

RIVER WORLD

A pencil and paper adventure game



END.

Witchwind	Cost: 2 ♂	Prerequisites: Weather Magic	Description: Summon a wind with an appearance of your choice, it surrounds you and lifts you into the air, allowing you to fly. The wind only lasts for thirteen seconds, so you may need to make an action roll to travel long distances, using your agility and your witchcraft. If you're carrying more than about twice your weight with you, you might have to make an action roll to avoid falling, using strength and witchcraft. You can also use this action to save up to seven people (including yourself) who are falling, slowing their fall so they land harmlessly.
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Witch's Curse	Cost: 2 ♂	Prerequisites: Witchcraft ■■■■■	Description: If someone makes you a promise fully of their own free will, you can choose any curse you can think of. If they ever break their promise, they are instantly afflicted by that curse. The curse must be a bad thing for the promise maker.
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Witch Eyes	Cost: 1 ♂	Prerequisites: Transfiguration	Description: Your eyes change color and you gain the ability to see through magical illusions at will, including seeing the invisible, and seeing normally if you've been magically blinded. You can also see ghosts and people's emotions. Lasts until you choose to end the spell or the sun rises.
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Walk Through Dreams

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: Spirit Binding

Description: You can enter the dreams of anybody who you've met before, even over great distances. You can choose the form of your dream self, and the target may or may not realize what's happening. You and the dreamer can both gain control of the dream environment. You can use this spell when you're awake or before you go to sleep to mingle your dreams with the target's. If you're awake, you enter a trance-like state while in the dream. If you cast this spell and it turns out the target isn't sleeping, it doesn't work. You can bring up to two companions with you into the dream, as long as they're sleeping.

Weather Magic

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: **either** witchcraft ¶¶ or boatcraft ¶¶¶

Description: Make an action roll to try to control the weather within the area you can see, using **perception** or **wisdom** and adding **witchcraft**. If you just want to nudge the weather in a direction it might have gone anyway, it's **easy**. If you want to create a sudden rainstorm or strong wind or turn rainy skies sunny, it's **moderate**. Creating or stopping a thunderstorm might be **hard**, and a tornado or monsoon might be **very hard**. If you succeed, the weather you conjured gradually forms over the next few minutes. Casting this spell means attempting to make a single change to the weather, but if you succeed your change can persist for as long as you want it to up to one day.

Weird Smell

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: **either** Chemistry or Smoke Bomb

Duration: One day

Description: Counterfeit any smell of your choice by burning a small packet of chemicals. More complex spells may take up to an hour to produce, but most can be ready immediately. The smell can have the range and force of something extremely pungent, and lasts for a day.

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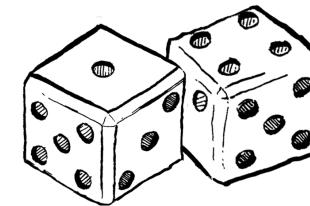
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Vanish and Return		Vanish and Return	
Prerequisites: Invisibility		Prerequisites: Invisibility	
Description: Space swirls around you and you vanish into non-being. Before you do this, choose any amount of time. When that time is up, you re-appear in the exact same spot. While you're vanished you don't exist, and when you return it either knock the obstruction out of the way, or, if it's too large and solid, you are thrown out of it to the nearest empty space, taking one wound.		Description: Space swirls around you and you vanish into non-being. Before you do this, choose any amount of time. When that time is up, you re-appear in the exact same spot. While you're vanished you don't exist, and when you return it either knock the obstruction out of the way, or, if it's too large and solid, you are thrown out of it to the nearest empty space, taking one wound.	
Durataion: Any amount of time you choose		Durataion: Any amount of time you choose	
Cost: 2⚡		Cost: 2⚡	
Undo Wounds		Undo Wounds	
Prerequisites: Reverse Time		Prerequisites: Reverse Time	
Description: You create a field of inverted time around a single wound or injury on yourself or someone you can see. Make a moderate action roll using your wisdom, dexterity or perception and adding your alchemy skill. If you succeed, the target can restore one crossed-out heart. Can also be used to repair small objects. Does not work on wounds that are more than a day old.		Description: You create a field of inverted time around a single wound or injury on yourself or someone you can see. Make a moderate action roll using your wisdom, dexterity or perception and adding your alchemy skill. If you succeed, the target can restore one crossed-out heart. Can also be used to repair small objects. Does not work on wounds that are more than a day old.	
Cost: 1⚡		Cost: 1⚡	
Unbalancing Strike		Unbalancing Strike	
Prerequisites: Martial Arts		Prerequisites: Martial Arts	
Description: Use this action before you make an attack using your strength . If your attack succeeds, your opponent takes a wound, and also immediately has to make a hard action roll using their strength and adding their close combat skill. If they fail, they are knocked off their footing, and you can choose one ally who's at close range to get an immediate free attack against them.		Description: Use this action before you make an attack using your strength . If your attack succeeds, your opponent takes a wound, and also immediately has to make a hard action roll using their strength and adding their close combat skill. If they fail, they are knocked off their footing, and you can choose one ally who's at close range to get an immediate free attack against them.	
Cost: 1⚡		Cost: 1⚡	
Can't use this action on yourself.		Can't use this action on yourself.	

1. HOW TO PLAY

River World is an adventure game where you create a character and try to use their skills and abilities to overcome obstacles in a fictional world. Your adventure can happen on a river, an ocean, a desert, or any other kind of world you're interested in building with your group.

One player at a time will take the role of the **narrator**, and the others will create a **character** to play as. The narrator will describe a situation, and you'll describe how your character reacts.

Any time you want your character to **take an action** in the story, you can **roll two dice**.



How hard is the action?

Difficulty	What you need to roll to succeed
Easy	0 or higher
Moderate	7 or higher
Hard	9 or higher
Very Hard	11 or higher
Impossible	13 or higher

ALCHEMY'S POCKET CHART

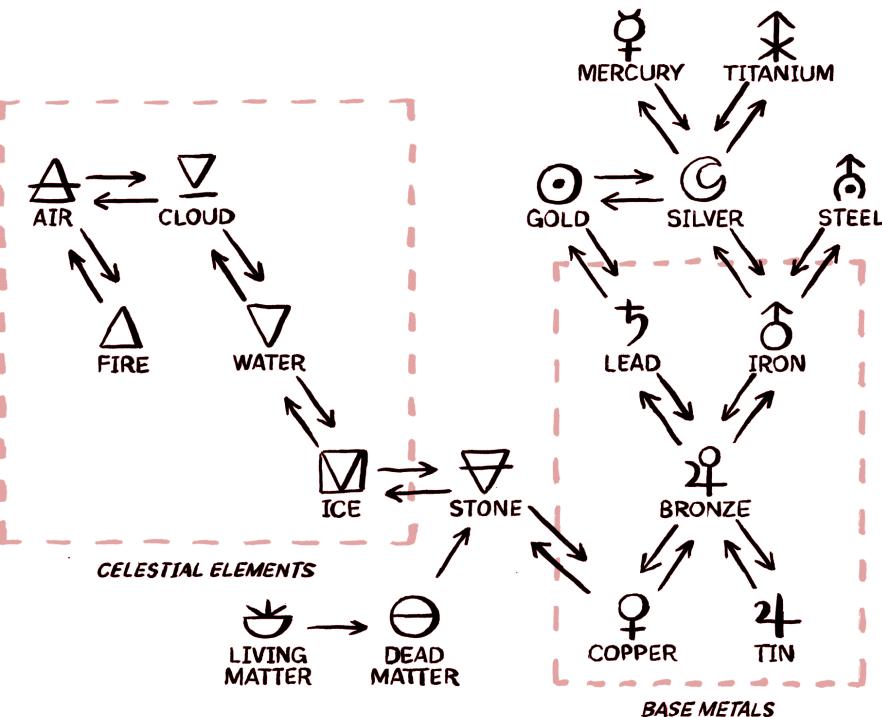
Transmutation

Triage Healing

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: medicine # # #

Description: Make a **moderate** action roll on a target you can touch using your **wisdom**, **perception**, or **dexterity** and adding your **medicine** skill. If you succeed, the target can restore one heart. Succeed or fail, you can then immediately try this three more times on different targets, but the second time



Description: Transform the appearance of someone you can touch, or yourself. You might get a **bonuses dice** or a **penalty dice** based on your character's six core skills, which are called **dice skills**. You can also add bonus points for one skill of your choice. You can improve your skills as the story continues.

Cost: X $\frac{1}{2}$

Prerequisites: Alchemy $\frac{1}{2}$

Durations: Permanent

Description: Use this action to transform something you can touch. The object's shape and volume remain the same, but its substance is transmuted to something else. You can choose to transform the whole object or only part of it, but everything you transform must transform into the same new substance. The volume of matter that you transmute cannot be more than about three times the size of your body. **Alchemy is an arcane and complex science**: refer to the Alchemist's Table are connected by an arrow, transmuting in that arrow's direction only costs 1 $\frac{1}{2}$. If they're farther apart, it costs the number of arrows that are between the substances. For instance, turning **bronze into gold** costs 2 $\frac{1}{2}$. Turning **air into ice** costs 3 $\frac{1}{2}$. In order to transmute across one of the dotted lines on the Alchemist's Table, like turning **lead into gold** or **stone into ice**, you must have at least $\frac{1}{2}$ in the **alchemy** skill. "Dead matter" includes any form of processed organic matter, such as wood, wax, oil, smoke, or rocks and minerals. To try to transmute someone's living flesh you need to make even plastic if you're playing in a more modern setting. "Stone" includes all transmute enough to deal one wound.

Continue to page 4 to make your character.

If your strength was 2, you would just roll 2 dice. If your strength was 9, if your strength had been a 1, you'd get a penalty dice each other out: if something adds a penalty, but that means you rolled a 9. If your strength had been a 1, you'd get a penalty, and that same roll would be a 6 (4 + 2).

So if the dice skill you're rolling with is **strength**, and your strength is 3, you get a bonus. Let's say you roll $\frac{1}{2}$: a 4, a 2, and a 5. You count the highest two (4 + 5), so that means you rolled a 9. If your strength had been a 1, you'd get a penalty dice means you roll three dice, and count the highest two. A bonus dice means you get to roll three dice, and count the lowest two. A penalty dice means you roll the lowest two. If you have a 1, have a 3 in the dice skill you're rolling with, you get a bonus dice. If you have a 1, have 3 in the dice skill you're rolling with, you get a bonus dice. If you have a 1, you get a penalty dice.

On top of that result, you can also add points for one **skill** (see page 34). The rules in this book are not intended to cover every possible situation your characters will run into. Where there is ambiguity, you are expected to make your own choices and interpretations. When the players in your game disagree, the narrator can act as a referee.

These rules are also intended to be flexible. They're written with a low-technology premodern fantasy world in mind, but they can bend and stretch to accommodate whatever story you're excited to tell together.

The rules in this book are not intended to cover every possible situation your characters will run into. Where there is ambiguity, you are expected to make your own choices and interpretations. When the players in your game disagree, the narrator can act as a referee.

Tactical Move

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: leadership ¶¶

Description: Use a non-attack action to let an ally of your choice who can hear or see you make any action. If they use it to attack, you can choose their target.

Thief's Ingenuity

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: stealth ¶¶¶

Description: You have a mechanical affinity, and can attempt to create or dismantle a mechanism or device. The difficulty is one level easier than it would normally be: **hard** becomes **moderate**, **moderate** becomes **easy**, etc.

