

# WARLOCK!

A GAME INSPIRED BY THE EARLY DAYS OF  
BRITISH TABLETOP GAMING



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**FIRE RUBY**  
DESIGNS



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# WELCOME TO WARLOCK

Warlock is a rules-light roleplaying game that aims to emulate the feeling of old-school British tabletop games of wondrous and fantastical adventure. Warlock looks to reproduce the play style of its illustrious predecessors but in a light, quick and simple manner, with a consistent rules set that is easily hackable and adaptable as desired.

## WHAT IS THIS GAME?

Warlock is a tabletop roleplaying game, played with pencils, paper and dice. The implied setting is a fantasy world in a vast Kingdom of man. Beset on all sides by enemies, both without and within, the players control characters struggling to survive in a fantastic world. So thematically, Warlock is a fantasy game of perilous adventure. However Warlock does not contain lots of explicit setting information, so you can use it with your favourite published or home-made settings. Instead Warlock aims to give you a simple and concise set of rules that you can shape as you need.

## WHAT DO WE NEED TO PLAY?

There are a few things you will need before you can play a game of Warlock. The first is a few friends, as role-playing is a shared experience. Typically, between three and six of you is ideal, but you can



play with as few as two if you want. You will also need some paper and pencils (you can use pens, but a lot of the information you will be writing down will change during play so pencils are better). You will need a character sheet such as the one shown at the back of this book; although you can easily copy down the relevant information onto a blank piece of paper should you wish to. Finally, you will need some dice, more on them later.

Warlock is a role-playing game with a narrative emphasis, so you will not need miniatures or strategic maps. Saying that, if you want to use them to enhance your experience of the game then feel free. Finally, you will need your imagination, so ensure you bring it along.

### HOW DOES WARLOCK WORK?

A group of people sitting around a table or sharing a space online plays the game. One of those people is the games master (GM), who sets the scenes, takes the roles of non-player characters (NPCs) and presents the game world and the challenges therein. The rest of the people around the table are players who each control one or more player characters (PCs), their avatars in the game and the imaginary characters through which they interact with the game world. Like in a spontaneously created radio play, roleplaying games allow players and the GM to create a story together by imagining scenarios as a series of interconnected scenes.



## WHAT DO THE PLAYERS DO?

During the game, the games master presents the players with scenes and encounters in which their characters are involved. The players simply choose the actions of their characters in each scene; relate that to the games master, who along with the players uses the rules of the game to decide the outcomes of the character's actions. It is as simple as that!

## HOW YOU ACTUALLY PLAY?

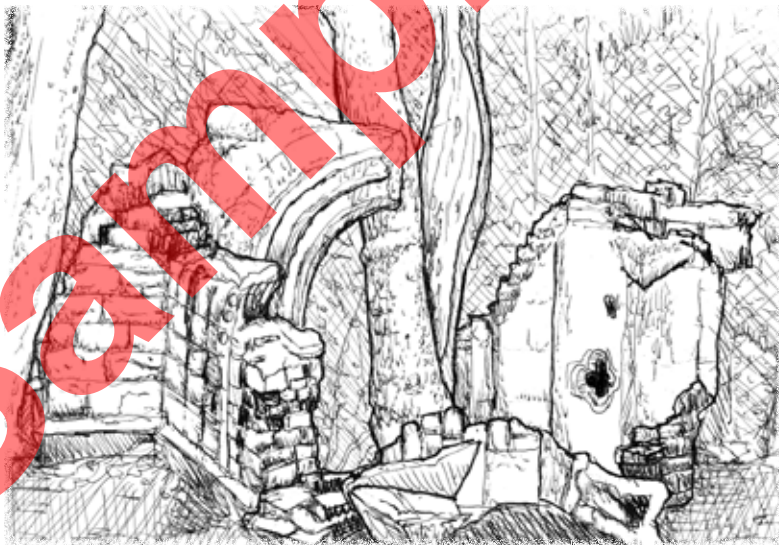
In a roleplaying game, the games master introduces the scene in which the player characters are involved to the players. They explain the surroundings and any other characters or enemies that the characters might interact with. They then typically present a challenge that the player character face, before asking the million dollar question 'what do you do?'. Based on the answer, the games master decides what occurs, and which, if any, of the mechanics of the game are invoked. The players and games master then use the mechanics to resolve the scene. Based on the outcome the games master describes a new scene, and the process repeats. It is a very simple procedure once the games master and players have 'got into character' and got used to the ebb and flow of play. Warlock uses a twenty-sided die, a d20, to resolve actions. You'll also need a six-sided dice or d6 as they are known. You'll need these to play, and it's best if everyone has their own dice.



