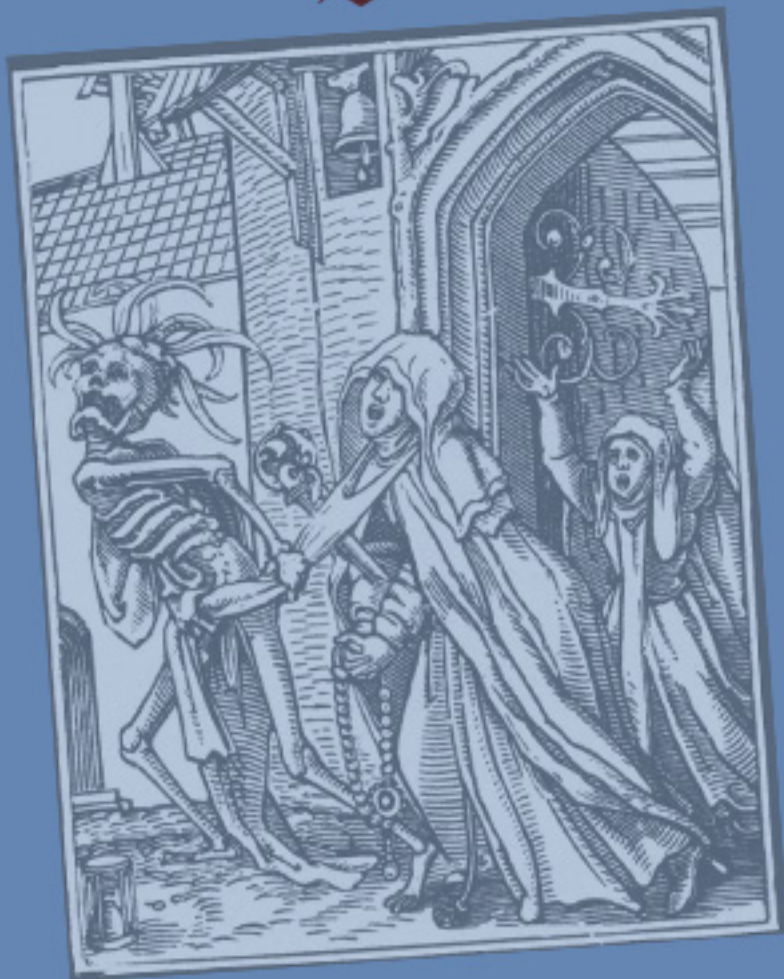


# A Grog's Life



Love, Loss, and Secrets  
in the Covenant's Shadow

An *Ars Magica* Playset for *Fiasco*

Will Hindmarch

# A Grog's Life

## Credits

Written by Will Hindmarch

Edits, cover design, and insta-setup by Renee Knipe

## Boilerplate

This playset is an accessory for the Fiasco roleplaying game by Bully Pulpit Games.

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For more information about Fiasco, or to download other playsets and materials, visit [www.bullypulpitgames.com](http://www.bullypulpitgames.com).

For more information about Ars Magica and other fine roleplaying games, visit [www.atlas-games.com](http://www.atlas-games.com).

If you'd like to create your own playset or other Fiasco-related content, Bully Pulpit would like to help. Write to them at [info@bullypulpitgames.com](mailto:info@bullypulpitgames.com).



"When you play, play *bard*." - Theodore Roosevelt

# The Score

## Nasty, Brutish, and Short

**grog:** *Strictly, a warrior or guardian employed by a covenant of wizards for protection from mortal or mundane threats. Practically, various servants and assistants at the lowest level of import on the covenant grounds. They are known for their mortality.*

Amid the magic of medieval Mythic Europe, where shadows run deep and profound mysteries lure even the greatest wizards into danger, you are the line of defense between mortal perils and the magi. Your body—and perhaps your courage, training, and steel, but definitely your body—is meant to keep the swords and arrows and fangs of the world from breaking the flesh or concentration of your wizardly betters. While the most prestigious among you may carry shields to protect the magi from harm, some of you protect them from cold and hunger and the schemes of the mortal world outside the covenant.

A covenant is like an abbey for a community of wizards. It's made up of masters and apprentices, books and laboratories, and includes all the servants and staff that keep the place in order. Like you. Your covenant dwells in something like a hidden castle in the countryside, near a village and a more traditional, martial castle.

The world, out there, teems with wolves and monsters and fay tricks and angry rivals and suspicious priests. Wizards dare to learn about magic and the world despite all the risks to life and limb—your life and your limbs.

