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LEGENDS OF THE  
DRAGON ISLES

# Player Quick Reference

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

- **Name** - What should we call you?
- **Themes** - Write two (2) core concepts, for your ancestry (e.g. "Elf") and background (e.g. "Soldier"). Add a creative "signature" to each to make it yours (e.g. "Elf - from Dorthonien", or "Soldier - mercenary recruit").
- **Traits** - Write five (5) qualities or skills, e.g. "strong", "patient", "climbing", "juggling", "handsome", or "quick-witted".
- **Assets** - Write five (5) common items, e.g. dagger, spear, backpack, water skin, tinder box, etc. These are ordinary items of average or lower quality.
- **Dark Secret** - Write one (1) aspect of your past that you hide from others.
- **Experience Paths** - Write one (1) motive, goal, or quest.
- **Secrets** - Ask the GM about special powers, magic spells, etc.
- **Signature Assets** - Ask the GM about special items, magic items, etc.

## Rolling Dice

The standard roll is **1d20**. You succeed if you roll the **Hazard** or higher, otherwise you fail. So at Hazard 15 you succeed on 15 or higher. You Fumble if you roll **Stress** or below. This is a "natural" roll with no modifiers.

Also roll a **Legend Die** or **1d6**. Your Legend Die allows you to upgrade your natural result by one step, if you can meet the criteria. One step improves fumble to failure, failure to success, success to crit. The Legend die faces highlight your choices as a player and various aspects of your character. Crits and Fumbles can be open-ended.

1	THEME	Upgrade if you have an ideal Theme.
2	EFFORT	Upgrade if you can make extra effort and have an ideal Trait to make it count. This becomes more difficult if you cannot move freely, are hiding, are relying on impeded senses, or are hindered by a Doom or Dark Secret.
3	ASSET	Upgrade if you have an ideal Asset Signature, such as a "flaming sword" vs spiders.
4	COMBO	Upgrade if you have an advantage, usually earned by taking Maneuvers to position yourself tactically or use Asset Tags.
5	VLT	Upgrade if you are an expert at your action, and more expert than anyone nearby. Requires player consensus for bonus.
6	PREP	Upgrade if you can leverage an Action you took on a previous Turn to prepare for this roll.

# Turns

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

Take one **Action** during your turn:

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

Also make a **Saving Throw** on your turn if you are attacked by a monster or other danger. If you fail a dice roll you are "hit".

Take your **action** after your Saving Throw. If you **attack** a foe and succeed on a dice roll you are "hit".

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

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

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

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

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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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# Introduction

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

## Design Principles

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 throwso 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, highlighting 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 character.

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.

# The New World Above

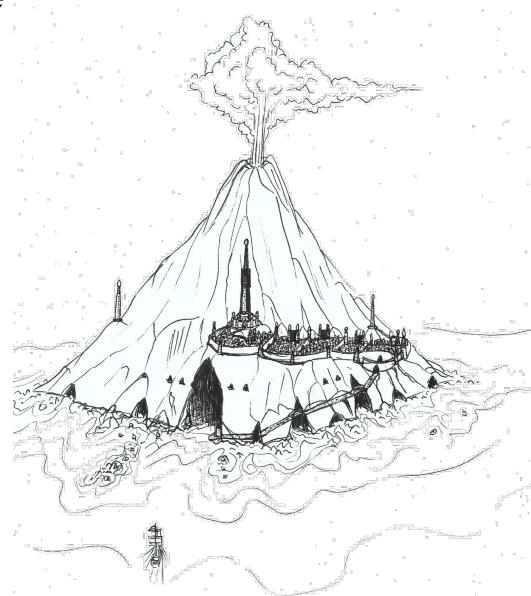
THE WORLD IS NEWBORN, bright and beautiful, full of life and boundless potential. Young kingdoms build on the unspoiled shores of the Dragon Sea: from the strong **Northmaren** keeps and strongholds with their high-walls in the north to the indulgent **Southmaren** oases with their libraries, banks, 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** 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 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 Hrvlyggdor, 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 are infamous for rocky "teeth" within a few miles of the shore, oft hidden by thick mists. Some teeth are atolls, but most are uncharted hazards. Sailors make offerings to Suul, the dragon of the mists.

**THE DRUNLANDS** - 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, cruel goblyn sea daemons who always seem to wriggle their way to the surface during each aeon. The shores are littered with sacrificial altars and temples near steps leading into the sea, to worship and summon Dagon the Voice of the Deeps or even Kha'din.

**HARNENDOR** - 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 Mrrym 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 DRAGON ISLES

The Dragon's Tail



# The Old Worlds Below

THE WORLD HAS DIED and risen anew in an infinite cycle. Each new incarnation blossoms and grows for an aeon, then dies in an apocalypse. Every reincarnation is a land for new civilizations 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 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 angelic **Elves**, inventive **Dwur**, draconic **Baal**, vampiric **Avathars**, scaly **Drisi** serpent-men, evil troglodytic **Drunes**, stone-skinned **Karrocks**, dragons-laying **Kith**, wise **Belerions**, black-robed **Alu**, reptilian mystic **Kess'rith**, fiery **Ifr'it**, or grotesque **Gobbah**.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**GULDURINE 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.

# 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 Dracosalchemical 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 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. Battle ruins of the hosts of Dagour Dagorauth
- xvi. Layers of only ash, debris, and fragments of the moons
- xvii. Hollow earths and lost worlds, buried and preserved in time
- xviii. 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.

# Part 1: Ancestry

The following set of character “ancestries” are recommended choices for your character represent distinctive and dominant cooperative cultures in the present time.

You are recommended to choose one of them. This provides you with a ready-made distinctive “look” and cultural heritage that fits into the campaign setting, and keeps it simple for other players to understand and relate to you.

However, if you have a creative idea of your own then feel free to discuss it with the GM. Some players have created truly unique characters such as a “winter wolf” or “baby platinum dragon”. This can be a very challenging roleplaying experience. If you choose to do this then you are recommended to create close tie-ins to at least one other character to help you integrate with the fantasy world.



## Northmarens

Northmarens are widely varied peoples from river and sea-side kingdoms on the northwestern shores of the Dragon Sea, such as Alglondor, Dorthonien, and Lyonesse. They are young and impetuous and eager for glory in battle, conquest, exploration and trade, however they are not as advanced as their smaller southern cousins, the Southmarens. They are divided into countless kingdoms and free cities, such as Alglondor, Dorthonien, Belerion, and Lyonesse, but stand united against the threat of bloodthirsty Nan-Avathar. They are allies with Eldar such as of Elves, Belerions and 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 Axek Hallki Berdi Mundi Summi Gudmi Arar Knute Sokki Loomis.  
**Homelands:** Alglondor, Lyonesse, Dorthonien, Belerion. **Themes:** Alglond, Dorthon, Taurithren Ranger, Druid, Elf Friend, Arms Master, Hallow, Knight, Noble Born, Paladin, Herald. **Traits:** hard to kill, strong, archery, swordsmanship, spearman, honorable, courageous, heraldry, music, scouting, bowyer/fletcher, bushcraft, wood lore. **Assets:** cuirass, plate armor, sword, lance, poleax, longsword, rondel, warhorse, canoe, silk rope, Elven cloak, hunting bow, long bow, war bow, bread, cheese, Elven way bread. **SECRETS:** detect evil, sense truth, holy aura, Elfsight, Starlight, Blessing of Lunara, Healing of Lunara, Purify water, Find Path, horse whisperer. **Dark Secrets:** family slain by Avathars, impious, deserter, fears undead. **Paths:** battle the Avathars, earn knight's armor, become a knight, build a river fort, strengthen the forest, purify forest tainted by Avathars. hunt Avathars, win new lands in the south



# Southmarens

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

# Æthiiri (Elves)

The Aethiiri (Elves) are beautiful hallowed Eldar of light, filled with sacred magic of the stars, moons, and music. Most Elves manifest aspects of the gods Lunara and Hirminel to the extent that being "Hallow" is often confused with being Elven, and some Elves have a visible silver halo. Elves are extraordinarily perceptive, and can see, feel, and find things invisible to mortal eyes. When they find people who are pure of heart they name them "Elf-friends", and help them follow their call to become hallow servants of light. However, when Elves find hidden darkness they purge it with silver arrow and flaming sword, just as they have always confronted evil across the aeons, such as Kha'din daemons, Deurg'gul undead of 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.

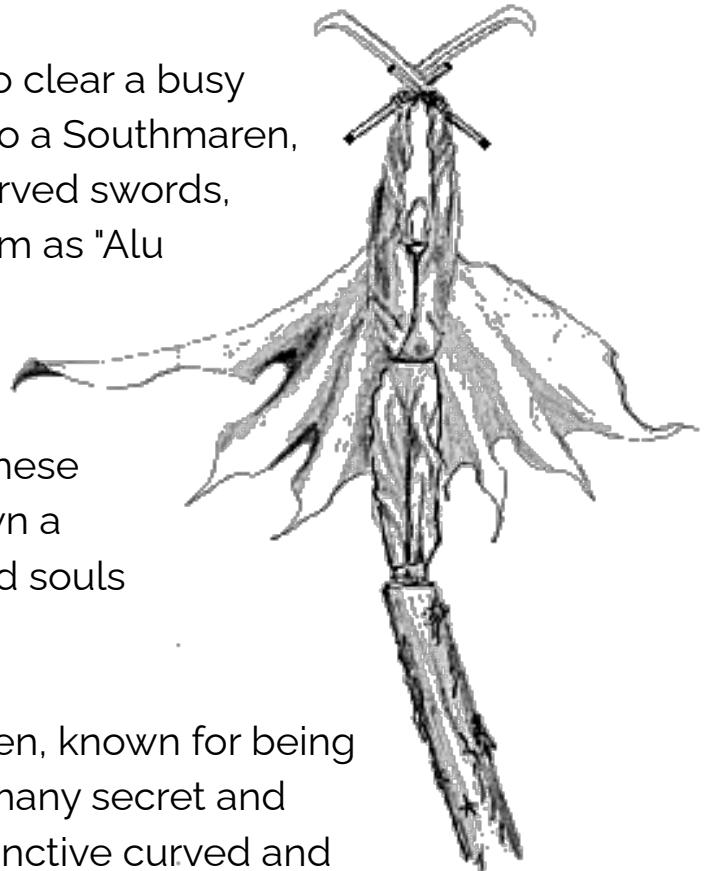
**Paths:** root out evil in the young kingdoms, find a weirstone of Lunara, learn a new song, bring a new saint to Lunara

## Illythri

Elves who turn away from the light of the Menelion are referred to as Illythiri, or “dark elves”. They are still saints, but of unhallowed gods such as Hyakki.

# Alu

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



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

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

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

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



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

# Avathars

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

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 Northmarens who are often hostile to Eldar.



