

Birds
of a
feather

-Ashcan version-

The **soul** of a dead person needs to enter a body of water connected to sea by the dawn following their death, in order to ensure they rejoin the cycle of the Earth. If not, they become revenants, wraiths, or worse.

Everyone used to know this. These days people live closer and closer together, further and further from the sea, and they cover up the waterways with paving stones. Rather than learn about souls, they learn about science.

The Grey Lady loves each and every one of us. It's her job to ensure that we rejoin the cycle of the Earth when we die. It used to be she could do this personally, but there's so many more of us nowadays, and there's only one Grey Lady. So she needs helpers.

The **Bag People**, the Bag Ladies and Bag Men, act as the Grey Lady's agents on Earth. They are priests without office, living amongst those who need them the most. They run the gamut from driven social workers to moonlighting vicars to lonely solo mothers to deranged geriatrics. Some can see the spirits of the dead; others just think they can. The thing that unites them: all have seen the Grey Lady at some point in their lives.

We are **pigeons**. We are everywhere. The vast majority are as you expect. A few of us have been blessed by the Grey Lady, given the dedication to carry out her work. We seek out the Bag People, take their instruction, and help the dead rejoin the Earth.

Even those of us who have purpose, who can see the souls of the dead, are still pigeons. We are vain, myopic, argumentative, impulsive. But for some souls, we're all they have.

Make a pigeon

First, determine a name for your pigeon. Pigeons are great believers in found names: consider picking something that you might have seen or enjoyed as a chick, or a word that you might have read or seen a lot. (Pigeons tend to be spotty readers at best.) If you need inspiration, perhaps one of the following may inspire you:

- Bottlecap
- Chimney
- Cinema
- Taxitaxi
- Chip
- Bread
- Paperbag
- Acorn
- Lake
- Pinecone
- Daisy
- Flower
- Berry
- River

Or, if a human once kept you, they may have given you a name, and you may have retained it even after you left their care. Other pigeons will know where you got that name, and they may judge you as a result.

Second, jot down a brief description of your appearance. Consider: are you a scrappy city pigeon, already missing some toes, or a glossy rock pigeon who wandered into the city and now can't get out? A sleek racing pigeon gone feral, or a dove escaped from someone's aviary?

Third, write down two **facts** about you. These should be written as "I" statements, and should give us an idea of what makes you special. Think of them as your pigeon CV. Some examples are:

- I once ate a whole bagel
- I read every newspaper I can find
- I have the shiniest feathers
- I'm always watching for trouble
- I can fly fast
- I can undo knots with my beak
- Humans like me
- I will fight you

Finally, leave some space for **memories** and **conditions**, and mark 4 boxes for **stress**. Now you're ready to go!

Birds of a Feather – Character sheet

Name:

Description:

Facts:

Memories:

Stress

Conditions:

<input type="checkbox"/> Injured	<input type="checkbox"/> Confused
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhausted	<input type="checkbox"/> Enraged
<input type="checkbox"/> Dead	<input type="checkbox"/> Feral

Action rolls

To perform an action roll:

- Start with 1 die

Add one die per each of the following:

- You have a relevant fact or memory
- Circumstances are favourable
- You accept the GM's bargain

Remove one die per each of the following:

- The odds are against you
- A condition hinders you

Bid stress, one-for-one, to add dice to your pool. Then roll.

Every 5 or 6 is a success. If you succeed, mark off any stress you bid.

By default, your action is **slapdash**, **noisy**, and **takes time**. Spend extra successes, one-for-one, to perform your action **quickly**, **quietly**, or **well**.

Action rolls

When stakes are high and the outcome is uncertain, you may need to make an **action roll** to see how things pan out. To perform an action roll, you will assemble a dice pool, roll them, and then assign successes.

To assemble your dice pool:

- Start with one die for trying
- If a fact or memory helps you in this situation, describe how and take +1 dice
- If the circumstances are particularly favourable (GM's call), take +1 dice
- If the odds are particularly against you (again, GM's call), take -1 dice
- If a condition hinders you, take -1 dice
- Finally, the GM may offer you a bargain. If you accept, take +1 dice

You may also bid stress, one-for-one, to gain dice to your roll. If you succeed (and *only* if you succeed), you must spend the stress you bid.

Now you know how many dice to roll, you can roll them. Every 5 or 6 you roll is a success. At least one success means you managed to achieve what you wanted. If you get no successes, you have failed: you don't need to spend stress that you bid, but the GM will likely introduce a complication, impose a condition, or both.

By default, every successful action is **slapdash**, **noisy**, and **takes time**. For every success beyond the first, you may instead choose to do your task **quickly**, **quietly**, or **well**.

Helping

After dice have been rolled, another pigeon may try to help you. To do so:

- They must describe how they butt in, take charge, get in the way, or otherwise help.
- They then roll a dice.

If this dice comes up 5 or 6, you may add one success to your action. If it is a failure, the GM may describe how the pigeon complicates your plan. If both the help roll and the action roll are failures, the helping pigeon will be sucked into your consequences, probably making the situation worse.

Conditions

If you fail, you may end up taking a **condition**. There are two physical and two mental conditions, followed by an end state for each. These are:

Physical	Mental
<input type="checkbox"/> Injured	<input type="checkbox"/> Confused
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhausted	<input type="checkbox"/> Enraged
<input type="checkbox"/> DEAD	<input type="checkbox"/> FERAL

If you must check a specific condition and it is already checked, check the other condition of that type (for example, if you are injured and you need to check “injured” again, you must check “exhausted”). If you must check a specific condition and both conditions of that type are checked, you must check the end state.

- If you ever check **dead** - you may not die right now, but over the next couple of scenes, you’ll find a hidden corner and pass on. Pigeons instinctively know how to get to the closest source of water.
- If you ever check **feral** - you lose track of whatever it is keeps you working for the Grey Lady. You fly off into the mass of “ordinary” pigeons throughout this city.

Recovering stress and clearing conditions

When you have the chance to recover and recharge – a night's rest, an abandoned meal, or similar – you can recover your stress back up to 4.

When you have an extended period of downtime, you can clear your conditions.

Memories

When you finish a session of Birds of a Feather, you can write a new memory for yourself. The only limitations on memories are:

- Each memory must mention another pigeon
- You may only have three memories at a time

You may need to remove an old memory if you make a new memory. You may use memories in action rolls like you would use facts.