



# LEGENDS OF THE DRAGON ISLES

# Player Quick Reference

Write your character in your own words, including the following information:

- **Name and Idea** - Who are you and what should we call you?
- **Theme** - Write one (1) core concept for your role or background, such as soldier, thief, healer, wizard, etc. If you are not human then you need to say that instead, such as elf, dwarf, etc. Extend your Theme to say where you are from and fine-tune the concept, such as "Soldier - Lyonese mercenary", "Wizard - Belerion white wizard", Elf - archer of the glade", etc.
- **Traits** - Write five (2) qualities or skills, e.g. "strong", "patient", "climbing", "juggling", "handsome", or "quick-witted".
- **Equipment** - Write five (5) common items, e.g. dagger, spear, backpack, water skin, food, etc. These are ordinary items of average or lower quality
- **Asset** - One special item, such as an heirloom sword, spell book, etc.
- **Secrets** - Write two (2) skills or knowledges known only to you, such as a secret language, password, contact, lost martial arts technique, etc.
- **Dark Secret** - Write one (1) aspect of your past that you hide from others.

## Rolling Dice

The game is player-facing, meaning players make most of the rolls and do so in-character. (The GM seldom rolls.) The standard **player roll** is a simple **1d20** with no modifiers. You succeed if you roll the **Hazard** or higher, otherwise you fail. You Fumble if you roll **Stress** or below. So at Hazard 15 / Stress 3 you succeed on 15 or higher and Fumble on 3 or lower.

Also roll your **Legend Die** to represent your advantages. This allows you to upgrade your result by one step, if you can meet the criteria. (One step improves fumble to failure, failure to success, success to crit.) The Legend die faces highlight your choices as a player and various aspects of your character.

|   |        |  |
|---|--------|--|
| 1 | THEME  | Upgrade if you have an ideal Theme.  |
| 2 | EFFORT | Upgrade if you have an ideal Trait.  |
| 3 | ASSET  | Upgrade if you have an ideal Asset. For example, a "flaming sword" is ideal against spiders or undead.     |
| 4 | COMBO  | Upgrade if you used a Maneuver that combines with your roll, such as maneuvering for a tactical advantage. |
| 5 | VLT    | Upgrade if you are adept at your action, and everyone agrees is the expert of anyone nearby.               |
| 6 | PREP   | Upgrade if your team prepared well in advance, such as posting a guard during camp or preparing an ambush. |

# TURNS

The game is played in continuous rotating turns; it's always someone's turn.

Take one **Action** during your turn:

- **Attack** - inflict 1 Damage
- **Investigate** - search, examine in detail, appraise, etc
- **Use Item** - drink a potion, throw a rope, open/shut door
- **Mercy** - stabilize or dispatch a mortally wounded creature
- **Use Magic** - use a spell or power (pay 1 Vim)

Also take two **Maneuvers** in your turn or at any time during the same round:

- **Move 10 feet** - walk, sit, stand, kneel, swim, climb, etc.
- **Run 20 feet** - on open ground
- **Ready Weapon** - draw sword, put away ax, draw bow, etc.
- **Aim** - called shot
- **Dodge** - improve defense
- **Cover** - take cover

## Combat

When your turn starts, describe what you do and take your **action**. If you attack and succeed on a dice roll you "hit". Also make a Saving Throw if you are attacked by a monster or other danger this round; if you fail the roll you are "hit".

Each "hit" deals 1 Damage, +1 for a Crit or Fumble. Then compare the weapon and armor, and add +1 Damage if Weapon Class is higher, or subtract -1 Damage if Armor Class is higher. The GM can also apply a +1/-1 modifier.

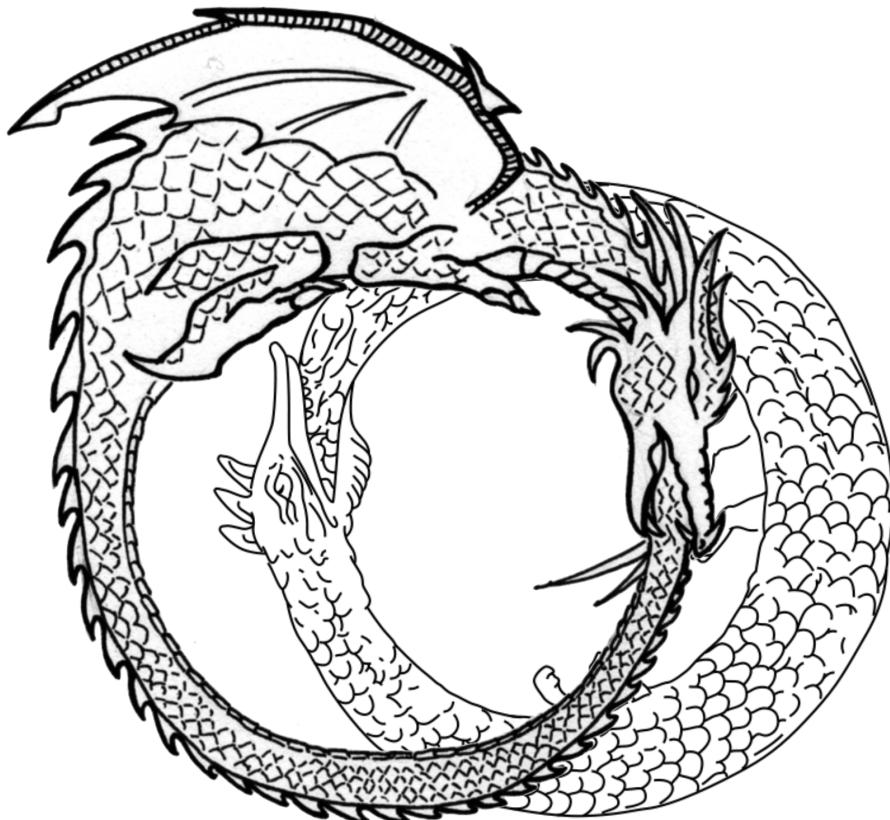
| Class | Weapon   | Armor & Shields  |
|-------|--|--|
| 0     | cane, whip   | skin, normal clothing  |
| 1     | knife, club, sickle, javelin                                       | thick clothing, stiff leather                                  |
| 2     | dagger, rondel, sword (1H), club (2H), hunting bow, ax, spear (1H) | light gambeson, cuir-boulli, arming jack, handguard            |
| 3     | spear (2H), mace, axe (2H), crossbow, sword (2H), warbow           | gambeson (30 layers), mail, jazeraint, coat of plates, buckler |
| 4     | greatsword, military longbow                                       | plate armor, kite or round shield                              |
| 5     | halberd, poleax, arbalest  | full plate, tower shield, aspis                                |

If you are hit and your armor does not negate all Damage then you take a **Doom**. This is a life-threatening injury.

# LEGENDS OF THE DRAGON ISLES



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The world has died  
The world is new  
As above, so below

LEGENDS OF THE DRAGON ISLES

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[oldbookillustrations.com](http://oldbookillustrations.com)

**Version:** 2024-03-02

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# Introduction

Welcome bold adventurer! Before you is a world to explore.

The Known World is a familiar medieval tapestry with human kingdoms, swords, chainmail, castles, and city-states. This is the 9th century by human reckoning, and young kingdoms have taken root around the shores of a vast inner sea known as the “Dragon Sea”.

If you imagine a compass rose, the main ports around the sea are Ælenthar (northwest), Ashenrise (north), Akkar (east), Aquila (south), and Dorthonia (west). These cities are connected by a myriad of trade ships and trade roads, any of which can be perilous. If you adventure or wander off the trade roads you might encounter ancient ruins of the Eldar, mythical and grim fairy tales with magic, dragons, monsters, and fragments of mysteries of the worlds that came before

## Game Principles

**Your character should be in your own words** - Your character is born from your creativity and written entirely in your own words. Your character sheet only includes words that your character could actually say in-character. Legends avoids out-of-character constructs such as classes, ability scores, levels, etc.

**Players should roll most of the dice** - Everything you attempt to do (or want to avoid happening) should be in-character, so it follows that your dice rolls should work the same way.

**Intangibles** - Your success or failure relies on many intangible factors such as your character, your gear, your foes, situational details, strategy, preparation, teamwork, morale, etc. Legends is a unique system that does not use dice modifiers, highlighting intangible factors for success.

**Combat should feel authentic** - Legends provides the feeling of authentic medieval combat, highlighting key details but without overcomplicating things. Legends strives for a balance of "heroic realism", where the characters are heroic, yet mortal. Combat is deadly enough to make you consider all your options, but still fun.

**Emergent Play** - The story starts with a situation set forth by the GM. However, the GM does not strongly script or screenwrite the story, rather the story is revealed during play by random events and your decisions as players. Play to find out what happens.

**Conversational Play** - I grew up playing early editions of that big roleplaying game. Back then, the *way you played* was more important than *how your character rolled*. The "old school" games were full of puzzles, and the way to avoid traps was to listen and describe where you poke and prod. As your interface to the world, the GM describes the situation. Then you and the other players have a *conversation* with the GM where you ask questions and negotiate possible outcomes, all using your imagination. The GM then makes a ruling of what happens. This conversation is the central focus of play.

**Rulings over rules** - The GM acts as the "neutral arbiter" for what happens in the game, making rulings *based on* good sense, the rules/guidelines of the game, fairness between players, and fun for everyone at the table. Rules exist solely as guidelines to help the GM make rulings, and help players predict what might happen.

## Getting Started

Gather 2-8 people and nominate one to be the GM (Game Master). The other players each take on the role of a character in the game world. You will need paper, pencils, one **d20** and one **Legend Die**.

- Tip: You can make a Legend Die from a standard d6 by writing one letter per side: "T E A C U P". Use a sharpie or stickers.
- The GM will also need a d6.

# Part 1: Character Creation

Your character is your interface into the fantasy game world. Legends allows any character you can imagine, so you can write about your character freely in your own words. Play who you want!

Follow these steps to create your character:

1. **Name and Idea** - What do we call you? Who are you?
2. **Theme** - Write one Theme for your main role or background, such as soldier, thief, wizard, elf, etc.
3. **Traits** - Write the two qualities or skills that best describe you, e.g. "strong", "patient", "handsome", "swordsman", etc.
4. **Items** - Write five common items you have, e.g. dagger, backpack, water, etc.
5. **Asset** - One special item, such as an heirloom sword, spell book, etc.
6. **Secrets** - Write two skills or knowledges known only to you, such as a language, secret technique, etc.
7. **Dark Secret** - Write one aspect of your past that you hide from others.

Always remember that your character is yours, and always written in your own words! If you need a creative push you can roll on the tables of suggestions below, but ultimately the choice is yours.

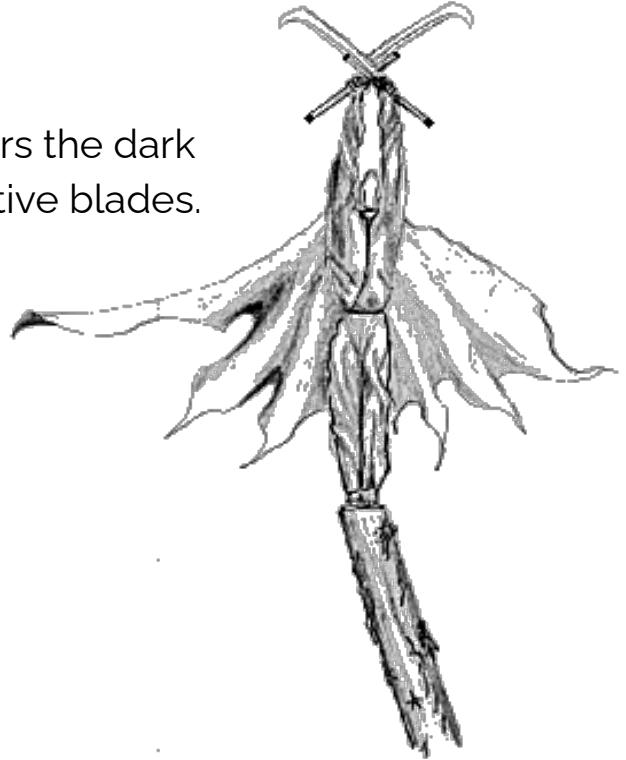
Also keep in mind you are a fledgling character, so your choices will be limited at this point. Don't worry, you will have plenty of opportunities to grow and develop soon enough.



# Sample Character

## Dthar Kel'en

Dthar is an Alu-trained assassin. He wears the dark robes of the Alu and wields their distinctive blades. His cloak is made of Alu bladegrass and seems to disappear into the shadows.



### THEMES

Assassin - Alu trained

### TRAITS

agile, deadly

### ITEMS

sickle swords (2)

dart knives (2)

water flask

### ASSETS

*Alu bladegrass cloak* - fluttering cloak of silken bladegrass strands, disappears into the shadows

### SECRETS

Shadow jump

Poison darts

### DARK SECRETS

Sole survivor of last mission

### EXPERIENCE PATHS

Duel a worthy opponent

# Step 1 - Name and Idea

The purpose of this step is to help you think about what kind of character you might enjoy playing. Go through the four sections below, either choosing or rolling. You are a novice character, so *who you strive to become* is more important than who you are now.

## i. Role

How do you want to approach problems and help the group?

| 1d20  | Role       | Approach  |
|-------|------------|---|
| 1-7   | Fighter    | fight well, protect your allies & crush your enemies    |
| 8-11  | Magic-User | seek out and use magic spells & magic items             |
| 12-15 | Cleric     | do the will & mission of your god, <i>regardless</i> .  |
| 16-19 | Thief      | live and love well, relying on quick wits & reflexes    |
| 20    | Eldar      | recover lost legacies of your ancestors; save the world |

## ii. Title

What is your epithet, or “self-proclaimed title” you use to impress others? You are only a novice, but this is what you claim to be and aspire to become.

### Fighter

- |                 |               |                  |
|-----------------|---------------|------------------|
| 1. Archer       | 8. Soldier    | 15. Lancer       |
| 2. Crossbowman  | 9. Thug       | 16. Mercenary    |
| 3. Fighting-Man | 10. Berserker | 17. Shieldbearer |
| 4. Gunner       | 11. Brawler   | 18. Spearman     |
| 5. Man-at-Arms  | 12. Duelist   | 19. Swashbuckler |
| 6. Mercenary    | 13. Fencer    | 20. Swordsman    |
| 7. Ranger       | 14. Knight    |                  |

## Magic-User

1. Aeromancer
2. Alchemist
3. Apprentice
4. Black Wizard
5. Dragon Priest
6. Elementalist
7. Enchantress
8. Geomancer
9. Guldurine
10. Illusionist
11. Necroalchemist
12. Necromancer
13. Pyromancer
14. Sorcerer
15. Summoner
16. Thaumaturge
17. Transmuter
18. Umbracala
19. Warlock
20. White Wizard

## Cleric

1. Acolyte
2. Cleric
3. Crusader
4. Destriant
5. Devotee
6. Dragon Priest
7. Druid
8. Faith Healer
9. Hallow
10. Hierophant
11. Initiate
12. Inquisitor
13. Mystic
14. Paladin
15. Pious Sage
16. Prophet
17. Redeemer
18. Saint
19. Shaman
20. Templar

## Thief

1. Adventurer
2. Assassin
3. Bandit
4. Burglar
5. Cat Burglar
6. Common Thief
7. Con Artist
8. Cutpurse
9. Highwayman
10. Outlaw
11. Pirate
12. Rogue
13. Scout
14. Smuggler
15. Sneakthief
16. Spy
17. Thug
18. Trickster
19. Vagabond
20. Viper

## iii. Homeland

Where are you from? You can ask your GM about the local area.

| 1d20 Homelands |                                   | Language   | Compass |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|------------|---------|
| 1-3            | Ashenrise                         | Northmaren | N       |
| 4              | Kyrgar                            | Northmaren | N       |
| 5              | Belerion, Hrivlyggdor             | Northmaren | N       |
| 6              | Ulfiskeptyr, Highport             | Southmaren | E       |
| 7              | Akkar, Si'Khar, Si'Enlil          | Southmaren | E       |
| 8              | Mirjiador, Haradjia, Eridu, Kutha | Southmaren | SE      |
| 9-12           | Aquila                            | Southmaren | S       |
| 13             | Dagor                             | Southmaren | S       |
| 14             | Rochir Plains, Si'Anwon           | Southmaren | SW      |
| 15-16          | Kitania                           | Northmaren | W       |
| 17             | Dorthonia                         | Northmaren | W       |
| 18-19          | Ælenthar, Alglondor               | Northmaren | NW      |
| 20             | Nan-Avathar, Torvilis             | Northmaren | NW      |

## iv. Look

Describe your "Look" in your own words. Everyone is human, so this is not a "race" and more about how you dress and behave.

### 1d20 Look

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| 1-7   | You look Northmaren, likely with pale skin and red or gold hair.   |
| 8-14  | You look Southmaren, likely with tanned skin and dark hair from the warm sun of the south.                                 |
| 15-18 | You have an exotic look that isn't distinctly northern or southern. Perhaps your ancestors migrated or were well-traveled. |
| 19    | You have a hint of something magical about you, such as strangely colored eyes. Possibly one of your ancestors was Eldar.  |
| 20    | You look like your ancestors were Eldar.   |

# Step 2 - Theme

Write **one Theme** for your current role or background, such as soldier, thief, healer, wizard, etc. Humans are the standard, but if you want to be an Eldar (elf, dwarf, etc) then you take that as your Theme. It's important that your Theme is immediately recognizable and understood by the other players. Add a tagline to say where you are from and refine your concept.

- ◆ Soldier - Lyonese mercenary
- ◆ Man-at-arms - scarred Alglond veteran of the vampire wars
- ◆ Thief - from the mean streets of Aquila
- ◆ Wizard - Belerion white wizard
- ◆ Elf - archer of the glade

Write in your own words, but try to root yourself into the fantasy world. Chat with the other players to make sure they understand your concept and it fits in well with the world and the group. Also bear in mind this is just your character's starting point, and you will be able to add or modify Themes later, even becoming Eldar!

# Step 3 - Traits

Write **two Traits**, which are the personal qualities or skills that describe you best. You will use these during the game, so choose qualities that make you good at your role. Look at your ancestry page and the suggestions below. Then write in your own words.

- |               |             |               |
|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1. archery    | 8. hunting  | 15. strong    |
| 2. athletic   | 9. patient  | 16. tall      |
| 3. bushcraft  | 10. quick   | 17. tough     |
| 4. cooking    | 11. riding  | 18. wiry      |
| 5. first aid  | 12. running | 19. witty     |
| 6. fisticuffs | 13. short   | 20. wrestling |
| 7. handsome   | 14. stoic   |               |

# Step 4 - Equipment

Write **five common items** in your own words, using suggested equipment below and on your ancestry page. These items are of good quality but are completely ordinary. You can optionally spend two items to get one of slightly nicer quality.

**Outfit** - Good clothing or armor (otherwise you wear "rags").

- |                   |                    |                       |
|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1-2. doublet vest | 9-11. arming jack  | 16-17. coat of plates |
| 3-4. robes        | 12-13. cuirie      | 18-19. mail hauberk   |
| 5-8. gambeson     | 14-15. chain shirt | 20. full mail         |

**Fashion Accessory** - Something to dress you up. Take two for free if you just take clothing instead of armor.

- |                     |                     |                  |
|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. bandolier        | 8. floppy hat       | 15. riding boots |
| 2. broad belt       | 9. front pouch      | 16. satchel      |
| 3. cloak w/ pockets | 10. holocaust cloak | 17. slippers     |
| 4. codpiece         | 11. leather pants   | 18. starry robes |
| 5. desert scarf     | 12. linen clothes   | 19. turnshoes    |
| 6. feather cap      | 13. mask/hood       | 20. warm cloak   |
| 7. fine gloves      | 14. purse, 10 sp    |                  |

**Weapons** - These suggestions are grouped into pairings of weapons that work well together. (Each weapon in the pair counts as an item.)

- |                               |                                |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. arming sword & kite shield | 11. hunting bow & hanger sword |
| 2. battle ax & round shield   | 12. javelins & battle ax       |
| 3. bill hook & small ax       | 13. longbow & knightly dagger  |
| 4. falchion & buckler         | 14. poleax & rondel dagger     |
| 5. falchion & warbow          | 15. sidesword & buckler        |
| 6. flail & kite shield        | 16. sidesword & rotella        |
| 7. glaive & throwing ax       | 17. sidesword & targa          |
| 8. great club & dagger        | 18. spear & small ax           |
| 9. greatsword & dagger        | 19. spear & war dart           |
| 10. halberd & rondel dagger   | 20. staff & knife              |

## **Expeditionary Gear**

- |                    |                    |                   |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. backpack / ruck | 8. fish hooks      | 15. satchel       |
| 2. bedroll         | 9. iron spikes     | 16. string / cord |
| 3. belt pouch      | 10. lantern        | 17. tinderbox     |
| 4. caltrops        | 11. large sack     | 18. tent          |
| 5. candles         | 12. oil cloth tarp | 19. torch         |
| 6. canteen         | 13. oil flask      | 20. waterskin     |
| 7. cook pots       | 14. rope, 50'      |                   |

## **Tools**

- |                  |                      |                      |
|------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. auger / drill | 8. crowbar / pry bar | 15. pick             |
| 2. bellows       | 9. fishing rod       | 16. pulley & rope    |
| 3. bucket        | 10. grappling hook   | 17. pincers / pliers |
| 4. canvas tarp   | 11. hammer / mallet  | 18. saw              |
| 5. cart          | 12. iron spike       | 19. shovel           |
| 6. chalk line    | 13. ladder, 9'       | 20. wheelbarrow      |
| 7. chisel        | 14. nails            |                      |

## **Specialty gear**

- |                    |                    |                     |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. book            | 8. map paper       | 15. spell focus     |
| 2. crystal ball    | 9. quill & ink pot | 16. spell component |
| 3. flute           | 10. riding horse   | 17. spell scroll    |
| 4. holy symbol     | 11. runestone      | 18. spyglass        |
| 5. lute / mandolin | 12. sail boat      | 19. thief's lantern |
| 6. lock picks      | 13. signet ring    | 20. thief's tools   |
| 7. map case        | 14. spell book     |                     |

**Food** - Each food item is about a half pound, enough for 1-2 days.

- |                      |                  |                 |
|----------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. apples            | 8. cheese        | 15. nuts        |
| 2. beans             | 9. chicken       | 16. rabbit      |
| 3. beer keg          | 10. coffee       | 17. sausages    |
| 4. berries / fruit   | 11. eggs         | 18. spices      |
| 5. bottle of spirits | 12. hard tack    | 19. smoked meat |
| 6. bread             | 13. iron rations | 20. wineskin    |
| 7. cabbage           | 14. mutton leg   |                 |

## **Oddities** - Creativity and instructions not included.

- |                 |                    |                   |
|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. auger        | 8. feathers        | 15. mousetrap     |
| 2. bag of cats  | 9. glass marbles   | 16. pepper blower |
| 3. bell         | 10. hand mirror    | 17. sack of rats  |
| 4. box of ticks | 11. hemlock        | 18. smoke pot     |
| 5. caltrops     | 12. horn           | 19. tar pot       |
| 6. dog treats   | 13. jar of spiders | 20. wolfsbane     |
| 7. dowsing rod  | 14. manacles       |                   |

## Step 5 - Asset

Write **one Asset**, your most precious possession. Describe how your Asset is special, which is your Asset "Signature". The power of your Signature depends on the kind of item your Asset is based on.

**Expensive Asset** - If your Asset is an "expensive" item, your Asset Signature can only describe a personal connection or "look".

- |                            |                               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Brass-bound Spellbook   | 4. Vaarthrun the Dragon Blade |
| 2. Holy symbol of Mrmym    | 5. Two-handed sword, elegant  |
| 3. My father's plate armor | 6. Noble warhorse             |

**Common Asset** - If your Asset is a "common" item, you can have an Asset Signature describing a Eldar material or minor passive ability. This could help you [+] ASSET on one kind of roll, such as hiding, feats of strength, attacking a kind of monster, etc.

- |                               |                                |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Elven leaf armor (hauberk) | 4. Silver poleax, burns undead |
| 2. Purple Vakaar dagger       | 5. Alu bladegrass robes        |
| 3. Orichalcum rotella shield  | 6. Kith hero belt of strength  |

**Common Trinket** - If your Asset is a common "trinket", the Signature can be a minor magic ability. This might cost 1 Vim to use if powerful.

- |                             |                         |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Unbreakable Mandolin     | 4. Amulet of protection |
| 2. Ring, hidden compartment | 5. Cloak, ever-dry      |
| 3. Lantern, ever-burning    | 6. Rope, self-coiling   |

# Step 6 - Secrets

Write **two Secrets** that represent skills or knowledge known only to you, or to a very select few. These let you know things that others never will, and helps you to claim ULT.

Some Secrets are magical powers, and for these you must pay 1 Vim each time they are used.

**Fighter** - You have dedicated years of training to mastering fighting skills, Combat Maneuvers, and maybe some survival instincts.

- |                     |                  |                       |
|---------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. dodge            | 8. high parry    | 15. binding           |
| 2. head cut         | 9. charge        | 16. checks exits      |
| 3. high parry       | 10. breakfall    | 17. armorer           |
| 4. hand cut         | 11. leg cut      | 18. weapon repair     |
| 5. quick draw knife | 12. shield parry | 19. light sleeper     |
| 6. quick arrow      | 13. low parry    | 20. sits back to wall |
| 7. head cut         | 14. sword ready  |                       |

**Magic-User** - You have gained abstruse knowledges through decades of study. These can be crucial for navigating ruins and learning spells.

- |                       |                    |                     |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. ancient lore       | 8. Circle Ritual   | 15. Fomorian glyphs |
| 2. ancient history    | 9. identify potion | 16. monster lore    |
| 3. arcane sight       | 10. identify magic | 17. medicine        |
| 4. sense magic        | 11. detect Kalla   | 18. alchemy         |
| 5. read spellbooks    | 12. Eldar language | 19. contact: master |
| 6. read spell scrolls | 13. Eldar lore     | 20. guild member    |
| 7. Field Ritual       | 14. Dwarven runes  |                     |

**Cleric** - You are a servant of higher powers, and act as their hand in this world. You have studied the sacred texts, mastered the sacred rites, and perhaps even know something about your enemies.

- |                  |                    |                     |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. meditation    | 8. detect Kha'din  | 15. ancient history |
| 2. prayer        | 9. detect Kalla    | 16. stagecraft      |
| 3. Field Ritual  | 10. Eldar language | 17. ordained        |
| 4. Circle Ritual | 11. Eldar lore     | 18. contact: master |
| 5. aura reading  | 12. monster lore   | 19. holy rituals    |
| 6. sense evil    | 13. medicine       | 20. healing         |
| 7. sense truth   | 14. theology       |                     |

**Thief** - You have many specialized (illegal) skills that help you stand out in a group of thieves (helping you claim ULT).

- |                     |                      |                   |
|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. appraise         | 8. forgery           | 15. pick pockets  |
| 2. climb walls      | 9. hide in shadows   | 16. remove traps  |
| 3. checks ceilings  | 10. identify poison  | 17. Thieves' Cant |
| 4. checks for traps | 11. map making       | 18. wears gloves  |
| 5. covers tracks    | 12. move silently    | 19. guild member  |
| 6. disguise         | 13. quick draw knife | 20. use poison    |
| 7. Eldar language   | 14. open locks       |                   |

**Eldar** - As an Eldar, you access to ancient knowledge and magic in your bloodline.

- |                            |                           |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Eldar language          | 11. Baal dragon ritual    |
| 2. Eldar lore              | 12. Baal dragon summoning |
| 3. detect Kha'din          | 13. Baal fire immunity    |
| 4. detect Kalla            | 14. Avathar blood ritual  |
| 5. monster lore            | 15. Karrock stone shape   |
| 6. Field Ritual            | 16. Karrock stone skin    |
| 7. Circle Ritual           | 17. Drisi poison immunity |
| 8. Dwur Runes              | 18. Drisi language        |
| 9. Elf sense secret doors  | 19. Drisi beguiling       |
| 10. Elf resist charm/sleep | 20. Drisi scale armor     |

# Step 7 - Dark Secret

Write **one Dark Secret**, which represents a hidden motive or internal conflict in your character. This helps you roleplay your character as a real person, although you probably don't share your secret openly.

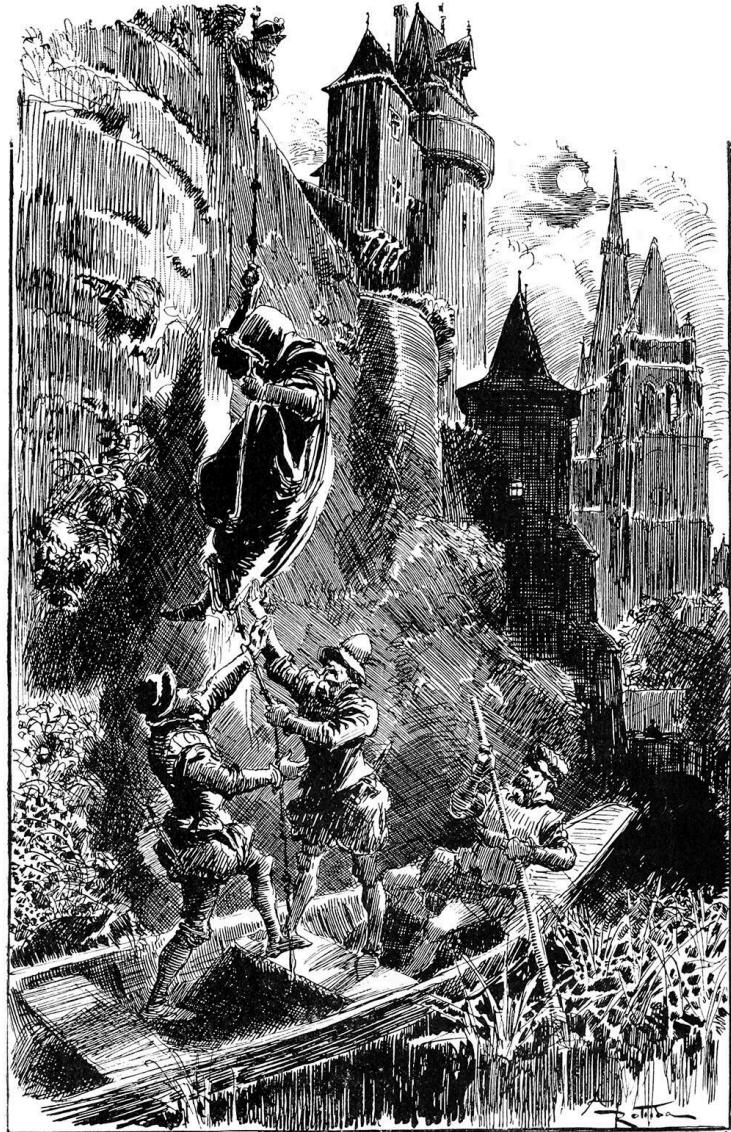
- 1. phobia of spiders / snakes
- 2. secret identity
- 3. sole survivor of last mission
- 4. outcast / exile / deserter
- 5. old wound / phantom limb
- 6. bad bargain (owes debt?)
- 7. survived starvation
- 8. ex-smuggler / pirate
- 9. wanted outlaw / criminal
- 10. orphaned / widowed
- 11. sole survivor of plague
- 12. spy / secret identity
- 13. ancient family curse
- 14. host for something awful
- 15. hears voices in my head
- 16. haunted by nightmares
- 17. visited by portents/dreams
- 18. have seen my own death
- 19. unnerves animals
- 20. possessed

# Part 2: Play the Game

Legends is a roleplaying game where you take on the persona of a character in a fictional world. For the duration of the game, you *are* your character, so everything you do should be role-played “in character”.

The GM describes the world, including everything and anyone other than the players’ characters. The GM will usually describe situations in cursory detail, and will expect you to ask *lots* of questions. This represents you (and thus your character) being observant and clever, just like our favorite heroes in old stories are.

Most of the game consists of a *conversation* between the GM and players, where you *negotiate* what you do (as your character).



## Rounds and Turns

The game uses Rounds so that everyone gets a chance to do something. Each person gets one turn per Round. The GM takes the first turn, followed clockwise by each of the players. This is continuous, so it’s always someone’s turn.

The GM uses their turn to narrate the fictional world and set the scene for the PCs. As a player, your turn starts with a brief narrative transition from the GM, which can include attacks or other dangers. You must respond to any attacks or dangers by rolling Saving Throws, and may then take one Action and two Maneuvers.

Use your Action to do something significant such as attack a foe, use equipment, use a Secret, etc. Use Maneuvers to move, get a weapon ready, interact with the environment, take cover, or other small motions.

## Rolling Dice

Everything you attempt to do (or want to avoid happening) should be in-character, so it follows that your dice rolls should work the same way. For example, you get to roll your defenses (saving throws) instead of the GM. Most rolls will occur within your turn.

## Hazard, Stress & Vim

Hazard, Stress, and Vim are the three vital scores essential to how the game works and used in dice rolls. They rise and fall during the game, similar to dramatic tension in a book or film; you can think of them as "volume knobs" for the story. They are also shared by all players, so what you do affects others.

This game emphasizes teamwork and rewards collaboration between the players. If you want to survive then work together.

### Hazard

Hazard is the current difficulty of the scene you are facing. When you roll, Hazard is the target number to succeed on your d20, so if Hazard is 15 you need to roll 15 or higher to succeed.

Hazard is the GM's "volume knob" for tension, drama, and risk in the story. The GM will start Hazard very low (probably 10) and then slowly raise Hazard whenever describing dangerous details that make the story more risky, such as foreshadowing, describing well-prepared foes, revealing threats (especially an ambush), maneuvering enemies, or adding a detail that makes the situation more tense or dangerous. Pay attention!

As a player you need to pay attention to **foreshadowing**, since each new dangerous or frightening detail is possibly useful information. The GM Raise Hazards to quantify the danger for you and help you to make informed choices. Your choices matter!

|                       |                              |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| claw marks on trees   | find/cross obstacle          |
| big tracks/footprints | fight sounds/yelling/screams |
| darkness falls        | damage to your ship/camp     |
| ominous sounds/smells | enemy leader yells orders    |
| wild howling/growling | seeing something awful       |
| find/avoid traps      | supernatural evil/horror     |

**Monsters** - Monsters are proportionally difficult to the amount of foreshadowing, information, and fear the GM provides to heighten tension. The GM raises Hazard with each new detail, and will lower Hazard if you overcome or mitigate those dangers.

**Traps** - Similar to monsters, traps are more dangerous as Hazard rises. Similar to a movie, you might find a few easily-discovered (yet deadly) traps, raising Hazard each time.