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

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

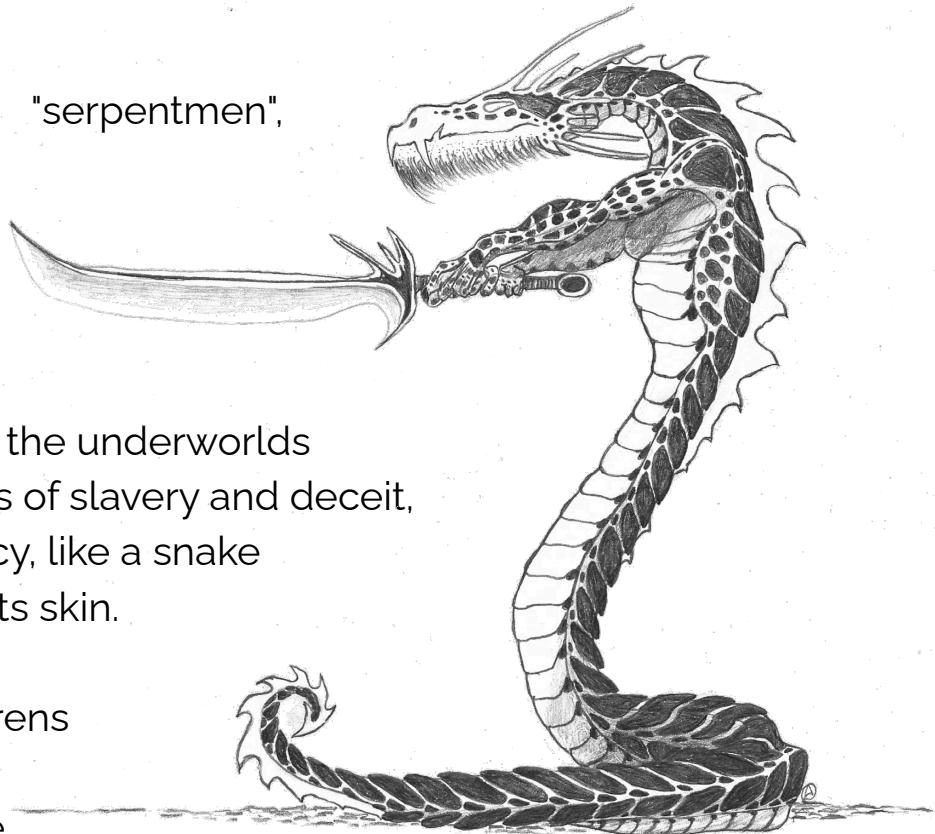
- **Uru:** A dragon, bound to guard the Node where it was hatched. Uru can be slain but do not die, they only sleep until they are reborn as a dracontia, and perhaps again as a dragon if they earn the favor of the Dragon Gods.
- **Baal'Seta:** A Baal noble, one who bears the *seta'al* dragon scars that 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, perform their sacred rituals (which often involve burnt offerings). Baal'Shem are the voice of the dragons and the Dragon Gods to Baal people
- **Baal'Kel:** knight or warrior, whose role is to be a weapon. Their name is the name of their weapon, and their weapon bears their name.
- **Baal'Yr:** artificer, skilled in alchemy and enchantment, whose role is to create.
- **Baal'Na:** abbot, ruler of a monastery. Na'Eslin is the monastery of the abbot Baal'Na'Eslin and home of the dragon Eslin.
- **Baal'Rhi:** king or prince, ruler of a great city. Rhi'Annon is the great city ruled by the king Baal'Rhi'Annon and guarded by the dragon Annon.
- **Baal'Si:** duke or count, ruler of a stronghold. Si'Anwon is a stronghold ruled by lord Baal'Si'Anwon and guarded by the dragon Anwon.
- **Baal'Er:** eyrie lord, ruler of a great watchtower. Er'Hajak is a watchtower ruled by lord Baal'Er'Hajak and guarded by the dragon Hajak.
- **Baal'Mot:** priest of the caste [once long ago] responsible for rituals of life and death (this name has been forgotten, and speaking this name is punished with death)

# Drisi

The Drisi are the Eldar 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, Yigg, Set, Ningishzida, Asclepius, Hygeia, Panacea, Aceso, Vlothuus, Yyg, and Nisi. Their necroalchemist priests traditionally took the surname "- Mot", although this fell out of favor after a great war with the Baal, who took issue with the Drisi-Mot claiming dragons were hatched from the moons and sacrificing them to the Gorgonae.



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

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

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.

## Dwurgaur

Not all Dwur seek the light. The **Dwurgar** "dark dwur" tunneled too deep and turned away from the bright peaks, and are enemies of the Dwur and all surface dwellers. Some say they are the remnants of the Dwur who were lost in the Battle of the Thousandfold Curses, who now seek vengeance for being left behind and sealed into the abandoned Dwur halls.

# Karrocks

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

Indeed, they are as living works of art, 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.

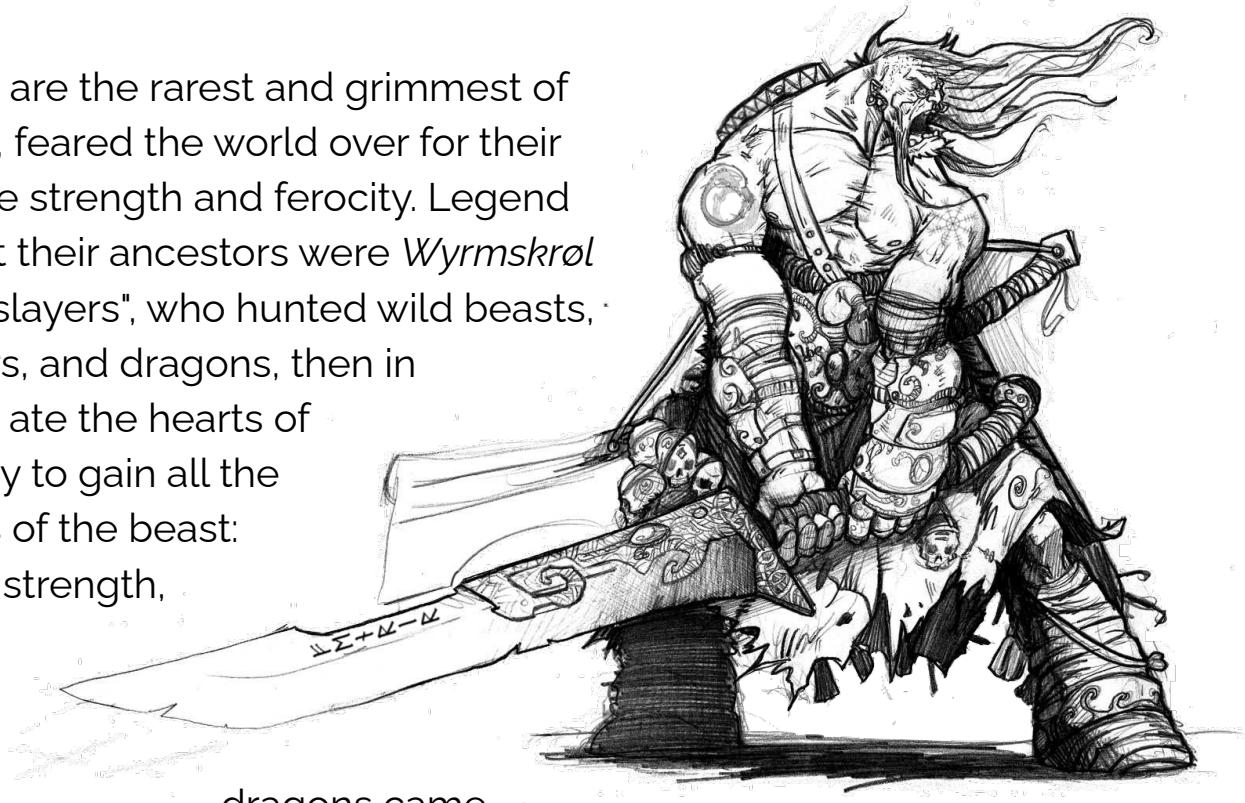
**Karrock Names:** Athan, Davon, Durgir, Galatan, Krego, Rugrir, Runon, Thovil, Bador, Adiel, Galatea, Rura, Runa. **Homelands:** Alglondor, Nan-Surinen, Sepulchre, the Platinum Peaks. **Themes:** Karrock, Exemplar Saint of Xohm, Wrestler, Warrior-poet, Priest, Yamabushi, Sohei, Wanderer. **Traits:** 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 grimmest of warriors, feared the world over for their immense strength and ferocity. Legend tells that their ancestors were *Wyrmskrøl* "dragonslayers", who hunted wild beasts, monsters, and dragons, then in tradition ate the hearts of their prey to gain all the qualities of the beast: bravery, strength, agility, and from

dragons came

healing  
and immortality.



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

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

The ancestors of the Kith came from the far northern lands of the midnight sun, which they call Hrvlyggdor. The cold mountains, tundra, forests and rivers of the north are teeming with big game for the hunt. The weather alone can kill, heightening the challenge when hunting monsters such as cave bears, giants, dragons, wyrms, 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:** Hrvlyggdor, 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, ancestry, face, voice, and the countless other details that

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Part 2: Character Creation

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!

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!

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 should we call you?
- **Themes** - Write two (2) core concepts, for your ancestry (e.g. "Elf") and background (e.g. "Soldier"). Add a creative "signature" to each to make it yours (e.g. "Elf - from Dorthonien", or "Soldier - mercenary recruit").
- **Traits** - Write five (5) qualities or skills, e.g. "strong", "patient", "climbing", "juggling", "handsome", or "quick-witted".
- **Assets** - Write five (5) common items, e.g. dagger, spear, backpack, water skin, tinder box, etc. These are ordinary items of average or lower quality.
- **Dark Secret** - Write one (1) aspect of your past that you hide from others.
- **Experience Paths** - Write one (1) motive, goal, or quest.
- **Secrets** - Ask the GM about special powers, magic spells, etc.
- **Signature Assets** - Ask the GM about special items, magic items, etc.



# Sample Character

## Dthar Kel'en

Alu'Kel assassin and master of the nine winds

### THEMES

Alu - desert screamer

Kel Warrior - sickle swords

### 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

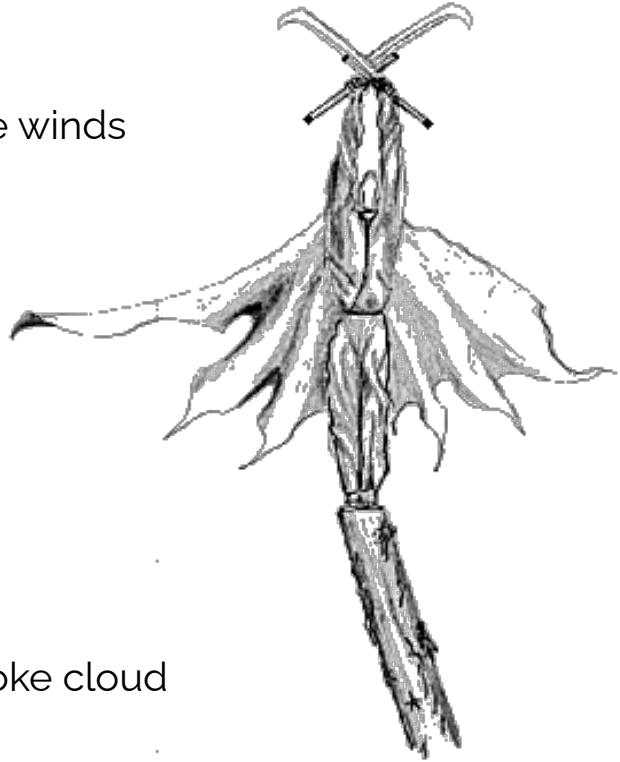
Vanish into smoke

Wind jump

Gust of wind

### DARK SECRETS

Sole survivor of last mission



# Character Creation Warmup

Before you create your character, take a moment to think about what role you want to play in your group. Think about how you want to approach problems and how you will fit into the group. You can choose or roll below for a suggestion for a classic character role. A group filling all four roles has the best chance of success.

1d20	Role	Approach
1-8	Fighter	fight well, protect your allies & crush your enemies
9-12	Magic-User	seek out and use magic spells & magic items
13-16	Cleric	do the will & mission of your god, <i>regardless</i> .
17-20	Thief	live and love well, relying on quick wits & reflexes

Also choose or roll where you are from.

1d20 Homelands					
1-5	Alglondor	14-15	Kitania	18	Akkar
6-10	Harnendor	16	Dorthonien	19	Beleron
11-13	Lyonesse	17	Hrvlyggdor	20	Rochir Plains

Don't write any of this down yet, just keep it in the back of your mind while creating your character in the steps below.

# Step 1 - Themes

Write **two Themes** that describe your character's main concepts. Use one Theme for your ancestry and your second Theme for your background. This helps anchor you to the fantasy world with a culture and distinctive "look".

## Ancestry Theme

Write a Theme for your ancestry, or roll for a suggestion based on where you are from.

1d20	1-10	11-15	16-19	20
Algondor	Algond	Northmaren	Dwur	Karrock, Belerion, Elf
Harnendor	Harn	Southmaren	Vozen	Drisi, Alu or Avathar
Lyonesse	Lyonese	Northmaren	Vozen	Drisi, Kith or Avathar
Kitania	Kitanian	Southmaren	Rochir	Northmaren or Avathar
Dorthonien	Dorthon	Northmaren	Elf	Avathar or Illythiiri
Hrivlyggðor	Kith	Northmaren	Drune	Elf, Dwarf, Illythiiri, or Dwurgaur
Akkar	Baal	Southmaren	Dwur	Karrock or Haradjinn Alu
Belerion	Belerion	Northmaren	Karrock	Elf, Dwur or Kith
Rochir Plains	Rochir	Southmaren	Kitanian	Alu or Avathar

Afterwards, write a "signature" after your Theme to customize it and make it yours. For example, you could write "Harn - from Aquila".

## Background Theme

Write a Theme for your background, or roll for a suggestion.