## THE GOLDEN RULE

Remember that Warlock is a game, nothing more, nothing less. The aim is to have fun, and the rules in this book are simply a way of arbitrating actions in a fair way and introducing some unpredictability. This is the golden rule - have fun! If you are having fun, you are playing the game right!

These rules are very light as roleplaying games go. If you come across a situation that you cannot find a rule for (and you will!), simply roll a die. Half the results go in favour of the players, the other half go against them.





## THE WORLD OF WARLOCK

Warlock is set within a fantasy world with many of the common creatures and beings of western fantasy literature. The implied area of the world in which the game takes place by default is a vast Kingdom of man, established many centuries ago. Elves, dwarves and halflings share this land, but they are very much in the minority - this is a human-centric place. Goblins and hobgoblins, rival realms and monsters beset the Kingdom on all sides. Worse still, the Kingdom is rotten within - the traitor Warlock escaped attempts to trap him and is still at large, wrecking ruin with his dark magics, and drawing goblins and other fouler creatures to his service. In look and feel the Kingdom is at a late medieval to early renaissance level.





# CREATING CHARACTERS





## CREATING A CHARACTER

Before you can start playing, the players need to create their alter egos in the game. Player characters (PCs, also just referred to as characters) are the figures through which players interact with the world of Warlock. The personalities of these characters are the roles players adopt during play, their focus within the game. It is the choices players make for their characters and how those characters interact that creates the story. Creating characters can be a shared experience, and building from each other's ideas can help to create a more interesting group of people. Remember to include the games master in the design process, as they have an important part to play in creating the game everyone will play.

Characters are defined by their skills, their Stamina and their Luck. These are outlined below.

### BEGINNING SKILLS

The skills shown on the character sheet (see the back of this book) are known as the adventuring skills. All skills have a level - the higher, the better. Characters are competent individuals, so they start with some aptitude here. Ten of the skills on the sheet you can mark as level 6. These are where the character has the most natural ability. Ten more begin at level 5, and the rest start at level 4. There's a description of each of the skills starting on page 16.



## STAMINA

The health, fitness and all-round vitality of a character is defined by their stamina. The higher the better. When a character or enemy runs out of stamina in combat, they risk serious injury and are at the mercy of their opponent. To determine beginning stamina, roll the following:

**Stamina:**  $2d6+12$

## LUCK

A character's destiny and fate are represented by luck. At any time during a game session, the games master can ask a character to try their luck to see if things go their way. To determine luck, roll the following:

**Luck:**  $1d6+7$





## COMMUNITIES

There are four communities within the Kingdom that can be selected for characters at creation. There are no mechanical differences between them, but in the default world of Warlock they each grant some benefits and impose some societal restrictions. The default character community is human, which grants neither benefit or restriction. Make a note of the community your character belongs to.

### HUMAN

The most populous community in the Kingdom, humans hold most of the position of authority. They are bright, adaptable, resourceful, aspiring to nobility but all too often destined to disappoint.

Choosing to play a human gives no benefits or restrictions. However, as part of the dominant community of the Kingdom, you'll fit in and can be expected to be treated as 'normal' - whatever that means.

### ELF

You are part of the ancient community of elves, natives to distant lands and the deep woods. You are rare enough in the Kingdom for your presence to be remarked upon. Elves think like humans, with two differences - they live for a long time and mature very slowly, and they value art above and beyond anything else. To the elves, the artistry of a life is worth more than the life itself - to



endure a dull life without grace and beauty is less than living.

Elves are beautiful, graceful and can see in moonlight as well as in day. However, they are treated with mild suspicion by most folk, and can all too often develop a contempt of their lesser fellows.

