



Cairn

Player's Guide — 2nd Edition

Cairn 2e Player's Guide

Cairn is an adventure game about exploring a dark and mysterious Wood filled with strange folk, hidden treasure, and unspeakable monstrosities. Character generation is quick and random, adventures are tense and reward careful exploration, and combat is frantic and deadly.

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cairnrrpg.com

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Overview

Cairn was written with the following design philosophies in mind:

Neutrality

The Warden's role is to act as a neutral arbiter and portray the rules, situations, non-player characters (NPCs), and narrative clearly.

Classless

A character's role or skills are not limited by a single class. Instead, the equipment they carry and their experiences define their specialty.

Death

Characters may be powerful, but they are also vulnerable to harm in its many forms. Death is always around the corner, but it is never random or without warning.

Fiction First

Dice do not always reflect an obstacle's difficulty or its outcome. Instead, success and failure are based on in-world elements and arbitrated by the Warden in dialogue with the players.

Growth

Characters are changed through in-world advancement, gaining new skills and abilities by surviving dangerous events and overcoming obstacles.

Player Choice

Players should always understand the reasons behind the choices they've made, and information about potential risks should be provided freely and frequently.

Principles

The Warden and the players each have guidelines that help foster a specific play experience defined by critical thinking, exploration, and an emergent narrative.

Shared Objectives

Players trust one another to engage with the shared setting, character goals, and party challenges. Therefore the party is typically working together towards a common goal, as a team.

Principles for Players

Agency

- Attributes and related saves do not define your character. They are tools.
- Don't ask only what your character would do; ask what you would do, too.
- Be creative with your intuition, items, and connections.

Teamwork

- Seek consensus from the other players before barreling forward.
- Stay on the same page about goals and limits, respecting each other and accomplishing more as a group than alone.

Exploration

- Asking questions and listening to detail is more useful than any stats, items, or skills you have.
- Take the Warden's description without suspicion, but don't shy away from seeking more information.
- There is no single correct way forward.

Talking

- Treat NPCs as if they were real people, and rely on your curiosity to safely gain information and solve problems.
- You'll find that most people are interesting and will want to talk things through before getting violent.

Caution

- Fighting is a choice and rarely a wise one; consider whether violence is the best way to achieve your goals.
- Try to stack the odds in your favor, and retreat when things seem unfavorable.

Planning

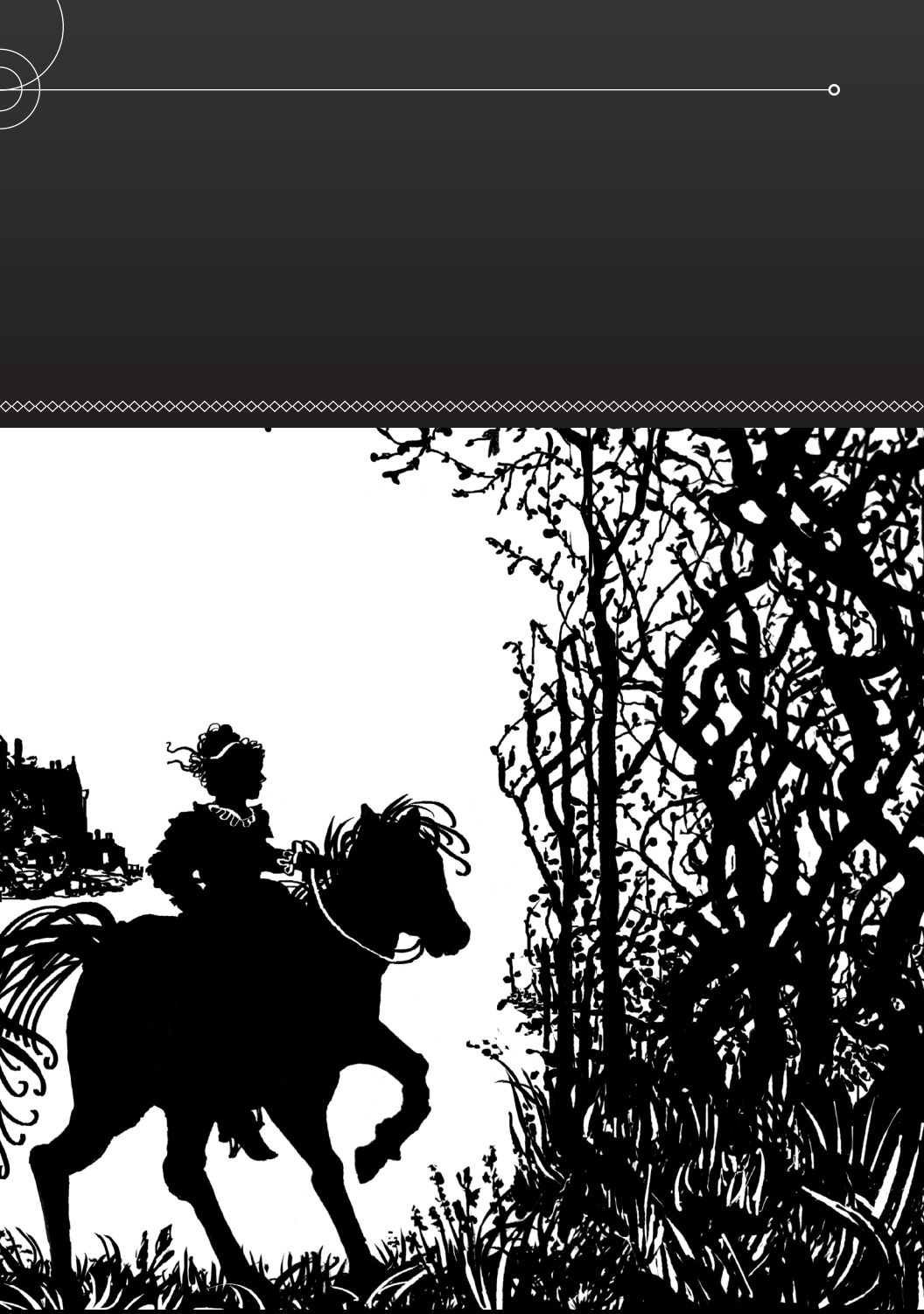
- Think of ways to avoid your obstacles through reconnaissance, subtlety, and fact-finding.
- Do some research, and ask around about your objectives.

Ambition

- Set goals, and use your meager means to take steps forward.
- Expect nothing. Earn your reputation.
- Keep things moving forward, and play to see what happens.

Character Creation





Creating a Character

Roll or Choose a Background

- First, roll or choose from the **Backgrounds** table below and note the page number. You will refer to that page for the next few steps.
- Choose a name from the available list, then record each of your character's starting items. See **Inventory** and **Inventory Slots** for how to record items.
- Roll on each of the included tables in the background. Record your character's items, skills, or abilities from each result. Some backgrounds may ask you to refer to the tables in the Marketplace (pg. 16) as well.

Attributes, Hit Protection, and Traits

- Roll for your character's **Attributes** and **Hit Protection**.
- Roll for the rest of your character's Traits (pg. 10), and then on the Bonds table (pg. 12).
- Finally, roll for your character's **Age** (2d20+10). If you are the youngest character, roll on the Omens table (pg. 14). The result should be read aloud to the other players. The Warden should incorporate Omens into the setting as they see fit.

Backgrounds

Backgrounds (d20)	
1 Aurifex (pg. 20)	11 Half Witch (pg. 40)
2 Barber-Surgeon (pg. 22)	12 Hexenbane (pg. 42)
3 Beast Handler (pg. 24)	13 Jongleur (pg. 44)
4 Bonekeeper (pg. 26)	14 Kettlewright (pg. 46)
5 Cutpurse (pg. 28)	15 Marchguard (pg. 48)
6 Fieldwarden (pg. 30)	16 Mountebank (pg. 50)
7 Fletchwind (pg. 32)	17 Outrider (pg. 52)
8 Foundling (pg. 34)	18 Prowler (pg. 54)
9 Fungal Forager (pg. 36)	19 Rill Runner (pg. 56)
10 Greenwise (pg. 38)	20 Scrivener (pg. 58)

Attributes

- Player Characters (PCs) have just three attributes: **Strength (STR)**, **Dexterity (DEX)**, and **Willpower (WIL)**.
- Roll 3d6 for each of your character's attributes, in order. You may then swap any two of the results.
- Attributes are not universal descriptors. A character with a low STR is not necessarily hopelessly weak; they can still attempt to lift a heavy door or survive a deadly fight! Their risk is simply higher.

Hit Protection

- Roll 1d6 to determine your PC's starting **Hit Protection (HP)**, which reflects their ability to avoid damage in combat. It does not indicate a character's health or fortitude, nor do they lose it for very long. (See Healing in the Core Rules (pg. 62).)
- If an attack takes a PC's HP exactly to 0, the player must reference the Scars table (pg. 66).

Inventory

- Characters have a total of ten inventory slots but can only carry four items comfortably without the help of bags, backpacks, horses, carts, etc.
- Each PC starts with a **Backpack** that can hold up to six slots of items or Fatigue (pg. 62). **Carts** (which must be pulled with both hands), **Horses**, or **Mules** can make a huge difference in how much a PC can bring with them on an adventure. **Hirelings** can also be paid to carry equipment.
- Inventory is abstract, dependent only on the fiction as adjudicated by the Warden. Anyone carrying a full inventory (i.e. filling all 10 slots) is reduced to 0 HP. A character cannot fill more than ten slots.

Inventory Slots

- Most items take up one slot, unless otherwise indicated.
- Petty items do not take up any slots. Bulky items take up two slots.
- A bag of coins worth less than 100gp is petty and does not occupy a slot.



Character Traits

Physique (d10)

1	Athletic	6	Scrawny
2	Brawny	7	Short
3	Flabby	8	Statuesque
4	Lanky	9	Stout
5	Rugged	10	Towering

Skin (d10)

1	Birthmarked	6	Soft
2	Marked	7	Tanned
3	Oily	8	Tattooed
4	Rosy	9	Weathered
5	Scarred	10	Webbed

Hair (d10)

1	Bald	6	Long
2	Braided	7	Luxurious
3	Curly	8	Oily
4	Filthy	9	Wavy
5	Frizzy	10	Wispy

Face (d10)

1	Bony	6	Perfect
2	Broken	7	Rakish
3	Chiseled	8	Sharp
4	Elongated	9	Square
5	Pale	10	Sunken

Character Traits

Speech (d10)

1	Blunt	6	Gravelly
2	Booming	7	Precise
3	Cryptic	8	Squeaky
4	Droning	9	Stuttering
5	Formal	10	Whispery

Clothing (d10)

1	Antique	6	Frayed
2	Bloody	7	Frumpy
3	Elegant	8	Livery
4	Filthy	9	Rancid
5	Foreign	10	Soiled

Virtue (d10)

1	Ambitious	6	Honorable
2	Cautious	7	Humble
3	Courageous	8	Merciful
4	Disciplined	9	Serene
5	Gregarious	10	Tolerant

Vice (d10)

1	Aggressive	6	Lazy
2	Bitter	7	Nervous
3	Craven	8	Rude
4	Deceitful	9	Vain
5	Greedy	10	Vengeful

Bonds

d20

Bonds

- 1 You inherited a single **Gem** (500gp, cold and brittle) from a long-dead relative. It arrived with a warning: squander your newfound riches, and a debt long thought forgotten would be called in.

- 2 A distant cousin left you a small inheritance. Take **20gp** and a **Strange Compass** (*petty*) that always points towards something deep in the Wood.

- 3 You carry a hand-drawn **Portrait** (*petty*) of a past love who disappeared into the Wood long ago. Somehow you know that they are still alive.

- 4 You found a **Tiny Crystal Prism** (*petty*) buried in the dirt. When held up to the light, it shows visions of an unknown location deep within the Wood. Sometimes you feel a presence looking back at you.

- 5 You once freed a Naiad from a choked stream. In return, it gave you some **Silver Moss** (*petty*). Swallow it near water, and the creature will come, once, to repay its debt.

- 6 You inherited an old **Journal**, bound in bark. Each evening, its pages are filled with the events of the day, crassly written from the journal's perspective. The writing is crude but accurate.

- 7 You protect a long-dormant family secret. Take one half of an **Ancient Key** (*petty*). They say that if joined with its twin, it opens a **Gate** through any door.

- 8 You received a **Letter** (*petty*) detailing incontrovertible proof that your true parentage is that of Fae nobility. The note also indicates a date and location where you are to meet the letter's author, deep in the Wood.

- 9 You owe a great debt to a member of the nobility and carry their **Signet Ring** (*petty*), which serves as proof of their protection as well as your obligation.

- 10 You consumed a **Mischievous Spirit** that wreaks havoc on your insides, demanding to be taken home, deep in the Wood. It occupies one slot but absorbs one Fatigue each day. It wants you alive (for now).

- 11 A roaming storyteller once spun you tales of great treasure hidden deep in the Wood. You thought it naught but fancy, till they gave you a **Rolled-up Map** (*petty*) marked with an X.

- 12 During your travels, you met a dying hunter who asked you to deliver a message to their loved ones. Take a **Letter** (*petty*), sealed with tree sap. It is addressed only to the **Lord of Winter**.

- 13 You found a wounded beast in the forest but chose to ignore it. You see it everywhere now, but only when you're alone. It looks sad but not angry. You cannot become *panicked* when acting alone.

- 14 You promised a childhood friend that you'd bring them back a rare gift, something unique in all the world. Take a **Bracelet** (*petty*) woven from twine and wildflowers.

- 15 You crossed a creature of the Wood, and it cursed you with a **Stone Heart**. With each passing month, the stone grows heavier by one slot. Until your debt is lifted, you cannot truly die.

- 16 You carved a **Whistle** (*petty*) from an **Oak Lord's** branch. Your act did not go unnoticed. You cannot seem to rid yourself of the whistle either.

- 17 The **Dawn Brigade** did your family a service, giving you a dried **Blood-Red Flower** (*petty*) as proof. When the flower turns white, it means the favor is owed.

- 18 An entertainer once visited your home, filling it with story and song. He left one day without a word, leaving behind only a **Miniature Lute**. Something rattles inside.

- 19 A white crow appeared to you in a dream, holding a twig in its mouth. You awoke the next morning with the **Twig** (*petty*) in your hand. You believe it brings you luck. It smells faintly of sulfur.

- 20 One of your ancestors wronged a **Moss Witch**, who cursed their bloodline. Your visage causes mirrors to shatter. You've noticed that the shards can sometimes reveal illusions.

Omens

d20

Omens

1 The once rich waters of a life-giving river have turned black and putrid, tainting the land and sickening those who drink from it. A village elder points to some recent desecration as the cause, but most do not heed their words.

2 It feels like winter has arrived too quickly this year, frost and snows making their appearance much earlier than expected. There is talk of a pattern to the frost found in windows, ponds, and cracks in the ground. It almost looks like a map.

3 A thick, unnatural fog has begun encroaching upon an ancient and holy grove. It is said to be the work of a great forest spirit, angered by nearby deforestation.

4 The night sky grows dimmer each evening, as if stars are disappearing one by one. Rumors of hellish creatures capturing farmers and pulling them into the Roots are spreading like wildfire. Village elders believe the two are connected.

5 The songbirds of the Wood have fallen eerily silent as of late. Hunters claim that a spectral figure has been spotted wandering the forest, gazing longingly at anyone it encounters.

6 Strange, tear-shaped stones have been found throughout the region, sparking a “gold rush” of sorts for jewelers and thieves alike. The locals believe they are the tears of the earth itself, weeping for a great tragedy yet to come.

7 Swarming pests gnaw away at the edges of dreams, and farmers speak of a loud buzzing sound emanating from deep within the Wood. They also say that the sound is getting closer.

8 There is a village known far and wide for its impressive “mother tree,” said to shelter the town’s secrets in its boughs. Recently it has begun bleeding red sap, worrying the elders.

9 The moon turns a deep crimson, bathing the night in an eerie, blood-red light. Some say it heralds a time of chaos and strife, as the boundaries between the Wood and the mortal realm grow thin.

10 Strange cracks have appeared in the night sky, revealing a swirling vortex of light and color. Some say that the divide between realms is at its weakest in centuries and fear what may emerge from the other side.

