

Beast Hunters



THE ROLEPLAYING CHALLENGE GAME
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BERENGAD GAMES

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Beast Hunters

Introduction

Thank you for purchasing *Beast Hunters*, the Role-Playing Challenge Game.

This is a game about two things: in the fictional setting, it's about tribal hunters who seek out and slay magical beasts and use their prey's blood to inscribe tattoos of power into their bodies. On the player level, *Beast Hunters* is a game about challenges. It focuses on introducing, negotiating, and resolving challenges in a way that gives a lot of opportunity and control to the player who faces them.

An example of play can be found at the end of this book, before the character sheet. Depending on what kind of reader you are, you might want to read it first or in tandem with the actual rules.

We would be very happy if you posted how your *Beast Hunters* sessions went on RPG.Net (www.rpg.net), on the Forge (www.indie-rpgs.com), on Story Games (www.story-games.com), or anywhere else.

You can download free playing aids and other goodies from our web site at www.berengad.com. There, you'll also find more information on the Berengad world, a forum to ask questions or connect with other players, and updates on this and other games.

— *Christian and Lisa Griffen*

BEAST HUNTERS

Setting

THE BERENGAD

The Berengad Peninsula lies south of the world's midline. The climate is mild in most places, though beyond the Tarragat Range that marks the southern Berengad a chill desert stretches toward the icy wastes at world's end. Historically, the broad peninsula was home to seven kingdoms until they were conquered and bound by an invading empire.

The Glorious Empire of Karakaan's powerful mages tapped into vast streams of magical energy more potent than the old static energies traditionally used by shamans. The mages and Karakaan soldiers conquered most of the Berengad, with the exception of the tribes of Chel'qhur.

After centuries of oppression by the Karakaan, the peoples of the Berengad allied to shatter the chains of servitude. Their rebellion climaxed with a raging battle at the gates of the great port city Norrogaan. Empire mages called down so much flowing magic that they inadvertently created a storm

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of power, a violent whirl of bolts and flashes. The storm tore free of their control and raged for three days, feeding on the magical energies of the Berengad as a firestorm feeds on a dry forest, until those energies were burnt out. This event came to be called the *Cwencam*: the death of the magical streams.

When the streams of power ceased to flow, the horrors that had been conjured and bound for service in the war were freed to ravage the land. Other creatures were unnaturally warped into freaks by the maelstrom of magical energy. Monsters and living nightmares claimed thousands of victims.

The people of the Berengad struggle to rebuild their kingdoms, redefine their borders, and reestablish their connections with each other. As if the return of old rivalries and tensions was not enough to challenge them, they live under the constant threat of the abominations that roam their lands.

CHEL'QHURI

The Chel'qhuri are savage warriors who live in loosely affiliated tribes called nadans. Long ago, they crossed the Tarragat mountains from the wintry southlands and claimed the prairies and mountains of the southeastern Berengad, driving off anyone who opposed them. Accustomed to a harsher way of life, nadan fighters are contemptuous of

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outsiders and refer to them as softlings.

The Chel'qhuri trace their lineage through the maternal line and women are the keepers of family lore, revered for their ability to bring forth life. Women choose the men they wish to breed with. They prize strength, ferocity and intelligence, all qualities they wish to see in their future daughters. Many of these couplings are fleeting, but some women form lasting relationships with their mates.

The tribes are led by women, though men are valued for their fighting skills. Some of the more vicious nadans treat their men badly, but most leaders value the counsel of their male warriors. Boy and girl children train as fighters and face a trial when they are fourteen years old. After this rite of passage they are awarded weapons and treated as adults, though they will not truly win respect until they have shown courage in battle.

The nadans are nomadic, constantly shifting their hunting or fishing grounds as food grows scarce. Some prefer to pillage the trade routes through the southern Berengad.

Chel'qhuri do not forge their own steel. Their weapons are taken from the corpses of their enemies or won in trade, and passed down from hand to hand. They learn to fight with a variety of weapons and techniques.

Their love of beauty is surprising in such a fierce

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people. Chel'qhuri artisans are skilled with leatherworking and tattooing. They also love music, and songs form the backbone of their oral histories.

The Chel'qhuri are proud of their reputation as fighters and most of them dress to uphold that reputation. Warriors often wear charms fashioned from small bones of animals, monsters or even human enemies. They also flaunt captured jewelry. This is practical as well as decorative: silver and gold bracelets, necklaces and armlets are portable wealth.

Some Chel'qhuri men and women shave parts of their heads. The scalp is a favorite site for tattoos. Their warriors sometimes stiffen their hair with lime before a fight in order to look more intimidating.

They make their clothes from bartered cloth or soft hides. They pride themselves on needing little protection against the elements. Chel'qhuri warriors do not rely on armor for protection, but might wear it as an unspoken boast after capturing it from a softling fighter.

THE WAR

The Karakaan never gained a foothold in Chel'qhur due to the fierce resistance of the tribes and the difficulty in pinning them down in one place. When the Chel'qhuri leaders met in a rare moot to hear representatives from the

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other lands of the Berengad, they were unmoved by pleas to join in a rebellion. Nadan warriors would not go north to fight. If the softlings could not win back their own lands, it was not the nadans' concern. They would continue to throw the Karakaan back from their own shifting borders.

However, some Chel'qhuri disagreed, out of opportunism or battle lust. These fighters went north and offered themselves as mercenaries. They fought their way to Norrogaan and were instrumental in defeating the Karakaan. Few returned to their tribal lands. Those who did are shunned or killed for disobeying the leaders' commands. Some formed new tribes—or bands of outlaws.

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Through the many generations since their arrival on the Berengad, the Chel'qhuri have fostered a special group among them, the Beast Hunters, who uphold tradition and guard the knowledge of the old magic that lingers on the Berengad. Long before the foreign mages with their dark practices forced Rosvaya to bow down, Beast Hunters were stalking their prey across the south. Although the rich streams of magic are now dry, magical energy still pools in obscure places and within fell creatures. Since the *Cwencan*, there always seem to be more to hunt.



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Beast Hunter elders are skilled in using the potent blood of magical creatures to brew a special ink for ritual tattoos. These markings transfer some of the power of the beast to its killer. Each power the Beast Hunter gains makes her stronger for the next hunt.

Four times each year, the scattered Beast Hunters gather at the Spirit Stone to exchange beast lore, stories, and most importantly, tattoos.

Among the Chel'qhuri, Beast Hunters are the only group that follows a tradition of treating men and women as equals, where both sexes receive the same training in tracking and fighting. Some young people, especially women, have a difficult time adjusting their attitudes.

The spirit Hoch'qhar grants dreams to guide experienced Beast Hunters to new initiates. A Beast Hunter who wakes from such a dream follows the spirit's urging to the nadan where a young warrior with special aptitude awaits. The Beast Hunter takes the young one from the tribe and begins months of rigorous training in tracking and beast lore.

Beast Hunters protect the tribes from the terrible beasts native to the peninsula, warped by magic, or unleashed by the *Cwencan*. Their wisdom is highly respected and since they belong to no particular tribe, they act as judges in disputes among the different nadans. The black tattoos marking their

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skins grant them both power and respect.

Spurred by visions or drawn by the promise of power, several young Beast Hunters roam the southern Berengad in search of prey. They are few and usually travel alone. Duty and ambition drive them onward.

You are one of these Beast Hunters. Your life is dedicated to protecting the Chel'qhuri and to winning the powers that make you a stronger guardian of your people. Armed with sharp blades and a strong will, you will travel to desolate places to track and kill the most dangerous and bloodthirsty creatures on the Berengad.

Only the most skilled and bravest of the Hunters survive.

CHEL'QHUR AND SURROUNDINGS

Chel'qhur's eastern border is the ocean and the southern edge of the tribal lands follows the Tarragat mountain range that stretches from coast to coast. Chel'qhur's terrain is varied: prairies in the lowlands, dotted here and there by woods, with foothills and mountains to the south. The Chel'qhuri move their camps whenever game in the area becomes scarce.

The Devoran Marsh, a region of swamps and half-drowned ancient forests, sprawls north of Chel'qhur. There are reports of raiders coming out of the Marsh,

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but the Chel'qhuri have yet to realize that the remnants of the dynastic army, the Saula Miur, are building up an independent kingdom deep within the swamps. Some hunts will take Beast Hunters into the Marsh, and between the Saula Miur and the creatures of the *Cwencan*, there is no telling what they may face.

The dry grasslands of Jossud lie northwest of Chel'qhur. The Jos are divided into two castes: nobles who are privileged to ride the antelope-like lessyth, and herders who barely support their families by caring for the animals. The Jos are a pious people ruled by the heads of the great families according to the scriptures carved into holy standing stones that tower high above any other structure ever built.

Chel'qhuri and Jos tend to avoid one another, as their differences in religion and world views create friction. The Jos are patriarchal and proud, believing themselves culturally and morally superior to anyone else on the Berengad. Occasionally a party of Chel'qhuri will raid into Jossud to steal a herd of lessyth for meat, a sacrilege that outrages the Jos.

In the western mountains the Chel'qhuri clash against the Tarrag, ancient rivals for the rich pickings of the southern trade routes. The Tarrag raid from strong fortresses called keans. Each kean is ruled by an extended family and

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Tarragat is controlled by the leader of the strongest family.

Rosvaya was the name of the wild land at the heart of the southern Berengad, between the foothills of the Tarrag Mountains and the grasslands of Jossud. When the Karakaan invaded, they moved south, conquering as they went, but Rosvaya refused to bow down. To make an example of that stubborn realm, imperial mages called down a magical disaster. They opened the streams of magical force and flooded the whole area, twisting reality and tearing apart anything in the way. Most denizens of the Berengad have enough sense to avoid that ruined region haunted by unnatural creatures. The Beast Hunters do not have that luxury; some of the worst predators hunt there. Dedicated Beast Hunters feel a duty to thin the monsters' numbers, and the ambitious are lured by the promise of power.

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HOW TO PLAY

THE STRUCTURE OF PLAY

This is a roleplaying game for two players. One will play a Chel'qhuri Beast Hunter (that player is called the "Hunter"), while the other plays the opposition (and is called the "Challenger"). The mechanics support multiple Hunters, and notes for multiplayer games are provided in the Multiplayer chapter, but the basic rules are explained for two players.

Overall, the game has the following structure:

- A) SETUP (*Select Character, Pool, and Limit*)
- B) SALUTE
- C) FREE PLAY
- D) CHALLENGES
 - i) NEGOTIATION
 - 1) *Phase One: SOLUTION*
 - 2) *Phase Two: ELABORATION AND TRAITS*
 - 3) *Phase Three: COMPLICATION*
 - ii) CONFLICT RESOLUTION
- E) END OF ADVENTURE

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First, the players set up the adventure. Then they roleplay freely until the Challenger presents a challenge to the Hunter. This starts the negotiation process, which often leads to Conflict Resolution. Once the challenge is resolved, the Hunter receives his reward and the Challenger determines the consequences. Then the players return to free play until they enter a new challenge or end the adventure.

SETUP

As you set up the adventure, you need to figure out what's at stake for it. The adventure as a whole has a purpose, something that the Hunter wants to achieve, and individual challenges represent certain obstacles that the Hunter needs to overcome on his path toward this goal. Beast Hunts are an obvious example: the Hunter needs to complete the adventure to kill the beast and gain a new tattoo. However, other adventures also need to have a large-scale goal. For example, the stake of an adventure could be establishing peace between two tribes of Chel'qhuri, bringing down a group of brigands, retrieving an important religious artifact from old ruins, establishing a trade agreement with another people, or whatever else interests you. If the Hunter loses the adventure, that goal is not fulfilled. The chapter on Adventures has more details on this subject.

How to Play

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HOW TO PLAY

The Hunter and Challenger have to select a few things before starting an adventure:

- CHARACTER:** The Hunter plays one character, a Beast Hunter, through the adventure. Rules for creating and advancing characters are provided in the Character Creation and Development chapter.
- POOL:** The Hunter selects the adversity pool for the adventure (which is just called the Pool), which provides the Challenger with the currency to “buy” elements of challenges, such as enemies that the Hunter must face. At the beginning of the adventure, the Hunter determines how many points there are in the Pool for the whole adventure. When the Pool is empty, the adventure concludes and the Hunter receives a chance to refresh his character. The more points you put in the Pool, the longer the adventure will take to play out (and the more challenging it will be).
- LIMIT:** The Hunter also determines the maximum amount of Pool points that the Challenger can spend on any single challenge, which is called the Limit. The higher you set the Limit, the more difficult each challenge can become.

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As the Challenger, you can use coins or a pen and a plain sheet of paper to keep track of the Pool for the duration of the adventure, whichever is easier and more intuitive for you.

