

Name:		Player:	
Quote:		Campaign:	
Appearance:			
Age:	Sex:	Ancestry:	Class:
Background:	Virtue:	Vice:	
Reputation:	Misfortunes:		
STR (max):	DEX (max):	WIL (max):	
STR:	DEX:	WIL:	
Armor:	HP (max):	HP:	
Deprived:			
GP:	SP:	CP:	
1.	2.	3.	
4.	5.	6.	
7.	8.	9.	
10.			
Notes:			

## Heroic Cairn Player's Handbook

**Cairn** is an adventure game for one facilitator (the **Warden**) and at least one other player. Players act as hardened adventurers exploring a dark & mysterious Wood filled with strange folk, hidden treasure, and unspeakable monstrosities.

**Heroic Cairn** consolidates and updates Cairn rules for ancestries, classes, combat and spell modifiers, and includes additional spells.

## Acknowledgments

**Cairn** is licensed under CC-BY-SA 4.0 by Yochai Gal.  
<https://github.com/yochaigal/cairn>.  
**Classic Classes** by Danger is Real is licensed under CC-BY-SA 4.0  
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**Leveling Up** and **Advanced Combat Options** by Adam Hensley, from the Cairn Adventurer's Guide licensed under CC-BY-SA 4.0.

## Character Creation

### Ancestry

Choose an ancestry for your character.

### Dwellers of the Underground

- Darkvision: Perfect vision in low-light, somewhat blinded by bright lights.
- Rocksniff: You always know the location of nearby jewels and minerals.
- Earthhardy: You are tougher than sun-dwellers, often recovering from injuries or poison thought to be lethal.

### Fair Folk

- Magic-Sense: You can tell when arcane energies are at work, and where.
- Third Eye: You cannot be fooled by magical illusions, save those created by one of your own.
- Fae Cunning: Whether by the reputation of your people or some ancient ways other-kind cannot lie to you.

### Smallfolk

- Easily Missed: Enemies tend to ignore you, going for the bigger targets first or ignoring you altogether.
- Quicksilver: Escaping sudden capture or a killing blow is like second nature to you. Sneaking comes naturally, too.
- Second Breakfast: You have to eat a lot, at least 5 times a day. Fortunately you can consume nearly anything if you have to.

### Greenskin

- Blood Brothers: Being surrounded by at least two other trusted warriors bolsters your battle sense, and you always go first.

### Humankind

- Eclectic (optional): Humans are many and varied. Select an additional background.

## Classes

Choose a class for your character.

### Warrior Classes

You are the Fighter, the Mercenary, the Barbarian, the Gladiator, The Knight. You are the master of the arts of combat and warfare.

**Fighter:** You are skilled in combat. Your weapons deal the next highest damage dice, so for example, a dagger does d8 for you.

**Mercenary:** You have a contact you can turn to in almost every city. They aren't always happy to see you, though. Men blindly follow you in battle (they always pass morale saves).

**Barbarian:** Your place is in the wilderness, you despise civilization and fear magic. You drink blood like ale, regain 1d3 HP when you kill or CD an enemy. Your battle rage is so strong that you can harm creatures immune to mundane damage.

**Gladiator:** Your favorite weapon is an extension of you (your attacks are enhanced). You are a trained merciless killer. Your reputation is not always serving you and your former master is probably looking for you.

**Knight:** Your rank gives you credibility with the nobles. The peasantry will generally follow you into dangerous situations without the slightest hesitation. However if you fail them somehow, they may strip you of your rank. You are also a skilled horseman, your mounted attacks are enhanced.

Warrior character creation:

- Start with 1d4+2 HP.
- Swirl: do a Blast attack and gain 1 Fatigue.
- Death Storm: when you kill or CD an enemy you can attack again.

Warrior starting gear:

- Roll 1d10+10 on the Armor Table.
- Roll 1d10+10 on the Helmets and Shields Table.
- Roll for Weapons and choose a second one.

- Roll the rest as usual.

## Divine Classes

You are the Cleric, the Druid, the Paladin. You are a faithful servant of your deity.

**Cleric:** You always find help and resources in the temple of your deity but stay in line with the dogma of your religion or be disfavored. You can invoke the divine power, brandishing your holy symbol, to repel undead (creatures Save WIL to resist). Priests know 2 Cantrips and 1 additional Cleric spell.

**Druid:** You belong to the wild lands and feel uncomfortable in cities. You worship the elements and the old bestial deities. You can communicate with animals and always find resources in the wilderness. You can shape-shift into your totem animal (get 1 Fatigue when you shift back). Druids know 2 Cantrip spells.

**Paladin:** As a sacred warrior of your faith you will be obeyed by zealots. Priests will favor you but if you step out of the line you will fall in disgrace. You dedicate your life to the cult and sworn vow of humility (you should not hoard treasures). Once per day you can Lay on Hands on someone to cure disease, poison or heal 1d6 STR. Paladins gain 8.50~no Cantrips.

Divine character creation:

- Salvation Grace: Once per day you heal 1D6 to any abilities but you became Deprived until you take the time to mediate, pray or sleep.
- Miracles: you can choose 3 spells related to your religion to cast without Spellbooks while holding your holy symbol.

Divine starting gear:

**2. Detect Alignment:** Concentrate for 1 round in direction and sense alignment specified in 150x10 ft.

**3. Detect Magic:** Concentrate for 1 round in direction to sense magic in varying degrees of strength in a 50x10 ft area. Passes through thin barriers.