- 11** A night-blooming flower once thought extinct is sprouting up throughout the Wood. Its scent is intoxicating but also causes vivid nightmares.
- 12** Local livestock have grown increasingly agitated and unmanageable as of late. An old shepherd says it is due to an unsettling howl that emanates from the Wood each full moon.
- 13** Swarms of insects are fleeing from the Wood in droves, destroying any wooden structures they come across. The sound of their wings hum a familiar tune as they pass overhead, like a forgotten nursery rhyme.
- 14** Hunters talk of a curse that befalls any who kill any beast with a streak of white fur: soon after, they are found dead in their homes. Each day, there are fewer and fewer creatures to hunt.
- 15** Folks say that a faint laughter can be heard echoing out of wells all over the city, and that the echoes change to sobs at night.
- 16** The constellations have slowly started shifting in the night sky, forming unfamiliar patterns that have stargazers and sages perplexed. Even the animals seem disturbed.
- 17** An ancient tree at the heart of a sleepy village has suddenly withered and died, despite showing no signs of disease. After its trunk was cut, a bloody hand was found in its core.
- 18** Statues have been weeping blood for months on end, and the wombs of the village have lain barren since. A single child has been the only exception, hidden away by elders overcome with fear and dread.
- 19** Local fauna is behaving oddly, displaying heightened aggression or fleeing the area entirely. Hunters talk of a shadowy figure that roams the Wood, calling to the animals.
- 20** Border towns have become riotous in recent weeks after multiple claims of a red-robed figure appearing in their children's dreams, uttering the same warning: A fire is coming, and it will consume everything.

Marketplace

Armor	gp
Shield (+1 Armor)	10
Helmet (+1 Armor)	10
Gambeson (+1 Armor)	15
Brigandine (1 Armor, <i>bulky</i>)	20
Chainmail (2 Armor, <i>bulky</i>)	40
Plate (3 Armor, <i>bulky</i>)	60

Weapons	gp
Dagger, Cudgel, Sickle, Staff, etc. (d6 damage)	5
Spear, Sword, Mace, Axe, Flail, etc. (d8 damage)	10
Halberd, War Hammer, Long Sword, etc. (d10 damage, <i>bulky</i>)	20
Sling (d6 damage)	5
Bow (d6 damage, <i>bulky</i>)	20
Crossbow (d8 damage, <i>bulky</i>)	30

Hirelings (daily rate in gp)			
Alchemist	30	Navigator	10
Animal Handler	5	Sailor	5
Blacksmith	15	Scholar	20
Bodyguard	10	Tracker	5
Local Guide	5	Trapper	5
Lockpick	10	Veteran Bodyguard	20

Transport	gp
Cart (+4 slots, <i>bulky</i>)	30
Wagon (+8 slots, <i>slow</i>)	200
Horse (+4 slots)	75
Mule (+6 slots, <i>slow</i>)	30
Carriage Seat	5
Ship's Passage	10

Upkeep & Recovery	gp
Room & Board (per night)	10
Private Room & Board (fits 4)	35
Stable & Feed (per night)	5
Medical Healing	50
Rations (3 uses)	10
Animal Feed (3 uses, <i>bulky</i>)	5

Gear	gp
Air Bladder	5
Antitoxin	20
Bandages (3 uses)	30
Bathing Goods (Soap, Perfume, etc.)	5
Book	50
Caltrops	10
Card Deck	5
Chain (10ft)	10
Chalk (<i>petty</i>)	1
Chest	25
Chisel	5
Common Agents (Glue, Grease, etc.)	10
Common Tools (Hammer, Shovel, etc.)	10
Compass	75
Complex Instruments (Bagpipes, Fiddle, etc.)	50
Containers (Sack, Waterskin, etc.)	10
Cooking Gear (Pots, Utensils, etc.)	10
Costume Gear (Face Paint, Disguise)	15
Dowsing Rod	15
Expeditionary Gear (Climbing Spikes, Pulley, etc.)	10
Fire Oil	10
Fishing Rod	10
Games (Cards, Dice, etc.)	10
Gloves (<i>petty</i>)	20
Grappling Hook	25
Lantern	10
Mirror	5
Net	10
Oil Can (6 uses)	10
Outdoor Comfort (Blanket, Hammock, etc.)	10
Parchment (3 uses)	10
Pole (10ft)	5
Repellent (Wolfsbane, Mugwort, etc.)	10
Rope (25ft)	5
Sedative	30
Sewing Kit	20
Simple Instruments (Pipes, Lute, etc.)	10
Smoking Pipe (<i>petty</i>)	15
Specialized Tools (Ink, etc.)	20
Spiked Boots	15
Spyglass	40
Tent (fits 2, <i>bulky</i>)	20
Thieving Tools (Lockpick, Metal File, etc.)	25
Torch (3 uses)	5
Trap (d6 STR damage)	35
Whistle (<i>petty</i>)	15
Wilderness Clothes (Poncho, Cloak, etc.) (<i>petty</i>)	15

Backgrounds



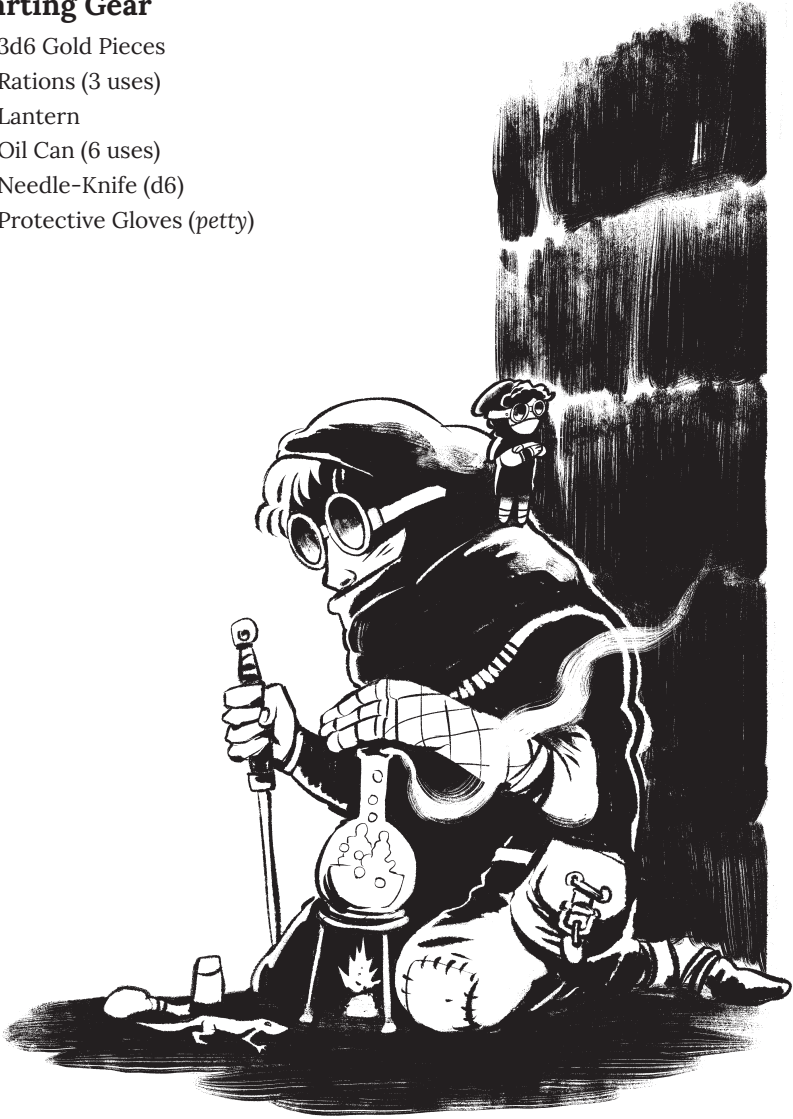


Aurifex

You are an artisan of the arcane, a smith of subtle forces. In the crucible of your workshop, the laws that govern this world are warped to suit your needs.

Starting Gear

- 3d6 Gold Pieces
- Rations (3 uses)
- Lantern
- Oil Can (6 uses)
- Needle-Knife (d6)
- Protective Gloves (petty)



Names: Hestia, Basil, Rune, Prism, Ember, Quintess, Aludel, Mordant, Salaman, Jazia

d6

What experiment went horribly wrong?

- 1 There was an explosion, and you lost your sense of smell. Well, almost: you can sniff out gold as a pig does truffles. Take a **Tin of Snuff** (6 uses) to dampen the impact. Use it every day or become *deprived*.

- 2 You dematerialized a beloved pet. Now it follows you around, invisible but always present. Although it cannot interact with the physical realm, you are able to share its sense. (Add a **Fatigue each time**.) It follows basic commands.

- 3 You were exposed to a long-acting truth serum whose effects have yet to wear off. The disorder has its advantages: you cannot repeat lies you've heard, either.

- 4 You were adept at creating *fake* gold, which is almost as good. Eventually, your ruse was discovered, and you had to make a hasty retreat. Take a heavy **Metal Ingot** and **Gold Powder** (3 uses).

- 5 Your alchemical recipe worked, but a rival stole the blueprint before your claims could be proven. Take a prototype **Blunderbuss** (d12, *blast*, *bulky*) that takes one round to reload, and a taste for revenge.

- 6 Ridiculed for discovering how to turn gold into lead, you were a laughing stock. Take a bottle of **Universal Solvent** (2 uses) that dissolves anything it touches into its constituent parts.

d6

What alchemical marvel is the product of your latest ingenuity?

- 1 **Pyrophoric Gel** A sticky green fluid that catches fire when exposed to air, then burns for 8 hours. Cannot be extinguished (1 use).

- 2 **Blast Sphere** A head-sized iron ball filled with explosive powder that explodes on impact (d12, *blast*, *bulky*, 1 use).

- 3 **Aqua Vita** Purifies any liquid, converting it to pure water. Drinking it cures 1d6 STR (1 use).

- 4 **Mimic Stone** Records a short phrase that can later be played back.

- 5 **Spark Dust** Ignites easily and quickly. Useful for starting a fire or as an incendiary device (3 uses).

- 6 **Homunculus** A miniature clay replica of yourself that follows your every command. It hates being enthralled to you and complains bitterly whenever possible. Any damage done to the homunculus is also done to you. 3 HP, 4 STR, 13 DEX, 5 WIL

Barber-Surgeon

You walk the line between healer and harrower, knowing the frailty of the flesh but also the secrets that lie within. With the right tools, life and death are merely words.

Starting Gear

- 3d6 Gold Pieces
- Rations (3 uses)
- Torch (3 uses)
- Amputation Knife (d6)
- Bandages (3 uses)
- Leech (restores 1 STR, 3 uses)
- Stained Medical Finery (*petty*)



Names: Wilmot, Patch, Lancet, Sawbones, Theo, Cutwell, Humor, Landsford, Goodeye, Johanna

d6

How have you “improved” yourself?

1 You have a replacement **eye** that can magnify objects, act as a telescope, and provide minimal night vision. You cannot wear anything metal on your head, and strong magnets make you *deprived*.

2 One **foot** is mostly metal (kick, d6), and you treat *some* Tough Terrain as Easy. Carry an **Oil Can** (6 uses). Without a daily application, you are *deprived* and noisy.

3 One of your fingers has been swapped, the bone replaced by gold and iron. Take a **Hook** and a **Screwdriver** that can attach to the fingertip.

4 Both **ears** have been surgically enhanced, tripling your hearing. You can focus on a specific sound, such as a conversation, at a great distance. You wear an ear flap to protect against sudden loud noises (WIL save to avoid temporary paralysis).

5 Your **chest** is lined with alchemical sigils, toughening the skin (1 Armor). Wearing other metallic armor nullifies the effect.

6 One **arm** is fully metal and comes off at the shoulder. It can be used as a weapon (d8, *bulky* when not attached) and can move independently if you are within sight of it.

d6

What rare tool is essential to your work?

1 **Regrowth Salve** Regrows a body part over the course of a day (1 use).

2 **Graftgrub** A small worm that can fuse inanimate objects with parts of the body (1 use).

3 **Woundwax** Heals wounds from fire or chemicals (restoring full STR) but nothing else (2 uses).

4 **Quicksilver** A stimulant. Go first in combat, and automatically pass any WIL saves for one hour. *Addictive*: Save STR or become *deprived* after 24 hours without it (4 uses).

5 **Pneuma Pump** Portable iron lungs (*bulky*). Enables life-saving surgery or underwater breathing.

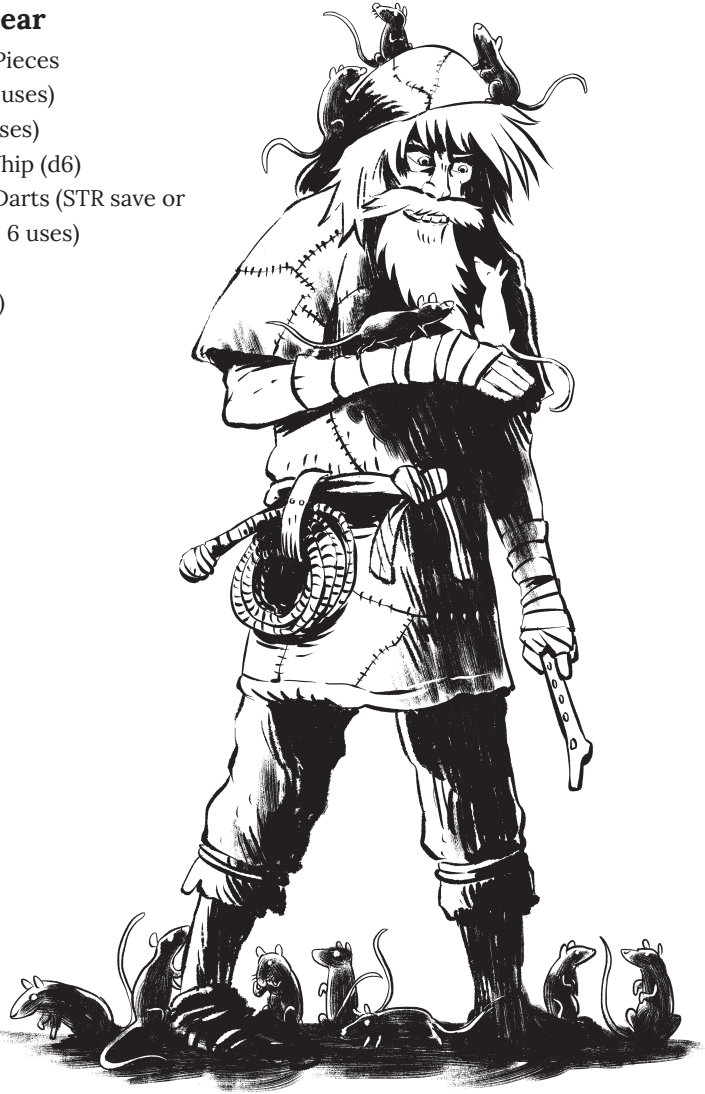
6 **Lodestone** Draws out dangerous elements from the body, and acts as a powerful magnetic force.

Beast Handler

You alone can walk among the creatures of the wild, fearless and in control. You share a connection with animals that others can only dream of...so long as you don't become their snack.

Starting Gear

- 3d6 Gold Pieces
- Rations (3 uses)
- Torch (3 uses)
- Leather Whip (d6)
- Soporific Darts (STR save or fall asleep, 6 uses)
- Lure
- Rope (25ft)



Names: Amara, Wulf, Mireille, Soren, Freki, Aster, Gerrik, Boreas, Veda, Matheus

d6

What creature is your specialty?

1 **Arachnids**

Take a **Quick-Flame Rod** and an **Oil Can** (6 uses). It can destroy a large spider nest in seconds.

2 **Felines**

Take a sack of **Whiskerwort**. Its odor can calm and control even the largest of cats.

3 **Canines**

Take a wreath of **Wolfsbane** and a **Large Net**. Also effective against werewolves!

4 **Birds**

Take a **Warble-Whistle** (3 charges). It can imitate any bird call and can even be used to send simple messages. **Recharge:** Feed a baby bird as its mother would, then blow.

5 **Rodents**

Take a **Windpipe** that emits a high-pitched sound that only rodents can hear. So long as you play, they will follow, even to their deaths.

6 **Serpents**

Take a **Warming Stone** that generates an irresistible heat and a vial of **Antitoxin** (2 uses).

d6

What do creatures of the wild understand that your kind do not?

1

There is far more to the world than meets the eye. With quiet concentration, you can borrow the senses of a nearby creature of your **specialty**.

2

The behavior of beasts is a language in itself. When observing beasts of your **specialty**, you gain insight into weather patterns and impending disasters.

3

The pulse of the hunt is a powerful impulse. You have a sense for when predators, even those **not of your specialty**, are near.

4

You know some lands intimately. Your chance of becoming lost in a terrain dominated by the beasts of your **specialty** is reduced by one step (e.g. 4-in-6 becomes 3-in-6).

5

Nature's symphony can be heard if you attune to its rhythm. When surrounded by creatures of your **specialty**, they can alert you to approaching danger before it arrives.

6

Survival is about adaptability. Once per day, you may take on a simple feature from a creature of your **specialty** (webbed fingers, night vision, etc.). Add a **Fatigue** each time.

