

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

LAIRSHARE

A role-playing game by Ben Wright

31st January 2012

Licenced under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial Share-Alike 2.0 England and Wales Licence.

You are reading page 1, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

You are reading page 2, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

Contents

Welcome to the Neighbourhood.....	5
<i>Materials</i>	5
<i>Roles</i>	6
<i>Mundane and Arcane</i>	7
<i>Paperwork</i>	8
<i>Supporting Material</i>	8
A Typical Day.....	9
Birth of an Emperor.....	10
<i>Name</i>	10
<i>Gender</i>	11
<i>Appearance</i>	11
<i>Imperial Traits</i>	11
<i>Annoyance</i>	12
House-Sharing Annoyances.....	13
Other Roles.....	16
<i>Most Trusted Lieutenant</i>	16
<i>Rebel Leader</i>	18
<i>Man on the Inside</i>	20
The Game Master.....	21
<i>Keep it Fun</i>	21
<i>Keep it Fair</i>	21
<i>Introduce Rolls</i>	22
<i>Introduce Complications</i>	22

You are reading page 3, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

About Scenes.....	24
<i>Starting a Scene</i>	24
<i>During a Scene</i>	25
<i>Ending a Scene</i>	26
Rules.....	27
<i>Rolling Dice</i>	27
<i>Exhausted Traits</i>	29
<i>Strategy</i>	32
<i>Getting Better</i>	33
<i>Drowning in Annoyance</i>	33

You are reading page 4, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

Welcome to the Neighbourhood

In this is a game you play an evil interstellar ruler who reigns over his empire with an iron fist. Rebels, traitors and rivals each get in the way of your inevitable conquest of the entire galaxy. You also happen, for reasons that are never quite made clear, to currently be living in a house-share in Coventry, England, Earth, with a bunch of other evil rulers.

The rest of the game follows naturally from that simple premise.

The action takes place mostly within the house and any attached garden. Other locations include the shop down the road, the local supermarket and other such ordinary places.

Materials

This game plays best with seven or so participants. It can be played with more, although it will be hard to keep everyone entertained with a lot of players. It can be played with less, but you might have to make some compromises with some of the rules for only three or four players.

You'll need character sheet for the players, or at least paper to serve as character sheets. You'll need some ordinary six-sided dice, but no more than ten of them. It can also save on some book-keeping if you have tokens, such a poker chips, to use to represent something called Annoyance.

You are reading page 5, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

Roles

This game is intended to be played with a Game Master, or GM, who takes the reigns, keeps order and generally moves the game along if it looks like it might drag. The GM does not have an empire of his own. The other players play their Emperor characters most of the time. They usually communicate with their empire through their 'Most Trusted Lieutenant'. Your enemies are represented by your current 'Rebel Leader'. At the start of the game the player to your right is your Most Trusted Lieutenant and the player to your left is your Rebel Leader. So, at the start of the game you are also the MTL of the player to your left and the Rebel Leader for the player to your right. The GM is not counted when working this out, only other ordinary players. These roles are passed around the table, as described later on in this book.

The cyberelephant in the room:

The incongruity of a single evil emperor living in rented accommodation on Earth is immense. That a number of them should all happen to occupy the same household is simply preposterous. During the game, however, simply take that as an assumption and move on from there. Don't draw attention to it. The alternative to the house-share is not, as you might otherwise expect, to return to an opulent orbital fortress in some picturesque part of the galaxy- it's to have to find different accommodation in Coventry, probably sharing with people who don't understand the problems and needs of an evil emperor in the same way your current house-mates do.

You are reading page 6, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

Mundane and Arcane

The problems and activities that relate to the shared house should be as mundane as possible, drawn from your own experiences and stories you've heard. You don't have to have shared accommodation to have a feel for the sorts of problems that crop up- everyone probably has, at some point, had some post go missing or dealt with the consequences of spilling something that stains. These problems should come thick and fast, and make up for their banality with their frequency. When multiple people live in close quarters, it's all too easy for trivial incidents to cause friction and, fingers crossed, pointless rows.

