

# Wrath of the Autarch

A Kingdom Building Game

Playable with the Deck of Fate (or fate dice), note-cards, fantasy medieval figurines, and imagination.

Concept and Design: Phil Lewis

Editing: Amanda Valentine

Graphic Design: Nathan Paoletta

Cover Art: Doug Kovacs

Interior Art: Doug Kovacs, Eric Quigley, Alyssa Maynard, Jonny Gray

Beta Edition Campaign Playtesters: “Aben’s Hollow” - Jennifer Lewis, Pat DeMoss, Rebecca DeMoss, Shawn Maden, Jeremy Nighbert, Nick Hopkins, Anna Ziegler, Terri Koontz, “Nethraheim” - Geoff McCool, Aaron Roudabush, Ben Rogers, Merissa Rushlow, Shawn Maden, Jennifer Lewis

Beta Edition Mini-game Playtesters: “Origins 2014: Merchant Princes” – Nathan Paoletta, Jeremy Friesen, Paul Arezina, “Origins 2014: Dragon Clans” - Steven desJardins, Gary Gentry, Bay Chang, “Step Dice Playtest” - Mark Diaz-Truman, Derrick Kapchinsky, Justin Rogers, “NewMexiCon 2014: Imperial Sabotage” - Aaron Feild, Jonathan Perrine, Katherine Fackrell, Jason Corley, Aaron Roudabush, “Origins 2015: Lady Vilisandra’s Manor” - Mick Bradley, Lowell Francis, Rich Rogers, Julia Nienaber, Jan van Zon, “Origins 2015: Hella Cool” - Gary Mengle, Daniel Scribner, Melissa Spangenberg, Enidia Santiago-Acre, Nick Brown

Beta Edition Feedback and Guidance: Jennifer Lewis, Adam Minnie, Jeremy Nighbert, Rob Donoghue, Ron Edwards, Mark Diaz-Truman, Pat DeMoss, Nick Hopkins, Shawn Maden, Auden Reiter, Andy Cowell, JMobi

Draft Edition Campaign Playtesters: Terri Koontz, Jennifer Lewis, Pat DeMoss, Rebecca DeMoss, Shawn Maden, Jeremy Nighbert

Draft Edition Mini-game Playtesters: Wendy Lopez, Lawrence Lopez, “Origins 2013: Blood for the Sun God!” – William Kniffin, Patrick Schifano, Scott Cameron, “Origins 2013: Property is Theft!” - Aidan Friesen, Luke Shannon, Avram R. Shannon, Samuel Shannon, Matthew A. Reed, “AI Meetup” – Nina Bice,

Auden Reiter, Mike Vivian, Chris Halama, Nick Hopkins

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For Jennifer.

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# WARNING: This Is a Weirð Game

Hello! This is Phil, the designer of *Wrath of the Autarch* (*WotA*). Thanks for picking this up while browsing at your local game store! I'll credit Doug's awesome cover art.

So, you're trying to figure out what this is, right? Will you have fun playing it? Do you have friends that will like it? What the heck is this? Well, I'm about to spend many words telling you what this is and how it came about.

I know it's weird to put designer's notes at the beginning of a book. But *WotA* is weird. My editor called *WotA* an "unusual approach" and said I should put this text at the beginning of the book to give you some context. She's super smart about editing games, so I did. If you want to skip this, though, go ahead! Start at chapter one (page XX).

If you haven't played many hobby games, like *Dungeons and Dragons* or *Magic Realm*, it might even be better to skip this for now. You probably don't have as many preconceptions about how games like this are supposed to work, so you don't need someone to tell you how this game is different.

But maybe you're the type of person that listens to those director commentary tracks on Criterion Collection Blu-Rays. Maybe you're not getting dirty looks from the owner of the store. Maybe you just live dangerously. I don't judge. Read all of the words.

## What Is This?

This game arose in a rather untoward fashion according to conventional game design wisdom. It began as the quintessential Fantasy Heartbreaker: "*Dungeons and Dragons* is so awesome, except for this one thing! And this other thing!" Be that as it may, I began to have ideas about game design that evolved past wanting to add material to *Dungeons and Dragons*.

I really wanted to make a strategic kingdom building role-playing game. I enjoy video games like *Civilization* and *Crusader Kings*. They're called 4X games for *explore, expand, exploit, and exterminate*. You build societies and watch them grow. They're dangerous if you like having free time.

But I like tabletop role-playing games more than I like video games. I like sitting around a table and talking with my friends. I wanted to make a game that had features of tabletop role-playing games and features of those video games. If that sounds interesting to you, you might like this game!

Anyway, I studied role-playing games like *Birthright*, *Pendragon*, *Reign*, *Houses of the Blooded*, *Circle of Hands*, *Song of Ice and Fire*, *Ars Magica*, *Burning Empires*, *Chronica Feudalis*, and *Diaspora*, not to mention the many supplements for *DandD* and *Pathfinder* (*Kingmaker Campaign*).

Each of those games had elements of what I wanted, although none of them was exactly what I was after. So I set about making a new game. When I stopped trying to accrete stuff onto *DandD* and started over from scratch, I thought about the key pillars of design that the game would rest on:

Shared Authority

Troupe Style Play

Episodic Structure

Integrated Setting

Here's more about how these pillars are used in *WotA*.

## Shared Authority

In most role-playing games, one player has quite a bit of authority over what's going to happen. This

player is usually called the Gamemaster or the Dungeonmaster or something like that. They control the pacing, the unfolding narrative, and the challenge.

I like all sorts of games, but I have a preference for games where one player doesn't have that much authority over what happens. I personally don't like having that much authority, either. I feel limited by the freedom—I can't push as hard as I want against the other players and there aren't enough constraints to spur creativity.

In *WotA*, all of the players share fairly equally in creating the unfolding narrative. One player does control the Empire of the Autarch, but they're very constrained in how they can act. Within those constraints, they may throw chaos and despair at the Stronghold, which is controlled by the rest of the players. The rules are kind of like the authority figures in the Milgram experiment. They say it's okay to shock the characters, so it's okay! And the Autarch really wants to shock the characters of the Stronghold.

## *Troupe Style Play*

In most role-playing games, you play one character over many sessions. In troupe style play, a group of characters is used, and different characters are selected for each session.

One benefit to this approach is that players usually have a character that's appropriate to the type of scene they're in. No need to explain away taking a diplomat into a dungeon! This seemed really useful for *WotA*, where the main character is the kingdom, not a person.

Another aspect of troupe style play is that heroes themselves become a resource. If enough of them are injured or not able to function, then certain types of missions become very difficult. This makes for interesting strategic choices.

The downside is that it can be difficult switching characters too often. In practice, since there's a limited pool of characters, a player will generally rotate between only a few characters.

## *Episodic Structure*

In *WotA*, each time you play, one season of time passes. These sessions usually take around three hours of time for four players.

My friends are always busy. We're old and many of us have kids. So stuff happens. We try to play each week but one or two people invariably can't make it. The cool part about having troupe based play and an episodic structure is that we can play each week regardless of who's able to make it! In this sense, *WotA* has more in common with boardgames like *Pandemic: Legacy* than it does with other role-playing games. See, kind of weird?

Another key part of the design is the use of missions with very transparent rewards and consequences. A high level of transparency makes it easier to strategize what activities most naturally align with the vision of the Stronghold. Setting the stakes of the missions ahead of time can also help increase tension during the mission. I like explicit communication about what everyone is up to!

In a kingdom building game, some sort of high level structure seems necessary so that the temporal pacing makes sense. By having short, constrained missions that are tied to a season of time, the campaign is able to progress at a reasonable rate, without getting bogged down in too much minutiae.

## *Integrated Setting*

I think it makes for better play if mechanics are adapted as closely as possible to the setting. There are certainly generic mechanics that are highly useful, as evidenced by the use of Fate Core in this game, but mechanics bring about different play styles and need to be adapted to the target genre. While generic toolkits can be very useful, it's usually not trivial getting them to fit into a setting. I wanted to do as much of that heavy lifting as possible! You can certainly pull this game apart and use it as a toolkit, but I wanted to give you a car—not the tools to build the car yourself.

As such, a fantasy kingdom building game is probably best built from the ground up as a cohesive whole. I'm fairly skeptical of rule sets that attempt to tack the mechanics of kingdom building onto a framework that was never designed to support maintaining a kingdom. In such a game, the kingdom becomes simply a possession that a character has, rather than the focus of the game. I really wanted the kingdom to be the focus!

I think this should be extended to the setting. There are plenty of fantasy RPGs out there that throw

all the standard tropes into a box and let the GM and players sort it out. That's all well and good, but I'm more interested in giving the GM a world that's partially fleshed out, since it becomes much easier to control how the setting and the mechanics interact. Rules frequently have implicit settings (such as *Dungeons and Dragons*), but it's probably better to make the setting explicit to clarify exactly what sort of game works with the rules. Did I mention I like being explicit?

Finally, having a better defined setting makes it easier for players to construct missions quickly. Part of my goal with this game is to reduce preparation time without sacrificing interesting tactical options. This is possible only by essentially building the rules around a specific setting. While *WotA* is certainly not a simple game, it also isn't a high prep game!

## Thanks!

Thanks for taking a look! Hopefully that gives you some sense of whether or not this game will work for you. If this sounds like your kind of game, I hope you enjoy it!

# BATTLE PLANS

Even during a time of war, the Autarch watches your settlement with a keen eye toward teaching you a painful lesson. It was years ago that you gathered the people up from under her nose and traveled beyond the dark mountains, looking to start a new life. Old grudges die hard, and catching the cloaked Freetrader within your village confirmed your worst fears; when the Empire is finished conquering the Gray Plains, you're next.

And there's no longer any question of *if* the Gray City-State will fall. It will fall very soon, allowing the Autarch's troops to begin the long trek back. Perhaps there are a few years yet before the threats begin in earnest, before the Empire's thirst for expansion brings attackers beyond the mountains toward your stronghold, but no more than that. You have a dearth of time to prepare for the Autarch's wrath. Will you use that time to build up a military force to stop her? Use diplomacy and convince the scattered factions around you to unite for a common cause? Or will you ignore the great risks to harness the power of the arcane arts? What will you sacrifice for independence?

## Wrath of the Autarch

*Wrath of the Autarch* (WotA) is a kingdom building game. Players collaborate to tell the story of a small group of leaders trying to guide a settlement through trials and tribulations within a fantastic realm. The central character of this story is the **Stronghold**, a society of people struggling to survive in the shadow of the Empire of the Autarch. The Stronghold will hopefully grow over six Winters into a powerful force capable of withstanding the onslaught of the Autarch, but it will require strategy and luck.

More than just telling stories, though, *WotA* is also a game. One player controls the Empire of the Autarch along with any other opposition threatening the Stronghold. The other players control the Stronghold. The Stronghold players strategize and plan the best course of action to thwart the Autarch. The Autarch player tries to bring about the destruction of the Stronghold by using increasingly powerful threats.

*WotA* is played over a number of sessions each taking about three hours to complete. A session focuses on one **season** of time for the Stronghold. During each season, one important Stronghold effort, called a **mission**, is played out in more detail. Missions link together to form a **campaign**. The campaign ends when the Stronghold has thwarted the Autarch or succumbed to her wrath.

Over the course of the campaign, the Empire's power grows. The Autarch works feverishly to draw magical energy from the Animaelic Forest, channeling the dreams there into powerful sorceries, and the Empire gains resources from the exploitation of the Gray Plains. If the Stronghold isn't successful after six years, the Autarch is able to fully harness the power of the Animaelic Forest, becoming an unstoppable force.

## Band of Heroes

Stronghold players don't play the role of only one character for the duration of the campaign. Instead, a pool of ten Stronghold **heroes** is created at the start of the campaign. At the beginning of each session of play, each Stronghold player chooses a character from this pool, based on the hero's suitability for the mission at hand.

For instance, if the mission involves killing an ogre that's stealing cattle, choosing heroes more suit-



able for combat would be wise. Managing these heroes is an important part of the game, as they aren't easily recovered if something unfortunate occurs. If enough heroes are killed or taken out of action for lengthy periods of time, it may become difficult to successfully complete missions and hold off the Autarch.

## Characters

All of the characters in *WotA* are described by five concepts: **aspects**, **skills**, **stunts**, **stress**, and **consequences**.

Aspects are the most important part of any game derived from Fate Core. These short descriptive phrases give both color and mechanical weight to characters, relationships, factions, regions, and scenes. For instance, *Towering Swordsmith* and *Quick to Anger* could be aspects associated with a character. Aspects are described in more detail in *Core Rules* (page XX).

Skills are broad areas of capability that describe what a character is good at. Stunts are associated with skills and are abilities that go above and beyond what the common person is capable of.

Stress and consequences reflect different forms of hardship the character is experiencing. There are two main stress tracks, **mental** and **physical**. Mental stress could represent psychological trauma or lack of dedication to the mission at hand. Physical stress tends to represent exhaustion and strain. There are consequences (represented as aspects) associated with these stress tracks. While stress is very transient, consequences are usually longer lasting: more harmful psychological issues or raw physical trauma. See *Core Rules* (page XX) for more.

## The Stronghold

The Stronghold is the centerpiece of the game. The term *Stronghold* is a generic way to refer to the society which all of the heroes inhabit (the players come up with a specific and evocative name for their particular Stronghold). During the initial session of the game, details about the Stronghold are fleshed out. Why was the Stronghold founded? What sort of grudge exists between the Autarch and the Stronghold? What are the values of the people within the Stronghold?

The attributes which describe the Stronghold are **stability** and **dispositions** with other factions. These

are numeric values ranging from -6 to +6. Stability describes the overall health of the Stronghold. If stability decreases too far, it becomes more and more difficult for the heroes to succeed at missions. This reflects unrest and low morale within the Stronghold. Dispositions are tracked between the Stronghold and the other five minor factions in the game. A positive disposition indicates an alliance, while a negative disposition indicates an adversarial relationship. Very high disposition additionally means the faction will provide troops in wartime situations, while a very low disposition means the faction will aid the Autarch.

The Stronghold also has **developments** and **regions**. Developments are improved capabilities for the Stronghold. They're similar to stunts, although they affect all the heroes from the Stronghold rather than just one. For instance, a mage tower provides all the heroes with improved magical might. Regions are large areas of land, which provide resources for trading or building developments. The resources in the game are **food**, **timber**, **ore**, **mana**, and **luxuries**.

# The Land of Six Winters

The setting for *Wrath of the Autarch* is a medieval fantasy world known as Six Winters. Besides the Empire of the Autarch, there are five minor factions that play an important part in the ongoing struggle between the Autarch and the Stronghold. Each faction has different strengths and weaknesses. Becoming allies with a complementary faction is important.

Although each faction has a few key details to help everyone get into the setting, this isn't a world-book with a fully fleshed out history. The players collaborate every session to fill in the starting skeleton and make the world their own.

## Geography

There's no set world map or fixed geography. The factions, like the Stronghold, also have regions, although the exact location of regions is left ambiguous. There are also unexplored regions, each with different sorts of goods and features, which the Stronghold may be able to expand into and settle.

## The Land Is Alive

Magic in the Six Winters is a primeval force that links the land and the people together. The raw substrate is referred to as **mana**, and is harnessed by **channelers**, people and creatures attuned to its presence. Mana is present everywhere, but in some regions—old and mysterious places in the Realm—it exists in a high enough concentration that it can be used to create powerful effects. Magic is powerful, but also chaotic and dangerous, potentially **backlashing** and blighting the land.

## The Autarch

The Autarch is the most important character in the game. She's a sorcerer of great power and a shrewd leader. The Autarch rules over a sprawling empire, known internally as the Independent Free Guilds, whose populace are referred to as Freetraders. Outsiders refer to the Autarch's kingdom as the Empire.

At the start of the campaign, the players work together to come up with a motivation for the conflict between the Autarch and the Stronghold. The Empire may just pursue relentless expansion, or there could

be a more personal reason. Perhaps the heroes of the Stronghold are military defectors or political dissidents. For whatever reason, there's a great threat from the Autarch that the Stronghold needs to deal with. Initially, the Autarch is fighting a battle against a numerous but somewhat primitive peoples far away. This conflict provides the Stronghold a few years of relative calm before the Autarch can attack in earnest.

The Empire has a stability attribute like the Stronghold, which plays a role in how effective they are in pursuing their goals. The Autarch player doesn't harvest resources and build developments in the same way as the Stronghold. Instead, **threat levels** are used to track offensive and defensive capability in four broad areas. These threat levels grow each year, allowing the Autarch player to formulate their own strategy to stop the Stronghold.

## Minor Factions

The five minor factions also have stability and regions similar to the Empire. For the minor factions, these capabilities tend to be very static and unchanging over the campaign. Each minor faction also has various resources they import and export. Trade relations with minor factions form an important part of the long term strategy for the Stronghold. Each minor faction has their own chapter that describes in more detail the important leaders and abilities they possess. The minor factions are as follows:

**Burgan Vale**—(page XX) The people of the Vale live in balance with the land, taking only what they need. Some of the most powerful mages in the Realm reside here.

**Crescent Hold**—(page XX) Amongst the cliffs and canyons of Crescent Hold are massive fortresses made of stone and steel. The culture of Crescent Hold is stratified like the layers of rock they inhabit.

**Lily Manor**—(page XX) A cosmopolitan trade hub, the leaders of Lily Manor are experts at getting maximum value from the exquisite fineries they have on offer. All manner of pleasures and goods are available in their marble pleasure domes.

**Gravewood**—(page XX) Gravewood is withdrawn and isolated from the world. The people carve out a difficult life in a dangerous part of the Realm that not many care to visit. Their independence is guarded

by isolation as well as by learning and leveraging secrets from other factions.

**The Sunriders**—(page XX) The Sunriders are loosely assembled clans that roam the land on great golden destriers from whence their name comes. The Sunriders guard and protect large swathes of farmland which they use for both feeding the population and trading for mana.

## Missions

Each season the Stronghold players choose one mission to undertake. There are seven mission types in *WotA*. Each mission has different effects on the Stronghold and possibly other factions in the Realm. Ultimately, only four significant efforts can be accomplished during a year, and each mission needs to be prioritized between the immediate and long term needs of the Stronghold. The mission types are as follows:

**Alliance**—Alliance missions strengthen relationships with other minor factions. Friendlier allies mean better trade, access to quests, and possibly the pledge of military aid.

**Conquest**—Conquest is the process of claiming regions for the Stronghold. This could be expanding into unexplored regions or conquering regions via military force.

**Sabotage**—Successful sabotage lowers a faction's stability and hobbles their effectiveness against other sorts of missions. This is particularly useful against the Empire.

**Assassination**—Murdering a faction's leader is a grim but possibly effective way to render them ineffective against certain mission types. Assassinating the Autarch is a (not very easy) way to win the game.

**Heist**—Heists are a way to gain additional resources for a season. They're best used to steal high value resources, like luxuries.

**Quest**—Quests are expeditions to retrieve powerful relics and artifacts. Quests are difficult undertakings with substantial rewards. Rumors of quests must be found through alliances with minor factions.

**Threat**—Threats are problems that can occur in regions or with minor factions. Threats for an upcoming session are determined by chance at the end of the previous session. Threats can be ignored, but there are consequences for the Stronghold.

**Scheme**—Schemes are the machinations of the Empire of the Autarch. As the campaign continues, schemes become more dire and punishing. Unlike threats, these aren't determined by chance, but are chosen by the Autarch player.



## How to Proceed

### *Mission Structure*

Missions are composed of two distinct modes of play, a **challenge phase** followed by a **conflict**. During the challenge phase, the heroes are confronted by tasks and hardships referred to as **challenges** which they must overcome. The challenge phase is also a time for players to use certain stunts and skills proactively, to give the heroes advantages later in the campaign. The challenge phase is fast moving and relies on the creativity of all the players to create scenes.

After the challenge phase comes a conflict, a set of tactical rules designed around a specific theme. The type of conflict depends on the current mission. While the challenges are very simple and open for any situation, the conflicts provide a framework that allows for more strategy during play. Although each conflict has a different flavor, they're organized around similar rules and principles to make the game more cohesive. The conflict types are as follows:

**Diplomacy**—Persuade influential members of another faction.

**Infiltration**—Use stealth and secrecy to achieve an objective inside a physical target.

**Skirmish**—Battle small numbers of opponents.

**Warfare**—Large scale military action involving the raising of troops.

It is neither necessary, nor even wise, to read the entire book before playing. The most important pieces of information are placed in the first few chapters. *Core Rules* (page XX), *Missions* (page XX), and *Challenge Phase* (pageXX) contain the core of the game. Everything is built from these concepts. *Getting Started* (page XX) includes information on the first session and how to start playing. Read these chapters before attempting play. The rest of the book should be read as needed over the course of the campaign.

## Core Rules

*Wrath of the Autarch* is built on the Fate Core game engine, as described in *Fate Core System* from Evil Hat Productions. If you're familiar with Fate, it will be easier to digest the rules. However, *Wrath of the Autarch* drifts from Fate Core in a number of key areas. In either case, it's important to read this chapter to get an understanding of how to play.

### How Does this Differ from Fate Core?

The Deck of Fate (also available from Evil Hat) is preferred over fate dice. See the end of this chapter for how to use fate dice instead.

Instead of situational aspects, there are three kinds of aspects differentiated by how long they remain relevant to the story: scene aspects, mission aspects, and campaign aspects.

Compels have been replaced by **complications** (see *Challenge Phase*, page XX).

**Stress for success** is a more general way to improve a Stronghold player's skill check.

The amount of stress inflicted by an attack action is capped by the value of the skill used to attack with. This increases the survivability of big bads and opens new tactical options.

Skills don't have to remain in a pyramid over the course of the game, although they start that way.

The general conflict and challenge system has been replaced by a structured system of collaborative challenge scenes and four specific conflict types (diplomacy, infiltration, skirmish, and warfare). This supports play without a gamemaster.

## Using the Deck of Fate

*WotA* is designed to use the Deck of Fate, published by Evil Hat, instead of fate dice. It's possible to play with fate dice (page XX) but there's a little more overhead. When the rules refer to finding the "result" from a card draw, this means drawing the top card of the deck and using the large value in the middle of the card. These cards yield a result from -4 to +4, the same range as fate dice.

Played cards are placed into a discard pile. If the deck is ever emptied, shuffle all discards to form a new draw deck. Otherwise, don't re-shuffle the cards unless directed to by the rules. Any player may look through the discard pile at any time.

Cards are also used to track fate points (page XX). When cards are used as fate points, keep them face down until used.

## Skill Checks

*WotA* is built around the same four actions that Fate Core uses (**overcome**, **create advantage**, **attack**, and **defend**). These actions are described later in this chapter. When a player takes one of these actions, a card is drawn (or the dice are rolled). The result is added to a character's skill and compared to an **opposition** value. This is called **making a check**.

Opposition may be **passive**, listed as a fixed value, such as the difficulty of a particular challenge scene. Opposition may also be **active**, which involves a comparison to a check made by another player. Active opposition involves another character, such as swinging a sword to attack an opponent.

A result less than the opposition is a failure. The amount below the opposition value is the **deficit**. Usually the deficit doesn't matter, although it's tracked in a few cases (such as magical backlash). If the value rolled is equal to the opposition, the result is a tie. Any result higher than the opposition is a success, and the amount above the opposition is known as **shifts**. Gaining three shifts (achieving a value three higher than the opposition) is called **success with style**, and generally confers extra benefits.

## *Fortune*

-2 Terrible

Various effects in the game may add **fortune** to the result of a skill check. For each source of fortune, draw an additional card and add the number of suns on the card to the skill check.

## *Misfortune*

If an effect says to apply **misfortune** to a check, all fortune (if any) is canceled. Additionally, draw a card and subtract the number of moons on the card from the skill check.

## *Eclipses*

If a card has an eclipse on it when drawn for fortune, add four to the skill check. Similarly, if an eclipse is drawn when misfortune is applied, subtract four from the skill check. Otherwise, unless specified, treat the eclipse as two suns and two moons.

## *The Ladder*

All skills and action results are rated on the **ladder**, a series of adjectives used to describe the rank of the skill (its numeric value). Whether you use numbers or adjectives is largely a matter of preference.

+13 Inconceivable

+12 Otherworldly

+11 Mythic

+10 Wondrous

+9 Astonishing

+8 Legendary

+7 Epic

+6 Fantastic

+5 Superb

+4 Great

+3 Good

+2 Fair

+1 Average

0 Mediocre

-1 Poor

## Aspects

Aspects are short descriptive words and phrases that add flavor to the narrative. Aspects are the most important part of the game and can be attached to almost anything: characters, factions, regions, relationships, terrain, and more. Furthermore, aspects are used to give mechanical advantages and disadvantages to die rolls.

Character aspects relate to individuals, frequently heroes, and include examples like *Fiery Temper* or *The Last Disciple of the Order of the Eye*. Aspects which describe a faction might be something like *Imperialist Magocracy* or *Education Is not a Priority*. Aspects may also relate to a region, such as *Flush with Game*. They may even describe very transient effects, such as *Ambush Perch* or *Slippery Floor*.

See the *Fate Core System* for a wealth of information about how to create aspects effectively. The faction chapters later in this book have many leaders already fleshed out with aspects that you can use as inspiration.

## Fate Points

Fate Core uses a currency called **fate points** to take advantage of aspects during play. Cards from the Deck of Fate are used to track fate points. Keep the cards face down when used in this capacity. Poker chips or some other tokens may be used if the Deck of Fate isn't used.

## Invoking an Aspect

Fate points are spent to **invoke** aspects. Invoking an aspect gives the character a mechanical advantage, as long as the player can narrate how the aspect in question will help their action (see page XX for the four action types). Any beneficial aspect may be invoked, not just one on your character sheet. Stronghold aspects are very frequently invoked in this capacity. Aspects are invoked *after* the roll, and one of two effects are chosen:

**Draw another card (or re-roll the dice)**

**Add +2 to the result**

There's a restriction on invoking aspects: on any given check, any single aspect may only be invoked once (free invokes are an exception we'll talk about in a moment). The fate point is spent from the player's personal supply and is put into the general supply of fate points.

If the chosen effect is drawing another card, just flip over the card used to track the fate point. Use the value on that card.

## Creating Aspects

Frequently during a session, the players make new aspects. New aspects are usually brought into play with the create advantage action detailed on page XX. Aspects are defined both by their scope (**campaign aspects**, **mission aspects**, and **scene aspect**) as well as what they're attached to.

### Free Invokes

When a new aspect is created through the create advantage action, the player who invokes it the first time doesn't have to spend a fate point. The player who created the aspect has the final say on which players can use this free invoke.

Sometimes an aspect has more than one free invoke; this allows it to be invoked more than once for free, even on the same roll, thus breaking the rule that an aspect may only be invoked once on any given action. Free invokes may also be combined with spending a fate point. An aspect with two free invokes could be used to add +6 to a roll if both free invokes are used and a fate point is spent.

### Campaign Aspects

Campaign aspects are important aspects that could potentially last for the duration of the campaign. They tend to be more significant than other aspects, as they represent long lasting facts about the world. Campaign aspects might relate to a region, faction, or hero. Campaign aspects may only be created during the challenge phase.

Campaign aspects are written on the Stronghold sheet in the Campaign Aspects section. If there are no empty slots available, a different campaign aspect must be removed (as long as the player who created the aspect allows it).

Note that modifying the Stronghold's aspects or one of the heroes' aspects isn't covered under the create advantage rules. This action creates new aspects, and the heroes and the Stronghold start the campaign with their full contingent of aspects.

*Terri is playing the character Gwynnet. Gwynnet is traveling through the Dusk's Ayrie. During an advantage scene (see page XX in Challenge Phase for more on*

*scenes), Terri has the idea of creating a new campaign aspect related to the flora of the area.*

*"I'm thinking that Gwynnet discovers some sort of healing plants in the area using her Survival skill."*

*The table loves the idea. Terri checks Gwynnet's Survival skill, and succeeds in her create advantage action. She writes down **Restorative Red Berries of Gumja Shrubs** under the Campaign Aspects section of the Stronghold sheet and gives it one free invoke. Besides adding to the story, these berries may be freely invoked sometime later on down the road—perhaps when someone is injured!*

### Don't Contradict What Exists

Creating aspects is a powerful way to create the world and propel the story forward. Characters and factions start the game with certain aspects. These aspects may not be modified or contradicted by newly created permanent aspects. New aspects should augment and complement what already exists in the world. There are other methods to change the aspects for the heroes and for the Stronghold.

### Mission Aspects

Mission aspects are in play for the duration of a mission. They're written down on notecards and kept nearby until the mission is over. They're created during the challenge phase to set up aspects for use during the conflict.

### Scene Aspects

Scene aspects are attached to a scene in the challenge phase. They're written down next to the scene description. They go away after the particular scene is over. See page XX in *Challenge Phase* for more information.

### Boosts

Boosts are very minor advantages that a character has. If a character gains a boost, they take a token for each boost they gain.

When a boost is used, fortune is added to a skill check. A boost may be used to aid any character's skill check, provided the helping character is in the same scene or conflict (see page XX in *Challenge Phase* for



more details). A character may spend their boosts to add fortune to their own skill check.

## Tracking Aspects

Any system can be used to track free invokes on aspects. One system that works fairly well is to draw open square boxes next to free invokes, which are filled in when the aspect is invoked for free. Another option is to put fate points on top of where the aspect is written down. Campaign aspects are always tracked on the Stronghold sheet.

## Helpful and Hindering Aspects

Heroes gain access to helpful and hindering aspects through relationships or assets (see page XX in *Characters*). Helpful or hindering aspects may be used by a Stronghold player on any applicable skill check. These don't cost fate points or free invokes to use, although each aspect only works with one particular skill.

If a helpful aspect is invoked, it adds fortune to the skill check. If a hindering aspect is invoked, misfortune is applied to the skill check. Additionally, during the challenge phase, invoking a hindering aspect grants a skill advance (see page XX in *Challenge Phase* for more details).

## Leveraging Aspects

The contribution of all the players in the unfolding narrative is one of the main features that makes playing *WotA* enjoyable. Aspects are one of the primary ways this can happen. While they do give mechanical hooks into narrative traits, they're also facts about the world. They help define people, places, and things.

Since *WotA* has such a tight restriction on scenes and actions, creating these facts allows the players to set up actions in the future. For instance, a player could use their character's Society skill to declare that a tribe of nomads live nearby.

## Crafting Aspects

Making aspects can take some practice. In particular, aspects for the characters and the Stronghold ideally should be able to be interpreted positively and negatively. For instance, ***Reacts Without Thinking*** could allow a character to act quickly when danger is discovered, but it could also be used to get the character into trouble. This is important for complications. See page XX in *Challenge Phase* for more details.

Giving an aspect color adds to the story. For instance, a character could be a ***Swordmaster*** or they could be a ***Master of the Nine Blade Whirlwind Technique***. Although they probably both apply in similar situations, the latter is far more suggestive of details and story hooks to uncover later. That makes crafting the narrative much easier as well.

## Aspect Burning

**Aspect burning** converts free invokes on aspects into other mechanical effects covered by the rules, like assets (henchmen, familiars, magical items) and military units. Aspect burning can also be used to modify the conflict setup, by adjusting how the situation is physically laid out or to give either side various advantages. Creating assets is covered in *Characters* (page XX), and the use of aspect burning to help in conflicts is covered in the different conflict chapters: *Diplomacy* (page XX), *Infiltration* (page XX), *Skirmish* (page XX), and *Warfare* (page XX).

The cost to create these effects is the number of free invokes that are expended. The free invokes, along with the aspect they are tied to, are no longer available after having been burned. Campaign aspects can create

permanent effects such as assets, while mission aspects create things that last until the end of the mission.

## Core Actions

There are four core actions used by players for most situations arising in play. They are **create advantage**, **overcome**, **attack**, and **defend**. These actions may be slightly different depending on whether they're used during the challenge phase or during one of the conflicts, but for the most part they work as described here.

Each core action involves a skill check—against either passive or active opposition. The attack and defend actions are almost always against active opposition. Also, the attack and defend actions are only usable with some skills, while the create advantage and overcome actions are possible using any applicable skill.

### *Create Advantage*

The create advantage action lets players create new aspects. It can also be used to add more free invokes to an aspect already in play (this is called **refreshing** the aspect). The create advantage action is only available during the challenge phase.

The difficulty for the skill check is based on how long the aspect will remain in play. The longer lasting, and thus more impactful, the aspect is, the more difficult it is to create. The difficulty is based on the difficulty of the mission (determining mission difficulties is discussed on page XX in *Missions*).

| Aspect Type | Opposition             |
|-------------|------------------------|
| Campaign    | Mission Difficulty + 2 |
| Mission     | Mission Difficulty     |
| Scene       | Mission Difficulty -2  |

Find the result based on the outcome of the check compared with the opposition.

**Failure**—If a Stronghold player fails the check, the Autarch player may create an aspect with one free invoke of the same scope. This should relate to the backfired attempt.

**Tie**—In the case of a tie, the player gains a boost.

**Success**—Create an aspect of the appropriate scope which may be invoked once for free.

**Success with Style**—The aspect is created as usual, but it may be invoked twice for free, rather than once.

## Refreshing Aspects

In addition to creating new aspects, free invokes may be refreshed on mission or campaign aspects that already exist. The procedure is the same—make a relevant skill check against a difficulty based on the opposition. On success, one free invoke is added to the target aspect, on a success with style, two free invokes are added, and on a tie the player gains a boost.

## Overcome

Overcome covers any action with an uncertain outcome that isn't a direct attack on another character. Climbing over walls, disarming traps, and moving quickly around a battlefield are all instances of the overcome action. The overcome action is frequently used to resolve scenes in the challenge phase and is used for a variety of different sorts of actions during conflicts.

This action may also be used by Stronghold players to remove an aspect from play. Getting rid of an aspect has the same difficulty as creating the aspect (it's based on the scope and mission difficulty). Of course, a character attempting this action must have a skill that could feasibly remove the aspect in the given situation. This is most commonly done to remove a campaign aspect that was previously created by the Autarch player.

Find the result based on the outcome of the check compared with the opposition.

**Fail**—The character fails their action. This could involve further penalties depending on whether the failure occurs in the challenge phase or the conflict phase. For heroes, stress for success is an option that might be used to succeed (page XX).

**Tie**—On a tie, the character succeeds at a minor cost. Apply a stress card (page XX) after the check.

**Success**—The action succeeds. If the target was an aspect, it's removed from play.

**Success with Style**—Same as general success, but the acting character also gains a boost.

## Attack

The attack action isn't used at all during the challenge phase. However, it occurs fairly frequently during conflicts. The attack action is used very broadly. It covers not just physical attacks, but could involve a volley of arrows from a military unit, or a hero attempting to seduce or intimidate another character. It's any action where the target is another character and the goal is to inflict physical or mental stress.

The opposition of the attack action is always active. **Note that there is a limit to the amount of stress that may be inflicted.** The stress is capped at the rank of the skill used to attack (so a character using Fighting +5 to attack may inflict at most 5 stress).

**Fail**—Unsuccessful attack. This could mean the defender gains a boost (see the defend action).

**Tie**—On a tie, the character gains a boost.

**Success**—The target takes stress equal to the number of shifts. The maximum shifts that may be inflicted are capped by the rank of the skill used to attack.

**Success with Style**—As for success. The player may gain a boost if they reduce the value of their shifts by one.

## Defend

Defend is a little different than the other three actions. It's not a proactive action, but rather any reaction where active opposition is needed by a character. Failure to defend is handled by one of the success cases for the action type the character is defending against.

If a player succeeds with style while taking a defend action, they gain a boost.

## Taking Stress

Attacks may result in the target taking stress. Note that anything in the game with a stress track (characters, units, fortifications) can take stress in the same fashion.

When stress is taken, the target may fill in **one** and only one open box on an applicable stress track to lower stress. The stress is reduced by an amount equal to the position of the open stress box filled in on the track (the third box lowers the stress taken by three, the fourth box on a track lowers the stress taken by four, etc.).

*Catrin is hit by an ogre's club and takes three physical stress. She fills in the second physical stress box on her track, which lowers the amount of stress taken by two. She still has one stress remaining.*

If this doesn't get rid of all the stress, open consequences may be filled in to get rid of the rest. The level of the consequence determines the amount of stress that is reduced in this way. A minor consequence can take two stress, a major can take four, and a severe can take six.

*Next, Catrin uses her open minor consequence slot to reduce the remaining stress point. She writes **Bruised Arm** in her minor consequence slot. This lowers the stress taken by two, getting rid of the remaining stress. The ogre (or some other character) can use the free invoke on this new consequence to make Catrin's life difficult later.*

If a character or target can't negate the stress by filling in a box on a relevant stress track and taking consequences, they're taken out. This can mean different things, depending on the type of character and situation (see page XX in *Characters* for more details). It usually means the character is no longer involved in the mission.

## Stress Card

Some effects cause a character to apply a **stress card**. In this case, a card is drawn and the number of suns and moons are noted. First, the number of suns on the card are taken as physical stress followed by taking the number of moons on the card as mental stress. If more than one stress card is applied at once, total all of the suns first and take those as physical stress. Next, total all of the moons and take those as mental stress.

## Stress for Success (Heroes Only)

One option available when a hero fails an action is to use **stress for success** to possibly succeed. The Stronghold player may take up to two stress cards after the action is resolved. For each stress card that will be taken, the Stronghold player may add +2 to the action. Resolve the action first, then apply all of the stress cards to the hero.

### Using Fate Dice

Although *WotA* is tuned to use the Deck of Fate, it's possible to play with fate dice. Instead of drawing a card when making a skill check, roll the four dice and add them together.

For fortune, add three extra dice to the check, but only count plus results. Similarly, if a check uses misfortune, add three extra dice to the check, but only count minus results.

For a stress card, roll four dice. Take all pluses as physical stress and all minuses as mental stress.

For any effects which allow for re-drawing a card, simply re-roll the dice. If an effect lets a player draw a few cards and take highest, roll the dice the appropriate number of times and take the highest result.

## GETTING STARTED

*Wrath of the Autarch* is an involved game, with many available tactical and strategic options. The rules shouldn't be read all at once. Rather, it's best to get started by creating the Stronghold and start fleshing out the heroes. This chapter gets the ball rolling.

*WotA* supports up to five Stronghold players. One player, the Autarch player, functions as the opposition. Picking the Autarch player is the first task. Usually the Autarch player ends up being the player who owns the book. Although for this game, picking a player who isn't afraid to heap misery and conflict onto the heroes also helps.

Hardship is the essence of drama, so having an opponent willing to push the other players into tough decisions makes for a more compelling game. Having a rotating Autarch player is another option, provided everyone is capable of pushing hard against the heroes while they're in that role.

The first session is devoted to discussing the Stronghold and the group of heroes who will inhabit it. *WotA* purposefully strikes a balance between open ended world creation and fully fleshed out campaign setting. There are elements of the world which aren't flexible, such as the five minor factions, the unexplored regions, the existence of the Autarch, as well as her plans to eventually conquer the Stronghold. Other background, such as why the Autarch is looking to conquer the Stronghold or particular details about each faction, is open for discussion.

For the first session, print out a copy of the Stronghold sheet, the faction sheet, and ten character sheets. Also gather together some notecards.

## The Campaign Arc

Each season, Stronghold players may choose from many different types of missions. During the course of the campaign, it's likely that each type of mission will be undertaken at least once. However, the heroes from the Stronghold will be better at some sorts of missions than others. Before starting to think about the history of the Stronghold, it can be helpful to get a sense of what sorts of missions sound fun to all of the players. While it's possible to adjust strategies over the course of the campaign, setting some expectations up front helps build consensus which makes the game more enjoyable for everyone.

There are five broad directions for strategy. It's typically possible to only be really good at one or two of them. These five campaign frames mirror the five tech trees for the Stronghold. It's also possible to be mediocre in all of them, but that tends to be a far more difficult road. The five areas are as follows:

**Arcane:** Wielding magic is a more complementary strategy because its flexibility and power come with great risks. Going for a high arcane strategy is akin to swinging for the fences.

**Diplomacy:** Campaigns featuring diplomacy involve many interactions with the minor factions. The heroes build allies and convince other leaders to join the cause. This is a slow building strategy, but basically unstoppable if it's able to get going before the Autarch strikes.

**Infiltration:** Infiltration is the process of assassination, espionage, and sabotage to accomplish goals. This type of play features building maps and evading guards rather than full frontal attacks. Usually this strategy culminates with trying to assassinate the Autarch. Unlike diplomacy, infiltration doesn't work as well for the long game, so speed is of the essence.

**Skirmish:** Most campaigns involve some skirmishing, which takes the form of a small group of heroes battling monsters or bandits. Focusing on skirmish lets the Stronghold gain resources from undiscovered regions, which tend to be guarded by horrible beasts. Many quests for artifacts also need skirmish. The end goal of this focus is to separate the Autarch from the source of her magical energy.



**Warfare:** Finally, there's a strategy of raising troops and becoming a military juggernaut. These games feature clashes of armies and lots of tactical maneuvering. Attacking the Empire directly isn't easy, but with the right allies it becomes feasible.

## Choosing Strategies

Take one of the notecards and write down the five campaign frames. Each player chooses two of the five areas that sound appealing. Tally up the results to determine which two will be highlighted during the campaign, realizing that all of the areas will likely see some playtime. This information informs both the creation of the Stronghold and the heroes within the Stronghold. Have a discussion amongst the table about what everyone is looking for.

## Difficulty

The standard campaign is fairly easy for the Stronghold to win. The uncertainty at the core of *Wrath of the Autarch* is less “Will the Stronghold win?” and more “At what cost?”

However, some play groups may want a very real chance of losing. In this case, the following changes will increase the difficulty by varying amounts. See *Seasons* (page XX) and *Threats and Schemes* (page XX) for more detail on threats.

**Hard:** Increase the difficulty of all threats by one. In order to balance this change, add one to the defensive value of all defensive developments. Thus, defensive developments may stop threats of difficulty 5/6/7 instead of 4/5/6.

**Crushing:** As Hard, and also check twice for region and faction threats each season.

**Tragedy Theater:** As Crushing, and also increase the difficulty for all missions against the Empire by one. Thus, all difficulties for the Empire start the campaign at 5 and increase from there. The mission to assassinate the Autarch is a difficulty 9, etc. Furthermore, the Empire starts with ten additional archers and ten additional infantry. Good luck!

## Playing with a Gamemaster

It's fairly easy to steal concepts from this game and adapt them to standard Fate Core rules or even another role-playing game system. The easiest way to incorporate these rules while playing with a game-master is to ignore the challenge phase and the formal mission structure.

The Stronghold may be kept as is. Trading with factions and creation of developments may also be kept if they sound fun. However, instead of building developments at the beginning of each session, that activity can be left up to the discretion of the gamemaster. To keep the sense of time passing, it should probably occur every few sessions of play.

Rewards—such as artifacts, gaining new regions, gaining or losing disposition with a faction, or changes in stability—may also be left up to the discretion of the

gamemaster. However, as in the case of building developments, the world should change fairly frequently, so applying changes to the Stronghold should occur at least every few sessions. The mission descriptions may be used as inspiration or taken largely as they are to provide opposition during scenes.

The conflict rules may be sprinkled in to add variety or when more structure is called for. Reserving these for use during particularly climactic moments in the campaign is a good policy. Since a number of developments improve the ability of characters to succeed during conflicts, it's a good idea to keep them around.

## Stronghold Creation

The Stronghold is the central character in the campaign, so most of the first session is dedicated to its creation. Keep in mind the strategic directions voted on by the players while working through its creation. The first step is to create the five Stronghold aspects. Get out five notecards, and write the five themes for the Stronghold's aspects: wrath, rule, belief, culture, and history.

### *Stronghold Aspects*

The creation of the Stronghold aspects helps create a trajectory for the campaign, as well as investing everyone in the unfolding story. Read out loud the brief description of the Empire from *The Empire* (page XX). Also read the aspects that the Empire has. These have been worded to give the Autarch flavor and provide inspiration for the players, but not to make it impossible to add more detail. It's okay to tweak the Empire aspects a little to fit the concept everyone has for the campaign.

Inspiration for the Stronghold aspects can come from the previous discussions regarding the focus of the campaign. Go over each aspect and solicit input from all of the players. If everyone is stuck, move on to the next aspect and come back later. Questions are provided to help spur creativity. Making these aspects should be a group activity. These aren't just mechanical hooks, but facts about the world.

### Wrath

Why does the Empire want to conquer the Stronghold?

Has this always been the case?

Is the Empire unified in this desire?

If not, who disagrees?

?

Examples: *Bearers of a Dark Secret*, *They Desire our Mana Rich Lands*, *True Heirs to the Empire*

### Belief

Why resist the Autarch rather than try to move away?

Who is most vocal about resisting the Autarch?

Is there any religious motivation?

Examples: *The Order of the Eye*, *Veterans of the West War*, *Vikings of the Frozen North*

Examples: *The Veil Must be Preserved*, *Might Makes Right*, *Death before Dishonor*

## Culture

What were the lands like before the Stronghold was built?

Are the native people still here?

What forms of entertainment are important to the people?

Examples: *Salt of the Earth*, *Worshippers of Sun and Song*, *Idle Hands Aid the Empire*

## Rule

What sort of government or ruling system does the Stronghold have?

Whose idea was it to create this system?

Who benefits most from the rule that's in place?

Who is harmed the most?

Examples: *The Shadow Council*, *Magocracy*, *Representatives of the Four Pillars*

## History

Where did the people of the Stronghold come from?

