

Guidebook for the Shadow of the Wurm

Julian Day

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1 Introduction

You wake up. Your head throbs, and your clothes drip with saltwater. Around you lie a few pieces of driftwood, the sight of which triggers a series of memories: a ship-journey from your homeland, full of promise; storm clouds on the horizon, roiling and swirling; and the screams of the sailors on the deck above as the storm caught the ship in its fury, tearing it apart without mercy.

Somehow, you survived, clinging to several planks that miraculously remained joined to form a small raft. And just as lucky, you still had all your possessions, your backpack balanced precariously at the end of the boards. Drifting over the cold sea, you ate sparingly, and drank even less. Eventually, your water ran out, and, fighting a fever, you drifted into unconsciousness, expecting to awake on the other side.

But it was not to be. You stand on the rocky beaches of an island, your raft shattered against the rocks. In the distance is some sort of settlement - where you go from here is entirely up to you.

You left in search of adventure: monsters were returning, creatures of myth and legend becoming startlingly real. Your friends set sail a year earlier, carrying their possessions on their backs, seeking their fame and fortune. You said your goodbyes, certain that, for one reason or another, you were unlikely to see them again.

After that year, the wanderlust took you, too. You took what you could carry, selling the rest. A small sailing ship offered passage for a handful of ivories, so long as you stayed out of the way. You jumped at the opportunity, and now you stand, dripping and exhausted, on a lonely beach, just barely alive.

The world is huge, and this is but an island. But first things first: you need to find a boat.

2 Your Character

Characters in *Shadow of the Wyrms* are created by selecting a race, class, and deity. The starting race and class are important, and have a large impact on game play. They determine starting statistics, skills, and equipment, and affect the difficulty of the game. Some races and classes have options not available to others: fae don't have a hunger clock; witchlings get free primordial spell castings with each level; pugilists can do an increasing amount of unarmed damage as they go.

The choice of deity will one day become important. Currently, the only real difference in deities is that some of them dislike certain things (cannibalism, certain forms of desecration, etc) and have different lists of artifacts they can grant.

2.1 Races

The races of *Shadow of the Wyrms* range from diminutive to massive, and each race has its own strengths and weaknesses. Some make great warriors, while some are better suited for magic or thievery; there are others that are more neutral and can work with any class. The races of *Shadow of the Wyrms* are listed below.

- **Humans** live throughout the world, in the centre lands, on islands large and small, making their homes in cities and settlements, outposts and camps. They are short and tall, fair and dark, settled and nomadic, but always adaptive, always resourceful, and always able to make the most of any situation. **Initial Skills:** Boating, Carrying, Detection, Fishing, Foraging, Hiding, Swimming, Short Blades, Bludgeons, Daggers, Spears, Rocks, Slings.
- **Wood Elves** retreated into the forests millennia ago, building their civilizations in the treetops and branches. Within the woods, they blend in with their surroundings, their clothing dyed deep shades of green and brown. Wood Elves are skilled archers, and are known for their devotion to swordsmanship. **Initial Skills:** Archery, Awareness, Carrying, Detection, Forest Lore, Herbalism, Hunting, Night Sight, Swimming, Long Blades, Bows.
- **Mountain Elves** live high up in the mountains, far above the rest of the world. They are stockier than other elves, and even many humans, fortified by a life in the thin, cold air. Mountain Elves typically wear animal skins, and craft weapons out of the tools at hand, making use of stone, animal bones, and the little wood at hand. **Initial Skills:** Archery, Awareness, Carrying, Detection, Mountain Lore, Night Sight, Spelunking, Swimming, Bludgeons, Rocks, Slings.
- **Snakelings** are the product of black magic, wielded by some unknown sorcerer many thousands of years ago to fuse man and serpent. The resultant

creatures horrified the world: standing nearly as tall as men, the creatures have the scales and head of an enormous snake, with the remaining features human in appearance. Cast to the fringes of the world, Snakelings band together in fens and marshes, or at the edges of the great deserts, hunting under darkness with barbed spears and javelins. **Initial Skills:** Awareness, Boating, Carrying, Desert Lore, Detection, Marsh Lore, Night Sight, Swimming, Spears, Thrown Spears.

- **Fae** are the remnants of the so-called faerie folk that lived in the world far before the elves. They require neither food nor drink, but enjoy both, holding great feasts deep within ancient forests. Time has brought down the Fae, and few remain. Those that do tend to travel together in caravans through the most inhospitable of terrain, keeping their company close and blocking out the rest of the world. Fae are stealthy tricksters, and tremendously skilled with magic. **Initial Skills:** Awareness, Carrying, Detection, Escape, Forest Lore, Herbalism, Hunting, Magic, Night Sight, Stealth, Daggers.
- **Dwarves** live deep within mountains, far below the naturally-occurring caverns and caves that serve as the entranceways. They carve their cities from the rock itself, and mine the mountains for its ore. They are short, about two-thirds the size of men, but stocky, and disproportionately strong. Dwarves are skilled with axes, hammers and crossbows. **Initial Skills:** Carrying, Detection, Disarm Traps, Mountain Lore, Night Sight, Smithing, Spelunking, Axes, Bludgeons, Crossbows.
- **Goblins** are short, cunning humanoids with sharp features and sharper teeth. They live in small tribes on the outer islands, though recently they have been spotted sailing closer and closer to the centre lands. Despite their smaller size, they are ferocious creatures, afraid of nothing. They wear ratty, tattered clothing, and are skilled with their sharp, curved blades. **Initial Skills:** Carrying, Detection, Disarm Traps, Dungeoneering, Escape, Hiding, Ocean Lore, Stealth, Swimming, Short Blades, Thrown Daggers, Slings
- **Ogres** are huge and thickly-built, with the strength of many men. Though they are often seen with goblins, and share those creatures fierce nature, they are not nearly as intelligent. Ogres make up for this with a tremendous strength and fortitude. They are often seen wearing scraps of armour plundered from their kills, and prefer great clubs and hammers above all else. **Initial Skills:** Carrying, Combat, Detection, Foraging, Hunting, Intimidation, Skinning, Tanning, Bludgeons.
- **Giants** are even older than the elves, and warred with the faerie folk when the world was still young. Massive and tremendously strong, they stand twice as tall as the tallest man. They live in the outer reaches of the world, where their settlements are constantly under attack by goblins and ogres, whom they hate. Giants prefer large, stone clubs, though when

these are unavailable, a small tree will often do. **Initial Skills:** Carrying, Combat, Detection, Intimidation, Mountain Lore, Bludgeons, Rods and Staves, Thrown Bludgeons.

