

TIME WITHOUT TIDE?

A ROLE PLAYING GAME
WITHIN A WORLD OF FOG



Preparation is essential and unimportant in the end.

The Delver's Motto - Verse III



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INTRODUCTION

The sea is black and still. Fog presses at its borders. Keep the light close. Salvation is out there, if we can only find it.

Set in a unique Victorian post-apocalyptic setting, *Time without Tide* is a role-playing game of exploration in a world of mirth and misery.

The system's streamlined mechanics make surviving in dangerous environments challenging and exciting. Players can expect to lead perilous expeditions through frozen caves and abandoned cities. The journey, and how your characters change throughout it, is as important as the destination.

The remaining denizens of this strange world are those who adapted to survive. Players are encouraged to create heroes who embrace the weird. From spring-heeled thieves, to dark robed cultists, to twitchy sharpshooters, all sorts will find themselves on grand ventures throughout this world of fog.

This booklet introduces *Time Without Tide* with a single adventure and the mechanics required to run it. Keep it close as you begin your first journey into the Unknown.

TIME WITHOUT TIDE

In the mid 19th century, we were on the brink of a technological revolution. In our hubris, we were accomplishing marvels, like electricity, automobiles, and the gift of flight. This future was not meant to be.

In the year 1864, we bore witness to a cataclysm. The moon, our constant companion, was ripped from its orbit by some invisible force and flung to the ground. A thousand meteors of vicious marble rent the world apart, obscuring its carcass with an infinite and enduring fog.

In that terrible event, we lost our bastions. London, New York, Saint Petersburg, and so many more were turned to dust. Our population was decimated. Those that survived, were cut off from civilization. Their only hope was to rebuild.

Portsmouth - The Grafted City

In the south of England, built against the English Channel, lies the Grafted City of Portsmouth.

Her streets are paved with ramshackle cobblestone. The Lamp-Lighters meandre across them astride their penny farthings. Her houses jutt against one another, pressing for space as if cowering from the outside world. Occasionally, with a faint pop, another building materialises in the Grafted City. Their origins are unknown, but the resources within are always welcomed.

Tall clay golems, lit from within by a blazing torch, keep the peace. They secure the new homes until they can be suitably inspected. Every building connects to one another, wrapped in a labyrinthian maze, that descends down into the bowels of the earth. Deep below, terrible titans creak and stir, slowly rousing from their aeon-long slumber.

Following the Project

Time Without Tide is in active development. To keep informed about future releases, events, and just how the project is flowing, follow us on twitter [@goodshipfuntrip](#) & [@robopelican](#).

If you'd like to join the mailing list, our website is [fadedprint.com](#). Here, you can download a digital copy of this booklet and find links to maps, creatures, and treasures.

Thank you for all your support!

Delvers

While others cling to the shrinking light, some illuminate their battered lanterns, and stride forth to uncover the mysteries hidden in the fog.

Some Delvers join established guilds, such as the Topiary Estate of Portsmouth, others stick to groups of family and friends. Only the foolhardy travel alone. These brave explorers leave the remnants of civilization to go on delves, searching for resources, artifacts, and answers in the deep Unknown.

In this new world, monsters howl at our gates and storms thunder in the distant air. Delvers are our response. These heroes are capable of amazing feats. They come from every caste and background. They are, without a doubt, our greatest defense against the Unknown.

The Unknown

Our adversary is intangible, and its goals are unclear. When the moon fell, and the rising fog obscured the sky, we found a force was acting against us. Green fields have been choked with darkness. The wandering paths that cut through them have been torn under the clawed feet of stalking beasts. Our empires are reduced to strength of the lamps we carry.

As the monsters return, we find that we are being changed as well. Our form is mutable, and like the land itself, prone to change. As the fog creeps beneath bolted doors it worms within us, adapting the human form for a purpose still unclear.

Stick to the well-treaded paths, and hope you encounter no monsters. Keep your lantern close, lest you become one yourself.

HOW TO PLAY

Time Without Tide is a tabletop role-playing game. A set of rules agreed upon by a group of players to allow them to tell stories and have adventures together. One player, the Narrator, describes the world, while the other players, the Delvers, control independent characters who explore the Narrator's story.

Select a character from the back of the book. This is your Delver. All creatures, including your Delvers, have three traits; Body, Mind, and Will. These traits measure your general ability while your skills, such as athletics or survival, measure your trained talents.