The problems and activities of an evil emperor are varied and strange. Deciding which planet to turn into a charred cinder, settling on how to make an example of a Rebel Leader, choosing which captured princess to add to your brain-washed harem - in other words, clichés as far as the eye can see. Evil empires don't exactly run to office hours, so there's a good chance that an emergency will crop up at any time. You can't simply leave matters to your underlings because, as is traditional, you are surrounded by incompetents.

Thus game is all about having those two aspects collide. The post might be getting stolen by the Rebel Alliance looking for military intelligence. One resident might have stayed up late making too much noise because he was playing Guitar Tyrant with his Most Trusted Lieutenant following a successful planetary invasion. These collisions, however, must strenuously avoid bringing in anything that threatens the mundanity of the household. So, rather than a rebel army bombarding the street with plasma weapons, the Rebel Leader rings the doorbell and asks for Dread Lord Kevin.

The sillier the juxtaposition, the better.

You are reading page 7, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

Paperwork

If your Emperor character ever needs to communicate with another resident of the house, but that character isn't present in the scene, he can leave a message in the Book. In setting, this book might actually be a blackboard or notepad in the kitchen that the house-mates use to leave messages for each other. Out of character the 'book' should be an actual book, or pad of paper, in the middle of the table. Anyone can write an in-character message on when they want to. Passive-aggressive messages are actively encouraged.

People often make informal agreements when in shared accommodation about who pays for what, who does what chores around the house, or who's turn it is to do something. Rotas are fine for ordinary people, but interstellar rulers need something with a little more heft. As Emperors, you can make treaties with one another. Drafting a treaty can be the subject of a particular scene, with painstaking negotiation over clauses, or it can be a between-session activity. When it happens at the table, though, make sure it does not last long enough that players not involved in the negotiations feel left out.

Supporting Material

A little interesting additional in-character stuff can be interesting. You might consider making social media profiles for your characters between sessions. Your friends already think you're weird, so there's nothing to lose.

You are reading page 8, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

A Typical Day

Lord DarkWeaver, the Scourge of the Orion Nebula, Mightiest of the Dread Triplets, the Lamentation of Tau Ceti and Supreme Ruler of the Omega Empire, May His Grip Never Weaken, tends to wake up around noon, perhaps earlier if some wanker in a hot hatch is making a noise outside.

The first thing he does is check his email, to see if any crises have hit his empire overnight. After he's got washed and dressed, he practises raising an eyebrow archly in the mirror for a few minutes, to make sure he has the right mix of ennui and contempt.

After a bowl of Cocoa Pops, he catches the bus outside for the first leg of his journey to his Fortress of Bleakness.

After putting in about six hours face time at the Fortress, he heads back, often with his Most Trusted Lieutenant in tow. When they get in, he either heats up a ready meal or they ring for an Indian take-away.

They catch up on Doctors, via Sky+, chew the fat, and generally hang. Sooner or later, the rest of the house-mates get in and his MTL leaves. He doesn't like company much, so he will probably write a gothically-inclined poem or update livejournal until he's tempted downstairs for some Rock Band. He likes playing the drums.

Around 4am, he has one last check of @fortressofbleaknessOFFICIAL on Twitter before heading off to bed. Sometimes he gets shouted at for listening to the Smiths when other house-mates are trying to sleep.

You are reading page 9, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

Birth of an Emperor

Your Emperor character is the one you will portray the most during the game, and the most important. Most Trusted Lieutenant and Rebel Leader roles are transient, and act as foils for their associated Emperors in a way that keeps as many players involved in the game as possible.

There are several stages to creating an Emperor, which can be tackled in any order you choose. It's often easiest to pick a strong central idea for a character, establish the details most closely related to it then work outwards from there.

Name

An Emperor's name is important. It must provide him with the requisite majesty and inspire appropriate fear in his enemies. Have a short version, that can be used by the GM and other players, and then a longer version that appears on formal documents. Go for distance. If you don't supply a short version, then your fellow players will probably make up their own - and it won't be complimentary.

Despots often grant themselves new titles whenever they are at a loose end. Feel free to do the same.

