



**Eidolons
of
Fate**

Acknowledgments

Illustrations are by Alphonse Mucha and in the public domain.

Eidolons of Fate is a tabletop role-playing game exploring themes of death, redemption, and regret.

Mechanics are inspired by Otherkind dice, Lady Blackbird, and Everway.

Inspiration for the Ghostwild comes from a number of places, notably Richard Matheson's *What Dreams May Come*, Greg Bear's *The Infinity Concerto*, *The Last Unicorn* by Peter S. Beagle, and *Wristcutters: a Love Story*.

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The bitterest tears shed over graves are for words left unsaid and deeds left undone.

– Harriet Beecher Stowe

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The Afterlife

Apeiron – the ghost world – is a lot like ours, except that the decaying remains of the past are everywhere. Boats left to rust and decay on deserts that were once seas or lakes. Buildings crumbling and ruined. Cars left to rust on the side of grass-broken roads.

Everything silent and still and dusty and full of that oppressive feeling that makes your hindbrain gibber in panic and demand you flee, only there's nowhere to flee to.

Nobody knows why some people end up here, instead of wherever they're supposed to go. Some folks, most folks, band together in communities, building walls and eking out what meager living they can, fearful always of what might come next and what's outside the walls.

Fate Eidolons, marshals and drifters, of a sort, have the job of keeping the peace, settling disputes, and, if you get to know one well enough, looking for a way out.

And they fight against the things that live in the Ghostwilds, the world of ghosts. Some of it's just the native wildlife, but some of it isn't.

They also capture Trespassers and send them back. Some Trespassers are humans, maybe gifted, maybe in a coma, maybe just partially crossed over, for whatever reason, hovering right at the Boundary between life and death. It's up to the Eidolon to determine if they cross over or go back.

Others aren't human, or at least aren't now. From Hell, or from Heaven, or maybe neither. If an Other catches someone, they drag them to wherever they're from and that Soul's never seen again.

Of course, legend tells of the Eidolon who went after a loved one, and brought 'em back, and hell itself couldn't stop her, but you know that story and it didn't end well, did it?

That's the thing about Eidolons, though. The more they struggle with the fabric of the ghost world, the more likely it is Fate'll punish them, maybe even drop them back into the Real with a task to fill before they can come back, like a toddler who gets too fussy over a bottle of juice.

And in their heart of hearts, that's what every Eidolon *wants*. Because even if they die the True Death, they'll get a day or two more in the Real.

To face their Regrets. And maybe, to atone for them.

Introduction

What Kind of Game Is This?

Eidolons of Fate is a narrative solo RPG set in the afterlife. It's an exploration of the lives of those tasked with protecting this world, and who wield the power of Fate like magic.

It's also an exploration of the boundaries between civilization and the wilderness, in a world that is almost entirely frontier.

And it's a study of how a powerful character, when looked at from another angle, might not be so powerful after all.

The core of the game is adventuring; traveling the Ghostwolds looking for lost souls to rescue, locating new settlements, building up the ones you care about, and fighting Others and Trespassers – and maybe even a few righteous Angels who are set on making sure Souls suffer their just measure – who want to take what you've built and crush it.

But sooner or later, your hero will find themselves trapped as a ghost in the real world, tasked with setting some wrong against Fate right before they can return to the world that needs them. And to do that, they have to move one step closer to True Death, and whatever awaits them on the other side.

To play *Eidolons of Fate*, you'll need a few handfuls of d6s, preferably in at least four or five different colors, and a deck of cards. Feel free to sub in your favorite 36 card oracle, if you have one.

Principles

Aim for specific. When interpreting, choose “a broken arm” over “a bad wound”. The more specific you can be, the more interesting, rich, and detailed your story will be.

Don't plan ahead. Discover the world as you play; make it yours by creating it.

Rely on the fiction. Let the fiction you've established, the world you've created, guide you. If something doesn't feel right, drop it. If a random result or draw card doesn't speak to you, discard it and draw again.