## DWARF

The stout-hearted dwarves are common in the Kingdom. They are tenacious, hardy and wilful, prone to greed and quick to anger, slow to friendship but firm in loyalty. Of the other races, dwarves are the most common in the Kingdom, respected if kept at arm's length by decent folk. Dwarves are like humans, with a couple of differences - they are concerned more with the making a thing than the thing itself, and consider honour and respect more important than anything else in life.

Dwarves are smaller but stockier than humans, happiest under stone, and stubborn as rock. They can see as well by moonlight as in day, and have a keen eye for appraising things that have been made. However, although they are always treated with respect, they are still considered outsiders to most in the Kingdom.

## HALFLING

Diminutive and slight, yet full of heart, halflings are the most accepted race in the Kingdom besides humans. In part this is because humans have difficulty seeing a Halfling as anything other than



a child. As a result, halflings tend to act like children - they are impulsive, quick to tantrums if they don't get their way but also quick to forget past slights.

Halflings are quiet and can move silently when they want to, and often go unnoticed by bigger folk. However, some people struggle to take them seriously.





## CAREERS AND SKILLS

Your career determines how you live - what you do to earn your keep and place in the Kingdom. To determine the starting career of the character, roll a d6 die four times to determine a career from the table shown on page 21. Then pick one of the four options that suits your conception of your character, and that's your character's starting career. Each career lists some possessions, so write them down (you'll also get some basic equipment, see page 20), and allows you to roll on some small tables which add a bit of colour and background. Finally each career has a list of adventuring skills and levels. These are the only adventuring skills that your character can advance while in the career, and the maximum values that those skills can have while in that career. Tick the boxes on your character sheet for the two different skill levels.

When you create your character, you can assign 10 levels to those skills listed in your starting career, the only restriction being that you cannot exceed the maximum skill level shown. Remember to include the skill levels you assigned earlier when determining your skill level total. You also gain a 'career skill' at a level equal to lowest level of all the skills the career grants as described on page 20 - you'll need to write this in the space on your character sheet.

You'll see that there are way more adventuring skills available than are listed for each career - to gain others, you'll need to change career, as described on page 62.



## THE ADVENTURING SKILLS

During skill tests, skill levels are used to help you succeed. There follows a description of the various adventuring skills and their use.

**Appraise** - the character has a keen eye. Not only can they appraise items for their worth or providence, they can also assess other people to get a measure of their worth and their apparent trustworthiness.

**Athletics** - a measure of a character's ability to use their body in feats of movement and coordination, including running, jumping, climbing etc.

**Bargain** - the character's ability to bargain with others for something they desire, such as a shopkeeper for their wares or an informant for a piece of information.

**Blunt** - the use and application of blunt weapons such as clubs, maces and hammers.

**Bow** - how to hunt with a bow and hit small targets, plus the care and maintenance of your implements.

**Brawling** - a knack for fighting with fist and body, knowing how to move and how to fight dirty.

**Command** - issuing commands and projecting the kind of confidence that gets those orders followed.

**Crossbow** - the use of crossbows, implements of war that advertise their users as soldier or hardened mercenaries.





**Diplomacy** - the art of charting a course through the rocky ground of interpersonal relations, and getting two opposed sides to compromise and find a way forward.

**Disguise** - the character can adopt a gait, voice and mannerisms that disguises their true nature and convinces the casual observer that they are someone they are not.

**Dodge** - the character is able to dodge incoming missiles, be they arrows, stones or rotten fruit.

**Endurance** - the character can resist physical hardship and keep going where others fail.

**History** - a knowledge of past events of the Kingdom and the realms that surround it, and some of the major personalities that litter history books.

**Incantation** - the ability to use magic, to draw symbols in the air with fingers of flame and summon the breath of esoteric power using scrolls.

**Intimidate** - the character is able to use their physicality and personality to intimidate others. This doesn't necessarily mean they are big and imposing, more that they are able to push others around with the strength of their character.

**Language** - understanding enough of a smattering of languages of the Kingdom, the character can figure out what people are saying, even other races.

