

# MALFEASANCE

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A GAME ABOUT GOBLINS

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

You are a GRAND GOBLIN, one of the trusted cronies and viziers of the great and terrible QUEEN OF THE GOBLINS. Like all of your kind you blend gleeful sycophancy with incalculable disloyalty, great personal ambition with staggering cowardice. You must do your best to appease your sovereign with SUPERNATURAL MISCHIEF while scheming against her and your fellows at every turn.

What you need to play:

- At least three “friends”
- At least six d6s and four d8s
- A bunch of tokens

## Chapter 2

# Your goblins

In the game of MALFEASANCE, every player creates a good-for-nothing goblin for their own. Your goblin's success and career are entirely dependent on CURRYING FAVOR with the Queen of the Goblins.

To define your goblin you first pick one of the following NASTY NATURES:

- **BOGEYMAN:** you are a horrible shapeless shadow of fear that walks like a man. Although your true shape is flimsy, wispy shadow, you start with 2d6 of darkness magic and 2d8 of shapeshifting.
- **FIEND:** you are a fierce fire-spitting spirit with a hot temper. Your tiny body is only good for 2d6 on its own, but you have fire magic that's worth 2d6. When there's already natural fire to work with, two of your fire magic d6s become d8s.
- **GREMLIN:** you are a common, excitable and tricky goblin. Your physical form is good for 2d6 and you start with either treasures worth 2d6 and trickery magic worth 1d6 or vice versa.
- **GNOME:** you are a foxy forester. Your little form is good only for 1d8, but you can call upon your many animal friends for 3d6 worth of mooks.

- **HOBGOBLIN:** you are a nasty lieutenant in the goblin hordes. Although on your own, your strength are only worth 2d6, this becomes 2d8 when are leading soldiers into battle. You also always start with 2d6s worth of mooks in the form of goblin draftees.
- **IMP:** you are a malignant mote, a poisonous point of cruelty. Your little flying form is worth only 1d8, but you have 2d6 of potent darkness magic and 2d6 of devilish trickery magic.
- **KOBOLD:** you are a scaly critter from the hot darkness of the goblin mines. Your little form is worth 2d6, but 2d8 whenever you are underground or in darkness. You also start with darkness magic worth 2d6.
- **LEPRECHAUN:** you are a greedy goblin cutpurse. You roll an ordinary 2d6 with your body, and start with trickery magic worth 2d6, but whenever you stolen have someone else's property two of your trickery d6s become d8s against them.
- **NIXIE:** you are a wily, wiry water sprite. Your slim body is only worth 1d6 on land but 3d8 in the water. You have some mastery of the tides and the waves, so you start with 2d6 of elemental water magic.
- **OGRE:** you are a mean mass of monster. Your massive stature is worth 5d6 whenever strength is called for, but you may frequently find yourself awkwardly big in many circumstances.
- **PIXIE:** you are a darting little fairy with mischief on the mind. Your tiny little body is only good for 1d8 on its own, but you start with 6d6 of fairy dust.
- **TROLL:** you are a great and terrible nature spirit of the old times. Your thick body is worth 4d6, but in the deep wood, by the standing stones or in other fey places it is worth 4d8!
- **WITCH:** you are a terrifying weaver of curses and misfortunes. Your decrepit frame is only worth 1d6, but you start with 3d8 of fate magic.

After choosing your AWFUL ARCHETYPE, it is time to buy BOONS and SKILLS. You buy these with cents; every goblin starts with 100 cents to equip themselves.

In addition to your nature, you can get extra dice from a number of BOONS. Anything all of the players agree to can be a BOON, but each die costs a different amount depending on how many d6 and d8 you already have. If you only roll d8 in certain circumstances (like a the fiend's elemental fire magic), count them as d6s.

Each d6 die costs 3 cents (and each d8, five), plus two times the number of d6s you already have of that kind and three times the number of d8s. You can also upgrade d6s that you already have to d8s for eight cents a die. You cannot add to or upgrade the dice you get from your body.

