

# IRONSWORN DELVE



PERILOUS EXPEDITIONS  
FOR THE IRONSWORN RPG

# **IRONSWORN**



# **DELVE**

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FOR THE IRONSWORN RPG**

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*For Matt, Tealah, and Rhowan. May all your adventures be unperilous.*

*Ironsworn: Delve* is a supplement for the *Ironsworn* tabletop roleplaying game. You'll need the *Ironsworn* rulebook to use this supplement, which is free to download at ironsworngrpg.com.

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CHAPTER 1

# AT THE THRESHOLD



# **PREPARE TO DELVE**

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Ancient ruins. Deep caverns. Mysterious woods. Dreadful swamps. The Ironlands are riddled with untamed reaches and dark depths—where only the reckless or resolute venture.

In *Ironsworn: Delve*, these locations are called **sites**. They are the most perilous places in the Ironlands, home to ancient secrets and cunning denizens. Most stay well clear of them, but you are different. Using the guidance and tools in this rulebook, you’ll brave these sites in pursuit of your sworn vows.

Beyond the resources for exploring sites, *Delve* also provides an array of material and tools for your *Ironsworn* campaign: new options, setting information, foes, character resources, tips, techniques, and more.

What dangers will you face? What opportunities will you discover? Will you escape the depths? If so, what price will you pay? Play to find out.

## **WHAT THIS BOOK CONTAINS**

- **Chapter 1 – At the Threshold:** You’re reading it! An introduction to *Delve* and how to setup an expedition into a perilous site. If you want to skip the preambles and get started, jump to page 4.
- **Chapter 2 – Into the Depths (page 19):** A complete walkthrough of *Delve*’s site-based gameplay.
- **Chapter 3 – Finding Your Path (page 51):** Techniques, tips, and options for *Delve*, and new rules for your *Ironsworn* campaign.
- **Chapter 4 – Sites (page 79):** More information on the perilous sites within the Ironlands.
- **Chapter 5 – Denizens (page 107):** An array of deadly foes and challenging encounters for your *Ironsworn* campaign.
- **Chapter 6 – Threats (page 151):** Optional mechanics for tracking those forces which seek to undermine your vows.
- **Chapter 7 – Objects of Power (page 163):** Optional mechanics and inspiration to arm yourself with unique items.
- **Chapter 8 – Oracles (page 203):** New oracle tables to answer questions, generate sites, create monstrosities, and more.

This book will occasionally direct you to rules or resources found in the main *Ironsworn* rulebook. When it does, you’ll see it referenced as ***Ironsworn Core***.

## WHAT ELSE YOU NEED

*Delve* adds some additional reference materials to your *Ironsworn* playscape. All are available for download at [ironswornrpg.com](http://ironswornrpg.com).

- **Theme and domain cards:** These represent the nature of sites and include oracle tables to help reveal what you encounter. They are available as preprinted tarot-sized cards and as free digital downloads.
- **Moves sheet:** A printable reference for new moves, including *Delve* moves and optional moves.
- **Site worksheet:** Use this to track your progress within a site, make notes or maps, and identify the denizens of the location.

## ADDING DELVE TO YOUR CAMPAIGN

These rules are completely compatible with *Ironsworn*. You can plug the mechanics, moves, and resources in this supplement into your existing campaign, or as part of a new character and campaign. This book assumes you are exploring the default setting of the Ironlands, but you can easily adapt to your own setting.

As with the core *Ironsworn* system, *Delve* is suitable for use in solo, co-op, and traditional guided play. If you are playing without a GM, these tools will help you generate perilous locations and reveal dangers and opportunities as you explore. If you are a GM, you'll find inspiration and mechanics for no-prep gameplay.

## SITES AND QUESTS

Because the gameplay and fiction of *Ironsworn* is focused on your sworn vows, the purpose for delving a site is usually related to a quest. There is a crucial goal which compels you to enter a forbidden place. For example:

- A **Haunted Barrow** holds an ancient weapon you must wield to defeat an otherwise untouchable foe.
- You have sworn to defeat the leader of an enemy clan who has taken refuge in a **Fortified Stronghold**.
- A **Corrupted Tanglewood**, fouled by dark magic, blocks your path on an important journey.

Depending on the nature of your quest, finding and overcoming your objective might mean you *Reach a Milestone* or *Fulfill Your Vow*. However, if the dangers prove insurmountable and the horrors overwhelming, you may be forced to flee. Or you may find your body or sanity broken, lost forever to the depths.

## THE NEW MOVES

There are seven new *Delve* moves to help resolve your exploration of a site. These moves are fully detailed in Chapter 2 (page 19).

- *Discover a Site* (page 19): Make this move when you first introduce or encounter a site within your narrative. When you prepare to enter a site, you'll choose its theme and domain and give it a rank.
- *Delve the Depths* (page 21): Make this move as you explore the site in search of your objective. Success on this move will allow you to mark progress toward your goal, and may reveal opportunities or dangers.
- *Find an Opportunity* (page 30): This move is always triggered when you *Delve the Depths* and score a strong hit, and is sometimes triggered by a weak hit. Making this move represents discovering a helpful situation or feature within a site.
- *Reveal a Danger* (page 34): You make this move in a site when you encounter a risky situation or obstacle which you must overcome. This move is sometimes triggered by a weak hit as you *Delve the Depths*, and is always triggered if you score a miss on that move.
- *Check Your Gear* (page 38): When you check to see if you have a specific item that can help you overcome an obstacle, make this move.
- *Locate Your Objective* (page 40): This is a progress move. Make this move when your exploration of the site is done. The amount of progress you have marked on your site progress track is compared to the challenge dice to determine if the situation favors you.
- *Escape the Depths* (page 42): Make this move when you flee or withdraw from a site. This move functions as a mechanical and narrative shortcut, resolving your escape in a single roll.

Outside of these key moves, various other moves are provided in this book to support optional mechanics. A summary of *Delve* moves is available in Appendix A (page 226) and optional moves in Appendix B (page 229). Reference downloads for moves are available at [ironswornrpg.com](http://ironswornrpg.com).

As in *Ironsworn Core*, the move titles are referenced in this rulebook using *italicized* text. Moves will also sometimes reference other moves, in which case the name of that move will be *italicized*. When you see *italicized* text, that's your prompt to refer to that move to resolve what happens next.

# **GETTING STARTED**

---

Start by defining your purpose for delving a site. This is your **objective**. You will generally encounter a site in one of two ways:

- **The site holds the key to moving forward in your quest.** Depending on the nature of your vow, your objective could be to defeat a person, creature, or force. Or perhaps you must recover a crucial object or uncover critical information.
- **You must traverse a site as part of a journey.** Perhaps the site is an obstacle in your path (such as a marshland), or allows you to circumvent otherwise impassable terrain (such as a network of caverns leading through snowbound mountains).

In either case, your objective is inherently tied to your vow. If your narrative suggests a complication in a quest, or you want to introduce a potential milestone for your vow, a site can serve as a dramatic and perilous obstacle.

*This rulebook includes examples of play as boxed text, using the format seen below. These examples often use a solo play session, but the basic principles are also relevant to co-op and guided play.*

You have vowed to prevent an imminent attack by a powerful clan of raiders. The beleaguered settlement cannot withstand a raid, and their supplies are too meager to meet the raiders demands. You visit the enemy camp to negotiate, hoping that a smaller portion of the settlement's winter stores will satisfy them. During your audience with Ithela, the clan's leader, you make the *Compel* move and roll a weak hit. Not certain what she asks in return, you roll on the Action and Theme tables. The oracle responds, "Preserve History."

You interpret this to mean that Ithela prizes artifacts from the rulers of the Old World. She believes these relics hold the strength and power of those long-dead monarchs.

After some additional investigation, you learn of a **Barrow** that holds one of the greatest kings of the Old World. He was laid to rest there a few years after the exodus that brought your people to the Ironlands.

Once you've determined you must enter a perilous site, you can use the moves and oracles in this supplement to resolve your exploration. You'll start by triggering the *Discover a Site* move, which is shown on the next page.

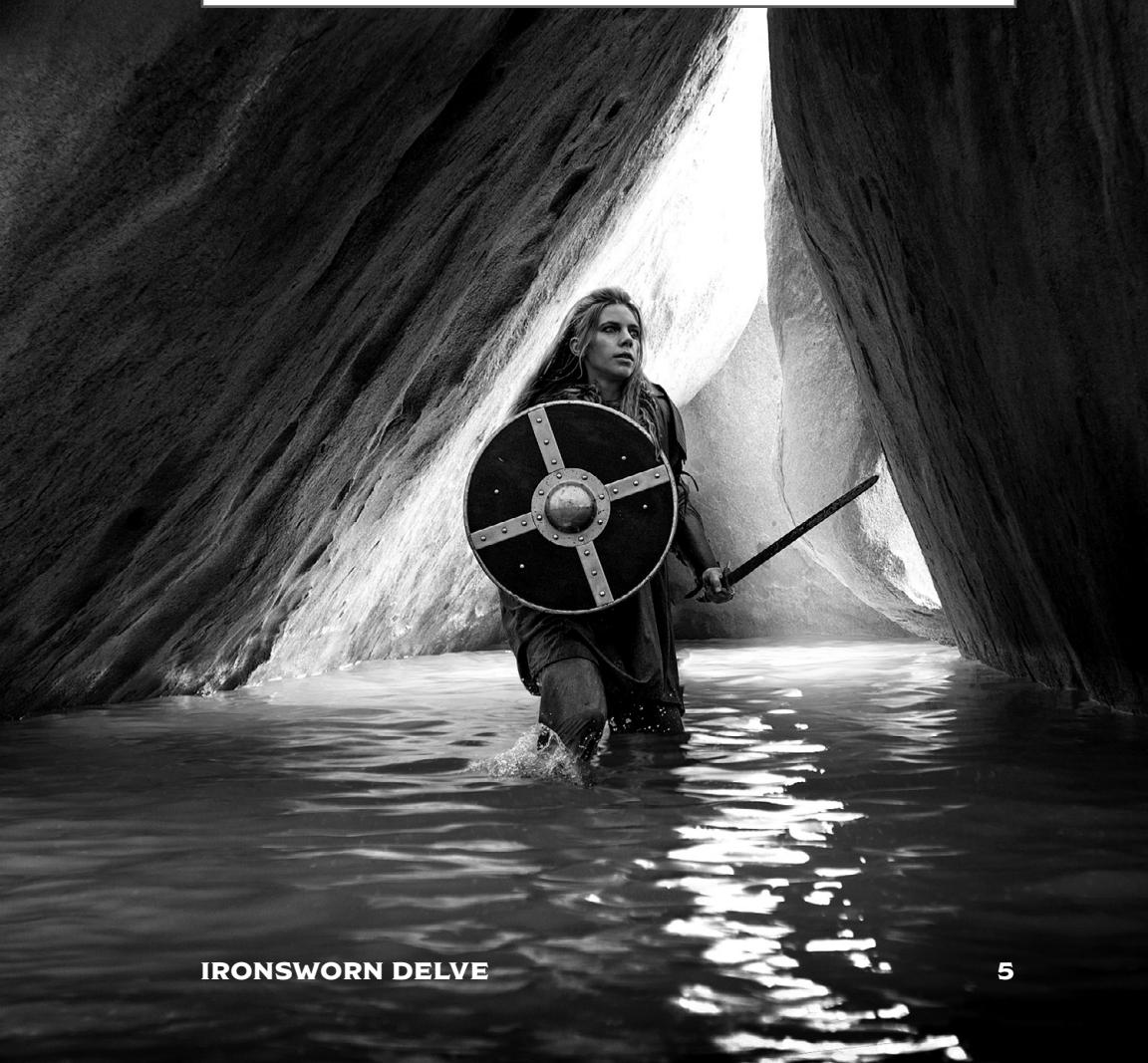
## DISCOVER A SITE

When you resolve to enter a perilous site in pursuit of an objective, choose the theme and domain which best represent its nature (*Ask the Oracle* if unsure), and give it a rank.

- Troublesome site: 3 progress per area.
- Dangerous site: 2 progress per area.
- Formidable site: 1 progress per area.
- Extreme site: 2 ticks per area.
- Epic site: 1 tick per area.

If you are returning to a previously explored site, roll both challenge dice, take the lowest value, and clear that number of progress boxes.

Then, *Delve the Depths* to explore this place.



# CHOOSING A THEME AND DOMAIN

Per the text of the *Discover a Site* move, you must first “choose the theme and domain which best represent its nature.”

The **theme** represents the condition or state of the site, and indicates the kinds of denizens and threats you might find there. If you choose **Corrupted**, you envision this place as tainted by dark magic. A **Fortified** site is occupied and held by enemy forces.

The **domain** represents the physical characteristics of the site—the terrain or architecture you must traverse. A **Cavern** is a dark realm of twisting tunnels and claustrophobic chambers. A **Shadowfen** is a foul marshland.

Pick the theme and domain which best fit your understanding of the place you must explore or traverse. If you’re not sure, see page 9 to learn how to randomly select a theme and domain. To learn more about the themes and domains included with *Delve*, see page 79.

Together, the theme and domain help you visualize your exploration of the site, and provide oracle tables for **features** and **dangers**. They are formatted as tarot-sized cards, and are available as a free print-and-play download at [ironswornrpg.com](http://ironswornrpg.com). Preprinted cards are also available for purchase.

THEME	DOMAIN
<b>CORRUPTED</b>  This place is tainted by dark magic. <b>FEATURES</b> 1-4 Mystic focus or conduit 5-8 Strange environmental disturbances 9-12 Mystic runes or markings 13-16 Blight or decay 17-20 Evidence of a foul ritual <b>DANGERS</b> 1-5 Denizen spawned from dark magic 6-10 Denizen controls dark magic 11-12 Denizen corrupted by dark magic 13-14 Corruption marks you 15-16 Innocents held in thrall 17-18 Revelations of a terrible truth 19-20 Mystic trap or trigger 21-22 Mystic barrier or ward 23-24 Illusions lead you astray 25-26 Dark ritual in progress 27-28 Lingering effects of a dark ritual 29-30 Dread harbingers of a greater magic	<b>CAVERN</b>  A place of stone and darkness. <b>FEATURES</b> 21-43 Twisting passages 44-56 Cramped caves 57-64 Vast chamber 65-68 Subterranean waterway 69-72 Cave pool 73-76 Natural bridge 77-80 Towering stone formations 81-84 Natural illumination 85-88 Dark pit 89-98 Something unusual or unexpected 99 You transition into a new theme 00 You transition into a new domain <b>DANGERS</b> 31-33 Denizen lairs here 34-36 Cave-in 37-39 Flooding 40-42 Perilous climb or descent 43-45 Fissure or sinkhole

## CHOOSE A THEME

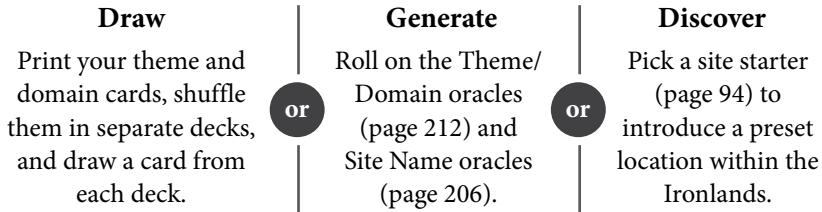
<b>ANCIENT</b> This place holds the secrets of a bygone age.		<b>CORRUPTED</b> This place is tainted by dark magic.	
<b>FORTIFIED</b> Foes defend this place against intruders.		<b>HALLOWED</b> The faithful worship here.	
<b>HAUNTED</b> Restless spirits are bound to this place.		<b>INFESTED</b> Foul creatures dwell here.	
<b>RAVAGED</b> Time, disaster, or strife have taken their toll.		<b>WILD</b> Nature prevails in this place.	

## CHOOSE A DOMAIN

<b>BARROW</b> The dead are enshrined here.		<b>CAVERN</b> A place of stone and darkness.	
<b>FROZEN CAVERN</b> A place of deep caves and enduring cold.		<b>ICEREACH</b> A frigid landscape formed of frozen seas.	
<b>MINE</b> Tunnels dug greedily and deep.		<b>PASS</b> Treacherous paths over high mountains.	
<b>RUIN</b> The crumbling legacy of a dead civilization.		<b>SEA CAVE</b> Stone passages carved by ocean waves.	
<b>SHADWFEN</b> A primeval marsh, cloaked in mist.		<b>STRONGHOLD</b> A fortress secured against trespassers.	
<b>TANGLEWOOD</b> A perilous forest of eternal shadow.		<b>UNDERKEEP</b> An age-old subterranean dungeon.	

## CHOOSING A RANDOM THEME AND DOMAIN

If you want to leave the nature of the site in the hands of fate, you can choose the theme or domain randomly in one of three ways:



If a random result doesn't make sense in the context of the situation or terrain, draw or roll again.

You've already established that you will explore a **Barrow** in search of the lost treasures of an Old World king. That is your domain.

But you'd like to leave the theme in the hands of fate. You assemble your theme cards into a stack, shuffle them, draw one, and reveal that this place is **Infested**.

Together, the theme and domain help you envision the nature of the site: an **Infested Barrow**.

You may also decide that certain themes or domains aren't a good fit for your campaign. For example, if you are running *Ironsworn* in a setting without magic or mystical forces, you may want to exclude or ignore themes and domains which include overtly supernatural characteristics. For more information on using your established truths, see page 80.

## USING MULTIPLE THEMES OR DOMAINS

You can add even more detail to a site by utilizing an additional theme or domain. For example, a **Haunted Fortified Stronghold** (two themes and one domain) might be a place held by raiders and plagued by vengeful spirits. A **Haunted Barrow Cavern** (one theme and two domains) is a tomb within a natural cave complex.

To learn more about using an additional theme or domain, see page 69.

## CREATING YOUR OWN THEMES AND DOMAINS

For information on custom themes and domains, see page 71.

# SET UP YOUR PLAYSCAPE

Prepare for your exploration of the site by readying your moves reference sheet, site worksheet, and theme and domain cards. These materials are available for download at ironswornrpg.com.

Arrange your theme and domain cards with the theme to the left, and domain to the right.

If you are playing co-op, everyone at your table can share the site worksheet and cards. Put them in the center of your table, pass them around as needed, or nominate one of your players as the record-keeper.

**DELVE MOVES**

**DISCOVER A SITE** (page 19)

When you choose to enter a perilous site in pursuit of an objective, choose the theme and domain which best represent its nature (Ask the Oracle if unsure), and give it a rank.

- Troublesome site: 3 progress per area.
- Dangerous site: 2 progress per area.
- Formidable site: 1 progress per area.
- Extreme site: 2 ticks per area.
- Epic site: 1 tick per area.

If you are returning to a previously explored site, roll the lowest value, and clear that number of progress. Then, *Delve the Depths* to explore this place.

**DELVE THE DEPTHS** (page 21)

When you traverse an area within a perilous site, surroundings (Ask the Oracle if unsure). Then, consider you navigate this area...

- With haste: Roll +edge.
- With stealth or trickery: Roll +shadow.
- With observation, intuition, or expertise: Roll On a strong hit, you delve deeper. Mark progress and On a weak hit, roll on the following table according On a miss, Reveal a Danger.

Edge	Shadow	With	Weak Hit Result
1-45	1-30	With	Mark progress and
46-65	31-65	41-55	Mark progress
66-75	66-90	56-80	Choose one: Mark Opportunity.
76-80	91-99	81-99	Take both: Mark progress and Opportunity.
81-00	00	00	Mark progress twice

**FIND AN OPPORTUNITY** (page 30)

When you encounter a helpful situation or feature the following table. If you are making this move as on *Delve the Depths*, you may pick or envision an opportunity.

Then, choose one:

- Gain insight or prepare: Take +1 momentum.
- Take action now: You and any allies may make progress move) which directly leverages the of do, add +1 and take +1 momentum on a hit.

Roll	Result
1-25	The terrain favors you, or you find a hiding place.
26-45	An aspect of the history or nature of this place.
46-57	You locate a secure area.
58-68	A clue offers insight or direction.
69-78	You get the drop on a denizen.
79-86	This area provides an opportunity to scavenging.
87-90	You locate an interesting or helpful object.
91-94	You are alerted to a potential threat.
95-98	You encounter a denizen who might support you.
99-00	You encounter a denizen in need of help.

**REVEAL A DANGER** (page 34)

When you encounter a risky situation within a site, envision the danger or roll on the following table.

Roll	Result
1-30	Check the theme card.
31-45	Check the domain card.
46-57	You encounter a hostile denizen.

**IRONSWORN DELVE**

**SITE WORKSHEET**

**SITE NAME:** [ ]      **OBJECTIVE:** [ ]

**THEME:** [ ]      **DOMAIN:** [ ]

**PROGRESS**

[ ] TROUBLESOME    [ ] DANGEROUS    [ ] FORMIDABLE    [ ] EXTREME    [ ] EPIC

Very Common	01-27	Common	28-41	Common	42-55	Common	56-69
Uncommon	70-75	Uncommon	76-81	Uncommon	82-87	Uncommon	88-93
Rare	94-95	Rare	96-97	Rare	98-99	Unforeseen	00

**DENIZENS**

When the outcome of a move prompts an encounter with a denizen, you may:

Choose or introduce a denizen based on the situation and what you know of this place. Roll on the matrix to generate a random denizen encounter. If the field is blank, add a new denizen.

Identify a denizen as "likely" to appear and Ask the Oracle. If the answer is "not", roll on the matrix.

Pick two denizens, rate one as "likely", and Ask the Oracle to determine which you encounter.

**MAP / NOTES**

**THEME**

**INFESTED**

Foul creatures dwell here.

**FEATURES**

- 1-4 Inhabited nest
- 5-8 Abandoned nest
- 9-12 Ravaged terrain or architecture
- 13-16 Remains or carrion
- 17-20 Heard foul food

**DANGERS**

- 1-5 Denizen swarm and attack
- 6-10 Toxic or sickening environment
- 11-12 Ravaged terrain stalks you
- 13-14 Denizen takes or destroys something
- 15-16 Denizen reveals surprising cleverness
- 17-18 Denizen guided by a greater threat
- 19-20 Denizen blocks the path
- 21-22 Denizen funnels you down a new path
- 23-24 Denizen undermines the path
- 25-26 Denizen lays in wait
- 27-28 Trap or snare
- 29-30 Victim's horrible fate is revealed

**DOMAIN**

**BARROW**

The dead are enshrined here.

**FEATURES**

- 21-43 Burial chambers
- 44-56 Maze of narrow passages
- 57-64 Shrine
- 65-68 Stately vault
- 69-72 Offerings to the dead
- 73-76 Statuary or tapestries
- 77-80 Remains of a grave robber
- 81-84 Mass grave
- 85-88 Exhumed corpses
- 89-98 Something unusual or unexpected
- 99 You transition into a new theme
- 00 You transition into a new domain

**DANGERS**

- 31-53 Denizen guards this area
- 54-56 Trap
- 57-59 Death makes its presence known
- 40-42 Crumbling architecture
- 43-45 Grave goods with hidden dangers

10

CHAPTER 1 | AT THE THRESHOLD

If you are a player, you should have your standard *Ironsworn* kit as part of your playscape: character sheet, assets, dice, and your preferred reference and note-taking materials.

If you are the GM, you will manage the worksheet and site cards. If you want to keep the nature of this place a mystery (for now), you can keep these materials hidden from your players.

## NAME THE SITE

Optionally, you can give the site a name and record it on your site worksheet. If you need inspiration, you can use the Site Name oracle on page 206.

You can also use the site worksheet to note your objective, theme, and domain. This will be handy if you don't wrap up your exploration of the site in a single session, and need to be reminded of those details when you return.

You give the long-dead king a name, and christen the barrow in his honor: Themon's Rest. To flesh out the legends of this king, you roll on the Character Goal oracle and twice on the Character Descriptor oracle. For the goal, the oracle answers, "Find redemption." For the descriptors, the oracle tells you, "Hot-tempered" and "Armed."

You envision this king's story. As a young man, Themon challenged his younger brother to a duel and killed him in a moment of impulsive rage. He spent the rest of his days burdened by this death, seeking but never finding redemption as a benevolent ruler. The dagger he drove into his brother's heart—a reminder of his failure—was always near him. Some say he never cleaned the blade, leaving the iron forever stained with his brother's blood.

This is the dagger you seek. Surely such a famous artifact will appease Ithela.

With that bit of background fleshed out, you fill in the site name, objective, theme, and domain on your site worksheet.

IRONSWORN DELVE		SITE WORKSHEET	
SITE NAME:	Themon's Rest	OBJECTIVE:	Find Themon's Dagger
THEME:	Infested	DOMAIN:	Barrow
<hr/> <b>PROGRESS</b> <hr/>			
<input type="radio"/> TROUBLESOME <input type="radio"/> DANGEROUS <input type="radio"/> FORMIDABLE <input type="radio"/> EXTREME <input type="radio"/> EPIC			
 +1    +2    +3    +4    +5    +6    +7    +8    +9    +10			

## GIVE THE SITE A RANK

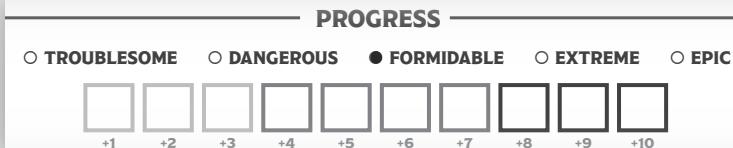
Per the *Discover a Site* move, the next step is to give the site a rank using the standard *Ironsworn* progress rank system.

- Troublesome site: 3 progress per area.
- Dangerous site: 2 progress per area.
- Formidable site: 1 progress per area.
- Extreme site: 2 ticks per area.
- Epic site: 1 tick per area.

The rank of a site represents its scale, peril, and complexity. A troublesome **Underkeep** is a place with a couple of chambers and connecting passages. An epic **Underkeep** is a subterranean complex of unknowable depths.

Mark the rank of the site on your site worksheet.

You consider the rank of the **Infested Barrow**. You envision this place as labyrinthine catacombs, built by early settlers within a network of caves and expanded over decades. You give it a rank of formidable.



Keep in mind that the rank will dictate how much focus you give to the exploration of a site in your campaign. A troublesome site might be dealt with in a matter of minutes at the table, while an epic site can be the focus of several hours of gameplay across multiple sessions. Generally, you should consider formidable as the typical rank for a site, offering a good balance of challenge and real-world time investment. Unlike a journey, it's not necessarily feasible to take a narrative break from a site, so higher-ranked delves may outstay their welcome. Lower ranked sites may not justify the initial setup.

As noted in the *Discover a Site* move, when you flee a site without finding your objective, you will give it the same rank if you return. However, the retreat costs you progress. As you resume your exploration, roll your standard *Ironsworn* **challenge dice** (two ten-sided dice), take the lowest, and clear that number of progress boxes.

## CHOOSE DENIZENS

Before you wade into the depths, consider who might dwell in this place and what foes you may face. These are the **denizens**. You may have already learned something of the site through your investigations or through the established facts of your setting. You can also probably make some assumptions based on the site's theme and domain.

The denizens of a site might be the focus of your quest, or merely potential obstacles in your exploration of the place. For example:

- You must traverse a **Hallowed Shadowfen** in your journey to an Ironlander settlement, but a clan of elves protect these borders.
- You are sworn to defeat a clan of raiders who defend a **Fortified Ruin**.
- You seek guidance from a mystic said to live in the heart of a **Wild Tanglewood**, but an elder wolf and her pack also lair in that place.
- Bonewalkers, once seafarers, lurk within a **Haunted Sea Cave**. You have sworn to put them to rest.

For the sake of simplicity, denizen is often presented in moves and oracles as a singular term, but is not meant to strictly represent a single being. A denizen can also be a group, a category of people or creatures, or a faction.

The site worksheet contains the **denizens matrix**, a set of blank fields for noting potential inhabitants. These fields are labeled very common, common, uncommon, rare, and unforeseen. Each field also has a number corresponding to a result on a 1-100 oracle roll.

DENIZENS					
VERY COMMON	01-27	COMMON	28-41	COMMON	42-55
UNCOMMON	70-75	UNCOMMON	76-81	UNCOMMON	82-87
RARE	94-95	RARE	96-97	RARE	98-99
				UNFORESEEN	00

If the outcome of a move indicates that you encounter a denizen, you can use the denizens matrix for inspiration or as the focus of a question when you *Ask the Oracle*.

See page 107 for more on using the matrix in play. For now, fill in a few potential denizens based on what you know of this place. Who is reputed to dwell here? Who has control of this place and what other creatures or forces vie for control? Who opposes you in your quest? What does the theme and domain suggest?

You may not have all the answers to those questions. That's fine. *Ironsworn* makes it easy to introduce NPCs on the fly. You'll introduce encounters and potential foes through play. Leave some—or even most—of the fields blank to fill in as you explore.

You'll find sample NPCs starting in Chapter 5 (page 133) of *Ironsworn Core*, and more NPCs in Chapter 5 (page 107) of this guide.

If you are the GM, you can share information on potential denizens as appropriate to the characters' knowledge of this place. Or you can reveal details as they explore. Don't worry about fleshing out the specifics up-front. Use the theme and domain for inspiration, and fill in a few inhabitants. You and your players can uncover the mysteries of this place together.



You choose some denizens for the **Infested Barrow**. First, you'll need a creature that reinforces the **Infested** theme—something that has overrun this place. Perhaps trogs. They are vicious, vile things which lurk in the deep places of the Ironlands.

You add them to the very common slot on your site worksheet. To further bolster the **Infested** theme, you also choose nightmare spider for a common slot. You envision the trogs and spiders as rivals in this place—each hunting the other for food.

Since this is a **Barrow**, you write bonewalker and haunt as uncommon encounters. Those who are entombed here do not always rest easy.

Finally, you choose blighthound for a rare slot. These creatures, harbingers of death, often lurk in tombs.

You leave the other fields blank. Some of these might get filled in as you explore.

DENIZENS					
VERY COMMON	01-27	COMMON	28-41	COMMON	42-55
Trog		Nightmare Spider			56-69
UNCOMMON	70-75	UNCOMMON	76-81	UNCOMMON	82-87
Bonewalker		Haunt			88-93
RARE	94-95	RARE	96-97	RARE	98-99
Blighthound				UNFORESEEN	00

When the outcome of a move prompts an encounter with a denizen, you may:

- Choose or introduce a denizen based on the situation and what you know of this place.
- Roll on the matrix to generate a random encounter. If the field is blank, add a new denizen.
- Identify a denizen as 'likely' to appear, and Ask the Oracle. If the answer is "no," roll on the matrix.
- Pick two denizens, rate one as 'likely', and Ask the Oracle to determine which you encounter.

## ENVISION THE SCENE

You stand at the precipice of the perilous site. Imagine the scene. What lies before you? How do you steel yourself for the dangers to come?

If you are the GM, set the scene for your players. Describe the surroundings and the sense of peril that await them. Use sights, sounds and smells to create atmosphere and offer clues for what they will find.

If you are a player, envision how your character prepares. If your actions trigger a move such as *Secure an Advantage*, make that move.

Light your torch. Ready your shield. Say your prayers.

The depths await.

# **GETTING STARTED SUMMARY**

- 1** Choose a theme and domain (page 6). Envision the nature of this place and select an appropriate theme and domain card—or *Ask the Oracle*.
- 2** Set up your playscape (page 10). Ready your moves reference, site worksheet, and theme and domain cards.
- 3** Detail the site (page 11). Give the location a name and record it on the site worksheet. Also, make note of your objective, theme, and domain.
- 4** Give the site a rank (page 12). Make the site troublesome, dangerous, formidable, extreme, or epic. Mark its rank on the site worksheet.
- 5** Choose denizens (page 13). Envision some potential inhabitants of the site and add them to the denizens matrix.
- 6** Envision the scene (page 16). Set the scene as you prepare to *Delve the Depths*.

## **WHAT'S NEXT?**

Take a look at the next chapter (page 19) for a walkthrough of using *Delve* moves and creative prompts within a site. You can follow along with those instructions as you undertake your own expedition. Or just print out the *Delve* moves reference sheet (available at [ironswornrpg.com](http://ironswornrpg.com)), and refer back to Chapter 2 when you have questions.

**CHAPTER 2**

# **INTO THE DEPTHES**



# THE DELVE MOVES

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As you explore a perilous site, you'll trigger moves. The moves included with this supplement help you resolve the outcome of your expedition—whether you make progress, and what dangers or opportunities you encounter.

In this chapter, we'll discuss each of those moves in detail, showing how they fit into the narrative of your exploration. For a quick reference, without commentary and examples, see Appendix A (page 226). You can also download and print the *Delve* moves reference sheet from [ironswornrpg.com](http://ironswornrpg.com).

As discussed in the previous chapter, you begin by introducing the nature of the location through the *Discover a Site* move.

## DISCOVER A SITE

When you resolve to enter a perilous site in pursuit of an objective, choose the theme and domain which best represent its nature (*Ask the Oracle* if unsure), and give it a rank.

- Troublesome site: 3 progress per area.
- Dangerous site: 2 progress per area.
- Formidable site: 1 progress per area.
- Extreme site: 2 ticks per area.
- Epic site: 1 tick per area.

If you are returning to a previously explored site, roll both challenge dice, take the lowest value, and clear that number of progress boxes.

Then, *Delve the Depths* to explore this place.

When you first encounter or introduce a site within your story, make this move. Choose a theme and domain, set the rank, ready your progress track, and prepare to enter. See page 6 for details on setting up your playscape.

## RETURNING TO A PREVIOUSLY EXPLORATED SITE

A site may prove too perilous, forcing you to flee or abandon your delve. Perhaps you are wounded, shaken, or *Out of Supply*. You might face a narrative complication which sends you out of the site.

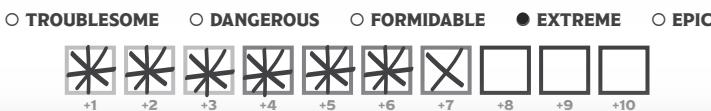
If you later return to continue your exploration, you can use the existing progress on the site progress track—but not all of it. To determine how much progress remains, roll your challenge dice (two ten-sided dice), take the lowest value, and erase that number of progress boxes. A low result means

your experience here is kept as you return, allowing you to speed your way through previously explored terrain. A high result indicates that something has changed, your foes have bolstered their defenses, or the nature of this place is simply too chaotic and unpredictable.

If a progress box is partially filled (fewer than four ticks), you'll count it as one progress for the purposes of clearing boxes.

You abandon an extreme site after accruing six filled progress and two ticks in the seventh box.

#### PROGRESS

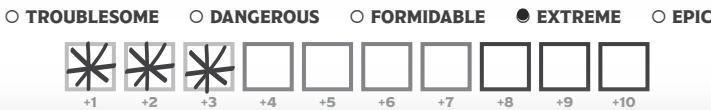


When you return to the site, you use the challenge dice to determine how much of your progress has been undone in your absence. You roll a 4 and a 9. You take the lowest value (4) and ignore the highest (9).



You then clear four boxes on your progress track (counting the partially filled box), leaving you with three filled progress.

#### PROGRESS



If you return to a site and your lowest challenge die is greater than your available progress, simply clear all the progress boxes.

When you're ready to enter the site, make the *Delve the Depths* move.

## DELVE THE DEPTHS

When you **traverse an area within a perilous site**, envision your surroundings (*Ask the Oracle* if unsure). Then, consider your approach. If you navigate this area...

- With haste: Roll +edge.
- With stealth or trickery: Roll +shadow.
- With observation, intuition, or expertise: Roll +wits.

On a **strong hit**, you delve deeper. Mark progress and *Find an Opportunity*.

On a **weak hit**, roll on the following table according to your stat.

On a **miss**, *Reveal a Danger*.

Edge	Shadow	Wits	Weak Hit Result
1-45	1-30	1-40	Mark progress and <i>Reveal a Danger</i> .
46-65	31-65	41-55	Mark progress.
66-75	66-90	56-80	Choose one: Mark progress or <i>Find an Opportunity</i> .
76-80	91-99	81-99	Take both: Mark progress and <i>Find an Opportunity</i> .
81-00	00	00	Mark progress twice and <i>Reveal a Danger</i> .

Make this move when you enter a site, and as you push forward into the depths. Think of this move as a counterpart to *Undertake a Journey*. It resolves your exploration within a segment of the site and determines whether you mark progress.

This is the anchor move for your exploration of a site, and you'll return to it each time you attempt to move toward your objective. Because of the importance of this move, we'll spend a few pages breaking down how it works. If you want to jump directly to the summary, see page 29.

### WHAT IS AN AREA?

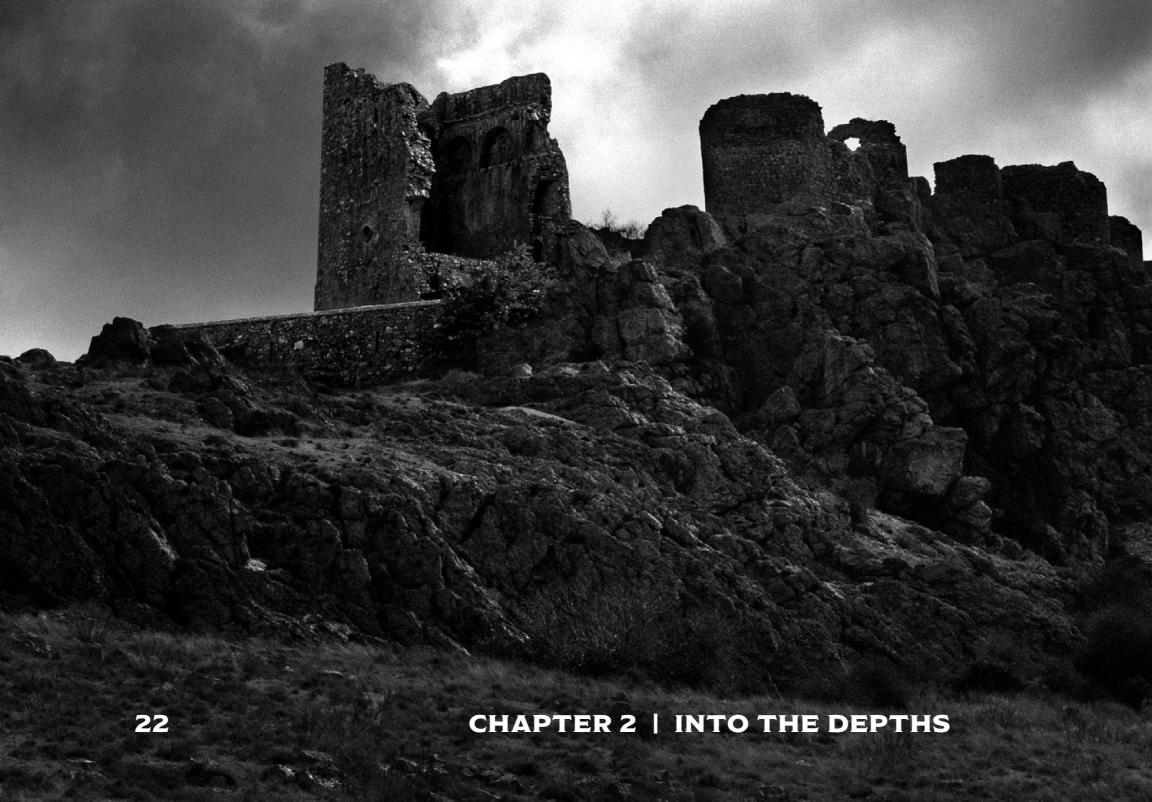
The portion of the site you traverse when you make this move is called an **area**. This is an abstract representation of a particular segment of the site. In a **Fortified Stronghold**, a specific area might consist of a single room. In a **Wild Shadowfen**, an area can be a deer path winding for miles through a stagnant and misty morass. The size and detail will vary based on the nature of the site and the context of your exploration.

You can adjust the pace and focus of your exploration. Your travel through some areas may pass as a montage that spans hours in the game world. Other areas might become the focus of a high-intensity scene which represents mere seconds or minutes. An area is an imprecise but flexible reference for measuring your progress, framing your surroundings, and introducing dangers and opportunities.

**Generally, *Delve* is not designed to emulate room-by-room dungeon crawling. Instead, the individual passages and spaces of a site are often abstracted.**

**Adjust the focus as you move through areas. Zoom out as a cinematic montage when you are transitioning through relatively mundane terrain or architecture. Zoom in when you encounter something of note, or when you face a new danger or opportunity.**

The moves will help prompt and guide your focus, but—like the director of a movie—you and your fellow players also have control. When it matters, when it's interesting or dramatic, zoom in. Use those moments to reveal interesting details, introduce complications, or deepen your characters.



## ENVISION YOUR SURROUNDINGS

When you make the *Delve the Depths* move, the first step is to define the characteristics of the area you are attempting to traverse. You are moving from a known area (your current location), into an unknown area. What will you find there? Taking a moment to reveal the characteristics of an area will create context for your exploration and the result of your moves.

Have a look at your theme and domain cards. They both include a **feature table**. When you want to define the characteristics of an area, you may *Ask the Oracle* using these tables as inspiration.

When you make a standard 1-100 oracle roll, the possible results span both cards. If you roll 1-20, refer to the theme card for your answer. 21-100 is found on the domain card.

When you roll 1-20,  
check the theme card.

When you roll 21-100,  
check the domain card.

### THEME

#### ANCIENT

This place holds the secrets of a bygone age.

##### FEATURES

- 1-4 Evidence of lost knowledge
- 5-8 Inscrutable relics
- 9-12 Ancient artistry or craft
- 13-16 Preserved corpses or fossils
- 17-20 Visions of this place in another time

##### DANGERS

- 1-5 Ancient trap
- 6-10 Hazardous architecture or terrain
- 11-12 Blocked or broken path
- 13-14 Denizen protects an ancient secret
- 15-16 Denizen reveres an ancient power
- 17-18 Living relics of a lost age
- 19-20 Ancient evil resurgent
- 21-22 Dire warnings of a long-buried danger
- 23-24 Ancient disease or contamination
- 25-26 Artifact of terrible meaning or power
- 27-28 Disturbing evidence of ancient wrongs
- 29-30 Others seek power or knowledge

### DOMAIN

#### RUIN

The crumbling legacy of a dead civilization.

##### FEATURES

- 21-43 Crumbling corridors and chambers
- 44-56 Collapsed architecture
- 57-64 Rubble-choked hall
- 65-68 Courtyard
- 69-72 Archive or library
- 73-76 Broken statuary or fading murals
- 77-80 Preserved vault
- 81-84 Temple to forgotten gods
- 85-88 Mausoleum
- 89-98 Something unusual or unexpected
- 99 You transition into a new theme
- 00 You transition into a new domain

##### DANGERS

- 31-33 Ancient mechanism or trap
- 34-36 Collapsing wall or ceiling
- 37-39 Blocked or broken passage
- 40-42 Unstable floor above a new danger
- 43-45 Ancient secrets best left buried

Instead of rolling to generate a feature, you may simply envision the nature of the area. Perhaps your current surroundings require additional time to traverse, or you might assume you are moving into a specific terrain or architecture based on your understanding of this place. To reduce the frequency of your dice rolling, and give the place a sense of uniformity interspersed with interesting areas and discoveries, feel free to rely on your instincts or choose a feature from the oracle charts.

## Default Features

The first feature listed on the domain card (21-43 result) can be considered the default architecture or terrain for a site. For example, in a **Sea Cave** you traverse **watery tunnels** to reach chambers and other features. To reduce the frequency of oracle rolls, especially in a large site, you can often envision moving through the default surroundings when you *Delve the Depths*. This is especially appropriate if you are moving out of a unique area.

## Something Unusual or Unexpected

Each domain card also includes a special 89-98 answer within the feature table: “Something unusual or unexpected.” If you roll this result, you can use another oracle to get your answer, such as the Action and Theme oracles (*Ironsworn Core*, page 174), or the Aspect and Focus oracles (page 204). Or simply envision what you encounter as appropriate to the current situation. Make it something which reveals new facets of the site or subverts your assumptions.

