through extortion

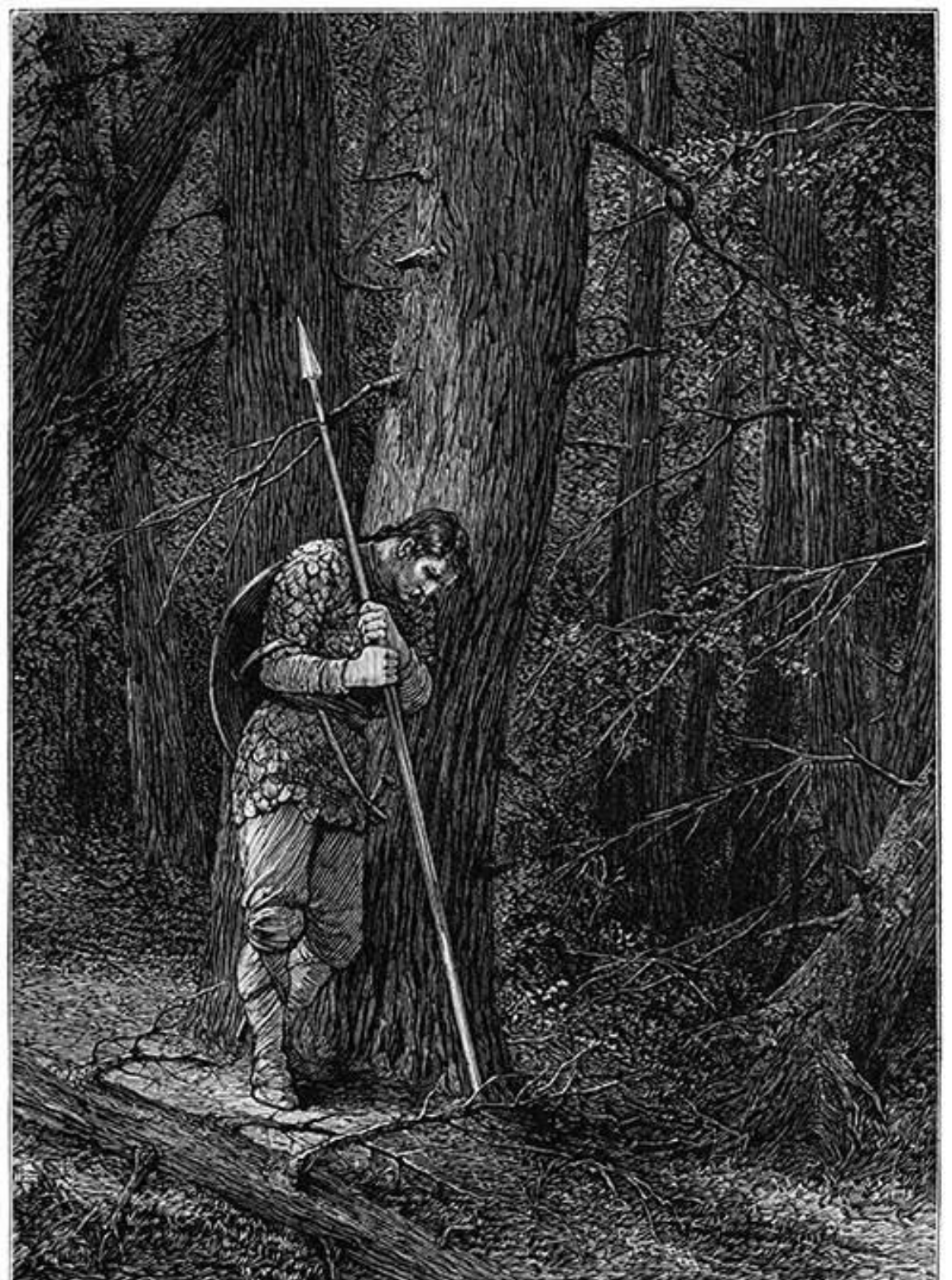
Rescuing a Christian from certain martyrdom before their execution date

Stopping an Imperial Arsonist from setting fire to a local slum to make way for a grand palace for Nero

UNDERGROUND NETWORK

In order to better find people that they can help, the Light Bearers rely on a network of the faithful. These are Christians who keep an eye out for situations that require the help of the Light Bearers.