Example: Lord DarkWeaver, the Scourge of the Orion Nebula, Mightiest of the Dread Triplets, the Lamentation of Tau Ceti and Supreme Ruler of the Omega Empire, May His Grip Never Weaken.

You are reading page 10, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

Gender

Emperor or Imperatrix, your choice.

No self-respecting evil ruler will accept the wussy title of Empress when Imperatrix is available.

Appearance

No mode of attire is too grand or outlandish for an Emperor. Whether it's an iron suit of armour with bat-wings on the helmet or a latex basque with a skull-and-dagger motif, you make it look good. Impracticality is the price you pay for sartorial perfection. If your skills permit, draw a sketch of your Emperor in action.

Example: Lord DarkWeaver has a high-collared black velvet shirt, with long, flappy sleeves. He wears boots crafted from hullmetal with four-inch platforms and his personal badge etched into them. He has a cape with red lining.

Imperial Traits

An Emperor's true skill lies in how he has crafted his empire. So, rather than 'skills' relating to his personal abilities, this game uses facets of his empire – called 'traits'. These are assumed to reflect his strengths and weaknesses in everyday life.

These traits can be many things:

- A significant location within the empire.
- Technology the empire has at its disposal.
- An army or special force the empire fields.
- Something about the way the Emperor rules.

Each trait is two to four words (not counting 'the' or 'of' or words like

You are reading page 11, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

that) that name it or briefly describe it. The more significant words used, the more powerful or important the trait is and the more points it costs.

- 2 words - 1 point.
- 3 words - 2 points.
- 4 words - 4 points.

Each Emperor has 8 points to spend on traits.

Example: Lord DarkWeaver's empire has the following traits:

- *The Gothic Sisters of Lethal Seduction (4 points)*
- *Mind-scrambling Orbital Lasers (2 points)*
- *The Fortress of Bleakness (1 point)*
- *Casual Fridays (1 point)*

Annoyance

Annoyance is a quantity that measures general, low-grade dissatisfaction with life and house-mates. Nominally, the goal of you and your character is to keep this as low as possible. However, don't bother trying to ruthlessly optimise your annoyance loss; it's all about the journey. It exists to give Emperors some motivation to annoy each other right off the bat, to get the ball rolling.

Because Annoyance changes so often, it's easier to use tokens if you have them in sufficient quantities.

Emperors begin with 5 points of Annoyance.

You are reading page 12, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

House-Sharing Annoyances

Here is a big list of ways you can annoy your house-mates. In the game, I mean.

- Using the last of something and not replacing it
- Eating or drinking something that belongs to someone else
- Using someone else's thing without asking
- Losing someone else's thing
- Selling someone else's thing on ebay
- Throwing someone else's post in the bin
- Killing someone else's house-plant
- Deleting someone else's recorded TV programme
- Wiping someone else's memory stick
- Loud noise late at night
- Loud noise early in the morning
- Extremely loud noise at any time
- No indoor voice
- Playing that one song over and over again
- Persistent humming with intent to annoy
- Not cleaning up after yourself
- Entering without knocking
- Moving something out of the fridge because you want the space
- Inviting guests round without letting anybody know
- Inviting a guest who has nicked stuff from the house in the past
- Flirting with someone else's significant other
- Hogging the bathroom
- Hogging the phone
- Hogging the TV

You are reading page 13, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

- Hogging the comfy sofa
- Hogging space in the shower for countless bottles of mysterious unguents
- Letting the sink overflow
- Not flushing
- Drawing water when someone else is in the shower
- Leaving the toilet seat in an unapproved position
- Blocking someone in the bathroom
- Unrestrained flatulence
- Defecation in unusual places
- Not paying your share of the utility bills
- Nudity in shared spaces
- Practical jokes
- Storing large objects in someone else's room, because 'it's the only place it fits'
- Attempted suicide
- Killing the life-giving internet connection
- Hitting the download cap early in the month
- Abusing the fact that someone's logged into something important on their computer
- Not cleaning up after pets properly
- The ongoing saga of the thermostat wars
- Leaving accessible windows open when the house is empty
- Not locking the front door
- Not getting rid of food even once it's gone mouldy
- Not taking the bins out
- Not sorting the recycling out of the waste
- Not bringing the bins back
- Locking someone out of the house
- Leaving something switched on
- Smoking indoors