**Large blade** - this skill covers the application and maintenance of large bladed weapons like both one-handed and two-handed swords.



**Lie** - the character is able to tell quick and easy lies, and convince others of their honesty. The use of this skill is often opposed by the Appraise skill.

**Medicine** - the character is able to help stabilise wounds and the critical hits that can be suffered in combat. Without some medical assistance, many wounds can fester and deteriorate.

**Navigation** - finding your way along the roads of the Kingdom, let alone the trackless forests, is no mean feat. This character is skilled in choosing the right path.

**Ostler** - riding, tending and maintaining horses is a life skill that this character has learnt. They know how to keep their mount happy and healthy.

**Persuasion** - the fine art of getting someone to do what you want. Persuading people assumes that what you want them to do isn't against their interests - if it is, the games master may impose a penalty to the test.

**Pole-arm** - the character is adept at fighting with the various kinds of pole-arm, both spears and long weapons topped with a blade or axe head.

**Repair** - characters with this skill are mechanically minded, and able to perform repairs either ad-hoc or planned to keep devices and tools operating.

**Sleight-of-hand** - the character is able to use distraction and manipulation to perform tricks of prestidigitation, useful in picking pockets and cheating at cards.



**Small blade** - the character is adept at using knives and daggers in combat, nasty weapons in the right hands.

**Spot** - with a keen eye and a mind set for detail, the character is able to spot things out of place or otherwise remarkable but hidden in a scene. This skill is often pitted against Stealth when someone is sneaking where they shouldn't be.

**Stealth** - able to make use of cover and shadows, the character is adept at sneaking about. This skill is often pitted against the spot skill of guards and watchmen.

**Streetwise** - a knack for knowing the right kind of people to talk to and the right places to go to meet them, this character is knowledgeable in facets of the seedier side of life.

**Survival** - how to find a good camp site, find water and forage for food, a character with this skill is adept at surviving in the wilds.

**Swimming** - not many folks can swim, and water is dangerous. This character is able to move about in open water without losing their life.

**Thrown** - there's an art to hitting something with a stone, a javelin or a tomato. A character with this skill has spent many an hour honing their aim.





## CAREER SKILL

Each career also comes with a skill named after the career itself. This represents all the knowledge and know-how that come from working in that profession, things that aren't covered by the adventuring skills themselves. If a player can persuade the games master that a career skill makes sense in the context of a test in the game, one that's not covered by an adventuring skill, they may use this skill to determine success.

## BASIC EQUIPMENT

Each character begins with the following equipment at character creation. More can be bought with the money they have, and most careers grant further equipment that will be described in their entry.

2d6 silver coins, backpack, d3 days' foods, water skin, eating knife, clothes and boots.



## THE BASIC CAREERS

The basic careers that can be taken by characters as they start their adventure follow. Roll 1d6 four times and choose one of the four careers indicated.

Die number	Result of d6	Career
1	1	Agitator
	2	Beggar
	3	Boatman
	4	Bodyguard
	5	Bounty Hunter
	6	Entertainer
2	1	Footpad
	2	Gambler
	3	Grave Robber
	4	Hunter
	5	Initiate
	6	Mercenary
3	1	Militiaman
	2	Miner
	3	Noble
	4	Outlaw
	5	Pedlar
	6	Raconteur
4	1	Rat Catcher
	2	Road warden
	3	Soldier
	4	Thief
	5	Tomb Robber
	6	Wizard's Apprentice

Each listing gives a basic description, the adventuring skills of the career and their maximum level, and details possessions the career grants. Tables of background flavour are also included.



## 1.1 AGITATOR

**Small blade 10, Intimidate 10**

**Dodge 12, Persuasion 12, Streetwise 12**

You spend your time stirring things up, digging into the psyche of the mob and twisting it to your ends. You are a good speaker, good at manipulating people, and at prodding the sore spots. That grain riot in Galdenback? That was you. You had some thing to do with the burning of the warehouse on the shores of the river Eld, some say. You don't comment.

Equipment: A notched and nasty dagger, a leather jerkin (light armour), pamphlets, seditious writings. A bottle of grog that could be set on fire, you know, if you had to.