Bonekeeper

You are a shepherd to the departed. You listen to the final whispers of the dead as they descend into the cold, unyielding earth. You know that to fully celebrate the gift of life, we must honor its finale as well.

Starting Gear

- 3d6 Gold Pieces
- Rations (3 uses)
- Lantern
- Oil Can (6 uses)
- Stake (d6)
- Chains (10ft)



Names: Rook, Ebon, Moro, Yew, Pall, Leth, Lenore, Barnaby, Vesper, Leder

d6

What did you take from the dead?

- 1 A **Crow-Shaped Amulet**. You can ask a question of the dead but must add a **Fatigue** each time.

- 2 A **mortal wound** from a freed *revenant*. You were healed, but the disfigurement has made you a pariah. You require neither air nor sustenance but are still subject to pain and death. Trapped between worlds, the dead see you as one of their own.

- 3 A **Blood Pail** (*bulky*) from a local death-cult. Empty it to raise a servant built from whatever is buried below, with 6 HP, 1 Armor, 13 STR, 11 DEX, 4 WIL, and shard fists (d8+d8). Only one servant can be raised at a time. If destroyed, you permanently lose 1d4 STR. **Recharge**: Fill with the blood of a dying warrior.

- 4 A **Burial Wagon** (+6 slots) from your last job. It came with a stubborn old **Donkey** (+4 slots, only +2 slots if pulling wagon, *slow*).

- 5 The *Detect Magic* **Spellbook**, stolen from an ancient library. Your family worked in service to an obscure underworld deity, but you lost your faith. Though exiled, you continue to serve, even as an apostate.

Detect Magic: You can see or hear nearby magical auras. Becomes warm to the touch when magic is used nearby.

- 6 A **Plague Doctor's Mask**, after its owner succumbed to the disease that wiped out everyone you once knew. They should have kept it on.

d6

What tool was invaluable in your work?

- 1 **Manacles** Though old, it's still effective even against the very strong. You don't have the key.

- 2 **Sponge** Supposedly made from the remains of a rare sea creature. It never seems to dry out.

- 3 **Pulley** Great for moving gravestones, rocks, or even bodies.

- 4 **Incense** Perfect for rituals or to keep the flies at bay. Cools the blood.

- 5 **Crowbar** d6 damage. Sometimes you just need to get the damn thing open!

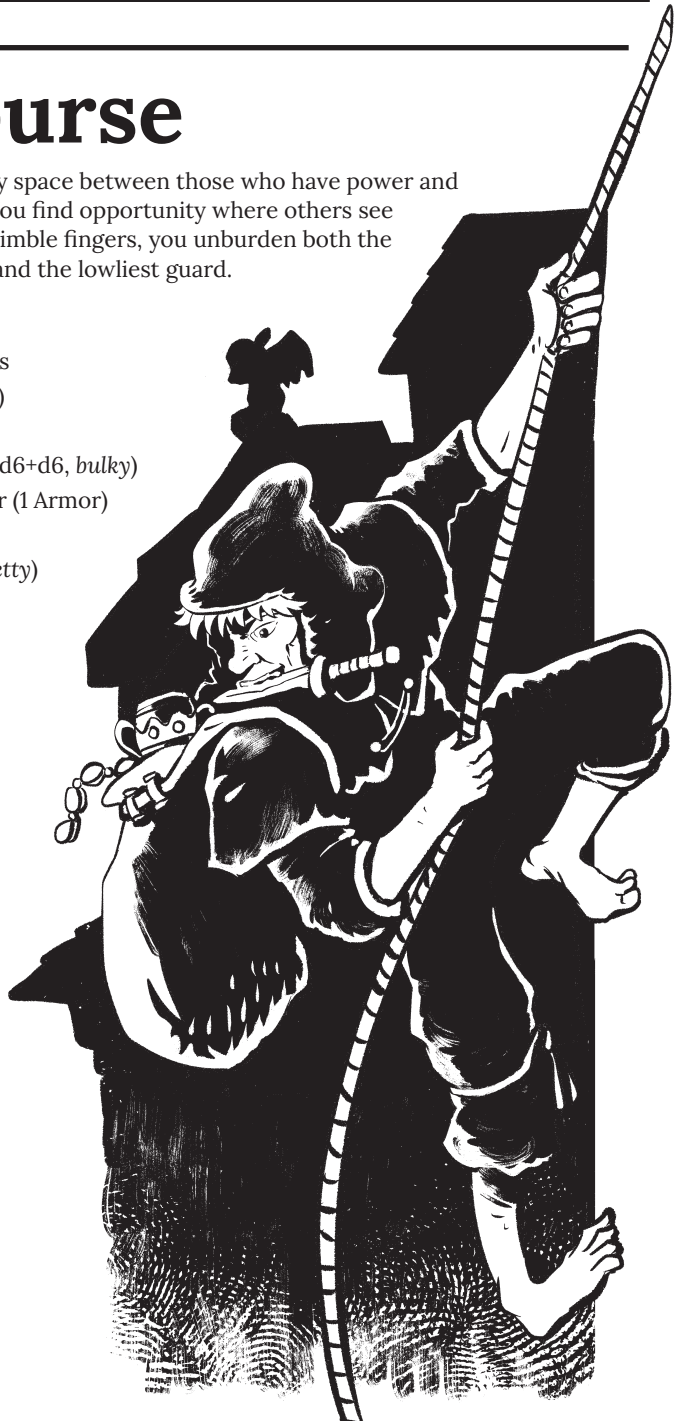
- 6 **Repellent** Powerful stuff. Its faded label makes it unclear what it is actually meant to repel, though. Perhaps everything. 3 uses.

Cutpurse

You live in the grey space between those who have power and those who don't. You find opportunity where others see only chaos. With nimble fingers, you unburden both the richest merchant and the lowliest guard.

Starting Gear

- 3d6 Gold Pieces
- Rations (3 uses)
- Torch (3 uses)
- Twin Daggers (d6+d6, *bulky*)
- Padded Leather (1 Armor)
- Lockpicks
- Black Outfit (*petty*)



Names: Arlo, Lyra, Eamon, Salina, Elara, Freya, Bull, Sparrow, Ivy, Silas

d6

What was your last big job?

- 1 A noble's summer home. The place was full of fancy wine (+20gp) but not much else. Take **Fence Cutters**.
- 2 A bank. (You were caught.) You bear a brand only visible by firelight, and anyone who sees the mark can ask you for a beer. Take **Retractable Wires**.
- 3 A guild warehouse. Take a **Ladder** (bulky, 10ft) and **Blinding Powder** (1 use).
- 4 Moneylender. Someone beat you to the job but left behind a **Scroll of Arcane Eye** (petty).
Arcane Eye: You can see through a magical floating eyeball that flies around at your command.
- 5 Constable's quarters. You escaped but left some friends behind. Take **Strong Silk Rope** and a queasy feeling.
- 6 A university. You were seen but not pursued. You still don't know why. Take **Smoke Pellets** (3 uses).

d6

What helps you steal?

- 1 **Catring** 2 charges. Climb up walls and fall safely. **Recharge:** Place the ring on a stray cat's tail.
- 2 **Gildfinger** 1 charge. A finger glove that mimics any mundane key. **Recharge:** Bundle it with at least 100gp for a night.
- 3 **Glimpse Glass** 3 uses. A monocle that lets you see through walls or other obstructions. It shatters after the last use.
- 4 **Sweetwhistle** 1 charge. Listeners hear a soft, familiar voice in the distance that they cannot resist following. **Recharge:** Lose a dear memory. (Describe it.)
- 5 **Vagrant's Veil** 1 charge. Wear it to blend seamlessly into crowds, appearing as a simple pauper. **Recharge:** Donate all the day's winnings to the poor. Petty.
- 6 **Reverse Teetotum** 1 use. When spun, time skips backwards 30 seconds. Everyone remembers what happened.

Fieldwarden

Protectors of the harvest, defense against pests, thieves, and beasts. A position of great honor, while it lasts: many guardians do not live out their natural lives.

Roll a second time on the **Bonds** table.

Starting Gear

- 3d6 Gold Pieces
- Rations (3 uses)
- Torch (3 uses)
- Brigandine (1 Armor, *bulky*)
- Sling (d6)
- Hand Axe (d6)
- Repellent (pick the type, 3 uses)



Names: Seed, Thresh, Dibber, Sow, Stalk, Harrow, Cobb, Flax, Briar, Rye

d6

What got the better of you?

- 1 A voracious swarm of pests that swallowed crops and animals alike. With nothing to defend, you left. Take **Gale Seed Extract** (3 uses). Ingesting it lets you sprint with a speed four times your regular rate. Afterward you add two **Fatigue**.
- 2 A crop spirit, angered by a poor tithing. The fires consumed nearly everything, and afterward you were able to gather a pouch of **Fireseeds** (d8, *blast*, 4 uses).
- 3 An antlered, toothy demon that nearly ended you. Take a **blood-stained bone knife** (d6). On *Critical Damage*, its next attack becomes *enhanced* from contact with blood.
- 4 The Withering, a type of stem rot from the Roots. Take a **Diseased Crop** (6 uses) that decays any plant it touches.
- 5 Wolves, or so you thought. You are now a **Werewolf** [8 HP, 15 STR, 14 DEX, claws (d6+d6), bite (d8)]. Your WIL remains the same. You can turn at will (once per day) but must make a WIL save to revert. Anyone left alive from your attacks must make a WIL save to avoid infection.
- 6 Crop thieves. Not all of them survived, but you were outnumbered. Start with +d4 HP and a **Cusped Falchion** (d8).

d6

What tool saved your life?

- 1 **Bloodvine Whip** d8 damage. On **Critical Damage**, it drains the target's blood, granting the weapon's next attack the *blast* quality.
- 2 **Clatter Keeper** A hand-cranked device that emits a loud noise, frightening away most creatures.
- 3 **Sun Stick** Provides ample warmth and light for up to one hour (1 use). **Recharge:** Leave in heavy sunlight for a full day.
- 4 **Root Tether** When thrown, binds a creature as large as a wolf to the soil for a short time.
- 5 **Greenwhistle** A small flute that calms plants, making passage through areas heavy with plant life a bit easier.
- 6 **Everbloom Band** A circlet adorned with flowers that never wilt. On **Critical Damage**, the flowers dissolve into dust, but you act as if your save succeeded (STR loss still occurs).

Fletcherwind

You strike from afar, but that does not make you a coward. You are a musician, the song of your bowstring nought but a warning, singing the silent promise of a quick death.

Starting Gear

- 3d6 Gold Pieces
- Rations (3 uses)
- Torch (3 uses)
- Bow (see table)
- Serrated Knife (d6)
- Boiled Leather (1 Armor)
- Heartroot Salve (restores 1d4 STR, 1 use)



Names: Flint, Feather, Crier, Thunder, Falcon, Pluck, Needle, Warsong, Hawk, Cai

d6

How did you earn your bow?

- 1 **War.** If you are first to attack, your bow gains the *blast* property for the first round.
- 2 **Falconry.** You keep a falcon [3 hp, 5 STR, 16 DEX, 4 WIL, claws (d6+d6), bite (d8)]. It only eats live game.
- 3 **Hunting.** When taking the Supply (pg. 79) action, your ability to secure **Rations** increases by **one step** (e.g. 1d4 becomes 1d6).
- 4 **Tournaments.** Attacks with your bow are *enhanced* if the target is immobile.
- 5 **Training.** If you are the first to attack, melee attacks against you are *impaired* until you take STR damage.
- 6 **Scouting.** When taking the Travel (pg. 79) action, your presence decreases the chance of getting lost by one step (e.g. 4-in-6 becomes 3-in-6).

d6

What kind of wood is your bow made from?

- 1 **Western Yew** (d6, *bulky*). Can be wielded as a blunt weapon (d6). Noisy.
- 2 **Sessile Oak** (d8, *bulky*). Slams into targets. On **Critical Damage**, something is torn off.
- 3 **Stone Pine** (d6, *bulky*). Produces one use of **Sticky Sap** per day. The sap is highly explosive.
- 4 **White Ash** (d6, *bulky*). Can be used in place of a shield in melee combat (+1 Armor).
- 5 **Striped Bamboo** (d6). Collapsible, it only requires one slot (but still requires both hands).
- 6 **Wych Elm** (d6, *bulky*). Protects the bearer from poisons and toxins, so long as they are holding it.

Foundling

An odd birthmark, a strange smell: somehow, the touch of elsewhere still lingers. Wherever you are, you have trouble fitting in. Roll on the Omens table (even if you're not the youngest player), but keep the results private for now.

Starting Gear

- 3d6 Gold Pieces
- Rations (3 uses)
- Torch (3 uses)
- Salt Pouch
- Heirloom Amulet (petty, glows in the presence of magic)
- Sling (d6)
- Dagger (d6)



Names: Faunus, Snowdrop, Wisp, Silverdew, Brim, Solstice, Steeleye, Artea, Gossamer, Hazel

d6

Who took you in?

- 1 An old hunter. You were both quite happy, until it all ended. Take a **Weathered Longbow** (d8, bulky) and a **Leather Jerkin** (1 Armor).
- 2 A wizened apothecary, who taught you the healing arts but maintained a clinical detachment. Take a **Healing Unguent** (restores d4 STR, 1 use).
- 3 A druid, who taught you the language of trees. When it came time to leave, you took with you only a **Gnarled Staff** (d8) and left a promise that one day you would return.
- 4 A gruff blacksmith from a sleepy river town. You were always kept at arm's length. Now the forge is cold, and you've moved on. Take a **Smith's Apron** (petty) and a set of oft-mended **Chain Mail** (2 Armor, bulky).
- 5 A troupe of traveling entertainers. For a time, they were like family to you. One day you woke up and they were gone with no explanation. Take a **Storybook**, a **Dagger** (d6), and some burning questions.
- 6 The monks of a secluded forest monastery. When their rules became too strict, you snuck away. Take a **Monk's Habit** (warm, petty) and a **Spellbook of Control Plants**.
Control Plants: *Nearby plants and trees obey you and gain the ability to move at a slow pace. Leaves grow along the spine, and it smells faintly of decay.*

d6

What keeps away bad tidings?

- 1 **Pipeweed** Your good luck charm. Conversations tend to flow more easily after a smoke (6 uses).
- 2 **Stink Jar** Shattering this jar releases an odor so foul all nearby must make a STR save or immediately vomit (1 use).
- 3 **Ivy Worm** A green worm often mistaken for a weed. Swallowed whole, it absorbs any toxins or rot in the body before exiting through the usual way.
- 4 **Dream Stone** A smooth blue stone that helps recall dreams more clearly. Overuse can cause dream-addiction.
- 5 **Drowning Rod** A finger-sized wooden stick that doubles in size each time it is fully submerged in water. It doesn't shrink back down.
- 6 **Rabbit's Foot** You were wearing it when they found you. They say it is the foot of she who left you and that it protects you from witch magic (petty).

Fungal Forager

You follow the whisperings of the deep earth, the rhythmic pulse of the mycelium forest that grows beneath the surface. The dark holds no terror for you. Also, you really love mushrooms.

Starting Gear

- 3d6 Gold Pieces
- Rations (3 uses)
- Sharpened Trowel (d6)
- Candle Helmet (+1 Armor, dim, 6 uses)
- Rope (25ft)
- Metal Pail



Names: Unther, Woozy, Hilda, Current, Leif, Ratan, Mourella, Lal, Per, Madrigal

d6

What strange fungus did you discover?

- 1 **Shrieking Trumpet.** When exposed to light, it screams so loudly that all nearby attacks (including your own) are *impaired* (2 uses).
- 2 **Torch Fungus.** When crushed, it creates a cold blue light for a short while. (2 uses).
- 3 **Murderous Truffle.** Pungent, highly toxic, and very rare (worth 50gp to assassins). Illegal pretty much everywhere (1 use).
- 4 **Hellcap.** Exposure to its aroma causes intense nausea, even vomiting. Either way, it clears the room. Bottled (1 use).
- 5 **Sproutcup.** Ingest to shrink down to the size of a mouse. (Your belongings stay the same size.) You return to normal size within the hour, often in fits and starts (1 use).
- 6 **Rootflower.** A white fungus found only on corpses deep underground. Ingest to restore d6 WIL. You will dream of the dead and their stories (1 use).

d6

What keeps you sane, even in utter darkness?

- 1 **Glowsnail** Casts a soft, bioluminescent light. Feeds on one ration every two days.
- 2 **Silk Moth Shawl** A weatherproof blanket, it can also douse a fire without being damaged.
- 3 **Milkflower** A gentle stimulant. Chewing it makes you immune to panic for the next hour (3 uses).
- 4 **Luxcompass** Hums softly as it moves closer to the Sun. Eventually the noise becomes unbearably loud.
- 5 **Sloth-Tarp** A tough and weatherproof fabric, useful for hanging off trees. When inside, you have +1 Armor.
- 6 **Miner's Grease** Great for dislodging a gem, tool, or limb from a tight crack. Highly explosive (3 uses).