**4. Detect Poison:** Detect whether one target has been poisoned/is poisonous.

**5. Endure Elements:** Ignore intense weather conditions for 24 hours.

**6. Ghost Sounds:** Create any type of sound up no louder than 4 humans within 150 ft.

**7. Light:** Make an object within 150 ft. light a 30ft radius.

**8. Purify Food and Drink:** Make food eatable.

**9. Detect Animals/Nature:** Concentrate for 1 round in direction to natural animals/nature in varying degrees of strength in a 50x10 ft area. Passes through thin barriers.

**10. Know Direction:** Immediately know where North is.

**11. Arcane Mark:** Leave visible/invisible message.

**12. Mage Hand:** Lift something 5 lbs 15 ft any direction/rnd. Lasts 10 min.

**13. Mending:** Fix breaks in a mundane non-complex item you can touch.

**14. Message:** Caster can whisper to target in sight as if at ear.

**15. Prestidigitation:** Within 10 ft. you can magically: 1) create a harmless sensory effect. 2) light or snuff out a fire. 3) clean or soil a small object. 4) chill, warm something. 5) make a color, a small mark, or a symbol appear on an object or a surface for 1 hour. 6) create a nonmagical trinket or an illusory image that can fit in your hand and that lasts until the end of your next turn.

**16. Ray of Frost:** 1d6 damage OR target makes a STR save or next attack is impaired.

**17. Shocking Grasp:** Your next melee attack is Enhanced.

**18. Acid Splash:** 1d6 damage Blast that can hit two targets.

**19. Poison Spray:** 10 ft range. 1d12 damage if the target fails a STR save.

**20. Fire Bolt:** 1d8 damage. Can light things on fire.

**91. Time Rush:** Time in a 40ft bubble starts moving 10 times faster.

**92. Time Slow:** Time in a 40ft bubble slows to 10%.

**93. True Sight:** You see through all nearby illusions.

**94. Upwell:** A spring of seawater appears.

**95. Vision:** You completely control what a creature sees.

**96. Visual Illusion:** A silent, immobile, illusion of your choice appears, up to the size of a bedroom.

**97. Ward:** A silver circle 40ft across appears on the ground. Choose one thing that cannot cross it: Living creatures, dead creatures, projectiles or metal.

**98. Web:** Your wrists can shoot thick webbing.

**99. Wizard Mark:** Your finger can shoot a stream of ulfire-colored paint. This paint is only visible to you, and can be seen at any distance, even through solid objects.

**100. X-Ray Vision:** You gain X-Ray vision.

## 20 Cleric Spells:

**1. Blessing:** Target's attacks are enhanced and non-Blast attacks are impaired against them until they next take damage.

**2. Cure-All:** A single illness or disease dissipates at your touch.

**3. Curse Unlife:** Deals 1d4+2 STR loss to one undead, ignoring armor and resistances.

**4. Fortify:** Damage from heat, ice, acid or electricity are impaired against a target for the next hour.

**5. Healing Grace:** A target heals 1d6 STR, and you become deprived until you take the time to mediate, pray or sleep.

**6. Induce Despair:** Target must pass a WIL save or its attacks are impaired.

**7. Lichsense:** You feel any undead within 60ft. WIL save to avoid detection by intelligent undead.

**8. Light Show:** You control a dazzling display of light and color.

**9. Linguist:** For the next hour you can speak and understand any mundane language.

**10. Magic Seal:** Magically locks a door, portal or chest.

**11. Master Undead:** Undead creatures obey your command. Intelligent undead make a WIL save.

**12. Otherworldly Gate:** Opens a portal to another reality. It works in both directions.

**13. Passage:** Creates a temporary path through wood, stone or brick.

**14. Perfect Preservation:** A weapon you touch becomes immune to wear, mundane damage or elemental effects. The spell wears off after a day.

**15. Planar Anchor:** Bars extradimensional movement.

**16. Ravenless Message:** You send a short message 1 mile that anyone along its path can hear.

**17. Scrying Ward:** For 24 hours you become aware of any magical eavesdropping.

**18. Song of Repose:** Target falls into a deep slumber.

**19. Uncurse:** A person or object you touch is freed from a curse or nefarious spell.

**20. Word of Pain:** A single phrase from your lips does 1d12 blast damage. Affected targets are also deafened.

## 20 Cantrips (Optional)

Magic-Users, Clerics, and Druids know 2 cantrips. Cantrips are spells that can be cast without gaining fatigue if the caster makes a WIL save.

**1. Create Water:** Create 2 gallons of water.

- You start with a holy symbol from your deity.
- Roll 1d12+8 on the Armor Table.
- Roll 1d12+8 on the Helmets and Shields Table.
- Roll the rest as usual.

## Magic-User Classes

You are the Wizard, the Necromancer, the Elementalist, the Enchanter. You are the scholar of the arcane, you handle spells and magic like no one else.

**Wizard:** You have spent time in magic school and libraries, Your knowledge is broad and you often now something about old and forgotten things. You have a small magic creature as Familiar. You can communicate with it telepathically as long as you can see it. If it dies it can be re-summoned during an 8 hours ritual, you end up Deprived. Your Grimlore starts with an additional spell.

**Necromancer:** You manipulate the forces of life and death and have a sick attraction for undead creatures. You will be despised, banished, or imprisoned in most settlements. You can speak with recently deceased corpses, they will talk to you like a friend. Get 1 Fatigue at the end of the conversation.

