ABIDE

Slots are Mental Load

Your Elder knows this world and its dangers better than you do. They have everything they need.

But Elders only consider a few things at a time. Slots are not an exhaustive list of everything your Elder knows and carries with them. They are just a list of what your Elder thinks is important right now.

Burdens are things your Elder can't stop thinking about, even if they wanted to.

Items, Memories, and Spells can be cleared from Slots at any time to make room for more stuff. Items in particular will change often. Spend Energy to pull some rope from your pack, or a shovel, or a tea set; drop it later when you don't need it anymore.

Augments are Growth

Memories, Spells, and Burdens draw upon what you did in your past: accomplishments and failures. Augments represent your growth as a capable Elder.

Whenever you augment a Number, mark its box. Augments make high numbers even better and remove some of the sting from low numbers.

Make the Details Matter

HOW you do something is just as important as WHAT you are doing. The rules of ABIDE are simple, but stories are complex and ever-changing.

Whether you sweet talk a merchant or threaten them, the roll you make is the same. But the consequences of those strategies will look different whether you fail or succeed.

Let the logic of the story guide you and make those details matter.

Make the Rolls Matter

All Tasks are risky. SOMETHING should always happen, whether a Task is completed or failed.

It's possible that a dice roll changes details about the fictional world. If your Elder was a farmer and then diffuses a tricky spell what does that say about them? It could inspire a future Memory or Spell!

This fictional discovery is one of the best parts of ABIDE! Let the dice rolls influence the fictional world.

Tasks are Everything

It's easy to feel like the dice and the math is what really matters. All this talking just gets in the way!

But the truth is that the conversations you have are the most fun and engaging part of ABIDE.

What do we really want? How will we get it? Who will help us? What will we risk? What might happen?

Use these conversations to create the Tasks that your Elders will work on together. Tasks have 4 parts:

1. **The Goal:** What are we trying to accomplish?
2. **Consequences:** What happens if we fail?
3. **Progress Required** to complete this task.
4. **Roll Limit:** How many rolls before we fail this Task.

"Get past the dragon before she wakes up."
(10 Progress, 3 Rolls)

Task Tips

ABIDE relies on well-phrased Tasks to move the game forward and keep everyone on the same page.

Tasks are scenes, not moments.

"Dodge the arrow coming at your face!" is not a Task.
"Disarm the traps before our torches run low" is good.
"Get past the traps before our torches dim" is better.

Tasks can be accomplished in many ways.

"Pick the lock on the door" is not a Task.
"Get past the door" is good.
"Get past the door before the guard returns" is great!

Tasks hint at consequences.

"Explore the room" is not a Task.
"Explore the room before it floods with oil" is good.
"Find any valuables before the room floods " is great!

Tasks focus on the true goal.

"Fight the bandits" is not a Task.
"Protect the treasure from the Bandits" is better.
"Protect the treasure from the Bandits until reinforcements arrive" is great.

Tasks are temporary. They cannot be repeated.

"Get to the city" is not a Task.
"Get to the city before the storm hits" is good.
"Decode the map to the hidden city" is also good.

Tasks are never deadly. See the Consequences page.

You are an Elder

You have seen and accomplished much throughout your 60 years of life. You've done a little of everything, mastered many skills, and have survived dozens of trials and dangers. You know what you're capable of.

More importantly, you know your limits. You're not a young fool who bets on raw strength or blind luck. Rather, you rely on your teammates, experience, and careful planning to achieve your goals.

Your Harvester is Coming

You can feel it: headaches, insomnia, anxiety, or nightmares…every Elder knows when their Harvester is coming. It will descend from the skies to hunt you down and take you away. Even if you manage to defeat it, it will simply return stronger than before. Again. And again. And again. Until you are either taken away, or perish in some other manner.

It will not hesitate to destroy anyone who stands between itself and its prey. The safest place to be is alongside your fellow Elders. Together you can accomplish almost anything!

ABIDE is About Life

Specifically it is about exploring the lives of your Elders. We're less concerned with defeating the dragon than we are with how your Elder learned to speak draconic in the first place.

It's a game about looking inward and coming together. Your Elder has lived a long life, but they aren't dead yet. There are still new things to learn and experience!

You are an Elder

1. In your first Slot, write down a Memory.
2. In your second Slot, write down a Spell.
3. In your third Slot, write down a Burden. It requires 20 Progress to transform.
4. Write a few other items your Elder considers to be important (weapons, tools, food, knickknacks, etc).
5. For each empty Slot, gain 2 Energy in Reserves.
6. Augment a Number by marking its box.

