

WHAT IS THIS GAME?

This is a game about fighting monsters. About larger-than-life, extraordinary heroes plunging into battle against terrifying, monstrous enemies.

That covers a lot! So let's get specific and talk about what this game is, and what it is not.

This game will absolutely feature dungeons. Ancient underground complexes filled with ravenous undead or creeping oozes. But it isn't a dungeon crawler. It's not about "clearing rooms." It's not a survival horror game where you must track light and food and the weight of every object you carry.

You can fight monsters in a dungeon, but the game is not *about* dungeons. Lots of games focus on that gameplay and do it really well! Like [Shadowdark](#).

It's not a wilderness exploration game, aka a hex crawl. It's not about surviving in extreme weather, getting lost, or trying to navigate your way back to safety.

You can fight monsters in the wilderness, even run a whole campaign in the wilderness, but this game is not about the wilderness. We love games that focus on that fantasy, like [Forbidden Lands](#).

You can run adventures with horror themes, but this is not a horror roleplaying game like [Call of Cthulhu](#). Your sessions can and will feature comedy, but this isn't a comedy RPG like [Paranoia](#).

We genuinely love all those games. But we love them because they focus on specific genres of gameplay and deliver on them really well.

Our game is heroic fantasy. That's its genre. Extraordinary people fighting dragons and necromancers.

But "heroic fantasy" is still a little too broad for our purposes, so we added two other keywords to explain how our game might be different from other games in this genre: tactical and cinematic.

These terms are just guidelines. A vibe. But we find them useful when trying to choose between different features. "Both of these ideas are cool, but which is the most cinematic? The most heroic?"

So let's talk about what we mean when we use these terms.

TACTICAL

Strategy is: "What are we trying to do?" Break a siege, free a prisoner, rescue a captive, steal a tome of ancient lore. Strategy is about long-term goals.

Tactics is about: "How are we going to do that?" We're going to ... surround them! Sneak around them! Pick them off one by one! Kill their leader first. Kill their priest first! "No resurrections!"

In a tactical game, *positioning matters*. So our game is played on a grid. Effects and distances are measured in squares. This means everyone is looking at the same problem, and there is no ambiguity regarding where the heroes and villains are in relation to each other. The

hobgoblin troopers are setting themselves up in a line to stop our tactician and fury from getting into melee with the hobgoblin war mage. We can all see that happening, and can talk about what we're going to do to stop it.

That means *teamwork matters*. That's why initiative works the way it does—to encourage the players to plan! "Okay, you use Concussive Slam on that trooper, it'll push him back, and on my turn I can use Phalanx Forward to get us all into melee with the death captain."

We think focusing on teamwork also makes the game more heroic! :D

In a tactical game, you have many choices each round. You are never reduced to just swinging your sword. You have options. If we do a good job, you don't feel like you outlasted your opponents because you wore their Stamina down before they could reduce yours to 0—you feel like you *beat* those hobgoblins! Through stealth and sorcery, coordination and ferocity!

As you play with the same group of characters, you learn what they can all do. You discover synergies, "combos." Some of them intended by the designers, some not! You start to learn these unique characters, and rely on them to do their cool things. It's a great feeling when another player comes up with a cool plan that relies on your unique abilities.

You learn which characters are the "squishies" who need to be protected or healed. You learn which characters can push themselves right to the edge and keep fighting. "Don't worry about healing Barlaca. She's our fury. She's happier with 3 Stamina."

Our game is not *about* tactics. It's not a war game. But it is tactical.

HEROIC

Our game is *definitely* about heroism! :D

For us, this means a couple of things. It means we don't assume your character is primarily motivated by greed. They might be! But we don't *assume* that. Instead we assume you're going to do the right thing. It might take some convincing, and there might be some reluctant heroes in your party, but that's part of the fun!

You should absolutely be able to run a [Chain of Acheron](#)-style campaign where the heroes are hard-bitten mercenaries in a morally ambiguous world. But that's not the baseline assumption. The fiction and adventures that inspire us feature epic villains trying to remake the world in their image, and the dashing, unyielding heroes who strive against them even in the face of impossible odds.

So that's one component of the heroic keyword. But another component, equally important, is what kinds of things happen "on-screen," so to speak. This is very closely related to the cinematic keyword.

For instance, you never see Indiana Jones having to find a local sporting goods store because he needs to stock up on ammo. You never see Katniss Everdeen have to stop and take a shower because she stinks.

These things do happen. No one watching *Raiders of the Lost Ark* thinks that Indy's gun is magical and doesn't need

bullets—but we just don’t need to see Indy doing that stuff. We don’t need to waste time on it.

Likewise in our game, we don’t worry about stuff that heroes in fiction tend not to worry about. We don’t worry how much everything you’re carrying weighs. If you try to lift a bear, you might have trouble, sure. But nowhere on your character sheet are you tracking the weight of every item.

You don’t track food such as rations, and you don’t worry about how many torches you have. Light might factor into a specific environment, because that can be a fun tactical challenge, but the game doesn’t expect that everyone is always worried about running out of light.

Basically, we worry only about those things you’d see your characters doing in a movie, or a comic, or a novel about their adventures. Assume all the tedious stuff happens off-screen.

Speaking of things happening on-screen ...

CINEMATIC

Closely tied to the heroic keyword, the cinematic keyword is about how we like powers and abilities with a strong visual component. You can imagine your character doing or saying these things. “In All This Confusion” is a good name for the shadow’s ability to slip out of melee and retreat to safety. The text of the ability says how it works, but the name creates a visual that explains *how* it’s working.

When Sir Vanazor the dragon knight fury leaps onto a goblin war spider, cleaving through the goblins riding the creature in a single turn, you can *see* it in your mind. It feels like a movie. It doesn’t feel simply as if you rolled well, but like an epic scene, complete with slow motion and a Carpenter Brut soundtrack.

You should imagine your tactician character leading the battle, granting your allies free strikes, extra maneuvers. *Coordinating* the battle. That’s what the name implies. And if we’ve done a good job, when you read the character’s abilities, you think, “Yes! This is what I was imagining! I can’t wait to do this!”

FANTASY

Just ... you know ... it’s got dragons and stuff. :D

It’s worth mentioning—while everyone basically already knows what fantasy means in this context, we do imagine it a little more broadly than your average classical medieval fantasy. We like that stuff! Vasloria is our medieval European fantasy analog with knights on horseback and wizards in towers. But we also like high fantasy urban intrigue, and so we’re developing Capital, the City of the Great Game, the Greatest City In This or Any Age. Vasloria is mostly humans and elves and orcs and dwarves, but Capital has dozens, *hundreds* of different ancestries in it.

Looking back at movies like *Star Wars* and the work of artists like Chris Foss, that ’70s stuff now seems explicitly fantastical. There’s nothing scientific or even plausible

about a lightsaber or a John Berkey spaceship. But damn, they look cool!

So our setting includes the timescape—our multiverse, of which the world of Orden containing Capital and Vasloria is only one part. The timescape is more explicitly “space fantasy.”

These core rules mostly cover the classic fantasy stuff. But we think Capital and the timescape will help us deliver a game where more people can see their fantasy in our worlds.

For us, fantasy includes magic, like wizards casting spells, and psionics, the natural and focused ability some creatures have to manipulate and warp reality with their minds. You know, telekinesis and telepathy! Jean Grey style!

IF YOU’RE COMING FROM D20 FANTASY ...

We know many folks are coming to this game having only experienced d20 fantasy RPGs. Here are a few key distinctions between this game and typical d20 fantasy that you’ll notice right away. These aren’t the only distinctions, but they’re the most obvious:

Abilities automatically deal damage. You can still have a bad turn! A tier one result is not awesome, but at least you’re making progress. The trick is: who’s making progress *faster*? You or the monsters? Since there’s no “I miss, next” in this game, fights tend to be short. Five rounds is a *long* fight. Because everyone’s always doing damage!

You don’t need to rest all the time. Most d20 fantasy games are games of attrition. Your spell slots and other features dwindle as the adventuring day goes on. In *Draw Steel*, you need to rest to regain your Stamina and Recoveries (the stat that determine how robust you are in combat). But all characters earn the ability to use their magic and other awesome abilities as they adventure, encouraging you to press on heroically.

Character options are different. We very strongly recommend you start by looking through the character creation section *before* you decide what you want to play. You can’t just assume the conduit is “basically a cleric.” In some ways it is! But in other ways it’s very different. You may have some cool character archetype you love to play in d20 Fantasy and you’re dying to see how it works in *Draw Steel*, but you’ll have a lot more fun if you start by browsing the Ancestries and Class sections and being inspired. Once you know how the game works, you’ll have a better handle on how to build your favorite character in here.

Smaller bonuses and penalties. *Draw Steel* is built around the roll of two ten-sided dice to produce three possible outcomes. On the surface, this might not seem that different from rolling a twenty-sided die and having two outcomes, but we've run the math. A lot. A bonus of +1 or penalty of -2 is significant in *Draw Steel*, much more so than in a typical d20 fantasy game. That means you should feel pretty good attempting most power rolls—the rolls you make to determine success out of combat—if you have a decent characteristic bonus on those rolls. And if you have a specific skill that applies to a power roll made as a test outside of combat, you'll do even better.

Our game has a lot of skills. Your character can make use of a long list of skills, but we don't expect you to memorize that list. We get into why there are so many skills in the [Tests](#) chapter, but the short version is that we think having a lot of skills allows you to create more distinct and specialized heroes, which supports the sort of gameplay we want to see in *Draw Steel*. And skills in *Draw Steel* aren't tied to characteristics. If you're trying to lose someone in a crowd? You can use Presence to Hide! Why not?

We won't be able to point out every difference. Beyond what's noted here, don't assume that these rules work like any d20 fantasy game you've played. We don't have the space to point out every exception. So if you're in doubt about how something works, put d20 fantasy out of your mind and read our rules without those assumptions, and you'll find that things make better sense. If you're still confused, stop by the [MCDM Discord](#) and ask. We've got tons of awesome community members ready to help!

We don't expect you to do everything to the letter. This is actually one thing *Draw Steel* does have in common with d20 fantasy. This is a big book of rules! Don't stress if you need to look something up or make a ruling about an edge case on the fly. If everyone's having fun, you're doing it right.

THE BASICS

The flow of playing *Draw Steel* is like playing any other tabletop roleplaying game with a Director (also called a Game Master or GM in other games). Play is a conversation between the Director and the heroes that describes the story. The Director sets the scene, describing the important elements of the environment that the heroes would notice.

Director: *You stand in the doorway of the top level of the ruined necromancer's tower. The air is stale and reeks of death. A pale full moon shines through a broken ceiling, illuminating six sarcophagi upon a raised dais, each with a lid carved in the likeness of a devil. Broken flasks, beakers, and other laboratory glass covers the floor.*

After the Director sets the scene, each player describes how their character interacts with the area. The Director then describes how the environment and any creatures in it respond to the heroes' actions.

Alyssa (playing Jorn): *I'm going to hang out at the back of the group with my warhammer drawn. I want to be ready in case any of those skeletons we snuck by on the lower levels make their way up the stairs.*

Matt (playing Linn): *Linn uses her Telekinesis ability to sweep up the glass on the floor and form a path free of glass that goes from the door to the dais.*

James (playing Korvo): *I'll light a torch as I step into the room. Is there anything new we can see now?*

Director: *With the glass cleared away and brighter light glowing in the room, you can see that the floor is covered in faded sigils.*

At some point, a player will have their hero attempt a task that has a risk of failing in a way that is narratively interesting. In such cases, the Director calls for some dice to be rolled! Don't worry—the rules outline when and how to do this.

Grace (playing Val): *Before anyone steps on them, I want to examine the symbols and figure out what they mean.*

Director: *Okay, well for that, I need you to make an easy Reason test.*

Grace: *I got a 12! What do I know?*

Director: *You can tell these old sigils are part of a necromancy spell that has been woven into the stone floor. Also, Jorn can hear something coming up the steps. It's the clicking and clacking of bone on stone.*

Alyssa: *Uh, let's make a decision here, folks. We got boneheads incoming!*

Matt: *Linn has had enough of this dillydallying. She moves to the dais and ushers everyone inside the room so we can shut and barricade the door.*

Grace: *Uh-oh.*

Director: *Before anyone else can move, Linn's foot connects with one of the sigils. A burst of red lightning cracks from the place where her foot touched the floor, running to the walls and up to the ceiling.*

Matt: *Oh, right. Necromancy.*

Grace: *Yeah. Should have warned you.*

Director: *The whole tower starts to sway as the sarcophagus lids slide to the floor and clawed undead hands emerge from within. Six decaying devils, each tattooed with glowing green runes, rise. They're eager for violence.*

James: *I think we found the Rotting Lords of Hell.*

Director: *Draw steel!*

When combat begins, it's time to use a square-gridded map and miniatures to represent the position of the heroes relative to their enemies and the environment. The rules become a little more granular during combat to keep things interesting and fair, but the idea that the game is a conversation between the Director and the other players remains the same.

CHARACTERISTICS

Each creature in the game has five characteristics that represent their physical and mental prowess.

MIGHT

Might (M) represents strength and brawn. A creature's ability to break down doors, swing an axe, stand up during an earthquake, or hurl an ally across a chasm is determined by Might.

AGILITY

Agility (A) represents coordination and nimbleness. A creature's ability to backflip out of danger, shoot a crossbow, dodge an explosion, or pluck keys from a guard's belt is determined by Agility.

REASON

Reason (R) represents a logical mind and education. A creature's ability to solve a puzzle that unlocks a door, recall lore about necromancy, decipher a coded message, or blast a foe with psionic power is determined by Reason.

INTUITION

Intuition (I) represents instincts and experience. A creature's ability to recognize a faint sound as the approach of a distant rider, quickly read the tell of a bluffing gambler, calm a rearing horse, or track a monster across the tundra is determined by Intuition.

PRESENCE

Presence (P) represents force of personality. A creature's ability to lie to a judge, convince a crowd to join a revolution, impress a queen at a royal banquet, or cast a magic spell by singing a song is determined by Presence.

CHARACTERISTIC SCORES

Each characteristic has a score that runs from -5 to +5. The higher a score, the more impact the creature has with that characteristic. A baby bunny rabbit would have a

Might score of -5, while an ancient dragon would have a Might score of 5. The average human has a score of 0 in all their characteristics. Characteristic scores are added to power rolls—the dice rolls you make whenever your character attempts a task with an uncertain outcome (see [Power Rolls](#)).

RESISTING POTENCIES

Many effects inflict conditions and unique statuses on heroes and their enemies. But creatures get a chance to resist these effects. A creature with a high Might score should be harder to knock prone than a creature who is lacking in that characteristic.

These effects have a potency and only take hold of the target if the effect's potency value is higher than the target's indicated characteristic scores.

A potency always appears in text as a capital letter followed by a less-than sign (<) single digit number, such as **M < 1** or **R < 3**. The letter indicates which characteristic is used to resist the effect (M for Might, A for Agility, R for Reason, I for Intuition, and P for Presence), and the number indicates the minimum score in that characteristic the target needs to beat the effect.

For example, a 1st-level conduit's Punishing Smite ability has the following power roll outcomes:

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **3 holy damage; A < 0 prone**
- 12–16: **6 holy damage; A < 1 prone**
- 17+: **9 holy damage; A < 2 prone and can't stand (save ends)**

If the conduit uses this ability and targets a bandit with an Agility score of 0, then a tier 1 result would deal holy damage to the bandit but have no other effect. But a tier 2 result would deal damage and knock the bandit prone while a tier 3 result would deal damage and knock the bandit prone and mean the bandit couldn't get up until they succeed on a saving throw.

YOUR POTENCY

Many of your abilities have a potency. The characteristic a target uses to resist is based on the ability used, and the value of your potency is based on one of your characteristics and determined by your choice of class during character creation.

You have weak, average, and strong potency values. All of these values increase as your hero advances in level and gains power.

- Your weak potency value is equal to your highest characteristic score - 2.
- Your average potency value is equal to your highest characteristic score - 1.
- Your strong potency value is equal to your highest characteristic score.

ADJUSTING POTENCIES

Potencies are made for quick resolution at the table, but there are some triggered actions and other abilities that allow you to manipulate their value. If you build a hero who can adjust a potency, pay attention during battle! You

might be able to help out a friend who needs a little boost to make their ability take full effect or an enemy about to lock down one of your allies who has a potency that needs some dampening. As the saying goes, "Teamwork makes the potencies dynamic." Yeah, that's the saying.

DICE

This game uses ten-sided dice (also called d10s). Each player and the Director should have two of these. Some ten-sided dice are numbered 0 to 9 while others are numbered 1 to 10. In the case of the former, a 0 counts as 10.

The game also makes occasional use of a six-sided die (called a d6), so it's helpful if each player has one or two of those as well.

D3s

On rare occasions, the rules ask a player to roll one or more three-sided dice (also called d3s). If you don't have a d3, you can roll a six-sided die instead, treating a roll of 1–2 as a 1, a roll of 3–4 as a 2, and a roll of 5–6 as a 3.

D100s

Some tables in this book ask the Director to roll a d100. To roll a d100, grab two ten-sided dice. One die represents the tens digit, and the other die is the ones digit. If you roll a 5 for the tens digit and a 3 for the ones digit, the number rolled is 53.

Some ten-sided dice are numbered 0 to 9 while others are numbered 1 to 10. A 10 on the latter counts as a 0 for the purposes of rolling a d100. If a 10 is rolled for the tens digit and a 9 is rolled for the ones digit, the number rolled is 09 or 9.

If both dice rolled show a 0 or 10 result, then the number rolled is 100.

POWER ROLLS

Whenever a hero or other creature in the game attempts a task with an uncertain outcome, such as attacking a foe, sneaking by a guard patrol without being seen, or persuading a queen to provide military aid, the creature makes a power roll to determine the outcome of their actions.

TYPES OF POWER ROLLS

The game uses two types of power rolls. An **ability roll** is used when you activate certain abilities to determine their impact. For instance, if a fury uses their Brutal Slam ability to strike an enemy, their ability roll determines how much damage the enemy takes and how far back the enemy is pushed. See [Abilities](#) for more information.

A **test** is a power roll you make outside of using your abilities to affect or interact with the world around you. A tactician might not have an ability that lets them climb up the face of a cliff, so climbing is an activity they can attempt with a test. An elementalist doesn't have an ability that lets them automatically intimidate a cultist into

backing down from a fight, but they can make a test if they want to try. See [Tests](#) for more information.

MAKING A POWER ROLL

When you make a power roll, you roll two ten-sided dice (sometimes noted as 2d10 in the rules) and add one of your characteristics. The characteristic you add depends on the kind of roll you're making, as outlined in [Abilities](#) and [Tests](#).

POWER ROLL OUTCOMES

The result of a power roll determines your outcome tier—three levels that determine how successful your power roll is.

Tier 1: If your power roll result is **11 or lower**, it is a tier 1 result. This is the worst result a power roll can have. If you're using an ability, a tier 1 result means you still do something, but the impact of what you do is minimal. With this result, a strike ability might deal a little bit of damage and not do much else. For a test, a tier 1 result means you fail at what you set out to do, and you might also suffer a negative consequence.

Tier 2: If your power roll result is **12 to 16**, it is a tier 2 result. This is the average result of many power rolls, especially for heroes who are 1st level. When using an ability, a tier 2 result means that what you do has a moderate impact. With this result, a strike ability deals a decent amount of damage and has an effect that briefly helps allies or hinders enemies. For a test, a tier 2 result means you might succeed at what you set out to do—though depending on the difficulty, success might have a cost.

Tier 3: If your power roll result is **17 or higher**, it is a tier 3 result. This is the best result a power roll can have. When using an ability, a tier 3 result means you deliver the maximum impact possible. With this result, a strike ability deals a lot of damage and has a powerful or lasting effect on enemies or allies. For a test, a tier 3 result means you succeed at what you set out to do. If the test has an easy difficulty, you also get a little something extra in addition to your success.

The specific outcome of any power roll is determined by the effect or ability that requires the roll (see [Abilities](#)) or the rules for tests (see [Tests](#)).

DOWNGRADE A POWER ROLL

Whenever you make a power roll, you can downgrade it to select the result of a lower tier. For instance, if an ability has a tier 3 result that lets you impose the restrained condition on a creature, but the tier 2 result for that ability lets you impose the slowed condition, you can use the tier 2 result if you would rather have the creature slowed than restrained.

If you downgrade a critical hit, you still get the extra action benefit of the critical hit (see [Critical Hit](#) in [Abilities](#)).

NATURAL RESULT

The result of your power roll before your characteristic or any other modifiers are applied is called the natural result. The rules often refer to this as “rolling a natural X,” where X is the result of the roll. For example, if you get a 20 on

the power roll before adding your characteristic, this is called rolling a natural 20.

Whenever you roll a natural 19 or 20 on a power roll, you always achieve the tier 3 result, no matter what characteristic is added to the roll and whether or not the roll has any banes.

EDGES AND BANES

An archer standing on a castle wall fires down into a throng of enemies, hitting the mark each time thanks to their high ground. A drunken bandit struggles to land blows on sober opponents as alcohol clouds their senses. Under certain circumstances, you need more than just a characteristic to represent the advantages and disadvantages that heroes, their enemies, and their allies might have.

EDGE

An edge represents a situational advantage a hero or an enemy has when making a power roll. For example, a standing hero who makes a melee strike against a prone creature gains an edge on the power roll for their strike. A pair of magic gloves that makes your hands sticky might grant you an edge when making a power roll to climb walls!

When you make a power roll with a single edge, you add 2 to the roll. If you make a power roll with two or more edges, you have a **double edge**. This means you don't add anything to the power roll, but the result of the roll automatically improves one tier (to a maximum of tier 3).

BANE

A bane represents a situational disadvantage a hero or an enemy has when making a power roll. For example, if you make an strike while prone, the power roll for the strike takes a bane. A rainstorm might give you a bane on a power roll made to climb an outdoor wall because the weather makes the stone surface extra slick.

When you make a power roll with a single bane, you subtract 2 from the roll. If you make a power roll with two or more banes, you have a **double bane**. This means you don't subtract anything from the power roll, but the result of the roll automatically decreases one tier (to a minimum of tier 1).

ROLLING WITH EDGES AND BANES

Under certain circumstances, you might have one or more edges and banes on the same roll. For instance, you might take a bane when weakened by poison, even as you gain an edge for striking a prone creature. In general, edges and banes cancel each other out, resolving as follows:

- If you have an edge and a bane, or if you have a double edge and a double bane, the roll is made as usual without any edges or banes.
- If you have a double edge and just one bane, the roll is made with one edge, regardless of how many single edge instances contribute to the double edge.
- If you have a double bane and just one edge, the roll is made with one bane, regardless of how many single bane instances contribute to the double bane.

WHEN TO USE EDGES AND BANES

The rules tell you when to modify a roll with an edge or a bane. The Director can also modify rolls with edges and banes as a response to narrative or environmental circumstances. For instance, no rule specifically says that rain imposes a bane on power rolls made to climb a stone wall. But it makes sense that rainy conditions should make climbing that wall harder, so a Director should absolutely do so!

WHY CAP?

We capped edges and banes at a maximum of two each for several reasons, including thinking about the narrative of those penalties. Every little advantage or disadvantage in a heroic story has diminishing returns, acknowledging that a creature can only benefit or be hindered by short-term circumstances so much. For example, a character who is prone and weakened by poison already finds it difficult to attack—so that becoming restrained by a net can't really make it harder.

We also liked capping edges and banes at two because it keeps play quick. It's nice to not need to count beyond two positive or negative circumstances in a battle with a lot of effects flying around.

BONUSES AND PENALTIES

While edges and banes cover most circumstantial effects that can have an impact on a power roll, a few rules add numeric bonuses or penalties to power rolls. Bonus and penalty values are specified in the rules that impose them, and are calculated independently of edges and banes, and before edges and banes are factored into a power roll. There is no limit to the number of bonuses or penalties that can apply to a power roll, and bonuses and penalties always add together.

Though it might sound as if the math with bonuses and penalties can get confusing, fear not! Bonuses and penalties are rare except in the case of skills, which appear on your character sheet (see [Skills](#) for more information).

AUTOMATIC TIER RESULTS

There are a few effects in the game that allow a creature to achieve automatic tier 1, 2, or 3 results. These effects supersede all edges, banes, bonuses, and penalties. When you are experiencing one of these effects and the roll would have special effects if you get a specific natural result, such as a critical hit when you use an ability as an action in combat, you can still make the roll to see if you achieve the natural result for an additional effect in addition to the automatic result.

If you are under two effects that each give you automatic results, then they cancel each other out and all automatic results are ignored.

HERO TOKENS

In all great heroic stories, luck favors the protagonists, giving them that little bit of extra fortune they need to win the day. In these stories, fate is often on the side of the righteous.

To represent that tiny bit of karma, players have access to hero tokens, a special resource that they can rely on when all else fails.

Hero tokens are a group resource that is tracked by the players and kept in a pool that is accessible to all their characters. They can be tracked using poker chips, stones, or other markers or numerically on a piece of paper or written off to the side in a virtual tabletop.

EARNING HERO TOKENS

At the start of a new game session, the heroes have a number of hero tokens equal to the number of heroes in the party.

The heroes can earn more tokens through play by taking big risks to save others. A hero who leaps off a cliff to get the bottom and aid a friend, who crosses a burning bridge to save a stray cat, or who wagers their most prized treasure as part of a negotiation to get shelter for a group of refugees earns a hero token for the group. The Director has the final say in what acts earn hero tokens.

Players can also be awarded hero tokens as part of a test's outcome when they succeed in a task with a reward (see [Tests](#)).

SPENDING HERO TOKENS

Whenever hero tokens are available, you can spend them in the follow ways. You can only spend one hero token on your turn or per test:

- You can spend a hero token to gain two surges.
- You can spend a hero token when you fail a saving throw to succeed on it instead.
- When you fail a test or succeed on a test with a consequence, you can spend a hero token to turn the failure into a success and to lose any consequence suffered.
- You can spend 2 hero tokens on your turn or whenever you take damage (no action required) to regain Stamina equal to your Recovery value without spending a Recovery.

Unless the Director decides otherwise, unused hero tokens disappear at the end of a session. A Director may lift this restriction if the heroes end a session with more hero tokens than they had at the start

GAME OF EXCEPTIONS

This game has a fair number of rules. But it also has plenty of character options, specialized equipment, and other game elements that let you break those rules. This is on purpose! Breaking the rules allows heroes to feel special and makes their foes seem extra dangerous.

If you're not sure what to do when two rules come into conflict with each other, remember that a specific exception always beats a more general rule. The Director has the final say in how rules are adjudicated.

ALWAYS ROUND DOWN

There are times when the rules tell you to divide a number in half. Whenever you divide an odd number in half and it results in a decimal, round the result down to the nearest whole number. For instance, if you have a speed of 7 and become slowed (a condition that halves your speed), then your speed becomes 3.

CREATURES AND OBJECTS

This game uses the terms “creature” and “object.” Creatures are living or unliving beings such as animals, elves, humans, dragons, giants, zombies, and valok. Objects are inanimate matter such as walls, carriages, cups, swords, ropes, coins, paintings, columns, and buildings.

When a creature dies, their body becomes an object, and can be affected by abilities and other effects that target objects. For example, a talent can’t use their Telekinesis power to slide an unwilling enemy cult leader into an evil temple’s pit of hellfire. But if that boss dies, the talent can slide their body into the pit to prevent the boss from being raised as a powerful undead by the temple’s magic.

The game sometimes refers to “unattended objects,” which are objects that aren’t held, worn, or controlled by a creature. Whenever an ability affects objects, it affects only unattended objects unless the Director determines otherwise. Among other things, this prevents abilities from being used to damage a foe’s armor, weapons, clothing, magic items, and so forth while those objects or worn or held.

SUPERNATURAL OR MUNDANE

The word supernatural is used to describe abilities, creatures, and objects that are magical or psionic in nature. The word mundane is used to describe abilities, creatures, and objects that aren’t magical or psionic.

PCS AND NPCs

Two types of characters inhabit the world of the game—the player characters (also called PCs or heroes) who are created and controlled by the players, and nonplayer characters (NPCs) created and controlled by the Director. NPCs can include any of the game’s monsters, but when the rules refer to NPCs, they generally do so in the context of interacting with them outside of combat.

BUILDING A HEROIC NARRATIVE

The game takes place in a series of scenes with the heroes as the main characters. An adventure is a collection of scenes that make up a story, with a beginning, middle, and end, and a campaign is a collection of adventures that tell the entire epic tale of a group of heroes. You can think of each adventure as a movie in a saga of films, a book in a series of novels, or a season of a television show. While many heroes have their stories told over the course of a campaign, some wrap up their careers in a single adventure that takes place in one game session, called a

one-shot. You can think of a one-shot as a great stand-alone novella or movie.

This game is built so that each adventure you play and each battle you fight gets more exciting as it goes on. In fantastic tales, the heroes and their foes both grow in power over the course of an adventure. But it isn’t time alone that grows a hero’s capabilities. Rather, it’s the adrenaline that comes from battle, the danger of the hero’s profession, and the pressure to save the world that pushes a character to do the impossible. Each small act of heroism gives a hero the confidence and bravery to perform legendary feats against all odds.

The things a hero can achieve at the end of the story are far more daring and impactful than what they do at the start, and the final showdown against a villain’s forces is more deadly and desperate than the first. The rules of the game help build a heroic narrative in this same fashion, making use of the four most important mechanics for building heroic narratives: Victories, Experience, Heroic Resources, and Recoveries.

VICTORIES

Victories measure your hero’s increasing power over the course of an adventure, as they overcome battles and other challenges. At the start of an adventure, your hero has 0 Victories.

VICTORIES FOR COMBAT

Each time your hero survives a combat encounter in which the party’s objectives are achieved, your Victories increase by 1. The Director can decide that a trivially easy encounter doesn’t increase a hero’s Victories.

VICTORIES FOR NONCOMBAT CHALLENGES

When your hero successfully overcomes a big challenge that doesn’t involve combat, the Director can award you 1 Victory. Such challenges can include things like a particularly complicated and deadly trap, a negotiation, a montage test, a complicated puzzle, or the execution of a clever idea that avoids a battle.

VICTORIES RESET

Whenever you finish a respite (see [Respite](#)), your Victories are converted into Experience.

EXPERIENCE

Victories temporarily increase a hero’s power during an adventure, but Experience (or XP) permanently improves their capabilities. Each time you finish a respite (see below), you gain XP equal to your Victories, then your Victories drop to 0. In other words, your Victories are converted to XP when you finish a respite.

For more information on how XP increases your hero’s power, see [Heroic Advancement](#).

HEROIC RESOURCES

Your hero has a Heroic Resource determined by your class, and which you manage during play. Earning resources can increase your hero’s power, and Resources are spent to activate your most powerful abilities.

Your hero's class description has more information about how to use your Heroic Resource.

BAGS OF RATS AIN'T HEROIC

Some players might think that quickly starting a fight with some bar patrons or carrying around a bag of rats is a good way to gather up those sweet, sweet Victories and Heroic Resources. Those strategies don't work! The rules of the game exist to help you tell a cool heroic fantasy story, not so you can try to be clever and exploit them by harming innocent rats to "win." In order to generate Victories and Heroic Resources, you must face and overcome challenges worthy of a hero!

RECOVERIES

Recoveries represent the number of times your hero can take a breather and keep fighting. Running out of Recoveries means your hero has reached their uttermost limit. You can spend your Recoveries with a special action (see below) or you might get a little magical help from a conduit, a boost of adrenaline from an allied tactician or inspiration from your party's troubadour.

When you spend a Recovery, you regain Stamina equal to your **recovery value**, which is one-third your Stamina maximum.

SPENDING RECOVERIES

During combat encounters and similarly dangerous situations when time is tracked in rounds (see [Combat](#)), you can use the Catch Breath maneuver to regain Stamina. See [Catch Breath](#) in [Maneuvers](#) for more information. Some heroes have abilities that allow them or their allies to spend more Recoveries without using the Catch Breath maneuver.

Outside of combat and other dangerous situations, you can spend Recoveries freely.

REGAINING RECOVERIES

You regain all lost Recoveries when you finish a respite (see [Respite](#)).

RESPITE

A respite is a focused period of rest and recuperation that allows heroes to regain Stamina and Recoveries. During a respite, you must spend 24 hours uninterrupted and doing nothing but sleeping, eating, dressing your wounds, and recuperating in a safe place. You can also undertake one respite activity, such as making a project roll (see [Downtime Projects](#) in future packets for more information), or changing your kit (see [Kits](#)). After 24 hours, your respite ends. You can take as many respites as you like in a row to keep accomplishing respite activities—just know that while you're resting, the enemies are still scheming and carrying out their dastardly plans.

When you finish a respite, you regain all your Recoveries and Stamina, and your Victories convert to Experience. It is best to take a respite in a safe place where you aren't in a hostile environment or at risk of being attacked. If your respite is interrupted by enemies attacking, an earth tremor, swarms of biting insects, and similar serious

distractions, the respite ends early and you don't gain the benefits for finishing it.

The standard eightish hours of sleep one gets at night doesn't count as a respite. The rules assume that all heroes take the time to sleep, eat, and take care of all the other functions necessary for life even if they aren't engaged in a respite.

ORDEN AND THE TIMESCAPE

A new game demands new worlds! Welcome to the timescape—a collection of worlds spanning high fantasy, dark fantasy, and even space fantasy! We sincerely hope you take these rules and adapt them to your own world, or adapt your world to these rules, or something in between!

Our tour begins on the world of Orden, the Prime Manifold—a realm of elves, dwarves, humans, orcs, dragons, and more. But human civilization and politics dominate here, especially in the great city of Capital, a hotbed of urban fantasy intrigue.

Orden contains seven major regions, the largest of which is Vasloria.

VASLORIA

A forested medieval and feudal land, Vasloria holds few cities—just towns and villages. Western Vasloria, including most of Aendrim and Corwell and parts of Graid, was until recently ruled by Good King Omund. His draconian knights, the Dragon Phalanx, protected the weak from the strong, dispensing justice throughout the land. But Omund died fifteen years ago—and so died the rule of law in Vasloria. Now, forests claim towns and roads once held safe under his rule. The woods are dangerous, their only law; tooth and claw.

When Omund was betrayed by Mandrake, a captain of the Dragon Phalanx, his castle fell to Ajax the Invincible—now called the Overlord and the Iron Saint. Ajax's wizard Mortum unlocked the secret of the ancient flying cities of the sky elves to raise the Chrysopolis, Ajax's city-fortress in the sky.

Ajax abolished all faiths and temples in Vasloria. He executed the dukes who served King Omund loyally, leaving only the three surviving baronies of Dalrath, Bedegar, and Tor to hold human civilization together. Once, the people of all the lands of Vasloria were loose allies. There was trade between humans, elves, dwarves, and orcs.

Now there is only suspicion.

The high elves of the Fallen City, once the sky elf city of Irranys, pay tribute to Ajax with ancient artifacts they plunder from their ruined home. The wode elves of the Orchid Court, lacking any centralized government or cities, refuse to bow to the Iron Saint.

The dwarves of Kal Kalavar pay tribute in prisoners they abduct from among those foolish enough to travel the roads unescorted—prisoners who serve Ajax as forced labor or are fed into the Body Banks. Brooding under the mountains in their fabled Hanging City of Kal Kalavar, the

stone dwarves do not like this deal with the Overlord, but they lack the power—or perhaps the will—to rebel.

The Hawklords of the High Aerie now act as Ajax's royal guard. Mounted on their giant hawks, these human warriors project Ajax's power, enforce his tyrannical order, and extend his influence into every corner of the wilderness. Their mastery of the air means that any revolt or rebellion is seen and crushed quickly.

The Dragon Phalanx is broken now, its knights scattered. Ajax has placed a high bounty on their heads. Some folk still see Omund's knights as symbols of justice, heroes of a lost age before might made right. But in every town, every village, there are always desperate people willing to collect the bounty, summoning the Hawklords to pluck any dragon knight foolish enough to travel without a disguise away to the Chrysopolis.

The peoples of Dalrath, Bedegar, and Tor, isolated and outnumbered, desperately fight a losing battle against the encroaching wilderness. Law dies. Chaos thrives.

CAPITAL

The Greatest City in This or Any Age! City of the Great Game! Located west across the Bale Sea from Vasloria on the eastern coast of Rioja, Capital is not only the largest city in Orden. It's the largest city there has ever been—larger than the fabled steel dwarf capital of Kalas Valiar, larger even than Alloy, the City at the Center of the Timescape. Capital is the exception to many rules.

It is a city of playwrights and opera, of spies and sorcery. Famed throughout the world as a city of high magic where flying tapestries act as taxis. But the reality of living in Capital is somewhat more mundane, for only the very wealthy can afford such luxuries.

THE GREAT HOUSES

The Great Houses, Capital's ancient noble families, reluctantly share power with the upstart guilds who think that their vast wealth entitles them to rule. The members of the Great Houses are proud of their city, and believe anyone, from anywhere, should be able to come to Capital and earn a living, own property, expect justice. They just don't think anyone else should be able to rule. The guilds of the city, by contrast, are more egalitarian, more democratic, largely obsessed with accruing wealth—and caring little for the welfare of the city or its people.

The Great Game is espionage, and House Alvaro are the best players in the world. Led by Duke Prospero, House Alvaro sponsors the Imperial University, the greatest center of learning in the world. Nobles from across Orden, including from lands as far away as Vanigar, send their children to learn diplomacy and statecraft at the university. The greatest spies in the world are all graduates of the Actian School, one of the university's many colleges, which once doubled as the intelligence agency of Capital's late prince.

House Vorona runs the city's navy, the largest military organization of any kind in Orden. Their engineers perfected the secret of blackpowder and guard it jealously. The Imperial Navy's canons protect trade across Orden, placing Capital at the center of international affairs.

Vorona's Far Mariners, aka the marines, are the closest thing to a citywide law enforcement organization. Each Great House is expected to police its own district.

Duke Marco Vorona sponsors the Imperial War College, also known as the Academy. A prestigious institution rivaling any college of the Imperial University, the Academy boasts graduates among all the noble families in Orden. This widespread allegiance creates a vast informal network in the city, referred to cynically as the Old Class Ring, that gives House Vorona access to intelligence that other factions can only dream of.

House Navarr, the oldest of the Great Houses, enforces the law of the Church of Saint Ysabella the Pitiless, which they call justice. The house is led by His Grace Orsino, Duke Navarr, archbishop of that most powerful church in the city. Under his rule, House Navarr consolidates a vast network of different churches and knights across the region under one elaborate system of patronage.

Arguably the most powerful Great House, House Valetta controls the city's tax collectors, known as the Arbitros Fiat. Valetta is led by the Duchess Lenore, who opened the *Codex Mortis* while in mourning for her assassinated husband Maximo, speaking a ritual from that ancient necromantic artifact that should have returned her love to life. Instead, she brought about the Lilac Night, which transformed everyone in her district into undead—including herself. The Duchess Lenore is now an immortal vampire queen, a dead lady ruling over a dead city.

THE POWER OF THE GUILDS

Desperate for funds after the Lilac Night, with the city no longer able to rely on House Valetta to deliver the taxes it collected, the price accepted Lady Shirome's offer to buy Great House status for three guilds: the Fulcrum—the city's assayers guild she controls—the Broadsheet Guild and the Farrier's Guild. The Fulcrum controls the Trade Integrity Board, which sets lending rates and leads trade negotiations between Capital and other governments in Orden. It was that guild that convinced the late prince to switch the city to paper money. As a result, Capital is the first and only city in Orden to have a robust monetary policy.

The Broadsheet Guild, formally known as the Font, publishes the thrice-daily news sheets that everyone in the city reads. Guildmaster Inān al-Adwiyya uses a vast network of young people called the Paperfeathers to deliver and sell the broadsheets throughout the city. Lady al-Adwiyya knows almost everything happening anywhere in Capital.

The Farrier's Guild, popularly known as the Rasp, controls transport throughout the city. The guild is led by Lord Kashmir, a heliox from the planar gateway city of Alloy. It was he who introduced the flying tapestries that metaphorically shrank Capital, allowing the rich and powerful to cross the thirteen-mile-wide city in just a few minutes. He also created the Kites, couriers famous for being able to get a message to anywhere in Capital in only a few hours. His monopoly on importing flying tapestries from Alloy gives Lord Kashmir enormous power, and he is not shy about wanting more.

THE MYRIAD WORLDS OF THE TIMESCAPE

Orden is only one world in the timescape! Each star in the night sky is another world, though this fact is not known to most people living on Orden. Higher worlds are more energetic, affording access to alien technologies. Great star freighters ply the space lanes, with knights wielding psionically powered hard-light blades dueling against star pirates with hard-light blasters.

The lower worlds lack the energy necessary for such extraordinary technology to function, and so rely on magic to break the rules.

On Axiom, the Plane of Uttermost Law, the memonek live on a world teeming with complex, inorganic life. UNISOL, the Universal Solar League, ensures and protects trade across the upper worlds, defending the star freighters from pirates such as the time raiders and the infamous Sunrunners on their legendary ship the *K.R.A.D Fearless*.

Meanwhile, on Proteus, the Sea of Eternal Change, the formless proteans rebelled against the synlirii who once ruled the plane of uttermost chaos, exiling the voiceless talkers to the World Below. Now the masters of their world, the proteans take to the stars in their living change-ships, hurling their small fleet against what they perceive as the tyrannical might of UNISOL.

On Quintessence, the lowest of the upper worlds, proteans and memonek alike rub shoulders with devils, fire dwarves, and even humans in Quintessence's capital city of Alloy, the City at the Center of the Timescape. The Free City of Alloy, also known as the City of Brass, is the gateway to the timescape. People traveling to or from the upper and lower worlds meet here to trade goods and information, free from the inflexible laws of UNISOL.

Traveling downward from Quintessence, one arrives on Orden, the Plane of Gods and Sorcery, highest of the lower worlds where magic rules. The gods, forbidden from interfering directly in a world with such a low energy state, rely on saints to enact their will. The technology from the upper worlds does not function down here, unless powered by a strong psionic mind, or the miracle mineral prismacore.

Almost coterminous with Orden is its sister-plane, the World Below, the Dark Under All. This plane of exiles is ruled by A Lie Cloaked In Star's Silver—the Queen of Night, and the first of the Three Sisters Below. The World Below is a land of vast caves and sunless seas. There are no stars here, no sky, only endless caves and warrens. Some of those are vast enough to hold entire cities, including Or-Mazaar, the City of the Black Sun, from where the Queen of Night rules.

The power of the World Below wanes, even as the power of Equinox waxes. Also known as Dusk, this smaller parasitic manifold is home to the exiled shadow elves and ruled by the Queen of Shadows, third of the Three Sisters Below. She plots to return her people to their homeland in Orden, and to escape the twisted shadow world.

The last plane of law, the Seven Cities of Hell is among the lowest of the lower planes. A realm of devils proud of their

civilization, the Seven Cities are each ruled by an archduke who schemes to ascend to the Throne of Hell. Living in a world of bureaucratic law, the devil denizens of Hell have little interest in the other planes. Life is so much more interesting down here. The seven dukes of hell conspired together once, agreeing to create the Order of Desolation, also known as the illriggers. Doing so was meant to extend their power into the timescape, and to defend the Seven Cities from the demon hordes below.

The demons of the Abyssal Waste, the lowest plane, claw and scramble over each other, competing for souls in this heat-blasted desert under a baleful, giant orange sun. Mindless collections of organs, claws, and teeth, demons collect souls until they reach sentience, gaining identity and the blessing of memory. These demons will do anything to escape upward out of the wasteland, lest they lose their collected souls, lose their identities, and fall into that mindless state called lethe.

At the center of the Abyssal Waste lies the Necropolitan Ruin, the Last City. A great city of the dead, the site is ruled by Khorsekef, once the Infinite Pharaoh of the desert wasteland of Khemhara, now the Ultralich. Khorsekef intends to return to Orden and sit once again on his throne in the grand Heliopolis at the center of Khemhara—and he has a plan ...

THE TIMESCAPE IN YOUR GAME

We use the timescape and its medieval fantasyland Orden as the default setting presented in these books. Doing so makes it easier for us as designers to marry our design with real examples from a real (imaginary) fantasy world. We also think it's easier for you to take the names for places, languages, and gods, and replace them with your own. We might reference some hero or villain, saint or god, whose name makes you think, "Well, I don't have that in my setting." If we do a good job, though, you might be inspired to say, "But that makes me think ..." And being inspired is part of the fun!

If you're the Director, you can use as many or as few of the details of the timescape as you like. You might wish to create your own world within the timescape, or use a setting you've created that exists outside of the official MCDM manifolds. You can use details from settings published by other companies. There are no rules when it comes to world-building. Feel free to take what you like from this book and change the rest. For example, you might not care for our dwarves having literal stone skin. That's fine. You can make them fleshy, stout, bearded folk, or mohawked, barrel-chested punk rockers, or anything else you wish. As long as you're running a heroic fantasy campaign about fighting monsters, then the game's rules are still likely to serve your narrative even if that narrative deviates from ours.

If you're a player, ask your Director about the setting where the game takes place and discuss with them the sort of hero you want to create. Maybe you want to play a more traditional gruff and bearded dwarf rather than go all short and stony. An open dialogue and honest discussion with your Director can lead to everyone getting what they want out of the game.

ECHELONS OF PLAY

The core gameplay experience of Draw Steel takes place over 10 levels of play. At 1st level, player characters are already known as heroes and have the power to save their local village. By 10th level, people all over the world know the names of their saviors ... maybe all the worlds!

Since this game encompasses power levels from hometown to demigods, the core experience has been divided into four different echelons, which indicate the types of threats the heroes take on, the stakes of their stories, and the rewards they receive at various levels of play.

1ST ECHELON (LEVELS 1–3)

The 1st echelon of play encompasses levels 1 to 3. At this echelon, the player characters are local heroes. They save lost caravans, besieged villages, and overlooked neighborhoods of cities. The heroes battle bands of mortal humanoids—dwarves, elves, goblins, humans, kobolds, orcs. They face the occasional larger monstrous threat, such as a bredbeddle, ogre, or chimera. These are the kinds of creatures that can threaten a small community, but rarely have plans for world domination or the destruction of the timescape. However, the adversaries might work for or be manipulated by a stronger threat as a foreshadowing of what awaits the hero at higher echelons.

2ND ECHELON (LEVELS 4–6)

The 2nd echelon of play encompasses levels 4 to 6. At this echelon, heroes are now known throughout wider region they serve. In Vasloria, this means that they're saving and celebrated by an entire country. In Capital, their reputation and work now encompasses several different neighborhoods of the enormous city. Heroes of the timescape might be known for saving a planet!

Heroes in this echelon battle humanoids of great supernatural power, such as draconians, devils, and hobgoblins. The bosses they face possess cunning and ambition as great as their terrible power, such as medusas and overminds. Heroes at this level also face the humanoid threats of earlier levels, but these foes are their villainous counterparts of equal power instead of bands of ruffians or marauding armies.

3RD ECHELON (LEVELS 7–9)

The 3rd echelon of play encompasses levels 7 to 9. At this echelon, heroes are saving and known throughout the setting where they serve. Most folks in Vasloria, Capital, or the timescape itself know of the heroes and are grateful for their efforts saving the continent, massive city, or many worlds, respectively. Foes at this echelon include beings of great power, such as giants, vampires, and valok.

4TH ECHELON (LEVEL 10)

The 4th echelon of play encompasses level 10 (and possibly beyond in future products). At this echelon, heroes are saving the entire timescape from threats like liches, powerful dragons, and Ajax the Invincible.

MAKING A HERO

If you're not the Director, then you create and play one of the main characters in the game's story—a hero. Your hero is a person motivated to fight forces of evil to protect the innocent, but each hero has their own personal reason for doing so. You don't have to be a pure beacon of good. Heroes have flaws and are complex, just like people in the real world. But your hero should be someone who isn't afraid to battle monsters for altruistic reasons. If you're only interested in playing a money-grubbing sellsword, you can achieve that with these rules, but you'll likely be happier playing another game.

The hero you create will be roleplayed by you. Often when referring to your hero, the rules use second-person pronouns (you/your) for shorthand, only making a distinction between you and your hero when that distinction is important.

YOUR FIRST SESSION

Getting together with your friends to make characters can be a lot of fun. Many groups spend most of their first session talking about the campaign's story, making heroes, and going over expectations for the game. It's a great way to kick off a long-term campaign.

The Director should make an agenda for a campaign's first session—often called “session zero”—which can include any of the following items:

- The Director and players talk about the safety tools they want to employ at the game table (whether physical or virtual), so that everyone has a good time and understands which topics should be avoided in the game's narrative and which should be embraced. For more information, check out the *MCDM Tabletop Safety Toolkit* at mcdm.gg/SafetyToolkit, which includes advice for running a successful session zero.
- The Director discusses the campaign's world and the major story themes they want to introduce into the game.
- The Director should tell the players if there are any options that are limited or rare in their campaign. For example, some Director's don't want psionics to make an appearance in their game worlds, so they might decide that heroes can't be nulls or talents. Another campaign might be grounded in more typical medieval fantasy and not have any memonek or time raiders, or those ancestries might be exceedingly rare, leading heroes with those ancestries to get a lot of questions from curious NPCs.
- The players get a chance to tell the Director what they would like to see in the campaign. This can include anything from “I'd love to play out some chase scenes!” to “I want to explore themes of loss and grief.” These wishes should be starting points for a conversation. If not all players are comfortable with certain themes or content requested by other players, then session zero is a great time to discuss that and come to a consensus about what everyone wants out of the game.
- Make heroes! Once everyone understands what the campaign is about, it's the perfect time to get into character creation. When a group of players make

heroes together, they can tie backstories together and strategize to build a tactically dominant party both in and out of combat.

- The Director runs an encounter to kick off the campaign. If all the players have the time, it's totally worth it to get some play in during the first session, even if it's just a quick brawl in a tavern with some cultists! Giving the players a little action lets them see what the game is all about—and leaves them excited for the next session.

STEP-BY-STEP HERO MAKING

Use the following step-by-step guide to create a hero.

These steps are presented in what we believe is the best way to approach making your first hero for *Draw Steel*. That said, the order of the steps is still a suggestion, not a hard and fast rule.

Many players like to build a hero from the backstory up, making ancestry and culture ideal first choices. However, some players like to start more in the present, choosing an inciting incident and a class—the choices with the most potential impact on what your character can do in the game—and then going back and figuring out where their hero came from. There's no wrong way to do it!

You'll want a character sheet to fill out while you make your hero.

Each option you can select for your hero at 1st level includes a parenthetical option labeled “Quick Build.” This is for players who want to build a hero faster without reading over all the options. These selections represent the most straightforward and archetypical options you can pick while building a hero. Most quick build options don't select languages for you, because your Director knows better than us which languages will be most useful in your campaign.

1. THINK

The first thing you should do is think about the kind of hero you want to make. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you fight with weapons, magic, psionics, or some combination of these abilities?
- Outside of combat, what do you want your hero to do well?
- What did you do before becoming a hero?
- Why did you choose to become a hero?
- What is your personality like?
- What people, places, and objects are important to you?
- How will your hero complement the strengths and weaknesses of the other heroes?

AMBITION IS GOOD!

Heroes are not just along for the ride in the Director's story. They're active participants, who make decisions that change their communities and eventually worlds or even the entirety of the timescape! It is good for your hero to have desires, to want to found an organization, seek justice for someone who was wronged, or want to craft a magic sword that will help you defeat your foes. It's only when that personal ambition becomes more important than the group's story that it becomes a problem. But if you share your character's ambitions with your Director, they can weave those desires in with the narrative. Character creation is a great time to do this.

As the story evolves, your hero's ambitions could change. That's not a bad thing—dynamic characters are awesome. If they do, make sure you have a conversation with your Director about it, so they can plan accordingly.

2. ANCESTRY

Choose your hero's humanoid ancestry from among the range of ancestries available in the game—devil, dragon knight, dwarf, hakaan, high elf, human, memonek, orc, polder, revenant, time raider, or wode elf. Future supplements will introduce additional ancestries you can choose from. See [Ancestries](#) for more information.

3. CULTURE

Create your hero's culture. Although ancestry gives your hero a number of physiological benefits, your culture describes the community that raised you and gives you languages and skills. See [Culture](#) for more information.

4. CAREER

Choose your hero's career, which describes what you did for a living before you became a hero. Your career gives you skills and a title, and might also give you languages, Renown, or knowledge for crafting and research. See [Careers](#) for more information.

I SPEAK THEIR LANGUAGE

Choosing languages at the start of a campaign can be hard, because you might not know which are going to be the most impactful for a game. You can choose to keep some of the languages you know blank until you discover what might be a good choice for the campaign you're playing in. Once you decide to take a language, you can reveal your choice in a dramatic moment, perhaps during a negotiation where your language would help or just after you find a tome that no other hero in your crew can read.

5. CLASS

Choose your hero's class. This choice has the biggest impact on how your hero interacts with the rules of the game, especially the rules for combat. Your class provides your characteristic scores and Stamina, in addition to skills, several abilities, and other benefits. You can be a censor, conduit, elemental, fury, null, shadow, tactician, talent, or troubadour. See [Classes](#) for more information.

6. KIT

If your class gives your hero a kit, choose your hero's kit. Your kit provides you with equipment and a fighting style that grants a signature ability and bonuses to one or more of your game statistics.

7. ADD FREE STRIKES

The simplest and most basic attack you can make, typically worse than every other option, free strike abilities are those strikes you can make when it's not your turn. An enemy is foolish enough to walk away from you in melee? Free strike! Every hero has both a melee and ranged weapon free strike, they're all the same (until modified by your kit or class) and it's up to you to decide what exactly these strikes are. A thrown dagger? A punch? The design is intended to let you use your imagination.

Free strikes also let you make strikes on your turn even if your hero isn't otherwise themed to do so. A bow-using wode elf can still stab an enemy with a dagger as a free strike, and a greataxe wielding orc fury can still pull out a hand axe and hurl it at a flying enemy staying annoyingly out of melee range as a free strike.

MELEE WEAPON FREE STRIKE

Keywords: Charge, Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** 1 creature or object

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- 11 or lower: **2 + M or A damage**
- 12–16: **5 + M or A damage**
- 17+: **7 + M or A damage**

RANGED WEAPON FREE STRIKE

Keywords: Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 5 **Target:** 1 creature or object

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- 11 or lower: **2 + M or A damage**
- 12–16: **4 + M or A damage**
- 17+: **6 + M or A damage**

See [Free Strikes](#) for more information on using free strikes, and see [Abilities](#) for information on the ability format.

8. COMPLICATION

Complications represent those dramatic moments in a character's backstory that give them pathos, a dramatic reason to be an outsider, to doubt the meaning of their life, to avoid intimacy, or rage against an enemy from their past. Complications grant a benefit and a drawback. They can make a character more three dimensional, but they are not necessary for making a great hero. Check with your Director to make sure your game is using them. See [Complications](#) for more information.

9. DETERMINE DETAILS

Once you've created your hero, it's time to determine the additional details of their backstory, appearance, and personality. How do the events of their culture, career, inciting incident, and class tie together into a cohesive narrative? What's their name? What do they look like? Do they have any cool scars? Any dope tattoos? Do they still

sleep with their teddy bear? These sorts of details can help define a well-rounded hero.

10. MAKE CONNECTIONS

Ask the Director if all the heroes start the campaign knowing each other. If they do, talk to the other players and build some connections between your heroes. If you like, you can use the following prompts to make those connections, or to come up with prompts of your own:

- While fighting a monster, another hero saved your life. What were you battling and who saved you?
- In your group, who looks after everyone's health and well-being and makes sure that all the characters get along? If it's not you, how do you view this other hero?
- Who is the grumpiest member of your party? If it isn't you, how do you react to that hero's sour nature? If it is you, how do you react to other characters teasing you or trying to cheer you up?
- What's one thing your fellow heroes know about you that other people do not?
- What's your favorite way to bond with your fellow heroes?
- You've known one of the other heroes in your party longer than the rest. Who is it, and how did you meet?
- Another hero creates food, music, clothing, trinkets, or something else that you enjoy. Who is that hero and what do they make?
- Another hero is teaching you a new skill. Who is it, and what are they teaching you?

Answer these questions with the other players present, and be sure to get a player's approval if your answer makes use of their character.

ADVENTURING GEAR

This isn't a game about tracking gear, so you don't need to list every piece of equipment you own on your character sheet. The game assumes that heroes generally have enough to eat and drink, so the rules don't expect you to track food and water either.

If your character has a skill that implicitly requires gear, such as lockpicks for the Pick Lock skill or basic alchemy supplies for use with the Alchemy skill, then you have that gear. Likewise, your character is assumed to have standard useful adventuring gear, including a torch, a rope, and a backpack at minimum.

At the Director's discretion, you might lose certain gear during an adventure, or your gear could break. If this happens, you might not be able to perform certain tasks as effectively without that gear.

CHOOSING SKILLS

This game has lots of skills, and lots of opportunities during character creation to gain them. We recommend recording a list of all the skills you might gain from the different steps of the character creation process, then making your choices at the end of that process rather than flipping back and forth through the book.

If you gain the same specific skill from two different sources (for instance, from a career and a class), you can pick a different skill from the same skill group. See [Skills](#) for more information.

CHANGING CHARACTER OPTIONS

If you pick a skill, ability, class, or any other option that you end up not liking after using it in the game—even your character's ancestry—you can always freely change that option between game sessions. If you want to change an option during a session, ask your Director. If they say it's fine to swap that option out for something else, go for it. You shouldn't be stuck with an option that makes the game less fun for you.

If you're changing an option out for some reason other than fun, such as changing a kit out because you think the next adventure is going to require you to have better distance with weapon attacks or changing a signature ability granted by your class because you think a different damage type would be more helpful against undead, you must either follow the normal rules for changing that option, or if no such rule exists, get permission from your Director.

OPTION: RESPITE ABILITY CHANGES

An optional rule the Director can include in your game is to allow heroes to change a number of their signature and heroic abilities granted by their class as a respite activity. This allows heroes to prepare for upcoming encounters and try new builds, but it does mean that Directors and players are constantly juggling and learning new abilities.

HEROIC ADVANCEMENT

Your character's heroic advancement is marked by level. Each time you gain a new level in your class, your Stamina increases, and you gain new features or abilities according to your class's advancement, as detailed in [Classes](#).

In the standard setup for the game, heroes gain Experience each time they finish a respite. When you gain sufficient Experience, you gain a level during the same respite (see [Building a Heroic Narrative](#)). The Heroic Advancement table shows exactly how much Experience (XP) you need to advance from one level to the next. The amount of Experience you gain is cumulative.

HEROIC ADVANCEMENT

XP	Level
0–15	1
16–31	2
32–47	3
48–63	4
64–79	5
80–95	6
96–111	7
112–127	8
128–143	9
144+	10

ALTERNATIVE ADVANCEMENT

Though many games might advance using the standard setup for heroic advancement, the Director can decide that their game uses different advancement. Check with your

Director to see what method of advancement they plan to use.

ADJUSTED XP ADVANCEMENT

Some Directors prefer that heroes level up faster or slower to suit the pace of their story. The Adjusted XP Advancement table is set up for campaigns where heroes advance at double or half the usual pace. Directors can also create their own customized pace for XP-based advancement.

ADJUSTED XP ADVANCEMENT

Level	XP for Double Speed	XP for Half Speed
1	0–7	0–31
2	8–15	32–63
3	16–23	64–95
4	24–31	96–127
5	32–39	128–159
6	40–47	160–191
7	48–55	192–223
8	56–63	224–255
9	64–71	256–287
10	72+	288+

MILESTONE

Rather than tracking XP, some games see the heroes advance in level when they achieve a particular story milestone. For example, when a party defeats the main villain of an adventure and foils their dastardly plot, each hero gains a level for achieving this objective, no matter how many or few obstacles they faced along the way.

For many Directors using milestone advancement, the end of each adventure within a campaign serves as a milestone for leveling up. The Director can share these milestones with the players to encourage them to work toward particular goals, and to engage with the story and world the Director has prepared. For example, in a campaign where the heroes have to face nine evil mages, it makes sense that each time the heroes defeat a mage, they gain a level. The Director should keep milestone goals flexible, though. Defeating a mage could mean stopping them with violence, using negotiation to make them stand down, or anything else that thwarts their evil plans.

DIRECTOR SAYS SO

Some games don't track XP or goals at all. The heroes simply gain a level whenever the Director decides it's appropriate for the story.

ANCESTRIES

Fantastic peoples inhabit the worlds of *Draw Steel*. Among them are devils, dwarves, elves, time raiders—even humans with their ability to sense the supernatural.

Your hero is one of these folks! The fantastic ancestry you choose bestows benefits that come from your anatomy and physiology. This choice doesn't grant you cultural benefits, like crafting or lore skills. While many game settings have cultures made of mostly one ancestry, other cultures and worlds have a cosmopolitan mix of peoples. Ancestry describes how you were born. Culture (in the next chapter) describes how you grew up. If you want to be a wode elf who was raised in a forest among other wode elves, you can do that! If you want to play a wode elf who was raised in a underground city of dwarves, humans, and orcs, you can do that too!

ON THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES

Orden is a fantasy world. It works on principles similar to those many people throughout history believed governed the real world. "I dunno, a god did it probably."

Humans, elves, orcs, dwarves, dragons, all have creator gods—the elder gods, four of whom made the world for some reason. Maybe they were bored.

The fashion among those gods for creating new, intelligent, species petered out after the orcs. Once humans came along and invented war, it stopped being fun.

It may be *all* species were created by gods. That's certainly what a lot of people throughout our own history assumed. Orden has no Darwin and probably won't ever. There's still inheritance. People expect children to look like their parents, but there aren't evolutionary pressures except on a very local scale.

And in a world where powerful, world-altering magics are available, mortals sometimes try to recreate the gods' efforts. Some succeed, and new intelligent, speaking peoples are born.

However, mortals are not gods and lack their ineffable wisdom. They are, in fact, very effable. Many have sought the power to create. It is available to any sorcerer of near-godlike power with the right rituals, though these days that power is very obscure. Creating new intelligent species was easier for mortal wizards back in the youth of the world when magic was friskier.

In every instance in recorded history, attempts by mortals to make obedient servitor species backfire. The steel dwarves worked marvels with valiar, the truemetal, and the miracle mineral iridoss, known as prismacore, that grants objects a semblance of life. Eventually their science and magics produced the omnivok, machines that were self-aware. Perhaps uniquely, when the dwarves realized they had created beings equal to themselves they stopped their work and gave their creation full rights and independence, preferring to work with them rather than attempt, and inevitably fail, to be their masters.

Normally, it doesn't work out that nicely. Even with the best of intentions, things go awry. The Dragon Phalanx

were created by Good King Omund's wizard Vitae to be the perfect knights, dispensing justice throughout the lands. But the same sorceries that grant self-awareness also grant independence. Agency. And though they enjoyed thirty years of peace and justice, eventually the dragon knights were betrayed by one of their own, seduced by the power offered by Ajax.

The law of unintended consequences applies to the just and the unjust alike.

Usually when some powerful being tries to *create* an intelligent species, it's for less than virtuous reasons. The synliroi are responsible for several intelligent species in the timescape, each an attempt to create a perfectly obedient servitor species. The most notorious example are the kuran'zoi, the time raiders who rebelled almost immediately and carry a burning hate for the voiceless talkers to this day.

A perhaps less egregious use of this power is called *quicken*ing. Used when a powerful mage lives in and amongst some clever species just on the cusp of self-awareness. These instances, which are much more numerous than creating a new species from whole cloth, are more like the concept of *uplifting* found in science fiction. The mage or witch or shaman didn't create anything. They just gave these cute, clever, frog-things a little boost. A little nudge. And suddenly there are angualotls walking around having conversations with each other, wondering when someone will invent a fabric that doesn't get moldy in the swamp.

This also carries serious ethical repercussions! "You didn't create angulotls! You screwed up some perfectly good frogs! Look at them, you gave them anxiety!"

This is only how it works on Orden. You may have completely different explanations for why there are several different intelligent species walking around in your world. Or no explanation! Or competing and irreconcilable theories on the matter! Use whatever inspires you.

At the end of the day, if you throw out all of this and replace it with something you made up, it will be better. Because it's *yours*!

MEASUREMENTS

How tall is a polder? How long does a dwarf live? The Ancestry Measurements table provides the average adult height and weight ranges and life expectancy for each of the ancestries in this chapter. These measurements are just average, and many folks in the world exist outside of them, so your hero can too!

Revenants are not on the table, since they live until destroyed or moving on after completing their unfinished business and their height and weight is based on their previous ancestry.

Humans have the potential to live a little longer on Orden than they do in the real world thanks to the presence of magic.

ANCESTRY MEASUREMENTS

Ancestry	Height in Feet/Inches	Weight in Pounds	Life Expectancy in Years
Devil	5'0"–6'0"	120–250	70–120
Dragon Knight	6'0"–7'0"	200–350	50–90
Dwarf	4'0"–4'6"	500–1,000B	700–1,500
Wode Elf	5'6"–6'6"	100–150	1,200–3,000
High Elf	5'6"–6'6"	100–150	1,200–3,000
Hakaan	7'6"–8'6"	1,000–2,000	300–500
Human	5'0"–6'0"	100–300	70–120
Memonek	5'0"–6'0"	50–100	70–120
Orc	5'6"–6'6"	150–300	50–90
Polder	3'0"–3'6"	20–50	50–90
Time Raider	5'0"–6'0"	120–250	50–90

STARTING SIZE AND SPEED

Unless otherwise noted, a character from any of these ancestries is size 1M and has a speed of 5 and a stability of 0.

Where an ancestry provides you with an ability, see [Abilities](#) for details of the ability format.

ANCESTRY TRAIT

Each ancestry has at least one signature trait, which your hero gets for free if they take the ancestry. This is a defining feature that other heroes of your ancestry also possess.

There are also purchased traits. You don't get every purchased trait your ancestry has to offer. Instead, your ancestry details a budget of ancestry points you can use to purchase traits. Each trait has a point cost that you pay to grant the benefit to your hero.

For example, the devil ancestry has the signature trait Silver Tongue and 3 ancestry points to spend on seven different traits. A player creating a devil hero could buy Barbed Tail, Big Horns, and Glowing Eyes, which each cost 1 ancestry point, or they could buy one of those traits and purchase Beast Legs or Wings, which each cost 2 points. They couldn't buy both Beast Legs and Wings, since their combined cost is 4, which is over the ancestry points budget for the devil.

DEVIL

"Go to hell!"

"You know, I have a rather interesting story about that ..."

The native ancestry of the Seven Cities of Hell, devils are humanoids with red or blue skin expressed in a wide variety of hues, from bright crimson to deep purple. Each devil is born with some hellmark—horns, a tail, cloven hooves, a forked tongue, fanged incisors, or even wings.

Hell is dominated by the Seven Cities of Hell, each ruled by a different archdevil who constantly plots and schemes against the others in the hope of ascending to the Throne of Hell.

Those devils who join "the trade," as their civil service is called, spend their days in bureaucratic service hoping or scheming for promotion. Devils looking for a quick path up the bureaucratic ladder sign up for the Exchange, whereby mortals in the mundane world who perform the right rituals can summon a devil, who bargains with the supplicant on behalf of their archdevil. Archdevils can grant temporary worldly power in exchange for a supplicant's soul, with the summoned devil acting as the broker.

On rare occasions, though, the summoning goes wrong and the supplicant dies before the deal can be struck, stranding the summoned devil on Orden permanently. Some stranded devils seek to return to Hell, but most prefer life in Orden, where the phrase "stabbed in the back by a colleague" is usually a metaphor.

The majority of devils in Orden are not from, nor have ever been to, the Seven Cities. They are descendants of devils who were stranded in the mundane world decades, centuries, even millennia ago.

ON DEVILS

Adelard scuttled across the floor of his basement, a heavy tome clutched in one hand, his index finger marking a page. Occasionally he would stop, open the book, consult a diagram, look at the chalk markings he'd made on the floor, tilt his head, then bend down and refine or rub out an esoteric symbol.

One of the red candles suddenly guttered out, making the small room noticeably darker. "Damn and blast!" he hissed. Then he relit it from another candle.

Stepping back to admire his handiwork, Adelard crossed his arms and nodded. He'd spent his last coppers on the candles—they weren't cheap. And he feared the skull might be fake, but did it matter? The book just said a skull—it didn't even specify a *human* skull! Did it matter if it was real? It was probably real. What kind of market was there for replica skulls? But it was awfully cheap. Anyway, did it matter? How would the ritual know if the skull was real?

He was wittering, putting off the inevitable. He pulled himself together. It was either going to work, or it wasn't, and wittering wasn't going to help. He opened the book and turned the page—then began to speak the ritual.

Moments later, the candles flared, there was a burst of flame, and acrid brimstone filled his nostrils. When the smoke cleared ... there was a devil standing in his basement—dark purple skin, horns, even a twitching tail.

"Aha! Yes, finally." It rubbed its hands together. "It's about time," the creature said, pulling on the bottom of his waistcoat to straighten it. "Now then! How does it go? Oh, yes." He cleared his throat. "On behalf of my lord, his grace Archduke Dispater, Lord of Dis, I am empowered to offer you ..." But his speech fell on deaf ears.

"It worked!" Adelard said, holding his clenched fists up. "Ahahaha! It worked! Finally, after *years*! I will have my revenge! Hahaha ...!" *cough* *cough* Adelard was suddenly gripped by a coughing fit, but he kept crowing.

"Dismiss me from service, will they?! *cough* Old and useless ... am I?! I'll show *them*!" He coughed again, fighting to breathe now. "I will *hex* them and *torture* them until they ..."

He stopped cavorting and capering, and his eyes went wide. "Until they ... until ..." He clutched his chest.

"Uh-oh," the devil said, genuinely worried.

"HNNG!" Adelard grunted. Then he collapsed to the ground, curled into a fetal position, obviously in immense pain.

"Nono. Nurse!" the devil called out. "Doctor!? Is anyone ... you should lie down. Well, you are lying down. Do some ... some deep-breathing exercises. Have a cup of tea! That always ..."

Adelard gasped one last time and uncurled, muscles relaxed. Eyes open but unseeing.

"... calms me down," the devil said quietly.

Suddenly, the candles were extinguished as one, plunging the room into pitch-blackness. The devil's *hellsight* meant this was only a minor inconvenience for him. "Um," he said to the empty room. "Uh-oh."

He poked the tip of his boot at the chalk symbol surrounding him on the floor. Nothing happened. He stepped on it. Nothing happened. He put his weight on that foot. No alarms went off.

He walked out of the circle. Nothing happened. No one, it seemed, cared.

A few moments later, the door to a small home, little more than a wooden shack, on the outskirts of a small village opened. A well-dressed devil peeked out and then slowly emerged, stepping onto the dirt road that led through the center of the village. A keep stood atop a hill in the distance.

"Ah," the devil said.

A wide woman dressed in wool, carrying a pile of clean clothes, saw him and stopped in her tracks, her mouth open.

"Oh! Good day to you madam, I wonder if you could tell me..."

"AAAHHHHH!!!" she screamed. For quite a long time. Then she dropped her laundry and ran.

"Ah. Um. Hmm."

A young man in a low, stone building saw this exchange, grabbed what looked like a long iron poker, and ran out to confront the new arrival.

"Have at you, devil!" he said, assuming something like a dueling pose.

"I say! Steady on!" The devil raised his hands.

The two of them stood there, frozen in the middle of the street for a few moments.

Then the devil turned and ran away as quickly as he could.

•

"And that's how I ended up here!" Riyalkin toasted his dinner companion. "Now, after years of obscurity, a legendary hero!"

"Legendarily vain," his dinner guest teased with a smile.

"Simply playing my part, darling. People expect a certain amount of vanity in a troubadour, don't they?"

She laughed. "Riyalkin the Red Pen is every bit as advertised."

"Thank you. And besides, accusations of vanity are a bit rich coming from my leading lady."

"Not all actors are vain." She took offense beautifully. "Just the good ones." She sipped her drink.

"Well then, you must be very vain indeed," the devil said. "Anyway, does that answer your question?"

"Mostly. Do they speak Caelian in hell?"

"*What* a good question. Unless it's *very* old, the ritual usually grants knowledge of the summoner's language. I gather in the bad old days, we used to just show up in a cloud of brimstone and gabble at people. I'm sure it was impressive, but what did it achieve? Not very professional, I can tell you that."

"No cloud of brimstone now?" she teased.

He wagged his eyebrows. "Style counts for something."

"But wait, that was ..." She did some quick mental math. "Fifteen years ago?"

"Well, I was an accountant here in Capital for several years in between."

"An accountant!"

Riyalkin shrugged. "It's what I did before. I'm moderately good at it."

"And how does one go from being an alien accountant to a famous troubadour?"

"Well ..." Riyalkin seemed uncomfortable suddenly. "It's just that ... the thing is, accountancy in the Seven Cities is just so much more *interesting* than it is here. Plotting and scheming, always on the lookout for an assassin, people constantly trying to claw their way up the ladder, usually over your dead body. And I guess I just ... missed the excitement."

"The excitement of being an accountant."

"The excitement of being an accountant in *Hell*," Riyalkin said. "In any event, enough about me and the thrill of double-entry bookkeeping. Perhaps you can enlighten me. Why is it, in spite of my impeccable taste and the outrageous sums I spend looking good, I always feel underdressed in your presence? Do you employ sorcery? Or is it that any outfit is improved by your unearthly beauty?"

She blushed in spite of herself and raised her own glass in a toast.

"You silver-tongued devil."

DEVIL TRAITS

Devil heroes have access to following traits.

SIGNATURE TRAIT: SILVER TONGUE

Your innate magic allows you to twist how your words are perceived to get a better read on people and convince them to see things your way. You gain an interpersonal skill of your choice, and you have an edge when attempting to discover an NPC's motivations and pitfalls during negotiations (see [Negotiation](#)).

PURCHASED DEVIL TRAITS

You have 3 ancestry points to spend on the following traits. (*Quick Build*: Beast Legs, Impressive Horns)

BARBED TAIL (COSTS 1 POINT)

Your pointy tail allows you to punctuate all your actions. Once per round, you can deal extra damage equal to your highest characteristic score on a melee strike.

BEAST LEGS (COSTS 1 POINTS)

Your powerful legs improve your speed. Your speed becomes 6.

GLOWING EYES (COSTS 1 POINT)

Your eyes are a solid, vibrant color that flares to show your excitement or rage. Whenever you take damage from a creature, you can use a triggered action to curse that creature for daring to do you harm. The creature takes 1d10 + your level psychic damage.

HELLSIGHT (COSTS 1 POINT)

Your eyes let you see through the dark, fog, and other types of concealment. You don't take a bane on strikes against concealed, unhidden creatures.

IMPRESSIVE HORNS (COSTS 2 POINT)

Your cherished horns are larger than the average devil and a hardened representation of your force of will, allowing you to succeed on a roll of 5 or higher with saving throws.

PREHENSILE TAIL (COSTS 2 POINTS)

Your prehensile tail allows you to challenge foes on all sides. You can't be flanked.

WINGS (COSTS 2 POINTS)

You possess wings powerful enough to take you airborne. While using your wings to fly, you can stay aloft for a number of rounds equal to your Might (minimum of 1 round) before you fall prone. While using your wings to fly at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd level, you have damage weakness 5.

DRAGON KNIGHT

"I thought the dragon knights would save us, but even they couldn't stop Ajax. Now the roads aren't safe. People are taken from their homes without cause or warning, never to return. I don't know what's going to happen now, except everyone's afraid all the time."

"I think things are going to get a lot worse before they get better."

The Ritual of Dracogenesis that grants the power to create a generation of dragon knights—also known as draconians

or wyrmwights—is obscure and supremely difficult for even an experienced sorcerer to master. Small populations of draconians in Khemhara, Higara, and Khorshir attest to this. Descendants of original generations created millennia ago by powerful wizards, they have never been numerous. A typical clutch yields only a single egg. After only a few generations, these draconians begin to show new adaptations like feathers or frilled ridges.

The largest extant population of draconians is the remnants of the Dragon Phalanx in Vasloria. Created by Good King Omund's wizard Vitae, the Dragon Phalanx once numbered several thousand of the king's greatest knights, ensuring the rule of law across the land.

Knighthood was a title carried by every member of that first generation of dragon knights. Within the Dragon Phalanx were shadows, censors, tacticians, and elementalists. Members of virtually every heroic vocation could be found in one of the eight dragonflights that made up the phalanx. For over thirty years, these heroes were symbols of justice, protecting the weak from the strong, and standing between the common folk and those who sought power over others. Those who grew up in that place and time could never have imagined any other way of life.

Then Ajax came.

ON THE DRAGON KNIGHTS

The cloaked figure at the back of the inn stood up. As they did so, their hood slipped down, revealing their head and face. A susurrantion rippled through the crowd. One man standing near the bar dropped his jaw, followed by his flagon of mead.

A tall, broad draconian stepped into the light. He was old, his scales battle-scarred. He rested one clawed hand on the pommel of a mace that hung from a loop on his belt, while the other carried his shield by a strap. His flat, expressionless look was more terrifying than any threatening glower.

The three human bandits took a step back. One of the dwarves just sneered—then, sensing his human compatriot's reluctance, turned to look at them. "What's this?" the lead dwarf growled.

"Don't be cowards now!" the other dwarf said, a hint of joy in his voice. "Look what a *prize* we have caught!"

"We didn't ..." one bandit said, shaking. "We didn't know ..."

Looking at the dragon knight, the other bandit added quickly, "We didn't know there was one of you here."

The draconian didn't move. Didn't give any indication he heard the man. Just stared unblinking at the lead dwarf. "Think of the *bounty*," the dwarf hissed to the humans, but he kept his eye on the draconian. "We'll all be rich."

"I don't ..." One of the bandits dropped her sword and held her hands up as she backed away from the group toward the exit. "I don't need it that bad," she said. Then she turned and ran out the door. Her human compatriots followed.

The two dwarves surveyed the tavern. The people were now all facing them. A few had stood up. They weren't afraid anymore.

"We'll be back," the lead dwarf said, and the two of them backed out of the inn, sheathing their shortswords before they turned and left.

As one, the people in the tavern turned to look with undisguised awe at the dragon knight. He noticed this, ducked his head to avoid their gaze. "Show's over," he growled, then he turned to go back to his seat in the rear.

"Thank you," the woman behind the bar said. "Thank you for ..." She stopped when she saw the draconian was ignoring her.

A short, doughty, middle-aged man stood up, and two equally doughty women at the same table stood up with him. "Excuse me, sir knight," the man said as the dragon knight walked past their table.

The knight moved on, ignoring them. The man reached out and grabbed the massive draconian's arm. The knight wheeled on the peasant, looming over him.

The man bowed his head and touched his forelock. The two women with him curtsayed and tried to avoid making eye contact.

"Begging your pardon, sir, but we been lookin' for you."

The dragon knight sneered and bared a set of sharp teeth. "*Look for someone else,*" he growled as he pulled his arm away.

The man scurried around to stand in front of the draconian, blocking his way. He took off his worn cap and held it over his breast. "I'm sorry sir, but there ain't no one else. And there's this new tax, you see, from the new baron. And a priest says he's of Saint Ajax."

The knight bared his impressive teeth, ready to scare Jago and the other two away—when someone else spoke.

"You might want to hear 'em out, Vaant," said a voice from the table the three peasants had been sitting at.

The dragon knight turned sharply to look at the man who'd spoken. His back was to the draconian, but the voice gave him away.

"John?"

The man turned to look up.

"Hi Vaant," he said, smiling. He rose from the table. He was middle-aged, fit. Black hair hung down to his shoulders. He was armed with many weapons, looked like a captain of the guard. "Folks," he said, "this is Vaantikalisax, Knight of King Omund in the Thunder Phalanx. He may be the last of the Storm Knights."

The man held out his hand. The dragon knight looked at it for a moment before reaching out slowly to grasp it. "What are you doing out here?" Vaantikalisax asked.

"These people need help. I said I'd find it. Heard a rumor someone matching your description was holed up here having a drinking contest with Mr. John Barleycorn."

The draconian sniffed, released John's hand, and looked at the three peasants. "Why do you people need me? You're in the company of Sir John, Commander of the Fifth ..."

"Just John," Sir John said, holding a hand up. "The new baron stripped me of my title. My lands."

"I didn't know that." The draconian's voice softened. "I'm sorry."

"I'll be fine. But these people ..." John said, gesturing to the three older peasants. Vaantikalisax waved him to silence.

"Sure," he said. "But why me?"

"Thought maybe you'd like to get back in the game."

"The game."

"Yeah." Sir John smiled. "The hero game."

Vaantikalisax said nothing. The inn had mostly gone back to its business but the three peasants watched intently. Eventually the dragon knight spoke again, his voice low.

"I owe you a lot, John—but not everything."

"I'm not asking everything."

"No, that's not how it starts. But I have this feeling that's how it'll end."

"What does your oath say? 'Even should the sun stop in the sky, even should the night—'"

"John," the dragon knight said, his voice suddenly sad. Exasperated. "You don't want to quote my oath to me. You really don't. I liked serving with you. I have fond memories of that time—of you. Don't spoil it." He looked at his friend, the three peasants, then shook his head and turned to leave the inn.

"Vaant," Sir John said, following. "Sir Vaantikalisax, by your oath!"

The dragon knight stopped and spun around. Everyone in the inn was watching the show again. Act two.

"The people need leadership," John said as he looked at all the folk watching.

Vaantikalisax's reptile eyes flashed in anger. "They had it! Thirty years, and what did it amount to?! I watched Ajax ... I watched him ..." The dragon knight's eyes flinched. His clawed hands tightened on his mace and shield. "I watched the oath ... fail."

"Vaant ... Vaant, the Dragon Phalanx didn't fail. You were betrayed. It was Mandrake! One of your own, don't you get it? You're just as fallible as the rest of us. You were never 'incorruptible.' It's just what we wanted to believe. You're just people—like the rest of us."

The dragon knight looked at the people around him, at the three peasants desperate for someone, anyone, to help them. Then he looked back to his friend.

"Exactly," Vaantikalisax said. Then he turned and left the inn.

DRAGON KNIGHT TRAITS

Dragon knight heroes have access to the following traits.

SIGNATURE TRAIT: WYRMPLATE

Your hardened scales grant you immunity equal to your level to one of the following damage types: acid, cold, corruption, fire, lightning, or poison. You can change your damage immunity type when you finish a respite.

PURCHASED DRAGON KNIGHT TRAITS

You have 3 ancestry points to spend on the following traits. (*Quick Build*: Prismatic Scales, Dragon Breath)

DRACONIAN GUARD (COSTS 1 POINT)

When you or a creature adjacent to you takes damage from a strike, you can use a triggered action to swing your wings around and guard against the blow, reducing the any damage from the strike by an amount equal to your level.

PRISMATIC SCALES (COSTS 1 POINT)

Select one damage immunity granted by your Wyrmpplate trait. You always have this immunity from your trait in addition to the one it normally grants.

REMEMBER YOUR OATH (COSTS 1 POINTS)

As a maneuver, you can recite the following oath. If you do, you succeed on saving throws when you roll a 4 or higher until the start of your next turn:

Even should the sun stop in the sky

Even should the night last a thousand years

I will stand forever

I shall not yield

Those who suffer and yearn for justice

I am your sword and shield

I will yield no ground

I will speak no lies

I will stand against all tyrants

Until the last villain dies

DRACONIAN PRIDE (COSTS 2 POINTS)

You can use the following signature ability.

DRACONIAN PRIDE

You let loose a mighty roar to shake your foes' spirits.

Keywords: Area, Magic

Type: Action

Distance: 1 burst

Target: All enemies

Power Roll + Might or Presence:

- 11 or lower: **2 damage**
- 12–16: **5 damage; push 1**
- 17+: **7 damage; push 2**

DRAGON BREATH (COSTS 2 POINTS)

You can use the following signature ability.

DRAGON BREATH

You expel energy to damage your foes.

Keywords: Area, Magic

Type: Action

Distance: 3 cube within 1

Target: All enemies

Power Roll + Might or Presence:

- 11 or lower: **2 damage**
- 12–16: **4 damage**
- 17+: **6 damage**

Effect: You choose the ability's damage type from acid, cold, corruption, fire, lightning, or poison.

WINGS (COSTS 2 POINTS)

You possess wings powerful enough to take you airborne. While using your wings to fly, you can stay aloft for a number of rounds equal to your Might (minimum of 1 round) before you fall prone. While using your wings to fly at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd level, you have damage weakness 5.

DWARF

"Remember, we are dwarves. Our strength is the strength of the earth. The strength of the marble column that rises to the heavens. The strength of the granite foundation that reaches deep into the ground. But what is the value of strength if it is not used in service of justice?"

—Zarok the Lawgiver, Hero, Dwarves 232

Possessed of a strength that belies their size, dwarves have flesh infused with stone—a silico-organic hybrid making them physically denser than other humanoids. They enjoy a reputation in Orden as savvy engineers and technologists thanks to the lore they inherited from their elder siblings, the long-extinct steel dwarves.

Dwarves are the children of the elder god Ord, and a common phrase among dwarves is "Ord made the world"—their way of saying, "What will be, will be." They take great pride in knowing that along with Aan, Eth, and Kul, their god created the mundane world, and many dwarves leave their homes to see the world and seek glory in Ord's name.

ON DWARVES

There's nothing a team of dwarves can't do! Five dwarves alone can easily kill a dragon. Ten dragons!¹ Why, Vorka the Fell-Handed alone slew five dragons at the Siege of Var Loska before succumbing to her wounds. One dwarf! Think what a small, dedicated party of dwarves could do!

There aren't many of the great dragons left, alas, so we must ... I mean, dwarves must content themselves with fighting lesser evils. Necromancers, tyrants. Folks who cheat at dice.

¹ This is what happens when you let a dwarf troubadour write the dwarf entry.

Dwarves take the long view. Well, so do elves, but elves seem more interested in preserving things. Dwarves want to make things! Improve the world! “The world is fine the way it is ...” Shut up! No it’s not! The world is full of pain, misery, injustice. We cannot make a perfect world, but we can strive to improve the one we’ve got!

Anyway. Humans make too much of this so-called rivalry between dwarves and elves. Yes, it was an elf army that slew the last steel dwarves in the War Against Night, but that was tens of thousands of years ago. And anyway, those were the shadow elves, long banished to the World Below. And none now live who remember those days.

The steel dwarves—the greatest of us—are dead now, and our cousins the fire dwarves left this world for Quintessence long ago. There they built Alloy, the City of Brass, the City at the Center of the Timescape. A marvel! Not so large as Capital, perhaps, but not so ... fragrant either.

It is left to us, the stone dwarves, the Last Children of Ord, to work stone, create great marvels with it. Our greatest days are not behind us! Who speaks thus!? Have we not been to the Hanging City of Kal Kalavar together? Will you ever forget that place? I will not should I live to be a thousand, and neither will you. And it was finished in my lifetime. Only three hundred years ago! It’s brand new!

Elf rivalry. Pagh! Did we not name the most precious metal in the earth “valiar” after their god Val? Val is a noble god, a worthy patron of the elves. He seeks justice and glory in his own way, we deem. Were one to choose the path of the conduit, you could pick worse gods than Val to serve.

It is the humans who make so much of rivalries between the ancestries. It was the humans who called us “dwarves.” We do not know the significance of this word in their tongue, but we accept it. Their speech is crude, true, but they are a young species after all. We must not judge them too harshly. “Elemental” would be a faithful translation of our word for ourselves into the Caelian tongue.

Ah, the record of dwarf achievement is long ... too long to tell in so short a space. And it is not seemly to compare ourselves so. This entry spends many words on elves and men as though we were competitors, but who says it? Why should it be thus? Was it a dwarf who slew Baalorak the Griefbringer? No! It was the Crown of Nine Stars! That legendary company of heroes who counted three dwarves among their number, but also elves and orcs and humans. Like the great cosmopolitan city of Alloy, we are stronger together.

Look you again at the Hanging City. Yes, your eyes well with tears from the magnificence of it, but see it clearly. Is it a dwarf city? Everyone calls it thus, but do you know how many humans live there? Thousands. And orcs. And elves! Of course! How else should it be?

Some say the greatest ages of the world are behind us, but this is not so. Not so. While there is yet will in the world, there is greatness. You will see. The elves, the orcs. Humans and dwarves. All the speaking peoples have wonder in them yet. Our greatest days are ahead. Did not Ord make the world?

None of us ask to come into this world, and apart from the Hakaan, none of us know how we will leave it. But

remember, you are a dwarf. You have it in you to work marvels. To change the world, be you a holy conduit of Valak-koth the Seeker, one of the talented Mind Masters of the White Gem, a beastheart of the Darkdivers seeking through the World Below for deep knowledge, or a master tactician of the Imperial War College in Capital. You will make a better world.

You are young yet, but already those who work evil deeds should fear you. You are a dwarf. You have a great destiny ahead.

DWARF TRAITS

Dwarf heroes have access to the following traits.

SIGNATURE TRAIT: RUNIC CARVING

You can carve a rune onto your skin and the magic within your body activates it. The rune you carve determines the benefit you receive. You can change or remove this rune with 10 minutes of work while not engaged in combat.

- **Detection:** Pick a specific type of creature, such as “goblins” or “humans” or an object, such as “magic swords” or “potions.” Your rune glows softly when you are within 20 squares of a chosen creature or object, regardless of line of effect. You can change the type of creature as a maneuver.
- **Light:** Your skin sheds light for 10 squares. You can turn this on and off as a maneuver.
- **Voice:** As a maneuver, you can communicate telepathically with another willing creature you have met before whose name you name, who can speak and understand a language you know, and is within 1 mile of you. You and the creature can respond to one another as if having a normal conversation. You can change the person you communicate with by changing the rune.

PURCHASED DWARF TRAITS

You have 3 ancestry points to spend on the following traits. (*Quick Build:* Grounded, Spark Off Your Skin)

GROUNDING (COSTS 1 POINT)

Your heavy stone body and connection to the earth makes it difficult for others to move you. Your stability increases by 1.

STAND TOUGH (COSTS 1 POINT)

Your body is made to withstand the blows of your enemies. Your Might counts as 1 higher for resisting potencies.

STONE SINGER (COSTS 1 POINT)

You have a magic connection to the earth. You can spend 1 uninterrupted hour singing and reshape any unworked, mundane stone within 3 squares of you. You can’t destroy this stone, but you can move each square of it anywhere within 3 squares of you, piling it off to one side to dig a hole or building it all up to create a wall.

GREAT FORTITUDE (COSTS 2 POINTS)

Your hearty constitution prevents you from losing strength. You can’t be weakened.

SPARK OFF YOUR SKIN (COSTS 2 POINTS)

Your stone skin affords you potent protection. Your Stamina increases by 6 at 1st level, then increases by an additional 3 each time you gain a new level.

ELF, WODE

*See you the wood so dark and deep,
Where runs the fox and hare?
You know now why your mother weeps.
Your father's bones lie there.*

*See you the river clear and sweet
So beautiful and fair?
Follow it in and you may meet
The Queen of Dark and Air*

Children of the sylvan celestials and masters of the elf-haunted forests called wodes, wode elves see all forests as their domain by birthright. They know and enjoy their reputation among humans for snatching children who wander too far into the woods. Humans should fear the trees.

The wode elves' natural ability to mask their presence, called glamor, complements their guerilla style of fighting, letting them strike quickly from cover and then meld back into the underbrush. These traits also make the relatively few wode elves who dwell in cities naturally adept at urban warfare.

ON WODE ELVES

"I'm scared," Wenna said. "We should go back." The forest felt as if it was closing in on them.

"We're not going back," Jeremy said. Normally, such a statement would be the end of the discussion, but they were alone and far from home.

"What if we're going in circles?"

"Then we keep going in circles!" Dade said from somewhere up ahead. "Until we find the elves."

"The elves have found you!" a clear, bright voice called out. The children froze. They scanned the wood, but there were no signs of the speaker.

Then, only a few feet from them, a half-dozen figures melded out of the background, as if the trees and bushes and grass had been painted on them to perfectly match the wode. They wore light armor covered in leaves, moss, and vines, and they bristled with weapons.

"Black gods!" Meliora gasped. Credan frowned, and Wenna hushed her for swearing. Dade was ushered back toward them by two more wode elves, his bow in hand. The children huddled together, Credan's hand on the symbol of Saint Gryffyn around his neck, and Jeremy's hand on the hilt of his sword.

The elves were tall, taller than an adult human, but seemed always to crouch as soon as they stopped moving. Their eyes were unsettling, widely spaced and huge. But it was their ears, long and tall and twisting and set with great scoops to catch all sound, that marked them as elves of the wode.

"Admittedly, though, most terrans regret the experience." The voice they had heard called out again—from above. The children looked up and now saw a wode elf with long, furry, twisting ears and nut-brown skin smiling down at them. They were wearing a brightly colored outfit. The children watched the elf leap lightly from branch to lower branch until finally landing with a flourish on the forest floor before them.

"Consort!" An elf before them spoke in Yllyric as he stood from his crouch and bowed. "*We have been tracking these since they entered the wode.*"

Meliora, who understood the words, whispered to the others. "They called that one 'consort!'"

Llyander smiled, looking from Meliora to the elf who had just addressed them with a *See? I told you!* look on their face.

The tall, swashbuckling elf bowed to the children. "I am Llyander, the Lightning Strike, Consort to Queen Imyrr." They indicated the elf who had spoken. "This is my cousin, Rhythylthin."

"How did you know we were here?" Jeremy asked. Dade stood just behind him, with an arrow now nocked.

The one called Rhythylthin reached out while Dade was turned, looking at the queen's consort, and deftly plucked the arrow from the young man's bow.

"Nothing happens within the wode without our knowledge," the elf said. Dade spun on him and nocked another arrow. "And approval," Rhythylthin added, closing his hand and snapping the arrow in it.

"You come bearing a gift for our queen—the *Codex Dryadalis*." Llyander nodded at the heavy scroll Meliora carried. "My cousin Rhythylthin here was sent to capture you and escort you to the Orchid Court. But I am the queen's consort, and have my own thoughts on the matter."

The elf smiled at the children. "But have no fear," they said. Their Vaslorian was perfect, their voice a song. "You are safe ... now." The pause before "now" spoke volumes.

"Are you a ... a ... boy or a girl?" Wenna asked.

Llyander smiled gaily. "I am a song! I contain melodies and harmonies alike," they said. Wenna smiled.

Rhythylthin rolled his eyes. Llyander noticed this and winked at him. "Fashions change. My cousin here wears the new trends." They gestured at the other wode elf's garb and masculine appearance. "Me? I'm old fashioned." They gestured to their own outfit and appearance. "Grace never goes out of style."

Llyander turned to Rhythylthin and the rest of the wode elf band. "Their gift goes to Lord Tear, methinks. I will escort them." Then, suddenly imperious, they added, "You may go."

In spite of his previous skepticism toward the queen's consort, Rhythylthin straightened and bowed. As one, the elves turned and flowed into the wode. In only a few steps, they melded into the trees and undergrowth.

"How did they *do* that?" Meliora demanded, spinning to confront their benefactor.

"Hmm? Do what?" Llyander asked, looking after the elves, wondering what Meliora meant.

"Just ... disappear like that!"

Llyander looked at the other children with a combination of wonder and annoyance. "Do terran children not play hiding games?"

"Well ..." Jeremy looked at Dade, who was no help. "We do, but ..."

Llyander made a theatrical, dismissive gesture with one arm. "Well, it is the same thing, then. But for our people, it is a game we practice all our lives! We would be poor protectors of the wode if we could not conceal ourselves within it."

"But that was ..." Meliora was frustrated at the elf's seeming evasion. "That was *magic*!"

"You say? Well," Llyander mused, "terrans are a part and apart, it is said. It is your blessing and your curse methinks. Perhaps someday you can explain it to me!" The elf's eyes twinkled at Meliora's frustration.

Llyander turned and marched off. "Come!" they called. The children ran to catch up.

"Where are we going?" Wenna asked.

"I enjoy the favor of Lord Tear," Llyander said. "We are old friends. With me as your guide, he will treat you well—likely bestow favor upon you! You should be in anticipation of great treasure." They smiled.

The elf stopped suddenly and spun toward them, serious but kindly. They pointed to each of the children in turn.

"I will instruct you on the proper etiquette, but remember this: Lord Tear will test us. Some tests for you and some for me. The high elves and the wode elves are but distant cousins. You will hear much that is polite, much that is flattering, but it is all another kind of glamor. It hides deep tensions, recently exacerbated by the treaty with Ajax."

The children nodded. The elf, satisfied, marched off and they followed.

Jeremy turned to Dade. "I feel like we're in a dream," he whispered.

"You are!" their escort called out. "The wode is a dream! With a little luck, one you may soon wake safely from."

WODE ELF TRAITS

Wode elf heroes have access to the following traits.

SIGNATURE TRAIT: WODE ELF GLAMOR

You can magically alter your appearance to better blend in with your surroundings. You gain an edge on Agility tests made to hide and sneak, and tests made to find you while you are hidden take a bane.

PURCHASED WODE ELF TRAITS

You have 3 ancestry points to spend on the following traits.

FOREST WALK (COSTS 1 POINT)

You can shift into difficult terrain.

REVISIT MEMORY (COSTS 1 POINT)

Accessing memories is as easy as living in the present for you. You have an edge on all tests made to recall lore.

SWIFT (COSTS 1 POINT)

Your speed is 6.

OTHERWORLDLY GRACE (COSTS 2 POINTS)

Your elf body and mind can't be contained for long. You succeed on saving throws when you get a 5 or higher.

THE WODE DEFENDS (COSTS 2 POINTS)

You have the following signature ability.

THE WODE DEFENDS

Thorny vines erupt into existence and attempt to bind your foe.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Strike

Type: Action

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: 1 creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- 11 or lower: **2 + M or A damage; A < [weak] slowed (save ends)**
- 12–16: **3 + M or A damage; A < [average] slowed (save ends)**
- 17+: **5 + M or A damage; A < [strong] restrained (save ends)**

ELF, HIGH

"Ajax has a kind of crude style, perhaps, but no taste. I have no objection to a villain, you understand. The world is a tale, but a tale is only as good as its villain. And Ajax is so ... artless. We deserve a better villain."

Children of the solar celestials created to tend their libraries and attend to the true elves as heralds, the high elves remember a better age, before the coming of humans and war. A time when the celestials were still in the world, and all that mattered was art and beauty.

In the millennia since their creators retired to Arcadia, the high elves built a civilization for themselves, primarily living in and among the fallen celestial sky cities. With no creators left to please, the elves continue as they did before—collecting lore and knowledge, worshiping art, and turning more inward and distrusting of outsiders with each generation.

ON HIGH ELVES

"They're so beautiful," Wenna said. "It's hard to imagine we're in danger."

"It's not that hard," Dade said darkly.

The five children stood alone in the center of a large circular courtyard open to the sky, their wode elf escort Llyander at their side. Lord Tear, King of the High Elves, sat on a marble throne, holding the scroll of the *Codex Dryadalis* in his lap. He had not spoken since Llyander made their speech and handed the codex over. The members of the court, nobles and courtiers and learned sages, gathered to watch. Implacable warriors in golden plate with fine filigree etched into the metal stood guard around the perimeter. They bristled with weapons.

"They seem like ..." Meliora said, searching for the words.

"Like the lords of all the world," Wenna said with awe and wonder.

"And we are their prisoners," Jeremy said, looking at his brother Dade and Credan beside him.

"You're not prisoners," Llyander said quietly. "You are guests. You're safer here than you would be even in your own homes."

"Yes," Jeremy said, looking at the nearest guards with their longspears and swords. "We feel very safe."

"Who are you kidding?" Dade said. "Everyone knows how much elves hate humans."

At this, Lord Tear exchanged a look with Llyander, consort to Queen Imyrr. It was a knowing look, full of sadness and melancholy. Then he broke his silence.

"Show me an elf who hates humans," he said, his voice deep and sonorous, "and I will show you an elf who loved a human and watched them grow old and die." He looked at the children for the first time and smiled a melancholy smile. "Love is like sunlight for us, you see. We love completely but rarely. The loss of it means an eternity of grief for us."

The king tapped the scroll against his lap, seeming to have reached a decision.

"Well done, consort. Young humans, your escort here seeks to shame me. For they know well they could have taken this prize to their queen and earned her favor. Instead, Llyander brought it to me in the hopes that by doing so, they deliver me the power necessary to throw off the yoke of Ajax's rule. Long has Llyander resented the decision I made and sought to change it ..."—he looked at Llyander—"... by changing my mind."

Llyander nodded deferentially, silently congratulating the king on his insight.

"Alas, your escort's efforts are for naught." Then the king's face became softer. He held up the heavy scroll. "But this is not nothing," he said. "We made a treaty with Ajax to deliver unto him any artifacts our search teams discover from the ruins of this city. He benefits from this bargain more than we. But this, methinks, will stay with us. It was written by my mother in the youth of the world, and there are some things which must be denied the Iron Saint, even should they violate the treaty."

Llyander turned to the children and smiled brilliantly, eyebrows wagging in a show of glee. Wenna and Credan couldn't help but smile. "Well, you see children?" Llyander said. "We only have *more* to do, not everything to do."

The king stood up and a herald beside the throne announced, "Gather ye, and attend! The Lord of Fallen Irranys, Morning Dew On a Single Leaf Like a Tear from the Sun, speaks. And know his word is law!"

Lord Tear glided down the steps until he was standing, as tall as Llyander, before the children. His face was noble and beautiful. Wisps of silver-like strands of smoke spread across his golden skin. He seemed at once eternal and youthful.

"You have heard many things about my people, but this above all you should know. We do not value lore for lore's

sake, but beauty first and above all other things. And the truth, to us, is a kind of beauty. Thus do we find knowledge beautiful.

"You have returned something not only of enormous worldpower, but at the same time, a work of art my mother labored over for many of your centuries. It is something of a miracle that it is returned to me now. I will not forget this. You have made an ally of the lord of the high elves. And though you lead brief lives, while you live, you shall have the favor of the elves." He turned to hand the scroll over to a sage and confer with his herald.

"He seems wise," Credan said.

"And smart," Meliora said.

"I'm surprised how kind he is," Jeremy said. "He seems a good king."

Llyander chuckled. Wenna noticed. She didn't say anything at first, but eventually she couldn't resist. "What?"

Llyander raised an eyebrow, then walked in front of the children so that as the wode elf spoke, their back was to the king.

"Do you remember when my cousin's soldiers hid in the wode?" they said, their voice low. "How astonished you were?"

Wenna and Meliora nodded. Llyander nodded to the guards and guests. "This is *their* glamor. Whatever you find pleasant and attractive in another? That is what you see in them. If you value good humor, they are jesters. If you value beauty, they are breathtaking. If you find intelligence attractive, they are sages. It is not just an effect of appearance, though it is also that. It is one of *demeanor*."

"But how do they do ..."

Llyander put a finger to their lips, silencing young Meliora. "It is not a thing they *do*. It is an effect in your mind."

"You mean they don't even know they're doing it?" Meliora asked.

"Then what do they *really* look like?" Wenna asked.

Llyander shrugged. "What does anyone really look like?" And while the other children chalked this up to their escort's normally abstruse mode of communication, Meliora caught a glimpse of understanding somewhere in her mind.

The king turned back to them. "Should any of you seek hidden lore or deep wisdom, please allow me to serve you first. But you, young woman, the human child who learned our language, I name thee *elffriend*. And my naming carries power. You will find the learning of our lore will come more quickly to you, and all those who still revere the elves will give you safe passage in their lands."

Llyander put their hands on their hips and regarded the children. "Not bad for your second quest. What shall you do for an encore?"

HIGH ELF TRAITS

High elf heroes have access to the following traits.

SIGNATURE TRAIT: HIGH ELF GLAMOR

A magic glamor makes others perceive you as interesting and engaging, granting you an edge on Presence tests using the Flirt or Persuade skills. This glamor makes you look and sound slightly different to each creature you meet, since what is engaging to one might be different for another. However, you never appear to be anyone other than yourself.

PURCHASED HIGH ELF TRAITS

You have 3 ancestry points to spend on the following traits. (*Quick Build*: High Senese, Otherworldly Grace)

GRACEFUL RETREAT (COSTS 1 POINT)

When you take the Disengage move action, you can shift 1 additional square as part of the move action.

HIGH SENSES (COSTS 1 POINT)

You have senses that are keen and perceptive. You have an edge on Intuition tests that use the Awareness skill.

REVISIT MEMORY (COSTS 1 POINT)

Accessing memories is as easy as living in the present for you. You have an edge on all tests made to recall lore.

OTHERWORLDLY GRACE (COSTS 2 POINTS)

Your elf body and mind can't be contained for long. You succeed on saving throws when you get a 5 or higher.

UNSTOPPABLE MIND (COSTS 2 POINTS)

Your mind allows you to maintain your focus in any situation. You can't be dazed.

HAKAAN

Defending the Society's flank, the Pillar stood alone against the Bloodstone Legion. The Arrow was awestruck and afraid. She was a different person in a fight.

"COME FORTH, SONS OF ORD!" the hakaan metamorph bellowed as Ajax's dwarf legion advanced. "AND MEET A BETTER WOMAN THAN THEE!!"

"You ... you know when you're going to die?"

The Pillar, dressed in her civilian clothing—a simple pleated dress cinched at the waist that left her bare arms free to work—dipped her hand in the pail of water. It immediately sprang to life, the water sizzled and danced as her fingers cooled. She pulled her hand out, shook off the water, and went back to sculpting the granite.

The hard, tough stone melded like clay under her fingers. Whatever she was doing, it generated enormous heat in her fingertips, hence the pails of water beside her. The Arrow couldn't tell if this was her talent manifest, or something her people could do, or neither. As he watched, he realized he recognized the bust. It was the girl they

rescued during the Society's recent battle with the Academy.²

"Not exactly," the Pillar said as she concentrated on her art. "Not when. More sort of ..." She looked away from her sculpture and looked out the window, thinking. "How. Why. I am told there is a sense of ..." she looked at the young man, a teenager, only recently recruited to the Society. "Anticipation. Eagerness when the time is nigh. So," she took in a deep breath, which was an impressive sight to see in a 9-foot-tall woman, and let it out, smiling at the young man. "Not anytime soon." Her smile was like a sunrise.

Though he had lived with fear most of his young life, mortality was not something that plagued the Arrow's mind. He had a hard time grasping it. "That must be ... awful."

"Oh no," she went back to her work. "No it's ... I do not know how to say it in Caelian. It is a blessing. I have seen people die for no reason. Be taken from their loved ones without warning, without ... without purpose. There are unjust deaths. They destroy families. Communities.

"But the doomsight only comes in time of great need. People forget Holkatya is also the goddess of luck, and those who beat luck—under ... underdogs, as you say. She gave more than she stole, I sometimes think.

"I do not know how long I have. No one does, but I know my death will have meaning. I *know* it, do you understand? I know it like I know my own name. Often I feel ..." Her great hands clenched and unclenched, as though she were trying to grasp something just out of reach. "I yearn for it. I *want* it to happen. What greater end can there be than fulfilling one's destiny?" She looked at the mostly-finished sculpture. "It gives everything I do a sense of purpose." She went back to work.

"My people are a serene and peaceful lot. We do not seek glory like the folk of Vanigar. But, in battle sometimes, knowing I am getting closer to my wyrd, my destiny, I think I know how they feel. Something comes over me, some enormous sense of ... of rightness." She smiled again at the young man. "It scares my friends sometimes, I know."

The Arrow had seen it, and enthusiastically agreed. "You're not from the Barrow Hills," he said.

The Pillar shook her head, "No, I do not wot of your hills. I am from the hills north of the Blue Cloud Mountains in far Vanigar." She turned and looked down at the Arrow with some pride. "My people are descended from the original Haka'an tribe." She went back to work. "Though I am sure the Barrow Men, as you call them, are a fine people. We're all related, you see."

"Is that why you joined the Society?"

"Oh yes," the Pillar said. "I had only left home a fortnight previous when Memory came to Vanigar to recruit me. I

² See last ish. -MC.

had a sense my wyrd lay in some distant land, but I did not know the world was so big.”

“Did she look like herself?” the Arrow asked, smiling. Enjoying a moment of shared experience with the giant woman.

The Pillar chuckled, and the Arrow’s chest vibrated with the force of it. “No, she looked like an aged wise woman of Vanigar. I think only in fabled Alloy could the Memory of a Sunset at Dawn walk the streets without ‘scaring the horses,’ as they say.”

“Alloy?”

The Pillar looked at the Arrow out of the corner of her eye. “You’ll see,” she said with some glee.

“You were following your vision, you said.”

“Yes, my wyrd as the Vanigair call it.”

“What did you see?”

“Oh,” she smiled and blushed, “it is not meet to say.”

“It’s bad luck?”

“Mmmm ... you would say maybe. I think ... rude is closer, but the doomsight is rarely clear in any event. It is full of symbolism and metaphor. My father is the shaa’er of our tribe. The skald as the Vanigair call it. He thought the symbolism was a kind of protection. So that I might know with certainty the meaning, but be unable to clearly convey it to others.” She nodded. “I think he is right.”

“Is it like a dream or a nightmare?” The Arrow wasn’t sure how much it was okay to ask.

“No, it was not a dream, it was a thing that happened.” She turned to face the Arrow and leaned her massive arms on her legs. “I know not how it is for other doomseekers, but this is how it was for me. I was collecting flecks of jasper, a ... a mineral we add to our food. I was picking flakes of rock up off the ground when I saw a bee that could not fly and a horde of ants all around, one with wings. In that moment, that was all that I could see. It was like the rest of the world fell away, and the bee and the ants filled my sight. Though the bee was surrounded and the ants seemed to go on forever, I could see the ants were afraid. There were dozens of dead ants on the ground.”

“What did you do?”

“Mm?” The Pillar was lost for a moment, remembering the moment.

“What happened next?”

The Pillar shrugged, giant muscles in her shoulders rippling. “That was the end of my vision. At that moment, I knew I had to leave home.”

“Wow.”

“Indeed. Its meaning is clear to me. I stand alone against the endless horde. In my heart, they are Ajax’s war dogs. I think I know this, but ...” She shrugged again.

“But how come you’re alone? Where am I? Where’s the Society?”

“Who knows?” she smiled. “When the vision comes upon you, it is all you can see. Maybe it is like a painting, and I

am the painter. And if only I could turn my head a little ways to the left or right, I would see my friends there, fighting with me. I like to think mine is a great sacrifice, made so my friends can escape some overwhelming evil. It is a common theme among the fated I am told.”

“What about the bee? What happened to the bee?”

“Oh, feeling sorry for it, I placed my finger gently on the ground, and you must see,” she held up her pinky, “even my little finger is like a mighty wall for the bee. I sought only to protect it from the ants, but it quickly scrambled onto my finger, and after I stood up, it cleaned itself and flew away.”

“It could fly!” the Arrow said, suddenly full of youthful exuberance. “It could fly the entire time! It was just waiting ... for someone else to come along.”

The Arrow stared, wide-eyed at the Pillar. Even before the young man spoke, the hakaan talent’s eyes widened in realization. “My vision ...” she said.

“Wasn’t over!” the Arrow said, his joy impossible to hide.

HAKAAN TRAITS

Hakaan heroes have access to the following traits.

SIGNATURE TRAIT: BIG!

Your size is 1L.

PURCHASED HAKAAN TRAITS

You have 3 ancestry points to spend on the following traits. (*Quick Build*: Forceful, Domsight)

ALL IS A FEATHER (COSTS 1 POINT)

You are exceptionally strong and have an edge made on tests that use the Lift skill.

FORCEFUL (COSTS 1 POINT)

When you force move a creature or object, you can increase the distance moved by 1.

STAND TOUGH (COSTS 1 POINT)

Your body is made to withstand the blows of your enemies. Your Might score counts as 1 higher for resisting potencies.

GREAT FORTITUDE (COSTS 2 POINTS)

Your hearty constitution prevents you from losing strength. You can’t be weakened.

DOOMSIGHT (COSTS 2 POINTS)

Working with your Director, you can predetermine an encounter in which you will die. When that encounter begins, you become doomed. While doomed, you automatically get tier 3 results on tests and ability power rolls, and you don’t die no matter how low your Stamina falls. You then die immediately at the end of the encounter.

If you don’t predetermine your death encounter, you can choose to become doomed while you are dying with the director’s approval (no action required). Doing so should be reserved for encounters in which you are dying as a result of suitable heroism, such as making a last stand against a boss or saving civilians, or when the consequences of your actions have finally caught up to

you—not because you’re playing a one-shot and have nothing to lose, Hacaarl.

Additionally, when your Stamina equals the negative of your winded value and you are not doomed, you turn to rubble instead of experiencing death. You are unaware of your surroundings in this state. After 12 hours, you regain Stamina equal to your Recovery value.

HUMAN

“Humans,” the dwarf said with a combination of exasperation and awe. “Their only virtue seems to be believing in impossible things.”

“Humans belong to the world in a way the other speaking peoples do not. You can sense the presence of magic—that ... oily smell in the air, as I’ve heard it described. And the presence of deathless causes the hairs on the back of your neck to stand up. Or why do you think graveyards affect you so? Whatever magic is, its grip on you is light. Whatever drives the deathless, your nature rebels against it.

“No one knows why this should be. We elves have no such senses. Nor do the elementals or the kanin ... the dwarves and the orcs as you say. What is it that sets humans apart? I am an historian, not a physician. I cannot say. Perhaps some of you will one day find out and teach us all the reason.”

ON HUMANS

So, we arrive here at the end of your first semester of Human Culture. I hope to see you next year in the Caelian Empire course, and though it may be hard to believe now, I often see former students’ names in our textbooks years later. Perhaps that will be some of you.

I will now answer the one question I am asked most often, and which I save answering until the last day of class. What do I think of humans?

I am a high elf, as you deem it in your tongue. A child of the solar celestials. And I have taught this class, mostly to young humans, since the Caelian emperors founded this city. I was asked to join the faculty by the first chancellor. I have seen generations of your people come through this classroom, and that alone would well qualify me to answer this question.

What do I think of humans? Well, I will tell you.

I was here, teaching this class during the fire of Enlightenment 373. The fire leveled this city. Can you imagine that? Can you imagine the heat, the death, destruction that such a thing causes?

Six months after the Great Fire, your ancestors had rebuilt ... everything. I have seen many miracles in my life. Witnessing that feat might be chief among them.

Liches are almost always humans. Did you know that? I think I know why. Your lives are so short—almost as soon as you’re born, you’re thinking about dying, and you refuse to yield.

That refusal to yield to death ... to *death* ... is what drives you, I think. Drives you to leave the world better than you found it. Causes ruined people to rebuild great city.

We studied human history in this room. Did you feel that those great ancestors of yours were perhaps made of finer stuff than you? Do not think thus. I knew them, and I know you, and your future is greater. I sometimes think each human generation greater than the last—more courageous, more generous. Quicker to forgive.

Today, Ajax’s name is on everyone’s tongue, but I have seen many great evils arise in the world. I was teaching in this classroom when the Pharaoh Khorsekef, desperate, his power failing, opened the Great Tet and drank of the time stored there, becoming the Ultralich. He was defeated, and now rules the Necropolitan Ruin in the Abyssal Waste.

I was alive, though not yet a professor, when Cthriion Uroniziir tried to reduce the timescape into one singular universe, wiping out reality as we know it. She was defeated, and we see her cage every day.³

Each of these great evils was defeated by a coalition. The armies and heroes of many speaking peoples. And all of them—all of them—were led ... by humans. That’s a fact. That’s history. You can look it up.

Is there some rare trait that makes you uniquely qualified to lead disparate peoples, bring them together to achieve great things? I think ... there must be.

Those great humans, your ancestors, did not focus on differences. They did not weigh different people and grade them based on arbitrary traits deemed virtues and flaws. That is what Ajax does. No, those humans focused on the future. On making a better world ... for all of us. A world many of them knew they would not live to see. That is a sacrifice ... I can scarcely imagine.

The people who stand against Ajax and tyrants like him will be just like you—normal people. Priests and scholars and merchants and farmers. Maybe even teachers.

Stopping Ajax will require you to become something else. You must become heroes. Conduits of saints, warmasters of great armies. Censors and shadows. That may seem unlikely now, but the future has a way of surprising us.

Some of your names, I will see written in future textbooks.

But some of your names, I will see written in the stars.

HUMAN TRAITS

Human heroes have access to the following traits.

³ Professor Cilliarwn did not elaborate on this.

SIGNATURE TRAIT: DETECT THE SUPERNATURAL

As a maneuver, you open your awareness to detect supernatural creatures and phenomena. Until the end of your next turn, you know the location of any supernatural object, undead, construct, or creature from another plane of existence within 5 squares of you, even if you don't have line of effect to them. You know if you're detecting an item or a creature, and you know if a creature is undead, a construct, or from another plane of existence.

PURCHASED HUMAN TRAITS

You have 3 ancestry points to spend on the following traits. (*Quick Build*: Perseverance, Staying Power)

CAN'T TAKE HOLD (COSTS 1 POINT)

Your connection to the natural world allows you resist supernatural effects. You ignore difficult terrain (but not other effects) created by magic and psionic abilities. Additionally, when you are force moved by a magic or psionic ability, you reduce the forced movement by 1.

PERSEVERANCE (COSTS 1 POINT)

Giving up is for other people. You have an edge on tests that use the Endurance skill and when you are slowed, your speed is reduced to 3 instead of 2.

RESIST THE UNNATURAL (COSTS 1 POINT)

Your connection to the natural world protects you from unnatural forces. When you take damage that isn't untyped, you can use your triggered action to half the damage.

DETERMINATION (COSTS 2 POINTS)

Your anatomical tolerance for pain allows you to push through difficult situations. If you are frightened, slowed, or weakened, you can use a maneuver to immediately end the condition.

STAYING POWER (COSTS 2 POINTS)

Your human anatomy allows you to fight, run, and stay awake longer than others. Increase your number of Recoveries by 2.

MEMONEK

"This world of yours. Ships of wood and swords of steel. It's so ... primitive. Like a fairy tale."

"Where do you come from, lady, that our world seems a fable? You have no ships and swords?"

"We have them." Lady Urusistra cast a hand across the sky. "You see those stars? That is my home—the timescape. Our ships are great star freighters that ply the space lanes. And among those stars, light hits as hard as steel."

The native denizens of Axiom, the Plane of Uttermost Law, memonek dwell in a land with lakes and trees and birds and flowers. But on this alien world, the lakes are seas of mercury, the birds glitter with wings of glass stretched gossamer thin, and the flowers' petals are iridescent metal as flexible and fragile as any earthly rose.

The minds of memonek are highly ordered. Their reason is their great pride. But when descending to the lower planes, including a manifold like Orden where law and chaos mix,

a sickness comes over them—an uncontrollable sensation called emotion.

ON MEMONEK

"You want to tell me what just happened?" Sir John asked. Count Revile avoided his gaze, then turned and stamped away across the bloody battlefield.

"I'm fine!" Revile shouted, all evidence to the contrary.

"I know what I saw," John said as he followed his friend. "You went into a bloodlust. And it's not the first time. Whether you like it or not, whether I like it or not, I'm in charge of this mission. Either you tell me what's going on, or I have no choice. I *have* to conclude you're a danger to the team and cut you loose."

Revile stopped and turned to look at the rest of the party, recovering from their wounds. The memonek's white porcelain chest heaved as he tried to calm himself. His ceramic skin looked as strong as plate, but John knew it was brittle, fragile.

Count Revile took a deep breath. "We call it *velloparatha*," he said. "In your tongue it would be ... world-sick ... or world-sickness? It is a thing that happens ... to my people ... when they come to your world. It is an illness of ... of feeling. Emotion."

"Are you going mad?" John asked in a whisper.

The memonek smiled ruefully. "It feels that way sometimes. I spent an hour this morning staring at an insect that landed on my finger—a grasshopper, the polder called it. I thought I had never seen a thing so perfect and beautiful. That was awe. As powerful as I have ever felt. In the battle today, anger—just as powerful.

"I thought I could resist it. When I arrived here and felt no different, I thought perhaps world-sickness was a legend. But it is a slow process, this illness, these insidious emotions."

"No emotions where you're from?"

Count Revile shook his head. "Not like this. We are creatures of reason, we of Axiom. It is our art, our pride—our religion sometimes, methinks. We have emotions. Joy, sadness, wonder, grief. Love. But they are ... a fashion. They do not *happen* to us. They are something we indulge in, out of propriety. Here... everything is order and chaos mixed—even in me. In *me*." Revile placed his hand on his chest.

"In the battle today," he said. "That anger was not directed at Ajax's War Dogs. It was directed at myself."

"At yourself? Why? What did you—"

"John," the memonek said, and now it was his turn to whisper. "I was afraid. Afraid of ... of being wounded, of failing you, failing my friends ... of dying. And out of that fear came ... enormous anger—at myself. Anger that I was so weak, so ... useless. Anger so ... strong, so powerful ... I forgot who I was."

John chuckled. "That's just ..." He smiled broadly. "That's normal, man. That's just normal. We all feel that way."

"What? No, you don't understand—"

"Oh, I don't understand? Okay, let me guess—it felt like you were gonna piss yourself."

"Yes!"

"Yeah, happens to all of us."

"Even you?!"

Sir John shrugged. "Are you kidding? Sure. But it doesn't help. You still got a job to do. In fact, I'd say that *is* the job. Anyone can learn the blade." He placed his hand on the pommel of his sword. "Nothing special about that. It's learning to deal with the fear. That's the job—what separates the professionals from the amateurs."

Count Revile said nothing, just thinking.

"Feeling better?"

Revile nodded. "I always recover afterward, but these outbursts come unbidden, like thunder from a clear sky."

"Hmm. Yeah. Well, that explains what happened when you met Embers."

Count Revile did not like being reminded of that. He looked to the sky and shook his head. "I made a fool of myself."

"Don't be so hard on yourself. If you're trying to seduce our void mage, you made a good start of it. She's three thousand years old, I've known her since I was fifteen. I don't think I've ever seen her *blush*. Anyway, now that I know what's going on, now that I know you're basically a giant teenager with overactive glands, I can relax a little."

Sir John and Count Revile, both tacticians, stood together on the bloody battlefield, looking at each other.

"John, I fear this may get worse before it gets better."

"So, just like everything else?" He clapped the memonek on the shoulder. "Don't worry, we'll get through it together. I'll let the others know. Once they understand, they'll help too. They'll probably just take the piss out of you. That'll help, you'll love that."

"You're a good friend, John."

"Heh. Is that you, or the world-sickness talking?"

"Me, I think. The world-sickness would have me say ... you're a bastardly son of a bitch. But you're my bastardly son of a bitch." Count Revile smiled.

John laughed and put his arm around his friend as they headed back to the party. "Funny. The world-sickness sounds a lot like *me*."

MEMONEK BENEFITS

Memonek heroes have access to the following traits.

SIGNATURE TRAIT: FALL LIGHTLY

Your silicone body is low in density. Whenever you fall, you reduce the distance of the fall by 2 squares.

SIGNATURE TRAIT: LIGHTWEIGHT

Your body is light for a creature of your height. Your size is considered 1S when being force moved by another creature.

PURCHASED MEMONEK TRAITS

You have 4 ancestry points to spend on the following traits. (*Quick Build*: Lightning Nimbleness, Nonstop)

I AM LAW (COSTS 1 POINT)

Your lawful nature and quick reflexes give no quarter to enemies trying to get around you. Enemy creatures can't pass through your space unless you allow them to do so.

SYSTEMATIC MIND (COSTS 1 POINT)

You have an edge on tests to parse schematics, maps, and other systematic documentation that aren't inherently chaotic. In addition, you interact with any language you don't know as if you know a related language, whether or not you actually do.

UNPHASED (COSTS 1 POINT)

Your ordered mind can't be caught off guard. You can't be surprised.

USEFUL EMOTION (COSTS 1 POINT)

Velloparatha might hinder, but it also fuels your strikes. You know how to turn your pain into something your enemies feel. When combat starts, you gain one surge.

KEEPER OF ORDER (COSTS 2 POINTS)

Your connection to Axiom, the plane of uttermost law, allows you manage chaos around you. When you or a creature adjacent to you makes a power roll, you can remove an edge or a bane on the roll as a free triggered action. You can only use this benefit once per round.

LIGHTNING NIMBLENESS (COSTS 2 POINTS)

You can push your body to move at incredible speeds. Your speed is 7.

NONSTOP (COSTS 2 POINTS)

Your connection to Axiom allows you to regulate your movements, even when other creatures would be forced to pause. You can't be slowed.

ORC

"Even should an arrow pierce their heart, each kanin warrior has within them one last act of revenge."

An anger that cannot be hidden. A fury that drives them in battle. Orcs are famed throughout the world as consummate warriors—a reputation that the peace-loving orcs find distasteful.

The fifth of the speaking peoples, orcs arrived on Orden after humans and elves. They made their homes in the borderlands between those two cultures, preferring the natural forests and avoiding the elf-haunted wodes. For generations, this put them directly in the path of humans who cut down the trees and built roads and farms.

Each orc has within them a fire that causes their veins to glow once blood is drawn. This anger propels them right to the edge of death. The dichotomy between their desire to be left alone and their zeal in battle is summarized in a dwarf proverb:

"Be thankful orcs do not hold grudges."

ON ORCS

What a world we have made.

Indeed, what a marvel!

It is a marvel *now*, with the dragons and celestials, elementals and terrans.

It is unseemly. It was better before things started talking.

And having *opinions*. About our creation. About *us*!

Oh, I don't know. I thought I agreed, but then look you what our sibling Ord has made. A fine people, these elementals. They make marvels. Ord made them, and now they make miracles.

We make marvels. The world is a miracle, and enough.

Yes. But still. I think I might try my hand at children. It seems a worthy pursuit.

Heed the lesson of our Shamèd Brother. It was better before the coming of the terrans. Before the coming of war.

But war has come. Ord and I are of one mind in this: what is done cannot be undone. My children should not seek war, but they would excel at it should it come to them. They would be strong, like the elementals. But theirs would be a strength of spirit. They would never relent, never give up. Always seeking, always striving. Like life itself.

They should love the forest and green things, like the children of Val. But they should be at home in the cities the terrans and elementals build. In this world of chaos and law, they should seek *balance*. Not quick to anger. But once angered? A *wildfire*.

If they excel at war, the terrans will be jealous. They will be in constant conflict with each other.

Perhaps. Yes, I think you're right. It seems to be the great tragedy of our creation, war. But the constant threat of it will bring wisdom. It will take great wisdom to avoid such conflict, and those possessed of such wisdom will become great leaders.

Would they be lorewise and crafty?

Oh, I would leave that to them. It is not meet that children should be too closely molded by their parents. But you ask, and my mind goes to Ket. They should lack the pride of Ket's children....

Look where *that* got him.

Hush, you. We should not be too hard on our Brother In Mourning. He has paid for his hubris. My children would love the world more than lore. That is my answer.

They seem a fine people, if you ask me.

And there they are, look at them! Kul, your thoughts made real! Only in the world a little while, and already growing, learning.

Ah! My children! So fierce and unyielding. I see you lead short lives, like the terrans. Perhaps this is good.

I see they get along well with Ord's children. I think this a good sign.

Already they make homes in the forests by the elves. Some little skirmishing over borders, I note. Nothing serious. What shall you call them?

Oh, I do not care for such things. They should be free of our designs, like the terrans. Let them name themselves. Oh! They already have! Kanin. It means "the people" in their tongue. I like that. Very democratic. Good for them.

And will they know you?

If they wish. Much as I agreed with...the Father of Men...I find worship unseemly.

Agreed.

Agreed!

Let me introduce myself, at least.

Ahem.

"Hear me, kanin! This world we made is yours, as much as it is anyone's. You belong here.

"Know that you are my children, the children of Kul, he who put fire within the world. And there is fire in you. And though the world and fate and baser minds may conspire to destroy your light, you will survive. And more than survive, you will thrive. And in thriving, you will conquer!"

ORC TRAITS

Orc heroes have access to the following traits.

SIGNATURE TRAIT: RELENTLESS

When a creature deals damage to you that leaves you dying, you can make a free strike against any creature. If the creature is reduced to 0 Stamina by your strike, you can spend a Recovery.

PURCHASED ORC TRAITS

You have 3 ancestry points to spend on the following traits. (*Quick Build*: Grounded, Glowing Recovery)

BLOODFIRE RUSH (COSTS 1 POINT)

The magic coursing through your veins makes you run faster in the heat of battle. When you take damage, your speed increases by 2 until the end of the round. You can benefit from this feature only once per round.

GROUNDED (COSTS 1 POINT)

The magic in your blood makes it difficult for others to move you. Your stability increases by 1.

PASSIONATE ARTISAN (COSTS 1 POINT)

When you are stirred by passion for creation, your bloodfire allows you to work longer and harder. Choose two skills from the crafting skill group. Whenever you make a project roll using these skills, you gain a +2 bonus to the roll.

GLOWING RECOVERY (COSTS 2 POINTS)

Your bloodfire allows you to regain your strength quicker than others. When you can take the Catch Breath maneuver, you can spend as many Recoveries as you like instead of just one.

NONSTOP (COSTS 2 POINTS)

Your bloodfire supplies you with a constant rush of adrenaline. You can't be slowed.

POLDER

"Wait, where'd he go? Where'd that little son of a bitch go? AAAAGGH!"

After humans, polder are the most numerous and diverse ancestry in Orden. They are not humans, but they live in and amongst humans and share their gods and culture. Almost every human culture in Orden has a polder saint or a human saint venerated by polder.

