

# Cairn

This is a revised markdown file for Cairn where tables were converted to lists because tables reflow terribly.

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<https://github.com/yochaigal/cairn>

**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.

## Overview

**Cairn** was written with the following design philosophies in mind:

**Neutrality:** The Warden's role is to portray the rules, situations, NPCs, and narrative clearly, while acting as a neutral arbiter.

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

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

**Fiction First:** Dice do not always reflect an obstacle's difficulty or its outcome. Instead, success and failure are arbitrated by the Warden

in dialogue with the players, based on in-world elements.

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

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

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

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

## Principles for Wardens

### Information

- Provide useful information about the game world as the characters explore it.
- Players do not need to roll dice to learn about their circumstances.
- Be helpful and direct with your answers to their questions.
- Respond honestly, describe consistently, and always let them know they can keep asking questions.

## **Difficulty**

- Default to context and realism rather than numbers and mechanics.
- If something the players want to do is sincerely impossible, no roll will allow them to do it.
- Is what the player describes and how they leverage the situation sensible? Let it happen.
- Saves cover a great deal of uncertain situations and are often all that is necessary for risky actions.

## **Preparation**

- The game world is organic, malleable and random. It intuits and makes sharp turns.
- Use random tables and generators to develop situations, not stories or plots.
- NPCs remember what the PCs say and do, and how they affect the world.
- NPCs don't want to die. Infuse their own self-interest and will to live into every personality.

## **Narrative Focus**

- Emergent experience of play is what matters, not math or character abilities. Give the players weapon trainers and personal quests to facilitate improvement and specialization.
- Pay attention to the needs and wants of the players, then put realistic opportunities in their path.
- A dagger to your throat will kill you, regardless of your expensive armor and impressive training.

## **Danger**

- The game world produces real risk of pain and death for the player characters.
- Telegraph serious danger to players when it is present. The more dangerous, the more obvious.
- Put traps in plain sight and let the players take time to figure out a solution.
- Give players opportunities to solve problems and interact with the world.

## **Treasure**

- A Treasure is specific to the environment from where it is recovered. It tells a story.
- Treasure is highly valuable, almost always bulky, and rarely useful beyond its worth and prestige.
- Relics are not Treasure, though they are useful and interesting.
- Use Treasure as a lure to exotic locations under the protection of intimidating foes.

## **Choice**

- Give players a solid choice to force outcomes when the situation lulls.
- Use binary "so, A or B?" responses when their intentions are vague.
- Work together with this conversational progress to keep the game moving.
- Ensure that the player character's actions leave their mark on the game world.

## **Die of Fate**

- Occasionally you will want an element of randomness (e.g. the weather, unique character knowledge, etc.).
- In these situations, roll 1d6. A roll of 4 or more generally favors the players.
- A roll of 3 or under tends to mean bad luck for the PCs or their allies.

## Principles for Players

### Agency

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

### Teamwork

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

### Exploration

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

### Talking

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

### Caution

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

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

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

## Character Creation

### Name, Background & Traits

First, choose or roll a **name** for your character from the Name & Background tables, then their **background**, which informs their knowledge and potential skills.

Next, roll for the rest of your character's **traits** (appearance, speech, mannerisms, beliefs, reputation, etc.) on the *Character Traits* tables.

Finally, roll for their **age** (2d20+10).

## 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 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*.

## Name & Background (d20)

### Female Names

1. Agune
2. Beatrice
3. Breagan
4. Bronwyn
5. Cannora
6. Drelil
7. Elgile

8. Esme
9. Griya
10. Henaine
11. Lirann
12. Lirathil
13. Lisabeth
14. Morail
15. Morgwen
16. Sybil
17. Theune
18. Wenain
19. Ygwal
20. Yslen

### **Male Names**

1. Arwel
2. Bevan
3. Boroth
4. Borrid
5. Breagle
6. Breglor
7. Canhoreal
8. Emrys
9. Ethex
10. Gringle
11. Grinwit
12. Gruwid
13. Gruwth
14. Gwestin
15. Mannog
16. Melnax
17. Orthax
18. Triunein
19. Wenlan
20. Yirmeor

### **Surnames**

1. Abernathy
2. Addercap
3. Burl
4. Candlewick
5. Cormick

6. Crumwaller
7. Dunswallow
8. Getri
9. Glass
10. Harkness
11. Harper
12. Loomer
13. Malksmilk
14. Smythe
15. Sunderman
16. Swinney
17. Thatcher
18. Tolmen
19. Weaver
20. Wolder

### **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

### **Character Traits (d10)**

#### **Physique**

1. Athletic

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

### **Skin**

1. Birthmark
2. Dark
3. Elongated
4. Pockmarked
5. Rosy
6. Round
7. Soft
8. Tanned
9. Tattooed
10. Weathered

### **Hair**

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

### **Face**

1. Bony
2. Broken
3. Chiseled
4. Elongated
5. Pale
6. Perfect
7. Rat-like

8. Sharp
9. Square
10. Sunken

### **Speech**

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

### **Clothing**

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

### **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 (d20)**

### **Armor**

- 1-3: None
- 4-14: Brigandine
- 5-19: Chasimail
- 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. FishingRod
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

### **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 in Gold Pieces)**

### **Armor**

- Shield (+1 Armor): 10
- Helmet (+1 Armor): 10
- Gambeson (+1 Armor): 15
- 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