**Elementalist:** You summon the forces of the four elements: Water, Earth, Fire and Air. You choose one element: You always have 3 Armor against it and you can perform an elemental attack that does Enhanced damage at the cost of 1 Fatigue.

**Enchanter:** You have sharpened your magic ability to seduce and charm mundane creatures with your words. You can hypnotize an intelligent creature by holding a trinket and speaking directly to him/her. The creature is dazed and confused until a WIL Save is passed.

Magic-User character creation:

- Grimoire (Bulky). This is the fruit of your research and your most precious belongings (only you can decipher it). You can spend four hours to copy a standard Spellbook into your Grimoire followed by a successful WIL Save. During this process the original Spellbook is destroyed. Scrolls cannot be copied.
- All Magic-Users know 2 Cantrip spells.
- You are not comfortable wearing bulky armor. Spell casting wearing one will cost 2 Fatigue.

Magic-User starting gear:

- You start with your Grimoire with a random spell inscribed..
- Roll 1d6 on the Armor Table.
- Don't roll on the Helmets and Shields Table.
- Roll the rest as usual.

## Thief Classes

You are the Rogue, the Assassin, the Ranger, the Tomb Robber. You are the master of stealth, acrobatics and deception.

**Rogue:** The larcenous arts are your way of living, you have contacts with the mob in most cities, You always hear the best rumors and nice job proposals. You get cheap equipment from selected shops. Nevertheless, Your reputation will not help you with the authorities and you probably "wanted" somewhere. You know how to cut a purse and you have learned the mysteries of lock-picking. As accomplished burglars you can attempt to climb unthinkable sheer surfaces.

**Assassin:** You have learned many ways of killing, you are a deadly shadow. You still owe your mentors, probably a guild, and beware of the

day they will hold you accountable. With the right ingredients you can brew all kinds of poison. With some observations and study you can create disguises that will fool detailed scrutiny.

**Ranger:** You are a protector of nature, you are a wilderness survival expert and you know how to travel fast and unnoticed. Always aware, you are rarely surprised. You have a semi intelligent faithful pet of your choice. You have a deep connection with him/her and you will always protect each other. Your pet will always find you back but if it dies you will need to raise a cub.

**Tomb Robber:** You are stealing things from the dead, they don't need it after all. You are a specialist of underground exploration and ancient structures. You feel at home in dark and damp places. You have developed skills for disabling traps, only the most advanced one should catch you. You can smell Undead creatures when they are close.

Character creation:

- Backstab: when you attack an unaware opponent from behind you do STR damage.
- Read languages: you can read approximately any text.
- Improvisation (Optional): You may try to improvise one type of tool if you have access to a similar item (such as hairpins being used as lockpicks), but you gain 1 Fatigue.

Starting Gear:

- You start with an Expeditionary Gear and a Tool of your choice.
- Choose a Weapon.
- Roll the rest as usual.

## Knave

Knaves have no special abilities. Roll normally for all gear.

## Name, Background & Traits

First, choose a **name** and choose or roll your **background**, which informs their knowledge and potential skills. Next, roll for the rest of your character's **traits** (beliefs, reputation, etc.) on the *Character Traits* tables.

## Ability Scores

Player Characters (PCs) have just three attributes:

**Strength (STR), Dexterity (DEX), and Willpower (WIL).** When creating a PC, the player should roll 3d6 for each of their character's ability scores, in order. They may then swap any two of the results.

**Example:** Ines rolls for her character's **STR**, resulting in a **2**, a **4**, and a **6**, totaling **12**. The next two ability rolls result in a **9** for **DEX** and a **13** for **WIL**. She decides to swap the **12** and the **9**, for a character with **9 STR, 12 DEX** and **13 WIL**.

## Hit Protection

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

## Inventory

Characters have a total of 10 inventory slots: a backpack with six

**60. Phobia:** L creatures become terrified of an object of your choice.

**61. Pit:** A pit 10ft wide and L×5ft deep opens in the ground.

**62. Primeval Surge:** An object grows to the size of an elephant. If it is an animal, it is enraged.

**63. Psychometry:** The referee answers L yes or no questions about a touched object.

**64. Pull:** An object of any size is pulled directly towards you with the strength of L men for one round.

**65. Push:** An object of any size is pushed directly away from you with the strength of L men for one round.

**66. Raise Dead:** L skeletons rise from the ground to serve you. They are incredibly stupid and can only obey simple orders.

**67. Raise Spirit:** The spirit of a dead body manifests and will answer L questions.

**68. Read Mind:** You can hear the surface thoughts of nearby creatures.

**69. Repel:** L+1 objects are strongly magnetically repelled from each other if they come within 10 feet.

**70. Scry:** You can see through the eyes of a creature you touched earlier today.

**71. Sculpt Elements:** All inanimate material behaves like clay in your hands.

**72. Shroud:** L creatures are invisible until they move.

**73. Shuffle:** L creatures instantly switch places. Determine where they end up randomly.

**74. Sleep:** L creatures fall into a light sleep.

**75. Smoke Form:** Your body becomes living smoke.

**76. Snail Knight:** 10 minutes after casting, a knight sitting astride a giant snail rides into view. He is able to answer most questions related to quests and chivalry, and may aid you if he finds you worthy.

**77. Sniff:** You can smell even the faintest traces of scents.

**78. Sort:** Inanimate items sort themselves according to categories you set. The categories must be visually verifiable.