Different kinds of dice in MALFEASANCE are:

- DARKNESS MAGIC is all about concealing things, snuffing out candles and making lamps flicker. More than that, darkness magic fills people with unknown dread and sends spooky sounds and phrightening phantasms.
- ELEMENTAL MAGIC has a number of different sorts:
  - Air magic is for flitting about on the flows of air or conjuring up bitter biting breezes.
  - Earth magic lets you call the very rocks of the earth to your aid.
  - Water magic can stir the the waters into a stormy soup or calm them to a quiet quell.
  - Fire magic, of course, is for burning things.
- FAIRY DUST makes you faster, lighter and quicker than everyone else, letting you hop and zip through the air at giddy speeds. It also lets you charm animals, open locks and generally perform minor acts of witchery like that. Although fairy dust is very useful, it is quickly used up. Every time you roll your fairy dust dice, if any of your fairy dust dice come up as misses you must set one of them aside until you have the chance to replenish your dust supply.
- FATE MAGIC lets you mess around with coincidence and happenstance. Perhaps a broom just happens to trip up the

meddlesome mortal, or the phone number you need just happens to be out in plain sight. It is usually used for laying curses on people, but we suppose someone might be able to use it to help out.

- **LANDS** are places that are under your goblin's power. In fairyland, goblins are much stronger when they have the home court advantage, after all. As long as you can get someone to enter your domain, you can influence the surroundings to do your bidding in frightening ways...
- **MOOKS** are anyone you can get to help you do your dirty work. Many hands, as it were, make light work.
- **SHAPESHIFTING** lets you twist yourself, for a scene, into whatever form you desire. You may add your shapeshifting dice onto your body's dice. If you wish, you can also use shapeshifting magic to appear to be someone else.
- **TREASURES** are ancient artifacts and devilish devices that can work wonders. They might not look like much, but a treasure contains unique magic that any who hold it and know its secrets can make use of. You must write down the powers of each of your treasures at character creation.
- **TRICKERY MAGIC** is for cheating, moving things about, getting into places you shouldn't, making things disappear, faking voices or making one thing look like something else.

Your **TERRIBLE TYPE** determines your starting **ATTRIBUTE** level. To increase your attributes by 1, it costs a number of cents equal to your current level in that attribute. The five attributes of **MALFEASANCE** are brutality, courage, niceties, riddles and secrets.

|            | BRU | COU | NIC | RID | SEC |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Bogeyman   | 2   | 5   | 4   | 4   | 3   |
| Fiend      | 3   | 4   | 4   | 3   | 2   |
| Gremlin    | 4   | 3   | 2   | 3   | 3   |
| Gnome      | 2   | 2   | 4   | 5   | 4   |
| Hobgoblin  | 5   | 4   | 4   | 2   | 2   |
| Imp        | 3   | 2   | 4   | 5   | 2   |
| Kobold     | 3   | 3   | 4   | 3   | 2   |
| Leprechaun | 2   | 3   | 5   | 4   | 2   |
| Nixie      | 3   | 2   | 4   | 5   | 3   |
| Ogre       | 5   | 6   | 2   | 2   | 2   |
| Pixie      | 2   | 3   | 5   | 4   | 3   |
| Troll      | 4   | 5   | 2   | 3   | 4   |
| Witch      | 2   | 2   | 4   | 5   | 6   |

Finally, come up with a name, one CRAVEN FEAR and two MALEVOLENT MOTIVES for your goblin. One of your motives must be something that HER SERPENTINE MAJESTY will never grant, and one must involve at least one of the other players' goblins. With that, you are ready to go!

| GRAND GOBLIN CHARACTER RECORD |
|-------------------------------|
| Name                          |
| Nature                        |
| Fear                          |
| Goals                         |
| Brutality                     |
| Courage                       |
| Niceties                      |
| Riddles                       |
| Secrets                       |
| Boons, Notes, Doodles         |

## Chapter 3

# Playing the Game

The game of MALFEASANCE unfolds in rounds. In each round, one player takes on the role of the Queen of the Goblins and declares her DARK BIDDING. They play the part of the POTENTATE OF PANDAEMONIUM for the whole of the malfeasance, and their own goblin takes a back seat for this round.