Tracking

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: wilderness ¶¶

Description: Roll to track a person or creature. Describe how you attempt to track them, then make an action roll depending on the environment and your target. The difficulty is one level easier than it would normally be: **very hard** becomes **hard**, **hard** becomes **moderate**, etc.

Transfer Wounds

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: witchcraft ¶¶

Description: When you successfully wound a foe with a close range attack, you can immediately use this action to heal a wounded ally in your line of sight. That ally's wound is instantly inflicted on your target instead. The target still only takes one wound.

Transfiguration

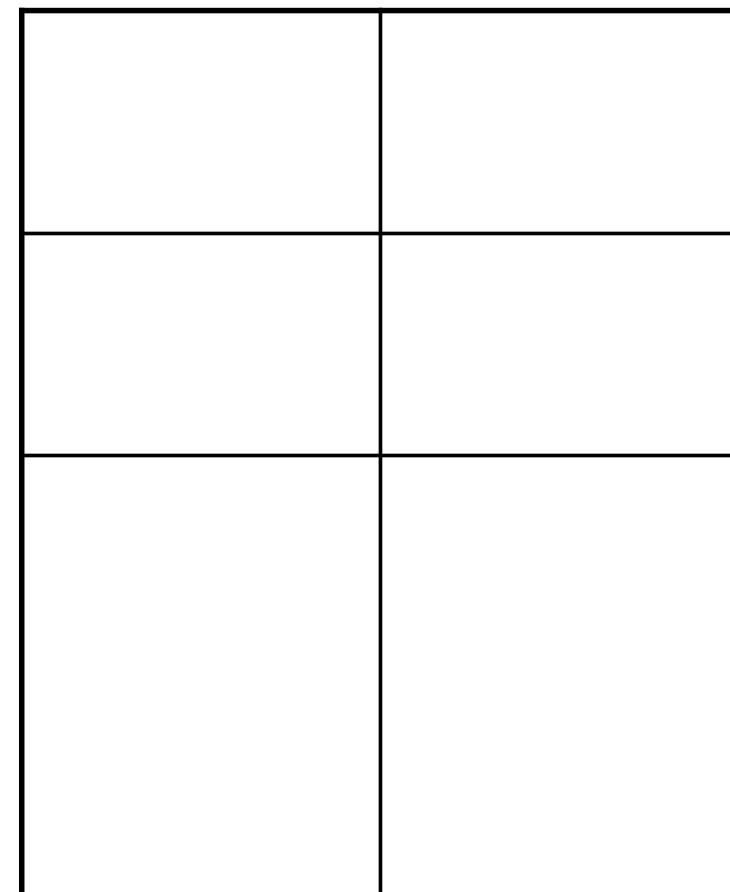
Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: witchcraft ¶¶

Duration: Until sunrise

2. HOW TO MAKE A CHARACTER

Get a piece of paper and draw three lines across it like this:



Description: Permanently change all your dice skill scores to any number between 1 and 4, as long as they all add up to 15. Having a dice skill of 4 means you get two bonus dice when you roll with that dice skill.
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisites: Martial Arts
Cost: 12★
Superhuman Fitness
Some powerful spectral beings may be able to break through your boundary but it will always be at least very hard to do so. The power of the boundary is broken by the rising of the sun.
Bidding to catch a drifting ghost and bargain with it, convincing it to deliver a message quickly over a long distance, create an illusion, or influence nature.
Your boundary, you can use spirit bidding to bar any spirit of your choice (except for living human souls) from crossing that boundary. A witch can use spirit bidding to catch a drifting ghost and bargain with it, convincing it to deliver a
message quickly over a long distance, create an illusion, or influence nature.
Until the boundary is broken or the sun rises
Prerequisites: Witch Eyes
Description: Everything in the natural world is inhabited by a ghost or a spirit. To use this ability, you must create a physical boundary or enclosure, for example a chalk line, a cloth sack, a trail of salt or a wooden box. Once you've established
your boundary, you can use spirit bidding to bar any spirit of your choice (except for living human souls) from crossing that boundary. A witch can use spirit bidding to catch a drifting ghost and bargain with it, convincing it to deliver a
message quickly over a long distance, create an illusion, or influence nature.
Prerequisites: Both Parry and Martial Arts
Spinning Parry
For long range attacks, you cannot use this action unless the target doesn't know you're there.
Description: When you're using Parry, you can also use this action to use your free attack against another than the one who you're parrying.
Prerequisites: Both Parry and Martial Arts

Skills	Special Abilities
Agility: Dexterity: Strength: Perception: Wisdom: Charisma:	
Name: _____ Defense: 	Items

Then fill in the sections with these labels:

Sharpshooter

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: **either** archery # # or distance throwing # #

Description: Use this action any time you're making a long range attack roll to add one bonus dice to your roll. Can be combined with other special abilities.

Single Combat

Cost: 3★

Prerequisites: **either** negotiation # # or etiquette # #

Description: Halt a conflict and force a resolution by single combat, with terms agreed on by both sides. Each side chooses a representative, and they fight either to incapacitation or to the death (the fighters must agree on the terms). The conflict is then resolved. If you try to use this action against an enemy that outnumbers you 5 to 1 or more, you have to make a **hard** action roll using **charisma** and **negotiation**. If you succeed, you can force the single combat, but if you fail you still lose the three stars you spent.

Smoke Bomb

Cost: 2★

Prerequisites: **either** Chemistry or Thief's Ingenuity

Duration: Ten seconds

Description: Learning this skill means you have the ability to use substances from your environment to make smoke bombs. When you throw one, you and everyone in close range to you is enveloped by a cloud of thick smoke that it's impossible to see through. The smoke lingers for about ten seconds, then dissipates. You can choose the color of the smoke.

Sneak Attack

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: stealth # #

Description: Before you make an attack roll using your **agility**, you can choose to use this action to make it a sneak attack. This can either mean you're sneaking up on an enemy unawares, or just striking in an unexpected way. If you then fail

The six skills in the middle left box are your character's **dice skills**.

Every time you roll the dice you use either agility, dexterity, strength, perception, wisdom or charisma.

Every skill has a score of 1, 2, or 3, with an average person being all 2's.

Use a pencil to **assign your six dice skills** however you want, as long as they add up to **a total of 13**, and are all either 1, 2, or 3.

Name: Honrad ♥ ♥ ♥	Defense: ★ ★ ★
Dice Skills Agility: 3 Dexterity: 2 Strength: 1 Perception: 3 Wisdom: 1 Charisma: 3	Items
Skills	Special Abilities

Which one of the six you use depends on the type of action you're trying to succeed at:

Description: Reverse the flow of time, causing everything that happened in the past **twelve seconds** to undo itself. You alone retain the memory of what happened the first time. The stars you spent to use this action are not restored, but any other consequences of the past twelve seconds are undone, including restoring hearts and stars, and even returning the dead to life.

Prerequisites: Keen Observation
Cost: 1★

See Through Illusion

Description: Notice the subtle flaws that give away a magical or non-magical illusion. When you use this action the narrator must tell you truthfully whether you're looking at an illusion.

Prerequisites: Keen Observation
Cost: 0★

Self Defense

Description: Increase your defense to 9 plus the number of **flips** you have in the close combat skill. If you don't have any points in close combat, you can raise your defense to 10.

Prerequisites: Parry
Cost: 1★

Set a Snare

Description: Either wilderness **or** stealth **or** set a trap of your choice, or triggers another existing mechanism.

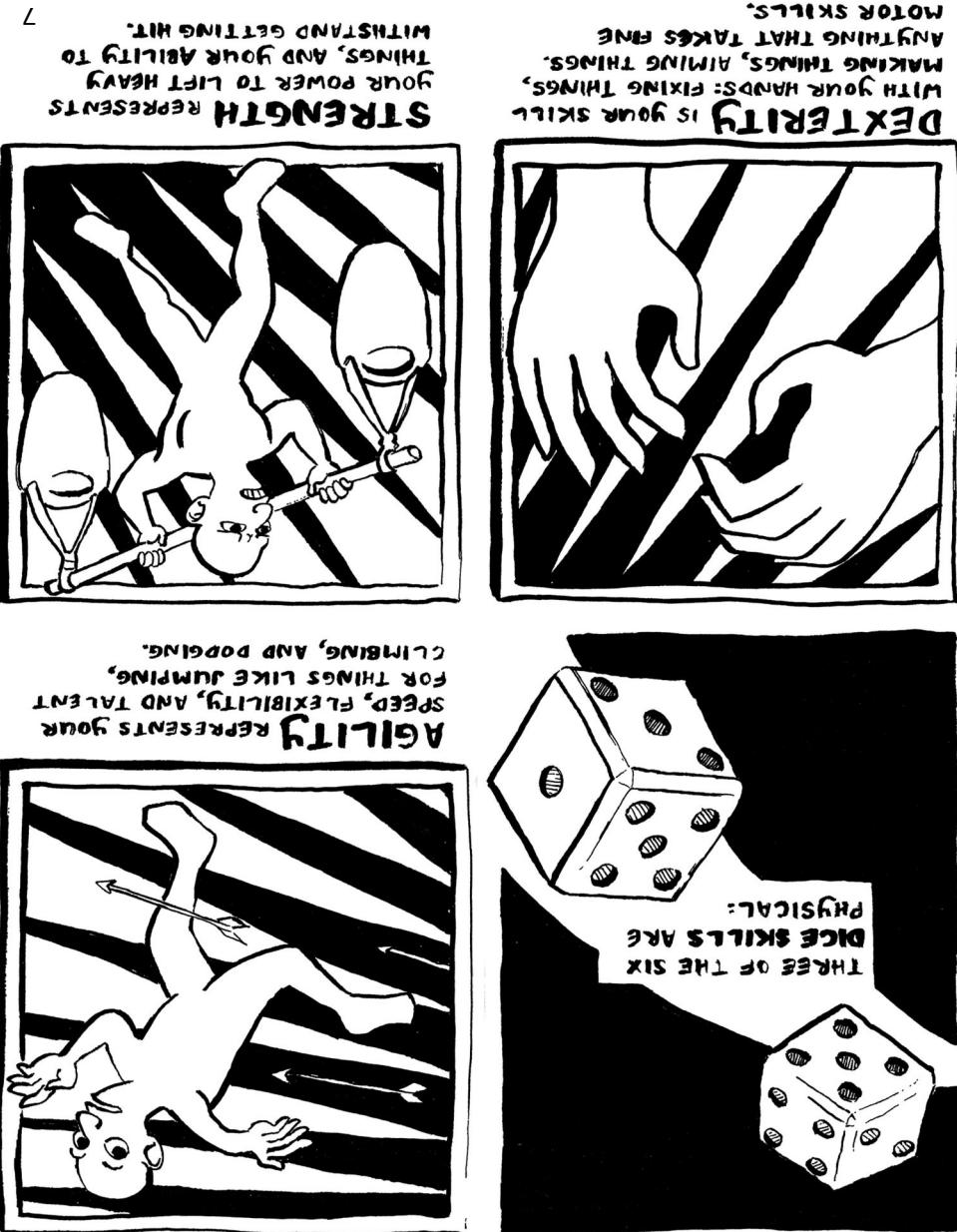
Prerequisites: either wilderness **or** stealth **or** set a trap of your choice, or triggers another existing mechanism.