## Optional Gear Packages

### Dowser

- Sickle (d6)
- Patchwork Doublet (+1 Armor)
- Dowsing Rod
- Eyestone (Sense if placed in fresh water)
- Worn Map
- Spyglass

### Dwarf

- Prickly Root (d6)
- Pinecone Lattice (1 Armor)
- Trowel
- Jar of Forest Ants

- Poisonous mushroom
- Hand Drill

### Elf

- Elegant Sword (d8)
- Recurve Bow (d8)
- Gilt Clothing (1 Armor)
- Spellbook (Charm or Detect Magic)
- Golden Flute
- Air Bladder

### Fighter

- Glaive (d10, bulky)
- Scimitar (d8)
- Shortsword (d6)
- Tobacco Pouch & Pipe
- Dice Set

### Friar

- Scepter (d6)
- Deceptive Robes (+1 Armor)
- Censer & Holy Water
- Jug of Honey Wine
- Folk Songbook
- Cart (+4 slots, bulky)

### Knight

- Longsword (d8, bulky)
- Chainmail (2 Armor, bulky)
- Helmet (+1 Armor)
- Heraldic Cape
- Manacles
- Fine Rope

### Magic User

- Fizzled Staff (d8, bulky)
- Dagger (d6)
- Spellbook (random spell)
- Spellbook (random spell)
- Ragged Clothing (hidden pockets)

- Leycap (x2, see Relics)

### **Thief**

- Two daggers (d6+d6)
- Hooded Jerkin (1 Armor)
- Lockpicks
- Caltrops
- Grappling Hook
- Metal File

### **Ranger**

- Longbow (d8, bulky)
- Hatchet (d6)
- Padded Leathers (1 Armor)
- Large Trap
- Bloodhound: 2 HP, 12 DEX, bite (d6)
- Thundering Horn

## **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!*

### **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.

### **Healing**

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.

### **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.

## 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.

## Hirelings

PCs can hire **hirelings** to aid them in their expeditions. To create a hireling, roll 3d6 for each ability score, then give them 1d6 HP and a simple weapon (d6), then roll on the *Character Creation* tables to further flesh them out. Hirelings cost between 1-3gp per day, or a share of whatever treasure the party obtains.

## 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.

### Attack Modifiers

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

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.

## **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:

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.

## 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 ley lines, 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.

### 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.

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**.

Damage die are roughly the same, though armed attacks do at least 1d6 damage.

### 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.
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.
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.
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.

## Rules Summary

### ACTIONS

On their turn, a character may move up to 40ft and take up to one action. Actions may include casting a spell, attacking, making a second move, or other reasonable activities. Actions, attacks, and movements take place simultaneously. Whenever turn order is uncertain, the PCs should make a DEX save to see if they go before their enemies.

**Retreating** from a dangerous situation always requires a successful DEX save, as well as a safe destination to run to.

### ABILITIES

- **STR:** Brawn, prowess & resistance.
- **DEX:** Dodging, sneaking & reflexes.
- **WIL:** Persuasion, intimidation & magic.

### SAVES

- Roll a d20 equal to or under an ability.
- 1 is always a success, 20 is always a failure.

### HIT PROTECTION

**HP** indicates a PC's ability to avoid getting hurt. It is lost during combat

& recovered after a few moment's rest.

### INVENTORY

PCs have 10 inventory slots: four on their body and six in their backpack (which acts as a sleeping bag if emptied). Most items take up a one slot, but smaller items can be bundled. **Bulky** items take up two slots and are awkward or difficult to carry.

Filling all ten item slots reduces a PC to 0 HP. PCs cannot carry more than their inventory allows, though carts & horses may provide an increase in slots.

### DEPRIVATION

**Deprived** PCs cannot recover HP. If deprived for more than a day, they add a **Fatigue** to inventory. Fatigue occupies one slot and lasts until they can recover in safety. This effect is cumulative.

### HEALING

A moment's rest and a swig of water will restore lost HP, but may leave the party vulnerable. **Ability** loss requires a week's rest and the aid of a skilled healer.

### SPELLBOOKS

Spellbooks contain a single spell and take up one item slot. Anyone can cast a spell by holding a Spellbook in both hands and reading its contents aloud. Casting a spell adds **Fatigue** to the PC's inventory.

Given time and safety, PCs can enhance a spell without any additional cost. If they are deprived or in danger, a WIL save may be

required to avoid terrible consequences.

## COMBAT

The attacker rolls their weapon die and subtracts the target's **Armor**, then deals the remaining total to their opponent's HP.

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.

**Unarmed** attacks always do 1d4 damage. If **multiple attackers** target the same foe, roll all damaged dice and keep the single highest result. If attacking with **two weapons** at the same time, roll both damage dice and keep the highest.

If an attack is **impaired**, the damage die is reduced to 1d4, regardless of weapon. If the attack is **enhanced**, the attacker rolls 1d12. Attacks with the **blast** quality affect all area targets, rolling separately for each.

## DAMAGE

If an attack takes a PC's HP exactly to 0, the player rolls on the **Scars** table.

Damage that reduces a target's HP **below** 0 decreases their STR by the remainder. They must then make a STR save to avoid **critical damage**. Failure takes them out of combat, dying if left untreated.

Having STR 0 means **death**; having DEX 0 is paralysis; having WIL 0 is delirium.