- **Gnomes** are tiny creatures that live in caverns and caves, and have since recorded time. They stand even shorter than dwarves, and are much less strong. They are intelligent and quick; gnomes love riddles and puzzles, and have a deep affinity for magic. In combat, they prefer knives, daggers, and small swords. **Initial Skills:** Awareness, Carrying, Detection, Disarm Traps, Dungeoneering, Literacy, Medicine, Mountain Lore, Spelunking, Wandcraft, Short Blades, Daggers, Rocks.

In addition to these races, there are a number of additional races not available to player characters: animal, construct, demon, divine, dragon, humanoid, insect, jelly, monster, plant, undead, and spirit.

2.2 Classes

A character's class represents its background or occupation. There are many possibilities: powerful warriors, mighty wizards, holy pilgrims; but also skilled smiths and artisans, street-hardened pugilists, and the ubiquitous adventurer. Class influences a character's starting statistics and equipment, and grants its own set of initial skills.

- **Adventurers** travel the world, seeking to make money and a name for themselves. While they lack the raw strength of Warriors, the stealth and cunning of Thieves, or the great learning of Wizards, they nonetheless have characteristics of all three, and are well-prepared for the challenges that lie ahead. **Initial Skills:** Awareness, Boating, Cantrips, Dungeoneering, Escape, Fishing, Foraging, Hiding, Jumping, Literacy, Spelunking, Stealth, Short Blades, Long Blades, Bludgeons, Daggers, Spears.
- **Apothecaries** prepare potions, salves, and remedies, assisting physicians by providing their medical materials. This training gives apothecaries a practical knowledge of medicine and healing. In addition, many dabble in hedge magic and cantrips, providing some practical magical knowledge while remaining focused on the duties of their trade. Apothecaries start with a complete knowledge of potions. **Initial Skills:** Bargaining, Brewing, Cantrips, Carrying, Herbalism, Literacy, Medicine, Papercraft, Scribing, Bludgeons.
- **Archers** are combatants skilled with ranged weapons such as bows, slings, and crossbows. While others can also learn these weapons effectively, Archers can maintain their accuracy over much greater distances. Though they possess some of the skill of Warriors in close combat, their focus is on ending the danger before it gets too close. **Initial Skills:** Archery, Awareness, Bowyer, Detection, Escape, Fletchery, Hiding, Jumping, Daggers, Bows, Crossbows, Rocks, Slings, Thrown Spears.

- **Artisans** are creative folk who craft jewellery, clothing, and other useful items. With training, they can focus their efforts and craft truly spectacular creations. Artisans learn their trade after apprenticing to a master crafter for many years, and with their training complete, are finally ready to make their way. **Initial Skills:** Bargaining, Cantrips, Carrying, Crafting, Detection, Jeweler, Literacy, Papercraft, Scribing, Skinning, Tanning, Weaving, Daggers.
- **Merchants** travel from place to place, always looking to sell their wares. In their travels, they learn a great many things about their merchandise, and are experts at identification. Each merchant begins their travels with a full understanding of all items. **Initial Skills:** Awareness, Bargaining, Cantrips, Carrying, Detection, Herbalism, Jeweler, Literacy, Lore, Bludgeons, Whips.
- **Minstrels** are itinerant musicians. They are instrumentalists and singers, learned in the rudiments of almost any form of music. Others find them quite charismatic and charming. Minstrels are often able to stir and sway their audiences on the strength of a particularly good performance. **Initial Skills:** Awareness, Detection, Hiding, Leadership, Literacy, Lore, Music, Scribing, Stealth, Daggers.
- **Nobles** are born of privilege and money. Lords and Ladies, Kings and Queens, Thanes and Chiefs; all are examples of the fortunate nobility. A life free from hard labour allows nobles to focus their efforts on leadership and military training, to better lead their people to victory. **Initial Skills:** Boating, Detection, Escape, Herbalism, Intimidation, Leadership, Literacy, Religion, Swimming, Short Blades, Long Blades, Whips, Bows, Crossbows.
- **Oracles** possess a keen sense of the future and present, and can see things that others can't: happiness, true love, long life; but also hexes, illnesses, and death. As favoured creatures of fate, they are immune to bad luck and curses. Their predictions have an almost unfailing accuracy, which causes Oracles to be both respected and feared. **Initial Skills:** Awareness, Blind Fighting, Cantrips, Detection, Literacy, Magic, Night Sight, Papercraft, Religion, Scribing, Rods and Staves, Mystic Magic.
- **Pilgrims** are devout followers and messengers of the divine. They seek enlightenment through travel, devotion, and prayer. They carry their life on their back, travelling from place to place, rarely staying long. Their piety gives them a sixth sense about objects, allowing them to avoid the burning cold of cursed items; and they are favoured by the Nine, who grant them the ability to learn the magic of divine mysteries. **Initial Skills:** Awareness, Detection, Dungeoneering, Herbalism, Literacy, Lore, Magic, Medicine, Religion, Scribing, Swimming, Bludgeons, Spears, Divine Magic.

