

THE DRAGON ISLES  
OF AMBAR

a roleplaying game by Paul Abrams

# THE DRAGON ISLES OF AMBAR

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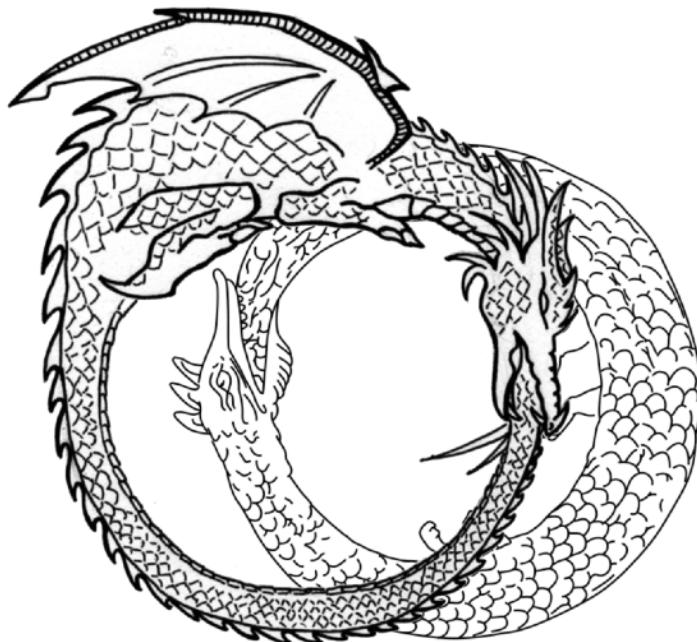
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# Player Quick Reference

As a player, you get **one Action** per Round, to use during your turn:

- **Investigate** - examine in detail, appraise, find Weakness, etc
- **Attack** - attempt to hit and inflict 1 Damage
- **Mercy** - stabilize or dispatch a mortally wounded creature
- **Recover** - un-tap one Trait
- **Cut Hazard** - reduce current Hazard by 1 point

You also get **two Maneuvers** per Round, to use at any time, even out of turn:

- **Move 10 feet** - walk, sit, stand, kneel, swim, climb, etc.
- **Use Item** - e.g. draw weapon, open/shut door, reload, etc.
- **Dodge** - increase defense
- **Cover** - take cover, which counts as armor
- **Called Shot** - choose hit location for one attack

## Roll the Dice

Roll a **d20** and a **Legend Die**. Your **d20** is an unmodified "natural" roll which succeeds on 15+. You Crit on 20. You Fumble if you roll equal to or less than the **Hazard**, which **starts at 1** but raises as the danger and tension grows. Your **Legend Die** is a custom d6 (faces below) which may upgrade or downgrade your natural result by one step.

THEME	Name a Theme or Theme Signature that assists your action. Downgrade if you don't have all necessary specialized knowledge (e.g. alchemy, swordsmithing).
EFFORT	Push yourself and upgrade your natural result by Tapping a Trait. Downgrade your natural result if your roll is hindered by a Dark Secret or Doom, which you can offset by Tapping an extra Trait.
ASSET	Downgrade if you are not using an Asset (an item you have). Upgrade if you can declare an Asset Signature or Asset Tag that is ideal for your roll.
COMBO	Upgrade if you previously took an Action or Maneuver that combines with your current roll to create an advantage. For example, you might have taken the high ground, moved to optimal weapon range, dodged, or parried. Downgrade if you are at a disadvantage (e.g. blinded, prone) or opponents have outmaneuvered you (e.g. flanking, high ground, etc).
ULT	Upgrade if you are an expert at your action, and more expert than anyone nearby. Requires player consensus for bonus. Downgrade if your action directly opposes someone who has ULT, e.g. a monster special attack.
PREP	Leverage an Action you took in a previous Round to prepare for the current roll. Usually this required you paid attention to foreshadowing or clues and used your wits to make ready. However, if your foes are better prepared than you (e.g. ambush, swarm) then downgrade your natural result.

# Saving Throws

The GM will call for a Saving Throw if you are attacked by a monster, trap, spell, or other danger. Roll dice for your Saving Throw during your turn: if you fail you take Damage (see below). If you Fumble you take extra Damage and the GM rolls a Surprise. If you Crit you gain a Counter, a bonus Action for a counterattack.

## Damage

**Attacks inflict 1 Damage**, or 2 for a Crit/Fumble, or 3 for a Super Crit/Fumble.

**Compare Weapon Class and Armor Class** in the Hit Location: add 1 Damage if Weapon Class is higher or subtract 1 Damage if Armor Class is higher.

Class	Medieval Weapon	Medieval Armor
0	cane, whip	clothing
1	knife, club, sickle, self bow	cold clothing, soft leather
2	dagger, rondel, sidesword, longsword (1H), javelin, club (2H), warbow, small ax	light gambeson, buckler, cuir-boulli, arming jack
3	mace, battle axe (2H), falchion, javelin, crossbow, longsword (2H), longbow, warbow (bodkin)	gambeson (30 layers), mail, jazerant, coat of plates, kite shield
4	greatsword, lochaber ax	transitional plate, munition plate, tower shield
5	halberd, poleax, polearm, pistol, arbalest, flintlock blunderbuss	full plate, pavise, a young dragon
6	mounted lance, flintlock carbine, arquebus, ogre club	jousting plate, a young dragon
7	handgonne, light ballista, giant club	an old dragon
8	siege weapons	an ancient dragon

**Tap a Trait to Soak the Damage**, otherwise you gain a Doom. You may only Tap ONE Trait per Saving Throw. Any Trait can Soak 1 Damage. A Trait that is worded to be defensive against this specific kind of attack Soaks +1 Damage. Any unsoaked Damage rolls over into a Doom!

**Roleplay your Trait** blocking the Damage to Soak +1 Damage, if your group is playing in "heroic mode".

# Dooms

Dooms are very serious life threatening injuries or afflictions. You gain a Doom whenever you do not Soak Damage. Dooms have three Damage boxes; check one box for each point of Damage you do not Soak. Once all three are checked you are expected to die, and any further damage results in immediate death.

Damage	Doom Stage	Effects
☒ □ □	1 - Wounded	Downgrade rolls of EFFORT
☒ ☒ □	2 - Disabled	Cannot use Hit Location
☒ ☒ ☒	3 - Death's Door	Expectant, near death
☒ ☒ ☒ +	Dead.	Immediate death

**New Dooms are Unstable**, and take 1 Damage any time you or the GM rolls EFFORT. You or someone else can use an Action to stabilize you; this requires a roll if the Doom is greater than 1 Damage.

**Combine Damage of the same kind**, such as another wound in the same Hit Location, more poison, etc.

## Recovery & Healing

**Spend an Action to Recover (Un-Tap) a Trait.** When you do this, un-Tap one Trait of your choice by erasing the "x" mark you wrote. Describe what you do, e.g. catch your breath, sip water, eat, bind wounds, meditate, taunt foes, or compose poetry.

**You heal 1 Damage per week**, or per full day of bed rest, or an hour after magical healing such as a potion of healing. Apply the healing to one Doom, reducing the Damage and Doom Stage.

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# Welcome to the Dragon Isles

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

**THE WORLD IS NEWBORN**, bright and beautiful, full of life and boundless potential. Young races of man build kingdoms on the unspoiled shores of the Dragon Sea: the honorable **Alglands** of the north, modern **Kitanians** of the west, mercenary **Lothians** of the midlands, fierce **Kith** northmen, **Dorthon** elf-friends, sophisticated mercantile **Harns**, and **Rochir** horse lords of the south. As they explore wildernesses and forge kingdoms they encounter ancient ruins, Eldar, dragons, and monsters, and thus learn deeper mysteries of the ancient worlds that came before.

**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 races and civilizations and dragons, 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, vast tunnels and caverns inside dead dragons, eggs laid by chthonian horrors, trapped Eldar civilizations, standing armies forged and forgotten, imprisoned kha'din and undead horrors, entrances to **Kalla**, and shrines to Gods with forgotten names.

**ELDAR** are survivors of previous aeons. Once young races 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 fae **Elves**, inventious **Dwur**, draconic **Baal**, vampiric **Avathars**, snake-worshiping **Drysi**, evil troglodytic **Drunes**, stone-skinned **Karrocks**, silver-blooded **Alorns**, glacial **Norns**, wise **Belerions**, black-robed **Alu**, reptilian mystic **Kess'rith**, fiery **Ifr'it**, slithering scaled **Linnorms**, grotesque goblinoid **Gobbah**, angelic **Aethiiri**, and raven-winged **Tengu**.

**KALLA** are holdfasts that allow the Eldar to survive across aeons. Each is an extradimensional 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 extradimensional prisons for Kha'din and otheremonic horrors. Kalla gates are located at Nodes, which are intersections of Dragon Paths coiling around the world.

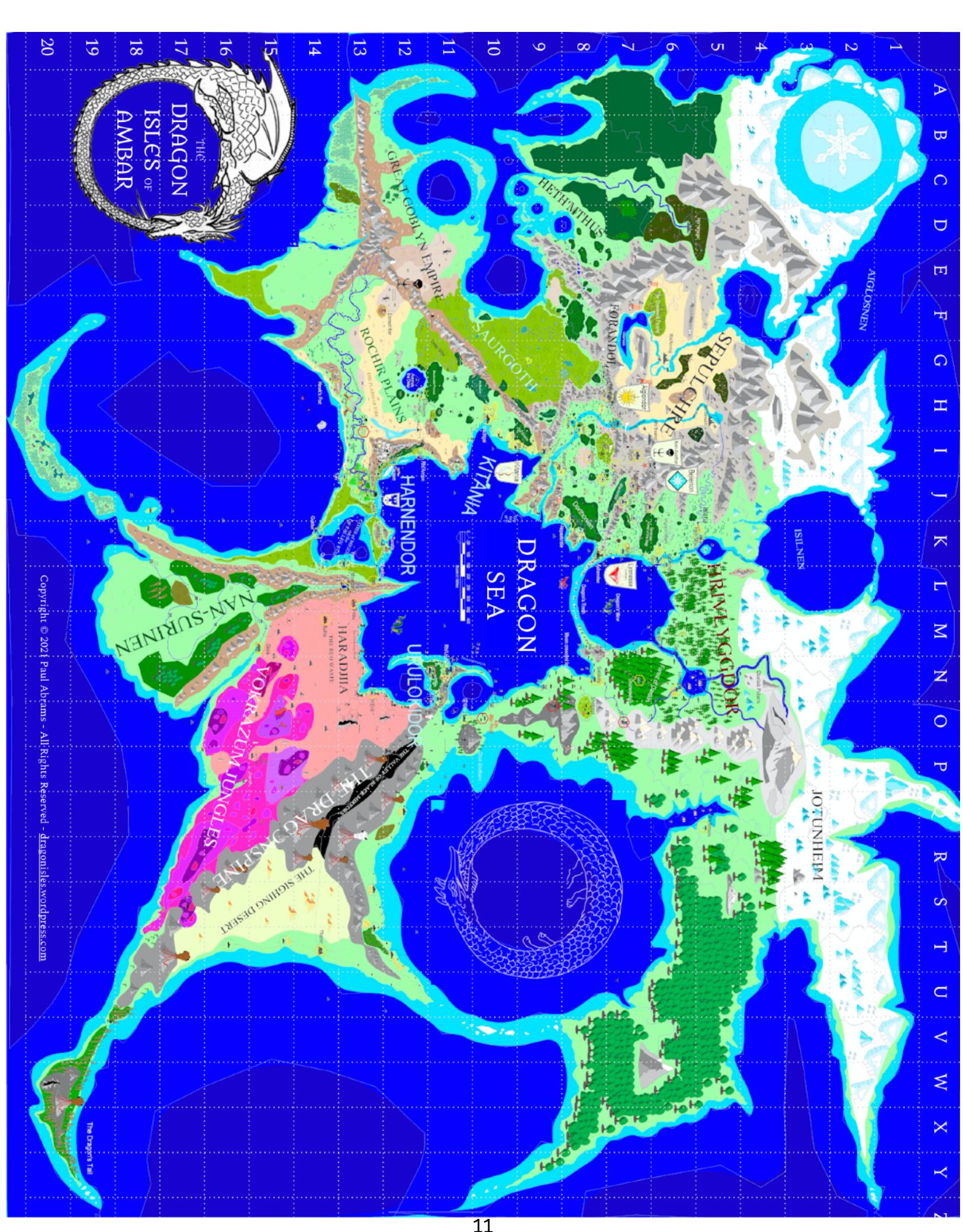
**WIZARDS** are abstruse sages and adepts of the magic arts. Aside from the youngest apprentices, wizards are as old and wise as the Eldar. Wizards seclude themselves in Kalla to focus on their arcane experiments and studies without interference or interruption, leaving only to fetch certain requirements or provide guidance to the current swath of young kingdoms. Wizards often form covenants of mutual assistance and defense of their Kalla, such as **Imperial Black Wizards** in Harnendor, **Istari** in Belerion, **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

dracone croalchemist 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 mournful soulsong 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 their **Saints** on missions, armed and armored in faith.



# The Known World

**The Known World** is a familiar medieval tapestry with human kingdoms, swords, chainmail, castles, and city-states. Eldar realms are mythical and grim renaissance fairy tales.

**AKKUR [N11]** - The basalt and obsidian palace of the Baal dragon lords, powerful Eldar who worship and work on behalf of noble dragons. Their Draconian Empire once spanned the world, and remnants are still visible into the new aeon, poking above the crust like islands.

**ALGLONDOR [H7]** - 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. Their chief fortification is the Aegis, Shield of the North, where Alglond paladins of Pyrose the Fyre Lord ward against the undead of Sepulchre to the northwest and the vampires of Nan-Avathar to the east.

**BELERION [J6]** - A remote northern realm bordering Nan'Avathar and Hrivlyggdor, renowned for natural wonders such as floating rock formations. Pilgrims on a quest for knowledge and peace will be welcomed by wise Eldar druids known as Belerions and will find what they seek.

**DORTHONIEN [J8]** - A vast woodland coastland region Within and around these forests dwell the Dorthons, men known as elf-friends and half-elves, for these forests are a refuge of the Elves.

**THE DRAGON SEA [L10]** - A vast inland ocean with waters are infamous for rocky "teeth" within a few miles of the shore, oft hidden by thick mists. Some teeth are atolls, but most are uncharted hazards. Sailors make offerings to Suul, the dragon of the mists.

**THE DRUNLANDS [N8]** - A dismal land of twisted forests, fens, and dragon mounds between Hrivlyggdor and Akkur, where travelers are welcomed and put to succulent use. The hateful Drunes rule this land, red-eyed troglodytic Eldar who hide from the sun in their tomb city of Drun'Carnac, or in countless dim caves and dungeon-forts in the region. Drun warbands raid human lands for slaves and sacrifices to crack the earth and free the Great White Wyrm, who will devour the world.

**THE GOBBAH EMPIRE OF DORASH KAR [E12]** - A harsh land of pits and tunnels leading to the Underworld realms of the Gobbah, a cruel Eldar race of goblyn sea daemons who always seem to wriggle their way to the surface during each aeon. The shores are littered with sacrificial altars and temples near steps leading into the sea, to worship and summon Dagon the Voice of the Deeps or even Kha'din.

**HARNENDOR [J13]** - The Southmaren Empire of Harnendor covers the far south. Their golden city of Aquila is a hub of trade, learning, and Black Wizardry. The Harns have vast fleets and have explored much of the world, and established many secret trade routes and colonies around the Dragon Sea.

**HRIVLYGGDOR [L5]** - The northlands of the midnight sun are vast taiga forests and arctic tundra. The Kith roam this savage land, grim warriors feared for their strength, resilience, tempers, and utter lack of fear. Kith longboats sail the Dragon Sea to hunt Wyrms or plunder the soft rich.

**KITANIA [I10]** - A prosperous kingdom covering the fertile midlands between Alglondor to the north and the Rochir Plains to the southwest. The Kitanians love freedom, horses, archery, and the sea, and revere the gods Mrmym and Lunara. They send food and munitions north to Alglondor.

**LYONESSE [K8]** - The rocky and mist-cloaked central coast is home to the Lyonese free cities. The Lyonese people love freedom and trade have learned to be adaptable in their war-torn region. The Lothian mercenary companies are famous. Their greatest free city is Ashenrise, which sits at the end of the Wolves Teeth archipelago and is the main trading hub of the north.

**NAN-AVATHAR [I16]** - A grim and desolate land of volcanic ashlands and crags east of Alglondor. This is the realm of the Avathars, vampiric Eldar ruled by 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 Vokrazum jungles.

**NAN-SURINEN [L13]** - A warm southern valley at the edge of the world, filled with the breath of the divine winds. Positioned between the Dragon Sea and the southern edge of the world, the mountain forests of Nan-Surinen hide many natural wonders such as the deadly savannah known as the Sea of Knives and jade cliffs with brightly feathered dragons. This is the holy land of the Alu, black-robed monastic Eldar who live by the sword, and foreigners are seldom permitted within.

**ROCHIR PLAINS [G13]** - The Rochir Plains is a vast region of arid savanna and deserts. The Rochir "horse lords" are nomads who rule these lands, said to learn to ride and wield a blade before they walk, who value freedom above all and bend no knee other than to the gods Mrmym, Xohm, and Lunara.

**SEPULCHRE [G5]** - 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 Khadin, died, but rose as undead rather than thralls. Their graveyard extends deep into the strata of the Underworlds. Alglondor shields the world from the undead, but Nan-Avathar recruits them.

## 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 Regios 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 a new layer to the strata, forming a stratigraphic sequence of megadungeons and gigadungeons, like the classic “circles of hells”, part Tartarus, part Jules Verne.

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. Thus, the world is not a static place, but ever-changing both over time and as you explore the world.

#### Some legendary strata:

- i. Ruins of the Draconian Empire
- ii. Mass Crypts of the First through Fifth Vampire Wars
- iii. Dracalchemical Empire of Ahr'Tolth
- iv. Pyres of the High Trolls
- v. Toxic Jungles of Vokrazum and giant insects
- vi. Necrophidius Temples of the Drysi
- vii. Cyclopean halls of the Oni Harvesters
- viii. Great Gobbah Empire, ever tunneling upward
- ix. Legions of undead elves seeking the surface
- x. Battle Plain of Sepulchre
- xi. The Undying Lands of Ealde
- xii. An endless graveyard
- xiii. Guldurine Glyph stones
- xiv. Cyclopean fossils of dragons and ammonites
- xv. The Gigaglacial Age
- xvi. Layers of ash
- xvii. Layers of fragments of the moons
- xviii. The Infernum
- xix. The Diluvium
- xx. Hollow earths / lost worlds
- xxi. Various "planes" (outer, inner, elemental, et al.)
- xxii. Avernus / the circles of hell
- xxiii. 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.

# Legends Roleplaying System

This game uses the Legends Roleplaying System, a lightweight innovative system with an old school feeling.

## Build your Legend!

LEGENDS helps you create the character you want, in your own words. There are no arbitrary classes, skill lists, attributes, or numbers to limit your imagination. Set your own goals for advancement and build your legend, in your own way.

## Your dice want you to roleplay

A unique new dice approach keeps you immersed in your “words only” character, savoring each facet of your character concept and the tactics you choose to employ.

A standard Legends roll consists of a **d20** and a **Legend Die**. The d20 is a simple “natural” roll without modifiers. You succeed on 15+, fail on 14-, crit on 20, and fumble on 1. However, you also fumble if you roll less than or equal to the **Hazard**, which starts at 1 and is slowly increased by the GM as danger and tension rise during the story, unless you work creatively to decrease Hazard.

The **Legend Die** is a custom 1d6 with faces labeled **THEME**, **EFFORT**, **ASSET**, **COMBO**, **ULT**, and **PREP**. Each face represents one *potential factor for success*. Your Legend Die decides which factor is decisive in this moment. You get to experience each factor

separately like a multi-course meal, roleplaying and showcasing each aspect of your character and the scenario. The Legend Die represents factors like character traits/concept, character domain/role within the team, situational advantages, teamwork, and player wits/preparation. About half of these factors highlight the character, and the others from player skill

## GM Support

Legends provides a lightweight, innovative framework for the Game Master to drive player immersion in your genre or world of choice. Legends uses continuous turns, so it's always someone's turn, even out of combat. The GM takes the first turn, and then Transitions to each player. The GM turn starts by rolling a random Encounter seed, then narrates the scene, maneuvers foes, and foreshadows threats.

## Heroic Realism

Legends is built upon historical martial principles, and combat should feel like historical combat, keeping authentic details but without overcomplicating things. Legends strives to portray a balance of "heroic realism", where the characters are heroes who are larger than normal life, but are still mortal and live in a dangerous and real world. Combat is realistic and deadly enough to make you consider all your options.

## Getting Started

Gather 2-8 people and nominate one player to be your "Game Master" (GM). Each player takes on the role of a player character (PC). Everyone needs one d20 and Legend Die (a custom d6). The GM is responsible for all elements of the fictional world other than the PCs. This includes monsters, NPCs, obstacles, and other aspects of the universe. The GM also acts as the referee for game rules. The story starts with a situation set forth by the GM, however, the GM does not script the story, rather the story is revealed during play by the your decisions. Play to find out what happens.



# Part 1: Your Character

The best introduction to Legends is to create your character. Your character will be freeform, written in your own words, with no limitations on your vision and creativity. Legends allows any character you can imagine, so play who you want!

Start with a blank page, or printed character sheet, then write the following elements all in your own words. Also ask the GM for suggestions that will fit the campaign setting and story.

**Name** - What are you called? You can include a title or alias.

**Themes (2)** - Write two core concepts that describe what you are. These are freeform but must be familiar concepts such as "Elf" or "swordsman". Write a Signature for each Theme to make it yours.

**Traits (2)** - Write two personal qualities or skills, e.g. "strong", "patient", "climbing", "juggling", "handsome", or "quick-witted".

**Secrets (2)** - Write two rare skills, abilities, gifts, or talents that you have, such as finding water, rare languages, or using magic spells.

**Dark Secret (1+)** - Write one hidden motive or aspect of your past that you hide from others. Write one extra per Theme or Signature related to magic or crime (e.g. wizard, priest, thief, assassin).

**Assets (6)** - Pick two enhanced Assets such as a family heirloom, racial feature, or something expensive. Then choose four common Assets, such as inexpensive armor, clothing, weapons, rope, provisions, etc.