Greenwise

You delve deep into the Wood, prying its secrets from between rough boughs and whispering leaves. To this verdant kingdom, you are no mere scholar but its confidant as well.

Starting Gear

- 3d6 Gold Pieces
- Rations (3 uses)
- Torch (3 uses)
- Iron Pot
- Root Knife (d6)
- Healing Salve (restores 1d4 STR, 1 use)
- Twine Bauble (petty, Ward once per day)

Ward: A silver circle 50ft across appears on the ground. Choose one species that cannot cross it.



Names: Gunther, Moss, Fern, Lichen, Root, Willow, Sage, Yarrow, Rowan, Ash

d6

How has the Wood failed you?

- 1 An ill-tempered forest spirit cursed you for stealing, marking you as an enemy of their kind. Take a **Bezoar Stone**. Ingesting it cures any poison (1 use, unless retrieved).
- 2 A close friend disappeared into the forest. Now you see their face in any tea you brew. Take a **Soporific Concoction** (3 uses).
- 3 You were poisoned, losing your sense of taste and smell. You can now withstand noxious fumes and always carry **Antitoxin** (2 uses).
- 4 Your radical experiments turned your skin green, and you now gain nourishment as a plant. You don't need **rations**, but a day without sufficient sunlight and water leaves you *deprived*.
- 5 Your impressive corpseflower won a local contest, then promptly killed a judge. You fled, but not without the **Prize Money (100gp)** and a warrant for your arrest.
- 6 You created a restorative tincture that also causes accidental infertility. Take a **Healing Potion** that completely restores STR. Only you know of its unintended side-effects.

d6

What keeps you safe while in the Wood?

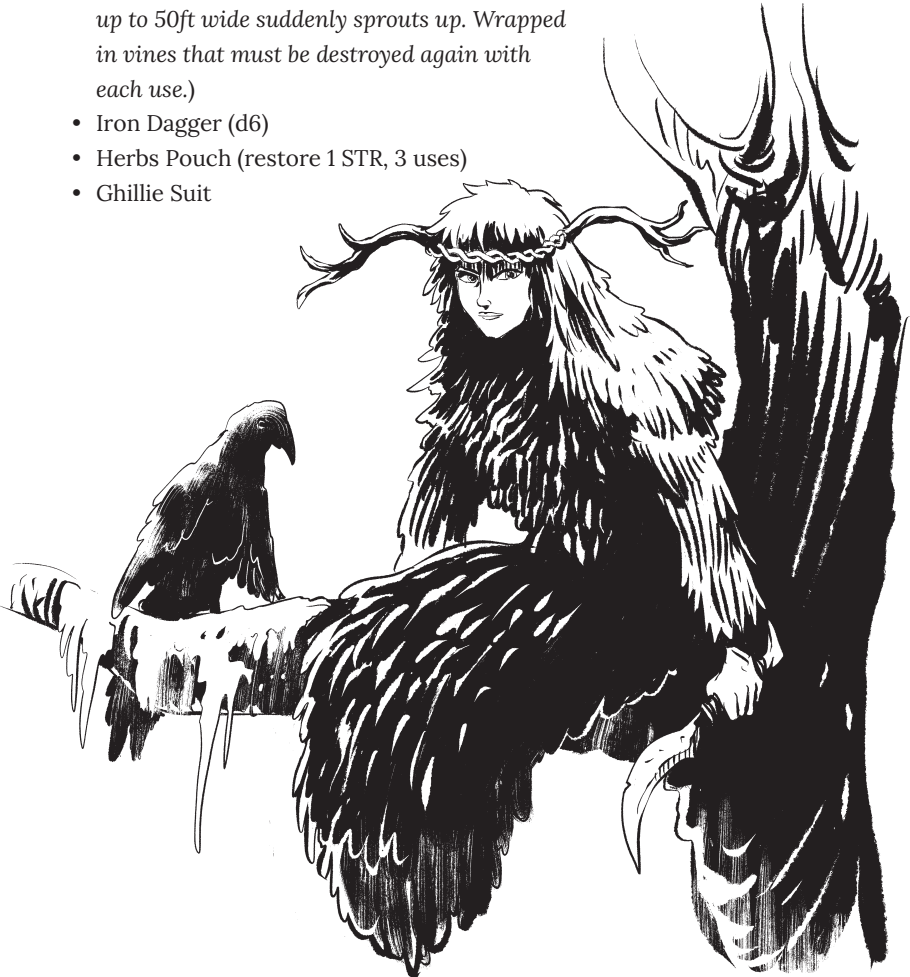
- 1 **Amadou** A vermillion fungus that catches fire quite easily (3 uses).
- 2 **Delphinium** Breathe water for up to one hour (1 use, but can be divided into fractional doses).
- 3 **Tacky Stalk** A woody reed that hardens into a permanent adhesive when chewed (2 uses).
- 4 **Wisp Lantern** Caged in wrought iron, provides a dim light so long as the wisp is able to feed on nearby pain and fear.
- 5 **Seed Bomb** A canvas sack filled with seeds that explode on impact. d6 damage (*blast*, 3 uses).
- 6 **Briarvine** Entangles any creature up to horse size (STR to break free, reusable).

Half Witch

Born of both the mortal world and the unseen, you are an enigma to some and feared by many. Yours is the tale of what happens when two worlds collide.

Starting Gear

- 3d6 Gold Pieces
- Rations (3 uses)
- Torch (3 uses)
- Spellbook (**Thicket**: A thicket of trees and dense brush up to 50ft wide suddenly sprouts up. Wrapped in vines that must be destroyed again with each use.)
- Iron Dagger (d6)
- Herbs Pouch (restore 1 STR, 3 uses)
- Ghillie Suit



Names: Solena, Veles, Bryn, Sabine, Razvan, Rowena, Galen, Nyx, Vex, Iwan

d6

What did you bring back from the Unseelie court?

- 1 A **Black Rose Fiddle** (*bulky*). Its music causes intense sadness and immobility in nearby mortals. (Others are merely fascinated.) You don't know how to play.
- 2 **Paper Legs**. You are extremely light and can fall a few stories without getting hurt. Try to avoid tearing them or getting them wet.
- 3 A **Living Nightmare** that dwells within you but manifests whenever you are in danger. It has your same Attributes and HP and attacks with claws (d8+d8). It disappears on **Critical Damage** (take 1d4 WIL damage), re-appearing again on the next full moon.
- 4 A **Raven Familiar** [8 HP, 3 STR, 11 DEX, 13 WIL, beak (d6)]. It speaks as an intelligent being and is entirely devoted to you.
- 5 A **Briar Thorn**. It can pierce any organic material (quite painfully) but when removed leaves no trace of the intrusion.
- 6 A Fae creature's **True Name**. Use it to summon its owner for an act of great service, but only once. It could also fetch a hefty price, from the right buyer.

d6

What concoction do you carry, and what rare ingredients did you gather to make it?

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------|--|
| 1 | Rebirth Ash | Remnants of a bark spirit. Sprinkle to reignite a fire that has died or return to life a creature that has died only moments before (3 uses). |
| 2 | Glamour Feather | Plume of a firebird. Can make any creature appear convincingly as someone (or something) else (1 use). |
| 3 | Hawthorn Seed | An acorn from the other side, gathered on the spring equinox. When planted, it sprouts a luxurious shelter, collapsing at moonrise the next day (1 use). |
| 4 | Stonetree Sap | Sap obtained in exchange for blood. Hardens when rubbed on any surface (+1 Armor, 3 uses). |
| 5 | Nightdust Powder | Made from the ritual burning of six owls. When tossed in the air, day turns to night for a short while (2 uses). |
| 6 | Hex Stone | Gathered from a river that flows from the other side. Removed from its iron tin, it can absorb the effects of an active magical effect. If destroyed, the magic is released (1 use). |

Hexenbane

You are a mere digit on the unerring hand of justice. You go where others fear to tread, unyielding and unbroken.

Starting Gear

- 3d6 Gold Pieces
- Rations (3 uses)
- Torch (3 uses)
- Vestments of the Order (*petty*)
- Blessed Tinctures
- Silver Knife (d6)
- Crossbow (d8, *bulky*)



Names: Percival, Felix, Isolde, Wolfram, Aldric, Eira, Oswin, Ivor, Brunhilda, Beatrix

d6

To which order do you belong?

- 1 **Order of the Crossroads.** Take a **Pocket Leyfinder**. It points to nearby ley lines and other sources of arcane power. If you lose it, the punishment is death.
- 2 **Order of the Bleeding Star.** Take a **Star-Iron Mace** (d8). It shines faintly in darkness and becomes very hot in the presence of witchcraft.
- 3 **Order of the Glass Sigil.** Take a **Short Sword** (d8) and **Chainmail** (2 Armor, bulky). You have contacts in most towns (the more rural, the better) willing to provide aid, food, or even weapons.
- 4 **Order of the Blank Eye.** Take a **Voidglass Shard**. Peer through it to see invisible marks, creatures, and other magical effects. Lose the use of your eye for an hour afterwards (you are *deprived*).
- 5 **Order of Canaas.** Once per day, you can change into a wolf. Take a **Quicksilver Chain**. Without it, you are unable to shift back.
- 6 **Order of the Silent Veil.** Take a **Quell Stone** (2 uses) wrapped in burlap. Extinguishes any nearby flames once exposed to air.

d6

What was your vow?

- 1 **Honesty** Choose a **weapon type** (blunt, blade, etc). Attacks against you of this type are *impaired*. If your vow is broken, you lose d4 WIL.
- 2 **Poverty** You carry the *Disassemble* **Spellbook**. Only you can use it. If your vow is broken, it explodes (d12 STR damage).
Disassemble: *Any of your body parts may be detached and reattached at will, without causing pain or damage. You can still control them. Regenerates any torn or defaced pages.*
- 3 **Selflessness** You are immune to magical effects such as *charm*, *hatred*, *frenzy*, and so on. If you break this vow, you lose d6 WIL.
- 4 **Mercy** Choose a **weapon type** (blunt, blade, etc). Attacks with this weapon are *enhanced*. If your vow is broken, you can never use that weapon type again.
- 5 **Charity** Once per day, you can shrug off a **Fatigue**. If your vow is ever broken, you permanently lose one inventory slot.
- 6 **Valor** The first time you inflict **Critical Damage**, you receive +d4 HP, returning to the previous limit at the end of combat. If your vow is broken, you die.

Jongleur

What inspires the soul more than song, words, and spectacle? Why practice for years to master the arcane when you've already got real magic inside?

Starting Gear

- 3d6 Gold Pieces
- Rations (3 uses)
- Torch (3 uses)
- Costume
- Simple Instrument (Pipes, Lute, etc.)
- Lucky Jerkin (+1 Armor)
- Sling (d6)



Names: Jax, Selene, Baladria, Ada, Mort, Saylor, Tripp, Lantos, Echo, Jubilo

d6

What happened at your final performance?

- 1 Despite your training in the deadly arts, an actor died and you were blamed. Take a light-weight **Rapier** (d6) and a false identity.

The crowd loved your catchy tune about a noble and his romantic failings. Take the *Read Mind* **Spellbook** and a warrant for your arrest.

- 2 **Read Mind:** *You can hear the surface thoughts of nearby creatures. Long-term possession can cause the reader to mistake the thoughts of others as their own.*

- 3 Your debut composition reduced the audience to a gibbering mess, murmuring of bright creatures descending from the night sky. Later you noticed that the notes resembled stellar constellations. Take a **Book on Astronomy** and a lot of questions.

- 4 You mocked a forgotten trickster god and were cursed for it. You speak only in perfect rhyme. Ironically, this has only made you more popular among your peers. Take a **Thesaurus** (20gp). Without it, you are *deprived*.

- 5 You were scarred in an on-stage accident. The crowd cheered, thinking it was part of the act. Take well-worn **Stage Mail** (1 Armor), a memorable scar, and a fear of applause.

- 6 Your respectable puppeteering skills were matched only by your mimicry. You were so good you were branded a witch (literally) and banished. Take an **Uncanny Hand-Puppet** and a **Rabbit Skull** (*petty*) that protects against charms.

d6

What trinket were you unable to leave behind?

- 1 **False Cuffs** Comfortable, realistic-looking cuffs. Only you know the trick to get out of them.

- 2 **Pocket Theatre** A set of small puppets and a folding stage. Good for quick distractions.

- 3 **Ghost Violin** A dark-gray violin that plays a haunting tune, mirrored by an invisible, distant twin.

- 4 **Tragic Tales** Banned in proper company, this book becomes less bawdy and more harrowing towards the end. Worth **100gp**.

- 5 **Mythos Mask** A plaster mask that allows one to take on a monster's countenance. Once it comes off, add a **Fatigue**.

- 6 **Rebreak Glass** A wine flute that can be broken multiple times, reforming after 24 hours. Makes a really loud noise.

Kettlewright

You are known by the smell of molten metal and the jingle of tin. You are no mere merchant but an artisan of fire and metal.

Starting Gear

- 3d6 Gold Pieces
- Rations (3 uses)
- Torch (3 uses)
- Pincers
- Roll of Tin
- Gloves (petty)
- Hammer (d6)



Names: Fergus, Eon, Bram, Idris, Hester, Darragh, Seren, Rónán, Berek, Lorenz

d6

What is your trade?

- 1 You build small contraptions for local guilds (and don't ask too many questions). Take an extra **40gp** and a wanted poster with your face on it. Given time and materials, you can open almost any door or vault.

- 2 You deal in home goods and tools, hawking your wares to townspeople across the lands. Take 20gp of items from the gear table. You are fluent in the *Traveler's Cant*.

- 3 You were a military smelter, before peace destroyed your livelihood. Take a **Smelting Hammer** (d10, bulky) and a **Tin Helm** (+1 Armor). Given time and adequate materials, you can repair armor.

- 4 You sell rare and quality items to monasteries and nobles alike. Take a **Spyglass**, a **Necklace** (petty) worth 20gp, and a **Scroll** of *Mirrorwalk* (petty).
Mirrorwalk: A mirror becomes a gateway to another mirror that you looked into today.

- 5 You offer protection as a service, quietly watching for threats as money exchanges hands. You start with +d4 HP, and carry a **Long Sword** (d10, bulky) and a **Gambeson** (+1 Armor).

- 6 You scavenge raw tin and iron from battlefields, pulling teeth from still-twitching corpses. Start with a young **Donkey** (+4 slots, slow), a **Crossbow** (d8 damage, bulky), and a **Saw** (d6).

d6

What never fails to get you out of trouble?

- 1 **Fire Eggs** Six small pellets made of sea salt, wood, and crockery-dust. They explode at low heat (d8, *blast*) but the flames dissipate quickly.

- 2 **Black Tar** Versatile: both sticky and highly flammable (3 uses).

- 3 **Spiked Boots** Cracks heads (d8) as easily as it does ice and muck. Travel is also a bit slower, but easier.

- 4 **Tinker's Paste** Seals shut any fist-sized opening (3 uses).

- 5 **Fireworks** A dazzling albeit dangerous display. Enough explosive material to blow off a finger or three (2 uses remain).

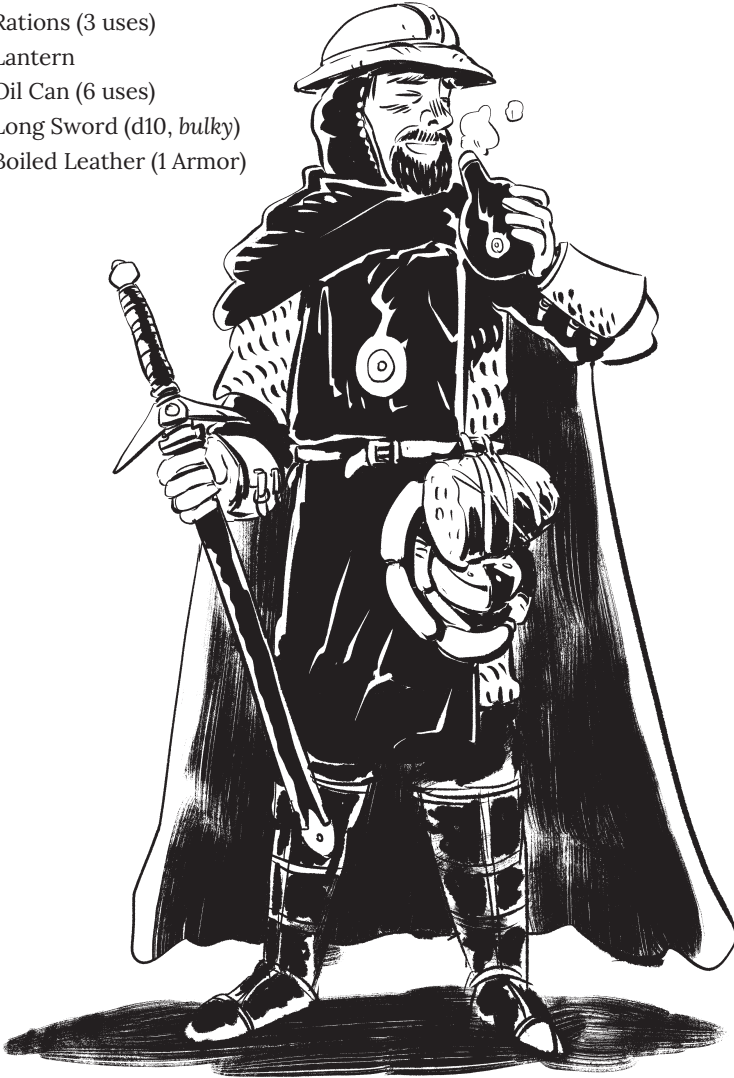
- 6 **Carrion Cat** A clever pet, small enough to hide in your pack (*bulky*), strong enough to scare off smaller predators. Requires one Ration a day, and it must be meat. 3 HP, 5 STR, 15 DEX, 12 WIL.