Short, averaging three and a half feet tall, their origins are obscure. They are a young species who, like humans, have no single patron god. Their ability to shadowmeld means they enjoy a reputation as excellent spies and thieves. Many polder consider this a base slander and point out they're also famed as chefs, though polder can be found in every profession, especially in cities.

ON POLDERS

The three peasants—Jago, his wife Sarah, and his sister Beth—sat together watching the three heroes talk in the crowded common room of the inn. Well, Jackson Bootblack seemed to be doing most of the talking.

"This kind of shit doesn't work if it's just a bunch of ratcatchers like us," the polder said. "You need the people to rise up. Been fifteen years since Omund died—fifteen years of fighting wolves and bandits and worse. The people welcome a tyrant after that. They like order, you know? They adapt."

"If you stand on the grass long enough, it learns to lie flat," A Mist Coils Around Dying Embers said. "But what do *you* say?"

"Eh?" the polder asked her. But he glanced at Sir John staring at him.

"You say the people have no stomach for rebellion," Embers said. "But what about you?"

"Oh," the polder said, "I say it doesn't matter much what I say. Why's he looking at me like that?" the polder asked the high elf and pointed at Sir John. Realizing he was being rude, John shook his head to clear it. "Sorry, I just ... I never met a polder before," he said.

"Are you kidding me?" Jackson said.

"No! Sorry, I just ..."

"What are you, from the moon? Where you from that you never met a polder before? There's polder in every fucking village and town from here to the sea."

"Really? That's weird. I'm from Tor, I've been all over—just never met a polder before."

Jackson looked at his friend, the high elf void mage. "Am I crazy?"

"You're not crazy." Embers smiled. She was enjoying watching two of her friends get to know each other. "John's just never run into one, it seems."

"Well, we're adorable," the polder said, and drank some ale.

"They must have been around I guess," John said. "I probably just never noticed."

The polder put his drink down. "Oh, thank you. Thank you very much. You know, it's funny. I never have any problem noticing you big assholes. One of you makes about as much noise as a cow, which ... I don't even know how you manage that."

"You're talking just ... my voice is just as loud as yours!"

"I mean the way you walk around. Just the way you move, the way you stand up and sit down. You make so much goddamn noise."

Jago, Sarah, and Beth all smiled at the exchange.

"Humans are loud, yes," Embers agreed.

"Do we have to ... can we talk about something else, please?"

"I just ..." The polder wouldn't let it go. "You seriously never ... you never been to an inn? Cavall's teeth, I can't count how many inns and taverns I've been to run by polders, got polders in the kitchen or waiting tables. One of the only two things we're good at, I think."

"Yeah?" John asked. "What's the other one?"

The little man smiled. "Getting into places we ain't supposed to be."

"Now we're talking," Sir John said. "You were saying we need the people behind us. I agree."

"Yeah, okay. To business: How to rally the people." The polder took the question seriously. "It's not hard. First, we need someone they'll rally around. I could make someone up, invent a local folk hero, but if we can find the real thing? They just need to look the part, that's all. I'll take care of the rest."

"I'm working on that," John said. "But it's ... slower going than I thought. I'm betting on a long shot."

"What's the holdup?"

John thought about how to put what he knew into words. "You know," he shrugged. "Some people can only be heroes if they think they're better than everyone else. Some people can only be heroes once they realize they're not. And some people ..."

He looked at his drink, at the expensive clear glass the innkeep had given him because he recognized Sir John. He turned the glass slowly on the table and now he was mostly talking to himself. "Some people still have to figure that out."

"Which is best?" Jackson asked, and Embers could tell the little man was testing John.

John took a deep breath and came back to reality. "Well. If we could be picky, we wouldn't need a hero," he said.

The polder looked at the high elf and nodded, impressed. Test passed.

"Okay. Well, if you've already got a candidate, I could get things started. The other half is: we need a good story—short, punchy. Something that'll catch on, needs to be easy

to relate to, but bigger than life. A tax. A toll! Bridge toll, classic. An ogre ... no, three ogres. Yeah, three is better. Three ogres in Ajax's livery. A lone figure standing against them. See? Easy."

"Where are we going to find three ogres?" John asked.

"What do you mean?" Now it was the polder's turn to be confused.

"What do you mean, 'What do I mean?'" John said.

"I'm not ... we don't need *real* ogres." Jackson looked at the elf. "Is he for real?"

"Trust me," the void mage said.

"You mean you're going to make it up?!" John exclaimed.

"I..." Jackson looked with incredulity at the high elf void mage, then back at the human. "Yes, I do mean that. Does he know what I do?" he asked the elf.

"He'll learn." Embers smiled.

The polder turned back to Sir John. "Hello. I lie for a living. And I'm *really good at it*. Sometimes also kill people, but only if lying or running away doesn't work."

John turned to Embers. "I thought he was a thief."

"I was a thief," the polder said.

"You *were* a thief."

"Yeah, I was with the Clock. Probably still am—they don't exactly let you just walk away. We sort of have an agreement. I agree to do what they tell me and they agree not to tell me to do anything."

"Did they kick you out, or did you quit?"

"Depends on who you ask. I don't like being told what to do. It's sort of a polder thing. Hereditary or ancestral or whatever. Everybody wants a polder chef until they start trying to tell us what to cook."

"So what are you now?"

"I'm annoying."

The elf smiled. "He's a troubadour—one of the best."

Sir John looked at him, nodded. "No lute, I notice. And you don't seem the type to sit by the hearth telling stories."

The polder grinned. "I ain't that kind of troubadour. I'm the other kind. I think the best story is the one people tell each other."

"Propaganda," Sir John said, a grin spreading across his face. The polder pointed a finger at him and smiled. John heard the door to the inn open behind him. This wasn't notable, but the gasp from the customers was.

"Hey," the polder said, looking past John to the doorway. "Hey, I think our folk hero just showed up. Damn, he looks the part all right. Or she, I can never tell with these guys."

John turned to see.

Sir Vaantikalisax loomed just inside the doorway, his scales and armor glowing in the light of the hearth fire. Sir John shot up out of his chair, a huge smile on his face.

"I, uh ..." Vaantikalisax said. The tall, broad draconian looked from John to the three peasants. Jago, Sarah, and Beth were beaming with even more joy than John, if that were possible.

The knight stared at them for a moment, then turned back to his friend.

"Maybe you're right," the dragon knight said.

POLDER TRAITS

Polder heroes have access to the following traits.

SIGNATURE TRAIT: SHADOWMELD

You gain the following ability.

SHADOWMELD

You become an actual shadow.

Keywords: Magic

Distance: Self

Type: Maneuver

Target: Self

Effect: You flatten yourself into a shadow against a wall or floor you are touching, and become hidden from any creature you have cover or concealment from or who isn't observing you. While in shadow form, you have full awareness of your surroundings, attacks against you and tests made to find you take a bane, and you can't move or take actions or maneuvers except to exit this form. Any ability or effect that targets more than 1 square affects you in this form only if it explicitly affects the surface you are flattened against. You can exit this form as a maneuver.

SIGNATURE TRAIT: SMALL!

Your size is 1S.

PURCHASED POLDER TRAITS

You have 3 ancestry points to spend on the following traits. (*Quick Build:* Corruption Immunity, Fearless)

CORRUPTION IMMUNITY (COSTS 1 POINT)

Your innated shadow magic gives you corruption immunity equal to your level + 2.

GRACEFUL RETREAT (COSTS 1 POINT)

When you take the Disengage move action, you can shift 1 additional square as part of the move action.

POLDER GEIST (COSTS 1 POINT)

When you start your turn while no creatures have line of effect to you, or while you are hidden from or have concealment from all enemies with line of effect to you, your speed is increased by 3 until the end of your turn.

FEARLESS (COSTS 2 POINTS)

Courage is all you know. You can't be frightened.

NIMBLESTEP (COSTS 2 POINTS)

Your light feet allow you to ignore the effects of difficult terrain and move at full speed while you are sneaking.

REVENANT

"I will suck the life from your flesh and leave you a withered corpse!"

The revenant null flexed his arms and assumed a fighting pose. He smiled.

"Little late for that."

The dead walk among us. Some of them are happier about it than others.

Unlike the necromantic rituals that produce wights and wraiths and zombies, revenants rise from the grave through a combination of an unjust death and a burning desire for vengeance. Creatures sustained on pure will, they have no need of food or water or air—and, unlike their zombified cousins, they retain all their memories and personality from life.

These revenants are rare. Many are hunted by ignorant villagers who see only their dead flesh and assume the worst. Those who survive the pitchfork brigade either choose a solitary life, often as a wandering soul seeking out living company yet constantly in fear of it, or they migrate to a metropolis such as Blackbottom or Capital, where lost souls gather to make a home.

ON REVENANTS

"I'm telling you, we are being followed."

"No one knows we're here. No one even knows this place exists! We got all day. We stash everything here, and take a sample to ..." The head thief pulled a vial out of a crate stuffed with straw and looked at it.

"It's just ..." The junior cutpurse spoke nervously. *"There was this lady knight in Blackbottom sniffing around. She seemed serious. I got this weird ... chill when I looked at her."*

"Hey," the head thief said, his brow furrowed as he looked at the label on the vial. *"Where'd you say you bought this stuff? You said a ship—a ship from where?"*

"I dunno, uh ... uh, Capital I think."

The head thief looked at the panicking cutpurse. *"This lady knight—she have a red and blue device on her shield?"*

"Black gods," one of the other thieves said. *"It can't be Lady Filliamo, can it?"*

There was a firm knock at the door to the safe house. A door which, from the outside, looked like an unremarkable section of wall.

"Oh, you've got to be kidding me."

"Nonono! How could she ... Capital was nine months ago!"

"She's a revenant, idiot! She doesn't even need air. She could have walked here! Just ... into the water and across the bottom of the sea! Black gods, why didn't you say anything?"

"I did! You asshole, I just did! I been trying to tell you for—"

"Man, there is a difference between, 'Hey I think we're being shadowed,' and, 'There's a deathless copper coming after us!'"

One of the four thieves opened a vial and dipped his dirk into the red oil within.

"What is that gonna do? She's already dead!" Another knock at the hidden door. *"Forget it. Let her knock. Grab as many as you can, and we'll go out the back."*

The head thief ran for the door out the back of the safe house. He jerked it open—and the other thieves watched as a silver flash silently flared across his forehead. Through the open door, they could see the silhouette of the knight, her open hand held up in front of her.

She clenched her hand into a fist and the judgment she had placed on the head cutpurse detonated, hurling him backward. He sprawled across the floor, conscious but stunned.

The gray-skinned knight walked into the room. Metal heels rang out on the wooden floor. She seemed relaxed, but her eyes burned with inner fire.

"Boys," Lady Filliamo said pleasantly. *"Busy morning."*

"How did you ... this is impossible, how did you find us?"

She looked at the man groaning on the floor. *"Your boss didn't tell you about the vengeance mark?"*

"You marked us. Back in Capital. You marked one of us and just ... just walked here."

"Don't be stupid. I marked you in Blackbottom. Capital was just normal detective work. I came here by ship." She smiled—black lips on pale gray skin.

"Come on." The braver of the three remaining thieves drew twin daggers. *"She can't get all of us at—"*

Lady Filliamo made a broad gesture with her right hand and argent marks flared across the foreheads of all three thieves. A clatter of weapons hitting the floor. Three pairs of hands slowly rose in the air.

"Good boys. Here, put these on." She tossed three pairs of manacles on the floor.

"Hang on, you can't arrest us," one of the thieves, unarmed and still holding his hands up, said. *"This isn't Capital. You don't have jurisdiction!"*

Lady Filliamo shrugged. *"I'm a knight of the church. Jurisdiction's for the city watch."* She drew her silver sword a few inches from the scabbard just to show them the blade.

"I deal in steel."

REVENANT TRAITS

Revenant heroes have the following traits.

SIGNATURE TRAIT: FORMER LIFE

Choose the ancestry you were before you died. Your size equals that ancestry's size. Your speed is 5. You lose all other ancestral benefits from your original ancestry.

SIGNATURE TRAIT: TOUGH BUT WITHERED

Your undead body grants you cold, corruption, lightning immunity, and poison immunity equal to your level. You also have fire weakness 5. You can't suffocate, and you don't need to eat or drink to stay alive.

Additionally, when your Stamina equals the negative of your winded value, you become inert instead of dying. You can continue to observe your surroundings, but you can't speak, take actions, maneuvers, or triggered actions, or move and you fall prone. If you take any fire damage while in this state, your body is destroyed and you die. Otherwise, after 12 hours, you regain Stamina equal to your recovery value.

PURCHASED REVENANT TRAITS

You have 2 ancestry points to spend on the following traits, or 3 ancestry points to spend if your size is 1S. (*Quick Build*: Bloodless, plus Undead Influence if size 1S)

PREVIOUS LIFE: 1 POINT (COSTS 1 POINT)

You gain a purchasable trait that costs 1 ancestry point from your previous ancestry. You can take this trait multiple times, selecting a new cost 1 trait from your previous ancestry each time you take this trait.

UNDEAD INFLUENCE (COSTS 1 POINT)

Your supernatural gifts allow you to influence other undead. You gain an edge on Reason, Intuition, and Presence tests made to interact with undead creatures.

BLOODLESS (COSTS 2 POINTS)

For you, an open wound is indistinguishable from a scratch. You can't become bleeding.

PREVIOUS LIFE: 2 POINTS (COSTS 2 POINTS)

You gain a purchasable trait that costs 2 ancestry points from your previous ancestry.

VENGEANCE MARK (COSTS 2 POINTS)

As a maneuver, you place a magic sigil on a creature within 10 squares of you. When you place a sigil, you can decide where it appears on the creature's body, and whether the sigil is visible to only you or to all creatures.

You always know the direction to the exact location of a creature who bears one of your sigils and is on the same world as you.

You can have an active number of sigils equal to your level. You can remove a sigil from a creature harmlessly (no action required). If you are already using your maximum number of sigils and place a new one, your oldest sigil disappears with no other effect.

Additionally, you gain the following signature ability.

DETONATE SIGIL

A magical sigil you placed on a creature explodes with energy.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Strike

Type: Action

Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** 1 creature with your sigil

Power Roll + Reason, Intuition, or Presence:

- 11 or lower: **3 + R, I, or P damage; slide 1**
- 12–16: **5 + R, I, or P damage; slide 2**
- 17+: **8 + R, I, or P damage; slide 3**

Effect: The sigil disappears from the creature.

TIME RAIDER

"I fear no living thing, but the time raiders."

—Chief Executive Admiral Lithiri Aswandala

Commander of the *HOV First Get Behind Them*

Memonek

The original servitor species of the synliiroid—evil psions with near god-like power—the kuran'zoi liberated themselves during the First Psychic War. In the centuries since, they built their own culture and civilization as nomads of the timescape. The exonym "time raiders" was given to them by denizens of the lower worlds who, seeing the advanced technology they wield, concluded they must be from the future.

Extraordinarily rare in Orden, the time raiders thrive on the Sea of Stars, the Sea Between Worlds, where the winds of limbo roar.

In place of eyes, kuran'zoi possess crystalline ocular sensors that grant them high-spectral vision hardened against the extreme radiations encountered in the Sea of Stars, permitting them to operate freely outside their vessels with only their portable rebreathers. Time raiders also have two sets of arms, allowing them to wield melee weapons at the same time as ranged weapons. A single well-trained kuran'zoi is like a squad unto itself.

ON TIME RAIDERS

"You will tell me the location of the ship you came here in."

Taxiarch Lycaon paced outside the ruined church. The four-armed woman with crystal eyes and flaming pink hair in a strip down the center of her shaved head sneered at him. She was chained to the ruin of a stone column outside the ruin of a stone church.

"Is it that your brain is so small you must *talk* in order to *think*?" The woman's smile was a sneer.

Lycaon strode toward the alien, grabbed a length of chain around her waist and yanked on it, pulling it taut so the chain around her neck tightened. "You are going to die in any event," he said. "If you wish to deny me the pleasure of hearing you howl and scream for mercy, tell me what I want to know now and my dogs will kill you quickly."

Up close she could see the fine stitching along Lycaon's cheeks and forehead, the very slight differences in skin tone that showed his skin was not his own.

"You seem to be made of *bits*," the alien said as she peered at Lycaon, her crystalline eyes catching and reflecting prismatic light. "And not the best bits. Leftovers? Is that what you are? A walking assemblage of cast-off scraps? Hahah, I thought the proteans were hideous. Someone should let them know! There are creatures even more foul-seeming and *useless* in the timescape."

The Taxiarch smiled to himself, nodded with respect at the woman's epithets. He placed his foot on a low piece of rubble, once part of the wall of the stone church, and leaned his arm on his knee. He was not dressed as the other war dogs. No black leather for him. He wore a gold breastplate with the embossed head of a ram molded into it, a white cape over his back. Gold greaves and red leather boots and gloves. The other war dogs only had patches of hair but his was long and blonde.

He struck a casual, jaunty pose. "Where is your worldship?" he said in a more reasonable voice. "Or came you here in a single-seater starskimmer?" At this, the alien's crystal eyes went wide, betraying surprise. "You see?" The Taxiarch said, impressed with himself. "I am not a primitive like these peasants, who hounded you because you are alien," he nodded at the folk of the small town watching from the stables some distance away. "I am Ajax's elite. Better than his chosen. I was *made* for victory." Indeed, Taxiarch Lycaon looked almost fully human. Handsome and fit like a statue from Phaedros, which his model had almost certainly been inspired by. Unless you looked closely, there was no sign he was a product of the body banks. "If you agree to lead me to your vessel, I will let you go free."

The alien sighed. "Blaap blaa blaa," she said. "You should hear yourself. Like barking thraxx, you sound to me. Who holds your leash I wonder? For surely a microbrain such as you could not command any more than these rabble," she nodded her head at the other twenty or so war dogs.

Her taunts worked. Lycaon hauled back and punched the alien in the jaw. Her head smashed into the ruined column. She was dazed but she shook it off and laughed.

"Look how easily this one is goaded!" she said. She spat out dark blue blood and turned to the peasants gathered. "You people! Why do you let yourselves be cowed by these ... bits? Bits of people kludged together? Even the least of you is worth more than these."

"Perhaps from the air," Flight Captain Lyria offered, and she stroked the feathers of her giant hawk mount to calm it. "I could scout the forest around the ..."

"No!" Taxiarch Lycaon pointed a finger at the hawklord and strode toward her. "*You* are the elite of Ajax's winged harriers, *I* am his chosen brigade commander. *We* are not scavengers! This one," he stabbed a gloved finger at the alien, "will come to heel, or I will give her to my war dogs." He turned to face the chained alien, who yawned. Lycaon seethed.

"They may pull you apart," he said to her, and at this his squadron of soldiers, all in black leather and golden pauldrons, started making barking sounds. Then they laughed at each other.

"Or I may let my crucibite melt the skin from your bones." At that, a war dog clad in leather from head to foot

wearing a heavy mask with glass circles where the eyes should be and some kind of canister over his mouth stepped forward. The long thin brass tube in his hands connected to a large metal tank on his back.

"Shall I let you choose?" the Taxiarch said and drew a dagger from his belt. "I will cut off one finger. If you cry out, I kill you. If not, another finger. And if you cry out then ..."

Slowly everyone assembled could make out the sounds of a conversation, quiet with a metallic ring to it. The voices got louder until eventually they could be heard.

"... should be ready for anything," one voice said, deep, commanding, and images started to form around and between the war dogs, the hawklord, and the Taxiarch. Like faded images in a manuscript they seemed, gaining pigment and clarity and, eventually, depth as their voices grew louder and clearer.

"Oh, thank you for the brilliant tactical advice," another voice, high pitched, piped up.

Suddenly, the images became three dimensional, solid, and four heroes stood among them. A human in working battle plate. A polder with twin rapiers in his hands. A tall willowy high elf with night-black skin and golden hair. And a Dragon Knight. The people of the town gasped when they saw him. Even at a distance, even with the war dogs between them, they recognized the device of Good King Omund on the knight's shield.

The war dogs scrambled. For a moment, it seemed they might flee at this sudden intrusion, but the Taxiarch bellowed "Hold fast!" and they held their ground, uncertainty over the unknown threat of a band of heroes battling in each of them with the certain fear of their commander.

John immediately read the situation. It was a clear enough picture.

There was something about the war dogs. They loved Ajax's cruelty—reveled in it. John had crossed swords with other commanders in Ajax's army before. Ground Commander Vordokov was a professional—could be reasoned with, but he was an orc.

Not the war dogs—they were fanatics.

"What's this?" the Taxiarch called out with a hungry grin. "Allies of the alien?" He was projecting confidence. Trying to muster his wary soldiers.

Sir John ignored the war dog, tilted his head toward the alien. "Embers?"

"A kuran'zoi," the high elf said, and the alien held her head up with pride. "A time raider from the upper worlds. What the truth is I cannot say, and no people are all one thing. But by reputation? They're intractable, ungovernable, they loathe authority, hate tyranny and are totally, utterly without fear."

John watched the alien. They sneered their approval at Ember's summary. That was enough for Sir John, they could work out the details later. After everything they'd been through before, he trusted Embers implicitly.

He could see the shape of the next moments play out, all he had to do was take the initiative. If he was right, the whole

thing would be over in seconds. There was no time to communicate. No time to plan, and everyone, *everyone* had to play their part.

John knew what came next, but he wasn't an assassin. He had his own part to play. He took a step forward, away from his teammates, and noted the Taxiarch didn't react. This spoke volumes. He locked eyes with his enemy.

"She goes free," John commanded, his voice steel, "or you die here." He could feel the muscles tightening in his comrades, the whole company like a steel spring wound tight.

Lycaon cocked his head at Sir John and took a few foolish steps toward the tactician. He was just out of reach. But close enough.

"I see you are a man, like Ajax. Why do you lower yourself with these ... creatures?" the war dog Taxiarch looked at the elf, polder, and dragon knight. "Little more than slimy things crawled out of the sea? Join us. Join me. Join Ajax. It'll be nice for you," his voice lowered almost to a whisper, "to be on the winning side for a change."

Sir John took a deep breath, his body language changed and that was enough. Several things then happened at once, so quickly no one would later be able to say who acted first.

Ember's eyes flashed into a starfield. The time raider's chains dissolved into starspace and reappeared around Flight Captain Lyria pinning her arms to her side. She was giving the hawklord an excuse to sit this one out. Gods, John was glad she was with them.

The time raider's right upper hand shot out, as though she'd been waiting for the void mage to do exactly what she just did, and her meson blaster leapt out of the hands of the war dog who'd chained her. The pistol made of glass and bronze slammed into her hand and its tip flared with prismatic light.

From the sun's shadow cast by Taxiarch Lycaon the polder Jackson Bootblack emerged, a rapier in each hand, and no one had seen him move from where he'd been a moment before.

At the same instant, a call—a horn. From directly behind John a blast of sound like a chord played by a dozen trumpets, and hope sang in John's heart—the Clarion Call of the last Storm Knight!

John hadn't hesitated, he'd already drawn his sword. "Alright, you patchwork son of a bitch." He charged Lycaon who fumbled with the short-sword on his belt.

"Draw steel!"

TIME RAIDER TRAITS

Time raider heroes have access to the following traits.

SIGNATURE TRAIT: FOUR ARMS

Your multiple arms let you take on multiple tasks at the same time. Whenever you use the Grab or Knockback maneuver against an adjacent creature, you can target an additional adjacent creature, using the same power roll for both targets. You can grab up to two creatures at a time.

PURCHASED TIME RAIDER TRAITS

You have 2 ancestry points to spend on the following traits. (*Quick Build*: Beyond Sight, Psychic Scar: Psionic Bolt)

BEYONDSIGHT (COSTS 1 POINT)

As a maneuver, you can adjust your vision to allow you to see through mundane obstructions that 1 square thick or less. While your vision is adjusted this way, you can't see and don't have line of effect to any creatures or objects within 1 square of you. You can return your vision to normal as a maneuver.

FORESIGHT (COSTS 1 POINT)

Your senses extend past mundane obscurity and the veil of the future alike. You instinctively know the location of any concealed creatures who aren't hidden from you, negating the usual bane on strikes against them. Additionally, whenever you are targeted with a strike, you can use a triggered action to impose a bane on the power roll.

PSYCHIC SCAR (COSTS 1 POINT)

Your mind is a formidable layer of defense, granting you psychic immunity equal to your level.

PSIONIC GIFT (COSTS 2 POINTS)

You gain one of the following signature abilities.

CONCUSSIVE SLAM

You slam an invisible force down upon the target.

Keywords: Psionic, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** 1 creature or object

Power Roll + Reason, Intuition, or Presence:

- 11 or lower: **2 + R, I, or P damage**
- 12–16: **5 + R, I, or P damage; push 1**
- 17+: **7 + R, I, or P damage; push 2; M < [strong] prone**

PSIONIC BOLT

You shoot forth a beam of psychic purple force that grips your target.

Keywords: Psionic, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** 1 creature or object

Power Roll + Reason, Intuition, or Presence:

- 11 or lower: **2 + R, I, or P psychic damage; slide 1**
- 12–16: **5 + R, I, or P psychic damage; slide 2**
- 17+: **7 + R, I, or P psychic damage; slide 3**

MINOR ACCELERATION

You fill yourself or an ally with a burst of energy.

Keywords: Psionic, Melee **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Self or Melee 1 **Target:** Self or 1 ally

Effect: The target's speed increases by an amount equal to your Reason, Intuition, or Presence score (your choice) until the start of your next turn.

UNSTOPPABLE MIND (COSTS 2 POINTS)

Your mind allows you to maintain your focus in any situation. You can't be dazed.

CULTURE AND CAREER

What makes a hero? Is their desire to stand up for the innocent and protect others somehow innate? Are they born knowing that tyrants must fall? Does a higher power instill the idea that sometimes those least deserving of compassion are those who need it most?

No. A hero's life experience teaches them right from wrong—and that experience starts with the culture that raised them and the career they started adventuring.

CULTURE

A hero's culture describes the beliefs, customs, values, and way of life held by the community in which they were raised. This community provides life experiences that give a character some of their game statistics. Even if a hero doesn't share their culture's values, those values shaped their early development and way of life. In fact, some people become heroes primarily from the rejection of the ways of their culture.

For our purposes, a hero's culture represents people, not a place. Yes, you might have grown up in the city of Capital, but your culture is more specific than that. One hero's culture might be House Alvaro, a noble house in Capital where they were raised. Another's culture could be a group or organization that moves around, such as a band of pirates or a secret order of sorcerers sworn to protect books of fell magic. It helps to get specific when thinking about your culture, and working with the four aspects of a culture can help you do that: **language, environment, organization, and upbringing.**

USING CULTURE

Directors can use the rules in this section to build cultures that players can choose for their characters. Players can use these rules to build a unique culture or modify an existing culture for their character, working with the Director to find a right place for that culture within the world of the campaign's world.

In many worlds, at least some cultures have a majority ancestry. The people of Bedegar, a duchy in Vasloria, are mostly humans. The folk dwelling in the Great Wode, a forest realm north of Bedegar, are primarily wode elves. However, you can always choose to be from one of these cultures and take a different ancestry. A dwarf raised in the culture of the Great Wode speaks Yllyric and probably knows a lot about nature, while a dwarf raised in the dwarf thanedom of Kal Kalavar speaks Zaliac and might know a good deal about smithing.

You can build your culture one aspect at a time or use the following tables if you want to make something quick or see an example. If you want to quickly create an archetypical culture for a hero who grew up surrounded by mostly other members of their ancestry, you can create your culture quickly by using or modifying the aspect options on the Typical Ancestry Cultures table. Revenants are missing from this table because they don't gain their ancestry until after they die. If you'd rather quickly create a culture based

on a cultural archetype, such as a noble house or pirate crew, use the Archetypical Cultures table.

TYPICAL ANCESTRY CULTURES

Ancestry	Language	Environment	Organization	Upbringing
Devil	Anjali	Urban	Bureaucratic	Academic
Dragon Knight	Vastariax	Secluded	Bureaucratic	Martial
Dwarf	Zaliac	Secluded	Bureaucratic	Creative
Wode Elf	Yllyric	Wilderness	Bureaucratic	Martial
High Elf	Hyrallie	Secluded	Bureaucratic	Martial
Hakaan	Vhoric	Rural	Communal	Labor
Human	Vaslorian	Urban	Communal	Labor
Memonek	Axiomatic	Nomadic	Communal	Academic
Orc	Kaliac	Wilderness	Anarchic	Creative
Polder	Khoursirian	Urban	Communal	Creative
Time Raider	Voll	Nomadic	Anarchic	Martial

ARCHETYPICAL CULTURES

Community	Environment	Organization	Upbringing
Artisan Guild	Urban	Bureaucratic	Creative
Borderland Homestead	Wilderness	Anarchic	Labor
College Conclave	Urban	Bureaucratic	Academic
Criminal Gang	Urban	Anarchic	Illegal
Farming Village	Rural	Bureaucratic	Labor
Herding Community	Nomadic	Communal	Labor
Knightly Order	Secluded	Bureaucratic	Martial
Mercenary Band	Nomadic	Bureaucratic	Martial
Merchant Caravan	Nomadic	Bureaucratic	Creative
Monastic Order	Secluded	Bureaucratic	Academic
Noble House	Urban	Bureaucratic	Noble
Outlaw Band	Wilderness	Anarchic	Illegal
Pauper Neighborhood	Urban	Communal	Labor
Pirate Crew	Nomadic	Anarchic	Illegal
Telepathic Hive	Secluded	Communal	Creative
Traveling Entertainers	Nomadic	Communal	Creative
Artisan Guild	Urban	Bureaucratic	Creative
Borderland Homestead	Wilderness	Anarchic	Labor
College Conclave	Urban	Bureaucratic	Academic
Criminal Gang	Urban	Anarchic	Illegal

WHY BUILD A CULTURE?

Building a character is about more than adding up your stats, picking skills and abilities, and recording that information on a character sheet. You're building a hero—a main character in a story, be it a one-shot or a heroic campaign. Think about the personality and the past of who you are creating. That's why the game lets you build a culture rather than simply saying, "Pick three skills and a bonus language." We want players to imagine their heroes as complex and intricate characters.

CULTURE BENEFITS

The culture you choose or create grants you the following benefits:

- You know the language of your culture, in addition to knowing Caelian.
- From the environment, organization, and upbringing aspects of your culture, you gain access to skills. You can

select one skill from each aspect's list of options. (See [Skills](#) for details.)

- You gain an edge on tests to recall lore about your culture, and on tests to influence and interact with people of your culture.

LANGUAGE

Your culture's language aspect determines how the people of your culture communicate. You know Caelian in addition to a language of your choice from [Languages](#).

ENVIRONMENT

Your culture's environment aspect describes where the people of that culture spend most of their time. Is your culture centered in a bustling city or a small village? Did you spend your early life in an isolated monastery? Or did you wander the wilderness, never staying in one place for long?

When you build a culture, select its environment aspect from the following options: nomadic, rural, secluded, urban, or wilderness. You then gain skill options from your chosen environment. All of these environments can be found in any sort of terrain, whether aboveground, in subterranean caverns, deep in trackless forest, or even underwater.

NOMADIC

A nomadic culture travels from place to place to survive. They might follow animal migrations or the weather, travel to sell their wares or services, or simply enjoy a restless lifestyle full of new experiences and peoples. Those who grow up in nomadic cultures learn to navigate the wilderness and interact with others.

Skill Options: One skill from the exploration or interpersonal skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Navigate)

RURAL

A rural culture is one located in a town, village, or smaller settled enclave. People dwelling in such places often cultivate the land, trade goods or services with travelers passing through, harvest fish from the sea, or mine metals and gems from the earth.

Living among a small population, most folks in a rural community learn a trade and are handed down bits of essential knowledge to help their community survive. For example, when a rural culture has only one blacksmith, it's important to have an apprentice already learning at the anvil well before that smith starts to get old. If the only priest in town gets the sniffles, folks want an acolyte ready to wear the fancy robes should the worst occur.

Skill Options: One skill from the crafting or lore skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Nature)

SECLUDED

A secluded culture is based in one relatively close-quarters structure—a building, a cavern, and so forth—and interacts with other cultures only rarely. Such places are often buildings or complexes such as monasteries, castles, or prisons. Folk in a secluded culture have little or no reason to leave their home or interact with other cultures on the

outside, but might have an awareness of those cultures and of events happening outside their enclave.

When people live together in close quarters, they typically learn to get along. They often spend much time in study or introspection, as there is not much else to do in seclusion.

Skill Options: One skill from the interpersonal or lore skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Read Person)

URBAN

An urban culture is always centered in a city. Such a culture might arise within the walls of Capital, a massive metropolis with a cosmopolitan population; within a network of caverns that hold an underground city; or in any other place where a large population lives relatively close together. The people of urban cultures often learn to effectively misdirect others in order to navigate the crowds and the political machinations that can come with city life.

Skill Options: One skill from the interpersonal or intrigue skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Alertness)

WILDERNESS

A wilderness culture doesn't attempt to tame the terrain in which its people live, whether desert, forest, swamp, tundra, ocean, or more exotic climes. Instead, the folk of such a culture thrive amid nature, taking their sustenance and shelter from the land itself. A wilderness culture might be a circle of druids protecting a great wode, a band of brigands hiding out in desert caves, or a camp of orc mercenaries who call the trackless mountains home. People in a wilderness culture learn how to use the land for all they need to live, typically crafting their own tools, clothing, and more.

Skill Options: One skill from the crafting or exploration skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Endurance)

ORGANIZATION

Your culture's organization aspect determines the functioning and leadership of your community. You might come from a place with an officially recognized government and a system of laws. Or your culture might have enjoyed a less formal organization, with the people in charge having naturally gravitated toward their positions without any official offices or oaths.

When you build a culture, select its organization aspect from the following options: anarchic, bureaucratic, or communal. You then gain skill options from your chosen system of organization.

ANARCHIC

In an anarchic culture, there are no rules and no one person leads the others. This might sound like complete chaos—people taking what they want when they want it—and some cultures that practice anarchy are. Other anarchic cultures are peaceful places where people mostly work for themselves, their friends, or their family, but rely on the whole group when times get tough.

Many anarchic cultures come together when the need arises, but they leave day-to-day responsibilities up to the individual. If an informal leader appears, it's because each member of the culture has decided to follow that person for

a time, and the leader enjoys their power only as long as they keep everyone happy. A group of rangers who protect a vast forest, a gang of rebels fighting against a tyrannical despot leader, and a bandit group roving the wilds without a leader are all anarchic cultures.

Most anarchic cultures operate outside of settled lands, sticking to the wilds, city sewers, or other secret places. For even when such cultures are harmless, their members know that outsiders might try to impose rules upon them if they live in the same place. As such, many folks in anarchic cultures learn how to navigate the wilds and fend for themselves while avoiding the danger that other folks can represent.

Skill Options: One skill from the exploration or intrigue skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Hide)

BUREAUCRATIC

Bureaucratic cultures are steeped in official leadership and formally recorded laws. Members of such a culture are often ranked in power according to those laws, with a small group of people holding the power to rule according to birthright, popular vote, or some other official and measurable standard. Many bureaucratic communities have one person at the very top, though others might be ruled by a council. A trade guild with a guildmaster, treasurer, secretary, and a charter of rules and regulations for membership; a feudal lord who rules over a group of knights, who in turn rule over peasants who work the land; and a militaristic society with ranks and rules that its people must abide are all examples of bureaucratic cultures.

Those who thrive in bureaucratic cultures don't just follow the rules. They know how to use those rules to their advantage, either bending, changing, or reinterpreting policy to advance their own interests. Schmoozing with those who make the laws is often key to this approach. Others in a bureaucratic culture might specialize in operating outside the strict regulations that govern the culture without getting caught.

Skill Options: One skill from the intrigue or lore skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Rumors)

COMMUNAL

A communal culture is a place where all members of the collective are considered equal. The community works together to make important decisions that affect the majority of the culture. While they elect leaders to carry out these decisions and organize their efforts, each person has a relatively equal say in how the culture operates, and everyone contributes to help their people survive and thrive. Individuals often share the burdens of governing, physical labor, childcare, and other duties. A collective of farmers who work together to cultivate and protect their land without a noble, a city of pirates where each person can do as they wish, and a traveling theatrical troupe whose members vote on every artistic and administrative decision are all communal cultures.

People in communal cultures learn that their voice and individuality has worth, as do the opinions and hard work of others.

Skill Options: One skill from the crafting or interpersonal skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Persuade)

UPBRINGING

Your culture's upbringing aspect is a more specific and personal part of your hero's story, describing how you were individually raised within your culture. Were you trained to become the newest archmage in a secret order of wizards, or to be a sword-wielding bodyguard who protected that arcane organization? Did you learn to delve deep into mines looking for ore in a mountain kingdom, or did you build machines meant to dig faster and deeper than any person could alone? Whatever your culture, your upbringing makes you special within that culture.

Pick your upbringing aspect from the following list: academic, creative, illegal, labor, martial, or noble. You then gain skill options from your chosen aspect.

ACADEMIC

Heroes with an academic upbringing were raised by people who collect, study, and share books and other records. Some academics focus on one area of study, such as a college for wizards dedicated to the study of magic, or a church that teaches the word of one deity. People in an academic culture learn how to wield the power that is knowledge.

Skill Options: One skill from the lore skill group. (*Quick Build:* History)

CREATIVE

Heroes with a creative upbringing were raised among folk who create art or other works valuable enough to trade. A creative culture might produce fine art such as dance, music, or sculpture, or more practical wares such as wagons, weapons, tools, or buildings. People in such cultures learn the value of quality crafting and attention to detail.

Skill Options: The Music or Perform skill, or one skill from the crafting skill group. (*Quick Build:* Perform)

ILLEGAL

Heroes with an illegal upbringing had caregivers who performed activities that other folk—whether within or outside their culture—considered unlawful. A band of pirates, a guild of assassins, or an organization of spies all commit unlawful acts for money. People with illegal upbringings typically don't mind breaking the rules when it suits them—and are good at making sure no one finds out they did.

Skill Options: One skill from the intrigue skill group. (*Quick Build:* Sneak)

LABOR

People who labor for a living survive through cultivation, typically raising crops or livestock on a farm; by harvesting natural resources, whether by hunting, trapping, logging, or mining; or through manual labor tied to settlement and trade, such as construction, carting, loading cargo, and so forth. People with a labor upbringing know the value of hard work.

Skill Options: One of the Blacksmithing or Handle Animals skills, or one skill from the exploration skill group. (*Quick Build:* Lift)

MARTIAL

Heroes who have a martial upbringing are raised by warriors. These might be the soldiers of an established army, a band of mercenaries, a guild of monster-slaying adventurers, or any other folk whose lives revolve around combat. Heroes with a martial upbringing are always ready for a fight—and they know how to finish that fight.

Skill Options: One of the Alertness, Blacksmithing, Climb, Endurance, Fletching, Intimidate, Monsters, Ride, Strategy, or Track skills. (*Quick Build:* Intimidate)

NOBLE

Heroes with a noble upbringing were raised by leaders who rule over others and play the games of politics to maintain power. Many families are nobles by birthright, but some cultures have noble titles that are earned through deeds or popularity. Whatever the case, heroes with this background understand why the whispered words in the right ear can sometimes be more powerful than any army.

Skill Options: One skill from the interpersonal skill group. (*Quick Build:* Lead)

BUT I REALLY WANT ALERTNESS

If the culture you create doesn't grant a skill that you want, check with your Director about modifying what the culture's aspects offer. For instance, you can easily make the case that a culture with the illegal upbringing aspect should give a character access to the Alertness skill, given that being successful in battle means always being aware of your surroundings.

CAREERS

Being a hero isn't a job. It's a calling. But before you answered that call, you had a different job or vocation that paid the bills. Thank the gods for that, because the experience you gained in that career is now helping you save lives and slay monsters.

CAREER QUESTIONS

The careers in this section don't go into great detail about the actual jobs they represent. We assume that you know the basics of what an artisan, a criminal, or a gladiator does for a living. However, each career includes a list of questions you should think about to help you define the specific details of your hero's career. For instance, if you pick the Artisan career, one of the questions is "What did you create?" You don't need to answer these questions, but doing so can help shape a more complete picture of your hero.

If you answer any of these questions, consider telling your Director the answers. It can help them work some dramatic moments into the game. Maybe not! Directors already have a lot to juggle, but they certainly won't work your backstory into the plot if you never tell them.

CAREER BENEFITS

Your career describes what your life was before you became a hero. When you select a career, you gain a number of benefits, the details of which are specified in the career's description.

SKILLS

Each career grants you two or three skills. If a career grants you a skill you already have, you can select a different skill.

LANGUAGES

Some careers allow you to learn extra languages, chosen from those available in [Languages](#).

RENOWN

Some careers increase your starting Renown score. See [Renown](#) in [Other Rewards](#) for more information.

If your career or another option doesn't increase your Renown score, then your starting score is 0.

WEALTH

Some careers increase your starting Wealth score. See [Wealth](#) in [Other Rewards](#) for more information.

If your career or another option doesn't increase your Wealth score, then your starting score is 1.

PROJECT POINTS

Some careers provide project points you can put toward crafting and research projects (see [Downtime Projects](#)).

These points can be divided among multiple projects, but they can't be used more than once. At the Director's discretion, your career might also let you start the game with the materials needed for one or more projects, so you can immediately put your project points toward them, possibly before the adventure begins!

PERK

Your career provides you with a perk. You can select a perk of the type provided by the career. See [Perks](#) for more information.

INCITING INCIDENT

Each career has a list of inciting incidents, each of which suggests a potential reason why you gave up your career, turned away from a possibly comfortable and reliable living, and took up the sword (or axe or wand) to become an adventuring hero. Each inciting incident represents a life-changing event that might have motivated you to change course, becoming a person who risks it all to save others.

You can roll for or choose an inciting incident from the table that accompanies each career. You can also use the table as inspiration and work with your Director to come up with a unique inciting incident of your own.

WHAT WAS TAKEN FROM YOU?

During your inciting incident, something was taken from you. It might have been a material object, such as an heirloom sword or a locket that proves your royal heritage. Perhaps a person you loved was killed, kidnapped, or cursed. It might be something deeper and more abstract, such as a chance for happiness, belief in the future, belief in basic goodness, or a lifetime goal snatched away.

It might be the case that you're obsessed with getting back what you lost. You might be in a position where you'll never recover what was taken from you, but you want to prevent that same loss from happening to others. Maybe you've become an itinerant hero because, after your loss, it's the only thing that gives your life meaning. Maybe all of the above. Whatever the case, the loss you've suffered is part of what drives you to be a hero. Record what was taken from you on your character sheet, and let your Director know.

AGENT

You worked as a spy for a government or organization. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- Who did you work for?
- Who did you spy on?
- Who shouldn't know your true identity and allegiance but does?
- Who did you burn or leave behind to get a job done?

You gain the following career benefits:

- **Skills:** The Sneak skill, plus one skill from the interpersonal skill group and one skill from the intrigue skill group (*Quick Build:* Sneak, Lie, Disguise)
- **Languages:** Two languages
- **Perk:** One intrigue perk (*Quick Build:* Forgettable Face)

AGENT INCITING INCIDENTS

d6	Incident
1	Disavowed: While on a dangerous espionage assignment, things went sideways. Although you escaped with your life, the mission was a public failure thanks to bad information your agency gave you. They denied you work for them, and you went on the run. Hero work will let you survive and clear your name.
2	Faceless: Your identity was always hidden. It was your way of protecting those around you because the work you did spying on powerful entities came with dangers. Then your world came crashing down when an enemy agent unmasked you, causing you to lose everything—your privacy, livelihood, loved ones, all gone in the blink of an eye. Instead of going into hiding, you became a public hero to protect the innocent in the name of those you lost.
3	Free Agent: There was a time in your life when you used to sell information to the highest bidder. Your acts were unsanctioned by any one organization, but you were well-connected enough to trade in secrets. Politics never mattered much to you until the information you sold wound up causing a ripple effect of harm that eventually destroyed the place you once called home. You became a hero to make up for your past.
4	Informed: After years of cultivating a rich list of informants, one of those informants risked everything to expose the heinous plans of powerful individuals. You promised to protect your informant, but your agency left them hanging—literally. You cut ties with your employer and swore to always make good on your word as a hero.
5	Spies and Lovers: While embedded in an undercover assignment, you fell for someone on the other side. They discovered you were a double-agent and though you insisted your feelings were real, the deceit cut too deep for your love interest to ignore. They exposed you, spurned you, or died because of their closeness to you. You left the espionage business to become a hero with nothing to hide.
6	Turncoat: You spent your life in service of your country or an organization that upheld your values. During your undercover operations, you discovered everything you were told was a lie. Whether you confronted your superiors or were exposed, you were stripped of your service medals before you left to become a true hero.

ARISTOCRAT

Career? Who needs a career when you're born into money! Or marry into it! Or con your way into it! Whatever the case, you didn't need to work thanks to (someone's) generational wealth. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- How did you become an aristocrat?
- What did you do to fill your days?
- Which aristocrats and people who worked for you were your best friends and greatest enemies?
- What sentimental heirloom from your old estate do you carry, and what does it mean to you?

You gain the following career benefits:

- **Skills:** One skill from the interpersonal skill group and one skill from the lore skill group (*Quick Build:* Brag, Society)
- **Languages:** One language
- **Renown:** +1
- **Wealth:** +1
- **Perk:** One lore perk (*Quick Build:* I've Read About this Place)

ARISTOCRAT INCITING INCIDENTS

d6	Incident
1	Blood Money: When you entered adulthood, you heard unsavory whispers about your family's fortune before learning that their wealth came at the cost of others' suffering. Whether you shed light on the secret or not, you left to become a hero stripped of noble title.
2	Charmed Life: Through some treasure or innate ability, you were able to defraud other aristocrats. You did it for fun. When you were found out, you lost your status. Whether you served time or escaped from punishment, you decided to rehabilitate yourself and became a hero.
3	Inheritance: The guardians who instilled in you the virtues of doing the right thing were murdered in a senseless petty robbery. Though their wealth was bequeathed to you, it did little to assuage the guilt you felt for being unable to stop the deadly crime. You decided to use your riches to fund your life as a hero, whether publicly or using an alter ego.
4	Privileged Position: Life outside the manor never piqued your interest. You had everything you wanted. It came as a surprise when the peasants came to overthrow your family. You narrowly escaped, and for the first time witnessed the world. It caused you to become a hero for the people, fighting against inequities.
5	Royal Pauper: Seeking a break from noble duties, you sought a lookalike to switch identities with. It went so well that you made a habit of switching whenever bored. Unfortunately, your counterpart became so good at imitating you that they convinced everyone you were an impostor. You lost contact with your family, but pursue a heroic path free of the pomp of your old life.
6	Wicked Secret: One parent passed away when you were a baby and the other remarried years later. Then that parent died under suspicious circumstances. Their spouse ousted you, and you were banished (and possibly hunted). Rising from tragedy, you now seek to right the wrongs of the world.

ARTISAN

You made and sold useful wares. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- What did you create?
- Who taught you your craft?
- Was there any particular creation you were known for?
- Did you have a shop, or did you travel to sell your wares?

You gain the following career benefits:

- **Skills:** Two skills from the crafting skill group (*Quick Build:* Blacksmithing, Carpentry)
- **Languages:** One language
- **Project Points:** 240
- **Perk:** One crafting perk (*Quick Build:* Area of Expertise)

ARTISAN INCITING INCIDENTS

d6	Incident
1	Continue the Work: A great hero was a fan of the things you created, and gave you a generous commission to create your best work for them. While working on this commission, you and the hero became close friends. The day you finished the work was the same day they disappeared. To honor their legacy, you took up the mantle of a hero with the intent of finishing your friend's work.
2	Inspired: As you traveled the road selling your wares, troll bandits attacked you. One of the bandits claimed an item belonging to someone precious to you—or perhaps claimed that person's life—but the rest were driven off or slain by a group of heroes. Seeing the quick work these heroes made of the bandits inspired you to follow in their footsteps.
3	Robbery: A criminal gang stole your goods and harmed a number of people who worked for you. You became a hero to prevent such indignities from being visited upon others, to seek revenge for the assault, or to find the thieves and get your stuff back.
4	Stolen Passions: Your parents discouraged your artistic talents, instead trying to focus your passions on the family business. You refused to dim your spark and continued your work in secret. Enraged at discovering your disobedience, they sold your work to a traveling merchant. You left your hometown, seeking your lost art and encouraging others to live freely.
5	Tarnished Honor: A new patron commissioned some art, but on completion, they refused to pay you and claimed the work as their own. You were accused of plagiarism and run out of town. For you, heroics are about restoring your name and honor.
6	Twisted Skill: You had great success that caused an unscrupulous rival to curse you. For a time, everything you tried to create turned to ruin. You broke the curse through adventuring, and in doing so discovered a new joy and purpose that now defines you.

BEGGAR

You lived by going to a tavern, crossroads, city street, or other busy area and begging passersby for money or food. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- What unfortunate circumstances led you to become a beggar?
- Where did you beg?
- Who made sport out of bullying you?
- Who showed you the most kindness?

You gain the following career benefits:

- **Skills:** The Rumors skill, plus one skill from the exploration skill group and one skill from the interpersonal skill group (*Quick Build:* Rumors, Endurance, Empathize)
- **Languages:** Two languages
- **Perk:** One interpersonal perk (*Quick Build:* Persistent)

BEGGAR INCITING INCIDENTS

d6	Incident
1	Champion: You were never content with your lot. Watching yet another friend fall to preventable circumstances was your last straw. You gathered up what little you had and set off to become a hero, determined to make real change for those society forgot.
2	Night Terrors: Something killed the other beggars. It came in the night. You barely saw it, but what you did see of it wasn't natural. You survived by hiding, or perhaps it simply passed you over for reasons unknown to you. It still haunts your nightmares, and you kill monsters so no one else has to experience such horrors.
3	One Good Deed: You ran afoul of the local watch by being in the wrong place when they were in a bad mood. A passing hero intervened on your behalf, shaming the guards into moving on, then gave you enough gold to get you back on your feet. Their kindness kindled a spark in you. You took the gold, bought some secondhand gear, and went to pay that hero's kindness forward.
4	Precious: No matter how far you'd fallen, there was one belonging you would never part with, no matter how much money it would bring you. When a pickpocket stole it, you chased them until you were in a part of the city you no longer recognized. With a jolt, you realized you had no desire to return to your previous stomping grounds. You kept going, and you haven't looked back.
5	Strange Charity: A passerby dropped something in your cup. When you counted your day's collections, you found a magic coin among the coppers. You knew immediately that it was special. When the other beggars—your friends, you thought—were ready to murder you for it, you killed several of them in self-defense before you fled, leaving behind the only semblance of community you had.
6	Witness: You saw something you weren't meant to see. Others would kill you if they knew, and they might be searching for you even now. You remain on the move, terrified of remaining in one place too long lest it all catch up to you. Perhaps if you make a big enough name for yourself, you can become untouchable and can finally speak of what you saw without fear.

CRIMINAL

You once worked as a bandit, insurgent, smuggler, outlaw, or even as an assassin. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- What sorts of crimes did you commit, and why?
- Did anyone help you perform your illicit activities?
- What is one crime you botched?
- Who was your nemesis while you were a criminal?

You gain the following career benefits:

- **Skills:** The Criminal Underworld skill, plus two skills from the intrigue skill group (*Quick Build:* Criminal Underworld, Pick Lock, Pick Pocket)
- **Languages:** One language
- **Project Points:** 120
- **Perk:** One intrigue perk (*Quick Build:* Criminal Contacts)

CRIMINAL INCITING INCIDENTS

d6	Incident
1	Antiquity Procurement: You stole, smuggled, and sold antiquities. In your haste to make a quick sale, you didn't fully vet a client and they subsequently robbed your warehouse. When the items you had stolen were taken from you, you realized the harm you had caused. Now you adventure to find those items you lost and return them where they belong.
2	Atonement: The last criminal job you pulled led to the death of someone or the destruction of something you love. To make up for the loss you caused, you left your criminal ways behind and became a hero.
3	Friendly Priest: You went to prison for your crimes and eventually escaped. An elderly priest took you in and shielded you from the law, convinced that your soul wasn't corrupt. They never judged you for your past, speaking only of the future. Eventually, the priest died, imparting final words that inspired you to become a hero.
4	Shadowed Influence: You spent years blackmailing and manipulating nobles for influence and wealth until a scheme went wrong. You were publicly exposed, and after a narrow escape, you reevaluated your life. Under a new identity, you work as a hero and hope no one looks at your past too closely.
5	Simply Survival: Stealing was a matter of survival for you and not what defined you—at least in your mind. But when your thieving actions lead to innocent folk being harmed, you knew you could be better. You turned your back on your old life, though your old skills come in handy.
6	Stand Against Tyranny: When a tyrant rose to power in your homeland, they began cracking down on all criminals with deadly raids and public executions. The nature of the crime didn't matter—pickpockets and beggars were made to kneel before the axe alongside murderers. After losing enough friends, you stood up and joined the resistance—not just against this tyrant, but against authoritarians anywhere.

DISCIPLE

You worked in a church, temple, or other religious institution as part of the clergy. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- What gods or saints did your institution venerate?
- What initiation rites did you undergo to get the job?
- What were your responsibilities as a disciple?
- How was your institution viewed by members of the local culture?

You gain the following career benefits:

- **Skills:** The Religion skill, plus two skills from the lore skill group (*Quick Build:* Religion, Culture, Magic)
- **Project Points:** 240
- **Perk:** One supernatural perk (*Quick Build:* Ritualist)

DISCIPLE INCITING INCIDENTS

d6	Incident
1	Angel's Advocate: Swayed by an evil faith, your cult was about to unleash horrors upon the world when an angel (figurative or literal) intervened. They convinced you to stop your cult's efforts. Now you follow in the footsteps of the angel who showed you the righteous path.
2	Dogma: Although you joined the religious institution under the guidance of a kind mentor, others within the house of worship became increasingly fanatical in their convictions. Your mentor sought to be a voice of reason in the rising tide of hatred and was tried as a heretic before being executed. Leaving the institution behind, you became a hero to uphold the beliefs you hold dear.
3	Freedom to Worship: Your temple was destroyed in a religious conflict. The institution's leaders sought retaliation, but you saw in these actions a ceaseless cycle of destruction that would lead to more conflict. Instead, you became a hero to protect religious freedoms, so all worshipers could practice their faith without fear.
4	Lost Faith: You devoted your life to ministering to the sick and needy and other charitable work. Time and time again, tragedy struck those you served without rhyme or reason. Your prayers went unanswered, and your efforts went thankless. Eventually, you lost your faith in a higher power, and you left your church or temple to do good outside of any religious affiliation.
5	Near-Death Experience: While serving at a religious institution, you almost died in an accident. When you woke, you had lost all memory of ever having worked for the church or temple. Though the clergy encouraged you to stay, you left to forge a new path. Your sense of altruism—whether instilled in you by your past work or a part of who you naturally are—guides you in your life.
6	Taxing Times: The faith-based organization you were once part of became corrupt. It used its status in the community to accumulate wealth through tithes and its leaders sought political appointments. During a season of drought, the institution stockpiled resources and refused to give aid, resulting in the deaths of many. You became a hero to fight against such corruption and to honor your dearly departed.

EXPLORER

You ventured into uncharted areas and made your living as a cartographer, researcher, resource seeker, or treasure hunter. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- For what purpose did you explore the unknown?
- Who else was part of your exploration team?
- What types of environments did you explore?
- What legend or rumor did you search for but never found?
- What is your greatest discovery?

You gain the following career benefits:

- **Skills:** The Navigate skill, plus two skills from the exploration skill group (*Quick Build:* Navigate, Climb, Heal)
- **Languages:** Two languages
- **Perk:** One exploration perk (*Quick Build:* Wood Wise)

EXPLORER INCITING INCIDENTS

d6	Incident
1	Awakening: In an uncharted area, you awakened some dark horror. You have turned to the life of a hero to put an end to the horror you unleashed and keep other hidden dangers at bay.
2	Missing Piece: You made an important but dangerous discovery about a treasure or ancient ritual that could spell mass destruction. Then the unthinkable happened when an unscrupulous colleague, spy, or treasure hunter stole your research notes. You're looking for them now, and anyone else who might use such discoveries for ill.
3	Nothing Belongs in a Museum: Traversing seas and mountains to collect valuable artifacts for cultural institutions was once your way of life. When people died trying to reclaim one of the objects you took, you realized the truth. Your work was part of a larger problem of misappropriation and the best place for these significant objects wasn't in a museum but with the people who created them. You set out to return what had been taken and to protect others from theft.
4	Unschooling: You delved into dungeons and far-off places by studying them in books. You were an explorer who never felt the need to experience the dangers your peers did. However, your theory about a lost world cost you your reputation. It gave you the impetus to go on adventures and stand up for those with different ideas.
5	Wanderlust: You saw yourself as an observer and operated within a code of conduct. You swore to never interfere with a group by exposing them to your technology, knowledge, or values. When faced with a moral conundrum, you either broke your code or stood idly by—and suffered the consequences. During this incident, you lost your observation journal but became a hero who refuses to let evil stand unchecked.
6	Wind in Your Sails: As a seafaring explorer, you lived to chart unknown courses. Though travel on the high seas was fraught with danger, the destination was always rewarding in riches, knowledge, or some other way that was meaningful to you. Your luck ran out when your ship was destroyed by pirates or other enemy forces. You've taken to protecting those who seek safe passage while also hoping to avenge your crew.

FARMER

You grew crops or cared for livestock. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- Did you own the land you farmed, or did you farm for another?
- What crops or livestock did you cultivate?
- Who else worked on the farm with you?
- What ill omen did you witness that caused you to have a poor season of farming?

You gain the following career benefits:

- **Skills:** The Handle Animals skill, plus two skills from the exploration skill group (*Quick Build:* Handle Animal, Drive, Lift)
- **Languages:** One language
- **Project Points:** 120
- **Perk:** One exploration perk (*Quick Build:* Monster Whisperer)

FARMER INCITING INCIDENTS

d6	Incident
1	Blight: A horrible blight swept over your homeland, sickening the livestock and causing crops to rot. No one knows whether the blight is of natural origin or something more malevolent, but you set out in search of a way to cleanse the land of this affliction.
2	Bored: You've always wanted so much more than gathering eggs and milking cows. You kept a secret journal of your dreams, filled with all the things you wanted. When your parent found the journal, they burned it and told you to keep your head out of the clouds. In response, you gathered what you could in a pack and left everything else behind, seeking a life of adventure.
3	Cursed: While tilling your fields, you found something in the dirt. Perhaps it was a chipped and dented weapon, a piece of ancient jewelry, or something altogether unique. Excited by your find, you showed it to a loved one, but when they touched it, something happened. You now know it was a curse conveyed by the item, though you don't know why it affected them and not you. You left your old life in search of answers.
4	Hard Times: Your farm had always been prosperous, until the last few years. Changes in the weather caused smaller yields until you could no longer pay your tithe to the local noble. Her soldiers took what items of value they found, including a precious family heirloom. You left the struggling farm behind to find a better life.
5	Razed: Your animals were killed, your crops and home set ablaze. The culprits might have been wandering bandits, raiders from a nearby kingdom, or hired thugs sent by a rival farm. Whoever they were, they left you with nothing. You couldn't face the thought of starting again from scratch, so you took up a life of heroism to protect others from such villainy.
6	Stolen: Your family bred horses—beautiful creatures that few could rival on the track and in the jousting lists. When a local noble arrived with an offer to buy your prized stallion, your father refused. The noble struck him down where he stood and stole the horse. Without that stallion, the renowned bloodline would end. You intend to get them back—and get revenge.

GLADIATOR

In the past, you entertained the masses with flashy displays of violence in the arena. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- What led you to this life of violent entertainment?
- What was your gladiator name and persona?
- Who was your biggest rival?
- What happened during your most famous match?

You gain the following career benefits:

- **Skills:** Two skills from the exploration skill group (*Quick Build:* Gymnastics, Jump)
- **Languages:** One language
- **Renown:** +2
- **Perk:** One exploration perk (*Quick Build:* Friend Catapult)

GLADIATOR INCITING INCIDENTS

d6	Incident
1	Betrayed: A local crime lord offered you money to throw your last bout, promising that you'd live through the ordeal and get a cut of all the wagers placed on the match. You upheld your end of the deal—which made the knife in your back after the bout so surprising. You woke in a shallow grave, barely alive, and ready to mete out justice.
2	Heckler: As you stood victorious on the arena sands, a voice cried out among the cheering. "This violence is just for show. You should be ashamed. There are people who need you—who need your skills!" Why did that voice ring so clear? And why did it sound so familiar? You never saw the face of the person who uttered those words, but they weighed heavy on you. The next day, you fled the arena to begin a hero's life.
3	Joined the Arena: As a child, you loved gladiatorial matches, captivated by the fierce displays of showmanship, never giving much thought to how the competitors ended up in the ring. Then your friend was wrongly accused of a crime and sentenced to compete. You went in their place. After viewing what life was like for those forced to fight, you survived your sentence and resolved to protect the unfairly condemned.
4	New Challenges: You earned every title you could. You beat every opponent willing to face you in the arena. Your final battle with your rival ended with you victorious—and still you were unsatisfied. There are other, greater foes out there—and you mean to find them.
5	Scion's Compassion: You were born a noble, but the duplicitous and power-hungry nature of your family had you seeking your own fortune in the arena. You saw that competitors brought there by circumstance and not choice suffered. You gave all you could of your family money to those less fortunate folk and then set out to make a real difference in this cruel world.
6	Warriors' Home: The orphanage you grew up in secretly supplied gladiators to the arena. Forced to fight against many childhood friends as an adult, you vowed to dismantle the arena and free other victims. You became a liberator, dedicating to ending the oppression of others until your dying breath.

LABORER

You worked as a farmer, builder, clothes washer, forester, miner, or some other profession engaged in hard manual labor. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- What type of manual labor did you do?
- What important friendship did you make on the job?
- Where did you go with your coworkers to blow off steam when the job was done?
- What aspect of the job was most difficult for you?

You gain the following career benefits:

- **Skills:** The Endurance skill, plus two skills from your choice of either the crafting skill group or the exploration skill group (*Quick Build:* Endurance, Blacksmithing, Lift)
- **Languages:** One language
- **Project Points:** 120
- **Perk:** One exploration perk (*Quick Build:* Brawny)

LABORER INCITING INCIDENTS

d6	Incident
1	Deep Sentinel: Spending your days cleaning and maintaining the sewers doesn't make you many friends. But you found friendship among the rats. You fought the monsters that hunted your friends, and which everyone else ignored. After making the sewers safe for the rats, you decided to take your talents to the surface and serve other humanoids who might appreciate your efforts in the same way.
2	Disaster: A disaster, such as a cave-in, wildfire, or tidal wave, hit your crew while you were working. You saved as many as you could, but the ones you couldn't save weigh heavily on your mind. You took up the life of a hero to save as many people as possible, vowing that what happened to you won't happen again.
3	Embarrassment: A noble you worked for admonished you publicly for work done poorly—and more than once. Finally, you'd had enough. You vowed to take up a new path and show this noble you're far more than what they make you out to be.
4	Live the Dream: You worked with a good friend, and on the job, you would always fantasize about what it would be like to hit the road as adventuring heroes ... someday. You didn't count on your friend falling ill and passing away. Now it's time to live out that dream for both of you.
5	Shining Light: You kept a lighthouse along the constantly stormy cliffs of your village with your mentor. On a clear and sunny day, your mentor vanished. Finding only a cryptic notebook filled with his musings on the supernatural, you left to find what really what happened. The trail has gone cold for now, and you're helping others find their loved ones in the meantime.
6	Slow and Steady: You labored silently as an uncaring boss drove those around you into the ground, pushing you to work harder to lessen the burden on your companions. But when the boss pushed too far and killed a friend of yours, you led an uprising against them. That was the start of your adventuring life.

MAGE'S APPRENTICE

For long years, you studied magic under the mentorship of a more experienced mage. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- Who did you study under, and what kind of person were they?
- What were your mentor's areas of expertise?
- What aspects of magic did you struggle to comprehend?
- What is your current relationship with your mentor?

You gain the following career benefits:

- **Skills:** The Magic skill, plus two skills from the lore skill group (*Quick Build:* Magic, Monsters, Timescape)
- **Languages:** One language
- **Renown:** +1
- **Perk:** One supernatural perk (*Quick Build:* Arcane Trick)

MAGE'S APPRENTICE INCITING INCIDENTS

d6	Incident
1	Forgotten Memories: While practicing a spell, your inexperience caused the magic to backfire and your memories were wiped, leaving you with only fragments of who you once were. Determined to recall your past, you now dedicate yourself to helping others, hoping your actions will spark some remembrance or lead you to a way to reverse the magic.
2	Magic of Friendship: As a sign of your status as star pupil, your mentor gifted you a familiar as a magic pet. Another jealous apprentice captured the familiar and slipped away in the night. Haunted by your pet's absence, you adventure to find your kidnapped friend and prevent others from feeling your loss.
3	Missing Mage: One day you woke up and the mage you worked for was just gone. They didn't take any of their belongings and there was no sign of any foul play—just the scent of sulfur in their bedchamber. You set out on your heroic journey in the aftermath and have been looking for them ever since.
4	Nightmares Made Flesh: Your attempts at magic have always been unpredictable. A powerful mage promised to help you gain control. During your training, a terrible nightmare caused your body to flare with magic and pull the monster of your nightmare into the waking world. The horror escaped. You left, seeking to vanquish their terrible vileness.
5	Otherworldly: While studying magic, you accidentally sent yourself from your original world to this one. Now you're stranded here, hoping to find ancient texts or powerful magic treasures that might transport you back home. A life of adventure it is!
6	Ultimate Power: The mage you worked for was a kindly old soul, but the basic magic they taught you always seemed like a small part of something bigger. It wasn't until you met an adventuring elemental that you realized hitting the road as a hero was the only way to truly improve and hone your skills. You resigned your apprenticeship and found yourself walking the path of a hero the next day.

PERFORMER

You can sing, act, or dance well enough that people actually pay to see you do it. Imagine that! In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- What is the tone of your performances?
- What song, role, or dance are you most known for?
- Did you perform in the same place throughout your career, or did you travel?
- Were you part of a troupe, or were you a solo act?

You gain the following career benefits:

- **Skills:** The Music or Perform skill, plus two skills from the interpersonal skill group (*Quick Build:* Music, Flirt, Performance)
- **Renown:** +2
- **Perk:** One interpersonal perk (*Quick Build:* Harmonizer)

PERFORMER INCITING INCIDENTS

d6	Incident
1	Cursed Audience: During a performance, you watched in horror as the audience was suddenly overcome by a curse that caused them to disintegrate before your eyes. You aren't sure what happened, but seeking an answer quickly led you to places where only heroes dare to go.
2	False Accolades: After a poor performance, you found a script to a well-written play left in your dressing room. The accompanying note asked that if you performed the play, you should give the author credit. But after a commanding performance, you claimed to be star and playwright both—and the curse hidden on those pages activated. A small portion of your skin has begun to transform into undead flesh, and the only cure is to prove you have become selfless.
3	Fame and Fortune: You thought you were famous—then that hero came to your show. Suddenly, all eyes were on the dragon-slaying brute instead of on the stage where they belonged. The audience even gave them a standing ovation when they entered the room. All you got was polite applause. Fine. If people want a hero so much, then a hero you shall be.
4	Songs to the Dead: Your performances have always been tinged with a bit of melancholy. During a particularly soulful performance, spirits disturbed the living audience and sat in their chairs. They begged you to prevent their demise, providing no other details before disappearing. You set out to see if you could help your most dedicated fans.
5	Speechless: A heckler's mocking words left you utterly speechless during a performance, stinging your pride and stirring your arrogance. The incident strained your legendary voice, and you could only speak in soft whispers. The heckler was a fey trickster who stole your voice, promising to give it back after you accomplished real good in the world.
6	Tragic Lesson: When a producer who once shortchanged you shouted out on the street for you to stop a thief who had picked their pocket, your spite toward the producer inspired you to let the thief run right on by. But that decision led to tragedy when the thief later harmed someone you loved. From that moment on, you made it your responsibility to protect others.

POLITICIAN

You worked as a leader within a formal, bureaucratic organization or government. You might have been appointed, born, or elected into your position, but getting people to agree and making decisions for the people you serve (or who served you) was your job. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- Who were you responsible for ruling or representing?
- What was your official title and how did you earn it?
- Who was your greatest political rival?
- What secret do you know that could tear apart the entire system you worked within?

You gain the following career benefits:

- **Skills:** Two skills from the interpersonal skill group (*Quick Build:* Lead, Lie)
- **Languages:** One language
- **Renown:** +1
- **Wealth:** +1
- **Perk:** One interpersonal perk (*Quick Build:* Engrossing Monologue)

POLITICIAN INCITING INCIDENTS

d6	Incident
1	Diplomatic Immunity: Your political power allowed you to be foolish without consequence. Through sheer carelessness or on a dare, you accidentally harmed or killed an innocent bystander. Due to your position as an official, you faced no consequences. But this event was the final straw for the person you loved or respected most, and they turned away from you. You left the world of political machinations behind to earn back their trust.
2	Insurrectionist: You secretly funded a rebel organization intent on overthrowing the corrupt establishment. Someone discovered your treason, and you were forced to leave or risk execution. You became a hero to live and fight another day on behalf of those who have no power.
3	Respected Consul: You were seneschal to a leader, able to sway their opinions, but gossip convinced the monarch you were plotting a coup, and you were ousted from court. You became a hero to continue your work making meaningful change in the world.
4	Right Side of History: You tried to work on policy change from the inside of a bureaucratic organization. There were others like you who were more vocal. You started to notice those colleagues were disappearing overnight. Not wanting to find out if you were next on the list, you left to enact change in more direct ways.
5	Self-Serving: You used your skills to collect incriminating or scandalous information about your opponents to blackmail them. A rival got one step ahead of you and stole your book of dirty secrets, but instead of using it against you, they gave you an opportunity to leave the world of politics behind. Saved from public humiliation, you now use your skills for the greater good.
6	Unbound: The red tape required to achieve anything through your political position resulted in a crisis being mishandled and countless people harmed or killed. After that unfortunate event, you resolved to be unfettered by bureaucratic interference and sought to do good through action, not paperwork.

SAGE

From an early age, you dedicated yourself to learning, whether you shared the knowledge of the world with others or sought out secret lore only for yourself. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- What subjects did you study?
- Where did your studies take place?
- How did you acquire the books and other materials you needed for work?
- Who benefited most from your research?

You gain the following career benefits:

- **Skills:** Two skills from the lore skill group (*Quick Build:* History, Magic)
- **Languages:** One language
- **Project Points:** 240
- **Perk:** One lore perk (*Quick Build:* Expert Sage)

SAGE INCITING INCIDENTS

d6	Incident
1	Bookish Ideas: You were always content to live a peaceful life in your library, until you found that one book—the one that told the tale of heroes who had saved the timescape. They didn't spend their days behind a desk. They made a real difference. It was time for you to do the same.
2	Cure the Curse: You used to think knowledge could fix everything. You were wrong. When someone you loved fell under a curse, the means to cure them couldn't be found in any of the books you owned. But that wasn't going to stop you. The answers are out there, and you'll find them even if you have to face down death to do so.
3	Lost Library: An evil mage took all your books for themselves, cackling at your impotence as they raided your shelves. Now, you're off to search through ancient ruins and secret libraries to rebuild your collection of rare tomes—and to find the mage who stole from you.
4	Paper Guilt: While transcribing ancient texts, you and another scribe discovered a shelf of long-forgotten books. At your suggestion, your companion started work on one and vanished along with the tome. Your guilt drove you to seek out your friend and prevent others from falling to similar dangers.
5	Unforeseen Futures: In your pursuit of ancient knowledge, you discovered a prophecy that has yet to come to pass. And that prophecy involves someone who might be ... you. Since your discovery, strange dreams have plagued you, driving you to seek out your destiny.
6	Vanishing: At first you thought it was your imagination, and you brushed off the disappearance of random sentences in historical books. Then as the books changed to entirely blank pages, the disappearances became difficult to ignore, particularly those involving ancient or critical text. Driven by the desire to preserve knowledge, you have made it your purpose to restore and reverse those vanishing texts before they forever disappear.

SAILOR

You worked on a ship that might have been a merchant cog, a mercenary or military craft, or a pirate vessel. You might have been a deckhand, a mate, or even the captain. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- What is the name of the vessel you sailed on and what type of business was the crew engaged in?
- What was your job aboard the boat?
- What's the longest amount of time you've spent at sea?
- Who or what did you lose on your maritime journeys?

You gain the following career benefits:

- **Skills:** Swim, plus two skills from the exploration skill group (*Quick Build:* Swim, Climb, Gymnastics)
- **Languages:** Two languages
- **Perk:** One exploration perk (*Quick Build:* Put Your Back Into It)

SAILOR INCITING INCIDENTS

d6	Incident
1	Alone: You joined up with your best friend, sibling, or other loved one, the culmination of a lifelong dream to sail the high seas together. When they died, you lost your taste for the seafaring life. You left at the first opportunity and haven't looked back since.
2	Deserter: It was in the middle of a pirate raid (whether you were part of it or targeted by it) that you realized you no longer yearned for a sailor's life. You used the chaos of the moment to slip away unnoticed. You now work as a hero in an effort to either end the piracy of others or atone for your past deeds, but you fear the day your old crew finds you and punishes you for your desertion.
3	Forgotten: You awoke aboard your ship with no memory of who you were. Though the other sailors insisted they knew you, you didn't know them. The next time you went ashore, you decided to stay, determined to find out who you really are.
4	Jealousy: You had the favor of your captain, which earned you many rivals aboard your ship. One night, your fellow sailors pulled you from your bunk and threw you overboard. By some miracle, you were scooped from the waters by a passing vessel. You worked off your debt to them, then set out on a new life with less pettiness.
5	Marooned: There was a mutiny, and you were on the losing side. You were marooned on an island and escaped when a merchant vessel was blown off course by a storm and found you. Your reputation is ruined among sailors, so you seek adventure elsewhere.
6	Water Fear: A catastrophic storm hit while you were at sea, destroying your ship and leaving you as the only survivor. Once you recovered, you tried to sign on with another ship, but the thought of the open water turned your legs to jelly. Instead, you've taken on the role of a traveling hero to make ends meet.

SOLDIER

In your formative years, you fought tirelessly in skirmishes and campaigns against enemy forces. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- In which army and company did you serve?
- What conflicts were you a part of?
- What rank did you achieve?
- What heroics did you perform in the heat of battle?

You gain the following career benefits:

- **Skills:** One skill from the exploration skill group and one skill from the intrigue skill group (*Quick Build:* Endurance, Alertness)
- **Languages:** Two languages
- **Renown:** +1
- **Perk:** One exploration perk (*Quick Build:* Teamwork)

SOLDIER INCITING INCIDENTS

d6	Incident
1	Dishonorable Discharge: You enlisted in the military to protect others, but your commander ordered you to beat and kill civilians. When you refused, things got violent. You barely escaped the brawl that ensued, but now you vow to help people on your own terms.
2	Out of Retirement: You had a long and storied career as a soldier before deciding to retire to a simpler life. But when you returned to your old home, you found your enemies had laid waste to it. Now the skills you earned on the battlefield are helping you as you become a different kind of warrior—one seeking to save others from the fate you suffered.
3	Peace Through Healing: The sight of constant bloodshed took its toll on you. You seek peace through healing and dedicated yourself to ending wars before they begin, to spare those around you from the horror.
4	Sole Survivor: You were the last surviving member of your unit after an arduous battle or monstrous assault, surviving only through luck. You turned away from the life of a soldier then, seeking to become a hero who could stand against such threats.
5	Stolen Valor: Tired of eking out an existence on the streets, you enrolled in the military. However, you were unable to escape your lower-status background until the officer leading your unit fell in battle. In the chaos that ensued, you assumed their identity and returned home a hero. To avoid suspicion, you took on the life of an adventurer, staying always on the move.
6	Vow of Sacrifice: You promised a fellow soldier that you'd protect his family if he ever fell in battle. When he did, you traveled to his village, but found its people slain or scattered by war. Driven by your vow, you have dedicated your life to finding any survivors and protecting others from a similar fate.

WARDEN

You protected a wild region from those who sought to harm it, such as poachers and cultists bent on the destruction of the natural world. Knowing your land well, you could also serve as a guide or the leader of a rescue party for those wandering the wilds. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- What environment did you protect?
- Were you part of a formal group of wardens or did you take the job upon yourself?
- Which animal became your constant companion while you worked in the wild?
- What mysterious creature or wanderer did you meet in the forest, and what prophecy did they share with you?

You gain the following career benefits:

- **Skills:** Nature, plus one skill from the exploration skill group and one skill from the intrigue skill group (*Quick Build:* Nature, Navigate, Track)
- **Languages:** One language
- **Project Points:** 120
- **Perk:** One exploration perk (*Quick Build:* Camouflage Hunter)

WARDEN INCITING INCIDENTS

d6	Incident
1	Betrayed: When outsiders arrived in your lands with the intent to exploit the wilds for their resources, you spoke out against them. However, several other wardens spoke in favor of these outsiders and allowed them in to despoil nature. Refusing to watch your homeland destroyed, you left. Now you help others avoid such a fate.
2	Corruption: A disease has infected the lands you protect, causing animals to become violent and twisting plants into something dark and sinister. You've tried everything, magical and mundane, to stop the scourge, but it continues to spread. As such, you've set out in search of a cure or an unblighted land to protect.
3	Exiled: You made a mistake that could not be forgiven. The other wardens of the region decided your fate, exiling you from your lands with an order never to return.
4	Honor the Fallen: A group of heroes arrived in your territory with trouble close on their heels. You fought alongside them to turn back the evil, but it was too much. The heroes fell, and your wilderness was forever altered. Though your lands are beyond saving, there are other lands you can help.
5	Portents: There were signs. You tried to ignore them, but when a great beast died at your feet, you had to recognize the truth. You were meant to leave your home territory, meant to fight a battle for the fate of all lands—and so you gave up the only life you've ever known.
6	Theft: You were responsible for guarding something precious, something vital to your region's survival. But you let someone in, and they betrayed your trust by stealing the thing you were meant to guard. You left your chosen territory to atone for your mistake.

WATCH OFFICER

You served as an officer of the law for a local government. You might have been a single person in a much larger city watch or the only constable patrolling a small village. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- What type of settlement did you protect?
- What was your law enforcement style like? Were you a by-the-book officer, a more lenient-but-fair type, or totally corrupt?
- What criminal still eludes your grasp to this day?
- Whose life did you save in the line of duty?
- What is the most absurd call you ever responded to and how did you handle it?

You gain the following career benefits:

- **Skills:** Alertness, plus two skills from the intrigue skill group (*Quick Build:* Alertness, Search, Track)
- **Languages:** Two languages
- **Perk:** One exploration perk (*Quick Build:* Team Leader)

WATCH OFFICER INCITING INCIDENTS

d6	Incident
1	Bigger Fish: You grew bored and disillusioned with chasing down petty thieves and imprisoning folks just trying to survive. Surely there are greater threats in the world. You will find that evil wherever it may lurk, and you'll be the one to stop it.
2	Corruption Within: You joined the force to help the helpless and bring justice to those wronged. You weren't prepared for the rampant corruption reaching the top of your organization. You refused to cover for your fellow officers and were told in no simple terms to leave town or face the consequences. Now you travel as a hero, acting as the protector you always wanted to be.
3	Frame Job: Your partner was murdered. That much is irrefutable. But you didn't do it, despite what the evidence implies. When it became clear you'd take the fall, you fled, leaving everything behind. Not content to cower in the shadows, you decided to adventure under a new name while you work to clear your own.
4	Missing Mentor: You learned everything you know about the job from someone you always looked up to in a corrupt organization. One night, they sent you a cryptic message saying they had discovered "something big," but before you found out more, they disappeared. No longer sure who you could trust, you slipped away and sought a new life. Now you do what good you can and search to find the truth.
5	One That Got Away: A particularly violent or depraved criminal began targeting you—perhaps stealing something personal or hurting someone you love—after slipping through your grasp. You left your career to pursue the criminal, but the trail has gone cold ... for now. Might as well help folk in the meantime.
6	Powerful Enemies: You made it your responsibility to root out and bring down the region's foremost crime syndicate. They sent goons to burn down your home and teach you a lesson, leaving you bleeding in the street with nothing left except your life. You've since taken on the life of a hero to gain the power and influence you need to destroy the syndicate once and for all.

LANGUAGES

When you create your hero, you'll be able to select the languages they know. The following section details the languages of Orden, the baseline world of the game, but the Director can use these languages in their own campaign world or can swap this list with their own list of languages.

If your hero knows a language, they can speak, read, write, and understand it.

CAELIAN EMPIRE

The Caelian Empire dominated five of the seven regions of Orden three thousand years ago. During the height of this most recent human empire, all humans (including folks from Vanigar in the far north, but not folks from the islands of Ix) learned to speak the Caelian tongue. For many, especially the noble classes and the well-to-do, Caelian effectively replaced their native language.

Some thirteen hundred years after the fall of the Caelian Empire, the languages of the different regions of the empire are enjoying a resurgence. Still, the Caelian tongue is spoken by most humans in most regions to one extent or another.

Most people in Orden can speak and understand some Caelian, simply because the empire was so powerful and so widespread. Anyone trading with the empire or living near its borders or under its influence eventually learned to speak Caelian, including dwarves, elves, orcs, lizardfolk, and goblins. If you speak more than one language in Orden, your second language is almost certainly Caelian. As a result, that language of empire is now colloquially referred to as "the common tongue"—the language that most folk of Orden have in common.

EXTANT SPOKEN LANGUAGES

Folks have been speaking and writing in Orden for at least thirty thousand years, but most of those languages are now dead. Many have been forgotten. Others were spoken by peoples who never developed writing, preventing those languages from being preserved. And many languages that were preserved in writing left no related descendants, so that no one knows what sounds that writing represented.

The languages on the Vasloria Languages by Ancestry table are the most common languages in that region, actively spoken by significant populations of people. Most languages are associated with a specific ancestry and its culture, but being a member of an ancestry doesn't automatically make you part of the associated culture the language is tied to. For example, if your orc hero was raised in a culture of elves, you probably speak one of the elf languages, and might never have learned Kalliak.

Most languages have colloquial or casual names. For instance, many people in Orden call Kalliak "Orcish" and Hyrallic "Elvish," but any sage knows there are lots of orcish and elf languages, just as there are multiple human languages.

VASLORIA LANGUAGES BY ANCESTRY

Language	Common Ancestries	Notes
Anjali	Devils, Hobgoblins	Language of contract law
Axiomatic	Memonek	Native language of Axiom, and the common language of the timescape by trade
Caelian	Orden Denizens	Common tongue of Orden
Filliaric	Angulotls	Offshoot of Cyllinric
High Kuric	Bredbeddles, Giants, Ogres, Trolls	
Hyrallic	High Elves	Language of interspecies diplomacy
Illyvric	Shadow Elves	
Kalliak	Orcs	Offshoot of Zaliac
Kethaic	Kobolds	Patois of Vastariac and Caelian
Khelt	Bugbears, Fey	Offshoot of Kheltivari
Khoursirian	Polder, Humans	Distant offshoot of Khamish
Low Kuric	Elementals	
Mindspeech	Voiceless Talkers	A symbolic language shared among native telepaths.
Proto-Ctholl	Demons	Incomplete offshoot of Tholl
Szetch	Goblins, Radenwights	
The First Language	Elder Dragons	Language of magic
Tholl	Gnolls	
Urollialic	Olothec	
Variac	Gnomes, Olothecs, Trolls, Voiceless Talkers	Common language of the World Below
Vastariac	Dragons, Dragon Knights	
Vhoric	Hakaan	Offshoot of the Stone Giant dialect of High Kuric
Voll	Time raiders	
Yllyric	Wode Elves	Language of druids
Za'hariac	Overminds	
Zaliac	Dwarves	Language of engineering

VASLORIA HUMAN LANGUAGES

Region	Language
The Gol	Uvalic
Higara	Higaran
Ix	Oaxuatl
Khemhara	Khemharic
Koursir	Khoursirian
Phaedros	Phaedran
Rioja	Riojan
Vanigar	Vaniric
Vasloria	Vaslorian

LANGUAGE USAGE

Hyralllic is the primary language of the high elves in Orden. Although young for an elf language, Hyralllic is older than almost all other modern cultural languages, save those of the dwarves. As a result, while anyone who lives near or trades with a human culture probably speaks at least a little Caelian, most nobles across all ancestries make sure their children or offspring speak Hyralllic. Caelian is new from many cultures' point of view, while Hyralllic as a language for diplomacy is considered cultured and traditional.

Yllyric is the cultural language of wode elves, and also the common language among those who defend and protect the natural forests of Orden.

Within any document concerning the workings of machines, masonry, or geology, you are likely to find a healthy supply of jargon using **Zaliac**, the most popular dwarf language. Even when such texts aren't fully written in Zaliac, they use a lot of dwarf language when describing esoteric, complex ideas.

Just as Zaliac is used in engineering, contract law isn't written purely in **Anjali**, the dominant language of the Seven Cities of Hell. But a lot of the legal jargon in any contract, as well as some of the language of trial courts, features many Anjali words. People are sticklers for detail in the Seven Cities, and this makes their language popular among lawyers.

In the same way that intelligent creatures in Orden who live near or trade with other cultures use Caelian as a common language, the denizens of the World Below, the Dark Under All, often speak **Variac**, the language of the voiceless talkers.

DEAD LANGUAGES

For an adventuring hero with an ambition to create great works or unlock deep lore, it can be useful to be able to read ancient writing. Much deep lore is attested only in ancient tomes and scrolls written in languages that no modern culture uses.

Most of these ancient writings were written by people who expected other people to read it. The lore might have been kept secret by not sharing it with anyone outside the college or cult whose members originally wrote it, but the actual writing was not intended to be difficult to read or understand. It wasn't written in code—just in a language that people stopped speaking long ago.

Sages can reconstruct many of these languages by learning which modern languages descended from them, then comparing them to related languages from the same time period that might have survived. Translating such ancient languages has been extremely useful for the purposes of crafting and research.

The Dead Languages table shows some of the dead languages of Orden, and the modern languages related to those ancient languages.

DEAD LANGUAGES

Langauge	Ancestry	Related Languages	Common Topics
High Rhyvian	Sun Elf	Hyralllic, Yllyric	Liannar, the Sunmetal
Khamish	Beast Lord	Khoursirian	Beast magic
Kheltvari	Old Fae	Yllyric, Cyllinric, Khelt	Using a wode to travel through time
Low Rhivian	Sky Elf	Hyralllic	Flying castles
Old Variac	Olothec, Voiceless Talkers	Variac	Kollar, the Sinmetal
Phorialtic	Old Elemental	Low and High Kuric	Moving between manifolds
Rallarian	Steel Dwarf	Zaliac	Valiar, the Truemetal
Tholl	Old Hobgoblin	Anjali	Zodiakol, the Bloodmetal
Ullorvic	Star Elf	Hyralllic, Yllyric	Rovion, the Starmetal

Khamish and Tholl are still spoken by creatures connected to the beast lords and the lower worlds such as the lizardfolk and gnolls, respectively. However, the forms spoken today only vaguely resemble their original tongues and have been adapted for use within their own circles.

CLASSES

While all your character creation decisions bear narrative weight, none influences the way you play the game like your choice of class. Your class determines how your hero battles the threats of the timescape and overcome other obstacles. Do you bend elemental forces to your will through the practiced casting of magic spells? Do you channel the rage of the Primordial Chaos as you tear across the battlefield felling foes left and right? Or do you belt out heroic ballads that give your allies a second wind and inspire them to greater achievements?

Your class provides you with your heroic resource, many of your features, and most of your abilities. There are nine to choose from in this book.

- **Censor:** A censor is a trained warrior devoted to a saint or god. They hunt down forces of evil using melee weapons and magic granted to them by their divine patron and specialize in locking down one enemy during combat and hunting the wicked.
- **Conduit:** A conduit is the devoted priest of a saint or god. They wield divine magic that smites enemies with holy energy and supports their allies. They are the best healing class in this book.
- **Elementalist:** An elementalists studies the elemental forces of the timescape and controls earth, fire, the void, and more with magic. Many of their abilities cover wide areas of the map and they have a versatile array of tricks that allow them to control the battlefield and accomplish tasks outside of combat.
- **Fury:** Coursing with the rage of the Primordial Chaos in their veins, a fury is a mobile warrior who gets up close and personal with enemies to dish out lots of damage. If you want to leap around the battlefield felling your foes and breaking down walls, then the fury is the class for you.
- **Null:** Disciplined and calm, the null is an unarmed warrior who creates an aura that quells the supernatural and other special effects created by their enemies. They use psionics to make their body stronger than any steel and faster than any steed.
- **Shadow:** Stalking foes from the darkness, the shadow is an expert assassin and thief who can use melee and ranged attacks to great effect if they get the drop on their foe. They also utilize magic to help them stay mobile on the battlefield and sneak up on their prey.
- **Tactician:** A brilliant strategist and weapons master, the tactician excels at granting allies more movement and actions in the battlefield and supports their allies outside of combat as well. If you want to inspire your friends to greatness, then the tactician class is for you.
- **Talent:** A talent is the master of psionics, manifesting powers that manipulate objects, minds, and time. These heroes can reach far into themselves to use abilities even when they don't have enough heroic resources—if they're willing to face the cost.
- **Troubadour:** A troubadour inspires their allies with storytelling and swordplay that is as much an art as it is an act of war. Their quips, songs, poems, and epic tales produce actual magic that harms foes and bolsters allies. They can even use their magic to tweak the campaign's story in real time to better suit their needs.

ABILITIES

Your class, kit, ancestry, titles, and other heroic options give you access to abilities that make your hero stand out. Abilities are special actions, maneuvers, and more that allow you to affect creatures, objects, and the environment.

Abilities are presented in a format that breaks out specific entries for keywords, time, distance, target, and effect.

NAME AND STORY TEXT

Each ability has an evocative name that sets up what it does in the game, followed by a line or two of flavor text that provides a sense of how the use of the ability might appear if described in an action scene in a story.

The name and story text for abilities sometimes makes reference to specific ways in which the ability is used—particularly combat abilities whose names imply specific types of weapons or tactics. However, that narrative flavor has no effect on how an ability can be used. For example, the fury's Impaling Strike ability allows you to grab a target, setting up the idea of harpooning your monstrous foe with a sword, then wrenching them in close before pulling your weapon free. But you can use that ability with an axe, a mace, a hammer, or any other weapon.

RESOURCE COST

Some abilities have a Heroic Resource cost to use them. When you use one of these abilities, you spend your Heroic Resource, then activate the ability.

ABILITY KEYWORDS

Each ability has a "Keyword" entry with one or more keywords that explain how the ability functions.

AREA

Abilities with the Area keyword create an area of effect. Many area abilities also deal damage, but such abilities are not strikes. See [Area Abilities](#) for more information.

CHARGE

Abilities with the Charge keyword can be used with the Charge action in place of a melee free strike (see [Charge](#) in [Actions in Combat](#)).

MAGIC

Magic-keyword abilities are used by creatures who can cast spells, have innate magical features, or wield magic items. These abilities do magical things such as create rays of fire, open swirling portals, or summon creatures.

MELEE

Abilities with the Melee keyword can be used only over very short distances, typically within a creature's reach, because they require you to touch someone or something with your body, a weapon, or an implement.

PSIONIC

Psionic-keyword abilities are used by creatures who can manifest psionic powers, have innate psionic features, or wield psionic items. These abilities might create blasts of psychic energy, move objects with telekinesis, or slow down time with chronopathy.

RANGED

Abilities with the Ranged keyword can be used to affect creatures who are too far away to touch.

STRIKE

Abilities with the Strike keyword (referred to simply as “strikes”) deal damage to or impose a harmful effect on other creatures.

WEAPON

The Weapon keyword is used in abilities that are made with blades, bows, and other such items. Weapon abilities also include attacks creatures make with their own bodies, such as punches, kicks, bites, tail slaps, and more. Your kit determines the types of weapons you wield and use with weapon abilities (see [Kits](#)).

IT’S NOT ALL STRIKES!

The Strike keyword and phrases like “makes a strike” are reserved for abilities that have a creature specifically targeting other creatures or objects (not an area), and dealing harm to them by making a power roll. Other abilities that target areas of effect, are not strikes. They instead use the Area keyword. That means if a feature distinctly interacts with a strike, that feature has no effect on abilities with the Area keyword.

TYPE

Each ability has a “Type” entry that describes how long it takes to execute the ability. For instance, if you use an ability that has “Action” as its type entry, you must use your action to activate the ability. Most abilities require you to use an action, a maneuver, a triggered action, a free maneuver, or a free triggered action (see [Combat](#) for more information).

If an ability takes 1 minute or longer to use, you can’t use it in combat.

TRIGGER

If an ability requires a triggered action or a free triggered action to use, a “Trigger” entry is part of the ability. For example, the trigger for the tactician’s Parry ability is: “A creature deals damage to the target.”

DISTANCE

An ability’s “Distance” entry indicates how close you need to be to a creature or object to affect that target with the ability.

MELEE

Melee abilities have a distance of “Melee X” require you to touch a creature with your body, a weapon, or an implement. X is the distance in squares at which you can physically make contact with another creature or object targeted by the ability. For instance, a distance of “Melee 2” can be used to target creatures or objects within 2 squares of you.

RANGED

Abilities with a distance noted as “Ranged” can be used to target creatures who are more than a touch away. Ranged distances are presented as “Ranged X,” with X being the number of squares away a creature or object can be while still allowing you to target them with the ability. For instance, a distance of “Ranged 5” can be used to target creatures or objects within 5 squares of you.

If you make a ranged strike while an enemy is adjacent to you, you have a bane on the strike’s power roll.

MELEE OR RANGED

Some abilities have a melee distance and a ranged distance. When you use such an ability, you choose whether to use it as a melee or a ranged ability. The ability never has both the Melee and Ranged keywords at the same time. For example, if you have the Cloak and Dagger kit, which has a weapon damage bonus to melee and ranged abilities, only one bonus at a time applies to an ability with the Melee or Ranged keywords.

AREA ABILITIES

Area abilities cover an area, creating an effect within that area that lets you target multiple creatures or objects at once. When an ability allows you to create an area of effect, you are sometimes given a distance, noted as “within X,” that describes how many squares away from you the area can be. If an area ability doesn’t originate from you, then least 1 square of the area of effect must be within that distance and your line of effect. This square is referred to as the origin square of the area of effect. The area of effect can spread from the origin square however you choose, as long as the area of effect conforms to the shape and arrangement rules of that particular area.

Unless otherwise noted, area abilities don’t pass through solid barriers such as walls or ceilings, or spread around corners.

As long as you have line of effect and distance to the origin square, you can place an area ability to include one or more squares where you don’t have line of effect (see [Line of Effect](#) below).

An area ability might use any of the following areas of effect:

Aura: When an ability creates an aura, it is expressed as “X aura.” Aura areas always originate from you and move with you for the duration of the ability that created them. A creature must be within X squares of you to be targeted by an aura ability.

Burst: When an ability creates a burst area, it is expressed as “X burst.” Burst areas always originate from you. A creature must be within X squares of you to be targeted with a burst ability.

Cube: When an ability affects a cubic area, it is expressed as “X cube.” X is the length of all the area’s sides.

Line: When an ability affects a linear area, it is expressed as “A × B line.” This means that A equals the line’s length in squares, while B equals the line’s width and height in squares. When you create a line area of effect, the squares it occupies on the grid must be in a straight line, forming either a rectangle or straight diagonal line shape with the squares it effects.

Wall: When an ability creates a wall, it is expressed as “X wall,” where X equals how many squares are used to make the wall. When you place a wall, you can build it one square at a time, but each square must share at least one side (not just a corner) with another square of the wall. You can stack squares on top of each other to make the wall higher. Unless otherwise stated, a wall can’t be placed in occupied squares, and a wall blocks line of effect.

Special: Some abilities create a unique area of effect. The distance entry of such abilities specifies how the area is created.

SELF

If an ability has a distance of “Self,” that ability originates from or affects only you. The ability’s description specifies how it works.

TARGET

The “Target” entry of an ability notes the number of creatures or objects who can be targeted by that ability.

CREATURE

If an ability targets one or more creatures, you can have it target any creature within the ability’s distance. You aren’t an eligible creature target for your own abilities unless those abilities also have “self” as a target (see below).

OBJECT

If an ability targets one or more objects, you can have it target any object within the ability’s distance. Unless otherwise noted, objects have poison and psychic immunity.

When an ability can target creatures and objects, the ability can damage objects. However, unless otherwise noted or if the Director decides otherwise, objects are immune to an ability’s other effects.

ENEMY

If an ability targets one or more enemies, you can use the ability to target only creatures who are hostile to you. Typically, you decide who counts as an enemy, though the Director has the final say.

ALLY

If an ability targets one or more allies, you can use the ability to target only willing creatures who are friendly to you. Typically, you and any other player’s character who you target decide who counts as an ally, though the Director has the final say. You aren’t an eligible ally target for your own abilities unless those abilities also have “self” as a target.

SELF

If an ability targets “self,” then you are a valid target for the ability.

ALL

If an ability doesn’t provide a number of targets but instead says it applies to all creatures, objects, enemies, or allies, then all eligible targets are affected.

ABILITY ROLL

If an ability requires a power roll, it has a “Power Roll” entry that tells you which characteristic to add to the 2d10 roll you make when you activate the ability.

Unlike power rolls made as tests, ability rolls always do something useful when you make them. You’re just rolling to see the impact of the ability, including damage and any effects based on the tier result of the power roll. For instance, the fury’s Brutal Slam ability is a melee strike that targets a creature within 1 square, and which has the following effects:

Tier 1 (11 or lower): The ability deals 3 + your Might score damage and pushes the target back 1 square.

Tier 2 (12–16): The ability deals 6 + your Might score damage and pushes the target back 2 squares.

Tier 3 (17 or more): The ability deals 9 + your might score damage and pushes the target back 4 squares.

CHARACTERISTICS AND DAMAGE

Certain abilities that deal damage list their damage as a number followed by a plus sign (+) and the letter M, A, R, I, or P. The indicated letter means you should also add your characteristic score to the damage dealt by the ability.

For example, the fury’s Brutal Slam ability uses a Might power roll that has this base damage:

- 11 or lower: **3 + M damage**
- 12–16: **6 + M damage**
- 17+: **9 + M damage**

If the fury’s Might score is 2, the ability’s damage would be:

- 11 or lower: **5 damage**
- 12–16: **8 damage**
- 17+: **11 damage**

Some abilities, such as your free strikes, allow you to pick which characteristic score you add. These are expressed with the word “or” between the letters representing characteristics, such as “7 + M or A damage.”

The damage for these abilities increases at each echelon of play, since your characteristic scores improve each time you enter a new echelon.

ABILITIES WITH DAMAGE AND EFFECTS

Both strikes and area abilities deal damage and often have an additional effect on their target. The amount of damage and the strength of the effect are determined by the power roll.

To keep things quick and easy to read at the table, damage and effects are separated in a power roll entry with a semicolon, with effects abbreviated whenever possible. An effect determined by the power roll result always applies to the target unless otherwise specified. For instance, the Brutal Slam ability described above has the following power roll setup:

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **3 + M damage; push 1**
- 12–16: **6 + M damage; push 2**
- 17+: **9 + M damage; push 4**

Unless otherwise indicated, any effects that are determined by a power roll result occur after the power roll's damage has been dealt to all targets.

If an ability has multiple effects, they resolve in the order in which they are presented.

POTENCY AND ABILITIES

If an ability effect has a potency, it is listed in the ability. See [The Basics](#) for more information.

SURGES AND ABILITIES

Surges can be spent to increase the damage dealt by an ability or increase an ability's potency. See [The Basics](#) for more information.

"DURING THE MOVE"

Certain ability effects allow you to move and affect other creatures or objects during that move, such as the shadow's Blade Dance ability. For such abilities, the move begins in the space you first leave when you begin the move, and ends in the last space you move into.

"ROLLED DAMAGE"

Some treasures and other effects affected **rolled damage**, a term that refers to the variable damage that is determined by making an ability power roll. Some abilities or ability effects deal damage without requiring a power roll—that is not rolled damage.

CRITICAL HIT

When you make an ability power roll as part of an strike or action and the total of the roll is 19 or 20 before adding your characteristic (a natural 19 or natural 20), you score a critical hit. This allows you to immediately take an additional action after resolving the power roll, whether or not it's your turn and even if you are dazed (see [Conditions](#)).

ROLL AGAINST MULTIPLE CREATURES

When an ability targets multiple creatures, you make one power roll and apply the result to all the creatures you target. If you have edges or banes against some but not all of your targets, you might apply a different tier of result to individual targets.

For example, if you target three creatures with a strike and your result is 11, each of the targets should be affected by the tier 1 result of the ability. However, if you gain an edge on strikes against one of the targets to add 2 to the power roll, your result against that target is 13 and that target is affected by the tier 2 result of the ability.

SURGES

A troubadour's battle song, a fury's building rage, and a shadow's patient insight can all make a hero more effective in a fight. These advantages are represented by **surges**. Many abilities give heroes surges during a battle. When you earn a surge, you can keep track of it on your character sheet.

Surges can be used in combat to deal extra damage to your foes and increase the value of your potencies. When you deal damage with an ability power roll, you can spend up to three surges you have to increase the damage you deal by an amount equal to your highest characteristic score per surge spent to one creature or object targeted with the ability. When you target one or more creatures with an ability that has a potency, you can spend two surges to increase the potency by 1 for one of the creatures targeted with the effect. You can't increase the potency by more than 1 with surges, though you can spend multiple at once to increase the potency for multiple targets. After you spend a surge, it disappears. At the end of combat, you lose all your surges.

EFFECT

Many abilities that require power rolls also have effect entries describing additional effects or rules for how the ability is used. If an ability doesn't require a power roll, it has an effect entry that describes how it works.

SPEND RESOURCE

Some abilities have a "Spend X [Heroic Resource]" entry. These are similar to effect entries, except they cost Heroic Resources to use. You must spend X of your Heroic Resource to activate the effect. If the entry reads "Spend [Heroic Resource]" with no number, then you can spend as much of your Heroic Resource as you like to increase the effect's impact, as described in the entry's details.

STACKING UNIQUE EFFECTS

The unique effects of different abilities are combined if their durations and targets overlap. However, the effects of the same ability used multiple times don't add together. Instead, the most impactful result—such as the highest bonus—from each use of the ability applies. The most recent ability applies for determining duration.

Different effects that impose the same condition (see [Conditions](#)) don't stack to impose the condition twice. For example, if a hero is targeted by numerous creatures whose abilities can halve a target's recovery value, the hero's recovery value is only halved once.

ENDING EFFECTS

When a creature suffers a lasting effect, whatever ability, hazard, or other mechanic imposed the effect specifies how long the effect lasts. Unless otherwise noted, all effects and conditions (see [Conditions](#)) that are imposed on you during a combat encounter end when the encounter is over if you want them to.

EoT

If an effect ends with "(EoT)" at the end of its description, a creature suffers the effect until the end of their next turn, or the current turn if they got the effect on their current turn.

SAVE ENDS

If an effect ends with "(save ends)" at the end of its description, then a creature suffering the effect can make a saving throw at the end of their turn to remove the effect.

A saving throw represents your luck in shaking off an effect. You likely already got a chance to resist the effect using your characteristic score to resist a potency, so now it's down to fate. To make a saving throw, roll a 1d10. On a result of 6 or higher, the effect ends. Otherwise, it continues.

END OF ENCOUNTER OR DYING

Some ability effects, such as the one associated with the conduit's Blessing of Fate and Destiny ability, last until the end of the encounter or until the creature who used the ability is dying. If these abilities are used outside of combat, they last 5 minutes.

ADJACENT

Many abilities and other options refer to creatures, objects, or spaces that are adjacent to a specified creature. Something is adjacent to a creature if it is within 1 square of that creature.

LINE OF EFFECT

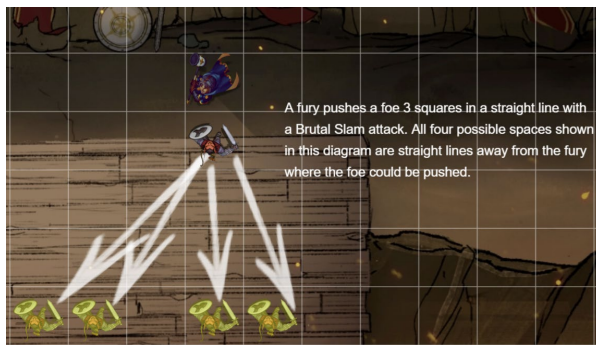
To target a creature or object with an ability, including striking the creature or object, you must have line of effect to that creature or object. If a solid object, such as a wall or pillar, completely blocks the creature from you, then you don't have line of effect to them. If you're not sure if you have line of effect to a creature, imagine drawing a straight line from any corner of the space you occupy on the map to any corner of a space the creature occupies. If you can do this with at least one corner connecting to another with no obstruction in between, you have line of effect to the creature.

At the Director's discretion, flimsy or fragile obstructions such as a glass window or linen curtains don't block line of effect, and might be automatically broken or torn by strikes or other abilities used through them.

If you want to create an area of effect in a specific area, you must have line of effect to at least one of the squares in that area. See [Area Abilities](#).

STRAIGHT LINE

Whenever your character moves or when you or another creature are force moved, that movement is typically in a straight line. Abilities that allow you to move or to forcibly move another creature often talk about moving straight toward or away from another creature or an object. Although a line of travel must be straight, it doesn't have to travel a straight line of squares on the grid.



GROUND

Some abilities affect or refer to a hero or their targets being "on the ground." In this case, the ground means any surface that a person could normally stand, sit, or lay upon. The ground can be a castle floor, the earthen road, a metal platform, or the deck of a ship.

CONDITIONS

Some abilities and other effects apply specific negative effects called conditions to a creature. The following conditions show up regularly in the game and can be tracked on your character sheet.

BLEEDING

While bleeding, whenever you make a test using Might or Agility, make a strike, or use an action, maneuver, or a triggered action, you lose 1d6 Stamina after the test, action, maneuver, or triggered action is resolved. This Stamina loss can't be prevented in any way.

DAZED

While you are dazed, you can do only one thing on your turn: use a maneuver, use an action, or take a move action. You also can't use triggered actions, free triggered actions, or free maneuvers.

FRIGHTENED

If you are frightened, ability power rolls you make against the source of your fear take a bane. If that source is a creature, their ability power rolls against you gain an edge. You can't willingly move closer to the source of your fear if you know the location of that source. If you gain the frightened condition from one source while already

frightened by a different source, the new condition replaces the old one.

GRABBED

While you are grabbed, your speed is 0, you can't be force moved, you can't use the Knockback maneuver, and you take a bane on abilities that don't target the creature grabbing you. If the creature grabbing you moves, they bring you with them. If the creature's size is equal to or less than yours, their speed is halved while they have you grabbed.

The creature grabbing you can use a maneuver to move you into an unoccupied space adjacent to them.

The creature grabbing you can end the grab at any time (no action required). You can also attempt to escape being grabbed using the Escape Grab maneuver (see [Maneuvers in Combat](#)). If you teleport or if the creature grabbing you is force moved to a space that isn't adjacent to you, you are no longer grabbed.

PRONE

While you are prone, you are flat on the ground, strikes you make take a bane, and melee abilities made against you gain an edge. You must crawl to move along the ground, which costs you 1 additional square of movement for every square you crawl. You can't climb, jump, swim, or fly while prone. If you are climbing, flying, or jumping while you are knocked prone, you fall.

While prone, you can stand up as a maneuver (see [Maneuvers in Combat](#)), unless the ability or effect that imposed the condition says otherwise. You can use a maneuver to make an adjacent prone creature stand up.

RESTRAINED

While you are restrained, your speed is 0, you can't use the Stand Up maneuver, and you can't be force moved. Your ability power rolls take a bane, abilities against you gain an edge, and you have a bane on Might and Agility tests.

If you teleport while restrained, the condition ends.

SLOWED

While you are slowed, your speed is 2 unless it is already lower, and you can't shift.

TAUNTED

If you are taunted, you have a double bane on ability power rolls that don't target the creature who taunted you while you have line of effect to that creature. If you gain the taunted condition from one creature while already taunted by a different creature, the new condition replaces the old one.

WEAKENED

While you are weakened, all your power rolls take a bane.

CENSOR

Demons and devils fear you. Criminals run from the sight of your shadow in the alley. Agents of chaos, blasphemers, and heretics tremble at the sound of your voice. You carry the power of the gods, armed with Wraths and sent out into the world first to seek, then censor those whose actions—or even existence—are anathema to your church.

You're at your best against the strongest foes. Your judgments terrify heretics, stop enemies in their tracks, even hurl them across the battlefield.

BASICS

Starting Characteristics: You start with a Might of 2 and a Presence of 2, and can choose one of the following arrays for your other characteristics scores:

- 2, -1, -1
- 1, 1, -1
- 1, 0, 0

Weak Potency: Presence - 2

Average Potency: Presence - 1

Strong Potency: Presence

Starting Stamina at 1st Level: 21

Stamina Gained at 2nd and Higher Levels: 12

Recoveries: 12

Skills: Choose any two skills from the interpersonal or lore skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Intimidate, Religion)

CENSOR ADVANCEMENT

Level	Features	Abilities	Order Abilities
1st	Censor Order, Deity and Domains, Wrath, Relentless Wrath, Judgment, Kit, My Life for Yours, Domain Feature, Censor Abilities	Signature, 3, 5	—
2nd	Perk, Order Features, Order Ability	Signature, 3, 5	5
3rd	Look on My Work and Despair, 7-Wrath Ability	Signature, 3, 5, 7	5

1ST-LEVEL FEATURES

As a censor, you gain the following features.

CENSOR ORDER

Censors are the will of their god made physically manifest, and you act as your god's agent in the world. As you shoulder that responsibility, you choose a censor order from the following options, each of which grants you a skill (*Quick Build:* Paragon):

Exorcist: An open mind is an unguarded fortress. You specialize in hunting the hidden enemies of your order. You gain the Read Person skill.

Oracle: Corruption has deep tendrils that can be missed. You specialize in uncovering long-timescale threats to your order. You gain the Magic skill.

Paragon: Without a strong example and a firm hand, the weak will be corrupted. You specialize in setting a visible example for your order. You gain the Lead skill.

Your choice of censor order determines many of the features you'll gain from this class.

DEITY AND DOMAINS

Choose a god or saint who you revere from the [Gods and Religion](#) chapter, or ask your Director about the deities in your campaign world. With the Director's permission, you can also create your own deity, and can choose four domains to be part of their portfolio.

After choosing your deity, pick one domain from their portfolio. Your choice of domain determines many of the features you'll gain from this class.

(*Quick Build:* Cavall as deity and War as domain)

WRATH

The power you serve grants you a Heroic Resource called wrath, fueling your abilities as you censor those your church deems to be heretics.

WRATH IN COMBAT

At the start of a combat encounter or some other stressful situation tracked in combat rounds (as determined by the Director), you gain wrath equal to your Victories. At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 2 wrath.

Additionally, the first time each round that a creature judged by you (see [Judgment](#)) deals damage to you, you gain 1 wrath. You also gain 1 wrath the first time each round that you deal damage to a creature judged by you.

You lose any remaining wrath at the end of the encounter.

WRATH OUTSIDE OF COMBAT

Though you can't gain wrath outside of combat, you can use your heroic abilities and effects that cost wrath without spending it. Whenever you use an ability or effect outside of combat that costs wrath, you can't use that same ability or effect outside of combat again until you gain at least 1 Victory or finish a Respite.

If you use an ability outside of combat that lets you spend unlimited wrath on its effect, you can use it as if you had spent an amount of wrath on it equal to your Victories. (Such abilities aren't part of the core rules for the censor but might appear in future products.)

JUDGMENT

You pick out the enemies most worthy of your wrath and place a divine judgment upon them, censoring them with the power of your god. You have the following ability.

JUDGMENT

You utter a pray that outlines your foe in holy energy.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One enemy

Effect: The target is judged by you until the end of the encounter, you die, you use this ability again, or you willingly end this effect (no action required). If another censor judges the target, then your judgment on the target ends.

If a judged creature uses an action and you have line of effect to them, you can use a free triggered action to deal holy damage equal to twice your Presence score to them.

When the judged creature is reduced to 0 Stamina, you can use a free triggered action to use this ability against a new target within distance.

In addition, you can spend 1 judgment to take one of the following free triggered actions. You can't use more than one instance of a benefit per trigger:

- When an adjacent judged target shifts, you can make a melee free strike against them. The target doesn't shift and their speed becomes 0 until the end of this turn.
- When a judged target makes a power roll, you can add a bane to the roll.
- When a judged target within distance uses an ability with a potency against another creature, you reduce the potency of the ability by 1 for that creature (to a minimum of 0).

JUDGMENT ORDER BENEFIT

When you use your Judgment ability to judge another creature, you gain the following benefit based on your order.

- **Exorcist:** You can teleport up to a number of squares equal to twice your Presence score. This movement must take you closer to the judged creature. You do not need line of effect to your destination.
- **Oracle:** You deal holy damage equal to twice your Presence score to the target.
- **Paragon:** You vertically pull the target up to a number of squares equal to twice your Presence score.

KIT

You can use and gain the benefits of a kit. See the [Kits](#) chapter for more information. (*Quick Build:* Warrior Priest)

MY LIFE FOR YOURS

You channel your will to mend your wounds or the wounds of your allies. You gain the following ability.

MY LIFE FOR YOURS

The first principle of the oath: defend the righteous.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged **Type:** Triggered
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Self or one ally
Trigger: The target starts their turn or takes damage.

Effect: You spend a Recovery and the target regains Stamina equal to your Recovery value.

Spend 1 Wrath: You can end one effect on the target that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of their turn, or a prone target can stand up.

1ST-LEVEL DOMAIN FEATURE

You gain a domain feature from one of your domains as shown on the 1st-Level Censor Domain Features table. Additionally, you gain a skill from the chosen domain, selected from the skill group indicated on the table.

1ST-LEVEL CENSOR DOMAIN FEATURES

Domain	Feature	Skill
Creation	Hands of the Maker	Crafting
Death	Grave Speech	Lore
Fate	Oracular Visions	Lore
Knowledge	Blessing of Comprehension	Lore
Life	Revitalizing Ritual	Exploration
Love	Blessing of Compassion	Interpersonal
Nature	Faithful Friend	Exploration
Protection	Protective Circle	Exploration
Storm	Blessing of Fortunate Weather	Exploration
Sun	Inner Light	Lore
Trickery	Inspired Deception	Intrigue
War	Sanctified Weapon	Exploration

BLESSING OF COMPASSION

You exude a magic aura that can soothe those willing to socially engage with you. You gain an edge on any test made to assist another creature with a test.

Additionally, when you are present at the start of a negotiation, one NPC of your choice has their patience increased by 1 (to a maximum of 5), and the first test made to influence them gains an edge.

BLESSING OF COMPREHENSION

You can interpret diagrams and charts even if you don't understand the language associated with them. For the purpose of making project rolls for research and crafting items (see [Downtime Projects](#)), you are considered fluent in all languages.

BLESSING OF FORTUNATE WEATHER

When you finish a respite, you can decide the weather conditions within 100 squares of you. If you are in the same area as a creature using this or a similar feature, both features cancel each other where their areas overlap. Until you finish another respite, the weather conditions you establish follow you through any mundane outdoor locations.

Choose one of the following types of weather, each of which grants a benefit to you and your allies:

Clear: You and each ally gain an edge on tests that use the Search or Navigate skills.

Foggy: You and each ally gain an edge on tests that use the Hide skill.

Overcast: You and each ally gain an edge on tests that use the Endurance skill.

Precipitation: When the ground is muddy or snowy, you and each ally gain an edge on tests that use the Track skill.

FAITHFUL FRIEND

You gain the following ability.

FAITHFUL FRIEND

An animal spirit is drawn to you, sharing their senses and serving you faithfully.

Keywords: Magic

Type: Action

Distance: Self

Target: Self

Effect: You conjure a spirit that takes the form of any animal you have seen. The incorporeal animal can't physically interact with the world, but they have a speed of 5 and can fly. While you are within 10 squares of the spirit, you can sense everything an animal of their type would sense, in addition to sensing your own surroundings. You can dismiss the spirit at any time (no action required). If the spirit takes any damage, it is dismissed and you take 1d10 psychic damage, which can't be reduced in any way.

GRAVE SPEECH

You gain the following ability.

GRAVE SPEECH

You commune with the lingering soul of the recently dead.

Keywords: Magic

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Melee 1

Target: One dead creature

Effect: You can speak to the target corpse (including just the head) of a creature who has died within the last 24 hours and who can speak a language you know. The target regards you as they would have in life, and you might need to make tests to influence them and convince them to speak with you. The trauma of dying can make a creature's memory of that event hazy, but the target otherwise knows all they knew in life. After 1 minute, the effect ends. You can't use this ability on the same creature twice.

HANDS OF THE MAKER

You gain the following ability.

HANDS OF THE MAKER

You can craft objects with the power of your mind!

Keywords: Magic

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Self

Target: Self

Effect: You create a mundane object no larger than size 1S. You can maintain a number of objects created this way equal to your Presence score. You can destroy an object created this way with a thought, no matter how far you are from it (no action required).

INNER LIGHT

Each time you finish a respite, you can choose yourself or an ally who is also ending a respite to gain the benefit of a divine ritual. As you perform the ritual, you place a ray of morning light into the chosen character's soul, granting them a +1 bonus on saving throws. This benefit lasts until you finish another respite.

INSPIRED DECEPTION

The gods favor your thievery with magic. Whenever you make a test that uses a skill you have from the intrigue skill group, you can use Presence on the test instead of another characteristic.

ORACULAR VISIONS

Your deity rewards you with hazy visions of things to come. Each time you earn 1 or more Victories, you earn an equal number of fate points. When you or a creature within 10 squares of you makes a test, you can spend 1 fate point to tap into a vision of the outcome, granting that creature an edge on the test. You lose any remaining fate points when you finish a respite.

PROTECTIVE CIRCLE

You can spend 10 minutes working while uninterrupted to create a protective circle on THE GROUND LARGE ENOUGH TO HOLD A SIZE 1 CREATURE. The circle lasts for 24 hours or until you dismiss it (no action required). ONLY creatures you designate at the time of drawing the circle can enter and exit the area. While in the protective area, a creature can't be targeted by strikes.

REVITALIZING RITUAL

Each time you finish a respite, you can choose yourself or an ally who is also ending a respite to gain the benefit of a divine ritual. When you perform the ritual, the chosen character gains a bonus to their recovery value equal to your level, which lasts until you finish another respite.

SANCTIFIED WEAPON

As a respite activity, you can bless a weapon. Any creature who wields the weapon gains a +1 rolled damage bonus with abilities that use the weapon. This benefit lasts until you finish another respite.

CENSOR ABILITIES

You use a blend of martial techniques and divine magic to attack your foes and defend your allies.

SIGNATURE ABILITY

Choose one signature ability from the following options. Signature abilities can be used at will. (*Quick Build:* Your Allies Cannot Save You)

BACK, BLASPHEMER!

You channel power through your weapon to repel foes.

Keywords: Area, Magic, Weapon **Type:** Action

Distance: 2 cube within 1

Target: Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Presence:

- 11 or lower: **2 + M holy damage; push 1**
- 12–16: **4 + M holy damage; push 2**
- 17+: **6 + M holy damage; push 3**

EVERY STEP ... DEATH!

You show your foe a glimpse of their fate after death.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Action

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Power Roll + Presence:

- 11 or lower: **5 + P psychic damage**
- 12–16: **7 + P psychic damage**
- 17+: **10 + P psychic damage**

Effect: Each time the target willingly moves before the end of your next turn, they take 1 psychic damage for each square they move.

HALT, MISCREANT!

"Your race is run!"

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action

Distance: Melee 1

Target: One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **2 + M holy damage; P < weak, slowed (save ends)**
- 12–16: **5 + M holy damage; P < average, slowed (save ends)**
- 17+: **7 + M holy damage; P < strong, slowed (save ends)**

YOUR ALLIES CANNOT SAVE YOU!

"See how they abandon you!"

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action

Distance: Melee 1

Target: One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **3 + M holy damage**
- 12–16: **5 + M holy damage**
- 17+: **8 + M holy damage**

Effect: Each enemy adjacent to the target is pushed away from the target up to a number of squares equal to your Presence score.

HEROIC ABILITIES

You call upon a number of heroic abilities, all of them bound to your wrath. (*Quick Build:* The Gods Punish and Defend)

3-WRATH ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 3 wrath to use.

BEHOLD, A SHIELD OF FAITH! (3 WRATH)

"Allow me to intercede."

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon

Type: Action

Distance: Melee 1

Target: One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **3 + M holy damage**
- 12–16: **6 + M holy damage**
- 17+: **9 + M holy damage**

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, enemies have a bane on ability power rolls made against you and each ally adjacent to you.

DRIVING ASSAULT (3 WRATH)

As you force your enemy back with your weapon, you use your faith to stay close.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon

Type: Action

Distance: Melee 1

Target: One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **3 + M damage; push 1**
- 12–16: **6 + M damage; push 3**
- 17+: **9 + M damage; push 5**

Effect: You can shift up to your speed and must end that shift within distance of the target.

THE GODS PUNISH AND DEFEND (3 WRATH)

You channel holy energy to smite a foe and heal an ally.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon

Type: Action

Distance: Melee 1

Target: One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **5 + M holy damage**
- 12–16: **8 + M holy damage**
- 17+: **11 + M holy damage**

Effect: You can spend a Recovery to allow yourself or one ally within 10 squares of you to regain Stamina equal to your Recovery value.

REPENT! (3 WRATH)

You conjure memories of their sins.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Strike

Type: Action

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Power Roll + Presence:

- 11 or lower: **5 + P holy damage; I < weak, dazed (save ends)**
- 12–16: **8 + P holy damage; I < average, dazed (save ends)**
- 17+: **11 + P holy damage; I < strong, dazed (save ends)**

5-WRATH ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 5 wrath to use. (*Quick Build:* Purifying Fire)

ARREST (5 WRATH)

"I got you, you son of a bitch."

Keywords: Magic, Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **6 + M holy damage; grabbed**
- 12–16: **9 + M holy damage; grabbed**
- 17+: **13 + M holy damage; grabbed**

Effect: If the target makes a strike against a creature while grabbed by you, you can then spend 3 wrath to deal holy damage to them equal to your Presence score and change the target of the strike to another target within the strike's distance.

BEHOLD THE FACE OF EVIL! (5 WRATH)

You show your enemies a vision of the true nature of one of their companions.

Keywords: Magic, Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 or ranged 5 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **3 + M holy damage; if the target has P < weak, each enemy within 2 squares of them is frightened of you (save ends)**
- 12–16: **5 + M holy damage; if the target has P < average, each enemy within 2 squares of them is frightened of you (save ends)**
- 17+: **8 + M holy damage; if the target has P < strong, each enemy within 2 squares of them is frightened of you (save ends)**

Effect: Each enemy frightened by this ability is pushed 2 squares away from the target and takes psychic damage equal to your Presence score.

CENSORED (5 WRATH)

Judged and sentenced.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **2 + M holy damage**
- 12–16: **3 + M holy damage**
- 17+: **5 + M holy damage**

Effect: If a target who is not a leader or a solo creature is winded after the damage is resolved, they die.

PURIFYING FIRE (5 WRATH)

The gods judge, fire cleanses.

Keywords: Magic, Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 or ranged 5 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **5 + M holy damage; M < weak, the target has fire weakness 3 (save ends)**
- 12–16: **9 + M holy damage; M < average, the target has fire weakness 5 (save ends)**
- 17+: **12 + M holy damage; M < strong, the target has fire weakness 7 (save ends)**

Effect: While the target has fire weakness from this ability, you can choose to have your abilities deal fire damage to the target instead of holy damage.

2ND-LEVEL FEATURES

As a 2nd-level censor, you gain the following features.

PERK

You gain an interpersonal, lore, or supernatural perk of your choice. See [Perks](#) for more information.

2ND-LEVEL ORDER FEATURES

Your censor order grants you a feature as shown on the 2nd-Level Order Features table.

2ND-LEVEL ORDER FEATURES

Order	Features
Exorcist	Saint's Vigilance, A Sense For Truth
Oracle	It Was Foretold, Judge of Character
Paragon	Lead by Example, Stalwart Example

IT WAS FORETOLD

Your order has trained you to understand fragments of the constant visions given to you by your deity, giving you a momentary advantage in challenging situations. At the start of an encounter, you can take one action before any other creature and before your first turn. Additionally, whenever a montage test is called for, you can make one test before the montage begins.

JUDGE OF CHARACTER

Your focus on your fragmentary visions to gain divine insight on creatures and the world beyond your normal senses. Whenever you would make an Intuition test, you can make a Presence test instead.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Your devotion to your deity allows you to take command of the battlefield, letting your allies benefit from your wisdom. When you are adjacent to a target, any ally gains the benefits of flanking against that target. Additionally, each of your allies gains an edge on tests made to aid other creatures with their tests.

SAINT'S VIGILANCE

You have honed your ability to detect sin and can use it to find those who hide from justice. Any creature judged by you cannot take the Hide maneuver. You have an edge when searching for hidden creatures and, if you find a hidden creature, you can use Judgment on them as a free triggered action.

A SENSE FOR TRUTH

You are trained in secret techniques from your order that allow you to discern the truth at a supernatural level. This puts you in high demand for your church and any governments it is allied with. If a creature is of a lower level than you, you automatically know when they are lying, though you don't necessarily know the actual truth behind their lie. Additionally, you have an edge on tests to detect lies or hidden motives, such as when using the Read Person skill.

STALWART EXAMPLE

You begin to exhibit a small spark of your deity's power, causing creatures to trust or fear you, depending on what you need. You gain an edge on tests that use skills from the interpersonal skill group.

2ND-LEVEL ORDER ABILITY

Your censor order grants your choice of one of two abilities.

2ND-LEVEL EXORCIST ABILITY

Choose one of the following abilities.

IT IS JUSTICE YOU FEAR (5 WRATH)

I am but a vessel. Your own deeds weigh upon you.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **8 + M holy damage; P < weak, frightened (save ends)**
- 12–16: **12 + M holy damage; P < average, frightened (save ends)**
- 17+: **15 + M holy damage; P < strong, frightened (save ends)**

Effect: If the target is already frightened of you or another creature when you use this ability and it would frighten them again, they take psychic damage equal to twice your Presence score instead.

REVELATOR (5 WRATH)

You channel holy energy to harm unbelievers and reveal those hidden from your judgment.

Keywords: Area, Magic **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: 3 burst **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Effect: Each target takes twice your Presence in holy damage. Any hidden enemies are automatically revealed and can't become hidden again until the start of your next turn. You can use Judgment on one of the targets as a free triggered action.

2ND-LEVEL ORACLE ABILITY

Choose one of the following abilities.

PRESCIENT GRACE (5 WRATH)

"Hah! I see your plan. It will not work!"

Keywords: Magic, Ranged **Type:** Triggered
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Self or one ally
Trigger: An enemy within 10 squares starts their turn.

Effect: You can spend a Recovery to allow the target to regain Stamina equal to your Recovery value. The target can then take their turn immediately before the triggering enemy.

WITH MY BLESSING (5 WRATH)

A word in prayer, and the gods show the way.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Self or one ally

Effect: When you use this ability, the target can use a free triggered action to make a signature strike or a heroic ability that is a strike, and has a double edge on the power roll.

2ND-LEVEL PARAGON ABILITY

Choose one of the following abilities.

BLESSING OF THE FAITHFUL (5 WRATH)

The gods reward your faith.

Keywords: Area, Magic **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: 3 aura **Target:** Self and each ally in the area

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or you are dying, each target in the aura gains a surge at the end of each of your turns.

SENTENCED (5 WRATH)

I am the law!

Keywords: Magic, Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Presence:

- 11 or lower: **5 + P damage; P < weak, restrained (save ends)**
- 12–16: **9 + P damage; P < average, restrained (save ends)**
- 17+: **12 + P damage; P < strong, restrained (save ends)**

Effect: Any of your abilities that impose forced movement can move the target while they are restrained this way.

3RD-LEVEL FEATURES

As a 3rd-level censor, you gain the following features.

LOOK ON MY WORK AND DESPAIR

Your judgment has grown in divine power, manifesting your deity's ire against blasphemers, causing them to fear your actions, especially when their allies are smited. Whenever you judge a creature you can spend 1 wrath to channel your divine power to make them afraid. If the target has **P < average**, they are frightened of you (save ends). Whenever a creature judged by you to is reduced to 0 Stamina and you judge a new target as a free triggered action, if that new target has **P < strong**, they are frightened of you (save ends). If the target is already frightened of you, they take damage equal to twice your Presence score instead.

7-WRATH ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 7 wrath to use.

EDICT OF DISRUPTIVE ISOLATION (7 WRATH)

Gather not together in secret to conspire.

Keywords: Area, Magic **Type:** Maneuver

Distance: 2 aura **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or you are dying, at the end of each of your turns, each target takes holy damage equal to your Presence score. Any target adjacent to one or more enemies takes an extra 2d6 holy damage if they are judged by you or adjacent to one of your enemies.

EDICT OF PERFECT ORDER (7 WRATH)

Use not the fell arts!