**79. Spectacle:** A clearly unreal but impressive illusion of your choice appears, under your control. It may be up to the size of a palace and has full motion and sound.

**80. Spellseize:** Cast this as a reaction to another spell going off to make a temporary copy of it that you can cast at any time before this spell ends.

**81. Spider Climb:** You can climb surfaces like a spider.

**82. Summon Cube:** Once per second, (6 times per round) you may summon or banish a 3-foot-wide cube of earth. New cubes must be affixed to the earth or to other cubes. 8.50"

**83. Swarm:** You become a swarm of crows, rats, or piranhas. You only take damage from area effects.

**84. Telekinesis:** You may mentally move L items.

**85. Telepathy:** L+1 creatures can hear each other's thoughts, no matter how far apart they move.

**86. Teleport:** An object disappears and reappears on the ground in a visible, clear area up to L×40ft away.

**87. Thaumaturgic Anchor:** Object becomes the target of every spell cast near it.

**88. Thicket:** A thicket of trees and dense brush up to L×40ft wide suddenly sprouts up.

**89. Time Jump:** An object disappears as it jumps L×10 minutes into the future. When it returns, it appears in the unoccupied area nearest to where it left.

**90. Summon Idol:** A carved stone statue the size of a four poster bed rises from the ground.

**24. Disguise:** You may alter the appearance of L characters at will as long as they remain humanoid. Attempts to duplicate other characters will seem uncanny.

**25. Displace:** An object appears to be up to L×10ft from its actual position.

**26. Earthquake:** The ground begins shaking violently. Structures may be damaged or collapse.

**27. Elasticity:** Your body can stretch up to L×10ft.

**28. Elemental Wall:** A straight wall of ice or fire L×40ft long and 10ft high rises from the ground.

**29. Filch:** L visible items teleport to your hands.

**30. Fog Cloud:** Dense fog spreads out from you.

**31. Frenzy:** L creatures erupt in a frenzy of violence.

**32. Gate:** A portal to a random plane opens.

**33. Gravity Shift:** You can change the direction of gravity (for yourself only) up to once per round.

**34. Greed:** L creatures develop an overwhelming urge to possess a visible item of your choice.

**35. Haste:** Your movement speed is tripled.

**36. Hatred:** L creatures develop a deep hatred of another creature or group of creatures and wish to destroy it.

**37. Hear Whispers:** You can hear faint sounds clearly.

**38. Hover:** An object hovers, frictionless, 2ft above the ground. It can hold up to L humanoids.

**39. Hypnotize:** A creature enters a trance and will truthfully answer L yes or no questions you ask it.

**40. Icy Touch:** A thick ice layer spreads across a touched surface, up to L×10ft in radius.

**41. Illuminate:** A floating light moves as you command.

**42. Increase Gravity:** The gravity in an area triples.

**43. Invisible Tether:** Two objects within 10ft of each other cannot be moved more than 10ft apart.

**44. Knock:** L nearby mundane or magical locks unlock.

**45. Leap:** You can jump up to L×10ft in the air.

**46. Liquid Air:** The air around you becomes swimmable.

**47. Magic Dampener:** All nearby magical effects have their effectiveness halved.

**48. Manse:** A sturdy, furnished cottage appears for L×12 hours. You can permit and forbid entry to it at will.

**49. Marble Madness:** Your pockets are full of marbles, and will refill every round.

**50. Masquerade:** L characters' appearances and voices become identical to a touched character.

**51. Miniaturize:** You and L other touched creatures are reduced to the size of a mouse.

**52. Mirror Image:** L illusory duplicates of yourself appear under your control.

**53. Mirrorwalk:** A mirror becomes a gateway to another mirror that you looked into today.

**54. Multiarm:** You gain L extra arms.

**55. Night Sphere:** An L×40ft wide sphere of darkness displaying the night sky appears.

**56. Objectify:** You become any inanimate object between the size of a grand piano and an apple.

**57. Ooze Form:** You become a living jelly.

**58. Pacify:** L creatures have an aversion to violence.

**59. Phantom Coach:** A ghostly coach appears until end of spell. It moves unnaturally fast over any terrain, including water.

slots, one slot for each hand, and two slots for their upper body (such as the belt, chest, or head). The backpack can also double as an emergency sleeping bag but only if emptied of its contents.

Most items take up one slot, and small items can be bundled together. Slots are abstract and can be rearranged per the Warden's discretion.

**Bulky** items take up two slots and are typically two-handed or awkward to carry. Anyone carrying a full inventory (e.g. filling all 10 slots) is reduced to 0 HP.

A PC cannot carry more items than their inventory allows. Carts (which must be pulled with both hands), horses, or mules can increase inventory. **Hirelings** can also be paid to carry equipment.

## Starting Gear

All PCs begin with:

- Three days' rations (one slot)
- A torch (one slot)
- 3d6 gold pieces

Roll on the **Starting Gear** tables to determine your PC's armor, weapons, tools, and equipment. If indicated, roll on the *Spellbooks* table with a d100 (or roll 2d10, using one die as the ones place, and one as the tens place).

See the **Equipment List** for related armor, damage, and slot values. Smaller items can sometimes be bundled together into one slot.

If you would like something closer to traditional classes, refer to the list of *Optional Gear Packages*.

