

Quilt of Shadows

A person in a dark, hooded garment stands within a large, dark stone archway. They hold a flaming torch aloft in their right hand, casting a warm, orange glow. The archway is constructed from rough-hewn stones and leads into a dark, tunnel-like passage. The background is a deep, dark blue with faint, star-like specks, suggesting a night sky or a distant, dark space. The overall mood is mysterious and atmospheric.

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Quilt of Shadows

A PBTA Game of Community in a
Low-Fantasy Apocalypse

Jacqueline Bryk

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Where We Are

The sun is dying out. It's like a storm is coming, but slowly and constantly. Every day we wake up to a sunrise that is slightly dimmer than the last. We don't know what mage cast a spell that went wrong, or which king angered which god, but we know that we're marching inexorably towards an end ... if not The End.

Quilt of Shadows is a Powered By The Apocalypse game about a medieval fantasy world where the sun is dying. In other games, you might play the brave heroes who venture to the edge of the horizon to save the Prime Material Plane or the center of the universe or even the sun itself. Here, you play the people who are suffering with the disappearances of their liege lords, in towns where survival is key over any heroic feat. You will not be playing great fighters or battle priests or powerful mages. Instead, you are the farmer in the valley who keeps your town fed, the cleric who keeps their spirits light, or the link who runs in-between hamlets on secret errands. As you read this book, you will notice that most charts and explanations are laid out in a 3x3 or 3x4 grid. This is to represent your quilt, your patched-together fabric of community during the apocalypse. Your quilt might be your friends and family, your town and customers, or even your connection to other demesnes. Your quilt is also yourself — you are supported, if not defined, by your connections.

What You'll Need

- 1 Master of Ceremonies (MC), the person who runs the game.
- Between 3 and 6 players.
- 1 set of 2d6 for each player, including the MC.
- Playbooks, printed from this PDF
- The worldbuilding questions from this PDF
- Notecards
- Pens or pencils

How to Play

Setup

Each player should choose a playbook and fill out all the prompts EXCEPT for the Threads. Remember to choose Vocations and Deviations.

As a group, fill out the Worldbuilding Questions on the next page to get an idea of what the world at large looks like.

Talk about your Town. Some question to consider:

- *What is it called?*
- *What are the boundaries?*
- *Where is it located?*
- *What is the nearest demesne or holding?*
- *What are its major exports?*
- *How close is it to a major keep or castle?*

Map out the town together on a piece of paper or on your notecards. Anything outside of the boundaries is unknown — anything could be out there, in the darkness. Answer the Threads questions while you're doing this, in order to establish further connections to the town, other player characters, and NPCs.

Safety Tools:

The X and O Card:

<http://www.gamingaswomen.com/posts/2013/01/finding-my-o-with-the-x-card/>

Lines and Veils:

<https://sethbenezra.wordpress.com/2008/04/23/pre-game-lines-and-veils-discussions/>



Play

For Players

Use the safety tools above if you need or want to. You are at the end of the world, or definitely an end of something. The sun is dimming, food is hard to come by, and there are strangers on the roads. You are not an adventurer. You are a peasant with no lord. How will you cope?

As other PBTA games say, drive your character like a stolen car. Help others to your own detriment, or hinder others to theirs. Acts of kindness and atrocity don't need world-shaking powers, they can be as simple as giving or denying or giving a hungry child your extra food.

Describe your actions. The Vocation skills are left intentionally vague. When you roll, explain what you're trying to do, and when you succeed or fail, explain how. If you swing a knife or a shovel (if you successfully attack someone, they lose Health, by the way) explain what your character is feeling and why they're doing what they're doing. Be descriptive!

Ask for help. If you find yourself stuck, ask another player or the MC for ideas. There's no shame in asking!

For the MC

Use the safety tools above, if you need or want to.

Keep track of NPCs. If you introduce a new NPC, write their name and several words describing them on a notecard. Introduce NPCs whenever you feel it's appropriate. Have adventurers disrupt town life. Show monsters at a distance, and ghosts and strangers up close. NPCs make the world feel bigger and PCs should feel like they're very small in a very large world.