Keywords: Area, Magic **Type:** Maneuver

Distance: 2 aura **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or you are dying, whenever a target uses an ability that requires Malice, they take holy damage equal to three times your Presence score. A target judged by you takes an additional 2d6 holy damage.

EDICT OF PURIFYING PACIFISM (7 WRATH)

Shed not the blood of innocents!

Keywords: Area, Magic **Type:** Maneuver

Distance: 2 aura **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or you are dying, whenever a target makes a strike, they take holy damage equal to twice your Presence score. A target judged by you takes an extra 2d6 holy damage.

EDICT OF STILLNESS (7 WRATH)

Flee not from just punishment.

Keywords: Area, Magic **Type:** Maneuver

Distance: 2 aura **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or you are dying, whenever a target is force moved or moves willingly out of the aura, they take holy damage equal to twice your Presence score. A target judged by you who moves willingly takes an extra 2d6 holy damage.

CONDUIT

The power of the gods flows through you! As a vessel for divine magic, you don't just keep your allies in the fight. You make those allies more effective, even as you rain divine energy down upon your foes. While the deity or saint you serve might have other faithful and clergy, you are special among worshippers, receiving your abilities from the highest source.

As a conduit, you heal and buff your allies, and debuff your foes while smiting them with divine magic. The spark of divinity within you shines, aweing your enemies and granting you increased empathy.

BASICS

Starting Characteristics: You start with an Intuition of 2, and can choose one of the following arrays for your other characteristics scores:

- 2, 2, -1, -1
- 2, 1, 1, -1
- 2, 1, 0, 0
- 1, 1, 1, 0

Weak Potency: Intuition - 2

Average Potency: Intuition - 1

Strong Potency: Intuition

Starting Stamina at 1st Level: 18

Stamina Gained at 2nd and Higher Levels: 9

Recoveries: 8

Skills: Choose any two skills from the interpersonal or lore skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Read Person, Religion)

CONDUIT ADVANCEMENT

Level	Features	Abilities	Domain Abilities
1st	Deity and Domains, Piety, Domain Feature, Healing Grace, Ray of Wrath, Triggered Action, Prayer, Conduit Ward, Conduit Abilities	Two signature, 3, 5	—
2nd	The Lists of Heaven, Perk, Domain Feature, Domain Ability	Two signature, 3, 5	5
3rd	Minor Miracle, 7-Piety Ability	Two signature, 3, 5, 7	5

1ST-LEVEL FEATURES

As a conduit, you gain the following features.

DEITY AND DOMAINS

Choose a god or saint who you revere from the [Gods and Religion](#) chapter, or ask your Director about the deities in your campaign world. With the Director's permission, you can also create your own deity, and can choose four domains to be part of their portfolio.

After choosing your deity, pick two domains from their portfolio. Your choice of domains determines many of the features you'll gain from this class.

(*Quick Build:* Adûn for deity, Life and Protection for domains)

PIETY

Your deity grants you a Heroic Resource called piety, letting you heal and empower your allies, and unleash holy power upon your foes.

PIETY IN COMBAT

At the start of a combat encounter or some other stressful situation tracked in combat rounds (as determined by the Director), you gain piety equal to your Victories. At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 1d3 piety.

Additionally, you can gain more piety by praying to the gods—but beware! Doing so can easily draw their ire, as the gods hate to be annoyed. When you roll to gain 1d3 piety at the start of your turn, you can pray to gain the following additional effects (no action required):

- If the roll is a 1, you gain 1 additional piety but anger the gods! You take psychic damage equal to 1d6 + your level, which can't be reduced in any way.
- If the roll is a 2, you gain 1 additional piety.
- If the roll is a 3, you gain 2 additional piety and can activate a domain effect of your choice (see below).

You lose any remaining piety at the end of the encounter.

PIETY OUTSIDE OF COMBAT

Though you can't gain piety outside of combat, you can use your heroic abilities and effects that cost piety without spending it. Whenever you use an ability or effect outside of combat that costs piety, you can't use that same ability or effect outside of combat again until you gain at least 1 Victory or finish a respite.

If you use an ability outside of combat that lets you spend unlimited piety on its effect, such as Healing Grace, you can use it as if you had spent an amount of piety on it equal to your Victories.

DOMAIN PIETY AND EFFECTS

Your choice of domains provides you with extra ways that you can earn piety during combat. These ways of gaining piety are triggered by events that happen during combat. There is a chance that you could have a single event trigger both of your piety effects. For example, if you are a 1st-level

conduit and have the Sun domain, which grants piety whenever a nearby creature takes fire damage, and the War domain, which grants piety whenever a nearby creature takes 11 or more damage, and a nearby creature takes 12 fire damage, you would gain piety from both domains for that one effect.

Additionally, whenever you activate a domain effect by praying for piety, choose one of your domains. That domain's effect takes effect immediately.

CREATION DOMAIN PIETY AND EFFECT

Piety: You gain 2 piety the first time in an encounter that a creature within 10 squares of you uses an ability with the Area keyword.

Prayer Effect: You summon the forces of creation and create a wall of stone whose size is 5 + your Intuition score within 10 squares of you. The wall lasts until the end of the encounter.

DEATH DOMAIN PIETY AND EFFECT

Piety: You gain 2 piety the first time in an encounter that a creature within 10 squares of you who isn't a minion dies or a solo creature becomes winded.

Prayer Effect: You inflict a deadly curse upon two enemies of your choice within 10 squares of you. Each target takes corruption damage equal to twice your Intuition score.

FATE DOMAIN PIETY AND EFFECT

Piety: You gain 2 piety the first time in an encounter that an ally within 10 squares of you gets a tier 3 result or an enemy within 10 squares of you gets a tier 1 result.

Prayer Effect: You call on the forces of fate to create a reliable future. Choose a creature within your line of effect. That creature automatically gets a tier 1 or tier 3 result (your choice) on their next power roll made before the end of the encounter.

KNOWLEDGE DOMAIN PIETY AND EFFECT

Piety: You gain 2 piety the first time in an encounter that the Director uses an ability or feature that costs Malice.

Prayer Effect: Choose up to three allies, including yourself, within 10 squares of you. Each target gains a surge.

LIFE DOMAIN PIETY AND EFFECT

Piety: You gain 2 piety the first time in an encounter that a creature within 10 squares of you regains Stamina.

Prayer Effect: Choose yourself or one ally within 10 squares of you. The targets can spend a Recovery, can end any effects on them that are ended by a saving throw or that end at the end of their turn, or can stand up if they are prone. Alternatively, you and one ally within 10 squares of you gain temporary Stamina equal to 5 × your Intuition score.

LOVE DOMAIN PIETY AND EFFECT

Piety: You gain 2 piety the first time in an encounter that you or an ally within 10 squares of you uses the Aid Another maneuver or an ability that targets an ally.

Prayer Effect: Each ally within 10 squares of you gains temporary Stamina equal to 2 × your Intuition score.

NATURE DOMAIN PIETY AND EFFECT

Piety: You gain 2 piety the first time in an encounter that you or a creature within 10 squares of you takes acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison, or sonic damage.

Prayer Effect: Vines whip up from the floor or ground within 10 squares of you, wrapping around a number of creatures of your choice equal to your Intuition score. You can slide each creature up to a number of squares equal to your Intuition score. The vines then fade away.

PROTECTION DOMAIN PIETY AND EFFECT

Piety: You gain 2 piety the first time in an encounter that you or an ally within 10 squares of you gains temporary Stamina or uses a triggered action to reduce incoming damage or give an enemy a bane on a power roll.

Prayer Effect: One ally within 10 squares of you gains temporary Stamina equal to three times your Intuition score.

STORM DOMAIN PIETY AND EFFECT

Piety: You gain 2 piety the first time in an encounter that an enemy within 10 squares of you is force moved.

Prayer Effect: Each enemy in a 3-cube area within 10 squares of you takes lightning damage equal to twice your Intuition score.

SUN DOMAIN PIETY AND EFFECT

Piety: You gain 2 piety the first time in an encounter that an enemy within 10 squares of you takes fire or holy damage.

Prayer Effect: One enemy of your choice within 10 squares of you takes fire damage equal to three times your Intuition score.

TRICKERY DOMAIN PIETY AND EFFECT

Piety: You gain 2 piety the first time in an encounter that you or a creature within 10 squares of you takes the Aid Another or Hide maneuver.

Prayer Effect: Choose a creature within 10 squares of you. You can slide that creature up to a number of squares equal to 5 + your conduit level.

WAR DOMAIN PIETY AND EFFECT

Piety: You gain 2 piety the first time in an encounter that you or a creature within 10 squares of you deals damage in an amount equal to or greater than 10 + your level.

Prayer Effect: Three allies of your choice within 10 squares of you, including yourself, gain two surges.

1ST-LEVEL DOMAIN FEATURE

Choose one of your domains. You gain a domain feature from that domain as shown on the 1st-Level Conduit Domain Features table. Additionally, you gain a skill from the chosen domain, selected from the skill group indicated on the table. (*Quick Build:* Revitalizing Ritual)

1ST-LEVEL CONDUIT DOMAIN FEATURES

Domain	Feature	Skill Group
Creation	Hands of the Maker	Crafting
Death	Grave Speech	Lore
Fate	Oracular Visions	Lore
Knowledge	Blessing of Comprehension	Lore

Life	Revitalizing Ritual	Exploration
Love	Blessing of Compassion	Interpersonal
Nature	Faithful Friend	Exploration
Protection	Protective Circle	Exploration
Storm	Blessing of Fortunate Weather	Exploration
Sun	Inner Light	Lore
Trickery	Inspired Deception	Intrigue
War	Sanctified Weapon	Exploration

BLESSING OF COMPASSION

You exude a magic aura that can soothe those willing to socially engage with you. You gain an edge on any test made to assist another creature with a test.

Additionally, when you are present at the start of a negotiation, one NPC of your choice has their patience increased by 1 (to a maximum of 5), and the first test made to influence them gains an edge.

BLESSING OF COMPREHENSION

You can interpret diagrams and charts even if you don't understand the language associated with them. For the purpose of making project rolls for research and crafting items (see [Downtime Projects](#)), you are considered fluent in all languages.

BLESSING OF FORTUNATE WEATHER

When you finish a respite, you can decide the weather conditions within 100 squares of you. If you are in the same area as a creature using this or a similar feature, both features cancel each other where their areas overlap. Until you finish another respite, the weather conditions you establish follow you through any mundane outdoor locations.

Choose one of the following types of weather, each of which grants a benefit to you and your allies:

Clear: You and each ally gain an edge on tests that use the Search or Navigate skills.

Foggy: You and each ally gain an edge on tests that use the Hide skill.

Overcast: You and each ally gain an edge on tests that use the Endurance skill.

Precipitation: When the ground is muddy or snowy, you and each ally gain an edge on tests that use the Track skill.

FAITHFUL FRIEND

You gain the following ability.

FAITHFUL FRIEND

An animal spirit is drawn to you, sharing their senses and serving you faithfully.

Keywords: Magic

Type: Action

Distance: Self

Target: Self

Effect: You conjure a spirit that takes the form of any animal you have seen. The incorporeal animal can't physically interact with the world, but they have a speed of 5 and can fly. While you are within 10 squares of the spirit, you can sense everything an animal of their type would sense, in addition to sensing your own surroundings. You can dismiss the spirit at any time (no action required). If the spirit takes any damage, it is dismissed and you take 1d10 psychic damage, which can't be reduced in any way.

GRAVE SPEECH

You gain the following ability.

GRAVE SPEECH

You commune with the lingering soul of the recently dead.

Keywords: Magic

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Melee 1

Target: One dead creature

Effect: You can speak to the target corpse (including just the head) of a creature who has died within the last 24 hours and who can speak a language you know. The target regards you as they would have in life, and you might need to make tests to influence them and convince them to speak with you. The trauma of dying can make a creature's memory of that event hazy, but the target otherwise knows all they knew in life. After 1 minute, the effect ends. You can't use this ability on the same creature twice.

HANDS OF THE MAKER

You gain the following ability.

HANDS OF THE MAKER

You can craft objects with the power of your mind!

Keywords: Magic

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Self

Target: Self

Effect: You create a mundane object no larger than size 1S. You can maintain a number of objects created this way equal to your Intuition score. You can destroy an object created this way with a thought, no matter how far you are from it (no action required).

INNER LIGHT

Each time you finish a respite, you can choose yourself or an ally who is also ending a respite to gain the benefit of a divine ritual. As you perform the ritual, you place a ray of morning light into the chosen character's soul, granting them a +1 bonus on saving throws. This benefit lasts until you finish another respite.

INSPIRED DECEPTION

The gods favor your thievery with magic. Whenever you make a test that uses a skill you have from the intrigue skill group, you can use Intuition on the test instead of another characteristic.

ORACULAR VISIONS

Your deity rewards you with hazy visions of things to come. Each time you earn 1 or more Victories, you earn an equal number of fate points. When you or a creature within 10 squares of you makes a test, you can spend 1 fate point to tap into a vision of the outcome, granting that creature an edge on the test. You lose any remaining fate points when you finish a respite.

PROTECTIVE CIRCLE

You can spend 10 minutes working while uninterrupted to create a protective circle on the ground large enough to hold a size 1 creature. The circle lasts for 24 hours or until you dismiss it (no action required). Only creatures you designate at the time of drawing the circle can enter and exit the area. While in the protective area, a creature can't be targeted by strikes.

REVITALIZING RITUAL

Each time you finish a respite, you can choose yourself or an ally who is also ending a respite to gain the benefit of a divine ritual. When you perform the ritual, the chosen character gains a bonus to their recovery value equal to your level, which lasts until you finish another respite.

SANCTIFIED WEAPON

As a respite activity, you can bless a weapon. Any creature who wields the weapon gains a +1 rolled damage bonus with abilities that use the weapon. This benefit lasts until you finish another respite.

HEALING GRACE

You gain the following ability, which you can use once on your turn.

HEALING GRACE

Your divine energy restores the righteous.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Self or one ally

Effect: The target can spend a Recovery.

Spend 1+ Piety: For each piety spent, choose one of the following enhancements:

- You can target one additional ally within distance.
- You can end one effect on a target that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of their turn.
- A prone target can stand up.
- A target can spend 1 additional Recovery.

RAY OF WRATH

You gain the following ability, which can be used as a ranged free strike.

RAY OF WRATH

You unleash a blast of holy light upon your foe.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **2 + 1 damage**
- 12–16: **4 + 1 damage**
- 17+: **6 + 1 damage**

Effect: You can have this ability deal holy damage.

TRIGGERED ACTION

Choose one of the following triggered actions. (*Quick Build:* Word of Guidance)

WORD OF GUIDANCE

You invigorate an attacking ally with divine energy.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged **Type:** Triggered
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One ally
Trigger: The target makes an ability power roll for an ability that deals damage.

Effect: The power roll gains an edge.

Spend 1 Piety: The power roll gains a double edge.

WORD OF JUDGMENT

Your holy word saps an attacking enemy's strength.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged **Type:** Triggered
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One ally
Trigger: The target takes damage from an ability that requires a power roll.

Effect: The power roll gains a bane against the target.

Spend 1 Piety: The power roll gains a double bane against the target.

PRAYER

Your god answers a prayer that enhances your statistics. Choose one of the following prayers. You can change your prayer along with your ward (see [Conduit Ward](#)) by praying to your god as a respite activity. (*Quick Build:* Prayer of Distance)

PRAYER OF DESTRUCTION

Your god infuses wrath within your being. You gain a +1 rolled damage bonus with magic abilities.

PRAYER OF DISTANCE

Your god blesses you with the ability to stretch your divine magic further. You gain a +2 bonus to the distance of your ranged magic abilities.

PRAYER OF SPEED

Your god blesses your flesh and infuses it with divine quickness. You gain a +1 bonus to speed and to the distance you shift when you take the Disengage move action.

PRAYER OF SOLDIER'S SKILL

Your god gives your mind the training of a soldier. You can wear light armor and wield light weapons effectively, even though you don't have a kit. While you wear light armor, you gain a +3 bonus to Stamina and that bonus increases by 3 at 4th, 7th, and 10th levels. While you wield a light weapon, you gain a +1 damage bonus with weapon abilities, including free strikes. You can use light armor treasures and light weapon treasures. If you have a kit, you can't take this blessing.

PRAYER OF STEEL

Your god fills your body with the light of creation, making you harder to hurt and move. You gain a +6 bonus to Stamina, and this bonus increases by 6 at 4th, 7th, and 10th levels. Additionally, you gain a +1 bonus to stability.

CONDUIT WARD

Your god gives you a ward that protects you. Choose one of the following wards. You can change your ward along with

your prayer (see [Prayer](#)) by praying to your god as a respite activity. (*Quick Build*: Bastion Ward)

BASTION WARD

You god grants you a holy countenance that protects you at all times. You gain a +1 bonus to saving throws.

QUICKNESS WARD

The gods imbue a divine swiftness within you. Whenever an adjacent creature deals damage to you, you can shift up to a number of squares equal to your Intuition score after the damage is dealt.

SANCTUARY WARD

In response to a foe's aggression, the gods protect you. After another creature damages you, that creature can't target you with a strike until you harm them or one of their allies, or until the end of their next turn.

SPIRIT WARD

Invisible spirits surround you if you are harmed. Whenever an adjacent creature deals damage to you, they take corruption damage equal to your Intuition score.

CONDUIT ABILITIES

Your training and faith let you specialize in magic that buffs your allies, debuffs your foes, and lets you hold your own in combat even while aiding your friends.

SIGNATURE ABILITIES

Select two signature abilities from the following options. Signature abilities can be used at will. (*Quick Build*: Blessed Light, Staggering Curse)

BLESSED LIGHT

Burning radiance falls upon your foe, transferring some of their energy to a nearby ally.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **3 + I holy damage**
- 12–16: **5 + I holy damage**
- 17+: **8 + I holy damage**

Effect: An ally of your choice within distance gains a number of surges equal to the tier rolled.

DRAIN

You drain the energy from your target and revitalize yourself or an ally.

Keywords: Magic, Melee, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **2 + I corruption damage**
- 12–16: **5 + I corruption damage**
- 17+: **7 + I corruption damage**

Effect: You or one ally within distance can spend a Recovery.

HOLY LASH

A tendril of divine energy shoots forth to draw in your foe.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **3 + I holy damage; vertical pull 2**
- 12–16: **5 + I holy damage; vertical pull 3**
- 17+: **8 + I holy damage; vertical pull 4**

LIGHTFALL

A rain of holy light scours your enemies and repositions your allies.

Keywords: Area, Magic **Type:** Action
Distance: 2 burst **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **2 holy damage**
- 12–16: **3 holy damage**
- 17+: **5 holy damage**

Effect: You can teleport yourself and each ally in the area to unoccupied spaces in the area.

SACRIFICIAL OFFER

Divine magic tears at your foe and defends a nearby friend.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **2 + I corruption damage**
- 12–16: **4 + IV corruption damage**
- 17+: **6 + I corruption damage**

Effect: You or one ally within distance can impose a bane on one power roll made against them before the end of their next turn.

STAGGERING CURSE

A blast of judgment disorients your foe.

Keywords: Magic, Melee, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **3 + I holy damage; slide 1**
- 12–16: **5 + I holy damage; slide 2**
- 17+: **8 + I holy damage; slide 3**

WARRIOR'S PRAYER

Your quickly uttered prayer lends aggressive divine energy to a friend engaged in melee.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **3 + I holy damage**
- 12–16: **6 + I holy damage**
- 17+: **9 + I holy damage**

Effect: You or one ally within distance gains temporary Stamina equal to your Intuition score.

WITHER

A bolt of holy energy saps the life from a foe.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **3 + I corruption damage; P < weak, the target takes a bane on their next power roll**
- 12–16: **5 + I corruption damage; P < average, the target takes a bane on their next power roll**
- 17+: **8 + I corruption damage; P < strong, the target takes a bane on their next power roll**

HEROIC ABILITIES

You make use of a number of heroic abilities, all of which channel piety to empower them.

3-PIETY ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 3 piety to use. (*Quick Build:* Violence Will Not Aid Thee)

CALL THE THUNDER DOWN (3 PIETY)

You ask your saint for thunder and your prayer is answered.

Keywords: Area, Magic, Ranged **Type:** Action
Distance: 3 cube within 10 **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **2 sonic damage; push 1**
- 12–16: **3 sonic damage; push 2**
- 17+: **5 sonic damage; push 3**

Effect: You can push each willing ally in the area. This forced movement ignores any ally's stability.

FONT OF WRATH (3 PIETY)

A brilliant column of holy light appears on the battlefield, striking out at nearby enemies.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Special

Effect: You summon a spirit of size 2 who can't be harmed, and who appears in an unoccupied space within distance. The spirit lasts until the end of your next turn. You and your allies can move through the spirit's space, but enemies can't. An enemy who moves within 2 squares of the spirit for the first time in a round or starts their turn there takes holy damage equal to your Intuition score.

JUDGMENT'S HAMMER (3 PIETY)

Your divine fury is a hammer that crashes down upon the unrighteous.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **3 + I holy damage; A < weak, prone**
- 12–16: **6 + I holy damage; A < average, prone**
- 17+: **9 + I holy damage; A < strong, prone and can't stand (save ends)**

VIOLENCE WILL NOT AID THEE (3 PIETY)

After some holy lightning, your enemy will think twice about their next attack.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **3 + I lightning damage**
- 12–16: **6 + I lightning damage**
- 17+: **9 + I lightning damage**

Effect: The first time on a turn that the target deals damage to another creature, the target of this ability takes another 1d10 lightning damage (save ends).

5-PIETY ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 5 piety to use. (*Quick Build:* Curse of Terror)

CORRUPTION'S CURSE (5 PIETY)

Cursed by you, your enemy takes more damage from your allies.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **3 + I corruption damage; M < weak, damage weakness 5 (save ends)**
- 12–16: **6 + I corruption damage; M < average, damage weakness 5 (save ends)**
- 17+: **9 + I corruption damage; M < strong, damage weakness 5 (save ends)**

CURSE OF TERROR (5 PIETY)

Fear of divine judgment overwhelms your foe.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **6 + I holy damage; I < weak, frightened (save ends)**
- 12–16: **9 + I holy damage; I < average, frightened (save ends)**
- 17+: **13 + I holy damage; I < strong, frightened (save ends)**

FAITH IS OUR ARMOR (5 PIETY)

The heroes' armor glows with golden light, granting divine protection.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Self and up to three allies

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **The target gains 5 temporary Stamina**
- 12–16: **The target gains 10 temporary Stamina**
- 17+: **The target gains 15 temporary Stamina**

SERMON OF GRACE (5 PIETY)

You inspire your allies with tales of your saint's great deeds.

Keywords: Area, Magic **Type:** Action
Distance: 4 burst **Target:** Each ally in the area

Effect: Each target can spend a Recovery. When you use this ability, each target can use a free triggered action to end one effect that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of their turn, or to stand up if prone.

2ND-LEVEL FEATURES

As a 2nd-level conduit, you gain the following features.

THE LISTS OF HEAVEN

Your patron is aware of your growing influence, making it easier to get their attention and power when you heal your allies. Whenever you allow another creature to spend a Recovery, you can also spend a Recovery.

PERK

You gain a crafting, lore, or supernatural perk of your choice. See [Perks](#) for more information.

2ND-LEVEL DOMAIN FEATURE

You gain the 1st-level domain feature and chosen skill for the domain you selected at 1st level but whose domain feature you didn't take (see [1st-Level Domain Feature](#)).

2ND-LEVEL DOMAIN ABILITY

Choose one of your domains. You gain an ability from that domain as shown on the 2nd-Level Conduit Domain Abilities table.

2ND-LEVEL CONDUIT DOMAIN ABILITIES

Domain	Feature
Creation	Statue of Power
Death	Reap
Fate	Blessing of Fate and Destiny
Knowledge	The Gods Command, You Obey
Life	Wellspring of Grace
Love	Our Hearts, Your Strength
Nature	Nature Judges Thee
Protection	Sacred Bond
Storm	Saint's Tempest
Sun	Morning Light
Trickery	Divine Comedy
War	Blessing of Insight

BLESSING OF FATE AND DESTINY (5 PIETY)

Your enemies suffer their fate; your allies embrace their destiny!

Keywords: Magic, Ranged **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Three creatures, including self

Effect: Choose one of the following effects, which lasts until the end of the encounter or until you are dying:

- Whenever a target makes a power roll, they can roll three dice and choose which two to use.
- Whenever a target makes a power roll, they must roll three dice and use the lowest two.

BLESSING OF INSIGHT (5 PIETY)

The gods grant insight revealing where best to strike your enemies.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Self and each ally in the area

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, each target gains a surge at the end of each of your turns.

DIVINE COMEDY (5 PIETY)

You and your allies swap places to confound your foes.

Keywords: Area, Magic **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: 5 burst **Target:** Each ally in the area

Effect: Each target can choose another creature within 5 squares of them, then swap places with that creature. The creature they choose must be able to fit into the space they leave and vice versa.

THE GODS COMMAND, YOU OBEY (5 PIETY)

You speak with the voice of your saint, commanding your enemies.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **4 + I holy damage; P < weak, before taking damage, the target makes a free strike against a target you choose**
- 12–16: **7 + I holy damage; P < average, before taking damage, the target uses an ability of your choice and you choose any targets for that ability**
- 17+: **11 + I holy damage; P < strong, before taking damage, the target shifts up to their speed, uses an ability of your choice, and you choose any targets for that ability**

MORNING LIGHT (5 PIETY)

Light shines at your command, burning your foes and blessing your allies.

Keywords: Area, Magic **Type:** Action
Distance: 3 burst **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **4 fire damage**
- 12–16: **6 fire damage**
- 17+: **10 fire damage**

Effect: Each ally in the area deals fire damage equal to your Intuition score with their next strike made before the end of their next turn.

NATURE JUDGES THEE (5 PIETY)

Mystical thorned vines appear at your bidding and bind your foes.

Keywords: Area, Magic, Ranged **Type:** Action
Distance: 3 cube within 10 **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **2 damage; A < weak, restrained (save ends)**
- 12–16: **3 damage; A < average, restrained (save ends)**
- 17+: **7 damage; A < strong, restrained (save ends)**

OUR HEARTS, YOUR STRENGTH (5 PIETY)

An ally gains strength from their friends.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Self and one ally

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or the target is dying, whenever the target starts their turn, they gain a bonus to speed and damage equal to the number of allies within 10 squares of them. This bonus lasts until the start of their next turn.

REAP (5 PIETY)

The gods reward those who smite their foes.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: Each ally

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, each time a target kills an enemy, they regain Stamina equal to 5 + your Intuition score.

SACRED BOND (5 PIETY)

You forge a divine connection between two creatures.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: Self and one ally

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, whenever one target takes damage, the other target can use a free triggered action to take the damage instead. The original target suffers any effects associated with the damage.

Additionally, whenever one target spends a Recovery, the other target can use a free triggered action to spend a Recovery.

SAINT'S TEMPEST (5 PIETY)

A raging storm appears, striking your foes with lightning and throwing them around with wind.

Keywords: Area, Magic, Ranged

Type: Action

Distance: 3 cube within 10

Target: Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **2 lightning damage; vertical slide 1**
- 12–16: **5 lightning damage; vertical slide 2**
- 17+: **7 lightning damage; vertical slide 3**

STATUE OF POWER (5 PIETY)

A marble statue of your patron rises from the earth.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: Special

Effect: A size 2 statue rises out of the ground in an unoccupied space within distance and lasts until the end of the encounter. While within 3 squares of the statue, you and your allies each gains a surge at the start of their turns. The statue is destroyed if it takes 20 or more damage. It is immune to poison and psychic damage.

WELLSPRING OF GRACE (5 PIETY)

A holy light is emitted from your body, healing your allies.

Keywords: Area, Magic

Type: Action

Distance: 3 aura

Target: Each ally in the area

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or you are dying, whenever a target starts their turn in the aura, they can spend a Recovery.

3RD-LEVEL FEATURES

As a 3rd-level conduit, you gain the following features.

MINOR MIRACLE

As a respite activity, you perform a religious ritual and beseech the gods to restore a dead creature to life. You must have at least half the creature's remains, and they must have died within the last 24 hours from an effect that isn't age related. The creature's soul must be willing to

return to life for the ritual to work. If they are not willing, you instinctively understand that as you start the respite activity and can cease it immediately.

A creature with a willing soul returns to life at the end of the respite with full Stamina and half their Recoveries. You regain only half your Recoveries at the end of the respite.

7-PIETY ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 7 piety to use.

FEAR OF THE GODS (7 PIETY)

Your divine magic makes a creature appear as what your enemies fear most.

Keywords: Area, Magic, Ranged

Type: Action

Distance: 5 cube within 10

Target: Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **6 psychic damage; I < weak, frightened (save ends)**
- 12–16: **9 psychic damage; I < average, frightened (save ends)**
- 17+: **13 psychic damage; I < strong, frightened (save ends)**

Effect: The targets are frightened of you or a creature you choose within 10 squares.

SAINT'S RAIMENT (7 PIETY)

An ally becomes the wearer of an empowered golden cloak.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: One ally

Effect: The target gains 20 Temporary Stamina and three surges.

SOUL SIPHON (7 PIETY)

A beam of energy connects a foe to a friend, draining life from one to heal the other.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Strike

Type: Action

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: One enemy

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **7 + I corruption damage**
- 12–16: **10 + I corruption damage**
- 17+: **15 + I corruption damage**

Effect: One ally within distance can spend any number of Recoveries (no action required).

WORDS OF WRATH AND GRACE (7 PIETY)

Your saint grants your enemies a vision of whatever they most fear.

Keywords: Area, Magic

Type: Action

Distance: 5 burst

Target: Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **2 holy damage**
- 12–16: **5 holy damage**
- 17+: **7 holy damage**

Effect: Each ally in the area can spend a Recovery.

ELEMENTALIST

Air for movement. Earth for permanence. Fire for destruction. Water for change. Green for growth. Rot for death. Void for the mystery. Years of study and practice and poring over tomes brought you the revelations that allow you to manipulate these building blocks of reality. Now you use your mastery of the seven elements to destroy, create, and warp the world with magic.

As an elemental, you can unleash your wrath across a field of foes, put an enemy exactly where you want them, debilitate foes with harmful effects, ward yourself and allies against danger, manipulate terrain, warp space, and more. Your choice of elemental specialization determines which of these things you do best.

BASICS

Starting Characteristics: You start with a Reason of 2, and can choose one of the following arrays for your other characteristics scores:

- 2, 2, -1, -1
- 2, 1, 1, -1
- 2, 1, 0, 0
- 1, 1, 1, 0

Weak Potency: Reason - 2

Average Potency: Reason - 1

Strong Potency: Reason

Starting Stamina at 1st Level: 18

Stamina Gained at 2nd and Higher Levels: 9

Recoveries: 8

Skills: You gain the Magic skill and can choose any three skills from the crafting or lore skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Magic, Alchemy, Blacksmithing, History)

ELEMENTALIST ADVANCEMENT

Level	Features	Abilities
1st	Elemental Specialization, Essence, Hurl Element, Persistent Magic, Practical Magic, Specialization Feature, Specialization Triggered Action, Enchantment, Elementalist Ward, Elementalist Abilities	Two signature, 1, 3, 5
2nd	Perk, Specialization Feature, New 5-Essence Ability	Two signature, 1, 3, 5, 5
3rd	Specialization Feature, 7-Essence Ability	Two signature, 1, 3, 5, 5, 7

1ST-LEVEL FEATURES

As an elemental, you gain the following features.

ELEMENTAL SPECIALIZATION

Through your studies, you know and can manipulate the seven primal elements of the timescape.

Air is the element of movement. Air abilities allow you to manipulate speed, quickness, flight, and breath.

Earth is the element of permanence. Earth abilities create and shape physical terrain in a permanent way, and bolster your hardiness.

Fire is the element of destruction. Fire abilities harm enemies and objects.

Green is the element of creation and growth. Green abilities make and manipulate plants, fungi, and other forms of life to hamper foes and nourish your allies.

Rot is the element of death. Rot abilities decay and debuff enemies.

Void is the element of the unknown. Void abilities warp space and reality, allowing you to teleport, create illusions, and make things incorporeal.

Water is the element of change. Water abilities enhance what your allies can do, and alter the abilities of your enemies for the worse.

Choose one of the following elements to be your specialty: earth, fire, green, or void. (*Quick Build:* fire) Your choice of specialization determines many of the features you'll gain from this class, including one of the benefits below. (Other elemental specializations will be featured in future products.)

EARTH: ACOLYTE OF EARTH

You gain this feature if earth is your specialization, letting you harness the flow of earth magic to become harder to move. Whenever you use an earth magic ability, your stability increases by 1 until the start of your next turn. This benefit is cumulative.

FIRE: ACOLYTE OF FIRE

You gain this feature if fire is your specialization, becoming an expert at wielding destructive flames. Your abilities that have the Fire and Magic keywords gain a +1 rolled damage bonus.

GREEN: ACOLYTE OF THE GREEN

You gain this feature if green is your specialization, harnessing the residual magic from your green spells to bolster yourself and your allies. Whenever you deal damage to one or more creatures with a green magic ability that costs essence to use (see below), you or one creature of your choice within 10 squares of you gains temporary Stamina equal to your Reason score.

VOID: ACOLYTE OF THE MYSTERY

You gain this feature if void is your specialization, using your immersion in the mystery of void magic to hold onto that magic longer than other mages. The distance of all your ranged void magic abilities increases by 2.

ESSENCE

You channel the substance of creation in the form of a Heroic Resource called essence, gathering and burning it to cast and maintain spells.

ESSENCE IN COMBAT

At the start of a combat encounter or some other stressful situation tracked in combat rounds (as determined by the Director), you gain essence equal to your Victories. At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 2 essence. You also gain 1 essence the first time in a round that you or a creature within 10 of you takes damage that isn't untyped or holy.

You lose any remaining essence at the end of the encounter.

ESSENCE OUTSIDE OF COMBAT

Though you can't gain essence outside of combat, you can use your heroic abilities and effects that cost essence without spending it. Whenever you use an ability or effect outside of combat that costs essence, you can't use that same ability or effect outside of combat again until you gain at least 1 Victory or finish a respite.

If you use a persistent ability outside of combat (see [Persistent Magic](#)), you can maintain it for a number of rounds equal to your Victories.

If you use an ability outside of combat that lets you spend unlimited essence on its effect, you can use it as if you had spent an amount of essence on it equal to your Victories. (Such abilities aren't part of the core rules for the elementalists but might appear in future products.)

HURL ELEMENT

You gain the following ability, which can be used as a ranged free strike.

HURL ELEMENT

You cast a ball of elemental energy at an unsuspecting foe.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **2 + R damage**
- 12–16: **4 + R damage**
- 17+: **6 + R damage**

Effect: When you make this strike, choose the damage type from one of the following options: acid, cold, corruption, fire, lightning, poison, or sonic.

PERSISTENT MAGIC

Some of your heroic abilities have a persistent effect entry. For example, the Instantaneous Excavation ability has an effect noted as "Persistent 1." Whenever you use a persistent ability, you decide whether you want to maintain it, and start doing so immediately after you first use the ability. If you maintain a persistent ability in combat, you reduce the amount of essence you earn at the start of your turn by an amount equal to the ability's persistent value, which enables the ability's persistent effect. All your active persistent abilities end at the end of the encounter.

You can't maintain any abilities that would make you earn a negative amount of essence at the start of your turn or have a negative amount of essence outside of combat. You can stop maintaining an ability at any time (no action required).

If you maintain the same ability on several targets and the effect includes a power roll, you make that roll once and apply the same effect to all targets. A creature can't be affected by multiple instances of a persistent ability.

If you take damage equal to or greater than $5 \times$ your Reason score in one turn, you stop maintaining any persistent abilities. For instance, if you have a Reason score of 2 and are maintaining Instantaneous Excavation, taking 10 or more damage in one turn causes you to stop maintaining the ability.

PRACTICAL MAGIC

You have the following ability:

PRACTICAL MAGIC

Your mastery of elemental power lets you customize your conjurations.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Self; see below **Target:** Self

Effect: Choose one of the following effects:

- You use the Knockback maneuver, but its distance becomes the range of your Hurl Element ability, and you use Reason instead of Might for the power roll.
- You choose a creature within the distance of your Hurl Element ability and deal damage equal to your Reason score to them. The damage type can be acid, cold, corruption, fire, lightning, poison, or sonic.
- You teleport up to a number of squares equal to your Reason score.

1ST-LEVEL SPECIALIZATION FEATURE

Your elemental specialization grants you a feature as shown on the 1st-Level Elemental Specialization Features table.

1ST-LEVEL ELEMENTAL SPECIALIZATION FEATURES

Specialization	Feature
Earth	Motivate Earth
Fire	Return to Formlessness
Green	It Is the Soul Which Hears
Void	A Beyonding of Vision

A BEYONDING OF VISION

You instantly recognize illusions for what they are, you can see invisible creatures, and supernatural effects can't conceal creatures and objects from you. You always know if an area or object you observe is magical or affected by magic, and you know the specifics of what that magic can do.

You also gain the following ability.

SHARED VOID SENSE

You grant allies a taste of your unearthly vision.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Void **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Special

Effect: For each Victory you have, you can target one creature. That creature gains the benefit of your A Beyonding of Vision feature until the end of your next turn, but doesn't gain the use of Shared Void Sense.

IT IS THE SOUL WHICH HEARS

You can speak with and understand Animals, Monstrosities, and Plant Creatures, even if they don't share a language with you. Your ability to communicate with such creatures doesn't make them inherently more intelligent, but you can use Reason in place of Presence while making tests to influence them.

Additionally, whenever you touch a living plant that is not a Plant Creature, you can communicate with it telepathically. You can use words to communicate with the plant, but it communicates with you only by transmitting feelings and sensations that can't be overly specific.

MOTIVATE EARTH

You gain the following ability.

MOTIVATE EARTH

The earth rises, falls, or opens up at your command.

Keywords: Earth, Magic, Melee **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** Special

Effect: You touch a square containing mundane dirt, stone, or metal and create a 5 wall of the same material, which rises up out of the ground and must include the square you touched.

Alternatively, you touch a structure made of mundane dirt, stone, or metal that takes up at least 2 squares. You can open a 1-square opening in the structure where you touched it.

You can instead touch a doorway or other opening in a mundane dirt, stone, or metal surface that is no larger than 1 square. The opening is sealed by the same material that makes up the surface.

RETURN TO FORMLESSNESS

You gain the following ability.

RETURN TO FORMLESSNESS

With the merest touch, you cause an object to turn to slag or ash.

Keywords: Fire, Magic, Melee **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One mundane object

Effect: You heat the target and cause it to combust and melt, destroying it. If the object is larger than 1 square, then only the square of the object that you touch is destroyed.

SPECIALIZATION TRIGGERED ACTION

Your elemental specialization grants you a triggered action as shown on the Specialization Triggered Actions table.

SPECIALIZATION TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Specialization	Triggered Action
Earth	Skin Like Castle Walls
Fire	Explosive Assistance
Green	The Breath of Dawn Remembered
Void	A Subtle Relocation

THE BREATH OF DAWN REMEMBERED

The power you channel grants the ability to get back in the fight.

Keywords: Green, Magic, Ranged **Type:** Triggered
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Self or one ally
Trigger: The target starts their turn or takes damage.

Effect: The target can spend a Recovery.

Spend Essence: The target can spend an additional Recovery for each essence spent.

EXPLOSIVE ASSISTANCE

You add a little magic to an ally's aggression at just the right time.

Keywords: Fire, Magic, Ranged **Type:** Triggered
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Self or one ally
Trigger: The target force moves a creature or object.

Effect: The forced movement distance gains a bonus equal to your Reason score.

Spend 1 Essence: The forced movement distance gains a bonus equal to twice your Reason score instead.

SKIN LIKE CASTLE WALLS

You make yourself or an ally covered in protective stone.

Keywords: Earth, Magic, Ranged **Type:** Triggered
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Self or one ally
Trigger: The target takes damage.

Effect: The damage is halved.

Spend 1 Essence: If the damage has any potency effect associate with it, the potency is reduced by 1.

A SUBTLE RELOCATION

You call on the void to swallow and spit out an ally.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Void **Type:** Triggered
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Self or one ally
Trigger: The target starts their turn, moves, or is force moved.

Effect: You teleport the target up to a number of squares equal to your Reason score. If the target moves to trigger this ability, you can teleport them at any point during the move.

Spend 1 Essence: You teleport the target up to a number of squares equal to twice your Reason score instead.

ENCHANTMENT

You weave an elemental enchantment into your body that enhances your statistics. You can change your enchantment along with your ward (see *Elementalist Ward*) by performing a complex ritual as a respite activity. (*Quick Build:* Enchantment of Destruction)

ENCHANTMENT OF BATTLE

You tap into the elemental mysteries to gain the mind and training of a warrior. You can wear light armor and wield

light weapons effectively, even though you don't have a kit. While you wear light armor, you gain a +3 bonus to Stamina and that bonus increases by 3 at 4th, 7th, and 10th levels. While you wield a light weapon, you gain a +1 damage bonus with weapon abilities, including free strikes. You can use light armor treasures and light weapon treasures. If you have a kit, you can't take this enchantment.

ENCHANTMENT OF CELERITY

You infuse your body with the speed of elemental air. You gain a +1 bonus to speed and to the distance you shift when you take the Disengage move action.

ENCHANTMENT OF DESTRUCTION

You harness the destructive power of flame inside your mind, allowing you to focus your magic on destroying your enemies. You gain a +1 rolled damage bonus with magic abilities.

ENCHANTMENT OF DISTANCE

You reach into the mysteries of the void and mix that element with all of your abilities. You gain a +2 bonus to the distance of your ranged magic abilities.

ENCHANTMENT OF PERMANENCE

You place the magic of earth into your flesh and bones, making your body tougher and harder to move. You gain a +6 bonus to Stamina, and this bonus increases by 6 at 4th, 7th, and 10th levels. Additionally, you gain a +1 bonus to stability.

ELEMENTALIST WARD

You create an invisible elemental ward that protects you. Choose one of the following wards. You can change your ward along with your enchantment (see [Enchantment](#)) by performing a complex ritual spell as a respite activity. (*Quick Build*: Ward of Surprising Reactivity)

WARD OF DELIGHTFUL CONSEQUENCES

A protective field of void magic absorbs violence aimed at you, then lets you hurl it back at your enemies. The first time each round that you take damage, you gain a surge.

WARD OF EXCELLENT PROTECTION

The protective shield you weave around yourself is made of all the elements to channel their full protective power. You have immunity to acid, cold, corruption, fire, and lightning damage equal to your Reason score.

WARD OF NATURE'S AFFECTION

You store green energy within your body that allows you to produce powerful vines when you're in danger. Whenever a creature within a number of squares equal to your Reason score deals damage to you, you can use a free triggered action to slide that creature up to a number of squares equal to your Reason score.

WARD OF SURPRISING REACTIVITY

You use the magic of fire to create an invisible ward of explosive fire energy. Whenever an adjacent creature deals damage to you, you can use a free triggered action to push

that creature a number of squares equal to twice your Reason score.

ELEMENTALIST ABILITIES

Your mastery of elemental magic grants you unique magical abilities, letting you damage, move, and debuff your enemies, empower your allies, and alter the terrain around you. You can select abilities from any elemental specialization, or can focus on abilities tied to your chosen specialization to establish your mastery of elemental power.

SIGNATURE ABILITIES

Select two signature abilities from the following options. Signature abilities can be used at will. (*Quick Build*: Bifurcated Conflagration, Viscous Fire)

AFFLICT A BOUNTIFUL DECAY

Your curse causes a foe's flesh to rot off as spores that aid your allies.

Keywords: Green, Rot, Magic, Ranged, Strike

Type: Action

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **2 + R corruption damage**
- 12–16: **4 + R corruption damage**
- 17+: **6 + R corruption damage**

Effect: You or one ally within distance can end one effect that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of that creature's turn.

BIFURCATED CONFLAGRATION

Two jets of flame lance out at your command.

Keywords: Fire, Magic, Ranged, Strike

Type: Action

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: Two creatures or objects

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **2 fire damage**
- 12–16: **4 fire damage**
- 17+: **6 fire damage**

GRASP OF BEYOND

You absorb the life energy of another creature and use it to teleport.

Keywords: Magic, Melee, Strike, Void

Type: Action

Distance: Melee 1

Target: One creature

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **3 + R corruption damage**
- 12–16: **6 + R corruption damage**
- 17+: **9 + R corruption damage**

Effect: You can teleport up to a number of squares equal to your Reason score.

THE GREEN WITHIN, THE GREEN WITHOUT

Whipping vines erupt from a foe's body to grasp at another close by.

Keywords: Green, Magic, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **2 + R damage**
- 12–16: **5 + R damage**
- 17+: **7 + R damage**

Effect: You slide one creature within 10 squares of the target up to 2 squares.

A METEORIC INTRODUCTION

You give your enemy a gentle tap like an asteroid impact.

Keywords: Attack, Earth, Magic, Melee, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **3 + R damage; push 2**
- 12–16: **5 + R damage; push 3**
- 17+: **8 + R damage; push 4**

RAY OF AGONIZING SELF REFLECTION

You inflict pain and doubt in equal measure.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Strike, Void **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **2 + R corruption damage; R < weak, slowed (save ends)**
- 12–16: **4 + R corruption damage; R < average, slowed (save ends)**
- 17+: **6 + R corruption damage; R < strong, slowed (save ends)**

UNQUIET GROUND

A sudden storm of detritus assaults your foes and leaves them struggling to move.

Keywords: Area, Earth, Magic, Ranged **Type:** Action
Distance: 2 cube within 10 **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **2 damage**
- 12–16: **5 damage**
- 17+: **7 damage**

Effect: The ground beneath the area becomes difficult terrain for enemies.

VISCOUS FIRE

A jet of heavy fire erupts with elemental fury where it strikes.

Keywords: Fire, Magic, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **2 + R fire damage; push 2**
- 12–16: **5 + R fire damage; push 3**
- 17+: **7 + R fire damage; push 4**

HEROIC ABILITIES

You channel a range of heroic abilities, all of them fueled by your essence.

3-ESSENCE ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 3 essence to use. (*Quick Build:* The Flesh, a Crucible)

BEHOLD THE MYSTERY (3 ESSENCE)

You open a rift into the void to harry your foes.

Keywords: Area, Magic, Ranged, Void **Type:** Action
Distance: 3 cube within 10 **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **2 psychic damage**
- 12–16: **4 psychic damage**
- 17+: **6 psychic damage**

Persistent 1: At the start of your turn, you can use a maneuver to use this ability again without spending essence.

THE FLESH, A CRUCIBLE (3 ESSENCE)

Fire engulfs a target of your choice and burns at your command.

Keywords: Fire, Magic, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **5 + R fire damage**
- 12–16: **8 + R fire damage**
- 17+: **11 + R fire damage**

Persistent 1: If the target is within distance at the start of your turn, make a power roll for this ability again.

INVIGORATING GROWTH (3 ESSENCE)

Mushrooms erupt from a foe, sapping their vitality to spread strengthening spores.

Keywords: Green, Magic, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **4 + R poison damage**
- 12–16: **7 + R poison damage**
- 17+: **11 + R poison damage**

Effect: Mushrooms cover the target's body, and can be removed by the target or by an adjacent creature as an action. While the mushrooms are on the target, you and each of your allies adjacent to the target gains a surge whenever the target takes damage.

RIPPLES IN THE EARTH (3 ESSENCE)

Like a stone dropped into a pond, waves in the earth radiate from you.

Keywords: Area, Earth, Magic **Type:** Action
Distance: 2 burst **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **3 damage**
- 12–16: **5 damage**
- 17+: **8 damage; M < strong, prone**

Effect: You must be touching the ground to use this ability. Choose a square of ground in the area that is unoccupied or occupied by your or an ally. A pillar of earth that is 1 square wide and long and is up to as many squares tall as your Reason score rises out of the ground. The pillar can't collide with any creatures or objects nor can it force any creatures being raised by it to collide with other creatures or objects.

5-ESSENCE ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 5 essence to use. (*Quick Build*: Conflagration)

CONFLAGRATION (5 ESSENCE)

A storm of fire descends upon your enemies.

Keywords: Area, Fire, Magic, Ranged **Type:** Action
Distance: 3 cube within 10

Target: Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **4 fire damage**
- 12–16: **6 fire damage**
- 17+: **10 fire damage**

Persistent 2: At the start of your turn, you can use a maneuver to use this ability again without spending essence.

INSTANTANEOUS EXCAVATION (5 ESSENCE)

The surface of the world around you opens up at your command.

Keywords: Earth, Magic, Ranged **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Special

Effect: You open up two holes with 1-square openings that are 4 squares deep, and which can be placed on any mundane surface within distance. You can place these holes next to each other to create fewer holes with wider openings. When the holes open, make a separate power roll for each creature on the ground above a hole and small enough to fall in. (You can't get a critical hit with this power because it uses a maneuver.)

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **The target can shift 1 square from the edge of the hole to the nearest unoccupied space of their choice.**
- 12–16: **The target falls into the hole.**
- 17+: **The target falls into the hole and can't reduce the height of the fall.**

Persistent 1: At the start of your turn, you open another hole, rolling power against any creature that could fall into the hole when it opens.

NO MORE THAN A BREEZE (5 ESSENCE)

The material substance of a creature shreds away at your command.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Void **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Self or one ally

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, the target can move through solid matter, ignores difficult terrain, and their movement can't provoke opportunity attacks. If the target ends their turn inside solid matter, they are shunted out into the space where they entered it and this effect ends.

Persistent 1: The effect lasts until the start of your next turn.

TEST OF RAIN (5 ESSENCE)

You call down a rain that burns your enemies and restores your allies.

Keywords: Area, Green, Magic, Ranged **Type:** Action
Distance: 3 cube within 10

Target: Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **4 acid damage**
- 12–16: **6 acid damage**
- 17+: **10 acid damage**

Effect: You and each ally within the area can end one effect that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of that creature's turn.

2ND-LEVEL FEATURES

As a 2nd-level elementalist, you gain the following features.

PERK

You gain a crafting, lore, or supernatural perk of your choice. See [Perks](#) for more information.

2ND-LEVEL SPECIALIZATION FEATURE

Your elemental specialization grants you a feature as shown on the 2nd-Level Specialization Features table.

2ND-LEVEL SPECIALIZATION FEATURES

Specialization	Feature
Earth	Disciple of Earth
Fire	Disciple of Fire
Green	Disciple of the Green
Void	There is No Space Between

DISCIPLE OF THE GREEN

You can use a maneuver to shapeshift into a type of creature on the Green Animal Forms table. While in animal form, you can speak, and you use your Reason score to make melee free strikes. Your statistics stay the same except as noted on the table.

Each form has a prerequisite level that you must attain in this class before you can adopt it. Some animal forms grant you temporary Stamina. You lose this temporary Stamina when you revert back to your true form.

You choose a specific animal and appearance while in animal form. For example, if you become a rodent, you might become a mouse, a rat, a shrew, or any other size 1T rodent who fits the animal type. When you take on animal form, your equipment either melds into your new form or falls unharmed to the ground, as you decide. When you return to your true form, any melded gear reappears on your person.

You can revert back to your true form as a maneuver. You can't enter an animal form unless you are in your true form. If you are dying, you revert to your true form and can't turn back into an animal until you are no longer dying.

DISCIPLE OF FIRE

Your connection to fire allows you to protect yourself from it, even as you rip away the protections of others. You have

fire immunity equal to 5 plus your level in this class. Any fire damage you deal ignores a target's fire immunity.

At the start of a combat encounter, you gain surges equal to your Victories. Whenever you deal damage with a surge, you can make that damage fire damage.

DISCIPLE OF EARTH

Your body is strengthened by your mind's connection to the element of permanence. You have a +6 bonus to Stamina, plus you gain an additional +3 bonus to Stamina whenever you gain a level beyond 2nd in this class.

THERE IS NO SPACE BETWEEN

You gain the following ability.

THERE IS NO SPACE BETWEEN

Knowledge of the mystery reveals two spaces are the same space.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Void

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: Special

Effect: You open two size 1 portals in unoccupied spaces in range, which last until you move beyond distance from any portal, end the effect as a maneuver, or are dying. Each portal must be placed at a height of no more than 1 square above the ground. When you or any ally touch a portal, that creature can choose to be instantly teleported to an unoccupied space of their choice within 1 square of the other portal. If an enemy is force moved into a portal, their forced movement ends and they emerge from the other portal in an unoccupied space chosen by the creature who force moved them.

At the start of each of your turns while the portals are active, you can open a new portal connected to the others. If three or more portals are present, you and your allies choose which portal you emerge from when you enter a portal, and a creature who force moves an enemy into a portal chooses that enemy's destination portal.

GREEN ANIMAL FORMS

Animal Type	Level	Temporary Stamina	Speed	Size	Stability Bonus	Melee Damage Bonus	Special
Canine	2nd	5	7	1M	+0	+1/+1/+1	You gain an edge on tests that involve smell.
Fish	2nd	0	5 (swim only)	1T	+0	+0/+0/+0	You can breathe in water but can't breathe outside of it.
Rodent	2nd	0	5 (climb)	1T	+0	+0/+0/+0	You gain an edge on tests that involve smell.
Bird	3rd	0	5 (fly)	1T	+0	+0/+0/+0	—
Great cat	3rd	5	6 (climb)	2	+0	+1/+1/+1	As a maneuver, jump up to 3 squares in any direction. If you land on an enemy of you size or smaller, that enemy is knocked prone and you can make a melee free strike against them as part of the maneuver.

NEW 5-ESSENCE ABILITY

Choose a new heroic ability from one of the following options, each of which costs 5 essence to use. Alternatively, you can choose one of the 5-Essence Abilities you didn't select at 1st level (see [1st-Level Features](#)).

O FLOWER AID, O EARTH DEFEND (5 ESSENCE)

Revitalizing plants and jagged stones grow, helping allies and hindering foes.

Keywords: Area, Earth, Green, Magic, Ranged

Type: Maneuver

Distance: 3 cube within 10

Target: Special

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, the area gains the following effects:

- You and each ally in the area can spend any number of Recoveries at the start of your turn once as a free maneuver.
- The area is difficult terrain for enemies.
- Any enemy who enters the area for the first time in a round or starts their turn there takes damage equal to your Reason score.

Persistent 1: The area remains until the start of your next turn. You can move the area up to 5 squares as a maneuver. This ability ends if you lose line of effect to its area.

SUBVERT THE GREEN WITHIN (5 ESSENCE)

Burrow into their brains and take control!

Keywords: Green, Magic, Ranged, Strike, Void

Type: Action

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Effect: The target uses their signature ability against a target of your choice. You then make a power roll against the target of this ability.

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **5 + R poison damage**
- 12–16: **9 + R poison damage**
- 17+: **12 + R poison damage**

TRANSLATED THROUGH FLAME (5 ESSENCE)

Your ally disappears, then reappears in a burst of fire!

Keywords: Fire, Magic, Ranged, Void

Type: Action

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: Self or one ally

Effect: The target is teleported to another space within distance. Make a power roll that targets each enemy adjacent to the target's new space.

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **3 fire damage**
- 12–16: **5 fire damage**
- 17+: **8 fire damage**

VOLCANO'S EMBRACE (5 ESSENCE)

Wrap them up in fire and melting stone.

Keywords: Earth, Fire, Magic, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Action

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **5 + R fire damage; A < weak, restrained (save ends)**
- 12–16: **9 + R fire damage; A < average, restrained (save ends)**
- 17+: **12 + R fire damage; A < strong, restrained (save ends)**

3RD-LEVEL FEATURES

As a 3rd-level elementalist, you gain the following features.

3RD-LEVEL SPECIALIZATION FEATURE

Your elemental specialization grants you a feature as shown on the 3rd-Level Specialization Features table.

3RD-LEVEL SPECIALIZATION FEATURES

Specialization	Feature
Earth	The Earth Accepts Me
Fire	A Conversation with Fire
Green	Remember Growth and Sun and Rain
Void	Distance is Only Memory

A CONVERSATION WITH FIRE

When you spend 1 minute in front of a fire, you can speak the name of another creature. If that creature is willing to speak to you, their image appears in the fire, and they can see you before them in a shimmering ball of light. The two of you can speak to each other through these images as if you were together in person. You or the creature can end the conversation as a maneuver.

DISTANCE IS ONLY MEMORY

When you finish a respite, you can open a two-way portal that leads to any place you have previously been. Your allies can pass through the portal, which remains open for 1 hour or until you dismiss it as an action.

THE EARTH ACCEPTS ME

You gain the following ability.

THE EARTH ACCEPTS ME

You can slip into the stone.

Keywords: Earth, Magic

Type: Action

Distance: Self

Target: Self

Effect: You step into a mundane dirt, metal, or stone object (including a wall) that is as large as you or larger. You can remain inside the object for as long as you like. While inside the object, you can observe events and speak to creatures outside of it, but you don't have line of effect to anything outside the object and vice versa. You can travel through the object freely until you exit it. If the object you meld with is destroyed, you take 10 damage and exit the object.

REMEMBER GROWTH AND SUN AND RAIN

You gain the following ability.

REMEMBER GROWTH AND SUN AND RAIN

You stir any wood's memory and learn what it has seen.

Keywords: Green, Magic, Melee **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One mundane wooden object

Effect: You see and hear any events that have occurred within 10 squares of the object within the last 12 hours, perceiving those events from the object's location as if you were there.

7-ESSENCE ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 7 essence to use.

ERASE (7 ESSENCE)

With a flick of the wrist, you phase creatures out of existence.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Strike, Void **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Special

Effect: The number of creatures you target with this ability is determined by your power roll.

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **One creature**
- 12–16: **Two creatures**
- 17+: **Three creatures**

Each target begins to fade from existence (save ends).

While fading from existence, a target initially takes a bane on power rolls. At the end of their first turn, they have a double bane on power rolls. At the end of their second turn, they fade from existence for 1 hour, reappearing in their original space or the nearest available space.

MAW OF EARTH (7 ESSENCE)

You open up the ground, unleashing a shower of stone and debris.

Keywords: Area, Earth, Magic, Ranged **Type:** Action
Distance: 3 cube within 10 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **5 damage**
- 12–16: **9 damage**
- 17+: **12 damage**

Effect: The ground in or directly beneath the area drops, lowering 3 squares.

SWARM OF SPIRITS (7 ESSENCE)

Guardian animal spirits surround you to harry your foes and bolster your allies.

Keywords: Area, Green, Magic **Type:** Action
Distance: 3 aura **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **3 damage**
- 12–16: **6 damage**
- 17+: **9 damage**

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, each ally in your aura has their characteristic scores increased by 1 for the purpose of resisting potencies and has a +1 bonus on saving throws.

Persistent 1: You make the power roll again to target each enemy in the aura, and the effect lasts until the start of your next turn.

WALL OF FIRE (7 ESSENCE)

A blazing, beautifully organized inferno erupts at your command.

Keywords: Area, Fire, Magic, Ranged **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: 10 wall within 10 **Target:** Special

Effect: The wall lasts until the start of your next turn, and can be placed in occupied squares. Creatures can enter and pass through the wall. When an enemy enters or starts their turn in a square of the wall, they take fire damage equal to your Reason score.

Persistent 1: The effect lasts until the start of your next turn, and you can add a number of squares to the wall equal to your Reason score.

FURY

You do not temper the heat of battle within you—you unleash it! Like a raptor, a panther, a wolf, your experience in the wild taught you the secret of channeling unfettered anger into martial prowess. Primordial chaos is your ally. Leave it to others to use finesse to clean up the pieces you leave behind.

As a fury, you have abilities that deal a lot of damage, move you around the battlefield, and grow in strength as your rage increases. Nature has no concept of fairness—and neither do you.

BASICS

Starting Characteristics: You start with a Might of 2 and an Agility of 2, and can choose one of the following arrays for your other characteristics scores:

- 2, -1, -1
- 1, 1, -1
- 1, 0, 0

Weak Potency: Might - 2

Average Potency: Might - 1

Strong Potency: Might

Starting Stamina at 1st Level: 21

Stamina Gained at 2nd and Higher Levels: 12

Recoveries: 10

Skills: Nature, plus choose any two skills from the exploration or intrigue skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Nature, Alertness, Jump)

FURY ADVANCEMENT

Level	Features	Abilities	Aspect Abilities
1st	Primordial Aspect, Rage, Growing Rage, Aspect Features, Aspect Triggered Action, Mighty Leaps, Fury Abilities	Signature, 3, 5	—
2nd	Perk, Aspect Feature, Aspect Ability	Signature, 3, 5	5
3rd	Aspect Feature, 7-Rage Ability	Signature, 3, 5, 7	5

1ST-LEVEL FEATURES

As a fury, you gain the following features.

PRIMORDIAL ASPECT

You are a product of customs older than civilization, older than warfare, older than most of the world. You have undergone a rite of passage that revealed the building blocks of the timescape—the Primordial Chaos—and which left an aspect of the Primordial Chaos inside you. As you channel the rage that shapes you, you choose a primordial aspect from the following options, each of which grants you a skill (*Quick Build:* Berserker):

Berserker: You channel your rage into expressions of physical might, acting as a living version of the forces that reshape the world. You gain the Lift skill.

Reaver: You channel your rage into instinct and cunning, challenging the false order of civilization. You gain the Hide skill.

Stormwight: You channel your rage into the form of animals and primordial storms. You gain the Track skill.

Your choice of primordial aspect determines many of the features you'll gain from this class.

RAGE

As the battle intensifies around you, your determination and anger grow, fueling a Heroic Resource called rage.

RAGE IN COMBAT

At the start of a combat encounter or some other stressful situation tracked in combat rounds (as determined by the Director), you gain rage equal to your Victories. At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 1d3 rage. Additionally, the first time each round that you take damage, you gain 1 rage. The first time in an encounter that you become winded or dying, you gain 1d3 rage. You lose any remaining rage at the end of the encounter.

RAGE OUTSIDE OF COMBAT

Though you can't gain rage outside of combat, you can use your heroic abilities and effects that cost rage without spending it. Whenever you use an ability or effect outside of combat that costs rage, you can't use that same ability or effect outside of combat again until you gain at least 1 Victory or finish a respite.

If you use an ability outside of combat that lets you spend unlimited rage on its effect, such as *To the Uttermost End*, you can use it as if you had spent an amount of rage on it equal to your Victories.

GROWING RAGE

You gain certain benefits in combat based on the amount of rage you have. See the various **Aspect Features** sections for details. The benefits from your growing rage last until the end of your turn, even if a benefit would become unavailable to you because of the amount of rage you spend during your turn.

Some of the benefits of your Growing Rage can be applied only if you are a specific level or higher, as noted on the Growing Rage tables.

1ST-LEVEL ASPECT FEATURES

Your chosen primordial aspect grants you features as shown on the 1st-Level Aspect Features table.

1ST-LEVEL ASPECT FEATURES

Aspect	Feature
Berserker	Kit, Primordial Strength
Reaver	Kit, Primordial Cunning
Stormwight	Beast Shape, Relentless Hunter

BEAST SHAPE

When you select a kit, you can instead select a stormwight kit (see [Stormwight Kits](#)). Your stormwight kit grants you a number of benefits, including effects tied to your Growing Rage feature.

KIT

You can use and gain the benefits of a kit. See the [Kits](#) chapter for more information. (*Quick Build*: Panther)

PRIMORDIAL CUNNING

You are never surprised. Additionally, whenever you would push a target with forced movement, you can slide them instead.

As your rage grows, your primordial cunning intensifies, granting benefits from the Primordial Cunning Growing Rage table. Benefits are cumulative except where an improved benefit replaces a lesser benefit.

PRIMORDIAL CUNNING GROWING RAGE

Rage	Benefit
2	Add your Agility to the distance you achieve on the Knockback maneuver.
4	Gain one surge the first time on a turn that you slide a creature.
6	Gain an edge on Agility tests and the Knockback maneuver.
8 (Level 4)	Gain two surges the first time on a turn that you slide a creature.
10 (Level 7)	Gain a double edge on Agility tests and the Knockback maneuver.
12 (Level 10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add your Agility to the distance of any forced movement power roll result. Gain 10 Temporary Stamina when you use a heroic ability.

PRIMORDIAL STRENGTH

Whenever you damage an object with a weapon strike, it takes additional damage equal to your Might score. Additionally, whenever you push another creature into an object, they take additional damage equal to your Might score.

As your rage grows, your primordial strength intensifies, granting benefits from the Primordial Strength Growing Rage table. Benefits are cumulative except where an improved benefit replaces a lesser benefit.

PRIMORDIAL STRENGTH GROWING RAGE

Rage	Benefit
2	Add your Might to the distance you achieve on the Knockback maneuver.
4	Gain one surge the first time on a turn that you push a creature.
6	Gain an edge on Might tests and the Knockback maneuver.
8 (Level 4)	Gain two surges the first time on a turn that you push a creature.
10 (Level 7)	Gain a double edge on Might tests and the Knockback maneuver.
12 (Level 10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add your Might to the distance of any forced movement power roll result. Gain 10 Temporary Stamina when you use a heroic ability.

RELENTLESS HUNTER

You gain an edge on tests that use the Track skill.

ASPECT TRIGGERED ACTION

Your primordial aspect grants you a triggered action as shown on the Aspect Triggered Actions table.

ASPECT TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Aspect	Triggered Action
Berserker	Lines of Force
Reaver	Unearthly Reflexes
Stormwight	Furious Change

FURIOUS CHANGE

In your anger, you revert to a more bestial form.

Keywords: — **Type:** Triggered
Distance: Self **Target:** Self
Trigger: You lose Stamina and are not dying.

Effect: After the triggering effect is resolved, you can use a free triggered action to enter your animal form or hybrid form. You gain temporary Stamina equal to your Might score.

Spend 1 Rage: If you are not dying, you can spend a Recovery.

LINES OF FORCE

You redirect the energy of motion.

Keywords: Magic, Melee **Type:** Triggered
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** Self or one creature
Trigger: The target would be force moved.

Effect: You can select a new target of the same size or smaller within distance to be force moved instead, and you can turn that forced movement into a push instead. You become the source of the forced movement and decide where the new target's destination. Additionally, the forced movement distance gains a bonus equal to your Might score.

Spend 1 Rage: The forced movement distance instead gains a bonus equal to twice your Might score.

UNEARTHLY REFLEXES

Elusive as a hummingbird.

Keywords: — **Type:** Triggered
Distance: Self **Target:** Self
Trigger: You take damage.

Effect: **Effect:** You take half damage from the attack and can shift up to a number of squares equal to your Agility score.

Spend 1 Rage: You reduce the potency of any effect associated with the damage for you by 1.

MIGHTY LEAPS

You always succeed on Might tests made to jump. You can still roll to see if you get a reward result.

WHERE'S MY MANEUVER?

Since most other classes get a bespoke maneuver, many folks have asked during playtesting, "Where is the fury's special maneuver?" The answer is that the fury doesn't need a maneuver all their own, because most the time, we've found that the fantasy of the fury has them using the Grab or Knockback maneuvers in combat. They're really good at those maneuvers too, so it doesn't make sense to give you another option that you'll rarely or never use.

FURY ABILITIES

You specialize in dealing massive damage on the battlefield, mastering a number of unique martial abilities that allow you to strike hard and keep moving in combat.

SIGNATURE ABILITY

Choose one signature ability from the following options. Signature abilities can be used at will. (*Quick Build:* To the Death)

BRUTAL SLAM

The heavy impact of your weapon attacks drives your foes ever backward.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **3 + M damage; push 1**
- 12–16: **6 + M damage; push 2**
- 17+: **9 + M damage; push 4**

HIT AND RUN

Keeping in constant motion helps you slip out of reach after a brutal assault.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **2 + M damage**
- 12–16: **5 + M damage**
- 17+: **7 + M damage; A < strong, slowed (save ends)**

Effect: You can shift 1 square.

IMPALED!

You plunge your weapon into your enemy like a boar upon a spit.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1

Target: One creature of your size or smaller

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **2 + M damage; M < weak, grabbed**
- 12–16: **5 + M damage; M < average, grabbed**
- 17+: **7 + M damage; M < strong, grabbed**

TO THE DEATH!

Your reckless assault leaves you tactically vulnerable.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **3 + M damage**
- 12–16: **6 + M damage**
- 17+: **9 + M damage**

Effect: You gain two surges. The enemy can make an opportunity attack against you as a free triggered action.

HEROIC ABILITIES

You fight with an array of heroic abilities, all of which cost rage to fuel them.

3-RAGE ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 3 rage to use. (*Quick Build:* Back)

BACK! (3 RAGE)

Surrounded? The fools!

Keywords: Area, Melee, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: 1 burst **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **5 damage**
- 12–16: **8 damage; push 1**
- 17+: **11 damage; push 3**

OUT OF THE WAY! (3 RAGE)

Your enemies will get out of your way—whether they want to or not.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **3 + M damage; slide 2**
- 12–16: **5 + M damage; slide 3**
- 17+: **8 + M damage; slide 5**

Effect: When you slide the target, you can move into any square they leave. If you take damage from an opportunity attack by moving this way, the target takes the same amount and type of damage.

TIDE OF DEATH (3 RAGE)

Teach them the folly of lining up for you.

Keywords: Melee, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Self **Target:** Self

Effect: You move up to your speed in a straight line, and you don't treat enemy squares as difficult terrain for this move. You can end this move in a creature's space and then move them to an adjacent unoccupied space. You make one power roll that targets each enemy whose space you move through.

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **2 damage**
- 12–16: **3 damage**
- 17+: **5 damage**

The last target you damage takes extra damage equal to your Might score for every free strike you triggered during your move.

YOUR ENTRAILS ARE YOUR EXTRAILS! (3 RAGE)

Hard for them to fight when they're busy holding in their giblets.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **3 + M damage; M < weak, bleeding (save ends)**
- 12–16: **5 + M damage; M < average, bleeding (save ends)**
- 17+: **8 + M damage; M < strong, bleeding (save ends)**

Effect: While bleeding, the target takes damage equal to your Might score at the end of your turns.

5-RAGE ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 5 rage to use. (*Quick Build:* Blood for Blood)

BLOOD FOR BLOOD! (5 RAGE)

A mighty strike leaves your foe reeling.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **4 + M damage; M < weak, bleeding and weakened (save ends)**
- 12–16: **6 + M damage; M < average, bleeding and weakened (save ends)**
- 17+: **10 + M damage; M < strong, bleeding and weakened (save ends)**

Effect: You can deal 1d6 damage to yourself to deal 1d6 bonus damage to the target.

MAKE PEACE WITH YOUR GOD! (5 RAGE)

Anger is an energy.

Keywords: — **Type:** Free maneuver
Distance: Self **Target:** Self

Effect: The next ability roll you make this turn automatically achieves a tier 3 result. You gain one surge.

THUNDER ROAR (5 RAGE)

A howl erupts from you that hurls your enemies back.

Keywords: Area, Melee, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: 5 × 1 line within 1 **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **6 damage; push 2**
- 12–16: **9 damage; push 4**
- 17+: **13 damage; push 6**

Effect: The targets are pushed one at a time, starting with the target closest to you.

TO THE UTTERMOST END (5 RAGE)

You spend your life force to ensure their death.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **7 + M damage**
- 12–16: **11 + M damage**
- 17+: **16 + M damage**

Spend 1+ Rage: If you are winded, this ability deals 1d6 bonus damage for each rage spent. If you are dying, it deals 1d10 bonus damage for each rage spent. In either case, you then lose 1d6 Stamina after making this strike.

2ND-LEVEL FEATURES

As a 2nd-level fury, you gain the following features.

2ND-LEVEL ASPECT FEATURE

Your primordial aspect grants you a feature as shown on the 2nd-Level Aspect Features table.

2ND-LEVEL ASPECT FEATURES

Aspect	Feature
Berserker	Unstoppable Force
Reaver	Inescapable Wrath
Stormwight	Tooth and Claw

INESCAPABLE WRATH

You have a bonus to speed equal to your Agility score, and you ignore difficult terrain.

TOOTH AND CLAW

When you end your turn, each enemy who is adjacent to you takes damage equal to your Might score.

UNSTOPPABLE FORCE

Whenever you use the Charge action, you can make a signature strike or a heroic ability melee strike instead of a free strike. Additionally, you can jump as part of a charge.

PERK

You gain a crafting, exploration, or intrigue perk of your choice. See [Perks](#) for more information.

2ND-LEVEL ASPECT ABILITY

Your primordial aspect grants your choice of one of two abilities.

2ND-LEVEL BERSERKER ABILITY

Choose one of the following abilities.

SPECIAL DELIVERY (5 RAGE)

You ready?

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One willing ally

Effect: You vertically push the target up to 4 squares. This forced movement ignores the target's stability, and the target takes no damage from the move. At the end of this movement, the target can make a free strike that deals additional damage equal to your Might score.

WRECKING BALL (5 RAGE)

It is easier to destroy than to create. Much easier, in fact!

Keywords: Melee, Weapon **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Self **Target:** Self

Effect: You move up to your speed in a straight line. During this movement, you can move through mundane structures, including walls, which are difficult terrain for you. You automatically destroy each square of structure you move through and leave behind a square of difficult terrain.

Additionally, you make one power roll that targets each enemy you come adjacent to during the move.

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **Push 1**
- 12–16: **Push 2**
- 17+: **Push 3**

2ND-LEVEL REAVER ABILITY

Choose one of the following abilities.

PHALANX BREAKER (5 RAGE)

Organizing your forces like feckless creatures of Law. Pitiful.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Self **Target:** Self

Effect: You shift up to your speed. You make one power roll that targets up to three enemies you come adjacent to during the shift.

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **2 damage; A < weak, dazed (save ends)**
- 12–16: **4 damage; A < average, dazed (save ends)**
- 17+: **6 damage; A < strong, dazed (save ends)**

RRRAAAGHH! (5 RAGE)

Death! Deeeaaath!!

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **3 + M damage; P < weak, dazed and frightened (save ends)**
- 12–16: **5 + M damage; P < average, dazed and frightened (save ends)**
- 17+: **8 + M damage; P < strong, dazed and frightened (save ends)**

2ND-LEVEL STORMWIGHT ABILITY

Choose one of the following abilities.

APEX PREDATOR (5 RAGE)

I will hunt you down.

Keywords: Animal, Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **4 + M damage; I < weak, slowed (save ends)**
- 12–16: **6 + M damage; I < average, slowed (save ends)**
- 17+: **10 + M damage; I < strong, slowed (save ends)**

Effect: The target can't be hidden from you for 24 hours. For the rest of the encounter, whenever the target moves, you can use a free triggered action to move.

VISCERAL ROAR (5 RAGE)

The sound of the storm within you terrifies your opponents.

Keywords: Animal, Area, Magic **Type:** Action
Distance: 2 burst **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **2 damage; push 1; M < weak, dazed (save ends)**
- 12–16: **5 damage; push 2; M < average, dazed (save ends)**
- 17+: **7 damage; push 3; M < strong, dazed (save ends)**

Effect: This ability deals damage of your primordial storm type (see [Stormwight Kits](#)).

3RD-LEVEL FEATURES

As a 3rd-level fury, you gain the following features.

3RD-LEVEL ASPECT FEATURE

Your primordial aspect grants you a feature as shown on the 3rd-Level Aspect Features table.

3RD-LEVEL ASPECT FEATURES

Aspect	Feature
Berserker	Immovable Object
Reaver	See Through Your Tricks
Stormwight	Nature's Knight

IMMOVABLE OBJECT

You add your level to your effective size for the purpose of interacting with creatures and objects, including determining whether you can lift an object, are affected by forced movement, and so forth. This has no effect on your ability to be grabbed.

Additionally, you gain a bonus to stability equal to your Might score.

NATURE'S KNIGHT

You can speak with animals and elementals. You automatically sense the presence of any animal or elemental within 10 squares of you, even if they are hidden. If you are in a negotiation with an animal or elemental, you treat your Renown as 1 higher than usual. This stacks with the increase to your Renown in a negotiation with an animal of your type while in animal form (see [Stormwight Kits](#)).

SEE THROUGH YOUR TRICKS

You have a double edge on tests made to search for hidden creatures, discern hidden motives, or detect lies. You also have a double edge on tests made to gamble!

7-RAGE ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 7 rage to use.

A DEMON UNLEASHED (7 RAGE)

Foes tremble at the sight of you.

Keywords: Magic **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Self **Target:** Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, each enemy who starts their turn adjacent to you and has **P < strong** is frightened until the end of their turn.

FACE THE STORM! (7 RAGE)

Fight or flight? FIGHT!!

Keywords: Magic **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Self **Target:** Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, each creature you make a melee strike against who has **P < average** is taunted until the end of their next turn. Additionally, against any enemy taunted by you, your abilities deal additional damage equal to twice your Might score and gain a +1 bonus to potency.

STEELBREAKER (7 RAGE)

See how useless their weapons are!

Keywords: Magic **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Self **Target:** Self

Effect: You gain 20 Temporary Stamina.

YOU ARE ALREADY DEAD (7 RAGE)

Slash. Walk away.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature

Effect: If the target is not a leader or solo creature, they die at the end of their next turn. If the target is a leader or solo creature, you gain three surges and can make a melee free strike against them.

STORMWIGHT KITS

The primordial aspect of the stormwight lets you channel your rage into the form of an animal, and grants you knowledge of one of a number of special stormwight kits. You can master additional stormwight kits through play, changing them out during a Respite as with any other kit. (See [Kits](#).)

KIT FEATURES

All stormwight kits have the following features in common.

ASPECT BENEFITS AND ANIMAL FORM

Your aspect benefits are always available to you, but you gain additional benefits while in the animal form your stormwight kit lets you take at any time, or the hybrid form that some stormwight kits grant you as your rage increases (see [Growing Rage](#) below).

ASPECT OF THE WILD

Your stormwight kit's Animal Form feature grants you the following ability.

ASPECT OF THE WILD

You assume the form of the animal who channels your rage.

Keywords: Magic **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Self **Target:** Self

Effect: You can shapeshift into the animal defined by your stormwight kit, a hybrid form, or back into your true form.

While in animal form or hybrid form, you can speak normally and can speak to animals who share your form. If you are in a negotiation with an animal, you treat your Renown as 2 higher than usual while in animal form.

Spend 1 Rage: As a free maneuver on your turn, you can shapeshift a second time, either into another animal form, into your hybrid form, or back into your true form.

PRIMORDIAL STORM

Each stormwight is associated with a primordial storm, which channels a specific damage type used by some of your abilities.

EQUIPMENT

You wear no armor and wield only your unarmed strikes—which become devastating natural weapons as your rage grows.

KIT BONUSES

These bonuses apply in your true form, your animal form, and your hybrid form if applicable.

GROWING RAGE

Each stormwight kit grants a specific set of benefits for your fury Growing Rage feature. You have some of the noted benefits all the time, but gain other benefits only while in the animal form or hybrid form granted by your stormwight kit, as noted on the Growing Rage table for each stormwight kit.

BOREN

With this stormwight kit, you channel your primordial rage into the form of a bear, becoming large, durable, and imposing. Boren are tied to the craggy, rocky north, and this aspect is associated with the blizzard's bitter cold.

ASPECT BENEFITS

Whenever you use forced movement to push a creature, you can pull that creature instead. Whenever you pull a creature adjacent to you and that creature has **M < average**, you can use a free triggered action to grab that creature.

ANIMAL FORM: BEAR

When you are in your bear form, your size becomes 2, and you gain a +2 bonus to speed and a +1 bonus to distance with melee weapon abilities.

HYBRID FORM: BEAR

When you are in your hybrid form, your size becomes 2, and you gain a +2 bonus to speed and a +1 bonus to distance with melee weapon abilities.

Once you reach 4th level, the first time you take hybrid form in an encounter you gain 10 Temporary Stamina.

PRIMORDIAL STORM: BLIZZARD

Your primordial damage type is cold.

KIT BONUSES

- **Stamina Bonus:** +9
- **Stability Bonus:** +2
- **Melee Weapon Damage Bonus:** +0/+0/+4

SIGNATURE ABILITY

BEAR CLAWS

Attacks with your sharp and deadly claws grab the weak.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action

Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **2 + M damage; M < weak, grabbed**
- 12–16: **5 + M damage; M < average, grabbed**
- 17+: **11 + M damage; M < strong, grabbed**

GROWING RAGE

As your rage grows, you gain benefits as noted on the Boren Growing Rage table. Benefits are cumulative except where an improved benefit replaces a lesser benefit.

BOREN GROWING RAGE

Rage	Benefit
2	You can grab up to 2 creatures and gain a surge whenever you attack a creature you have grabbed.
4	Gain one surge the first time on a turn that you grab a creature.
6	You have an edge on power rolls for the Knockback and Grab maneuvers, and creatures have a bane on power rolls made to escape being grabbed by you.
8 (Level 4)	Gain two surges the first time on a turn that you grab a creature.
10 (Level 7)	You have an edge on power rolls for the Knockback and Grab maneuvers, and creatures have a double bane on power rolls made to escape being grabbed by you.
12 (Level 10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add your Might to potency of any ability against a creature you have grabbed.• Gain 10 Temporary Stamina when you use a heroic ability.

CORVEN

With this stormwight kit, you channel your primordial rage into the form of a crow. Corven are tied to the mountain passes and the hot winds that flow through them. This aspect is associated with the katabatic wind.

ASPECT BENEFITS

You gain an edge on tests made to hide and sneak. Additionally, whenever you are falling, you can use a free triggered action to use your Aspect of the Wild ability.

ANIMAL FORM: CROW

When you are in your crow form, your size becomes 1T and your speed gains the Fly keyword. You can use the Hide maneuver as a free maneuver, and you can use your allies as cover when you hide.

HYBRID FORM: CROW

When you are in your hybrid form, your size becomes your choice of 1S or 1M.

Once you reach 4th level, your speed gains the Fly keyword.

PRIMORDIAL STORM: KATABATIC WIND

Your primordial damage type is fire.

KIT BONUSES

- **Stamina Bonus:** +3
- **Speed Bonus:** +3
- **Melee Weapon Damage Bonus:** +2/+2/+2
- **Disengage Bonus:** +1

SIGNATURE ABILITY

WING BUFFET

Foes who try to close around you do so at their peril.

Keywords: Area, Melee, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: 1 burst **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **4 damage**
- 12–16: **6 damage**
- 17+: **8 damage**

Effect: You can shift up to 2 squares before or after the making the power roll.

GROWING RAGE

As your rage grows, you gain benefits as noted on the Corven Growing Rage table. Benefits are cumulative except where an improved benefit replaces a lesser benefit.

CORVEN GROWING RAGE

Rage	Benefit
2	When you take the Disengage move action, you can add your Agility score to the distance you can shift.
4	Gain one surge the first time on a turn that you shift.
6	You have an edge on Agility tests and the power roll for the Escape Grab and Knockback maneuvers.
8 (Level 4)	Gain two surges the first time on a turn that you shift.
10 (Level 7)	You have a double edge on Agility tests and power rolls for the Escape Grab and Knockback maneuvers.
12 (Level 10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce the potency of any effects targeting you by 2.• Gain 10 Temporary Stamina when you use a heroic ability.

RADEN

With this stormwight kit, you channel your primordial rage into the form of a rat. Raden are associated with the true nature of the rat, before cities became their habitat. This aspect is associated with the rat flood.

ASPECT BENEFITS

You gain an edge on tests made to hide and sneak. Additionally, you ignore difficult terrain.

ANIMAL FORM: RAT

When you are in your rat form, your size becomes 1T and your speed gains the Climb keyword. You can use the Hide maneuver as a free maneuver, and you can use your allies as cover when hiding. You can stay hidden while you move through any square occupied by a creature and gain an edge on tests made to climb other creatures.

HYBRID FORM: RAT

When you are in your hybrid form, your size becomes your choice of 1S or 1M.

Once you reach 4th level, your speed gains the Climb keyword in hybrid form.

PRIMORDIAL STORM: RAT FLOOD

Your primordial damage type is corruption.

KIT BONUSES

- **Stamina Bonus:** +3
- **Speed Bonus:** +3
- **Melee Weapon Damage Bonus:** +2/+2/+2
- **Disengage Bonus:** +1

SIGNATURE ABILITY

DRIVING POUNCE

Your enemies try in vain to fall back from your pouncing attack.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **4 + A damage**
- 12–16: **7 + A damage; push 1**
- 17+: **9 + A damage; push 2**

Effect: You can shift up to the same number of squares that you pushed the target.

GROWING RAGE

As your rage grows, you gain benefits as noted on the Raden Growing Rage table. Benefits are cumulative except where an improved benefit replaces a lesser benefit.

RADEN GROWING RAGE

Rage	Benefit
2	When you take the Disengage move action, you can add your Agility score to the distance you can shift.
4	Gain one surge the first time on a turn that you shift.
6	You have an edge on Agility tests, the Escape Grab maneuver, and the Knockback maneuver.
8 (Level 4)	Gain one surge the first time on a turn that you shift.
10 (Level 7)	You have a double edge on Agility tests, the Escape Grab maneuver, and the Knockback maneuver
12 (Level 10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce the potency of any effects targeting you by 2.• Gain 10 Temporary Stamina when you use a heroic ability.

VUKEN

With this stormwight kit, you channel your primordial rage into the form of a wolf. Vuken are tied to forests and open steppes, and this aspect is associated with the thunderstorm.

ASPECT BENEFITS

Whenever you take the Knockback maneuver you can also take the Aid Attack maneuver as a free triggered action.

ANIMAL FORM: WOLF

When you are in your wolf form, your size becomes 1L if it isn't already, you gain a +2 bonus to speed, and you ignore difficult terrain.

HYBRID FORM: WOLF

When you are in your hybrid form, your size becomes 1L if it isn't already, you gain a +2 bonus to speed, and you ignore difficult terrain.

Once you reach 4th level, the first time you take hybrid form in an encounter you gain 10 Temporary Stamina.

PRIMORDIAL STORM: LIGHTNING STORM

Your primordial damage type is lightning.

KIT BONUSSES

- **Stamina Bonus:** +9
- **Speed Bonus:** +2
- **Melee Weapon Damage Bonus:** +2/+2/+2
- **Disengage Bonus:** +1

SIGNATURE ABILITY

PROBING ATTACK

A savage assault forces your foes back.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action

Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **4 + M damage; A < weak, prone**
- 12–16: **7 + M damage; A < average, prone**
- 17+: **9 + M damage; A < strong, prone**

GROWING RAGE

As your rage grows, you gain benefits as noted on the Vukén Growing Rage table. Benefits are cumulative except where an improved benefit replaces a lesser benefit.

VUKÉN GROWING RAGE

Rage	Benefit
2	You can target one additional creature when using the Knockback maneuver.
4	Gain one surge the first time on a turn that you push a creature or knock another creature prone.
6	You have an edge on Agility tests and the Knockback maneuver.
8 (Level 4)	Gain two surges the first time on a turn that you push a creature or knock another creature prone.
10 (Level 7)	You have a double edge on Agility tests and the Knockback maneuver.
12 (Level 10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add your Agility to the distance of any forced movement power roll result.• Gain 10 Temporary Stamina when you use a heroic ability.

NULL

The mind is not separate from the body. Perfection of one requires perfection of the other. You strive for perfect discipline, perfect order, mastery over mind and body. You require no weapons, no tools. Any tool can be turned against the hand that wields it. *You* suffice.

As you strive for perfect order, you become an enemy of that ultimate expression of chaos: magic. Those who employ sorcery or psionics to break the laws of nature should fear you.

The null is an unarmed psionic warrior who dampens and absorbs the effects of magic and psionics. You need no weapon because you are the weapon. Play a null if you want to resist the supernatural forces of the universe with expert calm and confidence.

BASICS

Starting Characteristics: You start with an Agility of 2 and an Intuition of 2, and can choose one of the following arrays for your other characteristics scores:

- 2, -1, -1
- 1, 1, -1
- 1, 0, 0

Weak Potency: Intuition - 2

Average Potency: Intuition - 1

Strong Potency: Intuition

Starting Stamina at 1st Level: 21

Stamina Gained at 2nd and Higher Levels: 9

Recoveries: 8

Skills: Psionics, plus choose any two skills from the interpersonal or lore groups. (*Quick Build:* Psionics, Read Person, Timescape)

NULL ADVANCEMENT

Level	Features	Abilities	Tradition Abilities
1st	Null Tradition, Discipline, Null Field, Inertial Shield, Discipline Mastery, Null Speed, Psionic Augmentation, Psionic Martial Arts, Null Abilities	Two signature, 3, 5	—
2nd	Perk, Tradition Features, Tradition Ability	Two signature, 3, 5	5
3rd	Psionic Leap, Reorder, 7-Discipline Ability	Two signature, 3, 5, 7	5

1ST-LEVEL FEATURES

As a null, you gain the following features.

NULL TRADITION

Through extensive physical and psionic training, you have learned to unlock the full potential of your body. As you shape the growth of your power, you choose a null tradition from the following options, each of which grants you a skill (*Quick Build:* Chronokinetic):

Chronokinetic: Your training has allowed you to become unmoored from temporal reality, using the flow of time as another dimension that all things move through. You gain one skill from the lore group.

Cryokinetic: You are able to tap into absolute cold, the most essential energy of the manifolds, and manifest its effects in your body. You gain one skill from the crafting group.

Metakinetic: You learn to see through the illusions of the universe to truly understand your body and its psionic potential. You gain one skill from the exploration group.

Your choice of null tradition determines many of the features you'll gain from this class.

DISCIPLINE

As your mastery of your body and tradition grows, it imbues you with a Heroic Resource called discipline.

DISCIPLINE IN COMBAT

At the start of a combat encounter or some other stressful situation tracked in combat rounds (as determined by the Director), you gain discipline equal to your Victories. At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 2 discipline. Additionally, you gain 1 discipline the first time in a round an enemy in your null field takes an action. You gain 1 discipline the first time in a round that an enemy uses Malice. You lose any remaining discipline at the end of the encounter.

DISCIPLINE OUTSIDE OF COMBAT

Though you can't gain discipline outside of combat, you can use your heroic abilities and effects that cost discipline without spending it. Whenever you use an ability or effect outside of combat that costs discipline, you can't use that same ability or effect outside of combat again until you gain at least 1 Victory or finish a Respite.

If you use an ability outside of combat that lets you spend unlimited discipline on its effect, you can use it as if you had spent an amount of discipline on it equal to your Victories. (Such abilities aren't part of the core rules for the null but might appear in future products.)

NULL FIELD

You project a psionic field of order around your body, dampening the effects of supernatural abilities harmful to you and your allies.

NULL FIELD

You intuit where an incoming attack will strike, reducing its effects.

Keywords: Psionic

Type: Maneuver

Distance: 1 aura

Target: All enemies

Effect: Each target reduces their potencies by 1.

Once as a free maneuver on your turn, you can spend 1 discipline and give your Null Field has one of the following additional effects until the start of your next turn:

- **Gravitic Disruption:** When a target takes damage, you can slide them 2.
- **Inertial Anchor:** Each target who starts their turn in the area cannot shift.
- **Synaptic Break:** When a target is subjected to a potency, the potency is increased by 1.

This ability stays active even after encounters end. It ends if you are dying or if you willingly end it (no action required).

INERTIAL SHIELD

Your instincts for danger let you predict attacks before they happen.

INERTIAL SHIELD

You intuit where an incoming attack will strike, reducing its effects.

Keywords: Psionic

Type: Triggered

Distance: Self

Target: Self

Trigger: You take damage.

Effect: You halve the damage.

Spend 1 Discipline: You decrease the potency of one effect associated with the damage for you by 1.

DISCIPLINE MASTERY

The more discipline you channel through your chosen null tradition, the more potent your presence in combat becomes.

CHRONOKINETIC MASTERY

You can use the Disengage move action as a free maneuver when you use Inertial Shield.

As your discipline grows, your psionic mastery of your body intensifies, granting benefits from the Chronokinetic Mastery table.

CHRONOKINETIC MASTERY

Discipline	Benefit
2	When you take the Knockback maneuver you can Disengage as a free triggered action, either before or after the maneuver.
4	You gain one surge the first time on a turn that you move at least 1 square as part of an ability.
6	You gain an edge on the power rolls for Grab and Knockback maneuvers.
8 (Level 4)	You gain two surges the first time on a turn that you move at least 1 square as part of an ability.
10 (Level 7)	You gain a double edge on the power roll for the Grab and Knockback maneuvers.
12 (Level 10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You add your Intuition score to the distance of any forced movement you create.• You gain 10 Temporary Stamina when you use a

heroic ability.

CRYOKINETIC MASTERY

You can use the Grab maneuver as a free triggered action whenever you use Inertial Shield.

As your discipline grows, your psionic mastery of your body intensifies, granting benefits from the Cryokinetic Mastery table.

CRYOKINETIC MASTERY

Discipline	Benefit
2	You can target one additional creature when using the Knockback maneuver.
4	You gain one surge the first time on a turn that you grab a target or an enemy moves at least 1 square in your Null Field.
6	You gain an edge on the power rolls for the Grab and Knockback maneuvers.
8 (Level 4)	You gain two surges the first time on a turn that you grab a target or an enemy moves at least 1 square in your Null Field.
10 (Level 7)	You gain a double edge on the power rolls for the Grab and Knockback maneuvers.
12 (Level 10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You add your Intuition score to the distance of any forced movement you inflict.• You gain 10 Temporary Stamina when you use a heroic ability.

METAKINETIC MASTERY

You can use the Knockback maneuver as a free triggered action whenever you use Inertial Shield.

As your discipline grows, your psionic mastery of your body intensifies, granting benefits from the Metakinetic Mastery table.

METAKINETIC MASTERY

Discipline	Benefit
2	You add your Intuition score to the distance you push a creature with the Knockback maneuver.
4	You gain one surge the first time in a round that you take damage or are force moved, even if you resist the effect.
6	You gain an edge on the power rolls for the Grab and Knockback maneuvers.
8 (Level 4)	You gain two surges the first time in a round that you take damage or are force moved, even if you resist the effect.
10 (Level 7)	You gain a double edge on the power rolls for the Grab and Knockback maneuvers.
12 (Level 10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You add your Intuition score to the distance of any forced movement you inflict.• Gain 10 Temporary Stamina when you use a heroic ability.

NULL SPEED

Your psionic mastery of your body allows you to achieve great quickness. You gain a bonus to your speed and a bonus to the number of squares you shift when you take the Disengage move action equal to your Agility score.

PSIONIC AUGMENTATION

Your training has turned your body into the perfect psionic weapon, shaping pathways in your mind that enhance your physical form. Choose one of the following augmentations. You can change your focus by undergoing a psionic meditation as a respite activity. (*Quick Build*: Speed Augmentation)

DENSITY AUGMENTATION

You gain a +6 bonus to Stamina, and this bonus increases by 6 at 4th, 7th, and 10th levels. Additionally, you gain a +1 bonus to stability.

FORCE AUGMENTATION

You gain a +1 rolled damage bonus with damage-dealing psionic abilities.

SPEED AUGMENTATION

You gain a +1 bonus to speed and to the distance you shift when you take the Disengage move action.

PSIONIC MARTIAL ARTS

When you use the Knockback or Grab maneuver, you use Intuition instead of Might for the power roll. If you use Knockback, you can choose to slide the target instead of pushing them.

NULL ABILITIES

You rely on a unique blend of martial techniques and psionic prowess to take down your foes and defend your allies.

SIGNATURE ABILITIES

Select two signature abilities from the following options. Signature abilities can be used at will. (*Quick Build*: Faster than the Eye, Inertial Step)

DANCE OF BLOWS

You strike everywhere at once, tricking an enemy into moving out of position.

Keywords: Area, Melee, Psionic, Weapon **Type**: Action
Distance: 1 burst **Target**: Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **4 damage**
- 12–16: **5 damage**
- 17+: **7 damage**

Effect: You can slide one adjacent enemy up to a number of squares equal to your Intuition score.

FASTER THAN THE EYE

You strike so quickly that your hands become a blur.

Keywords: Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon **Type**: Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target**: Two creatures or objects

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **4 damage**
- 12–16: **5 damage**
- 17+: **7 damage**

Effect: You can deal damage equal to your Agility score to an adjacent creature or object.

INERTIAL STEP

You flit about the battlefield with an opportunistic strike.

Keywords: Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon **Type**: Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target**: One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **5 + A damage**
- 12–16: **7 + A damage**
- 17+: **10 + A damage**

Effect: You can shift up to half your speed before or after you make the strike.

JOINT LOCK

You contort your enemy's body into a stance they struggle to escape from.

Keywords: Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon **Type**: Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target**: One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **4 + A damage; A < weak, grabbed**
- 12–16: **7 + A damage; A < average, grabbed**
- 17+: **9 + A damage; A < strong, grabbed**

KINETIC STRIKE

Your opponent staggers. They cannot ignore you.

Keywords: Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon **Type**: Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target**: One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **4 + A damage; taunted (EoT)**
- 12–16: **5 + A damage; taunted (EoT); slide 1**
- 17+: **6 + A damage; taunted (EoT); slide 2**

MAGNETIC STRIKE

The force of your blow extends past the limits of your body, pulling your enemy closer.

Keywords: Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 2 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **5 + A psychic damage; vertical pull 1**
- 12–16: **8 + A psychic damage; vertical pull 2**
- 17+: **11 + A psychic damage; vertical pull 3**

PHASE INVERSION STRIKE

You step momentarily out of phase as you pull an enemy through you.

Keywords: Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **4 + A damage; push 2**
- 12–16: **6 + A damage; push 4**
- 17+: **8 + A damage; push 6**

Effect: Before the push is resolved, teleport the target to a square adjacent to you opposite the one they started in. If the target cannot be teleported, then they ignore the push.

PRESSURE POINTS

You strike at key nerve clusters to leave your foe staggered.

Keywords: Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **4 + A damage; A < weak, weakened (save ends)**
- 12–16: **7 + A damage; A < average, weakened (save ends)**
- 17+: **9 + A damage; A < strong, weakened (save ends)**

HEROIC ABILITIES

You have mastered a range of heroic abilities, all of them channeled through your discipline.

3-DISCIPLINE ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 3 discipline to use. (*Quick Build:* Chronal Spike)

CHRONAL SPIKE (3 DISCIPLINE)

You foresee the best moment to strike, then exploit it.

Keywords: Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **7 + A damage**
- 12–16: **10 + A damage**
- 17+: **13 + A damage**

Effect: You can shift up to half your speed before or after you make the strike. Additionally, whenever an effect lets you use a free strike or a signature ability, you can use this ability instead, paying its discipline cost as usual.

PSYCHIC PULSE (3 DISCIPLINE)

A burst of psionic energy interferes with your enemy's synapses.

Keywords: Area, Psionic **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: 2 burst **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Effect: Each target takes psychic damage equal to twice your Intuition score. Until the start of your next turn, the area of your Null Field ability increases by 1. When you end your turn, each enemy in that area takes psychic damage equal to your Intuition score.

RELENTLESS NEMESIS (3 DISCIPLINE)

You strike, and for the next few moments, your enemy can't escape you.

Keywords: Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **6 + A damage**
- 12–16: **8 + A damage**
- 17+: **12 + A damage**

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, when the target moves, you can use a free triggered action to shift up to your speed. You must end this shift adjacent to the target.

STUNNING BLOW (3 DISCIPLINE)

You focus your psionic technique into a debilitating concussive punch.

Keywords: Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **4 + A damage; I < weak, dazed and slowed (save ends)**
- 12–16: **5 + A damage; I < average, dazed and slowed (save ends)**
- 17+: **7 + A damage; I < strong, dazed and slowed (save ends)**

5-DISCIPLINE ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 5 discipline to use. (*Quick Build:* A Squad Unto Myself)

ARCANE DISRUPTOR (5 DISCIPLINE)

Your blow reorders a foe's body, causing pain if they attempt to channel sorcery.

Keywords: Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **8 + A psychic damage; M < weak, weakened (save ends)**
- 12–16: **12 + A psychic damage; M < average, weakened (save ends)**
- 17+: **16 + A psychic damage; M < strong, weakened (save ends)**

Effect: While weakened this way, the target takes damage equal to your Intuition score when they use a supernatural or ability that costs Malice.

IMPART FORCE (5 DISCIPLINE)

A single touch from you, and your enemy flies backward.

Keywords: Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Melee 1

Target: One creature or object

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **Push 3**
- 12–16: **Push 5**
- 17+: **Push 7**

Effect: You gain an edge on this ability. For each square you push the target, they take 1 psychic damage.

PHASE STRIKE (5 DISCIPLINE)

For a moment, your foe slips out of phase with this manifold.

Keywords: Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon

Type: Action

Distance: Melee 1

Target: One creature

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **3 + A psychic damage; I < weak, the target goes out of phase, then is slowed (save ends)**
- 12–16: **4 + A psychic damage; I < average, the target goes out of phase, then is slowed (save ends)**
- 17+: **6 + A psychic damage; I < strong, the target goes out of phase, then is slowed (save ends)**

Effect: A target who goes out of phase is removed from the encounter until the end of their next turn, reappearing in their original space or the nearest available space.

A SQUAD UNTO MYSELF (5 DISCIPLINE)

You move so quickly, it seems as though an army assaulted your foes.

Keywords: Area, Melee, Psionic, Weapon

Type: Action

Distance: 2 burst

Target: Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **6 damage**
- 12–16: **9 damage**
- 17+: **13 damage**

Effect: You can take the Disengage move action as a free maneuver before or after you make this ability.

2ND-LEVEL FEATURES

As a 2nd-level null, you gain the following features.

PERK

You gain an exploration, interpersonal, or intrigue perk of your choice. See [Perks](#) for more information.

2ND-LEVEL TRADITION FEATURE

Your chosen null tradition grants you a feature as shown on the 2nd-Level Tradition Features table.

2ND-LEVEL TRADITION FEATURES

Tradition	Feature
Chronokinetic	Rapid Processing
Cryokinetic	Entropic Adaptability
Metakinetic	Inertial Sink

ENTROPIC ADAPTABILITY

You ignore difficult terrain related to cold and ice, and you can automatically climb at full speed while moving. Additionally, you have cold immunity equal to twice your Intuition score.

INERTIAL SINK

You add your Intuition score to your effective size for the purpose of interacting with creatures and objects, including determining whether you can lift an object, are affected by forced movement, and so forth. This has no effect on your ability to be grabbed.

Additionally, you have forced movement damage immunity equal to your level and reduce the distance of your falls by an additional 5 squares.

RAPID PROCESSING

As a maneuver, you can read an entire book or process a similar amount of information. Additionally, during any respite, you can take an additional respite activity.

2ND-LEVEL TRADITION ABILITY

Your null tradition grants your choice of one of two abilities.

2ND-LEVEL CHRONOKINETIC ABILITY

Choose one of the following abilities.

BLUR (5 DISCIPLINE)

You release stored time, allowing you to act twice.

Keywords: Psionic

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Self

Target: Self

Effect: You can use a signature or heroic ability as a free maneuver. You gain an edge on power rolls with this ability.

FORCE REDIRECTED (5 DISCIPLINE)

The force of your strike manifests in a surprising location.

Keywords: Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon

Type: Action

Distance: Melee 3

Target: One creature

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **8 + A damage; slide 1**
- 12–16: **12 + A damage; slide 3**
- 17+: **16 + A damage; slide 5**

2ND-LEVEL CRYOKINETIC ABILITY

Choose one of the following abilities.

ENTROPIC FIELD (5 DISCIPLINE)

You drastically increase the local entropy.

Keywords: Area, Psionic, Weapon

Type: Action

Distance: 3 cube within 1

Target: Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **6 cold damage; A < weak, slowed (save ends)**
- 12–16: **9 cold damage; A < average, slowed (save ends)**
- 17+: **13 cold damage; A < strong, slowed (save ends)**

HEAT SINK (5 DISCIPLINE)

You absorb ambient heat, coating the ground in frost and precipitating snow from the air

Keywords: Psionic

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Self

Target: Self

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, the area of your Null Field ability increases by 1. While the area is enlarged this way, you and your allies benefit from concealment while in the area. When you end your turn, each enemy in the area takes cold damage equal to your Intuition score.

2ND-LEVEL METAKINETIC ABILITY

Choose one of the following abilities.

GRAVITIC STRIKE (5 DISCIPLINE)

Your fist projects gravitic force that pulls a distant enemy closer.

Keywords: Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon

Type: Action

Distance: Melee 3

Target: One creature

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **8 + A psychic damage; vertical pull 3**
- 12–16: **12 + A psychic damage; vertical pull 5**
- 17+: **16 + A psychic damage; vertical pull 7**

KINETIC SHIELD (5 DISCIPLINE)

You manifest a force barrier that absorbs incoming kinetic energy.

Keywords: Psionic

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Self

Target: Self

Power Roll + Intuition:

- 11 or lower: **You gain 10 temporary Stamina**
- 12–16: **You gain 15 temporary Stamina**
- 17+: **You gain 20 temporary Stamina**

Effect: While you have this temporary Stamina, you can't be made bleeding.

3RD-LEVEL FEATURES

As a 3rd-level null, you gain the following features.

PSIONIC LEAP

You can long and high jump a distance equal to twice your Agility score without needing to make a test.

REORDER

Each time you start your turn, you can use a free triggered action to end one effect on you or another creature in the area of your Null Field ability.

7-DISCIPLINE ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 7 discipline to use.

ABSORPTION FIELD (7 DISCIPLINE)

Your null field absorbs kinetic energy.

Keywords: Psionic

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Self

Target: Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, the area of your Null Field ability increases by 1. While the area is enlarged this way, each enemy in the area takes a bane on ability power rolls.

MOLECULAR REARRANGEMENT FIELD (7 DISCIPLINE)

Your enemies' wounds open, your allies' wounds close.

Keywords: Psionic

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Self

Target: Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, the area of your Null Field ability increases by 1. While the area is enlarged this way, each enemy who has **1 < average** and enters the area for the first time in a round or starts their turn there is bleeding (save ends). The first time any ally enters the area or starts their turn there, they gain temporary Stamina equal to your Intuition score.

STABILIZING FIELD (7 DISCIPLINE)

You project order, making it harder for your enemies to interfere with you and your allies.

Keywords: Psionic

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Self

Target: Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, the area of your Null Field ability increases by 1. While the area is enlarged this way, you and any ally in the area ignore difficult terrain, reduce the potency of enemy effects targeting them by 1, and can use a free triggered action at the start of each of their turns to end one condition or effect that is affecting them.

SYNAPSE FIELD (7 DISCIPLINE)

Attacks made by allies in your null field disrupt your enemies' thoughts, causing psychic pain.

Keywords: Psionic

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Self

Target: Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, the area of your Null Field ability increases by 1. While the area is enlarged this way, enemies who take damage in the area taken additional psychic damage equal to twice your Intuition score.

SHADOW

Subtlety is your art, the tip of the blade your brush. You studied at a secret college, specializing in alchemy, illusion, or shadow-magics. Your training and knowledge places you among the elite assassins, spies, and commandos. But more powerful than any weapon or sorcery is your insight into your enemies' weaknesses.

As a shadow, you have abilities that deal a lot of damage, let you move swiftly across the battlefield and away from hazards, and allow you to fade from notice even in the middle of the most heated combat encounter. You also possess more skills than any other hero.

BASICS

Starting Characteristics: You start with an Agility of 2, and can choose one of the following arrays for your other characteristics scores:

- 2, 2, -1, -1
- 2, 1, 1, -1
- 2, 1, 0, 0
- 1, 1, 1, 0

Weak Potency: Agility - 2

Average Potency: Agility - 1

Strong Potency: Agility

Starting Stamina at 1st Level: 18

Stamina Gained at 2nd and Higher Levels: 9

Recoveries: 8

Skills: Hide and Sneak, plus choose any five skills from Criminal Underworld or the skills of the exploration, interpersonal, or intrigue skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Hide, Sneak, Criminal Underworld, Lie, Pick Lock, Pick Pocket, Sabotage)

SHADOW ADVANCEMENT

Level	Features	Abilities	College Abilities
1st	Shadow College, Insight, College Features, College Triggered Action, Hesitation is Weakness, Kit, Shadow Abilities	Signature, 3, 5	—
2nd	College Feature, Perk, College Ability	Signature, 3, 5	5
3rd	Careful Observation, 7-Insight Ability	Signature, 3, 5, 7	5

1ST-LEVEL FEATURES

As a shadow, you gain the following features.

SHADOW COLLEGE

Shadow colleges are secret institutions that turn ordinary folk into something else. Finding a college is the first step in a rigorous initiation process that tests the mettle of an applicant. Even those who make the cut often wash out—or are kicked out—as the master shadows who teach stealth, magic, and assassination to their students are often less than gentle in their approach.

You graduated from a shadow college chosen from the following options, each of which grants you a skill (*Quick Build:* College of Black Ash):

College of Black Ash: The College of Black Ash founded the art of being a shadow. Its graduates use Black Ash sorcery to teleport around the battlefield in clouds of soot, and to manipulate and create darkness. Graduates of the college are unmatched in mobility. You gain the Magic skill.

College of Caustic Alchemy: The College of Caustic Alchemy teaches its students recipes for the acids, bombs, and poisons used in their grim work. Graduates of the college are exceptional assassins. You gain the Alchemy skill.

College of the Harlequin Mask: Graduates of the College of the Harlequin Mask learn illusion magic, which they use to infiltrate enemy strongholds and create orchestrated chaos in combat. You gain the Lie skill.

Your choice of shadow college determines many of the features you'll gain from this class.

INSIGHT

By observing your enemy, you learn how to use their weaknesses against them, building up a Heroic Resource called insight.

INSIGHT IN COMBAT

At the start of a combat encounter or some other stressful situation tracked in combat rounds (as determined by the Director), you gain insight equal to your Victories. At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 1d3 insight. The first time each round that you deal damage with at least one surge, you gain 1 insight. You lose any remaining insight at the end of the encounter.

When you use a heroic ability that has a power roll, that ability costs 1 less insight if you have an edge or double edge on it. If the ability has multiple targets, the cost is reduced even if the ability has an edge or double edge against only one target.

INSIGHT OUTSIDE OF COMBAT

Though you can't gain insight outside of combat, you can use your heroic abilities and effects that cost insight without spending it. Whenever you use an ability or effect outside of combat that costs insight, you can't use that same ability or effect outside of combat again until you gain at least 1 Victory or finish a Respite.

If you use an ability outside of combat that lets you spend unlimited insight on its effect, such as Black Ash Teleport, you can use it as if you had spent an amount of insight on it equal to your Victories.

1ST-LEVEL COLLEGE FEATURES

Your choice of shadow college grants you one or more features as shown on the 1st-Level College Features table.

1ST-LEVEL COLLEGE FEATURES

College	Feature
Black Ash	Black Ash Teleport
Caustic Alchemy	Coat the Blade, Smoke Bomb
Harlequin Mask	I'm No Threat

BLACK ASH TELEPORT

You gain the following ability.

BLACK ASH TELEPORT

In a swirl of black ash, you step from one place to another.

Keywords: Magic **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Self **Target:** Self

Effect: You teleport up to 5 squares. If you have concealment or cover at your destination, you can use the Hide maneuver even if you are observed. If you hide using this maneuver, you gain a surge.

Spend 1+ Insight: You teleport 1 additional square for each insight spent.

COAT THE BLADE

You gain the following ability.

COAT THE BLADE

Just a little poison goes a long way.

Keywords: — **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Self **Target:** Self

Effect: You gain two surges. Whenever you use a surge before the end of the encounter, you can choose to have its damage be poison damage.

Spend 1+ Insight: For each insight you spend, you gain an additional surge.

I'M NO THREAT

You gain the following ability.

I'M NO THREAT

Taking on the illusory countenance of another creature gives you an advantage on subterfuge.

Keywords: Magic **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Self **Target:** Self

Effect: When you use this ability, you cover yourself in an illusion that causes you to appear nonthreatening and harmless to your enemies. You might take on the appearance of a harmless animal of your size, such as a sheep or capybara, or you might appear as a less heroic, unarmed, and capable version of yourself. While this illusion lasts, your strikes made against other creatures gain an edge. If you use this ability in combat, you gain a surge when you use it.

The illusion ends when you harm another creature, when you and any creature physically interact, when you use this ability again, or when you end the illusion (no action required).

Spend 1 Insight: Choose a creature whose size is no more than 1 greater than yours, and who is within 10 squares of you. This ability's illusion makes you appear to be that creature. This illusion covers your entire body, including clothing and armor, and changes your voice to sound like the creature. You gain an edge on tests made to convince the creature's allies that you are the creature.

SMOKE BOMB

You always carry a supply of smoke bombs to make it easy for you to distract and get away from foes. You can use the Hide maneuver even if you are observed and don't initially have cover or concealment. When you do so, you can shift a number of squares equal to your Agility score. If you end this movement with cover or concealment, you are hidden.

COLLEGE TRIGGERED ACTION

Your shadow college grants you a triggered action as shown on the College Triggered Actions table.

COLLEGE TRIGGERED ACTIONS

College	Triggered Action
Black Ash	In All This Confusion
Caustic Alchemy	Defensive Roll
Harlequin Mask	Clever Trick

CLEVER TRICK (1 INSIGHT)

You sow a moment of confusion in combat, to your enemy's peril.

Keywords: Magic **Type:** Triggered
Distance: Self **Target:** Self
Trigger: An enemy targets you with a strike.

Effect: Choose an enemy within distance of the triggering strike, including the enemy who targeted you. The strike targets that enemy instead.

DEFENSIVE ROLL

When an enemy attacks, you roll with the impact to reduce the harm.

Keywords: — **Type:** Triggered
Distance: Self **Target:** Self
Trigger: Another creature damages you.

Effect: You halve the damage against the triggering damage, then can shift up to 2 squares after the triggering effect resolves. If you end this shift with concealment or cover, you can use the Hide maneuver even if you are observed.

Spend 1 Insight: You reduce the potency of any effect associated with the damage for you by 1.

IN ALL THIS CONFUSION

You vanish in a plume of black smoke to avoid danger.

Keywords: Magic **Type:** Triggered
Distance: Self **Target:** Self
Trigger: You take damage.

Effect: You halve the damage, then can teleport up to 4 squares after the triggering effect resolves.

Spend 1+ Insight: You teleport 1 additional square for each insight spent.

HESITATION IS WEAKNESS

You gain the following ability.

HESITATION IS WEAKNESS (1 INSIGHT)

Keep up the attack. Never give them a moment's grace.

Keywords: — **Type:** Free triggered action
Distance: Self **Target:** Self
Trigger: Another hero ends their turn. That hero can't have used this ability to start their turn.

Effect: You take your turn after the triggering hero.

KIT

You can use and gain the benefits of a kit. See the [Kits](#) chapter for more information. (*Quick Build:* Cloak and Dagger)

SHADOW ABILITIES

You specialize in dealing damage, then getting out of harm's way before the inevitable counterattack. You know a number of unique martial abilities that define your presence on the battlefield.

SIGNATURE ABILITY

Choose one signature ability from the following options. Signature abilities can be used at will. (*Quick Build:* Teamwork Has Its Place)

GASPING IN PAIN

Your precise strikes let your allies take advantage of a target's agony.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **3 + A damage**
- 12–16: **5 + A damage**
- 17+: **8 + A damage; I < strong, prone**

Effect: An ally of your choice within 5 squares of the target gains a surge.

I WORK BETTER ALONE

It's better, just you and me. Isn't it?

Keywords: Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 or ranged 5 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **3 + A damage**
- 12–16: **6 + A damage**
- 17+: **9 + A damage**

Effect: If the target has no allies adjacent to them, this strike deals extra damage equal to your Agility score.

TEAMWORK HAS ITS PLACE

You attack an enemy, distracting them long enough for an ally to stab them.

Keywords: Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 or ranged 5

Target: One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **3 + A damage**
- 12–16: **6 + A damage**
- 17+: **9 + A damage**

Effect: If an ally is adjacent to the target, the target takes extra damage equal to your Agility score.

YOU WERE WATCHING THE WRONG ONE

They can't watch both of you at once.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **3 + A damage**
- 12–16: **5 + A damage**
- 17+: **8 + A damage**

Effect: As long as you have at least one ally within 5 squares of the target, you gain a surge. If you are flanking the target when you use this ability, choose one ally who is flanking with you. That ally also gain a surge.

HEROIC ABILITIES

A range of heroic abilities define your combat prowess, all of which make use of your insight.

3-INSIGHT ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 3 insight to use. (*Quick Build:* Get In Get Out)

DISORIENTING STRIKE (3 INSIGHT)

Your attack leaves them reeling, allowing you to follow up.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **4 + A damage; slide 2**
- 12–16: **6 + A damage; slide 3**
- 17+: **10 + A damage; slide 5**

Effect: You can shift into any square the target leaves when you slide them.

EVISCERATE (3 INSIGHT)

You leave your foe bleeding out after a devastating attack.

Keywords: Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 or ranged 5 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **4 + A damage; A < weak, bleeding (save ends)**
- 12–16: **6 + A damage; A < average, bleeding (save ends)**
- 17+: **10 + A damage; A < strong, bleeding (save ends)**

GET IN GET OUT (3 INSIGHT)

Move unexpectedly, strike fast, and be gone!

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **5 + A damage**
- 12–16: **8 + A damage**
- 17+: **11 + A damage**

Effect: You can shift up to your speed, dividing that movement before or after your strike as desired.

TWO THROATS AT ONCE (3 INSIGHT)

A bargain.

Keywords: Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 or ranged 5

Target: Two creatures or objects

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **4 damage**
- 12–16: **6 damage**
- 17+: **10 damage**

5-INSIGHT ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 5 insight to use. (*Quick Build:* Coup de Grace)

COUP DE GRACE (5 INSIGHT)

Your blade might be the last thing they see.

Keywords: Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 or ranged 5 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **1d6 + 7 + A damage**
- 12–16: **1d6 + 11 + A damage**
- 17+: **1d6 + 16 + A damage**

ONE HUNDRED THROATS (5 INSIGHT)

As you move across the battlefield, every foe within reach feels your wrath.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Self; see below **Target:** Self

Effect: You shift up to your speed. You make one power roll that targets up to three enemies, each of who became adjacent to you during the move.

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **3 damage**
- 12–16: **6 damage**
- 17+: **9 A damage**

SET-UP (5 INSIGHT)

Your friends will thank you.

Keywords: Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 5 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **6 + A damage; R < weak, the target has damage weakness 5 (save ends)**
- 12–16: **9 + A damage; R < average, the target has damage weakness 5 (save ends)**
- 17+: **13 + A damage; R < strong, the target has damage weakness 5 (save ends)**

SHADOWSTRIKE (5 INSIGHT)

They have no idea what the college taught you.

Keywords: Magic, Melee, Ranged **Type:** Action
Distance: Self; see below **Target:** Self

Effect: You make two signature strikes.

2ND-LEVEL FEATURES

As a 2nd-level shadow, you gain the following features.

2ND-LEVEL COLLEGE FEATURE

Your shadow college grants you a feature as shown on the 2nd-Level College Features table.

2ND-LEVEL COLLEGE FEATURES

Specialization	Feature
Black Ash	Burning Ash
Caustic Alchemy	Trained Assassin
Harlequin Mask	Friend!

BURNING ASH

The ash you leave behind burns your foes. The first time on a turn that you use a shadow ability to teleport away from or into a space adjacent to an enemy, that enemy takes fire damage equal to your Reason score.

FRIEND!

Your illusions make your enemies believe you are their friend in critical moments. Whenever an enemy uses an ability or trait that targets multiple allies and you are within distance of the effect, you can choose to be a target of the effect as well.

Additionally when you use your I'm No Threat ability, you can take the Disengage move action as part of that ability.

TRAINED ASSASSIN

You know just where to cut your enemies. Whenever you make a strike with at least one surge and no banes, the strike gains an extra surge which you must use on that strike.

PERK

You gain an exploration, interpersonal, or intrigue perk of your choice. See [Perks](#) for more information.

2ND-LEVEL COLLEGE ABILITY

Your shadow college grants your choice of one of two abilities.

2ND-LEVEL BLACK ASH ABILITY

Choose one of the following abilities.

IN A PUFF OF ASH (5 INSIGHT)

You enchant a strike with your teleportation magic.

Keywords: Magic, Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon

Type: Action

Distance: Melee 1 or ranged 5

Target: One creature

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **6 + A damage; you can teleport the target 1 square**
- 12–16: **10 + A damage; you can teleport the target up to 3 squares**
- 17+: **14 + A damage; you can teleport the target up to 5 squares**

TOO SLOW (5 INSIGHT)

Your foe made a big mistake.

Keywords: Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon

Type: Free Triggered Action

Distance: Self; see below

Target: Self

Trigger: You use your In All This Confusion ability.

Effect: You avoid any effects associated with the damage that triggered your In All This Confusion ability. Before you teleport, you can make a free strike against a creature who damaged you to trigger In All This Confusion. After you teleport, you can spend a Recovery.

2ND-LEVEL CAUSTIC ALCHEMY ABILITY

Choose one of the following abilities.

STICKY BOMB (5 INSIGHT)

Explosives are best when they're attached to an enemy.

Keywords: Ranged

Type: Action

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Effect: You attach a small bomb to a creature. If you are hidden from the creature, they don't notice the bomb and you remain hidden. The creature otherwise notices the bomb and can remove it as an action, disarming the bomb. At the end of your next turn, the bomb detonates. You can also detonate it earlier (no action required). When the bomb detonates, you make a power roll targeting each enemy within 3 squares of it.

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **4 + A fire damage**
- 12–16: **7 + A fire damage**
- 17+: **11 + A fire damage**

STINK BOMB (5 INSIGHT)

Yellow, disgusting gas explodes from a bomb you toss.

Keywords: Area, Ranged

Type: Action

Distance: 3 cube within 10

Target: Each creature in the area

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **2 poison damage**
- 12–16: **5 poison damage**
- 17+: **7 poison damage**

Effect: The gas remains in the area until the end of the encounter. Any creature who has **M < average** and starts their turn in the area is weakened (save ends).

2ND-LEVEL HARLEQUIN MASK ABILITY

Choose one of the following abilities.

MACHINATIONS OF SOUND (5 INSIGHT)

Illusory sounds make your foes reposition themselves as they cower or investigate the disturbance.

Keywords: Area, Magic, Ranged

Type: Maneuver

Distance: 3 cube within 10

Target: Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **Slide 4**
- 12–16: **Slide 5**
- 17+: **Slide 7**

Effect: This forced movement ignores stability. Instead, the forced movement is reduced by a number equal to the target's Intuition score.

SO GULLIBLE (5 INSIGHT)

When your enemy strikes, you reveal you were in a different place all along.

Keywords: Attack, Melee, Ranged, Magic, Weapon

Type: Free Triggered Action

Distance: Self; see below

Target: Self

Trigger: An enemy strikes you.

Effect: You use your Clever Trick ability with no insight cost, causing the creature who made the triggering strike to target an illusory image of you. You appear in an unoccupied space within 3 squares of that creature and can make a free strike against them. You can then spend a Recovery.

3RD-LEVEL FEATURES

As a 3rd-level shadow, you gain the following features.

CAREFUL OBSERVATION

Given the opportunity to watch your foe, you can assess their vulnerabilities and pick the perfect moment to strike. You gain the following ability.

CAREFUL OBSERVATION

A moment of focus leaves a foe firmly in your sights.

Keywords: — **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: 20 squares **Target:** One creature

Effect: As long as you remain within distance of the target, maintain line of effect to them, and strike no other creature first, you gain a surge and an edge on the next strike you make against the assessed creature.

7-INSIGHT ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 7 insight to use.

DANCER (7 INSIGHT)

You enter a flow state that makes you nearly impossible to pin down.

Keywords: — **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Self **Target:** Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, whenever an enemy moves adjacent to you or damages you, you can take the Disengage move action as a free triggered action.

MISDIRECTING STRIKE (7 INSIGHT)

Why are you looking at ME?!

Keywords: Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 or ranged 5 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **9 + A damage**
- 12–16: **13 + A damage**
- 17+: **18 + A damage**

Effect: The target is taunted by a willing ally within 5 squares of you until the end of the target's next turn.

PINNING SHOT (7 INSIGHT)

One missile—placed well and placed hard.

Keywords: Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 5 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **8 + A damage; A < weak, restrained (save ends)**
- 12–16: **12 + A damage; A < average, restrained (save ends)**
- 17+: **16 + A damage; A < strong, restrained (save ends)**

STAGGERING BLOW (7 INSIGHT)

There's no recovering from this.

Keywords: Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 or ranged 5 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **7 + A damage; M < weak, slowed (save ends)**
- 12–16: **11 + A damage; M < average, prone and can't stand (save ends)**
- 17+: **16 + A damage; M < strong, prone and can't stand (save ends)**

TACTICIAN

Strategist. Defender. Leader. With sword in hand, you lead allies into the maw of battle, barking out commands that inspire your fellow heroes to move faster and strike more precisely. All the while, you stand between your compatriots and death, taunting the followers of evil to best you if they can.

As a tactician, you have abilities that heal your allies and grant them increased damage, movement, and attacks.

BASICS

Starting Characteristics: You start with a Might of 2 and a Reason of 2, and can choose one of the following arrays for your other characteristics scores:

- 2, -1, -1
- 1, 1, -1
- 1, 0, 0

Weak Potency: Reason - 2

Average Potency: Reason - 1

Strong Potency: Reason

Starting Stamina at 1st Level: 21

Stamina Gained at 2nd and Higher Levels: 12

Recoveries: 10

Skills: Lead, plus choose any two skills from Alertness, Architecture, Blacksmithing, Brag, Culture, Empathize, Fletching, Mechanics, Monsters, Search, Strategy, or the skills of the exploration skill group. (*Quick Build:* Lead, Monsters, Strategy)

TACTICIAN ADVANCEMENT

Level	Features	Abilities	Doctrine Abilities
1st	Tactical Doctrine, Focus, Doctrine Feature, Doctrine Triggered Action, Field Arsenal, Mark, Strike Now, Tactician Abilities	3, 5	—
2nd	Doctrine Feature, Perk, Doctrine Ability	3, 5	5
3rd	Out of Position, 7-Focus Ability	3, 5, 7	5

1ST-LEVEL FEATURES

As a tactician, you gain the following features.

TACTICAL DOCTRINE

Warfare is as old as civilization—and perhaps even older. As battle became ever more developed and complex, military leaders invented tactical doctrine, outlining how combatants should be structured, used, and deployed. Doctrine can be learned at war colleges passing on ancient martial traditions, or directly through blood and sweat on the battlefield. Whatever path brought you to your mastery of tactics of historical significance, you choose a tactical doctrine from the following options, each of which grants you a skill (*Quick Build:* Vanguard):

Insurgent (Asymmetric Warfare): Doing your duty, playing fair, and dying honorably in battle is your opponent's job. By contrast, you'll do whatever it takes to keep your allies alive. You gain a skill from the intrigue skill group.

Mastermind (Grand Strategy): You have an encyclopedic knowledge of warfare, viewing the battlefield as a game board, and seeking victory by thinking multiple steps ahead of your opponents. You gain a skill from the lore skill group.

Vanguard (Shock and Awe): You have learned the tactics and stratagems of the heroes of ancient history, letting you lead from the front lines of battle and seek victory through sheer force of will and personality. You gain a skill from the interpersonal skill group.

Your choice of tactical doctrine determines many of the features you'll gain from this class.

FOCUS

The ring of steel panics others but brings order to your mind, granting you a Heroic Resource called focus.

FOCUS IN COMBAT

At the start of a combat encounter or some other stressful situation tracked in combat rounds (as determined by the Director), you gain focus equal to your Victories. At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 2 focus. Additionally, the first time each round that you or an ally damages a target you have marked, you gain 1 focus. The first time in a round that an ally within 10 squares of you uses a heroic ability, you gain 1 focus. You lose any remaining focus at the end of the encounter.

FOCUS OUTSIDE OF COMBAT

Though you can't gain focus outside of combat, you can use your heroic abilities and effects that cost focus without spending it. Whenever you use an ability or effect outside of combat that costs focus, you can't use that same ability or effect outside of combat again until you gain at least 1 Victory or finish a Respite.

If you use an ability outside of combat that lets you spend unlimited focus on its effect, such as Mark, you can use it as if you had spent an amount of focus on it equal to your Victories.

1ST-LEVEL DOCTRINE FEATURE

Your chosen tactical doctrine grants you a feature as shown on the 1st-Level Doctrine Features table.

1ST-LEVEL DOCTRINE FEATURES

Doctrine	Feature
Insurgent	Covert Operations
Mastermind	Studied Commander
Vanguard	Commanding Presence

COMMANDING PRESENCE

You command any room you walk into. While you are present, each hero with you is treated as having a Renown 2 higher than usual for the purpose of negotiations. Additionally, each hero with you has a double edge on tests made to stop combat and start a negotiation with the other side.

COVERT OPERATIONS

While in your presence or working according to your plans, each of your allies gains an edge on tests with any skill from the intrigue skill group. Additionally, you can use the Lead skill to assist on any test made with a skill from the intrigue group. At the Director's discretion, you and your allies can use skills from the intrigue skill group to attempt research or reconnaissance during a negotiation instead of outside of negotiation.

STUDIED COMMANDER

Your encyclopedic knowledge of the history of battle lets you apply that knowledge to current challenges. While you are with them, any hero treats the Discover Lore project related to a war or battle as one category cheaper. This makes projects seeking common lore free, but such projects still require a respite activity to complete. (See [Downtime Projects](#) for more information.)

Additionally, if you have a reasonable amount of time before a combat encounter or negotiation, and you have at least one clue or rumor regarding the encounter or negotiation, you can make a Reason test as a Respite activity. The following test results apply to a combat encounter:

- **11 or lower:** The Director tells you the number of creatures in the encounter.
- **12–16:** The Director tells you the number and level of the creatures in the encounter.
- **17+:** As 12–16, and when the encounter begins, all enemies are surprised.