## Transitioning into a New Theme or Domain

A roll of 99 or 100 on the feature table triggers the introduction of a new theme or domain. When you encounter this result, choose a new theme or domain as appropriate to the situation. If in doubt, randomly draw a card or *Ask the Oracle*. You might find that the **Fortified** site is now **Infested**. You might stumble across a **Ruin** while navigating a **Tanglewood**. Discard the existing theme or domain and add the new one to your playscape. Keep all your existing progress. Then, envision what you encounter and how this transition manifests in your story. Your objective lies within.



21-43 Watery tunnels	
44-56	Eroded chamber
57-64	Flooded chamber
65-68	Vast chamber
69-72	Dry passages
73-76	Freshwater inlet
77-80	Rocky island
81-84	Waterborne debris
85-88	Shipwreck or boat
89-98	Something unusual or unexpected
99	You transition into a new theme
00	You transition into a new domain
DANGERS	
31-33	Denizen strikes without warning
34-36	Denizen lurks below
37-39	Flooding
40-42	Rushing current
43-45	Claustrophobic squeeze

## Adding Detail

A result on the feature table might be abstract, mundane, unusual, or specific. If you want to clarify a result or add additional detail, you can use another oracle for inspiration.

The Aspect and Focus oracles (page 204) are useful prompts to help flesh out your surroundings or give detail for an encounter or event within a site.

*The examples in this chapter continue the story from the previous chapter: The Quest for Themon's Dagger.*

You make your way into the **Infested Barrow** in search of Themon's Dagger, a priceless artifact of the Old World. You envision moving warily through the entrance. The place smells of mold and dead things. The darkness wraps around you, barely held back by the flickering light of your torch.

You make the *Delve the Depths* move, and roll on the feature table to define your initial surroundings. You roll 70, and check the result on the domain card: “Offerings to the dead.”

What sort of offerings? You’re not sure how to interpret the result, so you *Ask the Oracle* and roll on the Focus table for additional detail (page 205). The oracle responds, “Remains.”

You envision an entry chamber filled with the remains of animals sacrificed to the memory of the old king. The bones of cows, goats, and horses litter this place, and the ground is stained with blood. “Are there any fresh remains?” you wonder, giving it an unlikely chance as you *Ask the Oracle* using the yes/no table. “No,” the oracle answers. There is nothing here but bones and dust.

DOMAIN
<b>BARROW</b>
The dead are enshrined here.
<b>FEATURES</b>
21-43 Burial chambers
44-56 Maze of narrow passages
57-64 Shrine
65-68 Stately vault
69-72 Offerings to the dead
73-76 Statuary or tapestries
77-80 Remains of a grave robber
81-84 Mass grave
85-88 Exhumed corpses
89-98 Something unusual or unexpected
99 You transition into a new theme
00 You transition into a new domain
<b>DANGERS</b>
31-33 Denizen guards this area
34-36 Trap
37-39 Death makes its presence known
40-42 Crumbling architecture
43-45 Grave goods with hidden dangers

If you are playing as the GM, you may roll for a feature or simply envision and describe the surroundings as appropriate to the nature of the site. You can also give narrative control to your players, encouraging them to make oracle rolls and interpret the results.

Working from a fixed map, or assuming a specific number of locations within a site, probably won't work as well. The actions your players take—and the result of their moves—will largely dictate the pace of the expedition and the number of areas they traverse. *Delve* works best when exploring places that are a mystery for everyone, including the GM.

## ENVISION YOUR APPROACH

Next, envision how you will attempt to traverse this area. The *Delve the Depths* move gives you three options. Choose one.

- With haste: Roll +edge.
- With stealth or trickery: Roll +shadow.
- With observation, intuition, or expertise: Roll +wits.

Your selection should be based on several factors, including the abilities and approach of your character, the terrain or architecture you find yourself in, your current situation, and the nature of the site. For example:

- Time is of the essence, and you must warn a village of an impending raider attack. Unfortunately, it lies on the other side of a **Corrupted Shadowfen**. Forced by the narrative circumstances to plunge heedlessly into danger, you roll +edge.
- A **Hallowed Stronghold** is held by enemy cultists. To blend in as you move through occupied areas, you wear the robes of their sect. You roll +shadow and hope no one takes notice of you.
- An **Ancient Frozen Cavern** holds age-old secrets. This is a perilous place, and your exploration is hindered by traps and dangerous terrain. You move with caution, wary of new dangers, and roll +wits.

If you are playing with allies, only one of you makes this move. Decide who is leading this segment of the exploration. The leadership role may change from area to area as appropriate to the situation and your approach. Another character can attempt to bolster the leader's action by making the *Aid Your Ally* move, though that carries its own risk of complication.

You envision moving through the entry chamber of the **Infested Barrow**, treading carefully across the scattered bones. On the other side of the space, a dark passage beckons. You stop and listen, wary of what might lurk beyond the reach of your torchlight.

You decide that +wits best represents your careful and observant approach as you begin your exploration of this place.

## MAKE THE ACTION ROLL

You have envisioned your surroundings and approach. Now, it's time to roll the dice. Make a standard action roll using your chosen stat. *Delve the Depths* breaks down the results as follows:

On a <b>strong hit</b> , you delve deeper. Mark progress and <i>Find an Opportunity</i> .	On a <b>weak hit</b> , roll on the following table according to your stat.	On a <b>miss</b> , <i>Reveal a Danger</i> .
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### If You Score a Strong Hit...

If you roll a strong hit, this phase of your exploration has gone well. You have the advantage, and are pushing farther into the depths of this place. Mark progress per the rank of the site. For example, if this is a dangerous site, mark two progress. If it is extreme, mark two ticks. Then, make the *Find an Opportunity* move (page 30).

### If You Score a Weak Hit...

On a weak hit, the outcome is uncertain. You must make a standard oracle roll on the table included in the *Delve the Depths* move, which is shown below.

Edge	Shadow	Wits	Weak Hit Result
1-45	1-30	1-40	Mark progress and <i>Reveal a Danger</i> .
46-65	31-65	41-55	Mark progress.
66-75	66-90	56-80	Choose one: Mark progress or <i>Find an Opportunity</i> .
76-80	91-99	81-99	Take both: Mark progress and <i>Find an Opportunity</i> .
81-00	00	00	Mark progress twice and <i>Reveal a Danger</i> .

Note that this table includes a different potential result for the three stat options: edge, shadow, and wits. Reference the appropriate column and check the result based on the stat used in your action roll. For example, if you *Delve the Depths* using shadow, rolling a 35 on this table instructs you to mark progress. If you used wits, that same roll tells you to mark progress and *Reveal a Danger*.

Each stat choice offers advantages and disadvantages as you *Delve the Depths*:

- **Edge** gives you the potential to move faster through the site, marking additional progress. But you are also more likely to *Reveal a Danger* and have less chance to *Find an Opportunity*.
- **Shadow** is the safest option, making it likely you will mark progress and not *Reveal a Danger*. However, your wariness gives you a reduced chance to *Find an Opportunity*.
- **Wits** is a balanced approach, with more potential to *Find an Opportunity* as you mark progress. But you put yourself at risk to *Reveal a Danger*.

When you envision your approach, your stat choice should be driven by the situation, your surroundings, and your character's abilities and methods. But you can also be mindful of how the stat will impact the result when you are forced to roll on this table.

If the table directs you to mark progress, do so. "Mark progress twice" means you should double the progress. For example, if you are exploring a dangerous site, you would normally mark two progress boxes. Marking twice gives you four progress boxes.

If the result instructs you to *Reveal a Danger* or *Find an Opportunity*, make that move now.

### If You Roll a Miss...

On a miss, you do not mark progress and must make the *Reveal a Danger* move. You have been waylaid by a threat.

You make the *Delve the Depths* action roll with +wits, and score a weak hit. You roll your oracle dice, and check the table for the outcome. A roll of 85 gives you "Take both: Mark progress and *Find an Opportunity*."

This is a formidable site, so you mark one progress. Then, you make the *Find an Opportunity* move to resolve what you discover.

PROGRESS										
<input type="radio"/> TROUBLESOME	<input type="radio"/> DANGEROUS	<input checked="" type="radio"/> FORMIDABLE	<input type="radio"/> EXTREME	<input type="radio"/> EPIC						

## DELVE THE DEPTHS SUMMARY

1

**Envision your surroundings (page 23):** Portray the environment as appropriate to the site, or roll for a feature on the theme/domain cards. Use other oracles to add details or answer questions.

2

**Consider your approach (page 26):** Envision the current situation and how you will attempt to traverse this area. Choose edge, shadow, or wits as the stat which best represents your approach.

3

**Make the action roll (page 27):** Make a standard action roll using your selected stat. On a strong hit, mark progress and *Find an Opportunity*. On a weak hit, roll on the *Delve the Depths* table. On a miss, *Reveal a Danger*.

**Reminder:** if you are playing with allies, only one of you makes this move. They are the leader for this segment of the exploration. Other players contribute by helping set the scene and interpreting outcomes. Allies can also make the *Aid Your Ally* move to bolster the leader's action.

## FIND AN OPPORTUNITY

When you encounter a helpful situation or feature within a site, roll on the following table. If you are making this move as a result of a strong hit on *Delve the Depths*, you may pick or envision an opportunity instead of rolling.

Then, choose one.

- Gain insight or prepare: Take +1 momentum.
- Take action now: You and any allies may make a move (not a progress move) which directly leverages the opportunity. When you do, add +1 and take +1 momentum on a hit.

Roll	Result
1-25	The terrain favors you, or you find a hidden path.
26-45	An aspect of the history or nature of this place is revealed.
46-57	You locate a secure area.
58-68	A clue offers insight or direction.
69-78	You get the drop on a denizen.
79-86	This area provides an opportunity to scavenge, forage, or hunt.
87-90	You locate an interesting or helpful object.
91-94	You are alerted to a potential threat.
95-98	You encounter a denizen who might support you.
99-00	You encounter a denizen in need of help.

This move represents discovering a helpful situation or feature within a site. It is a fortunate circumstance—not a willful action taken by your character—so is triggered only when you *Delve the Depths* and score a hit. It is always triggered on a strong hit with that move, and sometimes on a weak hit.

If you are playing with allies, the character who triggered *Find an Opportunity* as they *Delve the Depths* is the one to resolve the move. However, everyone at the table can participate in interpreting the outcome and describing the reactions of their character. Also, the rewards of this move may benefit your allies; see page 32 for how that works.

## DEFINE THE OPPORTUNITY

If you triggered this move through a weak hit on *Delve the Depths*, make an oracle roll on the included opportunity table. Check your result and interpret the outcome as appropriate to the nature of the site and your current situation.

If you scored a strong hit on *Delve the Depths*, you may pick an outcome from the table without rolling. Or you can simply envision any moderately helpful circumstance as an opportunity. If you are unsure, or want to leave it in the hands of fate, *Ask the Oracle*.

## INTERPRET THE OPPORTUNITY

Next, bring the opportunity to life. What do you encounter? How can it help you? The opportunity should make sense in the context of the site, the characteristics of this specific area, and the purpose of your exploration.

If you roll on the *Find an Opportunity* oracle and the response is difficult to interpret for your current situation, you can check up or down one row from your original answer, or reverse the digits (37=73). However, the abstract nature of these results should allow them to fit most circumstances.

If you need additional detail or clarification, *Ask the Oracle*.

If you are playing in guided mode, the result of the *Delve the Depths* move—a strong hit or weak hit—can define who has narrative control over an opportunity. On a strong hit, the player defines the opportunity. On a weak hit, the GM has control.

In the latter case, the GM may direct the player to roll on the *Find an Opportunity* table, or simply introduce an opportunity appropriate to the situation. Feel free to talk it over with the players, or *Ask the Oracle* for guidance.

When this move is triggered by a weak hit, the opportunity should feel like a minor reward. It is a moment of hope or respite in an otherwise dire circumstance, rather than a dramatic shift in the character’s fortunes. A strong hit on *Delve the Depths* can prompt a more powerful narrative opportunity, especially when paired with a match on the challenge dice.

## ACT ON THE OPPORTUNITY

Finally, per the text of the move, use the opportunity to choose one:

- Gain insight or prepare: Take +1 momentum.
- Take action now: You and any allies may make a move (not a progress move) which directly leverages the opportunity. When you do, add +1 and take +1 momentum on a hit.

**Take the first option if you don't want to take the chance of suffering a cost by making a move, if the opportunity doesn't lend itself to a move, or if you're more interested in building momentum without risk.** This reward represents your improved confidence and position as you push deeper into the depths. If you are playing with allies, this benefit is limited to the character making the move.

**Take the second option if you want to make an immediate move to leverage your opportunity.** For example, you might find an area where you can *Make Camp* in relative comfort or safety. A clear path may allow you to *Delve the Depths* with renewed determination. Perhaps you can *Gather Information* to search an area or follow tracks.

If you are exploring with allies, the “take action now” option is usable by anyone, and you may each make one move (not a progress move) which leverages this reward.

However, don’t bend the fiction to a breaking point by trying to justify a move which is tangential or unrelated to the opportunity. If there is a clear action for your character, take it. Otherwise, let someone else have the spotlight.

Group moves which are made by a single character—such as *Delve the Depths* or *Make Camp*—still have that limitation when you *Find an Opportunity* and take action. However, the character who originally acted to *Delve the Depths* can pass control to any ally for the next group move.

Moving through the entry chamber of the **Infested Barrow**, you roll a weak hit as you *Delve the Depths* and trigger *Find an Opportunity*. There is something helpful here. What is it?

You roll 62 on the *Find an Opportunity* oracle table: “A clue offers insight or direction.” Not sure how to interpret this, You Ask the Oracle using the Aspect and Focus tables. The oracle responds, “Marked opening.”

You envision yourself facing multiple passages leading out of the entry chamber. You hesitate, staring into the inky blackness beyond each portal. Then, you catch sight of a dagger carved into the center of a stone archway. It is Themon’s Dagger.

As you study the carving, a single drop of blood falls from the tip of the blade and splatters on the dusty floor. You shudder. Your path is clear.

You then apply the benefits of this discovery by making the *Delve the Depths* move with a bonus. You add +1 as you wade into the darkness beyond the archway.

## REVEAL A DANGER

When you encounter a risky situation within a site, envision the danger or roll on the following table.

Roll	Result
1-30	Check the theme card.
31-45	Check the domain card.
46-57	You encounter a hostile denizen.
58-68	You face an environmental or architectural hazard.
69-76	A discovery undermines or complicates your quest.
77-79	You confront a harrowing situation or sensation.
80-82	You face the consequences of an earlier choice or approach.
83-85	Your way is blocked or trapped.
86-88	A resource is diminished, broken, or lost.
89-91	You face a perplexing mystery or tough choice.
92-94	You lose your way or are delayed.
95-00	Roll twice more on this table. Both results occur. If they are the same result, make it worse.

This move is the inverse of *Find an Opportunity*. It is triggered by a miss or weak hit when you *Delve the Depths*.

You can also trigger *Reveal a Danger* as a consequence of any complication or failure within a site. If you must *Pay the Price* when exploring, and want to introduce an outcome related to the location, make this move instead of referencing the *Pay the Price* table. For example, if you *Make Camp* within the depths of a **Wild Tanglewood**, and roll a miss, you can choose to *Reveal a Danger* instead of rolling on the *Pay the Price* table.

## ENVISION THE DANGER

Much like *Pay the Price*, you can choose to simply introduce a danger that's a good fit for the current situation. If a dramatic outcome springs to mind immediately, go with it. Otherwise, you can put it in the hands of fate and roll on the included **danger table**. When you make your oracle roll on this table, the potential result spans three locations:

- 1-30 is found in the danger table on the theme card.
- 31-45 is found in the danger table on the domain card.
- 46-100 is found on the main *Reveal a Danger* table.

When you roll 1-30,  
check the theme card.

When you roll 31-45,  
check the domain card.

**THEME****WILD**

Nature prevails in this place.

**FEATURES**

- 1-4 Denizen's lair
- 5-8 Territorial markings
- 9-12 Impressive flora or fauna
- 13-16 Hunting ground or watering hole
- 17-20 Remains or carrion

**DANGERS**

- 1-5 Denizen hunts
- 6-10 Denizen strikes without warning
- 11-12 Denizen leverages the environment
- 13-14 Denizen wields unexpected abilities
- 15-16 Denizen guided by a greater threat
- 17-18 Denizen protects something
- 19-20 Hazardous terrain
- 21-22 Weather or environmental threat
- 23-24 Benign aspect becomes a threat
- 25-26 Overzealous hunter
- 27-28 Disturbing evidence of a victim's fate
- 29-30 Ill-fated victim in danger

**DOMAIN****SHADOWFEN**

A primeval marsh, cloaked in mist.

**FEATURES**

- 21-43 Narrow path through a fetid bog
- 44-56 Stagnant waterway
- 57-64 Flooded thicket
- 65-68 Island of dry land
- 69-72 Submerged discovery
- 73-76 Preserved corpses
- 77-80 Overgrown structure
- 81-84 Tall reeds
- 85-88 Camp or outpost
- 89-98 Something unusual or unexpected
- 99 You transition into a new theme
- 00 You transition into a new domain

**DANGERS**

- 31-33 Denizen hunts
- 34-36 Deep water blocks the path
- 37-39 Toxic environment
- 40-42 Concealing or disorienting mist
- 43-45 Hidden quagmire

**Roll      Result**

1-30	Check the theme card.
31-45	Check the domain card.
46-57	You encounter a hostile denizen.
58-68	You face an environmental or architectural hazard.
69-76	A discovery undermines or complicates your quest.
77-79	You confront a harrowing situation or sensation.
80-82	You face the consequences of an earlier choice or approach.
83-85	The path is blocked or trapped.
86-88	A resource is diminished, broken, or lost.
89-91	You face a perplexing mystery or tough choice.
92-94	You lose your way or are delayed.
95-00	Roll twice more on this table. Both results occur. If they are the same result, make it worse.

When you roll 46-100,  
check the move table.

If you are playing as the GM when someone triggers the *Reveal a Danger* move, you determine how the danger manifests. You can simply introduce an appropriate danger, roll on the oracle table, ask the player to roll, or talk it out with the group.

If you are playing with allies, a danger can impact a particular character or the entire group. Envision the danger, resolve the situation, and apply mechanical and narrative costs as appropriate.

## PLAY TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENS

Most results on the danger tables are a setup for a new threat or complication. You encounter an obstacle which must be overcome, or a foe who must be dealt with, or a mystery which must be solved. If you need clarification for an abstract or suggestive result, *Ask the Oracle*. Then, zoom in and resolve the situation. If a move is triggered, make it.

However, some results may suggest an immediate consequence, such as suffering a loss of spirit, harm, supply, or momentum. If so, make it happen. Varying the focus and nature of the dangers you encounter will help you manage the pace of your session. If it's interesting and dramatic, zoom in. Otherwise, apply the consequence and move on.

## REINFORCING A PERILOUS ENVIRONMENT

When you travel overland using the *Undertake a Journey* move, your supply is reduced on a weak hit. This creates a sense of urgency, forcing you to manage your resources or seek help within a community.

When you *Delve the Depths*, the potential consequence of a weak hit is more open-ended. You have more options to absorb a failure through your status tracks and narrative complications. However, you also have fewer options to recover from failure. A *Sojourn* is probably not possible without retreating entirely from the site. Depending on the nature of a site, you may not have an opportunity to *Resupply* or *Make Camp*. The deeper you delve, the more you are pushing your limited resources, and the greater the cost if you are forced to retreat or flee.

Also, consider the effect of this place on your morale. You face darkness, fear, aberrant environments, deadly foes, and constant peril. This will wear on you. Consider *Endure Stress* as a natural outcome for the sights and situations you encounter in a site. Your stress track should function as an ever-present ticking clock, counting down to an agonizing choice: do you abandon this place, or risk losing yourself to it forever?

## ADJUSTING THE SEVERITY OF A DANGER

The nature of the threat can also reflect your current situation and the outcome of the preceding move. If you trigger *Reveal a Danger* through a weak hit on *Delve the Depths*, you might have an opportunity to overcome or avoid the threat. For example, you *Face Danger* to avoid a sudden rockfall when exploring a **Mine**, and continue on your way unscathed.

A miss on *Delve the Depths* should trigger a danger that is dire, and has greater impact on your story. Even if you manage to overcome the threat, the effort or delay can carry a cost. For example, you escape immediate harm as you dive out of the way of the rockfall. But you must suffer a loss of momentum as you spend time and energy digging your way through the now-blocked passage.

For additional guidance and options for setting the severity of a danger, see Risk Zones on page 54.

You have descended deeper into the **Infested Barrow** in search of Themon's Dagger. After a string of successes, you roll a miss as you *Delve the Depths*. You must now *Reveal a Danger*.

You roll an 11 on the danger table. Results for 1-30 are found on the theme card, so you check there for your answer. "Denizen stalks you," the card tells you.

You envision catching sight of a pack of trogs behind you. Their pale eyes glimmer as they cling to the walls with gangly limbs. Then, a noise from ahead. More trogs. You are surrounded. What will you do? Decide, then play to see what happens.

THEME	
<b>INFESTED</b>	Foul creatures dwell here.
<b>FEATURES</b>	
1-4	Inhabited nest
5-8	Abandoned nest
9-12	Ravaged terrain or architecture
13-16	Remains or carrion
17-20	Hoarded food
<b>DANGERS</b>	
1-5	Denizens swarm and attack
6-10	Toxic or sickening environment
11-12	Denizen stalks you
13-14	Denizen takes or destroys something
15-16	Denizen reveals surprising cleverness
17-18	Denizen guided by a greater threat
19-20	Denizen blocks the path
21-22	Denizen funnels you down a new path
23-24	Denizen undermines the path
25-26	Denizen lays in wait
27-28	Trap or snare
29-30	Victim's horrible fate is revealed

## CHECK YOUR GEAR

When you check to see if you have a specific helpful item, and you have at least +1 supply, roll +supply.

On a **strong hit**, you have it. Take +1 momentum.

On a **weak hit**, you have it, but your resources are diminished. Take +1 momentum and suffer -1 supply.

On a **miss**, you don't have it and the situation grows more perilous. *Pay the Price.*

The isolation and perilous nature of a site may force you to consider what equipment you can bring to bear to overcome an obstacle. By default, the *Ironsworn* system is not concerned with tracking a detailed inventory. This may lead to situations where you aren't sure if you are prepared for an unexpected challenge. For example:

- Your enemies are coming across the bridge. Do you have a blade you can use to cut the rope support?
- Your ally is poisoned. Do you have an antidote in your herbalist's kit?
- The troll wants something for its collection. Do you have an appropriately shiny trinket?

When you check to see if you have a particular item on-hand, make this move.

On a strong hit, you've got it. You have the fictional framing to make moves (or avoid a move) using this item. Plus, you take a +1 momentum bonus to represent your readiness for this situation.

On a weak hit, you have it, but your resources are reduced. Take the +1 momentum reward and suffer -1 supply.

On a miss, you don't have what you need, and things get worse. You must *Pay the Price*. This may mean turning the peril of the current situation up a notch, or inflicting an immediate negative outcome.

## CHECKING YOUR GEAR OUTSIDE OF A SITE

If you like what it adds to the game, you can consider *Check Your Gear* as part of *Ironsworn*'s default move set. If so, you can trigger this move outside of site-based exploration.

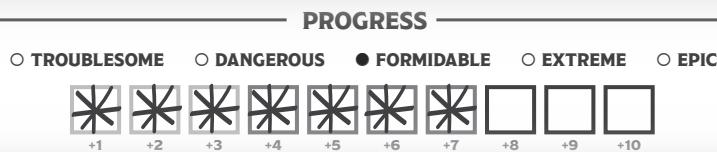
## DON'T OVERDO IT

Save this move for dramatic moments. If you are prepared to explore a site, you can assume you are equipped with the basics (such as lighting, rations, and weapons). Make this move when looking for something specific or noteworthy.

## PREFER TO IGNORE THIS MOVE?

Since this move is not essential to resolving your exploration of a site, you can consider it as an optional component. For example, if you prefer to keep a more detailed inventory for your character, this move may not be necessary. Or you might prefer to just handwave equipment entirely. If you think this move delivers an unnecessary level of detail, or not enough detail, you can ignore it and rely on your usual approach for managing gear.

Your exploration of the Infested Barrow is almost at an end. You have accumulated seven progress, and are nearly ready to *Locate Your Objective*. Just a bit farther...



Unfortunately, you roll a weak hit on *Delve the Depths*, and trigger the *Reveal a Danger* move. Your check against the *Reveal a Danger* table tells you, “The path is blocked or trapped.”

Looking for clarification on the nature of this obstacle, you *Ask the Oracle* by rolling on the Aspect and Focus oracles. The oracle responds, “Deep Boundary.”

You envision a broken crevice blocking your way. You drop a stone into the chasm, and it falls into nothingness. You don’t hear it hit bottom.

“Is it narrow enough to jump across?” you ask the oracle, giving it 50/50 odds. “No,” the oracle answers.

What then? Perhaps use some rope tied to something overhead? Do you even have a rope? You *Check Your Gear* and roll a strong hit. You envision digging through your pack and pulling out a length of woolen rope.

You have what you need to make your final push toward your objective.

## LOCATE YOUR OBJECTIVE

### *Progress Move*

When your **exploration** of a site comes to an end, roll the challenge dice and compare to your progress. Momentum is ignored on this roll.

On a **strong hit**, you locate your objective and the situation favors you. Choose one.

- Make another move now (not a progress move), and add +1.
- Take +1 momentum.

On a **weak hit**, you locate your objective but face an unforeseen hazard or complication. Envision what you find (*Ask the Oracle* if unsure).

On a **miss**, your objective falls out of reach, you have been misled about the nature of your objective, or you discover that this site holds unexpected depths. If you continue your exploration, clear all but one filled progress and raise the site's rank by one (if not already epic).

When you are ready to complete your exploration of a site, make this move. Since this is a progress move, you tally the number of filled boxes on your progress track. This is your progress score. Only add fully filled boxes (those with four ticks). Then, roll your challenge dice, compare to your progress score, and resolve a strong hit, weak hit, or miss as normal. You may not burn momentum on this roll, and you are not affected by negative momentum.

This move is structured and functions similarly to *Reach Your Destination* (*Ironsworn Core*, page 68). Have you found what you were looking for? Are there additional obstacles in your path? Roll to find out.

When you score a strong hit, you locate your objective. Depending on the context of your objective, your task may be complete or you are well-positioned to take action. For example:

- You have traveled through a **Ravaged Cavern**, taking a more direct and perilous path through the Veiled Mountains, in your quest to reach the Shattered Wastes. With a strong hit on *Locate Your Objective*, you find the exit. You take +1 momentum as you ready yourself for the next phase of your adventure.
- You have delved into the heart of a **Fortified Mine** to rescue a friend held by raiders. With a strong hit on *Locate Your Objective*, you find where they are held. The guards are asleep. You add +1 as you *Face Danger* to sneak past without alerting them.

On a weak hit, something complicates your objective. Things are not what you expected, or an obstacle stands in your way. Envision what you encounter. Then, play to see what happens.

On a miss, things have fallen apart. Your objective lies somewhere else, you were mistaken about the nature of your objective, or you face a turn of events that undermines your purpose. Depending on the circumstances, this might mean your exploration ends in failure, or that you must push on while clearing all but one of your filled progress and raising the site's rank.

If you are traveling with allies, one of you makes this move. Each of you benefits (or suffers) from the narrative outcome of the roll. Only the character making the move takes the mechanical benefit of a strong hit.

Finally, consider how the objective impacts your quest. If this is a milestone, make the *Reach a Milestone* move. If this objective represents what you believe is the completion of your quest, *Fulfill Your Vow*.

You have eight progress marked. Themon's Dagger awaits. Or does it? You *Locate Your Objective* to find out.

You roll a weak hit. Per the text of the move: "You locate your objective but face an unforeseen hazard or complication."

There's no need for an oracle roll to reveal what you find. You already have something in mind.

You envision entering Themon's burial chamber. The place has high ceilings and ornate columns. Your torchlight sends shadows dancing against the far wall. A stone sarcophagus sits there, nestled in an alcove.

The room is quiet. Dust glimmers in the still air.

You head for the coffin. With little reverence, you hunch over and shove the lid. It scrapes across the sarcophagus, then falls to the floor with a thunderous crack. The contents are laid bare.

The former king wears once-fine armor and an iron circlet. His eyes are black pits in a desiccated face. His hands—shriveled flesh stretched across yellow bones—hold a dagger to his sunken chest. The blade is bright silver, its edge stained with blood.

You reach in and take hold of the weapon.

Suddenly, Themon's hands grasp your own. The mouth opens with a dry snap. A blue light springs to life in the hollow eyes...

## ESCAPE THE DEPTHS

When you **flee** or **withdraw from a site**, consider the situation and your approach. If you...

- Find the fastest way out: Roll +edge.
- Steel yourself against the horrors of this place: Roll +heart.
- Fight your way out: Roll +iron.
- Retrace your steps or locate an alternate path: Roll +wits.
- Keep out of sight: Roll +shadow.

On a **strong hit**, you make your way safely out of the site. Take +1 momentum.

On a **weak hit**, you find your way out, but this place exacts its price. Choose one.

- You are weary or wounded: *Endure Harm*.
- The experience leaves you shaken: *Endure Stress*.
- You are delayed, and it costs you.
- You leave behind something important.
- You face a new complication as you emerge from the depths.
- A denizen plots their revenge.

On a **miss**, a dire threat or imposing obstacle stands in your way. *Reveal a Danger*. If you survive, you may make your escape.

With the focus and effort devoted to exploring the site, getting back out after you *Locate Your Objective* can feel anticlimactic. *Escape the Depths* gives you a zoomed-out method of abstracting your exit from this place. With a single roll, you'll resolve what happens when you journey out of the depths.

You might also need to *Escape the Depths* when your resources are exhausted, the dangers prove too great, or if you are at the brink of calamity. When you need to get the hell out, make this move. If you later return to try again, you'll reduce the amount of accrued progress when you *Discover a Site* (page 19).

To escape a site, you can envision reversing course or heading for the nearest exit. To justify the move, feel free to introduce a convenient shortcut or a heretofore unknown exit. In open terrain, such as a **Tanglewood** or **Shadowfen**, your exit can be a path leading to safer territory.

If you are playing with allies, one of you will take the leadership role and make this move for the party.

On a strong hit, you are free and clear. Envision the escape as a montage. You persevere over any obstacles. For the moment, you are safe.

On a weak hit, you escape the site, but not without cost. Envision how the site exacted this price, and pick an option from the move.

If you score a weak hit when escaping with allies, consider how the cost impacts the group. You can each choose an option from the weak hit results—for example, one might suffer harm and another stress—or just inflict the cost on the acting character. A narrative cost such as “you face a new complication” can apply to the group as a whole.

On a miss, the depths block your escape. You must *Reveal a Danger*. Zoom in as you deal with this sudden turn of events. Per the text of the move, make it a dire threat or imposing obstacle. Make it hurt. If you overcome this challenge, you may then envision your successful escape from the site.

You hold Themon’s Dagger. The lifeless corpse of the Old World king lies at your feet. Your objective is complete. Now, you must *Escape the Depths*.

Beset by howling trogs, you envision a mad rush back through the passages of the **Infested Barrow**. You roll +edge, and score a weak hit.

You consider your options for the weak hit, and choose “A denizen plots their revenge.” You picture the scene as you stumble through the tomb’s entrance. The mid-day light is blinding. You have escaped. But you feel a cold certainty as you study the dagger. The king is not at rest, and will attempt to reclaim the bloodied blade.

## DON’T MAKE THIS MOVE WHEN...

Don’t make this move when you are not in a position to escape. If you are in the middle of a fight, you must defeat your foes or *Face Danger* to break away from the battle. If the path is blocked or hindered, deal with that obstacle first.

You also won’t make this move if your sole objective in a site is to find your way out. In that case, when you successfully *Locate Your Objective*, you have the means to escape and can envision doing so without making another move.

Finally, if you would prefer to detail your journey back out of the depths, you can ignore this move. Instead, after you successfully *Locate Your Objective*, you should *Discover a Site*. Using the “If you are returning to a previously explored site...” option, roll both challenge dice, take the lowest value, and clear that number of progress boxes from the site progress track. Set a new objective to escape this place. When you successfully *Locate Your Objective* again, you have escaped.

# **MAKING OTHER MOVES**

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The *Delve* moves are not the only actions you will take within a site. Make other *Ironsworn* moves as appropriate to the circumstances and your intent. Take proactive actions when circumstances give you an opportunity. Make reactive moves when a situation forces you to avoid a threat or endure a hardship.

For example:

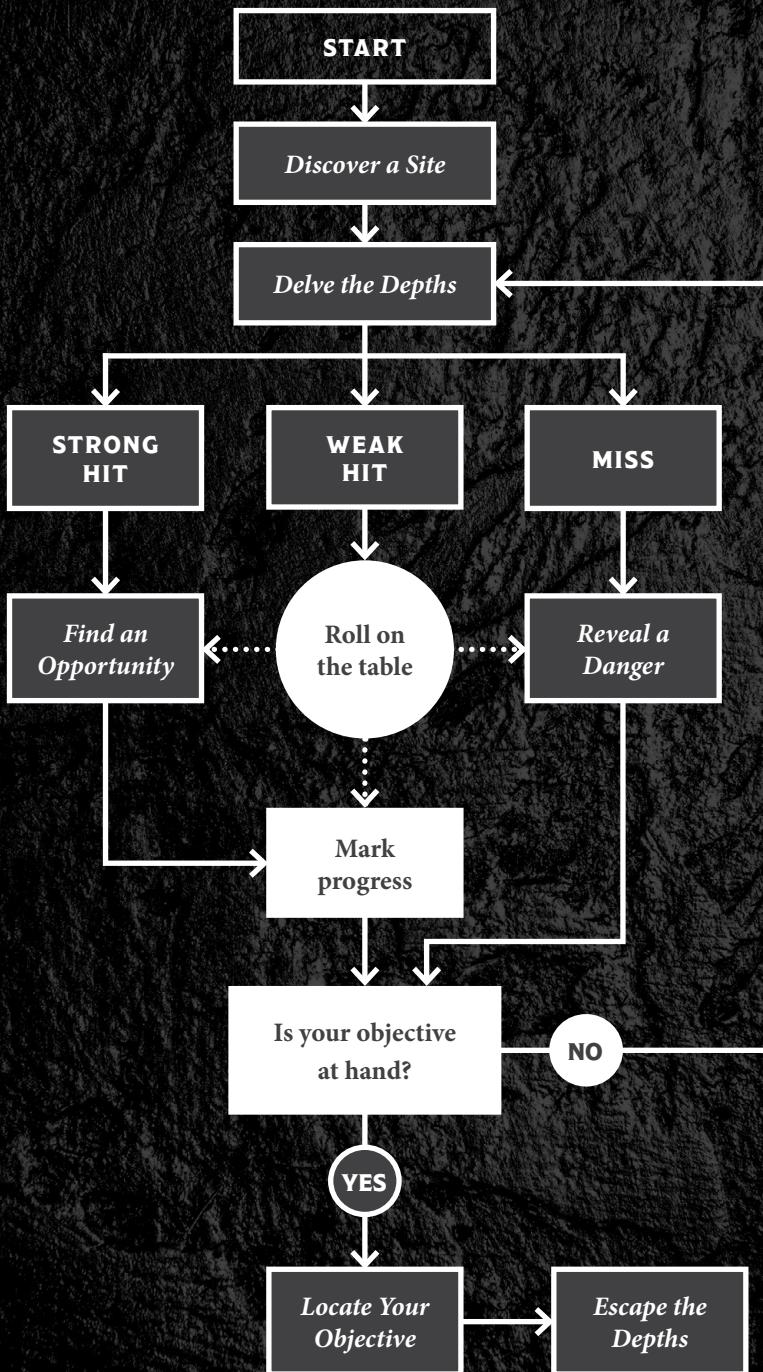
- You *Enter the Fray* as you are ambushed by a denizen.
- You find a place to rest and *Make Camp*.
- You search a storeroom to *Resupply*.
- You *Compel* a troll to let you pass.
- You *Face Danger* as you cross a raging underground river.
- You encounter a horrifying denizen, and *Endure Stress*.
- You *Swear an Iron Vow* to put a tormented spirit to rest.
- You use a ritual asset to weave forbidden magic.

Remember, your fictional framing will dictate the moves you *can* make and the moves you *must* make (*Ironsworn Core*, page 205). Lead with the fiction, and the moves and mechanics will follow naturally.

## **WHAT'S NEXT**

- When you're ready to delve deeper, check out Chapter 3 (page 51) for additional advice, techniques, and options.
- If you want to know more about the perilous sites within the Ironlands, jump to Chapter 4 (page 79).
- Need some new foes and encounters for your *Ironsworn* campaign? You'll find them in Chapter 5 (page 107).
- Interested in making the threats in your world more reactive and dangerous? See Chapter 6 (page 151).
- Do you want to introduce objects of power into your *Ironsworn* campaign? Check out Chapter 7 (page 163).
- And, finally, there's a host of new oracle tables in Chapter 8 (page 203).

# THE FLOW OF PLAY



# SUMMARY OF CORE TERMS

## AREA

An **area** (page 21) is an abstract representation of a segment of a site. In a **Fortified Stronghold**, a specific area might consist of a single chamber. In a **Wild Shadowfen**, an area can be a deer path winding for miles through a stagnant and misty morass. The size and detail will vary based on the nature of the site and the context of your exploration.

When you *Delve the Depths* (page 21), you envision the features of the area you must traverse, roll on the theme and domain cards, or use another oracle for inspiration. As you successfully navigate through an area, you mark progress.

## DANGER

A **danger** is triggered by moves or fictional circumstances. When you encounter a danger within a site, make the *Reveal a Danger* move (page 34). This move, and the theme and domain cards, provide random tables to help envision the threat you'll face.

## DENIZEN

A **denizen** is a person, creature, or group you may encounter within a site. When you *Discover a Site* (page 19), envision potential denizens, and add them to the denizens matrix on your site worksheet. As you explore a site, you may reveal new aspects of those inhabitants or uncover new denizens.

Learn more about denizens and the denizens matrix in Chapter 5 (page 107). Other foes and encounters are available in *Ironsworn Core* (page 133).

## DOMAIN

When you *Discover a Site* (page 19), choose a **domain** to represent the physical characteristics of this place. A **Cavern** is a dark realm of twisting tunnels and claustrophobic chambers. A **Shadowfen** is a foul marshland. A **Stronghold** is a defended fortress.

Together, the theme and domain help you visualize your exploration of the site and reveal features and dangers. They are formatted as tarot-sized cards.

Learn more about the default domains on page 88.

## FEATURE

As you *Delve the Depths* (page 21), you will envision your surroundings, including the terrain or architecture and what you find within. If you're unsure, you can use the **feature tables** on the theme and domain cards.

If you are playing solo or co-op without a GM, you will use these oracles to help envision your surroundings and encounters. If you are the GM, you can choose to roll on the feature tables (or ask a player to roll), or simply use them for inspiration when appropriate.

## OBJECTIVE

Your **objective** is your purpose for exploring this site. As you *Delve the Depths* (page 21), you mark progress toward your objective. When you *Locate Your Objective* (page 40), you'll make a progress roll to see what happens when you reach the end of your expedition.

## OPPORTUNITY

An **opportunity** is the opposite of a danger. It represents a place or circumstance within the depths of a site which gives you some advantage. An opportunity is sometimes triggered by success on the *Delve the Depths* move (page 21), and is resolved with the *Find an Opportunity* move (page 30).

## SITE

The **site** is the physical location you will explore in your quest. When you *Discover a Site* (page 19), choose a theme and domain card to represent its nature. When you enter a site, *Delve the Depths* (page 21) to resolve the outcome of your exploration and the progress toward your objective.

## THEME

When you *Discover a Site* (page 19), choose a **theme** to represent the nature of this place. If you choose **Infested**, you will envision this site as overrun by swarms of foul creatures. If you choose **Corrupted**, dark magic has tainted this place.

Together, the theme and domain help you visualize your exploration of the site and reveal features and dangers. They are formatted as tarot-sized cards.

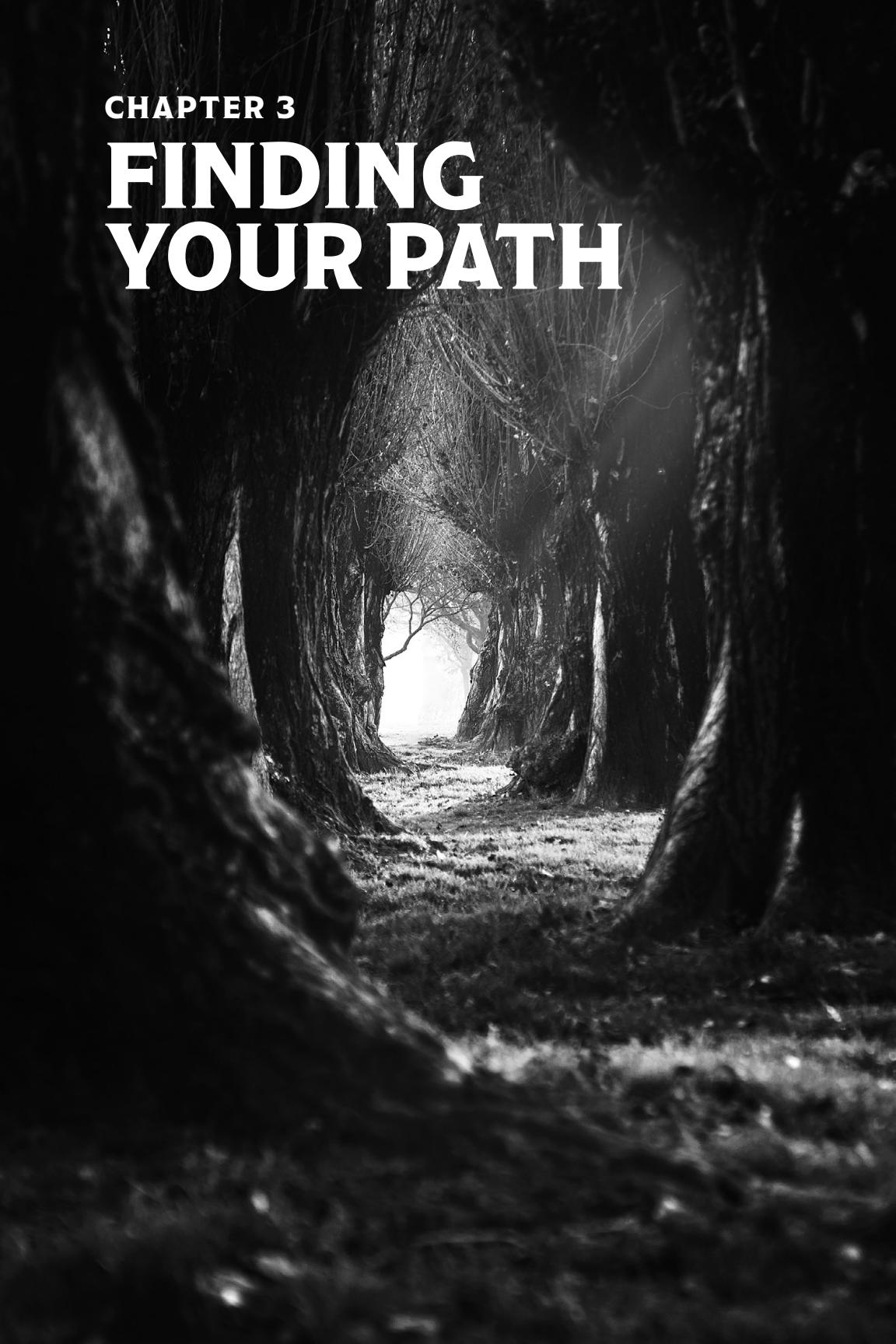
Learn more about the default themes on page 84.





