

AX&X: THE FORETOLD DOOM

Time, decline, and the end of the campaign. A countdown supplement for AX&X.

THE GATHERING DARK

Something is coming, and it keeps a schedule. The Foretold Doom is a campaign-long countdown that hangs over every delve. You cannot outwait it and you cannot hide from it, because adventuring is what spends it. Each expedition buys you loot and a Level and burns a little more of the time you have left.

It is built for the kind of play where a line of heroes races one deadline, and the world is darker at the end than it was at the start. The core game needs none of this. Bolt it on when you want a campaign that can be lost to the calendar, not just to a bad fight.

SETTING THE DOOM

- **Marks:** Start with **12**. Each mark is one expedition, a dungeon delve, or one overland journey. Draw the Count where every player can see it.
- **Name the Doom:** One sentence the table agrees on: the Lich's rite, the comet's fall, the drowning of the coast. That is what the Count counts down to.
- **Scale:** Roughly the number of expeditions you expect the campaign to run, plus a little slack. A grim sprint is 6, a standard arc 12, a long saga 18 to 24.

SPENDING TIME

- **The Tick:** At the end of each expedition or overland journey, erase one mark. The Count only moves one way.
- **Extra Ticks:** A whole season idled in town, a Journey Count that filled, or a catastrophic failure costs another mark, at the GM's call.
- **No Free Afternoons:** Shopping, a night's rest, and short trips inside a settled area are free. The Count tracks the long haul, not the hour.

THE DECLINE

The world does not wait for zero. Each quarter of the Count that empties advances the Decline one step, and each step is telegraphed a tick before by a Sign, so the party sees the fall coming and chooses what to spend their dwindling time on.

- **First Quarter Gone:** Omens and refugees. The enemy stirs at the edges. Rumor, not yet ruin.
- **Halfway:** A region or an ally falls. Roads turn dangerous and prices climb, and Journey Counts start one mark shorter.
- **Three Quarters Gone:** The heartland is threatened. A Haven is lost, resupply is dear, and the wandering-monster roll comes up one face easier for the dark.
- **Empty:** The End. See below.

THE END

At zero the doom lands. The rite completes, the comet falls, the sea comes in. The campaign is lost, in the way the Decline had been writing on the wall for hours of play. It is not a twist; it is the bill. The GM

narrates the dark age that follows. From there you can roll credits, or carry survivors into that fallen world as a different, harder game.

SUCCESSION

A party wipe does not wind the Count back. The years still passed, and now they are shorter. Bring in a fresh party at the current number and press on. The dungeon remembers: the fallen lie where they fell, their maps and gear still in the dark for the next hands to find. In solo play you are the line itself, each hero taking up the last one's unfinished march.

VARIANT: DEATH RESETS THE DOOM

For a kinder, more replayable loop, let a total party wipe wind the Count back to full, or back by half if full is too soft. The campaign becomes a cycle you can lose and retry, not a single falling line. The pressure now comes from wanting to reach the end before you run out of heroes you care about, rather than from the calendar alone.

Give the reset a reason in the fiction, so it reads as more than a mulligan. The age is caught in recurrence: a prophecy that re-rolls when its champions die, a god of time that rewinds to its last chosen, a loop forced on the world by the villain's unfinished rite. Each new party wakes at the dawn of the twelve years with the dim sense they have walked this road before, and now and then a memory that proves true: a trap they already know, a face they should not recognize, a door that should not be open.

TUNING

- **Buying Back Time:** Optional. A major victory, toppling a lieutenant, sealing a gate, saving a province, restores one mark, never above the starting number.
- **Harder or Softer:** Fewer marks for dread, more for a slow saga. Hand out extra ticks freely to tighten the screw, or waive them to loosen it.

ID8 SIGNS OF THE END

Telegraph a Decline step. Pick or roll one a tick before it lands.

- 1 **Red Sky:** The sun rises wrong and the animals will not settle.
- 2 **The Dead Walk Early:** Undead turn up a dungeon level shallower than they should.
- 3 **Sour Harvest:** Food spoils fast. Rations cost double this season.
- 4 **A Haven Falls:** A town or ally you relied on is gone when you return.
- 5 **The Roads Close:** Travel is harder. Journey Counts start one mark shorter.
- 6 **Deserters:** A hireling or contact abandons you, too afraid to go on.
- 7 **The Enemy Named:** The doom's agent is seen in the open, bolder than before.
- 8 **Too Quiet:** No wandering monsters for a stretch, because something worse cleared them out.