The following test results apply to a negotiation:

- **11 or lower:** The Director tells you three different motivations, one of which is one of an NPC's motivations, while the other two are not.
- **12–16:** The Director tells you one of an NPC's motivations.
- **17+:** As 12–16, and you and each of your allies gains an edge on tests made to influence NPCs during the negotiation.

You can make this test only once for any encounter or negotiation.

DOCTRINE TRIGGERED ACTION

Your tactical doctrine grants you a triggered action as shown on the Doctrine Triggered Actions table.

DOCTRINE TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Doctrine	Triggered Action
Insurgent	Advanced Tactics
Mastermind	Overwatch
Vanguard	Parry

ADVANCED TACTICS

Your leadership aids an ally.

Keywords: Ranged **Type:** Triggered
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Any creature
Trigger: The target deals damage to another creature.

Effect: The target gains two surges, which they can use on the triggering damage.

Spend 1 Focus: If any effect of the damage has a potency effect, you increase the potency by 1.

OVERWATCH

Under your direction, an ally waits for just the right moment to strike.

Keywords: Ranged **Type:** Triggered
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One enemy
Trigger: The target moves.

Effect: At any point during the target's movement, one ally can make a free strike against them.

Spend 1 Focus: If the target has **R < average**, they are also slowed (EoT).

PARRY

Your quick reflexes cost an enemy the precision they seek.

Keywords: Melee, Weapon **Type:** Triggered
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** Self or one ally
Trigger: A creature deals damage to the target.

Effect: The damage is halved. If any effect of the damage has a potency effect, you decrease the potency by 1.

Spend 1 Focus: The target can shift a number of squares equal to your Reason score.

FIELD ARSENAL

You have drilled with a broad array of weapons and have developed techniques to optimize their use. Whenever you select or change your kit, you can select an additional kit and gain the benefits of both kits, including both their signature abilities. See [Kits](#) for more information. (*Quick Build:* Shining Armor, Sniper)

If both kits grant you the same benefit, you take one or the other and can't change your choice until you finish a Respite. (This usually means taking the higher of two bonuses.) You also gain access to the signature abilities of both kits.

For example, if you take the Shining Armor and Sniper kits, you gain the following benefits overall:

- **Stamina Bonus:** +12
- **Stability Bonus:** +1
- **Melee Damage Bonus:** +2/+2/+2

- **Ranged Damage Bonus:** +0/+0/+4
- **Speed Bonus:** +1
- **Ranged Distance Bonus:** +10
- **Disengage Bonus:** +1
- You can use the Protective Attack and Patient Shot signature abilities.

Kit signature abilities already have their bonuses applied. For example, you might take the Martial Artist kit, which gives a melee weapon damage bonus of +2/+2/+2, and the Mountain kit, which gives a melee weapon damage bonus of +0/+0/+4. If you choose to use the Mountain kit's damage bonus, then the Battle Grace signature ability from the Martial Artist kit loses the +2/+2/+2 bonus from that kit, reducing its usual 5/8/11 damage for its tier 1, tier 2, and tier 3 results to 3/6/9. It then gains the +0/+0/+4 of the Mountain kit, to deal 3/6/13 damage.

MARK

You know how to focus the attention of your allies as you push them toward victory. You have the following ability.

MARK

You draw your allies' attention to a specific foe—with devastating effect.

Keywords: Ranged **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature

Effect: The target is marked by you until the end of the encounter, you die, you use this ability again, or you willingly end this effect (no action required). If another tactician marks the target, then your mark on the target ends. You can have one target marked this way, but other tactician abilities can allow you to have multiple marked creatures.

While the target is marked and within your line of effect, you and allies within your line of effect have an edge on power rolls made against the target.

When the marked creature is reduced to 0 Stamina, you can use a free triggered action to move the mark to a new target within 10 squares.

In addition, you can spend 1 focus to take one of the following free triggered actions whenever you or an ally damages a target with an ability. You can't use more than one instance of a benefit per trigger:

- The ability deals additional damage equal to twice your Reason score.
- The damage dealer can spend a Recovery.
- The damage dealer can shift up to a number of squares equal to your Reason score.

STRIKE NOW

Your skill at commanding your allies in combat grants you the following ability.

"STRIKE NOW!"

Your foe left an opening. You point this out to an ally!

Keywords: Ranged **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One ally

Effect: The target can make a signature attack as a free triggered action.

Spend 5 Focus: You target two allies instead of one.

TACTICIAN ABILITIES

You are a formidable combatant in your own right, but your greatest strength in battle is the ability to make your allies even more formidable. You know a range of abilities that shape the scope of your control of the battlefield.

KIT SIGNATURE ABILITY

Your additional kit from your Field Arsenal feature grants you a second signature ability. Signature abilities can be used at will.

HEROIC ABILITIES

Your heroic abilities cover a range of combat tactics, all of which require focus to use.

3-FOCUS ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 3 focus to use. (*Quick Build:* Inspiring Strike)

BATTLE CRY (3 FOCUS)

You shout a phrase that galvanizes your team.

Keywords: Ranged **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Three allies

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **the target gains one surge**
- 12–16: **the target gains two surges**
- 17+: **the target gains three surges**

CONCUSSIVE STRIKE (3 FOCUS)

Your precise strike leaves your foe struggling to respond.

Keywords: Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 or ranged 5 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **3 + M damage; M < weak, dazed (save ends)**
- 12–16: **5 + M damage; M < average, dazed (save ends)**
- 17+: **8 + M damage; M < strong, dazed (save ends)**

INSPIRING STRIKE (3 FOCUS)

Your attack gives an ally hope.

Keywords: Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action

Distance: Melee 1 or ranged 5

Target: One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **3 + M damage; you or one ally within 10 squares can spend a Recovery**
- 12–16: **5 + M damage; you or one ally within 10 squares can spend a Recovery**
- 17+: **8 + M damage; you or one ally within 10 squares can spend a Recovery, and each of you gains an edge on the next ability power roll they make in the encounter**

SQUAD! FORWARD! (3 FOCUS)

On your command, you and your allies force back the enemy line.

Keywords: Ranged

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: Self and two allies

Effect: Each target can move their speed.

5-FOCUS ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 5 focus to use. (*Quick Build:* Hammer and Anvil)

HAMMER AND ANVIL (5 FOCUS)

"Let's not argue about who's the hammer and who's the anvil!"

Keywords: Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action

Distance: Melee 1 or ranged 5

Target: One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **5 + M damage; one ally within 10 squares can make a signature strike against the target as a free triggered action**
- 12–16: **9 + M damage; one ally within 10 squares can make a signature strike that gains an edge against the target as a free triggered action**
- 17+: **12 + M damage; two allies within 10 squares can each make a signature strike that gains an edge against the target as free triggered actions**

Effect: If the target is reduced to 0 Stamina and a strike granted by this ability hasn't been made, the striker can pick a different target.

THE MIND GAME (5 FOCUS)

Your attack demoralizes your foe. Your allies begin to think you can win.

Keywords: Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action

Distance: Melee 1 or ranged 5

Target: One creature or object

Effect: You mark the target.

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **4 + M damage; R < weak, weakened (save ends)**
- 12–16: **6 + M damage; R < average, weakened (save ends)**
- 17+: **10 + M damage; R < strong, weakened (save ends)**

Effect: The first time any ally deals damage any target you've marked before the start of your next turn, that ally can spend a Recovery.

NOW! (5 FOCUS)

Your allies wait for your command—then unleash death!

Keywords: Ranged, Weapon

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Ranged 5

Target: Three allies

Effect: Each target can make a free strike.

THIS IS WHAT WE PLANNED FOR (5 FOCUS)

All those coordination drills you made them do finally pay off.

Keywords: Ranged

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: Two allies

Effect: Each target who hasn't acted yet this round can take their turn in any order immediately after yours.

2ND-LEVEL FEATURES

As a 2nd-level tactician, you gain the following features.

2ND-LEVEL DOCTRINE FEATURE

Your tactical doctrine grants you a feature as shown on the 2nd-Level Doctrine Features table.

2ND-LEVEL DOCTRINE FEATURES

Doctrine	Feature
Insurgent	Infiltration Tactics
Mastermind	Goaded
Vanguard	Melee Superiority

GOADED

You have learned to leverage the psychology of your marked foes and goad them into acting before they are tactically ready. When a creature marked by you uses a strike that targets you or an ally, you can use a free triggered action to retarget the attack to you or another one of your allies or yourself. The new target must be a valid option for the strike.

INFILTRATION TACTICS

You have trained your squad to work together and benefit from staying silent and waiting for the opportune time to strike. When you or any of your allies within 10 squares of you becomes hidden, they gain a surge.

MELEE SUPERIORITY

After constant drills you have improved your ability to anticipate an enemy's attack and thwart their attempts to move freely across the battlefield. Whenever you make an opportunity attack, the target's speed is reduced to 0 until the end of the current turn.

Mark Benefit: You can spend 2 focus to make a melee free strike against a marked creature who attempts to move or Disengage within distance of your melee free strike as a free triggered action. If you do, the target's speed is reduced to 0 until the end of the current turn.

PERK

You gain an exploration, interpersonal, or intrigue perk of your choice. See [Perks](#) for more information.

2ND-LEVEL DOCTRINE ABILITY

Your tactical doctrine grants your choice of one of two abilities.

2ND-LEVEL INSURGENT ABILITY

Choose one of the following abilities.

FOG OF WAR (5 FOCUS)

Your unorthodox strategy causes enemies to lash out in fear, heedless of who they might be attacking.

Keywords: Ranged **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** 2 creatures

Effect: Each target is marked by you. You immediately force each targeted creature to make a free strike against a creature of your choice within 5 squares of the targeted creature.

Mark Benefit: For the rest of the encounter whenever you or an ally attacks a marked target, you can spend 2 focus to make the marked target free strike a creature of your choice within 5 squares of the marked target.

TRY ME INSTEAD (5 FOCUS)

"Try picking on someone MY size."

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature

Effect: You shift your speed directly toward an ally adjacent to the target, then swap locations with the ally as long as you can each fit into the other's space. The ally can spend a Recovery, and you make a power roll against the target.

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **2 + R damage; R < weak, frightened (save ends)**
- 12–16: **3 + R damage; R < average, frightened (save ends)**
- 17+: **4 + R damage; R < strong, frightened (save ends)**

2ND-LEVEL MASTERMIND ABILITY

Choose one of the following abilities.

I'VE GOT YOUR BACK (5 FOCUS)

Your enemy will think twice about attacking your friend.

Keywords: Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 5 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **2 + R damage; R < weak, the target is frightened of an ally of your choice within range (save ends)**
- 12–16: **3 + R damage; R < average, the target is frightened of an ally of your choice within range (save ends)**
- 17+: **5 + R damage; R < strong, the target is frightened of an ally of your choice within range (save ends)**

Effect: One ally adjacent to the target can spend a Recovery.

THEIR TACTICS ARE SO PRIMITIVE (5 FOCUS)

All that time you spent studying ancient battles paid off!

Keywords: Ranged **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Ranged 5 **Target:** Two creatures

Effect: Each target is marked by you. You gain two surges.

Mark Benefit: For the rest of the encounter whenever you or an ally attacks a marked target with a strike, you can spend 2 focus to add one additional target to the strike within the attack's range.

2ND-LEVEL VANGUARD ABILITY

Choose one of the following abilities.

NO DYING ON MY WATCH (5 FOCUS)

You prioritize saving an ally over your own safety.

Keywords: Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Triggered
Distance: Ranged 5 **Target:** One enemy
Trigger: The target deals damage to an ally.

Effect: You move up to your speed toward the target, ending your move in the nearest square adjacent to them if you can. The triggering ally can spend a Recovery, and gains 5 Temporary Stamina for each enemy you move past while moving to the target. You then make a power roll against the target.

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **R < weak, frightened of the triggering ally (save ends)**
- 12–16: **R < average, frightened of the triggering ally (save ends)**
- 17+: **R < strong, frightened of the triggering ally (save ends)**

SQUAD! ON ME! (5 FOCUS)

Together we are invincible!

Keywords: Area **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: 1 burst **Target:** Self and each ally in the area

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, each target gains a bonus to their Stability equal to your Might score. Additionally, each target gains two surges.

3RD-LEVEL FEATURES

As a 3rd-level tactician, you gain the following features.

OUT OF POSITION

You are prepared for all eventualities. At the start of an encounter, you can use a free triggered action to use your Mark ability against an enemy you have line of effect to, even if you are surprised. You can then immediately slide the marked target up to 3 squares, ignoring their stability. The target can't be moved in a way that would harm them (such as over a cliff), leave them dying, or result in them suffering a condition or other negative effect.

7-FOCUS ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 7 focus to use.

DOUBLE ENVELOPMENT (7 FOCUS)

Historians will write about this day.

Keywords: —

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Self

Target: Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or you are dying, whenever you or any ally deals damage to a target marked by you, they gain two surges, which they can use immediately.

FRONTAL ASSAULT (7 FOCUS)

The purpose of a charge is to break their morale and force a retreat.

Keywords: —

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Self

Target: Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or you are dying, whenever you or any ally deals damage a target marked by you, the damage dealer can push the target up to 2 squares, then shift up to 2 squares. Additionally, any ally using the Charge action to attack a target marked by you can use a signature or heroic ability in place of a melee free strike.

ROUT (7 FOCUS)

The tide begins to turn.

Keywords: —

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Self

Target: Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or you are dying, whenever you or any ally deals damage to a target marked by you, if that target has **R < average**, they are frightened of the damage dealer (save ends).

STAY STRONG, AND FOCUS! (7 FOCUS)

"We can do this! Keep faith and hold fast!"

Keywords: —

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Self

Target: Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or you are dying, whenever you or any ally deals damage to a target marked by you, the damage dealer can spend a Recovery.

TALENT

The talent is a master of psionics—a source of incredible power created through sheer force of will. A talent can move and change matter, time, gravity, the laws of physics, or another creature's mind. In rare occurrences, people are born with the potential to harness psionic power, but only those who experience an awakening, an event that activates a talent's abilities, can actually tap into the mind's full strength.

A talent is limited only by the strength of their mind. Powerful psionic heroes can have multiple active powers at once and change reality at will. But with this limitless potential comes a gamble. Every manifestation has a chance of harming the talent, and those who use too many too quickly die from the exertion.

BASICS

Starting Characteristics: You start with a Reason of 2 and a Presence of 2, and can choose one of the following arrays for your other characteristics scores:

- 2, -1, -1
- 1, 1, -1
- 1, 0, 0

Weak Potency: Reason - 2

Average Potency: Reason - 1

Strong Potency: Reason

Starting Stamina at 1st Level: 18

Stamina Gained at 2nd and Higher Levels: 9

Recoveries: 8

Skills: Psionics and Read Person, plus choose any two skills from the interpersonal or lore skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Psionics, Read Person, Empathize, Timescape)

TALENT ADVANCEMENT

Level	Features	Abilities	Tradition Abilities
1st	Talent Tradition, Clarity and Strain, Mind Spike, Telepathic Speech, Tradition Features, Psionic Augmentation, Talent Ward, Talent Abilities	Two signature, 3, 5	—
2nd	Perk, Tradition Feature, Tradition Ability	Two signature, 3, 5	5
3rd	Scan, 7-Clarity Ability	Two signature, 3, 5, 7	5

1ST-LEVEL FEATURES

As a talent, you gain the following features.

TALENT TRADITION

Psionic abilities are grouped into specific categories according to their power and effects. Each category comprises one of many talent traditions, including the following:

Animapathy: Abilities that allow you to manipulate, meld, and exchange the souls of living things

Chronopathy: Abilities that allow you to view future and past events, and to manipulate time to aid allies and hinder foes

Cryokinesis: Abilities that allow you to manifest and manipulate absolute cold to freeze the water and air of the environment around you

Metamorphosis: Abilities that allow you to strengthen and manipulate your body and the bodies of others, allowing for the performance of preternatural exploits

Pyrokinesis: Abilities that allow you to create and manipulate fire by interacting with the potential energy found in all things

Resopathy: Abilities that allow you to manipulate matter and space to create, alter, or displace your environment and the creatures and objects in it

Telekinesis: Abilities that allow you to physically manipulate creatures and objects

Telepathy: Abilities that allow you to communicate with, read, and influence the minds of other creatures

As a talent gains mastery over their mind, they are drawn to a tradition that can be manifested as easily as breathing. Choose one of the following talent traditions: chronopathy, telekinesis, or telepathy. (*Quick Build:* telekinesis) Your choice of tradition determines many of the features you'll gain from this class. (Other talent traditions will be featured in future products.)

CLARITY AND STRAIN

The focus and precision of your thoughts grants you a Heroic Resource called clarity that empowers your psionic abilities.

CLARITY IN COMBAT

At the start of a combat encounter or some other stressful situation tracked in combat rounds (as determined by the Director), you gain clarity equal to your Victories. At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 1d3 clarity. You gain 1 clarity the first time each round that a creature is force moved.

You can spend clarity you do not have, pushing that Heroic Resource into negative numbers, to a maximum negative value equal to 1 + your Reason score. At the end of each of your turns, you take 1 damage for each negative point of clarity.

Whenever you have clarity below 0, you are strained. Some psionic abilities have additional effects if you are already strained or become strained when you use them.

Strained effects can still impact you even after you are no longer strained.

You lose any remaining clarity or reset any negative clarity at the end of the encounter.

CLARITY OUTSIDE OF COMBAT

Though you can't gain clarity outside of combat, you can use your heroic abilities and effects that cost clarity without spending it. Whenever you use an ability or effect outside of combat that costs clarity, you can't use that same ability or effect outside of combat again until you gain at least 1 Victory or finish a Respite.

Additionally, if you use two or more abilities or effects that cost clarity within 1 minute of each other, you take 1d6 damage and incur any strain effects from using those abilities or effects.

If you use an ability outside of combat that lets you spend unlimited clarity on its effect, such as Minor Telekinesis, you can use it as if you had spent an amount of clarity on it equal to your Victories.

MIND SPIKE

You gain the following ability, which can be used as a ranged free strike.

MIND SPIKE

A telepathic bolt instantly zaps a creature's brain.

Keywords: Psionic, Ranged, Strike, Telepathy

Type: Action

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **2 + R psychic damage**
- 12–16: **4 + R psychic damage**
- 17+: **6 + R psychic damage**

Strained: The strike deals an extra 2 psychic damage to the target and to you. The damage you take can't be reduced in any way.

TELEPATHIC SPEECH

You know the Mindspeech language (see [Languages](#)). Additionally, you can telepathically communicate with any creatures within the distance of your Mind Spike ability if they share a language with you and you know of each other. The receiver of your telepathic communications can choose to respond telepathically.

TRADITION FEATURES

Your talent tradition grants you features as shown on the 1st-Level Tradition Features table.

1ST-LEVEL TRADITION FEATURES

Tradition	Features
Chronopathy	Accelerate, Again
Telekinesis	Minor Telekinesis, Repel
Telepathy	Feedback Loop, Remote Assistance

ACCELERATE

You gain the following ability.

ACCELERATE

To your ally, it seems as though the world has slowed down.

Keywords: Psionic

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: Self or one creature

Effect: The target immediately shifts up to a number of squares equal to your Reason score.

Spend 2 Clarity: The target can also use a maneuver.

AGAIN

You gain the following ability.

AGAIN

You step back a split second to see if things play out a little differently.

Keywords: Psionic, Ranged

Type: Triggered

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: Self or one creature

Trigger: The target makes an ability power roll.

Effect: You can use this ability after seeing the power roll for the triggering roll. You force the target to reroll the power roll and use the new result.

FEEDBACK LOOP

You gain the following ability.

FEEDBACK LOOP

Creating a brief psychic link between a foe and their target gives that foe a taste of their own medicine.

Keywords: Psionic, Ranged

Type: Triggered

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Trigger: The target deals damage to an ally.

Effect: The target takes psychic damage equal to half the triggering damage.

MINOR TELEKINESIS

You gain the following ability.

MINOR TELEKINESIS

Wisp of psychic energy ripple visibly from your brain as you force the target to move using only your mind.

Keywords: Psionic, Ranged

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: Self, or a size 1 creature or object

Effect: You slide the target up to a number of squares equal to your Reason score.

Spend 2+ Clarity: The size of the creature or object you can target increases by 1 for every 2 clarity you spend.

Spend 3 Clarity: You can vertical slide the target.

REMOTE ASSISTANCE

You gain the following ability.

REMOTE ASSISTANCE

An ally gains the benefit of your intellect.

Keywords: Psionic, Ranged

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: One creature or object

Effect: The next ability power roll an ally makes against the target before the start of your next turn gains an edge.

Spend 1 Clarity: You target one additional creature or object.

REPEL

You gain the following ability.

REPEL

They aren't going anywhere, but you might!

Keywords: Psionic, Ranged

Type: Triggered

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: Self or one ally

Trigger: The target takes damage or is force moved.

Effect: The triggering damage is halved or distance of the triggering forced movement is reduced by a number of squares equal to your Reason score. If the target was damaged and force moved, you choose the effect. If the triggering forced movement is reduced to 0 squares, the target pushes the source of the forced movement a number of squares equal to your Reason score.

PSIONIC AUGMENTATION

Through psionic meditation, you create pathways in your mind that enhance your statistics. Choose one of the following augmentations. You can change your augmentation along with your ward (see [Talent Ward](#)) by undergoing a psionic meditation as a respite activity. (*Quick Build:* Force Focus)

BATTLE AUGMENTATION

You can wear light armor and wield light weapons effectively, even though you don't have a kit. While you wear light armor, you gain a +3 bonus to Stamina and that bonus increases by 3 at 4th, 7th, and 10th levels. While you wield a light weapon, you gain a +1 damage bonus with weapon abilities, including free strikes. You can use light armor treasures and light weapon treasures. If you have a kit, you can't take this augmentation.

If you have a kit, you can't take this augmentation.

DISTANCE AUGMENTATION

You gain a +2 bonus to the distance of your ranged psionic abilities.

DENSITY AUGMENTATION

You gain a +6 bonus to Stamina, and this bonus increases by 6 at 4th, 7th, and 10th levels. Additionally, you gain a +1 bonus to stability.

FORCE AUGMENTATION

Your damage-dealing psionic abilities gain a +1 rolled damage bonus.

SPEED AUGMENTATION

You gain a +1 bonus to speed and to the distance you shift when you take the Disengage move action.

TALENT WARD

Through psionic meditation, you create a ward that protects you. Choose one of the following wards. You can change your ward along with your psionic augmentation (see [Psionic Augmentation](#)) by undergoing a psionic meditation as a respite activity. (*Quick Build:* Repulsive Ward)

ENTROPY WARD

Your ward slows time for your enemies. Whenever a creature deals damage to you, their speed is reduced by an amount equal to your Reason score and they can't use triggered actions, all until the end of their next turn.

REPULSIVE WARD

You surround yourself with an invisible ward of telekinetic energy. Whenever an adjacent creature deals damage to you, you can use a free triggered action to push them up to a number of squares equal to your Reason score.

STEEL WARD

Your ward reacts to danger, protecting your body from future harm. Whenever you take damage, the damage resolves and you then gain damage immunity equal to your Reason score until the end of your next turn.

VANISHING WARD

Your ward allows you to slip away from danger. Whenever you take damage, you become invisible until the end of your next turn.

TALENT ABILITIES

You manifest a variety of psionic powers to impact the environment, bolster your allies, and empower yourself. You can choose abilities across different talent traditions, or can focus on abilities tied to your chosen tradition to establish your dedication to its power.

SIGNATURE ABILITIES

Select two signature abilities from the following options. Signature abilities can be used at will. (*Quick Build:* Incinerate, Kinetic Grip)

ENTROPIC BOLT

You advance an enemy's age for a moment.

Keywords: Chronopathy, Psionic, Ranged, Strike

Type: Action

Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Presence:

- 11 or lower: **2 + P corruption damage; P < weak, slowed (save ends)**
- 12–16: **3 + P corruption damage; P < average, slowed (save ends)**
- 17+: **5 + P corruption damage; P < strong, slowed (save ends)**

Effect: The target takes 1 extra corruption damage for each additional time they are targeted by this ability in the encounter.

Strained: You gain 1 clarity on a tier 2 or tier 3 result.

INCINERATE

The air erupts into a column of smokeless flame.

Keywords: Area, Fire, Ranged, Psionic, Pyrokinesis

Type: Action

Distance: 3 cube within 10

Target: Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **2 fire damage**
- 12–16: **4 fire damage**
- 17+: **6 fire damage**

Effect: A column of fire lingers in the area until the start of your next turn. Each enemy who enters the area for the first time in a round or starts their turn there takes 2 fire damage.

Strained: The size of the cube increases by 2, but the fire disappears at the end of your turn.

HOARFROST

A row of the terrain freezes over ahead of you, turning hard and slick.

Keywords: Cryokinesis, Psionic, Ranged, Strike

Type: Action

Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **2 + R cold damage; M < weak, slowed (EoT)**
- 12–16: **4 + R cold damage; M < average, slowed (EoT)**
- 17+: **6 + R cold damage; M < strong, slowed (EoT)**

Strained: A target slowed by this ability is restrained instead, and you are slowed until the end of your next turn.

KINETIC GRIP

You lift and hurl your foe away from you.

Keywords: Melee, Psionic, Telekinesis

Type: Action

Distance: Melee 3 **Target:** One size 1 creature or object

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **Push 3**
- 12–16: **Push 5**
- 17+: **Push 7; prone**

Effect: You can slide the target up to 2 squares before making the power roll.

Strained: You can't use this ability's effect, but you can vertical push the target.

KINETIC PULSE

The force of your mind hurls enemies backward.

Keywords: Area, Psionic, Telepathy

Type: Action

Distance: 1 burst **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **2 psychic damage**
- 12–16: **5 psychic damage; push 1**
- 17+: **7 psychic damage; push 2**

Strained: The size of the burst increases by 2, and you are bleeding until the start of your next turn.

MATERIALIZER

You picture an object in your mind and give it form in the world, directly above your opponent's head.

Keywords: Psionic, Ranged, Resopathy, Strike

Type: Action

Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **3 + R damage**
- 12–16: **5 + R damage**
- 17+: **8 + R damage**

Effect: A size 1M object drops onto the target and then rolls into an adjacent, unoccupied space of your choice. The object is made of wood, stone, or metal (your choice).

Strained: The object explodes on impact, dealing damage equal to your Reason score to each creature adjacent to the target. You also take damage equal to your Reason score, which can't be reduced in any way.

OPTIC BLAST

Your eyes emit rays of powerful enervating force.

Keywords: Metamorphosis, Psionic, Ranged, Strike

Type: Action

Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **2 + R damage; M < weak, prone**
- 12–16: **4 + R damage; M < average, prone**
- 17+: **6 + R damage; M < strong, prone**

Effect: When targeting an object with a solid reflective surface or a creature carrying or wearing such an object (a mirror, an unpainted metal shield, shiny metal plate armor, and so forth), you can choose an additional target within 3 squares of the first target.

Strained: You gain a surge, which you can use immediately, and take damage equal to your Reason score, which can't be reduced in any way.

SPIRIT SWORD

You form a blade of mind energy and stab your target, invigorating yourself.

Keywords: Animapathy, Melee, Psionic, Strike

Type: Action

Distance: Melee 2 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Presence:

- 11 or lower: **3 + P damage**
- 12–16: **6 + P damage**
- 17+: **9 + P damage**

Effect: You gain a surge.

Strained: The attack deals an extra 3 damage to the target and to you. The damage you take can't be reduced in any way.

HEROIC ABILITIES

You know a range of heroic abilities all fueled by your clarity.

3-CLARITY ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 3 clarity to use. (*Quick Build:* Nothing Exceeds My Grasp)

AWE (3 CLARITY)

You project psionic energy out to a creature and take on a new visage in their mind.

Keywords: Psionic, Ranged, Strike, Telepathy

Type: Action

Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One ally or enemy

Effect: Any ally targeted by this ability gains temporary Stamina equal to twice your Presence score, and can end one effect on them that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of their turn. If you target an enemy, you make a power roll.

Power Roll + Presence:

- 11 or lower: **3 + P psychic damage; I < weak, frightened (save ends)**
- 12–16: **6 + P psychic damage; I < average, frightened (save ends)**
- 17+: **9 + P psychic damage; I < strong, frightened (save ends)**

NOTHING EXCEEDS MY GRASP (3 CLARITY)

Be careful not to choke on your aspirations.

Keywords: Psionic, Ranged, Strike, Telekinesis

Type: Action

Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **3 + R damage; M < weak, slowed (save ends)**
- 12–16: **5 + R damage; M < average, slowed (save ends)**
- 17+: **8 + R damage; M < strong, restrained (save ends)**

Effect: You can vertical pull the target up to 2 squares. You can pull a target restrained by this ability, ignoring their stability.

PRECOGNITION (3 CLARITY)

You give a target a glimpse into the future so that they're ready for what comes next.

Keywords: Chronopathy, Melee, Psionic

Type: Action

Distance: Melee 2

Target: Self or one ally

Effect: Ability power rolls against the target have a bane until the start of your next turn. Whenever the target takes damage while under this effect, they can use a triggered action to make a free strike against the source of the damage.

SMOLDER (3 CLARITY)

Smoke flows from your enemy like tears as their skin begins to blacken and flake.

Keywords: Psionic, Pyrokinesis, Ranged, Strike

Type: Action

Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature

Effect: The target takes damage before this ability imposes any weakness effect. The damage type and the weakness for this ability must be chosen from one of the following: acid, corruption, or fire.

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **3 + R damage; R < weak, the target has weakness 5 (save ends)**
- 12–16: **6 + R damage; R < average, the target has weakness 5 (save ends)**
- 17+: **9 + R damage; R < strong, the target has weakness equal to 5 + your Reason score (save ends)**

5-CLARITY ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 5 clarity to use. (*Quick Build:* Inertia Soak)

FLASHBACK (5 CLARITY)

The target is thrown several seconds back through time, and gets to do it all again.

Keywords: Chronopathy, Psionic, Ranged

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: Self or one ally

Effect: The target immediately uses an ability they've previously used this round without spending any heroic resources.

Strained: You take 1d6 damage and are slowed (save ends).

INERTIA SOAK (5 CLARITY)

Your psionic energy surrounds the target and pushes everything else away from them.

Keywords: Psionic, Ranged, Telekinesis **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Self or one ally

Effect: The target ignores difficult terrain and takes no damage from forced movement until the start of your next turn. Whenever the target moves into a square while under this effect, they can push one adjacent creature up to 2 squares. If pushing an ally, the target can ignore that ally's stability.

Strained: You are weakened and your stability decreases by 5 (save ends). If your stability becomes a negative value, it adds to the distance you are force moved.

IRON (5 CLARITY)

The target's skin turns to hard, dark metal, impenetrable and dense.

Keywords: Metamorphosis, Psionic, Ranged **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Self or one ally

Effect: The target's stability increases by 5 and they gain 10 temporary stamina and two surges.

Strained: You can't use maneuvers (save ends).

PERFECT CLARITY (5 CLARITY)

You clear the mind of nothing but the goal.

Keywords: Psionic, Ranged, Telepathy **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Self or one ally

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, the target gains a +3 bonus to speed, and they have a double edge on the next power roll they make. If the target gets a tier 3 result on that roll, you gain 1 clarity.

Strained: You take 1d6 damage, and you can't use triggered actions (save ends).

2ND-LEVEL FEATURES

As a 2nd-level talent, you gain the following features.

PERK

You gain an interpersonal, lore, or supernatural perk of your choice. See [Perks](#) for more information.

2ND-LEVEL TRADITION FEATURE

Your talent tradition grants you a feature as shown on the 2nd-Level Tradition Features table.

2ND-LEVEL TRADITION FEATURES

Tradition	Feature
Chronopathy	Ease the Hours
Telekinesis	Ease their Fall
Telepathy	Ease the Mind

EASE THE HOURS

You can increase the number of rounds in a montage test by 1 if the test would end before the heroes hit the success limit.

EASE THE MIND

You gain an edge on tests to stop combat and start a negotiation. Any NPC who has a hostile or suspicious starting attitude in a negotiation has an additional 1 patience.

EASE THEIR FALL

Whenever you land after a fall, or if any falling creature lands within 2 squares of you, you can use a free triggered action to reduce the falling damage by an amount equal to 2 + your Reason score.

2ND-LEVEL TRADITION ABILITY

Your talent tradition grants your choice of one of two abilities.

2ND-LEVEL CHRONOPATHY ABILITY

Choose one of the following abilities.

APPLIED CHRONOMETRICS (5 CLARITY)

Time slows down around you. Your heartbeat is the only gauge of the extra moments you've gained.

Keywords: Chronopathy, Psionic, Ranged **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Special

Power Roll + Presence:

- 11 or lower: **Target two creatures, one of which can be you**
- 12–16: **Target three creatures, one of which can be you**
- 17+: **Target four creatures, one of which can be you**

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, each target gains a +5 bonus to speed, can't be dazed, and they can use an additional maneuver on their turn. If a target is dazed, the condition ends for them.

Strained: Your speed is halved until the end of the encounter.

SLOW (5 CLARITY)

Perhaps they wonder why everyone else is moving so quickly?

Keywords: Chronopathy, Psionic, Ranged **Type:** Maneuver

Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Three creatures or objects

Power Roll + Presence:

- 11 or lower: **The target's speed is halved (save ends), or if P < weak, the target is slowed (save ends).**
- 12–16: **The target is slowed (save ends), or if P < average, the target's speed is 0 (save ends).**
- 17+: **The target is slowed (save ends), or if P < strong, the target's speed is 0 (save ends).**

Effect: A target can't use triggered actions while their speed is reduced by this ability.

Strained: The potency of this ability increases by 1 and you take 1d6 damage. At the start of each round while any target is affected by this ability, you take 1d6 damage. You can immediately end the effects on all affected targets (no action required).

2ND-LEVEL TELEKINESIS ABILITY

Choose one of the following abilities.

GRAVITIC BURST (5 CLARITY)

Everyone get away from me!

Keywords: Area, Psionic, Telekinesis **Type:** Action
Distance: 1 burst **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **3 damage; vertical push 2**
- 12–16: **6 damage; vertical push 4**
- 17+: **9 damage; vertical push 6**

Strained: The size of the burst increases by 1 and you are weakened until the end of your turn.

LEVITY AND GRAVITY (5 CLARITY)

You raise the target into the air, then smother them against the ground.

Keywords: Psionic, Ranged, Strike, Telekinesis **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **6 + R damage; M < weak, prone**
- 12–16: **10 + R damage; M < average, prone**
- 17+: **14 + R damage; M < strong, prone and can't stand (save ends)**

Effect: A target made prone by this ability is lifted 2 squares into the air before falling immediately to the ground, taking damage as usual.

Strained: You take half the damage the target takes, including any damage from falling.

2ND-LEVEL TELEPATHY ABILITY

Choose one of the following abilities.

OVERWHELM (5 CLARITY)

You overload their senses, turning all their subconscious thoughts into conscious ones.

Keywords: Psionic, Ranged, Strike, Telepathy **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **6 + R psychic damage; I < weak, slowed (save ends)**
- 12–16: **10 + R psychic damage; I < average, weakened (save ends)**
- 17+: **14 + R psychic damage; I < strong, dazed (save ends)**

Strained: You start crying. You can't take triggered actions or take free strikes until the end of the target's next turn.

SYNAPTIC OVERRIDE (5 CLARITY)

You gain control over an enemy's nervous system. How pleasant for them.

Keywords: Psionic, Ranged, Telepathy **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One enemy

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **The target makes a free strike against one enemy of your choice.**
- 12–16: **The target shifts up to their speed and uses their signature ability against any enemies of your choice.**
- 17+: **The target moves up to their speed and uses their signature ability against any enemies of your choice.**

Effect: You control the target's movement. The target can't be moved in a way that would harm them (such as over a cliff), leave them dying, or result in them suffering a condition or other negative effect. However, you can move them to provoke opportunity attacks if applicable.

Strained: You take 1d6 damage and are weakened until the end of your turn.

3RD-LEVEL FEATURES

As a 3rd-level talent, you gain the following features.

SCAN

You can extend your psionic senses out beyond their normal range. You can search for hidden creatures as a free maneuver once on each of your turns (see Hide and Sneak). Additionally, once you establish line of effect to a thinking creature within the distance of your Mind Spike ability, you always have line of effect to that creature until they leave move outside that distance.

7-CLARITY ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 7 clarity to use.

FLING THROUGH TIME (7 CLARITY)

You hurl the target through the annals of time, forcing them to witness every moment of their existence all at once.

Keywords: Chronopathy, Psionic, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Presence:

- 11 or lower: **3 + P corruption damage; P < weak, weakened (save ends)**
- 12–16: **5 + P corruption damage; the target is flung through time; P < average, weakened (save ends)**
- 17+: **8 + P corruption damage; the target is flung through time; P < strong, weakened (save ends)**

Effect: A target who is flung through time is removed from the encounter until the end of their next turn, reappearing in their original space or the nearest available space.

Strained: You take 2d6 damage and grow visibly older (the equivalent of 10 years for a human). On a tier 3 result, you gain 2 clarity.

FORCE ORBS (7 CLARITY)

Three spheres of solid psionic energy float around you.

Keywords: Psionic, Ranged, Strike, Telekinesis

Type: Action

Distance: Self; see below

Target: Self

Effect: You create three size 1T orbs that orbit your body. Each orb you provides you with cumulative damage immunity 1. Whenever you take damage, you lose 1 orb.

Once on each of your turns, you can use a free maneuver to fire an orb at a creature or object within 5 squares as a ranged strike, losing the orb after the strike.

Power Roll + Reason:

- 11 or lower: **2 damage**
- 12–16: **3 damage**
- 17+: **5 damage**

Strained: You create five orbs. You are weakened while you have any orbs active.

REFLECTOR FIELD (7 CLARITY)

A protective field reverses the momentum of incoming attacks.

Keywords: Area, Psionic, Telepathy

Type: Action

Distance: 3 aura

Target: Special

Effect: The aura lasts until the start of your next turn. Whenever an enemy targets an ally in the aura with a ranged ability, the ability is negated on the ally and reflected back at the enemy. The ability deals half the damage to the enemy that it would have dealt to the ally, and loses any additional effects.

Strained: The size of the aura increases by 1. Each ability your aura reflects causes you to take 2d6 damage and makes you forget a memory, as determined in consultation with the Director.

SOUL BURN (7 CLARITY)

You blast their soul out of their body, leaving it to helplessly float back to a weakened husk.

Keywords: Animapathy, Psionic, Ranged, Strike

Type: Action

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Power Roll + Presence:

- 11 or lower: **6 + P damage; P < weak, dazed (save ends)**
- 12–16: **10 + P damage; P < average, dazed (save ends)**
- 17+: **14 + P damage; P < strong, dazed (save ends)**

Effect: The target takes a bane on Presence tests until the end of the encounter.

Strained: The potency of this ability increases by 1. You take 2d6 damage, and gain 3 surges.

TROUBADOUR

The whole world's a stage and everyone on it, an actor. No one knows this better than the troubadour. You find energy in the drama of everyday life and know how to draw spectacle forth from even the most mundane of situations. You accent highs and deepen lows in service to whomever would witness your performance.

And beyond the mundane, there are insurmountable dangers that cause many a hero to cower. But the troubadour must chase that drama. The troubadour takes the world stage not to die, but to find out if they are truly alive.

BASICS

Starting Characteristics: You start with an Agility of 2 and a Presence of 2, and can choose one of the following arrays for your other characteristics scores:

- 2, -1, -1
- 1, 1, -1
- 1, 0, 0

Weak Potency: Presence - 2

Average Potency: Presence - 1

Strong Potency: Presence

Starting Stamina at 1st Level: 18

Stamina Gained at 2nd and Higher Levels: 9

Recoveries: 8

Skills: Read Person, plus choose two skills from the interpersonal group and one skill from the intrigue or lore groups. (*Quick Build:* Read Person, Brag, Rumors)

TROUBADOUR ADVANCEMENT

Level	Features	Abilities	Class Act Abilities
1st	Troubadour Class Act, Drama, Scene Partner, Curtain Call, Class Act Features, Class Act Triggered Action, Kit, Troubadour Abilities	Signature, 3, 5	—
2nd	Appeal to the Muses, Invocation, Perk, Class Act Ability	Signature, 3, 5	5
3rd	Class Act Feature, 7-Drama Ability	Signature, 3, 5, 7	5

1ST-LEVEL FEATURES

As a troubadour, you gain the following features.

TROUBADOUR CLASS ACT

Panache, melody, and depiction. Some troubadours have it all, but everyone starts somewhere. Your class act is your art form, summing up the manner in which the world becomes your stage. As you go about unearthing the drama of everyday life and strife, you choose a troubadour class act from the following options, each of which grants you a skill (*Quick Build:* Virtuoso):

Duelist: Drama embraces your every movement done in tandem with another. You perform dances of death, putting trust in your opponent to return your passion in kind. You gain the Gymnastics skill.

Skald: You seek drama from story and recount, using your magic to manipulate the sequence of events unfolding before you. You gain the Brag skill.

Virtuoso: You find drama in music and song, weaving magic between the vibrations of your sound and filling the audience with your pathos. You gain the Music skill and you wield an instrument.

Your choice of class act determines many of the features you'll gain from this class.

DRAMA

During battles, you are fueled by the dynamic ups, downs, and upside downs of the fray, from which you derive a Heroic Resource called drama.

DRAMA IN COMBAT

At the start of a combat encounter or some other stressful situation tracked in combat rounds (as determined by the Director), you gain drama equal to your Victories. At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 1d3 drama.

Additionally, you gain drama when certain events occur during battle:

2 Drama: Three or more heroes use an ability on the same turn for the first time.

2 Drama: A hero becomes winded for the first time (only once per encounter and not once per hero).

3 Drama: A creature within your line of effect rolls a natural 19 or 20.

10 Drama: A hero, including you, dies.

You still gain drama during combat if you are dead as long as your body is intact. During the encounter in which you died, if you have 30 drama, you can come back to life with 1 Stamina and 0 drama (no action required). You can't gain drama in future encounters while you remain dead.

You lose any remaining drama at the end of the encounter.

DRAMA OUTSIDE OF COMBAT

Though you can't gain drama outside of combat, you can use your heroic abilities and effects that cost drama without spending it. Whenever you use an ability or effect outside of combat that costs drama, you can't use that

same ability or effect outside of combat again until you gain at least 1 Victory or finish a Respite.

If you use an ability outside of combat that lets you spend unlimited drama on its effect, such as Artful Flourish, you can use it as if you had spent an amount of drama on it equal to your Victories.

SCENE PARTNER

Whenever you use a skill from the interpersonal group on a test while interacting with an NPC (a bystander, a rival, and so forth) and you don't fail the test, you can form a bond with that NPC. If you then enter into a negotiation with this NPC, their patience increases by 1, and any compelling arguments you personally make to the NPC that would increase their interest by 1 instead increase their interest by 2. You can have a number of such bonds active equal to your level, losing a bond of your choice whenever you make a new bond beyond your limit.

CURTAIN CALL

You enter every performance with a set of routines at the ready. Routines are auras and other wide-reaching effects that have the Routine keyword, and which center around you while you move through the fray. At the start of each round of combat, as long as you are not dazed, dead, or surprised, you can either set a new routine to be active or maintain your current routine (no action required). Your routine ends if you are unable to maintain it, or at the end of the encounter.

You start off with the Choreography and Revitalizing Limerick routine ability. Your choice of troubadour class act then grants you additional routines.

CHOREOGRAPHY

Taps, kicks, steps. Now it's all "choreography."

Keywords: Area, Magic, Routine **Type:** No action
Distance: 5 aura **Target:** Self and each ally in the area

Effect: While this routine is active, each target who starts their turn in the aura gains a +2 bonus to speed until the end of their turn.

REVITALIZING LIMERICK

There once was a man from Capital....

Keywords: Area, Magic, Routine **Type:** No action
Distance: 5 aura **Target:** Self and each ally in the area

Effect: While this routine is active, choose a number of targets equal to your Presence score at the end of your turn. Each chosen target can spend a Recovery.

1ST-LEVEL CLASS ACT FEATURES

Your troubadour class act grants you features as shown on the 1st-Level Class Act Features table.

1ST-LEVEL CLASS ACT FEATURES

Class Act	Feature
Duelist	Acrobatics, Star Power
Skald	Blocking, Dramatic Monologue
Virtuoso	Power Chord, Virtuoso Routines

ACROBATICS

You gain the following routine ability, usable with your Curtain Call feature.

ACROBATICS

Folks love a good tumble.

Keywords: Area, Magic, Routine **Type:** No action
Distance: 5 aura **Target:** Self and each ally in the area

Effect: While this routine is active, any target who starts their turn in the aura can automatically obtain a tier 3 result on one test made to jump, tumble, or climb as part of their movement before the end of their turn.

BLOCKING

You gain the following routine ability, usable with your Curtain Call feature.

BLOCKING

No, no, no, you lose the audience that way. Try it like this ...

Keywords: Area, Magic, Routine **Type:** No action
Distance: 2 aura **Target:** Special

Effect: At the end of each of your turns while this routine is active, you can choose a number of creatures equal to your Presence score in the aura, causing those creatures to be teleported to unoccupied squares in the aura. A target can't be teleported in a way that would harm them (such as over a cliff), leave them dying, or result in them suffering a condition or other negative effect.

DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE

You gain the following ability.

DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE

It doesn't need to make sense. Just say it with emotionality.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Special

Effect: Choose one of the following effects:

- You orate a rousing tale of victory. One ally within distance gains an edge on the next power roll they make before the start of your next turn.
- You weave a tale of high stakes heroics. One ally within distance gains a surge.
- You insult a foe where they're most vulnerable. That foe takes a bane on the next power roll they make before the end of their next turn.

Spend 1 Drama: You can choose two targets for any of these effects.

POWER CHORD

You gain the following ability.

POWER CHORD

Your instrument rings true and your music blows everyone away.

Keywords: Area, Magic **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: 2 burst **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Presence:

- 11 or lower: **Push 1**
- 12–16: **Push 2**
- 17+: **Push 3**

STAR POWER

You gain the following ability.

STAR POWER

You're the one they came to see!

Keywords: —

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Self

Target: Self

Effect: You gain a +2 bonus to speed until the end of your turn. Additionally, the next power roll you make this turn can't have a result lower than tier 2.

Spend 2 Drama: You gain a +4 bonus to speed instead.

VIRTUOSO ROUTINES

You gain the following routine abilities, each of which is usable with your Curtain Call feature.

"THUNDER MOTHER"

All for thunder motherrr! 🎵 Run and hide for coverrr! 🎵

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Strike, Routine

Type: No action

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Effect: At the end of each round while this routine is active, make a power roll that ignores cover. You can't target the same creature twice with this effect.

Power Roll + Presence:

- 11 or lower: **Lightning damage equal to your level**
- 12–16: **Lightning damage equal to 5 + your level**
- 17+: **Lightning damage equal to 10 + your level**

"BALLAD OF THE BEAST"

Teeth are bare! 🎵 Eyes black! 🎵 No escaping the beast! 🎵

Keywords: Area, Magic, Routine

Type: No action

Distance: 5 aura **Target:** Self and each ally in the area

Effect: While this routine is active, each target who starts their turn in the aura gains a surge.

CLASS ACT TRIGGERED ACTION

Your troubadour class act grants you a triggered action as shown on the Class Act Triggered Actions table.

CLASS ACT TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Class Act	Triggered Action
Duelist	Riposte
Skald	Turnabout Is Fair Play
Virtuoso	Harmonize

HARMONIZE (3 DRAMA)

Give the chorus a little punch.

Keywords: —

Type: Triggered

Distance: Ranged 5

Target: One ally

Trigger: The target uses a non-area ability that targets one enemy.

Effect: The target chooses an additional target for the triggering ability within distance of that ability. They use the original power roll for all additional targets. Any damage dealt to an additional target is sonic damage.

Spend 2 Drama: The target chooses two additional targets instead of one.

RIPOSTE

"I'd have brought treats had I known I'd be fighting a dog."

Keywords: —

Type: Triggered

Distance: Melee 1

Target: Self or one ally

Trigger: The target takes damage from a melee strike.

Effect: The target makes a free strike against the triggering striker.

TURNABOUT IS FAIR PLAY

All's fair in love and whatever.

Keywords: —

Type: Triggered

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Trigger: The target makes an ability power roll with at least one edge or bane.

Effect: One of the edges becomes a bane or vice versa.

Spend 3 Drama: One of the edges becomes a double bane, or one of the attack's banes becomes a double edge.

KIT

You can use and gain the benefits of a kit. See the [Kits](#) chapter for more information. (*Quick Build:* Swashbuckler)

TROUBADOUR ABILITIES

Your performance centers around rearranging the battlefield and keeping things in motion. You know how to modify the little details in a scene so that the story flows as dramatically as possible.

SIGNATURE ABILITY

Choose one signature ability from the following options. Signature abilities can be used at will. (*Quick Build:* Witty Banter)

ARTFUL FLOURISH

And they said practicing fencing was a waste!

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon

Type: Action

Distance: Melee 1

Target: Two creatures or objects

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **2 damage**
- 12–16: **5 damage**
- 17+: **7 damage**

Effect: You can shift up to 3 squares.

Spend 2+ Drama: You can target one additional creature or object within distance for every 2 drama you spend.

CUTTING SARCASM

There you are, radiating your usual charisma.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Presence:

- 11 or lower: **2 + P psychic damage; P < weak, bleeding (save ends)**
- 12–16: **5 + P psychic damage; P < average, bleeding (save ends)**
- 17+: **7 + P psychic damage; P < strong, bleeding (save ends)**

INSTIGATOR

I didn't do it! What?

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Presence:

- 11 or lower: **3 + P damage**
- 12–16: **6 + P damage**
- 17+: **9 + P damage**

Effect: The target is taunted by you or a willing ally adjacent to you until the end of the target's next turn.

WITTY BANTER

A lyrical (and physical) jab insults an enemy and inspires an ally.

Keywords: Magic, Melee, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 or ranged 5 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Presence:

- 11 or lower: **4 + P psychic damage**
- 12–16: **5 + P psychic damage**
- 17+: **7 + P psychic damage**

Effect: One ally within 10 squares can end one effect on them that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of their turn.

Spend 1 Drama: The chosen ally can also spend a Recovery.

HEROIC ABILITIES

You master a range of heroic abilities, all of which cost drama to empower them. (*Quick Build:* Harsh Critic)

3-DRAMA ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 3 drama to use.

HARSH CRITIC (3 DRAMA)

Just one bad review will ruin their day.

Keywords: Magic, Melee, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 or ranged 10 **Target:** One creature or object

Power Roll + Presence:

- 11 or lower: **7 + P sonic damage**
- 12–16: **10 + P sonic damage**
- 17+: **13 + P sonic damage**

Effect: The first time the target uses an ability before the start of your next turn, any tier-related effects of that ability other than damage are suppressed, negating those effects for all targets. Ability effects that always happen regardless of the power roll work as usual.

HYPNOTIC OVERTONES (3 DRAMA)

You produce an entrancing note that twists the senses in a spectacular fashion.

Keywords: Area, Magic **Type:** Action
Distance: 2 burst **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Presence:

- 11 or lower: **Slide 1; I < weak, dazed (save ends)**
- 12–16: **Slide 1; I < average, dazed (save ends)**
- 17+: **Slide 2; I < strong, dazed (save ends)**

Spend 2+ Drama: The size of the burst is increased by 1 for every 2 drama you spend.

QUICK REWRITE (3 DRAMA)

You write something unforeseen into the scene that hinders your enemy.

Keywords: Area, Magic, Ranged **Type:** Action
Distance: 3 cube within 10 **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Presence:

- 11 or lower: **4 damage; P < weak, slowed (save ends)**
- 12–16: **5 damage; P < average, slowed (save ends)**
- 17+: **6 damage; P < strong, restrained (save ends)**

Effect: The area becomes difficult terrain for enemies.

UPSTAGE (3 DRAMA)

As you bob and weave through the crowd, you can't help but leave the audience wanting more.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Self; see below **Target:** Self

Effect: You shift up to your speed. You make one power roll that targets each enemy who becomes adjacent to you during the shift.

Power Roll + Agility or Presence:

- 11 or lower: **Taunted (EoT); A < weak, prone**
- 12–16: **Taunted (EoT); A < average, prone**
- 17+: **Taunted (EoT); A < strong, prone and can't stand (EoT)**

5-DRAMA ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 5 drama to use. (*Quick Build:* Dramatic Reversal)

DRAMATIC REVERSAL (5 DRAMA)

Give the audience a surprise.

Keywords: Area, Magic **Type:** Action
Distance: 3 burst **Target:** Self and each ally in the area

Power Roll + Presence:

- 11 or lower: **The target can shift 1 square and make a free strike.**
- 12–16: **The target can shift up to 2 squares and make a free strike with an edge.**
- 17+: **The target can shift up to 3 squares and make a free strike with and edge, then can spend a Recovery.**

FAKE YOUR DEATH (5 DRAMA)

O happy dagger, this is thy sheath!

Keywords: Magic

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Self

Target: Self

Effect: You turn invisible and create a magical illusion of your corpse falling in your space. While you are invisible, you gain a +3 bonus to speed and you ignore difficult terrain. The illusion melts into the ground and your invisibility ends at the end of your next turn, or earlier if the illusion is interacted with, if you take damage, or if you use an action or a maneuver.

FLIP THE SCRIPT (5 DRAMA)

You try a different take on events, justifying the new locations everyone ended up in.

Keywords: Area, Magic

Type: Action

Distance: 3 burst

Target: Self and each ally in the area

Effect: Each target can immediately teleport up to 5 squares. Any teleported target who was slowed is no longer slowed.

METHOD ACTING (5 DRAMA)

They're so hurt by your performance, you sort of start to believe it yourself.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon

Type: Action

Distance: Melee 1

Target: One creature

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **6 + A damage; P < weak, weakened (save ends)**
- 12–16: **10 + A damage; P < average, weakened (save ends)**
- 17+: **14 + A damage; P < strong, weakened (save ends)**

Effect: You can become bleeding (save ends) to deal an additional 5 corruption damage to the target.

2ND-LEVEL FEATURES

As a 2nd-level troubadour, you gain the following features.

APPEAL TO THE MUSES

You can give a rousing speech, invoke your inspirations, or lift your fellows' spirits to heighten the drama of your present circumstances. However, irony is eager to hand your fortune to the villain and achieve the same ends.

Whenever you roll to gain 1d3 drama at the start of your turn, you can make your appeal to gain the following additional effects:

- If the roll is a 1, you gain 1 additional drama. The Director also gains 1d3 Malice.
- If the roll is a 2, you gain 1 Heroic Resource, which you can keep for yourself or give to an ally within the distance of your active routine. The Director also gains 1 Malice.
- If the roll is a 3, you gain 2 Heroic Resources, which you can distribute among yourself and any allies within the distance of your active routine.

INVOCATION

You have a specific manner that helps define your reputation among those who watch you fight. Choose one of the following features.

ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE TONIGHT'S PLAYERS

Whenever you take the first turn in a combat encounter, you can use your action to introduce yourself and your allies to your opponents. Each creature on your side can shift up to their speed and gains the benefit of the Defend action (see [Actions](#)) until the end of the round. However, any enemies who were surprised are no longer surprised.

FORMAL INTRODUCTIONS

As a respite activity, you can scribe a notice of your arrival, such as a calling card or a formal letter, addressed to an enemy and have it delivered. You can deliver the notice to the target personally if you are in the same general area, send it by courier, or leave it in a covert location for the target to find. You can have only one notice active at a time.

The Director determines when the target receives your notice. Once the target receives the notice, they become alarmed and take desperate measures to stop you. The Director gains 1 additional Malice per round during future encounters involving the target. The heroes start each such encounter with 2 additional hero tokens. These hero tokens disappear at the end of the encounter.

MY REPUTATION PRECEDES ME

You can invoke your reputation at the start of a social interaction with a group of creatures who haven't met you before, automatically creating a bond with a representative NPC as if using your Scene Partner feature (see above). While the bond is active, all present heroes are treated as having Renown 2 higher than usual for the purpose of negotiations and influencing tests with the group.

The Director can choose to award the heroes with 1 Hero Token to stop you from forming this bond, making you infamous with the community instead. Until actions are taken to improve your reputations, all present heroes take a bane on tests using skills from the interpersonal skill group with the group of creatures. You can still use your Scene Partner feature to find allies within the community.

PERK

You gain an interpersonal, lore, or supernatural perk of your choice. See [Perks](#) for more information.

2ND-LEVEL CLASS ACT ABILITY

Your troubadour class act grants your choice of one of two abilities.

2ND-LEVEL DUELIST ABILITY

Choose one of the following abilities.

CLASSIC CHANDELIER STUNT (5 DRAMA)

Audiences love this bit.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** Self and 1 willing ally

Effect: Each target shifts up to 5 squares, and can shift vertically. Both targets must end this movement adjacent to each other and on solid ground. Each target can then make a melee free strike that deals additional damage equal to twice their highest characteristic score.

EN GARDE! (5 DRAMA)

Wait it's ... Guard! Turn! Perry! Dodge! Spin! Thrust! Hah!

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** One creature

Power Roll + Agility:

- 11 or lower: **6 + A damage; the target can shift up to 3 squares and make a free strike against you**
- 12–16: **9 + A damage; the target can shift up to 2 squares and make a free strike against you**
- 17+: **13 + A damage; the target can shift 1 square**

Effect: If the target shifts or makes a free strike against you as a result of this ability, you can shift up to 3 squares and make a melee free strike against the target.

2ND-LEVEL SKALD ABILITY

Choose one of the following abilities.

GUEST STAR (5 DRAMA)

We offered them a percentage of the gross. So they're working for free!

Keywords: Magic, Ranged **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** Special

Effect: Either a bystander within distance is uplifted by your magic, or a mysterious new hero appears in an unoccupied space to help out during the encounter. This guest star is controlled by you, has their own turn, shares your characteristics. Their stamina is maximum is half yours. They have no abilities other than your melee and ranged free strikes. When the target is reduced to 0 Stamina or at the end of the encounter, they retreat or revert to a bystander. An individual bystander can't be uplifted in this way more than once in an encounter.

TWIST AT THE END (5 DRAMA)

You didn't see that coming, did you?!

Keywords: Magic, Ranged **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One dead enemy

Effect: As long as the target is not a leader or a solo creature, they come back to life with half their Stamina and become an ally under the Director's control. The players can discuss with the Director when the target takes their turn each round. The target turns to dust and blows away at the end of the encounter.

2ND-LEVEL VIRTUOSO ABILITY

Choose one of the following abilities.

ENCORE (5 DRAMA)

Again! Again!

Keywords: Magic, Strike **Type:** Action
Distance: Special **Target:** Special

Effect: You recreate and enact a strike you have observed this round. The strike can't be one that uses Malice. When you make the strike, you use your Presence score for any power rolls, and any damage you deal is sonic damage.

TOUGH CROWD (5 DRAMA)

Your fans don't seem to like the opening act ...

Keywords: Area, Magic, Ranged **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: 3 cube within 10 **Target:** Special

Effect: The affected area becomes haunted by a swirling horde of phantoms until the end of the encounter. Any ally can enter any square of the area without spending movement. At the end of each of your turns, you can make a power roll against each enemy in the area.

Power Roll + Presence:

- 11 or lower: **5 corruption damage; M < weak, pull 1 toward the center of the area**
- 12–16: **9 corruption damage; M < average, pull 2 toward the center of the area**
- 17+: **12 corruption damage; M < strong, pull 3 toward the center of the area**

3RD-LEVEL FEATURES

As a 3rd-level troubadour, you gain the following features.

3RD-LEVEL CLASS ACT FEATURE

Your troubadour class act grants you a feature as shown on the 3rd-Level Class Act Features table.

3RD-LEVEL CLASS ACT FEATURES

Class Act	Feature
Duelist	Foil
Skald	Recast a Supporting Part
Virtuoso	Second Album

FOIL

Choose one creature within line of effect at the start of an encounter. You have a double edge on power rolls made against or in competition with that creature. The chosen creature also has a double edge on power rolls made against or in competition with you. If the creature dies, you can choose a new foil at the start of the next round.

RECAST A SUPPORTING PART

If you aren't surprised at the beginning of an encounter, you can choose one enemy within line of effect who isn't a leader or a solo creature. The director swaps that creature out with a squad of minions whose encounter value doesn't exceed the chosen creature's encounter value. The Director can determine that this feature can't be used against certain special enemies.

SECOND ALBUM

You gain the following routine abilities, each of which is usable with your Curtain Call feature.

FIRE UP THE NIGHT

Maybe you and I 🎵 We can still bring the light! 🎵

Keywords: Area, Magic, Routine **Type:** No action
Distance: 5 aura **Target:** Self and each ally in the area

Effect: While this routine is active, each target who starts their turn in the aura doesn't take a bane on attacks against a creature with concealment. They can also search for hidden creatures as a free maneuver once during their turn (see Hide and Sneak).

NEVERENDING HERO

And toniiiight we can truly say 🎵 They will allways find a way! 🎵

Keywords: Area, Magic, Routine **Type:** No action
Distance: 5 aura **Target:** Self and each ally in the area

Effect: While this routine is active, each target who starts their turn dying while in the aura gains an edge on power rolls and ignores the effects of bleeding until the end of their turn.

7-DRAMA ABILITY

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 7 drama to use.

EXTENSIVE REWRITES (7 DRAMA)

No, this isn't right. That foe was over there!

Keywords: Area, Magic, Ranged **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: 4 burst **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Presence:

- 11 or lower: **Slide 3; P < weak, this slide ignores the target's stability.**
- 12–16: **Slide 5; P < average, this slide ignores the target's stability.**
- 17+: **Slide 7; P < strong, this slide ignores the target's stability.**

Effect: Instead of sliding a target, you can swap their location with another target as long as each can fit into the other's space. You can't slide targets into other creatures or objects using this ability.

INFERNAL GAVOTTE (7 DRAMA)

A spicy performance lights a fire under your allies' feet.

Keywords: Area, Magic, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: 3 burst **Target:** Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Presence:

- 11 or lower: **5 fire damage; A < weak, weakened (save ends)**
- 12–16: **7 fire damage; A < average, weakened (save ends)**
- 17+: **10 fire damage; A < strong, weakened (save ends)**

Effect: Each ally in the area can shift up to 2 squares.

VIRTUOSO'S SOLO (7 DRAMA)

Your performance travels and doesn't stop moving until your audience is completely rocked.

Keywords: Magic, Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action

Distance: Melee 1 or ranged 10

Target: One creature or object

Power Roll + Presence:

- 11 or lower: **5 + P damage**
- 12–16: **8 + P damage; push 3**
- 17+: **11 + P damage; push 5**

Effect: You can choose to have this ability deal sonic damage. Additionally, you can use this ability on the same target for the next 2 rounds without spending drama.

WE MEET AT LAST. LET'S FINISH THIS (7 DRAMA)

Totus mundus agit histrionem.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** One creature

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, both you and the target can target each other with abilities even if you are beyond distance, with the distance of this ability replacing those abilities' distances. Abilities that grapple or force move a target are ignored if the target isn't within the distance of the ability.

Additionally, on each of your turns, you can use a free maneuver to communicate a motivating or dispiriting message to the target, either giving them two surges or a bane on the next attack they use before the start of your next turn.

KITS

The knight in shining armor. The warrior priest. The sniper. Censors, furies, shadows, tacticians, and troubadours can tap into these and many more archetypal concepts using kits. A kit is a combination of weapons, armor, and fighting techniques that lets you personalize martial heroes for battle.

CHANGING YOUR KIT

Your choice of kit is always flexible, and your hero is never locked into a specific kit. If you want to change your kit, you can do so as a respite activity (see [Respite](#)).

KIT EQUIPMENT

Each kit includes an armor entry and a weapons entry. It's important to know what equipment a kit uses, because that informs your hero's appearance and story. It also determines the type of magic and psionic treasures they can wield.

The description of gear in your kit is limited to broad categories, leaving you free to decide the specifics that best align with your vision of the character. For instance, the Guisarmier kit provides medium armor and a polearm. One player using this kit could wear heavy layers of hide and wield a longspear, while another might wear a shining breastplate and carry a halberd into battle.

The equipment categories your kit gives you are part of what affects the math behind your kit's benefits, alongside the fighting techniques each kit provides.

You can wear armor and wield weapons that aren't part of your kit, but if you don't you don't get your kit's bonuses.

CUSTOMIZING EQUIPMENT APPEARANCES

You should absolutely feel free to describe your equipment in a way that makes sense for the story of your game and hero. For instance, if your hero uses a weapon in the whip category as part of their kit, they could use a leather whip, a spiked chain, or a dagger tied to a knotted rope. A hero who wears heavy armor might wear a suit of chain mail, plate armor, or heavy wooden planks tied together. Your choices for equipment aren't limited just to the examples in this book.

KIT ARMOR CATEGORIES

Each kit has an armor category that indicates the kind of protection you have while using the kit.

NONE

If a kit has no armor, you can wear whatever clothing you like! Robes, a fashionable tunic and pants, or just loincloth it—totally up to you.

LIGHT ARMOR

If a kit features light armor, you might wear padded cloth, leather armor, or even a chain shirt.

MEDIUM ARMOR

If a kit has medium armor, you might wear layers of thick hides, a breastplate, or armor made of metal scales.

HEAVY ARMOR

If a kit has heavy armor, then you're likely wearing metal from head to toe. Chain mail, ring mail, and suits of plate armor protect you better than any other mundane protection.

SHIELD

If a kit has a shield, then you wield a shield that can be any shape and made of any mundane material you like. The best shields have a sweet insignia on them, so start thinking about yours!

KIT WEAPON CATEGORIES

Each kit has a weapon category that indicates the types of weapons you wield while using the kit. You can use any ability with the Weapon keyword even if your kit doesn't have a weapon, but you don't get to apply your kit's bonuses to that ability.

BOW

Bows cover any weapon used to fire an arrow or bolt projectile. This includes crossbows, longbows, and shortbows. You don't need to track mundane ammunition for these weapons, unless the Director says otherwise.

ENSNARING WEAPON

Ensnaring weapons include bolas, nets, and other weapons made to capture an enemy and hold them in place.

HEAVY WEAPON

Heavy weapons are two-handed melee weapons with weighty bladed or bludgeoning heads, made to seriously harm or kill enemies in a single mighty blow. Greatswords, greataxes, mauls, and morningstars are all examples of heavy weapons.

LIGHT WEAPON

Light weapons are one-handed melee weapons that can be used to make several strikes in rapid succession. Many such weapons can be thrown or used as an off-hand defensive weapon. Daggers, shortswords, rapiers, and throwing hammers are typical light weapons.

If your kit uses a light weapon, you can wield two light weapons at a time.

MEDIUM WEAPON

Medium weapons are one-handed melee weapons that can be carried into battle while leaving one hand free, or while using that hand to hold a shield or implement. Battleaxes, clubs, longswords, and warhammers are medium weapons.

POLEARM

Polearms are two-handed melee weapons with long hafts that increase the wielder's reach. They include glaives, halberds, longspears, and quarterstaffs.

UNARMED STRIKE

Any kit that uses unarmed strikes allows you to use your body as a weapon. Punches, kicks, eye gouges, and the like are your forte.

WHIP

Whip weapons include the standard whip, but also include spiked chains, flails, and any similarly long and flexible melee weapon.

IMPROVISED WEAPONS

Improvised weapons include rocks, bottles, plates, furniture, and anything else you pick up that can be bashed, hurled, or stabbed into an enemy. As well, any weapons that aren't part of your kit count as improvised weapons for you. If you're not using a kit with unarmed strikes, then your feet and fists are improvised weapons. If you're not using a kit and pick up a sword to use as part of a melee free strike, the sword counts as an improvised weapon.

Improvised weapons can be used to with abilities that have the Weapon keyword that you gain from your class, though not from your kit. They add no special bonuses from your kit to the ability. Many melee-focused heroes choose a kit that maximizes their melee capabilities, then make ranged free strikes with improvised weapons.

KITS AND TREASURES

When you find a supernatural item such as a magic sword, you can use the item as long as it matches one of your kit's equipment categories. A Blade of Quintessence is a medium weapon, so you can use it with the Ranger or Shining Armor kits. However, you can't use it with the Cloak and Dagger or Spellslinger kits because those kits don't use medium weapons, meaning you haven't done the necessary preparations to use the weapon effectively. You can still swing a Blade of Quintessence around, but you don't get any of its bonuses or benefits.

If you find a piece of equipment you really want to use that isn't part of your kit, you can always change your kit as a respite activity.

KIT BONUSSES AND TRAITS

A kit can increase your Stamina, speed, and stability, as well as the damage and distance of your weapon abilities. Kit bonuses are applied to free strikes.

STAMINA BONUS

Your kit's Stamina bonus is added to your Stamina maximum and scales with your echelon.

SPEED BONUS

Your kit's speed bonus is added to your speed.

STABILITY BONUS

Your kit's stability bonus is added to your stability.

DAMAGE BONUSSES

Kits can grant you a bonus to damage with certain types of abilities.

MELEE DAMAGE BONUS

Kits can have a melee damage bonus. This bonus is added to the rolled damage of abilities with both the Melee and Weapon keywords that deal damage.

RANGED DAMAGE BONUS

Kits can have a ranged damage bonus. This bonus is added to the rolled damage of abilities with both the Ranged and Weapon keywords that deal damage.

BONUSSES ACROSS TIERS

Kit damage bonuses are presented as "+X/+Y/+Z." The X bonus is added to qualifying tier 1 power roll results, the Y bonus is added to qualifying tier 2 power roll results, and the Z bonus is added to qualifying tier 3 power roll results.

For example, the Shining Armor Kit has a +2/+2/+2 melee damage bonus, increasing the damage of your abilities with the Melee and Weapon keywords across all tier results. The Sniper kit has a +0/+0/+4 ranged damage bonus, having no effect on tier 1 and 2 results, increasing the damage of tier 3 results by 4 for your ranged weapon abilities.

DISTANCE BONUS

Your kit's ranged distance bonus increases the distance of your abilities with the Ranged and Weapon keywords. Your kits melee distance bonus increase the distance of your abilities with the Melee and Weapon keywords.

A distance bonus doesn't increase the size of any ability's area of effect.

DISENGAGE BONUS

Your kit's disengage bonus increases the number of squares you can shift when you take the Disengage move action. You can shift an additional number of squares equal to the bonus when you use Disengage.

KIT SIGNATURE ABILITY

Each kit grants you a signature ability, **which already includes the kit's bonuses**.

For details on the ability format, see [Abilities](#).

OPTIONAL RULE: LOSING EQUIPMENT

The rules of the game expect that heroes always have access to their equipment. That's because for most of the time in the game, heroes aren't worried about surviving for days on end in a dungeon and tracking every piece of gear they carry. However, there could be times where your group wants to tell a story of heroes who are captured and stripped of their equipment, or who find themselves at a masquerade where weapons need to be checked at the door. For those sorts of scenarios, you can use the following rules:

- If your kit has armor and you aren't wearing or wielding it, then you lose your kit's bonuses to Stamina and stability. If you lose your shield but keep the rest of your armor, your Stamina decreases by 3. As long as you are carrying your shield, you don't lose its bonus to Stamina, even if you aren't actively wielding it.
- If your kit has a medium or heavy weapon that you aren't wielding, you lose the kit's melee damage bonus.
- If your kit has a light weapon that you aren't wielding, you lose the kit's melee damage, ranged damage, and distance bonus.
- If your kit has a polearm or whip that you aren't wielding, you lose the kit's melee damage and melee distance bonus.
- If your kit has an ensnaring weapon that you aren't wielding, you lose the kit's signature ability.

KITS A TO Z

This section details each kit, whose bonuses and benefits are summarized in the Martial Kits table.

ARCANE ARCHER

The Arcane Archer kit allows you to combine magic and ranged weapon attacks. Your lack of armor keeps you mobile, and your magic makes your arrows explode to devastate your foes.

EQUIPMENT

You wear no armor and wield a bow.

KIT BONUSES

- **Speed Bonus:** +1
- **Ranged Damage Bonus:** +2/+2/+2
- **Weapon Distance Bonus:** +10
- **Disengage Bonus:** +1

SIGNATURE ABILITY

EXPLODING ARROW

Your ammunition explodes with magical energy.

Keywords: Magic, Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 15 **Target:** 1 creature or object

Power Roll + Agility, Reason, Intuition, or Presence:

- 11 or lower: **5 + A, R, I, or P fire damage**
- 12–16: **7 + A, R, I, or P fire damage**
- 17+: **10 + A, R, I, or P fire damage**

Effect: A creature or object within 2 squares of your target takes fire damage equal to the characteristic score you added to this ability's power roll.

BATTLEMIND

Who says lightly armored heroes can't also be hard to move? You just need to employ some psionics! You use the Battlemind kit harnesses the power of your mind to make yourself harder to move and your foes easier to push around.

EQUIPMENT

You wear light armor and wield a medium weapon.

KIT BONUSES

- **Stamina Bonus:** +3 per echelon
- **Speed Bonus:** +2
- **Stability Bonus:** +1
- **Melee Damage Bonus:** +2/+2/+2

SIGNATURE ABILITY

UNMOORING

Your weapon unleashes psionic energy that reduces your target's weight.

Keywords: Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** 1 creature

Power Roll + Might, Reason, Intuition, or Presence:

11 or lower: **5 + M, R, I, or P damage; stability reduced by 2 (EoT)**

12–16: **8 + M, R, I, or P damage; stability reduced by 3 (EoT)**

17+: **11 + M, R, I, or P damage; stability reduced by 4 (EoT)**

CLOAK AND DAGGER

Providing throwable light weapons and light armor easily concealed by a cloak to confuse your enemies, the Cloak and Dagger kit makes you more mobile while providing a boost to your effectiveness at range and to your damage. This kit is good for a hero who wants to be able to move all over the battlefield while keeping their options open for using short-range attacks.

EQUIPMENT

You wear light armor and wield one or two light weapons.

KIT BONUSES

- **Stamina Bonus:** +3 per echelon
- **Speed Bonus:** +2
- **Melee Damage Bonus:** +1/+1/+1
- **Ranged Damage Bonus:** +1/+1/+1
- **Ranged Distance Bonus:** +5
- **Disengage Bonus:** +1

SIGNATURE ABILITY

FADE

A stab, and a few quick, careful steps back.

Keywords: Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 or ranged 10 **Target:** 1 creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- 11 or lower: **3 + M or A damage; you shift 1 square**
- 12–16: **6 + M or A damage; you shift up to 2 squares**
- 17+: **8 + M or A damage; you shift up to 3 squares**

DUAL WIELDER

The Dual Wielder kit is for folks who want to excel at using two weapons at the same time. The fighting style maximizes the power of each instrument in your hands, making you a whirling deliverer of death.

EQUIPMENT

You wear medium armor and wield a light weapon and a medium weapon.

KIT BONUSES

- **Stamina Bonus:** +6 per echelon
- **Speed Bonus:** +2
- **Melee Damage Bonus:** +2/+2/+2
- **Disengage Bonus:** +1

SIGNATURE ABILITY

DOUBLE STRIKE

Why strike once when you could do it twice?

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** 2 creatures or objects

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- 11 or lower: **4 damage**
12–16: **6 damage**
17+: **8 damage**

Effect: If you use this ability on your turn, you can target one creature or object with it then use your maneuver and move action for that turn before targeting a second creature or object. You still use the same power roll for both targets.

GUISARMIER

The Guisarmier kit is for those who want to use a polearm for extended reach and still gain the extra protection of armor. This is the kit that allows you to become the ultimate halberd, longspear, or glaive fighter.

EQUIPMENT

You wear medium armor and wield a polearm.

KIT BONUSES

- **Stamina Bonus:** +6 per echelon
- **Stability Bonus:** +1
- **Melee Damage Bonus:** +2/+2/+2
- **Melee Distance Bonus:** +1

SIGNATURE ABILITY

FORWARD THRUST, BACKWARD SMASH

In your hands, the haft is as good as the head.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 2 **Target:** 2 creatures or objects

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- 11 or lower: **4 damage**
- 12–16: **7 damage**
- 17+: **9 damage**

MARTIAL ARTIST

If you want to be fast in a fight, then Martial Artist is the kit for you. Unencumbered by weapons or armor, this fighting style rewards quick, focused unarmed strikes to opponents, and allows you to be the ultimate skirmisher.

EQUIPMENT

You wear no armor and wield only your unarmed strikes.

KIT BONUSES

- **Stamina Bonus:** +3 per echelon
- **Speed Bonus:** +3
- **Melee Damage Bonus:** +2/+2/+2
- **Disengage Bonus:** +1

SIGNATURE ABILITY

BATTLE GRACE

You feint to move your enemies into perfect position.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** 1 creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- 11 or lower: **5 + M or A damage**
- 12–16: **8 + M or A damage; you swap places with the target**
- 17+: **11 + M or A damage; you swap places with the target**

Effect: If you roll a 12 or better and can't swap places with the target because one or both of you is too big to fit into the swapped space, you both remain in your original spaces and the target takes 1 extra damage.

MOUNTAIN

The Mountain kit does exactly what it says on the tin. You don heavy armor and a heavy weapon to stand strong against your foes, quickly demolishing them when it's your turn to attack.

EQUIPMENT

You wear heavy armor and wield a heavy weapon.

KIT BONUSES

- **Stamina Bonus:** +9 per echelon
- **Stability Bonus:** +2
- **Melee Damage Bonus:** +0/+0/+4

SIGNATURE ABILITY

PAIN FOR PAIN

An enemy who tagged you will pay for that.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** 1 creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- 11 or lower: **3 + M or A damage**
- 12–16: **5 + M or A damage**
- 17+: **13 + M or A damage**

Effect: If the target dealt damage to you since the end of your last turn, this strike deals additional damage equal to your Might or Agility score (your choice).

PANTHER

If you want a good balance of protection, speed, and damage, the Panther kit is for you. This kit increases your Stamina not by wearing armor, but through the focused battle preparation of body and mind, letting you be fast and mobile while swinging a heavy weapon at your foes.

EQUIPMENT

You wear no armor and wield a heavy weapon.

KIT BONUSES

- **Stamina Bonus:** +6 per echelon
- **Speed Bonus:** +1
- **Stability Bonus:** +1
- **Melee Damage Bonus:** +0/+0/+4

SIGNATURE ABILITY

DEVASTATING RUSH

The faster you move, the harder you hit.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** 1 creature or object

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- 11 or lower: **3 + M or A damage**
- 12–16: **6 + M or A damage**
- 17+: **13 + M or A damage**

Effect: You can move up to 3 squares straight toward the target before this strike. You deal extra damage equal to the distance moved this way.

PUGILIST

Meant for brawlers and boxers, the Pugilist kit gives you access to a melee fighting style that gives you a boost to Stamina and damage while allowing you to float like a butterfly. If you want to be a tough, strong hero who doles out punishment with your fists, then this kit is for you.

EQUIPMENT

You wear no armor and wield only your unarmed strikes.

KIT BONUSES

- **Stamina Bonus:** +6 per echelon
- **Speed Bonus:** +2
- **Stability Bonus:** +1
- **Melee Damage Bonus:** +1/+1/+1

SIGNATURE ABILITY

LET'S DANCE

Keeping your enemies stumbling around the battlefield is second nature to you.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** 1 creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- 11 or lower: **3 + M or A damage**
- 12–16: **6 + M or A damage; slide 1**
- 17+: **8 + M or A damage; slide 2**

Effect: You can shift into any square your target leaves after you slide them.

RAIDER

The Raider kit keeps you protected while granting you full mobility, providing a boost to speed and distance that lets you run around the battlefield like a Viking warrior.

EQUIPMENT

You wear light armor, and wield a shield and a light weapon.

KIT BONUSES

- **Stamina Bonus:** +6 per echelon
- **Speed Bonus:** +1
- **Melee Damage Bonus:** +1/+1/+1
- **Ranged Damage Bonus:** +1/+1/+1
- **Ranged Distance Bonus:** +5
- **Disengage Bonus:** +1

SIGNATURE ABILITY

SHOCK AND AWE

You execute a brutal strike that leaves your foe reeling.

Keywords: Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 or Ranged 10 **Target:** 1 creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- 11 or lower: **3 + M or A damage**
- 12–16: **6 + M or A damage**
- 17+: **8 + M or A damage**

Effect: The target has a bane on their next power roll made before the end of their next turn.

RANGER

The Ranger kit outfits you with light armor and several weapons, letting you easily switch between using a melee weapon and a bow. This kit provides a good balance of bonuses to Stamina, speed, damage, and range to create a hero who is a jack-of-all-trades.

EQUIPMENT

You wear medium armor and wield a medium weapon and a bow.

KIT BONUSES

- **Stamina Bonus:** +6 per echelon
- **Speed Bonus:** +1
- **Melee Damage Bonus:** +1/+1/+1

- **Ranged Damage Bonus:** +1/+1/+1
- **Ranged Distance Bonus:** +5
- **Disengage Bonus:** +1

SIGNATURE ABILITY

HAMSTRING SHOT

A well-placed shot leaves your enemy struggling to move.

Keywords: Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** 1 creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- 11 or lower: **3 + M or A damage; A < [weak] slowed (save ends)**
- 12–16: **5 + M or A damage; A < [average] slowed (save ends)**
- 17+: **7 + M or A damage; A < [strong] slowed (save ends)**

RAPID-FIRE

The Rapid-Fire kit is for archers who want to deal maximum damage by shooting as many arrows as possible into nearby enemies. With this kit, your fighting technique focuses on peppering foes at medium range.

EQUIPMENT

You wear light armor and wield a bow.

KIT BONUSES

- **Stamina Bonus:** +3 per echelon
- **Speed Bonus:** +1
- **Ranged Damage Bonus:** +2/+2/+2
- **Ranged Distance Bonus:** +7
- **Disengage Bonus:** +1

SIGNATURE ABILITY

TWO SHOT

When you fire two arrows back to back, both hit their mark.

Keywords: Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 12 **Target:** 2 creatures or objects

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- 11 or lower: **4 damage**
- 12–16: **6 damage**
- 17+: **8 damage**

RETIARIUS

The retiarius is often depicted as a lightly armored warrior with a net in one hand and a trident in the other, and this kit gives you the equipment and fighting technique to make that happen. Tie up your foe with a net and then poke them to death!

EQUIPMENT

You wear light armor, and wield a polearm and several ensnaring weapons.

KIT BONUSES

- **Stamina Bonus:** +3 per echelon
- **Speed Bonus:** +1
- **Melee Damage Bonus:** +2/+2/+2

- **Melee Distance Bonus:** +1
- **Disengage Bonus:** +1

SIGNATURE ABILITY

NET AND STAB

The well-thrown net that follows your main attack leaves your foes right where you want them.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 2 **Target:** 1 creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- 11 or lower: **4 + M or A damage; A < [weak] slowed (EoT)**
- 12–16: **6 + M or A damage; A < [average] slowed (EoT)**
- 17+: **8 + M or A damage; A < [strong] restrained (EoT)**

SHINING ARMOR

The Shining Armor kit provides the most protection a kit can afford, providing you with the sword, shield, and armor necessary to play the prototypical knight.

EQUIPMENT

You wear heavy armor and wield a shield and a medium weapon.

KIT BONUSES

- **Stamina Bonus:** +12 per echelon
- **Stability Bonus:** +1
- **Melee Damage Bonus:** +2/+2/+2

SIGNATURE ABILITY

PROTECTIVE ATTACK

The strength of your assault makes it impossible for your foe to ignore you.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** 1 creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- 11 or lower: **5 + M or A damage**
- 12–16: **8 + M or A damage**
- 17+: **11 + M or A damage**

Effect: The target is taunted (EoT).

SNIPER

The Sniper kit gives you the tools and techniques to take down enemies from afar. This kit can help you become the archer who lurks behind trees or down tunnels, picking off enemies with a bow or crossbow as they approach.

EQUIPMENT

You wear no armor and wield a bow.

KIT BONUSES

- **Speed Bonus:** +1
- **Ranged Damage Bonus:** +0/+0/+4
- **Ranged Distance Bonus:** +10
- **Disengage Bonus:** +1

SIGNATURE ABILITY

PATIENT SHOT

Breathe ... aim ... wait... then strike!

Keywords: Ranged, Strike, Weapon

Type: Action

Distance: Ranged 15

Target: 1 creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- 11 or lower: **3 + M or A damage**
- 12–16: **6 + M or A damage**
- 17+: **13 + M or A damage**

Effect: If you don't take a move action this turn, this strike deals extra damage equal to your Might or Agility score (your choice).

SPELLSWORD

The Spellsword kit combines melee attacks and a little bit of magic for warriors who don't want to have to choose between the incantation and the blade.

EQUIPMENT

You wear light armor and wield a shield and a medium weapon.

KIT BONUSES

- **Stamina Bonus:** +6 per echelon
- **Speed Bonus:** +1
- **Stability Bonus:** +1
- **Melee Damage Bonus:** +2/+2/+2

SIGNATURE ABILITY

LEAPING LIGHTNING

Lightning jumps from your weapon as you strike to harm a nearby foe.

Keywords: Magic, Melee, Strike, Weapon

Type: Action

Distance: Melee 1

Target: 1 creature or object

Power Roll + Might, Reason, Intuition, or Presence:

- 11 or lower: **5 + M, R, I or P lightning damage**
- 12–16: **8 + M, R, I or P lightning damage**
- 17+: **11 + M, R, I or P lightning damage**

Effect: A creature or object within 2 squares of your target takes lightning damage equal to the characteristic you used for this ability's power roll.

STICK AND ROBE

Armed with a simple reach weapon, often a quarterstaff, heroes using the Stick and Robe kit are highly mobile thanks to their light armor. This allows them to make maximum use of their weapon's length.

EQUIPMENT

You wear light armor and wield a polearm.

KIT BONUSES

- **Stamina Bonus:** +3 per echelon
- **Speed Bonus:** +2
- **Melee Damage Bonus:** +1/+1/+1
- **Melee Distance Bonus:** +1
- **Disengage Bonus:** +1

SIGNATURE ABILITY

WHERE I WANT YOU

When your stick speaks, your enemy moves.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon

Type: Action

Distance: Melee 2

Target: 1 creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- 11 or lower: **4 + M or A damage**
- 12–16: **7 + M or A damage; slide 1**
- 17+: **10 + M or A damage; slide 3**

SWASHBUCKLER

If you want to be mobile and deal a lot of damage with melee attacks, then you should reach for the Swashbuckler kit. This is a great kit for heroes who want to be master duelists.

EQUIPMENT

You wear light armor and wield a medium weapon.

KIT BONUSES

- **Stamina Bonus:** +3 per echelon
- **Speed Bonus:** +3
- **Melee Damage Bonus:** +2/+2/+2
- **Disengage Bonus:** +1

SIGNATURE ABILITY

FANCY FOOTWORK

All combat is a dance—and you'll be the one leading.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon

Type: Action

Distance: Melee 1

Target: 1 creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- 11 or lower: **5 + M or A damage**
- 12–16: **7 + M or A damage; push 1**
- 17+: **10 + M or A damage; push 2**

Effect: You can shift into any square your target leaves after you force move them with this ability.

SWORD AND BOARD

The Sword and Board kit doesn't just give you a shield—it makes the shield part of your offensive arsenal. With a medium weapon in one hand and a block of steel or solid oak in the other, you can protect yourself and control the battlefield.

EQUIPMENT

You wear medium armor and wield a shield and a medium weapon.

KIT BONUSES

- **Stamina Bonus:** +9 per echelon
- **Melee Damage Bonus:** +2/+2/+2
- **Stability Bonus:** +1
- **Disengage Bonus:** +1

SIGNATURE ABILITY

SHIELD BASH

In your hands, a shield isn't just for protection.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** 1 creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

11 or lower: **4 + M or A damage; push 1**

12–16: **7 + M or A damage; push 2**

17+: **9 + M or A damage; push 3; M < [strong] prone**

WARRIOR PRIEST

The Warrior Priest kit imbues the power of the gods into your weapon, making it a smiting instrument. You wade into the fray without fear, thanks to the power of the divine ... and the heavy armor you're wearing.

EQUIPMENT

You wear heavy armor and wield a light weapon.

KIT BONUSES

- **Stamina Bonus:** +9 per echelon
- **Speed Bonus:** +1
- **Stability Bonus:** +1
- **Melee Damage Bonus:** +1/+1/+1

SIGNATURE ABILITY

WEAKENING BRAND

The impact of your weapon brands your target for destruction.

Keywords: Magic, Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** 1 creature or object

Power Roll + Might, Reason, Intuition, or Presence:

11 or lower: **3 + M, R, I or P holy damage**

12–16: **5 + M, R, I or P holy damage**

17+: **8 + M, R, I or P holy damage**

Effect: The target has damage weakness equal to the characteristic score you used on this ability's power roll (EoT).

WHIRLWIND

The Whirlwind kit makes effective use of whips, granting you mobility, damage, and reach. If you want to be a mobile warrior who uses a chain or whip, then this is the kit for you.

EQUIPMENT

You wear no armor and wield a whip.

KIT BONUSES

- **Speed Bonus:** +3
- **Melee Damage Bonus:** +1/+1/+1
- **Melee Distance Bonus:** +1
- **Disengage Bonus:** +1

SIGNATURE ABILITY

EXTENSION OF MY ARM

When you draw your whip back after an attack, your enemy comes ever closer.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 3 **Target:** 1 creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

• 11 or lower: **4 + M or A damage; vertical pull 1**

• 12–16: **7 + M or A damage; vertical pull 2**

• 17+: **10 + M or A damage; vertical pull 3**

MARTIAL KITS

Kit	Armor	Weapon	Stamina per Echelon	Speed	Stability	Melee Damage	Ranged Damage	Ranged Distance	Melee Distance	Disengage
Arcane Archer	None	Bow	—	+1	—	—	+2/+2/+2	+10	—	+1
Battlemind	Light	Medium	+3	+2	+1	+2/+2/+2	—	—	—	—
Cloak and Dagger	Light	Light	+3	+2	—	+1/+1/+1	+1/+1/+1	+5	—	+1
Dual Wielder	Medium	Medium, Light	+6	+2	—	+2/+2/+2	—	—	—	+1
Guisarmier	Medium	Polearm	+6	—	+1	+2/+2/+2	—	—	+1	—
Martial Artist	None	Unarmed strike	+3	+3	—	+2/+2/+2	—	—	—	+1
Mountain	Heavy	Heavy	+9	—	+2	+0/+0/+4	—	—	—	—
Panther	None	Heavy	+6	+1	+1	+0/+0/+4	—	—	—	—
Pugilist	None	Unarmed strike	+6	+2	+1	+1/+1/+1	—	—	—	—
Raider	Light, shield	Light	+6	+1	—	+1/+1/+1	+1/+1/+1	+5	—	+1
Ranger	Medium	Medium, bow	+6	+1	—	+1/+1/+1	+1/+1/+1	+5	—	+1
Rapid-Fire	Light	Bow	+3	+1	—	—	+2/+2/+2	+7	—	+1
Retiarius	Light	Polearm, ensnaring	+3	+1	—	+2/+2/+2	—	—	+1	+1
Shining Armor	Heavy, shield	Medium	+12	—	+1	+2/+2/+2	—	—	—	—
Sniper	None	Bow	—	+1	—	—	+0/+0/+4	+10	—	+1
Spellsword	Light, Shield	Medium	+6	+1	+1	+2/+2/+2	—	—	—	—
Stick and Robe	Light	Polearm	+3	+2	—	+1/+1/+1	—	—	+1	+1
Swashbuckler	Light	Medium	+3	+3	—	+2/+2/+2	—	—	—	+1
Sword and Board	Medium, Shield	Medium	+9	—	+1	+2/+2/+2	—	—	—	+1
Warrior Priest	Heavy	Light	+9	+1	+1	+1/+1/+1	—	—	—	—
Whirlwind	None	Whip	—	+3	—	+1/+1/+1	—	—	+1	+1

PERKS

Heroes don't just fight monsters. They engage in exploration, investigation, negotiation and more. Perks are features you can use to customize your heroes and give them heroic moments outside of combat. Perks, along with skills and many of your hero's class features, make your character more than a monster fighter. While these features are designed to be used outside of combat, many are versatile enough that they can also be used in combat.

You get one perk from your career and can choose others from your class as your level increases.

PERK TYPES

There are six types of perks:

- **Crafting perks** let you better craft materials and become an expert in the things you create.
- **Exploration perks** let you better traverse and explore environments.
- **Interpersonal perks** let you better interact with other creatures.
- **Intrigue perks** let you better investigate mysteries and find the truth while keeping your secrets hidden.
- **Supernatural perks** let you use magic and psionics to influence the world around you.

Whenever a feature allows you to gain a perk, it tells you which type of perk to choose.

CRAFTING PERKS

This section presents the crafting perks in alphabetical order.

AREA OF EXPERTISE

Choose one skill from the crafting skill group that you have. When you roll an 11 or lower on an easy or medium test with this skill, you instead take the 12-16 result. Additionally, if you spend 1 minute inspecting an object related to this skill, you can approximate its value and learn of any flaws in its construction.

EXPERT ARTISAN

Whenever you make a test as part of a research or crafting project that uses a skill you have from the crafting skill group, you can roll the test twice and use either roll.

HANDY

When you make a test to craft something and don't have a skill that applies, you gain a +1 bonus to the roll.

HOMESTEADER

You gain an artisan follower, in addition to followers you acquire through renown or other means.

IMPROVISATION CREATION

Even without tools, you can quickly jury-rig a mundane item or repair a mundane piece of equipment related to a skill you have from the crafting skill group without needing to make a test. That item works for 1 hour or 1 use (whichever comes first) then breaks beyond repair. For example, if you have the carpentry skill, you can repair a rickety wooden bridge long enough for a group of creatures to cross it or build a simple shovel made of wood that works for 1 hour.

INSPIRED ARTISAN

When you make a project roll using a skill from the crafting skill group that you have, you can spend a hero token to make another project roll for the same project as part of the same respite activity. You can't use this perk more than once per respite.

TRAVELLING ARTISAN

On a day when you don't take a respite, you can spend an uninterrupted hour working on a crafting project that uses a crafting skill you have. If you do so, you gain 1d10 points toward that project.

EXPLORATION PERKS

This section presents the exploration perks in alphabetical order.

BRAWNY

When you fail a Might test, you can roll a d6. You lose Stamina equal to the roll and improve the result of your test by one tier. You can use this perk only once per test.

CAMOUFLAGE HUNTER

While in the wilderness, once you are hidden from a creature, you don't need cover or concealment from them to stay hidden.

DANGER SENSE

When in a natural environment that isn't in a settlement, you have an edge on all tests made with the Alertness skill, and you cannot be surprised. Additionally, you're attuned to the instincts of wildlife and know if a natural disaster is imminent within the next 72 hours. You don't know exactly what it will entail.

FRIEND CATAPULT

As a maneuver, you can grab a willing, adjacent ally or object of your size or smaller and hurl them a number of squares equal to twice your Might score in any direction. If they fall as a result of this movement, their fall distance is reduced by a number equal to twice your Might score. You can't use this perk again until you gain at least 1 Victory.

I'VE GOT YOU!

If a willing ally lands on you when they fall, you can use your triggered action to catch them. Neither of you takes damage from the fall.

MONSTER WHISPERER

You can use the Handle Animals skill to interact with non-sapient monsters who are not animals.

PUT YOUR BACK INTO IT!

Once per montage test, you can turn an ally's tier 1 test result into a tier 2 result. Additionally, if you make a test to assist a test and get a tier 1 result, you don't add a bane to the assisted test.

SURVIVALIST

While in the wilderness, you can spend 1 hour searching a 1-mile-radius area of land and find a safe location suitable for a respite (if one exists).

TEAMWORK

When you take your first turn during a montage test, you can both make a test and assist another hero's test.

TEAM LEADER

At the start of a group test or montage test, you can spend a hero token. If you do, all participants make tests as if they also had your exploration skills.

WOOD WISE

When you make a test with an exploration skill and at least one of the d10s rolled is a 1, you can reroll one d10. You can only use this perk once per test.

INTERPERSONAL PERKS

This section presents the interpersonal perks in alphabetical order.

CHARMING LIAR

If you fail a test with the Lie skill, you don't suffer any consequences associated with the failure. You can't benefit from this perk again until you gain at least 1 Victory.

During a negotiation, you can be caught in one lie without negative consequences. You can't benefit from this perk again until you gain at least 1 Victory.

CUNNING PLAN

When you have at least 10 minutes to plan before going into a negotiation, you can declare a goal and offer up at least one piece of information you have about that NPC that will enable you to achieve that goal. If this intel is accurate and meaningful, you gain 1 Hero token which can be used to achieve that goal. If you have additional information, or your information is particularly extensive,

you can gain a second Hero token at the Director's discretion.

DAZZLER

When a creature watches you perform a song, dance, or role (as an actor, not in disguise) for at least 1 minute, you gain an edge on tests made to influence that creature for 1 hour after the performance ends.

ENGROSSING MONOLOGUE

When you are not in combat, you can shout to get the attention of all creatures within 10 squares of you. Each creature who is not hostile toward you listens to what you have to say for at least the next minute, or until they sense danger or any form of imminent harm. While creatures are listening to you, your allies gain an edge on tests made to avoid being noticed by those creatures.

FAST NEGOTIATOR

At the start of a negotiation, you can learn one negotiation motivation or pitfall (your choice) of an NPC in the negotiation.

HARMONIZER

For you, music is a universal language.

- You can make a Presence test with the music skill to influence creatures even if you don't share a language.
- Once during a negotiation when an ally makes an argument, you can play music to give them an edge on their test.

LIE DETECTOR

After another creature communicates with you, you can spend a hero token to determine whether what that creature communicated had any lies. If so, you know what the lies are, but not what the truth is.

OPEN BOOK

When you have a chance to speak one-on-one with someone, you can ask them one question about themselves. If they choose to answer honestly, they can immediately ask you a question about yourself in turn, which you must answer honestly. If they choose not to answer honestly, they simply deflect or redirect the question, no further complications result from the prying.

PARDON MY FRIEND

When an ally within 5 squares of you fails a Presence test, you can step in and make a Presence test with a bane. Your new roll replaces their roll. This feature can only be used once per test, regardless of how many heroes have it.

PERSISTENT

In a negotiation, when a creature's patience reaches 0, you can make one last argument before the negotiation is over. Only one hero can use this perk per negotiation.

POWER PLAYER

When you make a test that uses the Brag, Flirt, or Intimidate skills, you can use Might in place of another characteristic used as part of the test.

SO, TELL ME ...

When you succeed on a Presence test to influence another creature, you can ask one creature you influenced a follow-up question after the test resolves, which they must answer honestly. At the Director's discretion, the creature doesn't have to answer the question completely or at all if the response would put them or a loved one in danger.

SPOT THE TELL

When you make a test to read a person and get a tier 3 result, you notice several tells that give away their true feelings. Any test you make to read that person in the future, you gain an edge on the test.

INTRIGUE PERKS

This section presents the intrigue perks in alphabetical order.

CRIMINAL CONTACTS

You have access to a network of criminal contacts. As a respite activity during a respite in a settlement, you can ask a question of your contacts. Make a Presence test. On a tier 2 result, you gain knowledge that would be common among criminals (e.g. the secret entrances into a building, the location of a local, hidden criminal, the name of a local thieves' guild leader). On a tier 3 result, you can also gain knowledge that would be uncommon among criminals, if such information exists (e.g. the location of a local treasure stock, the location of a murder weapon used in a noble's assassination, the name of an NPC secretly bankrolling a local assassin's guild).

FORGETTABLE FACE

If you interact with a creature for less than 10 minutes and they haven't met you before in the past, you can cause them to forget your face when you part. If asked to describe you, they give only a vague, blank, and unhelpful description. Additionally, if you spend at least 1 hour assembling a disguise, creatures who meet you in that disguise do not recognize your true face later from when you were in disguise.

GUM UP THE WORKS

When a mundane trap activates within 3 squares of you, you can move up to 3 squares toward it as a triggered action. If you're adjacent to any of the trap's mechanisms after this movement, you jam the trap, preventing it from activating. So long as you stay adjacent to the mechanism, the trap can't go off. If an attempt to disarm the trap you are stall fails, it goes off.

LUCKY DOG

When you fail a test using any skill from the intrigue skill group, you can roll a d6. You lose Stamina equal to the roll and improve the result of your test by one tier. You can use this perk only once per test.

MASTER OF DISGUISE

You can don or remove a disguise as part of any Hide test you make or while taking the Hide maneuver.

SLIPPED LEAD

You have an edge on checks made to escape bonds. Given at least 1 minute uninterrupted, you can escape any mundane bonds without making a test. Additionally, it's not immediately obvious when you've escaped bonds until you use an ability that harms other creatures, cast them off, or do something else obvious that makes it clear you are unbound.

LORE PERKS

This section presents the lore perks in alphabetical order.

BUT I KNOW WHO DOES

When you fail a test to recall lore with a skill from the lore skill group that you have, you know the closest place where the information you seek with that test can be found. It could be a sage, in a library, or somewhere deep in a dungeon. The Director determines the source's location.

EIDETIC MEMORY

Your mind is an encyclopedia, though not always an easy one to organize. After finishing a respite, choose one skill from the lore skill you don't have. You gain that skill until you finish a respite. Additionally, if you spend at least 1 minute reading a page of text, you can memorize its contents. You can memorize entire books this way.

EXPERT SAGE

Whenever you make a test as part of a research or crafting project that uses a skill you have from the lore skill group, you can roll the test twice and use either roll.

I'VE READ ABOUT THIS PLACE

When you enter a settlement you've never been to before, you can ask the Director one of the following questions:

- Who's the most influential public figure in this settlement?
- Who in this town would be friendly to us right now?
- What does this settlement need most from outsiders?

If the Director does not have an answer to the question you ask, you can instead ask a different question.

LINGUIST

If you spend at least 7 days in a place where you regularly hear a language you don't know spoken, you can pick up enough of that language to hold a conversation, though you still can't read it. After doing so, you can learn it twice as fast as normal. Additionally, you learn two extra languages you've heard before when you gain this perk.

POLYMATH

When you make a test to recall lore and don't have a skill that applies to the test, you gain a +1 bonus to the test.

SPECIALIST

You are a leading expert on a particular subject. Choose one skill you have from the lore skill group. You always have a double edge on tests made to recall lore that use this skill. Additionally, you have at least one major contribution to this field, such as a thesis, field guide, gazetteer, or even an ongoing newsletter you maintain. This contribution grants you notoriety in your field. You treat your Renown as 1 higher when negotiating with people who know of your work, or 2 higher if they have the skill that you chose for this perk.

TRAVELLING SAGE

On a day when you don't take a respite, you can spend an uninterrupted hour working on a research project that uses a lore skill you have. If you do so, you gain 1d10 points toward that project.

SUPERNATURAL PERKS

This section presents the supernatural perks in alphabetical order.

ARCANE TRICK

You gain the following ability.

ARCANE TRICK

You cast an entertaining spell that creates a minor but impressive magical effect.

Keywords: Magic **Type:** Action
Distance: Self **Target:** Self

- Effect:** Choose one of the following effects:
- You teleport an unattended size 1T or 1S object within 1 square of you to an unoccupied space within 1 square of you.
 - Until the start of your next turn, a part of your body shoots a shower of harmless noisy sparks that give off light within 1 square of you.
 - You ignite or snuff out (your choice) every mundane light source within 1 square of you.
 - You make up to 1 pound of edible food you can touch taste delicious or disgusting.
 - Until the start of your next turn, you make your body exude a particular odor you've smelled before. This smell can be sensed by creatures within 5 squares of you, but can't impose any condition or other drawback on creatures.

- You place a small magical inscription on the surface of a mundane object you can touch, or remove an inscription that was made by you or by another creature using Arcane Trick.
- You cover a size 1T object that you touch with an illusion that makes it look like another object. A creature who handles the object can see through the illusion. The illusion ends when you stop touching the object.

CREATURE SENSE

As a maneuver, you can magically learn the keywords a creature of lower level within 10 squares of you has in their stat block (e.g. "Demon," "Humanoid," or "Undead").

FAMILIAR

A magic spirit, which has taken the form of a specific small animal or animate object, has chosen to be your familiar—or to adopt you as its familiar. The familiar can't perform activities that require hands, and it can't harm other creatures or objects. It can provide flanking benefits only to you. The familiar uses the familiar stat block.

If the familiar is destroyed, you can restore them as a respite activity or by spending a Recovery as an action to bring them back into existence into an unoccupied space adjacent to you.

FAMILIAR				
<i>Familiar</i>				
Stamina 2 × your level				
Speed 5		Size 1T / Stability 0		
Might -3	Agility +2	Reason +0	Intuition +0	Presence +1
Telepathic				
You and the spirit can communicate telepathically with each other and share senses over while you are within 10 squares of each other.				

INVISIBLE FORCE

You gain the following ability.

INVISIBLE FORCE

You manipulate a tiny object with your mind.

Keywords: Psionic **Type:** Maneuver
Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** 1 size 1T unattended object

Effect: You can grab or manipulate the target with your mind. You can move the object up to a number of squares equal to your Reason, Intuition, or Presence score (your choice). You can use this ability to turn doorknobs, pull levers, and manipulate other smaller, movable pieces of a larger object as long as the piece you're manipulating is unattended and size 1T (though you can't use this ability to break smaller piece off of a larger object).

PSYCHIC WHISPER

You gain the following ability.

PSYCHIC WHISPER

You send a one-way telepathic message to a friend.

Keywords: Psionic **Type:** Maneuver

Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** 1 ally who understands at least one language

Effect: You send a telepathic message to the target that takes 10 seconds or less to speak.

THINGSPEAKER

When you hold an object in your hand, you can ask the Director if it bears emotional importance. Objects with emotional resonance could include treasured gifts, murder weapons, or personal keepsakes. If the answer is yes, the Director tells you the most dominant emotion associated with the object, and you can spend 1 uninterrupted minute focusing on the object, at the end of which you receive a vision which answers one of the following questions:

- What was the name of the person whose emotions are imprinted on this object?
- Why does this emotion linger on the object?
- How long has it been since this was held by the person whose emotions linger on it?

After asking one question, you can choose to delve deeper. You ask one additional question from the list, after which you are overcome with emotions that do not belong to you. You take a bane on Presence and Intuition tests until you finish a respite. While you suffer this bane, you can't use this feature.

RITUALIST

You can spend 1 minute performing a magic ritual of blessing. At the end of the ritual, touch one willing creature, including yourself. The creature gains a double edge on the next test they make within the next minute. A creature can't use this benefit on an activity that takes longer than a minute.

COMPLICATIONS

Beyond your abilities and features, your hero might have something else that makes them ... unusual. Perhaps an earth elemental lives in your body. Maybe your eldritch blade devastates enemies but feeds on your own vitality.

A complication is an optional feature you can take to enrich your hero's backstory, with any complication providing you both a positive benefit and a negative drawback. Because complications are optional, check with your Director before taking one.

While you may get to determine your hero's complication, it's your Director's right to determine how your complication affects the story, and you should be okay with that. Maybe you get a chance to remove your complication's drawback or it plays a big part of the campaign's narrative, or it may be you always have the complication's drawback looming over you, forcing you into hard decisions! Either option leads to great narratives, so embrace the control you give to the Director when you take a complication. The story will be richer for it!

BENEFIT AND DRAWBACK

Your complication gives your hero both a benefit and a drawback. Some of these benefits and drawbacks are mechanical, while others are narrative. The benefit and drawback of a complication makes your connection to the game deeper and more interesting, and provides hooks to let the Director better draw your hero into the campaign's story.

Not all complication benefits and drawbacks are created equal, but each benefit is balanced by its drawback. If you have a powerful positive side to your complication, be prepared to have an equally influential bit of negative backstory as well.

MODIFYING THE STORY

You can modify the narrative of a complication to better fit with your vision of your character's backstory—or change it entirely. For instance, if you choose Devil Deal as a complication, you can have your hero instead make that deal with an archfey or an undead general!

Many of the details of each complication are purposefully left vague, so that you can connect it to the rest of your backstory. If your complication took place during “an attack” or “an accident,” you decide the specific details of who or what attacked you, or what type of accident befell you.

DETERMINE COMPLICATION

You can choose your character's complication, or you can roll on the Complications table.

COMPLICATIONS

d100	Complication
1	Advanced Studies
2	Animal Form

3	Amnesia
4	Artifact Bonded
5	Antihero
6	Bereaved
7	Betrothed
8	Careful Curse
9	Chaos Touched
10	Chosen One
11	Consuming Interest
12	Corrupted Mentor
13	Coward
14	Crash Landed
15	Cult Victim
16	Curse of Immortality
17	Curse of Misfortune
18	Curse of Poverty
19	Cursed Weapon
20	Disgraced
21	Dragon Dreams
22	Elemental Inside
23	Evanesceria
24	Exile
25	Fallen Immortal
26	Famous Relative
27	Feytouched
28	Fiery Ideal
29	Fire and Chaos
30	Following in the Footsteps
31	Forbidden Romance
32	Frostheart
33	Getting Too Old for This
34	Gnoll-Bit
35	Greening
36	Griper
37	Grounded
38	Guilty Conscience
39	Hawk Rider
40	Hears Voices
41	Host Body
42	Hunted
43	Hunter
44	Indebted
45	Infernal Contract
46	Infernal Contract ... But, Like, Bad
47	Ivory Tower
48	Lifebonded
49	Lightning Soul
50	Loner
51	Lost in Time
52	Lost Your Head
53	Lucky
54	Master Chef
55	Meddling Butler
56	Medium
57	Medusa Blood
58	Misunderstood
59	Mundane
60	Outlaw
61	Pirate
62	Preacher
63	Primordial Sickness
64	Promising Apprentice

65	Psychic Eruption
66	Punishment Curse
67	Raised by Beasts
68	Refugee
69	Rival
70	Rogue Talent
71	Runaway
72	Searching for a Cure
73	Secret Identity
74	Secret Twin
75	Self Taught
76	Sewer Folk
77	Shadow Born
78	Shared Spirit
79	Shattered Legacy
80	Shipwrecked
81	Sibling's Shield
82	Silent Sentinel
83	Slight Case of Lycanthropy
84	Stolen Face
85	Stone Cursed
86	Strange Inheritance
87	Stripped of Rank
88	Thrill Seeker
89	Vampire Sire
90	Voiceless Prisoner
91	Vow of Honesty
92	Vow of Duty
93	Waking Dreams
94	War Dog
95	War of Assassins
96	Ward
97	Waterborn
98	Wodewalker
99	Wrathful Spirit
100	Wrongly Imprisoned

ADVANCED STUDIES

You somehow obtained the notebook of a brilliant but eccentric member of your class. It should help you unlock powerful new abilities—if you can ever figure out what it means.

Benefit and Drawback: As a respite activity, you can study the notebook. Make a test using your highest characteristic. On an 11 or lower, you summon a hostile demon of your level or lower who attacks you at the end of the respite. The demon gets to act first in the combat, no matter any other creature's traits or abilities. On a 16 or less, you learn nothing and your time is wasted. On a 17+, you learn a bonus heroic ability from your class that you qualify for. You only know the ability until you finish a respite.

ANIMAL FORM

Due to a magical accident, your being has fused with a small, harmless animal. You turn into this animal when it's convenient—and sometimes when it's inconvenient as well.

Benefit: At the start of your turn, while you are conscious you can take the form of a specific 1T animal. Apart from your size, you keep your other statistics. Based on the animal you can turn into, your movement gains either the Burrow, Climb, Fly, or Swim keyword. Instead of gaining one of these keywords, your speed can increase by 2. Unless you use this benefit again, you regain your true form at the start of your next turn. While in animal form, you can't talk or use actions, and the only maneuvers you can take are Escape Grab, Hide, and Stand Up.

Drawback: At the start of your turn while you are winded, the Director can spend 1 Malice to force you to take your animal form. Once the Director has done so, they can't do so again until you have finished a respite.

AMNESIA

You have no memory of your past before the ... incident. Hopefully you'll regain your memory soon and find out what the incident was. In the meantime, you need friends, so you're not alone when your past catches up to you.

Benefit: You have a supernatural possession—a 1st echelon trinket. It might have some connection with your former life.

Drawback: You have a bane on tests made to recall lore.

ARTIFACT BONDED

A powerful artifact has bonded to you. You might be destined to wield the artifact or to destroy it. You're not powerful enough to use it at the moment, although you may one day be. For now, the item has no effect beyond getting you in trouble.

Benefit: Choose an artifact (see [Treasures](#)). The first time in an encounter that you are reduced to 0 Stamina against your will, the artifact appears on your person and then disappears at the end of your next turn.

Drawback: When the artifact disappears from your grasp, you lose a Recovery. If you have no Recoveries remaining, you take 1d10 damage instead, which can't be reduced in any way.

ANTIHERO

You used to be a villain. You're (mostly) reformed now, but in desperate moments, you sometimes draw on the rage and hatred that fueled your old life. In these moments, even your friends aren't sure whose side you're on. They don't need to worry, though. Once you leave evil behind, you can't go back. You've made too many enemies on the other side.

Benefit: You have three Antihero Tokens. Whenever you use an ability or effect that costs a heroic resource, you can spend an Antihero Token to in place of one heroic resource. While you have fewer than three antihero tokens and you would earn a hero token for the group through your deeds, you instead regain one antihero token.

Drawback: While you have fewer than three antihero tokens, you exude a villainous aspect. You and each ally within 5 squares of you takes a bane on all tests made to interact with other creatures.

BEREAVED

The most important person to you—perhaps a family member, mentor, or lover—was killed. The only thing that keeps you going is the faint connection you have with this person's spirit, and the hope that one day you can tie up their unfinished business and let them rest.

Benefit: When you don't know what to do, you can appeal to your loved one's spirit for help. You spend a hero token to let the Director determine your next combat or out-of-combat action. The Director chooses the best course of action they can think of for you, even if it relies on information you don't have. If the Director can't think of a particularly good course of action for you to take, you don't expend the hero token.

Drawback: You gain corruption weakness 5.

BETROTHED

Your parents made a deal, and as part of that deal, you're supposed to marry someone—or something—you didn't choose. But no one is going to tell you what to do! They'll be sorry when you run away and become a mighty adventurer.

Benefit: You escaped with a dowry present: a 1st echelon trinket of your choice.

Drawback: People who learn of you running out on your commitment think less of you and spread nasty rumors about you. Your Renown can't ever be more than your level – 1.

CAREFUL CURSE

When you were young, you did something reckless and unthinking that endangered a hag or cost them something dear. The hag cursed you, causing you to take your time and be always cautious and thorough, even to your own detriment. If you can't shake this curse, it could be your downfall or the very thing that saves you.

Benefit: Until you've taken your turn in a round, strikes against you take a bane.

Drawback: Your speed is reduced by 1.

CHAOS TOUCHED

You came into contact with a mote of pure chaos energy or were subjected to a spell or object that fused chaos into your very being. Now you can sprout and retract limbs in a way that can horrify unprepared onlookers.

Benefit: You gain an edge on power rolls that are part of the Grab, Escape a Grab, or Knockback maneuver. Additionally, you can hold an extra item even when your hands are full.

Drawback: While dying, you grow and retract uncoordinated limbs, making all power rolls with a bane.

CHOSEN ONE

Maybe the stars marked you out at your birth, or maybe your name appears in an ancient prophecy. In any case, a

sinister cult has decided that you're very important to their plan—though you don't particularly like the fate they have in mind for you.

Benefit: You have three Destiny Points. You can spend a Destiny Point in place of a heroic resource of your class. Each time you gain a Victory, you regain one Destiny Point.

Drawback: When you spend a Destiny Point, you take 1d10 psychic damage and the cult that seeks you becomes aware of your location.

CONSUMING INTEREST

Ever since you were a kid, you've been obsessed with a certain topic. During your travels, you spend your free time gleaning all the information you can on it. You might not be the world's leading expert quite yet, but people should certainly trust your opinion on the topic.

Benefit: You gain a skill from the lore skill group. You can use the following project up to three times for that skill. Each time you use the project, you must use a different project source.

STUDY LORE

Item Prerequisite: None

Project Source: A significant source of information on the topic, such as a major library or a world-renowned sage

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason

Project Goal: 120 the first time, 150 the second time, 180 the third time

Your knowledge of your chosen field increases. When you finish this project, the bonus to tests provided by your skill increases from +2 to +3, +3 to +4, or +4 to +5.

Drawback: You can't imagine ever being wrong on the subject. When you make a test to recall lore using your chosen skill, the Director makes the test in secret. Instead of informing you whether you're right or wrong, they provide you with correct information if you succeeded or false information if you failed.

CORRUPTED MENTOR

Your mentor taught you everything, and you trusted them implicitly—until they went rogue, betraying you or your organization. Their current whereabouts and activities are unknown, although there are disturbing rumors—and you, as their former pupil, are under suspicion as well.

Benefit: Your mentor taught you the Corrupt Spirit maneuver, which, in retrospect, should have aroused your suspicion.

CORRUPT SPIRIT

Keywords: Magic

Distance: Self

Type: Maneuver

Target: Self

Effect: Until the end of your turn, when you use a heroic ability against a single target, you can weaken the target's life force, dealing extra corruption damage equal to your highest characteristic score.

Drawback: You have holy weakness 1. Each time you Corrupt Spirit, your holy weakness increases by 1, to a

maximum of your Recovery value. This weakness is reset to 1 after you take holy damage.

COWARD

Some call you a coward, just because you shriek and run when you encounter danger. Sure, you might not have the natural bravado of less-imaginative people, and sure, you're always imagining the many horrible ways you could die, but you're used to fear. When you run in terror, you run *towards* the enemy.

Benefit: You can move toward the source of your fear while you are frightened.

Drawback: When you make a saving throw to end the frightened condition, you roll 2d10 and take the lowest result.

CRASH LANDED

You used to flit around the stars in your own ship, but after an ugly run-in with a pirate (or a pirate hunter), you're marooned on this backwater world. You're prepared to carve out a life here—at least until you can hitch a ride.

Benefit: You gain the Timescape skill. Additionally, you have a power pack that you can activate or deactivate as a maneuver. When you activate the power pack, choose an energy type from cold, fire, lightning, or sonic. The damage you deal with abilities becomes that damage type until you deactivate the power pack.

Drawback: You have a bane on tests made to know about anything related to the world where you crash landed.

CULT VICTIM

Cultists captured you while raiding your home, then began an unholy ritual to turn your body into an undead spirit. The ritual failed, but your body became infused with corrupted magic, turning you partially incorporeal.

Benefit: Once per turn, you can move through a solid mundane object no more than 1 square thick. If you end your turn inside the object, you take 5 damage and are shunted out into the space where you entered the object.

Drawback: Your body is more susceptible to negative energy. You have corruption weakness 5.

CURSE OF IMMORTALITY

As long as you can remember, you've never gotten older—you've just adventured through one age after another. Still, your memory of past events, even those you were involved with, is a little hazy—apparently your memory is not as long-lived as you are.

Benefit: You don't age. Also, when your Stamina equals the negative of your winded value, you enter a state of suspended animation indistinguishable from death. If your body is not destroyed while in this state, after 12 hours you regain consciousness and regain Stamina equal to your recovery value.

Drawback: You have a bane on tests made to recall lore.

CURSE OF MISFORTUNE

You should have never pissed off that mage! Maybe they deserved your ire, or maybe you were just a bully, but whatever the case, the wizard cursed you before skipping town. Now, in moments of pressure that require great skill, you have a tendency to choke, falling and flailing in such a dramatic fashion that you take everyone with you.

Benefit and Drawback: When you make a test in combat and get a consequence, you and every ally within 1 falls prone, causing you to barely miss any further consequence.

CURSE OF POVERTY

A soothsayer once told you you'd never be rich, but you'd survive the impossible—but you're determined to prove 'em wrong. You'll get rich or die trying!

Benefit and Drawback: When you take a respite while your personal Wealth is greater than 1, some improbable event occurs that causes most of your money to vanish. Your Wealth is reduced to 1. For each Wealth that you lose, your number of Recoveries increases by 1 until you take a respite with fewer Recoveries than your maximum.

CURSED WEAPON

When you were young, you were given, or you found, a magic weapon. Since then, it's stayed by your side, possibly even inspiring you to lead the life of a hero—but the weapon is cursed.

Benefit: You gain a leveled weapon of your choice.

Drawback: You have damage weakness 2.

DISGRACED

You're a disgraced member of a powerful family or guild. You've been turned out of the ancestral home, and your relatives won't give you the time of day, much less a helping hand, until you clear your name or clean up your act.

Benefit: You gain 1 Renown, and you learn a skill of your choice from the interpersonal or intrigue skill group.

Drawback: Anyone who has heard of you and is influenced by your Renown treats you as infamous. When you are part of a negotiation that ends with an NPC who has an influence of 2 or lower, that NPC makes a plan to hurt you personally and carries it out.

DRAGON DREAMS

You sometimes have strange dreams of infernos of flame ... gleaming piles of treasure ... spreading your wings and taking flight. You haven't told anyone about the dreams, except for your one strange relative who seems to know more than they're letting on.

Benefit: Choose two ancestry points worth of dragon knight traits. Whenever you have at least 5 Victories, you gain those traits.

Drawback: When you are reduced to 0 Stamina, you explode with heat and fire. You and each creature within 5

squares of you takes fire damage equal to twice your level. You can't reduce this damage for yourself in any way.

ELEMENTAL INSIDE

When an evil mage threatened someone you loved, you blocked your foe's summoning of an elemental creature by absorbing their magic with your body. You are now infused with the power of that elemental—and they're not happy about it.

Benefit: Your Stamina increases by 3 at 1st level, then increases by an additional 3 at 4th, 7th, and 10th levels.

Drawback: When you are dying, your possessing elemental takes control of your body. The elemental yearns for destruction, causing you to attack the closest creature they notice without regard for your desires or your body's safety. The Director or you can control the hero, but whoever does must do their best to kill any creature they notice until you are no longer dying.

EVANESCERIA

You have contracted a rare magical disease called evanesceria. There are times when you're not quite yourself—or anyone else either. You simply ... vanish. You return later with no memory of your absence.

Benefit: You can sometimes absent yourself from unpleasant situations. At the start of a combat round you can attempt to absent yourself by rolling a d10. On a result of 6 or higher, you disappear from reality, reappearing in the space you left, or the closest unoccupied space of your choice if it's occupied, when you take your turn. After you absent yourself, you can't attempt to absent again until you gain a Victory.

Drawback: When you start a respite activity, roll 2d10. If you roll a 1 on either die, you absent for the rest of the respite then reappear. You gain the benefits of taking a respite but don't perform the respite activity.

EXILE

Whether you're a convicted criminal, a noble stripped of their title, or just someone who made one too many enemies, you've been cast forth from your homeland, never to return—at least, until you're strong enough to set things right.

Benefit: You learn an extant spoken language of your choice.

Drawback: If you are caught returning to your homeland, you'll be put to death.

FALLEN IMMORTAL

You used to be an immortal creature, dispensing justice and doing the bidding of the gods. Now, as a punishment or perhaps as a reward, you have put aside your wings and become a mortal. Your remaining years will be short, but living aside your fellow mortals gives your life new meaning.

Benefit: You gain the Religion skill. Additionally, when you deal untyped damage, you can deal holy damage instead.

Drawback: You will never fully gain a mortal's comfort with untruth. When you make a test to deceive another creature, you do so with a bane.

FAMOUS RELATIVE

Sure, you're a promising young hero in your own right—but people always ask you about your famous relative. Will you equal or surpass your relative's accomplishments, or will you always live in their shadow?

Benefit: You have a piece of magic jewelry, such as a signet ring. As a maneuver, you can use the item to summon your relative to your aid. Your relative does their best to help you out of the current perilous situation, and disappears after 1 hour or after the perilous situation is resolved. Once you summon your relative, you can't do so again until you gain a level.

Your relative has the same statistics as you do except for Renown, doesn't gain the benefit of any of your treasures, and makes all power rolls with an edge. Your relative starts with a Renown of 10.

Drawback: After you summon your relative, the next time you gain Renown your relative gains the Renown instead and you gain no Victories from any combat encounters or other Victory-earning challenges for which they were present.

FEYTOUCHED

Your birth was attended by faeries. A friendly fairy blessed you, granting you strength so that you could defend yourself. An unfriendly fairy also blessed you, granting you a life full of peril so that you could prove your strength.

Benefit and Drawback: At the start of a combat encounter, you can gain 1 additional heroic resource. If you do so, the Director gains 3 Malice.

FIERY IDEAL

A spirit beyond your comprehension chose you to be the guardian of a place, a cause, or another ideal. A flame burns in your soul, one that can burn your enemies—or yourself, if you fall short of your ideal.

Benefit: While you are fighting on behalf of your ideal, when you score a tier 3 success with a damage-dealing ability, you deal additional fire damage equal to your highest characteristic score.

Drawback: When you act against your ideal or fail to live up to the high standards associated with your ideal, you take 5 + your level fire damage. This damage can't be decreased in any way.

FIRE AND CHAOS

A great monster who breathed fire burned your home to the ground. While everything around you was consumed, you somehow stood strong amid the inferno, your body adapting to ignore the effects of the flames.

Benefit: You have fire immunity 5.

Drawback: You have cold weakness 5.

FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS

Your personal idol was a mighty hero, and you have modeled yourself on their example. You've studied their legends, and someday you hope to learn their most famous battle technique.

Benefit: Choose a heroic ability for your class that requires a higher level than your current one. When you learn this ability, it costs 2 heroic resources less than usual (minimum 1).

Drawback: In your quest for advanced techniques, you have neglected basics. Choose a heroic ability that you already know. It costs 1 heroic resource more than usual.

FORBIDDEN ROMANCE

You are in love with someone, but tragic circumstances keep you apart—perhaps your lover is from a feuding family, betrothed to another, or has some other animosity toward you.

Benefit: You can secretly call on your betrothed for favors. They may be powerful, but they're constrained—they can't openly reveal their connection with you.

Drawback: When in trouble, your lover may call on you for help—and if your relationship is discovered, your lover's family become dangerous enemies.

FROSTHEART

At the edge of the world, you were lost in a winter storm and presumed dead—but returned with frosty skin and pale eyes.

Benefit: You have cold immunity 5. When you would deal untyped damage with strike, you can instead deal cold damage.

Drawback: You have fire weakness 5.

GETTING TOO OLD FOR THIS

You used to be a renowned hero, but you've been living the last few years in blissful peace. Now you're coming out of retirement for one last hurrah. Your fighting skills have atrophied to the point where you're no stronger than a wet-behind-the-ears starting adventurer, but you still remember some of your old tricks.

Benefit: On your turn, choose a heroic ability that you would be able to learn if you were one level higher. Provided you meet the ability's other prerequisites and you can spend the required heroic resources, you can use this ability. Once you use this benefit, you can't do so again until you have gained 2 Victories.

Drawback: While you are winded, your speed is reduced by 2.

GNOLL-BIT

As a child you survived a gnoll attack—but they left you with a toothy scar and the occasional fit of bloodlust.

Benefit: Whenever an ally within 5 squares of you is reduced to 0 Stamina, as a triggered action you can move up to your speed and make a free strike.

Drawback: If you start your turn next to at least one creature while dazed, you must use your action to make a melee free strike against an adjacent creature.

Special: You can't take this complication if you can't be dazed.

GREENING

A great tree in the middle of a forest called upon you to clear its roots of the ichor moss draining its life force. As you removed the moss, you felt as if you were being filled with green elemental energy. Sadly, the great tree withered before you could finish the job, leaving behind a golden sapling which you now carry with you.

Benefit: You have corruption resistance 5.

Drawback: You have fire weakness 5.

GRIFTER

You used to be a con artist. Those days are pretty much behind you. Being a hero is an even better racket. After all, if you're saving the world, who can be mad at you for stealing a couple of coins along the way?

Benefit: You gain a skill from the intrigue skill group.

Drawback: When you meet an NPC for the first time, the Director can award the party a Hero Token. If they do so, the NPC was a victim of one of your previous cons and remembers you.

GROUNDED

As a child, when your settlement was in danger, you called out to the earth for aid. The earth answered with a shower of protecting earthen walls, and since then, you've felt its presence as a friend and protector.

Benefit: You gain the 1st-level Elementalist Specialization feature Manipulate Earth. If you also gain Manipulate Earth in another way, you can use the ability as a ranged ability with a distance of ranged 5.

Drawback: You attract lightning. When any creature within 2 squares of you takes lightning damage, you take 5 lightning damage, which ignores any lightning immunity you have.

GUILTY CONSCIENCE

The world is in trouble—and it's partly your fault. Maybe you helped a villain rise to power or inadvertently released a demon from imprisonment. Now it's your mission to repair the damage you caused.

Benefit: You're determined to stay alive so you can set things right. When you are reduced to the negative of your

winded value, you can spend a Recovery as a free triggered action.

Drawback: Many people blame you for the evils you caused. They may be unfriendly or hostile to you—and you can see their point of view. You have a bane on tests made to interact with or strike those who accuse you of the sin you have committed.

HAWK RIDER

You travel with a giant hawk that you stole from the Hawklords. Perhaps you were once a Hawklord yourself, or perhaps you escaped their captivity. Traveling with a giant hawk comes with its share of inconveniences and dangers, but they're a small price to pay for the sky.

Benefit: While outside, you can spend a minute to summon your giant hawk (see Humans monster entry in the *Monsters* book), which acts as your mount. You can dismiss the hawk as a free action. The hawk won't go inside, and it won't accept anyone but you as a rider. If the hawk takes damage or dies, you can restore it to full Stamina as a respite activity.