**CHAPTER 3**

# **FINDING YOUR PATH**



# **TUNING YOUR EXPERIENCE**

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This chapter contains options and techniques to customize the *Delve* mechanics to your preferences. Some of these tips and variant rules are also generally useful in your *Ironsworn* campaign beyond the exploration of a site.

The mechanics and approaches in this chapter are entirely optional, and can be used or ignored as you like. Here's what you'll find within:

- **Managing Sites and Quests (page 52):** Guidance for managing the milestones for a vow when the quest goal and the objective within a site are the same.
- **Risk Zones (page 54):** An optional mechanic to manage the pace of your expedition and the hazards you'll face within a site.
- **Learning from Failure (page 58):** A new mechanic which rewards your *Ironsworn* character for the lessons learned when you fail to overcome challenges.
- **Mapping a Site (page 60):** Tips for creating a visual map of your exploration within a site.
- **Relationship Maps (page 61):** Techniques for illustrating how the people, creatures, and forces within a site relate to one another.
- **Streamlining Dice Rolls (page 64):** Recommendations to speed up play and alternatives for handling oracle rolls.
- **Hacking Sites (page 68):** Options to customize how sites are used at your table.
- **Delves as Journeys (page 74):** How to travel the Ironlands using the *Delve* mechanics.
- **One-Shot Delves (page 75):** How to facilitate an *Ironsworn* site-based adventure as a one-shot.

Later in this book, you'll also find two additional optional systems for your *Ironsworn* campaign.

- **Chapter 6 - Threats (page 151):** Mechanics for tracking those forces which seek to undermine your vows.
- **Chapter 7 - Items of Power (page 163):** Options for equipping your *Ironsworn* character with unique items.

# **MANAGING SITES AND QUESTS**

Typically, a site is an obstacle to be overcome in a related quest. When you *Locate Your Objective* within a location, you might also *Reach a Milestone* for your vow. But what do you do when the objective of your expedition is also the focus of your vow and the endpoint for your quest? How do you manage the progress tracks when the delve and the vow are both leading you to the same objective?

For example:

- You swear to rescue an important member of your village, held by raiders at the heart of a **Fortified Stronghold**.
- You swear to reclaim the Shield of Kalidis, an important artifact of your kin, from its resting place in a **Hallowed Barrow**.
- You swear to defeat a mighty wyrm which dwells in the vast depths of a **Wild Frozen Cavern**.

In each of these examples, the delve objective and the object of a quest are essentially the same. However, you should still maintain separate progress tracks for each. The site progress track represents your physical headway within the site as you search out your objective. The vow progress track is the narrative and mechanical potential to *Fulfill Your Vow*.

If a quest is directly related to a site and seems relatively straightforward—go to this place and do this thing—you should give it an appropriately low rank as you *Swear an Iron Vow*. Setting the rank of the quest a step or two below the rank of the site is about right. For example, you might have a dangerous quest to achieve an objective within a formidable site.

## **QUEST MILESTONES**

If your quest is keyed to a particular site, consider how to introduce opportunities for narrative complexity and milestones. What potential obstacles and complications stand in your way?

### **MILESTONES EN ROUTE**

First, consider what obstacles you must overcome as you ready yourself for this expedition. How must you prepare? Do you know the way to the site? Is a journey required? Do hostile people or creatures have dominion over the surrounding lands? Are there forces that seek to prevent you from reaching the site? Overcoming any of these obstacles can allow you to *Reach a Milestone* in your quest.

## MILESTONES WITHIN THE SITE

Within the site, continue to manage your progress for both the site and the vow. When you successfully *Delve the Depths*, mark progress for the site. In parallel, as you gain new information and overcome obstacles directly related to the quest, you can *Reach a Milestone* to mark progress on your vow. Introducing opportunities for milestones within a site will reward the narrative investment you've made, and help balance the pace of your quest.

For example:

- You have vowed to recover a powerful artifact from a clan of crazed zealots. As you search their **Corrupted Stronghold**, you uncover their plan to use this artifact to resurrect a long-dead god. Gaining this information allows you to *Reach a Milestone*.
- In your quest to defeat an elder wolf, you must travel deep into a **Wild Tanglewood**. You are attacked by a pack of lesser wolves under the control of this beast. You manage to defeat them, and *Reach a Milestone*.
- A band of raiders defend an outpost within a **Ravaged Icereach**. Your kinfolk were taken as slaves by those raiders, and you've sworn to rescue them. As you explore the treacherous terrain, you encounter the former leader of the raiders, who was usurped and is now an outcast. They agree to help you gain access to the camp, and this alliance allows you to *Reach a Milestone*.

## MILESTONES AT YOUR OBJECTIVE

The moment when you successfully *Locate Your Objective* will probably serve as a milestone in your quest. Then, depending on the situation, you may face obstacles at your destination which you must overcome before you can *Fulfill Your Vow*. There may be foes protecting the objective, for example, or a physical hazard you must bypass. These obstacles can serve as additional milestones in your quest.

In fact, adding obstacles once you *Locate Your Objective* can accomplish two things: It gives you additional milestones to fill out your vow progress track, and it creates opportunities for a dramatic climax to both your quest and your exploration of the site.

## PACING FOR GMs

In guided play, the GM can use the site progress track and quest progress track as pacing tools. If the expedition is outrunning the quest (narratively and mechanically), look for an opportunity to drop relevant obstacles and potential milestones in the path of the characters.

# RISK ZONES

The deeper you delve, the greater the danger. Using this option, the amount of progress you've marked on your expedition sets the tone of the site, the default rank of your foes, and the severity of the outcome for failure.

Risk zones are an optional mechanic. For co-op and solo play, zones help frame the challenges you'll face as you explore a site. If you are the GM, you can use zones to reinforce a sense of escalating danger.

## BREAKING A SITE INTO ZONES

A site can be segmented into three **zones** using your site progress track.

- **Low risk:** For the initial stages of your exploration, with **zero to three progress** marked, you'll encounter minor dangers (troublesome or dangerous).
- **Medium risk:** As you delve deeper, with **four to seven progress** marked, you'll encounter moderate dangers (dangerous or formidable).
- **High risk:** As you pierce the heart of a site, with **eight to ten progress**, you'll encounter major dangers (formidable or extreme).



The site worksheet handout (available for download at [ironswornrpg.com](http://ironswornrpg.com)) uses a gradient of shades within the progress track boxes. You can use this as a reference for the three zones. Low risk is light gray, medium risk is (appropriately) medium gray, and high risk is dark gray.

## CHOOSING A RANK FOR A ZONE

Each zone gives you a choice between two ranks. For example, the challenges you face in the medium risk zone are either dangerous or formidable. To decide between the suggested ranks within a zone, consider the current situation and the nature of the enemy or obstacle. If in doubt, *Ask the Oracle*.

You can also use the overall rank of the site to help define which of the two ranks you encounter within a zone.

- **A lower ranked site (troublesome or dangerous)** will default to the first option for the duration of your exploration in that zone. For example, a dangerous site would feature troublesome risks in the low risk zone.
- **A higher ranked site (formidable or greater)** will default to the second option. For example, an extreme site would feature formidable risks in the medium risk zone.

If you set a default rank for a zone, don't use the same rank in the next zone. For example, don't pick formidable for both the medium and high risk zones. The danger should always escalate.

## HOW TO INTERPRET ZONE RANKS

The ranks provide context for your expedition in three ways:

- **Use the zone rank as a guide when you envision the nature of your surroundings and the narrative complications and obstacles you must overcome.** As you delve deeper, the dread, peril, and stakes are heightened. The environment is more oppressive. Dire revelations add complexity and urgency to your quest.
- **When you face a denizen, give them a rank equal to that of the zone.** Since NPCs are defined by their rank, this can also inform your choice of what types of people and creatures you encounter within each zone. Or you can adjust the rank of known denizens up or down to match the rank of a zone, envisioning them as lesser or greater variations of that creature. You can also group foes into a pack to increase their rank as appropriate.
- If you're in a fight, you'll typically suffer harm or stress equal to the rank of your foe. **Outside of combat, when you must Endure Harm or Endure Stress, suffer an amount equal to the zone's rank.** For example, within a dangerous zone, suffer -2 health when you must *Endure Harm*.

Risk zones reinforce the feeling of moving into untamed territory, and offer encouragement for gambling on the *Locate Your Objective* move before you've filled up your progress track. If you're about to move into the high risk zone, do you take your chances with formidable or extreme risks, or should you push quickly on to your destination and *Locate Your Objective*?

One caveat: If you face a troublesome obstacle within the low risk zone, and *Face Danger* to avoid it, a weak hit on that move already defines a troublesome outcome. Therefore, a miss should compound the severity. This can be a narrative cost which makes your situation more perilous, perhaps forcing additional moves. You can also increase the mechanical cost by suffering a troublesome penalty across more than one track—such as facing 1 harm and 1 stress. Or simply make it a dangerous cost instead of troublesome.

You are on an expedition within a dangerous **Ravaged Cavern**. You have marked 2 progress thus far, which puts you in the low risk zone. Since this is a dangerous site, you are defaulting to the lower rank within each zone. For the first zone, that rank is troublesome.

You score a miss as you *Delve the Depths*, and must *Reveal a Danger*. Your roll on the table within that move tells you to "face an environmental or architectural hazard." You envision this as a sinkhole which opens beneath you, forcing you to *Face Danger*. You score a miss again, and interpret this as taking a fall into the pit. You suffer troublesome harm (-1 health) and *Endure Harm*. To reinforce your failure on that move and distinguish it from what would have happened on a weak hit, you make the situation more perilous by deciding that you also dropped your torch. You must now *Face Danger* again to scramble through the suffocating darkness to find and relight the torch.

Later, as you traverse the high risk zone, you must again *Reveal a Danger*. This time, you "encounter a hostile denizen." The challenges in this zone are formidable. A roll on your denizens matrix reveals a run-in with a deep rat, but these creatures are only a troublesome foe. To better represent the danger in this zone, you make them a large pack, increasing their rank by two steps to formidable.

## A GUIDELINE—NOT A RULE

The zone rankings are a reference, not a mandate. Introduce lesser dangers or greater dangers as appropriate to the situation. In higher-ranked zones, you can use the rankings to establish the tone of that region and the types of foes you encounter, but be wary of heaping on too many mechanical penalties.

Instead, introduce dangers with opportunities to overcome or evade them, and balance mechanical costs with narrative complications.

With the zone rankings as your default, the exceptions will feel even more dramatic and interesting.

## ZONES FOR GUIDED SESSIONS

If you are the GM, you can make the zone mechanics visible to your players, giving them an opportunity to make informed decisions on the potential cost as they push farther into a site. Or you can make zones invisible to others at the table, using them simply as a reference for your narration and the challenges and obstacles you introduce.

In either case, let your descriptions and the tone of the session reflect the escalating perils as the characters explore the depths.

## ZONES AND JOURNEYS

You can also use zones when you *Undertake a Journey* to show how the risks increase as you push deeper into the wilds. As with a site, use the journey progress track to define the risks you'll face within each zone.

You leave a settlement and head off into the deep woods on a formidable journey. On your second *Undertake a Journey* roll, on the outskirts of the forest, you score a miss. You interpret this as a new obstacle: a fast-moving river which must be forded.

You are at two progress (low risk), so this will either be a troublesome or dangerous challenge. Since this a formidable journey, you opt to make it dangerous.

You *Face Danger* to get across the river, but score a miss. Per the rank of the zone, you suffer 2 harm as you lose your footing and get bashed against some rocks in the freezing water.

A few segments of the journey later, you are now deep in the wilds with eight progress (high risk). Unfortunately, you roll another miss. The threat this time is extreme. You decide that an elder wolf (an extreme foe) is stalking you.

Using zones for a journey may not be appropriate if you are traveling from one civilized or settled place to another. In that case, the wild and more dangerous areas would likely be at the midpoint in your journey.

# **LEARNING FROM FAILURE**

Failure is a key part of your journey within the Ironlands. If you'd like to make those failures a more influential aspect of your character's evolution—while taking a bit of the sting out of rolling a miss—use these optional mechanics.

First, when creating your character or introducing this option into an existing campaign, create a **failure track**. This is a standard progress track with ten boxes.

Then, when you make an action or progress roll and score a miss, you'll make the following move.

## **MARK YOUR FAILURE**

When you **make a move and score a miss**, mark a tick on your failure track. If you **score a miss when making a progress move**, mark two ticks.

Note that you won't *Mark Your Failure* if you change the outcome of a move from a miss to a hit. For example, if you roll a miss but have an asset ability which allows you to reroll any dice, scoring a hit on that reroll represents the actual result of your move. Only *Mark Your Failure* when you must face the consequences of a miss.

Continue to mark ticks for misses as you play (four ticks per progress box). When your failure track is at +6 or greater, you may *Learn from Your Failures*. This is a progress move to resolve the impact of these misses on your character. Turn to the next page to see how that works.



## LEARN FROM YOUR FAILURES

### *Progress Move*

When you spend time reflecting on your hardships and missteps, and your failure track is +6 or greater, roll your challenge dice and compare to your progress. Momentum is ignored on this roll.

On a **strong hit**, you commit to making a dramatic change. Take 3 experience and clear all progress. Then, choose one.

- Adjust your approach: Discard a single asset, and take 2 experience for each marked ability.
- Make an oath: *Swear an Iron Vow*, and reroll any dice.
- Ready your next steps: Take +3 momentum.

On a **weak hit**, you learn from your mistakes. Take 2 experience and clear all progress.

On a **miss**, you've learned the wrong lessons. Take 1 experience and clear all progress. Then, envision how you set off on an ill-fated path.

Make this move when you take stock of the perils you've faced and the times you weren't up to the task. On a strong hit, this is a dramatic turning point in your character's narrative. Take 3 experience and choose one from the list of additional rewards. On a weak hit, you allow a grudging acceptance of your failures and take 2 experience.

On a miss, you take 1 experience, but your stubbornness prevents true growth. Envision the rash or wrongheaded decision you make as you take your next step.

After making this move, clear all progress on the failure progress track. Then, return to making the *Mark Your Failure* move whenever you score a miss. You may *Learn from Your Failures* again once your failure track is +6 or greater.

## FAILURE AND ALLIES

The failure track is not a shared resource. If you are playing with allies, each of you will have your own failure track. Only make note of your own misses. If your ally makes a move and scores a miss, they *Mark a Failure* on their track.

## ASSET COST ADJUSTMENT

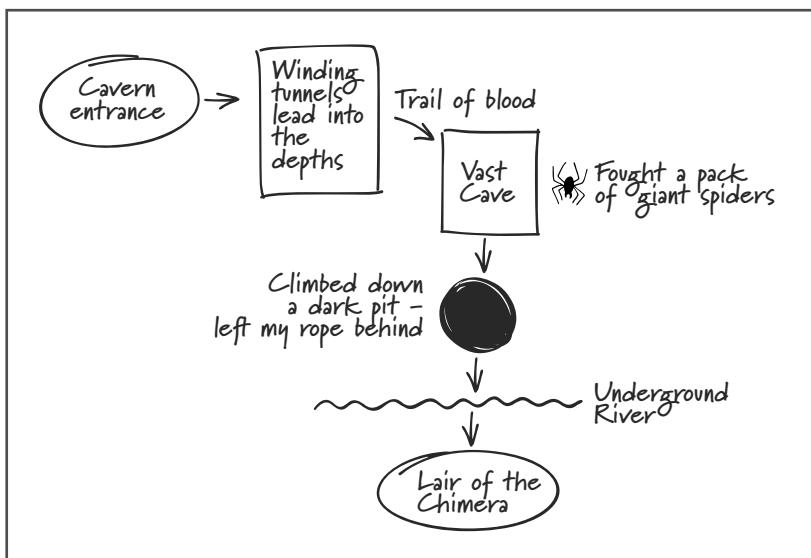
If you want to use the failure mechanics but prefer to keep character growth at a slower pace, adjust the cost of assets when you *Advance* as follows: 5 experience to add a new asset (instead of 3), and 3 experience to upgrade an asset (instead of 2).

# MAPPING A SITE

Because a *Delve* site is abstracted through moves and oracles, you don't need a map of the place. However, there are a few reasons you might consider creating a map as you explore.

- **Creating a map grounds the location in the created reality of your story and world.** It makes a site feel more tangible.
- Whether you are a player or a GM, **a map can supplement your usual method of record-keeping.** If your exploration extends over several sessions, it offers a handy visual reference for the areas you've explored and the encounters you've faced.
- If you are forced to flee a site, **a map can remind you of the nature of the place when you come back to it.** Also, if you are following the same path on your return, you can use the map as a reference for the locations you encounter as you *Delve the Depths*. What has changed here? What remains the same? Play to find out.

The site worksheet available for download at [ironswornrpg.com](http://ironswornrpg.com) provides a space for mapping and notes. Use it however you like to detail your exploration. For example, drawing a simple flowchart is an effective way to represent the abstract nature of the areas you'll traverse while making note of important events and encounters.



You can also use your preferred techniques or digital tools to create maps. If it enhances your fun and aids in your record-keeping, you're doing it right.

# RELATIONSHIP MAPS

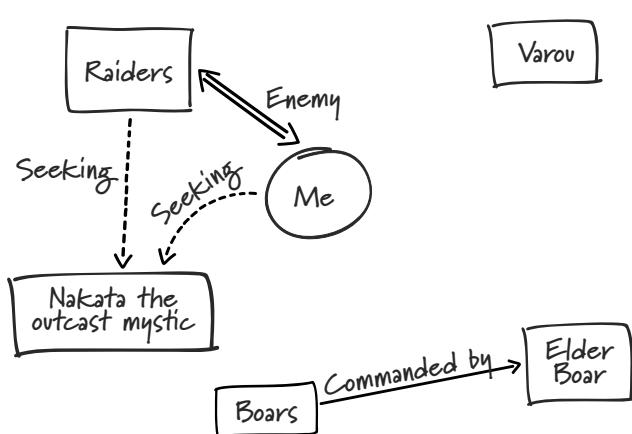
Instead of—or in addition to—a map of a physical location, you can create a relationship map to track the various important NPCs and factions within a site. A relationship map gives you a picture of how these people and creatures connect to one another, and can inform the conflicts and opportunities you'll face as you explore the place.

For GMs and players, a relationship map can help you establish communities within a site and understand how the player characters fit into that ecosystem. A relationship map is particularly helpful for any location which is in dispute or has a complex social or political structure.

To create a relationship map, identify the notable forces who are present. This might be important NPCs, factions, or types of creatures. You can use the site worksheet or a separate sheet to put the name of each denizen within its own block or circle.

You must enter a **Wild Tanglewood** in search of an outcast mystic.

You make note of what you know of the forces here. The mystic, the objective for this expedition, dwells within. A clan of raiders, your sworn enemy, trailed you into the forest; they seek the mystic for their own purposes. The site's wild nature is personified by a tribe of varou, along with an elder boar and packs of lesser boars.

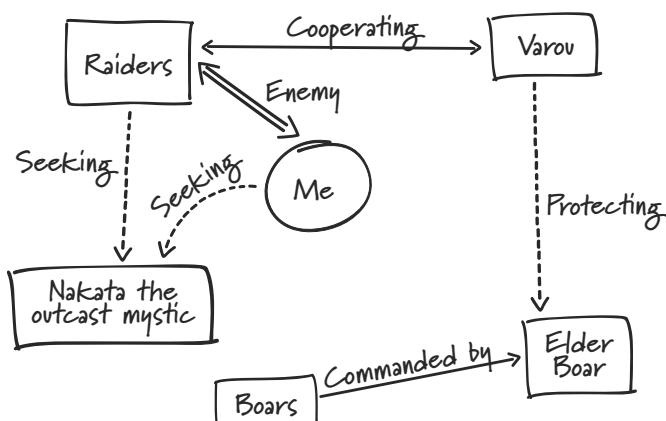


As you explore a site, update your relationship map with new details. If you encounter a new and noteworthy denizen, add it. When you must establish a relationship between denizens or determine how they react to your presence, you can *Ask the Oracle*. Some oracle tables to consider:

- Use the **Character Disposition oracle** (page 213) to understand how one entity regards another.
- Use the **Character Activity oracle** (page 213) to reveal a denizen's current task, or to understand the action they are taking against or in support of another denizen.
- Use the **Action and Theme oracles** (*Ironsworn Core*, page 174) to generate an abstract prompt for a particular denizen or situation.
- Use the **Character Goal oracle** (*Ironsworn Core*, page 182) to understand the primary objective of a denizen.

As your expedition into the **Wild Tanglewood** progresses, you *Ask the Oracle* using the Character Disposition table to determine the relationship between the varou and the raiders. “Cooperative,” the oracle responds, leaving you to understand that these two forces will work together to oppose you. What foul bargain have they struck?

Later, you use the Character Activity oracle to understand how the varou relate to the elder boar. The oracle responds: “Preserving.” It appears the wolf-folk are sworn to protect the great beast. They surely do not welcome your presence here. It is starting to feel like the entire world is arrayed against you.



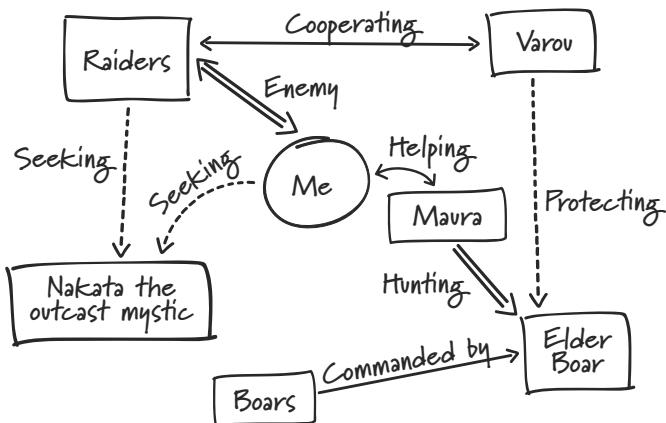
Use different shapes and connectors within your relationship map to provide at-a-glance representations of how the various denizens and groups relate to one another. For example, you might use dotted lines to indicate objectives, and double-lines to represent adversarial relationships.

As you explore, you can use the relationship map to understand how the forces in a site will seek to support or undermine your quest. These connections may also inspire opportunities for new quests.

As you traverse an area within the **Wild Tanglewood**, you score a weak hit on *Delve the Depths* and can *Find an Opportunity*. A roll on that move reveals that you “encounter a denizen in need of help.”

You make a few oracle rolls to determine the nature and objective of this new denizen, and introduce a vengeful Ironlander hunter named Maura. She has sworn to bring down the great boar.

Desperate for someone on your side in this perilous place, you *Swear an Iron Vow* to aid Maura in her quest. You make note of this new character by adding her to your relationship map.



## USING RELATIONSHIP MAPS OUTSIDE OF A SITE

You can also use relationship maps outside of sites. For example, you might use one to show the connections between notable NPCs within a community. A zoomed-out relationship map could represent the major powers within your world.

# **STREAMLINING DICE ROLLS**

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Because *Delve* is focused on generating your surroundings and resolving your movement through a site with a higher level of granularity than a typical *Ironsworn* session, it may tend to involve a fair bit of dice rolling. If you find this gets tedious or overly mechanical, consider the following approaches. These techniques may be used alone or together to keep your story moving at the speed of your imagination.

## **OPTION 1: GO WITH YOUR GUT**

There's no requirement to roll for a feature every time you *Delve the Depths*. You can use the site's theme and domain for context and inspiration, and roll occasionally to introduce more uncertainty and surprises.

Similarly, when you must *Reveal a Danger*, you can choose the most likely and interesting danger rather than rolling on the oracle table.

If you roll a strong hit on *Delve the Depths*, you may *Find an Opportunity* and choose one from the table instead of rolling.

Always consider the fiction before reaching for the oracle dice. If something appropriate and inspiring occurs to you, go with it. Save the oracle rolls for when you are stumped or want to introduce more uncertainty.

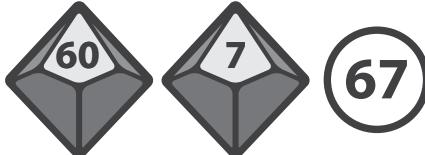
When navigating the treacherous highlands of a **Ravaged Pass**, you roll a miss as you *Delve the Depths*. You must now *Reveal a Danger*.

You have already established that a clan of raiders patrol this path, preying on trade caravans. This seems like a good time to introduce them into your story. Rather than making a roll on the danger table, you envision walking into an ambush.

## OPTION 2: LET IT RIDE

You can also let a single roll of the oracle dice serve for multiple table lookups.

When you roll your oracle dice on a feature table as you *Delve the Depths*, use that result to envision your surroundings. Set these dice aside, keeping your original roll visible.

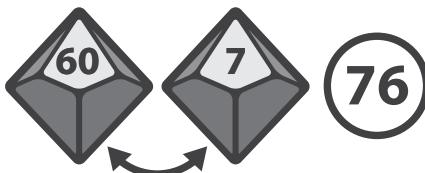


Then, if you score a weak hit as you *Delve the Depths*, take that same result and apply it to the stat table. Continue to keep the original roll visible.

Edge	Shadow	Wits	Weak Hit Result
1-45	1-30	1-40	Mark progress and <i>Reveal a Danger</i> .
46-65	31-65	41-55	Mark progress.
66-75	66-90	56-80	Choose one: Mark progress or <i>Find an Opportunity</i> .
76-80	91-99	81-99	Take both: Mark progress and <i>Find an Opportunity</i> .
81-00	00	00	Mark progress twice and <i>Reveal a Danger</i> .



Finally, if you roll on the *Reveal a Danger* or *Find an Opportunity* tables, take your original result and reverse the digits. Make the 10's value the 1's value, and vice-versa. Apply this new value to that table.



These oracle dice have now fulfilled their purpose. Make a fresh oracle roll the next time one is needed.

If any roll generates an extreme result, such as 01-02 or 99-00, you should not carry that result forward for subsequent rolls. Since the oracle tables often put rare results within that range, using an exceptionally high or low value will tend to produce chaotic outcomes. Better to start fresh.

## OPTION 3: CASTING RUNES

Have plenty of D10's on hand? This technique lets you pre-roll oracle dice. It speeds things up at the table, but—more importantly—it feels as if you're divining an answer from a set of inscrutable runes. Plus, it's fun to roll a big fistful of dice.

When you start a session, grab a bunch of D10s. Make it as many as you like, but ideally an even number. A variety of colors and sizes is fine. Roll them all at once into a dice tray or out of the way of your other play materials.

If you have other players at the table, roll the dice where everyone has access to them, or appoint one player as the **Reader of Runes**. You can each toss a few dice into the batch to make this a communal exercise.

When you reference an oracle table, look at the rolled dice.



If two dice are at the same level in the topmost or bottommost position, take the leftmost one.



Once you've used a result, set those dice aside. Their powers are spent—for now. After you've read the last pair of dice, it's time to scoop up all the D10s and roll them again.

### GIVING DICE A THEME

You can also use the physical characteristics of the selected dice to reinforce or elaborate an oracle result. Consider what their texture and color bring to mind in the context of the current situation and the answer provided by the oracle. A bright purple die might make you think of royalty or leadership. A blood-red die may remind you of violence or harm. A black die can suggest secrets or mysteries. A green die represents natural forces. Your dice pool might consist of mostly mundane dice, with a few special dice signaling a more significant or thematic result.

Using this approach shouldn't subvert the framing for your current situation. For example, if you are making an oracle roll to understand the outcome of a match on a strong hit, the result should represent something interesting or a new opportunity—not a complication or danger. Let the physical characteristics of the dice provide some additional nuance.

### USING A DIGITAL DICE ROLLER

Prefer a digital dice roller? You can begin your session by queuing up a list of D100 results in your preferred app. Then, just move down the list as you reference oracle results.

# HACKING SITES

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Interested in customizing how sites are used in your campaign? This section includes options and variations for how you interact with these locations. For more information on sites, including setting details for the default themes and domains, see page 79.

## PLAYING WITHOUT THEMES AND DOMAINS

If you prefer to use the *Delve* mechanics without themes and domains, you can ignore the cards. Instead, introduce and interpret the nature of a site as you like. Whether you are a GM or playing solo or co-op, you can use location generators from other RPG systems, oracles such as Aspect and Focus (page 204), or simply decide what is encountered based on the current situation and your established understanding of the site.

If you ignore the theme and domain cards, the main *Delve* mechanics can mostly remain the same. However, you may want to use this alternate version of the *Reveal a Danger* move. The danger table in this version does not include the references to the theme and domain cards.

### REVEAL A DANGER (ALTERNATE VERSION)

When you encounter a risky situation within a site, envision the danger or roll on the following table.

Roll	Result
1-22	You encounter a hostile denizen.
23-42	You face an environmental or architectural hazard.
43-58	A discovery undermines or complicates your quest.
59-64	You confront a harrowing situation or sensation.
65-70	You face the consequences of an earlier choice or approach.
71-76	The path is blocked or trapped.
77-82	A resource is diminished, broken, or lost.
83-88	You face a perplexing mystery or tough choice.
89-94	You lose your way or are delayed.
95-00	Roll twice more on this table. Both results occur. If they are the same result, make it worse.

# USING MULTIPLE THEMES OR DOMAINS

To give a site extra nuance or detail, you can assign it two themes or domains instead of one.

## USING TWO THEMES

Use an extra theme to expand on the nature of a place or create interesting contradictions. For example:

- A **Haunted Fortified Stronghold** is a raider's outpost plagued by ghosts.
- A **Hallowed Corrupted Ruin** is a place where zealots worship vile gods and perform dark rituals.
- A **Ravaged Ancient Underkeep** is an age-old subterranean dungeon devastated by cave-ins and flooding.

Put the two themes side-by-side in your playscape, along with your domain card. Define the theme on your left as odd, and the other as even. When you make a roll on a theme feature or danger table, look at the result to determine which theme you'll reference. If you've rolled an odd result on your oracle roll, refer to the tables on your odd theme. If you've rolled an even result, use the even theme.

THEME	THEME	DOMAIN
<b>FORTIFIED</b>  Foes defend this place against intruders. <b>FEATURES</b> 1-4 Camp or quarters 5-8 Guarded location 9-12 Storage or repository 13-16 Work or training area 17-20 Command center or leadership <b>DANGERS</b> 1-5 Denizen patrols the area 6-10 Denizen on guard 11-12 Denizen ready to sound the alarm 13-14 Denizen sets an ambush 15-16 Denizen lures you into a trap 17-18 Denizens converge on this area 19-20 Pets or underlings 21-22 Unexpected alliance revealed 23-24 Nefarious plans revealed 25-26 Unexpected leader revealed 27-28 Trap 29-30 Alarm trigger	<b>INFESTED</b>  Foul creatures dwell here. <b>FEATURES</b> 1-4 Inhabited nest 5-8 Abandoned nest 9-12 Ravaged terrain or architecture 13-16 Remains or carrion 17-20 Hoarded food <b>DANGERS</b> 1-5 Denizens swarm and attack 6-10 Toxic or sickening environment 11-12 Denizen stalks you 13-14 Denizen takes or destroys something 15-16 Denizen reveals surprising cleverness 17-18 Denizen guided by a greater threat 19-20 Denizen blocks the path 21-22 Denizen funnels you down a new path 23-24 Denizen undermines the path 25-26 Denizen lays in wait 27-28 Trap or snare 29-30 Victim's horrible fate is revealed	<b>MINE</b>  Tunnels dug greedily and deep. <b>FEATURES</b> 21-43 Cramped tunnels 44-56 Mine works 57-64 Excavated chamber 65-68 Mineshaft 69-72 Collapsed tunnel 73-76 Cluttered storage 77-80 Housing or common areas 81-84 Flooded chamber 85-88 Unearthed secret 89-98 Something unusual or unexpected 99 You transition into a new theme 00 You transition into a new domain <b>DANGERS</b> 31-33 Cave-in 34-36 Flooding 37-39 Unstable platforms or architecture 40-42 Hazardous gas pocket 43-45 Weakened terrain
		

**This is the odd theme.** When you roll an odd-numbered result, look here.

**This is the even theme.** When you roll an even-numbered result, look here.

## USING TWO DOMAINS

Some circumstances might also suggest using two domains. For example:

- A **Haunted Barrow Cavern** is a tomb within a natural cave complex.
- A **Corrupted Shadowfen Ruin** is a foul marshland strewn with the ruins of a long-lost civilization.
- A **Ravaged Underkeep Tanglewood** is a deep dungeon which is inundated by an unnatural subterranean forest.

As with using multiple themes, you'll put both domains in your playscape. The leftmost domain is odd, and the rightmost is even. When you make an oracle roll, refer to the appropriate card.

**This is the odd domain.** When you roll an odd-numbered result, look here.



**This is the even domain.** When you roll an even-numbered result, look here.



THEME	
<b>ANCIENT</b>	
This place holds the secrets of a bygone age.	
FEATURES	
1-4 Evidence of lost knowledge	
5-8 Inscrutable relics	
9-12 Ancient artistry or craft	
13-16 Preserved corpses or fossils	
17-20 Visions of this place in another time	
DANGERS	
1-5 Ancient trap	
6-10 Hazardous architecture or terrain	
11-12 Blocked or broken path	
13-14 Denizen protects an ancient secret	
15-16 Denizen reveres an ancient power	
17-18 Living relics of a lost age	
19-20 Ancient evil resurgent	
21-22 Dire warnings of a long-buried danger	
23-24 Ancient disease or contamination	
25-26 Artifact of terrible meaning or power	
27-28 Disturbing evidence of ancient wrongs	
29-30 Others seek power or knowledge	

DOMAIN	
<b>FROZEN CAVERN</b>	
A place of deep caves and enduring cold.	
FEATURES	
21-43 Maze of icy tunnels	
44-56 Glistening cave	
57-64 Vast chamber	
65-68 Frigid waterway	
69-72 Icy pools	
73-76 Magnificent ice formations	
77-80 Frozen waterfall	
81-84 Deep crevasses	
85-88 Discovery locked in the ice	
89-98 Something unusual or unexpected	
99 You transition into a new theme	
00 You transition into a new domain	
DANGERS	
31-33 Denizen lairs here	
34-36 Fracturing ice	
37-39 Crumbling chasm	
40-42 Bitter chill	
43-45 Disorienting reflections	

DOMAIN	
<b>MINE</b>	
Tunnels dug greedily and deep.	
FEATURES	
21-43 Cramped tunnels	
44-56 Mine works	
57-64 Excavated chamber	
65-68 Mineshaft	
69-72 Collapsed tunnel	
73-76 Cluttered storage	
77-80 Housing or common areas	
81-84 Flooded chamber	
85-88 Unearthed secret	
89-98 Something unusual or unexpected	
99 You transition into a new theme	
00 You transition into a new domain	
DANGERS	
31-33 Cave-in	
34-36 Flooding	
37-39 Unstable platforms or architecture	
40-42 Hazardous gas pocket	
43-45 Weakened terrain	

What about using two themes AND two domains for a site? It would technically work, but I wouldn't suggest it. The themes and domains are what give a site its flavor, and applying too many within a site can result in an unfocused experience.

# CREATING YOUR OWN THEMES AND DOMAINS

If you want to customize the themes and domains available in your setting, or are undertaking an expedition within a place which doesn't fit the default themes and domains, you can create your own.

First, you'll need a template for your custom theme and domain. Within the set of print-and-play and preprinted *Delve* site cards, you'll find templates with blank tables.

THEME	DOMAIN
<b>TYPE:</b> _____	<b>TYPE:</b> _____
<b>FEATURES</b>	<b>FEATURES</b>
1-4	21-43
5-8	44-56
9-12	57-64
13-16	65-68
17-20	69-72
<b>DANGERS</b>	<b>DANGERS</b>
1-5	73-76
6-10	77-80
11-12	81-84
13-14	85-88
15-16	89-98 Something unusual or unexpected
17-18	99 You transition into a new theme
19-20	00 You transition into a new domain
21-22	31-33
23-24	34-36
25-26	37-39
27-28	40-42
29-30	43-45

Fill in the features and dangers as appropriate to how you envision the site. Since these cards are customized to your setting, you can make them specific and flavorful. However, keep in mind that the features and dangers represent elements you may encounter multiple times during your expedition. They aren't unique, one-off encounters. Save those for when you roll for "something unusual or unexpected" in the features table, or when an oracle prompts you to introduce something interesting as an outcome of a move.

See the tables below for guidance on the rarity of a particular result, including the percentage chance of a roll occurring. Note that theme and domain dangers are overall relatively rare compared to the chance of rolling a feature on these cards, because the dangers are shared with the other outcomes on the *Reveal a Danger* table.

Features that will be encountered more frequently should represent a default characteristic of the site. Those which are rare can feel more exceptional, unusual, or significant.

#### THEME FEATURES

1-4	Rare feature (4%)
5-8	Rare feature (4%)
9-12	Rare feature (4%)
13-16	Rare feature (4%)
17-20	Rare feature (4%)

#### THEME DANGERS

1-5	Uncommon danger (5%)
6-10	Uncommon danger (5%)
11-12	Rare danger (2%)
13-14	Rare danger (2%)
15-16	Rare danger (2%)
17-18	Rare danger (2%)
19-20	Rare danger (2%)
21-22	Rare danger (2%)
23-24	Rare danger (2%)
25-26	Rare danger (2%)
27-28	Rare danger (2%)
29-30	Rare danger (2%)

#### DOMAIN FEATURES

21-43	Very common feature (23%)
44-56	Common feature (13%)
57-64	Uncommon feature (8%)
65-68	Rare feature (4%)
69-72	Rare feature (4%)
73-76	Rare feature (4%)
77-80	Rare feature (4%)
81-84	Rare feature (4%)
85-88	Rare feature (4%)
89-98	Something unusual or unexpected
99	You transition into a new theme
00	You transition into a new domain

#### DOMAIN DANGERS

31-33	Rare danger (3%)
34-36	Rare danger (3%)
37-39	Rare danger (3%)
40-42	Rare danger (3%)
43-45	Rare danger (3%)

If you don't have enough information about the site or are stumped for ideas, feel free to leave some table rows blank. If you then roll an empty result as you explore, you can fill in and introduce a feature or danger which is appropriate to what the site has revealed of its nature. Or you may *Ask the Oracle* and interpret an answer from the Aspect and Focus tables (page 204). In this way, you can start with a few answers, fill in others as you go, and use your completed theme or domain in future expeditions.

## GAINING INSPIRATION FROM OTHER ADVENTURE MATERIALS

If you'd like to explore a location featured in another RPG, such as one within a prewritten adventure scenario, here's a process to convert it to a *Delve* site.

- 1** Ready a site worksheet and a blank theme and domain card. Give the site a name on your worksheet.
- 2** Look through the adventure materials and consider the characteristics of the site, including general features and dangers. Fill out the feature and danger tables on the blank domain and theme cards with these potential recurring elements.
- 3** Make note of special, unique locations. Put these into a separate custom oracle table. You can use the oracle worksheet available for download at [ironswornrpg.com](http://ironswornrpg.com).
- 4** Consider the denizens and major NPCs in this place, and add them to your denizens matrix. If you like, create a relationship map (page 61) to illustrate how the denizens relate to one another.
- 5** Identify the objective of your expedition, and make note of it on your site worksheet.
- 6** Then, *Reveal a Site* and *Delve the Depths* as normal. As you discover locations, face dangers, and encounter denizens within the site, refer to your prepared materials.
- 7** If you roll “something unusual or unexpected” on your domain card, or are otherwise inspired to introduce a unique location, you can check the outcome against your custom oracle table. Once you've dealt with that one-off encounter, cross it out. If you trigger this result again, reroll or replace it with another element.

Don't try to represent every aspect of an adventure. You're using it for inspiration, much like you'd use a character, event, or location in a book or movie to inspire your own stories. Also, don't attempt to reproduce the plot from a prewritten scenario. You can use the adventure hook to set the stage for your adventure, but your choices and the whims of the dice should define the course of your expedition.

# **DELVES AS JOURNEYS**

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The *Delve* mechanics are functionally and narratively similar to *Ironsworn's Undertake a Journey* and *Reach Your Destination* moves, but with an extra level of detail and focus.

If you'd like to use *Delve* mechanics when navigating across perilous terrain—instead of the journey moves—start by choosing an appropriate theme and domain. The default domains accommodate a variety of Ironlands terrain, including woodlands, highlands, marshes, and frozen seas. You can also create themes and domains (page 71) to extend these options to other types of landscapes.

Then, set the objective as your destination and manage the expedition as normal. When you *Locate Your Objective*, you have reached your destination. Envision the situation there based on the outcome of that final move.

## **MANAGING SUPPLY**

The *Undertake a Journey* move consumes supply on weak hits, while *Delve the Depths* offers more flexibility when suffering cost. If you tend to conduct journeys using *Delve*, you may find that supply loses its narrative importance or context, becoming just a buffer to soak failures. To ensure that supply is given its due, make sure to weave your gear and necessities into the fiction of your journey. Keep the pressure on as those resources are consumed.

## **THERE AND BACK AGAIN**

If your journey is a round trip, you may *Escape the Depths* to return to your starting place. Your hard-won experience in traveling these lands puts you on the quickest path home.

You must travel from your home village to a mining settlement high in the Veiled Mountains. There, you will retrieve a prized sword from the village's ironsmith. You want to depict this journey as a delve, so you *Discover a Site* and give it a theme and domain. You choose **Pass** for the domain, which offers a good representation of the highland terrain. For the theme, you pick **Wild** and envision a landscape fraught with dangerous animals and beasts. You give the expedition a rank of dangerous and *Delve the Depths*.

After facing no small amount of peril on your journey, you finally *Locate Your Objective* and score a hit. You have arrived at the settlement.

Later, after you *Sojourn* and retrieve the sword, you set off back home. Instead of focusing on that return trip in detail, you choose to *Escape the Depths* and resolve the journey with a single roll.

## BALANCING THE FOCUS

Keep in mind that this extra level of detail may not always be wanted or warranted. You might consider using *Delve* only for travel across unusual or especially perilous locations or terrain. This will make those trips feel appropriately dramatic, while retaining the relative efficiency of *Undertake a Journey* for most expeditions.

# ONE-SHOT DELVES

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If you are facilitating or serving as the GM for an *Ironsworn: Delve* one-shot, do the following for a semi-planned expedition.

**1**

**Envision an inciting incident.** What has happened to compel the characters into the adventure? What is the objective within the site?

**2**

**Select a theme and domain** (page 6), or create a custom theme and domain (page 71).

**3**

**Setup the site worksheet** (page 10) and add potential encounters to the denizens matrix (page 107). Set the rank of the site as appropriate to the time available. Dangerous for an hour or two. Formidable for two to four hours.

**4**

**Create characters with the players**, or allow them to select from pregenerated characters.

**5**

**Set the scene for the players** as one of them must *Swear an Iron Vow* to undertake this expedition. Make it a troublesome vow. On a strong hit, describe how they begin their quest on a solid footing. On a weak hit, envision a minor danger that stands in their way or complicates what they know of the site. On a miss, introduce a major obstacle they must overcome in order to begin their expedition.

**6**

**Give the players an opportunity to describe how they ready themselves for the quest.** Allow them to make moves as appropriate. If they succeed dramatically in preparatory actions or gain crucial information, they may *Reach a Milestone*.

**7**

**Fast-track the narrative to the start of the expedition by handwaving the journey to the site.** You can assume the location is nearby and that the surrounding lands are not particularly perilous.

**8**

**As the characters *Delve the Depths* and explore a site, manage the pace and focus as appropriate to the time available.** Zoom in for crucial moments. If the characters overcome a major obstacle directly related to the quest, they should *Reach a Milestone*.

**9**

**When the *Locate Your Objective* move is successfully triggered, the characters can also *Reach a Milestone* on their vow.** Then, zoom in and resolve any final obstacles. If they are successful, prompt them to *Fulfill Your Vow*.



# CHAPTER 4

# SITES



# **DISCOVERING A SITE**

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When you *Discover a Site*, pick a theme and domain which best represent the nature of the place you must explore or traverse. If you’re not sure, you can select the theme and domain randomly. See page 4 for a walkthrough of how to introduce a site into your *Ironsworn* campaign.

