

LABYRINTHIAN

A GAME OF LIFE AND LEGEND

What follows can be thought of as a written 'trailer' for Labyrinthian, a new kind of game called an Immersive Improv Game (MMG), where players will be utilizing Improv alongside an immersive systemic engine to explore a world of slice of life and epic fantasy. None of the details within are theoretical or made up; every detail is playable.

*Labyrinthian ultimately does not care how you play
Only that no matter what you do, you are not merely ordinary*

THE ORIGIN

YOUR FIRST DAY

They gathered in the night... a horde of Goblins ten-thousand strong, closing around the city as the horns blared and lightning flashed across the sky. A storm was following these devils.

As the King drew up the guard and lined the walls, the people were ushered into the caverns and sewers below... but not all of us. I was already awake, baking and toiling away to fill the day's inventory. I'd gotten in these lovely herbs from a local adventurer. One of them...odd little thing...made me levitate for just a moment when I tasted it. I used it in a special sweet treat. I wanted to give it to the King as a gift; he loves muffins. I still might be able to.

The day was long though. The sun shone only for a breath before the storm swallowed it. The Goblins weren't good at breaking upon rock and stone, but they were many, and they had no fear as they charged up their weird ladders of bone and sinew. Soon, the call came down from the walls. The fighters were starving.

I steeled myself and made the run—up the wall, along the defense—passing out bread and water while the sky cracked above and below the dead stacked like firewood. The stench was awful, and the sound of the Goblin dead ringed through my ears. Swift as we could, those of us who stayed above got our stocks out to the defenders. They needed their strength. And then I heard it...The King...he's signaling something; the horn is blowing.

I think we're about to charge their ranks!

I look around. A sword...or perhaps a bow? The men rally behind their captain, the Goblins are faltering as the walls empty. I'm standing there with flour on my sleeves, sweat on my brow, and there's something else...something stirring.

What will I do?

That's the question Labyrinthian lives on. It doesn't ask who you're supposed to be, or how you're meant to win. It just gives you a world, breathing and moving without you—and says, live in it. Maybe you're the Baker who saves a kingdom. Maybe you're the Goblin general who tears one down. Maybe you're just someone caught between them, trying not to be ordinary.

Labyrinthian is a game of Life and Legend. You'll explore, craft, fight, fail, and improvise your way through a living, systemic world that doesn't just merely react to your choices; it can and will cause and solve its own problems, whether you get involved or not. The world does not care to sit and wait for you to be its hero, nor will it tolerate you being its villain. But if you go out there, and make a name for yourself, dare to be a legend, only you will be able to tell the story, for you had to live it first.

As the saying goes, there is no telling where you might end up if you don't kick your feet...

So where do you want to go?

ADVENTURING

A WORLD OF TRIAL AND DISCOVERY

It's been many months since the Siege at Oarmouth; the King fell, and the city was ransacked. I don't know what happened to those below...I was in the field, I joined the charge, but it was like the Goblins were just waiting for us to leave the walls...I have never seen such terrible magic in all my days. I am lucky to be alive, thanks to an odd new friend I made.

I wasn't the only one fleeing in horror from the battle, for when that magic erupted out of that Goblin, many of them broke ranks and began to flee along with us. One such Goblin, an old rogue, took pity on me when I fell and was nearly trampled. She picked me up, and we fled together. I had nothing but the sword in my hand and my sack of bread, my treat still tucked securely in its wrappings in my coat, well above the wound in my leg where that archer stuck me.

We fled southward, down river and away from the Goblin army, whom seemed wholly consumed with destroying the city. We trekked for many miles, for we had to get away from this vast storm that grew ever larger. Eventually, we had to cross the river, we were getting too close to elf-land, and we found a bridge just in the nick of time. A strange one too, we thought. It was rickety but covered in all these strange symbols. Those elves were an funny lot to be sure.

But as we crossed, seemingly as soon as we stepped foot on the bridge, lightning CRACKED! across the sky, and a great rushing sound echoed throughout the surrounding valley, as a torrent of water came rushing down the river. Where did this come from?

We didn't have time to wonder; though the bulk of the wave hadn't reached us, enough fast moving water had already crashed upon the bridge, and it was about to fail. We had only moments.

My rogue friend made a dash for the other side of the bridge. But I was stuck clutching the side of the bridge; I could barely move, my leg...but then I remembered.

I still have my treat...I can fly!

Adventuring is the lifeblood of Labyrinthian, the primordial root of everything you can do. But Adventuring is more than just mere travel or caloric minutia; Adventuring is the relentless march of Time itself.