The common folk don't trust wizards. Anyone who's not a wizard is probably common folk. You're common folk. But you count on wizards for food and shelter and a purpose in life.

Right?

## Movie Night

The Name of the Rose, Merlin, Dragonslayer, A Knight's Tale, The Reckoning, Game of Thrones

# Relationships...

## 1 roles

- ◻ A Berserker and a Bookbinder
- ◻◦ A Guard and a Historian
- ◻◦◦ A Huntress and a Cook
- ◻◦◦◦ A Minstrel and a Valet
- ◻◦◦◦ A Brute and a Messenger
- ◻◦◦◦◦ A Grizzled Combatant and a Novice Scribe

## 2 duties

- ◻ To serve the magi and to die for the covenant
- ◻◦ To protect the magi and to die for the covenant
- ◻◦◦ To keep the house and to die for the covenant
- ◻◦◦◦ To lie and to die for the covenant
- ◻◦◦◦◦ To better the soul and to die for the covenant
- ◻◦◦◦◦◦ To liaise with the folk and to die for the covenant

## 3 fates

- ◻ To enjoy the victories and suffer the defeats of the magi
- ◻◦ To disobey for the good of the covenant
- ◻◦◦ To bask or suffer together, inseparable
- ◻◦◦◦ To outlive the covenant in shame
- ◻◦◦◦◦ To die for the covenant (or because of it)
- ◻◦◦◦◦◦ To suffer the victories and enjoy the defeats of the magi

#### 4 origins

- ◻ From the same village
- ◻◦ From the same father
- ◻◦ From the same conspiracy
- ◻◻ Taught by the same tutor
- ◻◻ Raised by the same abbey
- ◻◻◻ Adopted together by the covenant

#### 5 wizardry and worse

- ◻ Split from a single person by forbidden magics
- ◻◦ Subjects of an experimental potion by a magus
- ◻◦ Traded in by a foreign covenant
- ◻◻ Shameful survivors of an ill-fated journey
- ◻◻ Suspected of being changelings by your peers
- ◻◻◻ Both bound by a magic spell (that is not magic at all)

#### 6 blessings

- ◻ One blessed and one damned
- ◻◦ One rising and one falling
- ◻◦ One dried out and one a drunkard
- ◻◻ Both bound by a regrettable pact
- ◻◻ Both bound by a love forbidden
- ◻◻◻ Both witness to a miraculous event

...in a Grog's Life

# Needs...

## 1 for the covenant

- To see the covenant through to a new spring
- To please one magus above all others
- To prove one magus is a villain
- To protect the magi from common hatreds
- To see the covenant beloved by the world
- To see the covenant feared and respected

## 2 for yourselves

- To outlast the covenant
- To outlast a rival grog
- To shift blame
- To feast like a magus
- To grow old with pride
- To grow old out of spite

## 3 for kith and kin

- To restore the crops with a magic boon
- To free your family from the covenant's shadow
- To bring a damned friend within the covenant's sanctuary
- To protect the common folk from hateful magi
- To sneak treasures to the common folk
- To turn a beloved friend from swan to human again

#### 4 to get in

- ☐ To the laboratory of a magus, to absolve them
- ◻◻ To the good graces of the church
- ◻◻◻ To the good graces of the Sheriff
- ◻◻◻◻ On an expedition into the wild
- ◻◻◻◻ On one of the wizard's arcane rituals
- ◻◻◻◻◻ To the laboratory of a magus, to pilfer

#### 5 ambitions

- ☐ See a mythic creature and live to tell the tale
- ◻◻ Earn a magic trinket and live to tell the tale
- ◻◻◻ Change shape through magic and live to tell the tale
- ◻◻◻◻ Earn riches enough to buy your loves better lives
- ◻◻◻◻◻ See the covenant rejuvenated like the spring
- ◻◻◻◻◻◻ Live to tell any tale, at this point

#### 6 to get away

- ☐ From your shame through heroism
- ◻◻ From your vocations through wits and wiles
- ◻◻◻ From your marriage
- ◻◻◻◻ With murder, for the sake of the covenant
- ◻◻◻◻◻ With betrayal, for the sake of your soul
- ◻◻◻◻◻◻ From the covenant, for a day

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# Locations...