What relation did they have to the Empire?

Were they citizens of the Empire?

What was the first interaction with the Empire?

## Hero Creation

Now it's time to think about the heroes of the Stronghold. The players create a troupe of ten heroes to choose from, but the heroes don't need to be fully fleshed out at the start of the campaign. It's helpful to think about the composition of the heroes at a high level. How do they fit into the Stronghold's goals and the campaign arc? Place two blank notecards below each of the five Stronghold aspects that were created in the previous step. These notecards will be used to start sketching out the hero concepts.

### Peak Skill

The easiest place to start is to write down peak skills for the heroes on each of the notecards. As described further in *Characters* (page XX), the peak skill is the highest rated skill a character has (it starts at +4). Think back to the discussion of the campaign arc. It's probably wise to have four or five heroes that are well adapted to one sort of conflict. The types of skills that are best suited to each conflict are as follows:

**Diplomacy**—Rapport, Society, Wits

**Infiltration**—Disguise, Stealth, Thievery

**Skirmish**—Athletics, Fighting or Marksmanship, Survival

**Warfare**—Command, Engineering, Tactics

Magic can be used for any of these conflicts. Characters relying on magic start out relatively weak, but through developments can become very powerful. For heroes utilizing magic, select Lore as the peak skill (also take a high Channeling).

Write down the peak skills on the notecards, making sure to have enough characters for each type of desired strategy. Characters can have a mix of abilities, but the peak skill goes a long way in determining what they're best at.

### Skills

Athletics

Channeling

Command

Disguise

Engineering

Fighting

Lore

Marksmanship

Physique

Rapport

Society

Stealth

Survival

Tactics

Thievery

Will

Wits

### Core Concept

Now start thinking of the core concept for each hero. Use the Stronghold aspects attached to the notecard for inspiration. For example, if the hero is next to the Stronghold's rule aspect, they might have had a key role in the formation of the system of rule. Maybe they're a noble or a king or an ambassador of some sort? How do they fit in with the rulings of the Stronghold? The goal here is to come up with a concise phrase that describes the hero, such as **World Weary Diplomat**. This short phrase will become the hero's core concept aspect. See *Characters* (page XX) for more information.

Do this for all ten heroes. When finished, there should be two heroes related in some way to each of the Stronghold's five aspects. The heroes should have a peak skill and a core concept.

### Start Sketchy

When a hero has a peak skill and a core concept aspect, you're ready to use them in a mission. The hero gets additional skills and aspects, as well as a starting stunt, but these can be filled in later. That said, it's not too hard to fill out the rest of the skills and pick a stunt. See *Characters* (page XX) for more details.

Filling in the rest of the aspects is sometimes trickier. Don't force it. It's fine to start with only a

rough idea of what the character is all about. Seeing what happens during play is usually the best catalyst for figuring out what really makes a hero tick. When inspiration strikes, fill in more aspects. Heroes can also change aspects over the course of the campaign, so nothing is locked in stone. The most important thing early on is to get a rough grasp on the overall composition of heroes that are available.

Print out character sheets from the back of the book, and fill in the peak skill as well as the core concept for each hero.

## Finishing Touches

Fill in the five aspects on the Stronghold sheet. Collectively, think of a name for the Stronghold, and fill that in as well. The stability for the Stronghold starts at 0. Mark that in.

### *Choose Alliances*

On the faction sheet are entries for all the minor factions. Each faction has a disposition entry. Dispositions can be positive or negative. The more positive, the better the relation, with a disposition of +5 or higher indicating a very solid alliance, and -5 or lower indicating fairly strong hatred. One minor faction starts with a disposition of +3, another with a disposition of +2, and a third with a disposition of +1. The rest start at 0. Fill in the checkboxes with current dispositions.

It's good to pick allies based on the focus of the Stronghold. Each minor faction has an area of expertise, and this can help when improving the Stronghold.

**Burgan Vale**—Arcane

**Crescent Hold**—Skirmish

**Gravewood**—Infiltration

**Lily Manor**—Diplomacy

**Sunriders**—Warfare

Show the faction sheet, with a blown up section that has the faction dispositions filled in?

### *Starting Regions*

The Stronghold starts with three regions from which to gain resources. These are already default region names on the Stronghold sheet. If desired, write over the names with names that better reflect the culture of your Stronghold.

### *Starting Units*

The Stronghold begins with ten militia units. Note this under the Units section of the Stronghold sheet.



## ***Choose First Mission***

Once the Stronghold sheet is filled out and the troupe of ten heroes has been assembled, the Stronghold players should choose their first mission. In a typical session, choosing the next mission happens at the end, guided by the spotlight player. The first session doesn't have a spotlight player, so the Stronghold players should try to reach consensus as much as possible. If there's no agreement, the Stronghold players should vote, with ties broken by the Autarch player.

A common opening mission is to conquer one of the easier unexplored regions, such as North Oaks, Green Vale, or Sightrock. This provides an early boost of resources while there are no threats to deal with.

Using alliance to improve disposition with a faction is also a good first option. The faction with a +2 disposition makes a particularly appealing target option, since going up to +3 gives much better trade results. Factions with a high difficulty for diplomacy missions (such as Lily Manor) may be too difficult early on.

Sabotage isn't a bad option to gain leverage on a faction early, although it's more effective with improved infiltration developments. Warfare isn't practical early in the campaign.

## ***For the First Mission***

Read *Core Rules* (page XX) and *Challenge Phase* (page XX), as well as the appropriate conflict chapter, prior to playing the first mission.

Good luck and make your seasons count!

## SEASONS

The campaign for *Wrath of the Autarch* is organized by seasons, which represent about three months within the game. A season is designed to take roughly three hours to play through, making it a good length of time for the typical session. The main focus for each season is the mission. Missions are covered in the next chapter. In addition to the mission, a season also includes gathering and trading resources, building developments, and determining new threats.

The term *season* is used loosely. A mission may take more or less time than three months. Missions may overlap somewhat. Although the players undertake only one mission each season, it's assumed that many activities are going on within the Stronghold, such as researching developments, but these activities don't need detailed narration. The constraint of one mission per season keeps the pace of the game moving forward and focuses on the big picture. It also makes for difficult choices in terms of allocating scarce resources.

This chapter details the upkeep and development of the Stronghold. It also lists the steps that book-end a mission. The details of mission structure, as well as the sorts of missions available and what they do for the Stronghold, are covered in the next chapter.

## Spotlight Player

Each session, one player is chosen as the **spotlight player**. This player has the final say on any choices for the season, such as what developments to build, what mission to undertake, which heroes are chosen. Even more important than resolving disagreements, which probably aren't that common, the spotlight player has a larger role in the events of the session. As much as possible, the responsibility of spotlight player should rotate among all the players throughout the campaign.

### *Modify Relationships*

If desired, the Stronghold player may modify the helpful or hindering relationships for the hero they've chosen for the mission. They should narrate what prompted this change.

## Faction Growth

At the start of each year (prior to each Spring season), there may be stability increases for all of the factions except the Stronghold. The cards are shuffled, and one card is drawn for each faction (including the Empire). If the result is +2 or higher, the faction gains one stability. See *Factions* (page XX) for more details on stability.

## Ignored Threats and Schemes

Before gaining resources, the penalties for ignored threats (page XX) are applied to the Stronghold. Note that using a development to deal with a threat isn't the same as ignoring it (if a development is used, it's like the threat never happened).

### *Regional Threats*

Ignored regional threats make it impossible to gather resources from the region. Ignore that region when calculating resource totals. Furthermore, ignoring a region threat causes the Stronghold to lose one stability.

### *Faction Threats*

The result of ignoring a faction threat is different if the faction is an ally (they have a disposition of -1 or higher) or an enemy (they have a disposition of -2 or lower). If an ally faction threat is ignored, lose one disposition with the faction and no trade with that faction is possible this season. If the faction is an enemy faction, one disposition is lost and the Stronghold loses one stability.

### *Autarch Schemes*

There are various Autarch schemes available to the Autarch player. They have different effects if ignored. See *Threats and Schemes* (page XX) for more details.

## Stronghold Upkeep

During **Stronghold upkeep**, the spotlight player gathers resources, trades, builds developments, and feeds the populace. Optionally, they may hold a festival or stage a prison break. Lay out the faction sheet and the five tech trees found at the end of the book.

### Gather Resources

The first step during Stronghold upkeep is to add up all the **resources** for regions controlled by the Stronghold. These should be tracked on the Stronghold sheet, but might be modified based on regional threats or other effects. Gather one six-sided die (d6) for each resource, using different colored dice for each resource type (for example, three green d6 could be used for 3 timber).

After gathering the appropriate dice, they're all rolled. All purchases (developments, feeding the populace, festivals, etc.) during the Stronghold upkeep phase must be made using whole dice. Any leftover amount on the dice isn't used (if something costs 6 timber, and there are only two timber dice showing 5 and 3, both dice must be allocated to meet the cost).

### Build Developments

The main use of resource dice is to build **developments**. Each development requires a certain amount of resources to complete. In addition, most developments have other developments as prerequisites. All prerequisite developments must be built first. See *Developments* (page XX) for more details.

Close up of how spending dice works (extra amount is lost).

Any number of developments may be built in a season provided that all the resource costs are met. The benefits of developments take effect immediately. Since ignored threats have already been applied, it's too late to use a just purchased development to stop a threat.

### Mustering Units

**Units** are built at the same time. Purchasing units follows the same process, and each unit works like a

separate development. The same rule about whole dice applies to each such unit created.

*Jeremy is the spotlight player. He wishes to muster infantry units, which cost 6 food each. Jeremy has food dice with values 6, 5, 5, and 3. At most, 2 infantry may be mustered. The 6 die musters the first infantry; two of the remaining dice must be used together to muster a second infantry, leaving a third die which may be used for something else.*

### Trade

The **faction sheet** lists the benefits of trade with other factions, based on current disposition. Each faction may only be traded with once each season. Trading is done by taking the dice desired by the faction from the seasonal total and placing them on the faction's entry on the faction sheet. Next, the listed amount of dice are taken from the supply and rolled. These dice are then added to the seasonal total. Any trade rate at or below the current disposition may be used, but only one such trade is allowed each season. Remember that ignored ally threats prohibit trade with the faction this season.

Show a snippet of trade section of the faction sheet for this example.

*Example: The Stronghold's disposition with Grave-wood is at 3. The spotlight player could either trade 2 luxury dice for 5 timber dice (rolling the timber dice immediately) or take the lesser trade of 1 luxury die for 2 timber dice (again, rolling them immediately). If either option is taken, no more trading is possible with Grave-wood for the remainder of the season. Placing the luxury dice onto the Gravewood box on the faction sheet is a good way to remember which factions have been traded with.*

### Luxuries

Luxuries provide an additional benefit: a luxury die can be discarded to reroll any dice of one resource type. A luxury die used in this fashion is removed from the gathered resources for the season and can't be used for anything else.

*Example: Jeremy rolls 4 timber dice for the season, resulting in 6, 2, 2, and 1. Not great! He decides to use one luxury die to reroll the three timber dice with low results. He rerolls the 2, 2, and 1 dice, resulting in 5, 5, and 2! Much better! The luxury die is discarded.*

## Feed the Populace

Besides building developments, the population must be fed. This requires twice as much food as the Stronghold has regions (for example, 12 food is needed if the Stronghold has six regions). Note that this is total food (the value on the dice), not the number of food dice. The same rule applies that whole dice must be allocated, however.

If there's less food available than twice the number of regions, the stability of the Stronghold drops by one. If there's less food than the number of regions, stability instead drops by two. This is summarized on the faction sheet.

If desired, the Stronghold players may purposefully not fully feed the population in order to have extra food to invest for other uses. This option can only be taken if the Stronghold actually has stability to lose (stability is above -6).

## Festivals

Festivals may be held at a price that's equal to the number of regions in luxuries. Similar to feeding the population, this is the total value on luxury dice, not the number of dice. Spending luxuries in such a way increases stability by one.

## Prison Break

A hero may be rescued from imprisonment by assigning heroes to break them out. These heroes may not go on the mission for the season. To see if they were successful, draw a card and add the highest Thievery skill of all heroes present. Any helping heroes also assigned to the break out may add one to the result provided they have a Thievery skill of one or higher. If this result is equal to or higher than the infiltration difficulty (page XX) of the faction that captured them, the hero is rescued and may be used in the future. The result may not be modified with free invokes or fate points.

## Mission

After Stronghold upkeep, the chosen mission is played through. *Missions* (page XX) contains details on how missions are structured as well as the different sorts of missions available. The steps that must be taken before and after the mission are covered here.

### Choose Heroes

The first step before going on a mission is to choose heroes. The spotlight player chooses first. Think about the suitability of the different heroes for the mission at hand. This is mostly determined by the skills of the heroes and the type of conflict the mission uses. The list below summarizes which skills are most useful for each conflict, although different sorts of magic (via Lore stunts) can substitute for these skills.

**Diplomacy**—Rapport, Society, Wits

**Infiltration**—Athletics, Disguise, Stealth, Thievery

**Skirmish**—Athletics, Fighting, Marksmanship, Survival

**Warfare**—Command, Engineering, Tactics

### Training and Recovery

Before going on the mission, heroes may be able to recover consequences and train skills. On the top of the character sheet is the last season the hero went on a mission. For each season of downtime between then and the current season (each open checkbox), the hero may add an advance to one skill (mark one of the three boxes next to a skill on the character sheet) **and** make one season of progress towards removing a consequence.

Major and minor consequences take one season to resolve, while severe consequences take two seasons.

*Fuscus was last on a mission six seasons ago (it's Spring of Year 4, and Summer of Year 2 was his last mission), which means there were five seasons of downtime that Fuscus could train and recover consequences. Fuscus has both a major and a severe consequence. The severe consequence has one check of progress. Fuscus re-*



*moves both the major and severe consequence (requiring two seasons of downtime) and marks five skill advances.*

Finally, update the last mission date to the current season on the top of the character sheet.

## Advance Skills

After any training is done, any skills that have three advances (whether through training or from a mission) may be raised by one. However, there's a restriction that every skill must have at least one skill in the rank below it. For instance, if a character has a Superb (+5) Fighting skill that has three advances, and no other Superb skills, the player may not advance it, since that would leave a Fantastic (+6) Fighting skill with no Superb (+5) skills in the rank directly below. This prevents advancing one skill up the ladder without taking at least a few others along the way.

If a skill is increased by one rank, erase all the advances. Skills advancing to the rank of Superb (+5) or higher gain the hero one additional stunt from the skill's stunt list. See *Skills and Stunts* (page XX) for more details on stunts.

## Starting Fate Points

Each Stronghold player starts the mission with two fate points. Starting fate points are modified by the Stronghold stability. If stability is -3 or -4, each player starts with one; if it's -5 or -6, each player starts with none!

However, if Stronghold stability is +3 or +4, each player starts with three fate points; if it's +5 or +6 each player starts with four. The spotlight player may get extra fate points from setting aside resource dice during the spending of resources (gain one fate point for every two dice). A maximum of two additional fate points may be gained for the spotlight player in such a manner.

## Refresh Consequence Free Invokes

If a hero has any consequences, the free invokes for those consequences are reset if they're filled in. Remove any check marks showing that the free invokes for the consequences have been taken. The Autarch player may freely invoke consequences each season on heroes. Consequences are the gift that keeps on giving!

## Play Mission

The main part of a season consists of playing through the chosen mission. Playing through the challenge phase and the conflict is described in *Missions* (page XX).

## Advance and Recover

Each hero that went on the mission may take one skill advance in any desired skill. Additionally they may mark one season of progress on a consequence box. This works the same as it does during downtime training (page XX).

## Remove Stress

After the mission is over, all stress is removed. Consequences hang around and must be removed via downtime.

## Mission Results

Every mission has repercussions for the Stronghold. The Stronghold sheet and faction sheet are updated to reflect these changes at the conclusion of the mission. Notes may be made on the **Chronicle of Seasons** in order to remember important details, such as stability or region loss, or notable consequences taken by important characters. The details of how to resolve each type of mission are given in *Missions* (page XX) and the different conflict chapters.

For threats, it's important to note that failing a threat is different than ignoring a threat. The repercussions for ignoring a threat were applied earlier before Stronghold upkeep. Usually, failing a threat isn't as bad as ignoring it completely.

## Determine New Threats and Schemes

After the mission is over, the spotlight player checks for region threats and ally threats. The Autarch player decides if they would like to reveal a scheme. The differences between threats and schemes are described in more detail in *Threats and Schemes* (page XX). Note that none of the checks to see if a threat occurs are skill checks, so fate points may not be spent to alter them. Before checking for threats, reshuffle all of the cards.

### *Region Threats*

Region threats are disruptions and problems with a region the Stronghold controls, potentially causing issues with gathering resources as well as draining Stronghold stability. For each region the Stronghold controls, draw a card (or roll the dice). If the result is +3 or +4, there's a threat in the region. To determine the details of the region threat, including difficulty and the type of conflict needed to resolve it, roll on the Region Threats chart (page XX).

### *Faction Threats*

Faction threats are potential sources of strife from factions. Ignoring them lowers the disposition of the minor faction, damaging the relationship. For each minor faction, draw a card (or roll the dice). If the result is a +3 or +4, there's a faction threat with that minor faction.

If the faction is an ally (they have a disposition of -1 or higher), check on the Faction Threats chart (page XX) to determine the difficulty and type of conflict needed to resolve it. If the faction is an enemy (-2 disposition or lower), the Autarch player chooses the type of conflict.

### *Autarch Schemes*

Each year, the Autarch player may reveal two schemes. At this time, the Autarch player decides if they would like to use a scheme, and if so, which track to advance.

See *Threats and Schemes* (page XX) for available options. If a scheme is chosen, update the faction sheet to show the current Empire mission difficulties and scheme levels.

## Next Mission

The final activity of the season is planning what mission should be undertaken next. The spotlight player resolves any disagreements. If this is done at the end of the evening, it helps the group plan for next session. It may also be useful to resolve over e-mail or some other medium to allow for more involved discussions.

# MISSIONS

Missions are the core currency of *Wrath of the Autarch*. While the populace of the Stronghold undertakes all sorts of activities during a season, only the missions are played out in detail. The Stronghold players choose one mission each season, and each type of mission has certain benefits as well as possible costs. Missions provide the strategic backbone for the campaign and set the tone for the session.

There are seven types of missions available for players to choose from: alliance, conquest, sabotage, assassination, quest, threat, and scheme. In some situations, not all mission types are available for the players to pick. For instance, if the heroes don't have strong enough alliances with any minor factions, they may not go on a quest.

## Structure

Missions are composed of a **challenge phase** followed by one of four **conflicts**: **diplomacy**, **infiltration**, **skirmish**, or **warfare**.

### *Challenge Phase*

During the challenge phase the players set up scenes and the heroes must confront a variety of challenges. The challenge phase is heavy on the narrative, light on the tactics. The Stronghold players may also create aspects to use in the conflict (mission aspects) or even in future missions (campaign aspects). Time tends to be very fluid during the challenge phase, as all the players can exert considerable narrative control on the story, using flashbacks and cut scenes as desired to frame the story.

### *Conflict*

The particular conflict used depends on the mission chosen by the players. Conflicts are built from the same action types, but each type has slight tweaks to better evoke the feel of the conflict. Conflicts are heavy on the tactics and lighter on the narrative. Timelines for conflicts are usually shorter than for the challenge phase.

**Diplomacy** is the art of negotiation and deal making (page XX).

**Infiltration** is a system for sneaking into a physical space without being detected (page XX).

**Skirmishes** showcase the fighting of small battles between heroes and other opponents, both mundane and monstrous (page XX).

**Warfare** is the clashing of armies on the battlefield.

The choice of conflict has an impact on the theme and tone of the challenge phase. Each of these four conflicts has a chapter dedicated to it, detailing their differences and offering suggestions and notes on how to handle the challenge phase leading up to that conflict.

## Choosing a Mission

The Stronghold players choose one mission each season, paying close attention to any requirements that must be first met. The mission descriptions list the rewards for successfully completing a mission, as well as the penalties for failure. In addition, they provide details on how to handle challenges and which conflict is used.

### Conquest

Conquest is the way new regions are added to the Stronghold. Conquest could be directed toward one of the ten unexplored regions in the game, or it could come from military action against another faction. The unexplored regions each have different amounts of resources that can be gained from successful exploration. A variety of conflicts may be necessary to conquer unexplored regions, although skirmish is the most common. *Neutral Regions* (page XX) lists all of the different neutral regions.

Conquering regions controlled by another faction requires units and is typically more difficult than looking toward unexplored regions. If a faction loses their capital, the faction collapses, so conquest is also the method by which other factions can be dismantled. See *Factions* (page XX) for more on capitals.

### Requirements

One of the unexplored regions in *Neutral Regions* (not already under the Stronghold's control) or a region controlled by a faction should be chosen as a target. At least one unit from the Stronghold is needed if warfare is used to conquer a region.

### Difficulty, Conflict Type

For unexplored regions, the mission is already fleshed out in *Neutral Regions*. The mission difficulty and conflict type are found in the description for the particular neutral region.

For regions controlled by factions, warfare is always used. The difficulty of conquering an Imperial region depends on how many points are allocated to the Empire's warfare schemes, but at the start of the campaign the Empire's warfare difficulty is 4. Attacking another faction lowers their disposition down to -5 (it's

hard to make friends when you're seizing their land by military force).

| Faction       | Warfare Difficulty       |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| Empire        | 4* (starting difficulty) |
| Burgan Vale   | 5                        |
| Crescent Hold | 5                        |
| Gravewood     | 4                        |
| Lily Manor    | 3                        |
| Sunriders     | 6                        |

### Success

If the heroes of the Stronghold are successful, write the region on the Stronghold sheet. The resources of the region may be harvested starting on the next Stronghold upkeep phase.

If the region conquered was a faction's capital, the faction immediately collapses and ceases to function. See "Collapse" on page XX. The Stronghold gains any two regions under the control of the faction (although these regions only have half the listed resources, rounded down). Conquering the Empire's capital wins the game for the Stronghold.

Even with success, using warfare has potentially high costs in terms of stability. See *Warfare* (page XX) for more details.

### Failure

If the heroes fail to conquer a region, there are no penalties other than the loss of time on the part of the heroes (and potentially consequences that heroes have sustained). If warfare is used, units could be lost and stability possibly lowered. The region is not added to the Stronghold sheet, but the mission for the same region may be attempted again.

### Alliance

Alliance missions are a way to increase the disposition with minor factions. Increased disposition gives access to better trade rates when building developments. A disposition of +3 or higher gives the Stronghold access to the quest mission provided by

the faction, and a disposition of +5 or higher means the minor faction will commit military units for the Stronghold in war.

Requirements

A particular faction is chosen as the target of the alliance mission.

Difficulty?

The difficulty of the alliance mission depends on the faction chosen to trade with. Note that an alliance mission with the Empire isn't with the Empire proper, but with an underground resistance within the Empire (see *The Empire*, page XX, for more details). The Empire despises the Stronghold too much to initiate trade.

| Faction       | Difficulty | Goods (Faction Specialty) |
|---------------|------------|---------------------------|
| Resistance    | 5          | Empire stability loss     |
| Burgan Vale   | 4          | Mana (arcane)             |
| Crescent Hold | 3          | Ore (skirmish)            |
| Gravewood     | 5          | Timber (infiltration)     |
| Lily Manor    | 6          | Luxuries (diplomacy)      |
| Sunriders     | 4          | Food (warfare)            |

Conflict

Diplomacy is used to resolve alliance missions.

Success

The disposition with the faction is improved by one or more (developments may modify this).

Failure

Either there is no change in disposition, or it could drop if things go very poorly. See *Diplomacy* (page XX) for more details.

Sabotage

The goal of sabotage is to cause stability loss through disruption of critical services or a campaign of misinformation.

Requirements

A target faction must be chosen. The difficulty is based on the faction targeted. The difficulty of targeting the Empire depends on how many points are allocated to the Empire's infiltration threat pool, but at the start of the campaign the Empire's difficulty is 4.

| Faction       | Difficulty               |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| Empire        | 4* (starting difficulty) |
| Burgan Vale   | 5                        |
| Crescent Hold | 4                        |
| Gravewood     | 6                        |
| Lily Manor    | 5                        |
| Sunriders     | 3                        |

Conflict

Sabotage missions use the infiltration conflict.

Success

A successfully sabotaged faction loses one stability (possibly more with the use of certain infiltration developments).

Failure

If heroes are caught, they are imprisoned, and the disposition with the target faction drops by two. It's possible to fail missions that use infiltration without getting caught, in which case the only loss is the wasted season of time.

Assassination

The art of eliminating a faction leader through stealth and guile. The Autarch may be targeted.

## Requirements

Choose a faction leader as the target of assassination. The different faction chapters detail the leaders for each faction.

The difficulty is based on the faction targeted. For targeting the Autarch, the difficulty is fixed at 8. Otherwise, the difficulty of targeting an Imperial leader besides the Autarch depends on how many points are allocated to the Empire's infiltration threat pool, but at the start of the campaign the difficulty is 4.

### Faction Difficulty

|                      |                                       |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Empire</b>        | 4* (starting difficulty), 8 (Autarch) |
| <b>Burgan Vale</b>   | 5                                     |
| <b>Crescent Hold</b> | 4                                     |
| <b>Gravewood</b>     | 6                                     |
| <b>Lily Manor</b>    | 5                                     |
| <b>Sunriders</b>     | 3                                     |

## Conflict

Assassination missions use the infiltration conflict.

## Success

The targeted leader is killed and may not be used in any capacity by the faction. If the Autarch is targeted, the Stronghold has successfully won the campaign.

## Failure

If heroes are caught, they are imprisoned, and the disposition with the target faction drops by three. It's possible to fail missions that use the infiltration conflict without getting caught, in which case the only loss is the wasted season of time.

## Heist

The goal of heist is to steal resources from a faction.

## Requirements

A target faction must be chosen. The difficulty is based on the faction targeted. The difficulty of targeting the Empire depends on how many points are allocated to the Empire's infiltration threat pool, but at the start of the campaign the Empire's difficulty is 4.

### Faction Difficulty

|                      |                          |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Empire</b>        | 4* (starting difficulty) |
| <b>Burgan Vale</b>   | 5                        |
| <b>Crescent Hold</b> | 4                        |
| <b>Gravewood</b>     | 6                        |
| <b>Lily Manor</b>    | 5                        |
| <b>Sunriders</b>     | 3                        |

## Conflict

Heist missions use the infiltration conflict.

## Success

A successful heist allows the Stronghold to gain one additional resource die on their next Stronghold upkeep phase. The stolen resource must be listed on one of the targeted faction's regions. That coveted luxury die is only available by targeting Lily Manor or Gravewood.

## Failure

If heroes are caught, they are imprisoned, and the disposition with the target faction drops by two. It's possible to fail missions that use infiltration without getting caught, in which case the only loss is the wasted season of time.

## Quest

In the remote corners of the Realm are mythical artifacts that could potentially swing the long struggle in favor of the Stronghold. Artifacts are always very dangerous to retrieve.

## Requirements

There are five artifacts in the game, each of which is buried deep in the secrecy and lore of one of the five



minor factions. The Stronghold must have a disposition of +3 or higher with the faction related to the artifact they desire before they learn of its existence.

## Difficulty, Conflict

The difficulty of all quests is 6, but the conflict used depends on the specific quest. See the different faction chapters for more details.

## Success

The Stronghold gains the artifact, along with all of its abilities. Most artifacts function like developments in that they aid all of the heroes rather than just one.

## Failure

There's no penalty for failure other than spending a season unsuccessfully questing. Quests may be attempted multiple times.

## Threats and Schemes

Threats and schemes are hardships that the Stronghold must deal with over the course of the campaign. Instead of being driven by choices the Stronghold players make, threats and schemes occur by chance or are directed by the Autarch player. Since threats and schemes aren't initiated by the Stronghold players, they may be ignored. However, the repercussions for ignoring them are usually worse than trying to deal with them and failing. Some developments make the Stronghold resistant to certain threats. There are no developments that help with Autarch schemes.

There are two types of threats: **region** and **faction**. Threats and schemes have the usual mission structure of a challenge phase and a conflict. However, they have different repercussions for ignoring them. The occurrence of threats and schemes is determined at the end of the season; see *Seasons* (page XX) for more details. The nature and composition of region threats and faction threats are completely random events, while Autarch schemes are chosen by the Autarch player.

## Region Threat?

The more lands controlled by the Stronghold, the more chance those holdings come under threat. Region threats are disruptions of supply, caused from

marauding beasts, sneaky bandits, or disgruntled peasants.

## Difficulty, Conflict

*Threats and Schemes* (page XX) has various region threats fleshed out. When a region threat occurs, roll on the region threat table (page XX) to determine the difficulty and conflict to use. Most region threats use skirmish.

## Success

Supply from the region is restored, and the Stronghold also adds one to stability.

## Failure

Even with failure, the region still provides resources, although the Stronghold loses one stability.

## Ignore

The region doesn't provide resources, the Stronghold loses one stability, and the Autarch player may create a campaign aspect with two free invokes.

## Faction Threat?

Faction threats are sources of strife that threaten relations with factions. They could be calls for aid from the faction, minor border and territory disputes, or cultural disagreements.

## Difficulty, Conflict

*Threats and Schemes* (page XX) has some faction threats fleshed out. If the faction threat is with an ally (the faction has a disposition of -1 or higher), the conflict and difficulty are determined randomly. When a faction threat with an ally occurs, roll on the ally threat table (page XX) to determine the difficulty and conflict. Most faction threats use diplomacy.

If the faction is an enemy (a disposition of -2 or below), the Autarch determines the type of conflict. The difficulty is listed in the chapter for the specific faction.

## Success

On success, the Stronghold has handled the situation well and disposition with the faction increases by one.

## Failure

The disposition with the faction holds steady.

## Ignore

The disposition with the faction drops by one and the Autarch player may create a campaign aspect with two free invokes.

## *Autarch Scheme*

Schemes are the main method by which the Autarch player attacks the Stronghold. Schemes are varied, although they have possibly dire consequences for the Stronghold. They tend to mirror the sorts of activities the Stronghold players can do: wage war, assassinate heroes, disrupt supply in a region, sabotage developments, and sow dissent among the populace.

## Difficulty, Conflict

The Autarch player chooses a scheme from the list in “Schemes” (page XX). The difficulty is based on relevant Empire conflict difficulty. The conflict used for resolution is also based on the particular threat chosen.

## Success, Failure, Ignore

These depend on the scheme chosen. Usually ignoring the scheme carries a greater penalty than trying but failing.

# Challenge Phase

During the challenge phase, the players set **challenge scenes** to spotlight the heroes' struggle to succeed at the mission. Stronghold players may also set **advantage scenes**, which showcase the creation of advantages for the heroes or Stronghold. The challenge phase is also the primary time for heroes to improve their skills.

## Goal

At the start of the challenge phase, briefly discuss the goal of the mission. Which heroes are going on the mission? Why? What will happen in the conflict? How is the spotlight character involved?

Using that information, it will be easier to understand the scope and theme of the challenge phase. Sometimes it's obvious, but sometimes activities that would usually be conducted in the conflict could bleed over into the challenge phase. For instance, if the mission is a sabotage mission to steal secrets from a wizard, the challenge scenes could involve casing the mage's tower, setting up a cover story, or meeting contacts in clandestine locations. The challenge scenes shouldn't feature actually infiltrating the tower—that's what the conflict is for. Scenes should either build toward the conflict or showcase related situations; talking about the conflict helps everyone get on the same page.

## Continuity

*Wrath of the Autarch* is an episodic game. Each mission has well defined start and end points, making it easy for players to drop in and out between sessions. The danger in that sort of game is that longer running story threads can sometimes get lost.

When creating challenges, look for opportunities to reincorporate characters and themes from past missions. This helps maintain the feeling that the world is alive. Campaign aspects, relationships, assets, and faction aspects are great vehicles for this sort of reincorporation. Look toward them if you're struggling to set a scene.

Use the success or failure of one challenge scene to color the next challenge. Successfully impressing the farm hand might mean that he puts you to work tracking down his lost cow. Falling into the river means you have to survive the long cold night shivering and wet. It's certainly not mandatory that scenes follow a causal timeline, but it can make them easier to set up.

## Challenge Scenes

Challenge scenes are narrative descriptions of troubles and tasks the heroes may encounter during the build up to the conflict. For instance, *Drive away the large gray spiders*, *Make Erasmus confess to the mur-*

der, and *Cross the Blue River Gorge* are all examples of challenge scenes.

Like the mission duration itself, the individual challenges have flexible timelines. Gathering dirt on another character could take weeks of game time, while fighting off dire wolves may only take minutes. The Stronghold players must successfully complete a number of challenge scenes equal to the number of heroes on the mission. Failure to do so gives the Autarch player an advantage in the conflict.

The skills to use and difficulty of a challenge scene are determined randomly using the Deck of Fate.

## Advantage Scenes

Advantage scenes allow the heroes to create mission or campaign aspects to be leveraged later. These scenes showcase new discoveries, such as finding the **Lost Sword of an Ancient Ancestor** or learning **Movement Patterns of Imperial Troops**. Advantage scenes may also be used to remove campaign aspects created by the Autarch player. Unlike the challenge scenes, the player setting up the advantage scene gets to decide what skill to use.

## Three Exchanges

The challenge phase is broken up into three exchanges. Each Stronghold player takes one action (either creating an advantage or resolving a challenge) during an exchange. Setting up a new scene doesn't take an action. The order of actions is up to the Stronghold players, as long as each player takes one action per exchange.

## Autarch Complications

At the beginning of the challenge phase, the Autarch player takes a number of fate points equal to one half the number of Stronghold players (round down). These are used to add **complications** to a challenge scene (see the resolve challenge action, page XX). These fate points don't carry over to the conflict, so it's important for the Autarch player to use them all during the challenge phase.

## Creating Challenge Scenes

Prior to taking their turn, a Stronghold player may create a challenge scene, provided they aren't already in a challenge scene. This doesn't require an action. Creating scenes is always free.

The player creating the scene draws a card, which is used to determine the difficulty and theme of the scene.

## Difficulty



Each challenge has a difficulty, which is used as the passive opposition for heroes trying to resolve the challenge. This difficulty is equal to the result on the card plus the mission difficulty.

*Rebecca draws a card from the Deck of Fate to create a new challenge scene during an infiltration mission. The difficulty of the mission is Fantastic (+6), fairly difficult! The result on the card is a +2, so the difficulty of this challenge scene is Legendary (+8). Ouch!*

## Skills

The challenge lists (page XX) determine which skills to use. There's one list for each type of conflict. Find the list that matches the type of conflict used during this mission.

To find the correct entry, use the first three dice results on the card to find the correct row in the list. Those skills must be used to overcome the challenge scene.



*The dice on the card Rebecca drew show . Rebecca looks up the  entry on the infiltration challenges list. The skills listed are Society, Rapport, and Wits. A broad social challenge!*

## Stress and Time

If there are sun ☀ symbols on the card, the challenge is particularly stressful, while moon ☾ symbols mean the challenge is more time consuming. The sun and moon are used as part of resolving a challenge, and are described in more detail on page XX. These symbols also aid in describing the scene.



*Rebecca notes there are two moons ☾☾ and one sun ☀ on the card. Dang! It's going to be time consuming as*

well as stressful. This challenge scene is shaping up to be tough.

If playing *Wrath of the Autarch* with fate dice instead of the Deck of Fate, roll one die three times to look up the entry on the challenge list. Then roll a fourth time—adding the result to the previous three rolls used to look up the entry—to figure out the difficulty. Finally, roll four dice to add suns and moons. Treat each  as suns and each  as a moon. Repeat the procedure if a complication is accepted.

## Scene Hints

On the challenge list is a short phrase that helps describe the scene. This can be used to help spark creativity when making the scene. The scene hint fits the skills listed. It may also be ignored if it doesn't seem to fit well, or if the player creating the scene already has an idea for what's going on. Setting scenes is usually a collaborative process.

*The scene hint in the infiltration challenges list for  is “Influential Aid.” Rebecca thinks about it, and decides it’s time to socially manipulate a noble into helping the heroes gain access to the Imperial War College. Rebecca imagines a costume party at Duke Felden’s manor. He’s the perfect person to manipulate into giving aid. The table loves the idea, so the idea is fleshed out a little more and made into a challenge scene.*

## Sample Challenges

Many of the missions later in the book have sample scenes to use as inspiration, such as, “Avoid getting hustled while playing four card split,” or “Resist the Song of the Fates, a dirge of despair.” These may be used instead of or along with the scene hints when creating a scene. They are more closely tied to a particular mission than the general challenge scene hints.

## Available Heroes

The player who created the challenge scene must include their hero in it. Any other heroes who aren't already in challenge scenes may also join in. Mission and campaign aspects may not be created by a character in a challenge scene (creating those longer lasting aspects involve their own advantage scenes), so it's not always

a good idea to include every hero in every challenge scene. Also, if the challenge scene involves stress, all heroes present will take some.

*Pat and Jennifer are playing with Rebecca. The hero Rebecca is playing, Crus, must be in the scene. Pat decides to join in as well, with Fuscus, given Fuscus has strong social skills. Jennifer’s character, Griggan, doesn’t have very useful skills for this challenge, so she decides to do something else.*

## Complications

Before any actions are taken by characters in a challenge scene, the Autarch adds a complication to a scene. This is done by offering the Stronghold player who created the scene one of the Autarch player's fate points, narrating how one of the character's aspects makes the scene more difficult.

If the Stronghold player accepts the complication, they may take the offered fate point. The Autarch player then flips over a card and adds all suns and moons on the card to the current scene. If the player doesn't want the complication, they must spend one of their fate points to buy it off. Both fate points are then removed from play. Of course, if a Stronghold player has no more fate points, they can't buy off the complication.



## Resolve Challenge (Overcome)

On their turn, a Stronghold player may use the resolve challenge action to resolve a challenge scene. The resolve challenge action works similarly to the overcome action described in *Core Rules* (page XX).

### Opposition

The difficulty of the challenge scene is used as passive opposition for the overcome action (although see “Time” for details on removing moons). Only those skills listed for the scene may be used. If there are no moons left, on a successful check the challenge scene is resolved favorably for the heroes. The player who completed the challenge may narrate what happened and close out the scene as desired.

A tie is a failure unless the acting player wishes to take a minor cost (taking a stress card). Success with style lets the Stronghold player take a boost, as normal for the overcome action.

### Stress ☼

Each time the resolve challenge action is used to attempt to overcome the challenge, the acting hero takes one stress for each sun on the challenge scene. Additionally, all other heroes in the scene take one stress if there are suns. It's up to each Stronghold player taking the stress to narrate what sort of stress (mental or physical) they take, as well as what fictionally occurred to give them stress. All stress taken by a character must be of the same type.

### Time ☐

Challenge scenes with moons require two resolve challenge actions to complete rather than one. The first action has an opposition equal to the number of moons. If either action is failed, the scene is failed.

*Rebecca narrates how Crus is at the costume ball, trying to get an audience with Duke Felden. She decides to use Crus' Rapport to charm the Duke. She adds her Rapport to the draw of a card, getting a Superb (+5) result. Because of the two moons, the opposition difficulty is Fair (+2), so Rebecca has success with style! She takes a boost.*

*Crus takes one mental stress from the one sun on this challenge scene, as Rebecca narrates how Crus*

*charms the Duke but is put into a tough situation at the ball. The scene isn't resolved yet, but the moons are removed. The Duke is very close to giving his support!*

*Fuscus also takes one stress since the scene has suns. Pat decides to give Fuscus one mental stress as well, narrating an obligation the Duke is requesting of Fuscus.*

### Failing a Challenge

If a resolve challenge action fails (either from dealing with moons or from failing to address the challenge), the challenge is failed. The player who failed the challenge narrates what happens. Failed challenges don't count towards the total of successfully resolved challenges needed. Sometimes, though, failing a challenge is better than spending resources to complete it.

There's an additional penalty for failing a challenge: the Autarch player may create a mission aspect with two free invokes.

## Creating Advantage Scenes

Prior to taking their turn, a Stronghold player may create an advantage scene, provided they aren't already in a scene. This doesn't require an action. Any other heroes not already in scenes may be present.

The player creating the scene decides whether they're going to use the scene to create a mission aspect, a campaign aspect, or try to remove a campaign aspect the Autarch player created. They also get to decide what skill to use.

Other heroes in the scene may help by creating scene aspects.

## Create Advantage

Creating an advantage allows a player to create helpful aspects during their turn. The difficulty of the action depends on how long the player would like the aspect to remain in play. This works as described in *Core Rules* (page XX).

### *Scene Aspects*

Scene aspects are the easiest aspects to create, with a difficulty two lower than the mission difficulty. However, scene aspects are attached to the scene in which they're created and may only be used by heroes in the same scene. Scene aspects are very short lived benefits, and the scope of these aspects should be narrow as well.

### *Mission Aspects*

When creating a mission aspect, the Stronghold player should narrate a short scene featuring their hero and any accompanying characters. The difficulty to create mission aspects is equal to the difficulty of the mission. Mission aspects may not be created by Stronghold players whose heroes are in challenge scenes.

### *Campaign Aspects*

The difficulty to create a campaign aspect is two higher than the difficulty of the mission. Campaign aspects represent broad and far reaching changes to the campaign. The Stronghold player should narrate an appropriately epic scene describing what their character is doing. As with mission aspects, campaign aspects may not be created by a Stronghold player whose hero is in a challenge scene.

## Remove Campaign Aspect (Overcome)

A player with a character in an advantage scene may attempt to remove a campaign aspect the Autarch player created. The difficulty to remove the aspect is two higher than the difficulty of the mission. The player may choose which skill to use, narrating how the characters involved in the scene work to overcome the aspect.

## Skill Advances

Any time during the challenge phase that a hero attempts an action with an opposition *higher* than the skill used for the action, they get one advance for the skill. It doesn't matter whether the action is successful or not. This applies to the create advantage action as well as the resolve challenge action.

The challenge phase is also a good time to use hindering aspects (from relationships or assets) to gain more skill advances. This is particularly true when success or failure are very likely regardless of taking misfortune from hindering aspects.

Note that skill advances can't be taken during the conflict. Each hero will get one skill advance after the conflict is over in any skill they want.

## Ending the Challenge Phase

The challenge phase ends after three exchanges. If the Stronghold players didn't successfully complete one challenge scene for each Stronghold player, the Autarch player gets bonus fate points to use for the conflict. For each such incomplete challenge, the Autarch player gets one fate point per Stronghold player.

For instance, if there are five Stronghold players and they only successfully completed three challenge scenes, the Autarch player gets ten bonus fate points. These are in addition to the usual fate points the Autarch player gets at the start of the conflict.

## Challenge Phase Example

In this example, the heroes from Bavin's Hollow are on a conquest mission to Green Vale (see *Neutral Regions*, page XX). This mission uses the skirmish conflict and has a difficulty of Great (+4). Green Vale, while on the surface an idyllic farming community, is dealing with attacks from a werewolf. The heroes are enlisted to confront the beast and drive it from the community.

**Phil** is the Autarch player.

**Jenn** is playing Cadell, a towering swordsmith.

**Jeremy** is playing Maelgwn, the great hunter, a loner and outdoorsman.

**Terri** is playing Gwynnet, a traveling academic.

*Phil: You arrive at a small farming community within the Green Vale. You're all weary and ready for some rest. Greeting you is an assortment of farmers, freshly returned from tilling the land. An older woman approaches, somewhat warily sizing up your group. "So, you're from Bavin's Hollow? Well, welcome to Hambridge Farms! I'm Mila. These here are Bjorn and Feljar, my sons. Come in, and we can get acquainted."*

*Phil: Let's focus on getting acquainted with the farmers, gaining their trust, and convincing them you know a thing or two about rural life and their concerns. Eventually, you'll learn that something sinister lurks here—the farm is under attack by a werewolf! If you can help them track and kill this werewolf, you gain the Green Vale region. Sound good? Who wants to set up the first scene?*


Phil draws one fate point to use for complications (one half the number of Stronghold players, rounded down).

*Jenn: I'm the spotlight player, probably makes sense for me to kick things off.*

### The First Exchange

#### Jenn's Turn

Jenn draws the  card, which has one . Looking at the Skirmish Challenges for 


(the first three symbols), she sees the challenge scene uses Rapport, Society, and Wits. The scene hint is “Gathering Support.” The difficulty of the challenge is Great (+4)—the result of the draw, , plus the mission difficulty of Great (+4).

*Jenn: Well, it's not too hard, but social situations aren't Cadell's strong suit. Maybe Gwynnet can back me up on this one?*

*Terri: Gwynnet's Society is Good (+3)—that's solid. I'll come along!*

Jenn's character Cadell must be in the scene, since Jenn created it. Gwynnet comes along as well. Tokens are placed on the notecard to indicate both characters are in the challenge scene.





*Jenn: Great! I think this scene involves Mila, the matron of Hambridge Farms. She's invited us into her home, and making a good impression on her will go a long way towards bringing the Green Vale under the banner of Bavin's Hollow.*

Jenn grabs a notecard, writes “Impressing Mila” on it, as well as the scene difficulty (+4), the skills to use, and the .

*Terri: Tea time! I see her home as being cluttered with all sorts of bric-a-brac.*

*Phil: I think I'm going to add a complication. Let's see, Gwynnet is a **Polysyllabic Wordsmith**, which might not go over so well out here in the country.*

*Terri: Hmm. Well, it's not that bad of a challenge scene—I think I'll take the fate point! So, Gwynnet may get a little wordy.*


Phil hands Terri his fate point for accepting the complication. Phil draws a card and adds the symbols to the scene. There's one  on the card, which is added to the other , giving the challenge scene  . Phil has no more fate points left for complications.

