

Wraith The Oblivion

Wraith: The Oblivion is a compelling and haunting tabletop role-playing game that immerses players in the dark, gothic world of the undead. Developed by White Wolf Publishing and first released in 1994, it is a core part of the World of Darkness universe. Wraith: The Oblivion explores themes of death, the afterlife, and the struggles of souls trapped between worlds. This article provides an in-depth overview of the game, its mechanics, lore, and how it stands out in the realm of horror role-playing games.

Introduction to Wraith: The Oblivion

Wraith: The Oblivion transports players into the shadowy domain of the afterlife, where spirits navigate the realms of the dead, face their fears, and seek redemption or further damnation. Unlike traditional horror games that focus on the living and external threats, Wraith emphasizes internal conflict, moral dilemmas, and the haunting memories of the deceased.

What Is Wraith: The Oblivion? - A tabletop role-playing game set in a dark, supernatural universe. - Focuses on spirits, ghosts, and the afterlife. - Explores themes of mortality, regret, and the human psyche. - Emphasizes storytelling, character development, and moral choices.

The Core Themes of the Game

- **Loss and Mourning:** Characters often grapple with unresolved issues from their mortal lives.
- **Redemption and Damnation:** Many spirits seek to find peace or be damned forever.
- **Power and Corruption:** The influence of the Shadow (a manifestation of inner darkness) on spirits.
- **Freedom and Entrapment:** Spirits' struggles to escape their torment or accept their fate.

The World of Wraith: The Oblivion

The universe of Wraith is a layered and complex realm, divided into several domains and planes that reflect different aspects of the afterlife.

The Afterlife Realms

- **The Shadow:** A mirror of the mortal world, infused with fears, regrets, and darker impulses.
- **The Fade:** The liminal space where spirits rest or are trapped.
- **The Underworld:** The domain of the dead, ruled by powerful entities and governed by complex laws.

Key Locations in the Game

- **The City of the Dead:** A sprawling metropolis where spirits gather, known for its haunting beauty and danger.
- **The River of Forgetfulness:** A symbolic river that spirits must cross to move on or become lost.
- **The Realm of the Dead:** Governed by the King of Shadows and other powerful entities, it's a place of both refuge and peril.

The Shadow and Its Influence

The Shadow is a central concept in Wraith. It represents the darker aspects of a spirit's personality and can manifest as a malevolent force.

- **The Shadow as an antagonist:** It tempts spirits to indulge in their worst impulses.
- **The Shadow as a reflection:** It embodies unresolved guilt, fears, and desires.
- **The Shadow's power:** It can influence spirits' decisions and even possess them.

Gameplay Mechanics of Wraith: The Oblivion

The game mechanics are designed to foster storytelling, character development, and moral complexity. Character Creation Players create spirits who have a backstory, a purpose, and unresolved issues from their mortal lives. - Attributes: Physical, Social, and Mental. - Skills: Talents, Skills, and Knowledges. - Paths: The moral and philosophical outlook of the spirit. - Tethers: Connections to the mortal world, such as loved ones or personal items. The Core Mechanics - Dice System: Uses ten-sided dice (d10) to determine outcomes. - Willpower: Represents a spirit's resolve and determines their ability to resist the Shadow. - Glamour: A form of supernatural energy used to perform feats or influence the living. - Oblivion: The ultimate force of destruction and forgetfulness, threatening spirits. Morality and Moral Dilemmas - Spirits often face moral choices that affect their fate. - Choices can lead to redemption or descent into chaos. - The game encourages narrative-driven decisions rather than just combat.

Character Types and Roles in Wraith

The game features a diverse cast of spirits, each with unique motivations and roles. Common Character Archetypes 1. The Lost: Spirits who are unaware of their death or the purpose of their existence. 2. The Redeemed: Spirits seeking peace and resolution for their mortal lives. 3. The Malefactor: Spirits driven by malevolent desires or corrupted by the Shadow. 4. The Guide: Spirits who aid the living or other spirits in their journey. 5. The Reaper: Entities responsible for collecting souls and maintaining the balance. Notable Character Traits - Resonances: Emotional energies tied to a spirit's past. - Territories: Areas that a spirit considers their domain or influence. - Fetters: Physical or emotional ties that keep spirits connected to the material world.

Storytelling and Campaigns in Wraith

Wraith emphasizes immersive storytelling and character-driven plots. Types of Campaigns - Redemption Quests: Spirits seek to resolve their mortal sins or find peace. - Haunting Stories: Spirits haunt the living or other spirits, creating tension. - Exploration of the Afterlife: Characters navigate the complex realms of the dead. - Moral Dilemmas: Players face decisions involving sacrifice, guilt, and moral ambiguity. Tips for Game Masters - Focus on atmosphere and mood. - Incorporate moral choices to deepen character development. - Use evocative descriptions of the shadowy realms. - Encourage players to explore their characters' backstories.