Introduce a new element to the apocalypse whenever the story calls for it. Make sure it follows the Worldbuilding Questions you filled out earlier!

Remember, this is a horror game. Be willing to work with the PCs and cheer them on, but also be willing to put their characters into heinous, terrifying, or revolting situations. Hint that there are things beyond their perception, but be willing to bring them to the fore if the

PCs insist on chasing them down. Show them how small they are when they come face to face with the apocalypse.

Conversely, emphasize community. Community is where the PCs can find safety and warmth even as the sun fades. Do new people ruin or enhance the sense of community? How do characters bond or keep themselves in the cold?

Worldbuilding Questions

The only constants in a game of Quilt of Shadows are that the world is low medieval fantasy with feudal leaning, world-shaking magic is a thing of the past, and the sun is starting to go out. The sun has not completely gone out, but seems weaker every day. Use these question to create your town, superstitions, and the world at large for your characters to play in.

<div>We have seen portents of evil in</div> <div>_____.</div> <div>They tell us that</div> <div>_____.</div>	<div>We used to think of magic as</div> <div>_____.</div> <div>Now that the sun is starting to fade, we think of it like</div> <div>_____.</div>	<div>We have been attacked by</div> <div>_____.</div> <div>They have stolen something,</div> <div>_____.</div>
<div>Our lord disappeared when</div> <div>_____.</div> <div>As a consequence,</div> <div>_____.</div>	<div>The overarching state of the world is</div> <div>_____.</div> <div>Our biggest problem or scarcity is</div> <div>_____.</div>	<div>The divine was important to us because</div> <div>_____.</div> <div>Now we treat it/them at the end of the world like</div> <div>_____.</div>
<div>The town was</div> <div>_____.</div> <div>Now it survives based on</div> <div>_____.</div>	<div>The sun started darkening when _____</div> <div>committed the sin of _____.</div> <div>This led to _____.</div>	<div>There is always hope. We cling to the hope that</div> <div>_____.</div> <div>Someday, the sun will shine again.</div>



Playbooks and Stats

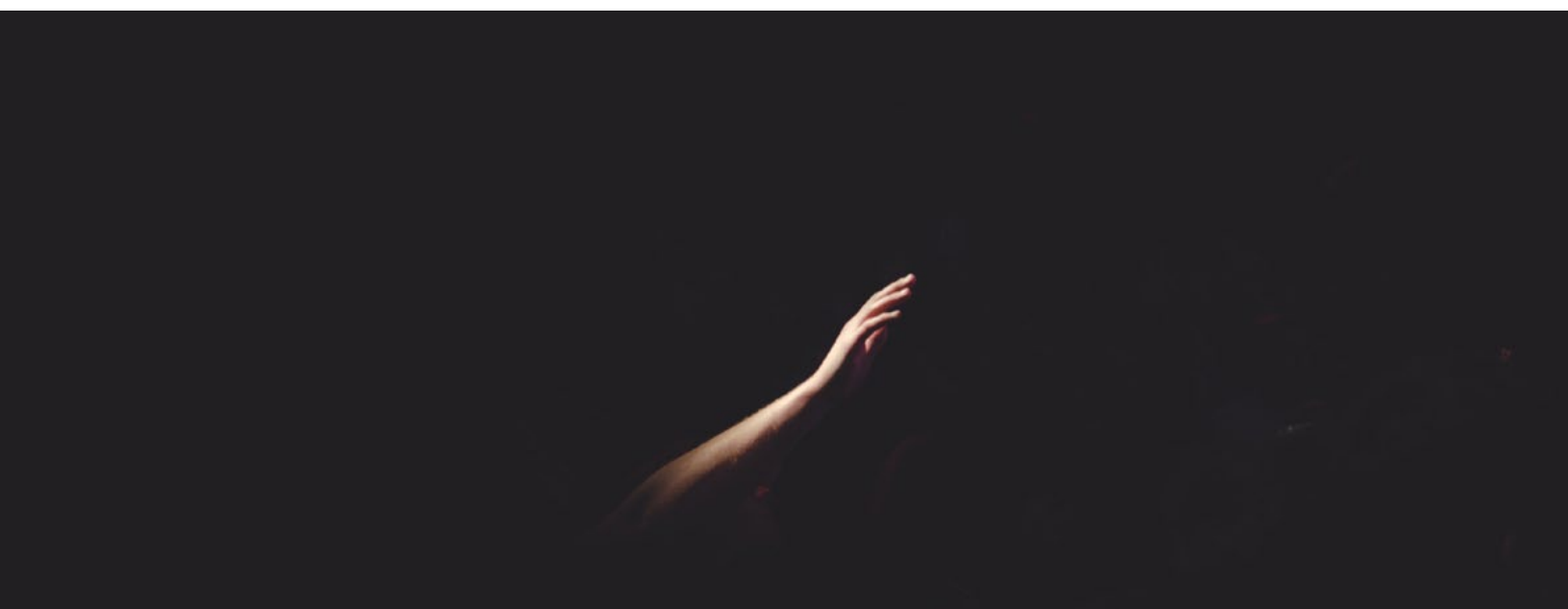
Quilt of Shadows runs off of a PBTA system with two rollable stats: **Vocation** and **Deviation**. Every playbook should start with one Deviation and three Vocations. Vocation skills come from the PC's playbook whereas Deviation skills come from another playbook, even one that might not be in play.