Rather than act on their own, they send word for the Light Bearers, and brief them as best as they are able. This is how the Light Bearers seem to be able to help someone when they need it most.



LUCEAT LUX VESTRA

CHARACTER CREATION

Colossians 3:12-15 - "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful."

To begin play, you must create a character. This character is your alter-ego in the game, and can be any sort of person you wish them to be. They could be very much like you, or be of a different gender or capabilities from your own.

CONCEPT

Start off with a concept of who your character is. You can start with a simple one-sentence line that gives a snapshot of what the character is: "A former Soldier who converted to the Faith." or "Runaway slave" are both good concepts.

CHOOSE A ROLE

As mentioned earlier, every Light Bearer has a role. Determine whether your character is a Protector, a Scholar, or a Speaker.

ATTRIBUTES

Every character has 4 Attributes: Physicality, Willpower, Intellect and Charisma. Higher scores mean that the character is better at an Attribute.

Assign the following values: -1, +0, +1, +2 to each of the Attributes.

VIRTUE

Indicate your character's Virtue. Your virtue is your character's most positive trait, the glimmer of His glory as reflected through your soul.

Select a Virtue from the following list:

Charity - Your character finds it easy to give willingly from what they have, even when it hurts.

Faith - Your character has a strong belief in a higher power that grants him conviction and humility in the face of adversity.

Fortitude - Your character is a font of determination, able to endure suffering.

Hope - Your character holds a powerful belief that evil cannot prevail, no matter how grim the situation.

Justice - Your character feels a personal responsibility to protect the innocent.

Prudence - Your character always considers their actions carefully, relying on wisdom for the proper course of action.

Temperance - Moderation comes easily to your character, and the pleasures of the flesh hold no sway over them.

When acting in accordance to your Virtue in a situation that places your character at risk, you gain a +2 bonus to your check.

WEAKNESS

Indicate your character's Weakness. As imperfect beings, all people suffer from a character flaw, and a vulnerability to Temptation.

Select a Weakness from the following list:

Envy - Your character is never satisfied with what they have, and yearn to have more than others do.

Gluttony - Your character is prone to indulging their appetites to the exclusion of all else. Some things are simply too good to pass up!

Greed - Your character has an urge to own material goods in excess of their needs.

Lust - Your character struggles with their passions, leaving them obsessed and desperate.

Pride - Your character is prone to arrogance and vanity, believing themselves to be right in all things.

Sloth - Your character is susceptible to apathy and cowardice, and may take short cuts and overlook details in their work.

Wrath - Your character has issues with uncontrolled anger and is prone to lashing out violently.

When confronted with a situation that pits your Weakness against you, you suffer a -2 penalty to your check.

DETAILS

Complete your character by giving them a physical description and a name, and you're done!





LUCEAT LUX VESTRA

HOW TO PLAY

Mark 10:15 - Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

HOW TO PLAY

Light Bearers is a very easy game to learn and play. In some ways, it's like a conversation, where the Game Master, or GM narrates a situation and the players describe how they react to it. You can choose to speak "in character", acting out your character's very words and mannerisms, or just describe what your character is doing or saying. Both are valid ways to play.

INITIAL SETUP

At the start of each session, all Players draw 5 cards from a single shuffled deck of playing cards. These form the Player's Hand. These cards have a special rule to them that we'll get back to later.

The rest of the cards are left face down in the middle, and will serve as the Player Deck. The GM also has his own, separate deck of facedown cards, but does not draw a Hand. We recommend using a deck of cards with a different color of card back from the Player Deck to avoid confusion.

If either deck runs out, reshuffle spent cards back to make a new deck.

