

“The Marrow witch from Hill” is a 3–5-hour Oneshot for 3 to 4 players. It is intended to introduce players to Talebones and its setting; a fragmented world recovering from an ancient tragedy.

This oneshot might be terribly unbalanced depending on the group, so feel free to deviate/add any homebrew rulings you would like. I would love to get feedback either way about what was changed, but do not feel pressured to stick to the script by the letter.

For a German version I can provide a partial translation if required.

5 Room Dungeons

The 5-room dungeon is a common stylistic device in adventure writing. Generally, it is structured as follows:

1. Entrance and Guardian
An obstacle that prevents the characters from entering the actual area of their adventure.
2. Puzzle or Roleplaying Challenge
A trial that cannot be solved by brute force and offers a break in the adventure.
3. Trick or Setback
Building of tension and an opportunity to include players not yet catered to.
4. Climax, Big Battle or Conflict
The central Encounter or Obstacle blocking the characters from reaching their goal. Should be as cinematic as possible.
5. Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist
Reveal of future things to come or recontextualization of the victory in Room 4.

A 5-room dungeon does not have to be exactly 5-rooms, nor does it have to be an actual dungeon. The structure can be applied to anything that should be relatively short, but nonetheless should have a narrative arc.

Character Outline

Included in this Oneshot are four Player-Characters. You can contact me under: info@talebones.net, if you want to get the Document for Custom Character Development.

Each player should pick a Character Name, Character Species and profession for their character.

Character 1 is a fast-moving fighter, utilizing a whip. They are designed to jump a lot and hunt down enemies that split off the main combat.

Character 2 is a Marrow-Witch. A learned magic user, supporting their party with several spells that damage themselves as they are being cast.

Character 3 is a nimble ranged combatant with a war bow. They help others move through the battlefield easier and safer while shooting anyone who isn't an ally.

Character 4 is the slowest of the four, but makes that up, by dealing obscene damage with their greathammer or katana, often finishing off multiple opponents in one fell swoop.

The Marrow-Witch from Hill

Intro

In the previous village you have heard about the new mayor of Hill. Your group has either banded together just then or has been travelling for a while, but in the Grassfolk-community you received multiple requests to look into the strange things happening in Hill since then. In a very unorganized fashion, you were told everything, from “Maybe just try to talk to the mayor” to “-and if you need to burn down all of Hill, so be it.”. All in all, you get the impression that as long as the weird happenings stop, you will be thanked and rewarded afterwards. Rumours are that the new mayor of Hill is indeed not ordinary Folk, but a Marrow-Witch. A label often burdened with plenty of superstition by common Folk, who are understandably scared by someone who breaks their leg and runs faster afterwards. But Marrow-Witches are not uncommon, so that alone would not lead to more than disdain by neighbours. No, apparently the new mayor of Hill is a Harrowing Marrow-Witch. A witch that uses dead bones.

Note

Here you might include an out of character information, that breaking dead bones causes the spirit of the deceased creature to come back to life with the only goal to murder you. So, while dead bones are essential for crafting longer lasting magical effects, the practise is connected with a lot of superstition.

So, your group has started their journey yesterday noon. Travelling through the dangerous wilderness between villages for the rest of the day, the only notable encounter was with a pack of wolves, trying to get a bite of you. Experienced adventurers that you are you dispatched them without much more than scratches and set up camp for the night. Sadly, you had to discover that a previous group was not so lucky and was eaten by the wolves recently.

Important Information:

- The village Hill has a new mayor.
- Mysterious and scary things have been going on in Hill since then.
- The characters have been tasked by a neighbouring village to deal with it.
- The way of how to deal with it, is up to the characters, due to split opinions of the quest givers.
- The group may decide themselves if they have been travelling together or freshly banded together in that last village.
- They started from the village yesterday at noon.
- In the evening, they encountered a pack of wolves, but defeated those handily.
- They set up camp for the night and rested.

Campsite

Start the players with the prompt of who would be up first in the morning.