Below are explanations of Vocation and Deviation, as well as the available playbooks. When you roll Vocation or Deviation, a 6 or under is a failure. A 7-9 is a partial hit -- you succeed, but something else happens. 10+ is a hit, you succeed with no drawbacks.

Health is how hale and hearty your character is. Each character has three Health circles. If all three are filled in, the character is dying of starvation, injury, etc. Only *healing* skills (such as poultice, stitch, or tincture) can restore Health. If the character ever goes beyond three circles, they are beyond help.

Experience is how your character gets better at things, both Vocation and Deviation based. Each playbook has a different Experience track, which is listed on the character sheet, as well as gaining one Experience per session automatically. When you fill the Experience track, take one of the **Advancements** listed on the sheet.

Threads are what bind the quilt of society together. In mechanical terms, having a Thread with someone means you can spend it to carry +1 forward on a roll involving them. Each playbook starts with three threads on other characters, either PCs or NPCs, and a space for writing them down on the sheet.



<p>The Farmer feeds the town's mouths, beef and parsnips for the wealthy and chicken and barley for the lessers. Everyone is lesser these days, though. Their Vocation comes from change, careful attention, and new life.</p>	<p>The Reeve ensures order in the town, keeping the church grounds sacred, arresting criminals, and providing a face for the law. Their Vocation comes from precedent, doctrine, and practice.</p>	<p>The Cleric is the soul of the town, soothing ailments of the heart, celebrating the living, and assisting the dying. Their Vocation comes from a higher power, liminality, and belief.</p>
<p>The Delver digs ditches, wells, canals, and graves. Their skills are always needed, but never more so than now. Their Vocation comes from fortitude, high demand, and revulsion.</p>	<p>Vocation <i>is a player character's ability to affect the world around them using their domestic skills. Every PC starts with Vocation +1. Vocation can always be used to help (add +1 to someone else's roll) or hinder (take -2 from someone else's roll).</i></p>	<p>The Clothier mends and creates clothing to cover bodies and quilts to cover beds. Their Vocation comes from connection, warmth, and detail.</p>
<p>The Butcher cleans, cuts, and prepares meat. They can also be called on for emergency procedures, if necessary. Their Vocation comes from efficiency, disassociation, and blood.</p>	<p>Deviation <i>refers to skills that a character should not have, but does. These are taken from other playbooks. Every PC starts with Deviation -1. Deviation can be used to hinder, but helping someone with Deviation may have consequences.</i></p>	<p>The Apothecarist is the local healer, the one who takes care of those who cannot afford the doctors and mages of the noble and wealthy. Their Vocation comes from growth, tenderness, and awareness.</p>
<p>The Famulus was the attendant to a mage or a scientist. These days, they're not quite sure what they are. They know a little bit of everything. Their Vocation comes from loss, uncertainty, and dark knowledge.</p>	<p>The Link does a bit of everything. They guide people through the night, but they also get goods to people who couldn't acquire them through strictly legal means. Their Vocation comes through whispers, grey spaces, and travel.</p>	<p>The Blacksmith is the backbone of the town, with strong hands and keen eyes. Their Vocation comes from strength, stability, and simplicity.</p>