## **SITES IN THE IRONLANDS**

The default themes and domains encompass a wide array of environments appropriate to the perilous places and terrain of the Ironlands. Simply by combining a theme and domain—and using the power of your creative interpretation—you create a unique location for your *Ironsworn* adventures. This chapter includes additional material to understand the role of sites in your version of the Ironlands.

- To understand the impact of your truths, see page 80.
- To learn more about the themes and domains included in *Delve*, see page 84.
- To explore starter sites complete with backgrounds and denizens, see page 94.

## **SITES IN ALTERNATIVE SETTINGS**

If you are playing in a different setting or genre using the *Delve* mechanics, many of the default themes and domains can still be useful. The nature of sites and the oracles for features and dangers generated by the theme/domain cards are relatively abstract, and can be interpreted to fit the established nature of your setting. For example:

- Playing in a science fiction campaign, you explore **Ancient Ruins** within a hollow asteroid to recover the artifacts of a progenitor race.
- In a cyberpunk setting, sites are virtual reality constructs. To steal corporate secrets from a rival corporation, you hack into a simulated fantasy dungeon and battle your way through the AI defenders of the **Fortified Underkeep**.
- In your tale of 20th-century Lovecraftian horror, your investigators must sneak into a **Corrupted Sea Cave** to uncover the evil schemes of cultists who worship abyssal ocean gods.

You can also create your own domains and themes, or use the *Delve* mechanics without using the site cards. See page 68 to learn more.

# YOUR TRUTHS

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How will these sites fit into your version of the Ironlands? The choices you made in the truths exercise when building your world (*Ironsworn Core*, page 122) can help guide your selection of themes and domains, or provide opportunities for interesting discoveries and contradictions.

Consider the following questions in the context of your established campaign and setting.

## IS WARFARE A DOMINANT FACTOR?



YES

Consider the impact of warfare in your version of the Ironlands. In a world where warbands, raiders, and darker things are a constant threat, the people will seek to shelter themselves behind strong walls of earth, wood, and stone. Perhaps some of these sites—particularly those built by powerful clans—are approaching the greatness of Old World citadels. Breaching those places would require great cunning or overwhelming force.



NO

If resources are scarce, and warfare limited, a **Stronghold** might be a simple hillfort at the center of a village. Or perhaps the people repurpose the remnants of past civilizations for protection. A **Fortified Ruin**, for example, might serve as a camp for a raider clan. These sites will tend to be of a lower rank than those in a setting with more advanced warfare and construction.

## DOES RELIGION INFLUENCE YOUR WORLD?



YES

If religion has a presence in your world, **Hallowed** sites can represent a holy sanctuary, the repository of sacred artifacts, or the historical location of significant religious events. Religion may also incite conspiracies and conflicts, influencing the nature of government and warfare in the Ironlands. In a world where the supernatural power of the gods is a reality, places of religious significance can even incorporate literal manifestations of that power or the embodiment of the gods themselves.



NO

If religion is not a factor in your world, you can exclude the **Hallowed** theme. Alternatively, a **Hallowed** site might represent the emergence of a new religion. How will this rising power disrupt the forces in your world or interfere with your sworn quests?

## DO MYSTICAL FORCES EXIST?



YES

Consider the nature of magic in your world. Is magic inherently more powerful within certain areas or sites? Can magic—particularly dark or evil magic—create a **Corrupted** site? If so, how does that corruption impact the environment and the denizens within?



NO

The **Corrupted** theme represents the virulent influence of dark magic within a site, and can be ignored if magic is not present in your world. Alternatively, a **Corrupted** site can provide a dramatic introduction of mystic forces to your setting. It might represent a tear in the fabric of reality, or dark experiments gone awry.

## DO MONSTROUS CREATURES ROAM THE LAND?



YES

In a world where mythical animals and beasts are a reality, you are free to envision complex and dangerous ecosystems within the sites you explore. From the cold depths of a **Frozen Cavern**, to the heights of a snowbound mountain **Pass**, these creatures will defend their territory and add danger and complications to your quests.



NO

If beasts and supernatural creatures are not a factor in your setting, you should consider the denizens and dangers you will encounter in environments such as a **Tanglewood**, **Shadowfen**, **Pass**, and within a subterranean area such as a **Cavern**. Your greatest threat in those sites may be the terrain itself. Or the sites may be defended by human adversaries. Similarly, the feature and dangers within **Infested** and **Wild** places will highlight creature encounters, and might be ignored unless you want to emphasize natural animal threats in your setting.

## DO SPIRITS AND HAUNTED PLACES EXIST?



YES

If spirits and undead horrors are a reality in your setting, consider how they manifest and what roles they play in the world of the living. When the dead do not rest, their legacies, mistakes, and undying ambitions will continue to haunt those left behind.



NO

You may ignore the **Haunted** theme if spirits and undead horrors are not a reality in your world. However, you can still consider how the death-rites and beliefs of your people impact your setting. What honors are paid to the dead? What respect is given to ancestors? These answers may inspire details for locations and sites such as a **Barrow**.

## DID ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS LEAVE BEHIND RUINS AND RELICS?



YES

Consider the nature of what these civilizations left behind. What do their ruins look like? Are these familiar edifices of mortar and stone, similar to Old World cities and strongholds? Or is this the strange and unsettling architecture of a more advanced or enigmatic lost culture? Do Ironlanders trade in rare trinkets and recovered knowledge from ancient sites, or do they avoid those places and the dangers within?



NO

If your version of the Ironlands is a wild, primeval place with no record of ancient people, you may want to exclude the following themes and domains from your campaign: **Ancient**, **Ruin**, and **Underkeep**. Alternatively, this may be an opportunity to introduce these previously undiscovered sites to your world. Perhaps these vestiges of an ancient civilization were only recently found by explorers? If so, how will this discovery impact your setting?



## IS YOUR CAMPAIGN SET WITHIN THE DEFAULT ENVIRONMENTS AND TERRAIN OF THE IRONLANDS?



YES

You can use the various domains to represent the unique and inhospitable terrain and ecosystems of the Ironlands. Let your vision of these places guide how you interpret the features within a site. You can depict the environments as inspired by places in our own world, or envision them as more fantastical domains. Make your mountains impossibly high and rugged. Let your forests deepen with unnatural shadows. Send your caverns plunging far into the depths of the earth. You are the crafter of this world.



NO

If you are playing in an alternative setting, consider which aspects of your world might be represented by the default themes and domains. In some cases, you may be able to reimagine them with few—if any—changes. For example, you can use the **Tanglewood** theme to explore the humid jungles of an equatorial realm.

# THEMES

## ANCIENT

An ancient site contains the mysteries, legacies, and dangers of another age.

Walking the paths of this place is like stepping through time. Ruins and relics provide glimpses of long-forgotten people and events. The knowledge and power hidden here are a tempting lure, but those treasures may come with a dire cost. Some secrets are best left buried.

### THEME



#### ANCIENT

This place holds the secrets of a bygone age.

##### FEATURES

- 1-4 Evidence of lost knowledge
- 5-8 Inscrutable relics
- 9-12 Ancient artistry or craft
- 13-16 Preserved corpses or fossils
- 17-20 Visions of this place in another time

##### DANGERS

- 1-5 Ancient trap
- 6-10 Hazardous architecture or terrain
- 11-12 Blocked or broken path
- 13-14 Denizen protects an ancient secret
- 15-16 Denizen reveres an ancient power
- 17-18 Living relics of a lost age
- 19-20 Ancient evil resurgent
- 21-22 Dire warnings of a long-buried danger
- 23-24 Ancient disease or contamination
- 25-26 Artifact of terrible meaning or power
- 27-28 Disturbing evidence of ancient wrongs
- 29-30 Others seek power or knowledge

## CORRUPTED

A corrupted site is befouled by dark forces. It might be the ancient magic of the Ironlands, or the residue of ancient evils, concentrated here like poisoned water soaked into a sponge. Perhaps a powerful mystic dwells in this place, one who walks a sinister path in search of power.

When you enter a corrupted site, you can feel the wrongness of it down to your bones. The air is tainted with foul smells, or tinged with strange energies. You hear unintelligible whispers. Shadows lurk at the edge of your vision. The creatures of this place are twisted by corruption, and the people are in thrall to a dark influence.

### THEME



#### CORRUPTED

This place is tainted by dark magic.

##### FEATURES

- 1-4 Mystic focus or conduit
- 5-8 Strange environmental disturbances
- 9-12 Mystic runes or markings
- 13-16 Blight or decay
- 17-20 Evidence of a foul ritual

##### DANGERS

- 1-5 Denizen spawned from dark magic
- 6-10 Denizen controls dark magic
- 11-12 Denizen corrupted by dark magic
- 13-14 Corruption marks you
- 15-16 Innocents held in thrall
- 17-18 Revelations of a terrible truth
- 19-20 Mystic trap or trigger
- 21-22 Mystic barrier or ward
- 23-24 Illusions lead you astray
- 25-26 Dark ritual in progress
- 27-28 Lingering effects of a dark ritual
- 29-30 Dread harbingers of a greater magic

## FORTIFIED

A fortified site is held and defended by an enemy force. It might be an enemy camp, an outpost, a fortress, or a closely-guarded territory.

Infiltrating this place requires caution and cunning. You may be forced to avoid inhabitants, sentries, and patrols. Revealing yourself or causing a disturbance will catch the attention of the denizens, perhaps forcing you to fight your way to your objective.

### THEME



## FORTIFIED

Foes defend this place against intruders.

### FEATURES

- 1-4 Camp or quarters
- 5-8 Guarded location
- 9-12 Storage or repository
- 13-16 Work or training area
- 17-20 Command center or leadership

### DANGERS

- 1-5 Denizen patrols the area
- 6-10 Denizen on guard
- 11-12 Denizen ready to sound the alarm
- 13-14 Denizen sets an ambush
- 15-16 Denizen lures you into a trap
- 17-18 Denizens converge on this area
- 19-20 Pets or underlings
- 21-22 Unexpected alliance revealed
- 23-24 Nefarious plans revealed
- 25-26 Unexpected leader revealed
- 27-28 Trap
- 29-30 Alarm trigger

## HALLOWED

A hallowed site is a place of great reverence, suffused with the power of old gods or the fervency of belief. It might be a location of religious significance, the resting place of legendary relics or figures, or the haven of a religious leader.

Hallowed places may be warded by ancient rituals, or imbued with divine energy. But it is the faithful and the zealous who will sacrifice everything to defend this place.

### THEME



## HALLOWED

The faithful worship here.

### FEATURES

- 1-4 Temple or altar
- 5-8 Offerings or atonements
- 9-12 Religious relic or idol
- 13-16 Consecrated ground
- 17-20 Dwellings or gathering place

### DANGERS

- 1-5 Denizen defends their sanctum
- 6-10 Denizen enacts the will of their god
- 11-12 Denizen seeks martyrdom
- 13-14 Secret of the faith is revealed
- 15-16 Greater purpose is revealed
- 17-18 Unexpected disciples are revealed
- 19-20 Divine manifestations
- 21-22 Aspect of the faith beguiles you
- 23-24 Unexpected leader is revealed
- 25-26 Embodiment of a god or myth
- 27-28 Protective ward or barrier
- 29-30 Prophecies reveal a dark fate

## HAUNTED

Within a haunted site, dread, sadness, and fear are palpable. Disturbing sounds and visions lure the unwary and terrorize the vulnerable. Gird your will when you enter this place, for you walk at the boundary of life and death.

Some lost souls, unaware they have passed, wander the site in search of answers. Others, stricken by eternal grief, seek to set right what caused their death or see their vows fulfilled. But all too often, the denizens of this place are undone by their deaths. They are rage and terror made incarnate, feeling nothing but hate for the living and a hunger for warmth which will never be sated.

### THEME



## HAUNTED

Restless spirits are bound to this place.

### FEATURES

- 1-4 Tomb or burial site
- 5-8 Blood was spilled here
- 9-12 Unnatural mists or darkness
- 13-16 Messages from beyond the grave
- 17-20 Apparitions of a person or event

### DANGERS

- 1-5 Denizen haunts this area
- 6-10 Unsettling sounds or foreboding signs
- 11-12 Denizen attacks without warning
- 13-14 Denizen makes a costly demand
- 15-16 Denizen seizes your body or mind
- 17-18 Denizen taunts or lures you
- 19-20 A disturbing truth is revealed
- 21-22 Frightening visions
- 23-24 The environment is used against you
- 25-26 Trickery leads you astray
- 27-28 True nature of this place is revealed
- 29-30 Sudden, shocking manifestation

## INFESTED

Foul creatures swarm these sites, overwhelming trespassers with sheer numbers and unchecked ferocity. The denizens do little beyond multiplying, feeding, and expanding, ravenous for fresh kills to feed the swarm.

Navigation through this place, across paths undermined by the hordes, may be perilous. The sights and smells may test your fortitude. But it is the creatures which pose the greatest threat, as they ambush and cut off your escape with unforeseen cunning.

### THEME



## INFESTED

Foul creatures dwell here.

### FEATURES

- 1-4 Inhabited nest
- 5-8 Abandoned nest
- 9-12 Ravaged terrain or architecture
- 13-16 Remains or carrion
- 17-20 Hoarded food

### DANGERS

- 1-5 Denizens swarm and attack
- 6-10 Toxic or sickening environment
- 11-12 Denizen stalks you
- 13-14 Denizen takes or destroys something
- 15-16 Denizen reveals surprising cleverness
- 17-18 Denizen guided by a greater threat
- 19-20 Denizen blocks the path
- 21-22 Denizen funnels you down a new path
- 23-24 Denizen undermines the path
- 25-26 Denizen lays in wait
- 27-28 Trap or snare
- 29-30 Victim's horrible fate is revealed

## RAVAGED

Time, weather, war, or calamity have laid waste to a ravaged site. The terrain is precarious. Hazards lurk around every corner. You may face glimpses of a former greatness, but this place is a ruined shadow of what it once was.

Traversing a ravaged site requires care, cunning, and quick wits to react to sudden perils. The environment here is your greatest enemy. It is a force, as willful as any intelligent adversary, which will see your quest undone.

### THEME



## RAVAGED

Time, disaster, or strife have taken their toll.

### FEATURES

- 1-4 Path of destruction
- 5-8 Abandoned or ruined dwelling
- 9-12 Untouched or preserved area
- 13-16 Traces of what was lost
- 17-20 Ill-fated victims

### DANGERS

- 1-5 Precarious architecture or terrain
- 6-10 Imminent collapse or destruction
- 11-12 Path undermined
- 13-14 Blocked or broken path
- 15-16 Vestiges of a destructive force
- 17-18 Unexpected environmental threat
- 19-20 Echoes of a troubling past
- 21-22 Signs of a horrible fate
- 23-24 Denizen seeks retribution
- 25-26 Denizen leverages the environment
- 27-28 Denizen restores what was lost
- 29-30 Ravages return anew

## WILD

Despite our attempts to extend our control into untracked reaches, the primal forces of nature still hold sway across the Ironlands. In those wild places, we must test our shields against tooth and claw, our wits against insidious creatures, and our resolve against dangerous terrain and harsh environments.

Be wary when you enter the wild places of this world. Beyond the comforting walls of your village, you are not the hunter. You are the prey.

### THEME



## WILD

Nature prevails in this place.

### FEATURES

- 1-4 Denizen's lair
- 5-8 Territorial markings
- 9-12 Impressive flora or fauna
- 13-16 Hunting ground or watering hole
- 17-20 Remains or carrion

### DANGERS

- 1-5 Denizen hunts
- 6-10 Denizen strikes without warning
- 11-12 Denizen leverages the environment
- 13-14 Denizen wields unexpected abilities
- 15-16 Denizen guided by a greater threat
- 17-18 Denizen protects something
- 19-20 Hazardous terrain
- 21-22 Weather or environmental threat
- 23-24 Benign aspect becomes a threat
- 25-26 Overzealous hunter
- 27-28 Disturbing evidence of a victim's fate
- 29-30 Ill-fated victim in danger

# DOMAINS

## BARROW

In this cruel land, there is no shortage of dead to be put to rest. Some barrows are simple crypts for a family or steading. Others are more elaborate or extensive, plunging well into the depths of the earth. A few inconspicuous mounds, their rock and earth worn by time, mark an entryway into impossibly labyrinthine tombs built by long-forgotten people.

Even the most ancient of these sites still echo with the memory and power of lives once lived, battles once fought, loves gained or lost, and vows unfulfilled.

## CAVERN

Another world lies beneath our feet. Caverns vein the Ironlands with meandering tunnels, plunging pits, soaring chambers, and absolute darkness. Claustrophobic crawlspaces and crevices may lead to miles-long cave complexes. Underground waterways carve a relentless path through stone.

When you enter these sites, you are a trespasser in a hostile domain. What unseen things dwell here, watching and waiting, amidst the depths?

### DOMAIN



#### BARROW

The dead are enshrined here.

#### FEATURES

- 21-43 Burial chambers
- 44-56 Maze of narrow passages
- 57-64 Shrine
- 65-68 Stately vault
- 69-72 Offerings to the dead
- 73-76 Statuary or tapestries
- 77-80 Remains of a grave robber
- 81-84 Mass grave
- 85-88 Exhumed corpses
- 89-98 Something unusual or unexpected
- 99 You transition into a new theme
- 00 You transition into a new domain

#### DANGERS

- 31-33 Denizen guards this area
- 34-36 Trap
- 37-39 Death makes its presence known
- 40-42 Crumbling architecture
- 43-45 Grave goods with hidden dangers

### DOMAIN



#### CAVERN

A place of stone and darkness.

#### FEATURES

- 21-43 Twisting passages
- 44-56 Cramped caves
- 57-64 Vast chamber
- 65-68 Subterranean waterway
- 69-72 Cave pool
- 73-76 Natural bridge
- 77-80 Towering stone formations
- 81-84 Natural illumination
- 85-88 Dark pit
- 89-98 Something unusual or unexpected
- 99 You transition into a new theme
- 00 You transition into a new domain

#### DANGERS

- 31-33 Denizen lairs here
- 34-36 Cave-in
- 37-39 Flooding
- 40-42 Perilous climb or descent
- 43-45 Fissure or sinkhole

## FROZEN CAVERN

These maze-like tunnels are found in the most inhospitable northern reaches of the Ironlands—carved through glacier, mountain, and hill—or in places of supernatural cold. Their icy depths are a perilous environment of fracturing terrain, shadowy reflections, hollow echoes, and lurking predators.

Entering a frozen cavern is like delving into another world. There is a stark beauty in the icebound passages and glistening chambers. Amazing discoveries, locked in the ice, lie unseen for millennia. But do not be distracted by those enticements. The hazards of this site have no sympathy for the unwary and ill-prepared.

### DOMAIN

#### FROZEN CAVERN



A place of deep caves and enduring cold.

### FEATURES

- 21-43 Maze of icy tunnels
- 44-56 Glistening cave
- 57-64 Vast chamber
- 65-68 Frigid waterway
- 69-72 Icy pools
- 73-76 Magnificent ice formations
- 77-80 Frozen waterfall
- 81-84 Deep crevasses
- 85-88 Discovery locked in the ice
- 89-98 Something unusual or unexpected
- 99 You transition into a new theme
- 00 You transition into a new domain

### DANGERS

- 31-33 Denizen lairs here
- 34-36 Fracturing ice
- 37-39 Crumbling chasm
- 40-42 Bitter chill
- 43-45 Disorienting reflections

## ICEREACH

An Icereach is an expanse of frozen sea, blue-white and sprawling in all directions. These sites are typically found in the northernmost waters. However, a few vast icereaches—kept perpetually frozen by forces we do not understand—clog the seas in southern regions.

Only the crudest, most powerful creatures can survive here. The terrain is rugged and cut-through with unstable ice and frigid waterways. Food is scarce. Bitter winds blast the landscape. The remains of ships, locked within the ice, stand as monuments to those who braved these places and were forever lost.

### DOMAIN

#### ICEREACH



A frigid landscape formed of frozen seas.

### FEATURES

- 21-43 Plains of ice and snow
- 44-56 Seawater channel
- 57-64 Icy highlands
- 65-68 Crevasse
- 69-72 Ice floes
- 73-76 Ship trapped in ice
- 77-80 Animal herd or habitat
- 81-84 Frozen carcass
- 85-88 Camp or outpost
- 89-98 Something unusual or unexpected
- 99 You transition into a new theme
- 00 You transition into a new domain

### DANGERS

- 31-33 Denizen hunts
- 34-36 Fragile ice above watery depths
- 37-39 Perilous climb or descent
- 40-42 Avalanche or icefall
- 43-45 Foul weather

## MINE

Within the earth, riches await the bold. Some mines are shallow pits worked by pick and shovel. Others are offshoots of existing caverns which pierce deep into hills and mountains. A few are the remains of vast underground complexes built by forgotten cultures.

The iron and other metals claimed from these sites feed our furnaces. From those fires, we craft tools, armor, weapons, and other precious goods. Our hunger for these resources is never sated, and we often dig into places best left undisturbed.

### DOMAIN



#### MINE

Tunnels dug greedily and deep.

#### FEATURES

- 21-43 Cramped tunnels
- 44-56 Mine works
- 57-64 Excavated chamber
- 65-68 Mineshaft
- 69-72 Collapsed tunnel
- 73-76 Cluttered storage
- 77-80 Housing or common areas
- 81-84 Flooded chamber
- 85-88 Unearthed secret
- 89-98 Something unusual or unexpected
- 99 You transition into a new theme
- 00 You transition into a new domain

#### DANGERS

- 31-33 Cave-in
- 34-36 Flooding
- 37-39 Unstable platforms or architecture
- 40-42 Hazardous gas pocket
- 43-45 Weakened terrain

## PASS

Winding through highlands and mountain ranges, these sites offer a tempting route over otherwise impassable terrain. But treacherous landscapes, foul weather, and a host of mountain predators offer their own dangers. Raiders and others take advantage of these natural chokepoints to ambush the unwary.

Lonely cairns mark the resting places of those who walked these routes undefended or unprepared. Pray that your path here does not end under a pile of mountain stones.

### DOMAIN



#### PASS

Treacherous paths over high mountains.

#### FEATURES

- 21-43 Winding mountain path
- 44-56 Snowfield or glacial rocks
- 57-64 River gorge
- 65-68 Crashing waterfall
- 69-72 Highland lake
- 73-76 Forgotten cairn
- 77-80 Bridge
- 81-84 Overlook
- 85-88 Camp or outpost
- 89-98 Something unusual or unexpected
- 99 You transition into a new theme
- 00 You transition into a new domain

#### DANGERS

- 31-33 Denizen lairs here
- 34-36 Denizen hunts
- 37-39 Perilous climb or descent
- 40-42 Avalanche or rockslide
- 43-45 Foul weather

## RUIN

These decaying edifices, skeletal and shadowed, mark the remains of once-great communities and civilizations. Some of these sites have been newly adapted by Ironlanders as shelter, temple, or citadel. Others are home only to dangerous creatures and dark forces.

Newly discovered ruins tempt bold explorers with the promise of powerful legacies and forgotten secrets. But most see these places as a portent of our inescapable, grim fate in these lands. Someday, another people may delve into the ruins of what we leave behind.

### DOMAIN



## RUIN

The crumbling legacy of a dead civilization.

### FEATURES

- 21-43 Crumbling corridors and chambers
- 44-56 Collapsed architecture
- 57-64 Rubble-choked hall
- 65-68 Courtyard
- 69-72 Archive or library
- 73-76 Broken statuary or fading murals
- 77-80 Preserved vault
- 81-84 Temple to forgotten gods
- 85-88 Mausoleum
- 89-98 Something unusual or unexpected
- 99 You transition into a new theme
- 00 You transition into a new domain

### DANGERS

- 31-33 Ancient mechanism or trap
- 34-36 Collapsing wall or ceiling
- 37-39 Blocked or broken passage
- 40-42 Unstable floor above a new danger
- 43-45 Ancient secrets best left buried

## SEA CAVE

Carved by ocean waves and unyielding currents, the sea caves pockmarking the coasts plunge deep into the land's dark heart. Deadly creatures or determined foes often lair within, but it is the water that is your ever-present enemy. The chill and damp seep into your bones. The tides and upland flooding can bring a torrent of water with little warning. You plunge desperately through submerged passages, praying that an opening will provide a pocket of air.

This is a realm of water and stone, cold and darkness. You are not welcome here.

### DOMAIN



## SEA CAVE

Stone passages carved by ocean waves.

### FEATURES

- 21-43 Watery tunnels
- 44-56 Eroded chamber
- 57-64 Flooded chamber
- 65-68 Vast chamber
- 69-72 Dry passages
- 73-76 Freshwater inlet
- 77-80 Rocky island
- 81-84 Waterborne debris
- 85-88 Shipwreck or boat
- 89-98 Something unusual or unexpected
- 99 You transition into a new theme
- 00 You transition into a new domain

### DANGERS

- 31-33 Denizen strikes without warning
- 34-36 Denizen lurks below
- 37-39 Flooding
- 40-42 Rushing current
- 43-45 Claustrophobic squeeze

## SHADOWFEN

These foul sites are cloaked in mist, clogged with muddy peat, and drenched in fetid water. Thickets of gray, skeletal trees conceal stalking creatures. Strange shapes move in the fog and beneath dark, placid water. Narrow trails tease with the promise of passage, but instead lead to hidden quagmires.

Be wary. When you enter a shadowfen, the specter of death is your constant companion.

### DOMAIN



### SHADOWFEN

A primeval marsh, cloaked in mist.

#### FEATURES

- 21-43 Narrow path through a fetid bog
- 44-56 Stagnant waterway
- 57-64 Flooded thicket
- 65-68 Island of dry land
- 69-72 Submerged discovery
- 73-76 Preserved corpses
- 77-80 Overgrown structure
- 81-84 Tall reeds
- 85-88 Camp or outpost
- 89-98 Something unusual or unexpected
- 99 You transition into a new theme
- 00 You transition into a new domain

#### DANGERS

- 31-33 Denizen hunts
- 34-36 Deep water blocks the path
- 37-39 Toxic environment
- 40-42 Concealing or disorienting mist
- 43-45 Hidden quagmire

## STRONGHOLD

These sites weather storms and sieges alike. Their walls stand firm against the forces of this dark land. They are fortified against attack and rife with guards, traps, and other defenses. For those who dwell within, strongholds provide the comfort of wood and stone, axe and bow. For those who seek to breach the walls, they can be as unyielding and unforgiving as the most stalwart ironbound shield.

### DOMAIN



### STRONGHOLD

A fortress secured against trespassers.

#### FEATURES

- 21-43 Connecting passageways
- 44-56 Barracks or common quarters
- 57-64 Large hall
- 65-68 Workshop or library
- 69-72 Command center or leadership
- 73-76 Ladder or stairwell
- 77-80 Storage
- 81-84 Kitchen or larder
- 85-88 Courtyard
- 89-98 Something unusual or unexpected
- 99 You transition into a new theme
- 00 You transition into a new domain

#### DANGERS

- 31-33 Blocked or guarded path
- 34-36 Caught in the open
- 37-39 Chokepoint
- 40-42 Trap
- 43-45 Alarm trigger

## TANGLEWOOD

A tanglewood is a thick wilderness, shrouded in mist. Overhanging, twisted boughs obscure the sky. The ground is snarled with exposed roots. The wind carries foreboding whispers, and branches rattle like old bones.

Many refuse to harvest wood from these places, believing the spirits who reside within will bring a curse upon them and their families. Others fear the creatures and beings which lurk within. For these reasons, even near settled areas, the tangles still stand.

### DOMAIN

#### TANGLEWOOD

A perilous forest of eternal shadow.



#### FEATURES

- 21-43 Dense thicket
- 44-56 Overgrown path
- 57-64 Waterway
- 65-68 Clearing
- 69-72 Elder tree
- 73-76 Brambles
- 77-80 Overgrown structure
- 81-84 Rocky outcrop
- 85-88 Camp or outpost
- 89-98 Something unusual or unexpected
- 99 You transition into a new theme
- 00 You transition into a new domain

#### DANGERS

- 31-33 Denizen hunts
- 34-36 Denizen lairs here
- 37-39 Trap or snare
- 40-42 Path leads you astray
- 43-45 Entangling plant life

## UNDERKEEP

These subterranean structures are a mystery. They are inexplicably ancient, older perhaps than even the Firstborn. Their passages and halls hide dangers within unfathomable darkness.

Most Ironlanders stay well clear of these places. But some stumble upon the entrance to an underkeep and delve inside, drawn by its secrets or the alluring promise of forgotten power. Others, desperate for protection from the perils of the surface world, foolishly try to use the depths of an underkeep as a sanctum for their kin or clan. They soon discover that the greatest threats lie beneath.

### DOMAIN

#### UNDERKEEP

An age-old subterranean dungeon.



#### FEATURES

- 21-43 Carved passages
- 44-56 Hall or chamber
- 57-64 Stairs into the depths
- 65-68 Grand doorway or entrance
- 69-72 Tomb or catacombs
- 73-76 Rough-hewn cave
- 77-80 Foundry or workshop
- 81-84 Shrine or temple
- 85-88 Imposing architecture or artistry
- 89-98 Something unusual or unexpected
- 99 You transition into a new theme
- 00 You transition into a new domain

#### DANGERS

- 31-33 Ancient mechanism or trap
- 34-36 Crumbling architecture
- 37-39 Blocked or broken passage
- 40-42 Artifact with a hidden danger
- 43-45 Denizen lurks in darkness

# SITE STARTERS

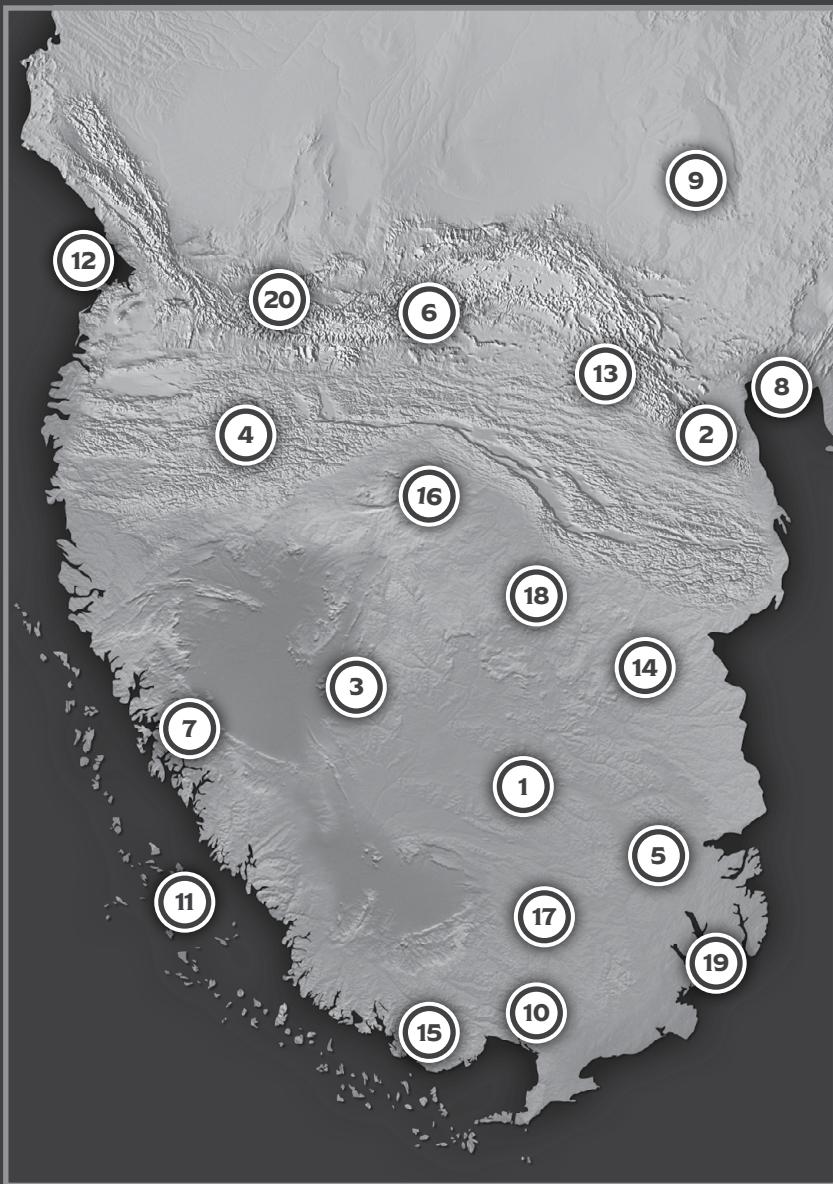
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This section includes twenty sites you can use as inspiration for your campaign. Each includes a rank, theme, domain, denizens, and a summary of its history. Adjust any of these elements to your liking, or simply use them as examples of how to build an adventure site.

See the next page for a map showing the location of these sites within the Ironlands, keyed to the index below. Of course, feel free to adjust as you like for your own world.

If you want to use this list to randomly select a site, an oracle roll result is also provided.

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8	36-40	Frostmark	Fortified	Icereach	99
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20	95-00	Trail of Spirits	Ancient	Pass	105



## 1. ALVA'S REST

<b>Rank:</b> Dangerous	<b>Denizens:</b>
<b>Theme:</b> Fortified	Raiders (very common); Zealot (common); Mystic (uncommon); Bonewalker (uncommon); Blighthound (uncommon);
<b>Domain:</b> Barrow	Alva (rare); Bonehorde (rare)

In life, Alva the Reaver was a leader of raiders and a merciless fighter, revered and respected by her followers. In death, she has become much more. Alva was laid to rest months ago after falling to the blade of a village defender. Driven to lead and protect her war-kin even beyond death, she returned as a wight, and resumed command of the raiding band. They established an outpost in this barrow which once served as her tomb.

The barrow brims with traps and hazards. Raiders wielding shield and spear lurk around every corner. Alva is also protected by a band of zealots, adorned in white cloaks and bone masks, who believe she is destined to fulfill some dark destiny.

The raiders strike out at villages, returning to the barrow with their spoils to appease their undead leader. The raids grow more frequent, and the nearby settlements grow desperate. What can be done to stop Alva's reign of terror?

## 2. BLEAKROOT DEPTHS

<b>Rank:</b> Formidable	<b>Denizens:</b>
<b>Theme:</b> Wild	Wolf (very common); Bladewing (common); Cave Lion (uncommon); Bear (uncommon); Common folk (uncommon); Hunter (rare); Elder beast (rare); Primordial (unforeseen)
<b>Domain:</b> Frozen Cavern	

The roots of the trees run deep into the veins of the earth, tangling amid the frozen tunnels of Bleakroot Depths. The site is perilous, but provides the only passage between the remote villages of Idleburrow and Lora's Rise. Those settlements depend on each other for trade and protection amid the perilous heights of the Tempest Hills.

Recently, the beasts of the hills have taken to the tunnels, drawn there inexplicably. Within, they become frenzied and wild. They ambush all who dare enter Bleakroot Depths, cutting off this critical route. What primal force is at work here?

## 3. BONEWILDS

<b>Rank:</b> Formidable	<b>Denizens:</b>
<b>Theme:</b> Haunted	Bonewalker (very common); Haunt (common); Wolf (common); Blighthound (uncommon); Bonehorde (rare); Blood thorn (rare); Husk (unforeseen)
<b>Domain:</b> Tanglewood	

This dense forest flourishes atop the remains of an ancient battlefield. Two armies clashed here long ago, fighting and killing over some forgotten dispute. Now, it is strewn with the artifacts and bones of the fallen. Rusted swords, broken spears, and dented helms protrude from the mossy ground, and skulls peer out from the knotted bark of trees. The intense corruption of bloodshed seeps into the roots of this place, and the tormented spirits rise to inhabit its vines and branches.

Skeletal remains seem to reach from their resting places among gnarled roots, and the wind through the branches is a mournful call. The sap of these trees weeps red and thick as blood. What evil sustains the specter of death here?

## 4. DARKFALL CAVES

<b>Rank:</b> Epic	<b>Denizens:</b>
<b>Theme:</b> Ancient	Nightmare Spider (very common); Bladewing (common); Deep Rat (common); Broken (uncommon); Chitter (rare); Trog (rare); Wyrm (unforeseen)
<b>Domain:</b> Cavern	

Local legend tells of a vast, sprawling cavern with heights as great as a mountain, and depths as fathomless as the ocean. It is a place, some say, carved by the hands of old gods.

This subterranean expanse can be reached from the surface, but only by traversing a labyrinth of plunging tunnels and tight crawlspaces known as Darkfall Caves. There are vestiges of a long-lost people in the passages, echoes of a time when others walked these paths, but today only skittering and skulking things dwell here. Nightmare spiders are a particularly common danger. They subsist on bats, rats, and insects—but are all too likely to attack a careless explorer. They ambush from above, their venom delivering horrific dreams to any who manage to escape.

The darkness within is absolute. The descent unending. What secrets lie in the unexplored heart of this place?

## 5. DEEPROT BOG

<b>Rank:</b> Dangerous	<b>Denizens:</b>
<b>Theme:</b> Hallowed	Zealot (very common); Marsh rat (common); Harrow spider (uncommon); Bog rot (uncommon); Basilisk (rare); Sodden (rare); Chimera (unforeseen)
<b>Domain:</b> Shadowfen	

The marshes of Deeprot Bog sit within a low valley, surrounded by impassible cliffs. The only accessible approach to this place is through a **Ravaged Cavern**, carved into the heart of the enclosing hills. It is a dangerous path, prone to floods and collapse.

Within the bog itself, amid the black waters and tangled wilds of the fen, the cult of the One Beneath Us practices their rituals. Utterly devoted to the strange deity of decay, the cultists formerly kept to themselves. But recently, they've struck out, traveling by boat through the cavern passage. They gather supplies and new adherents from local settlements—through force if necessary.

A perpetual storm seems to hang over the marsh, its dark clouds roiling. Could the cultists serving the One Beneath Us be reaching a zenith in their work?

## 6. EGAN'S FOLLY

<b>Rank:</b> Extreme	<b>Denizens:</b>
<b>Theme:</b> Haunted	Frostbound (very common); Haunt (common); Mammoth (uncommon); Giant (uncommon); Wolf (rare); Cave Lion (rare); Tempest (unforeseen)
<b>Domain:</b> Pass	

The pathfinder known as Egan prided himself on guiding Ironlanders through treacherous lands. Five years ago, he agreed to lead a group of folk headed for a mining settlement through an icebound pass. He departed too late in the season, and winter fell upon the mountains with brutal force. The expedition never emerged.

What horrors befell the group can only be guessed. All that remained of their makeshift camps were long-cold fire pits, crystalline patches of frozen blood, and gnawed bones. It's said the spirits of those travelers still haunt the pass now known as Egan's Folly. Travelers report strange and unsettling sounds echoing through the crags. Dark forms and hungry eyes appear half-glimpsed within blinding snowstorms. What happened here? Is there some way to put the tormented souls to rest?

## 7. FOULWATER PLUNGE

<b>Rank:</b> Formidable	<b>Denizens:</b>
<b>Theme:</b> Corrupted	Zealot (very common); Nightspawn (common); Merrow (uncommon); Shroud crab (uncommon); Mother nightspawn (rare); Husk (rare); Maelstrom (unforeseen)
<b>Domain:</b> Sea Cave	

On the Ragged Coast, countless caves riddle the fjords, carved over eons by the relentless tides. One such cave hosts a misshapen beast of unknown origin: a nightspawn, birthed from hellish depths to prey on the fishers and sailors of the coast. The monster's presence taints the waters of the cave, blackening them, tinging them with an acrid odor. Moreover, nearby aquatic life takes on qualities of the nightspawn, reshaped into aberrant forms by its creeping vileness. These monstrosities drift farther and farther from the cave, spreading the corruption to ships and settlements.

Recently, folk have undertaken pilgrimages to this sea cave. They say the nightspawn calls to them, like a mother to its children. What has become of them in that vile place?

## 8. FROSTMARK

<b>Rank:</b> Formidable	<b>Denizens:</b>
<b>Theme:</b> Fortified	Raiders (very common); Wolf (common); Broken (common); Bear (uncommon); Frostbound (uncommon); Tempest (rare); Rhaskar (rare); Primordial (unforeseen)
<b>Domain:</b> Icereach	

A clan of raiders established a settlement on this icereach. Their village, Thilda's Hold, sits high atop a high frozen crag. Elsewhere, they've built several work camps and outposts. In the spring, when the surrounding waters thaw, they board their longboats to raid along the coast.

Reaching the clan's remote village requires difficult overland travel. In warmer seasons, a skilled seafarer can navigate the ice-strewn waterways that cut through Frostmark like ragged scars.

A large tribe of broken also live here, sheltered in an **Ancient Frozen Cavern**. In a recent nighttime attack on Thilda's Hold, they killed many of the raiders, including the clan leader's son. What will the raider's do in retaliation?

## 9. GREAHTHAMMER DEEP

**Rank:** Extreme

**Theme:** Ravaged

**Domain:** Mine

**Denizens:**

Frostbound giant (common); Primordial (uncommon); Iron-wracked beast (uncommon); Haunt (rare); Nightspawn (rare); Wyrm (unforeseen)

In ancient days, a lineage of giants lived beyond the Veiled Mountains in the great expanse we now call the Shattered Wastes. The cavernous entrance to this abandoned mine sits at the summit of an icy mount. In the frozen depths, the giants once mined for ore and fashioned great weapons. Today, their abandoned tools and preserved corpses are all that remain of their legacy.

Exploration of this place is treacherous. The mine is shaken by frequent earthquakes, causing cave-ins and pitfalls. The cold is as piercing and deadly as the sharpest blade. Horrid things lurk amid the echoing shadows.

Some say the giants unleashed a long-buried power. Did this cause the cataclysm which sealed these northern lands in perpetual ice?

## 10. HOLDFAST BARROW

**Rank:** Formidable

**Theme:** Haunted

**Domain:** Barrow

**Denizens:**

Bonewalker (very common); Haunt (common); Bonehorde (uncommon); Blighthound (uncommon); Iron revenant (rare); Zhan the Bloodied (rare)

A power-hungry warrior known as Zhan the Bloodied arrived on the shores of the Ironlands with the first refugees. Seeing an opportunity to take control of the struggling settlements and weary people, he assembled a warband and waged a cruel campaign to establish himself as the ruler of this new land. Many hundreds died under his sword or by his command. Finally, in a battle against some brave folk defending their steading, he was defeated. With his dying breath, he swore he would return to force the people of the Ironlands to serve under his banner.

Zhan's body was entombed in a deep barrow. The members of his warband, even those who still lived, were sealed in that place along with him. A heavy stone and warding rites blocked the entrance.

Time passed. Memories of Zhan's reign of terror faded into legend. But some say he still lurks in the depths of the barrow, biding his time. If the seal is broken, will Zhan find a way to fulfill his undying vow?

## 11. HOLLOWMOUNT ISLAND

<b>Rank:</b> Extreme	<b>Denizens:</b>
<b>Theme:</b> Ancient	Raider (very common); Bonewalker (common); Trog (uncommon); Haunt (rare); Kayu the Bold (rare); Nightspawn (unforeseen)
<b>Domain:</b> Underkeep	

The only access to landfall on this imposing, storm-swept island is through a narrow bay called the Demon's Throat. Sailing this passage requires careful navigation around jagged, hull-shattering rocks. For the skilled and the lucky, relative calm awaits in the inner bay anchorage, which is sheltered by a massive overhanging cliff. Ancient stone steps lead from the shore into a grand doorway in the side of the rock face.

Beyond the doorway, vast passages and chambers are carved through the center of Hollowmount Island. This underkeep, undiscovered until recently, preserves the secrets and history of a long-forgotten people.

Last year, a band of raiders took up residence within the outer halls of the underkeep. When not attacking coastal settlements, they live in comfort and without concern for their defenses. Who else, other than their own leader—a skilled sailor they call Kayu the Bold—is foolish enough to make landfall here? But they have neglected to consider the dangers that may lie within. Will the raiders fall prey to the deadly traps and long-dead guardians which protect the secrets of this place?

