Legends

(updated 07/20)

The **Legends Roleplaying System** is a lightweight pencil-and-paper roleplaying game that emphasizes free-form character creation and flexible game play. Legends keeps your game focused on roleplaying the characters you want to play.

Freeform Characters

Legends has an especially flexible and liberating character creation process. The "character sheet" is collection of freeform Themes and Traits. Everything is written in the players own words; there are no numbers or stats on the character sheet, nor are there any prescriptive lists of classes, skills, or items.

Each player creates his character by outlining four key Themes such as "grizzled old soldier", "renowned swordsman", "world explorer", and "secretly a black wizard". Next, smaller details and gear are written down as Traits within the Themes, so the "grizzled old soldier" Theme might include Traits like "war cry", "strong arm". Items are also Traits, so he might have a "notched longsword" and wear a "chainmail hauberk".

The focus is on character development rather than advancement.

Nimble Rules

The core rules are small and beautiful, and designed to help keep players in-character and roleplaying. Classic polyhedral dice are used, but in modern ways.

The players make most of the rolls. This is for a few reasons: fun, a sense of empowerment, and to unburden the GM. Players can stay immersed in role-playing even while rolling because rolls are are based on the freeform Themes and Traits that were defined by the players, not stats or modifiers. Finally, the GM describes the

outcome, so the greater story is not fully decided by dice, just influenced by them.

Players simply roll 3d6 and count the number of dice that roll 4+. If at least two dice roll 4+ then the the roll succeeded and player gets to describe "Good Stuff" that happens. Otherwise the roll failed and GM gets to describe "Bad Stuff". Fumbles (0 dice are 4+) and critical successes (3 dice are 4+) are also possible, which are more exaggerated outcomes.

The GM can raise the difficulty of the action by requiring the player to roll "Black Dice", which are negative dice that subtract from the outcome. This can happen fluidly before or after the player rolls, for example, the GM might say "the cliff turns out to be very challenging to climb; roll one black die".

Players can use their Traits and Assets to assist in actions or use special abilities. For example, a character with Traits such as "grizzled old soldier" and "renowned swordsman" could use them together in a wild melee against his foes. Each player has pool of six polyhedral dice for this purpose. The player names a Trait or Asset and then Burns a Die from his pool, rolling the die. The die is then removed from play, but can be recovered in between Scenes or even with a Scene using two special character attributes: Beliefs and Flaws.

While Legends is not tied to any particular genre, I've always been partial to sword & sorcery games, which you will notice in the examples. I hope you enjoy Legends as much as I've enjoyed designing and running it!

-- Paul Abrams

1. Characters

Legends gives players the freedom to create and play any kind of character they can imagine. There are no standardized character "classes" or other restrictions on the player's imagination. Instead, everything is written in the players own words, in the form of a lightweight character outline called a "Legend".

The "Legend" is a flexible container that allows the player to map his ideas to the game. A Legend starts with the character name, followed by four Themes. Themes are the main character concepts, so a player might write down "swashbuckler, ex-wizard treasure seeker, and scoundrel". Each character Theme then has a few standard details such as a Belief, an Instinct, Flaws, Traits, and Assets. The structure of a Theme and the will be covered in detail later. In addition, players are encouraged to write a character sketch or background narrative, since this will help to envision the character. Take a quick look at the sample character Drayandir.

Freeform Characters

Characters are written entirely in the words of the player. There are no standardized (or restrictive) character classes, attributes, skills, levels, items, stats, or any other numbers. Furthermore, the

game focuses on character *refinement* over *advancement*, where players are intended to polish and hone their characters, not "gain levels".

Drayandir the Swift

1.1. Sample Character: "Drayandir the Swift"

Drayandir is a sample character with four Themes and a "Legend" backstory.

Chalidris, the Swift

Belief:	"Chalidris is a holy relic"
Instinct:	glows near Avathars
Traits:	sidesword, moonsilver, holy fire, warning, Avathar hunting
Assets:	jeweled scabbard, sword belt
Flaws:	hates Avathars
Framework:	Chalidiris was forged and enchanted by Aethiiri smiths, drawing holy power from the moons. It needs to recharge in moonlight at least once per month, or its powers will go dormant.

Swift Swordsman

Belief: "I can win any duel"

Instinct: always has blade in hand when danger is near

Traits: fast hands, fleet feet, sword and dagger always ready

Assets: gloves, parrying dagger, shortsword (backup weapon)

Flaws: hasty

Well-traveled adventurer

Belief: "the world is an amazing place"

Instinct: always sees everything

Traits: explorer, adventurous, always looks for "interesting" (foreign) faces in a crowd

Assets: scale armor with stylized steel "coins", bag of mixed coinage

Flaws: restless

Dorthon Ranger

Belief: "Dorthonien must be protected from the evil Avathars"

Instinct: always searching the shadows

Traits: skirmisher, light sleeper

Assets: Taurithren ranger garb (stealthy)

Flaws: weathered

The Legend of Drayandir the Swift

Drayandir the Swift is a Dorthon adventurer who has traveled most of the known world, and is known for his fast hands, fleet feet, and lightning-swift blade. He originally hails from the northern woodlands of Dorthonien, where he was a Taurithren ranger, but has felt more at home on the road or in cities. He is a master swordsman who has studied the riddle of steel as a Taurithren and with sword masters all over the world, and fights in a fluid style with a swift sidesword and broad-bladed dagger as a companion weapon.

Drayandir wears leather armor studded with stylized steel "coins" from the regions he has visited. He is never without his sidesword, which he calls *Chalidris the Swift*, and wields together with his broad-bladed companion dagger. When not riding he carries his

travel-worn saddle bags over one shoulder, but he generally travels light and swift. Drayandir is preternaturally stealthy, and has even been know to vanish from plain sight. "I once trailed an Avathar patrol for a week without being seen. They didn't notice me until there were only three of them left!"

Drayandir is never without his sidesword, which he calls *Chalidris the Swift*, and wields together with his broad-bladed companion dagger. Chaldiris was forged to defeat Avathars and their undead minions. Her blade is forged of gleaming *Moonsilver* and glows when there is danger and burns supernatural foes. Drayandir recovered Chaldiris from a hidden Avathar outpost in the plains outside of the forest edge. He trailed an Avathar patrol who had been sent to inflitrate Dorthonien and disrupt Taurithren patrols and supply lines, following them back to their lair, which was a series of underground tunnels and catacombs. He led an incursion into the stronhold and rooted out the Avathars. Most of the loot was returned to the Taurithren command to further the war effort, but they allowed Drayandir to keep this blade. Drayadir carries Chaldiris in a jeweled scabbard, cunningly crafted so that the warning light shines through one of the jewels.

Drayandir has preternatural speed, which he uses to great effect in swordplay. Drayandir learned the fundamentals of swordsmanship in the Taurithren, and has traveled the world to perfect and expand his skills. He seeks out sword masters and opponents for tests of skill.

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1.2. Character Creation

Creating a character in Legends is simple and freeform. Let's get started. Grab a pencil and some blank paper (or text editor) and get ready for some serious fun.

Contents

Step 1: Write your Legend

Choose a name and write a couple of sentences about your character concept. Show your character concept to the other players to get feedback on how best to connect with the other characters. This is your character's "Legend" and the foundation for how you will play him in the game.

Tips

Describe your character in vivid detail, painting a word picture. Start with a name and an epithet (one-liner) that sums up the general concept, such as "Epon, the tamer of horses". Follow with as many details as you can write down. Try to work quickly and stop when you feel you have enough to introduce the character and start playing--you can always add detail later. Here is a list of sample character names.

Equipment

Briefly describe your character's clothing, belongings, and equipment, as they can say a lot about him. Add detail for any belongings that are important to your character at a personal level, such as a family heirloom. You'll need to decide later which items are integral to the character or just along for the ride.

Always write in your own words!

Your character Legend could be a series of one-line epithets, outline of important points, backstory, character sketch, or whatever you like. Players who are artistic may want to sketch the character. Write about who your character was and who he or she might become.

Note that in Legends there are no lists of classes, races, skills, items, or powers to choose from. You might take a Theme called "Wizard" if you want to, but it won't be because it came from a list. Everything about your character will stem from his Legend, so visualize your character and be creative. Most importantly, *do whatever you want!* If you want to be a skilled swordsman, then write about it. You are limited only by your imagination--there are no rules to get in your way or tell you what to do.

Step 2: Themes

Turn to a fresh page and identify four important Themes of your character, such as "White Wizard" or "Sword Priest". The GM will use Themes as a rule of thumb for how the game world sees each character. This means players should choose their Themes carefully, and include anything that they want the world to know. Be sure to say if some of the information is a secret.

For each Theme, write a name and some descriptive text on paper. Be sure to leave lots of space between them or use index cards because your Themes will be developed with many more details in the steps below and during the game.'

Step 3: Traits

For each Theme, write 1-6 Traits to represent skills, abilities, or talents. Traits represent permanent aspects of the core character concept and should be *refined* over time. Don't worry if you can't fill them all in at once--it is fine to leave some blank and fill them in as you play, and it's also fine to refine the wording of the Traits as the character concept matures.

Traits can represent all sorts of details such as personal characteristics, physical appearance, mannerisms, skills, languages, and talents. You can also use Traits for special items of equipment like "magic sword", or for Special Abilities like "flying spell".

The GM may require a particular Trait to attempt some kinds of actions (e.g piloting a spaceship) or use certain kinds of gear (e.g. wearing plate armor) that requires special training.

Step 4: Belief, Instinct, Flaw

For each Theme, write one Belief, one Instinct, and one Flaw. These details help describe the character, breathing life into him, help you with role-playing, and even affect gameplay.

A Belief is something that forms your character's outlook, and helps you to understand what motivates him. For example, a "wizard" Theme might have a belief like "knowledge is power", "I will become an arch-mage at all costs", or "magical balance should be preserved".

An Instinct is something the character always does without thinking about it, such as "sits with back to the wall". This is a nice preprogrammed action that you don't need to state, however, it might also work against you, such as a character who "always has knife in hand" but forgets himself in front of the king!

Flaws are negative quirks. Nobody is perfect, and listing out a small number of personal deficiencies such as "picky", "dishonest", or "nosy" helps to make the character seem more real. Flaws are also great for restrictive codes of conduct like, such as "zealous", "vow of poverty", "pure of heart", or "just and good". It often works well to choose a Flaw that is a foil to a Trait. For example, a paladin with a Trait "pure of heart" could match it

with a Flaw "judgmental", meaning he would likely look down upon others who do not meet his high standards of purity.

Step 5: Assets

Your Assets are temporary Traits to represent gear, spells, or other flexible "loadout" you carry into a Scene. They are no different from Traits except they can be swapped out in-between Scenes. To start with write down no more than one Asset per Theme. As the game progresses you can gain more Assets, up to six per Theme.

At this point you should talk with your GM to ask what kind of Scene (situation) the character will start play in. Choose your Assets to best prepare yourself for the world you are about to enter, and start playing!

Step 6: Special Abilities & Frameworks

Traits are freeform, and sometimes they imply Special Abilities such as magic spells or innate abilities to see in the dark. For example, if your character has a Trait "flying spell" then he really can cast a spell to fly! This is a Special Ability.

Any Theme with Special Abilities must include a Framework that describes how they operate. For example, if you cast various wizard spells then you must describe how spellcasting works for your character, what the spells can or can't do, how new spells are gained, and how they are restored after being used. This should also include situations where the special abilities won't work, such as if he is unable to speak. No Theme can have more than one Framework, so characters are limited to four Frameworks.

Always consult your GM on Special Abilities and Frameworks, especially if you are new to the game. While characters are freeform, the GM may inform you of any constraints inherent in the game setting, such as whether or not magic exists, and if so, what kinds are most common.

Get Playing!

As you can see, character creation is fully free-form. Your character is written entirely in your own words, with no numbers or stats, and all of the game rules are built to work with any character you can imagine. This is intended to let you focus more on roleplaying in-character during the game, instead of thinking about game rules. You can see firsthand the flexibility and simplicity of this system by glancing at the Sample Characters.

Go play!

1.3. Themes

A Theme is a brief word or two that captures a key character concept. Every character should have **four Themes**, for example: "smiling swashbuckler, treasure seeker, ex-wizard, and spy". Express each of the four main concepts of your character as a Theme. These are written your own words, but good Themes are interesting, fun to role-play, and also useful in describing the character to other players. Try to be concise and use clear terms. Beyond the name, each Theme must contain five basic lists of details that are required by the game: one Belief, one Instinct, at least one Flaw, 1-6 Traits, and 1-6 Assets. Write each of these lists under the name of each Theme, for example a Theme "Swashbuckler" would look like this:

Swashbuckler
Belief: *belief*
Instinct: *instinct*
Flaws: *flaw 1, ...*
Traits: *trait 1, trait 2, ..., trait 6*
Assets: *asset 1, asset 2, ..., asset 6*

Each of these lists are discussed separately and you'll fill them in later. You can optionally customize these labels if you like, such as "Oath / Regimen / Strengths / Quirks / Gear". You can also add as many other notes or colorful tidbits as desired, such as a physical description, quotes, etc.

Theme Examples

Themes can represent any core character concept, such as:

- occupations: "soldier", "martial artist", "black wizard", "holy paladin", "white witch"
- titles: "landed knight", "black wizard adept", "witch of the fifth circle"
- interesting bits of background and history: "noble", "orphan", "veteran"
- trials, rites of passage, or hardships: "ex-slave", "gladiator", "survivor of the pits"
- race: "northman", "high elf", "dwarf

1.4. Beliefs

Characters should have **one Belief per Theme**, which is a quote, code, ethical stance, goal, or motto you live by. Beliefs describe crucial motivations that drive the character to action. Why is the character here? Beliefs provide a view into how your character thinks and help motivate your character. They can also help the GM connect your character to the story. Beliefs provide perhaps the most significant way to really role-play well. You can also use Beliefs to describe goals, such as "recover the staff of power".
The player should update Beliefs when they have been satisfied, such as when a goal has been completed.
Know that Beliefs are not necessarily high morals or lofty goals; every character and villain has Beliefs that guide his actions in life. In fact the best villains are the ones *who are right*...
Examples:
- One should always be truthful.
- True justice must be served.
- You can never trust someone completely.
- Warriors of light are not perfect. Their beauty lies in accepting this fact and still desiring to grow and to learn.
- I must kill the king to avenge my wife.
- Everyone owes me something.
- People like me, find me reasonable, and want to help me.
- The city corrupts peoples minds.
- Rob from the rich and give to the poor.
- I will free the people from the cruel yoke of the tyrant.
- Every debt must be paid.
- I am an immortal and the little people should show proper respect.
- I will blow up the world, muahahaha!

Using Beliefs
Player should use Beliefs to help role-play character behavior. For example, a paladin might demonstrate honor and honesty at an inopportune time.

A player can roll to Refill his dice (see Burning Dice) if he role-plays his character following a Belief at great personal cost or inconvenience.

Changing Beliefs

Each Theme can have at most one Belief, but they can change over time.
The interlude between major segments of a Story are great places to look at your character's Beliefs and adjust them if he now sees things through different eyes. This is a huge part of character development that will make him seem more real.

1.5. Instincts

Characters should have **one Instinct per Theme**. An Instinct is a used describe a gut reaction, habit or ingrained training that cannot easily be "switched off". Your instincts are things you will want to remember for your character to do. An instinct could also be a habit or quirk over which the character has little control. Good Instincts are worded as triggered actions, such as "always does x"; "never does y"; "when x happens then I do y". Instincts are used as any Trait, however the character will automatically follow his Instincts unless the player specifically declare otherwise and succeed in a Check. So an instinct like "always checks food for poison" would apply even if the player forgets to say the character checks for poison. The character would need to roll a Check if he did not want to check for poison in a particular situation, such as when accepting food from his king.
Examples: Always check food for poison; Always take note of peoples names and titles; Always have my weapon ready; Never trust a friendly stranger; Always cover my tracks; Always have an arrow on the string in dangerous or suspicious situations; Always look for loot after a battle; Never sit with my back to the door; Always check my equipment before traveling, or in the morning.

1.6. Flaws

Flaws are character weaknesses. Flaws work against the character and cause a penalty when appropriate. All characters must start with one Flaw per Theme.

Flaws can represent negative aspects of the character persona, such as quirks, foibles, annoying personal mannerisms, taboos, handicaps, phobias, or restrictive codes of conduct. Examples: whiny, cold-hearted, hyperactive, paranoid, overweight, acrophobia, overdeveloped sense of honor

Flaws are also used for physical, mental, or physical battle scars from mishaps and near-death experiences during the character's adventures. Examples: flayed leg, lost fingers, bad elbow, shattered soul, *taint*, wasting sickness, arachnophobia

All characters must start with one Flaw per Theme. Characters will gain an additional Flaw during play as a consequences of losing a Scene or when a Theme is Burned. For example, if a character was bitten by a snake and nearly died then he might develop a Flaw like "afraid of snakes".

Flaws thus provide a special challenge to the character, and also provide the player with interesting roleplaying and tactical challenges. Over time your character may develop an impressive list of heroic battle scars and war stories.

Keep firmly in mind that the primary purpose of Flaws is to provide players with interesting roleplaying and tactical challenges. If a character has a severe phobia of giant spiders then the group may need to take the long way around the mirky woods. Therefore, it is best if the player calls out the Flaws of his character on his own, without the other players and GM needing to provide reminders. Also keep in mind that not every character will deal with the handicap in the same way and roleplay accordingly.

Contents

Effects of Flaws

A Flaw acts as a penalty when appropriate. For example, "afraid of snakes" would make it really difficult for a character to keep a cool head if surrounded by snakes. A Flaw like "bad left shoulder" is a severe Flaw that would hinder climbing, fighting with a left-handed weapon, and wrestling. A character with an "old war wound" in his right leg should suffer a Disadvantage on actions like jumping.

Flaws can be used to drive or limit character behavior similar to Beliefs, or be used by the GM to count as a Disadvantage, thereby increasing the difficulty of a roll.

In other words, Flaws are not intended to simply cause penalties. Gaining a Flaw is not about punishing the character (or player) but around adding interesting complications to the character based on his experiences.

Gaining Flaws

Each character starts with one Flaw per Theme. A character gains a new Flaw when he "loses" a Scene, which is usually defined as rolling a Fumble on an important, high-risk roll or when a Theme is Burned. In dangerous situations like Combat most rolls are high-risk and this is called "Cheating Death" (q.v. Getting Hurt). A character can also gain a Flaw if he was hit by a particularly nasty attack, such as the soul-draining bite of an undead, which would kill a normal person outright.

Always assign a new Flaw to the most appropriate Theme. If no Theme is in any way appropriate then the character cannot Cheat Death and should instead die a heroic death.

Example

Sengarion awoke in a pool of his own blood. He should be dead, or so his foe seemed to think, but the blade had glanced off his collabone and sliced his shoulder rather than his neck. His left arm hung limply by his side, largely useless. Sengarion gathered himself up off the street and went to get a stiff drink and find a chirugeon. Damn, his purse was missing...

Sengarion survived the fight, but writes down a new Flaw under one of his Themes. He writes down "Flaw: Bad left shoulder". While he can heal the injury and restore his Power Die, the shoulder injury will always still bother him in situations where he really needs to rely on it.

Note that this is reserved for PCs and major NPCs as a means to cheat death; when a minor NPC or monster fumbles a defense it dies. If a PC has no Themes without Flaws then he is a shattered

hero who will die the next time he is faced by death. A minor PC, such as a newly introduced character who does not have a lasting tie to the story can also be treated as an NPC if the GM and players agree that is the best thing for the story.

Note that Flaws are not always physical scars. For example, a character who was maimed by a mental attack might have a fragmented mind, losing access to some of his memory. A character could even lose a portion of his soul.

Remediation

Flaws are permanent aspects of the character and cannot be fully healed like simple injuries. However, if a character puts in great effort then the GM may allow the player to "remediate" a Flaw, rewording it to reduce its severity. Naturally, this requires extraordinary means, such as a rare healing item or a quest. Ideally, the character's attempts at recovery should be directed in ways that enhance the Story. Also, the remediation can sometimes take the form of a twist that creates new (but less severe) complications than the original Flaw.

Examples

Dekros falls into a pit of snakes and nearly dies before his comrades pour burning oil into the pit, which also nearly kills him! He records a new Flaw "fear of snakes and fire". This proves to be a Disadvantage in many situations, so Dekros hires a trainer (at great expense) to cure him of his phobias. After some harrowing (to Dekros) and humorous (to the players) experiences, the man learns to mostly overcome his fears, and rewrites his Flaw as "hatred of snakes, love of fire", creating some interesting new complications for roleplaying.

Imtol loses one piece of his soul in a battle against a Kha'din. He records a Flaw "lost true name". This will make it challenging for him to resist magic that affects his persona, so he goes on a quest to find a legendary wizard who has the power to heal souls. The wizard gives him a new true name, and his Flaw remediates to "lost true name but got a new one", which could still have the same effect but only in rare circumstances. In addition, this preserves some potentially interesting story complications that his real true name is still out there somewhere, and the owner of his new true name might come looking for it.

Askold loses his left hand in a battle, gaining a Flaw "missing left hand". Fearing this may prevent him from entering Valhalla, Askold puts in every effort to restore his hand. He goes through a series of quests to seek an enclave of reclusive druids and curry their favor, that they may restore him.

No-Tongue starts play with a Flaw "cannot speak". He roleplays his communication challenges by gesticulating with his sword. After many sessions of play and quests in dedicated service to his goddess, he is released from his vows of silence. However, his

goddess still often speaks through his sword, and his Flaw becomes "speaking blade". This creates a complication that at times his sword may take actions outside of his direct control.

1.7. Assets

Assets are items of equipment or loot the character is currently carrying. For example, if your character grabs a longsword and healing potion for a journey then write down two Assets "longsword" and "healing potion". Similar to Traits, each Asset must belong to a Theme, and no Theme can have more than 6 Assets.

It's ok to leave some Assets open so that you can fill them during a Scene. If your character picks up a dagger, then write down an Asset "dagger". If you don't have any open Assets then you can't pick up the dagger unless you drop something else.

Since they represent typical items, Assets can be lost, stolen, damaged, or used up. Update Assets as needed, for example if your character drinks his "healing potion" then write "empty healing potion", or if his "longsword" shatters then write "broken longsword".

Your character might be able to repair or replace a broken Asset, but that does not happen automatically...only by something the character specifically does during play. For example, your character might want to find a wordsmith to repair his "broken longsword" or go to a temple and buy a new "healing potion".

You can also intentionally Burn an Asset similar to Burning Dice, but this uses up the Asset. For example, if you decided to Burn your character's "longsword" Asset to help you block a giant's club then you would update it to "shattered longsword". This grants a free Burnable Die. See the section on Burning Assets.

Assets vs Traits

Assets are similar to Traits, but are not as centrally defining as Traits. Unlike Traits which are a permanent part of the character, Assets can be lost, stolen, broken, or used up. Use Assets for all of your typical mundane gear (food, bedrolls, lantern, extra weapons) and reserve Traits for things that define your character. For example, a paladin's "holy sword" should be a Trait since that is central to his character, but a "dagger" on his belt is probably just an Asset.

Changing Assets

You can use Assets for your gear "loadout" going into a Scene, such as weapons, spells, special-purpose equipment, food, changes of clothing, hirelings, and such. Assets are ideal for specialized gear that you don't need to use very often, such as

climbing equipment to get to the roof, lighting, improvised bombs, provisions, cold weather gear, or specialized spells (possibly as a scroll or potion).

Tip

Tell your group whenever you are changing Assets. Also, be sure to specify what you are dropping to make room--there may be a piece of gear they were counting on you carrying.

Assets can be changed whenever doing so is feasible, so you could change weapons by taking one from a foe during a fight or from your weapons cache before a mission. This should take the appropriate amount of time, so putting on armor or memorizing a spell aren't generally possible in the middle of a fight.

Assets are also used for gear that you pick up in the middle of a Scene. For example, if you were disarmed you could pick up a weapon that was lying on the ground, or if you found a treasure trove you could write down an Asset like "treasure chest"

Load

Since each Theme can only have a few Assets, characters are naturally limited on how much they can carry. (This is intentionally simple and avoids the need to calculate weight of items carried.)

- If a character is very lightly loaded, such as having most or all of his Assets open, then he might claim an Advantage on athletics or acrobatics.
- If a character seems to be heavily loaded, such as having all of his Assets filled, then the player or GM should say that he is "heavily loaded" and suffer a Disadvantage as appropriate. Note that even a single Asset such as a "treasure chest" could be considered heavy load.

Spare Ammo

You can carry spare ammo as Assets, such as throwing knives, musket shot & powder, poison vials, bullets, magazines, grenades, and rockets. You can use your Asset ammo to reload your weapons.

Tracking Ammo

Any spare ammo a character carries must have been found during play, and the player must cross it off when the character uses it. For example, if a character defeated some guards and took their ammo to reload his own rifle (which he has as a Trait/Asset), the player should write down something like "4 rifle magazines". Each unit of ammo is good to reload a rifle once.

1.8. Traits

A Trait is a keyword that describes one small detail of a character Theme. Traits are the character's skills, talents, temperament,

physical (or magical) abilities, languages, spells, equipment, and other things that define him or that he can do. All of these little details really help to make your character fun to play. Even better, you get to add a new Trait during every game, so these details can grow as you play.

Contents

- [Gaining Traits](#)
- [Using Traits](#)

Gaining Traits

Each character starts with a single Trait underneath each Theme. A good Trait is simple, one or two words, refines its Theme, and is fun to play. (The GM may optionally allow a few more Traits, perhaps one per Theme Rank.) Each character can gain one new Trait during each game session.

Examples:

characteristics

big, strong, fast, ferocious, brilliant, pious, diabolical

skills

Elvish language, swordsmanship, kung-fu, herbalism, safecracker

gear

broadsword, buckler, chainmail, lockpicks, survival gear

magic

fireball spell, elemental ward pact, magic armor

Gear

It is important to understand that all items of equipment are represented as Traits. Every item a character carries, from a makeshift spear to a wearable computer terminal, is an Item Trait and are used in the same way as other Traits. Characters do not have a miscellaneous list of "gear", but must take everything as Traits.

Experience

Each character is eligible to gain one new Trait *during* each game session. The Trait should reflect the character's experiences during the game session, an item he picked up, a new contact, a new spell, etc.

Assets

In addition, each Theme can have one "Asset", which is a temporary Trait. You can use these Traits for your gear "loadout" going into a Scene, such as weapons, spells, special-purpose equipment, and such. Assets are ideal for specialized gear that you don't need to use very often, such as climbing equipment to get to the roof, lighting, improvised bombs, provisions, cold weather gear, or a *waterbreathing* spell. Assets are often filled with Item Traits.

Each Theme can only have a single Asset, and this does not increase with experience. See the section on [Assets](#) for full details.

Trait Sub-Types
A few varieties of Trait sub-types are discussed in the pages below. None of these Traits are required, but are sometimes used in the game so you should be aware of them.

Using Traits

Beyond roleplaying, there are several ways to use Traits.
Prerequisite
The GM may require a particular Trait as a prerequisite for a given action. Many kinds of actions require a specific piece of equipment, skill, or talent. For example, a character who wanted to speak an archaic language ("high elven") would need that Trait. The same is true for weapons, since killing a foe is nearly impossible without one, and you certainly can't "shoot" without a loaded gun, bow, or equivalent. Similarly, magic spells also require Traits--you can't cast a *fly* spell without a Trait for that spell.
The GM may still allow a character without the prerequisite to take the action, but might increase the difficulty or be justified in describing a spectacular failure. For example plotting a hyperspace jump requires extensive training and experience, and the consequences of failure are likely quite final.
Burn
You can use a Trait to justify a Burn. For example, a character using an armor-piercing arrow could Burn when rolling to penetrate a foe's chainmail. Note that all Special Abilities require an up-front Burn to activate the ability.

Defensive Traits

A Defensive Trait is a sub-type of a Trait that is *purely defensive*. Only a Defensive Trait may be Burned to buy a Saving Throw, or to Reroll a Saving Throw.
Defensive Traits should be worded such that they are clearly specialized as defenses, such as "armor", "dodge", "ward against weapons", "fireproof", "mage armor spell", "mirror images", or "poison resistance". Defensive Traits may NOT be broad multi-purpose Traits such as "swordsman", "quickness", "poisoner", or "berserker", nor may they be Special Abilities such as "flying", "aether shift", or "holy aura".
Example: Poison Resistance
Sicarius is a fearless assassin, poisoner, and brewer of poisons. He has routinely poisoned himself in small doses in order to build up resistances against common poisons. He is not immune to all poisons, but by taking several Defensive Traits against poison such as "poison resistance" and "anti-venom", he has a good

chance of not being affected. His general-purpose Traits such as "assassin" and "poisoner" do not qualify as Defensive Traits.

