



# LEGENDS

## Roleplaying System

# Player Quick Reference - Actions & Maneuvers

As a player, you get one main **Action** during your Turn; usually requiring a roll.

- **Attack** - damage a foe (armed, unarmed, grappling, magical, et al.)
- **Recover** - Untap one Trait (roleplay how you do this)
- **Secret** - use a Secret, such as casting a spell or using a special ability
- **Extreme Maneuver** - take a Maneuver that needs a roll, such a leap over a pit

You also get two lesser **Maneuvers** per Round, which you can take at *any* time.

- **Move (5 feet)** - move 5 feet (e.g. walk, hop, sit, stand, kneel, turn around)
- **Double Move (10 feet)** - double move straight ahead (e.g. run, sprint, charge)
- **Item** - ready a weapon, reload, pick up item, put item away
- **Combination** - improve a roll with a dodge, feint, parry, shield block, etc.
- **Cover** - take cover (counts as ASSET)

## Roll the Dice

Roll a **d20** and a **Legend Die**. Your **d20** is an unmodified "natural" roll which succeeds on 15+. You Crit on 20. You Fumble if you roll equal to or less than the **Hazard**, which **starts at 1** but is slowly increased by the GM as the danger and tension grows.

Your **Legend Die** is a custom d6 (faces below) which may upgrade or downgrade your natural result by one step. Describe how your roll succeeded or failed.

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**THEME** Name a Theme (or Theme Signature) that assists your action. Downgrade your result if you don't have all necessary specialized knowledge (e.g. alchemy, swordsmithing).

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**EFFORT** Push yourself and upgrade your natural result by Tapping a Trait. Downgrade your natural result if your roll is hindered by a Dark Secret or Doom (Stage 1+), which you can offset by Tapping an extra Trait.

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**ASSET** Describe how you are using an Asset to assist your action. For example, a tinderbox aids in starting a fire and a rope is useful for climbing and many other things. In combat the primary Assets are weapons and armor.

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**COMBO** Declare an Action or Maneuver that creates a "combination" with your current roll, such as a dodge or feint. You can declare a Maneuver at any time, even now, and the other players can also use Maneuvers to help you. Downgrade your result if you're surrounded or attacked multiple times, or at a disadvantage (e.g. unarmed, blind, held, prone, crawling, etc).

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**ULT** Describe how you are the absolute best at your action, out of anyone in the current scene. Requires player consensus for bonus. If your action directly opposes someone, and they have Ult, then downgrade your natural result.

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

# Saving Throws

While transitioning to your turn, the GM will call for a Saving Throw if you are attacked by a monster, trap, spell, or other danger. Roll the dice during your turn: if you fail you take **Damage**. If you Fumble you take extra Damage or effects. If you Crit you gain a **Counter**, a bonus Action in the context of your defense. You can use a Maneuver to assist your Saving Throw. You could dodge or parry to gain COMBO, take cover to gain the cover as an ASSET, or help an ally to provide them COMBO.

## Damage

You take **Damage** whenever you fail a **Damage Roll** (Saving Throws, Stunts, & Secrets).

- **Tap a Trait to Soak Damage.** Tapping a Trait negates 1 Damage, +1 per important reason why the specific Trait is ideal for opposing the specific Damage. If you do not Soak all Damage you gain a **Doom**.
- **Spend an Action to Un-Tap a Trait.** When you do this, un-Tap one Trait of your choice by erasing the "x" mark you wrote. Describe what you do, e.g. catch your breath, sip water, eat, bind wounds, meditate, taunt foes, or compose haiku.

## Dooms

Dooms are life threatening injuries or afflictions. Dooms have three Countdown boxes. The Doom "Stage" describes how far down the Countdown you've gone. If the Countdown ends so do you.

- Check a box each GM Turn until you receive first aid. You or someone else must use an Action to provide first aid.
- Check a box if you roll a Fumble, including the roll causing the Doom.
- Check a box to combine additional Dooms of the same kind, such as another wound in the same Hit Location, more poison, etc.

Boxes	Doom Stage	Effects	Recovery
□□□	Stage 0 - First Symptoms	Un-Tap needs 2 Actions	2d6 days
☒□□	Stage I - Full Onset	downgrade on EFFORT	2d6 weeks
☒☒□	Stage II - Incapacitated	cannot take Actions	2d6 months
☒☒☒	Stage III - Death	death/retirement	n/a

**Effects** are cumulative. The GM may waive effects when appropriate, e.g. a "wounded leg" does not hinder listening.

**Recovery** typically requires the amount of resting time indicated above. The GM will decrease or increase time for special circumstances, such as special healing (e.g. magic healing spells, potions, etc) or unsanitary/stressful conditions.

# LEGENDS Roleplaying System

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## Roleplaying System

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# Introduction

The **LEGENDS Roleplaying System** is purpose built to let you create any kind of character imaginable, and stay immersed in-character.

The LEGENDS Roleplaying System is purpose built to provide you with full creative control to create word-based characters and monsters, and stay immersed in-character throughout the game.

## Your character, in your own words

Characters and monsters are written entirely in your own words. There are no meta-game terms, numbers, or enumerated lists for classes, races, or skills..

Play who you want!

## Legends Dice

A custom d6 Legends Die keeps you immersed in your “words only” character, savoring each facet of your character concept, and keeping all rolls in-character.

## Who will you become?

Your character advances and is refined by accomplishing your goals in-character, not tracking points. Play to find out who you are.

## GM Support

The Legends system is built from the ground-up to help the GM run the table smoothly. This revolves around an innovative and fast



turn-based play with random encounter seeds to inspire the GM each round and keep players moving ahead, in-character.

## Streamlined turn-based play

Legends streamlines basic game flow. Legends is a turn-based game, where each player is provided one main Action before play passes clockwise to the next player. There is no “initiative” and play proceeds continuously, so it’s always someone’s turn. The GM always takes the first turn, during which the scene can be described, along with a random Encounter, followed by narration of maneuvering foes and foreshadowing of threats.

## Legends Dice keep you in character

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

Your **Legend Die** is a custom 1d6 with faces labeled **THEME**, **EFFORT**, **ASSET**, **COMBO**, **ULT**, and **PREP**. Each face represents one *potential factor for success*. Your Legend Die decides which factor is decisive in this moment. You get to experience each factor separately like a multi-course meal, roleplaying and showcasing each aspect of your character and the scenario.

Your Legend Die takes into account various factors such as character traits/concept, character domain/role within the team, situational advantages, teamwork, and player wits/preparation. About half of these factors highlight the character, and the other half comes from player decisions and skill, so player agency and choice have a high degree of impact on the outcome. Over the

course of many rolls the six factors will be equally important, so none can be safely ignored.

# When to use Legends

Legends excels in a few places that few other RPGs do.

## Newbie Friendly

Legends is easy to learn, making it friendly to novice roleplayers, kids, or anyone who has a creative concept in mind. Characters are in the players own words, so novices can jump in without needing to read any rules. Also, randomly creative ideas such as "tinkerer", "bear", "baby dragon", or "blue fire ninja" are no problem.

## One-Shot Friendly

Legends shines for quick pick-up games with any flavor of campaign. The system is flexible and simple to explain, requiring no up-front reading. The system is also genre-neutral, which is handy if you are trying a new genre, or a genre mashup.

## Genre Neutral

We've played Legends with all sorts of quick games ranging from quirky one-offs to decade-spanning epic campaigns. This book uses the traditional RPG "medieval high fantasy" genre for tone and flavor text. This is my favorite genre and the one I know best.

- Classic genres:** fantasy, sci-fi, horror, modern, superhero
- Fantasy:** dungeon crawl, fantasy sandbox, epic high fantasy, medieval europe, mythic europe, mythic japan
- Sci-fi:** big ship crew, explorers, starfleet, military, mercs, science explorers, space pirates, space station, time cops
- Modern:** cyber punkers, rock band, spies/agents, military/mercs, modern w/ magic, wild wild west
- Mashups:** "connecticut yankee", time travel

## Heroic Realism

Legends strives to portray a balance of "heroic realism", where the characters are heroes who are larger than normal life, but are still mortal and live in a dangerous and real world. Combat is realistic and deadly enough to make players consider all their options, because that's a realistic part of how people approach their lives.

Legends is built upon historical martial principles (the author and several contributors are life-long martial artists in multiple fighting systems). Combat in Legends feels like historical combat, keeping all the authentic nuances but without overcomplicating things.

## Getting Started

Gather 2-8 people and nominate one player to be your "Game Master" (GM). Each player takes on the role of a player character (PC). Each person will need their own d20 and Legend Die (which you will currently need to make). No other dice are required.

Your Game Master (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 acts as the referee or judge, keeping the game flowing according to its 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 decisions of the players. Play to find out what happens.

## Sample Characters

Here are some sample characters.

# Syr Wyndon

Sun Knight of Alglondor

## THEMES

Alglond - of *Tolsiriost*

Knight - *holy paladin*

Strong - *valiant*

Hallow - *pious and brave*

## TRAITS

brave, pious, strong, tall

## ASSETS

Longsword - *father's sword*

Plate armor

Kite shield

Warhorse

## SECRETS

Knightly vows

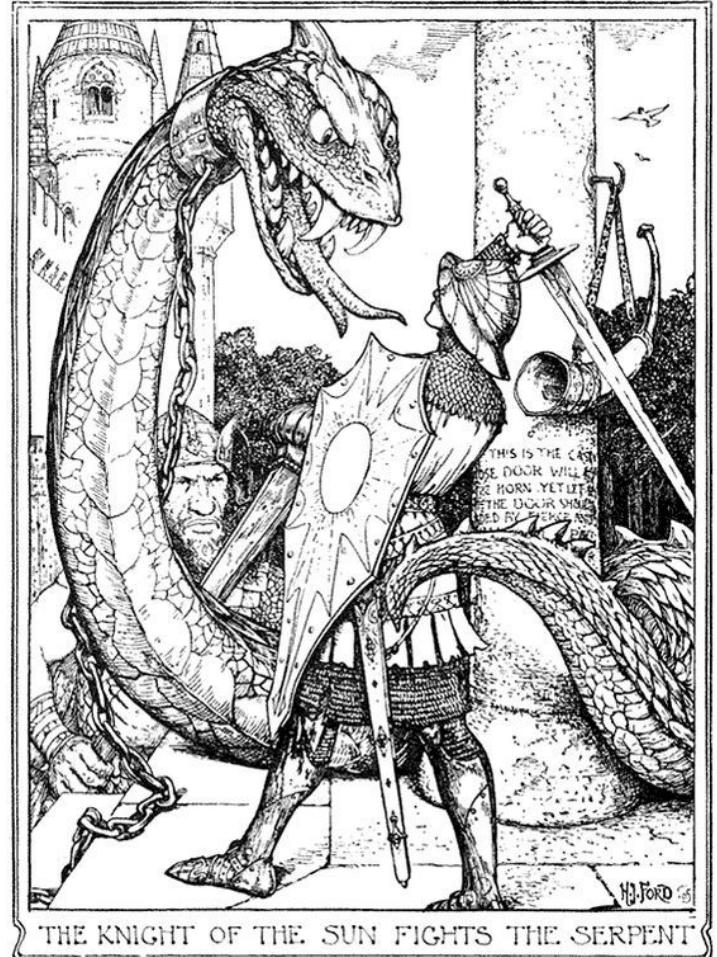
Friend of Lord Tirith

Holy light

Sense the truth

## DARK SECRETS

Will *never* trust an Avathar



# Dthar Kel'en

Alu'Kel assassin and master of  
the nine winds

## THEMES

Alu - desert screamer  
Kel Warrior - sickle swords  
Assassin - for honor of clan  
Wind Mage - nine winds

## TRAITS

agile, deadly, quiet, intense

## ASSETS

Sickle swords  
Dart knives  
Armored robes  
Smoke grenades

## SECRETS

Whispering wind  
Vanish into smoke  
Wind jump  
Gust of wind

## DARK SECRETS

Sole survivor of last mission





# Part 1: Your Character

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

## Character Sheet

Start with a blank sheet of paper, or a shiny printed character sheet, then write the following elements all in your own words.

**Name** - What do you want everyone to call you? Feel free to include an alias, title, epithet, or anything else you like. Ask the GM for suggestions that might fit into the campaign setting

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

**Traits** - Write two keywords that describe your personal qualities, e.g. "strong", "patient", or "quick-witted". Traits often support Themes.

**Assets** - Write two items, such as a sword, suit of armor, magic wand, or spellbook. The items must exist in the game setting.

**Secrets** - Write two special skills or abilities that you can do, which most people can't, such as magic spells or secret languages. Optionally, you can take Assets or Traits in place of Secrets.

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

**XP** - Write up to two Experience Paths for motives, goals, or quests.

## Tips

**Start playing** - Character refinement is an essential part of the game, so don't worry about getting your concept perfect right at the start. Instead, work quickly and then jump into playing the game to find out what you will become.

**Options** - You can optionally take an extra Dark Secret to get one extra Theme, Asset, Secret, or Trait. Also, if you take a spellbook or other secret tome you start with an extra Secret.

**Finishing touches** - You can optionally embellish your character with finishing touches such as a backstory and character portrait.

**Share** - It's nice to share. While your character is "yours" and in your own words, it's a good idea to involve the other players and the GM in your creative process. Role-playing games are social games, and you will be living in a world with other PCs. The other players might have ideas on how to best fit your concept into the game world and how the characters can get along and work together as a team.

## Themes

Your character can have up to four core **Themes** that describe your high concepts, such as: "Elf, Swordsman, Wizard, Quickened". Use familiar concepts and wording that other players will immediately recognize and understand. The other players shouldn't need to ask you to explain what a Theme means, so simpler and standardized Themes are best.

## Signatures

As you write each Theme, also write a Signature to awesomize the Theme and make it yours. This is a short note or epithet that puts your creative spin on the familiar archetype. A Theme like "Knight" could have a Signature like "errant knight, "champion of Lorenia", "knight commander", "veteran of the Vampire Wars", or "grizzled old

knight who has seen it all". You can also use Signatures for quotes, mottos, or beliefs, such as "knowledge is power".

### **Leclo, moon elf prince**

**Elf** moon elf prince

**Swordsman** blade dancer of the crescent moon

**Wizard** sacred moon magic

**Quickened** magically quickened mind and body

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

## Using Themes

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

You must name Themes that work together on the kinds of things you want to excel at doing. Redundant and overlapping Themes will make you perform better at a narrower range of tasks, and better set you up for ULT. Feel free to discuss your Theme strategy with your fellow players, since each of you could specialize in a narrow band of Themes and still be well-rounded as a group.

## Sample Themes

Lists of sample Themes are provided below to give you some ideas for writing your Themes. Notice how familiar RPG tropes such as "race and class" are all possible as Themes, but not necessary.

### Fantasy Themes

archer

assassin

berserker

bard	knight	quick
battlemage	magician	ranger
charismatic	magic-user	rogue
cleric	man-at-arms	soldier
druid	mercenary	sorcerer
executioner	merchant	swashbuckler
fighter	monk	thief
hero	necromancer	tinkerer
horse lord	nobleman	tough
illusionist	paladin	wizard

### Sci-Fi Themes

assassin	mercenary	space cowboy
asteroid miner	merchant	space marine
belter	pilot	space pirate
courier	psionicist	space samurai
empath	reaver	space trucker
engineer	scitech	star ranger
hacker	smuggler	starfighter pilot
jed'dai	spacer	strategist
lancer	space cop	void navigator

### Wild Wasteland Themes

bandito	mercenary	rider
canny	mutant	sharpshooter
doc	outlaw	soldier
gambler	pure human	survivor
gunslinger	preacher	tinkerer
lucky	rainmaker	tough
marshal	ranger	wanderer

## Race Themes

You can optionally use a Theme for your race. If you don't, you are the most common race in the campaign setting, such as "human". Choosing a race gives your character an anchoring culture and

general physical appearance, and races often provide natural advantages. Sample themes are below, but the GM may provide lists of races appropriate for your campaign setting.

### Fantasy

elf	gnome	half-orc
drow	gray elf	high elf
dwarf	halfling	human
dragonkin	half-ogre	wood elf

### Sci-Fi

android	clone	high-g colonist
astronaut	crystal man	martian
belter	cyborg	saurian
bird man	dog man	slug man
brain-in-a-jar	earthling	super soldier
bug man	fish man	yeti
cat man	fungoid	xenomorph

### Animal Heroes

baby dragon	husky ranger	sifu shitsu
bard beagle	labradoodle bard	st. bernard
bulldogbarian	poodle paladin	stunt eagle
catrabat	rat rogue	timber wolverine
cat burglar	raven thief	labradabrador

## Themes for Magic and Faith

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

### Magic Arts

alchemist	blood mage	enchanter
arcanist	chiromancer	evoker
battlemage	conjurer	fire wizard
black wizard	diviner	hedge wizard

illusionist	seer	war wizard
magic-user	song mage	witch
magician	sorcerer	weather wizard
necromancer	summoner	white wizard
oneiromancer	thaumaturge	wild mage
rune mage	warlock	wizard

### Faiths

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

## Campaign Setting Themes

The GM may have lists of sample Themes for your campaign setting. Here are a few of mine just to show you how natural and simple this is.