## 12. ICEBOUND REACH

<b>Rank:</b> Extreme	<b>Denizens:</b>
<b>Theme:</b> Wild	Wolf (very common); Bear (common); Atanya (common); Shroud Crab (uncommon); Common folk - sailors (uncommon); Wyvern (rare); Rhaskar (rare)
<b>Domain:</b> Icerach	

Ironlander ships, laden with ore from the north, often navigate the waters of a channel which bisects this vast icereach. This sea passage was once faster and less hazardous than overland routes. However, worsening winters have trapped ships in the expanding ice, forcing the crews to try to survive the cold season alone and isolated. Wrecked ships, their hulls exposed like broken ribs, stand as grim monuments to those who did not prevail.

The animals and beasts who dwell here fight their own battles for survival. The mightiest of these is a massive rhaskar which defends this frozen land against intruders. Is safe passage through Icebound Reach forever lost to us?

## 13. LASTROCK MINE

<b>Rank:</b> Formidable	<b>Denizens:</b>
<b>Theme:</b> Infested	Chitter (very common); Deep rat (common); Nightmare spider (common); Trog (uncommon); Bladewing (uncommon); Common folk - miner (rare)
<b>Domain:</b> Mine	

The miners of Lastrock depend on the iron in their hills to maintain trade alliances with neighboring settlements. The mine is decades old, founded before the village itself. But a new tunnel broke into a cavern and allowed a horde of chitters, starving and frenzied, to swarm into the tunnels. Several miners fell to the swarm; others have not been seen since the invasion.

Other creatures followed the chitters into the tunnels, and the place is overrun. The Lastrock miners can't return to work until the infestation is cleared. Also, there are reports of distant cries for help echoing through the abandoned chambers. Did some of the missing miners survive?

## 14. REDHOME SANCTUM

<b>Rank:</b> Extreme	<b>Denizens:</b>
<b>Theme:</b> Corrupted	Deep rat (very common); Nightspawn (common); Nightmare spider (common); Trog (uncommon); Chimera (uncommon); Bonewalker (rare)
<b>Domain:</b> Underkeep	

The people of Redhome are known for their hospitality. The village is unusually prosperous, and the folk are willing to share that abundance with friend and stranger alike. All are welcome during the frequent festivals and celebrations. Many travelers speak fondly of their time spent in Redhome, and of a bounty of food, drink, song, and fellowship. It is the Old World reborn, they say, a wellspring of hope in a harsh land.

But there is a darker truth here. The settlement was built directly on top of an age-old underkeep. Within the longhouse, a sealed and guarded stone pit is a gateway to the labyrinthine underdark. The villagers perform a nightly rite by slaying an animal or beast and casting the corpse into the depths. This keeps the denizens of the underkeep at bay, they say, but many are not so sure. Some complain of lost memories and dark dreams of their time in the village. Others sing laments for loved ones who did not return from a sojourn there. What secrets do the folk of Redhome protect?

## 15. SINKING TEMPLE

<b>Rank:</b> Extreme	<b>Denizens:</b>
<b>Theme:</b> Ravaged	Merrow (very common); Shroud crab (common); Sodden (uncommon); Maelstrom (rare); Primordial (rare);
<b>Domain:</b> Ruin	Kraken (unforeseen)

A massive ruin, ancient and abandoned, stands silent and still along the coast. Once, a lost people worshiped gods of the sea in this place. Today, the ground beneath it gives way, toppling the temple into the ocean and flooding its lower chambers.

Ironlanders pilgrimage here to pay respect to those old gods. They cast cherished items into the sea and pray for calm waters and safe voyages for their kin. Recently, these pilgrims found the ruin overrun with savage merrow, invading from the ocean's depths.

What brings the merrow to this place, and what hidden dangers lurk within its deluged chambers?

## 16. SMOLDERING WOOD

<b>Rank:</b> Formidable	<b>Denizens:</b>
<b>Theme:</b> Ravaged	Varou (very common); Bear (common); Wolf (common); Boar (common); Gnarl (uncommon); Elder beast (rare);
<b>Domain:</b> Tanglewood	Blood thorn (unforeseen)

Two years ago, a primordial of charred stone and raging fire was killed, hunted to its end by Ironlanders protecting their village. As the creature fell, disintegrating into ash, it sowed the land with its primal fire. Now, the trees smolder with spectral flame, giving off a choking heat and noxious smoke. The creatures of this place are driven to madness by this perpetual, ghostly blaze, and a tribe of Varou seek vengeance for what was destroyed.

Mystics speak of visions of the primordial's heart at the center of the wood. Will removing this heart cure the forest of its curse of flame?

## 17. STILLGRAVE MIRE

**Rank:** Formidable

**Theme:** Haunted

**Domain:** Shadowfen

**Denizens:**

Elf (very common); Bonewalker (common); Hollow (common); Haunt (uncommon); Marsh rat (uncommon); Chimera (rare); Basilisk (rare); Primordial (unforeseen)

In this flooded lowland forest, two clans of elves fight each other in an unending war. The reason for this conflict is long forgotten. Only the hate remains. The power of that hate infects this place like a sickness, seeping into the waters and contaminating the woods. It gives a horrid new life to those who die here, and fallen elves soon rise again to fight alongside their kin. They are called the twice-born.

In some skirmishes, the dead outnumber the living. Soon, perhaps only the twice-born will remain. What can be done to end this forever war?

## 18. STONESONG SPIRE

**Rank:** Extreme

**Theme:** Hallowed

**Domain:** Stronghold

**Denizens:**

Zealot (very common); Common folk (common); Warrior (common); Mystic (uncommon); Haunt (uncommon); Thrall (rare); Kord the Stonewright (rare)

Visions of a once-great fortress drew Kord the Stonewright to a deep lake in the northern Havens. There, he discovered the stones scattered in shallow waters and buried in mud near the shore—all that was left of the ancient place which haunted his dreams. Piece by piece, he recovered the remains of the fortress, transplanting the stones laboriously to an island at the lake's center.

Most laughed at this crazy venture. But some joined Kord, drawn to this place by a compulsion they can't understand or explain. Guided by the stonewright's unwavering vision, they rebuilt the vaults of the fortress and its tall central spire. Today, nearly two decades later, the workforce numbers in the hundreds. They live in ramshackle camps encircling the fortress and on the lakeshore. Many protect the place with spear and shield. The stones sing to them, they say, and with each block mortared in place the words become clearer. Folk of this area call them the builders.

The strange tower, nearly complete, now looms over the valley. There's a hum in the air, an expectant energy like the lull before a great storm. What is about to happen?

## 19. TOPPLEKEEP

<b>Rank:</b> Dangerous	<b>Denizens:</b>
<b>Theme:</b> Infested	Bladewing (very common); Marsh Rat (common); Harrow Spider (uncommon); Sodden (uncommon); Troll (rare); Carrion Newt (rare)
<b>Domain:</b> Ruin	

The skeletal structure of Topplekeep strikes an unsettling silhouette. It is a crumbling, tilting ruin, once a mighty fortress to some forgotten warlord. Time and weather have had their way with the place, eroding it down to its bones as it sinks deeper into the yielding ground and brackish waterways of the surrounding **Wild Shadowfen**. Many of its passages and rooms are flooded with foul, stagnant water.

A colony of bladewings, emerging to hunt under cover of darkness, roost within this place. Wayward travelers and opportunistic treasure-seekers provide ample prey for the beasts, and gnawed bones litter the dilapidated ruin. It's said the trove of the warlord lies in the heart of Topplekeep, and perhaps could be reached at night, when the bladewings hunt. But this is a fool's errand. More than just the bladewings lurk in this place. What other dangers lie within?

## 20. TRAIL OF SPIRITS

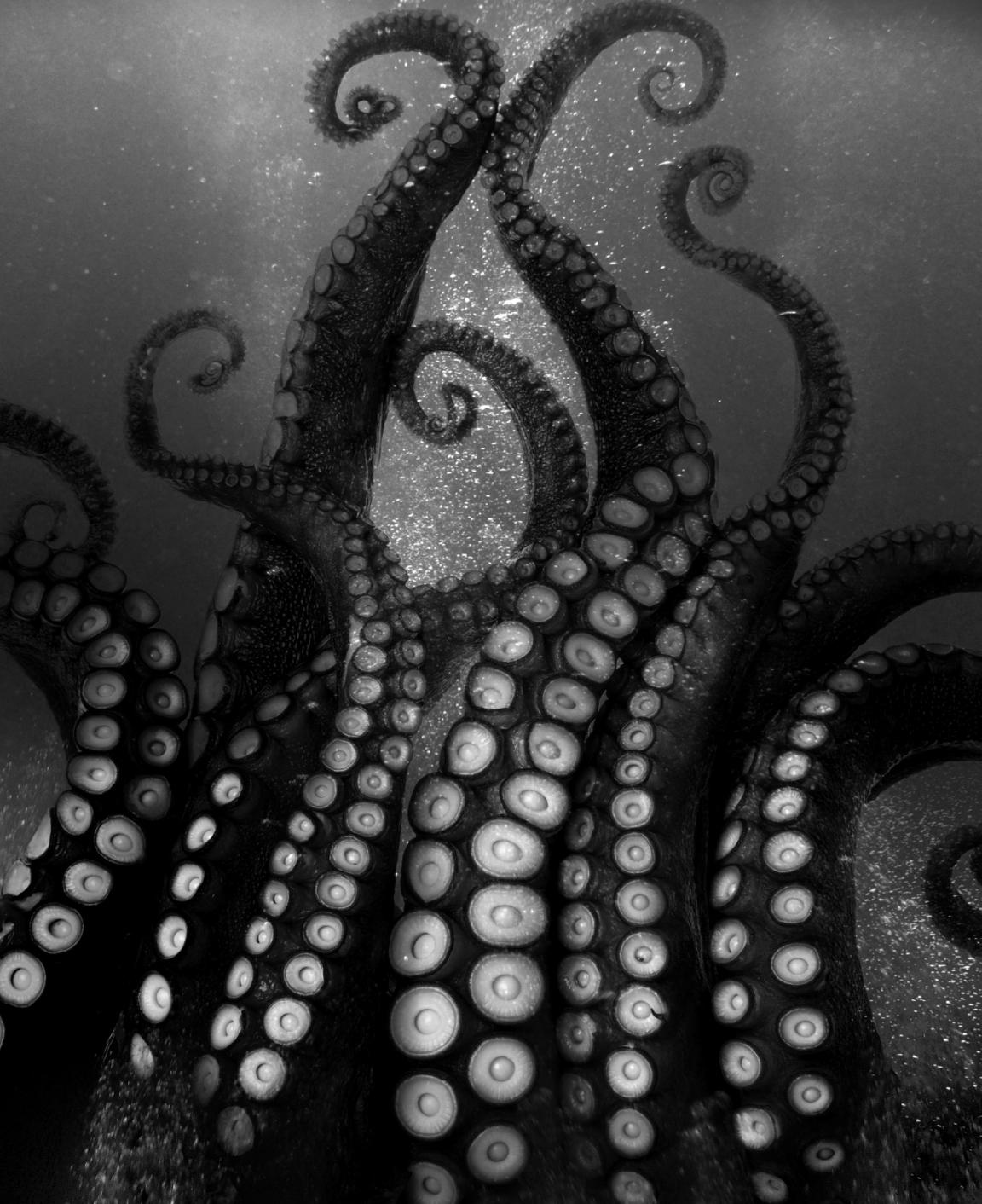
<b>Rank:</b> Extreme	<b>Denizens:</b>
<b>Theme:</b> Ancient	Broken (very common); Giant (common); Frostbound (uncommon); Wyvern (rare); Circle of stones (rare); Bear (rare); Primordial (unforeseen)
<b>Domain:</b> Pass	

A long-dead civilization once used this path through the Veiled Mountains as a trade road. Their crumbling outposts, forts, and waystones, half-buried in snow and fallen glacial stones, mark the way. Some say you can still hear their voices and songs carried on the wind; echoes of lives long lost.

A clan of giants now live here, drawn to the remains of this once-powerful place like travelers huddling close to a dying fire. They defend the pass against a massive tribe of broken who lurk within the caves and ruins of this frozen land. What purpose do the giants have here, and what can be done to aid their defense against the broken?

CHAPTER 5

# DENIZENS



# **POPULATING YOUR WORLD**

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This chapter contains an array of new foes and encounters to inhabit your *Delve* sites and provide challenges and interactions in your *Ironsworn* campaign. You can use these along with the NPCs provided in *Ironsworn Core*—not to mention your own unique creations—to add depth and danger to your world.

## **USING THE DENIZENS MATRIX**

The site worksheet, available for download from ironswornrpg.com, includes a denizens matrix.

DENIZENS				
VERY COMMON	01-27 COMMON	28-41 COMMON	42-55 COMMON	56-69
UNCOMMON	70-75 UNCOMMON	76-81 UNCOMMON	82-87 UNCOMMON	88-93
RARE	94-95 RARE	96-97 RARE	98-99 UNFORESEEN	00

The matrix provides a scale for the frequency of a particular denizen (or type of denizen) within a site, and how much influence they should have on your story. It is organized by very common, common, uncommon, rare, and unforeseen. Each field also has a number corresponding to a 1-100 result on an oracle roll.

### **FILLING OUT THE MATRIX**

Before you begin your exploration of a site, consider what you know of the denizens of this place. What rumors have you heard? What information have you uncovered? Do the theme and domain offer any clues?

Then, add some denizens to the matrix. Envision how much impact a denizen should have on your expedition and story, and slot them into an appropriate field.

If a particular denizen should represent most of your encounters in a site, you can add them to multiple slots in the first row starting from the leftmost space. For example, putting a denizen in the very common slot and the next two common slots will cause them to appear more than fifty percent of the time when generating a random encounter.

Feel free to leave a few matrix slots blank. In fact, if this place is a mystery to you, leaving many or all the spaces empty is fine. You can discover what lurks here through play.

The goal is to make the denizens organic to the setting and your understanding of the site, as opposed to a purely random cast of characters. However, this is your starting place. There's still plenty of room for chaos and surprises.

You must infiltrate a **Corrupted Ruin** held by enemy raiders. Those raiders will be your most common encounters here, along with the common folk who serve them. But the foul magic of this place has spawned or attracted other creatures.

The raiders are not immune to those forces, and many of them will be made zealots—their will subsumed until there is nothing left but mindless devotion to ancient powers.

DENIZENS				
VERY COMMON Raider	01-27 COMMON Common Folk	28-41 COMMON Zealot	42-55 COMMON Nightspawn	56-69
UNCOMMON Mystic	70-75 UNCOMMON Deep Rat	76-81 UNCOMMON Nightspawn	82-87 UNCOMMON Gloom	88-93
RARE Raider Leader	94-95 RARE	96-97 RARE	98-99 UNFORESEEN	00
When the outcome of a move prompts an encounter with a denizen, you may:	<input type="radio"/> Choose or introduce a denizen based on the situation and what you know of this place.	<input type="radio"/> Roll on the matrix to generate a random encounter. If the field is blank, add a new denizen.	<input type="radio"/> Identify a denizen as 'likely' to appear, and Ask the Oracle. If the answer is "no", roll on the matrix.	<input type="radio"/> Pick two denizens, rate one as 'likely', and Ask the Oracle to determine which you encounter.

## GENERATING ENCOUNTERS WITH DENIZENS

The site worksheet provides a summary of some techniques you can use to introduce encounters as you explore a site. This includes:

- **Choose or introduce a denizen** based on the situation and what you know of this place.
- **Roll on the matrix** to generate a random denizen encounter. If the field is blank, add a new denizen.
- **Identify a denizen as 'likely' to appear**, and *Ask the Oracle*. If the answer is "no," roll on the matrix.
- **Pick two denizens**, rate one as 'likely', and *Ask the Oracle* to determine which you encounter.

For the most part, go with your gut. The denizens matrix is just a tool, and you have many options for generating and managing the inhabitants of a site. If a particular encounter seems like a good fit for the current situation, and it's dramatic and interesting, make it happen.

Some other approaches you can use to generate denizens include:

- Roll on the Action and Theme oracles (*Ironsworn Core*, page 174), and interpret the result for a denizen encounter appropriate to the situation.
- Use the Character Role (*Ironsworn Core*, page 182), Goal (*Ironsworn Core*, page 182), Descriptor (*Ironsworn Core*, page 183), and Name (*Ironsworn Core*, page 184) oracles to generate a unique NPC.
- Use the Monstrosity oracles (page 214) to create a unique beast.
- Use your preferred encounter generator, such as one in another roleplaying game or digital tool.

If the result of a move, a prompt from an oracle, or the nature of your surroundings causes you to rethink the inhabitants of a site, you can modify your matrix or start fresh based on your new understanding.

## NON-HOSTILE DENIZENS

Not every denizen intends to kill or devour you. Some may be helpful. Some may be suspicious. Others will be indifferent to your presence. If you're not sure, *Ask the Oracle*. You can use the Character Disposition oracle (page 213) to set the scene. You can also create a relationship map (page 61) to track how the people and creatures of a place connect to one another (and to you).

## UNIQUE DENIZENS

If you want to include a unique denizen within your matrix, such as a named NPC, simply add them to an appropriate slot based on the chance of encountering them. If you trigger and resolve that encounter, remove them from the matrix.

## USING THE MATRIX OUTSIDE OF A SITE

You can also use the denizens matrix for inspiration and answers outside of a site. For example:

- When you *Undertake a Journey*, populate the matrix with potential encounters appropriate to the region.
- Create a matrix of the inhabitants of a faction or community, such as typical folk you might find in an Ironlander settlement.

In guided play, the GM can use the denizens matrix to help populate a site and generate encounters. The GM can keep the matrix hidden from the players, or use it as a tool for a shared narrative.

# IRONLANDERS

## HUSK

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**Rank:** Formidable (1 progress per harm; inflicts 3 harm)

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**Features:**

- Withered flesh and black eyes
- Clawed fingernails
- Horrifying wail

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**Drives:**

- Become more powerful
- Make others suffer as they have
- Restore their former self

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**Tactics:**

- Dishearten with a dreadful howl
- Lash out with forbidden magic
- Bind lesser creatures to their will
- Consume the essence of others

---

A husk is what remains of an Ironlander whose body, mind, and soul are hollowed out by dark magic. In their unquenchable thirst for power, they use their own essence to power foul rituals. Bit by bit, they give themselves to this ruinous path. They abandon their kin. They forsake their former lives. Their physical form wastes away. Their mind is shattered.

In time, only the husk is left. They are a needful thing, tormented by the memory of all they have lost, but willing to lose even more in their quest for power.

A husk may make tempting offers of rituals or rarities, but be wary. Their bargains are always in their own favor. When they turn against you, a husk is a cunning foe. They weave dreadful spells, summon swarms of lesser creatures, and unleash a savagery inflamed by their anguish.

*Quest Starter: Someone you are sworn to protect is stricken with a curse and falls into an unending sleep. Slowly, their heartbeat fades. They lie at the threshold between life and death. Your only hope lies with the husk who dwells in a nearby Infested Shadowfen. Will they have a cure? What will they demand in return?*

## ZEALOT

---

**Rank:** Troublesome (3 progress per harm; inflicts 1 harm)

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**Features:**

- Sickly pallor
- Distant eyes
- Marks of their faith

---

**Drives:**

- Serve the faith
- Bring others into the fold
- Destroy those who oppose them

---

**Tactics:**

- Entice with trickery or false promises
- Use the powers of the faith
- Stand together to overcome nonbelievers

---

Zealots are those we have lost to their faith. Friends and loved ones are discarded or forgotten. Communities are left behind. Possessions are discarded or turned over to the needs of the sect. They live for one purpose, and all other vows are forsaken. This single-minded devotion changes them, sometimes irrevocably.

Some zealots worship ancient, forgotten gods, and seek to return them to their former horrible glory. Others serve new religious movements, caught up in promises of a better life. Some worship mortal leaders as if they were gods—perhaps even believing them to be the avatar of divinity.

This sense of belonging, of purpose, can be a powerful lure in this perilous land.

*Quest Starter: You have lost someone to an emerging sect which seeks to unleash a forgotten power or entity. They dwell within a Hallowed Underkeep. What is the nature of their belief? Will you attempt to save this person from their faith, or see them destroyed along with it?*



# FIRSTBORN

## ATANYA

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**Rank:** Dangerous (2 progress per harm; inflicts 2 harm)

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- Features:**
- Stout forms
  - Iridescent Skin and dark hair
  - Clothed in hides and furs
- 

- Drives:**
- Hunt and fish
  - Respect the sea
  - Seek out new lands
- 

- Tactics:**
- Strike with spears
  - Fight as one, and embody the power of the mighty sea
- 

These people of the sea dwell among the Barrier Islands, along the Ragged Coast, and amid the frozen landscapes of the far north. Some live in isolated villages clinging to rugged shores, or as nomads among the icereaches. Others spend their lives aboard finely-crafted vessels called drift-homes. These ships find safe anchorage during the cruelest depths of winter, and return to the sea in calmer months.

The atanya are a diverse people, but most are well-suited to a life amid the northern climes. They are strong, hardy, and long-lived. Their height and stout forms give them an imposing physical presence, but they are generally good-natured. They have an unnatural sense of the coming weather and an innate understanding of the sea. Some say they once lived in the depths of the ocean, but were cursed by a forsaken god and banished to the world above.

*Quest Starter: A generation ago, one of your kin was rescued at sea by an atanya ship. By their tradition, this incurred a life debt—which went unpaid by your long-dead relative and now passes to you. They ask you to delve into the flooded bowels of a Ravaged Sea Cave to recover a precious item. What is it they seek?*

### YOUR TRUTH

Atanya ships sometimes sail to the west, and do not return for months or years. Some are never seen again. What is rumored to lie beyond the western horizon?

# MERROW

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**Rank:** Dangerous (2 progress per harm; inflicts 2 harm)

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**Features:**

- Gray scaled skin
- Bulbous eyes
- Webbed claws

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**Drives:**

- Blood for the deep gods

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**Tactics:**

- Swarm and overwhelm
- Entangle in nets
- Drag back to the depths

---

These semiaquatic beings dwell within coastal waters, sea caves, and saltwater marshes. They are fierce protectors of their realm, driven by a zealous devotion to their gods. Their eyes are large and glossy black. They have hunched forms and long limbs, and move with deadly grace in watery environments. Their language is a cacophony of clicks, low grunts, and whistles.

They war against the atanya clans, rarely interact with other firstborn, and are openly hostile to Ironlanders. They emerge from their sunken lairs to swarm over ships or coastal settlements, dragging their victims into the depths. As night falls, the people of seaside villages light their torches, ward their gates, and keep an eye to the waters.

*Quest Starter: Sailors speak in hushed tones of a large merrow, its skin translucent white, wielding a wicked stone blade. It strikes out from a hidden Fortified Sea Cave to raid indiscriminately. This merrow and its clan take no prisoners, instead performing bloodletting rituals aboard the ships they attack. What is the origin of this leader? What is the purpose of these violent rituals?*

## YOUR TRUTH

The merrow worship one god above all others. What form does it take? What does it demand of its supplicants?

# ANIMALS

## BLADEWING

---

**Rank:** Dangerous (2 progress per harm; inflicts 2 harm)

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**Features:**

- Large, dagger-shaped wings
- Elongated jaws with needle-like teeth
- Dark, leathery hide

---

**Drives:**

- Take flight under the cover of darkness
- Hunt from above

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**Tactics:**

- Glide silently
- Sudden, swift attack

---

These carnivorous creatures dwell in caves and ruins, and emerge at night to hunt. They have a lean, angular form, with a wingspan as wide as an Ironlander's outstretched arms.

They typically feed on smaller prey, but a pack of hungry bladewings will harass larger victims, diving and slashing in coordinated attacks. During the long nights of winter, swarms of these creatures have descended on Ironlander settlements or unwary travelers.

*Quest Starter: Night after night, a colony of bladewings emerges to prey on a remote settlement. The creatures are rumored to lair in a long-abandoned Ravaged Mine. What is driving their attacks?*

### YOUR TRUTH

A clan of hill people conduct ceremonial hunts of the bladewings, and decorate their banners and shields with its form. Their mystics and warriors even wear the leathery wings as ornamentation. What powers or protections do they believe this imparts?

# CARRION NEWT

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**Rank:** Formidable (1 progress per harm; inflicts 3 harm)

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**Features:**

- Long, sleek body
- Brightly-colored markings
- Serrated teeth

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**Drives:**

- Hunt and feed
- Lay eggs within fresh kills

---

**Tactics:**

- Lurk in the shallows
- Sudden, ferocious attack
- Unyielding bite

---

These semiaquatic creatures dwell within the freshwater rivers and subterranean waterways of the Ironlands. They have a long, eel-like body, a flat head, and short, claw-tipped legs.

A mature adult grows to the length of a horse. They are ungainly on land, but fast and agile within the water. They prefer to attack landbound prey by lurking along the water's edge and waiting for an unfortunate animal (or Ironlander) to come near their hiding spot.

Carrion newts lay their eggs within the carcass of their kills. The rotting body nurtures the eggs and feeds the young newts until they burst forth into the world. If you come upon a corpse at the water's edge—be cautious. It might be filled with dozens of hungry young newts.

*Quest Starter: In the depths of a Wild Shadowfen, the carrion newt they call Old-Gray lurks within a wide, slow river—an important waterway for trade. It is an ancient animal, larger than any newt ever seen. It has one blind eye and ash-colored skin. Recently, a trading boat was attacked and swamped by the creature. Others refuse to make the passage until Old-Gray is dealt with.*

## YOUR TRUTH

Carrion newt eggs are prized by a specific culture or settlement for some purpose. What is it?

# CAVE LION

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**Rank:** Formidable (1 progress per harm; inflicts 3 harm)

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**Features:**

- Feline grace
- Tawny, striped coat

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**Drives:**

- Hunt

---

**Tactics:**

- Stalk prey
- Leap and bite
- Intimidating roar

---

Cave lions are sleek, powerful creatures who dwell primarily in the Hinterlands and Tempest Hills. They lair in caverns and other hidden places, emerging to hunt prey such as deer, boar, and rodents. They are typically solitary creatures, but have been seen working together to bring down larger quarry. Even a mammoth is no match for a determined pack of cave lions.

*Quest Starter: A large cave lion kills livestock in outlying Ironlander steadings, and attacked a farmer. It hunts well beyond its usual territory, and is said to lair in a Wild Cavern. What has driven this beast from its hunting grounds?*



## DEEP RAT

---

**Rank:** Troublesome (3 progress per harm; inflicts 1 harm)

---

**Features:**

- Tiny, blind eyes
- Wrinkled, hairless skin
- Clawed feet
- Jutting incisors

---

**Drives:**

- Dig
- Feed

---

**Tactics:**

- Undermine paths
- Swarm and bite

---

These foul, oversized rats have squat bodies and stubby tails. They are essentially blind, but navigate through smell and touch.

Deep rats are constantly collecting food and will eat anything even vaguely edible. They often dwell in caves or subterranean structures, digging compulsively to expand their lair. In those places, they serve as fodder for greater creatures.

*Quest Starter: A fallen hero must be laid to rest with their kinfolk, but deep rats have invaded the settlement's tomb. Within the dark depths of this Infested Barrow is the massive brood mother, a formidable creature that will fight savagely to protect the horde.*

### YOUR TRUTH

During the longest night of winter, deep rats swarm the surface world. They are drawn inexorably to a specific place. What is it?

# NIGHTMARE SPIDER

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**Rank:** Dangerous (2 progress per harm; inflicts 2 harm)

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**Features:**

- Pale, semitransparent body
- Long, skinny legs
- Fangs, dripping with venom

---

**Drives:**

- Lurk in darkness
- Feed
- Lay eggs

---

**Tactics:**

- Spin webs
- Drop on prey
- Pierce with venomous fangs

---

Nightmare spiders are monstrous creatures which dwell in caves, ruins, thick woods, and other dark places. They have narrow, translucent bodies, three pairs of black eyes, and long, slender legs. They typically feed on bats and rodents, but are opportunistic hunters and attack anything straying into their path or stumbling into their webbing. Their lairs are often strung with large silk egg sacs.

For smaller animals, the toxic bite of the nightmare spider causes paralysis. For a typical Ironlander, it dulls the senses and induces vivid hallucinations. It is these frightening, dreamlike visions which earn the creature its name.

*Quest Starter: Within a **Wild Tanglewood**, mystics live in cooperation with the spiders, supplying them with live prey. They've abducted someone you care about and will use them as food for these foul creatures. What is the aim of these mystics?*

## YOUR TRUTH

Nightmare spider toxin is harvested for a specific rite or practice.  
What is it?

## SHROUD CRAB

---

**Rank:** Troublesome (3 progress per harm; inflicts 1 harm)

---

**Features:**

- Ridged shell
- Snapping, slashing claws
- Barbed, whiplike tail

---

**Drives:**

- Lie hidden among rocks and ice
- Feed

---

**Tactics:**

- Mimic surroundings
- Leap at unsuspecting prey
- Latch onto victims with powerful legs and tail
- Stab and slash

---

Shroud crabs threaten careless or unlucky Ironlanders along coasts and icereaches. They have long legs, a segmented tail, and large, serrated claws.

Their carapace changes color to perfectly match their environment, making them nearly invisible among rocks or ice. When potential prey strays near, a shroud crab uses its powerful legs to spring at its victim. Then, it wraps around them in a horrible embrace, stabbing and slashing with its claws and barbed tail.

Packs of shroud crabs are known to work in tandem to bring down large prey. Some report seeing mighty elk engulfed by these voracious creatures. On occasion, the body of a missing Ironlander is found with their flesh picked clean to the bones.

*Quest Starter: A vengeful husk curses a seaside settlement and summons a horde of shroud crabs to overrun the place in a flood of clattering legs and snapping claws. The husk dwells within an Infested Sea Cave, protected by other shroud crabs. There, she prepares an even more horrible show of her power—one which will threaten villages up and down the Ragged Coast.*

# TROG

---

**Rank:** Dangerous (2 progress per harm; inflicts 2 harm)

---

**Features:**

- Luminescent, scaled hide
- Keen vision
- Long claws and sharp teeth
- Powerful tail

---

**Drives:**

- Lurk in darkness
- Dig tunnels

---

**Tactics:**

- Stealthy approach
- Intimidating display
- Pounce
- Bite and thrash

---

Trots are warm-blooded reptilian animals. They dwell in the deepest places of the Ironlands, but have moved closer to the surface in recent years. Some suggest a greater threat in those dark domains is driving them toward the surface. Many a barrow or underkeep has been breached by trogs who tunnel into those spaces.

They are strong and agile, able to run, climb, and swim with equal speed. When they stand on two legs as a display of aggression, they are nearly as tall as an Ironlander. They have a hunched back lined with a ridge of spines, a long snout, and serrated teeth. Their scales glimmer with a colorful, ghostly light. Their bite is as powerful and unyielding as a hammer blow.

*Quest Starter: Pilgrims to a Hallowed Ruin report the site is overrun by trogs. Within the ruins, an altar to ancient gods is said to bestow fair weather and plentiful crops. Spring is near, and the pilgrims must carry out the rites of the harvest. If they don't, the will of the people in nearby settlements will falter.*

## YOUR TRUTH

Some insist that following a trog tunnel into the depths of the earth will eventually lead you to a vast cavern as expansive as the overlands. Is there any truth to this? What secret people or culture lives within this hidden realm?

# BEASTS

## CHITTER

---

**Rank:** Dangerous (2 progress per harm; inflicts 2 harm)

---

**Features:**

- Chitinous shell
- Snapping mandibles

---

**Drives:**

- Sniff out food
- Defend the nest

---

**Tactics:**

- Summon the horde
- Swarm and bite
- Spew putrid vomit

---

Chitters are unnaturally large insects which dwell underground, nesting in subterranean caves, ruins and barrows. They stand half the height of an Ironlander, and move on six segmented legs.

They are primarily scavengers, using their keen sense of smell to locate and retrieve carcasses above or below ground. Instead of eyes, chitters have three thumb-sized holes in the center of their heads through which they issue a distinctive twittering sound. This call is used to communicate with others of its kind and to help visualize their surroundings—much like bats find their way in darkness.

They are covered in a rigid shell, and their mandibles are as sharp and destructive as a finely forged blade. They are not necessarily hostile, but will aggressively defend their nests or fight to secure a food source.

As a last resort, a chitter may attack by spewing the contents of its stomach in a noxious spray, leaving all but the hardiest of Ironlanders temporarily blinded and retching.

*Quest starter: An Ironlander scavenged a relic from an Ancient Underkeep, bringing it back to their settlement. Now, as if lured by this object, chitters attack in overwhelming waves. The walls will not hold much longer. What is this object, and what connection does it have to these creatures?*

# GNARL

---

**Rank:** Extreme (2 ticks per harm; inflicts 4 harm)

---

**Features:**

- Thick, sturdy legs
- Tough hide, textured like old bark
- Majestic horns
- Sorrowful call

---

**Drives:**

- Keep to the woodlands
- Forage

---

**Tactics:**

- Threatening posture
- Powerful charge
- Stomp

---

Gnarls dwell in woodlands throughout the Ironlands. The tallest of them are nearly the height of towering trees, with a long neck and legs as stout as trunks. Atop their heads are sprays of horns which twist and intertwine like slender branches. They roam the forest alone or in small family groups, feeding on lichen, leaves, and other plants. They are not naturally aggressive, but are mighty foes when threatened.

The color of a gnarl's bark-like hide changes through its life, emulating the passage of the seasons. A young gnarl's hide is the verdant green of spring. As they mature, it transitions to the deeper brown-green of summer, then the burnished amber of fall, and finally the cold gray of winter. To protect itself from potential predators, a gnarl will stand among a copse of trees. It will plant its feet, straighten its back, stretch its neck, and stay perfectly still, blending in with its surroundings.

The low, resonant call of a gnarl can carry for miles. It is a lonely sound, as evocative and heartrending as the most mournful funeral song.

*Quest starter: A fire rages within a Ravaged Tanglewood. In that place dwells an unusually large gnarl, its ancient hide as white as new snow. Why are you sworn to guide this creature safely through the blaze? What was the source of the fire? Who opposes you in this quest?*

# IRON-WRACKED BEAST

---

**Rank:** Formidable (1 progress per harm; inflicts 3 harm)

---

**Features:**

- Flesh corrupted by iron
- Pained howl

---

**Drives:**

- Feed the insatiable hunger
- Destroy those who wield iron
- Find a release from pain

---

**Tactics:**

- Attack with brutal rage
- Bite and devour

---

We don't know the origin of the Iron Blight, nor do we know its cure. It inflicts creatures of the wilds and transforms their flesh slowly to iron. These pitiful but powerful beasts are scarred by patches of metal flesh within ragged, weeping wounds. The iron is like a parasite, devouring the host as it torments them with unstoppable pain and insatiable hunger. Their howls echo with animalistic agony and the clangor of hammer against anvil.

In time, the Blight takes too much, and the beast dies while it is still more flesh than iron. We pray a creature never survives beyond that stage. What would it become?

*Quest starter: Your animal companion is stricken with the Iron Blight. The disease is in its early stages, but time is your enemy. Locals say the origin of the blight lies within a **Corrupted Tanglewood**. What will you do to stop the relentless progression of the iron corruption?*

## YOUR TRUTH

A sect of zealots believe the Iron Blight is a divine manifestation. What god do they worship? What purpose do they believe the disease fulfills, and how do they intend to hasten the will of their god?

# KRAKEN

---

**Rank:** Epic (1 tick per harm; inflicts 5 harm)

---

**Features:**

- Gargantuan size
- Grasping tentacles
- Beaked maw

---

**Drives:**

- Lurk in unfathomable depths
- Destroy those who would trespass
- Inflict terror
- Shatter ships

---

**Tactics:**

- Grapple and crush
- Attack from every direction
- Sweep sailors from the deck

---

The kraken is a sea beast, as large as the mightiest longship. It is octopoid in form, with eight arms, two longer feeding tentacles, and a beak-like mouth. It emerges from the depths to hunt whales, sharks, and other large sea creatures. It is also prone to attack any Ironlander ships which stray into its waters, plucking the crew off the deck and crushing the vessel as easily as one would snap a piece of kindling.

*Quest starter: A kraken lurks at the mouth of a fjord. Fisher folk refuse to sail those waters, and trade ships rarely survive the passage. The settlement on the fjord cannot survive without resupply, and overland travel is impossible during this harsh winter. Elders tell of the Dawnrunner, a blessed longship of the original settlers, sealed away in a Hallowed Sea Cave with the body of its legendary captain. Only this ship, it is said, can outrun the kraken.*

## YOUR TRUTH

A clan of seafolk conduct a yearly hunt to kill a kraken. Although they have never succeeded, and untold Ironlanders have died in the quest, the practice persists. What event or change do they believe killing the beast will bring about? What venerated weapon do they wield in this hunt?

# NIGHTSPAWN

---

**Rank:** Formidable (1 progress per harm; inflicts 3 harm)

---

**Features:**

- Mutated form (see the Monstrosity oracle on page 214)

---

**Drives:**

- Guard against intruders
- Lurk in the shadows
- Endure beyond memory

---

**Tactics:**

- Varied (see the Monstrosity oracle on page 214)

---

What we call the nightspawn are mutated beasts which take a variety of forms. Some are animal-like, or combine the characteristics of different creatures. Others are bizarre aberrations seemingly born of chaos. A few even possess twisted mockeries of human features.

They are rare beasts, but dwell in every region and environment of the Ironlands, from the dark waters of the Ragged Coast to the icy plains of the Shattered Wastes. Often, they protect ancient ruins, forgotten relics, and other secrets. They watch and wait, and show no mercy to those who trespass in their domain.

We do not know the origin of the nightspawn. They are enigmatic creatures, rarely emerging from their dark lairs except during the long nights of winter. Is it the latent magic of these lands which gives them life? Have they passed through the veil from some other realm? Perhaps some questions are best left unanswered.

*Quest Starter: The first settlers, your forebears, told tales of a great nightspawn at the heart of a **Ravaged Ruin**. According to those stories, it guards a pool of life-giving water. Any who have since tried to plunder that place have not returned. Or they have come back broken in mind or body. What now compels you to delve into this site?*

# RHASKAR

---

**Rank:** Extreme (2 ticks per harm; inflicts 4 harm)

---

**Features:**

- White fur
- Shark-like head
- Rows of razor-sharp teeth
- Massive claws

---

**Drives:**

- Protect territory
- Hunt prey in water and on land

---

**Tactics:**

- Burst through ice
- Rend with savage claws
- Clamp down with a powerful bite
- Shake victims like a hound with a rat

---

In the language of the atanya, rhaskar means “white death.” This mighty beast dwells within northern waters and amid frozen icereaches. It hunts along shorelines, lurks beneath ice, or tracks the frigid wastes in search of prey. Some rhaskar have even been known to attack ships in coastal waters. It is a highly territorial creature, and does not abide trespassers within its domain.

With its mane of dorsal fur and long, angular head, the rhaskar looks like a fusion of shark and bear—and embodies the strength and cunning of both. It is the uncaring ferocity of these cold northern realms given form.

*Quest Starter: Settlements and ships along the northern expanse of the Ragged Coast face repeated attacks from a large rhaskar. The creature appears amidst a fierce snowstorm, makes its savage assault, and fades back into the blizzard like a ghost. It seems to act out of a pure compulsion to cause terror and inflict violence rather than any need for food. A hunter tracked it to a Wild Frozen Cavern. But they heeded the warning of a pile of bones at the entrance and refused to enter that place.*

# WYRM

---

**Rank:** Epic (1 tick per harm; inflicts 5 harm)

---

**Features:**

- Enormous size
- Yellow eyes, bright as a torch
- Long, sinuous tail
- Scaled skin
- Cavernous mouth

---

**Drives:**

- Protect territory
- Kill and feed

---

**Tactics:**

- Tail smash
- Pin to the ground
- Savage claw and bite

---

Wyrms are massive serpentine creatures. They are kin to the wyverns, but are much larger and wingless. Their lairs are found in deep caves, subterranean vaults, or at the heart of dense forests. They hibernate in those places for weeks or months at a time, waking only to satiate their massive appetites. They are low-slung beasts, with short, thick legs, elongated jaws, and a dense hide.

Fiercely territorial, a wyrm is sure to attack any who stray into their domain. It can sense movement through vibration, and its golden eyes can pierce the thickest darkness.

*Quest starter: Last year, a huge white wyrm destroyed several mining camps in the Veiled Mountains. Winter has passed, but Ironlander miners are refusing to return to those camps without assurance that the wyrm is dead. Its lair is in an Ancient Frozen Cavern deep within the mountains.*

## YOUR TRUTH

Tales tell of the World-Eater, the mother of all wyrms, and the great hero who battled her to save an Old World kingdom. Many claim to have relics from that great battle, or to be descended from that hero. But there is only one true legacy which survives today. What is it, and what clans or factions seek to control it?

# HORRORS

## BLIGHTHOUND

---

**Rank:** Formidable (1 progress per harm; inflicts 3 harm)

---

- Features:**
- Red eyes
  - Lean, hound-like form
  - Curved horns
- 

- Drives:**
- Portend death
  - Fulfill the prophecy of death
  - Lair in places where death is near
- 

- Tactics:**
- Unearthly howl
  - Piercing gaze
  - Savage bite
- 

Blighthounds lurk on blood-soaked battlefields, on the outskirts of settlements destined for famine, or within the dark catacombs of ancient tombs. Drawn to the dead, and foretelling great doom, they are capable predators and grim messengers of death.

They appear as gaunt, emaciated hounds, often mistaken for starving animals at first glance. Their fiendish form reveals itself in blood-red eyes, sweeping horns, and skin the texture of charred and blistered wood.

*Quest Starter: Every night, a blighthound appears outside a settlement at the edge of a Wild Tanglewood, observing silently from within the mist. The people are gripped with a cold fear, wondering what fate will befall them. If any approach the blighthound, it leads them into the depths of the woods....*



# BOG ROT

---

**Rank:** Dangerous (2 progress per harm; inflicts 2 harm)

---

**Features:**

- Mummified flesh
- Shambling gait

---

**Drives:**

- Rise to seek out the living
- Consign another to death in their place

---

**Tactics:**

- Emerge from the muddy earth
- Seize with grasping hands
- Crush with unexpected strength
- Share dreadful secrets

---

Long ago, before we arrived on the shores of the Ironlands, other people lived here. Some of those folk dwelled in what we now call the Flooded Lands, and laid their kin to rest in the vast peat bogs of that place.

A few of those dead do not rest, and rise as bog rots. They are horrible creatures, with preserved flesh stained and withered like old leather. Their eyes are black pits, and their mouths hang open in a perpetual, silent scream.

It is said a bog rot can only find rest by committing another victim to the mire. A soul for a soul. In those final moments, the creature whispers of ancient secrets and forbidden lore, as if unloading the burden of that dark knowledge. For those few who escape the grasp of a bog rot, these awful truths are sometimes worse than death.

*Quest Starter: In a Corrupted Shadowfen, a great battle once took place. Hundreds died amid the morass. Their mummified corpses lie buried in mud and peat, but many do not rest easily. What secret or artifact is said to lie with them? Why are you sworn to seek it out?*

## YOUR TRUTH

Ironlanders in the Flooded Lands enact a particular burial practice to ensure their kin do not someday rise as a bog rot from that baneful soil. What is it?

# BONEHORDE

---

**Rank:** Extreme (2 ticks per harm; inflicts 4 harm)

---

**Features:**

- The bones of many corpses, held together by a dark will
- Scurries with a hollow clatter

---

**Drives:**

- Destroy and kill
- Gather new bones

---

**Tactics:**

- Alter shape
- Strike with skeletal appendages
- Damage terrain or architecture
- Envelop and crush

---

A bonehorde is a mass of moldering skeletal remains given unnatural life. They are spawned in old battlefields or tombs, but often range beyond those places to seek out new victims. At the heart of a horde, surrounded by layers of clattering bones, are the remains of the spiteful being who gives the horror its cruel intelligence.