**Experience Paths (2)** - Write two Experience Paths for motives, goals, or quests.

# Sample Characters

## Syr Wyndon

Sun Knight of Alglondor

### THEMES

Alglond - *of Tolsiriost*

Knight - *holy paladin*

Noble - *valiant*

Hallow - *Saint of Pyrose*

### TRAITS

brave, pious, strong, tall

### ASSETS

Longsword - *father's sword*

Plate armor

Kite shield

Warhorse - *Justice*

### SECRETS

Knightly vows

Friend of Lord Tirith

Holy light

Sense the truth

### DARK SECRETS

Will *never* trust an Avathar



# Dthar Kel'en

Alu'Kel assassin and master of the nine winds

## THEMES

Alu - desert screamer

Kel Warrior - sickle swords

Assassin - for honor of clan

Wind Mage - nine winds

## TRAITS

agile, deadly, quiet, intense

## ASSETS

Sickle swords (2) - *honor & death*

Dart knives (9)

Armored robes

Smoke grenades (3) - secret: smoke cloud

## SECRETS

Whispering wind

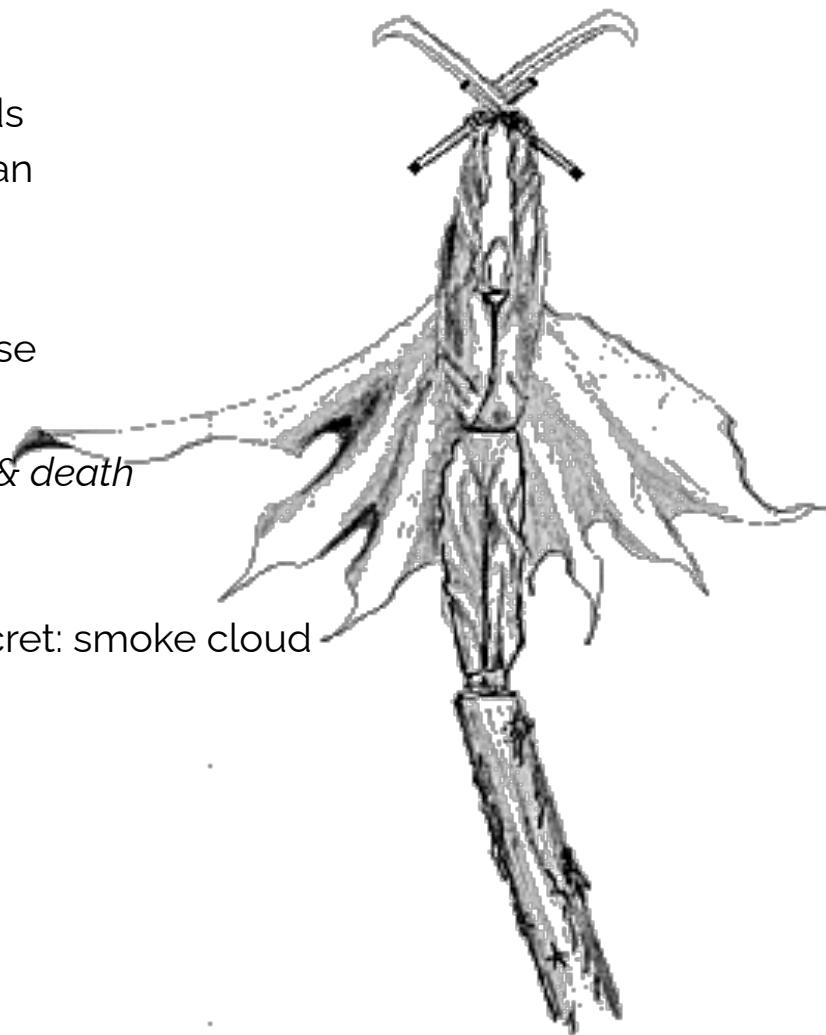
Vanish into smoke

Wind jump

Gust of wind

## DARK SECRETS

Sole survivor of last mission



# Build Your Character

## Step 1 - Themes

Write two core **Themes** that describe your high concepts, such as: "Elf, Swordsman, Wizard". Use familiar concepts and wording that other players will immediately recognize and understand. Your fellow players shouldn't need to ask you what a Theme means.

## Signatures

As you write each Theme, also write a Signature to personalize and awesomize. This is a short note or epithet that puts your creative spin on the familiar archetype. A Theme like "Knight" could have a Signature like "errant knight", "champion of Alglondor", "knight commander", "veteran of the Vampire Wars", or "grizzled old knight who has seen it all". You can also use Signatures for quotes, mottos, or beliefs, such as "knowledge is power".

### Leclo, moon elf prince

Elf - moon elf prince

Swordsman - blade dancer of the crescent moon

Wizard - sacred moon magic

Quickened - magically quickened mind and body

While Themes must be simple and familiar, your Signature can be written however you like, with no limits. The result is a familiar foundation for the other players to understand who you are, along with plenty of room for your own creative expression.

## Using Themes

You will use your Themes by naming them when your Legend Die rolls THEME. For example, if you are playing "Leclo, moon elf prince" (above) and making a sword attack, and roll THEME, you might say "Fighter" or a Signature like "crescent moon blade dancer".

## Race

You should use one Theme for your race. Choosing a race gives your character an anchoring culture and general physical appearance, and races often provide natural advantages. If you don't use a Theme for your race, you are a wandering human vagabond.

Alglond	Elf	Linnorm
Alu	Harn	Northman
Avathar	Ifr'it	Rochir
Baal	Karrock	Southmaren
Belerion	Kessrith	Tengu
Dorthonien	Kitanian	Vozen
Dwur	Kith	

## Sample Themes

archer	fighter	necromancer
assassin	hero	nobleman
berserker	horse lord	paladin
bard	illusionist	priest
baron	knight	ranger
battlemage	lord	rogue
charismatic	magician	soldier
cleric	magic-user	sorcerer
crossbowman	man-at-arms	swashbuckler
dragonslayer	mercenary	thief
druid	merchant	tinkerer
duke	minstrel	vampire hunter
executioner	monk	wizard

## Themes for Magic and Faith

You can use Themes to describe any talents in the magic arts or calling as a priest. Any magical powers such as spells, prayers, and such need to be taken as Secrets.

### Magic Arts

alchemist	battlemage	blood mage
arcanist	black wizard	chiromancer

conjurer	magician	warlock
diviner	necromancer	war wizard
enchanter	oneiromancer	witch
evoker	rune mage	weather wizard
fire wizard	song mage	white wizard
hedge wizard	sorcerer	wild mage
illusionist	summoner	witchdoctor
magic-user	thaumaturge	wizard

Faiths		
brother	healer	saint
cleric	inquisitor	seer
confessor	keeper	shaman
destriant	monk	sister
druid	paladin	spirit guide
faithful	pious	sword saint
father	priest	templar
hallow	reverend	wise one

### Magic Arts of the Dragon Isles

alchemist	dragon priest	necromancer
black wizard	guldurine	sorcerer
cairn mage	hallow / saint	thaumaturge
dracoalchemist	necroalchemist	white wizard

## Step 2 - Traits

Write two **Traits** for your character, in your own words. Traits are qualities and keywords that describe you, adding detail and fill in around your Themes. Traits describe your character and help you roleplay. A Trait like "handsome" or "silver tongue" helps you play your character. Some examples are:

athletic	cool	elemental pact
calm	crafty	eloquent
chi	dashing	fast
clever	dextrous	fit

focused	musical	strong
genius	noble	steely eyed
gritty	pious	survivor
handsome	powerful	tall
hardy	quick	tough
healthy	rock steady	tough as nails
holy	rough	traveler
icy gaze	short	unbreakable
infernal	silver tongue	unholy
intelligent	smart	unflappable
intrepid	spiritual	unstoppable
magical	stable	veteran
manly	stalwart	wise
morale	stoic	witty

## Step 3 - Secrets

Write a few **Secrets**, such as a magic spell, secret language, or a secret master. These are things known only to you, or to a select few. Secrets are unique amongst each band of PCs.

secret base	owed a favor by person x
password to thieves' guild	has leverage over person y
the thieves' cant	location of a magic artifact
ogham (language of druids)	secret or long lost language
memorized treasure map	apprentice of an archmage
contacts/allies	apprentice of a master thief

All magic **spells** and spell-like abilities or powers are Secrets.

detect magic	open	rope trick
charm person	light	magic shield
floating disk	read languages	ventriloquism

**Instincts & Habits** - You can use Secrets for any habits or instincts you have. You always do these things even if you don't remember to say it, but they can sometimes also get you in trouble.

sits with back to wall  
checks the ceiling  
checks for poison  
always wears gloves  
covers his tracks

keeps sword ready  
always checks exits  
light sleeper  
always sets snares at camp  
keeps weapons clean

**Supporting Themes** - You may only use a Secret if you have an appropriate supporting Theme. For example, an Elf "white wizard archer" might have Secrets like Elf light, Blessing of the Elves, Silent bow shot, Secret language of the Elves, etc.

## Step 4 - Assets

Write two "special" Assets, your most prized possessions, such as your family sword, expensive metal armor, a spell book, etc.

Then write four "common" Assets typical for your world, of moderate to low cost, which are ordinary.

These six items are your personal belongings, and everything you own for now. Use the examples below for inspiration and guidance, but describe them in your own words and as you imagine. You can draw from any sources you like, such as novels, movies, or historical sources, but you may only choose items that exist in the campaign setting. Try to use simple terms familiar to the other players.

Your Themes and Traits determine which Assets you would reasonably know how to use and possibly own. For example, a Theme like "archer" implies you know your way around bows and surely have one, while a "knight" Theme implies armor, weapons, and a warhorse. One way to pick your Assets is to choose one or two that accompanies each Theme and Trait.

## Sample Assets

These are examples of some appropriate starting Assets in a medieval setting. You can draw from other sources, your own knowledge, or lists provided by the GM for the campaign setting.

Assets marked with "\$" are difficult to obtain (e.g. rare, expensive, noble, racial, etc.) and will be one of your "special" Assets.

#### Clothing

belt	doublet/tunic	trousers/leggings
cap/hat	riding boots	turn shoes
cloak/mantle	robes	fashionable outfit \$

#### Armor

gambeson corset	mail hauberk \$	great helm \$
mail shirt	half plate \$	visored helm \$
breastplate	full gambeson	leather gloves
plate cuirass \$	full mail \$	leather gauntlets
Elven leaf armor \$	plate & mail \$	padded mittens
Dwur mail shirt \$	quilted coif	mail mittens \$
arming jack	mail coif	mitten gauntlets \$
buff coat	skullcap	finger gauntlets \$
gambeson coat	bascinet	

#### Shields

buckler	kite shield	round shield
heater	pavise	target

#### Weapons

axe	light crossbow	sidesword
arming sword	longsword	spear
dagger	mace	staff
falchion	messer	storta
knife	self bow	throwing ax
horseman's axe	sickle	war dart

#### Heavy Weapons

arbalest \$	greatsword \$	polax \$
bardiche	halberd	polearm
bill hook	lance	spadone \$
danish axe	longbow	spiedo
glaive	partisan	war club (2h)

war scythe

zweihander \$

### Adventuring / Dungeoneering Gear

acid flask	mirror	rope, silk 50' \$
backpack	lantern	sack, burlap
belladonna	ladder, 5'	sack, leather
healing potion \$	lockpicks	waterskin
holy water flask	oil flask	wolfsbane
iron rations, 1d	pole, 10'	torch
iron spikes	rope, hemp, 50'	torch bundle (5)

### Thieves Gear

bandit mask	hood	poison vial \$
bandolier	hooded lantern	prybar
belt pouch	knife, boot	mirror
cordage	knife, sleeve	rope, silk, 50'
crowbar	knife, bandolier	slippers
fish hooks	lockpicks	smoke pot
gloves	padded grapnel	string
grappling hook	pliers	thieves toolkit

## Special Assets

Two of your Assets are special, and are your most precious possessions. Give each an enhancement from the list below.

**Expensive** - Some Assets are rare, expensive, or difficult to obtain. These are marked with "\$" in the list of sample assets, but those are just examples. Add a Signature to describe how nice your Asset looks.

**Fashionable** - Add a Signature to one Asset to make it haute couture, fashionable, rich, and noble. As long as you have a supporting Theme (e.g. "noble") you will look fabulous, rock your look, get noticed, have influence, and be invited to fab parties.

**Signature** - Add a Signature to the Asset to describe a personal connection, superior quality, decorations, special features, etc. For example, your "longsword" can be "Longsword - my father's sword".

You can declare a relevant Asset Signature when you roll ASSET, for example, Assets like "Holy water - burns undead" or "Longsword - holy sword" would be useful for slaying undeads.

**Secret** - Give the Asset a Secret such as a magic power or special ability. You could have a ring with a secret compartment, a magic sword that detects evil, or a flask of holy water that heals wounds. You may only use a Secret if you have an appropriate supporting Theme, so choose something that fits your character.

**Book of Secrets** - You have a "grimoire", "spellbook", "holy scroll", or similar text with secret knowledge of a specific topic area. You can read this over time to learn new Secrets (see Advanced Assets - Books of Secrets). Also take one extra Secret from the book now.

**Racial Features** - Some character races and monsters have innate racial features such as wings, claws, infra-sight, resistance to charm & sleep, scaled skin, etc. You have an "Innate Asset" for one natural feature of your race. It's generally a good idea to take them now since it may be very difficult to obtain them later.

**Racial Items** - You have a special item unique to your race or culture, such as "Elven leaf armor", "Elven boots", "Dwur mail shirt", "Dwur runelock", etc.

## Asset Tips

**Weapons** - Choose one main heavy weapon such as a spear or longbow for battle, and a smaller sidearm such as a sword or knife. Your sidearm is your backup weapon and the everyday carry, the most you will be allowed to carry in guarded areas such as cities, castles, or inns.

**Armor** - Choose how heavy you want your armor to be, because this affects your number of Maneuvers per round: Body-Armor 3, Half-Armor 2, Full-Armor 1. The default rule of "2 Maneuvers per Round" assumes Half-Armor. You can upgrade armor pieces, but if you add more coverage areas then you go to the next tier.

## Step 5 - Dark Secrets

You must also write **one Dark Secret**. This is something that complicates your life or holds you back. New characters must take

one extra Dark Secret per Theme or Signature related to secrecy, magic, or underworld (e.g. wizard, priest, thief, assassin).

Some aspect of your troubled past might haunt you.

secret identity	survived starvation (ate friends)
sole survivor of last mission	ex-smuggler
outcast/exile from homeland	wanted outlaw / murderer
false tooth (w/ poison?)	sole survivor of plague
old wound / phantom limb	witnessed eldritch horror
bad bargain (owes debt?)	spy from foreign nation

You might have personal weaknesses, foibles, or mannerisms that may have caused you to take up the life of an adventurer, outcast, or wanderer, and cause friction with normal people.

nosy in others' business	gluttonous or hoards food
offensive fashion sense	doesn't understand humor
too honest, and loud	was never held as a child
zealous/uncompromising	always right
host for something awful	bad selfishness

You might bear a curse or ill omens.

ancient family curse	haunted by nightmares
sees dead people	visited by portents/dreams
my friends turn undead	fated to die
parent was undead	have seen my own death
hears voices in my head	unnerves animals
infected at birth	possessed

## Step 6 - Experience Paths

You are ready to play, but to build your legend you need to write Experience Paths ("XP" or "Paths"). Paths say what you need/want to do/accomplish, and suggest who/what might become. They are your essential goals, missions, or other statements of intention to do

something, whether they are quests to “find the cure to save the poisoned king” or self-serving wishes such as “become a fire wizard” or “find a magic sword”.

**Rewards** - Upon successfully completing a Path the GM will give an appropriate Reward. Some Rewards will directly enhance a part of your character such as adding new Trait or Secret. You could get a new Themes (max of four), or modify a Theme, or rid yourself of a Dark Secret. You could also find a new Asset, including a “magic item” or other traditional kind of loot.

**GM Paths** - The GM will also set Paths before you, to give you meaningful choices and challenges tied to rewards. Many of these Paths are limited-time opportunities, and will have a “Countdown” after which they resolve on their own.

**Bonds** - You can use Paths to describe unresolved relationships between you and other characters, such as debts, oaths, or favors. Be sure to describe the resolution you are driving toward. Examples:

- “I look up to \_\_\_\_\_ and want to learn from him”
- “I owe my life to \_\_\_\_\_ and will repay my debt in full”
- “I know \_\_\_\_\_ is a bad man and will see that justice is done”

**Dooms** - If you suffer a deadly injury or other affliction you will gain a “Doom”. Since this is a character experience it is recorded along with your other Experience Paths. However, Dooms are “dark paths” with a Countdown to death, so they represent your struggle for life.



HUON DEFEATS THE GIANT AGRAPART

H. FORD

# Part 2: Play the Game

Legends is a roleplaying game where you take on the persona of a player character (PC) in a fictional world. The GM describes the world, including everything and anyone other than the PCs. You should roleplay your player character at all times, so everything you do is “in character”, even when rolling dice.

The game takes place in turns, the GM takes the first turn, followed clockwise by each of the players, continuously.

Each **GM turn** is used to narrate the fictional world and set the scene for the PCs. The GM also seeks to **Raise Hazard** when possible, by describing direct threats, ominous details, foreshadowing, and dramatic tension. Hazard is central to game play, setting the difficulty of all rolls and ramping up challenges.

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**.

You can use your Action to **attack** a foe, **recover** a Trait, **Cut Hazard**, or attempt a Stunt. You can use your **Maneuvers** to move, interact with items or the environment, take cover, or assist your Action (a “COMBO”).

In general you should only roll dice when the GM asks you to do so. You will always roll for Attacks and Saving Throws, and those rolls always happen within your turn.

If you fail a Saving Throw you take **Damage**. You need to **Tap a Trait** to **Soak** the Damage, otherwise you will gain a **Doom**.

# Hazard

Hazard is the volume of ambient tension, drama, and risk in the story.

Hazard starts at 1, and builds over the course of the story, albeit Hazard rarely exceeds 10. The GM will **Raise Hazard** (by +1) each time something happens that makes the situation more dangerous, and a primary function of the GM turn is to describe or foreshadow a threat that raises Hazard. Since Hazard sets the difficulty of all rolls, you and the other players should work creatively to **Cut Hazard**

(by -1) whenever possible. In a typical game, the GM will continually seek to raise Hazard and you and the other players will work to reduce Hazard, and this struggle creates the dramatic tension inherent in any good story.



The Pilgrims caught by GIANT DESPAIR

## Effects of Hazard

Hazard makes all your actions more risky. You **Fumble** if you roll the Hazard or less on your d20, so you Fumble on 1-5 with Hazard 5.

It's important to understand that the danger of monsters and traps are mostly based on Hazard. They do not have static values such as attack or defense bonuses. Thus, the difficulty of a monster is proportional to the amount of foreshadowing, information, and fear the GM provides to heighten tension.

# Raising Hazard

Hazard starts at 1 at the beginning of the story, and then increases as the story becomes more dramatic, and dangerous, and frightening.

The GM will seek to **Raise Hazard** (by +1) when possible, creatively and continually working to make the world more dangerous and exciting. Each new dangerous or frightening detail raises Hazard.

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

# Cutting Hazard

You can **Cut Hazard** (by -1) by taking an Action that plausibly reduces Hazard. You and the other players should work together collaboratively and creatively to reduce Hazard at all times.

scouting	holding a choke point
standing watch	break enemy line
taking the high ground	eliminate enemy leader

Hazard cuts must be in-character, but often depend more on your skill as a player than character abilities. Also, Hazard cuts need not directly correspond to specific raises, so you can play to the wider situation and story.

The GM will not generally Cut Hazard for you, this is something you and the other players are responsible for doing. The life of an adventurer is incredibly dangerous to body and mind, routinely defying death and witnessing supernatural horrors. These experiences, which are measured by Hazard, take their toll as psychological strain which does not simply go away once the direct

threats have been neutralized or the scary shadows have gone away after the sunrise. You must still work off the trauma they built up, and find ways to Cut Hazard that relax your character. What does your character do to blow off steam?

## Putting it all together

Hazard is central to the game, affecting every roll, and is used by both the GM and players. The GM **Raises Hazard** to emphasize dangers, stressful situations, tensions, and urgency. You and the other players must take actions to **Cut Hazard**, representing how the PCs respond to and deal with the danger and trauma in their lives. During the game, Hazard will ebb and flow like dangerous waves crashing on cruel rocks, creating ups and downs of dramatic tension.

**Monsters** - Monsters are proportionally difficult to the amount of foreshadowing, information, and fear the GM provides to heighten tension. The GM will describe how terrible the monsters are, Raising Hazard, and you and the other players should take actions to respond to and mitigate those dangers, Cutting Hazard.

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

**Obstacles** - The GM can describe obstacles the PCs find in their path and must cross, such as a rotten bridge, narrow chasm, piranha-infested river, quicksand, etc. Each obstacle adds dramatic tension and the PCs will need to cross them coming back.

**Stress** - Hazard represents both current danger as well as unrelieved psychological stress and trauma. The GM will frequently Raise Hazard for details that add stress, fear, or horror. Since those experiences have lingering effects, the GM will not Cut Hazard when the direct causes of stress go away.

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

For the above examples, the GM can decide that the clues are obvious and easy to find, or require rolls. Similarly, any given monster, trap, or obstacle could be easy to defeat or avoid, or require rolls or a combat. The GM needs to decide whether the encounter is important or just a means to **Raise Hazard**.

## Turns

Legends is a turn-based game. The GM takes the first turn, followed by you and the other players. Game play flows clockwise around the table, continuously through the game session, in or out of combat.

Each **GM turn** is used to narrate the fictional world and set the scene for the PCs. The GM also seeks to **Raise Hazard** when possible, by describing direct threats, ominous details, foreshadowing, and dramatic tension. Hazard is central to game play, setting the difficulty of all rolls and ramping up challenges.

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**.

### GM Turns

The GM takes the first turn of each round. The GM first rolls an **Encounter** as a seed to narrate changes to the scene, then manipulates existing elements such as monsters. The GM then **Transitions** to the player on the left.

An **Encounter** is a seed of inspiration to drive narration of changes to the scene. The GM rolls a random **Encounter** at the start of the turn as an aid to help paint a picture of the scenario spontaneously

unfolding before the PCs (often urgently). The GM vividly describes what the PCs notice about the surroundings, such as “you hear the low growling of wolves in the trees”, often to **Raise Hazard**. Players are free to ask questions as needed to understand the scene.

The GM then manipulates scene elements. The GM should consider the passage of time and describe anything the PCs would observe, for example, a fire lit earlier might spread or die out, or the sounds of drums previously mentioned in the distance might be rolling nearer, creating verisimilitude. If there are monsters the GM should move them in a lifelike manner and foreshadow threats against the PCs. Otherwise the GM might use anything available, such as a monster, trap, terrain, or even the weather. Threats are only “a shadow of a threat”, meaning they are *possible* threats. The GM will call for actual Saving Throws during **Transitions** to each player’s turn.

You have two Maneuvers per round, which can be used at any time. You may freely interject your Maneuvers into the GM Maneuver phase, in which case the GM will interweave them together. For example, if the GM describes a monster moving to engage a PC, you might say “I step back to keep my distance”. The GM should handle this with a fluid narrative when possible, but can pause play to settle conflicting Maneuvers as necessary.

## Player Turns

As a player you get one turn per round to describe your PC’s action and responses to the evolving story.

