

Wights

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By Steffie de Vaan

The wight wives (*witte wieven* in Dutch) hail from pre-Christian Europe—the Netherlands, Belgium and parts of France specifically. The wight wives, born of darkness and the cries of the oppressed, protected women and children. They were forces to be reckoned with, haunting the hills and forests of Europe until the rise of Christianity. Cross and prayer drove the wight wives from the mortal lands, but their legacy remains in you.

You Need

Players: 3-6

GM: Yes

Time: *Wights* works as a one-shot of a few hours, or as an ongoing campaign.

Items: 2d6 for each player

Food: Herbal tea and snacks.

Location: At night outdoors, or indoors with the lights dimmed. Practice candle safety.

Special: This game shares mechanics and setting with [Cupcake Witches](#).

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Witte Wieven

You are a descendant of the wight wives, simply called a wight. You might live anywhere, as people migrate, and be unaware of your ancestry. Wights discover their gift (or curse, depending on whom you ask) and gain their signature white hair and nails during late puberty. Families that keep track of their heritage, or still see many wights born, hold records and books to smoothen a new wight's path. Wights born to families who forgot must learn through trial and error until they meet another of their kind. Wights instinctively sense each other's nearness and most wayward wights are eventually approached by an existing Coven.

Wights hail from any ethnicity. Bloodlines mingle, after all, and Black people in Europe trace as far back as the Moorish rule of Spain (if not further). There's also some evidence, as evidence of the esoteric goes, that whatever power imbued the wight wives arises spontaneously to protect threatened communities. A Black Lives Matter organiser, a Latina trans woman, and a queer kid throwing bricks at cops can all be wights. They form covens together, supporting and uplifting each other across all backgrounds.

The Shadow World

The wights' world, at first glance, is just like our own: cute tea shops, Nazis making an unwelcome return, and cat videos dominating the internet. Under the veneer of normalcy, a society of mythical creatures moves in the shadows. In addition to wights, the world houses more prolific demons and vampires, rare werewolves and fae, and some other uncommon creatures best left undisturbed. Meanwhile mortals pass down witchcraft, sorcery, and alchemy through familial teachings or forbidden books. In between them all move hunters, seeking supernaturals as trophies or for revenge.

This game focuses on playing a wight, but if you want to play a different creature just run it by the GM, pick Approaches as normal and make up a new Drive. See Character Creation for details.

Safety and Consent

Wights is a tale about creatures of the night protecting the helpless and avenging injustices. It's intense and emotional, and requires consent from everyone at the table. I've highlighted some common safety tools that you should use to make sure everyone feels safe.

Start by discussing **Lines and Veils**. The GM and players get together as a group and discuss which topics need to be handled with care or faded to black (these are veils), and which are off limits entirely (these are lines). No one needs to explain why they want a line or veil, but all must abide by these boundaries.

Inform everyone at the table—GM and players alike—that they can also call a new line or veil during the game. Maybe something is hitting them harder than they anticipated, or the game is nearing a line/veil they previously hadn't considered.

As an extra safety measure during the game itself, use either the OK Check-In or X-Card.

The **OK Check-In** relies on everyone at the table keeping an active eye out for each other, including the GM. If someone looks like they're uncomfortable or freezing up, make the OK sign to them. They then respond with a thumbs up (I'm good) or thumbs down (I'm not okay). A player can also give a thumbs up (I like this, keep going) or down (stop now) unprompted.

The **X-Card** relies on players to signal their own discomfort. Print or draw a black X on one side of a card, and give one to every person at the table including the GM. The player turns the X upward if they want to halt the scene at any point. You can also draw a yellow X on one side, and a red X on the other—sliding the card forward with the yellow X indicates a veil, while the red X signals a line.

If you're running *Wights* at a convention, or during RPG night at the local game store, make sure to include clear **content warnings** at sign-up, and explicitly go over them again before your actual game starts—even if the content warning carries a (potential) plot spoiler. Ask players about their lines and veils, and brief them on use of the OK Check-In or X-Card.