You set up your campsite near a crossroad of three ancient, trampled paths. At least with a signpost, pointing

roughly towards the surrounding settlements. Next to the road you discovered ruins of a ruined building. Presumably an inn or tavern, ancient establishments that welcomed travellers between stops. Daring of the people back then, constructing a building without any protections. As expected, there is at most three rows of bricks left. The house has been ground down to basically nothing. Next to the campfire sits the backpack that you used yesterday to quickly gather all the belongings of the deceased party that preceded you. You gathered it in the dark and did not have the chance to check it out yet.

Environment:

- The campsite is surrounded by open, rolling hills covered with grass.
- Trees exist but are sparsely dotted around.

Contents of the backpack:

- Adventuring gear (ropes, mess kits, simple tools), nothing the characters do not have already
- A pouch with local coinage (there does not exist a general payment system in this setting. Foreign coins do get accepted, but local coins garner favourable opinions)
- A cut crystal lens, reflecting and focusing light

Note
You could ask for a Luck roll here to restrict the contents of the backpack.

Introduction to skill challenges

Do use this calm environment of everyone awakening one by one, to introduce the players to skill challenges.

General steps in a skill challenge:

1. Character wishes to do something that is not trivial for them to achieve or has stakes connected to it.
2. Game Master decides on a Base Attribute to roll for the challenge. The GM may (and should) clarify the angle the player tries to approach this challenge by. (e.g. difference between rolling a Feel vs. an Intelligence Challenge).
3. Player goes over their characters Talents if any apply and give them any benefits (either by being skilled or having pool points). They suggest that this Talent applies to the challenge and the GM allows the usage of it, if it does fit the challenge.
4. In the case of no Talents with benefits applying, the player may argue that due to their Profession they should be better at the current Challenge. If the GM agrees, they may consider their character skilled in the current challenge (You can never apply a Talent **and** your Profession to the same challenge!).
5. Any other character may help the challenge by performing a useful action to the task at hand and rolling their own challenge. Their successes get added to the successes of the original challenge.

6. The player rolls as many d20 as they have points in the base attribute of the challenge, plus 1d20 per pool point in a used Talent. If the character is considered skilled in the challenge any roll of 8 or higher is a success. If the character is unskilled a 13 or higher is needed.
7. The GM determines the degree of success based on the number of successes.

Skill Challenges: Difficulty

The GM may conclude that circumstances make the challenge harder or easier. They can call for a change of the default difficulty of a roll (i.e. unskilled (13) or skilled (8)) by 1 to 5 in either direction.

More extreme changes are possible but should be reserved for special occasions.

Skill Challenges: Success

The average result for a skilled challenge with 3 dice is 2-3 and for an unskilled challenge 1-2.

Here is a table that you can use to judge difficulty of a task, or the degree of success achieved.

Successes Needed	Degree/Difficulty
1	Skilled: Trivial Unskilled: Difficult
2	Skilled: Easy Unskilled: Doable
3	Skilled: Doable Unskilled: Difficult
4	Skilled: Difficult Unskilled: Very Difficult With Help: Doable

5	Skilled: Very Difficult Unskilled: Basically impossible With Help: Difficult
6-10	With Help: Very Difficult
>10	Unrealistic/Superpowered

(Feedback to this table is appreciated. Hard to judge without a lot of playtesting)

Journey to Hill

You start your trek and walk through the disturbingly peaceful open plain.

Note

If there wasn't an opportunity during the campsite to call for a challenge, here is another chance, by asking the players how they spend the journey.

Around noon you spot something at the horizon. At a distance just a dark rectangle against the sky, soon a Folk village comes into Focus.

Folk are by far the group of people who have the biggest population growth, compared to Grass- and Treefolk. Due to expansion being hard though, most Folk villages tend to stay within their footprint and build upwards. Hill is a village of at most 12 buildings. Each one of them being around 13 floors high, connected by bridges, clothing lines and balconies. Around all of it stands a roughly 12 feet high wooden palisade. The road you are following approaches the village and ends in a gate. The gate is currently closed.

Special information

- If the characters are very attentive, they can see the Marrow field protecting the town hall at a distance. The air over the town flickers, as if in a hot summer day. The flickering gets

less the closer you are to the field.

Gate

As you approach the closed gate, you spot two guards on either side of I, apparently standing on platforms behind the palisade. Neither of them seem overly attentive, as their spears lean against the railing and they are chatting with each other over the gate.

At some point they do notice you though and the right guard picks up their spear as the left guard addresses you with a call.