- **Pugilists** are fighters who focus solely on unarmed combat, relying on their fists and instincts to get them out of trouble. Quick-witted and nimble, they eschew the trappings of any armour heavy enough to hinder their movements. Though they are skilled at all forms of unarmed combat, their skill with their bare fists increases as they gain more experience. **Initial Skills:** Awareness, Blind Fighting, Combat, Detection, Dungeoneering, Foraging, Intimidation, Stealth, Swimming, Unarmed.
- **Rovers** are solitary figures who spend the majority of their lives in the wild. At home far from civilization, rovers can be found in the highest peaks, deepest forests, and darkest caves. They spurn a life of comfort and prefer instead a life outdoors, surviving in the most inhospitable parts of the world. Rovers start with a pet falcon or boar. **Initial Skills:** Awareness, Beastmastery, Bowyer, Desert Lore, Detection, Dual Wield, Fishing, Fletchery, Foraging, Forest Lore, Herbalism, Hiding, Hunting, Leadership, Marsh Lore, Mountain Lore, Skinning, Swimming, Tanning, Axes, Bows, Rocks, Slings.
- **Sages** are scholars. They study the seen and unseen to the exclusion of all else. Sages are thin and frail. Living alone, they often withdraw from society to devote their lives to study. As they increase their knowledge and edge closer to enlightenment, they gain access to the arcane and divine, the mystic and the primordial. **Initial Skills:** Cantrips, Detection, Herbalism, Literacy, Lore, Magic, Medicine, Papercraft, Religion, Rods and Staves, Scribing, Wandcraft, Weaving, Arcane Magic, Divine Magic, Mystic Magic, Primordial Magic.
- **Seafarers** are drawn to the open water. They make their living traveling the rivers and oceans, spurning a life on land. The weather hardens them, and they are better able to withstand the rigors of cold. Fishers, pirates, and sailors are all examples of Seafarers. **Initial Skills:** Awareness, Boating, Combat, Detection, Fishing, Foraging, Marsh Lore, Ocean Lore, Skinning, Swimming, Tanning, Spears.
- **Shepherds** are among the weakest and most lowly in society. Tending to their flocks, or those of others, they live at the fringes of civilization, eeking out a living from the land. They are not strong in combat, nor with magic, but some have said they enjoy a special status with the divine. Shepherds start with a pet sheep. **Initial Skills:** Awareness, Detection, Fishing, Foraging, Herbalism, Religion, Skinning, Swimming, Tanning, Rods and Staves.
- **Smiths** are artisans of iron and steel. Using their bellows, hammers, and anvils, they are able to improve upon weapons and armour, able to turn the most mediocre example into a masterpiece. From spending a lifetime in front of the forge, they are bothered little by great heat. **Initial Skills:** Bargaining, Carrying, Combat, Detection, Fishing, Intimidation, Mountain Lore, Skinning, Smithing, Tanning, Bludgeons.

- **Thieves** are nimble and fleet of foot. They specialize in the redistribution of wealth, either to themselves, or to others. Loosely organized into guilds, they learn early on how to pick pockets, open locks, scale walls, and deal with traps. It is said that they are so stealthy that their nefarious activities, such as graverobbing, are hidden from the Nine themselves. **Initial Skills:** Awareness, Carrying, Detection, Disarm Traps, Dual Wield, Escape, Hiding, Hunting, Jumping, Spelunking, Stealth, Thievery, Short Blades, Daggers, Thrown Daggers.
- **Warriors** include soldiers, barbarians, nomads, and sell-swords. Some learn their skills by military training, while others learn simply through survival. Coming from many walks of life, they all have skill in close combat. **Initial Skills:** Blind Fighting, Boating, Bowyer, Carrying, Combat, Detection, Fletchery, Hunting, Intimidation, Swimming, Axes, Bludgeons, Daggers, Rods and Staves, Spears, Unarmed, Whips, Bows, Rocks.
- **Witchlings** practice a primordial, chaotic magic. From a young age, they find themselves able to channel the latent energies of the world. Misunderstood and often marginalized, Witchlings often live apart from society, separated by the blessing and curse of their abilities. Witchlings start with a pet cat, owl, or xither. **Initial Skills:** Awareness, Brewing, Cantrips, Detection, Foraging, Forest Lore, Herbalism, Literacy, Lore, Magic, Marsh Lore, Scribing, Swimming, Whips, Primordial Magic.
- **Wizards** are students of the arcane. Often apprenticing at a young age, they spend years reading ancient tomes, learning spellcraft, brewing potions, and imbuing wands and staves with magical powers. They are often seen in the company of some sort of familiar. Wizards start with a pet cat, owl, or xither. **Initial Skills:** Awareness, Brewing, Cantrips, Detection, Herbalism, Literacy, Lore, Magic, Papercraft, Scribing, Wandcraft, Weaving, Daggers, Arcane Magic.

2.3 Deities

There are nine deities within the world of *Shadow of the Wyrms*, collectively referred to simply as, “the Nine”. Though the motives and actions of the divine can never be neatly categorized by mortal men, it is believed that three are largely good, three remain neutral, and three are deeply evil.

2.3.1 The Good

- Empress of the Heavens, **Celeste** created the universe, crafting the galaxies and stars. She watches the world from high above, where centuries pass like seconds. Her domains are magic and creation. Throughout the existence of the universe, she has waged countless battles against the horrors of Sceadugenga. She likes burying humanoids, healing companions,

learning spells, and smiting; dislikes attacking friendly creatures, cannibalism, desecrating good altars, graverobbing, and skinning humanoids. Celeste grants her worshippers +2 Intelligence.

- Appearing to his followers as a great knight armoured in shining plate and wielding a flaming blade, **Aurelion** governs strength, chivalry, and honourable combat. He is husband of The Lady, and is in constant struggle with the forces of black Urgoth. He likes burying humanoids, healing companions, smiting, and stunning; dislikes attacking friendly creatures, cannibalism, desecrating good altars, graverobbing, and skinning humanoids. Followers of Aurelion gain +2 Strength.
- Wife of Aurelion, **The Lady** is seen in the form of an impossibly beautiful and radiant woman, that quintessential peace found in a life well-lived, love, sunlight, and music. She likes burying humanoids, healing companions, and pacification by music or beastmastery; dislikes attacking friendly creatures, cannibalism, desecrating good altars, graverobbing, and skinning humanoids. The Lady is the kindest and gentlest of the pantheon, and bestows +2 Charisma to her worshippers.

2.3.2 The Neutral

- After Celeste created the heavens, **Vedere** created the world itself. It was by his will that the mountains were raised. The forests and grasslands are his, as are the lakes and seas, the deserts and marshes. He likes burying animals and planting seeds; dislikes attacking friendly creatures and desecrating neutral altars. Itinerant wanderers and those who live off the land are often worshippers of Vedere, who protects his followers by granting +1 Health.
- Once Vedere created the world, he made **Voros** its protector. Voros lives deep within the molten core, a monstrous red wyrm, breathing gases and lava from his massive jaws. Voros is often worshipped by the dwarves, and others who live deep within the earth. He likes burying dragons and inflicting blindness via fire; dislikes desecrating neutral altars and graverobbing. Those who revere him receive +2 Strength.
- Appearing as a cloaked figure accompanied by a crow, **The Trickster** wanders the world of men, bending probability wherever he goes. He acts as an agent of neutrality. By his deeds, The Trickster balances the gains of order and chaos. He likes sneak attacks and learning spells; dislikes cannibalism, desecrating neutral altars, and graverobbing. His blessing grants +2 Agility.