*Jenn: Hah! Not bad at all, well worth the fate point. Let's see, maybe Mila has obscure items from all over the realm. It's my turn, so I can create a scene aspect before you try to use Society to resolve the challenge. I'm going to use Cadell's Lore to try to impress her.*

The opposition to create a scene aspect is Fair (+2) (the mission difficulty of +4 minus two for creating a scene aspect). Cadell's Lore is Good (+3), and Jenn gets a +1 on the draw, for a total of Great (+4). Good enough for a scene aspect with one free invoke!



Jenn could spend a fate point or use stress for success to add another +2 for success with style, which would let her have two free invokes. Instead, she decides to keep the result she has. There's no skill advance marked because Cadell's Lore (Good +3) is higher than the opposition (Fair +2).

*Jenn: I see she has an arcane tome from Burgan Vale, who are allies of ours. I read passages from it, showing her just how much we know about the sorts of harm befalling Hambridge Farms.*

Jenn writes down the aspect  **Knowledge of Arcane Threats** on a notecard.

## Terri's Turn

*Terri: Great, I can use that. I'll try to resolve the challenge. “Mina, I'm sure it's difficult finding reliable trading alliances out here. In a concordance with Bavin's Hollow, we can provide dweomercrafting and alchemancy to help your lycanthropy problems. Oh, what delightful confections you've served!”*





Terri gets a +0 on the result, and adds Gwynnet's Society skill of Good (+3), for a total of Good (+3), one less than the difficulty. She uses the free invoke on the scene aspect Cadell just made, for a total of Superb (+5). Success! Because Gwynnet's Society skill of Good (+3) was less than the overcome difficulty of Great (+4), Terri also checks off a skill advance box for Society. There were none filled in already, so two more advances are needed before she can increase the skill's rank. Gwynnet takes two stress (from  ). Terri decides to take it as mental stress, filling in the second stress box on the stress track.

Cadell takes one stress for being in the scene, which Jenn also takes as mental stress.





*Phil: Mila says, “Well, you sure know your stuff! But there's no mistaking you ain't from around here!” Your face flushes in embarrassment. But you've already succeeded at one challenge scene!*

## Jeremy's Turn

*Jeremy: Well, looks like I'll set up another challenge scene.*

Jeremy draws the  card, which has two  and one . Looking at the Skirmish Challenges for  (the first three symbols), the challenge uses



Fighting and Survival and the hint is “On the Run.” The opposition of the challenge is Fantastic (+6)—the result of the draw, , plus the mission difficulty of Great (+4).

*Jeremy: Not too bad, although the moon is irritating. My Survival is pretty good, and Cadell's Fighting is solid, so I think we'll be okay. But this is going to be a drain. If we want to be on the safe side, Gwynnet should be in the scene as well. But it's possible that might be overkill.*

*Terri: I think Gwynnet will be involved, it's probably worth it.*


*Jenn: Yeah, Cadell is going to need to be involved as well.*


Tokens for all three characters are placed onto the scene card.

*Jeremy: A few weeks pass. One evening at dusk, while we're in Mila's common room, we hear a commotion near the chicken coop. Heading outside, we see the werewolf eating chickens! It snarls at us before running into the woods.*

*Phil: I think Maelgwn's **Solitary Hunter** aspect may come into play here. I could see this team effort slowing him down.*

*Jeremy: It's my turn. I'll resolve it to get rid of that moon.*

Maelgwn's Survival is Good (+3), and the opposition of the challenge is only Average (+1) for the one moon. Jeremy draws a +1, for a total of Great (+4), success with style! Jeremy takes a boost for success with style. He removes the moon, making a note that it's gone. Because there are two  on the challenge scene, Maelgwn takes two stress for the resolve challenge action. Jeremy marks it as mental stress.

Gwynnet and Cadell also take one stress from the resolve challenge action for being in a scene that has s on it. Terri and Jenn both mark it as mental stress. No skill advance is taken for Maelgwn since the opposition was only one.

*Jeremy: Maelgwn shouts at everyone to keep up. "It's getting away!" The ranger leads the party through the woods for hours, following the tracks under the full moon. They're close now, but the fatigue is catching up with him.*





## The Second Exchange

Maelgwn, Cadell, and Gwynnet are in the challenge scene “On the Run,” chasing after the werewolf. The moons have been removed, but the scene still isn't resolved.

### Terri's Turn

*Terri: I'm thinking about setting up a scene aspect, which Cadell can use to try to beat this challenge. Maybe the werewolf has minions, supernatural wolves that are like guardians. This forest is the right climate for wolfsbane, useful in a fight against them.*



*Phil: Seems like finding that would use either Lore or Survival. Either one seems fine.*

Terri gets a +0 added to Gwynnet's Lore of Good (+3) for a total of Good (+3), which is enough for a scene aspect with a free invoke. She decides to use stress for success to add another +2 to the result, which is enough for success with style (three shifts beyond what's needed). However, she must draw one stress card for each time stress for success is used, and take all the stress at once. She draws and gets a card with , two physical stress! Terri marks off the second box on Gwynnet's physical stress track. She creates the aspect  **Wolfsbane** with two free invokes.

*Terri: Found it! Gwynnet works to harvest some wolfsbane and turn it into the necessary consistency to use as a weapon. In the process, she burns herself with the toxic reagents.*

### Jenn's Turn

*Jenn: The group is gathered around a fire, exhausted, taking a break from their hunt. In the darkness, glowing eyes appear. They must draw their weapons and defend against a pack of the werewolf's minions! I need a +7 to beat this challenge.*

Jenn draws a -2, and adds it to Cadell's Fighting of Great (+4) for a total of Fair (+2). Not great! Jenn could use the two free invokes on the  **Wolfsbane** aspect, giving a result of Fantastic (+6), a tie. A tie on an overcome action requires Cadell to take a minor cost (draw a stress card).

Jenn instead decides to use both free invokes as well as spend one of her fate points (invoking **Wolfsbane**), adding +6 for a total of Legendary (+8), enough to beat the challenge scene without a minor cost.

*Jenn: Cadell's sword is drawn in a flash. The beasts fall back under his sword, the wolfsbane burning and flashing when it contacts their unnatural forms. The wolves head off into the night, in the direction of the tracks.*





Since the “On the Run” scene has two ✨, Cadell takes two stress for the resolve challenge action. Jenn marks the second box on Cadell's physical stress track. Maelgwn and Gwynnet also take one stress since there are ✨ in the scene. Terri marks the first box on Gwynnet's physical stress track, while Jeremy marks Maelgwn's first box on the mental stress track.

All stress taken by a character from a resolve challenge action must be of one type, but each player may decide what type of stress to take.

*Phil: Nice! It sounds like the werewolf has a lair out there somewhere. Maybe it's not someone from town? Or maybe they just have a shelter in the woods.*

*Jeremy: I still haven't gone this exchange. I wanted to create a campaign aspect this mission, but time is starting to run short. Hopefully the last challenge scene isn't too bad.*

## Jeremy's Turn

Jeremy draws the  card, which has three . Looking at the Skirmish Challenges for  (the first three symbols), the challenge uses Survival and the hint is “Behind Enemy Lines.” The opposition of the challenge is Fair (+2)—the result of the draw, , plus the mission difficulty of Great (+4).

*Jeremy: Well, it's going to take some time, but it's not hard. Maelgwn is the best at Survival, so I could take an action now to chip away at it, as well as the first action next exchange. That would leave you two to create a campaign or mission aspect.*

*Jeremy: Our group continues to follow the tracks after beating back the wolves. We're running low on wolfsbane, though. Suddenly we realize that the trail has gotten difficult to follow, and we hear movement from all around us. The wolves are stalking us. The hunters have become the prey! Maelgwn works quickly, leading the group through streams and over difficult terrain in an effort to avoid the wolves.*

Jeremy gets a +1 added to Maelgwn's Survival of Good (+3) for a result of Great (+4). Success! Just

enough to get rid of the moons without taking a minor cost.

*Jeremy: The wolves are howling all around us, and we hear their movements in the distance, but we've evaded them so far. Maelgwn is clearly haunted by their howls. I'll go again and try to knock this one out!*

## The Third Exchange

Maelgwn is in the challenge scene “Behind Enemy Lines.” The moons have been removed, but the scene isn't finished. Cadell and Gwynnet aren't attached to any scenes.

## Jeremy's Turn

At the start of the third exchange, Jeremy again uses Maelgwn's Survival and he again gets a +1 added to Maelgwn's Survival of Good (+3) for a result of Great (+4). Success! This is enough to beat the challenge scene difficulty of Fair (+2).


*Jeremy: Maelgwn leads the group through the forest to a cabin. He's exhausted and worn thin by the stress of avoiding the wolves all night. The cabin is very old, the wooden walls not maintained very well.*

*Jenn: We made it! I think this is where the showdown with the werewolf will happen. But, for now, the cabin is empty. We're doing pretty good on fate points, so I'm thinking of setting up an advantage scene to create a campaign aspect. I'll create a scene aspect to make that more likely.*

*Terri: Sounds good! I can use my turn to create the campaign aspect.*

## Jenn's Turn

*Jenn: Inside the cabin are different arcane texts. They might be written in a tongue Cadell understands.*

The difficulty to create a scene aspect is Fair (+2), two below the mission difficulty. Jenn draws a +2, added to Cadell's Lore of Good (+3) for a result of Superb (+5), success with style! Jenn creates the aspect  **Tome of the Hallowed Vision** with two free invokes.

## Terri's Turn

*Terri: Cool! I'll create a campaign aspect! Gwynnet is very bright and worldly. I'll use the Tome to see the true future of the Autarch. The ritual takes hours!*

The difficulty to create a campaign aspect is Fantastic (+6), two higher than the mission difficulty. Terri draws a +0, added to Gwynnet's Lore of Good (+3) gives a result of Good (+3). Terri uses both free invokes on ***Tome of the Hallowed Vision*** to get the result to Epic (+7), and draws a stress card to get it to Astonishing (+9), success with style! Terri creates the aspect ☐☐ ***Visions of the Autarch's Future*** with two free invokes, writing it on the Stronghold sheet. The stress card has ☼☼, so Gwynnet takes two physical stress. However, Gwynnet's second physical stress box is filled, and Gwynnet doesn't have a third box to check off. Terri gives Gwynnet the minor consequence ***Glimpse into the Autarch's Psyche***. Taking a minor consequence mitigates the two stress.

*Terri: Gwynnet is drained after the ritual, shaken and confused by the dream visions she has witnessed. The current future path is terrible, but Gwynnet has insight into what the Autarch will do. Before she can recover, a growling is heard from outside. The owner of those tomes has returned, and the werewolf will attack!*

Since the players successfully completed three challenge scenes by the end of the challenge phase, the Autarch player doesn't get any bonus fate points prior to the skirmish conflict. Jeremy starts the conflict with a boost.

# CHARACTERS

The term **character** is used broadly. It refers not only to the heroes of the Stronghold, but to any leaders, monsters, minions, and henchmen. All characters are described using aspects, skills, stunts, stress, and consequences. Military units are also treated as characters, and are described using the same five elements (see *Warfare*, page XX).

## Heroes

The term **hero** is used exclusively to refer to the characters that the Stronghold players take control of. Such characters may not actually reflect a heroic archetype in play, but it serves to distinguish those characters in the text.

## Aspects

Heroes have three aspects that are used to describe them. As mentioned in *Core Rules* (page XX), aspects are arguably the most important part of the game, and learning how to leverage them is a good skill.

## Core Concept

The best way to think of the core concept is to imagine how you would concisely describe the character concept to another person. More than any of the other aspects, the core concept should portray the essence of the character. Sample core concepts: *Commander of the Tarmaeth Legion*, *Shadow Council Assassin*, *World Weary Animal Tamer*.

## Trouble

Every hero has trouble, weaknesses either internal or external that make life difficult. The trouble aspect is a great source for endures or compels. It's good to make sure the aspect isn't so narrow that it's never applicable. Sample troubles: *Drink to Silence the Screams*, *Never Subtle*, *In Debt to the Ghall Clan*.

## Legacy

The Stronghold has five aspects, and during the process of character creation, each hero is somehow related to one of those aspects. See *Getting Started* (page XX) for more details. Typically, the legacy aspect signifies what sort of position within the Stronghold the hero holds, but it can also tie the hero to some element of the Stronghold's history. Frequently the core concept also ties the hero into the Stronghold via rank or position, in which case this aspect can be used to clarify some other part of the hero's role. Sample legacy aspects: *Medium-sized Fish in a Small Pond*, *Echo Lake Farmer*, *Warfare Guild Journeyman*, *Veteran of the Sunrider Wars*.



## Relationships

Heroes have relationships with other heroes as well as with leaders from other factions. When a hero is created, they start with two relationship aspects, one for a **helpful relationship** with another hero, and another for a **hindering relationship**. The process for creating a relationship is to first pick a character and a skill. Finally, a description is added to the relationship that involves the skill.

Helpful relationships indicate friendship and camaraderie, like ***Fighter: Aria Has Pledged Her Sword For Me, Lore: Gareth Is my Mentor, Stealth: Ellie Has my Back.*** Hindering relationships could involve jealousy, irritation, or rough spots from the past. For example, ***Science: Maelgwn Never Trusts My Input, Intimidation: Ollie Broke My Heart, Empathy: Tyra Is Self-centered.***

It's possible to get more relationships with stunts. Sometimes during the mission it's desirable to use create advantage to create aspects that are relationships with different characters. These relationships are useful over the course of the mission or campaign, but aren't elevated to the level of relationship aspects that are added to the character sheet.

### Using Helpful Aspects

Whenever the hero is in a scene or conflict with the character they share a helpful relationship with, they may use the helpful aspect. During the challenge phase, they are with the character if they're in the same scene or providing some aid in the case of making mission or campaign aspects. During a conflict, they are with the character if they're within sight of each other. If a helpful aspect applies to the skill being checked, add fortune to the result.

### Using Hindering Aspects

Whenever the hero is with the character they have a hindering relationship with, the hero's player may hinder the skill check. Similarly to helpful aspects, they must be in the same scene or conflict as the hindering character.

If the hindering relationship is used, one skill advance may be taken for the skill. This is in addition to any other skill advances that may be taken. In exchange, misfortune is applied to the skill check. Be-

ing around frustrating people is one way to grow and learn!

## Skills

Skills are broad areas of expertise and ability that characters possess. Heroes start with one Great (+4) skill, two Good (+3) skills, three Fair (+2) skills, and four Average (+1) skills. The rest of the skills start at Mediocre (+0). Over the course of the campaign, skills can improve and increase in rank. The only restriction is that every skill above the Mediocre rank must have at least one skill below it in rank.

## Stunts

Stunts are special abilities and improvements tied to skills. Each hero starts with one stunt for their Great (+4) skill. Each time a skill advances to the rank of Great (+4) or above, the hero may take one stunt for that skill. Stunts are listed under each skill description in *Skills and Stunts* (page XX).

## Stress and Consequences

Stress and Consequences are a way to handle duress, hardships, and even injuries; they also function as a pacing mechanism. Heroes start with a physical stress track of length two as well as a mental stress track of length two. A Physique skill above Mediocre (+0) gives the hero extra physical stress boxes and a possible bonus consequence, and a Will skill above Mediocre (+0) gives the hero extra mental stress boxes and a possible bonus consequence. See *Skills and Stunts* (page XX) for the specifics.

Heroes also start with a minor (-2), major (-4), and severe (-6) consequence. Minor and major consequences take one season to recover, while severe consequences take two seasons. Consequences function as aspects when they're taken, and get a free invoke. Consequences can be fairly broad, representing physical damage (***Sprained Ankle***), mental anguish (***Night Terrors***), or even obligations (***Debt to Heinrich***) and passions (***Infatuated with Ellis***).

Heroes can go on missions when they have consequences, although naturally it's riskier.



## Taken Out

As described in “Taking Damage” in *Core Rules* (page XX), if a character must take stress but has no more stress boxes or consequences to mitigate the stress, they’re taken out.

A character getting taken out doesn’t necessarily mean they’re killed. It means the character is removed from the mission and may take no more actions. The nature of what it means to be taken out depends on the type of conflict. In a social situation, it could mean the character is shamed or embarrassed and doesn’t want to continue. Or they owe a debt to another character. In combat, the character might not be in any shape to fight any longer.

Faction leaders and heroes in particular may only be killed through assassination. Even if they’re taken out during skirmish or warfare, they’re presumed to not be killed. Monsters, lieutenants, and minions are killed for good if they’re taken out.

## Leaders

**Leaders** are important and possibly recurring characters in the campaign aside from the heroes. Leaders include the faction leaders, the set of influential characters described for each faction, as well as boss monsters and other central adversaries. Leaders are built very similarly to heroes, with the key difference coming from how skills and stunts are chosen.

### Aspects

Leaders typically have three aspects, which don’t have to be categorized as the hero aspects are.

### Skills

Leaders are built around a **skill cap**, which gives a rough indicator of their overall ability and indicates the highest skill rank they can have. When building a leader, the first step is to identify the skill cap.

Instead of a skill pyramid, leaders begin with two skills at the same rank as their skill cap, and two skills every rank below that down to Average (+1). The rest of their skills are Mediocre (+0). So, instead of a pyramid, leader skills form a column of width two. Most faction leaders have a Superb (+5) skill cap, while boss monsters generally have a skill cap based on the difficulty of the mission. Unlike heroes, leaders never improve their skills over the course of the campaign.

### Stunts

Leaders get stunts equal to half their skill cap value, rounded down. They have no restrictions on where these stunts come from. In addition to those on the skill lists, a leader’s stunts might be custom abilities given to unique monsters or powerful faction leaders.

### Stress and Consequences

Stress tracks and starting consequences are calculated for leaders the same way they are for heroes. However, leaders don’t have a severe consequence unless a stunt specifically allows it.

## Lieutenants

**Lieutenants** are minor characters that fill important roles for factions when leaders aren't available. They might be head guards, military captains, or diplomats. Lieutenants can also be minor monsters that work with a leader monster as adversaries in a skirmish.

### *Aspects*

Lieutenants have two aspects.

### *Skills*

Lieutenants use a skill cap as leaders do, but only have one skill at the same rank as their skill cap, and one skill for each rank below that. They have a skill column of width one.

### *Stunts*

Lieutenants have a number of stunts equal to half their skill cap, as per leaders.

### *Stress and Consequences*

Lieutenants don't have moderate or severe consequences unless they're from stunts. Otherwise, stress and consequences work the same as for leaders.

## Minions

Minions are the nameless, faceless adversaries that are but speed bumps toward the heroes' ultimate goal. They might be guards in a castle or packs of goblins under the service of an orc king.

### *Aspects*

Minions get two aspects.

### *Skills*

Minions are built using a skill column of width one as lieutenants are.

### *Stunts*

Minions have at most one stunt, related to their role, although they may have none.

### *Stress and Consequences*

The stress tracks for minions are calculated as for leaders and lieutenants (base of two, possibly modified by high Physique and Will skills). Minions don't have any consequences.

### *No Skill Minions*

As an option, minions may have no skills at all. Instead, whenever they take an action, they add the mission difficulty to the check. In essence, all of their skills are equal to the mission difficulty. Minions with no skills always have physical and mental stress tracks of length two and don't have stunts.

This option is best used when minions must be created quickly, and fleshing out individual skills doesn't matter much. Creating guards for infiltration missions is a good time to use no skill minions. Diplomats for diplomacy threats also work well as no skill minions.

## Assets

Through stunts or aspect burning, the players may have access to **assets**. Assets aren't first class characters with their own actions, but are instead tied closely to the hero. They might be animal companions, familiars, squires, torchbearers, magical amulets, or artifacts. Only heroes and leaders have assets, and they can't have more than one asset at a time.

## Aspects

Assets have a core concept, much like a character. These can be invoked or used in challenge scene complications as normal.

### *Helpful and Hindering Aspects*

Assets have both hindering and helpful aspects with skills tied to them that function as relationships do, although no character needs to be in the same scene to use them. Each time an asset gains a helpful aspect and skill, they also gain a hindering aspect and skill.

### *Stress and Consequences*

Assets don't have any stress tracks. It's possible they may have a minor consequence. Asset consequences may be taken by the controlling player instead of using their own consequences. Assets may never be targeted directly and they may not be killed or destroyed unless desired by the controlling hero.

### *Aspect Burning*

As mentioned in *Core Rules* (page XX), aspects may be converted into assets or improve existing assets. Only free invokes from campaign aspects may be burned in this way. The number of free invokes that must be converted is based on the number of helpful/hindering pairs of aspects the asset has. The listed number of free invokes must be burned to add one helpful and one hindering aspect.

#### **Number of Helpful/Hindering Aspect Pairs Free Invokes Burned**

1 2

# SKILLS AND STUNTS

Most actions taken by players during the game involve the use of skills and stunts. Typically, when the dice are rolled as part of an action, the result is added to an appropriate skill and compared against the opposition. Stunts provide additional effects that can modify how skills are used or provide special effects during different types of conflicts.

## Skills

Skills in *Wrath of the Autarch* are broad descriptions of capabilities and areas of expertise. Skills are used in conjunction with the four core actions mentioned in *Core Rules* (page XX). Some skills are more suited to certain core actions than others (for instance, Survival isn't used for attacks). Every skill can be used to create an advantage.

### *Skills and Conflicts*

The four types of conflicts tend to focus on distinct skills. For instance, Tactics is very useful in warfare, while Stealth is most useful during infiltration. Knowing which skills are best for each conflict is useful when determining which heroes to take on a mission. The skill description also describes what sorts of conflicts a skill is best suited for.

## Stunts

Stunts are special applications of skills, accessible when a skill reaches Superb (+5) or higher. They allow for additional bonuses to rolls, special benefits during certain conflicts, or other advantages that go beyond the normal usages of a skill.

### *Gaining Stunts*

Heroes start the campaign with one stunt for their skill of rank Great (+4). Each time a skill advances to the rank of Superb (+5) or higher, the hero gains an additional stunt from that skill's stunt list. Some stunts have other stunts listed as prerequisites. In that case, the stunt isn't available until the character also has all the listed prerequisite stunts.

### *Opposition Stunts*

Some stunts are only available to the opposition the heroes face (opposing leaders, monsters, and minions). These stunts are listed in a general opposition stunts section at the end of the chapter (page XX).

Some opposition stunts take more than one slot for purposes of the total number of stunts. For instance, if a leader is allowed to take three stunts, and one of them takes two slots, they're only allowed one more stunt. All stunts for heroes only take one slot.

## Athletics

Athletics encompasses not just physical fitness, but also body awareness and movement. It's used for climbing, swimming, tumbling, and balancing. If all that matters is raw power, and not some form of movement, then Physique is the more relevant skill.

Athletics determines the maximum number of zones a character can move in skirmish and infiltration conflicts. See *Conflicts* (page XX) for more details on character movement.

**Athletics 0-2:** 2 movement points

**Athletics 3-5:** 3 movement points

**Athletics 6+:** 4 movement points

### *Tumbling*

*Infiltration, Skirmish*

During movement in infiltration or skirmish, may ignore one opposing character for purposes of drawing a stress card.

### *Shifty Dodge*

*Infiltration, Skirmish, Prerequisite: Tumbling*

When defending against a Fighting attack with Athletics, may move one zone away after the attack. This movement may not be opposed.

### *Shifty Dodge (Improved)*

*Infiltration, Skirmish, Prerequisite: Shifty Dodge*

When defending against a Fighting attack with Athletics, may move two zones away after the attack. This movement may not be opposed.

### *Fast Feet*

*Infiltration, Skirmish, Prerequisite: Tumbling*

May move two zones and still take a free action.



## Channeling

Channeling is used to detect and harness the magic energies that can be found in the wildest regions of the Realm. Channeling is also used to determine the amount of starting mana a spellcaster has available. See *Magic* (page XX) for more details on mana, spellcasting, and channeling.

If a character takes Channeling stunts that require the spending of mana, the character should bind to a region as a spellcaster (no changes if already bound to a region). After any expenditure of mana, determine backlash as normal.

### *Arcane Defense*

For each mana spent, add +1 to any character's defend action against arcane attacks (actions which require the use of mana).

### *Chaotic Reserves*

For each mana spent, take one physical stress and add +1 to any character's attack action which causes physical stress.

### *Hurt the Ones You Love*

When this character generates backlash, it may be reduced by four. If reduced, choose a target character from the same faction as the caster. For heroes, the target character must be the hero they have a helpful aspect with. The target character immediately takes a severe consequence. The consequence should be thematically appropriate to the type of magic used. If the target character doesn't have an open severe consequence slot, they are killed—provided all the players agree. If the group doesn't agree, the full backlash should be applied to the bound region as normal.

### *Fleeting Familiar*

Summon a magical entity to perform tasks. Spend three mana to add +3 to a create advantage action using Channeling. Create an aspect to describe a specialized arcane familiar or the result of using the familiar.

## Command

The Command skill is used to get the most out of people. A character with a high Command is listened to and respected, if not always liked.

### *Band Together*

#### *Warfare*

During warfare, after units have been assigned during a clash of arms action, may swap one defending unit under the character's command for a different unit that isn't being attacked.

### *Hold Your Ground!*

#### *Warfare*

Add +2 to a defend action for a unit under the character's command once during each warfare exchange.

### *Fight for Your Home!*

#### *Warfare*

When defending a home region, add two additional militia units to character's command. These don't count against the total number of units that a commander may control.

### *Heroic Action*

#### *Warfare*

Spend a fate point to take a heroic action even if the character has already taken a different action this exchange.

### *Battlefield Savagery*

#### *Infiltration, Skirmish, Warfare*

The character performs a vicious and disturbing attack. Draw a stress card to add the character's Command value to Fighting (max stress inflicted is equal to Command + Fighting). However, the target may mitigate the stress through using both the physical and mental stress tracks (one box in each may be checked).

## Disguise

Disguise is used when pretending to be someone else. This doesn't have to involve a physical disguise.

### *Blackmail Artist*

Add +2 to Disguise checks made to create an advantage when blackmailing a target.

### *Deep Cover*

#### *Infiltration*

If captured during an infiltration mission, the character may successfully shift blame to some other faction. Create an appropriate campaign aspect to indicate growing distrust and animosity toward the blamed faction. Although the Stronghold takes no disposition hits, the caught character is still detained as normal.

### *Hasty Story*

Each stress card drawn adds three instead of two on Disguise defend actions.

### *Inside Job*

#### *Infiltration*

May burn one campaign aspect to allow this character access to one zone during infiltration conflicts. While this character is in the designated zone, no opposition may detect them as an intruder. (Failed actions on the part of the character could still arouse suspicion or alert.)

## Engineering

The knowledge of machinery, particularly machines of war, is covered by the Engineering skill.

### *Range Calculations*

#### *Warfare*

Catapults and cannons under this character's command have their range increased to four.

### *Efficient Engineers*

#### *Warfare*

Catapults or cannons under the command of this character may move one additional zone as part of the movement action.

### *Makeshift Device*

Add +2 to Engineering checks made to create an advantage when crafting devices from ad-hoc supplies.

### *Infantry Bombs*

#### *Warfare*

Infantry under this commander's control gain the Siege skill at +1. This works as does normal Siege, although the maximum range is one zone (the infantry must be adjacent to the fortified strategic zone).

## Fighting

Fighting is knowledge of weapons and the ability to utilize them to defeat others in martial combat. It also covers unarmed combat. However, it isn't used for leading units of many men into battle, which falls under the Tactics skill.

### Powerful Attack

*Infiltration, Skirmish, Warfare*

The character is a bruising attacker, capable of delivering crushing blows. Add +2 to attack actions using Fighting.

### I'm on a Roll!

*Skirmish, Infiltration, Warfare*

On a successful attack action, gain a boost even if the attack didn't succeed with style. If it succeeded with style, gain an extra boost.

### No Quarter Given

*Skirmish, Infiltration*

If an opponent leaves the zone the character is in, make an attack against them.

### Whirling Attack

*Skirmish, Infiltration*

Draw a stress card to attack every opponent in the same zone using Fighting. Only determine the attack value once, but each defender may defend individually.

## Lore

Lore is knowledge of the mystical and arcane facets of the Realm, knowledge of spells, artifacts, and bizarre creatures of myth. Lore is also essential to learning secrets, the harnessing of mana to produce magical effects.

### Initiate

The character chooses a secret and gains access to the initiate spell from that secret. Choose a region to bind with, and gain mana each season from the region. See *Magic* (page XX) for more details.

### Apprentice

*Requirement: Initiate stunt for chosen secret*

The character gains access to the apprentice spell for the chosen secret.

### Adept

*Requirement: Apprentice ability within secret.*

The character gains access to the adept spell for the chosen secret.

### Keeper

*Requirement: Adept ability within secret.*

The character gains access to the keeper spell for the chosen secret.

### Useful Trivia

Add +2 to Lore checks made to create an advantage when recalling some bit of arcane lore.

## Marksmanship

The Marksmanship skill works with any fired weapons, such as slings or bows of any sort. It also governs thrown weapons like spears or javelins.

### Hit the Weak Point

*Infiltration, Skirmish, Warfare*

Once per exchange, invoke a target's consequence of a physical nature without spending a fate point.

### Rapid Fire

*Infiltration, Skirmish, Warfare*

Draw a stress card to make two separate attack actions in the same turn. May target different opponents.

### Covering Fire

Add +1 when using boosts to provide covering fire.

### Eagle Eye

*Infiltration, Skirmish*

On attack actions, the target is one zone closer for purposes of calculating range.

## Physique

Where Athletics governs pure physical power, Physique measures raw physical power and endurance. Shrugging off bumps, bruises, and continuing to perform a strenuous task are possible with a high Physique. Bashing open doors or bending bars is also the province of Physique.

### Improved Physical Stress

Instead of stunts, the Physique skill gives the character higher resistance to physical stress. At lower ranks, it provides more stress boxes, while at higher ranks, it provides more consequences. Find the rating of the Physique skill below to determine the bonus to physical stress.

Use the unlock check boxes on the character sheet to note newly available physical stress boxes.

+1 or +2: A 3-point physical stress box

+3 or +4: A 4-point physical stress box

+5 or +6: An additional mild consequence slot

+7 or +8: An additional medium consequence slot

## Rapport

Rapport is the process of building lasting friendships. Characters with high Rapport have a grace and charm which allows them to easily make friends. It's also useful in brokering deals and creating alliances.

### *Passive Aggressive*

#### *Diplomacy*

When the character successfully gains support, opposing characters on the same issue each take one mental stress.

### *Related Point*

#### *Diplomacy*

When the character successfully gains support, they gain a boost. If the character succeeds with style, they gain an additional boost.

### *Captivating Features*

Add +1 when using boosts to leverage the character's looks.

### *Winning Personality*

#### *Diplomacy*

The character is better at fostering relationships with those close to them. The character may use Rapport instead of Society to defend against social attacks.

## Society

A character with a high Society skill understands the cultural details for the different factions and peoples of the Realm. These include the traditions, mannerisms, and trappings the leadership of the faction finds important, as well as other general details about each faction. Society is a useful skill for avoiding an embarrassing faux pas.

### *Socially Adept*

#### *Diplomacy*

For diplomacy, the character's Society skill is 2 higher for purposes of turn order.

### *Commanding Word*

#### *Diplomacy*

Spend a fate point to add an additional point of support when successfully gaining support.

### *High Born*

Add +2 on Society checks when overcoming resistance by using charm and sophistication.

### *Friends in High Places*

This character is well known throughout the Realm. Add +2 to create advantage actions when interacting with leaders from other factions.

### *Intoxicating Power*

#### *Diplomacy*

Add +2 to attack actions using Society.



## Stealth

Stealth is the skill to use for moving silently and avoiding detection.

### Assassin's Perch

#### *Skirmish*

The character is adept at finding hidden areas and attacking from them. During skirmish setup, the character may set-up in any zone desired, and no opponents may be placed in the same zone as the character. Furthermore, the character starts the skirmish with the **Hidden** aspect with one free invoke.

### Quiet as a Mouse

Add +1 when using boosts to leverage a hidden position.

### Sneak Attack

#### *Infiltration, Skirmish*

Add +2 to attacks when attacking from a hidden position.

## Survival

Survival imparts an understanding of the flora and fauna of the wilds, as well as a keen awareness of enemies lying in wait.

### Animal Companion (Good)

Create an asset with two helpful aspects and two hindering aspects (no need to burn campaign aspects to create it). See *Characters* (page XX) for more details.

### Animal Companion (Great)

*Prerequisite: Animal Companion (Good)*

As good animal companion, but the animal companion also gains a minor consequence which can be used to absorb physical attacks.

### Animal Companion (Superb)

*Prerequisite: Animal Companion (Great)*

As great animal companion, but draw two cards when using the helpful aspects from the animal companion. Add all suns on both cards.

### Tracker

Add +2 to overcome actions when following tracks in the wilds.

### Poisoner

Add +2 on Survival checks when creating an advantage that deals with any sort of poison.

## Tactics

Understanding the use of military force is the cornerstone of Tactics. Troop movements, weapons of war, combined arms, logistics, and using terrain all are covered by the Tactics skill.

### *Battle Master*

#### *Warfare*

During warfare, a group of units under a character's command may act independently. The units no longer need to remain in the same zone as the commander, and may be controlled independently for the duration of the battle. However, the group of units is considered to have a Tactics and Command of Mediocore (+0) for the purposes of turn order.

### *Infantry Maneuver*

#### *Warfare*

Once each exchange, add +2 to an attack utilizing infantry exclusively (no other unit type may be in the attacking group). The attacking commander may control other unit types.

### *Pushback*

#### *Warfare*

If the character inflicts more casualties than the other side in a clash of arms (taking into account possible outflanking), may move opposing commander and units to an empty adjacent zone. If no adjacent zone is empty, or if both sides lost the same number of units, they remain where they are.

### *Set for Charge*

#### *Warfare*

During warfare, add +1 to the Armor of infantry and militia units when they defend against charging cavalry (only for the turn the cavalry moved).

## *Enemy Weakness*

Add +2 on Tactics checks when creating advantages that exploit a perceived flaw in the enemy's battle strategies.

## Thievery

Thievery is used for any type of larcenous activity, from picking locks to picking pockets. The skill also encompasses knowledge of security countermeasures. Furthermore, Thievery imparts some level of streetwise to the character, useful in determining which areas are dangerous or how to obtain contraband.

### Disable Alarm

#### *Infiltration*

As an overcome action with opposition equal to mission difficulty, may remove an alarm from a zone.

### Friends in Low Places

Add +2 to Thievery checks for create advantage actions that leverage underworld contacts.

### Master Burglar

*Prerequisites: Disable Alarm, Master Lockpicker*

The character is able to recover all manner of illicit goods. When using create advantage to create a campaign aspect, the player may declare the aspect to be a luxury, listing it on the Stronghold sheet where it may function as a luxury die during the next trading phase. Make a note of the aspect. Each free invoke burned gives one luxury die.

### Master Lockpicker

Add +1 to boosts used when opening locks.

## Will

A character with a high Will is less affected by witnessing horrors of all stripes. It's also the ability to focus mentally for long periods of time.

### Improved Mental Stress

Instead of stunts, the Will skill gives the character higher resistance to mental stress. At lower ranks, it provides more stress boxes, while at higher ranks, it provides more consequences. Find the rating of the Will skill below to determine the bonus to mental stress.

Use the unlock check boxes on the character sheet to note newly available mental stress boxes.

+1 or +2: A 3-point mental stress box

+3 or +4: A 4-point mental stress box

+5 or +6: An additional mild consequence slot

+7 or +8: An additional medium consequence slot

## Wits

Wits is useful for spotting hidden things or determining when you're being tricked.

### *Never Forget a Face*

Add +2 to overcome actions when trying to see through a character's disguise.

### *Shoot the Messenger*

#### *Diplomacy*

When this character defends against a gain support action, the acting character takes one mental stress.

### *Shoot the Messenger, Improved*

#### *Diplomacy, Prerequisites: Shoot the Messenger*

When this character defends against a gain support action, the acting character takes two mental stress.

### *Assess the Situation*

Add +2 on Wits checks to create advantage when leveraging an unnoticed detail.

## Opposition Stunts

This section lists stunts only available to opposition (leaders, lieutenants, and minions) that don't fit under any skill grouping.

### *Big Bad*

The character gets a severe consequence. If opposed by four heroes, this character gets one additional stress box on either their physical or mental stress track. If opposed by five heroes, this character gets two additional stress boxes on either their physical or mental stress track. This stunt is reserved for solo opposition in a skirmish conflict, or very important characters, such as the Autarch. This stunt doesn't use up a stunt slot.

### *Flight (2 Slots)*

Add +2 when using Athletics to defend against Fighting attacks. Ignore ground based obstacles when moving through zones.

### *Ghostly*

Add +2 when using Athletics or Fighting to defend against attacks of a physical form (magical attacks do not grant this bonus).

### *Orb of Scrying*

#### *Infiltration*

Secretly designate one zone to contain the Orb of Scrying. Heroes entering this zone must make a Stealth roll to avoid being detected. If detected, the character with the Orb of Scrying stunt is alerted.

### *Quick*

#### *Infiltration, Skirmish, Warfare*

Prior to making an attack action, may move one zone. Usual rules for moving out of an opposed zone apply. This is in addition to any other movement available.

## Trapmaster

### *Infiltration*

Use the focus action to create a **Trap** aspect in the character's current zone with one free invoke. The trap stops hero movement. Trap may be removed with an overcome action with Thievery at a passive opposition equal to mission difficulty.

# MAGIC

**Magic** is the fusion of mana pulled from the land with a sorcerer's will, resulting in an arcane effect. It's a chaotic and omnipresent force of energy, difficult to control but very powerful. It's present everywhere, although in some locations, such as the untamed and exotic parts of the wilds, it's present in high enough concentration that it may be harnessed by magic users. Characters with high enough Lore may learn **secrets**, complex and arcane procedures for channeling mana to produce all manner of fantastical effects

## Mana

**Mana**, for those with attuned channeling abilities, appears as shimmering bands of color, a tinted hue laid out upon the land. Each region generates its own unique signature of mana, and capable channelers can detect the origin of mana harnessed by others. It can be stored and bound in a wide variety of vessels, although this greatly weakens its potency, making it worthless for use in spells.

### *Binding to the Land*

Before wielding secrets, a spellcaster must **bind** to the land. This is an involved process, taking an entire season to accomplish (newly made characters may start play already bound to a region). This is a solitary time, as the caster takes solace in understanding the flora and fauna of the region. The caster becomes part of the land in an intimate relationship. The caster is acutely aware of when the land is damaged or when another caster is attempting to bind to the same region.

The regions with the highest amount of mana allow for the most potent use of magic. When a caster binds to a region, the region is noted on the character sheet, next to the character's mana pool. It isn't possible for a channeler to bind to more than one region, as the effort required to create bonds with the land is too great. A caster may change which region they are bound to, but this takes an entire season of time (no training or healing is possible).

### *Starting Mana*

At the start of each season, every character bound to the land gains an amount of mana equal to their Channeling skill plus the mana value of the region. Additionally, certain developments (mana forge) and artifacts (Thedda's Palimpsest) grant additional starting mana for all spellcasters.

*Kara is bound to the Sunset Isles. The Sunset Isles have two mana. Kara's Channeling skill is Great (+4). Additionally, the Stronghold has a mana forge, which grants three additional starting mana. Kara will start each season with  $2 + 4 + 3 = 9$  mana.*



## Wielding Magic

To use magic, a character needs to be bound to a region and have a high enough Lore skill to gain access to a secret. Mana is then expended based on the specific secret and effect desired.

### Secrets

Secrets are groupings of thematically linked stunts. Each secret has four stunts, the four tiers of increasing mystical knowledge with the secret. These tiers, in order of increasing power, are known as **initiate**, **apprentice**, **adept**, and **keeper**. Earlier tiered stunts are prerequisites for later tiered stunts. For instance, a character must have the apprentice level stunt in the Secret of the Elements (Hailstorm) before being able to gain the adept Secret of the Elements stunt (Wind Rider). Casting a spell is the process of spending mana to use one of these stunts.

Although it's possible to become an initiate in multiple secrets, thus gaining broad ability, the only way to gain access to the very powerful keeper stunts is to specialize. Specialists are typically defined by their secret. Each secret tends to be linked with a world view and ethos that form a core part of the caster.

### Initiate Tier

All of the initiate stunts are very similar mechanically. By spending a point of mana, the caster's Lore skill can be used in place of another skill in certain contexts. Each additional mana spent adds +1 to the result. This allows for the potential to spend lots of mana to get a large bonus on the roll. However, the more mana spent, the greater the chance for backlash.

*Kara is an initiate in the Secret of the Elements. She's attacked by wolves and spends one point of mana to use her Fire Blast stunt to allow her Lore skill to function as Marksmanship while attacking. She makes an opposed draw against the wolves' Athletics, deciding to spend an additional two mana to gain +2 to the check. Three total mana is spent for the spell, which comes into play for backlash checks.*

### Advanced Tiers

The stunt effects for the advanced tiers are all very different, although the mana costs are the same across

tiers. It costs five mana to use an apprentice secret, ten mana for an adept secret, and fifteen mana for a keeper secret. The keeper tier secrets are tremendously powerful and can function as the capstone to an entire Stronghold strategy.

### Backlash Check

Spending mana could result in a terrible **backlash** to the land the caster is bound to. Any time a player spends mana, they make a Channeling check, opposed by the amount of mana spent. This is called a **backlash check**. If the opposition is greater than the hero's Channeling, they earn a skill advance if the check is made during the challenge phase (as normal).

### Backlash Effects

The psychic link between the caster and the land flows both ways. One resource (food, timber, ore, mana, or luxuries) is permanently removed from the land the caster is bound to for each point of deficit on the backlash check. The particular resources are chosen by the caster. Also, the region where the mana came from is changed, taking on features related to the effect produced which caused the mana drain. The Autarch player creates a thematically appropriate campaign aspect with one free invoke (or adds a free invoke if there's already an aspect from backlash). For example, the region might gain **Restless Spirits** if there's backlash from casting a Secret of the Dead. Choose wisely the lands where you draw mana from, as a region with no resources isn't very valuable!

## Secrets of the Dead

The white ships which sail to the island of the dead usually make no return trips. The mystics who know the Secrets of the Dead can voyage into that other dimension and pull the dead back, whether they want to return or not—not a practice that most people would look upon favorably. Sorcerers who master the Secrets of the Dead are frequently greeted with suspicion by many societies within the Realm.

### Shadow Walker

1+ Mana

The caster phases into the realm of the dead, becoming shadowy and difficult to detect. Spend a point of mana to use Lore in place of Stealth when moving quietly or hiding. Additional mana may be spent to add +1 to the final result.

### Commune with the Dead

5 Mana

The caster contacts someone deceased, absorbing their thoughts and learning their secrets. The caster must know something about the target, if only descriptions gleaned from talking with others. Create a mission aspect with two free invokes that reflects the knowledge gained. For instance, **Intimate Knowledge of Blackfell Keep**. This doesn't require an action to use.

### Animate Human

10 Mana

An assassinated faction leader (or hero) is brought back as an undead thrall of the caster. The dead character retains most of the faculties they had while living, although they aren't quite the same mentally or physically. All of their skills are lowered by two and they lose access to all of their stunts. Stress tracks are calculated with the new skills, and they gain one minor consequence. Furthermore, two of their aspects are swapped out for new aspects chosen by the Autarch player.

These characters are controlled just like other characters, and function as an additional hero that will go on missions provided the caster goes along with

them. The player controlling the caster also controls the minion. Only one undead minion may be employed at a time.

### Army of the Dead

15 Mana

The caster resurrects a well trained army from the forgotten past. The army of the dead operate as five infantry, although only the caster may lead them in war. Ignore any command restrictions on unit sizes. See *Warfare* (page XX) for more details on how to interpret the unit stat block. None of the developments apply to the army of the dead. If not destroyed in battle, the army crumbles at the end of the season in which it was summoned.

### Soldiers of the Dead (Infantry)

|              |                    |
|--------------|--------------------|
| Great (+4)   | Armor              |
| Good (+3)    | Fighting, Movement |
| Average (+1) | Marksmanship       |

#### *Unthinking Killing Machines*

#### *How Dare You Disturb Our Slumber!*

#### *Gleefully Seek Destruction*

**Aura of Terror:** A commander wishing to take units into the same zone as the undead soldiers must succeed at a Great (+4) Command roll.

## Secrets of the Elements

Mastering the elements requires a keen eye for detail. Elemental magic is primarily used for its offensive capabilities, and is well suited to skirmish and warfare.

### Fire Strike

*1+ Mana*

The caster harnesses fire, throwing it at a target. Spend a point of mana to use Lore in place of Marksmanhood to attack a character (not unit) with fire. Each additional mana spent adds +1 to the final result.

### Hailstorm

*5+ Mana*

Large icy pellets fall from the sky. This works similarly to the Fire Strike stunt, except every character (not unit) within the same zone is hit (they each may defend independently). There are no penalties for range. Also, the target zone gets the *Icy Terrain* aspect with one free invoke. Each additional mana spent adds +1 to the final result.

### Wind Rider

*10 Mana*

The caster's maximum movement is increased by two, and they furthermore gain access to the Flight (General) stunt for the remainder of the mission.