## Backgrounds & Traits

### Background

1. Alchemist
2. Beggar
3. Butcher
4. Burglar
5. Charlatan
6. Cleric
7. Cook
8. Cultist
9. Gambler
10. Herbalist
11. Magician
12. Mariner
13. Mercenary
14. Merchant
15. Outlaw
16. Performer
17. Pickpocket
18. Smuggler
19. Student
20. Tracker

### Virtue

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

### Vice

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

## Reputation

1. Ambitious
2. Boor
3. Dangerous
4. Entertainer
5. Honest
6. Loafer
7. Oddball
8. Repulsive
9. Respected
10. Wise

## Misfortunes

1. Abandoned
2. Addicted
3. Blackmailed
4. Condemned
5. Cursed
6. Defrauded
7. Demoted
8. Discredited
9. Disowned
10. Exiled

## Starting Gear

### Armor

- 1-3: None
- 4-14: Studded Leather
- 5-19: Chainmail
- 20: Plate

### Helmets & Shields

- 1-13: None
- 14-16: Helmet
- 17-19: Shield
- 20: Helmet & Shield

### Weapons

- 1-5: Dagger, Cudgel, Staff
- 6-14: Sword, Mace, Axe
- 15-19: Longbow, Crossbow, Sling
- 20: Halberd, War Hammer, Battleaxe

## Expeditionary Gear

1. Air Bladder
2. Antitoxin
3. Cart (+4 slots, bulky)
4. Chain (10ft)
5. Dowsing Rod
6. Fire Oil
7. Grappling Hook
8. Large Sack
9. Large Trap
10. Lockpicks
11. Manacles
12. Pick
13. Pole (10ft)
14. Pulley
15. Repellent
16. Rope (25ft)
17. Spirit Ward
18. Spyglass
19. Tinderbox
20. Wolfsbane

## Tools

1. Bellows
2. Bucket
3. Caltrops
4. Chalk
5. Chisel
6. Cook Pots
7. Crowbar
8. Drill (Manual)
9. Fishing Rod
10. Glue

## Trinkets

1. Bottle
2. Card Deck
3. Dice Set
4. Face Paint
5. Fake Jewels
6. Horn
7. Incense
8. Instrument
9. Lens
10. Marbles

## Converting from OSR Games

- Give 1 HP per HD for most creatures.
- Most humanoids have at least 4HP.
- **Morale** can also be used as a baseline.
- Damage die are roughly the same, though armed attacks do at least 1d6 damage.

Some pointers:

- Is it good at avoiding a hit? Give it HP.
- Does it soak up damage? Give it Armor.
- Is it strong? Give it a high **STR**.
- Is it nimble? Give it high **DEX**.
- Is it charismatic? Give it high **WIL**.

## Magic

### 100 Spells

1. Adhere: Object is covered in extremely sticky slime.
2. Animate Object: Object obeys your commands as best it can. It can walk 15ft per round.
3. Anthropomorphize: A touched animal either gains human intelligence or human appearance for L days.
4. Arcane Eye: You can see through a magical floating eyeball that flies around at your command.
5. Astral Prison: An object is frozen in time and space within an invulnerable crystal shell.
6. Attract: L+1 objects are strongly magnetically attracted to each other if they come within 10 feet.
7. Auditory Illusion: You create illusory sounds that seem to come from a direction of your choice.
8. Babble: A creature must loudly and clearly repeat everything you think. It is otherwise mute.

**9. Beast Form:** You and your possessions transform into a mundane animal.

**10. Befuddle:** L creatures of your choice are unable to form new short-term memories for the duration of the spell.

**11. Bend Fate:** Roll L+1 d20s. Whenever you must roll a d20 after casting the spell, you must choose and then discard one of the rolled results until they are all gone.

**12. Bird Person:** Your arms turn into huge bird wings.

**13. Body Swap:** You switch bodies with a creature you touch. If one body dies, the other dies as well.

**14. Catherine:** A woman wearing a blue dress appears until end of spell. She will obey polite, safe requests.

**15. Charm:** L creatures treat you like a friend.

**16. Command:** A creature obeys a single, three-word command that does not harm it.

**17. Comprehend:** You become fluent in all languages.

**18. Control Plants:** Nearby plants and trees obey you and gain the ability to move at 5 feet per round.

**19. Control Weather:** You may alter the type of weather at will, but you do not otherwise control it.

**20. Counterspell:** Make an opposed Intelligence save against the Intelligence of the caster of a nearby spell. You may do this out of turn as a reaction, or against an ongoing magical effect. On a success, you may cancel the spell.

**21. Deafen:** All nearby creatures are deafened.

**22. Detect Magic:** You hear nearby magical auras singing. Volume and harmony signify the aura's power and refinement.

**23. Disassemble:** Any of your body parts may be detached and reattached at will, without causing pain or damage. You can still control them.

## Bestiary

**Root Goblin:** 4 HP, 8 STR, 14 DEX, 8 WIL, spear (d6)

- Avoid combat unless they have the advantage (such as greater numbers).
- Guard their stolen goods to the death.
- Prize Spellbooks; willing to trade.

**Hooded Men:** 12 HP, 9 STR, 12 DEX, 14 WIL, leystaff (d8), a Spellbook (Choose one: Charm, Hypnotize, Push/Pull, Shield)

- The Watchers of the Wood; a cult that derive their power from leylines, rune stones, and the like.
- Critical damage: leech a part of the victim's soul (1d4 WIL damage).

