

Champions of the Mother - Crystal



mafara makes games

Part One



The Darkness
and the Call

Listen ... Heed the Call ...

Your head swims- the light is blinding. You feel weightless and still, like you're floating in a pond. You smell cold air like late autumn, but nothing else. No plants, no fire, none of the smells of life and the world. Just cold.

The light relents. Or maybe your eyes just adjust to its unyielding brilliance? You're surrounded by darkness. Where is that light coming from? It's all around you with no clear source. Your fingers reach out and feel... Nothing. You're in a void - somehow both empty black and blazingly bright.

There is a growing weight in your ears like you've reached the top of a mountain. The pressure is intense. A sound so deep it rattles your bones hums out of the empty darkness. Then standing - *floating?* - before you is a being wrapped in black robes. Its face is hidden within the many folds of its hood, but you can feel its eyes upon you. They seem to glow red for a moment as the being extends a gloved hand towards you.

You begin to drift towards it, though such is not your will. Fear wells up within you and you realize there never was any blinding light. It wasn't a light, it was a sound. A keening wail in

the dark. You focus on it, trying to understand what it's saying.

Listen ... Heed the Call ...

The robed being drops its beckoning claw and looks around in the luminous void - it hears the Call as well. It seems disturbed.

No! Not this one! You cannot have Them!

The robed figure rails against the Call, furious at the interruption.

Witness ... Heed the Call ...

NO!

The robed being cries out. Its words are not in a language you know, and yet you understand them perfectly. Were this any other time, the contradiction might make your head hurt, but now - in this strange dream-like place - you've far greater worries.

Know ... Heed the Call ...

You cannot deny Us! You cannot!!

Listen ... Witness ... Know ...

You awaken. Sweat soaks your shirt. The cart rolls on along a bumpy road. The world is as it should be - no robed figures menace you here.

What Is This?

Champions of the Mother-Crystal is a tabletop RPG inspired by the MMORPG Final Fantasy XIV by Square Enix. It borrows heavily from that property. Why? Because I'm a fan of that game in the second-strongest possible sense of that word (as the strongest sense is probably a little too strong, given that "fan" comes from the word "fanatic").

CotMC aims not to simply ape FFXIV's setting and world, but to explore and play with the gameplay cycle of an MMORPG in a tabletop RPG framework. The game takes place in several distinct phases, each with a parallel in MMORPG (and video gaming more generally) gameplay. These phases take place within the confines of a *Patch*, a chunk of story and gameplay that covers one distinct side of the game's overall story. Patches themselves are a part of an *Expansion* - when they're not a part of the core game (this one).

Your characters interact with the story, characters, exposition, and mysteries of their world during *Cutscenes*. They explore adventure areas like dungeons and battlefields during *Adventures*. They face terrible foes in climactic battle during *Encounters*. Then, they get a chance to relax, grind, and work on their crafting

and gathering during *Mid-Patches*, the phase that happens before a new Patch begins.

These phases aren't *always* in strict order from one to the next. A Patch isn't made up solely of 1 Cutscene, 1 Adventure, 1 Encounter, and 1 Mid-Patch. Well... There are always at least one of the first three and only ever one of the last one, but the number of Cutscenes, Adventures, and Encounters can vary. Each Patch must begin with a Cutscene to contextualize the coming action and end with a Mid-Patch section that leads into the next Patch. But other than those stipulations, you can stack on Cutscenes, Adventures, and Encounters as they make sense within the evolving narrative of the game.

Here's a little Patch diagram:

- **A Cutscene** - Each Patch starts off with a Cutscene taking place somewhere that will set up the coming action.
- **1 - 4 Adventures** (or more) with Cutscenes and/or Encounters between them. Often Adventures will end with an Encounter as a boss fight and a Cutscene wrapping up the action.
- **A Mid-Patch** to round out the action, give you a chance to recover some resources, and grind up some gear, resources, and materials.

The Fundamentals

Champions of the Mother-Crystal takes place in a fantasy world of aetherological science. Rather than the physics and chemistry with which you might be familiar, aetherology controls and explains all physical forces, processes, energies, and phenomena. It is a rational science and natural philosophy which explains and categorizes the natural world and the magicks within it.

Aether is an often invisible substance whose differing aspects and polarities allow it to make up literally all matter and energy in the universe. Everything, from the wind to the stars to your own body is made up of differently constituted masses of aether.

Aether has six primary aspects (and dozens of lesser aspects which are typically known only to aetherological scholars): Ice, Earth, Wind, Lightning, Fire, and Water. It also has two primary polarities: Light and Dark. The Light-polarity is the static force which allows cohesion and stability. The Dark-polarity is the entropic and energetic force which allows movement and change (and therefore, both destruction and growth). Each aspect can be found in different degrees of the two polarities, though some are far more commonly one than the other.

Magick & Machines

The world, being powered by and composed of aether, is a world of magick and magitech. Living will can shape and alter the localized flow and density of aether, giving rise to the force known as “magick”. Likewise, since all physical forces are aetherological in nature, it’s not incorrect to say that all technology is powered by (or at least takes advantage of) magick.

“Magitech” in its strictest sense is machinery powered by aether crystals and other aetherically energetic compounds. It is fairly uncommon, being present in its greatest concentrations in both military and civilian capacities in the Northern Empire. Through a century of expansion, colonialism, and exploitation, the Northern Empire has extracted and plundered the natural mineral and aetheric resources of countless nations. With this concentration of stolen material wealth, the Northern Empire has managed great advances in the realms of magitech at the expense of those whose lands they’ve pillaged.

Magick itself is an art and science which has developed in thousands of different fashions and paths throughout history. Every culture has different magickal traditions, with most having several competing and contrasting philosophies.

The Champions

The main characters of the story are “Champions”, people who have been blessed by the Mother-Crystal, a lifeforce in the great expanses of the cosmos whose light banished the endless darkness in the Time Before Time. Her many-colored light refracted into whole worlds and peoples, lancing through the dark and creating all that is.

The Mother-Crystal is not a god in most traditional senses of the word. She is worshiped only by very few, so inscrutable and distant is She. Though most cultures are aware of Her, many prefer to fashion and celebrate more comprehensible gods. It is thought by most that She is as unknowable to us as we are to insects. Many people find it difficult to truly grapple with what She is and the implications of Her very being.

Champions are those who have been touched by the Mother-Crystal’s mind. They have heard Her Call and though they may not understand why they have been chosen, they understand that their lives are now ones of great and terrible responsibility. A Champion wields the Echo as Her gift to them, the power to see the past reverberate through time- and maybe even feel the resonant frequencies of the future.

Champions are *adventurers*. That word has a specific meaning in this world. The world is made up mostly of small but powerful city states with little in the way of robust institutional structures outside of the cities themselves. Much of the world’s population lives in the spaces between these cities. “Adventurer”, then, is a catch-all term for those who travel the world doing odd-jobs (from labor to fishing to culling local monsters) for those who need help.

Adventurers are essentially individuals who fill in necessary roles that might be lacking in a rural collective or city. In times of great upheaval and catastrophe, they often fight as warriors (not soldiers, mind you) in defense of those without city walls and ranks of guards to protect them. Adventurers are immensely helpful to the people, which more often than not brings them into conflict with the powerful.

Most wealth in the world is hereditary, and most power is gained through the possession of wealth. Adventurers have reputations in some places as heartless, honorless mercenaries just going where the coin takes them. And for some who take the title “adventurer” this is an accurate reputation indeed. Others though, including Champions, see adventuring as a higher calling. An opportunity to lend aid to those unspoken for.

The Darkness

Opposing the Mother-Crystal since the Time Before Time is the Darkness, personified in the form of the Shadows. These inscrutable black-robed beings have harried, tempted, and tormented mortalkind since its earliest days. They are bringers of chaos, sowers of discord, liars, and - perhaps worst of all - charismatic, enticing, and powerful.

Shadows work their evil by offering easy solutions to the many complex problems facing mortalkind. They are not widely known of, careful to write themselves out of history at every opportunity. They reveal themselves to the desperate, the powerful, and those with the capacity to make real, lasting change in the world. They corrupt those people - if they weren't already corrupted - and give them access to great power without explaining its tragic costs.

Shadows' ultimate purpose in our world is unknown. Little written information related to them survives long enough to change hands. Those who know of them typically learned what they have from third-hand information - stories about stories about true events. Others, often Champions, interact with these immortal devils with distressing regularity, bumping up against

their multitudinous machinations regularly in their other, seemingly unrelated pursuits.

It is known that Shadows are as formless specters, capable of inhabiting and controlling mortal bodies like puppeteers. If destroyed, they merely return to the Dark between worlds and await their opportunity to return. They serve the Darkness as willing and enthusiastic soldiers and priests, proselytizing its grim power. They are thought to detest mortals, though the why of this is unknown.

Every Champion recalls an interaction with a Shadow in the moment of their awakening to the Mother-Crystal's Call. In the selfsame instant wherein their power first stirred and the favor of the Crystal became known to them, they were beckoned to by a Shadow. In fact, each was very nearly *claimed* by a Shadow before being illuminated. In the moment, after stirring from the strange incident, the vision seems no different from any other dream. But eventually, Champions realize that what they saw was a very real event indeed. A battle of wills between a Shadow and the Mother-Crystal.

Such events beg many distressing questions about the nature of Champions, their connections to the Crystal, and the nature of Shadow-possession itself.

Part Two

Rules and Rolls

The Dice and Their Rolls

When Champions engage in an action which is both difficult and dramatically interesting (whether the action fails or succeeds is interesting and not boring), **they must first state what it is they're hoping will happen**, then **roll dice equal to their level of Focus** in one of their four stats. This is called a *check*.

All checks have a *Difficulty* between 1 - 5. 1 is for Easy actions, 2 is for Average actions, 3 is for Hard actions, 4 is for Challenging actions, and 5 is for Extreme actions. These are written like "D1" for Difficulty 1, "D2" for Difficulty 2, etc. Difficulties are decided on by the player whose Champion is engaging in the check, after weighing the relative difficulty of what they're attempting against the subjective strengths and weaknesses of their Champion.

The Explorer or Nemesis (more about player roles on page XX) might point things out or ask questions that could throw the check into doubt or make it slightly easier, though, and thus raise or lower the check's *Difficulty*. Lastly, after *Difficulty* has been decided on, you can spend a point of Echo to reduce the *Difficulty* by -1 (minimum 1).

All dice score a *Hit* on a result of **4 or higher**.

If you score as many *Hits* as the check's *Difficulty*, **you succeed at that check and get what you said you wanted**. If you get more *Hits* than the check's *difficulty*, **you get what you wanted and then some**. This is called a *Critical Hit* (or a *Crit*). When you get a *Crit*, someone else around the table will tell you something good that happens because of what you did, but which wasn't your intention.

If you score fewer *Hits* than the check's *Difficulty*, **you've failed to get what you wanted**. You might get something else, though, usually something much worse. A failed check should never kill you - that's boring and ultimately counter-productive. Failed checks should complicate your life and give you an opportunity to succeed later, or in a different way than how you'd initially hoped.

When you fail, the Explorer can ask you what went wrong and what predicament you now find yourself in. Alternatively, the Nemesis might chime in to make your situation a little worse. Nemeses should remember to do this to their own Champions as well.

Which dice you use for a given check depends on how wounded and/or empowered you are. Normally, when your champion is uninjured and un-buffed, you'll roll a number of 6-sided Focus

Dice equal to your Focus in the stat being checked. However, if you've currently got one or more wounds on the stat, a number of dice equal to the number of wounds you're suffering will be traded out for 4-sided Wound Dice instead. This makes it far easier to fail rolls, given that Hits are only generated on rolls of 4+. Conversely, if you've got one or more buffs active on the stat being checked, a number of dice equal to the number of buffs you have will be traded for 8-sided Buff Dice instead.

You'll always only be rolling a maximum number of dice equal to your Focus in the stat being checked. Wound Dice and Buff Dice effectively cancel each other out. If you have an equal number of Buff and Wound Dice, you'll just be rolling the regular 6-sided Focus Dice.



Buff Dice (gained from abilities)



Focus Dice (base dice used)



Wound Dice (suffered by attacks)

It's important to point out that simply receiving a Buff or Wound Die doesn't cross off one of its opposite. You can only clear wounds by receiving healing effects, and buffs only go away when a rule tells you to clear them (most commonly when you go to sleep).

To Recap:



attempt something interesting:

say what you want to happen & choose Difficulty from 1 - 5



grab dice = Focus



swap Focus dice for Buffs + Wounds

roll and count # of Hits (4+)

Hits = Difficulty = Success!

Hits > Difficulty = Crit!!

Hits < Difficulty = Failure...

DESTINY					
wounds	△	△	△	△	△
focus	✗	✗	✗	□	□
buffs	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇

^ Example 1: 3 Focus means you'll roll 3D6 on a Destiny-based check!

DESTINY					
wounds	△	△	△	△	△
focus	✗	✗	✗	□	□
buffs	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇

^ Example 2: 1 Buff here means you'll roll 2D6 and 1D8 on a Destiny-based check!

DESTINY					
wounds	✓	✓	△	△	△
focus	✗	✗	✗	□	□
buffs	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇

^ Example 3: 2 Wounds here mean you'll roll 1D6 and 2D4 on a Destiny-based check!

DESTINY					
wounds	✓	△	△	△	△
focus	✗	✗	✗	□	□
buffs	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇

^ Example 4: 2 Buffs and 1 Wound means you'll roll 2D6 and 1D8 on a Destiny-based check! The first Wound and Buff cancel each other out.

Stats & Numbers

The stats each Champion has access to are **Destiny**, **Finesse**, **Power**, and **Thoughtfulness**. Each handles a broad variety of different actions, and learning to decide which is the most appropriate for a given check is a big part of learning to play CotMC.



Destiny: The Destiny stat is about defying the laws of mortalkind and nature and reaching for your own potential. It's about resisting others' manipulations, wills, and violence. It's about courage, resilience, and clear-headed conviction. Roll Destiny when you're doing the right thing in spite of others' interference.



Finesse: The Finesse stat is all about careful negotiation of one's surroundings. Maximizing outcome while minimizing visibility, collateral damage, and footprint. Finesse is about delicate movements and words. Finesse is getting in and back out without too much fuss.



Power: The Power stat is about throwing weight behind your words and punches. Power is blunt, effective, and brutal. It's raw brawn, memorized facts, and unvarnished, incisive language. Power pushes things and people around, but isn't good for every situation.



Thoughtfulness: The Thoughtfulness stat is curiosity, awareness, and the ability to know when you might be wrong. Thoughtfulness is about recognizing and seeking out expertise and learning what you don't know. Thoughtfulness is investigation, inquiry, searching, noticing, and chatting people up for info. It's also realizing when you've made a mistake and understanding how to go about fixing it.

These four stats are the basis of every action you take, and the number of points of Focus you have in each determines the number of dice rolled in checks related to them, as mentioned before.

Pools

A character's points of **Stress** and **Echo** are their pools. They help you in different ways, and can be spent to achieve certain things, or lost when suffering certain forms of attack.

Stress & Wounds

Stress is a resource that measures your Champion's ability to keep pushing through the dangers and the pain and do their duty. Whenever you suffer as many Wounds in a stat as that stat has Focus, you mark a Stress circle. Likewise, whenever another rule tells you to, you also mark a Stress circle. Stress is cleared mostly by resting and during Mid-Patches. Taking Leisure activities can also help clear it.

When hit by an attack, you normally suffer a Wound to a random stat (decided with a d4: 1 - Destiny, 2 - Finesse, 3 - Power, 4 - Thoughtfulness). You may not suffer more Wounds in a given stat than you have Focus in that stat. Excess Wounds go to the next stat in the list that has clear Wounds. Remember that whenever you fill up a stat's Wound track, you have to mark a Stress circle as well.

When you're Stressed Out (all Stress circles are marked), and have no clear wound slots,

you're immediately Downed if you suffer a successful attack that would inflict a wound.

When you sleep for the night, clear 1 Stress and 1 Wound from each stat.

Echo

The Echo is a power granted to Champions by the Mother-Crystal's favor. It allows the user to resonate with the frequencies of time itself, to see glimpses of the future and witness whole moments from the past as those who lived them. As a side effect, it also allows you to comprehend the speech of any creature with a language.

You can mark an Echo circle before rolling any check to reduce that check's Difficulty by -1 (minimum D1). If you score a Crit on a check that you reduced the Difficulty of in this way, you can clear the Echo circle you just marked.

You may also mark an Echo circle to learn a secret a character might be keeping related to the current situation. You personally can craft the secret with your narration, or present your idea for what it might be, then have the Explorer (or the Voice or Nemesis, depending on whether it's a friendly character or an enemy) ask you questions or add details to contour the secret.