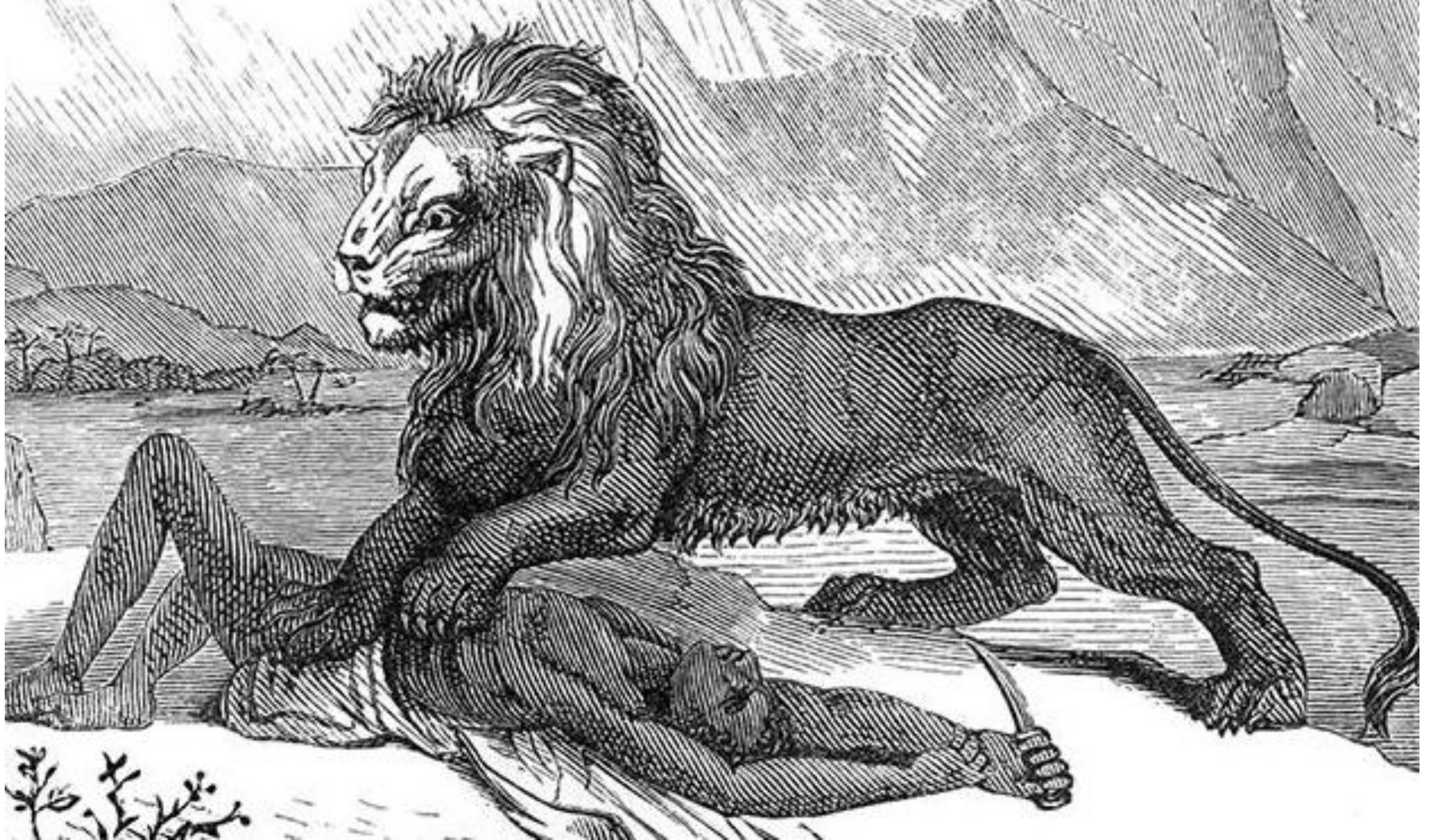
CHECKS

Whenever your character tries to do something that is risky, dangerous or open to the possibility of failure, the GM may ask you to do a check to discover if your character manages to pull off that action successfully. Checks may also be called upon if your character is trying to resist or break free from something.

First, the GM must inform you of two details: the Difficulty of the task, and the Category that the task falls under.

Tasks are sorted by card suits:

- ♠ Spades - Physical Task
- ♣ Clubs - Willpower Task
- ♦ Diamonds - Intellectual Task
- ♥ Hearts - Social Task



The GM establishes the difficulty of the action using the following table:

DIFFICULTY	DESCRIPTION
6	Easy
8	Difficult
10	Challenging
12	Extreme

The value of cards are also determined by the table below:

CARD TYPE	VALUE
2 to 10	2 to 10
Ace	11
Jack	12
Queen	13
King	14

In order to succeed, a Player must draw and play a card from the Player Deck that is equal or greater in value than the Difficulty of the Task.

If the card played matches the Suit of the task, then the value of the card is doubled.

If the card's value is below the Difficulty, then the character fails.