Cost: 0★

Shape Shifter

Description: When you use Transfiguration or Metamorphosis **on yourself**, make a hard action roll using either your **charisma** or **perception**, and adding your witchcraft. If you succeed, you can immediately restore the star you spent to use Metamorphosis or Transfiguration.

Prerequisites: Witchcraft **or** Transfiguration or Metamorphosis **on yourself**, make a hard action roll using either your **charisma** or **perception**, and adding your witchcraft. If you succeed, you can immediately restore the star you spent to use Metamorphosis or Transfiguration.



Prerequisites: **either** negotiation # or music #

Description: Your skills as an orator let you win back a crowd even if they're skeptical at first. Any time you fail an action roll using your **charisma**, you can use this ability to re-roll and use the new result instead, as long as the action you're taking involves speaking to two or more people.

Quickdraw

Cost: 2★

Prerequisites: Return Fire

Description: If someone other than you is about to get the first move in a fight, use this action to get to go first instead.

Repair

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: craftsmanship #

Description: Try to fix a broken object. Describe how you attempt to fix it using the supplies and knowledge you have access to, then make an action roll depending on how hard the job is. The difficulty is one level easier than it would normally be: **hard** becomes **moderate**, **moderate** becomes **easy**, etc. You can use your **wisdom** or **perception** and add your **craftsmanship** skill. You cannot use this action on things which are broken beyond repair.

Return Fire

Cost: 1★

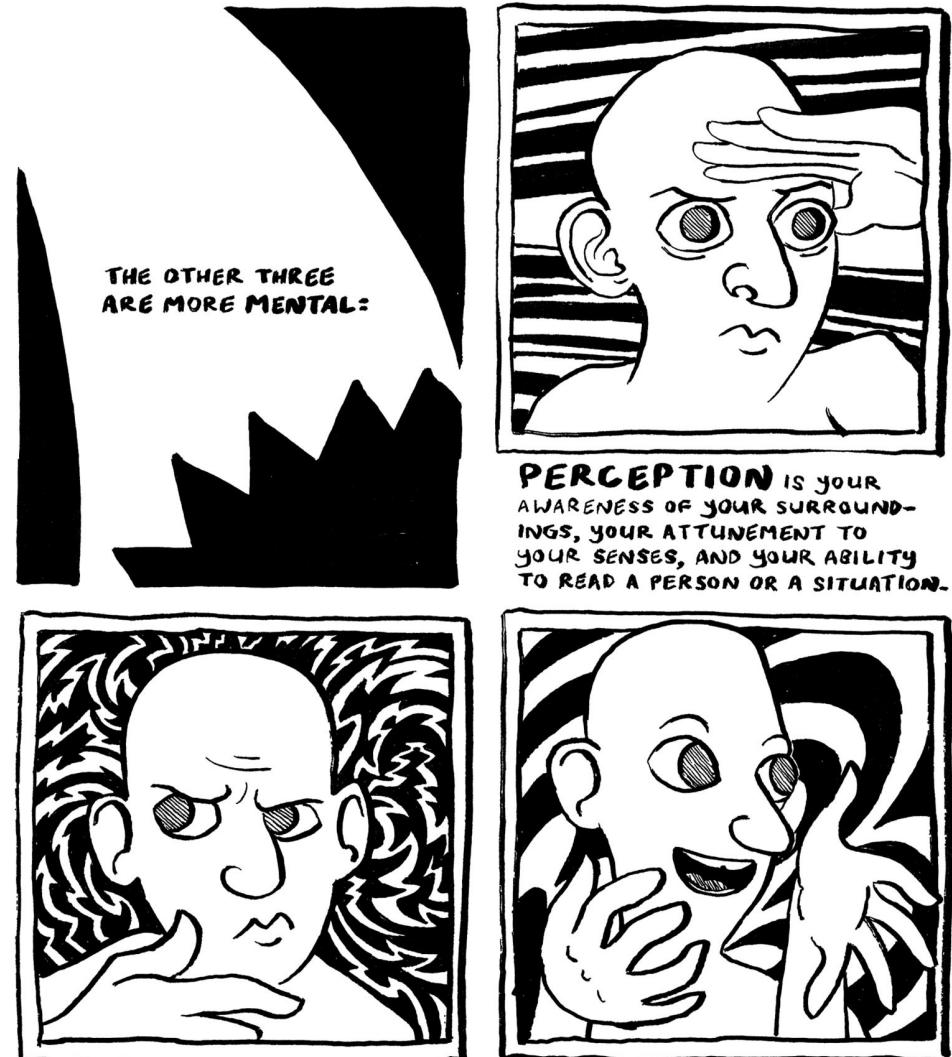
Prerequisites: **either** archery # or distance throwing #

Description: When someone makes a long range attack against you and fails, use this to get an immediate long range attack back against them. Like with Parry, two opponents with this action can continue using it back and forth until one of them hits.

Reverse Time

Cost: 5★

Prerequisites: Distort Time



WISDOM REPRESENTS HOW MENTALLY QUICK YOU ARE AND HOW MUCH KNOWLEDGE YOU HAVE.

CHARISMA IS SOCIAL SKILLS, HOW LIKABLE YOU ARE, HOW TRUSTWORTHY YOU SEEM, AND HOW GOOD YOU ARE AT LEADING, NEGOTIATING, OR LYING.

Public Speaking	
Prerequisites: Parry	Cost: 1 Δ
Description: When you use Parry against an opponent, you can use this action to push them, forcing them to back up in any direction you choose. You also choose how far they back up, up to about six steps. You must move with them, staying engaged in combat.	
Pressing Advance	
Prerequisites: Parry	Cost: 1 Δ
Description: When you use Parry against an opponent, you can use this action to attack a target more aggressively than normal consequences for failure.	
Press Your Luck	
Prerequisites: either Self Defense or Narrow Escape	Cost: 1 Δ
Description: Re-roll any failed roll and take the new result instead. If you fail again, you suffer a critical failure . On an attack roll, this means that you accidnetally make yourself vulnerable, and an opponent gets an instant attack against you. On any other kind of roll, it just means the narrator will devise a harsher than normal consequence for failure.	
Poison Immunity	
Prerequisites: either Herb Foraging or Thieft's Ingenuity	Cost: 1 Δ
Description: Once full day	
Description: Use herbal concoctions to make yourself or one other person immune to all venoms, toxins, and poisons, for one day.	
Plume of Fresh Water	
Prerequisites: Conjure Ice	Cost: 1 Δ
Description: Turn air into water, making a stream erupt with medium force from any point you can see, in a direction of your choice. It's about twelve gallons per minute, and can last up to six minutes.	

If you get a third X, you die.

When you cross out your last heart you're either knocked unconscious, severely injured, disarmed, or otherwise incapacitated. When this happens you have to add an X underneath your hearts. Hearts and stars can be restored by a good meal and a night's rest, but an X is a serious injury that can only be erased when your character spends a **full week** resting and recovering: one week, one X erased.

What if you run out of hearts?

Next, use a pencil to set your **Defense** to 9. This represents how hard you are to hit in a fight.

The stars on the top right of your character sheet represent how many **Special Abilities** you can use before you need to rest. Special Abilities are explained on [Page 33](#).

To learn how you can improve your dice rolls with **Skills** and what the symbol means, turn to [Page 34](#).

The hearts on the top left of your character sheet represent how many **wounds** you can take before being killed or incapacitated.

Harts, Skills, and Stars

Parry

Cost: 0★

Prerequisites: either close combat # or wilderness #

Description: When someone makes a close range attack against you and fails their attack roll, this action lets you instantly make an attack back against them. If both parties have Parry, they can continue using it back and forth against each other until someone lands a hit.

Pass in Silence

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: stealth #

Duration: Until you make a noise

Description: You make yourself completely silent and can move without making a sound. It lasts until you speak or choose to make any kind of noise.

Peak Fitness

Cost: 8★

Prerequisites: Martial Arts

Duration: Permanent

Description: Permanently change your dice skill scores (agility, dexterity, strength, perception, wisdom, and charisma) to any numbers between 1 and 3, as long as they all add up to 14.

Pickpocket

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: stealth #

Description: Roll to steal an item from someone. Describe how you attempt to steal it, then make an action roll depending on the circumstances. The difficulty becomes one level easier than it would normally be: **very hard** becomes **hard**, **hard** becomes **moderate**, etc. You get to know the difficulty before committing to trying this action. You can use your **dexterity** and add your **stealth** skill.

Whether you succeed or fail, the target will notice your attempt if they can make a **very hard perception** roll.

Next, choose one of these four backgrounds:

» The **Warrior** is good at fighting.

Turn to page 11

» The **Thief** is good at sneaking around and using creative or underhanded methods to get what they want.

Turn to page 15

» The **Merchant** makes their living doing a trade. They might be a skilled craftsman or a traveler who spends most of their time in the wilderness.

Turn to page 19

» The **Mage** can do magic.

Turn to page 22

If you're interested in playing as the **narrator**, turn to page 35.

Narrow Escape

If you're playing as a warrior, you must choose whether you want to specialize in **close combat** or in **long range** fighting. Pick one of these two paths, and add what it says to your character sheet.

CLOSE COMBAT

Prerequisites: climbing
Description: When an enemy moves into close range from you, or grabs, grapples, or pins you down, you can use this to get an immediate extra action.

You must use that action to try to move out of close range from the enemy.

NARROW ESCAPE

Cost: 1
Prerequisites: climbing
Description: Your weapon arcs like a boomerang or ricochets like a pinball, and you can use it as many times in a row as you can until you fail a roll.

in the **Special Abilities** section,
add:
Parry 0
Self Defense 0

and one item from this list:
a sword, a spear, a staff, an ax, a hammer, two daggers
item from this list:
in the **Items** section, add one
a compass, a tactical knife, a flint and tinder, any kind of shield,
hatchet, a sewing kit

close combat
in the **Skills** section, add:
close combat

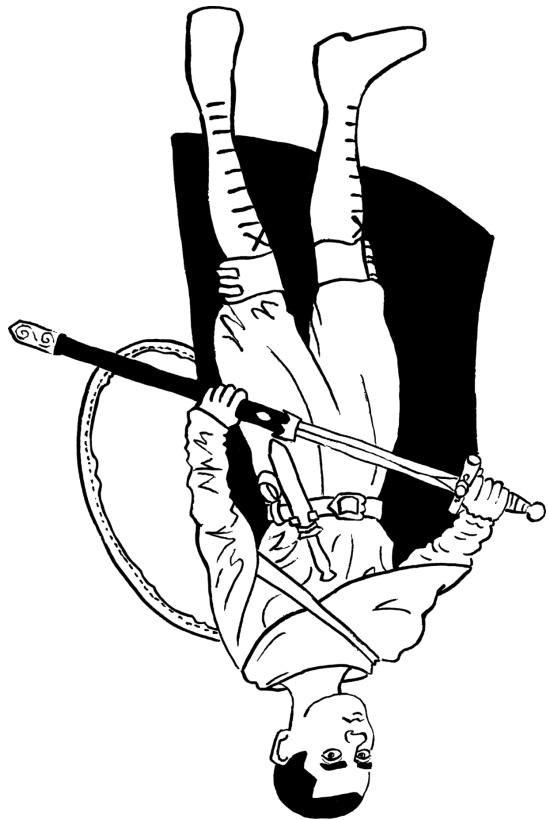
CLOSE COMBAT

Prerequisites: climbing
Description: When an enemy moves into close range from you, or grabs, grapples, or pins you down, you can use this to get an immediate extra action.