**Obstacles** - You will encounter obstacles in your path, such as a rotten bridge, narrow chasm, piranha-infested river, quicksand, etc.

**Enemy Leaders** - Enemy leaders can strategize and coordinate their troops or fleet, so otherwise weak underlings become more dangerous due to their leadership.

It's important to understand that the danger of monsters and traps are mostly based on Hazard, and they do not have absolute values. Thus, the difficulty of a monster is based on the amount of foreshadowing, information, and fear the GM provides to heighten tension, as well as the GM's judgment of how challenging the situation is. So a werewolf might be much easier to defeat if Hazard is low, but very challenging after lots of foreshadowing, and similarly easier or difficult if the PCs have defeated werewolves before!

The GM will acknowledge and celebrate your triumphs over challenges by reducing Hazard, but this is more likely to happen between scenes than in the middle of combat...unless you find a

clever way to reduce the difficulty of the situation! If the GM describes how vile black smokes from an unholy lanthorn are invigorating the undeads you are fighting, and Raises Hazard, then you might want to shoot that lantern to lower Hazard back down.

## Hazard Range

- **Hazard 10-12 (low)** - The players face little to no risk, they are safe. This is good for starting a game session or a slow-paced scene.
- **Hazard 13-14 (medium)** - The players face a good, sporting level of challenge, where they have a slight edge over their opposition, but not so much that things will feel easy. This is good for overland movement through sparsely defended enemy territory.
- **Hazard 15-16 (high)** - The players are facing opponents who are their equal, or possibly even slightly tougher. This presents a serious challenge, and one or more of the players will probably take a serious Doom or go down.
- **Hazard 17-19 (highest)** - The players are outmatched, and highly likely to be defeated unless they play brilliantly or flee.

## Stress

Stress is the amount of strain and trauma your group of characters has taken, and can be mental, spiritual, or physical. As Stress rises your failures are more likely to be disastrous fumbles. Stress starts at 1, then the GM Raises Stress whenever something awful happens, such as when a character gets hurt, your ship/castle is hit, you find something awful, etc. When things slow down after a stressful situation, you can reduce Stress by eating, drinking, making camp, cleaning yourself, mending your gear, making jokes, playing music, complimenting others, and blowing off steam. After all, you're a person.

You are responsible for managing Stress, and how you deal with this is part of your story. The life of an adventurer is incredibly dangerous to body and mind, routinely defying death and witnessing awful supernatural entities. These experiences, which are measured by Stress, take their toll as psychological strain which does not

disappear once the direct threats have been neutralized or banished by the sunrise. You must work off your Stress and find ways to relax. What does your character do to blow off steam?

|                      |                      |                 |
|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| cleaning yourself up | repair armor / gear  | composing music |
| eating & drinking    | foraging / gathering | reciting poetry |
| cooking meals        | hunting              | feasting        |
| resting / sleeping   | celebrating victory  | carousing       |

Reducing Stress is not possible within a fast and stressful situation such as combat. However, you could take a Secret which lets you reduce Stress even at the worst of times.

|                 |                 |                   |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| rallying cry    | boost morale    | second mind       |
| remove fear     | inspiring words | steel will        |
| song of hope    | second wind     | stillness of mind |
| true leadership | inspire courage | war cry           |

## Vim

Vim is the amount of energy your group of characters has available to use Secrets. Spend 1 Vim when you use a Secret. You can restore your Vim through sleep or Rituals.

## Sleep

Sleeping for about 2 hours without interruption restores 1 Vim. Consecutive hours of sleep yield higher Vim. The maximum is 4 Vim, or 5 Vim if you complete all four sleep cycles in a place of comfort, such as an inn or cozy, well-laden campsite.

Sleep is also necessary for your personal well-being, and going without sleep sets a minimum Stress.

## Negative Vim

Vim drops as Secrets are used, and can go to zero or even become negative ("in the red"). If you have Negative Vim, then Raise Stress any time you use a Secret.

If your Vim is negative then it will not raise unless what you are doing (i.e. sleeping or a Ritual) earns enough Vim to set you above zero. Thus, at Vim -5 simply sleeping will not help!

## Turns

Legends is a turn-based game. The GM calls upon each player to take their turn, and then starts a new round.

Your turn starts when the GM calls on you saying "what do you do?", "it's your turn", "you're up", or similar. The GM will often include situational details that you are likely to notice, possibly telegraphing monster actions, such as "the goblin approaches, his spear point leveled at you", "the wizard says an incantation of *infusnitem*", "the dragon inhales and a spark appears in its throat", or "the ceiling begins to shake and dust falls". This is intended to help you make informed choices, but will only include information you could reasonably know. You should ask questions as needed.

Now the spotlight is on you, and you get to say what you do! You may take one Action and two Maneuvers. You will sometimes need to roll for your Action.

After your Action, depending on what you chose to do, the GM may also call for a Saving Throw. For example, the "goblin stabs at your waist" or "the ceiling collapses on you". You might be able to use a Maneuver to help your roll, but it's too late to move out of the way. Note that this might not always require a roll; if your response to the "shaking ceiling" was to sprint ahead, the GM might describe how you avoid the cave-in, but are now separated from your group.

The GM can also raise Hazard or Stress whenever appropriate, whether from foreshadowing or a result of what you choose to do. For example, if you attempt to climb tall cliffs or cross an arctic desert without the proper gear, then the GM will raise Hazard.

# Actions

You get one Action per turn to have your character do something important, such as making an attack, casting a spell, disarming a trap, or climbing a cliff. This is the focus of your turn.

You can attempt anything you can reasonably describe, but some of the most common Actions are:

- **Attack** - inflict 1 Damage
- **Investigate** - search, examine in detail, appraise, etc
- **Use Item** - drink potion, light torch, throw rope, open/shut door
- **Mercy** - stabilize or dispatch a mortally wounded creature
- **Use Secret** - use a spell or special ability (costs Vim)

You will probably need to make a roll if your Action involves risk and failure could add interest to the game, such as an attack in combat. Since you are able to judge the success or failure of your rolls, you should narrate the outcome of your Action.



# Maneuvers

Maneuvers are minor activities such as moving, shouting orders, drawing a weapon, reloading, taking cover, etc.

You may take your Maneuvers at *any time* in the round, even in the middle of the another player's turn. They happen simultaneously with other Maneuvers. For example, if the GM describes a monster moving to engage another player on their turn, you might say "I step between them".

Maneuvers can be used for quick observation and communication. You could glance at something, listen, gesture or point, shout a quick command or word of warning.

Maneuvers can be used for moving a few steps, sitting, standing, taking cover, etc. The normal distance moved for a Maneuver is **ten (10) feet**, which is typically two 1-inch squares on a tabletop grid for miniatures. Double your movement (to twenty feet) if running forward or taking advantage of the environment (e.g. moving downhill, downstream, or falling). Halve your movement (to five feet) if not walking (e.g. crawling, climbing, standing jump, swimming, etc.) You can change facing as part of any Maneuver, but are otherwise assumed to face the direction of your movement.

|                   |                    |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| step (10')        | crawl (5')         | slide (10')        |
| run forward (20') | climb (5')         | fall (20')         |
| sit / kneel       | tightrope (5')     | running jump (10') |
| stand / crouch    | creep quietly (5') | standing jump (5') |
| lay prone         | roll (5')          | swim (10')         |

Maneuvers can be used to interact with items, but each Maneuver allows a single motion such as drawing a sword, an arrow, or pushing a door shut. Using an item in a way that requires multiple steps requires multiple Maneuvers.

|               |               |                |
|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| draw weapon   | pick item up  | kick shut door |
| reload weapon | throw item    | drop backpack  |
| get torch     | get potion    | pull lever (1) |
| put item away | uncork potion | push door (1)  |

You can use a Maneuver to embellish your Action, adding a touch of your personal style. This is for fun and makes you look awesome.

|                |                   |                     |
|----------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| bow/salute     | quip/quote/motto  | twirl/spin/flip     |
| hero pose      | smile/grin        | rude gesture        |
| flourish/swash | hiss/howl/catcall | fist pump/high five |
| swagger        | war cry           | "z" slash           |
| laugh/jeer     | challenge         | dance-off           |
| smirk/sneer    | taunt/insult      | theme song          |

Lastly, you can also use Maneuvers as combat tactics for your attacks & defenses. This is detailed in Advanced Combat.

Your number of Maneuvers per Round is determined by your Armor Tag: Body-Armor (or none) 3, Half-Armor 2, or Full-Armor 1.

Carrying or holding onto something heavy, such as a sack of loot, body, or heavy backpack, takes 1 Maneuver. A sack of loot or backpack can hold up to 100 pounds (1000 coins), and is "heavy" if at least half-loaded.

## Order of Actions

Everything within your turn, such as your Action, Saving Throws, and Maneuvers, is normally considered simultaneous. For example, if you and a monster both attack each other, your attack and defense occur at the same time. It's possible for you both to hit each other, regardless of which roll you make first. Both rolls are *resolved* as if they were rolled at the same time, even if you roll your Action first.

However, you can ask to *resolve* your Action before your Saving Throw if it makes more sense for your Action to happen first. For example, if an enemy rushes you and you have a spear or a bow, then your attack should occur before your foe reaches you. If you kill your foe you shouldn't need to make a Saving Throw against his attack. The opposite is also true.

# Roll the Dice

Roll 1d20: you succeed on a roll of Hazard or higher, otherwise you fail. You Fumble if you roll **Stress** or below. So with Hazard 14 and Stress 3 you succeed on 14 or higher and Fumble on 3 or lower.

Also roll your **Legend Die** to represent your various situational advantages. This allows you to **upgrade** your result by one step, if you can meet the criteria. So you can potentially upgrade fumble to failure, failure to success, success to crit, etc..

**Hits** - A successful attack "hits" and deals 1 Damage. This is the same for attacks and defenses, for all weapons, so if you fail a defense (i.e. a Saving Throw) then you take similar Damage. If you upgrade this it becomes a "Crit", causing 2 Damage.

**Crits** - A natural "20" is a "Crit", causing 2 Damage. If you upgrade this becomes a "Super Crit" (3 Damage).

**Fumbles** - A natural "1" is a "Super Fumble". If you Super Fumble a Saving Throw you take 3 Damage. If you upgrade this becomes a normal Fumble (2 Damage).

**Stunts** - You can spend Damage from a "super crit" to do a "stunt" or special effect. For example, if you super crit an attack for 4 Damage you could say "I lop off the goblin's hand!".

**Counters** - If an enemy attacks and you Crit your Saving Throw then you get a Counter. You get a free Action, limited to things you could conceivably do while defending yourself against the specific attack, such as a counterattack against the same enemy.

**Fumbles** - The GM will assign additional consequences for every Fumble, such as +1 Damage, +1 Stress, -1 Vim, equipment failure, etc.

**Explosive Crits** - A Crit with a natural 20 is "open-ended". Roll again, and on another Crit add +1 Damage and roll again. The GM may also allow a normal Crit to be open-ended if the attack is remarkably effective, such as a mace against a skeleton, a fire spell against an ice golem, a holy sword against a skeleton or wraith, etc.

**Explosive Fumbles** - A Fumble with a natural 1 is "open-ended". Roll again, and on another Fumble add +1 Damage and roll again. The

GM may also require a normal Fumble to be open-ended if the attack is remarkably dangerous, such as a vorpal sword, poison, dragon breath, petrification, poison, death magic, etc.

## YOUR Legend Die

You may also roll a **Legend Die**, which is a custom die (faces below) which may upgrade your natural result by one step.

|   |        |  |
|---|--------|--|
| 1 | THEME  | Upgrade if you have an ideal Theme.  |
| 2 | EFFORT | Upgrade if you have an ideal Trait.  |
| 3 | ASSET  | Upgrade if you have an ideal Asset. For example, a "flaming sword" is ideal against spiders or undead.     |
| 4 | COMBO  | Upgrade if you used a Maneuver that combines with your roll, such as maneuvering for a tactical advantage. |
| 5 | VLT    | Upgrade if you are adept at your action, and everyone agrees is the expert of anyone nearby.               |
| 6 | PREP   | Upgrade if your team prepared well in advance, such as posting a guard during camp or preparing an ambush. |

You can only upgrade by one step, e.g. super fumble to fumble, fumble to failure, failure to success, success to crit, crit to super crit. Each face is a mini-game, showcasing various details of your character, situational details, and/or your skill as a player. Describe the outcome as best you can, the GM will intervene as needed.

*A Theme, Trait, or Asset is “ideal” for your roll if it strongly benefits what you are trying to do. For example, a Trait like “strong” could help you smite a foe or open a stuck door, or maybe even impress someone with a feat of strength, but not lock-picking.*

### THEME

Upgrade if you have an ideal Theme.

Generally you can claim THEME if you are acting within your Themes, and cannot upgrade if you are out of your element.

## EFFORT

Upgrade if you have an ideal Trait.

Generally you can claim EFFORT if you can describe how one of your Traits helps you succeed. A trait might help you make your action look effortless through skill, or with extra effort, or by overcoming wounds. This could be directly related to your action or put forth effort to overcome any current hardship. For example, you might be a skilled archer, or you might be very tough and better able to ignore the pain of your wounds.

## ASSET

Upgrade if you have an ideal Asset. For example, a "flaming sword" is ideal against spiders or undead.

- **Attacking:** Upgrade if your weapon Asset has a Signature useful against your foe, such as a "holy sword" vs undead.
- **Defending:** Upgrade if your armor or shield Asset has a Signature that helps against this attack, such as "adamant helmet" against weapons attacking your head. This must be protecting the correct Hit Location. You can possibly declare a weapon if you are Guarding against the attack (see the section on Guarding).
- **Defending vs Magic:** Upgrade if you have an Asset Signature that helps you defend against this magic, such as "orichalcum amulet" armor against hostile magic. However, if the magic is targeting a specific Hit Location then your Asset needs to specifically cover that location, such as an "orichalcum helmet".
- **Climbing:** Upgrade if you have a rope with a fancy Asset Signature like "silk rope" or "elven rope", or "climbing claws".
- **Picking a lock:** Upgrade if you have lock picks with an Asset Signature (which would indicate they are higher quality).
- **Social:** Upgrade if you have elegant attire with an Asset Signature for style, e.g. "velvet blue cape with small silver birds". You can get by with appropriate attire without an Asset Signature for style.
- **Using Magic:** Upgrade if you have an Asset Signature relevant to your magic, such as "wand of fire".

## COMBO

Upgrade if you used a Maneuver that combines with your roll, such as maneuvering for a tactical advantage. Examples below.

**Maneuver:** Upgrade if you used a Maneuver to assist your roll such when you dodge, feint, parry, etc. You may spend a Maneuver after your roll, but then it only applies to this current roll.

**Teamwork:** Upgrade if an ally used a Maneuver to assist you. For example a friend could distract a foe to assist your attack, or watch your back to assist your defense. Your ally may spend a Maneuver after your roll, but only if they are very close to you, and then it only applies to this current roll.

**Advantage:** Upgrade if you used a Maneuver to get to a tactical position, e.g. a low wall for cover or a doorframe choke point.

## ULT

Upgrade if you are adept at your action, and everyone agrees is the expert of anyone nearby.

ULT requires true expertise, which should be easily demonstrated by your Themes, Traits, Secrets, and overall character concept.

It is not sufficient to be “the only person with a bow in the room”. You need to be a “bow expert”, and also be the “**MOST** bow expert”.

Also, ULT is based on the consensus of all players, so it's dependent on your *perceived* character concept, role in the group, and past demonstrations of expertise. If you're picking a lock you'll likely win if you're “the thief” of the group, especially if you have picked locks before no. If you're reading archaic runes you'll win if you're “the wizard”. This might also be an easy win if you are using a Secret, but on a tie nobody gets the bonus.

As an adventurer you are skilled at many things, but do not expect to win against a specialist NPC in their narrow area of expertise, in their terms, in their house. Do not expect to out-haggle a merchant,

hide from a huntsman, outmaneuver a courtier, out-fence a duelist in their arena, or out-riddle a sphinx. If you play their game, on their terms, they will probably win.

## PREP

Upgrade if your team prepared well in advance, such as posting a guard during camp or preparing an ambush.

Usually this required you to have noticed foreshadowing or clues and used your wits to make ready well in advance. **It's too late to prepare for a situation after it starts.** Preparation is not necessarily complicated, they just require paying attention, thinking, and setting plans into motion, often simply by roleplaying what you do. For example, you might rig warning traps around your camp, or plug your ears with wax before fighting the harpies, or douse yourself with water before fighting a dragon.

## Disadvantage

A Disadvantage is a significant hindrance or impediment that downgrades [-] COMBO by one step. Examples:

- Shooting at a target you can't clearly see (e.g. due to darkness, blindness, or a closed face helm)
- Playing a lute with a broken hand or wearing gauntlets
- Shooting while riding on a fast horse

Sometimes you can work around a Disadvantage, and sometimes this is just a Maneuver. In the above examples, you could remove your gloves, open your helm visor, light a torch, or stop your horse.

Multiple Disadvantages can apply, but your roll can only downgrade once. For example, an archer with Disadvantages of wind, cover, darkness, and a small target only downgrades once.



## Attacks

When you attack you must roll the dice. If you **succeed** on your roll you "hit" your target and deal Damage, otherwise you **fail** and "miss".

*The GM may raise Hazard or Stress if you do not have a weapon.*

### Failed Attacks

Failed attacks "miss" and deal no Damage, with no side effects. However, if you **Fumble** an attack Action the GM will describe a natural consequence or take a Counter Action, which can possibly turn your attack against you. If you use large-scale attacks like grenades or *fireball* spells, you can blow yourself up, and your allies too. Consider the scope of your actions, and the risk they bring.

### Successful Attacks

On a successful attack, the GM will determine the Damage dealt (none, or 1-4), and the corresponding Doom (none, or 1-4). The result is one of the following five outcomes:

**No Doom** - The target's armor stopped all Damage. The attack glanced off armor, so there won't be any blood.

**Doom1** - The target has a visible wound, such as a cut, gash, etc. This might go unnoticed due to fighting frenzy or adrenaline.

**Doom2** - The target has a severe wound, such as a cut to the bone. This will certainly be noticed, and most *reasonable* foes will consider retreat or surrender.

**Doom3** - The Hit Location is disabled and cannot be used at all. A disabled arm, hand, or leg might dangle limply despite all attempts to make it move. If this is the head the target is likely unconscious, and if the torso the target cannot take physical actions.

**Doom4** - The target is at Death's Door (see below) and certain to die very soon. If you rolled a Crit, feel free to describe a dramatic wound, such as losing an eye, crushing a knee, chopping off a hand, etc, up to but not including death (e.g. decapitation). If this is a minor monster or NPC then death can be immediate and visceral, or if this is a major NPC or player character then they might struggle for a time before expiring.

## Saving Throws

If you are attacked by a foe or other danger you must roll for your defense. This is called a **Saving Throw**, which is like a roll for an Action. If you fail a Saving Throw you take **Damage**. The GM will describe attacks and tell you when to roll a Saving Throw, saying something like "two black-fletched orc arrows fly from the darkness, striking Talin". Roll a Saving Throw against that fate.

**Success** - You aren't hit! If you Crit you also get a *Counter*: a free Action to counterattack.



**Failure** - The GM assigns the consequences for failures, usually Damage, Stress, Vim, or effects.

**Maneuvers** - If you roll COMBO in combat you can spend a Maneuver to describe a defense (e.g. dodge, parry, block, duck, roll, slip, etc.) and upgrade.

Saving Throws are used for all risks to life and limb and death-defying situations, such as a trap, collapsing cliff, pit filled with snakes, or poisoned drink. If you fail the Saving Throw you take Damage, which becomes a Doom unless your armor negates it.

|             |           |                  |
|-------------|-----------|------------------|
| attacks     | avalanche | lightning        |
| weapons     | poison    | charm            |
| falling     | disease   | mind blasts      |
| drowning    | morale    | fear             |
| suffocation | fire      | paralysis        |
| traps       | cold      | petrification    |
| cave-in     | acid      | very large rocks |

## Damage

Attacks deal 1 Damage, or 2 on a Crit. This is the same whether you are attacking or defending. Damage usually represents physical wounds, but is also used for other kinds of harm.

For physical attacks, compare **Armor Class** (AC) and **Weapon Class** (WC). Add 1 Damage if the weapon outclasses the armor, or subtract 1 Damage if the armor outclasses the weapon. If armor brings the total Damage to zero, the attack has no effect.

The GM may also apply a simple +1/-1 modifier for Damage for highlighting special resistances or weaknesses of monsters. For example, non-silvered weapons inflict -1 Damage to werewolves, but a holy weapon inflicts +1 Damage to minor undead.

**Rationale** - Damage in combat is intended to be cinematic, where you will get hurt but still have a sporting chance of survival. Even huge weapons (e.g. catapults, cannons, giants, dragons, giant ball traps, etc.) deal 1 Damage, because they are assumed to be a glancing blow or shrapnel from a near-miss, not a direct hit. What we're going for here is a fun fight. Outside of combat, if you get yourself into a situation where deadly damage is completely unavoidable then you'll just die.

## Assets

Assets are legendary items with exceptional or special qualities. These qualities are described by Asset Signatures and Secrets.

### Asset Signatures

An object might have a famous name and history such as "Naurdring the goblin slicer", or might be very high quality such as "tunic, royal blue with gold embroidery" or unusual "cloak, velvet green, warm, with lots of little pockets inside". If the Signature doesn't include the Asset type, write that afterwards along with Tags, e.g. "Naurdring, the goblin slicer [Longsword Class3...]".

You can declare a relevant Asset Signature to upgrade ASSET. For example, if you attack a goblin and roll ASSET then you can upgrade if you are wielding "longsword, Naurdring the goblin slicer". Similarly, wearing clothing such as "tunic, royal blue with gold embroidery" could help you in social interactions in high society.

Be warned, if an Asset becomes damaged it may lose these special qualities. For example, "clothing - very fine velvet" could become easily ruined by a crawl through a cavern. Consider reserving especially fine Assets for when you really need them.

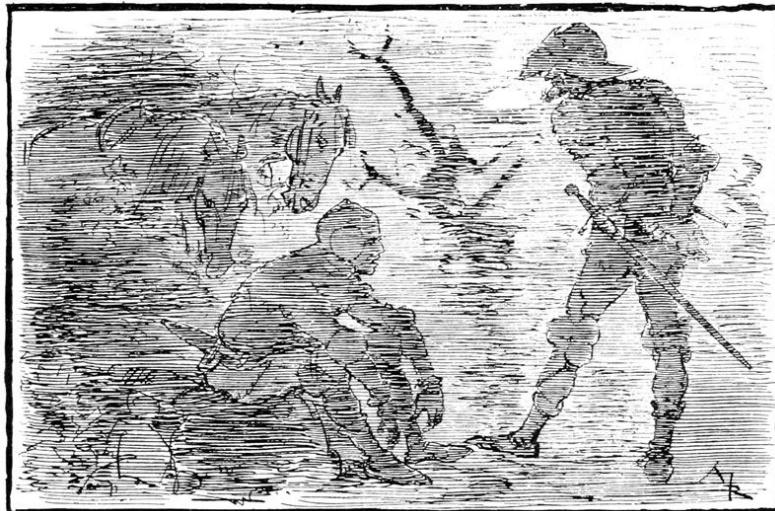
### Asset Secrets

Assets can also have Secrets, such as magic powers or special abilities. You could find a ring with a secret compartment, a magic sword that detects evil, or a flask of holy water that heals wounds. Asset Secrets work the same and are subject to the same

requirements as other Secrets, e.g. you need a supporting Theme, must spend Vim, etc.

# Vision and Hearing

Seeing and hearing your surroundings are extremely important for making wise tactical choices as well as enjoying the game.

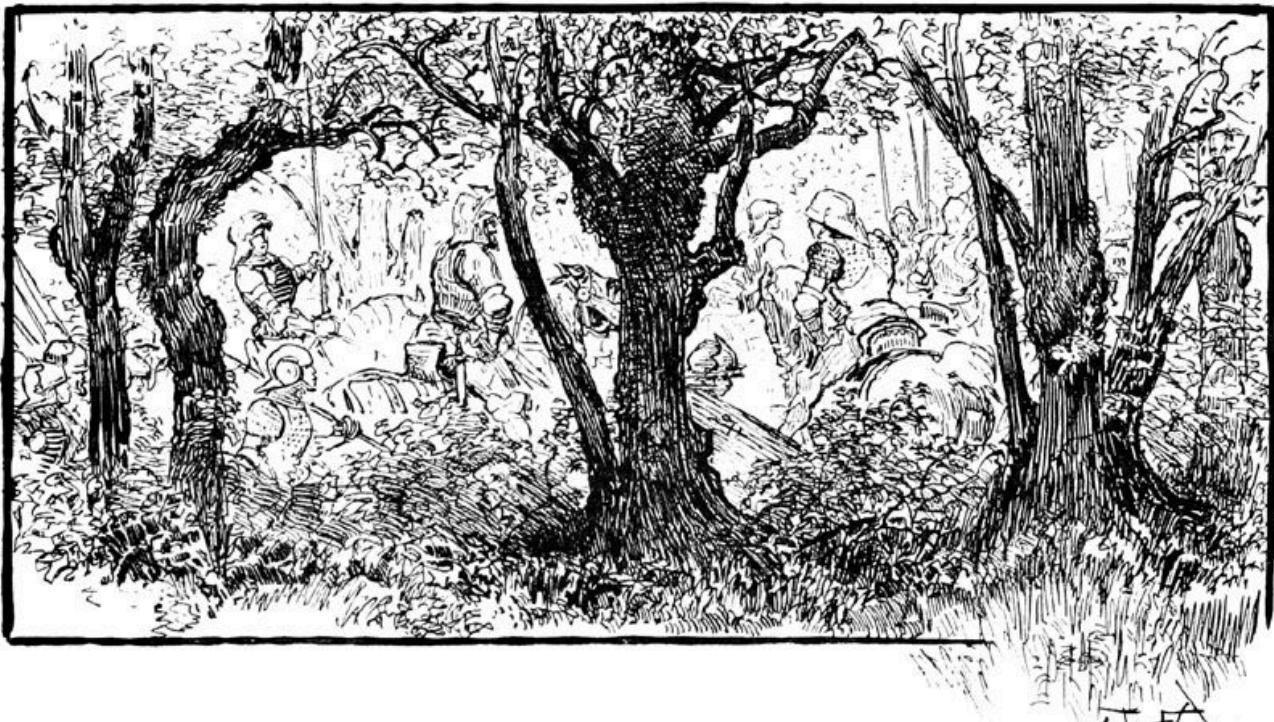


Since much of this game is played in the "theatre of the mind", you rely a lot on what the GM tells you. The GM will take the surroundings and your senses (primarily vision and hearing) into account when describing the situation or answering your questions.

In most situations the GM will describe what you might see or hear in general terms, and then expect you to ask questions to get details. If you have good vision and hearing the GM is more likely to be "chatty" and volunteer extra information. On the other hand, if you can't see or hear then you won't receive much information at all.

Sometimes the GM will respond to a question by saying you can't see or hear well enough to get an answer. For example, you might only be able to read an inscription if you are very close, with good direct light such as a lantern. Or you might not be able to hear what someone is saying at a distance if there is background noise, or if your allies are moving or talking.

Sometimes weather, terrain, or gear will impede your senses. It's hard to see through trees, fog, darkness, or after a bright flash. Most helms make it hard to hear, and closed face helms make it hard to see since you are looking through tiny slits or holes.



If something is impeding your senses then the GM will provide much less information, possibly only describing the obstacle. For example, the GM might say "your helmet muffles the sound of their voices", "you see thick smoke", "you just hear the thundering waterfall", "you can't see that far away with your helmet on".

You suffer a Disadvantage if your roll relies on an impeded sense.

## Light Adaptation

Given a few minutes of time, your eyes will naturally adapt to see well enough in various levels of light, from bright to dim. However, you lose your dark adaptation if you see bright light, such as the directly lit area of a light source. It's hard to see when your vision is adapting. If you are exposed to a flash of bright light, you can make a Saving Throw to close your eyes. An eye patch can help.

## Light Sources

A light source which directly illuminates an area can help you see in detail, and so the GM will provide the most detailed information. This can be valuable when reading runes on an ancient scroll or searching for traps. A candle or lamp lights a book-sized area and a torch or lantern lights a person-sized area. However, this direct light

spoils your night vision, and makes it hard to see outside of the directly illuminated area.

Light sources also provide indirect light, so in a cave or dungeon even a small candle is enough to let you see well enough to move around slowly and fight toe-to-toe in melee combat. You need to let your eyes adapt to the dark and avoid bright lights; since it is hard to see whenever your eyes are adjusting.

However, seeing something far away requires that area to be illuminated. So while a candle or torch might be enough for you to fight in melee combat, it won't be sufficient to see and shoot a far away foe. Also keep in mind light your sources can be seen from very far away, and the area they illuminate allows others to see you.

Nocturnal (such as cats) or subterranean creatures (such as goblins) have sensitive eyes optimized for the dark.

## Wealth, Treasure & Looting

The most common coin is the **crown** (cr), also known as the gold piece (gp). Some crowns are minted in other precious metals, such as "silver crowns", "red gold crowns", "platinum crowns", "electrum crowns", etc, but any "crown" is 1 gp. There are also lesser coins, such as silver pieces (sp) and copper pieces (cp), where  $1\text{ gp} = 10\text{ sp} = 100\text{ cp}$ . On average 10 coins weigh 1 pound. Also if it helps, you can think of 1gp as \$100 USD, 1sp as \$10, and 1cp as \$1.

## Goods & Services

Daily needs such as food, clothing, lodging, weapons, tools, etc, are usually readily available from the local people. You can expect to pay **1gp for common** goods and services of good quality. If you need to pay less you could pay in sp (or even cp), but you get what you pay for, and being cheap won't help your image. You can expect to pay **10gp+ for expensive** goods and services. (The character creation section denotes expensive assets with "\$".)

- **common (1gp)**: big meal, bottle of wine, lodging, cloak, cuirass, shield, knife, sword, sheet of paper, vial of ink, rope (50'), grappling hook, chain (10'), iron lock, rations (3 days), water skin, backpack, leather sack, bedroll, tent, lantern & oil, torches (4), tinder box, lock picks, mining pick and shovel, compass, wolfsbane, belladonna, holy water, eggs (dozen), crate of chickens, a goat, etc.
- **expensive (10gp+)**: full mail, plate armor, visored helm, greatsword, crossbow, pistol, book, silk rope (50'), mirror, healing potion, spyglass, draft horse and cart, riding horse, warhorse, etc.

## Assets

Assets as special items such as an adamant sword, moonsilver helm, Elven rope, a ship, a castle, etc. Assets have one or more a functional (i.e. non-cosmetic) Signature, Secret, or similar enhancements. Assets can only be acquired through adventuring or a Path, never purchased outright. However, Assets can be pawned for 100gp.

## Looting

Looting in its various forms involves taking an item, whether that's from the ground, furniture, prisoner, or corpse. The way you describe your looting matters! A body might also have something hidden under its shirt, in a boot, a fake tooth, or might have gems *inside*. The GM will not tell you what to do, or if you missed something, that's part of your adventure.

**Grab** - Use a Maneuver to take one readily accessible item. For example, you could grab a book laying on a table.

**Pickpocket** - Use an Action to take a small item from someone, or plant an item. The GM may require you roll to avoid notice. This only works for easily accessible items, such as a coin purse or ring of keys on a belt hook, unless you have a Secret such as "pick pockets".

**Loot** - Use an Action to loot a person or similarly-sized area, such as a prisoner, body, furniture piece, chest, pile of debris, etc. The GM will tell you what you find, and you can take one item in the Action.

**Investigate / Search** - Use an Action to search a person or similarly-sized area. It's up to you to say how you search. The GM will usually determine what you find based on how you describe your search (visual, patdown, or stripdown) rather than asking for a roll. Sometimes an item might be impossible to find without looking in a particular place, such as a gem rolled up in a rag in the toe of a boot.

**Harvesting** - Use an Action to harvest a material, such as picking mushrooms or cutting a fang off a giant spider. This can help you advance along an Experience Path.

## Carrying Capacity

The game subscribes to the mantra “you keep what you kill”, so we do not concern ourselves over limiting how much of the loot you can seize and carry with you. Building long lists of weird loots you’ve delved from the stygian deeps is obscenely fun! The GM may set reasonable limits on provisions you take *into* an adventure (e.g. food, water, ammo, large items, etc.) to keep things feeling real, but haul *out* all the loot you can claim!

# Part 3: Dooms

Dooms are traumatic conditions and experiences such as wounds, disease, starvation, and poisoning. That bone-deep cut the goblin gave you is a Doom, as is your charred left hand from the sorcerer's baalfire.

All Dooms are potentially life threatening. As Dooms worsens the effects become more severe, eventually leading to death.

You gain Dooms by failing Saving Throws. You take Damage if you fail a Saving Throw, and any Damage not stopped by armor or cover carries over into a Doom.



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This is the same for ALL afflictions, not just sword wounds. For example, "paralysis" creates a Doom with a downward spiral of loss of movement, eventually leading to total paralysis. Other examples:

|               |               |                    |
|---------------|---------------|--------------------|
| wound         | magical sleep | venom              |
| injury/trauma | freezing      | burns              |
| deaf/blind    | insanity      | taint              |
| poison/venom  | lycanthropy   | undead drain       |
| disease       | curse         | rot grubs          |
| drowning      | paralysis     | soul drain         |
| magical charm | petrification | insanity           |
| domination    | stunned       | other bad stuff... |

# Doom Stages

Dooms are very serious life threatening injuries or afflictions. You gain a Doom whenever you fail a Saving Throw and do not deal with all Damage. Each Doom has five checkboxes that indicate the Doom Stage. Check a box for each point of Damage taken for that Doom.

| Damage  | Stage | Effects                            | Recovery      |
|---|-------|------------------------------------|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>  | Doom1 |                                    | Field Ritual  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>  | Doom2 |                                    | Circle Ritual |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>                                     | Doom3 | Disabled (cannot use Hit Location) | Node Ritual   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Doom4 | Death's Door                       | High Ritual   |

**New Dooms are Unstable** and make you vulnerable. You take +1 Damage on a hit similar to an Unstable Doom. For example, if you have an unstable weapon wound in your leg, you take +1 Damage on another hit in your leg, (The original Doom is not modified.)

**Stabilizing a Doom** requires an Action and a roll, with Successes of the Doom Stage. Add +1 Damage on a Fumble.

**Healing a Doom** requires months of time for natural healing, or just a few hours via a healing Ritual.

## Doom1 ( ) - Hurt

At Doom1 you have received a potentially life-threatening wound. You might have pain and nausea, and may find it difficult to rest or sleep. Healing a Doom1 requires many weeks of rest, or a Field Ritual and healing Secret.