You are reading page 14, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

- Sneezing on someone
- Letting fire get out of control
- Leaving 'personal items' out in plain sight
- Really loud sex
- Really loud sex with someone else's significant other, in the bathroom, while watching the TV, using someone else's sex-toy and a whoopie-cushion late at night when you should be taking the bin out

You are reading page 15, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

Other Roles

Players can take on other roles in scenes when they are not playing their Emperors. They can act as Most Trusted Lieutenants and Rebel Leaders for other Emperors. No player can ever be both his Emperor and one of these secondary roles in the same scene. Don't get too attached to them, as they can get passed around the table fairly rapidly.

These characters provide an opportunity for players to participate in scenes they wouldn't be able to otherwise. This is useful because the nature of the game is such that it's rare for more than two or three Emperors to be present in any given scene. Take advantage of these temporary roles to indulge your passion for bizarre characterisation, including outrageous accents and wild, staring eyes.

This rotation also gives a reason to vary which Emperors interact with each other. If one particular Emperor has shared a lot of scenes with your character, then once that player becomes your MTL you have an incentive to interact with a different Emperor, so you can bring your MTL in if you need him.

Each MTL and Rebel Leader also has some rule-related responsibilities apropos their associated Emperor. These mechanical responsibilities are always fulfilled, even if the secondary character is not actually present in the scene.

Most Trusted Lieutenant

The Most Trusted Lieutenant is the current chief aide of an Emperor. Despite its many advantages, it is not a position with much in the way of long-term prospects. The favour of Emperors can be a fickle thing. The Emperor does not want to deal with every little affair of state, so he delegates his authority to his minions. The MTL is the chief amongst

You are reading page 16, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

these, and is the one who acts as the primary go-between when messages are passed to and from the Emperor.

So, it's the MTL who will ring an Emperor with bad news when things go wrong, and be the one who has to give him a lift when the Imperial Corsa breaks down. If an Emperor needs someone else to talk to in a scene, it's the MTL who is usually called on.

Responsibilities

A Most Trusted Lieutenant can, nay, is expected to, assist his Emperor in difficult tasks. The details of how dice rolls work is in another section, but in summary- The MTL can re-roll a dice when the Emperor pushes his luck, but only if the MTL can make a credible case for how he could help the Emperor.

The Price of Failure

At just about any point in the game, an Emperor can point to his MTL and announce "You have failed me for the last time.". At that point, the current MTL is executed (or demoted), and the player to his right (not counting the GM or the Emperor himself, naturally) becomes the new Most Trusted Lieutenant. A common first task is to sweep away the ashes of one's predecessor.

There are two specific occasions when an Emperor cannot execute his MTL:

- When the MTL and the Rebel Leader are the same person (more on that later).
- While a task roll is being resolved, from the GM first calling for it until it is fully complete. This is to prevent an Emperor from causing complicated situations by trying to change his MTL while a roll is being worked through.

You are reading page 17, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

When the role of MTL returns to a player who has had it before, that player can decide if there is any link between his previous MTL for that Emperor and his new one.

Executing your MTL too freely means you will have a traitor as MTL more often.

Rebel Leader

Any Emperor worth his salt cultivates a resentful, defiant rebel organisation to oppose him. The leader of this group is usually a charismatic, courageous and capable individual seeking to end the tyranny and avenge something or other. The details are scarcely important. The GM may choose to introduce the Rebel Leader to a scene already involving the relevant Emperor, to provide some conflict or give a scene more energy.

While a Rebel Leader may seek to overthrow the Emperor, he won't just turn up at the house and try to kill him. He might hide the bins, put something nasty through the letterbox or ring the doorbell and run away. However incongruous it might become, his actions are limited to that of a bad neighbour. Similarly, while an Emperor might have harsh words for a Rebel Leader, he can't simply stab him to death in the hall. Who would clear up the mess?