How to Play ABIDE

1. **Survey the situation.**
   - ▶ Note any threats nearby. *Hazards, monsters*
   - ▶ List opportunities. *Paths, valuables, clues*
   - ▶ Add interesting details. *Unexpected, weird, fun*

2. **Discuss** what you want to accomplish.

3. **Create a Task** from everyone's ideas. Make sure we all agree with how the Task is worded.
   - ▶ What is the actual goal of this Task?
   - ▶ Can it be accomplished in different ways?
   - ▶ What are the consequences of failure?

4. Assign **Progress Cost** and **Roll Limit** to this Task. This is more about pacing than difficulty.
   Low Stakes: 5 Progress, 2 Rolls
   Moderate Stakes: 10 Progress, 3 Rolls
   High Stakes: 20 Progress, 5 Rolls

5. **Elders work on the Task.** There is no turn order, anyone can work on any Task as long as it makes sense. But it's usually better share the load.

6. **If we make enough Progress before running out of rolls,** then we accomplished our goal! **Otherwise**, the group failed and will suffer the consequences together.

7. **Describe how things have changed** and start again at Step 1.

Energy Reserves

Spend 1 Energy to add +1 to your Roll.

Spend 1 Energy at any time to fill a Slot with an item you need.

When you rest

1. **Roll on any Burden** (even another Elder's), then spend all remaining Energy on that roll.
2. **Sleep.** Gain 1 Energy for each empty Slot.

Use 1 Slot per Roll

Slots **allow** you to do things or they **assist** you with what you're doing (roll twice, pick one result).

For example, a item like a torch may <u>allow</u> you to set a rope on fire or the torch may <u>assist</u> you while searching in the dark. In some cases, it may be so utterly pitch black that the torch is <u>allowing</u> you to see anything at all.

Slots may contain items, Memories, Spells, or Burdens.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Work Together on Tasks

Describe then roll a d20. Ignore unmarked boxes.

20 Make 10 Progress on this Task.
☐ ...and immediately complete any Burden.

19 Make 9 Progress on this Task.
☐ ...and augment a Number.

18 Make 8 Progress on this Task.
☐ ...and gain a Memory that has 3 uses.

17 Make 7 Progress on this Task.
☐ ...and gain a Spell that has 3 uses.

16 Make 6 Progress on this Task.
☐ ...and you may gain a Burden if you choose.

15 Make 5 Progress on this Task.
☐ ...and you may roll on any Burden.

14 Make 4 Progress on this Task.
☐ ...and grant 2 Energy to each ally.

13 Make 3 Progress on this Task.
☐ ...and recover all Energy spent on this Roll.

12 Make 2 Progress on this Task.
☐ ...and you may discover a useful item.

11 Make 1 Progress on this Task.
☐ ...and make another 2 Progress.

10 You must roll again on this Task, if possible.
☐ ...and make 3 Progress.

9 A Burden requires 10 more progress.
☐ ...and an ally may roll on this Burden.

8 Gain a Burden related to an injury.
☐ ...and you may roll on this Burden.

7 Gain a Burden related to stress.
☐ ...and you may roll on this Burden.

6 Gain a Burden related to your past.
☐ ...and you may roll on this Burden.

5 This Task suddenly requires 6 more Progress.
☐ ...and increase this Task's Roll Limit by 1.

4 You must clear two Slots. (not Burdens)
☐ ...and gain 2 Energy after clearing them.

3 Incapacitated: 15 Progress required to revive.
☐ ...and you may also roll to revive yourself.

2 Lose an augmented Number, unmark its box.
☐ ...and you may gain a Burden if you choose.

1 Your Harvester arrives! Use online generator.

Example Memories

Memories are past experiences and skills. They can be used for any related Task.