## Doom2 ( ) - Wounded

At Doom2 the Hit Location is severely wounded. Healing a Doom2 requires many weeks of rest, or a Circle Ritual and healing Secret.

## Doom3 (☒☒☒) - Disabled

At Doom2 the Hit Location is “disabled” and cannot be used. If this is your Head you are delirious or unconscious. If this is your Torso you can’t take physical actions. Healing a Doom2 requires many months of rest, or a Node Ritual and healing Secret.

## Doom4 (☒☒☒☒+) - Death’s Door

At Doom4 or higher you are “at death’s door”, incapacitated and about to die. You cannot take Actions beyond “death throes” such as complaining, crying, cursing, and making a mess. If you survive you’ve probably lost a hand, limb, internal organ, or dramatically disfiguring scar (e.g. face split in half, frozen joint, back bent sideways, etc). In this case it’s possible for you to continue to play your character, or you could retire from adventuring. Healing a Doom4 requires the most potent High Ritual and healing Secrets. Nobody survives this via natural means (and if they did they’d be burned as a witch).

This is a dangerous game, and your character can die due to unwise actions or bad luck. If your character dies or retires, role-play the last few moments, and recount the legend you have built. For example you might have been eviscerated by the orc’s falchion, crushed dead by the falling boulders, drained soulless by the vampire, turned to stone by the basilisk, eaten alive by the “vorpal squirrels”, or had his brain turned to eggs by the psionic blast of the “squid face”.

Afterwards, create a new character, so the GM can get you back into the action. The life of an adventurer is exceedingly dangerous, so you may want to have a few characters on the deck and ready to play.

## Stabilizing Dooms

Dooms are Unstable to begin with. For example, a sword wound might be a deep gash that makes it difficult to use a limb. These penalties go away once the Doom has been Stabilized.

First, you will need a feasible approach. Weapon wounds, bumps, bruises, and burns are commonplace and everyone knows basic first aid. However, more exotic or insidious Dooms such as paralysis, petrification, poison, diseases, curses, or mental afflictions require a variety of less commonly known approaches. If a Doom is beyond your knowledge to heal then you can't stabilize it.

Assuming you have the necessary knowledge to stabilize the Doom, you must use an Action and make a roll, scoring Successes of at least the Doom Stage. For example, a Doom1 requires only a normal success, but a Doom2 requires a critical success, and a Doom3 requires 3 successes.

- You can [+1] ASSET if you have a complete "first aid kit" (i.e. clean water, bandages, splints, needle and thread, anti-venom, etc.) suitable for the wound, OR a magical "healing potion".
- Add +1 Damage on a Fumble unless you are using magic, such a *potion of healing* or magic healing spell.
- If you are well positioned to stabilize the doom, with many advantages and a good approach, you can ask the GM if a roll is really necessary.

## Healing Dooms

Fortunately for you, this game is about having fun adventures, not long-term hospitalization, so you can be cured of nearly anything via some kind of magical healing Ritual.

### Healing Rituals

A healing Ritual is a combination of a healing Secret and a Ritual. The Secret must be appropriate for healing the Doom, just like for stabilizing the Doom with magic.

A healing Ritual will heal all Dooms at the level of the Ritual or less. So a Ritual1 heals Doom1, and a Ritual3 heals Doom2 and lower. The Ritual heals all applicable Dooms from everyone participating in the Ritual (actively or passively), not just one person.

Some rare Dooms might require you to go on a quest or seek out an NPC to find the cure. For example, “vampiric life drain” might require visiting a particular shrine with priests rumored to be able to reverse undead drain. The GM will let you know when this applies.

## Natural Healing

Attempting to heal Dooms *naturally* works about as well as it did in the medieval era, which is to say very slowly or maybe not at all. A broken bone might heal in a few months of rest, a spear wound in your guts is as likely to kill you from infection as to eventually heal, and an incurable magical disease or curse won’t ever go away.

# Part 4: Advancement

This section describes how you earn Experience Points to “level up”, as well as how you can complete Experience Paths.

## Experience Points

The GM will award Experience Points (XP) to reward heroic achievements. For illustrative purposes, the GM will usually award 1-6 XP for the following deeds:

- ◆ Survive a very challenging fight
- ◆ Complete a quest
- ◆ Haul loot (500+ gp) back to civilization

Once you have earned **10 XP** you are **ready to Level Up**. You will need to pause in action and consider what you have learned. After you Level Up, reset your XP to zero so you can do it again.

Awards are given during the game, and are usually just for memorable deeds, not small things. For example, an easy fight won't result in XP unless it ends up becoming important or memorable for some reason.

Usually all characters earn the same base XP, so the GM can simply say “you all earn 4 XP”. The GM can also issue small bonuses, such as “+1 XP for roleplaying”.

## Level Up!

Once you have earned **10 XP** you are **ready to Level Up**. You will need to pause in action and consider what you have learned.



When you Level Up, reset your XP to 0 and roll to see what kind of thing you learned. Then you update your character in your own words.

1. **THEME**: Add or refine a Theme
2. **EFFORT**: Add or refine a Trait you used in hardship
3. **COMBO**: Add or refine a Trait you learned from someone else
4. **ASSET**: Add or refine a Signature or Secret for an Asset (or item)
5. **ULT**: Add or refine a Secret
6. **PREP**: Advance or complete an Experience Path

You can ask the other players to help you decide. However, you can only update your character in a way that makes sense based on your current situation or recent past. Keep in mind you are taking a short break from whatever you were doing, and noting something you learned along the way. Crafting usually requires a lot of time spent in a workshop, which is best as an Experience Path.

*Note that the game doesn't use an overall "character level", so you don't need to track it except for fun.*

## Creative Rolling

You can optionally spend time on "homework" between games to create something to share with the group. You could write a character backstory or log, draw a character sketch, paint a miniature, write details for an NPC, pet, an essay on your religion, etc. The GM will let you **roll twice** when you level up and take the result that best fits what you worked on.

# Experience Paths

Experience Paths ("Paths") are your driving motivations, goals, and quests. Paths can involve world-spanning quests, or they can be small and personal, such as a goal to learn a new skill or spell, craft an item, or research a new magic spell.

- ◆ Lenarin wants to recover a long lost Elvish sword
- ◆ Hazarak wants to find a grimoire of summoning rituals
- ◆ The dragon Aashok wants the nearby goblins purged
- ◆ The townsfolk need your help against raiders
- ◆ Krod wants to train his hunting dog
- ◆ Hazarak is experimenting with a "blue fireballs" spell
- ◆ The princess asks for help returning to her kingdom
- ◆ Druznar is attempting to summon and bind an elemental
- ◆ Brigit wants to find the lost shrine of Ithilmerin

## Starting Paths

To start a new Path, simply write it down. Use your own words with as much detail as you like. If you already have two Paths then you must abandon one before starting another.

Ideally use a single sheet of paper that is shared by all the players, and start each game session by reviewing Paths as a group. This helps make it clear what kind of game everyone wants to play, and what they are trying to do. The players become the audience for the heroic deeds of the characters, and can often help each other.

## Completing Paths

You complete a Path when the GM agrees you have done enough work to finish it. You should roleplay progress and take notes. For example, you might want to log time and materials spent crafting your new set of armor.

You could roleplay how you spend effort and time training or working hard towards your Path. For example you might practice swordsmanship all day, carry logs up a mountain, or spend a day bent over musty tomes looking for a particular bit of lore.

Alternatively, you could roleplay how a Dark Secret or Doom moves you forward on your Path. For example, you might flee from an ambush with giant spiders, if you have a Dark Secret phobia, which helps you to learn to run fast. Or you could roleplay how a "arrow in the leg" Doom slows you down and you can't use a Maneuver to move fast, and helped you to learn courage by standing your ground. Overcoming adversity is a path to strength.

Or, face and overcome a Monster that is ultimate at something strongly related to your Path. For example, you could defeat a *fire-breathing wyrm* to finish your "fiery circle spell" Path.

## Rewards

The GM will give an appropriate **Reward** when you complete a Path. This could be a "level up" or something more specific and rare. For example, you could construct a new Asset or summon a Minion or Familiar. Anything is possible if you follow your dreams. Examples:

|                   |                    |                     |
|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| gold/cash/credits | valuable art       | horse/vehicle       |
| letter of credit  | trinket/gimmick    | pet/familiar        |
| magic spell       | magic item         | henchman/minion     |
| spellbook         | favor owed         | resolve dark secret |
| healing potion    | cure for a disease | location of hostage |
| special weapon    | cure for a curse   | potion ingredients  |
| special arrows    | land/holdings      | treasure map        |
| custom armor      | secret base        | key to something    |
| armored clothes   | ship/boat          | talking book/skull  |
| trophy/big tooth  | musical instrument | unusual tools       |

# Consequences

The way you complete (or abandon) a Path matters, and may have side effects such as making allies or enemies. The GM can assign a Dark Secret if the way you took your Path had consequences.

## Using Paths

Use your Paths for anything you want to accomplish. You can create personal wish lists, character objectives, personal quests, spell research, creation of magic items, finding a teacher, etc.

You can write a Path to seek out rare items, such as a custom suit of armor, fine sword, or a spell scroll. This lets the other players and GM know the character wants that item, and lets you highlight your character's journey to find and claim the prized possession. In this case the reward will be an Asset with an enhancement.

**RECLAIM MY FATHER'S SWORD** - The creepy cultists in the mountain stole my father's sword, all I have left of the great man. I will reclaim it to save my honor.

**CLOAK OF FEATHERBLADES** - I'm crafting a magic cloak with various blades (swords and daggers) incorporated into the cloth and hem, like deadly feathers. Its a wearable weapon.

## Magic Research

Use a Path to research a new spell or construct a magic item. This probably involves digging through libraries of arcane tomes, acquiring rare materials, spending time in a magic laboratory, etc.

## Minions

Use a Path to find a loyal minion, henchman, companion, or servant, including a magical minion such as an elemental or familiar. Write a **Secret** describing why your minion is truly loyal, whether that is from admiration, an oath, or magical binding. Your minion is an NPC ("non-player character") controlled by the GM, although you can generally ask (or order) your minion to do things and can temporarily take over a minion as your PC if your main character is indisposed.

Create the minion using the standard character creation rules. If you are short on time then you can rely on dice rolls instead of choosing, and skip some steps and do them later.

## Familiars

A familiar is a spirit who accompanies you in order to assist you in using your magic. Each familiar takes on the form of a tiny animal such as a cat, bat, small dog, toad, etc. Each familiar is a minion: use the Theme & Signature for the familiar form (e.g. "black cat familiar") and Traits to describe physical qualities or ways the familiar assists you with magic. Use your Secret that describes why your familiar (Minion) is loyal to describe a mystical bond with you, such as "telepathic bond", "shared emotions", "shared sight", "shared dreams", "shared voice", etc.

Familiars are relatively weak and likely to be killed if exposed to harm, however since they are spirits they can be brought back to life. You must use a Path to bring your familiar back from the dead, which manifests a new animal body (not necessarily the same kind as before). When this happens update your familiar's Theme & Signature as needed, and assign a new Trait or Secret.

# Part 5: Secrets

Secrets are things only your character knows, such as forgotten knowledge, special abilities, or magic spells.

Just as your character is in your own words, so are your Secrets. You have full creative control to invent your own Secrets that match your character concept. There is no predefined list of Secrets, but here are a few examples to kick start your creativity.



## Magic Spells

Magic spells and powers are Secrets. You can create any you like, or take inspiration from books, movies, or classic roleplaying games.

### Magic-User Spells

|              |              |               |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| detect magic | magic shield | telekinesis   |
| levitate     | read magic   | teleport      |
| lock/unlock  | scrying      | ventriloquism |

### Hallow (Divine) Spells

|                |              |                     |
|----------------|--------------|---------------------|
| bless          | detect magic | moon blessing       |
| cure blindness | dispel evil  | prot. from evil     |
| cure disease   | dispel magic | purify food & drink |
| cure poison    | hallow       | remove curse        |
| cure wounds    | heal         | remove fear         |
| detect evil    | meditation   | slow poison         |
| detect lie     | moonlight    | speak with animals  |

### Pyromancy (Fire) Spells

|               |                |              |
|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| blazing arrow | ring of ashes  | sunfire orb  |
| combustion    | smokeless fire | control fire |

|               |           |                      |
|---------------|-----------|----------------------|
| flaming arrow | flamberge | purifying flames     |
| fireball      | hellfire  | fire resistance      |
| flame wall    | ignite    | vision in the flames |

### Illusion Spells

|                 |                  |                   |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| audible glamer  | invisibility     | phantasmal killer |
| blur            | light            | phantom steed     |
| color spray     | minor illusion   | prestidigitation  |
| darkness        | mirror image     | shadow blade      |
| disguise self   | phantom fog      | silence           |
| illusory script | phantasmal force | ventriloquism     |

### Necromancy (Death) Spells

|                 |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| animate dead    | finger of death | soul trap       |
| circle of death | raise dead      | speak with dead |
| feign death     | resurrection    | vampiric touch  |

## Magic Rituals

In order to perform a Ritual you need a Secret that describes the Ritual itself, such as "magic circle ritual".

The Secret must also designate one of the Ritual levels, 1-6 (Field Ritual, Circle Ritual, Node Ritual, etc. Rituals have excellent potential for roleplaying and showing off your magic, since they are used in slow scenes where you have time to use evocative language and imagery. A Ritual restores your Vim and can be combined with a Secret for a powerful effect. For example, you could combine a "moonstone ritual" Ritual with a "heal wounds" Secret for a very powerful healing effect.

|                  |                   |                        |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| prayer ritual    | dolmen of stones  | Winter end festival    |
| moonstone ritual | sacrificial altar | First harvest festival |
| temple cleansing | pit of serpents   | Feast of fires         |
| magic circle     | Feast of the dead | Festival of dooms      |

# Using Secrets

Using a Secret is an Action, and resolved in the same way as a similar Action without a Secret.

Make a roll if a similar Action without the Secret would involve a roll. For example, roll for attacks or other hostile actions, but only roll for movement when doing something risky or flashy such as leaping over a pit. Do not roll for protective Secrets, since you will roll a Saving Throw as needed.

This depends a lot on the specific action and context, so the GM will sometimes tell you to roll, or not to roll. While nobody expects you to roll to light a fire while making camp, it's appropriate to roll when you're short on fuel or it's raining, or in a time-compressed stressful situation such as combat. Thus, using a Secret to create magical light might require a roll in some situations, but not in others.

Always roll if you are using a Secret used in a hostile way, i.e. as an attack. Some Secrets are purely magical attacks, such as a "magic missile" spell. Some clearly have the potential to harm others, such as conjuring a handful of fire. Others seem to be harmless, such as conjuring "moonlight", yet they might burn a wraith or shadow. So this comes down to your intention when using a Secret.

## Secrets Cost Vim

Attempting to use a Secret costs 1 Vim.

**Exceptions** - The following situations do not cost Vim:

- When you are just adding roleplaying flavor for fun, not advantage.
- When you are using a Secret to justify upgrading ULT.
- When your Secret is a skill or knowledge that doesn't involve anything magical or supernatural. You should be prepared to defend this with an explanation as needed. Knowledges such as ancient history or secret languages (e.g. Thieves' Cant, Druidic, Fomorian, Kessrith, Aethiiri, etc) do not cost Vim. For example, a

skill such as "quick draw dagger" does not cost Vim, unless you were using magic to accomplish the feat. The GM will limit usage and effect based on what seems plausible without magic.

**Powerful Secrets** - The GM may require multiple Vim for any Secret that seems more powerful than the sample Secrets in this book. Also keep in mind the most powerful secrets, such as summonings, wishes, resurrections, and doomsday shit, might be Rituals or Paths.

## Effects

Each Secret has a special Effect, which is the unique and interesting thing the Secret does. A Secret might make an area glow with moonlight, conjure a ball of fire, create an illusion, charm a person, tie/untie a knot, etc. The possibilities are endless, limited only by your imagination.

- **Ball of Flame** conjures a small palm-sized ball of fire into your hand. The fire doesn't burn your hands, and you could potentially juggle a few balls for fun.
- **Conjure Water** conjures water, or makes a target wet.
- **Freeze** turns water cold, possibly even to solid ice.
- **Friend** makes someone regard you as their friend.
- **Slow** halves the normal movement rate of the target.

Secrets target one **Person** within your line of sight, or by touch. Alternatively you could target a Person-sized object, animal, monster. It doesn't matter what you are targeting, so long as it's about the same size as a typical human person.

You can also target a Person-sized area, which is the area "occupied" by a person. For tabletop games with a battlemmap and miniatures you should consider the area occupied by a Person, which is a subset of one 5x5 foot square or hex.

If you want more than one Effect, or want to target more than one Person then you need to discuss that with the GM. This is a negotiation, so you could describe how your Secret isn't very

powerful based on the way you've described it, or by adding limitations / restrictions (e.g. only works in shadows). You could also specify your Secret costs extra Vim (e.g. pay 2 Vim to affect multiple people). This is locked in when you take the Secret, not something you can change freely during play, but still something that could change between games over further discussions with the GM.

## Damage

If you want to use a Secret to deal Damage, resolve it the same as for an attack without a Secret. So, on a successful attack roll you deal 1 Damage, or 2 for Crit. This is in addition to the normal Effect.

Some Secrets have an obvious way to use them as an attack, such as a "magic missile" spell. Others may be less straightforward and need some creativity. For example, a "palm of fire" Secret might be used to attack a foe by throwing the fire at him, or punching him, or dropping it into the back of his shirt. Be creative and have fun!

- **Magic Missile** deals 1 Damage to a target in line of sight.
- **Shock** deals 1 Damage to a target by touch.
- **Ball of Flame** conjures a small palm-sized ball of fire into your hand. The fire doesn't burn your hands, and you could potentially juggle a few balls for fun. If you hurl the ball of fire you can inflict 1 Damage. Creatures vulnerable to fire, such as trolls, might decide to deal with the fire or flee.
- **Freeze** turns water cold, possibly even to solid ice. If used on a foe this deals 1 Damage.

If you have a Secret which is solely meant to deal Damage, you can describe your Effect as some kind of dramatic, physical intermediary which expands the attack. For example, you could affect up to three people, or a similarly sized area of effect, or say the target can pierce some kind of cover (e.g. "the thorns can grow through wood").

- **Fan of Sparks** deals 1 Damage to everyone in a fan-shaped area in your forward arc (the size of three people attacking you).

- **Fireballs** deals 1 Damage to everyone within one or more blast areas (up to 3 person-sized areas).
- **Lightning Bolt** deals 1 Damage to a target, and then the lightning continues past that person to affect up to two more people.
- **Glyph of Pain** deals 1 Damage to any people in front of you who see it (up to 3 people).

## Magic vs Armor

Apply Damage from Secrets directly, without comparing Weapon Class & Armor Class. After all, Secrets often involve weird magic such as songs or evil eyes or acid or psychic blasts, so it's hard to imagine how they would be affected by armor.

**Line of Sight** - Even though your Secret isn't affected by armor, you must have direct line of sight to your target. Any obstruction such as cover, concealment, or someone in the way blocks your ability to deliver magic to that target. If a portion of the target is visible, you can use the Aim Maneuver to target a visible Hit Location. This means a simple curtain could potentially block your Secret. Magic is weird.

**Orichalcum** - Armor made of orichalcum allows the defender to upgrade ASSET vs magic attacks, even though magic attacks normally disregard armor. If the attack is targeting a specific Hit Location, the orichalcum armor must cover that location.

## Weapon-like Magic Attacks

If your Secret takes the form of a weapon or other physical attack (e.g. "magic arrow", "holy hammer", "stone shards", etc) then the Secret is affected by armor as if it were a normal weapon. In this case you must compare Armor Class and Weapon Class and modify damage accordingly.

- If you are not using any Asset you have WC 0.
- If you have an Asset, but it does not need to be held in the hands (e.g. an amulet or tattoo) you have WC 1.
- If you are using some kind of hand-held magic focus which needs to be equipped, such as a wand, orb, staff, etc, then you are WC 3.

- If you are using a weapon to deliver a Secret, then use its Weapon Class with a +3 bonus. For example, a warbow (Class 3) firing a "magic arrow" would be WC 6. You would also have WC 6 if you are using a wizard staff (Class 3) to smite a foe.

**Orichalcum** - Armor made of orichalcum has an Armor Class bonus of +3 vs magic attacks which deal damage.

## Bonus Maneuvers

Some Secrets can grant a **Bonus Maneuver**. For example, "quick draw dagger" readies your dagger, or a "quick step" lets you move 5 feet, without spending a Maneuver.

**You may only gain one (1) Bonus Maneuver per round.** However, this increases to two (2) if you are not wearing *any* armor. This gives skilled magic-users, thieves, and unarmed fighting monks their incentive to not wear any armor.

## Healing Secrets

**Healing Secrets** can be used in two ways: as a first-aid Action to stabilize a Doom, or as a Ritual to heal a Doom. Each healing Secret can only cure one specific kind of Doom, for example:

- **Cure Wounds** heals wounds caused by weapons or objects. Does not work if there are complications such as poison, burns, etc.
- **Slow Poison** heals wounds complicated by poison or venom. This includes stabilization of a wound that delivered the poison, such as weapon, bite or sting.
- **Pyromancer's Salve** heals burns, as well as extinguishing active flames and cooling boiling liquids.
- **Purifying Fyre** burns away unholy Taint caused by the touch of a *Kha'din* or other evil spirit.

## Protective Secrets

Protective Secrets grant you a form of resistance or partial immunity to a specific type of damage, such as "fire" or "swords". This allows

you to [+] ASSET against that type of damage. Use an Action to protect another person for as you Maintain the Secret. Use a Ritual to protect multiple people (1 person per Ritual Vim).

- **Protection vs Fire** protects vs fire.
- **Wardpact vs Swords** protects vs swords and daggers.
- **Protection vs Arrows** protects vs arrows.
- **Protection from Evil** protects vs hostile spells of any kind, except those which deal Damage.
- **Armor of Faith** protects vs unholy spells, defined as those cast by saints or minions of an evil god who is an enemy of your god.
- **Mage Shield** is a floating force-disc shield which Guards one Hit Location ([+] COMBO), changeable with a Maneuver.

## Conjuration Secrets

Secrets can be used to conjure (create) Common Assets. These are not fully real, and only last for as long as you Maintain the Secret.

- **Create Water** creates a person-sized amount of water.
- **Conjure Item** creates a small item in your hand.
- **Forest Spear** [Class3 2H ...] creates a wooden spear.

## Transformation Secrets

Some characters can undergo a transformation from "human" form to a special ancestral form such as Drisi or Karrocks. The Secret transforms you into the special ancestral form, which activates any Innate Assets you have taken for that ancestral form, such as a Drisi "snake bite" or a Karrock "stone body". Otherwise those Innate Assets are inactive and essentially don't exist.

## Secrets Use Assets

You can upgrade ASSET if your Asset has a Signature to help your Secret, such as a "wand of fire", "runesword" or "Aethiiri singing bow".

# Reversible Secrets

Secrets are freely "reversible". For example, an "unlock" spell could also be used to close the lock.

## Maintained Secrets

Some Secrets can be Maintained over time, such as a "protection from fire" spell. The effect is automatically Maintained until you use another Action to carefully unweave the magic and let it dissipate. In addition, any time you use a Secret you must pay a Maneuver to keep the Maintained Secret stable, or it becomes unstable and ends in an uncontrolled way.

Tip: If you are a magic-user you may want to take a Secret for a Bonus Maneuver such as "Maintained Spell".

## Movement Secrets

Secrets can increase your movement. If this enhances normal you do not need to roll, unless you would normally need to roll for movement (e.g. leaping over a pit). Maintaining an effect (\*) requires you to use at least one Maneuvers per round, or the Secret ends.

- **Flying** allows you to fly, possibly growing wings or manifesting aetheric energies.
- **Folded Step** transports you to a location in line of sight.

## Secret Fumbles

**Fumbles** - *The GM may assign additional consequences for any Fumble, including Damage, Stress, Vim, or effects. The GM may allow a Saving Throw.*

Fumbles are often more dramatic (or dangerous) when a Secret is involved, especially if it has an area of effect. For example, a fumbled *fireball* spell might blow up in your face and/or affect your allies. Secrets which do not have obvious damaging effects might still inflict Damage on you or others due to the magical drain.

backlash, or instability. The GM will usually allow a Saving Throw. Always consider whether using a secret is really necessary.

# Gaining Secrets

You can gain a new Secret as a Path. For example, a Thief might find a trap and reverse-engineer the mechanism to create a similar trap, or a wizard might study a spell from an old tome.

You must have a supporting Theme for every Secret. For example, "Wizard" could support various magic spells such as "magic sight", "wizard light", "magic shield", "levitate", etc.

Access to powerful Secrets such as "fly", "fireball", "suggestion", etc, is restricted. You must have an appropriate supporting Signature, not just a Theme, and also a supporting chain of lesser Secrets. So if you want to learn a powerful spell like "fireball" you would need first learn a few lesser spells like "conjure flame", "fire arrow", etc.

The above are guidelines for you and the GM to help you build your dream character, but keep your concept consistent, and avoid player character imbalance. Since Secrets are in your own words, the GM will usually adopt a "trust and verify" approach, where you are allowed to write your Secrets and even try them, but require adjustments as needed to match these guidelines.

## If I told you it wouldn't be a secret...

Secrets are complex and must be thoroughly earned; characters cannot simply swap Secrets with each other. The same goes with finding a spellbook. After all, owning a chemistry or physics textbook doesn't necessarily mean you have absorbed the material and can apply it. Mastering anything takes time and dedication.

# Ritual Secrets

Rituals are elaborate ceremonies that invoke mystical power. Participating in a Ritual restores your Vim. Performing a Ritual yourself lets you invoke a powerful Ritual Secret. There are five levels of Rituals, each increasing in power.



**Field Rituals (5 Vim)** are expedient and can take place anywhere, in just 2-3 hours. Thus they are the mainstay of magic-users and priests who spend their lives on the move and can't always take the time to sleep to recover power.

**Circle Rituals (10 Vim)** are field rituals that involve construction of a ritual focus such as a magic circle, altar, shrine, circle of stones, dolmen, tori gate, etc. This requires preparation, time and/or potentially costly materials such as powdered silver. Circle Rituals take 4-6 hours, or more as appropriate based on what you build.

**Node Rituals (15 Vim)** are circle rituals within a mystic place of power such as a Node, Kalla, holy ground, etc. Node Rituals take 8-12 hours, depending on your attunement to the Node.

**High Rituals (20-30 Vim)** are node rituals for specific high days of the year, such as changing seasons, harvests, equinox, solstice, etc. High Rituals are celebrated with cultural rituals and festivals for multiple days. You will have a dozen High Rituals per year.

**Aeonic Rituals** are unique, each performed just once, ever! They are immensely powerful, able to transform the practitioner into a demi-god, destroy the world, or perhaps both.

When you *participate* in a Ritual, your Vim is restored to the number specified by that Ritual, e.g. Field Rituals are 5, Circle Rituals are 10,

etc. This happens when the Ritual is completed. However, if your Vim is negative it will not raise unless the Ritual earns enough Vim to set you to above zero. Thus, at Vim -5 a Field Ritual will not help!

## Performing Rituals

Performing a Ritual requires a Secret, which corresponds to a specific Ritual level (e.g. Field, Circle, etc). You need to make this clear in the Secret name (e.g. "magic circle ritual", "faerie ring", etc.) or in a footnote "silver ritual (Circle)", etc.

When you perform a Ritual, roleplay the ceremony that you undertake in as much detail as you can. For example, you might describe your Circle Ritual as tracing intricate geometric shapes and runes in powdered silver and white chalk. While this is a great moment to take center stage, be inclusive and involve the other players.

## Ritual Secrets

When you *perform* a Ritual, you can choose one of your **Secrets** (or from those offered by participants) to become a **Ritual Secret**.

**Ritual Secrets** are major magics that make normal Secrets look like mere cantrips and cheap parlor tricks. These are highly-empowered versions of normal Secrets. You could summon a fire elemental, control the weather, open a Node gate, etc. The GM may limit what you can do with normal Secrets, ruling that you need to use a Ritual to get the full benefit. The most common example are the **Healing Rituals** described in Part 5: Dooms.



## Part 7 - Advanced Combat

This section provides advanced rules for combat..

### Hit Locations

Each attack affects one of six Hit Locations, which determines what protection (armor and cover) applies. The GM determines the Hit Location, and possibly a description of a specific body part.

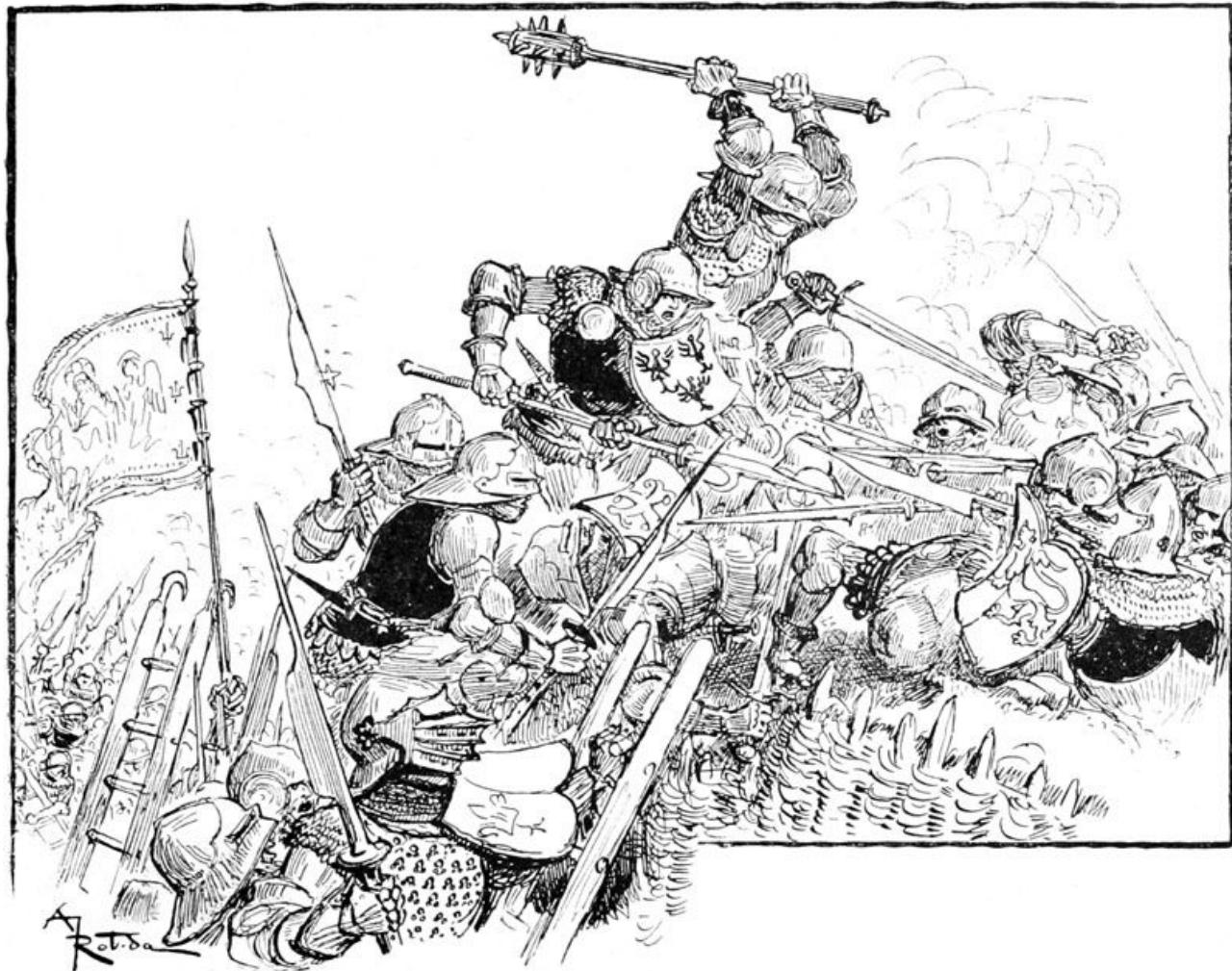
#### Hit Location Examples

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| Head  | neck, chin, nose, face, forehead, skull, etc.           |
| Arm   | forearm, elbow, upper arm, shoulder, etc.               |
| Hand  | fingers, knuckles, palm, back of hand, wrist, etc.      |
| Torso | abdomen, ribs, sternum, chest, clavicle, etc.           |
| Waist | outer thigh, inner thigh, groin, hip, pelvis, etc.      |
| Leg   | knee, shin, calf, ankle, foot, heel, instep, toes, etc. |

The Head and Torso are the most vulnerable areas, and the first body parts you should armor. Melee attacks prioritize the fragile Head. Conversely, ranged attacks usually prioritize the "center mass" target of the Torso, and a "near miss" might hit an adjacent area. Also the hands are often the easiest target in melee (since they are the closest target) but present too small of an area to be worthwhile targeting with ranged attacks.

You may use the "Aim" Maneuver to target a specific Hit Location. Otherwise, the GM determines the Hit Location.

When you are attacked, the GM will usually foreshadow aimed attacks, e.g. "the scarred goblin is swinging from the right" or "the scything blade arcs towards your legs". You can use a Maneuver to position your shield or weapon to cover a Hit Location, either by naming the Hit Location or naming the foe who is attacking, e.g. "I am blocking the goblin chief with my shield".



# Combat Maneuvers

Use your **Maneuvers** in combat for tactics such as feints, parries, beats, taking cover, and more! Simply spend a Maneuver when you roll COMBO to get an upgrade.

If you can you should roleplay what you do with your Maneuver, and if you do that before you roll then you may get a broader benefit that can apply to several rolls, such as "I take the high ground". Maneuvers can have tactical combinations, especially with Weapon Tags. Examples are below, but you should use Maneuvers to describe your own cunning tactics.

Raise Stress when you use a Maneuver that relies on vision (e.g. Aim) or other impeded senses.

## Aim

Choose an available Hit Location (head, torso, arm, hand, waist, or leg) and facing (right/left/front/back), or ask the GM to pick an optimal location for you. You gain COMBO if you are aiming at the Torso since that is the largest area. This Maneuver only applies to a single attack and you must declare it before rolling.

- I look for an opening
- I aim at center mass
- I aim for the gaps
- I look for a clean shot
- I take his hand with my sword
- I cut him in the leg

## Advanced Aim

Use two Aim Maneuvers to specify a smaller area within a Hit Location, about the size of your palm, such as the face, fingers, palm, wrist, foot, face, fingers, armpit, etc. Use three Aim Maneuvers for even smaller targets, about the size of your thumb, such as an

eye, ear, nose, mouth, etc. This Maneuver only applies to a single attack and you must declare it before rolling.