You must use that action to try to move out of close range from the enemy.

NARROW ESCAPE

Cost: 1
Prerequisites: climbing
Description: Your weapon arcs like a boomerang or ricochets like a pinball, and you can use it as many times in a row as you can until you fail a roll.



Martial Arts

Cost: 2★

Prerequisites: close combat ¶¶

Description: You're an expert in a fight, elevating violence into an art form. You can use this action immediately when you fail a close range attack roll. You get to roll again and use that result instead.

Metamorphosis

Cost: 1★ / 2★

Prerequisites: Familiar

Duration: Until sunrise

Description: For 1★, transform yourself, or an ally you can touch, into any animal that you've seen before. If your target is unwilling, the spell costs 2★, and you must succeed at a close range attack roll against them, using **agility** or **strength** and adding your **witchcraft** skill. Someone transformed against their will can make a **very hard** action roll using **charisma** and adding their **witchcraft** skill to turn back. You can't transform into most monsters or magical creatures, and some magical creatures are immune to the spell's effects. The transformation lasts until you choose to end it or the sun rises.

Minor Golem

Cost: 2★

Prerequisites: Transmutation

Duration: Until sunset

Description: Create a figure of stones, clay, or a material of your choice, that can move independently and use limited intelligence towards accomplishing a single simple task. You must write down its task and place it inside the golem. Can't be bigger than an average human. Lasts until the next time the sun sets.

Multiple Targets

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: distance throwing ¶

Description: After you make a successful range attack with a throwing weapon, use this action to make another attack roll against a target that's within close

LONG RANGE

in the **skills** section, add **one** of these two skills:
archery ¶ or
distance throwing ¶

Also in the **skills** section, add:
climbing ¶

in the **items** section, add **one** item from this list:
a bow and arrows, a spear, four throwing knives, a hand ax, a boomerang

and **one** item from this list:
a hunting knife, flint and tinder, a grappling hook with 60 feet of rope, a map of the area you're in, a sewing kit

in the **Special Abilities** section,
add:
Return Fire 1★



If a weapon or item you want isn't on the list, check with the other players, you can have it if everyone agrees it's fair.

Finish your character sheet on page 27.

with close combat	accessible now:
Keen Observation	accessible with prerequisites: Cost: 1gp Prerequisites: craftsmanship Description: Scrutinize something or someone with keen eyes. The narrator must give you additional meaningful information about what you're looking at.
LOCKMASTER	Cost: 1gp Prerequisites: either stealth or craftsmanship Description: You're good with locks. Most common locks will require a moderate or hard action roll to open without the key, using your dexterity or wisdom and adding your stealth or craftsmanship . More expensive high-quality locks might require a very hard roll, and magic locks might be impossible . Some can also try to pick a lock as a normal action roll without having Lockmaster, but the difficulty will usually be impossible , since that's the point of locks.
Lungs of Steel	Cost: 1gp Prerequisites: swimming Duration: 15 or 30 minutes Description: Make a hard strength roll. If you fail, you can hold your breath for the next 15 minutes. If you succeed, you get 30 minutes.
Magnifying Eyes	Cost: 1gp Prerequisites: illumination Duration: until sunset Description: Your irises appear to shrink and distort strangely, and you gain the power to see at up to a thousand times magnification. Lasts until you dispel it or the sun sets.

Impovised Weapon	accessible with prerequisites: Cost: 1gp Prerequisites: either stealth or craftsmanship Description: Scrutinize something or someone with keen eyes. The narrator must give you additional meaningful information about what you're looking at.
Defend	accessible with prerequisites: Cost: 1gp Prerequisites: craftsmanship Description: Scrutinize something or someone with keen eyes. The narrator must give you additional meaningful information about what you're looking at.
Fight Attack	accessible with prerequisites: Cost: 1gp Prerequisites: craftsmanship Description: Scrutinize something or someone with keen eyes. The narrator must give you additional meaningful information about what you're looking at.
Party	accessible with prerequisites: Cost: 1gp Prerequisites: craftsmanship Description: Scrutinize something or someone with keen eyes. The narrator must give you additional meaningful information about what you're looking at.
Self Defense	accessible with prerequisites: Cost: 1gp Prerequisites: craftsmanship Description: Scrutinize something or someone with keen eyes. The narrator must give you additional meaningful information about what you're looking at.

Special Abilities you have Access to as a Warrior
for descriptions see the alphabetical list of Special Abilities on page 48

Use your **perception** or **wisdom** and add your **craftsmanship** skill. If you succeed, the narrator has to tell you truthfully what the object is.

Illumination

Cost: 0★

Prerequisites: Conjure Fire

Duration: Until sunset

Description: A point of light as bright as a torch appears in your hand. It can be any color you choose, and you can attach it to objects. It lasts until you dispel it or the sun sets. You can make up to six at a time.

Improvised Carpentry

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: **either** craftsmanship # or boatcraft #

Description: Scavenge available wood to build a structure. To succeed you need to describe what tools you're using and how you're doing it, then make an action roll depending on how hard the job is. The difficulty is one level easier than it would normally be: **very hard** becomes **hard**, **hard** becomes **moderate**, etc.

Improvised Weapon

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: **either** close combat # or distance throwing #

Description: Pick up an object that's not a weapon but could reasonably be used as one in the circumstances. Your opponent is caught off guard by your unexpected tactics, so **if you fail your very first attack roll with the improvised weapon you get one chance to re-roll it**.

Invisibility

Cost: 2★

Prerequisites: Blindness

Duration: Until sunrise

Description: Make you or one person you can touch completely invisible. They stay invisible until you choose to end the spell or the sun rises. Also works on

with archery or distance throwing

accessible now:	accessible with prerequisites:
Bodkin Arrow (archery) Cover Fire Improvised Weapon (<i>dist. throwing</i>) Multiple Targets (<i>dist. throwing</i>) Quickdraw Return Fire	Ambush Predator Defense Formation Difficult Prey Sharpshooter

with climbing

accessible now:	accessible with prerequisites:
Catlike Grace Narrow Escape	Defense Formation Difficult Prey Hard to Hit Press Your Luck

whose difficulty depends on the situation, but which can't be harder than **hard**.
Description: Use this action on any object you can see. Make an action roll

Prerequisites: Keen Observation

Cost: 1*

Identify Object

special ability to locate or identify a plant.

represents your character stocking up on herbal supplies. You can use this them in your inventory, when you rest and recover your action stars, that

Description: You learn to forage for useful herbs. You don't need to keep track of Prerequisites: either wilderness #, witchcraft #, or farming #

Cost: 0*

Herb Foraging

Herb Foraging



no time pressure, this action is **easy**.

you succeed, restore one crossed-out heart. If you're not in combat and there's moderate action roll using your **Perception** and adding your **Medicine** skill. If

Description: Apply a healing salve to yourself or someone else. Make a

Prerequisites: Herb Foraging

Cost: 1*

Healing Salve

in the **Special Abilities** section, add:

Bluff 1*

section, add:

and **two** items from this list: a

crowbar, pliers, a lantern, a

telescope, a grappling hook

with 60 feet of rope, a mask

daggers, four throwing knives

a bow and arrows, a sword, two

daggers, four throwing knives

item from this list:

in the **Items** section, add **one**

in the **Skills** section, add:

stealth #

climbing #

stealth #

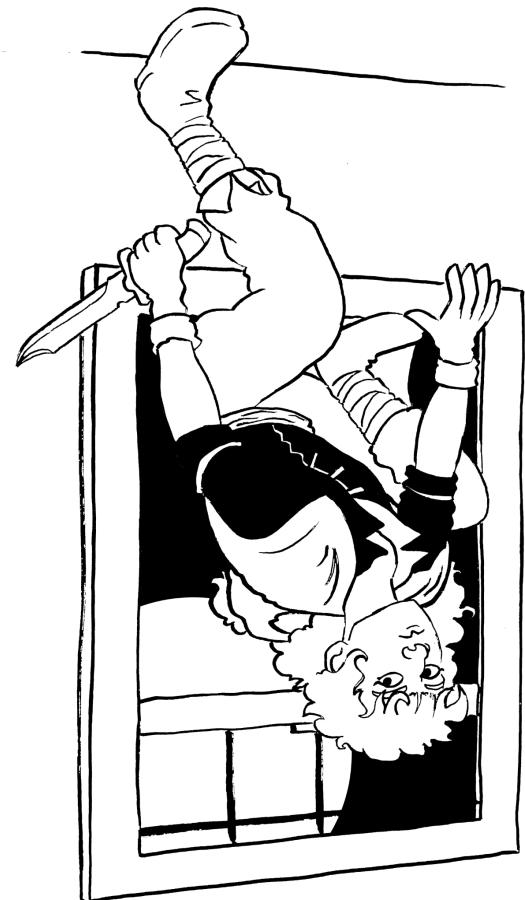
climbing #

stealth #

climbing #

Choose one of these two paths: **Burglar** or **bandit**, and add what it says to your character sheet:

THE THIEF



Golemry

Cost: 3★

Prerequisites: alchemy ¶¶¶

Duration: Permanent

Description: Create a figure of clay, metal, or a material of your choice, that can move independently and act based on **written instructions** stored inside it. It is capable of incorporating new information into itself by physically eating more written instructions. The more writing it eats and the more complex it becomes, the more likely the golem is to start making independent changes to its assigned goals and actions. A golem is tethered to its physical form, and unlike living beings, its artificial spirit cannot exist without the body it was created in.

Gravity Throw

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: alchemy ¶¶

Description: Cause an object you can see to be forcefully flung in a direction of your choice. It must be something you can physically lift, and can't be in someone else's grip. Make an attack roll against the target using your **perception** or **wisdom** and adding your **distance throwing** skill.

Hard Bargain

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: **either** negotiation ¶¶ or business ¶¶

Description: Any time you fail an action roll using your **charisma**, you can use this ability to re-roll and use the new result instead, as long as the action you're taking involves interacting one-on-one with another person.

Hard to Hit

Cost: 0★

Prerequisites: Catlike Grace

Duration: Permanent

Description: Your nimble cunning lets you **permanently raise your defense to 10.**

BANDIT

in the **skills** section,

add:

close combat ¶¶

negotiation ¶¶

in the **items** section,

add **one** item from this list:

a sword, a spear, a staff,
a hand-ax

and **two** items from this

list: a hunting knife, flint
and tinder, a compass, a
crowbar, 60 feet of rope

in the **Special Abilities**

section, add:

Feint Attack 1★



Finish your character sheet on page 27.



Special Abilities you have Access to as a Thief
lasts until you choose to reverse it or the sun rises. If the animal is your familiar,
the transformation can last as long as you want it to, even through sunrises.

for descriptions see the alphabetical list of Special Abilities on page 48
Special Abilities you have Access to as a Thief

<i>with climbing:</i>	accessible now: Catlike Grace Narrow Escape Defense Formation Difficult Prey Hard to Hit Press Your Luck
<i>with stealth:</i>	accessible with prerequisites: Bluff Don Disguise Feint Attack Lockmaster Pass in Silence Set Snare Sneak Attack Pickpocket
	accessible with prerequisites: Detect Lies Poison Immunity Smoke Bomb Thief's Ingenuity Weird Smell

against you, the spell is broken and your defense returns to normal. The spell is also broken when the sun rises.