OPENING SALUTE

Before play begins, the Hunter and the Challenger salute each other in Chel'qhuri fashion by grabbing each other's lower right arm with their right hand (think of it as reaching too far into a hand shake and taking hold of the arm instead). This salute expresses the intention of the players to respect each other, play for fun, and separate in-game activities from their outside relationship. That separation goes both ways: connections outside of the game, such as animosity or romantic interest, stay outside and don't interfere with the purpose of the game. Healthy competition and in-game events stay within the game and should not be taken personally. That doesn't mean you should not talk about what you liked or disliked about the game afterwards; you should definitely do that. It means that you recognize that part of the Challenger's job, for example, is to make things tough for the Hunter, and you don't carry any bad feelings about that outside of the game. You respect and accept each other's role in playing this game together.

This gesture is similar to saluting in at a martial arts

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class. You acknowledge mutual respect and the fact that for the duration of the event, you will push each other hard, maybe enough to cause a little pain, but you both know that you do it to help the other person grow. It expands the boundaries of your interactions for the sake of the activity you'll be doing together.

Be sure to discuss any optional rules or modifications that you are going to use before you salute in.

The opening salute is an integral part of the rules and should not be overlooked.

FREE PLAY

Like most roleplaying games, this one should have a good amount of free play time. That is, the Hunter and the Challenger simply play out events, with the Hunter describing what his character does and the Challenger acting for all other characters, beasts, and the environment. However, the Challenger cannot throw challenges at the Hunter without invoking the negotiation rules (see below).

While the Challenger controls all characters other than the Hunter's, the Hunter retains veto rights over characters that are named in his traits, and over actions that concern his original tribe as a whole, for example "Your mother commits suicide" or "Your tribe casts you out". He can

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negate anything that the Challenger decides about the actions of these characters and the tribe, but should only do so if the actions ruin the player's enjoyment of the game. If you need to discuss these issues, salute out and resolve them before saluting back in to continue the game.

The Challenger, when freely roleplaying, should allow the Hunter to get his way unless there's an interesting challenge at hand. Stick to that and you will enjoy playing and focusing on the interesting challenges that much more. Remember, the Challenger's budget is limited, and any introduced challenge will cost her, so spend it wisely. Once the Hunter encounters an interesting challenge, use the negotiation rules and/or Conflict Resolution to play through it.

CHALLENGES

Once the Hunter's character encounters an obstacle that prevents him from reaching a goal, whether it's the adventure's goal or a smaller goal that the Hunter has determined, a challenge is officially declared. This process begins with negotiation. The Challenger explains to the Hunter exactly what the problem is, whether it's a group of bandits blocking the way, fire raining from the sky, or a sudden onslaught of doubt in the Beast Hunter's mind planted by a supernatural force.

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The first thing to be established in a challenge is: what is it about? What's the outcome that the Hunter is fighting for? What's the goal, what's at stake? If the Hunter doesn't care, he can always give up at any point during the challenge, so you need to make sure that the stakes are worthwhile. However, if the Hunter gives up during Conflict Resolution, the Challenger regains any adversity points that she spent on it.

Challenges can either be presented by the Challenger or asked for by the Hunter. For example, during a Beast Hunt, the Challenger can state that a pack of hungry wolves stands between the character and the entrance to the cave leading to the beast. Or, the Hunter's character is in Norrogaan, and he states: "I want my character to impress the councilor." The Challenger can then start the negotiation by asking: "How are you going to do that?" The game works best when Hunter and Challenger work together to a certain degree in agreeing on appropriate challenges. A goal like "I want to steal this Chel'qhuri artifact out of the Jos villa" might lead to several challenges, as in: "First you need to sneak into the villa at night, then there are guards, and finally there are traps surrounding the artifact." Each part could be played as an individual challenge, or it could all be one big challenge, but the Challenger should be explicit about exactly what

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HOW TO PLAY

the challenge is, when it is initiated, and what the goal and possible outcomes are.

Stakes for a challenge *cannot* be something that would make the character lose or win the whole adventure. “Will my character be captured?” is a perfectly legitimate stake, because “Will my character escape captivity?” can be the next challenge that allows the Hunter to continue the adventure. However, in an adventure where the overall goal is “Make peace between these two tribes,” the stakes of a challenge cannot be “Will I establish peace?”, because that would solve the larger adventure goal. Also, stakes cannot be effects that are mechanically represented in the game (“I want to gain a +3 resource” or “Will I take a fatal wound level?” are not acceptable stakes).

The negotiation process is described in detail in the next chapter, and Conflict Resolution in the chapter after that. Once the challenge is resolved, including potential rewards, the game returns to free play.

CLOSING SALUTE AND BREAKS

When you end your session, you salute out the same way that you saluted in (see Opening Salute, above). Only after that, you can (and should) discuss what happened in the game, what you liked and disliked, and what could be better.

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If at any point during your session you feel that things are going downhill and you are not enjoying the game, you should announce that you need a break. First salute out, and then discuss the problem before you salute back in (if you decide to continue play). Taking a break is also advised when you feel that the in-game events are getting too far out of your comfort zone. For example, if the Challenger decides to offer a challenge by having a character rape another, and the Hunter doesn't want to go there, salute out and talk about it. Don't get pushed where you really don't want to go. Remember that the game is based on mutual respect and the goal of having fun.

The closing salute, like the opening salute, is not optional.

How to Play

Beast Hunters

Challenge Negotiation

THE THREE PHASES

Challenge negotiation is played out in up to three phases. At the end of each phase, the Challenger chooses how to continue the challenge. The Hunter should do his best to impress her with his solution to the challenge so that the Challenger will “give,” which means granting that the Hunter has overcome the obstacle without the need to use dice. Here’s how it works:

PHASE ONE (SOLUTION): First, the Challenger spells out the exact challenge. For example, the local guards don’t want to allow the Chel’qhuri access to the villa, and the Challenger describes the guards, the villa and surroundings, and anything else that could be useful. The Hunter asks clarifying questions (and can make suggestions) and presents his solution for the challenge. Maybe the Beast Hunter tries to trick the guards, sneak past them, or even knock them out. Depending on how the Hunter wants to overcome

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Challenge Negotiation

the challenge, the Challenger now declares whether the challenge is a mental, physical, or social challenge (this is called the **DOMAIN** of the challenge). Next, the Challenger can call for rolling dice (Conflict Resolution, see next chapter), ask questions about the solution and for use of traits (go to Phase Two), or “give,” which means accepting the solution and thereby concluding the challenge.

PHASE TWO (ELABORATION): In this phase, the Challenger asks the Hunter questions regarding the proposed solution to the challenge. This includes pointing out potential flaws and asking the Hunter which trait he will use to ensure the desired outcome. The Hunter gives his answers and preactivates the trait he wants to use, if any; each trait can only be preactivated once during an adventure (for details on activated traits, see the next chapter). The Challenger can then give, go to Conflict Resolution, or accept the solution partially before introducing complications (leading to Phase Three).

PHASE THREE (COMPLICATION): The Challenger accepts the Hunter’s solution to a certain point. Then the Challenger introduces one or more complications that the Hunter had not foreseen. Either the Hunter’s plan did not work out at some point, or the Beast Hunter didn’t know about surprises that would come up during the conflict. The Hunter now reacts to the complication(s) and modifies the rest of the

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Challenge Negotiation

solution accordingly. If the Challenger is satisfied with how the Hunter handles the complication, she can give. If not, the only choice is to resort to Conflict Resolution. The Challenger is allowed to have one trait active at the beginning of Conflict Resolution, and the Hunter's potentially preactivated trait from Phase Two will also be active.

Throughout these three phases (solution, elaboration, and complication), there are different consequences for the Challenger's choice. Calling for dice early is costly, as it directly rejects the Hunter's solution in favor of playing it out with dice and traits. However, if the Challenger calls for dice at the end of phases 2 or 3, the Hunter already has activated a trait and now gets bonuses for the conflict rolls.

The following list shows the consequences of the Challenger's choice:

PHASE ONE: Giving costs 2 adversity pool points and grants 1 reward point to the Hunter; going to conflict resolution costs 2 times the regular adversity pool points; traits have not been activated yet (they can be activated during the actual conflict).

PHASE TWO: Giving costs 2 adversity pool points and grants 2 reward points to the Hunter; going to conflict resolution costs the regular adversity pool points; the Hunter has the opportunity to preactivate one trait.

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PHASE THREE: Giving costs 2 adversity pool points and grants 3 reward points to the Hunter; going to conflict resolution costs 1.5 times the regular adversity pool points; the Hunter and the Challenger each can have one preactivated trait.

The following table summarizes these consequences:

	REWARD FOR GIVING	ADVERSITY COST	TRAIT ACTIVE
PHASE ONE	1 Reward Point	x2	No
PHASE TWO	2 Reward Points	x1	Hunter
PHASE THREE	3 Reward Points	x1.5	Both

Challenge Negotiation



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GIVING DURING NEGOTIATION

Challenge Negotiation

If during any of the three phases the Challenger believes that the Hunter has covered all bases and provided a fitting solution to the challenge, the Challenger can give. That means the Hunter wins the challenge and achieves the associated goal. The Hunter also receives reward points for challenges he won, which he can use to develop traits, resources, and other aspects of his character.

COST FOR GIVING: Giving means that the Challenger thinks the solution proposed by the Hunter is good enough (and cool or creative enough, or whatever other standard the Challenger wants to use) to overcome the obstacle. The Challenger always has to expend two points from the adversity pool in order to give. If only one point is left, giving simply reduces the pool to zero. If the Hunter gives, the Challenger expends nothing. If the Hunter gives during conflict resolution, the Challenger regains the points for the adversity introduced in the conflict.

REWARD FOR GIVING: The Hunter receives a number of reward points according to the phase in which the Challenger gave: giving at the end of Phase One grants 1 reward point, Phase Two grants 2 points, and Phase Three grants 3 points. This is getting higher because of the increased effort

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the Hunter has put into addressing the challenge and its complications.

If the Challenger does not give, the players will use dice, traits, and actions to play through the challenge. This is called Conflict Resolution and is described in detail in the following chapter.

Challenge Negotiation



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Conflict Resolution

BUYING ADVERSITY

Once the Challenger decides to play through the challenge using the Conflict Resolution rules, the first thing she needs to do is to buy adversity, which is the opposition to the Hunter's goal.

The Challenger has been given a Pool of adversity points by the Hunter for this particular adventure. There are different types of adversity you can buy, as shown on the table below, for two reasons: first, there are more tactical options that a player can deal with when the opposition varies. For example, bringing in adversity with a good defense or high defensive resources will require different tactical play. Second, it allows the Hunter to face adversity that correlates to the fictional events. For example, if you want to introduce a fast animal that attacks the Hunter's character, you can give it a high defense but low resources. Similarly, you could have a bear with lots of damage boxes but a low defense trait. You are by no means required to buy adversity this way—after all,

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this game is about the challenge, not about simulating physics and probable events—but the game will be more fun if you do.

You also need to keep in mind the domain of the challenge, which was determined during Phase One of the negotiation, and which is either mental, physical, or social. The adversity that the Challenger buys will be of that specific domain.

THE ADVERSITY TABLE

The following table lists the adversity that the Challenger can buy from the Pool. The Challenger needs to buy at least the minimum number of damage boxes, for one point. One can have a challenge without any traits or resources and an initiative of 0 if just that one point is expended; however, it's obviously more interesting when the Challenger buys additional traits and resources.

The Challenger can buy traits and resources multiple times. For example, she can buy two traits at +2 instead of buying one at +4. Of course, they will need to be activated separately during the challenge.

Each column must be bought on its own. You get the damage boxes, or trait, or resource, or initiative from that row for the price listed, not all of them. They are compiled into one table to make things easier to look up.

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Conflict Resolution

The total of the basic costs represents the challenge rating of this particular challenge and cannot be higher than the Limit the Hunter has determined. Remember that the final cost for the adversity can be higher, depending on the phase of negotiation in which the Conflict Resolution is invoked. If the players go to dice in Phase One, all costs are doubled. That means that buying something listed at the cost of 4 will actually cost 8 adversity points. The Limit restricts the challenge rating, not the actual expenditure. The challenge rating is also the number of reward points that the Hunter will earn for winning the challenge. Losing the challenge does not earn any reward points.

COST	TRAIT	RESOURCE	INITIATIVE	DAMAGE BOXES
0	0	0	1	—
1	+2	+1	2	1/1/1/1/1
2	+4	+2	3	2/1/1/1/1
3	+6	+3	4	3/2/1/1/1
4	+8	+4	5	4/3/1/1/1
5	+10	+5	6	4/3/2/1/1
6	+12	+7	8	5/4/2/1/1
7	+14	+9	10	5/4/3/1/1
8	+16	+12	12	5/4/3/2/1
9	+18	+15	15	6/5/3/2/1
10	+20	+20	20	6/5/4/3/2

The domain of the challenge was already determined in Phase One of the negotiation, so all traits, resources, and

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damage boxes are bought within that particular domain. If the challenge is a social one, all the traits, resources, the initiative rating, and damage boxes listed in the table are social.

When buying resources, please note that only one resource in a category can be active at any one time. If a challenge has a +5 defensive resource and a +4 defensive resource, the result is not +9, but only +5. If the Hunter denies the +5 resource with a Deny Resource action (see below), however, it only drops to +4 because of the second defensive resource.