- I hit him in the face (2 Maneuvers)
- I hit him in the back of the knee (3 Maneuvers)
- I thrust into his armpit (3 Maneuvers)
- I stab him between the armor plates (3 Maneuvers)
- I slice off his ear (3 Maneuvers)
- I shoot him in the eye (3 Maneuvers)

## Guard

Use a Maneuver to move your weapon or shield to **Guard** a named Hit Location and side (left or right), such as "Head - left". You upgrade COMBO on attacks against that area. See Advanced Combat > Guarding for more advanced details.

- I hold my shield high
- I shift my poleax to cover my left side
- In response to his leg cut, I cover my leg with my sword

## Range

Move to a specific combat Range in relation to an opponent. For example, if you are facing a spearman you could move to Short Range, or if you have a spear versus a shorter weapon you could move to Long Range. You upgrade COMBO if you are in optimal Range and your foe is not. (The optimal Range is specified by Weapon Range Tags.) Each Maneuver can move you at most two Range steps, e.g. Far to Medium or Long to Short but not Long to Close. Alternatively use this Maneuver to maintain current Range when an opponent is moving relative to you.

- I keep him at long range, ideal for my spear versus his puny knife
- I stay close as he tries to flee so I can keep stabbing him with my dagger

## Cover & Concealment

Position yourself to take advantage of cover, such as a wall, doorframe, trench, castle parapet, etc. Cover counts as armor, and solid objects usually have better AC than your armor. Cover and

concealment also reduces your visible target areas and enemies may seek other targets. This is especially important if you do not have any armor, or lighter armor than the weapons in play. However, your Cover can also limit your options. For example, if you duck behind a low wall then you can't see your opponents, but if you knelt behind the wall you could shoot over it. If you want to pop out and back behind cover, you need to use Maneuvers to do so. However, enemies who are ready to shoot can still attack you if you do this.

- I take cover behind the stone wall
- I dive into the trench
- I use the door frame for cover

## Keep Down

Crouch, kneel, or crawl to reduce your target area. This lets you upgrade COMBO in defense against ranged attacks, but will limit your ability to spend Maneuvers.

## Wrath Stroke

Grip your weapon in two hands and swing a mighty blow. Adds +1 Damage if you can [+] EFFORT or if the target is Prone or Pinned against a wall. You will need a lot of space to swing your weapon (thrusts don't benefit from this) and you must declare before you roll.

- I put all my strength into my swing and shout as I smash him down
- I reverse my sword and strike the mortshlager murder stroke at his knee (w/ Aim)

## Beat

Move your opponent's weapon or shield away from a Guard. Your opponent may spend another Maneuver to restore the Guard.

- I beat his blade aside and cut!
- I beat his blade with my false edge and cut him in the head (w/ Aim)

## Feint

Pretend to attack a Hit Location, but attack somewhere else instead. You {+} COMBO, but perhaps more importantly might fool him into settling into a Guard in the wrong place.

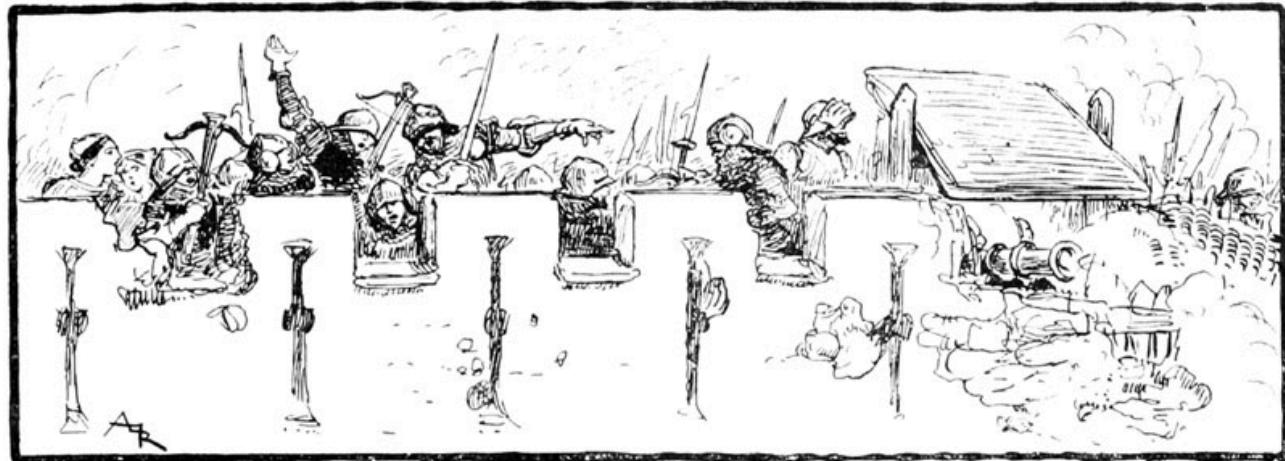
- I cut on the right and then on the left

- I feint high and then cut low
- I change through to cut to the other side
- I redouble my cut
- I pull my cut and turn it into a thrust
- I disengage my point under his sword and thrust

## Grab

Use a free hand to grab part of a foe while at Close Range. You will stay connected and at Close Range until you let go or your opponent uses a Maneuver to get free. If you are much larger and stronger than your foe then you can also keep him from moving.

- I grab his shirt and punch him (w/ move Maneuver & attacks Action)
- I step in, grab his arm and stab him with my dagger (w/ move Maneuver & attack Action)



## Overwatch

Point your ranged weapon along a specific field of fire, such as a line of approach or choke point. You're waiting to attack the first target who appears (although you could describe a specific target), so you upgrade PREP on your attack.

- I'm on the roof, covering the alley
- I'm aiming at the window, waiting for the sorcerer to appear

## Guarding

In historical combat, the term “guard” denotes a defensive position that allows you to launch attacks. Each attack also finishes in a guard, so you cut or thrust from one guard to another.

You can use a Maneuver to **Guard** a Hit Location with a melee weapon or shield. You must specify the Hit Location and right or left side, such as "left leg", "right head", etc. This lets you claim COMBO against all attacks against the guarded area until you move your weapon or shield.

**Melee weapons count as armor against melee weapons.** The weapon provides its Weapon as Armor Class against melee weapon attacks directed at the guarded area. Not applicable for ranged attacks or monster attacks.

**Weapons with the Guarding Tag** can move to a Guard after your attack Action, without spending a Maneuver. You could say "I cut down and guard my left leg", or "I parry up and guard my right head". Guards are the starting and finishing positions of attacks and parries.

**Shields are mobile armor** and provide Shield Class for the Guarded Hit Location against attacks from a specific direction. Shields work against any physical attacks (melee, ranged, or monster) that come from the direction being Guarded. Small shields cannot Guard against ranged weapons, and only Large or Huge shields can guard the Leg. In addition, your shield will Guard your Hand and Arm for opponents attacking you directly from the front. Otherwise, shields only provide Partial Coverage to the Hand and Arm holding it (and as a result do not reduce your Maneuvers).

**Each weapon and shield has its own Guard.** You can have two Guards if you have a shield or companion weapon. If you combine them together use the best Class +1.

**Shield Class stacks with Armor Class.** Shield Class functions the same as Armor Class, and even stacks with Armor Class of armor behind or beneath the shield. For example, when used to parry, a class 2 Dagger and class 2 cuirass combines to AC 4.

## Wrestling

Wrestling is a way to *control your opponent*. You can push him, grab his weapon arm, keep him from fleeing, throw him to the ground, break joints, choke him unconscious, or force him to surrender.

There are infinite variations, but it all comes down to gaining *Control*.

Wrestling is an attack Action; choose one of the following techniques.

Wrestling requires physical contact, so it is only possible in Close Range.

*Wrestling as described is for human vs human, if you try this against a monster the GM will improvise.*

**Push** - Force your opponent to move 5 feet in the direction of your choice. Unless you Crit you move with your opponent.

**Throw/Trip** - Put your opponent on the ground, putting him Prone, which gives attackers a [+] COMBO and +1 WC. You can either remain standing or gain *Control* by landing on top of your opponent. If you roll COMBO you also deal Damage.

**Hold** - Gain *Control* of one Hit Location of your opponent, e.g. an Arm or Head. You gain PREP to continue wrestling or fighting this foe. If you Crit you can disarm his weapon (i.e. preventing use or forcing it to be dropped). Maintain the Hold with a Maneuver each Round. Add +1 Weapon Class for attacks vs a foe over whom you have *Control*.

**Pin** - Immobilize an opponent whom you already *Control*. This can be done standing up, or against a surface like the floor or a wall.

**Escape** - Escape *Control* of an opponent. On a Crit you execute a "reversal" and now you have *Control*!

**Break/Subdue** - If you already *Control* an opponent's Head, Arm, Hand, Leg, or Foot you choke the neck or hyperextend the joint, dealing Damage. You may let your opponent submit ("tap out") to avoid Damage.



GRETTIR OVERTHROWS THORIR REDBEARD

## Details

**Damage** - Wrestling attacks only inflict Damage as noted above.

Armor does not reduce Damage inflicted by wrestling, but plate armor prevents chokes and joint locks in elbows and knees.

**Close Range** - Wrestling is only possible at Close Range. Moving to Close Range from a normal melee range (Short/Medium/Long) requires 1 Maneuver.

**Weapons** - If you wrestle using a weapon with the "Close" range Tag then you gain COMBO. You cannot use weapons with the "Long" range Tag while Close.

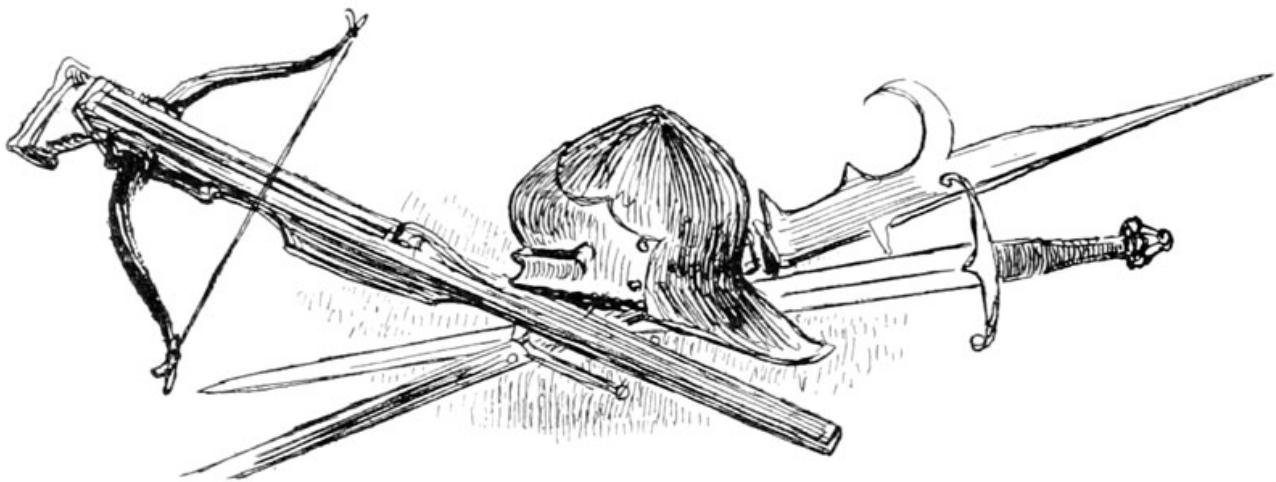
**Prone** - If you are Prone you cannot use Maneuvers involving mobility, and attacks against you gain a +1 WC bonus. You are considered Prone if you are off your feet, e.g. lying on the ground, sitting, kneeling, etc.

**Fumbles** - If you Fumble, the GM could choose to describe a "reversal" where your foe does the same thing back to you.

## Monster Death Throes

If the GM says a monster or foe is at **Death's Door**, that means it can take no Actions or Maneuvers, so it poses little threat and is expected to die on its own, in time. However, the GM rolls a random Event at the start of each turn, and it's possible for this to grant an Action or a Maneuver to a Downed foe. Thus, a Downed foe might manage to limp off to lick its wounds, make annoying dying sounds, kick and twitch, make a leaky mess, or bite you if you get too close.

You can spend an Action to put a Downed foe out of your misery, either dispatching the foe with a coup de grâce or finishing blow of some kind or taking a prisoner. This does not normally require a roll, but you need to describe how you do this, and sometimes the way you describe this matters. For example, you might need to use holy water or prayers to put undeads to rest, or use fire to put down a regenerating creature. The GM will not tell you what to do, that's part of your adventure.



## Weapon Class and Armor Class

Weapons and armor always have a "**Class**" Tag, for comparing weapon penetration and armor resistance.

When counting **Damage**, compare **Weapon Class** and **Armor Class** for the Hit Location. Add +1 Damage if the weapon is higher, or -1 Damage if the armor is higher. If you have a shield covering the Hit Location then you can use **Shield Class** in place of Armor Class.

The following table is a summary of the arms and armor of the Dragon Isles. The Northmarens generally have early medieval weapons and armor, the Southmarens have late medieval or early Renaissance, and the Eldar have exotic and magical arms.

## Weapons

Weapons are tools of war, designed to slay foes and keep you safe. You will definitely want a weapon to engage in combat. The GM will raise Hazard and/or Stress if you are attacked and you do not have an appropriate weapon ready to use. Readyng a weapon usually costs 1 Maneuver.

**Melee weapons** such as swords, axes, and spears are made for hand-to-hand combat, up close and personal. Melee weapons have

various lengths, from long spears to short daggers, so you should always maneuver to an optional range for your weapon.

- **Sidearms** such as swords and daggers worn on your belt are popular because they are convenient quick to deploy, requiring 1 Maneuver to ready or sheathe. Describe how you carry your sidearms so they are Quick Assets, otherwise you need to use an extra 1 Maneuver.

**Missile weapons** such as bows are built for attacking at a distance. When using a missile weapon you should maneuver to keep away from melee opponents and find the best lines of sight to shoot foes while using cover to block their lines of sight. Missile weapons are one-handed unless they have the "2H" Tag, which means they can only be used with two hands.

- **Bows** are only considered Ready if you have the bow in hand with an arrow knocked. Getting your bow is one Maneuver and knocking an arrow is a second Maneuver. However, drawing the bow is part of your attack Action—you don't hold your bow drawn.
- **Crossbows and Guns** require an Action to reload. Crossbows and guns become do not stay loaded if you put the weapon down, as the ammo will get out of place or even fall out.
- **Track Ammunition** you carry (e.g. arrows, javelins, throwing knives, etc.) and mark off shots.

**Melee Weapons** are one-handed unless they have a "2H" Tag.

- **1H:** One-handed melee weapons are optimized for use in one hand. They are intended to be a convenient, versatile sidearm.
- **2H:** Two-handed melee weapons have the "2H" Tag. They require two hands and lots of space to be effective. If used in one hand or tight spaces, you cannot use Weapon Tags, have a Disadvantage, and -2 Weapon Class.
- **2H/1H:** One-and-a-half-handed melee weapons have the "2H/1H" Tag. They are optimized for use in two hands. If used in one hand, you are at -1 Weapon Class; you also have a Disadvantage unless you spend a Maneuver.

**Battlefield Weapons** such as large spears, halberds, greatswords, are carried in your hands on your way to the battle. You are assumed to carry them casually, so you still need to spend 1 Maneuver to Ready them. You'll probably only carry one large weapon, or possibly two if they are thin-shafted spears held together. These weapons are long and bulky and do not normally have sheaths or any convenient way to stow them. So, if you say you do anything that requires both hands (e.g. climbing a rope, playing a mandolin, etc.) that implies you dropped your weapon, and you will need to spend a Maneuver to pick it back up again.

**Military weapons are illegal to** carry in towns or guarded areas. Most guards consider any weapon over Class 2 to be a military unless it has the Civil Tag.

**Unarmed attacks** includes various kicks, punches, knees, foot stomps, and other unarmed attacks. These are not considered weapons (Weapon Class 0).

**Improvised Weapons** (e.g. shovel, bottle, fire poker, candlestick, stool, chair, stick, rock, brick, roof tile, etc.) are Weapon Class 1 and will break on ASSET. However, they can be good tactical options even if you have other weapons. A shovel or a bottle appears less threatening than drawing a sword, and throwing bricks from a rooftop doesn't use your ammunition or leave evidence behind.

## Common Weapons

These weapons are the most commonly available, being relatively easy to produce and acceptable for carry by a common person. Everyone carries a knife, and travelers usually carry a staff.

**Knife** [Class1 Close Short Stabbity Civil] common belt knife

**Hard Boots or Brass Knuckles** [Class 1 Close] for the beat down

**Throwing Knife** [Class1 Close Short Stabbity Far1]

**Stick or Stone** [Class1 Short Far1Primitive] tree branch, rock, etc.

**Cane** [Class1 Short Civil] a gentlemanly stout walking stick or cudgel

**Sickle** [Class1 Short Hooking Tool Fragile] for grain

**Hatchet** [Class1 Short Breaching Tool] small for chopping wood

**Messer / Machete** [Class2 Medium Cutty] long work knife

**Wood Ax** [Class2 2H Medium Breaching Tool] for chopping wood

**Scythe** [Class2 2H Medium Tool Fragile] blade for harvesting wheat

**Spear** [Class3 2H/1H Medium Far1 Piercing Primitive] short thrusting and throwing spear used regularly in hunting and warfare, typically 5-6 feet in length (about your height), simple and effective.

**Staff / Quarterstaff** [Class3 2H Medium Control-Medium Civil] stout staff around nose- or head-height. Common, simple, & effective.

**Long Staff** [Class3 2H Long] staff about as high as you can reach

**Maul** [Class4 2H Medium Weighty Primitive] huge, heavy club

## Swords and Daggers

Swords are versatile sidearms which are particularly excellent at defense, able to parry and deflect most weapons.

**Pommel** [Class1 Close] counterweight end of a dagger or sword

**Dagger** [Class2 Close Stabbity] military double-edged dagger

**Rondel** [Class2 Close Stabbity] triangular thrusting war dagger, used to pierce gaps in armor, especially while grappling. Carried by many knights and man-at-arms.

**Parrying Dagger** [Class2 Close Binding Handguard Stabbity] left-handed dagger wielded to accompany a sword

**Messer** [Class2 Short Guarding Binding Stability Cutty] knife-like short sword with a distinctive "nail" guard to assist with binding.

**Cinquedea** [Class2 Short Guarding Binding Stabbity Cutty] dagger with a distinctive broad blade ("five fingers" wide), popular in Aquila.

**Storta** [Class2 Short Guarding Binding Cutty] civilian short sword with a hand guard, popular in Aquila.

**Cutlass** [Class2 Short Guarding Binding Handguard Cutty] short curved cutting sword with a basket handguard (q.v. Sinclair hilt).

**Arming Sword / Short Sword** [Class2 Short-Medium Guarding Binding Piercing Cutty] iconic straight "knightly" sword with simple cross guard. Often called a "short sword" to differentiate from a "longsword", but the blade is longer than a falchion.

**Sidesword** [Class2 Medium Handguard Binding Guarding Piercing Cutty] “the sword by your side”, a typical military or civilian sidearm sword, such as an arming sword, spada di filo, or cavalry sword

**Saber** [Class2 Medium Handguard Guarding Cutty] long curved cutting sword.

**Rapier** [Class2 Medium Handguard Binding Guarding Piercing Secret] civilian sword, popular with nobles and duelists in Aquila.

**Saber Falchion** [Class2 Short Guarding Binding Cutty] short sword with a distinctive cusped, beak-like saber blade with false edge able to cut and thrust, and a simple cross guard. (q.v. “Thorpe Falchion”)

**Cleaver Falchion** [Class3 Short Guarding Binding Weighty] short sword with a heavy cleaving blade and simple cross guard. (q.v. “Conyers Falchion”)

**Longsword** [Class3 2H/1H Short-Medium Control-Short Binding Guarding Piercing Cutty Secret] often called a “bastard sword”

**Swiss Saber** [Class3 2H/1H Medium Binding Handguard Guarding Piercing Cutty Secret] curved longsword with elaborate handguard

**Greatsword** [Class4 2H/1H Medium-Long Control-Medium Handguard Binding Guarding Piercing Cutty Secret] an elegant sword popular with bodyguards. Can attack in any direction. This is a longer longsword, spadone, or smaller montante.

**Zweihander** [Class5 2H Medium-Long Control-Medium Handguard Binding Guarding Piercing Cutty Secret] a massive greatsword

**Bearing Sword** [Class6 2H Long Handguard] a giant ceremonial parade sword. This is a +1 WC Zweihander if you are seven feet tall.

## Military Weapons

These weapons are strongly associated with military units. Most are more complicated to learn than simple peasant weapons, requiring at least some training in a military order. Military weapons are often restricted by various local laws and customs.

**Shield Punch** [Class1 Close Binding Guarding] uses the boss or rim

**Rifle Stock** [Class1 2H Short] using the heavy rifle stock as a club.

**Javelin** [Class1 Short Far2 Piercing Primitive] short throwing spear

**Small Ax** [Class2 Close Short Binding Breaching Hooking Far1] war hatchet or tomahawk, with a thin head and long handle

**Rifle Bayonet** [Class2 2H Medium] spear point on the barrel of a rifle

**Khopesh** [Class2 Short Medium Binding Hooking] a sickle-shaped sword-ax common in ancient times and still used by some Eldar

**Mace** [Class3 Short Weighty] wooden or metal club with flanges, beaks, or spikes for crushing armored foes. Needs space to be swung to full effect. Includes short impact weapons such as the short war hammer, horseman's hammer, morningstar, etc.

**Horseman's Ax** [Class3 Short Breaching Hooking Weighty] medium sized ax with a rear spike for penetrating armor.

**Spear** [Class3 2H/1H Medium Far1 Piercing Primitive] short thrusting and throwing spear used regularly in hunting and warfare, typically 5-6 feet in length (about your height), simple and effective.

**Long Spear** [Class3 2H/1H Medium Long Guarding Piercing] long thrusting and cutting spear (or glaive) used regularly in warfare, typically 8-10 feet in length (your height with your arm extended above your head).

**Pike** [Class3 2H Long Piercing] extremely long spear (typically 15-20 feet in length) used in mass infantry warfare. Pikes are not effective in individual combat except in a duel, so the range is listed as "Long".

**Grand Falchion** [Class4 2H/1H Medium Binding] distinctive heavy cleaver with a falchion-like clipped tip blade mounted on a long handle (sometimes umbrella-shaped).

**Battle Ax** [Class4 2H Medium Breaching Hooking] heavy two-handed war axe with a handle shorter than a polearm.

**Mangual Flail** [Class4 2H Medium Long Hooking Control] large multi-headed military flail. Only use the high guard (Head Guard) if you want to avoid hitting yourself.

**Pick** [Class4 2H Medium Hooking Piercing] large footman's pick, with a distinctive arced head that can strike over shields.

**Ranseur** [Class4 2H Long Binding Guarding] a very popular early polearm with a trident-shaped head, also known as roncone or ronka. The side prongs are for binding and trapping weapons and shields. Also known as a spetum, especially by Eldar in earlier aeons.

Some versions can be folded, and others such as the brandistock or "feather staff" have hidden prongs that spring out from one end.

**Glaive** [Class4 2H Long Cutty Hooking] polearm with a large single-edge cutting blade, usually with a hook on the back, but no spear point. Also known as a fauchard, especially by Eldar in earlier aeons.

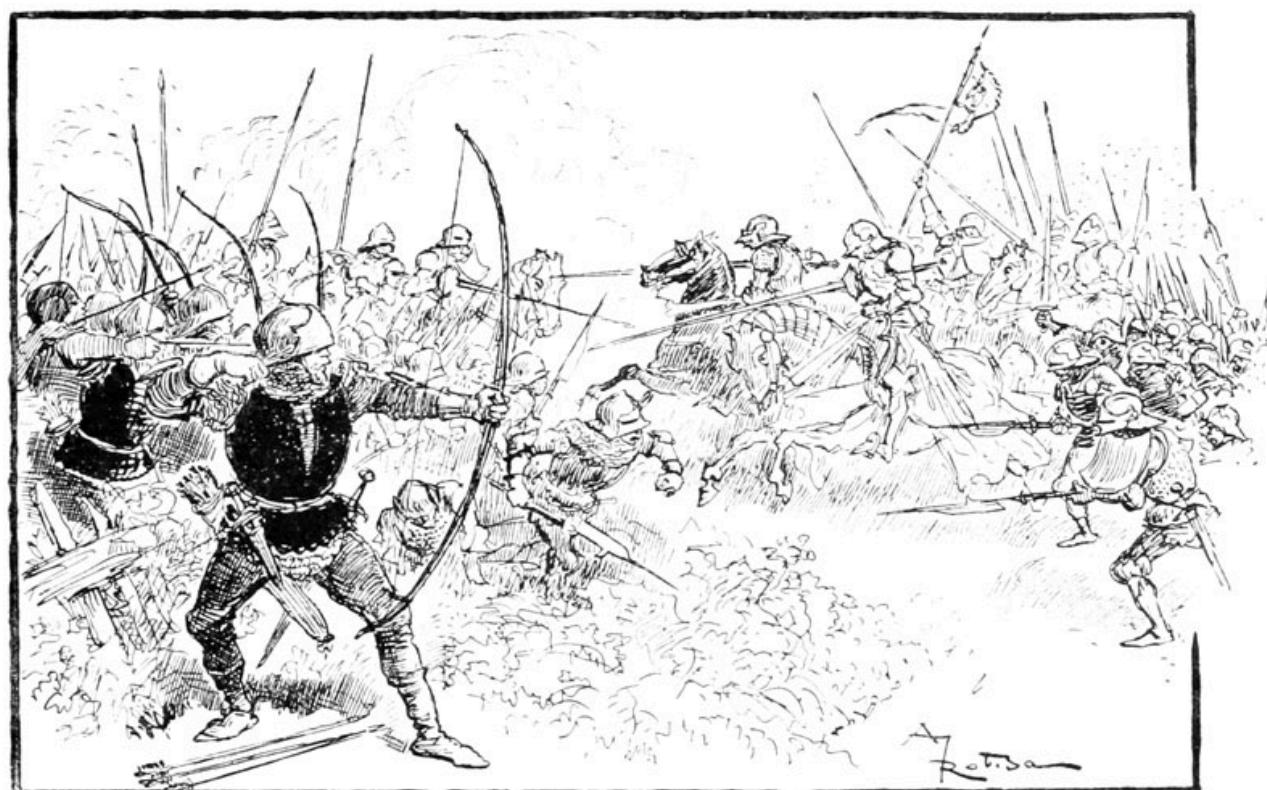
**Guisarme** [Class4 2H Long Binding Hooking] a polearm with a concave scythe-like blade (such as for pruning), usually with a spike for thrusting and various prongs for pulling. Includes similar weapons such as the bill, bill hook, and scorpion, etc.

**Partisan** [Class4 2H/1H Medium Long Cutty Binding Guarding] elegant polearm with a sword-like head with guard allowing a shorter grip.

**Poleaxe** [Class5 2H Medium Control-Short Hooking Guarding] the predominant knightly polearm for armored combat, a short stout staff with axe, hammer, and spike. Includes similar weapons such as lochaber ax, bec de corbin, etc,

**Long axe** [Class5 2H Medium Long] a very long battle axe.

**Halberd** [Class5 2H Medium Long Binding Hooking Guarding] popular polearm with a spike for thrusting, ax for cutting, and multiple hooks for pulling. Includes similar weapons such as bardiche, voulge, etc.



# Projectile Weapons

Projectile weapons shoot ammunition. The three main projectile weapon types are bows, crossbows, and guns. Loading or reloading the weapon costs Maneuvers equal to the Reload Weapon Tag.

**Primitive Bow** [Class1 2H Far2 Reload1 Primitive Civil] a self-made or primitive shortbow, quickly and easily crafted, firing simple all-wood arrows with sharpened wood tips and no fletching.

**Hunting sling** [Class1 2H Far4 Reload3 Primitive Civil] a common light sling, shooting stones or clay. Requires years of practice.

**Hunting bow** [Class2 2H Far4 Reload1 Civil] the most common short bow. Hunting arrows usually have broad heads, but simple round heads (Class1) are often used for birds or smaller game.

**War sling** [Class2 2H Far3 Reload4 Secret] larger more powerful sling for war, hurling cast-lead aerodynamic projectiles.

**Warbow** [Class3 2H Far3 Accurate Reload1 Secret] a heavy draw short bow, able to shoot heavy armor-piercing bodkin arrows, but requires years of training and conditioning.

**Hunting Crossbow** [Class3 2H Far4 Accurate Reload3] easy to shoot

**Longbow** [Class3 Far5 Accurate Reload1 Secret] a large self bow, taller than the archer, with impressive power, range, and accuracy, but with a slower rate of fire than hunting bows.

**Heavy Longbow** [Class4 Far5 Accurate Reload2 Secret] a heavy draw longbow, able to shoot heavy military arrows (50% heavier than standard arrows). Requires years of training and conditioning.

**Heavy crossbow** [Class5 Far4 Accurate Reload7] military crossbow, easy to learn and hard-hitting, but cumbersome and slow to reload.

**Flintlock pistol** [Class5 Far4 Accurate Reload7] Dwur pistol

**Doublloon** [Class5 Far2 Reload7 (each)] a double-shot flintlock pistol blunderbuss, often with a nautical/pirate theme.

**Shotgonne** [Class5 Far2 Reload9 (each)] a double-barreled hand cannon meant for “intimate encounters”, up-close personal combat. Each barrel must be loaded, primed, and fired independently.

**Siege arbalest** [Class6 Far5 Accurate Reload12 Secret] very heavy and powerful crossbow, but extremely slow to reload.

**Arquebus** [Class6 Far4 Accurate Reloadg Secret] a newer, more accurate version of the hand cannon with a true rifle shape and a matchlock.

**Flintlock rifle** [Class6 Far5 Accurate Reload8 Secret] a rifle using a flintlock.

**Handgonne** [Class7 Far3 Reload12 Secret] a hand cannon consisting of a heavy barrel, handle, and socket for inserting a stock or staff.

### Bows vs Crossbows

- Bows require more training, especially warbows are a specialist profession
- Bows are simpler to craft
- Bows require physical conditioning (strength)
- Bows are lighter and easier to aim and reload on the move
- Bows have a faster rate of fire
- Crossbows do not require strength to hold ready
- Crossbows are more optimal for fielding armies, since training takes less time and troops can still fight when hurt or weakened by malnutrition or disease
- Bows are ready if the bow is in hand with an arrow knocked. Drawing and releasing the bow is part of your attack—you don't hold your bow drawn for long periods of time.
- Crossbows are not carried loaded, as the bolt simply falls out if the crossbow is tilted.



# Weapon Tags

Weapons have Tags to represent their characteristics; many also describe a way you can upgrade COMBO in specific circumstances. Weapons tend to fall into two broad categories, main weapons such as spears and axes, then sidearms such as swords and daggers. Larger weapons are inherently more powerful and thus tend to have a higher Weapon Class and more Tags than smaller weapons.

## Weapon Class

Weapon Class is the penetration of the weapon versus contemporary armor types (i.e. of the same era). When counting Damage, compare Weapon Class and Armor Class and add +1 Damage if the weapon is higher, or -1 Damage if the armor is higher.

## Weapon Range Tags

**Weapon Range Tags** specify the optimal **Range** (i.e. the distance between attacker and target) for using a weapon. You can upgrade COMBO if you are at your optimal range and your opponent is not.

| Range  | Distance (feet) | Example Weapons                                 |
|--------|-----------------|---|
| Close  | 0 - 1           | wrestling, knife, dagger                        |
| Short  | 1 - 3           | long knife, arming sword, cutlass, ax           |
| Medium | 3 - 5           | sidesword, longsword, poleaxe, short spear      |
| Long   | 5 - 10          | halberd, halberd, polearm, spear                |
| Far1   | 10 - 30         | thrown weapon (knife, ax, spear, javelin, etc.) |
| Far2   | 20 - 60         | self bow, javelin                               |
| Far3   | 30 - 90         | warbow, war sling, shotgonne                    |
| Far4   | 40 - 120        | hunting bow, hunting sling, heavy crossbow      |
| Far5   | 50 - 150        | longbow, flight bow, arquebus, siege arbalest   |

**Close:** is the optimal range for unarmed attacks, and unarmed attacks can only attack at this range. Fighters can punch, kick, grab,

wrestle, throw, elbow, knee, head butt, pommel strike, and even bite. A sword pommel is a Class 1 weapon with the Close Tag.

**Short:** is the optimal range of most melee weapons, but any weapon can attack at this range. Any thrusting melee weapon wielded in two hands (e.g. a sword held in "halfsword") is optimal at Short range.

**Medium:** is the optimal range for longer melee weapons such as swords, but any weapon can attack at this range.

**Long:** is the optimal range for spears and polearms, and melee weapons may only attack at this range if they have the "Long" Tag.

**Far:** is at least 10 feet away, out of reach of melee weapons. Only weapons with a Far tag can attack at Far range.

## Advanced Weapon Tags

**Accurate** weapons are capable of very long ranged shots in the hands of a skilled marksman. You can increase your optimal range by one step (e.g. "Far2" >> "Far3") by spending an Action to adjust for gravity, wind, etc, as long as you have a supporting Theme or Trait (e.g. "marksman", "archer", "sharpshooter", etc.). You can do this multiple times, up to double normal range (e.g. "Far3" can become "Far5"). You lose the benefits if you move or take any other Action.

**Binding** weapons such as swords can be used to "bind" with an opponent's weapon, touching and then keeping "sticky" contact, which helps you influence and track the weapon. Use a Maneuver to "bind" with an opponent's weapon, which lets you upgrade COMBO on attacks and defenses for that opponent. You can also use a bind Maneuver in response to an opponent's bind Maneuver, and whoever does this last is "winning the bind" and upgrades COMBO.

**Breaching** weapons are strong and capable of forcing open doors, chests, windows, etc. Other weapons break under this kind of abuse.

**Civil** weapons are less threatening and legal to carry in towns.

**Control** weapons such as long swords and short polearms can be easily turned to strike in any direction. That is useful in itself, and also makes them ideal for controlling an area and fending off multiple opponents. If you are surrounded or flanked by opponents you can spend a Maneuver to "control" the area, removing normal penalties (e.g. Disadvantage) for being surrounded. This only works if using two hands and at the range specified, e.g. "Control-Medium".

**Weighty** weapons have their weight concentrated at the front and hit extremely hard, which is factored into their weapon class.