Strategy

Defensive Traits are a key element of surviving dangerous campaigns, and players are advised to take a broad and deep base of defenses in every Theme. Having lots of Traits that work in your defense will ensure that you get a Saving Throw, as well as the chance to Reroll it.
Example: Full Armor
If you want to survive in the thick of battle you might want to take multiple Defensive Traits, and could even group them together. For example, an armored knight might have a Signature Trait like "plate mail (great helm, breastplate, full maille, steel arms, hourglass gauntlets)".

Not Immune

Defensive Traits can never make a character truly "immune" to a danger, only highly resistant, yet still vulnerable to an unlucky series of rolls. See the section on Immunities for details.

Item Traits (Equipment)

All pieces of equipment and gear are represented as Traits. Everything a character carries, from a makeshift spear to a wearable computer terminal, is an Trait. All equipment works this way, such as a weapon, suit armor, shield, coil of rope, lockpicks, etc.
Historical vs Fictional Objects
Item Traits are used for *historical* objects such as swords, firearms, rope, etc, that exist in our real world. Magic Traits are

used for qualities of *fictional* objects, including futuristic sci-fi gear, such as a *potion of healing* or a *blaster rifle*. This distinction is necessary because real-world objects have well-known physical constraints, but fictional objects all too often bend or break the laws of physics.

The GM may have an additional list of items that are *historical* for his campaign setting. For example, a sci-fi campaign may have a variety of *blaster rifles* that are approved historic items. This works best when the item is documented with facts, pictures, and other details that give it well-known limitations.

Item Traits are used in the same way as other Traits. For example, a character with "survival gear" as an Item Trait can declare it in a similar manner as someone with a "survivalist" Trait.

The difference between an Item Trait and a normal Trait is that it needs to be "equipped" or readied before it can be used. For example, armor must be worn to be beneficial, and a sword must be held in the hand if it is to be wielded as a weapon. There may be times when that isn't possible, during which time the Item Trait cannot be used.

A character whose Themes revolved around gadgets might have a lot of Item Traits, or an "ascetic monk" might not have any physical possessions--but both characters would have the same overall number of Traits.

Accessories

Focus on listing your main items of equipment, not the small stuff. It's fine to assume that Item Traits come with other small pieces of gear that are implicit in the use of the item. For example, if you have a "sidesword" trait then you can say it comes with a sword belt, scabbard, and cloths for cleaning the weapon. Similarly, if you have a "longbow" then it comes with a quiver of arrows (see the section on Ranged Weapons for details).

Item-Based Signature Traits

A Signature Trait can be based on an item, such as "sharp sword" or "customized pistol". Any Traits that refer to the item itself, or a specific part of the item, or a technique related specifically to using the item are also considered to be Item Traits. For example, the following Signature Traits consist solely of Item Traits:

- **sharp sword:** longsword, sharp, false edge, pommel punch, parry
- **customized pistol:** pistol, high-powered, scope, aimed shot

Encumbrance

A character who has all of his equipment covered by Traits is considered to be comfortable carrying those items. A character who carries additional gear is Encumbered and suffers a Disadvantage on all rolls. Thus, while you have the freedom to lug

around a treasure chest, you will be quite slow if you don't have Traits to cover it.

Game Design

As you can see, the limit of what a character can carry is based on character concept and experience rather than physical strength. The weight of items is simply not considered as part of these rules, because it feels like bookkeeping, and it takes away from the purest character concept. If you need a rational explanation for why more experienced characters get more stuff, you can imagine that they have smaller, better made, or multi-function tools, both as a result of having collected some cool gear over the years, as well as knowing what gear to look for (a seasoned survivalist will pick out a better knife than a city-person).

Pros / Cons of Items

Item Traits are in inherently more transient than other kinds of character Traits. It is easier to role-play a character trading out one kind of sword for another than to explain why a character is changing a personality Trait like "brave". Item Traits are often a convenient choice for filling your Asset slots when getting ready for a mission. You could also give an item to another character, such as handing a "healing potion" to a wounded comrade.

On the other hand, Item Traits are not always available. They can also be dropped, damaged, or taken away. Also, in order to use an item you must have the item with you and also holding or wearing it properly. For example, your "warhorse" will not be available in the king's throne room, and your "longsword" is not available for use unless you are holding it.

Ultralight Characters

An Ultralight Character is one who is very lightly loaded, without bulky or heavy items. Athletes, acrobats, cat burglars, wizards, monks, and ninjas usually fit this description.

This can be declared as an Advantage for athletic actions (swimming, jumping, etc) and may have specific benefits, such as those described in Flight.

Magic Traits

Magic Traits are Traits that are powered by magic. Examples of Magic Traits are magical-sounding Traits like "supernatural strength", or spells like flying, mental projection, and teleport spells.

All Magic Traits are Special Abilities, even those that mimic mundane abilities such as "strength" or conjuration of a normal sword. As such, players must Burn before using a Magic Trait.
Magic vs Sci-Fi
All *fictional* Traits such as sci-fi technologies and psionics are also treated as Magic for the purposes of game rules. Be sure to give them distinctive role-playing flavors in your campaign, but the rules are the same.
"Magic", "Magic Power", "spell", and other terminology
All of these terms are used in a broad sense and players are free to substitute other terms as desired. For example, the term "magic" is used in these rules to indicate any sort of supernatural power, and in the broadest sense a "magic spell" is any kind of magical activity. Arcane wizard spells, priestly miracles, psychic projections, or the innate abilities of a mythic beast are only a few examples of magic. While your character might not necessarily call what he does "magic" or the act of using magic a "spell", the rules use these familiar terms to improve readability. Players should use terms appropriate for roleplaying their characters and make their own magic unique.
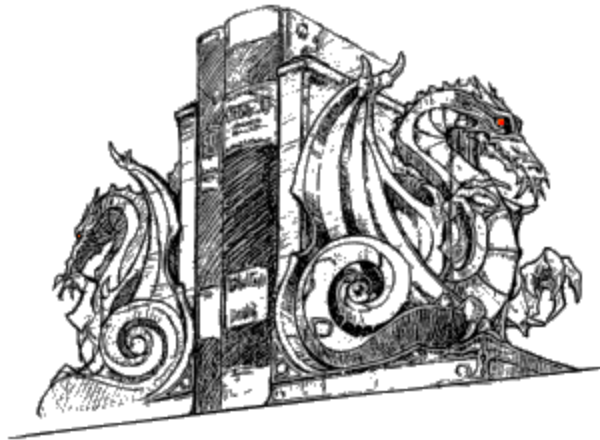
Magic Items

A magic item is any item that has one or more Magic Traits. For example, a "flaming sword", "potion of healing", and "ring of strength" are all magic items.
Magic Traits are never considered to be Item Traits, and never qualify for Double Burning. However, the Magic Traits of a Magic Item can be used together collaboratively. Magic Traits that have been invested into an item can be used together.
This works in a specific way. If a magic item has a Magic Trait that represents the magic item itself, such as "magic ring" or "magic wand" then that Trait can be used in place of any of the other Traits. For example, if you had the Signature Trait "magic wand:

magic missile, fireball" you could use "magic wand" in place of "magic missile" or "fireball".

Any Traits related to channeling or focusing magic power also work in this way, able to be used in place of any other Magic Trait on the item. So, if we add a "battle magic" Magic Trait to the previous example, it could be used in place of "magic missile" or "fireball". You could Reroll or Wind when casting "fireball", or you could cast another "fireball" even though it had been Burned. This makes a magic-user with several spells invested into a wand or staff very flexible.

Example

With a Signature Trait like "staff of power: wizard staff, power, magic missile, light, fireball" the player could use "wizard staff" or "power" in place of "magic missile", "light", or "fireball".

A mage-archer could do something similar with his bow and various kinds of magically conjured arrows.

Offensive Traits

An Offensive Trait is a sub-type of a Trait that represents an attack. This could be a weapon such as "sword", an offensive technique such as "heart thrust", or a damage-enhancing property of a weapon such as "sharp edge", "armor-piercing", "flaming sword", "vorpal", or "hard-hitting".

Recovery Traits

A Recovery Trait is a sub-type of Trait dedicated to healing. Examples include "just a flesh wound", "cure light wounds", "lay healing", "bandages", or "stim pack". Recovery Traits allow you to restore Burned Themes within a Scene, rather than waiting between Scenes, which is helpful for getting a character back into the fight.

You can Burn a Legend Die and name a Recovery Trait to restore one Burned Theme, either for yourself or for another character. You must also succeed on a check.

Applicability

The Recovery Trait must be applicable for the patient and injury; in other words things need to make sense. For example, you could use "bandages" to help yourself or a comrade who had been wounded, but probably not for a "psychic" wound. Nor could would it make sense to use it to fix a mechanical creature. Also, depending on your Recovery Trait you may need both hands free (e.g. "bandages"). You suffer a Disadvantage in borderline cases, or if the healing seems especially difficult.

Hold Still!

You must be in close proximity to your patient and he must "hold still" while you are working on him. The patient can still take limited Actions and Reactions, so long as he holds still and does not interfere with your attempts to heal him. You and your patient could potentially move before starting recovery, but not during recovery (which could take several Turns). Defend Reactions do not normally pose a problem, so long as the role-played defense does involve movement or vigorous actions (such as counterattacks).

If your patient does not "hold still" then you suffer a Disadvantage on your roll. Furthermore, if you Fumble then your patient may suffer the loss of one Energy if the healing involved physical repairs such as bandages or stitches. Note that the GM can apply additional Disadvantages if the character or patient make wild movements or vigorous actions such as attacks or Counterattacks.

Self-Only Recovery Trait

A "self-only" Recovery Trait is one that is obviously limited such that you are only able to heal yourself, such as "regeneration", "second wind", or "just a flesh wound". This kind of Recovery Trait cannot be used to help other characters, only yourself. In return for this limitation, you do not need to hold still.

..Recovering Traits: Some Recovery Traits could alternatively be used for immediately recovering a Burned Trait within a Scene. For example, "potion of strength" could be used to recover a Trait like "strong", a "armor repair kit" could be used to recover a Burned armor Trait, or a "black lotus essence" could be smoked to recover a Black Wizardry spell Trait.

Signature Traits

Some Traits needs a little more detail to make them "just right". For example, you might have a Trait that is based on a made-up name or term that needs some clarification or definition, or you might have a few Traits that could be grouped together. In such cases, you can create a "Signature Trait", which is a named group of Traits. Signature Traits form a convenient middle-ground between Traits and Themes.

You can create a Signature Trait even if there is just one Trait inside. This is useful if you want to refer to a Trait by a "made up name", such as calling your longsword "Slicer". The name of the Signature Trait has no in-game effect, it is purely role-playing and a way on the character sheet to indicate that some Traits are grouped together. After all, just because you gave your longsword a name doesn't really change what it is.

Examples

"Slicer" (longsword)

Ulfberht (viking sword, superior steel, feared blade)

Holy Sword (longsword, angranor, holy light, holy fire)

Grimoire (detect magic, magic missile, magic armor, rope trick)

Shadowfax (beautiful, horse of Rohan, understands speech, fearless, fast runner)

Witchslayer Runeblade (greatsword, adamantite, ward pact vs witches)

Sniper rifle (long rifle, high-powered shells, scope)

Thievery (climb walls, pick pockets, backstab)

As-ei (Alu steel, knife, throwing knife)

Nether Tendrils (negative energy, magic power source)

Sniper rifle (long rifle, high-powered shells, scope)

Power Armor (vacsuit, 3mm steel armor, exoskeleton, medi-kit, comm unit, maneuvering jets)

You must purchase each Trait in the group separately, so a group with three Traits takes up three of your Traits. The group name is not a Trait and does not cost anything. The group name cannot be declared directly as a Trait, but can still be mentioned while roleplaying as long as one of the Traits in the group are applicable.

Signature Traits may not be taken as Assets.

Character sheet tip

When writing a Signature Trait on a character sheet, it works well to list them at the top of the Theme as a separate section before your general lists of Traits and Flaws. See the sample character Drayandir for an illustration of this approach. For example, here is a wizard theme with two signature traits.

Wizard (theme)

Spellbook:	detect magic, magic missile, magic armor, rope trick
Wizard staff:	oak staff, light, fire arrow
Traits:	arcane lore, read magic
Flaws:	old

Special Abilities

A Special Ability is a Trait or Asset that describes an unusual talent, ability, power, magic spell, superpower, or other superhuman ability. Some examples are "superhuman strength", "night vision", "armored rock-skin", "poison immunity", or "fireball spell".

Any Theme that has one or more Special Abilities must also define a Framework for their use.

Special Abilities are discussed further in the section Using Special Abilities.

1.9. Frameworks

A Framework describes how the Special Abilities of a Theme work. For example, a superhero might have a power-armor suit that makes him super-strong, super-tough, and able to fly. Frameworks are also used for describing how a character's magic works. A priest might perform miracles through his relationship with his deity, or a wizard might cast spells by sketching glyphs in the air.

Every Theme that contains one or more Special Abilities is required to define a Framework. This is a firm rule, and Special Abilities will only function within the rules laid out by the Framework. A Theme may not have more than one Framework.

Example: Syr Tyrian the Paladin

Theme: Holy Paladin

Traits: armor of righteous indignation, sense impure thoughts, holy purifying flames

Assets: vial of holy water, incense block, blessed candles, vial of holy oil

Framework: Syr Tyrian calls upon the name of his god "Pyrose" to work miracles of fire and cleansing. If he has had an impure thought then powers won't work until he atones. His "holy purifying flames" burn undead and also burn away evil afflictions.

A Framework must cover at least these three topics:

1. Where do the special abilities come from?
2. What does the character need to do to make them work?
3. When won't they work?

A Framework can also be used to call out special ways in which the character should be treated differently in the game by particular cultures or types of NPCs. This applies quite often for priests, who historically play prominent roles in society. Frameworks can also contain miscellaneous notes about specific abilities, as needed.

Examples

Monk

A monk needs no armor or weapons. His hands and feet are like swords and his body like a mailed knight. His body is pure and resists poison and disease. His superhuman abilities come from long years of disciplined training, meditation, purity, and perfection of his chi. He loses his abilities if he neglects his discipline or if his chi becomes weakened or impure, such as by giving in to vices or greed. Heavy clothing or armor also interferes with his abilities.

Glyph Wizard (symbolic magic)

Magic comes from ancient glyphs, each of which forms a spell. The glyph literally *is* the spell. The wizard can only cast spells for which he has learned the glyph. He does so by tracing the glyph, either in the air, on the floor, on an object, or a person. The magic will not work unless the wizard can move freely enough to trace the glyph in a large pattern in the air or on a surface.

Psychic Sorcerer

Magic is wielded through inner power and thought alone. No words, gestures, or symbols are needed. However, supreme concentration and mental focus is required. A sorcerer may not wear restrictive clothing, particularly on his head, and any head covering or even an unshorn head of hair will disrupt his magic.

Wand Wizard

Magic power springs forth from within but requires a wand, rod, or magic staff to channel and focus it into a spell, which involves intricate gestures. The magic will not work without loud vocals accompanied by hand gestures, or alternatively a focusing tool like a wand or staff.

Ninja Gimmicks

A ninja carries an assortment of tricks and gimmicks on his missions. He usually builds them ahead of time while preparing for the mission, but can sometimes improvise them in the field. Either way, he can only build them given sufficient time, so this is not possible in the heat of battle.

Karrock

A Karrocks body is made of alchemical stone, and nearly impervious to harm. The alchemy is both powered and bolstered

by the consumption of gemstones. A Karrock's body will soften over time if gemstones are not consumed.

Immunities and Vulnerabilities

Some creatures are immune to specific kinds of attacks or dangers, unaffected by what might injure or kill a typical person. For example, fire elementals cannot be hurt by fire, and robots cannot be poisoned. However, immunities are traditionally paired with vulnerabilities, against which the creature has little or no chance of resisting.

The GM may rule that a character or NPC is immune or vulnerable to a particular attack, as he sees fit.

Immunities and vulnerabilities may be guessable by observant players, but that is not always the case because the players only have partial information about any given situation. Characters are ever facing fresh new challenges and breeds of monsters which they have never encountered before.

Immunities are Frameworks

Immunities are based on Frameworks rather than Traits. The Framework describes both the specific immunities, the source, and any exceptions to the immunities. The immunities are not subject to dice rolls, but the ruling of the GM, so there could be partial or full immunities, exceptions, and other strange and specific criteria.

In addition, the Framework must describe vulnerabilities: critical weaknesses that exceed the immunities. For example, while undeads are immune to poisons and disease, they have far more weaknesses, ranging from issues of questionable hygiene to major problems like getting burned by holy water, daylight, and random acts of kindness. The GM should always ensure that the vulnerabilities exceed the immunities, so a creature that was "immune to magic" would need to have several crushingly do weaknesses to compensate, likely reducing it to a hideous monster.

Characters with Immunities

Keep in mind that characters seldom have true immunities, but instead build up resistances using Defensive Traits. That said, here are a few examples of character Themes where an immunity might make sense.

Saints

A character playing a "saint" (e.g. cleric or paladin) might be immune to the holy wrath of his god, but only if that brought other special weaknesses. Note that Saints also have a Hidden Soul (see below), since they have given their soul up to their god, and no longer have it.

Ifr'it Fire Daemon

A character playing a "fire daemon" might be immune to fire, but only if he had a commensurate vulnerabilities such as to water. Note that Ifr'it may have a Hidden Soul (see below) if they have placed their soul in an Ifr'it Amulet and hidden it away.

Karrock Stone Golem

A character playing a "stone golem" should be immune to poison, disease, and other afflictions of flesh and blood. However, he should not be able to benefit from magical healing.

Hidden Soul

Some characters (especially Saints, Ifr'it, and Necromancers) give up or hide their souls away, making it generally inaccessible to soul-draining or soul-binding magics. While this has considerable merit, it also brings drawbacks that are not always immediately apparent. For example, concealing one's nature becomes quite challenging to any foes who can sense magic, any actions a Saint takes are known to his Hallow, and gaining an Ifr'it Amulet grants power over the Ifr'it.

2.0. Magic-Using Characters

A magic-using character such as a classical wizard or cleric needs at least one Theme with a Framework to describe their magic, and

fill it with Traits for skills, or Magic Traits for magical skills, and Special Abilities for spells and powers.

For example, to make old school wizard character start by taking a Theme named "Black Wizard". Then add Traits for his wizardly skills such as "ancient languages" and "read magic". Next, add a Special Ability for each spell he can cast, from *cantrip* to *fireball*, which he might as well group into a Signature Trait called "spellbook". The last step is to add a Framework to the Theme to describe how his wizardly magic works. Here is what you might end up with after a few game sessions:

Black Wizard (theme)

Traits:	ancient languages, occult lore, read magic,
Spellbook:	cantrip, detect magic, magic missile, mage armor, rope trick, unseen servant, fireball
Flaws:	nearsighted, old age
Framework:	Can cast magic wizard spells. Casting a spell involves magic words and gestures unless he Burns the Trait to be subtle. Must study his spellbook to recover Burned Traits.
Asset:	gnarled old staff

Since all Special Abilities require a Framework, it is preferable to organize similar magic Traits into a Theme that describes the kind of magic you use, such as "White Wizardry", "Sorcery", or "Priestess of Lunara". This gives you a single place to look for all of your magical Traits such as spells, components, magical allies, summoned creatures, and props like a staff or wand, especially as the character grows over time. A character who is adept at more than one form of magic might even have more than one Theme. A magic-related Framework should describe what kinds of magic can be used, how that magic is used, where the magic power comes from, and so on.

Magic Trait Examples

Here are a few examples of magic Traits. Also keep in mind that Signature Traits are handy for creating spellbooks or powerful items such as a "staff of power".

- magic powers such as spells, prayers, etc.
- magic art, school of wizardry, or religion
- sources of power
- magical allies, higher powers, and pacts
- magic "props", such as wands, staves, and holy symbols
- spell components, such as "eye of newt"
- restrictions on magic, taboos, foes
- books, tomes, and scrolls

As with any Special Ability, each magic power should have a specific Trait, such as *flame arrow* or *fireball*. A Trait always

represents the simplest interpretation of the wording, so a broadly named Trait such as *Pryomancy* would only be able to conjure and control small amounts of fire, not create larger effects like a *fireball*.

Anything that can be used to assist your use of magic can be taken as Traits. For example, a wizard's "wand" could be a Trait. See the sections on Magic Items and Magic Components for other examples.

Magic Components

Certain rare materials are magical or are said to assist spells. For example, in alchemy powdered silver is potent against undead, and the heart of a dragon is imbued with magical fire. The components could be in raw form or combined, such as a magical ink incorporating by powdered silver, the blood of a werewolf, and the tears of a dryad.

Attentive and creative characters are likely to collect many interesting and unusual components in their adventures. You can take these as Loot or Traits, depending on what you find

interesting. Loot can be used to justify gaining a new Trait, such as a spell. When a component is taken directly as a Trait this assumes some sort of stable supply.

Example

While traversing a swamp, a party of adventurers finds a rare *blue lotus* plant. The white wizard *Aiken* harvests some of the bulbs for use in spells that cure madness. Aiken's could just store the component as Loot, or take a new Trait like "Blue Lotus Plant" or a new spell like "Cure for Madness."

This is intentionally simple and freeform, relying on the initiative and creativity of the players and the GM. The GM is encouraged to have fun introducing unique flora, fauna, and minerals in his campaign world.

Lastly, keep in mind that several characters could use the same component in different ways.

Example

While exploring ruins in a swamp, a party of adventurers slays a deadly, venomous Hyrda. The white wizard *Aiken* thinks to take the venom glands for use as a component for curative spells that remove poison. The master assassin *Kef* demands one of the glands for his own purposes, and assists in carefully extracting the deadly prize. Aiken decides to gain a new trait "Cure Poison" while Kef decides to gain a trait "Hydra Venom Gland".

Examples

Here are some examples of magic components.

Herbs

"Herbs" is a catchall term, commonly used in reference to any plant substance such as bark, root, leaves, resin, flowers or stems. Often they are used in incense recipes, in mojo bags, ground and sprinkled as powder, or hung in bunches. Some herbs are used as tea, for a combination of medicinal and magical purposes.

- Acacia: Stimulates psychism
- Adam and Eve Root: Useful for spells to get married or heal a broken marriage
- Asafoetida: Use sparingly in exorcism and banishing incense and powder
- Balm of Gilead: Burn to cause spirits to appear
- Bear Berries: Carry to increase psychic abilities
- Black Snakeroot: Carry for courage
- Buckthorn: As a tea, makes an excellent cathartic
- Copal: Used in image magic to represent your target's heart
- Damiana: As a tea, acts as a mild aphrodesiac
- Dittany of Crete: Burn to cause spirits to appear
- Fava Beans: Also called Mojo Wishing Beans

- Hand Root: Used in mojo bags for good fortune, especially six-fingered
- Hyssop: As tea, oil, or incense, used universally for purification
- Jalap Root: Carry to increase power and courage
- Job's Tears: Wish on seven of these, and throw them into running water
- Mandrake: Either may be used in image magic
- Male Mandrake: Used to stimulate one's personal power
- Female Mandrake: Kept in one's house for protection and good luck
- Orchid Root: Carry to attract love, or powder and sprinkle on the object of your love
- Orris Root: Used in mojo bags to attract and keep a lover
- Patchouli: May be used in some cases where Graveyard Dust is called for
- Raspberry Leaf: As a tea, used by some to relieve menstrual pain
- Tonka Beans: Wish on one, and throw it into running water
- Yew: Bury a wand of Yew in a grave for one full moon to raise the deceased's spirit

Oils

Many practitioners of magic using traditions like to use scented oils. Oils are either "essential" (pressed or extracted from real substances) or "fragrance" (substitute or synthetic scents). The essences on this list may also be used in whole-herb form for the same purposes.

- Allspice: Used in money sachets and incense
- Catnip: Good for psychic bonding with feline familiars
- Cinnamon: Burned as incense, or used as anointing oil, to stimulate spiritual power
- Clove: Attracts the opposite sex
- Frankincense: Burned or used in anointing oils for purification and power
- Galangal: Used in anointing oils to stimulate spiritual power
- Jasmine: Stimulates psychic powers, and also induces sleep
- Lavender: Used to induce sleep, also attracts men
- Lemon Verbena: Attracts the opposite sex
- Lotus: Stimulates spiritual power
- Mastic: Burn to cause spirits to appear or stimulate psychic powers
- Mint: Used in mojo bags to attract wealth
- Mugwort: Rinse scrying devices with an infusion to activate them
- Myrrh: Used as an oil or incense to consecrate altars or ritual tools

- Rosemary: As oil or incense, used to purify a space
- Saffron: Drunk as an infusion to become prescient
- Vetiver Root: As oil or incense, use to break hexes
- Wormwood: Burn as incense to increase psychism

Stones

Precious and semi-precious stones and crystals are very important to many magic-using traditions. Often they are used as amulets and in mojo bags.

- Amber: Amber absorbs the vital essence of its owner. Amber is good for generating powerful solar energy.
- Amethyst: For clarity of mind. From the Greek "A Meth"--"without drunkenness"
- Bloodstone: For physical strength and health, closes wounds
- Calcite: Amplifies one's magical energies
    - White: For use in meditation, adds focus
    - Pink: For calming and balancing the emotions
    - Blue: For healing and purification
    - Green: For prosperity and wealth
    - Orange: For protection and power
- Jet: Like Amber, Jet absorbs the vital energy of its owner. Amber is the blood of the earth, while Jet is the body. Excellent for physical robustness.
- Moonstone: For divination and psychic enhancement
- Onyx: Protection and "cloaking"
- Quartz: A natural generator. Quartz crystal is excellent for powering amulets with unbiased energy.
- Obsidian: An excellent stone for scrying mirrors and also for protection. Arrowheads of obsidian are especially powerful
- Pyrite: Although "Fool's Gold", Pyrite is commonly used in spells to attract wealth and prestige.
- Ruby: A deep red jewel, the Ruby is very potent with Mars energy. Ruby is excellent for protection and personal power.
- Sapphire: Sapphires are good for psychic ability, especially telepathy. Sapphires are also rumored to protect the health and heart.
- Star Ruby: A beautiful stone with a six pointed refraction inside, the Star Ruby is associated with Chokmah, the Supernal Father, and the universal Masculine.
- Star Sapphire: Like the Star Ruby, the Star Sapphire is a deep rich color ranging from bluish to a dark grey, with a six pointed refraction inside. Associated with Binah, the Star Sapphire represents the Supernal mother and the universal Feminine.
- Sunstone: Power and protection, solar power

- Tiger's Eye: Courage and strength
- Topaz: Draws wealth and protects against accidents
    - Blue: Cools the body, worn next to the skin
    - Gold: Warms the body, worn next to the skin
- Tourmaline:
    - Pink: Draws love and friendship
    - Red: For protection, will and courage (rare)
    - Green: Draws money to wherever it is kept
    - Blue: For peace of mind, or to induce sleep
    - Black: For absorption of negative energies

Folk Charms

Simple folk-magic charms are often made from components, such as a poultice for wounds, or a woven wreath of magically significant herbs and flowers, or an enchanted feather. These can be easily treated the same as components. This is especially appropriate if the character is incorporating the component into his character as a Trait.

Arcane Components

More sophisticated practitioners of magic might make use of powdered silver, rare inks, or the blood of magical beasts. These are just more examples of magic components.

Pyromancy

Here are some sample magic components that might assist in fire magic.

Tifarum

Hermetic sulphur, i.e. pure and suitable for precise alchemical experimentation.

Naptha or Bitumen

Naphtha is petroleum, and a liquid oil. Bitumen is asphalt-hard, tenacious; can be often reduced to powder, but is not soluble, and has the offensive smell of naphtha. It should at times be found in water, and it burns more fiercely when cast into running waters.

Syphar

The Syphar, i.e., the Old Skin, or Slough, of dragons retains a trace of the dragon's fire magic, especially while still warm from the dragon's inner fires.

Dragon Blood

The power in a dragon's blood, especially when still warm, is a potent aid in fire magic. However, it still retains some magic even after dried into a powder.

Rubies

Rubies of various clarity and size are potent components for fire magic.

Amiantus

Amiantus is not unlike certain species of alum. It is impervious to fire, from which it issues more brilliant. It is fabled by the Germans to be produced from the hairs of a Salamander, which is accounted for by its fireproof nature. It is a kind of stone which may be split into threads and spun. It is without doubt a scaled or feathered Alum, which can burn for ever.

Dragon Heart

The heart of an ancient dragon, taken from its chest while still beating, and immersed in alchemical fire.