1d20	Fighter	Magic-User	Cleric	Thief
1-2	Fighting-man	Black Wizard	Hallow	Adventurer
3-4	Man-at-arms	White wizard	Saint	Scout
5-6	Soldier	Necromancer	Dragon Priest	Rogue

5-6	Soldier	Necromancer	Dragon Priest	Rogue
7-8	Mercenary	Necroalchemist	Paladin	Burglar
9-10	Knight	Guldurine	Destriant	Smuggler
11-12	Ranger	Alchemist	Druid	Assassin
13-14	Hero	Thaumaturge	Cleric	Cat Burglar
15-16	Archer	Illusionist	Templar	Swashbuckler
17-18	Crossbowman	Sorcerer	Shaman	Minstrel
19-20	Gunner	Shadow Mage	Healer	Merchant

You can write in your own words, but try to make it easy for the other players to understand your concept. Afterwards, write a “signature” after your Theme to customize it and make it yours. For example, you could write “Soldier - veteran of the vampire wars”.

## Step 3 - Traits

You start with 5 Traits to describe your character. For each category below, write one Trait in your own words or roll for a suggestion.

1d20	Youth	Physique	Demeanor	Stressed	Misfortune
1-2	farm hand	strong	positive	cool	poor
3-4	apprentice	wiry	gloomy	jumpy	orphan
5-6	messenger	quick	stoic	squeaky	abandoned
7-8	student	soft	quiet	talkative	ex-noble
9-10	urchin	short	complainier	calm	wanderer
11-12	page	handsome	spiritual	stalwart	outcast
13-14	acolyte	soft	impious	gritty	survivor
15-16	archer	lanky	energetic	blamer	pirate
17-18	noble	tall	witty	fatalistic	thief
19-20	soldier	tough	musical	pious	gambler

# Step 3 - Equipment

You start with 6 Assets, your inventory. For each category below, write one Asset in your own words or roll for a suggestion. Naturally, you may only start with items that are realistically accessible to you in the campaign setting.

d20	Armor	Armor Tags	Maneuvers
1-5	Doublet	Class1 Body-Armor	3
6-10	Gambeson	Class2 Body-Armor	3
11-13	Arming jack	Class2 Body-Armor	3
15-17	Coat of Plates	Class3 Half-Armor	2
18-19	Mail hauberk	Class3 3Qtr-Armor	2
20	Full Mail	Class3 Full-Armor	1

d20	Weapon	Sidearm	Fashion	Provisions	Oddity
1	staff	none	fine gloves	waterskin	mousetrap
2	spear	knife	floppy hat	backpack	chalk bag
3	great club	dagger	bandolier	rope, 50'	crowbar
4	spear	knife	front pouch	sausages	chain, 5'
5	glaive	dagger	warm cloak	cordage	holy water
6	hunting bow	sickle	satchel	5 torches	acid flask
7	javelin	rondel	mask/hood	iron spikes	key ring
8	warbow	sidesword	slippers	bag of beans	wolfsbane
9	longbow	hammer	turnshoes	lantern	smoke pot
10	poleax	mace	codpiece	torch	String
11	war club	buckler	broad belt	cheese	lockpicks
12	falchion	target	desert scarf	ladder, 9'	dog treats
13	bill hook	throwing ax	linen clothes	pole, 10'	pliers
14	long axe	war dart	feather cap	fish hooks	poison vial
15	spear	round shield	riding boots	sack, burlap	prybar

16	bardiche	kite shield	starry robes	sack, leather	mirror
17	halberd	sword	leather pants	bread	belladonna
18	polearm	small ax	cloak with pockets	oil flask	grappling hook
19	hunting crossbow	arming sword	holocaust cloak	skeleton key	hooded lantern
20	greatsword	longsword	purse, 10 sp	1d iron rations	lockpicks

**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)

## Step 4 - 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)

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

# Step 5 - Experience Path

Write one **Experience Path**. Paths 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. Paths suggest who or what you might become.

# Step 6 - 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.

Extraordinary or supernatural powers such as magic spells are Secrets. These cost Vim to use.

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

Powerful magic or powers requires an arcane Ritual.

runic ritual	magic circle	first harvest festival
prayer chant ritual	faerie ring	Feast of Pyrose
sacrificial altar	tap node	Feast of the Dead

Special habits or instincts can be Secrets. 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

You can also use a Secret to describe a special ability of your character ancestry. Some racial Secrets grant you Innate Assets when you use them, such as a Karrock's stoneskin.

Elf sense secret doors	Karrock stone shape
Elf resistance to charm/sleep	Karrock stone skin
Baal fire immunity	Drisi serpent shape
Drisi poison immunity	Drisi scale armor

# Step 7 - Signature Assets

Write two Signature Assets, your most precious possessions.

## Where is it?

First of all, you might not have the Assets on you right now. Roll 1d20 for each item to find out where it actually is. Write a Path for each Asset that you don't have on you, e.g. "looking for my Elven sword". This gives the GM hooks to integrate you into the campaign.

1d20 Where is it?	
1-10	You have it
11-12	You have it, but it's broken
13-14	It's in a local shop being repaired
15-17	You lost it, but you know the general location
18-19	Your ancestors lost it, but you know the general location
20	You have no idea where it is

## Enhancements

Once you acquire the Asset, roll to find out what kind of enhancement it has, and then write it in your own words. This will take the form of a Signature or Secret written on your Asset. Write your Signature Assets in your own words, and name them if you wish. Then roll to see where your Asset is.

1d20 Enhancement Type		What to write
1-4	Connection	Signature
5-8	Fashionable	Signature
9-12	Quality	Signature
13-16	Passive Ability	Signature
17-18	Active Ability	Secret
20	Roll twice	roll two times

**Connection** - Write a Signature to describe a personal connection, such as "Lyon, ancestral longsword of my house".

**Fashionable** - Write a Signature to make it haute couture, fashionable, rich, and noble. As long as you have a supporting Theme you will look fabulous, rock your look, get noticed, have influence, and be invited to fab parties.

**Quality** - Write a Signature describing an extraordinary quality, such as a sword that never needs sharpening, a lute of exceedingly sweet tone, ring with a secret compartment, etc.

**Passive Ability** - Write a Signature to describe something special it does all on its own. For example, a "longsword - Silverlight" that glows near undead, an "ogre belt" that makes you stronger, an "unbreakable mandolin", etc.

**Active Ability** - Write a Secret such as a magic power or special ability. You could have a magic sword that detects evil, or a flask of holy water that heals wounds. You may only use the Secret if you have a supporting Theme.

## Racial Assets

You can describe your Signature Asset as something unique to your homeland or ancestry, such as "Elven leaf armor", "Elven bow", "Elven boots", "Alu Kel sword", "Dwur mail shirt", "Dwur runelock", etc.

## Books

If you describe your Signature Asset as some kind of book (e.g. "spellbook", "grimoire", "holy scroll", "fencing manuscript", etc.) then it contains information you can study using Paths. Also take one extra Secret from the book now.

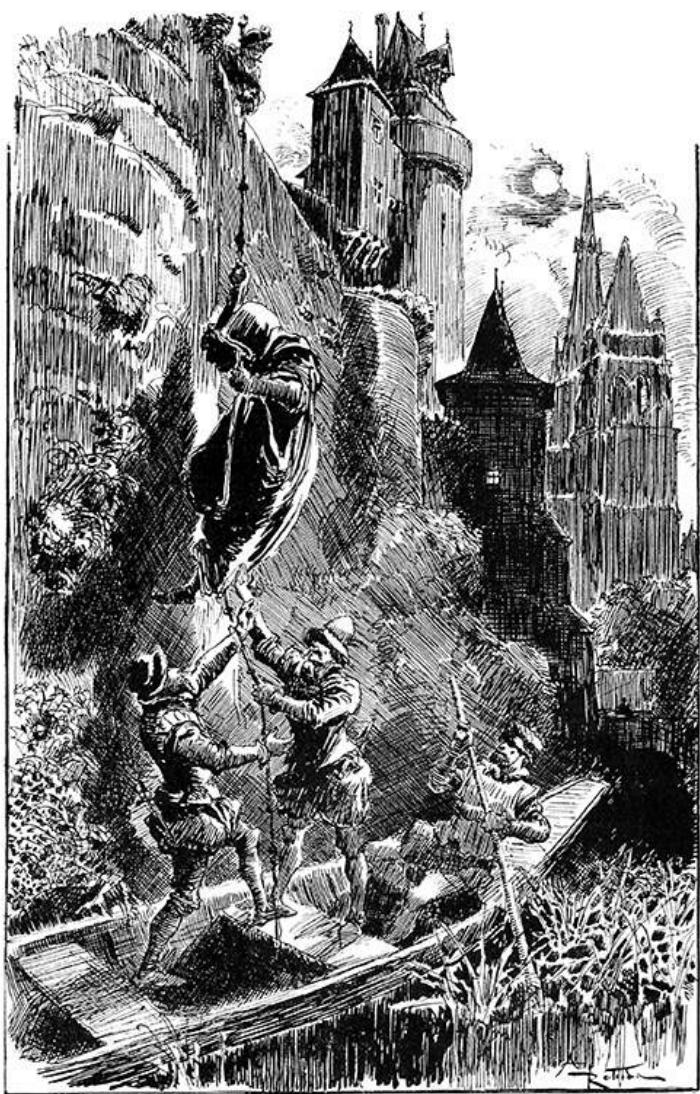
# Part 3: Play the Game

Legends is a roleplaying game where you take on the persona of a character 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 Raise Hazard if the enemies maneuver to increase the risk, such as by taking the high ground, or employing special abilities or spells. 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, +1 for a 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.

**You can Soak 1 Damage** each time you are hit. This Raises Stress, but still incurs a minimum of Doomo, and is limited to 1 Damage per hit. This does not fully negate the Doom, so you will take Doomo at a minimum, or increase the Doom by 1 Stage if combining Dooms. Roleplay what you do (feel free to let your creativity run wild and take "artistic license", since this is your heroic "plot armor").

## 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.

## Hazard, Stress & Vim

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

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

## Hazard

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The GM will acknowledge and celebrate your triumphs over challenges by reducing Hazard, but this is more likely to happen between scenes than in the middle of combat...unless you find a clever way to reduce the difficulty of the situation! If the GM describes how vile black smokes from an unholy lanthorn are invigorating the undeads you are fighting, and Raises Hazard, then you might want to shoot that lantern to lower Hazard back down.

## Hazard Range

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

# Stress

Stress is the amount of strain and trauma your group of characters has taken, and can be mental, spiritual, or physical. As Stress rises your failures are more likely to be disastrous fumbles. Stress starts at 1, then Raise Stress by 1 each time you take 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, complimenting others, and blowing off steam. After all, you're a person.

You are responsible for managing Stress, and how you deal with this is part of your story. The life of an adventurer is incredibly dangerous to body and mind, routinely defying death and witnessing awful supernatural entities. These experiences, which are measured by Stress, take their toll as psychological strain which does not disappear once the direct threats have been neutralized or banished by the sunrise. You must work off your Stress and find ways to relax. What does your character do to blow off steam?

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

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

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

## Vim

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

### Sleep

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

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

### Negative Vim

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

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

## Turns

Legends is a turn-based game. The GM 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 player, 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 Action and responses to the evolving story.

Your turn starts with a **Transition**, a short narration by the GM 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

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

However, you can ask to *resolve* 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 kill your foe you won't need to make a Saving Throw against his attack.

## 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 potion, light torch, throw rope, open/shut door
- **Mercy** - stabilize or dispatch a mortally wounded creature
- **Use Secret** - use a spell or special ability (costs Vim)

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

# Maneuvers

Maneuvers are minor activities such as moving, shouting orders, drawing a weapon, reloading, taking cover, etc. You may take your Maneuvers at *any time* in the round, even in the middle of the another player's (or the GM's) turn. Unused Maneuvers are lost at the start of the next 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 not walking (e.g. crawling, climbing, standing jump, swimming, etc.) You can change facing as part of any Maneuver, but are otherwise assumed to face the direction of your movement.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Roll the Dice

**Always roll two dice: a D20 and a Legend Die.** You succeed if you roll Hazard (usually 13-16) or higher, otherwise you fail. You Fumble if you roll Stress (usually 3-7) or lower. This is a "natural" roll, there are no die modifiers.

**Damage** - All attacks deal 1 Damage, or 2 for Crit.

**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.

**Stunts** - If you roll a Crit on your Action you can attempt a heroic stunt! Describe your stunt and roll again. If your new roll is 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 new roll is a Failure or a Fumble, then you keep the results of your first Crit, but with the new consequences added on.

**Natural 20** - If you roll a natural "20" you can attempt a Stunt at no risk. Ignore any result of your Stunt roll except for a Crit.