## 1 the covenant grounds

- The warm kitchen, full of expensive smells
- ◻ The herb garden, riddled with mushrooms
- ◻ The gatehouse, dripping with rain
- ◻ The cellar's "forgotten" chapel
- ◻ The smithy, filled with smoke
- ◻ The feast hall, its banners bright

## 2 the wizards' tower

- The front steps, etched with sigils
- ◻ The grand staircase, lined with stuffed birds
- ◻ Your favorite magus' laboratory, its cauldron cold
- ◻ The hated magus' laboratory, its cauldron bubbling
- ◻ The library, locked
- ◻ The rooftop, encircled with iron spikes

## 3 the nearby village

- The market, smelling of fish and leather
- ◻ The tavern, with cups chained to the walls
- ◻ A peasant farmhouse, abandoned
- ◻ A creaking mill, piled high with grain
- ◻ The master tailor's shoppe, curiously empty
- ◻ The Sheriff's fine, stone house



#### 4 the nearby wilds

- ☐ A crossroads, recently dug up for a grave
- ☐• An old stone footbridge, etched with the names of pilgrims
- ☐• The secret grove where it's always autumn
- ☐•• The ivy-choked ruins no one can identify
- ☐•• A cave littered with bones
- ☐••• The witch's hut, aglow from within

#### 5 holy ground

- ☐ The old cemetery at the abbey
- ☐• The common chapel in the village
- ☐• The gilded reliquary in the abbey
- ☐•• The nunnery above the road
- ☐•• The site of the new cemetery, yet unplanted
- ☐••• Sanctuary

#### 6 distant lands

- ☐ The cold lair of a basilisk
- ☐• A giant's crude abode
- ☐•• An ocean shore, blanketed in dead fish
- ☐•• A stretch of sand and bleached bones
- ☐•• The overgrown gate of a dead covenant
- ☐••• A ring of standing stones, half hidden in fog

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# Objects...

## 1 secret

- Wedding bands for a secret union
- ◻ Identical birthmarks that bode ill
- ◻ A page torn from a book, in an evil-looking script
- ◻ A stamp for sealing letters, thought lost
- ◻ A secret language, known only to a few
- ◻ The mingled ashes of wizard and grog, inherited

## 2 personal treasures

- Two scraps from a saint's hem, bought at great expense
- ◻ Hairs from a griffin's mane, given by a magus
- ◻ The petrified eyes of a selkie, or maybe just stones
- ◻ A wooden box holding cinnamon bark, saved since last winter
- ◻ Two gold coins — the start of something grand
- ◻ A rustic flute and a lyre with a broken string

## 3 weapons and armor

- A pitted, proven sword
- ◻ A broken lance, jagged and sharp
- ◻ A skullcap pulled from the lake, smooth and shiny
- ◻ A wicked-looking axe for chopping bone like branches
- ◻ A sword, hurriedly made and untested
- ◻ A tower shield, charred and scarred

#### 4 charms and talismans

- The necklace worn when Oswin survived a fatal blow
- ◻◻ A lead ring, protection against the spells of spies
- ◻◻◻ Melted wax "from the wing of Icarus" protects against falls
- ◻◻◻ Half a coin that halts attacks on the heart and mind
- ◻◻◻ A dragon's scale said to make one fireproof
- ◻◻◻◻ The lucky knucklebone of an Irish giant

#### 5 potions

- Petrifying venom of the cockatrice
- ◻◻ A slow-acting love potion
- ◻◻◻ A healing draught, watered down
- ◻◻◻ A volatile dram of drake's blood
- ◻◻◻◻ A staining poultice that promises invisibility
- ◻◻◻◻◻ Two doses of lethal poison, dangerous even to the touch

#### 6 perils

- A talking skull
- ◻◻ An unsealed letter of warning in the wrong hands
- ◻◻◻ A written confession
- ◻◻◻ A profane text, out of place
- ◻◻◻◻ A blood-encrusted dagger that cannot be cleaned
- ◻◻◻◻◻ A faerie circle kept secret from the magi

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# A Grog's Life

## Insta-setup

### Relationships in a Grog's Life

For three players...

- \* Roles: A Huntress and a Cook
- \* Origins: Adopted together by the covenant
- \* Blessings: Both bound by a love forbidden

For four players, add...

- \* Fates: To outlive the covenant in shame

For five players, add...

- \* Wizardry And Worse: Traded in by a foreign covenant

### Needs in a Grog's Life

For three players...

- \* For the Covenant: To see the covenant through to a new spring

For four or five players, add...

- \* For Kith and Kin: To free your family from the covenant's shadow

### Locations in a Grog's Life

For three or four players...

- \* The Covenant Grounds: The gatehouse, dripping with rain

For five players, add...

- \* The Nearby Wilds: The crossroads, recently dug up for a grave

### Objects in a Grog's Life

For three, four or five players...

- \* Potions: Two doses of lethal poison, dangerous even to the touch