2.3.3 The Evil

- A withered, twisted figure, **Shiver** takes the form of a bent and haggard crone. She comes in winter, on cold winds: her presence casts a pall over

the landscape, a deathly chill that cannot be lifted. She likes attacking friendly creatures, bloodletting, learning spells, and inflicting slowness via cold; dislikes desecrating evil altars. To her followers, she grants +2 Willpower.

- The Black Ogre, **Urgoth**, feeds off anger, rage, and hate. He seeks the destruction of all things good and holy, and leads his hordes of chaos in an ongoing struggle against Aurelion's forces. He likes attacking friendly creatures, raging, and inflicting stunning; dislikes desecrating evil altars. Those loyal to Urgoth receive +2 Strength.
- A teeming black horror as old as time itself, **Sceadugenga** lurks in the blackest corners of the universe, held back by the power of the rest of the pantheon. It seeks nothing less than the destruction of all creation, culminating with the deaths of all the other gods. Its name is considered ill even to speak, and its few followers practice in utmost secrecy, identified by a bleeding black mark on their foreheads. It likes attacking friendly creatures, cannibalism, desecrating good and neutral altars, graverobbing, and petrification; dislikes desecrating evil altars. Sceadugenga's servants receive +2 Intelligence.

It is said that, upon hearing the prayers of the most pious and devout, that the worshipped deity may decide to crown that mortal as a holy champion, providing fortification against damage and bestowing a gift of great power.

2.4 Alignment

The three alignments are Good, Neutral, and Evil. These represent sets of values that the ancient philosophers formalized in an attempt to categorize all creation.

- **Good** and the concept of "goodness" encompass those who treat others well; who have a respect for life and dignity, and those around them; and who will attempt to help others, even at a cost to themselves.
- **Evil** creatures range from the narcissistic and self-centered to the diabolical. Those who are evil lack respect for others, putting their own interests at the fore, and have few compunctions about harming others to get their own way; indeed, for some, maiming, torturing, and killing are the whole of their interests.
- **Neutral**, or unaligned, refers to those creatures and people who stand outside the neat dichotomy of good and evil. Some are mindless and unthinking: slimes, low animals, and so on, who are incapable of making moral decisions and live in a state of nature. Others are intelligent and rational creatures who make a conscientious decision to live apart from good and evil, making moral decisions only as they must. The Neutral alignment describes all of these.

A character's initial alignment is determined by the deity selected at character creation.

2.5 Statistics

A character's statistics influence many things: its ability to land or dodge blows, its hardness, its ability to deal damage or learn spells, and many other things. Statistics are displayed at the bottom of the screen

2.5.1 Primary Statistics

There are seven primary statistics: Strength, Dexterity, Agility, Health, Intelligence, Willpower, and Charisma. These are all displayed on the status lines at the bottom of the screen while you are playing the game. These statistics affect different calculations and outcomes within the game, and are described below.

- **Strength** (Str) determines how strong a character is. It affects weapon damage, as well as the ability to hit with large weapons such as great swords and huge hammers.
- **Dexterity** (Dex) represents a character's physical control, and is used to determine the ability to hit with most melee and ranged weapons.
- **Agility** (Agi) is a character's nimbleness, and allows it to more easily dodge attacks and other dangers.
- **Health** (Hea) is a measure of a character's toughness or hardness. It affects how much damage the character can take before dying, as well as helping to resist certain unwanted statuses.
- **Intelligence** (Int) affects the ability of a character to successfully learn spells, and the number of spells that can be cast before exhaustion.
- **Willpower** (Will) also affects the ability of a character to learn certain spells. It also has an impact on the number of spells that the character can cast before exhaustion, but to a lesser degree than Intelligence.
- **Charisma** (Cha) determines how easily the character sways or influences others, and also impacts whether monsters are intimidated by you.

The primary statistics can increase through the actions taken by the player. For instance, carrying heavy loads or attacking successfully with a heavy weapon can help to increase Strength. There is also a trainer to be found who can help increase these statistics — for a fee, of course.

2.5.2 Secondary Statistics

Secondary statistics are much more focused than primary statistics, and tend to have much more specific uses. These statistics can be acquired from armour and spells, or can be based on race and class. These statistics are also displayed on the status lines at the bottom of the screen.

- **Evade** (Ev) is used to determine whether a creature successfully avoids an incoming attack.
- **Soak** (Sk) reduces the amount of damage on a successful attack, removing one point of damage per point of Soak.
- **Speed** (Sp) determines how quickly a character can attack – the lower the Speed score, the sooner the character can act again.
- **Hit Points** (HP) represents a character's capacity for taking damage. When a character's hit points are reduced to 0 or lower, the character is dead.
- **Arcana Points** (AP) are a character's ability to cast spells. Each spell has a particular Arcana point cost associated with it, so the higher this score, the more spells the creature can cast before exhaustion.

2.6 Skills

Skills provide a way to interact with the world. Whether that's scanning the depths of a dark dungeon, or skillfully wielding a sword, skills allow a character to specialize in many different ways.

2.6.1 General

- **Archery**: Skill and damage with ranged weapons.
- **Awareness**: React quickly to incoming projectiles and magic.
- **Bargaining**: Sell for more. Pay less for goods and services.
- **Beastmastery**: Tame wild creatures.
- **Blindfighting**: Fight and dodge effectively without sight.
- **Boating**: Move faster navigating the water.
- **Bowyer**: Craft bows and crossbows.
- **Brewing**[†]: Brew magic potions and moonshine.
- **Carrying**: Carry more and heavier items.
- **Combat**: Skill and damage with melee weapons, and in techniques such as counter-striking.