To get through the gate, the group needs to succeed 5 times. Depending on how organized they are at this point you can have them require the successes in a single challenge or cumulative over multiple.

Technically they could try to climb the palisade and defeat the guards as well, but no playtesting group decided for that yet. If your group does, consider these guards to have ~2 Poise (so defeating both comes out to ~5 successes as well).

Important Information

- The Gate is supposed to be closed
- This is a recent policy change
- The guards' superior ("my boss", the mayor) has ordered it
- According to the guard, the group does not want to speak with the mayor
- If it comes out that the guard let the group in, the mayor is going to be displeased

- People, the mayor is displeased with, vanish (can be revealed later as well)

The streets of Hill

As you pass through the gate you are enveloped by a crowd. Thinking back on it, it should have been obvious that this many floors house even more people. Most of them do seem to be on the streets right now, making the ~15 feet wide village roads difficult to pass through.

Grassfolk must watch out to not be trampled, while Treefolk actively have to push through the crowd to get moving.

The edge of the road is lined with street vendors and food carts, making the space situation even worse and filling the air with shouts and the smell of freshly fried meats.

Most people do give you a stern glance, as they clearly identify the outsiders, but no one is voicing issue (yet).

Places:

- The streets
The streets of Hill are tightly packed with cheap NPCs. The characters can address a bystander, a store clerk or anyone and they will be able to get at least some information (but rarely more than a single sentence). The only issue is to circumvent the natural reaction of "I don't talk to strangers". The streets are the best place to encounter cultists as well!
- The streets by night

At night the streets are barely illuminated and travelled. Only on street corners the characters run danger of stepping into the vision cone of a lantern or a villager standing guard. These guards rarely step out of the light of the lanterns, but will check out if they hear any suspicious noises or similar activity. None of these guards are actually able to put up any fight.

- *The drunken Roy*

The local bar of Hill is run by Roy (only rarely drunk). The guy does not really mind people sneaking into hill as he voted for Schloink originally and is at odds with the current mayor's policies. Roy knows a lot about Hill, and most certainly will rant about Schloink being the better pick for mayor.

NPC Description: Roy, he/him

Roy is a muscular but squat guy. His moustache and eyebrows are extremely long and reach behind the counter. Protruding from the back of his nose are two little tusks or horns.

- *Town Hall*

(see [The Town Hall](#))

- *Schloink's Home*

Schloink is living right next to the town hall on the second floor of a building. The characters can reach it by an outside staircase leading right to his front door. Their space is quaint, and the characters can notice easily that it is not designed for Schloink's physique, so the lack of their life partner is duly noted.

Schloink will refuse public involvement of themselves, as they don't want to shake the public opinion of the political system. They will supply information and covert assistance though and promise to step up, should the current mayor be removed from office.

NPC Description: Schloink, they/them

In front of you you can see a coiled-up spring, made from flesh. Roughly 3 feet in diameter, the spring ends in a single finger surrounded by two fleshy eyes. Schloink moves by slinking cart-wheel-esque.

Information:

- *Election*

The current mayor came into office by election. Every villager questioned by the characters has voted against her but are convinced that the election was nonetheless not rigged. Each just assume that they are alone with their vote.

- *Previous Mayor*

The previous mayor died as she was split off her hunting party in the wilderness. She was apparently trampled by a wild boar. She was buried where she fell, to not break any dead bones.

- *Cult Members from outside*

The mayor has brought in outsiders after being elected. They dress in black cloaks and are always carrying swords. They are behaving like they own hill, do not actually contribute anything

and get agitated at the slightest inconvenience.

Note

The cultists are supposed to be the understandable evil. They are just guys that are in positions of power that abuse people around them. Feel free to make up crimes they commit without being trialed for it. (e.g. in one playtest they suddenly gathered orphans in their houses and made them work for them)

- People go missing

If anyone voices concern about the mayor or questions her decisions, they vanish shortly after. This has left most in fearful inaction.

- Schloink

Schloink is the life partner of the deceased mayor. They were the one running against the marrow witch in last election, and even in losing has retained a high standing with the village folk due to their hard work and open ear to concerns. They were the secretary of their partner. Everyone knows where they live.