Its form varies. In tight spaces, a bonehorde may appear as an amorphous mound or as a spider-like entity with long, skittering limbs. In the open, it can crudely mimic the shape of an animal or person. The bones constantly shift—snapping like dry twigs—to accommodate its environment, propel its movement, and lash out against its victims.

*Quest Starter: For months, someone has been stealing remains from local graves and barrows. Now, a bonehorde emerges from a Haunted Tanglewood to attack nearby communities and travelers. Who commands this foul aberration, and for what purpose?*



# THRALL

---

**Rank:** Dangerous (2 progress per harm; inflicts 2 harm)

---

**Features:**

- Sickly countenance
- Glimpses of their true nature
- A clash of personalities

---

**Drives:**

- Endure beyond death
- Coerce and manipulate
- Stifle the will of the host

---

**Tactics:**

- Reveal their true self
- Lash out with unnatural strength

---

A thrall is a living person controlled by the will of a powerful undead spirit. The malignant presence can lie dormant for some time, feeding on the suffering of the host and subtly manipulating them to achieve its mysterious and often malevolent ends. Once the host is weakened, the spirit supplants their will entirely.

*Quest Starter: A spirit has taken possession of someone you care about. They are fading, and will soon be a thrall to its will. Within a **Haunted Barrow**, the spirit's remains lie entombed. What ritual must you enact there to banish this foul presence?*

## YOUR TRUTH

To detect the presence of a spirit, drawing it out of the thrall for a few moments, mystics must perform a dangerous ritual. What is the nature of this ritual, and what rare or elusive component does it require?

# WIGHT

**Rank:** Formidable (1 progress per harm; inflicts 3 harm)

**Features:**

- Pallid skin and clouded eyes
- Ragged, unhealed wounds
- Iron burial mask

**Drives:**

- Stand in defense

**Tactics:**

- Skulk in darkness
- Resolute assault
- Exploit knowledge and powers from beyond death

Wights are beings who carry out their sworn charge—to protect a place, object or person—even beyond death. They retain their reasoning and intelligence, but are driven obsessively by this singular purpose.



A wight's steadfast will can delay their inevitable physical decay for decades, but they are marked by death nonetheless. They have the pallor of a freshly entombed corpse, with sallow skin stretched thin over bones. They often hide their corrupted features behind iron burial masks.

Some wights wield the armor and weapons they favored in life, and are relentless, unyielding fighters. Others master dark rituals, empowered by the knowledge of what lies beyond our mortal realm.

A wight who forsakes their vow will continue their tortured existence as a bonewalker, fated to lurk forever at the precipice of death.

*Quest starter: A wight is in search of the person it is sworn to protect, now held in a Fortified Stronghold. Who does it seek? Why were they taken? Will you stand against the wight, or help them?*

# ANOMALIES

Old magic permeates the Ironlands. These forces sometimes manifest as an anomaly, which is an otherworldly feature of the terrain or environment. Some are the embodiment of ancient spirits, and have unknowable motivations. Others are forces of nature given cruel purpose.

This section includes six sample anomalies (starting on page 138). You can also create your own anomaly by envisioning its features, goals, and approach. Give it a rank of troublesome (for a lesser anomaly), dangerous (for a typical anomaly), or formidable (for a greater anomaly). The rank represents the harm and stress it inflicts, and its toughness if you represent the encounter using the scene challenge mechanics (see below).

If you need some inspiration, make a few oracle rolls to generate some prompts, such as: Action and Theme (*Ironsworn Core*, page 174), Location Descriptor (*Ironsworn Core*, page 177), Character Goal (*Ironsworn Core*, page 182), and Character Descriptor (*Ironsworn Core*, page 183).

## ENCOUNTERING AN ANOMALY

To resolve an encounter with an anomaly, you can take action and make moves as appropriate to the situation and your intent. For example, you might *Face Danger* to overcome a tempest, *Compel* a circle of stones to show you its secrets, or *Enter the Fray* against a blood thorn.

Alternatively, you can use a **scene challenge** to play out a confrontation with an anomaly. This is the recommended approach, since it gives an anomaly an appropriate amount of focus and danger.

Scene challenges were included as an optional mechanic in *Ironsworn Core* (page 234). Those rules are restated here with a focus on anomaly encounters.

## RUNNING A SCENE CHALLENGE

As discussed in *Ironsworn Core* (page 234), you can use scene challenges to resolve a complex obstacle, contest, or threat. Examples of scene challenges include a chase on horseback, an archery contest, a formal debate before a council of elders, and leading an army into battle.

Scene challenges are also suited to playing out an encounter with an anomaly, per the process described on the following pages.

## SETUP YOUR ANOMALY PROGRESS TRACK

When you initiate an encounter with an anomaly, create a standard **progress track** with 10 boxes. This progress track is used to make a progress roll when you resolve the encounter.



As you mark progress against an anomaly, fill in the standard number of boxes or ticks based on its rank.

- Troublesome anomaly: 3 progress per success.
- Dangerous anomaly: 2 progress per success.
- Formidable anomaly: 1 progress per success.
- Extreme anomaly: 2 ticks per success.
- Epic anomaly: 1 tick per success.

Dangerous is the default rank for an anomaly. Reduce the rank to troublesome if it a lesser anomaly or if you have established the fictional framing necessary to effectively deal with this denizen. Increase the rank to formidable if the anomaly is particularly noteworthy or if you are ill-prepared for this encounter. Higher ranks should be rare: An extreme scene challenge is tough to overcome, and an epic challenge is nearly hopeless.

## CREATE A COUNTDOWN TRACK

Also, create a separate track with only 4 boxes.



This is your **countdown track**. When you mark the countdown track, you completely fill in a single box. When the countdown track is full (all 4 boxes are marked), you must make a progress roll to resolve the scene.

## CHOOSE YOUR MOVE

As you resist, oppose, or interact with an anomaly, first envision the situation and your action. Then, *Face Danger* or *Secure an Advantage* using whatever stat is most appropriate to your approach. For example:

- *Face Danger* +edge to dodge out of the reach of blood thorn vines.
- *Face Danger* +iron to fight a maelstrom's currents.
- *Secure an Advantage* +heart as you focus on a positive memory to resist a gloom's influence.

The choice between the two moves is both a narrative and mechanical decision. *Face Danger* is reactive, and is used to avoid an immediate threat or overcome a harrowing obstacle. *Secure an Advantage* is proactive, and is used when you are using your resources, abilities, or expertise to prepare or gain leverage. But there will be situations where either move is valid. In that case, consider the mechanical outcome. *Face Danger* allows you to build progress, while *Secure an Advantage* builds momentum. *Face Danger* is inherently riskier, since a weak hit involves a concession.

Even if you take an action which would normally fall under another move, you should frame and resolve that action as either *Face Danger* or *Secure an Advantage*. For example:

- If you bargain with a circle of stones, you should *Face Danger* +heart instead of rolling to *Compel*.
  - If you cut at a blood thorn with your axe, you should *Face Danger* +iron instead of rolling to *Strike*.
  - If you bolster your defenses against a tempest by finding shelter, you should *Secure an Advantage* +wits instead of *Make Camp*.
- 

#### IF YOU FACE DANGER...

Reference the outcomes below instead of the standard *Face Danger* results.

- On a **strong hit**, you are successful. Envision how you gain ground, and mark progress per the rank of your challenge.
  - On a **weak hit**, you are successful and mark progress. But you also encounter a minor complication. Envision what happens and mark a countdown box to represent this setback.
  - On a **miss**, you fail, or your action is undermined by a dramatic turn of events. Mark a countdown box and *Pay the Price*.
- 

#### IF YOU SECURE AN ADVANTAGE...

- On a **strong hit** or **weak hit**, apply the outcome as per the move.
  - On a **miss**, mark a countdown box and *Pay the Price*.
-

## CONTINUE MAKING MOVES

Continue to *Face Danger* and *Secure an Advantage*, envisioning the situation and your approach. Apply the outcome of each move to the current situation and envision how you react or what happens next.

## WORKING TOGETHER WITH ALLIES

The scene challenge progress track and countdown track are shared with your allies. Guided by the fiction, you can take turns making moves to give everyone a chance to participate. Any allies involved in the scene can make the *Face Danger* or *Secure an Advantage* move. When they do, resolve the outcome of their move and mark progress and countdown boxes as appropriate.

Any character can also make the *Aid Your Ally* move to contribute to a move another character is about to make.

## MAKING THE PROGRESS ROLL

When your countdown track is completely filled (all four boxes), you must resolve the encounter by making a progress roll. You can also decide to make the roll whenever you have accumulated enough progress to make success likely, or if you feel that the narrative of the scene is guiding you to a conclusion.

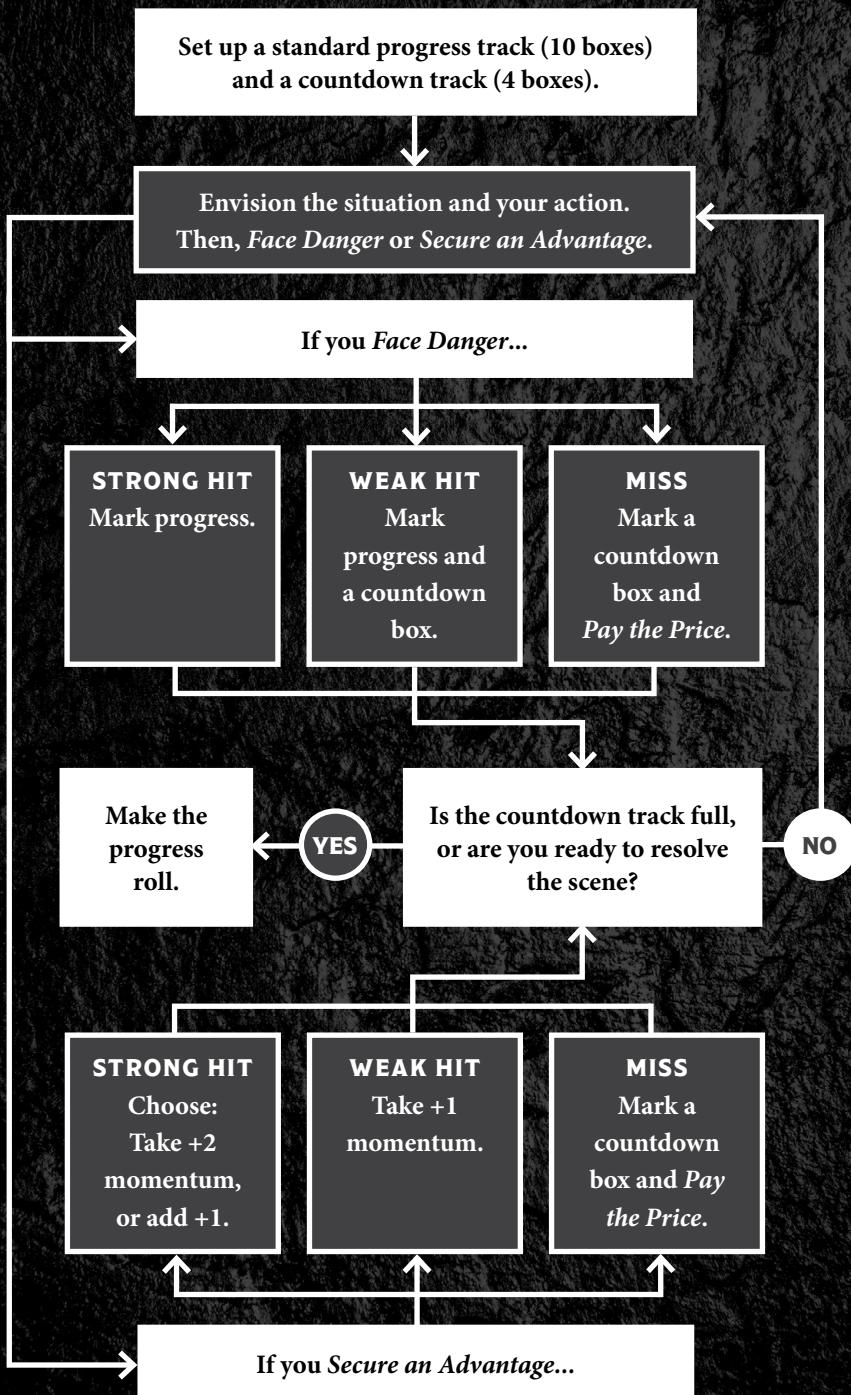
To resolve your encounter with the anomaly, roll the challenge dice and compare to your progress track. **As with standard progress moves, you may not burn momentum on this roll, and you are not affected by negative momentum.**

- On a **strong hit**, you achieve your goal unconditionally. The anomaly is defeated, avoided, or outmaneuvered as appropriate to the situation and your intent.
- On a **weak hit**, you overcome, outwit, convince, or escape the anomaly, but not without cost. You must *Pay the Price*. Make this a minor cost relative to the scope of the scene.
- On a **miss**, you fail, or your progress against the anomaly is undermined by a dramatic and costly turn of events. *Pay the Price*. Make it hurt.

### EXAMPLE ANOMALIES

Six example anomalies are provided starting on page 138. Some of these entities are hostile—literal forces of nature—while others have subtler needs and motivations. Add these to your world directly, or use them as inspiration and adjust to the needs of your story.

# SCENE CHALLENGE SUMMARY



# BLOOD THORN

---

**Rank:** Dangerous (scene challenge: mark 2 progress)

---

**Features:**

- Thorn-tipped branches
- Scattered bones, stripped clean
- Large central pod

---

**Drives:**

- Consume blood
- Proliferate

---

**Tactics:**

- Lie in wait
- Grasp, entangle, and feed

---

A blood thorn is a malignant, carnivorous plant. It seizes its victims with long, creeping tendrils. Then, it leeches their life through hollow thorns, eventually bleeding them dry.

Blood thorns appear in woodland areas throughout the Ironlands. They are especially common in the Deep Wilds, where they often encircle elf villages. Some suspect they are cultivated by the elves, or share a symbiotic relationship with them.

*Quest Starter: Ironlanders attempted to found a settlement at the heart of a Wild Tanglewood a decade ago. That place is now abandoned and infested by blood thorns. Why did the settlers try to create a home in such an untamed place? What object or information do you seek there?*

## YOUR TRUTH

Each spring, a vibrant red flower sprouts from blood thorn branches. This blossom is coveted as an ingredient for alchemical elixirs. What effect does it provide?



# CIRCLE OF STONES

---

**Rank:** Dangerous (scene challenge: mark 2 progress)

---

**Features:**

- Ancient stones, etched with mysterious symbols
- Whispers of old magic
- Visions of hoarded memories

---

**Drives:**

- Preserve age-old secrets
- Seek new knowledge

---

**Tactics:**

- Trap the unwary, and lure the desperate
- Extract painful memories
- Grant knowledge, for a price

---

The ancient standing stones, crafted long before we settled here, preserve the memories and secrets of the Ironlands.

Because the stones are often hidden within dense thickets, buried in snow, or obscured by veils of mist, a traveler may find themselves unexpectedly breaking the boundary of a circle. The stones hunger for new knowledge, and our memories are fodder for their insatiable appetites. What they take is sometimes gone forever.

Some Ironlanders enter a circle willingly. Perhaps they hope to abandon a painful memory to the stones, discarding that piece of themselves like slag hammered from wrought iron. Then, there are those who wish to forsake the world and live with their memories. For them, an unreal life within the circle is better than the cruel reality outside of it.

Those in need of information may choose to risk a negotiation within a circle. Knowledge for knowledge is the customary trade, but the stones are cunning and may demand a more horrible price.

*Quest Starter: A clan of Ironlanders protect and worship a circle of stones found in a **Hallowed Tanglewood**. What forbidden secrets do these stones offer? How does the price for these secrets threaten you or your kin?*

## YOUR TRUTH

The stones covet a particular type of memory above all others.  
What is it, and what do they offer in exchange?



# GLIMMER

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**Rank:** Dangerous (scene challenge: mark 2 progress)

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**Features:**

- Dancing lights given vague form
- Silent beckoning

---

**Drives:**

- Illuminate the darkness
- Provide escort along secret paths

---

**Tactics:**

- Appear to the lost and desperate
- Show the way
- Lead astray

---

The glimmer are beings of mysterious origin and intent. They are most often encountered as particles of light which coalesce into a luminous humanoid or animal form.

They are drawn to those who need guidance. For wayward travelers and seekers of hidden things, a glimmer will make a silent offer of passage. Relief from the dangers of the Ironlands or a quick journey to a distant destination is a tempting invitation, but not without its own price.

The path the glimmer reveals is not wholly of our world. It can descend into the past, or climb into the future. It can wend its way across other lands and through strange realities. These trails are navigated not just by the glimmer, but by ancient, baneful things beyond comprehension.

If you accept a glimmer's guidance, steel yourself for the journey. Envision the places and people that give you hope, and you may find yourself among them. But do not be distracted. The temptations and terrors along the way can lead all but the most resolute astray. To be lost along a glimmer's path is to remain lost—perhaps forever.

*Quest Starter: Someone you love entered a **Corrupted Shadowfen** in search of a glimmer's aid. They did not return. What did they seek? Can you walk the glimmer's path and bring them back home?*

## YOUR TRUTH

If you seek the guidance of a glimmer, you can try summoning one through a specific rite. What must you do? What cost must be paid?



# GLOOM

---

**Rank:** Dangerous (scene challenge: mark 2 progress)

---

**Features:**

- Creeping, vaporous murk
- Whispers and illusions

---

**Drives:**

- Envelop all in shadow
- Feed on fear and despair

---

**Tactics:**

- Lure with trickery
- Snuff out lights
- Surround and engulf
- Show painful and horrifying visions

---

A gloom is a mass of malignant shadow. It dwells in dark places beneath the earth, or in the shadows of thick woods. At twilight and during the long gray days of winter, it emerges from its lightless refuge to sate its hunger.

The gloom's amorphous form cannot exert physical force. Instead, it will draw in its victims through illusion, mimicking familiar voices or forms. Or it will use the cover of darkness to ambush unwary prey. Once enveloped, the victim is a captive audience for the gloom's apparitions, forced to face their innermost doubts and fears. The gloom picks at their sanity like a scavenger cleaning meat from bones. After a time, there is nothing left but an empty shell.

If trapped within a gloom, let your conviction and courage be your light. Against hopelessness, find hope. Against despair, find peace of mind. Against terror, find faith. In the darkness, it is not the gloom that is your enemy. It is yourself.

*Quest Starter: Zealots nurture a gloom within a Hallowed Underkeep. They believe this anomaly offers true enlightenment, and seek a means to unleash it on the Ironlands. Who is the leader of this sect?*

## YOUR TRUTH

Is there a benevolent counterpart to a gloom—one which offers light and hope instead of darkness and despair? Is this the cure for someone who suffers the aftermath of a gloom's visions? What is it called, and where can it be found?



# MAELSTROM

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**Rank:** Dangerous (scene challenge: mark 2 progress)

---

**Features:**

- Whirling vortex of water
- Fierce currents
- Ghostly screams

---

**Drives:**

- Engulf victims
- Amass the voices of the lost

---

**Tactics:**

- Seize with raging, swirling waters
- Stun with numbing cold
- Batter with debris
- Drag into abyssal darkness

---

In coastal waters and cavern pools, these swirling vortexes of frigid water drag the unwary into their depths, stealing the breath from their lungs.

Maelstroms often manifest in places of great loss and tragedy, on the sites of shipwrecks or the watery graves of drowned travelers. The debris swept into the maelstrom's heart batter armor and flesh. The voices of the maelstrom's victims, ripped from their chests with their dying breaths, cry out from the turbulent water.

*Quest Starter: Within a waterway cutting through a Ravaged Icereach, a great maelstrom drew a longship and its crew into the depths. Despite an exhaustive search, no survivors—or even bodies—are found. They are simply gone. Why are you compelled to discover the fate of these victims?*

## YOUR TRUTH

Some believe that you must cast a particular thing of value into a maelstrom in trade for your life. What is it?



# TEMPEST

---

**Rank:** Dangerous (scene challenge: mark 2 progress)

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**Features:**

- Biting winds
- Stinging ice
- Ghostly voices and shadowy forms

---

**Drives:**

- Seek warmth, and snuff it out

---

**Tactics:**

- Envelop in a wintry cyclone
- Batter with icy shards and ferocious winds
- Grant release, at great cost

---

A tempest is a fierce, unnatural storm. It can appear in any season or in any weather, but is larger and more powerful in the depths of winter. It is drawn to the warmth of living beings, and seeks to douse that life as one would snuff out a candle.

A tempest's true nature is a mystery. Is it intelligent, or just a force of nature? Those who survive an encounter sometimes report hearing hushed voices and seeing strange forms within the whirlwind. Some few tell tales of the eye of the storm, where the colds and wind abate, and where relief from certain death is offered—for a price.

*Quest Starter: In the Havens, a massive, swirling tempest has appeared. It is expanding with grim purpose. A settlement was destroyed, and others are threatened. At the heart of the storm lies an Ancient Ruin. What force powers this tempest? Can it be stopped, or will it someday cover all the Ironlands in its cold wrath?*

## YOUR TRUTH

Are there Ironlanders in your world who can foretell or influence the weather? If so, what are they called? What signs do they look for as a portent of a coming tempest?



CHAPTER 6

# THREATS



# **ADDING THREATS TO YOUR CAMPAIGN**

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The world does not wait for you. As you undertake journeys to distant locations, explore perilous places, and spend time recovering from your adventures, the forces which oppose you will advance their own agenda. When you suffer setbacks, those forces will take advantage of your failure to gain new ground.

**Threats** are an optional mechanic for your *Ironsworn* campaign which will make the forces in your world more active and responsive. Your vows will gain new urgency as threats work against you.

Threats are a mechanic which you can apply generally to your *Ironsworn* campaign—not just to your *Delve*-related adventures. These rules add a small amount of additional tracking and complexity, so don’t use them unless you think they will improve your story and enhance the fun and tension of your game.

## **INTRODUCING A THREAT**

When you *Swear an Iron Vow*, you can optionally associate a **threat** with that quest. The threat is the person, being, faction, or situation responsible for the problem that motivates your vow, or is the adversary most directly opposing you in the fulfillment of that vow.

Not every vow will have an associated threat. Save it for dramatic and important threats in your world. For example:

- You vow to protect the Ironlands from a rampaging horde of undead. The threat is the **relentless undead army**.
- You vow to stop a ruthless overseer from expanding their control over the Ironlands. The threat is the **power-hungry leader**.
- You vow to find a cure for a sickness which ravages several settlements. The threat is the **virulent plague**.
- You vow to prevent a conflict between the Ironlanders and the elves. The threat is **all-out war**.

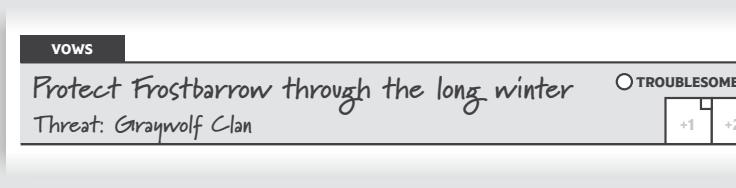
If you want to generate a threat as a motivation for a new vow, use the Threats oracle (page 220) to randomly determine the category of a threat. Then, envision how they threaten a key aspect of your world and *Swear an Iron Vow* to see their schemes undone.

## NAME THE THREAT

First, give the threat a name or identity. You can write it down on your character sheet adjacent to your vow.

You have sworn a vow to protect your home of Frostbarrow as they face the coming winter. The settlement is besieged by enemies and lacking supplies. Most notably, the powerful Graywolf Clan is vowing revenge for the death of their overseer at your hands earlier this year.

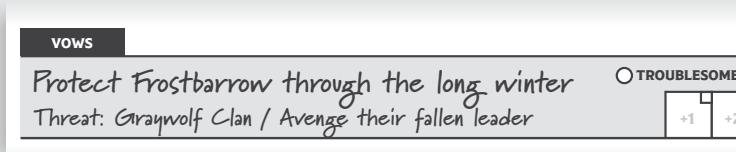
You make a note of the vow and the threat on your character sheet.



## CONSIDER THE THREAT'S GOAL

What does the threat hope to achieve, or what situation will come to pass if you can't stop it? This is the threat's **goal**. If it's not obvious, make a note of it. If you fail in your quest and *Forsake Your Vow*, the threat achieves its goal. The goal should relate directly to your vow, and represent a dire outcome for your character. How will it impact you, those you care about, and your world? If the goal doesn't feel interesting or dramatic enough, take a step back and rephrase it. Make it personal. Make it matter.

To remind yourself of the Graywolf Clan's goal, and how it opposes your own vow, you add a note to your character sheet.



If the threat represents an intelligent foe, you can phrase the goal as their sworn vow. Every villain is the hero of their own story, after all.

## WHEN SHOULD YOU CREATE A THREAT?

Every quest you undertake should have challenges to overcome and forces which work against you, but not every vow will incorporate a threat. The threat mechanic lets you put a spotlight on a particular adversary or aspect of your setting. One or two vows with an associated threat is about right for a typical campaign. For best results:

- **The threat's goal should be in direct opposition to your vow.** What you seek to stop or avoid, the threat wishes to bring to fruition (or vice-versa).
- **Assign a threat to a formidable or extreme vow.** Lesser vows are likely to be resolved without much direct opposition from the threat. An epic vow, which often represents a lofty or complex goal, can instead involve threats through secondary quests.
- **Don't assign more than one threat per vow.** Related threats might be introduced through a new vow, or simply represented as a challenge within the fiction.
- If you have multiple players at your table, **consider limiting threats to shared vows** to give everyone a stake in the conflict.

## NON-SENTIENT THREATS

A threat can be environmental or situational, such as a natural disaster, famine, war, or disease. As a threat of this sort advances its agenda, the problem worsens. The threat's goal is what happens if you can't prevent the ultimate, dire outcome. The sickness runs rampant, and all the settlements of your circle are lost. The winter storms arrive, trapping the refugees in the mountains and sealing their fate.

Threats are sometimes referenced in these rules using they/their pronouns. This does not imply any limitation for the nature of a threat. Even if the threat is not an intelligent being, it can help to think of it as something willful. After all, the people of the Ironlands often attribute dark intentions to the long winters, the deep woods, and the raging sea.

## ACTIVE THREATS

You will see the occasional references in these rules to an **active threat**. As long as a vow with a related threat is in progress, that threat is considered active. If you successfully *Fulfill Your Vow*, the threat is no longer tracked—though it may pose trouble in new ways. If you *Forsake Your Vow*, the threat achieves its goal.

# **TRACKING A THREAT**

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As you encounter setbacks or delays, the threat will advance their own agenda. If you are unable to *Fulfill Your Vow* before the threat brings their plan to fruition, you fail in your quest. The threat is a ticking clock that keeps the pressure on.

The threat's actions are resolved using the ***Advance a Threat*** move and a **menace track**.

## **TRIGGERING THE MOVE**

There are three triggers which can *Advance a Threat*.

- You choose to **ignore a situation or deal with more pressing matters**. For example, you undertake an unrelated quest and spend time pursuing that goal while your threat-driven vow is neglected.
- You **fail in a critical moment** when opposing some aspect of the threat, or create an opportunity for the threat. For example, you attack the minions of a threat, but are defeated.
- **Time passes** as you undertake lengthy expeditions or recover from your adventures. For example, you spend several days delving a forbidden forest to recover an artifact which is critical to your quest. Although you are ultimately successful in obtaining the object, the time you've spent gives the threat an opportunity to act.

Since the triggers for this move are subjective, you have some control over the pacing. However, you should let the narrative circumstances and the outcome of your actions lead the way. In particular, if you must *Pay the Price* in a decisive moment, and your failure creates an opening for the threat, then let that be your trigger. This gives you another option for resolving the cost of failure in your campaign.

If you're not sure if a threat should advance, you can *Ask the Oracle*: "Does the threat advance?" Set the likelihood as 50/50, or as appropriate to the situation. If the answer is "yes," make it happen.

When the move is triggered, it's time to see how the threat takes action. Look at the text for *Advance a Threat* on the next page.

## ADVANCE A THREAT

When you give ground to a threat through inaction, failure, or delay, roll on the table below and envision how the change manifests in your world (*Ask the Oracle* if unsure).

Roll	Result
1-30	The threat readies its next step, or a new danger looms. If you are in a position to prevent this development, you may attempt to do so. If you succeed, <i>Reach a Milestone</i> . Otherwise, mark menace.
31-70	The threat works subtly to advance toward its goal, or the danger escalates. Mark menace.
71-00	The threat makes a dramatic and immediate move, or a major event reveals new complications. Mark menace twice.

On a match, this development also exposes a surprising aspect of the threat's plan or nature.

If you mark the last box on the threat's menace track, the threat achieves its goal, or the final dire outcome occurs. You must *Forsake Your Vow*.

## MAKING THE MOVE

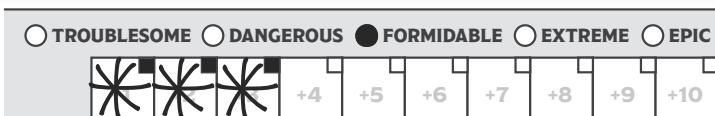
The *Advance a Threat* table will give you one of three results.

- If you roll the first result (1-30), the threat is taking calculated action, or the situation is at a tipping point. If you are in a position to act against the threat, or can interfere in their plans, play to see what happens. If you manage to prevent this development, *Reach a Milestone* on the associated vow. If not, you must mark a menace box (see the next page for how to do that).
- If you roll the second result (31-70), the threat takes action or the situation worsens, and there's nothing you can do to prevent it. It has maneuvered behind the scenes, or you become aware of a worsening situation. Mark menace.
- If you roll the third result (71-00), the threat's bold action has immediate consequences for you and your vow, or the situation grows irrevocably worse. Envision how this impacts your character and your world, and mark menace twice.

## HOW TO MARK MENACE

Within the vow progress tracks on the official *Ironsworn* character sheets, you'll find small inset boxes. This is the threat's menace track. Starting from the leftmost box, when you *Advance a Threat* and are told to mark menace, fill one box completely. If the move tells you to mark menace twice, fill two boxes completely.

You have made progress in your quest see Frostbarrow safely through the winter, but the Graywolf Clan has been relentless in its hostilities. You have three progress marked, and the threat has filled three menace boxes. If the threat gains any more ground, it will move ahead of you.



Continue to mark ticks and fill boxes on your vow as normal when you *Reach a Milestone*, per its rank. Marking menace for a threat is independent of your own progress.

When the tenth menace box is filled, the threat's goal is complete, and you must *Forsake Your Vow*.

Think of this as a race between you and the threat, both on the same track. In fact, you have one advantage over the threat in this race: you can move the finish line. Since you can *Fulfill Your Vow* at any time (as long as it's appropriate in the fiction), you can leap ahead of the threat to finish the race. Making the *Fulfill Your Vow* move with partial progress is risky, but might be necessary if the threat is closing in on their own goal.

You should also consider the tonal and narrative implications of filling the menace track. Marking menace represents the threat becoming more influential in your world and story. As you move from left to right on the menace track, envision how the threat's power and impact grows.

If you are using something other than the *Ironsworn* character sheet to track your vows, you can mark the menace however you like. For example, you can circle the boxes on your vow progress track to show the threat advancing.

## INTERPRETING THE RESULT

Depending on the result and the nature of the threat, you might face dramatic, immediate consequences. Or perhaps the impact will be more subtle and insidious. Consider how the threat's actions or tactics complicate your vow, your story, and your world.

If you're not sure how the threat's actions unfold, you can *Ask the Oracle*. For an abstract prompt, use the Action and Theme oracles (*Ironsworn Core*, page 174). For a more specific answer, use the Threat oracles (page 220).

Then, consider how you and others react, and play to see what happens. This back-and-forth between you and the threat will help create urgency and context for your vow.

Hoping to gain leverage against the Graywolf Clan, you attempt to create an alliance with another settlement. But that undertaking eventually fails. You decide the wasted time creates an opportunity for your enemies, and you *Advance a Threat*.

You roll 45 on the *Advance a Threat* table, which tells you: "The threat works subtly to advance toward its goal, or the danger escalates. Mark menace." Not sure what this means in the context of the current situation, you *Ask the Oracle* and roll on the Action and Theme tables. The oracle responds, "Breach Resource." You envision this as a dreadful discovery; some of Frostbarrow's stores have been poisoned. You apparently have a hidden Graywolf sympathizer in your midst! You mark the menace box on your progress track, and consider how this new development impacts your vow and your story. What will you do to uncover this traitor?

<input type="radio"/> TROUBLESOME	<input type="radio"/> DANGEROUS	<input checked="" type="radio"/> FORMIDABLE	<input type="radio"/> EXTREME	<input type="radio"/> EPIC
			+4   +5   +6   +7   +8   +9   +10	

## ROLLING A MATCH

If your oracle dice come up as a match on the *Advance a Threat* table, you should also introduce a twist, surprising action, or new understanding of the threat. If you're not sure what this means, *Ask the Oracle*. You can use the Action and Theme oracles (*Ironsworn Core*, page 174), or the Major Plot Twist oracle (*Ironsworn Core*, page 190).

# DOWNTIME

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There may be times in your *Ironsworn* campaign when it makes sense to take an extended hiatus from your quests to recuperate. Mechanically, your various status tracks are low, your conditions are marked, or your momentum is in the negative range. Perhaps all the above.

Forced downtime might also be the outcome of a particularly dramatic failure. You are gravely wounded, for example. Or you face a crisis of confidence. Perhaps you are betrayed by someone and lose faith. Narratively, your character is at rock bottom. The situation has spun out of your control.

The *Take a Hiatus* move offers an opportunity to clear the slate for your character. It can reset your conditions and trackers and give you a narrative refresh as you find your purpose once again. But this is not without cost. As you spend weeks or months recovering, the threats which oppose you continue to push forward. Your absence gives them an opening.

Here's the text of the move:

## TAKE A HIATUS

When you spend an extended time recovering in a safe place while a threat is active, do any of the following.

- Clear any marked conditions.
- Set your health, spirit, supply, and companion health to their maximum values.
- Set your momentum to its reset value.

Then, for each active threat, *Advance a Threat*.

If you don't have an active threat, you can't make this move. Consider this a bit of encouragement to associate a threat with at least one vow.

If you have multiple active threats when you *Take a Hiatus*, you'll *Advance a Threat* for each of them. This may mean prioritizing how you respond to each of the threats as they take action or reveal their schemes.

You should also consider your character's perspective and next steps. Does this time away from your quests renew your determination? Or does it leave you bitter and regretful of the wasted days? Envision how you spend your downtime, and what you do as your vows call you back to perilous adventure.

The *Take a Hiatus* move is also a great opportunity for a training montage. Inspiring music cues are optional, but encouraged.

# **RESOLVING A THREAT**

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A threat is resolved in one of three ways, as detailed below.

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## **IF THE THREAT SUCCEEDS...**

When you mark the tenth box in a threat's menace track, the threat achieves their goal. You have failed absolutely, and must *Forsake Your Vow* for the associated quest. Envision how this failure impacts your character and world. What will you do to redeem yourself?

---

## **IF YOU FULFILL YOUR VOW...**

When you *Fulfill Your Vow* against an associated threat, you will weave the resolution of that threat into your fiction.

- **If you score a strong hit**, you've soundly defeated the threat. Their plans are undone, or the ultimate dire outcome is avoided. Depending on the nature of the threat and the resolution of your vow, they might be killed, destroyed, avoided, or otherwise made incapable of further menace.
  - **If you score a weak hit**, you've succeeded, but not unconditionally. You might decide that your victory is short-lived, and the threat reveals a new aspect of their scheme or rebounds to present a new danger. Perhaps this is an opportunity for the threat as a recurring character.
  - **If you score a miss**, you've failed against the threat. Per the standard outcome when you fail to *Fulfill Your Vow*, you must recommit with a new vow or *Forsake Your Vow*. If you recommit, you might consider retaining the threat as the antagonist for the new vow. When you do, give them a new goal and clear the menace track.
- 

## **IF YOU FORSAKE YOUR VOW...**

When you *Forsake Your Vow* before marking the tenth box in a threat's menace track, you no longer oppose that threat. They will achieve their goal as an inevitable consequence of your failure.

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# MORE TIPS

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## CHANGING THE NATURE OF A THREAT

Through the course of your quest, you might reveal the true nature of a threat. For example:

- The animals and beasts of a **corrupted forest** are ambushing caravans along an important trade road. You discover that a **vengeful mystic** who dwells in the heart of this forest is somehow controlling these creatures.
- A **malignant illness** is sweeping across the Havens. You learn that this sickness is spawned by a **death cult** who worship an ancient god.

This new understanding of a threat may come through the evolution of your story, the outcomes of moves, and creative prompts. In particular, rolling a match on the *Advance a Threat* table can indicate a surprising revelation.

If the nature of a threat changes, you retain the existing menace track. Simply replace the name of the threat and its goal on your character sheet.

## THREATS AND GUIDED PLAY

If you are playing as the GM, you can prompt the *Advance a Threat* move as appropriate to the situation. Per the trigger of the move, if the characters create an opportunity for the threat through inaction, failure, or delay, then make the move. You can then roll on the result table yourself and reveal the outcome through a narrative description of what happens next in your world. Or you can ask a player to make the roll and work with the group to interpret the result.

Deciding when to trigger the move gives you pacing over the visibility and impact of the threat in your campaign. Keep the tension high by taking advantage of the opportunities the characters give you, but don't arbitrarily *Advance a Threat*. If the characters plan smartly and have success, let them push ahead in the race against the threat's menace track. If they give you an opening, take it.

If you use threats as a GM, consider keeping the mechanics visible to your players. You can conceal the specific nature, plans, and actions of your threats as appropriate. But the state of the menace track and the result of the *Advance a Threat* move should be done in the open. This will reinforce the pressure the threat is putting on the characters and the story, and will allow the players to better make decisions—as their characters—on where to focus or how to react.

## MANAGING THREAT ENCOUNTERS

In most cases, you will be dealing with a threat indirectly. They might have minions to enact their will, or their actions and schemes create ripples in your world which impact you and those you care about.

However, if your quest leads you to a direct encounter with a threat, how do you avoid prematurely triggering a decisive moment? For example, you have sworn to protect your village against a powerful elder bear which stalks the surrounding lands. That creature is your threat. Circumstances force you into a fight with the beast, and you somehow manage to defeat it. But you've only filled a couple of progress boxes, and you're not ready to *Fulfill Your Vow*. Plus, killing the bear feels like an anticlimactic turn in your story. How can you resolve this disconnect between the mechanics and the narrative?

Keep in mind the narrative flexibility you have based on the outcome of moves. In this case, your victory as you *End the Fight* against the bear can be a momentary reprieve. Perhaps the creature flees, and you'll face this bloodied and vengeful beast at another time. Maybe the bear is killed, but the entity or power controlling it is revealed.

These short-lived achievements will allow you to *Reach a Milestone* in your quest, but they are not the end of the story. Instead, they can deepen your understanding of the threat and widen the scope of the danger.

### EXPERIENCE POINT INCENTIVE

Need some additional incentive to push the threats in your world forward? A bit of carrot to go along with your stick? Here's a simple optional rule that gives you an experience point reward for keeping threats active in your story.

If you *Fulfill Your Vow* and score a hit, look at the number of menace boxes you've marked for the associated threat. If it is equal to or greater than your vow progress, take +1 experience.

CHAPTER 7

# OBJECTS OF POWER



# TREASURES AWAITS

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By default, *Ironsworn* does not focus on equipment or resources. The particulars of what you carry in your pack might influence the story and your fictional framing, and the *Check Your Gear* move (page 38) can help you overcome challenges with the aid of a fortuitously introduced item. But the spotlight is on the abilities you—and your companions and allies—bring to bear. It is those qualities which define your character and how you overcome challenges.

There are exceptions. Some assets, such as **Blade-Bound** and **Masked**, are framed around special objects. Combat talents typically require a specific weapon in battle. **Skirmisher**, for example, assumes you wield a spear.

This chapter broadens those exceptions with additional options for acquiring fortunes and wielding objects imbued with supernatural powers. It includes:

- **Wealth** (page 164) is an abstract representation of your bartering power and the tangible rewards you receive for undertaking quests in the service of others.
- **Artifacts** (page 167) serve as the focus of quests, or as opportunities to *Reach a Milestone* within a quest.
- **Rarities** (page 172) are enchanted objects you use to bolster your existing abilities.

You can use *Delve* as a framework for acquiring and using objects of power within perilous sites, but these options are also generally useful for your *Ironsworn* campaign outside of those locations.

These rules and guidelines can be used or ignored as you like. Some options, such as wealth and rarities, add a small amount of additional mechanical complexity and tracking to *Ironsworn*.

Also, giving your character access to these options may make you more capable and influence your odds of success. This may be a good thing or a bad thing, depending on your preferences. If you like a grimmer, more perilous tone, you may want to leave out these additions from your campaign. Or you can counterbalance them with greater challenges and more severe outcomes for failure.

# WEALTH

By default, the acquisition of money or things of value is not a focus in an *Ironsworn* campaign. When you are Ironsworn, it is your vows that drive and sustain you. You'll make sacrifices and go without worldly necessities to fulfill those vows.

But for some characters or campaigns, a path of fortune might have greater emphasis. The **Fortune Hunter** asset is an option for characters who seek to acquire **wealth** and use their fortunes to influence others and overcome obstacles. If you envision yourself on this path, take the asset as normal when you create your character or as you *Advance*.

## MANAGING WEALTH

Per the default (first) ability, this asset gives you a new resource called **wealth**. The track at the bottom of the asset card is used to mark your current wealth, with 0 as a minimum and +5 as the maximum. Set the track to 0 when you first add the asset.

When you *Swear an Iron Vow* to someone and they agree to provide payment if you complete the quest, give that vow a special mark. Then, when you successfully *Fulfill Your Vow*, you may take +wealth equal to the rank of the quest as your patron makes good on their promise of payment (troublesome=1; dangerous=2; formidable=3; extreme=4; epic=5). This is in addition to experience rewards.

Generally, a strong hit or weak hit as you *Fulfill Your Vow* will make it “successful,” but you should consider the perspective of your patron. Is the task complete in their view, or is there more to be done? If you’re not sure, *Ask the Oracle*.

### PATH



### FORTUNE HUNTER

- When you *Swear an Iron Vow* to someone under the promise of payment, add +1 and give the quest a special mark. When you successfully *Fulfill Your Vow* to them, take +wealth equal to the rank of the quest. If you leverage wealth when making a move where resources are a factor, add +wealth and suffer -1 wealth.
- When in a community or trading, you may suffer -1 wealth and take +2 supply.
- When you *Resupply* by scavenging or looting, and score a strong hit with a match, you may envision finding an object of value. If you do, take +1 supply (instead of +2) and +1 wealth.

0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
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Once you have wealth greater than 0, you may use it to improve your odds of success when making a move where resources are a factor. For example, you might offer a bribe as you *Compel*, or make a contribution to a settlement when you *Sojourn* there. You might encounter situations where a character or community insist on payment in exchange for some service or action, in which case you should use your wealth when making the appropriate move.

When you use your wealth, add your current wealth value to your action score. This is in addition to your stat and any adds afforded by the move. Then, roll the dice. Hit or miss, reduce the track by one.

You have sworn to protect a settlement against attacks from a rival clan. You want to *Compel* the clan's leader to cease their assaults, and envision making a plea of fellowship and cooperation in this harsh land. You'll be rolling with your +2 heart, but decide to offer a bribe as an additional enticement. Your wealth track is at +4, so you add that value to your stat, giving you +6 on your roll. Then, you reduce your wealth track from +4 to +3.

The second and third **Fortune Hunter** abilities offer additional options to use your wealth or to acquire new wealth.

- **For the second ability**, you may automatically suffer -1 wealth and take +2 supply if you are in a place or dealing with someone who can offer provisions. No roll is required, unless the situation requires you to gain a foothold through a move such as *Compel*.
- **For the third ability**, if you *Resupply* by scavenging or looting, and score a strong hit with a match, you have found an object of value. You may take +1 supply (instead of the +2 *Resupply* would normally provide) and +1 wealth.