Battles

The rules in this section apply to minor fights against monsters and foes in an Adventure (page XX) and against greater villains in Encounters (page XX). The only exceptions to this are *Clashes*, which can be physical fights as well as emotional ones and use unique rules (page XX), but ones which still make use of some of the fundamentals shown here.

Basics of Battle

The basic rules of battle are pretty simple and mostly just build on the rules for rolling and dice that we've already learned. First, the Nemesis and Voice make clear what non-Champion characters are involved in the battle - your Champions may not consciously be aware of some of these combatants, but all the players at-table get to know they're there and fret over when they might arrive.

Then, everyone plans their turn. This is done by spending ACTs (discussed below). Once everyone has planned (including the Nemesis and any characters the Voice might be controlling), everyone reveals what actions they've chosen, as described by their ACT placement.

Once planning and revealing are complete, everyone resolves their actions in ATR (Active Time Rating) order from 1 - 10. If more than one player has an action resolving on the same ATR, they are resolved in clockwise order from the Nemesis.

Job Actions like Combos and Long Cooldown abilities have variable ATRs, and will differ from character to character and Job to Job. Off-Cooldown (or, Off-CD) abilities can be resolved at any ATR of your choice over the course of a given round. You may not interrupt other people's action resolutions once they've begun, but you can choose to drop your Off-CD into the rotation for a given ATR count at any time before it's done and the group has moved on to the next count.

Attack Checks & Toughness

Actions described as “attacks” will require a check similar to the checks described before on page 10. What stat is checked will depend on the attack being used. The Difficulty of attack checks isn't decided by the player, however, but by their target's Toughness.

In the fiction of the game, the majority of attacks are going to be hitting their targets, but whether or not they inflict enough damage to

slow down the opponent and affect the battle is what's being decided by the attack check. If your attack scores Hits equal to the target's Toughness, they suffer a Wound to a random stat (determined with a d4). If your attack scores more Hits than their Toughness, they suffer a Critical Hit which inflicts 2 Wounds to two randomly determined stats (d4 for each).

If your attack fails to score at least as many Hits as the target has Toughness, you fail to inflict any Wounds. However! Your attack bruises them, pushes them out of position, or otherwise impedes their ability to continue defending themselves to the best of their ability. **They lose -1 Toughness if you fail to wound them.** Targets with lowered Toughness due to this mechanic regain their normal maximum Toughness whenever they're successfully Wounded by an attack.

Just like with regular checks, when making an attack, feel free to explain what you hope your attack does or what the windup before the action looks like. Then after rolling, you can describe how the attack either lands or fails to inflict telling damage. Crits, just like on non-attack checks, invite other players to chime in and describe something beneficial that happens in addition to the main effect of the attack.

More on Actions, ACTs, and ATRs

Each turn, you get to take three of the tokens (called ACTs) covering up the circles on your Champion's Combat Sheet and shift them into the Spent ACT box during the planning phase of the round. This means that you get 3 activations per battle round. The revealed circles will show what ATR those actions will resolve on.

In addition to resolving your actions as described, you may move a zone before or after resolving your action any time it's your activation. When using Combo actions, **you only get the 3-ACT effect when resolving the 3rd of 3 ACTs spent on the combo.** If your action is no longer possible once its ATR comes up, you may choose to either **move a second zone, recover 1 lost Toughness, or Reduce the ATR of another planned action by -1** instead of resolving that now impossible action.

ATRs range from 1 - 10 and count up, resolving from lowest number to highest. If two characters have actions to resolve with the same ATRs, they are resolved in clockwise order, starting with the Nemesis.

As you resolve your actions, move the tokens back from your Spent ACT box to cover back up the actions you've resolved.

Distance & Movement

Distance is measured in zones, spans of space which are variable in size from a few to a few hundred square feet. Zone sizes should be standardized at the start of a battle, depending on the amount of space likely to be needed for the fight to take place. Battles should have enough space for at least 9 zones (3×3), though larger battlegrounds are perfectly acceptable if desired for the fight and reasonable for people to keep track of in their heads.

The average suggested size for a zone is 30 square feet. This should be considered the “default” zone size unless specified as being different for a given battle.

Outside of battles, zones should rarely be considered. If there’s a question of how far away something is or how quickly you can get somewhere, you should probably ask yourself about whether or not it’s interesting and fun for you to worry about those things. If the answer to that question is an enthusiastic “Yes!”, then consider using a basic stat check to determine whether you can get to/get away from the thing in time.

In battle, all characters may move 1 zone before or after resolving each of their actions.

Conditions

There are a variety of conditions (both beneficial and detrimental) which creatures and characters can gain due to various abilities, actions, and circumstances.

Negative Conditions

Most negative conditions last for a set number of activations or rounds, determined by the effect or action which imposes them. Some have an indefinite duration, only being cleared when an ability or rule says to clear them.

- **Blackout** - Your primary senses, whatever they may be, are seriously scrambled. You’re having a hard time telling up from down. -1 Focus (minimum 1) for attack checks.
- **Confuse** - Your mind is playing tricks on you due to some sort of toxin or magickal effect. Roll 1d4 after making an attack, on a 1, your target is another Champion in range of your action (or yourself, if no others are in range).
- **Doom** - The keen edge of the Sword of Fate hovers over your neck. This condition lasts a maximum of 3 rounds (some versions of the condition may be shorter-lived). After it runs out, you are immediately Downed.

- **Downed** - The character is struggling to stay alive, or might already be dead. They cannot spend ACT or perform any actions. This condition is permanent until cleared and can only be cleared by items or abilities which specifically say that they clear Downed.
- **Sever** - You've been aetherically becalmed, cutting you off from your source of magickal power. You may only use Combos. Your Trait still functions.
- **Slow** - Your movements become sluggish and your experience of time is warped. You may move 1 zone instead of using your intended action, not in addition to that action.
- **Taunt** - Your attacks must target the creature that inflicted this condition on you.
- **Poison** - You lose 1 Toughness at the start of each of your activations while the effect is active, to a minimum of 1.
- **Weaken** - Your muscles feel like limp noodles. Your failed attacks do not inflict Toughness damage and you cannot score Crits while suffering this condition.
- **Zombie** - Your lifeforce has been inverted by some strange force. Healing effects instead cause you to suffer 1 random (d4) Wound.

Positive Conditions

Like negative conditions, positive conditions usually last for a set number of activations or rounds, determined by the effect which grants them.

- **Haste** - Your perception expands. You may move 1 zone both before and after resolving any action.
- **Proshell** - You are surrounded by a magicked barrier which flares to visibility when defending against attacks. Gain +1 Toughness, and when below your maximum Toughness you regain 1 lost Toughness at the start of each round.
- **Regen** - Your wounds slowly knit themselves closed even as you watch. Clear 1 Wound at the start of each round (and 1 immediately upon receiving this condition).
- **Spikes** - You are surrounded by a raging torrent of violent retributive magicks. When you are wounded, your attacker loses 1 Toughness (minimum 1).
- **Transcendent** - You are beyond mortality. When you suffer the Downed condition, you lose Transcendent, heal 1 Wound of your choice, and then lose the Downed condition.

Part Three



Tools and Roles

The Players

The players of this game will serve a handful of different roles. You can have more than one player serving the same role, if you wish, and can rotate amongst the group who's taking which role whenever you wish. I recommend having each person serving a role keep that role for the entire duration of a session, for consistency's sake, but this is by no means required.

The player roles are:

- **The Voice** - You control the world's reactions to the Champions. When a character speaks who is not a Champion, you are their Voice.
- **The Nemesis** - You control the monsters and villains of the world, even when they are not currently "on-screen" and even when not in battle. You spin and weave their Plots.
- **The Explorer** - You ask questions to get people to think about and explore their actions. "How do you do that?", "What did you find?", "Where did she go after she said that?", Etc.
- **The Scribe** - You write down, draw, or record the greatest moments of the game. The memories the group will need, those moments they'll cherish, and the encounters they'll regret.

Each of the 4 roles must be filled. In smaller groups, some people may be pulling double-duty. In larger groups, multiple people may want to take on the same role. All players must have at least 1 role, and those sharing roles should discuss what areas of focus or characters each is responsible for. If a villain appears that one player *really* wants to Nemesis for - but that player isn't currently serving as Nemesis - consider letting them take over for that one Encounter.

Voices are reactive, not proactive. They don't prepare and plan the group's adventures, they respond to Champions' words and deeds how they believe the characters they're portraying would. All the while, the **Nemesis** turns the gears of the villains' machinations, and when one has their Plot gauge filled up sufficiently, they spring a Cutscene on the group to let them know just what's about to go down.

Nemeses and Voices share some overlap in their roles, as Nemeses serve as the Voice to the creatures and villains they control. Sometimes a character who was once benevolent towards the group becomes the purview of the Nemesis and changes hands. Things happen. People change. Relationships get frayed.

Explorers expand what is known about the

world by asking questions of the other players. When a Champion opens a treasure chest, the Explorer asks them what they find inside. When the Nemesis monologues about their evil plot coming to fruition, the Explorer asks what the villains were up to at X or Y point in the story. Explorers can also inform people about what's visible, what's apparent, and what's in a given location.

The other players can (if they so choose) ask questions of the Explorer as well, particularly when they enter a new location. "What's for sale here?", "What's this temple made of?", "What can I hear down there?".

Scribes record the group's journey however they see fit, preferably in a format that can be looked back upon and shared. Words, poems, maps, character portraits and scene drawings, audio recordings, whatever creative methods that work best for you and which you are comfortable pursuing. Scribes can do their work during or after the game session, as best suits their needs, memory, and attention span.

Scribes - importantly - get to decide what is enshrined in their monuments. They are the arbiters of what belongs in the communal memory. They are the group and game's historians, and their works are to be interpreted

as archaeologists and anthropologists interpret the signs and relics of lost civilizations. Nothing is left of your game after a session is done except your memories, and the Scribe's work.

The players of CotMC will **each** have a single Champion that they control. Each Champion is made out of a handful of stats and choices you'll make when you create your Champion. Every player at the table has a Champion, even the person or people currently serving as the Voice. There is no separation between "Game Masters" and "Players" in CotMC.

Sharing Narrative Control

For players more accustomed to RPGs with a GM-to-Players storytelling relationship, the player roles of CotMC may feel strange and unusual. This is fine - when you first started playing games with GMs you had to learn exactly how that relationship worked, too.

For people new to the system, here's a tip: it's really not all that different from how you have to share time with other people at the table in GM-based games. The roles even have built-in levels of direct interaction with the table to appeal to different sorts of players.

If you're more comfortable leading from the front and shaping people's interactions, maybe give Voice a try. If you want to have the occasional spotlight and complicate things for your friends, the Nemesis is for you. If you want to engage with the game by adding contour and context to others' narrations, the Explorer role may be ideal. If you're a creative type who needs to keep their hands busy, or someone who's more comfortable observing and commentating than leading things, try out Scribe.

Regardless of which player role (or roles) you take on, you are free to engage with the game in whatever way makes the most sense and which is most comfortable for you. The fact that player roles can be traded around means that they absolutely should be. If you're not sure you'll enjoy filling a certain role, you should still consider giving it a try and see how it feels. Don't compare your performance to someone else's - different people are going to bring different styles, ideas, and points of view to the different roles.

Hegemony & Power at the Table

Most tabletop RPG players have experience with a fairly hegemonic distribution of narrative power. They say they walk into a room, the GM describes the room, they react to what they're

told they see, GM describes further, and so on. It's technically a conversation, in that players and GM are both talking, but the GM has the power to shape the players' experiences in a way that players don't tend to have to shape GMs' experiences. GMs have the power to limit and expand players' options at will - most games don't give similar power to the non-GM players.

CotMC's power hierarchy is flatter than most games' due to its distribution of power and responsibilities around the table. Some of the roles still have the ability to impose some measure of "narrative violence" (the ability to limit or expand narrative options), but all of them have some power to affect, interpret, or expand each others' options, as well.

The Voice speaks for all non-main characters (except the villains) and the Nemesis speaks for the monsters and villains, these are both true. But the Explorer asks or answers the questions which determine the conditions of those characters, expanding or limiting their options and conditions. The Scribe chooses what is important and reflects those choices back on the group, showing them what the story, its twists and choices look like from perhaps an angle not previously considered. Time can steal intention, leaving only action and aftermath.

The Scribe's work should inform the Voice's characterizations. Whenever the greater world actually hears about the exploits of the Champions (not always a guarantee), they'll probably hear a version that hews close to the Scribe's depictions of the events. If the Scribe's work is focusing more on character interactions and drama, the world at large might get the idea that the Champions are some kind of traveling soap opera that happens to save the world occasionally. If the Scribe's works are all about what the group fought and how badass they are, the greater populace might see the Champions as violent and destructive, possibly awe-inspiring and necessary but definitely frightening.

In this way, the Scribe's work will find itself reflected back at the Champions. The aspects of the group's adventures that the Scribe thinks are most important are validated as True by the setting and its people. Possibly to the exclusion of other details that the group might be keen for people to know about them.

None of this should be construed as a suggestion that the Scribes lie in their creations. Rather it's just an encouragement to think about what legacy you're leaving, what you're focusing on, what causes you're fighting for, and how you're choosing to fight for them.

What a Session Might Look Like

We'll be getting into the specifics of how the different types of scenes in this game (Cutscenes, Adventures, etc.) work just a little later on - see page 24 for that. For now, though, let's look at a rough diagram of what an evening spent playing this game might look like. Different groups are going to take the ideas in this book and use them in very different ways, certainly. This is just one possible diagram or way to play CotMC, and should not be construed as the "right way" to play, or anything like that.

...

The group gathers online or at one of their houses, makes sure they've all got snacks and liquids aplenty, and each has the dice and sheets they'll need in front of them. The Scribe starts by sharing the drawings she did of the group's last session, while everyone chats about the events.

An informal recap of the last game's events is forged from the memories enkindled by the Scribe's work. Last session was mostly a series of long Cutscenes with a minor Clash in the middle when one Cutscene was interrupted by a band of jealous knights. It was a lot of politics and not much adventure. But it taught the group a lot about their current situation.

The Explorer asks if anyone has any ideas for a Cutscene they want to get in at the beginning of the session. Since you're working with a bit of a blank slate, it's an ideal time to fit one in. The Nemesis beams with a dastardly grin and says they have an idea for a Cutscene involving two characters - a Shadow and a mysterious person meeting in a strange magickal void.

The scene's mood is tense. The Nemesis says that the revelation of the scene will be that the mysterious person will turn out to be one of the group of Champions' current and closest allies. The Nemesis texts the Voice the name of the character that the mysterious person will turn out to be. This bit of smoke and mirrors isn't necessary, but since the scene will be short and the tension high, the Nemesis thinks it appropriate to maximize the revelation's impact.

The Nemesis narrates the scene's setting, and the Nemesis and the Voice take the parts of the two characters in the scene. They speak in vague riddles about some big plan coming to fruition and at the end the mysterious person removes their veil to reveal the face of the Champions' ally. The Explorer asks the Voice what the Champions' ally is feeling right now, what expression he wears on his face when the veil is removed.

"He bears an expression of grim and resigned determination. He doesn't want to be here, but he feels he has to be." Explains the Voice. The group, including the Nemesis, murmur about the implications of this answer. None of the Champions know that this ally is conspiring with one of their greatest foes, much less why, but now the players do.

With that Cutscene out of the way, the Explorer asks if anyone has an idea for an Adventure following on from last session's many revelations and discoveries. The Scribe pipes up that they had a great idea for one. Since last session they learned about the noble House Greyverne's secret underground hold - which the Greyernes insisted contained nothing nefarious at all, just a wine cellar, really!

The Scribe thought it would be fun for a strange and twisted monster to escape from that underground hold. It turns out, she says, that the hold is containing demon worshiping heretics of the noble house's own issue, and that one of these heretics has twisted their own guards into monsters. Now the dirty secret threatens to be exposed and Lady Greyverne comes to the Champions desperate for discreet aid. The group gets to work designing the adventure before diving right in . . .

How Scenes Work

Now that you've learned about the player roles and some ways to think about sharing and interacting with one another, I wanted to give some concrete advice and rules for building the structure of different scenes.

Cutscenes

Let's start with Cutscenes. They're the most narratively straightforward and will usually involve the fewest rolls and hard rules. Cutscenes exist for the group to interact with characters, receive exposition, question important people, discover places they want or need to go, and explore their reasons for doing what they do.

Anyone with an idea for a Cutscene can propose one at any time - if you're in the middle of an Adventure or Encounter, wait until the action and excitement have reached a lull or a logical stopping point when the scene makes sense to occur. The person proposing the scene should explain three basic things and then let the Explorer (if they aren't the same person) ask and be asked some questions to flesh the scene out a bit.

