



Balance Analysis & Class Concepts

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This document is written in the style of an internal ability specification, using Darkest Dungeon's in-game presentation conventions.

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Introduction

This slidedeck contains system analysis and creative class design in response to balance observations in darkest dungeon.

I will analyse all pre-existing classes, and look at their strengths and weaknesses

I will conduct a brief late game balance-analysis

I will then create two new classes that will hit these goals:

- Fit in with the games theme
- Be balanced alongside and around the pre-existing heroes
- Be fun & unique

The two new characters should fit into the game with little friction and should not render aspects of it obsolete.



What is Darkest Dungeon



Darkest Dungeon is a **challenging** turn-based RPG built around party composition, resource management and long term roster progression.

Players form four-hero parties from the roster, each adventurer carrying **unique** stats, quirks and risks.

The game has **permadeath** for each character, so you must be very careful with your actions

Each class has 8 abilities, 4 of which can be equipped at one time, allowing for different **loadouts**

Combat relies heavily on **positioning**: heroes and enemies stand in a ranked line, and abilities can only be used from (and against) specific positions.

Disruption effects like pulls, pushes, and **stuns** dramatically alter the flow of battle.

Bleed and Blight effects can be afflicted upon enemies too, some are more **weak** to one than the other



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Class Analysis - 1



Abomination

A shape shifter that can buff and stun in his human mode, and deal huge damage in beast mode. Most effective in the middle of the team

HP: 26 DMG: 6-11 SPD: 7



Antiquarian

A unique class that is not a fighter, instead by having them in your party, you find more treasure. Can be placed anywhere in the team

HP: 17 DMG: 3-5 SPD: 5



Arbalest

A crossbow wielding sniper, who is only effective from the back of the team, she can mark an enemy to deal more damage and also has some utility skills.

HP: 27 DMG: 4-8 SPD: 3



Bounty Hunter

He is a versatile high-damage single target hero, he can mark enemies and fits in basically any rank in the team. Team him up with other markers for the most impact

HP: 25 DMG: 5-10 SPD: 5



Crusader

A tanky frontliner, able to dish damage out as well as receive it. He is normally found in the first two spots of the party. He has some utility.

HP: 33 DMG: 6-12 SPD: 1



Grave Robber

An independent, position swapping duelist, who can sustain herself and attack from anywhere in the party, she also has a very high crit rate

HP: 20 DMG: 4-8 SPD: 8

Class Analysis - 2



Hellion

Hellion is a fierce damage dealer, who wants to be at the front of the fight, she has multiple bleed abilities and other utility attacks

HP: 26 DMG: 6-12 SPD: 4



Highwayman

Highway can deal damage to any enemy from basically any spot of the team, making him the most mobile and versatile damage dealer

HP: 23 DMG: 5-10 SPD: 5



Houndmaster

Houndmaster is a mix of a support and a disabler, he can apply many debuffs to enemies and also buff and heal allies or himself. He also has a dog

HP: 21 DMG: 4-7 SPD: 5



Jester

Jester is a hard-to-use damage dealer and support. He has strict positioning and needs to follow a set plan in order to deal the most damage.

HP: 19 DMG: 4-7 SPD: 7



Leper

Leper can only operate at the front, but he is the model damage dealer and taker. He can buff himself and deal huge damage the enemies close to him.

HP: 32 DMG: 8-16 SPD: 2



Man-at-arms

A very powerful support based tank, who can protect other allies and ensure that attacks hit. He also has some of the strongest camp abilities in the game.

HP: 31 DMG: 5-9 SPD: 3

Class Analysis - 3



Occultist

The occultist is a unpredictable healer and support, he can debuff the enemies in numerous ways and can heal, but the numbers can change drastically.

HP: 19 DMG: 4-7 SPD: 6



Plague Doctor

Backline support who can apply Blight and stun to far away enemies, she can also stop bleeding and blight on allied heroes.