### Earthquake

*15 Mana*

The ground opens up and does massive damage to anything standing on it. The caster's Lore is used in place of Fighting to attack all characters and units in the target zone (they each get to defend independently). The Lore check is made only once. Furthermore, the caster's Lore may be used in place of Siege to attack castles and keeps. There are no penalties for range.

## Secrets of the Mind

The caster can control wants and desires, from the whims and wishes of a single person up to the leanings and attitudes of an entire population of people.

### Charm

*1+ Mana*

Spend a point of mana to use Lore in place of Rapport when exaggerating the truth. Each additional mana spent adds +1 to the final result.

### Glamour

*5 Mana*

Caster chooses a target character. Target character subtracts two from Wits skill for remainder of season. Does not require an action to use.

### Paragon of Grace

*10 Mana*

The caster adds their Lore skill to all actions using Rapport and Society. In addition, Society is increased by the value of Lore for determining exchange order in diplomacy conflicts.

### Collective Will

*15 Mana*

Any minor faction with a disposition of 0 or higher becomes a military ally (set disposition to +5).

## Secrets of the Wilds

Those who learn the Secrets of the Wilds tend to become boorish, losing their way in polite society. They feel more at home amongst the beasts of the world than in the refined halls of nobles. The advanced tiers allow the caster to shapeshift into animal forms: wolf, snake, and dragon.

Casting any of the shapeshifting spells allows the caster to transform to and from the listed animal for an entire season. The player chooses at the start of each turn whether to be in human or animal form, and must remain that way for their whole turn. This is true for the challenge phase as well as the conflict phase.

While in animal form, the caster uses the provided stat block instead of their own. Furthermore, the caster loses access to all of their normal skills, stunts, and aspects, with the exception of keeping the ability to transform back into a human. Most of the skills for the animal are expressed in terms of the caster's Lore rather than as absolute values. Stress tracks may also change. If the caster gets additional stress, these must be tracked for the remainder of the season (changing from animal to human back to animal does not remove stress or consequences).

### Primal Quickness

1+ Mana

The caster taps into a preternatural quickness and strength. Spend a point of mana to use Lore in place of Athletics. Additional mana may be spent to add +1 to the final result.

During a conflict, each additional mana spent gives the character one additional movement point. Using Primal Quickness furthermore removes the maximum movement amount for the character. Impediments to movement (opposing characters, obstacles) still function as normal.

### Fangs of the Wolf

5 Mana

The caster may take the form of a dire wolf. Wolves do not have the ability to speak, so communication is very difficult.

## Majestic Dire Wolf

### *Highly Attuned Senses*

### *Powerful Jaws*

### *Insatiable Hunger*

Lore      Survival

Lore -1    Athletics, Fighting

Lore -2    Physique, Stealth

As Character      Channeling, Lore, Tactics, Will, Wits,

**Physical** □□□□

**Mental**    As Character

**Render:** *If the wolf successfully attacks a target with Fighting, add +2 to all future attacks against the same target.*

**Tracker:** *Add +2 to overcome actions using Survival when tracking prey.*

### Skin of the Snake

10 Mana

The caster takes on the form of a viper. Snakes do not have the ability to speak, so communication is difficult.

### Slithering Viper

### *Neurotoxic Venom*

### *Quick Reactions*

### *Physically Weak*

Lore +1    Stealth

Lore      Athletics, Fighting

Lore -3    Physique

As Character      Channeling, Lore, Nature, Tactics, Will, Wits

**Physical** □□

**Mental**    As Character

**Silent Movement:** *Add +2 to create advantage actions using Stealth.*

**Vulnerable:** *Subtract -2 when defending in combat with Fighting or Athletics.*

**Poison:** *Add +2 when attacking with Fighting.*

### **Heart of the Dragon**

15 Mana

The caster takes on the form of a massive dragon. Dragons can speak and communicate in the common tongue. All skills not listed are the same as they are for the caster.

### **Dragon Shape**

**Powerful Dragon**

**Wings of Fury and Death**

**Bringer of Fear**

**Scales of Iron**

Lore + 2 Fighting, Marksmanship, Siege

Lore Athletics, Movement, Physique

Lore - 4 Stealth

**Physical** □□□□

**Mental** As Character

**Flying (General Stunt)**

**Fiery Breath:** *May use Marksmanship to attack all characters and units in the target zone.*



# Factions

The seven factions in *WotA* are the Stronghold, the Empire of the Autarch, and the five minor factions. Each faction has stability attributes, as well as aspects, regions, and leaders. Additionally, the Stronghold tracks developments and disposition towards other factions and the Empire tracks available schemes.

## Faction Attributes

Factions only have one core attribute: stability.

### *Stability*

**Stability** measures the cohesion and unity within the faction. As it lowers, the faction becomes more disorganized and easier to target. Mission difficulties are one lower if faction stability drops below -2. Alternatively, if a faction has a disposition higher than +2, mission difficulties are increased by one.

For the Stronghold, higher stability gives heroes additional fate points at the start of missions. Lower stability means heroes start with fewer fate points.

## Common Features

All factions share aspects, leaders, regions, developments, and units. The minor factions (as well as the resistance within the Empire) also have trade charts.

### Aspects

Every faction has aspects, which function similarly to character aspects. These may be invoked whenever the faction is playing an important part in the mission. For the Stronghold, this is every mission. Aspects also help give color to each faction. Faction aspects may be invoked by any character, provided they're relevant.

### Leaders

Each faction has a set of leaders that may be used in missions with that faction. Most leaders are best suited for alliance missions, but some factions have competent military leaders as well.

As with the heroes of the Stronghold, the faction leaders aren't necessarily members of the ruling class; they're people who are highly skilled for a variety of reasons.

### Names

In each faction's chapter is a list of appropriate names common to the faction. These are useful during missions when a new minor character is needed.

### Regions

**Regions** are large areas of land that contain important resources. There's a set of neutral regions available for conquest by the Stronghold (see *Neutral Regions*, page XX, for a list). The exact location of regions is purposefully left vague, although regions may be drawn on the map as they are acquired.

### Resources

Regions provide food, timber, ore, mana, and luxuries. Only the Stronghold tracks the seasonal up-take of resources.

The values for resources represent fairly abstract quantities of the materials in question. Food is the amount of food necessary to feed one population for

one season. Mana is a transient resource, channeled into vessels for trade, although this weakens its potency and makes it useless for spells. Finally, luxuries are any compact high value goods, such as gold, gems, or rare spices and herbs.

### Capital

Each faction has one region that's their **capital**. If this region falls as a result of military action, the faction will collapse. When defending a capital, a faction doesn't have limits on the number of units that may be used.

### Developments

Only the Stronghold uses developments. For things like units, other factions either have a fixed amount for the campaign (minor faction) or can gain them in different ways (Empire).

### Mission Difficulty

The other primary effect that developments have for the factions is to set the mission difficulty. If one of these developments is sabotaged, the mission difficulty for the faction decreases. See *Developments* (page XX) for more details.

### Units

Available units, like developments, are fixed for minor factions during the campaign. If a unit is lost in battle, it may not be replaced. The Empire gains units by investing points in the warfare threat pool, while the Stronghold gains new units by expending resources during the build developments phase.

### Trade

The Stronghold may trade resources with each minor faction. The Stronghold may also fund the underground resistance of the Empire using luxuries. The available trading options are listed on the faction sheet. This is covered in *Seasons* (page XX).

## Faction Collapse

If a faction's capital falls in warfare, it collapses and is no longer in the campaign. A faction with no capital doesn't generate threats, may not trade goods or contribute units to allies, and may not be the target of any missions.

Factions may still defend their other regions using any remaining troops they have available. But they will not mount any offensive attacks.

If the Stronghold collapses for any reason, the campaign is over, and the Empire has emerged victorious.

## The Stronghold

The Stronghold has many of the same attributes as the rest of the factions. Since the Stronghold is the focal point of the campaign, there is additional tracking and growth that takes place.

### *Stronghold Aspects*

The Stronghold's aspects help define the theme of the campaign. They are invoked, endured, and compelled as the other faction aspects. They may only be changed during the Winter season.

### *Campaign Aspects*

There's space on the Stronghold sheet for campaign aspects created during play. The number of slots on the Stronghold sheet is a limiter on how many can be created. The free invokes on campaign aspects are frequently burned to create assets and units, although they may be used like any other aspect.

### *Disposition*

The disposition with other minor factions is tracked on the faction sheet. If the disposition is +5 or higher, the minor faction in question becomes a full ally of the Stronghold, and will contribute units during military battle. In addition, the higher the disposition for a minor faction, the more goods are available as part of trade agreements.

A low disposition with another faction opens the possibility for enemy faction threats toward the Stronghold. If the disposition with another faction drops to -4 or less, the faction becomes an ally with the Autarch, and will contribute units to the Empire in military battle.

## The Empire

As with the Stronghold, the Empire changes and evolves over the course of the campaign and has a few additional elements that must be tracked.

### *Threat Pools*

The biggest difference between the Empire and the other minor factions is the use of threat pools. Each Spring the Autarch player may increase one threat difficulty.

### *Units*

The Empire gains additional units when their warfare threat pool increases. The total units received are listed in *The Empire* (page XX).

#### Mission Difficulties

|                      | Diplomacy | Infiltration | Skirmish | Warfare |
|----------------------|-----------|--------------|----------|---------|
| <b>Empire</b>        | 4*, 5*    | 4*           | 4*       | 4*      |
| <b>Burgan Vale</b>   | 4         | 5            | 4        | 5       |
| <b>Crescent Hold</b> | 3         | 4            | 6        | 5       |
| <b>Gravewood</b>     | 5         | 6            | 3        | 4       |
| <b>Lily Manor</b>    | 6         | 5            | 4        | 3       |
| <b>Sunriders</b>     | 4         | 3            | 5        | 6       |

# Developments

**Developments** are cultural, technological, and civic improvements to the Stronghold. Developments might be physical structures like a mage tower, scientific advancements such as gunpowder, or even skilled groups of people, like diplomats.

Developments may affect the Stronghold directly, such as by improving defensive capabilities, or developments might affect the heroes, giving them situational benefits during play. The latter sorts of developments are like stunts, except they affect all heroes from the Stronghold, not just one.

The Stronghold players build developments by spending the resources they obtain, as detailed in *Seasons* (page XX).

Other factions don't have developments (with the exception of keeps and castles). Instead, these are abstracted into general difficulties for each of the four types of conflict.

## Anatomy of a Development

Developments are described by the resource costs for building them (food, timber, ore, luxuries, and mana), by the tech tree they belong to, and by their effect.

### *Regional Developments*

Keeps and castles are very closely related to a particular region. When these developments are built, they should be listed on the Stronghold sheet under a particular region where they will reside. Factions already have these developments listed in the regions they control. Regional developments allow duplicates to be built, with a maximum of one such development in each region. If a region containing a development is ever lost for some reason, the development is lost with it. If a region has a threat which prevents any production of goods, the development also no longer functions until the threat conditions are removed.

### *Tech Trees*

The developments are divided into five tech trees. There's one tech tree for each type of conflict (diplomacy, infiltration, skirmish, and warfare) as well as a tech tree for arcane developments. The four conflict tech trees have effects that mainly help in each of those four conflict types, while the developments in the arcane tech tree benefit spellcaster heroes. The better developments in each tech tree have prerequisite developments that must be built first. The peak developments in each tree are difficult to obtain, and it's only possible to at most build a few of them over the course of the campaign.

### *Defensive Developments*

Some developments give the Stronghold certain defensive capabilities to cancel threats. Each defensive development may only be used once per year to cancel a threat of a certain difficulty or less. There's space on the developments summary sheet to track when these have been used. In the Spring, the defensive developments may be cleared so they can be used again.

## Units

Units function much like other developments. Their costs are listed in *Warfare* (page XX). Multiple units of the same type may be purchased during the Stronghold upkeep phase. Each unit purchased is added to the total on the Stronghold sheet.

## Arcane Developments

### *Arcane Military Academy*

May recruit battle mage units for warfare.

### *Great Casting*

May redraw on spell effect checks.

### *Superb Casting*

Draw two, keep one on spell effect checks.

### *Legendary Casting*

Draw three, keep one on spell effect checks.

### *Great Channeling*

May redraw on backlash checks.

### *Superb Channeling*

Draw two, keep one on backlash checks.

### *Legendary Channeling*

Draw three, keep one on backlash checks.

### *Mana Forge*

Spellcasters begin each session with three additional mana.

### *Mages Guild*

All heroes gain one Lore stunt. Current rank of Lore skill doesn't matter, but stunt prerequisites must still be met.



## Diplomacy Developments

### *Arts and Entertainment*

May redraw on Society actions when officially representing the Stronghold.

### *Center of Culture*

Draw two, keep one on Society actions when officially representing the Stronghold.

### *Great Diplomats*

Ignore one diplomacy threat per year of Great (+4) difficulty or less.

### *Superb Diplomats*

Ignore one diplomacy threat per year of Superb (+5) difficulty or less.

### *Fantastic Diplomats*

Ignore one diplomacy threat per year of Fantastic (+6) difficulty or less.

### *Festival*

Add one stability to the Stronghold. The cost listed is multiplied for each region under the Stronghold's control.

### *Trade Capital*

Gain +1 disposition on successful alliance missions.

### *Trade Guild*

May redraw on Rapport actions when officially representing the Stronghold.

### *Trade Outposts*

Draw two, keep one on Rapport actions when officially representing the Stronghold.

## Infiltration Developments

### *Safehouses*

May redraw on Disguise actions.

### *Improved Safehouses*

Draw two, keep one on Disguise actions.

### *Great Spies*

Ignore one infiltration threat per year of Great (+4) difficulty or less. Take two resource dice on successful heist mission. Dice may be of any type available in the regions controlled by the faction.

### *Superb Spies*

Ignore one infiltration threat per year of Superb (+5) difficulty or less. Successful sabotage missions inflict two stability loss.

### *Fantastic Spies*

Ignore one infiltration threat per year of Fantastic (+6) difficulty or less. Take three resource dice on successful heist mission. Dice may be of any type available in the regions controlled by the faction.

### *The Map Hall*

The Stronghold players place two notecards on their turn when setting up the house during infiltration. They also place the initial alarms.

### *Thieves Guild*

May redraw on Thievery actions.

### *Improved Thieves Tools*

Draw two, keep one on Thievery actions.

### *The Shadow Hall*

During infiltration, heroes may move through zones with guards by taking a stress card (usually heroes have to stop moving when entering a zone with a guard). The player draws and applies a stress card for each guard, but the hero remains hidden.

## Skirmish Developments

### *Arcane Smith*

May redraw when using Fighting to attack with melee weapons.

### *Improved Arcane Smith*

Draw two, keep one when using Fighting to attack with melee weapons.

### *Kinetic Armor*

All heroes add two boxes to their physical stress track.

### *Kinetic Greaves*

Free move up to two zones and take a different action.

### *Arcane Bowyer*

May redraw when attacking with Marksmanship.

### *Improved Arcane Bowyer*

Draw two, keep one when attacking with Marksmanship.

### *Great Guard Force*

Ignore one skirmish threat per year of difficulty Great (+4) or less.

### *Superb Guard Force*

Ignore one skirmish threat per year of difficulty Superb (+5) or less.

### *Fantastic Guard Force*

Ignore one skirmish threat per year of difficulty Fantastic (+6) or less.

## Warfare Developments

Most of these developments allow the Stronghold to muster different sorts of units for warfare. See *Warfare* (page XX) for unit details and resource costs.

### *Siegecraft*

May recruit catapult units.

### *Fletcher*

May recruit archer units.

### *Gunpowder*

May recruit cannon units.

### *Stables*

May recruit cavalry units.

### *Barracks*

May recruit infantry units for war. Ignore one warfare threat of Great (+4) difficulty or less each year if total recruited units (not militia) outnumber attacking units.

### *Great Barracks*

May redraw on unit attack checks during a clash of arms. Ignore one warfare threat of Superb (+5) difficulty or less each year if total recruited units (not militia) outnumber attacking units.

### *Superb Barracks*

Draw two, keep one on unit attack checks during a clash of arms. Ignore one warfare threat of Fantastic (+6) difficulty or less each year if total recruited units (not militia) outnumber attacking units.

### *Keep*

Place one keep on a target region.

### *Castle*

Upgrade a keep on region to a castle.

# CONFLICTS

Conflicts are mini-games based on diplomacy, infiltration, skirmish, or warfare. Conflicts are built from the core actions described in *Core Rules* (page XX), although the focus action is used instead of the create advantage action. Conflicts are the most tactical and adversarial part of the game.

## Zones

Zones are abstractions that usually represent physical spaces. The size of these physical spaces varies greatly depending on the conflict. In warfare, each zone might be an area of roughly 1,000 square yards, while in skirmish one zone might be a room in a house.

Zones could represent almost any physical shape, but in play they're designated by notecards. Each notecard may be labeled with the name of a zone (*bedroom*, *Red Gulch*), or a suitable picture may be drawn on the notecard.

Zones are placed on the table such that one edge of a zone is adjacent to one or more edges of other zones (notecards are placed orthogonally to other notecards). They can't be connected only through a diagonal. Zones provide a spatial element to conflicts, giving tactical options to characters or military units. There are different restrictions on how one character or unit interacts with others across the zone map.

In diplomacy, zones aren't physical spaces. Instead, zones represent issues that the two sides are arguing about. As such, zone placement restrictions don't apply. All zones in diplomacy are considered adjacent to each other.

## Obstacles

Zones may have obstacles in them. These are usually physical features, like dense foliage, each of which makes movement into the zone more difficult. Obstacles are written or drawn on the zone.

## Actions

Conflicts are played over exchanges, just like the challenge scene. Each player gets one action each exchange (the specific available actions are based on the type of conflict and are listed in the following chapters).

Unlike the challenge phase, the order of actions is usually based on a particular skill, and isn't up to the Stronghold players to decide. The create advantage action is not available during a conflict. Instead, two new action types, **focus** and **movement**, are available.

### Focus

The focus action is available in every conflict. It replaces the create advantage action. If a character has no boosts, they may use the focus action to take one boost. This action is not available to minions. Boosts may be spent as normal. See *Core Rules* (page XX) for more details.

### Movement

Movement is conducted by moving characters over the edges of adjacent zones (no diagonal movement is allowed). The maximum amount of movement depends on the conflict type and the skill used for movement.

If a character moves only one zone, they may take a different action either before or after the move. However, they may take stress from being opposed (see "Opposed Movement").

### Movement Points

Characters and units have maximum distances they can move. These are expressed in terms of **movement points**. The number of movement points available is based on Athletics for infiltration and skirmish (see the Athletics skill description on page XX) and from the Movement skill of the slowest commanded unit for warfare. Diplomacy is a little different, as a character may only move one zone (this represents changing the issue they're arguing about). Movement points aren't used in diplomacy.

Each obstacle in a zone requires one additional point of movement to enter. A character may always

move at least one zone, no matter how many obstacles there are.

## Opposed Movement

A character leaving a zone that contains opposing characters takes stress as a result. For each such opposing character, apply one stress card when leaving the zone. Assume all characters oppose movement unless specified otherwise.

### Opposed Movement

*Lem is fighting a bandit during a skirmish and wishes to move away. Lem has an Athletics of 4, which gives her 3 movement points. When Lem leaves the zone with the bandit, the Autarch player may apply a stress card immediately. This is a consequence of opposed movement. The Marshy Field zone has an obstacle, which makes it cost one extra movement to enter, leaving Lem with one movement left. Lem decides to move down to the Road zone.*

## Autarch Fate Points

The Autarch starts each conflict with fate points equal to the number of heroes. These can be spent in any way desired—they don't have to be allocated to particular opponents. Unused fate points from the challenge phase are discarded; they don't carry over to the conflict.

# Diplomacy

Diplomacy is used for social situations where two parties strive toward a common understanding through talks and negotiations. Alliance missions, where the Stronghold attempts to improve disposition with the targeted faction, always involve diplomacy. Diplomacy is also commonly used to resolve ally threats.

During diplomacy, the heroes attempt to gain the support of an audience by addressing issues raised by the other side. At the start of diplomacy, five issues are created. The number of issues successfully addressed determines the results of the mission.

## Challenges

Challenges during diplomacy missions focus on the relationships of the leaders toward the Stronghold. What sort of cultural differences are there? How do the heroes go about negotiating the customs of the people? Good challenges here can also focus on exposing infighting between different factions, thus forcing the heroes to choose sides. For alliance missions, there are sample challenges listed in the chapter for each faction.



## Opposition

The Autarch player gets one lieutenant for each hero taken on the mission. If the target of the mission is another faction (such as for alliance missions), the Autarch player may use any of the faction leaders instead. As usual, lieutenants have a peak skill rank equal to the difficulty of the mission. Good skills for lieutenants are Rapport, Society, and Wits.

## Setup

During setup, five issues are created. Write each issue down on a separate notecard. Issues should reflect cultural differences, concerns, and past transgressions. For example, *Is Aben's Hollow secure against the Autarch's spies?*, *Will you use the Gossamer Thread against us?*, and *Do you respect the veil of magic?*. Also gather up tokens (poker chips, beads, etc.) of two different colors to track each side's support.

### *Stronghold Issues*

Alternately, write a category from the five Stronghold aspects (*Wrath*, *Belief*, *Culture*, *Rule*, *History*) on each of the notecards. These categories will function as broadly scoped issues, guiding the conversation just as the specific issues do. This is a quicker process than coming up with five detailed issues and works best if the diplomacy conflict involves one of the other minor factions.

#### Issue Setup

### *Support*

Each side tries to gain support for issues by arguing their validity. If one of the sides gains enough support, they can claim the issue for themselves. The more issues the Stronghold claims, the stronger their position. The amount of support is tracked by placing tokens (one for each support) on the appropriate notecard. When one side has five support (five tokens) on an issue, they claim the issue.

Claiming an issue may have a different feel depending on the issue. For example, the Stronghold may be looking to minimize the importance of an issue ("We have no military weakness...") or they may be using the issue to gain leverage ("The people of Obsidian Wood do not need your aid..."). In either case, though, the side that claims the issue can dictate how it's perceived.

### *Alliance Missions*

For alliance missions, if the target faction has zero disposition or less, the Autarch player starts with one support on each issue.

### *Aspect Burning*

The Stronghold players may burn a free invoke (from a mission or campaign aspect) to place one support on an issue. Each free invoke burned allows the Stronghold players to place one support, although no more than one support may be placed on each issue (they have to be spread out).

### *Place Characters*

Characters are placed onto issues in reverse order of Society (the character with the lowest Society is placed first). Heroes break ties. A character placed onto or next to an issue is said to be **attached** to the issue.

### **The Exchange**

Turns are taken in order of the Society skill, with the highest character going first, working down. If tied, the Stronghold player may choose the order. Each character takes one action on their turn before a new exchange begins. Diplomacy continues until all issues are claimed by one of the two sides.

## Actions

When a character takes a turn, they choose one of these actions:

Change Issue

Focus

Gain Support

Manipulate

### *Change Issue (Move, Free)*

At the beginning of a character's turn, they may change from one issue to another. Move the token representing the character to the other issue. This movement may be opposed by other characters in the same zone (see *Conflicts*, page XX).

### *Focus*

If a character has no boosts, they may use the focus action to take one boost. This action is not available to minions. Boosts may be spent as normal. See *Core Rules* (page XX) for more details.

### *Gain Support (Overcome)*

To gain support for an issue, the character must be attached to the issue. If there are no opposing characters attached to the issue, make a Rapport check against an opposition of zero. On a success, the player adds one support to the issue (for the appropriate side). On success with style, the player adds two support.

The player of an opposing character attached to the issue may choose to defend. In this case, the Rapport check is opposed by the chosen character's Wits.

*Bavin's Hollow is in an alliance mission with Gravewood. Nick is playing Fuscus the diplomat from Bavin's Hollow. The group has decided to use the general Stronghold issues rather than come up with specific issues. Fuscus is attached to the issue labeled Culture. Fuscus has Superb (+5) Rapport. Fuscus is opposed by Galya, who has Good (+3) Wits. Phil, the Autarch player, is playing Galya. There is currently three support*

*for the Stronghold and two support for Gravewood on the issue.*

*Nick: Fuscus plays up the salt of the earth nature of Bavin's Hollow, which will hopefully resonate with the rugged individualism of Gravewood. Fuscus spends a few days amongst the havens promoting the similarities between the cultures.*

*Phil: Sounds good! Galya, somewhat angered by your refusal to help her earlier with problems within Green Haven, has told Sdila and others to exercise caution. Galya points out that Bavin's Hollow embraces magic, something that Gravewood largely distrusts.*

*Nick makes an opposed check against Phil.*

*Nick gets a +1, for a Fantastic (+6) result. Phil gets a -1, for a Fair (+2) result. Nick places two support on the notecard. This is enough to claim the issue for the Stronghold. Fuscus and Galya are now unattached from any issues.*

### **Claim an Issue**

If five or more support is placed onto the issue, the player may claim it for their side. All characters attached to the issue are now reassigned to other issues as in the setup (in reverse order of Society skill). If this is the last issue claimed, diplomacy is over immediately.

### *Manipulate (Attack)*

Instead of taking the high ground and arguing the merits of the deal, a character may decide to manipulate another character. This could take the form of blackmail, lies, intimidation, or seduction. Relationship aspects which suggest a positive relationship will prevent this—remember, aspects are always true and are first and foremost facts about the world. Friends don't use such underhanded tactics against other friends! One use of create advantage is to create such aspects to prevent being attacked by particularly devious characters.

This action works as described in *Core Rules* (page XX). The attacking character uses Society and the defending character uses Wits. The attacking character may only target other characters attached to the same issue. If there are multiple characters attached to an issue, the attacking player may choose who to attack.

If the attack is successful, the defending character becomes unattached to the issue. The token for the character is placed off to the side, away from all of the issues. At the start of their next turn they may attach to any issue they wish.

If a character is taken out, they no longer take actions for the rest of the diplomacy conflict. All the normal results for being taken out as described in *Core Rules* (page XX) also apply.

## Defend

This action works as described in *Core Rules* (page XX). Characters use Wits to defend against manipulation.

## Resolution

Unless otherwise listed in the mission description, the Stronghold needs to claim three issues in order to win. Frequently, there are partial victory conditions for claiming at least one issue.

## Alliance Missions

For alliance missions, each unresolved issue becomes a campaign aspect with one free invoke. If the Stronghold issues are used, create a suitable aspect based on the theme of the issue. These may be used later in the campaign by the Autarch player. The disposition increase is based on how many issues the Stronghold claims.

| Issues | Disposition Change |
|--------|--------------------|
| 0      | -2                 |
| 1      | -1                 |
| 2      | +0                 |
| 3      | +1                 |
| 4      | +2                 |
| 5      | +3                 |

# INFILTRATION

Infiltration involves covert operations targeting a physical installation (called **the house**). Infiltration is the conflict used for assassination, sabotage, and heist missions. Whether stealing secret arcane formulae or laying waste to an ore refinery, the most important part of infiltration is the ability to carry out the plan without being detected.

The heroes must sneak through the target location, avoiding or deceiving guards, while overcoming a number of security challenges (vaults, secure doors, observant guards, traps) in the process. Infiltration is not without risk. It's possible for one or more of the heroes to get caught in the act, making them unavailable for future missions until they're rescued.

## Challenges

During the challenge phase, the Stronghold players case the house, working to get access as well as uncover details about the target. The heroes may also try to find a safe house, connect with contacts, or use social engineering to exploit a source. The group can use the challenges as a collaborative vehicle to flesh out the house. What's stored inside? Who has access to it? Can you get close to them? What security measures are in place? What vulnerabilities does it have?

However, as with all missions, don't start playing through the conflict! The challenges should touch on the plan, but shouldn't directly accomplish the mission (stealing the plans, assassinating the target, etc.). That's covered during the infiltration conflict.

## Opposition

The opposition comes from **guards** trying to detect the heroes. Guards are built as minions. Guards are a particularly good use for no skill minions (see *Characters*, page XX). If the mission involves a faction, a leader from the faction may take the place of one of the guards.

### Creating Opposition

It's quickest to use no skill minions for guards. If they're built as regular minions, a high Wits skill is important for the guards to detect heroes. Athletics and Fighting are good for detaining heroes. Giving guards a higher Fighting skill helps push the action toward stealth and fast talking, as overt aggression becomes riskier.

### Sample Guards

These sample guards can get you started. It's easiest if all the guards share the same template. These are easy to convert to no skill minions. Simply get rid of the skills and stunts, and set all of the stress tracks to two.

#### Tough Guard (Minion)

*Lives to Crack Heads*

*King of the Brute Squad*

Physical ☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐

Superb (+5)      Fighting

Great (+4)      Wits

Good (+3)      Athletics

Fair (+2)      Physique

Average (+1)      Will

**Powerful Attack (Fighting):** *Add +2 to attack actions using Fighting.*

#### Observant Guard (Minion)

*"Hey, I Haven't Seen You Before!"*

*"When's Lunch?"*

Physical ☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐

Superb (+5)      Wits

Great (+4)      Athletics

Good (+3)      Fighting

Fair (+2)      Will

Average (+1)      Physique

**Never Forget a Face (Wits):** *Add +2 to overcome actions when trying to see through a character's disguise.*



## Setup

The players collaboratively come up with a plan, make a map of the house, flesh out the security challenges, and then place the heroes, initial guards, and alarms. First, gather together a number of notecards equal to three times the number of Stronghold players for use in creating the zones of the house. Add to this one notecard with the label *Outside the House*.

## Security Challenges

As the heroes go through the challenge phase, the players create details about the house. These details form the basis of the plan to crack the house. Imagine the heroes are huddled over a table at the back of the inn, drawing out who goes where and when to accomplish the task.

Mechanically, each stage in the plan is represented as a **security challenge**. These work very similarly to challenges in the challenge phase. The players must create one security challenge for each hero on the mission. Each security challenge is written on a separate notecard.

The security challenges aren't created using the challenge list. Instead, each challenge has one skill that must be used to overcome it. There must be one Thievery, one Disguise, and one Stealth security challenge. Write these skills on separate notecards. If there are four heroes, add another Thievery security challenge, and if there are five players, add another Disguise challenge.

Draw a card for each of these security challenges, adding the listed suns and moons to the challenge. The difficulty for the challenge is found by adding the result to the mission difficulty, as it is for regular challenges. When this process is finished, there should be three to five security challenges on different notecards. These challenges don't have thematic details or locations associated with them. That comes later.

## Alarms

The Autarch player should write the aspect **Alarm** on a number of blank notecards equal to half the heroes (round down). These alarm zones can be used by alerted guards to sound the alarm, bringing in more reinforcements.

## Create the Map

First, place the *Outside the House* zone out on the table. Next, shuffle all of the security challenge cards, the alarm cards, and the remaining blank cards together. The Autarch player and the spotlight player take turns placing the notecards on the table. The Autarch player goes first, taking the top notecard and placing it next to the *Outside the House* card. Next, the spotlight player draws a card, and places it adjacent to the card the Autarch player placed.

The Autarch player and spotlight player alternate turns, placing cards on the table until there are no cards left. Notecards must be placed with one edge adjacent to one or more other notecards. In addition, all zones must be reachable without going outside the house (that is, the house can't be split into two parts).

## Detail the Map

The group collaboratively comes up with locations for the zones that feature challenges (*The Hall*, *The Courtyard*, *The Baron's Bedchamber*) and writes them on each card. The spotlight player writes suitably thematic challenge titles on each security challenge card (*Main Office: Crack the Vault - 5 Thievery*, *Library: Convince Baron von Schlefwitz to Retrieve the Tome - 7 Disguise*).

## Place Guards

The Autarch player starts with a number of guards equal to half the heroes (round down). Each guard is placed on the edge of one of the notecards. It's fine to place multiple guards on the same zone.

## Aspect Burning

Each free invoke burned can be used to allow a hero unrestricted access to a zone (by default heroes are not allowed in any zones) or to add a new zone to the map.

## The Exchange

Each hero takes an action in any order desired by the spotlight player. Next, unalerted guards patrol, moving one zone. Alerted guards may optionally move. After movement, each guard and leader takes one action in any order desired by the Autarch player. Finally, more guards may arrive.

## Actions

When a character takes a turn, they choose one of the following actions:

### Focus

Remove Suspicion and Alerts (Heroes only)

Detect Intruder (Guards only)

Capture Intruder (Guards only)

Resolve Security Challenge (Heroes only)

### Movement

Attack (Heroes only)

Raise the Alarm (Guards only)

Some actions are only available to heroes while some are only available to the opposition leaders.

## *Suspicion and Alert*

If a hero fails *any* action, the nearest guard gets the aspect **Suspicious** with one free invoke. If any guards are *in the same zone* as the hero when an action is failed, each guard in the zone gets the aspect **Alert-ed!** with two free invokes.

## *Focus*

If a character has no boosts, they may use the focus action to take one boost. This action is not available to minions. Boosts may be spent as normal. See *Core Rules* (page XX) for more details.

## *Remove Suspicion and Alerts (Heroes, Overcome)*

Since these are just aspects, a hero can attempt to use an overcome action to get rid of them, resulting in the guard going back to a normal state. This is done used Disguise opposed by Wits for the guard. If the alarm has been raised, this action is not available.

## *Detect Intruder (Guards, Overcome)*

Guards may attempt to detect a hero in the same zone. The guard uses Wits, opposed by either Stealth

(if the hero is hiding) or Disguise (if the hero has a cover identity). Since the hero is in the same zone, if the hero fails to defend, the guards in the same zone are alerted (they gain the **Alerted!** aspect with one free invoke).

### ***Capture Intruder (Guards, Overcome)***

Alerted guards may attempt to capture a hero in the same zone. The guard uses Fighting, opposed by either Fighting or Athletics. If the guard is successful, the hero is captured, and both the guard and the hero are removed from the map.

### ***Resolve Security Challenge (Heroes, Overcome)***

This works similarly to removing challenges in the challenge phase. The challenge is removed if the hero succeeds (with the suns causing stress as for regular challenges). Similarly, moons must be removed first.

However, failure is handled a little differently. Instead of failing the challenge and giving the Autarch player a mission aspect, the nearest guard becomes suspicious (as normal for a hero failing an action).

### ***Movement***

Movement for heroes uses Athletics, and functions as described in *Conflicts* (page XX). However, because heroes are trying not to attract attention, they must stop movement when entering a zone with a guard, or the guard immediately becomes alerted. Alerted guards oppose movement out of the zone.

### **Guard Movement**

Guards **patrol**, moving only one zone each exchange in the direction they're facing, turning around when they run out of room. Place guards at one edge of the notecard they're on to indicate the direction they will move next turn. Suspicious and alerted guards move as heroes do.

### ***Attack***

Heroes may attack using Fighting or Marksmanship. These work as they do in the skirmish conflict (page XX). If a guard is attacked, the immediately gain the **Alerted!** aspect with two free invokes. Furthermore, the nearest guard becomes suspicious from the

sounds of battle (gains the **Suspicious** with one free invoke).

### ***Raise the Alarm (Guards Only)***

If an alerted guard ends their action in a zone with an alarm, the alarm is sounded. All guards become alerted, and may move and attack freely.?

## More Guards

After each exchange, the Autarch player may place one guard in any empty zone. If the alarm has sounded, the Autarch player may place two guards each exchange. Time is of the essence!

## Resolution

The heroes are successful when all the security challenges are completed and at least one hero makes it back *Outside the House*. Once in the *Outside the House* zone, a hero is out of the conflict. They take no more actions.

The conflict is over when all the heroes are either *Outside the House* or captured.

If any heroes are caught, the disposition of the faction drops by two. Furthermore, the captured hero is unavailable for any future missions until they're rescued during Stronghold upkeep (see *Seasons*, page XX).

## Skirmish

Skirmishes are small battles between the heroes and a few opponents. Conquering many of the neutral regions requires battling off monsters of the wild, which is handled with skirmish. Skirmish is also common for many of the quest missions, as well as for handling regional threats.

The opposition for the heroes is a boss monster or a leader of some sort, sometimes accompanied by a number of minions. The heroes and opponents move around zones, using skills like Fighting and Marksmanship to inflict physical stress on each other until one side concedes. Zones in skirmish aren't very big: typically they're on the scale of dining rooms, hallways, barns, and small forest clearings. As usual for zones, the exact scale is fairly abstract.

## Challenges

Common themes for skirmish challenge scenes include battling opponents (bandits, fire lizards, undead bears) and dealing with hardships in the environment (raging rivers, snowstorms, underground caverns). The most common skills used to resolve skirmish challenges are Fighting, Marksmanship, and Survival. Many of the conquest missions for neutral regions (see *Neutral Regions*, page XX), as well as the faction quests, have example challenges listed. These are good sources to mine for inspiration.

## Opposition

The opposition is usually either one leader (a boss monster) with a skill cap two higher than the mission difficulty, or a leader with a skill cap equal to the mission difficulty along with a number of minions equal to the number of heroes. The minions also have a skill cap equal to the mission difficulty. If the skirmish mission is against a faction, one of the leaders from the faction may be chosen as opposition.

If using a single tough opponent, they can take the Big Bad opposition stunt (page XX) without using up one of their stunt slots.

### *Creating Opposition*

If opposition needs to be created, they should be given beneficial skills to help with skirmish. Either Fighting or Athletics is critical to doing any damage. Athletics helps with moving around the battlefield, and Survival determines the action order. Finally, Physique improves the physical stress track, which is also helpful during skirmish. Stealth can be useful for creating advantages, and Wits is useful in case the heroes have a sneaky character of their own.

## Setup

The players collaboratively create a map where the conflict will take place, and place tokens (miniatures or markers of some sort) onto the zones to represent the characters.

### *Create the Map*

Use ten notecards to track the zones where the conflict will take place. The Autarch player may write or draw aspects representing physical obstacles on up to four of the notecards (rubble, shallow water, underbrush, cluttered room, etc.).

The Autarch player and the spotlight player take turns placing the notecards on the table. The Autarch player places a card first, choosing any desired notecard, followed by the spotlight player, who also chooses any notecard and places it adjacent to the card already on the table. Zones must be connected along one edge (not diagonal) to one or more other zones. After all zones have been placed, a notecard labeled *Hero Start* is placed by the spotlight player.

### *Place Characters*

The Autarch player places all of the opposition on any desired zones, with the exception of the *Hero Start* zone, which must be free from opposition. Following that, the spotlight player places tokens to represent the heroes on the *Hero Start* zone.

### *Aspect Burning*

The Stronghold players may burn free invokes (from a mission or campaign aspect) to allow a hero to start in a different zone instead of the given starting zone, add a new obstacle to a zone, or add a new zone to the map. Each of these costs one free invoke.



## The Exchange

Turns are taken in order of the Survival skill. Stronghold players go first in the case of ties. Characters may delay their action until later in the exchange, potentially forcing characters with lower Survival skills to go first.

## Actions

When a character takes a turn, they may create an advantage, attack, or overcome (usually used for movement).

### *Focus*

If a character has no boosts, they may use the focus action to take one boost. This action is not available to minions. Boosts may be spent as normal. See *Core Rules* (page XX) for more details.

### *Movement*

Movement in skirmish uses the Athletics skill, and works as described in *Conflicts* (page XX).

### *Attack*

Characters may attack using Fighting or Marksmanship. Fighting is opposed by Fighting or Athletics and inflicts physical stress. Without stunts, Fighting may only target a character in the same zone.

Marksmanship inflicts physical stress and is opposed by Athletics. Marksmanship may target a character in the same zone or in any zone the firing character can see. The zone targeted using Marksmanship must be in a straight line from where the firing character's zone is (counting diagonally along zones is fine). For each zone crossed to the target, add +1 to the target character's opposition.

Remember that a character can't inflict more stress than the value of the skill they use to attack with! (See *Core Rules*, page XX, for more details).

### *Defend*

The standard skills are available to defend with (Athletics defends against Fighting or Marksmanship, Fighting defends against Fighting). Defend doesn't require an action; it's used when the character is attacked or when another character tries to remove an aspect they're invested in maintaining.

## Resolution

Skirmish continues until one side either gives up or all of their characters are taken out. If the heroes give up or are all taken out, they have lost the mission. The heroes may give up after any exchange.

# WARFARE

Battles between armies for control of a region are fought using warfare. Warfare is bloody business. Casualties are common for the losing side as well as for the victor.

While having competent military commanders is important, a variety of quality **units** are also necessary for martial success. The Stronghold must have the correct type of development prior to building units. The units are mustered during the stronghold upkeep phase. Resources are allocated on a per unit basis as they are for other developments. Units are a little like characters, with skills and stunts to use during the battle.

Each side places units under the command of chosen leaders. Zones, representing large areas of land, are created on notecards and a battlefield is constructed. The goal in warfare is to secure the defender's **strategic zone**, occupying it with units so that it changes hands.

## Challenges

Challenges during warfare missions focus on the pain of military life and the struggle to secure strategic advantage. Morale issues, homesick soldiers, fatigue, reconnaissance, environmental hazards, and small battles with enemy forces are all potential challenge scenes.

## Units

Units are large groups of fighting forces under the control of a leader. Although units aren't characters, they are composed of similar elements: skills, aspects, and stunts. Units don't have stress or consequences.

### Commanders

Units are assigned to a commander (a hero, faction leader, or lieutenant) who spends fate points on behalf of the unit. Units don't spend or receive fate points of their own, nor do they get actions independent of their commander.

### No Units

If at any point a commander no longer controls any units, the commander takes a consequence and is taken out of the conflict. It is up to the controlling player to decide which consequence to take (usually the least severe consequence that is still available).

However, if another commander is in the same zone, instead of being taken out the commander may become a champion. See below (page XX) for more on champions.

### Novice Commanders

If a commander is taken out for any reason, it's assumed another commander steps up to lead the army. All of the novice commander's skills are Mediocre (+0) and they have no stress boxes or consequences. The novice commander may command all of the units of the commander they're replacing, despite having a low Command skill. See below (page XX) for more on unit command limits.

### Units and Skills

Units only have a few types of skills, which more directly reflect the sorts of actions available: Fighting, Lore, Marksmanship, Movement, Armor, and Siege. Movement, Armor, and Siege are skills exclusive to units. Only select unit types have Lore, Marksmanship, and Siege. All units have Fighting, Movement, and Armor. The functions of these skills are explained in Actions (page XX).

## Unit Listing

Following are all the types of units available for purchase during stronghold upkeep:

Archers  
Battle Mages  
Cannons  
Catapults  
Cavalry  
Infantry  
Militia

Units (with the exception of militia) have certain developments that must be purchased before the units can be obtained. See *Developments* (page XX) for more details.

### Archers

**Fair (+2)** Armor, Fighting, Movement

**Average (+1)** Marksmanship

**Out of Arrows!**

**Vulnerable to Charge**

**Aim:** *If archers have not moved this exchange, their Marksmanship is improved to Fair (+2).*

Archers have a maximum range of four zones, regardless of the number of shifts rolled.

Archers may not use ranged attacks if there are opposing units in the same zone.

Archers, along with battle mages, are the key units for ranged attacks. Archers have poor defense and are best surrounded by infantry.

### Battle Mages

**Good (+3)** Lore

**Fair (+2)** Movement

**Average (+1)**    Fighting

**Mediocre (+0)**    Armor

**Rain of Fire**

**Incompetent Fighters**

**Ranged Blast:** May use Lore to make ranged attacks.

Battle Mages may not make ranged attacks if there are opposing units in the same zone.

Battle mages are the only unit type that requires an Arcane development as the prerequisite. They have very poor defense, but have a devastating ranged attack.

### Cannons

**Fantastic (+6)**    Armor

**Fair (+2)** Movement, Siege

**Castle Smasher**

**Tricky to Maneuver**

**Siege Weapon:** The Siege skill can be used for ranged attacks with a maximum range of 3 (regardless of shifts). Cannons may inflict stress on defensive ramparts (keeps and castles).

**Aim:** If cannons have not moved this exchange, their Siege is improved to Good (+3).

Cannons are the most powerful siege weapons and are a virtual requirement when attacking a castle.

### Catapults

**Superb (+5)**    Armor

**Fair (+2)** Movement

**Mediocre (+0)**    Siege

**Fires Over Walls**

**Tricky to Maneuver**

**Siege Weapon:** The Siege skill can be used for ranged attacks with a maximum range of 3

(regardless of shifts). Catapults may inflict stress on defensive ramparts (keeps and castles).

**Aim:** If catapults have not moved this exchange, their Siege is improved to Average (+1).

While not as effective as cannons, catapults are powerful in greater numbers, and are also fairly effective against weaker defenses like keeps.

### Cavalry

**Superb (+5)**    Armor

**Good (+3)**    Movement

**Fair (+2)** Fighting

**Crashing Wave of Steel and Hoof**

**Vulnerable to Set Defense**

**Charge!:** If the cavalry moved this turn, their Fighting is improved to Good (+3).

Cavalry are highly mobile, and have strong Fighting and Armor skills.

### Infantry

**Great (+4)**    Armor

**Fair (+2)** Fighting, Movement

**The War Is Won or Lost With Us!**

**Most Important Piece**

Infantry are the bread and butter of any fighting force. They're cheaper, able to be improved by warfare developments, and help absorb blows as well as deal damage. They're best paired with other unit types where they can help.

### Militia

**Fair (+2)** Movement, Armor

**Average (+1)**    Fighting

***I Will Defend My Home!******Disorganized***

***Homeland Defense: When militia are used to defend a region, their Fighting skill is improved to Fair (+2).***

***Backbone of Labor:*** Each militia unit lost while attacking another faction causes a loss of one stability for the Stronghold (or attacking faction).