Wraith: The Oblivion's Legacy and Cultural Impact

Since its release, Wraith has had a lasting influence on horror role-playing games and popular culture. Influence on Gaming - Pioneered themes of internal conflict and moral ambiguity. - Inspired numerous supplements and expansions. - Contributed to the evolution of the World of Darkness universe. Cultural Impact - Influenced horror literature and media with its focus on psychological horror. - Sparked discussions on death, the afterlife, and morality. - Remains a beloved classic

among tabletop role-players. Notable Supplements and Expansions - The Book of the Dead: Explores the various realms and entities. - Shadow Players: Delves into the nature of the Shadow. - The River of Souls: Focuses on the journey of spirits crossing into the afterlife.

Why Play Wraith: The Oblivion Today?

Wraith offers a unique experience compared to other horror RPGs, emphasizing emotional depth and moral complexity. Benefits of Playing Wraith - Deep storytelling opportunities. - Exploration of complex themes like mortality and redemption. - Rich lore and immersive world-building. - Encourages players to develop nuanced characters. Who Should Play Wraith? - Fans of gothic horror and supernatural themes. - Players interested in moral dilemmas and psychological depth. - Game masters seeking to craft atmospheric and thought-provoking campaigns.

Conclusion

Wraith: The Oblivion remains a seminal role-playing game that pushes players to confront the darker aspects of existence. Its focus on internal conflict, moral ambiguity, and atmospheric storytelling sets it apart in the horror genre. Whether you're a seasoned role-player or new to tabletop gaming, exploring the shadowy realms of Wraith offers a profound and haunting experience that challenges perceptions of life, death, and the soul. Dive into the world of Wraith and discover the haunting beauty of the afterlife, where every choice echoes into eternity.

Wraith: The Oblivion stands as a haunting cornerstone in the world of tabletop role-playing games, capturing the dark, visceral essence of ghostly existence and the eternal struggle between the living and the dead. As part of White Wolf's renowned World of Darkness universe, Wraith: The Oblivion immerses players into the shadowed afterlife, exploring themes of regret, loss, and redemption through compelling storytelling and intricate mechanics. Whether you're a seasoned storyteller or a newcomer eager to delve into spectral narratives, understanding the core elements of Wraith: The Oblivion is essential to unlocking its profound and often chilling potential.

The Essence of Wraith: The Oblivion

Wraith: The Oblivion is primarily a game about ghosts—spirits caught between life and death—who grapple with their pasts, their unfinished business, and their place in the cosmic order. It's a game that challenges players to embody beings of memory and emotion, often confronting the darkness within themselves and others. Unlike other supernatural horror games that focus on monsters or external threats, Wraith emphasizes internal conflict, moral ambiguity, and the haunting weight of unresolved issues.

Historical Context and Development

Developed in the early 1990s, Wraith: The Oblivion was designed to expand the World of Darkness universe, which already included Vampire: The Masquerade and Werewolf: The Apocalypse. Its creation was driven by a desire to explore the afterlife's shadowy depths, giving players a chance

to role-play as spirits navigating their existence beyond mortal life. The game's unique mechanics and thematic focus distinguished it from its counterparts, emphasizing personal storytelling over combat-heavy gameplay.

Core Themes and Mood

Wraith: The Oblivion is characterized by several powerful themes:

1. **Memory and Identity:** Ghosts in the game are often defined by their memories, which shape their identities and influence their interactions.
2. **Regret and Loss:** Many spirits are haunted by their past lives, unresolved issues, and the pain of their deaths.
3. **Redemption and Damnation:** The game explores the possibility of redemption but also the allure of damnation, offering players moral choices that have cosmic consequences.
4. **The Shadow and the Inner Darkness:** Each spirit has a "Shadow," a manifestation of their darker impulses and repressed desires, which must be confronted.

The mood of the game is often somber, introspective, and atmospheric, encouraging players to explore complex emotional and moral landscapes.

Setting and Cosmology

Wraith: The Oblivion takes place in a shadowy realm known as the Shadowlands, a reflection of the mortal world but infused with memories, emotions, and lingering energies. The Shadowlands is divided into several regions:

1. **The Realm of the Dead:** The main setting where spirits reside, often depicted as a fragmented, surreal landscape.
2. **The City of the Dead:** A common setting for stories, representing the spirits' personal and collective histories.
3. **The Underworld:** A more ominous, often dangerous part of the Shadowlands, filled with malevolent spirits and challenges.

The cosmos is governed by various entities and principles, including the *Rae* (the collective soul) and the *Domains*, which are allegorical regions representing different aspects of existence.