### Races of the Dragon Isles

alglond	eldar	kith
alu	elf	linnorm
avathar	harn	northman
baal	ifr'it	rochir
belerion	karrock	southmaren
dorthonien	kessrith	tengu
dwur	kitanian	vozen

### Magic Arts of the Dragon Isles

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

## Species of the Dorado Sector

alpha	Incarnate	Organic
colonist/collie	mot	trilisk
galm	nisibisi	uni
ghost	omega	warg

## Traits

Your character starts with a few minor **Traits**, which are minor qualities and keywords that add detail and fill in around your Themes. Write your Traits in your own words, and while you have few now you can gain more as XP Rewards.

athletic	holy	stable
calm	icy gaze	stalwart
chi	infernal	stoic
cool	intelligent	strong
dashing	intrepid	steely eyed
dextrous	magical	tough
elemental pact	morale	tough as nails
fast	noble	traveler
fit	pious	unbreakable
focused	powerful	unholy
genius	quick	unflappable
gritty	rock steady	unstoppable
handsome	silver tongue	veteran
hardy	smart	wise
healthy	spiritual	witty

## Using Traits

Traits describe your character, so you should use them to help you roleplay. You can also name a Trait when your Legend Die rolls Combo or Ult. For example, a Trait like "handsome" or "silver

tongue" would help you at negotiating with the king. However, the main function of Traits is to let you push yourself to your limits. You can Tap a Trait to expend effort when your Legend Die rolls EFFORT. You can also Tap a Trait to Soak Damage that would normally kill a man.

To Tap a Trait, simply mark an "x" by the Trait. A Tapped Trait cannot be used until recovered (see below). If all your Traits are Tapped then you're "Tapped Out". While there is no immediate effect, you risk a Doom if you fail a roll, since you can't Soak more Damage. Thus, Traits act like a kind of "hit points", allowing you to act like a hero for as long as your Traits last, but when they are gone you're a vulnerable mortal.

You can recover a Trait whenever you spend an Action to take a break. Describe what you do, whether you just catch your breath, sip some water, or eat something. When you do this, recover (or "un-tap") the Trait of your choice by erasing the "x" mark you wrote.

#### **Traits Example: G'thar the Northman**

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

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

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

# Assets

Write down a few important **Assets**. These are your most prized possessions, such as your father's sword, armor, shield, Elven bow, wizard staff, or spellbook. You should use your own words, but you must use wording that is familiar to the other players. These should be items which anyone in the campaign setting would recognize.

The GM may require you to explain how you have each Asset and knows how to use it, especially for any complicated Assets. Expertise in heavy military weapons such as a greatsword or longbow requires lifelong training, and you must have an appropriate Theme or Trait. You will also have opportunities to gain new Assets during play. You might buy, loot, or steal a sword. Specialized gear requires a Theme or Trait.

## Signatures

Similar to Themes, you can add a Signature to awesomize the Assets and make it yours. For example, your "longsword" can be "Longsword - my father's sword". Only the most rare Assets will have Signatures for special abilities or exceptional qualities.



# Simple Assets

Examples of Assets are provided below, but you should outfit your character however you imagine. You can draw from any sources you like, such as novels, movies, other RPGs, or historical sources.

## Medieval Armor

arming jack	gambeson	open helm
chain maille	gauntlets	plate armor
closed helm	great helm	skullcap
coat of plates	hauberk	vambraces

## Medieval Weapons & Shields

arming sword	falchion	morning star
battle ax	gauntlets	round shield
buckler	kite shield	self bow
closed helm	light crossbow	sidesword
club (1h)	longsword	throwing ax
dagger	mace	war dart

## Medieval Heavy Weapons

arbalest	halberd	polearm
club (2h)	lance (mounted)	spadone
crossbow	longbow	spear
greatsword	polax	Zweihander

## Adventuring / Dungeoneering Gear

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

## Thieves Gear

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

### Sci-Fi Equipment

auto-doc	drone, repair	medical kit
blaster	drone, security	portable radar
communicator	geiger counter	power armor
computer	gizmo	scanner
drone, recon	grenade	vacsuit

## Using Assets

Assets are normally *expected* as part of what you do. If you attack it's naturally expected that you have a weapon. So in most cases, Assets aren't named like Assets are, but the *lack* of an appropriate Asset will cause a penalty, so you need to name an *extra* Theme.

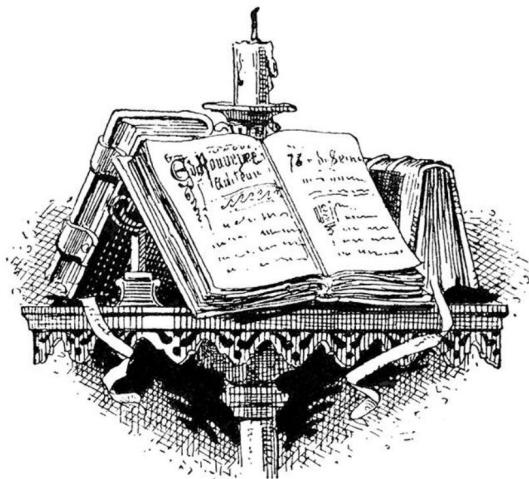
However, Assets with Signatures are special. If you have an Asset with a Signature that is ideal to the task, then you can name it instead of a Theme. For example, an Asset "Longsword - holy sword" could be named when attacking an evil undead or daemonic foe because the Signature is perfect for putting down evil.

## Special Assets

**Innate Assets** - If your character race has wings, claws, scaled skin, or other "natural" features you need to take them as Assets. Otherwise you won't have those features of your race.

**Magic Items** - You must obtain approval from the GM to start with any Assets which describe magic powers or other special qualities. The GM will probably require you to take an extra Dark Secret.

**Secret Books** - If you start play with a mysterious tome such as a "spellbook" you start with one additional Secret, or two Secrets if you take an additional Dark Secret. Your book might even contain additional Secrets for you to learn later.



# Secrets

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

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

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

detect magic	knock	shield
fireball	light	teleport
Illusion	rope trick	wizard lock

**Supporting Themes** - Your Secrets should follow your Themes.

You must have a Theme to support each Secret. For example, an Elf "white wizard archer" might start have: *Elf light, Blessing of the Elves, Silent bow shot, and Secret language of the Elves*.

**Supporting Assets** - Many Secrets also require a supporting Asset. For example, our Elf will need a *moonstone* for *Elf light* and *Blessing of the Elves*, as well as a bow for his *silent bow shot*. You may need to revise your Assets depending on which Secrets you want to use.

**Secret Assets** - Some Assets require a Secret for their use. For example, a Moonstone will not glow for someone who does not

understand how to use it. Also some weapons are "Complex" and require a Secret to use their full capabilities.

**Instincts & Habits** - You can use Traits for any habits or instincts you have developed. You can assume you do these things even without saying so at first, but they can sometimes also get you in trouble.

sits with back to wall	covers his tracks
checks the ceiling	keeps sword ready
checks for poison	always checks exits
always wears gloves	keeps weapons clean

## Dark Secrets

You must also write **one Dark Secret**. This is something that complicates your life or holds you back. New characters must take one extra Dark Secret per Theme or Signature related to secrecy, magic, or underworld (e.g. wizard, priest, thief, assassin).

secret identity	host for something awful
sole survivor of last mission	nosy in others' business
outcast/exile from homeland	my friends turn undead
haunted by nightmares	old wound / phantom limb
visited by portents/dreams	too honest
sees dead people	parent was undead
hears voices in my head	bad bargain (owes debt?)
infected at birth	survived starvation (ate friends)
ancient curse	ex-smuggler
false tooth (w/ poison?)	wanted outlaw
zealous/uncompromising	spy from foreign nation

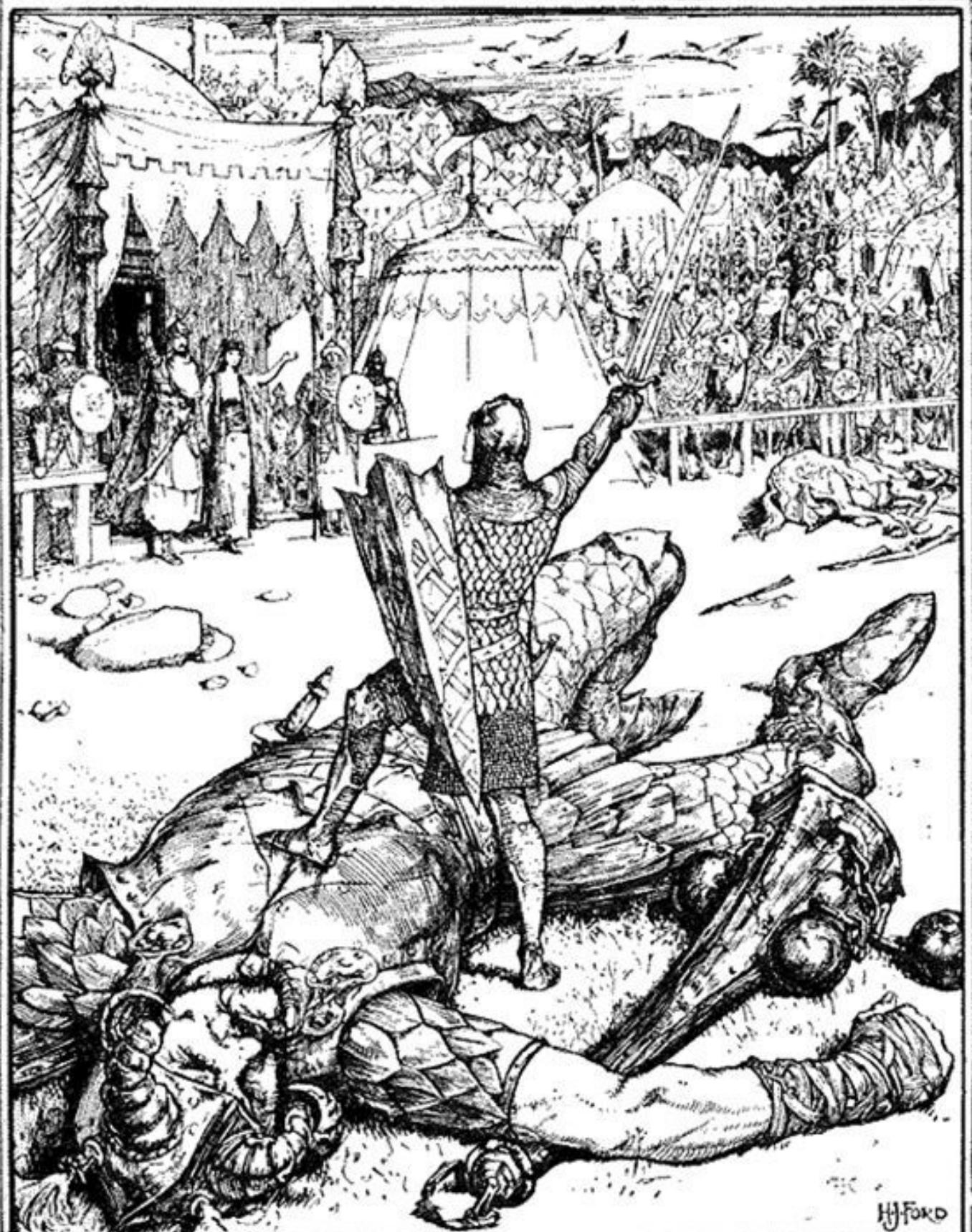
# Experience Paths

Build your legend with Experience Paths ("XP" or "Paths"). Paths say what you need/want to do/accomplish, and suggest who/what might become. They are your essential goals, missions, or other statements of intention to do something, whether they are quests to "find the cure to save the poisoned king" or self-serving wishes such as "become a fire wizard" or "find a magic sword".

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

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

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



HUON DEFEATS THE GIANT AGRAPART

H.FORD

# Part 2: Play the Game

Legends uses continuous turns, so it's always someone's turn, even out of combat. The GM is responsible for controlling the flow of turns. The GM takes the first turn, to narrate the fictional world and set the scene for the PCs. The GM then describes a **Transition** to each player to take their turn, flowing clockwise around the table until play circles back around to the GM. Any attacks or other threats requiring a Saving Throw are described during Transitions and handled within player turns.

## GM Turns

The GM takes the first turn of each round. The GM first rolls an **Encounter** as a seed to **Narrate** changes to the scene, then **Maneuvers** scene elements such as monsters. The GM then **Transitions** to the first player.

An **Encounter** is a seed of inspiration to drive narration of changes to the scene. The GM rolls a random **Encounter** at the start of his Turn as an aid to help paint a picture of the scenario spontaneously unfolding before the PCs. The GM vividly describes what the PCs notice about the surroundings, such as "you hear the low growling of wolves in the trees". At this time players are likely to ask questions until everyone can picture the scene.

The GM then **Maneuvers** scene elements, creating a sense of verisimilitude. 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. 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, and the GM may not call for any Saving Throws yet, since that will be handled during **Transitions** to player turns.

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

The floating **NPC Turn** can happen at any time. The GM will not usually describe a Transition to the NPC Turn unless the NPC is under attack or in a special position to help the PCs.

The above is a framework which supports the GM, with guidelines for what to focus on each turn, and limits what the GM does. This helps to keep the game flowing and create a sense of verisimilitude and urgency for players, since there is a new Encounter ever round! Note this is just a summary, see the GM Guide for full details.

## Player Turns

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

The GM will herald your turn with a **Transition**, a short narration to shift the spotlight onto you while keeping the game flowing. Your Transition may include critical information such as details only you notice, opportunities you have, or declarations of attacks against you.

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 a **Saving Throw** for each threat the GM described during the Transition to your turn.

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

## Resolution Order

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

You can take your Action ahead of your Saving Throw if you can describe why your Action will happen first. For example, if an dagger-wielding enemy rushes you, and you set your spear to receive his charge, then your attack can occur before your foe reaches you. Therefore, you can roll your attack Action first, and will only need to roll the Saving Throw if your foe survives.

## NPC Turns

NPCs are the supporting cast, and so play a minor role compared with PCs. While each player gets their own Player Turn each round for their PC, NPCs only get a single shared NPC Turn.

The NPC Turn is shared by the players and GM. Any player can take the NPC Turn, or the players can do so collaboratively, or they can leave it for the GM. Otherwise this is similar to a Player Turn.

The floating NPC Turn can happen at any time. The GM will not usually describe a Transition to the NPC Turn unless the NPC is under attack or in a special position to help the PCs.

Any other NPCs can be assumed to passively follow the main group, doing nothing of consequence.

## Player Actions

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

attack	cast spell	intimidate
rest	boxing/wrestling	hide
use secret	overwatch	search

Most Actions will require a dice roll, so when you take an Action, the GM will either say “yes” or “roll the dice”. Actions which are so minor they should never require a roll are usually Maneuvers (see below). A Maneuver that requires a roll (e.g. a difficult climb) requires an Action.

## Rest to Un-Tap a Trait

Spending an Action to “rest” Un-Taps (recovers) one Trait. Un-Tap one Trait of your choice by erasing the “x” mark you wrote.

Describe what you do, whether you just catch your breath, sip some water, eat something, bind your wounds, meditate, taunt your foes, or compose a haiku. The way you recover says a lot about you.

# Maneuvers

You may take up to two Maneuvers per round, at any time, even in someone else's turn. These are minor activities such as moving, opening a door, drawing a weapon, reloading, taking cover, etc. A Maneuver that requires a roll (e.g. difficult climb) requires an Action.

Maneuvers can be used for quick observation and communication.

Maneuvers can be used for moving a few steps, sitting, standing, taking cover, etc. The normal distance moved for a Maneuver is **five feet**, which is commonly one square or hex space on a tabletop grid for miniatures. Double your movement (to ten feet) if running forward or taking advantage of the environment (e.g. moving downhill or downstream), and triple if sprinting forward on clear ground or falling.

step (5')	kneel/crouch	take cover
run forward (10')	sit/stand	leap/hop/jump
sprint forward (15')	lay prone/stand	(5')
back up (5')	crawl/roll (5')	swim (5')
sidestep (5')	climb (5')	spin/turn around
step and turn (5')	fall (15')	hit the deck

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

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

You can use Maneuvers as combat tactics for your attacks and defenses. This grants COMBO for one roll, such as “aim” and “shoot”.

aim	call target	cover
feint	change guards	dodge
provocation	set shield	keep measure

## I make this look good!

You can use a Maneuver to embellish your Action, adding a touch of your personal style. This has no in-game effect, but is fun and makes you look awesome.

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

## Not a Maneuver

Maneuvers must be minor and simple, so these are not Maneuvers:

🚫 attack	🚫 deal damage	🚫 oppose action
🚫 cast a spell	🚫 difficult move	🚫 roll
🚫 use a secret	🚫 take time	🚫 stunt

## Roll the Dice

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

**Damage Rolls** - If you fail a **Damage Roll** then you take **Damage**.

Damage Rolls include Saving Throws, Stunts, and Secrets.

**Crits and Fumbles** are extreme successes and failures. You Crit on 20, which has extra effect (e.g. such as picking a hit location and dealing extra damage).

You Fumble if you roll equal to or less than the **Hazard**, which defaults to 1 but increases during the game as the tension builds.

## When to Roll

You should roll for Actions and Saving Throws.

Normally the rolls will happen during your own Turn. Otherwise only roll if the GM asks you to.

## Hazard

Hazard is the amount of ambient tension, drama, and risk in the current scene. Hazard starts at 1 and increases as the situation gets more dangerous.

You **Fumble** if you roll less than or equal to the Hazard on your d20, e.g. if Hazard is 5 you Fumble on 1-5.

The GM sets the Hazard of the current scene, which starts at 1 and increases as the situation gets more dangerous. The GM will increase Hazard in dangerous or risky conditions such as when you



are fighting on a narrow crumbling cliff path, in a burning building, or surrounded by foes. Enemy leaders can also increase Hazard by coordinating their troops or fleet, so weak foes are more dangerous with leadership. Players should work together to reduce Hazard, such as by moving the fight to a safer location, taking key strategic positions, or eliminating enemy leaders.

