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SETTING

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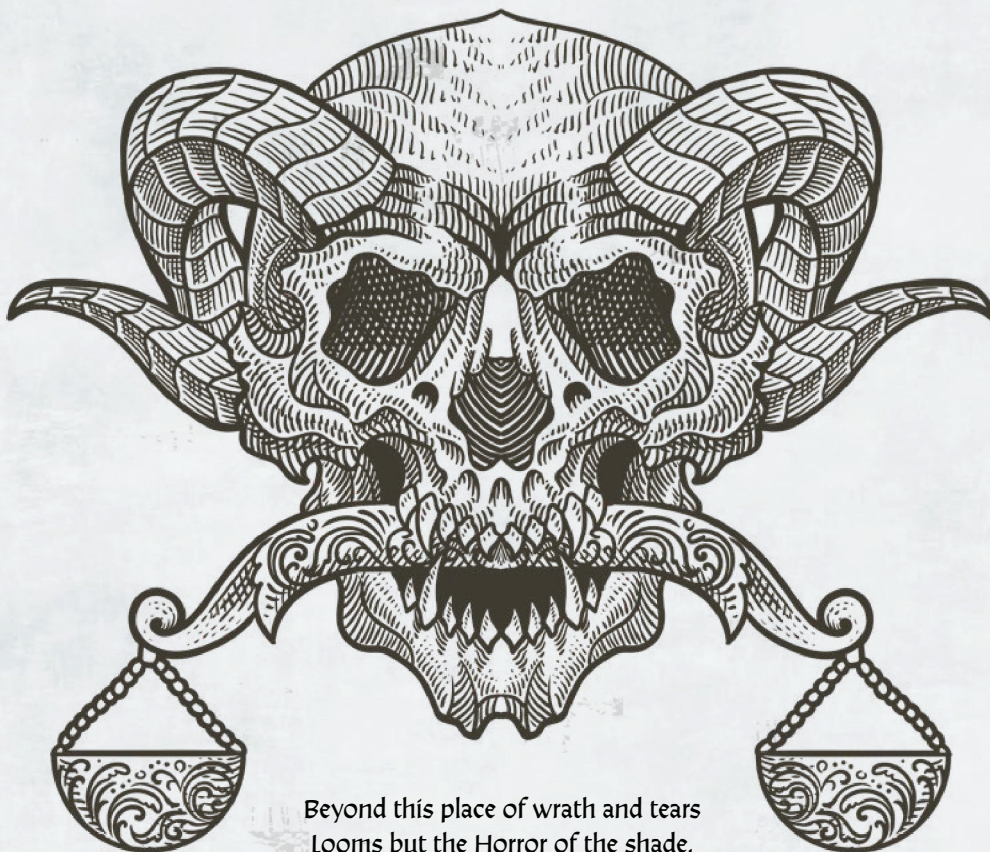
GRAVEHEART



IN THE DARK & GRIM FAR FUTURE,
EVEN DEATH IS NOT THE END OF HOPE.

GRAVEHEART

CAMPAIGN SETTING



Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.
~ *Invictus*, William Ernest Henley

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More information can be found at <https://www.daggerheart.com>.

There are no previous modifications by others.

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FEAR FEST

This publication is part of Fear Fest 2026. Fear Fest was conceptualized and organized by Bard & Raven and hosted by Heart of Daggers to celebrate the communities' shared love for Halloween and Daggerheart.

Check out all other community creations on www.heartofdaggers.com/fear-fest!

bard & raven  **HEART OF DAGGERS**

GRAVEHEART

*JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE DEAD,
DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE OFF THE CLOCK.*

COMPLEXITY RATING: ●●●

THE PITCH

You are a Reaper, Ferryman First Class, an agent of the Lord of Death themselves. Trapped between afterlives in a twisted Underworld of the far future, filled with savagery, sorcery, super science, and the rogue spirits of the damned.

You serve as Reaper in penance for misdeeds you can no longer remember. That memory stripped from you, along with all the rest, when you entered Death's service. Can't have your pesky old life distracting from your duties, can we?

Your job: To hunt rogue spirits fleeing eternal justice.

Your tools: Wits, Grit, Magic and Guns.

Your reward: A single copper coin.

TONE & FEEL

Mysterious, darkly comic, bureaucratic, satirical, gritty, punk, mercenary, action packed, battle hardened, cathartic.

THEMES

War stories, noir detectives, gallows humor, purgatory, duty vs. identity, moral gray areas, found family, redemption, rebellion.