The three basic facts the Cutscene's proposer

should answer are:

- **What non-Champion characters are involved?** What monsters or villains, what important named characters, what "extras"?
- **What is the scene's Mood?** Examples include: Exciting, Mysterious, Ominous, Frightening, Enlightening, Joyful, Humorous, Melancholy.
- **What is the scene's Revelation?** You needn't give away a surprise you intend to unveil in the scene, but Cutscenes work best with everyone on board about what's happening. If the Revelation is something about a non-Champion character, you must *at least* tell the Voice or Nemesis what this thing is to allow them to play the scene correctly.

Once the person proposing the scene has answered these questions, they should work with the Explorer to set the stage by asking and being asked questions until everyone feels like they understand what's going on.

I recommend in the strongest possible terms not keeping secrets from the other players when it comes to Cutscenes. For people with more experience with other sorts of RPGs and storytelling it might seem counter-intuitive that a story would be more fun if you know where it's going from the start, but trust me. It really is.

Everyone will be able to play their parts better, the scene will be more fun and interesting, and most of all it'll actually eventually get where it's going. "Spoilers" might be a thing in some forms of media (I actually have a very complicated relationship with the idea of spoilers, but I won't get into that here), but in collaborative storytelling, working from a single prompt toward a known goal can really make the improv sing.

Once all that is set, the Cutscene proposer (or someone they've entrusted the responsibility to) opens the scene with as much direct narration as they feel like giving. I recommend no more than two or three sentences. By now everyone should have a firm grasp on the environment and what's about to go down.

If more than one non-Champion character is going to be speaking, don't force the Voice to stand there talking to themselves. Other players should take over those other characters' roles and speak for them as they believe they should. The Voice should never be roleplaying against themselves.

It's important to point out that Cutscenes can take place far away from the Champions and don't need to directly involve them. It's "audience-level" info at that point, not

character-level. If you run through such a Cutscene remember not to play off of any information revealed there that your Champion wouldn't personally know about.

Every Cutscene should be steered towards its Revelation, what's to be learned from the scene, by everyone involved. They should play their characters however they feel, but they should do their best to not preclude or overshadow the Cutscene's intended Revelation. Similarly, while you can have funny moments in serious Cutscenes, people should generally try to keep their narrations to the Mood laid out by the Cutscene's proposer.

The keys to a solid Cutscene are:

- **Cooperation** - Don't stand in the way of a good story. If you like what's coming out, help it along. "Yes, and" and "No, but" are both valid and important tools to practice with when running through Cutscenes.
- **Specificity** - Clarity of Mood, Revelation, and purpose. Know what you're seeing and the implications of what's being said. Even if it's a group of mysterious hooded figures speaking cryptically, make those cryptic statements clear and precise so they can be played off of later.

Clashes (Or, Cutscenes+)

Clashes are a special kind of Cutscene (a hybrid of Encounter and Cutscene, really) in which multiple “sides” exist, battling against one another with words, weapons, and emotions. These are tense negotiations or heart-wrenching duels between friends-turned-enemies. While most Cutscenes are “neutral” with no “winners” or “losers” at the end of the scene, Clashes are competitive. Someone might not have come out on top by the end, but both sides know they’ve been in a fight.

Normal Cutscenes can become Clashes and Clashes can sometimes lead into normal Cutscenes. Clashes are also quite common as the precursor to dramatic cliffhangers and even the start of Encounters. They frequently end up draining the Champions’ resources and even adding to the Nemesis’ Plot tracks.

Clashes always involve the Nemesis, playing the antagonists of the scene, and might also involve the Voice depending on how many factions are getting involved. The Champions, as a group, always count as one “side”, even if there’s some in-fighting complicating matters.

Clashes are broken up into rounds like battles are. Clashes end when one side walks away,

gives up, or the scene changes types. Each round, the Nemesis gets 1 Action per Champion and each Champion gets 1 Action. Everyone plans their actions and then reveals as normal, resolving in order from lowest ATR to highest. Go clockwise starting with the Nemesis when resolving multiple actions with the same ATRs.

Players may make Attack, Maneuver, Defy, and Analyze checks as their Actions during a Clash. They don’t gain the benefits of or use the rules from any of their Job Actions. The available actions have the following effects:

- **Attack** - Roll Power or Finesse. Difficulty = 1 + # of Cons your side has. If successful, inflict 1 Con on enemy side. ATR: 7.
- **Maneuver** - Roll Destiny or Thoughtfulness. Difficulty = 1 + # of Cons your side has. If successful, remove 1 Con from your side. ATR: 5.
- **Defy** - Roll Power or Destiny. D2. If successful, Ignore 1 Con your side would suffer this round. ATR: 1.
- **Analyze** - Roll Thoughtfulness or Finesse. D1 for self, D2 for ally or enemy. Grant or remove a Buff to/from one target. ATR: 3

Cons are a “currency” of terrible happenstance. When a Clash has ended, all sides with remaining Cons must spend those Cons on *Dramatic Consequences*, or DCs. DCs are bad, usually lasting problems which sprang from the events of the Intrigue. All sides with Cons must spend those Cons down to 0. No other scenes can begin until all Cons are spent.

1-Con Dramatic Consequences:

Name	Effect	Target
<i>Lasting Harm</i>	Target suffers 2 random (1d4) wounds.	1 Target on your side.
<i>Lost It</i>	Target loses 1 Gear, Material, or Resources.	1 Target on your side.
<i>Meddlesome Wretches!</i>	Lose -1 Plot Armor.	1 Target on your side.
<i>Monologue Break</i>	One enemy NPC recovers from 3 wounds.	1 Enemy.
<i>No Chance</i>	One Enemy receives +1 Plot Armor.	1 Enemy.
<i>Shock and Horror</i>	Target suffers 1 Stress.	1 Target on your side.
<i>Stymied</i>	One Ally -1 Plot Armor.	1 Ally.
<i>Tumble Down</i>	Targets suffer 1 random (1d4) wound.	All targets your side.

You should make the Con-spending decisions as a group, laying the bulk of the burdens at the feet of the characters most likely to have suffered them in the scene, or those most able to handle them - or some combination of these tactics - as you prefer.

You could even roll randomly for them (on a d8) if you wish!

3-Con Dramatic Consequences:

Name	Effect	Target
<i>Bringers of Chaos</i>	Advance a Villain's Plot by +1.	1 Enemy Villain.
<i>Catastrophe</i>	Targets lose 1 Gear, Material, or Resources each. All must have at least 1 to lose.	All targets your side.
<i>Inscrutable Machinations</i>	+1 Plot Armor all Enemies on a side.	All Enemies on 1 side.
<i>Laid Low</i>	One Allied side is all Downed.	All Allies 1 side.
<i>Obliterated</i>	One Ally suffers -2 Plot Armor and Downed.	1 Ally.
<i>Round Two!</i>	All Enemies recover from 3 wounds each.	All Enemies on 1 side.
<i>Unlimited Power</i>	All Targets suffer 2 random (1d4) wounds.	All targets your side.
<i>We Are Undone!</i>	All Targets lose -1 Plot Armor.	All targets your side.

Adventures

Adventures will make up a pretty large chunk of your at-table time. They are where the exploring interesting locales, fighting monsters, surviving traps, and moving through dangerous terrain happens. An Adventure is a dungeon, battlefield, proving ground, the site of an unholy ritual, a dark hole into which bandits fled, and so on and so forth.

In a very real way, Adventures **are** the places where they happen. An adventure in a boring locale is no Adventure at all. “The Cursed Tomb of Maezar-Kett” is an Adventure, while “a trip into a smelly crypt” is just a bad weekend. Much like Cutscenes, Adventures can be proposed by anyone, but they’re built communally before being started. Adventures also have slightly more rigid structures than Cutscenes.

When an Adventure is proposed (usually this should start with a name and maybe a few Aspects), the group will gather around a blank Adventure Sheet to add Aspects, Dangers, Treasures, and Happenings. Then the Explorer will set the stage by asking questions about what each Champion sees and does as they explore the Adventure, using the components decided on beforehand as fodder for questions, answers, and descriptions.

Whenever a player’s narration or roll would suggest they’ve run afoul of one of the Adventure’s Dangers, it’s the Nemesis’ time to strike. Battle begins as one of the listed Dangers falls upon the Champions to test their mettle. Once the Danger is defeated, it’s crossed off the Adventure’s list.

Let’s do a deeper dive on the various components of an Adventure:

- **Aspects** - These are themes, words or short phrases which explain the mood, setting, and general features of the area in which an Adventure takes place. They should be used as a resource for descriptions and actions. Aspects should imply or suggest a dangerous or difficult activity requiring a test. Rolling a test based on an Aspect is called checking it.
- **Dangers** - These are monsters, traps, and incidental hazards littered throughout the area. Whenever a player’s narration would indicate it (or whenever the Nemesis wants, really), a Danger is sprung upon the party and must be combated according to the rules of the particular Danger.
- **Treasures** - These are items (Gear, Materials, or combat consumables) which benefit the Champions in some way. Treasures may also

be plot-significant items which are helpful either within the Adventure or elsewhere. The latter kind of treasure can often be used to reduce a villain's Plot Armor by -1 or -2. This can form a major impetus for going on Adventures in the first place - to gather the information or objects required to defeat a powerful enemy.

- **Happenings** - These are moments in the Adventure which give context, hint at or develop the story, or expose a greater mystery afoot amidst the Adventure. They might be things foes say as they flee or are defeated, evidence of some strange event, or just funny moments that might come up if there's time.

Treat the Adventure's components as a wishlist, not a to-do list. There might be some stuff on there that you end up not feeling like handling. The group might get really invested in one particular path to the Adventure's Resolution and the rest of the stuff on its sheet doesn't end up mattering all that much.

Adventures have a “timer” of sorts, which prevent them from being functionally endless. Eventually something will happen that forces a confrontation with the Adventure's final boss. The entity in charge of, imprisoned within, or

seeking to control/plunder/protect the Adventure's location. This timer is tracked in Resolution points. Every time a Danger is defeated, a Happening is crossed off the list, a Treasure is found, or an Aspect is checked, the group gains +1 Resolution. Adventures have Resolution tracks 8 (dungeon), 12 (raid), and 16 (campaign) boxes long, and must have *at least* as many components as they have boxes in their Resolution tracks.

When the Resolution track is full, the Adventure is resolved and an Encounter with the final boss can begin. Don't worry about beginning the Encounter *right that very second*, or anything. It can wait a few until the group reaches a place where it makes sense. But the Encounter should be the very next thing of major importance to occur within the story.

The final boss of an Adventure doesn't need to have been decided upon beforehand, but it can help give the Adventure structure. Final bosses should “rhyme” with the Adventure. They should be the final line of the poem that ties the whole theme together. If an Adventure took place in a coastal military fort, the final boss could be the commander of that fort, or it could be a powerful kraken come to crush it, or anything else which “rhymes” with the themes of the Adventure you've just played through.

Encounters

Encounter scenes are Big Deals. They're the fights between the group and a singular monstrous foe (or a large group of important and powerful lesser foes). They're boss fights, raid battles, whatever you want to call them.

Encounters function similarly to smaller-scale battles, but they've got a lot more riding on them. Encounters can allow you to finally destroy long-standing enemies and end their nefarious Plots once and for all. Alternatively, they allow you to completely derail a Plot and force its masterminds to start from scratch or try a different tactic.

Encounters mostly arise as the capstone to an Adventure, but this is by no means a requirement. If the story's narrative trajectory makes for an Encounter to occur after a Cutscene (or even at the very beginning of a session!), do what makes sense for your game.

Encounter Basics

Encounters are fought over the course of rounds and ATR countdowns just like a regular battle, but against Boss-type enemies who are much more powerful than your standard fare. Boss enemies get 5 ACTs per round instead of 3.

They can frequently spend their ACTs to control Adds - additional enemies that appear to complicate matters - and gain or maintain power-ups that make the Boss themselves stronger or harder to deal with in some way.

Bosses also have access to Telegraph Strikes. These actions target one or more specific zones within their range, but don't activate immediately, giving Champions time to move out of their area of effect. Telegraph Strikes hit hard or are otherwise extremely punishing for those unable to avoid them for whatever reason.

Telegraph Strikes require the Nemesis to keep the ACTs spent on them in the monster's Spent ACT box until the round after the round they're declared. On the second round, Telegraph Strikes activate on their ATR as normal. Telegraph Strikes usually have very low ATRs, meaning that when they finally go off they usually go off quick. Some Telegraph Strikes also leave behind terrain effects which alter the zones they affect (or sometimes those they don't affect).

Note that Nemeses never need to explain to the rest of the Champions what the Telegraph Strike is about to do, just what zones are in danger of being hit by which Telegraph Strike.

Ending Encounters

Encounters end - usually - when the Boss enemy has been defeated. Whether “defeated” means killed or not will depend heavily on the circumstances of the Encounter and the group’s relationship with the Boss. Also keep in mind the very intentional wording of the condition you get when you’re defeated in battle: you’re Downed. You’re not “Dead” or “Slain”, you’re “Downed”. Whether Downed means dead or not is only up to the group to a certain extent, however. This is because of Plot Armor.

Important named characters (non-Champions) have a stat called Plot Armor, which shows the strength of fate’s intervention in their lives. **Defeating an enemy in an Encounter reduces their Plot Armor by -1. If you defeat an enemy in an Encounter whose Plot Armor is already at 0, you can choose to Exile them.**

Exiling a character means they’re removed from the story. This could mean that they’re killed, but it doesn’t have to mean that. It just means that the character, as they currently are, can never again be a part of the story. If they come back later, it’s in a completely different context. They have likely changed their names (or taken on an alias, anyway), they’re dressed very differently, and their goals are completely

different. If you decide to reintroduce an Exiled character, make sure they’re so radically changed that the group has a hard time really recognizing them as the same person.

Characters returned from Exile should start out either friendly or at least neutral with the group, their motives and goals having altered so dramatically that they don’t really see a need to continue any grudge against the group.

Villain Management (for Nemeses)

When a Major Villain is first introduced to the story, they have 4 Plot Armor. Minor Villains start out with 2 Plot Armor, and Mid-Bosses have 0 Plot Armor. You may only ever have a maximum of 1 Major Villain, 2 Minor Villains, and 3 Mid-Bosses active at a given time.

At the beginning of a new Patch, you may Retire one or more villains of any type in order to replace them with different ones of their same type. When a villain is Retired, they may no longer take part in the game’s story until a new Patch starts.

Playing Nemesis can entail a decent amount of bookkeeping. Whether or not you play the role long-term. If you do trade off, be sure your villain notes are legible for others.

Mid-Patches

After the principle story threads of a Patch have been wrapped up, a Mid-Patch occurs. The main thrust of a Patch is usually concerned with interfering with the villains' Plots, Exiling one or more villains, planning and enacting some plan, and exploring the world and the characters' stories. Mid-Patches are lulls between story arcs.

Downtime from adventuring might seem appropriate sometimes, but when you're in the middle of a tense situation with no obvious resolution in sight (war is about to break out, an enemy has kidnapped an ally and you have no leads, etc.) it might seem like an odd time to take a break. However, when there's not much for you to do but wait, resting up is probably the best thing you can be doing.

Mid-Patches aren't narrative black holes - time doesn't stop and evil doesn't call a temporary truce or anything like that. They're moments where the Champions realize that the best thing they can do to help is to get out of the way and try to practice some self care while their various allies sort some things out.

Grinding Actions & Plots

During a Mid-Patch, each Champion receives

3 Grinding Actions that they can spend as they please. They are as follows:

- **Gathering Grind** - Gain +1 Materials.
- **Gear Grind** - Gain +1 Gear.
- **Quest Grind** - Gain +1 Resources.

In addition to the three optional Grinding Actions above, Champions also gain the following two Mid-Patch effects, Rest & Relaxation and Respec, for free if they would like to take advantage of either of them.

Rest & Relaxation - Clear all marked Wounds, Echo, and Stress. Then choose one:

1. Increase your max Stress or Echo by +1. Each may only be improved in this way once.
2. Improve your Focus in one stat by +1. Each may only be improved in this way once.
3. Gain an additional Job Ability slot (a Combo, a Long Cooldown, or an Off-Cooldown slot), thus allowing you to gain access to your Job's second ability of that category. Each type of bonus slot can only be gained once.

Respec - Swap out any number of your chosen Areas of Expertise, choose a different Job, and change your Job Actions, and/or Trait.

Nemeses also add +1 to the Plot tracks (see page XX) of all villains when a Mid-Patch starts. Nemeses should also take the Mid-Patch lull as an opportunity to plan out or workshop with the other players any Cutscenes and/or Adventures they might want to drop on the group about those Plots when the next Patch starts.

