



The Isles

The Game of Outcasts





Welcome to The Isles

"The problem with not knowing is the Fear that comes with being ignorant of who you are, who you used to be and who you have the potential to become now that are free. It is not just imprisonment that you have been set free FROM, it is the fear of yourself and others that you have been set free TO."

-Terval, Outcast and Destroyer of Taer-Lim



The Isles is a hand-moderated Play By Mail game run via either the postal system or via eMail. It is set in a fantasy world where trade and commerce are held in higher regard than Lords and Kings and where life can be brutal, terrifying and often short for those who do not belong.

Players take on the role of an Outcast, someone who is newly released from Prison with only a few possessions, little money and no tangible memories of who they are, what their past life was, or why they were imprisoned for so long.

'You recall a ship. It has to be a sea-going vessel of some kind because it rolls from side to side in a storm and you remember vomiting into the hood that covers your head and is secured at your neck by a steel band. You remember panicking that you may drown in your own puke if you are sick again, but the hood is porous and eventually the bile drains through. You hear gulls, for three days and nights you can hear seabirds and eventually the bellowing of men up on the deck making ready for the ships destination. You hear gulls before the nausea returns and you lie down to sleep

You recall a new feeling of movement, another rolling motion and jarring noises before a heavy force settles on you.'

What is Play By Mail?

Play By Mail are an old-fashioned style of games that are run through the post. In the past they were sent in stamped envelopes stuffed with printed pages to many far-flung locations in the world, where players would submit turns to participate in games run either by hand, by computer-program or by a little of both. Players would write their turns on a Turnsheets, detailing their orders before sending the orders back to the GM to process and return a set of results that the player would then respond to, often until a player or a group of players had won, conquered the other participating players, or advanced to the level that they were considered to be the winners etc.



How to Play

The Isles is a subset of the Play By Mail genre of games. It is an RPG, set in a game world where there are no winners and in theory, like normal life nothing will end until Death

Players take on the role of a Character within the game-world, beginning as a newly-released Prisoner. As an Outcast in a frontier town, a players Character will have to fight to make a life for themself

As a player you can take on many roles, tasks, quests and responsibilities – You can become a traveller, moving through the lands and interacting with either Player or Non-Player Characters on the way – You can become a force for good or ill, influencing events and gaining fame or notoriety for what you have done. You can even accept the hand that you have been dealt and remain an Outcast and a Beggar for the rest of your time in the game

Character Creation

Becoming a player in The Isles is simple.

If you are playing by Mail: Enclosed with this Game Guide there will be a **Character Creation Sheet**

If you are playing by Email: Download the **Character Creation Sheet** from www.playbymail.uk/startup

- Fill this in and return it to us, either to our postal address or by email to theislespbm@gmail.com

Take care to describe your Character as much as you can.

Once received, we will set you up as a new character within The Isles and you will begin somewhere on one of the Islands that gives the game its name.

Beginning as a lowly Outcast, newly released from Prison, with few possessions, friends or even memories you will decide what to do turn-by-turn by filling in a Turnsheets, and in return you will receive a Results Sheet which over time will tell a story of the Life of your Character.

Most of the Character Creation Sheet is self-explanatory. Like most Roleplaying Games, The Isles has a stats-based system that identifies your Characters strengths and weaknesses, but in general most of these stats remain hidden and are dealt with by the *GM*



The Isles Character Creation Sheet
Use this sheet to Create your Character in the Game. Fill in everything on this page. If you are unclear what to do, refer to the Game Guide.

Character Name

Age Sex Height Hair Colour/Style Eyes Skin Colour/Type

Attributes

	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
DEXTERITY				
CHARISMA				
INTELLIGENCE				
WILL				
STAMINA				
STRENGTH				

State of Mind

What is the GM?

GM in The Isles stands for Games Moderator – he / she is the person who processes your actions and determines whether what you have requested to do have been possible and if they have been successful or not. The GM is the person who will write your Turn Results based on your actions and return them in the form of a Results Sheet – written in normal prose like the Chapter of a Story.



By giving a Physical Appearance, Age, Height, Build and other characteristics to your Character you will be building a person that will be 'You' in the game world.

STARTUP

Physical Appearance : What a person looks like. Whether they have any distinguishing features, marks, scars, ticks, tattoos etc.

Age: Your Character is released as an adult, therefore any age older than Childhood is acceptable, although if a Character is of advanced age this should reflect in their physical appearance (see above) and will also impact some Player Abilities

Height: Player Characters do not necessarily have to be a specific height, they can be described as Tall, Medium, Short etc, Average heights in the game are dependant on the locality etc.