Marchguard

Bound by blood Oath to patrol the border and protect the realm. Once sworn, the Oath cannot be broken. The Guard always finds their own.

Starting Gear

- 3d6 Gold Pieces
- Rations (3 uses)
- Lantern
- Oil Can (6 uses)
- Long Sword (d10, bulky)
- Boiled Leather (1 Armor)



Names: Gann, Light, Saoirse, Frost, Thorn, Reed, Dirk, Ragnar, Brie, Aasim

d6

Why did you take the Oath?

- 1 Your family has a long tradition of serving, and you were trained from an early age on how to survive in the wild. When taking the Supply (pg. 79) action, your yield increases by one step (e.g. 1d4 > 1d6).
- 2 As a convict, the Oath was simply a means of avoiding punishment. Take a set of **Lockpicks** and the **Key** (*petty*) to a safehouse.
- 3 Noble-born, you joined to escape family trouble. Take a **Goosefelt Tarp** (fits two) that you stole before leaving home.
- 4 When your family lost everything, you took the Oath to avoid becoming a burden. Take extra **Rations** (3 uses) and **Throwing Knives** (d6).
- 5 Your life was saved by a member of the **Marchguard**, and you were inspired to join their ranks. Take a **Snare Trap** and a **Sketchbook** filled with detailed drawings.
- 6 You were in a dark place and decided that your life needed a little direction. You're still not so sure it was the right choice. Take an **Oilskin Coat** and **Mapping Paper**.

d6

What do you carry as proof of your Oath?

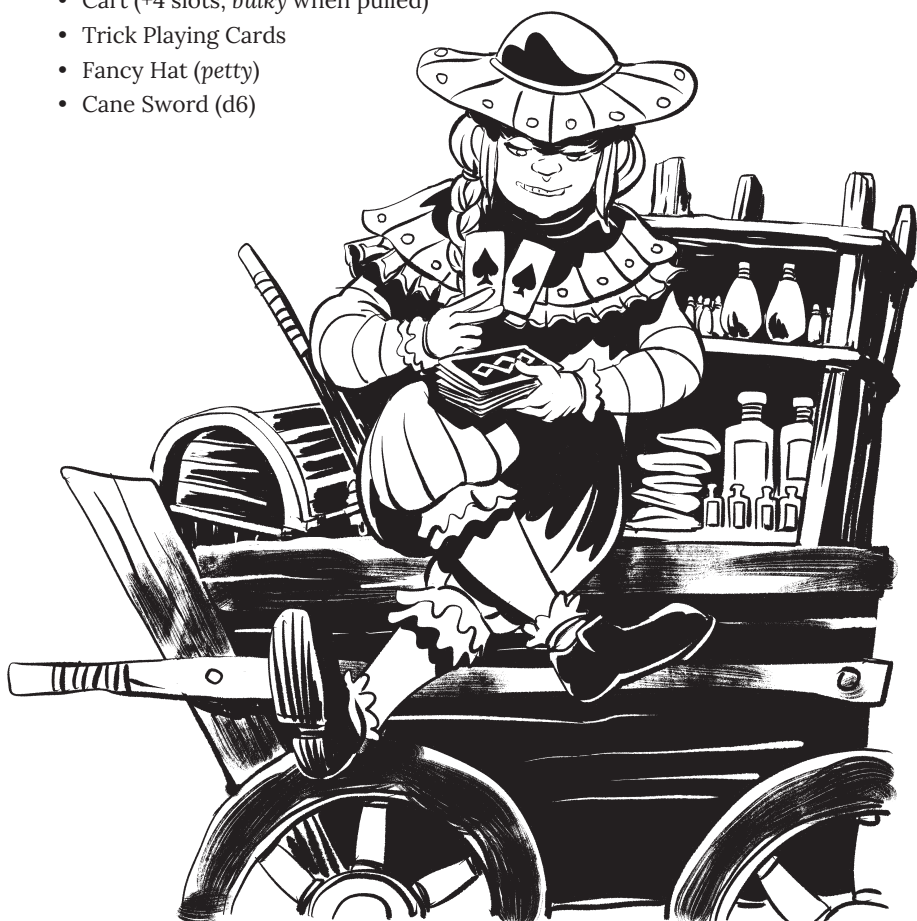
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|---|-----------------------|--|
| 1 | Impressive Pin | A metal badge of honor from the Guard. It can open doors but leaves a trail (<i>petty</i>). |
| 2 | Oath Compass | Points not towards North, but instead to the nearest member of the Guard. It also lets you know when they're getting close. |
| 3 | Pullstones | Two jet-black stones. When separated, the stones will always roll toward one another. |
| 4 | Fireflask | Highly alcoholic, yet strangely delicious. When thrown, it creates a wall of flames 10ft high that burns out after a few minutes (1 use). |
| 5 | Pain Band | Touch an injured creature to transfer their wounds to you. (Exchange their lost STR with your own.) Recharge: Wear the ring while in perfect health. You will lose 1 STR, permanently. (<i>petty</i>) |
| 6 | Poacher's Woe | Strongly-scented arrows (3 uses). The scent is powerful enough to track with ease. |

Mountebank

Wits are your sharpest weapon, a facade your strongest shield. But when you do lose, you lose badly.

Starting Gear

- 3d6 Gold Pieces
- Rations (3 uses)
- Torch (3 uses)
- Cart (+4 slots, *bulky* when pulled)
- Trick Playing Cards
- Fancy Hat (petty)
- Cane Sword (d6)



Names: Ambrose, Lucius, Beauregard, Cornelius, Aria, Toph, Indigo, Delphine, Solene, Noa

d6

How was your fraud exposed?

- 1 Your “patients” kept reporting miraculous recoveries, despite your lack of training. Start with **Bandages** (3 uses) and a knack for healing.

- 2 After seducing a wealthy patron, their family hired a criminal gang to retrieve you. You got away and need to lay low. Start with **Beauty Cream** (2 uses). Apply to appear irresistibly beautiful for the next 12 hours.

- 3 You were a peddler of fake prophecies, but when one turned out to be true, it drew unwanted attention. Roll on the **Omens** (pg. 14) table, but keep the result to yourself. Start with a concealable **Knife** (d6, petty).

- 4 Your latest stunt destroyed a priceless artifact and injured a dozen bystanders. Start with a **Captain’s Uniform** (petty), a **Ceremonial Sword** (harmless, 60gp), and a **Bouquet of Flowers**.

- 5 You were cursed by a hedgewitch for fooling some innocent village folk. Magic acts unpredictably in your hands (WIL save to avoid disaster). If you are the target of magic, the same applies to its wielder.

- 6 Your “seances” with the dead were in actuality a ruse involving a cleverly hidden **Spellbook** of *Auditory Illusion*. Inevitably, a patron discovered your secret. Start with the spellbook and a **Bundle of Scarves**.
Auditory Illusion: You create illusory sounds that seem to come from a direction of your choice. Produces random and occasionally inopportune sounds throughout the day.

d6

What keepsake could always identify you?

- 1 **Royal Crest** Born into royalty, you chose a different life. The crest grants you access but also alerts your family of your whereabouts.

- 2 **Miracle Oil** A smelly, slippery concoction (2 uses).

- 3 **Surgeon’s Soap** A lye and ash block that makes skin temporarily transparent, revealing the anatomy within (4 uses).

- 4 **Goat Powder** Derived from the placenta of a baby goat. Temporarily cures any affliction, but symptoms return within hours.

- 5 **Cursed Sapphire** Worth **200gp**, it noticeably returns to your pocket shortly after you spend it. You can’t seem to get rid of it.

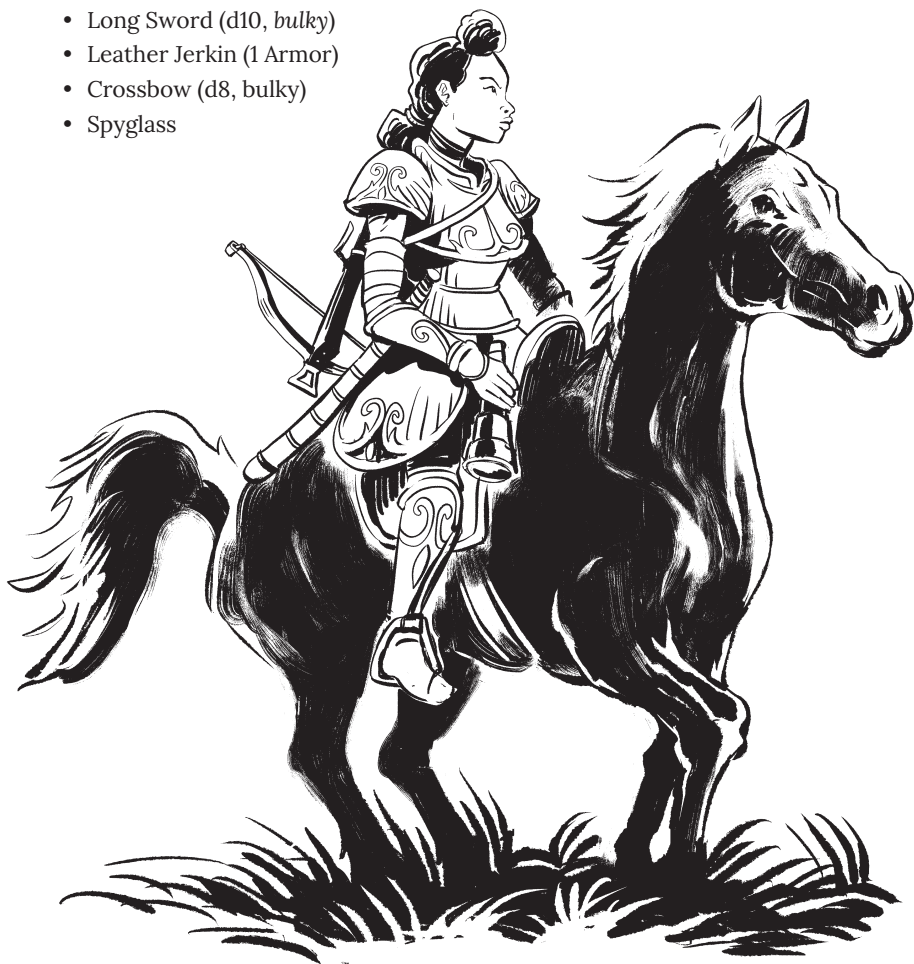
- 6 **Alchemical Tattoo** A dog, cat, or bird that can leave your body on demand. It follows your commands to the best of its abilities and can pass its injuries (as STR loss) back onto you (petty).

Outrider

Your coin comes from escorting caravans, tracking fugitives, or lending your blade to a cause. You've been a savior, an executioner, a hero, and even a villain. Yours is not a solitary path, however: you'll always have your horse.

Starting Gear

- 3d6 Gold Pieces
- Rations (3 uses)
- Torch (3 uses)
- Long Sword (d10, *bulky*)
- Leather Jerkin (1 Armor)
- Crossbow (d8, *bulky*)
- Spyglass



Names: Drake, Cyra, Keir, Darius, Valen, Rorik, Yara, Rui, Talon, Jory

d6

What personal code or principle do you uphold?

- 1 **No innocent blood:** No bystanders will come to harm on your watch. Take a **Steadymade Buckler** (+1 Armor). While holding this shield, you cannot be moved so long as both feet are planted on firm ground.

- 2 **Revere the tools of death:** Weapons are to be respected and maintained. Take a **Wyrmbone Whetstone**. Following a half-hour ritual sharpening, attacks with the weapon are *enhanced* until STR damage is dealt.

- 3 **To the death, always:** You never back down from a fight, no matter the odds. Take a **Death-Whistle**, 1 charge. Its scream frightens away all who hear it (save WIL or flee). **Recharge:** Capture the final breath of a dying warrior.

- 4 **Revere the dead:** Death is a journey we all take, and it deserves respect. Take an extra **30gp**. You always place two gold pieces on the eyelids of a slain foe. Somehow you always find the coin.

- 5 **Loyalty to the work:** Your word is your bond. Once you've accepted a job, you see it through to the end. Take a weathered **Tally Stick**. Once a vow is marked onto its face, the stick hardens (d8) until it is complete. The stick will snap in half if the vow is ever broken.

- 6 **Always pay your debts:** You always repay what you owe, whether in coin or in kind. You expect nothing less from all others. Take a **blackened-out ledger**, then roll a second time on the Bonds (pg. 12) table.

d6

What breed is your horse?

- 1 **Heavy Destrier** A beast built for war, an imposing creature. 8 HP, 1 Armor, hooves (d10+d10), +2 slots.

- 2 **Blacklegged Dandy** Hardy and adaptable. Tough or Perilous terrain (pg. 75) are one step easier. 6 HP. +4 slots.

- 3 **Rivertoath** Impressively strong, capable of carrying heavy loads. 4 HP. +6 slots (only +2 slots if carrying two people).

- 4 **Piebald Cob** Intelligent, it can understand simple commands and even has an instinct for danger. 6 HP. +4 slots.

- 5 **Linden White** Highly trained and agile, it can perform intricate maneuvers in a time of need (no DEX save to flee). 4 HP. +3 slots.

- 6 **Stray Fogger** Wild but very fast, even in Tough terrain (pg. 75). Rides light. 4 HP. +2 slots.

Prowler

You are a specter in the night, a fleeting shadow that slips by its prey, unseen. Each kill is a test of cunning and animal determination, a contest between life and death. You know that one day you will lose. You look forward to it.

Starting Gear

- 3d6 Gold Pieces
- Rations (3 uses)
- Torch (3 uses)
- Tarp (shelters 1)
- Boiled Leather (1 Armor)
- Short Sword (d6)
- Spring-Loaded Trap (4 STR damage)



Names: Winda, Brielle, Theron, Chayse, Nuja, Dev, Raven, Baruani, Arawan, Sable

d6

What did you last hunt?

- 1 A mock firefly, baiting water carriers with its lure. Take an **Alchemical Limb** (d8, *petty* when worn) to replace the one it tore off and an **Oil Can** (6 uses). The limb is immune to heat and poison. Needs to be oiled daily.
- 2 An ice nettle, trapping and draining sheep. You lost your commission when the fungus you introduced killed half the flock. Take a **Rime Seed** (1 use). It freezes any body of water, no matter the size. Don't eat it.
- 3 A silver marsh crawler that killed someone close to you. You now carry its **Tooth** (*petty*) on a chain around your neck as a warning to others of its kind. The tooth hums softly when something is stalking you.
- 4 A malicious forest spirit that poisoned a homestead. You saved a **Heartseed** from the roots of a dying tree. (Plant to create a new forest.) Also, take **Iron Bracers** (+1 Armor, *bulky*).
- 5 A hollow wolf that had been frightening travelers. You took pity on the half-starved creature and nursed it back to health. Now it is loyal to you unto death. It is also a great tunneler. 5 HP, 11 STR, 13 DEX, 8 WIL, teeth (d6).
- 6 An azure warbler. The gametes attract a sizeable profit, if properly extracted. You succeeded but left its nest to the wolves. Take a **Paring Knife** (d6), an extra **20gp**, and a pang of regret.

d6

What tool is always in your pack?