**Cutty** weapons such as swords can cleave through soft targets.

After resolving a Critical hit against a soft target (i.e. your WC is better than their AC) you may spend a Maneuver to get another attack Action (with the same weapon, but on any opponent).

**Custom** weapons are higher-quality, bespoke and perfectly made.

**Guarding** weapons can flow into a **Guard** after each attack without spending a Maneuver, as long as you declare you are doing so. For example, you could say "I cut down and guard my left leg", or "I cut up and guard my right head", etc.

**Fragile** weapons break on a Fumble.

**Handguard** weapons have a complex hilt such as a rapier's rings or basket hilt sword, which Guards your Hand for opponents attacking you directly from the front, and otherwise provides Partial Coverage.

**Hooking** weapons such as sickles and some polearms are able to cut *behind* the target. When you Aim, you can choose strike the *rear* instead of left/right, which for most armor grants a +1 WC bonus.

**Piercing** weapons have an extended straight and rigid blade at least 2 feet long, which enables them to reach deep into a target. This grants a +1 WC bonus when fighting larger monsters (who have a higher AC since their bodies are thicker).

**Primitive** weapons are simple and inexpensive to build or improvise.

**Reload** indicates the weapon must be reloaded before attacking again. This applies to projectile weapons such as bows, crossbows, and firearms. The number after the Reload Tag (e.g. Reload1, Reload3, etc.) indicates the number Maneuvers needed (min 1).

**Secret** weapons require a lifetime of dedication to use. You must have a *specific* Theme or a Secret to use this weapon. For example, the longbow requires tremendous strength, so you would need a Theme such as "Longbowman" or a Secret such as "Longbow".

**Stabbity** weapons are optimized for lots of stabbing or "shanking".

After resolving a Critical hit you may spend a Maneuver to get another attack Action (with the same weapon and Hit Location).

# ARMOR

The purpose of armor is to protect your vitals from threats you expect to face. Your ancestors only had to deal with weapons of their time period, but you will also face a variety of monsters! Armor is a tradeoff of coverage and mobility, so you should wear the minimal armor you feel necessary. In addition, you may need to make compromises based on your intended tasks, such as riding a horse, commanding troops, shooting a bow, playing a mandolin, climbing and spelunking in a deep dark caves, etc. Even knights only wear full armor when they *need* to!



## Armor Coverage

Your suit of armor has an Armor Tag which lists your Hit Locations covered and number of Maneuvers per round.

| Armor Tag  | Example      | Coverage                 | Maneuvers |
|------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| Body-Armor | cuirass      | Head, Torso              | 3         |
| Half-Armor | gambeson     | Head, Torso, Arms, Hands | 2         |
| 3Qtr-Armor | mail hauberk | Head, Arms, Torso, Waist | 2         |
| Full-Armor | plate armor  | all                      | 1         |

**Coverage** - Your number of Maneuvers per Round is determined by your number of Hit Locations covered by armor. (1-2 Hit Locations is 3 Maneuvers, 3-4 Hit Locations is 2 Maneuvers, and 5-6 Hit

Locations is 1 Maneuver.) Note that some areas of the rules say you get "2 Maneuvers per round", but this is just for readability since that is the average.

**Pieces of Exchange** - Armor suits are comprised of many smaller pieces. The highest quality armors have modular "pieces of exchange" suiting different purposes. You can customize your armor coverage by adding or removing removing pieces. For example, you might strip down to Body-Armor for travel, then add other pieces to gear up to Half- or Full-Armor when expecting battle, or change pieces whether on foot or on horse.

**Gaps** - Armor always has gaps, no matter how well it has been constructed. Almost all armor has gaps in the face, armpits, inside elbow, fingers, palms, inner wrists, gauntlet cuffs, groin, buttocks, inner thighs, back of knees, back of legs, and feet. In addition, armor tends to be absent or thinner on the rear and flanks. You can target these gaps by using the Advanced Aim Maneuver.

**Shields** - Shields are weapons which primarily provide protection via Guarding. Otherwise they only provide Partial Coverage for your hand and arm, so they do not affect your number of Maneuvers.

**Partial Armor** - Some armor pieces only give "Partial" protection, and do not protect an entire Hit Location. Partial Armor only provides protection if you roll ASSET on your Saving Throw, but does not count as Coverage or reduce Maneuvers per Round. However, there could also be times when the GM rules that an attack strikes your partial armor, such as "falling rocks" striking the top of your head, so a "kettle hat" would probably help you.

## Body-Armor

If you wear Body-Armor you armor coverage for your Head and Torso and get 3 Maneuvers per round. Focuses on just your vitals.

**Doublet Vest** [Class1 Body-Armor] fashionable vest.

**Light Gambeson Vest** [Class1 Body-Armor] 16-layer gambeson

**Gambeson Vest** [Class2 Body-Armor] thick padded or quilted textile armor, 30 layers thick.

**Cuirie** [Class2 Body-Armor] hardened leather cuirass made of cuir-bouilli (boiled leather).

**Concealed Mail Shirt** [Class2 Body-Armor] chain mail shirt without gambeson, worn concealed under clothing.

**Mail Shirt** [Class3 Body-Armor] chain mail shirt over light gambeson.

**Breastplate** [Class3 Body-Armor] steel breastplate, only covering the front, worn over clothing

**Plate Cuirass** [Class4 Body-Armor] steel breastplate and backplate, worn over light gambeson.

**Plate Cuirass with pauldrons** [Class5 Body-Armor] steel breastplate and backplate with shoulders, worn over light gambeson

## Half-Armor

If you wear Half-Armor you have armor coverage for your Head, Arms, Hands, and Torso, and get 2 Maneuvers per round. Half-Armor is commonly augmented by a large shield to increase protection and help guard the legs.

**Doublet** [Class1 Half-Armor Civil Soft] a jacket made of stitched and quilted linen ("doubling") made to be worn by itself. Originally these were gambeson, but eventually became fashionable. The head is protected by a fashionable hat or cap.

**Gambeson** [Class2 Half-Armor Soft] a jacket made of stitched and quilted linen ("doubling") made to be worn under ("doubled under") a cuirass, hauberk, or plate to prevent bruising and chafing. May include arming points for attaching plates, with small patches of mail to cover gaps in the plates. Made of multiple layers of cotton, linen, wool, or leather, it also doubled as a coat. Also known as an aketon, padded jack, arming jack, or arming doublet. The head is protected by a cloth arming cap.

**Scale Armor** [Class2 Half-Armor] is made of small leather or metal plates attached to each other and a backing in interlocking rows.

**Coat of Plates** [Class3 Half-Armor] is a coat of brigandine, consisting of plates sewn onto or between layers of cloth or leather. Inexpensive, widely available, and easily repaired. The head is protected by a leather cap.

**Coat of Plates and Mail** [Class4 Half-Armor] is a coat of brigandine worn over a mail hauberk. The head is protected by a mail coif.

## 3Qtr-Armor

If you wear 3Qtr-Armor you have armor coverage for your Head, Arms, Torso, and Waist, and get 2 Maneuvers per round. This armor is popular with troops who need nimble hands, such as archers, gunners, or swashbucklers (using sword and buckler).

**Mail Hauberk** [Class3 3Qtr-Armor] is a full shirt of mail (chainmail), reaching at least to mid-thigh, and including sleeves. Always worn over light gambeson. The head is protected by a mail coif.

**Three-Quarters Plate** [Class4 3Qtr-Armor Visor Custom] is suit of fully articulated light metal plate armor.

**Dwur Plate** [Class5 3Qtr-Armor Visor Custom] is an advanced suit of fully articulated metal plate armor. Dwur plate is traditionally decorated in "grotesque" style, helm and plates resembling an animal or monster.

## Full-Armor

If you wear Full-Armor you have armor Coverage for your Head, Arms, Torso, Waist, and Legs, and get 1 Maneuver per round. This armor is popular with soldiers wielding two-handed weapons.

**Full Mail** [Class3 Full-Armor] is a full suit of mail (chainmail), including the hauberk, coif, and chausses (leg protection). Always worn over light gambeson.

**Plated Mail** [Class4 Full-Armor Custom] armor is mail covered by embedded metal plates. The plates can vary in style significantly, and sometimes include a cuirie, coat of plates, or cuirass. This heavy armor was worn by the early knights.

**Full Plate** [Class5 Full-Armor Visor Custom] is an advanced, fully articulated light steel plate armor, the pinnacle of protection. Rare, expensive, and time-consuming to build.

## Armor Pieces

Some armor pieces only give "Partial" protection, and do not protect an entire Hit Location. Partial Armor only provides protection if you roll ASSET on your Saving Throw, but does not count as Coverage or reduce Maneuvers per Round.

### Clothing

**Hooded Cloak** [Class1 Soft Civil Cloak Partial] thick robes with long sleeves and hood. Worn by monks, wizards, and cultists everywhere.

**Plumed Hat** [Class1 Hat Soft Civil Partial] feathered hat.

**Pointed Hat** [Class1 Hat Soft Civil Partial] iconic wizard/witch hat

### Head

The head is arguably the most important location to protect, and all armor suits cover this location. If you wear one of these armor pieces be sure that the Class is higher than your armor suit, or you receive some other advantage.

**Coif or Arming Cap** [Class1 Helm] are hoods of stitched leather or quilted cloth, often worn under a helm or coif as padding.

**Mail Coif** [Class2 Helm] are hoods of mail (chainmail) or scale, often incorporated into a hauberk or camail.

**Cervelliere "skullcap"** [Class2 Partial Hat] a tight-fitting steel cap.

**Kettle Hat** [Class3 Partial Hat] is a metal helmet in the shape of a wide-brimmed hat. Inexpensive, effective, and popular with infantry since they have good lateral vision, and do not hinder hearing or breathing. However, they block vision looking up.

**Spangenhelm** [Class2 Helm] is a Northmaren helm made of metal strips with a distinctive mask protecting the eyes (q.v. Gjermundbu helmet), and decorated with wings, horns, knots, etc. Worn as a cap and very easy to put on and take off.

**Full Spangenhelm** [Class3 Helm] is a spangenhelm with added protections such as cheek guards and a mail aventail.

**Bascinet** [Class3 Helm] a medieval conical open-faced helm.

Includes an integral lining, so no arming cap is needed.

**Sallet** [Class3 Helm] are open-faced helms, lined with cloth.

**Burgonets** [Class3 Helm] are open-faced helms with lining.

**Barbute** [Class3 Helm Closed] a visor-less bronze helm with a distinctive "T" shaped opening for the eyes and mouth. Includes an integral lining, so no arming cap is needed.

**Close Helm** [Class3 Helm Visored] a steel helm that fully encloses the head and neck, with an integral visor that pivots up.

**Gorget** [Class3 Gorget Partial] stiff collar of brigandine for the throat.

**Bevor** [Class4 Gorget Partial] hard plate collar for the throat.

**Armet** [Class4 Helm Visored] are early fully-enclosed visored helmets compact and light enough to move with the wearer.

**Hounskull** [Class5 Helm Visored] are heavy bascinets with a "dog faced" conical visor and aventail. Lined so no arming cap is needed.

**Great Helm** [Class5 Helm Closed] are flat-topped cylinders of steel that completely cover the head and have only very small openings for the eyes and mouth. Use an Action to put it on or take it off.

## Arms

**Leather Bracers** [Class1 Arm Civil Soft Partial] hard leather forearms

**Splint Vambraces** [Class2 Arm Partial] metal banded forearms

**Spaulders** [Class2 Arm Partial] articulated metal bands (lames) covering the shoulders, joined by straps of leather or rivets.

**Pauldrons** [Class3 Arm Partial] large metal dome ("cop") that covers the shoulder and armpit, with metal bands (lames) for upper arms.

**Mail Sleeves** [Class3 Arm] a tube of chain mail covering the arms.

**Plate Arms** [Class4 Arm] fully enclosed plate arms.

## Hands

Hand armor hinders delicate work like picking locks, playing musical instruments, etc. The GM might raise Hazard or say you fail.

**Leather Gauntlets** [Class1 Hand] sturdy leather gloves with boiled leather reinforcements

**Demi-Gauntlet** [Class2 Hand Partial] leather gloves with partial steel coverage on the back of the hand and wrist only.

**Mail Mitten Gauntlet** [Class2 Hand] chain mail mittens

**Knight's Gauntlet** [Class3 Hand] fully articulated steel finger gauntlets covering the entire hand. Rare and expensive.

**Mitten Gauntlet** [Class4 Hand] extremely protective steel plate mittens. easy to obtain and ideal if your weapon does not have a hand guard (such as a polearm) and you do not have a buckler.

## Waist

**Purse** [Class1 Waist Partial] a stuffed fabric or leather pouch filled with your metal coins, worn over your irreplaceable valuables.

**Bollock Dagger** [Class1 Close Short Waist Partial] a dagger with distinctive two-balled hilt, worn front and center as a fashion statement, useful and protective at the same time.

**Codpiece** [Class1 Waist Partial] an important fashion item consisting of a stuffed fabric or leather pouch enclosing the genital area, and padded as needed to safeguard or enhance its contents.

**Hero Belt** [Class3 Waist Partial] is an exaggeratedly wide belt with an even larger buckle, worn by champions to safeguard their legacy.

**Faulds** [Class3 Waist] are pieces of articulated plate armor worn below a breastplate to protect the waist and hips.

**Culet** [Class3 Waist Partial] a piece of plate armor consisting of small, horizontal lames that protect the buttocks.

**Cuisses** [Class3 Waist Partial] articulated plate armor for the thighs.

**Plate Codpiece** [Class3 Waist Partial] a solid metal codpiece, maybe it rings like a bell.

## Legs

**Shoes** [Class1 Leg Partial] hard leather shoes

**Cloth leg wraps** [Class1 Leg Partial] simple flax or woven cloth strips to provide some protection to the legs and knees.

**Boots** [Class1 Leg Partial] hard leather boots covering the ankle

**Riding Boots** [Class1 Leg Partial] hard boots coming up to the knees.

**Greaves** [Class3 Leg Partial] metal plates to protect the shin.

## Armor Tags

**Arm** armor protects the arms, up to the hands.

**Civil** armors and helmets are “civil looking”, do not draw attention, and are legal to wear in cities, towns, inns, etc.

**Cloak** armor is in the shape of cloak, mantle, or cape. This tends to flutter behind you, and only counts as Partial armor (see below).

**Custom** armor and helms are higher-quality, bespoke and expertly fitted. Rare and expensive both to obtain and also to maintain or repair. You can add a number like Custom2, Custom3, and so on to represent artistic embellishments such as gold leaf or elaborate shapes like wild beasts or dragons.

**Front** armor only covers the front of the body; it is open-backed.

**Hand** is armor for the hand(s). This hinders delicate work like picking locks, playing musical instruments, etc.

**Leg** armor protects the legs and knees.

**Partial** armor only covers a portion of the Hit Location, so it only protects you if you roll ASSET. However, it does not count as Coverage or reduce your number of Maneuvers per Round.

**Waist** armor protects the hips, thighs, and other important parts.

## Advanced Armor Tags - Helms

**Helm** is armor that protects the head. The vast majority of helms are “open faced” and do not cover the face, so they do not hamper vision or breathing. Helms cover the sides of the head, making it difficult to hear, play music, and related rolls suffer Disadvantage.

**Hat** helms only cover the top of the head, but do not hinder hearing.

**Closed** helms completely cover the wearer's face, which is hugely protective (reflected in their AC). This sacrifices comfort, visibility, hearing, and breathability, and related rolls suffer Disadvantage.

**Visor** helms have a moveable plate, so you can use a Maneuver to change between an “open” faced helm and a Closed helm. In terms of protection, the difference is enemies might target your face if your helm is open, but this is not typical in game play.



**Gorget** armor protects the throat.

# Shields

**Shields** are pieces of *moveable armor* held in the hand. Pick up a shield when you need better protection, especially when armor is impractical or unavailable.

## Shield Guards

Shields are active defenses that utilize **Guarding**. Each Guard protects one Hit Location for one side (right or left). Your shield will cover your "**Left Torso**" Guard unless you use a Maneuver to change Guards. Small shields cannot Guard against ranged attacks, and only Large or Huge shields may Guard the leg. See Advanced Combat > Guarding for more advanced details.

In addition, your shield will Guard your Hand and Arm for opponents attacking you directly from the front. Otherwise, shields only provide Partial Coverage to the Hand and Arm holding it (and as a result do not reduce your Maneuvers).

## Common Shields

**Buckler** [Class3 Small Centergrip] small common shield the size of a dinner plate, gripped in the fist, and used as a companion weapon. It could be made of metal or boiled leather, round (brocchiero) or square (targa). Inexpensive, easily carried, and readily available.

**Target** [Class3 Small Strapped] small wooden round shield, worn strapped to the arm, such as the Scottish target or smaller Viking shield. Inexpensive and readily available.

**Heater** [Class3 Medium Strapped] the iconic "heater" (iron) shaped shield, with a shorter tail than a kite shield.

**Wooden Round Shield** [Class3 Medium Centergrip] light wooden round shield, such as a Viking shield. Inexpensive and common.

**Rotella** [Class3 Medium Strapped] strapped metal round shield held at arm's length from the body.

**Large Round Shield** [Class3 Large Centergrip] larger wooden round shield, such as a larger Viking shield.

**Kite Shield** [Class4 Large Strapped] A distinctive large teardrop shield used by horsemen and footmen to protect the flank and leg.

**Aspis** [Class5 Huge Strapped] huge round shield

**Tower Shield** [Class5 Huge Centergrip] huge rectangular shield

**Pavise** [Class6 Huge Standing] very large semi-portable wall shield to protect crossbowmen in siege warfare.

## Shield Tags

**Small:** cannot Guard the Leg; cannot Guard against ranged attacks

**Medium:** cannot Guard the Leg

**Large:** can Guard the Leg

**Huge:** Guards two adjacent Hit Locations; reduces Maneuvers by 1

**Centergrip** shields have a handle in the center of the shield, gripped in the hand so the shield can be easily moved to various positions. They can be easily equipped (1 Maneuver) or dropped (no Maneuver cost), and the hand can be used to grab. This style of grip results in a more maneuverable shield, ideal for battlefield one-on-one combat. The drawbacks are these shields must be lightweight enough to hold in your hand, so they are unlikely to survive repeated use, and can be more easily knocked out of position (q.v. Beat Maneuver) or disarmed compared with a Strapped shield.

**Strapped** shields are attached to the forearm by a strap, with a second strap to hold in the hand. Heavier versions often rest on the shoulder. They are simple to use since they close off the left side of the body, and the defender tends not to move them at all. Strapped shields take time to equip (3 Maneuvers) but are not easily dropped (1 Maneuver to drop). This style of shield works well on horse and on foot, and can support heavier shields than a Centergrip. Strapped shields cannot protect the right side of the body (i.e. no "right" Guards are possible) so use your weapon to guard your right side.

**Standing** shields are movable walls on posts or stands, setup as static cover so your hands are free to fire ranged weapons. Moving or repositioning a Standing shield requires 2 Maneuvers..

# Part 8: The Dragon Isles

Welcome bold adventurer! Before you is the timeless mystery of the Dragon Isles, a world both reborn anew and yet ancient, with realms to explore broadly above and deeply below. The world has died and been reborn anew, countless times. What legends will you create?

*While you can play Legends with any fantasy setting, this is the setting the game was envisioned with, and it is also system-neutral.*

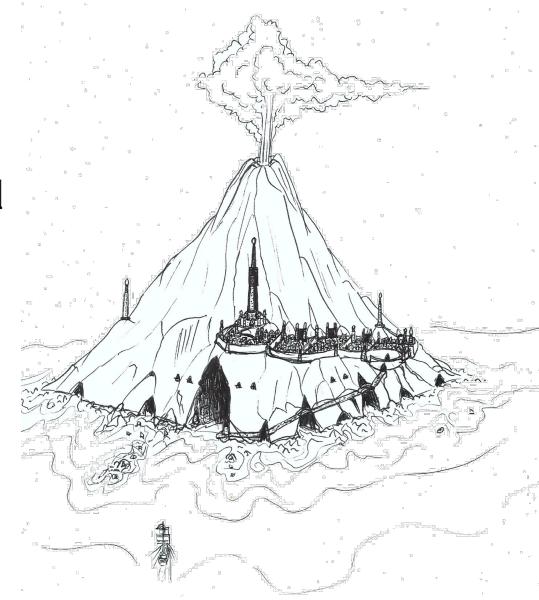
## The Known World

**The Known World** is a familiar medieval tapestry with human kingdoms, swords, chainmail, castles, and city-states. This is the 9th century of the Dragon Isles by human reckoning, and young kingdoms have taken root around the shores of a vast inner sea known as the "Dragon Sea". Putting it simply, if you imagine a compass rose, the main ports around the sea are Ælenthar (northwest), Ashenrise (north), Akkar (east), Aquila (south), and Dorthonia (west).

Separated by vast wildernesses and dark waters, these cities are metaphorically "Dragon Isles", connected by a myriad of trade ships and trade roads, any of which can be perilous. If you adventure or wander off the trade roads you might encounter ancient ruins of the Eldar, mythical and grim fairy tales with magic, dragons, monsters, and fragments of mysteries of the worlds that came before.

**ÆLENTHAR** - Known as the "shield of the north", Alenthar is a sacred silver-plumed isle where paladins of Pyrose the Fyre Lord ward against the undead of Sepulchre to the north and vampires of Nan-Avathar to the east.

**AKKAR** - Once the capital of the Draconian Empire, Akkar was the largest city in the world, with ships laden with tribute from every corner of the Dragon Sea. With the



fall of the Empire the city was sacked by Kith, and now only a fraction of the city is inhabited. This city is a blending of many kinds of stone, from basalt and obsidian to bright marble, and filled with many palaces and temples of the Baal dragon priests.

**ALGLONDOR** - The holy kingdom of the Alglonds occupies the rocky river valleys in the northwest. The Alglonds are honorable, pious, and excel at building river castles and forts. **AQUILA** - The crown jewel of the Southmaren Empire is the golden city of Aquila, a bustling hub of trade, scholarship, and the abstruse sorceries of Black Wizardry. The Southmaren command vast fleets that have boldly ventured across the globe, and established a network of secret trade routes and colonies around the Dragon Sea.

**ASHENRISE** - The greatest free city is Ashenrise, the jewel of the north, perched at the end of the Wolves Teeth archipelago. This bustling metropolis stands as the northern realm's paramount trading hub, its prosperity intertwined with the fortunes of the Lyonese people. Ashenrise stands at a strategic position on the main mountain pass defending Lyonesse from Nan-Avathar.

**DORTHONIA** - The regal city of Dorthonia serves as the paramount port in the on the northwest shores of the Dragon Sea. The Dorthon nobility proudly trace their lineage to Elven ancestry, offering sanctuary to friends of the elves while remaining resolute against their foes from Nan-Avathar. The city is surrounded by a vast wilderness of untracked coastal forests with ancient trees, Elven ruins, and untold secrets of aeons past.

**THE DRAGON SEA** - At the heart of this newborn world lies the majestic expanse of the Dragon Sea, a vast inland ocean surrounded by the young kingdoms. Intrepid ships from these budding realms ply the waters to carry trade between north and south. The principle ports are Ælenthar, Ashenrise, and Dorthonia, proud Northmaren kingdoms, and Akkar and Aquila, vibrant Southmaren oases. Yet, these waters are infamous for treacherous rocky "teeth" concealed within a few miles of the shore, often shrouded by thick mists. These uncharted hazards test the courage of sailors who traverse these perilous waters, offering prayers and tributes to Suul, the dragon goddess of the mists. The shores are

littered with sacrificial altars and temples near steps leading into the sea, to worship and summon Gobbah sea devils, avatars of Dagon the Voice of the Deeps, or Kha'din.

**HRIVLYGGDOR** - The northlands of the midnight sun are vast taiga forests and arctic tundra, renowned for enigmatic and wondrous phenomena, such as floating rock formations and rivers that defy the known laws of nature. Only Kith and monsters dwell here, but somewhere is Belerion, a secluded realm shrouded in mystery, whispered to be a sanctuary for white wizards, druids, and Eldar.

**ISLE OF LOOTS** - The infamous uncharted island of "Loots" is located somewhere in the Dragon Sea. Many a ship has been swept away by a maelstrom in the misty Dragon Sea, and never seen again. Some of those ships wind up at the Isle of Loots, often running aground on reefs, jagged rocks, or attacked by sea serpents. Over the years, some castaways have survived the island and escaped, returning home with tales of man-eating monsters and incredible "loots". Some even bring loot home, but most never make it off the beach...

**KITANIA** - A thriving kingdom that blankets the fertile midlands, bridging the gap between Alglondor in the north and stretching into the Rochir Plains to the southwest. The Kitanians cherish freedom and exploration, which often takes the form of riding the vast plains or sailing equally vast sea. Their spiritual devotion is directed towards the gods Mrmym and Lunara, who are revered with unwavering faith. Kitania remains supportive of Alglondor, regularly dispatching supplies to their northern neighbors. This prosperous realm stands as a testament to the harmony between the land and sea, its people, and the gods they hold dear.

**LYONESSE** - Along its rugged, mist-shrouded central coast, Lyonesse shelters the Lyonese free cities. Among these people, love for liberty and the art of trade courses through their veins. In a land marred by conflict, the Lyonese have honed their adaptability to a fine edge, making them masters of resilience. The fame of the Lothian mercenary companies echoes far and wide, embodying the martial prowess of Lyonesse.

**NAN-AVATHAR** - A grim and desolate land of volcanic ashlands and crags east of Alglondor. This is the realm of the Avathars, vampiric Eldar ruled by the thirteen Vampire Lords who serve Kurg the Winter King seek to end the aeon in an endless winter of ash and bones. Some histories indicate they have done this several times before, with each death adding to the strength of their underworld. Some Avathars labor to build dark shrines and recover lost treasures in Sepulchre, and some dream of rediscovering the ruins of the Necroalchemical Empire Of Arh'Tolth deep in the Vökrazum jungles.

**ROCHIR PLAINS** - The Rochir Plains is a vast region of arid savanna and deserts. The Rochir "horse lords" are Southmaren nomads who rule these lands, said to learn to ride and wield a blade before they walk, who value freedom above all and while claimed by Kitania, bend no knee other than to the gods Mrmym, Xohm, and Lunara.

**SEPULCHRE** - This legendary valley is ringed by the Wintercrown Mountains, north of Alglondor and west of Nan-Avathar. This was the oldest region of the world, cradle and paradise of first Eldar, who called this region Ealde and took refuge within a valley ringed with weirstones. Later this was the site of the legendary Battle of the Thousandfold Curses, where Eldar hosts fought the Kha'din, died, but rose as undead rather than thralls. Their graveyard extends deep into the strata of the Underworlds.



## Northmarens

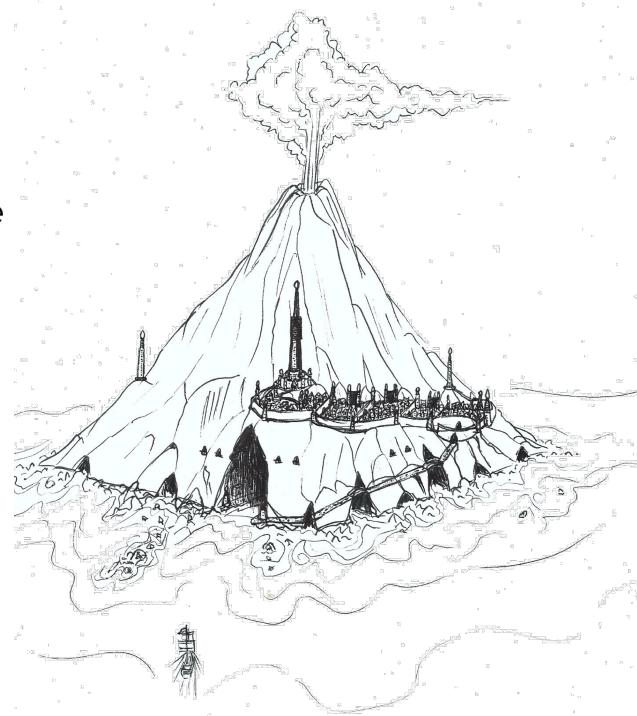
Northmarens are widely varied peoples from river and sea-side kingdoms on the northwestern shores of the Dragon Sea, such as Alglondor, Dorthonien, and Lyonesse. They are young and impetuous and eager for glory in battle, conquest, exploration and trade, however they are not as advanced as their smaller southern cousins, the Southmarens. They are divided into countless kingdoms and free cities, such as Alglondor, Dorthonien, Belerion, and Lyonesse, but stand united against the threat of bloodthirsty Nan-Avathar. They are allies with Eldar such as of Elves, Belerions and Dwür, and plagued by foes such as the Avathars and Illythrhi.

Northmarens are a diverse lot, and customs vary between regions, since most never leave their home town. A typical Northmaren stands six feet tall, a full head taller than their smaller Southmaren cousins, and some of their larger men are seven feet tall. Some tend towards single-mindedness and perfectionism, like the Dwür who taught them the arts of stone and steel. Yet others love nature, forests and the sea, like the Elves who taught them the arts of archery, swordsmanship, wood lore, and prayer. Most Northmarens

have a profound sense of fear and distrust for magic, especially Avathar blood magic or necromancy, except for obviously Elven "hallowed" magic such as songs to Lunara. Witches and vampires are hunted and cleansed with holy fyres of Pyrose.

Northmaren strongholds are works of engineering that would make the Dwur proud. The most famed is the city-fortress of Alglondor, the "Silverplume".

**Northmaren Names:** Alrik, Godfred, Bjarieson, Gunnar, Ognin, Thorkell, Ulf, Ragnar, Thorir, Leikrison, Knut, Sigrid, Saxe, Hallki, Geirla, Idin, Leif, Sigfi Horgi Iwar Asbralson Scandlo Odik Sturlison Ognin Thorki Bjarieson Hrike Agingrson Tholmfi Alldolfr Axir Herison Orken Fasti Artmav Saxe Geirla Idin Leido Artlidson Edil Mundi Leikrison Hugi Horhi Arnkend Axek Hallki Berdi Mundi Summi Gudmi Arar Knute Sokki Loomis.  
**Homelands:** Alglondor, Lyonesse, Dorthonien, Belerion. **Themes:** Alglond, Dorthon, Taurithren Ranger, Druid, Elf Friend, Arms Master, Hallow, Knight, Noble Born, Paladin, Herald. **Traits:** hard to kill, strong, archery, swordsmanship, spearman, honorable, courageous, heraldry, music, scouting, bowyer/fletcher, bushcraft, wood lore. **Assets:** cuirass, plate armor, sword, lance, poleax, longsword, rondel, warhorse, canoe, silk rope, Elven cloak, hunting bow, long bow, war bow, bread, cheese, Elven way bread. **SECRETS:** detect evil, sense truth, holy aura, Elfsight, Starlight, Blessing of Lunara, Healing of Lunara, Purify water, Find Path, horse whisperer. **Dark Secrets:** family slain by Avathars, impious, deserter, fears undead. **Paths:** battle the Avathars, earn knight's armor, become a knight, build a river fort, strengthen the forest, purify forest tainted by Avathars. hunt Avathars, win new lands in the south



# Southmarens

Southmarens are the sophisticated citizens of the seafaring cities of Aquila and the Empire of Harnendor. They are ambitious merchants and adventurous scoundrels with a famous wanderlust and are thus found everywhere, recognizable as slightly smaller, swarthier, and more calculating than

Northmaren, with fast hands and a ready smile. They are true rogues who rely on their exceptional luck, opportunism, quick wits, sharp blade, and even sharper quips. The center of their world is Aquila, the infamous "City of Thieves" and seat of their golden Southmaren Empire of Harnendor, with its decadent aristocratic society, dreaming artists, clever thieves, silver-tongued merchants, and scheming black wizards. Their empire extends as far north as Kitania, surrounding majestic Madrigal, "City of Birds". Southmarens are famed for their ships, horses, skill in arms, and the sense of style they bring to all they do.



The Southmaren Empire covers the Dragon Sea, with many hidden trade routes, ports, cities, and lands on its shores, such as Kitania, the Rochir Plains, Dagor, sorcerous cities the Sea of Fallen Stars, the deserts of Haradjiiia, and the southern Emerald Isles. As a result, the Southmarens are a varied people, a melange of cultures of Aquilans, Kitanians, Rochir, Northmaren immigrants, and Haradjjiin.

Southmarens have intermittent alliances and wars with the ever changing Northmaren kingdoms, hampered by their propensity to raid the rich Southmaren lands. They are also neighbors of Eldar such as the Mirjiador Alu, Baal of Akkar, Guldurine Alu, Haradjjinn Alu,

and know how to appease and trade with them, but are bitter enemies of the Gobbah and Drisi.

Southmaren nobles are most often found in the major cities of Aquila and Madrigal. Nobles are expected by society to have skill in business, in feats of arms, as well as athletics, music, dancing, and other arts. All must be done with *sprezzatura*, the air of nonchalance of doing many things well with little effort or concern.



**Southmaren Names:** Marozzo, Faxx, Hristo, Elo, Rendo, Pulg, Thorkell, Talin, Thaxas, Thax, Pax, Falar, Thorkar, Basharat, Killian, Tia, Mira, Alya, Avaxa, Ava, Vlasha, Vlana, Thorkell, Talin, Fay, Thaxas, Jakartai, Than, Pax, Thoren, Thorin, Falkar, Thorkar, Avar, Pulgh, Basharat, Giovanni, Rezz, Seco, Ansus, Sabe, Rento, Tiusio, Garso, Mundi, Anez, Veno, Zaido, Guiro, Arin, Ruenzo, Vadi, Garceo, Rila, Duso, Luadio, Miro, Cuso, Reiala, Tero, Sesme, Video, Nando, Andos, Mara, Cemia, Sesa, Aurol, Sendia, Female:, Killian, Thraxa, Talya, Thorka, Thorlia, Avaxa, Ava, Vlana, Vlasha, Eildinda, Gila, Berta, Gelvan, Vico, Viso, Ardon, Valdo, Mundo, Afin, Crono, Alid, Lupe, Faxx, Thaxas, Brax. **Homelands:** Aquila, Madrigal, Kitania, Dagor, Tuln, Guldur, the Emerald Isles. **Themes:** Southmaren, Harn, Aquilan, Rochir, thief, adventurer, swashbuckler, city merchant, banker, traveling merchant, mercenary captain, ship captain, Black Wizard, priest, Aristocrat, thief, assassin, slave trader, ranger, traveler, scout, nomad. **Traits:** sophisticated, streetwise, agile, quick, lucky, savvy, appraisal, artistic, witty, jaded, swordsmanship, traveling, riding, survival, desert survival, bushcraft. **Assets:** cuirass, sidesword, buckler, parrying dagger, storta, spadone, partisan, crossbow, boots, guildmaster silver pin, spellbook, vial of poison, vial of poison antidote, deer meat, wineskin, traveling rations. **Secrets:** black wizard spells, lock picking, magic appraisal, forgery, bribery, sword tricks, riding tricks, archery stick shot, horse whisperer, poison/antidote brewing. **Dark Secrets:** owes a debt, liar, thief, blackmailed, gigolo, flat broke, lost soul. **Paths:** find a magical rapier, learn black wizard spells, make it rich, pay off debt, blood debt vs goblyns, soul owned by a black wizard, orphan, raised by slave traders

# Part 9. The Eldar

THE WORLD HAS DIED and risen anew in an infinite cycle. Each new incarnation blossoms and grows for an aeon, then dies in an apocalypse. Every reincarnation is a land for new civilizations, built on the stones and bones of the past. Every death adds another layer to the deep strata of the Underworlds below the surface. The entire world is riddled with the bones of colossal dragons, wyrms, sunken cities, vast watery grottos, and tunnels leading above and below.