**Fumbles** - The GM may assign additional consequences for any Fumble you roll, such as Damage, Stress, Vim, lost or damaged equipment, etc. The GM may allow a Saving Throw. (A Fumble with a roll of 1 can be like a reverse Stunt for you.)

## Your Legend Die

Your **Legend Die** is a custom die (faces below) which may upgrade your natural result by one step, e.g. fumble to failure, failure to success, success to crit. Each face is a mini-game, showcasing various details of your character, situational details, and/or your skill as a player. Describe the outcome as best you can, the GM will elaborate or correct as needed.

1	THEME	Upgrade if you have an ideal Theme.
2	EFFORT	Upgrade if you can make extra effort and have an ideal Trait to make it count. This becomes more difficult if you cannot move freely, are hiding, are relying on impeded senses, or are hindered by a Doom or Dark Secret.
3	ASSET	Upgrade if you have an ideal Asset Signature (i.e. a magic item or other exceptional item), e.g. "flaming sword" vs spiders.
4	COMBO	Upgrade if you used a Maneuver that combines with your roll, such as maneuvering for a strategic advantage.
5	ULT	Upgrade if you are the ultimate expert in this situation, and more expert than anyone nearby. Requires player consensus.
6	PREP	Upgrade if you can leverage an Action you took on a previous Turn to prepare for this roll.

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

## THEME

Upgrade if you have an ideal Theme. Generally you can claim THEME if you are acting within your Themes, and cannot upgrade if you are out of your element.

## EFFORT

Upgrade if you can make extra effort and have an ideal Trait to make it count. This becomes more difficult if you cannot move freely, are hiding, are relying on impeded senses, or are hindered by a Doom or Dark Secret.

EFFORT uses Traits to represent your training, talents, and skills as well as transferability of those Traits to various situations. You might be an "swordsman", but can you also fight while on horseback? How about in the dark? Sometimes expending extra effort is difficult to justify, such as when you are prone or in deep water. With a Trait such as "ground fighting" or "aquatic combat" then you could still upgrade on EFFORT.

Helms make it hard to hear, so you cannot upgrade EFFORT for rolls involving listening. Closed face helms also make it hard to see, so you cannot upgrade EFFORT on rolls involving eyesight, such as shooting at a target.

## ASSET

Upgrade if you have an ideal Asset Signature ideal, such as a "flaming sword" vs spiders. Some examples:

- **Attacking:** Upgrade if your weapon has a Signature useful against your foe, such as a "holy sword" vs undead.
- **Defending:** Upgrade if you have an Asset with a Signature that helps against this attack, such as "adamant helmet" against weapons attacking your head. The Asset must cover the Hit Location targeted by the attack.
- **Defending vs Magic:** Upgrade if you have an Asset Signature that helps you defend against this magic, such as "orichalcum amulet" armor against hostile magic. However, if the magic is targeting a

specific Hit Location then your Asset needs to specifically cover that location, such as an "orichalcum helmet".

- **Climbing:** Upgrade if you have a rope with a fancy Signature like "silk rope" or "elven rope", or "climbing claws".
- **Picking a lock:** Upgrade if you have lock picks with a Signature (which would indicate they are higher quality).
- **Social:** Upgrade 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.
- **Using Magic:** Upgrade if you have an Asset Signature relevant to your magic, such as "wand of fire".

## COMBO

Upgrade if you have an advantage, usually earned by taking Maneuvers to position yourself tactically or use Asset Tags.

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

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

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

## ULT

Upgrade if you are an expert at your action, and more expert than anyone nearby.

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

You should not expect to claim 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.

## PREP

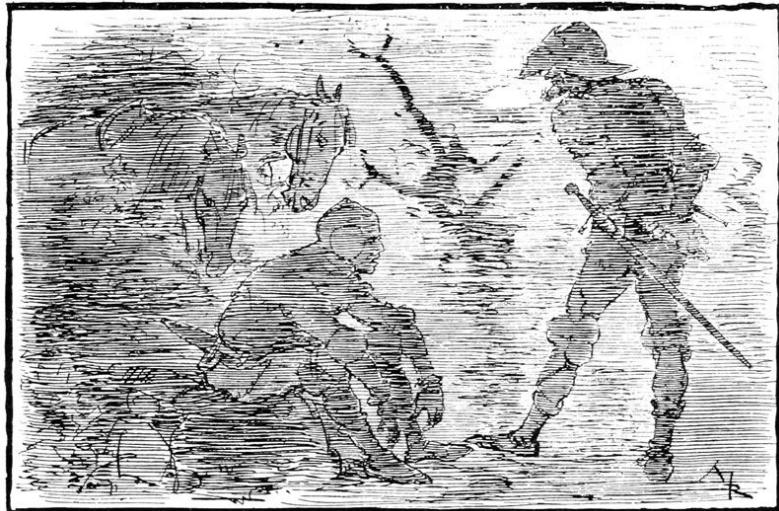
Upgrade if you can leverage an Action you took on a previous Turn to prepare for this roll.

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.

## Vision and Hearing

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

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



In most situations the GM will describe what you might see or hear in general terms, and then expect you to ask questions to get

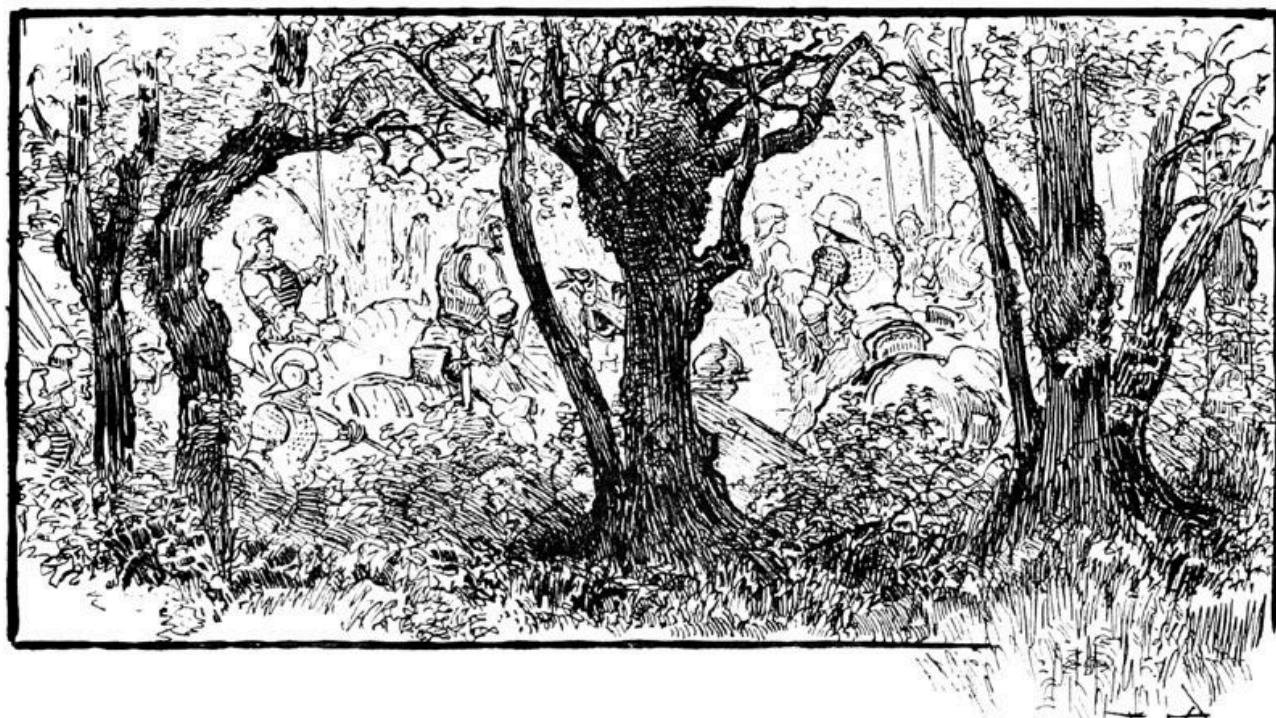
details. If you have good vision and hearing the GM is more likely to be "chatty" and volunteer extra information. On the other hand, if you can't see or hear then you won't receive much information at all.

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

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

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

You cannot upgrade EFFORT if your roll relies on an impeded sense.



# Light Adaptation

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

## Light Sources

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

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

Also keep in mind light sources can be seen from *very* far away, and the area they illuminate allows others to see you.

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

## Wealth, Treasure & Looting

The most common coin is the **crown** (cr), also known as the gold piece (gp). Some crowns are minted in other precious metals, such as "silver crowns", "red gold crowns", "platinum crowns", "electrum crowns", etc, but any "crown" is 1 gp. There are also lesser coins, such as silver pieces (sp) and copper pieces (cp), where 1 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. Signature Assets can be pawned for 100gp.

## Looting

Looting in its various forms involves taking an item, whether that's from the ground, furniture, prisoner, or corpse. The way you describe your looting matters! A body might also have something hidden under its shirt, in a boot, a fake tooth, or might have gems *inside*. The

GM will not tell you what to do, or if you missed something, that's part of your adventure.

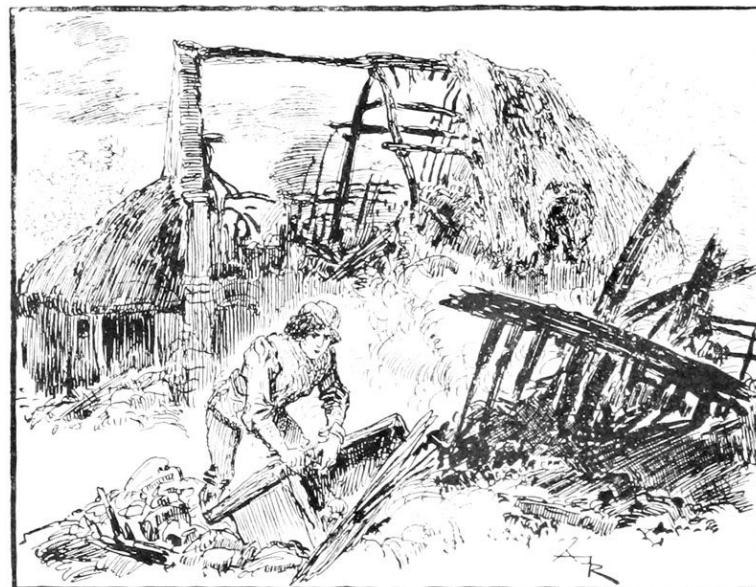
**Grab** - Use a Maneuver to take one readily accessible item. For example, you could grab a book laying on a table.

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

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

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



# Experience Paths

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

- Lenarin wants to recover a long lost Elvish sword
- Hazarak wants to find a grimoire of summoning rituals
- The dragon Aashok wants the nearby goblins purged
- The townsfolk need your help against raiders
- Krod wants 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 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.

## Starting Paths

To start a new Path, simply write it down. Use your own words with as much detail as you like. You can have as many Paths as you like, and sometimes the GM will give you Paths.



Ideally use a single sheet of paper that is shared by all the players, and start each game session by reviewing Paths as a group. This 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.

## Completing Paths

You must earn all six "Experience Points" to complete a Path. The Experience Points match your Legend Die facets to make them easy to remember. So, to track Paths simply write "T E A C U P" alongside your Path and cross them out as you earn them.

You can have as many Paths as you want, but you may not complete more than two (2) Paths per game session.

### THEME

Roleplay progress on your Path, and describe details of one of your Themes (and/or Signature) that support the Path. For example, if you are learning a new spell then you might describe how your background as a "Black Wizard" allows you to decipher the Guildurine Glyphs of the deep old ones.

### EFFORT

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

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

## ASSET

Obtain and use up a valuable Asset that helps you progress on your Path. For example, you might obtain special ink or paper for a new spell. The Asset must have a value of at least 100gp (e.g. a sack of 100 crowns or Signature Asset).

Tip: Look for special materials and monster parts on your adventures, such as weird glowing cave crystals, "cave squid ink", "fire beetle glands", etc. They are worth 10gp of progress each.

## COMBO

Use your Path to upgrade COMBO. For example, you might roll COMBO while fighting a goblyn, and spend a Maneuver to conjure a distracting fire flash toward your "fiery circle spell" Path.

## VLT

Obtain training from someone/something who is the "ultimate" at your Path. This could be a "master" (i.e. expert teacher, sensei, guild master, grandmaster, etc.), dragon, rare tome, etc. This requires at a minimum several hours (4+) of intense training and 100gp payment (or a Signature Asset).

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

## PRCP

Spend time between game sessions preparing something creative to share with your group of players. You must prepare something creative, such as a backstory, adventure log, character backstory, character sketch, a miniature, sketch of your castle, details for an NPC relationship (friend, foe, or other), essay on your religion, etc.