The GM will herald your turn with a **Transition**, a short narration to shift the spotlight onto **you** while keeping the game flowing. Your Transition is for you and may include critical information such as the environment as you see it, details you notice (and possibly only you), opportunities you have, or declarations of attacks against you. The GM may say things like “you see” or “(your name) sees”.

The spotlight is now **yours**, use your moment to play your character and describe what you do in the unfolding game story. You should describe how you react to threats such as attacks, as well as what action you focus on taking, ideally interweaving them together.

Think of your turn as the point of view of a camera in a film, which needs to move around to tell the story, and is focusing on you for a limited time.

You must roll **Saving Throws** to defend against threats described by the GM during the Transition to your turn.

You get one **Action** for your turn. You also get two **Maneuvers** per round, which you can use at any time in the round, but now is as good a time as any if you still have them. Since you are able to judge the success or failure of your rolls, you should narrate the outcome of your Action and Saving Throw. Once you're done with your turn, the GM will use another **Transition** to wrap up your turn and shift the spotlight to the next player's turn.

## Resolution Order

Rolls for your Action and Saving Throws within your turn are considered simultaneous. For example, if you are in a fight and you and your opponent both attack each other, your attack and defense occur at the same time, so it's possible for you to hurt your foe, at the same time your foe hurts you.

However, you can ask to take your Action ahead of your Saving Throw if your GM agrees your Action should happen first. For example, if an enemy rushes you and you have a spear, then your attack should occur before your foe reaches you. If you defeat your foe you won't need to make a Saving Throw against his attack.

## NPC Turns

There is one special floating "NPC Turn" each round, where an NPC allied with the PCs takes a turn. The NPC Turn can happen at any time during the round and is shared amongst the players and GM.

You can take the NPC Turn, or another player, or the GM, or you can collaborate. Multiple NPCs can share an NPC Turn if they are doing the same kind of thing. Otherwise NPCs allied with the PCs will generally continue whatever they were already doing.

## Player Actions

As a player you get one Action per round. This Action should be something important, such as making an attack, casting a spell, disarming a trap, or climbing a cliff. This is the focus of your turn.

observe	Cut Hazard	stunt
attack	overwatch	open lock
prepare	intimidate	first aid
Recover Trait	search	coup de grace

Most Actions will require a dice roll, so when you take an Action, the GM will either say "yes" or "roll the dice". Some Actions have in-game definitions, but you can attempt to do anything.

**Investigate** - Conduct a detailed observation, analysis, appraisal, or search. This could potentially be used to find a weakness of a foe, a gap in armor, or something else you can exploit.

**Attack** - Make an attack roll to inflict Damage.

**Mercy** - Stabilize or dispatch a mortally wounded creature.

**Recover Trait** - You can use an Action to recover (un-tap) one Trait. Describe what - you do, whether you just catch your breath, sip some water, eat something, bind your wounds, meditate, taunt your foes, or compose a haiku. The way you recover says a lot about you.

**Cut Hazard** - You can use an Action to reduce the current Hazard by 1. Describe what you do; this must be plausible and in-character.

## Push your limits

You can push your limits and attempt higher-risk Actions. Describe your high-stakes stunt and take it up to 11. Roll for your Action normally. The GM will roll a **Surprise** to determine an unpredictable natural consequence (good or bad) of your stunt. For example, you

might say "I point my sword down and leap from the cliff onto the giant...death from above!" and hope for good rolls that will wreck the giant without going splat.

## Maneuvers

Maneuvers are minor activities such as moving, shouting orders, opening a door, drawing a weapon, reloading, taking cover, etc. A Maneuver that requires a roll instead requires an Action.

Your maximum number of Maneuvers per Round is determined by your level of armor coverage: **Body-Armor (or none) 3, Half-Armor 2, or Full-Armor 1**. Carrying something very heavy or bulky such as a sack of loot or a body also takes 1 Maneuver.

You may take your Maneuvers at *any time* in the round, even in the middle of the GM's turn or another player's turn. If two characters want to act at the same moment they can out-spend Maneuvers to go first, or roll to break a tie. Unused Maneuvers are lost at the end of the round, they do not carry over.

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.

You can use Maneuvers as combat tactics for your attacks and defenses. See the Combat section for details.

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 commonly two squares or hexes 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 struggling with movement (e.g. crawling, climbing, standing jump, etc.) You can change facing while moving, and are assumed to face the direction of your movement.

step (10')	sit/stand	take cover
run forward (20')	lay prone/stand	running jump (10')
back up (10')	crawl/roll (5')	standing jump (5')
sidestep (10')	climb (5')	swim (10')
kneel/crouch	fall (20')	spin/turn around

**Miniatures** - If you are using 25-28mm miniatures and a battlemmap with 1-inch spaces, you can use a scale of 1 inch to 5 feet. Thus, one Maneuver moves you two spaces.

Maneuvers can be used to interact with items in simple ways.

draw weapon	put item away	drink potion
reload weapon	drop item	open/shut door
check ammo	pick item up	Pull lever
get item ready	throw item	drop backpack

You can also use a Maneuver to embellish your Action, adding a touch of your personal style. This has no in-game effect, but is 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

**Extreme Maneuver are Actions** - A stunt is an Action, not a Maneuver. If you need to make a roll to perform movement, such as jumping over a wide pit, it's an Action.

# Roll the Dice

A standard Legends roll consists of **1d20** and a **Legend Die**. The d20 is a “natural” roll without modifiers. You succeed on 15+, otherwise you fail. You should describe how your action succeeded or failed. On a failure you suffer the natural consequences.

**Crits and Fumbles** are extreme successes and failures. You Crit on 20, which has extra effect, such as dealing extra damage. You Fumble if you roll less than or equal to the Hazard on your d20, e.g. if Hazard is 5 you Fumble on 1-5. On a Fumble the GM will roll a Surprise and describe a natural consequence.

**Super Crits and Fumbles** - As you will see below, your roll can be upgraded or downgraded by your Legend Die. An *upgraded* Crit is a “Super Crit”, and a *downgraded* Fumble is a “Super Fumble”. Both are rare and momentous.

**Successes** - You earn 1 “Success” on a successful roll, 2 on a Crit, and 3 on a Super Crit. When attacking you deal 1 Damage per Success, but Successes can be used for other actions too.

## The Legend Die

**The Legend Die** presents an opportunity to improve your *natural* result based on your character abilities as well as your skillful gameplay. Each die face is a “potential factor” in success, so each roll has a single “deciding factor”. A Legend Die has six faces:

**THEME, EFFORT, ASSET, COMBO, ULT, PREP**. Whenever those words are written in ALL CAPS they refer to your Legend Die.

If you can do what your Legend Die says, winning that deciding factor, then your natural result upgrades by one full result step (fumble >> failure >> success >> crit). Otherwise, your natural result stands as-is. Conversely, in some situations your Legend Die will downgrade your result, so crit >> success, success >> fail, and fail >> fumble. A limit of one upgrade or downgrade is allowed per roll. Some die faces have specific effects if you roll a natural Fumble.

# Legends Die Faces

The Legend Die is conceptually simple to use, but each facet is a mini-game with its own depths of play.

THEME	Name a Theme or Theme Signature that assists your action. Downgrade if you don't have all necessary specialized knowledge (e.g. alchemy, swordsmithing).
EFFORT	Push yourself and upgrade your natural result by Tapping a Trait. Downgrade your natural result if your roll is hindered by a Dark Secret or Doom (Stage 1+), which you can offset by Tapping an extra Trait.
ASSET	Downgrade if you are not using an Asset. Upgrade if you can declare an Asset Signature or Asset Tag that is ideal for your roll.
COMBO	Upgrade if you previously took an Action or Maneuver that combines with your current roll to create an advantage. For example, you might have taken the high ground, moved to optimal weapon range, dodged, or parried. Downgrade if you are at a disadvantage (e.g. blinded, prone) or opponents have outmaneuvered you (e.g. flanking, high ground, etc).
ULT	Upgrade if you are an expert at your action, and more expert than anyone nearby. Requires player consensus for bonus. Downgrade if your action directly opposes someone who has ULT, e.g. a monster special attack.
PREP	Leverage an Action you took in a previous Round to prepare for the current roll. Usually this required you paid attention to foreshadowing or clues and used your wits to make ready. However, if your foes are better prepared than you (e.g. ambush, swarm) then downgrade your natural result.

## THEME

Name a Theme or Theme Signature that assists your action. Downgrade if you don't have all necessary special knowledge (e.g. alchemy, smithing). (Note that Asset Signatures are used for ASSET.)

## EFFORT

Push yourself and upgrade your natural result by Tapping a Trait.

Downgrade your natural result if your roll is hindered by a Dark Secret or Doom, which you can offset by Tapping an extra Trait.

## ASSET

Downgrade if you are not using an Asset. Upgrade if you can declare an Asset Signature or Asset Tag that is ideal for your roll.

**Signature** - Upgrade if you have an Asset Signature that applies. For example, a "holy sword" can help you attack undead.

**Asset Tag** - Many advanced Assets have Asset Tags which grant situational advantages and disadvantages. For example, swords have the "parry" Tag, which is activated when you use a Maneuver to parry an attack. See the Advanced Assets section for details.

**Weapon Range** - All weapons have Tags for range, which indicates the optimal fighting measure or range. For example, spears have the Long range Tag, so if you have a spear and attack an enemy swordsman at "spear range" or while he is approaching you can declare your Long range Tag to upgrade your roll.

**Use common sense** - As you know, having the right tool for the job always helps, and lacking the right tool can make a simple job painful. This is common sense, but the GM can make rulings when necessary. Examples:

- **Climbing** - Upgrade if you have a rope with a fancy Signature like "silk rope" or "elven rope", or another climbing Asset such as "climbing claws". You can do just fine with a normal rope, but downgrade if you are going free solo.
- **Picking a lock** - Upgrade if you have lock picks with a Signature (which would indicate they are higher quality). You could make do with a piece of wire, otherwise downgrade.
- **Attacking** - Upgrade if your weapon has a Signature or Weapon Tag. Otherwise a normal weapon will work, but downgrade if you don't have a weapon and using bare knuckles.

- **Defending** - Upgrade if you have a weapon, shield, or armor with a Signature or Tag. Otherwise normal armor is fine, but downgrade if you are empty handed.

## COMBO

Upgrade if you previously took an Action or Maneuver that combines with your current roll to create an advantage. For example, you might have taken the high ground, moved to optimal weapon range, dodged, or parried. Downgrade if you are at a disadvantage (e.g. blinded, prone) or opponents have outmaneuvered you (e.g. flanking, high ground, etc).

You and the other players can use Maneuvers at any time. However, a Maneuver can only affect a roll if declared prior to the roll.

**Maneuver** - Upgrade if you are using a Maneuver to assist your roll such as when you dodge, feint, parry, or aim.

**Teamwork** - Upgrade if an ally is assisting you with a Maneuver. For example a friend could distract a foe to assist your attack, or watch your back to assist your defense.

**Advantage** - Upgrade if you used a Maneuver to gain an advantage like taking the high ground or overwatch over a choke point.

**Disadvantage** - Downgrade if you're in a bad position, such as surrounded, swarmed, unarmed, blind, held, distracted, prone, crawling, or your opponent used a Maneuver such as "aim".

**Dodge** - Upgrade if you used a Maneuver to dodge the attack.

**Parry** - Upgrade if you used a Maneuver to parry the attack. In addition, you can move your weapon to a Guard which provides armor Class 1 for one Hit Location, or Weapon Class for a weapon with the Defensive Tag.

**Fail Forward** - Leverage failed Actions for COMBO, such as improving your aim on a second shot.

## VLT

Upgrade if you are an expert at your action, and more expert than anyone nearby. Requires player consensus for bonus. Downgrade if

your action directly opposes someone who has ULT, e.g. a monster special attack.

Since ULT is based on the consensus of all players, it's dependent on their perception of your character concept and role in the group. If you're picking a lock you'll likely win if you're "the thief" of the group, or 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, so guard your Secrets.

You should expect to lose ULT when facing NPCs in their area of expertise. You're unlikely to out-haggle a merchant, hide from a huntsman, or out-maneuver a courtier.

## PRCP

Leverage an Action you took in a prior Round to prepare for the current roll. Usually this requires that you paid attention to clues to get ready for what's coming and used your wits to prepare yourself. However, if your foes are better prepared than you (e.g. ambush) then downgrade your natural result.

PREP is unique in that it's hard to reverse once set into motion. If you're caught with your pants down in a sniper ambush, you can just hope to survive long enough to get out of that situation.

Preparation is not complicated, it's 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. Your foes will do the same, whether it's an ambush by brigands, a dragon hiding on a cave ledge, or that intricate looking magic circle the bad wizard is standing inside.

# Traits

Traits describe your character and help you roleplay. A Trait like "handsome" or "silver tongue" helps you play your character.

Traits also let you push yourself to your limits. You can Tap a Trait to expend effort when your Legend Die rolls EFFORT. You can also Tap a Trait to Soak Damage that would kill a normal person. Thus, Traits act like a kind of narrative armor, allowing you to act like a hero for as long as your Traits last, but when they are gone you're as vulnerable as anyone.

To Tap a Trait, simply mark an "x" by the Trait. A Tapped Trait cannot be used until recovered (see below). If all your Traits are Tapped then you're "Tapped Out". There is no penalty, but you are in a tenuous situation since you can't Soak more Damage.

You can recover a Trait whenever you spend an Action to take a break. Describe what you do, whether you just catch your breath, sip some water, or eat something. When you do this, recover (or "untap") the Trait of your choice by erasing the "x" mark you wrote. Keep in mind this is based on Actions, not the passage of time, so simply resting for a long time does not recover multiple Traits. This will feel natural as long as you focus on roleplaying in-character.

## Traits Example: G'thar the Northman

G'thar goes to the pub, fights, and burglarizes a bakery, and had to Tap most of his Traits: ~~icy gaze~~, tough as nails, ~~abs of steel~~, lucky

G'thar takes a rest: icy gaze, tough as nails, ~~abs of steel~~, lucky

Later, G'thar completes a quest to the "ice dryad grove" and gain a new Trait: icy gaze, tough as nails, abs of steel, lucky, **dryad's kiss**

# Secrets

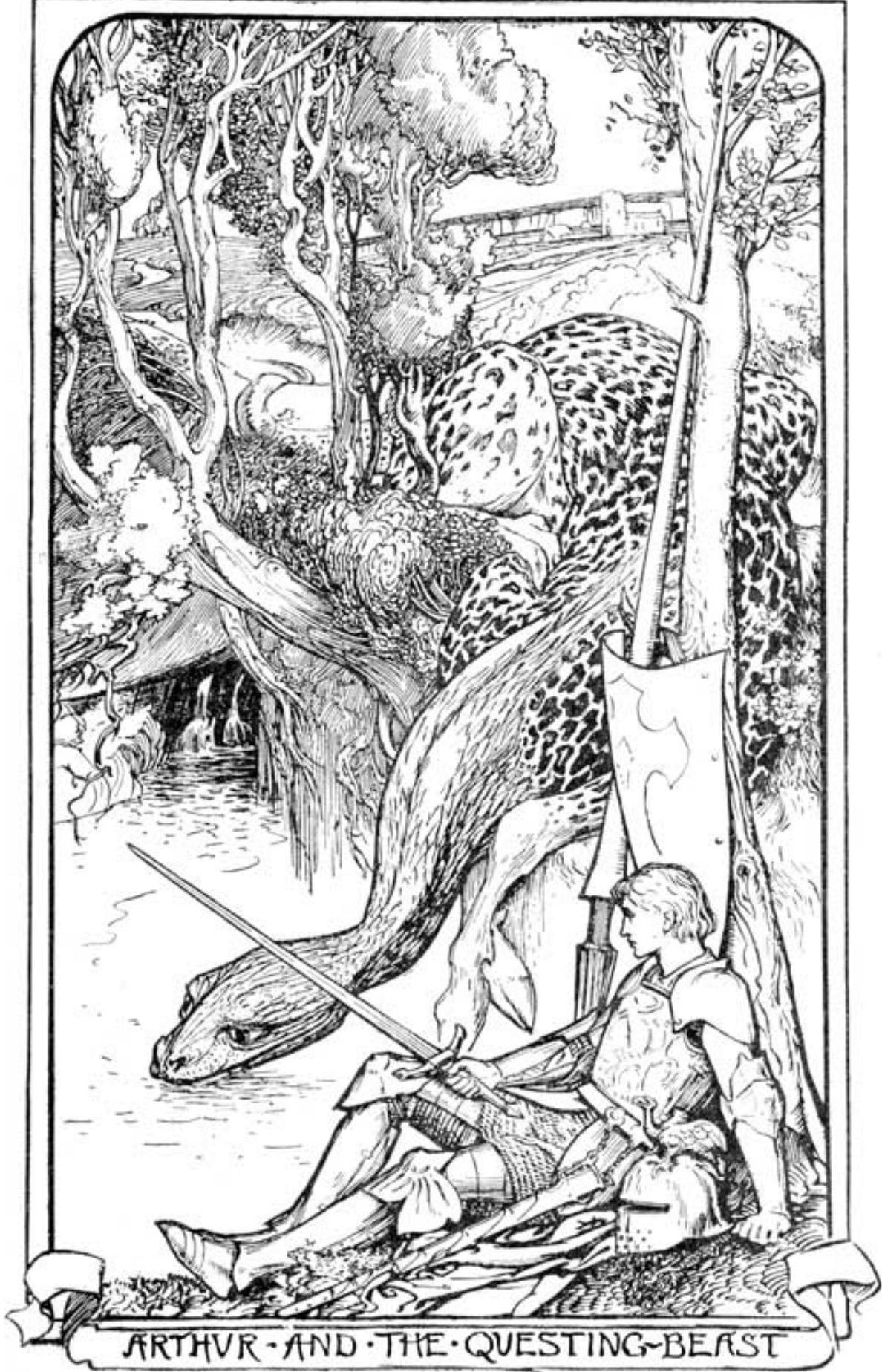
Secrets are special abilities such as flying, using poison, spells, and hurling lightning bolt spells. You will only have a few Secrets when your character starts out, but you can gain more over time as XP Rewards. Secrets have a Level appropriate to their power.

You can use a Secret as part of an Action or Maneuver, depending on the Secret. This does not normally require a roll, even when a similar Action without the Secret would require a roll.

## Dark Secrets

Dark Secrets represent the hidden motives or internal conflicts of your character. Their purpose is to help you roleplay your character as a real person who has complex motivations.

You must roll a Saving Throw prior to taking any Action which opposes one of your Dark Secrets. For example, if you have “always shoots first” and you decide to ignore or overcome that part of your persona, you must roll a Saving Throw.



# Part 3: Experience Paths

Experience Paths ("XP" or "Paths") are important objectives and accomplishments for the characters. These can be quests such as "save the princess from the dragon" or a goal to learn a spell.

Examples:

- Lenarin wants a proper Elvish sword
- Hazarak wants to find a grimoire of summoning spells
- The King calls upon you to save the princess
- The townsfolk need your help against raiders
- Krod wants a hunting dog
- Hazarak is experimenting with a "blue fireballs" spell
- Sir Bighead requires a horse befitting his ~~ego~~ status
- The princess asks for help returning to her kingdom
- We should build a secret base
- Brigit wants to find the lost shrine of Ithilmerin

Paths are as wide and varied as your own experiences. They can be large or small, shared or personal, and involve one or more characters. They can be story quests or challenges from the GM, or wish lists of stuff that characters want to find.

## Starting Paths

To start a Path, write down your quest, goal, or objective on a sheet of paper shared by all players. Once you start a Path, you and the other players can make progress. Each player is limited to two active Paths.

## Writing Paths

Paths are freeform, in your own words with no limits to creativity. You can write any details you want in addition to the Path name. Keep in mind the purpose of Paths is to propel the story forward in directions which you and the other players find interesting. So write them in an

exciting voice whenever possible. If you want inspiration, just pull from your favorite books and movies.

ESCAPE FROM THE DUNGEONS OF THE MAD KING! -The mad king has thrown you into his dungeons in rags to feed his monstrous “pets”. As far as you’ve heard, nobody has ever escaped from the dungeons, alive or otherwise.

## Paths are Shared

Since roleplaying is a social game, all Paths are *shared* between the players. The players as a group (including the GM) form the audience for the heroic deeds of the characters.

Keep all Paths on a single sheet of paper (a “Path tracker”) and pass them around the table for all the players to see and use. This transparency makes it clear what kind of game everyone wants to play, and what Paths they think will be interesting and fun. You should look at Paths at the start and end of each game session.

Each player can have at most two active Paths at the same time, so you may need to abandon a Path to make room for new priorities.

## Completing Paths

You **complete** a Path once all the players agree you’ve made sufficient progress and you’ve achieved success. Write “success” on the Path. The GM will then provide a suitable **Reward** (see below).

Paths can involve a short or long journey, but should always have some end or resolution. Ideally this ends in a successful completion of the Path, because that nets a Reward.

## Journaling

You should add notes to your Path about progress or details along the way. For example, for “The King wants the heroes to save the princess” you can write down the names of the King and the Princess, her last known location, where she should be taken, and

what kind of rewards you expect. This is freeform, so you can just jot random thoughts or use journal entries with dates or “day 1”, “day 2”, and so on. You can doodle, draw maps, whatever you like. Most importantly, write a final note about how it all turned out.

## Homework

Ask the GM if you can do homework between game sessions to earn progress on your Paths. You might sketch a map of your home village, write a backstory for your character or an NPC, write a session log, etc. This can be a great way to add detail to your campaign world.

**ESCAPE FROM THE DUNGEONS OF THE MAD KING!** - The mad king has thrown you into his dungeons in rags to feed his monstrous “pets”. As far as you’ve heard, nobody has ever escaped from the dungeons, alive or otherwise.

Day 1: fought off some worm things and found a safe hidey hole

Day 2: Timmek found a pit and died, but we found some dead guys and loot at the bottom. Got swords and a white stone orb

Day 3: found a way out! Need to reach the ceiling. Azazrem put the orb into the beam of moonlight and now it’s glowing

Day 4: found a subterranean river and built a raft and took the plunge! Wizzit fell overboard.

Day 5: **Success!** We emerged from the river into the sunlight.

## Failing Paths

If a Path becomes impossible to complete then mark the Path **Failed**. For example, if you’re supposed to save the princess from the dragon, but she dies in the rescue attempt, your quest has failed. Some Paths are time-sensitive and have a Countdown to failure (see below).

## Abandoning Paths

You can **abandon** one of your Paths if you no longer want to attempt progress. Write “abandoned” on the Path. Sometimes a Path seemed like a great idea, but for whatever reason didn’t turn out. The path

might no longer be relevant to the characters or story, or might no longer be possible to complete. For example, a path like "Warn the King of the assassination attempt" might become impossible if you learn he's been assassinated. If you cannot complete a Path then you should abandon it so you can focus on a new Path. The natural consequences of whatever happened still apply.