Flight

Cost: 6★

Prerequisites: **both** Witchwind and Herb Foraging

Duration: Permanent

Description: Make an ointment to use on an inanimate object that's no more than about seven times your size, and which is substantial enough to support your weight. That object **permanently** gains the ability to fly while you are touching it (meaning you only have to spend the stars to cast this spell once), and can support your weight plus about twice your weight in cargo. To make difficult maneuvers while flying you may have to make action rolls using your **agility** and **witchcraft**. You can choose to undo the enchantment at any time, but can only use it on one object at a time. If you undo the enchantment and cast it again, you have to spend the stars again.

Fourth Heart

Cost: 4★

Prerequisites: Martial Arts

Duration: Permanent

Description: Train your body to permanently increase the **maximum number of hearts** on your character sheet by one, as long as doing so doesn't give you a total of more than **four hearts**. This works differently than most special abilities: you only need to spend four stars to use it one time, and your maximum number of hearts is **permanently increased**.

Giant Animal

Cost: 2★

Prerequisites: Metamorphosis

Duration: Until sunrise, or permanent for a familiar

Description: Increase the size of an animal you can touch, up to about the size of a moose (or an elephant if you have  in witchcraft). The transformation

with close combat

<i>accessible now:</i>	<i>accessible with prerequisites:</i>
Defend Feint Attack Improvised Weapon Parry Self Defense	Berserkergang Clever Bladework Cruel Barrage Defense Formation Fifth Heart Fourth Heart Martial Arts Peak Fitness Press Your Luck Pressing Advance Spinning Parry Superhuman Fitness Unbalancing Strike

with negotiation:

<i>accessible now:</i>	<i>accessible with prerequisites:</i>
Bluff Hard Bargain Public Speaking Single Combat	Call a Truce Detect Lies

descriptions: Your body assumes a smoke-like or liquidy form with an appearance of whatever you could normally do, but you become extremely hard to hit and **your defense increases to 12**. The next time someone succeeds at an attack roll

Cost: 2★	Flesh to Smoke	Prerequisities: Transfiguration Duration: Until sunrise, or until broken
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First Aid	Cost: 1*	doesn't give you a total of more than five hearts.
Prerequisities: either medicine  or Repair	Description: Try to heal a wound with your hands, supplies, and knowledge of anatomy. Make a moderate action roll using your wisdom or dexterity and adding your medicine skill. If you succeed, restore one crossed-out heart. If you're healing yourself, the roll is hard .	

Field of Protection

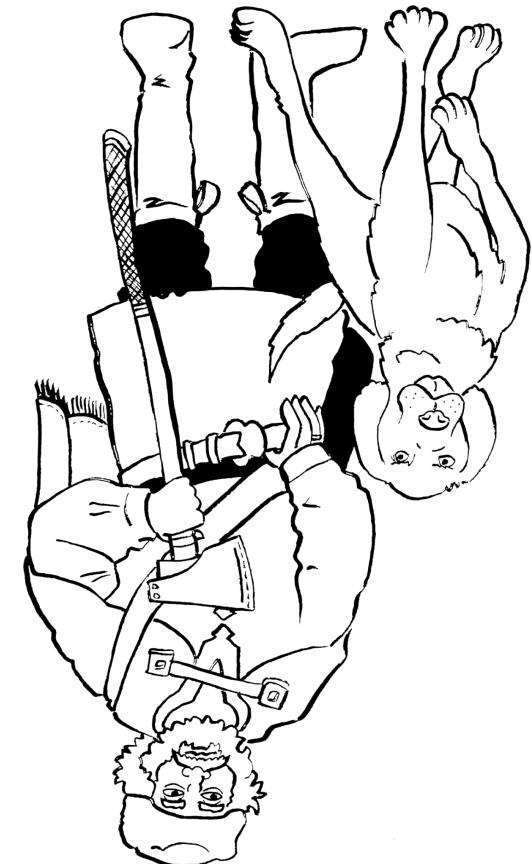
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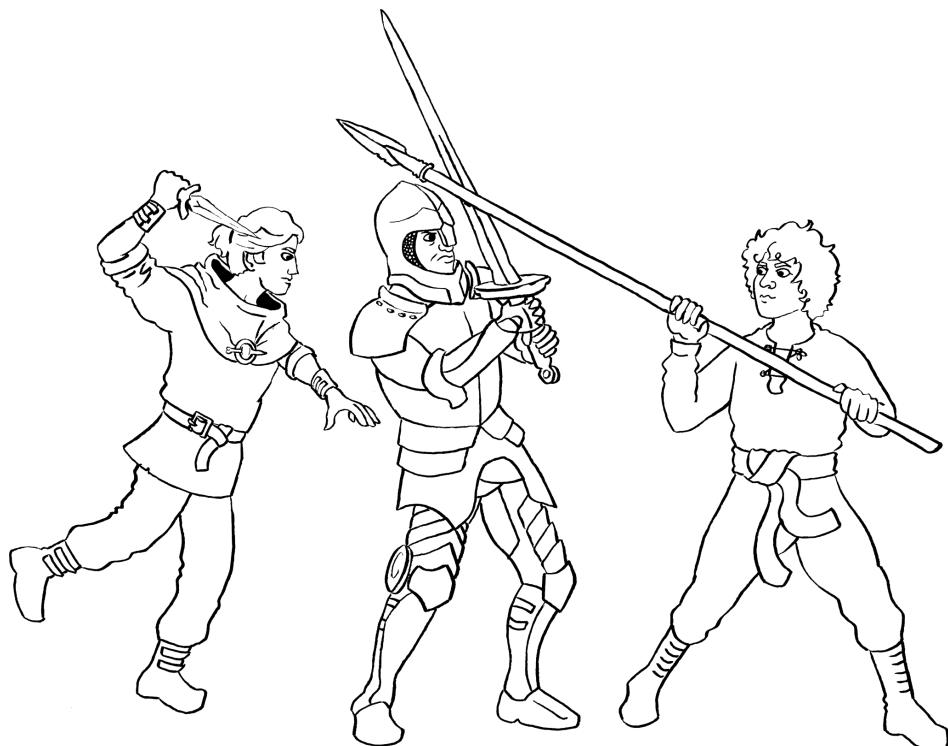
- In the items section, add one item from this list:
 - a hatchet, a bow and arrows, a machete, a wood-ax, a staff, a boomerang, a trident
 - and three items from this list:
 - a telescope, flint and tinder, a compass, a map of the region you're in, a fishing rod, a hunting spear, 60 feet of rope, a walking stick

TRAVELER

Choose one of these two paths: **traveler** or **artisan**, and add what it says to your character sheet.

THE MERCHANT





Feint Attack

Feint Attack

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: **either** close combat # or stealth #

Description: Choose a target to try to distract. Make a contest roll using your **agility** or **dexterity** against their **perception**, with both of you adding your related fighting skills. If you win or it's a tie, you strike at them with a blow intended only to distract. This creates an opening for an ally of your choice who is also at close range to get an immediate free attack action against the target. Using this action doesn't count as an attack.

ARTISAN

in the **skills** section, add:

craftsmanship #

negotiation #

in the **items** section, add **one** item from this list:

a dagger, a hatchet, a bow and arrows

and **three** items from this list:

a spyglass, ink and paper, a saw, scissors, a hammer, a map of the region you're from, a book, a crowbar, a sewing kit, a scale and weights, a chisel

also in the items section, add

silver shells: 150



If you want to, you can use these three facts as a basis for an economy:

1. a silver shell is a small silver-colored seashell.
2. a gold sun shell is a bigger, gold-colored seashell worth 10 silver shells.
3. 1 gold shell is worth about a fair wage for one day of labor.

Finish your character sheet on page 27.

Extra Stars	Cost: 5★	Prerequisites: Transmutation	Description: Permanent Duration: Transmutation	Prerequisites: both Animal Companion and Transformation Duration: Permanent, or until your bond is broken Description: Form a magical bond with an animal companion. The bond lasts until either you or the animal choose to break it. You can communicate telepathically with your familiar, and see through its eyes and experience its other senses. Any spells you have the ability to cast, you can choose to have your familiar cast instead. Acquiring a familiar also increases your reserves of magical energy: Permanently add two stars to your character sheet the first time you ever use this spell . You can only have one familiar at a time.
				mental abilities from their witch, and vice versa.

with negotiation:	accessible now:	accessible with prerequisites:	Chemistry Cost: 5★	Familiar Prerequisites: both Animal Companion and Transformation Duration: Permanent, or until your bond is broken Description: Form a magical bond with an animal companion. The bond lasts until either you or the animal choose to break it. You can communicate telepathically with your familiar, and see through its eyes and experience its other senses. Any spells you have the ability to cast, you can choose to have your familiar cast instead. Acquiring a familiar also increases your reserves of magical energy: Permanently add two stars to your character sheet the first time you ever use this spell . You can only have one familiar at a time.
with craftsmanship:	accessible now:	accessible with prerequisites:	Keen Observation Improvised Carpentry Don Disguise Durability Duration: Permanent, or until your bond is broken Description: Form a magical bond with an animal companion. The bond lasts until either you or the animal choose to break it. You can communicate telepathically with your familiar, and see through its eyes and experience its other senses. Any spells you have the ability to cast, you can choose to have your familiar cast instead. Acquiring a familiar also increases your reserves of magical energy: Permanently add two stars to your character sheet the first time you ever use this spell . You can only have one familiar at a time.	Cost: 5★
with wilderness:	accessible now:	accessible with prerequisites:	Animal Communication Dowsing Tracking Herb Foraging Dowsing Animal Communication Parry	mental abilities from their witch, and vice versa.

for descriptions see alphabetical list of Special Abilities on page 48
Special Abilities you have Access to as a Merchant

Energy Bomb

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: Transmutation

Description: You can charge up any object you can touch as long as it's not made of living matter. The object remains charged for as long as you choose, then explodes with the force of a small grenade. You can only charge one object at a time, and it must be light enough for you to physically lift. If you're using this in battle, make the attack roll using your **dexterity** or **strength**, and adding the **distance throwing** skill if you have it. Everybody within close range of your intended target is in danger of being hit by the blast. Make one attack roll for each target in that range, both enemies and allies, dealing an injury from the explosion on a success. If the sun sets while the energy bomb is still charged, it explodes.

Expert Healing

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: medicine ¶¶¶

Description: Try to heal a wound on yourself or someone else with your hands, supplies, and knowledge of anatomy. Make a **moderate** action roll using your **wisdom**, **perception**, or **dexterity**, and adding your **medicine** skill. If you succeed, the target can restore one crossed-out heart. If you're not in a fight and there's no time pressure, the difficulty is **easy**.

Expert Transmutation

Cost: 0★

Prerequisites: **both** Transmutation and Distort Space

Description: When you spend two or more stars to use Transmutation, you can use this ability at the same time to have **one star instantly refunded**.

THE MAGE

A mage can use magic in one of two ways. Students of **alchemy** use the natural chemicals and hard matter of the earth to fuel their magic. Students of **witchcraft** commune with the power of nature and the spirits of the dead for their spells. Nobody can have skill points in both **alchemy** and **witchcraft**. In addition to the spells available in the Special Abilities list, once you reach higher levels of power you can invent your own spells.

Choose one of these two paths, and add what it says to your character sheet.