Mid-Patch Narrations

After doing your 3 Grinding Actions, anyone who would like to do so should give a brief narration. This should describe what their Champion does during the Mid-Patch to earn them the things their Grinding Actions got them.

These narrations needn't be particularly detailed, but they could spiral out into Cutscenes (or even Clashes!) if the group is intrigued by something that comes up during one of them.

What one Champion's Rest & Relaxation looks like will be very different from another's. Some Champions might read (or even write) trashy romance novels in their time away from adventure, while some might prefer to relax by striking out into the wilderness by themselves to find and catch an infamous local fish.

Because "Resources", "Materials", and "Gear" are all either fairly nondescript concepts,

what Champions do to earn these things can vary widely. Gear usually refers to magicked weapons and armor, Materials are rare reagents and materials used for crafting things, and Resources are money and notoriety.

Mid-Patch Breaks & Wrap

A Mid-Patch can be a good time to take a break, talk about what has really been working for folks and what people want to see more of. It's also an ideal time for those interested in trying out different roles to swap them around. Some groups will want to swap roles from session-to-session, or even *within* a session. This is totally fine, but other groups might be looking for more cohesion and have people take on a given role semi-permanently in order to keep up narrative and gameplay continuity. For groups like this, a Mid-Patch is the ideal time for people to evaluate how they're feeling in their roles and decide if they want to try something new.

Game Wrap is a practice I've used in some of my personal game groups - if you think it might be helpful, take it for a spin. Once a session has concluded, anyone who's got time to stick around and a desire to participate can take turns saying something about the session (or game so far) that they enjoyed and something they want to see more (or less!) of going forward.

Part Four



Building
Champions

Building Character

Champions are built out of choices, not random die rolls. You'll need to decide on your Champion's stat allocation, Job, Type, Zodiac, and Areas of Expertise. You'll also need to decide on their Looks and their Truth, but these have fewer hard rules related to them - they aren't chosen from lists, they're descriptions.

Set Your Stats

Your Champion must have **one stat at 4 Focus**, **two stats at 3 Focus**, and **one stat at 2 Focus**. Which stats you choose to have which Focus rating is up to you, but you should try to make sure that people in the group have a good spread of stats with 4 Focus in them.

For instance, if you've got four players in your group, it might be a good idea to make sure that each person's character has their 4 in a different stat. That way - theoretically, at least - your group is as prepared as it can be to handle a variety of situations.

This suggestion to spread out your group's stat allocation isn't by any means a requirement, and is obviously a bit difficult for groups with fewer than four members. Don't bully your fellow players into making characters they don't

actually want to play. Let them choose their stats however they wish. Failing rolls isn't the worst thing in the world. In fact, if the group is narrating failures correctly (i.e. as "opportunities to succeed differently in the future"), failed rolls can be much more interesting than successes.

Choose Your Type

Each Champion falls into one of three "Types". These are broad categories which can have as much or as little narrative relevance as you choose to give them. They might be recognized divisions of some kind within the game's fiction, or they can be left as a wholly game-mechanical abstraction.

The Types are:

- **Archon** - Archons of Fate gain +1 maximum Stress and +1 maximum Echo.
- **Hero** - Heroes of Light gain +2 maximum Stress.
- **Student** - Students of Knowing gain +2 maximum Echo.

As you can see from the above, your type serves mainly as a way to boost your starting resources. You can choose a balanced approach, or one weighted more heavily to one side.

Define Your Zodiac

Champions are each born under a different zodiacal form called an Auspice or Guardian. Modern astrology and astromancy teach a good deal about the supposed personality traits and characteristics of people born under different astronomical events. How accurately this horoscopy describes your Champion's personality is entirely up to you, but it's a matter of aetherological fact that certain zodiac alignments predispose you to greater or lesser affinity to certain aetherial elements.

Your choices of Zodiac are:

- **The Catastrophe** - The Catastrophe is the Auspice of destruction, magic, and power. Those born under this sign are said to be brash, impulsive, and blunt, but also brave and loyal. The god represented by this sign is a raging tempest aligned with Darkness and Lightning. You have a strong aetheric connection to these aspects.
- **The Fury** - The Fury is the Auspice of wisdom, warfare, and strategy. Those born under this sign are said to be steely, frigid, and stubborn, but also wise, insightful, and dutiful. The goddess represented by this sign is aligned with Light and Ice. You have a
- **The Judge** - The Judge is the Auspice of the sun, of inquiry, and truth. Those born under this sign are said to be indecisive and prone to obsession, but also curious and clever. The goddess of this sign is aligned with Light and Fire. You have a strong aetheric connection to these aspects.
- **The Lover** - The Lover is the Auspice of caring, health, and love. It also represents the moons. Those born under this sign are said to be highly emotional and capable of great vulnerability, as well as generous, caring, and kind. The goddess of this sign is aligned with Dark and Ice. You have a strong aetheric connection to these aspects.
- **The Mason** - The Mason is the Auspice of ingenuity, creation, and the arts. Those born under it are said to be creative, determined, and artistic, but also prone to perfectionism and melancholy. The god of this sign is aligned with Light and Lightning. You have a strong aetheric connection to the Lightning aspect and Dark polarity.
- **The Merchant** - The Merchant is the Auspice of commerce, communication, and death. Those born under it are said to be prone to

greed and moroseness, but are also thought of as discerning, silver-tongued, and quick-witted. The god of this sign is the god of the Underworld, but is also the god of weights and measures and is aligned with Dark and Fire. You have a strong aetheric connection to these aspects.

- **The Mother** - The Mother is the Auspice of the earth, of nature, of families, and of life. Those born under this sign are said to be joyous, strong, and supportive, but also at times manic or prone to martyrdom - putting others needs before their own. The goddess of this sign is aligned with Light and Earth. You have a strong aetheric connection to these aspects.
- **The Sailor** - The Sailor is the Auspice of the sea, of navigation, and foresight. Those born under it are said to be capricious and flighty, but also effective and possessed of keen instincts. The goddess of this sign is aligned with Light and Wind. You have a strong aetheric connection to these aspects.
- **The Scholar** - The Scholar is the Auspice of learning, knowledge, and language. Those born under it are said to be quiet and introverted, but also brilliant, diligent, and perceptive. The god of this sign is aligned

with Light and Water. You have a strong aetheric connection to these aspects.

- **The Vagrant** - The Vagrant is the Auspice of mountains, roads, and travelers. Those born under this sign are said to be carefree and irresponsible, but also jovial, entertaining, and focused. The god of this sign is aligned with Dark and Wind. You have a strong aetheric connection to these aspects.
- **The Watcher** - The Watcher is the Auspice of space and time. Those born under this sign are said to be disconnected and distant, but also wise and competent. The god of this sign is aligned with Dark and Earth. You have a strong aetheric connection to these aspects.
- **The Weaver** - The Weaver is the Auspice of fate and rivers. Those born under it are said to be lucky, fated, or sometimes “cursed to live in interesting times”. The goddess is aligned with Dark and Water. You have a strong aetheric connection to these aspects.

The Zodiacs also represent the twelve common gods of the Homelands. Your Auspice or Guardian is thought of by many as your patron god, the one it is right to give thanks to on your namedays and other personal celebrations.

Choose Your Job

Each Champion has a Job. Jobs can be changed at Mid-Patch by taking the “Respec” Grinding Action. Jobs are divided into three categories: **Tank** (who are tough and focused on taking hits for their friends and keeping the enemies’ attentions), **Damage** (who are lethal and focused on taking down enemies quickly), and **Healer** (who are resourceful and focused on making sure everyone survives the fight). I strongly recommend having at least one Tank and one Healer in your group, if possible.

Job Abilities

Your Job gives you a handful of options to choose from for your Job Abilities, which include your *Combo*, *Long Cooldown*, *Off-Cooldown*, and *Trait*. You must choose one of each of these things from the options presented to you by your chosen Job. As you progress through patches, you will get the opportunity to add +1 more Job Ability slot of each type, except Traits.

You may change your slotted Job Abilities to any other Job Abilities available to you any time you’re not in combat, including just before a battle starts. This allows you to experiment with different builds or prepare your build for a known challenge you’re about to face.

Tank Jobs

The Dark Knight

Combos:

- **Bloodspiller - Range: o. ATRs: 3/5/7. 3-ACT**
Effect: Reduce target’s Toughness by -1 (min 1) after resolving other effects.
- **Soul-Eater - Range: o. ATRs: 2/4/6. 3-ACT**
Effect: Regain full Toughness if below max.

Long Cooldowns:

- **Darkside - Range: Self. ATR: 1. Effect:** Suffer 1 random Wound. Gain +1 Buff to all stats.
- **Flood of Shadow - Range: 3. ATR: 6. Effect:** Power attack against up to 3 targets in range. If not damaged, they suffer -2 Toughness instead of -1.

Off-Cooldowns:

- **Deathgrip - Range: 3. Effect:** Up to two targets in range suffer Taunt for 3 rounds, pulled to your zone, and suffer -1 Toughness.
- **Unleash - Range: o. Effect:** Destiny attack against up to 4 targets in range, all are Taunted for 2 rounds.

The Engiknight

Combos:

- Hard Barrel - Range:** 0. ATRs: 2/4/8. 3-ACT
Effect: Regain full Toughness if below max.
- Demon Hunter - Range:** 0. ATRs: 3/5/7. 3-ACT
Effect: Make the 3rd attack against up to 3 targets in range.

Long Cooldowns:

- Shell-Shock - Range:** 1. ATR: 3. Effect: Power attack against up to 3 targets in range. All targets suffer Confused for 2 rounds.
- Starfield - Range:** Self. ATR: 1. Effect: Regain full Toughness, and gain Proshell for 3 rounds. If you're successfully wounded during this time, choose the stat to wound instead of determining randomly.

Off-Cooldowns:

- Powder Flash - Range:** 0. Effect: Up to two targets in range suffer Taunt and Blackout for 3 rounds.
- Sonic Boom - Range:** 0. Effect: Power attack against up to 4 targets in range, all are Taunted for 2 rounds.

The Paladin

Combos:

- Rage of the Fury- Range:** 0. ATRs: 2/4/6. 3-ACT
Effect: Target suffers Taunt for 2 rounds.
- Save the Queen - Range:** 0. ATRs: 3/5/7. 3-ACT
Effect: Target suffers Weaken for 2 rounds.

Long Cooldowns:

- Bastion - Range:** 2. ATR: 1. Effect: Up to 3 enemy targets in range suffer Taunt for 1 round, up to 3 allied targets in range gain Proshell for 2 rounds.
- Divine Clemency - Range:** 1. ATR: 3. Effect: Regain full Toughness and clear 1 Wound. Affects self and up to 2 other targets in range.

Off-Cooldowns:

- Holy Spirit - Range:** 2. Effect: Up to 2 targets in range suffer -2 Toughness and suffer Taunt for 2 rounds.
- Shield Bash - Range:** 0. Effect: Destiny attack against one target in range, target is pushed 1 zone away and Severed for 2 rounds.

The Warrior

Combos:

- **Chaos Strike - Range: 0. ATRs: 2/3/5. 3-ACT**
Effect: Regain up to 2 Toughness if below max.
- **Maelstrom - Range: 0. ATRs: 4/6/8. 3-ACT**
Effect: Make the 3rd attack against up to 3 targets in range.

Long Cooldowns:

- **Berserk - Range: Self. ATR: 1. Effect:** Lose -1 Toughness. Max Toughness reduced by -1 for 3 rounds. Gain +1 Buff to all stats.
- **Overthrow - Range: 1. ATR: 4. Effect:** Regain full Toughness. Power attack against up to 3 targets in range. All targets are Taunted for 2 rounds.

Off-Cooldowns:

- **Fell Slaughter - Range: 0. Effect:** Destiny attack against 1 target in range, who also suffers Weakened and Blackout for 2 rounds.
- **Onslaught - Range: 2. Effect:** Move to target in range. They suffer Taunt for 2 rounds, lose -3 Toughness.

Tank Traits

All Tank Jobs may choose from amongst the following Traits:

- **Backbiter** - You have the Spikes condition with a permanent duration.
- **Prime Threat** - Instead of moving on your activation, you can inflict Taunt on 1 target within 1 zone.
- **Team Player** - Positive Conditions last +2 rounds longer than normal on you.

Tank Info

Tank Jobs have the duty of keeping the enemies' attentions focused on them. They have numerous abilities capable of inflicting the Taunted condition in order to facilitate it, and various ways of getting back lost Toughness in order to help survive all their newfound popularity with the enemy's front line.

You'll be relying on your teammates to really put the hurt on your foes and keep you alive. While you can inflict some damage, you're not as strong as some Jobs.

Base Toughness: Tanks have a base Toughness of 5.

Damage Jobs (Magick)

The Black Mage

Combos:

- Blazing Fire - Range: 3. ATRs: 3/5/7. 3-ACT Effect:** If any of the attacks inflicted Wounds, one Wounded target suffers +1 Wound.
- Jagged Ice - Range: 3. ATRs: 2/4/6. 3-ACT Effect:** Reduce target's Toughness by -1 (min 1) after resolving other effects.

Long Cooldowns:

- Drain-Rasp - Range: 3. ATR: 3. Effect:** Up to 3 targets in range suffer Poison and Blackout for 3 rounds. You may clear 1 Wound.
- Grand Flare - Range: 3. ATR: 10. Effect:** Power attack against up to 4 targets in range. Inflict +1 more Wound than normal on a hit.

Off-Cooldowns:

- Foul Scourge - Range: 3. Effect:** Up to 2 targets in range suffer -3 Toughness.
- Thunder-Blast - Range: 3. Effect:** Finesse attack against up to 2 targets in range. They lose -1 Toughness at the start of every round until the end of the battle.

The Red Mage

Combos:

- Enchanted Blade - Range: 0. ATRs: 4/6/8. 3-ACT Effect:** Gain 1 Buff to the stat used for the attack.
- Vermilion Blasts - Range: 3. ATRs: 3/5/7. 3-ACT Effect:** Make the 3rd attack against up to 2 targets in range.

Long Cooldowns:

- Crimson Scorch - Range: 3. ATR: 8. Effect:** Power attack against up to 3 targets in range. Clear Buffs after the attack check to add additional targets at a 1-for-1 rate.
- Septime Epee - Range: 3. ATR: 7. Effect:** Up to 4 targets in range lose -3 Toughness and suffer Slowed for 3 rounds.

Off-Cooldowns:

- Parry and Riposte - Range: 1. Effect:** Gain Proshell for 2 Rounds and up to 3 targets in range lose -1 Toughness.
- Vermilion Cure - Range: 3. Effect:** Clear 1 Wound from self or an allied target in range and restore them to full Toughness.

The Summoner

Combos:

- **Eidolon's Rage - Range:** 3. **ATRs:** 3/5/7. **3-ACT**
Effect: Make the 3rd attack against up to 2 targets in range.
- **Ruination - Range:** 3. **ATRs:** 2/5/9. **3-ACT**
Effect: If any of the attacks inflicted Wounds, one Wounded target suffers +1 Wound.

Long Cooldowns:

- **Ancient Trance - Range:** Self. **ATR:** 1. **Effect:** Gain +3 Buffs to one stat.
- **Enkindled Cataclysm - Range:** 3. **ATR:** 10.
Effect: Power attack against 1 target in range. Inflict +2 more Wounds than normal on a hit.

Off-Cooldowns:

- **Bio-Miasma - Range:** 3. **Effect:** Up to 2 targets in range suffer Poison and Blackout for 2 rounds.
- **Eidolon Shield - Range:** Self. **Effect:** Regain full Toughness and gain either Proshell or Regen for 2 rounds.

Magick Damage Traits

All Magick Damage Jobs may choose from amongst the following Traits:

- **Drain** - Clear 1 Wound when you Down an enemy target.
- **Manawall** - Gain Proshell with unlimited duration.
- **Swiftcast** - Once per battle (or phase, for encounters) you may resolve an action on any ATR as if it were an Off-Cooldown ability.

Magick Damage Info

Magick Damage Jobs are heavy-hitting Champions who usually do their best work at range. They tend to have less in the way of survivability mechanics than Tanks, but more than most Physical Damage Jobs. Because you have at least some ability to care for yourself and you can usually stay a good distance from the fighting, your presence lessens the burden on Healers.

When you do get hit, though, your lower Toughness means you're likely to get Wounded.

Base Toughness: Magick Damage Champions have a base Toughness of 3.

Damage Jobs (Physical)

The Blademaster

Combos:

- Flashing Blade - Range:** 0. ATRs: 3/6/9. 3-ACT
Effect: Make the 3rd attack against up to 3 targets in range.
- Lightning Draw - Range:** 0. ATRs: 2/3/5. 3-ACT
Effect: Gain 1 Buff to the stat used to attack.

