



MY BONES ARE READY TO HATCH!

A gross alternative to death for tabletop roleplaying games.

Content Warnings:

Body Horror, Gore, Squick
Gross Infections, Mutilation

Death is common in RPGs, but it can also be boring or undesirable. Simply removing death robs the game of tension.

These rules allow players to escape death by nurturing a bizarre infection/infestation within the bones of their characters.

I intended these rules to be silly, but they ended up being kind of horrific and creepy. Sorry about that. Make sure you have total buy-in from your players before you use this!

Artwork:

- ▷ *Clock Skull* from page 433 of *"The Book of Days"* by Chambers, Robert
- ▷ *Death's Ramble* from page 105 of *"Humorous Poems"* by Hood, Thomas
- ▷ *Experiments* from page 108 of *"Illustrated Penny Tales"* British Library HMNTS 12623.k.24

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Inspired by Patrick Harrison & Mike Lombardi
I pretty much stole the idea from Cavegirl

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How did this happen? Roll a d12:

- I. A sketchy "treatment". Sought only by the desperate, the foolish, or the foolishly desperate. You start without any gold, and your equipment is all loaner. Who do you owe?
2. Some horrible clattering form pinched/bit you during a fight/during the night. The wound healed and was forgotten, leaving only a small scar in an obvious place.
3. Ancient curse attached to a treasured item. What item? Why won't you get rid of it?
4. Hereditary. After your parent's coffin was broken out from the inside, you've been searching for/avoiding them.
5. Bizarre training. Daily exercises and rituals have transformed your bones. Describe these rituals. Could they be taught to others?
6. A roaming infectious swarm caused the death of your hometown/homeland. You barely survived, but you can feel/hear/taste something buried in your bones...waiting.
7. Bad bargain. In return for strength and longer life you agreed to be a host. Increase CON and STR by +1. What did you expect to sacrifice, and what did you ACTUALLY lose?
8. Infected at birth. Raised to be a defender, a fighter, a warrior of your community. Your armor is heavy and made by loving hands. Why did you flee your purpose?
9. Horrible trap/accident from a previous adventure. "Inoperable, unless you want a new skeleton" is what you were told. What else did you lose during that venture?
- IO. Rotten feast. You were starving, and your options were few. What did you eat? How did you find out you were infected?
- II. False tooth. Installed by a mad wizard. When you have no other option you can bite down, inhaling the spores, rapidly infecting you. Add 5 to your result when you roll on the death table.
- I2. Something else. Work with your GM to come up with a fitting tale of your infection, and what you gave up in exchange.

When you are reduced to OHP or fewer, you trigger the mysterious growths within you. Roll (d12 + your current HP) and consult the table on the next page:

12. Tiny parasites eat the injured/dead flesh and repair damaged organs. **Immediately** heal back to full health. **Longterm:** If you don't consume double rations every day then the parasites will feast on you. Missing even a single meal could be deadly!

11. Tendrils of sinew and bone expand around your flesh, creating a hard carapace. **Immediately** recover 2d20 HP and gain +2 AC. **Longterm:** All healing is halved, thanks to your bizarre structure.

10. One of your arms warps to form a large bony disc that blocks the killing blow OR it forms a large weapon that deflects the killing blow. **Immediately** undo the damage you most recently suffered. **Longterm:** Your arm protrusion benefits you like a large shield OR a large weapon, but you'll never equip or wear anything else on that limb again.

9. Your joints twist to avoid the killing blow. **Immediately** undo the damage you most recently suffered. **Longterm:** AC +2, but STR is reduced by 2 thanks to your weakened joints. You can perform a feat of incredible dexterity and flexibility, but you suffer 2 damage every time you do so.

8. Your nose bursts open releasing a cloud of tiny somethings. **Immediately** set your HP to 1 and fall unconscious. The swarm will distract and harass any creature that comes within 10 ft of you. They don't deal much damage, but creatures must save with disadvantage to approach your body. **Longterm:** The infection is gone, and you are left weakened (reduce max HP by d12 and reduce CON by 2). You can't roll on this table again.

7. Your shoulder blades pop open and sinewy wings unfold from within. **Immediately** take flight and move 100ft in any direction then fall unconscious with 1 HP. **Longterm:** Your skeletal wings allow you to glide, but hinder your ability to navigate tight spaces or wear heavy armor.

6. Horns grow from your skull. **Immediately** set your HP to 1 and fall unconscious. **Longterm:** Your horns are long and unwieldy. You cannot wear a helmet. As an action you can charge forward to try and gore an enemy (d10 damage), but if you fail the roll you miss and get stuck/tangled for a round.

5. The bones of your fingers stretch to thrice their length. **Immediately** attack all nearby creatures as you flail around in pain (damage as knives). Pain and adrenaline keep you conscious, set your HP to 1. **Longterm:** Weapons/equipment must be modified for your new digits but they're quite handy!

4. One of your limbs wrenches itself from your body growing into some kind of creature. **Immediately** set your HP to 1 and pass out from the blood loss. The pet defends your body as well as it can. It has 10 HP, and can deal d6 damage. **Longterm:** Describe your new pet. It vaguely resembles your missing limb. It has a 2-in-12 chance to follow any given command. Feeding it a chunk of your flesh (1 damage) increases that to 10-in-12.

3. Your tailbone stretches to form a sinewy tail. **Immediately** lash with your tail and knock away all nearby creatures. Set your HP to 1, and fall unconscious. **Longterm:** You now have a 10ft long prehensile tail. It's almost as strong as one of your arms, but has a mind of its own. 1-in-12 chance for it to do something annoying/dangerous instead.

2. If curling into a small ball could avoid the damage that killed you, then **Immediately** undo that damage. If curling into a small ball would NOT avoid the damage, then **Immediately** fall unconscious and set your HP to 1. **Longterm:** As a quick action you can fold into a small 1ft wide ball, but you suffer 1d6 HP every time you do this.

1. By all the evidence you are VERY dead. **Longterm:** A new body is grown from your remains. The next day you rejoin the party with a new body and a disgusting story to tell. Roll up a new character with the memories of your old one.

0. A bone in your body launches itself outward and explodes into shrapnel that somehow avoids you. **Immediately** deal d10 damage to all nearby creatures, set your HP to 1, and fall unconscious. **Longterm:** You can expel and explode your bones. Each bone deals 1d10 damage to all nearby enemies. 1-in-12 chance that bone was important.

-1. Your soul is sucked into your bones. **Immediately** recover d12 HP. **Longterm:** Over the next month all of your flesh dies and sloughs off. You are a soul trapped in a skeleton...a skeleton with strange growths and a few extra bones. Weak to bludgeoning weapons and resistant to piercing damage. You don't sleep or breathe or eat or talk.

-2. Your body sacrifices a piece of itself to preserve the rest. **Immediately** undo the damage you most recently suffered, and lose the limb affected. If the attack affected your core, instead **Immediately** set your HP to 1, and reduce your max HP by d12. **Longterm:** If a limb was affected: the limb is gone, sealed by a protruding scab of bone. If your core was damaged, then strange growths have replaced your lost organs. All healing received is halved thanks to your strange organs.

-3. Your arm expands to envelope the attacker's limb/weapon in a bone sheath. **Immediately** undo the damage you most recently suffered. You and your attacker are now attached. This will probably be awkward. **Longterm:** The embedded limb/weapon completely replaces your arm.

-4 AND LOWER: Roll twice and let the GM figure out how to combine the two effects. (Sorry. GM!)

"Inside every person is a skeleton..."



just waiting to break out."