Duratior: One hour.	Description: Using a stick or some other implement as a dowsing rod, choose a substance (for instance: water, salt, blood, wood). Make a Moderate action roll using Perception and adding your Alchemy or Wilderness skill. If you succeed, and if there is any of your chosen substance within three yards of the dowsing rod will point you toward it like a compass, lasting for about an hour.
Prerequisites: either alchemy or wilderness skill	
Cost: 1 Δ	
Dowsing	



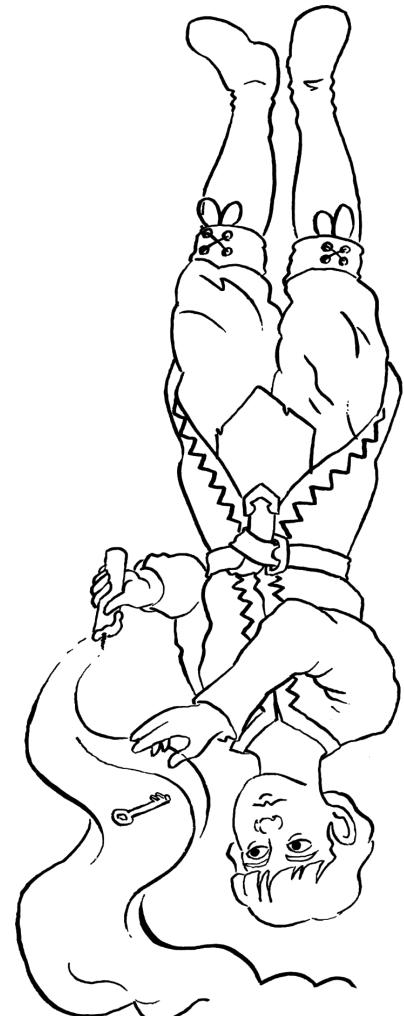
Cost: 0 Δ	Description: Use the materials you have access to to create a cunning disguise to hide the appearance of yourself or someone else.
Prerequisites: either stealth or craftsmanship skill	
in the Skills section, add:	
alchemy skill	

Don Disguise

in the **Action Stars** section, add a fourth star.

in the **Items** section, add **two** items from this list:
a glass bottle, a bronze dagger, ink and paper, a book, a magnifying lens, 20 matches, a bronze rod, a wood and leather shield, a lead brick, a vial of poison, a vial of acid, a small bomb.

Conjure Fire 1 Δ or Conjure Ice 1 Δ
of these two options:
in the **Special Abilities** section, add one



Distort Space

Cost: 2★

Prerequisites: alchemy ¶¶¶

Duration: Until sunset, or until broken

Description: Your body is surrounded by a field of distorted space, raising your **defense** to 11. When someone successfully hits you despite your raised defense, you must make a **hard** action roll using your **wisdom** and adding your **alchemy** skill. If you fail, the distortion is undone and your defense returns to normal.

Otherwise, the defensive field lasts until the sun sets.



Distort Space

Distort Time

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: alchemy ¶¶¶

Duration: One turn

Description: Use your ability to bend the flow of time to make yourself move faster than the world around you, getting an extra action during your turn in a fight. After using your first action to use Distort Time, you then get an additional three actions. The first cannot be used to attack, but the second and third can be used to do anything you want.

WITCH

in the **skills** section, add:

witchcraft ¶¶

in the **Special Abilities** section, add:

Transfer Wounds 1★

in the **items** section, add **one** item from this list:

a ritual knife, a wooden staff, a hatchet, a spear

and **one** item from this list:
a wooden wand, a crystal, a mask, a book, a candle, an astronomical chart, a mortar and pestle, flint and tinder, a map of a foreign place, a dead animal, a ghost in a jar.

in the **action stars** section, add a fourth star.



Finish your character sheet on page 27.

Accessible now:	Conjure Fire
Accessible with prerequisites:	Bolt of Lightning
Conjure Ice	Chemistry
Downing	Distort Space
Field of Protection	Distort Time
Gravity Throw	Energy Bomb
Transmutation	Expert Transmutation
Extra Stars	Golemry
Illumination	Magnifying Eyes
Minor Golem	Minor Golem
Pulse of Fresh Water	Reverse Time
Smoke Bomb	Smoke Bomb
Undo Wounds	Smoke Bomb
Weird Smell	Weird Smell

Special Abilities you have Access to as a Mage
for descriptions see alphabetical list of Special Abilities on page 48

jet of fire from the fireball, make a **moderate** action roll (also using **strength** and **alchemy**). If you fail, the fireball burns too hot and you lose control. You can immediately make one final attack by hurling the fireball at a target as you lose control, then it explodes and dissipates.

Conjure Ice

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: alchemy ¶¶

Duration: As long as you can maintain control of the ice beam

Description: A raw white beam of freezing energy crackles between the palms of your hands. You can direct the beam to make long range attacks using **wisdom** and adding your **alchemy** skill. After using the ice beam, make a **hard** action roll (also using **wisdom** and **alchemy**). If you fail, you lose control and the beam dissipates into the air.

Cover Fire

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: either archery ¶¶ or distance throwing ¶¶

Duration: One turn

Description: Choose one ally you can see to provide cover for. Until your next turn, all close or long range attacks made against that ally have one **penalty dice** added, as you protect them with cover fire. On the turn that you use this action, **you must also make a long range attack**. The attack does not need to succeed, and can be made immediately after using your non-attack action to use Cover Fire. If you are incapacitated the effect ends immediately.

Cruel Barrage

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: Pressing Advance

Description: Choose a target and make a close range attack against them. If you succeed, you can continue making repeated attacks against them as many times in a row as you can until you fail. On all but the first attack, you must use **strength** for the attack roll.

with *witchcraft*:

accessible now:	accessible with prerequisites:
Animal Communication Herb Foraging Transfer Wounds Transfiguration Weather Magic	Animal Companion Blindness Familiar Flesh to Smoke Flight Giant Animal Healing Salve Invisibility Metamorphosis Poison Immunity Shapeshifter Spirit Binding Vanish and Return Walk Through Dreams Witch Eyes Witch's Curse Witchwind

Description: A sparking, spitting ball of white-hot fire appears between the palms of your hands. You can shoot jets of flame from the fireball to make long bolts of energy. Using strength and adding your alchemy skill. After you shoot a ranged attack, using strength and adding your alchemy skill. After you shoot a

Conjure Fire

Clever Bladework	CC05: 1★	Prerequisites: Martial Arts Duration: The length of one fight Description: You're so cunning with a blade that fighting you is like solving a puzzle. For the rest of the combat engagement you're in, anyone making a close range attack against you can only use wisdom on their attack rolls. You can only use this action if you're armed with a blade.
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Chemistry Pre-requisites: **either** Identity Object, Transmutation, or literacy 
Description: Try to identify any substance you can see up close. Make a moderate action roll, using **wisdom** and adding your **craftsmanship** or **alchemistry** skill. If you succeed, the narrator must tell you truthfully what the substance is, including hidden qualities it might have, like if a drink is poisoned.

Category	Description
Prerequisites:	Climbing ■■■
Description:	Before making any action roll that has to do with jumping, climbing, dancinching, flipping and spinning, or anything acrobatic, you can use this action to deduce the difficulty of that roll. Impossible actions become very hard , very hard ones become hard , and hard or moderate both become easy , meaning you succeed automatically.
Cost:	1 ★

Once everyone's created their character, you're ready to start. Enjoy your game!

You will also be able to learn new skills and new Special Abilities over the course of the game. To learn how that works, see pages 33 and 34.

And **two** or the following items:
a lantern, any piece of jewelry, a warm blanket, a basket, any musical instrument,
a sealed envelope with a paper inside, a shovel, a mirror, a razor, a bag of seeds,
a sacred text, a set of dice, a deck of cards, an ice pick, a stool, a hammock, a
net, chalk, a bottle of any beverage, glue, a kettle, a key

You can also add one or the following skills:

- medicine
- music
- boatcraft
- leadership
- swimming
- horsemanship
- literacy
- farming
- etiquette
- business

Abilities of your choice, as long as you have the prerequisites to learn them.

Once you've chosen your character's background, add **two more Special**

Finishing your character sheet:

Bolt of Lightning

Cost: 2★

Prerequisites: alchemy #/#

Duration: As long as you can maintain control

Description: A crackling thunderbolt erupts between the palms of your hands. You can use it to strike at any target you can see, making a long range attack using your **wisdom** and adding your **alchemy** skill. **After you attack** with the lightning bolt, make a **hard** action roll (also using **wisdom** and **alchemy**) to try to **Maintain Control** of it so you can use it again. If you fail, you lose the lightning bolt but can first make one immediate free attack against a target of your choice, hurling the loose bolt in their direction. Whenever an attack with the lightning bolt succeeds, you can make an immediate second attack roll against another target within close range of the first, causing a **chain of lightning**. You can do this as many times in a row as you can before failing an attack roll, and you only need to roll to maintain control of the lightning bolt the first time.

Bluff

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: either stealth #/, negotiation #/, or business #/

Description: Use this action to make it more likely that you'll get away with a lie. Describe what you say, and if the difficulty otherwise would have been **very hard** or less, it becomes one level easier, with **hard** becoming **moderate**, etc. Special abilities like Detect Lies can counteract this.

Call a Truce

Cost: 1★

Prerequisites: Public Speaking

Description: You can use this action when you're in a fight or witness to a fight, as long as it involves fewer than 30 people. When you Call a Truce, both sides stop fighting for a moment and listen to you. You then have a chance to try to resolve the conflict, but if it's not resolved within about a minute, the fighting can resume. You can't use this more than once during the same fight.

3. FIGHTING and HEALING

Normally you don't need to worry about waiting for your turn: if you have an idea, you can speak up and try it at any time. But sometimes you might get into a fight or a struggle where you switch to going around the circle taking turns. When this happens you can take two actions on your turn:

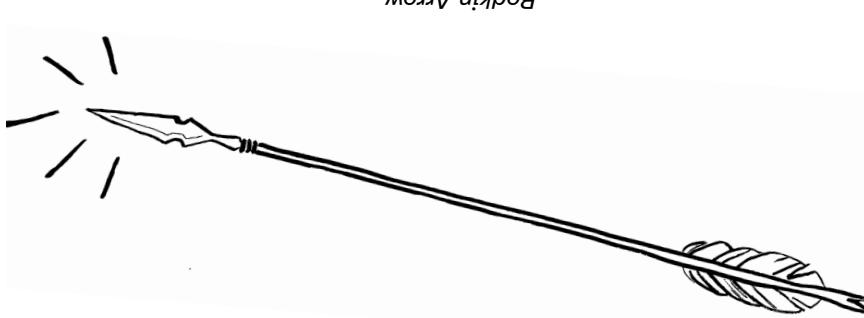
1. Optional non-attack action, you can do anything except attack
2. Main action, can be used to attack or do anything else

When you attack someone, use a dice skill that's related to what you're doing to make an **attack roll**. Just like with a normal action roll, if you have a 3 in that dice skill, you get a **bonus dice**, if you have a 1 you get a **penalty dice**, and if you have a 2, you just roll 2 dice.

Roll the dice, and add points for one related skill if you have one. The result must be **equal to or higher than the target's Defense** to succeed. If you succeed, you injure the target, and cross off one of their hearts. If you fail, they may have a Special Ability that gives them a chance to attack back.