Playing the Game

As your hero navigates the world, flesh out the details that you don't want to supply yourself or answer questions that don't rise to the level of a conflict by drawing cards.

Interpret reversed cards as negative, and upright cards as positive or at the least, neutral.

When a card is drawn, discard it. Reshuffle discarded cards back into the deck whenever a Scene ends or there's a similar significant transition in the story.

When you draw one of your three background cards, something of significance happens to remind you of that past event. Weave it in and restore one of your pools to its full value.

Resolving Conflicts

When your hero faces a conflict, consider what your hero wants (the intent), how he'll try to get it (the task) and what's at stake (the risk). If you don't have those three elements, you don't have a conflict; just draw a card and interpret it instead.

Decide on a base pool to use, either Eidolon or Human.

Name at least one potential Danger; a wound, an emotional setback, a spiritual scar, damage to something he cares about, or whatever seems appropriate to the situation. If nothing comes to mind, leave this empty for now.

When you use Eidolon, there's always an additional Danger equal to your intent. If your intent is to send someone to the True Death, that's the Danger you face too. If you intend to light a campfire with a 1 in a million spark, you risk being singed. If you intend to save someone from drowning, you risk drowning yourself.

Now choose Karma or Fate to resolve the conflict.

1	Abysmal
4	Passable

2	Terrible
5	Good

3	Poor
6	Flawless

Karma

If you have points left in your chosen pool, you succeed, up to the rank of that pool. Each rank represents a level of proficiency, from Abysmal to Flawless. When you use a specialty, add one to the effective level, and when you use an ability, add the ability's rank.

Draw a card to represent a twist or complication; if it's reversed, it's negative or bad for you, otherwise, it's positive or beneficial.

If the suit of the drawn card matches your soul suit, the Danger happens. If you didn't specify the Danger before, draw a second card and interpret it as the Danger.

If you're facing multiple Dangers, draw a separate card to resolve each one.

That's it; the conflict is resolved. Narrate the how and the why, any inflicted wounds, and how the resulting complication changes the situation.

You can always choose a Karma resolution, if you have points in a pool and you're satisfied with a partial victory.

Fate

When you want more control over a conflict's outcome, you can choose to roll.

Wager dice up to your chosen pool's current rank. You must wager at least one die.

Add one die if one of your specialties applies, or add the rank of an ability that applies, if you're using Eidolon.

Add up to three more dice to reflect three aspects of the situation that help you out.

Aspects can be anything that helps you achieve your intent, from a previously unknown fact about the situation to your hero's emotional state to an ally acting. The aspect must be consistent with the fiction.

For each Danger you're facing, if it is minor, add one more die. If it's major, add two more.

Keep track of what each die represents; you can do this by using different colors for each source or just rolling them in groups.

Roll, then assign your dice to Success, any Dangers, and the Complication, discarding any unassigned dice. If you don't have a die to assign to a category, assign a 1.

Then narrate the outcome based on that Complication and the assigned dice.

Remember that if you use a die from a source, you should include that source in the subsequent narration. Aspects that are used are truth; aspects that aren't used aren't confirmed.

Success

If the die here is 4 or better, you succeed at your intent, otherwise, you don't.

This might mean that you perform the task flawlessly, but something prevents you from getting what you wanted anyway, or that you just don't quite perform up to the level required.

If you fail, keep the dice you risked in your chosen pool, otherwise, lose them and reduce your pool by that amount.

Danger

The die assigned here determines if the Danger comes to pass; on a 5+, it doesn't, on a 3-4, it's delayed or still a threat, and on a 1-2 it happens.

Complications

If the die here isn't a 6, draw a Complication card.

Complications are the motor breaking down, a horse bolting, a dam breaking, a stubborn mayor, a tree across the path, the fire spreading.

Minor injuries are a broken arm or nose, a bruised shoulder, a separation from a lover, an as-yet unrequited love, a dashing scar, a lingering fear of spiders.