## Countdowns

The GM may give a Path a **Countdown** to create a sense of urgency, such as a race against a ticking clock, a mission to save a hostage, or a wound. To do this, the GM will write three checkboxes on the Path. These will be used to record the Countdown, and the Path **Fails** if you check the third box.

SAVE PRINCESS LOOKIE - Rescue the princess from the swamp castle before she is married against her will. [ ] [ ] [ ]

The Countdown doesn't change how you make progress and complete the Path, it just adds urgency. The GM can give a Path a Countdown at any time; sometimes things just become urgent.

Your **initial reaction** when a Countdown starts is very important. If you do not immediately attempt to make progress then you must check a Countdown box. For example, after taking a serious injury it's critical to immediately apply first aid, so if you instead keep fighting or if you flee then check a box.

You must also check a box with an "X" if you encounter a **serious setback**, such as a Fumble on a roll related to the countdown.

Also check a box if **significant time passes** without progress. Assume "one day" of in-game time, but this should vary depending on the situation. The point is to keep making best efforts at progress. Paths are very loose and flexible and rely on the collective judgement of the players.

## SCARS

When you **complete**, **fail**, or **abandon** a Path, any natural consequences still apply. Experiences can leave scars. Surviving a harrowing experience can lead to long-lasting trauma or a quest for vengeance. The GM should liberally assign Dark Secrets whenever it appears a character might have internal motivations affected by a Path. For example, if a character escapes from a spider's web cocoon, assign a Dark Secret such as "fear of spiders".

## Best Efforts

Some Paths are more difficult than others to make progress, and players may feel stuck in a logjam. When this happens focus on making "best efforts" and keep pushing forward. Paths affect character choices and highlight their experiences, and may require trying different approaches. Making best efforts will at least slow a Path Countdown.

## Rewards

The GM will give you an appropriate **Reward** when you successfully complete an Experience Path.

Some Rewards will directly enhance a part of your character such as adding new Trait or Secret. You could get a new Theme (up to four), modify a Theme, or rid yourself of a Dark Secret. You could also find a new Asset, including a "magic item" or other loot.



Experience Paths fulfill the same purpose as experience points and levels in other games, but are in-character and in your own words.

ESCAPE FROM THE DUNGEONS OF THE MAD KING! - Day 5: Success! We emerged from the river and into the sunlight. We're in a deep and wild wood but out of the dungeons. We got to keep our lives and our loot! Azazrem is studying the "moon orb" and can make it glow with light and purify water.

The Reward could be a component of your character (e.g. Theme, Trait, etc) or something less tangible like a noble title. 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

## Using Paths

The GM will use Paths to drive the story. 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.

## Quests

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.

Naturally, the reward is an Asset with an enhancement such as a Signature, Secret, or Asset Tag.

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.

If you have crafting skills you might build an item rather than buy or quest for it.

CLOAK OF BLADES - I'm crafting a magic cloak with swords and daggers incorporated into the cloth and hem. This cloak is used like a shield.

## Books of Secrets

Books contain knowledge, and knowledge is power. Ancient tomes, scrolls, maps, and spellbooks may contain Secrets such as spells or the location of an ancient lost city or treasure trove.



Write an Experience Path for each topic you are studying, and upon successful completion you will be given a Reward. Books are tremendously beneficial because they free you from having to travel to find knowledge.

The GM secretly determines how many Secrets each book contains, possibly by rolling 1d6 or some other die based on the size of the book. The form factor is not important, for example a "scroll" is really just an unbound book and could potentially be very long. If you've gleaned all the Secrets from a book, the GM will tell you mid-way through an Experience Path, which you will then need to "abandon" unless you have another book on hand to continue your studies.

# Magic Research

Use Paths for researching spells or magic items. These could involve reading books (see above) or time spent conducting research in a laboratory.

ELECTRIC FIREBALLS - Hazarak is experimenting with a blue fireball spell. The blue fireball will be a melding of his blue spark and fireball spells, a ball of commingled lighting and fire.

Week 1: cast a fireball during electrical storm to observe storm's effects

Week 2: experimented using a lightning rod to cast a fireball

Success! I can use a lightning rod to cast Electric Fireball

## Flashbacks

Most paths represent current goals and possible futures. However, it's also possible for a Path to be a "flashback" to past events. To make this work with a group of players, you will either need to write the Path so it can involve all the characters, or ask each player to write their own flashback Path that can be played at the same time. Similarly, you can use Paths for dream sequences, trips through magical planes, or other nonlinear time sequences.



## Part 4: Combat

This section deals with exciting topics like slaying monsters and staying alive. All of this is from the point of view of your character. You will make all the rolls for attack and defense. Legends uses

continuous turns, and this does not change when your character clashes with foes. Danger can strike at *any* time.

# Attacks

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

## Successful Attacks

On a successful attack you deal Damage.

The GM will tell you whether your foe is **Damaged** or **Disabled**.

- **Damaged** - You have dealt Damage, but not enough to disable your foe. The GM subtracts the Damage from the foe's "Hits"; no other effect.
- **Disabled** - Your foe is incapacitated and can take no Actions or Maneuvers, so it poses little threat and should die on its own.

If you roll a **Critical Success** you have dealt a "Critical Hit" which will either dismember or kill your foe outright. Your GM will tell you whether your foe is **Dismembered** or **Dead**.

- **Dismembered** - Your Critical Hit has crippled or removed a limb such as a hand, arm, leg, foot, or wing. You get to describe the wound. You could remove the weapon hand of an evil champion or lop off the wing of a dragon!
- **Dead** - Your Critical Hit has killed your foe, you may describe a fatal blow such as removing its head or chopping it in half.

## Failed Attacks

Failed attacks "miss" and deal no Damage, with no side effects.

However, if you **Fumble** an attack Action the GM will roll a **Surprise** and possibly use your Action 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.

## Disabled Foes

If the GM says a foe is Disabled, it is incapacitated and can take no Actions or Maneuvers, so it poses little threat and is expected to die. However, the GM rolls a random Encounter at the start of each turn, and it's possible for this to grant an Action or a Maneuver to a Disabled foe. Thus, a Disabled 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 Disabled 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.

## 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 such dangers, and tell you when to roll a Saving Throw, saying something like "two black-fletched orc arrows fly from the darkness, striking Talin".

If you roll a **Fumble** on your Saving Throw you take extra Damage and the GM will roll a **Surprise**.

If you roll a **Critical Success** on your Saving Throw you gain a **Counter**, which is a free counterattack or similar Action related to the attack you saved against. You are limited to things you could conceivably do while defending yourself against the attack. If you were attacked by a swordsman you can counterattack that foe, or if you defended against the magic fire of a wizard you can describe

how the fire scorches his  
minions instead of you.

You can declare **Maneuvers** before a roll to gain a bonus. For example, you could dodge, parry, or duck to gain COMBO, or position your shield or sword to cover a Hit Location (gaining ASSET). You must declare these maneuvers before rolling.

Saving Throws are used for all death-defying situations, such as a trap, collapsing cliff, pit filled with snakes, or poisoned drink. Regardless of the source, if you fail the Saving Throw any unsoaked Damage becomes a Doom.

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

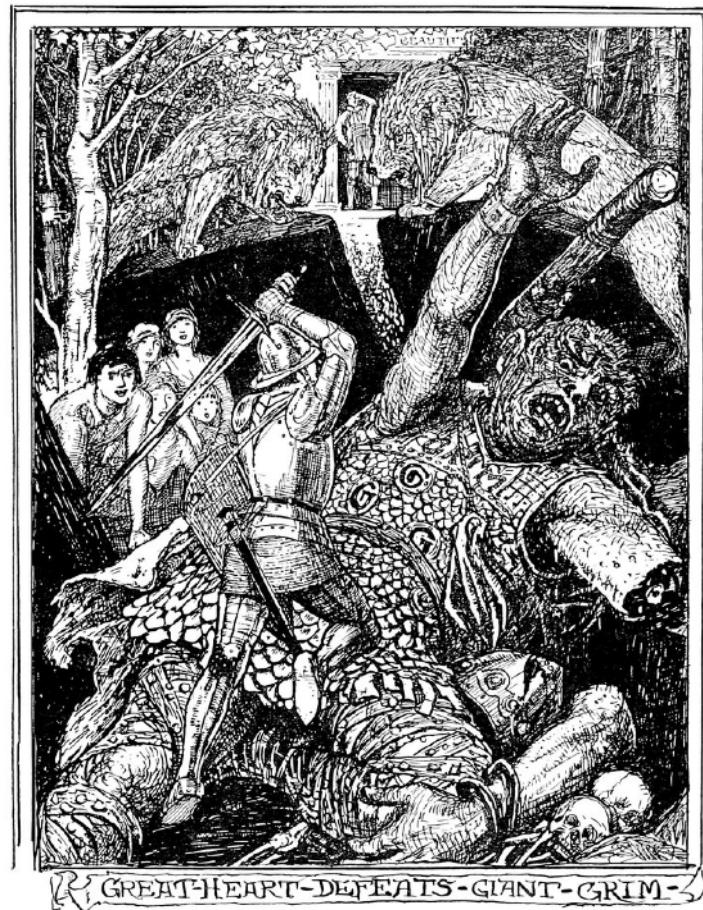


## Damage

If you fail a **Saving Throw** you take **Damage**. The GM will tell you how much Damage you take, usually 1-4, but possibly more.

Damage represents *any* kind of harm to your character, not necessarily physical. Damage encompasses concepts such as "hits", "wounds", "strain", etc. Damage is specific to the damage source, such as an arrow wound, burn, paralyzation, or mind-control.

However, psychological stress, horror, or dread are not Damage, but instead Raise Hazard. The GM will Raise Hazard when describing how you witness an "eldritch horror rising from the dark water".



## Damage Modifiers

Attacks deal 1 Damage, with the following modifiers:

- Add +1 Damage for a two-handed weapon
- Add +1 Damage on a Critical Hit
- Add +1 Damage if the weapon outclasses the armor, or subtract 1 Damage if the armor outclasses the weapon

## Armor Class and Weapon Class

Compare armor and weapons using **armor class** and **weapon class**. Use the armor for the specific Hit Location.

Armor negates 1 Damage if the armor outclasses the weapon. If this brings the total Damage to zero, the attack has no effect.

Monster vulnerabilities, such as a werewolf vs silver or undead vs fire, are simplest to treat as having no armor.

Note that huge weapons (catapults, cannons, giants, dragons, etc) count as "two-handed" and have a very high weapon class, and will probably outclass \* any armor you have.

## Hit Location

Each attack affects one of the six major Hit Locations. The Hit Location determines what protection (such as armor and cover) applies for defense. The GM determines the Hit Location (and possibly a Sub-location) for each attack.

### Hit Location Sub-locations

Head	neck, chin, nose, face, forehead, skull
Torso	abdomen, ribs, sternum, chest, clavicle
Arm	fingers, hand, wrist, forearm, elbow, upper arm, shoulder
Groin	outer thigh, inner thigh, genitals, hip, pelvis
Knee	patella, outer knee, inner knee, back of knee
Leg	shin, calf, ankle, foot, heel, instep, toes

The Head and Torso are the most vulnerable areas, and the first body parts you should armor. Melee attacks prioritize the fragile Head since the neck is a poor shock absorber and Body-Armor is often invulnerable to melee weapons. Conversely, ranged attacks usually prioritize the "center mass" target of the Torso, and a "near miss" might hit an adjacent area. In melee the hands are often the easiest target (and a tempting target for sniping at a distance) although for ranged attacks they present too small of an area to be worthwhile targeting.

You may use the "Called Shot" **Maneuver** to target a specific Hit Location, so you can attack your foe in an unprotected area (e.g. "I cut into his unarmored neck"), or choose a target to hamper (e.g. "I cut his hand to disarm him", "I cut his legs to slow him down").

Otherwise, the GM determines the Hit Location (and possibly a Sub-location), either by choosing an appropriate available target or by rolling. The GM will usually foreshadow when foes take their Maneuvers, e.g. "the goblin is swinging from the right" or "the scything blade arcs towards your legs". Otherwise you can ask. You can use a Maneuver to position your shield or weapon to cover a specific Hit Location, either by naming the Hit Location or naming the foe who is attacking, e.g. "I am blocking the goblin chief's falchion with my shield".

## Soaking Damage

You can Tap a Trait to Soak Damage. If you Soak all Damage from a hit then you were "hit but not hurt". That arrow might have grazed you, or it hit the spot where you *were*, it was a close call. However, if you didn't soak some of the Damage then the arrow is sticking deep in your leg and you're bleeding out and going into shock and you might die; you have gained a Doom.

You can only Tap ONE Trait per hit. However, a Trait can Soak +1 Damage if the Trait is ideal for your particular Saving Throw, especially if the Trait is defensive or a specialized skill related to your action. The Trait must words in common with the attack, such as "sword-proof" vs sword cuts.

## Options for Reducing Deadlines

These are optional rules which reduce the deadliness of combat. These could be suitable for a heroic tale or epic adventure, but not for a grim dark game where life is supposed to be cheap.

**Option: Dramatic Heroism** - You can soak another +1 Damage if you can dramatically roleplay how your Trait is ideal for Soaking the Damage. Think of how superheroes dust off hits and make witty quips and retorts. Players must agree you have earned the bonus.

**Option: Specialty Damage** - When dealing with a rare form of Damage and a specialized Trait intended to handle that damage, the GM may declare the Trait negates multiple points of damage.

# Recovery & Healing

**Spend an Action to Recover (Un-Tap) a Trait.** When you do this, un-Tap one Trait of your choice by erasing the "x" mark you wrote. Describe what you do, e.g. catch your breath, sip water, eat, bind wounds, meditate, taunt foes, or compose poetry.

**You heal 1 Damage per week,** or per full day of bed rest, or an hour after magical healing such as a potion of healing. Healing Damage decreases the Doom Stage.

# Combat Maneuvers

Use your **Maneuvers** in combat for tactics such as feints, parries, beats, taking cover, etc. You must declare your Maneuvers before you roll. Most Maneuvers give you COMBO for one roll, but others have different benefits, and many of the Maneuvers have interesting interactions and combinations. Examples are below, but you can also use Maneuvers to describe your own cunning tactics.

**Aim** - Improve chances of hitting a visible part of your foe. You gain COMBO and the GM will define the Hit Location from visible areas.

- I aim at center mass
- I look for an opening
- I look for a clean shot

**Beat** - Move your opponent's weapon or shield from a Guard so that you can attack a Hit Location protected by that Guard. You also gain COMBO. When combined with Called Shot this could a target you need to hit.

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

**Called Shot** - Choose one of the six Hit Locations (e.g. head, torso, etc). This does not grant COMBO, however you could get that from

another Maneuver such as Aim, Beat, or Feint. Combine with Aim to hit a visible Sub-location, such as fingers or face.

- I cut him in the leg
- I take his hand
- I slice off his ear (w/ Aim)

**Find a Gap** - Attempt to find a gap somewhere in your target's armor. This increases your Weapon Class for this hit is by your Damage (e.g. +1 on a Hit, +2 on a Crit, +3 on a Super Crit). This does not grant COMBO, however you could get that from another Maneuver such as Aim, Beat, or Feint, or if you are at Close Range and have a weapon with the Close Tag. This does not target a specific Hit Location or Sub-location gap unless you combine it with Called Shot. Also, with Find a Gap, Weapon Class is +1 vs a Prone target, or +2 if the attacker has a wrestling Hold or Pin.

- I aim for the gaps
- I stab him between the armor plates
- I thrust into his armpit (w/ Called Shot)

**Cover & Concealment** - Position yourself to take advantage of cover, such as a wall, doorframe, trench, etc. Cover counts as armor, and has a Class which you can declare as Armor Class. Cover and concealment also reduces your visible target areas.

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

**Feint** - Pretend to attack a Hit Location, but attack somewhere else instead. You gain COMBO.

- 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

**Guard** - Move a weapon or shield to the specified Guard position, e.g. "high" or "left". This positions the Asset to provide armor to the Hit Locations covered by the named Guard. Weapons provide Shield Class 1, but weapons with the Defensive Tag provide Shield Class the same as their Weapon Class.

- 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 Range from your opponent (either in or out). You can also use this to maintain current Range when an opponent is moving relative to you (either in or out). Each Weapon has one or more Range Tags that specify the optimal distance for an attack, which can be used to claim ASSET.

- 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

**Grab** - Use a free hand to grab part of a foe while at Close Range. Your opponent may not move unless he spends a Maneuver to break your hold, so you will keep him at Close Range until you let go. You must use a separate Maneuver to move yourself into Close Range.

- 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)

## Weapons and Armor

Weapons and armor are expected in combat, otherwise you must downgrade if you roll ASSET.

Compare weapon and armor Class for all attacks which hit. If the armor is better than subtract 1 Damage, or if the weapon is better then add 1 Damage.

## Cover

Cover counts as armor. This is essential because people are soft, and being out in the open is an invitation to be a target. This is especially important if the character does not have any armor, or relatively light armor compared to the weapons in play. Taking cover is a Maneuver. When you take cover, specify what Hit Locations are covered and from which direction. However, your position is considered static and areas covered cannot be used to take actions in the direction of the cover. For example, you could take total cover by ducking behind a low wall, but then you can't see your targets to shoot back; if you knelt behind the wall then your lower body and legs would be covered but you could still shoot.

## Readyng Assets

Reading an Asset such as drawing a weapon is a Maneuver.

Ranged weapons require ammo, and must be loaded before they can be shot. Loading a ranged weapon requires one Maneuver, although some weapons such as crossbows and firearms may require multiple Maneuvers. Modern weapons often stay loaded when stowed, but archaic weapons such as bows do not.

## Improvised and Cheap Assets

Assets which are improvised (e.g. a broken bottle) or very cheaply made are less expensive (often 50% less) but inferior to normal quality Assets. These items often work fine, but are less likely to win ASSET and will break on EFFORT.

## 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.

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

**Throw** - Put your opponent on the ground. You will both be Prone, which is a disadvantage on COMBO. If you Crit you gain *Control*, and can choose to land on top of your opponent or remain standing.

**Hold** - Gain *Control* of one Hit Location of your opponent, e.g. an Arm or Head. Similar to a Doom, your foe downgrades on EFFORT when using that Hit Location until you let go. If you Crit you can disarm his weapon. Maintain the Hold with a Maneuver each Round.

**Pin** - Immobilize an opponent whom you already *Control*.

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

**Subdue** - If you already *Control* an opponent's Head, Arm, Hand, Leg, or Foot you choke the neck or hyperextend the joint, dealing Damage. If you Crit you can disarm. You may use a Maneuver to let your opponent submit ("tap out") to avoid Damage. Only works with humanoid anatomy.

## Details

**Close Range** - Wrestling is only possible at Close Range.

**Weapons** - If you wrestle using a weapon with the "Close" range Tag you may upgrade on ASSET. Conversely, if your weapon has the



GRETTIR OVERTHROWS THORIR REDBEARD

"Long" range Tag you must  
downgrade on ASSET.

**Armor** - Armor does not reduce  
Damage, but plate armor  
prevents chokes and joint locks  
in elbows and knees.

**Find a Gap** - Using "Find a Gap"  
Maneuver, Weapon Class is +1 vs  
Prone, or +2 with a Hold or Pin.



# Strategy & Tactics

Tactics are vitally important to PCs in combat, and also a fun part of the game where you get to see how clever you can be. Most tactics involve taking Actions that set up your Legend Die. Whether or not your tactic works will depend on the specific situation, which means you might need to use multiple tactics at the same time.

**Opening** - Develop Openings prior to attacking so that you are attacking safely. Also take steps to minimize being Open yourself, especially against the most deadly foes. Keep a weapon ready and use cover to close lines of sight from possibly attackers.

**Ready weapon** - Since drawing a weapon is a Maneuver, it's best to do this ahead of combat, to use your Maneuvers for other things.

**Overwatch** - A common tactic is to take an Action to cover a particular field of fire with a ranged weapon, or cover a narrow choke point with a melee weapon. You're waiting to attack the first target who appears (although you could describe a specific target e.g. "I wait for the sorcerer to appear"). Grants PREP and COMBO.

**Positioning** - Gaining the high ground can grant PREP.

**Aiming** - An Action "I aim my bow at the clearing" ahead of combat sets you up to win PREP, and also take your next Action out of turn to shoot anyone crossing the clearing. Ranged weapons with the "Accurate" Tag also work better if you roll ASSET. You can also use a Maneuver to "aim" to gain COMBO on a shot. These work together.

**Shooting on the Move** - There is no penalty for attacking while moving. However, moving uses a Maneuver, and aiming also uses a Maneuver, so attacks while moving are less effective.

**Cover** - The use of cover is critical when facing ranged weapons, especially if they are heavier than your armor. You can use an Action to position yourself behind cover, against attacks from specific directions. This helps you to win ASSET and sometimes PREP.

**Keep Down** - You can crouch, kneel, or crawl to reduce your target area against ranged attackers. This counts as COMBO but not ASSET. Also, you may suffer a Disadvantage on some Actions or

Saving Throws (especially in melee) which will come up if you roll "Combo".

**Opportunity** - You should pay attention to the little details the GM describes, and look for opportunities in every situation. Consider countering enemy tactics, such as denying cover or high ground.

**Swarming** - Pay attention to groups, teams, or swarms of enemies. If these surround or flank you then you will need to downgrade the natural result on a roll of COMBO. You can counteract this by taking a Maneuver that gives you COMBO, such as pulling your allies close and locking shields. You can also use your Maneuvers to position yourself so you are not surrounded.

**Control Range/Measure** - You should attempt to control the Range (also called "measure") between you and your foes. Your ideal position is one where you can attack but your foe cannot. Weapons have a "Range" Asset Tag that describes their optimal range and range limits, and if you apply this you will more often win ASSET.

**Asset Tags** - Use Asset Tags to create Advantages in specific situations, as written in the rules for that Tag. For example, a spear with "Long" can only be applied if at long range and the opponent does not also have a long weapon. Asset Tags are fully driven by rules, so adds some crunchiness to the otherwise freeform game.

**Ambush/Stealth** - Planning a stealthy attack, ambush, or assassin's "backstab" counts as PREP. If a foe does this to you, you must downgrade on PREP.

**Pay Attention** - Your enemies can also use tactics against you, so listen carefully when the GM narrates maneuvers of foes. The GM will foreshadow threats in order to give you informed, meaningful choices. For example, paying attention to where enemies are aiming will tell you who will need to defend, and who might need to find cover or be covered by allied shields.

## Disadvantages

Here are some specific examples of Disadvantages that can affect your Legend Die in a conflict. In most cases these are simply the opposite of their corresponding tactic. Most Disadvantages related to maneuvering and positioning apply to COMBO.

unarmed  
unarmored  
need tools/gear  
ambushed

surrounded  
flanked  
kneeling  
prone

held down  
tied up  
grappled  
unconscious

# Looting

Looting in all its various forms involves taking an item, whether that's from the ground, furniture, prisoner, or corpse. The way you describe your looting matters, for you might just want to pick up a weapon, but a body might also have something hidden in its 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.