- **Crafting:** Skill at generally creating things: magical items, skins, and many other things.
- **Desert Lore:** Knowledge of deserts and dunes.
- **Detection:** Sense the unseen, such as nearby traps or creatures, both actively and passively.
- **Disarm Traps:** Disassemble dangerous traps.
- **Dual Wield:** Fight effectively with two weapons.
- **Dungeoneering:** Familiarity with dungeons and loot allows more items to be found, better hidden treasure caches, and fewer broken items.
- **Escape:** Flee and dodge effectively; squeeze through tight spaces.
- **Fishing:** Catch fish.
- **Fletcher:** Create ammunition for ranged weapons.
- **Foraging:** Find more food in the wilderness.
- **Forest Lore:** Knowledge of the woods and forests.
- **Herbalism:** Forage for useful herbs.
- **Hiding:** Remain unseen from hostile foes.
- **Hunting:** Get useful corpses from the creatures you kill.
- **Intimidation:** Make your foes tremble and quiver.
- **Jeweler:** Create and improve rings and amulets.
- **Jumping†:** Leap over obstacles and foes.
- **Leadership:** Command allies effectively and gain experience from their success; call your allies to you.
- **Literacy:** The ability to read scrolls and books.
- **Lore:** Knowledge of an item's blessed/uncursed/cursed status on pickup.
- **Magic:** Learn spells more effectively, and destroy unwanted spellbooks for AP.
- **Marsh Lore:** Knowledge about swamps and fens.
- **Medicine:** Naturally heal wounds faster, and avoid poison, stoning, and other negative effects.
- **Mountain Lore:** Knowledge of mountain features, and skill at climbing tall peaks.

- **Music:** Sway with songs and instruments.
- **Night Sight:** Ability to see in low-light conditions.
- **Ocean Lore:** Knowledge of seas and oceans.
- **Papercraft:** Creation of paper from natural materials.
- **Religion:** Gain piety faster, and be granted more powerful divine followers.
- **Scribing:** Creation of scrolls and books.
- **Skinning:** Carefully separate the skin from a corpse.
- **Smithing:** Create and improve melee weapons.
- **Spelunking**[†]: Move through tight spaces with ease.
- **Stealth:** Move without being heard, and attack with surprise.
- **Swimming:** Swim through water without drowning.
- **Tanning:** Turn skins into useful armour.
- **Thievery:** Redistribute wealth towards yourself.
- **Wandcraft:** The ability to create wands and make the most of them.
- **Weaving:** Create cloaks and clothing.

[†] – Not implemented yet.

2.6.2 Melee Weapons

All melee weapons can be categorized as one of the following weapon skills: **Axes, Short Blades, Long Blades, Bludgeons, Daggers, Rods and Staves, Spears, Unarmed, Whips, Exotic.**

At their maximum skill value, melee weapons give additional bonuses:

- **Axes:** Chance to cleave the opponent in two.
- **Short Blades, Long Blades:** +20 Evade.
- **Bludgeons, Exotic:** Increased chance to apply status ailments.
- **Daggers:** Extra chance to sneak attack.
- **Rods and Staves:** +1 Range.
- **Spears:** Piercing.
- **Unarmed:** Small damage bonus and a chance to knock the opponent back.
- **Whips:** Small damage bonus and a chance to apply bloodied and exposed statuses in addition to the whip's damage-based status.

2.6.3 Ranged Weapons

All ranged weapons can be categorized as one of the following ranged weapon skills: **Thrown Axes, Thrown Blades, Thrown Bludgeons, Bows, Crossbows, Thrown Daggers, Rocks, Slings, Thrown Spears, Exotic Ranged.**

At their maximum skill value, ranged weapons give an extra damage bonus equal to half the character's level.

2.6.4 Magic

There are five spheres of magic, which encompass all the magics of the world. These are:

- **Arcane:** Ancient powers harnessed by long-past civilizations, written down in an ancient Runic language. Arcane magic is broad, having elemental, restorative, protective, and many other types of spells. The language used to record Arcane magic is incredibly old and complicated. It requires heavy study itself, and thus the secrets of the Arcane are known only to a small few.
- **Divine:** The secrets of the Nine, written down by sages and scholars in ancient, hide-bound tomes. Divine magic is largely protective and restorative, cloaking the caster in the light and darkness of the Nine. Though it is recorded in the Runic script, the words themselves are those of the titans and archangels, gifted in dreams only to the most devout and holy.
- **Mystic:** Mystic magic allows the seer to glimpse the future in tiny glances, seeing things just before they happen: terrible afflictions, petrification, blindness, dumbness. Mystic magic, like Arcane, is written in the ancient Runic script, though its secrets are difficult to understand except for the rare folk with the gift for far sight.
- **Primordial:** Primordial magic, often referred to simply as “shadow magic”, harnesses the raw chaotic powers of the universe. It is not written down; rather, it is wielded instinctively. Primordial magic is deeply offensive, allowing its user to unleash inky black flames and roiling chaos.
- **Cantrips:** Minor magical spells. Cantrips encompass a broad spectrum of spells, from the attacking to the healing. They are relatively easy to learn, not being written in Old Runic, but they are also less effective than their counterparts in the other spheres of magic, and more expensive to cast.

Primordial magic is deeply innate. Those that learn its workings do so automatically as they gain in power. The remaining magics are traditionally learned through the careful study of ancient spellbooks.

When casting magic, you select a spell from a screen that summarizes the spells your character knows. This screen contains:

- The name and sphere of the spell
- The number of castings available before the spell is forgotten
- Range, shape, and radius details
- The cost in Arcana Points
- The spell’s effectiveness rating

A sample screen might look like:

```
[a] Cross of Flame (Arcane) [#:20, R:3Cr, AP:10, +0]
[b] Dragon Breath (Arcane) [#:10, R:3C, AP:7, +0]
[c] Lightning Bolt (Arcane) [#:15, R:4RB, AP:6, +0]
[d] Wreath of Fire (Arcane) [#:22, R:2Ba, AP:5, +0]
[e] Absolution (Divine) [#:40, R:6B2, AP:50, +0]
[f] Blink (Cantrips) [#:30, R:0TS, AP:3, +0]
[g] Spirit Bolt (Cantrips) [#:44, R:4RB, AP:30, +2]
```

The range, shape, and radius is encoded in a value like “R:3Cr”. This means that the spell has a range of 3 and is cross-shaped. A value of “R:6B2” means that the spell has range 6, beam-shaped, with radius 2 (indicating a wider beam). The following table summarizes the spell shapes.

Abbreviation	Shape	Description
B	Beam	Single-directional, non-reflective beam
Ba	Ball	Outward-spreading ball
C	Cone	Cone
Cr	Cross	Beams in the cardinal directions
RB	Reflective Beam	Single-directional, reflective beam
St	Storm	Random tiles around the caster
TS	Target Self	Targets the caster

Radius only affects beam-shaped spells. A radius of 1 is a typical beam spell that travels along in a line. Each increment to the radius adds a tile above and below that, so that radius 2 creates a beam along 3 lines, radius 3 a beam along 5 lines, and so on.