Major injuries are a broken back, a disfigured face, a lover's death, the loss of a beloved pet, a crippling fear of water, a home's utter destruction.

Injury & Healing

Souls are injured and heal up a lot like living humans do, over days, weeks, and months. Eidolons are no exception, though they don't die forever until they address their Regrets.

When you're injured, add a Wound to reflect the injury. Wounds affect the fiction, eliminating options. They also affect the mechanics; for each Wound your hero has, you can use one fewer Asset on a roll.

If your hero takes a fourth Wound, he's unconscious or temporarily dead. Note that injuries like broken arms, severed limbs, and broken spines don't heal any better or faster for an Eidolon than anyone else – unless he's willing to gamble with Weave.

The True Death & Moving On

When all of your hero's Regrets are gone, he has until the end of the current scene before he disappears into whatever comes next.

You can spend one Drive per scene to extend this, but once he's out of Regrets and Drives, he's out of the game.

Crossing Fate

Occasionally Fate will hand your hero marching orders. Sometimes this is subtle; an unshakeable certainty, a flash of insight – and sometimes it is as direct as a shotgun blast to the head.

Whenever you draw a card, add the value of the card (1-13) to the Order pool.

Fate's orders are triggered when the pool exceeds 70 or when you assign two dice with the same face value on a Fate roll and their value, read as a number (11, 12, and so on), is lower than the current value of the Order pool.

Draw two cards and interpret them together as an order from Fate. The sentiment of the event, whether it is positive or negative, is determined by the orientation of the second card.

Once the Order pool triggers, reset it to 0.

If your hero defies Fate, Fate will retaliate, with subtlety and with force. Any time you draw a card while defying Fate, draw two, and keep the worst, as things just never seem to go your hero's way until he does what Fate demands.

Character Creation

Souls can come from any time that humans exist; past, present, or future.

Draw three cards and write them down. Interpret each as a defining event in your hero's life. One is something that happened before she came here, one that happened after, and one is related to her death. Choose one of the four suits as your "soul suit".

Decide what the visible marks from her death are. Decide what she was wearing when she crossed over; this is usually but not always at the time of death, depending on culture and religion. Decide how much of this gear she still has.

You have 7 points to spend between two core pools of Human and Eidolon.

Human

Humans in the Ghostwolds are just like humans anywhere else; they eat, sleep, have sex, and, if wounded badly enough, die. They don't have religion, though, because on some fundamental level they know that question's been settled, even if they can't always remember it.

Your hero was a human, before she died, and that's what she is in the Ghostwolds, mostly. Use this pool when you want to do something that's within normal human abilities.

Choose three specialties, short phrases that represent things your hero is particularly good at as a human. These can be broad or narrow; it's up to you.

gunfighter, fighter pilot, cowboy, private investigator, pediatrician, beautiful but bored socialite, painting, solving puzzles, sailing

While your Human pool is at 0, add an extra minor Danger to every Conflict: "gain mark". If this Danger comes to pass, your hero is marked in some way as "Other"; horns, wings, a craving for raw flesh, an inability to lie, some minor thing that sets him apart.

When your hero is marked as Other twice, the Danger becomes major, as does the mark. The fourth time that your hero is marked as Other, he becomes an Other and is no longer an Eidolon or covered by these rules.

Special: If you begin play marked as Other, start with 10xp.

Eidolon

Eidolons look just like everyone else. Marked a little by the Passage. Maybe marked a lot by the journey since. But you can't tell an Eidolon just from looking – not until they do something crazy like stare at someone 'til they drop dead.

Use this pool when you want to do something beyond normal human abilities that would be plausible for an agent of Fate, and when you use your Eidolon specialties.

In the Ghostwolds, Eidolon is a lot like magic, but restricted to what's plausible, what could happen if things were just a little different or if chance favored you. In the Real, the effects are even more subtle; a rational mind will explain them away.

When your Eidolon pool drops to 0, your hero is pulled into the real world. See the section on "The Real" for how that works.

All Eidolons have the following abilities and 4 ranks to divide between them.