## Your Legend Die

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

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

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

**Take it to 11** - An upgraded Crit is a “Super Crit”, and a downgraded Fumble is a “Super Fumble”. Both are rare and momentous.

## Legends Die Faces

The Legend Die is conceptually simple to use, but each face has its own depths of play. Quick to learn, long to master.

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**THEME** Name a Theme (or Theme Signature) that assists your action. Downgrade your result if you don't have all necessary specialized knowledge (e.g. alchemy, swordsmithing).

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<b>EFFORT</b>	Push yourself and upgrade your natural result by Tapping a Trait. Downgrade your natural result if your roll is hindered by a Dark Secret or Doom (Stage 1+), which you can offset by Tapping an extra Trait.
<b>ASSET</b>	Describe how you are using an Asset to assist your action. For example, a tinderbox aids in starting a fire and a rope is useful for climbing and many other things. In combat the primary Assets are weapons and armor.
<b>COMBO</b>	Declare an Action or Maneuver that creates a "combination" with your current roll, such as a dodge or feint. You can declare a Maneuver at any time, even now, and the other players can also use Maneuvres to help you. Downgrade your result if you're surrounded or attacked multiple times, or at a disadvantage (e.g. unarmed, blind, held, prone, crawling, etc).
<b>ULT</b>	Describe how you are the absolute best at your action, out of anyone in the current scene. Requires player consensus for bonus. If your action directly opposes someone, and they have Ult, then downgrade your natural result.
<b>PREP</b>	Leverage an Action you took in a prior Round to prepare for the current roll. Usually this requires that you paid attention to clues to get ready for what's coming and used your wits to prepare yourself. However, if your foes are better prepared than you (e.g. ambush) then downgrade your natural result.

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## THEM€

Name a Theme (or Theme Signature) that assists your action. For example, when attacking with a sword, you might name a Theme like "soldier" or a Signature like "veteran swordsman". Downgrade your result if you don't have all necessary specialized knowledge (e.g. alchemy, swordsmithing).

## EFFORT

Push yourself and upgrade your natural result by Tapping a Trait. Downgrade your natural result if your roll is hindered by a Dark Secret or Doom (Stage 1+), which you can offset by Tapping an extra Trait.

## ASSET

Describe how you are using an Asset to assist your action. For example, a tinderbox aids in starting a fire and a rope is useful for climbing and many other things. In combat the primary Assets are weapons and armor.

If your action is opposed by someone, compare the Assets used (e.g. weapon vs armor). This comparison can be based on the Asset Signature, Asset Tags, and the situation. For a fast and loose game just wing it, or see the Advanced Assets for detailed Asset Tags. (e.g. the Heavy weapon tag defeats normal armor).

On a **natural Fumble+Asset**, you suffer a minor equipment mishap. Poor quality gear breaks, higher quality gear is dropped.

In combat the primary Assets are weapons and armor.

- For attacks, compare the weapon vs the defense. Highly armored foes like dragons do not fear most weapons.
- You can use a melee weapon or shield as a defense against an attack, if it's coming from your front. For example, you can declare your "chainmail hauberk" -or- "arming sword" -or- "heater shield" in your defense.
- For ranged combat, only cover and armor are defenses, so the comparison is the weapon vs the armor or cover.
- Try to apply tactical concepts such as reach and measure. For example, if you have a spear and attack an enemy swordsman at "spear range" then your weapon is superior. Conversely,

your spear isn't suitable when in close combat such as wrestling.

- Some characters (e.g. "monks", "serpent people", etc) might have Innate Assets such as "iron hand", "bite", "iron shirt", "scales", etc.
- ASSET includes resistances (e.g. fire elementals vs fire).

## COMBO

Declare an Action or Maneuver that creates a "combination" with your current roll, such as a dodge or feint. You can declare a Maneuver at any time, even now, and the other players can also use Maneuvers to help you. Downgrade your result if you're surrounded or attacked multiple times, or at a disadvantage (e.g. unarmed, blind, held, prone, crawling, etc).

You can even use a failed Action for COMBO, such as adjusting your bow aim on a second shot based on a first shot that fell short.

## ULT

Describe how you are the absolute best at your action, out of anyone in the current scene. Requires player consensus for bonus. If your action directly opposes someone, and they have Ult, then downgrade your natural result.

Since ULT is based on the collective voice of all players, it's based on their perception of character traits and role. If you're picking a lock you'll likely win if you're "the thief" of the group, or if you're reading archaic runes you'll win if you're "the wizard". This might also be an easy win if you are using a Secret, but on a tie nobody gets the bonus, so guard your Secrets.

ULT is one of the hardest Legend Die faces to consistently win because it involves the whole environment, not just your character. Especially in cities, NPC specialists will win ULT in their area of

focus, so you're unlikely to out-haggle a merchant or out-maneuver a courtier. So part of winning ULT is picking your battles.

## PREP

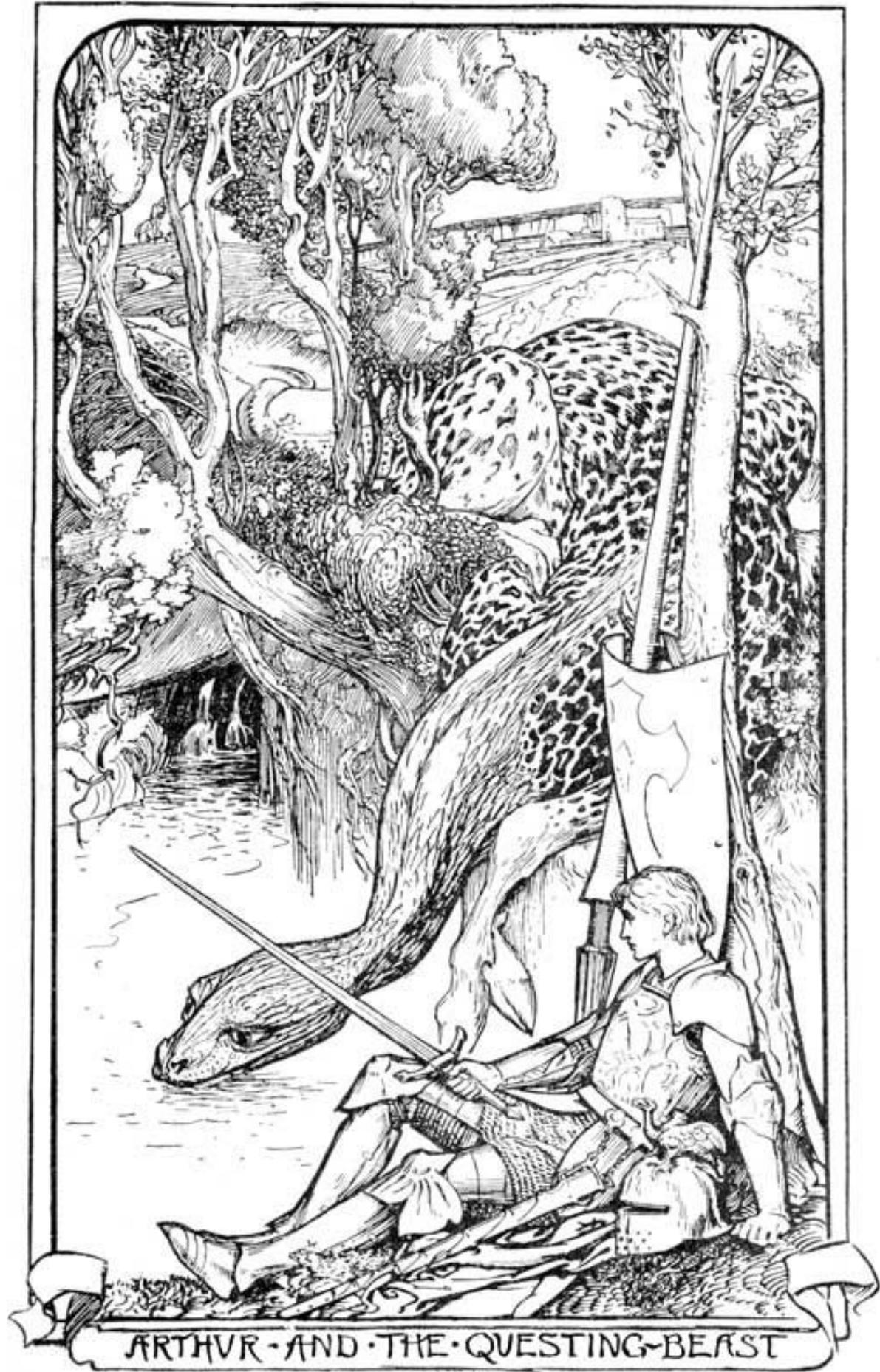
Leverage an Action you took in a prior Round to prepare for the current roll. Usually this requires that you paid attention to clues to get ready for what's coming and used your wits to prepare yourself. However, if your foes are better prepared than you (e.g. ambush) then downgrade your natural result.

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

Preparation is not complicated, it's paying attention, thinking, and setting plans into motion, often simply by roleplaying what you do. For example, you might rig warning traps around your camp, or plug your ears with wax before fighting the harpies, or douse yourself with water before fighting a dragon. Your foes will do the same, whether it's an ambush by brigands, a dragon hiding on a cave ledge, or that intricate looking magic circle the bad wizard is standing inside.

## Hidden Rolls

Sometimes the GM will ask you to roll but not explain the circumstances. There may be a clue or opportunity in the scenario you might notice, if you were observant or knowledgeable enough, such as a thief tailing you, an ambush ahead, or noticing poison on a blade. The GM will use your character sheet to determine the result.



ARTHUR • AND • THE • QUESTING • BEAST

# Part 3: Experience Paths

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

Examples:

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

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

## Starting Paths

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

## Writing Paths

Paths are freeform, in your own words with no limits to creativity. You can write any details you want in addition to the Path name. Keep in mind the purpose of Paths is to propel the story forward in

directions which you and the other players find interesting. So write them in an exciting voice whenever possible. If you want inspiration, just pull from your favorite books and movies.

#### ESCAPE FROM THE DUNGEONS OF THE MAD KING!

The mad king has thrown you into his dungeons in rags to feed his monstrous “pets”. As far as you’ve heard, nobody has ever escaped from the dungeons, alive or otherwise.

## Paths are Shared

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

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

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

## Completing Paths

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

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

## Journaling

You should add notes to your Path about progress or details along the way. For example, for “The King wants the heroes to save the princess” you can write down the names of the King and the Princess, her last known location, where she should be taken, and what kind of rewards you expect. This is freeform, so you can just jot random thoughts or use journal entries with dates or “day 1”, “day 2”, and so on. You can doodle, draw maps, whatever you like. Most importantly, write a final note about how it all turned out.

## Homework

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

### ESCAPE FROM THE DUNGEONS OF THE MAD KING!

The mad king has thrown you into his dungeons in rags to feed his monstrous “pets”. As far as you’ve heard, nobody has ever escaped from the dungeons, alive or otherwise.

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

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

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

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

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

## Failing Paths

If a Path becomes impossible to complete then mark the Path

**Failed**. For example, if you’re supposed to save the princess from the dragon, but she dies in the rescue attempt, your quest has

failed. Some Paths are time-sensitive and have a Countdown to failure (see below).

## Abandoning Paths

You can **abandon** one of your Paths if you no longer want to attempt progress. Write “abandoned” on the Path. Sometimes a Path seemed like a great idea, but for whatever reason didn’t turn out. The path might no longer be relevant to the characters or story, or might no longer be possible to complete. For example, a path like “Warn the King of the assassination attempt” might become impossible if you learn he’s been assassinated. Paths might need to be abandoned either by choice or by misfortune. If you cannot complete a Path then you should abandon it. Keep in mind natural consequences still apply depending on how the events of the Path played out.

## Countdowns

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

SAVE PRINCESS LOOKIE

Rescue the princess from the swamp castle before she is married against her will.

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

Your **initial reaction** when a Countdown starts is very important. If you do not immediately attempt to make progress then you must check a Countdown box. For example, after taking a serious injury

it's critical to immediately apply first aid, so if you instead keep fighting or if you flee then check a box.

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

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

## Scars

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

## Best Efforts

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

# Rewards

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

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

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



## ESCAPE FROM THE DUNGEONS OF THE MAD KING!

...

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

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

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

## Using Paths

You can use 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. The GM will typically use Paths to drive the story or present challenges. Here are some examples of how you can use Experience Paths:

### My Precious Asset

Players can write a Path when their character is seeking out hard to obtain 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 the player highlight the character's journey to find and claim the prized possession. Naturally, the reward is an Asset with a Signature.

### 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.

Characters with crafting skills might build an item rather than buy or quest for it, but this is still a Path.

### CLOAK OF BLADES

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

## Magic Research

Players should use Paths for any spell or magic item research.

### ELECTRIC FIREBALLS

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

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

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

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

## Flashbacks

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



THE ARCHERS THREATEN LANCELOT

Wrestle well and wield lance, spear, sword, and dagger manfully, whose use in others hands is wasted. - Johannes Lichtenauer

## Part 4: Conflict

This section deals with exciting topics like slaying foes, keeping yourself safe from harm, attempting amazing stunts, and getting hurt. All of this is from the point of view of your character. You will make all the rolls for attack and defense. Legends uses continuous turns, and this does not change when your character clashes with foes. Danger can strike at any time.

### Attack Rolls

When you attack you must roll the dice to hit. If you **succeed** you hit your target and inflict **1 Damage**. Some factors add +1 damage, such as if you are using a heavy weapon, or you hit a location without armor. The GM will have the foe **Soak Damage** by Tapping Traits, and will declare the foe **Doomed** (mostly helpless and dead) when out of Traits.



If you **fail** then your attack misses. There is usually no other consequence of failure. However, if you are attempting a special attack with greater risk than normal, such as a Stunt or Secret, then you take Damage as if you were hit.

If you roll a **fumble** you fail as above, but the GM will take a **Counter**.

If you roll a **Critical Success** you deal damage as above and can also describe a grievous wound ("critical hit") which can limit or remove a capability of the foe. You could remove the weapon hand of an evil champion or lop off the wing of a dragon! Choose wisely and make it dramatic. You may only describe a fatal blow (e.g. such as removing its head or chopping it in half) if you roll a Crit and the foe is out of Traits; your GM will tell you when this happens.

## Combinations

You can assist an attack Action by using a **Maneuver** to create a "combination", granting COMBO for one roll. You can do this even after you make your attack roll. You won't need to do this for every attack, so make it descriptive and exciting. Examples:

- I redouble my cut
- 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 pull my cut and turn it into a thrust
- I disengage my point under his sword and thrust
- I beat his blade aside and cut
- I beat his blade with my false edge and cut him in the legs

## Counters

A **Counter** is a free opportunistic Action such as a counterattack, friendly fire, or a gear mishap such as dropping your weapon. The GM takes a Counter whenever you Fumble an Action, and you take a Counter whenever you Crit a Saving Throw. A Counter is a new Action, related to the failed Action. Counters do not grant new Maneuvers.

**GM Counters** - The GM will use your Action against you if you Fumble. 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.

## Damaging Foes

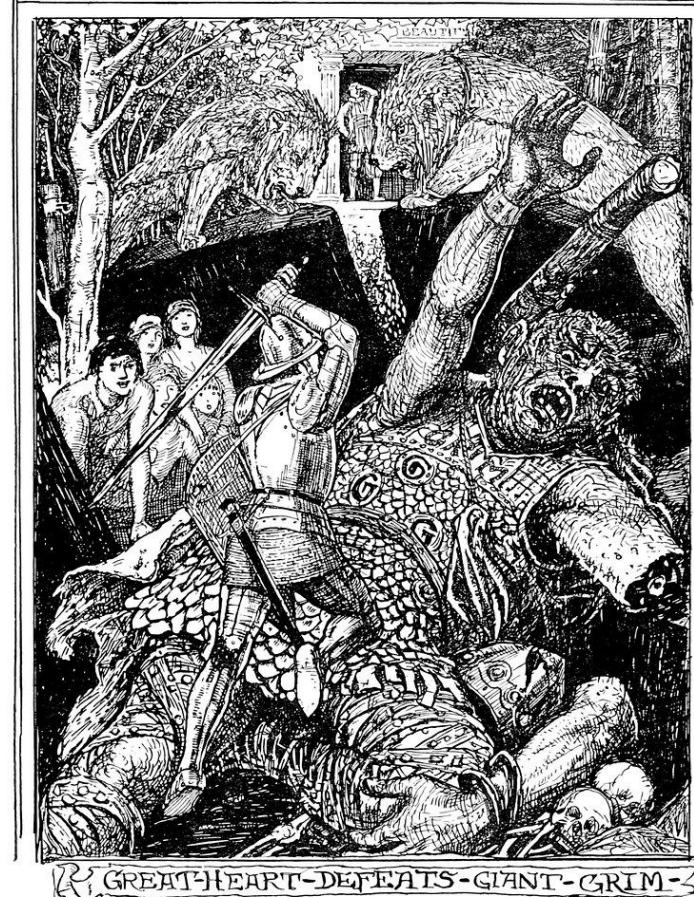
When you successfully attack a foe and deal **Damage**, the GM will Tap Traits to **Soak** damage (just like you do). When a foe can't soak damage from an attack it gains a **Doom** (just like you). The GM will let you know when this happens.

Most "doomed" foes skip directly to Doom Stage 3 ("incapacitated"), and are unable to fight. The GM might describe a "doomed" foe as bloodied and broken.