The Soldier fills his Knapsack with Money

**Grab** - Use a Maneuver to take one unsecured item in plain view. The item isn't nailed down and nobody is stopping you. Examples: torch, lantern, abandoned weapon or shield, sack, book.

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

**Loot** - Use an Action to loot a person or similarly-sized area, such as a prisoner, body, furniture piece, chest, pile of debris, etc. Your 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 for concealed or hidden items. Describe how

you search (visual, patdown, or stripdown). The GM may require you to roll if the search requires special skills. In some cases an item might be impossible to find without a full strip search, such as a gem rolled up in a rag in the toe of a boot. The GM will tell you what you find, and you can decide whether or not to take it.

**Harvesting** - Use an Action to harvest a material, such as picking mushrooms or cutting a fang off a giant spider. Your GM may call for a roll if the process seems difficult or risky.



The death of BEOWULF

H-J-F

# Part 5: Dooms

Dooms are traumatic conditions and experiences such as wounds, disease, starvation, and poisoning. Dooms are life threatening. As the Doom worsens the effects become more severe, eventually leading to death.

Dooms most commonly result from failed Saving Throws. You take Damage if you fail a Saving Throw, and any Damage you do not Soak carries over into a Doom.

This works the same for all permanent afflictions, from injuries to petrification, for example:

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

You should do everything you can to avoid Dooms, ideally avoiding them in the first place. Write Dooms alongside your Experience Paths. Dooms are a kind of Path, but are “dark paths” that end in misery and death. Like any Path, you can complete a Doom once all the players agree sufficient progress has been made.

The GM will also assign a Doom if specific dire conditions are met, for example if you don't eat you will be “Starving”, or if you run out of light then you won't be “In Darkness”. Note that temporary conditions are not generally Dooms, but are instead ways for the GM to Raise Hazard. So when you encounter stress, fear, and horror the GM will Raise Hazard instead of assigning a Doom.

# Doom Stages

Each Doom has three Damage boxes corresponding to three Stages of decline. Check a box for each point of Damage you do not Soak when you gain the Doom. Once all three boxes are checked you are expected to die, and any further Damage results in immediate death.

Damage	Doom Stage	Effects
☒☐☐	1 - Wounded	Downgrade rolls of EFFORT
☒☒☐	2 - Disabled	Cannot use Hit Location
☒☒☒	3 - Death's Door	Expectant, near death
☒☒☒+	Dead.	Immediate death

## New Dooms are Unstable, and take 1

Damage any time you or the GM rolls EFFORT. You or someone else can use an Action to stabilize you; this requires a roll if the Doom is greater than 1 Damage.

**Combine Damage** from Dooms of the same kind, such as another wound in the same Hit Location, more poison, etc.

## Doom Stage 1 (☒☐☐) - Wounded

At Damage 1 you must downgrade rolls of EFFORT. You don't feel well, might have pain and nausea, and may find it difficult to rest or sleep. For a subtle Doom, like a disease, you might know something is wrong, but not exactly what, and other people might not realize something is wrong



## Doom Stage II (☒☒☐) - Disabled

At Damage 2 you cannot use the Hit Location. If this is your Head or Torso you are incapacitated by severe pain, nausea, leakage, crying, etc, and then you cannot take Actions beyond "death throes" such as complaining, crying, cursing, and making a mess.

## Stage III (三々々) - Death's Door

At Damage 3 you are dying, at "death's door", expected to die, and you will instantly die if you take any more Damage.

If the Doom is limited to a limb, then you might live if you sacrifice the limb. In this case it's possible for you to continue to play your character, or you could retire from adventuring.



## Character Death / Retirement

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.

# Recovery & Healing

**You heal 1 Damage per week**, or per full day of bed rest, or an hour after magical healing such as a potion of healing. Apply the healing to one Doom, reducing the Damage and Doom Stage.

Recovery assumes you are making best efforts at appropriate progress, e.g. if you have a leg wound then you need to stay off your leg as much as possible. The GM may decide some days do not count toward progress, such as if you are too active or starving, or may multiply progress for days you receive excellent rest or professional healing.

Similarly, some Dooms might take longer to recover, for example the GM might rule that wounds from a giant fly or claws of an undead ghoul take longer to heal. Some Dooms might even require special treatment, possibly requiring a quest, for example “vampiric life drain” might require powerful holy magic or a rare disease might require a search for a cure.

# Using Dooms

Here are some Dooms that you are likely to encounter.

## Blindness & Darkness

If you can't see anything you immediately gain a Doom such as "Blind", "In the Dark", etc. This is one of the easiest Dooms to gain, and also to rid yourself of, since you need only wait for the dawn. Doom Stage 0 is appropriate for dim light or partial blindness, but go immediately to Stage 1 for full darkness or blindness. Prolonged darkness leads to further Stages, due to psychological impact.

## Wounds

Wounds are physical injuries such as hits from weapons or accidents falling from heights. Record specific details about your wound as well as the Hit Location, e.g. "sword stab in belly", "smashed face", or "burned hands". It's always more favorable to have an injury limited to a small area, so don't forget.

### Example: Bleeding Leg Wound

Hazarak has been ambushed by goblins. He fights well and slays many of them, but is finally wounded by an arrow and gains a Doom representing his wound. The GM or Hazarak's player writes a new Countdown Path on the XP Tracker.

HAZARAK - BLEEDING LEG! - A black goblin arrow is embedded deep in his leg

Hazarak's **immediate reaction** should be to apply or obtain first aid, otherwise he must check a countdown box.

HAZARAK - BLEEDING LEG! - A black goblin arrow is embedded deep in his leg

- Had to fight free of the goblins

Hazarak needs to avoid using the wounded body part aggressively, which will require him to check a countdown box. If he checks the second box he won't be able to take Actions that involve his leg.

**HAZARAK - BLEEDING LEG!** - A black goblin arrow is embedded deep in his leg

- Had to fight free of the goblins
- Had to run and landed hard jumping off a cliff

Drags himself to a stream

Washed the wound in a clean stream and rebound it

Hazarak can't use his leg, and will need to mark a box if significant time passes without caring for the wound or making any progress on healing. If Hazarak checks the third box he will die or lose his leg.

**HAZARAK - BLEEDING LEG!** - A black goblin arrow is embedded deep in his leg

- Had to fight free of the goblins
- Had to run and landed hard jumping off a cliff

Drags himself to a stream

wrapped it in a scrap of shirt

Washed the wound in a clean stream and rebound it

With enough progress and time on healing Hazarak will recover, and then the Doom can be crossed out.

## Essentials of Life

People require five basic essentials of life to survive: air, water, food, shelter, and sleep. If you delve deep underground then also add "light" to the list. During the game you are expected to use some of your turns to describe how you take breaks to rest, drink, eat, sleep, etc. You might describe how you buy sausages and cheese from a merchant, forage in the forest, or take cat naps.

You do not need detailed logistics or bookkeeping, however, you should frequently talk about how you go about keeping alive and healthy. You should also protect your provisions, since losing your pack horse with all your food will leave you hungry.

If you fail to do these things, the GM will assign an appropriate Doom. These checks are random (when the GM rolls FAIL+EFFORT) so it might happen at inopportune times!

**STARVING!** - Rats got into your stores and you're down two rolls, clearly not enough for all of you to live on.

**SUPPLIES GONE!** - You fell into an underground river and washed up...somewhere. Your supplies (food, water, bedrolls) are gone.

**ALONE IN THE DARK** - You're down to a candle stub, and not quite sure where you are in these deep dungeon tunnels. It's weirding you out and you feel like the walls are closing in. Check a box if your candle goes out, but uncheck a box if you find light.

## Arcane Dooms

Arcane dooms occur if you take Damage as a result of wielding magic. Highlight your character's specific magic school/art/style.

**THE WATCHER** - As you channeled power to enthrall the piteous villagers you felt something Watching, and it hasn't stopped. You see flickers of the Watcher in the corners of your eye, but it isn't there when you look for it. You feel a sense of loss, as corners of your mind peel away when you aren't watching them. You lose 1 Secret, plus 1 per countdown box. You feel like you should be able to remember them, unless the countdown is completed.

You might have met this doom if you enthralled lesser minds with dark magic, meddled with summoning spells of some-thing-best-left-unknown, saw something best-left-unseen, or killed something-from-somewhere-else.

You can avoid this doom if you find a way to protect your slowly unraveling mind before you go deeply, truly mad,

**DOOM OF FALSE DEATHS** - You die, and then come back to life on your next turn, but have a barely noticeable patch of dead skin the size of an eye or a bite. Each time you check a box you die again. Each time you come back to life, but it's slower, starting with a few hours and stretching to days. Each time you come back from the dead a little bit of you stays dead, such as a numb finger or foot, or a strange rotting smell. On your final doom you return fully undead.

You might have met this doom if you dabbled in the dark arts of necromancy, meddled with evil objects best left alone, were wounded by undead, or received a death curse.

Avoid this doom by setting to right the curse, or finding religion and entrusting your soul to the keeping of a god. Whether or not you continue to play as an undead is up to you, but know that all the world will be hostile to you.

**BLACK WIZARDS MIEN** - You gain an "mien" (aura) of black magic. Highly sensitive people and animals can feel this and will feel repulsed. Dogs will growl and bark, cats will hiss, babies will cry, horses will kick and buck you off. As you countdown to doom your "mien" grows. With one box anyone interacting with you will feel repulsed. With two boxes anyone nearby will feel something is very wrong. Nobody will talk with you, sell goods or services to you, or allow you in their shop or inn. You are the "creepy person" everyone avoids and you will be entirely alone. On your final doom you feel so alone and cursed that you die, alone.

You might have met this doom if you dabbled in dark magical arts, evil artifacts, or were cursed.

You can avoid this doom if you get a pet, take care of it, and it stays around on its own volition. However, most animals will avoid you, so you need to find "your pet", i.e. your familiar, an odd animal indeed.

**ACCELERATED AGING**- Your casting of "ebon lightnings of Ev-tol" went awry. You are rapidly aging! You've heard rumors that this can lead to a premature death as a crusty old corpse. You age  $1d6$  years, plus  $1d6$  per countdown checkbox, and if the total is over 40 you die.



H.J. FORD

BRADAMANTE DEFEATS THE WIZARD  
WITH THE RING.

# Part 6: Secrets

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

detect magic spell	contacts or allies
fireball spell	favor owed
teleport location	leverage for bribery
secret base	location of a magic artifact
mastery of a node	secret or long lost language
location of a lost temple	secret master or teacher
secret path to ancient ruins	speak with animals
hidden mountain pass	shapeshift to wolf

## Your Secrets

Just as your character is in your own words, so are your Secrets. Invent your own Secrets that match your character concept. Legends does not have a predefined list of Secrets, so you have full creative control. Here are a few examples to kick start your creativity.

### Martial Arts

Rare, difficult or flashy combat techniques make good Secrets. The Conflict (combat) section also has seeds for inspiration, such as combining a normal Maneuver into an attack Action. For example, a "leg cutting" Secret might let you target a foe's leg without a Crit.

arrow cutting	kiai/war cry	leg cutting
dance fighting	flying kick	sweep attack
disarm with style	iron fist/foot	zen archery
flourish	iron body/shirt	zornhau

# Thievery

Thieves carefully guard secrets of all kinds, and have many specialized (and illegal) skills. Elaborate jobs and heists may require a group of thieves with specialized talents. If you take Secrets for your specialized skills then you can more easily claim ULT when using them, even when surrounded by other thieves.

appraise	find traps	pick pockets
disguise	forgery	open locks
climb walls	hide in shadows	remove traps
detect noise	map making	Thieves' Cant
fence	move silently	use poison

## Magic Spells

Magic spells and powers are Secrets. You can create any you like, or reuse spells from classic RPG books, movies, and novels. A quick internet search for "OSR spells" provides tons of material. Examples:

### 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	smokeless fire	flaming arrow
combustion	sunfire orb	fireball
ring of ashes	control fire	flame wall

flamberge  
hellfire

ignite  
purifying flames

fire resistance

### Illusion Spells

audible glamer  
blur  
color spray  
darkness  
disguise self  
illusory script

invisibility  
light  
minor illusion  
mirror image  
phantom fog  
phantasmal force

phantasmal killer  
phantom steed  
prestidigitation  
shadow blade  
silence  
ventriloquism

### Necromancy (Death) Spells

animate dead  
circle of death  
feign death

finger of death  
raise dead  
resurrection

soul trap  
speak with dead  
vampiric touch

## Using Secrets

Using a Secret requires an Action or a Maneuver, depending on the Secret.

Secrets are automatic. You do not normally need to roll for Secrets even when you would normally need to roll for a similar Action. For example, a "magic missile" spell will automatically hit and deal 1 Damage.

However, you must make a Saving Throw if you are trying to push the bounds of your Secret.



# Cooldown

When you use a Secret it goes on Cooldown, and you must wait before it can be used again. You must have one uninterrupted night (8 hours) of sleep, upon which your Secrets may be used again.

## Campaign Cooldowns

The GM may define specific Cooldowns to fit the campaign setting, potentially defining Cooldowns for each race or magic art. Some suggestions are below.

1. Must wait for an amount of time to pass, such as 13 hours
2. Must wait for a time of day, such as dawn, dusk, midnight, etc.
3. Must "study and memorize" the Secret again
4. Must spend an hour at a particular time of day in prayer
5. Must stand several hours in vigil
6. Must conduct a ritual to contact and/or summon an extraplanar being of power (possibly a mentor, ally, or master)
7. Must gather key components (herbs/mushrooms/blood/etc).
8. Must spend an hour basking in moonlight
9. Must climb a tall tree or mountain and breath rarified air
10. Must observe the natural sunlight of a sunrise, noon, or sunset
11. Must walk a specified distance, such as 6 miles, or a league
12. Must challenge a foe to a duel and fight.
13. Must slay a foe in a certain way
14. Must seduce someone
15. Must drink water from a natural source (creek, spring, etc)
16. Must slay a foe and perform a specific rite afterwards
17. Must visit a mystic place, shrine, temple, node, etc.
18. Must feast (eat tons of food)
19. Must visit a tavern and party with abandon (wake up hungover and penniless)
20. Must learn or compose a new song/riddle/story/poem

## Custom Cooldowns

If your GM permits, you may customize your Cooldown to fit your character and special abilities. You may even have a different Cooldown for each of your Themes that is related to Secrets.

## Risks

If you fumble a Secret, the GM gets a Counter, which will be in the scope of your fumbled Secret and of similar proportion.

The GM may require you to make a Saving Throw to avoid magical backlash, drain, or similarly special disasters appropriate to your Secret. A fumbled *fireball* spell might also blow up in the faces of yourself and your allies.

The GM will set a minimum Hazard for this Saving Throw based on the power of the spell. This should range from 1-9 and if you are familiar with classic RPG "spell levels" then that is the scale to use.

If you gain a Doom it will be related to your Secret, Themes, and situation. For example, if you are a magic-user and fail to cast your spell, your Doom will be related to your spell (a Secret) and your Theme(s) that represents your magic art, school of magic, etc. If you are a "necromancer" then you'll get a necromantic-style Doom. The best Dooms are detailed and make good foils for the super-powers that Secrets provide.

As a bit of advice, it's a good idea to take Traits which support your Secrets because you might roll EFFORT or need to Soak Damage. For example, if you are a wizard with spells you might want Traits such as "mana", "elemental pact", or "powerstone". When you Tap Traits, this represents the mental, physical, and magical drain needed to wield Secrets such as magic spells.

## Maintained Secrets

Some Secrets can be "maintained" over time, such as a "protection from fire" spell. For Secrets which can be maintained, you must use

an Action to dismiss the ongoing effect safely. You can use a Maneuver but this causes the effect to unravel abruptly and you must roll a Saving Throw against the “backlash”.

There is no time limit, so if you cast a “magic disguise” spell you can maintain the disguise until you dismiss your spell. However, if you fail *any* roll related to your Secrets (e.g. magic stuff) then *all* your Maintained effects abruptly end, requiring you to make a Saving Throws against backlash. The GM may also call for a Saving Throw if you enter an area hostile to magic.

## Area-Effect Secrets

If your Secret affects an area, such as a *fireball* spell, so be it. Just realize that if you fumble your roll the GM’s **Counter** will likely turn the same effect against you and your allies. Consider whether bringing an area-effect weapon into the scene is really necessary.

## Drawbacks

Like anything, using a Secret might have side effects or natural consequences. For example, using “blackmail for the Duke” to threaten the powerful Duke might get you what you want for now, but will surely anger him. Casting a spell in view of others might have ramifications unrelated to the spell’s effect.

## Assets and Secrets

Assets can have Secrets, and they work just like your own. In addition, some Assets are “focuses” and assist with a specific kind of Secret. (See Focuses, below.)

## Gaining Secrets

You can gain a new Secret as an XP Reward. 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.

# Requirements

The GM may define appropriate prerequisites for any Secret. For example, depending on your campaign, you might require a spellbook or spell scroll in order to learn a new spell, or they might be found on runes carved in old ruins.

At a bare minimum you must have an appropriate supporting Theme for every Secret. For example, a "fireball" spell could be supported by Themes like Wizard, Pyromancer, Elementalist, etc.

One hard rule is you can never gain a Secret of a Level more than one higher than your previous highest-level Secret. So you can't gain a 3rd level "fireball" unless you already know a 2nd level spell. Furthermore, you need to have at least one Secret that you can say helped you to learn this new Secret. So if you want to learn a "fireball" then you would need another Secret like "fire arrow".

## 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. By way of analogy, owning a chemistry or physics textbook doesn't necessarily mean you have absorbed the material and can apply it.



W. J. Ford

RANNVART STOPS THE COWARDS

# Part 7: Advanced Assets

This section provides advanced rules for Assets beyond the basics presented above. You can skip this for a casual game.

As you saw during character creation, Assets can have enhancements in the form of **Signatures** and **Secrets**. Most Assets have none of these enhancements; they still function normally, they just aren't anything special. Assets can also have **Tags**, which provide tactical advantages and disadvantages or allow for comparison.

## Asset Signatures

Assets can have Signatures to describe any notable or exceptional qualities. An object might have a famous name and history such as "longsword - Naurdring, the goblin burner", or might be very high quality or unusual "cloak - velvet green, warm, with lots of little pockets inside".

You can use Asset Signatures in the same way as Theme Signatures. For example, if you roll THEME while battling goblins you could declare "longsword - Naurdring, the goblin burner".

In social situations proper clothing/attire is essential. Use Signatures to describe very finely made clothes or disguises; you can declare the Signatures when you roll THEME on rolls.

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.

## Magic Focuses

Magic-users highly prize Assets that assist with magic such as controlling elements and casting spells. An Asset Signature like

"staff of fire" could help when you are dealing with fire. Here are some examples, but it's best to dream up something unique.

**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.

**Wizard's Wand:** A thin stick of natural material such as wood or bone. Each wand assists with focusing magic.

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

**Book of Shadows:** A grimoire of Umbracala shadow magic spells. This is both a "book" of Secrets and a focus for shadow magic.

**Summoners Grimoire:** A book of summoning and binding rituals and spells. The magic-user must recite the ritual spell directly from the book, often inscribing magic circles or patterns on the floor according to the specific ritual, which requires a Cutscene.

## Asset Secrets

Assets can 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. You may only use a Secret if you have an appropriate supporting Theme, although the GM may rule a specific Asset Secret does not require a Theme. Assets with Secrets are rare, so you may want to give away an Asset that doesn't fit your character to another player's character.

## Cooldown and Charges

By default all Asset Secrets have a **Cooldown** of 24 hours, i.e. they can be used once per day. Some Assets have **Charges** instead of Cooldown, such as a "wand of lightning, 12 charges". Using the Secret expends one Charge, and the Asset loses its Secret once all Charges are used.

# Asset Tags

Asset Tags describe various qualities of the Asset, such as weapon range or features. One of the most common Tags for weapons and armor is Class, which is used to compare weapon penetration and armor resistance.

Some Tags are followed by a value, such as Class2, Class3, Far2, Far3, etc. The value can be positive or negative, and if omitted from a Tag defaults to "1". Examples:

- **Class3** armor is superior to a Class2 weapon.
- **Class4** weapon can blow through Class3 armor.
- **Far3** bow has a longer range than Far2 or Far bows.
- **Custom** means Custom1.
- **Custom2** armor is fancier than Custom.



# Weapon, Armor, and Shields

The young races of the men have medieval weapons and armor, while the Eldar have more sophisticated Renaissance era arms.

**Weapon Class** is the penetration of the weapon versus contemporary armor types (i.e. of the same era).

**Armor Class** is the resistance of armor versus weapons.

**Shield Class** is resistance of a shield versus weapons.

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 can use Shield Class in place of Armor Class.

Class	Medieval Weapon	Medieval Armor
0	cane, whip	clothing
1	knife, club, sickle, self bow	cold clothing, soft leather
2	dagger, rondel, sidesword, longsword (1H), javelin, club (2H), warbow, small ax	light gambeson, buckler, cuir-boulli, arming jack
3	mace, battle axe (2H), falchion, javelin, crossbow, longsword (2H), longbow, warbow (bodkin)	gambeson (30 layers), mail, jazeraint, coat of plates, kite shield
4	greatsword, lochaber ax	transitional plate, munition plate, tower shield
5	halberd, poleax, polearm, pistol, arbalest, flintlock blunderbuss	full plate, pavise, a young dragon
6	mounted lance, flintlock carbine, arquebus, ogre club	jousting plate, a young dragon
7	handgonne, light ballista, giant club	an old dragon
8	siege weapons	an ancient dragon

# Weapons

**Weapons** are designed to defeat armor and kill the foe. Characters suffer a Disadvantage if attacking or defending without a weapon. Weapons must be wielded in the hands, one hand unless noted below by the "2H" tag.

**Melee Weapons** are used in hand-to-hand combat in the "melee ranges" of Short, Medium, and Long. Melee weapons gain an Advantage when used in their optimal Range (as specified by their range tag). Only longer weapons such as polearms and thrown weapons can attack at Long range. Melee weapons cannot attack at **Far** Range and suffer a Disadvantage at **Close** Range.

**Ranged Weapons** can attack at any range, but suffer a Disadvantage if within reach of an opponent (e.g. in melee). It is best to attack at **Far** Range since that is out of reach of melee weapons.

You should choose a main weapon such as a spear or bow, a sidearm such as a sword, and a knife or dagger. Larger weapons are better for combat than smaller weapons, however most cities do not permit common visitors to carry heavy weapons openly on the streets. They may even require you to register them or leave them in a guard house upon entry. Breaking these laws can result in fines, confiscation, or jail. So your sidearm or dagger will be what you carry in cities.