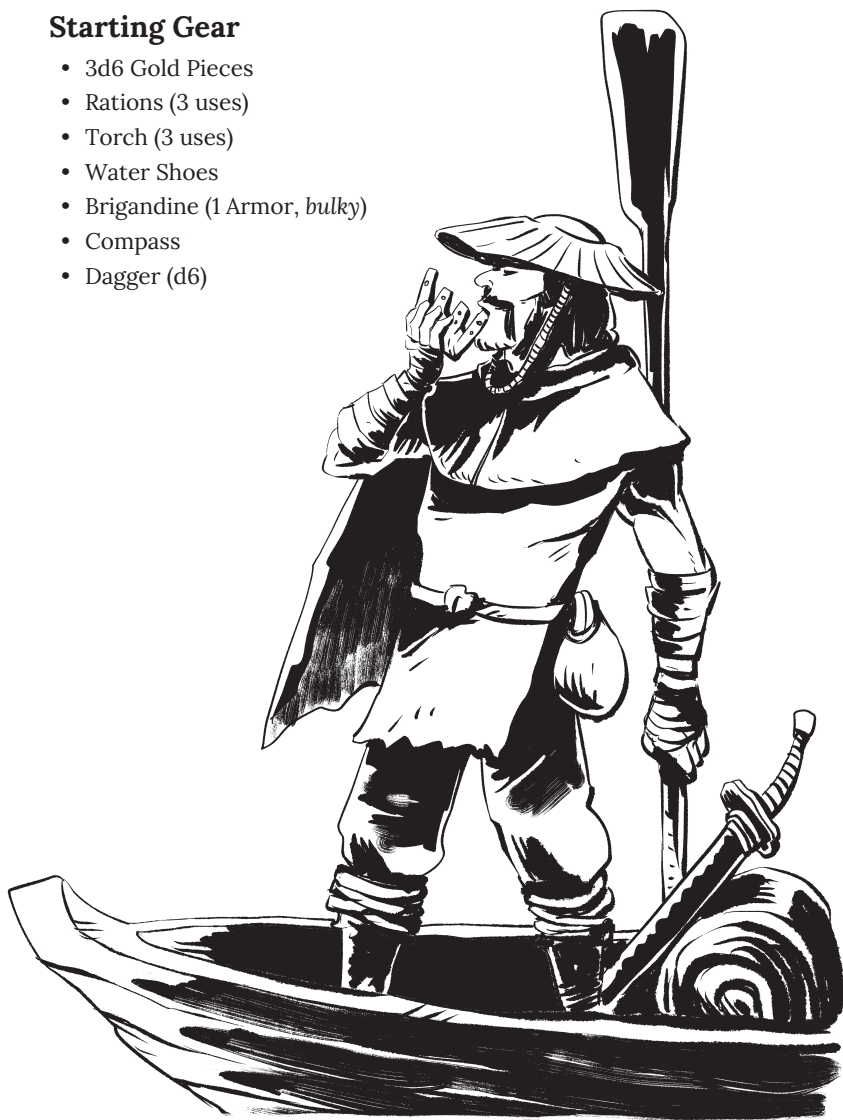
- 1 **Fermented Spirits** Keeps you warm at the best of times and can be used as an explosive at the worst (3 Uses).
- 2 **Trail Shaker** A noisy instrument that reveals nearby trails, even when deeply hidden.
- 3 **Drowse Balm** A wax bar. If boiled in water, the steam acts as a soporific agent.
- 4 **Spike and Cord** For traversing difficult terrain or for creating makeshift traps and structures.
- 5 **Iron Rattle** A noisemaker for distracting or scaring your quarry. Sounds convincingly like a snake.
- 6 **Hardening Glue** Makes any flat material (cloth, leather, sand) as hard as stone. Expensive (20gp a bottle, 3 uses).

Rill Runner

You sing the stories of rivers and lakes, your talents soothing friends and the elements alike. You've seen more than most, but somehow it never seems to be enough.

Starting Gear

- 3d6 Gold Pieces
- Rations (3 uses)
- Torch (3 uses)
- Water Shoes
- Brigandine (1 Armor, *bulky*)
- Compass
- Dagger (d6)



Names: Gale, Piper, Brook, Adair, Stone, Dale, Wren, Cliff, Rain, Robin

d6

What songs are you best known for?

- The Tinker's Two-Step.* A humorous fairy tale about a gift-giving traveler.
- 1 Start with a **Reed Whistle**. Anyone in earshot must pass a WIL save to perform an act of violence.
 - 2 *The Sylph and Her Lover.* A bawdy tale of lost love. Start with a **Breeze Knot** (3 charges). Creates a strong breeze. **Recharge:** Tie it to a mast during a storm.
 - 3 *Harper's Devotion.* A sad, short tale about a musician who falls in love with a star. Start with a **Celestial Lute**. Reveals the constellations above, no matter the weather.
 - 4 *The Reed Fisher.* A celebrated song about a massive carp that always seems to get away. Begin with a spool of **River Twine** (5 uses). Each dip into the river guarantees a catch, though it might not be pleasant.
 - 5 *Song of the Silver Stream.* A wordless lullaby that mimics flowing water. Take a **Stone Flute** that can calm almost any river.
 - 6 *The Thrush and the Meadow.* A moody tale told in alternating chorus. Start with a **Feather Quill** (1 use, petty). A map drawn with this quill reveals the most expedient course between any two points.

d6

What pays your way across the land?

- 1 **Performance** Performing at taverns always yields both room and board. Sometimes you even get tips! Start with an extra d6 gold.
- 2 **Bodyguard** You are a protector for those afraid to travel alone. Start with a rapier (d8).
- 3 **Wares** You buy low and sell high, always making just enough to get by. Take a **Single Item** worth 20gp or less from the equipment table.
- 4 **Transport** You deliver "delicate" packages throughout the lands. You have at least one contact in any major town.
- 5 **Sailor's Friend** Over troubled waters and dangerous winds, you always make sure a ship reaches its destination. For you, passage is always free.
- 6 **Guide** You shepherd caravans and travelers across water-soaked lands. Start with a **Map** relevant to your next journey.

Scrivener

You copy ancient texts and illuminate manuscripts, recording the voices of the clever, the great, and the powerful. You will prove that the pen truly is mightier than the sword.

Starting Gear

- 3d6 Gold Pieces
- Rations (3 uses)
- Torch (3 uses)
- Quill & Ink
- Blank Book
- Awl (d6)
- Badge (petty)



Names: Lazlo, Stilo, Akshara, Pisa, Ji-Yun, Kalamos, Hugo, Shui, Kalam, Julius

d6

What work did you keep for yourself?

- 1 **The Wild Tongue.** A bundle of leather-bound scrolls. A seminal work, cataloging the hidden languages of beasts and how to understand them.
- 2 **The Silent Symphony.** Bound in fluorescent wrap. Very rare, it chronicles the subtle signs used by those employing invisibility magic.
- 3 **A Treatise on the Abyss.** A nondescript black book. An in-depth, largely theoretical text describing the Roots, as well as information about the location of a nearby **Gate**.
- 4 **The Star Waltz.** A comet-shaped clasp bound in a fine leather cover. Detailed astronomical charts, celestial movements, and stellar festivals. Highly valued (100gp) for its usefulness to travelers.
- 5 **The Cathedral and the Canopy.** Large-leaf binding over vellum. Nominally a children's storybook, the margins detail information about traveling, eating, and sleeping in the cloud forests.
- 6 **Garden of Glass.** Bound in the cover of another book. A heretical work, it describes the materials, procedures, and optimal locations required to open a **Gate**.

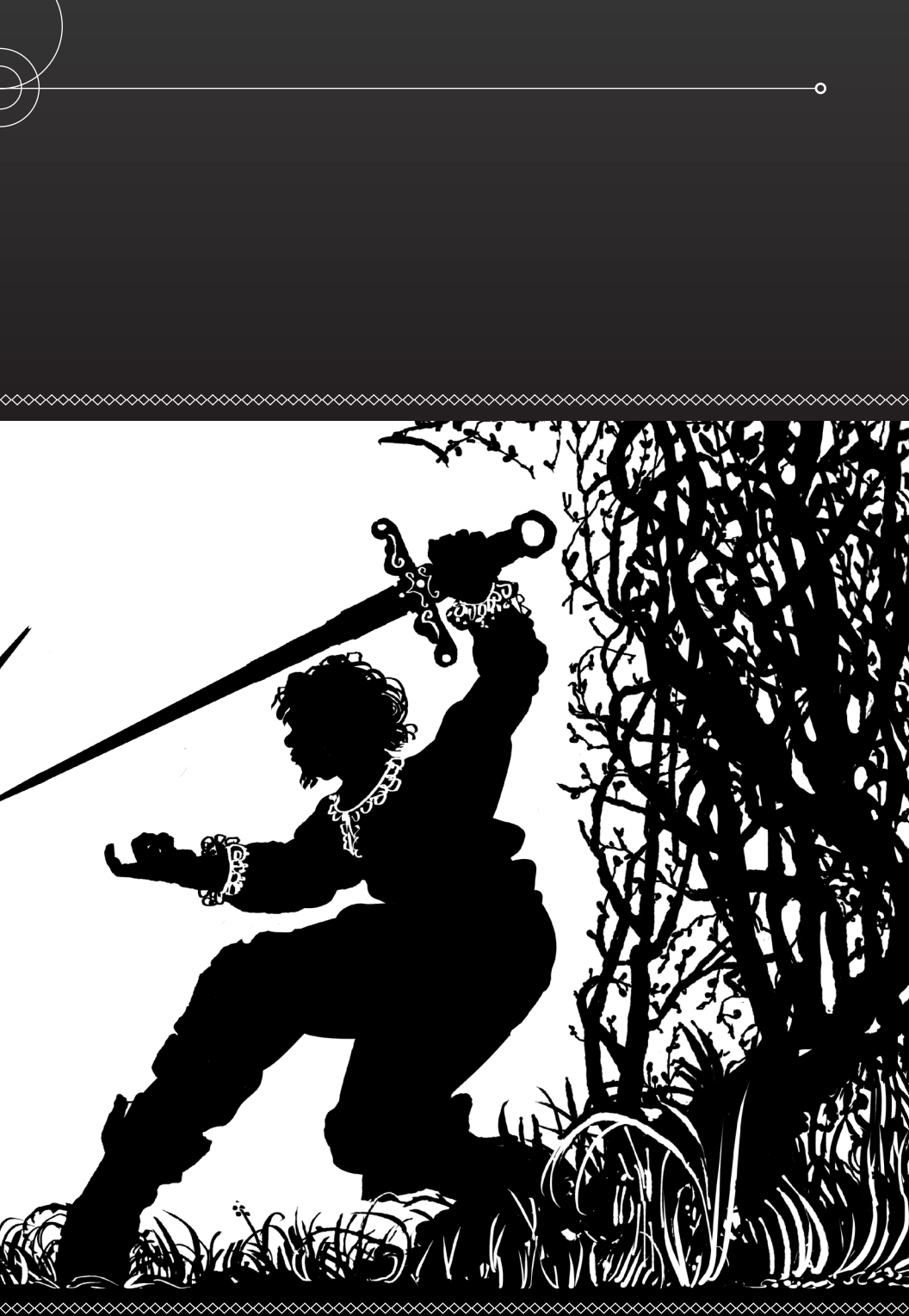
d6

How do you transcribe sensitive information?

- 1 **Fib Ink** Glows when used to write true statements but fades if used to write false ones.
- 2 **Cipher Stone** A pair of sharp black stones. Each one decrypts any message written by the other.
- 3 **Everquill** A quill that writes on any surface. You still need ink (*petty*).
- 4 **Whisper Vial** Whisper a message into the vial, and it will play it back to whoever opens it next.
- 5 **Sanguine Lens** Extracts blood from a target without their knowledge. A stolen drop placed on the eye reveals memories from the past day.
- 6 **Echo Leaf** A blank parchment. Whomever unfurls it sees their actions of the day slowly revealed in a tight scrawl.

Rules





Core Rules

Attributes

Each of the three attributes are used in different circumstances. (see **Saves**.)

Strength (STR)

Used for saves requiring physical power, like lifting gates, bending bars, resisting poison, etc.

Dexterity (DEX)

Used for saves requiring poise, speed, reflexes, dodging, climbing, sneaking, balancing, etc.

Willpower (WIL)

Used for saves to persuade, deceive, interrogate, intimidate, charm, provoke, manipulate spells, etc.

Saves

- A save is a roll to avoid negative outcomes from risky choices. Characters roll a d20 and compare the results to the appropriate attribute. If they roll equal to or under that attribute, they succeed. Otherwise, they fail. A 1 is always a success, and a 20 is always a failure.
- If two opponents are each trying to overcome the other, whoever is most at risk should save.
- If two characters need to take an action together, whoever is most at risk should save (usually the character with the lowest relevant Attribute).

Healing & Recovery

- Resting for a few moments and having a drink of water restores lost HP but may leave the party exposed. Bandages can stabilize a character that has taken Critical Damage.
- Attribute loss (see Critical Damage) can usually be restored with a week's rest, facilitated by a healer or other appropriate source of expertise.
- Some healing services are free, while magical or more expedient means of recovery may come at a cost.

Deprivation & Fatigue

- A PC that lacks a crucial need (such as food or rest) is Deprived. Anyone Deprived for more than a day adds Fatigue to their inventory, one for each day. A Deprived PC cannot recover HP, Attributes, or item slots from Fatigue.
- A PC may also be forced to add Fatigue after casting spells or due to events occurring in the fiction. Each Fatigue occupies one slot and lasts until the PC is able to recuperate (such as with a full night's rest in a safe spot).
- If a character is forced to add Fatigue to their inventory but they have no free slots, they must drop an item from their inventory.

Armor

- Before calculating damage to HP, subtract the target's Armor value from the result of damage rolls.
- Shields and similar armor provide a bonus defense (e.g. +1 Armor), but only while the item is held or worn. Some may also provide additional benefits, depending on the fiction.
- A PC, NPC, or monster cannot have more than 3 Armor.

Reactions

When the PCs encounter an NPC whose reaction to the party is not obvious, the Warden may roll 2d6 and consult the following table:

Reactions				
2	3-5	6-8	9-11	12
Hostile	Wary	Curious	Kind	Helpful

Morale

- Enemies must pass a WIL save to avoid fleeing when they take their first casualty and again when they lose half their number.
- Some groups may use their leader's WIL in place of their own. Lone foes must save when they're reduced to 0 HP.
- Morale does not affect PCs.

Hirelings

- Adventuring parties can recruit hirelings, relying on their unique skills, knowledge, and training to aid in expeditions.
- To create a hireling, choose an appropriate role from the Hirelings table in the Marketplace (pg. 17-18). Roll 3d6 for each attribute and 1d6 for their HP. Give them equipment appropriate to their station, then roll on the Character Traits tables to further flesh them out.
- Alternatively, choose an appropriate background and name from the Character Creation guide. Roll (or choose from) the tables for that background. Then roll for Rations, Gold Pieces, Attributes, HP, and age.

Die of Fate

- Optionally, roll 1d6 whenever the outcome of an event is uncertain or to simulate an element of randomness and chance.
- A roll of 4 or more generally favors the PCs, while a roll of 3 or under usually means bad luck for the PCs.

Combat

Rounds

- A round is roughly ten seconds of in-game time and proceeds with each side taking turns. Each round starts with all PCs that are able to act, followed by their opponents. *The result of each side's actions occur simultaneously.*
- During the *first round of combat*, each PC must make a DEX save in order to act. Special circumstances, abilities, items, or skills may negate this requirement. PCs that fail their save *lose their turn* for this round.
- Their opponents then take their turn, and the first round ends. The next round begins with the PCs taking their turn, followed by their opponents, and so on until combat has ended with one side defeated or fled.

Actions

- On their turn, a character may move up to 40ft and take up to one action. This may be casting a spell, attacking, moving for a second time, or some other reasonable action. Each round, the PCs declare what they are doing before dice are rolled. If a character attempts something risky, the Warden calls for a save for appropriate players or NPCs.

Attacking & Damage

- The attacker rolls their weapon die and subtracts the target's armor, then deals the remaining total to their opponent's HP. Attacks in combat automatically hit.
- If multiple attackers target the same foe, roll all damage dice and keep the single highest result. All actions are declared before being resolved.
- If an attack would take a PC's HP exactly to 0, refer to the Scars table (pg. 66) to see how they are uniquely impacted.

Attack Modifiers

- If fighting from a position of weakness (such as through cover or with bound hands), the attack is *Impaired*, and the attacker must roll 1d4 damage regardless of the attack's damage die. Unarmed attacks always do 1d4 damage.
- If fighting from a position of advantage (such as against a helpless foe or through a daring maneuver), the attack is *Enhanced*, allowing the attacker to roll 1d12 damage instead of their normal die.
- Attacks with the *Blast* quality affect all targets in the noted area, rolling separately for each affected character. This can be anything from explosions to a dragon's breath or the impact of a meteorite. If unsure how many targets can be affected, roll the related damage die for a result.
- If attacking with two weapons at the same time, roll both damage dice and keep the single highest result (denoted with a plus symbol, e.g. d8+d8).