### **Who you've worked for (roll a d6)**

1. The Heldehall crime gang.
2. Steepleman, the Mayor's rival.
3. The cult of the Stag.
4. The Gilvenburg trade house.
5. Someone called The Knife.
6. You don't know. Which is worrying.

### **Who's hunting you? (roll a d6)**

1. The Guard, deadly and vengeful.
2. The Guild, bedecked with lawyers.
3. The Church, saintly and poisonous.
4. Your brother, hateful but sad.
5. A goblin band, angry and mad.
6. You don't know. Which is worrying.



## 1.2 BEGGAR

**Appraise 10, Blunt 10**

**Lie 12, Spot 12, Streetwise 12**

Seated by the side of the road, you're ignored by almost everyone - they don't even notice you are there. Which doesn't help you eat, but does mean you tend to see things others might prefer to go unnoticed. You can spot a soft touch in the crowd, and when things are tight and you need some help, you also know people - not good people, but useful people.



Equipment: A wooden club for defence, ragged clothes, a messy bedroll. A bottle of something that helps you forget how hard the floor is.

**What you've seen (roll a d6)**

1. Things coming out of the sewers.
2. What the Mayor gets up to.
3. Where the pickpockets live.
4. The secret of Madam von Hossburg.
5. A murder, silent and beautiful.
6. A person supposed to be dead.

**Who you know (roll a d6)**

1. The captain of the Peacock Guard.
2. The silent priest of the Red King.
3. Silias, the silver thief.
4. The beautiful charlatan Mimirik.
5. The Dark Man and his bitter gang.
6. You don't know anyone, honest.

**1.3 BOATMAN**

Navigation 10, Repair 10

Blunt 12, Endurance 12, Swimming 12

Messing about on the river some call it, but in reality they know the rivers are the lifeblood of the Kingdom, and the boatmen are the true lords. Or so you say. Still, there's a lot to be learned on the river, and you certainly see some interesting places and meet some interesting people. But the boat is where you heart really lies.

Equipment: A wooden club for defence, workman's cloths, a bedroll and backpack. A pack of cards for those slow nights, and a picture of a saint.





### Where you've been (roll a d6)

1. The capital city, bedecked in flags.
2. The badlands, rife with goblins.
3. The great port and wine-dark sea.
4. Lake Gossenham, and the floating fort.
5. The bloody canals of Westerlan.
6. The rapids of the mighty Alase river.

### What you've seen (roll a d6)

1. Goblins burn a town with glee.
2. The lair of the loved Bandit king.
3. Blind traders from far Arais.
4. A sea beast, deadly and beautiful.
5. A handsome captain murdered for coin.
6. Enough of war to last a lifetime.

## 1.4 BODYGUARD

Medicine 10, Thrown 10

Dodge 12, Intimidate 12, large blade 12

You've guarded everyone from merchants in fear of rivals to rich nobles after some fun in the rougher parts of town. You know how to keep quiet and look mean - all you need, most of the time. But things get out of hand and you need to pull a weapon, you're ready for that too. Never lost a client. So far.

Equipment: An arming sword, chain and leather with a small shield (modest armour), knuckle-dusters. A letter from your mother, which you cherish when times get hard.



**Who you have protected? (roll a d6)**

1. Vilus, the vile priest.
2. The head of the von Tassenback family.
3. The dwarven map forger, Haddous.
4. Lady Consetta, the sly opera singer.
5. The crimelord Garhen the elf.
6. Lord Fellini, a fool in disguise.

**A secret you know about them (roll a d6)**

1. They drink wine like a fish.
2. They visit the more exotic brothels.
3. They once killed someone, for love.
4. Where they keep the gold.
5. Who their late lamented mother was.
6. Why they hate the King's guard.

## 1.5 BOUNTY HUNTER

**Bargain 10, Crossbow 10**

**Small blade 12, Spot 12, Streetwise 12**

You keep to yourself. Your face is enough to keep most people away. You have a knack for finding people, people that don't want to be found. Mainly that's a result of knowing the right people - or the wrong people, as most would see it. But you're handy with a blade too, as most of the people you are looking for will do a lot not to get found.