Speedy Player Prevention:

In the case that the characters ignore this “room” and head straight to the town hall to confront the marrow-witch:

The cult members following Shallen are undercover in the streets. If the characters are too obvious, up to 5 of the cult members start a brawl with them, in an attempt to distract them long enough for a messenger to reach Shallen.

Use the stats from [the Marrow-Witch](#) fight minions. They are dressed like common village people but are obviously trained in combat and behave way to brazen for village folk.

The Town Hall

The town hall is the only building in hill that is only mere two floors high and completely made of stone. All windows have been masoned shut and only a pair of large wooden doors lead into the building from a front courtyard. The courtyard is surrounded by a 7 feet tall wall with a stone archway cutting through its front.

Curiously the archway has no door or gate, and nonetheless none of the busy crowd seem to step directly in front of it. They rather seem to walk around it, leaving a glaring open space right in front of the arch.

Marrow field

The Marrow field is invisible at close and reacts to any movement entering it, reflecting it back outside with equal force.

The field is generated by a buried bone circle on the inside of the courtyard wall, underneath cobblestones (notably **inside** the field, while at the edge. The GM can decide if reaching this circle requires less successes than actively breaking the field).

Removing any bones and thusly breaking the circle deactivates the field. Reinserting the bone reactivates it. This way the mayor and her people leave and enter the town hall.

Mechanics:

- To overcome the field, 5 successes are required in a single challenge (that includes help).
- Any attempt to overcome the field with less than 5 successes deals as many successes to the character as poise damage (e.g. Character A throws a rock into the field with 3 successes, the rock rebounds into their stomach for 3 poise damage; Character B tries to sprint into the field with 2 successes, they get thrown to the ground outside the courtyard with 2 poise damage.).

Backdoor and Backchamber

The backdoor is a reward for groups that think before marching in through the front door.

The door is sturdy and has a good lock (that is locked, duh). Breaking it open, either by force or lockpicking is possible, though it would happen in plain view of anyone passing by (the backside of the town hall is just a regular street).

When entering by the backdoor, the group enters a small backroom of the town hall, containing three chests and a door.

One of the three chests is trapped. A character opening a chest has to succeed with 2 successes on a luck roll, or break a chicken bone, lodged in their chest's lock. This will summon a marrow wraith (see [The Marrow-Wraith](#))

Each of the three chests contain one of these items:

- Helmet of Agency

- Shoulders of Deflection
- Flute of Sorrow

Each of the items is made from a bone-metal alloy and is enchanted. What that means is very undefined at the moment, so it is up to the dm how much or how little they help.

Suggested abilities

- **Helmet of Agency:** While wearing the helmet, you are not required to take any movement.
(Good against Puppeteer of the Marrow-Witch)
- **Shoulders of Deflection:** Any telegraphed attack that includes movement, causes the attacker to target one field next to the wearer.
(e.g. Good against Swoop)
- **Flute of Sorrow:** Anyone hearing the play of this flute is very sad and decides not to do anything for this round.

Shallen, the Marrow-Witch from Hill

As you enter the large room you see a ritual in progress. In the centre a circular dais raises roughly 4 feet into the air, adorned with black stone insets. The 20-foot-high ceiling is supported by four columns, growing from the dais. Around the room is a large circle of nine people cloaked in black, each one raised hands and chanting. On top of the dais stands a figure in a heavy green mantle made of overlapping green pieces of fabric, emulating leaves. The hood is thrown up and out of it grows a majestic pair of elk antlers. Over the figures shoulders rests

the ribcage of an elk, framing their body like armour, in their left hand a long staff.

NPC Description: Shallen, she/her

A figure in a heavy green mantle made of overlapping green pieces of fabric, emulating leaves. The hood is thrown up and out of it grows a majestic pair of elk antlers. Over the figures shoulders rests the ribcage of an elk, framing their body like armour, in their left hand a long staff.

Underneath the hood Shallen is a pale Folk woman with elongated features and freckles in a greenish colour.

Shallen, the marrow witch, is open for conversation, but does not intend on accepting any bargaining points by the characters. She is holding this ritual because she is attempting to hold back the return of the old gods and requires a stable food source to do it. This is why she took over the village. She sees her life goal in holding this ritual, so the characters should not be able to just convince her to stop.