Long Cooldowns:

- Meditation - Range:** Self. ATR: 8. Effect: Gain +3 Buffs to one stat, or +1 Buff to three stats.
- Slow Draw - Range:** 3. ATR: 10. Effect: Thoughtfulness attack against 1 target. Inflict +2 more Wounds on a hit. Appear in the target's zone after resolving the action.

Off-Cooldowns:

- Air-Slash - Range:** 2. Effect: Finesse attack against up to 3 targets in range. If only attacking one target, inflict +1 Wound than normal on a hit.
- Third Eye - Range:** Self. Effect: Use when wounded. The successful attack becomes a failure instead. Attacker loses -2 Toughness.

The Dragon Knight

Combos:

- Fang and Claw - Range:** 0. ATRs: 2/3/5. 3-ACT
Effect: Reduce target's Toughness by -1 (min 1) after resolving other effects.
- Impulse Drive - Range:** 1. ATRs: 3/5/7. 3-ACT
Effect: Gain +1 Buff to the stat used to attack.

Long Cooldowns:

- Dragonfall - Range:** 3. ATR: 8. Effect: Gain +1 Buff to Power. Power attack against all enemies in one zone within range. Appear in the target zone after resolving the action.
- Eyes of the Wyrm - Range:** 2. ATR: 1. Effect: You and one ally in range both gain +2 Buffs. 1 target in each of your zones loses -1 Toughness.

Off-Cooldowns:

- Battle Chant - Range:** 3. Effect: Up to 3 allies in range choose: either gain +1 Buff or regain full Toughness.
- High Jump - Range:** 3. Effect: Power attack against 1 target in range. You may clear Buffs after the attack check in order to affect +1 target per buff cleared.

The Friar

Combos:

- Boot Rush - Range: 0. ATRs: 2/3/4. 3-ACT Effect:** Reduce target's Toughness by -1 (min 1) after resolving other effects.
- Fist of The Catastrophe - Range: 0. ATRs: 2/4/6. 3-ACT Effect:** Gain 1 Buff to the stat used to attack.

Long Cooldowns:

- Forbidden Technique - Range: 3. ATR: 5.** Effect: Thoughtfulness attack against up to 3 targets in range. If not wounded, targets suffer -3 Toughness instead of -1.
- Greased Lightning - Range: Self. ATR: 1.** Effect: Use full 3-ACT combo for only 1 ACT. (Effectively, you may spend 2 ACT to resolve combo twice)

Off-Cooldowns:

- Flying Knee - Range: 3. Effect:** Finesse attack against 1 target. Target clears all Buffs to one stat. Appear in target's zone.
- Pressure Strike - Range: 0. Effect:** Up to 3 targets in range suffer Poison and Slow for 2 rounds.

The Mechanician

Combos:

- Frag Blasts - Range: 3. ATRs: 3/5/7. 3-ACT Effect:** Make the 3rd attack against up to 3 targets in range.
- Hotshots - Range: 2. ATRs: 2/4/5. 3-ACT Effect:** Target suffers Weaken or Blackout (your choice) for 2 rounds.

Long Cooldowns:

- Drill Blaster - Range: 3. ATR: 9. Effect:** Destiny attack against 1 target in range. Inflict +2 more Wounds than normal on a hit.
- Mechastrike - Range: 2. ATR: 3. Effect:** Up to 3 targets in range are reduced to 1 Toughness.

Off-Cooldowns:

- Detonator - Range: 2. Effect:** Power attack against 1 target in range. Inflict +1 more Wounds than normal on a hit.
- Flamethrower! - Range: 0. Effect:** Finesse attack against up to 3 targets in range. If not wounded, targets suffer -2 Toughness instead of -1.

The Shadow

Combos:

- Spinning Slash - Range: 0.** ATRs: 2/3/5. 3-ACT
Effect: Gain 1 Buff to the stat used to attack.
- Venomous Blades - Range: 0.** ATRs: 2/4/6. 3-ACT
Effect: Target suffers Poison for 2 rounds.

Long Cooldowns:

- Foretold Blades - Range: 3.** ATR: 10. **Effect:** Destiny attack against up to 5 targets in range.
- Life or Death - Range: Self.** ATR: 1. **Effect:** Clear both Used boxes of one Off-Cooldown ability, or one from both.

Off-Cooldowns:

- Shadow Fireball - Range: 3.** **Effect:** Power attack against all enemies in one zone within range. Targets suffer Slow for 1 round.
- Shadow Bolts - Range: 3.** **Effect:** Finesse attack against 1 target in range. Target's max Toughness is reduced by -1 (min 1, effect removed after battle/phase).

The Traveler

Combos:

- Arrow Barrage - Range: 3.** ATRs: 3/5/7. 3-ACT
Effect: Make the 3rd attack against up to 3 targets in range.
- Nature's Bite - Range: 3.** ATRs: 3/5/7. 3-ACT
Effect: Target suffers Poison for 2 rounds.

Long Cooldowns:

- Song of War - Range: 3.** ATR: 1. **Effect:** All allies in range gain +1 Buff to two stats of their choice, or +2 Buffs to 1 stat.
- Ultimate Arrow - Range: 4.** ATR: 10. **Effect:** Target one zone in range. All enemies in all zones between you and target zone are reduced to 1 Toughness.

Off-Cooldowns:

- Snap Shot - Range: 3.** **Effect:** Finesse attack against 1 target in range. Target clears all buffs.
- The Judge's Paean - Range: 3.** **Effect:** Up to 3 allies in range choose: either gain +1 Buff or clear 1 Wound.

Physical Damage Traits

All Physical Damage Jobs may choose from amongst the following Traits:

- **Charge** - When you move before resolving an attack, you may ignore up to 2 Wounds on the stat you're using to attack.
- **Lightfoot** - You gain the Haste condition with a permanent duration.
- **Swiftness** - You may both use a consumable and move 1 zone on each activation, rather than having to choose one or the other.

Physical Damage Info

Physical Damage Jobs are front-line fighters without the benefits of a Tank's immense toughness and ability to easily regain their defensive posture. Physical Damage Jobs also bring a lot of Buff potential to the table and are often built around creating openings for others (or even themselves) to exploit.

Many Physical Damage Jobs have both good single target and multi-target options, so they're highly adaptable given enough foreknowledge.

Base Toughness: Physical Damage Champions have a base Toughness of 4.

Healer Jobs

The Academician

Combos:

- **Pyre Method - Range: 3. ATRs: 3/5/7. 3-ACT Effect:** Clear 1 Wound from up to 2 allies in range.
- **Ruinous Diagram - Range: 3. ATRs: 2/4/6. 3-ACT Effect:** Clear 1 Wound from 1 ally in range and restore them to full Toughness.

Long Cooldowns:

- **Adlocutio - Range: 3. ATR: 7. Effect:** Up to 4 targets in range clear 1 Wound, regain full Toughness, and gain Proshell for 3 rounds.
- **Bellator Tacticum - Range: 3. ATR: 1. Effect:** Up to 3 targets in range clear 2 Wounds and gain +1 Buff.

Off-Cooldowns:

- **Barrier Equation - Range: 3. Effect:** Up to 2 targets in range gain Proshell for 2 rounds and regain full Toughness.
- **Lustrating Theorem - Range: 2. Effect:** You and 1 target in range clear 1 Wound and regain full Toughness.

The Astromancer

Combos:

- Astrologos - Range: 3. ATRs: 3/5/7. 3-ACT**
Effect: Clear 1 Wound from up to 2 allies in range.
- Malefic Alignment - Range: 3. ATRs: 2/3/6. 3-ACT**
Effect: Restore full Toughness to 1 target in range. If they're already at full Toughness, clear 1 Wound instead.

Long Cooldowns:

- Grand Divination - Range: 3. ATR: 1. Effect:** Up to 4 targets in range clear 1 Wound and gain +1 Buff.
- Stellar Conjunction - Range: 3. ATR: 4. Effect:** Destiny attack against 1 target in range. Up to 3 allies in range clear 1 Wound.

Off-Cooldowns:

- Benefic Arcana - Range: 2. Effect:** Clear 1 Wound and 1 negative condition from up to 2 targets in range.
- Cross Spread - Range: 2. Effect:** Up to 3 allies in range gain +1 Buff and clear 1 Wound.

The White Mage

Combos:

- Holy Wind - Range: 3. ATRs: 2/3/4. 3-ACT**
Effect: Clear 1 Wound from up to 2 allies in range. Or forgo the third attack to Clear 2 Wounds from up to 2 allies in range.
- Nature's Might - Range: 3. ATRs: 3/5/7. 3-ACT**
Effect: Restore full Toughness and clear 1 Wound to 1 target in range. Or forgo third attack to affect 2 allies in range.

Long Cooldowns:

- Asylum - Range: 3. ATR: 1. Effect:** Target 1 zone in range. Allies in that zone gain Regen and Proshell for as long as they remain in that zone.
- Holy of Holies - Range: 1. ATR: 8. Effect:** Destiny attack against up to 3 targets in range. Up to 3 allies in range clear 1 Wound.

Off-Cooldowns:

- Divine Seal - Range: 3. Effect:** Clear 1 Wound from up to 4 targets in range.
- Regenerate - Range: 2. Effect:** Up to 2 targets in range gain Regen for 2 rounds.

Healer Traits

All Healer Jobs may choose from amongst the following Traits:

- **Purify** - Instead of moving on your activation, you may clear 1 negative condition from yourself or an ally within 3 zones after your activation is over.
- **Rescue** - Once per activation when you clear a Wound from an ally, you can pull them to your zone. Doing so restores their Toughness.
- **Resurrection** - Once per battle per Champion (or phase, for encounters), when you clear a Wound from a Champion they may also clear Downed.

Healer Info

Healer Jobs are back-line support casters. They keep the group alive and healthy, and put out Buffs and damage as they do it. Playing a Healer can be tough if your team isn't working together, so try to coordinate people's plans to make the best of your healing opportunities and action timing.

Base Toughness: Healer Champions have a base Toughness of 3.

Things to Remember

Your Champion's Job isn't permanent. You can change it with Respec during a Mid-Patch.

Your Job Ability choices aren't permanent either. You can change them whenever you're not in battle - including right before a battle actually starts! Like... The second a battle is declared you can say "Hold on, let's get our Job Abilities sorted first" and customize your loadout for the fight ahead. As you play through Patches, you'll also gain more Job Ability slots so you can use more of your Job's powers.

While some Job Abilities might seem to be just mathematically more powerful than others, each has a different application in different situations. Jobs bring some pretty different tools to the table, and every combination of Jobs in the ecosystem of a group of Champions plays off of one another in exciting ways. Try to diversify your team's abilities as much as possible and explore different combinations of powers.

Lastly, don't bully other people into a build they don't want to play. Don't hassle others about being "sub-optimal". If you come up with a group build and others like your idea and want to try it out, cool! If they say they want to do their own thing, leave them alone about it!

Choose Your Areas of Expertise

The last main set of choices you have to make for your Champion are their Areas of Expertise. These are three general or descriptive words or professions which can apply to any check rolled. As long as you can make a convincing argument that your Area of Expertise has something to do with what you're attempting, it will apply.

Areas of Expertise allow you to reroll any dice which result in a 1. The second rolled result must stand, even if it's another result of 1.

Each Champion has three Areas of Expertise. Areas of Expertise are named after a profession or sort of person who does a particular activity. They don't necessarily imply that your Champion literally worked as one such person before they became an Adventurer (though they might have). They just suggest that your Champion is good enough at that sort of thing to make a decent living of it if they really wanted to.

I'll provide a list of example Areas of Expertise, but this should by no means be regarded as an exhaustive list of the Areas of Expertise that are available to your Champions. If you come up with another one that isn't covered by the list that you'd like to use then by all means, go for it!

- **Apothecary:** An alchemist, a mixer of potions and gatherer of rare herbs. Would apply to creating medicines and poisons, recognizing plants and animal ingredients, possibly even recognizing the effects of certain poisons and ailments.
- **Artist:** A creator and creative. Would apply to things like the crafting of beautiful or evocative things, seeing past the obvious, haggling over prices, recognizing forgeries, knowing the history of their art, etcetera.
- **Assessor:** A taxation and excise inspector. Would apply to negotiation, mathematics, knowledge of weights and measures, discerning lies, all kinds of great stuff.
- **Athlete:** A strong, fast, determined physical adept. An acrobat, a runner, a swimmer, a climber. Would apply to all actions involving using your body in a physically intense and difficult fashion- running, jumping, climbing trees, balancing, etc.
- **Blacksmith:** A smithy, crafter of metalworks. Would apply to withstanding heat and hard toil, recognizing craftsmanship, creating metal objects (with time and materials), and a knowledge of metallurgy.
- **Counselor:** An adviser, friendly ear, and

insightful mind quick to turn a phrase. Would apply to analyzing other people's motives and plans, actively listening and understanding people, talking people down from things, talking people through things, and talking people over things.

- **Gatherer:** A claimer of things from the bounty of the earth. A miner, lumberjack, fisherman, etc. Would apply to the kinds of hard labor and fortitude required to perform these tasks, as well as the expertise required to recognize valuable materials, and the skill required to remove or acquire those materials safely.
- **Healer:** A doctor of medicine, a practitioner of the healing arts. Would apply to diagnosing and treating ailments, understanding and using medicines and medicinal practices, and recognizing reagents with medicinal properties.
- **Merchant:** A peddler of wares and procurer of goods. Would apply to haggling over prices, appraising the value of objects, selling things to people, recognizing deception, and “knowing people who know people”.
- **Natural Philosopher:** A scholar, a seeker of knowledge through rational inquiry. Would

apply to remembering scientific facts, understanding aetherological principles, trying to put theories into practice, and working out how best to learn something which is not currently known.

- **Priest:** A servant of the gods, shepherd of their mortal flocks. Would apply to recognizing holy artifacts, texts, and symbols, knowledge of history, as well as oration and confident speaking.
- **Sailor:** A boatswain, be their vessels seaworthy or plying mighty rivers. Would apply to climbing, tying of knots, recognizing weather patterns, handling boats, gambling and gaming, creative and shocking swears, and anything else stereotypically “sailory”.
- **Socialite:** A powerful persona capable of attracting and maintaining relationships and social buzz. Would apply to convincing people of things, extracting information, making friends and influencing people.
- **Soldier:** A professional fighter. Would apply to studying enemy tactics, understanding command structures, enduring hardships, athletic pursuits, and navigating bureaucracy.
- **Sorcerer:** A wizard, a mystical spellcaster, student of the occult arts. In the setting

suggested by CotMC, mages aren't terribly uncommon. The highest barrier to entry isn't some nebulous measure of "talent", but of finding a teacher. Would apply to knowing ancient languages and symbols, recognizing magickal materials, reading the stars and other omens, deciphering rituals, and countering fell magickal workings.

- **Thief:** A second-story worker, a pick-pocket, and a skulking sneakthief. Would apply to shadowing people, picking pockets and locks, hiding and moving quietly.
- **Tinkerer:** A worker of machines and clockwork. Would apply to finding and recognizing rare materials, understanding complex contraptions, building complex contraptions, destroying complex contraptions, and so on and so forth.
- **Woodsfolk:** A person at home in nature, one perfectly capable of survival in nature. Would apply to foraging and hunting, constructing shelter, fishing, chopping down trees, recognizing plants and animals.

Describe Your Look

Your Champion has a Look to them. It's something personal and noticeable about them that makes them stand out somehow (maybe it's even just how nondescript and "normal" they look?).

Your Look might be a description of your outfit, the fact that you are especially tall and muscular, your fiery blue eyes and thick eyebrows, your penchant for tattoos and piercings, or even a description of how your common personality traits manifest in your appearance.

Since the space on the character sheet for your Look is pretty small, it should be kept punchy and short. Something like two to ten words. Here are some examples to mull over:

- *Built like a bronze bull.*
- *Azure eyes, tanned skin, short blonde hair.*
- *Tired eyes and slumped shoulders.*
- *Leather coat, tricorn hat, pistol on hip.*
- *White antlers crown long red hair.*
- *A dark wizard hidden amongst robes and rags.*

Declare Your Truth

Each Champion has a *Truth*. Your Truth is something that's... well... True about you. It might be (but doesn't have to be) true about only you in the whole of the world. Somewhat ironically, it's possible (especially early in the story) that the Champion isn't consciously aware of their Truth.

You might be the scion of a long tradition of secretive wizards. You could be the bastard child of a powerful noble or clergyman whose attitude towards you speaks more about them than it does about you. You might be the one knight of a special designation in all your homeland - whose destiny it is to confront or contain some singular evil.