Cut

An Eidolon can Cut, wounding with a thought, or sending someone on to the True Death.

In Reality, Cut causes superficial wounds with no apparent source, as a poltergeist might.

Smoke

An Eidolon can wield Smoke to hide, conceal, or blind, physically, mentally, or emotionally.

In Reality, Smoke creates the classic "ghost" manifestations; a chill down the spine, a flash of shadow, a knocking somewhere nearby.

Weave

An Eidolon can Weave the Threads: adjust Fate to heal wounds or cause them, to move things a bit in their favor.

In Reality, Weave creates a spooky coincidence or eerie similarity that's soon forgotten.

Echo

An Eidolon can Echo: mimic or reflect back something about someone, in order to force them to confront that aspect of themselves.

In Reality, Echoing is an instant of self-doubt, regret, or remorse, the exact effect depending on the Regrets of the Eidolon sparking it. How crippling this is depends on the target; draw a Card if you're unsure.

Regrets & Drives

Choose three things your hero wishes he'd done when he was alive or regrets leaving unfinished by his death; these are his Regrets.

Regrets are how an Eidolon advances, but they're also how you choose to end the game.

When you act because of a Regret, or to atone for one in some small measure, gain 1xp.

When you cash in your Regret, by coming to terms with it, atoning for it fully, or letting it go, you get 10xp – but once all your Regrets are gone, your hero Moves On shortly thereafter.

An Eidolon with Regrets cannot truly die unless they choose to let those Regrets go or atone for them (or by wagering a True Death on a roll). They might be dead for a bit, but they'll get back up again eventually, as wounds heal up just enough, just until life's plausible again.

Even if an Eidolon's physical form is utterly destroyed, they reform a few hours to days later, just as they were the first time they died, but a little stranger.

Only you decide when a Regret is cashed in, but an Eidolon who refuses to face his regrets risks being trapped as a ghost forever.

Drives

Drives are the flip side to Regrets; when you make a connection to the world of Apeiron in some way, and have less than three Regrets, you may spend 5xp to cement a connection as a Drive.

From that point onward, it functions exactly as a Regret, except that Drives don't anchor an Eidolon to Apeiron.

Advancement

Spend 5xp at any time to raise the max value of one of your pools by one, to add a new specialty to Human, or to increase the rank of one of your Eidolon abilities.

Return one pool of your choice to full when you spend 5xp.

Final Details

Give your hero a name. Most people in the Ghostwild don't remember their past lives clearly; they choose new names based on their surroundings, appearances, and deeds.

Eidolons, on the other hand, remember. But they don't always want to be reminded.

Finally, roll up a starting scene, or make up one of your own.

The Beginning

- 1 Standing at a dusty crossroads, facing down a bitter old enemy, while an innocent Soul hangs in the balance.
- 2 Drinking in a bar in No Hope, when an ex-friend walks in looking for help.
- 3 Scavenging deep in the heart of a deadtown ravaged by plague in the Real, looking for something to pay a debt.
- 4 Halfway between Cut'n'Run and the Pass when you stumble over a dying courier, a satchel of missives over his shoulder.
- 5 Sitting across the table in a luxury penthouse looking out over the Hellroad Terminus, needing to ask a Fallen Eidolon a favor.
- 6 Ambushed crossing the Pale Rise, shot and left for dead, and the Other you've been hunting's still out there in the night.

The Ghostwolds

The People

The people of the Ghostwolds are hard and pinched, in general, worn out from scraping what life they can from the sandy dirt and dirty sand of the Ghostwolds, and from the everpresent fear.

When someone first wakes up in the Ghostwolds, they have what they had with them when they crossed over, plus a mark or two showing how they died. That's all – but it's enough that guns and swords and knives aren't at all uncommon.

That, plus metal and tech scavenged from the deadtowns, cobbled together with the help of the lingering memories of those who knew such things before they died, make up the bulk of what passes for technology in the Ghostwolds.