Militia are cheap, but they're ineffective and result in greater casualties if their morale breaks. They are not suited to campaigning in far off lands.

**Ramparts**

There are two defensive developments (keeps and castles) that may be placed on regions to help with defense. Keeps and castles are always on the strategic zone (page XX), and prevent movement onto the zone or ranged attacks on the units in the zone until they're destroyed or somehow neutralized. This is done via Siege attacks opposed by the Armor value of the structure. While this is going on, archers may rain down arrows from the ramparts onto opposing units without fear of reprisal.

***Rampart Listing***

**Wall strength** functions as a stress track similar to those used by characters. When the structure is taken out from an attack, it is no longer effective and provides no benefits.

**Castle (Regional Development)**

**Wall Strength**    ☐☐☐

**Consequences**    -2 ☐, -4 ☐

**Impenetrable (+10)**    Armor

***Fire From the Ramparts!***

***Thick Walls of Stone***

***Rampart: Only attacks from the Siege and Engineering skills cause the castle to take stress.***

**Keep (Regional Development)**

**Wall Strength**    ☐☐☐

**Consequences**    -2 ☐

**Fantastic (+6)**    Armor

***Boiling Oil***

***Take Cover!***

***Rampart: Only attacks from the Siege and Engineering skills cause the keep to take stress.***



## Opposition

For each hero, the opposing side gets one lieutenant with a skill cap equal to the mission difficulty. If the opponent in the conflict is a faction, the Autarch player can substitute any number of leaders from the faction for lieutenants.

### Creating Commanders

The most important skills in warfare are Tactics, Command, and Engineering, followed more distantly by Fighting, Athletics, Physique, and Marksmanship.

### Sample Commander

This sample commander is easy to adjust for the campaign by sliding the given skills up or down as appropriate to meet the mission difficulty.

#### Defensive General (Lieutenant)

Physical ☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐

Superb (+5) Command

Great (+4) Tactics

Good (+3) Will

Fair (+2) Fighting

Average (+1) Engineering

*Take the Hill!*

*Hold the line!*

*Band Together (Command): During warfare, after units have been assigned during a clash of arms action, may swap one defending unit under your command for a different unit that isn't being attacked.*

*Set for Charge (Tactics): During warfare, add +1 to the Armor of infantry and militia units when they defend against charging cavalry (only for the turn the cavalry moved).*

This is a good defensive military leader, with solid Tactics and Command, and two stunts useful for warfare. With the lower Engineering, this leader isn't as suited to dealing with siege equipment.

### Units for Threats

For threats that don't involve enemy factions, it's necessary to determine the opposing army strength. In this case, gather a number of units equal to twice the difficulty of the threat. At least half of the opposing units should be infantry. The other half can be a mixture of any unit types chosen by the Autarch player.

## Setup

During setup, each side determines what set of units they have available and assigns them to commanders. The battlefield is created, along with the strategic zone and any terrain. Finally, leaders and attached units are placed onto the battlefield.

### *Allocate Units*

Each side allocates units from their available total units. Allies for the Stronghold (minor factions with a disposition of 5 or higher) provide up to three units from their available totals. If warfare involves the Empire, allies for the Autarch (minor factions with a disposition of -4 or lower) provide up to three units to the Autarch.

### *Attach Commanders*

Each unit must be attached to one commanding character (a hero, leader, or lieutenant). A commander may control a number of units equal to their Command skill, with a minimum of three. Commanders defending their capital may control one additional unit.

### *Champions*

A character may start without commanding any units, in which case the character must be attached to a commander, just as units are. The character moves and acts with their commander. They can't take any actions that require units, but may take the heroic actions on page XX.

### *Create the Battlefield*

Assemble fifteen notecards for creating the battlefield. These zones represent much larger areas of terrain—potentially hundreds of yards across—than the zones in the skirmish or infiltration conflicts. One notecard should be labeled as the **strategic zone**. This is a vital location that's being fought over, such as a city center or a valuable mine.

Additionally, the defending side may place four physical obstacles onto the zones, such as marshes, hills, or forests. These may be drawn or written onto the notecards.

The strategic zone is placed by the defending player, and the battlefield is built out from the strategic zone. One side of the strategic zone is designated as the top and one side is designated as the bottom. When placing notecards to build the battlefield, no zones may be placed below the bottom of the strategic zone. The battlefield builds out in three directions from the strategic zone.

The attacking player and defending player alternate placing the zones onto the battlefield, keeping in mind the restriction of not placing zones below the strategic zone. Each notecard must be placed next to a card already in play.

### *Place Commanders*

Attacking commanders and attached units are placed first. They must be placed at least **four** zones away from the strategic zone. Defending commanders and attached units must be placed within **two** zones of the strategic zone. Use some marker for each commander (a token or miniature). It's also easier to visualize attached units if a token of some sort is used for each unit.

### *Aspect Burning*

Each free invoke burned may be used to add one new zone or one new terrain obstacle to the battlefield.

## Exchange

Turns are taken by commanders in the order of their Command skills. Stronghold players go first in the case of ties. Each commander may move all attached units and take one action.

## Movement

The commander may move a number of zones equal to the slowest attached unit's movement. This is not an action.

Obstacles increase the movement cost by one. As usual, commanders may always move at least one zone. Movement may be opposed as described in *Conflicts* (page XX).

## Ranged Attack

When taking the ranged attack action, the attacking commander allocates units with ranged attack capabilities to fire at defending units under one commander's control. First, select a defending commander within range. Next, one or more defending units under the commander's control are targeted. One or more ranged attacking units are paired with each defending unit.

One overcome action is resolved for each group of attackers. The attacking side draws a card, adding the result to the sum of all of the Marksmanship skills for the attacking units. The distance to the target is subtracted from the attack. The defending side draws a card, and adds the result to the defending unit's Armor skill.

If the attacking group is successful, the defending unit is taken out. On a tie, the attacking commander succeeds at minor cost. Take a stress card and the defending unit is taken out. If either side succeeds with style, they get a boost.

If there are allied units in the same zone as the defending commander, the defending commander gains a boost after the ranged action is resolved. Missile fire is risky when units are engaged with the enemy!

*An attacking commander, controlling four archer units, targets an opposed commander in an adjacent zone. The opposing commander controls two infantry units and one battle mage unit.*

*The attacker decides to divide up the attack as follows: three archers target one infantry unit and one archer targets the battle mage unit. The remaining infantry isn't targeted. Assuming the archers didn't move this turn (archers get a bonus to attack if they haven't moved), their Marksmanship skill is Fair (+2). The defending units are one zone away, which lowers the attacking total by one (each zone away lowers the attack by one).*

*The attacking player may choose the order of the attacks. They decide to attack the infantry first. Prior to drawing cards, the attack against the infantry is +5 vs. +4. The attacking player draws a +0 and the defending player draws a +1. A tie! Unless the attacking player spends a fate point, they will need to draw a stress card to take out the opposing unit. The attacking player applies a stress card to their commander. There are three*

*moons on the stress card. That's quite a bit of mental stress! The commander is suffering from battle fatigue, but the defending infantry unit is taken out.*

*The attack against the battle mages is +1 vs. +0 prior to drawing cards. The attacking player draws a +0 and the defending player draws a +2, for a total of +1 vs. +2. A failure! The attacking player decides to use a boost to draw a fortune card. Three suns! Now the total is +4 vs. +2. Success! The battle mage unit is removed.*

### Ranged Attack

## Clash of Arms

Clash of Arms works similarly to ranged attacks. A defending commander in the same zone is chosen as the target of the attack. As in ranged attack, attacking units are allocated to defending units in any way the attacking player chooses. All attacking units must be allocated before checking to see if they successfully attack.

One overcome action is resolved for each group of attacking units (in any order desired by the attacker). The attacking side draws a card, adding the result to the sum of all of the Fighting skills in the attacking group. The defending side draws a card, adding the result to the Armor skill of the defending unit.

If the attacking group is successful, the defending unit is taken out. On a tie, the attacking commander succeeds at minor cost. Take a stress card and the defending unit is taken out. If either side succeeds with style, they get a boost.

*An attacking commander, controlling three infantry and two militia, targets an opposed commander in an adjacent zone. The opposing commander controls three archers and two infantry. Archers have very poor armor, so they're ripe for the picking!*

*The militia aren't defending their homeland, so their attack is only Average (+1). The attacking commander decides to commit the two militia and one infantry to attack one archer. That's a large advantage (+4 attack vs. +2 defense), so it may grant success with style. Then the attacking commander assigns one infantry each to the remaining archers. Those assignments are riskier (+2 attack vs. +2 defense), but it sets up a possible sweep of every defending archer.*

*The attacking commander resolves the advantageous attack first, and gets success with style for a boost! One archer unit is removed.*

*The next attack results in success with style for the defender, bad luck! The attacking commander uses the boost to draw a fortune card, getting enough suns to change it into a regular failure. The defender no longer has success with style and will not get a boost.*

*Finally, the last attack is resolved. The attacker succeeds and another archer is removed! After the clash,*

*the defending commander now has one archer and two infantry.*

## Outflank

After the clash of arms is resolved in a zone, the defending side may be able to immediately make an attack with any surviving units. The commanders make opposed Tactics checks as an overcome action. If the defender succeeds, they may make attacks with surviving units. This doesn't count as the defending commander's action (they may have already taken an action or may still have an action to take).

*The defending commander from the previous example may be able to return the favor. The attacking commander's Tactics is Good (+3) and the defending commander's Tactics is Great (+4). The defending commander makes an overcome action, using opposed Tactics. The defending commander gets Superb (+5) and the attacking commander gets Good (+3)—the defender outflanks the attacker and immediately gets to assign units and attack!*

*The defending commander assigns an archer and an infantry to one of the militia and the remaining infantry to the final militia. The militia should be easy enough to take out!*

*The defending commander attacks with the archer and infantry first. The result of the attack is Fair (+2), not enough for success with style, but enough to take out a militia! The final attack also goes well for the defending commander, resulting in Average (+1). Both militia are removed!*

*Having a higher Tactics than opposing commanders comes in handy during the clash of arms. The defending commander still hasn't acted, so they'll also get an action to either initiate an attack, or maybe move away and use archers while other units maneuver on the battlefield.*

## Heroic Action

Each champion or commander that hasn't already taken an action may take one of the actions below. These actions work much like the actions available in *Skirmish* (page XX).

### *Focus*

If a character has no boosts, they may use the focus action to take one boost. This action is not available to minions. Boosts may be spent as normal. See *Core Rules* (page XX) for more details.

### *Attack*

A commander may be attacked directly. This works identically to the attack actions in *Skirmish* (page XX).

### *Defend*

Commanders defend using standard skills (Fighting vs. Fighting or Athletics vs. Marksmanship or Fighting).

## Resolution

If at least one attacking unit begins an exchange in the strategic zone with no opposing units in the same zone, the attacking force is successful. Warfare also ends if the attacking or defending force moves all units off the battlefield (moving off the edge of the map will remove the commander and all associated units from the battle).



# NEUTRAL REGIONS

**Regions**, abstract areas of land that can hold resources and developments, are described in more detail in *Factions* (page XX). This chapter lists all of the available neutral regions that may be gained via successful conquest missions by the Stronghold. Taking a region from other factions always uses the warfare conflict. The conflict used when conquering neutral regions depends on the specific region targeted. There are ten neutral regions available during the campaign.

Each neutral region has a mission difficulty and conflict, which are used for the conquest mission. If the mission is successful, the neutral region is added to the Stronghold's regions, and the Stronghold will begin gaining the listed resources. The neutral regions are also listed on the Stronghold sheet to make it easier to plan missions.

| Neutral Regions |     |            |                |          |              |     |
|-----------------|-----|------------|----------------|----------|--------------|-----|
| Name            |     | Difficulty |                | Conflict | Food         |     |
| Timber          | Ore | Mana       | Luxuries       |          |              |     |
| 1               | 0   | 0          | Boar's Hollow  | 5        | Diplomacy    | 2 0 |
| 0               | 0   | 1          | Cantlands      | 5        | Skirmish     | 0 1 |
| 0               | 3   | 1          | Dusk's Ayrie   | 7        | Skirmish     | 0 0 |
| 2               | 0   | 0          | Fennel Marshes | 5        | Skirmish     | 0 0 |
| 0               | 0   | 1          | Ferry's Glenn  | 6        | Warfare      | 2 1 |
| 1               | 2   | 0          | Gray Forest    | 5        | Skirmish     | 0 0 |
| 1               | 0   | 0          | Green Vale     | 4        | Skirmish     | 1 0 |
| 0               | 0   | 0          | North Oaks     | 3        | Skirmish     | 0 1 |
| 1               | 1   | 0          | Sightrock      | 4        | Skirmish     | 0 0 |
| 0               | 0   | 1          | Sunset Isles   | 6        | Infiltration | 0 3 |

## Boar's Hollow

**Conflict** Diplomacy

**Difficulty** 5

?

Boar's Hollow, unlike the other neutral regions, already has a reasonably sized population center. They're loosely allied with Gravewood (page XX), inheriting the same sense of isolationism. The people of Boar's Hollow are similarly hardy folk, who have made significant strides in cultivating a difficult landscape.

In this sense, the people themselves are the most impressive resource of this region. Trying to conquer the land militarily wouldn't give the Stronghold the knowledge necessary to get the resources from the land. Instead, Boar's Hollow is conquered using diplomacy, with the goal of gaining support from the leaders of the region, encouraging them towards joining forces with the Stronghold for mutual benefit.

### Faction Aspects

Boar's Hollow functions like a very minor faction, so the following aspects may be invoked during the mission, just like those of any other faction.

*The Autarch Isn't Our Problem*

*A Guarded and Suspicious Folk*

*No Shortcuts for Hard Work*

*Prepared for Almost Every Contingency*

### Sample Challenges

The people of Boar's Hollow are skeptical of joining with the Stronghold. The heroes must prove themselves and form common bonds with Boar's Hollow.

Gerard wants to know how the Stronghold is any different from the Empire.

Meet with Talan to discuss shoring up defenses.

Blend into the hard scrabble daily life of Boar's Hollow.

Find a weakness in the defensive watch of Boar's Hollow.

### Opposition

The leaders are listed in order of importance. Leo and Talan may be left out of diplomacy if there are fewer than five heroes on the mission.

#### Gerard (Leader)

**Physical** ☐☐☐

**Mental** ☐☐☐☐

**Consequences** -2 ☐, -2 ☐, -4 ☐

*Well Respected Farmer*

*"The Tallest Peg Gets Hammered."*

*Unafraid to Dispense Justice*

*Expects the Worst*

**Superb (+5)** Society, Will

**Great (+4)** Rapport, Wits

**Good (+3)** Command, Engineering

**Fair (+2)** Physique, Survival

**Average (+1)** Fighting, Stealth

*Commanding Word (Society): Spend a fate point to add an additional point of support when successfully gaining support.*

*Socially Adept (Society): For diplomacy, the character's Society skill is 2 higher for purposes of turn order.*

Gerard's voice carries clout amongst the people of Boar's Hollow. From the perspective of most people, he's been around forever and has given good advice to this point. His pessimism creates friction with Talan.

### Hargeth (Leader)

Physical ☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Superb (+5) Engineering, Wits

Great (+4) Society, Will

Good (+3) Lore, Survival

Fair (+2) Command, Marksmanship

Average (+1) Channeling, Physique

*Accomplished Architect*

*Friend to the Land*

*Slow to Accept Different Ideas*

*Speech Riddled with Incomprehensible Jargon*

*Socially Adept (Society): For diplomacy, the character's Society skill is 2 higher for purposes of turn order.*

*Undermine the Point (Wits): When defending against a gain support action, opponent takes one mental stress.*

Hargeth's passion is using engineering to more efficiently use the spare resources of Boar's Hollow.

### Gerda (Leader)

Physical ☐☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Superb (+5) Rapport, Will

Great (+4) Engineering, Society

Good (+3) Survival, Wits

Fair (+2) Command, Lore

Average (+1) Athletics, Stealth

*Warm Hearted Elder Sage*

*"Not All Issues Have Two Sides."*

*Disarming Smile*

*"What Impact Will This Have on Our Future Generations?"*

*Related Point (Rapport): When a character successfully gains support, they gain a boost. If the character succeeds with style, they gain an additional boost.*

*Undermine the Point (Wits): When defending against a gain support action, opponent takes one mental stress.*

Gerda is skeptical of the Stronghold's intentions, and is fearful that an alliance could bring unnecessary war and bloodshed.

### Leo (Leader)

Physical ☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Superb (+5) Rapport, Wits

Great (+4) Athletics, Command

Good (+3) Marksmanship, Society

Fair (+2) Survival, Will

Average (+1) Physique, Stealth

*Hot Blooded Hunter*

*Stunning Looks*

*An Eye for Weakness*

*No Half Steps*

*Passive Aggressive (Rapport): When a character successfully gains support, opposing characters on the same issue each take one mental stress.*

*Intoxicating Power (Society): Add +2 to attack actions using Society.*

Leo takes everything too far. He's somewhat of a people's champion, even though he's a polarizing figure.

**Talan (Leader)****Physical** ☐☐☐☐**Mental** ☐☐☐☐**Consequences** -2 ☐, -4 ☐**Superb (+5)** Tactics, Will**Great (+4)** Command, Wits**Good (+3)** Fighting, Society**Fair (+2)** Athletics, Survival**Average (+1)** Disguise, Rapport***Battled Hardened Master at Arms******“We Can’t Go this Alone...”******“The Threat of the Autarch Is Very Real!”******Nothing Wrong with White Lies******Undermine the Point, Improved (Wits):******When defending against a gain support action, opponent takes two mental stress.***

Talan is the most senior military leader for Boar’s Hollow, for what military there is. The defenses mostly consist of trained archers that hope to repel attacking forces through guerilla warfare tactics.

***Resolution***

If the heroes successfully claim three issues, the Stronghold gains Boar’s Hollow. If the heroes successfully claim all of the issues, in addition to gaining the resources from the land, the Stronghold also gains three archer units.

## Cantlands

**Conflict** Skirmish

**Difficulty** 5

The Cantlands are a densely forested area, the leafy and dark forest floor broken up by crags of silvery rock. Additionally, the Cantlands are home to a small group of farmers and settlers who carve out a life there.

Long ago, the region contained a powerful source of mana. It was burned when a reckless sorcerer, Fatil, expended massive amounts of magical energy to save a child. In the process, the backlash wounded both the mana source, as well as his loved ones, who now haunt the area. The heroes must put his loved ones, now roaming as ghostly Fates, to rest if they want to take the region.

### Sample Challenges

The heroes have spent some time with the locals, and in the process, they've discovered that many of the resources are effectively trapped because of ghostly forces that lure and kill those who venture too close. The heroes should see some signs of the ghostly beings, and work to track down their source. Olev was with his friend Ivan, who was taken by the Fates to a cottage in the woods.

Interview Olev, son of the farmer Ila, about his encounter with the gray skinned ghost.

Track the lost child Ivan through the forest.

Find clues to the Fates' location in the trinket-filled forest cottage.

Fight off a pack of pale, ghostly dogs, ravenous spawn of the backlash.

Resist the Song of the Fates, a dirge of despair.

## Opposition

There are two Fates that work in tandem, seeking to rid the region of the heroes.

### The Fate of Alsu (Leader)

**Physical** ☐☐☐☐

**Mental** ☐☐☐☐

**Consequences** -2 ☐, -2 ☐, -4 ☐, -6 ☐

**Fantastic (+6)** Command, Rapport

**Superb (+5)** Stealth, Will

**Great (+4)** Athletics, Channeling

**Good (+3)** Lore, Wits

**Fair (+2)** Physique, Society

**Average (+1)** Marksmanship, Thievery

*Wandering Banshee of the Deepest Woods*

*Ill-fated Bride of Fatil*

*"He Chose HER Son Over Me!"*

*Mournful Beauty*

*Big Bad (General Opposition): The character gets a severe consequence. If opposed by four heroes, this character gets one additional stress box on either their physical or mental stress track. If opposed by five heroes, this character gets two additional stress boxes on either their physical or mental stress track. This stunt is reserved for solo opposition in a skirmish conflict, or very important characters, such as the Autarch. This stunt doesn't use up a stunt slot.*

*Siren Song: May use Command as a ranged attack (opposed by Will) to cause mental stress.*

*Ghostly: Add +2 when using Athletics or Fighting to defend against attacks of a physical form (magical attacks do not grant this bonus).*

### The Fate of Erebrus (Leader)

**Physical** ☐☐☐☐

**Mental** ☐☐☐☐

**Consequences** -2 □, -2 □, -4 □, -6 □

**Fantastic (+6)** Fighting, Physique

**Superb (+5)** Athletics, Wits

**Great (+4)** Tactics, Will

**Good (+3)** Command, Survival

**Fair (+2)** Lore, Stealth

**Average (+1)** Channeling, Marksmanship

*Enraged Swordsman*

*Hands that Could Break a Man's Neck*

*A Fractured Mind*

*"I Will Protect Alsu from Any who Approach Her"*

*Big Bad (General Opposition): The character gets a severe consequence. If opposed by four heroes, this character gets one additional stress box on either their physical or mental stress track. If opposed by five heroes, this character gets two additional stress boxes on either their physical or mental stress track. This stunt is reserved for solo opposition in a skirmish conflict, or very important characters, such as the Autarch. This stunt doesn't use up a stunt slot.*

*Fell Blade: Attacks using Fighting target every hero in the same zone. (Make separate defense checks.)*

*Ghostly: Add +2 when using Athletics or Fighting to defend against attacks of a physical form (magical attacks do not grant this bonus).*

## Setup

A good spot for the battle might be the cottage, drawing out a few zones for inside the house, as well as one or two for outside. Erebrus will get in close, while Alsu will move away as much as possible.



## Dusk's Ayrie

**Conflict** Skirmish

**Difficulty** 7

On the tallest and most desolate peak within the Dusk Mountains lies the fortress of Arankh, the legendary great wyrm. Arankh was around when the world was young and the tribes of man had yet to form on the plains.

Surrounding the Ayrie lies an incredible bounty of natural riches. Veins of gold run through the crags, the countryside is covered with lush fields of strawberries, herds of wild sheep, saplings of oak and walnut, as well as strong currents of magical energy, no doubt fueled through connection with such an ancient being.

Unfortunately for those wishing to exploit this bounty, Arankh is highly protective of his realm. It exists as an idyllic paradise for his gaze, a thing of beauty that may only be taken by driving him away.

### Sample Challenges

Although it's no secret where Arankh's lair is, getting there is a perilous and trying ordeal.

Climb the rocky crags of the Dusk Mountains.

Take cover on the exposed mountain from Arankh's flame.

Survive overnight in the brutal cold.

Overcome Arankh's dread.

Fight giant spiders in the caverns beneath Arankh's lair.

### Opposition

Arankh, the most powerful living thing in the Realm.

## Arankh (Leader)

**Physical** □□□□

**Mental** □□□□

**Consequences** -2 □, -2 □, -2 □, -4 □, -6 □

**Godlike (+9)** Lore, Will

**Legendary (+8)** Athletics, Physique

**Epic (+7)** Channeling, Marksmanship

**Fantastic (+6)** Fighting, Survival

**Superb (+5)** Command, Wits

**Great (+4)** Engineering, Rapport

**Good (+3)** Society, Tactics

*Older than the Mountains*

*"I Have Felled Much Stronger Foes than You!"*

*Impenetrable Green Scales*

*Preternatural Foresight*

*Big Bad (General): The character gets a severe consequence. If opposed by four heroes, this character gets one additional stress box on either their physical or mental stress track. If opposed by five heroes, this character gets two additional stress boxes on either their physical or mental stress track. This stunt is reserved for solo opposition in a skirmish conflict, or very important characters, such as the Autarch. This stunt doesn't use up a stunt slot.*

*Flight (General): Add +2 when using Athletics to defend against Fighting attacks. Ignore ground based obstacles when moving through zones.*

*Gout of Flame: May attack every character in a zone using Marksmanship. Add major fortune to the attack. May not use on consecutive turns.*

*Secret of Annihilation: By spending a fate point, Arankh may use an overcome action to summon the worst horrors from beyond the veil, infecting the target's mind. Make a Lore check opposed by the target's Will. The target gains the permanent aspect **Haunted by the Ancient Demons** with a number of free invokes equal to the number of shifts on the roll. When all free invokes have been used, the aspect is removed.*

Arankh is unfathomably ancient and powerful. There's no sorcerer his equal, he has never been bested in combat, and armies can't be brought to meet him because of his remote position.

### *Tactics*

Arankh will hang back at first, blasting the heroes with ranged attacks until they close in. Then, he will take to the sky, swooping in to claw and bite at who he surmises is the weakest target, hoping to inflict psychological damage on the remaining heroes.

## Fennel Marshes

**Conflict** Skirmish

**Difficulty** 5

Frequent rains allow a menagerie of vegetation to grow here. All manner of fruits and vegetables are harvested and used by the residents of Fennel Marshes. Despite the bounty of food and rare herbs, the locals are haggard and downtrodden due to the recurrence of terrible diseases.

The palsies and fevers that harm the people are rarely fatal, but they cause debilitations that make daily life very difficult. All attempts to cure the diseases have failed, although many have surmised that the source is somehow related to yellow pollen that occasionally blows through the area. Attempts to find the source of this pollen have failed.

The heroes might discover that the source of this pollen is an ancient creature, known as Ur-Akti, which moves about the swamps and seeks to rid the land of the encroaching humans. The beast, a large shambling mound of plant matter and detritus, has an intimate connection with the land and can use that to its advantage, using the plants as extensions of its thoughts.

### Sample Challenges

The challenges for this mission deal with the despair of the locals, trying hard not to get sick, and handling the swampy habitat the creature dwells in.

Help Rasik and Vara soothe the fevers of the ill.

Investigate the spread of the blight.

Resist a billowing cloud of yellow pollen.

Track Ur-Akti to its lair.

Fight off crocodiles within the trackless swamp.

## Opposition

At some point while journeying through the marshes, the heroes are attacked by the beast.

### Ur-Akti (Leader)

**Physical** ☐☐☐☐ **Mental** ☐☐☐☐

**Consequences** -2 ☐, -2 ☐, -4 ☐, -6 ☐

**Epic (+7)** Fighting, Wits

**Fantastic (+6)** Athletics, Physique

**Superb (+5)** Channeling, Will

**Great (+4)** Command, Tactics

**Good (+3)** Rapport, Survival

**Fair (+2)** Lore, Society

**Sentient Amorphous Mass**

**Swamp Dweller**

**"You Must Leave Here!"**

**Burns Easily**

**Big Bad (General):** *The character gets a severe consequence. If opposed by four heroes, this character gets one additional stress box on either their physical or mental stress track. If opposed by five heroes, this character gets two additional stress boxes on either their physical or mental stress track. This stunt is reserved for solo opposition in a skirmish conflict, or very important characters, such as the Autarch. This stunt doesn't use up a stunt slot.*

**Mind Meld:** *Ur-Akti may use Channeling as a ranged attack, opposed by Will, with any shifts causing mental stress on the target.*

**Whirling Attack (Fighting):** *Draw a stress card to attack every opponent in the same zone using Fighting. Only determine the attack value once, but each defender may defend individually.*

**Grappling Vines:** *As a free action each round, Ur-Akti may use the create advantage action with Channeling to add the Grappling Vines obstacle to a zone.*

Ur-Akti's singular goal is to purge the land of any humans, which it perceives as threats.

### *Setup*

Place Ur-Akti near the largest group of heroes. Add **Swampy Terrain** obstacles on four of the zones. Ur-Akti is not slowed by these obstacles. Alternatively, if the opponents don't have much in the way of ranged attacks, placing grappling vines in key locations may help set up a funnel for Ur-Akti's attacks.

### *Tactics*

The beast tries to get close to the largest group of heroes, and attacks them relentlessly.

# Ferry's Glenn

**Conflict**Warfare  
**Difficulty**6

Ferry's Glenn is a moderately sized settlement in the shadow of the Broken Nose Mountains. The farmers of Ferry's Glenn have lush fields and orchards which produce everything from apples, pears, and grapes, to wheat, cabbage, and lentils. They also keep many goats and sheep as livestock.

The goats and sheep are less commonly enjoyed by the people of Ferry's Glenn, and instead are paid to a tribe of unruly giants that inhabit the Broken Nose Mountains. The Broken Nose Giants are led by the Dark Gleamer, who has set up this deal to provide food for his tribe, in exchange for protection from other people.

The giants are very protective of their source for food, and although the occasional villager is eaten, the people of Ferry's Glenn have succumbed to the extortion.

## Challenges

Ferry's Glenn is headed by Anthe, a leader who is somewhat fearful of angering the giants. His son, Philos, and daughter, Zoe, are both more headstrong and willing to listen to visitors promising a different life. The heroes are tasked with gaining Anthe's support, determining the nature of the opposition, and organizing troops for a coming battle.

- Gain the trust of Anthe.
- Fortify the defenses of Ferry's Glenn.
- Diffuse a conflict between Cassandra and the soldiers over lodgings.
- Assess the opposing forces by venturing beyond the Broken Nose Mountains.
- Flee from Po's clutches.

## Opposition

Each giant functions as both a unit and a commander. This is somewhat of a departure from the usual mechanics for warfare, where a leader commands a number of units. Here, the commander is also the unit.

Thus, a giant may perform a warfare action relegated to units, such as clash of arms, but may also take leader-centric actions such as create an advantage. The redeploy units action is obviously not available.

The heroic battle action is handled a little differently, given the large difference in sizes here. If a hero wishes to directly attack one of the giants, the giant adds major fortune to any physical attacks.

The giants may only use the heroic battle action against a hero that is not commanding units (otherwise the hero gets lost in the shuffle). They get major fortune when using Fighting or Marksmanship against an individual hero.

### The Dark Gleamer (Leader/Unit)

- Morale** □□□□
- Consequences** -2 □, -4 □
- Fantastic (+6)** Movement, Will
- Superb (+5)** Marksmanship, Physique
- Great (+4)** Fighting, Tactics
- Good (+3)** Armor, Command
- Fair (+2)** Lore, Wits
- Average (+1)** Athletics, Channeling
- Colossal in Size*
- Legs of Iron*
- Slow to React*
- "You Cannot Stop Me!"*
- Lightning Breath: Add major fortune when using Marksmanship for ranged attacks.*

The Dark Gleamer is the leader of the giants.

**Po (Leader/Unit)****Morale** □□□□**Consequences** -2 □, -4 □**Fantastic (+6)** Movement, Physique**Superb (+5)** Athletics, Marksmanship**Great (+4)** Armor, Command**Good (+3)** Fighting, Will**Fair (+2)** Survival, Wits**Average (+1)** Channeling, Lore**Four-armed Death Dealer****Voracious Appetite****“I Do What the Gleamer Tells Me...”****Dim-witted*****Armor Hide: Add fortune when defending with Armor.******Throw Rocks: Add major fortune to Marksmanship for ranged attacks.***

Po is subservient to both the Dark Gleamer and its own appetite.

**The Savage (Leader/Unit)****Morale** □□□□**Consequences** -2 □, -4 □**Fantastic (+6)** Command, Physique**Superb (+5)** Fighting, Movement**Great (+4)** Athletics, Survival**Good (+3)** Tactics, Wits**Fair (+2)** Channeling, Lore**Average (+1)** Armor, Will**A Feral Visage****Wretchedly Sharp Teeth****“Rrrrraaaaahhhhhhhh!!!!!!”****Lack of Focus*****Gnashing Teeth: Add major fortune on Fighting attacks.******Horrifying: Add major fortune when using Command to create an advantage.***

The Savage has no ranged ability, but can inflict incredible damage up close.

**Setup**

The strategic zone represents the giants' home amongst the rocks. Add the aspect **Rocky Terrain** to four of the zones representing the mountainous terrain. The Dark Gleamer should start in the strategic zone to make the best use of ranged attacks.

**Tactics**

The giants work best spread out, with the Dark Gleamer and Po using ranged attacks to do damage, while the Savage attacks the strongest group of resistance close up.



## Gray Forest

|                   |          |
|-------------------|----------|
| <b>Conflict</b>   | Skirmish |
| <b>Difficulty</b> | 5        |

The Gray Forest is a coniferous forest, with dense pine broken up by reed-filled marshes. In addition, there are many rocky outcroppings which contain all manner of valuable minerals.

While not great land for farming, there are large populations of deer, caribou, and mammoths which can be hunted for food and a variety of other uses.

The Gray Forest is the demesne of Eight Ears, a powerful inhabitant that has no interest in sharing the wilderness with anyone. Eight Ears usually takes a human form and has an intimate connection to the forest. Any attempt to settle the land meets with an increasingly hostile response.

### Challenges

Eight Ears initially uses fear to repel the heroes. Fear escalates toward outright violence if that tactic is ineffective.

See through Eight Ears' polymorphic deception.

Track Eight Ears through the forest.

Resist the apparitions and ghosts of the dead.

Battle the enchanted barb trees.

Mammoth attack!

### Opposition

Eight Ears assumes multiple forms during the skirmish with the heroes. Initially it takes on the human form it used during the first encounter, and if this fails, it turns into a massive beast.

### Eight Ears - Human (Leader)

Physical ☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Fantastic (+6) Society, Will

Superb (+5) Command, Disguise

Great (+4) Stealth, Survival

Good (+3) Athletics, Channeling

Fair (+2) Lore, Wits

Average (+1) Physique, Rapport

*Protective Banshee*

*Shapechanging Hermit*

*Ageless Wisdom*

*Weary Heart*

*Aching Visions: May make ranged attacks using Command, opposed by Will. Add fortune when making attack actions with Command. Eight Ears causes the target to see what they most fear, embedding it into their psyche.*

*Healing Shift: If taken out from physical stress while in human form, may shapechange into lion form, removing all physical stress and all consequences of a physical nature.*

In human form, Eight Ears has very little ability to physically injure the heroes. Instead, it tries to scare them off with terrible visions.

### Eight Ears - Lion (Leader)

Physical ☐☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -2 ☐, -4 ☐, -6 ☐

Fantastic (+6) Athletics, Physique

Superb (+5) Fighting, Wits

Great (+4) Command, Will

Good (+3) Stealth, Survival

**Fair (+2) Lore, Tactics**

***Protective Banshee***

***Razor Sharp Claws***

***Powerful Animal Instinct***

***Weary Heart***

***Big Bad (General):*** The character gets a severe consequence. If opposed by four heroes, this character gets one additional stress box on either their physical or mental stress track. If opposed by five heroes, this character gets two additional stress boxes on either their physical or mental stress track. This stunt is reserved for solo opposition in a skirmish conflict, or very important characters, such as the Autarch. This stunt doesn't use up a stunt slot.

***Quick (General):*** Prior to making an attack action, may move one zone. Usual rules for moving out of an opposed zone apply.

***Powerful Attack (Fighting):*** The character is a bruising attacker, capable of delivering crushing blows. Add +2 to attack actions using Fighting.

***I'm on a Roll! (Fighting):*** On a successful attack action, gain a boost even if the attack didn't succeed with style. If it succeeded with style, gain an extra boost.

In beast form, Eight Ears lashes out at the nearest hero with vicious and powerful attacks.

## ***Tactics***

As Eight Ears grows increasingly frustrated with its ability to scare the heroes off in various ways, it eventually decides to turn into a lion and mount a full scale attack. When taken out as a lion, the battle is over.

## Green Vale

**Conflict** Skirmish

**Difficulty** 4

The lands of the vale are lush with flora and fauna, open meadows and lush tracts of deciduous forest, lying at the base of a moderately sized peak to the north. It has many natural resources: tall trees in large groves, areas for cultivating crops, and streams from the mountain laced with ore.

There's a small farming community carving out a rough existence here. Unfortunately for them, every full moon brings about some measure of destruction—usually of their livestock, although occasionally one of the farmers loses their life. They have taken to leaving out a token sacrifice during these times.

### Sample Challenges

The heroes attempt to win over the hearts and minds of Hambridge Farms, a small farming community, by dealing with the menacing werewolf.

Impress Mila, the wise and crafty head of Hambridge Farms.

Best Bjorn in an archery contest.

Search the scene of Feljar's death for clues.

Follow werewolf tracks along Red Burrow gully.

### Opposition

At some point, the werewolf strikes the heroes. The actual identity of the werewolf doesn't matter. It could be a villager, or perhaps it isn't a werewolf in the traditional sense, but rather some sort of bipedal monster that hunts the wilds. As with all challenge scenes, it's best to build off the challenges and strive for a natural conclusion to the narrative.

## Werewolf of Hambridge Farms (Leader)

**Physical** ☐☐☐☐

**Mental** ☐☐☐☐

**Consequences** -2 ☐, -4 ☐, -6 ☐

**Fantastic (+6)** Athletics, Fighting

**Superb (+5)** Physique, Stealth

**Great (+4)** Will, Wits

**Good (+3)** Survival, Tactics

**Fair (+2)** Channeling, Command

**Vicious Claws**

**Lust for Human Flesh**

**Heightened Senses**

**Vulnerable to Silver**

**Big Bad (General):** *The character gets a severe consequence. If opposed by four heroes, this character gets one additional stress box on either their physical or mental stress track. If opposed by five heroes, this character gets two additional stress boxes on either their physical or mental stress track. This stunt is reserved for solo opposition in a skirmish conflict, or very important characters, such as the Autarch. This stunt doesn't use up a stunt slot.*

**Whirling Attack (Fighting):** *Draw a stress card to attack every opponent in the same zone using Fighting. Only determine the attack value once, but each defender may defend individually.*

**Powerful Attack (Fighting):** *The character is a bruising attacker, capable of delivering crushing blows. Add +2 to attack actions using Fighting.*

**Quick (General Opposition):** *Prior to making an attack action, may move one zone. Usual rules for moving out of an opposed zone apply.*

The werewolf is a large beast with silver fur and a crushing grasp. It is fairly unthinking in its fury.

### Setup

The werewolf sets up as close as possible to the most vulnerable looking hero. The actual fight will

most likely take place in a farmhouse or in a desolate shack in the woods.

### *Tactics*

The werewolf is fairly mindless; it focuses on whatever hero is closest.

## North Oaks

**Conflict** Skirmish

**Difficulty** 3

The North Oaks is a region densely populated with impossibly ancient trees. Due to its remote location, trapped in between large peaks, it's largely been avoided. However, its desolate position has drawn a forsaken warlock to the area. He has used his power to animate a number of skeletal minions, fashioned from the bones of local fallen beasts. Any encroachment on his lands is bound to unleash his wrath.

### Sample Challenges

Within the North Oaks is a malevolent warlock, Malthias, intent on raising an army of the undead for his nefarious purposes. In order to conquer the region, the warlock must be stopped.

Negotiate the rocky banks of the Gray River.

Fight off poisonous Dusk Frogs.

A crazed axemen hides in a ravaged camp.

Investigate Malthias' chamber of animation.

### Opposition

Malthias the Necromancer, along with one bone golem for each hero.

#### Malthias (Leader)

**Physical** ☐☐☐

**Mental** ☐☐☐☐

**Consequences** -2 ☐, -4 ☐

**Good (+3)** Lore, Will

**Fair (+2)** Athletics, Channeling

**Average (+1)** Physique, Survival

*The Mad Necromancer of North Oaks*

*"Feel the Pain that I Feel!"*

*Stretched Thin*

*Alert for Danger*

*Second Flesh: Add fortune to all defend actions using Athletics.*

*Ray of Rot: May use Lore in place of Marksmanship to make ranged attacks against a target.*

If Malthias is stopped, his bone golems cease to function.

Malthias was spurned in his homeland of Grave-wood, and has moved to this remote location to carry out his experiments.

#### Bone Golem (Minion)

**Physical** ☐☐☐

**Good (+3)** Fighting

**Fair (+2)** Athletics

**Average (+1)** Physique

*Unthinking Construct*

*Bound to Malthias*

*Powerful Blow: Add fortune to Fighting attacks.*

The bone golems aren't susceptible to any attacks that cause mental stress. They are mindless automatons in service to Malthias.

### Setup

The bone golems should be set up as close as possible to the heroes, while Malthias is better used further away.

### Tactics

Malthias will attempt to move around, shelling the heroes from distance with his Ray of Rot. However,

Malthias isn't weak, since his Second Flesh ability can ward physical damage.



## Sightrock

**Conflict** Skirmish

**Difficulty** 4

Sightrock gets its name from the large outcropping of rock that provides views of wide open vistas in every direction. The towering mound of rock is surrounded by rolling hills and dense thickets of pine, broken up by systems of streams suitable for irrigation and farming.

However, there's a reason there are no settlers in the area. A feeling of terrible dread and despair overcomes anyone spending a few weeks within sight of the expansive outcrop. This feeling of dread grows to an unbearable level given enough time. The source of this malignancy lies deep within a series of caverns underneath the rock.

### Sample Challenges

To successfully settle the land, the heroes must locate the source of this darkness, and deal with it. In a watery cavern under the rock is a writhing, formless mound of alien flesh, capable of psychic attacks. It was formed as a conduit of sorts for the magic of some long dead spellcaster.

Quell the fear and loathing running rampant at base camp.

Fight off the mob of settlers in the grips of psychotic dreams.

Follow the mana rifts to the great rock.

Decipher the runes below Sightrock.

Overcome the growing dread of the doom under Sightrock.

### Opposition

## Formless Spawn (Leader)

**Physical** □□□□

**Mental** □□□□

**Consequences** -2 □, -2 □, -4 □, -6 □

**Fantastic (+6)** Command, Will

**Superb (+5)** Channeling, Wits

**Great (+4)** Athletics, Fighting

**Good (+3)** Lore, Physique

**Fair (+2)** Stealth, Survival

*Unwanted Refuse of the Cosmos*

*Mutating Aquatic Form*

*Hulking Fleshy Mass*

*Vulnerable to Iron*

***Big Bad (General):** The character gets a severe consequence. If opposed by four heroes, this character gets one additional stress box on either their physical or mental stress track. If opposed by five heroes, this character gets two additional stress boxes on either their physical or mental stress track. This stunt is reserved for solo opposition in a skirmish conflict, or very important characters, such as the Autarch. This stunt doesn't use up a stunt slot.*

***Wave of Despair:** May use Command to perform a ranged mental stress attack, opposed by Will.*

***Resilient Flesh:** Add fortune when using Athletics for defense.*

***Waterborne:** Ignore water based terrain obstacles for purposes of slowing movement. Opposing heroes in water zones are also ignored.*

The formless spawn sits in a large chamber, at the lowest point in the network of caverns and passages. It seeks to drive off the heroes through psychic attacks.

### Setup

When creating the map, use all available obstacles to create zones that are partly filled with water. The spawn remains in these zones as much as possible, since it has poorer movement on land.

### *Tactics*

The spawn picks on the mentally weakest character, lashing out with psychic attacks that drain their will to fight. It moves around water zones, trying to avoid the heaviest hitters.

## Sunset Isles

**Conflict** Infiltration

**Difficulty** 6

The Sunset Isles are a string of islands within the Sunset Sea—a body of water hundreds of miles across, almost completely surrounded by land, save for a small inlet that pours out to the ocean.

The largest Isle is known as Hearth by the people of Fire Valley, a large native population reminiscent of Viking tribes living within the Sunset Isles. The buildings and farms of Fire Valley are built among a wide array of elm, ash, and cottonwood trees, densely packed amongst other bright and colorful flora. The peaks on each side give Fire Valley some protection from the high winds that howl through parts of the island.

The heroes spend many weeks in the Sunset Isles, with the goal of forming an alliance with the people of Fire Valley. This process is going well, until the heroes witness a bizarre ritual in the early morning hours. One of the islanders is taken away, never to return again.

As the heroes uncover what's happened, Kori, the patriarch of Sun Valley, beseeches the heroes to help the islanders thwart the Monastery of the Carnal Brood, a depraved and fallen cult demanding sacrifices of the people of Fire Valley on every new moon.

This entails getting to the Monastery, located high on North Peak, and destroying the Broodstone, the source of their power. The cult is incredibly dangerous, and a direct frontal assault would be foolhardy. Without the Broodstone, the cult is powerless.

### Sample Challenges

The heroes gain intelligence on the Monastery, and find a way to destroy the Broodstone. Depending on time and interest, other challenges could include swaying public opinion with the islanders or assisting them in their tasks. Perhaps the heroes witness a ritual where a villager is led off by orange cloaked captors.

The Broodstone is both living and dead, a beating red heart of rock, which fuels the creation of the zombie minions that the cult thrives on. Without it, the cult will cease to function. It must be destroyed using a smith's hammer that has forged over one hundred swords.

Where was the villager led in the early dawn?

Who lives in the Monastery on North Peak?

What are the goals of the Cult of the Carnal Brood?

Is Kori behind the kidnappings?

How can the Broodstone, the beating red heart of rock, be destroyed?

### Opposition

Any combination of initiates and frost zombies may be used as guards.

#### Initiate of the Orange Robes (Minion)

**Physical** ☐☐☐

**Mental** ☐☐☐☐

**Fantastic (+6)** Wits

**Superb (+5)** Fighting

**Great (+4)** Will

**Good (+3)** Athletics

**Fair (+2)** Physique

**Average (+1)** Lore

*May the Broodstone Guide My Hand!*

*Addicted to Black Lotus Tincture*

*Broodstone Guidance: Add major fortune when using Wits to detect intruders.*

*Powerful Attack (Fighting): The character is a bruising attacker, capable of delivering crushing blows. Add +2 to attack actions using Fighting.*

Initiates are better at detecting intruders, and aren't as good at fighting.