TOUCHSTONES

Devil May Cry, Hades (game), Dorohedoro, Tank Girl, R.I.P.D., Heavy Metal, Nifft the Lean, Gachiakuta, Hellboy, Fifth Element, Barlowe's Inferno, Necromunda, Thundaar, Dark Souls.

"YOU HAVE DIED"

You've seen those words hanging over your head more times than you can remember.

You sigh as you walk underneath the swaying sign bearing them, serving as a daily epitaph for the customers of the Broad Bottom Inn.

As you enter the moldy tavern, the filthy old barkeep points directly at you with an emaciated hand, freezing you in your tracks. The sharp finger tracks over and points again at the far wall, where the Job Board hangs.

"Dammit Charon, already?!? Can't a dead man pretend to have a drink first?"

The Ferryman of Death slowly begins to fill a rusty mug with gray dust, pouring out from the bar's sole brass tap. You remind him, you like your Pathos served cold.



PILLARS OF DEATH

OVERVIEW

If your group decides to play this campaign, give your players the following information before character creation.

HADES, LORD OF THE UNDERWORLD, IS MISSING.

Thanatos has left the Underworld to hunt for him, leaving Charon in charge of escorting souls to their afterlives. For eons Charon ferried souls across the Styx alone, with no office and no deputies, just the boat and the river. When Hades vanished, that was no longer enough.

Desperate and overwhelmed, Charon conscripted the *Penitent* to aid in his service. These hardworking souls are caught between afterlives, bound in service for mortal crimes, and stripped of their memories until they've finished their work. *You are one of them.*

The official titles are Reaper or Ferryman. Operating somewhere between police force, mercenaries, or vigilantes, they are the only officials most souls in the Underworld ever meet.

Crews of these elite supernatural agents often adopt mercenary-like unit names: Ghost Zero, Pale Company, Deathforce 5, etc.. Everyone else just calls them The Crossing Guards. A not-so-subtle insult that stings more because it isn't entirely wrong.

THE JOB

Most souls go quietly. Most. The rest are your problem.

Rogue spirits are the souls who refused their judgment and ran. Some are recent arrivals, panicked and confused. Some have been loose for millennia, dug in deep, collecting Fetters and followers, under protection of criminal gangs or powerful demigods.

They hide everywhere, from collapsed districts of the sprawling Slab to the depths of the ever-expanding Necroplex of the Damned. The longer they've been running the stronger they get, the harder they fight, and the stranger their power becomes.

Your job is to find them and bring them in. Intact if possible, or by whatever means necessary... It's not glamorous work, you didn't ask for it, but everyone says it has to be done, or the Underworld will overflow and break into the world of the living.

You have your doubts. As you begin your hunts, you can't help but ask yourself, what did I do to deserve this? Why are so many going rogue? What do they know that you don't?

DEAD TRADE

The Underworld is surprisingly rich in resources from the constant rain of shreds of reality falling down from the mortal world. Sometimes entire cities or landscapes pass through the veil, when truly massive amounts of death happen up above.

Most notably, a mass event during the Psychic Wars of 7110 AX dropped half the surface of an unnamed planet into the Underworld, bringing a strange collection of savagery, super-science, sorcery, aliens, and mutated new souls along with it.

OBOLS

All general trade is done with the barter system. Obols, the coin placed on the tongue or over the eyes of the dead, were once the primary currency of the Underworld. However, that tradition died with the culture that practiced it. Obols now circulate almost exclusively within the Reapers Corps, used to trade for rare goods, and as payment for jobs or favors amongst themselves.

FETTERS

Many spirits form deep spiritual bonds with items, changing them into Fetters. Every Fetter carried by a spirit is an anchor to something they refuse to let go. They can be almost anything: a soldier's rifle, a child's toy, or a chunk of reactor casing still warm from the nuclear meltdown that brought the soul here.

Fetters have become the Underworld's most valuable currency, powerful tools that transform and grow along with the owner. Spirits collect, hoard, and steal Fetters with the same tenacity the living reserve for food and water. The longer a spirit has failed to move on, the more Fetters they crave.

GRIM THUNDER

Something big is happening up above. Something so deadly it's shaking the roof of Hell, cracking across the land as a low, rolling thunder raining mortal shreds across the Underworld.

The thunder also means bodies. Every peal bringing a fresh flood of souls pouring through the veil, more than the ferryman were ever meant to handle. Processing these souls has backed up for centuries, and the Underworld is growing crowded...