Children are sometimes born in the Ghostwolds, but not very often. Most of the time they're ordinary kids. Sometimes they're born *wrong*, deformed, twisted. Sometimes these kids are as warped on the inside as out; sometimes they're Eidolons.

The Places

The Ghostwolds

The Ghostwolds is a land of extremes and of sudden demarcations; deserts that push up against sudden massive old growth forests that end abruptly in cliffs a thousand feet high above a sea of razor-sharp limestone spikes.

Rivers that are only a few feet across but are a mile deep. Dusty highways that stretch for hundreds of miles, until they crumple and twist over what looks like the fiery pits of hell. Boiling lakes, perfectly round, surrounded on all sides by treacherous sand.

Google up “the scariest places on Earth” and you'll know what the Ghostwolds looks like. Only the Ghostwolds is worse.

The Real

The Real is our world, at some point during human existence. When an Eidolon or Soul is on the Real, they're ghosts, unable to manipulate the world except through Eidolon abilities or, more rarely, raw emotion.

The only way out of the Real for an Eidolon is to confront one of his Regrets and resolve it, while achieving a task set by Fate. He'll know what needs to be done, but until it is, he's stuck as a ghost in the Real world.

A Soul might be trapped on the Real for a very long time, and return to the Ghostwolds to find an equal amount of time has passed – or that no time at all has.

- 1 | Stop someone.
- 2 | Convince someone to live.
- 3 | Protect someone.
- 4 | Kill someone.
- 5 | Pass on a message.
- 6 | Help someone accept a death.

The Why

Some Eidolons, the ones who've been around for centuries, say Apeiron is a holding pen for Souls who aren't good or bad enough to be welcome anywhere else.

Others say it's a last chance to prove yourself before being sorted out.

Still others are convinced it's Hell, just the outer edges of it.

Nobody talks about Heaven here – but what does that prove?

And maybe... maybe it's all of the above.

There's only one way to find out.

Oracle Cards

To make an Oracle deck, take a regular deck of playing cards and discard the 2s, 3s, 4s, and 5s. Card meaning may be literal or figurative. If you get a face card, and it makes sense to do so, introduce an NPC. If you need help or inspiration, try a google image search.

d6	d6	Title	Rank	Meaning	Reversed
1	1	Day	CA	revelation	blindness
	2	Trial	C6	truth	falsehood
	3	Child	C7	maturity	childishness
	4	Veil	C8	disguise	self-deception
	5	Anchor	C9	security	weight
	6	Palace	C10	luxury	bureaucracy
2	1	Judge	CJ	justice	injustice
	2	Empress	CQ	generosity	generosity with strings
	3	Emperor	CK	authority	tyranny
	4	Night	DA	caution	hidden pitfall
	5	Treasure	D6	windfall	thieves
	6	Fortress	D7	protection	overprotection
3	1	Harvest	D8	abundance	lack
	2	Magpie	D9	collect	waste
	3	Peacock	D10	amusement	vanity
	4	Merchant	DJ	calculated risk	debt
	5	Luck	DQ	good fortune	mischance
	6	Dragon	DK	enrichment	hoarding
4	1	Messenger	HA	communication	miscommunication
	2	Nature	H6	growth	stagnation
	3	Crossroad	H7	choice	restriction
	4	Muse	H8	inspiration	madness
	5	Eros	H9	desire	obsession
	6	Feather	H10	hope	despair
5	1	Lover	HJ	love	jilt
	2	Priestess	HQ	mysteries revealed	reckless curiosity
	3	Mentor	HK	sacrifice	jealousy
	4	Ship	SA	journey	shipwreck
	5	Scythe	S6	real danger	illusionary danger
	6	Snake	S7	enlightenment	treachery
6	1	Crossed Swords	S8	combat	subjugation
	2	Toy	S9	novelty	recklessness
	3	Ox	S10	strength	weakness
	4	Soldier	SJ	skill	overspecialization
	5	Amazon	SQ	power	arrogance
	6	Death	SK	change	stasis