Your Truth can be as mundane or as cosmic in its importance as you see fit. What's important is that it's True and meaningful in some way to how your Champion's story will unfold. Even if they don't start out knowing their Truth, it will have effects on their lives both subtle and gross. Truths should be shared out-of-character so that everyone can work together in their narrations to bring them forward, hint at or play off of them. If a Champion's Truth is something sensitive, though, people should be cognizant and respectful of its delicacy.

Designing Your Truth

Similar to a Champion's Looks, your Truth has- intentionally - only a small amount of room on the character sheet. You should keep its description short, even if you have a longer form of it rattling around in your head.

I would encourage players to make their Truths together - not necessarily to weave them into or make them referential of one another, though that can be a great way to do it. Coming up with Truths communally allows people to know what's being thought of by different players and can help shape the game to come. If everyone's on the same page about each characters' Truths, everyone can work together to highlight and play off of those Truths.

Keeping secrets in-character can be good drama, but keeping secrets out-of-character means that those things will probably never come up in play and might even feel weird and off-putting if you bring them up later. All that said, head-canons are totally fine, especially if the game's already started and you're still workshopping an idea for a reveal or upcoming story arc.

Be careful how you treat other people's Truths. They're just as special as yours is to you.

Champion Creation Recap

The steps to create your Champion that we've covered in this section are:

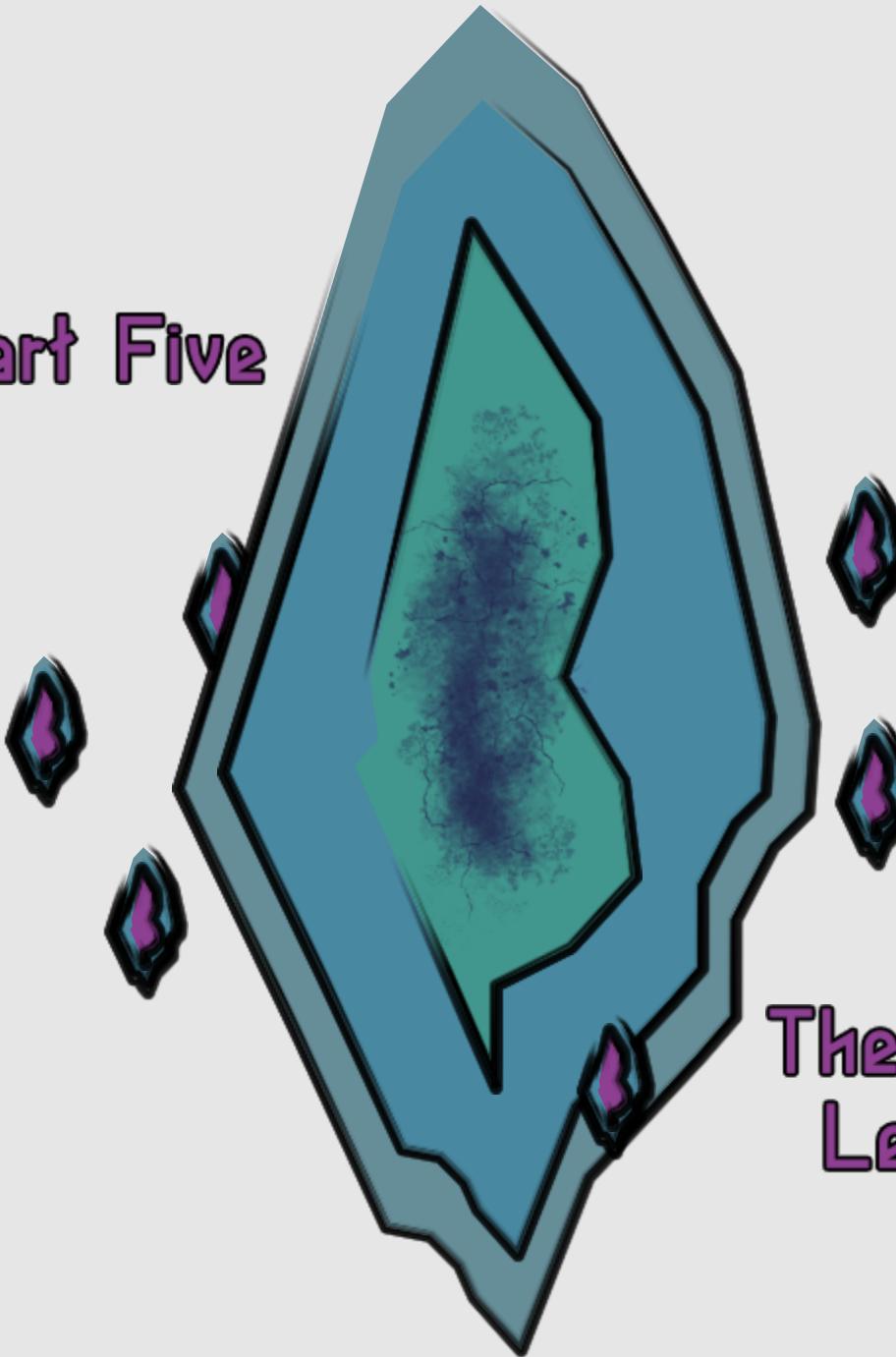
- **Stat Allocation** - Set one stat at 4 Focus, two stats at 3 Focus, and one stat at 2 Focus!
- **Zodiac** - Your character's birth-sign may (or may not) tell you something about their personality. Your Zodiac might also give you ideas about what kinds of dramatic "special effects" and elemental energies might accompany their magicks and abilities.
- **Type** - Your Champion serves a particular role in the story, being a Hero, an Archon, or a Student. These titles can have as much or as little narrative significance as you wish, but mechanically they set your starting maximum Stress and Echo pools.
- **Job** - Choose your starting job and (if you feel like it) jot down the specifics of 1 Job Ability per category (1 Combo, 1 Long Cooldown, 1 Off-Cooldown, and 1 Trait). You can change your slotted Job Abilities at any time when you're not in battle, up to and including just before battle formally starts. You can also gain additional ability slots as you play.
- **Areas of Expertise** - Choose 3 Areas of

Expertise, either from the list of suggestions or ones you've made up for yourself. Areas of Expertise are named after professions or people who do a certain thing. You have enough practice in that particular thing that you get to reroll 1s when they show up in checks related to that particular profession.

- **Your Look** - Describe your character's aesthetic, their personality as represented by their appearance, or just a list of noteworthy physical characteristics that might make them stand out to others. Use your Look (and the Looks of others) to inform and shape your narrations.
- **Your Truth** - Each Champion has a Truth, a secret (perhaps even to them) or deeply meaningful aspect of their personality or destiny. It might be their place in society, the circumstances of their becoming an adventurer in the first place, or something else. Truths are deeply important to your character even if they read as being relatively mundane.

With these steps completed, your Champion is born and ready to begin their adventure. Plunge head-first into the abyss to bring the Crystal's light where'er you walk.

Part Five



The Nemesis Ledgers

Here There Be Monsters

This section will contain a handful of enemies of various types for the Nemesis players to control, customize, and be inspired by.

The enemies of the Champions are not exclusively the puppets of the Shadows and other powerful villains. However, some connection to an overarching evil can make what might otherwise seem like a fairly mundane encounter (inasmuch as a battle to the death can ever be mundane) into a meaningful and dramatic battle.

When thinking about what monsters to use in a given Adventure, care should be given to think about why a certain monster might be in a certain place. What do they eat, what ecological (or aetheric, or historical) niche do they fill, how did they get there, and so on.

If you feel like a monster's stats would be perfect for representing a different kind of creature or enemy, but you're not particularly feeling the aesthetic vibe of the critter, feel free to customize. Adapt these creatures, hack them to pieces and sew them back together, give them a fresh coat of paint and a new name, make them work for you if they're not already.

Chapter Format

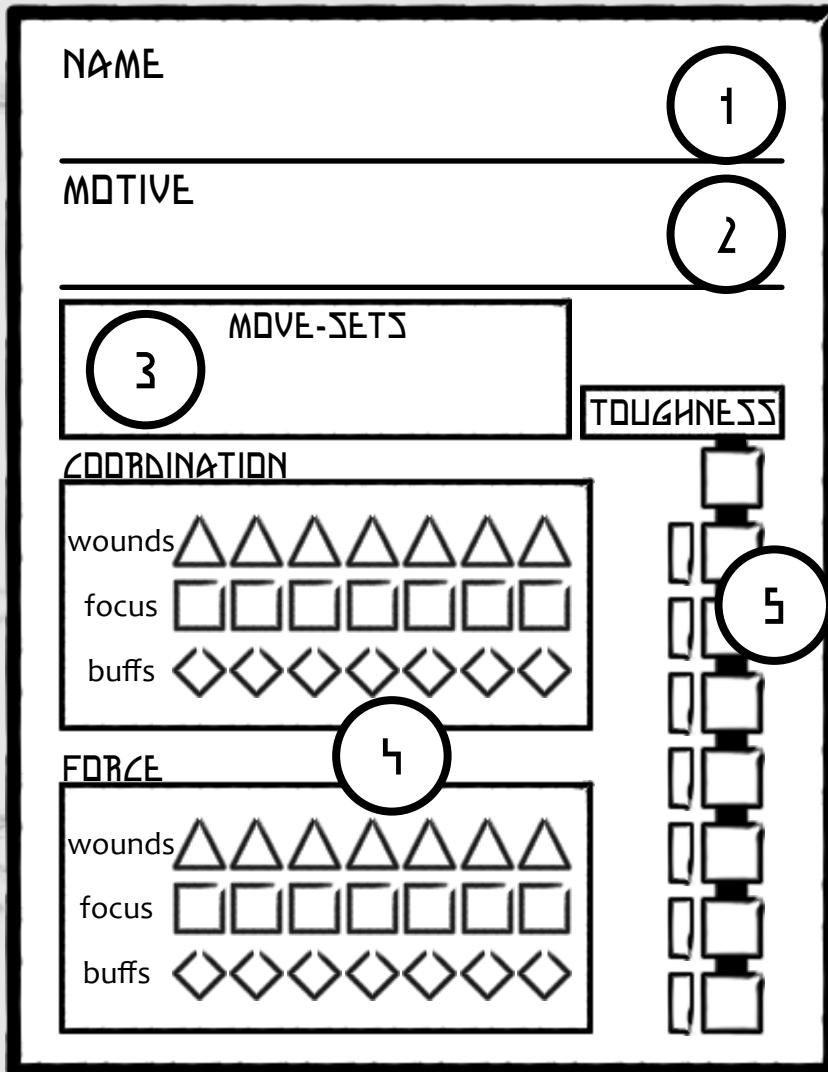
The first part of the chapter will be devoted to the statblocks for what might be considered “everyday flora and fauna”-type monsters, grouped by their habitats (**Civilization, Ruins, Underground, Wilderness**). This will include both monsters (commonly called Fiends) and humanoids who might have an axe to grind with the Champions. Accompanying each Creature's statblock will be a narrative cue in the form of a short description or bit of flavor text and an explanation of common abilities and scenarios for the Creature.

The second part of the chapter is a section devoted to Creature Move-Sets. Each Creature has a list of Move-Sets from which they can draw their abilities and traits. Their Move-Sets function a bit like Jobs in this regard, giving them access to different powers and passive effects. This allows Nemeses to customize monsters more or less on-the-fly before battle to keep things interesting.

The third and final part of this chapter will be devoted to a small handful of villain statblocks. These are Big Bads, the types you'll face in Encounters. This section will also include some additional rules and guidance for how to run Encounters and use these creatures' stats.

Elements of a Creature's Statblock

Creature statblocks are formatted with a few distinct sections. Some components are familiar, looking or functioning like some analogue on the Champions' sheets, while others are unique to monsters.



1. The Creature's Name.
2. A brief examination (bite-sized, you might say) of the Creature's primary motive when it comes to battle and hostile encounters. Just like everything else, this is open to customization and interpretation as context encourages.
3. The Creature's Move-Sets show which abilities they can be slotted with. Think of this as something like the Creature's Job, deciding what abilities and traits they have access to, and how many. The Move-Sets will be accompanied by a number, indicating how many abilities they're allowed to take from those Move-Sets. A Creature's combined total of all Move-Set numbers is called their **Set Limit** and can be used to approximate their level of power at a glance.
4. The Creature's stats. They serve the same function as a Champion's, except that **Coordination** is their equivalent of Finesse + Thoughtfulness while **Force** is their equivalent of Destiny + Power. When rolling (d4) for wounds, 1-2 = Coordination, 3-4 = Force.
5. The Creature's Toughness track. Creatures are considered to effectively only have a Stress limit of 1. Meaning they're Downed after suffering even 1 Wound while one stat is fully Wounded (see page 13).

Constructing Creatures & Battles

The Nemesis is responsible for putting together the battles that the Champions engage in. This can be done on the fly or planned ahead of time, especially if they have some ideas for an Adventure and the Danger components of that Adventure.

There are a handful of best practices for this kind of combat encounter design. These are just guidelines that may not end up working out for all sorts of reasons, depending on the unique needs and makeup of your group.

First, you should try to stick to a maximum combined Set Limit of 3 per Champion. So if you have 4 Champions, the combined total Set Limit of all involved Creatures should be 12 (4 Champions x 3 Set Limit per Champion = battle Set Limit of 12). You can cut this number in half (to a minimum of 4) for “minor tussles”, or add +1 Champion’s worth of Set Limit (so, +3 maximum Set Limit) for particularly hard fights.

Everyone at the table should be on board with the difficulty of the fight in which they’re about to take part. If someone thinks that a planned battle sounds like an un-fun slog, you should think about how to streamline it while keeping it exciting. Mixing up the terrain of the

fight (creating more moving parts, more hazards, and more potential complications) can make a lower Set Limit battle into one that’s still challenging and interesting without requiring hours of your life to slog through the seeming interminability of a fight with tons of dudes in it.

Similarly, adding a ticking clock or objective element (“we have to get from point A to point B, the monsters are secondary to the actual goal”) to a battle is an ideal way to add complexity while minimizing the bloat effect on the enemies’ health bars.

After you’ve picked out what Creatures you want to use in a battle, you’ll have to slot their abilities. Each Creature gains a number of abilities from their Move-Sets equal to their numerical rating with that Move-Set. **Creatures must have at least 1 non-Limited attack**, but other than that you’re free to customize them as you wish. Not every ability will be thematically appropriate to each Creature possessing a given Move-Set. Feel free to rename the abilities.

If you’re going to play Nemesis for a while, it will pay dividends for you to familiarize yourself with the Move-Set abilities and the general statblocks provided in this section. **There aren’t many specific monsters found herein, but there are the tools needed to make many more.**

Creatures of Civilization

The cities and communities of mortalkind are replete with life of all forms. But not all of them are friendly. Some are even actively hostile. To natural philosophers, the distinction between a monster (also commonly called “fiends”) and an everyday animal is simply that one seeks out destruction and mayhem while the other only butts heads with people when “civilization” begins encroaching on their territory.

The taxonomic distinction of “Spoken” is used to describe any creature with the ability to speak an intelligible, structured language. Unfortunately, dignity and respect are not as easily afforded to all people as is that classification. There exists a category of Spoken people commonly known as “beastfolk”, which purports to describe those who have eschewed taking part in “civilized society”.

In reality, most people designated “beastfolk” have never been afforded much of a chance to partake in such a society. “Beastfolk” have been thought of as crude and violent for centuries and have rarely if ever been given the opportunity to define themselves or decide on their own level of involvement in society. Instead being demonized and pushed evermore to society’s outermost edges.

Importantly, the designation of “beastfolk” is entirely arbitrary. What people count as beastfolk in one territory might just be considered “folk” elsewhere.

Centuries (if not millennia) of acrimony and war between so-called “civilized” cultures and the “beastfolk” they drive from their midst has complicated these relationships further and made the distinction between “people” and “beastfolk” seem somehow natural to many people. When in reality, it’s entirely arbitrary and determined mostly by what cultures were able to demand respect and recognition through force, or else were willing to sublimate massively important elements of their society and culture when put under pressure to submit and conform by some more militarily powerful culture.

When “beastfolk” are pushed too far by their intolerant, acquisitive neighbors, some turn to the ancient arts of summoning to call forth a Primal Avatar of their patron god or gods. This act is universally one of desperation, as the sheer mass of aetheric crystals required to embody these beings even temporarily is immense. While Primal Avatars are protective of their summoners, they are also corrupting to them, tempering their minds into thoughtless zealots. For this reason (and others) such summonings are seen as last resorts.

Bugbear

Large lumbering Spoken usually living amongst or sometimes in charge of gremlin communities. Bugbears are very long-lived and quite slow to reproduce, and are generally not very numerous as a result. It's believed they are related to gremlins in some way, but how that might be and when they might have shared a common ancestor are both unclear.

Motive: Protect gremlins, don't let others mistreat the weak.

Coordination - 4, Force - 6, Toughness - 6.