Nobody up top is asking whether the Underworld can absorb the dead they're making. Nobody up top is asking much of anything anymore. That might be the most telling detail of all.

DARK FUTURE

Nobody knows the exact timeline or year anymore. Reapers don't, Charon doesn't, or if he does he isn't saying. Best estimates put it somewhere in the mid five digits by whatever calendar is used.

The living world has become a techno-magical ruin where the last scraps of civilization grind against each other under poisoned skies. Down here, of course, none of that matters.

The Underworld has collected souls since the first person bled out. A Roman legionnaire might be running the same corridor as a void-suited star miner. The ghost of a medieval plague doctor might argue jurisdiction with a crackling electric mandroid.

More recently, robots and aliens have begun to enter the Afterlife. Nobody finds this newsworthy, least of all you, since you work alongside them every day, or are one. The Underworld is now a melting pot of the strange and unusual, all waiting to move on.



COMMUNITIES

All communities are available in a Graveheart campaign, but their meaning has shifted in the afterlife. How you were raised shapes how you carry yourself, even when memories of your past have been taken from you.

Provide the following to your players and ask them the relevant questions at the start of the campaign.

LOREBORNE & Highborne

In life, you traded in knowledge or privilege. In death, you still reach for those tools, gathering information on rogue spirits, negotiating with the damned, and leveraging whatever social capital carries over into the underworld.

- What knowledge did you carry into death that you still feel the shape of, even without the memory?
- You once used your position to protect someone who didn't deserve it. Who? And does that choice follow you?
- You were renowned or a leader in life. Down here, existence has less meaning and purpose. What is the hardest part of that, and have you made peace with it yet?

Ridgeborne, & Wildborne

Your life taught you how to make the best of a bad situation. The underworld is just another wilderness, and you've survived worse. You navigate it the way you navigated every hostile place before it, by instinct, grit, and the help of a close group of friends.

- What survival instinct from your life before serves you in death without you knowing why?
- You were forced from your home by something terrible. Did you ever find out what it was?
- Wild places have apex predators. So does the Underworld. You've identified one. What is it, and have you told anyone?

Underborne

Born into bunker complexes, generation ships, asteroid mines, or megacity hab-stacks; your sky was always a hard ceiling of metal or stone overhead and the low hum of recycled air.

The Underworld's twisting labyrinth feels almost like home to you. The walls may shift and the passages double back, but you're already three steps ahead of someone who grew up in the open. You know these rhythms, you were born knowing them.

- You thought you knew every passage, every junction, every shortcut. Then one day you found a corridor that shouldn't have existed. What was beyond it?
- Something sealed you in once. No light, no way out, just you and the dark and whatever was down there with you. How long were you trapped, and what did you do to survive?
- Everyone topside eventually asked you what it was like, living without sky. You had an answer you gave them. What was the real answer you never said?



Orderborne

You served something in life: a military, an institution, a mega-corporation, or just a personal code of honor. The structure and order of the Reaper Corps feels familiar, even if the uniform is more tattered. You follow orders. You keep your questions to yourself. You have opinions about how your squad runs, but you follow the chain of command before you pull it.

- You once followed orders that you knew were wrong. Everyone who gave those orders is somewhere in this Underworld. What would you do if you met them again?
- You are uncomfortable with how loosely some crews treat their jobs. What do they do that bothers you most?
- You served a system. Chain of command, doctrine, procedure. The system is ash now. What part of the old structure do you follow out of habit or still care about?

Slyborne

You worked the margins. Information, leverage, misdirection. You know how to find someone who doesn't want to be found. In death, those skills translate directly to your job in the Reaper Corp, and likely a few lucrative side hustles as well.

- You were caught doing something you shouldn't have been. Is that what killed you, or what got you this job?
- You have a contact among the rogue spirits. You haven't reported them. Why?
- In the Underworld, everyone is already dead and most of them have nothing left to lose. How do you work an angle on someone like that?

Seaborne & Wanderborne

You were always moving. The afterlife is just another journey, and the Underworld is just another land with no map. You adapt. You learn the Ways. You care about what counts as home, even if it's just a moldy tavern with a silent ashen bartender.

- One of your wanderings cost you something irreplaceable. Was it worth it?
- You've managed to keep something from your life: an object, a habit, or a phrase. You can't explain it, but won't give it up. What is it?
- You never stayed anywhere for very long. The Underworld is permanent, or close enough. How are you handling the fact that this time, you don't get to leave?