Character Creation and Playing a Wraith

Creating a character in Wraith: The Oblivion involves a focus on internal history, unresolved issues, and spectral powers. Key elements include:

1. **Concept:** The core idea or identity of the ghost.
2. **Attributes:** Divided into Mental, Physical, and Social, representing the spirit's capabilities.
3. **Skills:** Learned abilities that influence how the ghost interacts with the world.
4. **Qualities and Flaws:** Traits that add depth and complexity.
5. **Path and Pathos:** The spiritual journey and emotional state that define the character's narrative.
6. **Resonances:** The energies associated with memories, emotions, and physical objects, which

influence interactions.

Playing a wraith involves embodying a character torn between their past life and their current existence, often driven by emotional motives or unfinished business.

Mechanics and Gameplay

Wraith: The Oblivion employs a unique dice pool system, primarily relying on ten-sided dice (d10s). Success is achieved by rolling equal to or less than a target number (typically 7 or lower). Key mechanics include:

1. Resolve: The measure of a wraith's mental fortitude.
2. Pathos: Emotional energy that fuels powers and actions but can also lead to despair.
3. Resonances: Used to invoke powers or influence the Shadow.
4. Ghostly Powers: Abilities that range from intangible movement, possession, to haunting others.
5. The Shadow: Manifestations of inner darkness that can be both adversary and source of strength.

Gameplay often emphasizes narrative-driven challenges, moral dilemmas, and the exploration of personal themes.

The Role of the Shadow

One of the game's most compelling features is the Shadow, representing a spirit's darker side. The Shadow is a constant presence, whispering temptations, regrets, and destructive impulses.

Engaging with the Shadow involves:

1. Confrontation: Recognizing and battling one's darker urges.
2. Symbiosis: Sometimes, spirits can forge an uneasy alliance with their Shadow to harness its power.
3. Transformation: The ultimate goal for some spirits is to integrate their Shadow, achieving growth or redemption.

The Shadow adds psychological depth, turning internal conflicts into gameplay mechanics and storytelling opportunities.

Notable Settings and Campaigns

While Wraith: The Oblivion is inherently flexible, some notable settings and campaigns include:

1. The Durance: A prison realm where spirits are held captive, often used to explore themes of punishment and justice.
2. The City of the Dead: Urban settings where spirits interact with the living or other spirits, perfect for intrigue and moral dilemmas.
3. Personal Stories: Many campaigns focus on individual spirits' quests to resolve their pasts or find peace.

The game's open-ended design encourages storytelling that revolves around personal growth, tragedy, and sometimes, hope.

Critical Reception and Legacy

Wraith: The Oblivion is lauded for its atmospheric depth, psychological complexity, and innovative mechanics. It has influenced subsequent World of Darkness titles and inspired numerous adaptations in other media. Its focus on internal conflict and moral ambiguity has made it a favorite among horror enthusiasts and narrative-driven gamers.

Some criticisms include its steep learning curve and the emotionally intense themes, which may not appeal to all players. However, for those interested in exploring the darker aspects of the human (and ghostly) psyche, Wraith: The Oblivion remains a seminal work.

Conclusion: Why Play Wraith: The Oblivion?

Choosing to play Wraith: The Oblivion offers an opportunity to delve into stories that probe the depths of memory, regret, and redemption. Its rich cosmology, complex characters, and atmospheric gameplay create a memorable experience that challenges players to confront not only supernatural threats but also their own inner demons. Whether used as a tool for introspective storytelling or as a dark mirror reflecting human fears and desires, Wraith: The Oblivion stands as a masterful exploration of the shadows that dwell both within and beyond us.

If you're ready to explore the spectral realm and tell stories of haunting beauty and tragic loss, embracing Wraith: The Oblivion could be your next great adventure into the unknown.

Questions & Answers About wraith the oblivion

No	Question	Answer
1	What is Wraith the Oblivion about?	Wraith: The Oblivion is a tabletop role-playing game set in the World of Darkness, where players assume the roles of spirits of the dead known as Wraiths, exploring themes of death, the afterlife, and personal redemption.
2	How does character creation work in Wraith: The Oblivion?	Character creation involves selecting a Wraith's domain, ghostly traits, and personal history, along with their Shadow and Echoes, which define their internal conflicts and motivations within the game.
3	What are the main themes explored in Wraith: The Oblivion?	The game explores themes of mortality, grief, identity, moral dilemmas, and the struggle for redemption in the afterlife, often emphasizing psychological and spiritual conflicts.
4	How has Wraith: The Oblivion influenced modern horror role-playing games?	Wraith introduced complex psychological themes and a focus on character internal struggles, influencing many contemporary horror RPGs by emphasizing personal horror and moral ambiguity.

5	Are there any recent updates or editions of Wraith: The Oblivion?	While the original Wraith: The Oblivion was published in 1994, there have been supplementary materials and discussions within the World of Darkness community, but no new official editions have been released recently. Fans continue to explore and adapt the game for modern audiences.
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