An incapacitated foe is "mostly dead" and no longer poses an immediate threat. The foe is incapable of taking Actions (such as attacking you), but might still limp off to lick its wounds, make annoying dying sounds, kick and twitch, or make a leaky mess. The GM rolls a random Encounter at the start of each turn, and it's possible for this to indicate an unfinished foe makes an attack.

## Finish Him!

If you roll a Critical Success for the finishing blow the GM will instead describe how the foe is killed outright. The GM might add visceral detail if your players are into that kind of thing, or make a remark like "finish him!" to let you know you can describe some awful end. Either way you'll know it's dead.



Otherwise, you can spend an Action to put an incapacitated foe out of your misery, either dispatching the foe or taking a prisoner.

Sometimes the way you describe this matters, for example you might need to use holy water or prayers to put undeads to rest, or 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**. Saving Throws are the most common type of Damage Roll.

Attacks from foes are a common kind of saving throw, but Saving Throws are used for all death-defying situations, such as a trap, collapsing cliff, pit filled with snakes, or poisoned drink. The GM will describe such dangers, and tell you when to roll a Saving Throw, saying something like "two black-fletched orc arrows fly from the darkness, striking Talin".



GIANT MAUL FIGHTS HARD WITH GREATHEART ©

If you **succeed** on your Saving Throw you avoid taking Damage.

If you **fail** your Saving Throw you take Damage. The GM will tell you how much Damage you take. You can Tap a Trait to "soak" (reduce) Damage, see below. If you roll a **Fumble** on your Saving Throw you take +1 damage.

If you roll a **Critical Success** you gain a **Counter**, which is a free Action in the scope of the attack you defended against. If you were attacked by a swordsman you can counterattack that foe, or if you defended against the baalfyres of a goblin warlock you can describe how the fire scorches his goblin allies. Counters do not grant new Maneuvers.

You can declare **Maneuvers** to assist a roll, for example a dodge or parry will grant COMBO, or you can position your shield or sword to cover a Hit Location.

Saving Throws are used for ALL kinds of character injuries and dangers. If not Soaked the resulting Damage will cause a Doom.

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

## Hit Locations

Every attack or defense applies to a specific Hit Location, a body part. The Hit Location determines what protection (such as armor and cover) applies for defense. An attack deals extra Damage if the Hit Location does not have enough protection (see the section on Damage). Attackers aim for weak points in armor, and even the most protective armor has gaps (e.g. groin, armpits, palms, and face).

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

You may choose the Hit Location when you roll a Crit. Thus on a Crit you can stab your foe in an unprotected area (e.g. "I cut into his unarmored neck"), or choose a target to hamper (e.g. "I cut his hand to disarm him", "I cut his legs to slow him down").

## Random Hit Locations

Roll 1d20 + Legend Die to suggest a random hit location. Use D20 to determine left/right as odd/even, working from outside (low) to center (high). For example "EFFORT 4" is "right foot" or toes, and "ASSET 9" is left forearm.

THEME	EFFORT	ASSET	COMBO	ULT	PREP
<b>Torso</b> chest sternum ribs	<b>Leg</b> knee foot toes	<b>Arm</b> shoulder elbow forearm	<b>Hand</b> wrist hand fingers	<b>Belly</b> guts hips groin	<b>Head</b> skull face neck

## Damage

If you fail a **Damage Roll** you take **Damage**. Saving Throws are the most common kind of Damage Roll, but Secrets and Stunts are also Damage Rolls. The GM will tell you how much Damage you take, usually 1-4, but possibly as much as the Hazard.

Damage represents *any* kind of harm to your character, not necessarily physical, so don't take the word "damage" too literally (alternative names such as harm, strain, peril, and others were considered, but I went with "damage"). Damage encompasses concepts such as "hits", "wounds", "stress", "strain", etc.

Damage is specific to the damage source, such as an arrow wound, burn, paralyzation, or mind-control. If your character sees an "eldritch horror" he might take Damage related to stress, fear, and dread. Wizards who fail a roll to cast a spell (spells are Secrets) take Damage, so Wizards can actually blow themselves up.

## Soak Damage

You can Tap a Trait to "Soak" Damage, negating 1 Damage per Trait you Tap. Any Damage you do not Soak you gain a **Doom**, a very serious life-threatening injury, so always Soak Damage if possible.

## Defensive Traits

A Trait can potentially Soak extra Damage if the Trait is ideal for your particular Saving Throw, especially if the Trait is defensive or a specialized skill related to your action. All players must agree your Trait is ideal, possibly soaking an extra 1 Damage per good reason why the Trait is ideal, such as "my rocky skin is good at deflecting cuts", or "my skill at rock climbing should help me not get hurt if I fall". When dealing with an especially rare form of Damage, the GM may declare that an appropriate rare Trait fully negates the Damage.

## Damage vs Dooms

You can think of Damage is "potential damage" and Dooms are "actual damage". If you Soak all Damage from a hit then you were "hit but not hurt". That arrow might have grazed you, or it hit the spot where you *were*, it was a close call. However, if you don't Soak the Damage the arrow is sticking deep in your leg and you're bleeding out and going into shock and you might die...you are Doomed.

## Counting Damage

The GM will tell you how much Damage you take, but this works the same as when you hit a foe. The base Damage is 1, then add +1 damage for each damage factor that applies. In combat damage factors are a lack of armor, a hit by a heavy weapon, or if you rolled a fumble. The GM can add modifiers such as a giant weapon, falling from a great height, etc, but usually this is in +1 increments.

## Falling Damage

Base Damage is 1 for a fall of *up to 15* feet (~5 m) feet onto a hard surface or if thrown by an opponent. Add +1 for each additional 15 feet or fraction thereof. Thus a fall of 16-30 feet is 2 Damage, and 31-45 feet is 3 Damage. Feet first landings are safest, so if you are able to take the time to intentionally jump feet first you claim PREP. A fumble means you didn't land on your feet.

## Using Assets

This section describes the simple cases for how Assets are used. See the Advanced Assets section for more detailed rules.

### ASSET Legend Die

When you roll ASSET on your Legend Die, the deciding factor for success is the Assets you are using for your roll, and how they compare to any used against you. If you are in combat and attacking, then compare your weapon with your foe's armor, and do the opposite for defenses. This comparison is usually easy, especially if one of you is not using an Asset at all.

Use tools simply and naturally, just as you would use them yourself. A thief might carry a grappling hook and lockpicks to assist Actions like climbing a wall, opening a window, and unlocking a strongbox. For a typical lock the lockpicks would grant ASSET, but it's easy to understand why they would not help for a combination lock.

Note that rolls of COMBO may also consider Assets, in situations where movement and positioning is affected by the presence or absence of an Asset. For example, if you are unarmed in the middle of a combat then you must downgrade rolls of COMBO, yet if you were to punch an unarmored foe your result of ASSET would not be affected. So if you are lacking a critical Asset you will likely need to downgrade both ASSET and COMBO.

## Armor and Cover

Armor protects you from attacks. If you roll ASSET, compare the attacking weapon with your armor for the Hit Location of the attack. If you do not have armor in the Hit Location, or if the attacking weapon is better than your armor (ideally using Weapon and Armor Tags), you must downgrade your natural result. If you do not have armor in the Hit Location you also take +1 Damage.

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

## Readying Assets

Reading an Asset such as drawing a weapon is a Maneuver. Players can simply describe this as part of an attack Action, such as "I draw my sword and cut the evil sorcerer down!".

However, since combat typically starts with the GM narrating attacks from foes, you are better off being proactive about declaring which Asset (e.g. weapon) you have “out” or readied. Otherwise, you might not be able to use an Asset at the right time.

## Reloading

Ranged weapons require ammo, and must be loaded before each shot. The first shot is generally included with reading the weapon. Reloading a ranged weapon normally requires one Maneuver, but some weapons such as crossbows and firearms may require multiple Maneuvers.

## Unarmed

You are considered **Unarmed** if you do not have a weapon readied that can reach foes who are attacking you. For example, you are **Unarmed** if you are facing a knife-wielding assassin and don't have a weapon. You are also considered Unarmed if you have a weapon like a sword, but see a far-away ranged weapon aiming at you.

When **Unarmed**, downgrade COMBO for all rolls. For example, if you are attacked by a knife but do not have a weapon readied, you must *downgrade* your natural result if you roll COMBO. All of the above also works in reverse, so upgrade COMBO if attacking an Unarmed foe.

There is a brief moment when you can ignore the threat of an armed foe, which is when the foe is **distracted**. You might find all manner of ways to distract a foe, but any successful roll against the foe (e.g. an attack or saving throw) by you or an ally also counts as a distraction. The rationale is that weapons are not used just to attack, but also to threaten foes to keep them off you; nothing says “back off!” like a weapon. COMBO represents Maneuvers, movement, and positioning, which tactically applies to weapon range.

## Wrestling

To wrestle with a foe you must use an Action to attack, similar to a weapon attack. Wrestling attacks do not use weapons or armor, so rolls of ASSET are neutral, making this a good tactic when faced with a foe who has better armor than your weapon.

However, keep the penalties for Unarmed (see above) combat in mind, so it's best to wait to wrestle until the foe is distracted.

## Movement

Movement can often be "theatre of the mind", but here are detailed rules for when you need them.

**Scale** - If using a battlemap for 25-28mm miniatures, the scale is 1-inch equals 5-feet.

**Move Maneuver** - You can take a couple of steps as a Maneuver. The maximum distance is 1 inch (5 feet). The same distance applies to climbing, swimming, crawling, etc. You can "run" double move forward (10'), or "sprint" triple move forward on open ground (15').

**Move and Attack** - A statement like "I charge across the room and attack the sorcerer" requires you to use your Maneuvers to move.



**Actions as Maneuvers** - You can use your Action to perform a third Maneuver. This is required when the GM tells you to roll for the movement, such as jumping over a wide pit.

**Unit Moment** - You can use your Action to move your character, or to move a “unit” of multiple characters. Thus, you can move all of the PCs as a unit together by spending an Action. The characters in the unit all move together on the player’s turn. This streamlines the process of getting all of the characters (and possibly miniatures on a battlemap) to move together, without bumping into each other. Naturally, this requires the agreement/consent of the other players, but hopefully the players are already working as a team, so this rule keeps simple things simple.

**Load** - Your **Load** is a measure of how much stuff you are carrying. To find your Load, simply count your Assets. Do not count clothing worn, including minor accessories such as a belt or jewelry. Always count containers such as backpacks, belt pouches, arrow quivers, or loot bags, do not count their contents. For example, if you have a sword, buckler, helm, leather jack, gauntlets, backpack, waterskin, rope, and a bundle of torches you are at Load 9.

If you think you ought to be able to carry more stuff than a normal person (e.g. you are extraordinarily strong) then ask your GM if you may get a discount on Load, such as -5, -10, etc.

**Clumsy** - You are considered **Clumsy** if your **Load** is 10 or higher, simply meaning you find it difficult to move quickly and gracefully. (As a real-world experiment, strap on a 10kg / 22lb rucksack or weight vest and try a few pull-ups and burpees to see how it feels.) Every additional 10 Load adds another point of Clumsy, so at Load 20-29 you are Clumsy-2, at Load 30-39 you are Clumsy-3, etc.

When you are **Clumsy** you suffer a Disadvantage on rolls involving maneuverability, such as running, leaping, dodging, swimming,

dancing, climbing, etc. The GM will usually rule that feats of athletics comically fail for anyone who is Clumsy. If you roll COMBO you must downgrade your natural result unless you spend Maneuvers to negate points of Clumsy.

Some kinds of armor may have a **Clumsy** Asset Tag, which adds points of Clumsy. Also add one point of Clumsy per Heavy weapon after the first. Lastly, large objects such as chests, sacks of loot, or bodies add points of Clumsy.

## Secrets & Stunts

### Secrets

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

Using a Secret is an Action which requires a Damage Roll. The Secret Level is the minimum Hazard for your roll, and the Damage you take on failure. You can actually blow yourself up.

### Stunts

Any Action which involves significant risk or pushes beyond the limits of a normal Action is a "Stunt". For example, you could say "I leap from the ledge with my sword pointed down and land on the scout!" as a very dramatic and risky "death from above" attack where your expectation is that a successful roll causes lots of extra damage. Similarly, you could split an Action to attack two foes, etc. Stunts are definitively "high risk, high reward".

Stunts are **high-risk**, so they are Damage Rolls (i.e. failure results in Damage). The GM can increase the Hazard for your roll as appropriate, similar to using a Secret. The GM will describe the

natural consequences of failure, for example acrobatic stunts are likely to land you on your butt.

Stunts are also **high-reward**, and if you pull it off you get the dramatic high-stakes result you gambled for. For example, if you leap off the fifty-foot cliff to “death from above” the vampire, and pull it off, then you get to write your own ticket. In the simplest case of attacking a single foe to deal extra damage, upgrade your natural result, e.g. from Success to Crit. However, do not ignore the vast creative potential of this kind of “hail mary” roll to dramatically reverse a terrible situation.

You don't need to declare your Action is a stunt prior to rolling. However, if you (or GM or other players) say “wow, that's a stunt!” after your Action, it still counts as a Stunt, so you should ask your friends before you roll if that might affect your choice.

## Dark Secrets

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

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

## Strategy & Tactics

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Keep Down** - You can crouch, kneel, or crawl to reduce your target area against ranged attackers. This counts as COMBO but not ASSET. Also, you may suffer a Disadvantage on some Actions or Saving Throws (especially in melee) which will come up if you roll "Combo".

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

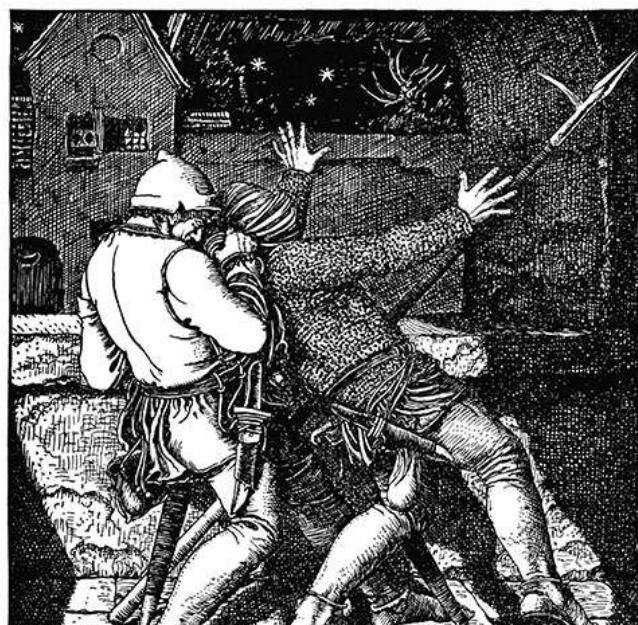
**Swarming** - Pay attention to groups, teams, or swarms of enemies. If these surround or flank you then you will need to downgrade the natural result on a roll of COMBO. You can counteract this by taking a Maneuver that gives you COMBO, such as pulling your allies close and locking shields. You can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

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

**Asset Tags** - Use Asset Tags to create Advantages in specific situations, as written in the rules for that Tag. For example, the "Heavy" Tag only applies as a benefit if your opponent does not have "Heavy" armor, and a spear with "Long" can only be applied if at long range and the opponent does not also have a long weapon. In other words, Asset Tags are not freeform like Themes, but are instead fully driven by rules.

This adds tactics and crunchiness to the otherwise freeform game.

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



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

## Disadvantages

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

unarmed	surrounded	held down
unarmored	flanked	tied up
need tools/gear	kneeling	grappled
ambushed	prone	unconscious

## Looting

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



The Soldier fills his Knapsack  
with Money

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

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

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

**Search** - Use an Action to search a person or similarly-sized area for concealed or hidden items. Describe how you search (visual, patdown, or stripdown). The GM may require you to roll if the search requires special skills. In some cases an item might be impossible to find without a full strip search, such as a gem rolled up in a rag in the toe of a boot. The GM will tell you what you find, and you can decide whether or not to take it.

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



The death of BEOWULF

# Part 5: Dooms

**Dooms** are traumatic conditions and experiences such as wounds, disease, starvation, and poisoning. The GM will assign a Doom if specific dire conditions are met, for example if you don't eat you will be "Starving", or if your light burns out you will be "In the Dark". Dooms can also result from failed Damage Rolls such as Saving Throws, since any unsoaked Damage results in a Doom.

Dooms reduce your chances of success on rolls, but only you roll EFFORT on your Legend Die. As the Doom worsens the effects become more severe, eventually leading to death.

This works the same for all afflictions, from injuries to petrification. Here are some examples; if you are lucky the GM will invent more.

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

## Gaining Dooms

The GM will assign a Doom if specific dire conditions are met, for example if you don't eat you will be "Starving", or if you run out of light then you won't be "In Darkness". Dooms can also result from failed Damage Rolls such as Saving Throws. You take Damage if

you fail a Damage Roll, and if you do not Soak all of the Damage you gain a Doom such as "Wounded".

Write Dooms beside your Experience Paths. Dooms are a kind of Path, but are "dark paths" that end in misery. Dooms are the "suck" of surviving in a dangerous and uncertain world.