**Cobblehounds:** 12 HP, 2 Armor, 14 STR, 1 DEX, 8 WIL, bite (d10)

- Immobile constructs typically used as guardians to great tombs or artifacts.
- Unaffected by mundane persuasion techniques - but do love a good bone.

**Wood Troll:** 12 HP, 15 STR, 12 DEX, 7 WIL, claws and bite (d8+d8 blast)

- As an action, can recover lost HP.
- Critical damage: moss and twigs begin growing out of target's wounds.

**Frost Elf:** 14 HP, 1 Armor, 8 STR, 13 DEX, 14 WIL, icicle dagger (d6), a Spellbook (Choose one: Sleep, Teleport, Detect Magic)

- Beautiful, amoral, and long-lived.
- Resistant to most forms of magic.

**Boggart:** 3 HP, 4 STR, 17 DEX, 13 WIL

- A wild, hairy trickster that takes pleasure in being a minor nuisance.
- Prizes relics and shiny trinkets above all else but unwilling to trade for coin.
- Boggarts have names that describe their true nature. Knowing their true name allows one to control a Boggart.

## Creating Monsters

Use the following template to model any more sophisticated Monster or NPC:

### Name:

X HP, X Armor, X STR, X DEX, X WIL, Weapon (dX, special items, qualities)

- Engaging descriptor of appearance or demeanor
- Quirk, tactic, or peculiarity making this NPC unique
- Special effect or critical damage consequence

### General Principles

Ability Scores: 3 is deficient, 6 is weak, 10 is average, 14 is noteworthy, and 18 is legendary. Adjust as necessary.

- Give average creatures 3 HP, give hardy ones 6 HP, and serious threats get 10+ HP.
- Use flavor and style to help them stand out. Players will remember a pig-faced humanoid looking for his missing sheep more easily than a generic goblin archer.
- Use critical damage to lean into the threat or strangeness of any aggressive NPC.
- Remember that HP is **Hit Protection**, not Hit Points. It's a measure of resilience, luck, and gumption - not health.

### Bonus Item (roll on table indicated)

- 1-5: Tool or Trinket
- 6-13: Expeditionary Gear
- 14-17: Armor or Weapon
- 18-20: Spellbook

### Spellbooks (d100)

Roll d100 and compare to *100 Spells* section.

## Equipment List

Prices are in GP.

### Armor

- Shield (+1 Armor): 10
- Helmet (+1 Armor): 10
- Padded Armor (*Gambeson*) (+1 Armor): 15
- Studded Leather (*Brigandine*) (1 Armor, bulky): 20
- Chainmail (2 Armor, bulky): 40
- Plate (3 Armor, bulky): 60

### Weapons

- Dagger, Cudgel, Sickle, Staff, etc. (d6 damage): 5
- Spear, Sword, Mace, Axe, Flail, etc. (d8 damage): 10
- Halberd, War Hammer, Long Sword, etc. (d10 damage, bulky): 20
- Sling (d4 damage): 5
- Bow (d6 damage, bulky): 20
- Crossbow (d8 damage, bulky): 30

### Gear & Tools

- Air Bladder: 5
- Bellows: 10
- Bedroll: 5
- Book: 50
- Bucket: 5
- Caltrops: 10
- Cart (+4 slots, bulky): 30
- Chain (10ft): 10
- Chalk: 1
- Chisel: 5

- Cook Pots: 10
- Crowbar: 10
- Drill (Manual): 10
- Face Paint: 10
- Fire Oil: 10
- Fishing Rod: 10
- Glass Marbles: 5
- Glue: 5
- Grease: 10
- Grappling Hook: 25
- Hammer: 5
- Holy Water: 25
- Horn: 10
- Horse (+4 slots): 75
- Hourglass: 50
- Incense: 10
- Ladder (bulky, 10ft): 10
- Lantern & Oil: 10
- Large Trap: 20
- Large Sponge: 5
- Lens: 10
- Lockpicks: 25
- Manacles: 10
- Metal File: 5
- Mirror: 5
- Mule (+6 slots, slow): 30
- Net: 10
- Oilskin Bag: 5
- Pick: 10
- Pulley: 10
- Pole (10ft): 5
- Quill & Ink: 10
- Rations (three day's worth): 10
- Rope (25ft): 5
- Saw: 5
- Sack: 5
- Shovel: 5
- Soap: 1
- Spike: 1
- Spiked Boots: 5
- Spyglass: 40
- Tar: 10
- Tent (fits 2 people, bulky): 20
- Torch: 1
- Wagon (+8 slots, slow): 200
- Wolfsbane: 10

# Rules

## Abilities

Each of the three **abilities** are used in different circumstances (see **saves**, below).

- **Strength (STR):** Used for saves requiring physical power, like lifting gates, bending bars, resisting poison, etc.
- **Dexterity (DEX):** Used for saves requiring poise, speed, and reflexes like dodging, climbing, sneaking, balancing, etc.
- **Willpower (WIL):** Used for saves to persuade, deceive, interrogate, intimidate, charm, provoke, manipulate spells, etc.

## Saves

A save is a roll to avoid bad outcomes from risky choices and circumstances. PCs roll a d20 for an appropriate ability score. If they roll equal to or under that ability score, they pass. Otherwise, they fail. A 1 is always a success, and a 20 is always a failure.