Responsibilities

The Rebel Leader sets the difficulty of any task roll the Emperor makes. More details are in the section on dice rolls.

You are reading page 18, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

Being Vanquished

Whenever an Emperor gets a really good roll on a task, his Rebel Leader is vanquished. The Emperor can choose what form this vanquishing takes. Some suggestions are:

- Executed.
- Mind-wiped.
- Added to the Emperor's stable of muscular boy-toys.
- Trapped in an alternate dimension.
- Imprisoned.
- Marooned on a remote planet.
- Encased in space-age polymer.

Note that completing the task that was the subject of the roll is not necessarily what vanquishes the Rebel Leader, it can just as easily happen 'off-camera' while the Emperor is dealing with a mundane task.

The player to the left of the vanquished Rebel Leader becomes the new one (skipping over the Emperor himself and the GM).

If the role of Rebel Leader returns to a player who has been one for that Emperor before, then it is always the same Rebel Leader returned from being vanquished. He was not truly dead, he recovered his mind when he saw the love of his life, etc. etc.

You are reading page 19, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

Man on the Inside

It's possible for a single player to be both the MTL and the Rebel Leader for the same Emperor. If he was already the MTL and the role of Rebel Leader was passed to him, then the explanation is that the MTL finally became so disgusted with the behaviour of the Emperor that he has decided to lead the rebellion against him. If he was already the Rebel Leader and the role of Most Trusted Lieutenant was passed to him, then the Emperor has unwittingly promoted a double-agent as his right-hand man.

In either case, it amounts to the same thing- the MTL is now actively trying to screw up the Emperor's rule.

The Emperor can no longer simply execute the MTL to get rid of him (because, er, look over there! *sound of running feet*). However, if the Rebel Leader is vanquished then both Rebel Leader and MTL pass as normal.

A note for small player groups:

When there are four or fewer non-GM players, the roles can cycle around rather quickly and the Rebel Leader can end up as the same person as the MTL quite frequently. For this reason, it's recommended that the role of Rebel Leader is done away with in small groups, the GM taking on the responsibility of setting the difficult of task rolls.

You are reading page 20, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

The Game Master

Keep it Fun

First and foremost, the Game Master exists to make the game happen, to be familiar enough with the rules to help other players, to keep the player group focused, and to make sure that no player feels excluded or uncomfortable. The latter problem is usually rare in role-playing games, but as this game might touch on real life concerns or problems, a little extra care is advised.

Keep it Fair

Almost as important is keeping the game fun, including making sure no-one hogs the limelight. This is a game where characters will sabotage each other, and it's important to make sure that everyone understands that that will happen. Such sabotage should be done stylishly and in ways that make the game fun. If one character is plotting against another, simply closing down that action as the GM or a player makes the game less fun. It makes someone's effort fruitless and squanders the sense of anticipation. If a player turns the plan against its creator, even if they slightly abuse out-of-character knowledge to do so, that increases the fun and the sense of anticipation. The GM can steer players away from non-fun activities with careful suggestions, turning them into much more entertaining ideas.

You are reading page 21, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

Introduce Rolls

Mechanically, the GM has responsibility for deciding when an Emperor has to roll the dice. Dice rolls should only be made when an Emperor is acting against the world, rather than when he is acting against another Emperor. For Emperor-on-Emperor disputes, encourage in-character arguments. The worst that will ever happen is that the situation devolves into undignified wrestling that MTLs have to break up. It would break the atmosphere of mundanity in the house if actual violence was ever used. Similarly, don't request dice rolls too freely. Many, if not most, scenes won't require one.

Introduce Complications

Finally, the GM can help to stir the pot. The drive to get rid of Annoyance by passing it onto others will create many opportunities for friction and entertaining interaction, but sometimes the GM needs to give matters a little bump. So here is a list of minor and major household disasters, none of which are necessarily caused by other house-mates. You're welcome.