As time goes on, the world will *pull you forward* into its wonders and dangers, and whether you choose to linger, to look around and explore, dawdle and hesitate to move for fear of what lurks ahead, or indeed, charge on into the unknown, every move you make is an opportunity for an even richer adventure.

Built around a system called '**The Crawl**', Adventuring is the basic mode of playing Labyrinthian, and you are free to move about and explore the gameworld as you wish. But as you do, Time is always creeping by, and eventually Time will interject in your adventure. It might not always be with some terrible obstacle or surprise, you might not even know what happened at all, but no matter what, time marches on, and the world moves in lockstep.

Adventuring includes:

- **The Crawl** – Navigate the world at your own pace, but never outpace Time.
- **Survival** – Eating, Drinking, and Sleeping become vectors to prepare for your adventures, as you stave off the ravages of Time and the World on your Energy.
- **Exploration** – Systematically learn about the gameworld; your discovery of *Lore* becomes your *Inspiration*, guiding you as you face ever greater challenges.
- **The Diversion Table** – Integrated, interpretative emergent events and unexpected moments that turn travel and busy work into anecdotes, encounters, and all new adventures...if you let yourself be distracted.

COMBAT

THE DANCE OF VIOLENCE

The Goblin betrayed me. I should have known not to trust her; she was just too eager when we took this job. Nobody gets this excited over fetching some stupid trinket for some noble with more money than sense. We fought our way into this labyrinth by the skin of our teeth, and had to spend a day sneaking around a dragon that managed to find its way down here. So much effort just to get stabbed in the back as soon as we found it...too bad she forgot I had her antidotes on me.

It did not take long to catch up with her; she taught me well after all. I grabbed a spear from the Orcs we fought earlier, and as she tried to make her way out of the chamber, I threw the spear at the door, pinning it shut. She didn't turn around...not yet. I squared up; I do not forgive betrayal.

She acted first. A knife came flying as she charged the center of the room, drawing her axes. I reacted; the knife shattered as I deflected it, and I took up my stance to brace against her next move. She jumped up to bring her axes down on my head; I barely stepped aside. She didn't get me, but it rattled me to be sure. I returned the favor, swinging my sword at her neck, which she dodged effortlessly, just as I wanted her to. I elbowed that bitch in the face, and left a piercing wound in her knee as I swung my sword back around. She wasn't getting away this time.

She went wild and grappled me. Our weapons clattered to the floor as we fought hand to hand. She was skilled, so many techniques she knew, but she was floundering. I just hammered her wounds, and broke her leg outright, bring her low and weak. I knocked her down one more time for good measure, a clean right hook to her jaw.

I took up my sword...and had no mercy.

Combat in Labyrinthian is not a numbers game—it's an expression. A clash of styles, a back-and-forth of choices, where what you do and how you do it matters more than what your stats say. It's a system designed to evoke the feeling of cinematic choreography, where each move flows from the last, and improvisation is your sharpest weapon.

This is **Tactical Improv**.

It's not a contradiction—it's a philosophy. You react, you predict, you adapt. No two battles play the same because no two characters fight the same, and no two players think alike.

The world will not wait for you to be ready. And when violence comes, it comes with momentum, with stakes, and with memory. Your wounds carry forward. So do your choices.

Combat includes:

- **Expressive Fighting** – You are not forced into rote patterns. You can formulate your own, personal fighting style using the expressive core of Tactical Improv, and the cross between four fundamental Combat Styles (Melee, Magic, Mysticism, and Leadership) and the numerous *Techniques, Spells, Powers, and Commands* available to them. Will you fight with Grace? *Or will you go fucking feral?*
- **Tactical Elegance** – A full on Tactics game like any other, but tuned to be accessible even if you have nothing to your name and no fighting skills to speak of. But be wary, for this means even a peasant can get lucky...
- **The Reaction Table** – A simple, player-facing system to drive your Enemies towards you, so that you may push through them with gusto, as you benefit from its resources or falter under its relentless onslaught, and interpret the emotional undercurrent of the fight. There is no fight that is not a story all its own.
- **The Choice to Not Be Violent** – Death is not the assumption of combat. All combatants, whether you, a friend, or foe, must deliberately choose to kill, and it will not happen automatically. You are empowered to find another way, whether by violent incapacitation, negotiation or surrender, cowardice or peace, you have the choice. Power Fantasy doesn't *have to be* violence incarnate. Peace through power indeed...

CRAFTING AND GATHERING

THE BEAUTY OF CREATION

The Noble stiffed me—because of course he did. So I robbed him that night. What was he gonna do? Not like he had his trinket anymore. I pawned it in Coldstool. Didn't fetch much, but it was enough to do a little shopping. Interesting little village, Coldstool. Famous with travelers for its sprawling food market. Dozens of family vendors, all shouting over each other, hawking their meals and treats.