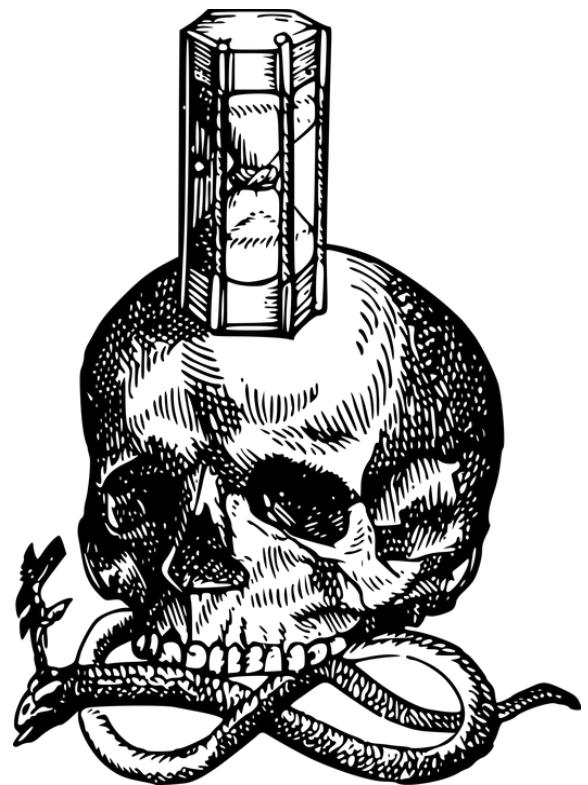
Dooms are urgent and always have a **Countdown**, so write three checkboxes (□□□) for your Doom. The effects worsen as each Countdown box is checked. This builds dramatic tension and may force you to adapt to limitations.

You should do everything you can to avoid Dooms, ideally avoiding them in the first place. Like any Path, you can complete a Doom once all the players agree sufficient progress has been made.

## Doom Countdown (☒□□)

Dooms are urgent and always have a **Countdown**, so write three checkboxes (□□□) for your Doom. Check a box in these situations:

- ☒ Check a box each GM Turn until you receive first aid. You or someone else needs to use an Action to provide first aid as soon as possible after gaining a Doom.
- ☒ Check a box if you roll a Critical Fumble, including the roll which caused the Doom. (Only check one box on one Doom.)
- ☒ Check a box to combine additional Dooms of the same kind, such as another wound in the same Hit Location, more poison, etc.



# Doom Stages (0-3)

Each Doom has a “Stage” which is a simple way to describe severity and how far down the Countdown you’ve gone. There are four Doom Stages named 0-3. These correspond to the Countdown checkboxes, so Stage 0 has no Countdown boxes checked, and Stage 3 has all three checked. If the Countdown ends so do you.

Boxe s	Doom Stage	Effects	Recovery
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Stage 0 - First Symptoms	Un-Tap needs 2 Actions	2d6 days
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Stage I - Full Onset	downgrade on EFFORT	2d6 weeks
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Stage II - Incapacitated	cannot take Actions	2d6 months
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Stage III - Death	death/retirement	n/a

**Effects** are cumulative. The GM may waive effects when appropriate, e.g. a “wounded leg” does not hinder listening.

**Recovery** typically requires the amount of resting time indicated above. The GM will decrease or increase time for special circumstances, such as special healing (e.g. magic healing spells, potions, etc) or unsanitary/stressful conditions.

## Stage 0 ( ) - First Symptoms

You feel the first symptoms of your Doom, such as pain or nausea, although these do not stop you (yet). You know something is horribly wrong, but you might not know exactly what and onlookers

might not realize something is wrong. You don't feel well and find it difficult to rest or sleep.

- Your character needs two Actions to recover one Trait.
- Recovery time is typically 2-12 (2d6) days.

## Stage I (☒☐☐) - Full Onset

You feel the full onset of symptoms as appropriate such as pain, nausea, swelling, vomiting, and crying. The Doom is fully upon you, isn't pretty, and is obvious to onlookers.

- Your character downgrade rolls of EFFORT\*
- Recovery time is typically 2-12 (2d6) weeks.

\* The GM can waive the above penalties if your Doom does not hamper your specific action. For example, a very specific Doom (e.g. "wounded leg") might not apply to your roll (e.g. "pick lock"). Multiple Dooms do not add together, but create a broader range of applicable situations.

## Stage II (☒☒☐) - Incapacitated

At Stage 2 you are incapacitated by severe pain, nausea, leakage, etc. Your character cannot take any Actions or do anything except complain and cry.

- Your character cannot take Actions.\*
- Recovery time is typically 2-12 (2d6) months.

\* The GM might waive the above penalties if your Doom wouldn't hamper a specific Action.

\* As a player you still get one Action and two Maneuvers per round, but you can't use it to make your character do anything. However,

nearby NPCs might be able to save your character, and you can use your Action or the NPC Turn to have them help.

## Stage III (☒☒☒) - Death / Retirement

Stage 3 is the final stage, which results in immediate death or retirement of your character.

In other words if you check the third Countdown box of a Doom your character dies or is otherwise removed from play. Roleplay "the end" as appropriate to the situation. 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".

If the Doom was limited to a limb, then your character might live but lose the limb. In this case it's possible for you to continue to play your character, although most people would probably retire from adventuring at that point.

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



## Recovery

The Doom Stage determines the typical recovery time. This assumes you are making appropriate progress, e.g. if you have a leg wound then you need to stay off your leg as much as possible.

The GM may increase or decrease recovery time as appropriate. For example, if you will recover from a leg wound faster if you receive professional healing and remain in a restful camp, inn, or hospital. The simplest way to do this is to change the standard roll of 2-12 (2d6) to roll fewer or more dice, or reduce the amount of time.

Similarly, some injuries might be harder to recover, such as a wound from a giant fly or claws of an undead ghoul. The GM will tell you to roll more d6's than the standard 2d6.

## Likely Dooms

Here are some Dooms that you are likely to encounter.

# Blindness & Darkness

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

## Wounds

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

### Example: Bleeding Leg Wound

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

HAZARAK - BLEEDING LEG!

A black goblin arrow is embedded deep in his leg

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

HAZARAK - BLEEDING LEG!

A black goblin arrow is embedded deep in his leg

Had to fight free of the goblins

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

#### HAZARAK - BLEEDING LEG!

A black goblin arrow is embedded deep in his leg

Had to fight free of the goblins

Had to run and landed hard jumping off a cliff

Drags himself to a stream

Washed the wound in a clean stream and rebound it

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

#### HAZARAK - BLEEDING LEG!

A black goblin arrow is embedded deep in his leg

Had to fight free of the goblins

Had to run and landed hard jumping off a cliff

Drags himself to a stream

wrapped it in a scrap of shirt

Washed the wound in a clean stream and rebound it

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

## Stress

While a stressful situation is not as dangerous as a direct attack, the effects of stress cannot be ignored. The GM may declare that you are experiencing **Stress** at any time. This might be part of the GM narration for the scene and apply to all characters, or it might be specific to a character based on a Theme or Dark Secret. You can recover from **Stress** by taking the time to de-stress, which you should roleplay appropriately since this varies between people.

## Essentials of Life

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

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

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

### STARVING!



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

### SUPPLIES GONE!



You fell into an underground river and washed up on the shores somewhere. Your supplies (food, water, bedrolls) are gone.

### ALONE IN THE DARK

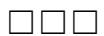


You're down to a candle stub, and not quite sure where you are in these deep dungeon tunnels. It's weirding you out and you feel like the walls are closing in. Check a box if your candle goes out, but uncheck a box if you find light.

## Arcane Dooms

Arcane dooms occur if you fail to cast a spell and cannot Soak Damage. Highlight your character's specific magic school/art/style.

### THE WATCHER

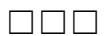


As you channeled power to enthrall the piteous villagers you felt something Watching, and it hasn't stopped. You see flickers of the Watcher in the corners of your eye, but it isn't there when you look for it. You feel a sense of loss, as corners of your mind peel away when you aren't watching them.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

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

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

### DOOM OF FALSE DEATHS



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

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

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

### BLACK WIZARDS MIEN

□ □ □

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

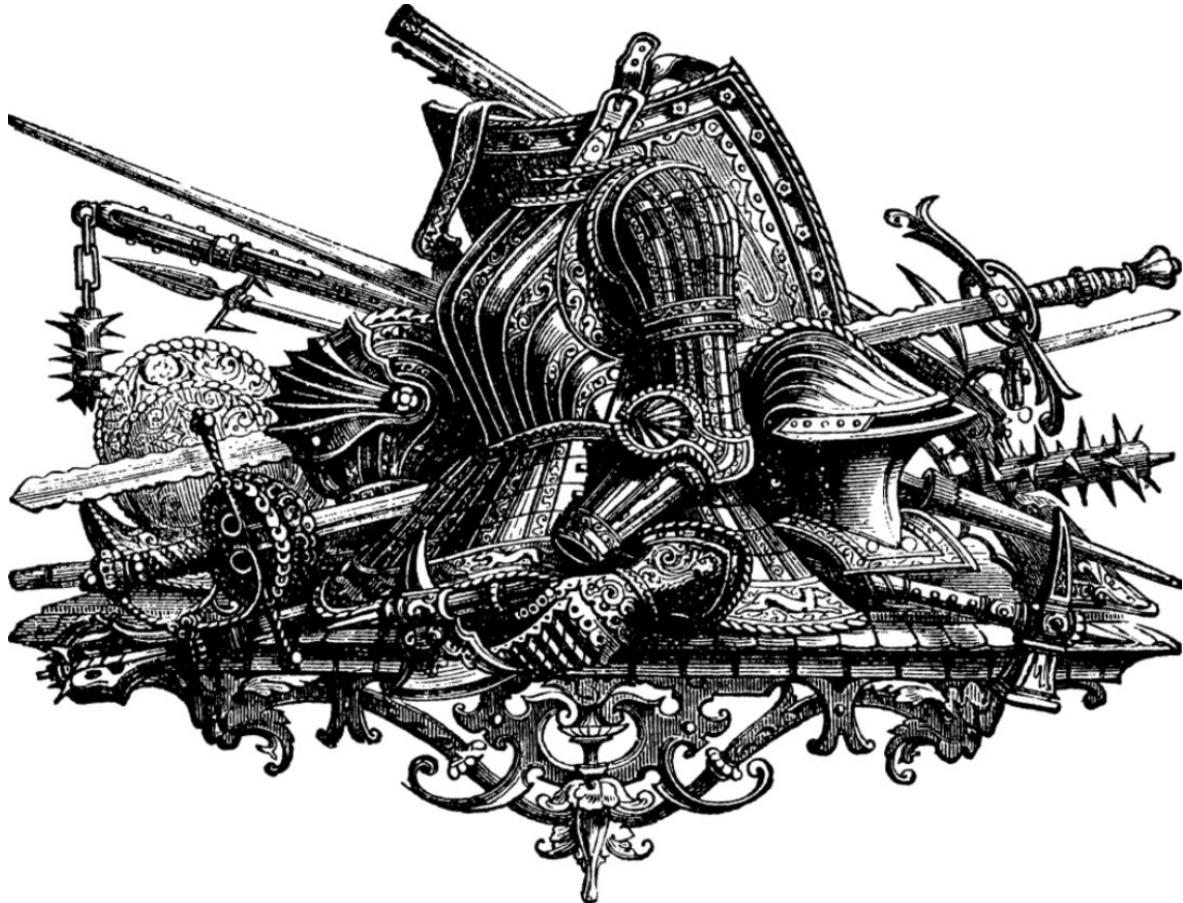
You might have met this doom if you dabbled in dark magical arts, evil artifacts, or were cursed.

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

### ACCELERATED AGING

□ □ □

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



## Part 6: Advanced Assets

This section provides additional detail and options for you to use Assets. You can skip this section for a casual game.

### Rolling ASSET

When your Legend Die rolls ASSET, you must compare your Asset with that of your opponent. The best Asset for the situation wins.

For a casual game this comparison is done qualitatively, but for an advanced game you will use Asset Tags to measure which Asset is best. **Asset Tags**, describe specific cases when they grant "advantage" or "disadvantage". You then count advantages and disadvantages to see which Asset is better. This is situational, since a spear is a fine weapon on the battlefield, but not in a small space.

## Assets are Expected

Characters are expected to use normal and appropriate Assets for most actions. Players usually describe this naturally, such as “I cut down the wizard with my sword”.

Characters attempting actions *without* supporting Assets will suffer a penalty since this is *not* the normal case. Characters will suffer a Disadvantage at best (which applies if you roll ASSET), and at worst the action will be ruled an automatic failure by the GM since some tasks are clearly impossible without the correct tools.

**Weapons and Armor** are expected for all characters in combat.

Otherwise the character (or foe) suffers penalties on attack and defense actions, and possibly others. Any lethal instrument counts as a weapon, and most heavy clothing such as a doublet or a sturdy cloak can count as armor, so in normal circumstances there is little reason to be completely unarmed or unarmored.

- **Unarmed attacks or defenses:** downgrade COMBO
- **Unarmored Defense:** If a character must defend against an attack and does not have any armor in the location being attacked, an ASSET Disadvantage applies, and damage is doubled for the head, neck, or torso.

**Specific Tools** are required for many professional jobs or special abilities, and lacking them causes Disadvantage.

**Prerequisites:** Some Assets require specific Themes. Even if other characters cannot use these Assets, they are still a normal part of everyday life and usually recognizable. For example, everyone recognizes a wizard’s wand, knows generally what it is for (“magic stuff”), and might consider taking the wand away to keep the wizard from waving it around.

# Asset Tags

Assets add a tactical, crunchy element to an otherwise freeform game. Most Assets have **Asset Tags**, specific features of the item that add tactical advantages, disadvantages, abilities, and tradeoffs. Most Tags create advantages that apply in specific circumstances, as well as counterbalancing disadvantages in other situations.

## Tag Magnitudes

Occasionally some Tags are followed by a number, such as Far2, Far3, etc. This indicates better capabilities than the standard Tag. This doesn't change the way the Tag is used, and often doesn't matter unless opposed by another Tag. Penalties are indicated by -2, -3, etc. Examples:

- A **Far3** bow has a longer range than Far2 or Far bows.
- **Custom2** armor is fancier than Custom.
- **Hard2** armor is not countered by Anti-Armor Weapon (AAW).
- **AAW2** weapons cancel both Hard and Hard2
- **Clumsy-2** armor causes 2 Disadvantages on rolls where mobility is important. For example, if you try to leap across a pit and roll ASSET your result will be downgraded.

Tag Magnitudes are rarely used, so the GM could use this to create unusual or magical items.

## Asset Quality Tags

Most Assets are standard quality, but when appropriate an Asset can have a Tag for quality.

**Cheap:** The Asset is very cheaply made, or a "bad knockoff". The price is usually less than a standard item, up to half (50%) less. The item works fine, but is fiddly and fragile and more likely to break, even when used properly. A Cheap Asset will break unless the character achieves an Extra Success result, in which case the "extra" benefit is that the item didn't break.

**Normal:** Most items are of standard quality. For weapons and armor this is commonly called “munitions grade”, mass-produced yet fully functional and well-suited for warfare.

**Luxury:** The Asset is very nicely made, and a joy to use. Weapons built for nobility are usually artistically engraved or etched, but are no more functional than munitions grade.

**Exceptional:** If a weapon has exceptional quality then it should be given additional Tags. For example, an “enforced Elven sword” should be given an additional Weapon Tag. Note that there are no “+1” weapons in this game.

**Advanced:** The Asset works exceptionally well. One of the Asset Tags grants an Advanced Advantage instead of a standard Advantage. Write this as a modifier on one of the Asset Tags, such as “Advanced Aiming” for a sniper rifle with scope.



## Weapons

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

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

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

# Swords

**Cutlass** [Short Cutty Parrying] short curved cutting sword

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

**Sabre** [Medium Parrying Cutty] longer curved cutting sword

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

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

**Arming sword** [Medium Binding Parrying Cutty] a simple thrust sword with a cross hilt

**Rapier** [Long Guard Binding Parrying Cutty] civilian thrusting sword

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

**Swiss Saber** [2H Medium Binding Guard Parrying Cutty] a long saber with an elaborate hilt

**Greatsword** [Heavy Medium-Long AAW Guard Binding Parrying Control Cutty Secret] a large two-handed sword such as a spadone, montante, or zweihander. Deadly and can attack in any direction.

## Close Combat Weapons

**Wrestling** [Close Unarmed] attacks requiring very close range such as grabbing, grappling, holding, throwing, punching, biting, etc.

**Pugilism** [Short Unarmed] unarmed punch and kick

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

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

**Shield** [Close Binding Parrying Nonlethal] punch with face or rim

**Dagger** [Close Cutty Stabbity] a military dagger or rondel

**Parrying Dagger** [Close Binding Guard Parrying Stabbity]

## Common and Peasant Weapons

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

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

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

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

**Hatchet** [Short Tool] small ax

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

**Cudgel** [2H Short Nonlethal] stout heavy stick, heavy club or bat)

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Military Hafted Weapons

These weapons are strongly associated with military units. Most are more complicated to learn than simple peasant weapons, requiring at least some training in a military order. Many cities and towns restrict possession of military weapons within the walls except by official town guards, as carrying them shouldn't be necessary and may indicate the owner is up to no good. The GM may declare that town guards harass characters so that they must pay fines or have their weapons confiscated.

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

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

**Hammer** [Short AAW Indestructible]

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

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

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

**Military Pick** [Heavy AAW Medium]

**Military Flail** [Heavy Medium]

**Poleaxe** [Heavy Medium AAW Indestructible Parrying] a knightly polearm for armored combat, a staff with axe, hammer, and spike

**Halberd** [Heavy Long AAW Binding Parrying]

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

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

## Bows & Crossbows

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

### **self bow** [2H Far2 Accurate Reload]

short bow, suitable for hunting or horseback.

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

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

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

**siege arbalest** [Heavy Far3 Accurate Reload10] very heavy and powerful crossbow, but extremely slow to reload.



## Early Firearms

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

**handgonne** [Heavy Far3 Reload4] a hand cannon consisting of a heavy barrel, handle, and socket for inserting a stock or staff.