Sailed the 5 oceans
Navigation, ship repair, predict weather

A Lady of the court
Social cunning, form alliances, clever insults

Mage Bartender
Alcohol alchemy, notice trouble, counselor

Bestselling Poet
Build up fame, forge papers, lie beautifully

Memory Prompts

Roll a d20 and create a memory inspired by…

1. A failed career. Why didn't things work out?
2. A taboo activity. How did you keep it a secret?
3. Your fame. What part of your reputation is a lie?
4. Something an old lover taught you. What do you miss most about them?
5. An old wound. How did you learn to overcome your injury?
6. A time of desperation. Who helped you?
7. A hated rival. What was the secret that allowed you to surpass them?
8. An unpleasant chore. What did you actually enjoy about it? What did it teach you?
9. Something you learned from an old book. What other knowledge do you seek?
10. A performance you enjoyed. What would you give to experience it again?
11. A close friend. What weakness did they help you overcome?
12. A terrible defeat. What did you learn from this failure?
13. A mundane career. What did you do to standout from the crowd?
14. Something your parents failed to teach you. Who taught you instead?
15. A family tradition. Will you adopt it as your own.
16. A belief you hold dear. Is it a religion? Moral code? Philosophy of life?
17. A secret you haven't told anyone. Who will you share it with?
18. A prized possession. (not necessarily something in your Slots right now)
19. A personal dream or goal. Why have you avoided it in the past?
20. Another Elder. What did they teach you?

Example Spells

Spells are named in an "Adjective Noun" format. A spell can be cast to do anything related to its name.

Angry Growth
Tangle foes, infest an area with deadly ivy

Howling Moon
Turn into a wolf, a piercing howl

Burnt Questions
Ignite materials, confuse an enemy

Freezing Gale
Knock foes around, Freeze a lake

Spell Adjectives

Roll two d20s and add them together:

2. Arcane	12. False	22. Haunted	32. Shining
3. Blazing	13. Flying	23. Infected	33. Silent
4. Bleeding	14. Foamy	24. Jagged	34. Soggy
5. Chaotic	15. Fractal	25. Metal	35. Stinging
6. Crying	16. Frozen	26. Mystical	36. Stylish
7. Cute	17. Furious	27. Pale	37. Twisted
8. Devious	18. Galactic	28. Prismatic	38. Wandering
9. Dying	19. Glaring	29. Sad	39. Withered
10. Elder	20. Gloomy	30. Scarlet	40. Youthful
11. Empty	21. Growing	31. Screaming	

Spell Nouns

Roll two d20s and add them together:

2. Ally	12. Edge	22. Moon	32. Sleep
3. Bane	13. Elder	23. Mountain	33. Sound
4. Beast	14. Embers	24. Noise	34. Spike
5. Blossom	15. Eye	25. Ocean	35. Storm
6. Champion	16. Fate	26. Oil	36. Terror
7. Claw	17. Frost	27. Pain	37. Time
8. Cloud	18. Grave	28. Reverie	38. Tooth
9. Creature	19. Hunter	29. River	39. Trick
10. Dream	20. Ink	30. Santuary	40. Wind
11. Dunes	21. Justice	31. Seed	

Spell Books

As an alternative to the tables above, open a random book and use the first adjective noun you see!

Example Burdens

Burdens take up a Slot and cannot be used with Rolls. Burdens can be positive or negative; anything your Elder considers important.

Burdens require 20 Progress to transform into a **Memory**, **Spell**, or to **augment a Number**. They have no Roll Limit. Slots can't be used on Burdens.

Half-empty Vial	**Challenging Hobby**
Familiar Fear	**A Lie You Believe**
Twisted Ankle	**Homesick**
Halting Stutter	**Confusing Relationship**

Burdens are Heavy

Burdens can be an upsetting reminder of real-life struggles that we all carry with us. If anyone expresses concerns over your Burden, try a something else.

It is perfectly okay to have mild or simple Burdens like "Sore Knees" or "Misses Home Meals". Please don't feel like you need to treat ABIDE like some kind of therapeutic session.

Burdens are Projects

Burdens can represent a lot of things, but in practice they're a project that an Elder is working on.

When a Burden is completed it is not necessarily "fixed" or "deleted" from an Elder's life. It just means your Elder doesn't consider it important anymore. But it may be important again someday!

Sharing Burdens

Often another Elder will want to help with someone else's Burden while resting. Sharing Burdens with the group can be a powerful way to bond Elders together.

Consent is key, as is how things tie into the narrative details. Would my Elder accept help with their Burden? Or are they protective of it? Would it even make sense for someone to help with this Burden?

▶ Another Elder offers to help massage Aliz's muscles and assist her with stretches or exercises.

▶ Brune agrees to share their fears with another Elder, and it helps ease their shame and guilt.

▶ Lauen asks for someone to quiz her vocabulary words in the language she is learning.

▶ Yamot politely refuses help, determined to discover what works best for them. They work on their Burden alone.

Scenes, not Moments

Think of Tasks like scenes in a play rather than moments of time. We set the stage and then let the Elders contribute to the scene with their rolls.

