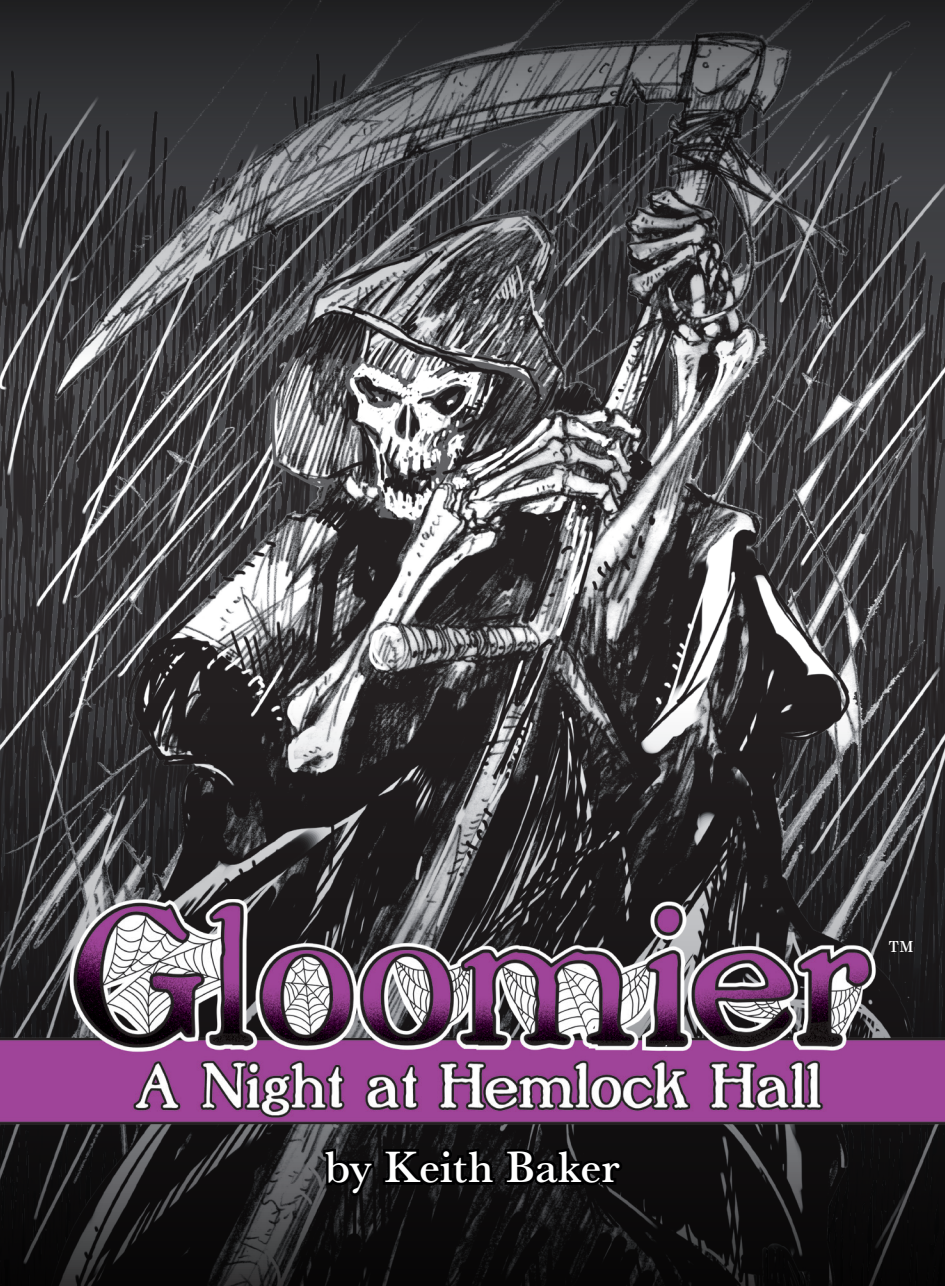




GloomierTM

A Night at Hemlock Hall

by Keith Baker

A TRAGIC TALE

Nothing ever gets better in the world of *Gloom*, and since we were there last, things have declined dismally. The sky is dribbling corrosive rain, the tea has gotten a bit moldy, and each new tragedy is somehow more improbable than the last. Famine, pestilence, and packs of feral corgis — just when it seems things can't get any worse, they do. The only consolation comes from the knowledge that yours really is the most tragic tale of them all, and there's some satisfaction in putting others' sorrows to shame by telling your own gloomier misadventures.