Tests

Your Delver's traits and skills measure their abilities and allow them to interact with this world of fog. When you attempt to complete a task and the outcome is uncertain, the Narrator will call for a test, using one of your traits and one of your skills.

When making a test, collect a pool of six sided dice equal to your trait's value plus your skill's value. Roll them. For each 5 or 6 rolled, you add one pass to the test. A standard test requires two passes. Easy tests take one. A difficult test can take up to three, four, or even five passes.

For each pass rolled above the required difficulty, you will generate a boon. A boon is a positive effect created by your attempt. This can include completing the task faster, to an exceptional level, or some other effect. Propose your desired outcome and work with the Narrator to see what is reasonable. Some effects may require multiple boons.

Damage

The unhappy truth of adventuring is sometimes people get hurt. Damage in *Time Without Tide* is tracked by directly reducing a creature's traits. When you are physically injured, your body trait is reduced. When you find your sanity shaken, your will is lowered. When you force yourself to stay up for hours straight, or study at a frantic pace, your mind is reduced. Skills are never reduced.

None of these effects are permanent, except of course, for death. But damage will require time to heal. When you rest for an evening, and consume a ration of food, you may heal a point of damage, to one of your three traits.

Straining

Delvers are capable of extraordinary accomplishments. To reflect that, they are capable of straining tests. When you are unhappy with the result of a test you may immediately collect all your dice and roll again. This can be done as many times as you'd like, but each time you strain, the trait used in the test is reduced by one.

Assisting

To combat the Unknown by yourself is to embrace madness. Delvers work together, in unions, so that they may compensate for each other's weaknesses and augment one another's strengths. When you attempt a test, an ally may assist you, as long as they have a skill relevant to the situation. You may increase your dice pool by half the assisting ally's skill, then roll the test as you usually would.

COMBAT

Violence is a vile and uncivilised event, but can be terrifically effective. The Delver's journey will take them face to face with all manner of opponents, both mundane and abominable. Knowing how to handle yourself in a scrap is integral.

Rounds

When a fight breaks out, time slows as each combatant leaps into the fray. Each round is a period of about ten seconds. Within a round, each creature has a turn, during which they take their desired actions.

A creature's initiative decides when they take their turn. To calculate initiative, add all the creature's traits together. The final value is their initiative. Creatures act in descending Initiative order. Remember, if a creature takes damage to their traits during combat, their initiative will change.

When multiple creatures share initiatives, Delvers act first.

Actions

A creature can take two actions each turn, one major and one minor. The major action is the bulk of your turn. Any action that requires a test, such as attacking or intimidating, requires a major action. Minor actions are used to move, change held items, or to talk with allies at length.

Additionally, at the start of each turn, Delvers gain an immediate action, which other creatures do not have. This is a second action that they can take at any time before their next turn. The difficulty of any tests made during an immediate action is increased by one.

Fighting

There are many ways creatures can attack each other. If attempting to make a melee attack, roll your **body + melee**. To throw an object, use your **body + ranged** skill. To fire a gun or projectile, use your **mind + ranged**. Improvised weapons, such as rocks or your fists, still use the same format, but the difficulty of the test is increased by one.

Regardless of what weapon type is used, if successful, you will deal a point of damage to the target creature's body. If that doesn't scare them off, reducing them to zero will leave them in a critical condition, vulnerable to a finishing blow.

Combat Effects

More skilled Delvers are capable of dealing additional damage, or applying devastating effects. For each boon generated in an attack, you may spend it to either increase the damage dealt by one, or to apply some other effect. Describe the desired outcome and the Narrator will adjudicate. In some circumstances, the effect will simply occur, in others the target may get a chance to make a test of their own to avoid it.

EXPLORATION

Travelling through the Unknown in search of secret places and whispered things is what makes you a Delver. Knowing how to survive the voyage and return home is what makes you a successful one. You will need to know how to manage your resources, keep yourself well fed, and above all else, protect the light.

Inventory

All creatures are capable of carrying a number of items equal to twice their body score. Any object that has a mechanical or strategic effect, such as a weapon, or a length of rope, will require an inventory slot. Trinkets, clothing, and decorative jewelry can be noted down in your description.