## 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.

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

## Consequences

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

## Using Paths

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

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

## 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.

## 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 determines how many Secrets each book contains.

## Minions

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

ask (or order) your minion to do things and can temporarily take over a minion as your PC if your main character is indisposed.

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

## Familiars

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

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



## Part 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. The GM will likely raise Hazard or Stress if combat starts and you do not have a weapon **Ready** to use. **Readyng 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 Doom** - The target's armor stopped all Damage.

**Doomo** - The target is hit, but there is no visible injury (for now).

**Doom1** - The target has a visible injury, but it is non-hindering. Most foes will consider retreat if outnumbered.

**Doom2** - The target has a severe injury. If the Hit Location is a limb (i.e. Arm, Hand, Leg) it is disabled and cannot be used at all. Foes will retreat or surrender.

**Doom3** - The target is Incapacitated (see below). If you rolled a Crit, feel free to describe a dramatic dismembering wound, such as losing an eye, crushing a knee, chopping off a hand, etc, but not something instantly lethal (e.g. decapitation).

**Doom4** - The target is Incapacitated (see below). If the Hit Location is a vital area (i.e. Head, Torso, Abdomen) free to describe an immediate and dramatic killing blow, such as decapitation, chopping it in half, blowing it to bits, etc.

**Unstable Dooms** are potentially fatal. Periodically roll a Saving Throw based on the Doom Stage: Doomo each round, Doom1 each minute, Doom2 each hour, Doom3 each day.

When you are attacked the process is the same, just in reverse. See "Saving Throws", for how that works, again from your point of view.

## Incapacitated Foes & Death Throes

If the GM says a foe is **Incapacitated**, it can take no Actions or Maneuvers, so it poses little threat and is expected to die on its own, in time. However, the GM rolls a random 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 attacks and tell you when to roll a Saving Throw, saying something like "two black-fletched orc arrows fly from the darkness, striking Talin". Roll a Saving Throw against that fate.

**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.

**Failures** - The GM may assign consequences for any failure, including Damage, Stress, Vim, or effects.

You can use a defensive **Maneuver** to upgrade COMBO, e.g. dodge, parry, block, duck, roll, slip, etc. Some need to be declared before a roll, such as Guard and Cover. Some Asset Tags upgrade 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. 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 can outclass armor and even cover. However, a "hit" from a huge weapon 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

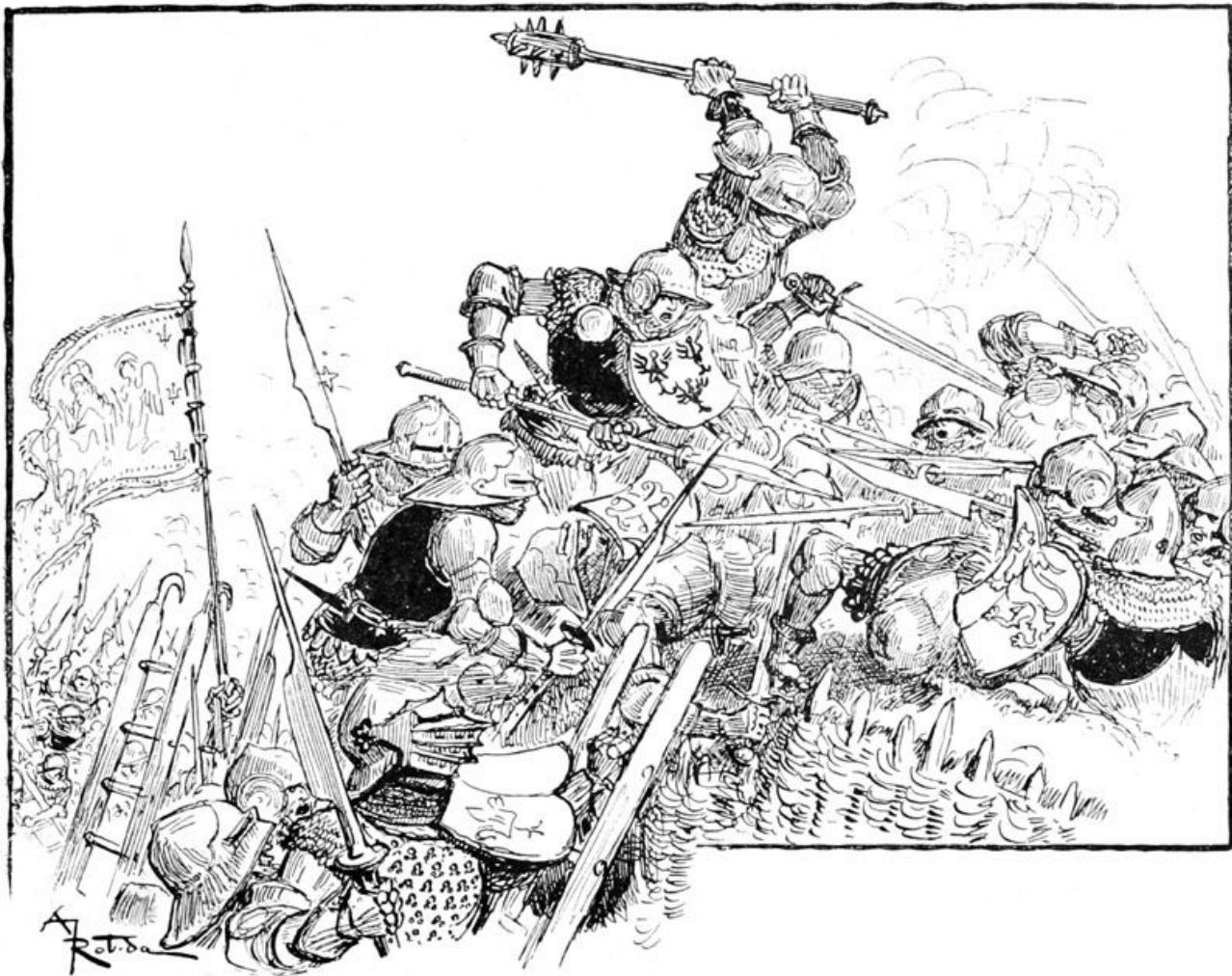
Head	neck, chin, nose, face, forehead, skull, etc.
Arm	forearm, elbow, upper arm, shoulder, etc.
Hand	fingers, knuckles, palm, back of hand, wrist, etc.
Torso	abdomen, ribs, sternum, chest, clavicle, etc.
Waist	outer thigh, inner thigh, groin, hip, pelvis, etc.
Leg	knee, shin, calf, ankle, foot, heel,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

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

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

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

naming the Hit Location or naming the foe who is attacking, e.g. "I



am blocking the goblin chief with my shield".

## Combat Maneuvers

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

If you can you should roleplay what you do with your Maneuver, and if you do that before you roll then you may get a broader benefit that can apply to several rolls, such as "I take the high ground".

Maneuvers can have tactical combinations, especially with Weapon Tags. Examples are below, but you should use Maneuvers to describe your own cunning tactics.

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

## Aim

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

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

## Advanced Aim

Use two Aim Maneuvers to specify a smaller area within a Hit Location, about the size of your palm, such as the face, fingers, palm, wrist, foot, face, fingers, armpit, etc. Use three Aim Maneuvers for even smaller targets, about the size of your thumb, such as an eye, ear, nose, mouth, etc. This Maneuver only applies to a single attack and you must declare it before rolling.

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

## Guard

Use a Maneuver to move your weapon or shield to **Guard** a named Hit Location and side (left or right), such as "Head - left". You

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

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

## Cover & Concealment

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

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

## Keep Down

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

## Wrath Stroke

Grip your weapon in two hands and swing a mighty blow. Adds +1 Damage if you 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)

## Beat

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

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

## Feint

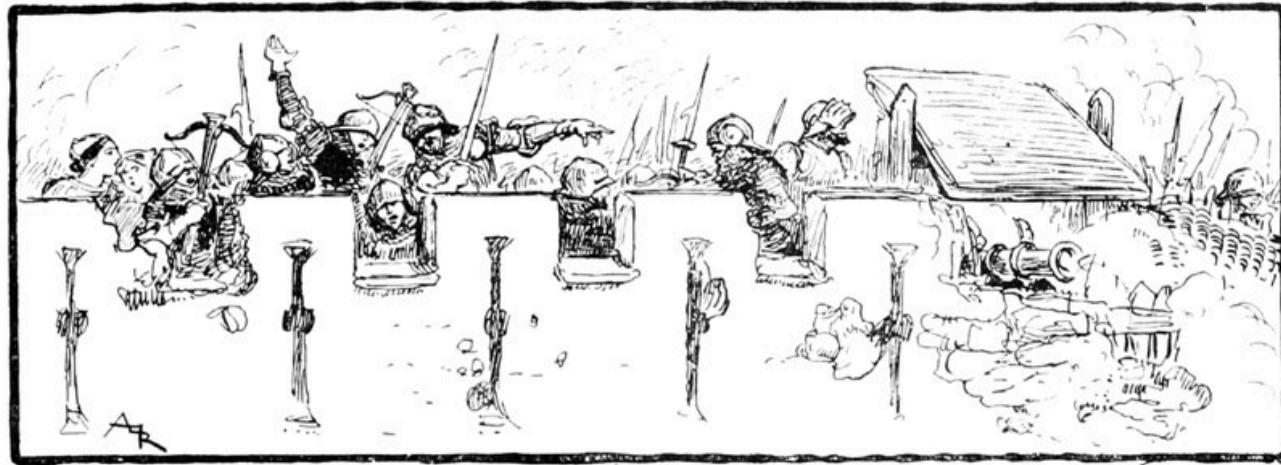
Pretend to attack a Hit Location, but attack somewhere else instead. You {+} COMBO, but perhaps more importantly might fool him into settling into a Guard in the wrong place.

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

## Grab

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

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



## Overwatch

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

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

## 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. You upgrade COMBO if your weapon or shield is set to "Guard" the Hit Location being attacked.

**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 useful against both.

**Each Guard covers one Hit Location for one side**, so simply say the Hit Location and side (left or right) you are guarding, such as "left leg" or "right head".

**Guards provide Armor** in the Hit Location. Shields provide Shield Class which functions the same as Armor Class. Weapons count as Class 1 shields, or Weapon Class with 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 cover the shield Hand, and Medium and Large shields also cover that Arm. Only Large shields can guard the Leg.

**Weapon Guards** are much more dynamic and correspond to the starting and finishing positions of attacks and parries. You can move to 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.

**You can Guard against an attack.** Instead of a Hit Location, you can Guard against a particular attack , e.g."I parry his thrust and riposte".

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

**Advanced Guards.** You can spend an extra Maneuver to gain +1 WC for your defense.

## 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



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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. You gain PREP to continue wrestling or fighting this foe. 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 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 you gain COMBO. You cannot use weapons with the "Long" range Tag while Close.

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

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

# 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 the three Stages of decline. Check a box for each point of Damage taken for that Doom, so if you take 1 Damage you have Doom1 (Doom Stage 1). Once all three boxes are checked you are expected to die soon, and additional Damage causes immediate death.

Damage	Stage	Effects	Recovery
□ □ □	Doom0	none ("I'm fine")	Stabilization
☒ □ □	Doom1	Cannot upgrade EFFORT	Field Ritual
☒ □ □	Doom2	Cannot use Hit Location	Circle Ritual
☒ □ □	Doom3	Expectant, near death, at "death's door"	Node Ritual
☒ □ □ +	Doom4	Immediate death	

**You can Soak 1 Damage** each time you are hit. This raises Stress, is limited to 1 Damage per hit, and results in a minimum of Doom0. Roleplay what you do (feel free to let your creativity run wild and take "artistic license", since this is 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 Doom1 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, or just a few hours via a healing Ritual.

## Doom0 (□□□) - "Fine"

At Doom0 you think you are "fine". However, sometimes wounds can take a turn for the worse, so it's best to be cautious. Healing a Doom0 occurs automatically when you stabilize the Doom, barring any complications set by the GM.

## Doom1 (☒□□) - Wounded

At Doom1 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. You cannot upgrade EFFORT on rolls using the wounded body part. Healing a Doom1 requires many weeks of rest, or a Field Ritual and healing Secret.

## Doom2 (☒☒□) - Disabled

At Doom2 you cannot use the Hit Location. If this is your Head you are possibly delirious or unconscious. Healing a Doom2 requires many months of rest, or a Circle Ritual and healing Secret.