Don't make a Task for each individual moment. "Avoid the falling rocks" is not a Task. It's too narrow, too constrained. Pull the camera back a bit and look at the broader scene. What dangers are we avoiding? What are our goals? Maybe we phrase it like this:

"Escape before the cave-in traps us."

Never be afraid to re-wind the game and make a Task for your current scene. To go along with this idea…

Elders Don't Just Die

Some games focus on draining player resources with life-threatening situations. Those kinds of surprise threats make little sense in ABIDE.

Elders are always in control. They always have time to plan, work together, and try different solutions. This means that they never "succeed or die". If you find your game in this state, roll it back to when Elders were last in control.

"The bridge collapses!" leaves no time for planning and has no consequences listed. Instead try a Task like: "Cross the rickety bridge before the bandits catch up."

"Flames shoot out from hidden holes in the wall!" If Elders are exploring a dangerous area, that should be a Task all on its own. Something like "Navigate the tomb before our torches run out."

"Ninjas drop from the ceiling!" This is not necessarily a bad situation, but it needs a little more context about what the Ninjas are trying to accomplish — or what the Elders assume the Ninjas are trying to accomplish.

Harvesters are the only thing that can immediately end an Elder. That's what makes them such a scary threat.

Instead of throwing dangers at the players, ask them what they want to do. Elders will cause enough problems on their own; they don't need any more.

Use the consequence ideas on the right to inspire you.

Consequence Inspirations

Consequences are always narrative events that affect the entire group. They should be tailored to each situation, but if you can't think of anything then roll a d20 on the list below:

1. **We ran out of time.** The situation changes. Things are so different now that Elders are basically starting over. "We spent too long arguing with the merchant and now her shop is closed."

2. **Our goal is now impossible.** We need a new goal, a new strategy, a new direction. "The magic shard was broken during our escape, it's useless."

3. **Wasted effort**. Our goal remains just as far as it was. We went in the wrong direction. We had bad information. "Turns out the tomb was empty…even after all the work we did to get here."

4. **Opposition arrives**. They must be dealt with before we can continue. "Just as we escaped the forest, a group of extremists intercepted us on the road."

5. **Environmental hazards appear**. We must protect ourselves before we can continue. "The approaching storm would force us to seek shelter before we reached the city."

6. **An unexpected threat approaches**. Wild animals, terrible monsters, or corrupt leaders force us to split our attention. "When the howling started we had to put down the stretcher and defend our friend."

7. **Things get worse for you**. Future Tasks will be more difficult. "…and then the thunderstorm began to flood the river!"

8. **Things get better for the opposition**. An enemy reveals new power, new information, new strengths. "With a curled lip he began to chant a spell I knew would kill us…"

9. **Sacrifice is required**. We can still accomplish our goal, but must sacrifice something in return. "The King demanded treasure, and we only had one thing to give them…"

10. **Everyone gains a Burden**. Don't use this too often, but a Burden that everyone works on can be a powerful consequence. "We would all bare the scars for the rest of our lives."

11. **The past haunts you**. Pick one Elder to describe what they recognize but the other's don't. "My old rival, Captain Bloodstone, is here to get revenge."

12. **Something precious is endangered**. An NPC is in trouble, innocents are caught in the middle, a treasure is in peril. "When we crossed the bridge I looked back and saw the pearl spear dangling on the precipice."

13. **Setup a future threat**. An enemy is made, reputation forged, and distant doom assured. "We won the competition, but we won't be welcome in this city any time soon."

14. **Lose an asset**. A friend leaves, transportation breaks, valuable items are gone. "As alarms went up all over the prison grounds, our getaway driver was nowhere to be found."

15. **Group weakness**. This should be used sparingly, but the occasional argument or weakness can force the group to come back together. "Just then, Silvi's legs gave out. She couldn't go on any more today."

16. **Magic**? Something weird happens. "So many fish fell from the sky that we could only see a few feet ahead."

17. **The group is split**. Not necessarily physically. They can't work together as well as they want to.

18. **The next consequence will be even worse**. Nothing happens this time…but the next time you fail will be devastating.

19. **Figure it out later**. Keep the game moving and introduce this consequence later when it makes sense.

20. **Someone's Harvester arrives**. The ultimate consequence. It could be an NPCs Harvester, or a willing player's Harvester.

▶ **Can't think of anything?** This was probably a bad Task to begin with. That's okay! Pause the game and talk with your group about how to handle things. Do we move forward? Rewind a bit and try again?