I stopped by one vendor, a particularly fat Pidgin. This huge bird towered over me, and sounded absolutely ridiculous, but I knew better than to laugh. I asked what he was selling, and through the borks and clucks I gathered they were Elixirs, perfect for adventurers. A shimmering blue one caught my eye. 'This'll give you the speed of a rabbit,' he said—or something like that. I bought it and set out, leaving Coldstool behind.

As I wandered, my stomach stirred. My back still ached from where she stabbed me. I took a swig of the Elixir, and suddenly I felt like I could outrun a wolf. I dashed into the woods, senses blazing. I smelled a rabbit. Found it. Killed it. But as I dressed it for the cookpot, I heard something, or someone, coming.

So I ran again. Fast and far. The sun was low when I finally stopped.

I made camp. I still had some tubers and onions from the other day, and had picked up some herbs from a lovely Dwarf woman; she was taller than the bird, but at least I could understand her. I rendered what little fat I could from the rabbit and thought about what I wanted from life. Salt. Onions first. I didn't expect to be a sellsword, but fate, it seemed, had other plans. Potatoes... ooh, I've got wine.

I let it stew, and soon I was eating, and later, I slept beneath the stars.

Crafting in Labyrinthian isn't just about tools or gear—it's about expression. It's about remembering the smell of firewood soaked in rain, or the taste of copper on your tongue when the potion went wrong but saved a life anyway.

Every item you make tells a story. Not just what it is, but how it was made—rushed or reverent, improvised or inspired. The system doesn't just simulate creation, it gives you the room to reflect, define, and refine what those creations not only do, but also what they mean to you, even if you eventually throw them away.

And before you can make, you must Gather. Every journey can be foraging story, a chance to dig through ruin, field, or cave for the perfect Material.

Crafting & Gathering includes:

- **The Sequence** – A systematic item creation tool that lets you not only craft mere items, but define them down to every major detail. From the core metal of a sword, to the wood in its scabbard, and it all matters.
- **The Crafting Table** – An interpretative framework for all Crafting, and even Artistry like Singing, or Painting, driving how well you crafted, and giving you the opportunity to add your own flair to your items.
- **Creation Through Decay** – Using a clean, automated Durability system, your items will eventually break on you, but by repairing, or reforging them, you can imbue them with new capabilities, and further still, you can Customize them to further augment them. A sword hilt of gold and jewels is not just a matter of vanity; it could very well be the key to defeating your greatest foes...or it could just be vain...
- **A Playground of Creation** – With a staggering amount of potential Materials and a vast toolbox of Sequences to let you forge, form, build, bolster, and even raise all manner of items, vehicles, buildings, and beasts, there are very few limits to what you can bring into the world. *The game does not ask you if you fail, only what you can create.*

THE REACH

A LIFETIME IS AN ADVENTURE

It had been a few years since I first fled Oarmouth and last laid eyes upon my old home. And today I return as the city celebrates a Festival, to remember the fallen from that terrible siege. They thought I was among them, but as time went on, they knew I was still alive...I can still see where they struck my name from the monument.

But I am not here today to remember, I have business in Oarmouth. Long ago, I was weary of taking someone under my wing. I knew I wouldn't be the one to ruin it, but I can still feel the scar on my back. But, eventually, I found someone, and I taught them what I knew. Soon I had two, and before long, I had an entire Organization at my call.

I knew then, that I could no longer stand idly by as a mere sword for hire by day and thief by night. I came into an alliance with an old friend, a would be claimant to the throne of Oarmouth. Though I never knew the truth, whether he truly was the son of that old King who fell that day, I knew who he was. I trusted him.

So I set my organization to its work. We hid ourselves in Bakeries across the realm; a pretty clever ruse, given how few existed these days. By day we enjoyed a steady income, but by night, we set ourselves to undermining the Steward of Oarmouth, that snivelling worm that grabbed up everything in the ashes of that siege.

We stopped him committing genocide against the Goblins, for while they were not innocent, they had good reason to go to war. We literally were burning their Elders for warmth, after all, and making our homes and beds out of the very wood of their eldest. But today is the day; the day we step out of the shadows and deception.

Either he dies by our hand today, or I do.

You begin in Labyrinthian as one person—defined by your Birth, Bloodline, and Backstory. But where you go from there? That's entirely up to you. Whether you're leading the King's army, founding a rebellion, or deciding how best to teach a lesson to a wayward villain, the world will keep moving—and so will you.