**arquebus** [Heavy Far3 Accurate Reload5] a newer, more accurate version of the hand cannon with a true rifle shape and a matchlock.

**flintlock pistol** [Far Accurate Reload4] a pistol using a flintlock.

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

**shotgonne** [Heavy Far Reload5 (each)] a double-barreled shotgun meant for "intimate encounters", i.e. up-close and personal combat. Each barrel must be loaded, primed, and fired independently.

**flintlock rifle** [Heavy Far3 Accurate Reload5] a rifle using a flintlock.



## Weapon Tags

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

## Weapon Size Tags

Weapons tend to fall into three general sizes, the largest being a primary battle weapon such as a spear, then a sidearm such as swords, and then weapons of last resort such as daggers. Size affects the weapon Reach tags. Larger weapons are inherently more powerful and thus tend to have more Tags than smaller weapons. The largest weapons also have Tags such as **2H** and **Heavy**, which have additional benefits and restrictions.

**2H** (two-handed) weapons such as spears are optimized for use in two hands. They tend to be longer weapons and often have better Range tags, but lose such Advantages if wielded in one hand. Most 2H weapons must be carried in hand rather than in a sheath. These weapons are often military battle weapons, which may make them illegal to carry in towns and cities.

**Heavy** weapons such as two-handed swords and polearms are primary battle weapons, always two-handed (2H) and requiring special military training. Their primary benefit is the ability to ignore armor without the Heavy armor tag (which provides an Advantage on the attack). Similar to 2H weapons, they lose such Advantages if wielded in one hand. Heavy weapons cannot be used unless the character has a supporting Theme indicating they have specialized military weapon training or are unusually strong (e.g. Fighter, Paladin, Soldier, Strong, et al). Heavy weapons are bulky and must be carried in hand, so a character may only feasibly carry one Heavy weapon at a time; each past the first has a **Clumsy** Tag. Most Heavy weapons are also 2H weapons. Heavy weapons are military battle weapons which often makes them illegal to carry in most towns and cities

## Weapon Range Tags

**Weapon Range Tags** specify the *optimal Range* for a weapon to make attacks. **Range** is the distance between an attacker and his

target, at the moment of his attack. There are five general Range categories, each of which allows only certain kinds of weapons to make attacks. If you position yourself correctly you can claim COMBO. A very few weapons list multiple Ranges, and are considered optimal for all of them. Players need to use smart tactics to set up attacks, or use cover to avoid attacks by foes.

**Close:** is the optimal range for wrestling and other unarmed attacks. The fighters can punch, kick, grab, wrestle, throw, elbow, knee, head butt, pommel strike, and even bite. Weapons suffer a Disadvantage unless they have the "Close" Tag (such as knives and daggers). Note that using a weapon pommel is considered to be equivalent to a gauntleted fist.

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

**Medium:** is the optimal measure for longer weapons such as swords. Weapons suffer a Disadvantage unless they have the "Medium" Tag, such as swords.

**Long:** is the optimal measure for longer weapons such as spears. Weapons must have the "Long" Tag to attack.

**Far, Far2, Far3:** is too far for melee and most thrown weapons, so only projectiles can attack. Only weapons with a Far tag can attack. A "Far" tag with a number such as "Far2" is an additional increment of "Far" Range, so "Far2" is double "Far", and "Far3" is triple "Far".

## Advanced Weapon Tags

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

**AAW (Anti-Armor Weapons)** are specialized at defeating Hard armor. The AAW tag cancels the Hard armor tag.

**Binding** weapons excels at *binding* with an opponent's weapon, and can momentarily *trap* and *control* an opposing weapon, such as a spear or sword. Parrying daggers can catch a weapon, falchions can bind with the blade tip, swords can bind with the blade, hilt, or lugs.

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

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

**Cutty** weapons such as swords are adept at cutting up and slicing unarmored foes, such as civilians. They can be claimed for an Advantage against unarmored targets. (Note that there is no inherent drawback to this, as Heavy and Hard armors already provided bonuses against these weapons.)

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

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

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

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

**Parrying** weapons excel at parrying or deflecting incoming attacks, and can work as well as a shield. Parrying daggers and swords are equivalent to a small shield and noted on the list of Shields. Note that any weapon can be used to parry, and this is expected in normal combat (hence the defense penalty if you are unarmed), but Parrying weapons excel at this.

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

**Stabbity** weapons are optimized for lots of stabbing or "shanking". If the first attack hits then the character may make a free second

attack on the same target area. Only one extra attack is allowed, but this represents *lots*. Also known as "Stabbity Stabbity".

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

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

## ARMOR

**Armor** protects the wearer from physical harm, such as weapons and fire. Characters should choose a base **Body Armor** listed below, and optionally consider additional **Armor Pieces**.

**Coverage:** All **body armor** covers at least the **torso** and **head**. The body and head are the most critical areas to protect, and many armors also serve as warm clothing. Any other areas covered will be noted by **Tags**.

Additional specific pieces can be worn to protect open areas or upgrade defenses of a critical area.



MARSILE THREATENS GANELON WITH A JAVELIN

**Unarmored Disadvantage:** Wearing armor of some kind is critical for survival in combat. If a character is attacked by a weapon and not protected by armor in the location being attacked, he suffers a Disadvantage on the Saving Throw to survive. An extra Disadvantage applies for the head, neck, and torso, so most armor and helms focus on protecting these critical locations. All **Body Armors** listed below uniformly remove the Disadvantage by putting the best protection on the most critical areas.

**Under-armored Damage Penalty:** If hit in a location and the weapon is better than the armor, take +1 Damage. Soft Armor always has this penalty.

**Armor Tags** may describe additional protection. For example the "Heavy" armor Tag grants an Advantage on defenses, but is also hot, heavy, and reduces mobility, so a soldier generally only wears heavy armor if expecting a full-scale battle on level ground. This usually only applies to the critical areas of the **torso**, which is the chest and abdomen, unless noted with the "Full" Tag.

Mobility can become an issue with armor, especially if the armor is heavy or covers the entire body. The Tag "Clumsy" indicates the armor causes a Disadvantage on rolls involving maneuverability.

## Body Armor

Characters should choose one **Body Armor** listed below. All Body Armors cover at least the **torso** and **head**. The body and head are the most critical areas to protect, and many armors also serve as warm clothing. Any other areas covered will be noted by **Tags**.

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

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

**Full Mail** [Armor Heavy Full Clumsy-2] is a full suit of mail (chainmail), including the hauberk, coif, and chausses (leg protection). Always worn over light gambeson, and sometimes covered with a cuirie, coat of plates, or cuirass.

**Plated mail** [Armor Hard Heavy Full Clumsy-2] armor is mail covered by embedded metal plates, this heavy armor was worn by the early knights.

**Three-Quarters Plate** [Armor Hard Heavy Visor] is a lighter suit of, fully articulated light metal plate armor. Designed for mobile foot combat, this armor leaves the lower legs unprotected.

**Custom Three-Quarters Plate** [Armor Hard Heavy Visor Custom] is an advanced, fully articulated light metal plate armor, designed for mobile foot combat. Rare and expensive.

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

## Armor Pieces

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

### Head and Neck

**Leather coif** [Armor-Head Coif] are hoods of stitched leather. Protects the neck and head.

**Mail coif** [Armor-Head Heavy Coif] is a hood of mail (chainmail) or scale, often incorporated into a hauberk or camail. Protects the neck and head.



### Neck

**Bevor** [Armor-Neck Hard Heavy] is a hard plate collar to protect the throat.

**Gorget** [Armor-Neck Hard] are stiff collars of brigandine to protect the throat.

### Head

**Plumed hat** [Armor-Head Civil Hat] are huge, feathered hats that count as some padding.

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

**Cervelliere** [Armor-Head Hard Cap] are round, close-fitting steel skull caps.

**Kettle Hat** [Armor-Head Hard Hat] is a helmet made of steel in the shape of a wide-brimmed hat. Inexpensive and popular with infantry

because they offer many advantages, but are not seen as fashionable.

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

**Spangenhelm** [Armor-Head Hard] are conical, pointed metal helms made of metal strips and plates.

**Barbute** [Armor-Head Hard Closed] a visor-less helm with a distinctive "T" shaped opening for the eyes and mouth. The barbute resembles classical Greek helms. Includes an integral lining, so no arming cap is needed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## TORSO

**Breastplate** [Armor Hard Partial Layerable] are steel breastplates, only covering the front, and often worn over other armor.

**Cuirass** [Armor Hard Partial] are steel breastplate and backplate, often worn over other armor.

**Cuirie** [Armor Hard Front] a hardened leather breastplate made of cuir-bouilli (boiled leather), often worn over other armor.

## Hands

**Swordsman's Gloves** [Armor-Hand Partial] nimble leather gloves with very limited protection

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

**Mitten Gauntlet** [Armor-Hand Heavy Full Hard Clumsy-2] extremely protective steel mittens, but also very clumsy. Easy to obtain and ideal for characters whose weapon does not have a hand **Guard** (such as a polearm) and do not have a buckler.

**Knight's Gauntlet** [Armor-Hand Hard Full Custom] fully articulated steel gauntlets covering the entire hand. Rare and expensive.

## Armor Maneuverability Tags

Armor must make a careful tradeoff between protection, comfort, style, and bulk. Many kinds of armor are Clumsy, meaning they adversely affect movement and maneuvers.

**Clumsy** armor causes a Disadvantage on Actions involving maneuverability. This stacks, so two Clumsy tags might be written as "Clumsy-2" and cause two Disadvantages.

## Armor Protection Tags

The main armor Tags are **Hard**, **Heavy**, and **Full**, which determine the Defense Advantage and whether the armor is Clumsy.

**Armor** is the basic armor Tag, indicating the Asset provides protection. This can specify a limited hit location, such as Armor-Head, Armor-Neck, or Armor-Hand

**Heavy** armors rely on multiple layers and grant an Advantage against weapons, except those with the **Heavy** weapon tags. The Advantage only applies to the **head and torso** unless the armor also has the **Full** tag. However, this armor is truly heavy, so add the **Clumsy** armor tag.

**Full** armors cover all hit targets. However this armor restricts movement, so add the **Clumsy** armor tag.

**Hard** armors have rigid plates and grant an Advantage against weapons, except those with the **Anti-Armor Weapon (AAW)** tag. The Advantage only applies to the **head and torso** unless the armor has the **Full** tag. Expensive to buy and maintain.

Note that **Heavy Anti-Armor Weapons** are only effectively countered by **Heavy Hard** armor.

Tags are often combined for more protection, for example: **Hard Full** protects all hit locations with the Hard tag, but is Clumsy. **Heavy Full** armor combines Heavy and Full, so the Heavy tag is granted in all locations, but the two Clumsy tags add together for a total of Clumsy-2. **Hard Heavy Full** armor is more protective and no more clumsy than Heavy Full, but is rare.

## Advanced Armor Tags

**Armor-Head** are helms, so they protect the head. Note that helms also have an Open or Closed Tag to describe facial protection.

**Armor-Hand** armors are gloves or gauntlets that protect the hands. If Clumsy, this causes a Disadvantage on delicate work, such as picking locks, playing musical instruments, etc.

**Armor-Neck** applies to armor and helms that cover the throat.

**Caps** are skull-caps that only cover the top of the head. They do not cover the face, ears, or rear of the head.

**Civil** armors and helmets are “civil looking”, appearing as normal rugged clothing and do not draw attention.

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

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

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

**Front** armor only covers the front of the torso; it is open-backed. Any Disadvantage caused by the item drops by one die size.

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

**Partial** armor, helms, and gauntlets cover very limited areas. Removes one Clumsy tag.

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

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

## Shields

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

### Shield Guards

Shields are moveable armor, able to be positioned during between **guards** (for free within a player's turn or by using a Maneuver). Each guard provides armor for specific Hit Locations, so the player will need to choose the best guard for their situation.



All shields have at least two **basic front guards**, so named since they protect from attacks coming at the character's front facing. These protect the Hit Location(s) listed, plus the Left Hand and Left Arm.

- **Left** - Torso (default)
- **High** - Head (causes Disadvantage on vision)

Additional front guards are available only to some shields, by Shield Tags.

- **Right** - Right Hand (bucklers) but not Left Arm
- **Middle** - Head and Torso (round shields, tower shields)
- **Low** - Torso and Legs (tower shields)

Lastly, specialty **flank guards** protect a side rather than the front:

- **Left Flank** - Head, Left Arm, Left Hand, Left Torso (most strapped shields) *from attacks coming from the left*
- **Right Flank** - Head, Right Arm, Right Torso (centergrip shields) *from attacks coming from the right*
- **Horseman's Guard** - Left Arm, Left Torso, Left Hand, Left Leg (kite shields) *from attacks coming from the left*

## Concepts

Just like armor, shields do not protect against **Heavy** weapons unless the shield also has the Heavy tag.

Shields are equivalent to armor, so they are less important if excellent armor is available. A knight in full plate armor is covered in interlocking plates equivalent to shields, so he is better off wielding a heavy two-handed weapon. Shields are also less useful when facing threats from multiple directions. Smaller shields are vulnerable to longer weapons because they cover few areas.

## Shields

**Buckler** [Small Centergrip] A small common shield, gripped in the fist, and used as a companion weapon. It could be made of metal or boiled leather, round (brocchiero) or square (targa). Inexpensive, easily carried, and readily available. Bucklers are also a type of "companion weapon" listed on the Weapons table, with some Weapon Tags.

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

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

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

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

**Large round** [Large Centergrip Clumsy-2] A large wooden round shield, such as a larger Viking shield..

**Kite** [Large Strapped Clumsy-2] A distinctive shield in a reverse teardrop shape used by horsemen to protect the left flank and leg.

**Aspis** [Heavy Large Strapped Clumsy-3] A very large, deeply-dished shield made of wood.

**Tower Shield** [Heavy Large Strapped Clumsy-3] A rectangular, semi-cylindrical tower shield.

**Pavise** [Heavy Large Standing Clumsy-4] A very large semi-portable wall shield to protect crossbowmen in siege warfare.

## Other Shields

Some weapons and objects can be used as shields. The same Asset cannot also be used as an offensive weapon during the same Round.

**Parrying Weapon** [Parrying] weapons such as daggers and swords can be used to parry, but not against Heavy weapons.

**2H Parrying Weapon** [2H Parrying] weapons such as larger swords can be used to parry.

**Furniture** [Medium Improvised Clumsy-3] a chair, table, or bar stool

**Umbrella** [Civil Fragile Small Improvised Clumsy-1] while open, not against Heavy weapons, and will break if the bonus is used.

## Heavy Weapons vs Shields

Attacks from Heavy weapons will damage a shield unless it is also Heavy. A damaged shield provides no benefit, but still applies all drawbacks such as the Clumsy tag.

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

## Shield Tags

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

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

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

**Clumsy:** shields cause a Disadvantage on Actions involving maneuverability. This tag works the same as the Clumsy armor tag, and they stack.

**Heavy** shields are able to block attacks from **Heavy** weapons without being damaged. Add Clumsy.

## 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. Centergrip shields are more actively wielded than Strapped shields, requiring more advanced skills (from both character and player) because the player must designate which direction (front, left, or right) the shield is positioned. *May not be Heavy.*

**Parrying** weapons such as daggers and swords are equivalent to a small shield. The same Asset cannot also be used as an offensive weapon during the same Round, so the first parry or attack during a Round sets the purpose of the item.

**Strapped** shields are attached to the arm by two stout straps (enarmes), and heavier versions often rest on the shoulder. They are simple to use since they close off the left side of the body, and the defender tends not to move them at all. The shield and arm can absorb more force. Strapped shields are harder to equip than a center-gripped shield, but also unlikely to be dropped by accident. This style of shield works well on horse and on foot, and can support heavier shields than a center-grip. Strapped shields cannot protect the right side of the body, so usually a weapon is used to parry attacks from the right side.

**Custom** shields are higher-quality, bespoke and perfectly made. Any Disadvantage caused by the item drops by one.

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

**Improvised** shields are everyday items used as cover. They are Clumsy and often Fragile..

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

# 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.

Studying requires hard work and dedication, so you must use an Experience Path for each topic you are studying. Upon successful completion of your Path you will be rewarded with a new Secret.



Characters who start play with a “book”, “scroll”, or similar Asset start play with one additional Secret, presumably from having already spent some time with the book, or perhaps having had a portion of the book explained by a teacher. The book can also be used as the basis for Experience Paths to glean more Secrets from its pages. Books are tremendously beneficial because they free you from having to travel to find knowledge.

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

# Focuses

Focuses are Assets that assist in using specific kinds of Secrets. Each focus assists with specific kinds of Secrets, typically by granting ASSET. Magic-users especially prize them for assisting with casting of magic spells, and might call them "spell focuses", or name them for a school of magic, such as a "illusion focus". Here are some examples, but it's best to dream up something unique.

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

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

**Blue Dragon Orb:** A glassy sphere filled with a flickering spark of dragon magic. The orb is a focus for aeromancy and electrical magic.

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

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

# Custom Assets

You or the GM can create new kinds of Assets, and even Asset Tags. Here are a few examples.

## Glass Weapons

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

Weapon Tag: Glass

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

## Runelocks

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

Weapon Tag: Runelock

Reduce Reload Tag by 1 if the wielder has a Secret named "runelock".



H.J. FORD

BRADAMANTE DEFEATS THE WIZARD WITH THE RING.