THE UNDERWORLDS are vast subterranean gigadungeons formed by the layers of countless precursor civilizations. Survivors compete for life in the dark cold below, fighting monsters and one another in their struggle to reach the surface. Yet, treasure hunters, adventurers, and doom cults seek tunnels into the Underworlds to plunder the riches of ancient aeons. Within the depths you will find dead cities, riches, artifacts, dragon lairs, monsters, monster eggs, vast tunnels and caverns inside dead dragons, miles long tunnels filled with the millions of glistening eggs laid by chthonian horrors, trapped Eldar civilizations, standing armies forged and forgotten, imprisoned kha'din and undead horrors, and entrances to **Kalla** or hallows of Gods with forgotten names. As above, so below, the underworlds are a reflection of the surface world, and below are concentric circles of nested underworlds and gates between.

ELDAR are survivors of previous aeons. Once humans like us, they have been forged, broken, and reforged in world-ending fire to something like fae or daemons. A few Eldar have realms above and below, but most are trapped below and seek the surface, or wander without a people or a home. Some Eldar you might encounter are the hallowed **Elves**, inventive **Dwur**, draconic **Baal**, vampiric **Avathars**, scaly **Drisi** serpent-men, evil troglodytic **Drunes**, stone-skinned **Karrocks**, dragons-laying **Kith**, wise **Belerions**, black-robed **Alu**, reptilian mystic **Kess'rith**, fiery **Ifr'it**, or grotesque **Gobbah**

**KALLA** are holdfasts that allow the Eldar to survive across aeons. Each is an extra-dimensional pocket controlled by sorceries. Eldar, dragons, and wizards struggle for control of these places in a hidden magical war, yet, one that influences the rebirth cycle of the surface world. **Kalla'din** are Eldar extra-dimensional prisons for Kha'din and other daemonic horrors. Kalla gates are located at Nodes, which are intersections of Dragon Paths coiling around the world.

**WIZARDS** are abstruse sages and adepts of the magic arts. Similar to Eldar, wizards seldom appear in the world, usually secluding themselves in Kalla to focus on experiments and studies. Some form covenants of mutual assistance and defense, such as the **Imperial Black Wizards** in Harnendor, the **Istari** in Belerion, the **Inverted Pyramid** in Lyonesse, and **House Cennyth** in Kitania.

**DRAGONS** are bound to the cycle of the world, dying in each apocalypse and reincarnating with each aeon. Dragons are territorial, and guard their lairs to the death, from threats above and below. Some dragons have cast aside this natural cycle, living past their aeon as quasi-undead **Wyrms**. The **Baal'Mot** are draconeuroalchemist priests who aided the Wyrms in this end. By living beyond their natural time the Wyrms grow to enormous size, misshapen, grotesque, cancerous, and undead.

**KHA'DIN** are primordial horrors spawned in the watery darkness of the deepest, oldest layers of the Underworlds and ocean abzu. In each aeon Kha'din find for paths to migrate to the surface, and dragons struggle to hold them back. Their mournsong causes eerie dreams and impulses, and a touch of eye-covered tentacle infects with taint that spreads until the host is a **Akuma** thrall.

**THE GODS** are **Pyrose** the Sun King, **Xohm** the Earth Mother, **Mrmym** the Winged Messenger, **Lunara** the Veiled Maiden, **Kurg** the Winter King, and **Hruul** the Voice in the Void. They are known by other names across cultures and the aeons, but the archetypes are the same, for example the Baal known the Veiled Maiden as Suul.

The Gods exist above the rebirth cycle of the world, and seldom leave their Hallows, instead sending **Saints** armored in faith. The Saints are joined in a communion or collective called a Hallow, which allows them to commune with each other and their god, but also places their souls beyond jeopardy. Thus, saints are fearless!

**THE MAGIC ARTS** of the Dragon Isles are ancient, elegant, and decadent, having been developed by various lines of Eldar across aeons. Magic spells, rituals, runes, enchantments, and the like are all Secrets that you can learn, and should guard closely.

**GULDURINE GLYPHHS** are unsettling ancient symbols sometimes found inscribed on ruins buried deep in the past, or submerged under the seas. Glyphs command abstruse concepts rather than natural phenomenon, such as summoning, binding, unseen forces, teleportation, and other mysteries. Glyphs are used by the Black Wizards of Aquila, Avathars, Gobbah, and Guldurine Alu.

**THAUMATURGICAL RUNES** are the building blocks of creation, and securely held by the Dwur. There is a rune for every foundational truth of nature, such as "fire", "mountain", or "tree". Runes are most often used by Dwur, Thaumaturgists, and White Wizards.

**ALCHEMICAL ARTS** are magical processes which can create substances not naturally found in the world, such as magic potions, special alloys, alchemist's fire, hardened glass or stone, and many other wondrous materials. Notable alchemists are the Baal'Yr, Drisi'Yr, Drunes, Avathars, and Black Wizards of Aquila.

**MTHU RYGAS** are sorceries built by forming mental images and constructs and holding them together by force of will and spirit. No words or gestures are used, but the sorcerer must concentrate, and must see the target directly with his own eyes, for the eyes are the gateway to the soul. Known practitioners of sorcery are the Belerions, Black Wizards of Aquila, and Ifr'it.

**ASTRAL HARMONICS** are eerie sounds, intonations, or songs drawing magic from the Astral. Aethiiri melodic strings and voices weave beautiful eerie music, Alu bells, song bowls, and chants direct deep meditation, Baal horns and brass instruments echo dragonsong, and Kha'din create dark whalesong dirge.

# Secrets of the Dragon Isles

The following is unknown to most living people, only hinted at in songs and histories. Learned men such as monks, sages, wizards, and Eldar may hold scraps and clues to these great mysteries, but only those who delve deep under the surface of the world can have any true understanding.

## The Young Kingdoms

The Eldar know that the young kingdoms of men which have sprung up in the recent years bears a striking resemblance to kingdoms in prior aeons. The names and locations of nations and cities are the same, or very similar, as the youngest new aeon plays out. Only the wisest Eldar know the Kalla below influence the Regio above. This is the secret of the Eldar, shaping the newborn lands again to the vision they had in their eons long ago.

## The Surface World

The young kingdoms of men have blossomed on the surface of the world, but this is a paper-thin veneer even more superficial than the tip of an iceberg. The surface marches through seasons of the year as well as a countdown towards the end of the current aeon, which will end with a worldwide cataclysmic apocalypse, adding one more layer to the world and beginning the rebirth cycle.

## The Underworlds

The entire world is riddled with the bones of colossal dragons, wyrms, and great cities of lost empires. Lands once above are now below, and bones of aquatic cities have been washed up on the shores. Entire civilizations have been covered



over by layers of history, sometimes buried alive and furiously tunneling up toward the surface...or below in search of even more ancient treasures. The tangled warren of countless tunnels and layers is an endless gigadungeon crossing back and forth, up and down, over the entire world.

## Strata (Layers)

However, the surface is just a thin veneer. The world beneath is endless strata (layers) of buried civilizations. The entire world has died a thousand times, with each apocalypse adding new layers to the strata, forming a stratigraphic sequence of megadungeons and gigadungeons, like the classic "circles of hells", part Tartarus, part Jules Verne, part "dying earth" of Jack Vance.

Some layers contain world-spanning cities, dungeon levels, evil (or good) empires, fossilized remains of mountainous dragons, bore-holes of cyclopean wyrms, shells of immense ammonites, nations of undead trapped for all time, or pure clean ash. Some layers are repeated, as if the ancients repeated past mistakes.

Only the surface and the few layers just beneath are understood or remembered at all. The stratum also varies in depth and even order depending on where you descend. Thus do the strata differ from the classic "circles of hells", for they are not sequential nor directly connected or organized. This world is not a static place, but ever-changing both over time and where you explore. Truth is lost in the mists of time, but some strata might have been:

- i. Ruins of the Draconian Empire of the Baal
- ii. Mass Crypts of the First through Fifth Vampire Wars
- iii. Ruins of the Serpent Empire of the Drisi and Nisi
- iv. Ruins of the Dracoalchemical Empire of Ahr'Tolth
- v. Cyclopean fossils of dragons and ammonites
- vi. Toxic Jungles of Vökrazum and giant insects
- vii. Decadent treasure halls of the *Harvesters*
- viii. Great Gobbah Empire, ever tunneling upward
- ix. Troglodytic cities of the Draugr, Drunes, and Dreadkin
- x. Endless graves of the Battle Plain of Sepulcher
- xi. Legions of undead elves seeking the surface
- xii. Rhi'Annon, the endless dungeon of graves

- xiii. The Gigaglacial Age
- xiv. Battle ruins of the hosts of Dagour Dagorauth
- xv. Layers of only ash, debris, and fragments of the moons
- xvi. Hollow earths and lost worlds, buried and preserved in time
- xvii. The deep waters of the Abzu

## Kalla

Most Eldar survived the end of their eon and subsequent apocalypses by constructing **Kalla**, magical realms that exist outside space and time. Access is made via ancient **Kalla gates** found scattered across the surface and deep Strata. Despite their precautions these civilizations usually die in time, decaying from within or falling to ancient rivals. Many adventures can be had within these mythical places. Some famous Kalla are:

- **Drun'Carnac:** The underworld tomb city of the Drunes. Sheltering their red eyes in the darkness, Drune warbands establish caves and dungeon forts near surface towns and raid for prisoners, whom they make into obedient thralls through the use of strange, sacred draughts. These thralls are their primary commodity and are bought, sold, used for labor, flayed for skins, put to succulent use, or given as sacrifices to summon the Great White Wyrm to devour the world.
- **Valusia:** A vast underworld that spans most of the world, used by the bold as a shortcut to travel quickly between distant regions or as a treasure trove. This was once the empire of the Drisi but most of the realm has decayed and become a trackless swamp.

# Æthiiri (Elves)

The Aethiiri (Elves) are beautiful hallowed Eldar of light, filled with sacred magic of the stars, moons, and music. Most Elves manifest aspects of the gods Lunara and Hirminel to the extent that being "Hallow" is often confused with being Elven, and some Elves have a visible silver halo. Elves are extraordinarily perceptive, and can see, feel, and find things invisible to mortal eyes. When they find people who are pure of heart they name them "Elf-friends", and help them follow their call to become hallow servants of light. However, when Elves find hidden darkness they purge it with silver arrow and flaming sword, just as they have always confronted evil across the aeons, such as Kha'din daemons, Deurg'gul undead of Sepulcher, fallen "dark" Elves, and fallen Wyrms. As a result, Elves traveling in the young kingdoms are met with mixed feelings of awe, wonder, and fear that they might find an imperfection in mortal hearts. This fear means some kingdoms do not welcome them at all.



**Elven Names:** Aegnor, Aerandir, Anarion, Anar, Annael, Aradan, Aranwe, Elros, Eluchil, Lenwe, Maglor, Aerin, Diora, Luthien, Morwen, Ilmare, Laurelin, Niniel, Rian. **Surnames:** Meadowbrook, Moonshadow, Blackthorn, Whitefeather, Harplight. **Themes:** Elf, Ælf, Hallow, Saint, Ranger, White Wizard, Bladesinger, Battlesinger. **Traits:** lithe, quick, beautiful, holy, light, moonlight, blessed of Lunara. **Assets:** sword, bow, knife, spear, leaf armor, Elven cloak, silver trumpet, mandolin, harp, holy water, way bread. **Secrets:** starlight, moonlight, healing touch, holy water, water of visions. **Dark Secrets:** vow of vengeance against the dark elves, family slain by Kha'din. **Paths:** root out evil in the young kingdoms,



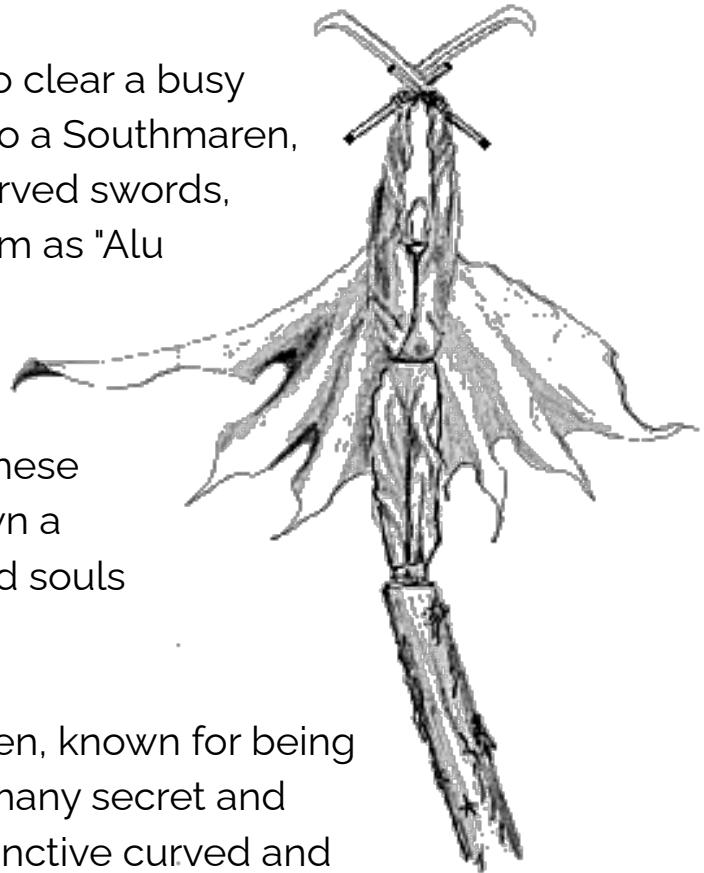
find a weirstone of Lunara, learn a new song, bring a new saint to Lunara

## Illythrhi (Dark Elves)

Elves who turn away from the light of the Menelion are referred to as Illythiri, or "dark elves". Lost from the light, they are unhallowed saints of dark gods. Hyakki has her "forest witches of the hunt" and Reshuk has his undead "Deurg-gul" of Sepulcher.

# Alu

The sight of a masked Alu is enough to clear a busy street in any city. While similar in size to a Southmaren, the distinctive demon mask, robes, curved swords, hooks, and chains they carry mark them as "Alu Demons", Eldar shadow warriors and deadly from the underworlds. Only arrogant fools stare at their swords or meet their red-gold eyes, for these are challenges to duel, and once drawn a hungry Alu blade must taste blood and souls before it may be sheathed.



Alu are famous duelists and swordsmen, known for being particularly devious adversaries with many secret and deceptive techniques. They wield distinctive curved and hooked swords of varying designs and lengths. The long edge is curved and ideal for broad sweeping cuts. Often weapons have hooks, lugs, chains, or cords for ensnaring and tripping. Such weapons are often of distinctive cultural design and use Eldar materials such as moonsilver, night iron, and bladegrass. Alu who always stand ready to fight are known as the Alu'Kel, and take that honorific after their name, such as "Arar'Kel".

Alu traditionally hide their faces, either behind a hood, veil, or war mask, leaving only their red-gold eyes visible. Their war masks are terrifying, formed in the stylized visage of various "Gallu", which is the word Alu use to describe the various demons of the underworlds, such as Oni, Ifr'it, Djinn, Tengu, Naga, Kha'din and all too many others. The Gallu visage is artistically embellished with elements of nature, spirits, and weapons. Alu masks are reputed to have magic powers, such as hiding the wearer from demons, shapeshifting into a demon, or ward pacts with bound demons.

Secretly, as one of the oldest of the Eldar, the Alu see it as one of their sacred duties to hunt, bind, and imprison wandering demons ("Gallu") across the Dragon Isles. This ranges from minor monsters and spirits to major incursions that threaten the world, such as the Kha'din. To this end, Alu use various binding chains, hooks, and mystic rituals to ensnare and imprison demons into Kalla'din planar prisons. Indeed, many of the Alu ruins found across the Dragon Isles are prisons, best left unopened. Alu entrusted with this sacred duty are the Alu'Shem, and use that honorific after their name, such as "Ammon'Shem". Some are reputed to call upon bound powers in times of need, and may undergo transformations to take a Gallu visage or feature such as tengu wings or oni strength. Alu choose their words with care, for they know hidden power of words to bind, and true words are magically binding.

**Alu Names:** Ammon'Shem, Arar'Kel, Panur'Shem, Sago'Shem, Azzaz'Kel, Verash'Kel, Ara'Kel, Nina'Kel, Vera'Shem, Nezzera'Kel, Nim'Kel, Ran'Kel the Ghost Blade, Dim'Shem Binder of Gallu. **Homelands:** Nan-Suruinen, Haradjiiia  
**Themes:** Alu, Alu Demon, Alu'Kel, assassin, Ifr'it, Haradjinn, Kha'din hunter, ninja, kensai, sohei shadow warrior, duellist, demon binder, tengu. **Traits:** quick, light, agile, swift, agile, small, cunning, cruel, perceptive, clever, tumbling, leaping, rolling, parry, dodge, stealth, rope use, trapping, binding, climbing, water walking. **Assets:** Alu demon mask, Alu silk robes, Alu bladegrass armor, Alu curved longsword (e.g. katana, scimitar, falchion, shotel), throwing dart knives (e.g. kunai, trumbash), hooked blades (e.g. sickle, kusari-gama, kama, khopesh, trumbash), bladegrass whip, night iron mail, hunting bow, longbow, silk slippers, horse, falcon, saffron, lamb, rice balls, sake bottle.



**Secrets:** arrow cutting, leaping, shadow step, invisibility, illusion, mirror image, shadow image, hide in shadows, shadow mask, binding words, circle of binding, binding chains, oni strength, tengu wings (grow from the back), shapeshift to Gallu. **Dark Secrets:** clan outcast, sole survivor, vengeful, consorts with shadows, assassin. **Paths:** defeat an Akuma in single combat, hunt Kha'din and purge them, master a disguise, master the flute, recover an ancient sword, recover a demon mask

# Avathars

Avathars are a beautiful, dark, and deadly people feared the world over for their sinister schemes and cruelty. They tend to be tall and thin, stronger than they look, with supernatural grace, much like Elves. The unholy truth is some of them are demi-vampires with stolen Elven blood.

Do not enter the ash-cloaked lands of Nan-Avathar lightly and *do not die there...*

Avathars are often born the color of death, with pallid skin and white hair. Bright sunlight will blind or even scorch them like flame. The Avathar fashion dictates dramatic, flowing, cowled robes, and high-collared cloaks to protect from the searing sun and veil the wearer from sight. Even in the ashlands they need protection from the choking ash clouds and noxious gases spewed from volcanoes. Their mineral-rich volcanic land produces many colorful dyes, and while charcoal is the most practical hue the more wealthy Avathars dress with splendor. They wear riches from years of conquest, and supple fabrics like fine wool and velvet are richly embroidered in gothic designs, with threads of silver, gold, and precious stones. Even ebon-colored adamant can be given color and patterns by the introduction of various minerals in the fires of the forge.

Nan-Avathar is the domain of the *Vampire Lords*, a council of ancient necromancers, liches, and vampires, each immensely powerful in the arcane arts and aeons old. Avathars serve the Vampire Lords



Avathar Knight

with great zeal, for these unholy half-dead have led the Avathars to world domination in the *Vampire Wars* of aeons past. The dead are by rights property of the Vampire Lords and their vassals. Avathar society is ancient and decadent; the nobility play high-stakes games at court, scheming in the shadows to gain favor with the Vampire Lords and displace their rivals. Assassinations by bolt, blade, or poison are frequent (although meticulously regulated by the Royal Avathar Society of Slayers).

Avathars worship the Duirgurth, the Gods of Death who preside over "the many deaths". Death is a fearful affair with the promise of a living death on the surface, or eternal torment in some layer of hellish Duirgurth underworlds. The greatest of the Gods of Death is Kurg, the god of bloody battle, and the most devout of worshipers call themselves "Kurgans" and drink the blood of their foes. Some say with great foreboding that the Vampire Lords are building inverted ziggurat temples to the Duirgurth to channel and control energies, to bring the world into an eternal night.

**Avathar Names:** Alan, Dani, Dmitri, Ivan, Pavel, Vlad, Vristo, Vladmir, Vela, Trina, Vlina, Jara, Natasha, Sonja, Anna. **Surnames:** Tepsh, Snagov, Cragov, Drakh, Split, Hvar, Riva. **Themes:** Avathar, Unhallow, Noble, Demi-Vampire, Assassin, Executioner, Kurgan, Necromancer, Undying, Necroalchemist (Royal Avathar Guild of Alchemists), Slayer (Royal Avathar Society of Slayers), Scourge (Royal Avathar Society of Scourges). **Traits:** strong, beautiful, graceful, dark, unholy, sinister, scheming, ruthless, deadly cunning, cruel, patient. **Assets:** black cape and hat, sunglasses/sungoggles, breath mask, plague doctor mask, gothic fluted plate armor, bat-winged ax, goupillon flail, mangual triple flail, longsword, executioner's sword, greatsword, gothic halberd, siege arbalest, pavise, blood purity potion, healing potion in syringe, poison vial, poison dagger, poison antidote, belladonna perfume (poison), syringe, black bread, blood sausage, potatoes, wineskin. **Secrets:** shadow sight, poison use, flail high guard, vampiricity, vampiric regeneration, vampiric immunities, bat familiar, wolf familiar, change to bat, change to wolf, energy drain, raise skeleton, raise zombie, corpse grinder, lifeblood, blood familiar, innate spells of death, negative energy channeling, headsman, blood sight, rage of Kurg, hunter of the unfaithful, immune to charm and sleep, create ash child. **Dark Secrets:** sunlight vulnerability, demi-vampiric (requires blood), schemer, vengeful and petty, deserter. **Paths:** become a necromancer, become a Vampire Lord, gather Elf blood, capture thralls, corrupt a saint.

# Baal

Baal are dragon worshipers from the "Draconian Empire" of Akkar. Baal are elegant Eldar with a touch of draconic; their skin is ash-like gray or black, often with small horns, bony ridges, sharp nails, and sometimes wings. Haughty, cruel, and greedy as dragons, Baal are looked upon with fear and loathing by most people. Human life has little value in their immortal eyes, and everyone has heard tales of the age when the Draconian empire stretched from sea to sea, enslaving all those within their reach. Their rituals of dragon worship call for burnt offerings of many kinds, but the Baal burn with a deeper purpose. Baal are often confused with Drisi serpent-men, especially by Northmaren who are often hostile to Eldar.



**Baal Names:** Jav'Tara, Vir'Hajas, Nur'Ash, Gor'Ash, Amon'Kel, Ev'Shem, Herek'Gor, Tov Morden'Yr, Tak'Jat, Ton'Hajak, Kajas'Gor. **Themes:** Baal, Dragon Lord, Pyromancer, Dragon Knight, Baal'Kel, Baal'Yr. **Traits:** noble, dragon-scared, bony skin, commanding voice, haughty, greedy, resist fire. **Assets:** silk robes, ornate silk hat, fluted plate armor, flamberge sword, spear, smoked meat, water, incense, book of dragon rituals. **Secrets:** speak for dragons, conjure flames, purifying flames (burns Taint), flaming sword, flame circle (ritual), immune to charm and sleep, sacrificial rites (ritual), summon dragon, dragon scales (manifests scale armor as an Innate Asset), dragon wings (grow from the back). **Dark Secrets:** as greedy and cruel as any dragon, secretly a Baal'Mot. **Paths:** find a dragon to serve, expand the Regio of my dragon, purge all Baal'Mot

**Baal Names & Titles.** The Baal believe names and titles have power, and create mystical connections through similarity, and this repeats across aeons.

- **Uru:** A dragon bound in the egg to guard the place where it was hatched. Uru can be slain but do not die, they only sleep until they are reborn as a dracontia "dragon eye", and perhaps again as a dragon if they earn the favor of the Dragon Gods.
- **Baal'Seta:** A Baal noble, one who bears the *seta'al* dragon scars that show him to have the favor of the dragons. One needs not be born as a Baal, the dragons sometimes mark foreigners. The dragons mark the face, so all can witness and none can deny their signs of favor. Causes distrust in Kith.
- **Baal'Shem:** dragon priest, a Baal'Seta who solely lives to serve the dragons, perform their sacred rituals (which often involve burnt offerings). Baal'Shem are the voice of the dragons and the Dragon Gods to Baal people
- **Baal'Kel:** knight or warrior, whose role is to be a weapon. Their name is the name of their weapon, and their weapon bears their name.
- **Baal'Yr:** artificer, skilled in alchemy and enchantment, whose role is to create.
- **Baal'Na:** abbot, ruler of a monastery. Na'Eslin is the monastery of the abbot Baal'Na'Eslin and home of the dragon Eslin.
- **Baal'Rhi:** king or prince, ruler of a great city. Rhi'Annon is the great city ruled by the king Baal'Rhi'Annon and guarded by the dragon Annon.
- **Baal'Si:** duke or count, ruler of a stronghold. Si'Anwon is a stronghold ruled by lord Baal'Si'Anwon and guarded by the dragon Anwon.
- **Baal'Er:** eyrie lord, ruler of a great watchtower. Er'Hajak is a watchtower ruled by lord Baal'Er'Hajak and guarded by the dragon Hajak.
- **Baal'Mot:** priest of the caste [once long ago] responsible for rituals of life and death (this name has been forgotten, and speaking this name is punished with death)

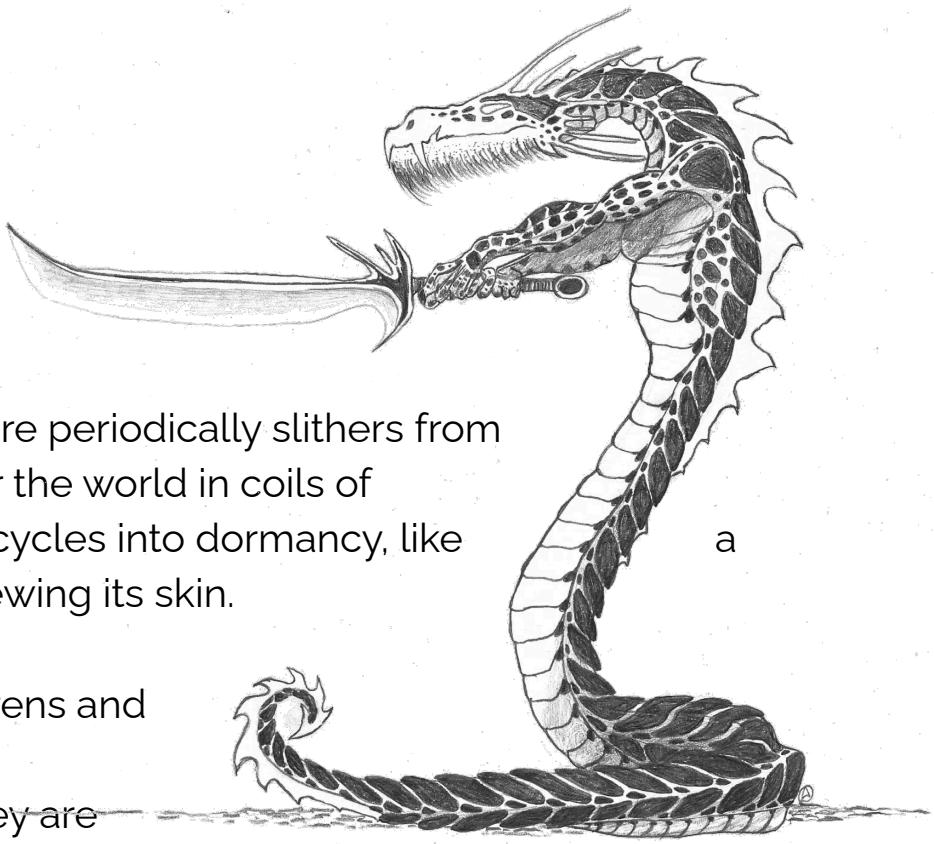
# Drisi

The Drisi are the Eldar "serpent-men", servants of the Gorgonae serpent gods, old enemies of mankind.

Their cold-blooded empire periodically slithers from the underworlds to cover the world in coils of slavery and deceit, then cycles into dormancy, like a snake shedding and renewing its skin.

Drisi appear as Southmarens and can blend in with human society anywhere, yet they are not what they seem to be. Drisi live to serve the Gorgonae serpent gods, and receive gifts as rewards for faithful service, such as snakes for hair, fangs, claws, scales, snake head, tail, and other snake, serpent, or draconian features such as spines and even dragon wings. Accomplished Drisi have many gifts, yet, these gifts are secrets of the serpent gods, revealed only to their saints, and so Drisi serpent-men are indistinguishable from Baal and Southmarens unless they choose to reveal these gifts to the world.

The serpent gods are renowned for their wickedness, as well as their wisdom and powers of renewal, healing, and resurrection. Also known as the *Gorgonae*, they have been known across the aeons by a great many names, such as Tark, Hypsiglena, Yigg, Set, Ningishzida, Asclepius, Hygeia, Panacea, Aceso, Vilothus, Yyg, and Nisi. Their necroalchemist priests traditionally took the surname "- Mot", although this fell out of favor after a great war with the Baal, who took issue with the Drisi-Mot claiming dragons were hatched from the moons and sacrificing them to the Gorgonae.



Drisi ruins are common, such as snake-carved pyramids, crypts, slave pits, and sacrificial altars to the dark serpent gods, and these places are filled with glittering treasures as well as grave peril. The Eldar serpentmen were masters of sorcery and necroalchemy, and left behind caches of potions, poisons, salves, healing unguents, and oils, most of which last indefinitely in preparation for the end times. Rarer still are Drisi libraries, housing the skins of snakes, dragons, strange beasts, Eldar, humans, and others, each of which can be read like a book to learn their story. In this regard, snakes prove superior since they shed their skins and need not be skinned.

Drisi warriors are known for their skill with the spear, javelin, partisan, and curved swords and axes. They often prefer shields over armor, since many of their heroes of legend were reputed to be encased in tough scales, gifted by the gods, as well as other weapons such as venomous snake hair. Their weapons are often made of alchemical steels, such as ever sharp black adamant, magic-soaking brassy orichalcum, or venomous purple vakaar.

**Drisi Names:** Amon, Ammon, Amon-Mot, Amosis, Angrboda , A'rthuun-Mot, D'irz, D'aergul, D'ras, E'rthane, Hypnalis, Imhotep, Im'Ravin-Mot, K'alaban, Khafra, K'kai, K'nren, L'lanir, Mesedsure, Moraga, Nedjem, Neferet, Rameses, R'enn, R'leth, Set ("man of Seth"), Tahemet, Y'quis, Y'sis. **Homelands:** Aquila, Ashenrise, Underworlds of Valusia, Necroalchemical Empire of Ahr'Tolth, Kalla'Drasi, the Cave of Serpents, The Nameless City. **Themes:** Drisi, Nisi, Nisibisi, Draconian, Serpentman, Gorgon, Linnorm, Naga, Desert Viper, Drisi-Mot, Son of Hecate, Son of Hypsiglena, Necroalchemist, Draconeuroalchemist. **Traits:** serpentine, scales, serpent speed, cold eyes, snakes for hair, snake tail, devious, adaptable, beguiling, calculating patient, planner, mastermind, deceptive. **Assets:** dory (light spear), aspis (shield), dagger, khopesh (sickle sword), crescent moon ax, crescent moon spade, gada (mace), monk spade, pilose (conical helm), orichalcum aspis, orichalcum pilose, adamant dory, orichalcum khopesh, vakaar dagger. **Secrets:** charm person, charm snakes, sticks to snakes, spray poison, suggestion. **Drisi Gifts:** Take an Innate Asset for each of your "gifts", e.g. serpent scale armor, dragon scale armor, snakes for hair, poison bite, poison blood, heat vision (q.v. pit viper), sleep venom, etc. Also take a "Drisi Gifts" Secret; when used this manifests your gifts, making them available to use as well as visible. Otherwise you appear human, and your gifts are unavailable to use, as well as undetectable. **Dark Secrets:** disguised serpentman, owes sacrifices to Set. **Paths:** become a son of Set, build a cult of Set, summon the Yellow King, summon an avatar of Vilothus, find a lost bowl of Hygeia or staff of Asclepius, find a great library, subvert a human kingdom

# Dwür (Dwarves)

Dwür are often described as dwarves or gnomes, short of stature, wizened and with dour yet hearty demeanor. They love places and things which are beautifully and well-made, so they tend to live in large cities, where they often achieve renown as masterful builders and artisans.

Even Dwur who wander afar from the forge are sure to carry tools to tinker and fix gear. Also they will strapped with guns. Multiple guns. Dwur love guns, and why not! Are they not the pinnacle of engineering and beauty? When the gods made the Dwur they challenged them to create something even greater: guns. (Some say guns are tied with beer.) Since the best guns are magic guns, the Dwur engrave their *Runeguns* with *thaumaturgic runes*.

**Names:** Athan, Davon, Durgir, Rugrir, Runon, Thovil, Bador, Adiel, Rura, Runa.

**Homelands:** Aegis, Aquila, Ashenrise, Alglondor, Belerion, Lyonesse **Themes:** Dwur, Dwarf, Dwarrow, Thaumaturge, Runemaster, Gunner, Artillery Captain, Rifleman, Gunsmith, Builder, Craftsman, Brewmaster. **Traits:** dour, solid, vengeful, hearty, patient as stone, strong as stone, bearded, beer lover.

**Assets:** hammer, axe, skullcap, three-quarter plate armor, tinkering tools, crafting tools, lantern, flintlock pistol, flintlock rifle, blunderbuss, runelock, sausages, beer, whiskey. **Secrets:** Runelock, create golem, craft Dwurstone.

**Dark Secrets:** family slain by Gobbah, quest of vengeance. **Paths:** invent something new, craft a new gun, visit a new young kingdom, regain the old Dwur homelands in Forandol mountains.