Blindness	Prerequisities: Transfiguration Duration: Until sunrise	Description: An archer sees an armored knight charging their way. The knight has a defense score of 11. The archer has a 3 in dexterity, and one ⚡ symbol (representing a skill point) in their archery skill. They fire an arrow at the target, using charisma and your witchcraft skill. If you succeed, they are struck completely blind until you restore their sight or the sun rises. Works on humans and most animals. As with any spell that doesn't specifically say otherwise, if you fail the attack roll, you don't get your spent stars back.
Bodkin Arrow	Cost: 2 ⚡ Prerequisities: archery ⚡ Description: Spend one star to use this action means firing one armor-piercing bodkin arrow. If the target you're firing at is armored, this lets you make your attack roll as if their defense was one point lower than it actually is. This could include natural armor, like a monster with thick scales, or man-made armor. If you use this action and then miss, you can refund one of the two action stars you spent. Learning this action means you know how to inventory, when you rest and recover your special ability stars, that represents make your own bodkin arrows. You don't have to keep track of these in your inventory, when you rest and recover your special ability stars, that represents	Your character spending some time to make new arrows.



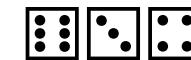
Blindness	Cost: 2 ⚡ Prerequisities: Transfiguration Duration: Until sunrise	Description: An archer sees an armored knight charging their way. The knight has a defense score of 11. The archer has a 3 in dexterity, and one ⚡ symbol (representing a skill point) in their archery skill. They fire an arrow at the target, using charisma and your witchcraft skill. If you succeed, they are struck completely blind until you restore their sight or the sun rises. Works on humans and most animals. As with any spell that doesn't specifically say otherwise, if you fail the attack roll, you don't get your spent stars back.
Bodkin Arrow	Cost: 2 ⚡ Prerequisities: archery ⚡ Description: Spend one star to use this action means firing one armor-piercing bodkin arrow. If the target you're firing at is armored, this lets you make your attack roll as if their defense was one point lower than it actually is. This could include natural armor, like a monster with thick scales, or man-made armor. If you use this action and then miss, you can refund one of the two action stars you spent. Learning this action means you know how to inventory, when you rest and recover your special ability stars, that represents	Your character spending some time to make new arrows.

In some unusual cases, like if you're unarmed and fighting someone who has a sword or armor, succeeding on an attack roll might not be enough to injure your target, and you might have to make a moderate or hard attack roll even after hitting them. But for the most part, succeeding at an action roll means dealing one injury.

What if a fight's not evenly matched?

Whether it's an attack roll or a normal action roll, you must declare what skill you're going to add to the result **before** you roll the dice.

They count the highest two, and then add 1 for their archery skill, making a total of 11. It's a hit! The knight is struck with an arrow and loses one heart.



For example:

An archer sees an armored knight charging their way. The knight has a defense score of 11. The archer has a 3 in dexterity, and one ⚡ symbol (representing a skill point) in their archery skill. They fire an arrow at the target, using charisma and your witchcraft skill. If you succeed, they are struck completely blind until you restore their sight or the sun rises. Works on humans and most animals. As with any spell that doesn't specifically say otherwise, if you fail the attack roll, you don't get your spent stars back.



Animal Companion

Berserkergang

Cost: X★

Prerequisites: either close combat ||| or wilderness |||

Duration: One turn

Description: Your judgment and self-control give way to a bloody fury. On the turn that you use this action, you can make a number of attack actions equal to the number of stars you spent to use it. Your defense also increases to 12 until the beginning of your next turn.

Contest rolls

Sometimes you might also make a **contest roll** against someone, where both of you roll on a dice skill and see who rolls higher.

For instance if two people are trying to throw each other off a narrow bridge, that might be a **contest of strength**. The narrator decides the consequences of a tie, so in that case they might both remain safe on the bridge, or they might both topple over the side together.

Deciding the turn order

When you're in a fight with just two people, make a **contest roll** (usually using **agility**) to see who gets to go first. If there are more than two people involved, have each side choose a **leader** to make the contest roll for their team. Then alternate between the teams until everyone has gone once, and repeat in the same order.

It's easiest to just go around the circle in the order the players happen to be sitting, but you can choose another order if you prefer.

If one team outnumbers the other, they'll get to go multiple times in a row before switching back to the other team. So if two people named A1 and A2 are fighting B1, B2, B3, and B4, the order would look like:

A1, B1, A2, B2, B3, B4, repeat.

Amateur Healing	Cost: 0	Prerequisites: none	Description: If you do something clever to give yourself an advantage on an attack or action roll, the narrator can give an additional bonuses dice . This allows you to use one extra dice when rolling. If you would have been rolling with a penalty (rolling three dice and taking the lowest two), the bonuses dice cancels it out and allows you to just roll two dice instead. If you already would have been rolling with a bonus, you get to roll four dice instead of just three, still counting only the highest two .
Ambush Predator	Cost: 0	Prerequisites: Sharpshooter	Description: As long as you are taking cover in your environment, this can also happen in reverse, and if you're suffering from some tactical disadvantage the narrator may give you a penalty dice . Bonuses dice and penalty dice are the most common ways to get advantage and disadvantage, rather than directly adding a +1 or -1 to the result of your roll.
Animal Communication	Cost: 0	Prerequisites: either wilderness , witchcraft , or horsemanship	Description: You can use this action any time you're able to hide yourself in your environment. For as long as you remain among cover, anyone who attacks you at long range has to use perception for their attack rolls.
Animal Communication	Cost: 0	Prerequisites: either wilderness , witchcraft , or horsemanship	Description: You can communicate with animals by imitating their sounds and body language. You can also try to calm an agitated or aggressive animal. If the animal is hostile or unfamiliar to you, you might have to make an action roll to succeed.
Animal Companion	Cost: 2	Prerequisites: Animal Communication	Description: Form a bond with an animal that trusts you. The bond allows you to communicate with both your bond and your animal companion, and only lasts as long as you maintain trust and respect. Your companion can either travel with you or wander the wild returning to you regularly. You can't have more than two animal companions at a time.

There are some Special Abilities that let you **heal** crossed-out hearts. The one called Amateur Healing (page 48) is accessible to anyone, with no prerequisites needed.

If you do something clever to give yourself an advantage on an attack or action roll, the narrator can give an additional **bonuses dice**. This allows you to use one extra dice when rolling. If you would have been rolling with a penalty (rolling three dice and taking the lowest two), the bonuses dice cancels it out and allows you to just roll two dice instead. If you already would have been rolling with a bonus, you get to roll four dice instead of just three, still counting **only the highest two**.

This can also happen in reverse, and if you're suffering from some tactical disadvantage the narrator may give you a **penalty dice**.

Bonuses dice and penalty dice are the most common ways to get advantage and disadvantage, rather than directly adding a +1 or -1 to the result of your roll.

Disadvantage, rather than directly adding a +1 or -1 to the result of your roll.

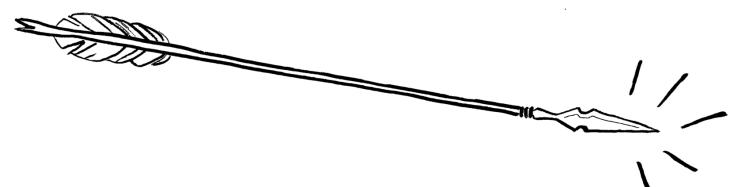


Range and Tactics

Every attack is either close range or long range. Don't worry too much about mapping out everybody's exact locations, it doesn't matter whether someone's 30 feet away from you or 40 feet, it just matters whether they're at close range, at long range, or totally out of range, and you and the other players can use your best judgment to make that call, with the narrator acting as referee.

If a close range fighter is being attacked by long range fighters, they can use their non-attack action to close the distance between themselves and the attackers. If there's treacherous terrain in between the two, it may take an action roll to succeed. Once they've **used their first action to move up close**, they can **use their second action to strike.**

An archer or other long-range fighter can use their ranged weapon up close, but doing so counts as a close range attack and can be countered with Parry if they fail.



When you get **a good night's rest** (or a full day's rest) **and a full meal**, restore your crossed-out hearts and stars, but do not erase any X's you have under your hearts. Each X requires **a full week** of rest and recovery before you can erase it.

If any of your characters have tracking and wilderness skills, use this as a chance for that player to get to use those skills. Eventually, they find the pig caught in an iron jaw trap.

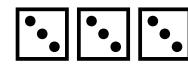
It takes a **very hard** strength roll to pry the trap open and free the wounded pig. Alternatively, dismantling the trap could be a **very hard** intelligence or dexterity roll, depending on how the player describes what they're trying to do. In either case, if they use some kind of clever method besides brute force, award bonus dice.

Whether they free the pig or not, the owner of the trap soon arrives. It's a hunter named Gargus, dressed in richly sewn velvet hunting gear and carrying a fancy looking bow and arrow and a steel sword. He's the scion of some rich local family, and he has a warrior named Norin with him to guard him. Norin has bronze armor, a bronze sword, and a wooden shield. You can use the Hunter and armored Paladin from page 42 for Gargus and Norin.

Gargus claims the pig is his now since it's in his trap. If he sees them trying to free it, he threatens them with his bow and arrow, calling them poachers and thieves. If they get him riled up, he might order Norin to attack them, or fire at them himself. If they're clever, they might be able to solve the problem by negotiation or trickery. They also might try to start a fight themselves.

Whatever happens, have your story go from here to whenever it feels resolved. Then if the other players want to you can pick it up again, spinning off new consequences based on their actions. If they kill or humiliate Gargus, maybe his vengeful family starts coming after them. If they help out Kest and the owner of the stables, maybe they're given free horses and they can ride out into the plains to seek their fortunes.

If at any point you roll three dice and get **triples** of any number, you can immediately restore one crossed-out star.



When you accomplish a major goal, you can earn a **new action star**, adding it to your character sheet in pen. When this happens, you can also choose **two new Special Abilities** to add to your character sheet. Or, you can choose to add three Special Abilities instead of gaining another star. Some Special Abilities have prerequisites that you must meet before you're able to learn them. If you want to be able to do something that's not on the Special Abilities list, you can invent your own Special Abilities.

Some Special Abilities, like Flight (page 61) or Fourth Heart (also page 61) may cost a lot of stars to use, but once they've been used their effects are permanent or near-permanent, and you never have to spend those stars again.

When you accomplish a major goal, you can earn **a new action star**, adding it to your character sheet in pen. When this happens, you can also choose **two new Special Abilities** to add to your character sheet. Or, you can choose to add three Special Abilities instead of gaining another star. Some Special Abilities have prerequisites that you must meet before you're able to learn them. If you want to be able to do something that's not on the Special Abilities list, you can invent your own Special Abilities.

4. SPECIAL ABILITIES

An Example Adventure

This example adventure uses a **map** (page 47). Maps are totally optional, but they can be a useful tool to help everyone imagine the same setting.

The adventure begins in Bridgetown, a small prosperous trading town. The characters are all locals, Bridgetown is their hometown, and they all already know each other. They work at the docks together.

One day at work they hear a splash and a scream for help. A man has fallen into the river upstream, he's thrashing and he's yelling that he can't swim. If the characters choose to ignore him, that's okay, you don't need to force your players to play through any kind of specific story or adventure. Just react to what they do and to the questions they ask, and don't be afraid to share the burden of improvising with the other players.

If they do try to rescue the drowning man, it takes a **hard** strength or agility roll to save him. Give bonus dice if the solution they come up with is clever enough. The man tells them he's in desperate need of help, and he can offer them money.