## ENVISIONING WEALTH

In the default Ironlands setting, people in communities rely on barter of services and goods instead of coin. When you acquire wealth, envision the nature of what you receive. It might be silver coins from the Old World, which still have some intrinsic value even if they aren't a formal currency. It could be a finely wrought cloak pin. Perhaps it is a rare medicinal herb. Make note of anything which is unusual or significant.

If you'd rather not give it too much thought, or just want to envision a coin-driven economy, mark the wealth and move on. Much like your supply, wealth can be abstracted as the resources you have at hand.

## CONSIDERING THE COST

When you *Swear an Iron Vow* in exchange for payment, you should consider how this choice frames your relationship with the quest-giver. Specifically, note the trigger for the *Forge a Bond* move: “When you spend significant time with a person or community, stand together to face hardships, or make sacrifices for their cause...”

Simply doing a job for payment does not meet the conditions of the move. You’ll have to do more to form a relationship worthy of a bond. This is the give-and-take of a mercenary lifestyle.

## SHARING WEALTH

What if you want to make the wealth mechanics a universal and default aspect of a campaign with allies? If you want to give everyone access to the features of the **Fortune Hunter** asset, you can make it shared asset. Do the following:

- During character creation, all characters gain access to the default **Fortune Hunter** ability at no cost.
- One player is appointed the **Keeper of Coins**, and manages the **Fortune Hunter** card and its wealth track.
- Much like the supply track, the **Fortune Hunter** wealth track is shared between allies. Any character may use wealth to make a move, as appropriate. When wealth is increased or decreased by the actions of any character, the Keeper of Coins makes the adjustment.
- Payment for a quest is made to the group per the rank of the quest (troublesome=1; dangerous=2; formidable=3; extreme=4; epic=5).
- When any player chooses to *Advance* and wants to upgrade **Fortune Hunter**, they may share the experience point cost with another willing player (1 experience point each). An upgraded ability is immediately enabled for all characters in the campaign.

If you’d rather have each player manage their wealth individually to better depict the dynamics of an everyone-for-themselves group, you can do so. When a character finds or spends wealth, they adjust their own wealth track. However, you must allocate the payment for a quest among characters, since the total payment remains the same.

# **ARTIFACTS**

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Legendary objects of power are a staple of heroic fiction, and often provide the motivation for characters to undertake fateful quests.

In *Ironsworn*, **artifacts** are objects of power which are the focus of a quest, or represent a crucial milestone in a quest. They do not use any new or additional mechanics. The foundation of moves, progress tracks, and fictional framing (*Ironsworn Core*, page 205) give you everything you need to add artifacts to your story.

Here are a few ways an artifact might drive or impact your quests:

- An artifact is your means of defeating an otherwise invulnerable foe, or reducing the rank of a significant foe.
- An artifact is the key to gaining the cooperation of an important character.
- An artifact offers a solution to overcome a threat to your world, such as a war or plague.
- An artifact gives you the opportunity to avoid a perilous journey, or reduce the rank of a significant journey.
- An artifact offers the solution to a personal crisis or need.
- An artifact provides the answer to a perplexing mystery.
- An artifact powers a destructive force which must be stopped.
- An artifact embodies a dark will, and must be destroyed.
- An artifact is sought by your foes to fulfill their own schemes, and must be kept from them.

## **THE ROLE OF ARTIFACTS**

Depending on the nature of an artifact in your story, it might function as the basis of a quest, as a means of overcoming an obstacle, or as an opportunity to *Reach a Milestone* in a greater vow. They operate as needed to support your narrative, and may reveal new aspects or complications as you undertake your quest and discover more about them.

Acquiring or overcoming an artifact should be difficult. They may be located in perilous sites or require significant investigation to uncover. They are typically an object, but can also represent a specific place like an enchanted pool of water, an immovable thing such as a mystical tree, or a complex and dangerous ritual. Even a person or creature with unusual gifts can function as an artifact in your story.

## BUILDING STORY AROUND ARTIFACTS

A basic example of an artifact—Themon's Dagger—is explored in the example passages within the first two chapters of this book. Our character must retrieve the dagger to satisfy a demand from a crucial character. In this case, acquiring the dagger is a milestone in a greater vow. The nature of the dagger itself is immaterial.

This type of object is referred to as a MacGuffin. This is a term coined by director Alfred Hitchcock, and represents any object which motivates plot but is otherwise unimportant. For the purposes of our narrative, the nature of the object in Themon's resting place has little bearing on the overall story. It could as well be a book, or a gold cup. It provides a bit of tone and texture.

On the other hand, the One Ring in the works of J.R.R. Tolkien is not a MacGuffin. Its history and nature have huge impact on the story and the actions of the characters. These complexities justify its focus as a central plot device in the *Lord of the Rings*.



## TAKING A MACGUFFIN TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Through the course of an adventure, a MacGuffin can evolve to become worthy of a more central function in your story. When you introduce an artifact into your narrative, look for opportunities to deepen its role. For example, rolling a match in a crucial moment when interacting with an artifact might prompt you to *Ask the Oracle* about its nature, revealing a surprising aspect of its history or purpose.

Even if an artifact doesn't have consciousness, think of it as a character. The more presence it has in your story, the more you should work to make it distinctive and interesting. Give it a background. Give it virtues and failings. Give it *needs*.

Adding depth to an artifact may lead to exciting new story, challenges, and opportunities for vow-driven quests.

## ARTIFACTS ARE EPHEMERAL

Artifacts are important. Until they aren't.

Depending on its nature and role in your story, an artifact may provide advantages for your character. If obtaining an artifact is a notable achievement in your quest, it can—in addition to giving you an opportunity to *Reach a Milestone*—deliver powers which impact your fictional framing for a key challenge. For example, you might use a notable weapon against a specific foe to reduce their rank in a fight. You might be able to avoid some obstacles entirely through the fictional framing an artifact provides.

However, the benefits of an artifact should be specific and short-lived. Consider how the powers of the artifact are counterbalanced by its narrow purpose, limited number of uses, or a cost which makes it dangerous or impractical. An artifact may have its own will and wish to separate itself from you. It can be broken or lost, sacrificed as it fulfills its purpose. It can exact a terrible price with each use.

If an artifact becomes a permanent part of your character, and is not represented as an asset or rarity (page 172), it shouldn't provide ongoing mechanical benefits. It might provide texture to your character, along with limited narrative benefits and costs. Make it part of your story. Show how it changed you, and vice versa. Dealing with how others view the artifact, and what forces seek to reclaim it, can also create interesting new story threads.

## EXAMPLE ARTIFACTS

These samples show a few ways to represent artifacts within the fiction and mechanics of an *Ironsworn* campaign. You can take inspiration from these artifacts as quest starters or milestones for your own adventures.



### ABYSSAL HARPOON

*This legendary weapon, forged in the fires of a lava flow at the edge of the ocean, is said to have the power to pierce the hide of even the mightiest sea beast. It is rumored to be held by a clan of merrow in a **Hallowed Sea Cave**.*

**Role in your story:** If a powerful leviathan is destroying Ironlander ships, and you *Swear an Iron Vow* to defeat it, obtaining this harpoon is a milestone in your quest. When you *Enter the Fray* to face the leviathan while wielding the harpoon, you can reduce its rank from epic to extreme—giving you a fighting chance.



### WAYSTONE OF THE LONG PATH

*When you imagine a destination and scratch its name upon this thin slab of sandstone, you are instantly transported to that place. The Waystone does not travel with you; it takes its own path to a new resting place.*

**Role in your story:** If you need to travel a great distance, this artifact can send you there in the blink of an eye. You won't make the *Undertake a Journey* or *Reach Your Destination* moves, and won't suffer the dangers of the trip or face the cost of wasted time. Once it is used, the Waystone is lost to you.



### WELLSPRING OF HOPE

*This pool lies deep within a **Wild Tanglewood**, and is reputed to contain healing water. It is guarded by ancient spirits, and tradition says that something precious must be left behind in exchange for the water.*

**Role in your story:** If you *Swear an Iron Vow* to cure someone, obtaining the healing water of this pool is a milestone in your quest. The wellspring is home to guardian spirits, and you must *Compel* them to grant you access. What might they demand in return? Even if you are successful, they will allow only a single draught. If you then deliver the dose to the object of your quest, you can *Fulfill Your Vow* to see how they fare.



## FROSTFORGE HAMMER

*Forged from an unknown metal, this fabled hammer is the color of a frozen lake, pale white with shadowy blue depths. When used to craft armor, it imbues the metal with unnatural strength and protects the wearer from the cruelest winter storm.*

**Role in your story:** If an unnatural winter storm threatens the Ironlands, and you *Swear an Iron Vow* to discover what lies at the tempest's heart, obtaining this hammer is a milestone in your vow. When you secure the aid of an ironwright to craft a cold-resistant set of armor using the hammer, you reach another milestone. The armor itself functions as an artifact, or will perhaps become a part of your character as an **Ironclad** rarity.



## MOLDERING BLADE

*This ancient bronze sword looks as if it was pulled from a centuries-old grave. Its surface is cratered with decay. Its edge is flaking and brittle. But when raised against an undead being, the corrosion falls away. What is left behind is a keen blade which looks newly forged, and can inflict terrible and enduring injuries upon any spirit or horror.*

**Role in your story:** Many undead beings are invulnerable to weapons or cannot be permanently destroyed by mundane means. If you *Enter the Fray* against a horror while wielding the blade, you may treat the spirit or monster as a living being. The harm you inflict is lasting, and you can defeat them permanently when you successfully *End the Fight*. The sword is completely useless against normal foes. When your quest is done, the weapon disintegrates into dust.



## STORMSURGE PILLAR

*This mysterious black monolith, uncovered by a sect of iron priests in an **Ancient Ruin**, is now a horrific weapon in their doomsday war against the people of the Ironlands. When carried into battle, it levitates beneath roiling storm clouds and thrums with a discordant drone. When the priests command, it draws down lightning from the sky and sends out a wave of destruction which transforms their enemies to ash.*

**Role in your story:** If you *Swear an Iron Vow* to defeat this sect of priests, you must discover the nature of this pillar and find the means of defending against it. These goals can serve as milestones in your quest.

# RARITIES

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History is often chronicled through objects of power. Wars and accords, struggles and triumphs, love and hate, sacrifice and death—these legacies can imbue objects with cultural importance and supernatural gifts.

In *Ironsworn*, these items are called **rarities**. They may be handed down through generations, lost or hidden away in the depths of perilous sites, coveted by powerful forces, or forgotten and discarded. When you obtain a rarity through the course of your story, you gain a subtle but lasting impact on your character and their abilities.

Rarities are an optional system for your *Ironsworn* campaign. They are directly linked to a specific asset: a path, combat talent, or ritual. When you use that asset, the rarity can bolster your chance of success and enhance the benefits of a positive outcome.

## ADDING A RARITY TO YOUR STORY

As with assets, a rarity is purchased using experience points. You can make this purchase when you *Advance*, instead of or in addition to adding an asset. However, gaining the fictional justification to take possession of a rarity should be an important aspect of your story. You won't suddenly find one by chance while browsing the wares of a local merchant. You must work for it.

For example:

- You agree to undertake a quest in service to a mystic. They are the keeper of the **Book of the Cipher**, an ancient tome of rituals, and agree to grant you this rarity as a reward once your vow is fulfilled.
- You vow to recover the **Opal of Whispers** from the clan which stole it from your own family a generation ago.
- You set off to hunt down a dangerous beast in the southern marshes so that you may fashion a **Basilisk Cloak** from its hide.
- You delve into a forbidden tomb in search of the **Shroud of Retribution**, said to be hidden in its depths.

## SETTING YOUR SIGHTS

Rarities **augment** a specific asset. As a first step, consider which asset you want to link with a rarity. You can use a rarity with any path, combat talent, or ritual.

**Rarities are not used with companions.** However, you can use a rarity with the **Animal Kin** path or the **Totem** ritual as an indirect means of bolstering your companion abilities.

Once you've got something in mind, it's time to weave it into the fiction.

## DEFINING THE NATURE OF A RARITY

Consider the nature of the object you seek. What is its history? What are its powers? Is it known to the people of your world? Is it lost and forgotten? Is it yet to be created?

Rarities bolster an existing asset. They are not an asset or ability unto themselves. Their magic is usually subtle, though a particularly effective action may reveal more dramatic powers. The nature of a rarity should relate to the theme of the asset it's linked with.

- A **Dancer** can use a rarity which makes their performance more graceful or compelling.
- A **Skirmisher** can use a rarity which bolsters their prowess with a spear, or wield a special spear that is itself a rarity.
- A mystic performing the **Scry** ritual can use a rarity which enhances the visions within the flames, or makes those visions easier to interpret.

## TAKING POSSESSION OF A RARITY

Obtaining a rarity is typically part of a vow-driven quest, either as a reward from another character (for completing a quest in their service) or as a personal goal. Obstacles in your path might involve solving mysteries to uncover the location or nature of a rarity, delving into perilous sites, or defeating forces seeking to take the rarity for themselves. When you successfully *Fulfill Your Vow*, you gain experience points which can be used to purchase the rarity.

However, a rarity might also represent a side-story for your character which is not an explicit vow. Not every personal goal is worthy of swearing on iron, and overcoming challenges to take hold of a rarity can be its own reward. In this case, you can use the *Delve* mechanics to undertake an expedition into a perilous site in search of a rarity. As long as you have experience points in the bank to purchase the rarity, adding it to your character can validate the successful outcome of that expedition.

## PURCHASING A RARITY WITH EXPERIENCE

You must spend experience points to add a rarity to your character. If you obtain a rarity in the narrative but don't have experience points available, you can spend experience later to activate it. In the fiction, this represents learning more about its power and unlocking its potential. Until you spend the experience, it is a narrative object without mechanical benefit.

Some assets will bring a rarity into play more often than others, so the experience point cost for a rarity will vary by the linked asset. These costs are shown in the tables on page 175.

If you are playing solo, and aren't concerned with the relative balance of rarity abilities, you can ignore these variable costs. If so, spend 3 experience points to purchase a rarity.

## AUGMENTING AN ASSET

When you obtain a rarity, you link it to a single asset. That asset—and any marked abilities—is then considered augmented. Give an augmented asset a special mark, and make note of the name and nature of the rarity.

You can also place a special die on an asset card to mark it as augmented. This is your **rarity die**. Use a D6 that is a different color than your standard action die. This will help remind you that the asset is augmented, and you will use the rarity die when you make an action roll using the rarity. See page 176 for how this works.

## EXPERIENCE POINT COSTS FOR RARITIES

Paths	XP Cost	Combat Talents	XP Cost
Alchemist	5	Archer	4
Animal Kin	3	Berserker	5
Banner-Sworn	4	Brawler	5
Battle-Scarred	3	Cutthroat	3
Blade-Bound	4	Duelist	3
Bonded	3	Fletcher	4
Dancer	3	Ironclad	5
Devotant	3	Long-Arm	5
Empowered	3	Shield-Bearer	4
Fortune Hunter	4	Skirmisher	4
Herbalist	3	Slinger	4
Honorbound	3	Sunderer	4
Improviser	4	Swordmaster	4
Infiltrator	5	Thunder-Bringer	4
Loyalist	3		
Masked	5		
Oathbreaker	3		
Outcast	3		
Pretender	5		
Revenant	3		
Rider	4		
Ritualist	3		
Shadow-Kin	3		
Sighted	4		
Slayer	3		
Spirit-Bound	3		
Storyweaver	4		
Trickster	4		
Veteran	3		
Waterborn	3		
Wayfinder	4		
Weaponmaster	3		
Wildblood	4		
Wright	3		
Rituals	XP Cost		
Augur	3		
Awakening	4		
Bind	5		
Communion	3		
Divination	3		
Invoke	5		
Keen	5		
Leech	3		
Lightbearer	4		
Scry	3		
Shadow-Walk	4		
Sway	3		
Talisman	4		
Tether	4		
Totem	4		
Visage	4		
Ward	3		

How do you use a rarity? Here's how it works in the form of a move.

## WIELD A RARITY

When you make a move aided by an augmented asset, roll your rarity die in place of your action die.

On any result with 6 showing on the rarity die, the power of the rarity manifests in a dramatic and obvious way. You score an automatic strong hit and take +1 momentum.

On a hit with 5 showing on the rarity die, the power of the rarity manifests in a subtle way. Take +1 momentum.

On a miss with 1 showing on the rarity die, the rarity's power fails or works against you.

What does it mean to be **aided** by an augmented asset? **You are aided when you are making an action roll, and an augmented asset directly contributes a bonus or benefit.**

Here's a summary of the bonuses and benefits which count as aided, along with related examples. Most asset abilities fall under one or more of these.

- ✓ **Add +X.**  
“When you *Aid Your Ally*, add +1.”
- ✓ **Take +X momentum/health/spirit/supply.**  
“When you *Heal* a companion, ally, or other character, and score a hit, take +1 spirit or +1 momentum.”
- ✓ **Inflict +X harm.**  
“On a strong hit, the wielder inflicts +1 harm.”
- ✓ **Inflict harm on a move other than Strike or Clash.**  
“When you *Enter the Fray* by barraging your foe with sling-bullets, inflict harm on a strong hit.”
- ✓ **Reroll any dice.**  
“When you *Swear an Iron Vow* to serve your leader or faction on a mission, you may reroll any dice.”
- ✓ **Make a move using an alternate stat.**  
“When you *Make Camp* in the woodlands, you may roll +wits (instead of +supply).”
- ✓ **Make a unique, self-contained move.**  
“When you commune with the spirits of a place, roll +heart.”

There are a few edge cases to keep in mind, including exceptions for game balance and for abilities with limitations. If you’re not sure if you can *Wield a Rarity* with a specific ability, look here to see if it falls under a restriction.

(!) **When the benefit is “one time only”, you are aided only if you commit to using up the benefit before rolling.**

“When you or an ally make a ritual move, reroll any dice (one time only).”

(!) **When the ability gives you an option after you roll, you are aided only if you commit to that choice before rolling.**

“When you *Make Camp* and choose the option to partake, you can create a restorative meal. If you do, you and your companions may take +1 health.”

(!) **When the benefit comes at a cost or risk, you are aided only if you accept the cost or risk to get the benefit.**

“When you perform a ritual, you may suffer -1 supply and add +1.”

(!) **When an augmented asset lets you inflict deadly harm (2 harm) using an unarmed attack or simple weapon, you are aided only if the ability also provides some other benefit for your action.**

“When you use an unarmed attack or simple weapon to *Strike* with deadly intent, add +2 and inflict 2 harm on a hit (instead of 1).”

Finally, here’s two situations when you can’t *Wield a Rarity*.

(X) **When an augmented asset forces you to suffer a cost as an outcome or concession, you are not aided when you make a move to resolve that cost.**

“On a weak hit, the wilds call as you dance; *Endure Stress* (2 stress).”

(X) **When an augmented asset modifies a progress move, you are not aided. You may only Wield a Rarity with an action roll.**

“When you *Reach Your Destination*, take +2 momentum.”

If you’re not sure whether an action counts as aided, feel free to err on the side of awesome and allow yourself to *Wield a Rarity*. Lead with the fiction. It won’t break anything.

See the next page for details on rolling the rarity die.

## ROLLING THE RARITY DIE

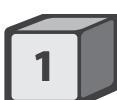
When you *Wield a Rarity*, you'll roll a special D6 in place of your action die. This is your **rarity die**. It works the same as an action die, with three important differences.



**If you roll a 6 on the rarity die,** the power of the rarity manifests in a dramatic and obvious way. Envision what happens. You score an automatic strong hit and take +1 momentum. You can consider how a match on the challenge dice influences the outcome, but the value of those dice is otherwise ignored.



**If you roll a hit with a 5 on your rarity die,** the power of the rarity manifests in a subtle way. Take +1 momentum. The rarity is not a focus or essential aspect of your action, but it does offer indirect or minor benefits.



**If you roll a miss with a 1 on the rarity die,** the rarity's power fails or works against you. Weave the rarity into the narrative of the outcome, but don't inflict additional mechanical cost beyond the normal scope of the miss. This is a failure with a bit of additional narrative texture, not a compounded failure.

For any other result, the rarity does not have any impact in this moment. Its power does not manifest, or its influence is inconsequential.

These mechanical and narrative results are in addition to the normal outcome of the move. Roll the dice, look at the rarity die, envision how its power manifests in this moment (or not), and resolve the move as normal. If your rarity die gives you a momentum bonus, add it to any other bonus you receive.

The rarity die is still considered an action die if a move or ability references an action die result (such as “if you roll a 1 on your action die.”). Also, if you suffer the effects of negative momentum (such as when your momentum is -6 and you roll a 6 on the rarity die), the die is canceled and any rarity effects are ignored.

## ROLLING A MATCH

If you rolled a match on your challenge dice, consider how the rarity plays into your interpretation of the match.

- **With a 6 on your rarity die and a match on the challenge dice:** This moment reveals some interesting aspect of the rarity, or the object manifests its power in a surprising way.
- **With a 1 on your rarity die and a miss with a match on the challenge dice:** This is an opportunity to introduce a surprising complication related to your rarity, or a dramatic effect such as a Mystic Backlash (*Ironsworn Core*, page 189).

## ONGOING BENEFITS

Some abilities provide benefits which persist beyond the initial action. For example:

- If you are a **Pretender** and adopt a disguise: "...add +2 when you make moves using this identity to deceive or influence others."
- If you perform the **Awakening** ritual to create a simulacrum: "If it aids you as you make a move to assault or overcome an obstacle through strength, add +2."
- If you perform the **Totem** ritual to deepen your connection to your animal or beast companion: "Add +1 and take +1 momentum on a hit when you use a companion ability."

If an ability with an ongoing benefit is augmented, you *Wield a Rarity* when making the initial move to trigger the effect. Then, **as long as a move gains a direct bonus or benefit to the roll from an augmented ability, you'll continue to Wield a Rarity when taking action.** Once the effect is spent or negated, you won't roll your rarity die.

## ALLIES AND RARITIES

You may have an augmented asset which grants a benefit to an ally. For example:

- If you are a **Loyalist**: "When an ally makes the *Endure Stress* move in your company, they add +1 and you take +1 momentum on a hit."
- If you perform the **Keen** ritual, and enchant the weapon of an ally: "...the wielder inflicts +1 harm when they *Strike* or *Clash*."
- If you are a **Slayer** and take a trophy from a kill: "When you or an ally make a ritual move, reroll any dice."

**If one of your augmented asset abilities gives a direct bonus or benefit to an ally's action roll, they may Wield a Rarity.** Hand them your rarity die to roll in place of their action die. They take the benefits of the outcome. If they roll a 5 on the rarity die, they take +1 momentum. If they roll a 6, they take +1 momentum and score an automatic strong hit.

This effect also applies if you use an augmented asset ability to *Secure an Advantage*, and you've framed that move as an attempt to *Aid Your Ally*. If you are successful, the ally takes the benefits of the move, including any additional momentum gained through the rarity. If you score a strong hit and they take the option to add+1 on their next move, they can *Wield a Rarity* and roll your rarity die.

## **EVOLVING THE STORY OF A RARITY**

Your rarity is another character in your campaign. As you use its powers and interact with it over time, look for opportunities to deepen your understanding of its nature. Go beyond its mechanical benefits to give it narrative meaning and importance.

Magic is a willful force, and a rarity may have its own goals and needs. You may even *Forge a Bond* with it, or swear vows and undertake quests to resolve some aspect of its nature or history.

A rarity may complicate your adventures in other ways. Perhaps another character or faction covet your rarity. Its mere presence might impact your dealings with others, especially in a setting where objects of power are feared or reviled. This is the fiction of your rarity.

If you are playing with allies, or are the GM in a guided campaign, don't let the acquisition or evolution of a rarity overwhelm the focus of your adventures. Be mindful of giving everyone the spotlight within sessions and as part of the overall campaign. An expedition to obtain a rarity might be a fun solo or guided session for a single player.



## LOSING A RARITY

Since a rarity is usually a physical object, losing or breaking it is a possibility. However, in most situations, losing access to your rarity should represent a temporary complication, not a permanent outcome. Only in the most dire of circumstances should your story lead to a place where your rarity is permanently destroyed or removed. It should feel like an inescapable outcome of where the fiction has led, rather than a sudden and random whim of fate.

If a rarity is ever permanently lost or destroyed, or if you choose to discard it, take 1 experience point.

## HOW MANY RARITIES?

There's no mechanical limitation to how many rarities your character can possess, but I'd suggest you keep it to a single rarity, or two at most. They should feel like a special exception—not a box to be checked on an asset card. There are two exceptions to this guideline:

- If your character and campaign is focused on acquiring objects of power, you might possess multiple rarities.
- If you are a mystic, you might collect rarities as special components to empower your rituals.

If you have more than one rarity, and two different augmented assets add a bonus or benefit to a single action, you still roll only one rarity die. Envision which rarity has the most influence in this moment.

### ABOUT THE EXAMPLE RARITIES

The following section provides an example rarity for each *Ironsworn* path, combat talent, and ritual. These examples include a name, an experience point cost (using the standard cost as defined on page 175), and a description.

The background of some of these rarities are known through folklore and legend, while others are mysterious objects of unknown origin. Some were brought over from the Old World, while others were created or first appeared within the Ironlands.

These are provided as potential rarities for your campaign, but are not your only option. Since all rarities have the same mechanical function, it's easy to create your own unique object of power.

## EXAMPLE RARITIES: PATHS



### PATH: ALCHEMIST AYETHIN'S JOURNAL

5 XP

This ancient tome was originally written by a legendary alchemist. In its curiously well-preserved pages, inscribed in an ink of unnatural intensity, are formulas for alchemical concoctions. New recipes occasionally appear unbidden, although the total number of pages never changes.



### PATH: ANIMAL KIN BLACK FANG

3 XP

This large tooth of uncertain origin resonates with the power and mystery of the untamed world. When you hold or wear the fang, your eyes take on a slight golden hue, and you feel the call of those wild places.



### PATH: BANNER-SWORN RESOLUTE BANNER

4 XP

First borne by the surviving members of a warband who stood firm against an enemy onslaught, this banner is scarred by generations of war. When you carry it into battle against an overwhelming foe, you might hear the song of former bearers, or catch glimpses of their spectral presence fighting alongside you.



### PATH: BATTLE-SCARRED CAIRN STONE OF THE SUNDERED

3 XP

The Sundered, an Ironlands warband, was formed of those who suffered the traumas of battle—but whose fighting spirit remained. Khinara the Half-Handed, a shrewd leader outcast from her former band, brought these misfits together to forge a new path. Their final and most renowned battle was to stand against an overwhelming force of varou at the Siege of Winterhill. Nearly all the Sundered fell in that long day of fighting, but not before saving many Ironlanders from the varou horde.

Khinara and her handful of remaining comrades left the battleground that day and have not been seen since. A simple cairn marked the sacrifice and courage of the Sundered, from which only this small stone remains.



**PATH: BLADE-BOUND  
BRACER OF THE FIRST BLOOD**

**4 XP**

This simple leather bracer was worn generations ago by the first person killed by your kin-blade. At that time, it was a simple weapon wielded by your ancestor. With their dying breath, the blade's victim cursed your ancestor to an afterlife of iron servitude, binding them forever to the weapon.

The bracer is weathered and marred by faded blood stains. When worn on your blade-arm, you feel a stronger connection to your ancestor within the iron. But there is another presence here, and you sense its long-simmering thirst for revenge.



**PATH: BONDED  
WATERSKIN OF FELLOWSHIP**

**3 XP**

Ages ago, this waterskin, filled with wine, was passed among the fighters of a warband on the night before a fateful battle. They drank heartily, sang hopeful tunes, and swore promises to one another. None would be left behind, they vowed. All would fall or stand together.

By the dawn, all lie dead. But their loyalty and companionship infused this waterskin with the purity of those vows. Anything it contains—water, wine, or mead—is made sweeter and more refreshing. When you bear the skin, your own nature might change subtly, and others may view you more favorably.



**PATH: DANCER  
SCARVES OF THE NORTHERN LIGHTS** **3 XP**

These lengths of fabric, bound together with silvery thread, are enchanted with the alluring but dangerous essence of the hyperborean realms.

When you dance with the scarves, your movements seem to blur and shimmer, becoming almost ethereal. The fabric casts wavering, prismatic auras into the air. Their beguiling nature is otherworldly.



**PATH: DEVOTANT  
FOUNDER'S RELIQUARY**

**3 XP**

This urn of brassy metal, etched with strange and captivating iconography, contains the ashes and bone fragments of an ancient devotant, the founder of your faith. While carrying this reliquary, you might catch whispers and chants on the wind; echoes of ancient oration.



**PATH: EMPOWERED  
SIGIL OF THE BROKEN CIRCLET**

**3 XP**

This sigil of simple worked iron bears a gemstone that once adorned a noble circlet. Within its facets, you might glimpse the faces of an ancient ruler whose reign ended with the sundering of their circlet of power. When you bear this sigil, you embody some measure of this ruler's former authority.



**PATH: FORTUNE HUNTER  
COIN OF FAVOR**

**4 XP**

This battered copper coin, emblazoned with the emblem of a forgotten people, appears mundane at first glance—a worthless trinket. But when spun on a surface, flipped into the air, or rolled across knuckles, the coin hums with a strange and discordant tone. Those who understand the coin's song may find themselves on a path of good fortune.



**PATH: HERBALIST  
SILVERSTONE PESTLE**

**3 XP**

This obsidian pestle is streaked with shimmering silver. The rounded end is unworn and unstained even after centuries of use. When ground against a mortar, violet smoke wafts from the ingredients, occasionally forming vaguely humanoid figures and bestial shapes. The phantasms are gone to the wind almost as soon as they appear.



PATH: HONORBOUND  
**UNBREAKABLE TORC**

3 XP

Once clasped to your arm, this simple iron bracelet binds itself closed. It cannot be removed, except by lopping off your hand at the wrist. When you stay true to your word, it is said to grant good fortune. But when you tell a lie or forsake an oath, it tightens painfully, like a snake coiling around its prey.



PATH: IMPROVISER  
**BLACKGUARD'S BALDRIC**

4 XP

An infamous scoundrel wore a wide belt laden with pouches and buckles, from which he drew wondrous implements to aid in his devious work. After his death, the baldric disappeared, but occasionally finds its way into the hands of the clever and the cunning. It's said that in times of need, one might find their salvation within the many pouches and pockets of the belt.



PATH: INFILTRATOR  
**BASILISK CLOAK**

5 XP

This leathery cloak and cowl, yellow-brown in hue, is stitched from the hide of a basilisk. When draped over the shoulders, the cloak allows the wearer to embody the stealthy nature of those beasts of the southern marshlands.



PATH: LOYALIST  
**HORN OF THE MAMMOTH**

3 XP

This sweeping signal horn, carved from the tusk of a mammoth, is etched with inscrutable runes. When blown, the horn emits the thunderous bellow of a mammoth.

Through the years, keepers of this mighty horn have rallied allies and summoned aid to their friends. Today, it is imbued with the loyalty and sacrifices of those bearers.



**PATH: MASKED  
PROGENITOR SHARD**

**5 XP**

The Progenitor Shard appears as a mundane piece of petrified wood. However, it is a fragment of what the elves call the source tree—the long dead entity from which all other elder trees originate. When pressed to the forehead of an elven mask, the shard sets itself into a hollow and glimmers with ancient power. Then, the mask makes a dramatic change to its features, such as sprouting wooden horns or antlers. A mask with the Progenitor Shard may even display new awareness and intelligence, reacting to others through subtle changes of its once-inert expression.



**PATH: OATHBREAKER  
SUNDERED SWORD**

**3 XP**

This remnant of an ancient sword consists only of a hilt, bound in decaying leather, and a stunted piece of broken blade. When it was whole, the weapon was wielded by a queen's guard. That warrior failed in his oath to protect his queen when she was assassinated by a usurper. In honor of his fallen liege, he undertook a new years-long quest that toppled kingdoms and remade the world. At the end of it, he shattered his sword and made no more vows. What's left of the blade is said to hold an essence of the resolve that set the warrior on his path of retribution.



**PATH: OUTCAST  
MARK OF THE EXILE**

**3 XP**

This mark is branded or tattooed onto the flesh of outcasts. It is the sigil of an Old World leader, betrayed by their own kin, who was stripped of their name and banished to the wilderness. They eventually returned to undo the schemes of those who cast them out. But even after they were welcomed back into their community, they chose to disappear again into the wilds—committed to their new life in exile.

Now the sigil, inscribed or branded as part of lengthy ceremony, marks the forsaken or misunderstood among the Ironlanders and gives them the strength to carry on. Only a few still hold the knowledge of the ritual which sets this mark upon your flesh.



**PATH: PRETENDER**  
**TATTOO OF MANY FACES**

**5 XP**

This elaborate tattoo, drawn with blood-infused ink, depicts a face that seems to change subtly each time you look at it. The mystic known as the Gray Lady, who was alive in the Old World and may outlive those not yet born in this new land, grants this mark to those she finds worthy. If you seek to escape your former life by adopting new identities, the cunning magic of this tattoo may aid you in your path.



**PATH: REVENANT**  
**SHROUD OF RETRIBUTION**

**3 XP**

This fragment of woolen cloth is etched with words in a long-forgotten language. It is said to be a piece of the burial shroud of a great warrior who defied death to join her war-kin in one final battle. Those who have seen beyond the veil of our world will feel a kinship to the enduring spirits that lurk within the shroud.



**PATH: RIDER**  
**HORSEMASTER HELM**

**4 XP**

This helmet with a crest of horsehair was worn by Delkash the Horseborn, a legendary leader who commanded a mighty warband of mounted warriors on the eastern plains of the Old World. She and her band were renowned for their skill in riding and the almost spiritual connection they shared with their horses.



**PATH: RITUALIST**  
**BOOK OF THE CIPHER**

**3 XP**

This unassuming tome is plainly bound in leather and clasped in iron. For most folk, the pages within appear blank. For those with the gift of magic, those pages are filled with the writings and illustrations of generations of ritualists. The content is a mix of tempting secrets, indecipherable scrawls, and deranged ramblings. It is a life's work to draw meaning from it, but even the presence of the book can bring you closer to the powers of the mystic realms.



PATH: SHADOW-KIN  
**BARROW CLASP**

**3 XP**

This horrid cloak clasp is fashioned from several interlocking finger bones. It was once worn by Balrick the Bone-Tender, who gathered the bones from crypts across the Old World and believed they whispered of forbidden lore.

When you wear the Barrow Clasp, you are marked as someone who has suffered the futility of life, who walks in shadow and embraces the power and secrets of realms beyond our own. For you, the that dark knowledge is not a corruption or a curse. It is a gift.



PATH: SIGHTED  
**SEEING STONE**

**4 XP**

Once owned by a mystic who succumbed to a dark path and became a husk, this glassy stone of volcanic rock is marred by a single hole through its center. Those who carry the Seeing Stone are said to gain clarity and an understanding of mystic forces. Looking through the stone may inspire revelations, but it can also reveal darkness and terrors beyond our understanding. Some secrets are best left unknown.



PATH: SLAYER  
**SLAYER'S MEDALLION**

**3 XP**

This pendant, fashioned of silver in the shape of a claw, was forged for the famed beast slayer Kodroth in honor of his tenth kill. Unfortunately, Kodroth was devoured on his eleventh hunt, and the medallion sat for a time in the gut of a wyvern. After an unceremonious reintroduction to the world, the Slayer's Medallion was retrieved and handed from one ill-fated hunter to the next.

The silver, now gouged by teeth and claw and pitted by digestive juices, is said to hold the hard lessons of every failed bowshot, every clumsy spear thrust, every weakened shield-arm. Perhaps these mistakes will not be your own.



**PATH: SPIRIT-BOUND  
MIRROR OF THE EIDOLON**

**3 XP**

Long ago, in the southlands of the Old World, a rich merchant believed he was haunted by the spirit of his beloved dead wife. But the signs of her presence were subtle. The smell of her perfume. An occasional chill. A barely-heard whisper. He longed to see her again, so he gathered the greatest artisans and mystics of the land to create a solution. Years later, they delivered a grand, gold-rimmed mirror that—they said—would reveal worlds and beings beyond the veil. The hopeful merchant had the mirror placed in his chambers and sent his staff away. A day later, a servant returned to find the merchant vanished and the mirror shattered.

This piece of broken glass, the edges smoothed by time, the surface darkened and tarnished, is all that remains of that ancient mirror. Carrying it with you strengthens the thread between you and those that dwell in the realms between life and death.



**PATH: STORYWEAVER  
GOLDWHYN'S DENOUEMENT**

**4 XP**

This ornate scroll tube is decorated with delicate silver and gold filigree. It is reputed to contain a single sheet of parchment once belonging to Goldwhyn the Bard, an ancient storyweaver who delighted the most royal of courts and the lowliest of mead halls with tales of adventure and sacrifice. As he lie in his death bed, Goldwhyn wrote one final tale and ordered it sealed away in this scroll tube. It has not been unsealed since, and doing so is said to bring the foulest of luck. Nevertheless, those who carry Goldwhyn's Denouement are favored with the gift of story and fellowship.



**PATH: TRICKSTER  
OPAL OF WHISPERS**

**4 XP**

This large opal is said to have been enchanted by a cunning mystic who sought to gain influence in court. The gem offers subtle suggestions to help guide conversations or reveal schemes. It is often set within an earring, where its whispers are better heard.



PATH: VETERAN  
**HELM OF THE UNBROKEN**

3 XP

The famed warrior Brenna stood against a hundred foes or more before she fell, buying her brothers and sisters in arms the time they needed to retreat through the mountain pass. With blade, axe, and spear, she fought fiercely, her back against the sheer cliffs. Brenna the Unbroken, they call her in songs in the decades since. Her helm is battered and dented, tarnished and stained, but remains whole.

Brenna's strength, resolve, and sacrifice remain imbued in the iron, the enduring legacy of a noble end.



PATH: WATERBORN  
**LEVIATHAN'S LAMENT**

3 XP

This pendant, fashioned from the tip of a leviathan's tooth, is engraved with a depiction of the fateful end of that creature. Pierced by the Abyssal Harpoon, an ancient weapon of unnatural sharpness, the leviathan is shown making a final leap above the waves in its death throes. If you stare at the pendant, you might find the scene revealed in extra clarity. The waves splash and surge, and you can see the mouth of the leviathan opening in a final, defiant roar.

When you wear this pendant—whether to honor the passing of this great beast, or as a warning to others of its kind—you are connected to the spirits of the water. If you are lucky, those spirits will favor you with fair winds and calm seas.



PATH: WAYFINDER  
**BOUGH OF THE SUREST PATH**

4 XP

This simple wooden rod, carved from an Old World rowan tree, can help guide travelers to their destination. It is marked with dozens of tiny notches representing successful journeys, and is said to have been used in finding the Ironlands during our escape from the Old World.

When you hold the Bough to the horizon, you feel the magnetic pull of the proper course. However, this object sometimes has its own opinions on where you should head, and may lead you to unexpected destinations.



**PATH: WEAPONMASTER**  
**WHETSTONE OF THE BEAR**

**3 XP**

This simple whetstone is engraved with a single mark—the bear claw motif of a legendary warrior renowned for their prowess in the fighting arenas of the Old World. This stone was passed from them through successive generations of fighters, and has honed the edge of countless weapons.

Each faint score upon the Whetstone of the Bear is suffused with the courage, skill, and tenacity of the warriors who left that mark. When you use the whetstone, you may hear distant echoes of long-ago battles; when you carry it, you bear the legacy of those brave champions.



**PATH: WILDBLOOD**  
**VIGNETTE OF THE WEALD**

**4 XP**

This small elderwood carving depicts an intricate scene of trees, birds, and woodland animals. Looking at it for a time seems to reveal new or transformed details. A live tree grows where once stood a stump. Eyes look out from the shadows of a hollow, then disappear. A nesting bird takes flight.

When you carry this unusual piece of art, you feel kinship with the natural world and a deeper understanding of those wild places. The vignette may even reveal clues which lead you on the proper path through untracked lands and keep you safe from threats.



**PATH: WRIGHT**  
**ARTISAN'S GLOVES**

**3 XP**

Once worn by a wright who built the first ship to land on the shore of the Ironlands, these hide gloves, sturdy yet flexible and reinforced with iron studs, allow for great dexterity while also protecting a worker's hands. The strength, skill, and resilience of dozens ofwrights over many decades is worn into the leather.

## EXAMPLE RARITIES: COMBAT TALENTS



### COMBAT TALENT: ARCHER **FARSIGHT QUIVER**

4 XP

This quiver is fashioned from tanned leather, and carved with elaborate, spiraling runes. Despite its age, the leather is as supple as a newly crafted object. Arrows held within are said to be given extra sharpness and accuracy, and the bearer's sight made more keen. On occasion, an arrow retrieved from the quiver will blossom with a cold blue flame as it flies unerringly to its target.



### COMBAT TALENT: BERSERKER **MANTLE OF MANY BEASTS**

5 XP

This stitched mantle is a patchwork of different pelts—some recognizable, some less so. When you wear the mantle, the ferocity and resilience of these animals and beasts is with you. Your foes may even look upon you and catch the briefest glimpses of these creatures upon your own form, like phantasms seen in the afterglow of a lightning strike.



### COMBAT TALENT: BRAWLER **IRON FIST**

5 XP

This band of ridged iron is inscribed with runes and subtly thrums with ancient energy. It fits perfectly in your palm and encircles your closed fist. When wielded in a fight, the crude but effective weapon adds unnatural weight and power to your attacks.



### COMBAT TALENT: CUTTHROAT **DAGGER OF THE BLOODED**

3 XP

When you wield this wickedly curved dagger with deadly intent, it almost seems to guide your hand. You can feel its hunger through the leather-wrapped hilt. But the blood it draws can never be completely wiped away. Over time, these stains have darkened the blade nearly to blackness.



**COMBAT TALENT: DUELIST  
IRON DYAD**

**3 XP**

The greatsword of a fallen warrior was melted down and reforged into this exquisite pair of blades. Each piece in the Iron Dyad is a formidable weapon in its own right, light and well balanced, with a keen edge. Throughout history, these masterworks have been kept apart. Now, reunited in your hands, they whirl in a perfect, synchronous dance, dealing death with grim efficiency.



**COMBAT TALENT: FLETCHER  
RAPTOR'S TALON**

**4 XP**

The wooden hilt of this delicate knife is carved in the form of a diving hawk. When used to fashion arrow shafts or trim fletchings, the blade imparts the speed and deadliness of that majestic creature to the arrow itself. When the arrow flies true, you may even hear it accompanied by the cry of a hawk.



**COMBAT TALENT: IRONCLAD  
STARFALL HAUBERK**

**5 XP**

This chain shirt is fashioned from rings of black iron, a starforged metal notoriously difficult to work in such delicate forms. It is as strong and resistant as the sturdiest shield. The glimmering black chain is beautiful to behold—like a clear night sky strung with iridescent stars.

When you wear the armor, you are connected to the eternal void beyond our own world. At night, the stars call to you with an alluring song.



**COMBAT TALENT: LONG-ARM  
ROVER'S STAFF**

**5 XP**

Some in the Ironlands speak of a figure known as the Rover, who wandered from settlement to settlement and was said to bring divine fortune. The figure dressed simply, came and went without fanfare or frivolity, and carried a gnarled staff of yew adorned with trinkets and etched with symbols of the firstborn. This staff, worn to a polished shine from decades of use, now fits in your own hand as if designed for it.



### COMBAT TALENT: SHIELD-BEARER **HEART OF THE AEGIS**

**4 XP**

This metal boss, affixed to the center of uncounted shields over years and generations, shines as bright as the day it was forged. It is said to strengthen both the shield and its wielder—and endures beyond both. Looking into the boss by firelight may reveal fragmentary reflections of battle and sacrifice.