NOW EVEN WORSE

Gloomier: A Night at Hemlock Hall is a standalone sequel to *Gloom*, and a deeper look into the Hemlock Hall family. If you've never played *Gloom* before, it's a great place to start. If you're as old hat as Lord Wellington-Smythe, you can skip right to "For Experienced *Gloom* Players" on page 12.

In *Gloomier: A Night at Hemlock Hall*, you control the fate of an eccentric family of misfits and misanthropes. Your goal is sad, but simple: you want your Characters to suffer the greatest tragedies possible before passing on to the well-deserved respite of death, while keeping your opponents' Characters happy, healthy, and annoyingly alive. And along the way you'll detail the unfortunate incidents resulting in their miserable demise.

You'll play Modifier cards from your hand on top of Character cards, describing the horrible mishaps you inflict on your own Characters to lower their Self-Worth scores, while trying to cheer your opponents' Characters with happy occasions that pile on positive points. When one of your family members finally suffers an Untimely Death, that Character and all the tragic circumstances leading to their passing are set aside until the end of the game.

The game ends the instant an entire family is dead. You then add up the *visible* Self-Worth points on your own *dead* Characters. The player whose Characters have suffered the most — the one with the *lowest* total family value — wins the game.



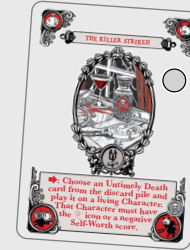
COMPONENTS

In addition to this rules booklet, *Gloomier: A Night at Hemlock Hall* includes 110 clear plastic cards:

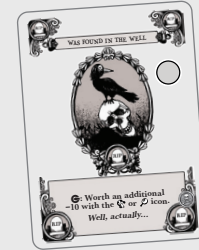
- 2 reference cards,
- 57 Modifier cards,
- 11 Event cards,
- 20 Untimely Death cards, and
- 20 double-sided Character cards (with 14 Unwelcome Guests and 6 Stories on the reverse side)



MODIFIER
cards don't have
a central image.



EVENT
cards are red.



UNTIMELY DEATH
cards have an image
of a crow and skull.

These three
types of cards
form the main
deck.



CHARACTER
cards have purple
portraits.

A Character card
might have either
an Unwelcome
Guest or a Story
on its reverse side.



GUESTS
have gray
portraits.



STORY
cards are green.

SETUP

Set the reference cards aside for now.

1. Choose Family Members

Separate the twenty double-sided Character cards from the rest of the deck and spread them out on the table, purple portrait side up. In *Gloomier*, all twenty Characters belong to the Hemlock Hall family. So, each player simply chooses four Characters they'd like to tell a story about.

All chosen Character cards are laid purple side up on the table in front of their owners, but still where the other players can also see and reach them.

An
example
family



2. Stories and Guests

Flip over the unchosen Character cards, to display the green Stories or gray Unwelcome Guests on their reverse side. Choose two randomly and lay them face up (green or gray side up) in the middle of the table, but where they won't be confused with the discard pile. Return the rest of the Story cards and Unwelcome Guests to the box. They won't be used.

Stories and Guests are not integral to gameplay. In a five-player game, you'll use all the Character cards, and so won't have any left over to reverse as Stories and Guests. They can also be left out completely for a simpler game. For more, see "Stories & Unwelcome Guests", page 10.

3. Deal the Cards

Shuffle the rest of the cards (Modifiers, Events, and Untimely Deaths) into a deck. Deal each player a hand of five face-down cards and put the rest of the deck in the center of the table. A discard pile will form next to it during play.