## Doom3 (☒☒☒) - Death's Door

At Doom3 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 you survive you've probably lost a hand, limb, internal organ, or dramatically disfiguring scar (e.g. face split in half, frozen joint, back bent sideways, etc). In this case it's possible for you to continue to play your character, or you could retire from adventuring. Healing a Doom3 requires years, or a Node Ritual and healing Secret. Healing a permanent dismemberment or scar might be possible with a higher Ritual.

## Doom4 (☒☒☒☒+) - Death

At Doom4 or more your character immediately dies. As far as anyone knows this is final.

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

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

## Recovering Dooms

**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. On a Fumble you take +1 Damage. Using a body part with a Doom1 makes the Doom Unstable again.

### Mundane Stabilization

You can use mundane (non-magical) methods to stabilize a Doom, such as first-aid. Bear in mind you will need to Ready bandages or such using Maneuvers, otherwise you won't have an Asset (in case you roll ASSET).

### Magic Stabilization

You can use a magic Secret to stabilize a Doom, as long as the Secret is appropriate for healing the Doom. For example, a "heal wounds" Secret could stabilize a "sword cut" Doom.

Magic potions, such as a *potion of healing*, can be used to magically stabilize a Doom. You can either drink the entire potion, or just take a sip and spend Vim. You upgrade ASSET if the name of the potion is ideal for your Doom, e.g. "vial of poison antidote" vs snake venom.

# Healing Dooms

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

## Healing Rituals

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

A healing Ritual will heal all Dooms at the level of the Ritual or less. So a Ritual-1 heals Doom1, a Ritual-2 heals Doom2 and Doom1, etc. The Ritual heals all applicable Dooms from everyone participating in the Ritual (actively or passively), not just one person.

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

## Natural Healing

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

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

## Martial Arts

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

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

# Thievery

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

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

## Magic Spells

Magic spells and powers are Secrets. You can create any you like, or 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 perform a Ritual you need a Secret that describes the Ritual itself, such as "magic circle ritual".

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

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

# Using Secrets

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

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

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

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

## Secrets Cost Vim

Attempting to use a Secret costs 1 Vim.

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

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

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

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

## Effects

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

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

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

You can also target a Person-sized area, which is the area "occupied" by a person. For tabletop games with a battlemmap and miniatures you should consider the area occupied by a Person, which is a subset of one 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. So, on a successful attack roll you deal 1 Damage, or 2 for Crit. This is in addition to the normal Effect.

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

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

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

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

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

## Magic vs Armor

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

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

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

## Weapon-like Magic Attacks

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

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

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

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

## Bonus Maneuvers

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

**You may only gain one (1) Bonus Maneuver per round.** This increases to two if you are not wearing any armor (not even Partial).

## Healing Secrets

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

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

## Protective Secrets

Protective Secrets grant you a form of resistance or partial immunity to a specific type of Damage, such as "fire" or "swords". This allows you to Soak Damage of that type using Vim instead of Stress. Use an

Action to protect another person for as you Maintain the Secret. Use a Ritual to protect multiple people (1 person per Ritual Vim).

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

## Conjuration Secrets

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

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

## Transformation Secrets

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

## Secrets Use Assets

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

# Reversible Secrets

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

## Maintained Secrets

Some Secrets can be "maintained" over time, such as a "protection from fire" spell. However, they end when you recover Vim (i.e. sleeping or a Ritual).

## Movement Secrets

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

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

## Secret Fumbles

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

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

# Gaining Secrets

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Part 7: Rituals

Rituals are elaborate ceremonies that invoke mystical power. Participating in a Ritual restores your Vim and prepare an

Ultimate. Performing a Ritual yourself lets you invoke a powerful Ritual Secret. There are five levels of Rituals, each increasing in power.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Performing Rituals

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

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

## Ritual Secrets

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

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

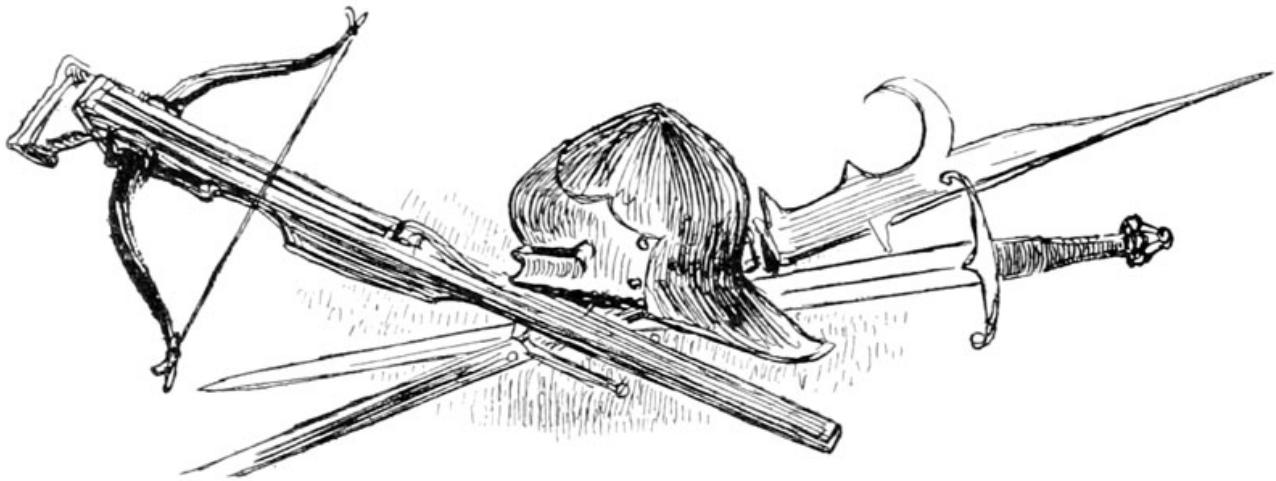
# Ultimates

Ultimates are legendary feats that have the potential to define the climax of a scene. A swarm of fiery meteors could rout an army, or a failed attempt to take down the “big bad boss” could end with a just-in-time teleport to safety. Ultimates are your “hail mary”, your “nuke”, and your “get out of jail free card”. They can be the play of the game. Ultimates can create memories that form the legend of your character. Each Ultimate can only happen once, ever.

You can prepare your Ultimate whenever you *participate* in a Ritual. Your Ultimate needs to be extremely specific, within the bounds of your Themes, and loosely related to your Secrets. This is usually a free-form discussion or negotiation with the GM. You can only have one Ultimate prepared at a time.

You must use an Action to Ready your Ultimate before use; this must include a dramatic display so everyone knows what you are about to do, and you should roleplay this to the hilt. After all, you’re going to be remembered for this forever. The GM will do the same for villains!

Using your Ultimate drains your Vim by 1d20 or to zero, whichever is lower, so your timing matters. Also, each Ultimate can only ever happen *once*. In terms of effect, Ultimates are more powerful than Secrets, but less powerful than Ritual Secrets.



## Part 8: 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.

### Signature Assets

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

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

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

## 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".

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 Northmaren generally have early medieval weapons and armor, the Southmaren have late medieval or early Renaissance, and the Eldar have exotic and magical arms.

# Weapons

Weapons are tools of war, designed to slay foes and keep you safe.

**Melee weapons** such as swords, axes, and spears are made for hand-to-hand combat, up close and personal. Melee weapons have various lengths, from long spears to short daggers, so you should always maneuver to an optional range for your weapon.

**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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Hunting Crossbow** [Class3 2H Far4 Accurate Reload3] easy to shoot  
**Longbow** [Class3 Far5 Accurate Reload1 Secret] a large self bow, taller than the archer, with impressive power, range, and accuracy, but with a slower rate of fire than hunting bows.

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

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

**Flintlock pistol** [Class5 Far4 Accurate Reload7] basic Dwur pistol  
**Doublloon** [Class5 Far2 Reload7 (each)] a double-shot flintlock pistol blunderbuss, often with a nautical/pirate theme.

**Shotgonnne** [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.

## Bows vs Crossbows

- Bows require more training, especially warbows are a specialist profession
- Bows are simpler to craft
- Bows require physical conditioning (strength)
- Bows are lighter and easier to aim and reload on the move
- Bows have a faster rate of fire
- Crossbows do not require strength to hold ready
- Crossbows are more optimal for fielding armies, since training takes less time and troops can still fight when hurt or weakened by malnutrition or disease

# Weapon Tags

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

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

## Weapon Class

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

**Military Weapons** - Weapons of **Class 3** 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** (i.e. the distance between attacker and target) for using a weapon. You can upgrade COMBO if you are at your optimal range and your opponent is not.

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

**Close**: is the optimal range for unarmed attacks, and unarmed attacks can only attack at this range. Fighters can punch, kick, grab, wrestle, throw, elbow, knee, head butt, pommel strike, and even bite. A sword pommel is a Class 1 weapon with the Close Tag.

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

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

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

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

## Advanced Weapon Tags

**Accurate** weapons are capable of very long ranged shots in the hands of a skilled marksman. You can increase your optimal range by one step (e.g. "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 lets you upgrade COMBO on attacks and defenses for that opponent. You can also use a bind Maneuver in response to an opponent's bind Maneuver, and whoever does this last is "winning the bind" and upgrades COMBO.

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

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

**Control** weapons such as long swords and short polearms can be easily turned to strike in any direction. That is useful in itself, and also makes them ideal for controlling an area and fending off multiple opponents. If the GM raises Hazard because you are surrounded or flanked by opponents, you can spend a Maneuver to negate the raise. 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 covered and number of Maneuvers per round.

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

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

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

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

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

**Partial Armor** - Armor suits tend to cover entire Hit Locations, but some armor pieces only cover specific parts, such as "bracers" that just cover the forearms and not the entire Arm Hit Location. Partial Armor only protects you if you roll ASSET, but does not count towards Coverage or affect your number of Maneuvers per Round.

## Body-Armor

If you wear Body-Armor you armor 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 armor 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.

**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.

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

## 3Qtr-Armor

If you wear 3Qtr-Armor you have armor coverage for your Head, Arms, Torso, and Waist. 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 armor 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 to replace your old gauntlets.

Pieces of Partial Armor only cover a portion of the Hit Location, so it only protects you if you roll ASSET. However, it does not count towards Coverage or affect your number of Maneuvers per Round.

## Clothing

**Hooded Cloak** [Class1 Soft Civil Cloak Partial] 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 Partial] feathered hat.

**Pointed Hat** [Class1 Hat Soft Civil Partial] 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 or Arming Cap** [Class1 Hat] are hoods of stitched leather or quilted cloth, often worn under a helm or coif as padding.

**Cervelliere "skull cap"** [Class1 Hat] are round tight-fitting steel caps.

**Kettle Hat** [Class1 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.

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

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

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

**Bevor** [Class4 Gorget Partial] 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.

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

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

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

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

## Arms

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

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

**Spaulders** [Class3 Arm Partial] 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 Partial] 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Waist

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Legs

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

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

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

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

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

# Armor Tags

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Advanced Armor Tags - Helms

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

**Hat** helms are helms that only cover the top of the head. They offer less protection (reflected in their AC), but do not hinder hearing.

**Closed** helms completely cover the wearer's face, which is hugely protective (reflected in their AC). This sacrifices comfort, visibility, and breathability. Closed helms make it hard to see and hear.

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

**Gorget** armor protects the throat.

# Shields

**Shields** are pieces of *moveable armor*, 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 your "**Left Torso**" Guard unless you use a Maneuver to change Guards.



In addition, your shield protects the Hand holding the shield. Medium and Large shields also protect that Arm. Only Large shields may guard the leg. 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** [Class 4 Medium Centergrip] light wooden round shield, such as a Viking shield. Inexpensive and common.

**Heater** [Class 3 Medium Strapped] smaller version of the kite shield suited for both mounted and foot combat.

**Rotella** [Class 4 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:** covers the Hand, but cannot guard the Leg

**Medium:** covers the Hand and Arm, but cannot guard the Leg

**Large:** covers the Hand and Arm, and can guard the Leg.

## 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. 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) so use your weapon to guard your 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.

# Magic Items / Eldar Assets

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

## Designing Eldar Assets

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

## Eldar Materials

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Vakaar:** An 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, and resist stabilization (the GM may increase Stress). 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 Cloak** [Class2 Soft Cloak Partial] fluttering cloak of silken bladegrass strands

**Alu Bladegrass Cuirass** [Class3 Body-Armor] thick bladegrass

strands covering the torso and head, including a war mask

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

## Avathar Assets

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Drisi Assets

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

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

**Orichalcum Serpent Ring** [Class0 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

## Dracone necroalchemistry Assets

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

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

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

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

**Dragonbone Staff:** A potent focus for controlling and conjuring fire. The staff is five feet in length to honor (or appease) the Dragon Gods, expertly turned from black dragonbone, and etched with draconic symbols. The staff feels smooth and warm to the touch, or burning

hot to those who displease the Dragon Gods. Greatly prized by Black Wizards and seen as heretical by dragon worshipers.