Move-Sets: (Brute 2) & either (Mage 2) or (Leader 2).

Bully

People who use their strength to hurt others for no reason other than it enriches them. Bullies are common enough in just about every gathering place. Many end up working either as in organized crime or law enforcement - two sides of a fixed coin, really.

Motive: Hurt others, enrich self.

Coordination - 3, Force - 4, Toughness - 3.

Move-Sets: (Brute 2) or (Mage 1, Brute 1).

Coblyn

Short furry rodent-like Spoken with two main interests. Some (the "Forge-Kin") are studious miners and metallurgists with a great knowledge of minerals and the underworld. Others (the "River-Kin") are river-based nomads of a sort whose rafts and ferries provide transportation for goods and people in riverlands. Which group a coblyn belongs to is not fixed by birth or anything, and they are free to move back and forth between kins.

Motive: Protect what's theirs, gather crystals.

Coordination - 3, Force - 3, Toughness - 3.

Move-Sets: (Brute 2) or (Brute 1, Rogue 1).

Cultist

Priests and holyfolk of many faiths gather in mortal cities, and with them their flocks. The word "cultist" can be used to refer to either a

member of the clergy or a lay follower of that faith. It is used by both secular and religious persons and institutions to refer to the faithful. Most cultists are peaceful and content to coexist and work with and within a society, but some others seek to dominate the culture in which they reside to instate their beliefs as law.

Motive: Punish nonbelievers, conquer the streets.

Coordination - 3, Force - 4, Toughness - 3.

Move-Sets: (Mage 1, Brute 1) or (Mage 1, Leader 1).

Drayski

Drayskis are feral dog-sized squirrel-things with long ears and bushy tails that hunt in packs and routinely cause mischief, steal food, and harass people. Like monkeys who can glide. Despite displaying significant cunning and an apparent love of causing problems on purpose, drayskis aren't Spoken and are definitely more animal than person.

Motive: Steal food, cause mischief, fly away unscathed.

Coordination - 3, Force - 2, Toughness - 2.

Move-Sets: (Beast 1, Rogue 1).

Elite Soldier

These are the elite troops, wealthy knights, and famous show-fighters that walk the streets of mortal cities. Elite Soldiers are usually both physically powerful and politically powerful, wielding a great deal of influence. Far more often than not they use that influence to pick on others, engage in violence against those with less physical or legal protection, and take what they want without compensation.

Motive: Hurt others with fearless impunity, enrich self.

Coordination - 4, Force - 5, Toughness - 6.

Move-Sets: (Brute 2) & one of (Mage 1), (Leader 1), or (Rogue 1).

Greenrager

There is a magickal disease called the greenrage. It is very rare, but capable of spontaneously

generating within the hearts of the especially rancorous and distraught. It is not infectious per se, unless an entire society falls to rage and despair simultaneously (along with some necessary aetheric anomalies... not everyone who's sad and angry falls to greenrage). Those with the disease slowly mutate into rubbery green fish-like creatures hellsbent on slaking their rancor on anything in sight. Fortunately, the changes to their bodies render greenragers quite slow-moving. It's possible to cure the rage in their hearts, though doing so is difficult and doesn't result in them changing back to their original forms.

Motive: Kill.

Coordination - 3, Force - 7, Toughness - 5.

Move-Sets: (Rogue 3, Beast 1).

Gremlin

Gremlins are widely thought of as beastfolk, but are nonetheless allowed (and even encouraged) into most cities. The reasons for this are twofold: first, they have no known history of Avatar-worship and have never attempted a summoning. Second, they are

consummate traders and craftspeople and frequently invent and sell some pretty ingenious technology. Their reputations as wreckers of machines and the causes of mechanical malfunctions are ill-deserved. Usually the machines they're seen stripping down for parts are their own creations, and while many of them do create in a rather chaotic and slap-dash way, just as many are meticulous, thorough and dedicated craftspeople.

Motive: Collect parts with which to create new things.

Coordination - 4, Force - 4, Toughness - 4.

Move-Sets: (Brute 1) & one of (Mage 1), (Leader 1), or (Rogue 1).

Mage

Sorcery and magick are common throughout the world. Almost anyone can become a mage, in theory. In practice, however, the opportunities and level of privilege required to find a tutor and afford to keep up your lessons can be hard to come by. Mages are often (but by no means always) wealthy or at least born of the middle merchant classes. They are frequently

scholars by profession and predilection, but some use their magickal talents for more practical pursuits. Many mages are also either trained by or formally inducted into religious organizations like the thaumaturges of the Order of the Merchant of Souls or the conjurers of the Greenwood Hearers.

Motive: Use magick to get what they want.

Coordination - 5, Force - 4, Toughness - 5.

Move-Sets: (Mage 4) or (Mage 3, Rogue 1).

Pugilist

Fist-fighting is an exceedingly popular sport upon which a good deal of money is gambled every year. With the prevalence of healing magicks, most organized unarmed brawls are almost entirely “safe” (non-lethal, at least). Because of these factors and others, many people train to become pugilists to win a little extra cash on the side, or even as their main career. Pugilism is even the origin of the Friars, though their orders tend to mix in some religiosity and/or trade union flavor to the central core of fight training.

Motive: Win, and maybe have some fun doing it.

Coordination - 4, Force - 6, Toughness - 5.

Move-Sets: (Brute 3, Rogue 1) or (Brute 2, Rogue 2).

Creatures of the Ruins

Countless empires, collectives, peoples, and kingdoms lie buried beneath your feet. Whole worlds have risen and fallen in the lifetime of this planet. Golden ages and apocalypses both, one after another in an endless cycle of death and rebirth.

The ruins of those countless previous societies lie scattered throughout the modern world. Some are buried deep and inaccessible until some great upheaval reveals them to the world. Others are very much on the surface, but distant from where folk now live. Superstition and distance together keep most folk away from these ruins. Whatever cataclysm befell the old world might have left some treasure behind, surely, but it might also have left behind some terrible curse to protect it as well.

The ruins of the Kingdoms of Eld are forever haunted by the creations and spirits of the people who once lived in them.

Corse

Corses are the reanimated bodies of powerful mages, their bones thrumming with arcane power. Most corses are found in elaborate tomb structures or the ruins of ancient civilizations. Corses are imperfect lich-folk, their minds are barely intact enough to control and cast spells. They are trapped in loops of time, reliving their worst memories and taking their rage and sorrow out on the world around them.

Motive: Wander the ruins of the old world, reliving memories.

Coordination - 3, Force - 6, Toughness - 5.

Move-Sets: (Mage 3, Undead 1) or (Mage 2, Undead 2).

Doll

Dolls are magickally-animated creations which can serve a wide array of functions. They are uncommon these days, as the magicks used to create the larger-scale ones once used in certain ancient civilizations are all but lost. Dolls tend to be (but aren't always) humanoid, very large (about 7-8 feet in height), and very

physically powerful.

Motive: Protect and/or maintain the ruins in which they're found.

Coordination - 0, Force - 7, Toughness - 7.

Dolls are immune to Coordination Wounds. If Coordination is rolled, ignore the Wound(s) inflicted by that attack completely.

Move-Sets: (Brute 4) or (Brute 3, Mage 1).

Elemental Sprite

Sprites are amalgamations of elemental aether which have solidified into a crystalline core and developed a limited measure of sentience. They are frequently hostile to sources of elemental aether opposed to their own elemental aspects.

Motive: Dominate the elemental aspect of an area to create more of their kind.

Coordination - 0, Force - 4, Toughness - 4.

Elemental Sprites are immune to Coordination Wounds. If Coordination is rolled, ignore the Wound(s) inflicted by that attack completely.

Move-Sets: (Mage 2).

Fomor

Fomor are a sort of ancient being revivified by calamities. They are similar in many ways to undead, but their aetheric makeup is very different. Some call them “Apocalypse Ghosts” because they typically only arise during times of extraordinary turmoil before returning to rest. They are tall, gaunt humanoids with long mouthless faces, wide glowing eyes, and covered in coruscating scar-like tattoos. Some always remain awake to guard over the resting tombs of their siblings.

Motive: Spread destruction while reclaiming stolen treasures of their people.

Coordination - 4, Force - 6, Toughness - 5.

Move-Sets: (Brute 1, Mage 1, Rogue 1) or (Mage 1, Rogue 1, Undead 1).

Creatures of the Underworld

There are unknowably vast tracts of subterranea snaking beneath the cities and realms of the surface world. The underworld is enormous and full of its own politics, intrigue, and ecosystem. Those who dwell beneath

seldom spare the time to think much on the surface world except when those from above chance to venture below.

There are shallower pits than the true underworld, too. Dank holes in the earth where prisons are made to hide away the multitudinous sins of the surface world.

The creatures down below might seem strange to the eyes of surface-dwellers, but it's all really a matter of context and familiarity. To the underworlders, those above are equally strange.

Darkworm

Darkworms are any of a large variety of subterranean invertebrates that tunnel through rock and dirt. Most are about the size of a person (between 4-6 feet long), but some are much, much larger. The bigger they are the more elementally powerful - most of them can control earth and stone through reflexive magicks. The largest can cause localized earthquakes.

Motive: Find and consume food (crystals).

Coordination - 2, Force - 7, Toughness - 6.

Move-Sets: (Beast 3, Mage 1).

Dvergar

A people commonly found in subterranean places. The dvergar are sometimes called “dark elves” for certain similarities to elf-folk of the surface world (namely, long pointed ears and slight features, the resemblance ends there). Dvergar are usually pale, lithe, short, and have long tails ending in tufts of fur.

Motive: Protecting their underground homes, scavenging from ruins.

Coordination - 5, Force - 3, Toughness - 3.

Move-Sets: (Mage 2, Rogue 1) or (Rogue 2, Mage 1).

Revenant

The word “revenant” refers to both corporeal and ghostly undead, and is used generically to refer to restless spirits and bones alike. Undead can be raised intentionally, but are far more commonly raised “naturally” by a significant disruption of local aether at the same

time as the introduction of excessively light or dark energies (a common occurrence during both wartime and plagues).

Motive: Kill, wallow in agony, seek freedom through destruction.

Coordination - 0, Force - 5, Toughness - 3.

Revenants are immune to Coordination Wounds. If Coordination is rolled, ignore the Wound(s) inflicted by that attack completely.

Move-Sets: (Undead 1, Brute 1) or (Undead 2).

Rootdrinker

Rootdrinkers are massive leather-winged beastkin sometimes called “flying wolves”. Despite their resemblance it’s not thought that they are directly related to any species of bats. More commonly, an unnatural origin is posited: they’re believed to be the chimeric creation of some ancient biomancer. As their name implies they are often seen hanging from cave ceilings and walls, sucking water out of roots twisting through the rock.

Motive: Protect their pups, hunt prey.

Stats: Coordination - 5, Force - 5, Toughness - 4.

Move-Sets: (Beast 3).

Umbra-Mykantong

The fungal ecology of the underworld is wonderfully diverse. A huge variety of fungal creatures, ambulatory and otherwise, carnivorous and not, exist in the many dark places of the world. The umbra-mykantong is one of the most widespread types of ambulatory fungi. They creep across cave floors and ceilings, spewing noxious spores and digesting prey with their whip-like tendrils.

Motive: Spread and consume.

Coordination - 3, Force - 3, Toughness - 2.

Move-Sets: (Rogue 1, Undead 1)

Creatures of the Wilderness

Most of the planet is wilderlands. Scarce a hundred citystates exist across its breadth with the larger empires and kingdoms typically only boasting a dozen cities or so apiece.

With so much empty space between settlements, the world can feel a bit like a vast empty span of darkness with pinpricks of light scattered across its surface. As above in the night sky, so below here on earth.

However, the great “empty” span between cities and settlements is in sooth anything but empty. Every different ecosystem and biome you can imagine is supported by this wondrous planet. Scarce an inch of it is truly “dead”, even the barren deserts are truly teeming with life if you know where (and how) to look.

The wild lands of this world are full of a great many strange, beautiful, and terrifying creatures. Whole lives have been spent cataloging and describing mere fractions of a single great wild. There is so very much more unknown than known about our world.

Gnole

Sometimes called “werewolves” or “lycanthropes”, gnoles are mythologized as half-person half-animal monsters. In reality, they’re simply especially intelligent (though un-Spoken) beastkin whose forepaws are particularly hand-like in appearance. Gnoles encountered in the

wild are often quite large as they go through multiple major growth spurts in their 20-30 year life cycle. Older gnoles especially are extremely clever, even devious.

Motive: Hunt and trap prey, often just for sport.

Coordination - 6, Force - 6, Toughness - 4.

Move-Sets: (Beast 4).

Monoceros

Creatures of significant natural magicks, monoceros are large equine beasts with enormous jagged horns sprouting from their heads. They only travel in herds every few years during their mating and child-rearing cycle, before splitting back up into smaller groups. When they gather in these herds, their lightning-aspected energies gather great storms which drench the lands they pass through.

Motive: Destroy trespassers and avoid predators.

Coordination - 4, Force - 5, Toughness - 5.

Move-Sets: (Beast 2, Mage 1).

Puka

Sometimes called faerie-dragons, pukai are winged reptilian creatures roughly the size of an especially large and overweight housecat. They often live in groups some naturalists call “slakes”, which are usually about 10-15 adults plus a like many children. Pukai are capable of breathing fire like their much larger false kin (in sooth, pukai have no known relation to other dracoforms). Pukai are unspoken scalekin common in coastal climes as they seem to thrive in the salt air.

Motive: Hunt food and protect the slake.

Coordination - 3, Force - 3, Toughness - 3.

Move-Sets: (Beast 1, Mage 1).

Roc

The name “roc” refers to any of a number of individual species of gargantuan featherkin. Most are well in excess of the height of a person, some boasting wingspans in excess of 30 feet. Some rocs are even said to be Spoken, though this has never been attested in a reputable and peer-reviewed naturalist journal. Rocs survive mainly by feeding on large,

powerful creatures (particularly fiends), and are therefore seen as a bit of a mixed blessing by most people. The spans of their hunting territories can be gargantuan.

Motive: Fight the baddest critters in their territory.

Coordination - 6, Force - 7, Toughness - 5.

Move-Sets: (Beast 3, Mage 1) or (Beast 3, Rogue 1).

Skyath

Large lizardfolk standing head and shoulders above all but the tallest. Skyath are scaled, very wide of shoulder and hip, and have large, thick tails and digitigrade legs. They are considered beastfolk by almost all, and tend to wear others' disdain for them and their ways as a badge of honor. They are particularly plentiful in harsh desert lands and steamy jungles where their cold-blooded nature is less of a detriment. Skyath care little for the goings on of other folk and keep to their own cities and settlements whenever possible.

Motive: Preserve their privacy and their faith.

Coordination - 3, Force - 6, Toughness - 4.

Move-Sets: (Brute 1, Beast 1, Rogue 1) or (Brute 1, Leader 1, Mage 1).

Move-Sets & Abilities

The creatures featured in the section preceding this one all have listed Move-Sets and numbers indicating how many abilities and traits from those move sets they're allowed to have.

When slotting abilities for monsters and enemies, **remember that each one must have at least one non-Limited attack ability.** After that requirement has been satisfied, you're allowed to customize them to your heart's content.

And speaking of customization - the statblocks shown in the preceding section are just examples for you to use in creating your own bestiary and menagerie of monsters. You don't need to look at that list and think that's all there is, use it instead as a launchpad for your own creations. Monsters you make should conform to similar spreads of stats, numbers for Set Limits, and so on. Set Limits are typically 2 to 4, but a Set Limit of 5 is possible for a particularly powerful creature.

Move-Sets are separated into 6 different categories (as of this core book, anyway - more Move-Set categories may be added later). These are **Beast**, **Brute**, **Leader**, **Mage**, **Rogue**, and **Undead**.

- **Beast** - The abilities and traits in this Move-Set allow you to build powerful, predatory warriors and feral beasts.
- **Brute** - These abilities and traits are about both dishing out and taking heavy damage.
- **Leader** - These abilities and traits allow monsters to support, heal, and empower one another.
- **Mage** - A broad variety of attacks and defensive options, most of them ranged in nature.
- **Rogue** - A variety of sneaky, devastating abilities with a focus on Coordination.
- **Undead** - Abilities which steal strength from others and allow the monster to use rare status effects.

When constructing monsters, you may pick one ability or trait per rating in a given Move-Set. This includes any ability in that set, as long as you have at least one non-Limited attack ability.