Dracontias

A precious stone which to be found in the brain of dragons, but unless it is removed while they are alive, it will never become a precious stone, by the inbred malice of the animal who, conscious of death approaching, destroys the virtue of the stone. Therefore the head is removed from dragons while asleep, and thus the gem is secured. The energy of the living soul is imparted to many things which the corruption of death in the humours impairs.
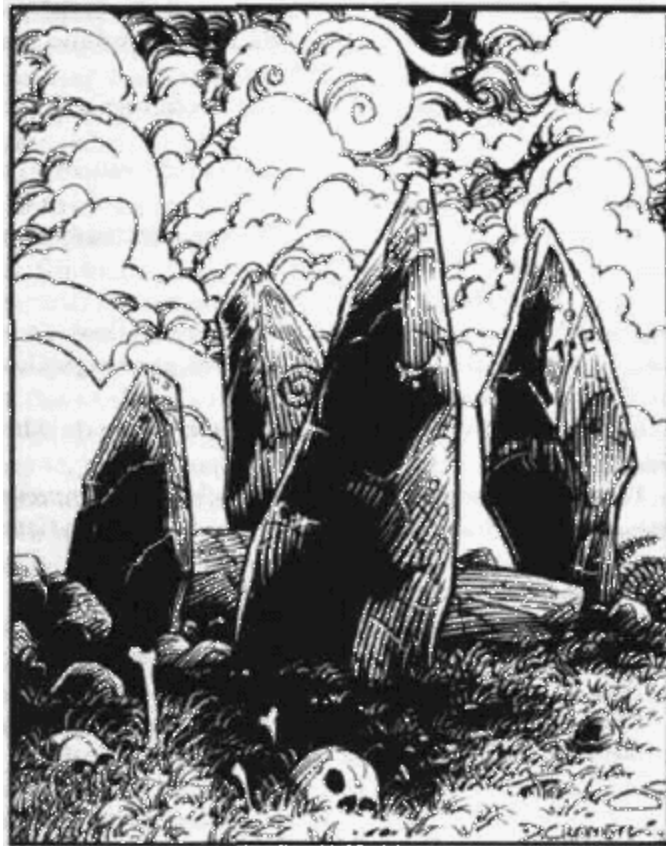
Magic Nodes

Magic Nodes are places that have a concentration of magical power.

Nodes can be found almost anywhere, but occur most often where Ley Lines pass near enough to be tapped, which is especially common where they intersect. Wizards consider them magical

places and priests call them holy ground, but both agree that these places are special. Many nodes have been marked in some way, either with wonders of nature, shrines, menhirs, cairns, or wizard's towers. This may make them easier to find, but it also makes it more likely that you may encounter other magic users or magical beasts at that locale--either of whom might consider themselves the rightful owner of the place.

Finding Nodes

The easiest way to find a Node is to search along the length of a Ley Line, look for ancient ruins such as standing stones, or talk with the local people to investigate old holy sites or places of mystery.

The GM can place nodes anywhere in his campaign world. The GM should choose a theme (or themes) for different types of nodes. Not all nodes need to be useful, and some may even be hazardous to characters.

Discovery and control of Nodes is one possible means for characters to explain their own magic-related Signature Traits. The GM could require characters to find nodes and perform a ritual to bind the node.

Node Theme

Each Node has a Theme, as determined by the GM. The Theme might come from the raw magic power or from an ancient structure like a shrine or wizard tower.

A Node Theme can affect anyone within the Node *regio*, or region of influence. For example, a shrine dedicated to the goddess of healing could actually heal the sick. Some Nodes require certain triggers to apply their magic, such as a sacrifice. Others will actually attack trespassers.

Characters who are magically sensitive may be able to directly use a Node's Theme when casting spells within the regio, provided that the Node is compatible with their own style of magic. For example, an ancient ring of stones sanctified by the Druids might be of little use to wizards. Discovering the special qualities of the place is a fun "aha" moment for the players.

It is also possible to "bind" or attune oneself to a Node, taking it's Theme as a Base.

Example: Temple of Na'Ututhra

This ancient Baal water temple is devoted to Myrym as the god of rain and Suul as the goddess of the rivers and seas.

- ● Temple of Na'Ututhra
- ● Shrine of Myrym, dragon god of rain
- ● Shrine of Suul, dragon goddess of rivers and seas

Example: Deep Ones Shrine

Adventurers find a ancient shrine to an unknown water god deep in the ruins of a lost city. A character with arcane or sage-like

knowledge should be able to deduce the nature of this shrine, which can assist in casting spells of Black Wizardry.

Example: Sphere of Doors

This unusual room is a 100-foot diameter sphere, with doors spaced evenly in the walls, ceiling, and floor. Anyone entering the room will find that they can walk normally on the surface of the sphere.

- Wow, it's all one big floor!
- Wow, I can run up the walls!

player tips: Magic Framework Design

Here are a few things to consider when describing a magic Theme and its associated Framework.

- Where does the magic come from? Examples: a Black Wizard uses eldritch spells from alien precursor race, a Warlock obtains his power from elemental pacts, a priest prays to his deity. This will have a profound impact on the philosophy and mannerisms of the character.
- What can this kind of magic do? Examples: healing, fire magic, teleportation, flight. Be descriptive. Dedicated magic-using characters will need to use multiple Themes in order to be good lots of different kinds of magic.
- How is this kind of magic used? Examples: incantations, prayer, mental powers. Think ahead to how you will roleplay this during the game. Example: *"I call upon Ra to smite the infidels with the searing heat of the sun."*
- Use colorful and fun terminology. The generic rules just say "magic", but for the most fun players should use more individual and flavorful names and terms for all things magical.
- What does the character call his particular discipline of magic? Examples: aeromancy, elementalism, theurgy, wizardry. aeromancer, hydromancer, pyromancy, sun priest, sorcery.
- What does he call himself? his "magic"? Examples: arcanist, black wizard, priest/ess, sage, sorcerer/ess, warlock, wizard/ess, white wizard.
- What does he call his flavor of magic power? Traditional names include: essence, earth power, mana, prana, "the force", ruah, pneuma, psyche, or vis.
- Take specific Traits to represent particular powers. For example, a wizard should take Traits to represent broad

areas of magic (e.g. healing, fire magic,), spells (e.g. *remove poison*, *ball o' flame*.
- What kinds of magic components and props are appropriate to the Theme? Take Traits for specific props (e.g. wand or staff), or magic components (e.g. pearl for healing, ruby for fire) so that you can use them to boost your magic during play.
- How does the world (or specific cultures) view this form of magic? Must it be practiced in secret?

sample Magic Themes

The following are examples of magic-related Themes for characters.

Baal'Shem, Dragon Priest

A Baal'Shem is a priest of the Dragons. They are leaders of their people, guiding the masses in rites of worship of the dragons, especially in sacrifices.
In battle against the foes of the dragons a Baal'Shem can create gouts of dragonflame, protect against flame, and make ritual sacrifices to call forth the spirits of ancient dragons of the past.

Black Wizard

"None can use black magic without straining the soul to the uttermost -- and staining it into the bargain. None can inflict suffering without enduring the same. None can send death by spells and sorcery without walking on the brink of death's own abyss, aye, and dripping his own blood into it. The forces black magic evoke are like two-edged poisoned swords with grips studded with scorpion stings. Only a strong man, leather-handed, in whom hate and evil are powerful, can wield them, and he only for a space."
-- Fritz Leiber,
"The Unholy Grail"
Wizardry has its origins at the beginning of time, when there were only azure skies and indigo seas, wherein dwelled the races known as the "Deep Old Ones" or Gobbah. These races were born of old magic and took many forms in the darkness of the

oceans' deeps. For centuries, the Kessrith, Fomorians, Illithid, Slaadi and other long-forgotten aquatic beings warred for control of the primordial ocean that covered Ambar. These races warred even after the lands were raised from the sea, and primitive tribes of man worshiped them as gods. While the "Deep Old Ones" are still spoken of in various fables and "creation myths", wizards know for a fact that they did exist and Ambar is steeped in their magic.

Amidst the Baal Dragonstone ruins common on Ambar are older works of eerie crumbling stone seemingly brought up from the floor of the sea and carved with symbols of power. These places are the legacy of the "Deep Old Ones", containing all their vast knowledge and power for those who know how to seek out such things and do not fear the possible consequences. For those for whom magic does not flow in their blood, the magic arts are gleaned from these ancient sea-worn stones. Wizards have been known to jealously war for control over such places, often forming powerful guilds or strongholds to study and protect the sites

Just as each race of man has its own language, the eerie stone runestones have been found scribed in various styles, accredited to several different races of the "Deep Old Ones". The best known are he swirling, erratic glyphs of the Fomorians and the precise geometric patterns of the Kessrith, but many others have been found and most wizards choose to keep their discoveries secret. The symbols and words seem alien to human minds, and while their understanding can bring great power it can be dangerous. The eccentricity of many wizards stems from a deeper understanding of the nature of the universe, or perhaps the madness such knowledge can bring.

Most wizards study the runestones without considering too deeply the origin of the magic they contain, but some wizards are more selective in what magic they choose to assimilate and invoke. Most non-wizards consider magic of the Fomorians to be evil and perilous, for certainly their race has always been a bitter foe to any who dwell upon land. The Dwur and Eldar have warred against the Fomorians since the lands were raised from the seas by the gods long ago. Some say that Fomorian magic is not evil but rather madness, it was their magic that first rent the fabric of space and allowed the Kaeden to enter our world from the "Astral Space". However, the Fomorian glyphs are the most widely known and studied, often discovered along coastlines upon the sites of the oldest cities such as Guldur and the "Black Tower of Aquila". At many of the ruins wide stone steps lead deep into the waters, sometimes to watery temples to ancient aquatic gods that predate any worshiped today. Many speculate that the Fomorian glyphs were intentionally left in convenient places where the land-dwelling races would find them. These dark origins, and the questionable nature of the magic itself causes the common folk who hear such

things to view "Black Wizards" with great fear and suspicion. In the Alornean nations "Black Wizards" are hunted with prejudice and slain as servants of dark powers. Since nearly all wizards are "Black Wizards" there are many who make no distinction between them and any other kind of wizard, slaying any who wield the "old magics" without distinction. In other cities, notably Aquila and Guldur, "Black Wizards" can roam the streets with impunity, having long ago culled the populace into submission through overt and terrible displays of power.

Some wizards strictly avoid the Fomorian glyphs and take a longer road to power, stylizing themselves as "White Wizards" or "Gray Wizards". Most "White Wizards" believe that the Fomorians will one day return to reap their harvest of "Black Wizards" who have foolishly gobbled up the seeds of magic like lotus eaters. No power is worth that risk, and the "White Wizards" consider themselves to be more enlightened and wise than their more common brethren. The "Order of the Unicorn" is an Alorn organization of "White Wizards" who consider it their duty to keep a watchful eye on the "Black Wizards". "White Wizards" generally prefer to remain hidden to society, for they are a minority compared with the "Black Wizards", and many common folk draw no distinction between them.

Hermetic Magus

As a generalist and practicioner of all magics, a magus would want to take multiple Themes (each as their own Trait) in the various schools, colleges, or spheres of magic. These might be very similar to the list of Magic Arts, but should not map directly to magic arts, but instead to general concepts like "protection", "destruction", "illusion", etc. An "illusionist" character might have a higher Rank in his "illusion" Theme than other Themes.

Wolf Shaman

Wolf shamans revere animal spirits. They have a kindred with all wolves, and can communicate with and befriend them. Shamans can call upon the abilities of wolves, such as endurance, and can even transform into wolves (and perhaps werewolves). They can also howl to cause fear in their foes.

2.1. Companions (henchmen, hirelings, contacts, and pets)

A "Companion" is a character who is associated with and might accompany your character, such as a henchman, hireling, trained pet, familiar, and even the other main characters. Companions are full characters with Themes and Traits, but are not always around and are sometimes played as "PCs" or "NPCs".

Companion List

Each character may make a list of "Companions" within each Theme. For example, an adventurer might list "Hodge (pack bearer), Fritz (war dog), Lord Kirrl (owes me a favor)". You can also include contacts, allies, and even the other players' characters. Companions in your list are not Traits and have no direct in-game benefit. You do not need to list all Companions, but this helps with role-playing.

Enemies

If you like you could make another list of Enemies, merchants who got the better of you or villains who got away. This is just for role-playing and fun, but can be amusing to use as a "to-do list".

Companions are Characters!

Each Companion is a full character, with his own Themes, Traits, etc. You do not need to detail out all Companions, but you should know that they exist separately from your current character, and

can grow and change (and possibly die) just like your main character.

The GM may sometimes provide a character sheet for someone the characters meet, with Themes and Traits already detailed. Otherwise, the players are left to define Companions as they see fit. After all, making characters is fun!

Player Characters

A single character might have dozens of Companions. However, **each player may only control a single character at a time**, who is his current Player Character (PC). It really isn't possible for a single person to immersively role-play more than one character at a time. It's fine to have Companions add details or crack jokes, but that's more of a peanut gallery than a front-line PC.

Players may change characters between Scenes, but may only control a single character at a time. All other characters are considered to be Non-Player Characters (NPCs) and are run by the GM, to whatever degree he sees fit.

If a character turns out to be a poor fit for the Scene (or gets killed), a player may change his Player Character at the beginning of a Turn (at the start of the Maneuver Phase). However, this may only be done once per Scene and requires a vote from the other players to on whether this makes sense for the Scene. Players may not switch back and forth between different characters. (The GM is an exception, because he has an entire world to run.)

Non-Player Characters

Any character who is not being active run by a player as his single Player Character is considered to be an NPC. All NPCs are run by the GM, as he sees fit.

Out to Lunch

NPCs will often seem like they are distracted, on break or out to lunch. The GM may even look for reasons to have the NPC wander off, guard camp, or generally make himself scarce. The GM has a lot to do running an entire world and possibly many NPCs, so any given NPC is likely to be considerably less effective than when a player is devoting 100% of his attention to running the character as a PC.

Gaining a Companion

Characters can gain new Companions whenever that makes sense. For example, if the character frees a swordsman from a dungeon cell, and the swordsman swears to serve him, then the player may define a new Companion.

Each Companion has up to four Themes just like any other character. Companions may have Special Abilities, which are taken as Traits and Frameworks normally.

Roleplay!

However, each companion is a secondary character who will hopefully play an interesting and significant role in the story. So, the event of gaining a Companion should be treated and role-played appropriately. Some companions join out of loyalty, some are hired, and some are summoned magically, but they do not just appear spontaneously.

Companion Lifecycle

Each Companion exists independently from the main character, and can be killed or leave the service of the character. Companions are eligible to gain a new Trait during each game session, just like any other character, but only during play in the context of a Scene where that Character was an active PC, and took meaningful action. In other words, Companions can gain experience, but only if they do important things in the story.
Expendable Companions
Some Companions represent summoned creatures, drones, skeletons bursting from the ground, or unnamed soldiers who are treated as expendable creatures who can be summoned again in the next Scene even if slain. For example, if a wizard's conjured servant was slain the wizard would just conjure him again for the next Scene. However, these companions do not gain experience. Therefore, they will always have the starting number of Traits (typically two per Theme).
Note that a player could still define a non-expendable Companion who was summoned or a drone, who could be permanently killed, and who could thus earn experience. It isn't the fact that the Companion is "summoned" that voids experience, but rather the quality that the Companion doesn't properly die.

2.2. Loot

A band of brave adventurers go on a treasure-hunting adventure to win the tremendous hoard of a dragon. The mighty lizard has never made use of its opulence except as a glorious golden bed. After slaying the great wyrm, the survivors divide the loot and return home to become kings or live their lives in luxury.
Successful adventurers often come across treasure troves, weapon caches, objects of art, magic items, gold, jewels, and other spoils of war. Of course, your character can make use of any items he finds by taking them as Assets. Anything your character carries during a Scene (whether into the Scene or out of the Scene) must be written down as an Asset. This means you may need to drop something in order to pick up something new. Character can change Assets in-between Scenes, but often that means leaving other things behind. Anything they leave behind

should be put into a list of "Loot", which is all the stuff he has cached away but is not actually carrying with him. If possible also jot down *where* each item is.

Starting Loot?

Loot is normally found during play, and Characters don't normally start with any, but feel free to ask the GM if there is something you think is especially appropriate to your particular character. For example, if you have a Theme like "Mafia Boss" then you could reasonably ask if you can have an "emergency cache of cash" to start with. However, the GM can always say no, as a lot of this depends on how he wants the campaign to start.

Spending Loot

Living Expenses

The characters will incur a reasonable amount of expenses just interacting with the campaign world. Everybody needs to eat, sleep, clothe themselves, and resupply. Furthermore there are always taxes and fees when living in a society. While you could track such things in a very detailed way, it is probably better for the GM to keep things really simple, and just require players to spend Loot in-between major Scenes when they are in a town.

Gifts and Bribes

Loot can be used to grease the wheels of social interaction. If a player decides to spend some Loot to influence an NPC, then the GM might waive the need to make a roll, or allow a reroll. Whether or not it works (or was even needed to begin with) the Loot is gone.

Purchasing Traits & Assets

The GM should allow characters to acquire simple Traits and Assets without too much trouble. However, anything special or complicated needs to be sourced and possibly purchased for a cost. The GM should require the character to spend an appropriate amount of Loot.

For example, a character might want to buy a particular weapon, but doesn't have a cache of weapons or a Trait like "arms dealer", so he would need to find a vendor and buy one. Similarly, a wizard might want a new spell, so he might need to pay a fee to a wizard's guild or pay for special paper and ink.

Similarly, characters may have Traits or Assets that can be improved. Characters often have "starter gear" that can be improved if you make the effort to do so. This is similar to buying new gear.

Examples:
- Pay a trainer to upgrade a skill-based Trait.

- Pay an armorer to upgrade a Trait like "breastplate" to "hardened breastplate". This would presumably make it easier for him to justify gaining a Saving Throw against a wider range of weapons.
- Pay a gunsmith to increase the capacity of a pistol with a larger magazine.
- Buy a scroll containing a new spell.

2. How to Play

Legends is a role-playing and fictional story-telling game. The GM describes a fictional game setting and tells a story, and asks the players what their characters do. The players role-play their characters, expanding on the story the GM put forth. Together, the GM and players spin a shared story.

Every good story has a healthy dose of action and excitement, such as ambushes by foes, chases along rooftops, and sword duels. Players role-play character actions and then make Dice Checks to help determine the outcome. When a player rolls a successful dice check he gets to describe Good Stuff, or on a failure the GM gets to describe Bad Stuff.

Typically the player describes Good Stuff, and the GM describes Bad Stuff, but this is a group storytelling game so keep an open mind.

This section covers the basics of the game and most situations, and even fast-and-loose combat. The same principles apply to a duel of wits or a gunfight. See the section on Tactical Play for a detailed approach for phase-based combat.

1. Dice Checks

Checks are the basic dice roll in the game. Players make all Checks. The player rolls 3d6 and counts the number of dice that roll 4+. If at least two dice roll 4+ then Good Stuff happens, otherwise Bad Stuff happens.

Typically the player describes Good Stuff, and the GM describes Bad Stuff, but this is a group storytelling game so keep an open mind.

The GM can raise the difficulty of a Check by requiring the player to roll "Ugly Dice". These are negative dice, so when one of them rolls 4+ it counts against the overall roll. For example, on a 3d6 roll of 2,4,6 is normally Good Stuff, but an Ugly Die roll of 5 would bring it down to Bad Stuff.

Extra Good and Extra Bad Stuff

If three dice roll 4+ then "Extra Good Stuff" happens. Conversely, if zero dice roll 4+ then "Extra Bad Stuff" happens. In many cases there will be no real distinction, but the player or GM can use the degree of success or failure to add detail when that helps the story. For example, if a character was trying to cut a foe with his sword and rolled Extra Good Stuff then the player might describe a "critical hit" and get an Advantage on the Damage Roll. The GM might use "Extra Bad Stuff" to describe an epic fail/fumble.

Burning Dice

When a player isn't satisfied with a Check, he can optionally Burn a Die to get a better result. The player Burns one or more dice and rolls them together, with each die that rolls 4+ helping the outcome.

Since the Burned dice are rolled *after* the Check, the player does't need to waste his precious Burnable Dice on Checks that were already successful.

Players can help *any* Dice Check, not just those of their own characters. For example, if player 1 makes a Dice Check for his character, player 2 might decide to help out by Burning a Die to help out. This kind of help needs to be role-played as a character the second player controls, and requires naming a Trait or Asset. Regardless of how many players are Burning Dice on a Check, all of the Burned Dice are rolled *together*. Players may not burn a single die and then see how it goes, and then roll another.

Advantage

An Advantage is an extra Trait that a character may claim based on an advantageous situation, such as attacking a foe without a weapon, having the element of surprise, or occupying the high ground.

You can use an Advantage like any Trait. For example, you can use the "bridge" you are standing on to justify Burning Dice when defending the narrow space against multiple foes. You can alternatively Burn an Advantage to roll an extra 1d6 on a Dice Check. Once an Advantage has been used it goes away.

Advantages are highly situational, so you should think of each Advantage as a "limited time offer" that will expire at any moment. In most cases characters will need to maneuver to earn an Advantage, although cunning foes may have already prepared an ambush for your heroes...

Examples of Advantages
- defensive fortifications or high ground
- attacking by ambush or surprise
- mounted on horseback
- shooting from a rooftop down into a street
- concealing bushes can assist with hiding
- defending a choke point, such as a door, stairway or bridge

Controlling the Advantage

Sometimes having an Advantage can negate the Advantage of a foe. For example, only one fighter can really have the "high ground" or control the center of a bridge, so sometimes controlling an Advantage is worthwhile just to deny it to your foes.

Ugly Dice (Difficulty)

The GM can raise the difficulty of a Dice Check by requiring the player to roll "Ugly Dice". These are negative dice, so when one of them rolls 4+ it counts against the overall roll. For example, on a 3d6 roll of 2,4,6 is normally Good Stuff, but a Black Die roll of 5 would bring it down to Bad Stuff.

2. Good Stuff

"Good Stuff" is a term for the results of a successful Dice Check. If a player succeeds on the Challenge Check then he gets to describe "Good Stuff" that happens. The Good Stuff should be role-playing, and is limited to the scope of the action the character was attempting. For example, if the character was fighting a foe, the player can describe how the character hit the foe, but he can't declare something unrelated.

In most cases the player will also need to make a **Damage Roll**. This is a Dice Check to see how effective the character was at accomplishing his Good Stuff. For example, in combat this is a check to see if the character's weapon can pierce the foe's armor to wound him.

If a player rolls especially well on his Dice Check then he may describe "Extra Good Stuff". This could be a "critical hit" on an attack, a "counterattack" when defending, or some other especially good result or secondary benefit.

Damage Rolls (Defeating Foes)

Character Perspective

Damage rolls are always made when a character is attempting to use Good Stuff against an NPC or object in the game world. A player should a Saving Throw instead of a Damage Roll to see if a character can avoid avoid Bad Stuff. Everything is done from the perspective of the character.

If a player succeeds on a Challenge then he gets to describe some Good Stuff that happens. If that Good Stuff will affect an NPC or object in the game world the player must make a "Damage Roll" to see how well that worked. This is just another Dice Check, with a Difficulty set by the GM based on how well the foe can resist the type of attack / Good Stuff. A Damage Roll that results in a Full Success inflicts one Disability on the NPC foe.

Damage Rolls

The term "damage roll" is used even if there isn't damage being applied; you can think of it as an "effectiveness check". If the Damage Roll succeeds then the player assigns a Disability to the NPC, or otherwise describes what happens.

Damage Rolls are used for all situations where a PC wants to inflict some kind of harm on a NPC foe, even if the attack does not cause normal bodily damage. Other kinds of Good Stuff can also require a Damage Roll. The term "Damage Roll" is just used for consistency and as a throwback to old school RPGs.

Damaging and Defeating Foes

Damage Rolls are used by players to have characters damage and defeat NPC foes. When a player makes a successful Damage Roll the GM will assign one Disability to the NPC foe. This works exactly the same for PCs and NPCs, and weapon attacks typically cause "wounds" as normal. A Full Success is normally required.

In the case of a "wound", the GM will Burn (cross out) one of the NPC foe's Themes. Similar to a PC, the NPC then loses access to that Theme and any attacks, Special Abilities, or resistances the GM may have assigned to that Theme. This is an important strategic consideration for players, as they can choose to target specific Themes that grant the foe particular abilities, such as wings, a sword arm, poisoned sting, etc. Defanging a serpent is often just as good as killing it.

Similar to a PC, a foe is out of the fight if he runs out of Themes. The GM will describe or role-play the manner in which the foe is defeated based on the situation. For example, in a sword duel the foe might be sliced open and lay dying on the floor, or he might be killed outright.

Ad-hoc Themes

Often it is easier for the GM to simply describe how an NPC appears and what it does, without listing specific Themes. When a character damages the NPC, the player ideally describes the manner of damage caused ("Kalerescent lops off the bat-daemon's foul wings"). The GM writes down that specific effect ("wings lopped off") and has the NPC behave appropriately, including limiting its capabilities. The GM also needs to decide how many Themes the NPC has in total, in case the attack could have taken it out of the fight.

Damage Roll Difficulty

The GM should adjust the Difficulty based on the ability for the NPC foe to resist the *general* kind of attack, such as weapons, magic, grappling, etc. It is easier to hurt an unarmored orc than a heavily armored knight. Keep in mind that the PC already succeeded on the Challenge and has hit the foe, so this is mostly related to armor, toughness, resistances, or the ability to dodge. The Difficulty should not depend on character details and should not vary between characters. The GM should be able to predetermine the Difficulty before the characters arrived.

Some creatures have special immunities or vulnerabilities, but these should not affect the Difficulty the Damage Roll, because they would also depend on the specific attack used by the character.

Damage Roll Outcomes

The outcome is based on the number of Successes rolled.

Failure

The NPC is unharmed and unaffected by the attack.

Example: Failure

An archer shoots an enemy soldier, but the arrow harmlessly glances off the armor.

Partial Success

The NPC is unharmed and unaffected by the attack unless the foe has a special Vulnerability to the particular attack.

Vulnerabilities

A Full Success is needed to damage a foe, but a Partial Success is enough if the foe has a special Vulnerability to the specific attack. For example, if mummies are particularly vulnerable to fire, then a *flaming sword* should wound it even with just a Partial Success (provided that it was active at the time). Otherwise the attack was just a glancing blow that almost did damage, but not quite. In many cases the player will need to spend a Chip to activate a special attack, such as a *flaming* or *silver* property of a special sword. This is also fine for an *armor-piercing* weapon against an armored foe.

Example: Partial Success

An archer shoots an enemy soldier and succeeds on his damage check. The GM crosses out one Theme, the soldier's last, so GM describes how the arrow pierces the soldier's chest and he collapses in agony. The character has taken down an enemy!

Full Success

The NPC suffers one Disability unless it has a special Immunity to the specific attack. The player generally gets to choose the specifics, such as which Theme was Burned, if he can role-play an aimed attack appropriately.

Immunities

A Great Success is needed if the foe has a special resistance or immunity to the specific attack. For example, the GM should require a Great Success to wound a werewolf with a non-silver weapon, or to hurt a fire elemental with a fireball. In many cases the player will need to spend a Chip to activate a special attack, such as a *silver* property of a special sword.

Example: Full Success

A PC archer shoots an NPC soldier and succeeds on his Damage Roll. The player states that he is aiming for the soldier's sword arm, and arrows clearly cause wounds, so the GM crosses out the soldier's "swordsman" Theme and determines he can no longer swing his sword.

Great Success

The NPC suffers one Disability, and may suffer a critical hit.

Critical Hit!

If the attack causes a wound and the NPC drops below half his Themes as a result, then the NPC has suffered a "critical hit" and is *immediately* taken out of the fight. However, the GM reserves

the right to allow particularly tough monsters to be immune to critical hits. For example, a named villain, enemy leader, solitary "boss" monster, or other NPC who is important to the story does can be immune to crits. Similarly, this does not apply if the NPC has a special resistance to the attack.

Winding

When a character wins a roll he can attempt to "Wind" and quickly finish off his foe. This is done by Burning a Trait to "Wind", which continues the action by making more rolls.

Winding is a very flexible game mechanic that handles a wide variety of situations. When roleplayed well, this can create a cinematic time-compressed virtuoso attack where everyone else watches for a moment in awe. Winding is also used for dangerous situations such as a deadly trap or extreme cliff. Here are a few examples of where Winding should be used.

Special Attacks
sniper rifle, poison, *black arrow*

Martial Arts
heart thrust, vorpal sword / lightsaber, stunning blow, choke hold, crushing blow, *dim mok* death fist of death

Social
interrogate, intimidate, demand surrender, call for parley

Traps and Hazards
climbing cliffs, leaping across pits, crushing ball trap, trapdoor pit, poison gas swamp, fumbled grenade, tossing a foe into a pit

Winding is a series of Contests that continues until it reaches a conclusion. The rolls continue as long as the initiating character

continues to win. The series ends if the defender breaks the cycle by winning a roll or is defeated.

Area Attacks and Winding

Area Attacks such as *lightning bolt*, *fireball*, poison gas, grenades, or a bomb can also benefit from Winding.