HP: 22 DMG: 4-7 SPD: 7



Vestal

The most consistent healing class. She wants to stay in the back and heal her allies. She can attack if she gets pulled to the front, but it's not ideal.

HP: 24 DMG: 4-8 SPD: 4



Flagellant

An unorthodox font-liner who must take damage in order to unlock his full potential. The closer to deal he his, the stronger his support and damage skills become

HP: 22 DMG: 3-6 SPD: 2



Shieldbreaker

The shield breaker is a very versatile attacker, she can move in and out of the team very easily. She can also attack most enemies, she is lacking on health though.

HP: 22 DMG: 5-10 SPD: 5

Team Composition

Team Composition is the key factor in making it far in the dungeon.

Multiple factors can influence team comps, as some areas are more resistant to bleed or other blight, so your team comp should reflect that.

The four most important things when building a team are:

- Reach
- Sustain
- Stress Management
- Status

Here are four very popular and powerful team compositions. Let's break them down and see why they work.

 - Healer

 - Move

 - Self-Heal

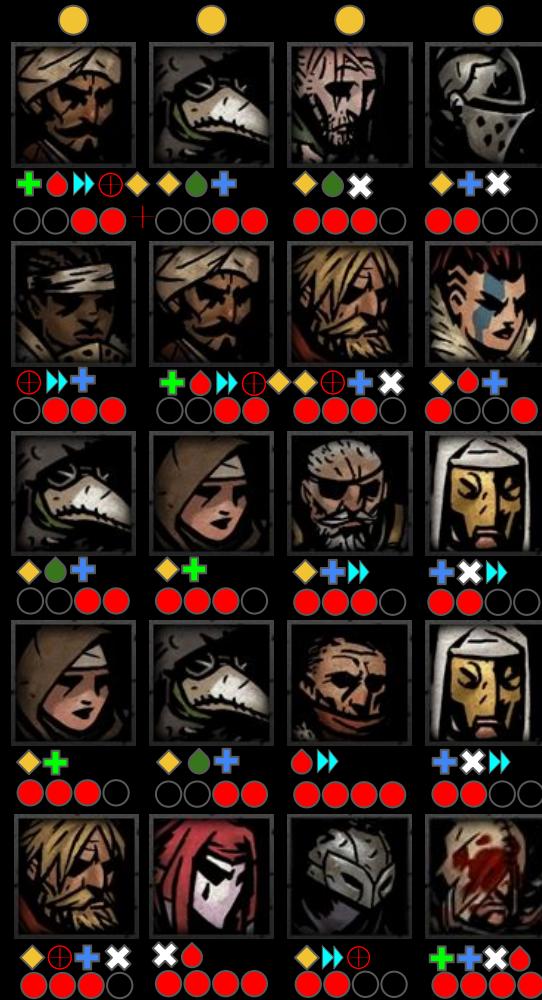
 - Stun

 - Bleed

 - Stress-heal

 - Blight

 - Mark



Team Composition - 2



From these 5 teams there are quite a few conclusions we can draw.