4. Begin!

Each player briefly summarizes the misery of their day so far. The player with the most sorrowful story will take the first turn. The game's owner chooses which terrible tale is most miserable, if there's a disagreement.

TAKING YOUR TURN

On your turn, take two actions, then draw back up.

Take Two Actions

- **PLAY AN EVENT CARD** for its immediate effect. It is then discarded.
- **PLAY A MODIFIER CARD** on any living Character or Guest. They alter that Character's Self-Worth score, may have additional effects as described on the card, and may bear story icons. You can play Modifier cards on anyone's Character, not just yours, as long as that Character is still alive.
- **PLAY AN UNTIMELY DEATH CARD** on any living Character or Guest with a negative Self-Worth score. *An Untimely Death can't be played as the second action of your turn; it has to come first.*
- **CLAIM A STORY CARD** whose requirements you meet and put it near your family, immediately gaining its benefits (see "Story Cards", page 10).
- **DISCARD YOUR ENTIRE HAND.** However, you don't get new cards until the end of your turn; if you discard as your first play, you won't have any cards to use for your second play.
- **PASS:** You don't have to make one or both plays if you don't want to.

It's fine to make the same play twice (except Untimely Death cards).

Free Plays

Some Modifier and Event cards allow you to play additional cards as "free plays" that don't count toward your two standard plays. If a card lets you use an Untimely Death card as a free play, it doesn't matter if it's your first play or second.

Draw Back Up

After you've made your two plays, draw until the number of cards in your hand is equal to your current draw limit. Unless it's altered by card effects, *your draw limit is five cards.*

If you somehow have more cards than your draw limit at the end of your turn, your turn simply ends without any drawing of cards.

Once you've drawn, the player to your left begins their turn.

STORYTELLING

Half the fun of *Gloomier: A Night at Hemlock Hall* is the stories that unfold as the game progresses. On your turn, it's up to you to explain the effects of your plays and how these tragic events have come to pass.

For example, you play Was Ruined by Rumors on Inspector Johnson. What salacious tale is being passed around? Who is the gossipmonger that started the scuttlebutt? And if your opponent later decides the Inspector Danced with a Duchess, how did he evade his infamy?

Some cards include prompt questions to help you explore mischievous motivations or unintended consequences of each part of your tale. There are no right answers to these questions, and it's up to you how deeply you delve into these tales of tragedy. But when you play a card, try to explain how it fits that Character's story... you'll have more fun if you do!



THE CARDINAL RULE

Gloomier's cards are transparent in some areas and opaque in others. As the game goes on, Modifier cards are stacked squarely on top of Character cards, as well as on top of previous Modifiers. Eventually, an Untimely Death card can be stacked on top.

As cards stack up, different Self-Worth values, card effects, and story icons will be covered up, sometimes replaced and sometimes simply concealed. **The cardinal rule of *Gloomier* is that you only pay attention to what you can see.**

If Self-Worth points are concealed, they no longer affect that Character's score. If a story icon is covered, that Character no longer has it. If an effect is hidden, it no longer does anything. And while a persistent effect is harder to remove, as soon as both its upper right icon and center illustration are obscured, the effect ends.

SCORING & WINNING

The game ends the instant the last Character in any family dies. Add up the Self-Worth scores of all your dead Characters and Guests. (Each Character's individual Self-Worth score is the sum of the point values currently showing in its stack.) The player with the lowest total — the one whose family is the most miserable — wins!



**EVELYN
WASTED AWAY,**

which is worth an
additional -10 points
with a ♀ icon.

-40 pts



**THE
INSPECTOR
WAS FATALITY
SMITTEN.**

Some cards allow
Characters to die
happy and score
positive points.

15 pts

**-60 points
family total**



FLETCHER

lives!
How awful.