Damage boxes are listed as L/M/H/I/F. For example, 3/2/1/1/1 means three light, two medium, one heavy, one incapacitating and one fatal damage box. For adversity, incapacitating and fatal are basically the same results, as they both mean the Hunter wins this challenge. You can, for example, determine whether the opposition flees or dies by whether incapacitating or fatal damage was inflicted; that's your call. For details on damage, see the section on Strikes, below.

Here's an example of how to buy adversity:

The Challenger has 20 adversity points in the Pool, and the Hunter determined a Limit of 8 for this adventure. The Challenger decided to go to Conflict Resolution during Phase

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Three of a social conflict negotiation, in which the Hunter is trying to persuade a band of brigands to cease their raids on a nearby village. The Challenger can accumulate a total base cost of 8 points (the Limit), though she needs to expend 1.5 times as much once all is added up (due to going to conflict resolution in Phase Three).

To represent the brigands, she buys one offensive trait at +4, one defensive trait at +2, a defensive resource of +3 and damage boxes worth 2 points (2/1/1/1/1). The total base cost (which is also the challenge rating) for this adversity is 8 points, the maximum allowed. However, her final expenditure for this adversity is 12 points due to the multiplier of 1.5. If the Hunter wins this challenge, he'll earn 8 reward points (the challenge rating, which is never multiplied).

RESOURCE DENIAL

There is one special effect you can buy to more accurately simulate certain situations, and that is a denial of a resource. For example, if the Hunter loses a challenge and gets captured and the Challenger wants the character to be in a cell without his favorite spear, she can deny the resource in the following challenge. This condition costs one point for each two points of the resource (rounded up). The Hunter begins the Conflict Resolution as if the Challenger had



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successfully used a Deny Resource action (see below), and he can recover the resource per the Recover Resource rules, at a defensive roll that needs to beat the opposition by 5 or more.

PLAYING OUT THE CHALLENGE

Once the Challenger has bought the adversity for this challenge, it's time to play through it. Players take turns taking actions, and assuming neither side gives during the challenge, the player who first inflicts incapacitating or fatal damage on the other side wins the challenge.

It's important to keep in mind that each challenge is part of a particular domain, and that everything involving the challenge (including initiative, traits, resources, and damage boxes) are of that type.

INITIATIVE

The initiative determines who goes first. This fixed rating depends on the character of the Hunter and the adversity bought by the Challenger. In case of a tie, the Hunter decides who goes first. After that, players take turns.

Hunters can permanently raise their character's initiative with reward points. For more information on spending reward points, please refer to the Character Creation and Development chapter.

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ACTIONS

Each player has one action during her or his turn (unless very unusual conditions apply). The possible actions are:

- a) ACTIVATE TRAIT
- b) OFFENSIVE MANEUVER
- c) DEFENSIVE MANEUVER
- d) DENY RESOURCE
- e) RECOVER RESOURCE
- f) SPECIAL EFFECT
- g) STRIKE

Maneuvers influence the advantage that one character has over another. Strikes trade that advantage for damage. Traits are used to gain bonuses on maneuver rolls. Resources add or subtract from damage and can be temporarily denied by the opposition.

It's a good idea to use tokens of some sort to keep track of advantage points.

ACTIVATE TRAIT

A player can use an action to activate a trait that a character or the challenge possesses. Only one trait can be activated per action. Imagine that a character needs a moment to focus to remember her "Pupil of the Sage +3"

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Conflict Resolution

knowledge. Now, the need to activate the trait puts the character at a momentary disadvantage, but the next roll using that bonus will obviously be more efficient.

Hunters can preactivate a trait during Phase Two of a challenge negotiation. Each trait can only be activated prematurely like that once per adventure. Mark the trait appropriately (make an x before the trait for using its preactivation). In later challenges it needs to be activated during Conflict Resolution with an Activate Trait action if you want to receive its benefit again (traits do not stay active after a challenge is resolved). If the game went to Conflict Resolution in Phase Three, the Challenger also is allowed to have one of the challenge traits preactivated.

Powers granted by Beast Hunter tattoos or possessed by the beasts specified in this game, however, are always active and do not need to be activated.

OFFENSIVE MANEUVER

A character can make offensive maneuvers to try and gain an advantage over the opposition. There are two steps to making an offensive maneuver: proposal and execution.

First, the Hunter proposes a maneuver that improves the character's situation. In combat, that could be charging with a flurry of hits, or it could be pushing the enemy into

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the wall, or taking one enemy into a lock and using him as a shield against the others. In social conflicts, this could be social maneuvering, calling in favors, proposing alliances against the other side, making a charming statement, or decrying the opposition's blasphemous activities. In any case, the Hunter describes what the character is trying to do—both in terms of the action and the character's intent.

The Challenger now offers the Hunter a number of advantage points for that move, depending on how well the Challenger thinks the move would work (and how cool it is). The minimum offer is two advantage points. The Hunter can accept the points and conclude the action, or roll to execute it with dice instead. Choosing the dice is riskier and can lead to no advantage points at all, but it can also garner more points than the Challenger was willing to offer.

If the Hunter rejects the offer, he executes the action by rolling two ten-sided dice (2D10) and adding all offensive bonuses from active traits in the particular domain. For example, a Hunter with the active physical offensive traits "Hunters' Lineage +2" and "My Spear Is My Life +3" rolls the dice for a sum between 2 and 20 and adds 5 points from the traits for a total range of 7 to 25.

The opposing player makes a defensive roll, using 2D10 and adding all active defense traits of the appropriate domain.



In this example, the Hunter's opponent, a brigand with only one active physical defense trait, "Coward +1," rolls $2D10$ and only adds one point for a total range of 3 to 21.

If the player on the offensive achieves a higher result than the defender, she gains advantage points in the amount of the difference between the two outcomes against this enemy. For example, if the Hunter's roll of $2D10+5$ results in a sum of 16 and the defender's roll of $2D10+1$ only results in a sum of 5, the Hunter now gains 11 advantage points against the brigand.

The Challenger is not offered advantage points and instead always rolls when she's performing an Offensive

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Maneuver (but should still try to come up with captivating actions of the opposition to represent those rolls).

Keep in mind that the Challenger always has the option to give (to determine that the Hunter instantly wins the whole challenge), which should only be exercised if the Hunter's described action blows the Challenger's mind and seems both doable and overwhelmingly effective. Other very cool but not overwhelming actions can just be rewarded with high offers. 15 guaranteed advantage points are worth a lot, for example.

FREE STRIKE: If either player, through accepting a proposal or rolling the dice, gains twelve or more advantage points with a single offensive maneuver, the player immediately has the opportunity to take a free Strike action before concluding the turn. This does *not* use up the player's next action, and the player cannot save it for later. Instead of a Strike, the player can also achieve a Special Effect, assuming she has enough advantage points.

DEFENSIVE MANEUVER

The only way to lower the advantage points of the opposition is to conduct a successful defensive maneuver. However, this is more difficult than to gain the advantage in the first place. Fundamentally, it works much the same way as offensive maneuvers, with proposal and execution,

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although the minimum advantage point offer is only 1 point.

The rolls are the same as well, except that the active player rolls defense instead of offense and vice versa. The active player makes a roll with $2D10$ plus all active defense traits of the appropriate domain, and the other player makes an offensive roll ($2D10$ plus all active offense traits of the domain). If the active player's result is higher than the enemy's, he can subtract *half* of the difference (rounded up) from the enemy's advantage points against him. A lower result does not change anything.

For example, the brigand tries to lower the advantage points against him. He makes his $2D10+1$ roll and scores a 14. The Hunter makes his $2D10+3$ roll and scores 18. Therefore, the Hunter retains all of his advantage points. If the Hunter gets a result of 11 instead, he has to lower his advantage by 2 points ($14-11=3$, $3/2=1.5$, rounded up to 2).

DENY RESOURCE

Resources in physical conflicts include weapons and armor. In social conflicts, they can include local connections and characters. In mental challenges, they include sources of concentration, focus, and drive. A player can try to temporarily deny the other player the use of a resource. This is done via a simple offensive versus defensive roll. If the

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attacker beats the defender, the defender cannot use that resource anymore until it is recovered through a Recover Resource action or after the challenge is concluded.

For example, a beast jumps at the Beast Hunter's spear and tries to wrestle it from him. The beast makes an offensive roll (2D10 plus all active physical offense traits) and the Hunter a defensive roll (2D10 plus all active physical defense traits). The beast beats the Hunter by 8 points, and the spear goes flying. The Hunter has to fight without it; hopefully he has another weapon he can use. He will get it back after the fight is over, or if he successfully uses a Recover Resource action.

The Challenger can, but does not have to, offer the Hunter a success of a certain level when the Hunter describes how he denies the opposition's resource. For example, if the Hunter wanted to overcome the beast's defensive resource and described convincingly how he could slide his dagger through the cracks between the beast's scales, the Challenger could offer a 5-point success, which means that she would have to use a Recover Resource action with at least 5 points of success to get the beast's resource back.

RECOVER RESOURCE

In order to regain a resource that has been denied,

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the acting player must make a defensive roll against the opposition's offensive roll that beats the other player by at least as much as the roll that denied the resource.

For example, the Hunter from above who lost his spear has to make a defensive roll against the beast's offensive roll (basically the same rolls as before, unless they activated more traits in the meantime) and beat the beast by at least 8 points, the beast's margin of success from earlier.

When the Hunter describes how he plans to recover the resource, the Challenger can but does not have to decide that the description is sufficient without needing a roll. Most of the time, you should require the roll, but a very good description of the Hunter's action can override this.

SPECIAL EFFECT

Sometimes one of the players will want to achieve something in the midst of a challenge that can't be expressed simply as damage. For example, the Hunter might want to leave a scar on an enemy, make sure that the innocent tribespeople get to safety before the brigands get to them, or impress a love interest during a heated debate with the tribal chief. These special effects are normally too small to be considered challenges in themselves, but they are still significant to the players.

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Any damage to characters other than the Beast Hunter or his direct opposition must be achieved through a Special Effect.

When a player wants to achieve a special effect, she explains to the opposing player what the special effect is. The opposing player now determines a number between 5 and 20 for the cost in advantage points to achieve the effect. A player can now spend the determined amount to achieve the effect. While the player who proposed the effect gets to say a couple of sentences about the cost to negotiate it, any prolonged discussion about it needs to be taken out of the game, for which the players need to salute out. Once an effect is decided one way or another, it cannot be brought up again or undone during the same challenge. The player who determined the cost cannot achieve the special effect in her turn directly following the determination; she needs to wait until at least two turns later.

There are two different types of special effects: those where one side tries to change the status quo, and those where both sides try to achieve something that's mutually exclusive. An example of the first kind is the infliction of a scar; if the proposing player spends the points first, the scar is inflicted, but if the other player spends the points first, no scar will be inflicted during this challenge. An example of the second

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kind would be the Hunter trying to get villagers to safety while the Challenger wants to have them killed. Both would change the status quo.

Special effects that are brought up but not resolved during the challenge are open for being raised as challenges or as special effects in future challenges.

Both players have a responsibility not to bring up special effects that are unrelated to the challenge at hand. If you think the other player's proposal is unrelated, say so. Discussions about it need to be conducted after saluting out.

STRIKE

A player can use an action to perform a strike using the accumulated advantage points. This is the only way in which a player can deal damage to the opposition. One could have two characters facing off, maneuvering for a while without ever attacking, until finally one of them lunges forward to exploit a weakness she spotted. Or the two characters could be locked in heated battle, exchanging blows and pushing each other back and forth, until one character finally strikes at an opening. Similarly, in a social challenge, a character could make alliances but not have them be exposed until the most opportune moment. In a mental duel of willpower, one character could deliver powerful statements that sow internal

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doubt or even shatter the other character's resolve.

Players buy a certain level of potential damage by expending some or all of their advantage points and then rolling the appropriate dice. The costs and the dice gained can be seen in the table below:

COST	6	10	12	18	20	24	30	+15
DICE	D6	D10	2D6	3D6	2D10	4D6	3D10	+D10

As you can see from the table, the more advantage points you expend, the higher the potential damage that you will cause. There is always risk involved; the lower numbers are single dice by design. When a player has a small advantage, there is still a chance that she might roll a 1 even on a D10. And even when she has a large advantage, she might only roll a 4. Combat is chaotic like that, and never certain. Plus, it motivates the players to wow the other side with each move in order to win the conflict without having to use advantage points.

Striking someone causes damage unless there's a defensive resource in the way, such as armor (see below). There are five levels of damage: light, medium, heavy, incapacitating, and fatal. Characters have a certain number of damage boxes for each level. Once a level is filled up, additional damage of that type moves up one level. Inflicting light damage on someone who has three light damage boxes and

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has taken light damage three times already causes medium damage instead. Notice that Hunters have *separate* boxes for each domain: every Hunter character has three sets of damage level boxes (for physical, mental, and social damage). However, as a challenge is always only in one domain, only one type of damage will be dealt during the challenge.