Procedure

After a character wins a roll he may optionally Burn a Trait to "Wind". The Trait must be related to some kind of special attack or action that could be used to defeat the foe. The initiating character makes another roll. The defender also rolls, but this is treated like a Saving Throw, which can at best avoid defeat, but not fully win. If the initiating character wins then the defender suffers the normal consequences of losing the roll (usually decreased Energy) and then the process continues. The series of rolls only stops if the defender wins a roll or is defeated.

GM: Applying Energy Loss

There are two ways to apply Energy loss. The GM (in concert with players) needs to decide whether the campaign setting should be less deadly or more deadly.

- For a less deadly campaign setting, wait to apply Energy loss at least until the end of the Action, and ideally Phase. For example, each failed roll in the series does not affect the next roll in Winding unless it would drop the character to zero Energy. (The best way to keep track of this if you are using Energy dice is to use two dice, one for the starting Energy to use for rolls and one for the resulting Energy. At the end of the Action (or Phase) remove the starting Energy die, leaving just the resulting Energy die.)
- For a more deadly campaign setting, apply the consequences of a lost roll immediately. For example, when Winding apply the Energy loss before the next roll in the series. So, each failed roll in the series shrinks the defender's Energy *before* the next roll. This is results in a rapid downwards spiral, where a defender who loses the first roll in a Winding is very likely to go down completely. This makes Winding extremely deadly!

Notes:

- The character only needs to Burn a Trait to start the Winding process; he does not need to Burn a Trait to continue. Also, the character may not Burn another Trait to restart Winding once it has stopped.
- In some cases, such as traps or hazardous terrain, there is no attacking character, so the player character rolls in an attempt to stop the Winding. A character who fails a roll to avoid the extreme danger must continue the action until it reaches a conclusion, either finding a way clear or suffering the natural consequences of failure.

Example: Free climbing a mountain

If your fail a climbing roll then you must Wind to a conclusion. Each time you lose a roll your Energy decreases and you must roll again. If you win a roll then the Winding stops--you caught yourself. If you don't win any rolls then you have fallen all the way down and suffer the natural consequences.

Death Attacks / Death Traps

Any kind of "kill shot", deadly poison, *sleep*, *soul drain*, deathtrap, tall cliffs, or other death attacks must be handled by Winding. There is no other game mechanic for instantly slaying a foe. The series of rolls ensures that it is *possible* for a character to be taken out by a single attack, yet *unlikely*. This is as much to protect the player characters as the major NPCs and villains.

Example: Deadly Poison

Nightfang the ninja shoots a guard with a poison dart. The initial roll wasn't enough to take out the guard, so Nightfang decides to Burn his "poison dart" Trait to have it inflict greater damage. Both Nightfang and the guard roll again. If Nightfang wins then the guard loses Energy. If Nightfang wins enough consecutive rolls to reduce the guard below D4 Energy then the guard will slump silently to the floor, and the mission continues.

Forked Winding

Some attacks can shift to different targets, such as a machine gun, *chained lightning*, *magic missiles*, rolling ball trap, or giants sword. The player makes a series of Winding rolls, but may optionally choose to advance to a different defender at any time. The player is allowed to choose the next defender. Thus, for a weak attack you could move on after slightly wounding the first defender, but for a *death spell* or giant sword you should finish off the first defender before advancing to the next.

Slow Winding

Not all Winding need be instantaneous. Fire or poison work quickly, yet not as quickly as a sword. The first Winding roll takes place on the Turn after the initial attack, and any successive Winding rolls happen at fastest once per Turn.

Slow Winding stops if the defender wins two consecutive rolls. In other words, the Winding gets a second chance even if the defender wins a roll.

In addition, there must be alternative action the defender can take to stop the Winding. For example, a character who is on fire can roll on the ground to put out the flames. The tactical benefit to this style of attack is that it has a good chance of causing the foe to use up his action to save himself.

Delayed Winding

The GM may optionally delay the Winding by hours, days, or even months. This works well for a slow-acting poison, disease, or magical curse. The first Winding roll takes place after the delayed time. Any successive Winding rolls may be optionally delayed by a similar time, or just happen instantly, depending on the nature of the affliction.

Delayed Winding stops if the defender wins at least three consecutive rolls. In other words, the Winding gets a second and third chance even if the defender wins.

The GM might grant an Advantage for special precautions taken by the character, such as using a particular medicinal herb or standing on holy ground.

Tossing Foes into Pits

A terrain hazard such as a nearby cliff or gaping pit might beckon invitingly for a character to toss a foe into its depths. The character might use a Westling move such as "drive" or "throw", or a wizard might use a "telekinesis" spell to toss the foe into the pit (which is also a Wrestling attack), ensuring his demise. This is a fine notion, but since this is effectively a "death attack" the character must use Winding to fully deplete the foe's energy to complete the attack, which can be quite challenging. In addition, the Energy loss is binary: either the foe is tossed into the pit (to his demise) or he loses no Energy. The character need not Burn a Trait for Winding in this case, but may instead use the terrain hazard similar to an Advantage get free Winding. This can make a group of enemy halberdiers guarding a narrow bridge quite dangerous to trespassers.

GM: Heavy Hitters

The GM may also allow some monsters or traps to automatically Wind on each attack. For example, trolls and giants are incredibly strong and can deliver incredibly forceful attacks. This will make the opponent quite deadly, so use it sparingly only in cases where you want this to be the memorable aspect of the opponent.

3. Bad Stuff

"Bad Stuff" is a fun term for diabolical damage or trouble thrown at a character (or his allies) by the GM as a penalty for failing a Challenge check. Whenever a player rolls "Bad" or "OK" on a Challenge check, then the GM gets to describe "Bad Stuff". Usually Bad Stuff will take the form of an attack or accident that will inflict a Critical Flaw on the character who failed the Challenge check. The player may make Saving Throw to avoid the Critical Flaw.

Lethality

In a duel involving weapons, Bad Stuff usually means the character was hit (cut, stabbed, whacked, etc.) by his opponent, so the character the Critical Flaw is likely to be lethal. This means that the character will die unless the player makes a second Saving Throw.

Bad Stuff can also be a minor, quirky Mishap.

However, the GM can use "Bad Stuff" in more insidious ways. If the Bad Stuff was incurred while fighting a foe, the GM will *usually* describe a Critical Flaw, but and it will *usually* come from the foe the character is fighting, but the GM is free to have the Bad Stuff come from any source, such as another foe in the sidelines, or not take the form of a Critical Flaw at all. A character who fails a

Challenge check and thus incurred Bad Stuff might have neglected to protect the group's flank, exposing other characters to danger, and the GM might announce that reinforcements arrived unnoticed and are flanking the characters. It's a dangerous world, and Bad Stuff can come from anywhere.

Critical Flaws (Crits)

Critical Flaws are wounds or equally unpleasant effects that severely harm or hinder a character. They have the same effects as Flaws, except that they are assigned by the GM during play are not a permanent part of the character.

Critical Flaws are often far more severe than Flaws, representing wounds, debilitating conditions, or severe limitations rather than mere personality quirks. Worse, Critical Flaws of a life-threatening nature can cause the character to die...or perhaps wish he could. However, if the character does survive, then he can recover and heal from his Critical Flaws.

Examples

stabbed in chest, lost arm, broken leg, severely burned, paralyzed, petrified, grabbed, knocked own, paralyzed, or gripped by fear, frostbitten, starving, lost, wanted by the sheriff's men, mocked by the royal court

Gaining Critical Flaws

The GM can use Bad Stuff to assign one or more Critical Flaws to a character. For example, a character who is hit by a axe-wielding assailant would suffer a lethal "axe head wound", or a character who got stuck in a sticky giant spider web would be assigned "trapped in giant webs". The player can make a Saving Throw to avoid the Bad Stuff.

Effects

Critical Flaws apply restrictions or hindrances as appropriate. For example, a character who was "grabbed by a giant tentacle" should be unable to move away freely, or would at best would suffer a Disadvantage.

Suffering builds character

Roleplaying a character who is suffering a Critical Flaw is a very interesting experience. Imagine the "world's best swordsman" who lost his right hand, or a wizard who lost access to his magic. What would they do to survive, and how would that affect and change them?

Dooms

Critical Flaws are extraordinarily serious and can lead to the death of the character, or an equally unhappy ending. The GM can rule that any Critical Flaw has the potential to "Doom" the character, removing him from play (at least for a time).

However, characters can be both frighteningly fragile and remarkably resilient at the same time. The character is allowed a **Saving Throw vs Doom**. This does not remove the Critical Flaw, but the character can continue playing. (Note that this is a second Saving Throw, the first one was rolled to avoid the Bad Stuff / Critical Flaw in the first place.)

A result of "OK" succeeds on these Saving Throws, unless the character is especially vulnerable to the attack. However, the character suffers a Disadvantage for each Critical Flaw he currently has, so even a stalwart hero can eventually be worn down.

Examples

Death

A Critical Flaw that is clearly lethal (e.g. a longsword stroke) kills the character unless the player makes a Saving Throw. If the player succeeds then he suffers a Disadvantage on future Saving Throws against death, until the Critical Flaw is healed.

Incapacitation

A Critical Flaw from an assault attempting to beat the character senseless (e.g. a boxing match K.O.) renders him incapacitated.

Petrification

A Critical Flaw from a magical petrification attack turns the character to stone.

Sleep

A Critical Flaw from a magical *sleep* attack makes the character fall magically asleep. He cannot be awoken with normal means.

Character Death

Legends emphasizes long-term character and story development, so character death is treated very carefully.

Major characters (including villains) should only die (or end "unhappily") in such a way that moves the story forward. This can and should happen at some point for most characters if the players all have a common understanding that the game is about shared character and story development, rather than "winning". Sometimes a well roleplayed character death will move the story further ahead in a more satisfying way than staying alive. Just be sure the character dies for a cause he believes in.

Recovery

A player can make a Recovery Check to have a character recover one Critical Flaw.

For example, a character who was "grabbed by a giant squid" could attempt to wriggle free (or play dead) by making a Recovery Check. This takes at least one character action, but possibly more time. For example, a character who was wounded by a sword could make a Recovery Check to heal, but this should take days unless a magical *healing potion* was used.

Mishaps

A "Mishap" is a minor side-effect of the action at hand. Most Mishaps are ordinary, for example a gun might jam or run out of ammo. This isn't anyone's fault and isn't a mistake or reflect a lack of skill on behalf of the character, just something that could happen to anyone in the real world.

The GM can alternatively use Bad Stuff to describe a quirky Mishap.

Mishap on a "1"

If using this option, a Mishap can occur on any roll, even a great one. However, this makes dice checks a little more complicated. A

Mishap occurs whenever a player makes a roll and gets exactly one "1". For example, a roll of 3,2,1 would result in a Mishap, but not a roll of 3,1,1. A Mishap can occur during any roll, even if the overall roll is successful.

When a Mishap occurs, the player must role-play the side-effect or leave it up to the GM. The standard Mishap is an equipment malfunction. However, if using a Special Ability for the action, this takes priority over any other possible mishap.

Equipment Mishaps

The standard Mishap is an equipment malfunction. Whatever piece of gear the character was using has developed a problem and is no longer useable. For example, your gun might jam, your bow might run out of arrows or snap a string, your sword blade might get stuck in a foe, or a piece of armor might come loose.

If no gear was being actively used for the action, then substitute a different piece of gear, such as a light source running out of fuel or an article of clothing becoming unusable. ("Harkill dodges the arrow but his pants rip!")

Disposable Items

Equipment damage is normally repairable/recoverable in-between Scenes. However, disposable items intended for temporary use or of shoddy construction should self-destruct on a Mishap. For example, a pocket lighter would out of fuel or a makeshift flint knife would shatter.

Special Abilities / Magic

If using a Special Ability for the action, this takes priority over any possible equipment mishap. The Special Ability is considered to be the "item" of equipment and becomes inactive. For example, a wizard who suffered a Mishap while casting a *magic missile* would no longer have that Special Ability "active". The player could still opt to spend another Chip to make the spell active again, but for now the power/ammo has run out.

Mixing things up

If the standard Mishap doesn't readily apply or you want to add a little variation, then you can create your own Mishap. Some examples are also below. A good rule of thumb is that the Mishap should be "something that could have happened to anybody". Another good rule is that a Mishap should be the "simplest of accidents", in other words keep it simple.

Mishaps shouldn't be severe, but a play may optionally give up his success (if he was successful) to cancel a Mishap if he just can't afford a complication at that moment. Another option is to spend a Chip to try to avoid the Mishap by making a Reroll. Lastly, a player may spend a Chip to have his character avoid the Mishap. (The GM may require a particular Chip value if desired.)

General
- You drop whatever tools you are holding, such as a lantern
- You drop a piece of equipment from your belt, pocket, or pack
- You bump into an ally; he suffers a Disadvantage on his next check
- You slip and drop to one knee
- You slip and fall on your rump
- You slip and fall sprawling

Attacks
- You graze an ally if he was in reach or in line of fire; he is unhurt but suffers a Disadvantage on his next check

Melee Attacks
- Your weapon slips from your grasp and goes flying
- Your weapon snaps at the hilt
- Your weapon is notched or otherwise blemished
- A foe slips by you (swap positions with foe at end of Phase)

Ranged Attacks
- You've run out of ammo
- Your bowstring stretches (if too wet) or snaps (if too dry or old)
- You needed to move to aim
- You needed to drop to one knee to aim

Magic
- Your energy for that spell runs out
- Your magic has attracted attention by *some thing*, and you may be followed or watched

Tactical Play

Mishaps take effect at the end of the Phase, so a "gun jam" Mishap would not prevent the character from using the gun for the remainder of the Action Phase. If a character rolls multiple Mishaps during the Turn then the player (or GM) should combine them into a single, "major" Mishap.

Immediate Mishaps

If the player failed the Challenge Check and also rolled a Mishap (oops!), the GM may choose to combine the Bad Stuff with the Mishap. In this case the GM may declare that the Mishap takes place immediately.

GM: Special Item Mishaps

The GM can also design Mishaps into special items to counterbalance any special benefits. For example, a primitive powder gun in a fantasy campaign might inflict extra damage, but might explode.

Saving Throws (Resisting Bad Stuff)

Character Perspective

Saving Throw are always made by a character attempting to resist damage from an NPC, trap, or other Bad Stuff that would result in a Critical Flaw. Use a Damage Roll instead of a Saving Throw when a character hits an NPC. This is because rolls are always made by players, from the perspective of the character.

The characters live in a dangerous, deadly world. Players should expect their characters to get hurt, poisoned, paralyzed, and otherwise roughed up...a lot.

Whenever the GM describes Bad Stuff happening to a character, the player may make a **Saving Throw** to avoid the Bad Stuff. For example, if the GM says a character is hit by a foe in combat, which would be a lethal Critical Flaw, the player can make a Saving Throw to escape taking damage.

A "Good" Success is normally required to avoid the Bad Stuff, unless the character seems to be especially resistant in a way that would not have adjusted the Difficulty.

A Saving Throw can be made against any kinds of Bad Stuff such as falling off a cliff, getting hit by a trap, or getting squeezed by a giant squid. Bad Stuff does not always have to result in a Critical Flaw.

Keep in mind that a Saving Throw is a Dice Check, and the GM will set the Difficulty based on the defense described by the player and his judgment of how well it might work against the impending Bad Stuff. Players should do their very best to describe feasible defenses against Bad Stuff, since the GM will probably increase the Difficulty if he hears something that doesn't sound like it should work.

Example

Haginc is fighting a band of goblyns in a snowy pass, but he misses a parry and the GM says he is struck by a couple of spears. Haginc makes Saving Throw, hoping that the spears won't pierce his chainmail shirt. *Note that even through the GM described the Bad Stuff as "spears", only a single Critical Flaw would apply and only a single Saving Throw needs to be made.*
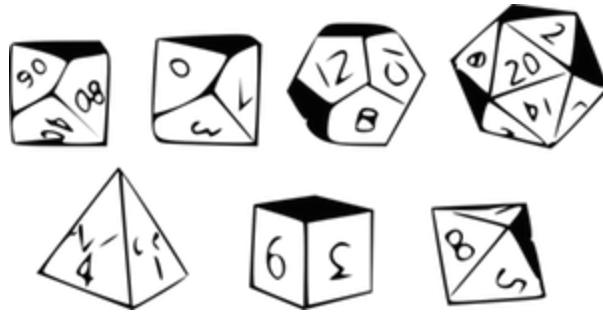
4. Burning Dice (Influence)

Each player has a special pool of six dice that he can "Burn" to influence the story.

Whenever a player decides to Burn a Die, he must role-play or name a Trait or Asset. The player then rolls the die. This is discussed at depth in two sections: Dice Checks and Using Special Abilities. The "burned" die is then set aside and cannot be used until it is "refreshed" (see below).

This pool of "burnable" dice is a set of classic polyhedral gamer dice (1d4, 1d6, 1d8, 1d10, 1d12, and 1d20). You could use ordinary dice in a pinch but it's not nearly as cool.

Burnable dice are special

Legends uses other dice beyond your "burnable" dice, such as the basic 3d6 for Dice Checks and the "Black Dice" for Difficulty. So be sure to keep your "burnable" dice separate, ideally by using a special set with a distinctive color or style.

These "burnable" dice form the primary currency for players to influence the story. Characters will take many actions during the

game, but players will need to choose when to "burn dice" to help characters succeed in challenges or perform legendary deeds. Burnable dice are an essential element of a Legends game, for they allow players to choose what really matters to them and get their fair share of the role-playing spotlight.

Die Size

The dice come in the six classic polyhedral gamer dice sizes: 1d4, 1d6, 1d8, 1d10, 1d12, and 1d20. Larger dice are better than smaller dice. For Dice Checks this is obvious, since a d12 simply rolls 4+ more often than a d4. The way die size affects Special Abilities is discussed later.

The highest-value d20 die is reserved for special use, only when the character is doing something that particularly highlights his central character concept (e.g. a "berserker" going berserk), or when there is a strong external influence indicated by the GM, such as an artifact, holy ground, or other epic-level power attuned to the character.

Refreshing Burned Dice

Players may attempt to "refresh" burned dice between Scenes, during times the characters take time to rest and recover. This is done by rolling all of the player's dice that are currently burned, and restoring all dice that roll failures back into his pool. For example, a player who had burned his d8 and d10 could roll them in-between Scenes, and if either (or both) rolled a Failure then it would return to his pool to be usable in the next Scene.

As discussed in [Using Special Abilities](), burned dice that are being used by an "active" Special Abilities may not be refreshed.

The GM can alternatively allow players to refresh their pool without rolling, such as when there is a long interlude between Scenes, or at the start of a game session.

Free Refresh

The GM may also instruct the players to roll a refresh at any time, typically in exchange for some in-game event. Examples:

- Flaws: A player who forces an dramatically undesirable character action based on a Flaw should be eligible for a Free Refill in the middle of an important Scene. For example, a character who has a Flaw "truthful" or "socially inept" might tell a powerful lord the full blatant truth rather than hide details that anyone with common sense would keep to himself. This can be initiated by either the player or by the GM (as a coercion). This makes makes characters seem more lifelike and makes Flaws quite important.
- Accomplishments: The GM can allow a dice refresh for accomplishments, such as defeating a major villain, recovering a quest object, or other points of progress in the Story.

- Beliefs: When a player forces his character to adhere to one of his Beliefs in a situation where that is extremely inconvenient, the GM can allow a dice refresh.
- Artifacts: The GM can earmark an Award for use in a particular situation. For example, if a character finds the villain's *staff of power* the GM might Award Chips to represent the power that was stored in the staff.
- Power Up!: The GM can occasionally can allow a dice refresh in situations where a character has somehow gathered a great deal of power. For example, if a character who prayed before an altar might be granted a dice refresh.

Burning Assets

A player may optionally decide to Burn an Asset instead of Burning Dice. The player names an Asset similar to how he names an Asset or Trait while Burning Dice. However, this renders the Asset unusable. For example, if you decided to Burn your character's "longsword" Asset to help you block a giant's club then you would update it to "shattered longsword".

The benefit is that the player receives a free Burnable Die from the Asset instead of needing to use one from his normal pool of Burnable Dice.

The Burnable Die granted is typically 1d6, but the GM might adjust it down or up depending on the condition and rarity of the Asset. Examples:

- d4: rusty dagger, worn boots
- d6: typical item (default) or single-use magic item (potion of healing)
- d8: finely crafted or minor magic item
- d10: major magic item
- d12: "epic" magic item

5. Health (and Health Checks)

A Health Check is a specific type of Challenge to determine if a character is able to remain healthy and hale, either in adverse conditions or when recovering from wounds.

When to make Health Checks

The players (or GM) may call for a Health Check when their characters are attempting to recover from a Critical Flaw. This has a better chance of being successful if the characters are resting,

such as when they make camp, hole up to heal, or head back to their base to reequip. Recovery on the move is more challenging. Conversely, the GM (or players) can call for a Health Check when a character has been exposed to a hazardous conditions, such as filthy sewer, a plague-ridden city, or spending the night outdoors in extreme weather.

Health Check Difficulty

The GM should set the Difficulty of a Health Check based on recent conditions, how much rest the characters get, nutrition, and overall stress levels. For example, characters who are fleeing from adversaries through an arctic blizzard will find Health Checks far more difficult than those feasting and staying in fine inns.

Assist

If a character has a relevant Trait he can Spend a Chip to assist a character (himself or someone else) on a Health Check. For example, a character with the Trait "hunter" could assist another character by hunting down some food.

A player who succeeds on a Health Check may describe Good Stuff. This might be related to restoring provisions, or some activity the character is taking while resting. For example, he may describe how he has learned something about a magic gewgaw that he found during his adventures.

Good Stuff can also be used to have a character recover a Critical Flaw, such as a Burned Theme or some other affliction, as appropriate. However, characters recover Critical Flaws haphazardly, especially in adverse conditions, and the minimum degree of success (see below) depends on living conditions.

Living Conditions

The optimal living conditions for health are adequate food, shelter, and rest. The GM should consider living conditions when setting the Difficulty of each Health Check. In addition, characters in adverse living conditions do not recover Critical Flaws easily.

Health Check Outcomes

Bad

The GM describes Bad Stuff, typically worsening health (a Critical Flaw such as "illness"), or something more interesting such as an ambush at camp or an inopportune change in weather.

OK

The player describes Good Stuff, such as successfully remaining healthy, resting, finding shelter, or foraging for food. The GM also describes some Bad Stuff, as above.

Good

The player describes Good Stuff, such as successfully remaining healthy, resting, finding shelter, or foraging for food. The player may declare a character recovers one Critical Flaw if the character is in highly optimal living conditions, such as during an extended

stay in a base or hospital, or if under the influence of a healing effect, such as a *regeneration* spell.
Great
A player who rolls a Great Success may declare that his character recovers a Critical Flaw even in adverse living conditions, such as a makeshift camp or forced march.

Mishaps

For ease of bookkeeping, characters are assumed to carry a small amount of personal food and water, camp supplies, blankets, etc. However, if a character rolls a Mishap then the GM may declare that he has run out of one of these resources and will incur a Disadvantage on future Health Checks.
If the character has a Trait describing additional supplies he may Spend a Chip to dig deeper into his personal stores. (Alternatively another character with a similar Trait could Spend a Chip to share his supplies.)

6. Using Special Abilities

All Special Abilities need to be "activated" before they can be used, which requires the player to Burn a Die and roll an "Activation Check". This is normally done in the Maneuver Phase. For some Special Abilities this is the only roll that will be made, such as if a wizard wants to *teleport* across a room. However, some Special Abilities may require additional roll(s) in the Action Phase, especially those that inflict damage. For example, a wizard who wants to cast a *magic missile* spell must activate the spell in the Maneuver Phase (making his magic finger glow) and then make separate rolls in the Action Phase to damage specific foes.

Activation

A player must make an Activation Check to "activate" a Special Ability before the character can use it. This requires the player to Burn a Die, naturally naming the Trait or Asset that describes the Special Ability.
A successful Activation Check makes the Special Ability "active" until dismissed. For example, a character who "cast a flaming blade spell" would then have a flaming sword in his hand and could use it until he decides to dismiss the spell.
The die that was Burned cannot be recovered as long as the Special Ability is active.
Activation is specific, not general
However, there is a firm rule that a Special Ability represents the simplest interpretation of how it was described at the time of activation, regardless of what else the character or his Traits might be able to do. For example, a character who Burned a Die to

activate a broadly named Trait such as "Pryomancy" would also need to describe the specific ability he is activating, such as "shoot fire bolts". He would be able to "shoot fire bolts" as long as that special ability remains active, but using other pyromaniac powers would require separate activation.

Deactivation

A Special Ability that is "active" can be "deactivated" by the player at any time. The die that was Burned is now available to be recovered, at the next time the player is allowed to refill his burnable dice. (To reiterate, the die is not immediately recovered, nor does "deactivation" grant a free attempt to refresh burnable dice.)
The GM or player can use Bad Stuff to deactivate a Special Ability. For example, if a player botches an attack using an active *magic missile* spell, the GM might use the Bad Stuff to describe how the "spell runs out of energy", and the Special Ability is thereby *deactivated*.

Usage

Once "active", some Special Abilities mimic mundane abilities, perhaps in fantastic ways. For example, a Trait like "armor of righteous indignation" would be mostly treated the same as a Trait like "plate armor".
Special Abilities that represent attacks work similar to weapons, such as spells like "magic missile" and "flame blade". A special ability like "magic missile" would make an attack similar to a an arrow shot from a bow, or a "flame blade" would create a flaming sword.

Die Size

The die size represents the magnitude of power of the Special Ability. For example, a wizard who casts a *light* spell needs to choose a die to represent the power of that spell, which determines the illumination radius. This is somewhat loose and left to the player and GM to interpret, but it works surprisingly well.
tip: use spell levels
You can use spell levels from a familiar game like D&D spell as a rough guide to die size. Cantrips are d4, 1st level d6, 2nd level d8, 3rd-4th level d10, 5th-6th d12, and 7th or higher is d20.

Examples

Teleport
The player Burns a Die and rolls an Activation Check to cast the spell in the Maneuver Phase. Success indicates the character moves as desired, possibly despite the attempts of foes to stop the character from casting his spell or blocking the target area.

The GM can raise the difficulty as applicable, such as casting in an area with wild magic or into a target zone that is busy, or if trying to cast the spell in melee. Failure indicates a botched spell, a foe blocked the movement, or some other undesirable outcome. No rolls are generally needed in the Action Phase, unless the character ended up in a solid object.

Fireball

The player Burns a Die and rolls to cast the spell in the Maneuver Phase. Success indicates the character placed the ball of fire on the desired targets.

The GM can raise the difficulty as needed, such as when casting underwater or attempting to hit a group of foes who are very close to allies, or if trying to cast the spell in melee. Failure indicates a botched spell or incorrect placement. The ball of fire is conjured into being on the Maneuver Phase and everyone sees the explosion at that moment.

The player must subsequently make rolls to damage specific foes in the Action Phase. Weak foes who resemble a mob or swarm (goblins, rats, etc) can be grouped together, but individual rolls are made against stronger foes. The GM can raise the difficulty for each individual as applicable.

Wall of Stone

The player Burns a Die and rolls to cast the spell in the Maneuver Phase. Success indicates the wall was placed as desired (despite possible attempts of foes to move past the area before the wall was placed).

The GM can raise the difficulty as needed, such as if trying to block the movement path of quick foes, or if trying to cast the spell in melee. Failure indicates the spell didn't work, or the wall was placed incorrectly, or that the foes made it past the wall before it was placed, etc.

No rolls are generally needed in the Action Phase, unless foes are trying to attack the wall (which seems unlikely). However, if this were a "wall of fire" instead, then the player would roll to damage any creatures that the wall was placed on top of, or who had attempted to pass through the wall during the Maneuver Phase. The wall lasts until the character decides to end the spell or the die that was Burned to activate the spell is recovered.

Magic Missile

The player Burns a Die and rolls to cast the spell in the Maneuver Phase. Success indicates a "magic missile" ranged attack is equipped by the character, and can be used as a weapon to attack foes, much like a longbow.

The GM can raise the difficulty as needed, such as if attempting to cast the spell in melee. Failure indicates a botched spell, backlash, or some other undesirable outcome.

The player must subsequently make rolls to hit specific foes in the Action Phase, just as if the "magic missile" was a normal weapon

such as a longbow. A failed roll might indicate the character gets hit by a foe or that the spell burns out ("bad stuff" to be determined by GM as usual).

The character may continue to make attacks on subsequent turns until he decides to end his spell. The attacks all take place during the Action Phase, and no additional rolls are needed in the Maneuver Phase.

Telekinesis

The player Burns a Die and rolls to cast the spell in the Maneuver Phase. Success indicates that the character has activated his spell correctly, and has moved the objects (or foes) as desired, such as picking up an ogre and dropping him.

The GM can raise the difficulty as needed, such as when attempting to move the target a long distance, moving a heavy target, doing something trick, or if casting the spell in melee. Failure indicates the target was not moved, or the spell was botched, etc.