Description Text for the second phase

As you strike down the mayor she collapses to the ground, unconscious, dead. -

Crack, crack, crack

In horror you see how her body suddenly starts moving once more and the elk-ribcage on her back unfolds, opening behind her like two spindly wings. With a heavy thrust the marrow-witch is catapulted towards the ceiling, once more alive. And while heavily broken, she does seem to take you especially into her gaze.

Description Text for the third phase

With a heavy thud the marrow witch hits the ground, struck out of the air and now surely dead for good. Her body heavily mangled from your attacks, the body lays there as suddenly it starts twitching once more. But not the body of the marrow witch. She is apparently really dead. But instead, the ribcage twitches and shift. Rolling around and turning into a multilegged abomination, carrying the corpse of the once proud marrow-witch on its back.

Fracturing Talebones in Playtest

Due to the lack of preparation and previous knowledge of the system by the players, it is advised to just assume that the players fracture their character's talebone, should it be necessary. The epithet should then be acknowledging something unique or memorable the character did in the oneshot so far. The important part is that the concept becomes clear, not that the epithet sounds incredibly pleasing (so nice sounding is nice, but not necessary here. In an actual campaign/adventure one would delay the granting of the epithet until the player and the GM had a time to talk about it out of character).

In the case of having preparation time the GM can ask the players to prepare two fitting epithets that fit their backstory.

The Marrow-Wraith

Killing the third phase of the Marrow Witch should mean, breaking the elk-ribcage armour of the witch. This will summon a marrow wraith, targeting the character that landed the final blow.

IMPORTANT!

It can happen that pacing wise the witch boss fight ends, and the players are exhausted. I advise this part to only include if your players are still up for it, as it could feel overbearing if pushed through without regard. Listen to your players (especially their non-verbal cues) and adapt the oneshot accordingly. This is a playtest oneshot, lore accurate consequences of breaking dead bone are not the main priority.

The Marrow-Wraith will leave if defeated (see statblock) or the target fractures a talebones (so: dies).

Marrow-Wraith

Hit Points: 40

(can only be damaged by bone)

Poise: 9

AP: 10

For 5, Bod 2, Spe 5
Int 1, Fee 2, Exp 1, Imp 3

The Marrow-Wraith can move through solid matter freely.

Gore [3 AP]: 6d20 Melee Attack

Charge [7 AP, Telegraphed]: The Wraith attacks anything in a 3 wide, 10 long line with 10d20 Melee Attack and moves to the end of the line.

Wrap Up

After fighting the mayor, the party comes out as heroes (in an actual campaign this would only happen if the characters fractured less talebones than the boss. In the playtest that can be omitted.). Schloink thanks them as the new Mayor and offers them anything the small, poor village can offer. Probably the promise of free shelter anytime they come by.

Returning to the Grassfolk village, they get rewarded for their completed task.

Close up any free plots the characters kicked off in Hill!

After the oneshot feel free to gather feedback for the system and hand on the link to the playtest survey.

<https://forms.gle/xrVoTxEKoYvYwgoG9>

Inform me (info@talebones.net) when you play the oneshot and I can add your session to the selection.

Hooks

If you want to use this as a jumping off point for another expedition, here's some hooks you can use:

- Shallan arrived in Hill only recently around 6 months ago. She clearly had a community she was a part of before that. Probably with more similar minded people and cultists. The villagers of the Grassfolk request a more thorough protection from these people.
- Schloink requests from the group upon leaving, that they check in on the grave of their partner. They have suspicion that Shallan did something dangerous with the remains.
- Upon having a close gate for multiple weeks, the food situation in Hill looks bleak. The characters are asked to travel through the nearby wilderness and villages and organize additional supplies.