0 pts



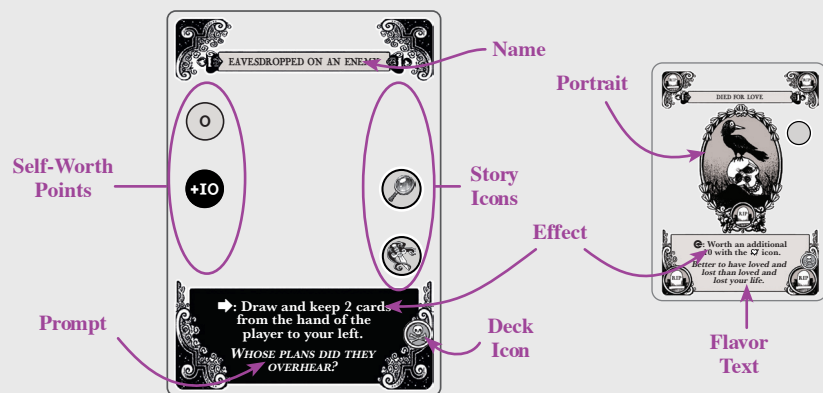
**JENNY
MADE A TRAGIC
MISTAKE.**

-35 pts



ANATOMY OF CARDS

Each area on a card has a particular use. Not all cards have all elements.



SELF-WORTH POINTS: Up to three point values in circles. A Character's Self-Worth score is the total of the points currently showing in its stack.

STORY ICONS: Up to three icons that have no effect on their own, but which frequently trigger or interact with the effects of other cards.

DECK ICON: The skull and crossbones on the bottom right of every card indicates it is from *Gloomier: A Night at Hemlock Hall*, to help you sort it out from your other *Gloom* games if you wish.

EFFECTS: Special rules that do whatever they say. There are four categories of effects with corresponding icons: immediate, continuous, persistent, and response. See "Card Effects" on the next page.

FLAVOR TEXT: Delightful or dreadful bits of story and commentary that provide entertaining ambiance. Flavor text is distinguished from effect text with italics.

PROMPTS: Questions about the situation that may help add atmosphere and background to your tale. These are not required for gameplay.

PORTRAIT: A disturbing, entertaining, or comic image, delightful to behold. Some illustrations make it easy to tell cards apart by type. For example, Modifier cards don't have illustrations, so it's easy to tell what they are. All Untimely Death cards bear the same image, so any Character showing that signature picture at the top of its stack must be dead.

CARD EFFECTS

Modifier card effects always apply to and are resolved by the player controlling the Character the card is played on, not (necessarily) the person who played it, unless the card says otherwise.

So if you play a card that says "Draw two cards" on another player's Character, that player is the one who gets to draw, not you. Likewise, any card text that says "you" or "your" refers to the person controlling the affected Character.

Event card effects apply to and are resolved by the player playing the card.

There are four types of effects, which are identified by icons. An effect's category determines when it's resolved.

➡ **IMMEDIATE EFFECTS** are resolved right away when played. If the card shifts to another Character, the effect isn't triggered again. Example: "Draw one card."

⌚ **CONTINUOUS EFFECTS** continue to affect the game for as long as their effect text is visible. When it's covered by another card, the effect ends. If the card shifts, the effect applies to the new Character. Example: "Your draw limit is increased by one card."

⌛ **PERSISTENT EFFECTS** represent a long-term trait of an Unwelcome Guest. As long as the ⌛ icon in the upper right remains visible, the effect continues. Typically, the only way to end a persistent effect is to play an Untimely Death card on that Guest.

↻ **RESPONSES** can only be played during another player's turn in response to some action that player has just taken. Response cards are the only cards that can be played during another player's turn. Example: "Cancel an Event card as it is played."



STORIES & UNWELCOME GUESTS

Story cards and Unwelcome Guests in *Gloomier: A Night at Hemlock Hall* appear on the back of Character cards. They are never shuffled into the deck, and usually only two total are used in a single game.

Story cards have a green portrait and icons, and Unwelcome Guests have gray portraits.

Both types of cards begin the game uncontrolled — loose in the center of the table, not claimed by any player (see “Setup”, page 4).