A spell’s effectiveness is a reflection of how well you know it, and goes up the more you cast it. It works in a number of ways: damage becomes more powerful, healing more effective, and status ailments more likely to be applied on a successful hit.

2.7 Resistances

In *Shadow of the Wyrm*, there are many different kinds of dangers. Bandits carry cheap knives and swords. Ogres and trolls wield massive wooden clubs. Dragons breathe infernal flames, and wizards cast ancient spells. These are all

represented by different damage types, and every creature is affected differently, based on race, class, current equipment, and the currently in-force spells.

All creatures in the game, not just the player's character, have a set of resistances. Some creatures may be almost invincible when attacked with certain damage types, and may be deeply vulnerable to others.

The different damage types follow, with an example of how they are used in-game.

- **Slash:** swords, axes, etc.
- **Pierce:** daggers, spears, etc.
- **Pound:** clubs, maces, etc.
- **Heat:** fire-based spells, dragon breath, fiery weapons, etc.
- **Cold:** ice-based spells, certain undead/astral creatures, etc.
- **Acid:** certain jellies and slimes, insects, demons, etc.
- **Poison:** certain snakes and reptiles, sea creatures, demons, etc.
- **Holy:** divine magics, holy creatures, etc.
- **Shadow:** primordial magics, certain undead/astral creatures, etc.
- **Arcane:** arcane magics, certain demons, etc.
- **Lightning:** lightning-based spells, certain holy creatures, etc.

The list above is intentionally incomplete – there are many different creatures scattered throughout the world, and a well-prepared character should have preparations in place for many different possibilities, not just the most common.

2.8 Damage Flags

Damage can have flags that are independent of the actual damage type. These add additional effects that can be triggered along with the damage itself, and include:

- **Chaotic:** for the duration of the attack, the damage type can change
- **Draining:** transfer some Hit Points to the attacker
- **Ethereal:** transfer some Arcana Points to the attacker
- **Explosive:** deal explosive damage to and around the target
- **Incorporeal:** the ghostly attack bypasses most of the target's Soak
- **Piercing:** bypass Soak completely
- **Scything:** the attack travels in an arc around the attacker
- **Vorpal:** small chance to instantly kill the target

2.9 Status Ailments

Each of the above damage types can also have a lingering effect on the targeted creature. Status ailments affect the creature in a variety of way, and may range from an inconvenience, to downright dangerous or deadly. After each successful hit, a status ailment may be applied. The chance for this is modified by the targeted creature's resistance to the damage type, as well as potentially other modifiers.

- **Blinded (Fire)**: cannot see any surroundings. Severe combat penalties.
- **Bloodied (Slash)**: difficult to focus accurately on combat.
- **Disfigured (Acid)**: randomly reduces a number of statistics.
- **Exposed (Pierce)**: knocked off-balance, evasion becomes difficult.
- **Mute (Holy)**: cannot speak, and therefore chat, cast spells, etc.
- **Paralysis (Lightning)**: cannot move or act.
- **Poison (Poison)**: damage over time until the poison is cured.
- **Slow (Cold)**: moves and acts at a much slower rate.
- **Spellbound (Arcane)**: can act, but cannot move.
- **Stone (Shadow)**: eventually, become petrified into a statue unless the corruption is cured.
- **Stunned (Pound)**: while staggering, moving or attacking in the desired direction is unlikely.

2.10 Additional Statuses

There are other statuses not associated with damage type. Some of these are innate, only available to certain creatures. Others are skill-based, and some can be acquired through potions, scrolls, and other means.

- **Drunk**: drink enough booze and you hit harder and slur your words, making magic more difficult. Drink too much booze, though, and you can die of alcohol poisoning.
- **Flying**: Move bird-like through the air, avoiding obstacles and dangers on the ground.
- **Hiding**: Remaining in place, you can avoid detection by the unwary.
- **Incorporeal**: Move ghost-like while this is in effect. Your blows will pass through armour easily.
- **Sated**: Eat food, but never hunger; all Fae start with this.

- **Rage:** Deal a lot of damage, but with limited ability to do anything involving rational thinking.
- **Water Breathing:** Breathe water as well as air.

2.11 Equipment and Inventory

When you start off, you have a minimal set of equipment based on your race and class. As you progress through the game, you can find additional items in a number of ways, not limited to: lying strewn on the ground, hidden underground in dungeons and caverns, carried by monsters and townsfolk, or granted as a reward for completing quests. Improving your equipment is essential to progressing deeper into the game, as the monsters you encounter become more and more dangerous.

2.11.1 Equipment

Your equipment includes your worn weapons and armour, as well as whatever magical items like rings and amulets you're able to wear as well. Your worn equipment helps determine how much damage you can do, how easily you can dodge or take a hit, as well as contributing to your resistances. A sample screen might look like:

```
----- Equipment -----
[a] Head          : uncursed cap [4, 0]  [0.44 lbs]
[b] Neck          :
[c] Right Finger  :
[d] Left Finger   :
[e] Wielded       : uncursed spear (15, 2, 0) (1d6)  [7.00 lbs]
                   Resists/Flags: {0.02Sl 0.02Po 0.01Ar}
[f] Off Hand      :
[g] Body          : uncursed chain mail [3, 6]  [40.00 lbs]
[h] Around Body   :
[i] Feet          : blessed leather boots [3, 1]  [5.00 lbs]
[j] Ranged        :
[k] Ammunition     :
```

Next to a weapon, (x, y, z) shows the bonus to-hit, to damage, and to speed. A weapon can also have damage flags associated with it, explained earlier.

Next to a piece of armour, $[a, b]$ shows the Evade and Soak bonuses, respectively.

Any item might carry resistances contributing to the character's overall resistances. While these individual values might be small, they can add up, and form an important way of mitigating damage, especially in certain parts of the game, when the damage dealt is so great that it can overwhelm or even bypass a high Soak value.

2.11.2 Inventory

Your inventory is all the items you carry that aren't actually equipped. These can include things like wands and potions, spare weapons, food, a favourite rock — anything you think might be useful that you've decided to carry with you.

There are limits to your inventory. Your statistics will determine how much weight you can carry, and how many items, and these numbers can be improved by improving those statistics, as well as the Carrying skill.

3 The World

Each game of *Shadow of the Wyrms* starts off in one of two places: either on Little Island, a tiny piece of land at the edge of the world; or in Carcassia, an island in the centre of the world.