## Dwur History

Dwur history is the history of Dragon Isles. Their homelands are deep in the Forandol mountains in the north, where they spent aeons carving the mountain peaks into breathtaking halls. Their bright halls were filled with wondrous works, given life by Dwur *thaumaturgic runes*. This was aeons ago, and they fled during *The Breaking*, scattering to the winds.

Many Dwur joined the Baal in their sacred quest to reclaim the Dragon Isles from the Kha'din. The Dwur built roads and canals connecting the Dragon Isles, overlooked by watchtowers and shrines. These works were made from *Dwurstone*, black basalt sturdily wrought and carved with *thaumaturgic runes*, which was even capable of giving life to the **Karrocks**. The Dwur also forged *runeblades*, dragon-winged plate armor, and dragon-mouthing *thaumacannons*. Many of these works survive and shape the landscape of the Dragon Isles. This alliance ended bitterly once the Baal finished their shared quest and then sought to grow their power into the Draconian Empire. The Baal-Dwur schism led to the fall of the empire, and the world is now facing Kha'din again.

Indeed, if Dwur have a fault, it is their memories. Dwur remember all, never forgive, and never forget. It can take a lifetime to earn their trust, yet, a single act of betrayal to lose it forever. They remember all the long dark wars of the past, and remain bitter enemies of the Gobbah, Drisi, Baal, and Deurg'dul undeads of Sepulcher. Some still seek vengeance to this day, but prefer to ally with Northmaren and serve as elite artillery and gunnery troops rather than foot soldiers.

## Dwürgaur (Dark Dwur)

Not all Dwur seek the light. The Dwürgaur tunneled deep and away from the bright peaks. Life in the depths changed them, and now they are enemies of the Dwur and all surface dwellers. Some say they are the remnants of the Dwur who were lost in the *Battle of the Thousandfold Curses*, who now seek vengeance for being left behind and sealed into the abandoned Dwur halls.

# Karrocks

Karrocks have the appearance of classical heroic statues come to life, each a study in fine art.

Indeed, they are as living works of art, with impassive gazes revealing emotions both human and inhuman at the same time.

Karrocks have a quiet wisdom, usually leading peaceful lives outdoors, often in remote mountains, seemingly unfettered by modern concerns. They tend to not place much value on physical belongings; for example tend to dress simply, which works for them to better draw attention to their classical faces and physiques. However, this serene calm is only possible because they have found the path to allow stress to live within them, not to avoid it.



Karrocks were created as war machines of the Draconian Empire. Dwur sculpted the Karrocks in heartstone and gave them life with thaumaturgical runes of power. These warriors of living stone were practically impervious to harm, proof against blades, Drisi poison, necromantic magics, and the Baalfire of renegade dragons and wyrms. They were able to tunnel and shape stone to sap strongholds or dragon caves. After the great wars the Dwur gave the Karrocks humanity to live their lives in freedom. Their bodies became flesh and blood, but they could still wield mystical gifts of stone shaping when needed. Many sought solace in remote mountain tops far from human kingdoms, to live simple monastic lives of contemplation. However, some Karrocks seek to atone for the damage they once caused, helping and protecting the people

they once crushed under stone heels. Despite this, most Karrocks hold no regret over fighting the Drisi serpent people or Wyrms.

Although Karrocks were given humanity by the Dwur and can lead mortal lives, they are Eldar who bear thaumaturgical runes of living stone. Karrocks can tap those runes to transform back to their original body of living stone. The runes also form a sympathetic connection with stone, and many Karrocks are able to wield this power to shape stone as if it were clay, or pull stone objects such as great clubs from the ground. Karrocks can use their "runes of living stone" to avoid normal human needs such as food, clothing and shelter, outlasting a famine or winter storm by turning to stone. However, these runes must be fed earth power to develop and keep their power strong, so Karrocks constantly seek out gems and precious stones containing blessings of Xohm, the Earth Mother.

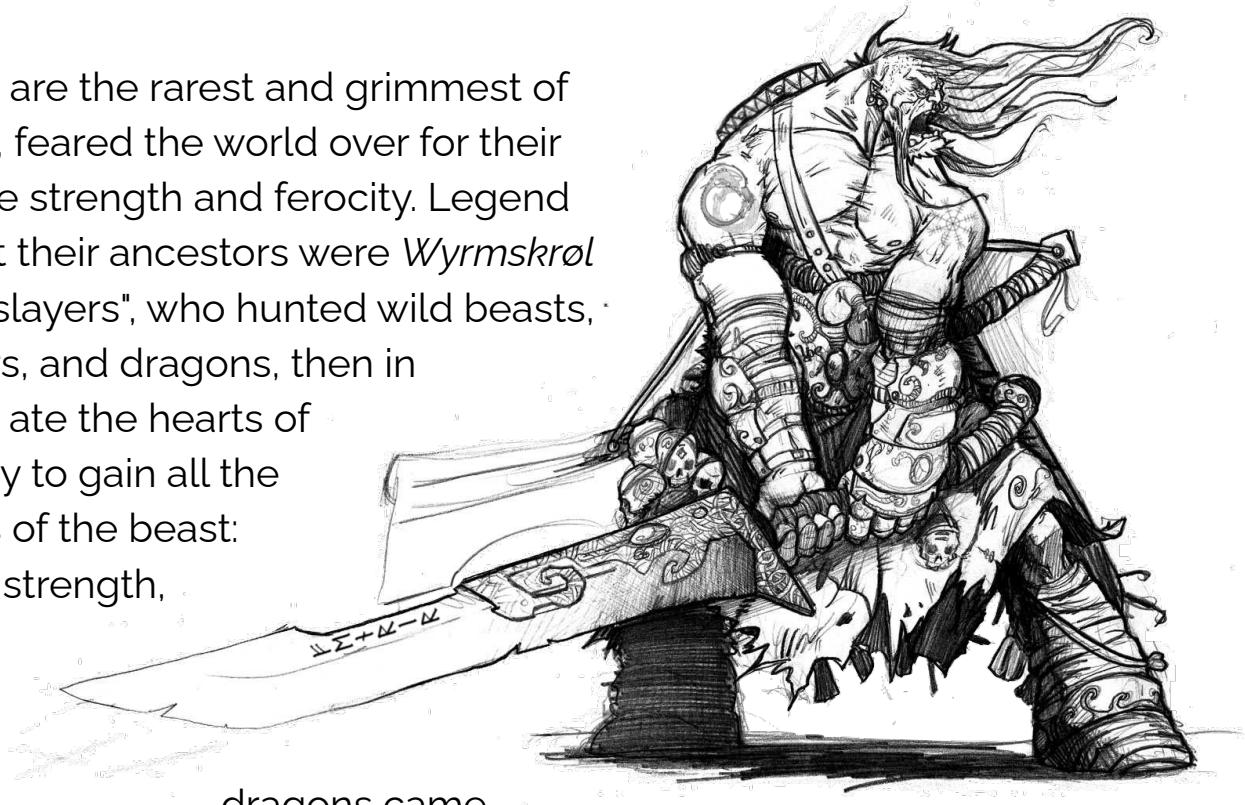
**Karrock Names:** Athan, Davon, Durgir, Galatan, Krego, Rugrir, Runon, Thovil, Bador, Adiel, Galatea, Rura, Runa. **Homelands:** Alglondor, Nan-Surinen, Sepulchre, the Platinum Peaks. **Themes:** Karrock, Exemplar Saint of Xohm, Wrestler, Warrior-poet, Priest, Yamabushi, Sohei, Wanderer. **Traits:** solid, hearty, wrestling, tall, huge, strong, voice like a mountain, baritone, patient as stone, stoic, tough as stone, strong as a mountain, contemplative, meditation, unyielding. **Assets:** stone mace, stone maul, poleax, iron-shod staff, tetsubo, lantern, colorful cloak, monk robes, simple loincloth, sausages, beer, whiskey. **Secrets:** feat of strength, summon greatclub, stone shape, shape stone, earth shatter. **Karrock Gifts:** Take an Innate Asset for each of your "Karrock gifts" when you are made of stone, e.g. stoneskin, stoneshirt, stonefists, etc. Also take a "Karrock Gifts" Secret; when used this manifests those Innate Assets, making them available to use as well as visible. Otherwise you appear human, and your gifts are unavailable to use, as well as undetectable. **Dark Secrets:** war atrocities, recurring war nightmares. **Paths:** find the Karrock homeland, find an arkenstone, become truly patient. **Karrock Paths:** You can consume gems and precious stones to earn XP on Paths for Karrock Gifts. (Tip: look up reputed gemstone powers for inspiration.) For example, you might work towards gaining a "stone strength" Trait or Secret by consuming a precious stone (such as agate or black onyx). Also if you find a truly magical stone then you may be able to gain its power.

# Kith

The Kith are the rarest and grimmest of warriors, feared the world over for their immense strength and ferocity. Legend tells that their ancestors were *Wyrmskrøl* "dragonslayers", who hunted wild beasts, monsters, and dragons, then in tradition ate the hearts of their prey to gain all the qualities of the beast: bravery, strength, agility, and from

dragons came

healing  
and immortality.



Each Kith is an alpha predator, a peerless hunter and warrior, yet seeks to outdo the feats of past great heroes and build an even greater name and legend that will last for all time.

Kith of legend often cast as musclebound berserkers half-naked in animal skins, wielding giant weapons, howling and murdering and like feral animals, and immune to wounds. Many live by the words "you keep what you kill", only owning and carrying what was pried from the grasp of vanquished foes, even going so far as to keep "drinking skulls" as trophies from especially worthy foes or prey. Kith often fasten belongings which can't be worn with cords or chains. All the myths are true, but the Kith are also Eldar, and some are just as civilized as any northmaren. Some Kith do indeed tower above even the northmen, and some have a bestial ferocity, but many others have the calm, quiet and determined demeanor of a seasoned hunter who stalks deadly monsters, yet prevails via cunning.

The ancestors of the Kith came from the far northern lands of the midnight sun, which they call Hrvlyggdor. The cold mountains, tundra, forests and rivers of the north are teeming with big game for the hunt. The weather alone can kill, heightening the challenge when hunting monsters such as cave bears, giants, dragons, wyrms, and underworld cities of Drisi and Drunes. Many Kith return to this ancient homeland as a rite of passage, seeking to test and find themselves. Yet, this land is no longer their home, which is amongst the northmarens and southmarens who struggle against monsters, wyrms, and oppressive Eldar empires, and are in need of a hero.

**Kith Names:** Alva, Asger, Aslog, Balder, Bard, Beowulf, Bjorn, Brant, Canute, Dag, Dagmar, Egil, Eirik, Fafnir, Freja, Haldor, Halvard, Helle, Hjalmar, Inge, Ivar, Jarl, Jormunrek, Niflung, Odin, Ottir, Siggeir, Sigi, Sigurd, Sorli, Regan, Regin, Rerir, Rodingeir, Tarben, Thor, Thorsen, Thorvaldr, Thorvaldr, Thurmond, Tyr, Tyra, Unn, Vali, Volsung, Ylva. **Homelands:** Hrvlyggdor, Ashenrise, The Wolf's Maw, Belerion, Lyonsesse. **Themes:** Kith, Wyrmsskrøl, wyrmslayer, dragonslayer, warrior, ranger, scout, berserker, monster hunter giantsbane, werewolf trapper. **Traits:** hard to kill, strong, hunting, trapping, scouting, stealth, unstoppable, force of nature, resilient, axeman, swordsman, spearman, courageous, resilient, skald, bowyer, bushcraft, wood lore. **Assets:** greatsword, lochaber ax, dragonbone axe, saex, small ax, dragonbone dagger, war bow, war drum, cloak (esp. deer hide, wolf, bear, etc.), drinking skull, venison, grog, gold wrist band, gold torc. **SECRETS:** understand bird's song, dragon eyes, dragon skin, dragon awe, burning blood, burning eye, stone heart, dragon fury, strength of the wyrm. **Dark Secrets:** seeks pain, only own what I can carry, keeps drinking skulls, family slain by Baal/Drunes/Drisi/Wyrms. **Paths:** master the winged axe, master the dragonspear, master the greatsword, slay a wyrm, slay a dragon, slay Baal, slay Drunes, raid Baal lands, establish trade with the south.

# Vôzen

Vôzen are doppelgängers who can take on the appearance and mannerisms of other people. Given time they can mimic the complete identity of any person. Vôzen are Eldar, and have been living this way for aeons...they could be anyone you meet, and unless you learn their "tells" you'll never know the difference.

Perfecting anything takes time, and each Vôzen develops only a few *identities* over their lifetime. Any given identity has a name, ancestry, face, voice, and the countless other details that

make up a full, believable persona. Vôzen who travel might have different identities for each region, or parts of a city. As Eldar, they might have identities from long ago which could seem antiquated in our time, or might even have been famous people. Vôzen try to avoid their doppelgängers, since their reactions are often violent. Many Vôzen have taken action to eliminate their doppelgängers, i.e. murder them, which made their generally unsavory reputation even worse. As a result, even honest Vôzen keep their true nature secret for fear of retribution.

The unique Vôzen gifts stem from alchemy. They have alchemical blood, which provides superhuman observation and adaptation, as well as their well-known ability to change shape. In fact, some Vôzen learn to take on the shape of objects such as furniture or shrubberies instead of people. Some Vôzen have also proven able to learn new abilities by studying alchemy, especially using magic



potions and alchemical elixirs. For example, a Vôzen might learn to self-heal by carefully absorbing the contents of a *potion of healing*.

Vôzen are Eldar with ancient origins. Aeons ago, the Baal'Yr alchemists discovered the native peoples of the Vôkrazum jungles, which to *everyone else* is an inhospitable, toxic environment with rare and deadly alchemical compounds and fungi. The Baal'Yr were intrigued and used their alchemical arts to study, and subsequently enhance the Vôzen, creating perfect scouts, spies, and agents for the Draconian Empire. The processes used were experimental, painful, and inhuman, but ultimately resulted in what the Vôzen are today, a people transformed by alchemy with superhuman gifts. However, due to this ancestral trauma Vôzen have an innate terror of fire, and this is entirely rational since extreme heat has the potential to destabilize their alchemical composition. As a result, most Vôzen eschew fire, and even go so far as to favor bland, uncooked food.

**Vôzen Names:** correspond to the current identity. **Themes:** Vôzen, Scout, Explorer, Spy, Alchemist, Actor, Merchant, Ambassador, Emissary, Investigator, Bodyguard, Adventurer. **Traits:** adaptable, observant, disguise, linguistics, voice actor, disguise, mimicry, acting, stagecraft, ventriloquism, alchemy.

**Assets:** sidesword, dagger, merchant's outfit, alchemists robes, master alchemist pin, *potion of healing*, *potion of water breathing*, alchemy kit.

**Secrets:** one secret identity, breathe water, squeeze flat, survive fall **Identity**

**Secrets:** Each *identity* is a Secret. When you use the identity Secret you instantly assume that identity, and remain that way until you use a different identity Secret or want to go back to your own identity. **Dark Secrets:** fears fire, fears hot water, fears spicy food, fears dragons and Baal, fears helplessness/capture, murdered one of my doppelgängers, secretly a spy, always takes any potions found. **Paths:** sip my *potion of water breathing* to learn how to *breathe water*, overcome fear of fire, tip my *potion of healing* to learn how to heal myself, learn to endure spicy food, perfect next identity, go bush camping, kill off my doppelgängers, steal the identity of a noble/merchant/alchemist.

**Alchemical Paths:** You can sip Potions to gain XP towards Paths dealing with alchemical pursuits or powers. For example, you might work towards gaining a "strength" Trait or Secret by sipping a *potion of strength*. Sipping a potion lets you know what the potion does, but does not trigger any of the normal potion effects or side effects. You get XP after sipping all of the potion. You can also consume alchemical components, working towards the reputed or presumed abilities of that component. For example the "heart of a basilisk" might allow you to "resist petrification" or gain the ability to change your "stone to flesh".

# Magic Items / Eldar Assets

The Eldar civilizations of aeons past created many things, some dark and beautiful, others bright and deadly. You might find Eldar relics during your adventures, perhaps lost in deep caverns or in battle with terrible guardians. Or you might encounter Eldar (living or undead) wielding archaic blades of mysterious metals. Some of the mightiest works of the Eldar are named in stories, often born by famous heroes, and sometimes even more famous (or infamous).

## Designing Eldar Assets

When describing Eldar Assets, think in terms of which Signatures and Secrets the Asset should have. For example, A Signature like "Drisi Orichalcum plate armor" protects against hostile magic (Saving Throws vs magic upgrades ASSET). A "Drisi Vakaar Dagger" could raise Stress if you attempt to stabilize the Doom. Lastly, the "Avathar Book of Shadows" is a Book of Secrets Asset with a "shadow magic" Signature. Overall it's better to be creative and flexible than to have a definitive list.

## Eldar Materials

Eldar materials are often exotic and wondrous in the eyes of mortals.

**Adamant:** A blued steel renowned for hardness and sharpness. The metal starts as normal steel, which is then alchemically tempered, darkening its color to a beautiful blue-grey.

**Bladegrass:** A fibrous plant that can be used to craft items normally well-suited for leather. The Alu use bladecrass exclusively instead of leather, crafting items such as armor, boots, and saddles. The main benefit over leather is better resistance to moisture, as bladegrass will not hold soak up or swell with water. In addition, bladegrass is naturally edged and the Alu craft some unusual items such as flexible knives and sharp-edged bladegrass whips.

**Moonsilver:** A silvery steel alloy that can absorb and shed moonlight, making it not only beautiful and useful but revered by devotees to Lunara. The Alu and Elves in particular have a love for moonsilver, and use it to make jewelry, armor, and swords.

**Night Iron:** A dark steel alloy that absorbs light, and thus appears darker than dark, like a hole from which no light escapes. The Alu used night iron to craft armor and blades, and the secrets of its source and manufacture are completely unknown.

**Orichalcum:** A brassy alchemical alloy that can be cast into various shapes, such as amulets, rings, weapons, and armor. Orichalcum is reputed to have some resistance to magic, and was a favored metal of the Alu, Baal, and Drisi, who cast amulets of protection, magic-cutting blades, and magic-soaking armor. You can upgrade ASSET on Saving Throws vs magic where the Hit Location is covered by orichalcum. However you must pay an extra point of Vim if you attempt to use magic involving a Hit Location covered by orichalcum.

**Vakaar:** An infamous meteoritic iron alchemical alloy, appearing blackened, purple, or green, often with flecks of blood red. Vakaar is used almost exclusively to make "venom blades" infamous for inflicting wounds that do not heal naturally, and resist stabilization (the GM may increase Stress). Such blades are often wavy or undulating. The secrets of making Vakaar blades are lost, rumored to be forged in darkness with many layers of folded steel, washed or infused with acid, poisons, venoms, blood, souls, forged with dark prayers to the Serpent Gods.

## Alu Assets

**Alu Dart Knives** [Class1 Close Short Stabbity Far1] the dart-like throwing knives of the Alu warriors. These usually have straight blades, but some variants have multiple points or are star-shaped.

**Alu Sickle Sword** [Class2 Medium Binding Guarding Hooking Cutty] the deeply curved sickle sword of the Alu, a weapon capable of hooking and trapping a foe's limbs, but also a tool in cutting through jungle overgrowth or bladegrass. These usually have deeply curved blades (such as a *khopesh*, *shotel*, *kama*, *sickle*, etc) and some variants have a vicious false edge hook or sharpened spur.

**Alu Longsword** [Class3 2H Medium Binding Guarding Cutty] the long sword of the Alu warriors, able to be drawn quickly and

wielded in one or two hands. These usually have lightly curved cutting blades (such as a *katana*, *scimitar*, *saber*, *falx*, etc)

**Alu Staff** [Spear Class3 2H/1H Medium Far1] a deceptively simple traveler's staff with one or more hidden spring-loaded hidden blades, spikes, or other nasty surprises. Some variants have spring-projected darts, chain, whip, climbing hook & legs, or smoke egg.

**Alu Bladegrass Cloak** [Class2 Soft Cloak Partial] fluttering cloak of silken bladegrass strands, supple and cut resistant

**Alu Bladegrass Jacket and Mask** [Class3 Body-Armor] supple armor made of layers of bladegrass strands a fearsome war mask

**Alu Smoke Egg** [Class0 Far1] An egg or paper-thin metal capsule containing smoke, orichalcum dust, or chili powder. The egg can be thrown or crushed to creat a person-sized cloud.

## Avathar Assets

Avathar have a variety of specialized instruments for delivering potions. The instruments require specialized training only available to members of the Royal Avathar Guild of Alchemists.

Syringe: Avathars can purchase empty syringes and fill them with potions. This allows you to deliver potions with pinpoint precision, maximizing their effectiveness. Alternatively, you to administer the potion to another person as an armed attack (not unarmed), although the potion only produces its normal effects.

Catheter: Avathars use a variety of catheters, which inject a potion directly into the blood system. This has the same effect as using a syringe, but the potion is always considered "readied", and using the potion is an Action.

Dead Man's Switch: Avathars can hook up a failsafe switch to a catheter that automatically delivers the potion if you falls unconscious or some other state of helplessness (e.g. paralyzed, petrified, beguiled, etc).

Blood Flies: Some Avathars raise blood flies as gruesome pets, fed on the Avathar's own demi-vampiric blood and trained to alert him to potential food (upgrade ASSET for related rolls). These Avathars are experts at detecting or tracking creatures of flesh and blood.

The Avathar can call back his flies and hide them on his person, but hinder social interactions since they are disgusting.

## Drisi Assets

The Drisi empires ruled the world aeons ago, and their relics can be found in any land and in many underworlds.

**Adamant Scorpion** [Class3 Long] a long bladed polearm of shadowed steel with incredible cutting properties.

**Orichalcum Serpent Ring** [Classo Gauntlet] brassy colored Eldar steel ring which absorbs magic. Magic-users generally avoid this ring, unless they do not use this hand for casting spells.

**Orichalcum Scale Armor** [Class2 Half-Armor] is made of small brassy Eldar steel plates attached to each other and to a backing of cloth or leather in interlocking rows

**Orichalcum Buckler** [Class3 Small Centergrip] brassy colored Eldar steel which absorbs magic

**Orichalcum Breastplate** [Class3 Body-Armor] brassy Eldar steel breastplate, only covering the front, worn over clothing

**Vakaar Falchion** [Class3 Medium Binding Guarding Weighty] evil wavy-bladed cleaving sword made of cracked dark purple or green steel. Wounds do not heal naturally

## Dracone necroalchemy Assets

Some of the Baal-Mot, Drisi, and Black Wizards have tapped into the vast power of dead dragons. This brings enmity from Baal.

Blue Dragon Orb: A glassy sphere filled with a flickering spark of dragon magic; assists with magic of air, electricity, and weather.

**Dracontia / Dragon Orbs:** are small crystalline spheres that contain a portion of a dragon's soul. A small flickering flame or spark can be usually seen in the sphere. They are prized by wizards of all kinds. Dragon orbs are most often a remnant left behind after a dragon's death. Each orb is a shard or fragment of the dragon's soul at the moment of death--the orb itself is a quasi-physical manifestation similar to an Incarnation. The fragment has power based on the strength of the dragon's soul and the manner of its death. The

strongest orbs come from dragons who felt betrayed, leaving a fragment of the dragon's soul in an angry, vengeful state.

**Dragonbone Dagger:** An assassin's blade dealing a wound that will not heal on its own.

**Dragonbone Staff:** A potent focus for controlling and conjuring fire. The staff is five feet in length to honor (or appease) the Dragon Gods, expertly turned from black dragonbone, and etched with draconic symbols. The staff feels smooth and warm to the touch, or burning hot to those who displease the Dragon Gods. Greatly prized by Black Wizards and seen as heretical by dragon worshipers.

## Dwur Assets

Thaumatagones ("Runelocks") are the famous and formidable Dwur firearms and cannons. The heavy metal barrels of these weapons are forged in fantastical shaped and covered in Thaumaturgical runes. The runes strengthen the barrel, allowing the use of more powerful alchemical powder than the simple black powder used in Alorn handgonnes. Some Thaumatagones bear additional enchantments or improvements that the Alglonds firearms cannot replicate. Runelocks are a form of flintlock with a Thaumaturgical rune on the "Runelock" striker which magically resets the striker when the rune is spoken. However, Runelocks can only be reloaded if you have the "Runelock" Secret, only known by Dwur, and the Themes Dwur and Thaumaturge reduce the Reload time by 1 each.

**Baalfyre Flask** [Class2 Far1] a small incendiary bottle of flammable "baalfyre". The flask is fragile and will break on impact, splashing highly flammable liquid over a person-sized area. Lighting the fuse requires a Maneuver.

**Runegrenade** [Class6 Far1] a small bomb thrown or placed by hand. Speaking the rune causes the grenade to explode, throwing shrapnel. Expensive, but oh so satisfying.

**Baalfyre Grenade** [Class4 Far1] incendiary runegrenade.

**Runelock Dwuringer** pistol [Class3 Far2 Accurate Reload6 Secret] is a single-shot holdout pistol that fits inside a belt buckle or boot

**Runelock Revolver** [Class4 Far3 Accurate Reload5 Secret] can hold six-shots, reload cost is for reloading 1-6 cartridges

**Runelock Pistol** [Class5 Far3 Accurate Reload5 Secret] single shot

**Runelock holy water sprinkler** [Class4 2H Far Reload7 Secret] is a "hand-cannon-mace-pistol" with the mace head containing four pistols. Each barrel must be loaded and fired independently.

**Runelock Doppelpistol** [Class5 Far2 Accurate Reload5 Secret] two barrels, each of is loaded and fired independently.

**Runelock dungeon sweeper** [Class6 2H Far3 Reload5 Secret] is a double-barreled shotgun meant for up-close and personal combat. Each barrel must be loaded and fired independently.

**Thaumasweeper** [Class6 2H Far3 Reload6 Secret] a Dwur Thaumaturgical "dungeon sweeper" cast in alchemist's iron and etched with thaumaturgical runes.

**Runelock carbine** [Class7 2H Far4 Reload5 Secret] a light rifle

**Runelock longrifle** [Class8 2H Far5 Heavy Accurate Reload6 Secret] a long-barreled heavy rifle

**Thaumagonne** [Class7 2H Far4 Reload10 Secret] a Dwur Thaumaturgical handgonne cast in alchemist's iron and etched with thaumaturgical runes.

**Thaumacannon** [Class8 Crew Far4 Reload12 Secret] a Dwur Thaumaturgical cannon cast in alchemist's iron and etched with thaumaturgical runes. The cannon barrel is heavy (20#) and usually fitted to a stock, staff, or wheeled frame. The barrels are often cast in fantastical shapes such as dragons, rockets, or mountain scenes. An alchemist can load the cannon with fire, stones, bullets, or any number of explosive or incendiary magic concoctions or fireworks. This charges the cannon with a single, specific spell (such as fireball or lightning bolt) which you must describe in detail.

## Ithilrhi (Elven) Assets

**Ithilrhi (Elven) Chainmail** [Class3 3Qtr-Armor Custom] is a suit of armor with tiny interlocking rings. If custom-made for the wearer this does not require a gambeson (normally required for chainmail armor) and can be worn under clothing.

# Part 10: Game Master's Guide

This last part of the book contains advice for you, the GM, to run your game, along with some additional game rules, options, and quick reference tables.

Whether you are creating your own world or reusing an existing work, you need to describe the fictional world to the players. Without this, there is no game. Vividly portray NPCs, monsters, and other elements; add drama, voices, and detail. Find ways to draw the players and their characters into the world and create verisimilitude. Also describe imminent threats and foreshadow future dangers.



## Starting a Campaign

Follow these steps to get a new campaign up and running quickly.

1. **Introduce the setting** - Pick a genre and come up with some idea of the game world and starting scene. You can use an existing campaign setting or come up with your own. Legends works with any genre, but pick something familiar unless you have time to prepare. It's also a good idea to talk with your players to find out what genres they are interested in playing.
2. **Introduce characters** - Work with each player to help them make characters. Try to create a group chemistry that works together. Introduce the characters to each other, and prompt each player to give a summary of his character.

3. **Experience Paths** - Ask each player to write one or two paths so that everyone has a good idea of what motivates them. You might need to help players do this, which is a good way of providing "hooks" into the campaign setting. Also set one Path before the players for a rumor or quest they have heard about, so that the world feels alive. Players can update their characters to add relationships or better align goals.
4. **Strong Start** - Kick off your first game session with a "strong start" such as a battle or other challenge. Be sure to narrate the encounter, set Hazard, and follow turns, etc, so that you teach the players how to play the game.
5. **Resolution** - Once players resolve the challenge, let them take a few turns looting, resting to lower Stress, or exploring. If anyone was hurt, explain how Dooms work.
6. **Time** - Track time spent and roll a Random Event every hour.

## Managing the Game

You are responsible for explaining the rules and ensuring the game runs smoothly. Make rulings that are consistent, sensible, and fair, so that players understand their choices and know those choices matter. You may need to make "house rulings" for anything not explicitly covered in the rules, and you should try to track those and keep them consistent for your campaign. Keep the current Hazard and Stress visible so players understand their odds for success.

## Flow of Play

Most of the game is a loose, open dialog with the players.

During this dialog, you need to continually describe what the players experience from their perspective. If at any time the players interrupt or leap into action, then stop talking and announce that a player's Turn has started, using these guidelines:

1. The game is structured in **Rounds**; announce new rounds.
2. Each player has one **Turn** per round.

3. Choose a player and call on them to take their Turn. This is usually the player who has encountered the dramatic situation. They might be "on point" in front of the group and have the best vantage point, or they might have been ambushed/attacked.
4. Describe any immediately pressing info, such as telegraphing monster activity. However, only describe what the player might actually observe and understand. A skeleton might clamber toward the player, or an evil wizard might mumble some magic words, but if it's pitch black dark then the player might just hear some sounds. Do not formally "declare" monster actions, just give good hints.
5. Now the spotlight is on the player, who gets to describe what do for their Turn. They get one main Action and two Maneuvers.
6. Be collaborative and help the player; this is not a competition.
7. Describe the outcome and any consequences of the player action. If the player faces danger then call for a Saving Throw, which is simultaneous with the player Action.
8. Then transition to the next player in an order that seems natural. You can also keep it simple and go clockwise around the table.

## Theatre of the Mind

Much of the game is based on verbal dialog and played in the "theatre of the mind". Therefore it's important to clearly describe what you are imagining, to help players make well-informed choices. Focus on what the players experience from their perspective.

For example, start new scenes or rooms by describing the most interesting, dramatic or dangerous elements of the scene, such as monsters and terrain hazards. For example, you might describe a huge ogre with a spear rushing the players, and remind them of the cliff edge on their left. Raise Hazard appropriately. If there are foes then describe how they move and what they appear to be doing. Make the environment feel alive.

Always try to answer player questions collaboratively and helpfully. Clarify any gross misconceptions, misunderstandings, or miscommunications implied by the player's actions, as needed.

If at any time the players interrupt and immediately leap into action, then stop talking and announce that player's Turn is now starting.

Otherwise, if the players allow you to continue, then give a general description of what the players see, hear, and smell. Emphasize any points of interest such as entrances, exits, and loot, e.g. "you see a bed, a table, a gold book stand, and a large hole in the ceiling". Don't go into detail, and then pause, allowing the players to direct the conversation, such as asking questions like "is there a chair?", "is there a book?", "how big is the hole?", etc. If the players seem confused or log-jammed, then encourage them to ask questions to clarify ("Feel free to ask me questions").

Never mention anything concealed from player view, whether that is due to line of sight or it was intentionally hidden. Something could be behind a tapestry, under a bed, in a chest, on a body, etc. Players will only find such things if they move to change their point of view or actively search, and how they describe this is important. This is a puzzle for the players to solve, so do not give away the answers, such as telling players when they pass by loot.

Always look for opportunities to foreshadow complications or threats, and **Raise Hazard**. Especially foreshadow any immediate dangers such as attacks which will require a roll from a player.

When in doubt, announce the start of a player's turn, giving them a problem to chew on. This puts the focus on the player, and gives you a crucial chance to re-state and re-describe the area for the player, ensuring clear communication and making meaningful player choices possible. Use direct wording like "you see" or "(your name) sees" to describe what the player's character sees. Most especially, always declare immediate threats such as monster

attacks, traps, area-effect attacks, or other dangers which will require the player to roll a Saving Throw.

Play to find out what happens. Whenever you present a challenge, always step back and let the game play out to see what happens. Let the players freely choose what they do! They might not bite, or they might find a different way than you thought of, but that's fine because the game is about the players and the choices they make. The adventure should live on its own with or without the PCs.

Present compelling and challenging adventures to the players and step back to see what they do. Play foes to their true nature and full potential. Wild animals and bandits should craft clever ambushes, and genius villains should be formidable. Be devious, ruthless, and do not hold back. Give the players a game where they must rise to the challenge and respond with intelligent, skillful play, to survive and win. Describe present dangers, foreshadow possible threats and Raise Hazard, making your world ever more exciting and dangerous.

## Player Maneuver Interrupts

Players are allowed to interject with **Maneuvers** at any time, even in the middle of narrative. For example, if you are describing how a "dark cowled figure rises from the mists" a player might say "I draw my sword". Stop talking, then acknowledge the Maneuver and interweave it into your narrative. Keep the game flowing.



# Time Tracking

Keep strict track of time that passes. Without this, the game will lack realism. The players will feel no pressure to act swiftly or pay attention to details such as provisions and transportation.

## Tracking Hours

Track the hour of the day. For example, you might tell the players "you wake and break camp at 6am". Advance the clock by an hour each time the players engage in a time-consuming activity.

|                |                   |                     |
|----------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| make camp      | open stuck door   | solve puzzle/riddle |
| follow a trail | find traps        | eat a meal          |
| combat         | find secret doors | evade pursuers      |

Just track whole hours, rounding up. Keep the clock visible to the players so they are mindful of the passage of time.

Roll on the **Random Events** table at the end of this book at least every hour.

Also Raise Stress every 6 hours of activity to encourage the players to rest, eat, drink, and so on. An easy rule of thumb is 6am, noon, 6pm, and midnight. Raise Stress by multiple points if the journey is arduous, such as difficult terrain (swamp, mountains, etc.) or laden with too much gear or loot.

## Using Hazard

**Hazard is your volume knob for difficulty and dramatic tension.**

Raise Hazard whenever you narrate anything which makes the situation more dangerous, especially when you foreshadow a threat of some kind. Lower Hazard as the players make progress to overcome those challenges.

- ◆ **Difficulty** - Use Hazard to quantify the current difficulty and risk. This is based on many squishy details such as terrain,

situational dangers, monsters, etc. A battle in a building on fire is both more difficult and more risky than on level ground.