### COMBAT TALENT: SKIRMISHER **DRAGON'S BITE**

**4 XP**

The name of the warrior who wielded Dragon's Bite, who felled dragons of old, is lost to time. But the spear, its tip heated in the flames of dragons and quenched in their blood, is legend. The haft of this weapon is simple and mundane, unadorned. The spear's point is formed with a layer of cold iron around a core of strange black metal. Some say the dark center is fashioned from the fossilized heart of mother dragon, the once-queen of dragonkind.



### COMBAT TALENT: SLINGER **GIANT BANE**

**4 XP**

Before the passing of the giants in the Old World, one of their clan terrorized a highland village. For months the people suffered the torment of the giant, until a brave villager felled him with this sling.

Today, untold years later, the leather is still supple, and the weapon imparts the stones unnatural force and precision. The large pouch can hold multiple stones, enabling a skilled slinger to bombard a foe with a flurry of lethal projectiles.



### COMBAT TALENT: SUNDERER **WARBRINGER**

**4 XP**

A clan of raiders once terrorized vast swathes of the Old World. The greatest of them was said to wield a wicked axe he called Warbringer. It was forged of the pillaged iron of defeated foes. Following the marauder's death, the axe passed from one hand to the next—over years and across kingdoms—as if seeking someone worthy of its savage power.



**COMBAT TALENT: SWORDMASTER  
HONING SHEATH**

**4 XP**

“May your wits nor your iron never dull,” the runes read, running the length of this worn, dark leather scabbard. Any blade drawn from it hums a harmonious tone, its edge as sharp as the day it was forged.



**COMBAT TALENT: THUNDER-BRINGER  
HAMMER OF RECKONING**

**4 XP**

The simple and brutal form of this great iron hammer belies the legend of its making. Said to have been crafted by the giant smiths of old, the Hammer of Reckoning was a gift bestowed upon an ancient people of the Ironlands. Forged during a great storm, and imbued with the essence of that violent tempest, it is a superbly balanced and destructive weapon. Its mightiest blows are sometimes accompanied by a distant peal of thunder.



## EXAMPLE RARITIES: RITUALS



### RITUAL: AUGUR CROW'S PATRON

3 XP

This unusually large crow feather is adorned with beads and brightly colored string. When you wear or hold the feather and perform the ritual to summon crows, the messages they carry are made more understandable. However, crows are still tricksters, and liable to bring unwelcome news.



### RITUAL: AWAKENING BREATH OF LIFE

4 XP

This clay decanter once belonged to an ancient mystic who dabbled in the secrets of life and death. Wracked with disease, facing his own mortality, he vowed he would endure. He inscribed the decanter with runes of power, and breathed his dying words into it. In that moment, clinging to the mortal world like a drowning man struggling to stay above the surface, his fear and anger infused the decanter with an unending breath.

When you release the stopper to aid the creation of your simulacrum, those last words sometimes escape as whispered curses.



### RITUAL: BIND MOONSHADOW RING

5 XP

This ring of polished wood is engraved with intertwining branches. Set in its center is a lustrous white stone. When the wearer performs the bind ceremony, the stone catches the light of the moon and flares with an unnatural glow. This light casts faint shadows of animals and beasts which dance in rhythm with the ritualist's steps.



### RITUAL: COMMUNION INCENSE OF BECKONING

3 XP

When lit, this stick of incense emits a green-yellow smoke which smells faintly of wet earth and moldering things. The swirling incense eases the passage of spirits to our world, and helps bind them to the ritualist's summoning circle.



RITUAL: DIVINATION  
**RIDDLESTONE**

**3 XP**

Carved from a snow-white chunk of alabaster, this runestone of uncertain origin reveals a new inscription each time it is thrown.

The stone makes some secrets obvious, and teases others through implication. For a particularly dire or surprising reading, it may even show a different surface or texture. For example, you might throw it in its usual alabaster form, and see it land as pitted black pumice. Divining the meaning of this trickery is not always easy—the riddlestone is a notoriously fickle tool.



RITUAL: INVOKE  
**INVOKER'S LODESTONE**

**5 XP**

This arrow-shaped, palm-sized stone seems completely unremarkable. But when you hold it at arm's length and focus on the weave of power around you, the lodestone can guide you to richer sources of mystic energy. Once those essences are absorbed, the stone shines with a subdued radiance.



RITUAL: KEEN  
**RAVEN'S SONG**

**5 XP**

This large raven skull is etched with ornate symbols, and dark gems are set into its eye sockets. It is said the spirit of the raven carries the words of your keen to those who dwell in the world beyond death. As you sing, strange shadows writhe within the smoky glass of the gems, and a layer of frost spreads over the skull.



RITUAL: LEECH  
**WOLF'S FEAST**

**3 XP**

This iron brooch bears an ornate and grisly depiction of a large wolf feeding on a fallen deer. Though the carved motif is worn and lusterless with age, the pin itself glimmers like fresh-forged metal and is as sharp as the finest dagger.



RITUAL: LIGHTBEARER  
**DAYBREAK STONE**

**4 XP**

In its mundane form, this fist-sized rough-hewn crystal is lusterless and opaque. Once used to capture the essence of light, however, it glows with a purity and brilliance which banishes any aspect of darkness.



RITUAL: SCRY  
**BEHOLDER'S DUST**

**3 XP**

This simple leather pouch brims with ash and bits of bone—the cremated remains of a powerful seer. When cast into a fire, the ash erupts in brilliantly colored sparks and flames. The sounds and visions within the fire are then made more vibrant.

Curiously, the Beholder's Dust is never fully consumed by the flames. Each time you return to the pouch, you will find the supply of ash replenished.



RITUAL: SHADOW-WALK  
**RING OF SECRET PATHS**

**4 XP**

The plainness of this gold ring belies the nature of its creation. It was forged in the dark fires of the shadow realm, and is forever connected to the veiled paths beyond our own world. Those who wear the ring are but one step from those hidden lands, but must be cautious not to let the will of the ring subvert their own.



RITUAL: SWAY  
**CHIME OF SECRETS**

**3 XP**

These small brass tubes hang from a stave of elder wood. When raised to the wind, they ring with a melody which is at first discordant. But then, if the spirits of the wind choose to reveal their secrets, the melody harmonizes and amplifies their words.



## RITUAL: TALISMAN BEADS OF MANY DOMAINS

4 XP

Rune-marked beads of vibrant hues adorn a simple corded chain. The colors and materials of each bead represent a different aspect of the natural and unnatural worlds, and glimmer faintly in dark places.

When you remove a bead from the chain and add it to a charm, you feel the protection bolstered. Beads sometimes appear or disappear from the chain of their accord, but the particular bead you need for a talisman is generally at hand.



## RITUAL: TETHER WAYFARER'S PROMISE

4 XP

Before setting off on a perilous voyage, a sailor gifted his husband a piece of string—cut from the thread he used to tie back his hair. “Even when it seems we are apart,” he told him, “we are connected. This will guide me back home. Back to you.”

But his ship did not return. Weeks passed. Then months. All hope seemed lost. One night, as the mourning husband held the string tight in a closed fist, there came a knock at the door. It was the sailor, with no memory of what brought him there.

Centuries later, these twin strings—passed into legend and now returned—are held in a simple wooden box. When you carry it, you are reminded of the importance of a place and the people there, and it helps set you on the path home.





RITUAL: TOTEM  
**LIDLESS EYE**

**4 XP**

When you look deeply into this glass orb, you see an unblinking eye which mimics that of your animal or beast companion. As you carry the orb with you, your connection to them is strengthened.



RITUAL: VISAGE  
**PHIAL OF THE UNTAMED**

**4 XP**

This unbreakable glass jar is filled with the blood of beasts and monsters. A single drop added to a paste of mundane blood and ash infuses the mixture with the essence of those baneful creatures. Those who look upon you when you wear your visage may glimpse instead the dread specters of fang, claw, tentacle, and wing.



RITUAL: WARD  
**DEFENDER'S SPIKE**

**3 XP**

This spike of chiseled stone is fashioned from the remains of a wall which once protected an Old World fortress—one which withstood assaults over millennia. When you drive the spike into the ground at the center of your ward, you may be heartened by ghostly echoes of a forgotten past. It is the rallying cry of those brave warriors who held the walls against relentless attacks.



# CHAPTER 8

# ORACLES



# DIVINING ANSWERS

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In *Ironsworn*, an oracle is anything which generates random results to help determine the outcome of a move, a detail in your world, an NPC action, or a narrative event. Oracles can be used in solo and co-op modes to answer questions and fuel your narrative. For GMs, oracles can provide inspiration when running a game session.

This chapter includes several new oracles to supplement those found within *Ironsworn Core*. Many are specific to the *Delve* mechanics, and will help reveal the nature of a site and its denizens. Others will be more generally useful in your *Ironsworn* campaign.

The oracles are organized into the following sets:

- **Feature (page 204):** Use the Aspect and Focus oracles to answer questions or provide inspiration for a location or event within a site.
- **Site Name (page 206):** Give a site a name or learn more about its characteristics and history.
- **Site Nature (page 212):** Randomly select a theme and domain for a perilous location.
- **Character (page 213):** Set the initial disposition for a character, or reveal what activity they are focused on when you first encounter them.
- **Monstrosity (page 214):** Discover the nature of a nightspawn (page 125) or other frightful creature within your world.
- **Trap (page 217):** Identify the characteristics and effects of a trap within a site.
- **Combat Event (page 218):** Determine the actions of a character, creature, or force during a fight.
- **Threat (page 220):** In support of the optional threat mechanics (page 151), use these oracles to introduce a threat and determine its actions within your world.

If a particular result isn't inspiring or is difficult to interpret for the current situation, check the adjacent rows or flip the digits. See page 167 in *Ironsworn Core* for more information on using oracles to guide your story.

# FEATURE

## FEATURE: ASPECT

1-2	Blocked	35-36	Foul	69-70	Mysterious
3-4	Crafted	37-38	Elevated	71-72	Unstable
5-6	Ancient	39-40	Moving	73-74	Fragile
7-8	Sunken	41-42	Unnatural	75-76	Broken
9-10	Trapped	43-44	Active	77-78	Ensnaring
11-12	Secret	45-46	Confined	79-80	Pillaged
13-14	Toxic	47-48	Fortified	81-82	Sealed
15-16	Ruined	49-50	Collapsed	83-84	Makeshift
17-18	Defended	51-52	Isolated	85-86	Treacherous
19-20	Decaying	53-54	Destroyed	87-88	Natural
21-22	Marked	55-56	Open	89-90	Dead
23-24	Guarded	57-58	Sacred	91-92	Unusual
25-26	Inaccessible	59-60	Flooded	93-94	Abandoned
27-28	Foreboding	61-62	Complex	95-96	Deadly
29-30	Veiled	63-64	Abundant	97-98	Forgotten
31-32	Deep	65-66	Hidden	99-00	Mystical
33-34	Depleted	67-68	Expansive		

Use the Aspect and Focus oracles to generate the details of a location or event within a site, or to answer questions about the site's nature or history.

The basic function of these oracles is similar to the Action and Theme oracles in *Ironsworn Core* (page 174). They are abstract word prompts you can interpret as appropriate to the current situation and setting. For example, you are traveling through a Wild Tanglewood and roll “Something unusual or unexpected” on the domain feature table. You then *Ask the Oracle* what you discover using the Aspect and Focus tables. The oracle responds, “Depleted Environment.” Interpreting this answer, you envision coming upon an expanse of cleared forest. All that remains of this once thick woodland is rotted stumps. What happened here? Perhaps the answer lies ahead...

## FEATURE: FOCUS

1-2	Attack	35-36	Trail	69-70	Illumination
3-4	Threshold	37-38	Supply	71-72	Obstacle
5-6	Boundary	39-40	History	73-74	Craft
7-8	Alarm	41-42	Prisoner	75-76	Container
9-10	Exit	43-44	Habitation	77-78	Information
11-12	Passage	45-46	Debris	79-80	Grave
13-14	Crossing	47-48	Creature	81-82	Equipment
15-16	Trigger	49-50	Lair	83-84	Shelter
17-18	Trap	51-52	Person	85-86	Denizen
19-20	Hideaway	53-54	Enclosure	87-88	Environment
21-22	Nature	55-56	Remains	89-90	Material
23-24	Sign	57-58	Water	91-92	Resource
25-26	Refuge	59-60	Message	93-94	Corruption
27-28	Valuables	61-62	Darkness	95-96	Death
29-30	Breach	63-64	Opening	97-98	Function
31-32	Route	65-66	Weapon	99-00	Power
33-34	Location	67-68	Entry		



# SITE NAME

## SITE NAME: FORMAT

- 1-25 [Description] [Place]
- 26-50 [Place] of [Detail]
- 51-70 [Place] of [Description] [Detail]
- 71-80 [Place] of [Namesake's] [Detail]
- 81-85 [Namesake's] [Place]
- 86-95 [Description] [Place] of [Namesake]
- 96-00 [Place] of [Namesake]

To generate a name for a site, first roll on the Format table above. Then, fill in the blanks by using the Description (page 207), Detail (page 208), Namesake (page 209), and Place (page 210) oracles.

If the form of a particular word doesn't work, try making it plural instead of singular, or vice-versa.

If you already know the theme and domain, you can pick from the tables instead of rolling. If not, you can use these oracles to help define those aspects of the site. Use the Place oracle to roll for a domain, and let the Description and Detail oracles inform your selection of a theme.

The site's name might be known in your world, or it could just be an evocative label you use to understand its history and nature.

## SITE NAME: DESCRIPTION

1-2	Deep	35-36	Shrouded	69-70	Elder
3-4	Tainted	37-38	Wasted	71-72	Scorched
5-6	Grey	39-40	Grim	73-74	Unknown
7-8	Forgotten	41-42	Endless	75-76	Scarred
9-10	Flooded	43-44	Crumbling	77-78	Broken
11-12	Forbidden	45-46	Undying	79-80	Chaotic
13-14	Barren	47-48	Bloodied	81-82	Black
15-16	Lost	49-50	Forsaken	83-84	Hidden
17-18	Cursed	51-52	Silent	85-86	Sundered
19-20	Fell	53-54	Blighted	87-88	Shattered
21-22	Sunken	55-56	Iron	89-90	Dreaded
23-24	Nightmare	57-58	Frozen	91-92	Secret
25-26	Infernal	59-60	Abyssal	93-94	High
27-28	Dark	61-62	Crimson	95-96	Sacred
29-30	Bloodstained	63-64	Silver	97-98	Fallen
31-32	Haunted	65-66	Desecrated	99-00	Ruined
33-34	White	67-68	Ashen		

Even without giving a site a name, you can use the Description and Detail oracles to help flesh out the theme and nature of that place.

For example, you hear rumors about a nearby ruin while visiting a settlement. What do you learn? You *Ask the Oracle*, using the Description and Detail tables. The oracle responds, “Bloodied Banishment.”

Interpreting these keywords, you envision this settlement’s grim method of enacting justice. Anyone sentenced to death for a crime is taken to the ruins. There, under the fading light of the setting sun, they are bloodied by the quick slash of a ceremonial blade. Finally, they are chained to an altar within the central courtyard. The foul creatures who dwell in that place do the rest.

## SITE NAME: DETAIL

1-2	Blight	35-36	Silence	69-70	Winter
3-4	Strife	37-38	Mist	71-72	Sadness
5-6	Nightfall	39-40	Isolation	73-74	Desolation
7-8	Fury	41-42	Runes	75-76	Bane
9-10	Terror	43-44	Rot	77-78	Lies
11-12	Truth	45-46	Corruption	79-80	Ash
13-14	Spring	47-48	Prophecy	81-82	Banishment
15-16	Sanctuary	49-50	Fate	83-84	Shadow
17-18	Bone	51-52	Twilight	85-86	Madness
19-20	Specters	53-54	Power	87-88	Stone
21-22	Daybreak	55-56	Darkness	89-90	Secrets
23-24	Doom	57-58	Gloom	91-92	Despair
25-26	Treachery	59-60	Storms	93-94	Blades
27-28	Blood	61-62	Hope	95-96	Dread
29-30	War	63-64	Lament	97-98	Light
31-32	Torment	65-66	Frost	99-00	Wrath
33-34	Iron	67-68	Souls		



## SITE NAME: NAMESAKE

1-2	Breckon	35-36	Kajir	69-70	Farina
3-4	Issara	37-38	Saiven	71-72	Yala
5-6	Milenna	39-40	Callwen	73-74	Kodroth
7-8	Thorval	41-42	Zhan	75-76	Morien
9-10	Khulan	43-44	Solana	77-78	Akida
11-12	Aurvang	45-46	Ildar	79-80	Haldorr
13-14	Kalida	47-48	Keelan	81-82	Nyrad
15-16	Keeara	49-50	Thrain	83-84	Edda
17-18	Andor	51-52	Kynan	85-86	Jorund
19-20	Zakaria	53-54	Jadina	87-88	Morraine
21-22	Willa	55-56	Radek	89-90	Lindar
23-24	Etana	57-58	Wulan	91-92	Sithra
25-26	Valgard	59-60	Garion	93-94	Torgan
27-28	Kenrick	61-62	Eysa	95-96	Arnorr
29-30	Wyland	63-64	Kolor	97-98	Thyri
31-32	Sidura	65-66	Katarra	99-00	Erisia
33-34	Svala	67-68	Dain		

You may also use your preferred name randomizer to generate a Namesake for your site.

If you want to add details for the Namesake, use the Character oracles in *Ironsworn Core* (page 182). This may help inspire a deeper understanding of the history of the site.

## SITE NAME: PLACE

### 1-6 Barrow

1-16	Sepulcher	50-66	Mound
17-32	Grave	67-83	Tomb
33-49	Crypt	84-00	Barrow

### 7-18 Cavern

1-10	Abyss	51-60	Hollow
11-20	Caverns	61-70	Lair
21-30	Caves	71-80	Rift
31-40	Chasm	81-90	Tunnels
41-50	Depths	91-00	Warren

### 19-28 Frozen Cavern

1-10	Abyss	51-60	Hollow
11-20	Caverns	61-70	Lair
21-30	Caves	71-80	Rift
31-40	Chasm	81-90	Tunnels
41-50	Depths	91-00	Warren

### 29-32 Icereach

1-16	Icemark	50-66	Waste
17-32	Wintertide	67-83	Expanse
33-49	Reach	84-00	Barrens

### 33-38 Mine

1-16	Lode	50-66	Mine
17-32	Dig	67-83	Tunnels
33-49	Forge	84-00	Cut

### 39-48 Pass

1-10	Cliffs	51-60	Heights
11-20	Crag	61-70	Highlands
21-30	Cut	71-80	Pass
31-40	Gap	81-90	Reach
41-50	Gorge	91-00	Ridge

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**49-58 Ruin**

1-10	Citadel	51-60	Sanctuary
11-20	Enclave	61-70	Sanctum
21-30	Fortress	71-80	Spire
31-40	Hall	81-90	Temple
41-50	Keep	91-00	Tower

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**59-68 Sea Cave**

1-16	Caves	50-66	Hollow
17-32	Channel	67-83	Pools
33-49	Cove	84-00	Gouge

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**69-78 Shadowfen**

1-10	Bog	51-60	Morass
11-20	Fen	61-70	Quagmire
21-30	Lowland	71-80	Floodlands
31-40	Marsh	81-90	Slough
41-50	Mire	91-00	Wetlands

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**79-83 Stronghold**

1-10	Bastion	51-60	Keep
11-20	Citadel	61-70	Outpost
21-30	Fortress	71-80	Refuge
31-40	Garrison	81-90	Sanctuary
41-50	Haven	91-00	Watch

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**84-95 Tanglewood**

1-11	Weald	49-61	Thicket
12-23	Tangle	62-74	Forest
24-35	Bramble	75-87	Wilds
36-48	Briar	88-00	Wood

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**96-00 Underkeep**

1-10	Catacomb	51-60	Maze
11-20	Chambers	61-70	Pit
21-30	Den	71-80	Sanctum
31-40	Hall	81-90	Underkeep
41-50	Labyrinth	91-00	Vault

# SITE NATURE

## SITE NATURE: THEME

1-11	Ancient	49-61	Haunted
12-23	Corrupted	62-74	Infested
24-35	Fortified	75-87	Ravaged
36-48	Hallowed	88-00	Wild

## SITE NATURE: DOMAIN

1-6	Barrow	49-58	Ruin
7-18	Cavern	59-68	Sea Cave
19-28	Frozen Cavern	69-78	Shadowfen
29-32	Icereach	79-83	Stronghold
33-38	Mine	84-95	Tanglewood
39-48	Pass	96-00	Underkeep

Use these oracles to generate a random theme and domain for a site. Alternatively, you can print out the theme and domain cards and draw a random result. Or use the Site Name oracles (page 206) to inspire the selection of a theme and domain.

# CHARACTER

## CHARACTER: DISPOSITION

1-6	Helpful	29-36	Indifferent	68-76	Demanding
7-13	Friendly	37-47	Suspicious	77-85	Unfriendly
14-20	Cooperative	48-57	Wanting	86-93	Threatening
21-28	Curious	58-67	Desperate	94-00	Hostile

## CHARACTER: ACTIVITY

1-2	Guarding	35-36	Tracking	69-70	Distracting
3-4	Preserving	37-38	Escorting	71-72	Leaving
5-6	Constructing	39-40	Hiding	73-74	Fighting
7-8	Mending	41-42	Raiding	75-76	Ambushing
9-10	Assisting	43-44	Socializing	77-78	Controlling
11-12	Securing	45-46	Exploring	79-80	Observing
13-14	Learning	47-48	Journeying	81-82	Gathering
15-16	Sneaking	49-50	Supporting	83-84	Suffering
17-18	Fleeing	51-52	Avoiding	85-86	Threatening
19-20	Sacrificing	53-54	Disabling	87-88	Searching
21-22	Creating	55-56	Leading	89-90	Destroying
23-24	Luring	57-58	Assaulting	91-92	Restoring
25-26	Hunting	59-60	Ensnaring	93-94	Consuming
27-28	Seizing	61-62	Defending	95-96	Removing
29-30	Bargaining	63-64	Recovering	97-98	Inspecting
31-32	Mimicking	65-66	Patrolling	99-00	Summoning
33-34	Tricking	67-68	Resting		

Use the Disposition oracle to understand the initial posture of another character or faction toward you—which may change as you interact. Or you can use this oracle to define the relationships between NPCs or factions.

To give an NPC or faction a task or objective, use the Activity oracle. For more detail, you can combine this prompt with the Focus oracle (page 205) or Theme oracle (*Ironsworn Core*, page 175).

# MONSTROSITY

## MONSTROSITY: SIZE

1-5	Tiny (rodent-sized)	66-94	Large (giant-sized)
6-30	Small (hound-sized)	95-99	Huge (whale-sized)
31-65	Medium (person-sized)	00	Titanic (incomprehensible)

## MONSTROSITY: PRIMARY FORM

1-15	Beast / mammal	67-69	Crustacean
16-25	Humanoid	70-71	Fish
26-31	Bird	72-73	Octopoid
32-37	Spider	74-75	Amphibian
38-43	Snake	76-77	Plant
44-49	Worm / slug	78	Incorporeal
50-55	Lizard	79	Mineral
56-61	Insect	80	Elemental
62-66	Amorphous	81-00	Hybrid (roll twice)

Use The Monstrosity oracle to define the nature of a Nightspawn (page 125), or to introduce a new type of animal, beast, or horror in your world.

To create a monstrosity, start by rolling for its Size and Primary Form (above). Then, roll up to four times for Characteristics (page 215) and keep up to three of those results. Do the same for Abilities (page 216).

Give the monstrosity a rank. Choose one appropriate to its features, or use the Challenge Rank oracle (*Ironsworn Core*, page 190).

Finally, envision your creation and give it a name. It's part of your world now.

## MONSTROSITY: CHARACTERISTICS

1-5	Extra limbs	67-69	Mandibles / pincers
6-10	Fangs / rows of sharp teeth	70-72	Luminescent
11-15	Claws / talons	73-75	Antennae / sensory organs
16-20	Strange color / markings	76-78	Proboscis / inner jaw
21-25	Horns / tusks	79-81	Exoskeleton / shell
26-30	Oversized mouth	82-84	Bony protuberances
31-35	Spikes / spines	85-87	Corrupted flesh
36-40	Tail	88-90	Semi-transparent
41-45	Multi-segmented body	91-93	Scarred / injured
46-50	Wings	94-95	Egg sac / carried offspring
51-54	Stinger / barbs	96-97	Rotting / skeletal
55-58	Many-eyed	98	Mummified / desiccated
59-62	Distinctive sound	99	Multi-headed
63-66	Tentacles / tendrils	00	Etched with mystic runes

Some results on these tables include two related options separated by a slash (/). Pick the one which best fits the nature of the creature or is the most interesting. You can also make one of the options likely, and *Ask the Oracle* (using the pick two procedure) to confirm your choice. Or just take both!

## MONSTROSITY: ABILITIES

1-4	Keen senses	70-71	Parasitic
5-8	Intimidating vocalization	72-73	Vibration sense
9-12	Climber	74-75	Breath weapon / toxic spew
13-16	Intelligent	76-77	Mimicry
17-20	Swift	78-79	Shapeshifting
21-24	Powerful bite	80-81	Control lesser creatures
25-28	Stealthy / ambusher	82-83	Echolocation
29-32	Horrid visage	84-85	Electric shock
33-36	Strong	86-87	Acidic
37-40	Camouflaged	88-89	Symbiotic
41-43	Flier / glider	90-91	Shoot projectiles
44-46	Poisonous	92	Paralyzing
47-49	Semiaquatic / swimmer	93	Immune to iron
50-52	Grappler / entangler	94	Feels no pain
53-55	Leaper	95	Enact rituals
56-58	Crusher / constrictor	96	Create illusions
59-61	Armored	97	Mind control / telepathy
62-64	Burrower	98	Move between realities
65-67	Noxious smell	99	Wield weapons
68-69	Trap-setter	00	Control elements

You should weave these abilities into the fiction of your encounter with a monstrosity. Combined with its physical characteristics, they help define the creature's approach and tactics. Make moves as appropriate to overcome, avoid, or face the consequences of these abilities.

To learn more about your creation's nature, you can roll on additional tables. Use the Character Goal oracle (*Ironsworn Core*, page 182) to give the monstrosity a purpose. Roll on the Character Disposition and Activity oracles (page 213) to frame your initial encounter. Another roll or two can give your monstrosity nuance and complexity, making it a deeper part of your story.

# TRAP

## TRAP: EVENT

1-4	Block	37-40	Imitate	73-76	Collapse
5-8	Create	41-44	Crush	77-80	Summon
9-12	Break	45-48	Drop	81-84	Move
13-16	Puncture	49-52	Conceal	85-88	Surprise
17-20	Entangle	53-56	Lure	89-92	Divert
21-24	Enclose	57-60	Release	93-96	Attack
25-28	Ambush	61-64	Obscure	97-00	Trigger
29-32	Snare	65-68	Cut		
33-36	Change	69-72	Smother		

## TRAP: COMPONENT

1-4	Pit	37-40	Trigger	73-76	Barrier
5-8	Water	41-44	Cold	77-80	Overhead
9-12	Fire	45-48	Weapon	81-84	Magic
13-16	Projectile	49-52	Darkness	85-88	Toxin
17-20	Passage	53-56	Decay	89-92	Earth
21-24	Fall	57-60	Path	93-96	Light
25-28	Debris	61-64	Stone	97-00	Denizen
29-32	Fear	65-68	Terrain		
33-36	Alarm	69-72	Poison		

If you encounter a trap within a site, use these oracles to better understand the nature or function of this obstacle. Roll once for an Event and once for a Component, and interpret the response as appropriate to the situation and environment. A trap might be a physical, supernatural, or an ambush by a denizen.

If you are in a position to overcome or avoid the trap, make moves to see what happens. A simple trap might be dealt with in a single action, such as through the *Face Danger* move. A complex trap could be represented as a scene challenge (*Ironsworn Core*, page 234).

# COMBAT EVENT

## COMBAT EVENT: METHOD

1-2	Defy	35-36	Charge	69-70	Withdraw
3-4	Break	37-38	Escalate	71-72	Clash
5-6	Trick	39-40	Sunder	73-74	Amplify
7-8	Evade	41-42	Shatter	75-76	Batter
9-10	Protect	43-44	Aim	77-78	Feint
11-12	Overwhelm	45-46	Stagger	79-80	Shove
13-14	Persevere	47-48	Counter	81-82	Embed
15-16	Assist	49-50	Seize	83-84	Affect
17-18	Await	51-52	Impact	85-86	Probe
19-20	Abort	53-54	Entangle	87-88	Force
21-22	Block	55-56	Hold	89-90	Intensify
23-24	Collide	57-58	Deflect	91-92	Distract
25-26	Focus	59-60	Drop	93-94	Challenge
27-28	Advance	61-62	Lose	95-96	Brawl
29-30	Breach	63-64	Sweep	97-98	Coordinate
31-32	Endure	65-66	Secure	99-00	Overrun
33-34	Assault	67-68	Cover		

Use the Combat Event oracles to answer questions about the actions of a foe or enemy force. You can use these oracles instead of—or in addition to—the Combat Action oracle (*Ironsworn Core*, page 188).

Roll once each on the Method oracle (above) and the Target oracle (page 219). Then, interpret the response as appropriate to the current situation and the nature of your foe.

For example, you are fighting a rhaskar, a bear-like beast. It has initiative, and you want to know what it does next. You *Ask the Oracle*, rolling Method and Target. The oracle responds, “Await Weakness.” You envision the rhaskar circling you, its keen eyes narrowing as it looks for an opening in your defenses. You must *Face Danger* to avoid being outmaneuvered.

## COMBAT EVENT: TARGET

1-2	Control	35-36	Weapon	69-70	Armor
3-4	Defense	37-38	Environment	71-72	Skill
5-6	Limbs	39-40	Technique	73-74	Body
7-8	Focus	41-42	Surprise	75-76	Protection
9-10	Advantage	43-44	Pride	77-78	Resolve
11-12	Range	45-46	Wound	79-80	Ferocity
13-14	Stress	47-48	Precision	81-82	Shield
15-16	Sense	49-50	Ally	83-84	Ammo
17-18	Weakness	51-52	Ground	85-86	Anger
19-20	Opening	53-54	Courage	87-88	Opportunity
21-22	Fear	55-56	Companion	89-90	Balance
23-24	Instinct	57-58	Object	91-92	Position
25-26	Footing	59-60	Momentum	93-94	Barrier
27-28	Maneuver	61-62	Speed	95-96	Strategy
29-30	Reach	63-64	Strength	97-98	Grasp
31-32	Harm	65-66	Supply	99-00	Power
33-34	Finesse	67-68	Terrain		



# THREAT

## THREAT: CATEGORY

1-10	Burgeoning Conflict	51-60	Ravaging Horde
11-20	Cursed Site	61-70	Scheming Leader
21-30	Environmental Calamity	71-80	Power-Hungry Mystic
31-40	Malignant Plague	81-90	Zealous Cult
41-50	Rampaging Creature	91-00	Roll Twice

These oracles support the optional threat mechanics detailed in Chapter 6 (page 151).

You can use the Category oracle above to randomly select a broad type of threat for your campaign. If you are told to roll twice, take both results and decide how these two threats act together or represent a more complex situation. For example, choosing both a Malignant Plague and Zealous Cult might signify an evil sect which has unleashed a sickness upon the Ironlands in service to some dark god.

For additional detail, use other oracles as appropriate. For example, you can look to the Action and Theme oracles (*Ironsworn Core*, page 174) or Character Goal oracle (*Ironsworn Core*, page 182) to define the motivations of a Scheming Leader.

Once you've introduced a threat, consider how it endangers something or someone important to you, and *Swear an Iron Vow* to see its goal undone.

Then, as you *Advance a Threat* (page 155), you can roll on the oracle table for your specific threat (pages 221-223) to generate an action, approach, or complication. Interpret the oracle's answer as appropriate to the nature of the threat and the current situation.

If you aren't using the threat mechanics within your campaign, you can use still these oracles to inspire details for enemies, troubles, and complications.

## **THREAT: BURGEONING CONFLICT**

- 1-10 Allow warmongers to gain influence
- 11-20 Break a treaty
- 21-30 Force a hasty decision
- 31-40 Deepen suspicions
- 41-50 Trigger a confrontation
- 51-60 Subvert a potential accord
- 61-70 Isolate the antagonists
- 71-80 Draw new battle lines
- 81-90 Reveal an unexpected aspect of the dispute
- 91-00 Introduce a new person or faction to complicate the situation

## **THREAT: CURSED SITE**

- 1-10 Unleash a creature or being
- 11-20 Lure the unwary into its depths
- 21-30 Offer promises of power
- 31-40 Reveal a new aspect of its cursed history
- 41-50 Expand its malignancy to surrounding lands
- 51-60 Leave its mark on an inhabitant or visitor
- 61-70 Reveal hidden depths
- 71-80 Ensnare an important person or object
- 81-90 Corrupt the environment
- 91-00 Transform its nature

## **THREAT: ENVIRONMENTAL CALAMITY**

- 1-10 Devastate a place
- 11-20 Block a path
- 21-30 Threaten a community with imminent destruction
- 31-40 Manifest unexpected effects
- 41-50 Expand in scope or intensity
- 51-60 Allow someone to take advantage
- 61-70 Deprive of resources
- 71-80 Isolate an important person or community
- 81-90 Force refugees into hostile lands
- 91-00 Disrupt natural ecosystems

## **THREAT: MALIGNANT PLAGUE**

- 1-10 Manifest new symptoms or effects
- 11-20 Infect someone important
- 21-30 Expand to new territory or communities
- 31-40 Allow someone to take advantage
- 41-50 Allow someone to take the blame
- 51-60 Create panic or disorder
- 61-70 Force a horrible decision
- 71-80 Lure into complacency
- 81-90 Reveal the root of the sickness
- 91-00 Undermine a potential cure

## **THREAT: RAMPAGING CREATURE**

- 1-10 Reveal a new aspect of its nature or abilities
- 11-20 Expand its territory
- 21-30 Make a sudden and brutal attack
- 31-40 Control or influence lesser creatures
- 41-50 Create confusion or strife
- 51-60 Leave foreboding signs
- 61-70 Lure the unwary
- 71-80 Imperil an event
- 81-90 Assert control over a location
- 91-00 Threaten resources

## **THREAT: RAVAGING HORDE**

- 1-10 Overrun defenses
- 11-20 Gather resources
- 21-30 Attack a location
- 31-40 Expand forces
- 41-50 Appoint or reveal a leader
- 51-60 Send forth a champion
- 61-70 Create a diversion
- 71-80 Undermine an opposing force from within
- 81-90 Cut off supplies or reinforcements
- 91-00 Employ a new weapon

## **THREAT: SCHEMING LEADER**

- 1-10 Defeat an enemy
- 11-20 Form a new alliance
- 21-30 Usurp or undermine another leader
- 31-40 Force the loyalty of a community or important person
- 41-50 Enact a new law or tradition
- 51-60 Rescind an old law or tradition
- 61-70 Reveal a true intention
- 71-80 Unravel an existing alliance
- 81-90 Incite conflict
- 91-00 Use an unexpected capability or asset

## **THREAT: POWER-HUNGRY MYSTIC**

- 1-10 Gain hidden knowledge
- 11-20 Assault an enemy with magic
- 21-30 Despoil a place through magic
- 31-40 Forge a bond with ancient forces
- 41-50 Create magical wards or protections
- 51-60 Obtain a powerful artifact
- 61-70 Tempt with power or secrets
- 71-80 Recruit a follower or ally
- 81-90 Sacrifice something in exchange for greater power
- 91-00 Use magic to trick or deceive

## **THREAT: ZEALOUS CULT**

- 1-10 Overtake a faction or community
- 11-20 Unlock secrets to greater power
- 21-30 Establish false credibility
- 31-40 Appoint or reveal a leader
- 41-50 Lure new members or establish alliances
- 51-60 Subvert opposition through devious schemes
- 61-70 Attack opposition directly
- 71-80 Spread the word of its doctrine
- 81-90 Reveal a dire prophecy
- 91-00 Reveal its true nature or goal





# APPENDIX A: DELVE MOVES

## DISCOVER A SITE *(page 19)*

When you resolve to enter a perilous site in pursuit of an objective, choose the theme and domain which best represent its nature (*Ask the Oracle* if unsure), and give it a rank.

- Troublesome site: 3 progress per area.
- Dangerous site: 2 progress per area.
- Formidable site: 1 progress per area.
- Extreme site: 2 ticks per area.
- Epic site: 1 tick per area.

If you are returning to a previously explored site, roll both challenge dice, take the lowest value, and clear that number of progress boxes.

Then, *Delve the Depths* to explore this place.

## DELVE THE DEPTHS *(page 21)*

When you traverse an area within a perilous site, envision your surroundings (*Ask the Oracle* if unsure). Then, consider your approach. If you navigate this area...

- With haste: Roll +edge.
- With stealth or trickery: Roll +shadow.
- With observation, intuition, or expertise: Roll +wits.

On a **strong hit**, you delve deeper. Mark progress and *Find an Opportunity*.

On a **weak hit**, roll on the following table according to your stat.

On a **miss**, *Reveal a Danger*.

Edge	Shadow	Wits	Weak Hit Result
1-45	1-30	1-40	Mark progress and <i>Reveal a Danger</i> .
46-65	31-65	41-55	Mark progress.
66-75	66-90	56-80	Choose one: Mark progress or <i>Find an Opportunity</i> .
76-80	91-99	81-99	Take both: Mark progress and <i>Find an Opportunity</i> .
81-00	00	00	Mark progress twice and <i>Reveal a Danger</i> .

## FIND AN OPPORTUNITY (page 30)

When you encounter a helpful situation or feature within a site, roll on the following table. If you are making this move as a result of a strong hit on *Delve the Depths*, you may pick or envision an opportunity instead of rolling.

Then, choose one.

- Gain insight or prepare: Take +1 momentum.
- Take action now: You and any allies may make a move (not a progress move) which directly leverages the opportunity. When you do, add +1 and take +1 momentum on a hit.

Roll	Result
1-25	The terrain favors you, or you find a hidden path.
26-45	An aspect of the history or nature of this place is revealed.
46-57	You locate a secure area.
58-68	A clue offers insight or direction.
69-78	You get the drop on a denizen.
79-86	This area provides an opportunity to scavenge, forage, or hunt.
87-90	You locate an interesting or helpful object.
91-94	You are alerted to a potential threat.
95-98	You encounter a denizen who might support you.
99-00	You encounter a denizen in need of help.

## REVEAL A DANGER (page 34)

When you encounter a risky situation within a site, envision the danger or roll on the following table.

Roll	Result
1-30	Check the theme card.
31-45	Check the domain card.
46-57	You encounter a hostile denizen.
58-68	You face an environmental or architectural hazard.
69-76	A discovery undermines or complicates your quest.
77-79	You confront a harrowing situation or sensation.
80-82	You face the consequences of an earlier choice or approach.
83-85	Your way is blocked or trapped.
86-88	A resource is diminished, broken, or lost.
89-91	You face a perplexing mystery or tough choice.
92-94	You lose your way or are delayed.
95-00	Roll twice more on this table. Both results occur. If they are the same result, make it worse.

## CHECK YOUR GEAR (page 38)

When you check to see if you have a specific helpful item, and you have at least +1 supply, roll +supply.

On a **strong hit**, you have it. Take +1 momentum.

On a **weak hit**, you have it, but your resources are diminished. Take +1 momentum and suffer -1 supply.

On a **miss**, you don't have it and the situation grows more perilous. *Pay the Price.*

## LOCATE YOUR OBJECTIVE (page 40)

### Progress Move

When your exploration of a site comes to an end, roll the challenge dice and compare to your progress. Momentum is ignored on this roll.

On a **strong hit**, you locate your objective and the situation favors you. Choose one.

- Make another move now (not a progress move), and add +1.
- Take +1 momentum.

On a **weak hit**, you locate your objective but face an unforeseen hazard or complication. Envision what you find (*Ask the Oracle* if unsure).

On a **miss**, your objective falls out of reach, you have been misled about the nature of your objective, or you discover that this site holds unexpected depths. If you continue your exploration, clear all but one filled progress and raise the site's rank by one (if not already epic).

## ESCAPE THE DEPTHS (page 42)

When you flee or withdraw from a site, consider the situation and your approach. If you...

- Find the fastest way out: Roll +edge.
- Steel yourself against the horrors of this place: Roll +heart.
- Fight your way out: Roll +iron.
- Retrace your steps or locate an alternate path: Roll +wits.
- Keep out of sight: Roll +shadow.

On a **strong hit**, you make your way safely out of the site. Take +1 momentum.

On a **weak hit**, you find your way out, but this place exacts its price. Choose one.

- You are weary or wounded: *Endure Harm*.
- The experience leaves you shaken: *Endure Stress*.
- You are delayed, and it costs you.
- You leave behind something important.
- You face a new complication as you emerge from the depths.
- A denizen plots their revenge.

On a **miss**, a dire threat or imposing obstacle stands in your way. *Reveal a Danger*. If you survive, you may make your escape.

## APPENDIX B: OPTIONAL MOVES

### REVEAL A DANGER *(alternate version - page 68)*

When you encounter a risky situation within a site, envision the danger or roll on the following table.

Roll	Result
1-22	You encounter a hostile denizen.
23-42	You face an environmental or architectural hazard.
43-58	A discovery undermines or complicates your quest.
59-64	You confront a harrowing situation or sensation.
65-70	You face the consequences of an earlier choice or approach.
71-76	The path is blocked or trapped.
77-82	A resource is diminished, broken, or lost.
83-88	You face a perplexing mystery or tough choice.
89-94	You lose your way or are delayed.
95-00	Roll twice more on this table. Both results occur. If they are the same result, make it worse.

### MARK YOUR FAILURE *(page 58)*

When you make a move and score a miss, mark a tick on your failure track. If you score a miss when making a progress move, mark two ticks.

### LEARN FROM YOUR FAILURES *(page 59)*

#### *Progress Move*

When you spend time reflecting on your hardships and missteps, and your failure track is +6 or greater, roll your challenge dice and compare to your progress. Momentum is ignored on this roll.

On a **strong hit**, you commit to making a dramatic change. Take 3 experience and clear all progress. Then, choose one.

- Adjust your approach: Discard a single asset, and take 2 experience for each marked ability.
- Make an oath: *Swear an Iron Vow*, and reroll any dice.
- Ready your next steps: Take +3 momentum.

On a **weak hit**, you learn from your mistakes. Take 2 experience and clear all progress.

On a **miss**, you've learned the wrong lessons. Take 1 experience and clear all progress. Then, envision how you set off on an ill-fated path.

## **ADVANCE A THREAT** (*page 155*)

When you give ground to a threat through inaction, failure, or delay, roll on the table below and envision how the change manifests in your world (*Ask the Oracle* if unsure).

Roll	Result
1-30	The threat readies its next step, or a new danger looms. If you are in a position to prevent this development, you may attempt to do so. If you succeed, <i>Reach a Milestone</i> . Otherwise, mark menace.
31-70	The threat works subtly to advance toward its goal, or the danger escalates. Mark menace.
71-00	The threat makes a dramatic and immediate move, or a major event reveals new complications. Mark menace twice.

On a match, this development also exposes a surprising aspect of the threat's plan or nature.

If you mark the last box on the threat's menace track, the threat achieves its goal, or the final dire outcome occurs. You must *Forsake Your Vow*.

## **TAKE A HIATUS** (*page 158*)

When you spend an extended time recovering in a safe place while a threat is active, do any of the following.

- Clear any marked conditions.
- Set your health, spirit, supply, and companion health to their maximum values.
- Set your momentum to its reset value.

Then, for each active threat, *Advance a Threat*.

## **WIELD A RARITY** (*page 176*)

When you make a move aided by an augmented asset, roll your rarity die in place of your action die.

On any result with 6 showing on the rarity die, the power of the rarity manifests in a dramatic and obvious way. You score an automatic strong hit and take +1 momentum.

On a hit with 5 showing on the rarity die, the power of the rarity manifests in a subtle way. Take +1 momentum.

On a miss with 1 showing on the rarity die, the rarity's power fails or works against you.



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