On the north shore of Little Island is a small fishing village, the only outpost on the island. This is the village Isen Dun (literally “Iron Hill”), a fishing outpost founded hundreds of years ago. Its inhabitants are human, members of a tribe called the Isenlings. At the north-western edge of the island is an old set of ruins, while an ancient stone stair sits at the southern tip.

On the south-east of the Isle of Carcassia is a city of the same name. This city is the seat of a great empire, one which extends its reach throughout the central lands, maintaining an uneasy peace with the other races and regions of the world. Its laws are forcefully and unevenly applied. It is a land of great opportunity and danger.

3.1 Starting Out

Isen Dun is full of friendly inhabitants, and is a great place to start out. The ploughman maintains a public garden in the village green for the needy, and there are a number of NPCs (non-player characters) that have quests that the player can try out. But be careful — some of these quests are much more dangerous than others!

Carcassia is a little more unfriendly. It’s a large city, and there are many places to explore, opportunities for advancement. But some of its inhabitants are less than friendly, and wouldn’t think twice about slitting a traveller’s coinpurse or throat. There are guilds and shops, puzzles and dungeons: a great many things to learn.

3.2 Non-Player Characters

NPCs fall into two categories:

- Those that want to kill you.
- Those that don’t want to kill you.

Philosophers have argued this dichotomy for years, and the more Hobbesian believe that the second category could simply be termed “those that don’t want to kill you just yet.” Debate rages.

Those that want to kill you should either be avoided, or destroyed, depending on your preference and the general difficulty of the thing bearing down on you. You can get a general feel for creature difficulty by using the look command (see Commands), and then hovering over another creature. In addition to telling you what the creature is, the look command will give an indication of the creature’s level, relative to yours.

3.3 Finding Help

3.3.1 Pets

There are all kinds of domesticated creatures, and some classes (Shepherds, Rovers, Wizards, and Witchlings) start off their travels with an appropriate sort of pet. These respond to your orders, and will faithfully fight for you should you request it, though most pets, being small animals, won't last in combat for very long.

3.3.2 Wild Animals

Really the same thing as pets, these just start off wild and need to be tamed somehow. Rovers are known to have skill in beastmastery, which can be deployed to attempt to turn any creature, but tales also tell of ways in which minstrels have used their instruments or voices to charm animals as well.

3.3.3 Adventurers

The philosophers were right — life is, on the whole, nasty, brutish and short. Most people are born into little or no means, and have to eke out an existence through farming or some sort of trade. Disease is rampant. Economies shaky. The more enterprising are always looking for a way to make their lives a little easier.

Open thievery and robbery are illegal, and liable to get you killed if caught, but there's always treasure hunting. The world has been populated, it is thought, for tens upon tens of thousands of years. In that time, all kinds of empires have fallen, treasures buried, entire peoples (and their priceless artifacts) coming and going in the span of just a few hundred years.

This opens up a business opportunity. The ownership of such things is typically seen as falling to whomever finds it. And so, in the taverns and social houses around the world, people band together, agree to split whatever they find, and set off to the nearest dungeon or cavern.

These adventurers are eager, but green — though they're happy to join you, they're often little more than ordinary folk with a bit of equipment and training, and sometimes barely that. If you're looking to join with people a bit more powerful, who've survived a few expeditions, you'll need to look elsewhere.

3.3.4 Hirelings

Throughout the world, you may run across hirelings who will fight with you — for a fee. Seasoned adventurers who have made it through dungeons and caverns by way of skill and luck, hirelings can be adventurers or warriors, wizards, shepherds, or any class that you might pick yourself. The amount that they require is based on their own experience.

Each hireling wears a selection of weapons and armour that they've found or enchanted in their travels. That said, they're not averse to picking up and wearing other items, as long as they're better than what they own.

Hirelings will act based on their circumstances and the situation, attacking nearby threats, picking up and using interesting items, and otherwise following their leader. But to give specific orders to override these behaviours (stand still, follow no matter what, etc), the order command, described in the Command Reference, can be used to do this.

3.4 Combat

The world is a dangerous place. The outer lands are home to Snakelings, Goblins, and Ogres. Monsters, formerly the stuff of ancient myth, have begun to appear once more. And priests of the dark three stalk the world like shadows, snatching the weak and unwary for blood sacrifices. What's an adventurer to do?

Combat is a popular option.

3.4.1 Attack Difficulty and Speed

Attacking uses the concept of attack difficulty to help determine whether an attack hits, speed to determine when the creature acts next after the attack, and damage to indicate what kind of punishment the attack doles out.

- **Base Difficulty** is the difficulty of the attack or weapon without any statistic or skill modifiers applied. A lower difficulty indicates a better chance to hit.
- **Total Difficulty** is the difficulty of the attack or weapon after all modifiers are applied.
- **Speed** is the speed of the attack. A lower speed value indicates a quicker attack.
- **Damage** is the range of the damage. Damage can involve dice and modifiers. A dice roll of 1d6 is like rolling a six-sided die once, meaning 1-6 damage can be dealt. 2d3+6 would mean that a 3-sided die is rolled twice, with 6 added to the result.

3.4.2 Range

Most melee weapons allow you to attack creatures directly adjacent to you. Some, however, have higher ranges, and this allows attacking creatures further away. All spears have a range of 2, and all whips have a range of 3, providing different combat possibilities for more cautious characters.

Range is only taken into consideration when the weapon is wielded as the primary weapon. When a melee weapon with range is wielded in the off hand, it is too awkward to be used to its full effect.

3.4.3 General Rules

The basic internal rules for combat are:

1. Generate the “target number” — a combination of the attacker’s weapon difficulty, weapon skill, target’s evade, and other considerations.
2. Roll 1d100.
 - If the roll is 5 or less, the attack automatically misses.
 - Otherwise, if the d100 roll plus modifiers is greater than the target number, the attack is considered a hit.
 - When the d100 roll is 96–99, the attack is a *mighty blow*.
 - When the d100 roll is 100, the attack is a *critical hit*.
3. Roll damage.
 - For a regular hit, a random value is rolled using the attack’s damage dice.
 - For a mighty blow, the maximum damage is taken.
 - For a critical hit, the maximum damage is taken.
4. Consider resistances. Multiply the damage by the creature’s resistance to that damage type.
5. If the attack is a slaying attack that affects the creature based on its race, double the damage. Typically only certain artifact weapons will grant slaying against a race or family of races.
6. Subtract the defending creature’s Soak score. For a regular hit or mighty blow, the full Soak is subtracted. For a critical hit, only a quarter of the Soak is subtracted.