Along with their inventory, creatures can carry up to ten rations in their pockets. These rations can include, but are not limited to, food, oil and ammunition. Some other small items of note, such as an important key, can also be carried here, depending on the situation.

Tracking Time & Resting

To efficiently track time, divide each day into three segments; morning, afternoon and night. During each segment, set a goal to accomplish. These can include travelling, foraging, or resting. During a segment, each Delver should have something they are trying to accomplish, typically requiring a roll.

Remember that unless you rest during at least one segment per day, you will take a point of damage to your mind. As part of this rest, you must also consume a ration of food. Once the rest is completed, you may heal a single trait by one point.

The Light

The Unknown presses at our borders and seeps through every crack. It is only kept at bay by the light, and even then, we feel it watching. When you travel in the Unknown, you must carry a lantern and protect it from the dark creatures that would see it snuffed out. To keep it lit, you must burn a ration of fuel, typically oil or candles, daily.

Should the worst happen, and the light is lost, restore it by any means necessary. For at any moment, the Unknown may find purchase and change you through various adaptations.

Adaptations

When you have a trait reduced to zero, or spend an extended period of time in contact with the Unknown, you are vulnerable to change. To resist the effect, you must make a mind + will test. If you are unsuccessful, the Unknown has found some purchase and will manifest in the form of an adaptation. These mutations are pollutions of your form for some unknown eldritch purpose.

Roll on the following table to determine what form your adaptation takes.

ADAPTATION CHART

1. You grow a long tail, you can wield three items.
2. You grow large fangs, you deal extra damage.
3. You begin to glow, hiding is harder.
4. Your appetite changes, you consume oil instead of food.
5. Your skin becomes plated, the difficulty to damage you is increased but you struggle with athletic feats.
6. Your hair lengthens and becomes strong, functioning as rope.

BENEATH THE ORPHANAGE

Running the Scenario

Three people are required to play this scenario. One person will serve as Narrator and run the game, using this booklet as a reference. The others will play as Delves. Their quest, is to escape the hideous drudgery of Dame Franca's Home For Wayward Children and Orphaned Souls.

The two players must first choose one of the Delves from page 15 & 16. These orphaned twins have made a pact; they will escape the orphanage, or they will die trying. To do so, they will need to descend into the catacombs beneath the orphanage, locate a secret passage, and make their way to the distant city of Portsmouth. All the while, they must avoid the venomous Dame Franca, and her hulking lackeys.

Once both Delves have been assigned, the Narrator should read, or paraphrase, the following passage and begin the game.

Scenario Introduction

On the outskirts of Portsmouth, a band of children are marched through the catacombs beneath a dilapidated mansion by a brutish teen. Grinning skulls flicker in the torchlight at the edges of their vision.

The children take the skulls one by one, and check them for golden fillings. While they work, they hum a haunting tune. It is a secret language known only to the young.

Above them, in the mansion, the orphan's matron, Dame Franca, slurps spoiled wine from a long-stemmed glass. Her crossed feet are stretched out, lain across the back of a dishevelled child who serves as the Matron's footrest.

Welcome to Dame Franca's Home for Wayward Children and Orphaned Souls. Run. Run while you can.

The Escape Begins

The tale begins with the twins huddled around a stolen porch lantern in their bedroom. They are packing the supplies for their escape. The children of the orphanage have largely raised themselves. As part of the ordeal, they chose their own names. Ask each Delver to introduce themselves, and explain the name they have chosen.

In preparation for the journey, the twins have stolen two “weapons” from Dame Franca. Like the world around them, the twin’s weapons are cobbled together from the detritus of the old world. Ask both Delvers to describe their weapon, and have them place it in their inventory.

Once their bags are packed, it’s time to leave. The twins will need to sneak through the mansion, make their way to the basement, then venture into the catacombs below. However, Dame Franca patrols the mansion, sniffing the air for absent children. She stomps along the old wooden floorboards in sharp riding boots. In one hand, she holds long whip held in her hand, which drags behind her as she moves. The matron’s face is frozen in a permanent grimace. She uses lead paint to highlight its features in lieu of makeup. The twins will need to succeed on a body + stealth test, or find another creative way to bypass her.

Once Dame Franca is dealt with, the twins can make their way through the winding corridors of the orphanage to the basement, which contains the entrance to the catacombs. However, Dame Franca has hidden the switch to open the locked door. The twins will need to succeed on a mind + investigation test, or find another way to get past the door and into the catacombs.