Apothecarist

The Apothecarist is the local healer, the one who takes care of those who cannot afford the doctors and mages of the noble and wealthy. Their Vocation comes from growth, tenderness, and awareness.

Gain Experience When:

You grow a rare plant.

You successfully make and apply a poultice.

You heal someone without requesting payment.

You poison someone, accidentally or on purpose.

Experience

∂

∂

∂

∂

∂

Vocation Skills (circle three)

Herb garden, canning,
jarring, dyeing, poultice,
tincture, small knife, first aid,
poison, cooking, diagnose

Deviation

(select one from
another playbook)

Name

(circle one or create your own)
Aspen, Caelan, Day, Pia, River,
Rose, Sage, Tarragon, West

Advancement

- Circle another Vocation.
- Circle another Vocation.
- Pick a Deviation.
- Circle another Vocation
- Pick a Deviation.

What does your garden look
like?

Hands

(pick one)

Cracked hands, dirty hands,
stained hands, slender hands,
dry hands, missing a finger

How do people know you by
looking at it?

Starting Threads

Who suspects you of being more than
you appear? (1 thread)

Other Threads

Who did you save from an odd illness?
(1 thread)

Who would you give your life for? (1
thread)

Health:

∂

∂

∂

Vocation: +1

Deviation: -1

Blacksmith

*The Blacksmith is the backbone of the town, with strong hands and keen eyes.
Their Vocation comes from strength, stability, and simplicity.*

Gain Experience When:

You create something new.
You build without asking for payment.
One of your creations helps someone.
One of your creations harms someone.

Experience	Vocation Skills (circle three)	Deviation (select one from another playbook)
ð		
ð	Hammer, repair metal, repair	
ð	stone, repair wood, forge	
ð	weapon, forge armor,	
ð	decorative metalwork, light/ extinguish fire, intimidate, first aid	
Name (circle one or create your own) Briar, Em, Sutton, Rust, Bronze, Avery, Jon, Red, Ian	Advancement <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Circle another Vocation.• Circle another Vocation.• Pick a Deviation.• Circle another Vocation• Pick a Deviation.	What does your abattoir look like? How do people know you by looking at it?
Hands (pick one) Big hands, strong hands, rough hands, burnt hands, skeletal hans, knobbly hands		
Starting Threads Who did you hurt during your apprenticeship? (1 thread) Who do you look forward to selling to? (1 thread) Who would you give your life for? (1 thread)	Other Threads	Health: ð ð ð Vocation: +1 Deviation: -1

Cleric

The Cleric is the soul of the town, soothing ailments of the heart, celebrating the living, and assisting the dying. Their Vocation comes from a higher power, liminality, and belief.

Gain Experience When:

You hold a service.

You counsel someone or take confession.

You console the dying.

You perform a baptism, marriage, or other sacrament.

You catch the attention of something Divine or Other.

Experience

∂
∂
∂
∂
∂

Vocation Skills (circle three)

Baptism, marriage, prayer for the dying, prayer for crops, empathy, mediumship, holy service, confession, first aid, blessing

Deviation

(select one from another playbook)

Name

(circle one or create your own)

Nitya, Emory, Ametis, Aviya, Saffron, Crescent, Dechen, Sylvaine, Lillis

Hands

(pick one)

Smooth hands, small hands, big hands, gloved hands, clammy hands, thin hands

Advancement

- Circle another Vocation.
- Circle another Vocation.
- Pick a Deviation.
- Circle another Vocation
- Pick a Deviation.

What does your sanctuary look like?

How do people know you by looking at it?