If applicable, the player must subsequently make rolls to damage any foes who were dropped or struck by telekinetic objects in the Action Phase. The GM will raise the difficulty for these rolls based on how likely the target was to be damaged by the attack, for example dropping a "blob monster" probably wouldn't hurt it.

The character may continue to use the ability on subsequent turns until he decides to end his spell. This always requires a roll in the Maneuver Phase to gain or maintain control over the target(s). This roll is equivalent to the original activation roll, but does not require the player to Burn a Die. Subsequent rolls in the Action Phase to damage targets may also be needed.

3. Tactical Play

This section builds on the basic rules with additional details for combat, such as combat Phases, specific attacks, and hazards such as poison.

1. Phases

There are four phases of play: Story, Encounter, Action, and Maneuver.

Contents
- [Story Phase](#)
- [Encounter Phase](#)

The steady-state of game play is the narrative **Story** phase, where players freely interact with each other and the GM, roleplaying their characters in the campaign world. During the Story phase, the players and GM should concentrate on roleplaying freely and things should be kept fast-and-loose. During most of the Story phase only one player (or the GM) is talking at a time, so the flow of play is simple for the GM to manage.

At some point, the Story phase will be interrupted by a high-tension or important situation that will involve multiple characters doing different things all at the same time. The story immediately "freezes" and an **Encounter** phase begins. The Encounter phase is entirely "frozen in time", so everything in the Encounter phase is just talk, intended to get all of the players on the same page. Each Encounter starts with a detailed setup, where the GM describes the situation and players ask questions to make sure they understand things at least as well as their characters should. The GM also describes visible activities of NPCs (e.g. foes) and asks each player to describe what his character wants to do once the action resumes. Characters who were not caught off-guard (surprised) may declare a Primary Attack.

Encounters take place over a number of **Turns**. Each Turn has an Action phase and a Maneuver phase.

Next, any actions the characters or NPCs declared are resolved in an **Action** phase. For example, an archer might shoot a foe or a wizard might cast a spell. In general, the first Action phase is quite limited, as not all characters may have entered into the Encounter as well prepared as they would like, or their foes might still be too far away, or characters might have been ambushed (surprised) by their foes.

After that is a **Maneuver** phase, where characters may move around, ready equipment, and change their Primary Attack.

Play continues with another pair of Action and Maneuver phases, which form a "Turn". This continues until the Encounter is resolved, after which the GM describes a conclusion or "wrap-up" and then starts a new segment of the Story.

Story Phase

The Story phase is most freeform and often makes up a large portion of the game session. Characters generally only make rolls when called on by the GM. When sort of conflict or contested

actions come up, then the GM immediately pauses the story and starts an Encounter phase.

Encounter Phase

The Encounter phase is mostly used for the GM to setup (and later wrapup) the scenario, but also for player to make statements of intent for what their characters will attempt to do.

Everything is frozen in time during an Encounter phase (whether setup or wrapup). Nobody can take actions or move. This is purely a time for talking through the scenario, asking questions, coordinating, and then making statements of intent for what characters want to do when the action resumes.

For hostile Encounters, characters should roll to see if they were surprised by their opponents, as appropriate. Each character should also declare a Primary Attack", unless he was surprised. Characters may only declare or change their Primary Attack during an Encounter or Maneuver phase.

Primary Attacks

A Primary Attack is the character's main declared attack at this moment in time, such as an attack with a weapon, attack spell, or unarmed attack. For example, an archer might declare "I aim my bow down the corridor", a warrior might say "I heft my axe menacingly", or a wizard might declare "magic missiles form in my hand". By declaring a Primary Attack, the character is saying "this is the weapon I am focusing on using right now."

In addition, if you are using the optional Facing rules, then the Primary Attack should include a description of which direction you are Facing. For example, a character aiming a ranged attack must describe the direction.

See the section on Primary Attacks below for full details.

Action Phase

During the Action Phase each character may take one Action, such as making an attack, casting a spell, or using a Recovery Trait. All Actions are simultaneous, so the order in which rolls are made does not matter (if it does then you are probably doing something wrong). Apply any outcomes such as changes to Energy at the end of the phase. This is after all characters and NPCs have finished their actions, but before the next phase begins. For example, Energy is restored from a Recovery Trait at the end of the phase, because it would otherwise influence the order of actions taken during the phase.

Attacks

A character can use his Action for an attack. The attack can be made using any feasible means of attack the character has available, such as weapons, attack spells, wrestling, etc, but the character may only use weapons that are already in-hand, since

equipment can only be readied during the Maneuver Phase. Attacks may only be made if the character can hit the opponent without moving or changing Facing.

Counterattacks

Making an attack opens you up to a possible counterattack. These work similarly to attacks, but take place as part of defend Reactions. However, if you attack a foe who does not Counterattack then you get an Advantage on your attack. See the section on Counterattacks for full details.

The character must Burn a Trait to make an attack (or counterattack), except if using his Primary Attack (if any). Also, any attack made without a supporting Offensive Trait suffers a Disadvantage.

Melee Attacks

Melee attacks can only be made against foes the character can reach with his weapon without moving or changing Facing. As a general guideline melee attacks can be made against foes within 8 feet. Melee attacks also include touch attack spells.

Weapon Reach

Melee combat involves a lot of turning, lunging, grabbing, pulling, and small motions that do not count as real "movement". This can be challenging to visualize objectively and consistently, so weapon reach has a very limited and specific effect in melee combat. Having a longer (or shorter) weapon does NOT prevent someone with a different length weapon from attacking (or counterattacking) you. A longer weapon can be declared as an Advantage if two opponents are closing a distance during an initial approach, but afterward the length differences are ignored.

Ranged Attacks

Ranged attacks can only be made against foes the character can target without moving or changing Facing. This means the character is limited to the 90-degree "firing arc" determined by the direction he is Facing. The character must Burn a Trait if he is not using his Primary Attack. Ranged attacks also include ranged attack spells.

Ranged vs Melee Attacks

Ranged attacks have the benefit of being able to attack from far away, provided that they are aimed in the correct direction, but do not work well in close combat. If two characters oppose each other with a melee weapon and a ranged weapon, the character with the ranged attack suffers a Disadvantage. For example, you can't block a sword cut with a bow, so if you attempt to shoot a swordsman with a bow as he attacks you, he will likely cut through your bow into you.

Special Abilities

Special Abilities can only be used in the Action phase, with effects being applied at the end of the phase. For example, movement for a *teleport* spell is applied at the end of the phase.

Maneuver Phase

During the Maneuver Phase each character may make observations about their environment, move around, ready items of equipment, and change their Primary Attack. All movement and preparations are simultaneous.

Movement

Movement includes charging, standing, laying down, changing Facing, etc. A character can Burn a Trait to move farther than normal or use special movement.

All movement is simultaneous, so all characters move at the same time, and can alter their movement paths in reaction to each other. Characters can continue to make adjustments to their movement in response to other characters. For example, if one character flees, his opponent can move with him provided that he is capable of doing so.

Miniatures

If you are using a battle map with miniatures, everyone should move their minis at the same time. This will help keep the movement simultaneous and make any jockeying for position more visual. Feel free to make iterative adjustments to the miniatures as the maneuvering unfolds.

Some maneuvers may require rolls for success, such as climbing. Maneuvers could even require opposed rolls against other characters. For example, if two characters want to occupy the same space then they can roll against each other to see who wins. However, no attacks may be made, and if either character wishes to escalate into a fight then the movement must stop and wait for the next Action Phase.

Equipment tasks

Characters can ready or stow away items, but doing so greatly reduces the characters movement. Equipment tasks limits movement to turning or just a couple of steps (perhaps 5 feet or so). A character may Burn a Trait to ready or stow items without impeding his movement, such as changing weapons. For example, a character could switch between his sword and bow without slowing his movement by Burning a Trait.

Small Items

Equipment tasks dealing with small items that are readily at hand do not incur the normal movement penalty. Small items are things such as a knife, shortsword, potion, gun. The character must have a free hand if reading a small item. If multiple items are being

readied or put away, the total size is considered, so putting away a sword and drawing a dagger would impede movement.
Note that equipment may only be readied during the Maneuver phase, never on the Action phase.

Observations

Characters can detect new information about the situation, asking questions and making rolls as needed to notice details or spot hidden foes.
Casual observation does not slow movement, but any kind of concentrated observation such as searching for a secret door will reduce the character's movement to just a couple of steps (perhaps 5 feet or so). A character may Burn a Trait to make a concentrated observation without impeding his movement.
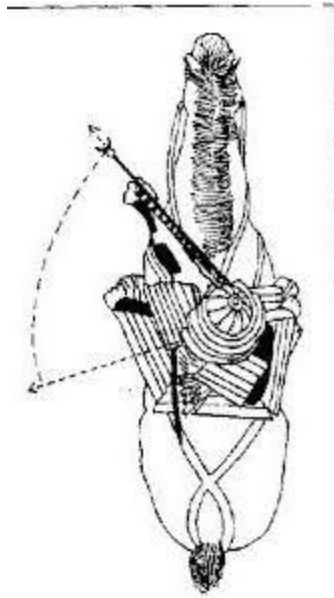
Facing (optional)

Facing is a optional rule that adds realism by adding some complexity.
Each character has a Facing, that is, the direction he is facing. You can only change Facing during the Maneuver Phase. Facing affects which directions you can attack or Counterattack.
Facing is always an arc in front of you. There is a 90-degree "firing arc" for ranged weapons, and a 180-degree "striking arc" for melee weapons.

Melee Attacks

Melee attacks have a wide attack arc in the direction the character is facing. The attack is his front 180-degrees. A character may make a melee attack into his rear 180-degrees by Burning a Trait.

Ranged Attacks

Ranged attacks have a narrow "firing arc" in the direction the character is facing (i.e. aiming his Primary Attack). The range varies based on the weapon: a longbow has a much longer range than a thrown dagger. The arc is normally a cone between 45-90 degrees, but could vary for a particular weapon if prearranged with the GM beforehand (possibly at the expense of range).

Movement

Movement takes place during the Story and Maneuver phases. During the Story phase, movement is narrative and much of it is role-played freely. In specific situations, such as crossing a chasm, the GM may make Rulings or call for rolls.

Movement in the Maneuver phase is much more tactical, especially when there are multiple characters and foes who all want to move at the same time.

Movement Rates

Try not to worry about movement rates except when it enhances the story. It usually doesn't matter how far a group of characters can travel during a day, while exploring a dungeon, or how far characters can move within a single Maneuver phase. When it does matter, the GM can use the simple system below or just make a Ruling.

When the distance a character can move matters, the player must choose a Primary Theme to use for movement. This can change over time, such as between different phases. The character can

move the Theme die size in "Moves" on the game board, which is one square or hex or measured equivalent (e.g. one inch).

- If you want added detail, then Moves can also be spent on changing facing, sitting, standing, and readying equipment. Alternatively, the GM could just halve the available Moves if a character isn't concentrating on moving in a straight line.
- Try to eyeball distances rather than measure them, unless you really want that level of detail.

"Moves" and Scale

The scale of each "Move" on your game board may vary based on units and game genre. Here in the US game boards typically use a scale of "one inch per five feet" for 25mm game miniatures, but you can customize this as needed for other genres or scales. You can also measure (or eyeball) the distance if your game board does not have spaces. For example, a a medieval game might use "paces", or a starship might move in parsecs.

For rough terrain or poor weather, the Primary Theme is rolled. Just like an Action, the player rolls multiple Theme Dice and then selects one. In this case the die roll is used rather than the die size.

However the Primary Theme is selected for movement, it limits the character's Traits that may be used or Burned for the movement. This means a wizard who wants to use his *flying spell* for overland movement may want to hand-pick the Theme that is used (or only roll that Theme Die in bad weather).

Carrying lots of Loot (or bodies) decreases movement; see the section on Encumbrance for details.

Flight

Some characters or creatures can fly. A character who wants to be able to fly must take Traits like "wings" or "flying spell", along with a Framework that describes why he can fly, how fast, how far, etc.

As you will see, a character will need to take multiple Traits as a Signature Trait be fully competent in the air.

Flying requires great effort, fully using the character's Action. The character loses his Action due to the effort required to fly, so a character cannot simultaneously fly and do something else at the same time, such as shooting arrows from above. If the character is in the air and does not use his Action to fly or safely land for the Turn then he falls!

Phases

If using Phases, a character declares he is flying during the Action phase (using up his Action), which should be fun to role-play. He then moves his character during the following Maneuver phase. Characters may alternatively Burn a flight-related Trait instead of using an Action, which would enable a "winged archer" to "hover while launching arrows from above". Obviously this requires a lot of Traits to use frequently, so a character with this concept should take a Signature Trait with multiple flying Traits.

The load carried also affects flight. Ultralight characters get two Turns of flight for each Action or Burned Trait (i.e. double credit). Conversely, if the character wants to carry someone or something heavy then he must both give up his Action and Burn a Trait on each Turn.

Example

The wizard Hzarjak mutters a *flying* incantation and lifts into the sky, simultaneously blasting a foe with a *magic missile*. He Burns a Trait since he is in a hurry.

On his second Turn he moves laterally toward a small hill while lobbing a *fireball* at some archers. He is Ultralight, so he doesn't need to Burn a Trait this Turn.

On his third Turn he reaches the hill and had intended to use his Action to land, but one foe remains so he would like to cast another *magic missile* to finish him off. Hzarjak Burns a flying Trait to hover while shooting, then lands on the following Turn.

Signature Traits

If you have a flying Signature Trait then you can carry objects or people. Each Trait beyond the first allows you to carry an additional person or equivalent sized object. If any of the passengers takes an Action then you must Burn the flying Trait.

GM: sample movement rates

Here are a few examples of movement rates to aid the GM in making Rulings.

Example	Meters per Second

Human walk (preferred)	1.7
Human walk (brisk)	2.5
Human crawl	1
Human swim (typical)	1
Human swim (Olypmpic record)	2.3
Giant snake (Black Mamba)	3.0
Swarm of bees	3.6
Crocodile	4.7
Human jog	**5**
Lava Flow in Steep Channel	9
Rottweiler	10
Human running (Olympic record)	10
African Bull Elephant	11
Great White Shark (swimming)	11
German Shepherd	14
Lion/Tiger/Bear	14
Tornado	15-26
Rabbit	16
Landslide/Mudslide	16
Duck (flying)	18
Cheetah	32
Crossbow Bolt	45
Human Falling at Terminal Velocity	60

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Phases V2

Primary Attack

A character's Primary Attack is his currently declared main attack, usually a melee weapon, ranged weapon, or spell.

Each character gets to declare one Primary Attack during the Maneuver Phase; this declaration is a role-playing statement of hostile intent that includes both the weapon (or spell) and the target(s). For example, a warrior might say "I look at the orc and heft my axe menacingly".

Examples

- I'm going to draw my sword and attack the orcs
- I summon my "flame blade"
- I ready my bow and point it at the door
- I summon magic missiles to my hand and look down the corridor
- I draw my breath and ignite the flames in my belly (dragon breath)
- I draw my dagger
- I prepare to throw my dagger down the corridor

A character's Primary Attack can be used for his main action (his main attack) and for any number of reactions (Counterattacks). The character may not change his Primary Attack during the Action Phase, but he can choose to attack a different target, use a different weapon, or not to attack at all. A character must Burn a Trait to attack with anything other than his Primary Attack.

Good declarations of Primary Attacks help everyone to understand what the character will be doing in the Action Phase, helping the team of character to work better together and helping the GM to keep things running smoothly.

Spell Building

Do your best to role-play "Spell Building" during the Maneuver Phase. Describing the way your mage builds up a spell during the Maneuver Phase should be dramatic and fun, and in many cases much more interesting than the actual attack. For example, a wizard might say "I conjure two balls of blue and red flame into his palm, then mix them together and cackle gleefully", or he might say "red lightning begins arcing between my hands". Please, please don't just say "I ready my magic missile".

Overt Threat

To qualify as a Primary Attack, the attack form must be visibly threatening. When a knight drops his great sword into a guard, or a wizard calls bolts of fire to his hand, foes can readily perceive the danger. This helps with role playing and gives all the players a fair chance of seeing is happening in the encounter. For example, a dragon will visibly "draw in his breath and ignite the fires in his

furnace". A ranged attack (including a spell) must also be pointed in the right direction.

Offensive Traits

You should base your Primary Attack on an Offensive Trait whenever possible, since any attack (or counterattack) made without a supporting Offensive Trait suffers a Disadvantage. This includes unarmed attacks (punch, kick) and wrestling.

Hidden Threats

A hidden threat such as a dagger up a sleeve, an invisible sword ("I'm unarmed!"), or a spell cast by merely blinking one's eyes, is not normally a Primary Attack.

However, a sneaky character may Burn a Trait to declare a hidden Primary Attack, such as a thief's "backstab" or a psionic assassin's "mind blade". The character makes a Check to keep his attack hidden, and nearby opponents make rolls to see if they notice. Concealing trees or shadowy rooftops should count as an Advantage.

Secondary Attacks

Characters usually have multiple weapons or spells they can choose from, such as a knight with a poleax, sword, throwing axe, and dagger. While a character cannot have more than one Primary Attack, his other attacks are still available to him, but he must Burn a Trait for each Secondary Attack. If the knight was wielding his poleax as Primary, but wanted to throw his axe, he would need to Burn a Trait to do so.

Using a Secondary Attack does not change the character's Primary Attack. The player must come up with a reasonable explanation for how the Secondary Attack can be carried out. For example, the knight with the poleax (a two-handed pole weapon) would momentarily let one hand go in order to grab and throw his throwing axe, and then restore his two-handed grip. He could alternatively plant the poleaxe in the ground (or body of a foe) while he threw his axe. However, he *must* restore his Primary Attack by the end of the action.

Sometimes a character might not have any Primary Attack declared, in which case he will need to Burn a Trait for each attack or counterattack he wishes to make. For example, a character who is surprised will have no Primary Attack until at least the following Maneuver phase.

Multi-mode weapons

Weapons with more than one attack mode are assumed to use the most common mode unless you say otherwise. For example:

- dagger (melee by default, unless declared for a throw)
- spear (melee by default, unless declared for a throw)
- kusari-gama (sickle by default, unless chain is declared)

Turns

The GM is responsible for organizing the flow of play. When the action gets thick, the GM will need to ensure everyone has equal opportunities to play by using Turns. Each Turn consists of an Action phase followed by a Maneuver phase.

How long is a turn?

Each "Turn" is an arbitrary amount of time that allows all of the characters to declare and complete one Action. For a tactical melee or fire-fight a good length of time is six seconds, but for strategic fleet combat one Turn might last for days. It is up to the GM to decide how long each Turn lasts, but it usually doesn't matter.

If a player has multiple characters, you can either treat them separately or together, whichever seems most appropriate. The GM can do the same for NPCs, either describing all of their actions en-masse, or distributing their actions between the characters.

Actions and Reactions

Each character gets a single Action per Turn, and unlimited Reactions. An Action is something the character initiates, such as attacking a foe, using a special ability, or casting a spell. A Reaction is something done in response to another character, such as defending against a foe or a spell.

2. Combat

Roleplaying games tend to involve a lot of combat, and here is how it works.

Combat follows the basics already covered in the Dice section. Combatants make opposed rolls to attempt to maneuver into a position where they can hit without getting hit in return. If you win then you didn't get hurt (yay!) and can instead hurt your opponent if you have a means of doing so, such as a weapon.

Provided that the winner can hurt his opponent, the loser of the roll will lose Energy. However, the loser of the roll can Burn a Trait to make a Saving Throw, which is a last-ditch attempt to avoid getting hurt. Energy loss is applied at the end of the Turn.

Example

Two swordsmen circle each other. Suddenly, one lunges and thrusts his blade at his opponent, who attempts to sidestep and parry with his own blade while cutting. The swordsman wins the roll and the thrust nicks the defender (who loses Energy).

Characters may move and maneuver as much as is needed for the fight to take place. For example, if two soldiers are approaching each other from across a field to clash swords then just roleplay the movement. (The GM will need to break the action up across Turns for great distances or other complications.)

If you are attacked and haven't taken your Action for this Turn then you may use an opposed attack Action, which works just as described above. Otherwise you must make a Defend Reaction, which can include a Counterattack if you are able to reach your opponent with an attack of your own.

This all works the same for any kind of combat, whether a bare-knuckled fight, sword-fight, gun fight, or wizard duel. For example, in a gun fight the combatants want to maneuver to set up clear shot while also finding cover to not get themselves shot.

Area Attack Action

You can use your Action and Burn a Trait to make an "Area Attack Action", attacking everything within an area. This is also known as an "area attack" or "area effect attack". This is an Action, so you may not do this as a Reaction.

This requires a "Area Attack Trait", a sub-type of Trait that can attack an area, such as an "grenade", "fireball spell", "flamethrower", "dragon breath", or ".50 BMG". The Trait name must make it obvious that it affects an area, and the Trait can only be used for an Area Attack Action. You must Burn the Trait to use it, and it always does a Area Attack.

When making an Area Attack Action, everything in the area is affected by the attack: people, objects, monsters, enemies, allies,

bystanders, daffodils, and even you. Make a single roll for your Area Attack Action, against which each character must make a Defend Reaction.

Blowing yourself up

Your area attack will also affect you, should you be in the area. You will end up making a Defend Reaction against your own Area Attack Action. You get an Advantage on the Defend Reaction, assuming you aren't actually trying to blow yourself up.

Counterattacks and Interrupts

Once an Area Attack Action is launched it is considered to be an indirect attack. For example, once you pull the pin on a grenade and throw it, it's going to explode. The only way to stop an Area Attack Action is with an Interrupt Action, which are attempted before the Area Attack Action is attempted. (See one exception below for "Selective Area Attacks".) As with all interrupts, they are resolved before the main Action is even attempted, and the character may make normal Reactions (including counterattacks) against them.

No-Threat Advantage

The Area Attack Action is not precisely targeted and does not qualify for the No-Threat Advantage.

If the Area Attack Action was not interrupted then it launches and will affect everyone in the area. A defender who can present a Threat can hit the character with a counterattack, but any loss of Energy does not affect rolls made against other defenders, even if it kills the character!

Similarly, any Rerolls apply only to an individual defender. For example, if a defender forces the character to Reroll by burning a Defensive Trait then the character only need to reroll against that one defender, not others.

It is quite sensible for a character in the area of effect to attempt an Interrupt Action in order to save his skin. However, he may only make an attack on either the Interrupt Action or a counterattack on the Defend Reaction. He does not get two attacks.

Selective Area Attack Actions

Certain kinds of attacks might be selective rather than indiscriminate in who or what they affect. The character can specify that his Area Attack Action is "selective" according to some rule, thereby specifying which targets are affected, and which are not. For example, a character might have a spell called *rain of holy fyres* that ought not affect his allies.

Selective Area Attack Actions are weaker than normal. If *any* defender beats the attack then with their Defend Reaction then the attack ends, and anyone else need not defend against it. For example, if a defender succeeds on a defense then all other

defenders who have not yet rolled are free and clear. This only applies to the main opposed roll, not to Saving Throws.

Winding

If the character chooses to Wind, it affects all defenders who lost their Defend Reaction. (You do not need to Burn a Trait for each defender.) Winding does not affect defenders who beat the attack or made a Saving Throw.

Charging Attacks

A Charging Attack is an attempt for a character to push through an opponent's position, perhaps attacking him along the way. This is a Multi-Phase Action, where the character must do something specific in two successive Phases.

A character who wants to make a Charging Attack must first declare that he is "charging" during the Maneuver Phase. He moves up to the first opponent he wants to charge through, but then "pauses" his movement, waiting to resolve the attack in the Action Phase. His movement will resume if he wins the attack, but the movement will take place at End of Phase. Thus, he must have reserved enough movement to continue the motion past the opponent.

The Charging Attack is otherwise a normal attack, so the combatants could lose Energy just like in a normal attack. Naturally, if the Charging Attack is unsuccessful then his motion does not resume. (Note that a successful Saving Throw does not cause the attack to fail, only to not cause damage.)

If you want to charge through multiple opponents then you will need to Burn an appropriate Trait to Wind and beat each of them. Your weapon reach is assumed to incorporate the delayed movement, allowing you to threaten them.

Multi-Phase Actions

The Charging Attack is an example of a Multi-Phase Action, which may be applicable to other actions that characters attempt. For example, a caveman flying on a pterodactyl who wanted to drop a heavy rock on a gorilla-man could make a "fly-by attack" using the same general approach. Note that the movement should always "pause" at the time of the first attack, because all attacks (and other non-movement actions) must be handled on the Action Phase.

stop thrust counterattack

Counterattack

Update: counterattacks are now part of a character's defense, so they only occur when the character is being attacked by a foe and the character is defending. A character can make a counterattack if he rolls Extra Good Stuff on the Dice Check.

The following needs to be updated. The updated rule is much simpler. However, a character who cannot mount an effective counterattack suffers a Disadvantage on the defense.

The best defense is a Counterattack, whether in combat, chess, or politics. A character who is attacked should try to fight back with a Counterattack as part of his defend Reaction whenever possible. Not only is it a good opportunity to damage the attacker, but the attacker actually gains an Advantage if the defender does not Counterattack.

Making a Counterattack

A character can make a Counterattack as part of any Defend Reaction, provided that he has an attack that can reach the attacker, without moving or changing Facing. Note that it is generally always possible to Counterattack a melee attack with a

melee attack of your own, even if the weapons are of different lengths, as you can imagine yourself stepping to lunge without leaving your spot.

The character must Burn a Trait unless the Counterattack is made with their Primary Attack. For simplicity, the character's Primary Attack can be used for a reasonable number of Counterattacks, but at some point the GM may require Traits to be Burned. Keep in mind that Ranged Weapons are always limited by Ammunition.

No Counterattack?

An attacker may declare an Advantage if the defender does not Counterattack. (This has sometimes been called a "no threat advantage".) The defender is not completely helpless and will still try not to get hit, but but he is not currently able to fight back. Attacking an opponent who isn't trying to hit you back gives you time to maneuver and launch a more devastating attack. This is the difference between shooting a ball at an open goal versus having an aggressive defender in your face. An axiom of all fighting arts is keeping a weapon trained on your opponent, and trying to maneuver into a position or alignment of weapons where you can strike decisively, yet safely, where your opponent cannot hit you back.

Ranged Attacks

Ranged attacks may only claim a Advantage for a lack of Counterattack on a perfectly clear shot, unobstructed by cover, concealment, or combatants. Note that Shields do not automatically count as cover (see the section on Shields for details).

Shield Wall

Shields

Shields are incredibly useful defensive tools. The main benefit is that a defender can use a shield to counter an attacker's Advantage in times when the defender could not make a Counterattack. For example, a warrior armed with a sword and shield who is assaulting a wall of enemy spearmen could use his shield to block arrows or spears launched by foes out of reach of his blade.

When an attacker declares an Advantage because the defender is not Counterattacking, the defender can Burn a shield-related Trait to counter the Advantage. The shield must be readied (i.e. usually in-hand) before the attack is declared, and the Trait must either literally represent that shield (e.g. "kite shield") or a shield-related skill (e.g. "shield bearer").

The defender must be feasibly able to block the attack with his shield. Shields cannot be effectively used to block attacks from the rear or on the opposite side of the defender's body. This can be subjective, but since the defender is Burning a Trait, the GM should be flexible.

Shields present an interesting tactical option for characters, since they allow characters to defend against attacks that they couldn't otherwise Counterattack. In addition, a character can also use a shield to protect an ally standing immediately adjacent to you on his shield-side, which could extend into a "shield wall" if several of his allies have shields.

Shield spells

Some wizards employ a *shield* spell that creates a magical shield of force, floating near him and automatically interposing itself between him and attacks. A magical shield works as well as a normal historical shield, except that it does not take up a hand, is not limited by facing, and is not an Item Trait that qualify for Double Burning. Just like a normal shield, a character with a *shield* spell must have deployed the magical shield prior to the attack in order to use it in defense.

Ranged Attacks

Long-range weapons such as bows and pikes are optimized for use at a distance. They have the potential to allow you to hit your opponent without being subject to a Threat in return. Conversely, they are difficult to use in close proximity to a foe and are more affected by conditions such as weather.

Tough Shot

You suffer a Disadvantage if the GM says you are attempting a "tough shot", such as shooting at long-range, a small target, in severe weather, or through concealment or cover. The GM should use his best judgment to make this appropriate for the weapon used, for example a longbow has a much longer range than a thrown knife.

You also suffer a Disadvantage if any foe presents a Close Combat Threat. That is, you suffer a Disadvantage if any foe could hit you with a melee attack without moving.

Ranged Weapons

Making a ranged attack requires a ranged weapon Trait, such as a crossbow or rifle.