## Dwur Assets

Thaumatagones ('Runelocks") are the famous and formidable Dwur firearms and cannons. The heavy metal barrels of these weapons are forged in fantastical shaped and covered in Thaumaturgical runes. The runes strengthen the barrel, allowing the use of more powerful alchemical powder than the simple black powder used in Alorn handgonnes. Some Thaumatagones bear additional enchantments or improvements that the Alglonds firearms cannot replicate. Runelocks are a form of flintlock with a Thaumaturgical rune on the "Runelock" striker which magically resets the striker when the rune is spoken. However, Runelocks can only be reloaded if you have the "Runelock" Secret, only known by Dwur, and the Themes Dwur and Thaumaturge reduce the Reload time by 1 each.

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

**Runelock Revolver** [Class4 Far3 Accurate Reload5 Secret] can hold six-shots, reload cost is for reloading 1-6 cartridges

**Runelock Pistol** [Class5 Far3 Accurate Reload5 Secret] single shot

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

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

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

**Thaumasweeper** [Class6 2H Far3 Reload6 Secret] a Dwur Thaumaturgical "dungeon sweeper" cast in alchemist's iron and etched with thaumaturgical runes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Magic-User Assets

Magic-users use wands, orbs, and other "magical focuses" to help them channel magic, such as the items below.

**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 9: Game Master's Guide

This last part of the book contains advice for you, the GM, to run your game, along with some additional game rules, options, and quick reference tables.

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

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

## Starting a Campaign

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

### 1. Introduce the setting -

Pick a genre and come up with some idea of the game world and starting scene. You can use an existing campaign setting or come up with your own. Legends works with any genre, but pick something familiar unless you have time to prepare. It's also a good idea to talk with your players to find out what genres they are interested in playing.

### 2. Introduce characters -

Work with each player to help them make characters. Try to create a group chemistry that works together. Introduce the characters to each other, and prompt each player to give a summary of his character.

### 3. Experience Paths -

Ask each player to write one or two paths so that everyone has a good idea of what motivates them. You might need to help players do this, which is a good way of providing "hooks" into the campaign setting. Also set one Path before the players for a rumor or quest they have heard about, so that the world feels alive. Players can update their characters to add relationships or better align goals.



4. **Strong Start** - Kick off your first game session with a “strong start” such as a battle or other challenge. Be sure to narrate the encounter, set Hazard, and follow turns, etc, so that you teach the players how to play the game.
5. **Resolution** - Once players resolve the challenge, let them take a few turns looting, resting to lower Stress, or exploring. 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** - If anyone was hurt, explain how Dooms work. Also prompt the players to choose a new Experience Path. 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**. 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** (starts each round):
  - 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 define the difficulty of the scene. Setting Hazard low creates a slow-paced scene, and setting Hazard high creates a fast-paced scene.
- GM describes Maneuvers & Actions of NPCs & monsters.
- Players may interrupt with **Maneuvers** and GM can use a Maneuver Phase if necessary. However, Saving Throws and Actions must wait for the player's turn.
- Player Leader (i.e. "party leader" or "caller") may 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.

If at any time the players interrupt and immediately leap into action, then stop talking and resolve their actions.

Start by describing the most interesting, dramatic or dangerous elements of the scene, such as NPCs, monsters, and terrain hazards. For example, you might describe a huge ogre with a spear rushing the players, and remind them of the cliff edge on their left. Raise Hazard appropriately. If there are foes then describe how they move and what they appear to be doing. Make the environment feel alive.

Otherwise, if the players allow you to continue, then give a general description of what the players see, hear, and smell. Emphasize any points of interest such as entrances, exits, and loot, e.g. "you see a bed, a table, a gold book stand, and a large hole in the ceiling". Don't go into detail, and then pause, allowing the players to direct the conversation, such as asking questions like "is there a chair?", "is there a book?", "how big is the hole?", etc. If the players seem confused or log-jammed, then encourage them to ask questions to clarify ("Feel free to ask me questions").

Never mention anything concealed from player view, whether that is due to line of sight or it was intentionally hidden. Something could be behind a tapestry, under a bed, in a chest, on a body, etc. Players will only find such things if they move to change their point of view or actively search, and how they describe this is important. This is a puzzle for the players to solve, so do not give away the answers, such as telling players when they pass by loot.

Always look for opportunities to foreshadow complications or threats, and **Raise Hazard**. Especially foreshadow any immediate dangers such as attacks which will require a roll from a player.

**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 Tracking

Keep strict track of time that passes. Without this, the game will lack realism. The players will feel no pressure to act swiftly or pay attention to details such as provisions and transportation.

### Tracking Hours

Track the hour of the day, as on a clock. For example, you might tell the players "you wake and break camp at 6am". Advance the clock by an hour each time the players engage in an activity. Just track whole hours, rounding up.

make camp	open stuck door	solve puzzle/riddle
follow a trail	find traps	eat a meal
combat	find secret doors	evade pursuers

Keep the clock visible to the players so they are mindful of the passage of time. The **Legends Scorekeeper** has a simple clock with hours from 1-12.

- The "6" hour is bolded since that is the average time for sunrise and sunset. These are good points to ask the player what they are

going to do for their day or night, possibly getting them back on track if they have been distracted.

- Raise Stress if the players do not describe eating, sleeping, etc.
- Raise Stress if the players are carrying a lot of gear or loot, especially if they have closed helms.
- Require players to cross off resources such as torches, lanterns, and magic light spells every hour.

## Tracking Days

You should keep track of which day it is. Simply pick a day to start with, e.g. Sunday, and then advance the day whenever you pass 24 hours. The **Legends Scorekeeper** has a convenient column for this.

## 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.

## Clocks

A Clock is a countdown timer to some event, which could be as simple as the end of the day or as dramatic as a race to escape a flooding dungeon. Clocks can also represent player progress.

hours until sunset

running out of food

travel time to the next city

decipher ancient glyphs

you've been poisoned

next random encounter

evil ritual in progress

hunters looking for you

dungeon is flooding

hours of work building a fort

To start a Clock, draw a pizza on a piece of paper, giving it six slices or so. Cross-out slices as time passes or progress is made.

Clocks help create a sense of time pressure for the players, helping to keep the game moving along and avoid “analysis paralysis”.

## 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 Doom1 and will probably die. Intelligent creatures might surrender if they feel that will be honored.

## Using Hazard

### **Hazard is your volume knob for difficulty and dramatic tension.**

Raise Hazard whenever you narrate anything which makes the situation more dangerous, especially when you foreshadow a threat of some kind. Lower Hazard as the players overcome challenges.

**Difficulty** - Use Hazard to quantify the level of difficulty and risk in the scenario. This is based on many squishy details such as terrain, situational dangers, monsters, etc. A battle in a building on fire is both more difficult and more risky than on level ground.

**Dramatic Tension** - Use Hazard to make the dramatic tension in the story real for the players. Raise Hazard as you head into a climax.

**Positioning** - Raise Hazard whenever the foes maneuver and claim an advantageous position, such as high ground or flanking.

**Outclassed** - Raise Hazard if the players are clearly out-classed in terms of weapons and armor.

**Player Choices** - Use Hazard to provide the players with meaningful choices where they know the odds. For example, if you describe how there are strong winds and loose tiles on the rooftops, and Raise Hazard, the players can make their decision which route to take. Or if you describe how an evil priest lights an unholy lanthorn that strengthens undead nearby, and Raise Hazard, then clever players might shoot that lanthorn to lower the Hazard back down. Player choices matter; use Hazard to inform those choices.

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

**Foreshadowing** - Use Hazard to make your foreshadowing reality for the players. If you describe remnants of prior victims ("look at the bones!"), deep footprints of a massive beast, claw marks on trees, and blood trails, and Raise Hazard each time, then the players will

know you are serious about the danger. 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.

**Resting** - You should reset Hazard when the PCs find a safe place to rest and make camp.

## Using Stress

**Stress is your volume knob for making the characters feel human.**

Raise Stress whenever you describe something that would shock, unnerve, or start to unravel the sanity of a normally brave human. For example, Raise Stress when a player finds a trap with the remains of a prior dead adventurer. Getting hit or hurt also Raises Stress, but this is applied when the player Soaks Damage.

eldritch horror	magical fear	torture
cultist ritual signs	character death	murder
lack of sleep	lost	<i>Soak Damage</i>
dead adventurers	darkness	

Play with normal 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, complimenting others, or blowing off steam. Enforce a minimum Stress as follows.

- If the situation is stressful, such as combat or a chase, or the players have not slept in the past 24 hours, 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.
- Going without sleep sets a minimum Stress, which is the number of consecutive days without sleep.
- 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.)
- The minimum Stress is normally 1, or maybe Stress 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 or when players take a risky action. When possible continue any natural chain of events, natural consequences, situational development, etc. You may 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 ( $\partial 20$ 1-14)	Success ( $\partial 20$ 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?
ULT	Black wizards walk the streets, what is their purpose?	Find a weird shop or black market with exotic goods.
PREP	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, or use two Paths, one for the players and the other for their adversaries. 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 two weeks of exploration, you have located the Caverna Chaotica, the source of repeated raids on the trade road. The bounty on Goblyn ears is 1gp each!

SURPRISE ATTACK! - 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.

**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. 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.

## 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 somewhere much 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.

If the adventure involves urgency or promise of a reward based on some criteria, then write a Path.

### 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.

## 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 it
- **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 obvious Assets, and vary them to differentiate similar monsters. Scatter a few projectile weapons, heavy weapons, and heavy armor amongst the goblins to create a variety of challenges. Assets can be the most distinctive aspect of groups of creatures, e.g. "the goblin with the arbalest". Raise Hazard when describing anything scary or unusual like 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 players. This helps the players make well-informed choices. Foreshadow attacks with a Maneuver of some kind, such as describing a goblin archer or troll aiming at a specific Hit Location. Limit each monster to one or two Maneuvers, according to its quickness and tactical abilities.

When possible maneuver groups of monsters as units. Raise Hazard if you have a group of monsters gang up on a player rather than attacking separately.

## Monster Attacks

When a monster attacks, the targeted player must roll a Saving Throw or take Damage. Declare monster attacks on **Transitions** to player turns, because the Saving Throw occurs during the player's turn and is considered simultaneous with any actions the player takes during their turn. You can also Raise Hazard if you also foreshadow the attack 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

Set the monster Weapon Class based on a weapon it is using, or by comparing its attack with equivalent weapons. For example, giant rat teeth at best knife-sized, so they should be at most Class 1. Use a higher Weapon Class if the monster is huge (e.g. a giant), or if it has a deadly attack (e.g. a shark bite). However, do not raise Weapon Class for poison or venom.

## Special Attacks

The hallmark of many monsters is one or more kinds of special attacks, such as petrification, poison, or energy drain. Special attacks

usually result in special Dooms, which can have immediate effects (e.g. petrification) or require special treatment (e.g. venom).

In general it's a good idea to foreshadow special attacks to keep them special and scary. Apply special attacks when you feel they will have the most dramatic impact. For example, a dragon shouldn't breathe fire every round, because that wouldn't be as dramatic as leading up to the breath of death by foreshadowing how the dragon breathes in and glares balefully. Highlight special attacks or special abilities when you roll ULT so they can surprise you and your players.

Special attacks deal Damage like normal attacks, but 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. You can limit the use of special attacks that are especially deadly or are hard to treat by only firing them off when you roll ULT. A wraith doesn't have to do its best undeath touch on *every* attack, and making it happen less often makes it more scary.

## Multiple Monsters

If there are multiple monsters who could attack the player, consider calling for just one Saving Throw. This approach allows you to liberally throw waves and hordes of awful monsters at the players without worrying too much about accidentally killing the party. Not all monsters are organized; they can get distracted or stop to feed!

Raise Hazard if you combine a group of monsters into one attack rather than making separate attacks. For example, in describing a hundred goblin archers "a black cloud of arrows falls upon you like barbed locusts" (+ Hazard). If this is area-effect then reiterate this during Transitions to player turns.

Lastly, you don't always need to tell the players how many monsters there are. The players might fall into a dark pit on a pile of bodies

and feel "many cold hands attempt to drag you down". Each player would roll one Saving Throw, regardless of how many monsters are down there. Sometimes this is more creepy than knowing the odds.