Critical Damage

- Damage that reduces a target's HP below zero is subtracted from their STR by the amount of damage remaining. The target must then immediately make a STR save to avoid taking Critical Damage, using their new STR score. On a success, the target is still in the fight (albeit with a lower STR score) and must continue to make Critical Damage saves when incurring damage.
- Any PC that suffers Critical Damage cannot do anything but crawl weakly, grasping for life. If given aid (such as bandages), they will stabilize. If left untreated, they die within the hour. NPCs and monsters that fail a Critical Damage save are considered dead, per the Warden's discretion. Additionally, some enemies will have special abilities or effects that are triggered when their target fails a Critical Damage save.

Attribute Loss

- If a PC's STR is reduced to 0, they die. If their DEX is reduced to 0, they are paralyzed. If their WIL is reduced to 0, they are delirious. Complete DEX and WIL loss renders the character unable to act until they are restored through extended rest or by extraordinary means.
- If a PC takes damage outside of combat, they should instead receive damage to an Attribute, typically STR.

Character Death

- When a character dies, the player should create a new character or take control of a hireling. They immediately join the party in order to reduce downtime.

Detachments

- Large groups of similar combatants fighting together are treated as a single Detachment. When a detachment takes Critical Damage, it is routed or significantly weakened. When it reaches 0 STR, it is destroyed.
- Attacks against detachments by individuals are *Impaired* (excluding Blast damage).
- Attacks against individuals by detachments are *Enhanced* and deal Blast damage.

Retreat

- Running away from a dire situation always requires a successful DEX save, as well as a safe destination to run to.

Ranged Attacks

- Ranged weapons can target any enemy near enough to see the whites of their eyes. Attacks against especially distant targets are *Impaired*.
- Ammunition is not tracked unless otherwise specified.

Scars

If damage to a PC would reduce their HP to exactly 0, look up the result on the table below based on the amount of HP lost in the attack. For example, if a PC went from 3 HP to 0 HP, they would look at entry #3 (Walloped).

How much HP did you lose?

1 HP

Lasting Scar: Roll 1d6 | 1: Neck, 2: Hands, 3: Eye, 4: Chest, 5: Legs, 6: Ear. Roll 1d6. If the total is higher than your max HP, take the new result.

2 HP

Rattling Blow: You're disoriented and shaken. Describe how you refocus. Roll 1d6. If the total is higher than your max HP, take the new result.

3 HP

Walloped: You're sent flying and land flat on your face, winded. You are deprived until you rest for a few hours. Then, roll 1d6. Add that amount to your max HP.

4 HP

Broken Limb: Roll 1d6 | 1-2: Leg, 3-4: Arm, 5: Rib, 6: Skull. Once mended, roll 2d6. If the total is higher than your max HP, take the new result.

5 HP

Diseased: You're afflicted with a gross, uncomfortable infection. When you get over it, roll 2d6. If the total is higher than your max HP, take the new result.

6 HP

Reorienting Head Wound: Roll 1d6 | 1-2: STR, 3-4: DEX, 5-6: WIL. Roll 3d6. If the total is higher than your current attribute, take the new result.

7 HP

Hamstrung: You can barely move until you get serious help and rest. After recovery, roll 3d6. If the total is higher than your max DEX, take the new result.

8 HP

Deafened: You cannot hear anything until you find extraordinary aid. Regardless, make a WIL save. If you pass, increase your max WIL by 1d4.

9 HP

Re-brained: Some hidden part of your psyche is knocked loose. Roll 3d6. If the total is higher than your max WIL, take the new result.

10 HP

Sundered: An appendage is torn off, crippled, or useless (the Warden will tell you which.) Then make a WIL save. If you pass, increase your max WIL by 1d6.

11 HP

Mortal Wound: You are deprived and out of action. You die in one hour unless healed. Upon recovery, roll 2d6. Take the new result as your max HP.

12 HP

Doomed: Death seemed ever so close, but somehow you survived. If your next save against Critical Damage is a fail, you die horribly. If you pass, roll 3d6. If the total is higher than your max HP, take the new result.

Magic

Spellbooks

- Spellbooks contain a single spell and take up one slot. They cannot be easily transcribed or created; instead they are recovered from places like tombs, dungeons, and manors.
- Spellbooks sometimes display unusual properties or limitations, such as producing a foul or unearthly smell when opened, possessing an innate intelligence, or being legible only when held in moonlight.
- Spellbooks will attract the attention of those who seek the arcane power within, and it is considered dangerous to display them openly.

Casting Spells

- Anyone can cast a spell by holding a Spellbook in both hands and reading its contents aloud. They must then add a **Fatigue** to inventory.
- Given time and safety, PCs can *enhance* a spell's impact (e.g., affecting multiple targets, increasing its power, etc.) without any additional cost.
- If the PC is deprived or in danger (such as during combat), the Warden may require a PC to make a WIL save to avoid any ill-effects from casting the spell. Consequences of failure are on par with the intended effect and may result in added **Fatigue**, the destruction of the Spellbook, injury, and even death.

Scrolls

Scrolls are similar to Spellbooks, however:

- They are *petty*.
- They do not cause **Fatigue**.
- They disappear after one use.

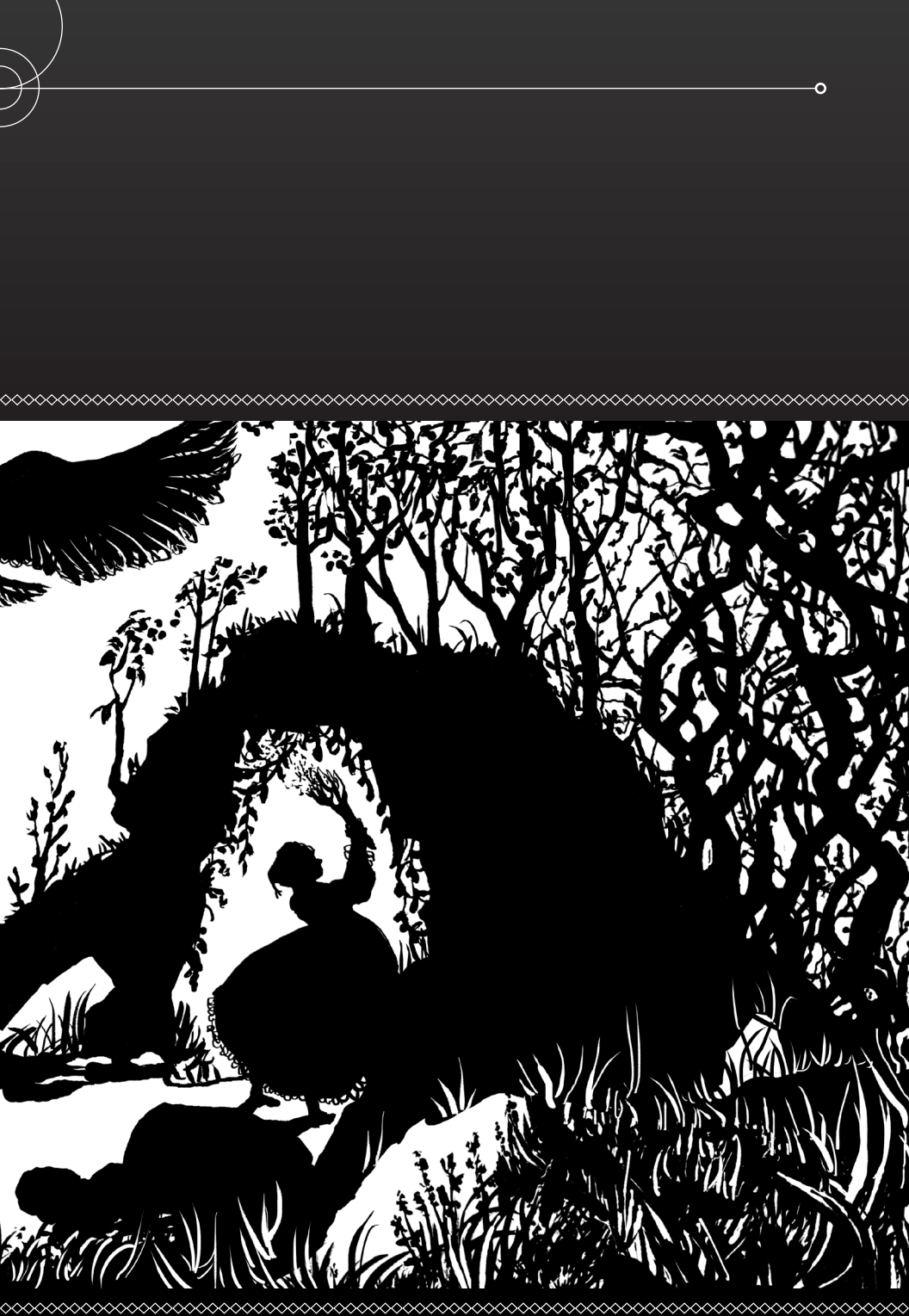
Relics

- Relics are items imbued with a magical spell or power. They do not cause **Fatigue**. Relics usually have limited uses, as well as a **Recharge** condition.



Procedures





Dungeon Exploration

The Basics

- The dungeon exploration cycle (see below) is divided into a series of **Turns**, **Actions**, and their consequences.
- On their **Turn**, a character can move a distance equal to their torchlight's perimeter (about 40ft) and perform one **Action**. Players can use their action to move up to three times that distance, though that will increase the chance of triggering a roll on the **Dungeon Events** table.
- The **Warden** should present obvious information about an area and its dangers freely and at no cost. Moving quickly or without caution may increase the chance of encountering a wandering monster, springing a trap, or triggering a roll on the **Dungeon Events** table.

Although the term “dungeon” is used here, it can mean any dangerous locale (mansions, farmhouses, adventure site, etc.).

Dungeon Exploration Cycle

1. The **Warden** describes the party's surroundings and any immediate dangers (combat, traps, surprises, etc.). The players then declare their character's intended movements and **Actions**.
2. The Warden resolves the actions of each character simultaneously, along with any actions that are already in progress. Remember, the Die of Fate can be a useful tool whenever the Warden is in doubt!
3. The players record any loss of resources and any new conditions (i.e. item use, deprivation, etc). The cycle then begins again. If appropriate, the **Warden** should roll on the **Dungeon Events** table. Keep common sense in mind when interpreting the results!



Dungeon Events

Exploring a dungeon is always dangerous, and time must always be weighed against the risk of awakening the location's denizens, natural hazards, and worse. When the party:

- Spends more than one dungeon cycle in a single room or location.
- Moves quickly or haphazardly through a room.
- Moves into a new area, level, or zone.
- Creates a loud disturbance.

Roll on the table below:

d6	Dungeon Events	
1	Encounter	Roll on an encounter table. Possibly hostile. (See Reactions (pg. 63).)
2	Sign	A clue, spoor, track, abandoned lair, scent, victim, etc is discovered.
3	Environment	Surroundings shift or escalate. Water rises, ceilings collapse, a ritual nears completion, etc.
4	Loss	Torches are blown out, an ongoing spell fizzles, etc. The party must resolve the effects before moving on.
5	Exhaustion	The party must take a brief rest (roll on this table again), add a Fatigue , or consume a ration.
6	Quiet	The party is left alone (and safe) for the time being.



Actions

- Actions are any non-passive activities, such as searching for traps, forcing open a door, listening for danger, disarming a trap, engaging an enemy in combat, casting a spell, dodging a trap, running away, resting, etc.
- Some actions have special rules (see below), while others may take multiple turns to complete.
- Loud or noticeable actions may also trigger an encounter with the dungeon's denizens.

Searching

- A character can spend a turn performing an exhaustive search of one object or location in an area, revealing any relevant hidden treasure, traps, secret doors, etc.
- Larger rooms and difficult or complex dungeon terrain may take a few turns to properly search.
- Searching a room first is a safer way to explore the dungeon, but it has a steep cost: time.

Resting

- A character can spend a turn resting to restore all HP.
- A light source and a safe location are required to rest. Present or oncoming danger makes rest impossible.
- Resting does not restore **Fatigue**, as it is impossible to safely Make Camp (pg. 79) in a dungeon.

Panic

- A character that is surrounded by enemies, enveloped by darkness, or facing their greatest fears may experience *panic*. A **WIL save** is typically required to avoid losing control and becoming *panicked*.
- A *panicked* character must make a **WIL save** to overcome their condition as an **action** on their **turn**.
- A *panicked* character has 0 **HP**, does not act in the first round of combat, and all of their attacks are *impaired*.



Dungeon Elements

Light

- Torches and other radial sources of light illuminate 40ft of dungeon and beyond that only a dim outline of objects. Torches last until they are put out by a character or their environment.
- A torch can be lit 3 times before permanently degrading. A lantern can be relit indefinitely but requires an Oil Can (6 uses).
- Characters without a light source may suffer from panic until their situation is remedied.

Doors

- Doors and entryways may be locked, stuck, or blocked entirely. Characters can try to force a door open (or wedge it shut) using available resources (spikes, glue) or through raw ability.
- The party's marching order determines who is most impacted by whatever lies beyond a door.
- A character can detect, through careful observation (listening, smelling, etc.), signs of life and other hazards through nearby doors and walls.

Traps

- A cautious character should be presented with any and all information that would allow them the opportunity to avoid springing a trap. An unwitting character will trigger a trap according to the fiction, or will otherwise have a 2-in-6 chance.
- Traps can usually be detected by carefully searching a room.
- Damage from traps is taken from attributes (usually STR or DEX) and not from HP. Armor can reduce damage, but only if applicable (e.g. a shield would not reduce damage from noxious gas).



Wilderness Exploration

Watches

- A day is divided into three watches: morning, afternoon, and night.
- Each character can choose one Wilderness Action (pg. 79) per watch.
- If the characters split up, each group is treated as an independent entity.

Points

- Potential destinations on a map are called points.
- One or more watches may be required to journey between two points on a map, depending on the path, terrain, weather, and party status.
- The party should have a rough idea of the challenges involved to get to their destination, but rarely any specifics.

Travel Duration

Travel time in Cairn is counted in watches, divided into three eight-hour segments per day. However, as most parties elect to spend the third watch of the day resting, one can use “days” as a shorthand for travel time. For example, if the distance between two points is equal to four watches, the party would need to travel for two days, arriving in the evening of the second day.

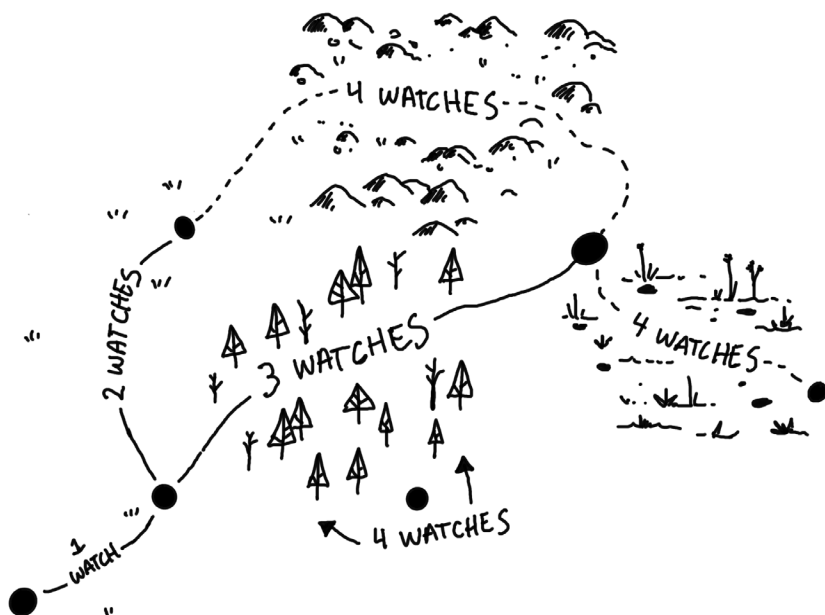
To determine the distance between two points, combine all penalties from the path, terrain, and Weather Difficulty (pg. 76) tables, taking into account any changes to those elements along the route. For travel via waterways, refer to the surrounding terrain difficulty. For especially vast terrain, assign a penalty of up to +2 watches to the journey.

The weather, terrain, darkness, injured party members, and other obstacles can impact travel or even make it impossible! In some cases, the party may need to add Fatigue or expend resources in order to sustain their pace. Mounts, guides, and maps can increase the party’s travel speed or even negate certain penalties.