## Swords

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

**Cutlass** [Class2, Short Cutty Defensive] short curved cutting sword

**Short Sword** [Class2, Short Binding Defensive Cutty Stabbity] a short sword (or huge knife), useful for chopping and stabbing, such as a machete, langes messer, katzbalger, cinquedea

**Sabre** [Class2, Medium Defensive Cutty] longer curved cutting sword

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

**Arming sword** [Class2, Medium Binding Defensive Cutty] a simple thrust sword with a cross hilt

**Rapier** [Class2, Long Handguard Binding Defensive Cutty] civilian thrusting sword

**Falchion** [Class3, Medium Binding Defensive Cutty] distinctive curved sword with a clipped tip which can bind with an opponent's (possibly longer) weapon, also known as a storta or scimitar

**Longsword** [Class3, 2H Medium Binding Defensive Cutty] longsword, bastard sword, or kriegsmesser

**Swiss Saber** [Class3, 2H Medium Binding Handguard Defensive Cutty] a long saber with an elaborate hilt

**Greatsword** [Class4, 2H Medium-Long Handguard Binding Defensive Control Cutty Secret] a large two-handed sword such as a spadone, montante, or zweihander. Deadly and can attack in any direction.

## Close Combat Weapons

**Pugilism** [Class0 Close Unarmed] various kicks, punches, knees, foot stomps, and other unarmed attacks

**Pommel** [Class1 Close] a sword or dagger pommel (the counterweight at the end of the grip) which is a separate weapon from the sword.

**Knife** [Class1 Close Short] a common belt or house knife

**Shield Punch** [Class0 Close Binding Defensive] punch with face or rim

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

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

**Parrying Dagger** [Class2 Close Binding Handguard Defensive Stabbity]

# Common and Peasant Weapons

**Knife** [Class1 Close Short Cutty Stabbity] a common belt or house knife

**Stick** [Class1 Short Nonlethal] lightweight stick, baton, or light club

**Stone** [Class1 Short Thrown-Long] a rock or brick

**Sickle** [Class1 Short Tool Fragile] grain sickle

**Hatchet** [Class1 Short Tool] small ax

**Cudgel or Cane** [Class1 Short Nonlethal] stout heavy stick, heavy club or bat)

**Wood Ax** [Class2 2H Medium Tool] chops wood and other stuff

**Scythe** [Class2 2H Medium Fragile] farmer's tool for reaping wheat, or foes

**Grain Flail** [Class2 2H Medium Fragile] long and heavy

**Great Club** [Class2 Medium] big tree branch

**Staff** [Class3 2H Medium] stout staff around nose-height

**Short Spear** [Class3 2H Long Stabbity] common, easy, and deadly

**Long Staff** [Class3 2H Long] stout staff above head-height

## Military Hafted 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. Many cities and towns restrict possession of military weapons within the walls except by official town guards, as carrying them shouldn't be necessary and may indicate the owner is up to no good. The GM may declare that town guards harass characters so that they must pay fines or have their weapons confiscated.

**Small Ax** [Class2 Short Binding Tool] war hatchet or tomahawk

**Mace** [Class3 Short Indestructible] wooden or metal club with flanges or spikes for crushing armored foes

**Hammer** [Class3 Short Indestructible]

**Battle Ax** [Class3 Medium] war axe

**Javelin** [Class3 Medium Thrown-Long-Far] throwing spear

**Spear** [Class4 2H Long Defensive Stabbity] common primary weapon, simple to wield and deadly

**Military Flail** [Class4 Medium]

**Military Pick** [Class5 Medium]

**Poleaxe** [Class5 Medium Indestructible Defensive] a knightly polearm for armored combat, a staff with axe, hammer, and spike

**Halberd** [Class5 Long Binding Defensive]

**Partisan** [Class5 Medium Long Binding Defensive] polearm with a sword-like guard that allows the wielder to shorten the weapon

**Polearm** [Class5 Long] various other pole-weapons

## Bows & Crossbows

Bows are superior to crossbows and early firearms for fast-moving elite units because they can be reloaded and aimed quickly, while on the move. However they require much greater strength and experience than crossbows, making them impractical for fielding large armies. Elite archers can outperform crossbows or early firearms, making them a compelling choice for adventurers even though armies might make other choices.

**war bow** [Class2 2H Far2 Accurate Reload] short bow, suitable for hunting or horseback. Add +1 Class if using armor piercing bodkin arrows.

**hunting crossbow** [Class3 2H Far2 Accurate Reload3] light hunting crossbow. Reloading takes 3 Actions without moving. Can be fired in one hand, but the range drops to Long.

**longbow** [Class3 Far3 Accurate Reload] the deadly longbow is large and requires great strength to use.

**heavy crossbow** [Class5 Far3 Accurate Reload5] military crossbow, easy to learn and hard-hitting, but cumbersome and slow to reload.

**siege arbalest** [Class6 Far4 Accurate Reload10] very heavy and powerful crossbow, but extremely slow to reload.



# Early Firearms

Early firearms are similar to crossbows in terms of their advantages compared with bows, and require even less strength. Thus firearms can be used even when hurt or weakened by malnutrition or disease. Reloading a gun requires one or more Actions equal to the Reload tag, per gun barrel.

**handgonne** [Class7 Far3 Reload8] a hand cannon consisting of a heavy barrel, handle, and socket for inserting a stock or staff.

**arquebus** [Class6 Far3 Accurate Reload7] a newer, more accurate version of the hand cannon with a true rifle shape and a matchlock.

**flintlock pistol** [Class5 Far Accurate Reload5] a pistol using a flintlock.

**doublon** [Class5 Far Accurate Reload4 (each)] a double-shot flintlock pistol blunderbuss. Each barrel must be loaded, primed, and fired independently.

**shotgonne** [Class5 Far Reload6 (each)] a double-barreled shotgun meant for "intimate encounters", i.e. up-close and personal combat. Each barrel must be loaded, primed, and fired independently.

**flintlock rifle** [Class6 Far3 Accurate Reload6] a rifle using a flintlock.



## Weapon Tags

Weapons have Tags to represent their characteristics. Most weapons grant an **Attack Advantage** in certain circumstances, as specified by weapon Tags. Gaining an Attack Advantage often requires a Maneuver to setup a specific combat tactic. In other words, this is not a static benefit, but something that the player needs to gain or earn via character actions.

Weapons tend to fall into two broad categories, main weapons such as spears and axes, then sidearms such as swords and daggers. Size affects the weapon Reach tags. Larger weapons are inherently more powerful and thus tend to have a higher 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.

## Two-Handed Weapons

Two-handed weapons are optimized for use in two hands, and tend to be longer and heavier than other weapons. Two-handed weapons are designated by the **2H Tag**. Weapon Class is 1 less if you use a 2H weapon in one hand.

## Weapon Range Tags

**Weapon Range Tags** specify the *optimal Range* for a weapon to make attacks. **Range** is the distance between an attacker and his target, at the moment of his attack. If you position yourself at your optimal Range you can claim ASSET, and deny that to your foes.

**Close**: is the optimal range for wrestling and other unarmed attacks. The fighters can punch, kick, grab, wrestle, throw, elbow, knee, head butt, pommel strike, and even bite. Note that a weapon pommel is a Class 1 weapon with the Close Tag.

**Short**: is the optimal range of most melee weapons, and any weapon can attack at this range.

**Medium**: is the optimal measure for longer weapons such as swords. Weapons downgrade on ASSET unless they have the "Medium" Tag, such as swords.

**Long**: is the optimal measure for longer weapons such as spears. Weapons may only attack if they have the "Long" Tag.

**Far, Far2, Far3**: is too far for melee and most thrown weapons, so only projectiles can attack. Only weapons with a Far tag can attack. A

"Far" tag with a number such as "Far2" is an additional increment of "Far" Range, so "Far2" is double "Far", and "Far3" is triple "Far".

## Weapon Guards

A Guard is a defensive position that also allows you to launch your attacks. Always remain in a guarded position.

**Each Guard covers one Hit Location**, so simply say the Hit Location you are guarding. A Guard provides Class 1 armor for the Hit Location, or the Weapon Class if the weapon has the Defensive Tag. Each Guard applies to a single Hit Location, and for only one side of the body (right or left).

This is similar to Shield Guards, however weapon Guards are much more dynamic and correspond to the starting and finishing positions of attacks and parries. **You can name a Guard after each attack Action or parry Maneuver**.

For example, you might say "I cut down and guard my left leg", or "I parry up and guard my right head". This is free when done with an attack Action or parry Maneuver, but you must end in a different Guard from the one you started in.

## Weapon Legality

Weapons of Class 3 or higher are military weapons, and are not permitted in civilized areas such as cities, towns, taverns, etc. Weapons with the Civil Tag are generally excepted.

## Advanced Weapon Tags

**Accurate**: accurate but slow to aim two-handed weapons, such as a longbow or arquebus. Adv on ranged attack if Aimed, Dis otherwise.

**Binding** weapons excels at *binding* with an opponent's weapon, and can momentarily *trap* and *control* an opposing weapon, such as a spear or sword.

**Control** weapons such as the two-handed sword are ideal for controlling an area. They can be easily turned to strike in any direction. The character gains an Advantage on Actions to control the distance between himself and his foes. The character can also attack foes in any direction around him, not just directly in front.

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

**Cutty** weapons such as swords are adept at cutting up and slicing unarmored foes, such as civilians. They can be claimed for an advantage against unarmored targets (granting COMBO).

**Handguard** indicates weapons with a complex hilt such as a rapier's rings or basket hilt sword, which protects the hand, a very common target. This counts as Class 2 armor for the weapon hand.

**Fragile** weapons are more fragile than most, and break apart if a Fumble is rolled.

**Indestructible** weapons are sturdy and never break.

**Nonlethal** are *less lethal* than other weapons, such as a stick or staff in comparison with a mace or spear. They are not as damaging and *less likely* to be lethal than most weapons. They are less threatening and more likely to be legally carried in towns.

**Defensive** weapons excel at defense and can work as well as a shield. Note that any weapon can be used to parry, but Defensive weapons excel at this.

**Reload** indicates the weapon must be reloaded before attacking again. This applies to ranged weapons such as bows, crossbows, and firearms. Normally this requires one Maneuver, but a number after the Reload Tag (e.g. Reload3) indicates that multiple Maneuvers are needed.

**Stabbity** weapons are optimized for lots of stabbing or "shanking". If the first attack hits then the character may make a free second attack on the same target area. Only one extra attack is allowed, but you should role-play this as *lots* of "stabbity stabbity" shanking.

**Secret** weapons are unusual or difficult to use and require a Secret. Otherwise the character suffers a Disadvantage using the weapon, and cannot use any of the beneficial Tags.

**Thrown** weapons can be thrown at the Range specified, such as "Thrown-Long" or "Thrown-Far1". Most Thrown weapons such as daggers can be thrown at Long range only, while some weapons such as Javelins can be thrown Long and Far1.

# ARMOR

The purpose of armor is to protect your vitals from weapons 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 Coverage

You have six Hit Locations (Head, Torso, Arm, Hand, Thigh, and Leg), and your armor will cover some or all of them. When you are hit, you will use the armor for the Hit Location.

**Armor Suits** - Each armor suit has a Tag which describes your Hit Locations covered and number of Maneuvers per Round. Armor is a tradeoff of coverage and mobility.

Armor Tag	Example	Hit Locations	Maneuvers
Body-Armor	cuirass	Head, Torso	3
Half-Armor	mail hauberk	Head, Torso, Arm, Groin	2
3Qtr-Armor	three-quarter plate	Head, Torso, Arm, Groin, Knee	2
Full-Armor	plate armor	Head, Torso, Arm, Groin, Knee, Leg	1

**Piecemeal Armor** - Armor suits are comprised of many smaller pieces, which you can wear individually. Each piece has Tags describing specific Hit Locations or Sub-locations. For example, "finger gauntlets" would have the "Gauntlet" tag.

Your number of Maneuvers per Round is determined by your total number of Hit Locations covered, regardless of whether you are wearing a suit, individual armor pieces, or both. Thus, most people will wear the minimal armor they feel warranted by the situation.

Total Hit Locations	Maneuvers	Examples
1-2	3	helmet and cuirass

3-5	2	helm, mail hauberk, mittens
6	1	fully armored knight

**Adjusting Coverage** - High quality suits of armor can be adjusted to any coverage tier by adding or removing pieces. For example, you might strip down to Body-Armor for travel, then add other pieces to gear up to Half-Armor or Full-Armor when intentionally going into battle.

**Pieces of Exchange** - The highest quality armors even have "pieces of exchange", alternate pieces suiting different purposes, so the suit can be configured for a range of different uses, such as fighting on foot or on horse.

**Gaps** - Coverage of any given Hit Location is never absolute, and there are gaps behind each joint. These gaps are necessary so that the wearer can move, walk, ride a horse, etc. Common armor gaps are the groin, armpits, buttocks, groin, back of legs, palms, face, and the inside of joints.

## Body-Armor

Body-Armor covers the Head and Torso. While wearing Body-Armor, or no armor, you get 3 Maneuvers per round.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Half-Armor

Half-Armor covers the Head, Torso, Arm, and Groin. While wearing Half-Armor you get 2 Maneuvers per round.

**Doublet** [Half-Armor Class1 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** [Half-Armor Class2 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** [Half-Armor Class2] is made of small leather or metal plates attached to each other and to a backing of cloth or leather in interlocking rows.

**Coat of Plates** [Half-Armor Class2] 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.

**Mail Hauberk** [Half-Armor Class3] is a full shirt of mail (chainmail), reaching at least to mid-thigh, and including sleeves. A coif (hood) was often included. Always worn over light gambeson. The legs are covered in cloth, not mail. The head is protected by a mail coif.

## Three-Quarter Armor

3Qtr-Armor covers the Head, Torso, Arms, Groin, and Knee. While wearing 3Qtr-Armor you get 1 Maneuver per round. This is the same

as Half Armor, but three-quarter armor is a later development (Renaissance) and is rare and expensive.

**Three-Quarters Plate** [3Qtr-Armor Class4 Visor] is suit of fully articulated light metal plate armor. Designed for mobile foot combat, this armor leaves the Legs unprotected.

**Dwur Plate** [3Qtr-Armor Class5 Visor] is an advanced suit of fully articulated metal plate armor. Designed for mobile foot combat, this armor leaves the Legs unprotected. Dwur plate is often intricately decorated in "grotesque" style, with a helm and other details resembling an animal or monster.

## Full-Armor

Full-Armor covers the Head, Torso, Arm, Groin, Knee, and Leg. While wearing Full-Armor you get 1 Maneuver per round.

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

**Plated mail** [Full-Armor Class4] armor is mail covered by embedded metal plates, this heavy armor was worn by the early knights.

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

## Armor Pieces

Characters may wear specific armor pieces as **upgrades** over the general Body-Armor. This only makes sense if the piece is better than the Body-Armor, so adding Knight's Gauntlets to Full Plate is unnecessary unless the gauntlets are custom or enchanted or have some additional merit.

## Head and Neck

**Leather coif** [Class1 Helm Coif Partial] are hoods of stitched leather. Protects the neck and head but not the face.

**Quilted coif** [Class2 Helm Coif Partial] are hoods of stitched leather. Protects the neck and head but not the face.

**Mail coif** [Class3 Helm Heavy Coif Partial] is a hood of mail (chainmail) or scale, often incorporated into a hauberk or camail. Protects the neck and head but not the face.



## Neck

**Bevor** [Class4 Gorget Partial] is a hard plate collar to protect the throat.

**Gorget** [Class4 Gorget Partial] are stiff collars of brigandine to protect the throat.

## Head

**Plumed hat** [Class1 Helm Civil Hat Partial] are huge, feathered hats that count as some padding.

**Arming cap** [Class1 Helm Open] are hoods of stitched and quilted linen, worn under a helm or coif as padding.

**Cervelliere "skull cap"** [Class2 Helm Cap Partial] are round, close-fitting steel skull caps.

**Kettle Hat** [Class2 Helm Hat Partial] is a helmet made of steel in the shape of a wide-brimmed hat. Inexpensive and popular with infantry because they offer many advantages, but are not seen as fashionable.

**Great Helm** [Class4 Helm Closed] are flat-topped cylinders of steel that completely cover the head and have only very small openings for the eyes and mouth. This helm does not have a moveable visor, so it was sometimes taken off for foot combat.

**Spangenhelm** [Class5 Helm] are conical, pointed metal helms made of metal strips and plates.

**Barbute** [Class3 Helm Closed] a visor-less helm with a distinctive "T" shaped opening for the eyes and mouth. The barbute resembles

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

**Bascinet** [Class3 Helm Open] a medieval conical open-faced helm. Includes an integral lining, so no arming cap is needed.

**Sallet** [Class3 Helm Open] are open-faced helms. Includes an integral lining, so no arming cap is needed.

**Burgonets** [Class3 Helm Open] are open-faced helms. Includes an integral lining, so no arming cap is needed.

**Close Helm** [Class4 Helm Visored] a steel helm that fully encloses the head and neck, with an integral visor that pivots up.

**Hounskull** [Class4 Helm Visored] are bascinets with a "dog faced" conical visor and aventail. Includes an integral lining, so no arming cap is needed.

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

## Hands

**Swordsman's Gloves** [Class1 Gauntlet Partial] nimble leather gloves with very limited protection

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

**Mitten Gauntlet** [Class4 Gauntlet Clumsy] extremely protective steel mittens, but also very clumsy. Easy to obtain and ideal for characters whose weapon does not have a hand guard (such as a polearm) and do not have a buckler.

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

## Advanced Armor Tags

**Helm** is armor worn to protect the head. Helms also have an Open or Closed Tag to describe facial protection.

**Gauntlet** is armor worn to protect a hand. If Clumsy, this causes a disadvantage on delicate work, such as picking locks, playing musical instruments, etc.

**Gorget** is armor worn to protect the throat.

**Cap** is armor only covering the crown (top) of the head.

**Civil** armors and helmets are “civil looking”, appearing as normal rugged clothing and do not draw attention. They are the only armor legal to wear in cities, towns, inns, etc.

**Closed** helms cover the wearer's face for greater protection, but sacrifice comfort, visibility, and breathability. This causes a Disadvantage that applies to any rolls involving clear sight or hearing, such as ranged combat or observing something.

**Coifs** are protective hoods that cover the neck as well as the forehead, chin, sides and rear of the head. They are always constructed of flexible material such as cloth or mail. They only cause a Disadvantage on hearing, not sight.

**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. Any Disadvantage caused by the item drops by one die size.

**Hat** helms are hat-shaped, offering protection from the sun and anything dropping from above. They do not cover the face, ears, or rear of the head.

**Partial** armor, helms, and gauntlets cover very limited Sub-locations. This armor piece does not count towards number of covered areas when determining maximum Maneuvers per round, as long as other armor pieces are not worn on the same Hit Location. However, the armor piece leaves a large gap which can be targeted.

**Open** helms do not cover the wearer's face. They only cause a Disadvantage on hearing, not sight.

**Visored** helms have a moveable plate to open or close the face, becoming an Open or Closed helm whenever the wearer likes.

## Shields

**Shields** are pieces of *moveable armor*, primarily used when full Body-Armor is impractical or unavailable. A character without strong armor can pick up a shield and immediately cover some lines of attack, depending on its size and “guard” position held.

# Shield Guards

Shields are moveable armor which can be positioned to a **Shield Guard** by using a Maneuver. Each Shield Guard covers specific Hit Locations. You will be in **Left Guard** unless you declare otherwise.

All shields have two common **front Guards**, so named since they protect from attacks coming at the character's front facing. These protect the Hit Locations listed, plus Left Hand and Left Arm.

- **Left** [Torso] this is the default shield guard
- **High** [Head] - limits your vision



Additional front guards are available by Shield Tags.

- **Right** [Right Hand] - for bucklers
- **Middle** [Head, Torso, Groin] - for round shields, tower shields
- **Low** [Torso, Groin, Legs] - for tower shields

Lastly, specialty flank guards protect a side rather than the front, and only work against attacks coming from that side:

- **Left Flank** [Head, Left Torso, Left Arm, Left Hand] - most strapped shields
- **Right Flank** [Head, Right Arm, Right Torso] - centergrip shields
- **Horseman's Guard** [Left Arm, Left Torso, Left Hand, Left Leg] - kite shields

## Shield Class

Use your Shield Class in place of Armor Class when you are using a Guard to cover a Hit Location.

Since shields are equivalent to armor, so they are less important if excellent armor is available. Full plate armor is essentially interlocking plates equivalent to shields, so two-handed weapon is more useful than a shield. Shields are also less useful when facing threats from multiple directions. Smaller shields are vulnerable to longer weapons because they cover few areas.

## Medieval Shields

**Buckler** [Class2 Small Centergrip] A small common shield, 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. Bucklers are also a type of “companion weapon” listed on the Weapons table, with some Weapon Tags.

**Target** [Class2 Small Strapped] A small wooden round shield, worn strapped to the arm, such as the Scottish target or smaller Viking shield. Inexpensive and readily available.

**Round shield** [Class2 Medium Centergrip Clumsy] A light wooden round shield, such as a Viking shield. Inexpensive and readily available.

**Heater** [Class3 Medium Strapped Clumsy] A smaller, more manageable version of the kite shield suited for both mounted and foot combat.

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

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

**Kite** [Class3 Large Strapped] A distinctive shield in a reverse teardrop shape used by horsemen to protect the left flank and leg.

**Aspis** [Class4 Large Strapped Clumsy] A very large, deeply-dished shield made of wood.

**Tower Shield** [Class4 Large Strapped Clumsy] A rectangular, semi-cylindrical tower shield.

**Pavise** [Class5 Large Standing Clumsy] A very large semi-portable wall shield to protect crossbowmen in siege warfare.

## Shield Tags

**Small:** shields can be used once per round

**Medium:** shields can be used two times per round

**Large:** shields can be used three times per round

**Clumsy:** shields reduce your Maneuvers by 1.

## Shield Damage

Your shield may be damaged or broken if you attempt to use it to block a weapon with a weapon Class higher than your shield Class.

**Background** - Shields are not indestructible. Robust attacks can damage the rim of a shield, and thrusts on the flat shield face can penetrate. Shields must strike a careful balance between weight, protection and cost, and most soldiers prefer a lighter shield even if that means they will need to replace it. Also any hit which is hard enough to damage a strong shield might hurt the arm behind it, so a shield that crumples absorbs some of the damage. A skillful shieldman will angle the shield to deflect attacks rather than block them directly.

## Advanced Shield Tags

**Civil** shields are "civil looking" and will not generally draw attention.

**Centergrip** shields have a handle in the center of the shield, which is gripped so that the shield can be easily moved to various positions. They can be easily equipped or dropped, and the hand can be used to grab. This style of grip results in a more maneuverable shield, so is ideal for one-on-one combat, but only lighter and smaller shields can be held this way. Centergrips are more actively wielded than Strapped shields, requiring more skill because the player must declare which direction (front, left, or right) the shield is positioned.

*May not be Heavy.*

**Shieldweapon** weapons such as swords and daggers are equivalent to a small shield. They can either attack or parry each round. Their effective Shield Class is the same as their Weapon Class.

**Strapped** shields are attached to the arm by two stout straps (enarmes), and 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. The shield and arm can absorb more force. Strapped shields take longer to equip or drop than a centergrip shield, but unlikely to be dropped by accident. 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, so usually a weapon is used to parry attacks from the right side.