Stun is very prevalent in every team

Vestal & Occultist appear in nearly every team

Stress heals are powerful and always appear

Every enemy spot can be attacked

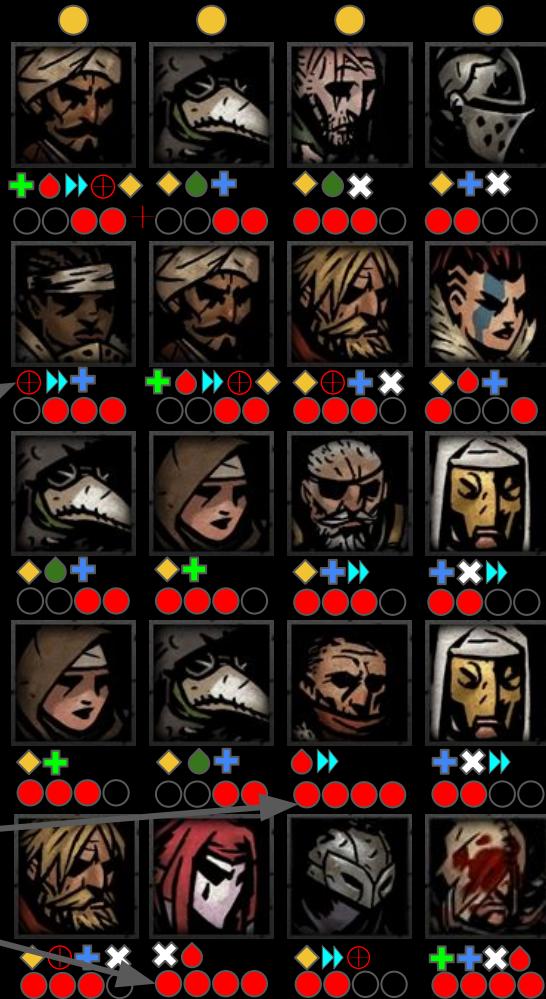
Team 2 is based around marking enemies, so more characters who mark appear on it



Plague Doctor appears the most

Characters who can hit all 4 enemies usually have less effects

Teams are built around blight or bleed, not usually both.



Why This Matters - Objectives



Stun is prevalent, but two classes can't change that, instead let's find competing strategies to offer alternatives.



The Plague Doctor is the strongest blight-inflictor in the game and also has multi-target stuns, which makes her extremely valuable. One of the new classes should offer a meaningful alternative



Healers are super important in darkest dungeon, yet only two dedicated healers exists. Maybe some more variety could help.



Only a few classes create deliberate synergies (Team 2). Perhaps a new way to do this could be beneficial to the game



Two new classes



- One will be a new core healer



- There *could* be a situation stun



- There *will* be synergy with a pre-existing class



- There *will* be an alternative to stun, that still feels strong



- They will not be drastically stronger or weaker than other classes





Class 1 - Flag Bearer

A mid rank support character who can remove the *stress* from battle. They can also *inspire* other allies





Class 1 - Flag Bearer



Flag Bearer is a **mixed utility support** class, he sits best in 2nd or 3rd rank, and has a higher immunity to displacement, solidifying his place and stance in the team. He also adds the **Rallied** effect into the game.

| | Level 1 | Level 6 |
|--------|---------|---------|
| Health | 23 | 39 |
| Damage | 3-7 | 7-13 |
| Speed | 2 | 6 |
| Dodge | 5 | 25 |

| Resist |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| ♂ | ♂ | ♂ | ♂ | ♂ | ♂ | ♂ |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 35% | 35% | 30% | 35% | 40% | 30% | 10% |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|



Rally:

When an ally is rallied they act first in the next round of combat





Flag Bearer - Abilities



Flag Skewer

| | Range | Rank | Target | Damage | Accuracy |
|---|-------|---------|---------|--------|----------|
| A small icon of a flag with a spear through it. | Melee | ● ● ● ● | ● ● ● ● | +0% | 85 |

Standard melee attack usable from ranks 1-3, including rank 3 reinforces the fact he should be in the middle of the team

Fly the Flag

| | Rank | Target | Effect | Self |
|--|------------------|---------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| A small icon of a flag with a cross on it. | ● ● ● ● | ● ● ● ● | Rally Stress -4 | Mark Self -25% SPD |
| Limit | 1 Use per Battle | | | |

Fly the Flag inspires backline allies to act first and reduces their stress. The frontliner becomes marked and slightly slower, creating tactical risk. Usable once per battle for high-impact strategy.