The Delvers have already retrieved enough food and light for the coming journey, which is included in their inventory, but they may wish to relieve the house of additional supplies. Narrate their journey through the orphanage and, where applicable, allow them to salvage tools and resources from the mansion’s furnishings.

Entering the Catacombs

As soon as the twins enter the catacombs, they are surrounded by the darkness, and the Unknown. The two constantly feel eyes trained on their movements, the sensation of delicate silk trailing across their arms, and an overwhelming desire to return to the light.

By lighting their lantern they can stave off the Unknown, while their oil lasts. Should either of the twins stray away from the light, or have a trait reduced to zero, they will develop an adaptation as the Unknown seeps beneath their skin and finds their forms mutable.

For the moment, the Unknown is kept at bay. The more pressing concern is finding their way through the catacombs. Explain to the twins that they have been given a map. It has been scrawled across the back of a travel brochure that loudly proclaims “You are just three easy steps away from a better you!”. The ink it was written in has begun to fade. Ask the Delvers who it was that gave them the map. Perhaps a sibling who already escaped, or maybe an anonymous visitor.

Once the history of the map has been defined, ask for a mind + survival test to find the necessary passage, and begin the descent. If successful, narrate two days of travel through the twisting maze. If the test is made with a boon, they can cover the same distance in half the time. Should they fail the test, a day is wasted and the test must be repeated again on the following day.

Remind the players to remove a ration for each day travelled, of both food and oil, each crucial to their survival. If they had taken any damage previously, they may heal a trait by one point during each night.

The Restless Dead

After travelling on foot through endless passages, the twins encounter a problem. With each passing day, they have walked further from the orphanage, and deeper into the Unknown. The skeletons they had once pilfered for gold now grimace at their passage. Their old bones cracking, shifting, and slowly moving to shy away from the light.

In an open chamber, the restless dead take their chance to strike at the trespassers. Crawling from the walls come four skeletons, page (18), and the skittering form of Dame Franca herself. Refusing to allow the two orphans to escape, she has propelled herself after them, carried through secret passages on dark winds, and made a deal with the long dead to retake what is hers. If the twins were particularly bloodthirsty and eliminated Dame Franca before they left, then her wobbling teetering corpse will join in the battle, filled with unstoppable bloodthirst.

The living Dame Franca's goal is not to kill the children. They're no use to her if they can't work. But she won't hesitate to slay them if the only other option is their escape. To aid this strategy, the skeletons will attempt to grapple the twins and haul them away from the light, allowing madness and the Unknown to corrupt them. Should the Matron be defeated, the twins can ascend a broken ladder into the shadows of a sewer, clamber through a rusted grate, and finally emerge upon the eerie streets of Portsmouth, their escape successful.

Congratulate the Delves. They have escaped from the clutches of Dame Franca. Now, all they need to do is find some way to survive in a foreign city, where the Unknown lurks at the borders of the light.

Orphan					
NAME:					
BODY	4	ATHLETICS	4	INTIMIDATION	2
MIND	3	STEALTH	1	SURVIVAL	2
WILL	2				

Orphan					
NAME:					
BODY	2	RANGED	2	EXPRESSION	2
MIND	4	INVESTIGATION	3	MEDICINE	2
WILL	3	ATHLETICS	1		

Dame Franca					
ORPHANAGE MATRON					
BODY	3	RANGED	3	MELEE	3
MIND	4	INVESTIGATION	2	OCCULT	3
WILL	3	ATHLETICS	3	INTIMIDATE	4

Orphan		
INVENTORY		
RATIONS:	FOOD (start 4) <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	OIL (start 3) <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Orphan		
INVENTORY		
RATIONS:	FOOD (start 4) <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	OIL (start 3) <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