Beast

- **Flashing Claws** - Coordination Attack, ATR: 3, Range: 0, Effect: Attack up to 2 targets in range.
- **Flighted** - Passive Trait, Effect: Can only be hit by attacks with greater than 0 range. When wounded, this trait deactivates until the start of next round. Can also move in 3 dimensions (vertical zones).
- **Ironhide** - Passive Trait, Effect: When Wounded, gain Proshell for 2 rounds.
- **Persistent Hunter** - Passive Trait, Effect: When you Wound a target, regain 1 Toughness.
- **Predation** - Limited Coordination Attack, ATR: 4, Range: 3, Effect: Up to 3 targets in range suffer Blackout and Weaken until end of next turn. Limited: 1 use per battle.
- **Swift** - Passive Trait, Effect: Gain Haste condition with permanent duration.
- **Tail Sting** - Coordination Attack, ATR: 3, Range: 0, Effect: Target Poisoned for 2 rounds.
- **Vicious Maw** - Force Attack, ATR: 5, Range: 0,

Effect: Target suffers -2 Toughness instead of -1 on a fail.

Brute

- **Biggest & Baddest** - Passive trait, Effect: +1 Force and +1 Toughness.
- **Brutal Throw** - Force Attack, ATR: 5, Range: 0, Effect: Wounded targets are hurled 1 zone away in any direction.
- **Heavy Hit** - Force Attack, ATR: 6, Range: 0, Effect: Target suffers -2 Toughness instead of -1 on a fail.
- **Invigorating Blow** - Limited Force Attack, ATR: 3, Range: 0, Effect: If target is Wounded, regain max Toughness and clear 1 Wound. Limited: 1 use per battle.
- **Shell-Cracker** - Limited Force Attack, ATR: 8, Range: 0, Effect: Target loses -1 max Toughness (stacking, minimum 1) for duration of battle. Limited: 2 uses per battle.
- **Shrug it Off** - Passive trait, Effect: Reduce the duration of all negative conditions except Taunt by -1 (minimum 0).

Leader

- **Empowerment** - Limited Ability, ATR: 3, Range: 1, Effect: One target gains +2 Buffs to one stat or +1 to two. Limited: 2 uses per battle.
- **Healing Spell** - Limited Ability, ATR: 3, Range: 1, Effect: One target clears 1 Wound. Limited: 2 uses per battle.
- **Lead from the Front** - Passive Trait, Effect: Grant 1 Buff to self or ally in the battle whenever you inflict a Wound.
- **Status Quo** - Limited Ability, ATR: 4, Range: 1, Effect: Clear 1 condition from target in range. Limited: 2 uses per battle.
- **Up-Tempo** - Limited Ability, ATR: 1, Range: 3, Effect: Up to 3 targets in range gain Haste for 2 rounds.

Mage

- **Biotic** - Coordination Attack, ATR: 7, Range: 3, Effect: Wounded target suffers Poison 2 rounds.
- **Circle of Power** - Limited Ability, ATR: 3, Range: 0, Effect: The zone you're currently in becomes a Circle of Power. You gain +2 Buffs

to both stats while in this zone. Limited: 1 use per battle.

- **Curse** - Limited Ability, ATR: 8, Range: 3, Effect: Clear up to 3 Buffs from 1 stat of target in range. Limited: 2 uses per battle.
- **Elemental Assault** - Force Attack, ATR: 4, Range: 3, Effect: Attack up to 2 targets in range.
- **Gravity** - Force Attack, ATR: 7, Range: 3, Effect: Wounded target suffers Slow for 2 rounds.
- **Healing Spell** - Limited Ability, ATR: 3, Range: 1, Effect: One target clears 1 Wound. Limited: 2 uses per battle.
- **Magicked Barrier** - Limited Ability, ATR: ?, Range: 1, Effect: Ignore 1 Wound suffered by you or one target in range. Limited: 2 uses per battle.
- **Meltdown** - Limited Force Attack, ATR: 10, Range: 3, Effect: Target one zone in range and hit all targets (friend and foe). Wounded targets receive +1 additional Wound. Limited: 1 use per battle.
- **Telekinesis** - Coordination Attack, ATR: 5, Range: 3, Effect: Wounded targets are

pushed away 1 zone.

Rogue

- **Backstab** - Passive Trait, Effect: Inflict +1 Wound with attacks when at least 1 ally is in the same zone as you and your target.
- **Blackjack** - Limited Coordination Attack, ATR: 4, Range: 0, Effect: Wounded target suffers Blackout or Confused (your choice) for 2 rounds. Limited: 2 uses per battle.
- **Chameleon** - Limited Ability, ATR: 3, Range: Self, Effect: Become untargetable for the remainder of the round. Limited: 1 use per battle.
- **Mug** - Limited Force Attack, ATR: 6, Range: 0, Effect: Wounded targets lose 1 consumable on their person, and the attacker immediately uses them (gaining their effect, if any). Nemesis' choice of which consumable.
- **Quick Throw** - Coordination Attack, ATR: ?, Range: 1, Effect: Attack up to 2 targets in range.
- **Red-Handed** - Passive Trait, Effect: +1 Coordination, +1 Toughness.
- **Sabotage** - Limited Coordination Attack, ATR:

- 6, Range: 0, Effect: Target loses -1 max Toughness (stacking, minimum 1) for duration of battle. Limited: 2 uses per battle.
- **Shank** - Coordination Attack, ATR: 2, Range: 2, Effect: Target suffers -2 Toughness instead of -1 on a fail.
- **Snipe Attack** - Coordination Attack, ATR: 9, Range: 3, Effect: Wounded targets receive +1 additional Wound.

Undead

- **Darkness** - Coordination Attack, ATR: 4, Range: 3, Effect: Wounded target suffers Blackout for 2 rounds.
- **Drain Strength** - Force Attack, ATR: 6, Range: 3, Effect: If successful, gain 1 Buff.
- **Hollowing** - Limited Force Attack, ATR: 5, Range: 0, Effect: Attack up to 2 targets in range. Wounded targets suffer Zombie for 2 rounds. Limited: 1 use per battle.
- **Leveldeath** - Limited Ability, ATR: 1, Range: 3, Effect: 1 target in range suffers Doom. Limited: 1 use per battle. If target is Downed due to the Doom condition, regain use of this ability.

- **Refusal** - Passive Trait, Effect: When Downed, roll d6. On a 3+, clear 2 Wounds and Downed. Each time this trait triggers, increase the number needed (so second Refusal requires a roll of 4+, third Refusal requires a roll of 5+, etc.).
- **Vampirism** - Limited Force Attack, ATR: 6, Range: 0, Effect: If successful, clear 1 Wound. Limited: 2 uses per battle.

Villains & Gods

As previously mentioned on page 31, villains come in three distinct flavors: Major Villains (who start out with 4 Plot Armor), Minor Villains (who start out with 2 Plot Armor), and Mid-Bosses, who have 0 Plot Armor. Also on that page, the rules state that you may only ever have a maximum of 1 Major Villain, 2 Minor Villains, and 3 Mid-Bosses active at a given time. In this case “active” means present in and relevant to the story.

Mid-Bosses are a little funky in these rules because most Mid-Bosses your group meets won’t last longer than their first encounter with the Champions. Mid-Bosses tend to be the boss

monsters at the end of Adventures, and are thus usually dispatched in a single Encounter. In the unlikely event that a Mid-Boss gains some Plot Armor (probably due to a Clash or the machinations of a particular Plot - see page XX), you'll have to fight them a couple of times to really put them down for good.

Besides their differing levels of Plot Armor and relevance to the ongoing story of the game (or the Patch), villains also have different levels of power called their *Threat Level*. Threat Levels are entirely independent from a villain's rank on the scale of villainous importance. A Mid-Boss could be a Threat 4 enemy, while a Major Villain may only be Threat 1.

Rank (and Plot Armor) determines importance to the story, Threat determines individual and temporal power.

Villain Stats & Phases

Villains have many of the same stats as players, down to having Zodiacs, Looks, and Truths. However, they still only have the two stats common to monsters - Coordination and Force. That said, their stats can sometimes be even more complicated than Champions', because they exist in what are called *phases*.

A phase is a particular physical form or level of seriousness and desperation for a given villain. A phase's stats and abilities are that villain's stats and abilities for that given phase only. All villains have at least 2 phases, and their stats and abilities can change drastically between phases. When not in an Encounter, villains are always assumed to be in their first phase and use that phase's stats and abilities for anything they might need to roll or resolve.

It's possible that after a villain undergoes some kind of permanent transformation they might change considerably and need a whole new set of phases and stats.

Villains change phases during battle after one phase has been Downed. This happens in the usual way for enemies - when one stat is completely wounded-out and they suffer another wound

Threat Levels

Threat Levels are measured on an ascending scale of power from 1 - 4. What Threat Level an individual villain is, is largely arbitrary. But on balance you should maybe have a little bit of practice with the game (and a handful of Mid-Patch advances) under your belt before throwing Threat Level 3s and 4s into your midst.

Threat Level 1 is appropriate for a beginner boss monster or villain. Threat Level 2 would be appropriate for a challenging villain or boss for a new group, or average boss for a more experienced group. Threat Level 3 and 4 are both very strong and best reserved for the very strongest of bosses and most badass of villains.

Threat Level 1

Phase One

Coordination - 5, Force - 5, Toughness - 5.

Move-Sets: One at 3 and one at 2 (or one at 3 and two at 1).

Villain Traits: 1, **Telegraph Attacks:** 1.

Phase Two

Coordination - 6, Force - 6, Toughness - 4.

Move-Sets: Same as Phase One, but +1 to one of the existing Move-Sets.

Villain Traits: +1, **Telegraph Attacks:** +1.

Reward

A: 1 Resource each, 2 Consumables.

B: 1 Resource each, 1 Gear each.

Threat Level 2

Phase One

Coordination - 6, Force - 6, Toughness - 5.

Move-Sets: One at 3 and one at 3 (or one at 3 and three at 1).

Villain Traits: 2, **Telegraph Attacks:** 2.

Phase Two

Coordination - 7, Force - 7, Toughness - 4.

Move-Sets: Same as Phase One, but +1 to two of the existing Move-Sets.

Villain Traits: Same, **Telegraph Attacks:** +1.

Reward

A: 1 Resource each, 2 Consumables.

B: 1 Resource each, 1 Gear each.

Threat Level 3**Phase One****Coordination - 7, Force - 7, Toughness - 5.****Move-Sets:** One at 3 and one at 3 (or one at 3 and three at 1).**Villain Traits:** 2, **Telegraph Attacks:** 2.**Phase Two****Coordination - 6, Force - 6, Toughness - 4.****Move-Sets:** Same as Phase One, but +1 to two of the existing Move-Sets.**Villain Traits:** Same, **Telegraph Attacks:** +1.**Phase Three****Coordination - 5, Force - 5, Toughness - 3.****Move-Sets:** Same as Phase Two.**Villain Traits:** +1, **Telegraph Attacks:** +1.**Reward**

A: 2 Resource each, 3 Consumables.

B: 1 Resource each, 1 Gear each, 1 Consumable.

Threat Level 4**Phase One****Coordination - 7, Force - 7, Toughness - 5.****Move-Sets:** One at 3, one at 3, and one at 2 (or four at 2).**Villain Traits:** 2, **Telegraph Attacks:** 2.**Phase Two****Coordination - 6, Force - 6, Toughness - 4.****Move-Sets:** Same as Phase One, but +1 to two of the existing Move-Sets.**Villain Traits:** Same, **Telegraph Attacks:** +1.**Phase Three****Coordination - 5, Force - 5, Toughness - 3.**

Move-Sets: Same as Phase Two.

Villain Traits: +1, **Telegraph Attacks:** +1.

Phase Four

Coordination - 5, Force - 5, Toughness - 3.

Move-Sets: Same as Phase Two.

Villain Traits: Same, **Telegraph Attacks:** +1.

Reward

A: 3 Resource each, 4 Consumables.

B: 2 Resource each, 2 Gear each.

Villain Traits

The following traits are available for building villains. Many types of villains gain additional Traits as they progress through their phases.

If you choose to apply “Add Phase” or “Have you the Strength?!” to a villain when they receive an additional trait due to a Phase transition, it activates immediately.

- **Add phase** - Become inert and untargetable

with any attack or ability for 3 rounds during the transition from one phase to the next. A number of lesser creatures with a combined Set Limit of $2 \times$ number of Champions appear in the fight.

- **Have you the Strength?!** - Become inert and impossible to Wound with any attack or ability for 2 rounds during the transition from one phase to the next. Your Toughness is reduced to 3 and cannot go higher or lower during this time. Add up all the Wound damage done to you during this 2-round sequence.

After this sequence, inflict a number of automatic Wounds on all Champions equal to $(12 - \text{number of Wounds inflicted during this time, minimum 1})$.

- **High pressure** - When one stat is fully Wounded, gain a number of Buffs equal to your Focus in both stats.
- **Indomitable** - Regain full Toughness at the end of every round of battle.
- **SHOW ME MORE!** - Inflicting a Wound on you causes the attacker to lose -2 Toughness.
- **Slaughter-fiend** - You gain +1 ACT which may only be used to support Telegraph Attacks.

- **Tactician** - Your Telegraph Attacks are built with a budget of 6 points instead of 5.
- **Tankbuster** - On the ATR count immediately following any Telegraph Attack, one Champion suffers 3 automatic Wounds chosen randomly or 2 automatic Wounds to one specific chosen stat. If you're currently under the Taunt condition, the targeted Champion must be the one that Taunted you.
- **Undying** - Clear 1 Wound at the end of every round of battle.
- **Unusual aetheric signature** - You gain +1 ACT which may only be used to use basic actions.
- **You have not BEGUN to test me!** - Gain +1 Buff at the end of every round of battle. Clear all Buffs when phase changes.

Telegraph Attacks

What Telegraph Attacks are and how they work are described in greater detail on page 30. For the purposes of designing villains, **Telegraph Attacks are built on a budget of 5 points** which must be spent on the attack's various properties- **Power, Reliability, Shape, Status Effects, and Speed**.

Choose one option each from the following options:

Power

- **Normal Damage** - Inflict 1 automatic random Wound to any in the area of effect when the Telegraph Attack goes off. Cost: 0 points.
- **High Damage** - Inflict 2 automatic random Wounds to any in the area of effect when the Telegraph Attack goes off. Cost: 1 point.
- **Grievous Damage** - Inflict 3 automatic random Wounds to any in the area of effect when the Telegraph Attack goes off. Cost: 2 points.

Reliability

- **Single Use** per battle. Cost: 1 point.
- **Two Uses** per battle. Cost: 2 points.
- **Three Uses** per battle. Cost: 3 points.

Shape

- **Line** - 3 contiguous zones starting with your zone. Cost: 0 points.
- **Cone** - Attack spreads from your zone, then to two adjacent zones (which must also be

adjacent to one another), then to three zones adjacent to those two (which must also be adjacent to one another). Cost: 1 point.

- **Half** - All zones to your right or left (chosen when ability is cast), with a straight line down the “middle” of the battlefield (from your perspective and facing). Includes your zone. Cost: 1 point.
- **Doughnut** - All zones except your zone. Cost: 1 point.
- **Serpent** - 5 contiguous zones starting with your zone snaking in any direction and shape you wish. Cost: 1 point.
- **Bow & Stern, Port & Star** - Your zone plus 5 contiguous zones to your left and 5 to your right. Alternatively, your zone plus 5 contiguous zones in front of and behind you. Cost: 2 points.
- **Cross** - Your zone plus 3 contiguous zones straight in front of and behind you, 3 contiguous zones straight to your left and right. Cost: 2 points.
- **Cataclysm** - All zones. Does not affect Champions hiding behind a substantial obstruction like a pile of rubble or sturdy pillar that can withstand the blast. Cost: 3

points, or 2 points if the battlefield has at least 1 piece of substantial cover to hide behind per Champion.

Status Effects

- None. Cost: 0 points.
- Inflict one status effect for 2 rounds (cannot include Doom or Zombie). Cost: 1 point.
- Inflict two status effects for 2 rounds (cannot include Doom or Zombie). Cost: 2 points.
- Inflict Zombie for 1 round or Doom (3 round counter). Cost: 2 points.
- Inflict Zombie for 2 rounds or Doom (2 round counter). Cost: 3 points.

Speed

Telegraph Attacks always go off the round after ACT is spent/reserved on them. They do so on the following chosen ATR counts.

- ATR: 8. Cost: 0 points.
- ATR: 6. Cost: 1 point.
- ATR: 4. Cost: 2 points.
- ATR: 2. Cost: 3 points.

It's strongly recommended that you build out a villain's Telegraph Attacks (and preferably their Trait selections as well) in advance of any encounters with them. Designing some of this stuff on the fly can really slow things down for everyone.

That said, it can be a very fun communal exercise building the harbinger of your own destructions. Just because only the Nemesis is going to be controlling these bad bois doesn't mean that everyone can't be involved in their ideation and creation. Like with everything else, this is a great opportunity for communal storytelling.