Flag Bearer - Abilities



| Stand Firm | | | | |
|---|--------|---|---|---------------------------|
| | Range | Rank | Target | Effect |
|  | Ranged |   |   | -2 Stress (70% Chance) |

Stand firm is a whole team stress heal, it is quite weak, but it can heal everyone simultaneously, it can only be used in rank 3 and 4, meaning it cannot be used with Fly the Flag

| Encore | | | | |
|---|---|---|------|----------------------------------|
| | Rank | Target | Heal | Effect |
|  |  |  | 1 | +20% Healing received (1 rds) |

Another support technique that can increase the potency of other healing buff to your whole team. This also creates synergies with other healers





Flag Bearer - Abilities



Intimidating Charge

| | Range | Rank | Target | Damage | Accuracy | Effect |
|--------|-----------|-----------|--------|--------|---------------------------------------|--------|
| Ranged | ● ● ● ● ● | ● ● ● ● ● | -0% | 80 | Push 1 (100% base) Mark (2 Rds) | |

Standard melee attack
usable from ranks 1-3,
including rank 3 reinforcing
the fact he should be in the
middle of the team

Replenishing Rally

| | Rank | Target | Heal | Self |
|-----------|-----------|--------|------|------|
| ● ● ● ● ● | ● ● ● ● ● | 2-3 | | |

A support technique that can heal the first three party members, but cannot heal the member in the final rank. It is a consistent heal.





Flag Bearer - Abilities



| Inspiring Cry | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|---------|--------|-----------------------|
| | Rank | Target | Effect | Self |
| | ● ● ● ● | ● ● ● ● | Rally | Mark Self -30% SPD |
| Limit | 1 Use per Battle | | | |

A weaker version of Fly the Flag, but it can be used from the third rank





Flag Bearer - Skill Levels



| | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 5 |
|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Feathers | ACC 90 | ACC 95 | ACC 100 | ACC 105 |
| Crossed Swords | Stress -5 SPD -20% | Stress -6 SPD -15% | Stress -7 SPD -10% | Stress -8 SPD -5% |
| Hand | Stress -3 | Stress -4 | Stress -5 | Stress -6 |
| Skull | Heal 1-2 HR 25% | Heal 2-2 HR 25% | Heal 2-2 HR 30% | Heal 2-3 HR 30% |
| Deathblow | ACC 85 Push 110% | ACC 90 Push 120% | ACC 95 Push 130% | ACC 100 Push 140% |
| Music | Heal 3-4 | Heal 4-5 | Heal 5-6 | Heal 6-7 |
| Hand (Level 5) | SPD -25% | SPD -20% | SPD -15% | SPD -10% |



Flag Bearer - Example Builds



A hybrid role that mixes offense and support. He can heal, rally allies and mark enemies, while still contributing damage from the back. If another hero can self-sustain, he can keep the rest of the party stable



A full support role, that heal stress, boosts healing effects and allows him to heal others. This would allow flagbearer to sustain a whole team by himself



A build that makes full use of rally and makes him more of a support than a healer, allowing him to rally allies and boost the main healers effects. He can also disrupt enemies.



Flag Bearer - Trinkets



Burning Flagpole



+20% Damage

-33% Healing

Common

Inspiring Banner



-15% Stress

-1 SPD

Uncommon

Sturdy Helm



+10% Max HP
+10% Move Chance
-10% Damage

Rare

First Aid Book



+33% Healing Skills
-4 Accuracy

Very Rare



Flag Bearer - Camp Skills



Supporting Words

-10 Stress (all)

Time Cost: 4

Reinforces the **morale-support identity** of the Flagbearer.

Works well after a tough dungeon segment or before a boss.

Supports his theme of **inspiring allies** both in combat and downtime.



Bloody Banner

+10 Stress (Self)

+10% DMG (All, 2 Battles)

Time Cost: 3

Emphasizes **leadership through sacrifice**, the Flagbearer risks his own composure to boost the party.

Fits his **morale and initiative theme**, synergizing with *Fly the Flag* in combat.

Shorter time cost than Supporting Words



Studying Up

+20% Healing received (3 Battles)

Time Cost: 2

Emphasizes preparation and tactical foresight.