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

**Standing** shields are movable walls on posts or stands, setup as static cover. Moving a Siege shield and setting it back down takes an Action. The benefit is that the fighter's hands are free, which is useful if you want to reload a crossbow. Due to the bulk of the stand, they are Clumsy, although some shields have a detachable stand such as loops to put the shield on a post.

## Custom Assets

You and the GM can create new Assets and Asset Tags.

### Glass Weapons

"Glass" weapons have fragile blades designed to break into shards inside the victim, leading to an agonizing and unavoidable death. Some glass weapons are actually volcanic glass, while others are steel with spines or thin blades.

**Glass Weapon** (weapon tag) - The weapon is designed to break apart inside a victim. This also makes the blade relatively fragile. When making any roll while holding the weapon and EFFORT is rolled, the weapon shatters. On an attack this upgrades the natural result, but there is no benefit for other rolls. If an attack with a glass weapon causes a Doom immediately check a box.

### Runelocks

Runelocks use thaumaturgical runes to speed the reload time of their flintlocks. Speaking the name of the rune performs some of the reloading functions, such as cocking the hammer.

**Runelock** (weapon tag) - Reduce Reload Tag by 1 if the wielder has a Secret named "runelock".



ANTONIO · IS · NOT · AFRAID ·  
OF · THE · OGRE ·

## Part 8: 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.

# GM Roles

As the GM you get to wear several different hats.

**Worldbuilder** - 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 create custom Encounter and Surprise tables between games to organize your ideas.

**Referee** - 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 visible so players understand their odds

**Adversary** - 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.

## New Campaign Quick Start

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.

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. 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** - The game session is ready to start; kick it off with a "strong start" such as a battle or other challenge. Be sure to roll for an Encounter, narrate the scene, set Hazard, and follow turns so that you can teach the players how to play the game.
5. **Resolution** - Once players resolve the challenge, let them take a few turns looting, resting, or exploring. Point out how those require Actions, and that turns are continuous so you are continuing to make Encounter rolls. Ideally let the players find a clue that kicks off another Path.
6. **Next Experience Paths** - Add a GM Path and check on Dooms or other Dark Paths. Also prompt the players to choose a new Experience Path and start making progress. Add pressure by rolling an Encounter each turn, or whenever they get stuck or lost on what to do next and look to you for guidance.

## Flow of Play

Game takes place in **Rounds**. As the GM, start each round by rolling an **Encounter** to start your turn. Do this when the game starts, you come back from a break, or whenever the players seem lost, stuck, indecisive, or waiting for you.

- **GM Turn:**
  - GM rolls an **Encounter** (hidden)
  - GM narrates the scene, describing the environment, situation, obvious threats, changes such as movement of foes or NPCs, and foreshadowing future threats.
  - GM **Raises Hazard** whenever possible

- Players may interrupt with **Maneuvers** and GM can use a Maneuver Phase if necessary. (Saving Throws and Action rolls must wait for the player's turn.)
- **Player Turns** (for each player):
  - GM chooses a player (usually clockwise around the table) and **Transitions** into the player's turn. GM describes new or urgent info and declares required Saving Throws.
  - Player Turn
    - Player says what they will do for their turn
    - Player rolls Saving Throws (if applicable)
    - Player takes 1 Action and 2 Maneuvers
  - GM rolls for **Surprise** as necessary (e.g. a Fumbled roll, a risky or audacious action, etc.)
  - GM **Transitions** out of player's turn

## GM Turns

Roll an Encounter at the start of your turn. This provides a random seed for inspiration and reminds you to check a few game details.

Describe the current scene. Since much of the game is theatre of the mind, it's important to clearly describe what you are imagining, so that your players can make good, well-informed choices.

Encourage the players to ask questions to clarify. Try to repeat the scene description each round, but vary the wording.

After that, **introduce new scene elements**, such as new information or a detail that could be an opportunity or challenge. This could be a new NPC, some new details of the scene, a trap, an opportunity to gain a new asset or find food, or foreshadowing of an upcoming danger. Also, narrate changes to the scene. If there are foes then describe how they move and what they appear to be doing. Make the environment feel alive.

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 PC.

**End your turn** by narrating a **Transition** into the first player's turn.

## Player Maneuver Interrupts

Players are allowed to interject with **Maneuvers** at any time, and are likely to do so in the middle of your turn or narrative. Acknowledge the Maneuver, interweave it into your narrative, and keep the game flowing. For example, if you are describing how a "dark cowled figure rises from the mists" a player might say "I draw my sword". Maneuvers are simple and don't require rolls, so you can keep going.

If necessary, you can start a **Maneuver Phase**, to resolve any complicated simultaneous Maneuvres. Simply pause the game and take the Maneuvres in slow motion, allowing players to fine-tune their response to the changing scene.

## Player Turn Transitions

Always describe a **Transition into** each player's turn. 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. Don't worry about repeating yourself, the players really do need it.

During a Transition, **reiterate all critical information**. 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.

Since you are Transitioning into each player's turn, you are also controlling turn order. You can use clockwise seating order around the table for simplicity, or use proximity to a threat, or you can bounce around to shake things up. Experiment with this. You can also narrate the **Transition out** of a player's turn if desired.

The floating NPC Turn can happen at any time, but you should Transition into the NPC Turn if you are attacking the NPC. This means you should usually declare attacks on NPCs first, before transitioning into the first player's turn.

## Time

It's simplest to stay in real-time for most of the game, where each round is about half a minute. That's just long enough to finish one significant action.

## Fast-Forward

Always keep the game flowing and don't hesitate to **fast-forward** past boring stretches of time, such as camping for a night, riding for a day, traveling by ship for a month, or any other kind of "downtime". You can still use rounds and turns, just remind players during Transition to their turns that the game is on fast-forward, so they can describe a series of broad sweeping actions that cover time loosely. Go back to real-time as soon as something interesting happens, such as running out of food, a storm, or an ambush, and don't be afraid to rewind a bit so you resume real-time at the start of the interesting event. Whatever you do, make sure the players understand when you are fast-forwarding.

## Describing Critical Hits

Players expect Critical Hits to be more awesome than normal rolls. Whenever possible, describe Critical Hits as the best possible outcome of how the player declared their attack. In other words, 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 if the monster is out of Traits to tap. Describe a visceral end leaving no doubt the monster is dead (rolling heads, sprays of blood, fine red mist, etc.). If the player was targeting a specific hit location, be sure to use it.

**Called Shot** - If the player was targeting 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 even 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 glowing runegorm.

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. This is a great opportunity to showcase the PCs choice of weapon.

**Morale** - The attack inflicts a wound which causes the monster to panic and flee. If there is a group of monsters they will probably do the same. Intelligent creatures might surrender if they feel that will be honored.

**Wound** - Despite still having more Traits to tap, the monster is mortally wounded, but not yet incapacitated. 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. However, the monster now has a Stage 1 Doom and will probably die. Intelligent creatures might surrender if they feel that will be honored.

## Using Hazard

**Hazard** is the level of inherent difficulty and risk in the current scenario, based on terrain, situational dangers, and broad boosts to the foes. A battle in a building on fire is both more difficult and more risky than on level ground.

**Hazard starts at 1**, and then you Raise Hazard as the story becomes more dangerous and the characters become increasingly stressed and burned out.

**Raise Hazard** whenever you narrate anything which makes the situation more dangerous, especially when you foreshadow a threat of some kind.

**Cut Hazard** when you roll a Critical Success on an Encounter or other Seed. However, do this sparingly, and make it clear it's the players' responsibility to manage Hazard. Players must use the Cut Hazard action in order to keep it under control.

**Hazard continues between game sessions.** Hazard is never automatically reset, and players need to work to Cut Hazard .

You should use Hazard to heighten the dramatic tension in the situation, and to highlight any interesting situational factors, and ideally provide tactical choices to the players. For example, a battle on a rooftop in high winds is risky, so the characters might decide to take the battle somewhere else.

You can also use Hazard in situations when a foe or story element is directly raising the Hazard, which may be something the characters can stop. For example, an unusual device might be sending psychic signals that make it harder for the characters to think; can that be disabled? You can give the players a clue by describing how an adversary might visibly switch on the "psychic scrambler" device after reaching it mid-fight.

Raising hazard is best done as foreshadowing prior to the direct interaction with a threat, such as by describing remnants of prior victims ("look at the bones!"), deep footprints of a massive beast, claw marks on trees, or blood pools on the steps leading to the next dungeon level. Using foreshadowing adds tension and wonder and gives players a chance to avoid trouble.

If a monster should be particularly dangerous you should develop the threat over time using a series of turns. However you can also raise the hazard as a monster attacks, moves, or uses a special ability, especially for unusual monsters or a hidden threat.

Hazard is the primary crunchy game mechanic for you to control odds of success or failure. The target number for d20 rolls is always

15, which models a baseline of PC competence in a reasonably challenging situation. Players fail on rolls of 14 or less, and Hazard determines how many of those Failures are Fumbles.

## Encounters

Roll for a random Encounter at the start of every turn. Roll your 1d20 and Legend Die and consult the **Encounters Table** to give you a seed of inspiration.

The Encounter is beneficial to the PCs on a **Success (15+)**, otherwise the Encounter is opposed to the PCs. You should Raise Hazard on a Failure and Cut Hazard on a Critical Success.

The Encounter Table shows twelve conceptual patterns, so once they become familiar you shouldn't need to look at the table. Encounters are also reminders for you to check on various elements of the campaign and PCs, such as food and light.

Any Encounter is simply a starting point, an idea or concept for you to build on, helping you to spontaneously create wonder and make the game feel more alive. You will need to nurture the seed so it grows, by embellishing, adding detail, connecting it to past events, and possibly using future seeds for more ideas.



# Encounter Table

As the GM, roll a random Encounter each round to start your turn.

	Failure (d20 1-14)	Success (d20 15-20)
THEME	Describe a hazard, e.g. terrain, weather, monster, etc. Or introduce a new monster or NPC.	Describe the scene, a location, or an NPC. Provide an opportunity by revealing information.
EFFORT	Check the status of Dooms, and Raise Hazard if PCs are not getting enough rest, are hunted, or are getting winded in combat. Describe how the PCs must expend effort or resources.	Provide an opportunity to rest or find shelter, and cut Hazard if the PCs rest. Provide an opportunity to make sudden progress if the PCs spend Effort.
ASSET	Present a challenge caused by superior gear on a foe, poor gear on PC, or special gear for the situation. Check on resources such as food, water, light, or fuel. In combat a PC has a gear mishap or attracts an attack due to arms & armor.	Highlight how a PC/NPC Asset is useful (e.g. armor blocks an attack). Or provide a clue to find a new Asset. For example, they might find food, water, light sources, or arrows. On a Crit they might find "magic healing berries". Only provide a clue.
COMBO	Encounter a team of hostile NPCs or challenge that needs teamwork (e.g. auto-closing door, 2-person puzzle). An NPC mistake sets the group back. Foes use teamwork, tactics, and maneuvers to downgrade COMBO.	Encounter a group of possibly friendly NPCs, or describe an opportunity to use teamwork, or an NPC helps a PC teammate. Provide an opportunity to show teamwork or describe how an ally proves helpful. Possibly Cut Hazard.
ULT	Advance the plans of a major villain, or foreshadow a major threat. Or highlight an unusual risk (e.g. evil magic, spirits, etc). Or highlight a Dark Secret of a PC or NPC.	Highlight an ULT of a PC or NPC, e.g. the "scout" finds a hidden trail; the "wizard" finds a Ley Line, the "thief" spots a tail, the "ranger" finds tracks, the "archer" sees a target.
PREP	Punish recklessness, especially if clear dangers are ignored. Surprise encounter, ambush, trap, jump scare, etc. In combat describe how the foes were better prepared, and players downgrade natural rolls of PREP.	Drop a clue to help players prepare for what's coming, e.g. "the air coming down the corridor is warm and smoky like brimstone". Provide an opportunity to Cut Hazard.

# Custom Encounter Tables

You can create custom Encounter tables for your campaign. Use the standard table as a guide, and write your own 2x6 table filled with your ideas. Reserve ULT for something exotic such as magic, a main villain, etc.

dungeon of the...	mountains	villain schemes
on the road	NPC friends/foes	boss battle plan
inns & taverns	ships & ports	city of thieves
forest	dungeon traps	I loot the body!

## Sample Encounter Table: The City of Thieves

	Failure (d20 1-14)	Success (d20 15-20)
THEME	Meet a dangerous NPC (e.g. a thief, wizard, corrupt guards) or an off-limits location (e.g. thieves hideout, warehouse with contraband)	Meet a reasonably friendly and useful NPC or building (e.g. a shop or tavern). Or a NPC warns PCs they are tailed/pickpocketed.
ASSET	PCs are not dressed right for the neighborhood, attracting attention hindering travel and purpose.	Find a shop or NPC with something useful to the PCs, or a rare item they've been searching for.
EFFORT	PC loses a coin purse or similar resource. Or the strong rains flood the streets, and shit runs downhill...	Witness a theft, warning of a dangerous shortcut. Or witness a knifing, clearing a street ahead.
COMBO	A team of rogues wants to steal PC's expensive gear, e.g. magic items	Urchins watching... What do they want? Who do they work for?
ULT	Black wizards walk the streets with impunity, what is their purpose?	Find a weird shop or black market with exotic goods, maybe magic.
PREP	Ambushed by an organized band of thieves. Or an urchin grabs an item and runs, leading to an ambush. Or thieves/thugs attack, e.g. from the rooftops of an alley.	Notice the neighborhood is getting dicey. Or notice urchins speaking with some rough guys, watching and pointing at various marks (potential victims) on the street.

# Surprises

Roll for a **Surprise** when a player rolls a Fumble or does something ambitious, greedy, or reckless.

Surprises are natural consequences that can't always be predicted or controlled. There are good surprises and bad surprises. When the PCs swing from ropes, trick off walls, or slide under the feet of giants, give the players a Surprise, taking the already exciting action over the top, turning it up to 11.

	Failure ( $\partial 20 \leq 14$ )	Success ( $\partial 20 \geq 15$ -20)
THEME	Describe how a foe or terrain hindered the action. On a Fumble the action fails, regardless of player roll.	Describe how an ally or terrain assists or enhances the action. On a Crit the action succeeds, regardless of player roll.
EFFORT	Take 1 Damage from exertion, or 1 extra Damage on Fumbled Save.	Highlight an asset used for the action, e.g. +1 Damage, or negate an opposing asset.
ASSET	An asset is dropped or jammed, but recoverable with a Maneuver. On Fumble the asset is lost or broken.	Drain an enemy resource, or cause 1 Damage to an enemy
COMBO	Roll a Saving Throw, e.g. from an attack during or after the stunt. No Save on Fumble.	Allies take heart and morale improves, which Cuts Hazard.
ULT	If a foe or terrain has ULT, assign a severe consequence.	If the PC has ULT, enhance or upgrade the result.
PREP	Unless the PC was well prepared, describe a major side effect.	If the PC was well prepared then upgrade their result. Otherwise describe a minor side effect.

Surprises are similar to **Encounters**, so you can use the tables interchangeably, or create custom Surprise tables, e.g. for magic.

# NPCs

NPCs are “non-player characters”, essentially anyone in the game universe who isn’t a PC (“player character”) controlled by a player. You control all NPCs, including PCs whose player is absent from the game session. After introducing an NPC to the players, step back and see what the players do.

## Role of NPCs

NPCs are the supporting cast of the story. The player’s PCs are the main cast and own the spotlight. While you should not avoid taking personal interest in your NPCs, since you want them to be awesome, you need to be prepared to “let go” of even your favorite NPCs, allowing them to be liberally marginalized or killed off. This is important for verisimilitude, and so that your NPCs do not eclipse the PCs. You can always make more!

## Creating NPCs

Create new NPCs by assigning a couple Themes and Traits. While you can create NPCs with much detail as PCs, you should reserve this for NPCs who are especially important to the story, or who have become close allies adventuring with the PCs for some time.

Introduce NPCs to the players in terms of Themes and Traits. Generally each NPC should have one Theme for their occupation (e.g. baker, cook, driver, guard, scout), one Trait for a strength (e.g. clever, connected, quick, strong), and one Trait for a personality quirk (e.g. friendly, nosy, boorish). Add a Theme for an unusual race (e.g. elf, dwarf, etc), and add additional Themes or Traits to represent greater experience or power. Raise the Hazard if the NPC is ominous or doing something threatening, even if you intend the NPC to become an ally.



# Monsters

Monsters are enemies for the players to encounter, battle, outwit, slay, and loot. They are also an opportunity for you to be creative and scare your players. Traps, evil spells, and other threats work the same way.

## Using Monsters

Introduce monsters to the scene during your turn, using vivid and exciting descriptions. Raise Hazard when introducing a monster or revealing a dangerous capability. However, try to foreshadow the monster on your turns earlier than that when possible. This raises the Hazard and dramatic tension more than if you surprise the players with the monster out of nowhere.

## Monster Stats

Each monster has a compact stat block. This is a streamlined version of traditional RPG monster stat blocks, so that you reuse all your favorite RPG books, adventure modules, and websites.

### **Skeleton** H 2; A 1

**Orc** H 2; A 1

**Hobgoblin** H 2; S Heavy armor

**Dire Wolf** H 5; AC 2; WC3

**Ogre** H 7; AC 3; WC5

**Manticore** H 8; A 3; AC 3; WC 3; S flying, ranged spikes Dam 1

**Hill Giant** H 10; A 2; AC 6; WC 3

**Chimera** H 12; A 4; AC 4; WC 3; S flying, fire breath 15' cone Dam 7

**Medusa** H 17; AC 2; S petrification, poison; W her own gaze

**Monster Name** H 1; [A 1;] [AC 2;] [WC 2;] [S;] [W;]

- **Hits (H)**: Overall toughness of the monster, essentially hit points. Inflicting total Damage of HD disables the monster.
- **Attacks (A)**: Number of attacks per round
- **Armor Class (AC)**: Armor Class for defenses; defaults to 2
- **Weapon Class (WC)**: Weapon Class for attacks; defaults to 2
- **Special (S)**: Secrets, special attacks, and special defenses such as Heavy armor, breath weapons, poison, spells, resistances, immunities etc. Most monsters can see in the dark.
- **Weaknesses (W)**: Vulnerabilities that can be exploited to make the monster easier to defeat.

Reuse stats from your favorite RPG directly except as follows:

- **H**: Use double the HD from OSR sources, ignoring modifiers. For example, OSR HD "4 + 2" is H 8. Use HD directly from 5e.
- **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.
- **AC**: By human armor when applicable. Otherwise AC3 if the monster is equivalent to chainmail, AC4 if plate, etc.

For monsters which use equipment, list their Assets such as weapons and armor. You can vary Assets to differentiate similar monsters. Scatter a few ranged weapons, heavy weapons, and heavy armor amongst a group of goblins to create a variety of challenges for the PCs. Assets are often the most distinctive aspect of groups of creatures, such as "the goblin with the arbalest". Raise

Hazard when describing anything scary or unusual such as poison arrows or man-catching nets.

Try to use special abilities such as spells, powers, special attacks, and special defenses directly as much as possible. These are often central to the monster concept so don't avoid using them.

Some RPG resources may provide additional details, such as size or movement, either as stats or in a text description. They are not formally used in Legends, but can be useful to add detail.

You may also find it helpful to give each monster an epithet or signature phrase, such as "Ogre - huge ferocious brute w/ strength of ten men", or "Tiger - huge muscled sharp-toothed fast hunting beast". This helps you visualize the monster at a glance, and gives you words you can use to describe your monster to your players.

## Monster Hazard

Always Raise Hazard when foreshadowing monsters, or when the monster appears, or when revealing special abilities. If you visualize the monster and describe how dangerous it is in detail, you will naturally Raise Hazard appropriate to the monster. Your players will quickly learn to read these cues and get a sense of how tough you think the monster will be. 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 Encounter Triggers

You can use your Encounter roll 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 Encounter roll in the context of the monster. Some examples are below, but the whole point is to help you make the monster feel more chaotically real, so run this on the fly.

	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	Elaborate on visual appearance, sounds, or smells, and gross (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.

If you have time to plan a special monster encounter, you can make a custom Encounter table for the monster, or an abbreviated form along with the monster stat block.

Medusa HD 6; SA petrification, poison; THEME rattlesnake sounds, EFFORT tries to establish gaze, ASSET dagger & bow, COMBO venomous snakes, ULT petrify creature meeting her gaze

## Monster Maneuvers

As part of narrating the scene during your turn, describe how Monsters take Maneuvers to aim or move to flank the PCs. This will help the players to make well-informed choices. Always foreshadow attacks with a Maneuver of some kind, such as describing a goblin archer or troll aiming at a PC, especially if they are targeting 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. If you foreshadow a group of monsters ganging up on a PC, this counts as a Disadvantage on COMBO for the PC's Saving Throw.

Only reveal Maneuvers to the players if their PCs can notice them. Otherwise, you can keep them secret or hint at them vaguely.

## Monster Attacks

When a monster attacks a PC, the player must roll a Saving Throw or take Damage. You must 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 during your turn.

Try to add as much visual imagery and detail as you personally can, 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.

Reiterate any details you described during your turn; for example, if you said a monster was aiming at a Hit Location without armor you should say it again in the Transition. 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).

Special attacks result in special Dooms, but are otherwise resolved as normal attacks. For example, if a basilisk attacks a PC with a “petrifying gaze”, call for a Saving Throw, let the player Soak Damage if possible, otherwise the PC gains a Doom “petrified”.

Special attacks deal damage just like other attacks (i.e. 1 on a hit, 2 Fumble, 3 Super Fumble). If you want to make the creature more deadly, you can foreshadow and Raise Hazard, which gives the players the ability to prepare and make choices. Also, characters are unlikely to have Traits to Soak rare kinds of Damage.

Some special Dooms may be difficult or even impossible to treat with first aid. The venomous bite of a cobra needs to be treated with an antivenom potion, spell, or the like. Similarly, a wound caused by an unholy wraith dagger might not be treatable except by a few people in the world, and will otherwise fester and lead to undeath.

## Multiple Monsters

For most combat encounters, try to call for one Saving Throw per PC per turn. If there are multiple monsters who could attack the PC, just require one Saving Throw. Only call for multiple Saving Throws per PC if you want to increase risk.

Limiting Saving Throws will help prevent the PC from becoming unintentionally overwhelmed by numbers of foes. You can liberally throw waves and hordes of awful monsters at the PCs without worrying about accidentally killing the party, since skillful players will have time to react and flee. Monsters are not required to take an action or attack each turn, it's often more natural to have some

monsters act in an uncoordinated manner, get distracted, pull back cautiously, or stop to feed on fresh meat.

If a group of monsters (or a many-headed hydra) attacks en masse or as a team, then treat it as a single Saving Throw, but be sure to foreshadow the attack so that it gains COMBO. For example, if there are a hundred goblin archers you can declare the attack as “a black cloud of arrows falls upon you like barbed locusts”. The player will need to downgrade their natural result if they roll COMBO. Make this clear during your turn and reiterate during the Transition.

Lastly, you don't always need to tell the players how many monsters there are. The PCs might fall into a dark pit on a pile of bodies and feel “many cold hands attempt to drag you down”. Each PC in the pit would roll one Saving Throw, regardless of how many monsters are down there. Sometimes this is more creepy than knowing the odds.

## Monster Attacks

Monsters attack and inflict Damage exactly like PCs. You can use a high Weapon Class if the monster is huge (e.g. a giant), or has an especially deadly attack (e.g. a great white shark or dragon bite), or is venomous (e.g. scorpion sting).

## Defeating Monsters

When a monster is hit and takes Damage, subtract that from its Hits. The monster is disabled when its Hits reach zero, and further Damage kills it.

## Death Throes

A Doomed 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 maybe even one last attack before going out. While Doomed monsters are “as good as dead”, they can still be dangerous. Some monsters like snakes can even be deadly after they are dead.

## Resistances and Weaknesses

Some monsters have special resistances and weaknesses. For example ghosts aren't hurt by iron weapons but hate silver.

immune to acid  
immune to fire  
immune to cold  
ward pact vs swords

immune to weapons  
magic resistance  
mostly made of air  
ghostly

You can scope resistances and weaknesses to specific Hit Locations, adding detail and giving players something to aim at.

armored head  
impervious shell  
ghostly head

incorporeal legs  
only vulnerable on belly

## Regeneration

Monsters which have powerful regenerative or auto-healing abilities will recover all Hits each round except Damage caused by specific weaknesses. For example, trolls are only hurt by fire and acid, rapidly regenerating any other damage. You will need to track Hits by Damage type. You can choose to have the monster always regenerate all damage at the start of your turn each round, or when you roll EFFORT, or just regenerate +1 Hit each round.

## Interacting with Monsters

Monsters should **always want something** specific, whether that's food, water, territory, treasure, allies against enemies, or new music. Ideally this is something the players have, are blocking, or can obtain, which gives the players a way to interact with the monster other than combat, and possibly even manipulate the monster. There can be competing priorities, for example, 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.

## 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, but 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.

You can and should leverage the wealth of fantasy literature and books of monsters from old RPGs out there. However, make the monsters yours by mixing and mashing them up, so that the monsters in your campaign are unique, mysterious, and terrifying.

The most important thing to do is to 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.

Lastly, consider whether normal humans might fill the same role you have in mind. Resist adding humanoid monsters (a.k.a. "rubber forehead aliens" in sci-fi) when an interesting human would do. Goblins and orcs are not any more interesting than brigands or highwaymen unless you make the effort to make them interesting.

# Using Secrets

You should define appropriate prerequisites for each Secret. For example, if a player wants their PC to learn a "fireball" spell you might tell them they first need to learn "a fire spell, an area-effect spell, and test the spell in a volcano or dragon cave". This is best done when written as an Experience Path.

## Story Secrets

Sometimes you might decide that a character should *already* know a Secret, such as if you need this to move the plot forward. For example, you might plant clues in an ancient language, and declare that a certain character always had a Secret "Ancient language of Tharizdul", but wait to reveal this until the clues are found. Simply tell the player to add the Secret to their PC without an Experience Path.

You should choose a single character and explain why the character knows this secret information. This is a great way to present a particular character as the "expert guide" in a strange environment, especially when there is a strong cultural or background tie-in with a particular character (e.g. the Elf in a forest). You can tell the player or pass a note like "Secret: the forest of *Malras* is cursed, any who sleep here become trees".

# Using Experience Paths

Review Paths with the players at the start of every game session. Add a new GM Path to anchor the players in the story. This can be something immediate such as evading pursuers or a longer-term goal such as returning home. You may need to help players write new Paths, especially new players. Also check on Dooms or other kinds of Dark Paths.

## GM Paths

You can use Paths to write story or campaign goals, group quests, bounties (wanted posters), and requests for aid from NPCs.

It's a good idea to vary the duration of your Paths. Some should be immediate, others long-term. However, try to limit yourself to two long-term Paths.

You should add a Countdown if the Path is a race against time, such as escaping a burning building, pursuers, or poison.

Here are some examples of Paths you can set for the players.

## Strong Start

Write a Path to create a strong start to each game session. When in doubt start with a combat or an urgent Path with a Countdown.

**AMBUSH!** - You're in your camp preparing for your day when you hear a trumpeting-growl and an owlbeast charges out of the forest.

**CITY FIRE!** - You hear the bells of the fire brigade. It seems like a major fire that will affect most of the city section you are in now.

## Adventures

Write a Path to kickoff each new adventure. This ensures the players don't miss the cue, and can look at the card and remember it between game sessions.

**ESCAPE FROM THE DUNGEONS OF THE MAD KING!** - The mad king has thrown you into his dungeons in rags to feed his monstrous "pets". As far as you've heard, nobody has ever escaped from the dungeons, alive or otherwise.

Include an introduction with details to help players picture the adventure. This helps to remind players where they were between game sessions.

If the Path is time-sensitive then give it a Countdown. (Note that this does not make it a Doom.)

THE WELL'S RUN DRY - Your village well has run dry and there is no rain in the sky.

## Adventure Paths

Write a Path for each new adventure. Always try to keep at least two Paths running for interesting adventures. One natural time to add a new adventure is when a previous adventure concludes.

TRAVERSE THE DEEP AND WILD WOOD - The river flows through dark woods. Odd sounds and shapes are visible on the shores. The waterway seems to be winding deeper into a heart of darkness. We're already deep in the woods, so either way we need to find a way out.

THE MOON ORB - Azazrem found a glowing orb in the dungeons of the mad king. He is studying the glowing orb and has already figured out how to make it glow with light and purify water. (two new Secrets)

The orb keeps giving him dreams of good deeds that need doing. (TODO - write an XP for a dream, or maybe a dark secret if he resists?)

VENGEANCE AGAINST THE MAD KING - Now that you've escaped, it's payback time! Your Dark Secret of vengeance will be resolved once you've gotten even.  
Day 1: Escaped the dungeons into the deep and wild wood.

## Hunted

Write a Path if the characters are being hunted, pursued, or chased by something awful they don't want to face directly.

HUNTED BY GOBLYNS - You escaped the goblin caves and ran into the nearby woods. You can hear the howls of goblins and their wargs hunting you.

ON THE RUN - The police were alerted to the burglary and are looking for you.

## In too deep

Write a Doom if the characters become overextended in a dungeon or other or dangerous territory, and need to find their way back to safety before something awful happens. Describe or hint at the dangers surrounding the characters, to raise the level of dramatic

tension and urgency. The characters are in over their heads, and the players should be worried.

CHUTE TRAP! - Oh, shoot, you fell in a pit on dungeon level 2 and now you're at least 3 levels deeper. You hear skittering noises at the edge of your light. Now what?]

## Adventures

Use Paths as adventure hooks.

### Create your Adventure

If you are good at thinking on your feet you can create an instant adventure by coming up with an interesting scenario or location. If you have more time, also think about interesting obstacles, challenges, monsters, NPCs, clues, and rewards. Avoid making decisions about what will happen after the players become involved. For example, don't decide what the players will do, or how the adventure ends...this game is about playing to find out what happens.

### Introduce your Adventure as a Path

When the right moment arises, introduce the players to the adventure. You should usually write an Experience Path, especially if the adventure involves urgency or promise of a reward.

### Play to find out what happens

Step back and let the game play out to see what happens. Always 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.

### No-win scenarios

It's possible that some situations will result in character death. That is fine as long as the players chose to be in the deadly situation, rather than being surprised due to a lack of information. Following the

guidelines for raising Hazard will ensure you are providing adequate clues and warnings about the danger that is building.

## Rewards

Rewards don't have to be big. Focus on fun. The best rewards are creative, unique, and quirky. Personal connections also make rewards more fun and memorable.

Sometimes the reward is written as the Path itself. For example "Lenarin wants a proper Elvish sword" needs to end with Lenarin getting a sword he likes. A reward might also be part of the initial setup, such as the King promising "half his kingdom" for the return of the princess.

Consider scale and how the reward might impact the story going forward. After all, great deeds should bring great rewards, while trivial tasks should have small rewards. Make sure everyone has fun.

It's fine to give indirect or group rewards. Some rewards are direct and affect the character sheet (e.g. Themes and Assets) but others are indirect (e.g. a ship or secret base) or apply to a group of characters.

Be consistent about promptly giving one reward per Path. Consistently associating "Path = Reward" trains the players to keep making progress on their Paths. That helps with game pace and makes it easier for you to predict the direction the characters will go next, and focus your preparation time on the shared Paths.

# Dangers and Dooms

Here are some guidelines for dangers and Dooms other than monsters.

## Foreshadowing Dangers

Foreshadow future dangers whenever possible, so that you can Raise Hazard. For example, a “creeping doom of killer ants” might take a long time to reach the characters, giving you more chances to Raise Hazard. This is a common technique in movies since it builds dramatic tension.

## Area-Effect Attacks

Area-effect attacks (e.g. enemy archers, traps, dragonfire, etc) can affect multiple characters. Describe the area-effect attack during your Turn just like any other attack. Then **declare the area-effect attack** when Transitioning to each player’s turn who has an affected character, so they can roll their Saving Throw.

## Falling

Falls can be deadly. Short falls are 1 Damage, such as a fall up to 15 feet (~5 m) onto a hard surface or if thrown by an opponent. Longer falls add +1 for each additional 15 feet or fraction thereof. Thus a fall of 16-30 feet is 2 Damage, and 31-45 feet is 3 Damage. Feet first landings are safest, so if you are able to take the time to intentionally jump feet first you claim PREP.

## Essentials of Life

People require five basic essentials of life to survive: air, water, food, shelter, and sleep. Depending on your campaign setting you might change the list to include other essentials such as honor, reputation, sanity, etc. As the GM, you are responsible for enforcing the natural consequences should the PCs neglect or lack these essentials.

Assuming you do not want to turn the game into a logistical exercise, the simplest solution is to leverage your random Encounter

roll. Any time you roll Failure-ASSET check to see if the PCs are lacking an essential, and if so assign a Doom. This is simple, direct, and will make the players be proactive.

Otherwise, write a Doom if the players haven't used any Actions to create one or more of these essentials *recently*. How you define "recently" is flexible and can be adapted to your game style, such as "I can't remember the last time they slept" or "they haven't slept in two days". Initially you might find yourself writing Dooms and players reacting in dismay, but this amounts to training your players. Over time your players will learn they should *proactively* drink water, eat, find shelter, and sleep.

## Diseases

People are able to resist most normal afflictions and diseases, however, adventurers delve into all sorts of dark and unsavory places. Call for a Saving Throw whenever your Encounter roll is **Failure+EFFORT** and the conditions are dramatically unclean. You should do this more frequently when PCs have made direct physical contact with something unclean such as a sewer, fungus monster, werewolf bite, mummy, stale tomb air, etc.

Black spots	Lycanthropy	Vampiric hunger
Blood eye	Mummy rot	Undead fungus
Bloody flux	Ocre fever	Umbral curse
Fungus fur	Sewer spots	Werewolf curse
Grey rime	Sleeping fits	White cysts
Ifr'it fever	Trog foot	Wizard's twilight
Kha'din taint	Tomb lung	Wyrmtosis

# GM Quick Reference

## NPC Personas & Voices

As the GM, you can choose from these suggestions or roll. Failures are annoying or suggest dishonesty.

	Failure (d20 1-14)	Success (d20 15-20)
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"

# NPC Personality Quirks

always bored angry drunk annoyingly cryptic avant-garde bigoted bloody-minded boastful bookworm bossy bully calculating can-do attitude chatterbox chirpy collects small animals compulsive liar condescending conniving conspiracy-theorist creep decadent ditz egomaniac exquisite dresser extravagant loyal fast-talker femme-fatale fiercely ambitious fits of melancholy flamboyant folksy wisdom gossip hard-boiled hears voices hillbilly hothead iconoclast idealistic illiterate incredibly persistent insightful observer jack of all trades jerk klutz love-struck mad genius manic master orator miser mopey naïve no-nonsense obsessive old fart overeducated paranoid perfect manners pouty power-hungry prickly ruthless sadist self-destructive self-important self-pitying senile serene shameless flirt slacker slimy slovenly snarky snitch snob social butterfly sophist terrible memory thick toady totally unreliable twitchy vain vengeful village idiot well-travelled whiner wild child wisecracking world weary debtor drunk blackmailed occultist murderer bastard coward weak unfaithful scapegoat ex-slave blackmailer broke/bankrupt sole survivor deserter angry fits hears voices possessed Khadin tainted thief untrustworthy selfish cruel bully abused scarred tortured embarrassed vengeful cultist zealous obsessed liar cheat

# NPC Occupations

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 NAMES

**Northman or Dwur:** 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 Axei Hallki Berdi Mundi Summi Gudmi Arar Knute Sokki Loomis

**Southmaren:** Thorkell Talin Fay Thaxas Jakartai Than Pax Thoren Thorin Falkar Thorkar Avar Pulgh Basharat 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

**Elven:** Anar Sumar Delore Lebre Galmili Edhror Elweleth Caronwe Finerdhil Lominor Elror Lothelye Ilmindis Alwen Earwel Nerdanye Ealotel Eldariel Ebriarel Arweldas Ithir Finasaer Engophel Enegnor Elror Finare Edrarar Carosaer Angror Aladar Celebrin Aerandire

**Avathar:** Ctana, Bora, Drada, Mira, Lavoi, Beko, Sticek, Blata, Rada, Veko Zlava Vleko Bosek Jara Drosla Lava Ziva Vela Alan Dani Dmitri Ivan Pavel Vlad Misha Female: Natasha Sonja Nadja Pavlina Family: Tepsh Snagov Cragov

**Baal or Alu:** Shimtar, Alion Aashok Ututhra Assaz Asas Nabyz Riaxas Ammon Surgo Ligo Gatu Shista Hasa Alphan Mono Sama Napha Gara Akis Sago Marbach Yesan Abubar Ninu Sema Asaz Asat Amis Balbelph Gammaz Sama Choma Amon Alphas Aksham Mora Bera Azzanuh Daadusu Bazzu Bumula Nergal Enki Nunni Gonidi Baaliita Beluni Sumuba Ergamum Ningilga Nabazzi Inurrum Amus Inmugar Sadaru Arar Nunnusu Buru Reshek Baresu Ardurnal Nunnaba Aburnam Amusus Naki Agossum Sumutu Hazaru Sisuma Gudita Bilika Azzamuk Samardea Namzaba Abirsuk Sumaama Berabu Nezzera Kuuzzu Eretu Nisil Lisid Ammeshki Lith Nocri Ninki

**Baal or Alu Nobles:** Combine names & titles, e.g. Arar'Kel Er'Alion Ammon'Mot Ninu'Sumutu'Kel Namha'Eretu'Shem Arar'Kel Nezzera'Kuuzzu'Mot Rhi'Ammon Na'Ututhra

**Vozen:** Azog Azgor Azuth Azroth Azgoth Azor Azgor Uzog Uzor Uzogog Uzgor Uzath Uzog Vuzog Vazroth Vazuth

# I Loot the Body!

Players can ask for the items they can see at any time, and use a Maneuver to take an unattended item. They can use an Action to quickly loot a body or similarly sized area, and take one item.

Finding concealed items requires players to state they are actively searching, including the method (visual, patdown, or strip), and roll.

Roll to determine what might be found. On a Crit the item is significantly nicer, more valuable, possibly even a magic trinket. However, truly valuable, powerful, or rare items should not be found as random Loot, but as an Experience Path or planned Reward.

	Failure (d20 14-)	Success (d20 15+)
THEME	Something useless related to the main Theme of the owner.	Something useful related to the main Theme of the owner.
EFFORT	Something exists, and can be found via an invasive (gross) search.	Something exists, and can be found via a thorough search.
ASSET	A tool useful to the owner, but broken or not useful to the PCs.	A tool useful to the owner, such as a weapon or shield.
COMBO	Empty coin purse, no loot.	Coin purse, (Crit) gems, or other valuables
ULT	Burned out item	More valuable, unusual, or (Crit) magic trinket.
PREP	Ruined clothing, once valuable	A valuable article of clothing

**Something Awful** - On a Crit or Fumble there is also "something awful" to find...something disturbing and gross, or possibly horrifying. If found, Raise the Hazard due to the stress this causes.

messy wound	bounty note	chaos sign
gross diseased bits	gold tooth	mummified part
body bugs / lice	piercing(s)	he's not dead yet
trophy scalps	stolen item / coins	lock of hair
string of ears	creepy odd lump	cursed trinket
wanted poster	worms / maggots	Eldritch sign

# Hit Locations

As the GM, include the **Hit Location** along with each attack, e.g. "The goblin falchion slices wickedly at your knee". Make a roll and use the Legend Die for Hit Location, but adjust based on the situation or monster, e.g. a giant rat can only reach low or a scything blade trap might only hit high.

## Hit Location Sub-locations

Head	neck, chin, nose, face, forehead, skull	THEME
Torso	abdomen, ribs, sternum, chest, clavicle	EFFORT
Arm	fingers, hand, wrist, forearm, elbow, upper arm, shoulder	ASSET
Groin	outer thigh, inner thigh, genitals, hip, pelvis	COMBO
Knee	patella, outer knee, inner knee, back of knee	ULT
Leg	shin, calf, ankle, foot, heel, instep, toes	PREP

## Use the d20 to add details

**Gap (Crit)** - On a 20, hit a Sub-location with weak armor, if any, such as the face, joints, groin, hand, foot, etc. Closed helms prevent this for Head.

**Priority Target (Fumble)** - On a Fumble, change Hit Location to the "priority target" for the attack, which is Head for melee and Torso for ranged. However, in melee the normal location is the Arm in melee hits the hand (a "hand snipe").

**Sub-location** - Otherwise, map the d20 to a Sub-location low-high, and odd/even as left/right, e.g. Arm 7 is left forearm and Arm 18 is right shoulder.

# Death Throes

As the GM, describe "death throes" of dying monsters to make dying messy and scary. This is a simple add-on to your existing Encounter and Surprise rolls.

	Failure (d20 14-)	Success (d20 15+)
THEME	Attacks	Mutters, menaces, and curses
EFFORT	Attacks and then dies	Messily dies, ew, gross!
ASSET	Clutches a precious item	Hides loot - you can't have it!
COMBO	Gets hold of a weapon	Fingers and hands wriggle
ULT	Uses special attack or spell	Thinks of what it's good at
PREP	Prepares for a counterattack	Plays dead

# Surprise Table

Roll for a **Surprise** when a player rolls a Fumble or does something ambitious, greedy, or reckless.

Surprises are natural consequences that can't always be predicted or controlled. There are good surprises and bad surprises. When the PCs swing from ropes, trick off walls, or slide under the feet of giants, give the players a Surprise, taking the already exciting action over the top, turning it up to 11.

	Failure (d20 14-)	Success (d20 15-20)
THEME	Describe how a foe or terrain hindered the action. On a Fumble the action fails, regardless of player roll.	Describe how an ally or terrain assists or enhances the action. On a Crit the action succeeds, regardless of player roll.
EFFORT	Take 1 Damage from exertion. Extra +1 Damage on Fumble.	Highlight an asset used for the action, e.g. +1 Damage, or negate an opposing asset.
ASSET	An asset is dropped or jammed, but recoverable with a Maneuver. On Fumble the asset is lost or broken.	Drain an enemy resource, or cause 1 Damage to an enemy
COMBO	Roll a Saving Throw, e.g. from an attack during or after the stunt. No Save on Fumble.	Allies take heart and morale improves, which Cuts Hazard.
ULT	If a foe or terrain has ULT, assign a severe consequence.	If the PC has ULT, enhance or upgrade the result.
PREP	Unless the PC was well prepared, describe a major side effect.	If the PC was well prepared then upgrade their result. Otherwise describe a minor side effect.

Surprises are similar to **Encounters**, so you can use the tables interchangeably, or create custom Surprise tables, e.g. for magic.

# Encounter Table

As the GM, roll 1d20 + Legend Die at the start of your turn each round.

	Failure (d20 1-14)	Success (d20 15-20)
THEME	Describe a hazard, e.g. terrain, weather, monster, etc. Or introduce a new monster or NPC.	Describe the scene, a location, or an NPC. Provide an opportunity by revealing information.
EFFORT	Check the status of Dooms, and Raise Hazard if PCs are not getting enough rest, are hunted, or are getting winded in combat. Describe how the PCs must expend effort or resources.	Provide an opportunity to rest or find shelter, and cut Hazard if the PCs rest. Provide an opportunity to make sudden progress if the PCs spend Effort.
ASSET	Present a challenge caused by superior gear on a foe, poor gear on PC, or special gear for the situation. Check on resources such as food, water, light, or fuel. In combat a PC has a gear mishap or attracts an attack due to arms & armor.	Highlight how a PC/NPC Asset is useful (e.g. armor blocks an attack). Or provide a clue to find a new Asset. For example, they might find food, water, light sources, or arrows. On a Crit they might find "magic healing berries". Only provide a clue.
COMBO	Encounter a team of hostile NPCs or challenge that needs teamwork (e.g. auto-closing door, 2-person puzzle). An NPC mistake sets the group back. Foes use teamwork, tactics, and maneuvers to downgrade COMBO.	Encounter a group of possibly friendly NPCs, or describe an opportunity to use teamwork, or an NPC helps a PC teammate. Provide an opportunity to show teamwork or describe how an ally proves helpful. Possibly Cut Hazard.
ULT	Advance the plans of a major villain, or foreshadow a major threat. Or highlight an unusual risk (e.g. evil magic, spirits, etc). Or highlight a Dark Secret of a PC or NPC.	Highlight an ULT of a PC or NPC, e.g. the "scout" finds a hidden trail; the "wizard" finds a Ley Line, the "thief" spots a tail, the "ranger" finds tracks, the "archer" sees a target.
PREP	Punish recklessness, especially if clear dangers are ignored. Surprise encounter, ambush, trap, jump scare, etc. In combat describe how the foes were better prepared, and players downgrade natural rolls of PREP.	Drop a clue to help players prepare for what's coming, e.g. "the air coming down the corridor is warm and smoky like brimstone". Provide an opportunity to Cut Hazard.

# AS ABOVE, SO BELOW

THE WORLD IS NEWBORN, bright and beautiful, full of life and boundless potential. Young races of man build kingdoms on the unspoiled shores of the Dragon Sea. As they explore wildernesses and forge kingdoms they encounter ancient ruins, Eldar, dragons, and monsters, and thus learn deeper mysteries of the ancient worlds that came before.

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 races and civilizations and dragons, 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, vast tunnels and caverns inside dead dragons, eggs laid by chthonian horrors, trapped Eldar civilizations, standing armies forged and forgotten, imprisoned kha'din and undead horrors, entrances to Kalla, and shrines to Gods with forgotten names.

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.