The Trait taken for the weapon includes a normal or "reasonable" amount of ammunition ("ammo"), such as a magazine of bullets for a gun, a quiver of arrows for a longbow, a battery for a beam rifle, or "charges" for a *wand of magic missiles*. Keep in mind that some ranged weapons *are* their own ammunition, such as grenades, javelins, and throwing knives.

When you take a ranged weapon as a Trait, try to specify how much ammo the weapon normally has as naturally as possible. For example, you could say "nine shurikens", "pair of javelins", "double-barreled derringer pistol", "six-shooter", or "longbow and one score gray goose shafts". Unless the GM agrees otherwise, ranged weapons can't have more than 20 shots, so that will be assumed if you leave this detail out of the Trait name. However, a very powerful ranged weapon should always be written as if it only has a single shot, such as "siege arbalest", "hand cannon", "grenade", or "bazooka" (more on this later).

The weapon Trait becomes Burned once its shots are used up. The Trait can be refreshed in-between Scenes normally, but if you want to keep using the weapon within a Scene then you need to Burn an "ammo" Trait instead. The Trait must specify ammo that can be used to reload the weapon. For example, you could have a weapon Trait "9mm pistol (9 rounds)" and reload it using another Trait "9mm pistol clip (9)". Reloading the weapon is considered a natural step in using the weapon and takes no time. A dedicated ranged fighter might want multiple ammo Traits.

Shot Counting and Reloading

Not everybody likes to count shots, as it can feel like bookkeeping. On the other hand, ranged weapons can't be fired forever. Feel free to play this loose, but if a character is shooting dozens of shots then someone should probably ask him to Burn the ammo Trait.

Reloading weapons takes no time in order to streamline the flow of play. This may be as much a factor of the character's skill in reloading the weapon quickly and seamlessly, as anything special about the weapon. Keep in mind that the character had to pay a Trait for the extra ammo, and that should count for something. However, if you prefer you can require characters to reload weapons in-between Turns.

High-Powered Weapons

High-powered ranged weapons such as a "siege arbalest" or "sniper rifle" make a single powerful attack rather than multiple weak attacks. By convention, these weapons as well as their ammo should be written in singular form. This means that when you shoot a high-powered weapon you will always Burn its Trait (twice if applicable) to Wind (twice if necessary) to take out the target(s).

The single attack does not mean these weapons cannot be reloaded, but that reloading the weapon takes a long time. For example, a "siege arbalest" is an extremely powerful crossbow, but takes a very long time to reload, so in a small-scale skirmish it is effectively a single-shot weapon, at least as far as the Trait is concerned.

Explosive Weapons

Explosive weapons such as a "grenade", "rocket launcher", or "wand of fireballs" always make an Area Attack. These are very much like "high-powered" weapons, but do an Area Attack instead of Winding.

Multi-Function Weapons

Some weapons might have multiple functions, for example an "assault rifle" has "selective fire" and a "beam rifle" might be able to overcharge the battery for an "overloaded shot". In such cases you must take the "high-powered" or "explosive" attacks as separate Traits.

In most cases it should be obvious, but make sure it is clear which of the attacks are Winding versus Area. Also consider using a Signature Trait to keep everything organized.

Examples

- **Custom Assault Rifle:** assault rife, mini-grenade
- **Mage Bow:** magic longbow, quiver of fire arrows (20), silver arrows (5), arrow of slaying
- **Bertha:** machine gun, ammo box, burst
- **EB-6 Particle Beam rifle:** beam rifle, battery pack, overloaded shot
- **Fire Wand:** wand of fire arrows, fireball

Striking with the Flat

A warrior who wishes to subdue an opponent rather than harm him might strike with the flat of his blade rather by cutting with the edge.

For our ancestors, striking with the flat was a necessary skill as initially striking with the flat would prove your intent to avoid escalating a violent conflict and therefore could mean the difference between severe punishment and standing clear of blame and guilt.

In game terms, this kind of blow still has the potential to cause the loss of Energy, but is regained as soon as the conflict ends. However, nonlethal strikes using normally lethal weapons such as swords are inherently less effective, so the targets gets a free Saving Throw.

Wrestling / Grappling

The goal of wrestling (grappling) is to grab your opponent and throw him to the ground, putting him in a poor tactical stance as

well as hopefully damaging him in the process. This turns an opponent's height and weight against him, as a tall opponent has a high center of gravity. Wrestling can be done unarmed or using a weapon as a lever.

Like any other attack, wrestling requires a Trait. If wrestling with multiple opponents, you need a Trait per opponent, just like with a weapon-based attack. The wrestling Trait cannot not simply be the same Trait used to wield a weapon, such as "swordsman" or "longsword", but must reflect wrestling or grappling as a skill, or a particular hold or throw.

Examples of Wrestling Traits

- wrestling
- takedown
- arm bar
- shoulder lock
- wrist lock
- the sun pointer
- double-leg takedown

Wrestling is typically non-lethal combat. If you win your contest against your opponent then you do not simply cause Energy loss like in other attacks, but instead you get to choose from one of the following wrestling moves. If you want to perform multiple wrestling moves (such as a throw and grab) then use Winding.

Grab

You grab your foe to keep him from getting away. Your foe may not move away without making an opposed roll to break your hold. Both you and your foe are tied together, and both receive a Disadvantage on defending against attacks from anyone or each other, which makes the *grab* a good choice for your first wrestling move.

Weapon Grab

You grab your foe's weapon arm (or one other attacking appendage such as a neck). The foe cannot use that weapon except at a Disadvantage. However, you receive a Disadvantage against attacks from other opponents.

Drive

You use your strength to push and drive your foe a short distance, about as far as you can step twice, such as out of a wrestling ring or back one line in a shield wall. The movement is applied at the end of the Action Phase, and may have interesting side-effects based on the terrain. For example, if there is a solid object such as a wall then you can slam your foe into it and he loses Energy. Sending your foe tumbling down a gaping pit in the floor is also possible, but you must use Winding to defeat your foe since this counts as a "death attack". You do not need to Burn a Trait to get Winding in the case of the pit, as you may use the pit to get free Winding, similar to an Advantage.

Throw

You throw your foe to the ground. A character who is prone on the ground suffers a Disadvantage on most combat actions until he gets back up on his feet.

Wrench (requires grab)

You break one of your foe's bones or otherwise wrench something out of place. This causes Energy loss unless your foe surrenders ("submits") and you choose to stop. If you fully deplete your foe's Energy then he is rendered incapacitated, with some vital bone broken. (Note: in order to break a healthy foe's neck you will need to use Winding to deplete all his Energy.)

Choke (requires grab)

You choke or strangle your foe, causing Energy loss from the shortness of breath and blood flow. If you fully deplete your foe's Energy then he is rendered unconscious or dead, at your option. Note that in order to choke out a healthy foe you will need to use Winding to deplete all his Energy.

Historical Wrestling

Historical wrestling was not like what we see in sporting competitions or on TV today, regardless of whether we are watching the Olympics, WWF, or MMA. Historical wrestling was forced to deal with weapons, armor, and multiple opponents. Weapons are both a hazard to an unarmed grappler, but can also be used as a lever. Multiple opponents are significant because that means grabbling a foe or going to the ground with him is highly unsafe. Armor restricts joint movement, locking out at a certain point, but also makes the soldier top-heavy. You can search the internet for inspiration, especially "wma wrestling"...

gm: Fighting Styles

Some character concepts focus on an "artistic" fighting style that is both extremely impractical yet awesomely cool at the same time. A knife fighter, unarmed "monk", or ninja with "claws", would really have a rough time of things up against a medieval knight (knives can't really parry swords and it sucks to punch armor) but in a heroic fantasy game can be extremely fun. So, the GM may give some characters whose core concept surrounds "artistic" weapons more leeway for weapon "Threat" than he might do otherwise. To qualify, the character must have at least one Theme representing the fighting style, and use the Framework to detail how things work. For example a character with a "knife fighter" Theme might treat the effective weapon reach as more like a sword than a mere knife, and a "monk" Theme might allow empty hand attacks to be like a sword in terms of reach and damage.

3. Common Scenarios

Most simple things a character might do have already been covered by the general rules. This section covers a few situations that are naturally more complicated or just want a greater level of detail. These are just guidelnes or recipes for how to handle certain kinds of things characters do. Like any recipe, the GM may need to make adjustments to fit the campaign or to keep the game flowing.
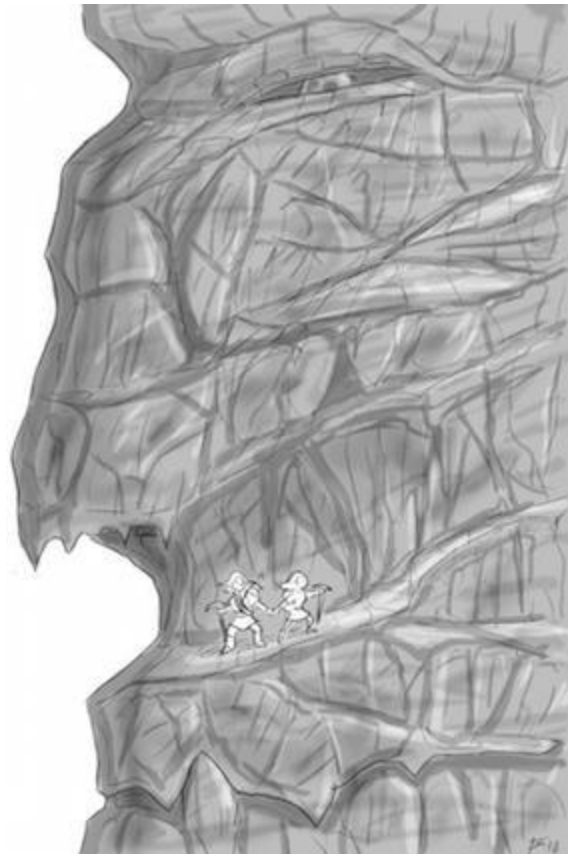
Hazards

Stalwart adventurers must overcome all manner hazards, such as a deep pit that must be leapt over, a treacherous cliff that must be scaled, a turbulent river that must be forded, or a deadly trap to disarm. Since the GM describes such dangers, this section is more for the GM than for the players, although reading this can give players an idea of what to expect.

Encounter Intro

When the characters face an encounter involving a hazard, the GM needs to provide a description and set the tone. The GM should try to tell the players what their characters would observe based on their collective experiences.
Next, the players describe the approach their characters take in overcoming the hazard, noting any special precautions. For example, characters walking along a narrow cliff ledge might rope themselves together. As long as the characters are making a **reasonable effort** then they should expect to make relatively normal rolls, without an Advantage or Disadvantage. They could go out of their way to earn an Advantage with additional preparation.
Experts

The GM should keep in mind that in most cases himself and the players are not experts in mountaineering, underwater demolitions, or other such operations, so cut everyone some slack and try to assess the level of *character effort* and intent to work hard, not their specific actions. Character effort involves preparation, care and caution while facing the hazard, and spending appropriate time,

Rolling

Each player then rolls to overcome the hazard. A character who succeeds has overcome the hazard. A character who fails decreases his Energy by one. For deadly hazards he must then roll again, as if the hazard were Winding against him.

The GM should keep hazards small and focused, splitting lengthy or multi-part obstacles into smaller hazards. For example, a particularly lofty cliff might be broken into three sections, each of which would be described separately and resolved as its own hazard.

Obstacles / Contests

By default, all hazards are an Average Obstacle. This is great for keeping players in-character because they only need to say whether or not they passed.

If a character fails a roll, he can Burn a Trait to gain a Saving Throw similar to avoiding damage when attacked. In this case the character has made no progress for the current leg of the hazard, but has not failed. Similar to opponents, hazards can counter-burn traits of their own to counter, and characters can counter-counter-burn, etc.

Advantage / Disadvantage

Characters can find ways to gain an Advantage in overcoming a hazard, often via teamwork. For example, cliff-climbers who rope themselves together or send a lead climber to find the best path up a cliff may deserve an Advantage. Conversely, any character who attempts a difficult climb lacking proper climbing gear (such as rope) or in a hurry is at a Disadvantage.

Poison

Few dangers evoke the same fear as poison. The idea that a tiny scratch could prove fatal to even the most hardened warrior is a tough pill to swallow.

While some attacks are obviously poisoned, such as the venomous bite of a giant spider or sting of a scorpion, any attack could potentially be poisoned. A blade or arrow might be coated with deadly poison, yet, no one would likely notice until it was too late.

While some poisons do act quickly, most take considerable time to take effect, and none are as swift as a sword wound. Thus, all poisons are a kind of delayed attack. The primary attack may have caused damage on its own (such as a poisoned sword) but the poison will make a secondary attack after some amount of time. The time might vary, but is at least a few rounds and at most a few days.

When the poison begins to work, it makes an attack against the victim. In the case of poison inflicted by an NPC, the GM determines the strength of the attack. This might be similar to a roll made by the attacker when he was at full health, or it might be stronger or weaker. In the case of a PC, the poison is treated similar to a Minion, where the die size is determined by the number of poison Traits the PC had.

Since poison represents delayed damage, the attack automatically Winds, and the defender can only stop the Winding by succeeding on two consecutive rolls.

One way to combat poison is to carry an antidote. This might take the form of an "anti-venom" or "poison antidote" Trait. Each does of antidote cancels out one pending poison attack, so if you act proactively after being poisoned then you won't need to roll at all. Naturally, the GM needs to agree that the Trait being used is an appropriate antidote, since some rare poisons might exist that require a more specific antidote.

Stealth

Characters and their foes normally notice one another automatically. If you enter a room you can normally expect to see all creatures present, and they can see you.

Characters can attempt to avoid detection. To do this, role-play the way your character attempts to avoid detection, such as hiding in the shadows. Describe your attempt to remain unnoticed as best you can, given whatever manner of men or beasts or wizards or security cameras you are trying to evade. Also keep in mind that hiding in plain sight may be a better option, so using believable disguises can use these same rules.

Are you really hiding?

While you are hiding you must be mindful of your actions, always trying to avoid attracting attention, keeping motions small, acting innocuous, etc. If you take any actions that are inconsistent with remaining hidden then the GM may decide that you are not effectively hiding.

Detection

The character who is hiding should roll against an Average Obstacle each time there is a chance he might be noticed by someone.

However, anyone who is nearby and in a heightened state of alert (e.g. animals, guards, or paranoid adventurers) is allowed a Reaction to notice the hidden character. This is an opposed contest where the observer and hiding character roll against each other. However, only Themes dedicated to observation should apply, such as "spy", "scout", or "rogue".

Getting Spotted

If you are found then try to role-play the situation appropriately. Unless the finding character was actively searching (such as through an Action) then he probably wasn't expecting to find a ninja hiding in the bushes, and will likely make some involuntary sign, such as a startled turn of the head or widening of the eyes. Note that the GM might not tell you that you were found if you could not see the watcher, or if the watcher is stealthy himself.

Moving with Stealth

If you attempt to move with stealth then you automatically suffer a Disadvantage. There are just too many things that can go wrong, such as casting a shadow, rustling clothing, or stepping on a twig. You can cancel this Disadvantage by Burning a stealth-related Trait, such as "thief", "sneakers", or "ninja".

Use the terrain!

A concealing terrain feature can be used as an Advantage, which you can Burn to cancel the above Disadvantage. Examples: concealing bushes, thick shadows, a low rubble wall, corner of a buildings, etc. As always, whatever you describe needs to seem reasonable and in-character.

Attacking with Stealth

Backstabbing thieves and assassins make use of stealth to get the drop on unsuspecting targets. Sneaking up on an unsuspecting victim gives you the tactical high ground to choose the time of your attack. If done right you should be able to make at least one attack with an Advantage because your victim is not threatening you with a weapon. (Note that stealth does not grant a second Advantage.) As always, if you want to take out a foe with a single attack then you will need to Burn a Trait to Wind. If you have an Advantage for a non-threatening foe then you may Burn your Advantage to Wind. Thus, even a poorly trained thug who gets the drop on you is quite dangerous.

Maintaining Stealth / Sniping

In many cases you do not actually need to maintain stealth all the way through the attack--your target will certainly know he is being attacked at some point! If you can choose the right moment (such as when he is unarmed) or close to striking measure you could even announce your presence and still receive the Advantage for attacking a non-threatening foe. On the other hand, if you find a way to remain concealed throughout your attack (such as with a

sniper rifle or invisibility) then your victim will need to make a Reaction to determine your exact location.

Camouflage

Some characters might take a Trait describing how the character is difficult to see, such as "camouflage" or "ninja outfit". This can make the character easier to conceal in the right circumstances, largely because it makes it easier for you to role-play a reasonable attempt at stealth.

Camouflage does not prevent the character from being detected. Enemies still get to roll to find you. A character who wants powerful camouflage should take several Traits to Burn on Rerolls to remain undetected.

Invisibility

A Special Ability such as "invisibility", "elven cloak", or "cloaking device" is a more flexible and powerful type of Camouflage. A character whose camouflage consisted of dark clothes could disappear into shadows, but an invisible character can disappear into the middle of a room! This is a powerful ability, so the GM should require the player to Burn the Trait in any situation where normal Camouflage would not have sufficed to remain hidden. Invisibility does not provide any intrinsic benefits in combat. You will need to Burn a Trait any time you want to leverage the benefits of being "invisible", such as rerolling an attack or defense in combat. Therefore, in order to have powerful invisibility you will need multiple Traits, and may want to group them into a Signature Trait.

Survival

Many campaigns involve overland travel through wilderness areas, or even prolonged forays into dark caverns beneath the earth. Characters are well advised to pack along survival gear appropriate to the situation. In addition, characters need to keep their eyes open for opportunities to restock along their way.

All gear in Legends is taken in the form of Traits, so if your character does not have a Trait for an item of needed gear then he simply doesn't have the gear. When setting out into the great beyond characters should think about where they are going and at least try to fill their Asset slots with appropriate gear.

It is fine to use a broadly named trait for survival gear, but then the GM may require you to Burn the Trait in order to use it.

Lastly, you might want to take some personal Traits to make your character more "rough and tough" and able to survive without as much gear.

Examples

overland travel

provisions, tinder box, camp tools, survival knife, hatchet, riding horse, tent, pavilion

mountains

climbing gear, rope, coal, tinder box, ice axe, cold weather gear

caverns

lantern, torches, tinder box, climbing gear, rope, cold weather gear, coal

desert

water, provisions, hot weather gear, water, tent, water, dowsing rod

dungeoneering

lantern, torches, tinder box, 10-foot pole, adventurer's pack, caltrops

personal

mountain man, ranger, cave delver, tough, adventurer, well-traveled, strider

Maneuver Checks

A Maneuver Check is an important type of Challenge Check related to movement is non-trivial in some way. Maneuver Checks are used to resolve a wide variety of situations and hazards, such as climbing, grappling, jumping over pits, pushing past guards, knocking foes down, holding a hallway, acrobatic combat, and escaping from the grip of the kraken.

Maneuver Checks are also used for Special Maneuvers such as jet-packs, spring boots, and spells such as *fly* and *teleport*. Sometimes the maneuver is initiated by a character, such as trying to trip a foe. However, a Maneuver Check is also used to resist enemy maneuvers, so a player might make a Maneuver Check to avoid his character being pushed off a cliff by a foe.

Rolling Maneuver Checks

A Maneuver Check is a type of Challenge Check, and is made in the same way. The GM sets a Difficulty normally: climbing a fence seems Easy but escaping from the tentacles of "The Kraken" is possibly Impossible.

Each character should only be part of a single Maneuver Check per Turn. If the character is engaged in multiple maneuvers (or is being acted on) then the players should try to combine them together somehow. Otherwise, the GM should increase the Difficulty for attempting multiple maneuvers at once.

Maneuver Check Outcomes

If the player succeeds then he describes Good Stuff such as how he moved the way he wanted to. If the player fails then the GM

describes Bad Stuff like how the NPC stopped the character, or how the character slipped and fell.

Typically a Partial Success is a wash, and a total Failure might result in falling down. However, unlike an "attack" or an action, nobody is being directly attacked, so the Good Stuff or Bad Stuff cannot cause direct damage. Even if a character tried to leap over a pit, and failed, he wouldn't take damage until the Action phase.

Examples

Here are some examples of situations that require a Maneuver Check. Most of these examples also work in reverse.

- A character wants to cross a bridge, but his path is blocked by enemy spearmen.
- A character is engaged in close combat with a foe, but wants to turn and flee.
- A character wants to run and leap across a pit as part of his movement.
- A character wants to run under the legs of a giant.
- A character wants to fly over a foe, but the foe is warding him off with a longsword.
- Varion is standing toe-to-toe with a giant toll and wants to move away. The troll opposes this, so the player must make a Maneuver Check to get away.
- Varion wants to close with a stone golem and then dive between its legs and come out the other side. All kinds of things could go wrong, so the player must make a Maneuver Check.
- Der Hydra wants to keep a safe distance while chucking spells at a stone golem. He has to be careful not to trip or get trapped in a corner or misjudge the reach of the giant sword, so the player must make a Maneuver Check.
- A PC wants to leap over a pit to attack foes on the other side. The player must make a Maneuver Check to leap all the way across.
- Graille wants to teleport to the enemy mage and run him through with a fabulous flaming sword. The player makes a Maneuver Check to Teleport.
- A character falls into a pit (by failing a Maneuver Check) and wants to cast feather fall as a second Maneuver Check to avoid falling too fast.

Maneuver Phase

If using tactical Phases such as during combat, all Maneuver Checks are made during the Maneuver Phase. This keeps all movement in the Maneuver phase, so that during the Action phase there is never ambiguity about which foes can reach each other. Critical Flaws or other damage that result from Maneuver Checks (e.g. you fell into a pit) are applied at the end of the Maneuver Phase.

Hazardous Movement

A character whose movement seems dangerous or risky must make a Challenge Check. For example, a character jumping over a pit or trying to run through a *wall of fire* must make a Challenge Check to avoid getting hurt.

If the character fails then the GM describes Bad Stuff, which could take the form of a Critical Flaw. The player may make a Saving Throw normally.

Aggressive Maneuvers

Characters (and foes) can declare aggressive maneuvers such as stopping a foe by using one's spear, tossing someone into a pit, or kicking a foe's legs out from beneath him. These are all fine and fun, however, the Maneuver Checks never inflict Critical Flaws or other damage.

In order to inflict Critical Flaws or other damage, the character (or foe) must make a separate Challenge Check to attack the foe. If using tactical Phases this requires the character's (or foe's) Action during the Action Phase.

For example, if a character wants to push a foe into a pit, then the player must make a Maneuver Check to *avoid* being pushed into the pit. This won't cause damage, but could set up something bad that will happen during the Action phase.

Special Movement

Some characters have Special Abilities related to movement, such as "running up the walls", "flying spell", or "teleport spell". Using these abilities requires the player to Spend a Chip as usual. In addition the player must make a Maneuver Check each time the character uses the ability. For example, a character who had a "ninja shadow jump" ability that could leap behind a foe must make a Maneuver Check each time he attempts to do so.

Perception Checks

The GM will occasionally need to determine how the characters react to their environment in general ways. For example, the world is full of subtle cues and details that can be noticed by attentive characters, however, what they will actually notice and pay attention to depends a lot on their state of mind.

The GM should ask the players to make **Perception Checks** as standard Challenge Checks. Each player whose character succeeds on the check should role-play what he was thinking about or doing and announce the result of his check. The GM will then riff on the role-playing with some information about what the character noticed or achieved.

This allows different characters to notice different kinds of things. A skulk thief who was on point and looking for traps would probably find them, and a wizard who was inspecting his latest magical gewgaw might notice a stray thread of magic energy. Players can also show initiative by making Perception Checks all on their own, such as when a character meets a new NPC, hears a rumor, or walks through a neighborhood in town. Players who make checks could even volunteer that they may know something about the topic.

Tangents

The GM can (and should) reward a successful check even if it is irrelevant to what the GM was originally trying to determine. For example, if a player says his wizard is reading a book while marching, he wouldn't notice a trap, but he might glean something from the book.
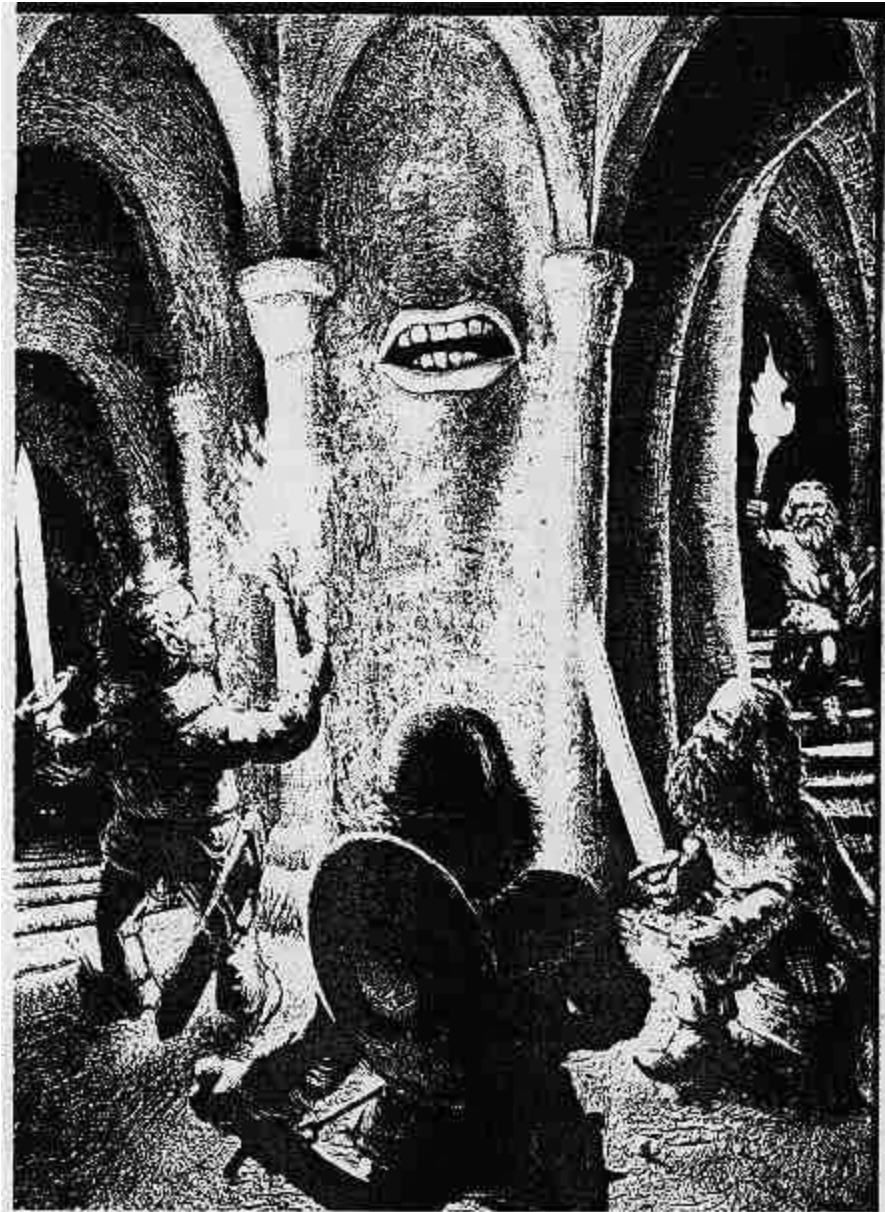
4. GM Guide

This section lists rules and tips for the Game Master (GM) for running a Legends game.

Hidden Details

Stories frequently include hidden details such as sleeping monsters, concealed traps, hidden compartments, pieces of puzzles, and secret doors.

How do the characters notice or find these things? Practically speaking, much of this is influenced by how engaged and observant the players are, for the GM will often give clues or details just because players are asking good questions! While something might be hidden to casual observation, the GM might reveal it if he knows the characters are paying attention, especially if they are specific about where they are looking or what they are looking for. For example, a door hidden behind a tapestry is quite well hidden when viewed from a distance, but only a player who thinks to go look behind the tapestry will find the door.

Reward player engagement!

As a general rule, the GM should always reward player engagement, answering any questions the players raise with some new bit of information or calling for a roll. Depending on the line of questions and actions the characters take, the GM can reveal more information, or say nothing more was found...yet.

How Hidden?

Here is a guide to help the GM determine the degree to which something is hidden.

1. **Obvious:** The detail is automatically noticed, so the GM should always mention the detail to the players.
2. **Subtle:** The detail will be noticed if the characters are being observant and vigilant, asking good questions, and paying attention to the answers or clues. This is the same level for creatures using Stealth.
3. **Hidden:** The detail won't be noticed unless the characters are actively searching in a particular way. For example, the GM could make a Ruling that a character found an *invisible* creature if a character threw chalk dust into the air, or stated he was looking for footprints in the snow. This is recommended for poorly-made concealed doors, ad-hoc traps, and invisible creatures.
4. **Secret:** Similar to "hidden", but the search must be made in a specific, small area (e.g. a small section of wall). This is recommended for well-made secret doors and traps.
5. **Puzzle:** The detail won't be found even with meticulous searching, but only by interacting with NPCs or other elements of the setting. See the page on Puzzles for more thoughts.