- The car won't start
- An appliance is broken
- The washing machine sets fire to the kitchen*
- The fuses trip
- The computer gets a virus
- The phone lines go down
- A radiator starts leaking
- A tap breaks
- A shelf collapses
- A door sticks
- The smoke alarm keeps going off
- The toilet is blocked

You are reading page 22, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

- The kettle won't switch off
- The oven won't light
- A window gets broken
- The roof leaks
- Livestock in the garden
- A bulb blows
- A bed collapses
- The water heater breaks down
- A bird has gone in through a window
- Ants everywhere
- Wasps' nest in the loft
- Earthquake
- Local flooding
- The bin is stolen
- Brownouts
- A car crashes into the garden
- The street is evacuated due to a gas leak

*This actually happened to my parents when I was living with them.
On Christmas Eve.

You can play this game without a fixed GM, letting every player have an Emperor. In this case, you can rotate the duty of Game Master to whoever isn't currently being an Emperor, Most Trusted Lieutenant or Rebel Leader or rely on consensus for the GM's chores.

You are reading page 23, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

About Scenes

The game is divided up informally into a number of scenes, which last long enough for something interesting to happen and end soon after. The GM has overall control of when scenes start and end.

Starting a Scene

The GM has authority to say which Emperors, MTLs and Rebel Leaders are present. However, it's useful if the GM is as accommodating to the players' wishes as possible. If a player wants a certain character present, come up with a reason why they are there, even temporarily. Failing that, they are only a phone call away. Conversely, if a player wants his Emperor to act when another character specifically isn't there, the GM can say he has opportunity to do so- perhaps the character in question has popped to the newsagents for a few minutes. Any character that is not an Emperor, MTL or Rebel Leader is played by the GM.

Sometimes the GM will start a scene, to deal with the consequences of a previous scene or to throw a new problem at an Emperor. The GM might ask a Rebel Leader how they have been planning to fight their matching Emperor, and start a scene like that. Or, a player might ask the GM to start a scene so their Emperor can do or say something specific. In all cases, the GM should take care that no player is left feeling excluded.

You are reading page 24, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

During a Scene

Most of what goes on during a scene is talk. Banter between characters, banter between players, and so on. Something should be happening, even if it's just one character getting up the nose of another, but as long as the scene is entertaining things are going well.

Other characters might arrive part way through a scene, at the GM's discretion. Characters might leave.

There are, however, specific mechanical triggers that can occur during a scene.

Any time an Emperor does something that will annoy a housemate, he loses one Annoyance and his victim gains two Annoyance. The GM may refuse the transfer if he thinks it isn't annoying enough, or has got old.

Any time the GM wishes, he can call for an Emperor to make a Task Roll. These are covered in a later chapter.

You are reading page 25, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

Ending a Scene

The GM should not be afraid to call an end to a scene swiftly. Any slightly unfinished business can be brought into a future scene, or dealt with in passing when starting a future scene.

A typical scene has a character who wants something, with some obstacle in the way and tension as to how they overcome it. In this sense, a scene you use just to annoy another Emperor is slightly wasted- you should, wherever possible, build the annoyance into something else to give it context, and a reason for your character behaving that way.

Scenes that draw on what has happened earlier in some way give the game the best flow.

On the subject of passive-aggressive behaviour:

Maybe someone you are playing with has a habit that annoys you around the house, when they stay there or visit, but you have never got around to telling them off. This game is a perfect chance to let them know by having your character do the same thing to their character. You will probably never have to put up with that particular problem again and, with luck, will have ruined a good friendship into the bargain.

You are reading page 26, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

Rules

All of the fiddly rules for Lairshare revolve in some way around moving points of Annoyance around, gaining it or removing it.

Rule One:

When your Emperor does something to annoy a house-mate, if the GM thinks it's funny and novel, you lose 1 point of Annoyance and the victim receives 2.

Rolling Dice

A dice roll happens when the GM decides that an Emperor's action is one that should be suspenseful, with a chance of failure. If more than one Emperor is involved, the GM chooses which gets to roll.