Once you roll the damage dice you have bought with your advantage points, consult the following table to determine what type of damage you have inflicted:

RESULT	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21+
DAMAGE	<i>Light</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Heavy</i>	<i>Incapacitating</i>	<i>Fatal</i>

The result can be modified through resources that a player possesses. Offensive resources grant bonuses to damage, while defensive resources of the opposition subtract from the amount. In the physical domain, weapons and armor are the most typical kinds of resources, but a passionate belief could serve as well (as long as it can be denied). Social resources can be contacts in the right places that help you damage the social standing of an opponent and a great reputation that makes it harder for others to damage you socially. The same goes for mental resources: you can have a memory, relationship, or belief that steels your will.

A player can only use one resource at a time. However, resources do not need to be activated. They are always active

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unless they are denied in a challenge by the Deny Resource action. That's when backup resources of the same category come into play.

Characters who take incapacitating damage are defeated and lose the challenge. They continue the adventure and can participate in future challenges, but they risk fatal injury, as the next incapacitated result will move up one level. If the character has more than one box for incapacitating damage, the effect only comes about when all of the incapacitating boxes are checked off. If the Hunter loses a challenge this way, the Challenger does *not* regain the expenditure of adversity points for this challenge.

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If the challenge is the very last one in a non-Beast Hunt adventure or the encounter with the beast at the conclusion of a Beast Hunt, incapacitating damage has no effect on either side.

Beast Hunters who take fatal damage have two choices:

- 1) the character loses the adventure as a whole, but gets away with his life, or
- 2) the character automatically wins the challenge as well as the adventure, but is forever removed from play.

If the character has more than one box for fatal damage, the effect only comes about when all of the fatal boxes in one domain are checked off.

A Hunter who accepts the fatal damage to win the adventure describes how the character dies or permanently retires. In the case of fatal physical damage, the character is mortally wounded and dies after the adventure concludes in his favor. Fatal social damage leads to the character forever leaving society behind, maybe to live in the wilderness on his own or to take his life. Fatal mental damage burns out the character's mind or will in a way that makes him unplayable.

All damage remains until the end of the adventure, unless the character has special powers, such as the hazuma tattoo. Between adventures, however, all wound boxes as well as preactivations of traits are cleared. This is called a Refresh.

Beast Hunters

Character Creation and Development

CHARACTER DETAILS

Beast Hunters are an elite group among the Chel'qhuri. All Chel'qhuri are trained warriors, and Beast Hunters receive special training and knowledge from their elders. They travel across the territory of various nadans in search of their prey, and sometimes their hunts lead them to the farthest corners of the Berengad.

Now would be a good time to check out the character sheet at the back of this book. As you can see, there are several aspects to a character. They are:

- A) NAME
- B) HUNTER
- C) INITIATIVE
- D) REWARD POINTS
- E) TRAITS
- F) RESOURCES
- G) TATTOOS
- H) DAMAGE BOXES

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Naturally, a character should be defined by more details, such as looks, background, history and family. But these aspects have no mechanical relevance to the game unless you incorporate them into traits and resources, so you can keep additional information in mind or write it out on different sheets of paper. You probably won't need to reference that information during the game too often, but you'll need the traits and resources all the time.

NAME: Chel'qhuri names often include harsh consonant sounds. "CH" and "QH" are also common.

HUNTER: The player who owns this character.

INITIATIVE: Initiative determines the order of action during a conflict. There are three initiative values, one for each challenge domain (physical, social and mental).

REWARD POINTS: These are earned through challenges and can be spent to improve your Beast Hunter's traits, resources, and initiative.

TRAITS: Every Beast Hunter has traits to help her overcome the challenges in her path. There are six types of traits: offensive and defensive traits in each of the three domains. That means there are physical offensive (PO), physical defensive (PD), mental offensive (MO), mental defensive (MD), social offensive (SO), and social defensive (SD) traits. Traits have a numerical value associated with

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them. That value is the bonus to the 2D10 roll that the trait grants during Conflict Resolution if it has been activated (see the Conflict Resolution chapter for details).

When you create traits for your Beast Hunter, they can be virtually anything you can think of that's appropriate to their purpose. They can be attributes, talents, events of character history, relationships, beliefs, or anything else. For example, a Beast Hunter could have "Spear and Axe Training" as an offensive or defensive physical trait. But that would be somewhat boring; a more interesting description would be "My Mother Taught Me To Fight," "Hulking Brute," "Fear My Wrath," or even just "I Am A Beast Hunter." All of those could be physical traits; some could be mental or social traits as well. They have something interesting about them, something that makes your character more unique, allows you to use more interesting solutions and actions for challenges, and hints to the Challenger about ways to make adventures and challenges matter to your character. It's a good idea to use traits that also give Challengers an idea of what kind of adventures and challenges you'd like to face.

RESOURCES: Hunters and their opposition have resources that help them out. Resources either add to the damage that a Hunter inflicts or subtract from the damage that a Hunter takes in a certain domain. The first kind is called an

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offensive resource, the second a defensive resource. Just like traits, therefore, they come in six types (PO, PD, MO, MD, SO, SD). The numerical value of the resource shows how many points of damage it adds or subtracts. For example, a Beast Hunter's spear that she has won in combat and that was decorated by members of her tribe would usually be a physical offensive resource, but it could also be categorized as a social or even mental resource. Social resources are often contacts or reputation. Examples of mental resources are an iron will, a sharp wit, or a strong relationship that lends determination to the character. Unlike traits, resources can be denied during a conflict. This usually means the Beast Hunter was disarmed, socially cut off from his contacts, or mentally distracted and confused. Remember when selecting your resources that you can only use a particular type of resource at one time, but that having several works as backup in case the main resource gets denied.

TATTOOS: Beast Hunters stalk fiendish creatures to rid the world of them and to use their blood in magical rituals. A Beast Hunter who brings down a specific beast will receive a tattoo from an elder, with ink made with the blood of the beast. Each tattoo imbues the Beast Hunter with some of the creature's power. These tattoos grant bonuses to traits and resources, as well as some special abilities. They are always

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active, so unlike traits, they need not specifically be activated, and unlike resources, they cannot be denied.

DAMAGE BOXES: During a conflict, characters deal and receive damage. This damage is tracked with these boxes. Each domain has its own set, so a character has separate boxes for mental, social and physical damage. There are boxes for light, medium, heavy, incapacitating and fatal damage.

CREATING A BEAST HUNTER

In order to play this game as a Hunter, you need to create a character. This section outlines how to create the character and fill out the character sheet. The character's history and personality can and should be written into the traits and resources. The following steps ensure that happens while keeping all starting Beast Hunters balanced. If you come up with more information and neat tidbits that don't fit into the traits and resources, feel free to write them down on as many separate sheets of paper as you need.

Before you start on the five steps below, enter the following things on your character sheet: the character's name in the Name field, your name in the Hunter field, and an initiative rating of 1 for each domain (M1, P1, S1). You also have one damage box in every step of every domain.

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When adding traits and resources in the following steps, a few restrictions apply. First, you can only have three starting traits in each category (three in mental offensive, three in mental defensive, etc.). Second, you cannot have more damage boxes of a higher type than the ones below in the same domain (for example, if you have three light social damage boxes, you cannot have more than three medium social damage boxes).

When I refer to “you” in the following paragraphs, I am talking about you the player, as these are your resources to use, but I am also sometimes talking about the Beast Hunter character, just for ease of reference.

STEP I: YOUR PARENTS

Think about the way in which your character’s parents influenced his or her life. Write down **THREE TRAITS** that your character has received from his or her parents. You need to mark the traits with their category, such as physical offensive, but don’t give them a rating yet. Almost any trait can fit into any category, depending on how you interpret the influence on the character. For example, belonging to a well-known warrior bloodline can grant your character physical abilities, social aptitude, or mental agility. Traits can be abilities, experiences, beliefs that drive your character, or anything

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else that empowers the Hunter to face tough challenges.

Examples of traits you could gain from your parents are:

My Mother Taught Me How to Ignore Pain

I Take Risks to Prove Myself

Resilient

I Will Make My Mother Proud

Trust No Elders

The Beatings Only Made Me Stronger

My Mother Is the Nadan's Chief

In addition, you gain TWO RESOURCES from your parents.

Name them and note the category, such as physical offensive, but don't assign a rating yet. Examples of resources that your character's parents might have granted her are family weapons or armor, genetic attributes (strength, quickness, beauty, intelligence), social contacts or family reputation, willpower, and so on.

Next, raise one of your initiative levels by one point. For example, raise social initiative to 2.

Finally, add one light and one medium damage box to any of your damage areas to indicate the domain in which your parents influenced you the most (mental, physical, or social).

STEP 2: YOUR TRIBE

You gain TWO TRAITS and TWO RESOURCES from growing up in your particular nadan. Give the tribe a name, think

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about what it was like growing up there, and connect your character to it. Traits from your tribe could include training that the group bestowed upon the character, experiences that the character had within the tribe, or beliefs and religious attitudes that the tribe as a whole holds and reinforces.

Resources include your standing among the tribe, items you have gained from its members, and so on.

Examples of traits you could gain from your tribe are:

My Tribemates Were Stronger, but I Never Quit

Commanding Presence

I Can Hear the Spirits Whisper

Outsider's Perspective

Spiritual Leader

Beloved and Feared

You also get to raise an initiative level by one point and add a light damage box to any of your damage areas. Again, think about how that came to be and why your tribal association made you more powerful or resilient in a physical, mental, or social way.

STEP 3: YOUR ENEMIES

You gain THREE TRAITS and ONE RESOURCE from your experience with your enemies. This is a wide open field; it can include the bully you fought against as a child ("I Stand Up For Myself"), the rival tribe or family that you fought

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with in the past (physically, mentally, or socially), or any actual nemeses you might have. We highly recommend that your trait-related enemies are still alive, so that the Challenger can include them in your adventures.

Examples of traits you could gain from your enemies are:

I Will Have Revenge on Jiala

Cunning Keeps Me Alive

I Hate Borok with a Passion

Known to Take Their Ears

Kerak Will Suffer for What He Did

Noqha's Spirit Still Haunts Me

Raise one of the initiative levels by one point.

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You also get to add a light damage box to any damage area as a result of confronting your enemies in the past.

STEP 4: BEAST HUNTER TRAINING

Create TWO TRAITS and ONE RESOURCE that you gained during your Beast Hunter training. If you haven't gained a ritual hunting weapon (typically spear or axe) from your parents, your tribe, or your enemies yet, you should take it at this point as a resource. These traits and resources include your individual training as a Beast Hunter, your interests and personal motivations, your quirks and talents, and everything else that comes to the foreground during your teenage years.

Examples of traits you could gain from your Beast Hunter training are:

Knowledge of Anatomy

Chel'qhuri Lore

My Mentor Died for Me

Swift as a Panther

Humility

I Am Destined to Slay the Qhurym

From your personal training, you've gained a medium and a light damage box that you can now distribute among your damage areas. Again, note that you cannot have more boxes in a higher damage level than in the one below it. In addition, raise one initiative level by one point.

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STEP 5: ASSIGN NUMBERS

You now have ten traits. Distribute the following bonuses among them: +3, +3, +2, +2, +2, +2, +1, +1, +1, +1 (in other words, two times +3 and four times each +2 and +1). Remember that only three of your traits can each be in the same category—offensive physical, for example. Also keep in mind that Beast Hunters must physically hunt down powerful creatures as well as serve as facilitators and eventually wise elders among their people, so all three domains are important.

You also have six resources. Distribute the following bonuses among them: +3, +2, +2, +1, +1, +1. Note that you can only use one resource for a specific purpose, like an offensive physical resource (such as a weapon), at one time during a conflict, but if that resource is denied, you can use another one in the same category instead. Multiple resources in the same category, therefore, serve as backups.

You start without any tattoos. However, one of the first adventures you play should be a low-level Beast Hunt. That will serve as your initiation rite among the Beast Hunters. After you have slain your first beast and gained your first tattoo, you can wander the Berengad as you see fit, bound only by duty to your people and the lure of the hunt.

Now you have a Beast Hunter character ready. Good hunting!

BEAST HUNTERS

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

You spend the reward points earned from challenges on your character. Reward points can be spent at any time *outside of a challenge*. That means you can spend them during an adventure, but not after a challenge has started.

Spending reward points is very straightforward. You can improve your character's traits, resources, initiatives, or damage boxes. You can buy new traits and resources as well.

The following table lists the costs for those improvements:

Buy New Trait (at +1)	5 Points
Raise Trait by 1 Point	New Rating $\times 3$
Buy New Resource (at +1)	5 Points
Raise Resource by 1 Point	New Rating $\times 3$
Improve Initiative	New Rating $\times 3$
Buy Light Damage Box	15 Points
Buy Medium Damage Box	25 Points
Buy Heavy Damage Box	50 Points
Buy Incapacitated Damage Box	100 Points

Note that you only improve one domain of initiative or damage boxes at a time, and that you cannot gain more damage boxes at a level than you have in the level below that one. For example, if you have 3 light damage boxes, you cannot have more than 3 medium damage boxes in that domain.

If your character has more than one incapacitated damage box, the incapacitated stage is only reached when all of them are marked off through damage. Additional fatal damage boxes cannot be bought through reward points, but can be earned by completing very high level Beast Hunts.

BEAST HUNTERS

Playing the Hunter

OVERVIEW

At first glance, the Hunter seems to have only one responsibility: to play the Beast Hunter character during the game. However, that's not all. Your job as the Hunter includes setting up the boundaries of the adventure by selecting the Pool and Limit, providing enough information to the Challenger to enable her to create cool adventures and challenges, pushing the game forward by playing a proactive character who seeks out challenges and heads straight for the goal, and providing creative solutions to challenges.

CHOOSING POOLS AND LIMITS

One of the first things you do when you're about to embark on an adventure with your character is to choose the Pool and Limit. At the beginning, you won't know how difficult specific numbers will make the game for you. Luckily, there is little risk in reaching too high. Your character will not die unless you want him to, and even if you

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lose the adventure, you've still gained reward points for the challenges that you overcame.

We suggest beginning the game with a Beast Hunt for the hektratan. A Pool of 20 adversity points and a Limit of 5 points per challenge provide a short and not-too-difficult adventure for a beginning character that you can win even if you rely mostly on the dice instead of the offers from the Challenger. It should also give you a good idea of how difficult you want your adventures to be.

Over time, you can experiment with raising the Pool and Limit. Some people like their games difficult so that they can be truly challenged. Others are more comfortable if they have some leeway and can progress at a more leisurely pace. The choice is yours.

BEING PROACTIVE

The Challenger creates adventures for you based on what she thinks you are interested in. You can help this process in many ways. You can discuss what kinds of challenges and plots you most enjoy. You can also point out aspects of your character's background, such as enemies, that you'd like to see incorporated into the adventure. Finally, during the adventure, you should not hesitate to make suggestions to the Challenger.

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While playing the game, you will find that the Challenger might wait for your character to do something. After all, it's the Beast Hunter who sets out with a specific goal, so it's often up to him to find ways to work toward it. Think about the protagonists in most stories, who have goals and strive to achieve them. The Challenger will put opposition in your way, but you are the one who walks the path. That means that the pacing of the game is often up to you.

In addition, remember that the Challenger only has a limited Pool to work with. If you come up with actions that you know will lead to opposition, you have some control over the kinds of challenges you will face. This can give you a strategic advantage over the course of the game, especially during Beast Hunts, when you want to be as physically healthy as possible for your final encounter with the beast.

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

The most challenging thing about being the Hunter is coming up with solutions and actions for challenges. That's what the game is all about. It takes some creativity to do this well. However, it's also something that you practice as you keep playing the game, and you can always fall back on the dice when you can't think of anything special.

Creative solutions to challenges often depend on you



paying close attention to the details. You can utilize not only your character's abilities, but also his motivations and passions. For physical challenges, make good use of the location, any objects that might be within reach, any weak points that the opposition shows, and all of your applicable traits and resources. For social challenges, try to make use of the way the Chel'qhuri interact in general as well as the dynamics of the specific situation at hand, such as existing rivalries or the needs of those you try to persuade. For mental challenges, remember what drives your character onward, what they've already overcome in the past, and what the stakes are for the challenge as well as the whole adventure.

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Playing the Challenger

TRADING ROLES

This game is designed to have players trade off as Challenger and Hunter. Each should have Beast Hunter characters and provide adventures for the other. Given the limited budget for adventures, it should be easy to trade off whenever an adventure is concluded. There's a natural breaking point there. Not that you have to switch; if you prefer, you can run whole campaigns as the Challenger. But a part of your social contract with the friends you play with should be that everyone is okay with switching roles when the Challenger wants to be Hunter for a change. Given that this might require some preparation (though not necessarily, if you're good at improvising), you might want to discuss that before you get together to play.

THE CHALLENGER'S JOB

Your job as the Challenger is to provide tough challenges,

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but also plenty of opportunities, for the Hunter. It's not to defeat the Hunter, though you should play hard to keep the pressure and excitement level up. Seeing that you have a limited budget that the Hunter selected, you should use every bit of those resources to make his character's life difficult. Only then can the Hunter be truly challenged.

That said, if the Hunter has made a move that awed you, you should not continue a conflict only to inflict more damage. Remember, the main purpose of this game is to provide a playing field on which players can act through their characters and find creative solutions to challenges (and if you both put in the effort to weave it all into an interesting narrative while you're at it, even better). So if you're in the middle of a conflict or even a challenge negotiation, and the Hunter makes a move that blows you away, just say, "I give." Of course, don't forget to describe how that move plays out in the imagined events between the characters.

Similarly, be fair when you offer advantage points for maneuvers during conflicts. This might mean that you will more easily be beaten, but the idea is to reward the Hunter for coming up with great ideas. Your achievement comes whenever you create a challenge that draws the Hunter in. When he is engaged enough that he comes up with creative responses, you've already "won." That's really the purpose

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of the Challenger. Not to win by defeating the Hunter, but to push the Hunter on. Still, if you feel you need to play out every dice roll and every last adversity point in order to egg the Hunter on, don't feel restricted from doing just that. No one will blame you for using all the power at your disposal, which was given to you by the Hunter in the first place. Just do it in the spirit of good-natured fun.

And finally, make sure that the challenges remain interesting. If a challenge goes on for too long and becomes flat, it stops being fun. You can give even if the Hunter's action was not awe-inspiring, in order to get the game moving forward.

In conclusion, don't judge how well you're doing by whether you're beating the Hunter, but rather by how engaged and stimulated the Hunter is by the adventures and challenges you provide.

ADVERSITY POOL AND CHALLENGES

The chapter on Conflict Resolution tells you what you can buy for the Pool points given to you by the Hunter. Be aware of how many points you have and what that means for the length of the adventure. This, coupled with the "say yes or call a challenge" guideline, means that you have to be very flexible about spending your budget and creating challenges.

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It might happen that the Hunter wants something you had not foreseen, and your only way to avoid giving him his way is to call a challenge over it. That's very different from most roleplaying games, because most games allow the Game Master to get her way most of the time, where this game favors the Hunter having his way.

During an adventure, keep an eye on your Pool. The adventure ends when you run out of adversity points. If the Hunter wants, you can of course follow up with another adventure that's directly related, but the Hunter will have everything refreshed (trait preactivations and damage boxes cleared), and the goal of the previous adventure has been achieved.

CREATING CHALLENGES

There is an art to creating engaging challenges, and it's one that can be learned by following some simple guidelines. Here are a few that'll get you started:

GIVE THE HUNTER A LOT TO WORK WITH. It's not a cool challenge to put the Hunter's character in an empty room without any equipment and ask, "Now what?" That's the opposite of what you should do. When you present a challenge, make sure you mention many details of the environment, so that the Hunter can use them to address the

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challenge. This can include nearby objects, geographical features, people and other creatures in the area, relationships that exist between characters, other characters' desires that the Hunter can play to, and many other things, depending on the kind of challenge. For physical challenges, think of the stunts in books and movies that the protagonists pull off using nearby walls, hanging chandeliers, decorations, furniture, innocent bystanders, pits of lava, or torches. For social challenges, remember that the more named characters and relationships among them you provide (even simple ones such as "Hag the Jealous Nanny" or "Garrag had an affair with Ulma"), the more options the Hunter has to manipulate the social structure.

MAKE THE CHALLENGE SOMETHING THAT MATTERS. The challenge should engage the Hunter so that he is invested in the outcome of the challenge. Ultimately, both the character and the player need to care. Figure out what the other player is interested in and make the challenges all about that. Looking at the character is a good start: most people create characters that are tied to issues that they as players are interested in exploring, and the freely created traits and resources in this game offer lots of opportunities to do just that. But don't stop there. Talk to the player outside of the game, gauge what they like to play, and develop a good sense

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for the in-game stories they enjoy.

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WEAVE THE CHALLENGES INTO A NARRATIVE. This is connected to the previous point. You want your fellow player to care what happens. One good way to do that is to develop a story through play. Instead of just letting the character wander from one unconnected combat encounter to the next, try to connect the events. Have follow-up conflicts with previously defeated enemies, if they survived. Think about the consequences of one challenge, and how they could lead to the next, hopefully more intense one. The most captivating narrative is usually one that starts with small challenges and stakes and reaches its climax near the end. Using specific characters and their motivations is a great way to achieve this.

HAVE A LOOK AT THE HUNTER'S CHARACTER SHEET. The traits there, as well as the resources, should provide you with some ideas on how you can make interesting adventures and challenges for the Hunter. Because the Hunter can freely name the traits, they will tell you about the character's connections, upbringing and personality. Try to bring those things into the game. But don't always fall back on something threatening the character's family or tribe; think about how rivalries within the nadan or among tribes could involve the people who are connected with those traits.

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Consider favors that might be asked, authority that could be invoked, betrayals that could occur.

CHALLENGES ARE MEANT TO BE OVERCOME. They should be difficult, but not impossible. Do not use them as plot devices to force the character into a certain kind of situation, to have them rescued by an NPC, or to show off your own solution to your challenge. In most cases, the negotiation and resolution system should keep you from doing this anyway.

BE OPEN-MINDED ABOUT POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS. Do not present a challenge that you think has only one possible solution. If you can't think of at least a couple of ways that things could play out in the Beast Hunter's favor, the challenge is no good.

MANEUVER OFFERS

During Conflict Resolution, you will offer a certain number of advantage points to the Hunter, depending on several factors. The following are guidelines on how best to decide how many points you should offer for a particular maneuver.

First, look at the activated traits. If the Hunter has a big advantage in his offensive traits against your defensive ones, you should take that as the baseline for your overall offer. Otherwise the Hunter would be better off rolling the dice in

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any case. For example, if the Hunter has two offensive traits active at +5 each, and you have no defensive traits activated, your basic offer should start at 10 points.

Second, add or subtract a certain number of points for the quality of the maneuver. You take into account whether the Hunter used his traits and resources in the description, whether he is making good use of the environment, whether he's thinking up possible weak spots of the opposition that make sense, whether he brings in elements of the description you gave for the opposition and the situation, and whether the Hunter is really trying to come up with something cool. If you feel like the Hunter's maneuver sounds flat and that he's not really making an effort, don't add any points to your basic amount or even subtract some (but remember that you have to offer at least two points). If you think it's a solid proposal, add a few points. If you feel like the Hunter is displaying great skill and putting a lot of effort into the maneuver, add up to 8 points. And if you are wowed by how cool the maneuver is, add up to 12 or even more. Finally, if you feel like the Hunter has come up with a perfect maneuver that would put an immediate end to the opposition and that's very likely to succeed, you can just give. That should be a rare event, but it should be achievable.



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SECONDARY GOALS

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You can use Special Effects during a challenge to handle things that a player wants to achieve that she hadn't thought of before. However, as an advanced mechanism, you can use modified Special Effects rules to set up secondary goals from the outset of Conflict Resolution. This application of the Special Effects rule contributes to complex challenges with many variables and possible outcomes.

After buying your adversity, you can declare one or more secondary goals. Like Special Effects, those are achievements that either player can gain by spending the appropriate number of advantage points. They must be smaller in scope than the goal of the challenge itself. With normal Special Effects, the Hunter would tell you what the cost for a particular effect is. In this case, however, you suggest the cost (a value between 5 and 20), and the Hunter can agree or adjust it up or down by up to 5 points. If a secondary goal is not resolved by the time the challenge ends, the winner of the challenge determines the outcome.

For example, you could have a challenge in which the Beast Hunter is fighting off an attack on a village. The main goal is to drive off the attackers. However, you determine that the attackers' secondary goal will be to kidnap a couple

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of the village's children. You propose that this goal be valued at 10 advantage points. The Hunter changes the number to 13, making it harder for the Challenger to achieve it, but also for the Hunter to claim it as prevented during the challenge.

Secondary goals are best used in large, high-point challenges. If you have a challenge that's small in scope, it's best not to slow it down with additional goals. This advanced mechanism works best when it's reserved for the more important challenges.

AGGRESSIVE SCENE FRAMING

If you have only a short amount of time to play the game, or you just want to focus on the juicy parts, you should use a technique called "aggressive scene framing." In most traditional roleplaying games, the players would go through all kinds of trivial affairs such as buying items at a market or having casual conversation with a passerby, and most of the game would be one continuous stream of activity.

When you aggressively frame scenes, however, you adopt a more cinematic technique. Whenever a challenge is finished, you cut straight to the next one. You fill in what's happened in between, but you don't spend much time playing it out. Instead, you figure out, together with the Hunter, where the character's path would lead him next, and then you

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set up the next challenge and throw the Hunter straight into the middle of it.

In longer-running games this could be exhausting, and it takes some of the fun out of playing because the character has no chance to unwind or set up challenges for himself. But for more focused games, this technique can be used to get the most fun out of the shortest amount of time.

Here's an example. The Hunter has just finished a challenge during which his character made some new enemies. Instead of playing out the rest of the evening (when the character makes camp), the Challenger asks the Hunter if he wants to do something about these enemies. If he says no, the Challenger says, "The next morning, as you gather your belongings to continue your journey, you hear a sound from above, and suddenly notice movement in the branches." This leads straight into the next challenge. Alternatively, the Hunter might want to be proactive, and the Challenger would frame the next conflict scene based on what the Hunter was going to do.

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ADVENTURES

GOALS AND STAKES

Every adventure revolves around one big goal, which you will determine first. Unlike the individual stakes of challenges, the goal of an adventure is a large-scale achievement. Examples are “Rescue the chief’s son” or “Make peace between two warring tribes.” Of course, Beast Hunts always have slaying the beast as their goal, as well as gaining the associated tattoo. But you can also have great adventures that do not have anything to do with a beast.

Another way of thinking about the goal of an adventure is to think of it as the big dramatic question of a story. “Drive out the invading Saula Miur” could be one in which the Beast Hunter takes part in protecting Chel’qhur from an outside invasion. The question would be, “Will the Chel’qhuri fight off the invaders or will they be defeated?”

Individual challenges, on the other hand, have smaller stakes that contribute to achieving the big goal. The scope of the stakes is up to you, as long as they’re smaller than

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the overall goal. You could play “Defend the camp” as one challenge in the “Drive out the invading Saula Miur” adventure, or you could split it into smaller tasks such as “Fight off the first wave of cavalry” and “Hack your way to the leaders.” The Challenger needs to keep the Pool in mind when doing this. The more points are in the Pool, the more challenges the Challenger can afford to play out before the overall goal is achieved. Once the Challenger runs out of adversity points, the Hunter achieves the goal and the adventure is concluded.

Adventure goals need to be framed so that the adventure can still be won even if the Hunter loses a particular challenge. For example, if the Hunter loses the “Defend the camp” challenge, he can retreat to fight another battle, or be captured and fight his way out. “Drive out the invading Saula Miur” can still be won even if “Defend the camp” is lost.

POWERFUL ADVENTURE SITUATIONS

The best way to get a Hunter involved in the game is to create situations that speak to the player as well as to the character. In order to engage the player, you need to figure out what he is interested in. Is this player a fan of high-powered action? Does he enjoy dramatic relationships? What are his goals for the character aside from hunting beasts?

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Secondly, you need to involve the character in the situation. The best way to do this is to use other characters who are connected to the Beast Hunter. There should be several traits on the character sheet identifying the character's parents, tribe members, and enemies.

For socially-oriented adventures, it's a good idea to create a little "map" of all the characters who will be involved in an adventure, along with their relationships to each other. Write their names on a piece of paper and draw lines between them. Then write along the lines how these characters feel about each other. The stronger the feelings are, the more powerful the situation will be. Once you've set up a network of characters who passionately love, hate, envy, and despise each other, you can drop the Beast Hunter into their midst.

For example, if the adventure goal is to rescue a nadan member who was kidnapped by a rival tribe, you could create a relationship map of the rival tribe. There might be characters who support the kidnappers and come to their assistance. Others might be persuaded to help the Beast Hunter because of old grudges. But if the Beast Hunter injures or kills someone who has loved ones with the means to affect the Beast Hunter, there will be severe repercussions.

Now imagine doing the same thing for the Beast Hunter's own tribe, including his or her love interest(s), enemies,

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friends, ex-lovers, mentor, fellow Beast Hunters and family. You'll begin to see the potential of having a group of interrelated characters that you can use to stir up trouble and come up with challenges that are not only intriguing in themselves, but also because they matter to the character and therefore to the player.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

In case you don't know where to start with creating an adventure, here are some seeds that you can grow into your own full-blown adventures. Don't be afraid to make big decisions and develop your own ideas; no one will fault you for "not following canon."

RESCUE: A member of your nadan or kin was taken prisoner by a group of Tarrag who have taken him or her back to their stronghold. You must travel through the Tarragat mountains, infiltrate the stronghold, and free the prisoner.

OUTCAST: A tribal leader, Kamret, sends a message to the elders asking for a Beast Hunter to advise her. One of the warriors who disobeyed orders and went north to fight for the softlings has returned and asks for a place among the Kamret-nadan. Over the past few years, these fighters—heroes to the softlings, traitors in the eyes of their own people—have trickled back to Chel'qhur, only to be killed or driven off

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again. You are sent to advise the chieftain whether she should be merciful and grant exile. The matter would be a simple one but for one thing: the returned fighter is also a Beast Hunter.

SAULA MIUR: Scouts tell of softling outlaws attacking the nadans at the border of the Devoran Marsh. Your nadan is affected, and you set out to investigate the attacks and kill the outlaws. Behind these attacks, however, are soldiers of the Saula Miur, veterans of the dynastic army who retreated deep into the swamps. Depending on how far you go and how much of the truth you learn, discovering the Saula Miur can lead to a host of adventures that include gathering the different nadans, persuading them to overcome their differences, and facing the Saula Miur before they can grow too strong.

GLORY: Two days ago on the plains, you crossed paths with a softling runner bearing a message. Almost none of the Chel'qhuri can read the softlings' words, but you forced the runner to read you the letter before you killed him. The message told of rich goods traveling the southern road. The man in charge trusts the swiftness of his animals and the lightness of the cargo to get them through Chel'qhur safely. In a week's time, they will pass into the mountains and beneath the keans of the Tarrag. If you tell the chieftain your news, she will do what any nadan leader would do: gather a

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party of her favored warriors and capture the caravan herself. But if you can persuade your childhood friends to join you, you can defeat the softlings and bring back the trade goods, gaining glory among the nadans.

RENEGADES: Beast Hunter elders receive visions telling them of a band of their own, including an elder, who have forsaken the true way and are selling their services to the highest bidder. You are sent to hunt down one or more of these renegades to preserve the purity of the Beast Hunters. The task might get complicated if it turns out that one of them was someone you used to know.



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BEAST HUNTS

DUTY AND POWER

The beasts that the Hunters are after aren't just animals; they are magical creatures and powerful monsters that threaten whole communities, and their blood can be used for the ritual tattoos that grant the Beast Hunters special powers. It's the duty of any Beast Hunter to track down and slay these creatures, both to rid the world of them and to gather more power so the Beast Hunters can better protect the Chel'qhuri.

Beast Hunters are guided on Hunts by visions, dreams, and more subtle signs. Sometimes they see a beast in a dream and know where to head when morning comes. Other times a nadan might ask for help, and the Beast Hunter understands that this is a sign leading her to the beast she is meant to slay.

The tattoos gained from beasts provide special abilities to the Beast Hunters. These abilities might grant bonuses to traits and resources or have unique effects. In any case, they are always active (they do not need to be activated to be used in Conflict Resolution) and cannot be denied, even if they

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grant a bonus to a resource category. Veteran Beast Hunters are a force to be reckoned with and rank among the most powerful beings on the whole Berengad.

SPECIAL RULES

Beast Hunts work like regular adventures, with the exception of a few special rules that apply.

In order to embark on a particular Hunt, the Hunter must set the Limit and Pool at the minimums (or higher) for the particular beast she wants to hunt. For example, if you want to hunt down a hektratan, you must set the Limit at 5 or higher and grant the Challenger a Pool of no less than 20 points. You can set them higher, of course, which makes the Hunt harder.

The adventure does not end when the Pool runs dry. Instead, once that occurs, the Hunter is about to face the beast. Each beast has stats of its own that the Challenger does not need to pay for. Only if the Hunter manages to kill the beast does she earn the tattoo.

That final battle will be a conflict within a particular domain listed with the beast's stats. It's usually physical, but some beasts can only be defeated through a mental challenge. The fight has to be played out using the Conflict Resolution rules. The Challenger cannot give at any time. However,

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the Challenger can still reward the Hunter's creativity by offering large adversity point gains for offensive actions during Conflict Resolution.

Even if you use the optional rules for multiple players, a Beast Hunt can only be played by a single Hunter (the qhurym is the only exception to this rule). Beast Hunters would never go on a Beast Hunt together. It would be completely dishonorable, and the rituals of the tattoo only grant power to the single Beast Hunter who killed the beast. This is a hard rule and cannot be broken, no matter what your in-character justification is.

This is a fight to the bitter end. Incapacitating wounds do not end the fight, only fatal wounds do.

Keep in mind that only the domain of the final fight against the beast is determined. The adventure of the Hunt itself can and probably should use challenges from all three domains, include distractions and side plots on the way to the beast, and doesn't need to be any more straightforward than a regular adventure. The Example of Play provides you with some idea of how that can work.

THE BEASTS

A sample of the creatures that the Beast Hunters stalk are described on the following pages. They are listed with these

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attributes:

NAME AND REQUIREMENTS (LIMIT/POOL)

DESCRIPTION

STATS

SPECIAL ABILITIES

TATTOO POWER

The requirements show the minimum Limit and Pool needed to participate in this particular Beast Hunt. The description provides flavor text as well as clues on where the Hunter might find the creature. The stats are used for the final fight against the beast; they cannot be boosted with adversity points or otherwise altered (in fact, the fight will only occur once the Pool is empty).

Each beast has special abilities. Some have a lot of resilience or strength, for example, and those are incorporated into the stats. Some have unique powers that are listed beneath the stats.

The tattoo section describes the power that the Hunter will gain if he kills the beast, but should he lose, he will have to start the Hunt all over again. Tattoo powers have two aspects. Most of them grant some bonus or give a special ability that the Hunter can use during Conflict Resolution. They often also have descriptive aspects that the Hunter can weave into solutions and actions to aim for more advantage points from the Challenger.



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HEKTRATAN (5/20)

The hektratan is a cat-sized, agile reptile covered in dark green scales that seem to absorb light, making it hard to detect when it stands still. It has an elongated triangular head with shiny little eyes sunk into deep sockets. Its neck is long and thin, and in stressful situations the hektratan constantly whips its head around to survey its surroundings. This beast does not pose a severe threat to warriors, but as a highly aggressive carnivore, it has been known to attack small children with its thin claws and pointed teeth. The hektratan can cause enough bleeding to severely injure or even kill a child and often goes for the neck. It kills other animals and frequently takes over tunnel systems of animals its own size on the plains of Chel'qhur. Hektratans are the most common magical beasts and are often selected as the first trophy for Beast Hunters.



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HEKTRATAN (5/20)

INITIATIVE: P₃

TRAITS:

Swift and Mean: PO+2

Faster Than the Eye: PD+5

RESOURCES:

Claws and Fangs: PO+1

Scales: PD+1

DAMAGE BOXES: 1/1/1/1/1

SPECIAL ABILITIES: None.

TATTOO POWER: The Hunter receives a constant bonus of +2 on all physical defense rolls due to increased speed and agility. This bonus is always active.

PIFNIR (5/25)

Rodents the size of wolves, pifnir hunt in packs of three or four. They form such close bonds that the entire pack must be killed in order to reap the benefit of their power. It's also a mercy to kill all of them, as the pack will mourn their losses so deeply that they stop hunting and starve to death. Some believe that a pifnir pack is connected in spirit and can communicate mind to mind. They have bushy tails, unlike many other rodents. Powerful haunches help them leap onto their prey. Pifnir prefer to hunt deer or smaller animals but have been known to attack human children. They live in shallow burrows in wooded areas. Their habitat can be recognized by gnawed tree roots and low branches, as pifnir must wear down their sharp incisors to keep them from

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growing too long. Their active times are dawn and dusk, when their prey are most likely to be feeding. They hunt so voraciously that they must be thinned out to avoid starvation for the tribes.

PIFNIR (5/25)

INITIATIVE: P4

TRAITS:

Strength in Numbers: PO+3

Leaping Strike: PO+3

Cowards: PD+3

RESOURCES:

Sharp Teeth: PO+3

DAMAGE BOXES: 3/1/1/1/1

SPECIAL ABILITIES: None.

TATTOO POWER: The Beast Hunter gains a sense of empathy for other people and even animals. This lends a +2 bonus to all social offense rolls. This bonus is always active.

ARAMANTOS (5/30)

The aramantos is a thick-skinned magical mutation of a wild boar. It has massive, sharp tusks, small black eyes, and shaggy gray fur. It can mate with non-magical boars and has a small chance of producing another aramantos in a litter of regular boars. Aramanti are much more aggressive than regular boars. They not only defend their territory, but sometimes roam surrounding areas, attacking anything that doesn't flee from them.

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ARAMANTOS (5/30)

INITIATIVE: P2

TRAITS:

Furious Charge: PO+5

Feel No Pain: PO+5

To the Bitter End: PD+5

RESOURCES:

Big Tusks: PO+4

Thick Hide: PD+5

DAMAGE BOXES: 2/2/2/2/1

SPECIAL ABILITIES: The aramantos' Thick Hide defensive resource cannot be denied.

TATTOO POWER: The Beast Hunter gains resilience that allows him to withstand pain more easily. He gains a +2 physical defensive resource bonus that stacks with any physical defensive resource and cannot be denied.

VHARKATAS (8/35)

The vharkatas is a huge bird that lives in the Tarragat mountains. Its wingspan is twice as wide as a human is tall, and it possesses a sharp crooked beak as well as crescent-shaped talons. The vharkatas is carnivorous, and while it often feeds on animals, it also snatches up small children and carries them back to its nest. Hunting a vharkatas always involves climbing up steep rock walls to reach the nest, which the creature will defend to



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its death. The vhar-katas dives at intruders, snapping and clawing to make them fall down the mountainside. It has a magical ability to conjure up wind, which it uses for the same purpose.

VHARKATAS (8/35)

INITIATIVE: P5

TRAITS:

Talons from Above: PO+5

Fierce: PO+3

Evasive Flight: PD+5

Fighting on My Turf: PD+3

RESOURCES:

Beak and Talons: PO+3

Resilient: PD+5

DAMAGE BOXES: 3/2/1/1/1

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Force of the Winds. The Vhar-katas can conjure a strong gust of wind that is aimed at disorienting a victim and possibly pushing it down the mountain. It can only use it as an action twice in a fight, and each time its effect is to halve the Hunter's accumulated advantage points.

TATTOO POWER: This tattoo allows the Beast Hunter to be comfortable at any height, and it increases her sense of balance. The tattoo grants a constant bonus of +2 on all physical defense rolls that stacks with the bonus from the hektratan tattoo. This bonus is always active.

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ISPALAR (8/35)

This airborne monster's translucent, circular body is six to ten feet across. It has a gas bladder on top to keep it floating, while the flexible lower part of the body contracts into a bell shape and expands to let it "swim" through the air at surprising speeds, trailing its long, fibrous tentacles. The tentacles have venomous stingers that kill small animals or paralyze larger ones, while the ispalar uses its grip on its victim to draw itself down to earth. With the mouth on the underside of its body, it envelops its meal and remains on the ground to digest it. After feeding, the ispalar is buoyant enough to float up into the wind currents and rest, but as that gas is used up, the ispalar drifts lower and lower to the ground until it actively searches for prey. Ispalari often gather in groups and their translucent bodies are quite lovely with sunlight shining through them. When they are within range, they are not hard for humans to kill with an arrow or a well-thrown spear, but the reach of their tentacles can be unexpected and their tendency to group together makes them more formidable. It would be easy for flying predators to



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attack ispalari from above, but they don't make an appetizing meal, so humans are their only enemy. The best time to kill them is when they're on the ground digesting prey. They are most dangerous at night, when they can approach silently and their fine tentacles are nearly invisible. Lacking a brain, they rely on their sense of heat to find their next meal. Ispalar stings are incredibly painful and usually leave a distinctive round scar.

ISPALAR (8/35)

INITIATIVE: P4

TRAITS:

Lashing Tentacles: PO+6

Close in for the Kill: PO+4

Body out of Reach: PD+6

Floating Maneuvers: PD+4

RESOURCES:

Stinger Tentacles: PO+6

No Vitals: PD+6

DAMAGE BOXES: 6/3/2/1/1

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Entangle and Poison. As an offensive action, the Ispalar tries to entangle its victim with its stringers and apply contact poison. If the Ispalar's offensive roll is higher than the victim's defensive roll, the victim is poisoned and must use 2D6 instead of 2D10 for all rolls for the remainder of the fight.

TATTOO POWER: Sense Living. The Beast Hunter can sense the presence and general direction of living beings in her vicinity, even without seeing, smelling, or hearing them. This grants a +3 bonus to the Hunter's physical initiative.

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HAZUMA (10/45)

The hazuma is a highly dangerous predator. Built like an oversized panther, with long claws and an appetite for blood, hazumi pose a threat to the Chel'qhuri wherever they appear. They have jet black fur, and a row of triangular spikes protrude from their skin, starting on the head and running down the line of the spine. Luckily, they always hunt alone and are very rare. Little is known about their origins or how they produce young, as they usually dwell in Rosvaya west of Chel'qhur. The residents of the Berengad view this area as cursed. Some hazumi have migrated to the Tarragat mountains, where they hunt Tarrag and Chel'qhuri alike. Hazumi have unnatural healing powers and are very hard to kill.



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HAZUMA (10/45)

Initiative: P8

Traits:

Grace and Power: PO+8

Sense Vulnerability: PO+6

Superior Agility: PD+8

Avoid the Humans' Sharp Ends: PD+6

Resources:

Powerful Bite: PO+8

Retractable Claws: PO+5

Tough: PD+10

Damage Boxes: */*/2/2/2

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Regeneration. The hazuma ignores all light and medium wounds.

TATTOO POWER: Fast Healing. After each physical challenge, all of the Hunter's light physical damage boxes are cleared.

THISTRA (10/45)

This six-legged parasite only inhabits human hosts.

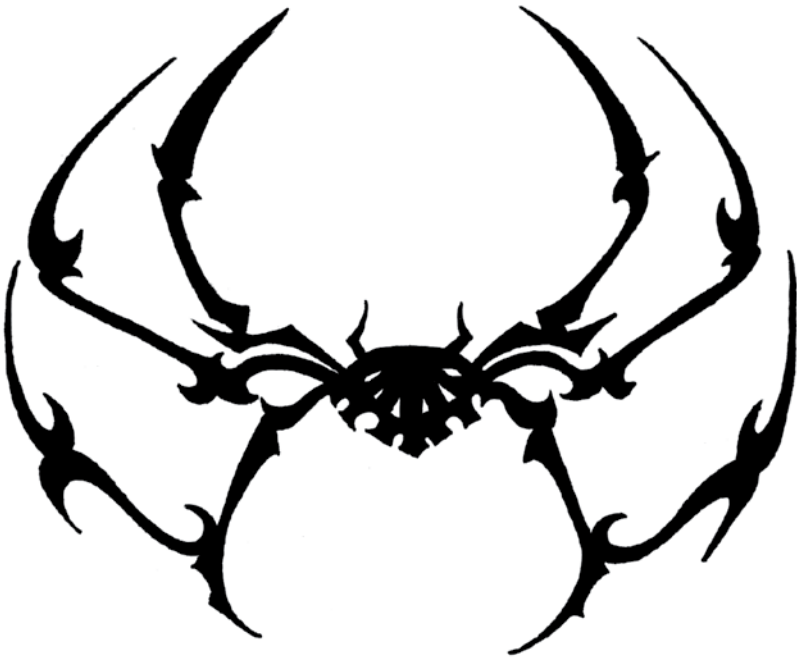
Thistrai are rare but may show up anywhere in the southern Berengad. Young thistrai look like tiny spiders. They enter the host through the ear canal and grow to embrace the brain. At full size they look like leggy crabs with small bodies positioned at the back of the host's skull. If the host is a child at the time of joining, the skull may have a telltale bump at the back caused by the growing thistra. Eventually the parasite will lay its eggs behind the brain and the developing egg sac will pressure the brain to the point that the human

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runs mad. When the host is killed, the parasite dies.

It is not easy to kill a human inhabited by a thistra, because the parasite lends its host the power to see two or three seconds into the future, and thus avoid most dangers. It also makes the host stronger and faster than normal humans. Thistrai must be handled very carefully, as their long, delicate legs make them extremely fragile when they are full-grown. They are easily broken or crushed and they don't contain much blood to start with. After killing the host body, a Beast Hunter carefully conveys the head containing the thistra's corpse to an elder so that the elder can extract the juices to make a tattoo.

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THISTRA (10/45)

INITIATIVE: P20

TRAITS:

Anticipate Every Step: PO+14

Supernatural Strength: PO+7

I Know Where You Will Strike: PD+14

Supernatural Agility: PD+7

RESOURCES:

Powerful Blows: PO+7

Painless Host: PD+7

DAMAGE BOXES: 4/3/2/1/1

SPECIAL ABILITIES: The Sight. The thistra enables its host to see a few seconds into the most likely future. This allows the host to predict attacks and act accordingly. The thistra can reroll every non-damage roll once. If the reroll turns out worse than the first roll, the vision was off and the reroll still counts.

TATTOO POWER: The Sight. Once during any physical challenge, the Hunter can get a glimpse of the immediate future and reroll his dice (except for damage rolls). Beast Hunters with this tattoo tend to be somewhat absent-minded and sometimes outright confused, as unwanted flashes of insight into the future are disorienting and distracting.

SUBRAK (10/50)

The subrak is a kind of bear that lives in caves deep in the woods of Chel'qhur.

Unlike most bears, it never hibernates and is always on the



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lookout for food. When it stands up on its hind legs, it towers high over any human, and its powerful build is surpassed by few creatures on the Berengad. The Chel'qhuri consider the killing of a subrak an occasion for a feast, as the carcass can often feed a whole nadan at once. Their fangs and claws make for popular adornments. However, bringing down a subrak is a difficult feat, given the bear's strength, toughness, and aggressive nature. Subrak fall into a rage during combat that makes them even more dangerous.

SUBRAK (10/50)

INITIATIVE: P8

TRAITS:

Hulking Brute: PO+10

Furious: PO+10

Sense Fear: PO+5

Large Target: PD+5

Intimidating: PD+5

RESOURCES:

Massive Claws: PO+12

Jaws: PO+8

Furry Hide: PD+8

Strong Build: PD+4

DAMAGE BOXES: 5/4/3/2/1

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Rage. Always roll 3D10 for offensive maneuvers.

TATTOO POWER: Rage. Once during every physical conflict, the Hunter can roll 3D10 for an offensive maneuver. Beast Hunters with this tattoo tend to develop a horrible temper.

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KHEPHAST (12/60)

Armed with a long and extremely sharp tail as well as two oversized talons, this winged reptilian monster is a fearsome enemy. It dwells in dark caves and abandoned tunnels, venturing out at night to find its prey with eerie precision despite the darkness. Thick gray skin covers its elongated body. The khephast can carry away full-grown humans, and the spike at the end of its long tail is powerful enough to impale its victim in mid-air (though it usually prefers to eat its prey alive once it returns to its nest). The khephast can give an ear-piercing shriek that confuses or even paralyzes its victims, especially in close quarters. Most khephasti live in Rosvaya and the Tarragat mountains.

KHEPHAST (12/60)

INITIATIVE: P10

TRAITS:

Flyby Attack: PO+12

Killer Instinct: PO+6

Aerial Maneuvering: PD+16

Leathery Skin: PD+6

RESOURCES:

Spiked Tail: PO+10

Talons: PO+5

Scales: PD+12

Leathery Skin: PD+5

DAMAGE BOXES: 5/4/3/2/1

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SPECIAL ABILITIES: **Scream.** Once during a fight, the khephast can unleash an ear-piercing scream. This paralyzes its opponent and allows the khephast to skip the opponent's turn and take two other actions.

TATTOO POWER: **Eyes of the khephast.** The Beast Hunter has limited night vision and can see sharply over long distances. In addition, he can follow quick movement better. The tattoo grants a +5 bonus to Deny Resource and Recover Resource rolls, whether the Beast Hunter is taking the action or defending against it.

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MYAQHIT (12/60)

This mosquito-like insect the size of a human's head stuns its victims by projecting feelings of doom and apathy. The victim becomes convinced that there is no escape because all his efforts are pointless, and just gives up. The myaqhit has heat-sensing vision to detect areas of greatest bloodflow, and stabs its feeding tube into the human to draw out the lifeblood. Found in the Devoran Marsh between Chel'qhur and Illiaz, this is not a common creature but is very dangerous for its size. The Beast Hunter must be careful that she is getting the myaqhit's blood, rather than the blood of its most recent victim. It's a mistake that young Hunters sometimes make.

MYAQHIT (12/60)

INITIATIVE: M10

TRAITS:

Force of Mind: MO+12

I Know Your Fears: MO+5

Hidden Behind Hallucinations: MD+12

Adaptive: MD+5

RESOURCES:

Sting of Doubt: MO+10

Your Worries: MO+5

Impenetrable Mind: MD+10

Mental Resilience: MD+5

DAMAGE BOXES: 5/4/3/2/1

SPECIAL ABILITIES: None.