### **Frost Zombie (Minion)**

**Physical** ☐☐☐☐

**Mental** ☐☐☐

**Fantastic (+6)**    Fighting

**Superb (+5)**    Intimidation

**Great (+4)**    Athletics

**Good (+3)**    Physique

**Fair (+2)**    Wits

**Average (+1)**    Survival

**Undead Born of Frost**

**Easily Tricked**

**Powerful Attack (Fighting):** *The character is a bruising attacker, capable of delivering crushing blows. Add +2 to attack actions using Fighting.*

**I'm on a Roll! (Fighting):** *On a successful attack action, gain a boost even if the attack didn't succeed with style. If it succeeded with style, gain an extra boost.*

**Whirling Attack (Fighting):** *Draw a stress card to attack every opponent in the same zone using Fighting. Only determine the attack value once, but each defender may defend individually.*

Frost zombies are strong undead, but are better used by pairing them with initiates, as they're easily tricked on their own.

### **Setup**

The Broodstone is housed in a large monastery on top of North Peak, built hundreds of years ago. It's surrounded by a massive courtyard, with very high walls covered with runes.

The Monastery has three levels, with the largest level on the bottom. The lowest level contains the Sanctum of Carnal Reflection, where the frost zombies are created. The Broodstone is below the sanctum, within a large open chamber called the Heart of Unlife.

### **Sample Security Challenges**

Disguise: Obtain Robes from Runolf the Distasteful

Stealth: Slip through Sanctum of Carnal Reflection

Thievery: Open the Heart of Unlife

# The Empire

The machinations of the Autarch are the core focus of the game. The specific variety of pain and grief inflicted on the Stronghold will vary, but the question of what steps and sacrifices the Stronghold makes in dealing with this threat is the central theme of the campaign.

The Empire of the Autarch is vast and expansive, although it's slowly rotting from within, only propped up by its inexorable expansion. The state is referred to from within as the United Freetraders and from without as either the Freetraders or simply the Empire.

At the start of the campaign, the Autarch is at war with a numerous, though not very sophisticated, people known as the Plainsmen. As that war winds down over the next three or four years, the Autarch begins harassing the Stronghold using more aggressive techniques.

Life under the Autarch is very stratified. At the top is the Autarch, the first among the citizens and the ultimate authority on most matters. The Subtect holds the next most important position, able to step up to fill the Autarch's duties for a temporary period if something happens to the Autarch. The Subtect is a key diplomat—the Autarch typically remains within the Empire's confines.

The backbone of the Empire is built from a large number of guilds. The grandmasters from each of these guilds form a senate which is responsible for making most of the important decisions, with occasional and sometimes contentious advisement from the Autarch.

The Autarch rules for life. A replacement is not elected, but rather open to a candidate able to pass The Hollowing, a grueling test of magical might administered by the Mana Guild.

- Autarch Is the First Among Citizens*
- Vast Network of Spies*
- Council of 100 Guildmasters*
- Economy of Expansion*

## Names

Aitark, Arcus, Aulark, Aulim, Destia, Fulvia, Lucia, Micus, Nalah, Octja, Publiark, Quintim, Regulim, Tiberiat, Yimarina, Yinerva, Yivian

## Regions

|   | Name                 | Ramparts | Food | Timber | Ore |
|---|----------------------|----------|------|--------|-----|
|   | Mana                 | Luxuries |      |        |     |
| 1 | Prominence (Capital) | Castle   | 1    | 1      | 2   |
|   | 1                    |          |      |        |     |
|   | Eastkeep             | Keep 1   | 0    | 1      | 0   |
|   | Southkeep            | Keep     | 2    | 0      | 0   |
| 1 |                      |          |      |        |     |
|   | Guilder Farms        | Keep     | 2    | 1      | 0   |
| 0 |                      |          |      |        |     |
|   | Dawncaves            |          | 0    | 0      | 1   |
| 0 |                      |          |      |        |     |
|   | Yearly Field         |          | 0    | 1      | 0   |
| 0 |                      |          |      |        |     |
|   | Firstborn Peak       |          | 0    | 0      | 0   |
| 0 |                      |          |      |        | 1   |

## Mission Difficulties and Autarch Schemes

Instead of fixed mission difficulties, mission difficulties for the Empire are determined by Autarch schemes. The Autarch player may advance two schemes each year (see *Threats and Schemes*, page XX, for more details). Some of these schemes increase the mission difficulties for missions against the Empire. By default, all of the mission difficulties start at four.

Units are also increased through the selection of certain schemes. At the start, the Empire has the units listed in this chapter. Refer to *Threats and Schemes* (page XX) for more details.

The faction sheet has space to track which schemes have been selected.

### Starting Units

|          |    |
|----------|----|
| Militia  | 20 |
| Archers  | 10 |
| Infantry | 10 |

## Leaders

### The Autarch (Leader)

**Physical** □□□□

**Mental** □□□□

**Consequences** -2 □, -2 □, -4 □, -6 □

**Legendary (+8)** Channeling, Lore

**Epic (+7)** Society, Will

**Fantastic (+6)** Command, Wits

**Superb (+5)** Athletics, Tactics

**Great (+4)** Rapport, Survival

**Good (+3)** Marksmanship, Physique

**Fair(+2)** Fighting, Stealth

**Average (+1)** Engineering, Thievery

**Greatest Sorcerer in the Realms**

**Youngest to Pass The Harrowing**

**“We Will Not Be Sacrificed on the Altar of Civility!”**

**Oldest Daughter of Arcus**

**Bound to the Animaelic Forest:** The Autarch starts any conflict with mana equal to four times the current year.

**Victor of the Harrowing:** May spend mana on any magical secret without having to check for backlash.

**Big Bad (General):** The character gets a severe consequence. If opposed by four heroes, this character gets one additional stress box on either their physical or mental stress track. If opposed by five heroes, this character gets two additional stress boxes on either their physical or mental stress track. This stunt is reserved for solo opposition in a skirmish conflict, or very important characters, such as the Autarch. This stunt doesn't use up a stunt slot.

The current Autarch was born to Arcus, a Grandmaster in the now abandoned Guild of Channeling. Born under the eighth moon, she was called Octia by



her father, and began the study of magic immediately. Octia was a prodigy in magic, and quickly outpaced all of the Masters within the guild. At the age of eight, she emerged from The Harrowing alive, a test of magical will that affirmed her place as the next Autarch. She rose to power with little fanfare and much awe.

The Autarch's quest for sorcerous knowledge has not abated with age. As the campaign unfolds, she is taking steps towards completing the Ritual of Law, a feat that will let her rule become absolute.

The exact nature of the conflict with the Stronghold can slowly be revealed as the campaign progresses. As mentioned in *Getting Started* (page XX), it could be fueled by resources the Stronghold controls, or from some defection in the past. Perhaps the heroes from the Stronghold know her desires to ascend the mortal realm and seek to stop her. It could also be the case that the Autarch is a more sympathetic character, looking out for her own people against an expansionist Stronghold.

### **The Subtect (Leader)**

**Physical** □□□

**Mental** □□□□

**Consequences** -2 □, -2 □, -4 □

**Fantastic (+6)** Rapport, Society

**Superb (+5)** Will, Wits

**Great (+4)** Command, Lore

**Good (+3)** Channeling, Survival

**Fair (+2)** Engineering, Tactics

**Average (+1)** Physique, Stealth

**Guild of Trade Grandmaster**

**"Hey, At Least Hear My Offer"**

**Admirer of Art and Beauty**

**"It's Good to Know Your Allies!"**

**Socially Adept (Society):** For diplomacy, the character's Society skill is 2 higher for purposes of turn order.

**Commanding Word (Society):** Spend a fate point to add an additional point of support when successfully gaining support.

**Passive Aggressive (Rapport):** When the character successfully gains support, opposing characters on the same issue each take one mental stress.

The Subtect is the primary mouthpiece for the Empire. He is adept at leveraging the might of the Empire to close deals and gain new allies.

### **Nalah (Leader)**

**Physical** □□□□

**Mental** □□□□

**Consequences** -2 □, -2 □, -4 □

**Fantastic (+6)** Athletics, Fighting

**Superb (+5)** Marksmanship, Physique

**Great (+4)** Disguise, Stealth

**Good (+3)** Will, Wits

**Fair (+2)** Command, Tactics

**Average (+1)** Lore, Rapport

**Super Hero of the Plainsmen War**

**Brightest Student of Warmaster Kalos**

**Four Step Sweeping Feint**

**"Is Your Life Really Worth This?"**

**Whirling Attack (Fighting):** Draw a stress card to attack every opponent in the same zone using Fighting. Only determine the attack value once, but each defender may defend individually.

**Powerful Attack (Fighting):** The character is a bruising attacker, capable of delivering crushing blows. Add +2 to attack actions using Fighting.

**I'm on a Roll! (Fighting):** On a successful attack action, gain a boost even if the attack didn't succeed with style. If it succeeded with style, gain an extra boost.

A warrior of great renown, Nalah is used by the Autarch when justice must be meted out at sword-point.

Micus (Leader)Physical ☐☐☐☐Mental ☐☐☐Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Fantastic (+6) Command, Tactics

Superb (+5) Engineering, Fighting

Great (+4) Physique, Wits

Good (+3) Athletics, Survival

Fair (+2) Marksmanship, Society

Average (+1) Rapport, Will

*Lord of the Millet Plain**"I Don't Care About Odds! Back to the Front!"**Shrewd General**"We Will Outflank Them!"*

**Battle Master (Tactics):** During warfare, a group of units under a character's command may act independently. The units no longer need to remain in the same zone as the commander, and may be controlled independently for the duration of the battle. However, the group of units is considered to have a Tactics and Command of Mediocre (+0) for the purposes of turn order.

**Infantry Maneuver (Tactics):** Once each exchange, add +2 to an attack utilizing infantry exclusively (no other unit type may be in the attacking group). The attacking commander may control other unit types.

**Set for Charge (Tactics):** During warfare, add +1 to the Armor of infantry and militia units when they defend against charging cavalry (only for the turn the cavalry moved).

Minim (Leader)Physical ☐☐Mental ☐☐☐☐Consequences -2 ☐, -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Fantastic (+6) Stealth, Wits

Superb (+5) Athletics, Fighting

Great (+4) Disguise, Lore

Good (+3) Channeling, Rapport

Fair (+2) Society, Survival

Average (+1) Engineering, Tactics

*Guild of Knowledge Grandmaster**"Under Extreme Pain We Reveal our Character"**"I Never Forget a Face"**Gray Cloak Founder*

**Orb of Scrying (General):** Secretly designate one zone to contain the Orb of Scrying. Heroes entering this zone must make a Stealth roll to avoid being detected. If detected, the character with the Orb of Scrying stunt is alerted.

**Powerful Attack (Fighting):** The character is a bruising attacker, capable of delivering crushing blows. Add +2 to attack actions using Fighting.

**I'm on a Roll! (Fighting):** On a successful attack action, gain a boost even if the attack didn't succeed with style. If it succeeded with style, gain an extra boost.

Minim is the leader of the Gray Cloaks, a group tasked with rooting out plots to overthrow the Autarch.

Micus is a legend within the Empire, leading the Empire to victory against the Plainsmen as well as sparking a major renaissance of military strategy.

## Diplomacy

Alliance missions aren't conducted with the leadership of the Empire, but rather with an underground resistance interested in overthrowing power within the Empire. When going on an alliance mission, use The Resistance mission described on page XX. The Imperial leaders and sample challenges described here are reserved for diplomatic threats.

The Subtect is always involved in diplomacy for the Empire, while the Autarch rarely ventures beyond the Empire's borders. During threats, the Empire focuses on exposing flaws within the Stronghold, both real and perceived. This is a good chance to play up past transgressions, using them to dissuade minor factions from allying closely with the Stronghold.

**Base Difficulty:** Threat Pool

### *Sample Challenges*

Engage in a discussion of Imperial law with the Subtect.

Defend the actions of the Stronghold to minor faction leaders.

Expose bribery attempts by the Subtect.

Respond to accusations of betrayal by the Autarch.

## Infiltration

The network of spies and informants, known as the Gray Cloaks, operates throughout the Empire. Minim is one of the key leaders within the Gray Cloaks and should be used in all infiltration missions. The Empire is a vast place, with many large cities, making it easier for the heroes to move around anonymously. However, the Gray Cloaks are focused on looking out for incursions from the Stronghold.

Note that a mission to assassinate the Autarch has a fixed difficulty of 8, as she is surrounded by the most competent guard force.

**Base Difficulty:** 4

**Assassinating the Autarch:** 8

### *Sample Challenges*

Escape through the cramped alleys of the Wharf Quarter in Prominence.

Meet with Tatlia in the back room of the Plump Guildmaster.

Watch guard movements outside of the Guild of Maps, a Gray Cloak front.

Plot a course through the Dawncaves.

## Skirmish

The Empire is only too willing to send capable soldiers and mercenaries to attack targets within the Stronghold. Nalah is typically sent on such missions, backed up by guards or mercenaries from other factions.

**Base Difficulty:** 4

### *Sample Challenges*

Chase Stronghold defectors out of their hideout.

Avoid getting lured into Nalah's wilderness ambush.

Work to get an important Stronghold leader out of harm's way.

Help defend the Carley farmhouse from ogre pillagers.

## Warfare

The amount and type of troops the Empire has at their disposal is based upon their warfare threat pool. Early in the campaign, they're busy fighting the Plainsmen, so most of their most proficient troops are unavailable. However, as that war winds down, if warfare becomes a focus, they possess a potentially terrifying array of power, led by the Autarch and Micus.

**Base Difficulty:** 4

**Attacking Prominence:** 8

### *Sample Challenges*

Keep morale up during the long march through the South Downs.

Flee from a magical assault by the Autarch.

Strike quickly with a rain of arrows to take the Gold River Bridge.

Make an example of the defector Yarik.

# The Resistance

**Conflict** Diplomacy

**Difficulty** 5

A covert resistance to the Autarch exists within the confines of the Empire. Although the resistance is small, it does have some measure of popular support behind it. It will be difficult at first for the heroes to make contact with the right people, while avoiding scrutiny from the wrong ones. After that, the influential leaders of the resistance want assurances that the heroes are earnest, and can also provide the aid they say they can.

Use this mission when the Stronghold chooses an alliance mission against the Empire. If successful, the Stronghold will have a method of exchanging luxuries for stability damage.

## Resistance Aspects

*Resource Strapped Uprising*

*Passionate and Unorganized*

*Hunted by Gray Cloaks*

*Will of the People*

## Sample Challenges

Subtly ask around Prominence to find disgruntled citizens.

Convince Raliark to grant council with Tatiana.

Investigate who outed Octja, Tatiana's contact within the Guild of Security.

Free Octja from the Guild of Justice.

Help Raliark pilfer military documents from the Guild of Warfare.

Escape questioning by the Autarch.

Help Secundim secure a guard's outfit.

## Opposition

The leaders of the resistance are listed roughly in order of importance.

### Tatiana (Leader)

**Physical** □□

**Mental** □□□□

**Consequences** -2 □, -4 □

**Superb (+5)** Command, Society

**Great (+4)** Rapport, Wits

**Good (+3)** Lore, Will

**Fair (+2)** Channeling, Stealth

**Average (+1)** Engineering, Survival

*Hotheaded Leader of the Resistance*

*Master in Guild of Scribes*

*"I Will Not Sacrifice the Innocent!"*

*"We Must also Plan for Success..."*

*We Will Not Sacrifice Our Own: Add fortune on any gain support actions in diplomacy if the Stronghold has conducted sabotage missions against the Empire.*

Tatiana is the strategic thinking leader of the resistance. She maintains a healthy and well-founded paranoia about who she associates with.

### Tulim (Leader)

**Physical** □□

**Mental** □□□□

**Consequences** -2 □, -4 □

**Superb (+5)** Fighting, Intimidation

**Great (+4)** Rapport, Will

**Good (+3)** Society, Tactics

**Fair (+2)** Command, Wits

**Average (+1)** Lore, Survival

*Retired from Guild of Security*

*“We Bear the Greatest Risk!”*

*“Money Greases the Wheels”*

*Eternally Pessimistic*

*Commanding Word (Society): Spend a fate point to add an additional point of support when successfully gaining support.*

Tulim has seen and undertaken horrific acts in the name of the Empire. He is suspicious of any outside intervention, although direct financial assistance goes a long way to helping waylay his fears.

### Akilah (Leader)

**Physical** ☐☐☐

**Mental** ☐☐☐☐

**Consequences** -2 ☐, -2 ☐, -4 ☐

**Superb (+5)** Society, Will

**Great (+4)** Lore, Rapport

**Good (+3)** Survival, Wits

**Fair (+2)** Channeling, Fighting

**Average (+1)** Athletics, Physique

*Servant to Guild of Pleasure Grandmaster*

*Mother of a Soldier*

*“We Must Be Prepared to Sacrifice”*

*Uncanny Streetsmarts*

*Captivating Features (Rapport): Add +1 when using boosts to leverage your looks.*

Akilah is a servant to Sabila, the Guild of Pleasure Grandmaster. The Guild of Pleasure is a hotbed of Imperial secrets that Akilah is privy to.

### Secundim (Leader)

**Physical** ☐☐☐

**Mental** ☐☐☐

**Consequences** -2 ☐, -4 ☐

**Superb (+5)** Fighting, Thievery

**Great (+4)** Disguise, Rapport

**Good (+3)** Will, Wits

**Fair (+2)** Athletics, Tactics

**Average (+1)** Stealth, Survival

*Freetrader Outlaw*

*A Worldly Man*

*Bearer of Scars That Won't Heal*

*“I'm the Guy Who Can Get that Done”*

Secundim is a wanted man within the Empire, so must don a disguise when he moves about the cities. He has visited many places within the realm, giving him a broad experience in the cultures and peoples outside of the Empire.

### Raliark (Leader)

**Physical** ☐☐

**Mental** ☐☐☐

**Consequences** -2 ☐, -4 ☐

**Great (+4)** Society, Tactics

**Good (+3)** Rapport, Will

**Fair (+2)** Engineering, Wits

**Average (+1)** Lore, Survival

*Librarian at the Guild of Warfare*

*A Trustworthy Face*

*Father Executed by the Autarch*

*“We Must Not Overextend our Hand”*

Raliark keeps tabs on the military strength of the Empire via his position within the Guild of Warfare. He is very loyal to Tatiana and is optimistic that her drive and charisma can keep the resistance from falling apart.



## The Severing

The Severing quest consists of three different missions, the end goal of which is to sever the Autarch from the First Source of Mana, neutralizing the Autarch's power. The quests must be done in order (A Call to Arms, Run the Gauntlet, and The Animaelic Forest). This first mission is optional, but it can make the next mission (Run the Gauntlet) much easier.

An ancient wellspring of arcane energy known as the First Source generates all magic within the Realm. This source of magic lies within the Animaelic Forest, a dense woods avoided by the pure of heart for its corrupting influence on the soul of those who linger within. The forest is surrounded by impassable sheer peaks except for a canyon known as the Sundered Crag.

The Autarch is bound to the Animaelic Forest, a tremendously dangerous feat, allowing her to draw on immense reserves of arcane energy. It is possible for a motivated group of heroes to sever the Autarch's connection to the Animaelic Forest, by voyaging to the First Source and sacrificing a part of themselves upon arrival. Severing the bond destroys the Autarch and stops the Empire's rampant conquest.

Unfortunately, just getting to the Animaelic Forest is difficult; the forest itself lashes out to stop intruders with creatures built of rock and earth. Gaining access will require commanding an army to push through the Sundered Crag, buying time for a group of heroes to enter the Animaelic Forest and sever the Autarch from the First Source.

## A Call to Arms (The Severing)

**Conflict** Diplomacy

**Difficulty** 5

The Stronghold sounds the call to arms for all the minor factions with a disposition of one or higher with the Stronghold. Representatives from each of these factions arrive at the Stronghold, ready to decide whether or not to commit troops in support of the Stronghold's bold plan.

### *Sample Challenges*

The challenges should involve the minor factions allied with the Stronghold. Use past alliance missions as well as past threats with the faction as a source of inspiration. Another good source of challenges are conflicts between ideologically opposed members of minor factions.

### *Opposition*

Choose one representative leader from each allied minor faction for use during the diplomacy conflict. If there are fewer opposing leaders than heroes, add additional leaders from the represented minor factions until each side is equal in number. If there are more representatives than heroes, drop leaders from factions with the lowest dispositions.

### *Setup*

Spread out issues among all of the factions present as evenly as possible. Existing issues from factions can be used, particularly if they're related to military conflict.

### *Resolution*

For each issue successfully resolved by the Stronghold, they receive three units from the associated faction for the upcoming mission to run through the Sundered Crag.

## Run the Gauntlet (The Severing)

**Conflict** Warfare

**Difficulty** 6

The Animaelic Forest is an ancient nexus of death and pain. The land around it is increasingly barren and foreboding, culminating in the Sundered Crag, a long narrow chasm with sheer cliffs on the sides. The ground is littered with the blood of the countless dead, still fresh after untold millennia.

As the army gets closer to the forest, the blood erupts into demons and devils built of rock that attack mercilessly. The heroes take cover within the army, hoping to emerge on the other side unscathed.

### Sample Challenges

Survive the long march through the frozen north.

Convince soldiers of the necessity to burn the bodies of the dead to prevent them coming back as demons.

Drive rock demons from camp.

Organize a plan through the chasm.

### Opposition

The pass is guarded by twenty units of rock demons led by long dead heroes from the first tribes of humanity.

#### Fallen General (Lieutenant)

**Physical** ☐☐☐☐

**Mental** ☐☐☐☐

**Consequences** -2 ☐, -2 ☐

**Fantastic (+6)** Command, Tactics

**Superb (+5)** Fighting, Physique

**Great (+4)** Survival, Wits

**Good (+3)** Athletics, Marksmanship

*Vengeful Hero of a Bygone Age*

*“Rend! Bite! Claw! Tear!”*

*Ferocious and Aggressive*

*Battle Master (Tactics): During warfare, a group of units under a character's command may act independently. The units no longer need to remain in the same zone as the commander, and may be controlled independently for the duration of the battle. However, the group of units is considered to have a Tactics and Command of Mediocre (+0) for the purposes of turn order.*

*Pushback (Tactics): If the character inflicts more casualties than the other side in a clash of arms (taking into account possible outflanking), may move opposing commander and units to an empty adjacent zone. If no adjacent zone is empty, or if both sides lost the same number of units, they remain where they are.*

The demons are led by ancient generals and fighters pulled back to life by the land.

#### Rock Demons (Unit)

**Morale** ☐☐☐

**Superb (+5)** Armor

**Good (+3)** Fighting, Movement

**Mediocre (+0)** Survival

*Creatures of Death and Sorrow*

*Born of the Land and the Land Wants You Dead*

*Eyes of Fire and Blood: Opposing leaders commanding units in the same zone as the rock demons must apply a stress card every time they order their attached units to attack.*

Rock demons have a simple focus: murder everything in sight.

## *Setup*

The Sundered Crag is a long narrow pass. It's represented by setting out a column of zones ten long and two wide. The units of demons start on one side of the column, and the units controlled by the heroes and other allied groups start on the other side. The heroes who will ultimately go on into the Animaelic Forest need to be placed among the units as desired.

## *Resolution*

When the units that the heroes are in make it to the far side of the pass (they move out of the zones on the other side of the pass), the mission is over. The chosen heroes may then enter the Animaelic Forest.

# The Animaelic Forest (The Severing)

**Conflict** Skirmish

**Difficulty** 7

It takes tremendous will to enter the Animaelic Forest. The forest is a place of ghostly forms and crushed dreams. Because the Autarch is bound to the forest, it has transformed into a psychic map of her own internal pain.

The trip through the forest takes many months, although the inhabitants don't need food or drink. Instead, they must move along in starts and stops, facing their own fears represented in the tortured dreams of the Autarch.

## Sample Challenges

These challenges are all related to painful moments in the Autarch's upbringing. Memories, even positive ones, become twisted and negative while in the forest.

Pass the Trial of Burning Copper in the Harrowing.

Defend against Guild of Security bullies.

Stay still during the Ritual of Purity.

Defeat Or'thak, the beast of one thousand eyes.

Defend Arcus from Plainsmen Raiders.

## Opposition

Deep within the forest, in the eye of the nightmare maelstrom, lies the corrupted heart of the Autarch. This form of the Autarch confronts the heroes directly and attacks without mercy.

In addition to the Autarch, the heroes must face one ghostly doppelganger for each hero. These are bizarrely twisted and perverse creatures that mimic the heroes themselves.

## Shadow of the Autarch (Leader)

**Physical** □□□□

**Mental** □□□□

**Consequences** -2 □, -2 □, -4 □, -6 □

**Epic (+7)** Channeling, Lore

**Fantastic (+6)** Command, Wits

**Superb (+5)** Athletics, Will

**Great (+4)** Fighting, Physique

### *The Spirit of the Autarch*

*Bearer of the Hopes and Dreams of a Nation*

*An Entity of Pure Magical Force*

*"I Will Sacrifice to Save My People!"*

*Animaelic Fire: May use Lore as a ranged attack, opposed by Athletics.*

*Share My Pain!: If a hero takes a severe consequence, they must also permanently change one character aspect to reflect this consequence.*

*Quick (General): Prior to making an attack action, may move one zone. Usual rules for moving out of an opposed zone apply.*

*Ghostly (General): Add +2 when using Athletics or Fighting to defend against attacks of a physical form (magical attacks do not grant this bonus).*

*Big Bad (General): The character gets a severe consequence. If opposed by four heroes, this character gets one additional stress box on either their physical or mental stress track. If opposed by five heroes, this character gets two additional stress boxes on either their physical or mental stress track. This stunt is reserved for solo opposition in a skirmish conflict, or very important characters, such as the Autarch. This stunt doesn't use up a stunt slot.*

The shadow bears some resemblance and intelligence with the Autarch, but has been twisted by the forest.

**Twisted Doppelganger (Minion)****Physical** ☐☐☐☐**Mental** ☐☐☐☐

Each doppelganger has the same skills as the hero they're reflecting.

***Dark Reflections of Hopelessness******Intimate Knowledge of Deepest Insecurities***

***Ghostly (General): Add +2 when using Athletics or Fighting to defend against attacks of a physical form (magical attacks do not grant this bonus).***

The doppelgangers are twisted reflections of the heroes. They are also creatures of shadow.

***Setup***

The Autarch player may add one ☐☐ ***Psychic Vortex*** aspect for each player to any zones desired. These are eddies and rifts of psychic energy which make movement and action difficult for anything with a physical form.

***Resolution***

If the shadow is defeated, the Autarch is stopped and the heroes have won! The Empire no longer lusts after the Stronghold. Each player should answer one of the following questions. Finally, players should take turns narrating short epilogues for each surviving hero from the Stronghold.

What happened to the Autarch when her connection to the Animaelic Forest was shattered?

What happens to the people of the Empire?

Who is bound to the forest in the Autarch's place and what happens to their personality?

What does the future hold for the Stronghold?

## Wrath of the Autarch

**Conflict** Skirmish

**Difficulty** 9

If it gets to the point where the Autarch player is able to use this scheme, things are about to get very bad for the Stronghold. The Autarch is close to channeling all the mana from the realm, a process which will transform her into an unstoppable force of raw magic. Before that can happen, though, the Autarch must complete the Path of Ascendancy, an arduous trek through the north and into the heart of the Animaelic Forest.

While on the path, she is protected by shadow guardians summoned to protect her. If the guardians are killed, the Autarch attacks the heroes using all of her stored up magical energy (which is very potent by this point).

### Sample Challenges

Uncover the Autarch's plans of Ascendancy.

Battle a contingent of Freetrader guards.

Read the signs of mana to find the Autarch.

Set up an ambush just outside Millet Plain.

### Opposition

One Shadow Guardian for each hero, along with the Autarch.

#### Shadow Guardian (Minion)

**Physical** ☐☐☐☐

**Mental** ☐☐☐☐

**Legendary (+8)** Fighting, Will

**Fantastic (+6)** Athletics, Physique

**Superb (+5)** Stealth, Survival

***Demons of the Gray Wastes***

***Extensions of the Autarch's Will***

***Attracted to Magical Energy***

***Quiet as a Mouse (Stealth): Add +1 when using boosts to leverage a hidden position.***

***Ghostly (General): Add +2 when using Athletics or Fighting to defend against attacks of a physical form (magical attacks do not grant this bonus).***

The Shadow Guardians are amorphous forms, hidden in clouds of inky blackness, moving quickly about the Autarch.

### Setup

The Autarch will most likely hang back and let the Shadow Guardians work up front, while attacking the heroes using ranged spells. If the heroes bunch up, Hail Storm (Secret of the Elements) is an effective attack. Another option is to transform into a dragon and wade into the front lines. That option uses up most of the Autarch's mana.

### Resolution

If the Autarch is killed, the heroes have won! Follow the steps in The Resolution section of The Animaelic Forest mission just prior to this one. If the heroes are driven back, the Autarch has won! Each player should take turns narrating short epilogues for each living character. Then, each player should answer one of the following questions.

What happens to the Autarch when she finishes walking the path of Ascendancy?

What happens to the people of the Empire?

Which of the Stronghold allies join with the Autarch?

What does the future hold for the Stronghold?

Who suffers most under the Autarch's rule?

Who benefits most from the Autarch's rule?





# BURGAN VALE

The people of Burgan Vale treat the Veil—the energies which bind the land and the people together—as the centerpiece for every aspect of life. They are not dissuaded by its chaotic side-effects, but instead train intensely to master them, reaching great heights of prowess in channeling and spellcraft. They are concerned that others not abuse its power and ruin the scarce sources of mana in the wilds.

To this end, they have created the Order of the Eye, a group of channelers who monitor the use of magic in the Realm through sorceries and subterfuge. Initiates of the Order wear blue robes, as a symbol of their station.

Part of becoming a powerful channeler is living with less, and this is reflected in the Spartan dwellings the people of Burgan Vale maintain. They are simple wooden structures, functional and clean in design, without much flourish. The only opulent structure is Arankh, a large tower which rises high above all the other structures in the valley. It's a repository of knowledge, unparalleled in scope and detail.

The people of Burgan Vale tend to be reserved in speech and manner, but do succumb to wild abandon during the Festival of Illusions, their summer celebration of the power of sorcerous craft. The night sky lights up in an almost cataclysmic explosion of color, a fitting backdrop to days of spirited competition and debate.

## *Communal Magocracy*

### *Order of the Eye Watches All*

### *Worldly Pleasures Are Limited*

### *Veil Must Be Protected*

## *Names*

Abram, Alda, Amalric, Berta, Carrie, Celsa, Claudas, Clovis, Dagen, Flint, Gautmarus, Illegardis, Ingund, Landina, Lothar, Morgan, Rigunth, Sigmund, Thedda, Wisa

## *Regions*

| Name                    | Ramparts | Food | Timber | Ore |
|-------------------------|----------|------|--------|-----|
| Mana                    | Luxuries |      |        |     |
| Harrow's Glen (Capital) | 1        | 0    | 0      | 1   |
| The Feldmarch           | 0        | 1    | 0      | 0   |
| Blue Rock               | 0        | 0    | 0      | 2   |

## *Mission Difficulty*

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Diplomacy    | 4 |
| Infiltration | 4 |
| Skirmish     | 5 |
| Warfare      | 5 |

## *Units*

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| Militia  | 8 |
| Infantry | 5 |
| Archers  | 3 |
| Mages    | 8 |

## Leaders

### Marellus (Leader)

Physical ☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Fantastic (+6) Channeling, Lore

Superb (+5) Command, Tactics

Great (+4) Survival, Wits

Good (+3) Rapport, Society

Fair (+2) Marksmanship, Will

Average (+1) Engineering, Stealth

*Hierophant of the Blue Robes*

*Thinks the Best of People*

*"We Are All Connected by the Veil."*

*Keen Observer of the Human Condition*

*High Mage: Starts each conflict with ten mana.*

*Fire Strike (Lore): The caster harnesses fire, throwing it at a target. Spend a point of mana to use Lore in place of Marksmanship to attack a character (not unit) with fire. Each additional mana spent adds +1 to the final result.*

*Hailstorm (Lore): Large icy pellets fall from the sky. This works similarly to the Fire Strike stunt, except every character (not unit) within the same zone is hit (they each may defend independently). There are no penalties for range. Also, the target zone gets the Icy Terrain aspect with one free invoke. Each additional mana spent adds +1 to the final result.*

Marellus is the master of the Tower of Arankh and, along with Elisa, the most important figure in the ruling class of Burgan Vale. Marellus is willing to engage militarily if necessary to protect the Veil of magic from external threats.

### Elisa (Leader)

Physical ☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Superb (+5) Channeling, Lore

Great (+4) Society, Wits

Good (+3) Rapport, Will

Fair (+2) Stealth, Survival

Average (+1) Engineering, Tactics

*Sorceress of Incalculable Age*

*Keeper of the Forbidden Lore*

*Teacher of Secrets*

*Crafter of All Manner of Potions*

*High Mage: Starts each conflict with ten mana.*

*Charm (Lore): Spend a point of mana to use Lore in place of Rapport when exaggerating the truth. Each additional mana spent adds +1 to the final result.*

*Glamour (Lore): Caster spends five mana and chooses a target character. Target character subtracts two from Wits skill for remainder of season. Does not require an action to use.*

The spiritual leader of Burgan Vale, Elisa has Marellus' ear. Elisa is one of the oldest people in the realm, having seen all manner of rulers rise and fall.

### Alda (Leader)

Physical ☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Superb (+5) Survival, Wits

Great (+4) Athletics, Fighting

Good (+3) Channeling, Stealth

Fair (+2) Command, Rapport

**Average (+1)** Society, Will

**Horsemaster for Burgan Vale**

**Never Forget a Face**

**Quick and Powerful Frame**

**"I Can Spot a Lie from a Mile Away."**

**Trapmaster (General):** Use create advantage to create permanent aspects in a zone that stop hero movement. Trap may be removed with an overcome action with Thievery at a passive opposition equal to mission difficulty.

Alda is Elisa's granddaughter, and has influence over the goings on of Burgan Vale through Elisa. Alda keeps tabs on who comes and goes within Burgan Vale. She has a gruff exterior, and her speech is laced with profanity as a means to disarm those she talks with.

### Childric (Leader)

**Physical** □□□□

**Mental** □□

**Consequences** -2 □, -2 □, -4 □

**Superb (+5)** Fighting, Physique

**Great (+4)** Athletics, Command

**Good (+3)** Rapport, Society

**Fair (+2)** Survival, Wits

**Average (+1)** Stealth, Tactics

**Washed Up Mercenary Captain**

**Scars of Many Wars**

**Three Time Longbow Tourney Champion**

**"Save Your Pity."**

**Powerful Attack (Fighting):** The character is a bruising attacker, capable of delivering crushing blows. Add +2 to attack actions using Fighting.

Childric is an incredibly popular figure within Burgan Vale, historically a famous entertainer, acrobat, and adventurer after his career as a man-at-arms.

Childric is particularly sympathetic to the plight of the downtrodden.

### Amalger (Leader)

**Physical** □□□

**Mental** □□□

**Consequences** -2 □, -4 □

**Superb (+5)** Command, Tactics

**Great (+4)** Channeling, Lore

**Good (+3)** Engineering, Fighting

**Fair (+2)** Physique, Society

**Average (+1)** Rapport, Wits

**Commander of the Phoenix Brigade**

**Man of Few Words**

**Mana Infused Scimitars**

**"Get Moving, You Sniveling Bookworm!"**

**Infantry Maneuver (Tactics):** Once each exchange, add +2 to an attack utilizing infantry exclusively (no other unit type may be in the attacking group). The attacking commander may control other unit types.

Amalger is in charge of the military within Burgan Vale, focusing on using battle mages as the primary force of arms.

## Diplomacy

Marellus is the clear head of Burgan Vale, although he greatly values Elisa's opinion. In general, Marellus is a fairly straight shooter, preferring to keep intentions above board.

The people of Burgan Vale have a deep love of nature and a close relationship to the mana that's a core part of their life. Diplomacy challenges can build on these elements.

**Base Difficulty:** 4

### *Sample Challenges*

Impress Marellus during a reception inside the tower of Arankh.

Answer to an inquiry of the Order of the Eye.

Help Elisa recover mana infused blue rock.

Gather luminous moss for the Festival of Illusion.

Tune the mana forge.

Decipher an ancient text on the history of the vale.

## Infiltration

Burgan Vale doesn't invest heavily in guards or defenses from spies. Most of the arcane knowledge they have is very difficult to master and doesn't lend itself to theft. As with everything related to Burgan Vale, the sense of the arcane should be played up.

**Base Difficulty:** 4

### *Sample Challenges*

Establish base of operations within the The Lifted Veil archiving workshop.

Meet Celsa, Order of the Eye contact, on the North Moors.

Leverage Aemon's wily advances.

Find reagents to stop a Dweomer of Discovering.

## Skirmish

If it comes to blows with Burgan Vale, the heroes will meet resistance from select members of the Phoenix Guard, a talented group of mages specializing in attack spells. Marellus and Childric are also good leaders to use in a skirmish.

**Base Difficulty: 5**

### *Sample Challenges*

Put out fires within Obsidian Wood after a Phoenix Guard assault.

Attack a perimeter of zombie guardians resurrected from the graveyards of the Stronghold.

Attack an Electric Quickling from range, avoiding its paralyzing touch.

Track your quarry by following the aetheric currents.

## Warfare

Burgan Vale has a large number of battle mages (known as the Phoenix Guard) at their disposal, so they present a decent challenge in warfare. Amalger is a solid military leader.

**Base Difficulty: 5**

### *Sample Challenges*

Recover lost troop morale from a Ritual of Terror.

Defend against a rain of fire from the Phoenix Guard.

Take the Hill of the Lonely Stone from a small contingent of archers.

Attack a perimeter of undead guardians.

## Thedda's Palimpsest

**Conflict** Skirmish

**Difficulty** 6

Before anyone inhabited the Vale, there stood a solitary gray tower at the base of massive granite cliffs. No life existed around the tower, no birds flew and no trees grew. Those who found a way inside the tower spoke of a sad man living within, withered and cold, immune to death. The people of Burgan Vale called him the Gray Recluse, and came to understand that if left alone, he posed no threat. When treated aggressively, he turned all those that dared confront him into mindless golems of flesh.

Thedda was the greatest channeler ever to live within Burgan Vale. Such was her power that she could pull mana from barren earth and detect eddies in the Veil from the casting of spells miles away. The Gray Recluse, fearing she might learn his secrets, walked out into a night lit by the full moon and stole her away to his tower. But Thedda saw this before it happened, and put all of her knowledge and spirit in a book made of hatchling dragonskin vellum. These pages she covered with mundane writings on star orbits in order to conceal the book until such time as it could be recovered by the people of the Vale.

Marellus and Elisa found evidence Thedda left behind of the existence of this book, and are willing to share its location if they think the heroes will use it for aims they support.

### Sample Challenges

The Gray Recluse is mostly unconcerned about the threat the heroes pose. He is usually happy to entertain guests, at least until he bores of their presence or they make a misstep.

Overcome foreboding on the Trail of Fireflies.

Align the looking glass in the Chamber of Astro-mancy.

Open the first vault by capturing the light of the North Star.

Sneak past the rows of animated heads.

Engage in a philosophical discussion with the Gray Recluse.

### Opposition

The Gray Recluse and one zombie minion per hero

#### The Gray Recluse (Leader)

**Physical** □□□□

**Mental** □□□□

**Consequences** -2 □, -2 □, -4 □, -6 □

**Fantastic (+6)** Channeling, Lore

**Superb (+5)** Will, Wits

**Great (+4)** Rapport, Survival

**Good (+3)** Marksmanship, Physique

**Fair (+2)** Society, Stealth

**Average (+1)** Fighting, Rapport

*Ancient Lich of the Northern Wastes*

*Older Than the First Tree*

*Source of Infernal Magic*

*A Great and Powerful Sorcerer*

*High Mage: The Gray Recluse begins the conflict with ten mana.*

*Fire Strike (Lore): The caster harnesses fire, throwing it at a target. Spend a point of mana to use Lore in place of Marksmanship to attack a character (not unit) with fire. Each additional mana spent adds +1 to the final result.*

*Hail Storm (Lore): Large icy pellets fall from the sky. This works similarly to the Fire Strike stunt, except every character (not unit) within the same zone is hit (they each may defend independently). There are no penalties for range. Also, the target zone gets the Icy Terrain aspect with*



*one free invoke. Each additional mana spent adds +1 to the final result.*

*Arcane Defense (Channeling): For each mana spent, add +1 to any character's defend action against arcane attacks (actions which require the use of mana).*

The Gray Recluse likely hangs back once the conflict begins, using ranged magical attacks against the heroes. If the heroes ever bunch up, he can use the Hail Storm.

### **Tomb Guardian (Minion)**

**Physical** □□□

**Fantastic (+6)**    Fighting

**Superb (+5)**      Athletics

**Great (+4)**        Physique

*Dedicated Skeletal Guardians*

*Razor Sharp Scythes*

*Powerful Attack (Fighting): The character is a bruising attacker, capable of delivering crushing blows. Add +2 to attack actions using Fighting.*

The Tomb Guardians can be spread out and used to slow down the heroes from reaching the Gray Recluse.

### **Resolution**

When Thedda's Palimpsest is read, her spirit enters one of the heroes present. They must change one of their aspects to reflect this. All the casters from the Stronghold start each session with five additional mana.

# Crescent Hold

Crescent Hold produces a fantastic variety of materials and tools made from the various ores they mine from deep underground. These goods are highly valued throughout the Realm.

Fortunately for Crescent Hold, their habitats aren't very accessible, to say the least. From a combination of natural wonders and engineering marvels, access to their cities is possible only through invitation or incredible bloodshed. Unfortunately for the people of Crescent Hold, life can be very harsh, with cold winter temperatures and dismal conditions underground for the miners.

The attitudes of leadership can sometimes reflect the harsh realities of the land. While there are opportunities for both genders, Crescent Hold is hardly egalitarian. There is a great deal of structure in each aspect of life and within the government, with orders largely expected to be followed.

The ruling system is also very hierarchical, with small committees running each segment of life: military matters, civic culture, food production, etc. The process of promotion within these groups tends to be from within, creating an insular and somewhat plutocratic rule. However, promotion is largely based on merit, rather than other extraneous factors.

## *Technological Utopia*

### *Measure Twice, Cut Once*

### *The Autarch Can't Reach Us*

### *Every Rank Is Important*

## Names

Anastia, Aren, Batzas, Cyrus, Era, Gaiana, Galen, Ionna, Ionnes, Kassandra, Ligeia, Melena, Menalo, Roshana, Sophus, Theron

## Regions

| Name                  | Ramparts | Food | Timber | Ore |
|-----------------------|----------|------|--------|-----|
| Mana Luxuries         |          |      |        |     |
| The Great Deeps       | Keep     | 1    | 0      | 1 0 |
| North Ridge (Capital) | Castle   | 2    | 0      | 2   |
| Upper Reach           | Keep     | 1    | 0      | 1 0 |

## Mission Difficulty

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Diplomacy    | 3 |
| Infiltration | 4 |
| Skirmish     | 6 |
| Warfare      | 5 |

## Units

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Militia   | 8 |
| Infantry  | 8 |
| Archers   | 9 |
| Cavalry   | 3 |
| Catapults | 3 |
| Cannons   | 3 |

## Leaders

### Agatha (Leader)

Physical ☐☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Superb (+5) Fighting, Rapport

Great (+4) Athletics, Society

Good (+3) Physique, Wits

Fair (+2) Tactics, Will

Average (+1) Engineering, Stealth

*President of the Trade Council*

*Weary from Rumors of Threats*

*“We Understand Ourselves through understanding Nature”*

*Grieving Widow*

*Passive Aggressive (Rapport): When the character successfully gains support, opposing characters on the same issue each take one mental stress.*

*Powerful Attack (Fighting): The character is a bruising attacker, capable of delivering crushing blows. Add +2 to attack actions using Fighting.*

Agatha is the President of the Trade Council, responsible for all exchanges of goods and services with other factions.

### Almor (Leader)

Physical ☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Superb (+5) Engineering, Tactics

Great (+4) Command, Rapport

Good (+3) Society, Wits

Fair (+2) Fighting, Will

Average (+1) Athletics, Physique

*President of the War Council*

*Veteran of the Decade War*

*Bull-headed*

*Defense Is the Best Offense*

*Infantry Maneuver (Tactics): Once each exchange, add +2 to an attack utilizing infantry exclusively (no other unit type may be in the attacking group). The attacking commander may control other unit types.*

*Efficient Engineer (Engineering): Catapults or cannons under the command of this character may move one additional zone as part of the movement action.*

Almor is mostly concerned with military efforts and the defense of Crescent Hold. When trade involves technological innovations that could be used for military purposes, he takes a keen interest.

### Thea (Leader)

Physical ☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Superb (+5) Stealth, Wits

Great (+4) Tactics, Will

Good (+3) Command, Engineering

Fair (+2) Rapport, Society

Average (+1) Athletics, Fighting

*President of the Learning Council*

*Refugee of the Decade War*

*Always the Bridesmaid*

*“Work Smart, Not Hard”*

*Never Forget a Face (Wits): Add +2 to overcome actions when trying to see through a character's disguise.*

**Shoot the Messenger (Wits):** When this character defends against a gain support action, the acting character takes one mental stress.