- ◆ **Dramatic Tension** - Use Hazard to make dramatic tension feel concrete. Raise Hazard as you head into a climax.
- ◆ **Outclassed** - Raise Hazard if the players are clearly out-classed in terms of weapons and armor. If the players are unarmed or "brought a knife to a gun fight" then Raise Hazard. You should also Lower Hazard if the enemies become disarmed.
- ◆ **Outmaneuvered** - Raise Hazard when foes take the high ground, flank, or encircle the players. You can foreshadow this to Raise Hazard earlier. Lower Hazard when the players break free.
- ◆ **Player Choices** - Use Hazard to provide the players with meaningful choices where they know the odds. For example, if you describe how there are strong winds and loose tiles on the rooftops, and Raise Hazard, the players can make their decision which route to take. Or if you describe how an evil priest lights an unholy lanthorn that strengthens undead nearby, and Raise Hazard, then clever players might shoot that lanthorn to lower the Hazard back down. Player choices matter; use Hazard to inform those choices.
- ◆ **Pace** - Use Hazard to control pace. By setting Hazard low, you are signaling the players that they are reasonably safe and can take their time to explore, be introspective, or engage in a long drawn-out narrative. By Raising Hazard you are telling the players that the situation has changed and they need to react quickly.
- ◆ **Foreshadowing** - Use Hazard to make your foreshadowing reality for the players. Describe remnants of prior victims ("look at the bones!"), deep footprints of a massive beast, claw marks on trees, blood trails. If you raise Hazard the players will know you are serious. Using foreshadowing adds tension and wonder and gives players a chance to avoid trouble. If a monster should be especially dangerous then develop the threat over multiple turns.
- ◆ **Secrets** - Raise Hazard whenever a monster reveals a Secret such as a special attack, special ability, special defense, etc.

- ◆ **Safety** - Reset Hazard when the PCs find a place of safety and you want to lower the tension back down. Players need a break from the tension now and then.

## Using Stress

**Stress is your volume knob for making the characters feel human.**

Raise Stress whenever you describe something that would shock or unnerve a normally brave tough human person.

|               |                  |              |
|---------------|------------------|--------------|
| tired         | darkness         | magical fear |
| hungry        | dead adventurers | disease      |
| lack of sleep | character death  | torture      |
| lost          | eldritch horror  | horror       |

### Bad Stuff is Stressful

**Raise Stress whenever something bad happens.**

However, only do this if the misfortune is the “worst of its kind” in the current scene. For example, Raise Stress the first time someone gets hit, but don’t raise Stress on subsequent hits unless they are worse.

### Play with Fear

Play with normal human stressors and fears. Getting lost is stressful, especially in the dark and with goblyns hunting you. The purpose of Stress is to make the PCs feel human. Sure, they are stone-cold adventurer murder-hobos and all that, but they are still people. All the stuff you see adds up and you have to unwind and destress all of it somehow. You could take this as far as supernatural horror if you and your group of players like that sort of thing. *However, practice empathy and make sure you aren't crossing anyone's boundaries.*



## Stress Resistance

If a player has a Secret that might counteract the Stress, you can allow the player to spend Vim instead of raising Stress.

## Reducing Stress

As long as the situation is reasonably non-stressful, the players can reduce Stress in a relatively short time by roleplaying human actions such as resting, eating, playing music, complimenting others, or blowing off steam.

- Normally the minimum Stress is 2. But you can allow players to get to Stress 1 if they are celebrating a major victory with a great feast, epic tavern party, etc.
- Raise the minimum Stress by the highest Doom.
- Going without adequate rest raises the minimum Stress, which is the number of consecutive days without sleep, food, water, etc.
- Negative Vim raises the minimum Stress, which is the number of points below zero. (So if Vim is -5 then the minimum Stress is 5.)

## Monsters

Monsters are enemies for the players to encounter, fight or outwit, slay, and loot. They are an opportunity for you to be creative and scare the players.

Describe monsters vividly and foreshadow their actions as early and often as possible. Raise Hazard and/or Stress each time you add a dangerous, ominous, or scary detail.

## Monster Stats

Monster stats use a simple format like the original roleplaying games, for example:



**Giant Rat** HD 0; SA swarm

**Skeleton** HD 1; SA undead immunities

**Spitting Cobra** HD 1; #At 1 (spit or bite); SA spit venom causes blindness, deadly bite venom +1 Doom

**Goblin** HD 1; SA 20% have missile weapons

**Hobgoblin** HD 2; SA 20% have missile weapons

**Medusa** HD 4; SA petrification, poison; W her own gaze

**Werewolf** HD 4; AC 3; #At 1; SA only hit by silver or magic weapons, wounds carry curse of lycanthropy

**Ogre** HD 5; AC 3; WC5

**Manticore** HD 5; AC 3; #At 3; WC 3; SA flying, ranged spikes

**Hydra of 6 Heads** HD 6; #At 6; AC 3; SA heads double when cut; #At is number of heads

**Basilisk** HD 7; AC 3; #At 2 (bite, gaze); SA petrification by bite or gaze

**Hill Giant** HD 8; AC 3; WC 8

**Chimera** HD 9; AC 3; #At 6; WC 3; SA fly, deadly snake tail venom, fiery breath 15' cone

**Monster Name** HD 0; [AC 2;] [#At 1;] [WC 2;] [SA;] [W;]

- **Hit Dice (HD)**: overall toughness
- **Attacks (#At)**: Number of attacks per round; defaults to 1. Although players only get 1 attack (i.e. 1 Action) monsters can have multiple, since they are weird and often represent a single opponent/challenge for the group of players to defeat. For example a 6-headed hydra could easily have multiple bite attacks, and potentially also stomping, trampling, tail whips, etc.
- **Armor Class (AC)**: Armor Class for defenses; defaults to 2 or set based on actual armor worn. Modify AC by +1 for each foot larger than human (-1 for each foot shorter).
- **Weapon Class (WC)**: Weapon Class for attacks; defaults to 2 or set based on actual weapons wielded. Modify WC by +1 for each foot larger than human (-1 for each foot shorter).
- **Special Abilities (SA)**: Secrets, special attacks, +1 Damage (for a giant weapon), +1 Doom (for deadly venom), and special defenses such as breath weapons, spells, resistances, immunities etc. Most

monsters can see in the dark of their lairs. Monsters inflict Damage just like players (1 for a hit, 2 for a Crit) so any Damage bonuses are considered Special Abilities.

- **Special Weaknesses (SW):** Bypass HD or add 1 Damage when players exploit weaknesses or vulnerabilities.

Reuse stats from "original RPG" books directly, except as follows:

- **Damage:** Players and monsters normally deal 1 Damage. Some monsters such as giants might merit a +1 Damage modifier, but be sure to telegraph this to players.
- **WC:** Use human weapon when applicable. Otherwise count damage dice and add +1, so 1d8 is 2, 2d4 is 3, 3d6 is 4, etc. Add +1 if there is a large damage bonus. Add more for giants.
- **AC:** By human armor when applicable. Otherwise AC2 if equivalent to leather, AC3 if chainmail, AC4 if plate, etc.

Describe any obvious weapons, armor or other items, and vary them to differentiate similar monsters. Scatter a few projectile weapons, heavy weapons, and heavy armor amongst the goblins to create a variety of challenges. Assets can be the most distinctive aspect of groups of creatures, e.g. "the goblin with the arbalest". Raise Hazard or Stress when describing anything especially difficult, unusual, or scary such as giant halberds, poison arrows, or man-catching nets.

## Monster Hazard

Raise Hazard when you foreshadow monsters, when the monster finally appears, and when revealing special abilities. If you visualize the monster and describe how dangerous it is in detail, you will naturally come to a Hazard appropriate to the monster. The players will quickly learn to read these cues and get a sense of how dangerous the monster is. You can also mix things up and have a high-power monster with a low Hazard if it's been caught out of its element, or low-power monsters at a high Hazard due to terrain (e.g. goblins defending a rope bridge over lava).

# Monster Maneuvers

As part of narrating the scene, describe how Monsters take Maneuvers to aim or move to flank the players. This helps the players make well-informed choices. Foreshadow attacks with a Maneuver of some kind, such as describing a goblin archer or troll aiming at a specific Hit Location. Limit each monster to one or two Maneuvers, according to its quickness and tactical abilities.

When possible maneuver groups of monsters as units. Raise Hazard if you have a group of monsters gang up on a player rather than attacking separately.

## Monster Attacks

When a monster attacks, the targeted player must roll a Saving Throw or take Damage. Declare monster attacks on **Transitions** to player turns, because the Saving Throw occurs during the player's turn and is considered simultaneous with any actions the player takes during their turn. You can also Raise Hazard if you also foreshadow the attack.

Try to add visual imagery and detail when possible, for example "the orc attacks you" isn't as interesting as "the grey orc stabs at your unarmored leg with a rusty spear". If you are teaching new players the game you might need to tell them directly to "[make a Saving Throw]", but over time they should roll without being prompted.

Solidify any details you described before; for example, if you said a monster was targeting a Hit Location without armor you should say it again. Your players will learn that threats you foreshadow are more deadly and should be paid close attention, or neutralized with their own Maneuvers.

## Special Attacks

The hallmark of many monsters is one or more kinds of special attacks, such as petrification, poison, or energy drain. Special attacks

usually result in special Dooms, which can have immediate effects (e.g. petrification) or require special treatment (e.g. venom).

In general it's a good idea to foreshadow special attacks to keep them special and scary. Apply special attacks when you feel they will have the most dramatic impact. For example, a dragon shouldn't breathe fire every round, because that wouldn't be as dramatic as leading up to the breath of death by foreshadowing how the dragon breathes in and glares balefully. Highlight special attacks or special abilities when you roll ULT so they can surprise you and your players.

Some Dooms may be difficult to stabilize. The bite of a cobra needs an anti-venom potion or spell. A wound caused by an unholy wraith dagger might only be treatable by a few people in the world, and will otherwise fester and lead to undeath. You can limit the use of special attacks that are especially deadly or are hard to treat by only firing them off when you roll ULT for your Encounter. A wraith doesn't have to do its best undeath touch on *every* attack, and making it happen less often makes it more scary.

## Multiple Monsters

If there are multiple monsters who could attack the player, consider calling for just one Saving Throw. This allows you to liberally throw waves and hordes of monsters at the players without requiring too many rolls or worrying too much about overloading the players. Not all monsters are organized; they can get distracted or stop to feed!

Raise Hazard if you combine a group of monsters into one attack rather than making separate attacks. For example, in describing a hundred goblin archers "a black cloud of arrows falls upon you like barbed locusts". This adds tactical challenges beyond the attack.

Lastly, you don't always need to tell the players how many monsters there are. The players might fall into a dark pit on a pile of bodies and feel "many cold hands attempt to drag you down". Each player

would roll one Saving Throw, regardless of how many monsters are down there. Sometimes this is more creepy than knowing the odds.

## Defeating Monsters

Monsters take Damage and Dooms like characters. So if a character inflicts 3 Damage on an ogre's arm, the wound looks really bad, just like it would for a character.

However, most monsters are tougher than humans. The ogre is bigger so a similar gash doesn't affect it as much.

To simulate this toughness, monsters automatically stabilize the first few points of Damage they take, up to their HD. So for a skeleton (HD 1) its first point of Damage is stable rather than unstable, and an ogre (HD 4) has its first 4 Damage stable. Once a monster takes an Unstable Doom then it feels the effects of that Doom and takes extra Damage on additional hits, just like characters.

This means an ogre can survive a single Damage 4 hit without going down. Maybe it doesn't know its dead yet?

## Resistances and Weaknesses

Some monsters have special resistances and weaknesses. For example ghosts aren't hurt by iron weapons but hate silver, or a wyrm might be invulnerable except for a spot above its heart. Bypass HD or apply a Damage modifier of +1/-1 as applicable.

|                     |                     |                  |
|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| vulnerable on belly | ward pact vs swords | ghostly          |
| immune to fire      | immune to weapons   | armored head     |
| immune to cold      | mostly made of air  | impervious shell |

## Morale

Most monsters will lose morale and flee when they take an Unstable Doom.

# Death Throes

A creature (whether a monster or player) at Doom3 goes into "death throes". The creature "drops", goes into shock, and loses their ability to take actions other than random "death throes", such as thrashing about, making messes and pitiful sounds, bleeding on or biting someone who gets too close, or making one last attack before expiring. Even "as good as dead", monsters can still be dangerous. Snakes can be even be deadly after they are dead.

## Describing Critical Hits

Describe Critical Hits as the best possible outcome of how the player declared their attack. If the player said they were trying to do something specific then have that work; this takes precedence over other ideas you might have.



**Finishing Blow** - The monster dies dramatically. Describe a visceral end leaving no doubt the monster is dead (rolling heads, sprays of blood, fine red mist).

**Aim** - If the player targeted a specific hit location or capability of the monster, describe how that worked, such as disarming the foe or lopping off an arm, leg, etc. Clever players might find a way to target and remove specific monster capabilities, such as removing flight by lopping off a wing, or removing a magic shield by hitting a rune. Otherwise, if the player did not describe something specific, then you should come up with something you think is appropriate.

**Weapon Crit** - Describe a dramatic or special benefit of the weapon used, e.g. a mace might crush a skull or a *fireball* might inflict collateral damage. Showcase the PCs choice of weapon.

**Morale** - The attack causes the monster to rethink wanting to be in the fight, and it might panic, retreat, flee, or surrender.

**Wound** - Despite still having Hits remaining, the monster is mortally wounded, but not yet at Death's Door. Describe the wound in visceral detail. The monster will probably attempt to flee at the first opportunity, heading for its lair to lick its wounds. Intelligent creatures might surrender if they feel that will be honored.

## Interacting with Monsters

Monsters **always want something** specific, whether that's food, water, territory, treasure, allies vs enemies, or new music. Ideally this is something the players have, are blocking, or can obtain, giving players a way to interact with the monster other than combat, and possibly *manipulate* the monster. There can be competing priorities, e.g. a tribe of ferocious baboons might want "man's red fire or man's red flesh", causing players to carry extra torches in case they need to trade for their lives. Motivations make monsters feel real.

**Talking monsters** should always attempt to communicate. They will relate their needs, ask questions, boast, make demands, threaten, and curse. Give the monster a distinctive voice, such as whispering, gibbering, clacking, clicking, growling, or croaking. Also mix-in non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions, body language, gestures, and drawing. Magical monsters might use telepathy to whisper, biochemical lights to show pictures, or pheromones to communicate ideas via smell.

## Monster Event Triggers

You can use your random Event to trigger special abilities, attacks, or behaviors. For example, giant ants might "swarm" on COMBO, or a dragon might breathe fire on ULT. Simply interpret your Event roll in the context of the monster. Examples below.

Failure ( $\partial 20$  1-14)

Success ( $\partial 20$  15-20)

|        |  |   |
|--------|--|---|
| THEME  | Highlight a dangerous aspect of the monster (e.g. huge fangs, thick scales, etc.) and Raise Hazard | Focus on visual appearance, sounds, or smells (e.g. bloodshot eyes, frothing mouth, yellow nails, putrid breath, etc) |
| EFFORT | Monster is furiously energetic, ferocious, feral, manic, or berserk, moving or attacking twice.    | Monster catches its breath, possibly either moving or attacking, but not both, this round.                            |
| ASSET  | Use the best weapon possible, in the most effective way.   | Choose the wrong weapon for the situation, or tip their hand.   |
| COMBO  | Ruthless team, swarming, or mobbing.   | Enemies act like individuals rather than a coordinated team   |
| ULT    | Devastating and defining attacks such as dragonbreath, petrification, death gaze, etc.             | Foreshadow the monster's defining special attack, which it will do next round unless the PCs stop it!                 |
| PREP   | Executes a deviously planned ambush, uses terrain effectively                                      | Attempts to setup a special attack, but is unsuccessful.  |

You can even make a custom Event table for the monster to create a memorable encounter.

Medusa HD 6; #At2; AC 3; S petrification, venom +1 Doom; W her own gaze; THEME rattlesnake sounds, EFFORT tries to establish gaze, ASSET dagger & bow, COMBO venomous snakes, ULT petrify creature meeting her gaze

## Weird Monsters

Monsters are a staple of the fantasy genre, and are important because they provide fear of the unknown, and let you demonstrate to the players that *there is weird scary shit out there*.

Use weird monsters sparingly, and when you use one take the time to make them interesting. You can pull out all the stops and make a monster really scary and weird. Load it up with special attacks and defenses. Give it an inhuman personality. Make it do or say something mysterious or creepy when it dies.

Keep the monster mysterious. Never truly explain what it is or where it's from. Foreshadow the monster, revealing fleeting glimpses and

clues, but not letting the "camera" of your story reveal the monster until after you've milked it for all the dramatic effect you can.

## Climbing and Falling

Raise Hazard when players are in a precarious position, such as hiking on a knife edge ridge, traversing a rope bridge over a deep chasm, or climbing a rock face. Require a Saving Throw if the character free climbs or falls. In the event of a fall to the ground, modify Damage by +1/-1 for factors such as deadly heights (above 20'), spikes, soft ground, etc.

## Diseases

Call for a Saving Throw after contact with something "dramatically unclean" like a fungus monster, undead rats, tomb air, etc.

|              |               |                |
|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| Black spots  | Slime mold    | Sewer rot      |
| Blood eye    | Kha'din taint | Tomb lung      |
| Bloody flux  | Lycanthropy   | Undead fungus  |
| Mange        | Mummy rot     | Werewolf curse |
| Black fungus | Sleeping fits | White cysts    |



# NPCs

Each player takes on the role of one character in the game. Everyone else is an NPC ("non-player character"). You control all NPCs, including minions and hirelings of the PCs, and even characters whose player is absent.

Quickly create new NPCs with a few descriptive words, with a Theme for an occupation (e.g. baker, cook, driver, guard, scout), a Trait for a strength (e.g. clever, connected, quick, strong), and a Trait for a personality quirk (e.g. friendly, nosy, boorish). Add a Theme for an unusual ancestry (e.g. elf, dwarf, etc), and Assets for their gear.

After introducing an NPC, step back and see what the players do. Make your NPCs come alive, but never forget they are the supporting cast of the story, and the spotlight is for the players. Be prepared to "let go" of even your favorite NPCs, allowing them to be marginalized or killed off. You can always make more!



## NPC Backgrounds

acolyte, advocate, alchemist, apothecary, arbiter, armorer, assassin, assayer, astrologer, baker, bard, banker, blacksmith, bodyguard, bounty hunter, brewer, butcher, butler, candlemaker, carpenter, cartographer, chamberlain, chef, clerk, cobbler/shoemaker, concubine, cook, dancer, druid, dyer, engineer, executioner, falconer, farmer, fisherman, ferryman, fishmonger, furrier, gardener, gemcutter, prospector, goldsmith, groom, guard, guide, healer, herald/crier, herbalist, hunter, inquisitor, jongleur, knight, landlord, leatherworker, longshoreman, maid, mapmaker, mercenary, midwife, merchant, minstrel, miller, milkman, miner, monk, mortician, musician, page, painter, panhandler, peddler, potter, priest, prostitute, sage, sailor, scholar, scout, scribe, sculptor, shaman, shipwright, shopkeeper, silversmith, servant, serving wench, shepherd, singer, slave, slave-trader, soldier, sorcerer, spinster, squire, stable boy/girl, stonemason, tailor, tax collector, teacher, thatcher, thief, town guard, tracker, urchin, vintner, wagon driver, weaponsmith, weaver, woodsman, wizard

## NPC Personas & Voices

|        | Roll even  | Roll odd   |
|--------|--|--|
| THEME  | Arrogant, haughty, self-important, overly proud and overconfident                        | A voice used to giving orders and having them obeyed                                     |
| EFFORT | Starts off quiet and then fades to inaudible, causing you to lean forward to hear better | Brash and bold, often twice as loud as necessary. A booming baritone: "Ho ho my friend!" |
| ASSET  | Sounds like he starts the day gargling hot coals; Like a cat bringing up a hairball      | Smooth and dark, like treacle (molasses) poured into black coffee                        |
| COMBO  | Has friends in low places, like an east end gangster                                     | Everybody's friend. Hey friend! I can definitely help you out...I know a guy...          |
| VLT    | Dripping with false sincerity  | A voice that makes belts unbuckle themselves   |
| PREP   | Every word a sneer, every pause a lie  | A sensible, reasonable voice. "I think we can come to an arrangement"                    |

# Hirelings & Henchmen

The characters may recruit hirelings or rescue them from dungeons. Must be fed and paid 1 sp every day (1 gp for men-at-arms) or will not take risks. Adventurous hirelings may instead expect a share of the loot. As the GM, you can choose from these suggestions or roll.

|        | Roll even  | Roll odd   |
|--------|--|--|
| THEME  | Man-at-arms, brawler, fighter, mercenary, brigand, thug, tough guy             | Has military training, or cunning, or is in good shape, or has good gear, or stalwart vs weird monsters / undead                                     |
| EFFORT | Laborer, digger, dock worker, quarry slave                                     | Can direct other laborers, or has experience prospecting   |
| ASSET  | Pack-bearer, porter, lantern bearer, torch bearer, shield bearer, weapon caddy | Can keep a precise inventory list, or is somehow always in the right place at the right time, or sometimes offers the right tool for the job (caddy) |
| COMBO  | Sailor, pirate, cabin boy  | Salty/veteran sailor or first-mate   |
| VLT    | Ex-apprentice wizard, monk, acolyte, altar boy                                 | Can actually cast a spell, or can read magic, or knows things  |
| PREP   | Fodder - meat shield, point man, trap tester, door spiker, poison taster       | Specialist - guide, scout, lock picker, sapper, door spiker, forager, naturalist, messenger, tinkerer (can fix things)                               |

- **Hopefuls (Crit)** are the most competent and daring of young adventures in the making. Will generally exceed expectations and show qualities.
- **Losers (Fumble)** are generally incompetent, except sometimes have a knack for pretending to be useful. Will royally screw up any assignment given them.

# I Loot the Body!

A player can use an Action to quickly Loot a body or similarly sized area. As the GM, you determine what loot (treasure) is found. There are numerous GM aids available online for generating treasure, as well as some simpler approaches below.

Choose the value of the Loot or roll 1d20 vs Hazard (i.e. like a player would roll). Then shift the result by one step downward (e.g. success to failure) if the fight was tough (e.g. causing a Doom) or if the monster had deadly special abilities.

| d20          | Value                   | Loot   |
|--------------|-------------------------|--|
| Crit         | 1-10 cp<br>or<br>1-5 sp | Loot is a few small coins or a <b>Cheap Asset</b> (e.g. broken sword, chipped knife, loose-headed ax, broken shield, frayed rope, torn cloak, worn out boots). These are only worth a few cp or sp, but nobody will buy them from you. |
| Success      | 1 gp                    | Loot is 1 crown or a <b>Common Asset</b> (e.g. sword, spear, ax, shield, rope, quiver of arrows, lantern, cloak, boots, provisions, mead, wine) worth 1 gp.  |
| Failure      | 10 gp                   | Loot is 10 crowns or an <b>Expensive Asset</b> (e.g. greatsword, plate armor, arbalest, gem.) worth 10 gp.   |
| Fumble       | 20 gp                   | Loot is 20 crowns or an <b>Expensive Asset</b> (e.g. greatsword, plate armor, arbalest, gem.) worth 20 gp.   |
| Super Fumble | 100gp                   | Loot is 100 crowns or a <b>Signature Asset</b> (i.e. Asset with Signature and/or Secret). Can be pawned for 100 crowns, or used for advancing an Experience Path.  |

*It's a ton of fun to let the player roll the d20, since this is a roll where they want to roll bad, and flips the Hazard/Stress numbers which they hated during the fight into a reward.*

# Loot Variety

Use your **Legend Die** to add variety, details, or complications.

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| THEM€  | Loot is an item (especially arms, armor, shields, and clothing) thematically styled for the owner, such as a coat of arms, cultural designs/knots, anchors, skulls, snakes, runes, horses, etc. The Asset can have a Signature for style if it makes a unique fashion statement, such as an avant garde dragon-winged helmet. Players love these kinds of detailed items, as they help to dress up their characters with distinctive clothing, especially when hard-won versus a worthy foe!   |
| EFFORT | Loot consists of furnishings and artwork, such as an ornate table, tapestry, rug, chest, bed, mirror, candelabra, mural, altar, sculpture, etc. If you can find a descriptive style that appeals to the players, they will likely have fun taking furnishings and artwork home to decorate their lairs, fortresses, and temples. Naturally, many of these items are bulky and difficult to move.   |
| ASSET  | Loot is a useful tool or utensil, such as a tinderbox, chef knife, tongs, shovel, rope, etc. Even ordinary tools can be useful to clever players, e.g. pincers or tongs could pick up dangerous items, or a rake can safely comb through piles of debris.  |
| COMBO  | Loot is small (e.g. coins, gems, etc.) and well-hidden , so it will only be found if the player described an appropriately thorough search (e.g. strip, fully body search, etc.) Possibly the monster itself is the Loot if you know what to look for, such as eyes of a basilisk, venom glands of a giant viper, etc.<br><br>However, there is a 50% chance <b>Something awful</b> is near the Loot, which might be found depending on how the player described their search. if found! Examples:<br><i>awful case of lice, it's a trap!, messy wound, oozing sores, disgusting diseased bits, body bug, crawling lice, contagious crusty lesions, taxidermy trophy scalps, dry string of ears, wanted poster, bounty note, rotten gold tooth, gross piercing(s), Avathar blood coins, odd lump, wriggling worms, creepy chaos sign, mummified part, "he's not dead yet", lock of hair, cursed trinket, "cursed" weapon/armor/shield, Eldritch sign, undead rats inside</i> |
| ULT    | Loot is foodstuffs, spices, wine, or other comforts. Possibly the monster itself might provide meat, eggs, a warm pelt, etc. Unless cared for, there is a 50% chance the Loot is spoiled or tainted.   |
| PREP   | Loot consists of written works or records such as books, scrolls., diaries, navigational charts, treasure maps, etc. With careful study, these can reveal secrets of the past and used to make progress on Paths. Unless stored carefully, there is a 50% chance the Loot has been damaged and only snippets of lore remain.   |

## Describing Loot

Always give a general description of what the players can see in the area, with some emphasis on points of interest such as threats and loot, e.g. "you see a bed, table, book stand, and a hole in the ceiling". Don't go into detail, instead allow the players to direct the conversation by asking questions like "is there a chair?", "is there a book?", "how big is the hole?", etc.

Never mention anything concealed from player view, whether that is due to line of sight or it was intentionally hidden. Something could be behind a tapestry, under a bed, in a chest, on a body, etc. Players will only find such things if they move to change their point of view or actively search, and how they describe this is important. This is a puzzle for the players to solve, so do not give away the answers, such as telling players when they pass by Loot.

Loot doesn't need to be coins or items. Some monsters have valuable pelts, or the "Loot" could be a key, clue, or secret door.

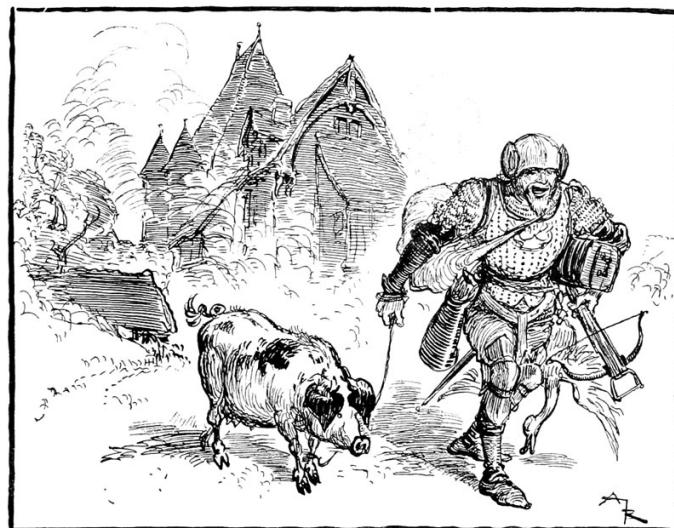
## Damaging Loot

The players might inadvertently damage or destroy Loot, reducing its value by one step on the table. They might shoot a "white wolf" full of holes, thereby destroying its valuable pelt. Some items are very fragile or flammable, such as books, scrolls, clothing, artwork, magic mushrooms, etc.

## Carrying Loot

Players tend to accumulate long lists of items of treasure over their adventures. Players find this fun, so let them have their fun without onerous bookkeeping, even if it stretches the imagination a bit wondering how they are carrying it all.

However, if they do find a sizable treasure trove or hoard then it's a good time to ask them what they plan to do with it.



# GM Quick Reference

## Armor Coverage

Armor is a tradeoff of Coverage and Maneuvers per Round.

| Armor Tag  | Example      | Coverage                 | Maneuvers |
|------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| Body-Armor | cuirass      | Head, Torso              | 3         |
| Half-Armor | gambeson     | Head, Torso, Arms, Hands | 2         |
| 3Qtr-Armor | mail hauberk | Head, Arms, Torso, Waist | 2         |
| Full-Armor | full mail    | all                      | 1         |

Partial Armor only provides protection if you roll ASSET on your Saving Throw, but does not count as Coverage or reduce Maneuvers per Round.

## Hit Locations

As the GM, include the **Hit Location** along with each attack, e.g. "The goblin falchion slices wickedly at your knee". Try to choose something both descriptive and appropriate, e.g. rats on the floor will usually attack low targets such as legs, but rats falling from the ceiling attack the head and shoulders, a caltrop trap hits under the foot, etc. If you prefer you can roll dice, using 1d6 on the table below.

### 1d6 Hit Location Examples

|   |       |   |
|---|-------|---|
| 1 | Head  | neck, chin, nose, face, forehead, skull           |
| 2 | Arm   | forearm, elbow, upper arm, shoulder               |
| 3 | Hand  | fingers, knuckles, palm, back of hand, wrist      |
| 4 | Torso | abdomen, ribs, sternum, chest, clavicle           |
| 5 | Waist | outer thigh, inner thigh, groin, hip, pelvis      |
| 6 | Leg   | knee, shin, calf, ankle, foot, heel, instep, toes |

You can specify left/right based on what seems natural, or roll a die odd (left) / even (right).

**Area-of-Effect (AOE) Attacks** still target a Hit Location. They are most likely to hit an extremity with low protection, such as hands, legs, or face.

## Dooms

Dooms are very serious life threatening injuries or afflictions. You gain a Doom whenever you fail a Saving Throw and do not deal with all Damage. Each Doom has five checkboxes that indicate the Doom Stage. Check a box for each point of Damage taken for that Doom.

| Damage   | Stage | Effects                            | Recovery      |
|--|-------|------------------------------------|---------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>                                    | Doom1 |                                    | Field Ritual  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>                         | Doom2 |                                    | Circle Ritual |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>              | Doom3 | Disabled (cannot use Hit Location) | Node Ritual   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> + | Doom4 | Death's Door                       | High Ritual   |

**New Dooms are Unstable** and make you vulnerable. You take +1 Damage on a hit similar to an Unstable Doom. For example, if you have an unstable weapon wound in your leg, you take +1 Damage on another hit in your leg, (The original Doom is not modified.)

**Stabilizing a Doom** requires an Action and a roll, with Successes of the Doom Stage. Add +1 Damage on a Fumble.

**Healing a Doom** requires months of time for natural healing, or just a few hours via a healing Ritual.

## Visualization

As the GM, help the players visualize the situation by adding new details at least once per round. **Modify Hazard and Stress** as appropriate (e.g. Raise them when describing new dangers or creepy details; lower them to slow down the pace of the game.) You can describe a current situational detail or foreshadow what's to come.

Roll below if you want a spark of inspiration to keep things fresh. You can also roll 1d20 for magnitude of the detail.

|        | Narrative   | Death Throes  |
|--------|---|---|
| THEME  | Describe a <b>theme</b> of monsters, NPCs, surroundings, etc.   | Describe <b>thematic</b> mutterings, curses, or sound effects.  |
| EFFORT | Play up the <b>effort</b> the players are expending, e.g. a long hike, climbing, swimming, trudging, enduring bad weather, exposed to disease, toxins, etc. | It spends its last <b>effort</b> attempting one last attack, then dies messily all over the target          |
| ASSET  | Describe an <b>asset</b> the enemies have, maybe threat or treasure!  | It clutches a precious <b>asset</b> and tries to hide it - you can't have it!                               |
| COMBO  | Describe <b>maneuvers</b> and tactics of monsters/NPCs  | It quietly <b>maneuvers</b> to escape and/or hide   |
| VLT    | Describe <b>special abilities</b> or expertise of monsters/NPCs   | Reveal <b>special abilities</b> such as self-destruct, acid blood, phasing, toxic fumes, regeneration, etc. |
| PREP   | The bad guys <b>prepared</b> for this, so play up their home-field advantage with an ambush or trap.  | Plays dead and <b>preps</b> to sneak attack anyone getting close  |

# AS ABOVE, SO BELOW

THE WORLD IS NEWBORN, bright and beautiful, full of life and boundless potential. Young kingdoms of man build on the unspoiled shores of the Dragon Sea. As they explore wildernesses and forge kingdoms they encounter ancient ruins, Eldar, dragons, and monsters, and mysteries of the old worlds.

THE WORLD HAS DIED and risen anew in an infinite cycle. Each new incarnation blossoms and grows for an aeon, then dies in an apocalypse. Every reincarnation is a land for new peoples and civilizations and dragons, built on the stones and bones of the past. Every death adds another layer of history.

THE UNDERWORLDS are vast subterranean gigadungeons formed by the layers of countless precursor civilizations. Survivors compete for life in the dark cold below, fighting monsters and one another in their struggle to reach the surface. Yet, treasure hunters, adventurers, and doom cults seek tunnels into the Underworlds to plunder the riches of ancient aeons. Within the depths you will find dead cities, riches, artifacts, dragon lairs, monsters, vast tunnels and caverns inside dead dragons, trapped Eldar civilizations, imprisoned horrors, entrances to Kalla, and shrines to Gods with forgotten names.

ELDAR are survivors of previous aeons. Once young like us, they have been forged, broken, and reforged in world-ending fire to something like fae or daemons. A few Eldar have realms above and below, but most are trapped below and seek the surface, or wander without a people or a home..

BUILD YOUR LEGEND as you explore the world, above and below. Write your character in your own words, with no numbers or limitations, and set your own goals for advancement. Then play in total immersion, with a unique new dice system that keeps you immersed in playing your “words only” character, rewarding good roleplaying and clever tactics.

THIS BOOK includes everything you need to start adventuring in the Dragon Isles, with a setting overview and full game rules.

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