Build: A PC could be short, tall, lithe, thin, athletic, squat, stocky etc. This describes their physical build, and might also impact certain Player Abilities

Skin Colour: Most ethnic groups are represented somewhere in The Isles. Choosing ethnicities that are not local to the area where a PC is located might impact how they are perceived by other Characters

Be aware that giving a character characteristics might make them more noticeable, memorable or anonymous to other people in the game world. For example, an Innkeeper may not be able to easily describe an average person with average features, but he will find it easier to describe a one eyed giant...

PLAYER ABILITIES

PLAYER ABILITIES are an attempt to reflect a character's mental and physical attributes using stats. The successful completion of some tasks within the game are always possible in a number of different ways, but the chances of completing a task are made more possible by having higher than average Stats in the related ability

Unlike a lot of more outwardly complicated systems, a player character is split over four levels POOR, AVERAGE, GOOD and EXCELLENT. It is possible to increase and decrease all of these skills, but the ease of doing this is dependent on environment, time and method.

When creating your Character using the Character Creation Sheet, select from Poor to Excellent for the 6 Attributes, but remember that these will be limiting or improving factors that will dictate many actions that you attempt within the game.

NON PLAYER Character ABILITIES are measured in the same way as above, but they will also have hidden primary and secondary sets of attributes which would either be treated as separate when matched with or against a PLAYER, or combined if required. There is an underlying reason for PC stats being seen and dealt with differently for NPCs but this is not usually elaborated on within the game



The physical abilities:

Strength A person's physical strength. A player with an above average Strength would show a defined musculature depending on their build. Having a high physical strength would allow a character to lift, push, pull, carry, press greater mass at increased force in a normal environment. Stronger character's might also be able to swim, climb or sprint and run more efficiently but this would also depend on reasonable Stamina and Dexterity

Stamina The ability to maintain high levels of exertion over a protracted level of time without suffering elevated levels of fatigue. Stamina also affects the incidence of physical injury due to normal exertion. Stamina is also the main factor in allowing a PC to hold their breath and heal quickly.

Dexterity the ability to perform tasks related to the hands primarily, but also relating to how the character's limbs integrate with the users other senses. A person with elevated Dexterity would be able to into a knot with increased speed, but it would also allow them to untie a similar knot at a reduced speed but with their hands tied behind their backs. A person with good Dexterity would be better able to pick a lock or handle small, intricate tools.

Charisma in the normal sense is the way a Character would use attractiveness and charm to inspire liking from others. A high Charisma would increase the attraction to a person who is predisposed to your character.

The mental abilities:

Intelligence the ability for a character to acquire and use knowledge. The ability is quite diverse as an Intellect is not always the ability to read books. Book reading requires reasonable Intelligence, but the real purpose of reading in this sense is to allow through intellect the aggregation of an then application of knowledge that a book contains. This holds true when knowledge is gained by observation such as watching someone demonstrating a new skill.

Will is an overreaching ability and is normally innate in the character. It can manifest itself in many ways. Will is the ability to focus on a task in hand so that it may become obsessive to some people, but is in itself a way of achieving a difficult goal. Will is the ability also to be lucky, to be able to roll the correct dice roll at the gambling table, even the ability to remain steely eyed during a confrontation. Will should not be underestimated when creating a character, but it should also not be favoured too much over the mental and physical ABILITIES.



STARTUP

When beginning in the game, you are given a set amount of **14** points to allocate across the 6 abilities.

By allocating above or below average stats be aware that your Characters Abilities will also be either above or below average, and as such your chance at achieving tasks that are reliant on these Abilities will also be positively or negatively affected.

While playing in the game, be aware that a Character who is described as for example lower than average Strength will not be able to lift greater weight than a Character who is above average in the same Ability.

When creating a Character during Start Up, make sure you allocated attributes in a similar way as the example Character Sheet displayed here

Note that it is only during Character Creation these 14 points are allocated across the 6 Player Abilities, and once allocated the Abilities are described as POOR, AVERAGE, GOOD and EXCELLENT

Once you have completed and returned your Character Creation Sheet, you should receive a basic Character Sheet containing information including your location, your current state of health, possessions and money and any information relevant to your Character.

ABILITIES

Distribute 14 points - each attribute must have points allocated

	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
DEXTERITY		☒		
CHARISMA		☒		
INTELLECT		☒		
WILL			☒	
STAMINA			☒	
STRENGTH		☒		