Drawback: People who know of your crime are afraid to interact with you, since they worry the Hawklords will come after them by association. You have a bane on tests made to influence anyone who knows of the Hawklords and who has seen you with your giant hawk. Such people might report you to the Hawklords, who can come looking for you.

HEARS VOICES

You occasionally hear a voice in your head, offering orders or advice. You don't know who the voice is or why, but when you've followed the advice, it's usually proved to be sound.

Benefit: The Director tells you when you hear the voice. The voice seems to be aware of your surroundings, and its advice is usually vague but helpful. Someday its motivations might be different from your own, but for now it seems keen on making sure that you survive.

Drawback: Eventually, the voice may reveal that it wants something from you—something you may or may not want to provide. If the voice is displeased with you, it can prevent you from resting during a respite, causing you to regain 2 fewer Recoveries than normal.

HOST BODY

"Do not be alarmed! We are not the humanoid we appear to be. We are an intelligent fungal collective, using this body as a host. No, we are doing nothing unsavory! This body was dead when we found it; we merely gave it another chance at life. We are friendly. Please put down those torches!"

Benefit: You are a fungus that inhabits a humanoid body. Your host body follows all the normal rules for a character and is considered to be alive. At any time while your host body is alive, or for 24 hours after it dies, as an action you can move to a dead humanoid within 10 squares of the body and use it as your new host body, provided the body belongs a playable ancestry. When you do so, your original

host body dies. Your new host body gains all your statistics except for those related to your former host body's ancestry such as size and ancestry traits, which you instead gain from your new host body. When you inhabit a new host body, you start with 1 Stamina and can immediately spend a Recovery.

Drawback: You have fire weakness 5. Additionally, you have a bane on tests made to read humanoid creatures' emotions and body language.

HUNTED

You're one step ahead of a pursuer—perhaps a bounty hunter determined to bring you to justice, a revenant, or an assassin intent on your death. Someday, you'll be strong enough to face your pursuer head to head, but for now you're living your life on the run.

Benefit: You gain a skill from the intrigue skill group. Additionally, you when other creatures are pursuing you, you can take the lay low respite activity. When you use it, anyone pursuing you loses track of your party's location and must start their search again.

Drawback: Each time you gain Renown, your pursuer learns your location. Unless you lay low or move to a new location, within a 1d10 days you'll be visited by the pursuer's minions, or, if you linger, the pursuer.

HUNTER

You're hunting someone or something—perhaps a wanted criminal or someone who wronged you, or perhaps a dangerous monster or beast. You won't rest until you meet your quarry face to face!

Benefit: Choose one skill from Alertness, Criminal Underworld, Eavesdrop, Interrogate, Rumors, Search, Track, or Society. You gain that skill, and you have an edge on tests made to find or learn clues about your quarry.

Drawback: You are so obsessed with finding your quarry that you have a bane on tests made to track other creatures.

INDEBTED

A deal went south, or you got involved with the wrong people, and now you owe a debt or a ransom—the kind that would bankrupt a minor noble. In order to pay it off, you'll need to take some dangerous risks.

Benefit: You're good with money—you've had to be. Whenever you would gain Wealth, you gain 1 more than what you'd normally earn.

Drawback: Your starting Wealth is -5. While your Wealth is less than 1, you can purchase items as if you had 1 Wealth, but you're frequently visited by threatening creditors, and shopkeepers tend to lock their doors when they see you coming.

INFERNAL CONTRACT

You made a deal (perhaps unknowingly) with an archdevil that has tied you to that fiend's service. When you first learned of this deal, you were taken to the Seven Cities of

Hell, where some of the timescape's best minds taught you the ways of battle or magic. The archdevil allows you to use these gifts as you will ... until they require a favor from you.

Benefit: Whenever you are present for a battle in which all the creatures on one side are not surprised, your side goes first on a result of 4 or greater on the d10 roll (see [Determine Who Goes First](#) in [Combat Round](#)).

Drawback: The archdevil occasionally asks you to defeat enemies on their behalf. If you refuse, your fiendish patron sends devils after you and those you care about.

INFERNAL CONTRACT ... BUT, LIKE, BAD

You made a deal with a devil—not a very good deal, but it wasn't a very good devil. Now it's too late for regrets. Your soul is forfeit unless you find a loophole or convince the devil to void the deal.

Benefit: Choose one of the following benefits: Your Renown increases by 2, your Wealth increases by 2, or your Stamina increases by 3.

Drawback: Your body bears a fiendish mark. Anyone who understands religion can tell that your soul belongs to Hell, giving you a bane on tests made to interact with them (unless they're into that). Additionally, when you die, your soul goes to Hell and you can't be restored to life.

IVORY TOWER

You studied in an academy or other educational institution. Your training was thorough and your reading list was wide-ranging, but when you left school you discovered that there were serious gaps in your education. Maybe some of those books were a little out of date.

Benefit: You learn three skills and one dead language.

Drawback: The Director chooses one of the skills you learned from this complication. You lose that skill and can't ever learn it. When you make a test to which this skill would apply, instead of gaining a +2 bonus you suffer a bane.

LIGHTNING SOUL

You were caught in a storm and stuck by lightning—but you survived. Something saved you. Maybe it was a gods-given miracle, a latent psionic gift, or the magic of a helpful elemental, but you absorbed the lightning into your body. It's always there, simmering under the surface.

Benefit: When you regain Stamina in combat, you gain a surge. Whenever you spend a surge, you can make the extra damage it deals lightning damage.

Drawback: When you are wet, you have damage weakness 5.

LIFEBONDED

In a sinister ritual, your soul has been bound to another's. When they die, you die—making you the perfect bodyguard. Who is your life bonded to: a companion? A superior officer? An enemy?

Benefit: Choose another creature that doesn't have the Lifebonded complication. When you die, your body disappears until that creature completes a respite or gains one Victory. You then appear next to the creature, fully healed.

Drawback: If the creature you're bound to dies, you die as well, no matter what other traits or features you have.

LONER

You've always been a lone wolf. With no one else to lean on, you've picked up a million survival tricks. Which made it all the more surprising when you joined your current adventuring group, and found the family you never had.

Benefit: When you complete a respite, choose a skill you don't possess. You gain the benefits of that skill until you next complete a respite.

Drawback: Now that you finally have people who care about you, you won't let anyone take them away! When a creature reduces one of your allies to 0 Stamina, you are taunted by the creature until your ally's Stamina is higher than 0, the end of the encounter, or another creature makes you taunted.

LOST IN TIME

In a long-ago age, a cataclysm overtook your city. You weren't killed, but through some arcane accident you were suspended in time—until now. Alone, you must navigate the modern world with a head full of outdated memories—and a few ancient secrets.

Benefit: Choose a damage type from acid, cold, corruption, fire, holy, lightning, poison, psychic, or sonic. When you use a signature ability, you can use your chosen damage type instead of the ability's normal damage.

Drawback: You automatically fail any test made to recall information from after you were suspended in time.

LOST YOUR HEAD

A bredbeddle stole your head! Normally, being beheaded by one of these giants is fatal, but due to your latent psionic ability you're able to survive despite your decapitation.

Benefit: You gain the following ability.

SHARE HEAD

You don't have a head but can psionically borrow another.

Keywords: Psionic, Ranged

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: One willing creature

You can see, hear, and smell as if you were in the creature's space. Additionally, you can borrow their mouth to speak when you wish to do so. You speak in a different voice than theirs. This effect ends when you use Share Sense on a different target, when the creature moves more than 10 away from you, or when the creature is no longer willing to share their head with you.

Drawback: Having no head, you can't see, hear, smell, or taste except by using the Share Head ability. Additionally, you can't wear gear that requires a head, such as helmets or hats.

LUCKY

You've always had a lucky streak: when you leave things in the hands of fate, you tend to succeed more than you fail. But luck is fickle—when you don't trust it, it deserts you.

Benefit: When you spend a hero token to turn a failure into a success or to avoid a consequence, roll a d10. On a result of 6 or more, you don't expend the hero token.

Drawback: When you get a tier 1 result on a test and don't expend a hero token to turn it into a success, you gain a bane on the next test you make.

MASTER CHEF

Before you were a hero, you were a chef—and when you retire, you have big plans for your next restaurant or inn. In the meantime, you're on the lookout for rare ingredients that only a traveler can find. After all, it's food that makes the world go round.

Benefit: You gain the Cooking skill. Additionally, when you complete a respite or wake up after a night's sleep, you can spend 1 uninterrupted hour prepare an excellent meal for up to 10 creatures, provided you have ingredients and cooking tools. Each creature that eats the meal gains 1 bonus Recovery, which expires at the end of the day if not used.

Drawback: The first time each day that you are forced to eat ordinary or substandard food, you lose 2 Recoveries.

MEDDLING BUTLER

You're not sure what you did to deserve it, but for some reason your family saddled you with an old and trusted—but irritating—family servant. They're supremely competent, of course, but they sometimes seem to forget who's in charge.

Benefit: You gain a retainer, in addition to followers you acquire through Renown or other means.

Drawback: Outside of combat, your retainer is under the Director's control. The retainer sometimes acts without orders—always with your best interests at heart, but often in embarrassing or inconvenient ways.

MEDIUM

You can see ghosts and spirits that others just don't sense. They're constantly whispering unsettling secrets in your ear—when they're not trying to kill you.

Benefit and Drawback: Incorporeal undead within 10 squares of you can communicate telepathically with you. Additionally, you can use the Contact Spirits ability.

CONTACT SPIRITS

Keywords: Magic

Distance: Self

Type: Action

Target: Self

Power Roll + Intuition or Presence:

- 11 or lower: **You take corruption damage equal to 5 + your level.**
- 12-16: **A spirit speaks to you. You learn how it died, and you can ask it one question, which it can answer**

truthfully or untruthfully. It knows anything it knew in life, and it is aware of the events that took place in this location since its death. You can't use this ability again until you have earned 1 Victory.

- 17+: **As 12-16, but you can ask 3 questions.**

Effect: If any sapient creatures have died nearby within 24 hours, you gain a double bane on the power roll if any of the creatures were hostile to you, or a double edge if they were friendly to you. You can't use this ability again until have earned at least 1 Victory.

MEDUSA BLOOD

Your mother and father never saw eye to eye—you know that because your father's still alive. Your mother was a medusa. It made your childhood difficult, and now it's making your adulthood complicated as well.

Benefit: You gain the following ability:

STONE EYES

These looks don't kill—they petrify.

Keywords: Attack, magic, ranged

Distance: Ranged 10

Type: Action

Target: 1 creature

Power Roll + Might or Presence:

- 11 or lower: **2 damage; M < [weak] slowed (save ends)**
- 12-16: **4 damage; M < [average] slowed (save ends)**
- 17+: **6 damage; M < [strong] slowed (save ends)**

Effect: This ability has no effect on a creature that can't see you or purposely avoids looking at your eyes. If a creature is reduced to 0 Stamina by this ability, they turn to inanimate stone.

Drawback: Out of combat, you use Stone Eyes on anyone who meets your eye, whether you intend to or not. Your companions know not to make eye contact, but strangers are likely to trigger the ability unless you cover your eyes.

MISUNDERSTOOD

Your appearance marks you as part of a group that's universally feared. You might be a gentle soul, but you're not often given a first chance, much less a second. It's no wonder that you usually wear a hood.

Benefit and Drawback: When you reveal your appearance to creatures that don't know you personally, you gain an edge on tests where the Brag or Intimidate skill could be applied and a bane on tests where the Flirt, Lead, or Persuade skills could be applied.

MUNDANE

You're hopelessly nonmagical. When you try to use magical abilities, or when they're used on you, they never work right. Even magical devices seem to fizzle in your presence.

Benefit: You have corruption, holy, and psychic damage immunity equal to your level.

Drawback: While you are carry more than three magic treasures, you have a bane on all power rolls.

OUTLAW

You might be a common bandit or an idealistic freedom fighter, but in either case, the local authorities don't approve of your actions. You've managed to stay one step ahead of the law, but until your name is cleared you've got to keep a low profile.

Benefit: You gain 1 Renown.

Drawback: Law enforcement officials and bounty hunters who recognize you attempt to arrest you.

PIRATE

You have a piratical past (and maybe a piratical present and future as well). While you're not well known ashore, other pirates have a way of recognizing their own.

Benefit: When interacting with pirates or pirate hunters, you treat your Renown as 2 higher than usual. Additionally, you hold a piece of a pirate map. Somewhere in the world, a handful of other pirates hold the other pieces of the map. With all the pieces, you'd know the location of a fabulous pirate treasure.

Drawback: The pirate treasure is said to be cursed or haunted. Furthermore, you're not the only ones looking for it. The pirates holding the other pieces of the map would very much like to get their hands on your piece!

PREACHER

When you were young, you almost died in an accident or attack and had a vision of god or saint that showed you the way to save yourself and others you loved. That drove you into the church and gave you a strong belief in a particular religion or cause, and you just can't wait to tell other people all about it.

Benefit: As a respite activity, you can try to convert members of a community to your cause. Make a Presence test. The Director determines the difficulty based on the community's receptiveness to your ideas. On a success, you convert one NPC into a follower, in addition to followers you acquire through Renown or other means. The Director determines the type of follower. Once you have converted an NPC into a follower in this way, you can't try again until you gain a level.

Drawback: If you fail in your conversion attempt, one of the followers you have (either through this feature or your Renown) leaves you, their faith in you shaken. If you have no followers, your Renown instead decreases by 1. If you need to reduce your Renown and it is already 0, you instead experience a fitful respite and don't gain any of the benefits of it.

PRIMORDIAL SICKNESS

You once contracted a terrible illness for which no one could find a cure. You sought out a primordial swamp said to be either incredibly poisonous or miraculously salubrious. It turned out to be both, keeping your illness at bay while corrupting your body with its unnatural energy.

Benefit: You have poison immunity 5 and corruption immunity 5.

Drawback: The number of Recoveries you have is reduced by 1.

PRISONER OF THE SYNLIRII

You were captured by the psionic beings known as voiceless talkers. You escaped them, but you can't escape that feeling in the back of your mind—the feeling of being watched.

Benefit: You can telepathically communicate with creatures within 10 of you if they share a language with you and you know of each other. The receiver of your telepathic communications can choose to respond telepathically.

Drawback: Voiceless talkers within 1 mile know your location and can overhear and understand your telepathic conversations.

PROMISING APPRENTICE

You were apprenticed to a trade. Your mentor said you had a special gift, and you could have become a master of your craft—but before your training was complete, your mentor was killed.

Benefit: You gain a skill from the crafting skill group. Choose one of your skills from the crafting skill group. When you use this skill you gain an edge.

Drawback: Whoever killed your mentor cursed you. Whenever you make a test that you don't apply one of your skills to, you have a bane on the test.

PSYCHIC ERUPTION

In times of stress, you get headaches. Psionic energy builds up in your mind until you feel like your head is going to explode. If you're not careful, it actually does explode, radiating psychic waves that harm friends and enemies alike.

Benefit: You gain the following heroic ability:

PSYCHIC BLAST (COST: ALL YOUR HEROIC RESOURCES)

Psionic energy bursts from your body in an iridescent shimmer.

Keywords: Area, Psionic

Type: Action

Distance: 3 burst

Target: All creatures

Power Roll + Highest Characteristic:

- 11 or lower: **1 psychic damage for each heroic resources you spend, to a maximum of your level**
- 12-16: **1 psychic damage for each heroic resource you spend, to a maximum of your level + your highest characteristic**
- 17+: **1 psychic damage for each heroic resource you spend**

Special: If you are a talent and you are strained, the ability deals an additional 5 psychic damage to you and all creatures in the area.

Drawback: When you gain the bleeding, frightened, or weakened condition, you must use Psychic Blast as a free triggered action.

PUNISHMENT CURSE

Through ignorance, fear, spite, or selfishness, you refused to help someone in need. To teach you a lesson, a deity offered you what seemed to be a blessing—extra power to help you heal yourself in times of need, but harsh consequences should your need become excessive. You took the deal, and now benefit from the blessing but also suffer from a curse.

Benefit: You have 1 additional Recovery.

Drawback: When you are out of Recoveries, you are dying, no matter what your current Stamina is.

RAISED BY BEASTS

You were orphaned or lost in the wild, and a friendly animal pack (perhaps apes, bears, or wolves) took you in. Returning to so-called civilization was a shock, but you're determined to learn all you can about your own kind.

Benefit: You gain the Animal Handling skill. Additionally, choose an animal type, such as wolf. You can communicate with this animal as if you shared a language, and animals of this type are not initially hostile to you unless they're supernaturally compelled to be. You gain an edge when you use Animal Handling to interact with this animal.

Drawback: You don't have a culture, though you can still speak Caelian.

REFUGEE

A hostile army—perhaps the forces of Ajax, the Iron Saint—conquered your homeland. Your family escaped, but you can't return home until your oppressors are defeated once and for all.

Benefit: When your family fled your homeland, they left their greatest treasure behind. Work with the Director to determine its nature. It might be a trinket or leveled item, several points of Wealth, a treasure's project source, or the like. This treasure is now in the hands of the invaders, until you win it back and use it against them.

Drawback: The faction that invaded your homeland is hostile to you.

RIVAL

Whatever your accomplishments, you'll forever measure yourself against a former companion who always seemed to be one step ahead of you.

Benefit: Choose one of your skills. This skill grants +3 bonus to tests instead of +2.

Drawback: You occasionally cross paths with your rival, who has similar statistics to yours (but gains a +4 instead of a +3 in the skill you chose).

ROGUE TALENT

You are the only survivor of a cataclysmic psionic event—an experiment gone wrong, a voiceless talker attack, or some naturally occurring phenomenon of a far off part of

the timescape. It left you with a psionic talent, but also made you vulnerable to telepathic attacks.

Benefit: You gain the following ability, which you can use as a ranged free strike.

TELEKINETIC GRASP

You reach out with your mind to move a creature or object.

Keywords: Psionic, Ranged, Strike **Type:** Maneuver

Distance: Ranged 10 **Target:** 1 creature or object

Power Roll + Might, Intuition, or Presence:

- 11 or lower: **push or pull 1**
- 12-16: **push or pull 2**
- 17+: **push or pull 3**

Drawback: You have psychic weakness 5.

RUNAWAY

To your embarrassment, no sinister omens attended your birth and your closet contains no skeletons. You're just an ordinary person raised in a hardworking family. You're expected to carry on the family business—but who can settle down to a boring job when adventure calls! That's why you ran away.

Benefit: You gain a skill from the crafting skill group.

Drawback: Your extended family is looking for you to take you home—and you've never been able to stand up to them. That's why you ran away in the first place!

SEARCHING FOR A CURE

Your homeland has been corrupted by some terrible monster, and you're the only one who escaped the plague. The rest of your family still exists, but in changed forms—perhaps as vampires or zombies. People tell you the situation is hopeless, but you're determined to find a cure.

Benefit: Choose a type of monster, such as medusa or vampire. You gain a +1 bonus on saving throws and to characteristic scores for the purpose of resisting potencies against this monster's abilities.

Drawback: You have started to turn into one of these creatures yourself. If you don't find a cure soon ... you'll fall victim to the disease or curse. Work with your Director to determine the timeline of your disease taking effect. It should be something that could happen during the campaign!

SECRET IDENTITY

You're secretly very important—but it's not safe for your true identity to be known. Perhaps you're the witness to a crime or a royal on the run from a usurper. Until the appropriate villains are punished, you'll maintain the guise of an ordinary adventurer.

Benefit: You gain a skill of your choice from the intrigue skill group. Additionally, you can resume your true identity, either temporarily or permanently. While in your true identity, your Renown and Wealth are treated as 2 higher, along with any other benefits you may gain from your identity.

Drawback: You have powerful and clever enemies. Until they're defeated, if you resume your true identity, there is a cumulative 20% chance that they find you and confront you each day. This chance resets if you resume your secret identity for a full day. Even if you try to keep your identity hidden, their suspicions may be raised by a careless slip.

SELF TAUGHT

While your peers were learning their trades in fancy schools, you were practicing your abilities on the mean streets with nothing but your own instinct as a guide. What you lost in polish and tactical acumen you make up for in raw power.

Benefit and Drawback: At the start of your turn during combat, you can forgo gaining heroic resources until the start of your next turn. If you do, until the start of your next turn your strikes deal additional damage equal to your highest characteristic score.

SEWER FOLK

Impoverished or on the run, you spent formative years living in the sewers of a major city. There you learned lessons that have stood you well, although the miasma of the sewers did permanent damage to your health.

Benefit: Your movement gains either the Climb or Swim keyword (your choice). Additionally, while in a city you and your companions can move from place to place without being detected, and you never get lost while underground.

Drawback: You have poison weakness 5.

SHADOW BORN

You were born in the dusk land ruled by the Queen of Shadows, and its darkness has seeped into your bones.

Benefit: When you start your turn in concealment, you gain a surge.

Drawback: You have holy weakness 5.

SHARED SPIRIT

A supernatural spirit shares your body; each of you controls your body by turn. You and the spirit share the same short-term goals and work equally well with your companions, although you may have different personalities, mannerisms, and long-term goals.

Benefit and Drawback: At the start of each day, roll 1d6. On a 1-4, you control your body. On a 5-6, the spirit does. Alternatively, if you and the spirit are on good terms, you can choose each day who is in control. Choose three of your skills that you possess only while you are in control, and choose three new skills that you can use only while your spirit is in control.

SHATTERED LEGACY

You're the heir to a powerful magical treasure that has been in your family for generations. The only problem: it's broken. Some ancestor of yours broke it while saving the

world, or maybe they tripped and smashed it on a rock. It's your job to fix it.

Benefit: You learn a language of your choice. You gain a leveled item of your choice.

Drawback: The leveled item you gain from this complication is broken and completely inoperative. Repairing the item requires using the Craft Treasure project, and the goal is half what it would normally be to create such an item. You have the project source you need to fix the item, but not the item prerequisite.

SHIPWRECKED

You are the sole survivor of a shipwreck that left you stranded on a remote and inhospitable island for years. Your struggle to survive there granted you insight into the natural world but distanced you from who you once were.

Benefit: You gain two skills from the exploration skill group.

Drawback: You have forgotten one language you know.

SIBLING'S SHIELD

You were tasked with delivering a ceremonial shield to your older sibling, a celebrated warrior, for their years of service. When you arrived at their homestead, you found them dead on their doorstep with their sword lodged in their back. If you were going to find out who did this to them and why, you needed to step into their shoes. It will take a while to match up to your sibling's legacy, though.

Benefit: You cannot be flanked as long as you wear your sibling's shield on your back.

Drawback: Visions of your dead sibling haunt you at night. Whenever you take a respite, make an Intuition test without applying a skill. On a 17 or lower or lower, you gain 1 fewer Recoveries than your normally would when the respite ends.

SILENT SENTINEL

You were trained by a group of spies who psionically infused silence into your every step and enhanced your ability to hear distant whispers. It wasn't until you got caught by an elementalist who blasted you with thunder that you learned the enhanced hearing had some nasty side effects.

Benefit: You gain the Eavesdrop and Sneak skills and one skill from the lore skill group of your choice. Additionally, you can silently communicate with any creature, provided you share a language and can see each other.

Drawback: You have sonic weakness 5. Additionally, when you take sonic damage, you are dazed until the end of your next turn.

SLIGHT CASE OF LYCANTHROPY

Maybe you were bitten as a child, or maybe it's a family curse. Either way, you have a malady that is best not discussed in public, lest the torches and pitchforks make their appearance.

Benefit: When you wound or kill a non-minion creature, you gain a surge.

Drawback: If you have five or more surges at the start of your turn, or you have at least one surge at the start of your turn while in moonlight, you lose all your surges and become a wofish hybrid until the end of your turn. While in the form, you either make a melee free strike at the nearest creature or shift up to your speed towards the nearest creature and make a melee free strike against them if you can. If allies and enemies are equally close, you attack an ally.

Special: Stormwight furies can't take this complication.

SECRET TWIN

You have an identical twin—either a sibling or someone who looks so much like you that none would ever know the difference. They had a life that you coveted, or they had obligations that couldn't go unfulfilled. So when they went missing, you stepped in and started living their life. Most folks are none the wiser.

Benefit: You claimed something that belonged to your twin as your own—a signature treasure that is now all yours. You gain a 1st echelon trinket of your choice. This treasure has their name or sigil written, sewn, or emblazoned on it somewhere.

Drawback: Your twin disappeared for a reason—someone wanted them dead. Whenever you finish a respite, roll a d10. On a result of 1 or 2, the Director can decide that your past catches up with you at any point in the future in the form of an assassin or someone who knows your real identity and threatens to reveal it as part of a blackmail scheme.

STOLEN FACE

An evil fairy cursed you, leaving you with a blank expanse instead of a face. Although you're able to imitate other peoples' features, you'd like to have your own back.

Benefit: You can spend 5 uninterrupted minutes to rearrange your face into that of another creature of your ancestry who you've seen before. You gain a double edge on tests made to impersonate this creature or to disguise your identity. You are unable to change your hair or other non-facial features.

Drawback: When you take damage, your face is blank, with no eyes, nose, mouth, or ears. Your face doesn't return until you spend 5 uninterrupted minutes rearranging it.

STONE CURSED

As a child, you met a creature that turns people to stone, such as a medusa. You escaped half-petrified, but others, not so lucky, are statues now, waiting for a cure.

Benefit: Your stability increases by 1. Additionally, while unmoving you appear to be an ordinary statue.

Drawback: You have sonic weakness 5. Additionally, while you are winded you are dazed.

STRANGE INHERITANCE

Your siblings each inherited money or land, but you got a strange, seemingly useless trinket, along with the advice that maybe you weren't cut out for an ordinary, peaceful life.

Benefit: You gain a somewhat inoperative 2nd echelon trinket of the Director's choice. It only works while the total of your level plus your Victories is 5 or higher. You don't learn what the item's powers are until the first time it becomes operative.

Drawback: With no other inheritance, you accumulated debts. The first time your Wealth exceeds 1, you lose 1 Wealth.

STRIPPED OF RANK

You were trained as an officer, but you no longer serve. Did you flee a battle? Were you dishonorably discharged? Did you defect from an evil army?

Benefit: You gain the following ability.

ISSUE ORDER

"Move or die, folks."

Keywords: Ranged

Distance: Range 10

Type: Action

Target: One ally

Effect: The target can use its triggered action to take an action, a move action, or a maneuver.

Special: If you have the Strike Now tactician ability, the target can use a free triggered action instead of a triggered action to use this ability.

Drawback: You need 4 Renown, instead of 3, to attract a follower and can gain additional followers for every 4 Renown, instead of 3, you gain after that.

THRILL SEEKER

You live for danger. In battle and peril, you can transcend your usual limits—and once you've tasted that excitement, you want more.

Benefit: When the party reaches two, four, and six victories, you gain a hero token.

Drawback: At the start of the session, the party doesn't gain a hero token for your character.

VAMPIRE SIRE

A vampire has bitten you. You're not undead—not yet anyway—but you have a connection with your vampire sire, and you feel urges you fight to control.

Benefit: When you make a melee free strike against an adjacent creature, you can make it a bite. If you do so, you gain temporary Stamina equal to the damage you dealt. This temporary Stamina lasts until the end of your next respite if it doesn't disappear due to damage.

Drawback: While you have temporary Stamina from this complication, your vampire sire can sense your location,

you grow visible fangs, and you have a bane on Presence tests made to interact with humanoid who aren't undead.

VOW OF HONESTY

You were brought up to a strict standard of behavior. You cannot tell a lie.

Benefit: As long as you don't lie, you gain the benefit of the Censor's A Sense for Truth Order feature. If you also gain the A Sense for Truth feature in another way, you also gain a double edge on tests made to persuade a creature of a specific fact.

Drawback: When you lie, your honor is stained, and you gain a bane on any test you make that uses a skill from the interpersonal skill group and lose this complication's benefit. You can lose the bane and regain this complication's benefit only by doing penance, such as gaining the forgiveness of the creature you lied to.

VOW OF DUTY

You have sworn an oath to an organization. It is your rock, and as long as your faith in it remains unshaken, you are immovable.

Benefit: Your stability increases by 1.

Drawback: If you are forced to disobey your organization's orders, your stability is reduced to 0 until your doubts are resolved or you find a new organization.

WAKING DREAMS

You broke a magic amulet that immersed your mind in weird magic. This magic has given you the power of premonition, but you struggle to control this new gift.

Whenever you take a respite, make a Reason power roll to determine whether you gain this complication's benefit or drawback.

Benefit: On a 12 to 16, you experience a vision of an event currently happening in your world. The vision lasts for just a few seconds, but the information you glean is helpful to you. On a 17 or higher, you receive a full minute or more of the scene.

Drawback: On an 11 or lower, you receive a painful vision that is fractal and inscrutable. When the respite ends, you immediately lose 1 Recovery.

WAR DOG COLLAR

You wear a loyalty collar from one Ajax's War Dogs. You've managed to rig the collar so it explodes outward while keeping you safe.

Benefit: While you wear your loyalty collar, other war dogs can't use Posthumous Promotion on you. You gain the following ability.

POSTHUMOUS RETIREMENT

You make your modified collar explode.

Keywords Magic

Distance 1 burst

Type Maneuver

Target All enemies

Effect Your loyalty collar detonates, dealing fire damage equal to 5 plus your level to each target. Once you have used this ability, you can't use it again until you spend 1 minute out of combat resetting the collar.

Drawback: When you use your Posthumous Retirement ability, the Director can spend 3 Malice to make your collar malfunction and deal damage to you.

WAR OF ASSASSINS

Being in the wrong place at the wrong time saw you caught in the middle of a conflict between two warring thieves guilds. Whether by choice or by accident, you wound up helping one faction at the expense of the other.

Benefit: Having gained the favor of the faction who you helped, you can call on its members three times for favors. If a favor is reasonable and within the faction's power to grant, they'll do it, no questions asked.

Drawback: The faction you wronged hates you, and its members would love to see you pay for your transgression.

WARD

Your childhood sweetheart was royalty, and the two of you stayed close throughout the years. When your former sweetheart died, you swore an oath to dedicate your life to become a tutor for their child, advising them in the ways of being a benevolent monarch.

Benefit: You know how to talk to monarchs, aristocrats, and other wealthy leaders. When you engage with any such NPC during a negotiation, their patience increases by 1 (to a maximum of 5).

Drawback: Your royal ward can be a burden. When you start a respite, roll a d10. On a roll of 1, your ward contacts you and requires your help during the respite, requiring you to spend your time helping them instead of taking a respite activity.

WATERBORN

You nearly lost your life at sea, but then you heard the voice. Someone ... something in the sea called out to you—telling you to swim. Suddenly the ocean wasn't your doom. It was your parent, birthing you into something new. You emerge with a small piece of the ocean's power. For what purpose—you can't be sure.

Benefit: Your movement gains the Swim tag, and you can breathe underwater. Additionally, you can summon water to do your bidding. You gain the following ability.

ROGUE WAVE

You summon a wave of water to batter your foe.

Keywords: Attack, Magic, Ranged

Type: Action

Distance: Ranged 10

Target: 1 creature or object

Power Roll + your highest characteristic:

- 11 or lower: **2 damage; push or pull 1**
- 12-16: **5 damage; push or pull 2**
- 17+: **7 damage; push or pull 3**

Effect: You can forgo dealing damage with this ability.

Drawback: You have lightning weakness 5. Additionally, the sea, or one of its representatives, can assign you a

quest. If you don't do the sea's bidding, it may temporarily deny you this complication's benefits—including water breathing—at an inconvenient time.

WODEWALKER

You were dying in the wode—starving and wounded, you collapsed. When you woke, you found a group of green elementalists had saved your life by infusing the regenerative bark of a tree to your body.

Benefit: Your recovery value increases by an amount equal to your highest characteristic score.

Drawback: You have fire weakness 5.

WRONGLY IMPRISONED

You spent many years imprisoned for a crime you didn't commit. During your long hours of solitary confinement, you honed your skills and you recited the names of those who framed you. Someday you will have your revenge.

Benefit: You learn two skills of your choice, neither of which are from the interpersonal skill group.

Drawback: Your health suffered in prison. While you are winded, you develop a hacking cough, which makes it impossible for you to hide or sneak.

WRATHFUL SPIRIT

You're quick to anger, and some even say you're possessed by a literal spirit of wrath. You never let an insult go without slinging one right back. In combat, things are similar: no matter the tactical circumstances, when someone injures you, you feel compelled to answer blood with blood.

Benefit: While you are taunted by a creature, you gain an edge on attacks against that creature. If you have the Rage heroic resource, you can spend 1 rage to make it a double edge.

Drawback: In conversation or negotiation, when a creature insults you, you must either spend a Recovery or reply with an insult. Furthermore, in combat, whenever a creature hits you with an strike while you are not taunted, you are taunted (EoT) by that creature.

TESTS

When you want your hero to rifle through a desk and locate a specific document, scale a castle wall, negotiate a treaty with a monarch, or undertake any other activity with a chance of failure, you'll need to make a test to determine how successful you are on the task. A test is any power roll that has failure or consequences as an option.

WHEN TO MAKE A TEST

The Director should ask a player to make a test only when the player's hero attempts a task where the consequences of failure are interesting or dramatic, and where failure won't grind the story to a halt. For example, if a hero wants to leap over a waist-high wall while casually walking through a peaceful city neighborhood, the worst case for failure is probably that the hero falls on their butt, takes no damage, and can stand up to either try again or walk around the wall. As such, no test is required. But if the hero were being chased by enemies, failing to leap over the wall means the pursuers can catch them, so the Director might decide to call for a test to determine what happens.

The advancement of a story shouldn't be halted by failing a test. For instance, the heroes might need to know the color of a dwarf king's crown to solve a puzzle, with that puzzle opening the only entrance to a tomb they must enter to stop a world-ending ritual. It could be that a successful Reason test allows the heroes to recall that lore, but the test shouldn't be their only option to get the information. If the test fails, perhaps the heroes need to go to a flying library to do research, or they might be able to delve into a ruin to find the ancient monarch's portrait. A failed test should always result in a story becoming more interesting, not in the action coming to an end.

IT JUST WORKS!

When a hero attempts to solve a task that normally requires a test with clever, outside-the-box thinking, the Director can instead decide that no test is required and the attempt automatically works! For example, if a hero who wants to climb a wall first covers their hands and feet in giant strands of sticky spider webs, the Director might decide that they can climb up the wall without needing to make a test.

That said, such clever ideas often work for free the first time, but the Director could decide they require tests if they are used again.

HOW TO MAKE A TEST

Each test has the following steps:

- The Director decides that a hero's actions call for a test and asks the hero's player to make a power roll using an appropriate characteristic (see [Characteristics and Tests](#)). The Director then selects a difficulty for the power roll, either secretly or publicly (see [Test Difficulty](#)).
- The player makes the power roll. If the character has a skill that applies to the test (see [Skills](#)), they can ask the

Director if the skill applies. The player must justify the use of the skill to the Director. If the Director agrees the skill applies, the hero gains a +2 bonus (not an edge but a bonus) to the roll.

- The player reports the result, and the Director interprets the success or failure of the roll.

CHARACTERISTICS AND TESTS

When you describe a task you want your hero to undertake and the Director determines that a test is necessary, they then determine which characteristic the test uses based on the nature of the task. For instance, if you're scaling a wall, the Director could ask for a Might test to determine how far and how quickly you're able to climb. If you're attempting to plead your innocence in court for a murder you didn't commit, the Director might ask for a Presence test if you're attempting to win over the jury with your personality, or a Reason test if you're laying out a logical argument to support your innocence.

Though the Director can decide to call for tests in any circumstances, a number of tasks that heroes routinely undertake are commonly set up as tests.

MIGHT TESTS

You make a Might test whenever a risky task calls for the use of physical strength. Might tests are most often used for breaking down doors and other structures, hurling heavy objects, pulling your body up a sheer wall, swimming against a mighty current, and other feats of physical power.

AGILITY TESTS

You make an Agility test whenever a risky task calls for the use of your physical coordination and nimbleness. Agility tests are most often used for tumbling, sneaking, picking locks, and engaging in sleight of hand.

REASON TESTS

You make a Reason test whenever you attempt a risky task that requires the use of your mental acumen and education, formal or otherwise. Reason tests are most often used to recall lore, deduce information based on clues, complete a puzzle, forge counterfeit items or documents, break a code, convince others of a logical argument, or make an estimation.

INTUITION TESTS

You make an Intuition test whenever you attempt a risky task that requires the use of your powers of observation and instinct. Intuition tests are most often used to notice hidden creatures or details, discern another person's motivations or honesty, calm and reassure others, and train animals.

PRESENCE TESTS

You make a Presence test whenever you attempt a risky task that requires the use of your force of personality. Presence tests are most often used to gain trust, project confidence, and influence and lead other creatures.

INFLUENCING PLAYER CHARACTER ACTIONS WITH TESTS

Tests can't be used by NPCs or PCs to influence the actions of PCs. Many players feel that their agency is taken away if they're compelled to jump into a pile of gold filled with hidden scorpions because an NPC convinced them to do so with a Presence test. For most players, it's not fun to be in control of a single hero and lose some of that control.

Instead, Directors should do their level best to have an NPC suggest that a character dive headlong into the gold like a billionaire duck, then let the player decide what their character does. Similarly, a Director might decide that one player character can't make an Intuition test to discern another PC's motivations or honesty.

That said, if everyone in your gaming group decides to lift one or more of these restrictions after talking about it, go for it! There's no wrong way to play as long as everyone is having fun. The MCDM Safety Toolkit (available for download at <https://mcdm.gg/SafetyToolkit>) discusses how to talk about potentially problematic topics such as limiting character agency at your table.

TEST DIFFICULTY

The Director decides how difficult a task that requires a test is: easy, medium, or hard. If a task seems as though it's easier than easy, then no test is necessary. The hero simply accomplishes the task. If the task seems harder than hard, then the Director is free to decide that it's impossible to complete with a test.

On a test-by-test basis, the Director can share the difficulty of a task before the player makes the test, which makes interpreting the result faster at the table. The Director can also keep the test's difficulty secret until after the player rolls the test, for dramatic effect.

The Test Difficulty Outcomes table shows all the possible results of the different difficulties of tests. If you're a Director, you'll want to keep this handy so you can see the different difficulties and their outcomes at a glance.

TEST DIFFICULTY OUTCOMES

Result	Easy Outcomes	Medium Outcomes	Hard Outcomes
Less than 11	Success with consequence	Failure	Failure with consequence
12-16	Success	Success with consequence	Failure
17+	Success with reward	Success	Success
Natural 19-20	Success with reward	Success with reward	Success with reward

EASY TESTS

An easy test has some risk of failure, but most heroes will likely overcome it. The power roll you make for an easy test determines the outcome (see [Test Outcomes](#)):

- 11 or lower: **You succeed on the task and incur a consequence.**
- 12–16: **You succeed on the task.**
- 17+: **You succeed on the task with a reward.**

MEDIUM TESTS

A medium test has some risk of failure that most heroes will likely overcome—but with a cost. The power roll you make for a medium test determines the outcome:

- 11 or lower: **You fail the task.**
- 12–16: **You succeed on the task and incur a consequence.**
- 17+: **You succeed on the task.**

HARD TESTS

A hard test has a greater risk of failure, and most heroes are likely to suffer some hardship while trying to overcome the intended task. The power roll you make for a hard test determines the outcome:

- 11 or lower: **You fail the task and incur a consequence.**
- 12–16: **You fail the task.**
- 17+: **You succeed on the task.**

NATURAL 19 OR 20: SUCCESS WITH A REWARD

When you get a natural 19 or 20 on a test's power roll, you succeed on the task with a reward, even if the test has a medium or hard difficulty.

TEST OUTCOMES

Depending on a test's difficulty and the result of the power roll made to accomplish a task, you can obtain one of the following outcomes.

FAILURE WITH A CONSEQUENCE

If you fail a hard test and incur a consequence, you don't do what you set out to do—in addition to which, you suffer an impactful setback. The Director determines the exact nature of the consequence, which is typically related to the specific task. For instance, if a hero suffers a consequence while trying to climb a wall, they might make it halfway up the wall and then fall, taking damage and landing prone. A hero trying to sneak by cultists might be spotted by those foes, who immediately attack. If a consequence strikes when a hero attempts to bribe a prison guard, the guard might decide to arrest the hero or lead them into a trap. If a hero suffers a consequence on a Reason test made to recall lore about the king's favorite meal, they might confuse it for a dish to which the monarch is deathly allergic.

Not all consequences need to be immediate or apparent. For example, a hero might fail with a consequence on a test made to cheat at a high-stakes game of cards with a noble. The failure means that the noble notices, but the Director decides that the noble doesn't say anything. This consequence isn't made apparent until later in the evening, when the noble has guards surround the hero and take the cheater down to the dungeon for stacking the deck.

Common consequences for failing a test include the following:

- Making an NPC so upset that they storm off, or betray, attack, or otherwise attempt to harm you
- Drawing the attention of a group of foes

- Triggering a trap or hazard that captures or significantly harms you or an ally
- Breaking an important piece of equipment that is difficult to replace or repair
- Thinking you know something that you don't
- Getting stuck in a situation that must be resolved with a negotiation or a montage test that you didn't need to make before

In lieu of other consequences, the Director has the option to gain 2 additional Malice, a resource their creatures use in combat, at the start of the next combat encounter.

You can spend a hero token after making a test to turn a failure with consequences result into a success.

FAILURE

If you fail a test without incurring a consequence, you simply don't do what you set out to do. If you're attempting to climb a wall, you find no purchase. If you're attempting to recall lore, you can't remember the desired facts. If you're attempting to bribe a guard, they don't take the bait.

When you get this result, the Director can decide that there might still be a small penalty for failure, depending on the circumstances of the test. This penalty shouldn't be as harsh as rolling a failure with a consequence, though. For instance, a hero who gets this result on an Agility test made to sneak by a group of cultists might draw the attention of one cultist with their failure. Now that cultist is coming to investigate, but they haven't raised the alarm ... yet.

When a hero rolls a failure without a consequence, the Director can offer to let them succeed with a consequence instead. For instance, when a hero rolls a 10 on a medium Might test to break down a locked door, that's a failure. But the Director could offer the player the choice of either not breaking down the door, or breaking down the door and losing 1d6 Stamina as they get injured in the effort.

You can spend a hero token after making a test to turn a failure result into a success.

SUCCESS WITH A CONSEQUENCE

If you succeed on a test and incur a consequence, you do what you set out to do, but with an added cost. You might succeed in climbing up a wall, but the surface of the wall crumbles and becomes unstable as you do, making the climb more difficult for the ally ascending after you. When trying to sneak by a cultist, you successfully do so, but you leave footprints or other evidence of trespassing behind that someone will eventually find. If you attempt to bribe a guard to let you sneak into a prison, the guard lets you in—but then demands that you hand over a gemstone you need for an important crafting project before they let you out.

Just like failure with a consequence, the consequences accompanying success don't need to be immediately apparent. In lieu of other consequences, the Director has the option to gain 2 additional Malice at the start of the next combat encounter.

When a hero rolls a success with a consequence, the Director might give them a chance to fail instead. For

instance, when a hero rolls a 10 on an easy agility test to pick a chest's lock, that's a success with a consequence. But the Director could offer the player the choice of either picking the lock and breaking their lockpicks (which can't be replaced until the hero gets a chance to pick up some more in town), or not picking the lock but keeping their lockpicks intact.

You can spend a hero token after making a test to turn a success with consequences result into a success without consequences.

SUCCESS

If you succeed on a test without consequence or reward, you simply achieve whatever you set out to do. You climb that wall, sneak by those cultists, or bribe that guard just like you planned it. Smooth.

SUCCESS WITH A REWARD

If you succeed on a test with a reward, you accomplish whatever you set out to do. But you also gain a little something extra, in the form of momentum or luck that makes the immediate future easier for you or your friends. The Director determines your reward, which is most often related to the task at hand. For instance, if you succeed with a reward while climbing a wall, you might find a ladder at the top that you can lower so any allies climbing after you can do so without needing to make a test. A hero trying to sneak by cultists who succeeds with a reward might then be able to dose the cultists' nearby water barrel with sleeping poison as they pass by unseen. Succeeding with a reward while bribing a prison guard could mean that the guard will unlock a door for you in addition to forgetting you were ever there.

As with consequences, the reward that comes with a success doesn't need to be immediate or apparent. For example, a hero succeeds with a reward on an easy test made to cheat at a high-stakes game of cards with a noble. Not only does the hero win the game, but the Director decides that their reward comes from a servant watching the game who's impressed with the character's performance. After the game, the servant approaches the hero, offering a Flying Potion from the noble's private stash in congratulations and admiration.

Some common rewards accompanying success on a test include the following:

- Automatically accomplishing a related follow-up task that would normally require a test
- Allowing an ally engaged in the same task to accomplish the task without needing to make the test too
- Obtaining a consumable supernatural item or useful piece of mundane equipment
- Learning a piece of helpful information
- Impressing or ingratiating yourself with someone who grants you a small favor
- Noticing a hidden danger well before it strikes, giving you time to avoid or prepare for it

In lieu of other rewards, the director can also decide that a hero who succeeds on a test with a reward earns the players a hero token (see [Hero Tokens](#)).

OPTION: LET PLAYERS PITCH CONSEQUENCES AND REWARDS

Coming up with consequences and rewards for tests can be a big part of the fun for many Directors, but even the best of us occasionally run low on ideas. That's why the game gives the default option of consequences and rewards in the form of Malice and hero tokens. However, if you're a Director who prefers narrative consequences and rewards, consider asking the players to pitch you different consequences and rewards when they make a test. You can reject, add to, or modify their ideas as you see fit. Players who take this option should understand that they need to pitch real consequences when they suffer one, and not minor rewards disguised as consequences.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

The amount of time required for a task involving a test is determined by the Director. A task such as recalling lore with a Reason test might take no time at all. Ducking behind a barrel to hide with an Agility test might require a maneuver or an action, while tracking a band of voiceless talkers through the World Below could take hours or even days.

TESTS DURING COMBAT

Many (but not all) tests that a hero might make during combat are made as maneuvers. See [Make a Test in Maneuvers](#) for more information.

CAN I TRY AGAIN?

In many cases when you fail a test, you can't attempt the test again unless the circumstances of the test change. For instance, if you attempt an Agility test to pick a lock and fail, you can't attempt to pick the lock again unless you get some better lockpicks, oil the lock, have someone demonstrate how to pick a similar lock, and so on.

The Director decides when the circumstances have changed enough to allow a new attempt at a test.

HEROES MAKE TESTS

If a hero attempts to sneak by an enemy guard unnoticed, should the hero make an Agility test to sneak, or should the guard make an Intuition test to catch the hero in the act? If a cultist lies to a hero about the location of a secret temple, does the cultist roll a Presence test to conceal the truth, or does the hero roll an Intuition test to discern the cultist's honesty?

Unless the rules state otherwise, heroes make tests and NPCs do not. Heroes are the stars of the story, and the consequences and rewards of tests have longer-lasting implications for them. There are exceptions to this rule, of course. If a hero travels with an NPC retainer or companion, that NPC would almost certainly make tests too. But for the most part, NPCs working against the heroes never need to make tests.

To quickly assess the difficulty of a task and the test made to attempt it, the Director can use the following guidelines (though these are not hard and fast rules):

Easy Test. A test is easy if only one creature opposes the hero, and that opposed creature would have a lower bonus to their test roll for the task than the hero does. If a hero with an Agility score of 2 attempts to sneak by a guard with an Intuition score of 0, the test is easy.

Moderate Test. A test is moderate if multiple creatures oppose the hero and those creatures would have lower bonuses to their test rolls than the hero, or if only one creature opposes the hero and has the same test bonus as the hero.

Hard Test. A test is hard if an opposed creature would have a higher bonus to their test roll than the hero, or if multiple creatures with the same test bonus as the hero oppose the hero.

The failure consequences of opposed actions are some of the easiest to create on the fly. Fail to hide from someone, and they see you. Fail to lie to someone, and they catch your duplicity. Fail to arm wrestle someone for a free ale, and you're picking up the tab. The consequence is that the opposition bests the hero.

NPCs ROLL FOR DECEPTIVE TASKS

At times, a hero and an NPC might oppose each other in a scenario where the Director chooses for the NPC to make a test instead of a player. This occurs when an NPC undertakes an action the heroes aren't aware of or aren't seeking actively to notice. By having the NPC roll in these scenarios, the Director can keep secret the fact that the task is happening, as well as its outcome.

For example, if an assassin attempts to ambush the heroes while they sit around a campfire without anyone keeping watch for danger, the assassin makes an Agility test to sneak up on the heroes unnoticed. The Director rolls and doesn't reveal the result until the heroes actually realize someone is approaching their camp. If the assassin fails the test, the heroes notice immediately as their assailant loudly steps on a twig. If the assassin succeeds, the heroes don't notice until the assailant is right on top of them. But if any player had said that their hero was on the lookout for danger, that hero would make an Intuition test instead.

An NPC might also make a Presence test if they lie to the heroes, as long as the heroes have no reason to believe the character would be deceptive. You'll know if the heroes are wary in that way, because the players will ask if they can make a test to discern the NPC's honesty.

The difficulty of the NPC's test can be modified by the skills and characteristics of the heroes they attempt to deceive, in the same way NPC statistics can modify a hero's test difficulty.

As an optional rule, the Director is also free to ask the heroes to make a reactive test to a deceptive NPC action instead (see [Reactive Tests](#)) whenever they see fit.

OPTIONAL RULE: OPPOSED POWER ROLLS

In the very rare occurrence that two or more heroes are in conflict with each other in a way that requires them to make tests, the Director can have all the heroes involved make a test. The hero with the highest result on their power roll wins. You can't earn a reward as part of these

opposed power rolls, and they don't follow the typical difficulty structure or have three different tiers of possible outcomes.

For example, if your hero attempts to sneak by an allied hero, you would make an Agility test opposed by the player of the other character making an Intuition test. If your hero gets the higher result, you sneak by without the other hero noticing. If the other hero gets a higher result, they catch you in the act of sneaking. If multiple sneaking heroes attempt to get by multiple heroes on the lookout for sneaks, then each character makes a test and all the results are compared to determine which heroes on guard notice which sneaking heroes.

In the event of a tie in an opposed test, the state of the scene doesn't change. In the previous example, a tie means that if a hero on guard duty didn't know a sneaking hero was there, then the guard hero remains oblivious. If the guard did know the sneak was out there somewhere and the sneak is trying to avoid being noticed, a tie means that the guard still knows the sneak is there.

The Director can also use opposed power rolls when heroes face off against important NPCs using tests.

REACTIVE TESTS

At certain times when a hero isn't engaged in overcoming a task, the Director might ask the player of the hero to make a test without context, explaining the test only after the power roll is made. This often happens when a hero has a chance of knowing or noticing something of significance that the player doesn't know to look for or ask about.

Reactive tests are typically made in the following circumstances, though the Director can call for them in any appropriate scenario:

Hidden Environmental Features. The Director asks for an Intuition test to notice a secret door, a hidden trap, or some other disguised environmental feature.

Hidden Monsters. The Director calls for an Intuition test to notice a hidden monster (or they could use the rules in [NPCs Roll for Deceptive Tasks](#)).

Hidden Motives. The Director can ask for an Intuition test during a conversation to gauge how well a hero can read an NPC, judging whether they're lying, withholding information, or concealing an emotional response. (The Director could also use the rules in [NPCs Roll for Deceptive Tasks](#).)

Recall Lore. The Director might ask a hero to make a Reason test when dealing with a new object, a piece of information, or an event to see what history or details the hero might already know about it.

DIRECTOR'S OPTION: SECRET REACTIVE TESTS

Some Directors prefer to make the power rolls for reactive tests for the heroes rather than asking the players to do so. This allows the Director to make the rolls when appropriate for hidden objects, creatures, motivations, and information without tipping off the players that there is information to be gained. Having the Director roll requires the Director to have everyone's characteristics and skills written down (whether physically or digitally) for easy reference.

SKILLS

Skills represent the different specializations a hero has outside of attacking, defending, and using their ancestry features, class features, and equipment. Whenever you make a test, having a particular skill associated with the test increases your chance of success.

APPLYING SKILLS

If you have a skill that applies to a test you make, you gain a +2 bonus (not an edge) to the test. For instance, if your hero has the Hide skill, you have a +2 bonus to any test you make that involves hiding yourself. This might include an Agility test to hide behind a barrel, or a Presence test to disappear into a crowd.

You can't apply more than one skill to a test.

JUSTIFY THE SKILL

It's not the Director's job to know all the skills in this game or to know the specific skills your hero has. Instead, the Director asks you to make a test with a characteristic and you tell the Director if you think you have a skill that applies. If it's not obvious why the skill applies, tell your Director how your hero is approaching the task and justify why that approach uses the skill. The Director then decides if you get the +2 bonus or not. If the Director disagrees with you, that's the final word. Lose gracefully.

If the Director does agree with you, then you get the +2 bonus from the skill! Approaching problems creatively, while remaining reasonable, can help you get the most out of your skills. For example, if you're making a Presence test to impress a noble at a party, the Brag skill is obvious choice, but what if you don't have that skill? Maybe you could instead try to impress the noble with a Presence test that uses the Magic skill (which you do have), as you give a brief, exciting lecture about the nature of the elements. If I was your Director, I'd allow it!

Sometimes, you won't have a skill that applies to a test. That's okay! If your characteristic score is decent, you likely still have a good chance of success without a skill.

MIXING CHARACTERISTICS AND SKILLS

The bonuses from characteristics and the +2 from skills are separate and can apply to the same roll. Although certain skills are often paired with one characteristic more than others, a skill can apply to any characteristic test that makes sense. The Director has the final say on which characteristic is used to complete a task, and can call for a different characteristic based on the circumstances.

For example, intimidating someone with a purely verbal threat is a Presence test. But if a player describes their character tearing a log in half with their bare hands to intimidate a foe, the Director is likely to call for a Might test instead. The Intimidate skill applies to both tests. In the same way, scaling the side of a building is covered by a Might test, but if a hero does a series of leaps from one balcony to another to reach a roof, the Director could call for an Agility test instead. The Climb skill applies to both of these tests.

MANY SPECIFIC SKILLS

This game includes a big list of skills, and each is fairly specific. For example, instead of one Athletics skill that covers climbing, jumping, swimming, and lifting heavy objects, your character might use separate Climb, Jump, Lift, and Swim skills. Instead of a Thievery skill that covers picking locks, picking pockets, and disabling traps, the game has three skills: Pick Lock, Pick Pocket, and Sabotage.

We made the decision to have a lot of specific skills based on our design goals. First, having skills this specific means that you will frequently make tests that don't use one of your character's skills and simply apply a characteristic. By not having a few broader skills, it means that having a character who covers the spread of every skill is actually impossible. Luckily, the math of the game doesn't require you to have a skill to have a decent chance of success on a test. That means heroes can attempt tasks without the help of a skill just because someone needs to do it, and that is pretty darn heroic!

Since players don't need to be worried about their characters covering a wide spread of skills, they're free to choose the skills they think fit their heroes best and are the most fun to work with. In this way, you can get pretty specific with the hero you want to make. Maybe you're thinking about an elementalist who has a gymnastic background in jumping and tumbling, and who also studied religion and blacksmithing. You can make that in our game! Having a specific backstory is part of cinematic storytelling.

Our rules for skills allow for them to be flexibly applied to any test that is appropriate for the skill. This encourages clever thinking. A player can ask the Director, "I want to impress the duke with a story about how I ascended the sheer Cliffs of Azgahnan. Can I use my Climb skill to get a +2 bonus to my Presence test?" That's great! Getting creative like that is a lot of fun. It paints a visual picture, and it's tactical thinking! However, if the skills in a game are too broad in the kinds of activities they represent, that sometimes encourages players to find a way to apply the same skill over and over again with as many tests as possible. This isn't fun for anyone, and doesn't make a very compelling story.

SKILL GROUPS

Skills are broken down into five groups: crafting, exploration, interpersonal, intrigue, and lore.

FOR THE DIRECTOR: MAKE YOUR OWN SKILLS

Directors should feel free to make their own skills that they feel are relevant and useful to their campaigns and adventures. For instance, the game doesn't have a Brewing skill for brewing ale or a Painting skill for making art because those aren't tasks that typically come up or require a test in a game about fighting monsters and saving the world. However, a Director could decide that their campaign involves poisoned barrels of ale and large amounts of counterfeit art, and that adding these two new skills to the game would make it more fun for the players. The Director simply needs to pick a group for these new skills—in this case, crafting makes sense. They then let the players know that they can swap out any crafting skill they have for these new skills.

CRAFTING SKILLS

Skills from the crafting skill group are used in the creation and appraisal of goods and for jury-rigging contraptions. They are especially useful during rests and downtime.

Rewards for tests made with crafting skills typically include having leftover rare material used in the creation process, knowing a buyer willing to pay extra for goods or items you're appraising, or making a jury-rigged device so amazing that it lasts for more uses than it should.

Failure consequences for tests made with crafting skills typically include wasting rare materials used in the creation process, greatly overestimating or underestimating an item's value, and poorly jury-rigging a contraption so that it harms people (or at least the wrong people).

CRAFTING SKILLS

Skill	Use
Alchemy	Make bombs and potions
Architecture	Create buildings and vehicles
Blacksmithing	Forge metal armor and weapons
Carpentry	Create items out of wood
Cooking	Create delicious dishes
Fletching	Make ranged weapons and ammunition
Forgery	Create false badges, documents, and other items
Jewelry	Create bracelets, crowns, rings, and other jewelry
Mechanics	Build machines and clockwork items
Tailoring	Craft cloth and leather clothing

EXPLORATION SKILLS

Skills from the exploration skill group are used to physically explore the environment around the characters, and to overcome physical obstacles.

Rewards for tests made with exploration skills typically include helping another creature engaging in the same task succeed without needing to also make a test, automatically succeeding on a follow-up test while engaged in the same task, reaching a destination faster than you anticipated, and learning about or avoiding an upcoming hazard.

Failure consequences for tests made with exploration skills include harming yourself, your gear, or your allies, becoming lost, or stumbling headlong into a hazard or a place you were trying to avoid.

EXPLORATION SKILLS

Skill	Use
Climb	Move up vertical surfaces
Drive	Control vehicles
Endurance	Remain engaged in strenuous activity over a long period of time
Gymnastics	Move across unsteady or narrow surfaces, and tumble

Heal	Use mundane first aid
Jump	Leap vertical and horizontal distances
Lift	Pick up, carry, and throw heavy objects
Navigate	Read a map and travel without becoming lost
Ride	Ride and control a mount who isn't sapient, such as a horse
Swim	Move through deep liquid

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Skills from the interpersonal skill group are used to socially interact with other creatures, and are particularly useful during negotiations. Aside from the Handle Animals skill, you can generally only use interpersonal skills when you attempt to influence creatures who have emotions and who can understand you.

Rewards for tests made with interpersonal skills typically include gaining an extra favor, item, or piece of information from the person or people you interact with.

Failure consequences for tests made with interpersonal skills include making the person you're interacting with angry, sad, embarrassed, offended, or otherwise upset or uncomfortable, which might cause them to ignore you, storm off, spread rumors about you, attack you, betray you, blackmail you, or otherwise attempt to harm you.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Skill	Use
Brag	Impress others with stories of your deeds
Empathize	Relate to someone on a personal level
Flirt	Attract romantic attention from someone
Gamble	Make bets with others
Handle Animals	Interact with animal wildlife that isn't sapient
Interrogate	Obtain information from a creature withholding it
Intimidate	Awe or scare a creature
Lead	Inspire people to action
Lie	Convince someone that a falsehood is true
Music	Perform music vocally or with an instrument
Perform	Engage in dance, oratory, acting, or some other physical performance
Persuade	Convince someone to agree with you through use of your charms and grace
Read Person	Read the emotions and body language of other creatures

INTRIGUE SKILLS

Skills from the intrigue skill group are used in tasks centered around investigation, thievery, and spycraft.

Rewards for tests made with skills from this group typically include helping another creature engaging in the same task succeed without needing to also make a test, automatically succeeding on a follow-up test while engaged in the same task, discovering helpful information in addition to what you set out to learn, and performing an extra bit of clandestine activity in addition to what you set out to do.

Failure consequences for tests made with intrigue skills include getting caught in the act or failing to notice a detail that places you in danger, such as triggering a trap or walking into an ambush.

INTRIGUE SKILLS

Skill	Uses
Alertness	Intuitively sense the details of your surroundings
Conceal Object	Hide an object on your person or in your environment
Disguise	Change your appearance to look like a different person
Eavesdrop	Actively listen to something that is hard to hear, such as a whispered conversation through a door
Escape Artist	Escape from bonds such as rope or manacles
Hide	Conceal yourself from others' observation
Pick Lock	Open a lock without using the key
Pick Pocket	Steal an item that another person wears or carries without them noticing
Sabotage	Disable a mechanical device such as a trap
Search	Actively search an environment for important details and items
Sneak	Move silently
Track	Follow a trail that another creature has left behind

LORE SKILLS

Skills from the lore skill group are used to research and recall specific information. They are especially useful during rests and downtime.

Rewards for tests made with lore skills typically include learning an extra piece of useful information.

Failure consequences for tests made with lore skills typically include learning an incorrect piece of information that seems useful, but which actually makes things worse or wastes time. (It's fun to roleplay these sorts of moments, so lean in!) Alternatively, the Director can make medium and hard lore tests for each hero in secret and let the players know the narrative outcome without revealing the result of the dice.

LORE SKILLS

Skill	Use
Culture	Knowing about a culture's customs, folktales, and taboos
Criminal Underworld	Knowing about criminal organizations, their crimes, their relationships, and their leaders
History	Knowing about significant past events
Magic	Knowing about magical places, spells, rituals, items, and phenomena
Monsters	Knowing monster ecology, strengths, and weaknesses
Nature	Knowing about natural flora, fauna, and weather
Psionics	Knowing about psionic places, spells, rituals, items, and phenomena
Religion	Knowing about religious mythology, practices, and rituals
Rumors	Knowing gossip, legends, and uncertain truths
Society	Knowing noble etiquette and the leadership and power dynamics of noble families
Strategy	Knowing about battle tactics and logistics
Timescape	Knowing about the various planets of the timescape

ARE ALL SKILLS EQUAL?

This game has a big list of skills, and it's impossible for us or anyone else to know in advance which will be most useful during a campaign. For instance, the Swim skill might be used constantly during a campaign that takes place on the ocean and has heroes exploring underwater ruins, but it won't come up as much in a campaign that takes place entirely in a vast desert. The Psionics skill might come up a lot in a campaign where voiceless talkers are the main foes, and Magic might be more useful in a game where the heroes take on a circle of evil wizards. If you're worried about whether a skill you'd like to take will be useful, discuss your skill list with the Director after you create a hero. At the Director's discretion, you can swap out any skill you have with any other skill in the same group.

EXAMPLE TESTS

Jorn, a tactician played by Alyssa, Val, a conduit played by Grace, and Korvo, a shadow played by James, want to scale the 40-foot-high walls surrounding the Star Chamber to see if they can covertly obtain information about their enemy, Lady Morgant.

Director: *The towering walls that surround the Star Chamber stand before you, the only iron gate closed and locked with a platoon of armed guards outside.*

James: *Let's move to the side of the wall opposite the gate and make our ascent there.*

Grace: *Agreed.*

Director: *Okay. It'll be a Might test to get up to the top of the wall.*

Alyssa: *Let me go first. I've got good Might and can throw you down a rope once I'm up there.*

Grace: *Sounds good.*

Director: *Okay then. Does Jorn have any skills that apply here.*

Alyssa: *How about Climb?*

Director: *For sure. Okay roll it up.*

The Director knows the walls of the castle of the Star Chamber are smooth and hard to climb, specifically to repel invaders. The test's difficulty is hard, but they keep it a secret for now.

Alyssa rolls 2d10 and gets a 13. She then adds her Might score of 2 to the roll and her +2 bonus for having an applicable skill for a total of 17.

Alyssa: *17! That's tier 3, baby!*

The Director looks at the Test Difficulty Outcomes table and realizes that tier 3 is a success on a hard test.

Director: *Okay. You're on top of the wall. You can see a few guards patrolling on the opposite side of the wall in the distance, but they're looking out at the city right now.*

Alyssa: *Great! I toss down a rope. Korvo, you're next.*

Grace: *So it's a Might test. Would you let me use Endurance too? It's a lot of physical exertion to climb.*

Director: *It's not a climb that would take you hours, so I don't think Endurance applies here. But hey, the rope does make this an easier test.*

Grace: *Fair. Okay, dice. Let's do this.*

Given the rope, the Director decides that this is an easy test. Grace rolls 2d10 and gets an 11! With her Might score of 2, that's a 13.

Grace: *13! That's a tier 2 result for Val.*

The Director looks at the Test Difficulty Outcomes table and realizes that tier 2 is a success on an easy test.

Director: *Good news! You make it to the top of the wall.*

James: *Ah, crap. I have a might of -1 and no applicable skills to use. Unless I could Intimidate the rope into carrying me up?*

Director: *Wishful thinking.*

Alyssa: *What if Korvo hangs onto the rope and I lift him up while he just hangs on for a ride?*

Director: *Sure. That'd be a Might test, if Korvo's down for it.*

James: *Nothing risked, nothing saved. Let's do it. Just be careful, any loud noises could attract those guards.*

Alyssa: *Please, I'm a pro. Since I'm lifting this polder off the ground, does the Lift skill apply?*

Director: *Yes it does. Roll it up.*

The Director decides that lifting the polder is a medium difficulty test. Alyssa rolls 2d10 and gets a 2. With her Might score and Lift skill bonus of +2, it's a 6.

Alyssa: *6. Oof. That's tier 1.*

Director: *Which is a failure without consequence. You just can't lift Korvo off the ground without making a lot of noise.*

The Director realizes they can bring in an optional rule here, allow the players to decide if they get a failure without consequence or success with a consequence.

Director: *I'll give you a choice here. You can leave Korvo on the ground or pull him up and suffer the consequence of making some noise while doing so.*

Grace: *Ah, pull the polder up.*

Alyssa: *Yeah. We have to face these guards sometime.*

James: *Thanks for not leaving me behind!*

Director: *As you yank Korvo off the ground and pull him up onto the wall, a guard turns a bullseye lantern your way, shouting encouragement at them isn't going to make them stealthier.*

ASSIST A TEST

You can attempt to assist another creature with a test they make, provided you have a skill that applies to the test, the other creature isn't using that same skill on the test, and you can describe how your character helps to the Director's satisfaction. In other words, your attempt to help has to make sense, and you have to bring some useful expertise to the table. Helping another creature sneak by shouting encouragement at them isn't going to make them stealthier.

When you attempt to assist another creature, make an test using the skill you choose, and with a characteristic chosen by the Director based on the action you take to help. The outcome of that test determines the bonus applied to the test you're assisting:

- **11 or lower:** You get in the way or make things worse. The creature takes a bane on their test.
- **12–16:** Your help grants the other creature an edge on their test.
- **17+:** Your help gives the other creature a double edge on their test.

For example, if you want to use the Flirt skill to help another hero pick a jailor's pocket, the Director might ask you to make a Presence test using Flirt. The outcome of that test determines the bonus you provide to the other hero's Agility test to pick the pocket.

HIDE AND SNEAK

Hiding and sneaking are important tools for heroes and their foes. You might want to avoid another creatures' notice to eavesdrop on conversations, steal items, set up an ambush, or avoid a combat encounter.

HIDING

When you wish to hide from a creature, you must have cover or concealment (see [Combat](#)) from your foe, and that foe can't observe you attempting to hide. A creature is observing you if they're aware of your specific location before you attempt to hide. This means they can pinpoint you with their senses and be able to point a finger (or paw or tentacle) at you as if to shout, "There they are!" If you duck behind a barrel to hide from a foe, your attempt to hide has a chance of succeeding only if your foe doesn't notice you doing so. If you are being chased by a hungry dragon, you can hide only if you first move into a place where the dragon can't observe you, such as turning a

sharp corner into a tunnel full of giant stalagmites before the dragon does. You then make your hide attempt.

When you use the Hide maneuver to hide during combat while you have cover or concealment from a creature who isn't observing you, you are automatically hidden from them unless the Director deems otherwise. If you hide outside of combat, the Director might ask you to make a test using the Hide skill to see how well hidden you are.

While you are hidden from another creature, you gain an edge on ability power rolls made against them, and the creature can't target you with abilities that don't have the Area keyword. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn in which you become no longer hidden. These rules allow you to be hidden from another creature at the start of your turn, move out of cover or concealment toward them and use an ability against them and still gain the benefit of being hidden as long as you use the ability before the end of the turn in which you moved out of hiding.

You are no longer hidden from a creature if you don't have cover or concealment from them. If you use an ability, interact with an enemy creature, move without sneaking, or otherwise make noise or reveal yourself while hidden, you are no longer hidden once the thing you're doing resolves. For instance, if you are hidden and then make an strike, you resolve the strike first, then are no longer hidden.

SEARCHING FOR HIDDEN CREATURES

You can search for creatures who are hidden from you as long as those creatures are within 10 squares of you and you have line of effect to them. To do so, you make an Intuition test as a maneuver and assess the result:

- *11 or lower:* You find any hidden creatures with an Agility of 0 or lower and who don't have the Hide skill.
- *12–16:* You find any hidden creatures who don't have the Hide skill.
- *17 or more:* You find all hidden creatures.

As part of this maneuver, you can point out any creatures you find to allies within 10 squares of you, making those creatures no longer hidden from those allies. If a creature is hidden from your allies but not from you, you can use a maneuver without making a test to point them out to your allies.

SNEAKING

While you are hidden from another creature and not in combat, you can attempt to sneak, which means avoiding the senses of other creatures as you move around them out in the open, in order to remain hidden. While sneaking, your speed is halved. If you do so, you can make an Agility test with a difficulty set by the Director, remaining hidden during your movement if you succeed. This test can use another characteristic at the Director's discretion, such as using Presence to blend in with a crowd in a packed city street.

GROUP TESTS

Whenever two or more heroes attempt to overcome a single, simple task together that calls for them to make the

same test, the Director can call for a group test. For example, if several heroes are all attempting to climb the outside of a tower at the same time, giving each other boosts and advice, they could be asked to make a Might group test. If a group of heroes attempt to sneak by a sleeping ogre, they might make an Agility group test.

GROUP TEST DIFFICULTY

The Director determines the difficulty of a group test the same way they do for individual tests. Group tests can be easy, medium, or hard.

MAKING A GROUP TEST

Each hero participating in the group test makes the test individually as usual, but the Director waits until all the tests have been made to interpret the results. A hero who is participating in the group test can't assist another hero participating in the test.

GROUP TEST OUTCOME

When interpreting the outcome of a group test, the Director first determines if the task succeeded or not before figuring out rewards and consequences. If half or more of the heroes making the group test succeed, then the group test succeeds. Otherwise, the group test fails.

If the heroes succeeded and half or more of them obtained a reward from the test, the Director gives the group a collective reward and ignores any consequences incurred in the test. This collective reward should be equivalent to earning two individual rewards. In fact, it could be two consumable items, juicy pieces of information, or hero tokens. However, it could also be something more tailored to the task. For instance, if the heroes earn a collective reward while sneaking through the camp of an enemy army, the Director might allow them to sabotage a bunch of war engines or steal a few horses on their way out.

If the heroes failed the group test and more than half of them incurred a consequence as a result, the Director gives the group a collective consequence and ignores any earned rewards. This collective consequence should affect everyone. An easy option is for the stress of failing the test to cause each hero to take a bane on their next power roll or for the Director to gain 2 Malice per hero at the start of the next combat encounter, but the consequence could also be tailored to the task. For instance, if the heroes fail in their attempt to sneak through the camp of an enemy army, they're spotted and the camp immediately goes on alert as waves of enemies attack them.

If fewer than half the heroes get a consequence or reward on their individual tests, then the group test simply succeeds or fails.

MONTAGE TESTS

When a group of heroes works together over time to accomplish a common goal that requires more than a single characteristic, the Director can call for a montage test. Such tests typically take place over a prolonged period and focus on collective or shared activities. Navigating a vast desert, convincing farmers to rise up

against a tyrannical leader, and performing a ritual to open a magically sealed gate can all be accomplished with montage tests.

In a montage test, the players take turns making tests as their characters tackle a task together in a montage test round. Each hero has a chance to make a test (or to assist another hero's test) intended to influence the outcome of the task (see [Assist a Test](#)).

A hero can also spend their turn using an item, ability, or other option they have available that they believe can help in the montage test. For example, if a group of heroes wants to cross an ocean on a sailing ship before a storm begins, one hero might make use of a magic fan that creates wind to keep the sails full day and night. The Director decides that this clever action gives the heroes 2 automatic successes in the montage test, with no individual tests necessary (see [Total Successes and Failures](#)).

Once a hero makes a test, assists with a test, or uses an ability or other option, they can't do anything else as part of the montage test until each other hero involved in the montage test does so as well. A hero can also choose to do nothing, most often if they have no one to assist and fear that their actions might make the situation worse (see [Montage Test Outcomes](#)). Once every hero has had a chance to act, the montage test round ends and a new one begins.

TIME AND STAKES

As the name suggests, montage tests create a kind of cinematic montage in the action of the game. A montage test can take place over the course of several hours or days, with each individual test or other activity set up as a brief vignette within the montage, and starring one of the heroes. Combat encounters, negotiations, and other challenges and scenes can break up a montage test (see [Sample Montage Test](#) below).

The Director should deploy montage tests only when the players are engaged in overcoming a goal that has stakes for the story and some sort of pressure, such as a looming deadline or impending harm. A montage test is great for a race to get to another location before an enemy army does, a chase to escape or catch up to a foe, weathering a hazard, preparing a village for war, or similar activities. Low- or no-stakes activities such as travel through a forest with no time pressure, or training during a respite to use a new kit, can be narrated in montage style, but they don't require a montage test.

DIRECTOR SETS THE SCENE

At the start of a montage test, the Director should describe the scenario underlying the task at hand, and the various challenges the heroes might face as they attempt to collectively accomplish it. For example, if the heroes are attempting to chase down a pickpocket through a crowded market, the Director might talk about the throngs of innocent people blocking the way forward, obscuring the characters' vision, and making noise that complicates attempts to hear the thief's nimble footsteps. There are also traveling carts to dodge, the speed and dexterity of the pursued character to contend with, and a pack of stray

dogs who chase after anyone who sprints through the market. Describing these obstacles gives the heroes ideas about what they're trying to overcome as they attempt to achieve their goals.

INDIVIDUAL TESTS IN MONTAGE TESTS

The difficulty of each individual test in a montage test is set by the Director and can vary from test to test. For instance, if the heroes are preparing the defenses of a village threatened by a band of approaching raiders, the Director might decide that a character who wants to dig a trench around the village needs to make an easy Might test. Another hero wants to train the untested farmers of the village in the ways of war, and the Director decides this is a hard Reason test.

The same rules and guidelines that apply to all individual tests apply here. If a hero has a clever, out-of-the-box idea that the Director thinks should automatically succeed without rolling dice, it does. If the circumstances of the test should grant an edge or a bane, they do. Individual test outcomes shouldn't halt the story.

The Director should couch each success or failure as it relates to the overall goal of the montage test. If the heroes are trying to reach an ancient temple, failing a Might test to ford a river in their path doesn't mean they don't cross the river and are stuck on the other side. But it could mean that failing to cross the river in a timely manner gives a rival group of villains the chance to beat the party to the temple.

The rewards and consequences of individual tests made during a montage test should be handled on an individual basis. The Director can use the default additional Malice in the next combat encounter for consequences and hero tokens for rewards to keep the montage moving.

CAN'T USE THE SAME SKILL TWICE

An individual character can't use the same skill more than once in a montage test. Though multiple heroes can use the same skill, a test or an assist with a specific skill represents each characters' entire contribution to the montage test with that skill. At the Director's discretion, this restriction can be lifted for prolonged montage tests, or for montage tests that are limited in scope and have only a small number of skills that apply to them.

NEW CHALLENGES FOR EACH TEST

In general, when a hero makes a test as part of a montage test, they should choose new obstacles to overcome that haven't already been tackled as part of the test. If the heroes are chasing a thief through the marketplace and one of them has already distracted the pack of stray dogs with a deft hand and a piece of meat, additional tests made to distract the animals don't count toward the result of the montage test.

When it fits the scenario, the Director can adjust this restriction. If part of a montage test involves searching for people trapped in a burning building, the Director is likely to allow multiple tests to fight or avoid the fire, since this will happen throughout the montage test, not just once.

DIRECTOR CAN INTRODUCE MORE CHALLENGES

During a montage test, a Director can introduce new challenges for the heroes to face. While attempting to run out of a burning building from the top floor, the characters might discover that by the time they reach the second floor, beams are starting to fall and glass windows are exploding as the structure begins to collapse. These new challenges can be incorporated into the tests the heroes subsequently make.

TOTAL SUCCESSES AND FAILURES

The Director or another player will track the total number of successes and failures the heroes earn during a montage test. Every montage test has a success limit and a failure limit. When the number of successful tests equals the success limit, the montage test ends and the heroes achieve total success (see [Montage Test Outcomes](#)). The montage test can also end when the number of failed tests equals the failure limit, and the heroes suffer total failure.

LIMITED ROUNDS

A montage test should last only 2 montage test rounds. If the heroes don't end the montage test by achieving the success limit or failure limit, the montage test ends when the second montage test round is over. This time limit helps to keep a montage test from becoming a slog, and prevents heroes from simply using their turns to assist the one hero with the best chance of success. This can inspire each hero to be a more active participant in the montage test. That said, the Director can increase the number of rounds a montage test lasts if they wish to create a particularly grueling challenge.

MONTAGE TEST DIFFICULTY

The Director determines the success limit and failure limit of a montage test. They can share this information or keep it secret, depending on what feels the most fun and dramatic for the situation and the players.

In general, the higher the success limit, the harder and more complicated it is for the heroes to overcome the montage test, since a hero can't make the same test twice. The Montage Test Difficulty table gives a recommended success limit and failure limit for easy, moderate, and hard montage tests for groups with five heroes.

MONTAGE TEST DIFFICULTY

Difficulty	Success Limit	Failure Limit
Easy	5	5
Moderate	6	4
Hard	7	3

For larger or smaller groups, you can make the following adjustments to keep montage tests achievable but challenging:

- For four or fewer heroes, decrease the success limit and failure limits by 1 (to a minimum of 2) for every hero

fewer than five. For example, if your group has only three heroes, an easy montage test has a success and failure limit of 3.

- For six or more heroes, increase the success and failure limits by 1 for every hero more than five.

MONTAGE TEST OUTCOMES

A montage test can have three different outcomes:

- If the heroes hit the success limit before hitting the failure limit or before the time runs out for the test, they achieve total success.
- If the heroes hit the failure limit or time runs out, and if they've achieved at least two more successes than failures, they achieve a partial success.
- If the heroes hit the failure limit or time runs out, and if they don't have at least two more successes than failures, they suffer total failure.

TOTAL SUCCESS

If the heroes earn a total success, they achieve what they set out to do without complication. For instance, if the heroes engaged in a montage test to see if they can cross a desert to reach a city before a tyrant's army arrived there and leveled the place, a total success sees them arrive at the city gates with plenty of time to warn people of the impending assault. The heroes earn 1 Victory when they achieve total success on an easy or moderate montage test, and 2 Victories on a hard montage test.

PARTIAL SUCCESS

If the heroes earn a partial success, they succeed at what they set out to do, but there is a complication or a cost involved. For instance, when crossing the desert to reach and warn the city of the tyrant's army, a mixed success sees the characters arrive at the city gates with the enemy forces just behind them. Alternatively, the Director might allow the heroes to arrive well before the army, but they don't cover their movements well enough. The tyrant realizes the city has been warned and decides to call in a favor to have a powerful dragon join the siege. The heroes earn 1 Victory when they achieve partial success on a hard or moderate montage test.

TOTAL FAILURE

If the heroes suffer total failure, they don't achieve what they set out to do. Just as with standard tests, failure on a group test shouldn't bring a story to a halt. Total failure should make things more interesting and challenging! With a total failure in a montage test to cross the desert and warn the city, the characters arrive at the city to find it already under siege by the tyrant.

SAMPLE MONTAGE TEST

Four heroes must cross the vast and inhospitable Infinite Desert to warn the city of Ahset that the tyrannical Empress Vardo is coming to conquer them. If the characters arrive in time, they can organize the defenses of the city, giving its people a greater chance of defeating the tyrant.

The Director determines that crossing the desert is a montage test of hard difficulty. With four heroes involved, the success limit is 6 and the failure limit is 2 as the montage test begins:

- When the test begins, the Director sets the scene. They tell the players that the desert has extreme temperatures, sudden sandstorms, high dunes to cross, deep sand, chasms, and quicksand lakes. The Director decides that challenges of dunes, deep sand, and quicksand can be tackled multiple times in the test, since the Infinite Desert is filled with these hazards.
- Urdoncara, a fury, starts things off by asking to make an Intuition test using the Nature skill to predict the best times of day to travel and rest. She wants the party to avoid the worst of the desert's extreme temperatures and any sandstorms or other weather phenomena, so that their journey is quickened. The Director decides this is an easy test. Urdoncara makes the test and gets a result of 12, earning 1 success for the montage test.
- Loric, a tactician, wants to make a Reason test using the Climb skill to lead the party over dunes and other hazards with minimal effort. The Director allows the attempt, but says that knowing what makes one dune easier to climb than another is difficult, setting the difficulty at medium. Loric gets a 9 on the test and fails with a major consequence, which the Director decides will cause him to take a bane on his next power roll due to the exertion. The montage test currently has 1 success and 1 failure.
- Karrel, an elemental, thinks the group might cross the desert faster if they have specially modified sandals that distribute their weight and prevent their feet from sinking into the sand. The Director loves the idea, and decides that making four pairs of the shoes while traveling the desert is a medium Reason test. Karrel gets to use their Tailoring skill and winds up with a result of 13—a success with a consequence. The Director gains an additional 2 Malice at the start of the next combat encounter as a consequence, but the group now has 2 successes and 1 failure on the montage test.
- Adrian, a conduit, offers to scout ahead for the group with an Intuition test, using the Navigate skill to find the best path forward and avoid hazards such as chasms and quicksand. The Director thinks this straightforward task of acting as lookout in a vast desert is an easy task. Adrian smashes it with a 21, and the Director decides to get creative with the reward. Adrian's lookout skills grant the next hero to act in the montage test an edge on their test. At the end of the first montage test round, the heroes have 3 successes and 1 failure.

Before the next montage test round, the Director pauses the montage test to run a battle with a kingfissure worm, who attacks the heroes as they cross over an ancient ruin partially buried in the sand. After the heroes defeat the kingfissure worm, the test continues:

- Urdoncara wants to make a Might test using the Lift skill to carry most of the group's equipment as they cross the desert, allowing her allies to move more quickly while she keeps up with her superior endurance. The Director thinks this arduous task has a hard difficulty. Urdoncara gets a 17 on the test thanks to the edge from Adrian's earlier success. The montage test has 4 successes and 1 failure.

- Loric, eager to prove himself after his last failure, asks to make a Might test using the Lead skill, representing tying a rope around his waist to drag his weaker friends over the tallest dunes. The Director likes the idea, but doesn't think the Lead skill applies to the task. He tells Loric that Lift is more appropriate, since the tactician is using their physical skill to aid their friends and not really doing anything interpersonal. Loric agrees, and the Director sets the test at medium difficulty. Making the test with a bane because of his previous failure, the tactician rolls a 15, which is a success with a consequence. The montage test has 5 successes and 1 failure, but the consequence gives the Director another 2 Malice at the start of the next combat encounter.
- Since the group needs only 1 more success to achieve total success, Karrel says she'd like to assist Adrian in whatever task he decides to take on. Adrian wants to recall lore about the Khem-hor—the inhabitants of the Infinite Desert—to remember their time-honored travel techniques using the History skill. Karrel has the Culture skill, which she can use to assist by providing information about the lives and society of the Khem-hor. She makes a Reason test to assist and gets a 16, granting Adrian an edge on his upcoming test.
- Adrian attempts to recall lore about the Khem-hor, wanting to see if he can remember any of their travel from his studies of the history of the region. The Director has him make a hard Reason test with an edge, thanks to Karrel's input on the current state of Khem-hor culture. Adrian gets a 17, and the Director decides that the conduit recalls a shortcut through a canyon tunnel that leads directly to Ahset, avoiding a vast lake of quicksand. The heroes get their sixth success in the montage test, achieving total success, and earn 2 Victories.

The heroes could have attempted other tests during their travels, such as an Agility test using the Sneak skill to lead the group through dangerous shortcuts in the desert without being seen or waylaid by predators, a Reason test using the Nature skill to find enough food and water to keep the group hydrated and fed, or a Presence test using the Music skill to inspire allies to travel faster with song.

COMBAT

When the heroes face a problem that can be solved only with action, or when they come up against creatures who want to harm them, it's time to throw down!

SET THE MAP

When combat begins, the Director should position miniatures or tokens on a gridded map to represent the environment, the heroes, their foes, and any other creatures in the battle.

HOW BIG IS A SQUARE?

It's helpful to know how big a square is for abilities that heroes and NPCs can use outside of combat. A single square is 5 feet on all sides. The Director can change this measurement to 2 meters, 1 meter, or any other measurement you prefer, as long as that scale stays consistent throughout your game.

SIZE AND SPACE

A creature's size indicates how many squares they occupy during combat, which defines the creature's space. If a creature's size is 1, they occupy a space of 1 square. If a creature is larger than 1 square, their size equals the number of squares they take up in length, width, and height. For example, a horse has a size of 2, which means that during combat, they occupy a space that is 2 squares long, 2 squares wide, and 2 squares high. You could also think of that space as a cube that is 2 squares on all sides.

If a creature is a size 1, their size value includes the letter T, S, M, or L, abbreviations of tiny, small, medium, and large respectively. Since the minimal amount of space a creature can take up during combat is 1, this letter indicates the difference between tiny pixies, small polders, medium humans, and large hakaan, each of which occupy a space 1 square in combat. These sizes in order from smallest to largest are 1T, 1S, 1M, and 1L.

Objects can also have a size rating. If an object has an O (an abbreviation for oblong) next to its size, it indicates that the object's size isn't the number of squares the object occupies, but rather it's relative mass and weight to a creature of equivalent size. If an ability or feature allows you to interact with objects of a certain size that rule includes all objects of that size, oblong or otherwise.

The Creature and Object Sizes table shows examples sizes of creatures and objects up to size 5, but there is no limit to what a creature or object's size could be.

CREATURE AND OBJECT SIZES

Size	Example Creature	Example Object
1T	Pixie	Potato
1S	Polder	Heavy armor
1M	Human	Wardrobe
1L	Hakaan	Anvil
2	Ogre	Carriage
3	Treant	Sailboat
4	Ancient Dragon	Galley
5	The Kraken	Castle

SIDES

Every combat encounter is a conflict between two sides. The heroes and any of their allies are one side, controlled by the players. Any creatures who oppose the heroes are the other side, controlled by the Director. All creatures who oppose the heroes are on the same side, even if those creatures also oppose each other. For example, if the heroes are battling a group of bandits when a kingfissure worm suddenly bursts into the fray to devour player characters and brigands alike, the worm is still on the side of the bandits for the purpose of the game's combat rules.

NPC ALLIES

If an NPC ally fights alongside the heroes, the Director should give the players the ally's stat block and let them control the NPC during combat. The Director has enough to worry about. As well, any missteps, mistakes, or triumphs the ally makes will be thanks to the decisions of the players and not the Director, which can make the outcome of the battle more satisfying for the players.

COMBAT ROUND

Combat takes place over a series of rounds. During a round, each creature in the battle takes a turn. Once every creature has taken a turn, a new round begins.

WHEN DOES COMBAT START?

Combat begins as soon as one creature intends to harm another. This means that even before the action happens, a hero can't use a heroic abilities without spending their resources on it, because combat has already begun!

DETERMINE SURPRISE

When battle begins, the Director determines which creatures, if any, are caught off guard. Any creature who isn't ready for combat at the start of an encounter is surprised until the end of the first round of combat. A surprised creature can't take triggered or free triggered actions and ability power rolls against them gain an edge.

For example, if the heroes sneak up unnoticed on a camp of marauders and attack, each marauder is surprised. Likewise, if the heroes fail to notice that all the cloaked figures in a tavern are actually brain-devouring zombies, then the heroes are surprised. If one of the heroes notices the disguised undead before the zombies attack but has no opportunity to warn their allies, that hero isn't surprised but the rest of the characters are.

DETERMINE WHO GOES FIRST

Sometimes figuring out who gets to take the first turn in combat is automatic. If all the creatures on one side are surprised, then a creature on the other side gets to go first. But if both sides have creatures who aren't surprised, the Director or a player they choose rolls 1d10. On a result of 6 or greater, the heroes' side acts first. Otherwise the other side acts first.

CREATURES TAKE TURNS

Whichever side goes first chooses a creature (or sometimes a group of creatures on the Director's side) to act at the start of combat. Whenever the rules talk about a creature acting in combat, that creature gets to take their turn. When that turn is over, the other side chooses a creature to act. Play continues back and forth this way as each creature takes their turn.

Unless an ability or special rule allows them to do so, any creature who has taken a turn during a round can't act again until a new round begins. To help track which creatures have already acted in the current round, each creature can have a coin, token, or card they flip over on the table, or some kind of flag they set on their virtual tabletop token, once they've taken a turn. That way, all the players know who has already acted and who hasn't.

In many encounters, a point comes when one side has creatures who haven't acted yet but all the creatures on the other side have. The creatures who have yet to act get to take their turns in any order they choose, without turns in between from the other side. For example, consider four heroes taking on six enemies. When all four heroes have taken their turns and four of the enemies have taken theirs, the two enemies who are left take their turns one after the other to end the round.

Once all creatures on both sides of a battle have acted, the round ends and a new one begins. The side whose members acted first during the starting round of combat acts first in all subsequent rounds.

DETERMINING WHO ACTS NEXT

When it comes to the heroes' side, the choice of who should act next is intended to give players the opportunity to comment, strategize, and plan. Some tables, in some encounters, might find that the choice of who should act next isn't obvious, leading to debate. That's fine. Deliberating about what the group should do next is classic roleplaying.

In general, though, most groups find that it's usually only one or two players in a given round who think it best if they act next. And as soon as those players explain why they want to act next and what they plan on doing, the issue is quickly resolved.

ARGUMENT TIMER

If the players do end up arguing in circles about what to do next, the Director can place a timer on the discussion. Usually, giving the players a warning and 30 seconds to decide who goes next does the trick. If they can't choose by the end of that time, the Director chooses a hero to act.

ALTERNATIVE INITIATIVE

If planning everyone's turn order isn't fun for your group, you can leave it to the dice instead. At the start of combat, have each hero, enemy, and group of enemies make an Agility test, then record the results. When it's time for someone on the heroes' side to act, the hero with the highest result goes first. On the next hero turn, the hero with the second-highest result takes their turn, and so on. The Director-controlled creatures act the same way. Creatures on the same side should reroll tied Agility

tests to determine who among the tied creatures acts before the others.

At the Director's discretion, a hero can swap their turn in the initiative order with another willing hero at the start of a new round of combat. This allows certain abilities that interact with the core initiative system, such as the shadow's *Hesitation is Weakness* ability, to better work with this alternative system.

ENEMIES ACT IN GROUPS

Director-controlled creatures act in groups, with information for building groups found in the *Bestiary*. When a group of enemies acts, the Director chooses a single creature or minion squad to take a turn. Once that turn is over, the Director chooses another creature in that group to take a turn, continuing until all members of the group have taken their turn.

END OF ROUND

Once all creatures on both sides of a battle have acted, the round ends and a new round begins.

TAKING A TURN

Each creature in combat—whether hero, adversary, or something in between—gets to take a move action, a maneuver, and an action on their turn. Each combatant can perform their maneuver and action in any order, and can break up the movement granted by their move action before, after, or between their maneuver and action however they like. You can also turn your action into a move action or a maneuver, so that your turn can alternatively consist of two move actions and a maneuver; or two maneuvers and a move action.

The [Movement](#) section breaks down how your move action works, while the [Maneuvers and Actions](#) sections break down the baseline maneuvers and actions your character can undertake. For any activities not specifically covered in those rules, such as cutting down a chandelier to drop on enemies, the Director decides whether such an activity is a maneuver or an action.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS AND FREE TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Your hero might have one or more unique triggered actions, each of which has a specified trigger that allows the action to be used. You can use one triggered action per round, either on your turn or another creature's turn, but only when the action's trigger occurs. For instance, a fury hero can use the *Relentless Toss* triggered action to force move a target, but only after an enemy has first tried to force move the fury or one of their allies.

A free triggered action follows the same rules as a triggered action, but it doesn't count against your limit of one triggered action per round. For instance, a shadow hero can use their *Hesitation is Weakness* ability to take their turn in response to the trigger of another hero ending their turn. But because that ability is a free triggered action, the shadow can still use their *In All This Confusion* triggered action later in the round.

If multiple triggered actions occur in response to the same trigger, any heroes and other player-controlled creatures

taking a triggered action or a free triggered action decide among themselves which of those triggered actions are resolved first. Then the Director decides the same for creatures they control.

Any effect that prevents you from making triggered actions also prevents you from making free triggered actions.

FREE MANEUVERS

Boring stuff like opening an unlocked door, picking up an arrow from the ground, giving an object to an adjacent ally, or drawing a weapon doesn't require a maneuver or an action. Rather, you can undertake such straightforward activities as free maneuvers on your turn. A free maneuver follows the same rules as a regular maneuver, but you can typically take as many free maneuvers as you like.

At the Director's discretion, circumstances could make something that is typically boring more impactful and exciting. For instance, if you need to pick a magic arrow up off the ground during a violent earthquake, what would otherwise be a free maneuver could require a maneuver or an action to accomplish.

Likewise, the nature of an activity might make it too complicated for a free maneuver. For example, picking up the body of an unconscious talent ally to carry them to safety can probably be done as a free maneuver. But if your Might is lacking and you need to pick up a tactician ally decked out in the Shining Armor kit, the Director might determine that you need to use a regular maneuver to hoist their armored form over your shoulders.

Any effect that prevents you from making maneuvers also prevents you from making free maneuvers.

NO-ACTION ACTIVITIES

Free maneuvers cover most of the simple activities you might want to undertake on your turn. When it isn't your turn, you can typically undertake even simpler activities requiring no action with the Director's approval. For instance, shouting out a warning to an ally or dropping an item so another creature can pick it up require no action.

The Director can limit what kinds of no-action activities you can attempt when it isn't your turn. For instance, shouting out a warning about an unseen foe to an ally on the ally's or the foe's turn requires no action. But the Director might stop you from giving that ally complex tactical advice, saying that doing so instead requires a free maneuver on your turn.

MOVEMENT

During combat, creatures can employ multiple mechanics that allow them to move around the battlefield. The most common of those mechanics is to use the Advance or Disengage move action on your turn, but abilities granted by your class, equipment, ancestry, title, or other options might allow you other ways to move.

Your hero starts with a speed based on their ancestry—usually 5. This represents the maximum number of squares you can move when you take the move action or when another effect allows you to move. Your speed can be increased by your kit and other game options.

All squares adjacent to your character cost 1 movement to move into. No, there is no Pythagorean theorem on the grid. It's a game, don't overthink it.

You can move freely through an allied creature's space. You can move through an enemy creature's space, but it counts as difficult terrain (see [Difficult Terrain](#)). You can't stop moving in any other creature's space, including making an strike or using an action or maneuver while in that space and then continuing your move.

CAN'T EXCEED SPEED

A single move or other effect can never allow a creature to move more squares than their speed, unless the effect specifically states otherwise. For example, a creature with a speed of 5 might have that speed reduced to 2 by the slowed condition. If an ally then targets them with an effect that allows them to move up to 3 squares, the creature can move only 2 squares because that's their current speed.

CAN'T CUT CORNERS

A creature can't move diagonally when doing so would allow them to cross the corner of a wall or other structure the fills the corner between your space and the space you are moving to. This rule applies only to moving by objects, not creatures.

SHIFTING

Shifting is a careful form of movement that allows your hero to move safely by dangerous foes. Certain abilities, features, and other rules allow you to shift a specific number of squares, sometimes up to your speed. Whenever you shift, creatures can't make opportunity attacks against you during your movement (see [Free Strikes](#)). You can't shift into difficult or damaging terrain.

MOVEMENT TYPES

Creatures in the game can use eight types of movement: walk, burrow, climb, swim, jump, crawl, fly, and teleport.

WALK

Walking is the most common movement type, whether it refers to ambulating on legs, slithering, or some other default method of movement. Unless specified otherwise, all creatures can move over solid horizontal ground without any problem.

BURROW

A creature with "burrow" in their speed entry can move through dirt vertically or horizontally, and either has the means to breathe while doing so or doesn't require air to live. Such creatures can't move through more solid ground, such as stone, unless their stat block says otherwise.

A creature who can't burrow can dig through soft, borrowable earth by spending 3 squares of movement for every 1 square they move.

CLIMB OR SWIM

If a creature's speed entry includes the word "climb," they can climb across vertical and horizontal surfaces at full speed. Likewise, if a creature has "swim" in their speed entry, they can swim in liquid at full speed.

Creatures without those types of movement can still climb or swim when a rule allows them to move, but each square of climbing or swimming costs 2 squares of movement. If a surface is difficult to climb (for instance, a sheer cliff or ice-covered wall) or a liquid is hard to swim through (a raging river or whirlpool), the Director can call for a Might test. On a failure, a creature can't climb or swim but wastes no movement in the attempt. The Director can also impose other consequences to failure, such as being caught in the spinning current of a whirlpool.

CLIMBING OTHER CREATURES

You can attempt to climb a creature whose size is greater than yours. If the creature is willing, you can climb them without any trouble. If the creature is unwilling, you make the following test:

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- **11 or lower:** You fail to climb the creature, and they can make a free strike against you.
- **12–16:** You fail to climb the creature.
- **17+:** You climb the creature.

While you climb or ride a creature, you gain an edge to melee abilities used against them. The creature can use a maneuver to attempt to knock you off. If you are knocked off a creature, you must make the following test:

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- **11 or lower:** You fall off the creature into an unoccupied adjacent space of your choice, taking falling damage and landing prone as usual (see [Falling](#) in [Adventuring](#)).
- **12–16:** You slide down the creature into an unoccupied adjacent space of your choice and don't land prone.
- **17+:** You continue to hold on to the creature.

If you are knocked prone while climbing or riding a creature, you fall and land prone in an adjacent space of your choice, taking damage as usual from the fall.

JUMP

When an effect allows you to move, you can long jump a number of squares up to your Might or Agility score (your choice; minimum 1 square) without a test as part of that movement. If you move at least 2 squares in a straight line immediately before your jump, you can long jump 1 additional square.

If you want to jump even farther than your initial jump allows, make a medium Might test. On a success, you jump 1 additional square, or 2 additional squares if you get a success with a reward.

The height of your jump is 1 square. If you move at least 2 squares in a straight line immediately before your jump, you can jump 1 square higher.

You can't jump farther or higher than the distance of the effect that allows you to move. You can't jump out of difficult or damaging terrain.

CRAWL

If you are prone (see [Conditions](#)), you can remain prone and crawl on the ground. Doing so costs you 1 additional square of movement for every square you crawl. If you intentionally want to crawl, you can fall prone as a free maneuver on your turn. While voluntarily prone, you can choose to stand as a free maneuver.

FLY

A creature who can fly can move through the air vertically or horizontally at full speed and stay still in midair. If a flying creature is knocked prone or has their speed reduced to 0, they fall (see [Falling](#)).

If a creature who can fly also has the Hover keyword in their speed, they remain in the air and don't fall even if they are knocked prone or their speed is reduced to 0.

TELEPORT

When you teleport, you move from one space to another space instantaneously. The following rules apply to teleporting:

- Teleporting doesn't provoke opportunity attacks.
- When you teleport, you bypass any obstacles between the space you leave and your destination space.
- The creature teleporting you must have line of effect from the space you leave and to your destination space.
- Your destination space can't be occupied by another creature or object.
- The effect that lets you teleport tells you how far you can teleport, which you can use even if it is greater than your speed.
- If your movement has the Teleport keyword, you can use the Advance move action to teleport a number of squares up to your speed, unmodified by conditions or effects.
- If you teleport while prone, you can be standing when you reach your destination space provided you are able to stand. If another creature teleports you, it is up to them if you remain prone or stand, provided you are able.
- If you teleport while affected by the grabbed or restrained conditions, those conditions end for you.
- When you teleport, you must leave the space when you start and enter a new one. You can't teleport and remain in the same space.

FALLING

When you fall 2 or more squares, you take 2 damage for each square you fall (to a maximum of 50 damage), then you land prone. When you fall, you reduce the effective height of the fall by a number of squares equal to your Agility score (minimum 0). Falling into liquid that is at least 1 square deep reduces the effective height of a fall by 4 squares.

Falling is not forced movement, but being force moved downward is considered falling (see [Forced Movement](#) in [Combat](#)). Movement from falling doesn't provoke opportunity attacks (see [Opportunity Attacks](#)).

FALLING ONTO ANOTHER CREATURE

If you land on another creature when you fall, that creature takes the same damage you do from the fall. You then land prone in the nearest unoccupied space of your choice. If your size is greater than the creature's Might score, the creature also falls prone.

FALLING FAR

When you first fall from a great height, you fall 100 squares in the first round. At the end of each subsequent round that you remain falling, you fall another 100 squares.

DIFFICULT TERRAIN

Areas of thick underbrush, rubble, spiderwebs, or other obstacles to movement create difficult terrain. It costs 1 additional square of movement to enter a square of difficult terrain.

DAMAGING TERRAIN

Areas of acid, fire, sharp rocks, lava, or any other terrain that causes damage to creatures who are in it is damaging terrain. The amount of damage caused by hazardous terrain is listed in the terrain's description or in the description of the effect that creates the terrain.

HIGH GROUND

When you use an ability against a creature or object while standing on ground and occupying a space that is fully above the space the target takes up, with the bottom of your space higher than the top of the target's space, you gain an edge on the power roll against that target. You can get this the benefit while climbing if your speed has the Climb keyword.

FORCED MOVEMENT

Some actions and maneuvers allow you to push, pull, or slide another creature a specific distance across the battlefield. Collectively, these types of movement are called forced movement:

Push X: You move the target up to X squares away from you in a straight line, without moving them vertically.

Pull X: You move the target up to X squares toward you in a straight line, without moving them vertically. Each square you move the creature must bring them closer to you.

Slide X: You move the target up to X squares in any direction, except for vertically.

When you force move a target, you can always move that target fewer squares than the number indicated. For example, when the conduit gets a tier 3 "push 3" result with their Call the Tunder Down ability, they can push targets any distance up to 3 squares, including choosing to not move certain targets at all.

Forced movement ignores difficult terrain and never provokes opportunity attacks. When you force move a target into damaging terrain or into terrain that produces

an effect, they are affected as if they had moved into it willingly.

VERTICAL

If a forced movement effect has the word "vertical" in front of it, then the forced movement can move a target up or down in addition to horizontally. For example, if a forced movement effect says "vertical push 5," then the creature targeted by the effect can be pushed up to 5 squares in any direction, as long as the forced movement is a straight line.

If a creature who can't fly is left in midair at the end of a vertical forced move, they fall.

Though you can't push, pull, or slide a creature unless that forced movement specifies "vertical," you can move them along a physical slope, such as a hill or staircase. For a creature to be force moved along a slope, each square of the slope can be no more than 1 square higher or lower than the previous square.

BIG VS LITTLE

When a larger creature force moves a smaller creature with a melee weapon ability, the force move distance is increased by 1. If a smaller creature force moves a larger creature with a melee weapon ability, the force move distance does not change.

SLAMMING INTO CREATURES

When you force move a creature into another creature, the movement ends and both creatures take 1 damage for each square remaining in the first creature's forced movement. You can also force move an object into a creature. The object's movement ends and the creature takes 1 damage for each square remaining in the object's forced movement.

It is possible to move a creature or object of a larger size into several creatures of a smaller size at the same time. When this happens, all creatures in the collision take damage once.

If a creature is killed by damage from an ability or effect that force moves them, the second creature still takes damage unless the Director deems otherwise.

You can force move another creature into yourself with a pull or a slide.

TRACKING OBJECT FORCED-MOVEMENT DAMAGE

At the Director's discretion, mundane objects that are force moved into creatures or other objects take damage as if they were creatures. Sturdy objects can take damage as follows:

- For each square a wood object occupies, it can take 3 damage before it is destroyed.
- For each square a stone object occupies, it can take 6 damage before it is destroyed.
- For each square a metal object occupies, it can take 9 damage before it is destroyed.

More fragile objects are destroyed after taking any damage.

SLAMMING INTO OBJECTS

When you force move a creature into a stationary object that is their size or larger and the object doesn't break (see below), the movement ends and the creature takes 2

damage plus 1 damage for each square remaining in their forced movement.

If you force move a creature downward into an object that doesn't break (including the ground), they also take falling damage.

HURLING THROUGH OBJECTS

When you move a creature into a mundane object, the object can break depending on how many squares of forced movement remain:

- It costs 1 remaining square of forced movement to destroy 1 square of glass. The creature moved takes 1 damage.
- It costs 3 remaining squares of forced movement to destroy 1 square of wood. The creature moved takes 3 damage.
- It costs 6 remaining squares of forced movement to destroy 1 square of stone. The creature moved takes 6 damage.
- It costs 9 remaining squares of forced movement to destroy 1 square of metal. The creature moved takes 9 damage.

If any forced movement remains after the object is destroyed, you can continue to move the creature who destroyed the object.

FORCED INTO A FALL

If you can't fly and are force moved across an open space that would cause you to fall, such as being pushed over the edge of a cliff, you continue moving the total distance you were moved first. If you are still in a position to fall when your move ends, you fall.

STABILITY

Each creature has a stability that allows them to resist forced movement. When a creature is forced moved, they can reduce the movement up to a number of squares equal to their stability. Heroes start with a stability of 0 that can be increased through kit and ancestry options.

MOVE ACTIONS

A move action allows you to move around the battlefield. Sometimes you'll already be exactly where you want to be and not need to use a move action on your turn. That's okay! The decision to not move is just as tactical as the decision to move.

ADVANCE

When you take the Advance move action, you can move a number of squares up to your speed. You can break up this movement granted with your maneuver and action however you wish.

DISENGAGE

When you take the Disengage move action, you can shift 1 square. Some class features, kits, or other rules let you shift more than 1 square when you take this move action, if they do, you can break up the movement granted by this

move action with your maneuver and action however you wish.

RIDE

You can only take the Ride move action while mounted on another creature (see [Mounted Combat](#)). When take the Ride move action, you cause your mount to move up to their speed, taking you with them. Alternatively, you can use this move action to have your mount use the Disengage move action as a free triggered action. A mount can only be ridden with this move action once per round.

MANEUVERS

A maneuver typically involves less focus and exertion than an action. It can be an opportunity to move other creatures, drink a potion, or undertake similar activities.

Sometimes you might not have anything you can do with your maneuver. That's totally fine! Often, the best thing to do on your turn is take an action and move on.

AID ATTACK

Choose an enemy adjacent to you. The next ability power roll an ally who makes against that creature before the start of your next turn has an edge.

CATCH BREATH

By using the Catch Breath ,amuver, you spend a Recovery and regain Stamina in an amount equal to your recovery value.

If you are dying (see [Dying and Death](#) in [Stamina](#)), you can't take the Catch Breath maneuver, but other creatures can help you spend recoveries.

ESCAPE GRAB

While you are grabbed by another creature (see [Grab](#) below), you can attempt to escape by making the following test (which can't have a skill applied). You take a bane on the roll if the creature's size is larger than yours.

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- **11 or lower:** You fail to escape the grab.
- **12–16:** You can escape the grab, but if you do, the creature grabbing you can make a melee free strike against you before you are no longer grabbed.
- **17+:** You are no longer grabbed.

GRAB

You attempt to grab a creature using the following ability:

GRAB

Keywords: Melee

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Melee 1

Target: 1 creature no more than 1 size larger than you

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **No effect**
- 12–16: **You can grab the target, but if you do, they can make a melee free strike against you right before they become grabbed by you.**
- 17+: **The target is grabbed by you.**

Effect: You gain an edge on the power roll if the creature's size is smaller than yours. You can grab only one creature at a time this way.

HIDE

Using the Hide maneuver, you attempt to hide from other creatures who aren't observing you while you have cover or concealment (see [Hide and Sneak](#)).

KNOCKBACK

You attempt to shove an adjacent creature using the following ability:

KNOCKBACK

Keywords: Melee, Weapon

Type: Maneuver

Distance: Melee 1

Target: 1 creature no more than 1 size larger than you

Power Roll + Might:

- 11 or lower: **Push 1**
- 12–16: **Push 2**
- 17+: **Push 3**

Effect: You gain an edge on the power roll if the creature's size is smaller than yours.

MAKE OR ASSIST A TEST

Many tests are maneuvers if made in combat. Searching a chest with a Reason test, picking a door's lock with an Agility test, or lifting a portcullis with a Might test would all be maneuvers. Assisting a test is also a maneuver in combat.

Complex or time-consuming tests might require an action if made in combat—or could take so long that they can't be made during combat at all. Other tests that take no time at all, such as a Reason test to recall lore about mummies, are usually free maneuvers in combat. The Director has the final say regarding which tests can be made as maneuvers.

SEARCH FOR HIDDEN CREATURES

You can use this maneuver to attempt to search for creatures hidden from you (see [Hide and Sneak](#)).

STAND UP

You can use this maneuver to stand up if you are prone, ending that condition. Alternatively, you can use this maneuver to make an adjacent prone creature stand up.

USE CONSUMABLE

Unless otherwise noted in a treasure's description, you can use a consumable treasure (see [Treasures](#)), such as a potion, with this maneuver. You can use this maneuver to administer a potion or other consumable that benefits the user to a willing, adjacent creature instead of yourself.

ACTIONS

When you take an action on your turn, you most often do so to use a unique ability defined on your character sheet (see [Abilities](#)). These abilities are the most unique, flavorful, and impactful things you can do with your action.

You can also use your action to catch your breath, help another creature regain Stamina, charge into battle, defend yourself, or make a free strike.

You can convert your action into a maneuver or move action.

CHARGE

When you take the Charge action, you move up to your speed in a straight line without shifting, and can then make a melee free strike (see [Free Strikes](#)) against a creature when you end your move. You can't move through difficult terrain as part of your movement with this action. You can't climb, fly, or swim as part of this action unless you have that type of movement as a keyword in your speed.

DEFEND

When you take the Defend action, all ability power rolls made against you have a double bane until the start of your next turn. You gain no benefit from this action while another creature is taunted by you (see [Conditions](#)).

FREE STRIKE

You can use this action to make a free strike (see [Free Strikes](#)). Most of the time, you'll want to use the more impactful actions found on your character sheet, just as the director will use the actions in a creature's stat block, but free strikes are always available for when all else fails. For instance, a fury who has no other options for ranged strikes might use the Ranged Weapon Free Strike ability with an improvised weapon when battling a flying creature.

HEAL

You use your action to employ medicine or inspiring words to make an adjacent creature feel better and stay in the fight. The creature can spend a Recovery to regain Stamina, or can make a saving throw against a "(save ends)" effect they are suffering.

FREE STRIKES

Every creature can use a **free strike** ability as an action on their turn, though doing so typically isn't the most effective choice. Most of the time, you'll use free strikes when the rules call for it. Specific rules let you use free strikes as part of an action that allows you to also do something else impactful, such as how the Charge action lets you move and use a melee free strike in one action (see [Charge](#) above).

Many rules and abilities allow heroes to make free strikes when it isn't their turn, such as the tactician's Overwatch ability. As well, all characters can make an opportunity attack free strike.

IN PLACE OF SIGNATURE OR HEROIC

Some abilities, like the tactician's Strike Now ability, allow one creature to target another and let them use a signature or heroic action. Unless otherwise stated, you can always use a free strike in place of the action granted.

OPPORTUNITY ATTACKS

Whenever a creature adjacent to you moves to a space that isn't adjacent to you without shifting, you can take advantage of their movement to quickly make a melee free strike against them as a free triggered action. This is called an opportunity attack.

If you have a bane or double bane on the power roll against the creature, you can't make the free strike.

STANDARD FREE STRIKES

Every hero has two standard free strike abilities available to them. Your class might give you additional free strike options, and your kit can improve the standard options (see [Kits](#)).

A melee weapon free strike is a melee strike made with an unarmed strike or an improvised weapon. A ranged weapon free strike is a ranged strike made with an improvised weapon. At the Director's discretion, the damage type of an improvised weapon can change based on the object used. For example, if you use a burning torch as an improvised weapon, it could deal fire damage.

MELEE WEAPON FREE STRIKE

Keywords: Charge, Melee, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Melee 1 **Target:** 1 creature or object

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- 11 or lower: **2 + M or A damage**
- 12-16: **5 + M or A damage**
- 17+: **7 + M or A damage**

RANGED WEAPON FREE STRIKE

Keywords: Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Type:** Action
Distance: Ranged 5 **Target:** 1 creature or object

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

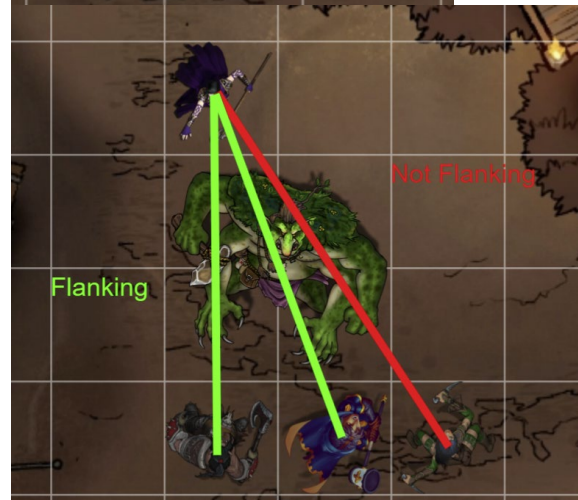
- 11 or lower: **2 + M or A damage**
- 12-16: **4 + M or A damage**
- 17+: **6 + M or A damage**

FLANKING

When you and at least one ally are adjacent to the same enemy and on completely opposite sides of the enemy, you are flanking that enemy. While flanking an enemy, you gain an edge on melee strikes against them.

If you're unsure whether your hero and an ally are flanking a foe, imagine a line extending from the center of your space to your ally's space. If that line passes through opposite sides or corners of the enemy's space, then you and your ally are flanking the enemy.

You must have line of effect to the enemy and be able to take triggered actions in order to gain or grant the flanking benefit.





COVER

When you have line of effect to a creature or object but that target has at least half their form blocked by a solid obstruction such as a tree, wall, or overturned table, the target has cover. You take a bane on abilities that deal damage against creatures or objects that have cover from you.

CONCEALMENT

Darkness, fog, invisibility magic, and any other effect that fully obscures a creature but doesn't protect their body grants that creature concealment. You can target a creature who has concealment with strikes, provided they aren't hidden (see [Hide and Sneak](#) in [Adventuring](#)). However, strikes against such creatures take a bane. Even if you have line of effect to a creature, they have concealment from you if you can't see them.

INVISIBLE CREATURES

Invisible creatures always have concealment from other creatures. If an invisible creature isn't hidden, they can still be targeted with abilities, though strikes against them take a bane. The test made to find a hidden creature who is invisible takes a bane.

DAMAGE

Whenever you take damage, you reduce your Stamina by an amount equal to the damage taken.

STRIKES AND DAMAGE

When you make a strike that deals damage with a power roll, you add the characteristic score used to modify the power roll to the damage dealt by the power roll. This bonus does not apply to Area abilities that deal damage.

DAMAGE TYPES

Typical damage, such as that caused by weapons, falling, traps, and monstrous claws, has no type associated with it. That's because for most creatures, there's no difference in the amount of harm caused by being run through with a pike, dropped from a height onto a stone floor, slashed by a pendulum scythe, or skewered on a minotaur's horns.

However, when it comes to elemental and magical damage sources, some creatures might have an immunity or weakness to that damage. As such, abilities and effects note when they deal any of the following damage types: acid, cold, corruption, fire, holy, lightning, poison, psychic, or sonic.

DAMAGE IMMUNITY

Damage immunity means that a creature can ignore some or all of the damage they would usually take from certain attacks or effects.

Damage immunity might have a damage type associated with it, expressed as "[damage type] immunity." Damage immunity often has a value associated with it, so that one creature's stat block notes "fire immunity 5," while another creature has "lightning immunity 5."

Whenever a target with damage immunity takes damage of the indicated type, they can reduce the damage by the value of the immunity (to a minimum of 0 damage). If the value of the immunity is "all," then the target can take no damage of the indicated type.

Certain creatures also have forced move damage immunity. Whenever they take damage from forced movement, that damage is reduced by a number equal to their immunity.

Damage immunity should be the last thing applied when calculating damage. For instance, if your hero has fire immunity 5 and takes 8 fire damage, you would take 3 damage. If a someone first halved the damage with a triggered action, you would take 4 damage from the attack before immunity is applied, with immunity then reducing the damage to 0.

If multiple damage immunities apply to a source of damage, only the immunity with the highest value applies.

DAMAGE WEAKNESS

Damage weakness works like damage immunity, except that creatures take extra damage whenever they take damage of the indicated type. For instance, if a creature has fire weakness 5 and is dealt 10 fire damage, they take 15 fire damage instead.

A creature who has "damage weakness X" with no specific type or keyword indicated has weakness of the indicated amount when they take damage of any type.

If you have both damage immunity and weakness applied to a source of damage, apply both. First apply weakness, then immunities.

STAMINA

Your hero's survivability is represented by your **Stamina**. Think of Stamina as a combination of a creature's physical

vitality and their overall energy for dodging and resisting incoming blows, spells, and other violence. It's not that every instance of damage deals a bleeding wound to you, but that each one chips away at your ability to fight effectively. An attack might make you sweat as you leap back to avoid an arrow, while another might just graze your elbow with a dagger nick, leaving a dull, distracting pain. Eventually, though, this draining of energy leaves you open for bigger blows that can truly harm your body—or possibly kill you.

After any damage you take is reduced by damage immunity or other effects, your Stamina is reduced by an amount equal to the remaining damage. Some effects can also reduce your Stamina maximum, limiting the amount of Stamina you can regain.

RECOVERIES AND RECOVERY VALUE

Each hero has a number of Recoveries determined by their class. A hero also has a recovery value that equals one-third of their Stamina, rounded down. When you use the Catch Breath maneuver (see [Maneuvers](#)), you spend a Recovery and regain Stamina equal to your recovery value. Outside of combat, you can spend as many Recoveries as you have remaining. Some abilities, items, and other effects allow you to spend a Recovery to regain Stamina equal to your recovery value plus a little extra (as described by the effect), or to regain Stamina without spending a Recovery.

WINDED

Your winded value equals half your Stamina maximum. When your Stamina is equal to or less than your winded value, you are winded. Although being winded has no effects on its own, certain ancestry, class, item, and title abilities affect winded creatures.

You can tell when other creatures are winded and vice versa.

DYING AND DEATH

When your Stamina is 0 or lower, you are dying. While dying, you can't take the Catch Breath maneuver in combat, and you are bleeding, and this condition can't be removed in any way until you are no longer dying. While you are dying, your allies can help you spend Recoveries in combat, and you can spend Recoveries out of combat as usual.

While your Stamina is lower than 0, if it reaches the negative of your winded value, you die. When you die, you can't be brought back to life without the use of a special powerful item such as a Scroll of Resurrection.

DIRECTOR-CONTROLLED CREATURES

Director-controlled creatures die when their Stamina drops to 0.

NO RECOVERIES

Director-controlled creatures don't have Recoveries or a recovery value. Any such creatures who regain Stamina during a battle do so via a special item or an ability in their stat block. However, there are times when a hero might

wish to use an ability that allows another creature to spend a Recovery or to regain Stamina equal to their recovery value on an injured NPC. In such cases, a Director-controlled creature regains Stamina equal to one-third their Stamina maximum.

KNOCKING CREATURES OUT

If you damage a creature with an ability that would kill them, you can choose to instead knock them unconscious. If a creature takes damage while unconscious in this way, they die.

Director-controlled creatures remain unconscious for 1 hour if no one does anything to end that condition. They then gain 1 Stamina and their unconsciousness ends.

Heroes remain unconscious for 1 hour if no one does anything to end that condition. After 1 hour, they can spend a Recovery and end their unconsciousness. If the hero has no Recoveries left, they can't wake up until they finish a respite.

UNCONSCIOUS

While you are unconscious, you can't take actions, maneuvers, triggered actions, free triggered actions, or free maneuvers; your speed is 0; you are unaware of your surroundings; and you are prone. Ability power rolls against you have a double edge. If you wake up from being unconscious, you can stand up from prone as a free maneuver.

TEMPORARY STAMINA

Some abilities, treasures, and other effects grant a creature temporary Stamina. Temporary Stamina shouldn't be included in a creature's Stamina total when figuring out a creature's recovery value or winded value. If you have temporary Stamina while winded, dying, or dead, the temporary Stamina doesn't change those states.

Whenever you take damage while you have temporary Stamina, the temporary Stamina decreases first, and any leftover damage is applied to your Stamina as usual. For instance, if you have 10 temporary Stamina and take 16 damage, you lose the temporary Stamina and then lose another 6 Stamina.

There is no maximum to how much temporary Stamina you can have. Regaining Stamina can't restore temporary Stamina. If you have temporary Stamina and then gain more temporary Stamina, you get whichever amount of temporary Stamina is greater, rather than adding the two pools together. For instance, if an ability grants you 10 temporary Stamina when you already have 5, you have 10 temporary Stamina, not 15.

Unless otherwise indicated, temporary Stamina disappears when you finish an encounter.

OBJECT STAMINA

Mundane objects in the game have Stamina based on the material they're made of. When an object's Stamina is reduced to 0, the object is destroyed. Objects have damage immunity all to poison and psychic damage. Objects made of common materials have stamina as follows:

- A size 1 object or 1 square of a larger object made of glass has 1 Stamina.
- A size 1 object or 1 square of a larger object made of wood has 3 Stamina.
- A size 1 object or 1 square of a larger object made of stone has 6 Stamina.
- A size 1 object or 1 square of a larger object made of metal has 9 Stamina.

The Director can decide that a well-made or poorly made object has more or less Stamina. Destroying a supernatural object often (but not always) requires a specific quest, such as throwing a magic ring back into the volcano where it was forged.

UNDERWATER COMBAT

If a creature is fully submerged in water, they have fire immunity 5 and lightning weakness 5. If their speed doesn't have the Swim keyword, all their power rolls take a bane.

SUFFOCATING

During combat or under similarly stressful conditions, you can hold your breath for a number of rounds equal to your Might score (minimum 1 round). At the end of each round after that, you take 1d6 damage while holding your breath.

Out of combat, you can hold your breath for a number of minutes equal to your Might score. Being unable to breathe after that time counts as a stressful condition, causing you to run out of air as above.

MOUNTED COMBAT

A willing allied creature with the Mount role (see [Creature Roles in Monsters](#)) can serve as your mount as long as their size is greater than yours. You can climb onto your mount freely (see [Climbing Other Creatures](#)). You determine which space you occupy. While mounted you can take the Ride move action, but a mount can only be ridden this way once per round.

If a creature riding a mount is force moved, they are knocked off the mount, and must make a test to determine how they land (see [Climbing Other Creatures](#)). If a mount is force moved, they carry any riders with them. Riders and mounts teleport separately.

If your mount dies, they fall prone and you fall off them and land prone in the closest unoccupied space of your choice.

END OF COMBAT

At the end of combat, the Director determines if the heroes each gain any Victories. Any effect or condition affecting you that you suffered during combat (except for being winded, unconscious, or dying) ends if you want it to.

HOW COMBAT ENDS

The Director determines when a combat encounter is over. While some battles—especially showdowns with important villains—can be about a fight to the bitter end,

many other encounters can become a tedious slog if the heroes need to fight until every last enemy's Stamina is reduced to 0.

To avoid a battle dragging, the Director can set objectives when they build the encounter. Once the heroes achieve those objectives, or if it becomes clear that they can win the fight with minimal effort, the Director can end the encounter. They might do so by calling "Cut!" like a film director, or can use some other phrase or indicator.

When the Director ends combat this way, the players typically choose how the battle ends by narrating a dramatic finish. Or in rarer cases when the heroes achieve a major objective that sets off a story-defining event, the Director narrates the end of the battle with a positive outcome for the players, called an event ending (see below).

FLEEING FOES

If you've played an RPG like this one before, odds are you've had an encounter where you didn't chase down every last fleeing foe—and then one such foe grabbed another bunch of evil buddies and came back to ambush you. It takes only one experience like this to create players who promise, "No survivors. No mercy!" whenever foes break ranks. Chasing down every last foe can be fun once in a while, but it can easily turn a tactical encounter into a slog.

Luckily, this is a heroic game. Although the Director can surprise the players with dramatic reveals and twisty-turny stories, "Gotcha!" moments that make players suspicious of every fleeing bandit shouldn't be part of those stories. If a bandit is fleeing an encounter, they're running away to rethink their life. If they're going for help, the players should get some sense of that—for example, the bandit screaming at the top of their lungs for help as they run toward their leader's tent. That way, the players can process what's happening, and will understand that stopping that fleeing bandit is part of the challenge of the encounter.

OBJECTIVE ENDINGS

While planning a combat encounter, the Director can set one or more objectives the heroes can achieve to end the encounter without dropping every last foe. Some broad categories of objectives are described in this section, but the Director should feel free to create their own. As well, Directors can always end combat anytime it becomes clear that the heroes are going to win an encounter with minimal effort, even if they haven't achieved all the objectives.

DIMINISH NUMBERS

Sometimes the heroes simply defeat enough of their enemies that the rest don't stand a chance. For example, the Director might decide that an encounter ends when the heroes have no nonminion enemies remaining, when the heroes outnumber their foes, or when the number of remaining enemies is half of what it was at the start of the encounter.

The Director can find more guidelines for ending the encounter for this objective in *Monsters*.

DEFEAT SPECIFIC FOE

A combat encounter might include one or more of the heroes' enemies commanding the rest, such as a hobgoblin captain leading a group of mercenaries, or one or more particularly powerful foes among a group of weaker ones, such as a pair of tusker demons in a gnoll war band. Because these enemies are the stars of the encounter, if only weak foes are left once the stars are gone, the battle loses its challenge and it's time to wrap it up. Under such circumstances, the Director can end the combat once those special creatures are defeated.

GET THE THING!

Classic heroic fantasy is full of important objects that the heroes must protect from the forces of evil: magic rings, royal birth certificates, dragon eggs, and the like. Heroes often find themselves at violent odds with their enemies as they race to collect a valuable or important item from a guarded temple or castle, or when they need to steal the item from a group of enemies already in possession of it. Objectives in this category work well when paired with other objectives. For instance, the heroes must steal a ledger containing a record of criminal activity from an overmind and her lackeys. However, even if they obtain the ledger, the battle won't be over until they also defeat the overmind, who won't let the book go without a fight!

DESTROY THE THING!

Combat doesn't always have to be about destroying your enemies. Sometimes it's about destroying their stuff! Burning a pirate captain's vessel, closing a portal to the Abyssal Wasteland before it lets in an army of demons, or shutting down a massive kobold trap made of spinning blades could so hamper the heroes' foes that the battle is no longer worth fighting once the damage is done.

SAVE ANOTHER

No one earns the mantle of hero without saving a few lives. Sometimes the point of an encounter isn't to kill, but to save as many folks as you can.

If the heroes rescue a powerful ally from the clutches of their foes during combat, the added strength of that ally might be enough to make the remainder of the encounter trivial. When you and your allies save a griffon from a crew of poachers, the hunters become the ... well, you know the rest.

ESCORT

Surprising as it may seem, sometimes the fate of the mission doesn't rest on the heroes' shoulders at all! Sometimes it rests on the shoulders of someone standing next to the heroes. The heroes' job is to keep this important person safe as they travel to a specific destination.

Sometimes the heroes are tasked with protecting a helpless or even an actively troublesome creature, such as a hapless noble or a wayward child. They might even have to protect a bulky or inconvenient inanimate object. Whatever the case, the enemies just keep coming until the heroes get their charge to their destination.

HOLD THEM OFF

Sometimes the heroes just need to buy time. They might need to battle a conquering tyrant's army to allow innocent villagers time to escape. They might need to hold off wave after wave of zombies while a group of priests completes a ritual to lay the undead to rest for good. To achieve this objective, the heroes need to stay alive and protect a particular position for a number of rounds determined by the Director.

ASSAULT THE DEFENSES

The enemy holds a strategically important position and the heroes want it. In a reverse of the Hold Them Off encounter, the heroes seize the enemy's defensive position. The encounter ends when the heroes secure this spot for themselves, even if there are more enemies outside of it. Those enemies likely know better than to assault that position on a whim, because they just held it!

STOP THE ACTION

Sometimes combat is complicated by the fact that the heroes need to stop the villainous actions of their foes. It's not enough to simply defeat the warriors in a cult. The heroes must also stop the zealots' archdevil-summoning ritual! Or it might be that the heroes need to interrupt a wedding and make sure an evil mage doesn't marry the heir to the throne. Despite combat, the mage forces the ceremony to continue! Objectives in this category often have a timer associated with them. If the heroes don't achieve the objective in a certain number of rounds, the conditions of the battle should change. For instance, if the cultists summon the archdevil, defeating the devil suddenly becomes the heroes' new objective!