The Rebel Leader then sets the difficulty of the task as one of the following:

- 5 - not too hard
- 10 – somewhat problematic
- 15 - challenging
- 20 - murderous

The Emperor then decides if he wants to use any of his Empire's traits on the roll. In theory, only traits that can be made relevant in some way can be used, but given how unlikely it will be that any of them will make much sense in this context, a spirited attempt to defend the choice is all that's required. He can only use one trait, but he can choose to not use one at all.

He rolls a number of six-sided dice equal to the rating of the trait - that is, the number of significant words in it. If he isn't using a trait, he rolls a single dice.

You are reading page 27, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

He adds up the total on the dice, and that is his current roll. If his roll is higher than the difficulty, he will succeed, otherwise he will fail. However, the Emperor can attempt to improve his roll. He can roll an additional dice - if this comes up as a number he has already rolled on one of his dice, then things have gone disastrously wrong: a botch. Otherwise he adds that dice to his roll. He can continue to roll extra dice in this way as long as he avoids botching.

The Most Trusted Lieutenant can assist the Emperor by re-rolling one of these extra dice. The MTL is not compelled to do so, and can choose to re-roll a dice even if there is no need to do so. He can't however, re-roll any of the dice in the initial roll- only the extra ones as and when the Emperor rolls them. There is only one re-roll of a dice per task.

After any extra dice and re-rolls, once the Emperor has either decided to stop rolling or has botched, the dice roll is resolved. The outcome of the roll, and hence the task, depends on the total:

- Higher than 20 - brilliant success, and the Rebel Leader is Vanquished. The Emperor can shed 5 points of Annoyance.
- Higher than the difficulty - success. The Emperor can shed 1 point of Annoyance.
- Lower than or equal to the difficulty - failure. The Emperor gains 1 point of Annoyance, the Rebel Leader removes 1 point of Annoyance.
- Botch - dismal failure. The Emperor gains 5 points of annoyance, and any trait used is 'exhausted'.

The GM should describe exactly how well or badly the task attempt went, using any suggestions from players that tickle his fancy. The MTL might also adjust his Annoyance, depending on his contribution:

- The MTL re-rolled a dice and the task was a success - The MTL removes 1 point of Annoyance.

You are reading page 28, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

Exhausted Traits

Exhausted traits can't be used again until your current Rebel Leader is Vanquished. This means that a string of botches can make it very difficult to succeed. If you ever find that all of your traits are exhausted, then you can immediately get them back by accepting 5 points of Annoyance.

Example:

Lord DarkWeaver is trying to put up some shelving, because he has run out of room for his collection of over-priced collectible figures. The GM calls for a dice roll.

The Rebel Leader for Lord DarkWeaver, with a strong French accent, says that such a task runs counter to Lord DarkWeaver's aesthetic, and hence has a Difficulty of 15.

Citing that as it is 'Casual Friday', and hence the aesthetic can be relaxed a little, Lord DarkWeaver rolls 2 dice for that trait.

He rolls a 4 and a 5, getting a total of 9. Rather than accept failure (Princess Nightshade needs somewhere to stand, after all) he rolls another dice, getting a 5.

At this point, his Most Trusted Lieutenant springs to his aid. The dice is re-rolled, getting a 2. The new total is 11.

Lord DarkWeaver decides to leave it at that – a failure. He gains 1 Annoyance, and the Rebel Leader loses 1 Annoyance.

The GM narrates that Lord DarkWeaver starts drilling some holes in the wall, nearly drilling through a water pipe until his MTL stops him, but still can't get the holes at an even height and gives up in disgust.

You are reading page 29, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

Example:

Later, Lord DarkWeaver is trying to fix the toaster, which has jammed with the tray down. The GM calls for a dice roll.

The current Rebel Leader says that electrical appliances are not that hard to master, and hence the difficulty is 10.

Lord DarkWeaver chooses to not use a trait, so he rolls a single dice – a 2.

He decides to push his luck, rolling a 4 for a new total of 6. He pushes his luck again, getting a 1. And again, getting a 6, for a grand total of 13.

The current Rebel Leader is also Lord DarkWeaver's current Most Trusted Lieutenant by this point, so he chooses to re-roll that last dice. It is a 1, which causes a botch.