Immediately halt play when someone gives a thumb down or uses the (red) X card. Take a moment to breathe, figure out what went wrong, retcon as needed, and resume play only once everyone feels good to go again. Safety and consent always trump immersion and game flow.

Character Creation

Here's where we go from concept to stats. Your GM might have some input, like saying you're all high schoolers, or the game will be combat light or heavy.

Step 0: Concept

Picture your character in your mind. Are they brave and outspoken, or determined and shy? What do they do when not fighting injustice? If they're a young wight, did the change catch them unawares or did their grandmother know? If they're an older wight, what battles for justice lie behind and ahead of them?

Choose a name and pronouns for your wight.

Step 1: Physical Description

Wights come in all skin colors, body types, genders, and abilities. They share two identifying features though, revealing them to other supernaturals and hunters. Wights have white fingernails. They also have stark white hair to some degree, whether it's all-white, white ends or roots, or a single white streak.

Step 2: Drive

The ancient wight wives were driven to protect the marginalized, and take vengeance on the people who harmed them.

Your **Vengeance** and **Protection** Drives both sit on a scale from 0-3.

Distribute 3 points between them.

Step 3: Approaches

Each wight has three Approaches to life and problem-solving.

Body encompasses everything physical, from running and jumping to hiding and fighting. **Heart** is all about making connections, reading emotions, and both honestly persuading and deceiving people. **Mind** reflects your wight's mental endeavors, from solving riddles to reading books and remembering things.

Each Approach sits on a scale from 0-5.

You start with 1 in each, and then distribute 3, 2 and 1 points among them.

Step 4: Coven

You form one Coven together, which the GM can further supplement with NPCs.

Questions to consider:

Who are the oldest and newest members? Who's the leader? Where and how often does the Coven meet? What mortal friends do and don't know their secret? Are there rival or friendly Covens nearby?

Pick one PC to be your **bestie**, and another to be their (possibly friendly) **rival**.

Mechanics

Whenever your character performs a mundane action, describe what and how they want to do it, and what Approach you're using. Your GM decides if it's within the realm of the possible. If it is: **roll 1d6**.

If your roll is less or equal to your Approach: The action succeeds.

If your roll is 1 higher than your Approach: The action succeeds with a complication of the GM's choice, and you reduce the Approach by 1.

If your roll is 2 higher than your Approach: The action fails, and you reduce the Approach by 1.

Losing a point of Approach represents losing self-confidence, the wight's flow breaking, or suffering an injury per the player's choice. See **Depletion** for what happens when an Approach drops to zero.

You regain a point of Approach, up to your maximum rating, for every uncomplicated success.

Example of Play:

Serena wants to sneak past Jack the Bouncer into the Midnight Cabaret. She can make herself look tall and intimidating (Body), cajole him into letting her into the club (Heart), or sass out that Jack takes a smoke break every hour and sneak in then (Mind). Serena's player Liz takes a quick look at her Approaches (Body 4, Heart 3, Mind 2) and decides to intimidate Jack with her physical might. She rolls Body and gets a 5: a success that carries a complication.

Jack stands aside as Serena enters, but then sets off to find another bouncer to toss her out. Serena's time in the Midnight Cabaret is limited. Had Liz rolled a 1-4 the action would have succeeded without a complication, as Jack would have been too impressed to do anything else. Meanwhile a roll of 6 would mean Jack doesn't budge.

Depletion

If an Approach falls to 0, the wight no longer recovers it through uncomplicated successes, and instead needs an evening of self-care (or, for extroverts: a girls' night out) to recover their normal rating.

The player describes what their wight's Depletion looks like, but here are some examples:

Body 0: Can't keep your eyes open, Can't stop shaking. Resolve with an evening of hot baths, foot massages, and your favorite take-out.

Heart 0: Can't stop crying, Doesn't feel anything anymore. Resolve by getting a tub of ice cream, watching your favorite tragic romance movie, and bawling your eyes out.

Mind 0: Can't think anymore, Becomes an anxious mess. Resolve with an evening of meditation, and tackling that no-mind task you've been putting off like cleaning the bathroom.