COMPLETE THE ACTION

The opposite of "Stop the Action," this objective ending sees the characters charged with initiating an event, performing a ritual, and so forth. For instance, if the heroes are attempting to launch an airship while repelling a time raider boarding party, the encounter could be over the moment the heroes manage to activate the vessel and take off with just a few time raiders actually aboard.

DRAMATIC FINISH

If the heroes are able to end a fight with a dramatic finish, the Director assigns each hero one or more of their remaining enemies, then asks that hero's player to describe how the hero neutralizes that enemy. The hero might deliver a killing blow, knock their foe out, or let the enemy flee with their tail between their legs (literally or figuratively). If the fight has more heroes than Director-controlled enemies, the Director can assign more than one hero to an enemy, then ask the players how their characters work together to bring that enemy down. After everyone gives a description, the battle ends.

EVENT ENDING

If the Director calls the end of combat when a specific objective in an encounter is achieved, the event ending creates a big narrative finish. The Director can pick a narrative trigger for an event ending before an encounter

begins, or can come up with one on the fly if that makes more sense.

Event endings can cover big scenarios such as the characters destroying a dam to unleash a river upon their enemies, or completing a ritual that causes all the demons they've been battling to be sent back to the Abyssal Wasteland, accompanied by visual details. For example, if the heroes are battling a necromancer who controls a horde of zombies, the undead might all crumble to dust when the necromancer is defeated. If the heroes destroy an eldritch machine sapping the land of its natural energy, the shockwave from the device's destruction could vaporize the cultists attempting to protect it.

NEGOTIATION

Negotiation gives the heroes a chance to get what they want without combat ... or at least without further combat! You might negotiate with a king to obtain military support against an incursion of demons in a neighboring country. You could enter into talks with a bandit leader to convince her to stop attacking merchant caravans on the road, and instead target nobles loyal to a tyrant. You might attempt to convince an archmage to allow you access to their secret library so you can research the location of a dragon-slaying axe. Negotiation covers all these scenarios and more.

Think of negotiation as something like learning a new system for combat, exploration, or investigation in an RPG. This set of rules provides a framework for roleplaying. The negotiation rules are meant to be read by players and Directors, so that both understand the rules of negotiation. If a player hasn't read these rules, the Director and other players who have can explain them to that player during their first negotiation.

Negotiation is a framework for important roleplaying encounters when the heroes want to convince an NPC to take a particular course of action, such as lending the heroes an artifact or pardoning a prisoner. This framework tracks the NPC's interest in the hero's arguments and their patience, so that the Director know what the NPC is willing to offer and when it's time to end the scene. This framework shouldn't replace roleplaying (though it certainly can if your group doesn't enjoy that part of RPGs). It's here to help players and Directors understand the structure of a give and take conversation and give some rules that can make a high-stakes conversation even more dramatic!

WHEN TO NEGOTIATE

In order for a negotiation to occur, an NPC must have an interest in negotiating with the heroes—but must also have a reason to not simply jump on board with whatever the heroes propose. Negotiations happen only when an NPC has that internal tension between interest and reluctance. For example, if the characters ask a king to send his army into a neighboring kingdom to battle a demon incursion, the king needs to be conflicted. He wants to stop the incursion, but he doesn't want to risk the lives of his soldiers defending a foreign nation while leaving their own people unprotected. If the heroes want the help of the king's army, they need to negotiate.

Heroes aren't expected to use the negotiation rules every time one character tries to convince an NPC to see things their way. For instance, if a hero wants information about a cult leader from a captured cultist, a single Presence test using the Lie skill or a Might test using Intimidate is likely all that's needed. A character who wants to flirt with the local alchemist to obtain a free Healing Potion likely just needs to make a Presence test using the Flirt skill.

By contrast, negotiations typically involve all the heroes interacting with one or more important named NPCs who can provide information, items, or services that dramatically change the course of an adventure. Often, this involves the heroes seeking an item of great power, a

retainer or companion, the services of an influential organization or nation, or a plot-twist-worthy piece of information. Convincing a lich to lend the party the legendary *Codex Mortis*, trying to convince a dragon to halt an attack on a wizard's tower, or talking the leaders of an enemy army into standing down means that a negotiation is in order.

To negotiate successfully, the heroes must make persuasive arguments to convince NPCs to do what they want. "Do it or we kill you" is a threat that might well accompany a single Might test using the Intimidate skill, but it's not a negotiating tactic.

LIMITS OF NEGOTIATION

Some players might instinctively feel that the negotiation rules should give them something akin to mind-control superpowers. They're not used to imagining NPCs complexly, and might attempt to negotiate in situations where negotiation is either completely unreasonable or literally impossible. No matter how persuasive or well-spoken a hero is, there's no argument to be made that might convince the vile Lord Syuul to give up his pursuit of evil and become a gardener. A negotiation typically can't convince a queen to hand over her crown to the heroes and name them the new rulers of the land, or inspire a dragon to fork over every piece of treasure in their hoard. Negotiations only work when the heroes ask for something from an NPC that the NPC is willing to seriously consider giving them.

Negotiation is not a process that changes an NPC's character. Rather, the heroes are trying to make an NPC understand how behaving differently would be *in* character. You might well be able to get the hitherto loyal lieutenant of an evil boss to reconsider the error of their ways. That's a classic dramatic trope. But even then, you're not changing their character—you're convincing them that their current evil ways are out of character. "Is this who you are? Is this how you want to be remembered?!"

If some players want to use the negotiation system as a means to an end by having their characters say, "Just do what we tell you, or else!", you can remind them that that's not how most people, including NPCs, work. Any heroes who open with that attitude are likely to lose the negotiation before it begins.

THE THREAT OF VIOLENCE

In the real world, negotiations rarely come with a threat of immediate violence. Ambassadors don't usually get into fistfights. But this is a heroic fantasy RPG, featuring heroes who are armed to the teeth and able to alter reality with their minds. The threat of violence is already implied. Everyone involved knows that the characters could draw steel at any moment.

The Director typically assumes that the underlying potential for events to turn violent is already factored into every negotiation. However, if the heroes decide to bring that threat to the forefront, then they've exited the realm of negotiation and have entered into a different type of relationship—and it's probably time to determine initiative.

Negotiation is about persuading someone to help you willingly because you've convinced them that meeting your objectives is a good idea. Working with you is wise or logical, or might make them look good. A hero can absolutely threaten someone with violence and force them to do what they want, but this is an incredibly temporary state. A threatened NPC isn't willingly doing what they've been asked. They're doing it on threat of violence, and will comply only while that threat is evident—after which, they'll likely go back to their previous behavior as soon as they think they can get away with it.

NEWNEGOTIATION

If you've never played a game with a dedicated negotiation system like this, you might need to run it once or twice before you master it, similar to learning any new subsystem in an RPG.

NEGOTIATION STATS

During negotiation, the Director assigns NPCs four temporary statistics—interest, patience, motivations, and pitfalls. The heroes can strike a favorable deal if they maximize an NPC's interest by making arguments that invoke the NPC's motivations and avoid their pitfalls—but they have to do all that before the NPC's patience wears out.

INTEREST

An NPC's interest represents how eager they are to make a deal with the heroes. Interest is graded on a scale of 0 (no interest) to 5 (the most possible interest). When a negotiation begins, an NPC's interest is between 1 and 4. If the NPC's interest goes to 5, they make a final offer and the negotiation ends (see [Keep Going or Stop](#), below). If the NPC's interest drops to 0, they end a negotiation without offering the heroes any deal.

Interest increases and decreases during the negotiation based on the arguments the heroes make.

PATIENCE

An NPC's patience represents how much time and effort they're willing to devote to a negotiation. Patience is graded on a scale of 0 to 5, with each NPC starting a negotiation with their patience higher than 0. If an NPC's patience reaches 0, the NPC makes a final offer and negotiation ends (see [Keep Going or Stop](#)).

Patience can decrease each time the heroes make an argument during a negotiation.

LANGUAGE AND PATIENCE

If at least one hero negotiating with an NPC speaks the NPC's native language (not including Caelian), then the NPC's patience increases by 1 at the start of the negotiation (to a maximum of 5). If three or more heroes negotiating with an NPC speak the NPC's native language, the NPC's patience increases by 2 (to a maximum of 5).

MOTIVATIONS

Each NPC has at least two motivations the heroes can appeal to with their arguments. Arguments that appeal to an NPC's motivation require an easier power roll to

increase the NPC's interest. Arguments that don't appeal to a motivation require a more difficult power roll. See [Making Arguments](#) for more information.

Each motivation can be successfully appealed to only once during a negotiation. To successfully appeal to a motivation, the heroes must use the motivation in an argument without mentioning one of the NPC's pitfalls or being caught in a lie.

PITFALLS

Pitfalls are motivations that spark ire, discomfort, shame, fear, or some other negative response in an NPC. Using a pitfall in an argument causes an NPC's interest and patience to wane. Each NPC has at least one pitfall, and many have two or more.

Pitfalls and motivations are two sides of the same concept. They're presented below as a single list, so that what might be a motivation for one NPC is a pitfall for another. Whenever the heroes make an argument, they risk stumbling into one of an NPC's pitfalls unless they do their research beforehand or read the NPC well.

LIST OF MOTIVATIONS AND PITFALLS

An NPC can have any of the following twelve motivations or pitfalls.

BENEVOLENCE

An NPC with the benevolence motivation believes in sharing what they have with others. However, an NPC involved in a negotiation must be limited in their benevolence, so that they don't just give the heroes what they need.

Sometimes an NPC's benevolence might extend only to a specific group of people, so that a benevolent pirate captain might share their plunder freely with the rest of their crew—but they're still plundering! Other times, an NPC's charity might be limited by the fact that they don't have much to give. A benevolent NPC might be hesitant to give the heroes help because they believe their limited resources are more necessary or could do more good somewhere else.

An NPC with the benevolence pitfall has a cynical view of the world, believing that no creature has a right to anything just by being alive. The idea of helping others because it's the right thing to do is a preposterous, immature, or inexperienced idea to be laughed off or snuffed out.

Arguments that appeal to a benevolence motivation contend that if the NPC strikes a deal with the heroes, the people the NPC cares about will benefit from the deal. Example arguments include the following:

- "If you lend us the Sword of Agathor, we can make Capital safer for your guild by using it to lay your enemies low."
- "If you can teleport us into the dragon's cave, we'll give you half the wyrm's hoard once we cut off the creature's head. That could benefit generations of students at your academy!"

DISCOVERY

An NPC with the discovery motivation wants to learn new lore, explore forgotten places, break ground with new experiments, or uncover artifacts lost to time. Their curiosity and quest for knowledge might be driven by a specific goal, such as seeking the cure for a rare disease or a portal to a specific far-off world. Or it could be that they are a naturally inquisitive person who just wants to understand all they can about the timescape.

An NPC with the discovery pitfall has no interest in finding new places, peoples, or ideas. It might be that the unknown scares them or makes them so uncomfortable that they'd rather remain ignorant. Alternatively, a previous pursuit of discovery might have turned out poorly for them.

Arguments that appeal to a discovery motivation contend that striking a deal with the heroes will allow the NPC to gain new knowledge or acquire unique property. Example arguments include the following:

- "Allow us to use your cipher to translate the only copy of the *Codex Mortis*, and then we'll let you read the book when we're done."
- "We know the journey to Decant Isle is dangerous, but we're going into uncharted territory. We thought that your crew of sailors might want to be among the few mortals to lay eyes on the place."

FREEDOM

An NPC with the freedom motivation wants no authority above them and desires no authority over others. They might already have personal freedom and wish to maintain that status quo, or they might wish to liberate themselves or others from someone else's authority.

An NPC with the freedom pitfall believes that a world without authority is one in turmoil and chaos. They might even believe that they are the right person to rule, and that their ideals should be the ones that become the law of the land.

Arguments that appeal to a freedom motivation contend that helping the heroes will maintain or grant freedom to the NPC or other people. Example arguments include the following:

- "I know you want to see the queen's authority revoked forever. She has no heirs. Give us the key to her study so that we can prove her corruption and give you a chance to topple the monarchy henceforth."
- "If you promise to give us ten vials of Assassin's Kiss, we'll see to it that the baron's prison is emptied."

GREED

An NPC with the greed motivation desires wealth and resources above almost anything else. Sometimes these NPCs are misers, much like wyrms who hoard coins and gems but never spend or donate them. Others flaunt their wealth, viewing it as a sign of their station in life.

Greed-driven NPCs might share their wealth with a select group of people they love, such as a noble lord who indulges his children's every desire. Some NPCs might be greedy for resources other than money, such as a demon

who wants to collect and devour souls, or a troll lord who hungers endlessly for the flesh of others.

An NPC with the greed pitfall has no interest in accumulating wealth or other resources, and becomes offended if anyone tries to buy their participation. They hold their ideals above material desires.

Arguments that appeal to a greed motivation contend that helping the heroes will increase the NPC's wealth or assets. Example arguments include the following:

- "You should help us battle the overmind. Xorranox's wealth is legendary, and we'll see to it that you get your fair share."
- "Give us a week to do research among your private collection of books, and we'll give you another ten unique tomes we found in an ancient star elf sanctuary."

HIGHER AUTHORITY

An NPC with the higher authority motivation remains staunchly loyal to a person or force they perceive as more important than themselves. This higher authority could be an organization, a deity or being of great power, a formal leader such as a noble or monarch, a mystical presence or force the NPC might not fully understand, or a person the NPC sees as an informal authority figure (an older sibling, a personal hero, and so forth).

An NPC with the higher authority pitfall scoffs at the idea of serving another. The NPC might not believe that all people should be free, but they certainly believe that they personally shouldn't have to answer to anyone.

Arguments that appeal to a higher authority motivation contend that it's in the interest of the higher authority for the NPC to strike a deal with the heroes. A hero might even tell the NPC that if the higher authority were in the NPC's position, they would take the deal. Example arguments include the following:

- "All great creations honor your god, Malus. If you teach me to forge the Hammer of Azdul, that will be a great honor to bestow upon your god."
- "You know what Jarith the Bold would do? He'd guide us through the vast wasteland of the desert to reach the tower. Will you be our Jarith?"

JUSTICE

An NPC with the justice motivation wants to see the righteous rewarded and the wicked punished, however subjective their sense of who or what is good and evil. A priest who venerates a god of nature might believe that all who protect plants and animals are righteous, and that who harvest natural resources as miners and lumberjacks do must die. Having a justice motivation doesn't necessarily make an NPC a kind or charitable person.

An NPC with the justice pitfall doesn't believe that the timescape is an inherently just place, and has no interest in making it one. The world is eternal conflict, there is no such thing as justice, and anyone who thinks otherwise is a naive fool.

Arguments that appeal to a justice motivation position the heroes on the good side of an NPC's sense of right and wrong. Example arguments include the following:

- “You despise those who steal from nature. Allow us peacefully into your wode so we may bottle the Blessed Spring’s water. We’re going to use it to stop an army from felling every tree and tearing up the earth wherever they go.”
- “You think nobles are lazy barons who get rich off the backs of peasants. We want to dethrone Lord Saxton. Lend us your crew of thieves, and we’ll see to it that when Saxton falls, the people can choose their own leaders.”

LEGACY

An NPC with the legacy motivation desires fame while alive and acclaim that lasts long after their death. They hope others will know and remember their deeds, great or terrible. Some of these NPCs might even seek immortality through deification or undeath, so that the eventual shedding of their mortal coil doesn’t prevent them from continuing to make history.

An NPC with a legacy pitfall cares nothing about leaving a personal mark on the world. To them, such vain thinking is nothing but a waste of time.

Arguments that appeal to a legacy motivation contend that striking a deal with the heroes increases the likelihood that people will talk about the NPC for centuries to come. Example arguments include the following:

- “If you give us the vizier’s itinerary, I’ll compose a song about your bravery in defying him, then sing it in every tavern from here to Ix!”
- “Yes, losing the battle is a possibility. If we do, the gnolls will still come for you eventually. But if we crush our foes, imagine the honors, the histories, the poems, the statues—all of it created for you because your siege engines turned the tide.”

PEACE

An NPC with the peace motivation wants calm in their life. Under typical circumstances, they want to be left alone to run their business, farm, kingdom, criminal empire, or whatever small slice of the timescape is theirs. Some such NPCs don’t have peace and need help obtaining it, while others want their peaceful status quo to be maintained.

An NPC with the peace pitfall hates being bored. They want excitement, drama, and danger in their life. For them, there’s nothing worse than the status quo.

Arguments that appeal to a peace motivation contend that helping the heroes will earn the NPC some peace, at least for a little while. Example arguments include the following:

- “You have a good thing going here. A little burgling of nobles, some alcohol smuggling, and some illegal gambling dens. No one’s getting hurt, but Constable Cofax is closing in on you. We could redirect him toward some real danger to the community, if you can help us set a trap for the Watchmaker.”
- “I know you don’t sell to outsiders, but we need that helm. I’m going to use it to turn back a group of hobgoblins marching this way. They’re not going to be as friendly as us.”

POWER

An NPC with the power motivation covets the authority of others. They want to increase their influence, no matter how great it already is, and maintain their domain. They might seek power through conquering others, the collection of artifacts, or through the infusion of supernatural rituals—though why choose one method when all three together achieve the best results? Some such NPCs are world-traversing tyrants, but the petty administrators of village organizations and shrines can covet power just as hungrily.

An NPC with the power pitfall has no interest in authority for themselves. They might respect the authority of others, but they hate the thought of ruling over other people and roundly reject any suggestion of the idea.

Arguments that appeal to a power motivation contend that working with the heroes will increase or protect the NPC’s power. Example arguments include the following:

- “Everyone knows you should be running the watch, Percy. The old lady’s retiring, and our friend Baron Kuglar is naming the replacement. Now, you let us into the restricted armory, and we’ll put in a good word.”
- “We know he’s your brother, Your Highness, but he’s older—first in line for the throne. If you help us prove he’s in a cult, you become the favorite son.”

NPCs CHANGE OVER TIME

Just like the heroes, NPCs in negotiations are complex individuals who can change over time. It’s possible that the heroes might have to negotiate with the same NPC for several different favors during the course of a campaign, over which time the NPC’s motivations and pitfalls might change. If the heroes turn a bandit captain with the greed and power motivations into a temporary ally, that criminal might learn from them, changing their ways to rob only those who exploit the poor and giving those earnings to people in need. The next time the heroes negotiate with the bandit captain, they have the benevolence and protection motivations.

PROTECTION

An NPC with the protection motivation has land, people, information, items, or an organization they want protected above all else. Keeping their charge safe is a duty they hold dear, and aiding in that protection earns their favor. Most people have friends or family they wish to protect, but an NPC with the protection motivation believes in doing so above all else.

An NPC with the protection pitfall is happy to leave others to fend for themselves. They don’t believe that it’s their responsibility to protect anyone other than themselves, and might be outright disgusted at the thought of risking themselves or their property to protect others.

Arguments that appeal to a protection motivation contend that helping the heroes allows an NPC to better protect their charge. Example arguments include the following:

- “Dead soldiers grow the necromancer’s ranks. Total annihilation is the only way to defeat her. March with us now, while her army is small, and we’ll defeat her. Or you could gamble that someone else tries, fails, and suddenly she’s at the border, ready to overrun your

kingdom with an army tenfold larger than what it is now.”

- “I see your grandchild is hell-bent on joining the service. I happen to have a magic suit of armor that could help them ward off the blows of monsters and ruffians. I’d be happy to give it to you, in exchange for borrowing your griffons for a few days. After all, I won’t need the armor if I can simply fly over the marsh’s monsters.”

REVELRY

An NPC with the revelry motivation just wants to have fun. They enjoy socializing at parties, thrill-seeking, or indulging in other hedonistic activities. Getting pleasure out of life while spending time with people they like is paramount to such NPCs.

An NPC with the revelry pitfall sees social encounters and hedonism as a waste of time. They take pleasure only in work or in building their own skills and character. Others who suggest immature debauchery are not worth their time.

Arguments that appeal to the revelry motivation contend that striking a deal with the heroes will allow the NPC to get back to reveling sooner, longer, or harder. Example arguments include the following:

- “How would you like to have the most exclusive songs for your exclusive birthday celebration next week? I’ll write you a whole original set list, free of charge ... provided you extend me and my band here an invitation.”
- “I know you don’t want to forge five Chronokinesis Crowns. How’s this instead? You do that for me, and I’ll give you the fourteen kegs of whiskey we found in a steel-dwarf ruin. This stuff is old, unique, and forget-your-first-name potent. You can crack a keg with your friends to celebrate a job well done.”

VENGEANCE

An NPC with the vengeance motivation wants to harm another who has hurt them. Their desire for revenge could be proportional to the harm that was inflicted upon them, or they might wish to pay back their pain with interest. In some cases, a desire for vengeance can be satisfied only by the death of another, but an NPC might wish to pay back their own suffering with embarrassment, career failure, or some other less permanent pain.

An NPC with the vengeance pitfall believes that revenge solves nothing. They might have gained this belief first hand, or they might simply not have the ambition to seek revenge—and they take a dim view of others who do.

Arguments that appeal to the vengeance motivation contend that the NPC can gain payback for their pain by helping the heroes. Example arguments include the following:

- “The servants of Ajax killed your sister as she scoured the city for his cults. The Black Iron Pact works for the Overlord. Give us her diaries, and we might uncover the pact’s hideaway and deal a great blow to your hated foes.”
- “That prankster Huckable made your trousers tear at the last council meeting. Don’t you want to pay him

back? We can arrange a delicious prank at the next gathering, but we need you to guarantee the safety of the orc refugees.”

OPENING A NEGOTIATION

A negotiation begins when the heroes ask something of an NPC and the Director deems that the circumstances require a negotiation. Those circumstances always involve the heroes requiring assistance that could change the course of the adventure, and having the NPC conflicted about working with them. Unlike combat, which can be thrust upon the heroes by violent allies, the heroes must be the ones to willingly start a negotiation. They must want something from the NPC, otherwise they have no reason to negotiate!

The Director can decide that an NPC who has something the players want could show up at their door and ask if the heroes want to negotiate, but it’s always okay for the characters to say, “Not interested,” and refuse to negotiate.

STOP COMBAT, START NEGOTIATION

If a hero wants to halt hostilities to negotiate with the other side, they can use a maneuver to make a hard Presence test (or another applicable test, as the Director determines) in an attempt to stop combat and start a negotiation. The test has a chance of success only if the Director believes the other side is willing and capable of negotiating. A foe who has the upper hand, who hates the heroes beyond measure, or who lacks sapience is unlikely to negotiate.

STARTING STATS

An NPC’s starting negotiation stats depend on their attitude toward the heroes, as shown on the Negotiation Starting Attitudes table, and can be adjusted by the Director as they see fit. A naturally irascible NPC might have lower patience, while a hostile NPC with a greater-than-expected stake in the negotiation topic might have a higher-than-typical interest.

NEGOTIATION STARTING ATTITUDES

Attitude	Description	Interest	Patience
Hostile	Openly opposed to the heroes. Barely willing to listen.	1	2
Suspicious	Doubts the heroes’ motives, but is willing to listen.	2	2
Neutral	Doesn’t feel one way or the other. Would probably rather be somewhere else, but doesn’t want to be rude.	2	3
Open	Willing to listen, willing to help, as long as the heroes aren’t asking too much.	3	3
Friendly	The heroes seem like the NPC’s people. The NPC is willing to give them the benefit of the	3	4

	doubt.		
Trusting	The NPC has reason to take the heroes at their word, and will help if the characters don't screw this up.	3	5

UNCOVERING MOTIVATIONS

If a hero wishes to figure out an NPC's motivations, they can begin by simply asking, "What do you want out of this deal?" In response, the NPC can willingly hint at or reveal one of their motivations, usually by asking for something. For instance, a monarch NPC with the greed motivation and a penchant for collecting rare animals might suggest that the heroes retrieving a griffon egg would earn the monarch's gratitude. The Director can also decide that during the natural course of the negotiation, the NPC might offer up similar suggestions without the heroes asking, provided the NPC already has an interest of at least 3.

If an NPC isn't as forthcoming, or if the heroes want to learn one of the NPC's pitfalls, a hero can make a Reason, Intuition, or Presence test while interacting with the NPC during the negotiation, based on the tactics used to draw out the NPC. The test has the following outcomes:

Power Roll + Reason, Intuition, or Presence:

- **11 or lower:** The hero learns no information regarding the NPC's motivations or pitfalls, and the NPC realizes the hero is trying to read them and becomes annoyed. As a consequence, the NPC's patience is reduced by 1.
- **12–16:** The hero learns no information regarding the NPC's motivations or pitfalls.
- **17+:** The hero learns one of the NPC's motivations or pitfalls (their choice).

After this test is made, the heroes can't make another test to determine the same NPC's motivations or pitfalls until they make an argument to the NPC or the negotiation ends.

OUTSIDE OF NEGOTIATION

While the heroes can discover an NPC's motivations or pitfalls through tests made during negotiation, they can employ other methods of investigating motivations or pitfalls before negotiation. Research or a little reconnaissance (for instance, reading the NPC's diary or talking to their closest friends), can reveal quite a bit about a person!

MAKING ARGUMENTS

As part of their initial request to an NPC in a negotiation, a hero makes an argument as to why the NPC should give the heroes what they want. The hero might offer to do something in exchange as part of their argument, such as clear bandits from a forest, hand over a piece of treasure, or slay a dragon for the NPC. Or instead of offering something, the hero could attempt to convince the NPC that it's in their own best interest to help—or even that it's a moral imperative. For example, a hero could appeal to a knight's sense of duty, the potential wealth a mercenary could make, or the final wish of a queen's dearly departed grandmother as part of an argument. NPCs who admire

the heroes are more likely to respond to compliments and buttering up, while those who fear the heroes are more likely to respond to intimidation and awe.

Arguments need a justification as to why they're true.

"Helping us defeat Lord Saxton is good for you in the long run," is half of an argument, so that the hero also needs to explain why this is the case. "Helping us defeat Lord Saxton is good for you in the long run, because we know he's coming for your kingdom after Bedegar falls!" If a hero makes half an argument, the NPC might follow up with questions such as, "Why do you say that?" or "What makes you think that's true?" to get the full argument from the hero.

One hero makes an argument to an NPC, but the players can discuss the details of the argument out of character beforehand. It's up to the group to decide how much discussion to have before making an argument, and to decide what argument the players think will best sway the NPC.

This is a good topic for discussion before a group actually gets into a negotiation, so everyone knows the other players' thoughts. Some groups have the most fun without any around-the-table discussion, while others prefer being able to strategize as often as possible.

APPEAL TO MOTIVATION

If an argument doesn't include a pitfall and appeals to one of the NPC's motivations that hasn't already been appealed to, the hero making the argument can make an easy test to attempt to sway the NPC with the argument. Depending on the argument, this can be a Reason, Intuition, or Presence test using any applicable skill—most commonly a skill from the interpersonal skill group. The test has the following outcomes.

Power Roll + Reason, Intuition, or Presence:

- **11 or lower:** The NPC's patience decreases by 1.
- **12–16:** The NPC's interest increases by 1, and their patience decreases by 1.
- **17+:** The NPC's interest increases by 1, and their patience doesn't change.

At the Director's discretion, a particularly well-roleplayed or well-reasoned argument automatically counts as a tier 3 result without a test. Good roleplaying should be rewarded!

If the heroes attempt to appeal to a motivation that's already been appealed to, the NPC's interest remains the same and their patience decreases by 1.

APPEALING TO MULTIPLE MOTIVATIONS

If a hero makes an argument that appears to appeal to multiple motivations, the Director can always ask for clarification, listing the motivations it seemed like the player was trying to appeal to and allowing the player to pick one from the list. If the player had another motivation in mind, it's up to the Director if the argument appealed to that specific motivation or not.

NO MOTIVATION OR PITFALL

If an argument doesn't include one of the NPC's motivations or pitfalls, the hero who makes the argument

must make a more difficult test to appeal to the NPC. The test has the following outcomes.

Power Roll + Reason, Intuition, or Presence:

- **11 or lower:** The NPC's patience decreases by 1, and their interest decreases by 1.
- **12–16:** The NPC's patience decreases by 1.
- **17+:** The NPC's interest increases by 1, and their patience decreases by 1. (On a natural 19 or 20, the NPC's patience remains the same.)

If the heroes try to use the same argument without a pitfall or motivation twice, the test automatically gets a tier 1 result.

EVERYONE CAN PARTICIPATE

Since Reason and Intuition with creatively applied skills can be used to make arguments, all heroes can actively participate in the process of negotiation. The hero with the highest Presence who has the Persuade skill doesn't automatically have to be the one who makes all the tests.

CAUGHT IN A LIE

If a hero lies to an NPC with an argument that fails to increase the NPC's interest, the Director can decide that the NPC catches the lie and is offended by it. The NPC's interest decreases by 1, in addition to any decrease imposed by the failure.

PITFALL USED

If an argument uses one of the NPC's pitfalls, it automatically fails and the NPC's interest and patience each decrease by 1. The NPC might also warn the heroes not to treat them in such a way again.

RENOWN AND NEGOTIATION

During a negotiation, an NPC has an **Impression score** that determines the amount of Renown needed to influence them (see [Renown](#)). This score only matters if the NPC knows of the heroes. A dragon who slumbered away the last hundred years and was just woken up to negotiate can't be influenced by a hero's Renown. (By the way, it's a terrible idea to wake a dragon, even if they do know you're famous.) If the NPC does know of the hero and has an Impression that is equal to or lower than the hero's Renown, the NPC can be influenced by that hero.

The higher an NPC's Impression, the harder they are to influence with Renown. A small-time brigand has a lower Impression score than a monarch who meets with powerful and famous people all the time. The NPCs and Impression table provides examples of different archetypical NPC Impression scores. If a creature has a level, then their Impression equals their level unless the Director deems otherwise.

NPCs and Impression

Impression	Example NPC
1	Brigand leader, commoner, shop owner
2	Knight, local guildmaster, professor
3	Cult leader, locally known mage, noble lord
4	Assassin, baron, locally famous entertainer
5	Watch captain in a large city, high priest, viscount

6	Count, warlord
7	Marquis, world-renowned entertainer
8	Duke, spymaster
9	Archmage, prince
10	Demon lord, monarch
11	Archdevil, archfey, demigod
12	Deity, titan

FAME OR INFAMY?

If a hero has enough Renown to influence an NPC during negotiation, the Director decides if they are famous or infamous to the NPC. If the NPC appreciates a character's deeds and views them as a hero who makes the world a better place, that hero is famous to them. If the NPC believes the hero's accomplishments make the world worse and views them as an enemy, the hero is infamous to the NPC.

INFLUENCING TESTS

If a hero is famous to an NPC, they gain an edge on tests when making arguments to which the Flirt, Lead, or Persuade skill could be applied. If they are infamous to the NPC, they gain an edge on tests when making arguments to which the Brag, Interrogate, or Intimidate skill could be applied. A hero gains this edge even if they don't have the appropriate skill.

NPC RESPONSE AND OFFER

After a hero makes an argument, the NPC responds in one of three ways:

- An NPC responds positively if the heroes increase the NPC's interest. "That's an excellent point." "You've given me much to consider." "Fair enough." "Makes sense to me."
- An NPC responds negatively if the heroes decrease their interest. "I don't buy that." "Poppycock!" "I hear you, but I disagree." "That's not going to sway me."
- An NPC responds with impatience if the heroes fail to increase or decrease their interest. "I've heard that before." "Are you going to offer me anything real?" "This debate is tiresome." "BORING!"

Unless the NPC is deceitful, it should be clear to the heroes if their argument helped convince the NPC, if they need to take a new approach, or if the argument actually did more harm than good.

The initial response should come with an offer (or a refusal to make an offer) based on the NPC's current interest. If a hero's argument reduces an NPC's patience to 0, the NPC lets the heroes know that this is their final offer.

FOR THE DIRECTOR: REASONS FOR DECEPTION

Under certain circumstances, an NPC might not want to show the heroes how well their arguments are working. For example, if an NPC's interest has dropped so low that they now intend to harm the heroes, the NPC might falsely agree to what the heroes ask for as part of a trap. Likewise, a greedy NPC might try to keep their enthusiasm for a deal concealed while their interest is high to obtain more money or favors from the heroes. If a hero thinks an NPC is attempting to fool them, they can make an Intuition test. On a success, the hero learns their true standing with the NPC.

INTEREST 5 (“YES, AND ...”)

If the NPC’s interest is 5, they offer everything the heroes initially asked for—and then sweeten the deal. This result is the best possible outcome for the heroes. If they offered to perform any services or make payments as part of the deal, the NPC might waive those obligations, allowing the heroes to get what they want for free. Alternatively, the NPC might hold the heroes to any offers they made and instead offer an extra service or item on top of what was asked for.

For example, if the heroes asked the boss of a thieves guild for that organization’s help in standing against Lord Saxton, the guildmaster might pledge to send a unit of elite assassins to aid in the battle against that tyrannical noble, and then offer the heroes a quiver filled with explosive arrows to give them an additional advantage in the fight.

The NPC should let the heroes know that this is the best offer they can make.

INTEREST 4 (“YES.”)

If the NPC’s interest is 4, they offer the heroes everything they asked for but won’t sweeten the deal. The NPC also accepts anything the heroes have offered as part of the deal with this result.

For example, if the heroes offered to help spring a guild thief from prison in exchange for the thieves guild’s elite assassins standing against Lord Saxton, the guildmaster agrees to those terms without attempting to adjust anything. This likely ends the negotiation, but it’s possible that the heroes could push for a little more, provided the NPC has the patience for another argument. A Director could prompt the heroes to push for more by having the NPC ask a leading question, such as, “Is there anything else?” or “What else do you want from me?”

INTEREST 3 (“YES, BUT ...”)

If the NPC’s interest is 3, they offer the heroes what they want in exchange for everything the heroes offered ... then they ask for a little extra, such as a favor or a payment from the characters. If the heroes offered to free a thieves guild member from prison in exchange for the service of the organization’s assassins, the guildmaster might ask them to free an additional prisoner, or to grant the prisoner they rescue a sum of cash or a magic weapon.

INTEREST 2 (“NO, BUT ...”)

If the NPC’s interest is 2, the NPC can’t give the heroes what they want. However, they are willing to offer other less impactful goods or services in exchange for whatever the heroes have promised. The guildmaster might not be willing to spare any troops to fight Lord Saxton, but could instead offer the latest spy reports on Saxton’s movements in exchange for the jailbreak.

INTEREST 1 (“NO.”)

If the NPC’s interest is 1, they outright reject the heroes’ idea without a counteroffer. If the NPC still has patience, they might press the heroes for a better deal, saying

something like, “Why should we risk our necks to help you fight Lord Saxton? What’s really in it for the thieves guild, other than a short, brutal end when you inevitably fail?”

INTEREST 0 (“NO, AND ...”)

If an NPC’s interest is 0, they offer nothing, refuse to negotiate further, and seek to harm the heroes. The NPC might attack immediately, or they could take a different approach, perhaps spreading malicious rumors about the characters, sending assassins after them, or otherwise making their lives difficult. If the heroes don’t want to be at odds with the NPC, they’ll need to offer an valuable gift or undertake a quest just to make amends.

It is impossible to continue a negotiation when an NPC’s interest drops to 0.

KEEP GOING OR STOP

If an NPC still has patience after making an offer and their interest is between 1 and 4, the heroes can make another argument to attempt to improve the deal. Alternatively, they can accept the offer and end the negotiation. Let the players drive this decision. You can always have an NPC show they have patience remaining by asking, “Is there anything else?”

If the NPC’s patience is 0 or their interest is 5, then the offer the NPC makes is their final offer to the characters. The heroes can accept the offer or not, but either way, the negotiation ends.

If the NPC’s interest is 0, the NPC ends the negotiation without accepting a deal.

The heroes can walk away from a negotiation without accepting a deal at any time.

SAMPLE NEGOTIATION

After killing the true lord of Bedegar, the tyrannical Lord Saxton took over the barony’s capital, and is presently gathering forces of his own to march on the rest of Bedegar’s settlements. The heroes recently saved Edmund, the true heir to Bedegar’s throne, and are now gathering forces to build an army that can stand against Saxton and defeat the tyrant.

The heroes are engaging in a negotiation with Zola Honeycut, the human guildmaster of the Clock—a thieves’ guild whose headquarters is located in Bedegar’s capital. The guild openly opposed Saxton when he first seized power, but the tyrant was quick to crack down on all known members of the Clock, forcing them into hiding or hanging them as a warning to others. The heroes’ hope is that they can convince Zola to support their armed resistance.

ZOLA’S NEGOTIATION STATS

Zola is neutral toward the heroes when the negotiation begins. She knows them only by reputation, though she understands that they too believe Saxton is a tyrant who must be stopped. However, standing up to that tyrant has cost her people dearly, and she’s not sure she’s ready to

rejoin the fight. One wrong move could spell the end of the Clock!

ZOLA HONEYCUT NEGOTIATION STATS

Interest: 2 • Patience: 3 • Impression: 3

Motivations

- **Benevolence:** Zola's name, Honeycut, comes from the fact that she always gives her fellow thieves a bigger cut than her own on jobs.
- **Protection:** The members of the Clock are the only family Zola's ever known. The guild's motto is "The Clock is always ticking," because they're always planning the next job and their ever-richer future. Zola doesn't want to be the guild's last master.

Pitfall

- **Higher Authority:** Zola has no interest in serving anyone other than herself, and she scoffs at the suggestion of taking orders.
- **Revelry:** Zola is all business and has no time for frivolity, especially while living under Saxton's threat.

ROLEPLAYING ZOLA

Zola is glad that people are finally opposing Lord Saxton, but is angry that no one rose up with the Clock months ago when the tyrant first staged his coup. She's passionate about protecting her people, quick to call out dangerous plans in arguments she doesn't like, and fast to praise statements she agrees with. She's not afraid to speak her mind to the heroes, knowing that they share her desire to see Saxton gone. She's just not sure she can risk more of her found family in the current fight.

NEGOTIATION IN ACTION

Here's how the negotiation with Zola might play out. In this scenario, Alyssa is playing Jorn the tactician, Grace is playing Val the conduit, James is playing Korvo the shadow, and Matt is playing Linn the talent. All the heroes have a Renown of 2 except for Jorn, who has a Renown of 3 and is therefore famous to Zola.

Director: *The windows are boarded up, allowing no light to enter the seemingly abandoned Goat's Eye tavern. The whole place smells of charred wood, evidence of the fire that burned most of the building's interior three years ago. As the door shuts behind you, light from a hooded lantern on the opposite side of the tavern suddenly fills the room. Amid the blackened walls and pillars, you see that six burly ruffians flank your group on both sides. The human holding the lantern smiles. "Welcome. I'm Zola. Willoughby told me you were coming. Have a seat." She motions to a few crates arranged in a circle around a wide barrel.*

James (playing Korvo): *I have a seat and say, "Korvo at your service, Ms. Honeycut. And these here are the finest companions a polder could ask for: Linn, Jorn, and Val."*

Director: *Zola nods to each of you in turn, then says, "You'll excuse me if I dispense with more pleasantries. These days, no place is safe for the Clock. We keep moving. So tell me, what are you here for?"*

Alyssa (playing Jorn): *"We're building an army to take down Saxton once and for all."*

Director: *Zola gives a mirthless chuckle as she shakes her head. "Oh is that all? I have to tell you, I don't think the four of you stand much of a chance. Unless you're hiding a legion or two of dwarves in your pockets. Yes, you have Jorn the Mighty with you, but you'll need more than one famous warrior to win the day."*

Alyssa: *Ah! So she has heard of me at least! Thanks, Renown.*

Grace (playing Val): *"We don't. But we do have Lord Edmund—the true heir to the Bedegar throne."*

Director: *Zola nods, impressed. "I'm glad the boy is safe, but that's all he is—a boy, not an army."*

Matt (playing Linn): *"He's a boy people will rally around. We have no army, but that's why we're here. We're planning on changing that. Can you spare any soldiers for our cause?"*

The negotiation officially starts. The heroes have stated what they want from Zola. The Director begins by prompting them to make an argument.

Director: *Zola leans back on her crate. "There it is. The Clock has sacrificed much against Saxton. Why should we risk more to help? No one was here to help us months ago when we stood up to tyranny."*

Alyssa: *I nod along as Zola speaks, listening before I say, "We didn't hear of your struggle until after Saxton had already hanged many of your brave people. We're here now. How can we help?"*

Before making an argument, Jorn is attempting to learn what Zola's motivations are by simply asking. The Director decides to reveal one of Zola's motivations: protection.

Director: *"If I were to make a deal with you, and that's a big 'if,' I'd need assurances that you can end this. Proof would be even better. The protection of my people is my top priority. We can earn freedom from Saxton once we regain our strength."*

James: *Aha! I got this, folks. I stand atop my crate and say, "Well, we can surely offer that, Ms. Honeycut. We have convinced Lord Edmund to grant amnesty to any who swear to serve him." I'd like to roll a Presence test to convince her.*

Director: *Hold it there, champ. Zola's eyes narrow as you speak, and she holds up a hand to cut you off. "I will not swear to serve any ruler, no matter how benevolent. I'll consider being a partner, but even that outlook is grim if you tell me again that I need to bend the knee."*

Korvo inadvertently made an argument using a pitfall by appealing to a higher authority. The Director notes that Zola's interest drops to 1 and her patience drops to 2. Zola gave a pretty firm "No" response here, which is what an NPC with an interest of 1 would say. However, the Director phrased Zola's response in such a way that the heroes know they can keep making arguments if they wish, since her patience hasn't run out.

James: *Sorry! I thought that'd work. Seems like higher authority is a pitfall for her.*

Grace: *Let's try to avoid any others. Val says, "We're sorry, Zola. We don't want to do anything else to offend you." I'd like to make an Intuition test and use my Read Person skill to gauge her reaction to see if I can discern any other pitfalls.*

Director: Cool. Hard difficulty.

Grace: I got a 17! Success.

Director: Zola sits back, chuckling. "There's two things I can't stand—anyone telling me to kiss a ring and merry fools who would rather go drinking than fight for their freedom. Luckily, you're not the latter." You can tell that revelry also won't go over well with Zola.

The heroes now know both of Zola's pitfalls: higher authority and revelry.

Linn: Linn is going to say, "We're recruiting more than just the Clock. We have a good chance of recruiting the elves of the wode and the orcs of Forest Rend, and we're already training the people of Gravesford to put up a fight. If we strike before Saxton can fully build his forces, we all stand a better chance of survival. If you don't stand with us, Saxton will still come for you. He's already coming for you. The Clock stands less of a chance alone."

Director: I think that's a Reason test, since you're using logic to point out that you have a better chance together than on your own. It's easy too, since you're appealing to one of her motivations.

Linn: Great! Can I use Lead here, since I'm demonstrating our ability to bring people together?

Director: I'll allow it.

Linn: That's a 14!

Because Linn appealed to a motivation, Zola's interest increases to 2, and her patience remains at 2. The Director gives a "No, but ..." response based on Zola's interest. At this point, the heroes haven't promised anything, so she offers them something for free. The Director makes it clear in Zola's response that the negotiation can still continue if that's what the players want.

Director: Zola nods along as you speak. "You're correct, but I'm not sure I can spare the people. I'll tell you what I can do. I have spies watching Saxton still. I can give you information about his troops' movements. Will that suffice?"

Alyssa: I don't think so, right?

James: No. We need an army.

Matt: Yeah, let's push it.

Grace: Agreed.

Alyssa: I wonder if we can try to figure out another one of her motivations.

James: Is there anything I know about Zola's reputation? I have the Criminal Underworld skill.

Director: Make a hard Reason test.

James: That's an 18! Success!

Director: Korvo would know that Zola got the name Honeycut because she's generous with the guild's earnings. She gives all her fellow thieves a nice cut of every job.

Korvo's success has revealed Zola's benevolence motivation.

James: Brilliant! I think I probably would've shared that with the group before this.

Director: Yeah, that makes sense.

Alyssa: Great. I'll say, "It would be worthwhile in other ways for your crew if you joined our side."

Director: Zola's interest is piqued. "What makes you say that?"

Alyssa: "Even before his coup, Saxton had a considerable amount of wealth. If he's deposed, those riches need to go somewhere. The Clock will get a cut—a honey of a cut, you might say. Edmund has also promised to share his family's fortune with any who stand with him against Saxton ... after the young lord reclaims the throne, that is."

Director: You're appealing to one of her motivations, so make an easy Presence test.

Alyssa: Can I use my Persuade skill too?

Director: Absolutely. And you gain an edge because you're famous to her.

Alyssa: I got a 12!

Because Jorn appealed to a motivation, Zola's interest increases to 3, and her patience is reduced to 1. The Director gives a "Yes, but ..." response while making it clear that the negotiation can still continue.

Director: Zola contemplates this for a moment. She nods, "I'm starting to see the benefits. I think I can spare some folks to help you, but you have to help them first. See, my best warriors are locked up in Bedegar Keep. They're supposed to be hanged in two days. If you free them, I'll see to it they stand with you against Saxton. We were making a plan to free them ourselves, but could frankly use the help."

Grace: We could push the Clock to do it themselves, but I can't see Val turning her back on people in need.

James: Hear, hear. I'm done pushing my luck on this one.

Matt: It'll mean less time to recruit the other troops, so we'd better work quickly.

Alyssa: Then we're in agreement. I offer a handshake to Zola. "You've got yourself a deal."

The negotiation ends! The heroes could have pushed for a better deal, but they're satisfied with the offer from Zola, so they accept her terms.

DOWNTIME PROJECTS

As a team, you and your fellow heroes can achieve great things. But the time between adventures gives you a chance to pursue your own goals: uncover forbidden lore in ancient tomes, forge weapons of great power, build ships that can sail the skies, and more. *Draw Steel's* project rules allow heroes to use their time during respites to obtain important information, make new equipment and strongholds, and engage in other activities to support their adventuring.

TRACKING PROJECTS

You start a project during a respite. You can start as many projects as you like, but you can't work on more than one project at a time during a respite. Eventually, you'll be able to hire creatures who can work on additional projects for you.

You can track project progress on your character sheet. As you work on a project, you might look over old books that you've found in your travels, perform experiments, converse with experts and scholars, or work with tools to create something.

PROJECT PREREQUISITES

All projects have prerequisites you must meet before you can start them.

ITEM PREREQUISITES

Many projects have special items you must possess or obtain before you can begin the project. For instance, you can't build an airship without first finding a Wind Crystal of Quintessence, a rare and key component in that vehicle's construction. Other projects have prerequisites that involve undertaking certain actions during the project process.

PROJECT SOURCE

To start a project, you must have access to specific lore detailing how the project is to be undertaken. This can be in the form of written information (a book, scroll, schematic, and so forth), an expert tutor with wisdom to share, a master artisan with skills to teach, a magical manifestation of the project's scope and secrets, or any other form of the Director's determination. This project-focused lore is referred to as a project source. Not only do you need project sources to start a project, you must have access to them whenever you make a project roll for that particular project (see [Project Roll](#)).

Some project sources can be relatively easy to find. Building a castle doesn't require tomes filled with ancient lore, but it's also not something every stonemason knows how to do. However, the location of the tomb of Ashrya, the mummified protector of one hundred slumbering sorcerer-sovereigns, might exist only in a single tome that requires an accompanying adventure to unearth.

The language with which project sources are set down or can be shared is chosen by the Director. The sample

projects below have suggestions, though you might be able to find a version of a source in other languages as well.

Whenever the Director determines that a creature with needed knowledge can be used as a project source, another hero can serve as this source of knowledge. However, they must use a respite activity to be your project source whenever you make a project roll related to the project.

SEARCH FOR COMMON PROJECT SOURCES

If you need a project source for a particular project, ask your Director if the source is common enough that it might be found in a substantial library, among a group of sages or guild artisans, and so forth. If the Director says yes, then the next time you take a respite in a place with a library or access to creatures with the knowledge you seek, you can locate the project source you need as a respite activity.

PROJECT ROLL

As a respite activity, you can make a project roll for one of your own projects. You can also make a project roll to contribute to another hero's project, with their permission. A project roll is a test with a special outcome. The characteristic used in the test is determined by the project.

When you make a project roll, the result—no matter how low—becomes project points that are accrued by the project. Even if you have a penalty on a project roll, the minimum result for the roll is 1. If you get a natural 19 or 20 on the roll, this is called a **breakthrough**, and you can make another project roll for the same project as part of the same respite activity.

A project is complete when it accrues project points equal to or greater than its project goal—the number of points it takes to complete the project, noted in each project's description.

As you work on a project, the Director can add events that help form the narrative of your research, crafting, or other activities. These events might provide unexpected benefits or challenges as you work on your project, to help make the journey as dramatic as arriving at the destination. See [For the Director: Project Events](#) for more information.

PROJECT ROLL EDGES AND BANES

Since project rolls don't use success tiers, they don't follow the normal rules for double edges and double banes. If you gain an edge on a project roll, you add 2 to the roll, as usual. But if you have a double edge, you add 4 to the roll. Likewise, you subtract 2 from a project roll that takes a bane, and you subtract 4 from a roll that has a double bane.

SKILLS AND PROJECT ROLLS

You can apply skills from either the crafting or lore skill groups to project rolls that directly relate to the project (see [Skills in Tests](#)). For example, you could use the Tailoring skill for project rolls related to making a magic cloak, and you could use the History skill while attempting to research the location of an ancient battle where a magic crown was lost. At the Director's discretion, you can also

use skills from other skill groups, but a skill used for a project roll must be directly related to the project.

LANGUAGE AND PROJECT ROLLS

If you know the language of a project source, you can make a project roll without any issues. If you don't know the language of the source but you know a related language, then the project roll takes a bane. If you don't know the source's language or a related language, the project roll has a double bane.

GUIDES

Heroes sometimes find guides—special books, schematics, knowledgeable NPCs, magical recordings, and so forth—providing important and easy-to-understand information relating to a project. Each guide has a knowledge value and a connection to a specific project that greatly decreases the time required to complete the project. When a hero studies a guide as a respite activity, they gain the guide's knowledge value as project points toward its project. The guide can't be used with that specific instance of the project again, though it can be used for a different project of the same type.

Guides are awarded at the Director's discretion, usually as a tool that can be used to increase the speed of complex projects for campaigns with little downtime. For example, the Craft Automaton project has a project goal of 1,500, requiring a fair bit of downtime. But if a hero finds a manual that describes how to craft an automaton and grants them 500 or more project points toward the Craft Automaton project, the crafting time can be significantly reduced.

A guide must provide its information in a language you understand for you to gain its full benefit. If it's written in a language related to one you know, you gain only half the guide's knowledge value (rounded down) as project points toward your project.

FOR THE DIRECTOR: PROJECT EVENTS

Project events are story events that present boons and challenges to heroes as they complete research and crafting projects. These events are entirely optional. If you want to have a game where the heroes simply work toward their goals by making project rolls, that's fine. But using these events can help you inject more drama into the processes of research and crafting.

WHEN TO USE PROJECT EVENTS

Projects don't need an event every time a hero makes a project roll. If they did, the heroes would likely spend all their time trying to manage their projects and never do any adventuring. Instead, pick one of the following methods to determine when an event occurs in a project. You can always switch up the method you use during a campaign, doing whatever you think works best for the current situation.

ROLL FOR EVENT

If you want events to be a surprise for even you, then once during any respite when one or more heroes makes a

project roll, roll a d6. On a result of 6, an event occurs. This is a good option if you enjoy coming up with story on the fly during play.

EVENT MILESTONES

If you want to guarantee that events occur during a project, use project point milestones. When the project accrues a certain number of points, an event occurs the next time a hero wants to make a project roll. This approach works well if you want to plan your event in detail before it occurs.

You can use the Suggested Event Milestones table to determine when an event should occur during a project.

SUGGESTED EVENT MILESTONES

Project Goal	Milestones
Fewer than 30	None
31–200	One event halfway to the goal
201–999	Two events at one-third and two-thirds of the way to the goal
1,000 or more	Three events at one-quarter, one-half, and three-quarters of the way to the goal

WHENEVER YOU WANT

Whenever you think the heroes could use a little drama during a respite, throw in an event. This approach allows you to plan an event in detail when a project begins, then deploy it at the most dramatic moment—or even throw it in during an encounter if you're feeling saucy!

DEPLOYING EVENTS

An event occurs when a hero makes a project roll. You can roll for or choose an event from the appropriate events prompts table, or use the tables to inspire your own events. Each entry on the table is a narrative prompt that you can change and flesh out as you see fit, and specifies whether it occurs before or after the project roll.

CRAFTING PROJECTS

Crafting projects enable heroes to create vehicles, magic items, and more. When you begin a crafting project, other creatures can also work on the project, using their respite activity to contribute a project roll to it in order to get the work done faster. Unless a project has a complication table of its own, research projects use the Crafting and Research Events Prompts table for event prompts.

BUILD AIRSHIP

Item Prerequisites: Wind Crystal of Quintessence

Project Source: Texts or lore in Old Sky Elf

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Presence

Project Goal: 3,000

When you begin this project, you hire a crew of carpenters, mages, and shipwrights who work in the area where the

project begins, with these artisans building the ship for you. You can make a project roll whenever you are overseeing the project, which you might be able to do remotely through the use of magic or psionics.

When the project is completed, you have an airship. You and any creatures you designate can operate the ship by touching the wheel. During combat, a creature touching the wheel of the ship can use a maneuver to make the ship move up to 10 squares. The ship can be moved only once per round. Out of combat, the ship has a speed of 130 miles per day.

An airship is an object (giving it immunity all to poison and psychic damage), and can take 200 damage before it is destroyed. If the damage the ship takes is not too severe (as the Director determines), as long as you have access to materials that can repair the ship, you can restore it back to its original condition as a respite activity.

BUILD OR REPAIR ROAD

Item Prerequisites: Three writs or approval, each from a different guild: one of engineers, one of masons, and one of guards

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Presence

Project Goal: Varies

When you begin this project, you hire a crew of masons, engineers, and guards who work in the starting location where the project began and build or repair the road for you. You can make a project roll whenever you are overseeing the project, which you may be able to do remotely through the use of magic or psionics, provided you have the means.

The project points required to complete work on the road equals $10 \times$ the road's length in miles. The goal is cut in half if you are repairing an existing road, or someone else begins work on a second road project starting from the second location connecting to your first location.

CIVILIZATION DISTANCE PROJECT GOALS

Project	Renown Earned
25 Miles or less	1
26-50 Miles	1
51-100 Miles	2
More than 100 Miles	3

When you complete the project, you earn Renown with the people depending on the length of the road. Time spent traveling on the road is cut in half. Access to resources and knowledge is improved in both locations, giving you and your allies an edge on project rolls to discover lore while you are in the area.

BUILD OR REPAIR ROAD EVENTS PROMPTS

d10	Prompt
1	Before the roll, the crews have uncovered an ancient road, made with remarkable techniques that grant it an incredibly sturdy base on which to build. The project gains an automatic breakthrough and the project goal is halved if it was not already halved.
2	After the roll, the local population grows in excitement with each completed portion. The hero's name spreads as a builder of bridges both literal and social. If the roll is 11 or higher, the community comes together to complete the project alongside the hero's hired crew. The hero doubles the renown earned at the end of the project.
3	Before the roll, a third party—the local religious or civic authority—has heard of the project and sent laborers to accelerate it in exchange for a future favor. The hero gains an immediate 50 points if they accept the help.
4	After the roll, the local-hired hands and the engineers find themselves frequently at odds, hindering the project. Completing it requires an additional 50 project points or the hero settling the problem another way.
5	Before the roll, the supply caravans are disrupted by bandits, requiring extra guards. The hero can handle the problem personally or add an additional 50 project points to its completion.
6	After the roll, not everyone is happy about the march of civilization. The project is hindered by supernatural curses. Stones move, vines and overgrowth reclaim the way, or the earth churns back to its previous form. The hero must make amends or the renown earned by completing the project does not extend to the local supernatural community.
7	After the roll, the ditchers hit an ancient well, retaining wall, or hidden stream that results in an immediate flood. The work is delayed, but the new water source ultimately provides a boon to the local farming communities. The project points earned by this roll are halved, but upon completion the hero gains an additional renown for completing the project.
8	Before the roll, a new worker arrives who wants to work on the project. They are adept at unusual solutions, like engineering especially sturdy wooden bridges, or using bilge pumps to keep rainwater from slowing the work. They want to work on the project, but ask for a consumable treasure one the heroes has. If they are hired, the project gains an immediate breakthrough.
9	Before the roll, the proposed road touches on a supernatural intersection, a crossing place that draws interest from a powerful devil. Its completion becomes the personal interest of this being. They offer to make progress go faster, but demand a favor

	from the hero. If the deal is accepted, double the result of each project roll for this project until its completion.
10	After the roll, a guildmaster has it out for the hero. Whether it's from something in their past, or just something in the way this project was taken on, they've made it their mission to hinder the project by dragging the hero's name through the mud. The hero suffers -1 Renown while these rumors persist.

CRAFT TELEPORTATION PLATFORM

Item Prerequisites: 1 spatial navigator

Project Source: Texts or lore in Voll

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason

Project Goal: 1,500

When you complete this project, you end up with a 3 x 3 square teleportation platform with a magic password. The platform is permanently affixed to the ground where you create it. You can use the teleportation platform to instantly teleport any creatures or objects on the platform to a location or another teleportation platform with a magic password you know. Each time the teleportation platform is used, the chance of it malfunctioning and teleporting its contents to a random platform increases by 1% (to a maximum of 50%). When you have access to the platform, you can restore it back to its original condition as a respite activity.

CRAFT TREASURE

You can craft the items found in [Treasures](#). Each item notes its prerequisites, project source, project roll characteristic, and project goal.

FIND A CURE

Item Prerequisite: Varies (see description)

Project Source: None

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition

Project Goal: Varies (see description)

You research a cure for a disease, curse, or supernatural affliction that references this project as a way to end it. If the affliction was caused by another creature, you need the remains of that creature or another creature of the same kind as an item prerequisite for making the cure. For example, you can research the cure for the affliction of a werewolf's Accursed Bite by studying the corpse of any werewolf, not just the one who did the biting. The number of project points it takes to complete this project is equal to the creature's level times 50.

If the affliction is created by something other than a creature, such as an environmental effect, than the effect lists the item prerequisite and project points required to complete this project.

When you complete this project, you craft one dose of an alchemical cure for that affliction. Once the project is completed, you can craft subsequent doses for the same affliction in half the number of project points the initial project took.

IMBUE TREASURE

You can create leveled treasures by imbuing items with magic or psionic power. You must have a mundane version of the item you plan to imbue, such as a sword or shield, when you begin this project.

You can imbue any item three times. The first time you imbue it, you pick a 1st-level enhancement. The second time you imbue it, you pick a 5th-level enhancement. The third time you imbue it, you pick a 9th-level enhancement. A hero using armor, an implement, or a weapon can't benefit from an enhancement unless they are using a kit that includes the armor, implement, or weapon type, and their level matches the enhancement's level.

If an enhancement has a Roman numeral greater than I after it, such as the Phasing III enhancement, that enhancement can't be applied unless the item has all previous versions of the enhancement. This means you can't imbue armor with the Phasing III enhancement unless it has the Phasing I and Phasing II enhancements first. These numbered enhancements are cumulative unless otherwise noted.

Enhancements are listed by item type and level. Each item type and level features a table showing the name, item prerequisites, and project source language of each enhancement. Imbued items take the Magic or Psionic keyword (your choice), plus any keywords appropriate to the type of item (Light Armor, Implement, Medium Weapon, and so forth).

Imbuing magical treasure as a project typically means you undertake that project to make use of the treasure yourself. As such, all the features of imbuing make reference to "you" as the user of the item. However, imbued items can be created for other creatures, or created by other creatures and found as treasure.

IMBUE ARMOR

Armor imbued with an enhancement grants you special benefits while it is worn. Additionally, when your armor receives its 1st-level enhancement, it also grants a +6 Stamina bonus. A 5th-level enhancement increases the Stamina bonus to +12, and a 9th-level enhancement increases it to +21.

1ST-LEVEL ARMOR ENHANCEMENT

Item Prerequisites: Varies

Project Source: Texts or lore in a language determined by the enhancement

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 150

1ST-LEVEL ARMOR ENHANCEMENTS

Enhancement	Item Prerequisite	Project Source Language
Awe	A lock of hair from a fey, taken in amicable bargain for Charming or in violence for Threatening	Khelt

Damage Immunity I	Elemental sand left behind when an elemental enters Orden from Quintessence	Zaliac
Disguise	The blood of a lycanthrope	Khelt
Iridescent	Fur from a lightbender	Hyralllic
Magic Resistance I	A scale from a dragon	The First Language
Nettlebloom	A rose from the enchanted hedge of a hag	Khelt
Phasing I	Ichor from a destroyed wraith	Szetch
Psionic Resistance I	Rare crystals that resonate with psionic energy, often found at sites of psionic experimentation	Voll
Swift	The feather of a falcon slain as it was diving	Yllyric
Tempest I	A strip of starmetal struck by lightning	Old Star Elf

Awe: When you begin this project, choose either Charming or Threatening. If you choose Charming, you gain an edge on Presence tests to win people other creatures over or make a good impression. If you choose Threatening, you gain an edge on Presence tests made to intimidate, coerce, or bully.

Damage Immunity I: When you begin this project, select three damage types. You have immunity 5 to those damage types.

Disguise: You can use a maneuver to cause this armor to appear as any type of clothing that you have been in the presence of—a noble's dress, a guard's uniform, a cultist's robes, and so forth. The armor loses none of its protective qualities while transformed into other clothing.

Iridescent: When you are the sole target of an ability, you can use a free triggered action to reveal that the ability was targeting an afterimage of you in the same space as you. The power roll for the ability is treated as an 11. You can't use this enhancement again until you earn a Victory.

Magic Resistance I: Your characteristic scores are considered 1 higher (to a maximum of 2) for the purpose of resisting the potencies of magic abilities.

Nettlebloom: Whenever you are grabbed by a creature adjacent to you, your armor sprouts toxic nettles. While an adjacent creature has you grabbed, they are weakened.

Phasing I: Once per turn, you can move through 1 square of solid matter. If you end your turn inside solid matter, you take 5 damage, which can't be reduced in any way, and are shunted out into the space from which you entered it.

Psionic Resistance I: Your characteristic scores are considered 1 higher (to a maximum of 2) for the purpose of resisting the potencies of psionic abilities.

Swift: Your speed increases by 1.

Tempest I: As a maneuver, you can infuse this armor with the essence of a storm. The first time an adjacent creature makes deals damage to you before the end of your next turn, they take lightning damage equal to your highest characteristic score and you can push them 1 square.

5TH-LEVEL ARMOR ENHANCEMENT

Item Prerequisites: Armor with a 1st-level enhancement; varies

Project Source: Texts or lore in a language determined by the enhancement

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 150

5TH-LEVEL ARMOR ENHANCEMENTS

Enhancement	Item Prerequisite	Project Source Language
Absorption	A mirror blessed by a priest of a god of magic	The First Language
Damage Immunity II	The essence of an elemental who is still alive	Zaliac
Dragon Soul	A scale from a dead dragon	Vastariax
Levitating	A palm-sized crystal grown in the subterranean lair of an overmind	Zaliac
Magic Resistance II	A scale from a mature dragon	The First Language
Phasing II	The remnants of a slain ooze	Szetch
Psionic Resistance II	A fresh crystalline scale from a gemstone dragon	Voll
Reactive	A complex, hand-engineered set of brass dwarf gears inscribed with runes in silver dust	Zaliac
Second Wind	The sweat of a troll	Kalliak
Shattering	A pound of volcanic obsidian, formed naturally as a single piece	Zaliac
Tempest II	The armor must be laid out under a clear sky as a comet passes over	Old Star Elf

Absorption: Whenever you are targeted by a supernatural ability that targets only one creature, you can use a free triggered action to cause this armor to absorb the ability after the ability's effects resolve. While the armor has an ability absorbed, you can't absorb another.

You can use an absorbed ability as if you knew it, making power rolls for the ability using your choice of Reason, Intuition, or Presence. You don't need to spend any

resources to activate the ability. Once you use the ability, the armor loses it, and you can absorb another.

Damage Immunity II: The damage immunity conveyed by the armor increases to 10.

Dragon Soul: When another creature causes you to be winded or dying, you can use a free triggered action to cause the soul of a dragon to emerge from this armor and hurtle toward the creature. Make the following power roll against the creature.

Power Roll + Highest Characteristic:

- 11 or lower: **8 damage; push 3**
- 12–16: **12 damage; push 4**
- 17+: **15 damage; push 5**

Levitating: On your turn, you can treat up to 5 consecutive squares of movement as flying movement. If you are still in midair at the end of your turn, you fall prone.

Magic Resistance II: Your characteristic scores are considered 2 higher (to a maximum of 3) for the purpose of resisting the potencies of magic abilities. This benefit replaces Magic Resistance I.

Phasing II: When you use the armor’s Phasing I enhancement, you can move through 3 squares of solid matter per turn.

Psionic Resistance II: Your characteristic scores are considered 2 higher (to a maximum of 3) for the purpose of resisting the potencies of psionic abilities. This benefit replaces Psionic Resistance I.

Reactive: Whenever you take damage, you gain damage immunity 2 until the end of your next turn after resolving the triggering damage.

Second Wind: Whenever you become winded, you can use a free triggered action to spend a Recovery.

Shattering: Whenever an enemy scores a critical hit against you, they take 10 sonic damage.

Tempest II: When you use the armor’s Tempest I enhancement, the affected creature takes 8 lightning damage and you push them up to 3 squares.

9TH-LEVEL ARMOR ENHANCEMENT

Item Prerequisites: Armor with a 5th-level enhancement; varies

Project Source: Texts or lore in a language determined by the enhancement

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 150

9TH-LEVEL ARMOR ENHANCEMENTS

Enhancement	Item Prerequisite	Project Source Language
Devil’s Bargain	The wing of an archdevil	Anjali
Dragon Soul II	An offering of gems, coins, and art stolen from a dragon’s hoard, sacrificed in ritual fire	Vastariax

Invulnerable	Repurposed metal plates from a servok war engine	Steel Dwarf
Leyline Walker	A cutting from an ethereal tree that manifests in the mundane world only once a year	Yllyric
Life	The tear of an angelA	High Kuric
Magic Resistance III	A scale from an ancient dragon	The First Language
Phasing III	Perfectly clear glass from a house that disappeared into the Ethereal Plane	Szetch
Psionic Resistance III	The skull of a voiceless talker at least a century old	Voll
Temporal Flux	An experimental temporal capacitor invented by the kuran’zoi	Voll
Unbending	A spearhead or other weapon broken off in the body of a stone giant, and ossified for at least a year	High Kuric

Devil’s Bargain: Your movement gains the Fly keyword. Additionally, if an effect would make you prone while flying, you can choose to not go prone by losing Stamina equal to the distance you would have fallen from becoming prone.

Dragon Soul II: While you are winded, your head transforms into a dragon’s head, and you gain the following ability.

DRAGON’S FIRE

You open your maw and unleash hell.

Keywords: Area, Magic, Melee

Type: Action

Distance: 5 × 1 line within 1

Target: Each enemy in the line

Power Roll + Highest Characteristic:

- 11 or lower: **5 fire damage**
- 12–16: **8 fire damage**
- 17+: **11 fire damage**

Invulnerable: When a power roll made against you has a result of 11 or lower, you can ignore its damage and effects.

Leyline Walker: Once per turn, you can spend any amount of your movement to instead teleport that distance.

Life: Whenever you would die, you can spend a Recovery to regain Stamina instead. If you have no Recoveries to spend, you die.

Magic Resistance III: The benefits of the armor’s Magic Resistance II enhancement extend to each ally within 3 squares of you.

Phasing III: Your movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks, and you can move through enemy spaces as if they were allies. You can't end your turn in an enemy's space.

Psionic Resistance III: The benefits of the armor's Psionic Resistance II trait extend to each ally within 3 squares of you.

Temporal Flux: Whenever you move out of a square, you can choose to leave an imprint behind that lasts until the end of the encounter, until your imprint takes 20 or more damage, or until you create a new imprint. The square is occupied by your imprint, and you can share that space with it.

During your turn, you can teleport to the imprint's space as a free maneuver. When you are targeted by an ability, you can use a free triggered action to teleport to your imprint, and the power roll for the ability is treated as an 11.

Unbending: You can't be subjected to forced movement unless you choose to be. Effects that ignore Stability also ignore this enhancement.

IMBUE IMPLEMENT

Implements are jewelry, orbs, staves, tomes, wands, weapons, and other objects used by magic and psionic users to focus their power. You decide what object to imbue when you create an implement treasure, but it must be an object you can carry or wear. You must have a mundane version of the item you plan to imbue when you begin this project. An implement imbued with an enhancement grants you special benefits while it is wielded. Additionally, when an implement receives its 1st-level enhancement, it grants a +1 rolled damage bonus for your damage-dealing magic and psionic abilities. A 5th-level enhancement increases the bonus to +2, and a 9th-level enhancement increases it to +3.

1ST-LEVEL IMPLEMENT ENHANCEMENT

Item Prerequisites: Varies

Project Source: Texts or lore in a language determined by the enhancement

Project Roll Characteristic: Agility, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 150

1ST-LEVEL IMPLEMENT ENHANCEMENTS

Enhancement	Item Prerequisite	Project Source Language
Berserking	The tusk of a feral boar	Kalliak
Displacing I	Slime from an ooze	Khelt
Elemental	Ashes or other leavings from a natural disaster	The First Language
Forceful I	A lead slingstone that killed a giant	High Kuric
Rat Form	One hundred rat pelts	Khamish
Rejuvenating I	A singing quartz crystal	The First Language

Seeking	An inch-long needle carved from a diamond	Caelian
Thought Sending	The brain of a psionic creature	Variac
Warding I	Three skulls from the same chimera	Zaliac

Berserking: Whenever you damage a creature using a supernatural ability and obtain a tier 3 result on the power roll, that creature must make an opportunity attack against their nearest ally (if possible) after the ability's effects resolve. This strike deals extra damage equal to the highest of your Reason, Intuition, or Presence scores.

Displacing I: Whenever you damage a creature using a supernatural ability and obtain a tier 3 result on the power roll, you can teleport that creature up to 2 squares after the ability's effects resolve. If the creature started on a horizontal surface, they must end on a horizontal surface.

Elemental: Whenever you use an ability with the Air, Earth, Fire, Green, Rot, Void, or Water keyword, you can attune this implement to that element until the end of the encounter. While the implement is attuned, you gain an edge on power rolls with that elemental keyword. The implement can be attuned to only one element at a time.

Forceful I: Whenever you use a supernatural ability to push or pull a creature, you can move that creature an additional 2 squares.

Rat Form: As a maneuver, you can transform into a rat. Your equipment transforms with you. As a rat, you have a speed of 5 with the Climb keyword, your size is 1T, and you can see in the dark. You can speak and keep your skills while in rat form, but your Might becomes -5 and you lose all your regular abilities, features, and benefits. You can revert to your natural form as a maneuver, and do so automatically if you take any damage.

Rejuvenating I: Whenever you use an ability that costs 1 or more Heroic Resources, roll a d10. On a 9 or higher, you gain 1 Heroic Resource.

Seeking: Your ranged magic and psionic abilities gain a +2 distance bonus. Additionally, if you speak the name of a specific person, place, or object to the implement, the implement points toward that target, provided you are on the same world.

Thought Sending: Your ranged magic and psionic abilities gain a +2 distance bonus. Additionally, you can telepathically speak with any willing creature who knows a language and whose name you know, provided they are on the same world as you. You must initiate the conversation, but once you do, the creature can respond until you end the conversation.

Warding I: You gain a +6 Stamina bonus.

5TH-LEVEL IMPLEMENT ENHANCEMENT

Item Prerequisites: An implement with a 1st-level enhancement; varies

Project Source: Texts or lore in a language determined by the enhancement

Project Roll Characteristic: Agility, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 150

5TH-LEVEL IMPLEMENT ENHANCEMENTS

Enhancement	Item Prerequisite	Project Source Language
Celerity	A dire falcon's beak	Khelt
Celestine	A still-warm piece of a meteorite	Old Star Elf
Displacing II	The wing of a pixie	Voll
Erupting I	Obsidian from an active volcano	Vastariax
Forceful II	A marble stone giant's fingernail	High Kuric
Hallucinatory	A night hag's hair pin	Variac
Lingering I	Slow-acting poison refined from rare fungi	Szetch
Rejuvenating II	A still-growing bonsai tree at least thirty years old	The First Language
Warding II	A metallic dragon's horn	Zaliac

Celerity: Immediately after using a supernatural ability that requires an action, you can shift up to 3 squares, or you can use the Escape Grab maneuver as a free maneuver.

Celestine: As an action, you conjure up to three stars, which hover in unoccupied squares of your choice within 5 squares of you. The stars remain in place, and disappear if you create more stars. When an enemy enters any star's space, the star detonates and is destroyed, and the enemy takes 10 fire damage. You can also slide the enemy 1 square if they are within line of effect. Otherwise, the enemy slides 1 square in a random direction.

Displacing II: When you use the implement's Displacing I enhancement, you can teleport the creature up to 4 squares. Additionally, the creature takes a bane on their next power roll made before the end of their next turn.

Erupting I: Whenever you damage a creature using a supernatural ability that targets only a single creature and obtain a tier 3 result on the power roll, each enemy within 2 squares of the creature takes 3 fire damage after the ability's effects resolve.

Forceful II: Whenever you use a supernatural ability to push or pull a creature, you can move that creature an additional 3 squares. This replaces the benefit of Forceful I.

Hallucinatory: As a maneuver, you create an area of sensory instability in a 2 aura centered on yourself. The area is difficult terrain for your enemies until the end of the encounter or until you are dying.

Lingering I: Whenever you damage a creature using a supernatural ability and obtain a tier 3 result on the power roll, that creature takes 8 damage at the start of your next turn.

Rejuvenating II: Whenever you use an ability that costs 1 or more Heroic Resources, roll a d10. On an 8 or higher, you gain 1 Heroic Resource, and you can spend a Recovery. This replaces the benefit of Rejuvenating I.

Warding II: The Stamina bonus for the Warding I enhancement becomes +12. Additionally, your characteristic scores are considered 1 higher for the purpose of resisting potencies.

9TH-LEVEL IMPLEMENT ENHANCEMENT

Item Prerequisites: An implement with a 5th-level enhancement; varies

Project Source: Texts or lore in a language determined by the enhancement

Project Roll Characteristic: Agility, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 150

9TH-LEVEL IMPLEMENT ENHANCEMENTS

Enhancement	Item Prerequisite	Project Source Language
Anathema	An olothec tentacle	Variac
Displacing III	The keystone from a gate used for crossing between worlds	Voll
Erupting II	A sealed geode containing explosive gas	Vastariax
Forceful III	A scale from the kraken	High Kuric
Lingering II	A venom gland from a mature dragon	Szetch
Piercing	Black iron harvested from a slain blood elemental	Anjali
Psionic Siphon	The frontal lobe of an overmind	Variac
Rejuvenating III	A live flower that blooms only once a decade	The First Language
Warding III	Heartwood from a two-hundred-year-old tree	Zaliac

Anathema: Whenever you damage a creature using a supernatural ability and obtain a tier 3 result on the power roll, that creature is also weakened (save ends). If the creature is within 10 squares of you when this weakened effect ends, you can make a free strike against them as a free triggered action.

Displacing III: When you use the implement's Displacing I enhancement, you can teleport the creature up to 5 squares. Additionally, the creature then has a bane on their next power roll made before the end of their next turn.

Erupting II: The fire damage dealt by the implement's Erupting I enhancement increases to 6.

Forceful III: Whenever you use a supernatural ability to push or pull a creature, you can move that creature an additional 3 squares, and that movement can be vertical. This replaces the benefit of Forceful II.

Lingering II: Whenever you damage a creature using a supernatural ability and obtain a tier 3 result on the power roll, that creature takes 15 damage at the start of your next turn. This replaces the benefit of Lingering I.

Piercing: Your supernatural abilities ignore damage immunities.

Psionic Siphon: Once per turn when you damage one or more creatures with a supernatural ability and obtain a tier 3 result on the power roll, you gain Stamina equal to your highest characteristic score, and one creature you damage takes an additional 5 damage.

Rejuvenating III: Whenever you use an ability that costs 1 or more Heroic Resources, roll a d10. On a 7 or higher, you gain 1 Heroic Resource, and you or a creature of your choice within 3 squares of you can spend a Recovery. This replaces the benefit of Rejuvenating II.

Warding III: The Stamina bonus for the Warding I enhancement becomes +18. Additionally, you and each ally within 3 squares of you has their characteristic scores considered 1 higher for the purpose of resisting potencies.

IMBUE WEAPON

A weapon imbued with an enhancement grants you special benefits while it is wielded. Additionally, when a weapon receives its 1st-level enhancement, it grants a +1 rolled damage bonus for your damage-dealing weapon abilities. A 5th-level enhancement increases the damage bonus to +2, and a 9th-level enhancement increases it to +3.

1ST-LEVEL WEAPON ENHANCEMENT

Item Prerequisites: Varies

Project Source: Texts or lore in a language determined by the enhancement

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 150

1ST-LEVEL WEAPON ENHANCEMENTS

Enhancement	Item Prerequisite	Project Source Language
Blood Bargain	The blood of a devil	Anjali
Chilling I	A piece of ice from Quintessence that never melts	Yllyric
Disrupting I	A vial of blood from a living saint	Anjali
Hungering I	Stomach bile from a gnoll pack leader	Proto-Ctholl
Hurling	A magnet made from rare metals	Variac
Merciful	A sprig of dockwart, a rare plant with natural anesthetic properties	Yllyric
Terrifying I	The preserved, intact amygdala of a mindkiller	Variac
Thundering I	The heart of a lion, bear, or other large predatory animal	Low Kuric
Vengeance I	The crown of an usurper	Kalliak
Wingbane	A sprig of dockwart, a rare plant with natural anesthetic	Yllyric

	properties	
--	------------	--

Blood Bargain: As a maneuver, you can harm yourself with the weapon, taking 1d6 damage that can't be reduced in any way. An ally within 5 squares can then spend a Recovery.

Chilling I: Whenever you damage a creature using this weapon and obtain a tier 3 result on the power roll, that creature takes 3 cold damage.

Disrupting I: Whenever you damage an undead using this weapon and leave that undead with 15 Stamina or less, they drop to 0 Stamina.

Hungering I: Whenever you damage a creature other than yourself using this weapon, you regain Stamina based on the tier result of the power roll—3 Stamina for tier 1, 5 for tier 2, and 8 for tier 3. You can't regain this Stamina if you're dying.

Hurling: Whenever you use an ability with a melee distance using this weapon, you can throw the weapon by treating the ability's distance as Ranged 3 instead. When the ability is resolved, the weapon returns to your hand. Any ability used when you throw this weapon can't impose the grabbed or restrained conditions.

Merciful: Whenever you reduce a non-undead to 0 Stamina using this weapon, the creature falls unconscious and wakes up 1d6 hours later. A creature with the Heal skill can wake the unconscious creature early with 1 minute of medical treatment. Whenever the creature wakes, they regain 1 Stamina.

Terrifying I: Whenever you damage a creature using this weapon and obtain a tier 3 result on the power roll, that creature takes 3 psychic damage.

Thundering I: Whenever you damage a creature using this weapon, you can push that creature up to 2 squares after the other effects of the ability resolve.

Vengeance I: Whenever you use this weapon with an ability against a creature who has dealt damage to you since the end of your last turn, you gain a +2 damage bonus on the ability.

Wingbane: Whenever you damage a flying creature using this weapon, that creature is also bleeding (save ends). While bleeding in this way, the creature takes 1 damage per square they fly. If the creature starts and ends their turn on the same solid surface, the bleeding condition ends.

5TH-LEVEL WEAPON ENHANCEMENT

Item Prerequisites: A weapon with a 1st-level enhancement; varies

Project Source: Texts or lore in a language determined by the enhancement

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 150

5TH-LEVEL WEAPON ENHANCEMENTS

Enhancement	Item Prerequisite	Project Source Language
Chargebreaker	An adamantine spearhead	Zaliac
Chilling II	Frozen bones from the lair of a white dragon	Yllyric
Devastating	A slaughter demon's horn	High Kuric
Disrupting II	A cutting from a century-old living tree in a graveyard	Anjali
Hungering II	A fang from a slain vampire, crushed and mixed with the blood of the creature imbuing the item	Proto-Ctholl
Metamorphic	Oil from an olothec's liver	Variac
Silencing	An executioner's hood worn during the execution of a mage	The First Language
Terrifying II	Riverbed silt harvested from the Abyssal Wasteland	Variac
Thundering II	An iron rod charged by the death throes of an essence of storms	Low Kuric
Vengeance II	The remains of a sworn foe of the creature imbuing the item	Kalliak

Chargebreaker: While you wield this weapon, you have the following ability.

STOP RIGHT THERE

Their momentum, your impact.

Keywords: Melee, Strike, Weapon

Type: Free Triggered Action

Distance: Melee 1

Target: 1 enemy

Trigger: The target moves into a space adjacent to you.

Effect: The target takes 5 damage.

Chilling II: Whenever you damage a creature using this weapon and obtain a tier 3 result on the power roll, that creature takes 6 cold damage and is slowed (save ends). This replaces the benefit of Chilling I.

Devastating: Whenever you make an ability roll using this weapon, the number you need to roll to score a critical hit is reduced by 1.

Disrupting II: Whenever you damage an undead using this weapon and leave that undead with 30 Stamina or less, they drop to 0 Stamina. This replaces the benefit of Disrupting I.

Hungering II: Whenever you damage a creature other than yourself using this weapon, you regain Stamina based on the tier result of the power roll—4 Stamina for tier 1, 10 Stamina for tier 2, and 15 Stamina for tier 3. You can't regain this stamina if you're dying. This replaces the benefit of Hungering I.

Metamorphic: You can change this weapon's shape and form as a maneuver, granting one of the following benefits of your choice:

- **Concealed:** The weapon shrinks to the size of a piece of jewelry and can be worn as an earring, necklace, or similar accessory. While in this form, the weapon can't be used for weapon abilities.
- **Large:** The distance of abilities using this weapon increases by 1 for melee abilities, or by 3 for ranged abilities.
- **Vicious:** Whenever you damage a creature using this weapon, you deal 1 extra damage on a tier 1 result, 2 extra damage on a tier 2 result, and 3 extra damage on a tier 3 result.

Silencing: Whenever you damage a creature using this weapon and obtain a tier 3 result on the power roll, that creature also can't use magic abilities (EoT).

Terrifying II: Whenever you damage a creature using this weapon and obtain a tier 3 result on the power roll, that creature takes 10 psychic damage and is frightened (save ends). This replaces the benefit of Terrifying I.

Thundering II: Whenever you damage a creature using this weapon, you can push that creature up to 4 squares after the other effects of the ability resolve. If you obtained a tier 3 result on the power roll for the ability, the creature is also knocked prone after being pushed. This replaces the benefit of Thundering I.

Vengeance II: Whenever you use this weapon with an ability against a creature who has dealt damage to you since the end of your last turn, you gain a +4 damage bonus on the ability. This replaces the benefit of Vengeance I.

9TH-LEVEL WEAPON ENHANCEMENT

Item Prerequisites: A weapon with a 5th-level enhancement; varies

Project Source: Texts or lore in a language determined by the enhancement

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 150

9TH-LEVEL WEAPON ENHANCEMENTS

Enhancement	Item Prerequisite	Project Source Language
Chilling III	The weapon must be dipped in the Glacial Forge in the coldest depths of Hell	Yllyric
Disrupting III	Wrappings from a mummy buried at least a century ago	Anjali
Draining	The intact, still-thinking brain of a voiceless talker	Voll
Hungering III	A bottle of wine from Aurumvas's hoard	Proto-Ctholl
Imprisoning	A chain once used to restrain an angel	Anjali
Nova	A piece of metal touched by a sun	Old Star Elf
Terrifying III	The central eye of an overmind	Variac
Thundering III	An oracle of storms must willingly bless the weapon with lightning while it is being wielded, and its	Low Kuric

	wielder must survive this trial	
Vengeance III	The true name of a devil who hunts other devils	Kalliak
Windcutting	A feather from a bird, once thought extinct, who dwells at the eye of an ever-whirling tornado	Yllyric

Chilling III: Whenever you damage a creature using this weapon and obtain a tier 3 result on the power roll, that creature takes 9 psionic cold damage and is slowed (save ends). This replaces the benefit of Chilling II.

Disrupting III: Whenever you damage an undead using this weapon and leave that undead with 50 Stamina or less, they immediately drop to 0 Stamina. If you instead leave the undead with 100 Stamina or less, they are frightened (save ends). This replaces the benefit of Disrupting II.

Draining: Whenever you damage a creature using this weapon and obtain a tier 3 result on the power roll, that creature is also weakened (save ends). Each time you weaken a creature with this weapon, you gain one surge.

Hungering III: Whenever you damage a creature other than yourself using this weapon, you regain Stamina based on the tier result of the power roll—5 Stamina for tier 1, 12 for tier 2, or 20 for tier 3. Additionally, while you are dying, you gain an edge on abilities that use this weapon. This replaces the benefit of Hungering II.

Imprisoning: Whenever you damage a creature using this weapon and obtain a tier 3 result on the power roll, that creature is also restrained (save ends). While restrained in this way, the creature can't use supernatural abilities.

Nova: Whenever you damage a creature using this weapon, each enemy within 1 square of you takes damage based on the tier result of the power roll—2 damage for tier 1, 6 for tier 2, or 10 for tier 3. Additionally, while you are winded, you gain the following ability.

NOVA

I am an eternal flame, baby!

Keywords: Area, Magic, Melee

Type: Action

Distance: 3 burst

Target: All enemies

Power Roll + Highest Characteristic:

- 11 or lower: **7 fire damage**
- 12–16: **11 fire damage**
- 17+: **16 fire damage**

Terrifying III: Whenever you damage a creature using this weapon and obtain a tier 3 result on the power roll, that creature takes 6 psychic damage and is frightened (save ends). This replaces the benefit of Terrifying II.

Thundering III: Whenever you damage a creature or object using this weapon, after the other effects of the ability resolve, you can vertical push that creature up to 5 squares and knock them prone. If the creature takes or deals damage as a result of this movement, they take 5 thunder damage. This replaces the benefit of Thundering II.

Vengeance III: Whenever you use this weapon with an ability against a creature who has dealt damage to you since the end of your last turn, you gain a +6 damage

bonus on the ability. This replaces the benefit of Vengeance II.

Windcutting: Whenever you use a melee signature ability that normally targets one creature, you can take a bane on the ability to target each enemy in a cube 3 within distance. If your signature ability would normally cause its target to become grabbed or restrained, each target in the area is instead slowed (EoT) instead.

CRAFTING AND RESEARCH EVENTS PROMPTS

d100	Prompt
01–02	After the roll, a thief who wants the project source or an item needed for the project approaches the hero and pretends to be someone who wants to help. The thief might want to sell the project source or item, or use it to accomplish the same project as the hero.
03–04	Before the roll, a traveler in need of food, shelter, or some other necessity happens upon the heroes and asks for their help. If the heroes show kindness, the traveler reveals themselves to be an artisan or sage who can help with the project. With the characters' permission, the traveler can contribute one project roll to the project with a +3 modifier.
05–06	Before the roll, an NPC who is already friendly with the heroes and has helped them before asks the heroes to let them join the project. The NPC explains that they need the project source or the object being crafted for a personal matter of great importance (saving someone's life, righting a great wrong, and so forth). The NPC can contribute one project roll during the current respite with a +3 modifier, but the party must commit to letting the NPC use the finished project before the party can do so.
07–08	After the roll, the hero receives a mysterious note from a person who wants to exchange a magic item or other reward for the project source when the project is complete. The buyer could be someone with their own interest in a similar project, an enemy eager to exploit what the hero is working on, or a superfan who wants to emulate the hero.
09–10	Before the roll, a pest begins devouring important components of the project. This could be rats gnawing at alchemical components, moths eating rare silks, mites devouring a printed project source, and so forth. If the pests aren't dealt with quickly, some of the components will need to be replaced.
11–12	Before the roll, a powerful supernatural entity sends an agent or premonition to the hero, offering them knowledge that will let them complete the project immediately. In exchange, the hero must agree to do a favor for the entity, which might not be specified at the time of the bargain.
13–14	Before the roll, a rumor arises that the project is being worked on in service to an evil entity. People start showing up to the heroes' place of respite, demanding that they repent their wicked ways. If the rumors aren't disproved, the locals form a mob to stop the

	heroes.
15–16	Before the roll, the hero's rival comes to visit and shows off a guide for the project. The rival is willing to hand the guide over ... provided the hero publicly humiliates themselves by proclaiming that the rival is their better.
17–18	The project source is cursed. Before the roll, the hero must succeed on a hard Intuition test or become obsessed with the project. Until the project is complete, the hero can't use Victories to increase their heroic resources. The curse can be broken by slaying the creature who created it, or by finding a priest to perform a holy ritual over the project source.
19–20	Before the roll, the hero finds that a significant amount of the project has been completed by a group of fairies. The fairies might have completed the job out of boredom, or they might want something from the hero in return.
21–22	After the roll, the hero realizes that the project source contains only half the information they need, and they must find the rest of the information to complete the project.
13–24	After the roll, the hero discovers a new bit of knowledge or a technique that allows them to immediately start and finish a second project with a project goal of 50 or lower.
25–26	Before the roll, the hero finds that someone has attempted to sabotage their project, resulting in damage to notes, the project source, or crafting components. The damage is negligible, but the person responsible will strike again to worse effect if not discovered.
27–28	Before the roll, the project source is found to hold additional information, letting the hero treat the project roll as an automatic breakthrough. The note could have been left by a helpful visitor, or by someone who wants the hero's work to be finished for their own gain.
29–30	After the roll, the project draws the attention of a devil, who tries to subtly change the project source from the Seven Cities of Hell. If the hero doesn't notice, the devil is summoned the next time the hero makes a project roll, with goals of the Director's determination.
31–32	Before the roll, the hero stumbles upon a tool, expert, or book that helps them with the project, letting them treat the project roll as an automatic breakthrough.
33–34	After the roll, the project source suddenly becomes impossible to understand. A psionic NPC has used a mighty power to obscure or corrupt the project source to prevent a potential catastrophe they foresaw. If the heroes can help prevent the catastrophe in another way, the NPC will end the effect.

35–36	After the roll, the hero discovers that the project source contains a piece of helpful knowledge unrelated to the current project .
37–38	Before the roll, the hero learns that several sages working on similar projects have all mysteriously disappeared. Someone or something is abducting these experts for a nefarious purpose ... and the hero could be next!
39–40	After the roll, a group of scholars approaches the hero and asks if they can review the project source, promising to help the hero complete the project in return. If the hero accepts, the scholars take the project source until the end of the hero's next respite. Three of the scholars then contribute project rolls during the following respite, each with a +3 modifier.
41–42	After the roll, a physical project source or crafting components come to life and begin attacking the hero. Magic within these items has become corrupted! If the hero can fix the corruption without destroying the items, the project is saved, but doing so requires a special ritual.
43–44	After the roll, an otherworldly specter appears and warns the hero not to complete the project, explaining that they died attempting the same project and are now attached to the project source. If the hero can convince the spirit that they will not die similarly, the creature shares their knowledge, contributing one project roll to the project with a +3 modifier.
45–46	Before the roll, the servants of a dragon appear and demand that the hero hand over the project source. If the hero refuses, the servants warn that the dragon will come to claim the project source for themselves.
47–48	Before the roll, the hero notices a contract written on a physical project source or accompanying other materials that appears only under certain conditions (in the presence of magic, in the light of a full moon, and so forth). The contract promises that anyone who signs it in blood will receive the true and full answer to three questions in exchange for a week of service to the hag Corrine Withersnipe. The hag appears instantly if the contract is signed.
49–50	After the roll, an unexpected total eclipse of the sun occurs, lasting one hour. Once per respite when any creature makes another project roll for the project, another eclipse occurs and lasts twice as long as the previous. Some folk take this phenomenon as a sign of impending doom that will descend when the project is completed. Others believe that a powerful enemy is merely trying to scare the heroes into not finishing the project.
51–52	Before the roll, the hero gets a visit from an NPC who they helped in the past. The NPC has found a guide that relates to the project, and gives it to the hero as a gift of thanks.
53–54	After the roll, a local officer of the law appears and

	tells the hero to stop working on their project. The nature of the hero's project has just become outlawed in the region, and the constable insists on locking up the project source and arresting anyone who gets in the way.
55–56	Before the roll, the hero determines that the research or crafting they are planning requires only part of their attention. They can either make two project rolls for their current project, or can make one for that project and one for another project.
57–58	After the roll, a component or tool the hero is using for the project suddenly reveals itself to be magic or psionic as it starts to hum with energy and glow red hot. If the item isn't quickly cooled, it explodes, and work on the project can't continue until a replacement is found.
59–60	Before the roll, the hero realizes they're at a critical point in the project, and can achieve more if they just shave off a few hours of rest. By choosing to lose some sleep, the character can make two project rolls for the project, but when they end the current respite, they do so with one fewer Recoveries than usual.
61–62	Before the roll, a sage approaches the hero and offers to help with the project. The NPC isn't really a sage, however—they're an assassin hoping to catch the hero off guard.
63–64	Before the roll, a sage approaches the hero and offers to help with the project. However, the NPC is secretly a bard who wishes to compose a song about the hero's deeds. The NPC tries to ingratiate himself to the hero while contributing nothing to the actual project.
65–66	After the roll, a physical project source or a component of the project creates an unstable portal to another world related to the nature of the project. A group of tiny devils, elementals, or other creatures start clawing their way out of the item and causing mischief.
67–68	After the roll, the hero realizes that the project source also holds information regarding the location of another project source or certain items, which are needed for another project the hero or one of their allies wants to pursue.
69–70	Before the roll, a group of enemies working for the campaign's villain attacks the hero, intent on destroying as much of the project's research material and other resources as possible.
71–72	Before the roll, a storm moves into the area that threatens to persist until the project is completed. The closer to completion the hero gets on their project, the more violent the storm becomes. It's possible the storm is conscious, or someone is controlling the storm to stand in the hero's way.
73–74	After the roll, the hero falls asleep. They go on to

	complete the project in their dreams, but they have no access to that progress while they're awake. The hero can rectify this if they can find a way to physically enter into their dreams where the completed project rests.
75–76	Before the roll, a band of goblins barge in on the hero. If the hero has been fighting goblins on their recent adventures, the goblins attempt to run away with the research materials. Otherwise, the goblins are mostly curious about the project and the hero can make two project rolls if they choose to explain it and have the goblins help.
77–78	After the roll, the hero watches as they immediately lose that progress as if the project was moving backwards through time. A character familiar with psionics would recognize the phenomena as a chrono-anomaly. The project loses the same amount of progress each night until the hero finds and stops the source of the anomaly. Putting an end to the anomaly restores the project's progress.
79–80	Before the roll, the hero hears a voice beckoning them into the wode to work on their project. Each time the hero makes a project roll in the wode, they make three times the progress but feel more pressure to stay in the wode forever.
81–82	After the roll, the hero stumbles upon knowledge of an expert a day's travel away that could complete the project and have research materials for another hero's project.
83–84	Before the roll, fire rips through the hero's research materials and threatens to destroy the entire project. If the hero puts out the fire before everything is lost, they find the fire activated secret notes in the research materials that doubles the progress on the project from here on out.
85–86	After the roll, a skald NPC approaches the hero and asks if they would like to make the project "a little more exciting." If the hero agrees, the skald narrates the hero's progress on the project, prompting another project roll. If the second roll is lower than the first, the hero subtracts the second roll from the original roll. If it's equal or higher, the hero adds the second roll to the original roll.
87–88	Before the roll, the hero's rival reluctantly comes seeking their help on their own project. If the hero agrees, the hero makes their project roll towards the rival's project, and the director makes the rival's project roll towards the hero's project.
89–90	After the roll, the hero finds that they've finished their planned progress a little earlier than expected and finds an opportunity to either relax or go carousing with other heroes that are free. Everyone that joins the hero starts the next encounter with 10 temporary Stamina.
91–92	Before the roll, the hero is approached by a wagoneer

	that needs help fixing their wagon. If the hero helps, they find out the wagoneer is allied with the campaign's villain. Should they meet on the battlefield, the wagoneer refuses to fight the hero and leaves peacefully.
93–94	After the roll, the research materials and any evidence of the project disappear into thin air. If the hero investigates the area, they'll notice footprints fleeing the scene and traces of gnoll hair.
95–96	After the roll, the hero suddenly no longer understands or comprehends the research materials after focusing on them for too long. If the hero leaves the project alone for the next two respites, they'll finally be able to comprehend the research again and start the next project roll with an automatic breakthrough.
97–98	Before the roll, one of the hero's research materials shrinks and gets pulled through a mousehole. A group of radenwights sent mice to take the hero's resources so that they can finish their own project. The radenwights are willing to negotiate if the hero doesn't approach the situation with aggression.
99–100	There's no time to roll. An elemental springs forth from the research material and pulls the hero into a duel. If the hero can survive three rounds with the elemental on their own, the elemental vanishes and leaves behind a completed project. If the hero flees, falls unconscious, or gets help from an ally, the elemental destroys the research materials as they disappear.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Heroes can undertake the following research projects, which require the study of documents, spycraft, or interviewing experts. Unless a project has a complication table or entry of its own, research projects use the Crafting and Research Events Prompts table for event prompts.

DISCOVER LORE

Item Prerequisite: None

Project Source: Texts or knowledge related to the subject you wish to research

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason

Project Goal: Varies (see the table)

If you want to track the location of a lost treasure, decipher a ritual, or trace the lineage of a royal family to find the next heir to the throne, you can start a project to delve into whatever mysteries you seek to unravel. You might start a project to discover lore because the information can't be discovered through a regular test, or you could do so because you failed a test to recall information and now want to learn it through research.

When you start a project to discover lore, you choose the lore you want investigated and the questions you want answered. The Director tells you if the lore you seek amounts to common, obscure, lost, or forbidden

knowledge. The more esoteric the knowledge, the more project points are required to find the answers you seek.

When you begin a Discover Lore project, other creatures can also work on the project, using their respite activity to contribute a project roll to it in order to get the work done faster.

DISCOVER LORE PROJECT GOALS

Project	Goal
Common knowledge	15
Obscure knowledge	45
Lost knowledge	120
Forbidden knowledge	240

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Common knowledge is generally easy to discover with a day or so of research. It's not known by every passerby and takes time to uncover, but with plentiful local sources for the information, you don't need to spend a lot of time searching. It could be that you need to question several members of a rumor mill to figure out who a noble is not-so-secretly courting, or you might need to spend a few hours in a temple to find the particular religious text that carries a seldom-used alternative name for a deity.

OBSCURE KNOWLEDGE

Obscure knowledge is known only to specialized sages and is typically of interest only to those scholars. As such, precious few tomes are written on obscure subjects. Finding the right expert to interview or the best book to read typically requires several days of research. Uncovering the details of a ritual used to open and close a portal to the Sea of Stars isn't easy information to come by, but there are people out there who know how to do it—and who wrote the instructions down.

LOST KNOWLEDGE

Lost knowledge is so esoteric that even among a field's most dedicated scholars, there might be only one or two individuals who have dug deep enough to know that lore. Lost knowledge could come from a time so long ago that only a single text in a dead language now holds the lore you seek. Such lore often takes more than a week to hunt down. The location of a legendary steel dwarf's workshop is most likely lore that is lost—except for one map hidden in a private collection.

FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE

Forbidden knowledge is lore that a powerful individual or organization is attempting to keep secret. Those who know the secrets speak of them in whispered codes after passwords are exchanged, and write texts using ciphers. Hunting down leads and making sense of them typically takes weeks. The location of the dagger that slit the throat of the god of death is hidden behind layers of encoded text, and written in a dead language known only to that god's most devout followers.

GO UNDERCOVER

Item Prerequisites: Special

Project Source: None

Project Roll Characteristic: Intuition or Presence

Project Goal: 15

Going undercover to spy on a group of people is a cheap and easy way to find what you're looking for. Choose an organization when you undertake this activity. Completing this project grants you access to maps, knowledge about an organization's operations, or some other piece of knowledge that would be considered common or obscure (see the [Discover Lore](#) project). At the Director's discretion, you must have a disguise, signet ring, tattoo, or some other indication that you belong to the organization in order to begin this project. Additionally, the Director can decide that the knowledge you seek may not be gained through this project but rather through adventuring.

Complications: This project has its own special complications. The first time you complete this project within an organization, you have a 25% chance of being caught. Each time you complete this project with the same organization, the chance of you being caught the next time you use it within the same organization increases by 25% and the project goal increases by 30. If you are caught going undercover, you are ruthlessly pursued by the organization you were infiltrating.

While your secret is safe, you may be called upon by the organization to complete a task you may not want to do. Failure to complete the task leads to you being caught.

HONE CAREER SKILLS

Item Prerequisite: None

Project Source: None

Project Roll Characteristic: Intuition

Project Goal: 240 if your career granted you two skills, or 360 if your career granted you three skills

You revisit your previous life and freshen up on the experience it provided you. When the project is complete, you have an edge on tests made with the skills provided by your career.

HONE CAREER SKILLS EVENTS PROMPTS

d10	Prompt
1	Before the roll, an old colleague from the hero's past asks the hero if they would give up adventuring and come back to their old career. If the hero reaffirms their current role of being a hero, they gain a hero token. However, the project goal increases by 50 points, as their old colleague refuses to help them.
2	After the roll, the hero gets hurt on the job. They end the respite with 1 Recovery fewer than their maximum.
3	Before the roll, the hero stumbles upon an individual seeking guidance about entering the same career as the hero. If the hero forgoes their project roll to help the individual out, the individual becomes one of the hero's followers. The director determines if they are

	an artisan or a sage depending on the type of career the hero is attending to.
4	After the roll, the hero finds inspiration from their old life that helps out with another project that they or another hero is currently working on. The project owner of the second project can immediately make a project roll for this second project.
5	Before the roll, the hero stumbles into a negative aspect of their career that they forgot was particularly grueling. If the result of the project roll is 11 or lower, it is halved.
6	After the roll, the hero learns rumors of a treasure of the Director's choice that other members of the hero's previous career are seeking. The hero automatically determines where the treasure waits when they complete this project if they don't seek it ahead of time.
7	Before the roll, a vaguely familiar stranger in the same career field asks if they could work with the hero on their project. If the hero accepts their help, the hero can add 2d10 + 2 to the project roll. Afterwards, the hero realizes the stranger works for the campaign's villain or believes in their motive.
8	After the roll, the hero feels younger (about 5 years). A creature familiar with psionics would recognize the phenomena as a chrono-anomaly. The hero grows younger each time they make progress on the project, ceasing to exist if they complete the project, until the hero finds and stops the source of the anomaly.
9	Before the roll, the hero stumbles upon an old memento from when they actively worked within this career. They can choose between having an automatic breakthrough on the project roll or gaining a Hero token.
10	After the roll, the hero starts getting back into the rhythm of their old career. They can roll 2 additional project rolls.

LEARN FROM A MASTER

Item Prerequisite: None

Project Source: An NPC with a higher level and the same class as you or another class with an ability you wish to learn or texts of their teachings in a language you know

Project Roll Characteristic: your highest characteristic

Project Goal: Varies (see Master Teaching Project Goals table)

When you start a project with a master, you choose the goal you wish to work on as well as the benefit you would gain from it. The Director tells you if it is within the master's ability to teach you what you're looking for. Alternatively, you may stumble upon the left behind teachings of a master, and learning from them may fit into one of the following goals.

MASTER TEACHING PROJECT GOALS

Project	Goal
Hone Ability	120
Improve Control	500
Acquire Ability	1,000

HONE ABILITY

You sharpen the potency of one of your abilities of your choice. Choose between adding a +1/+1/+1 damage bonus to the ability or improving the distance of a ranged ability by 2. An ability can only be honed this way once.

IMPROVE CONTROL

You've learned efficient use of one of your heroic abilities. Reduce its initial heroic resource cost by 1 (to a minimum of 1). An ability can only receive this benefit once.

ACQUIRE ABILITY

If your master's class is different than yours, they give you a taste of another way. You gain one Signature Ability from the master's class. If your master is a tactician, you can gain the Strike Now ability instead. You can't gain another from their class.

LEARN FROM A MASTER EVENTS PROMPTS

d10	Prompt
1	After the roll, the hero experiences a revelation and all their training snaps into place. The hero rolls two additional project rolls for this project.
2	Before the roll, your master has died mid-way through training, or the manuscript is found to be incomplete. In order to complete your project, you must seek out another master that was trained by them to complete the project or find another copy of the manuscript.
3	Before the roll, while the master is adept at the skill taught in this lesson, they are less adept at the teaching of that skill. The project requires an additional 50 project points to complete.
4	Before the roll, the master requires your aid with manual labor before your training can begin. The hero must spend this respite completing the requirement, earning a hero token for their efforts instead of making the project roll.
5	Before the roll, the master's training regime is grueling. The hero rolls an additional 1d10 project points during this respite, but when their respite finishes, they lose a Recovery.
6	After the roll, the mentor's relationship with the master deepens. In addition to the current project, the master provides information relevant to the hero's goals, another project, or a surprising connection to a mystery from the hero's past.

7	Before the roll, the hero discovers that the master has been working with an enemy of the hero by covertly providing them information about the hero's activities. The hero can continue learning from the master, but risks exposing the party to danger by doing so.
8	After the roll, an accident, fire, or other natural disaster disrupts the hero's training during this Respite. They gain half the project points rolled, but if they act to stop the event, their act of heroism raises their Renown by 1.
9	After the roll, the master gifts the hero with the item prerequisite for an item they wish to craft or a consumable.
10	After the roll, the hero uncovers a secret in their studies, something the master had never anticipated, or the manuscript had clearly not covered. The project goal is halved.

LEARN NEW LANGUAGE

Item Prerequisite: None

Project Source: Texts or instruction that teach the language you want to learn

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition

Project Goal: 120

When you start this project, choose a language taught by the project source. When the project is complete, you understand the language.

LEARN NEW RECIPE

Item Prerequisites: Varies (see Recipe table)

Project Source: Recipe in a language you know or a cook tutor

Project Roll Characteristic: Intuition or Reason (+3 if it's a recipe from your Culture)

Project Goal: 100

You practice being able to reliably follow a recipe for a dish. The ingredients required depend on the recipe being followed, which may be easier or harder to acquire based on the degrees of separation you have from the recipe's origin. When you complete this project, you can make 5 servings of the specific recipe as a respite activity whenever you have access to the ingredients. You and each creature taking a respite with you can a serving and gain its benefits until they take another respite. A creature can only benefit from one recipe at a time and can't benefit from more than one serving of a recipe at a time.

The recipes in the Recipes table detail the effects consuming a serving of the recipe confers.

- **Comforting:** When you fail a saving throw, you can choose to succeed instead. This benefit then disappears.
- **Hearty:** You gain 1 additional Recovery.
- **Supernatural Power:** You increase the value of one of your characteristic scores by 1. This can increase your characteristics to 6.

RECIPES

Project	Item Prerequisites	Benefits
Modern	Common Ingredients (examples: flour, carrots, beef)	Hearty
Vintage or Home	Key Ingredients (examples: starfruit, kindleseeds, oarfish)	Comforting
Ancient or Lost	Rare/Extinct Ingredients (examples: honeylillies, steel apples)	Supernatural Power

OTHER PROJECTS

Not all heroes want to craft or research during their time between adventures. Some wish to build organizations, reconnect with family, or just simply go fishing.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Item Prerequisite: None

Project Source: None

Project Roll Characteristic: Varies

Project Goal: 75

When you begin this project, you must be in a settlement or other place where people gather, and you must be in that place each time you make a project roll for the project. You can undertake several Community Service projects, each one in a different community.

While undertaking this project, you provide help to people in need, doing odd jobs, tutoring life skills, cleaning statues, finding lost valuables, or the like. The Director determines the characteristic that applies to the project roll based on the activities you undertake. When you complete this project, you receive a random consumable of the Director's choice as thanks for your hard work.

COMMUNITY SERVICE EVENTS PROMPTS

d10	Prompt
1	After the roll, your service is recognized by the local nobility or authorities. Upon completion of the project, the hero's Renown increases by 1.
2	Before the roll, a mysterious force hinders the work in an unfortunate way. If it's a construction project, tools go missing. Tutoring materials vanish. Cleaning supplies turn up already filthy. The hero can't continue the project until the culprit: a malignant devil or spirit connected to their past.
3	Before the roll, the community is so excited by the project that they join to lend a hand. The project gains an automatic breakthrough.
4	After the roll, a sympathetic NPC, perhaps a friend or ally from the community or from the hero's past, offers to help this Respite. If the hero accepts the help, they gain a +3 to the roll.
5	Before the roll, the project has unearthed a previously

	lost detail within the community, like a boarded up alleyway, a hidden cellar passage, or a surprising detail on a statue or civic monument. The local authorities take a keen interest in this, as it relates to an old mystery in the area. The hero can investigate this mystery with them if they choose.
6	After the roll, a seemingly benign action taken by the hero has caused a magic bad luck curse to descend on the hero. Until they break the enchantment, the value of all project rolls they make are halved as they're hindered by the curse.
7	After the roll, a saint blesses on the hero's work. The hero feels supernaturally rejuvenated by civic contribution and gains an additional Recovery when they finish the respite that lasts until the end of their next respite. If the character is a conduit, they also experience a breakthrough.
8	Before the roll, the hero uncovers a peaceful radenwight warren that heartily objects to the work being done around their entrance. The hero must negotiate with their leader in order to continue the project.
9	Before the roll, a local malcontent has turned their focus on the hero and roused the people against them. The hero must either contend with the crowds (losing the benefit of the Respite) or find the malcontent and win them over before proceeding.
10	Before the roll, a thief, assassin, or other criminal finds this project, or the hero attempting to complete it, worth assisting. They're able to throw in an additional 50 points of aid towards the completion of the project, so long as the hero looks the other way should they cross paths again.

FISHING

Item Prerequisites: None

Project Source: None

Project Roll Characteristic: Agility, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: Varies

You've gone fishing, provided you are near a body of water. The project roll for this project has the following changes:

- The points you roll represent the length of the fish (or fish-like creature) you catch.
- During each respite when you undertake this activity, you continue making project rolls until you get an 11 or lower (fish got away, earning you no points) or a breakthrough.
- A breakthrough results in rolling on the fishing events table instead of additional points or another project roll.

When you finish rolling, you can spend the points you earned on a reward from the Tackle table. Any points you don't spend during this respite activity are lost.

TACKLE

Reward	Cost	Effect
Hearty Meal (1 serving)	50	A serving of this meal gives the eater 1 additional Recovery that lasts until their next respite. A creature can only benefit from 1 serving of this meal or another (like from the Learn a New Recipe project) at a time.
Better Tackle	120	You gain the following title. Angler: You have an edge on all Fishing project rolls.
Great Meal (1 serving)	100	A serving of this meal gives the eater 1 additional Recovery and 10 Temporary Stamina that lasts until the end of their next respite if it doesn't disappear through damage first. A creature can only benefit from 1 serving of this meal or another (like from the Learn a New Recipe project) at a time.
Fishing Event	200	You invoke a fishing event as if you got a breakthrough.
Legendary Fisher	300	You gain the following title. Goldenrod: While undertaking the Fishing project, you can ignore the results of one project roll.

FISHING EVENTS

1	While fishing, the hero reels in a talking fish. The fish informs the hero of any events that have occurred within 10 squares of the body of liquid they fished in within the last week, or one piece of Forbidden Knowledge (see Discover Lore).
2	While fishing, the hero reels in note in a bottle. The note is written in Anjali and binds the reader into a deal with a powerful devil if read out loud, giving the devil ownership of the reader's soul in exchange for rolling an additional 1d10 on all future fishing and project rolls.
3	While fishing, some passersby inform the hero of a rumor of a magic fishing rod that allows the fisher to double the length of the fish they reel in.
4	While fishing, the hero reels in an angulotl daybringer . They're insulted by the hero catching them and threaten to summon heavy thunderstorms and drown the region in a flood. However, they can be negotiated with and might provide the hero with 1 serving of an amazing meal if they end things on good terms. A serving of this meal gives the eater 1 additional Recovery and 25 temporary Stamina that lasts until the end of their next respite if it doesn't disappear through damage first. A creature can only benefit from 1 serving of this meal or another (like from the Learn a New Recipe project) at a time.
5	While fishing, the hero reels in half of a mysterious ancient treasure of the Director's choice. If the other half is found, the treasure magically melds together again.
6	While fishing, the hero has fond memories of their life up until now, energizing them. They have an edge on all

	Presence tests until the end of their next respite.
7	The hero manages to reach a new fishing milestone. They gain the following title. Master of Reels: When you deal damage to a creature or object that is 2 or more squares away from you that doesn't force move the creature, you can choose to pull the target a number of squares equal to your Agility, Reason, or Presence score (your choice).
8	It's a relaxing, meditative exercise! While fishing, the hero has a breakthrough either on another project they're working on, or they can give the breakthrough to another hero's project.
9	While fishing, the hero is pulled by an ancient fish. The hero must succeed on a hard Might test in order to reel in a humongous fish worth 100 points, or fail and end the respite with 1 Recovery fewer than their maximum. On a success with complication result, the hero gets the fish and loses the Recovery.
10	While fishing, the hero catches their line on what appears to be an underwater cavern. Inside the cavern is a treasure of the Director's choice being guarded by a revenant knight fulfilling their duty until their captain returns.

SPEND TIME WITH LOVED ONES

Item Prerequisites: None

Project Source: None

Project Roll Characteristic: Presence

Project Goal: 60

You revitalize your spirit by spending time with people you love who you haven't seen in a long while. You must be able to communicate with them in order to undertake this project and make project rolls for it. When you complete this project, your Stamina maximum increases by 12 + your level until the end of your next respite. You can't start another Spend Time with Loved Ones project for 1 month.

SPEND TIME WITH LOVED ONES EVENTS PROMPTS

d10	Prompt
1	Before the roll, the hero is presented with an heirloom, artifact, or family secret that aids another project they've undertaken or wanted to undertake. They can immediately make a project roll for that project as well as for this one.
2	Before the roll, the hero's family embraces their loved one's companions as their own. Additional party members can contribute their project rolls to this project without using a respite activity. When this project is completed the entire party gains the benefit of completion.
3	Before the roll, the hero's enemies have tracked them to their home. They immediately launch an attack, hoping to catch the hero off guard.

4	After the roll, the hero learns that a distant friend or family member has joined the cause of their enemies. Their loved ones plead with the hero to bring this person back home safely.
5	After the roll, a loved one gives the hero a rare consumable to aid in their travels.
6	After the roll, the family shares that they have been subjected to a curse. The only way to lift it is by returning a family heirloom to its original place of origin.
7	Before the roll, the hero meets an old family friend who is a more experienced adventurer. They offer to mentor the hero in exchange for a treasure or favor. If the hero accepts, they also complete a Learn from Master project when this project is complete.
8	Before the roll, the surrounding community is not as happy to see the hero as their loved ones. By returning home, the hero put those they care about in danger, either with the authorities or an opposing power in the region. In order to complete with the project, they need to earn the trust of those they once called enemies.
9	After the roll, the hero learns that family time is not always as rejuvenating as it seems. Completing the project requires an additional 20 project points, thanks to difficult relatives.
10	Before the roll, the hero's loved ones ask if the hero would like to cook together. If they accept, the hero can apply the results of this roll to a Learn a New Recipe project goal as well as this project. If the hero is not currently undergoing a Learn a New Recipe project, they begin one now and their family provides the prerequisite materials and source.

REWARDS

Virtue is its own reward ... but wouldn't a magic sword also be kinda nice? As heroes adventure, they find and craft treasures and earn titles, renown, wealth, and followers. This chapter presents all the various rewards a hero can earn during their career! As you read over the rewards within, make note of the treasures and titles your hero would like to earn—then you can start pursuing them during your adventures.

TREASURES

You've helped save the world! Or at least a corner of that world important to you. Now you deserve the treasures that can help you do so even more efficiently next time. So claim your magic sword, psionic shield, and Catapult Dust, and let's ride to adventure!

Treasures are the supernatural items that heroes find on their adventures, or that they craft themselves to help with their heroics. You might claim a magic whip from a bandit captain, or create a psionic necklace that will help you take down a dread cult.

Treasures come in all shapes and sizes, and are broken down into four types:

Consumables are the most numerous treasures. These include potions, dusts, and other items that are consumed by you when you activate them. Most consumables can only be used once!

Trinkets are treasures with supernatural properties that never fade. These include magic bags, boots, cloaks, gloves, jewelry, and other oddities.

Leveled items are treasures that become even more powerful in the hands of a higher-level hero. They connect with their user, building a bond that fuels the item's supernatural power. Armor, implements, and weapons are the most common types of leveled items.

Artifacts are treasures of legendary power that can change or shape an adventure—or even an entire campaign. Each of these game-breaking items is unique, highly coveted, and well guarded.

FOUND, EARNED, OR CRAFTED

The rules of the game account for worlds where the average person—sometimes even the average noble—doesn't have regular access to treasures. There might be an apothecary in the capital city of a region, but they're selling herbal remedies, not supernatural potions. In Vasloria, a town blacksmith isn't selling magic maces, and the local tailor doesn't make psionic capes. There simply aren't enough treasures readily available to create a good trade economy. Word sometimes gets around of mysterious clubs where heroes and treasure seekers can meet up to swap items, but the constant threat of thieves makes such markets difficult to find.

Most treasures are found as part of adventures. Many people concoct dastardly schemes, but only those with the will and power to enact that vision become villains—and acquiring treasures of great power is often part of a villain's plans. As such, the heroes who vanquish those

evildoers often get to claim those treasures for themselves. At other times, generous and well-off individuals such as monarchs and powerful mages can reward treasures as thanks for heroic deeds.

Heroes can also craft their own treasures, forging the tools they need to get the job done. Items that can be crafted have their item prerequisites, project source, project roll characteristic, and project goal (the number of project points needed to complete the project) noted in their descriptions. See [Downtime Projects](#) for more information about crafting.

TREASURE ITEM PREREQUISITES

Each treasure has an item prerequisite for crafting. The exact nature of many of these materials is left nebulous so that the Director can more easily work them into a campaign. What's a mindspider and how rare is their silk? That's for the Director to decide. This makes it easier for them to drop it into their planned adventures or craft an entire adventure around finding that one item.

WEARING TREASURES

Many treasures, such as cloaks, jewelry, hats, and boots, must be worn. Unless the Director deems otherwise, these items supernaturally resize themselves to fit the creature using them.

Wearable treasures have keywords that indicate which part of the body they are meant to adorn—Arms, Feet, Hands, Head, Neck, or Waist. The Ring keyword marks treasures typically worn on the finger. You can wear any number of treasures that have the same body keyword as long as the Director deems it reasonable. For example, it might be fine for a four-armed time raider to wear two pairs of bracers, but the Director might decide that the same hero can't benefit from wearing two magic cloaks at once. If the Director decides you're wearing too many treasures with the same body keyword, none of those treasures function.

Though body keywords indicate where a treasure is meant to be worn, treasures can still function if worn on other parts of the body. For example, a hero without ears or who just wants to have a different look might wear an earring as a piercing anywhere else they desire.

If a wearable treasure comes as a set, such as a pair of bracers, boots, or earrings, all items in the set must be worn to gain the treasure's benefits.

WIELDING TREASURES

Some treasures are wielded in the form of weapons or implements. A weapon might have the Light Weapon, Medium Weapon, or Heavy Weapon keywords, or might have a keyword denoting a specific category of weapon (Bow, Polearm, and so forth). An implement might have the Implement keyword or a keyword denoting the type of implement (Orb, Wand, and so forth). Armor is also considered a wielded treasure, with the Light Armor, Medium Armor, or Heavy Armor keywords, or the Shield keyword.

A hero can wield as many weapons, implements, suits of armor, or shields as they can feasibly hold or wear.

However, an ability can benefit only from one weapon or implement at a time.

TREASURES AND KITS

To gain the benefits of a weapon or armor treasure, the treasure must have keywords that match the equipment of your kit. For instance, a hero using the Warrior Priest kit can benefit from wearing a heavy armor treasure and wielding light weapon treasures, since those are part of that kit. But they gain no benefit from using treasures that are light armor, medium armor, shields, medium weapons, or heavy weapons.

If your hero doesn't use a kit, they can't gain benefits from using armor or weapon treasures unless they have a feature that says otherwise, such as the conduit's Prayer of Soldier's Skill.

MAGIC AND PSIONIC TREASURES

The Magic and Psionic keywords don't restrict you from using specific treasures, such as implements, with specific abilities. An implement with the Magic keyword can be used to enhance Psionic abilities and vice versa.

While treasures can enhance specific abilities, for the purpose of the rules, they don't add the Magic or Psionic keyword to abilities that don't already have them, even if they are enhancing those abilities.

STAMINA AND DAMAGE BONUSES

If two treasures give a creature a bonus to their Stamina or the rolled damage of their abilities, only the higher bonus applies unless otherwise noted. The Stamina and damage bonuses from consumables ignore this rule and can be stacked with other Stamina and damage bonuses granted by treasures.

CONSUMABLES

Consumables are treasures that can be used a limited number of times before they expire, losing whatever makes them supernatural. You can drink a potion once, and when you do so, that's it. It's consumed. Other consumables might have a specific number of charges that can be spent. Once those charges are gone, the treasure is useless.

Consumables are organized by echelon to make life easy for the Director handing them out (see [Echelons of Play](#) in [The Basics](#)). As a guideline, a hero should always be able to find consumable treasures or the materials required to craft consumables of their echelon and lower. For example, heroes who are 5th level should be able to find consumables of 1st and 2nd echelon. In some cases, the Director might decide to award consumables of an echelon higher than the heroes' echelon, but such a choice means giving the heroes more power than the encounter-building guidelines in *Draw Steel: Monsters* accounts for.

Your character can carry any number of consumables at a time.

1ST-ECHELON CONSUMABLES

This section presents 1st-echelon consumable treasures in alphabetical order.

BLACK ASH DART

A diamond-shaped dart holds a shimmering black vial at its core.

Keywords: Magic

Item Prerequisites: Three vials of black ash from the College of Black Ash

Project Source: Texts or lore in Szetch

Project Roll Characteristic: Agility or Intuition

Project Goal: 45 (yields 1d3 darts, or three darts if crafted by a shadow)

Effect: As a maneuver, you can make a ranged free strike using a black ash dart. The attack deals 1 bonus damage and adds the following effects to the tier results of the power roll:

- 11 or lower: **You can teleport the target up to 2 squares.**
- 12–16: **You can teleport the target up to 4 squares.**
- 17+: **You can teleport the target up to 6 squares.**

BLOOD ESSENCE VIAL

A brittle glass tube has a ruby set atop it, attached by a hinge.

Keywords: Potion, Psionic

Item Prerequisites: A ruby purloined from a vampire

Project Source: Texts or lore in Proto-Ctholl

Project Roll Characteristic: Agility or Reason

Project Goal: 45

Effect: When you damage an adjacent creature who has blood, you can capture the target's life essence in this vial (no action required). Record the damage you dealt. As a maneuver, you can drink the contents of the vial to regain Stamina equal to half the damage dealt. If you spend 1 Heroic Resource while you drink, you regain Stamina equal to the damage dealt. Once you drink from the vial, it crumbles to dust.

CATAPULT DUST

A small leather pouch is filled with this fine blue powder.

Keywords: Magic

Item Prerequisites: An ounce of witherite crystal

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition

Project Goal: 45

Effect: Catapult Dust was developed as a cost-effective magical siege weapon. As an action, you pour the dust out in an adjacent unoccupied space to fill an area as large as a 2 cube. At the start of your next turn, the ground at the bottom of the area erupts violently upwards and in a direction of your choice. Any unattended objects in the area, or creatures who have entered the area since the dust was poured, are launched in an arc that is 6 + 1d6 squares long and 3 + 1d6 squares high.

GIANT'S-BLOOD FLAME

A small pot is filled with a viscous, ochre oil that smells of sulfur and burnt hair.

Keywords: Magic, Oil

Item Prerequisites: One vial of fire giant blood

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition

Project Goal: 45

Effect: As a maneuver, you coat a weapon in this oil and ignite it. The weapon burns persistently and without harming itself until it is extinguished as a maneuver. Whenever you use a weapon that is ignited this way with a weapon ability, you deal an extra 2 fire damage with rolled damage.

Alternatively, you can use a maneuver to throw the pot up to 5 squares, coating the square where it lands and any creatures or objects in that square with a sticky, flammable oil. If the oil takes any fire damage, it burns persistently and deals 5 fire damage at the end of each of your turns to anything it has coated. A creature covered in the oil or who can reach it can use an action to extinguish the flames and end the effect.

GROWTH POTION

This thick, green liquid tastes of licorice and potatoes.

Keywords: Magic, Potion

Item Prerequisites: Five ounces of seagrass

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition

Project Goal: 45

Effect: As a maneuver, you can drink this potion or pour it over an object of size 2 or smaller, causing the target's size to increase by 1. If you are the target, your current Stamina and Stability are doubled, you gain an edge on Might tests, and your weapon abilities deal extra rolled damage equal to your highest characteristic score. You shrink back to your original size after 3 rounds, halving your current Stamina and Stability, and losing the potion's other benefits. Objects maintain their new size permanently.

HEALING POTION

Thick and red, this liquid tastes of sour beer.

Keywords: Magic, Potion

Item Prerequisites: One ounce of costmary leaves

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition

Project Goal: 45

Effect: When you drink this potion as a maneuver, you regain Stamina equal to your recovery value without spending a Recovery.

IMP'S TONGUE

The tongue of an imp has been dried and preserved. Yuck.

Keywords: Magic

Item Prerequisites: One imp's tongue

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition

Project Goal: 45

Effect: As a maneuver, you place the imp's tongue on your own tongue, causing it to reconstitute and attach itself to your tongue. While attached, the Imp's Tongue allows you to speak any language and understand any language spoken to you. This benefit ends after 1 hour, when the tongue is absorbed into your body.

LACHOMP TOOTH

A thumb-sized serrated tooth seems to scratch your flesh in some way whenever it is handled.

Keywords: Psionic

Item Prerequisites: A leftover carcass of a lachomp meal

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition

Project Goal: 45 (yields 1d3 teeth)

Effect: As a maneuver, you attach a lachomp tooth to a weapon, allowing that weapon to supernaturally flicker in and out of reality. Your next strike that uses this weapon can tear through multiple targets in a line (for a ranged strike) or surrounding you (for a melee strike). The attack adds the following effects to the tier results of the power roll:

- **11 or lower:** You can affect one additional target with this strike.
- **12–16:** You can affect up to three additional targets with this strike.
- **17+:** You can affect up to seven additional targets with this strike.

MIRROR TOKEN

A gold-rimmed, mirror-faced coin trembles in the hand as if it were repelled by your touch.

Keywords: Psionic

Item Prerequisites: Three sheets of glass, sunbaked gold dust

Project Source: Texts or lore in Variac

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition

Project Goal: 45

Effect: While the Mirror Token is on your person and you are targeted by a ranged strike, you can use a triggered action to crush the token and ignore the strike. Half the damage you would have taken and any effects of the triggering strike are imposed on the creature making the strike.

POCKET HOMUNCULUS

A densely interlocking sphere of clockwork gears features facets that show the countenance of the item's wielder.

Keywords: Psionic

Item Prerequisites: A strip of starmetal coated in the blood of the item's crafter

Project Source: Texts or lore in Zaliac

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason

Project Goal: 45

Effect: When activated as a maneuver, this item erupts in a bright flash, you can shift 1 square without your enemies noticing your movement, and a homunculus perfectly resembling you appears in a space adjacent to you. The homunculus is a creature with Stamina 15, a 0 in all their characteristics, and a speed and stability equal to yours.

They appear indistinguishable from you, but can't use any abilities.

While you have line of effect to your homunculus, you can use a maneuver to issue them a telepathic command. The homunculus performs the command to the best of their ability. If not commanded, the homunculus mimics your movements and speech. When you move, the homunculus moves with you, matching your pace. The homunculus crumbles to dust after 1 hour or if reduced to Stamina 0.

PORTABLE CLOUD

This thin glass sphere holds a tiny roiling cloud.

Keywords: Magic

Item Prerequisites: Ten ounces of rainwater from a sacred fey grove, plus optional prerequisites (see below)

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition

Project Goal: 30 or 45 (see below)

Effect: As a maneuver, you throw this delicate glass sphere up to 5 squares, breaking it and creating a 4 cube of fog. The fog dissipates after 10 minutes or if a strong gust of wind created by a storm or magic passes through the area.

Enterprising mages within various thieves' guilds have developed variations of the Portable Cloud. Each variation has a secondary item prerequisite and a project goal of 45.

Noxious Cloud: Filled with a green or putrid yellow haze, this sphere spreads a choking, foul-smelling mist when broken. Each creature who enters the cloud for the first time in a round or starts their turn there takes 5 poison damage. Additionally, any creature is weakened while in the fog. *Additional Item Prerequisites:* One ounce of undead flesh.

Thunderhead Cloud: Small lightning bolts arc around the black cloud in this sphere, which creates a 3 cube of cloud and lightning when broken. Each creature who enters the cloud for the first time in a round or starts their turn there takes 5 lightning damage. Additionally, any creature is slowed while in the cloud. *Additional Item Prerequisites:* A spool of copper wire.