**Example:** *Bea encounters a group of heavily-armed Goblins standing guard before a tunnel entrance. Her player carefully plots a course, recognizing that her 13 DEX makes sneaking past the guards the best option. She rolls a d20, and resulting in a 10 – a success!*

## Advantage and Disadvantage

Optional: Cairn likes to keep things simple for saves, where if a character is likely to succeed you let them succeed, and if something is impossible it can't be done. But there is a lot of space between impossible and inevitable, so while nothing in Cairn incorporates **advantage** (where a character rolls

two d20 and uses the higher roll) or **disadvantage** (where a character rolls two d20 and uses the lower roll), it can be used by wardens to provide easy nuance to to saves.

## Deprivation & Fatigue

A PC **deprived** of a crucial need (such as food or rest) is unable to recover HP or ability scores. Anyone deprived for more than a day adds **Fatigue** to their inventory, one for each day. Each Fatigue occupies one slot and lasts until they are able to recuperate (such as a full night's rest in a safe spot).

PCs can also gain Fatigue by **casting spells** or through events in the fiction.

Resting for a few moments and having a drink of water restores lost HP but leaves the party exposed. Ability loss can usually be restored with a week's rest facilitated by a healer or other appropriate source of expertise. Some of these services may be free, while more expedient or magical means of recovery may come at a cost.

Optional: One level of ability loss can be restored if a player passes a corresponding save after a rest.

## Armor

Before calculating damage to HP, subtract the target's **Armor** value from the result of damage rolls. Shields and similar armor provides a bonus defense (e.g. +1 Armor), but only while the item is held or worn.

No one can have more than 3 Armor.

Shields, gauntlets, and helms may provide additional benefits according to their use.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**11. Mortal Wound:** You are deprived and out of action. You die in one hour unless healed. Upon recovery,

roll 2d6. Take the new result as your max HP.

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

# Leveling Up

## Experience Points (XP)

Gain a new level every 1,000 XP. Optionally increase the XP needed each level. A good place to start is adding between 500-1,000 XP each level.

## Gaining XP

Experience points are gained at a rate of 1 XP for every 1 gold (or your game's standard currency) retrieved and returned to the safety of a town or your base of operations.

Optional: Characters level up after playing a certain number of adventures at their current level, and this number of adventures is often some multiple of their current level. For example, if your multiple was 5, a character would go from being level 2 to level 3 after playing about 10 adventures at level 2.

Increasing HP and Ability Scores each time you level up:

- Roll 1d6 and add to your HP total.
- Re-roll each Ability Score with 3d6. If a result is higher than your current score, increase that Ability Score by 1.
- Optional: Players gain a point of **Perseverance** every level up, which can be used to remove one **Fatigue**. **Perseverance** is restored when a player rests to regain their fatigue.



- Parry: (swords and daggers only) Melee damage of 1-2 is harmlessly parried away.
- Reach: (polearms only) When attacked with a melee weapon without reach, the attacker must roll half or higher on their damage roll or else you get to attack them first.

#### Rare Traits:

- Enchanted: (magic weapons) Damage ignores armor.
- Brutal: (magic bludgeoning weapons; 2h only) Critical Damage resulting from a Damage roll of 8 or more from this weapon is an instant kill, and forces a morale Save on the enemy.
- Deadly: (magic weapons; rare) Re-roll on max damage and add to total.
- Vorpall: (magic blades; rare) Damage immediately bypasses HP, going straight to STR and requiring a save against Critical Damage
- Blood-Thirsty: (cursed magic weapons; rare) On max damage, upgrade dice type. 6>8>10. 10 on a d10 will reset the weapon to its base dice and the weapon will need 2d6 hours to recharge. Should have some type of curse or drawback.

#### Shield Trait:

- Shield Splintering: Players can opt to absorb all damage and effects from an attack in exchange for their shield breaking.

#### Magic Damage Types

Below are some magic weapon damage types other than +1 damage. Magic damage type on a weapon should lower it's damage by 1 dice size to account for the extra effect.

- Cold: On a hit, target makes a STR save or next attack is impaired.
- Thunder: On a hit, target makes a DEX save or can't move next turn.
- Necrotic: On a hit, target makes a WIL save or loses next turn.
- Poison: On a hit, target makes a STR save or 1d4 damage for 1d4 rounds.
- Disintegration: On a hit, target makes a DEX save vs instant obliteration and the wielder takes 1 fatigue. Exceptionally powerful and rare.

#### Special Materials

Most weapons will be made from steel. Some special weapons, however, could potentially come from different materials. Consider making a weapon of a special material one dice size less to compensate for its advantages.

- Cold-Iron: Heavy and prone to breaking. Enhanced vs. fey.
- Silver: Expensive. Enhanced vs. undead and certain monsters.
- Mithril: Elven alloy. Silvery-gold. Enhanced vs. goblins.
- Orichalcum: Dwarven alloy. Deep red-bronze. Enhanced vs. undead.
- Electrum: Magically forged alloy. Green-gold. Enhanced vs. demons.
- Meteor Ore: Rare star metal. Multi-hued. Enhanced vs. dragons.

#### Scars

When an attack reduces a PC's HP to exactly 0, they are uniquely impacted. Look up the result on the table below based on the total damage taken:

#### Reactions

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

- 2: Hostile
- 3-5: Wry
- 6-8: Curious
- 9-11: Kind
- 12: Helpful

#### Morale

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

#### Wealth & Treasure

The most common coin is the gold piece (gp), which is equal to 10 silver pieces (sp) and 100 copper pieces (cp).