Thea holds sway with the Learning Council, responsible for investigating new technologies essential to their way of life. Agatha greatly values Thea's opinion.

### Hesiod (Leader)

Physical ☐☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Fantastic (+6) Fighting, Survival

Superb (+5) Marksmanship, Physique

Great (+4) Command, Tactics

Good (+3) Engineering, Will

Fair (+2) Lore, Wits

Average (+1) Rapport, Society

**Secretary of the War Council**

**Veteran Organ Gunner**

**Wields Skull Ripper**

**Concerned with Military Security**

**Powerful Attack (Fighting):** The character is a bruising attacker, capable of delivering crushing blows. Add +2 to attack actions using Fighting.

**I'm on a Roll! (Fighting):** On a successful attack action, gain a boost even if the attack didn't succeed with style. If it succeeded with style, gain an extra boost.

**Band Together (Command):** During warfare, after units have been assigned during a clash of arms action, may swap one defending unit under your command for a different unit that isn't being attacked.

Second in command to Almor on the War Council, Hesiod is a grizzled veteran and a master tactician.

### The Boar (Leader)

Physical ☐☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Superb (+5) Fighting, Physique

Great (+4) Athletics, Wits

Good (+3) Marksmanship, Survival

Fair (+2) Lore, Rapport

Average (+1) Command, Will

**Superhero of the Decade War**

**A Whirlwind of Blade and Death**

**Built Like a Tank**

**"Lots of Words for Such a Little Guy"**

**Powerful Attack (Fighting):** The character is a bruising attacker, capable of delivering crushing blows. Add +2 to attack actions using Fighting.

**I'm on a Roll! (Fighting):** On a successful attack action, gain a boost even if the attack didn't succeed with style. If it succeeded with style, gain an extra boost.

The Boar is an iconoclast within the Hold, favoring sweeping action and power. Almor listens to the Boar's opinions, much to the chagrin of Agatha.

## Diplomacy

Agatha has most of the authority for determining how the Crescent Hold deals with the Stronghold, particularly in matters of trade. However, her authority is tempered by Almor's influence on matters of war and Thea's knowledge of other societies. Crescent Hold values technology, order, and defense. Another theme of the challenges is flare-ups arising from the poor working conditions of the miners.

**Base Difficulty: 3**

### *Sample Challenges*

Convince Agatha, Garodes, and the rest of the Council of Trade that the Stronghold is reliable.

Repair the primary drill south of the Great Hall.

Help an injured miner trapped by falling debris.

Quell a riot along the North Breach.

Diffuse an argument between the Agatha's conservative approach and the Boar's recklessness.

Convince Almor that the heroes aren't spies.

Find the way back to Crescent Hold after getting lost in the mines.

## Infiltration

Crescent Hold, with its large fortifications and walled cities, is good at stopping invading armies. However, there are weaknesses in the tunnels below and around Crescent Hold that a small band of infiltrators can take advantage of.

**Base Difficulty: 4**

### *Sample Challenges*

Pay off the nosy guard Ionnes.

Gain sympathy with Era, an influential miner.

Find a position as an archivist within the Learning Council.

Create a device to open the orbital tumbler lock protecting Theron's vaults.

## Skirmish

The biggest position of strength that Crescent Hold possesses is in the craftsmanship of their weapons and the small groups of very capable warriors who wield them. Having Crescent Hold as an enemy that can potentially launch skirmish attacks at the Stronghold is not a good situation to be in.

**Base Difficulty:** 6

### *Sample Challenges*

Escape from the Boar in the Obsidian Wood.

Clash arms with the Three Battle Maidens.

Loose arrows at the Hold Guard from the top of the Great Reach.

Prepare an ambush site outside of Farmer Holden's south field.

## Warfare

Crescent Hold is better prepared to defend against attack than join in attack, but they have a stout military force in either case.

**Base Difficulty:** 5

### *Sample Challenges*

Engineer a system of bridges to cross the North Ridge.

Find a way around rock traps.

Calm the nerves of troops frightened of marching on the Trail to the Heavens.

Assault the archers occupying the Outer Hold.

## Aren's Forge

**Conflict** Skirmish      **Difficulty** 6

Far east of the Great Deeps lies a dead walled off city, the Halls of Aren. Many generations ago, Aren was a promising smith, showing aptitude uncommon amongst his peers. Aren wasn't satisfied with the slow fitful progress of humans. Unlike his Crescent Hold kin, Aren possessed sorcerous talents that allowed him to uncover a huge forge abandoned by an ancient civilization. After a great deal of effort on Aren's part, the forge bore fruit: uncanny blades that could quickly fell any foe.

Aren's Forge called out to malevolent imps, inhabitants of that dead civilization from where the forge was born. These creatures were under the command of the Stealer of Hope, a demon who would use the forge for nefarious purposes. Aren, along with the people of Crescent Hold, were driven back, forced to wall off the forge in order to survive. The hatred of that defeat has weighed heavy on the people of Crescent Hold. Agatha and the Boar potentially see the heroes as capable of driving off the Stealer of Hope and reigniting Aren's Forge for the greater glory of Crescent Hold.

### Sample Challenges

Avoid the traps of blasting in the Halls of Aren.  
Fight through the defenders of the Hellgate.  
Open the Hellgate using the Key of Iron.  
Prime the bellows with the blood of the hopeful.

### Opposition

The Stealer of Hope along with one Fire Imp for each hero.

## The Stealer of Hope (Leader)

**Physical** □□□□

**Mental** □□□□

**Consequences** -2 □, -2 □, -2 □, -4 □

**Fantastic (+6)** Athletics, Fighting

**Superb (+5)** Physique, Will

**Great (+4)** Lore, Stealth

**Good (+3)** Command, Survival

**Fair (+2)** Engineering, Tactics

**Average (+1)** Channeling, Society

*Ancient Bringer of Sorrow*

*Eager to Inflict Pain*

*Supremely Confident Battle Commander*

*"I Will Bathe in the Tears of Your Fallen People"*

*Magic Interference: All magical effects cost twice the normal amount of mana when used during a skirmish against the Stealer of Hope.*

*Powerful Attack (Fighting): The character is a bruising attacker, capable of delivering crushing blows. Add +2 to attack actions using Fighting.*

*Whirling Attack (Fighting): Draw a stress card to attack every opponent in the same zone using Fighting. Only determine the attack value once, but each defender may defend individually.*

## Fire Imp (Minion)

**Physical** □□□

**Mental** □□

**Fantastic (+6)** Marksmanship

**Superb (+5)** Athletics

**Great (+4)** Channeling

**Good (+3)** Survival

**Fair (+2)** Physique

**Average (+1)** Stealth

*Hateful Flying Monstrosities*



***Launch Gouts of Flame***

*Flight (General): Add +2 when using Athletics to defend against Fighting attacks. Ignore ground based obstacles when moving through zones.*

*Rapid Fire (Marksmanship): Draw a stress card to make two separate attack actions in the same turn. May target different opponents.*

***Setup***

The Stealer of Hope will seek out the weakest hero, focusing its energy on taking them out. The imps fly around, trying not to get pinned down, helping to pick off vulnerable heroes.

***Resolution***

The heroes gain access to weapons from Aren's Forge. When using the attack action with Fighting or Marksmanship, the suns on the card played apply directly as physical stress to the target, even if the action wasn't successful. All stress is applied at one time.

# Gravewood

The old and wild forests known as Gravewood are—in defiance of their name—rich and vibrant with beauty. Mixed with idyllic streams and rocky outcroppings, they are nothing if not breathtaking. However, they're also incredibly treacherous to the human traveler, home to many horrific beasts, and further infested with traps and barriers set by xenophobic natives.

The people of Gravewood are difficult to approach. They pride themselves on a certain amount of self-sufficiency, able to exist and thrive without much contact with the outside world. The biggest task for the locals is to maintain safe trails through the forest—although this treacherous land also helps discourage visitors.

Their communities are decentralized; small villages called havens are built in little clearings throughout the woods. It's not uncommon for groups of families to move between one haven and another to maximize the natural resources that the forest provides.

The leaders of the havens form a council of sorts and vote on matters of consequence as they arise. Responsibilities for defense are shared among all the leaders, while other responsibilities are the sole purview of the individual havens. Leaders are chosen by a variety of means, although most leaders tend to be male. Galya, the leader of Green Haven, has worked her whole life battling a pervasive misogyny among leadership.

*On Our Own We Thrive*

*Always Vigilant*

*Ends Justify the Means*

*Gold Speaks the Loudest*

## Names

Aida, Alimov, Alsu, Aydar, Aynur, Aysilu, Azat, Culpan, Elbrus, Golcacak, Guzal, Ilsat, Irek, Kazbek, Lia, Olev, Tansilu, Timer

## Regions

|   | Name                    | Ramparts | Food | Timber | Ore |   |
|---|-------------------------|----------|------|--------|-----|---|
|   | Mana                    | Luxuries |      |        |     |   |
| 0 | The Gravewood (Capital) |          |      | 0      | 2   | 0 |
|   | 1                       |          |      |        |     |   |
|   | Spinner Lakes           | 2        | 0    | 0      | 0   | 0 |
|   | Maplewood               | 0        | 1    | 0      | 0   | 0 |

## Mission Difficulty

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Diplomacy    | 5 |
| Infiltration | 6 |
| Skirmish     | 3 |
| Warfare      | 4 |

## Units

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| Militia  | 6 |
| Infantry | 6 |
| Archers  | 8 |
| Cavalry  | 4 |

## Leaders

### Sdila (Leader)

Physical ☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Legendary (+6) Stealth, Wits

Superb (+5) Rapport, Thievery

Great (+4) Disguise, Society

Good (+3) Marksmanship, Will

Fair (+2) Command, Physique

Average (+1) Survival, Tactics

*Leader of the First Haven*

*Killed a Snow Cat With One Arrow*

*"Death Visits in Endless Forms"*

*Weaver of Tall Tales*

*Trapmaster (General): Use the focus action to create a Trap aspect in the character's current zone with one free invoke. The trap stops hero movement. Trap may be removed with an overcome action with Thievery at a passive opposition equal to mission difficulty.*

*Never Forget a Face (Wits): Add +2 to overcome actions when trying to see through a character's disguise.*

*Passive Aggressive (Rapport): When the character successfully gains support, opposing characters on the same issue each take one mental stress.*

Leader of one of the largest and oldest havens in Gravewood, Sdila is boastful and brags about his achievements to anyone who will listen. He's not above taking liberties with the truth.

### Samo (Leader)

Physical ☐☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Superb (+5) Fighting, Stealth

Great (+4) Athletics, Wits

Good (+3) Physique, Survival

Fair (+2) Rapport, Thievery

Average (+1) Society, Will

*Leader of Briar Haven*

*The First Haven Boasts too Much*

*Youthful Exuberance*

*Puckish Charm*

*Whirling Attack (Fighting): Draw a stress card to attack every opponent in the same zone using Fighting. Only determine the attack value once, but each defender may defend individually.*

*Assassin's Perch (Stealth): The character is adept at finding hidden areas and attacking from them. During skirmish setup, the character may set up in any zone desired, and no opponents may be placed in the same zone as the character. Furthermore, the character starts the skirmish with the Hidden aspect with one free invoke.*

A young, headstrong upstart who places emphasis on ideological purity and self-reliance, Samo has a potentially dangerous zeal which is difficult to harness.

### Radia (Leader)

Physical ☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Superb (+5) Thievery, Wits

Great (+4) Stealth, Tactics

Good (+3) Command, Will

Fair (+2) Engineering, Survival

Average (+1) Disguise, Physique

*Eldest Trapsmith of Gravewood*

*Necklace Made of Teeth*

***“Galya Is My Only Living Friend.”***

***Expert Poisoncrafter***

***Trapmaster (General): Use the focus action to create a Trap aspect in the character’s current zone with one free invoke. The trap stops hero movement. Trap may be removed with an overcome action with Thievery at a passive opposition equal to mission difficulty.***

***Never Forget a Face (Wits): Add +2 to overcome actions when trying to see through a character’s disguise.***

Radia and Galya are old friends, both relying on their accumulated wisdom to help Gravewood. Radia is an intimidating presence, occasionally ranting about dark deeds performed in service to the First Haven.

**Galya (Leader)**

Physical ☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Superb (+5) Rapport, Will

Great (+4) Command, Society

Good (+3) Tactics, Wits

Fair (+2) Physique, Survival

Average (+1) Fighting, Lore

***Leader of Green Haven***

***“I’m Giving It Everything I Have—But It’s Not Enough”***

***Grimly Reserved***

***Egalitarian***

***Commanding Word (Society): Spend a fate point to add an additional point of support when successfully gaining support.***

***Related Point (Rapport): When the character successfully gains support, they gain a boost. If the character succeeds with style, they gain an additional boost.***

Galya made her way up to become leader through hard-nosed determination. She’s concerned about the treatment of women within Gravewood, who tend not to be respected.

**Lev (Leader)**

Physical ☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Superb (+5) Command, Tactics

Great (+4) Engineering, Wits

Good (+3) Athletics, Thievery

Fair (+2) Disguise, Fighting

Average (+1) Physique, Will

***Keeper of Swords***

***Quiet as a Snail Across Snow***

***Keen Eyes***

***“Always Use the Terrain to Your Advantage”***

***Set for Charge (Tactics): During warfare, add +1 to the Armor of infantry and militia units when they defend against charging cavalry (only for the turn the cavalry moved).***

***Hold Your Ground! (Command): Add +2 to a defend action for a unit under the character’s command once during each warfare exchange.***

Lev is in charge of the meager troops at Gravewood’s disposal. His concerns revolve around the ability of Gravewood to defend themselves militarily.

## Diplomacy

Sdila, Galya, and Samo are the leaders of three of the largest havens, and should be a part of diplomacy if they're alive.

The people of Gravewood reflect the same harshness that's endemic to the land. They value their security and an unbridled sort of freedom, which could come to the fore as their freedom can occasionally turn into a slavish devotion to the past.

**Difficulty:** 5

### *Sample Challenges*

The leaders of Gravewood value knowledge of the wilderness and the ability to survive in harsh environments. Assisting the havens with trade and improvements could also be the focus of challenges.

Reset the traps in the Hinterlands.

Convince Sdila to spare the young Sunrider intruder's life.

Endure Samo's browbeating.

Hunt reindeer in the Red Forest.

Help Galya create a more egalitarian society in Green Haven.

Escort children between the Green Haven and First Haven.

Prepare for a frost troll attack.

## Infiltration

Gravewood is adept at guarding against infiltration. They have a network of traps set up to guard against hostile forces, and they use the same traps to guard important information. They're also highly distrusting of outsiders, and keen to detect disguises adopted by would be infiltrators.

**Difficulty:** 6

### *Sample Challenges*

Gain employment at the First Haven Timber Manufactory.

Convince Radia that it's okay to be in the Map Depository.

Avoid Green Haven patrols.

Escape from an Ironjaw Briar trap.

## Skirmish

Given the very low difficulty of skirmish missions against Gravewood, there probably isn't much motivation to choose this type of campaign threat. Early in the campaign might be an option, particularly if the Stronghold is weak in skirmish.

**Difficulty:** 3

### *Sample Challenges*

Lay down false tracks to ambush Samo.

Take cover while advancing on a position of Gravewood Rangers.

Fight off a curious snow cat.

Survive a bitter cold snap in Winter Haven.

## Warfare

Gravewood's heavy reliance on archers makes them better at defending than attacking.

**Difficulty:** 4

### *Sample Challenges*

Wheel around a scouting wing from Green Haven.

Construct a shelter for war planning.

Trek single file through Troll Pass without stopping.

Repair equipment lost to cold.

## Gossamer Spirit

**Conflict** Infiltration

**Difficulty** 6

Long ago, the people of First Haven were attacked by a wandering band of Sunriders. To escape the assault, they secured refuge on the Island of Apples within Memory Lake. There they beseeched the gods to save them, and the gods listened, making the island invisible. The Sunriders, unable to find their quarry, left without hunting them down.

The gods, after helping the people of First Haven, sent a storm as an omen to leave the island. But the people ignored the omen, and built a barracks. Yari, their leader, beseeched the gods further for luxuries they could use for survival on the island. The gods turned him into a spider, capable of generating a fine silk that has the power of invisibility, the better to hide away from all humans. The rest of Yari's band became his immortal minions, feeble but unable to die. The spider's followers called him the Weaver. For many generations, they've remained hidden away, choosing to keep to themselves.

### Sample Challenges

Sdila and Radia know the location of the isle and the value of the gossamer webbing that can be found there. After the Stronghold has become friendly with Gravewood, Sdila and Radia may impart the location of the island to the heroes.

Locate the maps to the Weaver's Temple, secreted away by Radia.

Resist memory drain while sailing across Memory Lake.

Avoid the hollow eyed island sentries.

Uncover the First Door into the ancient complex.

## Opposition

The Weaver and other guards roam the complex, guarding the store of illusory webs.

### The Weaver (Leader)

**Physical** ☐☐☐☐

**Mental** ☐☐☐☐

**Consequences** -2 ☐, -2 ☐, -4 ☐

**Fantastic (+6)** Stealth, Wits

**Superb (+5)** Athletics, Will

**Great (+4)** Fighting, Physique

**Good (+3)** Survival, Thievery

**Fair (+2)** Command, Lore

**Average (+1)** Channeling, Society

**Forlorn Servant of the First Gods**

**"I Can Smell Your Fear!"**

**Venom of Forgetfulness**

**Sticky Webs**

*Web Layer: Use the focus action to create a Web aspect in the character's current zone with one free invoke. The web stops hero movement. Web may be removed with an overcome action with Thievery at a passive opposition equal to mission difficulty.*

The Weaver is resigned to patrolling the halls of his temples, tasked with keeping intruders out and living out his days in isolation.

### Hollow Guard (Minion)

**Physical** ☐☐☐☐

**Mental** ☐☐☐

**Fantastic (+6)** Wits

**Superb (+5)** Athletics

**Great (+4)** Fighting

**Good (+3)** Physique



**Fair (+2)** Will

**Average (+1)** Survival

***I Live to Serve the Weaver***

***Vision Without Sight***

The Hollow Guards have no hope or fear; instead they detect and capture intruders, placing any they find into the conversion pits.

## ***Setup***

The Temple of the Weaver is buried deep underground. It's dimly lit, with torches maintained by the hollow guards. The gossamer thread is hidden within a large vault.

## ***Sample Security Challenges***

Disguise: Distract hollow guard leader.

Stealth: Sneak past Hall of Echoes.

Thievery: Open the Vault of Ten Locks.

## ***Resolution***

If the heroes are successful, they gain access to the ***Gossamer Thread***, letting them draw two and choose one for any Stealth actions if they weave it into the fabric of their clothes.

# Lily Manor

Lily Manor is the hub of culture, science, and trade throughout the Realm. Rather than protect themselves with military might, the people of Lily Manor protect themselves with secrets. Secrets gained by embedding agents in every nook and cranny throughout the world. These secrets form powerful deterrents to invasion.

It's good for the people of Lily Manor that they command the reluctant aid of other factions, as they hold a level of wealth and opulence only rivaled by the Autarch. This is gained through shrewd and aggressive trading with every other faction, even venturing into the Gravewood.

Besides wealth and trade, science and knowledge are highly prized within the borders of Lily Manor. They heavily guard covert vaults of lore detailing the practices and peoples of the world around them.

Lily Manor is ruled by a small number of provincial leaders, the speakers, chosen from among the population every year during the longest night of the winter. These positions are open to anyone cutthroat enough to engage in the sorts of byzantine political maneuvering necessary for success.

Sex and love aren't closely related for the people of Lily Manor. Most people, even those in somewhat committed relationships, tend to have multiple sexual partners from various walks of life. Pronouncements of love are very rare, and reflect honor and a certain measure of trust more than a physical bond.

***Secrets Are Power***

***We Have Eyes Everywhere***

***Bound by Your Word***

***Words Are Weapons***

## Names

Arwa, Atika, Atiq, Bakkar, Fatil, Hamida, Himas, Idris, Lanu, Mudar, Nisa, Nuzha, Rasis, Sa'led, Salma, Tawd, Ulu, Walyd, Zahra, Zuhr

## Regions

|   | Name                    | Ramparts | Food   | Timber | Ore |
|---|-------------------------|----------|--------|--------|-----|
| 0 | Caster's Edge (Capital) | 2        | Castle | 0      | 0   |
|   | Nalah Farms             | 1        | 0      | 0      | 0   |
| 0 | Goldspike               | Keep     | 1      | 0      | 1   |

## Mission Difficulty

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Diplomacy    | 6 |
| Infiltration | 5 |
| Skirmish     | 4 |
| Warfare      | 3 |

## Units

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| Militia  | 6 |
| Infantry | 6 |
| Archers  | 9 |
| Cavalry  | 4 |

## Leaders

### Zarrah (Leader)

Physical ☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Fantastic (+6) Rapport, Society

Superb (+5) Stealth, Wits

Great (+4) Disguise, Will

Good (+3) Lore, Thievery

Fair (+2) Command, Physique

Average (+1) Athletics, Engineering

*Confident Speaker for Lily Manor*

*Charming Polymath*

*“Art and Culture Lives and Dies with Lily Manor”*

*Excellent Judge of Character*

*Related Point (Rapport): When the character successfully gains support, they gain a boost. If the character succeeds with style, they gain an additional boost.*

*Winning Personality (Rapport): The character is better at fostering relationships with those close to them. The character may use Rapport instead of Society to defend against social attacks.*

*Commanding Word (Society): Spend a fate point to add an additional point of support when successfully gaining support.*

Zarrah is the wise and savvy leader of Lily Manor, and thus the primary speaker for all the provinces. Looking to expand Lily Manor's sphere of influence into the Stronghold, through underhanded tactics if necessary.?

### Sut (Leader)

Physical ☐☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Superb (+5) Society, Wits

Great (+4) Fighting, Rapport

Good (+3) Athletics, Physique

Fair (+2) Survival, Will

Average (+1) Engineering, Tactics

*Speaker for Brass Manor*

*Crafter of Inscrutable Contracts*

*Emotionally Invested in Idris*

*Addicted to Yellow Lotus Powder*

*Socially Adept (Society): For diplomacy, the character's Society skill is 2 higher for purposes of turn order.*

*Commanding Word (Society): Spend a fate point to add an additional point of support when successfully gaining support.*

Zarrah consults Sut when coming up with plans for trade agreements and other contractual details. Furthermore, Sut is very close to Idris, and they have a trusting bond with each other.

### Karraq (Leader)

Physical ☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Superb (+5) Tactics, Wits

Great (+4) Command, Society

Good (+3) Engineering, Rapport

Fair (+2) Fighting, Physique

Average (+1) Survival, Will

*Ambassador of War*

*Keen Appraiser of the Human Condition*

*“A Little Grease Never Hurt the Wheels of Commerce”*

*“When Pushed, React with Overwhelming Force”*

**Infantry Maneuver (Tactics):** Once each exchange, add +2 to an attack utilizing infantry exclusively (no other unit type may be in the attacking group). The attacking commander may control other unit types.

**Set for Charge (Tactics):** During warfare, add +1 to the Armor of infantry and militia units when they defend against charging cavalry (only for the turn the cavalry moved).

Zarrah's ambassador of war, Karraq has Zarrah's ear regarding the status of other factions and the worthiness of various investments.

### Azene (Leader)

Physical ☐☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Superb (+5) Disguise, Wits

Great (+4) Stealth, Thievery

Good (+3) Marksmanship, Tactics

Fair (+2) Command, Will

Average (+1) Engineering, Physique

**Obedient Assassin**

**Last One to be Noticed**

**"What Are You Trying to Hide?"**

**"I Know Things You Don't Want Revealed"**

**Never Forget a Face (Wits):** Add +2 to overcome actions when trying to see through a character's disguise.

**Trapmaster (Opposition):** Use the focus action to create a Trap aspect in the character's current zone with one free invoke. The trap stops hero movement. Trap may be removed with an overcome action with Thievery at a passive opposition equal to mission difficulty.

Azene is one of the principal characters involved in infiltrating other factions. Her advice guides the leaders of all the houses, and she has the ear of Zarrah.

### Idris (Leader)

Physical ☐☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Superb (+5) Athletics, Fighting

Great (+4) Physique, Wits

Good (+3) Stealth, Survival

Fair (+2) Disguise, Marksmanship

Average (+1) Rapport, Will

**Zarrah's Personal Guard**

**Master of the Three Blades**

**"Enough Talk!"**

**Captain of the Sunset Voyagers**

**Powerful Attack (Fighting):** The character is a bruising attacker, capable of delivering crushing blows. Add +2 to attack actions using Fighting.

**No Quarter Given (Fighting):** If an opponent leaves the zone the character is in, make an attack against them.

Idris serves as Zarrah's main guard. Idris is also more than capable of handling any heavy lifting that needs doing.

## Diplomacy

The people of Lily Manor are at once more open and liberated than most of the other factions, yet also coldly calculating. Lily Manor relies very heavily on trade, mostly for food, and have perfected diplomacy to an art form.

**Base Difficulty: 6**

### *Sample Challenges*

Impress Zarrah during a tour of the Lotus Gallery.

Avoid getting hustled while playing four card split.

Fend off an assassination attempt on Sut's life by Brass Manor rivals.

Dodge jail time after heisting a valuable idol from the Lotus Gallery.

Help Karraq determine the authenticity of a recovered idol.

Weather the fever dreams of a yellow lotus trip gone bad.

Help Tanifah organize the library.

## Infiltration

Lily Manor is in the business of gathering and keeping secrets, so they have a well-developed spy network. The arm of security responsible for gaining and keeping secrets is known as the Bloodguard.

**Base Difficulty: 5**

### *Sample Challenges*

Detect Azene tracking the heroes' movement.

Use Sut's lotus addiction to gain blackmail material.

Create a cover identity at Master Ruh's House of Pleasures.

Steal a key from Lanu, Captain of the Bloodguard.

Map out Brass Manor guardhouse.

## Skirmish

Skirmish isn't a strong suit for Lily Manor, but if necessary, they can use their limited muscle to attack the Stronghold. The core military units, which may be employed in a skirmish style attack, are known as the Grayblades.

**Base Difficulty:** 4

### *Sample Challenges*

Interrogate Salma, a scout for the Grayblades.  
Administer aid from lotus poison dart trap.  
Fight off a small contingent of Grayblades.  
Avoid Idris' ambush.

## Warfare

Warfare is a last resort for Lily Manor, for they prefer to rely on other allies for military purposes.

**Base Difficulty:** 3

### *Sample Challenges*

Chart a path through the wastes east of Gold-spike.  
Fight off an advanced Grayblade contingent.  
Clean out a scorpion mite infection in the barracks.  
Quell an outbreak of yellow lotus addiction.

# The Sapphire Djinn

**Conflict** Skirmish

**Difficulty** 6

One of Zarrah's chief rivals is Crow Manor, a house with rapidly growing influence. This influence is due to the machinations of the Sapphire Djinn. A generation ago, the Sapphire Djinn hid from a pursuing necromancer by possessing the farmhand Arwa. Even better for the Sapphire Djinn, Arwa was pregnant with quadruplets. The Djinn passed through to the quadruplets and used them as vessels to carry out its desires.

The Sapphire Djinn enjoys harassing powerful humans and receiving tribute from the vessels willing to do the dirty work. The Sapphire Djinn guided the decisions of Arwa's children. It helped them grow into charismatic leaders who pose a threat to Zarrah's power. Zarrah is aware that a Djinn is behind the success of Crow Manor, but is unable to use magical means to stop the spirit. Zarrah realizes that the heroes may have more success bargaining for the Djinn's services, simultaneously giving the Stronghold an ally and removing an irritating threat to her rule.

Truth be told, the Sapphire Djinn is growing bored tormenting Zarrah. The heroes must approach the four descendants of Arwa: Lanwa the geometer, Mudar the torturer, Ulu the speaker, and Tawd the brothelatelier. The Sapphire Djinn respects clever bargaining and honeyed words. With enough verbal wit, the heroes will win over the Djinn's support.

## Sample Challenges

Convince Zarrah the heroes won't use the Djinn's power against her.

Resist the temptations of Tawd's House of Delights.

Navigate the treacherous streets of Crow Manor.

Persuade Ulu's retinue to grant the heroes an audience.

Help Mudar capture a cattle thief.

## Opposition

The heroes must address the issues posed by the Sapphire Djinn in its currently split form. Its vessels aren't completely aware of the extent to which they're being controlled. The Djinn has imparted four parts of its essence into the descendants of Arwa.

### Ulu (Leader)

**Physical** □□□□

**Mental** □□□□

**Consequences** -2 □, -4 □

**Superb (+5)** Rapport, Society

**Great (+4)** Command, Wits

**Good (+3)** Physique, Will

**Fair (+2)** Lore, Tactics

**Average (+1)** Channeling, Thievery

*Reckless Speaker for Crow Manor*

*Champion of the Common Man*

*Visions of a Utopian Future*

*Shadow of the Sapphire Djinn's Ambition*

*Related Point (Rapport): When the character successfully gains support, they gain a boost. If the character succeeds with style, they gain an additional boost.*

*Passive Aggressive (Rapport): When the character successfully gains support, opposing characters on the same issue each take one mental stress.*

Ulu has made her mark quickly within Crow Manor, displacing the previous speaker and winning the hearts and minds of the people. Ulu's stellar rise quickly brought her to Zarrah's attention. Ulu is a true people's champion and a reformer.



**Lanwa (Leader)**Physical ☐☐☐Mental ☐☐☐☐Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Superb (+5) Lore, Rapport

Great (+4) Command, Society

Good (+3) Will, Wits

Fair (+2) Channeling, Marksmanship

Average (+1) Stealth, Survival

*Inquisitive Geometer**Keen Perception**Wielder of Logic and Reason**Shadow of the Sapphire Djinn's Intellect**High Mage: Lanwa starts the conflict with ten mana.**Charm (Lore): Spend a point of mana to use Lore in place of Rapport when exaggerating the truth. Each additional mana spent adds +1 to the final result.**Glamour (Lore): Caster spends five mana and chooses a target character. Target character subtracts two from Wits skill for remainder of season. Does not require an action to use.*

Lanwa is consumed by a desire to measure and catalog all that she sees around her. She spends most of her time mixing reagents and cataloging math theorems. This knowledge is put to good use by Lanwa to give Crow Manor a leg up.

**Mudar (Leader)**Physical ☐☐☐☐Mental ☐☐☐☐Consequences -2 ☐, -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Superb (+5) Command, Physique

Great (+4) Society, Wits

Good (+3) Rapport, Will

Fair (+2) Athletics, Disguise

Average (+1) Fighting, Marksmanship

*Dedicated Torturer**"With a Heavy Heart Do I Toil"**A Tool for Every Occasion**Shadow of the Sapphire Djinn's Vengeance**Shoot the Messenger (Wits): When this character defends against a gain support action, the acting character takes one mental stress.**Passive Aggressive (Rapport): When the character successfully gains support, opposing characters on the same issue each take one mental stress.*

Mudar is consumed with a horrific lust for vengeance. This takes the form of endlessly meting out his brand of painful justice from a bottomless well of anger. Mudar is willing to do whatever Ulu asks of him in the name of the safety and security of Crow Manor.

**Tawd (Leader)**Physical ☐☐☐Mental ☐☐☐Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Superb (+5) Rapport, Wits

Great (+4) Command, Society

Good (+3) Disguise, Will

Fair (+2) Athletics, Thievery

Average (+1) Lore, Survival

*Sensual Brothelatelier**Tall, Dark, and Handsome**"Your Sexual Proclivities Are Not Judged Here"**Shadow of the Sapphire Djinn's Passion**High Born (Society): Add +2 on Society checks when overcoming resistance by using charm and sophistication.*

***Intoxicating Power (Society): Add +2 to attack actions using Society.***

Tawd is a hedonist of the first order, and enjoys all manner of pleasures. Tawd's House of Delights is renowned as a place where even the staunchest will is broken; noble and farmer alike become slaves to passion.

## ***Setup***

Use all four descendants of Arwa. If there are only three heroes, one of the descendants won't take an action each exchange. The Autarch player chooses which one. If there are five heroes, one of the descendants takes two actions each exchange. The Autarch player chooses which one. The Sapphire Djinn will work for the heroes if the cause sounds interesting and exciting. After, of course, trying to verbally humiliate them and gain leverage. When you're thousands of years old, the struggle against boredom is real!

## ***Sample Issues***

Relationship with Zarrah.

Do you have the will to topple the Autarch?

The Sapphire Djinn distrusts magic-users.

The Sapphire Djinn craves excitement.

The future of Crow Manor.

## ***Resolution***

The heroes need to successfully address three of the five issues in order to gain the support of the Sapphire Djinn. Any unaddressed issues become campaign aspects for the Autarch player, with one free invoke each.

## ***The Sapphire Djinn***

If they gain the Djinn's support, it inhabits one of the heroes. The hero must change one aspect to reflect this new symbiotic relationship. At the start of any mission including the hero, the hero may leverage the Djinn's vast knowledge. The heroes start with one mission aspect with two free invokes. Furthermore,

in diplomacy missions with the hero, the Stronghold players may place two support on any issues before the conflict starts. This is done prior to placing characters on issues.

# The Sunriders

The Sunriders' philosophy is simple: roam free on the plains. This drives most of their life, from their transient dwellings to their ability to rapidly mobilize and advance against an enemy.

The only elaborate and permanent dwellings are large structures to support the many farms, such as mills and tanneries. These are guarded by smaller garrisons inhabited by a mix of newly minted fighters and troops recently retired from the front lines. Defense isn't a great concern of the Sunriders, since the vast tracts of land are so difficult to traverse.

Horses make up a centerpiece of daily life. Huge, powerful destriers, from which the Sunriders get their name, are jealously protected and bred for use in battle and transport. Learning to ride and command them is started at a young age.

There's only one leader, Arban the Swift, unquestionably the strongest and most powerful in battle. He delegates authority to a number of generals he trusts. Leadership changes tend to be bloody affairs for the Sunriders, as one clan expands and conquers another.

Magic is an obsession for the Sunriders. They have a great interest in harnessing mana from the land, but besides lacking expertise, the lands they control are largely devoid of the magical energies found elsewhere.

## *Nomadic Horsemasters*

### *Act Quickly and Decisively*

### *A Bright and Open Homeland*

### *Enough Talking!*

## Names

Abagai, Alangoa, Altan, Altani, Amur, Boke, Boladai, Buqadai, Buri, Chotan, Enqela, Ganbayan, Hulan, Jebe, Nasa, Nomolun, Qarader, Shria, Taichu, Unegei

## Regions

| Name                 | Ramparts | Food | Timber | Ore |
|----------------------|----------|------|--------|-----|
| Mana                 | Luxuries |      |        |     |
| Horsethief Meadows   |          | 1    | 0      | 0   |
| 0                    |          |      |        |     |
| Millet Plain         | 1        | 0    | 0      | 0   |
| Song Bluff (Capital) |          | 3    | 1      | 0   |
| 0                    |          |      |        |     |
| Arrow Lake           | 0        | 1    | 0      | 0   |
| Boar's Peak          | 0        | 0    | 2      | 0   |

## Mission Difficulty

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Diplomacy    | 4 |
| Infiltration | 3 |
| Skirmish     | 5 |
| Warfare      | 6 |

## Units

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Militia   | 8 |
| Infantry  | 8 |
| Archers   | 5 |
| Sunriders | 8 |
| Catapults | 2 |

## Leaders

### Arban the Swift (Leader)

Physical ☐☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Legendary (+6) Command, Tactics

Superb (+5) Engineering, Physique

Great (+4) Athletics, Fighting

Good (+3) Rapport, Wits

Fair (+2) Society, Survival

Average (+1) Marksmanship, Will

*Glorious Ruler of the Open Steppes*

*Predictably Ruthless*

*“Our Weakness Is our Vulnerability to Sorcery”*

*“Do Not Let Fear Guide You!”*

*Specialized Tactics (Tactics): If you inflict more casualties than the other side in a clash of arms (taking into account possible outflanking), may move opposing commander and units to an empty adjacent zone. If no adjacent zone is empty, or if both sides lost the same number of units, they remain where they are.*

*Battle Master (Tactics): During warfare, a group of units under a character's command may act independently. The units no longer need to remain in the same zone as the commander, and may be controlled independently for the duration of the battle. However, the group of units is considered to have a Tactics and Command of Mediocre (+0) for the purposes of turn order.*

*Hold Your Ground! (Command): Add +2 to a defend action for a unit under the character's command once during each warfare exchange.*

Arban looks first to war and conquest to solve resource issues, then to diplomacy and trade. He is fascinated by the power of the arcane.

### Taichu (Leader)

Physical ☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Superb (+5) Engineering, Tactics

Great (+4) Command, Rapport

Good (+3) Society, Wits

Fair (+2) Fighting, Physique

Average (+1) Stealth, Will

*Military Commander*

*I Confide in Ile*

*Unquestioning Loyalty to Arban*

*“Speed Is More Important than Power”*

*Infantry Maneuver (Tactics): Once each exchange, add +2 to an attack utilizing infantry exclusively (no other unit type may be in the attacking group). The attacking commander may control other unit types.*

*Band Together (Command): During warfare, after units have been assigned during a clash of arms action, may swap one defending unit under the character's command for a different unit that isn't being attacked.*

Arban's chief commander for the Sunriders' military, Taichu is primarily interested in military innovation.

### Dashen (Leader)

Physical ☐☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Superb (+5) Fighting, Survival

Great (+4) Marksmanship, Wits

Good (+3) Athletics, Physique

Fair (+2) Disguise, Stealth

Average (+1) Rapport, Society

## Chief Horsemaster

### Youthful Naiveté

### "I Hear Our Ancestors' Song"

### "Our Horses Are the Best in the Realm"

**Powerful Attack (Fighting):** The character is a bruising attacker, capable of delivering crushing blows. Add +2 to attack actions using Fighting.

**Never Forget a Face (Wits):** Add +2 to overcome actions when trying to see through a character's disguise.

While Dashen doesn't have much influence to speak of with Arbal, he's usually involved in outside deals, and may be used to raise issues regarding the protection and use of the Sunriders' mounts. Dashen is also an incredibly gifted swordsman.

## Hogel (Leader)

Physical ☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Superb (+5) Rapport, Society

Great (+4) Command, Wits

Good (+3) Fighting, Will

Fair (+2) Marksmanship, Survival

Average (+1) Lore, Physique

### Lord of the Millet Plain

### Broker of Shrewd Deals

### Hotheaded Demagogue

### "You're Whining as Much as a Woman"

**Commanding Word (Society):** Spend a fate point to add an additional point of support when successfully gaining support.

**Passive Aggressive (Rapport):** When the character successfully gains support, opposing characters on the same issue each take one mental stress.

Hogel looks for opportunities to get ahead, although he's careful not to stoke Arban's ire.

## Ile (Leader)

Physical ☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐, -4 ☐

Superb (+5) Stealth, Wits

Great (+4) Fighting, Marksmanship

Good (+3) Lore, Will

Fair (+2) Channeling, Survival

Average (+1) Rapport, Society

### Kidnapped Speaker from Moonrider Clan

### Ear to the Ground

**"I Have Come to Expect a Great Deal of Pain in This Life"**

### "Show Respect When You Speak to Me!"

**Never Forget a Face (Wits):** Add +2 to overcome actions when trying to see through a character's disguise.

**Shoot the Messenger (Wits):** When this character defends against a gain support action, the acting character takes two mental stress.

Ile has accepted her tragic lot in life, and now looks to carve out a niche for herself within the Sunriders clan. She understands the arcane world better than most of the Sunriders.

## Diplomacy

The Sunriders live a hard life revolving around their steeds, livestock, hunting, and war. They don't have much patience for people who can't hold their own in a fight. Ultimately, Arban decides the fate of the Sunriders. However, Hogel has great influence over what course of action Arban will take.

**Base Difficulty: 4**

### *Sample Challenges*

Make a good impression at Hogel Manor over a feast of lamb.

Best Taichu in a wrestling competition.

Keep up with Arban during a ride across the steppes.

Help Ile harness mana from Song Bluff.

Repel Moonrider bandits.

Discuss future military strategy with Taichu.

Help Hogel track down his livestock.

## Infiltration

The Sunriders are largely oblivious to infiltration, assuming the vast distances of travel needed to reach the settlements is protection enough. They also feel that they have the capability to defeat enemies in battle even if their secrets are stolen. There is no secret for toughness.

**Base Difficulty: 3**

### *Sample Challenges*

Move through the horse pens under cover of darkness.

Dismiss Ile's suspicions that you're here under false pretenses.

Give Nasa refuge after she is outed as a traitor.

Forge a letter from Taichu requesting aid to the north.

## Skirmish

The Sunriders have many capable fighters amongst their ranks. They prefer a direct approach if it comes to battle.

**Base Difficulty: 5**

### *Sample Challenges*

Track Sunrider horse patrols back to their base in the Burnt Forest.

Shoot a fleeing Sunrider sentry.

Battle a clutch of sentry drakes.

Stay alert while waiting for arrival of Abagai, a Moonrider contact.

## Warfare

Aside from a full strength Imperial force, the Sunriders possess the most dominant military in the land. Their ability to maneuver about the battlefield on horseback while pelting the enemy with arrows is greatly feared.

**Base Difficulty: 6**

### *Sample Challenges*

Out pace Sunrider rearguard to Dragon's Tooth Fields.

Prepare horse traps in the Sunset Gorge.

Shore up weaknesses during advance into Sunrider line.

Survive winter march through the Long Wastes.

### *Special Units*

The Sunriders have access to a special unit type, from which their name derives. These are highly trained cavalry capable of shooting accurately while moving about the battlefield, combining the best of both archers and cavalry.

### *Sunriders (Unit)*

**Morale** □□

**Fantastic (+6)** Movement

**Fair (+2)** Armor, Fighting, Marksmanship

*Swift and Terrible*

*Born to Ride and Hunt*

*Charge!: Add fortune to attack actions on any turn the Sunriders moved.*

*Rain of Arrows: The Sunriders, unlike regular archers, may shoot even on a turn when they've moved.*



## Pelakhar's Loyalty

**Conflict** Skirmish

**Difficulty** 6

In the vastness beyond the Long Wastes is the demesne of the ancient wyrm Pelakhar. Pelakhar, impossibly massive and covered with rusty brown scales, has grown bored with living. It seeks challenge and combat and bloodshed, but none will challenge it. The Sunriders know this, but even they are not so foolhardy as to challenge Pelakhar to battle.

Should the heroes of the Stronghold cross the vastness and subdue the beast, Pelakhar will grant its service in battle, craving excitement and conquest. It is an ancient and crafty foe, so such a task will not be easily achieved.

### Sample Challenges

Keep group cohesion through the miasma of Dragonfear.

Escape from the Moondrider slave camps.

Scale the outer face of the Dragon Monument.

Battle dusky sand mites.

### Opposition

The great wyrm Pelakhar itches for a fight. If the heroes knock out Pelakhar, it agrees to claim the Stronghold's banner in open warfare. Pelakhar has skills for units (Movement, Armor) as well as for characters. Ignore the unit skills during skirmish.

#### Pelakhar (Leader)

**Physique** □□□□

**Mental** □□□□

**Consequences** -2 □, -2 □, -4 □, -6 □

**Epic (+7)** Athletics

**Fantastic (+6)** Fighting, Society

**Superb (+5)** Marksmanship, Physique

**Great (+4)** Will, Wits

**Good (+3)** Channeling, Lore

*Great Wurm of the Long Wastes*

*"Better to Feel Pain than to Feel Nothing"*

*Forged in the Fires of a Newborn Realm*

*Thirsty for Death and Conquest*

*Flight (General): Add +2 when using Athletics to defend against Fighting attacks. Ignore ground based obstacles when moving through zones.*

*Breath of Fire: Draw a stress card to breathe fire. Make a ranged attack using Marksmanship and add +6 to the result. Pelakhar may target all characters in the same zone.*

Pelakhar will attack the heroes with a purposeful excitement, preferring its breath attack to biting and clawing.

### Resolution

If the heroes take Pelakhar out, it is bloody and subdued but not deceased. The heroes have woken something within the dragon and it pledges its aid in conquering the Stronghold's foes.

Pelakhar may be used as a unit in warfare. Pelakhar can't be bothered with fighting skirmishes, as it lusts after death on a grand scale. The spotlight player may control Pelakhar's actions.

Furthermore, if Pelakhar isn't used in warfare at least once a year, it grows bored of waiting and leaves the servitude of the Stronghold to find something more exciting.

#### Pelakhar (Unit)

**Morale** □□□

**Consequences** -2 □

**Epic (+7)** Athletics, Marksmanship

**Great (+4)** Armor, Fighting, Movement

**Fair (+2)** Command, Tactics

**Great Wurm of the Long Wastes**

*“Better to feel pain than to feel nothing”*

*Forged in the Fires of a Newborn Realm*

*Thirsty for Death and Conquest*

*Flight (General): In warfare, gains a +2 to defense checks when attacked by ground based units (infantry, cavalry).*

*Nowhere Is Safe: May attack units within a keep or castle.*

Unlike most units, Pelakhar has a stress track. Pelakhar takes stress equal to the number of shifts on the attack check, as with the regular attack action.

# THREATS AND SCHEMES

Threats and schemes are the primary source of adversity for the Stronghold. There are two types of threats: region and faction. Each season there's a chance that any number of these threats might occur.

Region threats affect the land the Stronghold controls, possibly altering supply and stability. Faction threats potentially harm relationships with allied factions. If a faction is negatively disposed toward the Stronghold, a faction threat could result in stability loss.