PROFESSOR VERATISMO'S QUAFF 'N HUFF SNUFF

This tiny compact holds a colorless powder with the slightest astringent smell.

Keywords: Potion, Psionic

Item Prerequisites: The roots of a just-budded nightshade

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason

Project Goal: 45

Effect: As a maneuver, you sprinkle a dose of this powder onto food or drink, or blow it at an adjacent creature who is grabbed, restrained, or unconscious. A creature who is exposed to blown powder (even if they hold their breath) or consumes a dose of the powder must speak only true statements for the next hour. Additionally, other creatures gain an edge on Presence and Intuition tests made to convince the target to speak or to read the target's emotions. Any such creature has a double edge on the test

if the target doesn't realize they've been affected by the snuff.

SNAPDRAGON

This delicate orange blossom has a sickly-sweet smell.

Keywords: Magic

Item Prerequisites: Fifty snapdragon seeds

Project Source: Texts or lore in Yllyric

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition

Project Goal: 45 (yields 1d6 + 1 snapdragons)

Effect: As a maneuver, you sniff a magical snapdragon blossom, causing it to wither and making your movements more forceful and explosive. The next damage-dealing ability you use deals 5 extra damage and gains a +2 bonus to the distance of any forced movement it imposes. If the ability does not impose forced movement, you can push each creature targeted by the ability up to 2 squares.

TRINKETS

Trinkets are treasures that can be used at will without a reduction in their potency. They generally provide a small benefit, such as allowing you to see farther or become a bit better at picking locks.

Like consumables, treasures are organized by echelon. You can carry any number of trinkets.

1ST-ECHELON TRINKETS

This section presents 1st-echelon trinket treasures in alphabetical order.

COLOR CLOAK (BLUE)

This silky-blue hooded cloak is emblazoned with a golden Anjali sigil meaning "ice."

Keywords: Magic, Neck

Item Prerequisites: A pint of blue ichor, soul chalk

Project Source: Licensing agreements in Anjali

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition

Project Goal: 150

Effect: While worn, a blue Color Cloak grants you cold immunity equal to your level.

Additionally, when you are targeted by any effect that deals cold damage, you can use a triggered action to shift a number of squares equal to your level. If you do so, the cold immunity granted by the cloak becomes cold weakness with the same value until the end of the next round. You can't use this triggered action again until this weakness ends.

COLOR CLOAK (RED)

This woolen red hooded cloak is emblazoned with a golden Anjali sigil meaning "fire."

Keywords: Magic, Neck

Item Prerequisites: A pint of red ichor, soul chalk

Project Source: Licensing agreements in Anjali

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition

Project Goal: 150

Effect: While worn, a red Color Cloak grants you fire immunity equal to your level.

Additionally, when you are targeted by any effect that deals fire damage, you can use a triggered action to reduce the damage to 0. If you do so, the fire immunity granted by this cloak becomes fire weakness with the same value until the end of the next round. You can't use this triggered action again until this weakness ends.

COLOR CLOAK (YELLOW)

This rubbery, yellow hooded cloak is emblazoned with a golden Anjali sigil meaning "lightning."

Keywords: Magic, Neck

Item Prerequisites: A pint of yellow ichor, soul chalk

Project Source: Licensing agreements in Anjali

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition

Project Goal: 150

Effect: While worn, a yellow Color Cloak grants you lightning immunity equal to your level.

Additionally, when you are targeted by any effect that deals lightning damage, you can use a triggered action to cause the next damage-dealing ability you use to deal extra lightning damage equal to your level. Once you deal this extra damage, your lightning immunity becomes lightning weakness with the same value until the end of the next round. You can't use this triggered action again until this weakness ends.

DEADWEIGHT

Though this humanoid femur is coated in lead, it feels impossibly heavy for its size.

Keywords: Magic

Item Prerequisites: One humanoid femur, one bar of lead laced with starmetal

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition

Project Goal: 150

Effect: While holding the Deadweight, you fall twice as fast, taking an extra 1 damage for each square you fall (to a maximum of 75 total damage from a single fall). If you fall at least 5 squares in this way, choose one of your melee abilities normally used as an action. You can use that ability as a free maneuver once during the fall before you hit the ground.

DISPLACING REPLACEMENT BRACER

A wooden bangle is etched with an ambigram sigil of the Zaliac word for "transfer."

Keywords: Arms, Psionic

Item Prerequisites: Petrified wood from a tree that has not been observed since falling

Project Source: Texts or lore in Zaliac

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason

Project Goal: 150

Effect: As a maneuver, you transfer an object of size 1S or 1T held in one hand with another object of the same size that is within 10 squares. The objects change locations instantaneously and without creating any auditory or visual disturbance. If another creature is wearing or

holding the object you transfer to your hand and they have **I < 4**, they fail to notice the transfer.

DIVINE VINE

A coil of emerald-green vines is topped with the jaws of an enormous Venus flytrap.

Keywords: Magic

Item Prerequisites: Three withered mundane vines, a tree's blessing

Project Source: Songs in Yllyric

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Presence

Project Goal: 100

Effect: As a maneuver, you call upon the Divine Vine in Yllyric, causing it to extend up to 5 squares from you and attach its jaws to a creature or object, allowing you to use the Grab maneuver at a distance. If the target is grabbed, you can choose to keep the divine vine extended, pull the target adjacent to you, or pull yourself adjacent to the target. The divine vine stays attached to the target until the vine takes damage from a strike, the target escapes your grab, or you call upon the vine to release the target (no action required).

FLAMESHADE GLOVES

These finely stitched gloves appear to flicker in and out of reality when first handled.

Keywords: Hands, Psionic

Item Prerequisites: A humanoid's shadow disconnected from its source

Project Source: Texts or lore in Khelt

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason

Project Goal: 150

Effect: When you use a move action while wearing these gloves, you can place one hand upon a mundane object as part of that move action. If the object is 1 square thick or less and has open space on the other side (for example, a door or wall), you pull your body through it as though the object wasn't there.

If the object is too thick or has no open space on the other side, your hand becomes stuck inside the object. Removing your hand takes a successful **hard Might test** made as an action.

GECKO GLOVES

These scaled gloves have palms and fingers covered in near-invisible sticky hairs.

Keywords: Hands, Magic

Item Prerequisites: Ten gecko tails

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition

Project Goal: 100

Effect: While you wear these gloves, your grip is all but impossible to break. You can't be disarmed, you can't lose your grip while climbing, and creatures grabbed by you take a bane on the test for the Escape Grab maneuver.

GYROTOQUE

This tight-fitting cap is topped with a freely spinning bauble.

Keywords: Head, Psionic

Item Prerequisites: A lodestone that has been struck by lightning

Project Source: Texts or lore in Zaliac

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason

Project Goal: 150

Effect: When you spin the bauble atop this cap (no action required), the cap gains an amount of momentum equal to the number of squares you previously moved this turn. As a move action, you can spin the bauble the opposite direction to instantly infuse yourself with the cap's momentum. The next time you force move a creature before the end of your turn, the forced movement distance gains a bonus equal to the cap's momentum. The cap's momentum drops to 0 when you use it this way, if you spin the bauble again to gain new momentum, or at the end of your turn.

HELLCHARGER HELM

A steel helm is set with two curved ebony horns, a crackling plume of fire floating between them.

Keywords: Head, Magic

Item Prerequisites: One broken contract, one ingot of steel

Project Source: Texts or lore in Anjali and Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Might or Reason

Project Goal: 150

Effect: Whenever you take the Charge action while wearing this helmet, you gain a +5 bonus to speed until the end of your current turn. After charging, you can use the Knockback maneuver as a free maneuver, regardless of the target creature's size.

MASK OF THE MANY

A plain white mask is lined with soft black velvet—which smells faintly of blood.

Keywords: Head, Magic

Item Prerequisites: One used death shroud

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition

Project Goal: 150

Effect: While you wear this mask, you can use a maneuver to transform into any humanoid of equivalent size that you have previously seen. The humanoid's appearance reflects the last time you saw them, including whatever they were wearing. Your clothing and gear are transformed into the figure's clothing and gear, absorbed into your body, or retain their original forms, as you determine. If the figure possessed any treasures when you last saw them, they are duplicated as mundane copies while you are transformed.

QUANTUM SATCHEL

A woven metal drawstring seals this plain-looking leather bag, which is affixed with an opal brooch.

Keywords: Magic

Item Prerequisites: One uncut opal

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition

Project Goal: 150

Effect: When the brooch is removed from this bag and placed in a container or room, it magically entangles that

location to the bag. Any item that can be placed in the Quantum Satchel appears near to the brooch and can be recovered by reaching inside while picturing the desired object. The capacity of the satchel is dictated by the size of the container or room where the entangled brooch is. If an item is removed from the container or room containing the brooch, it can't be retrieved via the satchel.

UNBINDER BOOTS

A pair of ornately embroidered leather boots are covered in images of broken chains.

Keywords: Feet, Magic

Item Prerequisites: One battered gold chain of at least fifty links

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition

Project Goal: 150

Effect: These boots can temporarily unbind themselves from the chains of the earth, letting you move through the air as high as 3 squares above the ground from where you started. If you end your turn while you are still airborne, you fall.

LEVELED TREASURES

Like trinkets, leveled treasures can be used at will without a reduction in potency. However, leveled treasures tap into your will in a way that trinkets don't, becoming more powerful and increasing their capabilities as you level up.

LEVELED BENEFITS

Each leveled treasure has benefits that you gain at 1st, 5th, and 9th levels. You can't use a treasure's benefit until you achieve the appropriate benefits level. Leveled benefits are cumulative.

CARRY THREE SAFELY

Your connection with leveled treasures doesn't just make them useful. It also makes them dangerous. Each leveled item is a quasi-sentient, purpose-driven entity. A magic sword wishes to be used in combat. A psionic censer yearns to defy physics and bend reality. As such, a creature can safely carry a maximum of three leveled treasures at a time. If you carry more leveled treasures, those items become jealous of one another and fight for your attention, attempting to subconsciously influence you into using them—and leaving your other items behind.

It's fine to own or possess more than three leveled treasures, as long as the extras are stored away or in the possession of other creatures. But if you carry more than three leveled treasures, you must make a Presence test during each respite:

- **11 or lower:** One of your leveled treasures (chosen by the Director), grabs hold of your psyche. It forces you to sleepwalk or otherwise enter an active fugue state and discard the rest of your leveled treasures some place that you can't remember. If you want those items back, you'd better get looking before someone else finds them.

- **12–16:** Your items work together to prevent you from moving until you pick three items and leave the rest behind.
- **17+:** Nothing happens.

YOU DON'T NEED THREE

Because you can carry up to three leveled items safely, many players assume they should get and carry three. The truth is that many heroes get a great benefit from carrying just one or two leveled items and have no real need to for a third. That's totally fine! You'll still be super powerful with just one. You can always craft more trinkets and consumables that might serve you better.

LEVELED ARMOR TREASURES

Magical and psionic armor and shields are the primary tools of heroes always ready to hurl themselves into combat. This section presents leveled armor treasures in alphabetical order.

ADAPTIVE SECOND SKIN OF TOXINS

This suit is shaped of tough leather and set with thousands of tiny barbs on the inside, all thankfully pain-free to the touch.

Keywords: Light Armor, Magic

Item Prerequisites: Five rabid honey badger pelts, the quills of a hedgehog

Project Source: Texts or lore in Yllyric

Project Roll Characteristic: Agility or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wear this armor, you have a +6 bonus to Stamina, and you have immunity to acid and poison damage equal to your highest characteristic score.

5th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +12. Additionally, whenever an adjacent creature deals damage to you, they take 3 acid or poison damage (your choice).

9th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +21, and an adjacent creature who deals damage to you takes 6 acid or poison damage. Additionally, you can use a maneuver to transmute a 2-cube area of liquid or gas within 1 square of you into liquid acid or poison gas until the start of your next turn. Any creature who enters the area for the first time in a round or starts their turn there takes 6 acid or poison damage, as appropriate.

CHAIN OF THE SEA AND SKY

This set of heavy chain mail is created to allow free movement in extreme environments without sacrificing protection.

Keywords: Heavy Armor, Magic

Item Prerequisites: A set of wings from a flying carp, a set of chain mail rusted by seawater

Project Source: Texts or lore in Zaliac

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wear this armor, you have a +6 bonus to Stamina, you can automatically swim at full speed while moving, and you can breathe underwater for up to 1 hour. Returning to the surface to breathe air again for any length of time resets the armor's water-breathing benefit.

5th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +12, and you have cold immunity 5. Additionally, whenever you fall, you can extend your arms (no action required) to unfurl a thick membrane between your arms and your body, slowing your fall and allowing you to glide. While gliding in this way, you move downward at a speed of 1 square per round, and you can glide up to 6 squares horizontally as a free maneuver once during each of your turns.

9th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +21, and you have cold immunity 10. Additionally, whenever your feet are not touching a solid surface (including floating in water or being in midair), you gain an edge on ability power rolls, and any abilities that target you take a bane.

GRAND SCARAB

The bluish-purple carapace and wings of a gigantic scarab beetle have been formed into an ornate breastplate.

Keywords: Magic, Medium Armor

Item Prerequisites: A giant scarab beetle carapace

Project Source: Texts or lore in Phaedran

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wear this armor, you have a +6 bonus to Stamina and you can fly. If you don't end your turn on a solid surface, you fall.

5th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +12, and you no longer need to end your turn on a solid surface to avoid falling.

9th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +21. Additionally, if you fly any distance before making a strike, that strike gains an edge.

KING'S ROAR

A sunmetal kite shield bears the face of a lion on its front, its mouth opening wider over the course of battle.

Keywords: Magic, Shield

Item Prerequisites: A ballad of heroism, two ingots of sunmetal

Project Source: Songs in Old Sun Elf

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason, Intuition, or Presence

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wield or carry this shield, you gain a +3 bonus to Stamina. This Stamina bonus can be gained in addition to ones granted by other treasures. Additionally, you can use a maneuver to make the shield's lion face roar, choosing one creature or object adjacent to you and pushing that target up to 3 squares.

5th Level: The shield's bonus to Stamina increases to +6. When you cause the shield to roar, you target one creature or object within 3 squares and push that target up to 4 squares.

9th Level: The shield's bonus to Stamina increases to +9. When you cause the shield to roar, you target one creature or object within 6 squares, you push that target up to 5 squares, and the target is slowed until the end of their turn.

KURAN'ZOI PRISMSCALE

Each scale of this iridescent armor shimmers with the faint image of a frozen moment of time.

Keywords: Medium Armor, Psionic

Item Prerequisites: The eyes of a time raider who died valiantly in battle

Project Source: Texts or lore in Voll

Project Roll Characteristic: Intuition or Presence

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: You gain a +6 bonus to Stamina while you wear this armor. Additionally, whenever a creature within 5 squares deals damage to you, you can use a triggered action to capture a moment of time in the armor, forcing the creature to immediately end their turn after the damage and any effects associated with it are resolved.

5th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +12. When you capture a moment of time in the armor, the triggering creature is also slowed until the end of their turn.

9th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +21. Additionally, whenever you capture a moment of time in the armor, you can immediately release it for a burst of speed. If you do, you become dazed (save ends) and can take an extra turn immediately after the triggering creature.

PAPER TRAPPINGS

This delicate robe is made from thousands of pages torn from books, intricately folded together without a single thread to bind them.

Keywords: Light Armor, Magic

Item Prerequisites: Ten pages from each of a hundred different books

Project Source: Texts or lore in Anjali

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wear this armor, you have a +6 bonus to Stamina. Additionally, as an action, you can fold in on yourself until you and your gear are paper thin. This effect lasts for 1 minute, letting you easily slip through any opening that is at least 1 inch wide. When you return to your three-dimensional form, you are dazed for 1 minute. If you return to your true form while in a space that is too small for you, you are violently expelled into the nearest open space of your choice and take 3d6 damage.

5th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +12, and when you return to your true form, you are dazed only until the end of your next turn. Additionally, while you are paper thin, you can use a maneuver to wrap yourself around an adjacent target who is the same size or smaller than you, automatically grabbing them.

9th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +21, and you are no longer dazed when you return to your true form. Additionally, while you have a target grabbed when you are paper thin, you can use a maneuver to constrict the target, dealing 10 damage to them. A creature damaged this way takes a bane when using the Escape Grab maneuver against you and when making a strike against you.

SHROUDED MEMORY

This midnight-dark leather coat is embossed with fractal patterns that appear different each time they are observed.

Keywords: Light Armor, Psionic

Item Prerequisites: The will of a deceased person with no heirs

Project Source: Texts or lore in Khelt

Project Roll Characteristic: Agility or Presence

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: You gain a +6 bonus to Stamina while you wear this armor. Additionally, you gain an edge on tests made to lie about or conceal your identity.

5th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +12. Additionally, whenever you take damage, you can use a triggered action to teleport up to 5 squares. If you do, you create an illusion of you dying in your previous space, which fades at the end of your next turn.

9th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +21. Whenever you use the armor's triggered action to teleport, you can teleport up to a number of squares equal to the damage taken. Additionally, if a creature dealt you the triggering damage, you become invisible to that creature until the end of your next turn.

SPINY TURTLE

This heavy mechanized plate armor of gnomish make is designed to create its own cover on the battlefield.

Keywords: Heavy Armor, Magic

Item Prerequisites: Ten steel gears from an ancient construct

Project Source: Texts or lore in Variac

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wear this armor, you have a +6 bonus to Stamina. Additionally, as an action, you can expand the armor on your back to create a 4 wall of metal behind you. The wall is an object that retracts if you move, or if it takes 15 damage. It then requires an action to recalibrate before it can be deployed again.

5th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +12. Additionally, the damage the wall can take before retracting increases to 25. Additionally, while the wall is expanded, spikes extrude from it, and any creature who deals damage to the wall while adjacent to it takes 3 damage.

9th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +21. Additionally, spikes cover the armor, and any creature who deals damage to you while adjacent to you takes 6 damage.

STAR-HUNTER

Shimmering light flows like liquid along this suit of crystalline armor.

Keywords: Heavy Armor, Psionic

Item Prerequisites: Fifty pounds of astral ice, one pint of supercooled mercury

Project Source: Texts or lore in Voll

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wear this armor, you have a +7 bonus to Stamina, but any magic ability gains an edge when targeting you. Additionally, you instinctively know the location of any concealed creature within 2 squares. You can also turn invisible as a maneuver. Your invisibility ends if you take damage or use an ability, or at the end of your next turn.

5th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +14, and you instinctively know the location of any concealed creature within 5 squares. Your invisibility no longer ends at the end of your next turn. Additionally, you have psychic immunity 5.

9th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +25, and you instinctively know the location of any concealed creature within 10 squares. Your invisibility no longer ends when you use an ability, and you have psychic immunity 10.

TELEKINETIC BULWARK

An unseen force seems to draw this steel shield toward nearby creatures.

Keywords: Psionic, Shield

Item Prerequisites: Three ingots of steel, six crystals that resonate with psionic power

Project Source: Texts or lore in Variac

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wield or carry this shield, you gain a +2 bonus to Stamina. This Stamina bonus can be gained in addition to ones granted by other treasures. Additionally, once per turn when an adjacent enemy uses an ability, you can use a free triggered action to use the Grab maneuver against that enemy. You can have any number of enemies grabbed in this way.

5th Level: The shield's bonus to Stamina increases to +5, and you can use the shield's free triggered action to grab any enemy within 10 squares who uses an ability. Additionally, any enemy who uses the Escape Grab maneuver while grabbed this way takes a bane on the test.

9th Level: The shield's bonus to Stamina increases to +9. Additionally, you can use a maneuver to pull any number of targets the shield has grabbed up to 5 squares.

LEVELED IMPLEMENT TREASURES

Implements are pieces of jewelry, orbs, staffs, tomes, wands, and other objects used by magic and psionic heroes to focus their power. This section presents leveled implement treasures in alphabetical order.

ABJURER'S BASTION

An ornate ring is set with a large diamond that swirls with blue light, and whose inner surface is etched with protective runes.

Keywords: Implement, Magic

Item Prerequisites: A diamond ring

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wield this implement, your damage-dealing supernatural abilities gain a +1 rolled damage bonus. Additionally, whenever you deal damage to a creature with a supernatural ability, you gain temporary Stamina equal to your highest characteristic score.

5th Level: The implement's damage bonus increases to +2. Additionally, whenever you deal damage using a supernatural ability, you can use a maneuver to create an immobile field of protection that is a 1 cube, around yourself or an ally within 5 squares. While in the area, you or the chosen ally has damage immunity 5. The field disappears at the start of your next turn.

9th Level: The implement's damage bonus increases to +3. Whenever you deal damage to a creature using a supernatural ability, you and each ally within 5 squares of you gains temporary Stamina equal to your highest characteristic score. Additionally, the size of your field of protection increases to a 3 cube, and it can be placed anywhere within 10 squares of you. You and each ally in the area gain its benefits.

BRITTLEBREAKER

This crystal wand thrums with power, yet is so thin and brittle that it feels as if even a slight squeeze will shatter it.

Keywords: Psionic, Wand

Item Prerequisites: Three ounces of shattered quartz

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wield this implement, your damage-dealing supernatural abilities deal an extra 2 rolled psychic damage. Additionally, you have damage weakness 3, but you gain an edge on supernatural power rolls if you aren't at full Stamina, or a double edge if you are winded.

5th Level: The implement's extra psychic damage increases to 3. Additionally, once per round when you take more than 20 damage from a single source, the implement's extra damage is doubled until the end of your next turn.

9th Level: The implement's extra psychic damage increases to 4. Additionally, whenever you use a damage-dealing supernatural ability, you can take half as much damage as is dealt to the target to immediately use the same ability again. The damage you take can't be reduced in any way. You can repeat this process until you become winded.

CHALDORB

A perfectly clear sphere is embossed with fine ivory and crystal that is frigid to the touch.

Keywords: Implement, Magic

Item Prerequisites: An ounce of primordial ice, an ounce of mammoth-ivory shards

Project Source: Texts or lore in Zaliac

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wield this implement, your damage-dealing supernatural abilities gain a +1 rolled damage bonus. Additionally, if you make a magic strike, the strike must deal cold damage instead of its usual damage.

5th Level: The implement's damage bonus increases to +2. Additionally, whenever you use a magic ability, a whirlwind of sleet and ice whips around you, dealing 3 cold damage to each enemy within 1 square of you.

9th Level: The implement's damage bonus increases to +3. The whirlwind you create when you use a magic ability deals 6 cold damage to each enemy within 2 squares of you, and creates a 2 aura around you that lasts until the start of your next turn. Each enemy who enters the aura for the first time in a round or starts their turn there takes 6 cold damage.

ETHER-FUELED VESSEL

This bronze bottle has been shaped into the form of a ghostly figure.

Keywords: Implement, Psionic

Item Prerequisites: Incense distilled from the essence of ether

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Intuition or Reason

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wield this implement, your damage-dealing supernatural abilities gain a +1 rolled damage bonus. Additionally, whenever you deal damage to a creature with a supernatural ability, they become insubstantial to you until the end of their next turn, allowing you to pass through them freely. While insubstantial, a creature can't make opportunity attacks against you.

5th Level: The implement's damage bonus increases to +2. When you move through a creature who is insubstantial to you, you can use a free triggered action to make them take damage equal to your highest characteristic score. If you do, the insubstantial effect ends immediately after you pass through them and exist into an adjacent space outside of them.

9th Level: The implement's damage bonus increases to +3. Any creature who isn't a leader or a solo creature who becomes insubstantial to you also can't make opportunity attacks against your allies.

FOESENSE LENSES

These spectacles feature pink-tinted glass lenses held in a silver frame.

Keywords: Implement, Psionic

Item Prerequisites: Two clear lenses carved from volcanic glass

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wield this implement, your damage-dealing supernatural abilities gain a +1 rolled damage bonus. Additionally, whenever you deal damage to a creature with a supernatural ability, you can use that creature's senses until the end of your next turn, allowing you to experience all they observe and use your abilities as if you were in their space. You also benefit from your own senses at the same time.

5th Level: The implement's damage bonus increases to +2. Additionally, whenever you deal damage to a creature

with a supernatural ability, you can also cause intense pain in one creature whose senses you are using. That creature takes a bane on power rolls until the start of your next turn.

9th Level: The implement's damage bonus increases to +3. Additionally, any creature you have damaged with an ability using this implement in the last minute is dazed while you are using their senses.

GEOMETRIC MANIPULATOR

This tiny gold sphere is made up of intricately interlocking rings and plates.

Keywords: Magic, Orb

Item Prerequisites: Fourteen gold rings each two inches in diameter

Project Source: Texts or lore in Zaliac

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wield this implement, your damage-dealing supernatural abilities gain a +1 rolled damage bonus. Additionally, when you use any supernatural ability that creates a cube or a burst, you can use a maneuver to rearrange the squares of the area into any shape you wish, provided there are no empty squares inside it.

5th Level: The implement's damage bonus increases to +2. Additionally, when you use any supernatural ability that creates a cube or a burst, you can increase or decrease the size of the area by 1. If you decrease the size of the area, you gain an edge on the ability. If you increase the size, you take a bane on the ability.

9th Level: The implement's damage bonus increases to +3. Additionally, you can increase or decrease the size of all your supernatural area abilities by up to 2, and rearranging the squares of a cube or burst ability requires no action.

WORDS BECOME WONDERS AT NEXT BREATH

This ornate high elf tome seems to sigh each time it is opened.

Keywords: Implement, Magic

Item Prerequisites: Written permission from a high elf magistrate

Project Source: Texts or lore in Hyrallic

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: You open or close the tome as a maneuver while saying its full name. While the tome is open, it floats in a space adjacent to you and flips to specific pages at your command. Additionally, you gain an edge on Intuition tests to recall lore, and you gain a +3 bonus to the distance of your ranged supernatural abilities.

5th Level: While the tome is open, the bonus to distance of your ranged magical abilities increases to +5. Additionally, when you or a creature you have line of effect to uses a supernatural ability, you can use a triggered action to gain a +3 bonus to the power roll.

9th Level: While the tome is open, you automatically obtain a tier 3 result on Intuition tests to recall lore, and

when you use a heroic ability, its heroic resource cost is reduced by 1.

LEVELED WEAPON TREASURES

For combat-focused heroes, weapons channeling magic and psionic power can easily tip the balance of any battle. This section presents leveled weapon treasures in alphabetical order.

AUTHORITY'S END

This twelve-foot chain is composed entirely of broken links held together by unseen power.

Keywords: Psionic, Whip

Item Prerequisites: A lash used to punish a mutineer

Project Source: Texts or lore in Khelt

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason, Intuition, or Presence

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any damage-dealing weapon ability using this weapon gains a +1 rolled damage bonus. Whenever you damage a creature with the weapon, you can immediately use a maneuver to end one condition or effect imposed by that creature on you or another creature within 5 squares of you.

5th Level: The weapon's damage bonus increases to +2. Additionally, you and each ally within 2 squares of you gains a +1 bonus on saving throws.

9th Level: The weapon's damage bonus increases to +3. Additionally, you no longer need to use a maneuver to end one condition or effect when you damage a creature with the weapon. The weapon also refuses to vie for control of your psyche, and no longer counts against the limit of leveled treasures you can carry safely.

BLADE OF QUINTESSENCE

This crystal blade houses a stormy vortex of fire, ice, and lightning.

Keywords: Magic, Medium Weapon

Item Prerequisites: A ruby hardened in the fires of the City of Brass, a sapphire that has been struck by lightning

Project Source: Texts or lore in Zaliac

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any damage-dealing weapon ability using this weapon gains a +1 rolled damage bonus. Additionally, you can change the damage type of such abilities to cold, fire, lightning, or sonic.

5th Level: The weapon's damage bonus increases to +2. Additionally, the weapon can be used with ranged weapon abilities, and returns to you when a ranged ability is resolved. Ranged abilities used with the weapon increase their distance by 3, and must deal cold, fire, lightning, or sonic damage (chosen when you use the ability).

9th Level: The weapon's damage bonus increases to +3. Additionally, while you wield or carry the weapon, you gain immunity 10 to cold, fire, lightning, and sonic damage.

BLADE OF THE LUXURIOUS FOP

Despite sporting an outrageously ornate hilt adorned with far too many jewels, this blade remains perfectly balanced.

Keywords: Light Weapon, Magic

Item Prerequisites: A personal blessing from the greatest duelist in the land, six fake and extremely shiny gemstones

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Agility, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any damage-dealing weapon ability using this weapon gains a +1 rolled damage bonus. Additionally, whenever you deal damage with this weapon, you can immediately shift 1 square. As well, while you wield or carry the weapon and are present in a negotiation, if an NPC in a negotiation has the Greed, Legacy, Power, or Revelry motivation, their starting interest increases by 1 (to a maximum of 5).

5th Level: The weapon's damage bonus increases to +2. Additionally, when you make an opportunity attack against an enemy of your size or smaller, you can use fancy footwork to knock them prone. You also gain a +1 bonus to Renown.

9th Level: The weapon's damage bonus increases to +3. Additionally, you have a double edge on any test you make using a skill you have from the interpersonal skill group.

DISPLACER

This crystal battleaxe seems to pull at the hands that wield it, as if anxious to leap across the battlefield.

Keywords: Medium Weapon, Psionic

Item Prerequisites: An ancient bronze gear covered in indecipherable runes

Project Source: Texts in Zaliac

Project Roll Characteristic: Might or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any damage-dealing weapon ability using this weapon deals an extra 1 rolled psychic damage. Additionally, whenever you deal damage to a creature, you can use a maneuver to trade places with that creature, provided you both fit into each other's spaces.

5th Level: The weapon's extra psychic damage increases to 2. Whenever you deal damage to a creature, you can use a maneuver to trade places with that creature or any creature within 4 squares of them, provided you both fit into each other's spaces.

9th Level: The weapon's extra psychic damage increases to 3. Whenever you deal damage to a creature, you can use a maneuver to trade places with that creature or any creature within 8 squares of them, provided you both fit into each other's spaces. Additionally, you can choose for the creature you traded places with to be weakened until the end of their next turn, or to spend a Recovery.

EXECUTIONER'S BLADE

This blade exudes a faint hum that grows louder as its quarry weakens.

Keywords: Heavy Weapon, Psionic

Item Prerequisites: The skull of a convicted criminal

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any damage-dealing weapon ability using this weapon deals an extra 1 rolled psychic damage, or an extra 2 psychic damage if the target is winded.

Additionally, the first time in an encounter that you cause an enemy to become winded with an ability using the weapon, you gain 10 temporary Stamina.

5th Level: The weapon's extra psychic damage increases to 2, or to 4 if the target is winded. Additionally, whenever you cause an enemy to become winded with an ability using the weapon, you gain two surges that you can immediately spend.

9th Level: The weapon's extra psychic damage increases to 3, or to 6 if the target is winded. Additionally, you gain an edge on any ability using the weapon against any winded target.

ICEMAKER MAUL

The head of this platinum hammer is cold to the touch, and encases whatever it strikes in a thin layer of ice.

Keywords: Heavy Weapon, Magic

Item Prerequisites: Eight iron bars cooled in a glacier, the branch of an ancient evergreen

Project Source: Texts in Zaliac

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any damage-dealing weapon ability using this weapon deals an extra 1 rolled cold damage. Additionally, you can use a maneuver to create an ice field in a 3 burst. This ground in this area is difficult terrain for enemies and lasts until the end of the encounter or when you use this ability again.

5th Level: The weapon's extra cold damage increases to 2, and the ice field becomes a 4 burst. Additionally, whenever you use a weapon ability using the weapon against one or more enemies in the ice field, you gain one surge that you can use immediately.

9th Level: The weapon's extra cold damage increases to 3, and the ice field becomes a 5 burst. Additionally, any enemy in the ice field who is reduced to 0 Stamina by an ability using the weapon can be shattered, killing them and dealing 15 cold damage to each enemy within 3 squares of them.

KNIFE OF NINE

This ivory dagger features nine faintly glowing indentations along the blade.

Keywords: Light Weapon, Psionic

Item Prerequisites: Eighteen daggers—nine taken from personal enemies and nine gifted by friends

Project Source: Texts or lore in Variac

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any damage-dealing weapon ability using this weapon deals an extra 1 rolled psychic damage. This extra damage increases by 1 each time you deal damage with an

ability using the weapon to the same target during the same encounter, to a maximum increase of 3.

5th Level: Whenever you reduce a creature to 0 Stamina with an ability using the weapon, one of its indentations glows brighter. When you use a signature ability using the weapon, you can use a triggered action to expend any number of bright-glowing indentations, with the ability dealing extra psychic damage equal to the number of indentations. The expended indentations then return to a dim glow.

9th Level: If you make a weapon strike using this weapon against a target after dropping down on them from at least 2 squares' height, the attack deals an extra 10 psychic damage. You can distribute all extra psychic damage dealt by the attack between the target and any enemies adjacent to them.

LANCE OF THE SUNDERED STAR

This needle-like lance is cast of shimmering metal, and induces a yearning for the skies in those who handle it.

Keywords: Magic, Polearm

Item Prerequisites: Night-blooming flower petals, a starmetal meteorite

Project Source: Texts or lore in Hyrallic

Project Roll Characteristic: Agility or Presence

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any damage-dealing weapon ability using this weapon deals an extra 1 rolled holy damage. Additionally, when the weapon is used with a weapon ability that allows you to push a target, you can shift to any square adjacent to the target after the push.

5th Level: The weapon's extra holy damage increases to 2. Additionally, whenever you take the Charge action and use an ability with the Charge keyword, or whenever you use an ability that allows you to shift, you can fly as part of the charge movement or the shift. If you don't end your flying movement on the ground, you fall.

9th Level: The weapon's extra holy damage increases to 3. Additionally, whenever the weapon is used with a weapon ability that allows you to push or slide a target, that forced movement can be vertical.

MOLTEN CONSTRICTOR

This flexible black-iron net burns with the heat of a volcano.

Keywords: Magic, Net

Item Prerequisites: Four iron bars coated in magma slag

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any damage-dealing weapon ability using this weapon deals an extra 1 rolled fire damage. Additionally, whenever you make a strike using the net and obtain a tier 3 result, you can automatically grab the target. A target grabbed in this way takes a bane when using the Escape Grab maneuver.

5th Level: The weapon's extra fire damage increases to 2. Additionally, a target grabbed by a strike using the net takes 8 fire damage each time they attempt to escape using the Escape Grab maneuver.

9th Level: The weapon's extra fire damage increases to 3, and the damage taken by a grabbed creature attempting to escape increases to 15. Additionally, you can use a maneuver to make a free strike with another weapon against a target grabbed using the net.

ONEROUS BOW

This mechanized bow is set with magical reservoirs that carry the faint tang of toxins.

Keywords: Bow, Magic

Item Prerequisites: A venom sac from a giant spider, one valok gyroscope

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian and Variac

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any damage-dealing weapon ability using this weapon deals an extra 1 rolled poison damage. Additionally, any signature ability using the weapon that obtains a tier 3 result also makes the target weakened until the end of their turn.

5th Level: The weapon's extra poison damage increases to 2. A signature ability made using the weapon that obtains a tier 3 result also makes the target weakened and slowed until the end of their turn.

9th Level: The weapon's extra poison damage increases to 3. Additionally, if you use an ability using the weapon that targets one creature and you don't have a bane or double bane on the ability, you can take a bane. Doing so lets you target another creature within 1 square of the original target. Alternatively, you can take a double bane to target two creatures within 1 square of the original target.

STEELTONGUE

This sinuous whip reflects all light off its plated steel surfaces.

Keywords: Magic, Whip

Item Prerequisites: One hundred steel arrowheads stained with blood

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian and Kalliak

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: You gain a +1 bonus to melee distance with weapon abilities using this weapon. Additionally, when you use a damage-dealing weapon ability using the weapon against a target who has **A < [average]**, that target is bleeding (save ends).

5th Level: The weapon's bonus to melee distance increases to +2. Additionally, when you use a damage-dealing weapon ability using the weapon, that ability gains a +3 rolled damage bonus against any target who is bleeding.

9th Level: The weapon's bonus to melee distance increases to +3. Additionally, if you use a signature ability using the weapon that targets one or more bleeding creatures, you can use the same ability again immediately as a maneuver.

THIRD EYE SEEKER

The shifting patterns on this bow's crystalline grip resemble dozens of blinking eyes.

Keywords: Bow, Psionic

Item Prerequisites: Heart strings of a tapir, a pound of tiger's eye gemstones

Project Source: Texts or lore in Variac

Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any damage-dealing weapon ability using this weapon deals an extra 1 rolled psychic damage. Additionally, any damage-dealing weapon ability using the weapon that achieves a tier 3 result also leaves the target dazed until the end of their turn.

5th Level: The weapon's extra psychic damage increases to 2. Additionally, whenever a creature within distance of your ranged weapon free strike uses a triggered action, you can use a triggered action after their triggered action resolves to make a ranged weapon free strike using the weapon against the creature.

9th Level: The weapon's extra psychic damage increases to 3. Additionally, you have a double edge on weapon abilities that use the weapon against creatures who have used a psionic ability since the end of your last turn.

THUNDERHEAD BIDENT

This bident is made from two pieces of moon metal twisted together, and hums like a tuning fork.

Keywords: Magic, Medium Weapon

Item Prerequisites: A jar of captured thunder, two ingots of moon metal

Project Source: Texts or lore in Zaliac

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any damage-dealing weapon ability using this weapon deals an extra 1 rolled sonic damage. Additionally, when the weapon is used with any weapon ability that pushes a target, the push distance gains a +1 bonus. If the ability deals damage to a target but doesn't impose forced movement, you can push the target a distance equal to this bonus.

5th Level: The weapon's extra sonic damage increases to 2, and the bonus to push distance becomes +2. Additionally, the weapon can be used with ranged weapon abilities, and gains power the farther it is hurled. For each 2 squares the weapon travels to the target of a ranged strike, the strike deals an extra 1 sonic damage.

9th Level: The weapon's extra sonic damage increases to 3, and it deals an extra 1 sonic damage for each square it travels as part of a ranged strike. Additionally, whenever you make a weapon strike using this weapon, each creature adjacent to the target takes 6 sonic damage.

WETWORK

When first held, this naginata whispers the names of its past victims.

Keywords: Polearm, Psionic

Item Prerequisites: A folded metal blade infused with blood

Project Source: Texts or lore in Higanan

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any damage-dealing weapon ability using this weapon deals an extra 1 rolled psychic damage. Additionally, if you kill a creature using this weapon, you can immediately use a maneuver to make a melee free strike.

5th Level: The weapon's extra sonic damage increases to 2. Additionally, if you kill a creature using the weapon, you can use a maneuver to make a melee free strike and move up to 2 squares before or after the strike.

9th Level: The weapon's extra sonic damage increases to 3. Additionally, if you kill a creature using the weapon, you can use a maneuver to move up to your speed and make either a signature strike or a melee free strike.

OTHER LEVELED TREASURES

In addition to armor, shields, implements, and weapons, heroes can make use of a wide range of magic and psionic treasures. This section presents other types of leveled treasures in alphabetical order.

BLOODBOUND BAND

This ring appears to be traced by dried blood, which returns each time it is rubbed away.

Keywords: Magic, Ring

Item Prerequisites: A pair of obituaries that each mention the subject of the other

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wear this ring, you gain a +6 bonus to Stamina. Additionally, during a respite, you can touch the ring to any number of other Bloodbound Bands worn by willing creatures to form a bond among all of you. Creatures related by blood can't form bonds in this way. Bonded creatures can each use the highest recovery value of any bonded creature in place of their own, and can spend each other's Recoveries as if they were their own. Whenever any other bonded creature takes damage, each bonded creature takes 1 damage that can't be reduced in any way. Your bond ends if you remove the ring, use it to bond with one or more other creatures, or die, but other rings continue to be bonded to each other.

5th Level: The ring's bonus to Stamina increases to +12. Additionally, you gain damage immunity 2.

9th Level: The ring's bonus to Stamina increases to +21. Additionally, if a creature bonded with you dies, you can choose to die in their place. Your sacrifice twists fate to remove the creature from danger, and they regain Stamina equal to their winded value. Your ring then teleports into their possession and ceases to be magical.

BLOODY HAND WRAPS

These rough hand wraps are stained with blood that never comes clean.

Keywords: Hands, Psionic

Item Prerequisites: One cotton bolt soaked in the blood of six adventurers

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Agility, or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wear these hand wraps, your weapon abilities that use your unarmed strike gain a +1 rolled damage bonus. Additionally, once per turn, you can take 5 damage that can't be reduced in any way to use the Grab maneuver (no action required).

5th Level: The damage bonus granted by the hand wraps increases to +2. Additionally, once per turn, you can take 10 damage that can't be reduced in any way to make a melee free strike (no action required).

9th Level: The damage bonus granted by the hand wraps increases to +3. Additionally, once per turn, you can take 15 damage that can't be reduced in any way to use a signature ability (no action required).

LIGHTNING TREADS

Sparks strike from these boots whenever they touch the ground, increasing in number as the wearer gathers speed.

Keywords: Feet, Magic

Item Prerequisites: One jar of lightning

Project Source: Texts or lore in Yllyric

Project Roll Characteristic: Agility, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wear the boots, any damage-dealing weapon ability using your unarmed strike deals an extra 1 rolled lightning damage. Additionally, you gain a +2 bonus to speed.

5th Level: The extra lightning damage granted by the treads increases to 2. This bonus increases by 1 for each square you move this turn before you use the ability to a maximum total bonus of 4.

9th Level: The extra lightning damage granted by the treads increases to 3, and the maximum total damage bonus you can earn including movement increase to 6. Additionally, you can use a maneuver to perform a flying lightning kick on one adjacent creature. That target is pushed up to 5 squares, and you can move to any square adjacent to the target after the push.

REVENGER'S WRAP

When first handled, this tattered cloak fills the mind with thoughts of revenge.

Keywords: Neck, Magic

Item Prerequisites: A cloak worn by a murdered monarch

Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wear this cloak, any creature who damages you is marked for revenge until the end of your next turn or until another creature damages you. Any strike you make against a creature marked for revenge deals extra damage equal to your highest characteristic score, and whenever you damage a creature marked for revenge, they are also bleeding until the end of their turn.

5th Level: Each creature who damages you is marked for revenge until the end of your next turn. Whenever you damage a creature marked for revenge, they are also bleeding (save ends).

9th Level: When you have three or more creatures marked for revenge and you target one of them with an ability that targets only one creature, you target all the creatures marked for revenge regardless of their distance and line of effect from you.

THIEF OF JOY

This burnished copper torc thrums with a sense of judgment.

Keywords: Neck, Psionic

Item Prerequisites: A pound of feathers, a pound of bricks from the Seven Cities of Hell

Project Source: Texts or lore in Anjali

Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Presence

Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wear this torc, you gain a bonus to Stamina equal to twice your highest characteristic score.

Additionally, you can use a maneuver to choose a creature in your line of effect and learn their level. If their level is higher than yours, the torc grants you envy. If their level is equal to or lower than yours, the torc grants you disdain. You can have both envy and disdain, but not more than one instance of either. Whenever a creature within 10 squares of you deals damage to another creature, you can use a triggered action to expend your envy or disdain. If you expend envy, you deal damage equal to the triggering damage to a creature adjacent to you. If you expend disdain, you reduce the triggering damage by half. At the end of the encounter, you lose any envy or disdain granted by the torc.

5th Level: The torc's bonus to Stamina increases to three times your highest characteristic score. Additionally, when you use the torc's maneuver and the target creature is the same level as you, you gain your choice of envy or disdain.

9th Level: The torc's bonus to Stamina increases to five times your highest Characteristic score. Additionally, you can have multiple instances of envy and disdain, with no limit on either.

ARTIFACTS

Artifacts are powerful treasures, with entire campaigns to be built around finding, using, hiding, protecting, or destroying one. Make no mistake—these items unbalance the game. If the heroes or villains have access to such a treasure, their power is far beyond what the encounter-building guidelines expect. That's part of the fun!

Typically, one creature never holds onto an artifact for too long. Most of these treasures have a sentience of their own and an eagerness to move on. Since many powerful entities might want to get their hands on an artifact, characters might see armies, dragons, and even gods come to collect one from a wilder who refuses to let go.

BLADE OF A THOUSAND YEARS

This fabled sword features a hilt made of glittering starlight, out of which its gleaming metal blade extends.

Keywords: Magic; Light, Medium, or Heavy Weapon

Whether drawn from a stone, gifted by a lake spirit, forged by a god, or used to kill one, there is a sword that exists outside of time and space. It is always where it needs to be

precisely when it needs to be there—then is gone in a flash when the need for it has waned. The sword is depicted in art, song, and story across many living cultures—and even more frequently among those long buried, often after proving the deciding factor in a battle. It's been wielded by numerous heroes of legend, and even more who have slipped into the forgotten shadows of history.

Though its size and make are often debated, the sword is consistently described as a hilt with no crossguard, made from pure starlight. When wielded, a brilliant metal blade springs forth from that hilt, suiting the holder's taste in weapons. Those who touch the blade are filled with the vigor and power of the heroes who have held it before.

Suited for Victory: This sword takes on the size, shape, and make that the wielder wills into it. It can be a light, medium, or heavy weapon, and you can change its weapon type and appearance as a free maneuver. Any damage-dealing weapon ability using the Blade of a Thousand Years gains a +5 rolled damage bonus, and that ability always deals holy damage. Any creature vulnerable to holy damage who takes damage from this weapon is also weakened and frightened until the end of their turn.

Rally the Righteous: This blade fills all around it with hope and courage. Each ally within 1 mile of the weapon gains an edge on weapon abilities and magic abilities, and has damage immunity 5. Additionally, each such creature's Stamina maximum increases by 15 and they gain a +15 bonus to Stamina when this ability first affects them.

Turn the Tide: Each enemy minion within 1 mile of the sword is dazed. Any enemy leader or solo in that area takes a bane on ability power rolls.

Victory's Assurance: This weapon always appears on the eve before what will later come to be known as a historic battle. It disappears after 24 hours or when the battle is won, whichever comes first. By taking the blade, the wielder unwittingly enters into a pact with the weapon. If they don't secure victory against monumental odds or some great foe by the time the sword disappears, they are pulled into the sword, preventing any chance of resurrection, and forever dooming them to lend their strength to the heroes of other ages.

Soul of the Martyr: If the wielder dies while holding this blade, their soul is drawn into the starlight hilt, where it remains for the rest of time to prevent any chance of resurrection. The sword disappears, but the lingering feeling of hope that spreads from it remains. For the next hour, the effects of Rally the Righteous increase to provide a double edge on weapon abilities and magic abilities, damage immunity 10, an increase to Stamina maximum of 30, and a bonus to Stamina of +30.

ENCEPTER

A bejeweled scepter with a spiraling porcelain handle balances an orb of light above its crown.

Keywords: Magic

This scepter waits high in the sky, resting within an endlessly raging cyclone. It waits for the one who will unify all people under its light. It awaits its champion.

The Encepter is said to have first manifested in a young world doomed to apocalypse—unless every last inhabitant

of that world could stand together. The scepter is said to impose either dominion or obliteration over any threat its light is drawn around. Today, it is most commonly known as a bad omen, and should the Enceptor reveal itself, folk know that the world teeters on the brink of destruction. Whether any of the stories are true, few can say, for the only living eyes that have witnessed the Enceptor belong to dragons deep in slumber.

Shining Presence: The one who wields the Enceptor is always cast in a brilliant glow. Any power roll made by the wielder that uses Presence automatically achieves a tier 3 result, though the wielder can still roll in an attempt to score a critical hit.

Champion's Lasso: As a free maneuver, the wielder of the scepter can trigger a glowing line of light that traces their path as they move, or can dismiss the glowing line. If the wielder crosses over this line, each creature and object of the wielder's choice enclosed inside the line and within 2 squares above and below it are considered lassoed by the Enceptor. Creatures remain lassoed until the lasso is released or until a new line is drawn.

Dominion: Each creature lassoed by the Enceptor is restrained and can't teleport. A creature caught in midair while lassoed stays in place rather than falling.

Obliteration: As an action, the wielder raises the Enceptor to the sky. Each target lassoed by the Enceptor erupts into a prismatic burst of light, taking 10 psychic damage for each square horizontally encircled by the lasso. The lasso is then immediately released.

At World's End: If the Enceptor was not taken from its cyclonic resting place with the purpose of vanquishing a terrible peril, then a terrible peril emerges to threaten the world within three days of the scepter being taken.

MORTAL COIL

This floating helix of golden metal spins ever faster as it activates, crackling with crimson sparks.

Keywords: Psionic

Change is the engine of existence. Permanence begets stagnation. When the past refuses to relinquish control, a path must be cleared for the future. Energized by the flickering of minds and souls passing through the void, the Mortal Coil taps into the entropic potential inherent in every living creature to cast a shadow capable of felling even gods. For the true gift of life is death, and gifts are meant to be given.

Only one destined for death can contain the power of the Mortal Coil. A mortal creature who carries this artifact serves as its host, gaining an additional action on each of their turns, aging at ten times the normal rate, and becoming unable to ever regain Stamina. A host with no natural maximum lifespan permanently reduces their maximum Stamina by 10 each year.

When the Mortal Coil is left unattended or is in the possession of a creature who is not mortal, it activates and can't be deactivated until a mortal creature becomes its host once more. While active, the artifact extends a penumbra of influence for 10 miles in every direction. Every creature in the penumbra is subject to the following effects.

One Foot in the Grave: Any creature in the penumbra has damage weakness 2 and can't regain Stamina.

Get Busy Dyin': Each creature in the penumbra ages at 10 times the normal rate, and diseases and poisons affecting creatures in the penumbra run their course at 10 times their normal rate. A creature with no natural maximum lifespan permanently reduces their maximum Stamina by 10 each year. Each creature can undertake one additional respite activity during each respite.

If You Meet God on the Road, Kill Them: Every non-mortal entity in the penumbra is granted the gift of mortality. Previously immortal or invulnerable entities—from planar creatures to the gods themselves—can be killed while in the penumbra, though not necessarily easily. Any creature or entity who dies in the Mortal Coil's penumbra experiences perfect death. They are permanently, irrevocably dead, and no magic, psionics, or technology can restore them to life.

Perpetual Motion: If there are ever no creatures or entities within the Mortal Coil's penumbra, the radius of the penumbra doubles.

Beneath Contempt: Deities and their servants always overlook the Mortal Coil and its host—either unable to notice it, or not considering it a threat. If the artifact is somehow destroyed or unmade through godly power, it consumes a year of life from every humanoid in the manifold where it was destroyed, then reforms in a hidden place.

TITLES

Titles are special benefits earned by heroes through adventure and mighty deeds. Heroes must win titles—sometimes individually, sometimes as a group—by accomplishing heroic tasks. Titles are the record of a hero's accomplishments, forming the basis of the stories told of them in taverns or whispered in the halls of the mighty.

Each title comes with a new ability or other special benefit. By earning titles, heroes gain a unique set of capabilities that sets them apart from other adventurers.

TITLE REQUIREMENTS

Players don't choose their titles. Like treasure and renown, titles must be won.

Each title has a unique requirement—you might need to defeat a specific monster, research dangerous forbidden lore, or, in the case of the Monarch title, win a kingdom!

Titles aren't given out on a schedule. Instead, the Director grants one whenever heroes perform a deed worthy of it. Just as a hero doesn't automatically find a magic weapon just because they meet the requirements for using it, they don't automatically earn a title unless it's granted by the Director.

Although the Director gives out titles, players can work with the Director towards a specific goal. For instance, a player might say, "I'm interested in the Dragon Blooded title. Can my hero listen for rumors of any wicked dragons nearby that need smiting?" Having ambition is good! Pursue the titles you want that will make you a better hero!

TITLE ECHELONS

Each title is assigned to an echelon of play where it is most likely to be earned. For instance, knighthood is something that can be typically earned by the 2nd echelon, while becoming a king or queen can usually only be achieved in the 4th. But don't let the rules get in the way of a good story! If the Director decides that the players somehow earn knighthood at level 1, bask in the glory of this great accomplishment.

If you're the Director, note that granting a title several tiers early may have unwanted effects on the game. Higher-echelon titles tend to have more significant benefits than lower-tier ones. If a hero becomes queen at level 1, her royal responsibilities may overshadow her other adventures. Don't grant a title more than one echelon early unless you know what you're getting into!

CUSTOMIZING TITLES

In the following pages, you'll find lots of premade titles. But the Director can also create custom titles, both to reward specific player accomplishments and to flesh out organizations, locations, and foes within their own game world. When a hero finally achieves a long-term goal after many game sessions of struggle, the Director can memorialize the moment by granting a unique title.

Similarly, the Director can grant custom titles when the heroes befriend specific factions, defeat notorious villains, or learn new moves from skilled NPCs.

While the Director can always create titles from scratch, the easiest way to create custom titles is to modify an existing title's requirements to fit the adventure at hand. For instance, maybe your world contains a secretive organization of freedom fighters, the Jesters, who never carry weapons, defeating foes with unarmed attacks and improvised weapons. You could modify the requirements of the Brawler title, changing its requirements to "Join the Jesters."

HOW MANY TITLES?

Just because a hero meets a prerequisite for a title doesn't mean that it is granted to them. The Director decides when a hero earns a title and its benefits. Odds are you'll be adventuring quite a bit and qualify for more than a few, but too many titles all at once can make for a very complicated hero. In general, a hero typically earns one title per echelon of play, though they can earn more or fewer at the Director's discretion.

If there's a specific title you want to earn, let your Director know. It's good to have ambition, and they are likely to help you make it happen.

TITLE BENEFITS

Some titles have only one benefit. These are typically earned individually by heroes instead of together as a group. Only the hero doing the studying reaps the reward!

Most titles, however, are earned by all the heroes at once for accomplishing a great task, benefiting them all. These titles typically offer a menu of three or four different options. When the party earns the title, each player decides which benefit they hero takes. For instance, if the party triumphs in a tavern fight and gains the Brawler title, one hero might become more adept at fighting with improvised weapons, another might learn a special dodge to use when flanked by multiple enemies, and two others might simply revel in increased notoriety. Any hero can take any of a title's benefits they qualify for, and multiple characters can take the same benefit.

GRANTING TITLES

Titles are rewards for heroic actions, and they often go hand in hand with treasure and other goodies. If the party defeats a fearsome monster and gains renown, or accomplishes a quest and wins a magical leveled item, they might earn a title at the same time.

There's no hard and fast rule for the number of titles a party should accumulate by a certain level. If the party wins a title whenever they accomplish a truly notable deed—once every few adventures—then they might earn about one title per level. Sticking to this rate isn't a requirement. A party might easily earn twice or half as many titles—they'll just be a bit more or less powerful than they otherwise would be. A Director can even skip granting titles altogether if they wish.

While running a game session, it can be hard to track the heroes' actions and remember which titles they might qualify for! It's easier to plan titles ahead of time. If the heroes might face a demon or dragon in an upcoming adventure, the Director can include the Demon Blooded or Dragon Blooded titles as potential rewards alongside that magic cloak or enchanted dagger. A Director can even use the titles system to inspire adventures. What challenges should a hero face to earn the Demigod title?

OPTIONAL RULE: PLAYERS CHOOSE TITLES

If the Director doesn't want to track player accomplishments, they can let the players do it instead. In this case, whenever a hero enters a new echelon of play, they gain one title of their choice for which they qualify.

1ST ECHELON TITLES

The 1st echelon titles are presented in alphabetical order.

ANCIENT LOREMASTER

"It's astonishing what you find in old books. Look at this, nearly complete schematics for a war automaton, gathering dust because nobody here reads Zaliac."

Prerequisites: You find a trove of forgotten books.

Choose one of the following benefits:

- **Leverage:** You learn a priceless secret. The Director chooses the type of person who would value this secret, usually a member of a particular faction, such as a Higarar noble, or a type of person, such as a fence of stolen goods. When negotiating with this type of person, you can offer this secret. If they accept, you instantly raise their interest by 3. You can only share this secret once.
- **Rare Books:** You add rare, ancient books to your collection. When you make a project roll for a research project, you roll an additional 1d6 for each dead language you know.
- **Susurrus Codex:** You find a sinister book that whispers advice in a voice no one else can hear. As long as you follow all the book's advice, you gain an edge on Reason tests and a bane on Presence tests. You can stop following the book's advice at any time, but the book won't speak to you for the rest of the day.

BATTLEAXE DIPLOMAT

"We seem to be equals in might and swordcraft. Perhaps we should bandy with words awhile instead."

Prerequisites: You gain the friendship or alliance of a creature you once battled.

Choose one of the following benefits:

- **Iron Hand in Velvet Glove:** The first time during a negotiation when you make a test that uses the Intimidate skill and don't make an argument that appeals to the NPC's pitfall, you don't lower the NPC's patience or interest no matter the outcome of the roll.
- **Truce!** You have a double edge on tests made to stop combat and start negotiation.

- **Warriors' Understanding:** You have an edge on Presence tests made to influence creatures who you fought against in combat encounters.

BRAWLER

"We won't kill you. But you might wish we did."

Prerequisites: You triumph in battle without killing any of your foes.

Choose one of the following benefits.

- **Duck!** When an enemy strikes you while a second creature is flanking you, you can use a triggered action to redirect the strike against the second creature. You can't use this benefit again until you gain a Victory.
- **Furniture Fighter:** When you use a weapon ability with an improvised weapon or a weapon that is not part of your kit, the ability still benefits from your kit's melee weapon damage bonus.
- **Headbutter:** Your free strikes don't take a bane while you are grappled or restrained.
- **If I Wanted You Dead, You'd Be Dead:** Now and in future fights, when you defeat foes without any killing, you gain an edge on tests during negotiations with them.

CITY RAT

"Stay out all night, visit the dives. Get in a fight, run from the cops. That's the real city."

Prerequisites: You have spent at least 5 respites in a metropolis.

Choose one of the following benefits:

- **Discerning Shopper:** When looking for an item prerequisite for a crafting project, you can remember meeting someone who might have the item—or at least information about it.
- **One with the Crowd:** You gain an edge on tests made to hide and sneak, provided you are using one or more creatures as cover.
- **Street Smart:** While in a settlement, you never suffer penalties from being surprised.

DOOMED

"I don't know what it meant, but when I watched her die, I saw a vision. I watched her die, and saw my own death. Am I going mad?"

Prerequisites: You are not a Hakaan but have witnessed the death of a Hakaan.

You're not destined for a meaningful death, but you still might achieve one. When you're reduced to 0 Stamina but still conscious, you can choose to become doomed. If you do, you can't regain Stamina, you automatically get tier 3 results on tests and power rolls, and you don't die until your Stamina equals the negative of your maximum Stamina value. At the end of the encounter, you die.

DWARF LEGIONNAIRE

"I have learned much. It may be your courage that inspires others. Watch your opponent's shield as well

as their sword. And above all, stand fast, and do not yield."

Prerequisites: You fight alongside at least three dwarves.

Choose one of the following benefits.

- **Close Formation:** Your stability increases by 2 while adjacent to at least two allies.
- **Rune of Alarm:** You can spend 10 minutes to inscribe a magical eye-shaped rune on a surface. The rune sheds light for 2 squares. It is dispelled if it is activated or if you inscribe the rune elsewhere. The rune is activated when an enemy comes within 2 squares of the rune. When the rune is activated, you wake up if you are nonmagically asleep, and for 1 minute you can see through the rune as if you were in its square.
- **Stonemeld:** While adjacent to a stone wall, you can use a maneuver to gain concealment. The concealment lasts until you leave the square or use an ability.

ELEMENTAL DABBLER

"Spirit of fire, I command you!"

Prerequisites: You defeat a monster with the Elemental keyword, such as an crux of fire.

Choose a damage type to which the defeated monster had an immunity (such as fire). Then choose one of the following benefits:

- **Elemental Blaster:** You gain the Elementalist 1st-level Hurl Element feature, dealing the chosen damage type.
- **Elemental Immunity:** You gain immunity to the chosen damage type equal to your highest characteristic score.
- **Elemental Weapons:** When you use an ability that deals damage with no type, you can change that damage to damage of the chosen damage type.

FACTION MEMBER

"In six months, I'll be running this place."

Prerequisites: You join an army, guild, or similar organization.

You gain membership in a faction. You're regarded as a promising but untested agent, and you're allowed to operate independently. You can be assigned tasks to further your faction's goals, and you can expect rewards and promotion if you succeed.

When you're negotiating with a member of your faction, their starting Patience increases by 2, up to a maximum of 5.

Additionally, the Director assigns you one of the following benefits, as appropriate to the faction in question. The Director can also create a custom benefit for a faction not listed here. You can only use this benefit in a settlement where your faction can be found, and once you have used this benefit, you can't use it again until you have completed a task for your faction.

- **Academic Faction:** You can find a sage who can make up to three Reason tests to recall lore or project rolls for research projects on your behalf. The sage has a +5 bonus to these tests. Research project rolls take 10

minutes each and don't need to be made during a respite.

- **Guild Faction:** You can find an expert craftsman who can make up to three project rolls for crafting projects on your behalf. The craftsman has a +5 bonus to these tests. These project rolls take 10 minutes each and don't need to be made during a respite.
- **Martial Faction:** You can recruit up to three minions with levels no greater than your own, of a type appropriate for the faction (such as **human guards**). These minions follow your orders for 1 day.
- **Spy Faction:** You can find an agent who can provide you with three pieces of information about a settlement you're in, such as the location of a hidden person, a secret entrance into a guarded area, or the negotiation ideal or pitfall of an important person.

You can gain this title multiple times, once for each faction. A faction can strip you of this title if you act against its interests.

LOCAL HERO

"Your coin won't spend here. The Heroes of Gravesford drink for free in this tavern!"

Prerequisite: You save a community from certain destruction.

Choose one of the following benefits:

- **A New Dawn:** When you finish a respite while in a community you have saved, the party gains a hero token. This hero token disappears at the end of your next respite if it hasn't been used.
- **Easy Marks:** You have an edge on tests made with skills from the interpersonal and intrigue skill groups when influencing members of a community that you have saved.
- **Local Fame:** Your Renown score increases by 1.

MAGE HUNTER

"Their power is dangerous. Unnatural. Someone needs to do something."

Prerequisites: You defeat three leaders or solo monsters who could each use at least one ability with the Magic keyword.

Choose one of the following benefits:

- **Arcane Dampening:** Your characteristic scores are considered 1 higher when resisting potencies from magic abilities.
- **Oh No You Don't!** When an adjacent creature uses an ability with the Magic keyword, you can make a free strike against them as a triggered action.
- **Stink of Magic:** As a maneuver, you can open your senses to the residue of magic. Until the end of your next turn, you are aware whether each creature within 5 squares of you is an undead, construct, or creature from another plane of existence, and whether they have used an ability with the Magic keyword in the past hour. Additionally, you never suffer the penalties of being surprised by undead, constructs, or creatures from another plane of existence.

MARSHAL

"I said you had 24 hours to leave town. That was...what, about 24 hours ago?"

Prerequisites: You join an organization, such as the Far Mariners, that hunts criminals, or you are deputized to act for the local authorities.

Chooses one of the following benefits:

- **I Guess It's the Hard Way:** When a combat begins and you are not surprised, the first time you take damage before your turn you halve that damage.
- **Heedless Pursuer:** Once on your turn, you can spend 1d6 stamina as a free maneuver. If you do so, you ignore difficult terrain and the length of your jumps increases by 1 square until the end of your turn.
- **Silver Shield:** You have a badge granted to you by your organization. While you are wearing it, you gain the Divine Interdiction feature from the My Life for Yours class. When you use this feature in this way, you can't spend wrath unless you have the Wrath class feature.
- **Trained Tracker:** You gain an edge on tests made to track criminals.

MONSTER BANE

"You dare mock Blunwin Mousebane? You think my deed trivial? Ah but you didn't see the size of the mouse!"

Prerequisites: You defeat a leader or solo monster with a Reason score of -2 or lower, such as an ankheg.

Choose one of the following benefits:

- **Beast Bane:** When a creature with the Animal keyword uses a strike against you, the strike takes a bane.
- **Monster Whisperer:** You gain an edge on tests made to calm or tame non-sapient creatures.
- **Monster Trophy:** You decorate your equipment with a trophy from a monster. While the trophy is visible, you gain an edge on tests made to intimidate sapient creatures.

OWED A FAVOR

"The Guild's gratitude knows no bounds! We'll repay you in any way we can ... short of actually paying you."

Prerequisites: You successfully perform a service for a powerful faction.

The faction will perform one favor for the party, provided it doesn't interfere with the faction's goals.

Additionally, the faction is a good source of information. The Director chooses a skill from the crafting or lore skill groups appropriate to the faction, such as the Criminal Underworld skill for an outlaw gang, the Blacksmith skill for a blacksmith's guild, or the Society skill for a noble house. While in a settlement with the faction, you gain this skill if you don't already have it. If you already have the skill, they gain an edge on tests made with the skill.

PRESUMED DEAD

"But... you're dead. We went to your funeral."

Prerequisites: You die in a way that prevents your body from being recovered or examined (for instance, you fall off a cliff).

While it may appear that you died, in fact you did not. You regain 1 Stamina and can spend one or more Recoveries. In addition, you gain a 1st-echelon trinket of the Director's choice.

At a dramatic moment determined by the Director, you rejoin your party with an explanation for your narrow escape, and how you found your new trinket along the way.

RATCATCHER

"I like fighting these little guys. Means I don't have to waste money on a helmet."

Prerequisites: You defeat a leader or solo monster that is 1S or smaller, such as a goblin monarch.

Choose one of the following benefits:

- **Death From Above:** You gain a +3 damage bonus to strikes against creatures whose size is smaller than yours.
- **Everybody Move!** When you use the Knockback maneuver, you can use it on one additional creature of your size or two additional smaller creatures.
- **Come Out to Play:** You gain the Come Out to Play ability, which can be paid for using the heroic resource of your class:

COSTS 1 HEROIC RESOURCE: COME OUT TO PLAY

Come out to play-yay!

Keywords: Area, Magic

Type: Maneuver

Distance: 5 burst **Target:** All enemies hidden from you

Effect: Each target is **P < [average]** taunted (EoT). You know the locations of creatures taunted in this way.

SAVED FOR A WORSE FATE

"Drink this. You'll need all your strength for what lies ahead!"

Prerequisites: The entire party is killed or captured by intelligent foes.

After being defeated, the party awakes, alive and with their Stamina and Recoveries returned to their maximum. You are captives of the creatures that defeated you, and you await a gruesome end—unless you can escape or overcome the fiendish challenge your captors have planned.

The Director chooses one of the following benefits, based on the fate your captors have in mind for you. Each hero gains the same benefit. In addition to this benefit, you must face an encounter, montage test, or adventure of the Director's invention.

- **Gladiators:** You must fight to the death for your captors' amusement. Your intended opponents wield or guard a

trinket or leveled item, which you can earn if you are victorious.

- **Prey:** Your captors plan to release you and hunt you down, but it's no fun unless you offer a challenge. Each of you is given medicine which raises your Speed and your number of Recoveries by 2. This benefit lasts until your next Respite.
- **Sacrifices:** You are to be dropped in a volcano, fed to a sacred monster, abandoned in a desert, or otherwise sacrificed to a higher power. You are bedecked with holy jewelry. Each hero gains 1 Wealth.
- **Saviors:** Your captors fear an even stronger foe. They want you to defeat this enemy for them. You can keep any treasure you find while doing so.

SHIP CAPTAIN

"Up anchor, shipmates, 'tisn't gold but glory we seek!"

Prerequisites: You acquire a ship, airship, or similar vessel.

Choose one of the following benefits:

- **Deep Sea Diver:** Your movement gains the Swim keyword.
- **Ship Speaker:** You magically know any of your ships' locations even while not aboard. You can telepathically speak to anyone on board the ship who understands a language, and they can respond, no matter your distance from the ship.
- **Signal Flags:** While aboard a ship, you can communicate with and conduct negotiations with another ship up to 5 miles away, as long as you can both see each other. You have an edge on Presence tests made while negotiating in this way.
- **Trained Crewmember:** You gain an edge on tests made to handle sea or air vessels.

TROUPE TACTICS

"We're actors! We're the opposite of people!"

Prerequisites: The party has successfully performed as a troupe of actors, circus performers, or other entertainers.

Choose one of the following benefits:

- **Flying Circus:** At any time during a willing adjacent ally's turn, you can use a triggered action to push them up to 2 squares if their size is the same as yours, or 4 squares if they are smaller. If this push causes the creature to fall, they can use their action or maneuver before they fall to reduce the height of the fall by 2.
- **Spotlight:** You magically cause a creature within 10 squares to shed light for 5 squares. The light lasts for 1 minute, until the creature is more than 10 squares away from you, or until you dismiss the effect (no action required). While illuminated, a creature can't sneak or hide, has a bane on tests to perform an action secretly, and has an edge on tests made with the Lead, Music, and Perform skills.
- **Supporting Player:** You gain an edge on group tests using Presence and on tests made to assist another creature with a Presence test.

- **Work the Crowd:** While one of your allies is playing music or performing, you gain an edge on tests made to hide, sneak, conceal objects, or pick pockets.

WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE

"A hundred silver?! An insult! I turned my father in for fifty golden crowns. And he was innocent!"

Prerequisites: You are declared an outlaw by a governmental authority.

Choose one of the following benefits:

- **Honor Among Thieves:** You are considered to have 2 higher Renown when negotiating with criminals.
- **Minion Mower:** When you make a melee strike that targets a minion and at least one more minion is within distance of the attack, the attack gains a +3 bonus to damage.
- **No, You're Under Arrest!** You gain an edge on power rolls made to escape a grab. Additionally, when you make a successful test to escape manacles or bonds, as part of the same maneuver you can transfer the manacles or bonds to another person adjacent to you without them immediately noticing.

ZOMBIE SLAYER

"Why won't you die! You've already done it once, you should be good at it by now!"

Prerequisites: You defeat a leader or solo monster with the Undead keyword, such as a ghost.

Choose one of the following benefits:

- **Blessed Weapons:** When you use an ability that deals damage that has no type, you can deal holy damage instead.
- **Divine Health:** You gain corruption immunity equal to your highest characteristic score. You can't be turned into an undead creature.
- **Holy Terror:** You gain the Holy Terror ability, which can be paid for using the heroic resource of your class:

COSTS 3 HEROIC RESOURCES: HOLY TERROR

Return to your grave!

Keywords: Area, Magic

Type: Maneuver

Distance: 3 burst

Target: All enemies

Effect: Each undead creature in the area takes holy damage equal to your Reason, Intuition, or Presence score (your choice) and is **P < [strong]** frightened (save ends).

PERKS AS TITLES

The Director can turn a perk into a 1st echelon title by simply giving it a prerequisite. For example, a hero might gain the Familiar perk as a title instead if they complete a quest for an archmage, who then teaches the ritual to conjure the familiar as a reward for the hero.

RENOWN

As you accomplish heroic deeds, your fame allows you to influence NPCs and attract followers. Your infamy among enemies also grows, and their hatred and fear of you can cause foes to lash out during negotiations (see [Negotiation](#)). Every hero has a Renown score that represents how they can use their reputation to influence others. The higher the score, the greater your impact with those who know of your legend.

At the start of character creation, your Renown is 0. Some careers can increase your initial Renown score (see [Careers](#)).

INCREASING RENOWN

Your starting Renown score is 0 unless modified by your choice of career or other rule. Renown typically increases at the end of an adventure, often after the acknowledgement of a powerful NPC that you helped save them, their family, their home, or their organization. That NPC and anyone else who witnessed your heroics can tell the tale, and from there, your legend grows.

INFLUENCE NEGOTIATION

Renown changes the way NPCs respond to heroes during negotiations. For more information, see [Negotiation](#).

ATTRACT FOLLOWERS

You can also use your Renown score to attract and employ followers who perform different duties or favors for you. The Renown Followers table shows how many followers a hero can have at one time based on Renown. You can always let go of a follower in your employ to hire a new one.

You can recruit as many new followers as your Renown allows as a respite activity, provided you are in a place or have a means of communication that allows you to recruit such followers.

RENOWN AND FOLLOWERS

Renown	Number of Followers
3	1
6	2
9	3
12	4

STRONGHOLD

Many followers stay at a stronghold, which is a home base you designate and can change. Your stronghold is typically a location shared by your fellow heroes. It could be a few rooms at an inn in a sleepy village, an old castle you claimed after clearing it of monsters, or a fleet of sailing ships.

FOLLOWER TYPES

When you attract a new follower, you decide on their name and ancestry, and choose what role they play in their service to you.

ARTISAN

Artisans are crafting experts who can contribute to your research and crafting projects (see [Research and Crafting](#)). An artisan can contribute one project roll per day to a project you choose while they remain at your stronghold, provided they have access to the necessary materials.

When you recruit an artisan, choose four skills from the crafting skill group that they know. An artisan has a Might or Agility score of 1 (your choice), a Reason score of 1, and a 0 in all other characteristics. They know Caelian and two other languages of your choice.

RETAINERS

Retainers are heroic NPCs who adventure alongside the player characters. They are controlled by players in combat and much simpler to run and less powerful than the player characters. A hero can only have one retainer in their service at a time unless the Director deems otherwise.

Rules for retainers are found in the *Draw Steel: Monsters* core rulebook.

SAGE

Sages are research experts who can contribute to your research and crafting projects. A sage can contribute one project roll per day to a project you choose while they remain at your stronghold, provided they have access to the necessary materials.

When you recruit a sage, choose four skills from the lore skill group that they know. A sage has a Reason and Intuition score of 1, and a 0 in all other characteristics. They know Caelian and two other languages of your choice.

WEALTH

This game isn't about accumulating and counting every piece of copper you acquire. Instead of tracking a bank account, the amount of stuff your hero can purchase is based on their wealth score. As you accomplish more deeds, you acquire more treasure and rewards from grateful NPCs that allow you to be an even more effective hero.

The Hero Wealth table shows the types of items, gear, services, property, and more that you can purchase at in the game. The table shows both the purchases that heroes can acquire individually, and that a party can acquire when the characters pool their resources together as a group.

In order for a hero to make a purchase, the item must be available to them. The Director can also decide that a hero can only afford one or a limited number of purchases. For example, a hero with a Wealth score of 3 can buy a small house, but their Wealth score doesn't they can buy up every available small house to become a landlord.

This isn't an exhaustive list, but you and the Director can use the table to judge what your character can and can't purchase. For instance, the price of an ox isn't on this list, but you can reasonably assume that if you can buy a horse, you can probably afford an ox as well. (Don't @ us, farm nerds.) And if you can't afford something you want, fear

not! You might still be able to acquire a specific good or service through negotiation, or by trading your heroic services instead of spending cash. Treasures such as magic swords and psionic crowns and even healing potions are rare, and typically can't be purchased. Instead, they're found on adventures, traded for other treasures, given as rewards by NPCs, or crafted by the heroes.

HERO WEALTH

Score	Individual	Group
1	Mundane clothing, gear, armor, implements, and weapons; meals or drinks at a common tavern; stay at a common inn; passage on a boat	Horse and cart; dinner at a fine tavern; stay at a fine inn
2	Horse and cart; dinner at a fine tavern; stay at a fine inn	Catapult; small house
3	Catapult; small house	Library; tavern; manor home; sailing boat
4	Library; tavern; manor home; sailing boat	Church; keep; wizard tower
5	Church; keep; wizard tower	Castle; shipyard
6	Castle; shipyard	Private island

GAINING WEALTH

Each hero starts with a Wealth score of 1 that can be improved by their choice of career during character creation. The hero's Wealth score increases whenever they find and keep a massive amount of monetary treasure, such as a hoard of coins and gems from a dragon's lair or several unique and valuable paintings from a monarch as a reward for a job well done.

In general, a hero's wealth score increases about once every other level of play. The Director can increase this rate if they wish.

LOSING WEALTH

As an optional rule, the Director can allow a hero to make a purchase that is one level above their wealth level. If this occurs, the hero's Wealth score is reduced by 1 after making the purchase.

GODS AND RELIGION

Orden is a fantasy world in which the gods are objectively real. In spite of this the people of Orden, regardless of ancestry, do not believe the gods control everything that happens in the world. They believe the gods created a natural world with its own cycles that are sometimes *predictable*, but which cannot be *understood*. It rained last Lyleth, and the Lyleth before that, so it'll probably rain this Lyleth—but maybe not! And if not, that may be because the gods are displeased, but it might just as easily be because the gods are bored, or fickle or, even more likely, it has nothing to do with the gods, and there's no way to know which.

When a river floods or crops fail, some people may curse the gods, but those people do not all believe a god caused these events. They may curse simply because the gods didn't prevent catastrophe. They do not think, "Why did the gods do that?" They think, "Why did the gods make a world that behaves like this?"

The gods are powerful, but forbidden from acting directly upon or within the world. In order to enact their will, they use intermediaries. Beings of demigod-like status, once mortals, who now serve their patron god in eternity. Many humans call these beings *saints*, while the other speaking peoples use the term heroes, or legendary heroes, not to be confused with the heroes you make using the rules in this book. 😊

Each god has many saints, some obscure. They sometimes manifest in the world. These encounters are always brief, leading sages and theologians to conclude there must be some limit to how much time or energy these saints and legendary heroes can spend on the prime manifold. Who created or enforces these limits ... no one knows.

As a result of this complex tapestry of belief and personalities, a farmer in Aendrim might call upon Adûn for strength while tilling the earth. But if a cool breeze suddenly came along, easing the bite of the sun on their back, they would almost certainly not thank Adûn or any of his saints. They would probably thank Saint Elspeth the Blithe, sometimes called the Summer Breeze. If they had a neighbor or relative with a shrine to St. Elspeth in their home, they might give that person a small gift or offering and ask them to place it on their shrine. More likely, they would silently promise to do this, and then forget or get distracted.

If questioned about this; "why did you call upon one god, but thank the saint of a completely different god?" They would first be surprised by the question. It would not have occurred to them to examine this behavior. If pressed they would say, "Oh, I'm sure they worked it out between them." They would not imagine, "Adûn told Viras, who told her saint, Elpeth, to send a cooling breeze," but they would assume something *like* that happened and not worry overmuch about the details. They called out, they received aid, that's what's important.

If no aid is forthcoming folks assume this is because the gods and saints are all very busy and cannot be arsed to answer every prayer. People are never surprised when the gods and saints are silent. They are usually silent.

CHURCHES AND TEMPLES

Most religions in Orden organize themselves into hierarchies and build temples or cathedrals, but some religions are little more than traditions handed down from shaman to shaman, or wise-women to wise-daughter. Some religions are secret!

Because the gods are forbidden from acting directly upon the world, churches and temples in Orden are consecrated to saints, or heroes. There are no temples to Ord, or Churches of Cavall. Instead there is the Church of Zarok, Law-giver, and the Church of Saint Llewellyn the Valiant. Everyone knows which god these heroes and saints serve, it's common knowledge. A human in Vasloria might call out to Cavall for aid in times of need but they know that, should Cavall choose to help, it would be by sending one of his saints.

The most popular saints and heroes can have several churches—meaning distinct organizations—devoted to them, each with their own rituals. In Corwell, there is the Church of Saint Llewellyn the Valiant, but there is also the smaller Church of Saint Llewellyn the Charitable with only a few temples.

Usually these churches recognize each other as expressing different, equally valid, teachings of the same Saint, but occasionally churches compete to see which among them is the "true" church. The saints don't discourage this, so they must, in some sense, approve.

There are churches dedicated to nature or knowledge or the sun, with no clear moral or ethical component to them; there are evil churches, churches devoted to dark saints and tyrant gods, but the saints and heroes listed here each have churches that, however esoteric their teachings (usually referred to as the "speech" or "words" of the saint or hero) expect their clergy to go forth into the world and perform good deeds—tend to the sick, ease pain, perform birth, death, and union rituals. These churches all have acolytes and abbots, censors and conduits. It is not so much that Grole the One-handed was, in life, principally concerned with the spiritual wellbeing of his *people*, but rather that this is what people expect of *churches*. So, as a religion grows, it soon conforms to the expectations of the people such that even the church of Khorvath Who Slew A Thousand has conduits who heal the sick and tend to the souls of their people.

INTERSPECIES WORSHIP

Dwarves mostly venerate dwarf heroes, humans mostly worship human saints, etc ... But this is just a side effect of the fact that members of the same species share the same culture and language and self-assemble along those lines. Any sufficiently large city, regardless of which species founded it, has churches and temples to gods of many species because cities attract people of many different species.

Each culture's pantheon reflects the mores and folkways of the people who live there. In far northern Vanigar, villains folktales often gain their power by tricking others through clever wordplay. Riddles. Though they are villains, they are clever and this earns them some respect even

from their enemies. So the Vanigar pantheon includes Holkatya, a trickster god.

Whereas Vasloria has no folk tradition of trickster figures, and so has no trickster god. Instead, villains in Vaslorian folktales tend to be people who sought quick ways to power in order to avoid honest work. So Vasloria has the dark god Cyrvis who teaches that magic can subvert fate and make you master of not only your destiny, but also the world. This also reveals the common Vaslorian's attitude toward magic.

The gods of each pantheon tell you what the people of that region value, and what they fear, disapprove of, or distrust. The Vaslorian pantheon is wholly different from the pantheon of Vanigar which is different from the pantheon of Rioja. The gods and saints can hear their worshippers anywhere in the timescape and even small cities can have temples to distant gods from other peoples and regions. All it takes is one dedicated conduit to establish a church of their saint or hero in some distant land.

For instance the High City of Dalrath, a small barony in northern Aendrim, has a temple to Sektahre, the Boatman, a saint of Khemhara, a distant desert region. The people of Dalrath do not find this strange. The priestess of Sektahre does all the same things any native curate would do: perform rituals, heal the sick, and otherwise tend to the spiritual and physical wellbeing of the locals without asking much in return. Some people may be suspicious of a stranger peddling their religion far from home, but yet more people consider the presence of such a priestess a sign that their city must be very important indeed.

Because of all these gods and saints, religion in Orden is a very a la carte affair. There are human heroes in the elf pantheon, there are dwarf saints in many human pantheons. Elder or younger, the gods do not care much about their followers' biology. If you devote your life to the teachings of a god and do good works in their name, you can expect to be rewarded regardless of your ancestry and, though the Age of Saints is long past, most folk believe it is still possible for a mortal to ascend to sainthood or herodum, even in this late age.

Lastly, though rulers across the land instinctively believe the gods are paying more attention to them because they are queens or dukes or the heads of a powerful wizard order or guild ... there is no evidence of this. As far as theologians can tell, the gods seem to view every soul as equally worthy. Many of the Tales of Saints and Heroes feature characters of enormous divine power battling over the soul of a normal person with no station or power or inheritance.

As much as it annoys the great and the good, the gods view all mortals as equals.

DARK GODS AND EVIL SAINTS

The gods and saints presented here are popular and well-known. Their priests, shamans, or godcallers serve the public weal and tend to the souls of the people.

But the world is not for heroes alone. There are villains as well as those who are simply misguided or desperate. Every pantheon has saints, even gods, who teach the

virtues of selfishness, cruelty, the pursuit of power for its own sake, and the right of the strong to do as they please.

These religions do not *usually* build public temples and worship in the open but most communities know, or very strongly suspect, who among them serve dark gods and saints.

Among the people of Vasloria, there are the gods Nikros the Tyrant and Cyrvis the Lich, popularly known as the Black Brothers, each with their own saints. When tyrants rule, these religions tend to come out from the basements and sewer-temples and start worshipping openly.

AFTERLIFE IN ORDEN

Folk in Orden believe that most, maybe all, living things have a soul which is the source of personality, creativity, and memory. The loss of one's soul, either through bargaining with a devil, or being consumed by a demon or otherwise trapped by a warlock, results in slowly losing your personality, your distinctiveness, even memory.

However there is no popular idea that everyone's soul is immortal and persists forever after death. Most people believe their soul dissipates after death and becomes one with creation. When asked where the soul goes after death, the elf sage responded by blowing out a candle. "Where did the fire go?"

In some cultures, exceptions are made for those mortals who lived an especially virtuous life.

Much the same way the humans of Vanigar believe the bravest among them live on after death drinking and telling tales at the vigbordh—the wartable—most elves believe that should they live a life of sufficient meaning, should they do great deeds and embody Val's ethos, they earn the right to join Val in Arcadia after death where they will live in a timeless faerie world, "the world that should have been."

Most dwarves believe that those members of each generation who best distinguish themselves earn the right to live forever in Ord's memory. This, they believe, is where their heroes go after death. Uniquely among the speaking peoples, the dwarves believe their god is watching them, watching the world. Ord cannot act, but he judges and remembers.

Some people in Orden, like the hakaan and the orcs believe their ancestors watch over them, although there is no agreement whether their ancestor's souls are watching over them, or just their memory. Or something in between. Sages differ. This belief among the orcs and hakaan is more of an attitude, an assumption, than a religion.

CONDUITS AND CENSORS

"Conduit" is not a title within any church, it is a job or rank. An abbot, rector, even a bishop may be, or may have been, a conduit or a censor. Conduits and censors are those members of the church expected to go out into the world and actively, sometimes very actively, represent their saint's ethos. It is for this purpose they are given access to powerful prayers.

Any sufficiently large organization has conduits just like they have shadows and wizards. The thieves guild needs healers just as the church needs spies! A conduit who works for the thieves' guild still serves their saint which implicitly means the church approves of the guild's activities and the two organizations are at least pointing in the same direction if not actively allied.

Churches have bureaucracy just like any organization and while some prelates, abbots, bishops, or hierarchs are conduits, many are not. They are normal people who serve the church in administrative, political, or bureaucratic roles and while they know the same minor orisons every acolyte and abbot know, they do not go out into the world righting wrongs and so do not gain access to the powers of the conduit.

The prayers acolytes perform in churches are little more than magical rituals. They say the right words, make the right gestures, touch the appropriate fetish or talisman, and wounds close, curses are lifted, blessings bestowed. There's no direct connection in these examples between the acolyte and their god or saint. Though even a lowly acolyte can expect to find their prayers fall on deaf ears if they fail to uphold the tenets of their faith.

Should the acolyte continue in their studies and deeds and earn the rank of conduit, they gain access to greater prayers granted them by their saint. As they advance in their faith they call upon their saint more directly, and they begin to form a personal relationship with their saint. It is a feeling that develops whereby the conduit learns the ... mood, for lack of a better term, of their saint or hero.

As they gain experience, they may even enter into dialogue with their saint. When they call upon their saint for power in battle, their saint personally answers them. They might literally be on first-name terms. At even higher levels, conduits begin to get a sense of the greater power behind the saint or legendary hero: their god, who begins answering prayers directly. They become, in effect, little mini-saints. The pathway from high-level conduit to saint is now obscure, but was once well-known. In earlier ages of the world, it was expected that certain holy conduits who had served their god and saint well would, should appropriately dramatic circumstances reveal themselves, be elevated to sainthood.

Elves, Dwarves, and Orcs revere their own creator gods. Val, Ord, and Kul respectively. Humans, uniquely, worship many gods. The difference between the Innumerable Younger Gods of the humans, and the Elder Gods who created the other speaking peoples is not well understood.

HOW TO USE THIS CHAPTER

Draw Steel isn't about religion any more than it is about language or treasure, but understanding how religion works in a day-to-day sense can help make the world feel more real. The people in Orden aren't any more religious than the people of Earth were in the pre-modern era. It is a factor in their lives, but not the only factor and for some people, not a very important one.

Obviously conduit and censor players can use this chapter to choose a saint, each saint also lists which domains they represent. But each god also has a list of domains, so an enterprising player could just invent a new saint, hero, or herald choosing two domains from a god's list.

But any player might wonder "does my character follow the teachings of any saint or god?" Think about the people you know in the real world who wear religious or quasi-religious talismans every day. A symbol on a necklace, a sticker on their car, a tattoo. Normal people often carry religious talismans, your character in *Draw Steel* might not be particularly religious, but they might still carry a religious talisman just because it's a family tradition or to remind themselves of the religious instruction they received in church as a child.

We wrote a lot of words here because we wanted to give characters from all ancestries a few choices when it came to saints and heroes. But your character can ignore all of this if you think religion isn't a big part of their lives.

VAL

Domains: Creation, Knowledge, Life, Nature, Protection

Val, the Noble Lord, First Among Equals, is the patron of the elves. He created the Celestials, the True Elves, second of the five speaking peoples who then created the younger elves: the high, wode, and shadow elves. His name is the root of the Calien word "valiant," and the dwarves named the most precious ore in Orden, *valiar*, the truemetal, after him.

Val holds that the greatest purpose a thinking being can commit themselves to is the creation of art and the appreciation of beauty. He keeps the magical, elf-haunted forests called wodes close to his heart because they represent his vision for Orden. What the world could have been. His growing disgust with the concept of war led him to leave Orden and take up residence in his private manifold, *Arcadia* where all elves hope to someday join their patron.

HEROES OF THE ELVES

The legendary heroes of the elves are once-mortal heroes who now dwell in Arcadia and make up Val's court there. They answer prayers and dispense blessings and boons, even manifest in the world during times of great need (though, like all the speaking people's saints and heroes, what these legendary figures consider "great need" is very personal and has little to do with politics or great kingdoms).

The high elf heroes detailed in this book are A Sea of Suns, the Taste of Morning, and Ripples of Honey on a Shore of Gold. The wode heroes are Yllin Dyrvis, Thyll Hylacae, and Illwyv li Orchiax.

A SEA OF SUNS

Domains: Creation, Life

A Sea of Suns, also known as the Composer. Credited with inventing harmony, it is said that after she discovered the power of blending many voices into one, the elves sang for

an entire century uninterrupted⁴. The harmonics so complicated they created new beings like faeries, dryads, and the elgenwights.

The Composer discovered, or invented, the power of music to manipulate reality. Her troubadours, it was said, could return the dead to life. “In the music, you can live forever.” Legend has it, she was at the battle of Kalas Valiar when the first Army of Night sieged its walls. When their corruption engines weakened the impenetrable walls, she stood alone on the parapets and sang. For forty days did her voice bolster the walls, stemming the flood of evil. Her song ended only when her life was taken by A Heart Trapped In Amber, the sorcerer-assassin of the Star Elves.

THE TASTE OF MORNING

Domains: Creation, Knowledge

The Taste of Morning, also known as the Librarian. Credited with building the first library, most scholars consider this a real, historical event (never a certainty with the tales of the legendary heroes) and adventurers through all ages have sought this legendary building. If, indeed, it was a building.

He canonized the idea that knowledge, truth, was a kind of beauty. The Library was a temple to thought, wisdom, scholarship. It contained plays, poems, histories, treatises on the nature of reality. The knowledge held within was incalculable. Legends say it held codices written by the elder dragons, though modern scholars suspect this is a literary conceit as there is no evidence the elder dragons bothered with writing.

RIPPLES OF HONEY ON A SHORE OF GOLD

Domains: Life, Protection

Ripples of Honey on a Shore of Gold, also known as Warkiller, the Diplomat, was both scholar, sage, and soldier. She served as emissary between the humans and the dragons when the former sought war against the latter. For many years she brokered peace, but she could not stem the tides of war forever.

In the end, her efforts failed, and the Elder Dragons live no more in this world. Like Val, she hated war so much, after her failure she sought to pen a new codex. A work so powerful it would bind the world. The Codex Pax Universalis would banish the concept of war from Orden. Alas, in the end she realized there was only one way to finish her great work, and she was not willing to take that final step.

YLLIN DYRVIS

Domains: Knowledge, Nature

⁴ If this story wasn't invented by the dwarves or humans, it must at least have passed through one of their cultures. The celestials did not reckon time the way younger species do and would not have said “for an entire century.”

Yllin Dyrvis, also known as the Beast Heart, the Wodespeaker, the Warden, witnessed the Composer's first song, and took it upon themselves to communicate with and care for the speaking creatures the Sea of Suns created. The dryads, elgenwights, the giant birds and intelligent fish that populated the ancient wode that once covered all Orden, all came under the Beast Heart's care. Dyrvis learned their speech and taught them who they were.

To this day, many ages of the world later, the wode elves consider themselves the stewards of the speaking creatures, and those creatures rely upon the wode elves for protection.

THYLL HYLACAE

Domains: Life, Nature

Thyll Hylacae, the Forestal, Apothachron, also known as the Sacrifice. Thyll spoke to the plants, learned their truths, discovered many magics hidden within. The power to heal, harm, change. It was Hylacae who first sensed, then learned, the language of trees. She studied, cared for them, and protected them when the folk of farm and field came to cut them down.

Though she was mighty in warlore, she could not be everywhere. In the end, she sacrificed herself for the trees, the ritual she performed uplifted a small population of trees, creating the Derwic, the thinking speaking tree-peoples few of whom remain in Orden.

ILLWYV LI ORCHIAX

Domains: Nature, Protection

Illwyv li Orchiax, the Moonknight, Marshall of the Gloaming, Manslayer. When humans first arrived in Orden (it is said) they were welcomed by the other speaking peoples. But they were unlike the other creations in the world. While the dwarves cut rock for the ore within, humans cut down trees simply because they were in the way. Other species had their own territories and homelands, but humans sought constant expansion into even the most inhospitable territories.

Illwyv it was who first realized the folly of treating with these creatures. A great hunter of the Quercus Court, she gathered her band of elite Helriath harriers and made war on the humans who would kill the wode.

ORD

Domains: Creation, Knowledge, Protection, Sun, War

Ord, the Maker, the Engineer is the patron of the dwarves. Ord, along with his siblings Aan, Eth, and Kul, created Orden. These four saw the world as a dynamic expression of their philosophies.

Ord values integrity, honor, faithfulness to an ideal. Courage in battle and fair play. Treating your opponent honorably, Ord teaches, is an expression of your own worthiness. Ord is associated with permanence, which some elder dwarves take to mean a kind of slavish devotion to tradition. But Ord teaches permanence is the quality of reliability, of steadfastness. Young dwarves who chafe at the stale and stifling traditions of their elders remind the greybeards that Ord is The Maker. He expects

his children to create marvels, to bring forth new discoveries, new insights. To remake the world anew each generation.

HEROES OF THE DWARVES

The following heroes are venerated by many dwarves and others who follow Ord.

ZAROK THE LAW-GIVER

Domains: Protection, War

Zarok, the Law-Giver. Zarok the Teacher. Zarok who is Justice. The first, great hero of the dwarves, Zarok was a noted general, diplomat, and poet. In his time each dwarf city-state had their own laws which were mostly just lists of offenses with punishments listed next to them. There was no consistency from one city to another and no underlying theory of law. The strong ruled, the rest obeyed.

It was after Zarok retired from his career as a warmaster and became the ambassador to the elves that he undertook a study of how different cultures express the idea of justice. He surveyed the various traditions of elves, humans, and orcs and wrote *The Conversations*; a series of fictional dialogues in which two characters, deliberately chosen from dwarf theater so as to be familiar to his audience, debate the question “What are the characteristics of a just society?”

The Conversations marks the beginning of legal theory in Orden. It sought not only to state what a just society was, but to prove it ethically through a series of logical statements. Most of the work concerns itself with the proper, *ethical* uses of political power. The responsibility of the strong to protect and defend the weak. The adversarial system of legal representation is his.

Zarok teaches that all people should be equal under the law. His is the principle of fair play, sportsmanship. Respect for your adversary. The responsibility of the strong to protect the weak.

Zarok’s *The Conversations* are still quoted today. There is a long legal tradition, when a prestigious lawyer in Capital wishes to write an amicus brief without revealing their identity, to sign it “-Z.”

VALAK-KOTH THE SEEKER

Domains: Knowledge, Sun

Valak-koth the Seeker, the Delver, the Unquenchable Fire, Koth Who Brought Light to Darkness, said she heard voices in the rock as a child. These days this would result in a visit to the apothecary or a change in diet, but in those days the world was young and a child who heard voices might turn out to be a prophet of Ord. Her parents listened and soon none doubted.

She would run, heedless of danger, into the dark caves below and wherever she pointed, marvels were found: metals, gems, fantastic ores. Caves as big as nations. It was Valak-koth it was who first discovered aerithyst, the sungem, a crystal mineral which glows upon contact with living things.

Valak-koth teaches bravery in the face of the unknown, the virtue of curiosity, to seek endlessly and quest for knowledge, not to fear the darkness. To bring light into dark places. Valak-koth it was who first discovered the World Below, the Dark Under All, though it was not recognized as a separate manifold until after her death. After her death, the original sungem she found refused to dim. It was enshrined in her temple-tomb, now lost along with the ancient stone dwarf city of Kas Koriar.

STAKROS THE ENGINEER

Domains: Creation, Knowledge

Stakros the Engineer, the Machine Mind, the Operator, founder of the Order of Fabrication. Stakros it was, not a steel dwarf, who forged the first strife-engine; a great war-walker manned by thirty dwarves who, at the battle of Kalas Mithral, grappled with the legion of Ylindyr the star elves summoned to defeat the walls of the steel dwarf capital.

After the war, Stakros turned his talents to peaceful pursuits. He forged the first magma diver, designed to withstand enormous temperatures and pressures, all the while protecting the operator within. Inside his marvel Stakros personally dove into the great volcano Oxor-myr, returning with marvelous ores never before seen in Orden. His design soon evolved into a variety of armored frames to suit a variety of purposes.

Stakros teaches the value of knowledge for knowledge’s sake, and the power of the mind to overcome any obstacle. He also teaches that knowledge is power, and in unready hands can only be dangerous.

KUL

Domains: Knowledge, Life, Sun, Trickery, War

Kul, Father of Flames, Lord of the Forge, the Cleansing Fire who put fire and magma within the world at its creation. He saw his sibling gods creating their own children and placing them within the world, and so followed suit, creating the orcs, the last of the original Five Speaking Peoples.

Kul’s fire is the fire that destroys, but it is also the fire that creates, the fire of the forge, the fire that makes meat safe to eat, the fire that cauterizes wounds. Kul teaches that action is the defining characteristic of being. Kul’s heroes are not philosophers or poets, but warriors and hunters.

Uniquely among the Elder Creator Gods, Kul does not desire worship, finds it distasteful. Orcs still call out to Kul in desperate times, “Kul Who Once Spoke,” but in those moments they do not call out for aid, only that Kul witness them, and that they might prove worthy of his attention.

HEROES OF THE ORCS

The following heroes are venerated by many orcs and others who follow Kul.

KORVATH WHO SLEW A THOUSAND

Domains: Sun, War

Khorvath who Slew a Thousand, the Slayer, the Scourge. Khorvath was a musician and woodworker specializing in carving flutes whose family and village were exterminated by a band of wode elves. None who knew Khorvath thought her a warrior or a killer, but when the fire came, Khorvath rose to become a legendary warleader of the orcs. Though the tales about her imagine Khorvath earned her sobriquet by single-handedly killing a thousand elves in a single night, Khorvath was only one of a small squad of orcs. And the actual number killed by them was lost to history.

Khorvath teaches that those who turn a blind eye to distant injustice will soon find it is too late to act once the trouble is at your doorstep. She speaks to those who, like her, only wish for a quiet life. "Peace is earned," Khorvath says. Khorvath teaches the best action is swift and immediate.

GROLE THE ONE-HANDED

Domains: Life, War

Grole the One-Handed, Grole who Slew the Saint of Skulls lost his left hand at the Battle of Dur Mothe where he stood, alone, against the horde of deathless and their master, the living saint Morath of Many Tendrils. Grole thought to buy time for his army to escape the flood of death, but when they saw their warleader grappling alone with the Saint of Rot, they reversed their retreat. When Morath lashed out with his greataxe Viscerator and severed Grole's left hand from his arm, Grole's army surged forward, breaking the tide of deathless.

His army watched as Kul's light descended on their wounded leader, and they knew Grole had been chosen by Kul in that moment. At the last, Grole and Morath fought as equals. Orc Hero and Dark Human Saint grappled atop the ancient hill. With his one good hand Grole plunged The Green Fire, his grandmother's saber, into Morath's heart, ending the Saint of Many Tendrils.

Grole teaches the extraordinary deeds normal people can accomplish if they cast fear from their minds. It was Grole who said "Even should an orc be pierced by many arrows, they should still be able to perform one last act of revenge."

Grole is the orcish hero of those facing impossible decisions. He is favored by most orcish leaders. Grole teaches that, even alone, even against impossible odds, extraordinary victories are possible.

KHRAVILA WHO RAN FORTY LEAGUES

Domains: Knowledge, Trickery

Khravila who Ran Forty Leagues, The Eternal Runner, Khravila The Unstoppable. On the eve of a war between elves and men that would certainly result in the death of many orcs caught between the two great powers, Khravila's dying father had been incapable of deciding what should be done. Equally incapable of choosing who should succeed him as chieftain; his son or daughter.

At the moment of his death, when the godcaller rang the bell of souls officially announcing his passing to the tribe, Khravila looked at her brother and saw hesitation. Khravila had never known doubt.

She snatched her tribe's oriflamme from her father's dead hands ... and ran. For many leagues she ran and the tales of the creatures—manticores, griffins, chimeras—who barred her passage passed into legend. Orc children still delight at the tricks and wordplay Khravila employed to thwart the beasts, avoid fighting, and continue her epic run.

Less than five hours after her father died, Khravila arrived at the Astragalus Court, forty leagues from home and while many elements of her legend are certainly mythical, the time and distance are well attested. Khravila held forth the oriflamme and announced that, should the elves continue their assault on the humans, there would be war between them and her tribe. "Chose quickly," she said. "My people are right behind me, and eager for battle." They could not have known she was bluffing.

The elves called off their attacks and Khravila brokered peace between them and the humans. When her brother arrived with their kin folk some hours later—itself an impressive feat—Khravila handed him the oriflamme, and collapsed, dead. It was Khravila the chieftain who ran. It was Khravila the Unstoppable who died, a legendary orc hero.

Khravila teaches the virtue of persistence, endurance, and above all ... wits. Not only the wits necessary to foil the tests that barred her way, but to conceive her plan in the first place, and the dedication to pull it off. "Perhaps another orc could have ran," her brother said. "But only Khravila could have bluffed."

HEROES OF THE HAKAAN

Most Hakaan in Orden are animists. They know and respect the four elder gods who created the world and believe these gods watch the world and see what happens within it, but the Hakaan do not create churches or formal belief systems around this attitude.

Instead they believe the world is filled with innumerable nature spirits. Each river, tree, stone, has their own spirit, which the Hakaan revere. They have no organized religion in the way the other species in this chapter do, though a Hakaan brought up in a city, or among another people, would naturally venerate in whatever gods and saints are worshiped by the folk who raised them.

They know they are descended from stone giants, but they do not think of themselves as stone giants. They know their ancestors were tricked by Holkatya, one of the gods of Vanigar, into trading some of their great strength for the doomsight. But while they respect Holkatya, they do not worship her. Nor do they resent her. She's merely a detail of their history.

Hakaan conduits and censors venerate Hakaan heroes who, after doing great deeds in life, were chosen by the gods to take their place among the stars, becoming constellations. They see the stars at night as a complex map of legendary hakaan heroes, and their own ancestors who watch from above.

MAHSITI THE WEAVER

Domains: Creation, Knowledge, Trickery

Mahsiti the Weaver was a fresco painter and mathematician of the hakaan who discovered, or invented, a way of drawing very precise geometric shapes following patterns that repeat at any scale. Believing it could be a new way to devise spells, she took to weaving tapestries using lines of thread to better understand the numerical relationships within the patterns. It took time to master weaving but she took to it quickly and produced a series of essays, each a tapestry, proving correct her suspicions. The Tapestries of Mahsiti are a series of thirteen legendary artifacts of varying sizes, one as small as a napkin, one over two hundred feet long. Each has a powerful spell written into it, available for use by anyone who can read the patterns.

One of Mahsiti's weavings, titled *The Shepherd and the Sheep*, was used by her whole clan when war came to them. The hakaan had no doubt they could defend their home but were equally certain there would be enormous loss of life. Mahsiti suggested they use the tapestry, but the people of her clan did not understand. Use it how? It's simply a picture of a tree in a field with many sheep gathered around it.

But this image, as Mahsiti showed, was formed out of thousands of repeating geometric patterns. The tapestry was a gift from Mahsiti to her chieftain who hung it in their great receiving hall. Mahsiti cast the spell within the tapestry, and walked *into* the tapestry. The people were amazed, and followed.

When the enemy army arrived, they found the clan's villages empty, and did not notice the tapestry with hundreds of Hakaan depicted within. Once the enemy left, Mahsiti finished the spell, and her people emerged, safe.

Mahsiti teaches that art and science, creativity and knowledge, are the same thing. Those who follow her teachings believe that the act of creating, of bringing a new idea or work of art, into being is the act of participating in the same process the gods used to create the world.

PREXASPES THE STARGAZER

Domains: Nature, Protection, Sun

Prexaspes Stargazer, the Astronomer, the Sun-sage mapped the skies and was one of the first people in all Orden to correctly calculate the repeating pattern of Orden's three moons. Because of his growing mastery of the cycles of nature, he predicted a coming famine and prepared his clan. When the famine came, but the people had storehouses of food ready, he became a hero of his tribe.

After receiving the doomsight, Prexaspes turned his attention to the sun itself. He studied ancient tomes written by scholars of many people, believing eclipses were predictable events. His research yielded a pattern, but his insight led him further. What if, he wondered, an eclipse was more than a celestial event? What if it was an opening, a portal? He studied the stars, and prepared a ritual.

Years later Prexaspes' tribe was besieged by hobgoblins and all hope was lost, he begged his chieftain to continue fighting, not abandon their homes. The Astronomer promised an eclipse, and though none doubted his calculations, no one could guess how this could help the beleaguered and besieged people.

But the Hakkan trusted their sage, and kept up the fight. When the eclipse came, Prexaspes performed his experimental ritual opening a portal to the sun. A line of golden fire erupted from the portal, evaporating many hobgoblins. But this was just a side-effect of the ritual.

With his people watching, shielding their eyes from the brilliant light, Prexaspes entered the portal, and emerged on the surface of the sun. In that moment, the people knew this was his doom. He was only gone a few moments, but when he emerged from the portal his flesh was solid sunstuff, and he waded into the remaining battalions of hobgoblins, destroying them with rays of heat and purifying flame.

Though he died in the act, he saved his people becoming a hero of all hakaan, taking his place among the stars as a new constellation.

Prexaspes teaches that nature is a moral good and is worth defending, and that the sun is the source of power for all life on Orden.

ATOSSA THE SHEPHERD

Domains: Fate, Protection, Trickery

The great dam built by their ancestors that created lake Tospah was going to fail, her doomsight said. The people would not listen, they said she read the signs wrong.

When the rains came and would not stop, and the water in lake Tospah rose putting more pressure on the dam, Atossa opened the gates to the sheep pen and let the tribe's herd of sheep out.

The people ran after them, effectively evacuating the village. But the rains stopped, and the dam did not burst. The people returned to their homes, put the sheep back in the pen, and blamed the shepherd for worrying too much and leading them on wild goose chases.

The next year, the rains came again. And this time the lake was already near capacity. When the shepherd tried to warn the people, they reminded her that it had rained the year before and there was no danger. And so would not listen.

When the first cracks appeared at the base of the dam, Atossa knew her *wyrd* was before her. She took a piece of the broken dam back to the village to show the elders. They frowned and wondered what Atossa was up to now, but agreed amongst themselves to go up the valley and inspect the dam in person.

Atossa tried to warn them they were walking to their doom, and became even more agitated when the rest of the village followed. When the elders reached the cracked dam, they sounded no alarm. Instead they argued and debated, "chewing their beards," *rish javid* the hakaan say about elders who argue instead of acting.

Desperate, Atossa climbed to the top of the dam, and dove into the water, swimming down to the bottom of the lake where she could see the stone cracking. Her people were on the other side.

When the crack widened and water began to pour through at incredible pressure, the people panicked and ran. But Atossa was not worried. This was her doom. She knew what to do.

She let the flowing water carry her toward the widening crack until her body slammed against the stone, blocking the water. The hakaan are famed for being able to hold their breath, but though her people ran as quickly as they could, there was no way Atossa could block the water long enough.

When the damn eventually burst, and washed away the village, the people were not there. Atossa had bought them the time to run to safety. They walked among the ruins and found her crushed body among the rubble. They knew they would see her again.

That night, there was a new constellation in the sky.

Atossa teaches that it is not for the shepherd to judge the flock, only to protect and care for them. Even though they might be foolish, or cowardly. "Let the gods judge," Atossa said. "We have sheep to worry after."

DEVIL GODS

Devil heroes in Orden usually serve the gods and saints of the culture in which they were raised. Few devils in Orden are from the Seven Cities, most are descended from devils who were stranded on Orden hundreds or thousands of years ago. Devils who are from the Seven Cities have their own unique pantheon.

The Seven Cities have saints just like humans in Orden do but in place of gods, these saints serve the seven Archdukes of Hell, also known as Archdevils or the Lords of Hell. Unlike the gods of Orden, the Lords of Hell are corporeal. Giant figures, 30 feet tall, who each sit upon the throne of their city, projecting their consciousness out into the world, dealing with politics, sorcery, and treachery, manifesting avatars when necessary. They are, effectively, the Gods of Hell.

Like the other gods of the timescape, the Lords of Hell are too busy to attend to every petition and request and so employ saints just like other gods. Religion in Hell is superficially similar to religion among the peoples of Orden. There are churches and rites and rituals, but devils tend to view attending church and performing the expected rituals at the appropriate times as akin to paying taxes. Annoying but necessary.

SAINTS OF HELL

Like Orden, there are dozens of saints in hell, some obscure. These three are some of the most popular and the most likely saints for a conduit or censor to follow.

THELLASKO THE GREAT DESIGNER

Domains: Knowledge, War

Thellasko the Great Designer, the Game Master, Saint of Strategy did not invent war, humans in Orden hold that honor, Thellasko invented war *simulation*. Creating what were effectively games to train cadets and lieutenants at the wartable to ensure victory on the field.

Thellasko served in Dispater's army rising to the rank of Major General. He retired with honors after the Battle of the River Rhye intending to take what he had learned on the field and write a book about the proper way to conduct a war.

He felt the high command of hell's armies fought battles on outdated principles. Which side had the best fighting spirit, which sides' officers had the greater noble pedigree. Thellasko's treatise, never published, was titled *The Proper Application of Force*. As he wrote, he created a kind of ideal battlefield to use as his running example. The example became more and more critical to the text, more robust, such that eventually Thellasko put his manuscript down to develop the example into a proper game.

This first game was played on a grid of 64 squares arranged in an 8 x 8 grid. There were two armies each with sixteen pieces. Eight serfs, two soldiers, two prelates, two towers, a King and Queen. The game was superficially simple but held hidden depths. It taught the principles of sacrifice and territory control, of thinking like your enemy.

The game evolved into the game of Shere played throughout the timescape. But while the game was immediately popular far outside its intended audience, Thellasko grew dissatisfied with it, and began work on his masterpiece simply called the Game of War. It was complex, using hexagonal tiles to build modular terrain boards, and featuring dozens of different unit types with extensive tables that factored supplies, morale, visibility. Unlike Shere, which was an abstraction, the Game of War was a true simulation.

Expensive to produce, the Game of War was never very popular outside the Academy of Dis, but Thellasko used it to train a generation of lieutenants on the art of war. Thellasko's students and best players led the armies of Dis from victory to victory. Thellasko taught his students that an army must fight. All other things being equal, the army with the most experience wins.

In Thellasko's time, the most senior noble was always the senior commander, regardless of experience or, indeed, sanity. After Thellasko and the Game of War, commanders were chosen from among the soldiers with the most battlefield experience.

Thellasko was granted sainthood on his deathbed after a generation of successful battles won by his students, all of whom carried a symbol of graduation from Thellasko's school; three adjacent hexagons. They praised him on the battlefield during his life, and his church continues to advance his theories

Thellasko teaches the virtue of accepting the battle as it is, not as you wish it might be. To take action based on available data, not what tradition says. That wars are not won based solely on the size of one's army, but based on which side is best able to bring its force to bear against the opponent.

URYAL THE SUBTLE

Domains: Knowledge, Trickery

Uryal the Subtle, Deception, the Hidden Hand, Saint of Lies rose to the rank of senior adjudicator in the Bank of Vorilom, Styx. His manager had been Permanent Undersecretary of Finance for over 300 years, which Uryal felt was taking the title a *tad* too literally.

A dozen senior adjudicators had tried to usurp the PUSF for generations. Their corpses made excellent lamps and even better examples. But Uryal believed he was different. He knew the game the finance managers played, and thought it was stale. Lying, double-dealing, and backstabbing have their place, but there are even subtler tools in the deceiver's toolbox.

During a critical trading session, it was Uryal's job to ferret out the text of the upcoming bloodfruit futures report from the Ministry of Goods and Services. Already an accomplished spy before he moved into finance, this Uryal did easily.

Uryal faithfully relayed the contents of the report. Every detail, unredacted, no embellishments. In other words, he told the truth. The Permanent Undersecretary never considered this, and interpreted the report assuming Uryal had edited it to favor his own placed wagers.

The Permanent Undersecretary ordered the bank to corner the market on bloodfruit futures, believing the price of bloodfruit would skyrocket. Uryal, meanwhile, shorted bloodfruit. When the report was finally published, saying exactly what Uryal said it would, the Bank of Vorilom was left owing billions in futures trades, causing the entire bank to default.

The PUSF was, of course, fired. Literally. Uryal awaited his promotion and counted the enormous sums he made betting on cheap bloodfruit. He was not disappointed.

His use of truth in a war of lies attracted Moloch's attention, but lining his own pockets in the bargain and becoming one of the single richest people in Hell earned Moloch's favor. He raised Uryal to sainthood and a privileged position in the Court of Styx, the City of Lies.

Uryal teaches that deception is only one tool in the art of lies. That the point is *manipulation* and *any* tool, including the truth, should be used to achieve one's ends. Uryal teaches the virtue of flexibility of character and morality. The virtue of unpredictability, always behaving in a manner that is open to interpretation so as to prevent your opponent from learning your tells.

Uryal is the Saint of Hell's Diplomatic Core. His *unofficial* motto, falsely attributed to him but oft-repeated, "Do unto the other guy as he would do unto you. *But do it to him first.*"

KYRUYALKA THE FALSE PRINCIPLE

Domains: Death, Trickery

Kuryalka the False Principle, Soulstealer, Audacity, Saint of Ambition credited with inventing the trading scheme known as the Kuryalka Ploy. Daughter and eldest child of Orliath the IXth, Marquis of Naraka, the City of Blood, tradition held Kuryalka would ascend to the house throne

upon her mother's death and rule, but from childhood Kuryalka was obsessed with what was informally known as The Trade, the buying and selling of mortal souls from Orden and elsewhere in the timescape.

It occurred to Kuryalka that as long as people saw their soul-power increasing on paper they wouldn't inquire too closely about her stewardship of their investment. They signed their accumulated souls over to young Kuryalka, who promised them great returns. It seemed too good to be true! But she published a report every quarter showing marvelous gains and while no one could understand her math or references to "integrals," they were well-pleased with their growing wealth. Whenever someone complained about the lack of disbursements, she would quickly pay them out of her growing hoard of souls.

Of course, there was no investment taking place. She simply kept the souls and grew in power, using new investors' souls to pay out old investors. She was not the first to use this technique, but she became the most famous and successful and the scheme was named after her, because of one innovation. Kuryalka had developed an equation that showed exactly when the ploy would collapse.

Days before that moment, supreme in the fullness of her soulpower, Kuryalka did not withdraw her souls and escape into the timescape with her near infinite wealth; she went to the Archdevil Sutekh, Lord of Naraka, and offered him her vast soulwealth in exchange for immortality and a place in the Court of Blood. No mortal had ever dared or even conceived of such a thing!

Sutekh's terrifying hollow laughter could be heard throughout hell. No mortal, he said, had ever embodied such naked ambition. He accepted her offer, making her the first Saint of Hell. Sutekh took Kuryalka's souls and founded the Exchange, making the trade in souls an official government department in hell, and building an entire bureaucracy around it.

Kuryalka teaches the virtue of ambition, that if you are willing to risk everything you can gain everything. "The world is yours, if only you tell a lie big enough." That the greatest ambitions are those that are so audacious, no one else has even imagined them yet. In this manner does one avoid competition.

Kuryalka features in many folktales in Hell including "Of The Childe Whomst Kepte The Sheep" in which she appears to a young shepherd boy warning him against getting caught telling his first lies. Kuryalka instructs him in the proper use of manipulation. "*Never tell the same lie twice!*"

HUMAN GODS OF VASLORIA

Like all the Innumerable Younger Gods, the gods of Vasloria embody the attitudes of the people who live in that region. This includes the humans, polder, and draconians of Vasloria.

Vasloria is a polytheistic, pre-industrial, pre-Enlightenment, feudal culture. Its people have many superstitions and prejudices, some of which are reflected in the teachings of their gods. Adûn, for instance, teaches that hard physical labor is a moral good and people who

work hard every day are honest. Most people in Vasloria, especially Aendrim where Adûn's faith is most popular, believe this to one extent or another.

Some of them take it more seriously than others though. People in the most distant villages tend to believe it more literally, while people in the cities are perfectly aware that one may work and work and be a villain. And this is true of most of the beliefs in this section. Some people take it very seriously, some not so much.

Like all peoples of Orden, the people of Vasloria are well aware there are other gods and they do not particularly think their gods are *better*, just, "These are the local ones who matter to us." A priest of Cavall who journeyed far from Corwell and found themselves in the distant desert land Khemhara could still act as a Conduit of St. Llewellyn the Valiant, but they would look around the Heliopolis and see the animal-headed gods of the Khemharans and the astonishing feats of masonry and astronomy the Khemharans achieved and think "Well. Obviously the gods of Vasloria aren't that big a deal here, but these gods certainly are!" The peoples of each region of Orden tend to prefer their own gods because they understand them best, not because they think they are "more powerful."

ADÛN

Domains: Creation, Life, Love, Protection

Adûn believes that truth and hard work are virtues. He embodies the Vaslorian belief that hard work is honesty. Someone who works hard, real physical labor, is an honest person. Anyone who does no obvious work for a living is someone not to be trusted. Adûn is more worshiped in the field than in the city. Farmers distrust city folk because many of them make a living writing, or counting money, and never break a sweat.

Vaslorians in distant villages still use the ancient test of strength to determine truth. Two individuals in a legal dispute may find the reeve asking them to fell a tree or build a wall. Whoever finishes first is in the right, because they worked harder and are therefore more honest. Many walls and fields owe their existence to this ancient legal tradition.

A priest following Adûn expresses their faith through labor. They build things. Many priests are also masons or carpenters. Joining the church for them did not mean abandoning their former trade, it intensified it.

A knight following Adûn spends their time aiding others through hard work, inspiring people to honest speech and hard labor, as opposed to Adûn's brother Cavall who seeks to right wrongs.

Adûn and Cavall are brothers and the line between them is not a sharply defined one. Truth and justice are close companions.

GAED THE CONFESSOR

Domains: Love, Protection

Gaed the Confessor, son of Malgen, son of Germoc, was the abbot of a small monastery dedicated to St. Anthony, Shield of the North in eastern Aendrim during the rule of the tyrant Baron Kaveran. Kaveran was a censor of the

church of St. Pallad, winning the baronial throne though a combination of treachery and good strategic battle principles. Once on the throne, he threw off the black cloth covering the device on his shield, revealing himself to be a servant of Pallas, Saint of Nikros.

Kaveran sought to consolidate his rule by extinguishing the church of St. Anthony, Shield of the North specifically, and worship of Adûn generally. In this, he almost succeeded. Gaed's monastery was small, his province obscure, but as he refused to renounce his faith, his monastery attracted more and more refugees, making it harder and harder for Kaveran to deal with him without causing a revolt.

Kaveran abducted Gaed, his knights dragging the abbot out of his monastery in the middle of the night, and tortured him for seven days, hoping to break his faith and force him to convert to St. Pallad. Gaed neither renounced his faith nor called out for aid.

Kaveran was no fool, and knew killing Gaed would make a martyr of him, and so attacked his flock. Hoping, by putting their homes to the fire, to pressure Gaed into recanting his faith. Kaveran barred several families in a tavern, set fire to it, and brought Gaed to witness the horror.

But Kaveran had not thought to shackle Gaed, and the abbot countered by lifting the bar on the burning building and walking into the tavern in full view of hundreds of his followers. He spoke Saint Anthony's words as he did so, but it was Adûn who clothed him in a shimmering blue light.

It was Gaed son of Germoc who entered the tavern, it was Saint Gaed the Confessor who emerged, unscathed, leading the people inside to safety. In that moment the people and many of Kaveran's own followers, turned on the cruel Baron, dragging him off his horse and spitting his body with kitchen knives and pitchforks.

Gaed teaches the virtue of being true to one's principles even—especially—when doing so is the most difficult thing in the world. The title "confessor" is granted to those who persisted in their faith, in public, even when doing so was dangerous or deadly.

GRYFFYN THE STOUT

Domains: Creation, Life

Gryffyn the Stout was an infant dwarf when his parents' cart was waylaid by bandits who killed his mother and father, stole all their wares, and set fire to the cart. They were unaware of the child nestled within.

A nearby farmer saw the flames and rode out to investigate. When she arrived, she could hear the bawling of the dwarf babe. Though wreathed in flame, the infant's skin was too hardy to feel the heat. In the horse's pack were a pair of tongs she used to extract the child without harming herself, and she took the baby dwarf home to her husband.

Naming him Gryffyn, the farmers raised him as one of their own. The boy grew up wanting to be a farmer like his adoptive mother and father, but they encouraged him to take up masonry, believing stonework to be a natural part of his ancestry.

Gryffyn had no particular aptitude for stone work, but desirous to please his parents he worked hard until eventually he was apprenticed to a mason and, after many years effort (more years than most, it was noted) he produced his master work and became a master mason.

One day, years later after his parents had passed, hundreds of people from other nearby towns and villages arrived. Cinis, the Necromancer had discovered an ancient tome of lore and summoned a horde of ghouls. She used her new army to conquer the barony, causing a flood of refugees. Gryffyn's quarry could not shelter a tenth this number of refugees, so Gryffyn proposed the people cross the white ravine to the north and seek asylum among the elves of the Orchid Court.

The people were appalled, the white ravine was impossible to cross for any but the most experienced ranger. "There is no choice" Gryffyn said. "Cinis' army will be here in a matter of days, and there is nowhere else to run."

The people cried and prepared for death. Gryffyn saw this, and his heart felt like it would burst. "There are stones enough in the quarry," he said enigmatically. "Yoke the oxen and bring the stones to the ravine and do not stop, even in darkness, even in rain, until the ghouls come or the quarry is empty."

When the army of Cinis the Pale arrived, the people fled to the ravine, the path being easy as their carts and oxen had worn a clear road. Thinking they would throw themselves into the ravine rather than be eaten by the ghouls, they were astonished to discover a great stone bridge crossing the ravine. It had not existed three days prior, and all agreed it could not have taken less than a year to build.

Fleeing across the bridge, they found the body of Gryffyn, author of the bridge, his fingers bleeding, hammer in his hand, his heart having finally failed. He knew his labors would cost his life. But Gryffyn's Arch still stands, almost a thousand years later.

Saint Gryffyn the Stout teaches that despair is the enemy of action. That unyielding endurance is the cure for impossible odds. That more than sword and spell, hard work is the savior of the people.

CAVALL

Domains: Life, Love, Protection, War

Cavall believes that mortals cannot live where injustice thrives. To followers of Cavall, the unjust society is the Wasted Land, where people live false lives. The concepts of civil law and just punishment are his.

A watchhouse chaplain is almost certainly a priest of Cavall. A rector serving a small town may be welcome on the town council, but would consider passing judgment on a fellow citizen a breach of duty. The maxim of the church of St. Gwiddon the Vigilant translates to "To Watch, Report, But Not To Judge." The law, Cavall says, belongs to mortals.

Censors of Cavall, on the other hand, have no such motto. The nobility often sponsor knights of Cavall to roam the countryside and dispense justice in remote wilderness areas where the noble's influence cannot reach.

Brother to Adun, patron of the country of Corwell, Cavall also believes that people, no matter how vile, can be bettered. "Let the law judge," said Saint Llewellyn, "let us forgive."

LLEWELLYN THE VALIANT

Domains: Life, Protection

Llewellyn the Valiant was a knight in service to Duke Melianus of Gant known as Melianus the Bright. His mother the Duchess died from a withering illness none could cure, and Melianus, her only son, assumed the throne.

Almost from the beginning of his rule there were rumors that a sorcerer in the marsh was behind his power, poisoning his mother to hasten Melianus' ascent, but as the marsh was nigh impassable this could not be proven and was taken for little more than a spiteful rumor.

Duke Melianus' reign was cruel almost from the outset. He accused all those loyal to his mother of treachery, and found occasion to have them each imprisoned and executed without trial. Sir Llewellyn had served the Duchess loyally and strove to acquit himself of his duty under the new Duke but struggled to reconcile his sense of duty with the new Duke's capricious malice.

The new Duke yearned to imprison his mother's favored knight, but all the guards, the reeves, the people of city and village looked up to Llewellyn. Melianus instead contrived to send Sir Llewellyn on a series of quests, each more deadly than the last.

The Trials of Llewellyn, as they came to be known, passed into legend and their tale is still told in Corwell. Llewellyn and the Dragon With Seven Eyes, Llewellyn and the Witch of the Fen, Llewellyn and the Onyx Tower.

When Llewellyn slew Ghruk the Trollhag, she cried out, "Follow Melianus!" as she died. These words echoed in Llewellyn's ears and his heart. He assumed she meant, obey him, be loyal to him. But as he rode his great destrier Silverheart back to Castle Gant, Llewellyn began to suspect what Ghruk meant.

That night, Llewellyn waited in the stables and, at midnight, Melianus appeared. He mounted his great black warhorse Coalfire and rode. To where, Llewellyn could not guess. But the knight followed the duke as he rode east toward the marsh, Llewellyn remembered the rumors.

At the edge of the marsh, Coalfire's eyes began to glow with a baleful flame and his mane burst into crimson fire. Llewellyn's breath caught in his throat. "A nightmare!" he realized. The rumors were true! The sorcerer had given Melianus a devil steed.

On flaming nightmare hooves was Melianus able to cross the impassable swamp. Llewellyn balked, no man could cross the cursed bog. But Silverheart champed at her bit, pulled on the reins. She would not yield. Placing his trust in his steed, Llewellyn let the reins lie slack, and Silverheart took the lead.

Llewellyn and Silverheart plunged into the bog and though it was night and the mud sucked at her hooves, Silverheart pushed on. In the hour before dawn, they arrived at an

island with an ancient tower. "The tower of the sorcerer," Llewellyn thought. Thunder rolled, and rain began to fall.

Looking up at the upper window of the tower, Llewellyn saw someone performing a dark ritual. A flash of lightning illuminated the figure. It was Melianus! Melianus was the sorcerer! Llewellyn called out, and the duke descended the tower and mounted his hellsteed. On his shield now, the screaming skull symbol of Cyrvis, the Lich, god of malice.

Cyrvis had rewarded his loyal servant for his years of cruelty and the figure astride the nightmare was Saint Melianus the Bright. The Dark Saint charged Llewellyn, his lance gleaming with balefire. Llewellyn and Silverheart returned the charge and the two clashed together, Melianus' blow strong enough to unseat a giant. But Llewellyn was not thrown; his strength was the strength of ten, for his heart was pure.

Coalheart struck with flaming hooves at Silverheart but the destrier struck back, blow for bite and bite for blow. Then the hellsteed roared and a rotting green flame burned Silverheart's flesh and stole her breath until, choking, she fell to the ground, dead.

Llewellyn's heart burst, he threw his body over the corpse of his loyal steed, and Melianus' lance pierced his armor, his back, and his heart. Knight and horse, dead. Melianus crowed as the lightning flashed again. But, in that moment, the miracle.

Cavall stood between the Dark Saint and loyal knight. Cavall pulled the lance from Llewellyn's back. "Rise my son, and rise thy steed. Thou work shalt never be done."

Saint Llewellyn the Valiant and Silverheart his Eversteed rose, immortal, and the battle against evil renewed itself, the two armored saints clashing on barded steeds.

Weeks later, neither having returned, the people of Gant laboriously forded the swamp and found the tower of the sorcerer. The ground around the tower turned black from the baleful energies unleashed. Though no bodies were found, the armor of both knights lay on the ground. Melianus' breastplate having been pierced.

Llewellyn and Silverheart had rid the people of their cursed, hateful Duke.

Saint Llewellyn is Cavall's greatest saint. He teaches that the greatest loyalty is to the wellbeing of the people and that it is the responsibility of the strong to protect the weak. That the only proper use of power is in pursuit of justice.

GWENLLIAN THE FELL-HANDED

Domains: Protection, War

"Work your ritual, loremaster. And I will make your life worthy of a god's memory."

The Red Sun Hobgoblins seemed unstoppable. The Baron began to think he might need to evacuate the entire barony, else allow his people to be slaughtered. His greatest knights perished against the Red Sun. They wielded some magic that granted them invulnerability.

Then the loremaster came. Zür the Wizard, dwarf and master of the Tower of Enchantment arrived. Seeing the need he opened his tomes and researched what might the

hobgoblins might wield. He presented himself to the baron's court with a solution. The Red Sun had found an ancient spring dedicated to a Gol demon-god. The Red Sun hobgoblins had bathed in the spring and awoken the blessing of the demon within and, having bathed in the river, they were now invulnerable.

Zür believed he could remove the enchantment and rob the Ren Sun of its power. But the way to the spring was dangerous and he had no guard. The baron was at a loss, his greatest knights were almost all dead, thanks to the Red Sun.