Appendix A: Town Hall Map



A: Courtyard protected by Marrow Field

B: Ritual Chamber

C: Backroom

D: Backdoor



Appendix B: Shallen, The Marrow Witch of Hill (Boss Fight)

1x Shallen - Marrow Witch of Hill

Shallen - Marrow Witch of Hill
Hit Points: 40 Poise: 6 AP: 10 + Number of alive minions For 2, Bod 2, Spe 4 Int 4, Fee 5, Exp 4, Imp 3
After dropping to 0 hit points, Shallen fractures one of her 2 talebones and returns to combat with an increased phase (phase 1 -> phase 2 -> phase 3).
Bone Club [2 AP]: 7d20 Melee Attack Puppeteer [1 AP]: Incantation, max. 5d20: Target moves successes hexes/squares/steps.
Reactive Actions: Exploding Corpse [2 AP, Telegraphed] (reacts after minion moving): Incantation, max 4d20: Target minion explodes and deals successes + remaining poise points of target minion damage to anyone within 2 radius. Shatter Weapon [3 AP] (reacts after being hit by a melee weapon): incantation, max 5d20: If successes greater or equal than the weapon dice pool, destroy weapon.
Only Phase 2: Swoop [2 AP, Telegraphed]: Move 4, any collisions deal 2 damage and afflict prone.
Only Phase 3: Grab [6 AP, Telegraphed]: 9d20 Melee Attack
Combos:

Phase 1.1 [2 AP + 2 AP per Attack]: Puppeteer target, a minion Move 3, all minions in range of target Attack

Phase 1.2 [5 AP]: Shatter weapon, Bone club

Phase 2 [5 AP]: move 4, swoop, force attack (-3)

Phase 3 [14 AP]: grab, speed attack (wounding 1), grab

Incantation: Needs to be cast via Marrowing. So, any failures deal direct HP damage.

Combos: Reactive Actions reacting to any other event. Can only be used in the according phase.

[Base Attribute] Attack: A (melee) Attack challenge using the base attribute dice pool.

9x Minion: Cultist

Minion: Cultist
Poise: 2 AP: Share the boss AP For 3, Bod 2, Spe 3 Int 3, Fee 1, Exp 3, Imp 2
Longsword [2 AP]: 6d20 Melee Attack Move [1 AP]: Move 2
Reactive Actions: Feed Marrow [1 AP] (supports incantation challenge): Incantation, max 3d20: Helps the challenge with successes.

Appendix C: Character Sheets

Download Character sheets from this
Drive Folder:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1UfiI4426SIA7wm9C2O9WQhfwvLsdPArM?usp=sharing>

Appendix D: Quick Rules

Challenges

At any point the game master may call for a skill or attack challenge. This is usually the case if an action performed by the characters has an unclear outcome.

The game master calls for a **skill challenge** by telling the player which *Base Attribute* is to be used in the challenge (i.e. Force, Body, Speed, Intelligence, Feel, Experience, Impression or Luck) and at what difficulty the challenge takes place (usually +/-0).

In response the player may argue that a **talent** of their choice is applicable in the situation. This can lead to being considered *skilled* in the challenge or gaining additional *pool* dice.

If the player cannot successfully argue for any beneficial talent, they may argue instead for their **profession** being applicable in the situation. If so, the character is considered skilled in the challenge.

After this discussion, the player rolls a number of d20 equal to the **collected challenge dice pool** (Base Attribute Pool + Talent Pool).

In an unskilled challenge a die is a **success** if it displays a number equal or higher to 13 adjusted by the difficulty of the challenge.

In a skilled challenge the base, unmodified value to meet is an 8.

A **20** on a die equals 2 successes.

All other dice not meeting the difficulty are considered **failures**.

Example: Sam, the Folk, wants to keep an eye out for guards. The game master asks her to make an Experience skill challenge, to represent her experience in looking for guards covertly. Sam offers that the Awareness talent would be applicable here and the game master agrees.

Sam has 2 points in the Base Attribute Feel and one pool point in Awareness (representing good eyes in her case). She is not skilled in Awareness though, so she rolls 3d20 and considers all rolls equal or above a 13 a success.

She rolls (12,7,15). One Success. She notices that there is a guard presence on the streets, but so far, none of the guards seem to care for her or her groups presence.

An **attack challenge** uses the Base Attribute pool, determined by the weapon or attack used. If you are skilled with that weapon or attack, you are considered skilled in the challenge. Instead of Talent pool dice, you add the **weapon-specific dice pool** to the challenge pool.

Critical Failures

If there are no successes in a roll, it is considered a critical failure.

If the challenge dice pool was only a single die, that means that the action fails completely and thoroughly and cannot be reattempted due to changing circumstances.

If the challenge dice pool was more than one die the action fails spectacularly

and serious consequences transpire from this failure.