THE HAND

There are two ways to use the cards in your hand:

- You may choose to play a card from your hand in place of drawing from the top of the Player Deck.
- You may choose to play a card from your hand to add its value to a card that you drew from the Player Deck. You may play as many number of cards from your Hand to improve a draw.

Take note that the Players do not refresh their Hand until the next game, so choose wisely!



LUCEAT LUX VESTRA

CONFLICT

Matthew 18:15-17 ~ "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. "But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that **BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.** "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

CONFLICT

In Light Bearers, conflict is inevitable. Whether it's a heated debate to convince a non-believer, or a scuffle against soldiers in order to resist arrest, there are different situations that pit the Light Bearers against other people.

INITIATIVE CHECK

To determine who goes first in a Conflict, the Players all draw from the Player Deck and play the cards. The GM also draws once from his deck for each group of minor opponents, and each major opponent. The GM also draws to determine Initiative for any allies that the Players may have that are joining the Conflict.

DEFINE THE ENVIRONMENT

Once Initiative has been determined, every character in the Conflict gets to define one feature of the environment. This feature can be a physical thing but could also be a condition or a quality of the situation that they could use to their advantage. A Light Bearer could say that they are "Standing where their voice carries furthest" as a potential feature in a social Conflict. Another Light Bearer could say that a chase Conflict has a feature of "Cluttered with Market Stalls."

Once per Conflict, the player may utilize the feature they defined to augment one of their actions. This grants them a +1 bonus to the action. So again, the Speaker currently trying to talk down an angry crowd will get a +1 bonus because they are "standing where their voice carries furthest."

Once used, the feature is no longer available.

CONTESTS

Conflicts are resolved by contests. During a contest, the GM draws and plays the top card of his deck and applies either a bonus or penalty to the value based on the NPC's Attributes. Players then have an option of playing a card from their hand or playing the top card of the deck.

The draw is then compared to the GM's and the higher value wins. Ties go to the defending character.

Example:

Maximus is attempting to sneak past a few guards in hopes of making it safely out of the prison compound. The GM also draws the top card of his deck and plays it, a 7 of Clubs. Since the guards are well trained, they have a Physical Attribute of +2 for a final Difficulty of 9.

Maximus looks at his hand. Unwilling to gamble on uncertainty, he decides to play one of his cards in hand, a 5 of Spades. Since the Suit of his card matches that of the Check, the value of the card is doubled, giving Maximus a result of 10, easily overcoming the difficulty. Maximus sticks to the shadows and slinks his way past the guards.

STRIKES

While most Conflicts can be resolved in a single check, some Conflicts, like a battle or a chase need multiple successes to determine a winner. In these Conflicts, each character has a total of 3 Strikes. Every time an opposing character succeeds against you, your character takes a Strike. Once they take 3 Strikes, they lose the Conflict, either getting caught, losing an argument or being knocked unconscious.



Example:

Maximus finds himself being chased by an Angry Mob of citizens that believe him to be a threat to them. He has no intention of hurting anyone, and opts to run instead. Both Maximus and the Mob start with 3 strikes.

Both Maximus and the Crowd make Initiative Checks. Maximus draws a 6 of Hearts, while the GM draws a 4 of Clubs. Maximus goes first!

Maximus says that he's trying to pull ahead as much as he can and ducking into the tighter alleyways of the residential districts to hope and thin down the crowd. The GM nods and makes the check for the Mob: 6 of Spades! Since this is a Physical Task, the card counts as double, making the final value a 12.

Maximus' player decides to play a card from his Hand, something he's been saving for emergencies like these: A Queen of Hearts! Queens count as a 13, and Maximus pulls ahead while the Angry Mob begin to fall behind, taking 1 Strike in the process.

Now it's the Mob's turn. The GM describes how the Mob, frustrated by Maximus' cleverness, decide to split up to cover more ground rather than cram into the tighter alleyways. The GM makes another check and gets a 6 of Diamonds.

Maximus' player knows he has a 1 Strike lead, and decides to take a risk and play the top card of the Player Deck and finds himself playing a 2 of Clubs. Maximus despairs at his misfortune as he takes 1 Strike, and the Mob's tactic of splitting up is starting to close off his avenues of escape.

Play then continues back and forth until Maximus or the Mob loses all their Strikes.