Combat

Most confrontations don't escalate into combat. Bouncer Jack wants to keep Serena out, sure, but he doesn't get paid enough to have her break his nose. One roll, as described above, is enough to resolve those situations. Sometimes though, people stick to their position—maybe Jack already has a write-up for letting teenagers sneak in, or he just dislikes Serena—and the situation devolves into combat.

Combat takes many forms in *Wights*. Going toe to toe with a mixed martial artist requires physical combat through Body rolls. Pursuing a truce with someone who actively dislikes the wight is an act of diplomacy expressed with Heart rolls. Debating a tenured professor about their field is settled by Mind rolls.

Roll as you normally would. On an **uncomplicated or complicated success** the opponent suffers one Resilience damage. The opponent **relents** once they have no Resilience remaining.

The wight still loses Approach points from complicated successes and failed rolls, and must **releat on Depletion**.

Creature: Resilience

Most mortals: 1

Impressive mortal, such as MMA's or professors: 2

Supernaturals, including other wights: 2

Impressive supernaturals, including the wight wives of old: 3

Superlative supernaturals, such as the ancient wight queen themselves: 4-5

Supernatural Feats

Wights perform supernatural feats as part of their heritage, though like the wight wives of old their powers are governed by darkness.

Under cover of night: Describe what supernatural feat your character wants to accomplish, and whether they're driven by Protection or Vengeance. Pay 1 matching point of Drive, and roll an Approach as normal. The point of Drive is not refunded if you fail.

In shadows, windowless rooms, etc: As above, but roll 2d6 on the Approach. The higher die stands.

In full daylight: You cannot perform supernatural feats.

Examples of supernatural feats:

• *Alfonzo wants to punch a fascist through a wall. He might do this to protect people, in which case his player spends a point of Protection. Or he might simply want to because fascist are vile, in which case it costs a point of Vengeance. Punching people through walls requires a Body roll.*

- *Latisha and her community are surrounded by cops. She stands up to sing an ancient melody that dissolves the cops' guns into atoms. After spending a point of Protection, Latisha's player rolls Heart to weave the song.*

- *Natalie is running a bank heist and wants to see the safe combination in a premonition. This would be a Mind roll if Natalie's player could tie it to a Drive. As she can't (Natalie just needs the money to make rent) she can't use her wight powers.*

Your wight **regains all points of Drive** if they fulfill that Drive in a concrete way without the use of supernatural feats. Getting a Nazi cop fired by getting him blasted all over the news refills Vengeance. Protecting a friend by sneaking them to a safehouse while their abusive boyfriend is away refills Protection.

Character Advancement

A campaign of *Wights* breaks up into story arcs, each of which can take multiple game sessions to unfold. After an arc, all players raise one Approach by +1.

The GM also picks the character who had the strongest development during the arc—that player gets to raise a second Approach by +1. The GM should design the campaign so each character gets a chance to shine, ensuring all characters take equal turns earning this extra reward.

At the end of an arc, players can also shift 1 point of Drive from Vengeance to Protection, or vice versa.

Running The Game

Pick a city to set the game in, with input from your players. Design the plot (what injustice do the wights uncover and how do they stop it) keeping everyone's safety and comfort in mind.

Now it's a matter of pacing—give the wights a chance to meet their in-game community, form Coven bonds, and get to the point where the players genuinely give a damn. Ask the players what the wights want to do: see their favorite band perform, navigate a day at school or work, or just hang out together.

Let the situation go sideways once the players are invested. Their band friend gets arrested on fake charges. Their favorite tea shop is threatened by a global franchise. A friend shows up with bruises after a weekend with their boyfriend. Your story will have much more impact if the players are emotionally involved.

Keep the wights on their toes by introducing a twist after they solve the initial problem. The Chief of Police is a literal demon. That global franchise is poisoning people's souls. The boyfriend returns after he's been bit by a Werewolf. Start small, then go big.

wights can fight for justice and support their communities in many ways. Depending on their own background, they take center stage on time and take a supportive stance as allies the next. She might be the trans girl fighting to use the girls' bathroom, or she might be the cis girl who says "I'll go with you." You can use this in an ongoing wights campaign to give each character their own "center stage" arch while the coven supports them.