Help

If a character attempts a challenge another character may always *Help* them. To do that they describe how they help and attempt their own skill or attack challenge. The successes of the Help challenge get added to the helped challenge.

Combat

In combat each action costs a number of Action Points (specified with the action)

Initiative

Upon starting combat each player rolls one d20 and adds the *Speed* dice pool size to it.

Each round in combat starts with a collective Enemy phase when all enemy NPCs take their actions, and the characters can react to it.

After the enemy phase the player characters take turns in descendant order of their rolled values.

At the end of characters turn, they lose all their unspent Action Points.

When a round is over, the last player character in initiative is placed as the first character to act in the next round (so order of players characters is circling).

Movement

Movement in combat costs Action Points.

You may always move less than the action you paid for allows.

Movement Action	AP	
Dash	2	Move [Speed] Steps
Move	6	Move [2*Speed] Steps
Sprint	5	Move [3*Speed] Steps, only in a straight line

*1 Step = 5 Feet ~= 1 Meter

Jumping is currently undefined, and we roll with it how it goes~

Character Sheet

Name

Your Name is what you are known by with Folk you encounter or that hear about you.

Beyond the name you start the game with, it is possible to be *taleboun*d to additional titles, names or stereotypes by fracturing *talebones*.

Species

Species only categorises your size in comparison to all other Folk. Small Folk is called Grassfolk, and tall Folk is called Treefolk. All in between are just called Folk.

Player Name

Your name. So you can find your character sheet again!

Profession

Specifies what your character did in their life before the adventure of the group started. Can be used to be considered skilled in challenges.

Hit Points (HP)

Your hit points describe your bodily health. Wounds, mental scarring and stress can all affect your HP. If your HP fall to 0 you, the player, may decide if your character dies or fractures a talebone, returning with all poise and 1 HP. The consequence is that the character becomes talebound to a name or legend. This can either be a preprepared name revealing a badly framed aspect of your characters backstory or a name that relates to how your character died and fractured their talebone. Any sentient creature that you

encounter from that point on has heard (by magical means) of your name or legend, which can lead to a poor first impression, superstition or mistrust. If you decide that the character dies, you can do the opposite. Speak with the game master and the other players to frame the life and death of your character in any way you wish.

Poise

Poise is your posture, balance and attention in stressful situations. Any successes against you in combat or in dramatic scenes reduce your poise by one per success. If you do not have poise left to negate all successes you are hit with, you take HP damage instead (reroll a number of d20 equal to the remaining successes and add them up).

You regain all Poise at the start of a scene.

Luck

Luck is the 8th base attribute. That means you can roll skill challenges against Luck. For Luck challenges you are never considered skilled and cannot add pool dice from talents.

If you resolve any non-luck challenge, you may spend any amount of remaining Luck you have and buy yourself a success per spend pint of Luck. You can only regain Luck at the start of an adventure.

A standard character as **3 maximum Luck**.

Action Points (AP)

You regain all Action Points each time a **combat round** starts. Most action you take during a round cost at least 1 AP

and sometimes up to 7 AP. If you do not have enough AP to pay for an action, you are unable to perform it. At the end of your **turn**, you lose all remaining unspent action points.

A standard character has **10 AP**.

Base Attributes

Each Base Attribute is quantified by 1 to 5 ticked boxes. The number of ticked boxes defines the number of d20 you roll in a challenge using the according Base Attribute (also referred as “base attribute dice pool”).

In few special cases the base attribute dice pool can be increased beyond 5; in that case an additional box has to be added by hand.

Force. The pure kinetic energy you can put behind your actions. This can be by muscle strength or acceleration.

Examples of Use: Kick in a door, throw something, use most melee weapons

Body. The amount of stress your body can take before failing.

Examples of Use: consume poison, sprint over long distance, hold up a fallen tree for a long time, hit point and poise calculation

Speed. The physical speed your body is able to showcase.

Examples of Use: chase something, dodge a falling boulder, react to an unexpected danger, trick someone with slight of hand, poise calculation

Intelligence. Your capabilities for planned action and cognitive ability.

Examples of Use: plan a journey,

imagine a situation, calculate the weight of a cannon, understand a situation

Feel. Your intuitive connection with your surroundings and natural talent.