Hidden Creatures

An invisible or hidden creature deserves special consideration. Is the creature simply hiding or is stealth a core part of the creature's concept? It should be nearly impossible for a living, breathing creature to be anywhere near as hidden as a *secret door*. Using the degrees above, most creatures are "obvious", a creature using stealth is "subtle", a special creature like an *invisible stalker* is "hidden", and an extraordinary creature like a *mimic* is "secret".

Encountering Traps

When a trap or other hidden thing is encountered, the presumption is that the characters will not see it until it is too late. However, the character may Burn a Trait to make a Saving Throw to notice the detail in time.

Puzzles

Puzzles are key elements in many stories. They can take the form of magically locked doors, man-eating monsters with riddles, seemingly impassible traps, unfindable secret doors, and so forth. These are story elements the characters can overcome only by taking specific actions, often indirect, multi-part, or otherwise puzzling.

There should be a reward for solving the Puzzle commensurate with how challenging it was to solve. A Puzzle might block entry to a secret passage shortcut, hidden treasure cache, hidden holy shrine / hideout, secret passageway into the heart of the villain's lair, or entrance to the next "dungeon level". Alternatively a Puzzle could unlock a new challenge such as a special monster encounter or extended adventure area.

Example: Hidden Door

A Puzzle might be a super-secret door that cannot be found solely through observation and searching. The hidden mountain door in *The Hobbit* is a great example, for the observant dwarfs would never have found it unless they knew precisely where and when to look, which was solved via a riddle.

Example: Impenetrable door + special key

A common Puzzle is an impenetrable, magically sealed door that requires a special key. A door might require a unique key, password, or magical *keyspell* to open. Alternatively it might ask an unsolvable riddle (unless one has the proper clue) or only open after its guardian is slain. In order to open the door the characters need to find and obtain the secret means of opening. So, when the GM places this kind of puzzle he also needs to place one or more of these "keys".

Non-Player Characters (NPCs)

In Legends each player has a "Player Character" ("PC") and the GM runs an assortment of "Non-Player Characters" (NPCs). The standard character creation process with Themes and Traits is intended for players building highly detailed and customized PCs, but NPCs use a different system of "Aspects". While the GM could try to follow that process for NPCs, this is usually unnecessary and too time-consuming, so there must be an easy way to create NPCs on the fly.

Running NPCs

When introducing any NPC describe him and his actions as best you can, trying to make each NPC interesting and memorable. You might visually describe an vile tax collector, or call a friendly shopkeeper by name--whatever works for you. Exercise your roleplaying skills and try not to let the players catch on that this may be a partially-defined NPC.

Each "interesting and memorable "detail about an NPC you provide to the players is called an Aspect. An Aspect may be a strength or a weakness. Aspects are similar to Traits, but are higher level concepts used only for .

Role-play in-character whenever possible.

NPC Themes

Each NPC should have Themes. Unlike PCs, who only have four active Themes, the GM can assign an NPC as few as one Theme, the standard four, or as many as he sees fit. For example, a "baker" or "guard" might only need a single Theme, but "guard captain" might merit two or three. On the other hand, unusually powerful NPCs such as death knights, arch-wizards, or dragons can have more than the four standard Themes that PCs receive! Try to make NPC Themes "interesting and memorable details" that the players will remember. PCs may "Target" NPC Themes if they work that into the wording of their attacks. Saying "I attack the ogre" is not nearly as fun and interesting as saying "I light his tree on fire, we all know ogres hate fire". As always, the roleplay in needs to make sense and seem feasible.

NPC Traits

In order to save preparation time, the GM can choose to focus on the Themes and just assume the NPC has the appropriate Traits. For example, a "baker" should know how to bake and run a small business, and a "town guard" should know how to handle himself in an conflict, whether verbal or physical. Just do what makes sense. However, it is still a good idea to write down major Traits that represent special abilities, especially if they are unusual or will need special rules when you use them.

NPC Development

If an NPC starts to take on a more important role in the story, you can start to write down his Themes and Traits, eventually ending up with a full character. This is usually a good idea if the NPC will be traveling with the PCs as an ally.

Monsters

Monsters and strange creatures populate many fantasy settings, adding depth to the world and providing unique challenges to the players. This section gives the GM some guidelines for creating and playing "monsters", a type of NPC with inhuman forms and memorable challenges.

"M" is for "monstrous", "memorable", and "mortal"

The best monsters are monstrous, memorable, and mortal. Monsters typically appear in a story for a short time and then are defeated. Thus, the rules for running monsters focus more on creating memorable challenges for the PCs than on an alternative character-creation method. The methods of creating monsters are simpler, less overhead, allow for on-the-fly creation, and provide the GM with lots of shortcuts and literary license. While it is certainly possible to create detailed monsters using the same rules that apply to characters, this would be a waste of time unless the monster is a recurring antagonist.

The purpose of a monsters is to provide a unique challenge to the players and add depth to the fantasy setting. Make each monster memorable in some way, such as a special purpose, special attacks, or special defenses. These do not need to follow any of the usual guidelines for character creation. Since monsters are typically encountered only briefly and may use their powers just

once, these powers do not need to be as carefully balanced as powers given to player characters, who will use them thousands of times.

Lastly, monsters should be mortal--they should be defeated by the PCs. Make the monsters challenging, but not impossible to overcome. An unstoppable, unkillable terror isn't really all that fun for player to fight.

Themes and Traits are optional

Monsters can be created on the fly without Themes and Traits. Decide if the monster should be on-par with one of the characters, or more powerful, or less powerful. Give the monster an overall Power die relative to the PC standard d10.

Special Attacks and Defenses

Make each monster memorable in some way, such as a special purpose, special attacks, or special defenses.

Keep this fast and loose! For example, you can simply rule that dragons and hell hounds are immune to fire, and poisons should not affect undead creatures. Monsters are not PCs and there is no need to try to apply a similar rule set or worry about "balance" because the PCs are going to kill the monster right now!

Special Weaknesses

Also be sure to give each monster a special weakness that sharp players can use to their advantage. Exploiting the weakness should grant an Advantage. Especially limiting weaknesses can be balanced by stronger powers or more Legend Points.

Roleplaying with Your Kids

I'm the father of two boys and started playing a simplified Legends with them when they were 8 and 5. We use the Rock-Paper-Scissors diceless mechanic for the most part, and don't usually write the characters down, although my 8-year-old has started to keep a notebook. They picked it up immediately and it's been really quite amazing on road trips and hikes.

Genres

We've played a number of genres so far: "Lorenia" (swords & sorcery), "adventure squad" (space rangers/marines), and "pokemon" (sigh). The last one was the hardest for me, as I'd never been into that show before.

Characters

Most of the characters are described verbally (the 5-year-old is just learning to write) and are kept simple. I tell the kids to pick "four big things" (Themes) and then "two small things inside each

big thing" (Traits). That's it. They need to "cross out a small thing" for a "do-over" (Reroll) or to do something really cool.

Dice Method

We mainly use the Rock-Paper-Scissors diceless method. It's truly amazing with kids and you can play *anywhere* and without pulling out gamer dice.

Energy

This has usually been the hardest concept for the kids to grasp. Mostly they just don't want to lose, and don't like the idea that their character might get hurt. (I've seen some adult players also manifest this reluctance.)
During one story featuring "pokemon" trainers the boys mapped Energy numbers to pokemon HP: 120, 90, 60, 30.
I haven't tried the Rock-Paper-Scissors with weapon damage mechanic yet, but I hope to try soon.
Focus on the Story, not Winning
I've found that the kids really want to win, to the point of crying if their character is about to lose. So, I've had to emphasize with them that this is foremost a *storytelling* game and if the rock-paper-scissors goes against then it's ok to request a do-over. However, if the fates conspire then we need to find a way for the story to go on.

Rulings

A Ruling is a decision by the GM, a declaration of fact within the game such as "you climb the cliff" or "you fall off the cliff". Rulings are usually based on the standard game rules, but not always. Stories are complicated, and the rules cannot handle every eventuality, and many situations demand exceptions. For example, the rules say that when a character shoots a foe with an arrow, the foe should lose one Energy. However, the rules do not say what to do if the foe is a ghost, illusion, or hologram, which should not be affected by an arrow. The GM will need to make a Ruling such as "the arrow passes through the dark figure".
"That's my Ruling"
If the players press for an explanation of a Ruling, the GM should simply say "That's my Ruling" to indicate a rules discussion isn't needed at this time. Players must ask in-character questions to solve the mystery.
Stories are not only complicated, but also mysterious, and Rulings will not always make sense to the players, since they never really have full knowledge of any situation. The GM should never explain a Ruling, allowing it to be mysterious. Instead, players must ask questions in-character to gather clues to solve the mystery. The

GM should also answer in-character, and refuse to answer out-of-character questions. For example, a player might ask if the foe looked any different as the arrow passed through it, and the GM might say that it's image flickered and wobbled. The player might conclude that the "foe" is an illusion, but can never really be sure.

Players may Burn a Trait in an attempt to nudge a Ruling in their favor. The GM is not obligated to change his Ruling, and if he does it might not be what is expected, since the character has changed the situation. For example, a player might say "I quickly fire my *ghost-slaying arrow* at the same spot" (Burning that Trait) to see if the GM will change the Ruling, but naturally the GM wouldn't change his mind if he knew that the foe was an illusion rather than a ghost. Players may also find it is more effective to Burn a Trait *before* the action leading up to the Ruling, since that would avoid taking two actions (e.g. firing two arrows).

5. Magic of the Dragon Isles

Magic of the Dragon Isles is a supplement to the core rules, detailing the magic system for the Dragon Isles of Ambar campaign setting. This is a guide to how magic works in the Dragon Isles within the Legends system.

not a generic magic system

This is not a "generic" magic system for Legends, but rather a guide to how magic works specifically to the Dragon Isles. The specifics of how magic works (the "laws of magic") varies a great deal between fantasy settings, so any attempt to build a generic, universal magic system would be doomed to be horribly bland and still not fit all fantasy settings. Hopefully this serves as a useful example of how to create a magic system in Legends for any campaign setting.

There are also many links back to the campaign setting content, and some content may be repeated, but the main focus of this section is Legends-specific rules and interpretations.

Covenants

A Covenant is a magical pact or contract. Some wizards extract a Covenant from a bound Ifr'it. Other wizards might form a Covenant with fellow scholars of the arcane, promising mutual support.

A Covenant is similar in some ways to a Hallow, where the members must enter into it willingly and then share a common bond. Magically sensitive members will find it easier to converse with one another within a Covenant, or to sense where one

another are. However, the Covenant does not bind the soul as fully as a Hallow, and will not influence its path in the afterlife as a Hallow would. For example, the bond will not pass through a Kalla as a Hallow bond would,

Fundamental Magic Principles

This page describes the "physics" of magic in the Dragon Isles of Ambar campaign setting.
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- [Planes](#)
- [Astral](#)
- [Aether](#)
- [Aethiiri](#)
- [Aetheric Crystals](#)
- [Aetherial Beings](#)
- [Corruption](#)
- [Nodes](#)
- [Ifr'it Amulets](#)
- [Regio](#)
- [Gods of Ambar](#)

Planes

There are two primary "planes" or universes: the Material (i.e. our world/universe) and Astral. They are wholly separate universes with different physical laws, and the Astral is almost incomprehensible.

Astral

The Astral (a.k.a. Astral Sea, Astral Plane) is a parallel universe that is the source of all magic. This is a primordial soup of souls

and all creation, heaven and hell. It somewhat resembles deep space, with floating stars, shifting clouds of gas, and rocky atolls. The creatures native to the Astral are called Ifr'it. However, this is a highly magical realm and all manner of weird shit happens. The Astral consists entirely of Aether. As a realm of magic, creatures in the Astral do not need food and water. However, they do need to absorb spiritual energy, so the need to forage still exists, as do predators... Wizards who travel the Astral frequently usually bring Aetheric Crystals for sustenance.

Aether

The Aether is ambient spiritual energy that surrounds us all, flowing through the universe like airy water. Most of the Aether consists of primordial proto-souls, that is souls who have not become fully formed and self-aware. However, all living creatures have souls and are also part of the Aether just as their bodies are part of the physical world.

All magic is fundamentally based on manipulating Aether. Spells are powered by soul energy. Magic items contain magic and therefore Aether (and sometimes fully-formed souls).

Aether cannot be created or destroyed. An effect that seemingly destroys Aether actually just sends it somewhere else. When a creature's physical body dies its soul lives on, and usually begins a journey to find its ideal of an afterlife.

Aethiiri

The Aethiiri are a race of beings who live on Ambar, but originally came from the Astral Plane. They are beings of light somewhat like angelic elves (in the Tolkien tradition) and are closer to their Aetheric selves (i.e. their magic souls) than natives of Ambar, hence the source of their name Aethiiri or "Lords of the Aether".

Aetheric Crystals

Some wizards store Aether in "Aetheric Crystals" or "soul gems". In some cases fully developed souls are imprisoned in crystals. These can be used to power spells in times when the ambient Aether proves unsuitable or insufficient.

Aetherial Beings

Creatures who have no physical bodies are said to be Aetherial. Aetherial creatures do not exist in the physical world, and can walk through walls or other objects. However, they cannot walk through people or objects with Aether, such as magic items. Thus, a person's fist, a magic sword, or magic spell can hurt an Aetherial being, but a mundane sword cannot. (Yes, you can punch a ghost!) An Aetherial creature who is "killed" is not destroyed (because Aether cannot be created or destroyed) but is weakened and banished elsewhere.

Some creatures are primarily Aetherial but able to assume physical bodies. Conversely, some creatures or wizards are able to force their bodies into an Aetherial state, which might allow them to walk through walls or teleport.

The Astral consists entirely of Aether, and creatures who dwell in the Astral are Aetherial.

Corruption

Aether can be Corrupted by afflictions of the spirit, similar to how a body might become sick or diseased. Corruption can take many forms, for example, zombies and vampires are Corrupted creatures who are afflicted with different kinds of undeath. As you might guess from these examples, Corruption can also have an effect on the physical body, which can grant both strengths and weaknesses.

Like physical diseases there is a strong tendency for Corruption to propagate and spread, almost as if it had a life of its own, which of course as soul energy it does.

Lastly, it is always possible in theory to remove Corruption. That might prove quite difficult in advanced stages of Corruption, just as it might with a physical disease, but striving for a cure is never without hope.

Nodes

Magic energy from the Astral leaks into and out of the Material Plane via singularities called Nodes. Some Nodes are inflows (positive magic) and some outflows (negative magic).

Nodes can be "owned" by a magically-powerful being like a wizard or a dragon who attunes it to himself. This takes time and may be opposed by any current owner, even if he is not present (although that isn't as easy as being there). The Baal of old would deposit a dragon egg on a Node to guard it. Wizards often battle over control of key Nodes. Ascension

Ownership of Nodes is thought to be the gateway to ascension into godhood. Most dragons of the ancient times have long since melded with their Nodes and ascended, becoming Deities.

Ifr'it Amulets

The Ifr'it typically bind their Aether souls in amulets in order to protect them from soul-stealing magic. They then hide their amulet in the deepness of the Astral Seas, or in a hidden place somewhere on Ambar. Only by obtaining an Ifr'it amulet can a wizard access or steal the Ifr'it soul.

Regio

Each Node is surrounded by a magical realm called a Regio. Some Regio are weak and look like normal land while others are

quite surreal and fantastical, with floating rocks or rivers, or faerie forests.

There is a corresponding Regio on the Astral side, which often resembles a floating island.

It is possible to ward a Regio, preventing entrance or exit, but this type of barrier is extremely weak in comparison to a Kalla.

Regios of adjacent Nodes can be combined into a larger Regio if the Nodes are attuned together or have the same owner. This essentially creates the equivalent of a "wizard kingdom" where the owner has tremendous power over a large area of the world. Many wars are actually about control over Nodes and formation of Regios. Corrupted Regios

Some regions of the universes are throughly tainted, such as the dread realms of the Kha'din or the shadowlands of Nan-Avathar. These chthonian realms are terrible places for living beings to visit, for Corrupted Aether spirits run rampant, and will seek to spread their taint to healthy Aether. Kalla (Foldings, Pocket Planes, Warrens)

Some Regio are a step removed from the physical world, "folded" away from the land. These are called Kalla, but are also sometimes referred to as pocket planes, foldings, or warrens. Entering or exiting a Kalla is only possible through a "Kalla Gate". Many Kalla have permanent gates, but not all. Gates might be obvious, such as magic doors, stone columns, or faerie rings, but could be secret, or may be locked or warded. Some Kalla are like fortresses, others like prisons. Only the owner of a Kalla (the person who owns the Regio) can create or modify Gates in a permanent way--other wizards have to break in or out.

Some Kalla were formed spontaneously but others were created by arch magi for use as hidden sanctums. Some Eldar created Kalla to use as prisons for eldritch evil such as Kha'din. A creature who dies within a Kalla will find its soul stuck inside, wandering its confines as a ghost. Ley Lines

Nodes also form pathways between them called Ley Lines, or "Dragon Lines" by Baal. These have a current much like a river, and some are faster or slower than others. Ley Lines always Shining Paths

Shining Paths are the Astral equivalent of Ley Lines. Shining Paths do not follow the same "ground" as Ley Lines. Also, Shining Paths are more often able to form direct Node-to-Node connections since they do not need to conform to a 2D landscape.

Gods of Ambar

The Gods of Ambar are tremendously powerful beings, each of whom controls a portion of the Aether that is his Hallow. This is similar to how a wizard might be an owner of a Node or Regio and have more influence over the Aether he owns, except that the god

actually is the energy, not just the owner. The Saints of a god can use

Most gods have one or more Kalla in which they are most concentrated and have the most influence. These form the heavens and hells of the god's faith. Mortals who pledge their souls to a god become part of the god's Hallow andl find a place for their soul's afterlife within that Kalla, rather than flowing back into the Astral. Thus, the concept of an "underworld" is a Kalla. Hallows of the gods even extend through Kalla boundaries. Thus, a Saint who passes through a Kalla Gate can remain fearless for the sanctity of his soul, as opposed to any faithless companions he might have.

See Saints for full information.

Covenants

Covenants are semi-permanent magic bindings between individuals. For example, when a Dragon scars a devotee, he brings the mortal into his Covenant.

Covenants are similar to Hallows, but far less powerful and do not involve transferring one's soul. Characters can be a member of any number of Covenants. Covenants can have one more more owners.

Magic Methods and Magic Arts

Here are the archetypical magic methods common in Ambar, along with examples of cultural Magic Arts that use them. A Magic Method is a set of abstract core mechanics shared by many Arts, while a Magic Art is an application of one or more Methods, combined with cultural nuances.

By giving consideration to the underlying magical methods involved, two characters of different cultures or magic arts can collaborate on the same kind of magic. This also makes it easier for characters to interact with magic they find while adventuring. These magic methods are not mutually exclusive, and an individual wizard might become well versed in several of them. For example, a Dwur Thaumaturge might also embellish his creations with Runes.

Glyphs / Runes
Spells are cast by drawing magic symbols such as glyphs or runes in the air or on objects. Each symbol has a corresponding power

word that may be spoken to add to the effect, although some say this does nothing more than assist the wizard in recalling the symbol precisely.

Since glyphs and runes are a form of writing, this method of magic has been easier to pass down through generations of wizards. Also, it is possible to rediscover symbols from ancient times in old ruins.

The Guldurine Glyphs originated from the Deep Old Ones in the Astral Sea. They can often be found inscribed on coral and stones around the oceans. These glyphs rarely describe natural phenomenon like, usually only abstruse magical concepts such as summoning, binding, force lightning, and teleportation. This is likely because these glyphs originated in the Astral Seas, where the natural elements do not exist as we know them. Guldurine Glyphs are used by the "Black Wizards" of Harnendor, Avathar Necromancers, Deep Old Ones, and many Ifr'it. Runes are used by wizards (for fireball!), Dwur, other Eldar.

The Dwur are the keepers of the sacred Eldar Runes. These powerful symbols hold the keys to the creation of the world of Ambar. There is a rune for every concept in the world, such as "fire", "mountain", or "tree", and thus are essentially the opposite of the Guldurine Glyphs ("reality" versus "theory"). Some "White Wizards" only practice runes, eschewing glyphs as occult lore that should be avoided, and most Aethiiri avoid both.

Thaumaturgy / Alchemy

This magic method is not used to cast spells, but instead to craft magical objects such as potions, unbreakable doors, and even automatons. Special materials are often required. This magic method is used by a great many cultures, including the Baal'Yr, Avathars (blood alchemy), many Eldar, and Harnendorian Black Wizards.

Astral Harmonics

Spells are cast by making particular sounds that have magic resonance. The instrument can be the voice, bells, horns, or even swords, but the sounds are quite eerie as this method of magic originated in the Astral Plane.

Some cultures, particularly the Aethiiri, have developed this into a fine art of music, albeit alien-sounding music. Few other cultures have mastered this method of magic, save the dragons and Baal, who use horns that mimic dragon sounds. Be aware that the Kha'din also employ astral harmonics (which is a good example of how a "magic method" is independent of its usage).

Mthu Rygas (sorcery)

Spells are cast by forming mental images and constructs. No words or gestures are used, so some say this is the purest form of

magic, however there some unusual restrictions. The sorcerer needs to be able to concentrate well, and if he wants to affect a target directly he must see it directly with his own eyes, for the eyes are the gateway to the soul. This is most often called Mthu Rygas, and is the favored magic method of many Ifr'it, Belerions, and Vozen.

Saints

The Gods of Ambar are real, and their servants, the Saints, can work miracles. The souls of the god and his saints are joined in a communion or collective called a Hallow. Saints can commune with each other and their god.

Contents

Saints

A Saint is any person, living or dead, who has pledged his soul to a god. A Saint is with his gods always and everywhere, and his god dwells in him. Saints can work miracles.

A person can become a Saint by pledging his soul to a god. This is an extraordinarily serious matter, perhaps the most important decision a person can make. Most religions have ceremonies to dress up the occasion, but all that is required is for a person to offer his or her spirit to a god. If the god finds the pledge acceptable he may take the person's soul into his Hallow, which is the collective soul of the god and all his Saints.

Most pledges also include the person's body (i.e. "body and soul") but this is not universal to all gods. Some gods have no interest in the physical shell, and in some religions the body is sacrificed in the pledge. In any case, the body has limited value for it will eventually die, whereas the soul of the Saint will now live forever within the Hallow.

Gods do not always accept a pledge. The pledge must be of free will and true heart or the binding of souls will simply not work. Gods are also very particular about which souls they want to join with their Hallow for eternity. For most gods there is a weighing of souls or a conversation with the individual, either consciously or in

a dream. Gods or their Saints may also notice individuals whom they want to recruit, and "call" them to join.

Saints do not fear death, for that is only the loss of a mortal shell. Their souls are already within the Hallow, and nothing can sever that connection. This allows Saints to be utterly fearless and devoted to the service of their god. Indeed, Saints live to serve the interests of their god in the world. There are many ways to serve, and some Saints are called into one form of service or another, at various times. For example, Saints can serve by recruiting more Saints to extend the Hallow, attending to the needs of more important Saints, defending the interests of the god in the world, or waging war on Saints of opposing gods. Saints are perfectly willing to die in the service of their god, which can make them terrifying foes.

Some gods will Resurrect their Saints, returning them to life sending them back to the world for more work. This is taxing for the god, and not without constraints, so this is reserved for cases of extreme need.

Hallows

A god's Hallow is sacred and profound. A Hallow can be thought of the god's Aether, Kalla or Regio, but it is far more, for it is extended by the presence of every Saint. Wherever a Saint goes, his god's Hallow comes with him, and so therefore does the god and the other Saints. Thus, the presence of a god is fluid.

Souls cannot be removed from or separated from a Hallow. Hallows even extend through Kalla boundaries. Thus, a Saint who passes through a Kalla Gate can remain fearless for the sanctity of his soul, as opposed to any faithless companions he might have.

The Hallow is the union of the god's soul and that of all his Saints, living or dead. A Saint can Commune with their Hallow, communicating with and consulting the other Saints. For example, a Saint could "divine" answers to many questions by communing with Saints in the Hallow, skiing around to find out if anyone knows the answer. They can also use the Hallow to communicate and coordinate over vast distances; for example a Saint could commune directly with a Saint whose physical body is on a different continent, for their souls are both in the Hallow. The location the physical body are irrelevant. Saints are still part of the Hollow after death, so even the condition of the physical body is irrelevant to the Hallow, and a Saint can commune with any other Saint, living or dead. Naturally, Saints may only commune with their own Hallow, not the Hallows of other gods.

Miracles

As noted above, a Saint can Commune with their Hallow. A Saint can also Intercede with his god on behalf of another person. This

can be used to focus the attention of the god on a new pledge or prospect, or to obtain instruction.

Saints can also draw upon the Aether of the Hallow to work Miracles. The Hallow can be utilized the same as another character might draw on ambient Aether, except that the Hallow is always present and available to a Saint. While potentially, vast, the power of a Hallow by no means unlimited, and is most efficiently used when in alignment with the god's persona. One might think of this in terms of spheres of influence in historical pantheons. For example, the Hallow of a "war god" is filled with souls of warrior-priests who are supreme at miracles of war, and that Hallow does not excel at miracles of fishing, fertility, or animal husbandry. Religions

The religions of the world are related to, but separate from Saints and Hallows. From the point of view of the god and Hallow, religions are akin to the physical body of a Saint: they are less important than the true spirit. Religions serve to manage the affairs of the Hallow in the physical world, such as extending the Hallow by recruiting new Saints and protecting the interests of the Hallow in the world.

Religions usually have formal orders of priests, clerics, monks, or paladins, along with formal religious titles and ranks. These are political and job titles of influence in the physical world, so they do not always have any bearing on a Saint's relationship with his god or Hallow.

Hallowed Ground

Just as people can pledge themselves to a god and join the Hallow, a place can be pledged to god and become Hallowed Ground. Temples, churches, shrines, or other "holy ground" are all common terms for Hallowed Ground. Although the place does not have a mind per se, it can be considered equivalent to a Saint in that it is part of the Hallow and can provide assistance to the faithful or call for aid, in its own mindless way. For example, a shrine Hallowed to a god of healing should be able to heal visitors, just as a Saint of the same god could do. It is more correct to say that Saints in the Hallow notice a need within Hallowed Ground and respond than to attribute the Hallowed Ground with any sort of mind. This means that Saints are very likely to send Avatars to defend Hallowed Ground, since the place does not really have a mind of its own and thus cannot effectively defend itself.

Avatars

Avatars are physical incarnations of a Hallow's will, that is, apparitions sent by the Saints (or god) of a Hallow to serve their interests in the world. While some might think of an Avatar as an incarnation of the god himself, it is usually a dead Saint who becomes manifest, although not necessarily in his original form.

This kind of miracle could happen anywhere a Saint is present, but is is more likely to happen on Hallowed Ground, especially in order to defend a holy site that is under attack.

As one might imagine, creations sent by a Hallow can be quite powerful, at least while serving the interests of the Hallow. Avatars can make extremely potent allies or deadly foes.

Fallen Saints

Fallen Saints are ex-saints, tragic figures who have become corrupted and then cast out from their Hallow by their god. Fallen Saints are soulless, for they gave away their soul, and are now cut off from both it and their god, which is one definition of hell.

The severance of a Saint from a Hallow is only possible by the explicit action of the god who owns the soul and Hallow. A god can cast out a Saint who profoundly breaks his pledge, becoming thoroughly corrupted or otherwise unacceptable to the god. In some cases, the god might cast the Saint's soul from the Hallow as well, usually sending it to a "hell" of isolation, such as a Kalla'din, rather than giving it back to the Fallen Saint.

Game Mechanics

In Legends game mechanics this is not much different from other forms of magic. The Framework should reflect the guidelines above, as well as describing the specific "spheres of influence" of the Hallow. Ultimately, this simply involves taking appropriate Traits that represent special powers granted by the Hallow. Lastly, be sure to consider using Asset slots for temporary powers.

FAQ

Q:

How would the "always have access to his hallow" work with effects like anit-magic aura or a teleport block on a dungeon? In other words does it work just like magic from any other power source (theme) or is it different?

A:

The Saint is always part of his Hallow, so he can always use whatever powers he has, wherever he is. The same is generally true for wizards, except for something like a "dead magic zone". However, that doesn't mean his powers work differently from other magic sources or magic methods. He'd still need to use a Kalla Gate (link below) to go through a Kalla boundary, not a Teleport power.

Q:

Can I banish the soul of that annoying priest to another dimension?

A:

No, because the priest gave his soul to a god, so you'd need to take the soul from that god, which is effectively impossible.

Spells and Frameworks

See the sub-pages for house spells and frameworks. Casting the spell requires you to Spend a Chip and name a Trait that corresponds to the spell.