3.4.4 Melee Combat

Melee combat encompasses attacking barehanded, or with a hand-held weapon. After rolling the d100 to hit, bonuses are added based on the creature’s Combat score and skill in the given weapon. Additionally, if the weapon is particularly heavy, a bonus is added based on the creature’s Strength score. If the weapon is not particularly heavy, or if the creature is attacking without a weapon, a bonus is added based on the creature’s Dexterity. For light weapons, a penalty is applied based on drunkenness. This penalty is not applied for heavy weapons, where brute strength, not finesse, powers the blow.

3.4.5 Ranged Combat

Ranged combat adds a bonus based on the creature's Archery skill, rather than Combat, adds a bonus based on the weapon skill, and then adds a bonus based on Dexterity. A penalty is applied based on drunkenness. If particularly skilled at ranged combat (100 in the appropriate skill), there is an additional damage bonus based on the creature's level.

3.4.6 Magical Combat

Magical combat (e.g., attacking with a Wizard's or Witchling's spells) adds bonuses based on the Magic skill and the creature's Intelligence score. Penalties are applied based on drunkenness and level of burden.

3.5 Quests

But not everything in the world wants to kill you. Some NPCs are capable of granting quests. Quests are unlocked by having the appropriate pre-requisites, and then talking to a particular NPC. Quests will show up in the list of quests (see Commands). When quests are completed, a reward is typically given — an item, skill training, etc. Quests typically provide rewards that help much more than the random items found on the dungeon floor, but tend to be dangerous, and should be taken with caution.

3.6 The Passing of Time

As your character moves through the world, time passes. And as time passes, the moon's phase changes as well. The moon has long been known to have a direct effect on the forces in the world - not only tidal, but the elements, and primordial forces, too. When the moon waxes or hangs full, elemental and celestial damage is more potent; when the moon wanes or stands new, acid, poison, shadow, and arcane forces are at their peak. The moon is also said to affect other things, such as the ability to train one's strength or intelligence, but these forces are not well-understood.

3.7 Finding a Home

Though *Shadow of the Wyrms* has questlines that you can follow, there are other opportunities, unrelated to saving (or destroying) the world. One of these is building—all the buildings had to come from somewhere, and while they're typically built from stone, sod is a popular building material as well. If you're in possession of stone blocks or sod bricks, you can drop them to build walls, and if you drop them on a space you've previously dug, you can build floors or roads as well. Lumber can be used similarly, to make yourself a door, or a bed. It's not much, but it can be a place to sleep, or keep the treasures you find on your travels, and if you build somewhere safe, maybe it's a place you can call home when you retire as well.

3.8 Maps and Permanence

Map permanence in *Shadow of the Wyrms* refers to whether a map will persist after it's generated. Some maps (such as Carcassia, Isen Dun, and others) are defined in configuration files and will look the same every game. Some maps, such as dungeons, sewers, and the randomized towns, will generate once, and thereafter look the same when you leave and come back. Most other terrain maps — such as forests, fields, mountains, and hills — will not. With these, if you leave and come back, you will find yourself on a new map.

However, there are exceptions to both permanence and non-permanence. There is a dungeon complex, as well as a set of old sewers, that seem to be infinite and never generate the same way twice. Coming back up to the surface it will feel as if everything is new, because it is. Similarly, sometimes the woods and fields stay the same, and there are a number of possible reasons for this. Building things will make a map permanent, but so too will a number of other conditions: planting trees, or stumbling upon hermitages, graves, and other significant features.

4 Commands

4.1 Movement and Attacking

Move using number keys, vi keys, or arrow keys. Attempting to move into a creature's tile will either attack it, if the creature is hostile, or else prompt for confirmation to attack, switch places, or squeeze past. If carrying a digging implement, and trying to move into a diggable tile (e.g. rock, earth), an attempt to dig will be made.

7, y	8, k, ↑	9, u
4, h ←	s, .	6, l, →
1, b	2, j ↓	3, n

w Automatic movement

< Ascend on world map tiles, staircases, etc.

> Descend on world map tiles, staircases, etc. On a non-staircase tile, while carrying a shovel, dig.

4.2 Actions

5 Rest for a while.

, Pick up item.

; Pick up all items.

d Drop item.

i View equipment, items, and the item codex.

I View items and the item codex.

_ Pray.

s Search your surroundings.

x Examine any tile currently in view.

f Fire a missile.

D Drink a potion.

r Read a scroll or a book.

\$ Display number of ivory pieces currently on hand.

e Eat a comestible.

C Chat with an adjacent creature.

- a** Apply a nearby terrain feature.
- N** Inscribe on the current tile, or name the current part of the world.
- q** List current quests.
- z** Cast ('z'ap) a known spell.
- B** Display bestiary information.
- v** Evoke a wand.
- K** Kick.
- O** Offer a sacrifice while at an altar.
- /** Skin a corpse.
- P** Show the current piety level.
- X** Show experience-related details.
- c** Search the item codex.
- o** Give orders to your followers.

4.3 The Bestiary and Item Codex

The bestiary and item codex provide a way to get more information about the creatures and items you encounter in your journey. The bestiary is a compendium of information on creatures throughout the world, providing a verbose description of every beast and person you might meet.

The item codex is used to get information on items. These can be items held in your possession, but the codex can also be used to search for items you do not have - artifacts, weapons, armour, wands, and anything else you might find. The item codex provides more information than the bestiary, showing resistances and enchantments, details specific to certain types of item (nutrition for food and potions, evade and soak for armour, charges for wands, and so on), and also provides a textual description of the item itself.

4.4 Leaving the Game

- S** Save the game, then quit.
- Q** Quit the game and abandon the current character.

4.5 Miscellaneous

M View messages in the message buffer.

W Melee weapon information.

R Ranged weapon information.

V Game version details.

T Current date, time, and weather.

! Toggle auto actions.

@ Display character details.

Dump character details to disk.

F1 Show current resistance information.

F2 Show current conduct information.

F3 Show skills.

F8 Switch between fullscreen and windowed mode, if the display type allows it.

F9 Switch colour palettes, if the display type allows it.

F10 Switch between tiles and ASCII, if applicable.

F11 Execute a Lua statement.

F12 Reload Lua scripts, textures, and string identifiers.