Starting Threads

Who did you give up to serve the divine?(1 thread)

Who do you want to follow in your footsteps?(1 thread)

Who would you give your life for? (1 thread)

Other Threads

Health:

∂
∂
∂

Vocation: +1

Deviation: -1

Clothier

*The Clothier mends and creates clothing to cover bodies and quilts to cover beds.
Their Vocation comes from connection, warmth, and detail.*

Gain Experience When:

You finish a piece of clothing.

You finish a quilt.

You host a quilting bee.

You give a stranger clothing free of charge.

You sew something other than cloth.

Experience

ð
ð
ð
ð
ð

Vocation Skills (circle three)

Stitch, poultice, repair cloth,
repair armor, patchwork,
embroidery, leatherwork,
appraise, accounting, haggle

Deviation

(select one from
another playbook)

Name

(circle one or create your own)
Silk, Heather, Thistle, Bairre,
Kalish, Izevel, Cheall, Ndidì,
Dana

Hands

(pick one)

Pinpricked hands, rough hands,
dry hands, slender hands,
delicate hands, warm hands

Advancement

- Circle another Vocation.
- Circle another Vocation.
- Pick a Deviation.
- Circle another Vocation
- Pick a Deviation.

What does your sewing room
look like?

How do people know you by
looking at it?

Starting Threads

Who cheated you on a commission?
(1 thread)

Who is most grateful for your work?
(1 thread)

Who would you give your life for?
(1 thread)

Other Threads

Health:

ð
ð
ð

Vocation: +1

Deviation: -1

Delver

The Delver digs ditches, wells, canals, and graves. Their skills are always needed, but never more so than now. Their Vocation comes from fortitude, high demand, and revulsion.

Gain Experience When:

You dig a grave for someone.

You find something while digging.

You dig a well.

Someone makes an unpleasant comment about your profession.

You make a sarcastic existentialist comment.

Experience

∂

∂

∂

∂

∂

Vocation Skills

(circle three)

Intimidation, shovel, dig,
fistfight, dowsing rod,
geography, oratory,
mineralogy, repair stone,
stamina

Deviation

(select one from
another playbook)

Name

(circle one or create your own)

Dev, Nur, Ike, Liv, Riny, Ash,
Kris, Thorn, Jay

Advancement

- Circle another Vocation.
- Circle another Vocation.
- Pick a Deviation.
- Circle another Vocation
- Pick a Deviation.

What does your home look like?

Hands

(pick one)

Filthy hands, broken nails,
strong hands, sweaty hands, cold
hands, diseased hands?

How do people know you by
looking at it?

Starting Threads

Who tormented you most when you
began digging?(1 thread)

Other Threads

Who did you recently dig a well for?
(1 thread)

Health:

∂

∂

∂

Vocation: +1

Who would you give your life for?
(1 thread)

Deviation: -1

Famulus

The Famulus was the attendant to a mage or a scientist. These days, they're not quite sure what they are. They know a little bit of everything. Their Vocation comes from loss, uncertainty, and dark knowledge.

Gain Experience When:

You refuse to reveal your master when asked directly.

You translate something.

You perform a small amount of magic.

You experiment with another PC's help.

You discover something about the sun fading.

Experience

∂
∂
∂
∂
∂

Vocation Skills

(circle three)

Translation, secret
language, mediumship,
accounting, haggle,
haruspication, research,
bookbinding, transcribe,
occult knowledge

Deviation

(select one from
another playbook)

Name

(circle one or create your own)

Dewey, Tevfik, Hathaway,
Rowan, Aurum, Greenheart,
Paderau, Cevahir, Arden

Hands

(pick one)

Knotted hands, smooth hands,
soft hands, twitchy hands,
tattooed hands, bloody hands

Advancement

- Circle another Vocation.
- Circle another Vocation.
- Pick a Deviation.
- Circle another Vocation
- Pick a Deviation.

What does your room or hovel
look like?

How do people know you by
looking at it?