The value of the Chip determines the power of the spell. For example, when Burning Dice, a "cantrip" might only require a d4, but a high-level spell would require a d12.

However, some powers want a Signature Trait for their full effectiveness, mostly because players will want multiple Traits to Burn to achieve the benefits they expect. For example, a spell like invisibility can be a single Trait, but really warrants a Signature Trait with multiple Traits to allow the player to spend more Chips for rerolls on stealth, attacks, defenses, etc. This is because in Legends there are no static buffs or modifiers, only the reroll and winding mechanics.

Aether Manipulation

The power to generate and manipulate Aether (also called Ether in some circles), the unique life force or essence that flows through most of existence, and is the source of all magic.

These spells allow a wizard to deal with the Aether, sense magic, banish magic, become insubstantial, battle ghosts, walk through walls, and teleport!

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- [Aether Sight](#)
- [Aether Tracking](#)
- [Aether Cloak](#)
- [Aether Blast](#)
- [Aetherial Shift](#)

Aether Sight

The character can see the Aether, by which he can observe both ambient and concentrated magic, as well as Aetherial creatures.

Cantrip: The character can detect concentrations of Aether. Concentrations of Aether around a person or object might indicate a wizard, saint, or magic item. A successful roll might provide additional information, answer specific questions the character might have. For example, you might be able to determine what kind of Aether spirits are common in the current area. However, only the first layer of Aether can be seen, so a wizard might have concealed his aura. Most magic traps or magical secret doors are also concealed behind a layer of Aether.

In addition, you can instantly notice anyone using Aether Sight on you. It's almost as if their eyes glow with Aether.

Spell: The character can see past the first layer of Aether. For example, he could examine a creature who is inside a magic circle, or find a secret door or magical trap on a successful roll. You could also use this to determine conclusively what forms a magic a spell caster has access to, for example "is this guy a necromancer?"

Aetherial Creatures Some creatures are naturally Aetherial. The proto-souls known as Aether are an obvious example, as are creatures who have no physical bodies, such as ghosts. Such beings are invisible, and only able to be detected via spells such as Aether Sight.

All living creatures have souls, and are thus at least partially Aetherial. It is possible for a creature to become fully Aetherial, whereupon his body takes on spiritual form. An Aetherial creature will appear ghostly and take on a form that more closely matches his inner persona. Thus, a White Wizard who becomes Aetherial might look angelic, or a necromancer who becomes Aetherial might look like a liche.

Only things that have souls can become fully Aetherial, so there is no way to make a boulder insubstantial. However, the personal possessions of a creature (i.e. his Traits, Assets, and Loot) can become Aetherial with him. In fact a person's Aether normally extends to a degree into his personal possessions, even while he is fully material.

An Aetherial creature is ghostly and insubstantial, which means it can walk through walls but can't physically affect material creatures. Aetherial creatures are also less affected by gravity can

slowly float like ghosts. Similarly, material creatures cannot physically affect Aetherial creatures. A material character may Burn a suitable Trait to affect a creature who is Aetherial with a physical item, and vice versa. A suitable Trait might be a weapon with a "ghost slaying" Trait.

A physical creature can affect an Aetherial creature with magic, and vice versa, but only by using Aetherial Manipulation spells like Aetherial Blast. (Note: I realize the potential for abuse here, and intend to fix it, but haven't finished most of the other spell lists yet.)

Aether Tracking

Creatures leave behind a trail of Aether, much like physical tracks.

Cantrip: The character can look for obvious signs of passage by a creature who has Aether, such as a person, animal, ghost, or undead. The tracks appear different for different kinds of creatures, so the character can make a roll to determine roughly what manner of creature passed.

Spell: The character can determine additional details or answer more specific questions by making a roll.

Signature: The character can determine details about the creatures without rolling. Each sub-Trait should be related to one kind of creature or quality of a creature. For example, if you have a sub-Trait called "track necromancers" then you will automatically notice tracks left behind by necromancers.

Aether Cloak

The character can create a cloak of ambient Aether around him, masking his aura.

Cantrip: The character surrounds himself with ambient Aether, concealing his magical mien from other using an Aether Sight Cantrip. This will not protect against an Aether Sight Spell.

Spell: The character surrounds himself with ambient Aether, concealing his magical mien from other using an Aether Sight Spell.

Signature: The character can use sub-Traits to change the appearance of the Aether around him. For example, a Black Wizard might normally attract a certain Aether, but he could use a Trait to make himself appear to have the Aether of a White Wizard.

Aether Blast

The character hurls a blast of concentrated Aether.

Cantrip: The character projects a blast of concentrated Aether. This is a ranged attack similar to shooting an arrow.

The blast is made of concentrated Aether, so it passes through objects and only harms creatures who have Aether, such as people or Aetherial beings. However, you still need direct line of sight, so you can't just shoot through walls. Also, while the Aether

dart does pass through nonmagical armor, shields and cover, a defender may normally still Burn such Traits since his own Aether permeates his personal belongings to a degree, and they still conceal your target.

Spell: The blast is made of highly concentrated Aether, and passes through any nonmagical armor, shield, or cover that the defender might otherwise declare in his defense.

Signature: TBD

Aetherial Shift

The character can change his phase, becoming Aetherial.

Cantrip: The character can determine if a barrier will stop Aether, such as an enchanted wall.

Spell: The character can shift his phase from Aetherial to material, or vice-versa. See the description of Aetherial creatures above.

Signature: The character may include one companion per sub-Trait in his spell; they must be standing ready as the spell is cast.

Aetherial Passwall

Cantrip: The character can determine if a barrier will stop Aether, such as an enchanted wall.

Spell: The character travels through a specific solid object, such as a wall. The object may not contain any Aether. This spell causes the character to briefly become Aetherial and then material again on the predetermined course. A roll will be required if the area on the other side of the wall is difficult to re-emerge into for whatever reason, and failure can cause loss of Energy normally.

Signature: The character may include one companion per sub-Trait in his spell; they must be standing ready as the spell is cast.

Aetherial Tentacles

The character creates writhing *aetherial tentacles* over an area, which will attempt to grab and crush anyone who passes through. The area is a 20' radius and duration of a typical combat (about 10 Turns).

The tentacles create an area grappling effect:

- On the Maneuver Phase, anybody in the area or moving through it must make a Maneuver Check or get grabbed by the tentacles. They won't be able to move.
- On the Action Phase, anybody who was grabbed gets attacked, so they must make a Challenge Check. (Apply the defenseless disadvantage if appropriate.)

The tentacles are living Aetherial Creatures. They can only grab creatures with souls and are immune to mundane damage but not magical weapons or natural weapons. Damaging the tentacles

clears them from the area the attack could feasibly target, e.g. a 5' radius for a melee weapon.

A variant of this spell exists, for *Umbral Tentacles*, if the spell is cast on an Umbral area.

Dispel Aether

The character can disrupt any concentrations of Aether, a technique that is primarily used to dispel magic spells.

Cantrip: The character can cancel an ongoing Cantrip. This requires a roll against the caster, or the GM will assign an obstacle.

Spell: The character can cancel an ongoing Spell. This requires a roll against the caster, or the GM will assign an obstacle.

Signature: The character can cancel an ongoing Signature Spell. This requires a roll against the caster, or the GM will assign an obstacle.

Remove Aether Corruption

This spell allows the character to remove / heal Aether Corruption, ranging from minor afflictions of the spirit to advanced curses such as Kha'din Taint, Undeath, or lycanthropy.

Note that Energy lost from Corruption does not normally recover, even if healing magic is used.

Cantrip: The character can diagnose and alleviate the symptoms of Corruption. This will allow the subject to recover up to one Energy lost from Corruption during his next rest period. The Corruption is not removed.

Spell: As the Cantrip, but one Energy is immediately restored.

Signature: If the character can remove Corruption when a Spell is cast, but only if he has a sub-Trait named for a particular kind of Corruption. Example sub-Traits: "Kha'din Taint", "ghoul corruption", "wraith drain", "vampire bite", "lycanthropy".

Sail Ley Lines

This spell allows the character to sail or surf the magical current of a Ley Line, which can be thought of as a magical river flowing along the ground. This is a very effective way to cover long distances quickly, and is far safer than a Teleport spell.

Cantrip: The character can gauge Ley Line currents, much like a sailor might do the same on the seas. He can float along slowly in the current, mostly to test the waters and for roleplaying effect.

Spell: The character surfs the Ley Line, covering long distances with speed and relative safety.

The character moves within the Aether surrounding the Ley Line, so he becomes ghostly and physical objects will not stop him, but magical barriers, spirit creatures, or warded Nodes could. The character does not need to have traveled this Ley Line before, but

it would be wise to at least try to obtain a "roadmap" of what lies ahead and avoid dangerous paths.

The character may stop at any point in his travel, anywhere along the Ley Line or at a Node, but this is highly approximate and he must succeed on a roll to stop precisely where desired. A warded Node or other magical barrier could stop him prematurely unless he can win a contest. On a Fumble he stops traveling, but gets stuck in the Aether.

The exact speed varies widely and is effectively random, so you should roll D100 MPH if traveling downstream. The GM may increase this to D1000 MPH for a character who has a Theme involving magical speed, a swift magical mount, or a Trait indicating the character is attuned to this area. Upstream travel is only 1/10 the downstream rate.

Signature: The character may include one companion per sub-Trait in his spell; they must be standing ready as the spell is cast. Sailing Dragon Lines

Some Baal'Yr of old excelled at travel along "Dragon Lines", and could sail ships along them, even over land. This was usually only possible if the Dragon Lines were part of a dragon-controlled Regio.

Teleport

Cantrip: The character can sense magically disruptive areas and Aether that would make teleportation more difficult or hazardous. He can also make educated guesses about what particular mishap might occur on a failed teleport.

Spell: The character instantly transports himself to a different place within the Material Plane.

The character must either see, or visualize, or have an arcane connection with the destination. The player is advised to specify the target location very carefully to avoid ending up inside something solid. For example, trying to teleport to the other side of a wall could put you inside a object in the room.

The character must succeed in a roll. The character suffers a Disadvantage if the travel must cross Ley Lines, Regios, or other magically disruptive terrain, which is almost a certainty for any kind of long-distance travel. A Failure causes loss of Energy normally, and indicates the character arrives near the destination he wanted, but is Aetherial, probably to avoid a physical object that was inadvertently in the way. A Fumble causes loss of Energy normally, and also means the character suffers a fun mishap as determined by the GM.

Signature: If using a Signature Trait, the character may include one companion per Trait. They must be standing ready as the spell is cast.

GM: Mishaps

A character who fails to teleport successfully can be in serious trouble, but try to provide a mishap that is interesting or furthers the story rather than something that is just inconvenient. If you have a good side adventure in mind the character might end up in that "random" place. If you feel like the group wants a fight then they might end up on the web of an Astral Phase Spider or a Kalla mini-dungeon, perhaps separated into two groups. If the character was attempting to escape a battle perhaps he just goes nowhere, but shifts to Aetherial, so the battle continues in a new and interesting way.

Hazard: Disorientation

Teleportation is disorienting. This generally happens if you cannot physically see the destination ahead of time, and just "pop" in somewhere, often a little up in the air (to avoid ground contact) or upside-down, or a little off-target. Try to see this not as a thing to bitch about, but something you can roleplay in a fun way, such as in Time Bandits or Sliders.

Upon arriving at the destination the character is "disoriented" and unable to take any Actions or Reactions. Failure on this roll does NOT cause loss of Energy. This makes it quite risky to teleport directly to a destination that is known to be guarded by hostile forces.

The character is allowed a roll to recover on each Turn. He can gain an Advantage if he is attuned to the exit area (such as owning a Node) but suffers a Disadvantage if the transition has crossed a through a magically disruptive area (such as from Material to or thorugh Astral).

Astral Spells

These spells are big/weird magics dealing with planes, Nodes, Ley Lines, and Kalla.

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- [Astral Portal](#)
- [Walk the Shining Paths](#)
- [Node Teleport](#)
- [Kalla Gate](#)
- [Bind Node](#)
- [Banish](#)

Astral Portal

The characters opens a portal between the Astral and Material Planes. The character may opt to keep the portal open long enough for a small number of companions to accompany him. They must all travel at the same time, so they will need to be

standing ready as the spell is cast. A roll is not usually required if you are standing on or very near a Node.

This can also be combined with Walk the Shining Paths for rapid travel.

Walk the Shining Paths

The character rapidly transports himself along Shining Paths in the Astral. The character starts and ends in the Astral, so he probably opens a Node Portal at the beginning and end of the journey.

This travel takes place over Shining Paths in the Astral, so it can potentially cover vast distances in the Material Plane in very little time. The weird magic thing is that the journey feels like it takes more time for the character than it does for people in the Material plane because of the time differential. In other words, while the wizard might seem to zip-pop instantly from one place to another, to the wizard himself the journey might have taken a few hours or even days. Try to roleplay this as best you can.

Shining Paths

Shining Paths are the Astral equivalent of Ley Lines. Shining Paths do not follow the same "ground" as Ley Lines. Also, Shining Paths are better able to form direct Node-to-Node connections since they do not need to conform to a 2D landscape.

Astral Encounters

While this method of travel is extremely fast, encounters can still happen if the story demands them. This does not require the character to Burn the Trait, and he may bring companions with him. You can use your Trait (or Burn it) to try to avoid encounters by detecting them and taking alternate routes.

Node Teleport

The character transports himself between two Nodes. The character does not need to have visited the destination Node, but must be able to identify it magically, so an object keyed to a Node or its Arcanym would suffice.

The Trait must be Burned and the character must succeed in a roll. Failure means the character has reached the destination Node, but it was not available for exit so the character is on the Astral side of the Node portal. On a Fumble the character ends up at a random location in the Astral Plane, or has reached the wrong Node. Either case might only be a minor setback if he can rest and cast the spell again.

The character may opt to keep the portal open long enough for a small number of companions to accompany him. They must all travel at the same time, so they will need to be standing ready as the spell is cast. The caster makes all necessary rolls.

Kalla Gate

The character creates a temporary gateway into or out of a Kalla. A Kalla is a Regio that has been folded to create a "pocket plane", so the only ways in or out are through a "Kalla Gate". Most Kalla have permanent gates, often with a physical manifestation such as a magic door, stone columns, star gate, or faerie ring, but some have no normal ways in or out.

The Gate remains open just long enough for you and a small number of companions to pass through quickly. You must succeed on a roll if you are not the owner of the Kalla. You suffer a Disadvantage if you are not creating the Gate in a physical location that somehow resembles a magical gateway. A pair of stone columns is fine, but creating a Gate in open air is just hard.

Permanent Kalla Gates

If you are the owner of the Kalla you can create a permanent Gate by Burning the Trait. You can alternatively lock a Gate, close (remove) a Gate, or key a Gate to match certain kinds of people.

Bind Node

The character can take control over a node.

Banish

The character can *banish* a creature to its "home plane" for a period of time (possibly hundreds of years). The creature cannot leave it's home plane for the period unless *summoned*.

For example, a wizard banishes an Ifr'it for 500 years. The Ifr'it vanishes in a poof of red smoke, and will not be able to leave it's home region of the Astral unless summoned.

Conjuration/Creation Spells

These spells seemingly create objects, *conjuring* them into being. The distinction between conjuration or creation is academic for the purposes of these spells. A skilled *conjurer* can *conjure* (create) a wall, a bridge, or a sturdy sword, which are only magically distinguishable from mundane items of the same kind.

All conjuration spells that create a thing Burn the Trait of the spell. The conjured thing ceases to exist if the character recovers the Trait. So, most conjurations made by characters only last within the current Scene.

Detect Conjuration

This spell detects if an object has been conjured.

Cantrip: The character can look for obvious signs of conjuration.

Spell: The character can inspect a particular object and determine additional details or answer more specific questions by making a roll.

Signature: The character can determine details about conjurations without rolling. Each sub-Trait should be related to one kind of conjuration. For example, if you have a sub-Trait called "walls" then you know a lot about conjured walls.

Wall of Ice

This spell conjures a solid wall of ice.

Cantrip: The character can conjure ice cubes, suitable for making drinks cold.

Spell: The character conjures a solid wall of ice. If a foe attempts to break down the wall, the character must succeed on a challenge to keep the wall in place. The GM may require a Great Success if the foe has ice-cutting tools, a source of magical flame, is extraordinary strong (e.g. a giant), or can dig through ice.

Signature: Each Trait in the Signature can specify a different specialty shape that the character may *optionally* use when conjuring the wall. Thus, the character could use a Trait like "igloo" to either create a dome or a normal wall. (Other suggestions include ball, bridge, roof, or raft.) Another Trait option is "ungrounded", allowing the wall to be created in mid-air.

Wall of Fire

Cantrip:
Spell:
Signature:

Wall of Stone

This spell conjures a solid wall of stone.

Cantrip: The character can look at a stone or rocky wall and succeed on a challenge to determine if it was conjured, or is real.

Spell: The character conjures a solid wall of stone. If a foe attempts to break down the wall, the character must succeed on a challenge to keep the wall in place. The GM may require a Great Success if the foe has mining tools, is extraordinary strong (e.g. a giant), or can dig through stone.

Signature: Each Trait in the Signature can specify a different specialty shape that the character may *optionally* use when conjuring the wall. Thus, the character could use a Trait like "stone dome" to either create a dome or a normal wall. (Other suggestions include ball, bridge, or roof.) Another Trait option is "ungrounded", allowing the wall to be created in mid-air.

Wall of Force

Cantrip: Spell: Signature:

Prismatic Wall

The caster can create a wall of colored light. The wall does not block movement, but instead applies a damaging effect to any

creature passing through it. The effect can vary widely, such as *paralysis* or *disintegration*.

Cantrip: The character can look at a *prismatic wall* and know its effect.

Spell: The character can create a single-colored *prismatic wall*, with a single effect. The Trait for the spell must specify both the color and effect--the same Trait cannot be used flexibly for a multitude of effects.

Signature: A multi-colored *prismatic* wall can be made by using a Signature Trait consisting of multiple single-colored walls. The character can Burn as many Traits within the Signature as he wishes when creating a wall, thus allowing him to create a defense-in-depth.

Illusion Spells

Illusions are images or can be quasi-real "phantasms".
Mthu sorcery particularly excels at illusions because the magic is based on mental images.

Mirror Images

Each mirror image is a separate Defensive Trait that creates a copy of your image and moves how you move. In addition to using them in normal defensive ways, you can Burn one to swap places with a mirror image. You need to be within arm's reach to swap places (i.e. this isn't a teleport) but the swap isn't detectable by foes. Mirror Phantasms

Each mirror image is a separate Minion, either a single Trait or Signature Trait. If the Minions are Signature Traits then they might have Defensive Traits that provide the same benefits as "mirror image". Otherwise, they can take independent actions as Minions do.

Blur / Blending / Invisibility

Various spells such as blur, blending and invisibility make it difficult to perceive the caster, acting as camouflage and making it easier for him to be stealthy. These only work to the degree of the character's skill, so a Signature Trait is needed for high degrees of invisibility.

From the base rules Legends - Stealth:

A Special Ability such as "invisibility", "elven cloak", or "cloaking device" is a more flexible and powerful type of Camouflage. A character whose camouflage consisted of dark clothes could disappear into shadows, but an invisible character can disappear into the middle of a room! This is a powerful ability, so the GM should require the player to Burn the Trait in any situation where normal Camouflage would not have sufficed to remain hidden.

Invisibility does not provide any intrinsic benefits in combat. You will need to Burn a Trait any time you want to leverage the benefits of being "invisible", such as rerolling an attack or defense in combat. Therefore, in order to have powerful invisibility you will need multiple Traits, and may want to group them into a Signature Trait.

Transmutation Spells

Transmutation spells change the shape or form of something, either partially or fully. Baal'Yr alchemists can transmute metals, Wizards can cast spells to polymorph, and Vozen can change shape naturally.
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- [Detect Transmutation](#)
- [Polymorph](#)
- [Wildling](#)
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Purify
The character can purify materials, especially metals.
Cantrip: The character can determine whether or not he can make a material more pure. The character does not actually know which impurities would be removed by a *purify* spell. Thus, a cup of water could be known to be less pure than it could be, but the character would not know if the water contained poison or was simply normal drinking water.
Spell: The character can remove all impurities from a particular substance. This normally removes all impurities, making it perfectly pure. For example, purifying water would result in double-distilled water.
Signature: The character can detect and remove specific impurities, each of which is a Trait such as "bloodbane poison".

Detect Transmutation
The character can inspect an object or creature and determine whether it has been affected by transmutation magic that has changed its shape, as well as the extent of the change. For example, he could know that a gold ingot is alchemically pure or that a servant is an impostor. Nothing about the true shape can be determined, so while the character could know that a "frog" is not really a frog, he could not know if the frog is really a prince.
Cantrip: The character can look for obvious signs of transmutation.
Spell: The character can inspect a particular creature or object and determine additional details or answer more specific questions by making a roll.

Signature: The character can determine details about transmutations without rolling. Each sub-Trait should be related to one kind of transmutation. For example, if you have a sub-Trait called "animals" then you know a lot about animal shape-changing.

Polymorph

The character can shape change into a different creature, man, or beast.
Cantrip: The character can change back to his natural form.
Spell: The character can take on the form of another creature.
Signature: The character can make small adjustments to the names of Traits within the Signature Trait to match the new form.

Wildling

The character has a strong affinity with a particular natural animal, and can take on its shape, in whole or part.
Cantrip: The character can take on minor features of the animal, such as facial features, claws, eyes, features, or fur. This also allows the character to use his Trait to leverage abilities of the animal, for example he could use his eyes of an eagle to see far away. The character can also change back to his natural form.
Spell: The character can take on the form of the animal, or become a "hybrid" form.
Signature: The character can Double Burn sub-Traits related to physical characteristics of the animal, such as claws, wings, fur, etc. Note that these Traits may be available even while in human form by taking on minor features of the animal as described above. For example, an "eagle wildling" could use his "eagle eyes" Trait even while in human form.

Wildshape

The character can take on the form of various animals.
Cantrip: The character can gain cosmetic features of an animal, or change back to his natural form.
Spell: The character can take on the form of an animal.
Signature: The character can make small adjustments to the names of Traits within the Signature Trait to match the new form.

6. Appendix

This appendix contains a miscellany of articles with various tips and notes about game design.

game design: Character Refinement

Legends focuses on character *refinement* instead of *advancement*. There are no "character levels" or "experience points". Instead, the player is invited to continuously polish and hone the character, adjusting Themes and details such as Beliefs, Instincts, Flaws, and Traits. We think it's more fun to dial-in a cool character concept than build a "powerful" character, and this approach makes it easier to introduce new characters without having a large power imbalance.

Each player is responsible for the development of his or her own character and are generally free to make any adjustments they like, so long as your choices are reasonable. However, always get consent from the GM for any new Special Abilities, especially if that would require a new Framework. In addition, Assets and Loot must be gained during play.

Tips for choosing Traits

Choose Traits that make your character more interesting and fun to play. People grow and develop by learning from the challenges they overcome, so you could take a new Trait that represents something your character learned, or events that took place in the game. On the other hand, since characters often recover treasure, they can afford to pay for tutors, and could take Traits that are outside the range of experiences from the game session. The choice is up to the player. Other good choices for Traits are titles of nobility, allies, or other intangible rewards.

game design: No Character Sheets

By design, Legends does not have a standard character sheet. If you have played other roleplaying games, you know that most systems have a detailed character sheet form that players photocopy and then fill-in with extensive details such as as class, race, skills, items, and powers. Players who value roleplaying often choose to write character descriptions, histories, or narrative stories about their characters, but this quickly becomes secondary to the character sheet when it is time to roll dice. The character sheet is usually the primary or only aspect of the character that players see. This is less than ideal for two reasons.

1. Focusing on the character sheet keeps the player's mind on game mechanics rather than elements of story, roleplaying, and strategy. This is a serious impediment for players who want to immerse themselves in the game, whether that is for purposes of a roleplayer "staying in character" or a wargamer planning and executing his latest strategy.
2. Character sheets are fixed-format--you need to fill in certain details in just the right way. This requires extensive knowledge of the rules, which can take years to develop. Choosing from preset lists of classes, races, and skills also stifles creativity because it imposes bounds on what your character can be. It is always disappointing to dream up an amazing character concept (or see one in a movie) and then find that it doesn't fit in the rules. Most heroes in novels and movies fit rather poorly into standard RPG rules. Some GMs add new classes, races, and skills to help their players realize their vision, but this is time-consuming and often presents game balance issues.
3. Most characters sheets are filled with numbers and calculations. These things say very little about who the character is and how he behaves. In addition, some players tend to focus on bumping up those numbers at the expense of a fun character concept. Why have a d6 mace when you can have a d8 sword?

Your character Legend and Themes serve the same purpose as a character sheet, but are hand-crafted entirely by you.

game design: Only Players Roll

All Dice Checks are handled by one side, either the players or GM. The group can decide who handles most of the rolling, but I recommend having players handle the rolling, and the rules are worded below with this default in mind.

If the players handle the bulk of rolling, the GM, now freed from tossing dice, can focus more of his attention on directing the story. This speed up play significantly, as it both reduces task load for the GM and allows players to roll at the same time. In addition, this puts the fate of the characters in the dice of the players.

Alternatively, the GM can handle rolling, allowing the players total immersion. In this way the players do not even need to know that dice are being rolled. This only realistically works for very simple characters, but the GM could use this method for hidden checks.

player tip: Writing a Backstory

You may find it useful to ask yourself the following questions when writing a character backstory.

Character Early History

1. Exactly where and when was your character born? Under what circumstances? Was he wanted? Was he adopted
2. Who raised him? How did he live? What was his quality of living/standards?
3. What was happening in the region while he was growing up? Any marking events?
4. Does he have any immediate relatives? If so, how did he get along with them? What are they doing now? How many sisters or brothers does he have? What of their names? Where are they now? What are they doing?
5. Any marking events in his family's history? Fortunes made or lost? Migrations? Lost members? Found members? Deaths? Births? Crimes? Great acts of philantropy?
6. Is he well-educated? Where and under who did he study

Character Recent History

1. Where is he living now? Is he patriotic about his current locale? How is he living? What are his living conditions? How does it affect him?
2. Who are his close friends? Why? How did they become close friends? Does he currently have a love or exclusive relation of some sort? Who is this special person?
3. Who does he deal with on a frequent basis? Why?
4. Does he have anyone who dislikes him? Is each person currently acting on it, or just passive about it? Why does he dislike him?
5. Does he have any enemies with deep-seated hatreds? Blood feuds Vendettas? Why? How are they acting out this hatred in relation to him?
6. Any marking events in his recent past? Did he commit a crime? Any acts of great philantropy/heroism?

Character Motivation

1. What are your character's immediate goals in the next year? What does he want out of life at the moment?
2. What are his long-term goals, in the next five, ten or twenty years? What does he want out of life in the long run? Fame? Fortune? Family? Land? Enemies crushed? Nothing?
3. What type of person, briefly, would be his ideal mate

4. Who is his patron deity? Is he a devout worshiper?
5. Is he a member of any nonreligious/secular cause? (i.e., is he a loyal servant of a king, baron, organization, etc.)

6. Is there any race, creed, alignment, religion or the like which he cannot stand? Does he fight against it?

1. What is his greatest fear?
2. What is his greatest hope?
3. What is the one task he absolutely refuses to do

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Character Idiosyncrasies

1. What is your character's motto or favorite saying?
2. What is his favorite color?
3. Describe what he would wear if money were no object. What does he usually dress like?
4. What is his favorite food? His favorite drink?
5. What is his favorite animal?
6. What habits of his friends annoy him most
7. What are his pet peeves, if any?
8. Does he have any mannerisms?
9. Does he have any distinguishing marks?

player tip: Writing a Character Sketch

Your character's legend can take any form you choose, but the format known as the "character sketch" is perhaps the most useful.

When you write a character sketch, you are trying to introduce the reader to someone. You want the reader to have a strong mental image of the person, to know how the person talks, to know the person's characteristic ways of doing things, to know something about the person's value system. Character sketches only give snapshots of people; therefore, you should not try to write a history of the person.

A good way to write a character sketch is to tell a little story about one encounter you had with him or her. If you do that, you could describe a place briefly, hopefully a place that belongs to the person you are describing, focusing on things in the scene that are somehow representative of the person you are describing. Describe how the person is dressed. Then simply tell what happened as you spent time together. From time to time, describe the person's gestures or facial expressions. It is important to put words into the person's mouth in direct quotations.

As you work on this paper, you should decide what kind of emotional reaction you want the reader to have in relationship to this person. What kind of details can you select to create that emotional reaction? Avoid making broad characterizing statements; instead, let the details you give suggest general characteristics. Let the reader draw her own conclusions.
A few Internet searches also turn up great articles on this topic.

player tips: Writing Legends

The following is a list of advice for writing various types of character Legends. Also see this list of sample character names.