Equipment: A dagger, chain and leather (modest armour), a crossbow. A roll of parchment showing faces and names for you to look out for.



**Who you have caught? (roll a d6)**

1. The murderer of Madam Von Hock.
2. The Tresselback arsonist.
3. Your sister. Don't ask.
4. Deserters from the royal army.
5. The wrong person, but don't tell.
6. The agitator Hemlock.

**Who you're searching for? (roll a d6)**

1. The halfling poisoner Rubis.
2. The lover of Jizt, a jilted noble.
3. Horse thieves from Pure Ballalas.
4. The heretical priest Kinns.
5. A reason to hope, in a dark land.
6. A way out and into the light.





## 1.6 ENTERTAINER

**Diplomacy 10, History 10**

**Brawling 12, Disguise 12, Persuasion 12**

You can hold a tune, play an instrument or tell a story, good enough that others will listen. People like you for that reason, and listen to what you have to say. Not that you take advantage of that. Not at all. But hey, everyone has to make a living right? Nothing wrong with telling people what they want to hear, and if it helps you, that's just a coincidence, right?

Equipment: A musical instrument or book of stories, a dagger, nice clothes and a jaunty hat that marks you as someone to watch. A roll of parchment with that play you've been working on.

**Who you have entertained? (roll a d6)**

1. The crowds outside the grand temple.
2. The patrons of the Broken Swan.
3. The royal opera house.
4. Lady Polbeck's last and greatest party.
5. The beggars, you feel sorry for them.
6. Anyone who'll listen on the streets.

**What have you learned? (roll a d6)**

1. The mayor loves to sing.
2. Holbrick is a swindler.
3. Great stories are often unappreciated.
4. Poetry is not for you.
5. Sweet words hide ugly thoughts.
6. There's money in well-spoken lies.



## 2.1 FOOTPAD

**Stealth 10, Thrown 10**

**Blunt 12, Intimidate 12, Streetwise 12**

Need money? No problem. Spot a mark, follow them, make your move. No need to get too violent, just enough to get the job done. Then run. Have a look at what you got later, when you're safe. Or as safe as you can be anyway. You can't trust anyone these days. A lurker in doorways and alleys, you are sadly one of many in the Kingdom these days.

Equipment: A nasty club, stained with blood. A cloak with hood, and a sack for your gains. A few pretty trinkets which make you feel special and aren't worth pawning.

**Who you have you robbed? (roll a d6)**

1. The captain of the guard, dead drunk.
2. Your father. Needs must.
3. A young noble, foppish and foolish.
4. A priest of the Heartstone.
5. The merchant Johannes.
6. A nun - you're not proud.

**What's your move? (roll a d6)**

1. Slink out of doorways, cloaked.
2. Drop from a roof like a spider.
3. Pretend to be a beggar, humble and sad.
4. Lurk in bars, prey on the drunk.
5. Hide in the sewers, then jump!
6. Anything that comes to mind, really.



## 2.2 GAMBLER

**Bargain 10, Spot 10**

**Lie 12, Persuasion 12, Sleight-of-hand 12**

A fool and his money are soon parted. You're no fool, but the gambling pits of the Kingdom, be they back-street dens or aristocrat casinos are awash with them. You're good at finding a mark, and playing the odds in your favour so that you get what you need. And if you make a few enemies on the way, that's life huh?

Equipment: A deck of cards, well-thumbed, nice clothes and a serious hat that marks you as a player. A roll of parchment with your best cheats scribbled on it.

**Who have you fleeced? (roll a d6)**

1. Anise, arrogant mistress of Fulbeck.
2. Your father. Needs must.
3. An aspiring priest of his last coppers.
4. The mercenary Jagar. An error.
5. The gullible son of Lord Vech.
6. Who haven't you fleeced?

**Who wants revenge? (roll a d6)**

1. The casino owner, who's on to you.
2. Your partner. Well, one-time partner.
3. Your lover, who you gambled away.
4. That princeling, who knows you cheat.
5. Your father, for your dissolute ways.
6. Who doesn't want revenge?