"I will attend," Lady Gwennlian volunteered. The baron objected, Lady Gwennlian was his personal knight and bodyguard, just as her mother had been to his father. "If we succeed," Gwennlian said, "you will have no need of bodyguards. If we fail, it will be the same."

The baron could not say no to his closest and most loyal knight and so Lady Gwennlian, daughter of Morwetha, rode out with Zür the Enchanter. "It will take time to perform the ritual," Zür said. "Once I start, the demon will send creatures to stop me. They will be terrible."

Gwennlian swore to defend the dwarf against all who might come for as long as it might take. In later years, Zür professed he felt the weight of her vow and knew the gods were watching. "How long to work your ritual?" she asked, and she could tell the answer was dire.

"Ten days," Zür said. "Ten days must I work this weaving without pause or rest or food or water." Dour Gwennlian merely nodded. "So be it."

Arriving at the spring which ran red, Zür prepared his weaving. "You understand," Zür said coating his hands in a rare powder, "that once we begin, we cannot stop, no matter how horrible the fiends the demon sends at us."

Well-versed in the faith of Ord and the dwarves, Gwennlian responded. "Work your ritual, loremaster. And I will make your life worthy of a god's memory."

For ten days and nine nights Zür spake his weaving and lighting sprang from his fingertips as he grappled with the demon of the spring. And horrors came as he did so.

Creatures unseen in Orden, assemblages of organs, teeth, and claws. Animals with too many legs or too few heads. The dead came, trees that walked whose branches dripped blood came. The tale of all detailed in the *Lay of Lady Gwennlian*. And while the endurance of the dwarves is well documented, Lady Gwennlian did not falter, did not rest.

On the seventh day did a group of men from the Barony come to tell the dwarf the Red Sun had been defeated. Zaar hesitated, but Lady Gwennlian did not. Exhausted, spent, she could not be fooled. She saw through the demon's guise and the men who were not men erupted in tentacles and spines.

Lady Gwennlian dispatched them all.

Twelve days after they rode out, Zür returned with Lady Gwennlian's body on her horse. The spring had been consecrated by the green, the Red Sun had lost their invulnerable skin and were beaten. Lady Gwennlian protected Zür as she swore, but she died upon dispatching the last demon spawn.

"I bring you her body," Zür said to the Baron. "And one thing more will I do for you. I shall build you a church here. A cathedral worthy of the life of Saint Gwenllian."

Gwenllian is the saint of those who stand watch, of all those who must carry a burden ceaselessly. Gwenllian teaches that vigilance is its own reward.

SALORNA

Domains: Life, Nature, Storm, Sun

Salorna believes that nature is a moral good. That to behave in a manner not in accord with the natural balance (she would never use the word "order") is to commit offense against the gods.

Salorna teaches that humans are a product of nature, so then a tilled farm is as much a natural phenomenon as a forest. Indeed, tilling the land is a form of caring for it. But Salorna also teaches balance in all things; a land of farms and no trees would be just as unnatural to her as a land of all trees and no people.

Felling a tree for lumber is natural. People need lumber to make homes for shelter. This is proper and good. Felling a tree because it's in the way of a *road* is mere convenience and therefore a moral wrong. Salorna curses a straight road.

Killing for food is likewise natural. People need to eat and the pig knows this as well as the person. Killing for sport is a moral wrong, however. It is unnatural, Salorna says.

A wheel that harnesses the power of the river is a beautiful thing. Humans and river physically connected. A dam that blocks the river is a desecration.

Some of Salorna's priests are conduits, some are Mages of the Green. Both seek to preserve the balance and respect for nature. Because much of Vasloria is covered in elf-forest, Salorna's druids are also often diplomats to the elves.

Salorna has few censors, but not none! Favoring light armor and ranged weapons, her censors are often mistaken for rangers. They seek to punish those who hunt for sport, or those who would defile the natural order.

DRAIGHEN THE WARDEN

Domains: Nature, Sun

Saint Draighen the Warden, the Ranger, Draighen of the Wood was known in her life for her mastery of the elf haunted wodes which she could cross without incident. Draighen it was who first treated with the Derwic whom even the wode elves had not seen in many ages of the world.

The awakened trees were happy to hear news of the world and while it was impossible for her to satiate their endless curiosity ("How fare the steel dwarves?") she provided many services for them, chief among them; locating the Stone of Hyllc a large flagstone infused with magic which the Derwic used as a kind of altar for communing with their creator. Many traditions had the Derwic forsworn after the loss of their symbolic meeting-stone, and they were sore grateful to the human who took their problems as her own.

Years later a fire threatened to engulf the local wode and the elves within refused all aid. Their stoic refusal to prevent their own extinction infuriated Draighen, whom they already resented because of her special relationship with the walking trees.

Draighen proposed a trick the humans, the "men of farm and field" used when fire threaten to burn their crops after a drought. "Starve the fire" she proposed. The elves, initially curious, rejected her idea as soon as they understood it. "Cut down the trees?!" they exclaimed and exiled the human.

Refusing to give up on the elves, even after they chose to die with their forest, she went to the Derwic who immediately praised her plan and were eager to help. The elves of the wode were astonished when Draighen returned with a dozen Derwic who immediately began uprooting a line of trees ten miles long and a thousand feet wide. What would have taken the elves or humans even working together many days, the Derwic did in an hour. The fire reached the edge of the break the walking trees had made...and died out.

When the elves remarked upon this, taking the Derwic to task for their actions, Hurlothornindrascyl, their chief, looked at Draighen in confusion and then pointed to the sea of uprooted trees. "They would have moved on their own if they could! We just helped them along."

The elves were properly chastised and realized their shame. Though the Derwic disappeared back into the wode, the elves celebrated Draighen, naming her Elf-friend and Wode Warden. In the ceremony, Draighen was surrounded by a golden light and her brown eyes turned green. The elves knew she was Saint Draighen now.

Draighen teaches solutions can always be found if people are willing to talk. That even the darkest forest is not a thing to be threatened by if you carry wisdom and an open heart with you. That the proper reaction to unknown territory is curiosity.

ERARWEN THE WROTH

Domains: Nature, Storm

Eriarwen the Wroth apprenticed to her mother as a witch just as her mother had apprenticed under her mother. Her family were witches in service to Halcyon the Moonmaiden, Saint of Viras the Lady of Spring. They had tended to the souls and health of the people of five villages for two centuries. Eliarwen was not yet of age, and so not yet a full Mistress of the Craft when the blight came.

At first it was a newborn foal born with seven eyes and a writhing grasping tentacle where it tongue should have been. It took three men to kill the infant beast and though they dismissed it as an accident of birth, the men were harrowed.

Soon, it was a cat, then a herd of cows, then every kind of beast and bird in the wood emerged with hideous mutations, defects, and deformities. The creatures had not just been driven mad, they were filled with hate for the people of the farms and villages. Though they could not know it, it was the Red Blight of Caswyn the Plaguemaster.

In a matter of a week, the people were forced to all gather together in one town for protection, and they feared

Her mother and grandmother, the other witches of their coven spent their time trying to protect the people and heal the afflicted animals, but this was not possible. There could be no cure, for these creatures were not sick. Caswyn had changed their nature making new things out of the wildlife.

When her grandmother's horse...changed underneath her turning into a merging of horse and crab, Eliarwen saw her mother summon a killing spell, but her Grandmother forbade it and turned to try and calm and reason with the steed who had carried her for twenty-seven years.

Then Eliarwen saw the beast rip her grandmother apart with a single bite.

Her mother raced to her mother's corpse. And Eliarwen called out.

Eliarwen did not scream or cry, nor call out for aid or even mercy. She did not call to Viras, nor any of her saints. She called out to Salorna the Summer Storm and demanded the Woodland Mistress act.

Eliarwen felt a growing heat and joy in her heart and, feeling like she could fly suddenly saw the world through a million eyes all at once and where she had stood, a humanoid figure composed entirely of bees filled the space. Eliarwen the Swarm exploded in a cloud of bees and each bee was Eliarwen. She sped across countryside from one village to the next, stinging every animal affected by the Red Blight, and the villagers watched as the woodland creatures, their own pets and livestock, returned to normal. Good as new! None knew then that it was Eliarwen who saved them, but all knew it was a member of her family. Who else?

But Eliarwen was just getting started. Returning to her grandmother's corpse, the swarm coalesced and Eliarwen emerged, a young woman again. But her hair was flame and lightning crackled where she walked.

"CASWYN!" She thundered. "I SUMMON THEE! COME! YOU CANNOT RESIST! I COMPELL THEE!"

Caswyn, furious at the death of his blight, furious at the *girl* who dared oppose him, could not resist. He revealed himself and in that moment, it was Caswyn the Pestilent, Saint of Cyrvis who appeared.

Saint Caswyn and Saint Eliarwen battled and grappled with each other, each growing to great size infused with the power of their gods. But their figures were unrecognizable. Caswyn was a rotting giant, a mutated dragon, a griffon oozing blood.

Eliarwen was a wolf made of fire, a crow made of lightning, a bear made of stone.

Caswyn the Chimera hurled Eliarwen the Lion to the ground and it was Caswyn the Cobra who struck. But it was Eliarwen the Elk who spit Caswyn upon her antlers, banishing the saint from the mundane world.

Eliarwen returned to herself and though she was now an immortal saint, she sensed that Salorna had given her yet more power. She saw her mother weeping over her grandmother's body, the old woman's horse, restored by Eliarwen's sting, nuzzled at her mistresses' curled grey hair.

Eliarwen smiled, and knew the task before her. She conjured lightning from her fingertip, and her grandmother was renewed. Mothers and daughters reunited.

Eliarwen teaches that nature holds the power to destroy, that Mother Nature is also the fury of a hurricane. She preaches revenge against those who would pervert the natural world. And that those would seek to preserve the balance between humans and nature must be willing to take violent action if necessary.

THE BLACK BROTHERS

"Black Gods!"

Most heroes are hero-heroes, but some heroes are anti-heroes and some are anti-villains! Presented here are one archetypal saint from each of Vasloria's evil gods; the brothers Nikros and Cyrvis (KNEE-crows and SEAR-vis) for those players who wish to play a dark hero.

NIKROS

Domains: Death, Fate, Storm, War

Nikros is strength. He is dominance. His is the right of the strong to rule over the weak. He is the Tyrant.

Nikros believes that strength is the only virtue, and those who are born strong were born to rule. Because of this, followers of Nikros are often mistaken for followers of Adun—a mask they are happy to wear. Both teach that strength is good. But for Adun strength is a tool for helping others. For Nikros, strength is power to enact your will heedless of the consequences. Might is right.

Many is the Baron or Duke who attained power through sheer strength and ruthlessness, seeing their people as mere resources to be spent. Many of these rulers only come to Nikros after achieving power, their ears poisoned by a priest of The Tyrant.

Though he and Cyrvis are brothers, Nikros hates Cyrvis because Cyrvis is feeble and weak. Both teach that strength is the only virtue. But Cyrvis teaches that the weak can exploit treachery and sorcery to become strong. Nikros spits upon these feeble wastes, and preaches to the strong to take what is theirs by right.

Like Cyrvis, his priests worship in secret. Like Cyrvis, folk hate followers of Nikros, while sometimes, secretly, admiring them. Bullies always have their sycophants.

His censors take what they want, ignoring the law, heedless of consequence, and teach that all folk should live thus. To subjugate one's will to the law, or the community, or the family, is to be weak! Weakness is a disease and it must be eradicated!

PENTALION THE PALADIN

Domains: Death, War

Pentalion the Paladin, the Usurper, served at the right hand of Uther the Callous, aiding him in his ascent to the throne. Uther mastered fell sorceries under the tutelage of a priest of Cyrvis. In public, Uther's illusions kept him hale-seeming, but in reality his addiction to sorcery had withered him.

Pentalion was his greatest knight, general, and chief of Uther's secret police. He ferreted out conspiracies and rebellious coalitions. His tactic; infiltrate the rebels with his own agents, give them a taste of success but at the cost of relying on his power. Then, in their moment of triumph, Pentalion's agents revealed themselves and the insurgents found themselves surrounded by enemies without and within.

Eventually serving at the right hand of the conquerer was not enough. Pentalion loathed Uther for his physical weakness and growing dependence on sorcery. After Pentalion helped Uther depose a nearby duke, the Paladin helped the dead duke's daughter plot revenge.

He used all his usual tactics, his agents aided the duke's daughter and helped her build her insurgency, but in a critical moment when she confronted Uther with only Lord Pentalion as witness, the dark paladin killed first Uther, then the duke's daughter assuming leadership of both the kingdom and the rebellion.

Saviour to all, Pentlion was made Saint of Nikros for this act. He ruled well into old age, always finding new enemies within and without to be cruel to. And the more cruel he was to his invented enemies, the more the people loved him.

Saint Pentalion teaches that one should bide their time and build their power before striking. That treachery in service to growing your own power is no vice.

CYRVIS

Domains: Death, Fate, Knowledge, Trickery

Cyrvis is the enemy of fate. He is the god of those who believe they have been wronged by life, and seek revenge. Cyrvis is a god of magic, because through magic one can gain power to exert their will over others. He is brother to Nikros and together they are called "The Black Brothers."

A person bullied, a criminal arrested, a servant dismissed, all who harbor secret hate whisper Cyrvis' name, and that whisper is a prayer. A man rejected by a woman who loves another finds himself walking in Cyrvis' shadow. He is the god of assassins, conspirators, and the bitterly frail.

It is dangerous to worship Cyrvis in public, but those who gain power through his worship often parade this fact gladly and teach Cyrvis' hatred as virtue. Many is the knight who rides with Cyrvis's screaming skull talisman on their shield, teaching folk to take what they want, the law be damned. The law is a coward! The law is a system designed by cowards to keep us from seeking real power!

His churches are often underground, dungeons, cellars. His priests worship in secret, plotting against those with power, or those who are merely popular. To be liked and loved is reason enough for a follower of Cyrvis to hate you.

ESELD OF THE EYE

Domains: Knowledge, Trickery

Eseld of the Eye, the Eye of Hate, sought mastery of the Tower of Summoning. But though she studied hard, there were always other mages more fortunate.

Cursing those who succeeded where she failed, Eseld sought the *Tome of Boiling Hate* written by Cyrvis himself

during his life. Acquiring the tome required years of research and treachery. Eseld left a trail of poisoned librarians and tortured loremasters behind her before finally unearthing the tome from its resting place at the bottom of the inverted Tower of Blood.

But though the tome was written in an ancient dialect Eseld knew, the words moved under her gaze and she could not extract meaning from them. Many oracles were consulted and tortured before she learned the prophesy.

"Only one with singular vision will see the secrets in the Lich's writing."

With a flash of certain insight, Eseld understood the riddle. She took a dagger and carved out her own eye. With only one good eye remaining, blood from her eyesocket pouring onto the page, she could read the lore within.

In that moment was Eseld made Saint of Cyrvis.

Filled with sorcerous power, Eseld no long sought mastery of the Tower of Enchantment, returning instead to the hidden Tower of Blood, restoring it to its former glory, there to start her own cult. Eventually Eseld was overthrown by the Darkling Shades, her own cadre of elite sorceresses who pass on her lore to this day.

Eseld teaches that spite is a virtue. Only fools follow rules, and sorcery is a route to ultimate power.

TIMESCAPE SPACE GODS

The nature and origin of the gods of the timescape is not well understood. Unlike the gods of Orden, the Space Gods are corporeal beings, usually of immense, even planetary size. Some are humanoid, others like Nebular the Star Mother and XXAXX decidedly not so.

They have god-like power, greater it seems than the Innumerable Younger Gods but there is no evidence that they can create whole realities like the Elder Gods. They are not, as far as sages can make out, the authors of the worlds or people of the timescape. They may represent the last survivors of previous realities, High Science experiments run amok, or ascended beings from ancient civilizations who outlasted the fall of their people.

Rather than moral principles, the Space Gods represent abstract concepts and often alien points of view. They are more inscrutable than the gods of Orden, more capricious in their dealings with mortals. In some ways more accessible, in others, more dangerous.

Only a handful of those who dwell on Orden have ever heard of these figures, or know that the stars are anything other than pinholes in the curtain of night.

LORDS OF LAW AND CHAOS

The Space Gods do not concern themselves overmuch with what humans call "ethics." They embody older principles; Order, Chaos, Balance. Each faction thinks their fundamental principles are morality. The universe needs stability, predictability, say the Lords of Law. The only constant is change, say the Lords of Chaos. The truth lies between, say the Lords of Balance.

HERALDS OF THE SPACE GODS

Whether it is a tradition or some real limitation, each space god has, instead of saints, a single herald; mortals chosen to be the voice of each space god and communicate with their worshippers where the gods themselves cannot due to their alien minds.

These heralds function much the same way as saints. They grant conduits and censors power in battle, but without the moral expectations of Orden's gods. The gods themselves are more capricious but their heralds often arrive in person to aid their followers and take an active interest in the mortal affairs of the timescape.

RELIGION IN THE TIMESCAPE

The people of the timescape know and believe in their gods just like the people of Orden do. There are churches throughout the worlds to Quasax the Ultra Nova, temples to Mynoth the Way. Even XXAXX the anti-god has his worshippers: the Cult of Undoing.

But most citizens of the timescape do not carry the gods with them in their daily lives the way the people of Orden do. The gods of the timescape are powerful and reward their worshippers, but they are remote and unknowable. Most denizens of the upper worlds view a church as just another kind of shop. A place to go to renew your soul and speak the rites that your parents spoke. For many denizens of the upper worlds, religion is more of a cultural phenomenon than a way of life.

The closest analog to worship in Orden to be found in the upper worlds would be in Alloy, the City at the Center of the Timescape. The great port city where civilizations across the multiverse come to trade is also a city of temples. Temples to every god and saint and hero and herald in the timescape, some dead, some forgotten can be found somewhere in the ancient city's limits. Folk from Orden arriving in Alloy (an incredibly rare event as it takes enormous energies to lift one's ship up out of the slow-time of the Lower Words) remark at how familiar Alloy seems to them. It is a city where the upper and lower worlds mingle and steel sabers sometimes cross with swords made of hard light.

NEBULAR THE STAR MOTHER

Domains: Creation, Life, Love, Sun

The Queen of Suns. A living nebula. Desperate ships in need sometimes find themselves enveloped within Nebular, their systems repairing, their injuries healing.

She is a stellar nursery leaving a trail of infant stars in her wake. Hers is the Engine of Law transforming darkness into light, chaos into order. She is the most popular god among the memonek and the senior god among the Lords of Law insofar as their hierarchy can be discerned by mortal minds.

She is the goddess of creation and for some of her followers, life itself, as her children's energies feed all life on all worlds. Her priests teach that life is the opposite of entropy, and the natural byproduct of her solar incubator.

THE CHOOSING OF LADY MAGNETAR

Domains: Life, Sun

Captain Kalisdrossa was the leader of Sword Squadron an elite cadre of legendary UNISOL fighter pilots. Her crew believed unwaveringly that with Kalisdrossa as their leader, though one or two may perish in battle, the squadron would always come home.

In the legendary Battle of Cassiar IV against Grotenhulk the Evolver, flagship of the protean fleet, the protean Mutate-commander Oruth-phor intended to break Sword Squadron's winning streak, and from the body of PCS Grotenhulk a giant swam of living drone-sprites, each specially evolved to seek and destroy UNISOL Arrestor-class ships, spawned.

Sword Squadron's meson repeaters were too imprecise to target the tiny drone-sprites. Not only were the pilots unable to carry out their order, they were each being picked off one by one. Many privately believed this was the final flight of Sword Squadron.

When one of her pilots dropped his countermeasures and temporarily distracted the swarm, Captain Kalisdrossa had a flash of insight. Seeing an opportunity to destroy the swarm, save her crew, and give them a fighting chance to complete their mission, Captain Kalisdrossa ordered Sword Squadron to ignore the drone and proceed with their attack on the protean flagship.

Her wingman sent back "The drones will kill us before we're halfway there!"

"No they won't," she responded and then sent her last message. "Squad, you have your orders. First lieutenant Vachsimnatta is in command. Kalisdrossa out."

As her squad peeled away to begin their final run at the protean capital ship, Kalisdrossa dropped all her countermeasures and flipped on her turbothrusters, believing the overheating engines would ignite the metal sensor-chaff she had jettisoned.

Her instincts were precise and correct. The resulting chemonuclear reaction generated so much light and heat, the entire swarm of drone sprites turned to pursue Sword-1.

There was only one place to lead them. The surface of Cassiar Prime was a boiling sea of plasma condensate powerful enough to rip planets apart. "It should make short work of these drones," Captain Kalisdrossa thought.

Sword-1 plunged into the fermionic sea, the hull boiling away moments before impact. A million drone-sprites followed into oblivion. Commander Oruth-phor howled his fury into empty space and ordered his ship to envelop the Unisol capital ship, literally swallow it whole. Grotenhulk the Evolver understood the command and knew it was suicide, but the ship was compelled to obey.

Watching the great maw of the living changeship open to swallow an entire flagship struck terror into every memonek in the fleet.

Then, crackling across every signal unit, a voice. "COME FORTH LADY MAGNETAR, CHOSEN OF THE MOTHER OF STARS," and out of the blue plasma sea that was the

surface of the star Cassiar Prime arose a figure, humanoid, made of solid boiling plasma.

It was Kalisdrossa, still wearing the helmet that marked her captain of Sword Squadron, holding in her hand the blue topaz Fusion Rod, a powerful artifact that would serve as her weapon and the symbol of her office as Herald of Nebular.

Lady Magnetar flew across the void of space at lightning speed, evaporating protean fighters as she went until finally she faced Grotenhulk the Evolver, his maw poised to envelop the Unisol capital ship.

She punched a hole right through the hullskin of the changeship and battled her way, deck by deck, toward the heart of the beast. Though a thousand protean soldiers stood in her way, none could touch her or slow her relentless progress.

The memonek officers and soldiers of Unisol watched the bleeding changeship convulse, then explode as brilliant shafts of blue light tore the ship apart. Ending the Battle of Cassiar IV.

Lady Magnetar is the Herald of Nebulon the Star Mother aiding those who fight in the cause of light and life and order. She is invoked whenever a great sacrifice must be made. "Lady Magnetar, let my sacrifice not be in vain."

OV THE WAVE PILOT

Domains: Fate, Knowledge, Storm, Sun

OV the Navigator, an enigmatic humanoid figure described as masculine, appears to live inside the pilot-wave. In those rare instances where a mortal is directly exposed to the energies that propel ships across the sea of stars, they occasionally report seeing a figure that matches the description of OV.

Lost ships sometimes find their navigation systems lighting up, a clear path home suddenly visible where no such path was possible before. OV aids those who are lost regardless of their affiliation with law or chaos, and is one of the Lords of Balance. His herald works to stop conflicts by guiding ships around and past routes that might cause them to intercept hostile entities.

OV is the god of navigators and those who seek safe passage through treacherous scenarios. Because he cares little for the politics of the timescape, he is respected by the Time Raiders, though none would call him or any other being their "god."

When a time raider swears "OV guide me," the meaning is not "show me the right thing to do" but "show me a way out of this mess."

THE CHOOSING OF CHO'KASSA THE TIME RIDER

Domains: Storm, Sun

"Take the helm and damn them all!"

Cho'kassa and her family-clan were prisoners of Unisol being taken to Ordos, the capital of Axiom for trial on charges of piracy and insurgency. Unisol, she deemed, make arrests first and invent whichever laws were convenient afterwards.

Halfway through their journey, the Unisol corvette was attacked by a protean heavy patrol vessel. The smaller protean ship latched itself onto the hull of the Unisoil corvette, lamprey-like, and its digestive acids quickly burned a hole in the plasteel allowing the protean boarding party to invade.

Though the rest of her captured clan believed the proteans had, for some reason, come to free them, Cho'kassa was not so optimistic. Eventually the boarding party made it to the prison deck and opened the cells. They were evidently as surprised to find the imprisoned kuran'zoi as the time raiders were to be rescued by proteans!

"You were prisoners, now you are our thralls. Obey and earn your freedom."

The rest of her clan were unsure of their options, but Cho'kassa grabbed the protean captain's hardlight pistol out of his hand and shot him in the chest. Her clan were now sure.

With that pistol shot the fight for the Unisol corvette became a running battle between three factions. The time raiders stole weapons from the bodies their enemies left behind, and the small band fought their way to the bridge, none knowing what they would do once they got there.

On gaining the bridge, messages blared from every signal receiver. Each side demanding the Time Raiders join them and defeat their enemies. Many promises and threats were made. The kuran'zoi looked to Cho'kassa.

"Take the helm and damn them all!" she called out. "There must be a way home!" And in that instant, the navigation screens sprung to life. "Look!" her brother said. A route had already been plotted. One that made no literal sense. Was the ship's logic system malfunctioning?

Was there a way out? Could the impossible course on the starchart be trusted? It was a moot point, as the ship was still caught in the grip of the protean's ship's sucker-mouth. "There is a way" her brother said, but pulling away from the protean ship would require disabling all the safety circuits preventing the starengine from going into overload. It might damn them all, but for at least a moment the ship would have enough power to rip itself away from its parasitic attacker.

Cho'kassa ordered her clan to hold the bridge and seal the door behind her and she fled, alone, to the engine room. She picked up a protean rifle as she ran and though she could hear the battle between the memonek and proteans raging, her path was mercifully clear of enemies.

Finally facing the great Starengine of the Unisol ship, Cho'kassa punched in the override codes, and used her recovered rifle to blast the shielding off the star core. Bathed in brilliant yellow light that was killing her second by second, Cho'kassa leapt off the gangplank across the safety gap, and into the star core itself.

Others thought this a strange way to end one's life, but Cho'kassa had seen the sign of the Wave Pilot when the navigation screens on the bridge came to life, and instinct compelled her. Some insight said that only if she joined with the ship could she save her clan. When her consciousness continued even after the engine disintegrated her body, she knew her faith proved correct.

Now part of the ship itself, Cho'kassa could see the relationship between time and space. The Wave Pilot appeared before her, an enigmatic figure made of gold-green light conveyed without words the secret. The dark star, Procellon Beta, warped space and time around it, and that was why the plotted chart that appeared on the bridge could not be understood.

The energies of the wounded starengine ripped through the ship killing the memonek and proteans onboard, but did not breach the door to the bridge. Cho'kassa piloted her new body with her family nestled safely inside through the course the wave pilot had set.

The harrowing, twisting path brought the ship close to the horizon of the dark star, through an inverted waveform, and they emerged weeks before they set out. Cho'kassa followed the course until it brought them to the Unisol ship well before the events that led to the capture of her people.

With her clan manning the blaster turrets, Cho'kassa destroyed the memonek ship. Erasing the timeline in which they had originally been captured.

"What just happened?" One kuran'zoi asked. "How can we be here, now?"

The ship returned to manual control. Cho'kassa was no longer the ship. Her brother looked through the viewscreen at the starry sea outside and said "Only the stars know."

Cho'kassa the Time Rider is the herald of OV the Wave Pilot invoked by those who are lost and yearn for home. She sometimes appears riding her single-seat metal star bike, the Wavebreaker which she employs as a tug, pulling ships that ventured too close to a dark star out of danger.

FOR THE DIRECTOR

The Director collaborates with all the other people working on a film and makes their collective story shine. That's also what the Director in *Draw Steel* does! If you plan on being the Director, this chapter of the book focuses on your role in the game.

Before we dive into helpful advice for Directors, we want to make you aware of the [Running the Game series of videos on Matthew Colville's YouTube channel](#)! Hey, we know that guy. He's the Design Director of this game! Most of these videos reference the world's older roleplaying game, but their advice is universal to folks running tabletop RPGs everywhere.

WHAT'S A CAMPAIGN?

A **campaign** is the entire story of a group of heroes told while playing the game. It starts with a campaign pitch from the Director to their players. During the pitch, the Director tells the players about the setting where the game takes place and what sort of adventures the heroes will undertake.

If the players like the pitch, they create heroes and then the game begins! The Director prepares and runs **adventures** which are played out over a series of game **sessions**. During these sessions, the heroes play out scenes that include combat encounters, negotiations, montage tests, investigations, downtime projects, and more.

The best way to think of a campaign is that it is an entire series of books or an epic television show. Each adventure that makes up that campaign is one book or season of television in that series. These adventures might be connected by an overarching villain that the heroes face in their final encounter or they might have connected goals, such as the heroes hunting and destroying evil artifacts, that tie them together in a campaign. These ties between adventures aren't necessary, but many players get drawn in by a cohesive campaign story. Each game session is a chapter of the adventure's book or an episode in its TV season.

Some campaigns are short and might only span a single adventure or even just a session of play. Most last a good while longer than that and contain a few adventures. The longest campaigns feature many and take heroes from levels 1 to 10.

DIRECTOR'S ROLE

The Director has some key jobs in this game that we plan to go over in this chapter:

- Before a campaign begins, the Director pitches the idea of their campaign to their players.
- Before the game, the Director prepares the adventure, by building scenes that include encounters, negotiations, and downtime activities.
- During the game, the Director presents the scenes they prepared to the players.
- During the game, the Director is responsible for how the NPCs and environment react to the actions of the heroes.

This includes changing and skipping prepared scenes and running new scenes on the fly.

- During the game, the Director acts as a referee, adjudicating the rules. If something isn't covered by the rules, the Director decides how to determine what happens next in the game.
- After the game, the Director reviews their notes about what happened during the game and starts planning for the next game session.

FIRST TIME RUNNING A GAME

If this is your first time ever running a game, good for you! Directing a game is a super rewarding experience and allows you to lead your friends in group storytelling. It's also work, but that work is fun for folks who enjoy creative activities. You're running a game for your friends. They want to see you succeed. Remember that this is a collaborative experience—it's not all on you.

While this chapter covers some of the basics, we do highly recommend that people running *Draw Steel* as their first tabletop roleplaying game check out the *Running the Game* videos on the Matthew Colville YouTube channel.

PERSONAL PROBLEMS AT THE TABLE

Sometimes a player might talk over others. Sometimes a player makes a snarky comment that hurts someone else's feelings. Sometimes a player might be cheating on their dice rolls. When personal problems pop up at the table, it's best to talk about those issues above the table rather than try to solve them by punishing a player's hero. If the problem is serious enough, you can stop play and talk to anyone who needs it. If the problem is just an annoyance, you might wait until your game session ends. It's best to have these conversations with just the players involved to get their perspectives, rather than in front of everyone and increase the chance of someone getting embarrassed and defensive. Most of the time a person doesn't even realize they were creating a problem for the other players. Once it's pointed out, they get a chance change their behavior. Talking it out has the best chance of solving a problem.

CAMPAIGN PITCH

Before you start running or even preparing adventures, you need to find a group of people who want to play this game with you. You probably already have a group of friends in mind, so prepare a quick campaign pitch for them.

A campaign pitch is a document (or quick spiel) you give to your players to make sure that they're interested in the game you want to play. This helps them understand the sort of game you're planning on playing and what's in store for them as players. If something in your pitch doesn't appeal to a player or they have questions, you can address those concerns before actually playing the game.

It's all about communication. Nothing halts everyone's enjoyment of a campaign faster than a player not having a good time, so let them know what kind of game you want to run and what you're expecting of them. A pitch allows a player to discuss any reservations they have with you or even gracefully bow out of the campaign before it starts.

If you can, present your pitch to your players before the first session, so they can be fully on board and think about

the hero they want to create before it's time to put pencil to character sheet. Otherwise, present your pitch during your first session.

OPENING OVERVIEW

A campaign pitch starts with a few paragraphs of information that gives an overview of the campaign's theme, settings, and conflict. Your initial overview should answer these questions:

- Where does the campaign take place?
- What major events important to the campaign's plot have occurred before the campaign begins?
- What sort of adventures might the heroes have over the course of this campaign?

This overview doesn't give away any of the campaign's secrets (like the key to defeating the villain is destroying the Mortal Coil) or surprises (such as the Lord of Dalrath is secretly a lich). Rather, it gives the players an idea of how their story starts and what sort of adventures they'll go on. The best pitches leave players wanting to know a bit more and dive into the action.

Here's an example of an opening overview that Matthew Colville created for his group.

OVERVIEW: WARDS OF THE LAST EMPEROR

Long before Good King Omund, the lands of Vasloria and all of Orden belonged to the Caelian Empire. Its last emperor, Marcus Octavius, held near omnipotent power. He used that power to protect his citizens and extend the borders of the empire. But his greatest general, Actius Vispania, betrayed him and schemed to usurp the throne.

Knowing he discovered this betrayal too late to stop it, Octavius took his knowledge and his weapons and spread them across Orden, sealing them behind powerful wards. All this was done in secret—even his closest allies did not know the location of the wards. The number of wards is now lost in the mists of time. Were there seven? Nine? Legends differ.

The rebellion against Ajax begins here. Surely the wards of the emperor contain the power to stop the Overlord. The heroes must travel across the world and brave many dangers to find and unlock the last emperor's wards. Whoever does will wield near omnipotent power.

As you can see this opening overview introduces the setting—Vasloria. It also gives just enough history and background information for the players to understand what their heroes might be doing, which is trying to recover the knowledge and weapons of the last emperor sealed behind powerful wards in order to stop Ajax.

GAMEPLAY BREAKDOWN

After your opening overview, you should breakdown roughly how much time you imagine the players will spend engaged in various types of challenges and scenes.

GAMEPLAY CATEGORIES

You can break down your game in the following categories:

- **Combat:** How often are the heroes using violence to overcome challenges?
- **Exploration:** How often are the heroes exploring new environments that are difficult to traverse? How often do you expect all of the heroes to make tests using skills from the exploration skill group?
- **Interpersonal:** How often are the heroes using negotiation and conversing with NPCs to overcome challenges? How often do you expect all the heroes to make tests using skills from the interpersonal skill group?
- **Intrigue:** How often are the heroes solving mysteries, finding double agents, and skulking about the shadows to achieve their goals? How embroiled will they get in the politics of competing people and factions? How often do you expect all the heroes to make tests using skills from the intrigue skill group?

These are the primary types of scenes many campaigns have, but you could also add your own. For instance, if you want to run a campaign full of diabolical brain teasers and traps, you could add a Puzzles category to your campaign pitch document.

CATEGORY FREQUENCY

Give each category a rating to show players how often you expect them to experience scenes in the campaign that involve that type of gameplay.

- **High:** If a category has a high rating, you expect the heroes to experience multiple scenes involving this type of gameplay during each session.
- **Medium:** If a category has a medium rating, you expect the heroes to experience at least one scene involving this type of gameplay once per session or so.
- **Low:** If a category has a low rating, you expect the heroes to experience a scene involving this type of gameplay less than once per session.

Frequencies are not hard and fast rules. They're just there to give the players an idea of what kind of scenes you'd like to run for them. There might be a session or two where you skip a category type you marked as high or medium because the heroes do something unexpected or because you're having fun playing out the story in a different way.

BREAKDOWN: WARDS OF THE LAST EMPEROR

The Wards of the Last Emperor campaign pitch has the following gameplay breakdown:

- **Combat:** Medium. The heroes might tussle with the forces of Ajax, guardians of Ajax, and other factions who desire the last emperor's treasures.
- **Exploration:** High. The heroes must traverse Vasloria's most remote locations to find the wards.
- **Interpersonal:** Low. Heroes will likely interact with other NPCs in order to track down leads on wards but there won't be frequent conversations with them.
- **Intrigue:** Medium. Heroes will regularly contend with everyone else who wants the prizes hidden behind the wards engaging in counterintelligence and sabotage.

PLAYER BUY-IN

After the gameplay breakdown, tell the players what's expected of them in order for the group to get the most enjoyment out of the game. Let them know things like how often you expect them to be traveling from one place to another, the types of rewards or accolades they might be earning, and what sort of adventures they're about to go on. You want to be upfront about what sort of buy-in you need from them.

It's a good idea to let the players know, "Hey in order to get the most out of this game, you'll need to enjoy diving into ancient ruins," or, "This game has some horror themes. If you're not interested in playing heroes who have fears they need to face, we should do something else."

BUY-IN: WARDS OF THE LAST EMPEROR

Visiting lots of different locations and cultures has to sound cool. You won't start in a town and eventually become the heroes of the barony, but you'll become legendary heroes across the world. You'll constantly be leaving the people you've met behind, but you'll eventually have a base you return to after completing each quest. You'll have allies and enemies all across the world!

The buy-in tells the player that their heroes are going to be traveling all over the world and that it might take them a while to find a home. If a player is looking for a different experience, such as a game that takes place entirely in the city of Capital, they now know that this game isn't for them!

PLAYER OPTION RESTRICTIONS

Some campaigns include restrictions on the character options that players can choose. For example, a Director might be interested in running a game where the heroes are all memoneks and time raiders who have come to Vasloria searching for a secret incursion of voiceless talkers. In this case, they might restrict all other ancestries. A campaign about citizens forming a rebellion to take on a tyrannical leader might restrict career options so that no one can take Aristocrat or Politician.

Put any restrictions your campaign has in your pitch!

PRESENTING MULTIPLE PITCHES

If you have multiple ideas for campaigns that you want to run, put together a pitch for each of them and then ask the players to decide which sounds the most interesting. It's a good idea to have the players rank each pitch and tell you which ones they love, which ones aren't their favorites but they'd still enjoy playing, and which ones they definitely have no interest in. This way if most people love two of your pitches, but of those one makes a player say, "No way!" you know which one to pick.

DISCUSSING THE PITCH

Once you give the pitch to your players, ask them to give you their honest opinions. If someone doesn't like an aspect of your pitch, don't get defensive. Hear them out. You might be able to accommodate them. You might be willing to tweak your gameplay breakdown or buy-in to

play a game with your friends. You might be willing to lift one of your restrictions for a single player to add some spice to your campaign—an aristocrat who joins a group of farmers in a rebellion is an interesting plot point!

It's also okay if, after hearing out your potential players, you're not interested in running the kind of game they want to play. This happens, and it's why we're recommending you pitch your campaign. There's no harm in having different interests, but there is in forcing people to play a game together that won't be fun for everyone. If you can't see eye-to-eye with a player, it's okay to agree that they or you should find a different group.

PITCHING PUBLISHED CAMPAIGN

Writing your own campaign setting and adventures takes time! Maybe you want to save yourself some of that work and instead run adventures in an official MCDM setting, like Vasloria, and run our published adventures that take place in that setting. We also allow third-party publishers to make their own *Draw Steel* settings and adventures, so you might want to use one of those instead.

If you want to run a campaign that uses published material, give it a read, think about anything you'd like to change, and then pitch it as you would any campaign you create yourself. When you're running published material, you're still the Director. You can change anything you don't like or you think isn't a good fit for your group.

If your players participate in other games of *Draw Steel*, it's a good idea to ask them if they're familiar with published adventures when you pitch them. Sometimes it's okay for a player to experience an adventure twice, but typically there's some sort of mystery or plot twist involved. You'll want to run something new for your players, so it's good to know before you pitch.

HOUSE RULES

You can change the rules to fit your campaign and taste! Maybe it better suits your campaign's pace to have a respite last 8 hours, or maybe a respite should take a week. You might prefer it if critical hits are super rare and only happen on a natural 20. You could allow heroes to spend hero tokens to reduce the amount of Malice you have. You might decide that all heroes get a free +1 bonus on any characteristic of their choice at 1st level.

The rules you create or modify to suit your group are called **house rules**. You can have as many as you like, but you should discuss these rule changes with your players before implementing them. If you decide critical hits only happen on a natural 20, the worst time for a player to find that out is right after they roll a natural 19 in combat and expect to get the benefit of a critical hit.

You should talk to your players about the house rules you want to use in your campaign and discuss any ideas they bring to you for house rules during your first session.

BUILDING THE CAMPAIGN

After your players agree to your pitch, it's time to start building the setting where your game takes place.

PUBLISHED SETTING: READ

If your campaign takes place in a published campaign setting, read the material that pertains to the campaign you pitched. You shouldn't feel like you need to read the entirety of the setting if it isn't pertinent to your campaign. If you've got a campaign that takes place entirely in Dalrath, you don't need to read about the city of Blackbottom, a city that is many miles beyond Dalrath's borders.

As you read, make notes on anything that's interesting about the setting that you might want to incorporate in your campaign and anything you want to change.

Your top priority should be the campaign's starting location. In which district of Capital do the players begin their first adventure? Which world of the timescape will be the first the heroes visit? What settlement in Vasloria hold their first adventure? Answer that question and get familiar with that place first. You'll have plenty of time to read as you plan out your games.

BUILDING YOUR OWN

If you plan on building your own campaign, the work of worldbuilding can be overwhelming. Don't worry! You don't have to build the whole thing before the campaign starts. Your world is more likely to be layered, interesting, and authentic if you start small and build out the settings, people, and organizations within it as you go.

START SMALL

If you're planning on making your own campaign setting, start small. Instead of detailing every settlement on every continent on every planet in a universe, build a starting town or district of a city and the surrounding area where the first adventure takes place.

- Make a list of the names of any important locations in town, such as an inn or house where the heroes are staying, merchants they might want to visit, and organizations that might be important to them.
- Then write the name, ancestry, age, gender, and personality of each NPC they might interact with in those places.
- Do the same for any adventure locations the heroes will visit during their first adventure. Detail the locations and the important NPCs and villains the heroes with whom the heroes will interact.
- You can also detail the laws and function of organizations the heroes interact with during their first adventure. What governments, churches, and guilds might they come across? How might these organizations interact with the heroes? You don't need to write every bylaw in a pirate code, but it'd be good to know how the pirates react to adventurers asking to sail the seas on their ship.
- Make a map of the starting area. It doesn't need to be good! Just a few clearly labeled dots and squiggles showing forests, deserts, mountains, bodies of water, and other landforms should be plenty.

Each time you need a new location for an upcoming adventure, detail it in a similar way and add it to your map!

VAGUE FOR THE BEYOND

There might be other details of your campaign you'll want to establish before your first adventure. For example, you might want to know where the closest settlement is to the heroes' starting town or the name of the monarch who rules over the country where that town resides. Go ahead and sketch out the names and a single sentence (or so) of detail for any places you know will be an important part of the campaign. You'll be able to add more detail to these items as needed while doing your preparation.

The main reason you shouldn't overprepare for the future is that you can't know how your players' actions might change the world. Those actions should matter and have consequences. That's what makes the game fun and authentic. When a player surprises the Director, it should be a moment of delight—not a moment of grumbling because you just lost a lot of preparation work.

Overpreparing means you'll end up doing work that you throw out. Do the minimum you need to do to be comfortable running the game and no more.

CAMPAIGN STYLES

There are many different types of campaigns you can run in *Draw Steel*. What follows is a list of the most common. You can pick one from this list and modify it as you see fit to work within your campaign:

- **Long Arc:** The long arc is a model of campaign where one villain or organization is behind almost every threat the heroes face. If during every adventure, the heroes battle the forces of Ajax or the vampire Count Rhodar von Glaur and they eventually face this main villain in their final adventure, then you've got yourself a long arc campaign. Long arcs allow the heroes to learn of and even meet the villain several times before the final showdown, allowing for the creation of personal drama with the main antagonist and their underlings. If you're planning on running a long arc, you may want to make sure there are times that the villain's threat is quieter to give heroes a chance to take a respite now and then and work on their downtime projects.
- **Adventure of the Week:** You can have the heroes face an entirely new threat each time a new adventure begins. During their first adventure they might face cultists bringing an undead horde to life. In the next, they battle a band of pirates hellbent on taking control of a peaceful island. Then it's a race to catch a group of time raiders before they disappear across the timescape with their kidnapped victims. Adventure of the week campaigns can give your heroes plenty of downtime between adventures, since the quests aren't connected, though they have none of the personal drama with villains that a campaign with recurring threats has.
- **Looming Threat:** A looming threat campaign is a combination of the long arc and adventure of the week types of campaigns. While many of the adventures contain individual threats, a few have events orchestrated by a recurring villain who the heroes face at the end of the campaign. The villain's forces might make a brief appearance in an adventure to harass the heroes that otherwise has nothing to do with them. A looming threat campaign allows the heroes to create a personal drama with the main campaign's villain while

experiencing the variety of an adventure of the week campaign.

- **Multiple Fronts:** In a multiple fronts campaign, several villains threaten the people of the land, and the heroes must prioritize the threats they face. While the heroes deal with one of their foes, the other adversaries advance their plans, growing in power and resources. Multiple front campaigns make the world feel authentic and alive, but they require more preparation, since you're juggling multiple villains and storylines at the same time.

ECHELON OUTLINE

You should build an outline of the events that could occur in each echelon of your campaign. The further these events get from the start of your campaign, the vaguer you can leave the details. The actions of the heroes should matter and influence the course of events, so don't plan too much or you might end up throwing out a lot of your preparation to make player decisions matter.

Your outline should include the plans of the villains in your campaign. Review [Echelons](#) in [The Basics](#) to get an idea of the threat level and stories the heroes should be experiencing at each. An echelon outline might look like this:

- **1st Echelon:** The heroes protect the village of Gravesford in the duchy of Bedegar from the forces of Lord Saxton, a usurper and tyrant loyal to Ajax. Eventually, they must bring the fight to Lord Saxton's keep in Bedegar City.
- **2nd Echelon:** After toppling Saxton's keep, the heroes find a letter from Ajax detailing plans to amass powerful treasures from throughout Vasloria. The heroes can race to these locations to get the treasures before his forces.
- **3rd Echelon:** With some or all of the treasures secure, it's only a matter of time before Ajax's army comes to harm the heroes. They can build a coalition of allies to face Ajax, but those allies first require help getting out from under the rule of the Iron Saint.
- **4th Echelon:** Ajax brings the fight to the heroes. If he loses, he retreats to his sanctum, where the heroes can dare to follow.

COMPLICATIONS AND CAMPAIGNS

If the heroes in your game took complications during character creation, you should also think about how the story of their complications might factor into the campaign. Complications aren't just a chance to add a benefit and drawback to a hero. They're narrative hooks you can use to further draw the players into the action.

Discuss the details of each hero's complication with that hero's player. Complications are intentionally vague and any of their narrative details can be modified, so that the hero's personal story fits into the campaign. With the details worked out, ask your player how the hero feels about the complication? Does the hero think the benefit is worth having the drawback? Are they actively trying to find a way to rid themselves of the drawback, but keep the benefit? Or maybe they want to be rid of the entire complication, benefit be damned!

Once you understand a hero's desires for their complication, you can create an echelon outline for each complication to give the hero's backstory some narrative teeth throughout the campaign.

Matt, who is playing Linn the talent, has the Elemental Inside complication. After discussing the details with the Director, Matt decides that years ago Linn threw herself in front of a spell cast by Sorin the Brown, an evil earth elemental who wanted to abduct Linn's talent mentor, a dwarf who was a perfect subject for Sorin's next deadly experiment. In doing so, Linn saved her mentor and absorbed an angry force of earth named Bruulv. Sorin escaped and desires the return of her pet elemental. Meanwhile Linn is tougher thanks to the elemental within, but when she is dying, Bruulv takes control of her body and goes on a violent rampage.

Matt tells the Director that Linn enjoys the extra protection afforded to her by Bruulv, since it makes her a tougher hero, and would like to find a way to keep her benefit while losing the drawback. The Director comes up with an echelon outline for Linn that will enrich the talent's story and have ties to the main campaign (which happens to be the example campaign in [Echelon Outline](#)).

- **1st Echelon:** After the heroes start riling up trouble for Lord Saxton's forces, Sorin offers her services to the tyrant for a chance to face Linn. During the hero's assault on the keep, Sorin attacks.
- **2nd Echelon:** Assuming Sorin's defeat, Bruulv becomes even angrier, trying to wrestle control away from Linn when she is winded or dying. Linn finds a Crown of Elements, a special item that allows her get Bruulv back to a "takes control only while dying" state as long as she wears it. The crown has other elemental powers too and is one of the items desired by Ajax.
- **3rd Echelon:** As Linn and the other heroes build a coalition, an elderly high elf named Leaves of the Autumn Wind offers to enhance the crown, allowing the talent to speak directly to Bruulv. The catch is that Leaves needs a magic fire opal from the lair of a fire giant in order to enhance the crown.
- **4th Echelon:** With the crown enhanced, Linn can speak directly to Bruulv. By learning the elemental's history and wants through negotiation, she can see that Bruulv mostly desires a return to the City of Brass so they might once again see the raw elemental powers come together. If Linn goes to this city that is literal worlds away, she earns Bruulv's trust and he stops overtaking her form.

At each echelon, the Director should revisit these outlines, since the action of the players could change the plan. For example, if Sorin gets away after the battle with Saxton at 1st echelon, the elemental is likely to return and try to free Bruulv once again!

CREATING ADVENTURES

A lot of Directors prefer to make their own adventures rather than use published ones, because they can tailor the story to perfectly fit the motivations of the heroes and fun for the players.

Every good adventure includes villains, a task to accomplish, NPCs, and interesting locations.

PLAYER AMBITION WRITES ADVENTURES

Players have ambition driven by their complications, personal stories, and desires for titles, magic items, and other rewards. Indulge these desires! If a hero wants to go on a quest to gain a Blade of Quintessence, let them know where they can find one (after they put in the proper research or questing time). You can plan an adventure, even if it's just a short one, around its retrieval!

VILLAINS

Every good adventure has a villain behind the trouble the heroes are trying to solve—after all, this is a game about fighting monsters, so give the heroes something to fight!

VILLAIN SINS

You probably know the old idiom, “Actions speak louder than words.” This applies to heroes and villains alike. The thing that primarily makes a villain a force of evil the heroes (and players) will stop at nothing to defeat—the villain's actions.

The best way to let your players know that your villain must be defeated is to have your villain do some unquestionably evil stuff! Before the heroes ever even meet the villain, they should find the corpses left behind, witness the burning villages, or get the harrowing eyewitness accounts from those lucky enough to survive an encounter to fully understand the depth of the evil they face. Villains don't hesitate to take or ruin the lives of others in order to get what they want. Most don't believe in collateral damage.

The number one thing that makes your adventure's villain worth the hero's time is what they've done, and what they're planning to do. What they've done shows that they're not just evil but capable. What they plan to do is worse than what they've done, and, by golly, someone needs to stop it.

Give your villain a history of evil that the heroes can uncover. It might be a short one—maybe they just performed their first in a series of murders hours before the heroes come to town—or it could years spent as a warlord, tyrant, or monster with entire worlds reduced to rubble. Let the sins of the villain be what hooks your heroes into adventure. There is no motivation stronger than your players deciding that they must stop the villain without any asking from other NPCs. It works better than having a someone pay the heroes to get the job done (though often what starts as a job becomes a personal mission, so don't be afraid to start there if you have no other ideas).

Once a villain discovers that the heroes are meddling in their plans, they don't sit idly and wait for the fight to come to them. No! Great villains are proactive, sending lackeys to battle the heroes, frame them for crimes, capture their loved ones, or burn their hometowns.

VILLAIN GOALS

Many villains don't see themselves as evil. In fact, most heroes and villains have similar motivations—ambition, revenge, and even protecting others and saving the world. The difference is that villains believe their personal goals are more important than anything else and are willing to

sacrifice the well-being and lives of others to get what they want.

You could give your villain one of the following goals or come up with your own:

- The villain has a deadly personal vendetta against another person or group of people who wronged them.
- The villain believes that rulership is theirs by birthright or because they see themselves as the most qualified.
- The villain wants to live forever to protect their people, possessions, land, or legacy.
- The villain knows of a great threat, and they require ultimate power to defeat it.

Instead of achieving their goals through diplomacy and heroics, these villains take what they require to achieve their goals and destroy anyone and anything that gets in the way.

Of course, there are some villains who want to cause violence and mayhem for the sake of it! These villains can be fun to throw into an adventure from time to time, but they are the type of folks who are typically being manipulated by someone with greater motivation and shouldn't be the focus of every adventure in every campaign.

STEALING IS ENCOURAGED

When you're coming up with ideas for campaigns, adventures, and scenes, you should feel free to steal plots, action set pieces, characters, and anything else you want from your favorite movies, television shows, novels, comic books, and podcasts. You can modify a few cosmetic details to make things your own. Borrowing a human male character from your favorite book to make an NPC? Make the NPC a dwarf female with a new name and no one is the wiser. Got an idea for an encounter based on a battle scene from your favorite science fiction flick? Make those invading aliens gnolls instead! Let your favorite stories inspire you when you have no other ideas.

ADVENTURE GOAL

Every adventure should give the heroes a clear goal to accomplish. While most every goal could be boiled down to “stop the villain from doing a bad thing,” it helps if the heroes have a specific idea of how to stop or minimize the consequences of the villain's plan. Ideally, they'll be able to accomplish this goal in more than one way.

The hero's ultimate adventure goal should be one that stops or prevents the total achievement of the villain's goal. If the heroes live under the oppressive rule of a tyrant who usurped a lordship and imprisons any who question his authority, they could rise to help the rightful heir regain the lordship, engaged in political intrigue to get close to the tyrant before deposing him, or lead the commonfolk in a rebellion that installs a new form of government. While they have several ways to accomplish it, their ultimate adventure goal is the same—depose the tyrant and install better leadership.

An adventure's goal doesn't always result in a total failure for the villain. Sometimes the heroes need to simply prevent as much damage as they can while surviving to fight another day. For example, if Ajax the Invincible attacks the port city of Blackbottom to force its leaders bend the knee, a group of 1st-level heroes lacks the

resources and power to stand directly against the siege and stop it. This adventure's goal is to escape the city with as many innocent folk as possible and live to face the villain later. They're still heroes for saving people, even if they can't save the entire city.

DISCOVERING THE GOAL

An adventure's goal isn't always clear to players at the start, but the heroes should always have a good idea of how to keep pursuing the story. Gameplay and fun can grind to a halt if the players don't have any idea what their characters can do to further their goals.

Every adventure should have an inciting incident that either gives the heroes discovering the adventure's goal or puts the heroes on the path of discovering it. If the heroes start an adventure by finding the freshly murdered body of a noble in the streets of Capital, they're likely to look for clues that could lead them to catching a murderer—a solid, straight forward adventure goal. Or it could be that the murder leads them to uncovering a grand conspiracy where one of Capital's great noble houses is actually planning a coordinated, violent takeover of the city and they heroes must stop it—an adventure goal that takes the heroes several scenes to fully uncover, but each leads to the next without leaving them wondering, "What should we do next?" Both are good adventure goals, even if one gets discovered a little later in the adventure.

COMPLICATIONS AND ADVENTURES

If your heroes have complications, it's a good idea to have at least one complication make trouble for a hero during an adventure or be part of the adventure's story. Rotate the hero whose complication gets highlighted each time, so that everyone gets a chance to be at the center of the story.

CREATING NPCs

The heroes and the monsters they slay shouldn't be the only folks in the adventure. A few friendly (or at least non-hostile) NPCs can supply them with information, equipment, and—most importantly—a good reason for putting their lives on the line. If everyone they come across is a monster, apathetic, or a selfish a-hole, the players won't feel very motivated to get their hero.

The NPCs the heroes meet during their adventures should be complex people. They have personal motivations for helping the heroes, personality and behavioral quirks, and character flaws. When you create an NPC, quickly jot down the following information about them:

- What's their name?
- What does this NPC do for a living?
- What's notable about their appearance? Do they have any distinguishing features, such as a streak of gray or color in their hair, a bushy beard, a tattoo of a snake skull, or scar over one eye? Do they have a specific smell (good or bad)?
- When the NPC speaks, how does their voice sound? You don't have to put on a character voice when you speak as the NPC, but it does help the players remember and differentiate that NPC from others if you at least tell them, "This elf talks like a pirate," or "This dwarf has a high-pitched voice that keep cracking."

- What noticeable behaviors does the NPC have? Maybe they maintain constant, unbreaking eye contact or maybe they rarely look up from their feet. They could pick their nose, repeat a catch phrase, talk to themselves, bite their nails, whispers whenever they say something profound (or profane!), or constantly clear their throat. Giving an NPC just one distinct behavior helps cement them in the players' minds and makes them more authentic.
- What character flaw does this NPC have? They might be selfish when it comes to wealth, ignore their personal hygiene, lie to cover up their insecurities, or act cowardly in the face of any threat. A single flaw will do the trick. Too many and your NPC will go from authentic to authentically unlikable fast.
- Why would this NPC want to help the heroes during this adventure? The NPC doesn't have to be fully on board with helping the heroes at first. It might take some convincing in the form of a test, negotiation, or other task the heroes need to accomplish for them to win the NPC's help, but there is likely already at least a kernel of motivation there, otherwise they have no reason to help. It could be that they don't want to see the villain succeed, see a profitable opportunity in working with the heroes, or feel they owe the heroes a favor thanks to a previous adventure.
- What would prevent this NPC from helping the heroes? It's possible that the answer is "nothing," but most people have something or someone they're not willing to risk, even if the fate of the world hangs in the balance. What could the villain threaten that makes the NPC think twice about helping out the heroes. It might be a loved one, a meaningful location, or a valuable treasure.

An adventure typically has at least three or four NPCs you'll want to flesh out like this, but it depends on how many scenes you plan to play out and how many NPC each scene requires.

INTERESTING LOCATIONS

A good adventure has interesting locations that the heroes visit. These places do not need to be fantastic to be interesting (though it doesn't hurt to throw in one or two fantastic places in an adventure). A small farming village can be an interesting location if there are engaging events and intrigue happening. Even small-time drama, like who has been poisoning farmer Yelena's crops or which woman will Jon ask to marry are the kinds of happenings that make a place engaging.

Make a list of the different locations that the heroes might visit during the adventure. You'll want to have a list of general locations and specific places.

GENERAL LOCATIONS

A general location is a settlement or defined wilderness region that the heroes visit during the adventure.

- If the adventure takes place in a giant, sprawling metropolis like Capital, then different city districts and large landmarks, like catacombs and parks count as general locations.
- If the adventure takes place in around a regional area larger than a city but no bigger than a planet, then full

settlements and biomes like deserts and forests count as general regions.

- If the adventure takes place across the timescape (or a similar place of many worlds), then a general location could be an entire world and any specific settlements or biomes the heroes visit in those worlds.

You don't have to define everything about these locations, because you'll get more in-depth information about the specific places the heroes will visit in them later. Here's some questions about each general location you'll want to answer (and you may already have some of this from preparing a starting area during your campaign preparation).

- What is the mood of this location? Is it safe and peaceful? Dark and gloomy? Tense and dangerous? Do the hairs on the back of your neck stand up when you're here, or is it the kind of place where you can relax?
- What are the first things you notice about this location with your eyes, ears, and nose? What does the air taste like? How does it feel on your skin? What stands out and is unique?
- What non-hostile creatures can be encountered here? It might be passersby, street merchants, animals, or something moving in the shadows.

Having these details will help you set the scene as the heroes travel through these general locations to get from one specific place to another.

SPECIFIC PLACES

A specific place where an adventure scene can take place. It could be a building, complex, city street or square, a forest clearing, an oasis, a bridge, or the like. The encounters and other scenes in an adventure happen in these specific places.

When you create a specific place, ask the following questions in addition to the questions you'd ask about any general location.

- Why would the heroes come here during the adventure?
- What type of scenes might play out in this location?
- Which NPCs who the heroes might interact with are found in this location?
- What information, items, or confrontations will the heroes meet here that will help them advance the story of the adventure?

PLAN SCENES

The [Creating Scenes](#) section of this chapter has more information about planning out specific scenes, like montage tests and negotiations, in an adventure. Once you have your villain, adventure goal, NPCs, and locations, it's time to start stitching them together with scenes. Your adventure will have combat encounters, montage tests, negotiations, respites, and scenes of exploration and social interaction.

When you're creating scenes, write down which locations and NPCs are involved in those scenes and then try to arrange them in an order that makes sense for the story. It may be that after your inciting incident, some scenes can be tackled in any order. For example, if the adventure goal

is to recover three pieces of an ancient staff before the villain, the heroes might be able to explore the three locations where the staff is hidden in any order they choose. Their choice might even have consequences. It might be that the first one they choose has none of the villain's lackeys investigating yet, the second has a showdown with those lackeys, and the third one has already been recovered by the villain by the time they get there! Other scenes might have to happen more linearly. An investigation typically includes a trail of clues that takes heroes from one scene to the next, but the players can surprise you.

Don't get married to the order in which you plan your scenes. If the heroes have terrible luck with dice in a couple of combat encounters, they may stop to take a respite and regain their Stamina and Recoveries before you anticipated they would. If the heroes are unraveling a mystery, they might deduce some good information that allows them to skip one of your scenes or locations! This is part of the fun of the game. The dice and the players will surprise you. Embrace this by keeping an open mind as you plan out your scenes and allowing yourself to be flexible. Odds are the combat encounter they skipped over during one session can be tweaked and moved to a later game night, so don't sweat it. The game is most rewarding for you and your players if you let the heroes' choices and actions mean something and affect the game.

Once you have all your scenes planned, it's time to put together the adventure outline.

ADVENTURE OUTLINE

Your adventure outline is a document that you can use to run your game sessions. It contains information about the villain, the adventure goal, NPCs, locations, and scenes. You can format this outline however you like. It can be fully written sentences, bullet points, a plotting web, or anything else that makes sense to you.

The standard adventure outline contains some overview information about the adventure's villain, goal, and NPC and then each following section of the outline is listed by location, sharing the location's details the details of each scene that occurs in the outline. This all wraps up with a conclusion section that discusses the impact the heroes' actions have on the overall campaign and world.

CREATING SCENES

When you're preparing scenes for an adventure, keep in mind that **you can't and should not try to control how the heroes interact with the challenges set forth in a scene**. Much of the fun of the game comes from the fact that players can creatively solve the challenges you set forth with their hero's traits and abilities. You should be planning obstacles for them while knowing that they will think of solutions you haven't. Let them try those solutions (when they're plausible) and see where the story goes!

It's best to set up scenes as "here's the situation when the heroes arrive." The game world is an authentic setting, and bandits would still pillage and plunder, politicians would still backstab, and vast sandstorms would still cover deserts whether or not the heroes show up. Each scene

should start with the question, “What’s happening when the heroes arrive in this scene?”

After setting up your scene, make a list of the things the heroes can discover or achieve that will further the story of the adventure. When running the game, you’ll allow them to approach the achievement of those things in their own way. However, you may have some ideas as to how they could accomplish those goals, such as which test they might make to find clues that lead to a murderer around a corpse or a negotiation to secure safe passage across the sea. You should note these possible solutions and any rules you need to prepare with them as you set up your scenes.

Not everything the heroes do is worthy of a scene. You don’t need to play out adventures in real time. If they want to walk from a farm to a castle, you don’t need to play out the walk unless it’s fun for you and your players to do so or something significant (like a bandit attack or the discovery of a corpse) happens along the way. You don’t need to narrate every shopping trip or boat journey if they’re just going to be a bore. It’s a game! Run the scenes that are fun for you and move the campaign’s story along. You’re under no obligation to do anything else, and your games will be better for it.

CREATING AND RUNNING COMBAT

There’s a lot to be said about building and preparing great combat encounters for *Draw Steel*. So much, that we had to put that advice in another book—the one with all the monsters and other stuff you need to build combat encounters. Go check it out in the *Monsters* book.

One tip we note here (and in the other book because it bears repeating) is that combat encounters should hold narrative weight. *Draw Steel* isn’t a game of attrition, where a few small, trivial combat encounters can weaken the heroes to winnow down some of their resources to make the final, important, epic clash with the villain a bit more of a struggle. A quick combat encounter with two bumbling guards at a gate is likely over in a matter of less than a round and shouldn’t give the heroes a Victory. These can be fun scenes to roleplay, but they aren’t going to make full use of your heroes’ features and should only occur sometimes. Most of the time when combat occurs, the stakes for the heroes and the story should be high!

CREATING AND RUNNING EXPLORATION

Exploration scenes are narrative-driven moments where the heroes investigate their surroundings to further the story or uncover rewards. Everything from searching the site of a murder for clues to scouring ancient ruins for a portal to Axiom, the Plane of Uttermost Law, is an exploration scene.

Your job here is to set the scene, listen the players describe their heroes’ actions, and then respond with how those interactions affect the environment.

NECESSARY AND UNNECESSARY INFORMATION

When preparing an exploration scene, you’ll want to write down your answers to the following questions:

- What information or objects do the heroes need to recover in this scene that will help them continue the game’s story?
- What bonus pieces of information and other rewards can they earn during this scene if they explore fully and successfully?

The information or objects the heroes need from the scene to continue the story should have a way that they can be found without a test. Just by entering the scene of a murder, the heroes might learn that a king was slain with a knife because his body and the weapon are still plainly visible in the monarch’s private chambers when they arrive. They might even notice the knife bares the crest of a noble house, which means they have a way to continue their investigation. Other details in the room could help speed along their investigation of who killed the king, but they find the bare minimum of what they need to continue for free.

It’s okay for a test to be the *best* way to get necessary information, but if the heroes fail or don’t make the test, they should still get the minimum needed for the story to continue. If they’re searching a necromancer’s tower for a book that will help them stop a ritual and miss all the clues pointing to the book, then they run into the necromancer’s apprentices who know where the book is but aren’t willing to give up the information without a difficult fight.

The other information and rewards the heroes can earn in an exploration scene can be hidden behind a test and it can be missed. If heroes don’t think to check under the dead king’s desk, they don’t find the chalice that rolled under there. If they fail a Reason test to examine the mug, they don’t learn the chalice has the residue of a rare poison that could lead them the only alchemist nearby who sells it. They can still solve the mystery without this information, but it’ll take them a little longer. The longer it takes them, the more time the assassin has to prepare for their arrival, so missing those things still has consequences!

Once you have your list of information and objects the heroes can find, make a list of where those things can be found. Some might require a test. Some might just require a player saying their hero performs a certain action (like searching a bookshelf or desk). While you can write down what’s required to find information or items, you shouldn’t try to cover every option. Even if you try, the players will think of things with their multiple brains that you never could and you’ll have to make adjudicate their choices on the spot. Knowing where and how something is hidden or guarded from the heroes is more important than knowing how they’re going to get it. If you can think of at least one way they’ll get it and are open to other possibilities, the heroes have a fair shot.

SETTING THE SCENE

When an exploration scene begins, start by telling the heroes what they notice around them. Starting with what the heroes see is a good idea, but they have other senses. Mention what they can smell, hear, and feel in their environment if it’s applicable to what they’re investigating. These little details can help them better imagine the scene and lead them to important narrative beats within it. Before you run the scene, write these details down so you

can give them to the players right at the start instead of trying to think of them off the cuff.

You don't need to list every single detail of an environment. That leads to players spending a lot of time interacting with elements of the environment that you just included for flavor. Unnecessary details can have you saying things like, "Yes, I know I described the tapestries for five minutes, but there's really not much more to them. Now, the pile bones at the center of the floor on the other hand ..." Many players will also zone out if you have too much detail, even if you're giving an Oscar-worthy narration. Instead, stick to the pieces of the environment that are worthy of their notice.

If the heroes are exploring an abandoned bandit hideout in a cave for information about where the criminals relocated, you might describe a refuse pile in the cave's corner, a wet, mud-covered floor, and the smoking remains of a doused fire. Why point these things out? Because the refuse pile holds a torn-up map to the bandit's new hideout the heroes can assemble, the muddy floor means the bandits left some tracks that can be followed, and the smoking fire means that at least a few of them left not too long ago and might still be enroute to the hideout. You've given the heroes three important elements to interact with, each of which gives them information they can use to further the story or get an idea of events that are to come. You don't need to describe the stalactites hanging from the ceiling or the sound of the wind blowing over the entrance of the cave or the wood pile next to the campfire or the slugs crawling on it. While one or two of those details might be atmospheric, too many will distract folks and pull them out of the game. You can fill in those details as the players ask questions and explore the environment.

HEROES INVESTIGATE

After you set the scene, let each player ask you questions about the environment and describe how their hero is interacting with it. If a player asks a question their hero wouldn't know the answer to, you can encourage them to explore more. If a player with a hero standing at the cave asks, "What can I see in the refuse pile?" You might answer, "From where you're standing, it looks like mostly scraps of cloth and old bones, but there might be more if you dig through it." This encourages the players to be a little more active in the process of searching.

Allow the players to investigate and drive the action. You should take on the role of the environment, reacting to their choices. Don't tell the players what their heroes do. Instead, describe the consequences of their actions. If a hero runs into the bandit hideout and triggers a hidden trap because they didn't move into hostile territory carefully, that's on them! It's an important lesson the player can learn for next time. But if they take the time to carefully search for traps, then they should at least have a chance of finding it.

WHEN TO CALL FOR A TEST

The heroes can usually get some information just by interacting with their environment. If a hero asks you, "Does it look like the muddy floor of the cave would cling to someone's boots?" Getting the, "Yes," answer doesn't require a test. Following any boot prints that lead out of the cave to the bandits' new hideout probably does,

because that's a harder task and failing it means that the bandits have time to prepare an ambush for when the heroes arrive! If a hero wants to meticulously dig through the refuse pile and examine each piece of trash, no test is required to find the torn-up pieces of map unless they're under some serious time pressure to do so. However, if a hero wants to piece together all the bits of a map they find, they're going to need to make a Reason test to put it back together, because failing that task means the heroes.

If you've played a lot of d20 fantasy, you might be used to reflexively asking for a roll of the dice anytime a hero attempts any task. This is a game where the players take on the roles of competent heroes. Only call for a test when failure would make the story more interesting for the heroes and not grind the game to a halt. You might be asking for fewer tests than you're used to—that's the way this game is played!

Remember that if a player has a particularly clever and plausible idea, you can have them automatically succeed on a task, even if failure would make the story more interesting. It's important to reward clever thinking once in a while with a free success, so that the players are encouraged to think outside the box and create memorable moments!

IT'S OKAY TO SAY NO

Sometimes a player will propose what they think is a plausible or clever idea, but you'll think there's no way it could ever work. It's fine for you to tell the player, "That's not going to work." You're under no obligation to allow a player to attempt a test for something that's going to fail.

TEST DIFFICULTY

Before you ask for a test, set a difficulty of easy, moderate, or hard. Here's some criteria to keep in mind:

- A hero will always succeed on an easy test. It's just a question of if they get a consequence, reward, or neither. For this reason, most Directors use easy tests sparingly.
- A hero who has a modifier of +1 or more on their test will likely succeed on a moderate test. Success with a consequence is fairly common for heroes if their bonus to the test is lower than +4, so they're succeeding at a cost. Odds are most of the tests you'll call for are moderate. They give most heroes a decent chance of success without it being a sure thing and things might get interesting when there are consequences involved.
- Hard tests are exactly what the name says on the tin. You can only succeed with a 17 or higher, which means a hero only has a better than 50 percent chance of success on the test if they have a +6 or better bonus on the test. At 1st level that means using your highest characteristic, a skill, and having an edge. Failure on hard tests often means consequences beyond the normal failing, so it's really risky! For most Directors, hard tests aren't as common as moderate tests, but they're used more than easy tests.

The Tests chapter gives examples of different difficulties of tests.

Unlike many d20 fantasy games, a test in *Draw Steel* has three levels of outcome and everyone knows them. Everyone knows that a result of 10 is the worst you can

do! In this game, making a test means something. It always comes with risks and stakes.

You can tell a player a test's difficulty. Saying, "Make a hard Reason test," can make a dramatic moment at the table as everyone holds their breath to see what the outcome is.

On the other hand, you can do a little fudging of difficulties if you don't share them with the heroes. You might call for a test and then think it's not necessary as a player makes the roll. Your first option is to just say, "Hey sorry. I shouldn't have asked for a test. You just do the thing." Most players, especially your pals, will be fine with that. But if you want to play it cool, remember that every level of an easy test is a success, it's just a matter of whether there's a consequence or reward as part of it. If a hero rolls 11 or lower on a test and you think they should still succeed, then it was easy difficulty.

TEST OUTCOMES

After a hero makes a test, it's up to you to narrate and decide the consequences of the outcome. Uses these basic guidelines:

- If the test is a failure with a consequence, the hero shouldn't just fail, they should make things worse. They might draw the attention of nearby foes, set off a hazard or trap, take some damage or do something that results in an ally taking damage, suffer a bane on a future test, lose a mundane item, make a friendly NPC angry, scared, or suspicious, or even earn you a little future Malice. The consequence is up to you!
- If the test is a failure, the hero doesn't do what they set out to do. There might still be some consequence for this beyond failure. That consequence should be worse for heroes making the same test if they fail with a consequence. If two heroes try to move silently by some guards, the one who fails draws their attention, but gets a chance to react before the guards raise the alarm. The other, who fails with a consequence, is spotted immediately as the guards rush to attack while shouting.
- If the test is a success with consequences, the hero succeeds and suffers a consequence. You sneak by those guards but lose your belt pouch in the process, which they might find later.
- If a test is a success, the hero does what they set out to do! You can even let them narrate the outcome by asking them, "How did you pull this off?"
- If the test is a success with a reward, the hero does what they set out to do and then some. Their reward might allow for another hero who needs to make the same test an automatic success, a boon on a future test, find a hidden treasure they weren't looking for as they attempt their task, inspire a nearby NPC to come forth and offer aid, or earn the group a hero token. The reward is yours to create or choose.

You can find more sample consequences and rewards for tests in the [Tests](#) chapter.

CREATING AND RUNNING HAZARDS

Hazards include traps, natural dangers like quicksand and avalanches, and supernatural dangers, such as magically irradiated ruins or floating cloud of unstable psionic

energy. Hazards can appear in combat and exploration scenes as dangers a hero needs to contend with as they solve other problems. An elaborate hazard can be a scene all on its own as well and one that's tackled in a montage test or run round to round as if it were a combat scenario.

Some of the best hazards you can find are the terrain options in *Monsters*. These dynamic options work great in a combat encounter, but you can also use many of them as hazards the heroes have to cross (such as acid pools and lava) or contend with (such as the black obelisk) as they travel from one destination to another. You can use these hazards and rework them to match your story (for example you could use the acid pool to instead by a poisonous pool by having it deal poison damage instead of acid damage).

You can also create your own hazards. A good hazard is a real threat to the heroes and is in the way of something they want. Crossing a pool of lava isn't much of an issue if the heroes can simply walk around it. But if the pool is too big to walk around or if the treasure they need is somewhere at the bottom of the pool, now it's something they can't easily ignore. If a villain in a mountaintop keep triggers an avalanche as the heroes traverse the rocky terrain to get to them, the heroes are going to need to do something about it right quick!

There are three kinds of hazards:

- **Activated Perpetual:** Activated perpetual hazards get activated by a tripwire, loud noise, pressure plate, or some other action the heroes take and then remain active until they're dealt with, such as a pendulum scythe trap that's activated by a tripwire and then swings indefinitely across a bridge.
- **Activated One-Time:** Activated one-time hazards get activated and then create one instance of danger that ends almost as soon as it starts, like a trap that fires a single poison dart. Sometimes the effects of that one instance of danger can create other lasting problems the heroes have to deal with, like a cave-in that leaves them trapped in an abandoned mine.
- **Obstruction:** Obstructions are hazards that the heroes must find their way over or around, such as pools of acid, chasms, and rivers of lava. Since these hazards tend to be static, a hero only takes damage from them as the result of a failed test made in an attempt to traverse the hazard.

ACTIVATED HAZARD TRIGGERS

If a hazard is activated, it has some sort of trigger, and the heroes should be allowed to make a test to notice that trigger. This test is typically a Reason or Intuition test. The deadlier the hazard, the harder the test to notice and disable.

If the heroes don't think to search for any hazard triggers, you can still call for a test to notice the trigger whenever someone is about to activate it, provided it would make sense for them to do so. If a hero is about to cross over a tripwire that triggers a trap, you might allow them to make an Intuition test to notice it just because they're getting closer, and you want to see if they notice the detail. If they fail, they walk into the tripwire and activate the trap.

Once a hero notices a trigger, they might get a chance to disarm the trigger, if such a thing is possible. You probably can't do anything short of renovating an old mine to stop it from collapsing whenever anyone damages its walls, but you can try to disable a magic rune that teleports anyone who walks over it into the middle of an ocean. Trying and failing to do such a thing could trigger the hazard!

HAZARD DAMAGE

Hazard damage depends on two factors. First, how deadly would you like the hazard to be? Do you want it to just leave the heroes with a little damage, or should it cost them a Recovery or two? Second, is this hazard a perpetual hazard or a one-time hazard? If it's an obstruction, answer this question by asking if you expect a hero to be able to reasonably take damage from the obstruction more than one time? If the answer is yes, consider it a perpetual hazard in terms of damage. If not, it's a one-time hazard.

A hero might get a chance to mitigate damage from a hazard, such as an Agility test to outrun or dodge an avalanche or a Reason test to resist the psychic damage of a psionic cloud. You can typically adjudicate these as tests. Ultimately, you decide what sort of test needs to be made based on the circumstances.

The Hazard Deadliness tables shows the damage dealt by hazards. This damage is done in tiers based on the results of the test. The worse the test result, the highest the damage.

ONE-TIME HAZARD DEADLINESS

Level	Not Deadly	Little Bit Deadly	Very Deadly
1	7/5/3	9/7/5	11/9/7
2	10/7/4	12/9/6	15/12/9
3	11/8/5	14/11/8	17/14/11
4	12/9/5	16/13/9	19/16/12
5	13/10/6	17/14/10	21/18/14
6	14/11/6	19/16/11	23/20/15
7	15/12/7	21/18/13	25/22/17
8	16/13/7	23/20/14	27/24/18
9	17/13/8	25/21/16	29/25/20
10	18/14/9	27/22/18	31/27/22

PERPETUAL HAZARD DEADLINESS

Level	Not Deadly	Little Bit Deadly	Very Deadly
1	5/4/2	7/6/4	9/8/6
2	6/4/3	8/6/5	10/8/7

3	7/5/3	9/7/5	11/9/7
4	8/6/4	11/9/7	14/12/10
5	9/7/4	12/10/7	15/13/10
6	10/8/5	13/11/8	16/14/11
7	11/9/5	15/13/9	19/17/13
8	12/9/6	16/13/10	20/17/14
9	13/10/6	17/14/10	21/18/14
10	14/11/7	19/16/12	24/21/17

HAZARD EFFECTS

Some hazards deal effects in addition or instead of damage. If your hazard is part of a combat encounter, then it can deal almost any effect, such as the dazed or weakened condition, and have a real impact on the story. However, if the heroes are facing a hazard outside of combat, you want the effects the hazard deals to be something more impactful and lasting—the loss of a Recovery, a curse that leaves them with a demonic voice and a bane on Presence tests, a gaping wound that can't be closed until they finish a respite and means they take 1d10 damage every time they roll a natural 2 or 3, or getting teleported into the middle of a nearby body of water are all effects that have more interesting and lasting consequences. While lasting and interesting consequences are fun, make sure they don't totally derail your story to the point where the whole game becomes about solving the problems created by a hazard unless your group thinks that's fun!

CREATING AND RUNNING INTERACTION

Interaction scenes are just like exploration scenes, except that the heroes are getting information and items they need by talking to one or more NPCs instead of exploring an environment. Just like exploration, make a list of necessary information the NPC needs to give to the heroes. The NPC should offer this information freely. They may have other information or objects they can be convinced to give to the heroes if they make a persuasive argument, do something kind for the NPC, or succeed on a test, they might get that from the NPC too! Though these scenes aren't negotiations, keep in mind that different NPCs react differently to various forms of persuasion. A coward might be easy to intimidate, while a battle-hardened soldier may be impossible to awe with displays of ferocity. A bribe might work for a corrupt noble, but a goodly queen who already has wealth beyond measure likely has no interest in whatever materials the heroes possess.

Refer to the details you wrote down for your NPC while you roleplay them. Remember they may have distinct behaviors and attitudes you can throw in to help make the scene fun and memorable. You don't have to be a great actor to make a memorable interaction scene! Just describing how the NPC looks, sounds, and acts goes a long way without doing any funny voices. If you want to put on a character voice, go for it—but there is no obligation.

For this chapter's purposes, interaction scenes are different from negotiations. Negotiations are reserved for adventure-changing conversations.

CREATING AND RUNNING NEGOTIATIONS

When you're preparing for a negotiation (see the [Negotiation](#) chapter), you'll want to pick an NPC and give them their negotiation stats—a starting interest and patience, an Impression score, motivations, and pitfalls. The Starting Attitudes table in the [Negotiation](#) chapter should give you an idea of where to start with some of these stats, but you can and should feel free to adjust the numbers as you see fit. Keep these guidelines in mind:

- The higher an NPC's starting interest, the more likely the heroes are to end the negotiation with everything they want and then some from the NPC.
- The higher an NPC's starting patience, the longer the more chances the heroes have to make arguments. If you want a longer negotiation, give your NPC a higher patience score.
- The more motivations an NPC has, the more likely the heroes are to have easier tests when making arguments.
- The more pitfalls an NPC has, the more likely the heroes are to stumble into a topic that turns negotiation sour. Too many pitfalls can feel like a gotcha to players, especially if they don't have time to do a little recon on the NPC before going into the negotiation.

PLAN THE OUTCOMES

It helps to know the various outcomes that an NPC might offer during a negotiation. **An adventure or campaign continuing should never hinge entirely on the outcome of a negotiation.** You don't want the story to come grinding to a halt if the heroes fail to secure information, treasure, or help from an NPC. It might mean the adventure is about to get a lot harder for them, but then should have options for continuing when their negotiation skills fail them.

While there are six different outcomes, two are predetermined. If the negotiation ends with the NPC at interest 4, then the heroes get what they want. If the heroes end the negotiation at interest 1, the NPC can't offer them anything.

Even with those two options determined, there's actually less prep work than you think. Here's what you should prepare:

- You need to know what the NPC might offer the heroes instead of or in addition to their ask if the negotiation ends with the NPC's interest at 2 or 5. It's also a good idea to have a list of two favors, items, pieces of information, or other help the NPC can offer the heroes, so that you aren't scrambling to think of something if these results come up.
- Likewise, if the NPC's interest hits 3, they'll ask the heroes for a favor in exchange for what they want. They heroes may also directly ask the NPC what they can offer to get the job done. In this case, it helps to have two favors, items, pieces of information, or other help the NPC could ask for from the heroes.
- Finally, if the heroes really offend the NPC and end the negotiation with their interest at 0, have some idea of

what the NPC might do to punish the heroes. If you don't have this ready, don't sweat it. Revenge is a dish best served cold, and maybe a few sessions from now, so you got time to plan.

HERO NEGOTIATION STATS

Many heroes have class features, titles, or other character options that make them better in negotiation. When you're preparing a negotiation, it helps if you know each hero's Renown score and any features they have that might interest a negotiation like, the troubadour's Scene Partner feature. Ask your players to tell you what, if any, of their character options influence negotiation at the start of a campaign and whenever they level up.

HEROES MUST INITIATE

Negotiations should always be initiated by the heroes—players (and people in general) can't be forced to negotiate for something they don't want. As you prepare your negotiation, remember that they might choose to gain what they need from the NPC another way (maybe by calling in an owed favor to someone else who has the means to help them, stealing what they need from the NPC, or simply pushing forward without the NPC's help).

FRAMEWORK FOR ROLEPLAYING

Some new Directors and players can get overwhelmed by negotiation, wondering if they need the rules at all for roleplaying a quid pro quo discussion. If you'd rather play without them, go for it. The *Draw Steel* designers aren't going to come to your house and take your books if you play without these rules. However, the negotiation rules exist to help you create an exciting back and forth between two parties that have stakes and drama. The NPC's interest helps you determine their attitude toward the heroes' proposals and their patience score indicates how much time they're willing to give the heroes. The same way Stamina tells you when a monster is done with a fight, patience tells you when an NPC is done talking to the heroes and ready to cut bait. This way you're not just roleplaying a conversation until you and your players get bored with a scene and then asking them to make a single test—the rules are giving you structure and stakes.

The most important thing to remember when it comes to negotiation is that the rules are here to work with you and not against you. They're flexible on purpose. If a hero makes an excellent argument that you think should work without a test, then it does. If a hero makes an offensive argument that should fail no matter what, then they're out of luck. You're empowered to make negotiation whatever will be the most fun for you and your players.

If your players are having trouble roleplaying during a negotiation, try running your next negotiation without announcing that they are now in a negotiation. Simply ask them for tests when appropriate and have the NPC respond based on the results and their motivations and pitfalls. This might help your players shake off the rules and just roleplay as you track interest and patience.

CHANCE FOR RECON

If the players want to negotiate with an NPC and the heroes have some time before the conversation, they might think to do a little recon into the NPC to discover

motivations and pitfalls. The heroes have multiple ways to tackle this—they might do research into an NPC as a downtime project, they could employ a montage test to see what they can discover by gathering rumors and doing a little palm greasing and staking out, or they might attempt to do some favors for people close to the NPC and get some information in exchange. If they have the time and ambition, it's a good idea to let the heroes do a little recon before jumping into the negotiation, since it makes for a richer story and encourages them to engage with the system, since they'll feel more prepared for it.

ROLEPLAYING NEGOTIATORS

When it comes time for you to roleplay an NPC during a negotiation, remember that the NPC, like all sapient creatures, is complex. Refer to your notes on the NPC you created while preparing the adventure so that you can remember their habits, flaws, and general demeanor.

Every NPC has their own way of approaching negotiation. Some might be full of bluster. Others might say everything with a smile, even when rejecting the heroes. Another might be very verbose, while yet another may say as little as possible to keep the heroes guessing about their real desires. One important decision you should make ahead of time is how upfront the NPC will be with what they want from the heroes. A straightforward NPC can make for a faster negotiation, if the heroes are willing to give the NPC whatever they need. An unreadable NPC can be a puzzle for the heroes to figure out, but it can be a little more difficult to roleplay. If it's your first time using the negotiation rules, you should start out with a more straightforward NPC before playing a coy customer.

During negotiation, it's a good idea to let your players talk above the table about their strategy if that fits their fun and playstyle. You can intervene if there's a personal issue, but otherwise, let them plot, scheme, and guess while you play it cool. Once a negotiation starts, they can only get information about the NPC by making tests, using their characters' features, or through engaging in conversation with them.

Whenever the NPC makes an offer to the heroes after a test, make it clear what the terms of the offer are. While some NPCs might speak cryptically, it's best for the players to understand what they're getting their heroes into—it's fun to trick heroes, but many players don't feel the fun when *they* get tricked instead.

SHARING INTEREST AND PATIENCE

It's up to you as the Director to decide whether to share an NPC's interest or patience during a negotiation. Sometimes sharing this information can make an encounter more dramatic, with the players watching their progress rise and fall in real time. Other groups might find negotiation more fun, dramatic, and immersive if those exact numbers are hidden from the players.

In playtesting, some groups loved seeing these statistics and some groups didn't, just as some groups like knowing the Stamina of every creature in a battle and others prefer to keep that information secret. Talk to your group about what they'd prefer.

SAMPLE NEGOTIATORS

We've created some sample NPC archetypes you can use for negotiation. Each of the following NPCs is an archetype

that you can adapt to specific situations. For example, the bandit chief archetype could be the leader of a brigand gang, a pirate captain, or a rebel who redistributes wealth by stealing from corrupt nobles and giving the booty to those less fortunate.

Each archetype includes a list of motivations and pitfalls an NPC could have. You should pick at least two from the list for an NPC you create using the archetype. Feel free to change the wording on motivations and pitfalls and adjust numbers as you see fit.

BANDIT CHIEF

Impression score: 1

The bandit chief is a bully and a braggart, and most negotiate using intimidation and bluster before softening.

The bandit chief archetype can be used for any other local big shot, such as the privileged child of a local lord, an arrogant tavern darts champion, or any bully.

Motivations:

- **Freedom:** No one tells me what to do—not if they want to keep their head on their shoulders. And no one tells my toughs what to do, except ME!
- **Greed:** Gold! I love the feel of shining, clinking coins running between my fingers. I never found something to spend it on that I like as much as the gold.
- **Power:** I want a stronger hideout, more toughs, and a bigger share of the loot. Get me that, and I'll do your dirty work for you. You can keep your fancy titles and lands.
- **Revelry:** If you don't get drunk after a raid, then why have a raid?

Pitfalls:

- **Higher Authority:** By order of the baron? I give the orders around here!
- **Justice:** Only the weak whine for justice—the strong make their own rules.
- **Legacy:** Listen, I don't care what happens when I'm gone. I want my toughs shouting my name now, not in a hundred years.
- **Peace:** In times of peace, if you pick up a silver coin that's not yours, the sheriff comes knocking on your door. In war, whole caravans disappear and nobody blinks. Give me war.

KNIGHT

Impression score: 2

While not an idealist, the knight is a loyal servant of their liege and a stickler for duty. The knight knows their place in a regimented society and believes everyone else should keep to their own.

The knight archetype can be used for any other local authority, such as a village elder, town guard officer, or academic professor.

Motivations:

- **Higher Authority:** That's above my pay grade. If my superiors sign off on it, then so do I.
- **Justice:** Thank you for bringing this to my attention. I agree, this must be put right. The only question is how.

- **Peace:** People like us, we fight so that the common folk don't have to. If I must, I'll draw the sword again, to keep the peace.
- **Revelry:** Every agreement should be sealed with a toast. Huzzah!

Pitfalls:

- **Benevolence:** These people don't need charity, they need order. Let them go to the town hall, and they'll get a full belly in exchange for an honest day's work.
- **Freedom:** None of us are free—from the lowliest servant on up. Even a monarch has a duty to their people.
- **Power:** My power comes to me through my lawful oath, not by some dirty deal made in secret.
- **Vengeance:** I believe in law, not vengeance, and law is decided by higher courts. I'm just a functionary.

GUILDMASTER

Impression score: 3

The guildmaster knows the value of a coin and that knowledge—inside information and trade secrets—is the most valuable currency. They bargain accordingly.

The guildmaster archetype can be used for any other local information broker, such as a cult leader, hag, or spy.

Motivations:

- **Benevolence:** The people can't take care of themselves. Somebody's got to look after them, the poor lambs.
- **Discovery:** It would be highly illegal for you to show me those schematics you got from a rival guild. Likewise, it would be highly illegal for me to slide you this bag of gold.
- **Power:** Who do you think will be in charge in the next age? The nobles? Pah! They still count their wealth in cows. No, whoever controls the information will rule the world—and I intend for it to be us.
- **Protection:** We have rivals—hungry opportunists who will stop at nothing. If I want to protect my guild, I've got to do unto them before they do unto us.

Pitfalls:

- **Higher Authority:** My loyalty is to the guild—not the burgomaster, not the king, not Ajax himself. But don't tell them I said that.
- **Justice:** We're reshaping the world here. Of course, some people who can't adapt are going to find themselves on the bottom, and they're going to blame us for it—but I had thought you were smarter than that.
- **Peace:** Conflict isn't bad in itself. It drives innovation. The key is not to be on the losing side.
- **Revelry:** I don't have time for this foolishness. Come talk to me again when you have something of value to show me.

WARLORD

Impression score: 4

The warlord has raised their banner, and troops flock to their cause. Some say they never negotiate, but that's not true—they're happy to listen to terms of surrender.

The warlord archetype can be used for any other local-level threat, such as a vampire, hobgoblin bloodlord, or rebellious noble.

Motivations:

- **Freedom:** I'm not paying a coin to some weakling liege lord for the privilege of being told what to do. I've raised my banner. I defy anyone to pull it down.
- **Legacy:** Did you see that young captain out there putting the fear of the gods into her troops? That's my kid, but she earned her title. Someday this will all be hers.
- **Peace:** Look around you. Everywhere you look—weakness, corruption, waste. Peace is a noble goal, but we won't have peace until the current regime is swept away.
- **Vengeance:** Have you suffered like I have at the hands of that accursed villain? If so, then I'll gladly call you friend.

Pitfalls:

- **Benevolence:** Go back to your street corner and beg for alms if that's what you're after. You'll get nothing from me.
- **Discovery:** What does that have to do with me? I'm a soldier, not a scholar.
- **Justice:** You dare call me unjust? I make the laws here. Justice is mine to give or take away!
- **Protection:** I'm not some sniveling coward who begs for protection, and neither are my troops. Anyone who asks for safety doesn't deserve it.

BURGOMASTER

Impression score: 5

The burgomaster's power comes from their constituents, and for the most part they aim to serve them. They're experienced negotiators, never giving up any more than they mean to.

The burgomaster archetype can be used for any other local ruler, such as a baron, governor, or a watch captain in a metropolis.

Motivations:

- **Greed:** Keep talking. I'm sure we can come to an agreement that benefits all parties. A rising tide and all that.
- **Higher Authority:** No one can accuse me of being disloyal. What my duty demands, I do—but let's determine the most sensible way to go about it.
- **Justice:** The rule of law must be preserved. If you have evidence of crimes, they must be punished.
- **Protection:** The weak, the helpless ... they depend upon me and, to a lesser extent, civic-minded heroes like yourselves. Together we'll make sure the people come to no harm.

Pitfalls:

- **Vengeance:** In politics you have to have a short memory. Your enemy today may be your ally tomorrow. There's no need to make things personal.
- **Discovery:** Trust me. No good is going to come from poking that particular beehive.

- **Freedom:** Freedom, eh? What's next, freedom from taxes? No one is born free except the gods, and only fools believe otherwise.
- **Revelry:** Put that bottle away. I'm a public figure, I can't be seen carousing and gallivanting and who knows what else.

VIRTUOSO

Impression score: 6

The virtuoso is the preeminent musician in the land—perhaps a celebrated opera singer or composer. If you need a cause popularized or an enemy's name tarnished, then you come to them.

The virtuoso archetype can be used for any other local celebrity, such as a master crafter, inspired artist, famous gladiator, or world champion.

Motivations:

- **Freedom:** I follow my muse, my only master. Who would dare put handcuffs on art?
- **Legacy:** Castles will crumble. Empires will fall. But if I can only produce a work worthy of my talents, my name will live forever.
- **Peace:** In war, bronze statues are melted down for armor. Money is wasted on ballistae instead of ballads. War is a crime against the god of art.
- **Revelry:** Yes, tonight let us celebrate! Inspiration looks down kindly on those who drink life to the dregs.

Pitfalls:

- **Greed:** You offer me money? Money comes to geniuses—it is our due. I can get it from a thousand admirers.
- **Power:** I have no ambitions beyond this opera house. For me to leave this place, even for a palace or a throne ... it would be an exile for me.
- **Protection:** I'm not afraid. The god of music will look after her own.
- **Vengeance:** Perhaps there are some who hate me ... some who think I stand in their way, or some whose accomplishments I have eclipsed. But I hate no one and am jealous of no one.

HIGH PRIEST

Impression score: 7

The high priest may be a high-ranking member of their faith, but as they are quick to tell you, that doesn't make them free to act as they wish. The commands of their deity must be paramount.

The high priest archetype can be used for any other national authority, such as a count, judge, or general.

Motivations:

- **Benevolence:** We are agreed on this matter. If this threat puts people in danger, we must come to their rescue.
- **Discovery:** Oh indeed? Um ... I would be interested in looking at that document further. Surely no harm can come from being aware of the snares and dangers in the world.

- **Higher Authority:** Indeed, my appointed duty is to serve everyone—whether it be my deity, my liege, or the poorest person crying out in need.
- **Justice:** Rest assured, the good will receive their just reward, and the evil will be punished. I will see to it.

Pitfalls:

- **Greed:** Don't offer that to me. Donate it to the faith, if you have no need of it.
- **Legacy:** Me? I am no one. My good deeds, if I have any, are to my deity's credit, not my own.
- **Power:** My current responsibilities are quite enough. I have no desire for more.
- **Revelry:** For shame! Do you boast of doing evil—and expect me to join you in it?

DUKE

Impression score: 8

As the duke gestures you to join him at his card table, spies whisper into his ear. The duke never plays a game or enters a negotiation unless he thinks he can gain the high card.

The duke archetype can be used for any other royal counselor, such as an archmage, spymaster, vizier, or even a beloved jester.

Motivations:

- **Discovery:** My agents have brought me many whispers, but this is news to me. Who else knows of this?
- **Higher Authority:** I must do as my liege commands.
- **Peace:** We must have stability. I will sacrifice anything—and anyone—for this.
- **Vengeance:** There is one—I will not speak their name—who thinks I have forgotten what they did to me. Someday they will discover that I have a long memory. Perhaps you have no love for this person either.

Pitfalls:

- **Benevolence:** Do you think I do what I do because I love my fellow people? Half of them are nitwits, and the other half are villains. But without them, I'd be the Duke of Nothing, so I must preserve them.
- **Greed:** Put away your gold. I'm far too busy to spend it.
- **Justice:** Right and wrong? There is no right, except what strengthens the kingdom, and there is no wrong, except what hurts it.
- **Protection:** I don't care about saving lives. We're all doomed to die. The question is, what will live on after us.

DRAGON

Impression score: 9

The dragon's tremendous might is only overshadowed by their boundless ambition and pride.

The dragon archetype can be used for any other kingdom-level threat, such as a fire giant chief, a contender for a throne, or Lord Syuul.

Motivations:

- **Freedom:** Yes, my ambitions have been bound to the earth far too long. It's time I took flight.

- **Greed:** Bring me tribute now, and when I rule I will not forget you.
- **Protection:** My people have been mistreated for centuries. It ends now!
- **Vengeance:** This land, these people, their treasures, rightfully mine. Stolen from me!

Pitfalls:

- **Legacy:** No heir will outlive me, no legend will remember my past glory ... for I shall never die!
- **Peace:** You want to make peace? When there are still things in the world that are not yet mine?
- **Power:** How can *you* possibly offer *me* power?
- **Revelry:** My pleasures are as far beyond your comprehension as yours are to a worm.

MONARCH

Impression score: 10

Whether they're good or evil, the monarch is accustomed to authority—and wants to keep it. They respond better to pleas than to demands.

The monarch archetype can be used for any other kingdom-level ruler, such as a tyrant, a theocracy's archpriest, or a republic's consul.

Motivations:

- **Benevolence:** It's not for nothing I'm called "the Good."
- **Greed:** Your offer intrigues me. In truth, our coffers are not as full as I should like.
- **Justice:** Ah, do the villains ignore my laws? They must be punished!
- **Legacy:** If I should die, promise me this: you will serve my heir as loyally as you have served me.

Pitfalls:

- **Discovery:** Keep your secrets to yourself. I'm a monarch, not a spymaster.
- **Freedom:** Freedom? Some of my disloyal subjects speak that word a little too often for my liking. I hope you're not one of them.
- **Higher Authority:** Do you dare give orders to me? Never forget, no matter who sent you, I rule here!
- **Vengeance:** Revenge is an exciting sport. Sadly, it's one I've had to give up. It's policy, not revenge, that rules here.

LICH

Impression score: 11

The lich spent centuries alone, studying and building their power ... but now the time for studying is over. The lich is willing to negotiate with strong heroes: they can make loyal lieutenants, or strong undead servants if the talks don't go well.

The lich archetype can be used for any other world-shaking threat, such as a would-be emperor or Count Rhodar von Glauer.

Motivations:

- **Discovery:** Give me that book at once! Your very touch pollutes it.

- **Power:** Yes ... yes ... power! Ahahahaha! Bring me this power and you will be rewarded.
- **Revelry:** Join my court for the coming feast! We shall know such entertainments as were never seen in this world before.
- **Vengeance:** The world despised me ... banished me ... forgot me. The world shall regret it.

Pitfalls:

- **Benevolence:** Do you ask the farmer to pity the wheat before it's harvested?
- **Legacy:** I don't care what the common people think of me. The less they think of me the better, as long as they obey my commands.
- **Peace:** Yes, yes, peace will come ... eventually.
- **Protection:** If you're so intent on saving lives, then bow down before me! No harm will come to my servants.

DEITY

Impression score: 12

The deity will listen to your prayers, and perhaps answer them as well—if the mood strikes them.

The deity archetype can be used for any other world-transcending power, such as Cthriion Uroniziir or Khorsekhef the Infinite.

Motivations:

- **Benevolence:** Worry not ... I have sent champions to save the world. Perhaps these champions ... are closer than you think.
- **Legacy:** When that blessed day comes, all shall come before me to pray, and I shall offer my blessings to the world!
- **Power:** Although I am all-powerful on the spiritual realm, my hands are bound in such worldly matters. But if you act for me, I can offer a little assistance.
- **Protection:** Have faith, little one... none will be forgotten or left behind.

Pitfalls:

- **Discovery:** Mortal, what can you tell me that I do not know?
- **Freedom:** True freedom lies in service to me. Surrender your freedom and I shall raise you up high.
- **Greed:** Fool! Do you seek to offer me what is mine?
- **Higher Authority:** Who do you speak of? Who is beyond me, who is above me? Who will live to see me die, and who drew breath before I gave it? Let them come forth and say their name!

CREATING AND RUNNING MONTAGES

You can use montage tests for chases, escapes, investigations, wilderness travel, tracking other creatures, and any exciting moment in a story that could be told by transitioning or cutting back and forth between heroes.

PREPARING MONTAGE TESTS

When you prepare a montage, you'll want to write down the following information:

- Make a list of potential challenges the heroes face during the montage. This list of challenges should be at least as long as the number of successes the heroes must have to earn a total success. You might also prepare a list of consequences and rewards that could come up for individual tests made during the montage, but since you can't predict what approaches the players will have to their tests, don't worry too much about covering every scenario. You can always fall back on earning Malice and hero tokens!
- You'll need to create the three outcomes of the montage: total success, partial success, and total failure. In a total success, the heroes should do whatever they set out to do. In a partial success, they should do what they set out to do at a cost, create a new problem for themselves after doing what they set out to do, or not quite accomplish all their goals. In a total failure, they fail to do whatever they set out to do, but **this result should not grind the story to a halt**. It can cost them dearly, but they should still have options for continuing the adventure. Maybe they lost track of the fleeing lackeys, but that's not the only lead they had to finding the villain's hideout. It's just going to take raiding a mage's tower now to find the information.

RUNNING MONTAGE TESTS

When you run a montage test, start by setting the scene for the players and listing the various challenges the heroes must overcome. Allow the heroes to strategize about the order in which they'll tackle these challenges and make tests.

When it comes time for you to adjudicate the tests, do so as you would any other test (see [Adjudicating Tests](#)). Individual tests in a montage should have rewards and consequences when appropriate, just like any other in a montage. You also have the option for the reward or consequence of an individual test in a montage to add an edge or bane to a test in addition to the normal options! Do whatever makes sense for the heroes' actions in the narrative.

After each test, make sure you're narrating the failure or success of the hero, so the other player can understand if and how the challenge has been overcome. Your description may even spark some new ideas for what they can do next.

If a hero decides to tackle a problem using one of their abilities or a trait instead of a test and it makes sense for them to do so, allow the use. It's mostly likely that the ability counts as an automatic success and allows the group to overcome one of the challenges for the montage, but you could decide that there are greater or lesser consequences. Maybe the use of the ability or trait is just enough to provide an edge on a future test, or maybe it's so good it counts for multiple successes or solves the entire montage. Reward the clever actions of the players.

At the end of the montage test, narrate the outcome for the players and describe the success or failure and any consequences. Then you can let them know the montage test is done!

MONTAGE TWIST!

You can break up the individual tests within a montage by introducing a combat encounter, negotiation, trap, or more challenges to overcome. Keep track of the hero's successes and failures, and decide how many tests they must attempt before introducing your twist. When the twist has been established and dealt with, continue the montage test. Make sure the players understand the montage test is simply paused, not over.

EXAMPLE MONTAGE TESTS

The following are examples of montage tests that you can use or modify to your heart's content.

FIGHT FIRE

Fire has broken out in the town! The heroes must prevent it from spreading while saving as many townsfolk as possible. Their efforts might be more complicated if the cause of the fire—such as a marauding dragon or an invading army—is still around causing trouble.

SETTING THE SCENE

Fire blazes from several buildings, and the occupants need to be rescued. Elsewhere, some townsfolk flee while others throw water on the fire without any organization or plan. Without leadership and a way to stop the spread, the fire could easily consume everything. In a nearby stable, horses are panicking as their hay begins to smolder. Burning rubble blocks pathways everywhere.

MONTAGE CHALLENGES

- **Bucket Chains:** Organize the would-be firefighters into disciplined bucket brigades or fight the fire some other way. Suggested characteristics: Presence, Reason. Suggested skills: Architecture, Intimidation, Lead
- **Clearing a Firebreak:** Prevent the fire from spreading by clearing the ground of flammable materials, either by moving it or burning it away. Suggested characteristics: Might, Reason. Suggested skills and abilities: Endurance, Lift, abilities that deal fire damage. A creature loses a Recovery if they get a consequence on this test.
- **Evacuating Buildings:** Save people trapped in burning buildings. Suggested characteristics: Might, Presence. Suggested skills: Athletics, Climb, Persuade. A creature that doesn't have fire immunity loses a Recovery if they suffer a consequence on their test. Heroes can attempt this task twice during the montage, since there are plenty of people to save.
- **Free the Horses:** Loose the stabled horses threatened by the fire. Suggested characteristics: Might, Presence. Suggested skills: Lift, Handle Animals, Ride
- **Find More Firefighters:** Find groups that aren't fighting the fire, such as fleeing civilians, and convince them to help. Suggested characteristic: Presence. Suggested skills: Intimidate, Lead, Persuade
- **Move Burning Rubble:** Move burning beams blocking doors. Suggested characteristic: Might. Suggested skills: Endurance, Lift. A creature that doesn't have fire immunity loses a Recovery if they suffer a consequence on this test.
- **Use the Freed Horses (if Free the Horses was successful):** Put the horses to work clearing rubble or bringing people to safety. Suggested characteristics:

Reason, Presence. Suggested skills: Drive, Handle Animals, Ride

OPTIONAL TWISTS

At the end of the first round, an emergency crops up. One or more heroes, selected by the players, must deal with the situation before the second round begins. If the heroes successfully deal with the twist, they earn a success for the montage test. Otherwise they earn a failure.

- **Building Collapse:** While a hero is in or near a blazing building, it begins to collapse. The hero must escape before it crumbles. Suggested characteristics: Agility, Intuition. Suggested skills: Climb, Jump, Gymnastics.
- **Cause of the Fire:** The entire party meets the hostile cause of the fire—the invading army, dragon, arsonist, etc. They must fight a standard or hard encounter against this threat.
- **Help!** Someone is about to run into a burning building to save a relative trapped under a burning beam. This twist requires two tests, each of which nets a success or a failure for the montage test. One hero can try to prevent the townspeople from entering the burning building while another rescues the relative. Suggested skills: Might, Presence. Suggested skills and abilities: Lift, Persuade

OPTIONAL TWIST

At the end of the first round of the montage test, the party meets the hostile cause of the fire—the invading army, dragon, arsonist, etc. They must fight a standard or hard encounter against this threat.

MONTAGE TEST OUTCOMES

- **Total Success:** The fire is extinguished. Buildings are damaged but no lives were lost. The party achieves 2 Victories if the montage test was hard, or 1 Victory if it was easy or moderate.
- **Partial Success:** The fire is quenched, although many buildings burned and a few lives were lost. The party achieves 1 Victory if the montage test was moderate or hard.
- **Total Failure:** When the fire finally burns out, the town lies in ruins. Townsfolk mourn their dead or grimly prepare to find a new home. The party achieves no Victories from the montage test.

INFILTRATE THE PALACE

Whether the heroes are trying to reach a tyrant's throne room, pull off a daring art heist, or rescue royalty from captivity, they're somewhere they're not supposed to be—and they'd prefer to keep their presence secret.

SETTING THE SCENE

The target site is well-defended, with patrols that change every few hours. The few obvious entrances are locked and guarded. And once you're inside, you don't know your way to your goal. There are probably guard patrols inside as well. You'll have to sneak or bluff your way past them.

MONTAGE CHALLENGES

Half the work of a successful infiltration is done before setting foot in the target building. If the heroes choose, they can make individual tests as part of the montage test before they enter the site. One round of montage tests can

be made in this way. These tests don't affect the alarm level of the site.

Preparation Challenges

- **Bribe Guards:** The heroes can pay off guards to look the other way. On a success, the active hero's Wealth is lowered by 1. Suggested characteristic: Presence. Suggested skills: Criminal Underworld, Flirt, Persuade
- **Find Blueprints:** Research secret entrances and little-known passageways in forgotten libraries or well-guarded town halls. Suggested characteristics: Agility, Reason. Suggested skills: Architecture, Sneak, History
- **Identify Unguarded Entrance:** Find a forgotten back door or climbable window, or learn about one through contacts. Suggested characteristics: Agility, Intuition. Suggested skills: Alertness, Architecture, Criminal Underworld
- **Learn Guard Schedules:** Keep ears and eyes open and learn when guards go off duty. Suggested characteristics: Intuition, Reason. Suggested skills: Alertness, Eavesdrop, Track
- **Make False Identities:** Prepare to walk right into the palace in plain sight. Suggested characteristics: Presence, Reason. Suggested skills: Disguise, Forgery, Lie

Infiltration Challenges

When the heroes begin their infiltration, the alarm level of the site starts at 0. While infiltrating the site, whenever the heroes fail a test that is part of the montage test, the alarm level of the site increases, to a maximum of 2. When the heroes succeed at a test, the alarm level decreases, to a minimum of 0. All of the heroes' montage tests inside the site gain a number of banes equal to the current alarm level.

The first time the heroes fail a test while the alarm level is 2, they encounter guards (enough for a hard combat encounter). The second time the heroes fail a test while the alarm level is 2, the montage test fails.

- **Aerial Route:** Take a path that leads along catwalks or high ledges. Suggested characteristics: Agility, Might. Suggested skills: Climb, Gymnastics, Jump
- **Avoid Traffic:** Find the dustiest, least-traveled areas and stick to them. Suggested characteristics: Intuition, Reason. Suggested skills: Navigate, Search, Track
- **Lay Low:** Once while the alarm level is greater than 0, the heroes can find a place to hide for a bit, reducing the alarm level by 1. This activity doesn't require a test or generate a success or failure.
- **Make a Diversion:** Cause a ruckus, then go the other way. Suggested characteristics: Might, Presence. Suggested skills: Alchemy, Perform, Sabotage
- **Skulk in the Shadows:** Keep out of sight. Suggested characteristic: Agility. Suggested skills: Hide, Sneak. Heroes can attempt this task twice during the montage.
- **Pose as Guards:** Using castoff clothes, disguise as guards or other inhabitants. This test gets an edge if the party prepared disguises in advance or defeated guards while in the site. Suggested characteristics: Intuition, Presence. Suggested skills: Disguise, Lie, Search

OPTIONAL TWIST

At any time during the infiltration section of the montage challenge, between one hero's turn and another's, the heroes learn another group is breaking into the site at the same time, possibly after the same prize. When the heroes run into them during the infiltration, they can fight, negotiate, or let them go—in which case they may meet them again when they reach their prize.

MONTAGE TEST OUTCOMES

- **Total Success:** The party reaches their goal, and they secure an escape route that lets them leave safely. The party achieves 2 Victories if the montage test was hard, or 1 Victory if it was easy or moderate.
- **Partial Success:** The heroes reach their goal, but they'll need to fight a standard difficulty combat encounter to escape. The party achieves 1 Victory if the montage test was moderate or hard, in addition to any Victories earned from combat.
- **Total Failure:** The site is locked down, and their goal is out of reach. The party needs to fight a Hard combat encounter to escape. The party achieves no Victories from the montage test, although they may earn Victories from combats undertaken during the montage test.

PREPARE FOR BATTLE

Whether it's a village threatened by bandits or a great city preparing for a siege, enemies are on their way to attack the settlement. The heroes have a limited time to fortify the settlement's defenses and bolster its troops.

SETTING THE SCENE

The walls or palisades around the settlement (if any) are in poor shape. The roads or rivers leading to the settlement may be convenient for trade, but they won't slow down the invaders—barricades, traps, or ambushes could be set up. The settlement's food, weapon, and ammunition supply is too low to survive a long siege. Its experienced fighters are competent but few, and its militia is poorly equipped and virtually untrained.

MONTAGE CHALLENGES

- **Evacuation:** Heroes lead noncombatants to safety. Suggested characteristics: Intuition, Presence. Suggested skills: Handle Animal, Lead, Persuade
- **Fortification:** Heroes help build or repair walls. Suggested characteristics: Might, Reason. Suggested skills: Architecture, Endurance, Lift
- **Inspiration:** Heroes improve morale with rousing speeches or performances. Suggested characteristics: Intuition, Presence. Suggested skills: Brag, Lead, Perform
- **Propaganda:** Heroes sow confusion or rebellion in the approaching army. Suggested characteristics: Agility, Presence. Suggested skills: Disguise, Forgery, Lie
- **Smithing:** Heroes help craft weapons or invent entirely new ones. Suggested characteristics: Might, Reason. Suggested skills: Alchemy, Blacksmithing, Fletching
- **Stockpiling:** Heroes hunt, magically summon food or water, or otherwise increase the settlement's supplies in case of a protracted siege. Suggested characteristics: Agility, Reason. Suggested skills: Nature, Sneak, Track
- **Training:** Heroes train the settlement's defenders. Suggested characteristics: Might, Presence. Suggested skills: Endurance, Intimidation, Lead

- **Trapmaking:** Heroes dig concealed pits, lay ambushes, or otherwise make it hard for the invaders to approach the settlement. Suggested characteristics: Might, Reason. Suggested skills: Conceal Object, Endurance, Mechanics

OPTIONAL TWIST

At the end of the first round of the montage test, fast-moving enemy troops attack before the heroes are ready. The heroes must fight off an easy combat encounter.

MONTAGE TEST OUTCOMES

- **Total Success:** The settlement is fully fortified, and even if the heroes don't fight in the settlement's defense, it survives. If the heroes wish, they can leave the settlement and fight a standard combat encounter against the invader's leader and their lackeys. If the heroes succeed, they might kill or capture the leader. The party achieves 2 Victories if the montage test was hard, or 1 Victory if it was easy or moderate, in addition to any Victories they may earn in combat during the settlement's defense.
- **Partial Success:** If the heroes hit the failure limit or time runs out, and if they've achieved at least two more successes than failures, they achieve a partial success. The settlement's fortifications are improved, but the settlement will still fall unless the heroes fight in its defense. To save the settlement, the heroes must triumph in a hard combat encounter against the invader's leader and lackeys. If the heroes lose the encounter, the settlement falls. The party achieves 1 Victory if the montage test was moderate or hard, in addition to any Victories they may earn in combat during the settlement's defense.
- **Total Failure:** The heroes each lose 1 recovery from their failed efforts in defense of the city. Invaders enter the settlement. If the heroes wish, they can fight two hard combat encounters against waves of invaders to allow some of the settlement's inhabitants to retreat to safety. The party achieves no Victories from the montage test, although they may earn some Victories from combats undertaken during the settlement's defense.

TRACK THE FUGITIVE

The heroes are on the trail of someone—an escaped criminal? A dangerous beast? A lost child? The difficulties of the chase depend on whether the quarry knows they're being pursued, and if they want to be found.

SETTING THE SCENE

You can see the fugitive's tracks—but could they be setting a false trail? Did anyone see them pass by, and do you have any idea where they might be headed? The goal is to do whatever you can to find and stay on the fugitive's trail.

MONTAGE CHALLENGES

- **Ask Around:** Gather clues from locals or bystanders, if any are present—or, if the heroes have the proper magic, from animals or the dead. Suggested characteristics: Intuition, Presence. Suggested skills: Interrogate, Persuade, Rumors
- **Follow the Trail:** Look for tracks or other signs of the fugitive's passage. Heroes can attempt this test twice during the montage. Suggested characteristic: Intuition. Suggested skills: Alertness, Search, Track

- **Get a Good View:** Climb up high to get the big picture. Suggested characteristics: Agility, Might. Suggested skills: Climb, Gymnastics, Jump
- **Predict their Next Move:** Without needing to find their quarry's trail, the heroes might have an idea where they're headed. The hero gains an edge if they know the quarry well. Suggested characteristics: Intuition, Reason. Suggested skills: Navigate, Read Person, or an appropriate skill from the Lore group (such as Nature to follow an animal or Criminal Underworld to follow a criminal)
- **Push Ahead:** While the quarry is resting, the heroes are closing in. The hero loses a recovery. Suggested characteristic: Might. Suggested skills: Endurance, Navigate, Ride, Drive

OPTIONAL TWIST

At the end of the first round of the montage test, the heroes stumble upon a trap set by the quarry, such as a pit trap full of poison spikes, or a problem they left behind, such as angry locals or a forest fire. The heroes must deal with the issue before they begin the test.

MONTAGE TEST OUTCOMES

- **Total Success:** The heroes catch their quarry before the fugitive reaches their destination (or before a lost or kidnapped creature comes to harm). The party achieves 2 Victories if the montage test was hard, or 1 Victory if it was easy or moderate.
- **Partial Success:** If the quarry was trying to evade capture, the quarry reaches their destination. They find allies and a fortified position to defend themselves, or they may have time to cause more harm. If the quarry was lost, the quarry is injured grievously when they are found. The party achieves 1 Victory if the montage test was moderate or hard.
- **Total Failure:** The trail has gone cold. The heroes will need to wait for fresh clues to come along before they can resume the hunt. The party achieves no Victories from the montage test.

WILDERNESS RACE

The party needs to reach a besieged city before it falls or traverse a jungle before a curse is activated. In any case, the party needs to cross dangerous wildlands—fast.

SETTING THE SCENE

The wilds ahead hold unknown dangers. Someone will need to figure out the best route, and others can speed the journey by carrying baggage or keeping up spirits. It might be wise if someone kept an eye out for monsters and other hazards, as well.

MONTAGE CHALLENGES

- **Avoid Hazards:** Determine ways to overcome the area's natural hazards, such as finding insect-repelling herbs in a swamp or making snowshoes to cross tundra. Suggested characteristics: Intuition, Reason. Suggested skills: Heal, Nature, appropriate skill from the Crafting skill group (such as Alchemy to make bug repellent)
- **Carry Baggage:** By carrying supplies for the weaker party members, you increase the whole party's speed. Suggested characteristic: Might. Suggested skills: Endurance, Lift

- **Find the Path:** Keep the party from getting lost. Suggested characteristics: Intuition, Reason. Suggested skills: Alertness, Nature, Navigation
- **Keep Up Spirits:** Keep up morale with cheer and marching songs. Suggested characteristic: Presence. Suggested skills: Lead, Music, Performance
- **Keep Watch:** Keep an eye out for danger. Suggested characteristic: Intuition. Suggested skills: Alertness, Eavesdrop, Track
- **Push On:** Pick up the pace and push past the fatigue. Suggested characteristics: Might. Suggested skills: Endurance, Lead; Animal Handling, Drive, or Ride if the party has mounts or vehicles.
- **Scout Ahead:** Investigate the path ahead. Suggested characteristics: Agility, Intuition. Suggested skills: Alertness, Navigation, Sneak

OPTIONAL TWIST

At the end of the first round of the montage test, a natural hazard (such as an avalanche) interrupts the journey. Each hero must make a test of your choice to avoid the hazard, losing a Recovery on a failure.

MONTAGE TEST OUTCOMES

- **Total Success:** The heroes reach their goal in time. The party achieves 2 Victories if the montage test was hard, or 1 Victory if it was easy or moderate.
- **Partial Success:** In order to reach their goal in time, the heroes must sprint over the last leg of the journey, each hero must spend two Recoveries to do so. The party achieves 1 Victory if the montage test was moderate or hard, in addition to any Victories earned from combat.
- **Total Failure:** The heroes don't arrive in time to avert catastrophe. The party achieves no Victories from the montage test.

RUNNING RESPITES

When the heroes decide to take a respite, your role changes a bit, as most of what the heroes are doing during that time are downtime projects, which tend to be self-directed. However, you've still got levers you can pull to make the story interesting.

SAFE PLACE

Heroes can't take a respite unless they're in a safe place. This typically means a place with a bed and four walls and a roof around you where you're very unlikely to get stabbed in your sleep. Heroes aren't going to find 24 hours of peace in a villain's lair, even if they barricade a door. This can become more of a gray area if the heroes attempt to take a respite while traveling in the wild. "Why can't we camp in this seemingly peaceful wode for a day?" That's the kind of thing that you may decide is fine and helpful for the players if you want them to be able to regain their Stamina and Recoveries. Alternatively, you may want them to work harder for those and mark the wode as a dangerous place in the story. If the players want the heroes to take a respite in a place you deem unsafe, let them know it is impossible for them to get any meaningful rest or project progress in this place because they must constantly be on guard for danger.

TOO MANY RESPITES?

It's up to the heroes how many respites they take in a row. Each one is a day. They might be eager to take a series of respites to accomplish some downtime projects. Sometimes a longer break is fine, but the heroes should feel some pressure to keep up the fight. Remember that villains don't stop plotting and conquering while the heroes rest. Their plans continue! If the heroes are taking their sweet time with respites so they can create as many Healing Potions as possible, have them get wind of the latest evil actions that nearby villains are taking. If they want to defend the people and values they love, they better stop respiting and start adventuring.

If you have very few respites in your campaign, you may want to deploy artisans, sages, and manuals to allow heroes to get a chance to craft useful items and do some research, since their respite time to do so is limited.

PROJECT EVENTS

Downtime project events are your time to shine during downtime. Remember that these events are optional, and you can use them as frequently you like. In general, more than one or two events per respite can be disruptive to the overall campaign. It's also fine to have no events if you just want to keep the campaign's main story rolling along.

When you're running downtime events, be sure to rotate which heroes are in the spotlight of the action. Don't focus on the same hero over and over again. You can also do a little preparation for events before you play them out. Read the event prompt, and think about fleshing it out into a scene. They're vaguely written so that you can modify them as you see fit and easily create your own.

RESPITES BETWEEN SESSIONS

If your play time is limited, you can have the players do everything they need to do during a respite between your game sessions, provided they end a game session by taking a respite. You can run any events over email or through a chat app. Then when folks return for the next session, they'll be ready to go with project rolls completed, XP tallied, and Stamina and Recoveries restored.

GRANTING REWARDS

Giving treasure, Renown, wealth, and titles to your players is as much fun as earning them. But what's the right amount of treasure to give out with turning the heroes into badasses who can simply cut down every dragon they meet? How often do the rules of the game expect a hero to earn renown? What about titles? This section answers is for you!

GRANTING TREASURES

When you're planning on giving your heroes treasures, consider items that will be good for their heroes. Finding a magic bow isn't going to be exciting for a group that doesn't have a hero who loves firing arrows. Make sure the treasures they find are good for them to use. The players

may even tell you (or you can ask) which treasures their heroes most desire.

Keep the following progression in mind for heroes earning treasures:

- The group should earn one leveled treasure per hero per echelon up to 3rd echelon. Some heroes only need one or two leveled treasures to be happy. If you find that giving one of these heroes another leveled treasure wouldn't actually help them, you can swap that item out for a trinket of their current echelon.
- The group should earn one trinket per hero per echelon. The trinkets they earn should be of their current echelon or lower.
- The group should also earn one to three consumables of their current echelon or lower each level.

You don't have to award a full treasure to heroes. They can use their downtime to craft things! You can spread out the pace at which they earn treasures by having them find the source materials and item prerequisites for crafting an item instead of finding an item outright.

When you're planning an adventure, put the treasures and crafting materials the heroes can earn into the outline. Enemies who have access to treasures that can help them in a battle against the heroes don't keep those treasures hidden away. They use them in battle!

RESKINNING TREASURES

You can take the treasures in this book and easily reskin them. Do you wish Gecko Gloves were actually boots? Just change the description and a few keywords and you're good to go. Do you want the Icemaker Maul to be a dagger that creates pools of acid instead? Swap some keywords and damage types, and you're ready to rock! If you're just changing a few keywords, damage types, and descriptions, you're probably not going to break the game. This allows you to create many different treasures to give to your players just by reskinning the ones in this book.

AWARDING TITLES

You don't need to grant heroes every title they qualify for. You probably shouldn't, lest they become too powerful too fast. It's up to you when to give titles out. Here are two options:

- You can grant a hero a title during a significant moment in a campaign, such as after defeating a villain. The heroes are each awarded a title they earned that is chosen by you.
- You can allow a hero to choose a title they've earned from the list each time they achieve an even-numbered level.

As a guideline, a hero should gain one title about every other level.

You should check in with your players occasionally and see if they have any specific titles they want to earn. Give them a chance to earn the titles they want. This gets the players more involved in the campaign and driven to adventure.

AWARDING RENOWN

The heroes earn Renown whenever they do something of significance, like save a town or the world! As a general guideline, the heroes should earn 1 Renown per level.

If you want the characters to be less famous than in a standard heroic tale, you can adjust this to give out Renown every other level, or only when the heroes level up. Alternatively, you can award more Renown after each adventure if you want the heroes to become power players in the world more quickly.

GRANTING WEALTH

The heroes increase their wealth whenever they get a big payday or recover a giant hoard of treasure. The heroes should increase their wealth by 1 about every other level.

AWARDING HERO TOKENS

You can award hero tokens to the players for taking risks with their heroes beyond what the game typically expects of them. For instance, battling a group of monsters is part of the game and doesn't earn a hero token. However, the following sorts of activities might:

- A hero stands alone against a group of enemies to allow their comrades to escape.
- A hero willingly jumps into quicksand, into lava, off a cliff, or into some other hazard to save another character.
- The group is presented with an easy way out of a difficult situation that involves lying, cheating, stealing, or the like, but they take the more arduous and honorable path.
- A hero gives away an important resource, such as a Healing Potion, to help another creature in need.

AWARDING VICTORIES

Use the following guidelines for awarding Victories to the heroes. You can increase these values for overcoming particularly difficult challenges:

- **Combat Encounters:** A successful combat in which the party's objectives are achieved earns the heroes 1 Victory. Particularly difficult encounters are worth 2 Victories when completed. See *Monsters* for more information about Victories and combat difficulty.
- **Montage Tests:** The heroes earn 1 Victory when they achieve total success on an easy or moderate montage test, and 2 Victories on a hard montage test. They earn 1 Victory if they get a partial success on a moderate or hard montage test.
- **Negotiation:** The heroes earn 1 Victory if they end a Negotiation with the NPC's interest of at least 3 and at least 2 higher than it started and they agree on a deal.
- **Hazards:** If the heroes overcome a complicated trap hazard that required multiple tests to find and survive, they earn 1 Victory.
- **Puzzles:** If the heroes solve a complicated puzzle that would take most people at least 10 minutes to complete, they earn 1 Victory.

- **Story Goals:** If the heroes achieve a major story goal that accomplishes a quest (such as saving a prince trapped by an evil baroness or stopping a necromancer from performing a world-ending ritual), they earn 1 Victory.
- **Clever Thinking:** If the heroes use clever thinking to easily and surprisingly overcome or bypass a combat encounter, a negotiation, a montage test, a trap, a puzzle, or some other challenge that would award them 1 or more Victories in a more difficult fashion, award them the Victories they would have earned had they faced and overcome the problem head on.

CAMPAIGN: SESSION ONE

Ah, that new campaign smell! The first session of any new long-term campaign is all about getting everyone excited and comfortable to play, and then kicking things off with a bang!

FIRST, BUSINESS

At the start of session one, you have some business to get out of the way before you get to the fun of making characters.

- Talk to your players about how the game's schedule. Determine with the group how often you'll play, what you plan to when a player can't make it, and how you plan to communicate about the game when not playing. You should also decide how you're going to settle rules disputes—we recommend that you make a ruling in the moment and then look up the rule after the session to keep the flow of play.
- Talk about the safety tools you plan to use at the table. For more information, check out the *MCDM Tabletop Safety Toolkit* at mcdm.gg/SafetyToolkit.
- Go over your pitch again, and answer any questions the players have about it.
- Ask the players what they would like to see in the campaign. This can include anything from "I'd love to play out some chase scenes!" to "I want to explore themes of loss and grief." These wishes should be starting points for a conversation. If not all players are comfortable with certain themes or content requested by other players, this is a great time to discuss that and come to a consensus about what everyone wants out of the game. Take notes about what your players want.
- Go over any house rules you have with your players, and ask them if they have any they'd like to add. Discuss these rules with them, but ultimately you get to decide which house rules get used in the campaign.

MAKE HEROES

During the first session of a new campaign, the players spend most of their time building heroes. While they build, it's a good idea for you to be available to answer any questions they have about the campaign and the setting. They might ask about everything from the name of the town where their first adventure begins, important organizations in the game, or if a specific language or skill will be particularly useful during the game. As your players make their heroes, you can also take notes. It's a

good idea to record each hero's name, ancestry, background, class, complication (if any), and any important plot details they share with you such as their hometown, the name of rivals, loved ones, or enemies, and any organizations with which they have history.

START WITH A BANG

If you've got the time, it's a good idea to play an opening scene during your first session. It's a great idea for this first scene to include a combat encounter. This first encounter should give the players a taste of the delicious campaign you're cooking up for them and leave them eager for the next session.

This encounter should introduce or hint at the villain the heroes face during their first adventure. Here are a few ideas for encounters to get you started.

- While traveling to the settlement where their first adventure takes place, the heroes and their caravan or ship are attacked by brigands.
- The heroes enter a new town to find war dogs ready to publicly execute a noble who refused to bend the knee to Ajax.
- The heroes are at a tavern enjoying a night off when a band of gnoll raiders invade and light the tavern on fire.
- The heroes are camped in a swamp when undead emerge from the muck and surround them.
- While watching a theatrical performance, an actor (perhaps by accident) performs a ritual that opens a portal to the Abyssal Wasteland and summons a horde of demons.

The encounter you craft should be connected to the first adventure you plan to run. Keep this first one simple, and let each player get used to running the hero. You can always have a couple reinforcements arrive if the encounter is too easy!

If you've got time, you can keep playing, or wrap it up and start planning your next session.