Examples of Use: improvise a task, empathise with an enemy, read a room, judge a situation by gut instinct

Experience. Your knowledge about and history with the world. Correlates with age but does not need to.

Examples of Use: remember a historical fact about a church, know about a different culture, do a task you have done many times before, give good advice

Impression. The first perception other sentient creatures have of you.

Examples of Use: get someone to let you in due to your good looks, convince someone that you are innocent, present yourself favourably to a person of authority

Talents

Your character can be considered skilled in some talents. This defines what the character has learned and practised.

Additionally, the character can have up to two pool dice in each talent. This defines what the character has a natural disposition or talent for.

If the game master asks for a base attribute skill challenge, the player may suggest a talent to be used alongside the base attribute. If the game master agrees that it is appropriate, the player may roll against the skilled challenge table (see [here](#)) if the character is skilled in that talent and add any pool dice of that talent to the challenge dice pool.

Awareness. Your mental and physical ability to be alert of your surroundings and yourself.

Breach. Your ability to get forbidden and unintended access to an area or object. *You may choose to be skilled multiple times in Breach.*

For each skilled point in Breach, you specify a single “Way of Entry”, that specifies your fields of application for Breach (e.g. lockpicking, confidence, climbing).

Convince. Your ability to sway another sentient creature to align with an intended opinion.

Fitness. Your ability to do different forms of sports and physical activity.

Knowledge. Your basically complete knowledge in a specific field of study. *You may choose to be skilled multiple times in Knowledge.*

For each skilled point in Knowledge, you specify a single “Field of Academic Study”, that specifies your fields of application for Knowledge (e.g. biology, history, tactical warfare).

Marrow. Your connection with and knowledge about the magic in yours and everyone else’s bones.

Medicine. Your knowledge about the physiology of living creatures and your ability to heal them from injuries and sickness.

Tactics. Your knowledge about how creatures and folk react and behave in stressful situations.

Reactive Actions & Incantations

Your character has a number of actions they can do before their turn actually happens, reacting to the things going on around them. Some characters do have marrowing incantations as well, powerful effects that have to be paid for with broken bones.

Status Effects

Status effects are situational disadvantages your character experiences. For each instance you get affected by a status effect you tick one box accordingly. If you do not have free boxes of that status effect, you can’t be affected by the newest instance of the effect.

All status effects get removed at the end of a combat round.

Tripped. Any form of movement impediment. You are not able to take a move action.

Downed. You lay on the ground and are also tripped.

Staggered. If you take HP damage, you become staggered. While staggered, any movement action you make only moves you half as far.

Weirded. Affected by natural impulses and marrow, you are unable to perform any reactive actions.

Off Balance. You temporarily get thrown off balance. Remove one poise per off balance. When you remove the off balance effect, regain as much poise.

Weapons

Your character is skilled in two types of weapons. Weapons are specified by the following things:

- **Name.** Names the default appearance of this type of weapon. If your used item does not fit that Name, you may rename it on the sheet but include the “real” name for reference in brackets.
- **AP.** The amount of AP a single attack with the weapon costs.
- **Dice.** The weapon dice pool that gets added to the Base Attribute pool when attacking.
- **Stat.** The Base Attribute the weapon uses to attack. If there is a choice in the rules, you must pick one.
- **Attributes.** A collection of special rules for each weapon.

Unskilled/ Skilled Challenge

This is a reference table for dice rolls. Refer to the first table, if you are not considered skilled in a challenge. Refer to the second, if you are.

The Challenge with difficulty 0 is the default challenge to beat with each dice of a pool. The game master or the rules can increase or decrease the difficulty by a number. That number is usually between -5 and +5, but may be even higher.

Abilities

Every character has an individual ability that changes some rules for them.

Appendix E: Game Master Tips

Converting successes

Into damage or vice versa

If the characters do something else than deal damage during combat, or try to enhance a weapon attack, for example by not playing fair, any successes achieved in the challenge, can be converted to direct poise damage at enemies. This can be described as the NPC being distracted, seeming unsure by the characters words or turning to flee.

Note
In most cases this kind of damage, can only apply to Poise! Only in rare circumstance should non weapon attacks deal damage to hit points. Sticks and stones may break your bones, but words rarely do.