Doom Sword

A DIY LARP for 2+ Tragedy-Inclined Players

Long ago, the Doom was sealed away by a mighty hero wielding the legendary Doom Sword. The sealing of the Doom ushered in an era of peace and prosperity. Art, culture, and magic flourished throughout the land. All this time, the Doom Sword lay dormant, guarded by the Doom Ward.

This time of peace may be about to come to an end. The diviners have spoken; they say the seal upon the Doom has weakened, and the Doom soon will be unleashed. ***Unless.*** *Unless the seal can be strengthened by a willing sacrifice upon the blade of the Doom Sword.*

A random assortment of people have been chosen by lot to contemplate the Doom Sword. The hour draws nigh. At the end of this hour, one person must throw themself upon the Doom Sword, taking their place alongside the mighty hero of old and sacrificing their life to save us all. The rest will be left to mourn and contemplate what might have been.

Mechanics & Set-Up

The Doom Sword is in the middle of a large room or outdoor space. To access it, two people must simultaneously place their hands upon the Doom Ward for at least thirty seconds. Once they have done so, the Doom Sword is permanently accessible and anyone within touching distance of it may throw themselves upon it. The LARP ends when someone throws themself upon the Doom Sword or when an hour has passed without someone doing so. (If playing with fewer than four people, consider ending in half an hour instead.)

The Doom Sword should ideally be represented by the most ridiculous fantasy sword anyone present possesses, but can also be represented by an index card if needed. The Doom Ward may be represented by any object which is big enough for two people to touch at once. Objects that can be dramatically flung away once the Doom Ward is deactivated are especially good.

Once you have built your characters and determined your relationships (as described below), you may begin the game. Someone should start a timer – ideally one that beeps loudly when expiring – and declare, "Game start."

Character Creation

Each player should pick a name for their character that is some kind of innocuous noun, like Sunlight or Ribbon. Then, roll a 6-sided die to determine each of the following:

Profession: 1 is least important to the continued functioning of society while 6 is most important. Picture a sort of pleasant pastoral medieval fantasy society. A socialite or bandit might be a 1, while a high priestess or physician might be a 6.

Pick whatever profession feels right and whatever you do, do not share the number you rolled with anyone; this is not "debate how important farmers are individually vs on aggregate for an hour LARP."

Tragedy: How tragic has your life up until this point been, on a scale of 1-6? After rolling, determine the nature of this tragedy.

Martyrdom Quotient: How much do you personally want to throw yourself on this sword, on a scale of 1-6? Or simply pretend to roll the die and write down a 6.

Introduce yourself. Your name, profession, and potentially your tragedy are all public; your martyrdom quotient is private. Write down everyone else's names.

Character Relationships

For each other character, roll 1d6 to determine:

Relationship Closeness: If you roll a 6 for someone else, inform them that the two of you have a close, positive relationship. If you roll a 1, inform them that the two of you have an intense negative relationship. Ignore all other rolls. Note down any 1s or 6s others roll for you. Anyone who did not end up with at least two close relationships of some sort (or one, for a 2-3 player game) may choose to reroll.

If two people both roll a 6 for each other, the pair are Soulmates. (You may have multiple Soulmates.) If both roll 1s for each other, they are Mortal Enemies. If one person rolls a 1 and the other rolls a 6, they have a complicated but intense relationship. (It does not matter who rolled which number.)

Work with the other players to determine the exact nature of these relationships.

Sacrifice Quotient: How much do you want to throw this person onto the Doom Sword, where 1 is "I would sacrifice my life for them even if I weren't planning on doing that already" and 6 is "why are we even having a debate rather than impaling this person immediately?" Keep your sacrifice quotient for each other character private.

You may choose to skip rolling for close positive and negative relationships and assume those are 1s and 6s, respectively. You may choose to roll if you want the potential challenge of figuring out why you want to save your Mortal Enemy and/or sacrifice your Soulmate.