Treasure is highly valuable, usually bulky, and rarely useful beyond its value. It can be a lure, taking PCs to exotic and even dangerous locations, and is often under the protection of intimidating foes.

Villages, strongholds, and ports of call barter and trade based on the local rarity and value of an item or commodity.

#### Magic

**Spellbooks** contain a single spell and take up one slot. They cannot be transcribed or created; instead they are recovered from places like tombs, dungeons, and manors.

Spellbooks sometimes display unusual properties or limitations, such as producing a foul or

unearthly smell when opened, possessing an innate intelligence, or being legible only when held in moonlight.

Spellbooks will attract the attention of those who seek the arcane power within, and it is considered dangerous to display them openly.

**Scrolls** are similar to Spellbooks, however:

- They do not take up an inventory slot.
- They do not cause fatigue.
- They disappear after one use.

#### Casting Spells

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

#### Relics

**Relics** are items imbued with a magical spell or power. They do not cause Fatigue. Relics usually have a limited use, as well as a recharge condition. A few examples:

**Honeyclasp**, 3 charges. A rusted ring that shrinks the bearer to 6" tall. Recharge: place in a thimble-sized cup of royal jelly.

**Falconer's Friend**, 1 charge. A bolt-shaped wand carrying the Haste spell. Recharge: fire from a crossbow and recover.

**Staff of Silence**, 1 charge. This blackened rod temporarily disables all magic within 50ft. Recharge: bathe in the light of a full moon.

**Leycap**, 1 use. Anyone ingesting this green-flecked mushroom loses a Fatigue, but is then required to make a WIL save to avoid its addictive properties. A fail leaves the PC deprived and unable to focus until they can eat another leycap, providing only a brief reprieve from the addiction.

## Combat

### Rounds

The game typically plays without strict time accounting. In a fight or circumstance where timing is helpful, use rounds to keep track of when something occurs. A **round** is roughly ten seconds of in-game time and is comprised of turns.

### Actions

On their turn, a character may move up to 40ft and take up to one action. This may be casting a spell, attacking, making a second move, or some other reasonable action.

Each round, the PCs declare what they are doing before dice are rolled. If a character attempts something risky, the Warden calls for a save for appropriate players or NPCs. All actions, attacks, and movements take place simultaneously.

### Turns

The Warden will telegraph the most likely actions taken by NPCs or monsters. At the start of combat,

each PC must make a DEX save to act before their opponents.

**Example:** *Bea has accidentally stumbled onto the stomping grounds of a massive Wood Troll. In order to make a move before the Troll, she makes a DEX save. She fails, and the Troll gets to attack first.*

### Attacking & Damage

The attacker rolls their weapon die and subtracts the target's armor, then deals the remaining total to their opponent's HP. Unarmed attacks always do 1d4 damage.

**Example:** *The Wood Troll roars, swinging its club at Bea, who has 5 HP. The club does 1d10 damage and the Warden rolls a 4. They subtract 1 to account for Bea's leather armor, leaving Bea with 2 HP remaining.*

### Multiple Attackers

If multiple attackers target the same foe, roll all damage dice and keep the single highest result.

Optional: Add +1 to the damage for every attacker to a target after the first.

### Attack Modifiers

If fighting from a position of weakness (such as through cover or with bound hands), the attack is **impaired** and the attacker must roll 1d4 damage regardless of the attacks damage die.

If fighting from a position of advantage (such as against a helpless foe or through a daring maneuver), the attack is **enhanced**, allowing the attacker to roll 1d12 damage instead of their normal die.

### Dual Weapons

If attacking with two weapons at the same time, roll both damage dice and keep the single highest result.

### Blast

Attacks with the **blast** quality affect all targets in the noted area, rolling separately for each affected character. Blast refers to anything from explosions to huge cleaving onslaughts to the impact of a meteorite. If unsure how many targets can be affected, roll the related damage die for a result.

### Scars

When damage to a PC reduces their HP to exactly 0, they are sometimes changed irrevocably. See the **Scars** for more.

### Critical Damage

Damage that reduces a target's HP below zero decreases a target's STR by the amount remaining. They must then make a STR save to avoid **critical damage**. Additionally, some enemies will have special abilities or effects that are triggered when their target fails a critical damage save.

Any PC that suffers critical damage cannot do anything but crawl weakly, grasping for life. If given aid and rest, they will stabilize. If left untreated, they die within the hour.

### Ability Score Loss

If a PC's STR is reduced to 0, they die. If their DEX is reduced to 0, they are paralyzed. If their WIL is reduced to 0, they are delirious.

Complete DEX and WIL loss renders the character unable to act until they are restored through extended rest or by extraordinary means.

### Unconsciousness & Death

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

### Detachments

Large groups of similar combatants fighting together are treated as a single **detachment**. When a detachment takes critical damage, it is routed or significantly weakened. When it reaches 0 STR, it is destroyed.

Attacks against detachments by individuals are impaired (excluding blast damage).

Attacks against individuals by detachments are enhanced and deal blast damage.

### Retreat

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

## Advanced Combat Options

### Weapon Traits

Below are some optional traits a magical or good quality weapon might have. Sweep, parry, and reach are traits any weapon of that type can have. Any of the other traits should be limited to 1 per rare, special, or magic weapon.

Common Traits:

- **Sweep:** (2 handed weapons only) Make a second attack against an enemy within reach if you roll for maximum damage or your attack reduces the targets HP to zero or lower.