Supports the Flag Bearer **healing and stress-management role**.

Short time cost → can be used in combination with other camp skills.



Flag Bearer - Conclusion



The Flagbearer aligns with our discussed goals, he introduces a new core healer/support role without replacing existing healers, offers tactical turn-order manipulation through Rally, provides optional situational control with minor stuns, and creates synergy with backline allies. Whilst still reinforcing flexible positioning and risk-reward decision-making



Class 2 - The Herald

A front lining blight infused tank, he can *drain* blight stacks from his foes restoring his health





Class 2 - The Herald



The Herald is a **powerful** and sturdy frontliner, who must channel the power of blight to **sustain** himself and deal damage. He can absorb enemies blight stacks to empower himself.



| | Level 1 | Level 6 |
|--------|---------|---------|
| Health | 30 | 54 |
| Damage | 4-7 | 6-12 |
| Speed | 1 | 5 |
| Dodge | 5 | 25 |

| Resist |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| ♂ | ♂ | ♂ | ♂ | ♂ | ♂ | ♂ |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 35% | 50% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 30% | 10% |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|





The Herald - Abilities



Infectious Swipe

| | Range | Rank | Target | Damage | Accuracy | Effect |
|--|-------|------|--------|--------|----------|-------------------------------------|
| | Melee | | | -67% | 90 | Blight (95% Base) 2 per 3 rounds |

Low Damage move that applies blight to the two enemy front lines

Undergrowth Garrote

| | Rank | Target | Damage | Accuracy | Effect |
|--|------|--------|--------|----------|------------------------------------|
| | | | -20% | 95 | Bleed (95% Base) 1 per 2 rounds |

A move to apply bleed to the backline enemy, allows him to contribute to areas with a blight resistance





The Herald - Abilities



Rot Feast

| Range | Rank | Target | Damage | Accuracy | Effect |
|-------------------------|---------|-----------|--------|----------|--|
| Ranged | ● ● ● ● | ● ● ● ● ● | -100% | 95 | Remove all blight from the target. Heal the user for an amount equal to the 55% of the blight damage that was removed. |
| Limit 2 Uses per Battle | | | | | |

Herald can cash out any blight build up and instead turn into a big heal.

Purge

| Rank | Target | Damage | Accuracy | Effect |
|-------------------------|-----------|--------|----------|--|
| ● ● ● ● ● | ● ● ● ● ● | -50% | 95 | Remove blight from a front-line enemy and deal damage to the target equal to the 75% of blight damage removed. Base damage also applies. |
| Limit 1 Uses per Battle | | | | |

Instead of healing you can deal all the blight damage instantly, causing huge damage





The Herald - Abilities



| Sanctuary | | | |
|-----------|---------|---------|--|
| | Rank | Target | Effect |
| | ● ● ● ● | ● ● ● ● | Guard Ally (2 Rds) 10% DMG Resist Marked |

Allows Herald to guard one ally, allowing his protective abilities to benefit the whole team

| Spore Cloud | | | | | | |
|-------------|--------|---------|---------|--------|----------|--------------------------------------|
| | Range | Rank | Target | Damage | Accuracy | Effect |
| | Ranged | ● ● ● ● | ● ● ● ● | -67% | 90 | Blight (Base 100%) 1 per 2 rounds |

A wide plague spreading attack, but cannot be used with purge without moving the team around





The Herald - Abilities



Blighted Renewal

| Rank | Target | Effect | Self |
|---|---------|-------------------------|--|
|  ● ● ● ● | ● ● ● ● | Cure Blight Heal 1-2 | Remove all blight from an ally Heal self for amount of blight removed |

A move that allows Herald to remove an allies blight and heal himself in return, a great defensive move