His name is Kest, and his father owns the local stables on the northern outskirts of town. It was his father who threw him into the river, in a rage after Kest accidentally let his prized golden pig escape from its pen.

The pig has run off into the Forest of Owls, and he's afraid to go after it himself because of how dangerous the forest is. He'll give them each 150 silver shells if they bring him the pig.

If they enter the Forest of Owls, have one or two encounters prepared with wild beasts and monsters, or forest bandits. Use the suggestions on pages 42 and 43 to help create enemies for your characters to battle.

5. LEARNING NEW SKILLS

A five-line tally mark (☰) represents having a single point in a skill. When you get practice at something, you add a line. Whenever you roll the dice, you can declare before rolling that you're adding a relevant skill. You can then add 1 to the roll for every ☰ you have in the skill. If there's disagreement over whether the skill is relevant, the narrator acts as referee.

For instance if you get into a swordfight, you can get one line in **close combat** once the fight is over, win or lose. You don't get one line every time you swing your sword. An especially impressive win might get you two lines.

You can add any new skill to your skill list **at any time**, as long as you and the other players agree on it being a legitimate skill and what it should be called. You don't get any bonus for that skill until you get your first five-line tally mark ☰, representing one skill point.

When your characters have down time, you can have a fight pitting all the characters against each other to see who wins. If everyone agrees before a fight that you're only sparring and not trying to hurt each other, you **do not have to mark an X** when you run out of hearts, you're just out for the count and need some rest or healing before you can keep fighting. Everyone can get one tally line this way (in any skill they used during the practice fight), and the winner can get two.

For a reminder of what normally happens when you run out of hearts, see page 9.

get a chance to use Parry. You cannot attack the same target twice in one turn. Your strength **without it counts as an attack action.** If you miss, they **do not** between you and them, you can use this Special Action to attack them using Description: If a target is smaller than you and if you can run the distance

Cost: 0 Δ
Trample

pinning someone down, they escape. Because it doesn't inflict a wound, this until they escape, they cannot take any other action. If you take a wound while pinned down target. To escape, the target must win a **contest roll of strength.** Description: You attempt to leap at a foe and pin them down under your weight. Make a contest roll against the target, both using your **agility.** If you win or it's a tie, the target is pinned down. You get a bonus dice on any attack against a

Cost: 1 Δ
Pounce

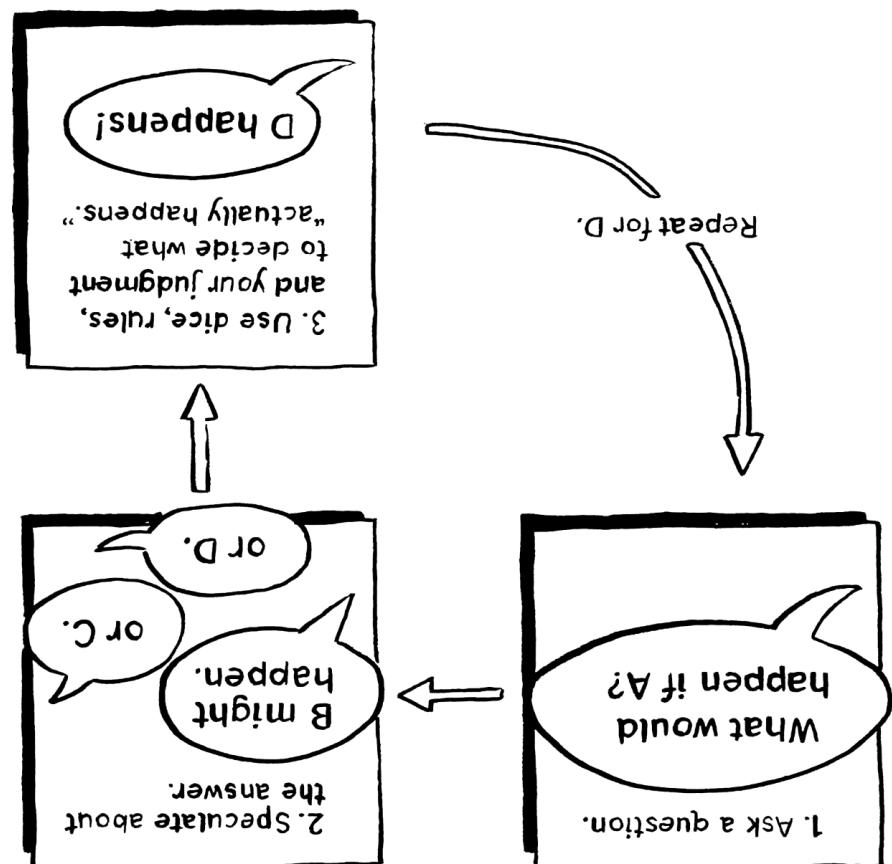
Description: You attempt to leap at a foe and pin them down under your weight. They're able to make a **hard perception** roll to overcome their disorientation. Instantly makes the target disoriented, and they cannot take any action until can perform a **death roll**, dragging them into a rapid thrashing spin. This Description: After making a successful close-range attack against a target, you

Cost: 1 Δ
Death Roll

Also see the list of player-accessible special abilities on page 48.
Beast Special Abilities:

combat much more dynamic. opportunity to strike back at you. Most enemies should have Parry, it makes the that if you get close enough to a trigger to fail to attack it, it's going to use the a special ability, it doesn't mean they use a sword or anything, it just represents combat to account for their natural fighting abilities. When a beast has Parry as the "what-would-happen-if" game.

You can also choose to give any wild beast one or two skill points in **close**



Here's how it works:

At its most basic, this game could be called the "what-would-happen-if" game.

6. PLAYING AS THE NARRATOR

Dragon

A terrible flying fire-wyvern from ancient days.

♡♡ ★5

Defense: 14

Agi: 3, Dex: 1, Str: 4, Per: 3, Wis: 2, Cha: 2

Skills: close combat # #

Special Abilities: Fire Breath, Parry

The dragon attacks with its teeth and claws using its strength and its close combat skill. Its superhuman **strength** score of 4 lets it roll two bonus dice on every strength attack. If it makes a successful attack with its talons it can also lift its target away up into the air.

Fire Breath 1★: All targets in range of the dragon's cone of fire have to make a **very hard** agility roll to avoid taking a wound.

When you're creating characters to inhabit your world, remember you can always invent new Special Abilities for them. For instance, there's no Special Ability in the list for Fire Breath, but a dragon wouldn't be a dragon without it.

Wild Animals

	Def.	♡	★	Agi.	Dex.	Str.	Per.	Wis.	Cha.	Special Abilities	Disposition
Tiger	12	2	5	3	2	3	3	1	2	Parry, Pounce	predatory
Moose	10	3	3	2	1	3	3	2	2	Trample	peaceful
Crocodile	9*	2	3	2	1	2	3	1	1	Death Roll	watchful
Hippo-potamus	10	5	4	2	1	4	2	1	2	Trample, Berserkergang	violent
Wolf	11	1	3	3	1	2	3	2	3	Parry, Feint Attack	predatory

*The crocodile's defense is 9 on land, but 12 in the water.

This cycle can repeat as many times as it needs to. Every time it does, it contributes to a shared reality agreed on between the players, which is how the virtual world of the game is created.

The fun of the game comes from exploring that world, and from creating characters and finding out what happens to them.

River World is a set of rules you can use to help you with step 3.



Ninja Assassin	A deadly killer trained in stealth and combat.	Agi: 4, Dex: 3, Str: 1, Per: 3, Wis: 1, Cha: 1	Defense: 12	Skills: Close Combat	Special Abilities: Pass in Silence, Sneak Attack, Parry, Smoke Bomb, Don Disguise, Martial Arts, Lockmaster
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Beggar Knight	A mercenary knight with a suit of bronze armor and an old warhorse.	Agi: 1, Dex: 3, Str: 3, Per: 1, Wis: 1, Cha: 3	Defense: 9 on horseback, 9 on foot	Skills: Close Combat	Special Abilities: Press Your Luck
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Enemies and Allies	Skills	Special Abilities	Parry	Cover Fire	Archery	Hired Archer	Armed Paladin	Hunter	Def. Agi: Dex: Str: Per: Wis: Cha:
Swordsman	Close Combat	Parry	2	2	Archery	Archer	Paladin	Hunter	Def. Agi: Dex: Str: Per: Wis: Cha:
Hired Archer	Archery	Cover Fire	2	2	Archery	Archer	Paladin	Hunter	Def. Agi: Dex: Str: Per: Wis: Cha:
Archer	Close Combat	Parry	2	2	Archery	Hired Archer	Armed Paladin	Paladin	Def. Agi: Dex: Str: Per: Wis: Cha:
Armed Paladin	Combat	Parry, Defense	2	2	Archery	Swordsman	Hired Archer	Archer	Def. Agi: Dex: Str: Per: Wis: Cha:
Hunter	Close Combat	Parry, Defense	2	2	Archery	Archer	Armed Paladin	Paladin	Def. Agi: Dex: Str: Per: Wis: Cha:

1. **Describe** the environment and the situation the characters are in.
 2. **Decide** on the difficulty of the other players' attempts at actions.
 3. **Play** the role of the non-player characters that inhabit the game world.
- You can choose one player to be the narrator, or if it's a long-term game being played over multiple sessions, you can take turns.
- In other tabletop role-playing games, this role is usually called the **GameMaster**, and if you look for tips on being a GameMaster you can find an abundance of good advice.

In other tabletop role-playing games, this role is usually called the **GameMaster**, and if you look for tips on being a GameMaster you can find an abundance of good advice.

This can happen with up to as many dice as you want. You may have a situation where a player is rolling five or ten dice. But they only ever count **two of them at a time**.

(If you're short on dice, you can re-roll one die as many times as needed.)

Give bonus dice when the other players come up with creative ways to give themselves an edge.

Skill bonuses do not stack, you only get one per roll and it can only be worth 1-3 points. If the character in the example had had  (2 skill points) in log-lifting or some related skill, they would have gotten to add 2 on top of their roll of 9, making it 11.

Creating Enemies, Allies, and Monsters

Populating the world with monsters, characters, and wild beasts may take some time. As the narrator, expect to spend 15 minutes or so before the game preparing for it. Of course, you never know what's actually going to happen once the game starts, but it's helpful to have some characters ready.

The next few pages contain some examples of enemies, animals, and monsters. You can use these as they are, or just use them as inspiration to create your own.

A few tips that are specific to River World:

- » Remember **you don't need to have a skill in something to do it**. For instance, your characters will likely get into a fight, and not all of them will have combat skills. If you have a spear, but no skill points in close combat, you can still attack someone with that spear. You'll just be less likely to succeed.
- » Help the players engage with the skill learning system, remind them that **they can add tally marks to skills when they get practice** with them. They can add a new skill with no tally marks at any time, but they only get a point once it gets up to a full .
- » When the characters accomplish a major goal, they get an extra star and the chance to learn two new special abilities. **You should give them a star at the end of the first or second session** of playing the game, and again at the end of the third or fourth session. After that, you can start to make the extra stars a little more rare. Letting the characters level up early on will help give the players agency in creating their character.
- » When creating enemies and allies (including allies like golems and animal companions) to inhabit the world, you can refer to the character stats on pages 42 and 43 for examples.
- » Giving **bonus dice** and **penalty dice** consistently is an important way to give texture to the world.



Bonus and penalty dice can stack and cancel each other out: