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LEGENDS OF THE  
DRAGON ISLES

# Player Quick Reference

## Character Creation

**Write your character in your own words.** You start with 2 Themes, 2 Traits, 6 Assets (4 normal & 2 enhanced), 2 Secrets, 1 Dark Secret, and 1 Path.

## Turns

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

Take one Action in your turn:

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

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

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

## Hazard, Stress & Vim

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

**HAZARD** is the difficulty of the scene your group of characters is facing, and is set by the GM. Hazard is the target number to succeed on rolls of 1d20, so if Hazard is 12 you need to roll 12 or higher to succeed.

**STRESS** is the amount of strain and trauma your group of characters has taken, and can be mental, spiritual, or physical. As Stress rises your failures are more likely to be disastrous fumbles. Stress starts at 1, then Raise Stress by 1 each time you Soak Damage after failing a Saving Throw, or when you use a Secret with negative Vim. The GM can also Raise Stress when narrating stressful events, such as an ambush, seeing something horrifying, or when your allies or castle are hit hard. When things slow down after a stressful situation, you can reduce Stress by eating, drinking, making camp, cleaning yourself, mending your gear, making jokes, playing music, and blowing off steam. After all, you're a person. Reducing Stress within a stressful situation requires a Secret spell or power, such as "song of hope", "boost morale", etc.

**VIM** is the amount of energy your group of characters has available to use Secrets. Spend 1 Vim when you use a Secret. Sleeping restores Vim (from 1-5 based on quality of sleep). Arcane Rituals are a faster way to regain Vim, which are discussed in the chapter on Secrets.

# Rolling Dice

A standard roll consists of one d20 and a one Legend Die.

Your **d20** succeeds if you roll the Hazard or higher. So at Hazard 14 you succeed on 14 or higher. You Crit on 20. There are no modifiers to this roll. Otherwise you fail, but you **Fumble** if you roll Stress or below.

Your **Legend Die** is a custom die (faces below) which may downgrade [-] or upgrade [+] your natural result by one step, e.g. success down to failure, failure up to success, etc. Each face is a mini-game unto itself, showcasing various details of your character, situation details, or your skill as a player.

| Roll   | Downgrade [-]  | Upgrade [+]   |
|--------|--|---|
| THEME  | Downgrade [-] if you don't have necessary specialized knowledge (e.g. lockpicking, alchemy).   | Upgrade [+] if you have an ideal Theme, Theme Signature, or Trait.  |
| EFFORT | Downgrade [-] if you cannot push yourself and exert effort, such as if you cannot move freely, are hiding, or hindered by a Doom or Dark Secret, etc.                                      | Upgrade [+] if you have an ideal Trait. (This can cancel a Downgrade.)  |
| ASSET  | Downgrade [-] if you are not using an Asset (item). This is waived if the action cannot possibly benefit from an item.   | Upgrade [+] if you have an ideal Asset Signature ideal, such as a "flaming sword" vs spiders.   |
| COMBO  | Downgrade [-] if you have disadvantage (e.g. blinded, prone) or opponents have outmaneuvered you (e.g. flanking, high ground) or created a tactical advantage (e.g. dodged, parried, etc). | Upgrade [+] if you have an advantage, usually earned by taking Maneuvers to position yourself tactically or activate Asset Tags. Each advantage cancels one disadvantage. |
| ULT    | Downgrade [-] if your action directly opposes someone who has ULT, e.g. a monster special attack.  | Upgrade [+] if you are an expert at your action, and more expert than anyone nearby. Requires player consensus for bonus.   |
| PREP   | Downgrade [-] if your foes are better prepared than you (e.g. ambush, swarm).  | Upgrade [+] if you can leverage an Action you took on a previous Turn to prepare for this roll.   |

# 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 a Saving Throw you take Damage. If you Crit you get a free Counterattack.

**If you fail a Saving Throw you take 1 Damage.** If you **Fumble** you take 2 Damage (or 3 for Super Fumble) and the GM gets another action.

Next, 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. If your armor does not negate all Damage you will gain a Doom with a stage equal to the remaining Damage.

## Dooms

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

| Damage  | Doom Stage       | Effects                             | Recovery      |
|---------|------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| □ □ □   | 0 - "Fine"       | none                                | after battle  |
| ☒ □ □   | 1 - Wounded      | [+] EFFORT                          | Field Ritual  |
| ☒ ☒ □   | 2 - Disabled     | Using body part makes Doom Unstable | Circle Ritual |
| ☒ ☒ ☒   | 3 - Death's Door | Expectant, near death               | Node Ritual   |
| ☒ ☒ ☒ + | Dead.            | Immediate death                     | n/a           |

**New Dooms are Unstable** and you take +1 Damage each time you roll EFFORT. You or someone else can take an Action and roll to stabilize a Doom. Using a body part with a Doom of Stage 2+ makes the Doom Unstable again.

**Combine Dooms** of the same kind and Hit Location, such as another wound, additional poison, more extensive burns, etc.

**Toughness Traits** (e.g. "tough", "sword scars", "fire scars", "survivor", etc.) help you survive Dooms. When gaining a new Doom you can declare a Toughness Trait. The GM will reduce the Doom Stage by 1 if the Trait is ideal and specific for surviving the Doom. (Otherwise 50% chance.)

**Healing Dooms** requires months of time for natural healing, but just a few hours if using a healing Ritual.

# Weapon Class & Armor Class

For any attack or Saving Throw, 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 | Weapon  | Armor & Shields  |
|-------|---|--|
| 0     | cane, whip, magic spell *   | skin, normal clothing  |
| 1     | knife, club, sickle, javelin  | thick clothing, stiff leather  |
| 2     | dagger, rondel, sidesword, longsword (1H), club (2H), hunting bow, small ax, spear (1H)           | light gambeson, cuir-boulli, arming jack, handguard                    |
| 3     | spear, (2H), mace, battle axe (2H), falchion, crossbow, longsword (2H), longbow, war bow, khopesh | gambeson (30 layers), mail, jazeraint, coat of plates, buckler         |
| 4     | greatsword, military pick, small pistol   | transitional plate, munition plate, round shield, rotella, kite shield |
| 5     | halberd, poleax, polearm, heavy pistol, arbalest, blunderbuss                                     | full plate, tower shield, aspis  |
| 6     | mounted lance, carbine, rifle, arquebus, an ogre's club   | jousting plate, pavise   |

## Armor Coverage

Armor is a tradeoff of coverage and mobility. Your suit of armor has an Armor Tag that describes coverage and number of Maneuvers per Round.

| Armor Tag  | Example      | Full Coverage            | Maneuvers |
|------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| Body-Armor | cuirass      | Head, Torso              | 3         |
| Half-Armor | mail hauberk | Head, Torso, Arms, Hands | 2         |
| 3Qtr-Armor | 3/4 plate    | Head, Arms, Torso, Waist | 2         |
| Full-Armor | plate armor  | all                      | 1         |

**Full Coverage** is the Hit Locations your suit of armor protects. Your number of Maneuvers per Round is determined by your number of Hit Locations with Full Coverage. (1-2 Hit Locations is 3 Maneuvers, 3-4 Hit Locations is 2 Maneuvers, and 5-6 Hit Locations is 1 Maneuver.)

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# LEGENDS OF THE DRAGON ISLES



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

LEGENDS OF THE DRAGON ISLES

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**Author:** Paul Abrams

**Contact:** legendsroleplaysystem@gmail.com

**Contributors:** Alek Abrams, Luka Abrams, Saxon Amdahl,  
Joel Butler, Scott Campbell, Brian Pugh, Chris Wessling

**Original art and maps:** Paul Abrams, Alek Abrams, Joel Butler

**Public domain art:** Albert Robida (cover is titled "Free Fight"), Elmer Boyd Smith, H.J. Ford, Arthur Rackham, Albrecht Dürer, etc, sourced from oldbookillustrations.com

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# Introduction

Legends of the Dragon Isles is a fantasy roleplaying game. Most of this book focuses on the rules of how to play the game. Also included is a high-level overview of a fictitious medieval fantasy setting called the "Dragon Isles", but you can create your own world.

Legends was written with the following design principles in mind.

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

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

**No dice roll modifiers** - Your success or failure relies on many intangible factors such as your character, your gear, your foes, situational details, strategy, preparation, teamwork, morale, etc. Many of these factors cannot be quantified into dice roll modifiers (e.g. +2, -2, etc). Legends has a unique new dice system that does not use traditional modifiers, but can highlight your words-only character and other squishy facets for success that other systems cannot.

**Combat should feel authentic** - Legends provides the feeling of authentic medieval combat, highlighting key 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 deadly enough to make you consider all your options, but still fun.

**You should have agency over your growth** - You get to set your own goals for advancement and build your legend, in your own way. You gain experience as you progress along your Path.

**Old School Roleplaying style** - I grew up playing early editions of that big roleplaying game. Back then, the *way you played* was more important than *how your character rolled*. The game was full of puzzles, and the way to avoid traps was to listen and describe where you poke and prod, not by whipping out the dice. The focus was on player agency and player skill. Legends embraces that style and helps facilitate OSR play, with a fresh modern system.

## Getting Started

Gather 2-8 people and nominate one player to be your "Game Master" (GM). The other players each take on the role of a player character (PC).

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.

**You need dice** - Everyone needs one **d20** and one **Legend Die**. Other dice are optional.

**Tip:** You can make a Legend Die from a standard white d6. Just overwrite the dots with a sharpie, one letter per side: "T E A C U P" to represent THEME, EFFORT, ASSET, COMBO, ULT, and PREP.

# 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 ancient, with realms to explore broadly above and deeply 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: from the strong **Northmaren** keeps and strongholds with their high-walls in the north to the indulgent **Southmaren** oases with their libraries, banks, and shrines to many gods in the warm 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 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. At the time of writing the year is 882 in the current aeon.

**AKKAR** - The basalt and obsidian palaces of the Baal dragon lords, powerful Eldar who worship and serve noble black-scaled dragons. Their Draconian Empire once spanned the world, and remnants are still visible into the new aeon, poking above the crust like islands.

**ALGLONDOR** - The holy kingdom of the Alglonds occupies the rocky river valleys in the northwest. The Alglonds are honorable, pious, and excel at building river castles and forts. Their chief fortification is the Aegis, Shield of the North, where Alglond paladins of Pyrose





# THE DRAGON ISLES

The Dragon's Tail



the Fyre Lord ward against the undead of Sepulchre to the north and the vampires of Nan-Avathar to the east.

**BELERION** - 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 and will find what they seek.

**DORTHONIEN** - 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** - A vast inland ocean with waters 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** - A dismal land of twisted forests, fens, and dragon mounds between Hrivlyggdor and Akkar, where travelers are welcomed and put to succulent use. The hateful Drunes (Dreadkin) 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 skins and sacrifices to summon the Great White Wyrm who will devour the world.

**THE GOBBAH EMPIRE OF DORASH KAR** - A harsh land of pits and tunnels leading to the Underworld realms of the Gobbah, a cruel Eldar race of goblin 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** - The Southmaren Empire of Harnendor covers the far south. Their golden city of Aquila is a hub of trade, learning, and Black Wizardry. The Southmaren have vast fleets and have explored much of the world, and established many secret trade routes and colonies around the Dragon Sea.

**HRIVLYGGDOR** - The northlands of the midnight sun are vast taiga forests and arctic tundra. Only monsters and Kith venture here.

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

**LYONESSE** - 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** - 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** - The southern edge of the world, filled with the warm breath of the divine winds. This is the holy land of the Alu and their feathered dragons. Foreigners are seldom welcomed.

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

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

# The Ancient World

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, monster eggs, vast tunnels and caverns inside dead dragons, miles long tunnels filled with the millions of glistening eggs laid by chthonian horrors, trapped Eldar civilizations, standing armies forged and forgotten, imprisoned kha'din and undead horrors, entrances to **Kalla**, and shrines to Gods with forgotten names. As above, so below, the underworlds are a reflection of the surface world, and below are concentric circles of nested underworlds and gates between.

ELDAR are survivors of previous aeons. Once 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**, Drisi serpentmen, evil troglodytic **Drunes**, stone-skinned **Karrocks**, dragonslaying **Kith**, wise **Belerions**, black-robed **Alu**, reptilian mystic **Kess'rith**, fiery **Ifr'it**, slithering scaled **Linnorms**, grotesque **Gobbah**, and angelic **Aethiiri**.

**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 other daemonic horrors. Kalla gates are located at Nodes, which are intersections of Dragon Paths coiling around the world.

**WIZARDS** are abstruse sages and adepts of the magic arts. 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 Lyonsesse, 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 draconecroalchemist priests who aided the Wyrms in this end. By living beyond their natural time the Wyrms grow to enormous size, misshapen, grotesque, cancerous, and undead.

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

**THE GODS** are **Pyrose** the Sun King, **Xohm** the Earth Mother, **Mrmym** the Winged Messenger, **Lunara** the Veiled Maiden, **Kurg**

the Winter King, and **Hruul** the Voice in the Void. They are known by other names across cultures and the aeons, but the archetypes are the same, for example the Baal known the Veiled Maiden as Suul. The Gods exist above the rebirth cycle of the world, and seldom leave their Hallows, instead sending **Saints** armored in faith.

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Wealth & Treasure

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

## Goods & Services

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

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

## Signature Assets

Signature Assets (e.g. adamant sword, moonsilver helm, Elven rope, a ship, a castle, etc.) are those that have a functional (i.e. non-cosmetic) Signature, Secret, or similarly valuable properties. These can only be acquired through adventuring or a Path, never purchased outright. If you find a Signature Asset you can pawn it for 100gp or trade it for 1xp of "materials".



## Northmarens

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

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

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

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

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



# Southmarens

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

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



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

Southmarens have intermittent alliances and wars with the ever changing Northmaren kingdoms, hampered by their propensity to raid the rich Southmaren lands. They are also neighbors of Eldar races such as the Mirjiador Alu, Baal of Akkar, Guldurine Alu, Haradjinn Alu, and know how to appease and trade with them, but are bitter enemies of the Gobbah and Drisi.

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



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

## Alu

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



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

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

Secretly, as one of the oldest of the Eldar, the Alu see it as one of their sacred duties to hunt, bind, and imprison wandering demons

("Gallu") across the Dragon Isles. This ranges from minor monsters and spirits to major incursions that threaten the world, such as the Kha'din. To this end, Alu use various binding chains, hooks, and magic rituals to ensnare and imprison demons into Kalla'din planar prisons. Indeed, many of the Alu ruins found across the Dragon Isles are prisons, best left unopened. Alu entrusted with this sacred duty are the Alu'Shem, and use that honorific after their name, such as "Ammon'Shem". Some are reputed to call upon bound powers in times of need, and may undergo transformations to take a Gallu visage or feature such as tengu wings or oni strength.

Alu choose their words with care, for they know hidden power of words to bind, and true words are magically binding.

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



**Secrets:** arrow cutting, leaping, shadow step, invisibility, illusion, mirror image, shadow image, hide in shadows, shadow mask, binding words, circle of binding, binding chains, oni strength, tengu wings (grow from the back), shapeshift to Gallu. **Dark Secrets:** clan outcast, sole survivor, vengeful, consorts with shadow daemons, hired assassin.

**Paths:** defeat an Akuma in single combat, hunt Kha'din and purge them, master a disguise, master the flute, recover an ancient sword, recover a demon mask

# Avathars

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

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

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



Nan-Avathar is the domain of the *Vampire Lords*, a council of ancient necromancers, liches, and vampires, each immensely powerful in

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

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

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

## Baal (Draconians)

Baal are dragon worshipers from the "Draconian Empire" of Akkar. Baal are elegant Eldar with a touch of draconic; their skin is ash-like gray or black, often with small horns, bony ridges, sharp nails, and sometimes wings. Haughty, cruel, and greedy as dragons, Baal are looked upon with fear and loathing by most people. Human life has little value in their immortal eyes, and everyone has heard tales of the age when the Draconian empire

stretched from sea to sea, enslaving all those within their reach. Their rituals of dragon worship call for burnt offerings of many kinds, but the Baal burn with a deeper purpose. Baal are often confused with Drisi serpentmen, especially by Northmaren who are often hostile to both Eldar races.

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

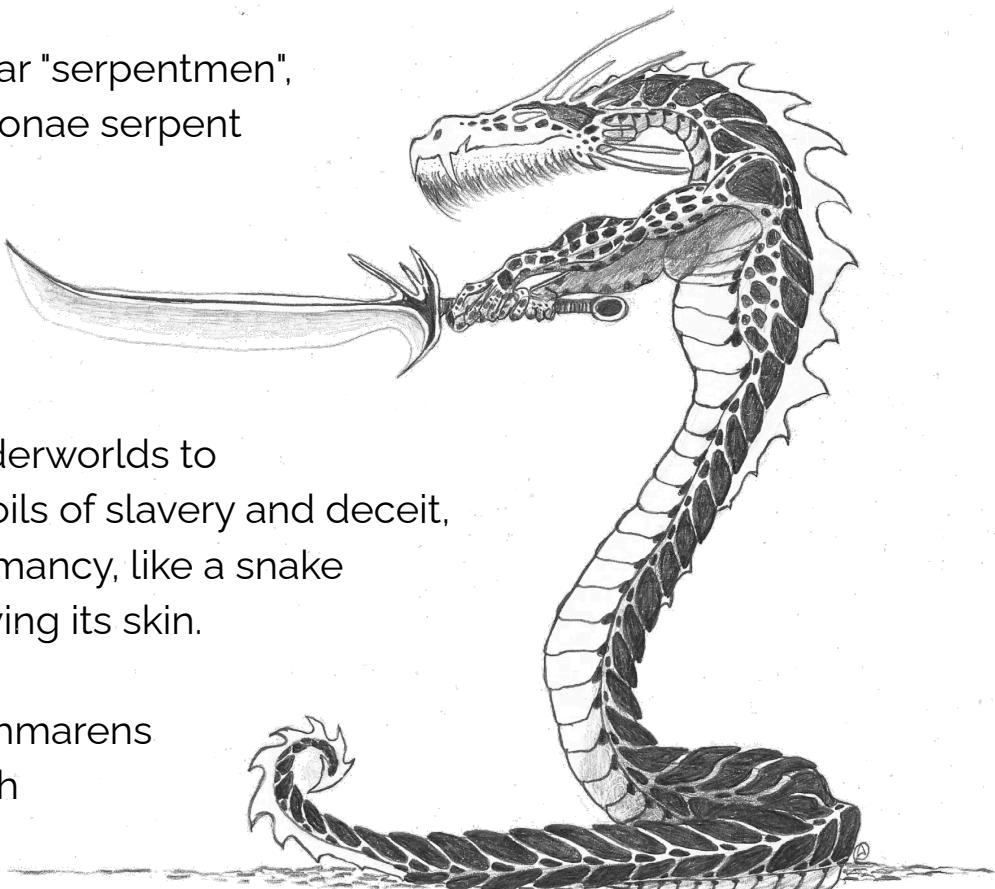


**Baal Names & Titles.** The Baal believe names and titles have power, and create mystical connections through similarity, and this repeats across aeons.

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

## Drisi

The Drisi are the Eldar "serpentmen", servants of the Gorgonae serpent gods, old enemies of mankind. Their cold-blooded empire periodically slithers from the underworlds to cover the world in coils of slavery and deceit, then cycles into dormancy, like a snake shedding and renewing its skin.



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

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

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

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

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

## DWÜR

Dwur are master builders and craftsmen, creating many cunning devices and impenetrable strongholds. They are often described as dwarves or gnomes, short of stature, wizened and with dour yet hearty demeanor. As Eldar they devote their aeons-long lives building works of wonder to honor their family lineage, inventing, building, and mastering their crafts. The Dwur homelands are deep in the Forandol mountains to the north, but after The Breaking they fled south. Now aeons later just as many Dwur dwell in cities as in mountain halls. Dwur are weary of war and do not seek it out, but are bitter enemies of the Gobbah, Drisi, and Deurg'dul undeads of Sepulchre. When they must fight they prefer to ally with Northmen and provide units of elite artillery and gunnery troops.



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

**Themes:** Dwur, Dwarf, Builder, Runemaster, Craftsman, Gunner, Artillery Captain, Rifleman, Gunsmith, Brewmaster. **Traits:** dour, solid, hearty, patient as stone, strong as stone, beardy, beer lover. **Assets:** hammer, axe, crafting tools, lantern, runelock, skullcap, plate armor, sausages, beer, whiskey.

**Secrets:** Runelock, create golem, craft Dwurstone. **Dark Secrets:** family slain by Gobbah, mistrusts Elves. **Paths:** invent something new, craft a new gun, visit a new young kingdom, regain the old Dwur homelands in Forandol mountains.

## Elves (Ælf, Æthiiri)

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



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

# Karrocks

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

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

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



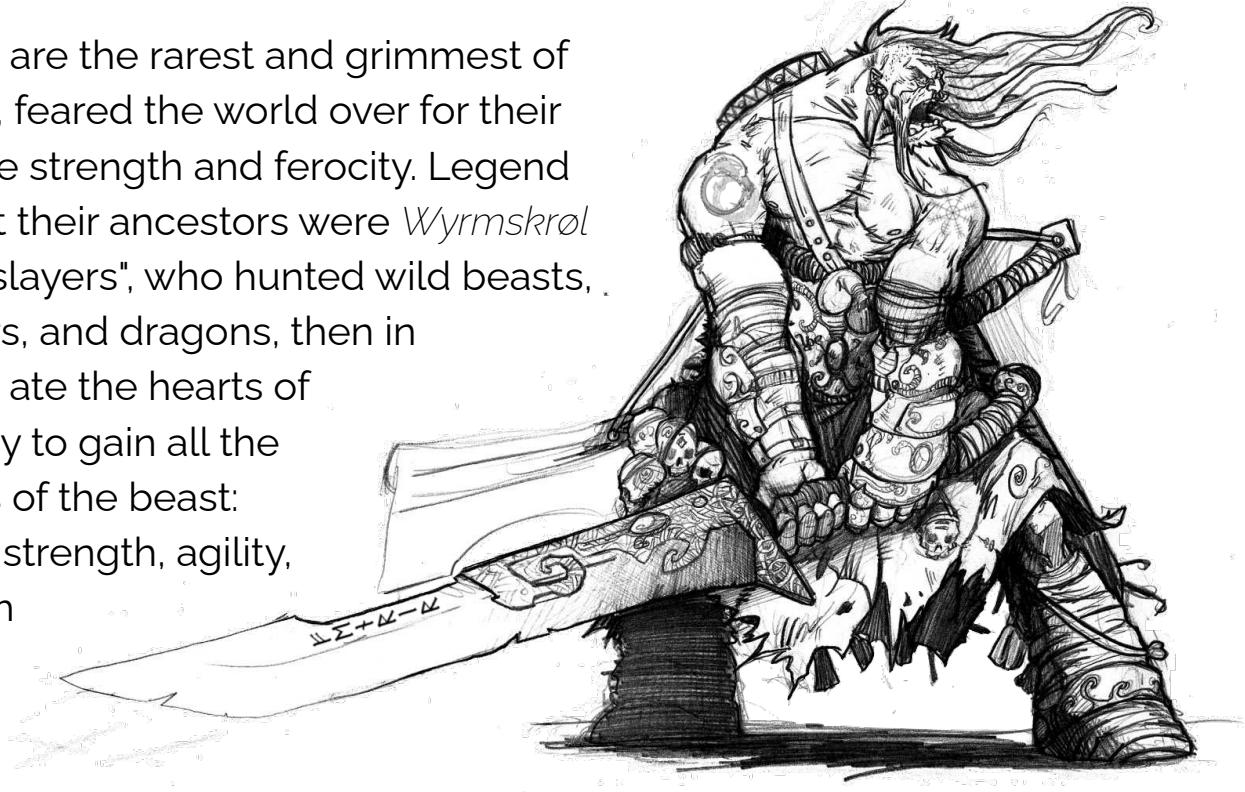
Karrocks were created as war machines of the Draconian Empire. Dwur sculpted the Karrocks in heartstone and gave them life with thaumaturgical runes of power. These warriors of living stone were practically impervious to harm, proof against blades, Drisi poison, necromantic magics, and the Baalfire of renegade dragons and wyrms. They were able to tunnel and shape stone to sap strongholds or dragon caves. After the great wars the Dwur gave the Karrocks humanity to live their lives in freedom. Their bodies became flesh and blood, but they could still wield mystical gifts of stone shaping when needed. Many sought solace in remote mountain tops far from human kingdoms, to live simple monastic lives of contemplation. However, some Karrocks seek to atone for the damage they once caused, helping and protecting the people they once crushed under stone heels. Despite this, most Karrocks hold no regret over fighting the Drisi serpent people or Wyrms.

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

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

# Kith

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



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

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

The ancestors of the Kith came from the far northern lands of the midnight sun, which they call Hrvlyggdor. The cold mountains,

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

**Kith Names:** Alva, Asger, Aslog, Balder, Bard, Beowulf, Bjorn, Brant, Canute, Dag, Dagmar, Egil, Eirik, Fafnir, Freja, Haldor, Halvard, Helle, Hjalmar, Inge, Ivar, Jarl, Jormunrek, Niflung, Odin, Ottir, Siggeir, Sigi, Sigurd, Sorli, Regan, Regin, Rerir, Rodingeir, Tarben, Thor, Thorsen, Thorvaldr, Thorvaldr, Thurmond, Tyr, Tyra, Unn, Vali, Volsung, Ylva.

**Homelands:** Hrivlyggdor, Ashenrise, The Wolf's Maw, Belerion, Lyonesse. **Themes:** Kith, Wyrmskrøl, wyrmslayer, dragonslayer, warrior, ranger, scout, berserker, monster hunter, giantbane, werewolf trapper. **Traits:** hard to kill, strong, hunting, trapping, scouting, stealth, unstoppable, force of nature, resilient, axeman, swordsman, spearman, courageous, resilient, skald, bowyer, bushcraft, wood lore. **Assets:** greatsword, lochaber ax, dragonbone axe, saex, small ax, dragonbone dagger, war bow, war drum, cloak (esp. deer hide, wolf, bear, etc.), drinking skull, venison, grog, gold wrist band, gold torc. **SECRETS:** understand bird's song, dragon eyes, dragon skin, dragon awe, burning blood, burning eye, stone heart, dragon fury, strength of the wyrm. **Dark Secrets:** seeks pain, only own what I can carry, keeps drinking skulls, family slain by Baal/Drunes/Drisi/Wyrms. **Paths:** master the winged axe, master the dragonspear, master the greatsword, slay a wyrm, slay a dragon, slay Baal, slay Drunes, raid Baal lands, establish trade with the south.

## Vôzen

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

Perfecting anything takes time, and each Vôzen develops only a few *identities* over their lifetime. Any given identity has a name, race, face, voice, and the countless other details that make up a full, believable persona. Vôzen who travel might have different identities for each region, or parts of a city. As Eldar, they might have identities from long ago which could seem antiquated in our time, or might even have been famous people. Vôzen try to avoid their doppelgängers, since their reactions are often violent. Many Vôzen have taken action to eliminate their doppelgängers, i.e. murder them, which made their generally unsavory reputation even worse. As a result, even honest Vôzen keep their true nature secret for fear of retribution.

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



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

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

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

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

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

**Secrets:** Each *identity* is a Secret. When you use the identity Secret you instantly assume that identity, and remain that way until you use a different identity Secret or want to go back to your own identity. **Dark Secrets:** fears fire, fears hot water, fears spicy food, fears dragons and Baal, fears helplessness/capture, murdered one of my doppelgängers, secretly a spy, always takes any potions found. **Paths:** sip my *potion of water breathing* to learn how to *breathe water*, overcome fear of fire, tip my *potion of healing* to learn how to heal myself, learn to endure spicy food, perfect next identity, go bush camping, kill off my doppelgängers, steal the identity of a noble/merchant/alchemist. **Alchemical Paths:** You can sip Potions to gain XP towards Paths dealing with alchemical pursuits or powers. For example, you might work towards gaining a "strength" Trait or Secret by sipping a *potion of strength*. Sipping a potion lets you know what the potion does, but does not trigger any of the normal potion effects or side effects. You get XP after sipping all of the potion. You can also consume alchemical components, working towards the reputed or presumed abilities of that component. For example the "heart of a basilisk" might allow you to "resist petrification" or gain the ability to change your "stone to flesh".

# 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.

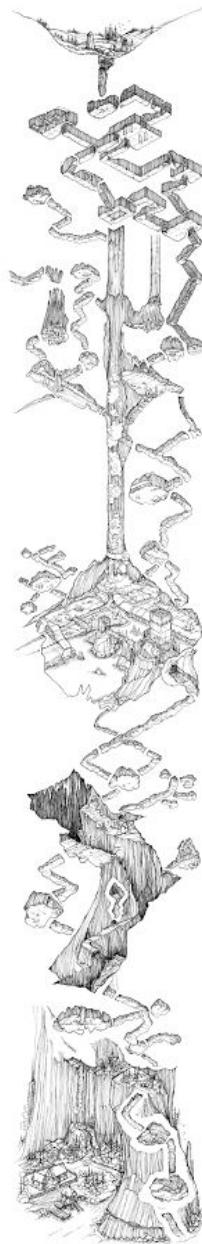
# Strata (Layers)

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 were:

- i.      Ruins of the Draconian Empire of the Baal
- ii.     Mass Crypts of the First through Fifth Vampire Wars
- iii.    Ruins of the Serpent Empire of the Drisi and Nisi
- iv.     Ruins of the Drcoalchemical Empire of Ahr'Tolth
- v.      Cyclopean fossils of dragons and ammonites
- vi.     Toxic Jungles of Vokrazum and giant insects
- vii.    Decadent treasure halls of the *Harvesters*
- viii.    Great Gobbah Empire, ever tunneling upward
- ix.     Troglodytic cities of the Draugr, Drunes, and other Dreadkin
- x.      Endless graves of the Battle Plain of Sepulchre
- xi.     Legions of undead elves seeking the surface
- xii.    The Undying Lands of Ealde
- xiii.    Rhi'Annon, the endless dungeon of graves
- xiv.    The Gigaglacial Age
- xv.     Layers of only ash, debris, and fragments of the moons
- xvi.    Hollow earths and lost worlds, buried and preserved in time
- xvii.    The deep waters of the Abzu



## Kalla

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

## Magic of the Dragon Isles

### Glyphs / Runes

Spells are cast by drawing magic symbols such as glyphs or runes in the air or on objects. Each symbol has a corresponding power word that may be spoken to add to the effect, although some say this does nothing more than assist the wizard in recalling the symbol precisely.

Since glyphs and runes are a form of writing, this method of magic has been easier to pass down through generations of wizards. Also, it is possible to rediscover symbols from ancient times in old ruins. The Guldurine Glyphs originated from the Fomorians, an ancient Eldar race deep old ones. They can often be found inscribed on coral and stones around the oceans. These glyphs rarely describe natural phenomenon like, usually only abstruse magical concepts such as summoning, binding, force lightning, and teleportation. This is likely because these glyphs originated in the Astral Seas, where the natural elements do not exist as we know them. Guldurine Glyphs are used by the "Black Wizards" of Harnendor, Avathar Necromancers, and Ifr'it. Runes are used by wizards (for fireball!), Dwur, other Eldar.

The Dwur are the keepers of the sacred Eldar Runes. These powerful symbols hold the keys to the creation of the world of Ambar. There is a rune for every concept in the world, such as "fire", "mountain", or "tree", and thus are essentially the opposite of the Guldurine Glyphs ("reality" versus "theory"). Some "White Wizards"

only practice runes, eschewing glyphs as occult lore that should be avoided, and most Aethiiri avoid both.

## Thaumaturgy / Alchemy

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

## Astral Harmonics

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

Some Eldar cultures, particularly the Elves, have developed this into a fine art of music, albeit alien-sounding music. Few other cultures have mastered this method of magic, save the dragons and Baal, who use horns that mimic dragon sounds. Be aware that the Kha'din also employ astral harmonics.

## Mthu Rygas (sorcery)

Spells are cast by forming mental images and constructs. No words or gestures are used, so some say this is the purest form of magic, however there are some unusual restrictions. The sorcerer needs to be able to concentrate well, and if he wants to affect a target directly he must see it directly with his own eyes, for the eyes are the gateway to the soul. This is most often called Mthu Rygas, and is the favored magic method of Eldar such as the Ifrit and Belerions.

## Saints

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

# 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.

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

**Themes (2)** - Write two core concepts. Try to use familiar concepts such as "Elf" or "swordsman", but write a creative Signature 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 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*

night - *holy paladin of Pyrose*

Noble - *valiant*

TRAITS: brave, pious, strong, tall

ASSETS: *father's sword [Longsword]*

Plate armor, Kite shield, Justice

[Warhorse]

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

TRAITS: agile, deadly, quiet, intense

ASSETS: Sickle swords (2) - *honor & death*

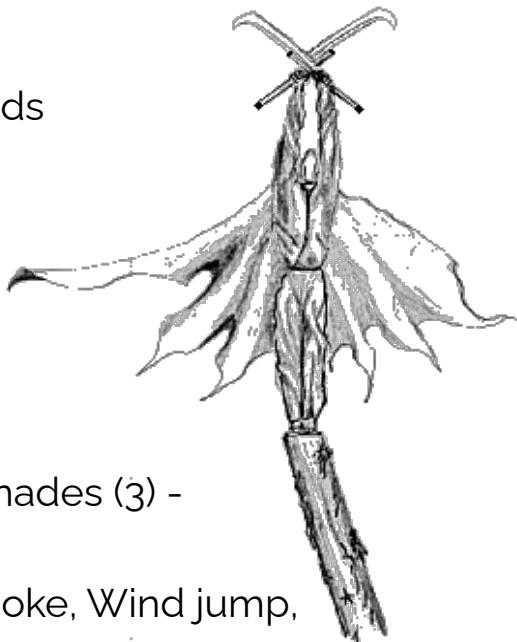
Dart knives (9), Armored robes, Smoke grenades (3) -

secret: smoke cloud

SECRETS: Whispering wind, Vanish into smoke, Wind jump,

Gust of wind

DARK SECRETS: Sole survivor of last mission



# Build Your Character

Character building is one of the most enjoyable experiences of any roleplaying game. Legends provides you with full creative control because you get to write your character in your own words!

## Step 1 - Themes

Write two **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". 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 Theme

You should use one Theme for your race, since this gives your character an anchoring culture and general physical appearance, which helps to define your character. If you don't use a race Theme then you won't be able to claim any strong ties to a homeland,

cannot take Themes/Traits such as "noble", or gain any specific racial advantages or features, such as "elf sight".

**Northmaren:** Alglond, Dorthonien, Karrock, Kith, Lyonese

**Southmaren:** Harn, Kitanian, Rochir

**Eldar:** Aethiiri (Elves), Alu, Avathar, Belerion, Baal, Drisi, Drune, Dwur, Illythrhi, Kess'rith, Norns, Sind, Vozen

## 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

Use Themes to describe any talents in the magic arts or calling as a priest. Magic abilities such as spells need to be taken as Secrets.

### Magic Arts

|              |              |                |
|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| Alchemist    | Fire Wizard  | Summoner       |
| Arcanist     | Hedge Wizard | Thaumaturge    |
| Battlemage   | Illusionist  | Warlock        |
| Black Wizard | Magic-User   | War Wizard     |
| Blood Mage   | Magician     | Witch          |
| Chiromancer  | Necromancer  | Weather Wizard |
| Conjurer     | Oneiromancer | White Wizard   |
| Diviner      | Rune Mage    | Wild Mage      |
| Enchanter    | Song Mage    | Witchdoctor    |
| Evoker       | Sorcerer     | 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       | focused     | manly         |
| calm           | genius      | morale        |
| chi            | gritty      | musical       |
| clever         | handsome    | noble         |
| cool           | hardy       | pious         |
| crafty         | healthy     | powerful      |
| dashing        | holy        | quick         |
| dextrous       | icy gaze    | rock steady   |
| elemental pact | infernal    | rough         |
| eloquent       | intelligent | short         |
| fast           | intrepid    | silver tongue |
| fit            | magical     | smart         |

|             |                |             |
|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| spiritual   | survivor       | unholy      |
| stable      | tall           | unflappable |
| stalwart    | tough          | unstoppable |
| stoic       | tough as nails | veteran     |
| strong      | traveler       | wise        |
| steely eyed | unbreakable    | witty       |

You may refine one Trait at the end of each game session, adjusting your words to reflect how your character is growing or changing as a result of what happened during the game. For example, you might adjust "quick" to "quick hands" or "witty" to "charmingly witty".

## Step 3 - Secrets

Write two **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 |

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.

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 |

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 | keeps sword ready          |
| checks the ceiling     | always checks exits        |
| checks for poison      | light sleeper              |
| always wears gloves    | always sets snares at camp |
| covers his tracks      | keeps weapons clean        |

Rituals are used to recover Vim faster than sleep.

|                    |                        |                   |
|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| field medic ritual | magic circle           | Feast of Pyrose   |
| sacrificial altar  | first harvest festival | Feast of the dead |

## 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 the common people of your world, of moderate to low cost.

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          | riding boots      | codpiece              |
| cap/hat       | robes             | coin purse (10sp)     |
| cloak/mantle  | trousers/leggings | coin purse (10gp) \$  |
| doublet/tunic | gloves            | fashionable outfit \$ |

## Armor

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

## 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          | hunting bow    | throwing ax |
| horseman's axe | sickle         | war dart    |

## Heavy Military Weapons

|               |          |               |
|---------------|----------|---------------|
| arbalest \$   | halberd  | polearm       |
| bardiche      | lance    | spadone \$    |
| bill hook     | warbow   | spiedo        |
| long axe      | longbow  | war club (2h) |
| glaive        | partisan | war scythe    |
| greatsword \$ | polax \$ | zweihander \$ |

## Adventuring / Dungeoneering Gear

|                   |                 |                   |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| acid flask        | mirror          | rope, silk 50' \$ |
| backpack          | lantern         | sack, burlap      |
| belladonna        | ladder, 8'      | 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. Some examples are marked with "\$" in the sample assets. 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 your "Silverlight, family longsword". You can declare a relevant Asset Signature when you roll ASSET, for example, Asset Signatures like "Holy water - burns undead" or "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 Ability** - You have a special innate racial ability such as infra-sight, ability to sense secret doors, resistance to charm & sleep, etc.

**Racial Innate Feature** - You have an innate racial feature such as wings, claws, scaled skin, stony skin, etc. This is an "Innate Asset", i.e. an asset which is part of your body. Alternatively, you can describe this as a Secret that manifests as Innate Asset when you use it, to blend in better with human society when the feature is inactive.

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

## Asset Tips

**Quick access** - You can optionally write a short note describing how an Asset is carried for quick access (e.g. "knife - sheath right belt"). You can ready the Asset with 1 Maneuver instead of 2.

**Securely stowed** - You can optionally write a short note describing how an Asset is securely stowed (e.g. "acid vial - wrapped in cloth in pack"). You will need appropriate time to unpack this Asset, but it's far less likely to be accidentally broken (or stolen)

**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 and everyday carry in securely 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.)

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

## Step 5 – Dark Secrets

You must also write **one Dark Secret**. 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 take an 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 | too honest, and loud   |
| offensive fashion sense  | zealous/uncompromising |

host for something awful  
gluttonous or hoards food  
doesn't understand humor

was never held as a child  
always right  
bad selfishness

You might bear a curse or ill omens.

ancient family curse  
sees dead people  
my friends turn undead  
parent was undead  
hears voices in my head  
infected at birth

haunted by nightmares  
visited by portents/dreams  
fated to die  
have seen my own death  
unnerves animals  
possessed

## Step 6 - Experience Paths

You are ready to play, but to further develop your legend you need to write Experience Paths ("Paths"). Paths say what you need/want to do/accomplish, and suggest who/what might become. They are your essential goals, quests, missions, such as "find the cure to save the poisoned king", "become a fire wizard", "find a holy sword", etc.

**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 alternatively craft or obtain a new Asset.

**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"



## 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. The GM will also **Cut Hazard** when you make progress overcoming those challenges, so Hazard floats up and down with the dramatic tension in the story.

Your turn starts with a brief narrative **Transition** from the GM, which can include attacks or other dangers. You must respond to any attacks or dangers by rolling **Saving Throws**, and may then take one **Action** and two **Maneuvers**.

Use your Action to do something significant such as attack a foe, use a Secret, attempt a stunt, etc. Use your **Maneuvers** to move, interact with items or environment, take cover, assist your Action or assist other characters.

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 1 Damage.** If you roll a Fumble you take 2 Damage, or 3 for Super Fumble.

Next, **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. If your armor does not negate all Damage you will gain a Doom with a stage equal to the remaining Damage.

**Toughness Traits** (e.g. "tough", "sword scars", "fire scars", "survivor", etc.) help you survive Dooms. When gaining a new Doom you can declare a Toughness Trait. The GM will reduce the Doom Stage by 1 if the Trait is ideal and specific for surviving the Doom. (Otherwise 50% chance.)

For example, if you are cut by a sword and take 1 Damage this would normally be a Doom 1, but if you have a Toughness Trait like "sword scars" then you just gain Doom 0. If your Toughness Trait is not fully "ideal and specific" to the Damage, the GM may still allow you to flip a coin (or roll 11+ on d20) for your Trait to count. So a very general Toughness Trait like "tough guy" can work, but only half the time when needed.

# Hazard, Stress & Vim

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

This game emphasizes teamwork and rewards collaboration between the players. You will need to work together to survive and overcome the challenges of the story.

## Hazard

Hazard is the current difficulty of the scene you are facing. When you roll, Hazard is the target number to succeed on your d20, so if Hazard is 12 you need to roll 12 or higher to succeed. The GM manages Hazard, raising Hazard as the difficulty escalates, or reducing Hazard as you overcome challenges.

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

As a player you need to pay attention to **foreshadowing**, since each new dangerous or frightening detail is possibly useful information, and also raises Hazard.

claw marks on trees  
big tracks/footprints  
darkness falls  
ominous sounds/smells  
wild howling/growling

find/avoid traps  
find/cross obstacle  
fight sounds/yelling/screams  
damage to your ship/camp  
enemy leader yells orders

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

**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.

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

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

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

## Stress

Stress is the amount of strain and trauma your group of characters has taken, and can be mental, spiritual, or physical. As Stress rises your failures are more likely to be disastrous fumbles. Stress starts

at 1, then Raise Stress by 1 each time you time you Soak Damage after failing a Saving Throw, or use a Secret with negative Vim. The GM can also Raise Stress when narrating stressful events, such as when you something truly awful or your ship/castle is hit hard. When things slow down after a stressful situation, you can reduce Stress by eating, drinking, making camp, cleaning yourself, mending your gear, making jokes, playing music, and blowing off steam. After all, you're a person.

You are responsible for managing Stress, and how you deal with stressors is part of your story. 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 Stress, 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 work off the trauma and find ways to relax. What does your character do to blow off steam?

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

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

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

## Vim

Vim is the amount of energy your group of characters has available to use Secrets. Spend 1 Vim when you use a Secret. Sleeping

restores Vim (from 1-5 Vim, depending on your quality of sleep). Arcane Rituals are a faster way to regain Vim, which are discussed in the chapter on Secrets.

## Sleeping

Sleeping restores 1-5 Vim, depending on your quality of sleep. The GM decides how much Vim you regain.

You regain 1 Vim for each sleep cycle, up to 4 Vim per day. Each sleep cycle is about 2 hours long. Interrupted sleep cycles do not count, but it's possible to regain Vim along the way during the night, which might be important depending on what wakes you up!

If you complete all four sleep cycles then add 1 Vim if you slept at an inn or cozy, well-laden campsite.

## Negative Vim

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

If your Vim is negative then it will not raise unless what you are doing (i.e. sleeping or a Ritual) earns enough Vim to set you to at least zero. Thus, at Vim -6 or below simply sleeping will not help!

## 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, revealing ambushes/surprises, 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 for each round. The GM narrates changes to the scene, including descriptions of what NPCs and monsters do. The GM then **Transitions** to the player on the left.

The GM should vividly describe what the PCs notice about the surroundings, such as "you hear the low growling of wolves in the trees", often as foreshadowing 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 to have your character do something important, such as making an attack, casting a spell, disarming a trap, or climbing a cliff. This is the focus of your turn.

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

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

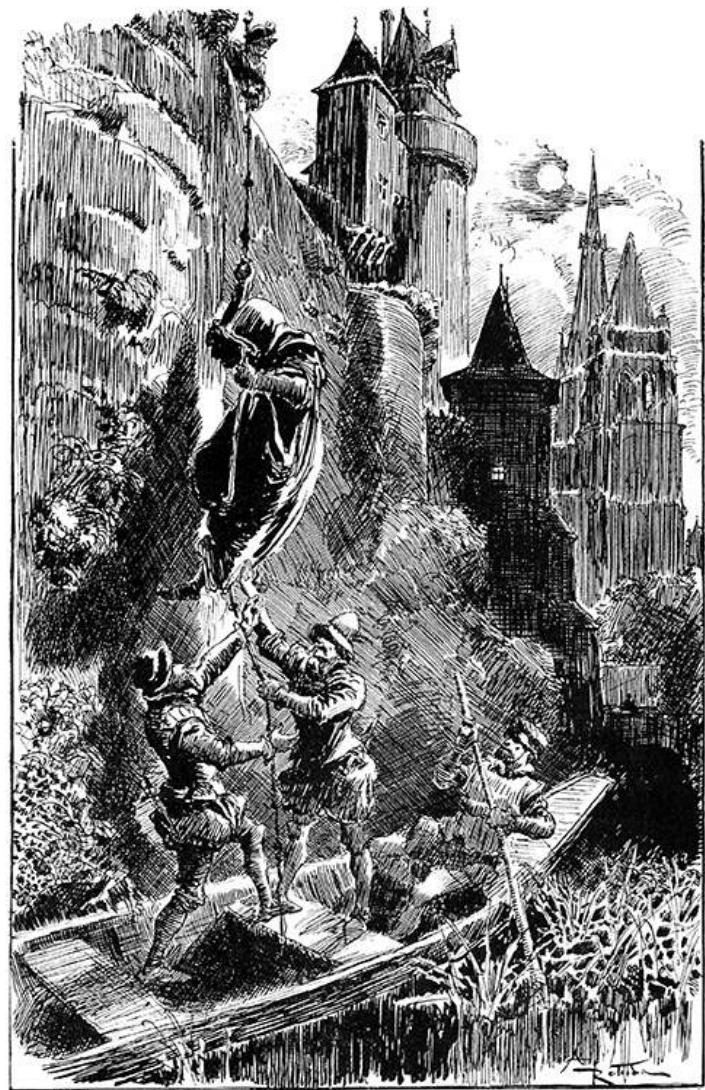
You will probably need to make a roll if your Action involves risk and failure could add interest to the game, such as an attack in combat.

## Maneuvers

Maneuvers are minor activities such as moving, shouting orders, 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 Armor Tag: Body-Armor (or none) 3, Half-Armor 2, or Full-Armor 1. Carrying or holding on to 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 another player's (or the GM's) turn. If two characters want to act at the same moment they can bid Maneuvers to go first, or roll to break a tie. Unused Maneuvers are lost at the end of the round.



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

Maneuvers can be used for moving a few steps, sitting, standing, taking cover, etc. The normal distance moved for a Maneuver is **ten (10) feet**, which is typically two 1-inch squares on a tabletop grid for miniatures. Double your movement (to twenty feet) if running forward or taking advantage of the environment (e.g. moving downhill, downstream, or falling). Halve your movement (to five feet) if struggling with movement (e.g. crawling, climbing, standing jump, etc.) You can change facing as part of any Maneuver, but are otherwise assumed to face the direction of your movement.

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

Maneuvers can be used to interact with items, but each Maneuver allows a single motion such as drawing a sword, an arrow, or pushing a door shut. Multi-step interactions such as lighting a torch or retrieving an item from a backpack require multiple Maneuvres.

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

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

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

Lastly, you can also use Maneuvers as combat tactics for your attacks & defenses. This is detailed in Part 4: Combat.

## Roll the Dice

Always roll two dice: a **D20** and a **Legend Die**. You **succeed** if you roll **Hazard** (usually 10-15) or higher, otherwise you **fail**. You **Crit** on 20, but **Fumble** if you roll **Stress** (usually 1-5) or lower. This is a "natural" roll, there are no die modifiers. Describe the outcome as best you can, the GM will elaborate or correct as needed.

**Damage** - All attacks deal 1 Damage, +1 for a Crit/Fumble, or +2 for a Super Crit/Fumble.

**Stunts** - If you Crit a roll for an Action you can attempt a heroic stunt! Describe your stunt and roll. On a Crit you pull off your stunt, otherwise your new roll result stacks on top. For example, if you Crit an attack you could say "I lop off the goblin's hand!". If your second roll is a Fumble, then you keep the results of your first Crit, but with the consequences of a Fumble added on.

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

**Counters** - If you Crit a Saving Throw you get a Counter. This is a free Action, but limited to things you could conceivably do while defending yourself against the Saving Throw. For example you can counterattack an enemy who attacks you.

## The Legend Die

Your **Legend Die** is a custom die (faces below) which may Downgrade [-] or Upgrade [+] your natural result by one step, e.g. success down to failure, failure up to success, etc. Each face is a mini-game unto itself, showcasing various details of your character, situational details, and/or your skill as a player.

If multiple upgrades and downgrades apply, they cancel each other out. The natural result can only shift by one step, so a natural success can be at best a crit, and at worst a failure.

## Legends Die Faces

Each Legend Die face is a mini-game with its own depths of play.

| Roll   | Downgrade [-]  | Upgrade [+]   |
|--------|--|---|
| THEME  | Downgrade [-] if you don't have necessary specialized knowledge (e.g. lockpicking, alchemy).   | Upgrade [+] if you have an ideal Theme, Theme Signature, or Trait.  |
| EFFORT | Downgrade [-] if you cannot push yourself and exert effort, such as if you cannot move freely, are hiding, or hindered by a Doom or Dark Secret, etc.                                      | Upgrade [+] if you have an ideal Trait. (This can cancel a Downgrade.)  |
| ASSET  | Downgrade [-] if you are not using an Asset (item). This is waived if the action cannot possibly benefit from an item.   | Upgrade [+] if you have an ideal Asset Signature ideal, such as a "flaming sword" vs spiders.   |
| COMBO  | Downgrade [-] if you have disadvantage (e.g. blinded, prone) or opponents have outmaneuvered you (e.g. flanking, high ground) or created a tactical advantage (e.g. dodged, parried, etc). | Upgrade [+] if you have an advantage, usually earned by taking Maneuvers to position yourself tactically or activate Asset Tags. Each advantage cancels one disadvantage. |
| ULT    | Downgrade [-] if your action directly opposes someone who has ULT, e.g. a monster special attack.  | Upgrade [+] if you are an expert at your action, and more expert than anyone nearby. Requires player consensus for bonus.   |
| PREP   | Downgrade [-] if your foes are better prepared than you (e.g. ambush, swarm).  | Upgrade [+] if you can leverage an Action you took on a previous Turn to prepare for this roll.   |

## THEME

Downgrade [-] if you don't have necessary specialized knowledge (e.g. lockpicking, alchemy). Upgrade [+] if you have an ideal Theme, Theme Signature, or Trait.

## EFFORT

Downgrade [-] if you cannot push yourself and exert effort, such as if you cannot move freely, are hiding, or hindered by a Doom or Dark Secret, etc. Upgrade [+] if you have an ideal Trait. (This can cancel a Downgrade.)

## ASSET

Downgrade [-] if you are not using an Asset (item). Upgrade [+] if you have an ideal Asset Signature ideal, such as a "flaming sword" vs spiders. Do not apply any modifier if the action cannot benefit from an item, e.g. singing, hearing, observation, etc.

### Examples of [-][+] ASSET

- **Attacking:** [+] ASSET if your weapon has a Signature useful against your foe, such as a "holy sword" vs undead. Otherwise a normal weapon will work, but [-] ASSET if you don't have a weapon and using bare knuckles.
- **Defending:** [+] ASSET if you have an Asset with a Signature that helps against this attack, such as "adamant helmet" against weapons attacking your head, or "orichalcum amulet" armor against hostile magic. You must [-] ASSET if you do not have an Asset that helps against this attack. You can potentially declare your weapon or shield if you declared you are parrying or have an applicable Guard prior to rolling. While some attackers might use poison, this affects Damage, not your Saving Throw roll.
- **Defending vs Magic:** Upgrade if you have an Asset Signature that helps you defend against this kind of magic, such as "amulet of shielding". You must [-] ASSET if you don't have any magical props to defend you.
- **Defending against Monsters:** Depending on the monster attack, this is the same as "Defending" or "Defending vs Magic". While many monsters inflict special types of damage, e.g. venom, this affects Damage, not your Saving Throw roll.
- **Climbing:** [+] ASSET 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 [-] ASSET if you do not have any climbing gear at all.

- **Picking a lock:** [+] ASSET 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 [-] ASSET.
- **Social:** [+] ASSET if you have elegant attire with a Signature for style, e.g. "velvet blue cape with small silver birds". You can get by with appropriate attire without a Signature for style, but [-] ASSET if you are improperly clothed for the situation.
- **Using Magic:** [+] ASSET if you have an Asset Signature relevant to your magic, such as "wand of fire". You must [-] ASSET if you don't have any magical props to help you channel your magic.

## COMBO

**Downgrade [-] if you have disadvantage** (e.g. blinded, prone) or opponents have outmaneuvered you (e.g. flanking, high ground) or created a tactical advantage (e.g. dodged, parried, etc). **Upgrade [+]** if you have an advantage, usually earned by taking Maneuvers to position yourself tactically or activate Asset Tags. Each advantage cancels one disadvantage.

**COMBO is the combination of advantages and disadvantages.** You [-] COMBO if you have more disadvantages, or [+] COMBO if you have more advantages. Some examples are below, but the GM will assign other advantages and disadvantages to fit the situation.

### Examples of [-] COMBO Disadvantages

**Unarmed:** [-] COMBO if you do not have a weapon Ready to use.

**Compromised Posture:** [-] COMBO if you are not standing with good body posture on solid ground. Examples: off balance, prone, kneeling, crawling, held by someone, on slippery ice, on wet slippery stone, laying on the ground, sitting, entangled in vines, wading through water, climbing a rope, balancing on a rope, trudging through mud, etc.

**Opposing Maneuvers:** [-] COMBO if the GM described how your opponent is using a Maneuver to gain an advantage. Examples: the foe has high ground, the foe has cover, the foe is feinting, dodging, parrying, guarding their head, etc.

**Outnumbered:** [-] COMBO if you are surrounded, flanked, swarmed, outnumbered, encircled, attacked by a hail of arrows, etc.

**Firing into a Melee:** [-] COMBO if you are shooting a ranged weapon into a melee and there are allies you do not want to hit. If you miss because of this penalty then you might have hit the wrong person!

## Examples of [+] COMBO Advantages

**Maneuver:** [+] COMBO if you are using a Maneuver to assist your roll such when you dodge, feint, parry, etc.

**Teamwork:** [+] COMBO 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:** [+] COMBO if you used a Maneuver to gain a tactical advantage like taking high ground or overwatch over a choke point.

**Weapon Range:** [+] COMBO melee attacks and saving throws vs melee attacks when you are at your optimal range and your opponent is not. All weapons have Tags to indicate *optimal* fighting distance. For example, if you have a spear and attack a swordsman at "spear range" such as while he is approaching then use your spear's Long Tag to [+] COMBO.

## ULT

Downgrade [-] if your action directly opposes someone who has ULT, e.g. a monster special attack. Upgrade [+] if you are an expert at your action, and more expert than anyone nearby. Requires player consensus for bonus.

Since ULT is based on the consensus of all players, it's dependent on your *perceived* character concept, role in the group, and past demonstrations of expertise. If you're picking a lock you'll likely win if you're "the thief" of the group, especially if you have picked locks before no. If you're reading archaic runes you'll win if you're "the wizard". This might also be an easy win if you are using a Secret, but on a tie nobody gets the bonus, 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. This is especially true for monsters with special dramatic attacks that they are well known for, such as dragons breathing flame, gorgon's stony gaze, giant toads that swallow people whole, etc.

## PREP

Upgrade [+] if you can leverage an Action you took on a previous Turn to prepare for this roll.

Usually this required you to have noticed foreshadowing or clues and used your wits to make ready. Preparation is not necessarily complicated, they just require paying attention, thinking, and setting plans into motion, often simply by roleplaying what you do. For example, you might rig warning traps around your camp, or plug your ears with wax before fighting the harpies, or douse yourself with water before fighting a dragon. 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. The earlier and more involved Action wins on a tie.



## Part 3: Experience Paths

Experience Paths ("Paths") are important objectives and accomplishments for the characters. These can be goals, quests, areas of research, crafting items, magic research, and more.

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

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.

When you earn 10xp on a Path, you complete it and receive a Reward. Paths are how you grow, develop, evolve your character, becoming interesting and more powerful. Completing a Path is like "leveling up", but according to your vision and in your own words.

## Writing Paths

To start a new Path, write down your quest, goal, or objective on a sheet of paper shared by all players. 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 try to write them in an exciting voice. Take ideas from your favorite books and films.

The only limitation is you may only have two active Paths at a time, and NPCs may only have one active Path.

Keep all Paths together on a piece of paper and start each game session by reviewing Paths as a group, possibly passing the page around the table for updates. Since roleplaying is a social game, all Paths are open and shared between the players. This transparency makes it clear what kind of game everyone wants to play, and what Paths they think will be interesting and fun. The players and GM form the audience for the heroic deeds of the characters, and can often help each other.

## Experience Points (XP)

When you accumulate 10xp on a Path, you complete it and the GM grants a Reward. Use tally marks to track xp for each Path, such as "Learn a levitate spell |||". When you have ten tallies ("||||\ ||||\") you have completed the path.

Sources of earning xp are listed below. You can only gain xp from each source once per Path per session. In other words, you can't use

"Progress" on the same Path more than once in the same game session. This effectively limits you to 7xp per Path per session.

**Roleplay the Path** - The 5th and 10th xp (i.e. when you cross off a tally of 5) must be earned by roleplaying progress (for the 5th xp) or completion (for the 10th and final xp). There is no other way to earn these two tallies. This helps them serve as milestones where you can celebrate your progress and eventual completion, in character.

**Progress** - You can earn 1xp by making progress on a Path during the game. For example a warrior might practice his swordplay or try a new technique, or a wizard might read from a book or experiment.

**Dark Secret / Doom** - You can earn 1xp by roleplaying how a Dark Secret or Doom hinders you. For example, you might flee from an ambush with giant spiders, if you have a Dark Secret phobia. Or you could roleplay how a "arrow in the leg" Doom slows you down when the Doom makes you [-] EFFORT. Let your humanity show, for you'll be faced with enough inhuman monsters in your adventures.

**Development** - You can earn 1xp by working on developing a Path between game sessions. For example, you could write a journal of your adventures, add to your character backstory, or help the GM with worldbuilding. You must produce something creative, such as a backstory, adventure log, character sketch, a miniature, sketch of your castle, details for an NPC (friend, foe, or other relationship), essay on your religion, etc.

**Materials** - You can earn 1xp if you obtain valuable materials to help you on your Path. For example, a wizard might obtain special ink or paper to work on a new spell. The materials needed for 1xp cost 100gp, or you can pawn a Signature Asset. However, you can also find materials in your adventures, such as weird glowing cave crystals, "cave squid ink", "fire beetle glands", etc.

**Training** - You can earn 1xp by training under a "Master" (i.e. expert teacher, sensei, guild master, grandmaster, etc.). This requires at a minimum one day of intense training (at least 4-6 hours) and 100gp payment (or equivalent compensation such as a Signature Asset). Another PC can be a trainer, but they must be a bona fide "Master".

Either way, the master-student relationship is an excellent opportunity for roleplaying and developing relationships.

**Player Awards** - Players can nominate each other for various awards such as "MVP" or "Best Roleplaying".

## Ending Paths

If you want to end a Path, or if a Path becomes impossible to complete then cross it off the list. For example, "Warn the King about assassins!" ends if they get to him first.

## Natural Consequences

Whenever a Path ends, think about the natural consequences of how things played out. Surviving a harrowing experience can lead to long-lasting trauma or a quest for vengeance. The GM may assign a Doom or Dark Secret if you are adversely affected by a Path.

## Journeys

Sometimes a Path is just one step in a longer journey, of many Paths. If your dream goal is to become a king, an archmage, a guild master thief, then you will need to complete multiple Paths along the way. The GM may require you to split a Path into multiple Paths.

## Rewards

The GM will give an appropriate **Reward** when you complete a Path. Some Rewards will add a new Trait or Secret. You could get a new Theme (up to a max of four), modify a Theme, or rid yourself of a Dark Secret. You could find or construct a new Asset, even something exotic, magic item, or summoned servant. Anything is possible if you follow your dreams, although your GM may increase the XP needed to complete the Path for really big dreams.

Also, once you are halfway complete (50 XP) you can *try* to use the Reward before the Path is completed, such as trying out a new spell you are working on. This is only an option when it makes sense.

The GM can also assign a Dark Secret if the way you took your Path had undesirable consequences.

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

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

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

Signature, Secret, or Asset Tag. If you have crafting skills you might build an item rather than buy or quest for it.

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

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

## Magic Research

Use a Path to research a new spell, construct a magic item, or other kinds of magic research. This might involve obtaining and reading arcane books, acquiring rare materials, spending time conducting magical research in a laboratory, etc.

### 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. Books are tremendously beneficial because they free you from having to travel to find knowledge. Write a Path for each topic you are studying.



The GM secretly determines how many Secrets each book contains (possibly rolling dice by 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 book will no longer allow you to earn XP.

## Minions

Use a Path to find a loyal minion, henchman, companion, or servant, including a magical minion such as an elemental or familiar. Write a **Secret** describing why your minion is truly loyal, whether that is from admiration, an oath, or magical binding. Your minion is an NPC ("non-

player character") controlled by the GM, although you can generally ask (or order) your minion to do things and can temporarily take over a minion as your PC if your main character is indisposed.

Minions start with **one Theme** (with Signature) and **two Traits**. If association with the minion poses a complication (e.g. "my bat is vampiric") then add a Dark Secret and a second Theme (with Signature). Minions can have one Path open at a time.

## Familiars

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

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

## Campaign Paths

The GM can write Paths for the campaign world, such as rumors or events, creating a sense of verisimilitude. These Paths might independently from your actions...or possibly as a result of them. The GM then assigns XP towards those Paths at the end of each game session, but you can also assign XP to those Paths. Just be aware that some of these Paths might be opportunities for adventure, such as a lost merchant caravan, and others might be portents and signs of impending doom, such as the rise of an evil warlord.



## Part 4: Combat

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

### Weapons

You need a weapon to engage in combat. You must [-] ASSET on all attack and defense rolls if you do not have a weapon **Ready** to use.

**Readying a weapon requires 1 Maneuver**, which gets your weapon in hand and in the right way so it can be immediately used (e.g. not in the wrong hand, not upside down, etc). Always have a weapon in hand, even if it's just a stick or stone. Additional details are below.

**Sidearms** - Swords and daggers worn on your belt are popular because they are convenient quick to deploy, requiring 1 Maneuver

to ready or sheathe. Describe how you carry your sidearms so they are Quick Assets, otherwise you need to use an extra 1 Maneuver.

**Battlefield Weapons** - Large battlefield weapons such as spears, halberds, greatswords, are carried in your hands on your way to the battle. You are assumed to carry them casually, so you still need to spend 1 Maneuver to Ready them. You'll probably only carry one large weapon. These weapons are long and bulky and do not have sheaths or any convenient way to stow them. So, if you do anything that requires both hands (e.g. climbing a rope, playing a mandolin, etc.) then you are automatically considered to put the weapon down and pick it back up afterwards. However, in combat, picking the weapon back up costs 1 Maneuver, plus 1 maneuver to get the weapon Ready to use again. You may need to find solutions for situations like climbing a rope, using at least 2 Maneuvers.

**Reload** - Weapons that use ammunition (e.g. bows, crossbows, guns, etc.) require an additional 1 Maneuver to load or reload an arrow or bolt. For a bow you must draw and nock an arrow. If you are using the Advanced Assets rules then use the number after the Reload Weapon Tag, such as "Reload1", "Reload2", etc. (Tip: List the location of ammunition such as "quiver of arrows" so they are Quick Assets and you don't need to use an extra 1 Maneuver.)

**Track Ammunition** - You must track all ammunition (e.g. arrows, javelins, throwing knives, etc.) you carry and mark off shots.

**Legality** - Weapons of Class 3+ are considered "military weapons" and not legal to carry in most towns or guarded areas. So it's a good idea to have a smaller sidearm to carry in town.

**Improvised Weapons** - Improvised or cheaply made weapons are Weapon Class 1 and will break on EFFORT (this still deals Damage on a hit). Makeshift items (e.g. shovel, bottle, fire poker, candlestick, stool, chair, stick, rock, brick, roof tile, etc.) can be interesting tactical options even if you have other weapons to choose from. Readyng a shovel or a bottle appears less threatening than drawing a sword, and throwing bricks from a rooftop doesn't use your ammunition or leave evidence behind.



## Attacks

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

### Failed Attacks

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

### Successful Attacks

On a successful attack, the GM will declare the Damage dealt (i.e. by comparing WC and AC) and the resulting Doom Stage. The GM may also declare that the foe Soaks Damage. The result is one of the following five outcomes:

**No Effect** - The target's armor stopped all Damage.

**Doom Stage 0** - The target is hit, but there is no visible injury.

**Doom Stage 1** - The target takes a visible injury.

**Doom Stage 2** - The target suffers a crippling injury, which prevents the use of the Hit Location. If you rolled a Crit, then the target suffers a dramatically permanent injury such as or removing a hand, arm, leg, foot, tail, wing, etc.

**Doom Stage 3** - The target is "downed" (see below) and expected to die on its own, in time. If you rolled a Crit, the opponent suffers a dramatically disabling injury, and less capable of "death throes" (see below).

**Doom Stage 4** - The target immediately dies. If you rolled a Crit then the death is particularly dramatic, such decapitation, chopping it in half.

Note that in all these cases, the GM determines the outcome. The GM will sometimes describe what happens, and sometimes ask you to provide some color to how you dispatch your foe.

When you are attacked by a foe the process is very similar, just in reverse. See "Saving Throws", below, for how that works, again from your point of view.

## Downed Foes

If the GM says a foe is Downed, 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 Downed foe. Thus, a Downed foe might manage to limp off to lick its wounds, make annoying dying sounds, kick and twitch, make a leaky mess, or bite you if you get too close.

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

## 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".

**Counters** - If you Crit a Saving Throw you get a Counter. This is a free Action, but limited to things you could conceivably do while defending yourself against the Saving Throw. For example you can counterattack an enemy who attacks you.

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

You can use a defensive **Maneuver** to [+] COMBO, e.g. dodge, parry, block, duck, roll, slip, etc. Some need to be declared before a roll, such as Guard and Cover. Also some Asset Tags [+] COMBO.



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

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

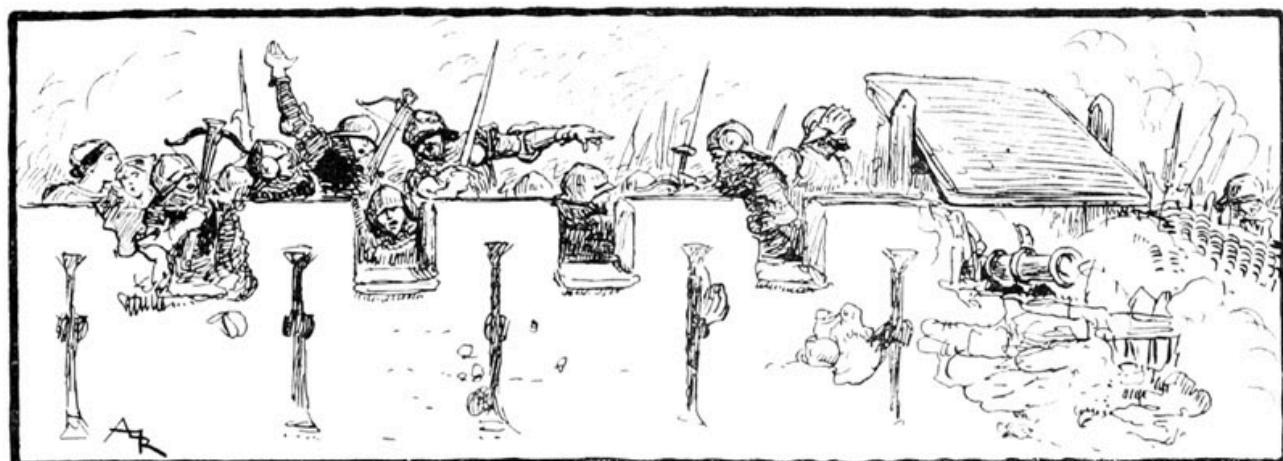
## Damage

Damage has a very tight scale, ranging from 0-4 per attack. Attacks normally deal 1 Damage, or 2 on a Crit/Fumble, or 3 on a Super Crit/Fumble. This is the same whether you are attacking or defending.

Damage represents *any* kind of harm, not necessarily physical. So while the term "Damage" is used, it's about all kinds of setbacks.

### Armor Class and Weapon Class

For physical attacks, compare **Armor Class** (AC) and **Weapon Class** (WC). Add 1 Damage if the weapon outclasses the armor, or subtract 1 Damage if the armor outclasses the weapon. If armor brings the



total Damage to zero, the attack has no effect. Always use the armor for the specific Hit Location.

**Huge weapons** (e.g. catapults, cannons, giants, dragons, etc.) effectively have very high WC that outclasses any armor and most cover. If you are "hit" from a huge weapon this is assumed to be a glancing blow or shrapnel from a near-miss. After all, a direct hit would instantly kill you, and that isn't the point of the game.

## Damage Modifiers

The GM may apply a +1/-1 modifier for Damage for highlighting special resistances or weaknesses of monsters. For example, non-silvered weapons inflict -1 Damage to werewolves, but a holy weapon inflicts +1 Damage to minor undead. The total modifier will not exceed +1/-1.

## Hit Locations

Each attack affects one of your six Hit Locations. The Hit Location determines what protection (such as armor and cover) applies for defense. The GM determines the Hit Location, possibly provides a description of a specific body part, and whether or not your armor protects against the attack.

### Hit Location Examples

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| Head  | neck, chin, nose, face, forehead, skull           |
| Arm   | forearm, elbow, upper arm, shoulder               |
| Hand  | fingers, knuckles, palm, back of hand, wrist      |
| Torso | abdomen, ribs, sternum, chest, clavicle           |
| Waist | outer thigh, inner thigh, groin, hip, pelvis      |
| Leg   | knee, 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 with less armor than the body. Conversely, ranged attacks usually prioritize the "center

mass" target of the Torso, and a "near miss" might hit an adjacent area. Also the hands are often the easiest target in melee (since they are the closest target) but present too small of an area to be worthwhile targeting with ranged attacks.

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

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



## Combat Maneuvers

Use your **Maneuvers** in combat for tactics such as feints, parries, beats, taking cover, etc. You can use a Maneuver after rolling to [+] COMBO, but if you declare a Maneuver before you roll then you may get a broader benefit that can apply to several rolls. Maneuvers can have interesting tactical combinations, such as activating Weapon

Tags for [+] COMBO or other benefits. Examples are below, but you should use Maneuvers to describe your own cunning tactics.

## Aim

Choose an available Hit Location (head, torso, arm, hand, waist, or leg) and facing (right/left/front/back), or ask the GM to pick an optimal location for you. You gain [+] COMBO if you are aiming at the Torso since that is the largest area. You can aim at an armor gap if the Hit Location does not have Full Coverage. This Maneuver only applies to a single attack and you must declare it before rolling. You cannot Aim if you have Limited Visibility.

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

## Advanced Aim

Use two Aim Maneuvers to specify a sub-location (e.g. a wrist, a foot) or an armor gap in a Hit Location with Full Coverage but with a visible opening (e.g. the face with an open-faced or hat helm) or a Hit Location bordering on an unarmored location (e.g. armpit when wearing Body-Armor). Use three Maneuvers for tiny targets (e.g. an ear, an eye, etc.) or an armor gap in an area with Full Coverage (e.g. eye slits in a closed helm). This Maneuver only applies to a single attack and you must declare it before rolling; also you cannot Aim if you have Limited Visibility.

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

## Guard

Use a Maneuver to move your weapon or shield to **Guard** a named Hit Location and side (left or right), such as "Head - left". This grants [+1] COMBO on attacks against that area. See [Weapon and Shield Guards](#) for more advanced details.

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

## Range

Move to a specific Range from your opponent (either in or out). This grants [+1] COMBO if you are in optimal measure and your foe is not. (The optimal measure is specified by Weapon Range Tags.)

Alternatively use this Maneuver to maintain current Range when an opponent is moving relative to you (either in or out).

- 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

## Wrath Stroke

Grip your weapon in two hands and swing a mighty blow. Adds +1 Damage if you roll EFFORT or if the target is Prone or Pinned against a wall. This Maneuver only applies to a single attack and you must declare it before rolling.

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

## Cover & Concealment

Position yourself to take advantage of cover, such as a wall, doorframe, trench, etc. Cover counts as armor, and solid objects usually have higher AC than weapon class, so a target with cover will usually downgrade Damage. Cover and concealment also reduces your visible target areas and enemies may seek other targets. This is especially important if you do not have any armor, or lighter armor than the weapons in play. However, your Cover can also limit your options. For example, if you duck behind a low wall then you can't see your opponents, but if you knelt behind the wall you could shoot

over it. If you want to pop out and back behind cover, you need to use Maneuvers to do so. However, enemies who are ready to shoot can still attack you if you do this.

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

## Beat

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

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

## Feint

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

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

## Grab

Use a free hand to grab part of a foe while at Close Range. 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. Intentionally closing from normal melee range (Short/Medium/Long) to Close Range costs 1 Maneuver.

- 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)

# Weapon and Shield Guards

You can use a weapon or shield to **Guard** a Hit Location. A "Guard" is a defensive position that also allows you to launch your attacks.

**Your weapon must be able to defend the attack.** Melee weapons do not protect against missile weapons, nor do missile weapons protect against melee weapons. Shields are always useful.

**Each Guard covers one Hit Location for one side**, so simply say the Hit Location and side (left or right) you are guarding. You [+] COMBO if you have a weapon or shield set to "Guard" the Hit Location.

**Guards provide Armor** in the Hit Location. Shields provide Shield Class as armor. Weapons count as Class 1 shields, or Weapon Class if the weapon has the Defensive Tag.

**Shield Guards** are relatively static, and only change when you use a Guard Maneuver. In addition to the Hit Location covered by the Guard, Shields provide Full Coverage to the Hand holding the shield. Medium shields also provide Partial Coverage for the Arm (wrist & forearm), while Large shields provide Full Coverage for the Arm.

**Weapon Guards** are much more dynamic and correspond to the starting and finishing positions of attacks and parries. You can name a Guard for a weapon after each attack Action. For example, you might say "I cut down and guard my left leg", or "I parry up and guard my right head". However, weapon Guards only protect against melee attacks, not ranged. Otherwise you can use a Guard Maneuver.

**Each weapon and shield Asset has its own Guard.** You can have two Guards if you have a shield or companion weapon. Or you combine them together, for the best defense, which gives you the best Class +1.

**Advanced Guards.** You can spend an extra Maneuver to gain +1 WC for your defense. This requires a two-handed weapon, or two weapons together, or a weapon and a shield.

# 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.

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

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

**Hold** - Gain *Control* of one Hit Location of your opponent, e.g. an Arm or Head. Similar to a Doom, your foe must [-] 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. Add +1 Weapon Class for attacks vs a foe over whom you have *Control*.

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

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

**Break/Subdue** - If you already *Control* an opponent's Head, Arm, Hand, Leg, or Foot you choke the neck or hyperextend the joint, dealing Damage. If you Crit you can disarm. You may use a



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Maneuver to let your opponent submit ("tap out") to avoid Damage.  
Only works with humanoid anatomy.

## Details

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

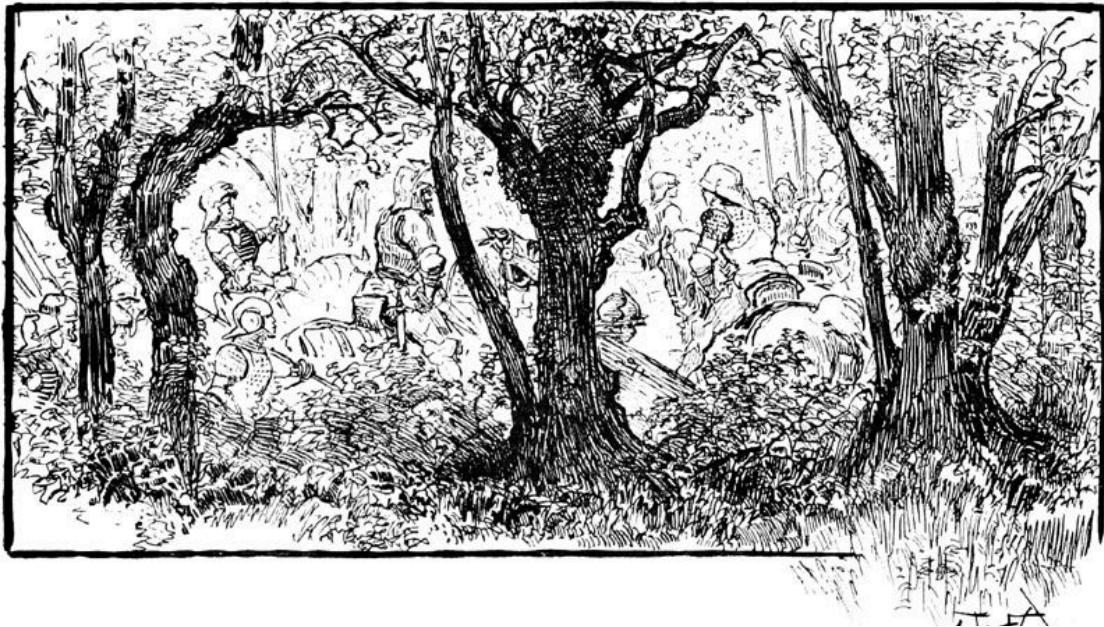
Armor does not reduce Damage inflicted by wrestling, but plate armor prevents chokes and joint locks in elbows and knees.

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

**Weapons** - If you wrestle using a weapon with the "Close" range Tag then [+] COMBO. Conversely, if your weapon has the "Long" range Tag then [-] COMBO. (Do not apply either modifier if your opponent also has a similar weapon.)

**Prone** - If you are Prone you must [-] COMBO, and attacks against you gain a +1 WC bonus. You are considered Prone if you are off your feet, e.g. lying on the ground, sitting, kneeling, etc.

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



# Visibility

**Visibility** comes in three levels: High, Low, and Limited. This determines how well you can see, and much detail the GM will provide when describing the situation and answering questions.

|                    | Conditions   | Effects  |
|--------------------|--|--|
| High Visibility    | Clean line of sight with bright lighting, such as outside on a clear day, in a well-lit arena, or a candle over a book, after your eyes have adapted.                                | The GM will provide detailed information. When you ask questions the GM is likely to be "chatty" rather than require Maneuvers or Actions.   |
| Low Visibility     | Clean line of sight with dim lighting or near-darkness, such as moonlight or candlelight, after your eyes have adapted to the dark.  | The GM will provide sparse information for what you see (e.g. "multiple creatures are behind you"), and require a Maneuver if you ask a detailed question.   |
| Limited Visibility | Sight is blocked or obscured due to rain, smoke, snow, cover, concealment, shadows, etc. Or, your eyes have not yet adapted to changes in prevailing light. This includes blindness. | The GM will describe the limiting factor (e.g. smoke) but little or nothing more. Use a Maneuver or Action to ask a detailed question. You cannot use the Aim Maneuver, and must [-] COMBO for rolls affected by visibility. |

Note: These descriptions for Visibility are focused on vision because that's easiest to visualize, but this also applies to hearing and other senses.

# Line of Sight

Regardless of the prevailing visibility, line of sight is still a limiting factor. In High Visibility you can see in high detail in your line of sight, and in Low Visibility you can see in your line of sight, just with less detail. Without clear line of sight you have Limited Visibility.

## Adaptation

People can naturally adapt to see well enough in various levels of light, from bright to dim. This after a few minutes. However, you lose your Dark adaptation if you see bright light, such as the directly lit area of a light source. Whenever your vision is adapting you have Limited Visibility. If you are exposed to a flash bright light, you can make a Saving Throw to close your eyes. An eye patch or helmet visor can help.

## Light Sources

Each light source creates an illuminated area with High Visibility, which is useful if you need to detailed get information such as when reading runes or searching for traps. A candle or lamp lights a small book-sized area, a torch or lantern lights a medium man-sized area, etc. However, this direct light spoils your night vision, so you have Limited Visibility outside of the illuminated area.

Light sources also provide indirect light, so in a cave or dungeon a simple candle is enough to provide Low Visibility. You need to let your eyes adapt to the dark and avoid bright lights; whenever your eyes are adjusting you have Limited Visibility.

Also keep in mind light sources can be seen from very far away, and the area they illuminate is High Visibility for potential foes skulking out there in the darkness.

## Helms Limit Visibility

The head is a vital target, so most helms cover as much as possible, while making compromises for breath, hearing, and vision.

**Partial helms** such as a kettle hat or skullcap only cover the top of the head. They have no penalties, but are only Partial Coverage.

**Open helms** fully cover the head, but have an "open" face. You must [-] COMBO on rolls requiring hearing or peripheral vision (e.g. listening, noticing an ambush, playing music, etc.).

**Closed helms** fully cover the head, including the face, offering better protection but sacrificing comfort, visibility, and breathability. You have Limited Visibility and must [-] COMBO for rolls which would be impeded by having a metal plate in front of your face, such as ranged attacks, ranged defenses, observation, hearing, communication, shouting orders, peripheral vision, etc. In essence you are trusting in your armor to protect you, not your senses.

## Nocturnals

Nocturnal (such as cats) or subterranean creatures (such as goblins) have sensitive eyes optimized for the dark, so they have High Visibility in dim light and Low Visibility in bright light.

## Tactics

Tactics are important for survival but can also be quite fun and satisfying to see how clever you can be. Many tactics involve taking Actions or Maneuvers that set up your Legend Die. Whether or not your tactics work will depend on the specific situation, which means you need to listen carefully and be ready to try alternatives. Pay attention to details the GM provides, and look for opportunities.

**Disadvantages** - Any miscellaneous situational disadvantages such as prone, flanked, blind, etc, require you to [-] COMBO. Consider countering enemy tactics, such as denying cover or high ground.

**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 prepare 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"), so you gain PREP on your attack roll.

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

**Shooting on the Move** - There is no penalty for attacking while moving, but this reduces your available Maneuvers for aiming, etc.

**Cover** - The use of cover is critical when facing heavy projectile weapons. Use a Maneuver to take cover against attacks from a specific direction, providing [+] COMBO and [+] PREP.

**Keep Down** - You can crouch, kneel, or crawl to reduce your target area to [+] COMBO in defense against ranged attacks. However, you [-] COMBO on melee attacks and defenses against melee attacks.

**Swarming** - Pay attention to groups, teams, or swarms of enemies, and try not to get surrounded. If these surround or flank you then [-] COMBO. You can counteract this with a Maneuver to [+] COMBO, such as pulling your allies close and locking shields.

**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 COMBO.

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

**Pay Attention** - Your enemies can also use tactics against you, so listen carefully in case the GM provides clues or foreshadows threats. Noticing where enemies aim will tell you who will need to defend, and who might need to find cover.

# Looting

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

**Grab** - Use a Maneuver to take one 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 roll to avoid notice. This only works for easily accessible items, such as a coin purse or ring of keys on a belt hook, unless you have a Secret such as "pick pockets".

**Loot** - Use an Action to loot a person or similarly-sized area, such as a prisoner, body, furniture piece, chest, pile of debris, etc. 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 a roll if the search needs special skills. Sometimes an item might be impossible to find without a specifically worded search, such as a gem rolled up in a rag in the toe of a boot. It's up to you to say how you search, then the GM will tell you if you find something, 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. You can earn 1xp if these "materials" are useful to a Path.

# 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 not stopped by armor or cover carries over into a Doom.

This is the same for all afflictions, from injuries to curses, for example:



wound  
injury/trauma  
darkness  
deaf/blind  
poison/venom  
disease  
drowning  
magical charm  
domination

magical sleep  
freezing  
insanity  
lycanthropy  
curse  
paralysis  
petrification  
stunned  
venom

radiation  
burns  
starving  
taint  
undead drain  
rot grubs  
soul drain  
insanity  
other bad stuff

# Doom Stages

Each Doom has three Damage boxes corresponding to Stages of decline. Check a box for each point of Damage taken for that Doom, so if you take 1 Damage you have Doom Stage 1. Once all three boxes are checked you are expected to die soon, and additional Damage causes immediate death.

| Damage  | Doom Stage       | Effects                             | Recovery      |
|---------|------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| □ □ □   | 0 - "Fine"       | none                                | after battle  |
| ☒ □ □   | 1 - Wounded      | [−] EFFORT                          | Field Ritual  |
| ☒ □ □   | 2 - Disabled     | Using body part makes Doom Unstable | Circle Ritual |
| ☒ □ □   | 3 - Death's Door | Expectant, near death               | Node Ritual   |
| ☒ □ □ + | Dead.            | Immediate death                     | n/a           |

**You can Soak 1 Damage** each time you are hit. This is limited to 1 Damage per hit, cannot reduce a Doom below Stage 0, and this raises **Stress**. Roleplay what you do (feel free to let your creativity run wild and take "artistic license", since this represents your heroic "plot armor").

**New Dooms are Unstable** and you take +1 Damage each time you or the GM rolls EFFORT. You or someone else can take an Action and roll to stabilize a Doom. Using a body part with a Doom of Stage 2+ makes the Doom Unstable again.

**Combine Dooms** of the same kind, especially if they are in the same Hit Location. For example, more wounds in the same location, additional poison, more extensive burns, etc. You can Soak Damage when combining Dooms, but the Doom Stage increases by a minimum of 1 (so Soak only helps if you are taking Damage 2+).

**Healing Dooms** requires months of time for natural healing, but just a few hours if using a healing Ritual.

## Doom Stage 0 (□□□) - "Fine"

At Doom 0 you are "fine". At least you think you think you probably will be fine, and might feel ok, but sometimes wounds can take a turn for the worse, so it's best to be cautious. After the stressful situation ends (e.g. combat or a chase) then Stage 0 Dooms are automatically recovered, barring any special complications set by the GM.

## Doom Stage 1 (▣□□) - Wounded

At Doom 1 you must [-] EFFORT. You know have received a life-threatening wound and are dying. You might have pain and nausea, and may find it difficult to rest or sleep. Stage 1 Dooms require a Field Ritual to heal, or many weeks of rest.

## Doom Stage II (▣▣□) - Disabled

At Damage 2 you cannot use the Hit Location. If this is your Head you are possibly delirious or unconscious. Stage 2 Dooms require a Circle Ritual to heal, or many months of rest.

## Stage III (▣▣▣) - 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. You cannot take Actions beyond "death throes" such as complaining, crying, cursing, and making a mess. 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. Stage 3 Dooms require a Node Ritual to heal.

## 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.

## Doom Recovery

Dooms are best recovered using magical healing Rituals, since natural healing is not always complete even after many months.

### Healing Rituals

You can heal a Doom with a healing Ritual. This is a combination of a healing Secret appropriate to the Doom and a Ritual Secret.

You must have a Secret appropriate for healing the Doom. For example, a "sword cut left arm" Stage 1 Doom could be healed with a "heal wounds" Secret channeled into a Field Ritual. However, Dooms such as "petrification" or "burns" would need a different Secret.

The level of Ritual required depends on the Doom Stage. A Field Ritual can heal a stage 1 Doom, a Circle Ritual can heal a stage 2 Doom, and a Node Ritual can heal a stage 3 Doom. Naturally, a higher Ritual can heal lesser Dooms.

Sometimes finding an appropriate healing Secret will require seeking out an NPC or going on a quest, for example "vampiric life drain" might require finding a priest who knows how to cure that affliction, or a rare disease might require a search for a cure.

### Healing Potions

Magic potions, such as a *potion of healing*, are essentially bottled magic. They can be used in place of a healing Secret, however, they cannot substitute for a Ritual. So a healing potion can be used for first-aid to stabilize a Doom, but to heal a Doom you will need to use the potion along with a Ritual.

# Natural Healing

Dooms can be healed naturally, however this takes many weeks or months. Just think about how long it takes for a deep cut with stitches to heal, a broken bone, or worse! This should be your last resort since it takes your character out of the game for a long time.

## 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 per point of Damage. You feel like you should be able to remember them, unless your Doom finalizes. 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.

# Part 6: Secrets

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

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



## Examples of Secrets

detect magic spell

fireball spell

teleport location

secret base

mastery of a node

location of a lost temple

secret path to ancient ruins

hidden mountain pass

contacts or allies

favor owed

leverage for bribery

location of a magic artifact

secret or long lost language

secret master or teacher

speak with animals

shapeshift to wolf

## Martial Arts

Rare, difficult or flashy combat techniques make good Secrets. See Part 4: Combat for more examples.

arrow cutting

dance fighting

disarm with style

flourish

kiai/war cry

flying kick

iron fist/foot

iron body/shirt

leg cutting

sweep attack

zen archery

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 take inspiration from books, movies, or classic roleplaying games.

### Magic-User Spells

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

### Hallow (Divine) Spells

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

### Pyromancy (Fire) Spells

|               |                |               |
|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| blazing arrow | smokeless fire | flaming arrow |
| combustion    | sunfire orb    | fireball      |
| ring of ashes | control fire   | flame wall    |

|                        |                  |                      |
|------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| flamberge              | ignite           | fire resistance      |
| hellfire               | purifying flames | vision in the flames |
| <b>Illusion Spells</b> |                  |                      |
| audible glamer         | invisibility     | phantasmal killer    |
| blur                   | light            | phantom steed        |
| color spray            | minor illusion   | prestidigitation     |
| darkness               | mirror image     | shadow blade         |
| disguise self          | phantom fog      | silence              |
| illusory script        | phantasmal force | ventriloquism        |

### Necromancy (Death) Spells

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

## Magic Rituals

In order to conduct a Ritual you need a Secret, which must correspond to one of the Ritual tiers (Field, Circle, Node, High, or Seasonal). Rituals have excellent potential for roleplaying and showing off your magic, since they are used in slow scenes where you have time to use evocative language and imagery. Rituals can be used to restore your Vim, or combined with your other Secrets for various results. For example, you could combine a "moonstone ritual" Secret with a "heal wounds" Secret to heal Dooms.

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

## Using Secrets

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

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

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

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

## Secrets Cost Vim

Attempting to use a Secret costs 1 Vim.

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

- When you are just adding roleplaying flavor for fun, not advantage.
- When you are using a Secret to justify why you deserve to [+] ULT.
- When your Secret is a skill or knowledge that doesn't involve anything magical or supernatural. You should be prepared to defend this with an explanation as needed. Knowledges such as ancient history or secret languages (e.g. Thieves' Cant, Druidic, Fomorian, Kessrith, Aethiiri, etc) do not cost Vim. For example, a skill such as "quick draw dagger" does not cost Vim, unless you were using magic to accomplish the feat. The GM will limit usage and effect based on what seems plausible without magic.

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

## Effects

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

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

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

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

If you want more than one Effect, or want to target more than one Person then you need to discuss that with the GM. This is a negotiation, so you could describe how your Secret isn't very powerful based on the way you've described it, or by adding limitations / restrictions (e.g. only works in shadows). You could also specify your Secret costs extra Vim (e.g. pay 2 Vim to affect multiple people). This is locked in when you take the Secret, not something

you can change freely during play, but still something that could change between games over further discussions with the GM.

## Damage

If you want to use a Secret to deal Damage, resolve it the same as for an attack without a Secret. On a successful attack roll you deal 1 Damage, or 2 for Crit, or 3 for Super Crit. This Damage is dealt in addition to the normal Effect.

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

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

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

- **Fan of Sparks** deals 1 Damage to everyone in a fan-shaped area in your forward arc (the size of three people attacking you).
- **Fireballs** deals 1 Damage to everyone within one or more blast areas (up to 3 person-sized areas).

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

## What about Armor?

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

**Cover and Concealment** - Even though your Secret isn't affected by armor, your Secret cannot go through walls or other cover, and you must have line of sight to your target. This means a simple curtain could potentially block your Secret. Magic is weird.

**Orichalcum** - Armor made of orichalcum still allows the defender to [+1] ASSET vs magic attacks, even when the magic ignores armor.

## Weapon-like Attacks

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

- If you are not using any Asset you have WC 0.
- If you have an Asset, but it does not need to be held in the hands (e.g. an amulet or tattoo) you have WC 1.
- If you are using some kind of hand-held magic focus which needs to be equipped, such as a wand, orb, staff, etc, then you are WC 3.
- If you are using a weapon to deliver a Secret, then use its Weapon Class with a +3 bonus. For example, a warbow (Class 3) firing a "magic arrow" would be WC 6. You would also have WC 6 if you are using a wizard staff (Class 3) to smite a foe.

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

## Healing Secrets

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

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

## Protective Secrets

Protective Secrets grant resistance or partial immunity to a particular Effect or type of Damage, such as "fire" or "swords". This grants [+] ULT and Armor Class 3 on Saving Throws against the specific Effect or type of Damage. Use an Action to grant protection to one Person (possibly yourself) for as long as you Maintain the Secret, or use a Maneuver to grant protection for a single roll.

- **Protection vs Fire** protects vs fire.
- **Wardpact vs Swords** protects vs swords and daggers.
- **Protection vs Arrows** protects vs arrows.
- **Protection from Evil** protects vs hostile spells of any kind, except those which deal Damage.
- **Armor of Faith** protects vs unholy spells, defined as those cast by saints or minions of an evil god who is an enemy of your god.
- **Mage Shield** is a floating force-disc, protecting vs attacks from a specific direction, changed with a Maneuver.

# Conjuration Secrets

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

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

# Transformation Secrets

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

# Movement Secrets

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

- **Quick Step** doubles movement from 10' to 20' per Maneuver. \*
- **Flying** allows you to fly, possibly growing wings or manifesting aetheric energies. \*
- **Folded Step** transports you to a location in line of sight.

# Secrets Use Assets

Secrets use Assets just as much as any other Action. For example, if you are making an attack you must [-] ASSET if you don't a supporting Asset, such as a magic wand, staff, or other focus. You can [+1] ASSET if your Asset has a Signature to help your Secret, such as a "wand of fire", "runesword" or "Aethiiri singing bow".

# Reversible Secrets

Secrets are freely "reversible". However, this applies to the target has two "modes" which it normally changes between, such as a lamp being lit/unlit, a door being open/closed, etc.

- **Unlock** opens a closed container, door, buckle, etc. You can reverse this to "lock" something.

# Maintained Secrets

Some Secrets can be "maintained" over time, such as a "protection from fire" spell. However, when you recover Vim (i.e. sleeping or a Ritual) then the Vim earned is reduced by 1 per maintained Secret.

# Secrets & Maneuvers

If appropriate, you can use a Secret as a Maneuver instead of as an Action. This is only allowable if no roll is needed, since anything you actively do that requires a roll is an Action, and never a Maneuver.

Some Secrets can grant a Bonus Maneuver. For example, a "quick draw dagger" Secret lets you ready your dagger without expending a Maneuver, and "quick step" gives you one Bonus Maneuver of movement. You may only gain one Bonus Maneuver per round.

# Secret Fumbles

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

Fumbles are often more dramatic (or dangerous) when a Secret is involved, especially if it has an area of effect. For example, a fumbled *fireball* spell might blow up in your face and/or affect your allies. Secrets which do not have obvious damaging effects might still inflict Damage on you or others due to the magical drain, backlash, or instability. The GM will usually allow a Saving Throw. Always consider whether using a secret is really necessary.

# Gaining Secrets

You can gain a new Secret as a Path 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.

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

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

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

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

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

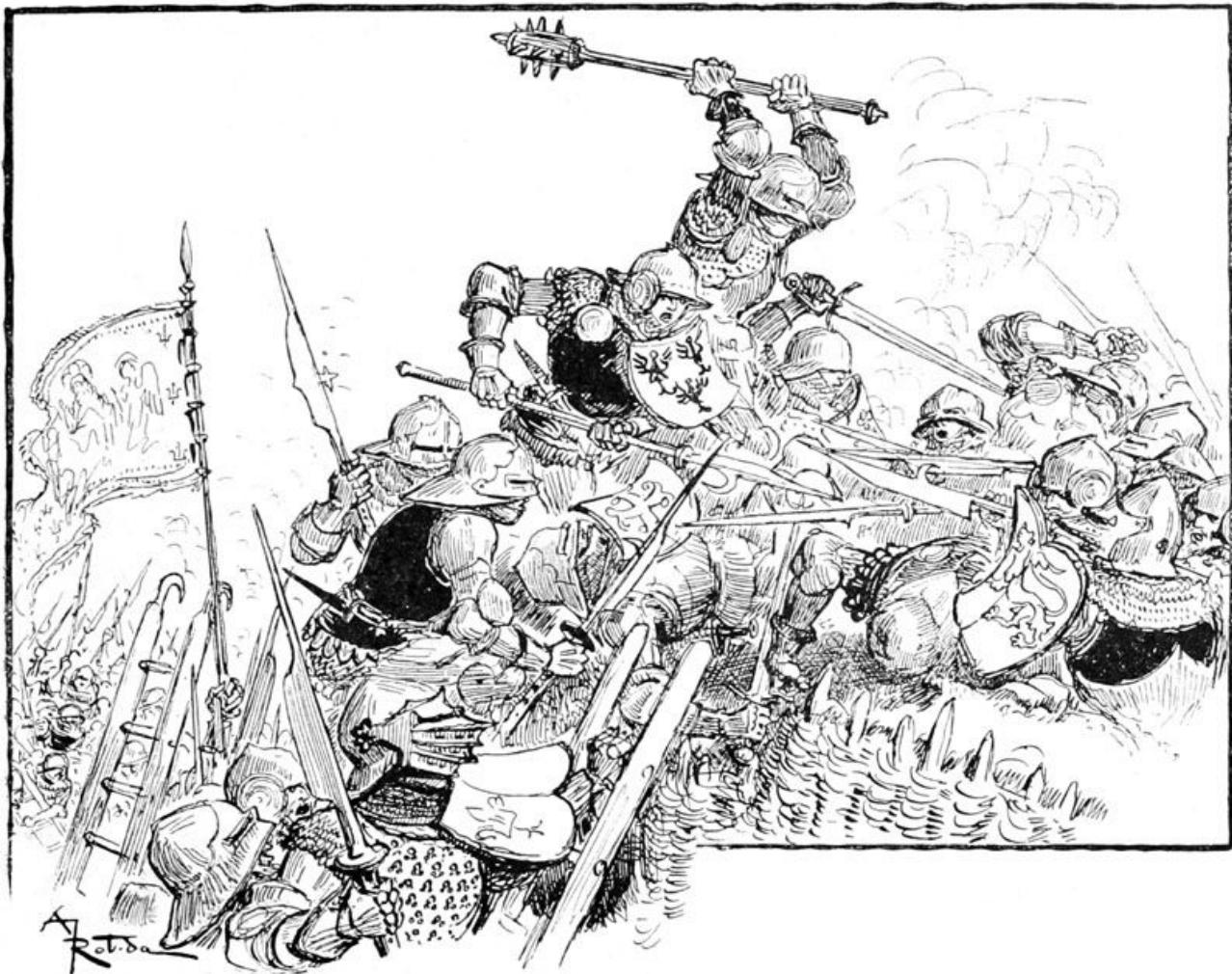
# Rituals

Rituals are complicated ceremonies that restore Vim. If you participate in a Ritual then upon completion your Vim raises to a new number based on the Ritual.

- **Field Rituals (5 Vim)** are expedient and can take place anywhere, in minimal time (1-2 hours). Thus they are the mainstay of magic-users and priests who spend their lives on the move and can't always take the time to sleep for a full night.
- **Circle Rituals (10 Vim)** are field rituals that involve construction of a ritual focus such as a magic circle, altar, shrine, circle of stones, dolmen, tori gate, etc. This requires preparation, time and/or potentially costly materials such as powdered silver. Circle Rituals take 3-5 hours, or more as appropriate based on what you build.
- **Node Rituals (15 Vim)** are circle rituals within a mystic place of power such as a Node, Kalla, holy ground, etc. Node Rituals take 3-5 hours if the Node is friendly/allied, or 6-8 hours if the Node is unfriendly/hostile.
- **High Rituals (20 Vim)** are node rituals for specific high days of the year, such as changing seasons, harvests, equinox, solstice, etc. There are a dozen High Rituals per year.
- **Seasonal Rituals (25 Vim)** are the most important high rituals celebrated with cultural rituals and festivals for multiple days. There are four Seasonal Rituals per year.
- **Aeonic Rituals (30+ Vim)** are the most rare and powerful of all rituals, taking place just once per aeon. Some herald a new aeon or important milestone, such as the rebirth of man, and some seek to bring about the end of the aeon.

Rituals are essential. In order to *conduct* a Ritual you need a Secret, which must be specific and correspond to one of the Ritual tiers (Field, Circle, Node, High, or Seasonal). However, always keep in mind you can *participate* in a Ritual that *someone else* conducts without needing the Secret Ritual yourself. Try to interact with NPCs.

Also, Rituals restore Vim even when used along with another Secret to create an effect. So a circle ritual combined with a "heal wounds" secrets both heals and restores Vim.



## Part 7: Advanced Assets

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

Some Assets have enhancements in the form of **Signatures** and **Secrets**; otherwise they still function normally, but aren't anything special. Assets can also have **Tags**, which provide tactical advantages and disadvantages in combat.

### 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 slicer", or might be very high quality such as "tunic, royal blue with gold embroidery" or unusual "cloak, velvet green, warm, with lots of little pockets inside". If the

Signature is the proper name of the Asset, be sure to write the normal Asset name afterwards along with Tags, e.g. "Naurdring, the goblin slicer [Longsword Class3...]".

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

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

## Asset Secrets

Assets can have Secrets, such as magic powers or special abilities. You could find a ring with a secret compartment, a magic sword that detects evil, or a flask of holy water that heals wounds. Asset Secrets work the same and are subject to the same requirements as other Secrets, e.g. you need a supporting Theme, must spend Vim, etc.

## Asset Tags

Asset Tags describe various qualities of the Asset, such as weapon range or features.

Weapons and armor always have a "Class" Tag, for comparing weapon penetration and armor resistance. Some Tags are followed by a value, such as Class2, Class3, Far3, Far4, etc. The value can be positive or negative, and if omitted from a Tag defaults to "1".

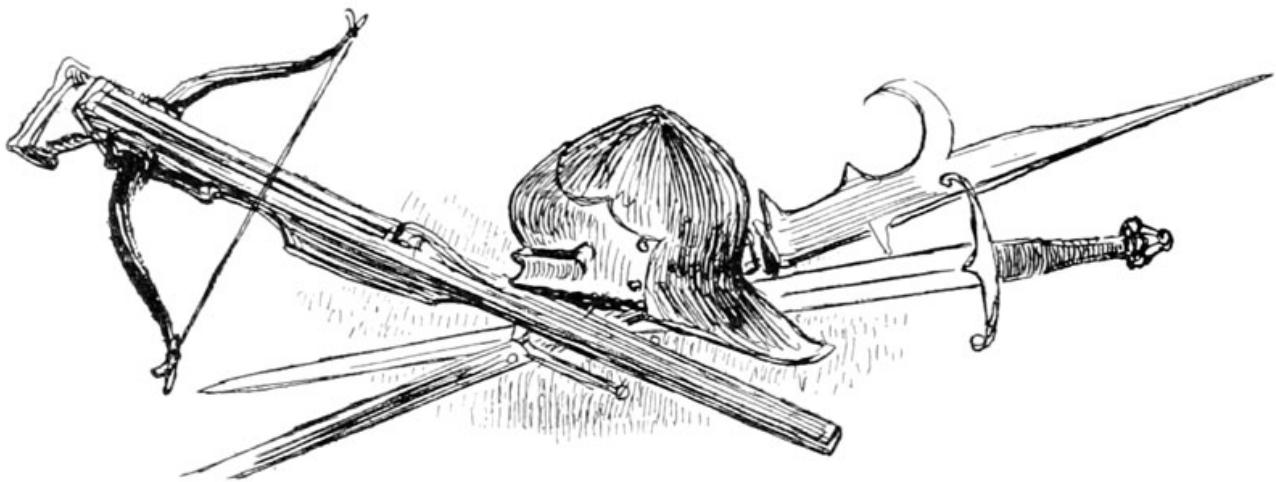
## Weapon, Armor, and Shields

When counting **Damage**, compare **Weapon Class** and **Armor Class** for the Hit Location. Add +1 Damage if the weapon is higher, or -1

Damage if the armor is higher. If you have a shield covering the Hit Location then you can use **Shield Class** in place of Armor Class.

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

| Class | Weapon  | Armor & Shields  |
|-------|---|--|
| 0     | cane, whip  | clothing   |
| 1     | knife, club, sickle, javelin, flight bow  | cold clothing, soft leather  |
| 2     | dagger, rondel, sidesword, longsword (1H), hunting bow, club (2H), small ax, spear (1H)         | light gambeson, cuir-boulli, arming jack, handguard                    |
| 3     | spear (2H), mace, battle axe (2H), falchion, crossbow, longsword (2H), longbow, warbow, khopesh | gambeson (30 layers), mail, jazeraint, coat of plates, buckler         |
| 4     | greatsword, military pick, light pistol   | transitional plate, munition plate, round shield, rotella, kite shield |
| 5     | halberd, poleax, polearm, heavy pistol, arbalest, blunderbuss                                   | full plate, tower shield, aspis  |
| 6     | mounted lance, carbine, rifle, arquebus, Dwur thaumasweeper, ogre club                          | jousting plate, pavise   |
| 7     | light ballista, handgonne, giant club, Dwur thaumagonne   | wooden palisade  |
| 8     | siege weapon, dragon breath, Dwur thaumacannon  | stone castle wall  |



# Weapons

Weapons are tools of war, designed and honed to defeat armor and kill enemies.

**Melee weapons** such as swords, axes, and spears are made for hand-to-hand combat, up close and personal. When using a melee weapon you should maneuver to engage with foes at a range appropriate for your weapon, e.g. if you have a dagger you need to get close.

**Missile weapons** such as bows are built for attacking at a distance. When using a missile weapon you should maneuver to keep away from melee opponents and find the best lines of sight to shoot foes while using cover to block their lines of sight.

**Two-handed weapons** need two hands to use, and this is indicated by the "2H" Weapon Tag. If necessary you can use a 2H melee weapon in single hand, but this reduces Weapon Class by 1 and does not grant beneficial Weapon Tags. (Not an option for bows.)

## Common Weapons

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Swords and Daggers

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

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

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

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

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

**Cutlass** [Class2 Short Defensive Cutty] short curved cutting sword, such as a machete, hanger, langes messer, or dussack.

**Short Sword** [Class2 Short Defensive Stabbity] short straight stabbing sword, such as a katzbalger or cinquedea.

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

**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

**Sabre** [Class2 Medium Defensive Cutty] long curved cutting sword. A thin bladed scimitar can be a sabre, otherwise it is a falchion.

**Rapier** [Class2 Medium Handguard Binding Defensive Cutty] civilian thrusting sword, popular with nobles and duelists in Aquila.

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

**Longsword** [Class3 2H Short-Medium Control-Medium Binding Defensive Cutty] longsword, bastard sword, kriegsmesser, or Alu "av-kel" sword

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

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

## Military Weapons

These weapons are strongly associated with military units. Most are more complicated to learn than simple peasant weapons, requiring at least some training in a military order. 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Ranseur** [Class4 2H Long Binding Defensive] a very popular early polearm with a trident-shaped head, also known as roncone or ronka. The side prongs are for binding and trapping weapons and shields. Also known as a spetum, especially by Eldar in earlier aeons. Some versions can be folded, and others such as the brandistock or "feather staff" have hidden prongs that spring out from one end.

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

**Guisarme** [Class4 2H Long Binding Hooking] a polearm with a concave scythe-like blade (such as for pruning), usually with a spike

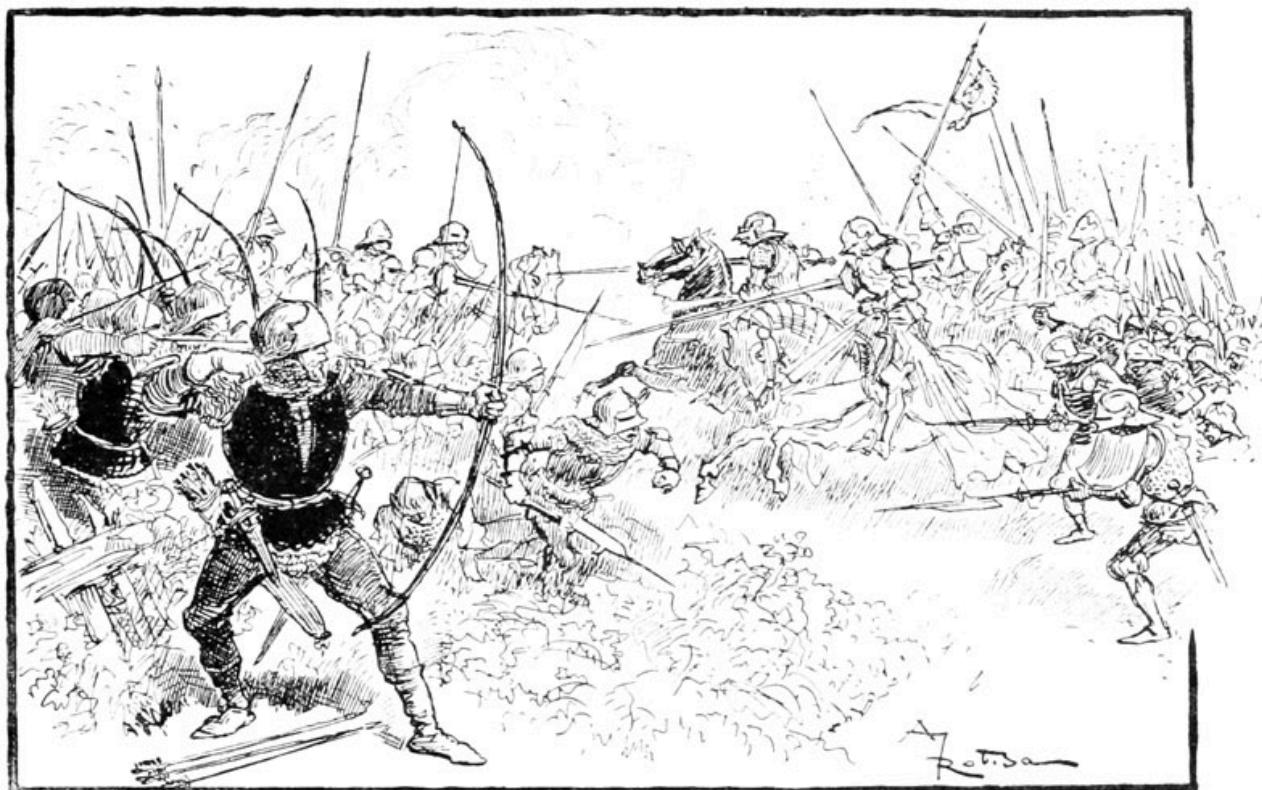
for thrusting and various prongs for pulling. Includes similar weapons such as the bill, bill hook, and scorpion, etc.

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

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

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

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



## Projectile Weapons

The main three kinds of projectile weapons are bows, crossbows, and guns. Bows are superior to crossbows and guns 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 or guns, making them impractical for fielding large armies. Guns require the least training and strength,

and remain effective even troops are hurt or weakened by malnutrition or disease. Yet, elite archers can outperform crossbows or guns, making them a compelling choice for adventurers even though armies might make other choices.

Projectile weapons have a **Reload** Tag, which is the number of Maneuvers you need to spend to load ammo for taking a single shot. Projectile weapons without a trigger (e.g. bows and slings) become unloaded after one Round, so the Reload Maneuvers must be spent on the same or prior Round as your attack Action.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Arquebus** [Class6 Far4 Accurate Reload9 Secret] a newer, more accurate version of the hand cannon with a true rifle shape and a matchlock.

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

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



## Weapon Tags

Weapons have Tags to represent their characteristics; many also describe a way you can [+] COMBO in specific circumstances.

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

# Weapon Class

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

**Military Weapons** - Weapons of **Class3** or higher are perceived as "military weapons" and not usually permitted in civilized areas such as cities, towns, taverns, etc, unless they have the Civil Tag.

## 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**. If you use a 2H weapon in one hand reduce Weapon Class by 1 and you do not benefit from Asset Tags.

## 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. You can [+] COMBO if you are at your optimal range and your opponent is not.

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

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

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

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

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

## Advanced Weapon Tags

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

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

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

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

**Control** weapons such as long swords and short polearms can be easily turned to strike in any direction. That is useful in itself, and also makes them ideal for controlling an area and fending off multiple opponents. When surrounded or flanked by opponents, avoid [-]

**COMBO** if you spend a Maneuver. This only works if using two hands and at the range specified, e.g. "Control-Medium".

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

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

After a successful attack against a soft target (i.e. your WC is better than their AC) you may spend a Maneuver to make another attack with the same weapon.

**Handguard** weapons have a complex hilt such as a rapier's rings or basket hilt sword, which protects the hand, a very common target.

This counts as AC 2 armor for the weapon hand.

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

**Fragile** weapons break on a Fumble.

**Defensive** weapons are equivalent to a shield using Weapon Class.

**Primitive** weapons are easy to build, requiring very low skills, time, and materials, and tools. They might still be found in use by primitive tribes, but for modern peoples would only be found self-made or improvised when nothing else is available.

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

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

After a successful attack you may spend a Maneuver to make another attack with the same weapon in the same Hit Location.

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

# ARMOR

The purpose of armor is to protect your vitals from threats you expect to face. Your ancestors only had to deal with weapons of their time period, but you will also face a variety of monsters!

Armor is a tradeoff of coverage and mobility, so you should wear the minimal armor you feel necessary. In addition, you may need to make compromises based on your intended tasks, such as riding a horse, commanding troops, shooting a bow, playing a mandolin, climbing and spelunking in a deep dark caves, etc. Even knights only wear full armor when they *need* to!



## Armor Coverage

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

| Armor Tag  | Example      | Full Coverage            | Maneuvers |
|------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| Body-Armor | cuirass      | Head, Torso              | 3         |
| Half-Armor | mail hauberk | Head, Torso, Arms, Hands | 2         |
| 3Qtr-Armor | 3/4 plate    | Head, Arms, Torso, Waist | 2         |
| Full-Armor | plate armor  | all                      | 1         |

**Coverage** - You will have either **Full Coverage** or **Partial Coverage** for each Hit Location. There are two key differences:

- **Maneuvers** - Your number of Hit Locations with Full Coverage determines your number of Maneuvers per Round.
- **Gaps** - Hit Locations Partial Coverage have significant gaps or vulnerabilities compared with Full Coverage.

You should wear a suit of armor that covers critical Hit Locations with Full Coverage, and miscellaneous pieces of clothing or armor on other Hit Locations.

**Maneuvers** - Your number of Maneuvers per Round is determined by your number of Hit Locations with Full Coverage. (1-2 Hit Locations is 3 Maneuvers, 3-4 Hit Locations is 2 Maneuvers, and 5-6 Hit Locations is 1 Maneuver.) Note that some areas of the rules say you get "2 Maneuvers per round", but this is just for readability since that is the average.

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

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

## Body-Armor

If you wear Body-Armor you have Full Coverage for your Head and Torso and get 3 Maneuvers per round. This armor just covers the most vital areas.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Half-Armor

If you wear Half-Armor you have Full Coverage for your Head, Arms, Hands, and Torso, and get 2 Maneuvers per round. Half-Armor is commonly worn with a shield and/or gauntlets.

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

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

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

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

**Coat of Plates** [Class3 Half-Armor] is a coat of brigandine, consisting of plates sewn onto or between layers of cloth or leather.

Inexpensive, widely available, and easily repaired. The head is protected by a leather cap.

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

## 3Qtr-Armor

If you wear 3Qtr-Armor you have Full Coverage for your Head, Arms, Torso, and Waist. This armor is popular with troops who need nimble hands and thus do not wear gauntlets, such as archers, gunners, or swashbucklers (using sword and buckler).

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

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

## Full-Armor

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

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

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

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

## Armor Pieces

You may exchange pieces in your suit of armor, for example if you find magical gauntlets you might want to swap them for your old gauntlets. However, only Hit Locations covered by your Armor-Tag count as having Full Coverage.

### Clothing

**Hooded Robes** [Class1 Soft Civil] thick robes with long sleeves and hood, possibly with some boiled leather or metal reinforcements.  
Worn by monks, wizards, and cultists everywhere

**Plumed Hat** [Class1 Hat Soft Civil] feathered hat with padding.

**Pointed Hat** [Class1 Hat Soft Civil] big conical floppy wizard hat, somehow always stays up there

### Head

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

**Coif** [Class1 Helm] are hoods of stitched leather or quilted cloth.

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

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

**Cervelliere "skull cap"** [Class2 Hat] are round tight-fitting steel caps.

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

**Barbute** [Class2 Helm Closed] a visor-less bronze helm with a distinctive "T" shaped opening for the eyes and mouth. Includes an integral lining, so no arming cap is needed.

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

**Gorget** [Class2 Gorget] stiff collar of brigandine for the throat

**Bevor** [Class3 Gorget] hard plate collar for the throat.

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

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

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

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

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

**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 is fully closed and does not have a moveable visor, so it was usually taken off for foot combat.

**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. Lined 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.

## ARMS

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

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

**Spaulders** [Class3 Arm] articulated metal bands (lames) covering the shoulders, joined by straps of leather or rivets. Unlike pauldrons, spaulders do not cover the armpits, which may be protected by besagews (rondels) or left open.

**Pauldrons** [Class3 Arm] large metal dome ("cop") that covers the shoulder and armpit, with metal bands (lames) to also protect the upper arm similar to spaulders.

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

**Plate Arms** [Class3 Arm] fully enclosed plate arms.

## Hands

If you wear armor on your hands you must [-] COMBO for delicate work like picking locks, playing musical instruments, etc.

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

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

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

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

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

## Waist

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Legs

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

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

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

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

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

## Advanced Armor Tags

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

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

**Closed** helms cover the wearer's face, but sacrifices comfort, visibility, and breathability. You have Limited Visibility and must [-] COMBO for rolls which would be impeded by having a metal plate in front of your face, such as ranged attacks, ranged defenses, observation, hearing, communication, peripheral vision, etc.

**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.

**Gorget** armor protects the throat.

**Hand** is armor for the hand(s). You must [-] COMBO for delicate work like picking locks, playing musical instruments, etc.

**Hat**-shaped helms are armor that just covers the top of the head. They do not hinder vision, hearing, or breathing.

**Helm** is armor that protects the head. Since cover the sides of your head, you must [-] COMBO on rolls requiring hearing or peripheral vision (e.g. listening, noticing an ambush, music, etc.). Helms are normally "open" and do not fully cover the face.

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

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

**Visor** helms have a moveable plate to open or close the face, becoming a normal "open" or Closed helm. Locking the visor into open or closed position requires an Action. However, if you have a free hand you can use a Maneuver along with a roll to quickly open and shut the visor (i.e. to avoid penalties for that roll).

# Shields

**Shields** are pieces of *moveable armor*, primarily used when full 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 **Guard**. Each Guard covers one Hit Location for one side (right or left).



Your shield will cover in "**Left Torso**" Guard unless you use a Maneuver to change Guards. Large or Medium shields can protect any Hit Location, but Small shields cannot protect the Leg. In addition to the Guard,

In addition to the Hit Location covered by the Guard, your shield provides Full Coverage to the Hand holding the shield. Medium shields also provide Partial Coverage for the Arm (wrist & forearm), while Large shields provide Full Coverage for the Arm.

See [Weapon and Shield Guards](#) for more advanced details.

## Medieval Shields

**Buckler** [Class 3 Small Centergrip] 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.

**Target** [Class 3 Small Strapped] small wooden round shield, worn strapped to the arm, such as the Scottish target or smaller Viking shield. Inexpensive and readily available.

**Round shield** [Class4 Medium Centergrip] light wooden round shield, such as a Viking shield. Inexpensive and common.

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

**Rotella** [Class4 Medium Strapped] strapped metal round shield held at arm's length from the body.

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

**Kite** [Class4 Large Strapped] A distinctive shield in a reverse teardrop shape used by horsemen to protect the left flank and leg.

**Aspis** [Class5 Large Strapped] huge deeply-dished wooden shield.

**Tower Shield** [Class5 Large Strapped] rectangular tal shield.

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

## Shield Tags

**Small:** shields cover the hand

**Medium:** shields cover the hand, wrist, and forearm, but count as an armor piece for maximum Maneuvers

**Large:** shields cover the entire Arm Hit Location, but count as an armor piece for maximum Maneuvers

## 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.

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 (i.e. with a smaller Shield 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, and thus they have a higher Shield Class. 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 (i.e. no "right" Guards are possible) and 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.

## Eldar Assets

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

## Designing Eldar Assets

Asset design is intentionally flexible in Legends, to give you creative space. When describing Eldar Assets, think in terms of which

Signatures and Secrets the Asset should have. For example, A Signature like "Drisi Orichalcum plate armor" protects against hostile magic (Saving Throws vs magic [+1] ASSET). A "Drisi Vakar Dagger" Signature prevent recovery (Stabilization Roll [-1] ULT), or it could be a Secret that prevents normal healing (which might hinder PCs more than NPCs). Lastly, the "Avathar Book of Shadows" is a Book of Secrets Asset with a "shadow magic" Signature. Overall it's more important to be creative and flexible when writing down Assets than to have a definitive list, and you should collaborate with the GM.

## Eldar Materials

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

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

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

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

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

**Orichalcum:** A brassy alchemical alloy that can be cast into various shapes, such as amulets, rings, weapons, and armor. Orichalcum is reputed to have some resistance to magic, and was a favored metal of the Alu, Baal, and Drisi, who cast amulets of protection, magic-cutting blades, and magic-soaking armor. You can [+1] ASSET on Saving Throws vs magic where the Hit Location is covered by

orichalcum, but must [-] ASSET on rolls involving magic and a body part (Hit Location) covered by orichalcum. Orichalcum also has an Armor Class bonus of +3 vs magic attack which deal damage.

**Vakaar:** An alchemical steel alloy, typically blackened, purple, or green in color, and used almost exclusively to make "venom blades" infamous for inflicting wounds that do not heal naturally (Stabilization Rolls [-] ULT). The secrets of making Vakar blades are lost, but were kept by the Drisi and rumored to be forged in darkness with many layers of folded steel, infused with poisons, venoms, blood, souls, forged with dark prayers to the Serpent Gods.

## Alu Assets

**Alu Dart Knives (as-en)** [Class1 Close Short Stabbity Far1] the dart-like throwing knives of the Alu warriors

**Alu Sickle Sword (av-tlen)** [Class2 Medium Binding Defensive Hooking Cutty] the deeply curved sickle sword of the Alu, a weapon capable of hooking and trapping a foe's limbs, but also a tool in cutting through jungle overgrowth or bladegrass.

**Alu Kel Sword (av-kel)** [Class3 2H Medium Binding Defensive Cutty] the long sword of the Alu warriors.

**Alu Bladestaff** [Spear Class3 2H Medium Far1] an ornate staff with a hidden blade. Variants with other hidden weapons have also been found, such as a spring-dart knife, whip, or smoke egg.

**Alu Bladegrass Robes** [Class1 Soft] soft woven bladegrass robes over the entire body, including a fluttering cloak

**Alu Bladegrass Cuirass** [Class3 Body-Armor] thick bladegrass strands covering the torso and head, including a war mask

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

## Avathar Assets

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

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

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

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

**Blood Flies:** Some Avathars raise blood flies as gruesome pets, fed on the Avathar's own demi-vampiric blood and trained to alert him to potential food ([+] ASSET for related rolls). These Avathars are experts at detecting or tracking creatures of flesh and blood. The Avathar can call back his flies and hide them on his person, but takes [-] ULT for social interactions since they are disgusting.

## Drisi Assets

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Vakaar Falchion** [Class3 Medium Binding Defensive Cutty] evil wavy-bladed sword made of cracked dark purple or green steel. Wounds do not heal naturally ([!] ULT on Stabilization)

## Draconecroalchemy Assets

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

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

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

**Dragonbone Dagger:** An assassin's blade dealing a wound that will not heal on its own ([!] ULT Stabilization).

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

## Dwur Assets

Thaumatagonnes ('Runelocks") are the famous and formidable Dwur firearms and cannons. The heavy metal barrels of these weapons are forged in fantastical shaped and covered in Thaumaturgical runes. The runes strengthen the barrel, allowing the use of more powerful alchemical powder than the simple black powder used in Alorn handgonnes. Some Thaumatagonnes bear additional enchantments or improvements that the Alglonds firearms cannot replicate.

Runelocks are a form of flintlock with a Thaumaturgical rune on the "Runelock" striker which magically resets the striker when the rune is spoken. However, Runelocks can only be reloaded if you have the "Runelock" Secret, only known by Dwur, and the Themes Dwur and Thaumaturge reduce the Reload time by 1 each.

### **Runelock Dwuringer pistol**

[Class3 Far2 Accurate Reload6 Secret] is a single-shot holdout pistol that fits inside a belt buckle or boot

### **Runelock Revolver** [Class4 Far3

Accurate Reload5 Secret] can hold six-shots, reload cost is for reloading 1-6 cartridges

### **Runelock Pistol** [Class5 Far3

Accurate Reload5 Secret] single shot

### **Runelock holy water sprinkler**

[Class4 2H Far Reload7 Secret] is a "hand-cannon-mace-pistol" with the mace head containing four pistols. Each barrel must be loaded and fired independently.

**Runelock Doppelpistol** [Class5 Far2 Accurate Reload5 Secret] two barrels, each of must be loaded and fired independently.

**Runelock dungeon sweeper** [Class6 2H Far3 Reload5 Secret] is a double-barreled shotgun meant for up-close and personal combat. Each barrel must be loaded and fired independently.

**Thaumasweeper** [Class6 2H Far3 Reload6 Secret] a Dwur

Thaumaturgical "dungeon sweeper" cast in alchemist's iron and etched with thaumaturgical runes.

**Runelock carbine** [Class7 2H Far4 Reload5 Secret] a light rifle

**Runelock longrifle** [Class8 2H Far5 Heavy Accurate Reload6 Secret] a long-barreled heavy rifle



**Thaumagonne** [Class7 2H Far4 Reload10 Secret] a Dwur

Thaumaturgical handgonne cast in alchemist's iron and etched with thaumaturgical runes.

**Thaumacannon** [Class8 Crew Far4 Reload12 Secret] a Dwur

Thaumaturgical cannon cast in alchemist's iron and etched with thaumaturgical runes. The cannon barrel is heavy (20#) and usually fitted to a stock, staff, or wheeled frame. The barrels are often cast in fantastical shapes such as dragons, rockets, or mountain scenes. An alchemist can load the cannon with fire, stones, bullets, or any number of explosive or incendiary magic concoctions or fireworks. This charges the cannon with a single, specific spell (such as *fireball* or *lightning bolt*) which you must describe in detail.

## Magic-User Assets

Magic-users use wands, orbs, and other "magical focuses" to help them channel magic, such as the items below. Otherwise, if you have no Asset then [-] ASSET, just as if attacking without a weapon.

**Book of Shadows:** A grimoire of *Umbracala* shadow magic spells.

**Diadem of the Third Eye** a pendant suspended above your brow, in the position of your third eye, usually A of jewel or precious stone.

**Eye of Horus** one of your palms has been tattooed with magical patterns resembling a third eye

**Hamsa** this ornate amulet depicts the "hand of the goddess" with the third eye, which can be worn on a chain or pin.

**Hex Hands** your hands are covered in magical tattoos, and very potent when used together.

**Ioun Stone** a rare stone, crystal ball, or dracontia. Held in one or two hands when used, or with a Secret can be released to hover by you.

**Runesword** [varies by specific sword type] legendary rune-inscribed sword wielded by Eldar battlesingers

**Singing Bow** Elven warbow exquisitely carved and inlaid with silver leaf, which channels vim into the arrows as they leave the bow.

**Sorcerer's Focus** your clean-shaven head is tattooed with magical ink, tracing magical patterns to project your thoughts into reality

**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.

**The Evil Eye** one of your eyes is capable of a truly malevolent glare, yet prone to becoming bloodshot if used too often

**The Magic Finger** one of your fingers (you pick!) is tattooed with magical inks and can shoot a ray of magic

**Wizard's Wand** a sturdy rod the length of your arm from finger tips to elbow, often made of bundles of sticks to help channel magic.

**Wizard's Staff** stout staff, ideal for defense and focusing power.

## Legendary Asset Names

Legendary Assets are kick-ass, and so they should have kick-ass names! Here are some examples to kick-start you writing your own.

### Weapon Names

|              |               |              |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| Asskicka!    | Nightfall     | Soulsplitter |
| Skullcrusher | Patience      | Starhammer   |
| Sineater     | Harmony       | Soultaker    |
| Inquisitor   | Mercy         | Widowmaker   |
| Sunblade     | Sword of Life | Frostcutter  |
| Dawnbreaker  | Hater         | Bloodletter  |
| Tranquility  | Twilight      | Kinslayer    |
| Lightbringer | Doomsong      | Fellcleanser |

### Famous Weapon Names (no claim to originality)

|           |          |              |
|-----------|----------|--------------|
| Arondight | Clarent  | Foehammer    |
| Ascalon   | Durandal | Stormbringer |
| Caliburn  | Galatin  | Mourneblade  |

# 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.

Whether you are creating your own world or reusing an existing work, you need to describe the fictional world to the players.

Without this, there is no game. Vividly portray NPCs, monsters, and other elements; add drama, voices, and detail. Find ways to draw the players and their characters into the world and create verisimilitude. Also describe imminent threats and foreshadow future dangers.

## Starting a Campaign

Follow these steps to get a new campaign up and running quickly.

1. **Introduce the setting** - Pick a genre and come up with some idea of the game world and starting scene. You can use an existing campaign setting or come up with your own. Legends works with any genre, but pick something familiar unless you have time to prepare.
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 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 to lower Stress, or exploring. Point out how those require Actions, and that turns are continuous so you are continuing to roll Encounters. Ideally let the players find a clue that kicks off another Path.
6. **Next** - Add a GM Path and check on Dooms. Also prompt the players to choose a new Experience Path and start making progress. Roll an Encounter to add urgency and pressure.

## Managing the Game

You are responsible for explaining the rules and ensuring the game runs smoothly. Make rulings that are consistent, sensible, and fair, so that players understand their choices and know those choices matter. You may need to make “house rulings” for anything not explicitly covered in the rules, and you should try to track those and keep them consistent for your campaign. Keep the current Hazard visible so players understand their odds for success.

## Flow of Play

The game is structured in **Rounds**; where each player can take one **Turn** per round. The GM starts each round, and manages transitions into/out of the round, as well as into player Turns.

- **GM Turn:**
  - GM rolls an **Encounter** (hidden) for inspiration, if desired.
  - GM narrates the scene, describing urgent updates to the situation, attacks, obvious threats, changes such as movement of foes or NPCs, as well as details about the environment or foreshadowing of future threats.
  - GM sets **Hazard** to set the level of difficulty in the scene, whether low (10-12) medium (13-15) or high (16-18). Setting Hazard low creates a slow-paced scene, and setting Hazard high creates a fast-paced scene.
  - GM describes one Action (or possibly more than one if there are many NPCs / monsters).

- 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.)
- GM prompts the Player Leader (or "party leader") to describe the intentions of the group of players. If appropriate, narratively fast-forward to a new round.
- **Player Turns** (for each player):
  - GM chooses a player (usually clockwise around the table) and **Transitions** into the player's turn. GM describes any new or urgent info and declares required Saving Throws.
  - Player Turn
    - Player declares what they will do for their turn. The player needs to match the pace described by the GM, so these are possibly long narratives, or lightning fast such as in combat.
    - GM should clarify any gross misconceptions or misunderstandings implied by the player's declaration, as needed.
    - Player rolls Saving Throws (if applicable). This is simultaneous with the player Action.
    - Player takes 1 Action and up to 3 Maneuvers, making a roll if necessary.
    - GM describes Consequences for a Fumble, if any, possibly calling for a Saving Throw.
  - GM **Transitions** out of player's turn

## GM Turns

Roll an Encounter at the start of your turn, or whenever a player rolls a Fumble or takes a risky action. 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 Management

It's simplest to stay in **real-time** for most of the game, where each round is just barely long enough to finish one significant action. When moving around town or a dungeon, this is few minutes per round, and in a fast-paced combat this is a few seconds per round.

## Rest Days

When the PCs rest, you should reset Hazard, Stress, and Vim as appropriate. Usually the PCs will use at least a Field Ritual to recover some Dooms and raise Vim.

## Narrative Fast-Forward

It's important to keep the game flowing, so feel free to fast-forward past boring stretches of time, such as camping for a night, riding for a few days, traveling by ship for a month, etc. You can still use rounds and turns, just remind players during Transition to their turns that the game is on fast-forward, so the timescale is longer (e.g. 1 day rather than 6 seconds) so they can get more done. Go back to normal-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 to the start of the interesting event.

## 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 it has taken Damage in excess of its Hits. Describe a visceral end leaving no doubt the monster is dead (rolling heads, sprays of blood, fine red mist, etc.). If the player targeted a hit location, be sure to use it.

**Aim** - 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 Hits remaining, 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 a tool to help you present challenge to the players.

Hazard is the current level of difficulty and risk in the 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 also controls pace.

### **Hazard ranges from 10-18:**

- **Hazard 10 (lowest)** - The players face little to no risk, they are safe. This is good for starting a game session or a slow-paced scene.
- **Hazard 11-12 (low)** - The players face some risk, but have the upper hand. This is good for overland movement through sparsely defended enemy territory.
- **Hazard 13-14 (medium)** - The players face a good, sporting level of challenge, where they have a slight edge over their opposition, but not so much that things will feel easy.
- **Hazard 15-16 (high)** - The players are facing opponents who are their equal, or possibly even slightly tougher. This presents a serious challenge, and one or more of the players will probably take a serious Doom or go down.
- **Hazard 17-18 (highest)** - The players are clearly outmatched, and highly likely to be defeated unless they play brilliantly or flee.

You should adjust Hazard to match the dramatic tension in the story, rising and falling throughout the game. Raise Hazard whenever you narrate anything which makes the situation more dangerous, especially when you foreshadow a threat of some kind. Cut Hazard as the players overcome challenges.

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 to control pace. By setting Hazard low, you are signaling the players that they are reasonably safe and can take their time to explore, be introspective, or engage in a long drawn-out narrative. By Raising Hazard you are telling the players that the situation has changed and they need to react quickly.

You can also describe how a foe or story element is directly raising the Hazard, which may be something the players can stop. For example, an unusual device might be sending psychic signals that make it harder for the players 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. Cut Hazard if the players neutralize the source of the danger.

Raising hazard is best done as foreshadowing before 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 then develop the threat over multiple 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.

## Using Stress

As the GM, you should Raise Stress whenever you describe something that would shock, unnerve, or start to unravel the sanity of a normally brave man. For example, Raise Stress when a PC finds a trap with the remains of a prior dead adventurer still on it.

|                    |                      |               |
|--------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| ambush             | cultist ritual signs | death of a PC |
| murdered innocents | dead adventurers     | lost          |
| eldritch horror    | magical fear         | darkness      |

All of the examples play to common human stressors and fears. Getting lost is stressful, especially in the dark and with goblyns hunting you. You could take this into supernatural horror if you and your group of players like that sort of thing (be sensitive about this) but there are plenty of childhood terrors to exploit.

The purpose of Stress is to make the PCs feel human. Sure, they are stone-cold adventurer murder-hobos and all that, but they are still people. All the stuff you see adds up and you have to unwind and destress all of it somehow.

If a player has a Secret that might counteract the Stress, then allow the player to spend Vim instead of Stress. This is the same principle as when players Soak Damage.

## Enforcing Minimum Stress

The point of Stress is to make the players feel human, and keep up pressure during the climax/resolution of a scene. As long as the situation is reasonably non-stressful, the players can reduce Stress to 1 in a relatively short time by roleplaying human actions such as resting, eating, playing music, or blowing off steam. However, you need to enforce a minimum Stress as follows.

- If the situation is stressful, such as combat or a chase, then the players can only reduce Stress by using Secrets, which costs Vim.
- Dooms set a minimum Stress, which is the number of Dooms, or the highest Doom Stage, whichever is higher.
- Negative Vim sets a minimum Stress, which is the number of points below zero. (So if Vim is -5 then the minimum Stress is 5.)
- You can optionally let Stress go to 0 if the players celebrate a major victory at a feast, epic tavern party, etc.

## Encounters

As the GM, describe an Encounter during your turn at the start of every round, and whenever players Fumble or take a risky action. When possible continue any natural chain of events, natural

consequences, situational development, etc. Otherwise you can roll on the **Encounter Table** at the end of this book for inspiration. Raise Hazard or Stress when you describe ominous details.

## Custom Encounter Tables

You can create custom Encounter tables for your campaign. Use the standard table as a guide, and fill your own table 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) at an off-limits location (e.g. thief hideout, shady warehouse, etc.)                     | Meet a friendly and useful NPC or building (e.g. a shop or tavern). Or players warned they are tailed/pickpocketed.                                     |
| ASSET  | Players do not fit in the neighborhood, standing out and attracting attention.  | Find a shop with something useful to the players, or a rare item they've been searching for.  |
| EFFORT | Player 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 thieves wants to roll the players for loot.   | Urchins watching. What do they want? Who do they work for?  |
| VLT    | Black wizards walk the streets, what is their purpose?  | Find a weird shop or black market with exotic goods.  |
| PRCP   | Ambushed by an organized band of thieves. Or an urchin grabs an item and runs, leading to an ambush. Or thieves attack from the rooftops of an alley. | Notice the neighborhood is getting dicey. Or notice urchins speaking with some thugs, watching and pointing at marks (potential victims) on the street. |

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.

## Using Experience Paths

Review Paths with the players at the start and end of every game session. Help new players write Paths. Also check on Dooms.

# GM Paths

You can use Paths to write story or campaign goals, group quests, bounties (wanted posters), and requests for aid from NPCs. Mark XP on the Paths as the PCs make progress. Or, in the case of a countdown to something awful, mark XP as the clock ticks by. 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 throw the players into combat or other action.

DUNGEON CRAWL! - After trekking a week from the city, you stand before the caverns of chaos, the source of .

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 for each adventure the players might pursue. When the Path completes, the players fast-forward to the entrance to the adventure scenario, such as a dungeon, tomb raid, etc. Many GMs do this as a matter of course, railroading the players to the next adventure, but using Paths allows the GM to present a list of *possible adventures* for the players to choose from, which is helpful in long-running or sandbox campaigns where there are many plot threads competing for your attention, and players may not know how to advance to any of them. This allows players to decide which adventures to opt-into, choosing their own adventures!

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.

If the Path is time-sensitive then give it a Countdown.

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 adventure the characters might pursue.

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. Foreshadow dangers and raise Hazard. The players are in over their heads and should worry.

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

If you are good at thinking on your feet you can create an instant adventure by coming up with a 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 the player group.

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.

# Monsters

Monsters are enemies for the players to encounter, fight or outwit, slay, and loot. They are an opportunity for you to be creative and scare the players. Traps, spells, and other threats are the same.

Reveal new monsters during your turn, using vivid and exciting descriptions. Raise Hazard when revealing a monster or dangerous capability. Foreshadow the monster as early and often as possible, raising Hazard each time you add an ominous detail.