The Herald - Skill Levels



| | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 5 |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| | ACC 95 Blight (105%) 3 per 3 rounds | ACC 100 Blight (110%) 3 per 3 rounds | ACC 105 Blight (115%) 4 per 3 rounds | ACC 110 Blight (120%) 4 per 3 rounds |
| | ACC 100 Bleed (100%) 2 per 2 rounds | ACC 105 Bleed (105%) 3 per 2 rounds | ACC 110 Bleed (110%) 3 per 2 rounds | ACC 110 Bleed (110%) 4 per 2 rounds |
| | ACC 100 Heal 70% of Blight | ACC 105 Heal 85% of Blight | ACC 110 Heal 100% of Blight | ACC 115 Heal 115% of Blight |
| | ACC 100 | ACC 105 | ACC 110 | ACC 115 |
| | DMG 15% Resist | DMG 20% Resist | DMG 25% Resist | DMG 30% Resist |
| | ACC 95 Blight (105%) 2 per 2 rounds | ACC 100 Blight (110%) 3 per 2 rounds | ACC 105 Blight (115%) 4 per 2 rounds | ACC 110 Blight (120%) 5 per 2 rounds |
| | Heal 2-2 | Heal 2-3 | Heal 3-3 | Heal 3-4 |



The Herald - Example Builds



The classic tank role for the Herald, features Rot Feast and Purge giving him a lot of flexibility with blight stacks. The team also features other blight inflicting characters, to really let those numbers stack up

The loadout is somewhat similar to the first but based around a team that moves, being in second rank allows him to use spore cloud. The Gravedigger can move back; allowing The Herald to use purge.

Here is how The Herald fits into a bleed comp, if you are in an area that is resistant to blight. He can act as a support that keeps the blight at bay, all whilst inflicting bleed aswell.



The Herald - Trinkets



Infected Idol



+15% Blight Chance

-5% Max Health

Common

Bloody Herbs



+33% Bleed Resist

+10 ACC

Uncommon



The Herald - Conclusion



The Herald ticks off some of our discussed goals, he synergizes with a lot of different characters, like plague doctor or shieldbreaker. He also allows new playstyles revolving around applying blight and using his execute to deal massive damage. In a bleed team he can act as a support/tank that can also inflict high bleed.

Goals Achieved?



- One will be a new core healer



- There *could* be a situation stun



- There *will* be synergy with a pre-existing class



- There *will* be an alternative to stun, that still feels strong



- They will not be drastically stronger or weaker than other classes

All of our goals have been achieved, except for the stun, which wasn't a requirement anyway.

Design Philosophy - Flag Bearer



The Flag Bearer is designed as a frontline support who manipulates turn order, positioning, and risk, rather than raw damage or healing.

1. High Impact, Limited Use

Signature abilities like *Fly the Flag* are powerful but restricted by:

Rank requirements

Self-inflicted risk (mark, speed penalty)

Once-per-battle limits

2. Support Without Replacing Healers

Provides Stress reduction

Does not offer sustain healing easily

Preserves the roles of Vestal and Occultist

3. Party Coordination Over Solo Power

Excels when paired with allies that benefit from acting first

Enhances existing strategies rather than creating new win conditions

Rewards planning, not reactionary play

Design Philosophy - Herald



The Herald is designed as a frontline blight tank who converts damage-over-time into deliberate, player-driven outcomes, emphasizing timing, positioning, and risk-reward decision making.

1. Blight as a Resource, Not Just Damage

Blight is treated as a **currency** to be spent for healing or burst damage

Abilities allow the player to decide **when to let blight tick** and **when to cash it out**
Encourages mastery through timing rather than raw output

2. Frontline Risk for High Reward

Signature abilities require front-rank positioning

Cash-out effects expose the Herald to danger through placement and limited uses
Power is earned through commitment, not safety

3. Synergy Without Dependency

Strongly benefits from blight-focused allies

Remains functional without Plague Doctor, avoiding hard party locks

Enhances existing strategies rather than replacing them



Thanks for reading!

These class mods are now in development,
please keep an eye on my steam account for
updates