The Reach is the horizon of your journey, the long tail of every choice and every change. It is where personal growth becomes societal change, and where characters don't simply "level up"—they leave a mark. The Reach is when you are no longer progressing by merely becoming stronger, but by becoming more responsible. The scope of the game evolves as you become more involved, and begin to shape the world to your vision.

The Reach and Your Character includes:

- **Six B Character Development** – Via Birthsigns, Bloodlines, Backstories, Banners, Blazons, and Bastions, your character will be embarking on a lifelong journey that only you can define. Guided by practice and reflection, you engage on a dual progression track develop your core statistics, and eventually, become more than just some fantasy protagonist. You become a legend, that other games only dare put in lore.
- **A Natural Endgame** – When your Character comes into their own in The Reach, they will not be facing bigger numbers or just harder fights. They will be facing the evolution of their responsibility, tied into an elegant evolution of the game itself. Every mechanic and system you learn organically grows to accept a new scope; Combat becomes Warfare, Adventuring becomes Stewardship, and so on. You don't need to learn anything new, because if you've lasted this long, *you already know how to play*.
- **A Playground of Character** – Each Character in Labyrinthian becomes an exponential reflection of who you are as a player, and who you want them to be as a person. Customize and develop your character over time using:

- **32 Skills across 9 Talents**

- **13 Birthsigns**

- **7 Bloodlines, with 21 Different Cultures**

- **30 Backstories**

- **20 Banners, with 80 Blazons**

- **50 Bastions**

THE LIVING WORLD

A WORLD OF MEMORY AND MOTION

Why? Why didn't I just leave this man alone? I didn't even get much from his stupid trinket, and who even knows what happened to it after all these years? Absolutely incredible. The man held a grudge for years, and now after this long war to put my friend on the Throne of Oarmouth, he's come for blood. I should have paid attention; the signs were always there. Rumors of a man seeking me, those random attacks I took for sport. I could have ended this long ago.

Oh well, I suppose. Just another bastard to put down. My rogues made quick work of tracking the man after his pitiful attempt to assassinate me and my friend at his coronation. He had fled south and across the sea, to the island of Brandr, the land of the Dwarves and Dragons. They tell me there was some sort of upheaval. A Dragon, just a child wyvern, set upon the man's entourage and scattered them. While the Dwarves managed to draw it away with one of their giant oxen, they lost him in the struggle. They've been searching high and low across the island, and today I hear news that he may be coming back this way.

'Enough of this', I thought, as I geared up and left Oarmouth behind. I would put an end to this. I set out on the road alone; I did not fear what might come. Days stretched into weeks as I travelled, and as more news of the man's whereabouts came in. He made landfall in Aflask just yesterday, just 30 miles away. I knew the land well, I knew where I could...wait. Who is this? A child? And is that...no, it can't be. How on earth does he have that damn...

And that's when he stabbed me. Little bastard.

Labyrinthian isn't just a system or a setting. It's a world in motion—a place with memory, cause and effect, where history is written whether you're part of it or not. You can be a hero, a villain, a bystander, or something in-between. The world won't wait for you, but it will remember you.

Built from the ground up to simulate narrative consequence, the Living World of Labyrinthian bridges all of the game's Pillars. When you Adventure, Craft, Fight, or grow into the Reach, the Living World is watching. It tracks reputation and motivations. It turns offhand comments into Quest Lines. It lets the past come back to haunt, or help, you. This is what makes the game systemic and expressive. It plays you as much as you play it.

Every decision ripples. Every silence echoes. Even the smallest acts can spark revolutions, awaken monsters, or win unlikely allies. And just like the baker, you might find yourself facing down an old ghost...in a world that never forgot your name.

The Living World includes:

- **The Talking Table** – An interpretative dialogue engine. Converse with anything, about anything.
- **Noble Intrigue** – A dynamic narrative engine that drives the behaviors and rivalries of powerful NPCs. They pursue their own goals, and you can intervene... or not. They won't wait.
- **Procedural Cultures** – Each region develops its own identity based on its Nobles, Quest Lines, and past events, allowing you to influence the rise of entire civilizations—or clash against them.
- **Ambient Intrigue** – Not every story is scripted. Unexpected developments, rumors, and secrets emerge naturally through systems that track cause and consequence.
- **The Calendar and World State** – Time is tracked in days, weeks, and seasons. As it passes, wars erupt, cities rise, and factions shift—all with or without you.
- **Quest Blocks and Lines** – Modular, emergent quest structures tied to Nobles, Regions, and World Events. Designed to evolve with or without player involvement, but also act as tools to improvise new stories, no writing skills needed.
- **Continuity Support** – A toolkit to maintain an ongoing gameworld across characters and campaigns, including recurring villains, dynamic faction shifts, and legacy player impact.