# Part 7: Secrets

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

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

## YOUR Secrets

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

## Martial Arts

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

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

# Thievery

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

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

## Magic Spells

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

### Magic-User Spells

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

### Hallow (Divine) Spells

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

### Pyromancy (Fire) Spells

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

flaming arrow  
fireball  
flame wall

flamberge  
hellfire  
ignite

purifying flames  
fire resistance

### Illusion Spells

audible glamer  
blur  
color spray  
darkness  
disguise self  
illusory script

invisibility  
light  
minor illusion  
mirror image  
phantom fog  
phantasmal force

phantasmal killer  
phantom steed  
prestidigitation  
shadow blade  
silence  
ventriloquism

### Necromancy (Death) Spells

animate dead  
circle of death  
feign death

finger of death  
raise dead  
resurrection

soul trap  
speak with dead  
vampiric touch

# Using Secrets

Using a Secret is an Action which requires a Damage Roll, so failure results in Damage. The minimum Hazard of your roll is your Secret Level, so using a powerful Secret in a mild situation still incurs risk.

## Secret Level

Every Secret has a "Level" from 1-9 which quantifies the degree of skill and power necessary to use the Secret, as well as the inherent risk. A low-level Secret is less powerful than a higher-level Secret, but also much less risky to use.



Levels range from 1-9 and match “spell levels” common to classic RPGs. The classic “magic missile” is 1st level and “fireball” is 3rd level, etc. This allows you to quickly gauge the Level of a spell you invented or look at classic RPGs for inspiration.

## Side Effects

Even if you succeed in using your Secret there might be side effects or natural consequences. For example, using “blackmail for the Duke” to threaten the Duke might get you what you want for now, but will surely anger the powerful Duke. Casting a magic spell in direct view of others might have ramifications unrelated to the actual spell itself.

Also consider that if you fumble a Secret, the GM gets a Counter. This free Action will be in the scope of your fumbled Action, and of similar proportion. If you attack with a large Action like a grenade or *fireball* spell, you bring the inherent risk it might blow up in the faces of yourself and your allies.

## Risks

Secrets are powerful but risky. Using a Secret requires a **Damage Roll**, and the minimum Hazard of your roll is your Secret Level. If you fail you take Damage equal to the **Secret Level**. If you do not Soak all Damage you gain a **Doom**. Thus a wizard’s *flame arrow* spell can slay foes even more surely than the arrow of a war bow, but bears a greater risk.

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

The minimum **Hazard** of your roll is your zSecret Level, using higher-level Secrets are more risky for you, and more likely to result in a Doom. You should think about trying to use the minimum power necessary whenever possible.

Lastly, if you fumble your roll the GM gets a **Counter**, which is related to your Action. So casting dramatic spells such as *fireball* or *teleport* exposes you to grave risk, since a fumble could turn the power against you.

## Supporting Traits

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

## Maintained Secrets

Some Secrets can be "maintained" over time, such as a "protection from fire" spell. For Secrets which can be maintained, you must use an Action to dismiss the ongoing effect safely. You can use a Maneuver but this causes the effect to unravel abruptly and you must roll a Saving Throw against the "backlash".

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

## Area-Effect Secrets

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

## Gaining Secrets

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

## Requirements

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

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

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

Secrets are complex and must be thoroughly earned; characters cannot simply swap Secrets with each other. The same goes with finding a spellbook. By way of analogy, owning a chemistry or physics textbook doesn't necessarily mean you have absorbed the material and can apply it.



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

# Part 8: Game Master's Guide

This section contains some additional game rules, options, and advice for you, the GM, to run your game.

## GM Roles

As the GM you get to wear several different hats.

**Worldbuilder** - Whether you are creating your own world or reusing an existing work, you need to describe the fictional world to the players. Without this, there is no game. As a bonus, vividly portray NPCs, monsters, and other elements. Add drama, voices, and detail. Find ways to draw the players and their characters into the world.

**Referee** - You are responsible for explaining the rules to the players and ensuring the game runs smoothly and fairly. Strive to be a "benevolent dictator", where rulings are consistent, sensible, and fair. This will help players understand their choices. 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. This is a lot like parenting.

**Adversary** - Present compelling and challenging adventures to the players and step back to see what they do. You are responsible for playing foes according to their true (and often oppositional) nature, to their full potential. Wild animals and bandits should craft clever ambushes, and genius villains should be formidable. Be devious, ruthless, and do not hold back. However, the Adversary cannot overrule the Referee, meaning you still need to be fair and consistent. Hopefully you will find that players rise to the challenge and respond with intelligent, skillful play, and win. If you find you're too good at being a devious Adversary, then do more with less.

# Flow of Play

Game takes place in **Rounds**. As the GM, start each round by rolling an **Encounter** to start your turn. Do this when the game starts, you come back from a break, or whenever the players seem lost, stuck, indecisive, or waiting for you. You don't need to use the Rounds and Turns formally in cases where they are getting in the way.

- **GM Turn:**
  - GM rolls an **Encounter** (hidden)
  - GM **Narrates** the scene - Describes the current scene, narrating changes such as movement of foes or NPCs, foreshadow possible future changes, and set Hazard
  - Players may interrupt with Maneuvers and GM can use a Maneuver Phase if necessary
- For each **player**:
  - GM chooses a player (usually clockwise around the table) and **Transitions** into the player's turn. GM describes new or urgent info and declares required rolls / saves.
  - Player Turn
    - Player declares PC response to threats
    - PC Action and remaining Maneuvers
    - Player rolls one Saving Throw (if applicable)
    - Player rolls one Action (if applicable)
  - GM **Transitions** out of player's turn

Players are allowed to interject with **Maneuvers** at any time, even during your GM turn. Just acknowledge the Maneuver and keep flowing with your turn. For example, if you are narrating the scene and describe a "dark cowled figure rising from the mists" one or more players might say "I draw my sword". Maneuvers are simple and do not involve rolls, so you can just keep narrating.

# Encounters

Roll for a random Encounter at the start of every turn. Roll your 1d20 and Legend Die. This uses the same dice as player rolls, but the way you use them is very different. The dice are the same as what players use for actions, but you will interpret them a bit differently.

Your d20 does not result in success/failure of a particular action, but the kind of Encounter you will present. If your d20 rolls 15+ (what players would call "success") your result is

WEAL, otherwise on 14- your result is WOE. An WEAL is something which benefits the PCs, and WOE goes against them. (Whenever you see these words in all-caps in the rules, this is what they refer to.)

Combine your d20 with your Legend Die to determine what kind of Encounter you will present, such as WEAL THEME, WOE ASSET, WOE COMBO, etc. There twelve encounter patterns are described below, to spur your imagination, helping you to spontaneously create wonder and make the game feel more alive.



# Encounters Table

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

	WEAL (d20 15+)	WOE (d20 14-)
<b>THEME</b>	Describe the scene, a location, or an NPC. Provide an opportunity by revealing information. Describe how a Doomed monster fails an attack.	Introduce an NPC or monster using a Theme. In combat, highlight a Theme of a foe, trap, or monster that raises Hazard. Describe how a Doomed monster takes a final Action and dies.
<b>EFFORT</b>	Describe an opportunity to make sudden progress, at the expense of spending Effort. Or have an NPC take initiative in an area of expertise to move the group ahead. Describe how a Doomed monster mutters and makes a leaky mess, and dies.	Highlight aspects of the scenario which expend effort or resources. An NPC does something to set the group back. In combat describe how PCs are fighting hard and getting tired, and must downgrade natural rolls of EFFORT this round. Describe how a Doomed monster attacks and dies.
<b>ASSET</b>	Highlight how a PC/NPC Asset is useful (e.g. armor blocks an attack). Or provide a clue to find a new Asset. For example, they might find food, water, light sources, or arrows. On a Crit they might find "magic healing berries". Only provide a clue.	Present a challenge caused by superior gear on a foe, poor gear on PC, or special gear for the situation. Check on resources such as food, water, or light. In combat a PC has a gear mishap or attracts an attack due to subpar Asset/armor.
<b>COMBO</b>	Encounter a group of possibly friendly NPCs, or describe an opportunity to use teamwork, or an NPC helps a PC teammate.	Encounter a team of likely hostile NPCs, or a challenge that needs teamwork (e.g. auto-closing door, two-person puzzle). In combat describe how monsters use teamwork, which downgrades rolls of COMBO unless PCs use teamwork.
<b>ULT</b>	Highlight an ULT of a PC or NPC, e.g. the "scout" finds a hidden trail; the "wizard" finds a Ley Line, the "thief" spots someone tailing, the "ranger" finds tracks, the "archer" sees a target.	Highlight a Dark Secret of a PC or NPC, or highlight the threat of an NPC boss. Describe how players will need to downgrade rolls of ULT if related to a Dark Secret or boss ability.
<b>PREP</b>	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". Possibly an NPC does something which might count as PREP for a PC Action.	Surprise encounter, ambush, trap, or jump scare. Can reveal something a foe did to prepare. In combat describe how the foes were better prepared, and players downgrade natural rolls of PREP.

# Narrating Scenes

When narrating a scene, do the following:

1. Describe the current scene
2. Introduce new scene elements, and describe changes
3. Foreshadow threats

First, 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. Try to repeat the scene description each round, but vary the wording.

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

When narrating monsters, try to use Maneuvers similar to those the players can take. For example, you can describe enemy archers



THE GENIUS COMES OUT OF THE JAR

aiming their bows at particular targets. Limit each monster to two Maneuvers, similar to players. This will help the players to make well-informed choices during their turns.

Always look for opportunities to foreshadow complications or threats. Especially foreshadow any immediate dangers such as attacks which will require a roll from a PC.

## Maneuver Interrupts

Players are allowed to interrupt your narration at any time to declare Maneuvers. This is common in combat when players want to contest the movement of their foes. Just note the player declaration and interweave it into your narrative. If necessary, you can start a **Maneuver Phase**, to resolve any complicated simultaneous Maneuvers. Simply pause the game and take the Maneuvers in slow motion, allowing players to fine-tune their response to the changing scene. While they can freely interrupt by using Maneuvers, players must wait until their turn to resolve any Actions or Saving Throws.

## Time

As part of narrating the scene, you should set expectations for the amount of time passing during the current round. This might be a few seconds in a wild melee combat or days when traversing the wilderness between cities. You can clarify or remind players during Transitions to their turns as needed. Here are five common tempos.

**Battle Intro** - A Battle Intro is a cinematic scene acting as a transition to initiate a combat. The GM will describe the newly unfolding situation and events, as well as foes. Players can describe heroic battle poses, draw weapons, throw insults and taunts, and so on, but attacks need to wait for Player Turns..

**Combat** - A Combat is used for stressful situations like combat. Each player may describe one Action, such as readying a weapon,

moving around, or attempting to flank a foe. The Action and supporting actions must be short, but long enough to do a couple of things such as open a door and move through, draw a weapon and move through an open door, stay put and aim a bow, or sprint.

**Cutscene** - A Cutscene Round is up to a few hours, covering a full cinematic scene. Each player can describe a series of broad sweeping actions that cover time loosely, such as running an errand, going shopping, repairing gear, resting, or gathering intel. Describe things at a high level and avoid getting bogged down with details.

## Hazard

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

Hazard starts at 1, and then you increase it as the scene becomes more dangerous. **Raise the Hazard** whenever you narrate something which makes the situation more dangerous, especially when you foreshadow a threat of some kind. The success target number for d20 rolls is always 15, which models a baseline of PC competence in a reasonably challenging situation. Hazard is the main lever for you to change the odds.

You should use Hazard to heighten the dramatic tension in the situation, and to highlight any interesting situational factors, and ideally provide tactical choices to the players. For example, a battle on a rooftop in high winds is risky, so the characters might decide to take the battle somewhere else. **Lower the Hazard** whenever you narrate something which reduces the danger, or if the PCs neutralize some danger in the scene.

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

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

You can only raise the Hazard by +2 during one round, so you can use Maneuvers as a simple way of keeping track. If a monster should be particularly dangerous you should develop the threat over time using a series of turns.

## Player Turns

While players can freely interrupt with Maneuvers, they must wait until their turn to resolve any Actions or Saving Throws.

### Player Turn Transitions

Always narrate a **Transition into** each player’s turn. Describe or reiterate any critical information. Declare all monster attacks, traps, area-effect attacks, or other dangers which would require the player to roll a Saving Throw. You may need to repeat area-effect attacks (e.g. squad of enemy archers, trap, dragonflame) for multiple **Transitions**, since players roll Saving Throws during their

respective turns. You can also narrate the **Transition out** of a player's turn if desired.

## Player Turn Order

Players can take their turns in whatever order they like. Use clockwise seating order around the table for simplicity, but allow players to swap or adjust their order however they like. This is especially useful when one PC is defending another PC from a threat; simply let the defending PC take their turn first to see if they can neutralize or mitigate the threat. The floating NPC Turn can happen at any time.



## Monsters

Monsters are enemies for the PCs to battle and an opportunity for you to be creative and scare your players. Other threats such as traps and evil spells use the same rules as "monsters".

Use your **Encounter** to introduce a monster to the scene. Roleplay this as vividly as possible and use Traits from your monsters, e.g. "A

dozen brigands step onto the road, armed with clubs and spears". Your Encounter can only add the monsters to the scene, develop them by describing them further, or move them; you must use your Action to have them do anything directly against the PCs, such as attack. After introducing the monsters, step back and see what the players do.

You can raise the Hazard as part of any Encounter or Action, as long as you can give yourself a reason. So when introducing a monster which poses a threat then you can also raise the Hazard.

## Sample Monsters

These samples illustrate the principles of creating your own monsters with a minimal amount of information, but you can add as much detail as you want. The format is **Theme - Traits - Encounters**.

**Ant, giant** - giant warrior ant with deadly bite - COMBO swarm attack

**Dragon** - ancient winged reptilian beings whose breath is death, covered in hard scales, known and feared for their size, physical prowess, and magical abilities - THEME ancient, intelligent, greedy, EFFORT wing buffet causes winds, ASSET deadly bite, scales immune to fire and most weapons, COMBO claw/bite/tail, PREP roaring wind heralds approach, ULT dragonflame from above

**Elemental, fire** - aggressive chaotic spirit of fire and ash - THEME smoke and heat, EFFORT ignites flammable surroundings, ASSET immune to fire, touch sets PCs on fire (Doom), ULT burning things

**Manticore** - huge deadly man-headed lion with bat wings, barbed tail, horns, and thick wiry fur - ASSET fling dart-like spikes from tail; bite/claws are Heavy weapons; ULT ambushing and hunting prey

**Orc** - aggressive tribal warrior - EFFORT lose morale and flee, ASSET 2H polearm, bow, weapon & shield, COMBO coordinated attack

**Ogre** - giant feral brute of the cold northern wastes with legendary strength and toughness - ASSET 2H giant club (+2 damage), sack of rocks/heads, heavy cleaver, ULT feats of strength and hardiness

**Gorgon** - evil cursed woman with hideous face and head of writhing snakes (and possibly a snake lower body) - THEME rattlesnake sounds, EFFORT she tries to establish a gaze, ASSET dagger and bow, COMBO her snakes are venomous, ULT petrify any creature that meets her gaze

**Snake, asp** - small venomous serpent - ULT venomous bite

**Wraith** - powerful cursed evil undead spirit, feeds on souls - THEME pass through physical objects, EFFORT touch bypass non-magic armor and chill, ASSET unaffected by non-magical items, COMBO flies through PCs and chills them, ULT drains life (special Doom)

## Monster Maneuvers

As part of narrating the scene during your turn, describe how Monsters take Maneuvers to outposition the PCs or take attacks. Always foreshadow attacks with a Maneuver of some kind, such as describing a goblin archer or troll aiming at a PC, especially if they are targeting a specific Hit Location. Limit each monster to one or two Maneuvers, according to its quickness and tactical abilities.

When possible maneuver groups of monsters as units. If you foreshadow a group of monsters ganging up on a PC, this counts as a Disadvantage on COMBO for the PC's Saving Throw.

## Hidden Maneuvers

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

## Monster Attacks

You must declare all required rolls such as Saving Throws versus attacks on **Transitions** to player turns.

Be sure to apply any Maneuvers that the monsters made. When a monster aimed at a Hit Location, that will affect the Saving Throw if that location is not well protected. Your players will learn that threats you foreshadow are more deadly and should be paid close attention, or neutralized with their own Maneuvers.

## Multiple Monsters

Only require one Saving Throw per PC, per turn. If there are multiple monsters who could attack the PC, highlight one of them.

Limiting Saving Throws will help prevent the PC from becoming unintentionally overwhelmed by numbers of foes. You can liberally throw waves and hordes of awful monsters at the PCs without worrying about accidentally killing the party, since skillful players will have time to react and flee.

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

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

# Monster Damage

Monsters inflict Damage exactly like PCs. (The base Damage is 1 point, +1 for Heavy weapons, etc.) However, fearsome monsters can have additional bonuses that characters do not have. Add +1 if the monster is huge (e.g. a giant), or has an especially deadly attack (e.g. a great white shark or dragon bite), or is venomous (e.g. scorpion sting). An apex monster like a dragon might deal Damage 3-4.

## Resistance and Vulnerabilities

You may give monsters Traits and Assets that represent resistances and vulnerabilities to certain kinds of attacks. For example ghosts aren't hurt by iron weapons but hate silver, and fire elementals can't be hurt by fire. You need not Tap such Traits when Soaking Damage they apply to. These Traits often apply to ASSET, COMBO, and ULT.

## Monster Doom

Your monsters will Tap Traits to **Soak** Damage, just like PCs do. When a monster can't soak damage from an attack it gains a **Doom**. Describe the monster as "Doomed", bloodied and broken. This is simpler and more serious than a PC Doom, because your story is unlikely to have a path to recovery for your monster.