The type and difficulty of region and faction threats are determined randomly.







In addition to random threats, the Autarch player gets to unleash ever more challenging schemes as the campaign progresses. These aren't chosen randomly—rather, the Autarch player selects two each year from a list of options. Schemes give the campaign more continuity and bring the Autarch into the spotlight.

## Defensive Developments

Some developments allow the Stronghold to cancel one threat of a certain difficulty each season. If used on a threat, it's as if the threat never happened. They don't stop schemes.

## Using Fate Triangle Tables

To use the threat tables in this chapter, draw a fate card. Cross reference the number of 's with the row along the top of the table (from 0 to 4) and the number of 's with the column down the left side of the table (from 0 to 4) to find the conflict type and difficulty.

*Rebecca is the spotlight player. She draws a +3 when determining region threats for Obsidian Wood. A threat! Next she draws a card to determine the nature of the threat. The card is a +2, with three 's and one .* Looking at row  and column  on the region threat table, this is a skirmish threat with a difficulty of 4.

# Region Threats

Region threats are checked for at the end of every season. See *Seasons* (page XX) for more details. For each region the Stronghold controls, draw one fate card. If the result is a +3 or +4, a threat occurs.

## Region Threat Table

If a region threat occurs, use the region threat table to determine the conflict type and mission difficulty. Region threats tend to be skirmish missions. The Autarch player may either choose a mission from the **Region and Faction Sample Threats** section (page XX), or create a mission of the appropriate type and difficulty on their own.

| / | 0              | 1              | 2              | 3              | 4              |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 0 | Warfare 3      | Diplomacy 3    | Diplomacy 4    | Diplomacy 5    | Warfare 5      |
| 1 | Infiltration 3 | Skirmish 3     | Skirmish 4     | Skirmish 5     | Skirmish 6     |
| 2 | Infiltration 4 | Skirmish 4     | Skirmish 5     | Skirmish 6     | Skirmish 7     |
| 3 | Infiltration 5 | Infiltration 6 | Infiltration 7 | Infiltration 8 | Infiltration 9 |
| 4 | Warfare 4      | Warfare 5      | Warfare 6      | Warfare 7      | Warfare 8      |

## Ignoring Region Threats

If a region threat is ignored, the region produces no resources for that season. During Stronghold upkeep at the beginning of the season, don't add the region's resources to the total dice rolled. Furthermore, the Stronghold suffers one point of stability loss.

## Mission Failure

If the spotlight player decides to go on a mission to address the threat, but fails, the Stronghold loses one stability. Since the threat wasn't ignored, the Stronghold may use resources from the region.

## Mission Success

If a region threat mission is successful, the Stronghold gains one stability.

## Faction Threats

Faction threats are determined similarly to region threats. At the end of each season, a fate card is drawn for each minor faction (all of the factions except for the Autarch). If the result is a +3 or +4, a faction threat occurs.

### *Ally vs. Enemy Factions*

Faction threats are handled differently for allied factions (disposition with the faction is -1 or higher) than they are for enemy factions (disposition is -2 or lower). Current disposition is tracked on the trade sheet.

### *Ally Threats*

If a faction threat with an ally occurs, use the ally threat table to determine the conflict type and difficulty of the mission. Ally threats tend to be diplomacy missions.

| /           | 0              | 1              | 2           | 3 | 4 |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|---|---|
| 0           | Warfare 3      | Skrimish 3     | Skrimish 4  |   |   |
| Skrimish 5  | Warfare 5      |                |             |   |   |
| 1           | Infiltration 3 | Diplomacy 3    | Diplomacy 4 |   |   |
| Diplomacy 7 |                |                |             |   |   |
| 2           | Infiltration 4 | Diplomacy 5    | Diplomacy 6 |   |   |
| 3           | Infiltration 5 | Infiltration 6 |             |   |   |
| 4           | Warfare 4      |                |             |   |   |

### **Ignoring Ally Threats**

Ignoring an ally faction threat causes a loss of one disposition with the threatened faction.

### **Mission Failure**

On mission failure, the Stronghold neither gains nor loses disposition with the faction.

### **Mission Success**

If the Stronghold undertakes the mission and succeeds, the Stronghold gains one disposition with the faction.

### *Enemy Threats*

If an enemy faction has a threat, the Autarch player chooses the type of conflict. Use the faction's conflict difficulty to determine how hard it is (the faction is directly affecting the stability of the Stronghold using the appropriate conflict type).

### **Ignoring Enemy Threats**

Ignoring an enemy faction threat causes a loss of one disposition with the threatening faction **and** the Stronghold loses one stability.

### **Mission Failure**

On mission failure, the Stronghold neither gains nor loses a stability, but they do lose one disposition with the faction.

### **Mission Success**

If the Stronghold undertakes the mission and succeeds, the Stronghold gains one stability. The enemy faction loses one disposition (the only way to stop this downward spiral is to go on an alliance mission and attempt to repair the rift).

## Crafting Threats

Although a number of threats are provided on (page XX), it's helpful for the Autarch player to know how to create their own. Crafting threats, like most of *Wrath of the Autarch*, should be viewed as a collaborative process.

### *Rough Sketch*

The type of conflict and difficulty goes a long way toward determining what sort of threat will occur. If a threat is indicated at the end of a session, the group should work to quickly sketch out what might be happening. This may be nothing more than looking through *Threats and Schemes* (page XX) and finding a suitable example. Alternatively, a new threat may be constructed from scratch.

This shouldn't be a detailed explanation. A simple phrase is sufficient. For example, **peasants are uprising at Echo Lake, border disagreement with Crescent Hold, skeletons are attacking allies in Lily Manor.** Use the Chronicle of Seasons to help spur creativity. What happened in the past with the faction or in the region? Was there ever backlash? How is stability for the Stronghold?

Furthermore, if a threat was ignored, it's fine to bring it back again. Those bandits that were never dealt with may be back again!

### *Opposition*

If the Stronghold players have no intention to deal with a threat, leave it as a rough sketch. It should be noted on the Chronicle of Seasons to jog the memory of the group later. If, however, the Stronghold players intend to deal with the threat next season, opposition is needed.

Sometimes creating opposition isn't needed at all. If the mission involves diplomacy with another faction, for example, the opposition will be leaders chosen from the faction.

If new opposition is needed, they can be based on opposition listed in existing threats. This may require scaling the peak skill slightly, raising or lowering the rank of all skills so the peak skill matches the mission difficulty.

As a last resort, opposition will need to be created. Each of the individual conflict chapters provides guidelines for creating opposition. Frequently, the sample opposition from each chapter is sufficient. The main exception tends to be unique monsters desired for skirmish threats. For these sorts of beasts, look to the general opposition stunts when creating them.

## Autarch Schemes

Each year, the Autarch player may unleash two schemes on the Stronghold. This happens before checking for threats—the Autarch player can't use the information about what threats happen before choosing to enact a scheme.

There are four lists of schemes to choose from, one for each type of conflict. Each list is numbered from one to six. The Autarch player must choose a scheme that is less than or equal to the current year of the campaign (starting from year one). Furthermore, the schemes on any particular list must be chosen in order (the Autarch player starts any list by using the year one scheme first).

### *Mission Type and Difficulty*

The mission type depends on which list the scheme is chosen from (diplomacy schemes use the diplomacy conflict, etc.). The difficulty is equal to the Empire's ranking for that conflict.

### *Empire Conflict Difficulty*

Some schemes boost the Empire's difficulty for a particular conflict type ("Empire immediately gains +1 diplomacy"). This happens immediately, at the moment the scheme is chosen. It can't be avoided or stopped by the Stronghold. These difficulties are tracked on the trade sheet.

### *Ignoring Schemes*

Ignored Autarch schemes cause the particular effect listed for the chosen scheme. Developments may not be used to stop schemes—they are either ignored or dealt with.

### *Mission Failure*

Unlike region and ally threats, failing an Autarch scheme carries the same penalty as ignoring it. However, the effect occurs at the end of the season when applying mission results, rather than at the beginning when applying ignored threats and schemes.

## Mission Success

On mission success, the listed effect doesn't occur and the spotlight player may additionally create one campaign aspect with two free invokes.

Note: the mission difficulties increase for the Empire even if the Stronghold successfully deals with the scheme. For example, if the Stronghold successfully stops the Hard Bargain scheme, the Empire will increase their diplomacy difficulty by one. However, the faction chosen by the Autarch player will not lose four disposition.

### *Wrath of the Autarch*

If the campaign ever reaches the Winter of Year 6, the Wrath of the Autarch scheme occurs regardless of the above procedure. See *The Empire* (page XX) for more details.

## Creating Schemes

There are more details later (page XX) on how to create threats and schemes, as well as some samples that can be used. Following are guidelines on how to interpret schemes and incorporate them into the campaign.

### *Diplomacy Schemes*

When running the diplomacy schemes, freely mix leaders from the Empire along with leaders from any targeted faction. For some of the schemes, it may be more appropriate to create new lieutenants to represent disgruntled characters from within the Stronghold.

**1 Building Up Rapport?** Empire immediately gains +1 **diplomacy**. Autarch player creates a campaign aspect with two free invokes.

**2 Feeding the Flames of Discontent?** The faction with the lowest disposition loses three disposition. If multiple factions are tied, Autarch player chooses.

**3 Hard Bargain?** Empire immediately gains +1 **diplomacy**. Autarch player chooses a faction with less than three disposition. Chosen faction loses four disposition.

**4 Wheels within Wheels?** All faction threats are twice as likely to occur. Draw two cards instead of one for each faction.



5 **You Have Precious Few Friends?** Empire immediately gains +1 **diplomacy**. Autarch player chooses a faction with less than five disposition. Chosen faction loses five disposition.

6 **Kingdom Fractured?** The Stronghold loses three regions. The Stronghold players choose which regions rebel and are lost.

## Wheels within Wheels

If the Stronghold either ignores or fails to stop this threat, it remains in play for the rest of the campaign. However, unlike the other schemes, the Stronghold may address it later by succeeding at a diplomacy mission against the Empire.

## Infiltration Schemes

These are usually either missions into the Empire in order to ferret out information, or they may be missions to disrupt covert operations within the Stronghold. In the latter case, brute force may not be an option as it would give the opposition a chance to destroy sensitive information.

1 **Spy Network?** Empire immediately gains +1 **infiltration**. Autarch player creates a campaign aspect with two free invokes.

2 **Bureaucratic Confusion?** Stronghold loses one stability.

3 **Propaganda Campaign?** Empire immediately gains +1 **infiltration**. Stronghold loses two stability.

4 **Fomenting Rebellion?** Stronghold loses three stability.

5 **A Terrible Plot?** Empire immediately gains +1 **infiltration**. Autarch player assassinates a hero.

6 **Revolt?** The Stronghold loses four stability.

## A Terrible Plot

It's fine if the hero targeted for assassination goes on the mission. The assumption is that there's a secret plot to assassinate the particular hero, and if it isn't discovered, they'll be targeted at some point later in the season.

## Skirmish Schemes

Skirmish threats could be leaders and minions from the Empire, or they can be any sort of opponent hired or coerced by the Empire to inflict hardships on the Stronghold.

1 **Targeted Weak Point?** Empire immediately gains +1 **skirmish**. Autarch player creates a campaign aspect with two free invokes.

2 **Mercenary Tactics?** All skirmish threats for the Stronghold are at +1 difficulty.

3 **Local Troubles?** Empire immediately gains +1 **skirmish**. When determining region threats, Stronghold player must draw two cards for each region instead of one. If either is +3 or higher, there is a threat.

4 **Powerful Enemies?** All skirmish threats for the Stronghold are at +2 difficulty.

5 **Overrun With Foes?** Empire immediately gains +1 **skirmish**. When determining region threats, Stronghold player must draw three cards for each region instead of one. If any are +3 or higher, there is a threat.

6 **Legendary Foes?** All skirmish threats for the Stronghold are at +3 difficulty.

## Changes to Region Threats

As with the Wheels within Wheels diplomacy threat, the Stronghold may address schemes that affect threats at a later point either because they were ignored or failed initially. To do so, the Stronghold must succeed at a skirmish mission against the Empire.

If the Empire employs skirmish schemes to affect how often region threats occur or the difficulty of skirmish threats, it's thematically appropriate to have these skirmish threats involve the Empire in some fashion.

## Warfare Schemes

Usually warfare missions are fought over a particular region. Some of these schemes are not. If the Stronghold chooses to try to stop one of these schemes (such as "Raids in the Hinterlands") which doesn't result in loss of a region, the warfare conflict is still fought over a strategic zone as normal. However, the



zone contains a small base or outpost instead of a more populated area as might exist in a region.

1 **Raids in the Hinterlands?** Empire immediately gains +1 **warfare**. Autarch player creates a campaign aspect with two free invokes.

2 **Redirected Troops?** Empire immediately gains +1 **warfare**. Autarch player creates a campaign aspect with two free invokes.

3 **Outpost Attack?** Autarch player conquers a region.

4 **The Long March?** Empire immediately gains +1 **warfare**. Autarch player creates a campaign aspect with two free invokes.

5 **Final Push?** Autarch player conquers any non-capital region.

6 **Assault on the Capital?** Autarch player conquers capital. If this is ignored or failed, the Stronghold is defeated. If this happens the same season that the Stronghold players stop the Autarch (sever her connection in the Animaelic Forest, assassinate her, or conquer Prominence), then the Stronghold players win a Pyrrhic victory.

## Outpost Attack

Because there's no fixed geography in *Wrath of the Autarch*, when the Stronghold player chooses the region the Autarch player must attack, the assumption is that there's some geographic motivation behind it, such as the region is less guarded or on the outskirts of the Stronghold.

## Creating Threats and Schemes

Once the conflict type and difficulty are determined, it's ultimately up to the Autarch player to craft the threat or scheme. The individual conflict chapters detail how to create the opposition for the appropriate conflict type.

There are also sample region and faction threats listed at the end of this chapter (page XX) that may be used as is or with minor tweaks. These may be adapted for schemes as well. If the Autarch player wants to create a mission from scratch, there's a little more work to do.

## Ignored Threats

If the Stronghold players are planning on ignoring the threat or using a development to stop it, there's no reason to create opposition. The group should still discuss the theme of the threat in broad strokes and make a note of what happened on the Chronicle of Seasons.

## Inspiration

The type of threat or scheme (region, faction, or Autarch), the type of conflict, and the difficulty can all provide inspiration when deciding what's happening.

The best source of inspiration is prior missions. Reincorporate prior events into the unfolding narrative. If the Stronghold conquered a minor faction, maybe some citizens are disgruntled about the war effort. Have previous threats been ignored? Maybe they're rearing their ugly head again.

Coming up with these sorts of details is best handled by discussing it amongst the entire group when the threat occurs. Although creating the threat is left to the Autarch, coming up with ideas works best when the Stronghold players are involved as well.

## Region Threat Ideas

Region threats can be internal, the work of bandits or upset farmers, or external, from attacks by other factions or fantastic monsters.

Farmers are demanding more compensation for their production (diplomacy).

A group of bandits are fleecing trade. Their network must be infiltrated and stopped (infiltration).

A dragon is stealing cattle (skirmish).

A band of undead, led by a witch king, assaults an outlying region, (warfare).

### ***Faction Threat Ideas***

Faction threats can be calls for aid from another faction or disputes that could increase tensions with the Stronghold.

An offer for marriage from a noble in the faction was rebuffed by a peasant (diplomacy).

The Empire has infiltrated the faction, setting up a splinter cell of disinformation (infiltration).

The faction needs help dealing with restless undead (skirmish).

The faction is attacked by another faction they don't get along with (warfare).

## **Region and Faction Sample Threats**

The remainder of the chapter showcases sample threats that are easily adapted for either region or ally threats. They can be used as-is or adapted to fit the particular themes and narratives of the campaign. It's typically easier to make minor changes to one of these missions than it is to create one from scratch.

## Ogres Raid Tarrydale Farms

**Conflict** Skirmish

**Difficulty** 4

An unruly group of ogres are stealing food and generally causing mayhem at the Tarrydale Farms—or any region with food, as ogres are wont to do. They're operating out of a series of caverns a few miles away from the farms.

### Sample Challenges

The heroes trek across Tarrydale Farms, seeking out and killing or capturing the ogres they come across.

Escort the grain cart out of Tarrydale.

Repel an ogre ambush on the North Road.

Fix a broken wagon wheel.

Track the ogres through the farm country.

Remedy a burning nettle sting.

### Opposition

The ogres aren't particularly bright, mostly focusing on smashing the heroes up. They don't mind ganging up on someone who looks particularly feeble. There is one lead ogre, Gnarlbone, along with one minion for each hero.

#### Gnarlbone (Leader)

**Physical** ☐☐☐☐

**Mental** ☐☐☐☐

**Consequences** -2 ☐, -2 ☐, -4 ☐

**Great (+4)** Fighting, Physique

**Good (+3)** Athletics, Will

**Fair (+2)** Tactics, Wits

**Average (+1)** Marksmanship, Survival

**Hamfisted Ogre Boss**

**Cunning for an Ogre**

**Iron Capped Tusks**

**Shrug Off Pain:** Add +2 to defend actions with Athletics.

**Powerful Attack (Fighting):** The character is a bruising attacker, capable of delivering crushing blows. Add +2 to attack actions using Fighting.

#### Ogre (Minion)

**Physical** ☐☐☐☐

**Mental** ☐☐☐

**Great (+4)** Fighting

**Good (+3)** Physique

**Fair (+2)** Will

**Average (+1)** Athletics

**Dumb Killing Machine**

**Always Hungry**

**Powerful Attack (Fighting):** The character is a bruising attacker, capable of delivering crushing blows. Add +2 to attack actions using Fighting.

### Setup

The ogres have no great ranged abilities, so getting them as close to the heroes as possible on setup is probably for the best.

### Tactics

The ogres work together to smash the heroes. The minion ogres will work together to swarm a target, creating advantages to improve damage.

## Bandits at Echo Lake

**Conflict** Skirmish

**Difficulty** 5

A group of bandits have been stealing ore from the Echo Lake mine. They've taken up residence in a collection of old abandoned farmhouses, which they access through an unused series of passages in the mines. This threat works well for any region that has significant amounts of ore.

### Sample Challenges

The heroes can head out to Echo Lake, interviewing farmers and figuring out what happened. They might be able to catch someone affiliated with the bandits, or track them back to their hideout.

Search around Erasmus' farm, located near the mine.

Catch Gavin, a young bandit sent to spy on the heroes.

Navigate through the Echo Lake mine.

Avoid toxic methane pockets within the mine.

### Opposition

The bandits are led by the Claw, a mineworker fired for courting the mine owner's daughter. They've set up shop in a small complex of abandoned farmhouses.

#### The Claw (Leader)

**Physical** ☐☐☐☐

**Mental** ☐☐☐☐

**Consequences** -2 ☐, -4 ☐

**Superb (+5)** Marksmanship, Wits

**Great (+4)** Athletics, Thievery

**Good (+3)** Physique, Will

**Fair (+2)** Disguise, Fighting

**Average (+1)** Lore, Survival

*Disfigured Bandit Leader*

*Safer in the Shadows*

*"Everyone Has a Price, Including Me"*

*Eagle Eye (Marksmanship): On attack actions, the target is one zone closer for purposes of calculating range.*

*Hit the Weak Point (Marksmanship): Once per exchange, invoke a target's consequence of a physical nature without spending a fate point.*

#### Bandit (Minion)

**Physical** ☐☐☐

**Mental** ☐☐

**Superb (+5)** Marksmanship

**Great (+4)** Thievery

**Good (+3)** Will

**Fair (+2)** Fighting

**Average (+1)** Physique

*We Follow the Claw!*

*Poor Quality Swords*

*Eagle Eye (Marksmanship): On attack actions, the target is one zone closer for purposes of calculating range.*

### Setup

The bandits try to stay out of the direct path of heavy hitters and focus on putting some distance between themselves and the best striker for the heroes.

## Murder of an Innocent

**Conflict** Diplomacy

**Difficulty** 4

Ulark, an overzealous agent of the Stronghold, murdered Torik, a young man suspected of being an agent of the Autarch. Outrage at the incident has spread throughout the region, causing dwindling productivity. The ire of the local people is further stoked due to cultural differences with Ulark, who is considered an outsider.

Eurich and Pasha, Torik's parents, are the central source of the anger. Further thrown into the mix are Ranilo, who's looking to benefit financially from the situation, and Safrich, an idealist looking for a change in rulership.

### Sample Challenges

There's an underlying distrust between the locals and the authority figures from the Stronghold. The challenges and issues raised should keep coming back to that theme.

Sympathize with Eurich and Pasha's suffering after the loss of their son.

Investigate who ransacked Felden's shop.

Help Ulark patrol Echo Lake.

### Opposition

Both Eurich and Ulark should be included in the conflict. Any of the other three can be chosen so that the number of heroes and leaders are equal.

#### Eurich (Lieutenant)

**Physical** □□

**Mental** □□□

**Consequences** -2 □

**Great (+4)** Society

**Good (+3)** Rapport

**Fair (+2)** Wits

**Average (+1)** Will

*Pillar of the Community*

*"We Are Citizens, Not Suspects!"*

*Commanding Word (Society): Spend a fate point to add an additional point of support when successfully gaining support.*

*Socially Adept (Society): For diplomacy, the character's Society skill is 2 higher for purposes of turn order.*

Eurich is a straight shooter who is well respected in the region. He blames a failure in leadership for his son's death more than anything else, placing much of the blame at whatever decisions resulted in placing Ulark into power.

#### Pasha (Lieutenant)

**Physical** □□

**Mental** □□□□

**Consequences** -2 □

**Great (+4)** Rapport

**Good (+3)** Will

**Fair (+2)** Wits

**Average (+1)** Society

*Star Crossed Farmer*

*"At Least the Empire Doesn't Attack Their Own!"*

*Related Point (Rapport): When the character successfully gains support, they gain a boost. If the character succeeds with style, they gain an additional boost.*

*Passive Aggressive (Rapport): When the character successfully gains support, opposing*

*characters on the same issue each take one mental stress.*

Pasha puts on a friendly face and has a certain grace and charm, but underneath she's seething and blames the heroes for a failure of leadership.

### Safrich (Lieutenant)

Physical ☐☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐

Great (+4) Rapport

Good (+3) Society

Fair (+2) Wits

Average (+1) Will

*Hot Headed Instigator*

*"We Demand More than This!"*

*Captivating Features (Rapport): Add +1 when using boosts to leverage the character's looks.*

*Related Point (Rapport): When the character successfully gains support, they gain a boost. If the character succeeds with style, they gain an additional boost.*

Safrich is a young idealist, not very willing to see compromise or the practical realities of creating a system of rule. Instead, his demands center on egalitarian solutions that aren't very practical but appeal as populist rabble rousing.

### Ranilo (Leader)

Physical ☐☐

Mental ☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐

Great (+4) Rapport

Good (+3) Society

Fair (+2) Command

Average (+1) Wits

*Charming War Profiteer*

*"I'm Sure There's a Way We Can Both Come out Ahead Here."*

*Passive Aggressive (Rapport): When the character successfully gains support, opposing characters on the same issue each take one mental stress.*

*Socially Adept (Society): For diplomacy, the character's Society skill is 2 higher for purposes of turn order.*

Ranilo is trying to find an angle where he can profit in the tumult. Whether that's helping the heroes or helping the farmers doesn't make much difference.

### Ulark (Lieutenant)

Physical ☐☐

Mental ☐☐☐☐

Consequences -2 ☐

Great (+4) Wits

Good (+3) Will

Fair (+2) Society

Average (+1) Tactics

*Captain of the Guard*

*"I Can Promise You There's an Active Insurgency in the Area!"*

*Shoot the Messenger (Wits): When this character defends against a gain support action, the acting character takes two mental stress.*

*Socially Adept (Society): For diplomacy, the character's Society skill is 2 higher for purposes of turn order.*

Ulark enjoys his job serving the Stronghold. While he's saddened by Torik's death, he's also frustrated at being harassed lately by unknown assailants during patrols. He's correct in thinking they're agents

of the Autarch. Torik was shot down for being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

### ***Resolution***

If this is used for a regional threat, the Stronghold gains one stability if they successfully resolve three issues. Otherwise, they don't lose or gain any stability, since the threat wasn't ignored.



# Prisoner of the Moonriders

**Conflict** Infiltration

**Difficulty** 4

Jebe, an important Sunrider elder, has been captured by the Moonriders. By the request of the Sunriders, the heroes attempt a prison break from the Darkhold, the most notorious Moonrider prison.

This threat is easily adaptable to any situation where a prison break is desired. It could be used as a regional threat, where someone from the Stronghold has been kidnapped or imprisoned by some other faction.

## Sample Challenges

Gain entry into the Moonrider city state of Ar-Hia.

Obtain plans to the Darkhold.

Resist Moonrider dweomers to detect intruders.

Exploit Relhi, Darkhold guard who is addicted to the Gray Paste.

## Opposition

Any of the guards in *Infiltration* (page XX) may be used as normal. In addition, the following guards can be used.

### Darkhold Guard (Minion)

**Physical** □□

**Mental** □□□

**Great (+4)** Fighting

**Good (+3)** Wits

**Fair (+2)** Athletics

**Average (+1)** Will

*No One Escapes the Darkhold!*

*Three Lotus Spring Attack*

*Quick (Opposition): Prior to making an attack action, may move one zone. Usual rules for moving out of an opposed zone apply.*

## Setup

The Darkhold is a deep prison built into a rocky mountain face. Its halls are made of a dark black rock. The warden is known as One Eye and takes delight in inflicting all manner of sadistic torments on his captives.

## Sample Security Challenges

Disguise: Trick the sentry

Stealth: Sneak down the Hall of Obsidian

Thievery: Pick the lock on Jebe's cell

## Resolution

The Stronghold gains one disposition with the Sunriders if they're successful (as usual for an ally threat). Any captured heroes are detained as normal.

# Quick Reference

Following are summaries of the core procedures used in *Wrath of the Autarch*. The summaries may be used for reference during play.





Also in this section are the character sheets, challenge lists, tech trees, the Stronghold sheet, the faction sheet, and the Chronicle of Seasons.

## Season

- **Choose the spotlight player**
- **Spring only (including first season of game)**
  - **Faction growth:** Draw a card for each faction except the Stronghold, add +1 stability if result is greater than +2
- **Ignored threats and schemes**
  - **Region threat:** No resources from region, -1 stability
  - **Faction threat:** No trade with faction for season, -1 disposition
    - \* *If faction is an enemy (disposition is less than -1), Stronghold also -1 stability*
  - **Autarch scheme:** Varies
- **Build developments**
  - Roll a d6 for each point of resource (use different colors of dice for different resource types)
  - May trade with each faction **once** during season (place dice traded away onto trade sheet), roll new dice
    - \* *Choice of trade restricted by faction disposition*
  - Whole dice must be allocated to developments (may not divide up result on a die)
    - \* *Lose one stability if spent less food than population (2 \* number of regions)*
    - \* *Lose two stability if spent less food than one-half the population (number of regions)*
- **Pre-Mission**
  - Choose heroes
  - Train and recover chosen heroes
    - \* *One skill advance **and** one step of consequence recovery for each season of down time*
    - \* *May improve skill rank provided skill has three advances and one skill in rank below*
    - \* *Gain one stunt for any skill advancing to a rank of Superb (+5) or higher*
  - Each hero starts the mission with two fate points
    - \* *Total fate points are modified by Stronghold stability and leftover resource dice*
  - Refresh any remaining hero consequences (Autarch player may freely invoke them during mission)
- **Post-Mission**
  - One free skill advance upon completion of mission
  - Remove all stress and gain one step of consequence recovery
  - Apply mission results
- **New Threats and Schemes**
  - **Autarch scheme:** Autarch player may enact one scheme before checking for threats (max two per year)
    - \* *Choose scheme from appropriate list in Threats and Schemes, restricted by current year*

- Reshuffle all cards before drawing for threats
- **Region threats:** Draw one card for each region the Stronghold controls (may be modified by Autarch schemes)
  - \* *Regional threat occurs on a +3 or +4*
- **Faction threats:** Draw one card for each minor faction (may be modified by Autarch schemes)
  - \* *Faction threat occurs on a +3 or +4*
- **Choose Next Mission**
  - **Alliance (diplomacy):** Gain disposition with target faction
  - **Conquest (varies):** Gain region
  - **Assassination (infiltration):** Target leader is removed from game
  - **Sabotage (infiltration):** Target faction loses one stability
  - **Heist (infiltration):** Steal resources from a faction
  - **Quest (varies):** Gain an artifact, must have disposition 3+ with related faction
  - **Threat or Scheme (varies):** Deal with a region or faction threat or an Autarch scheme

## Core Rules

- **Using Aspects and Stunts**
  - Spend a fate point (or free invoke) to **invoke** an aspect and gain +2 or re-draw
  - May use one **helpful** aspect (assets and relationships) on skill check, draw a card and add suns to the skill check
  - May use one **hindering** aspect (assets and relationships) on skill check, draw a card and subtract moons, gain a skill advance
- **Core Actions**
  -  **create advantage:** Create an aspect with a free invocation
  -  **overcome:** Remove an aspect or accomplish a general goal
  -  **attack:** Target takes stress equal to shifts
    - \* **Important:** *May not inflict more stress than skill used to attack with*
  -  **defend:** A response to attack or overcome actions
- **Stress for Success (Heroes Only)**
  - Apply stress cards to add to check (each card adds +2)
    - \* *Max two cards*
    - \* *Each sun results in one physical stress and each moon in one mental stress*
    - \* *All cards must be drawn at the same time, adding all symbols together and taking all stress at once*
- **Challenge Phase**
  - **Create advantage:** Mission and campaign aspects may be created during challenge phase (and only during challenge phase)
    - \* **Boost:** *Mission difficulty -2*
    - \* **Mission aspect:** *Mission difficulty*
    - \* **Campaign aspect:** *Mission difficulty +2 (make sure there's an open slot on the Stronghold sheet)*
  - **Remove campaign aspect (overcome):** On success, may remove one campaign aspect
    - \* *Mission difficulty +2*
  - **Resolve challenge (overcome):** On success, challenge is resolved
    - \* *If there are suns, characters in scene take stress. Character taking resolve challenge action takes one stress for each sun on challenge, all other characters in scene take one stress (players taking stress decide how to allocate it)*
    - \* *Moons must be removed first using a resolve challenge action with an opposition equal to the number of moons (time)*
    - \* **Failure:** *Challenge is failed and removed, Autarch player creates a mission aspect with one free invoke*
  - When a hero's opposition for creating advantages or resolving challenges is higher than skill rank, gain a **skill advance**

## Diplomacy

- **Complication (Autarch player):** If accepted, draw card and add suns and moons to challenge
- Each **ignored challenge** gives the Autarch player a number of fate points equal to the number of players for the conflict
- **Conflicts**
  - Autarch player starts with one fate point for each hero
  - No skill advances during the conflict
- **Magic**
  - Spellcasters start each session with mana equal to their Channeling plus the mana of the bound region
  - **Backlash:** After using mana, make a Channeling skill check with passive opposition equal to total mana spent
    - \* *Lose one resource in bound region for each point below the opposition value*
- **Opposition**
  - One lieutenant for each hero
    - \* *May use faction leaders if mission is with a faction*
- **Setup**
  - Create five issues, writing them on notecards and placing them in a line
    - \* *Alternately, use the five Stronghold aspect themes for the five issues*
    - \* *For alliance missions, if faction disposition is zero or less, Autarch player places one support on each issue*
  - Characters are placed onto issues in reverse Society order (ties go to heroes)
- **Aspect Burning**
  - Each free invoke allows the spotlight player to place at most one support on an issue
- **Exchange**
  - Each character gets one action in order of their Society skill (ties go to heroes)
- **Actions**
  - **Change issue (move):** Society is used for movement, all issues are considered adjacent
  - **Gain support (overcome):** Rapport vs. Wits to address issue (Rapport vs. 0 if no leader is on other side of issue)
    - \* *If multiple leaders are on other side of issue, opposing player may choose who defends*
    - \* *On success, place one support; on success with style, place two support*
    - \* *If issue gains five support for one side or the other, it's won; re-assign all unattached characters as in setup*
  - **Manipulate (attack):** Society vs. Wits to inflict stress to one character attached to the issue
    - \* *On success, character also becomes unattached to any issue*
- **Resolution**
  - Unless specified elsewhere, if the Stronghold wins three or more issues, they are successful
  - **Alliance missions:** Number of issues won by Stronghold determines disposition gain
    - \* *Each unresolved issue becomes a campaign aspect with one free invoke*
    - \* *0: -2 Disposition, 1: -1 Disposition, 2: No change, 3: +1 Disposition, 4: +2 Disposition, 5: +3 Disposition*

# Infiltration

- **Opposition**

- One leader and guards with skill cap equal to mission difficulty

- \* *If target is a faction, may use faction leaders*

- **Setup**

- Create at least one Thievery, Disguise, and Stealth security challenge
  - \* *Each security challenge is placed in a different zone*
  - \* *One additional Thievery challenge for four players, and one additional Disguise challenge for five players*
- Add additional zones so there are three times as many zones as there are heroes
  - \* *Add one more notecard for **Outside the House***
- The Autarch player adds alarms to a number of zones equal to one-half the number of heroes (round down)
- Place the **Outside the House** zone and shuffle the remaining cards
- Autarch player and spotlight player take turns drawing and placing notecards (Autarch player goes first)
- Players fill in locations and challenge names for all the zones
- All heroes are placed **Outside the House**
- The Autarch player adds guards equal to one-half the number of heroes (round down)

- **Aspect Burning**

- Each free invoke allows the spotlight player to add a new zone

- **Exchange**

- Each hero gets one action, unalerted guards patrol, then all guards get one action
- After all character actions, place one guard in a zone without heroes (two guards if the alarm has been sounded)

- **Suspicious and Alerted Guards**

- Failing an action causes the nearest guard to gain the **Suspicious** aspect with one free invoke
- Failing an action in the same zone as a guard causes all the guards in the zone to gain the **Alerted!** aspect with two free invokes
- An alerted guard may **sound the alarm** by ending turn on any zone with an alarm
  - \* *When the alarm is sounded, all guards become alerted*

- **Actions**

- **Hero movement:** Heroes use Athletics for movement; when entering a zone with a guard, hero must stop movement or the guard becomes alerted (and may oppose movement)
- **Guard movement:** Guards **patrol**, moving only one zone each exchange in the direction they're facing, turning direction only when they run out of room. Suspicious and alerted guards

move as heroes do

- **Detect intruder (overcome, guards only):** Attempt to detect a hero in the same zone. Wits vs. Stealth or Wits vs. Disguise

- **Capture intruder (overcome, alerted guards only):** Fighting vs. Athletics or Fighting to capture a hero

- **Resolve security challenge (overcome):** As the resolve challenge action in the challenge phase, except failed challenges make guards suspicious or alerted

- **Focus**

- **Remove suspicion and alerts**

- **Attack**

- **Resolution**

- The heroes are successful if all of the security challenges are completed and at least one hero makes it back **Outside the House**
- If any heroes are caught, the disposition of the faction drops by two and the heroes remain captured until broken out of jail

## Skirmish

- **Opposition**
  - There are two options available for skirmish missions
    - \* **Boss Monster:** A leader with a skill cap two higher than the mission difficulty. A boss monster may also take the Big Bad general opposition stunt for free
    - \* **Leader and Minions:** A leader with a skill cap equal to the mission difficulty, along with minions equal to the number of heroes (also with a skill cap equal to mission difficulty)
  - If the mission is against a faction, may use faction leaders
- **Setup**
  - Set aside 11 notecards for the battlefield. One notecard is labeled as the **Hero Start** zone
    - \* If desired, the Autarch player may create up to one obstacle for each Stronghold player, writing them on the notecards
  - Autarch player and spotlight player take turns placing notecards (Autarch player goes first)
    - \* The **Hero Start** zone is placed last
  - Autarch player sets up opposition at least four zones away from **Hero Start** zone
  - Stronghold players place heroes in **Hero Start** zone
- **Aspect Burning**
  - May burn a free invoke to allow a hero to start in any zone, add a new zone, or add a new obstacle to a zone
- **Exchange**
  - Each character gets one action in order of their Survival (ties go to heroes)
- **Actions**
  - **Movement:** Athletics is used for movement
    - \* Applicable obstacles add one to the cost for entering a zone
  - **Attack:** May use Fighting vs. Fighting or Athletics (in same zone), Marksmanship vs. Athletics for ranged attack
    - \* Marksmanship may target characters in same or other zones
    - \* For every zone of distance between the attacker and target, add one to the opposition
- **Resolution**
  - The side that gives up or is taken out first loses
  - The Autarch player or the spotlight player may give up at the end of any exchange

## Warfare

- **Opposition**
  - There's one faction leader or lieutenant for each hero
  - Each commander may control a number of units equal to their Command skill (or a minimum of three)
    - \* When defending a capital, a commander may control units equal to one more than their Command
    - \* Units are drawn from those available
    - \* Allies contribute three units to pool
- **Setup**
  - Set aside 15 notecards for the battlefield. One notecard is labeled as the strategic zone
    - \* If desired, the defending player may create up to one obstacle for each Stronghold player, placing them on the notecards
  - Autarch player and spotlight player take turns placing zones (defender goes first)
    - \* Strategic zone is placed first
    - \* Zones may not be placed below the level of strategic zone
  - Attacking commanders are placed at least four zones away from strategic zone
  - Defending commanders are placed within two zones of the strategic zone
- **Exchange**
  - Each character gets one action in order of their Command (ties go to heroes)
- **Actions**
  - **Movement:** Commanders move at rate of slowest unit
    - \* Moving units does not use an action
    - \* Hindering obstacles add one to the cost for entering a zone
    - \* Tactics is used to oppose movement
  - **Ranged Attack**
    - \* Attacking commander chooses an opposing commander within range
    - \* Ranged units are divided into groups as desired by attacking commander
    - \* For each group, make an opposed attack action, add all ranged attack skills (Marksmanship) vs. Armor skill of defending unit
  - **Clash of Arms**
    - \* Attacking units are divided into groups as desired by attacking commander
    - \* For each group, make an opposed attack action, add all attack skills (Fighting) vs. the Armor skill of defending unit
    - \* Defending commander has opportunity to outflank attacker if successful on opposed Tactics check
  - **Heroic actions:** Champions and leaders may focus or attack another character directly

- **Resolution**

- Warfare is over if the attacker captures the strategic zone or one side leaves the battlefield

## Diplomacy Challenges

|       |                              |                                    |
|-------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| +++   | Piercing Judgment            | (Rapport, Society, Wits)           |
| ++■   | New Friends                  | (Rapport, Society)                 |
| ++-   | Council of Kings             | (Society, Wits)                    |
| +■+   | Little White Lies            | (Rapport, Wits)                    |
| +■■   | Charming Dweomers            | (Lore, Rapport)                    |
| +■-   | Lay of the Land              | (Channeling, Society)              |
| + - + | Deflecting Blame             | (Will, Wits)                       |
| + - ■ | A Sales Job                  | (Rapport, Society, Wits)           |
| + - - | Grim Portents                | (Channeling, Lore)                 |
| ■++   | Feats of Sport and Intellect | (Athletics, Will)                  |
| ■+■   | Analyzing Weaknesses         | (Command, Engineering, Tactics)    |
| ■+ -  | Blackmail Material           | (Disguise, Stealth, Thievery)      |
| ■ ■ + | Sudden Violence              | (Fighting, Marksmanship, Survival) |
| ■ ■ ■ | Grueling Journey             | (Athletics, Physique, Will)        |
| ■ ■ - | Populist Sentiment           | (Rapport, Society, Wits)           |
| ■ - + | Organized Movement           | (Command, Rapport)                 |
| ■ - ■ | Selling the War              | (Society, Tactics)                 |
| ■ - - | Shoring Up Weakness          | (Engineering, Wits)                |
| - ++  | Dark Secrets                 | (Rapport, Stealth)                 |
| - + ■ | Infrequent Battle Plans      | (Command, Tactics)                 |
| - + - | A Noble Chameleon            | (Disguise, Society)                |
| - ■ + | Structural Weakness          | (Command, Engineering)             |
| - ■ ■ | Friends in Low Places        | (Thievery, Wits)                   |
| - ■ - | Constructing Machines of War | (Engineering, Tactics)             |



- ==+ Cultural Differences (Rapport)
- == Old Entrenched Power (Society)
- == A Clever Hustle (Wits)

## Infiltration Challenges

- +++ Wheels Within Wheels (Disguise, Stealth, Thievery)
- ++ Finding a Key (Stealth, Thievery)
- +- Under False Pretenses (Disguise, Stealth)
- ++ Intimate Pickpocket (Disguise, Thievery)
- ++ Over the Ledge (Athletics, Thievery)
- +- Cramped Movement (Physique, Stealth)
- ++ Tense Bluff (Disguise, Will)
- +- Gathering Clues (Disguise, Stealth, Thievery)
- +- Power Over Subtlety (Athletics, Physique)
- ++ Strenuous Research (Lore, Will)
- ++ Influential Aid (Rapport, Society, Wits)
- +- Escape! (Fighting, Marksmanship, Stealth)
- ++ Blueprints and Battle Plans (Command, Engineering, Tactics)
- ++ Arcane Guidance (Channeling, Lore, Will)
- +- Inside Man (Disguise, Stealth, Thievery)
- +- High Society Target (Society, Thievery)
- +- Misdirection (Rapport, Stealth)
- +- Elaborate Ruse (Disguise, Wits)
- ++ Dexterous Devices (Marksmanship, Thievery)
- +- Hiding in Plain Sight (Rapport, Society)
- +- Unseen Attack (Fighting, Stealth)
- +- Charming Power Play (Society, Wits)
- +- Forbidden Access (Disguise, Stealth)

|     |                       |                 |
|-----|-----------------------|-----------------|
| ■■■ | Belle of the Ball     | (Rapport, Wits) |
| ■■+ | Inside the Lockbox    | (Thievery)      |
| ■■■ | Solitary Surveillance | (Stealth)       |
| ■■■ | Out in the Cold       | (Disguise)      |

## Skirmish Challenges

|     |                      |                                    |
|-----|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| +++ | Leviathan Wakes      | (Fighting, Marksmanship, Survival) |
| +++ | An Old Foe Returns   | (Fighting, Marksmanship)           |
| ++- | Tracking Your Prey   | (Marksmanship, Survival)           |
| +++ | On the Run           | (Fighting, Survival)               |
| +++ | Close Quarters Brawl | (Fighting, Physique)               |
| ++- | Poisonous Threats    | (Athletics, Marksmanship)          |
| +++ | A Treacherous Land   | (Lore, Survival)                   |
| ++- | Beasts of the Wild   | (Fighting, Marksmanship, Survival) |
| ++- | Strenuous Obstacles  | (Athletics, Physique)              |
| +++ | A Mystical Power     | (Channeling, Lore)                 |
| +++ | Reconnaissance       | (Disguise, Stealth, Thievery)      |
| ++- | Coordinated Plans    | (Command, Engineering, Tactics)    |
| +++ | Gathering Support    | (Rapport, Society, Wits)           |
| +++ | Arcane Test          | (Channeling, Lore, Will)           |
| ++- | Scouts and Maneuvers | (Fighting, Marksmanship, Survival) |
| +++ | Wetwork              | (Fighting, Stealth)                |
| ++- | The Waiting Game     | (Disguise, Marksmanship)           |
| ++- | Secret Trails        | (Survival, Thievery)               |
| +++ | Coordinated Fight    | (Command, Fighting)                |
| ++- | Avoiding Battle      | (Disguise, Stealth)                |
| ++- | Tactical Firefight   | (Marksmanship, Tactics)            |
| +++ | Prized Target        | (Stealth, Thievery)                |

■■■ Makeshift Developments (Engineering, Survival)

■■■ A Clever Ruse (Disguise, Thievery)

■■+ Ambush! (Fighting)

■■■ On the Run (Marksmanship)

■■■ Behind Enemy Lines (Survival)

## Warfare Challenges

+++ Caught in the Trap (Command, Engineering, Tactics)

+++ Early Offensive (Command, Tactics)

+++ Reinforced Position (Engineering, Tactics)

+++ Makeshift Structures (Command, Engineering)

+++ Low Morale (Command, Will)

+++ An Arcane Weakness (Lore, Tactics)

+++ Trenches and Pits (Engineering, Physique)

+++ Gaining Ground (Command, Engineering, Tactics)

+++ Ghostly Visitors (Lore, Will)

+++ Forced March (Athletics, Physique)

+++ Scouting Ahead (Fighting, Marksmanship, Survival)

+++ Plea for Support (Rapport, Society, Wits)

+++ Enemy Encampment (Disguise, Stealth, Thievery)

+++ Brutal Terrain (Athletics, Channeling, Physique)

+++ Battle Plans (Command, Engineering, Tactics)

+++ Lead from the Front (Command, Fighting)

+++ Using the High Ground (Marksmanship, Tactics)

+++ Shelter from the Storm (Engineering, Survival)

+++ Empathy and Resolve (Command, Rapport)

+++ Ambush! (Fighting, Marksmanship)

+++ Officer Training (Society, Tactics)

+++ Strenuous Recon (Fighting, Survival)

== A Clever Ruse (Engineering, Wits)

== Waiting for Action (Marksmanship,  
Survival)

==+ An Example Is Made (Command)

== Outflanked Foes (Tactics)

== Custom Designs (Engineering)