Lord DarkWeaver gains 5 points of Annoyance, but as he didn't use a trait he doesn't have to exhaust it.

The GM narrates that while trying to fix it, the MTL offers some bad advice – “Are you sure it's plugged in and switched on?” suggests the player himself – and Lord DarkWeaver gets an electrical shock. He ends up lying unconscious on the kitchen linoleum until someone comes home and finds him.

You are reading page 30, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

Example:

Later on, Lord DarkWeaver's treacherous MTL and Rebel Leader is trying to slip some laxatives into his absinthe. The GM calls for a roll from him.

The Rebel Leader/MTL sets the difficulty at 20 – he worked hard to get this opportunity and he doesn't want it wasted.

Lord DarkWeaver, knowing that the squits is chronically un-gothic, chooses to use the trait 'The Gothic Sisters of Lethal Seduction'. He trained them in many techniques, including how to slip something into an enemy's drink, he says, so he stands a good chance of spotting this treachery. He rolls 4 dice, getting 2, 5, 5 and 5 – a total of 17. He pushes his luck, getting a 4 and a new total of 21.

The MTL/Rebel Leader chooses to roll that again, but gets a 6.

The Rebel Leader is Vanquished. Lord DarkWeaver gets rid of 5 points of Annoyance. The Rebel Leader and Most Trusted Lieutenant roles are passed on.

The GM narrates that Lord DarkWeaver spots his MTL spiking his drink, then forces the unlucky traitor to drink it down in one. Lord DarkWeaver adds that he knew of his MTL's notorious aniseed allergy. The former Rebel Leader, dosed with laxatives and breaking out into hives, is taken away to the deepest, darkest, most aniseed-smelling dungeon in the Fortress of Bleakness.

You are reading page 31, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

Strategy

Thinking too hard about your strategy as MTL or Rebel Leader is weaksauce. However, here are some things to ponder.

As the Emperor, you want things to go well, but many variables are out of your hands. Choosing when to push your luck and roll an extra dice is important, as is knowing how much trust your Most Trusted Lieutenant actually deserves.

As Rebel Leader, you might consider setting the difficulty as high as possible, but in doing so you make it likelier that the Emperor will persevere to the point where he Vanquishes you.

As Most Trusted Lieutenant, you only get an advantage by helping out, but if you choose to re-roll when there was no good reason to you might cause a botch, or otherwise drive your Emperor to execute you.

If you are Rebel Leader and MTL, then you can use the re-roll to cause botches. On the other hand, it could backfire and lead to being Vanquished. You get to remove Annoyance for a both failure and success after a re-roll, but not for a botch.

In all cases, you will probably be MTL and possible Rebel Leader for each other Emperor, and they in turn will be one or more of those for you. So, being too mean in those roles risks making enemies who will trip you up later. If you can justify being harsh, or are particularly entertaining, then your transgressions will probably be more easily overlooked.

You are reading page 32, oh great lord.

This simple human game is called 'Lairshare', sire.

Let's say you're MTL and Rebel Leader for one Emperor. Then you manage things so that he is MTL and Rebel Leader for you. That can be quite a cushy gig, assuming you can trust each other, setting difficulties low and enjoying a gradual reduction in Annoyance as you collude. The other players can't break up your tidy agreement, but they can keep shovelling Annoyance onto the pair of you every chance they get.

Getting Better

So, you've run out of Annoyance and are feeling pretty proud of yourself? You can, by accepting 5 points of Annoyance, increase one of your attributes by one word, or gain a new attribute with two words.

Drowning in Annoyance

If you have a bad run of task rolls, it's possible to end up with rather a lot of Annoyance. If at all possible, you should persevere and try to get it under control. If the situation is so bad that you're no longer having fun, then with the GM's permission you can have your Emperor leave the house to be replaced by another. This leaves MTL and Rebel Leader roles unaffected. The catch is that you have to create three different new Emperors, and the other players vote on which they will allow into the house. The GM might even have a scene for house-mate interviews. New Emperors start with 7 points of Annoyance.

You are reading page 33, oh great lord.