They are both optional: A less complicated game can be played with just one of these cards (instead of two), or by leaving them out entirely. If you do play without, you may discard and replace any card you might draw — like Plot Twist — whose effect refers to them.



Story Cards

If Characters in your family, living or dead, currently show the icon(s) to meet a Story card's listed requirement, you can claim it as an action on your turn. When you claim a Story card, place it near your family so everyone can see that it's yours. You enjoy its effects for as long as you control it.

For example, The Alabaster Albatross' requirement is a [fish icon]. If any Character in your family, living or dead, shows a [fish icon], you meet the requirements. You can spend an action to claim the Albatross Story card from the middle, increasing your draw limit accordingly.

Players can also claim Story cards controlled by another player. Now that you control The Alabaster Albatross, if another player has more [fish icon] icons showing in their family than you do, they can spend an action on their turn to claim the Albatross card from you.

You can only have one Story card at a time. If you have one and claim another, return the first one, uncontrolled, to the center of the table.

You keep a Story card and its effect even if you lose the required icons.

Unwelcome Guests

Unwelcome Guests aren't tied to any one family. Each Guest has something that they follow — a story icon or a particular type of card. For example, Madame Zora follows Untimely Death cards, while Sally True investigates crimes and follows the [skull icon] icon. Any time such a card is played, the Guest follows the card — leaving their current family and joining the family that card was played upon. This occurs immediately after any effects of the triggering card are resolved. The Guest takes all of their current Modifiers with them when they move.



This behavior of following cards is a persistent effect, called out by the persistent icon in the upper right corner. It continues even if the text is covered up, as long as that persistent icon can be seen. If the icon is covered — usually by an Untimely Death card — the effect ends, so a dead Guest no longer moves. Most Guests have additional persistent effects: Sally True follows [skull icon], but she increases your draw limit for each [skull icon] in your family. These persistent effects only apply to the player who currently controls the Guest.

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QUICK REFERENCE

Game Setup

For full instructions, see “Setup”, page 4.

1. Each player picks **4 Characters** (purple).
2. Choose **2 Stories** (green) and/or **Unwelcome Guests** (gray) to go in the middle.
3. **Deal 5 cards** to each player.
4. The player having the worst day goes first!

On Your Turn

Take two actions from among these options:

- **Play an Event** for its effect, then discard it.
- **Play a Modifier** on a living Character, and leave it there.
- **Play an Untimely Death** on a Character or Guest with negative Self-Worth, *as your first action only*.
- **Claim a Story**, if your family meets its requirements.
- **Discard** your entire hand.
- **Pass** your action by doing nothing.

Then draw back up to your draw limit (which is five, unless an effect has changed it).

Card Effects

Card effects apply to the player whose Character they were played on, not (necessarily) the player who played them.

- ➡ **Immediate effects** are resolved right away when played.
- ⌚ **Continuous effects** continue to affect the game for as long as their effect text is visible.
- ⌚ **Persistent effects** keep working even if their effect text is covered. They remain in effect as long as the ⌚ icon in the upper right remains visible (typically until death).
- ↪ **Response effects** can only be played during another player's turn, in response to something specific.

For Experienced Gloom Players

No rules have changed in *Gloomier*. You should be able to hop right in without reading this rule book.

However, in *Gloomier*, all Characters are from Hemlock Hall, so you choose four Characters during setup instead of one family (this will be familiar to *Fairytale Gloom* fans).

Please also note that the Guest cards and Story cards are on the back of the Character cards. You may wish to read “Stories & Unwelcome Guests” on page 10 if you've only played core *Gloom* before.

Combining with Other Gloom Games

Play *Gloomier* by itself the first time, then mix together all of the Modifier, Event, and Death cards from as many *Gloom* games as you like, to form a big draw pile of very random happenstance!

If you like, you can form combined pools of Characters, Guests, and/or Stories to draw from, or you can just pick out your favorites!

MORE INFO

For more information about *Gloomier*, including strategies, downloads, and expansions, please visit us at:

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