# Monster Stat Blocks

Monster stat blocks follow the OSR tradition (old school, or "original" RPGs). Thus, you can directly use all OSR books, adventure modules, websites, etc. Here are a few examples for illustration.

**Giant Rat** HD 0; SA swarm

**Skeleton** HD 1; SA undead immunities

**Spitting Cobra** HD 1; #At 1 (spit or bite); SA spit venom causes blindness, deadly bite venom +1 Doom

**Goblin** HD 1; SA 20% have missile weapons

**Hobgoblin** HD 2; SA 20% have missile weapons

**Medusa** HD 4; SA petrification, poison; W her own gaze

**Werewolf** HD 4; AC 3; #At 1; SA only hit by silver or magic weapons, Dooms carry curse of lycanthropy

**Ogre** HD 5; AC 3; WC5

**Manticore** HD 5; AC 3; #At 3; WC 3; SA flying, ranged spikes

**Hydra of 6 Heads** HD 6; #At 6; AC 3; SA heads double when cut

**Basilisk** HD 7; AC 3; #At 2 (bite, gaze); SA petrification by bite or gaze

**Hill Giant** HD 8; AC 3; WC 6; SA +1 Damage

**Chimera** HD 9; AC 3; #At 6; WC 3; SA fly, deadly snake tail venom +1 Doom, fiery breath 15' cone

**Monster Name** HD 0; [AC 2;] [#At 1;] [WC 2;] [SA;] [W;]

- **Hit Defense (HD)**: Overall toughness of the monster. Monsters take Dooms like PCs, and can Soak 1 Damage per hit until Stress goes above HD. (As with PCs, try to roleplay Soak, and this otherwise works the same as when players Soak Damage.) Monsters with HD < 1 do not Soak. Soak +1 Damage if the monster has a special resistance to the damage.
- **Attacks (#At)**: Number of attacks per round; defaults to 1
- **Armor Class (AC)**: Armor Class for defenses; defaults to 2
- **Weapon Class (WC)**: Weapon Class for attacks; defaults to 2
- **Damage (D)**: Damage for attacks, defaults to 1, rarely change
- **Special Abilities (SA)**: Secrets, special attacks, +1 Damage (for a giant weapon), +1 Doom (for deadly venom), and special

defenses such as breath weapons, spells, resistances, immunities etc. Most monsters can see in the dark of their lairs.

- **Weaknesses (W):** Add +1 Damage or +1 Doom when players exploit weaknesses or vulnerabilities.

Reuse stats from OSR books directly, except as follows:

- **HD:** Use the HD directly, adding +1 if there is a modifier, so "HD 4" is HD 4 and "HD 4+2" is HD 5.
- **WC:** Use human weapon when applicable. Otherwise count damage dice and add +1, so 1d8 is 2, 2d4 is 3, 3d6 is 4, etc. Add +1 if there is a large damage bonus. Add more for giants.
- **AC:** By human armor when applicable. Otherwise AC3 if the monster is equivalent to chainmail, AC4 if plate, etc.
- **Damage:** Damage 1 is the standard for most (95%) monsters. Rarely list a +1 Damage or +1 Doom bonus as a "Special Ability (SA)". For example a giant might have +1 Damage (which applies before armor) or a cobra might have +1 Doom (which only applies if Damage gets past armor). Damage and Doom bonuses are incredibly deadly, so be sure to foreshadow and scare the players ahead of time.
- You can reuse any other stats you like, such as the number of monsters appearing, etc.

Describe any prominent items of equipment (Assets), ideally varying them to differentiate similar monsters. Scatter a few projectile weapons, heavy weapons, and heavy armor amongst a group of goblins to create a variety of challenges. 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.

## Monster Hazard

Raise Hazard when you foreshadow monsters, when the monster finally appears, and when revealing special abilities. If you visualize the monster and describe how dangerous it is in detail, you will naturally come to a Hazard appropriate to the monster. Your players

will quickly learn to read these cues and get a sense of how dangerous the monster is. You can also mix things up and have a high-power monster with a low Hazard if it's been caught out of its element, or low-power monsters at a high Hazard due to terrain (e.g. goblins defending a rope bridge over lava).

## Monster Maneuvers

As part of narrating the scene 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, [-] COMBO on saves against those attackers. Only reveal Maneuvers to the players if their PCs can notice them.

## 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 visual imagery and detail when possible, for example "the orc attacks you" isn't as interesting as "the grey orc stabs at your unarmored leg with a rusty spear". If you are teaching new players the game you might need to tell them directly to "[make a Saving Throw]", but over time they should roll without being prompted.

Reiterate any details you described during your turn; for example, if you said a monster was targeting 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.

## Monster Weapon Class

You can set the monster Weapon Class based on a weapon it is using, or by comparing its attack with equivalent weapons. For example, even giant rat teeth at best knife-sized, so they should be at most Class1. Use a high Weapon Class if the monster is huge (e.g. a giant), has a deadly attack (e.g. a shark bite), or is venomous (e.g. scorpion sting).

## Special Attacks

The hallmark of many monsters is one or more kinds of special attacks, such as petrification, poison, or energy drain. Special attacks usually result in special Dooms, which can have immediate effects (e.g. petrification) or require special treatment (e.g. venom).

In general it's a good idea to use special attacks in moderation and foreshadow them in order to keep them special. Apply special attacks when you feel they will have the most dramatic impact. For example, a dragon shouldn't breathe fire *every* round, because that wouldn't be as dramatic as leading up to the breath of death by foreshadowing how the dragon breathes in and glares balefully. However, always highlight special attacks or other special abilities when you roll ULT so they can surprise you and your players.

Special attacks result in special Dooms, but are resolved as normal attacks. For example, if a basilisk uses its "petrifying gaze" on a PC, call for a Saving Throw, otherwise the PC gains a Doom "petrified".

Special attacks deal Damage like normal attacks (i.e. 1 on a hit, 2 on a fumble, etc). However, special attacks may result in Dooms which are difficult to treat with first-aid. The venomous bite of a cobra needs an anti-venom potion or spell. Similarly, a wound caused by an unholy wraith dagger might only be treatable by a few people in the world, and will otherwise fester and lead to undeath. Thus, you

should limit the use of special attacks that are especially deadly or are hard to treat, such as by limiting the frequency of those monsters or or by only firing them off when you roll ULT. A wraith doesn't have to do its best undeath touch on *every* attack, and making it happen less often makes it more scary.

## Multiple Monsters

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, consider just calling for one Saving Throw, rather than one per monster, if you want to minimize risk to the PC.

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 must [-] COMBO. Reiterate this during Transitions to player turns.

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.

# Defeating Monsters

Monsters take Dooms like PCs, and can Soak 1 Damage per hit until Stress goes above HD. (As with PCs, try to roleplay Soak, and this otherwise works the same as when players Soak Damage.) Monsters with HD < 1 do not Soak. Also Soak 1 Damage if the monster has a special resistance to the damage, and like armor this can negate all Damage.

## Resistances and Weaknesses

Some monsters have special resistances and weaknesses. For example ghosts aren't hurt by iron weapons but hate silver. For some monsters this applies only to specific Hit Locations, for example the dread wyrm might be invulnerable except for a weakness right above its heart. Apply a Damage modifier of +1/-1 as applicable.

|                     |                     |                  |
|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| vulnerable on belly | ward pact vs swords | ghostly          |
| immune to fire      | immune to weapons   | armored head     |
| immune to cold      | mostly made of air  | impervious shell |

## Death Throes

A creature (whether a monster or PC) at Doom Stage 3 goes into "death throes". The creature drops, goes into shock, and loses their ability to take actions other than random "death throes", such as thrashing about, making messes and pitiful sounds, bleeding on or biting someone who gets too close, or maybe even one last attack before expiring. Even "as good as dead", monsters can still be dangerous. Some monsters like snakes can even be deadly after they are dead.

## Regeneration

Monsters which have powerful regenerative or auto-healing abilities heal 1 Doom per turn. However Damage caused by weaknesses does not heal, e.g. trolls do not reenergize damage from fire or acid.

# 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.

## 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 (d20 1-14)   | Success (d20 15-20)   |
|--------|--|---|
| THEME  | Highlight a dangerous aspect of the monster (e.g. huge fangs, thick scales, etc.) and Raise Hazard | Focus on visual appearance, sounds, or smells (e.g. bloodshot eyes, frothing mouth, yellow nails, putrid breath, etc) |
| EFFORT | Monster is furiously energetic, ferocious, feral, manic, or berserk, moving or attacking twice.    | Monster catches its breath, possibly either moving or attacking, but not both, this round.                            |

|       |  |   |
|-------|--|---|
| ASSET | Use the best weapon possible, in the most effective way.                               | Choose the wrong weapon for the situation, or tip their hand.   |
| COMBO | Ruthless team, swarming, or mobbing.   | Enemies act like individuals rather than a coordinated team   |
| ULT   | Devastating and defining attacks such as dragonbreath, petrification, death gaze, etc. | Foreshadow the monster's defining special attack, which it will do next round unless the PCs stop it! |
| PREP  | Executes a deviously planned ambush, uses terrain effectively                          | Attempts to setup a special attack, but is unsuccessful.  |

If you have time to plan a special monster encounter, you can even make a custom Encounter table for the monster.

Medusa HD 6; #At2; AC 3; S petrification, venom +1 Doom; W her own gaze; THEME rattlesnake sounds, EFFORT tries to establish gaze, ASSET dagger & bow, COMBO venomous snakes, ULT petrify creature meeting her gaze

## Weird Monsters

Monsters are a staple of the fantasy genre, and are important because they provide fear of the unknown, and let you demonstrate to the players that *there is weird scary shit out there*.

Use weird monsters sparingly, 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 when an interesting human would do. Orcs are not any more interesting than brigands or highwaymen unless you make the effort to make them interesting.

## Falling

Falls deal 1 Damage, +1d6 Damage for heights greater than 15 feet. You can claim PREP if you are able to take the time to intentionally jump feet first and roll with the fall.

## Diseases

Characters resist most normal afflictions and diseases, but when they delve into dark and dramatically unclean places call for a Saving Throw if your Encounter roll is Failure+EFFORT. You should also do this when PCs have physical contact with something unclean such as a sewer, fungus monster, stale tomb air, etc.

|              |               |                   |
|--------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Black spots  | Kha'din taint | Vampiric hunger   |
| Blood eye    | Lycanthropy   | Undead fungus     |
| Bloody flux  | Mummy rot     | Werewolf curse    |
| Mange        | Sleeping fits | White cysts       |
| Ifr’it fever | Tomb lung     | Wizard’s twilight |

## 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 minions and hirelings of the PCs, and even PCs whose player is absent from the game session.

Quickly create new NPCs with a few descriptive words, with a Theme for an occupation (e.g. baker, cook, driver, guard, scout), a

Trait for a strength (e.g. clever, connected, quick, strong), and a Trait for a personality quirk (e.g. friendly, nosy, boorish). Add a Theme for an unusual race (e.g. elf, dwarf, etc), and more Themes or Traits to represent greater experience or power.

After introducing an NPC, step back and see what the players do. While you should make your NPCs come alive, never forget they are the supporting cast of the story. You need to be prepared to "let go" of even your favorite NPCs, allowing them to be marginalized or killed off. This is important for verisimilitude, and so that your NPCs do not eclipse the PCs. You can always make more!

# 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...          |
| ULT    | 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, creep, decadent, egomaniac, exquisite dresser, extravagant, loyal, fast-talker, femme-fatale, fiercely ambitious, fits of melancholy, flamboyant, folksy wisdom, gossip, hard-boiled, hears voices, hothead, idealistic, incredibly persistent, insightful observer, jack of all trades, jerk, klutz, love-struck, mad genius, manic, master orator, miser, mopey, naïve, no-nonsense, obsessive, 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, Kha'din tainted, thief, untrustworthy, selfish, cruel, abused, scarred, tortured, embarrassed, vengeful, cultist, zealous, obsessed, liar, cheat

# Recruit Hirelings / Henchmen!

The characters may recruit hirelings or rescue them from dungeons. Must be fed and paid 5sp every day (1gp for men-at-arms) or will not takes risks.

Talented hirelings expect double pay or loot. A previous occupation might prove useful or not. As the GM, you can choose from these suggestions or roll.

| Hireling (d20 14-) |  | Talented Hireling (d20 15+)  |
|--------------------|--|--|
| THEME              | Man-at-arms, brawler, fighter, mercenary, brigand, thug, tough guy             | Has military training, or cunning, or is in good shape, or has good gear, or stalwart vs weird monsters / undead                                     |
| EFFORT             | Laborer, digger, dock worker, quarry slave                                     | Can direct other laborers, or has experience prospecting   |
| ASSET              | Pack-bearer, porter, lantern bearer, torch bearer, shield bearer, weapon caddy | Can keep a precise inventory list, or is somehow always in the right place at the right time, or sometimes offers the right tool for the job (caddy) |
| COMBO              | Sailor, pirate, cabin boy  | Salty/veteran sailor or first-mate   |
| VLT                | Ex-apprentice wizard, monk, acolyte, altar boy                                 | Can actually cast a spell, or can read magic, or knows things  |
| PREP               | Fodder - meat shield, point man, trap tester, door spiker, poison taster       | Specialist - guide, scout, lock picker, sapper, door spiker, forager, naturalist, messenger, tinkerer (can fix things)                               |

- **Hopefuls (Crit)** are the most competent and daring of young adventures in the making. Will generally exceed expectations and show qualities.
- **Losers (Fumble)** are generally incompetent, except sometimes have a knack for pretending to be useful. Will royally screw up any assignment given them.

## 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

# I Loot the Body!

As the GM, try to describe visible pieces of Loot. Players can ask about what they can see, but they will only find concealed loot if they describe how and where they search the body (e.g. pat down, strip, fully body search, etc.). A lair or treasure hoard, or even a body, might have multiple pieces.

Players can loot a body or similarly sized area, gaining **one piece of Loot** per Action. You determine the Loot, either choosing or rolling for a suggestion.

- **Success:** Loot is a cheap or worn out Common Asset of value, e.g. chipped sword, loose ax, broken shield, frayed rope, lantern, cloak, boots, mead, etc. Has no value for trade or resale.
- **Failure:** Loot is a good quality Common Asset (e.g. sword, ax, shield, rope, lantern, cloak, boots, mead, etc.). Can be traded for items of similar value. You can trade a dagger for an ax, a shovel for rope, etc. If sold they are worth 1gp.

Note that rolls which are usually bad (fumble and failure) result in better Loot, as a reward for higher Hazard and Stress. Use your Legend Die to add variety, details, or complications.

**THEME** Loot is thematically styled for the owner, such as a coat of arms, cultural designs/knots, anchors, skulls, snakes, runes, horses, etc. This is stylish enough to have a Signature on a Fumble.

**EFFORT** Loot is bulky and will take effort to retrieve or move, such as a tapestry, furniture, mirror, chest, etc. Worth 5x on fumble.

**ASSET** Loot is a Expensive Asset (e.g. greatsword, plate armor, arbalest, gem, etc.) worth 1gp success / 10gp failure / 50gp fumble.

**COMBO** Loot is small (e.g. coins, gems, etc.) and well-hidden , so it will only be found if the player described an appropriately thorough search (e.g. strip, fully body search, etc.) Worth 5x on fumble.

**VLT** Loot may be a **Signature Asset** (i.e. Asset with Signature and/or Secret) if you rolled a Fumble. You can also reward a tough fight (e.g. that caused a Doom) or surviving a monster with deadly special abilities. This can be pawned for 100gp, or traded for 1xp of "materials", or gifted to a trainer for 1xp of "training".

**PREP** **Something awful** is near the Loot, which might be found depending on how the player described their search. Raise Stress if found! Examples:

*awful case of lice, it's a trap!, messy wound, oozing sores, disgusting diseased bits, body bug, crawling lice, contagious crusty lesions, taxidermied trophy scalps, dry string of ears, wanted poster, bounty note, rotten gold tooth,gross piercing(s), Avathar blood coins, odd lump, wriggling worms, creepy chaos sign, mummified part, "he's not dead yet", lock of hair, cursed trinket, Eldritch sign, undead rats inside*

# Hit Locations

As the GM, include the **Hit Location** along with each attack, e.g. "The goblin falchion slices wickedly at your knee". Try to choose something both descriptive and appropriate, e.g. rats on the floor will usually attack low targets such as legs, but rats falling from the ceiling attack the head and shoulders, a caltrop trap hits under the foot, etc. If you prefer you can roll dice, using 1d6 on the table below, a hit location die, or whatever works for you.

## 1d6 Hit Location Examples

|   |       |   |
|---|-------|---|
| 1 | Head  | neck, chin, nose, face, forehead, skull           |
| 2 | Arm   | forearm, elbow, upper arm, shoulder               |
| 3 | Hand  | fingers, knuckles, palm, back of hand, wrist      |
| 4 | Torso | abdomen, ribs, sternum, chest, clavicle           |
| 5 | Waist | outer thigh, inner thigh, groin, hip, pelvis      |
| 6 | Leg   | knee, shin, calf, ankle, foot, heel, instep, toes |

## Armor Coverage

After determining the Hit Location, you can roll 1d20 as a suggestion of what AC to apply. Then work backward from the AC to describe an appropriate detailed sub-location, for example a Fumble might hit a gap like the face.

**Success** - use best AC; double AC on Crit

**Failure** - use worst AC, which is AC 0 for Partial Coverage (i.e. not Full Coverage); half AC on Fumble

# Death Throes

As the GM, when you roll a Failure or Fumble on any roll, also describe "death throes" of dying monsters to make dying messy and scary.

|        | Fumble (d20 Stress-)         | Failure (d20 Hazard-)           |
|--------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 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       |
| VLT    | Uses special attack or spell | Mutters about awful things      |
| PREP   | Prepares for a counterattack | Plays dead                      |

# Encounter Table

As the GM, describe an Encounter at the start of each scene, during any prolonged break in action (e.g. resting), or whenever the players seem stalled. When possible continue any natural chain of events, natural consequences, situational development, etc. Otherwise you can roll for inspiration. Adjust Hazard up or down to match the situations.

|        | Failure ( $\partial 20$ Hazard -)  | Success ( $\partial 20$ Hazard +)   |
|--------|--|---|
| THEME  | Introduce a new threat that is thematic to the current scene, such as a foe, trap, weather, etc.   | Offer useful information and details about the scene, a location, or an NPC.  |
| EFFORT | Describe how the journey ahead will be arduous. Call for a Save if PCs are already exerting themselves or have unstable Dooms  | Offer an opportunity to rest or find shelter.   |
| ASSET  | Present a challenge caused by superior gear on a foe, poor gear on PC, or special gear for the situation. In combat a PC has a gear mishap or attracts an attack due to arms & armor.                    | Offer a clue to gain a resource (e.g. food, water, light sources, arrows) which might be amazing on a Crit).  |
| 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 [-] 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. |
| 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 [-] 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".  |

# 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 mysteries of the old worlds.

THE WORLD HAS DIED and risen anew in an infinite cycle. Each new incarnation blossoms and grows for an aeon, then dies in an apocalypse. Every reincarnation is a land for new races and civilizations and dragons, built on the stones and bones of the past. Every death adds another layer of history.

THE UNDERWORLDS are vast subterranean gigadungeons formed by the layers of countless precursor civilizations. Survivors compete for life in the dark cold below, fighting monsters and one another in their struggle to reach the surface. Yet, treasure hunters, adventurers, and doom cults seek tunnels into the Underworlds to plunder the riches of ancient aeons. Within the depths you will find dead cities, riches, artifacts, dragon lairs, monsters, vast tunnels and caverns inside dead dragons, trapped Eldar civilizations, imprisoned horrors, entrances to Kalla, and shrines to Gods with forgotten names.

ELDAR are survivors of previous aeons. Once young 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..

BUILD YOUR LEGEND as you explore the world, above and below. Write your character in your own words, with no numbers or limitations, and set your own goals for advancement. Then play in total immersion, with a unique new dice system that keeps you immersed in playing your “words only” character, rewarding good roleplaying and clever tactics.

THIS BOOK includes everything you need to start adventuring in the Dragon Isles, with a setting overview and full game rules.

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