A Doomed monster is incapacitated, but might make awful noises, make a mess, and take actions haphazardly. Use your Encounter roll for inspiration, and add visceral detail (noises, messes, etc) so monsters are scary even in defeat. Make the players fear Dooms by using them on monsters. Make pose an occasional threat.

### WEAL (d20 15+)

### WOE (d20 14-)

**THEME** monster menaces PCs

monster makes a Counter attack.

**EFFORT** monster messily dies

monster makes a Counter attack, then dies

**PREP** monster plays dead

monster prepares for a Counter attack

## Dispatching Monsters

A PC can usually dispatch a Doomed monster as a Maneuver, such as by sticking a sword into its eye. That's probably fine for most monsters, especially humanoids (e.g. orcs) but to be really thorough the player needs to use an Action. The PC might behead the monster or apply fire, silver, or some other special coup de grace. You might even require a roll if it's especially hard to kill.

## Making Monsters

Monsters are "in your own words" just like the PCs are for your players. Write your monster in the format **Theme - Traits - Encounters**, for example: **Ogre** - *giant feral brute of the cold northern wastes with legendary strength and toughness - ASSET 2H giant club (+2 damage), sack of rocks/heads, heavy cleaver, ULT feats of strength and hardiness*

Monsters have Themes and Traits, so they can be as simple or complex as you like. In addition, monsters have an "Encounters" section to describe special behaviors or abilities of the monster to be triggered by your Encounter roll.

Most monsters should have a single Theme and up to six Traits, depending on how tough your monster should be. The **Theme** is simply the name of the monster type, e.g. "black orc" or "cave troll". Use additional Themes as needed to describe any special role or occupation, such as an "orc shaman" or "goblin chief". **Traits** are keywords that you can use to describe the monster.

The simplest way to write a monster is to make a little phrase, such as "Ogre - huge ferocious brute w/ strength of ten men", or "Tiger - huge muscled sharp-toothed fast hunting beast". This helps you visualize the monster at a glance, and gives you words you can use to describe your monster to your players. A great technique is to foreshadow the monster when you roll WOE.

Add Traits for any special abilities, defenses, attacks, or reactions to attacks. Ideally these add depth to tactical combat, making the players adjust their approach to deal with the monster's capabilities. A Trait like "fire resistant" makes the monster harder to burn, a Trait like "bear hug" might add damage if the bear can pull off the hug, and a Trait like "feeding frenzy" might make the monster go crazy (raising the Hazard) if it smells blood. These might seem similar to Secrets, but it's simpler for you to list them as Traits, and this also has the nice side-effect of making the ability unavailable once that Trait is Tapped, or makes the monster feel more alive and special by triggering a reaction like "cowardly" or "berserker" when the Trait becomes Tapped.

Keep in mind, adding Traits makes the monster more powerful because you will Tap Traits to Soak Damage. Thus, monster Traits are like it's "hit points", and when Tapped Out you will declare the monster "Doomed" (or slain if the finishing blow was a Critical Hit).

**Traits as Hazard** - You can use the number of Traits as a soft guideline for your target Hazard. Use Traits to foreshadow the monster, raising the Hazard until it's where you want it to be. You can also mix things up and have a high-power monster with a low Hazard if it's been caught out of its element, or low-power monsters at a high Hazard due to terrain (e.g. goblins defending a rope bridge over lava).

**Tip: Reuse Classic Monsters** - You can very easily reuse (i.e. convert) all the classic RPG monsters! Use the monster name for the Theme, and pick Traits from keywords in the description. Use "Hit Dice" and/or "Levels" as a loose guide for the number of Traits (e.g. goblin 1, orc 2, ogre 4, etc). Add more Traits for special abilities/attacks/defenses.

**Trait boxes** - If you are pressed for time, you can use checkboxes instead of named Traits, but the monster won't be very interesting.

**Encounter** - Use the "Encounter" section of your monster to write notes about behaviors triggered by your Encounter roll (usually on WOE). For example, a dragon might breathe fire on ULT.

**Assets** - All monsters have basic armor and weapons, whether these are carried or innate such as scales and claws. Use the Encounter section for any special or unusual Assets, such as heavy weapons, heavy armor, or special attacks and defenses.

You can also use Assets to vary similar monsters. Scatter a few ranged weapons, heavy weapons, and heavy armor amongst a group of similar monsters (e.g. goblins) to create a variety of challenges for the PCs. Assets are often the most distinctive aspect of mooks like goblins, such as "the goblin with the arbalest". Especially nasty Assets like poison arrows or man-catching nets can even raise the Hazard, but try to foreshadow so your players can react to the challenge.

## Interesting Monsters

Monsters are a staple of the fantasy genre, and are important because they provide fear of the unknown, and let you demonstrate to the players that *there is weird scary shit out there*.

Use weird monsters sparingly, but when you use one take the time to make them interesting. You can pull out all the stops and make a monster really scary and weird. Load it up with special attacks and defenses. Give it an inhuman personality. Make it do or say something mysterious or creepy when it dies.

You can and should leverage the wealth of fantasy literature and books of monsters from old RPGs out there. However, make the

monsters yours by mixing and mashing them up, so that the monsters in your campaign are unique, mysterious, and terrifying.

The most important thing to do is to keep the monster mysterious. Never truly explain what it is or where it's from. Foreshadow the monster, revealing fleeting glimpses and clues, but not letting the "camera" of your story reveal the monster until after you've milked it for all the dramatic effect you can.

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

## NPCs

NPCs are "non-player characters", essentially anyone in the game universe who isn't a PC ("player character") controlled by a player. You control all NPCs, including PCs whose player is absent from the game session.

Always use an **Encounter** to introduce an NPC to the scene. Describe the NPC to your players, then step back and see what the players do.



KIPNON MEETS WITH THE BLACK MASTER OF THE BEASTS

## Creating NPCs

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

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

When introducing the NPC (e.g. as part of an Encounter) always describe their Themes and Traits. If the Traits are threatening then consider raising the Hazard.

## Using Secrets

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

## Story Secrets

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

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

## Using Experience Paths

### Rewards

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

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

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

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

Be consistent about promptly giving one reward per Path. Consistently associating “Path - Reward” trains the players to keep making progress on their Paths. That helps with game pace and

makes it easier for you to predict the direction the characters will go next, and focus your preparation time on the shared Paths.

## Using Experience Paths

You can use Paths to write story or campaign goals, group quests, bounties (wanted posters), and requests for aid from NPCs. You should add a Countdown if the Path is a race against time.

### Strong Start

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

#### AMBUSH!

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

#### CITY FIRE!



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

### Adventures

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

#### ESCAPE FROM THE DUNGEONS OF THE MAD KING!

The mad king has thrown you into his dungeons in rags to feed his monstrous "pets". As far as you've heard, nobody has ever escaped from the dungeons, alive or otherwise.

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

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

#### THE WELL'S RUN DRY



Your village well has run dry and there is no rain in the sky.

## Adventure Paths

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

#### TRAVERSE THE DEEP AND WILD WOOD

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

#### THE MOON ORB

Azazrem found a glowing orb in the dungeons of the mad king.

- He is studying the glowing orb and has already figured out how to make it glow with light and purify water. (two new Secrets)
- The orb keeps giving him dreams of good deeds that need doing. (TODO - write an XP for a dream, or maybe a dark secret if he resists?)

#### VENGEANCE AGAINST THE MAD KING

Now that you've escaped, it's payback time! Your Dark Secret of vengeance will be resolved once you've gotten even.

Day 1: Escaped the dungeons into the deep and wild wood.

## Hunted

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

#### HUNTED BY GOBLYNS



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

## ON THE RUN

□ □ □

The police were alerted to the burglary and are looking for you.

## In too deep

Write a Doom if the characters become overextended in a dungeon or other or dangerous territory, and need to find their way back to safety before something awful happens. Describe or hint at the dangers surrounding the characters, to raise the level of dramatic tension and urgency. The characters are in over their heads, and the players should be worried.

## CHUTE TRAP!

□ □ □

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

## Adventures

Use Paths as adventure hooks.

## Create your Adventure

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

## Introduce your Adventure as a Path

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

## Play to find out what happens

Step back and let the game play out to see what happens. Always let the players freely choose what they do. They might not bite, or they might find a different way than you thought of, but that's fine because the game is about the players and the choices they make. The adventure should live on its own with or without the PCs.

## No-win scenarios

It's possible that some situations will result in character death. That is fine as long as the players chose to be in the deadly situation, rather than being surprised due to a lack of information. Following the guidelines for raising Hazard will ensure you are providing adequate clues and warnings about the danger that is building.

## New Game Quick Start

1. **Introduce the setting** - Pick a genre and come up with some idea of the game world and starting scene. You can use an existing campaign setting or come up with your own. Legends works with any genre, but pick something familiar unless you have time to prepare.
2. **Introduce characters** - Work with each player to help them make characters. Try to create a group chemistry that works together. Introduce the characters to each other, and prompt each player to give a summary of his character.
3. **Experience Paths** - Ask each player to write one or two paths so that everyone has a good idea of what motivates them. Also set one Path before the players for a rumor or quest they have heard about, so that the world feels alive. Players can update their characters to add relationships or better align goals.
4. **Strong Start** - The game session is ready to start; kick it off with a "strong start" such as a battle or other challenge. Be sure to roll for an Encounter, narrate the scene, set Hazard, and follow turns so that you can teach the players how to play the game.

5. **Resolution** - Once players resolve the challenge, let them take a few turns looting, resting, or exploring. Point out how those require Actions, and that turns are continuous so you are continuing to make Encounter rolls. Ideally let the players find a clue that kicks off another Path.
6. **Paths** - Prompt the players to choose an Experience Path and start making progress. Add pressure by rolling an Encounter each turn, or whenever they get stuck or lost on what to do next and look to you for guidance.

## Using Dooms

Many of these were described in the previous game sections, but here are some additional tips for you to scare your players.

### Essentials of Life

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

Assuming you do not want to turn the game into a logistical exercise, the simplest solution is to leverage your random Encounter roll. Any time you roll WOE-ASSET check to see if the PCs are lacking an essential, and if so assign a Doom. This is simple, direct, and will make the players be proactive.

Otherwise, write a Doom if the players haven't used any Actions to create one or more of these essentials *recently*. How you define "recently" is flexible and can be adapted to your game style, such as "I can't remember the last time they slept" or "they haven't slept in two days". Initially you might find yourself writing Dooms and players reacting in dismay, but this amounts to training your players.

Over time your players will learn they should *proactively* drink water, eat, find shelter, and sleep.

## Diseases

People are able to resist most normal afflictions and diseases, however, adventurers delve into all sorts of dark and unsavory places. You can write a Doom or call for a Saving Throw whenever your Encounter roll is WOE+EFFORT and the conditions are "dramatically unclean". This is most appropriate when PCs have made direct physical contact with something unclean such as a sewer, fungus monster, werewolf bite, mummy, stale tomb air, etc.

Black spots	Lycanthropy	Vampiric hunger
Blood eye	Mummy rot	Undead fungus
Bloody flux	Ocre fever	Umbral curse
Grey rime	Sleeping fits	White cysts
Ifr'it fever	Trog foot	Wizard's twilight
Kha'din taint	Tomb lung	Wyrmtosis

## When to Use Dice

Dice are part of the game, but don't rely on them too much. The game is a theatre of the mind centering on player skill, with character sheets and dice used only as a last resort. Players should only roll dice when you call for a roll.

**GM Inspiration** - Roll dice *for yourself* when you want a suggestion or random seed for inspiration. An Encounter or loot roll can be a useful suggestion. However, you can do whatever you like, and there is no need to roll if you already know what you want.

**Surprises** - Allow players a Saving Throw if the world (i.e. you) surprises them with something they could not avoid. While you should narrate the scene and use foreshadowing so that players can make informed choices, if you don't (or if your description was

confusing) then allow a saving throw to give the PCs a “sporting chance”. Death traps and ambushes deserve saves.

**Interesting Combats** - Require players to roll for attacks and defenses for important or interesting combats.

**Stunts** - Require players to roll for Stunts, Secrets or similarly amazing feats of skill or magic. These over-the-top actions should always be interesting and involve risk of failure.

## When NOT to use Dice

**Exploration** - Never let dice decide what happens when players are exploring, investigating, or narrating play. Simply respond to player questions, actions, or explorations naturally.

**Natural Consequences** - Never use dice to decide the direct, natural consequences of a player choice. If a PC dips his toes in the lava they burn off, or if he jumps off a thousand-foot cliff he splats. Dice do not save PCs from informed player choices or mistakes.

## Minimal Dice Options

Use these options if you want to greatly reduce the use of dice.

**Debate** - You and the players debate actions and their results. When you narrate something such as “the orc stabs you”, the player has a brief moment to narrate a suitable response such as “I parry with my shield”, otherwise the narration stands. Conversely, when a player declares an action such as “I shoot the wolf” then you have a brief moment to say why that doesn’t happen such as “the wolf is concealed in the trees”, otherwise the action succeeds. Assign Dooms (Stage 0-1) to the PCs if you decide the PCs were hurt. Use dice only to break ties, or if the result would kill a PC or major NPC.

**Encounters** - Use your Encounter roll to narrate the result of anything that happens during the turn. Assign Dooms (Stage 0-1) to the PCs if you decide the PCs were hurt. Have a player roll if the result would kill a PC or major NPC.

# I Loot the Body!

Players can ask for the items they can see at any time, and use a Maneuver to take an unattended item. They can use an Action to quickly loot a body or similarly sized area, and take one item. Finding concealed items requires players to state they are actively searching, including the method (visual, patdown, or strip), and roll.

Roll to determine what *might* be found. On a Crit the item is significantly nicer, more valuable, possibly even a magic trinket. However, truly valuable, powerful, or rare items should never be found as random Loot, but as part of an Experience Path or planned Reward

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**THEME** Something related to the main Theme of the owner.

**EFFORT** Something exists, but only a thorough search would find it. If the player succeeded on a search roll then roll the Legend Die again. The item will have been well hidden.

**ASSET** A tool useful to the owner, such as a weapon or shield.

**COMBO** Coin purse, (Crit) gems, or other valuables

**ULT** More valuable, unusual, or (Crit) magic trinket.

**PREP** A valuable article of clothing

On a Fumble there is "something awful" to find, causing Stress and reinforcing that the characters are people, not loot bots. However, treat 50% of Fumbles as "merit" Crits in cases where the PCs earned a reward. Some awful ideas:

messy blood / wound  
gross diseased bits  
body bugs / lice

trophy scalps / ears  
PC wanted poster  
gold tooth / piercing

stolen item  
stolen coins  
creepy odd lump

## Monster Doom

Your monsters will Tap Traits to **Soak** Damage, just like PCs do. When a monster can't soak damage from an attack it gains a **Doom**. Describe the monster as "Doomed", bloodied and broken. A PC can usually dispatch a Doomed monster as a Maneuver. A Doomed monster is incapacitated, but might make awful noises, make a mess, and take actions haphazardly. Use your Encounter roll for inspiration, and add visceral detail (noises, messes, etc) so monsters are scary even in defeat.

**WEAL (d20 15+)**

**WOE (d20 14-)**

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**THEME** monster menaces PCs

monster makes a Counter attack.

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**EFFORT** monster messily dies

monster makes a Counter attack, then dies

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**PREP** monster plays dead

monster prepares for a Counter attack

# GM Quick Reference - Encounters

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

**WEAL (d20 15+)**

**WOE (d20 14-)**

<b>THEME</b>	Describe the scene, a location, or an NPC. Provide an opportunity by revealing information. Describe how a Doomed monster fails an attack.	Introduce an NPC or monster using a Theme. In combat, highlight a Theme of a foe, trap, or monster that raises Hazard. Describe how a Doomed monster takes a final Action and dies.
<b>EFFORT</b>	Describe an opportunity to make sudden progress, at the expense of spending Effort. Or have an NPC take initiative in an area of expertise to move the group ahead. Describe how a Doomed monster mutters and makes a leaky mess, and dies.	Highlight aspects of the scenario which expend effort or resources. An NPC does something to set the group back. In combat describe how PCs are fighting hard and getting tired, and must downgrade natural rolls of EFFORT this round. Describe how a Doomed monster attacks and dies.
<b>ASSET</b>	Highlight how a PC/NPC Asset is useful (e.g. armor blocks an attack). Or provide a clue to find a new Asset. For example, they might find food, water, light sources, spent arrows. On a Crit they might find "magic healing berries". Only provide a clue.	Present a challenge caused by superior gear on a foe, poor gear on PC, or special gear for the situation. Check on resources such as food, water, or light. In combat a PC has a gear mishap or attracts an attack due to subpar Asset/armor.
<b>COMBO</b>	Encounter a group of possibly friendly NPCs, or describe an opportunity to use teamwork, or an NPC helps a PC teammate.	Encounter a team of likely hostile NPCs, or a challenge that needs teamwork (e.g. auto-closing door, two-person puzzle). In combat describe how monsters use teamwork, which downgrades rolls of COMBO unless PCs use teamwork.
<b>ULT</b>	Highlight an ULT of a PC or NPC, e.g. the "scout" finds a hidden trail; the "wizard" finds a Ley Line, the "thief" spots someone tailing, the "ranger" finds tracks, the "archer" sees a target.	Highlight a Dark Secret of a PC or NPC, or highlight the threat of an NPC boss. Describe how players will need to downgrade rolls of ULT if related to a Dark Secret or boss ability.
<b>PREP</b>	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". Or an NPC does something which will count as PREP for a PC Action.	Surprise encounter, ambush, trap, or jump scare. Can reveal something a foe did to prepare. In combat describe how the foes were better prepared, and players downgrade natural rolls of PREP.

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