The Queen's orders invariably involve causing trouble for HUMAN FOOLS. The player directly across from the queen take on their part of the MEDDLING MORTALS.

The rest of the players will have the roles of their own GRAND GOBLINS.

### 3.1 Scenes

Within each story there are many scenes. The player who plays the QUEEN and the one who plays the HUMANS take turns setting the scene. After the do so, any other play can announce that they will take an action.

To get anything done a goblin need to THROW THEIR WEIGHT AROUND, and that means throwing the dice. Every dice action requires you to have some sort of DICE SOURCE—be it your own strength, some foolish cronies or some devilish device. The dice source lets you know how many dice of which sorts to roll.

The GREAT AND TERRIBLE GOBLIN QUEEN rolls 3d8 for her own strength, and has 10d6 worth of other boons that she can reveal throughout each story. Stupid humans roll 3d6 for

their own strength and have no other boons (hah!). However, whenever a human picks up someone else's traitorous dice by TAKING THE INITIATIVE, they can keep those dice as a new boon if the scene goes well for them.

Pick up the dice and declare what you want to do. The player to your left announces the CHALLENGE NUMBER, then the player to your right says which of your ATTRIBUTES you get to use.

| Challenge Numbers |                                    |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| 3                 | Child's play.                      |
| 6                 | Hmph! Shouldn't be too tough.      |
| 9                 | Tricky, even for a rogue like you. |
| 12                | Hah, I'd like to see you try.      |
| 15                | Don't make me laugh!               |

If your ATTRIBUTE is more than twice the CHALLENGE NUMBER, every die that comes up 3+ is a hit. If it is higher but not double, a 4+ hits. If it is equal to the number or lower, each 5+ is a hit.

Hits build your MOMENTUM: take a number of tokens equal to the number of hits you scored and put them in your MOMENTUM CHALICE.

Regardless of the challenge number, all dice that come up as ones are TRAITORS; other people can take these POLYHEDRAL BETRAYERS for their own actions and roll them to THWART YOUR PLANS.

After someone else rolls, you can TAKE THE INITIATIVE by changing the shape of the scene; this means something different depending on who you're playing:

- Ordinary Goblins have to use their PRECIOUS POWERS to take initiative, tapping their secret sources of strength (which they are loathe to do). They change the scene by bringing out a FORCE or a FOCUS, but that risks the boon that is used. If the scene goes poorly for the goblin, they might lose a die from their boon.
- The Queen of the Goblins can use her POWERFUL SORCERY to throw a complete curve into the conflict. She might transport all the characters to a different place or conjure up a terrifying monster. The EMPRESS OF EVIL is greatly powerful, but can only intervene like this once in a conflict.

- Humans are of course great fools, but even fools are capable of CHEATING. When humans take initiative, it is always to break the rules of the conflict, to take the hidden third option or to going outside the bounds.

When you take initiative, grab whatever dice betrayed the previous roller and roll them as part of your action.

If you want to make another roll, but you can't take initiative, you have to spend momentum to do so. The first time you do this in a conflict, it costs one token. Each time after that costs an additional token.

When you have at least thirteen tokens in your momentum chalice—or, when no one else wishes to take an action—you may bring the scene to a close and whoever has the most momentum DECIDES THE FATE of all the characters involved.

If you do not like your outcome, you may make a SAVING THROW. Using whatever dice source you used last time, and adding however much momentum you had in your chalice to the relevant skill. You start the next scene with no momentum, while everyone who didn't make a saving throw can keep a half (rounded down) of their momentum from the last scene.