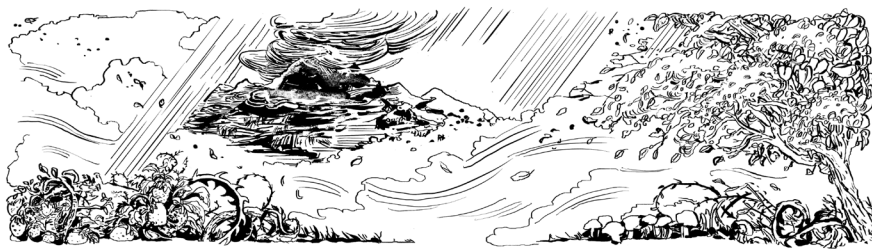
Path Type			Path Distance	
Path	Penalty	Odds of Getting Lost	Distance	Penalty
Roads	None	None	Short	+1 Watch
Trails	+1 Watch	2-in-6	Medium	+2 Watches
Wilderness	+2 Watches	3-in-6	Long	+3 Watches

Terrain Difficulty			
Difficulty	Terrain	Penalty	Factors
Easy	Plains, plateaus, valleys	None	Safe areas for rest, fellow travelers, good visibility
Tough	Forests, deserts, hills	+1 Watch	Wild animals, flooding, broken equipment, falling rocks, unsafe shelters, hunter's traps
Perilous	Mountains, jungles, swamps	+2 Watches	Quicksand, sucking mud, choking vines, unclean water, poisonous plants and animals, poor navigation



Weather

Each day, the Warden should roll on the weather table for the appropriate season. If the “Extreme” weather result is rolled twice in a row, the weather turns to “Catastrophic.” A squall becomes a hurricane, a storm floods the valley, etc.



Weather				
d6	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
1	Nice	Nice	Fair	Fair
2	Fair	Nice	Fair	Unpleasant
3	Fair	Fair	Unpleasant	Inclement
4	Unpleasant	Unpleasant	Inclement	Inclement
5	Inclement	Inclement	Inclement	Extreme
6	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme

Weather Difficulty		
Weather	Effect	Examples
Nice	Favorable conditions for travel.	Clear skies, sunny
Fair	Favorable conditions for travel.	Overcast, breezy
Unpleasant	Add a Fatigue or add +1 watch .	Gusting winds, rain showers, sweltering heat, chill air
Inclement	Add a Fatigue or add +1 watch . Increase terrain difficulty by a step.	Thunderstorms, lightning, rain, muddy ground
Extreme	Add a Fatigue and add +1 watch . Increase terrain difficulty by a step.	Blizzards, freezing winds, flooding, mud slides
Catastrophic	Most parties cannot travel under these conditions.	Tornados, tidal waves, hurricane, volcanic eruption

Wilderness Elements

Night

- The party can choose to travel during the night and rest during the day, but night travel is far slower and more treacherous!
- Traveling at night is always more dangerous! The Warden should roll twice on the Wilderness Events table.
- Some terrain and weather may be easier to traverse at night (desert, for example). The Warden should balance these challenges along with any other.

Sleep

- The last watch of the day is typically reserved for the Make Camp (pg. 79) action.
- Characters typically need to sleep each day. Anything beyond a minor interruption can negate or cancel the benefits of sleep.
- If the party skips the Make Camp (pg. 79) action, they each add a **Fatigue** to their inventory and are *deprived*. Additionally, traveling when sleep-deprived raises the terrain Difficulty by a step (i.e. Easy becomes Tough).

Light

- Torches and other radial sources of light illuminate 40-ft ahead of the party but beyond that only provides a dim outline of objects.
- Characters without a light source may suffer from panic until their situation is remedied.
- Environmental conditions (sudden gusts of wind, dust, water, etc.) can easily blow out a torch.

Light Sources

- A torch can be lit 3 times before degrading.
- A lantern can be relit indefinitely but requires a separate Oil Can (6 uses).



Wilderness Exploration Cycle

1. The Warden describes the current point or region on the map and how the path, weather, terrain, or party status might affect travel speed. The party plots or adjusts a given course towards their destination.
2. Each character chooses a single Wilderness Action (pg. 79). The Warden narrates the results and then rolls on the **Wilderness Events** table. The party responds to the results.
3. The players and the Warden record any loss of resources and new conditions (i.e. torch use, deprivation, etc), and the cycle repeats.



d6

Wilderness Events

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|--|
| 1 | Encounter | Roll on an encounter table for that terrain type or location. Don't forget to roll for NPC reactions if applicable. |
| 2 | Sign | The party discovers a clue, spoor, or indication of a nearby encounter, locality, hidden feature, or information about a nearby area. |
| 3 | Environment | A shift in weather or terrain. |
| 4 | Loss | The party is faced with a choice that costs them a resource (rations, tools, etc), time, or effort. |
| 5 | Exhaustion | The party encounters a barrier, forcing effort, care or delays. This might mean spending extra time (and an additional Wilderness Action) or adding Fatigue to the PC's inventory to represent their difficulties. |
| 6 | Discovery | The party finds food, treasure, or other useful resources. The Warden can instead choose to reveal the primary feature of the area. |

Wilderness Actions

Travel

- Travel begins. Obvious locations, features, and terrain of nearby areas are revealed according to their distance. This action is typically taken by the entire party as one.
- The party rolls **1d6** to see if they get lost along the way. This risk can increase or decrease, depending on Path Difficulty (pg. 75), maps, party skills, and guides.
- If lost, the party may need to spend a Wilderness Action to recover their way. Otherwise, the party reaches the next point along their route.

Remember to compare the results of getting lost to the relevant Path Difficulty.

Explore

- One or more party members search a large area, searching for hidden features, scouting ahead, or treading carefully.
- A **Location** (shelter, village, cave, etc.) or **Feature** (geyser, underground river, beached ship, etc.) is discovered.
- The **Travel** action is still required to leave the current area, even if it has been completely explored.

Supply

- One or more party members may hunt, fish, or forage for food, collecting 1d4 Rations (3 uses each). The chance of a greater bounty increases with each additional participant (e.g. 1d4 becomes 1d6, up to a maximum of 1d12). Relevant experience or equipment may also increase the bounty.
- The party may encounter homes and small villages, spending gold and a full Watch (pg. 74) to resupply.

Make Camp

- The party stops to set up camp in the wilds. Each party member (and their mounts) consumes a **Ration**.
- A lookout rotation is set so that the party can sleep unmolested. A smaller party may need to risk sleeping unguarded or switch off sleeping over multiple days.
- Party members that were able to rest remove all **Fatigue** from their inventory.

Downtime

Between game sessions, players can engage in a variety of activities such as research, following up on leads, improving skills, or building relationships. A PC is limited to one **Downtime Action** at a time. These actions cannot be undertaken in unsafe conditions or while a character is in recovery. A character cannot perform a downtime action if it would put their safety at risk.



Milestones

For activities requiring multiple steps, the Warden assigns 1-5 **Milestones** for players to track progress. Each Milestone represents a comprehensive, non-interactive task. The Warden may present different strategies to achieve these goals, each with distinct Milestones. Depending on the unfolding events in the game, the Warden is also empowered to introduce new Milestones or discard existing ones.

Costs

PCs can complete individual **Milestones** by taking a **Downtime Action** and paying its respective **Cost**. If a character is unable to pay the Cost, they may have to find some other way to achieve their goal. A few examples of Cost:

- **Gold:** Direct payment of gold from a character's inventory.
- **Resources:** Non-monetary costs, such as material goods, specific common items, and so on.
- **Reputation:** Betting on a character's renown, personality, presence, social connections, etc.
- **Loss:** Offering something specific and unique. A finger, a soul, a **Relic**, etc.

Some **Costs** can be reduced or disregarded through character skills, connections, or force of will. For example, a PC may have already acquired the necessary reputation to gain access to a renowned institution, and thus the cost is abated. On the other hand, another character may not be so lucky and must rely on their force of personality instead. In this case, the Warden should state the risk (a permanent ban on entry, a loss of reputation, etc.). The PC then makes a **WIL save**; on a success, the cost is either reduced or avoided entirely.

Downtime Actions

The following activities represent some of the most common **Downtime Actions** a players can choose. The Warden can also create custom actions based on the needs of play.

Research

A PC investigates a single question about a bit of lost or forgotten lore, the location of a lost item, the whereabouts of an important NPC, and so on. To take this action, the player must have a clearly formulated question they'd like to answer and a **Source** of knowledge in the game world that their character can interact with. If the PC does not have a Source, then they can spend a **Downtime Action** trying to find one. There is no guarantee that they will be successful. Once a question is posed and an appropriate Source has been identified, the Warden should provide any **Milestones** and associated **Costs**.

Questions

As always, the question must come from an experience that occurred during play.

Examples:

- “Where is the Lost Temple of East Nipoor?”
- “Who in Fortune City might know how to crack an ancient vault?”
- “Where can I find the cure to curly sickness?”

Sources

A Source is a person, place, faction, or entity that holds either a part or whole answer that the character seeks. They can be NPCs, Factions, spirits, or even other PCs.

Examples:

- Kewr the Mouth, a frequent contact for the Conclave of Merchants. Despite their excellent relationship with this faction, asking for help in an illicit activity might come at a high cost.
- A Woodwose who makes his home deep in the Forest of Knives. The party encountered him in an earlier expedition, and the encounter did not end well. Still, he is said to know the nature of every herb and their healing properties.
- The Temple of Puppets, a nomadic circus troupe who have travelled the known and unknown lands. The party assisted one of their members during the Rain of Fire, when even the creatures of the Wood were preparing to flee their homes. If anyone has heard of forgotten places, it's them.

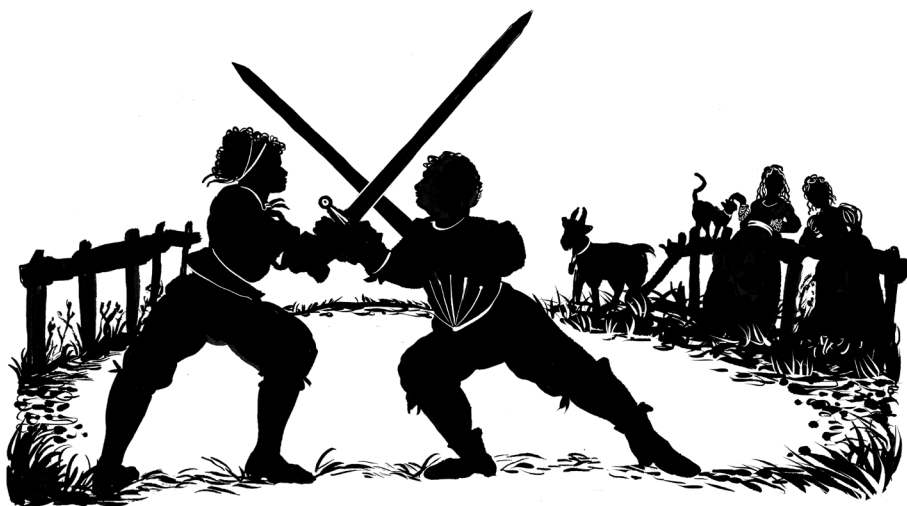
Training

A character can improve their skills with an item or ability, with clear narrative or mechanical results. They might be interested in dealing greater damage with a particular weapon, decreasing their chances of getting lost in rough weather, or learning to read the languages of the ancients. A PC might spend multiple **Downtime Actions** sparring with a particular weapon, improving their skills week by week. Or they may need to travel to the home of a distant sage, improving themselves through short but intense study.

The player must describe precisely what they'd like to improve and a **Master** whom they might train with. And of course, the character's inspiration to improve should come from an experience in play. The Warden should provide any **Milestones** and associated **Costs**.

Examples:

- **The Two-Handed Parry:** When fighting with one hand free, a PC's HP temporarily increases by 1d4. The party took on a hireling from the Cratered Lands, whose fighters emphasize avoiding enemy attacks. She has agreed to train anyone who can best her in hand to hand combat.
- **Herbology:** Given proper ingredients, a PC can create a Healing Salve (restores 1d4 STR, 1 use) as a **Downtime Action**. After receiving care from an elderly herbalist in the Verdant Glades, the wounded PC asked to be trained in the healing arts. The Master has agreed, but asked that they collect three rare herbs before training can begin.
- **Troutmaster:** When taking the **Supply** Action, Rations gathered near cold freshwater sources increase by one step (e.g. 1d4 becomes 1d6). The party escorted a stranded naturalist from the famously dreadful Silver Wastes safely back to the city. As thanks, she has offered to train a PC to identify and capture a common lakefish that frequents colder waters.



Strengthening Ties

A character fosters a connection with an NPC or Faction in the game world. First, they must identify the entity with whom they wish to strengthen ties, as well as a specific intent (e.g., building trust, mending a friendship, seeking membership in a Faction, forming an alliance, and so on). The Warden then provides concrete measures (described as **Milestones** and **Costs**) that the PC can undertake to advance the relationship. With each completed Milestone, the Warden describes how the PC's relationship has grown or changed.

Examples:

- After returning from an unsuccessful delve into the Roots, a PC discovers that they'd unknowingly brought along a stowaway: an eyeless devourer, barely hatched. They decide to keep the creature and train it in secret.
- During a play session, a PC becomes friendly with an Agent of the Order of the Helm. Impressed by the Order's values, the PC asks what the requirements are to join.
- An agent for a powerful faction dies during the Battle of Frogs while under the party's care. The party wishes to provide redress, so that the party can once again perform tasks for that faction.



The Setting of Vald





Vald

Introduction

The implied setting of Cairn is called Vald, encompassing all developed or settled lands, cities, towns, forests, etc. The specific ruler is irrelevant, as most adventures will take place in smaller towns and villages, the forest, and the margins of the realm. Most inhabitants (regardless of region) refer to the local centers of power as the Cities, occasionally as a pejorative.

Towns and villages are built near water and lumber sources, within a day's walk of each other. Larger villages may rely on nearby farms and hunters. Settlements are often organized around specific industries like lumber, brewing, fishing, or mining, with a Fieldwarden or Beast Handler protecting their most valued assets.

Established trails between larger towns are fairly common, while maintained roads are almost non-existent except to the distant cities. Itinerant merchants, Kettlewrights, and various peddlers pass through settlements on a semi-regular basis, sometimes hiring Outriders to protect and escort larger caravans, or Rill Runners to help ferry passengers in the Riverlands.

Even the smallest village may play host to scholarly types from the cities: a Scrivener, Aurifex, or Greenwise with keen interest in nearby tombs, barrows, and Gates. Often a Bonekeeper or Fungal Forager will be hired for their expertise, while clever adventurers will ensure that a Barber-Surgeon is never far away, or a Cutpurse if there is unsavory business that needs tending to. Of course, Mountebanks and Jongleurs often accompany these sorts, riding their coattails in hopes that they too will benefit from the next major discovery.

Those who enter the Wood hire a guide familiar with the territory, such as a Prowler or Fletchwind, while the truly determined traveler will seek the wisdom of a Half Witch or Foundling with some connection to its darker secrets. Closer to the border, the Marchguard work to keep the realm free of outside influence, while the Hexenbane seek to protect it from forces within.



The Wood

The Wood surrounds and divides the realm, representing not just one forest, but all forests. Denizens of the Wood are fiercely independent, believing they are subject solely to its rules. Its various peoples, creatures, and unrelenting natural elements have kept the outside world at bay since time immemorial.

At the core of each forest is a Heart Tree, the place where the forest is at its most powerful as well as its most dangerous. Each Heart Tree is born from a single Heartseed, acquired exclusively from a Heart Tree that is dying or dead.

The Wood is populated by creatures strange and wondrous, such as Goblins, Spirits, Treants, Trolls, Werewolves, Witches, and even talking plants and animals. Most are openly hostile to outsiders (particularly humans), but others will (on occasion) parley with those that have shown respect for the Wood. Of course, all demonstrate utter respect for the Fae (sometimes called the Pale Folk, or the Neighbors).

Of course, the Wood is not empty of people. Those who can survive (or even thrive) in such places learn to live according to the rules of the forest, for those who ignore or foolishly oppose these rules often meet grisly ends.

The Roots

The Roots is a realm of mystery and horror underground, where vast caves loom as large as an emptied ocean, without even a hint of sunlight. The various creatures and wild animals that survive there have developed natural means to live in the utter darkness, adapting their eyesight to function in even the dimmest light or eschewing vision altogether.

Entrances to the Roots, known as Gates, are scattered across the lands and are usually hidden or protected by powerful forces. Once opened, Gates permit dangerous creatures to pass through, giving them free reign over the weak and vulnerable.

Only the brave and foolish enter the Roots, and most do not return. The few that do whisper of the indescribable horrors and evil intelligence guarding these lost treasures. Still, there will always be those who cannot resist the draw of forgotten Relics, profound wealth, or knowledge, for there are rumors that creatures far more interesting than wild beasts make their home in the depths below.

Read more about Vald in the Warden's Guide.





Cairn