## Defeating Monsters

Monsters take 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; 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, or a wyrm might be invulnerable except for a spot above its heart. Apply a Damage modifier of +1/-1 as applicable.

vulnerable on belly  
immune to fire  
immune to cold

ward pact vs swords  
immune to weapons  
mostly made of air

ghostly  
armored head  
impervious shell



## Death Throes

A creature (whether a monster or player) at Doom3 goes into "death throes". The creature "drops", goes into shock, and loses their ability to take actions other than random "death throes", such as thrashing

about, making messes and pitiful sounds, bleeding on or biting someone who gets too close, or making one last attack before expiring. Even “as good as dead”, monsters can still be dangerous. Snakes can 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 regenerate damage from fire or acid.

## Interacting with Monsters

Monsters **always want something** specific, whether that's food, water, territory, treasure, allies vs enemies, or new music. Ideally this is something the players have, are blocking, or can obtain, giving players a way to interact with the monster other than combat, and possibly *manipulate* the monster. There can be competing priorities, e.g. a tribe of ferocious baboons might want “man's red fire or man's red flesh”, causing players to carry extra torches in case they need to trade for their lives. Motivations make monsters feel real.

**Talking monsters** should always attempt to communicate. They will relate their needs, ask questions, boast, make demands, threaten, and curse. Give the monster a distinctive voice, such as whispering, gibbering, clacking, clicking, growling, or croaking. Also mix-in non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions, body language, gestures, and drawing. Magical monsters might use telepathy to whisper, biochemical lights to show pictures, or pheromones to communicate ideas via smell.

## Monster 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	Monster catches its breath, possibly either moving or attacking, but not both, this
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 should leverage the wealth of fantasy literature and 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.

## 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

Each player takes on the role of one character in the game. Everyone else is an NPC ("non-player character"). You control all NPCs, including minions and hirelings of the PCs, and even characters whose player is absent.

Quickly create new NPCs with a few descriptive words, with a Theme for an occupation (e.g. baker, cook, driver, guard, scout), a Trait for a strength (e.g. clever, connected, quick, strong), and a Trait for a personality quirk (e.g. friendly, nosy, boorish). Add a Theme for an unusual ancestry (e.g. elf, dwarf, etc), and Assets for their gear.

After introducing an NPC, step back and see what the players do. Make your NPCs come alive, but never forget they are the supporting cast of the story, and the spotlight is for the players. Be prepared to "let go" of even your favorite NPCs, allowing them to be marginalized or killed off. You can always make more!

# NPC Personas & Voices

	Failure (d20 1-14)	Success (d20 15-20)
THEME	Arrogant, haughty, self-important, overly proud and overconfident	A voice used to giving orders and having them obeyed
EFFORT	Starts off quiet and then fades to inaudible, causing you to lean forward to hear better	Brash and bold, often twice as loud as necessary. A booming baritone: "Ho ho my friend!"
ASSET	Sounds like he starts the day gargling hot coals; Like a cat bringing up a hairball	Smooth and dark, like treacle (molasses) poured into black coffee
COMBO	Has friends in low places, like an east end gangster	Everybody's friend. Hey friend! I can definitely help you out...I know a guy...
VLT	Dripping with false sincerity	A voice that makes belts unbuckle themselves
PREP	Every word a sneer, every pause a lie	A sensible, reasonable voice. "I think we can come to an arrangement"

## NPC 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, stonecutter, tailor, tax collector, teacher, thatcher, thief, town guard, tracker, urchin, vintner, wagon driver, weaponsmith, weaver, woodsman, wizard



# 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 take 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
PRCP	Fodder - meat shield, point man, trap tester, door spiker, poison taster	Specialist - guide, scout, lock picker, sapper, door spiker, forager, naturalist, messenger, tinkerer (can fix things)

- **Hopefuls (Crit)** are the most competent and daring of young adventures in the making. Will generally exceed expectations and show qualities.
- **Losers (Fumble)** are generally incompetent, except sometimes have a knack for pretending to be useful. Will royally screw up any assignment given them.



# I Loot the Body!

A player can use an Action to quickly Loot a body or similarly sized area. As the GM, you determine what loot (treasure) is found; here are some helpful tips.

**Describing Loot** - Always give a general description of what the players can see in the area, with slight emphasis to points of interest such as threats and loot, e.g. "you see a bed, a table, a gold book stand, and a large hole in the ceiling". Don't go into detail, instead allow the players to direct the conversation, such as asking questions like "is there a chair?", "is there a book?", "how big is the hole?", etc.

Never mention anything concealed from player view, whether that is due to line of sight or it was intentionally hidden. Something could be behind a tapestry, under a bed, in a chest, on a body, etc. Players will only find such things if they move to change their point of view or actively search, and how they describe this is important. This is a puzzle for the players to solve, so do not give away the answers, such as telling players when they pass by Loot.

Also, there is more to Loot than coins and items. Some monsters might have valuable pelts, or the "Loot" could be a key, clue, or a secret door.

**Setting Loot Value** - Choose the value of the Loot or roll 1d20. Note that this is a reverse roll, as if you were attacking the players, so the worse you roll the better the loot. This rewards players for surviving higher Hazard and Stress. Then shift the result by one step better if the fight was tough (e.g. causing a Doom) or if the monster had deadly special abilities.

$\partial 20$	Value	Loot
Success	1-10 cp	Loot is a few small coins or a <b>Cheap Asset</b> (e.g. broken sword, chipped knife, loose-headed ax, broken shield, frayed rope, torn cloak, worn out boots). These are worth 1-10 cp, but nobody will buy them from you.
Failure	1 gp	Loot is 1 crown or a <b>Common Asset</b> (e.g. sword, spear, ax, shield, rope, quiver of arrows, lantern, cloak, boots, provisions, mead, wine) worth 1 gp.
Fumble	10 gp	Loot is 10 crowns or an <b>Expensive Asset</b> (e.g. greatsword, plate armor, arbalest, gem.) worth 10 gp.
Below Fumble	100gp	Loot is 100 crowns or a <b>Signature Asset</b> (i.e. Asset with Signature and/or Secret). Can be pawned for 100 crowns, or used for advancing an Experience Path.

**Damaging Loot** - The players might inadvertently damage or destroy Loot, reducing its value by one step on the table. They might shoot a "white wolf" full of holes, thereby destroying its valuable pelt. Some items are very fragile or flammable, such as books, scrolls, clothing, artwork, magic mushrooms, etc.

Use your **Legend Die** to add variety, details, or complications.

THEME	Loot is an item (especially arms, armor, shields, and clothing) thematically styled for the owner, such as a coat of arms, cultural designs/knots, anchors, skulls, snakes, runes, horses, etc. The Asset can have a Signature for style if it makes a unique fashion statement, such as an avant garde dragon-winged helmet. Players love these kinds of detailed items, as they help to dress up their characters with distinctive clothing, especially when hard-won versus a worthy foe!
EFFORT	Loot consists of furnishings and artwork, such as an ornate table, tapestry, rug, chest, bed, mirror, candelabra, mural, altar, sculpture, etc. If you can find a descriptive style that appeals to the players, they will likely have fun taking furnishings and artwork home to decorate their lairs, fortresses, and temples. Naturally, many of these items are bulky and difficult to move.
ASSET	Loot is a useful tool or utensil, such as a tinderbox, chef knife, tongs, shovel, rope, etc. Even ordinary tools can be useful to clever players, e.g. pincers or tongs could pick up dangerous items, or a rake can safely comb through piles of debris.
COMBO	Loot is small (e.g. coins, gems, etc.) and well-hidden , so it will only be found if the player described an appropriately thorough search (e.g. strip, fully body search, etc.) Possibly the monster itself is the Loot if you know what to look for, such as eyes of a basilisk, venom glands of a giant viper, etc.  However, there is a 50% chance <b>Something awful</b> is near the Loot, which might be found depending on how the player described their search. Raise Stress if found! Examples: <i>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, "cursed" weapon/armor/shield, Eldritch sign, undead rats inside</i>
VLT	Loot is foodstuffs, spices, wine, or other comforts. Possibly the monster itself might provide meat, eggs, a warm pelt, etc. Unless cared for, there is a 50% chance the Loot is spoiled or tainted.
PREP	Loot consists of written works or records such as books, scrolls,, diaries, navigational charts, treasure maps, etc. With careful study, these can reveal secrets of the past and used to make progress on Paths. Unless stored carefully, there is a 50% chance the Loot has been damaged and only snippets of lore remain.

# GM Quick Reference

## 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	Coverage	Maneuvers
Body-Armor	cuirass	Head, Torso	3
Half-Armor	gambeson	Head, Torso, Arms, Hands	2
3Qtr-Armor	mail hauberk	Head, Arms, Torso, Waist	2
Full-Armor	full mail	all	1

Pieces of Partial Armor only cover a portion of the Hit Location, so it only protects you if you roll ASSET. However, it does not count towards Coverage or affect your number of Maneuvers per Round.

## Hit Locations

As the GM, include the **Hit Location** along with each attack, e.g. "The goblin falchion slices wickedly at your knee". Try to choose something both descriptive and appropriate, e.g. rats on the floor will usually attack low targets such as legs, but rats falling from the ceiling attack the head and shoulders, a caltrop trap hits under the foot, etc. If you prefer you can roll dice, using 1d6 on the table below.

### 1d6 Hit Location Examples

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

You can specify left/right based on what seems natural, or roll a die odd (left) / even (right).

**Area-of-Effect (AOE) Attacks** still target a Hit Location. They are most likely to hit an extremity with low protection, such as hands, legs, or face.

## Dooms

Dooms are very serious life threatening injuries or afflictions. You gain a Doom whenever you fail a Saving Throw and 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	Stage	Effects	Recovery
□ □ □	Doom0	none ("I'm fine")	Stabilization
☒ □ □	Doom1	cannot upgrade EFFORT	Field Ritual
☒ ☒ □	Doom2	Cannot use Hit Location	Circle Ritual
☒ ☒ ☒	Doom3	Expectant, near death, at "death's door"	Node Ritual
☒ ☒ ☒ +	Doom4	Immediate death	

**You can Soak 1 Damage** each time you are hit. This raises Stress, is limited to 1 Damage per hit, and results in a minimum of Doom0. Roleplay what you do (feel free to let your creativity run wild and take "artistic license", since this is 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 Doom1 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.

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

## 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 ( $\partial 20 \leq \text{Stress}$ )	Failure ( $\partial 20 \leq \text{Hazard}$ )
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 ( $\partial 20 < \text{Hazard}$ )	Success ( $\partial 20 \geq \text{Hazard}$ )
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 the gear of a foe, poor gear on a player, or special gear for the situation. In combat a player 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 raise Hazard.	Encounter a group of possibly friendly NPCs, or describe an opportunity to use teamwork, or an NPC helps a player. Provide an opportunity to show teamwork or describe how an ally proves helpful.
VLT	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 player or NPC.	Highlight an ULT of a player 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 well prepared and raise Hazard.	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 kingdoms of man build on the unspoiled shores of the Dragon Sea. As they explore wildernesses and forge kingdoms they encounter ancient ruins, Eldar, dragons, and monsters, and mysteries of the old worlds.

THE WORLD HAS DIED and risen anew in an infinite cycle. Each new incarnation blossoms and grows for an aeon, then dies in an apocalypse. Every reincarnation is a land for new peoples and civilizations and dragons, built on the stones and bones of the past. Every death adds another layer of history.

THE UNDERWORLDS are vast subterranean gigadungeons formed by the layers of countless precursor civilizations. Survivors compete for life in the dark cold below, fighting monsters and one another in their struggle to reach the surface. Yet, treasure hunters, adventurers, and doom cults seek tunnels into the Underworlds to plunder the riches of ancient aeons. Within the depths you will find dead cities, riches, artifacts, dragon lairs, monsters, vast tunnels and caverns inside dead dragons, trapped Eldar civilizations, imprisoned horrors, entrances to Kalla, and shrines to Gods with forgotten names.

ELDAR are survivors of previous aeons. Once young like us, they have been forged, broken, and reforged in world-ending fire to something like fae or daemons. A few Eldar have realms above and below, but most are trapped below and seek the surface, or wander without a people or a home..

BUILD YOUR LEGEND as you explore the world, above and below. Write your character in your own words, with no numbers or limitations, and set your own goals for advancement. Then play in total immersion, with a unique new dice system that keeps you immersed in playing your “words only” character, rewarding good roleplaying and clever tactics.

THIS BOOK includes everything you need to start adventuring in the Dragon Isles, with a setting overview and full game rules.

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