Starting Threads

Who suspects you of being a dark
mage? (1 thread)

Who took you in even when rumors
were flying? (1 thread)

Who would you give your life for?
(1 thread)

Other Threads

Health:

∂
∂
∂

Vocation: +1

Deviation: -1

Farmer

The Farmer feeds the town's mouths, beef and parsnips for the wealthy and chicken and barley for the lessers. Everyone is lesser these days, though. Their Vocation comes from change, careful attention, and new life.

Gain Experience When:

You plant a new kind of crop.

Your crops fail.

You buy a new animal.

You sell crops or animals to others for lower than you usually do.

You feed a stranger.

Experience

∂

∂

∂

∂

∂

Vocation Skills

(circle three)

Herb garden, growing staple crops, growing exotic crops, orchard, husbandry, herding, accounting, haggle, first aid, shovel

Deviation

(select one from another playbook)

Name

(circle one or create your own)

Hanne, Mies, Sycamore, Mischa, Ash, Elian, Georgi, Alexe, Aeron

Advancement

- Circle another Vocation.
- Circle another Vocation.
- Pick a Deviation.
- Circle another Vocation
- Pick a Deviation.

What does your farm look like?

Hands

(pick one)

Callused hands, big hands, dry hands, sweaty hands, tanned hands, odd hands

How do people know you by looking at it?

Starting Threads

Who do you suspect of stealing food from you? (1 thread)

Other Threads

Who do you trust to help you out on the farm? (1 thread)

Health:

∂

∂

∂

Vocation: +1

Who would you give your life for? (1 thread)

Deviation: -1

Link

The Link does a bit of everything. They guide people through the night, but they also get goods to people who couldn't acquire them through strictly legal means. Their Vocation comes through whispers, grey spaces, and travel.

Gain Experience When:

You fence an object stolen within the town.

You blackmail someone.

You lead someone outside of town.

You endanger someone with a stolen object.

Someone comes after you.

Experience

∂

∂

∂

∂

∂

Vocation Skills

(circle three)

Wilderness survival, fast talk,
locate, light/extinguish fire,
disguise, fence, pickpocket,
intimidate, haggle, hide

Deviation

(select one from
another playbook)

Name

Arlie, Kit, Noel, Alpha, Jae, Joss,
Rain, Leith, Sparrow

Advancement

- Circle another Vocation.
- Circle another Vocation.
- Pick a Deviation.
- Circle another Vocation
- Pick a Deviation.

What does your shopfront look
like?

Hands

(pick one)

Quick hands, delicate hands,
spidery hands, small hands, extra
finger, well-kept hands

How do people know you by
looking at it?

Starting Threads

Who do you suspect of stealing from
you?(1 thread)

Other Threads

Who is your best customer? (1 thread)

Health:

∂

∂

∂

Who would you give your life for?
(1 thread)

Vocation: +1

Deviation: -1

Reeve

The Reeve ensures order in the town, keeping the church grounds sacred, arresting criminals, and providing a face for the law. Their Vocation comes from precedent, doctrine, and practice.

Gain Experience When:

You successfully accuse someone of a crime.

You put someone on trial.

You mistake someone for someone else.

You are suspicious of a stranger.

You give aid to a fellow townspeople.

Experience

∂

∂

∂

∂

∂

Vocation Skills (circle three)

Pursue, locate, observe,
intimidate, law, empathy,
oratory, accounting, billy
club, knife

Deviation

(select one from
another playbook)

Name

Tibby, Haven, Lamb, Tryst,
Justice, Parveen, Mahinder,
Rahat, Joscelin

Advancement

- Circle another Vocation.
- Circle another Vocation.
- Pick a Deviation.
- Circle another Vocation
- Pick a Deviation.

What does your gaol look like?

Hands

(pick one)

Thick hands, grasping hands,
cracked hands, missing a finger,
ringed fingers, soft hands

How do people know you by
looking at it?

Starting Threads

Who do you suspect of stealing from
you? (1 thread)

Other Threads

Who is your most ardent supporter or
deputy? (1 thread)

Health:

∂

∂

∂

Who would you give your life for?
(1 thread)

Vocation: +1

Deviation: -1