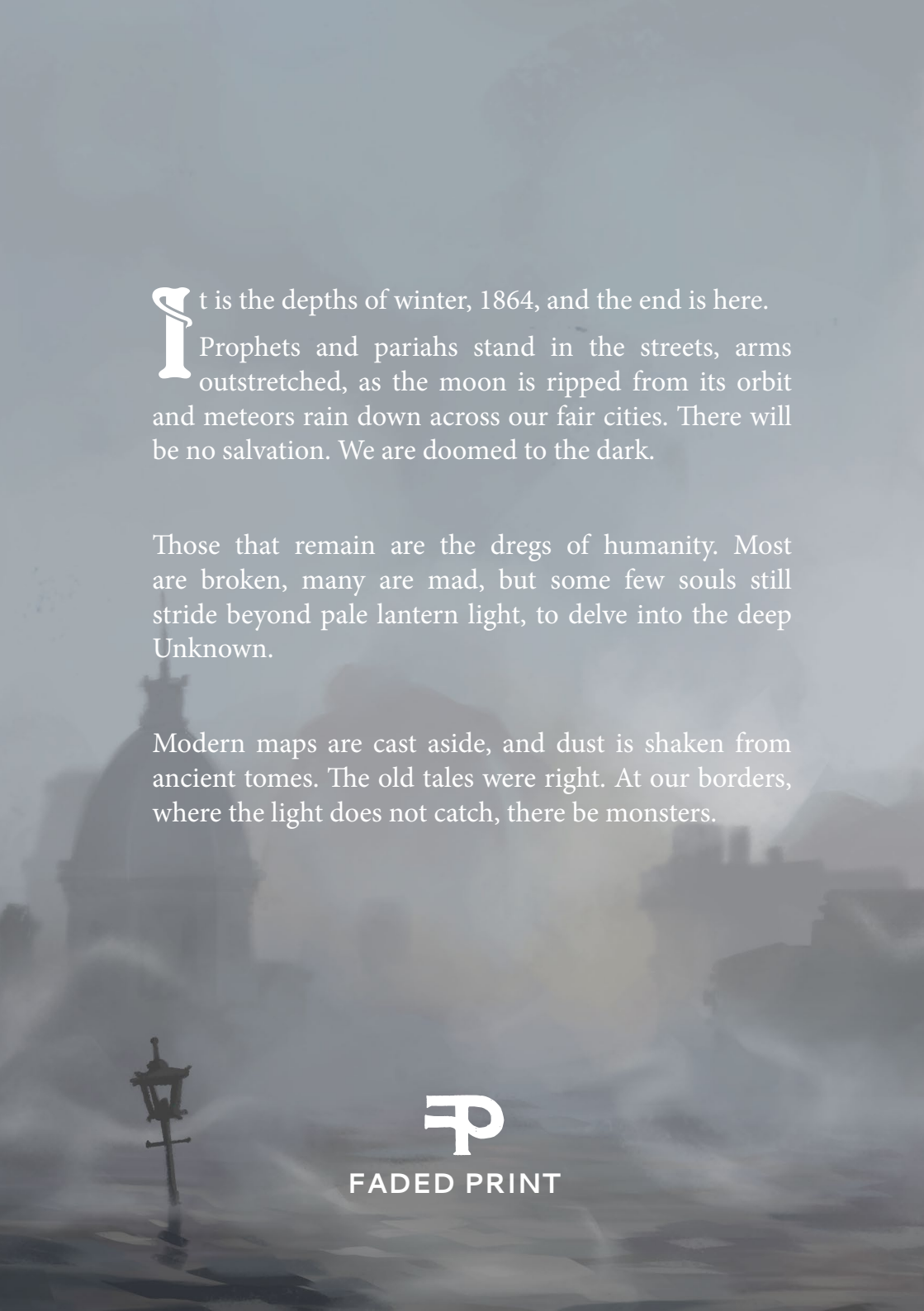
Skeleton					
ANIMATED BONES					
BODY	2	MELEE	3	ATHLETICS	3
MIND	1	BRITTLE BONES The skeleton is destroyed when a point of damage is dealt.			
WILL	1				

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Ty Carey: Formatting and Direction - @ty_carey

Adam Duncan: Cover Art - @Aeronik



It is the depths of winter, 1864, and the end is here.
Prophets and pariahs stand in the streets, arms
outstretched, as the moon is ripped from its orbit
and meteors rain down across our fair cities. There will
be no salvation. We are doomed to the dark.

Those that remain are the dregs of humanity. Most
are broken, many are mad, but some few souls still
stride beyond pale lantern light, to delve into the deep
Unknown.

Modern maps are cast aside, and dust is shaken from
ancient tomes. The old tales were right. At our borders,
where the light does not catch, there be monsters.



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