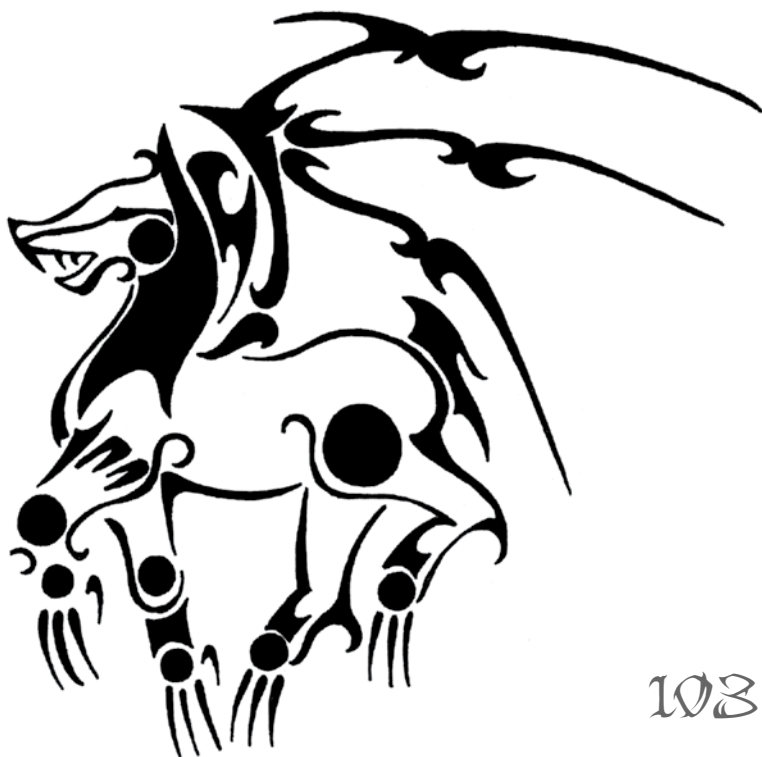
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TATTOO POWER: Mental Resilience. The Hunter, having conquered his fears, is resistant to mental anguish. This tattoo grants a mental defensive resource bonus of +5, which stacks with any mental defensive resource. This also leads to a tendency toward increased risk-taking.

BHAKRA (15/65)

Living on the plains where Rosvaya borders Jossud, these carnivorous winged equines often feed on the Jos herds of lessyth. Their drab dun coats are thick and soft to give them warmth at altitude, and they are sometimes hunted for their hides. They have short, brushlike manes and their heads resemble horses' heads except that the jaw and snout are more

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like a dog's, with teeth sharp enough to tear flesh. Their wingspan lends them grace, and they take flight by springing upward with their strong legs. Unlike horses, they have four toes with sharp gripping claws, allowing them to attack from the air, though lessyth horns can be a strong deterrent. The bhakrai live in small groups with a stallion and several mares. Both sexes hunt, singly or in groups, and they are known to prey on humans.

BHAKRA (15/65)

Initiative: P12

Traits:

Fierce and Strong: PO+15

Flight: PO+10

Swift: PO+5

Leaping and Flying: PD+15

Out of Reach: PD+5

Hoof Block: PD+5

Resources:

Hooves: PO+15

Jaws: PO+12

Charge: PO+8

Powerful Build: PD+10

Strong Bones: PD+5

Damage Boxes: 6/5/4/3/1

SPECIAL ABILITIES: None.

TATTOO POWER: The tattoo of the bhakra allows the Beast Hunter to jump twice as high and far as normal. It also allows the Beast Hunter to fall from heights with less risk of serious injury. Further, it grants a bonus of +4 to physical offensive rolls. This bonus is always active.

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ORIGAR (15/75)

Hundreds of years ago, before the Karakaan invaded the Berengad, the people of Rosvaya were rich and powerful. They harnessed the streams of magic and built beautiful cities full of precious things. In order to protect their cities from Chel'qhuri raids and other invasions,

they created guardians. One of these guardian creatures is the origar. It is a giant with four arms, ten times as strong as any human and loyal to a fault. Many of them were tough enough to survive the Karakaan's onslaught that destroyed most of Rosvaya. To this day, origari guard the ruins of their home, roaming among the debris and killing any intruders, their centuries-old weapons and armor rusted and dirty but still working. Some believe that the presence of the origari is a sign that deep inside Rosvaya, maybe far beneath the surface, a group of Rosvayans survives to this day, hidden from the rest of the Berengad.



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ORIGAR (15/75)

INITIATIVE: P6

TRAITS:

Powerful Arms: PO+15

More Powerful Arms: PO+15

Humans Are Like Flies: PO+5

Hard to Reach: PD+10

Block: PD+5

Ancient Battle Training: PD+5

RESOURCES:

Upper Arms: PO+20

Lower Arms: PO+20

Stomping Legs: PO+10

Ancient Armor: PD+15

Massive Build: PD+5

DAMAGE BOXES: 6/6/5/4/2

SPECIAL ABILITIES: None.

TATTOO POWER: Origar's Strength. This tattoo lends the Beast Hunter superhuman strength and grants a +5 bonus to physical damage rolls that stacks with any physical offensive resource.

AZANIT (15/75)

Standing as tall at the shoulder as a horse, this reptile looks like a throwback to primeval times. An azanit can run up to thirty miles per hour on its splayed, clawed feet. Its forelegs are slightly longer than its hind legs, so it always appears to be on the verge of rearing up. When angered or threatened, the azanit stiffens its mane of fleshy tendrils into spikes that make it look even more menacing. The creature

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spits venom from glands at either side of its throat. This poison is acidic and very painful. Some older Beast Hunters have a spattered pattern of scars on their faces from an encounter with an azanit.

These reptiles will eat carrion but they prefer live prey, including livestock, wild creatures such as pifnir, and humans. Their jaws are lined with vicious teeth but the worst danger is from their saliva. It is so full of bacteria that even shallow bites fester and cause death. Azani can be found throughout Rosvaya in dry, rocky terrain, where they lay their eggs twice a year in sandy depressions. Many generations ago, when the Chel'qhuri first crossed the mountains into the Berengad, they tried to tame these terrible lizards to use in war, but the experiment was a disaster. Azani were impossible to control and would attack their handlers as readily as the enemy.



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AZANIT (15/75)

INITIATIVE: P12

TRAITS:

Unstoppable Charge: PO+20

I'm Quicker Than I Look: PO+10

Always Cover Weak Spots: PD+15

Never Stand Still: PD+5

RESOURCES:

Poisonous Bite: PO+15

Raking Claws: PO+10

Tail: PO+5

Scaly Hide: PD+22

Skin Beneath: PD+10

DAMAGE BOXES: 5/4/3/2/1

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Spit Venom. Once per fight, the azanit can spit a burst of poison that burns through skin. The azanit automatically gains 2D10 advantage points. If it gains 12 or more points, it immediately makes a free Strike using the Venom Burst: PO+20 resource. That resource cannot be used in any other way.

TATTOO POWER: The Beast Hunter becomes immune to poison. She will not be affected by the poison effects of ispalari or utheqhi. Beast Hunters with this tattoo tend to develop a preference for warm places and dislike the cold.

REGHWOR (20/85)

Few creatures are as vile as the reghwor. An unintended creation of the magical inferno in the Berengad's south, the reghwor is a monster of pure destructive power. Its massive body, which dwarfs even that of a subrak, shows random

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patches of black fur on pale white skin. It is hunched over so much that when it walks, its head, which consists mainly of a huge jaw with hundreds of teeth as well as four glowering eyes, sways back and forth only inches above the ground. It can rise up on its hind legs to impress a victim, yet barely bothers to do so. The reghvor's arms are unnaturally long, allowing it to reach far ahead and tear any creature caught between the dozen foot-long claws to pieces. The reghvor is unable to climb, but it can bring down all but the sturdiest of trees. Its two stunted legs struggle to gain much speed,

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and on level ground a victim might have a chance to escape. However, in its natural habitat, which consists of thick forests, the reghwor has the advantage. Luckily, very few of these creatures still exist, and it is believed that they are unable to procreate.

REGHWOR (20/85)

INITIATIVE: P12

TRAITS:

Destroy Everything in Its Path: PO+25

Rend, Bite, Grab, Smash: PO+10

Knows No Fatigue: PO+5

Unapproachable: PD+15

No Vulnerable Spots: PD+10

RESOURCES:

Jaws of Terror: PO+25

Rending Claws: PO+20

Charge: PO+10

Skin of Rock: PD+20

Thick Flesh Beneath: PD+5

DAMAGE BOXES: 6/6/6/4/2

SPECIAL ABILITIES: None.

TATTOO POWER: Aura of Intimidation. The Beast Hunter carries with him the powerful aura of destruction of the reghwor. This intimidates people and animals around the Beast Hunter and grants a +3 bonus to social and mental damage rolls that stacks with any social and mental offensive resources. Beast Hunters with this tattoo tend to feel a constant lust for violence and blood.

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VEBLUSS (20/85)

A few of these deadly creatures dwell in the deepest pools of the Devoran Marsh. Their tentacles lash out to trap any prey that ventures close enough. No one now alive has seen their whole shape, but there is a generations-old legend that Kelrik One-Eye tricked a vebluss into grabbing a cart pulled by a team of eight lessyth, then lashed the beasts so furiously that they dragged the vebluss from the depths. According to Beast Hunter lore, the creature has a bulbous body and ten suckered arms, but no one has been able to count the tentacles accurately before being dragged under the stinking surface of the swamp. The suckers at the ends of the tentacles are the

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diameter of a human hand and lined with razor-sharp teeth. No living Beast Hunter can claim to have killed a vebluss but several have hacked off a tentacle or two. They bear the tattoo to back up their claim.

VEBLUSS (20/85)

INITIATIVE: P20

TRAITS:

Surprise from the Deep: PO+10

Tentacle Swipe: PO+10

Grab and Drown: PO+10

Multiple Tentacles: PO+10

Hidden Beneath: PD+30

RESOURCES:

Tentacle: PO+20

Tentacle: PO+20

Tentacle: PO+20

Tentacle: PO+20

Tentacle: PO+20

Tentacle: PO+20

Tentacle: PO+20

Tentacle: PO+20

Tentacle: PO+20

Tentacle: PO+20

Rubbery Flesh: PD+20

DAMAGE BOXES: 6/5/4/3/2

SPECIAL ABILITIES: The Rubbery Flesh resource cannot be denied.

TATTOO POWER: Any Beast Hunter with this tattoo is capable of surviving underwater without the need for air. Furthermore, the Hunter gains a fatal social damage box due to the reputation of cutting off a vebluss tentacle and making it back alive.

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HOCH'QHAR (15/100)

There are many legends surrounding Hoch'qhar, the immortal spirit who guides all Beast Hunters through prophetic visions and dreams. Elders are those who have a special connection with the great spirit because they sought it out and gained its favor in an unusual Beast Hunt. Seeking Hoch'qhar is a pilgrimage for Beast Hunters. Only when they are ready to make a long journey and face their own fears and weaknesses can they embark on it. They will never see Hoch'qhar, nor find any trace of its existence, yet they will know when they have reached it. At the pinnacle of the pilgrimage, which can lead Beast Hunters into faraway lands and through many perils that test their resolve, they will step into a vision. They might find their surroundings slowly changing as they walk, or they might slip into it from a dream, or they may turn a corner and suddenly find themselves in a different place. Here, Hoch'qhar confronts the Beast Hunter with intimate doubts, mistakes and flaws. Enemies of the past might appear, or lost loved ones. No matter what the vision shows, in order to overcome the trial, the Beast Hunter must not only be mentally strong, but also compassionate. He must explore his own fears, forgive his enemies, and show appreciation for everything that his family and his tribe have done for him. Only if the

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Beast Hunter can fulfill these difficult tests does he gain the favor of Hoch'qhar. After the vision fades or disappears, the Beast Hunter will find that he already possesses a new tattoo. Hoch'qhar is the founder of the Beast Hunters, and only through it can a Beast Hunter become an elder who can inscribe tattoos on other Beast Hunters.

HOCH'QHAR (15/100)

INITIATIVE: M15

TRAITS:

Your Soul Laid Bare: MO+20

No Secrets: MO+5

Vivid Visions: MD+25

RESOURCES:

Fears: MO+15

Persistence: MD+15

DAMAGE BOXES: 5/4/3/2/1

TATTOO POWER: The Beast Hunter can now inscribe tattoos on other Beast Hunters who successfully complete a Hunt. He is officially an elder of the Beast Hunters. The tattoo also grants the Beast Hunter strong spiritual resilience: the Hunter gains a fatal mental damage box. The tattoo that the Beast Hunter earns is unique in style; no two are the same.

CHARN (20/90)

The charn is one of the most volatile monsters on the face of the Berengad. It is a constantly shifting and changing beast. The magic that warped many creatures is so powerful

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within the Charn that it cannot keep one form for more than a few moments. As such, the creature cannot hold a thought aside from the one driving instinct that all creatures have in common: hunger. It eats anything in its path, constantly developing different mouths, snouts, and other orifices that suck in and consume living matter. Fighting a charn is intensely difficult, but stopping these monsters is one of the Beast Hunters' most pressing duties.

CHARN (20/90)

INITIATIVE: P10

TRAITS:

Grow Weapons as Needed: PO+25

Ravenous: PO+10

Shifting Target: PD+20

Absorb Blows: PD+10

RESOURCES:

A Hundred Teeth and Claws: PO+30

Uncountable Parts: PD+25

DAMAGE BOXES: 1/3/5/6/2

SPECIAL ABILITIES: The charn's resources cannot be denied.

TATTOO POWER: Limited Morphing Ability. The Beast Hunter has the ability to change her body in small ways, such as lengthening fingers, stretching thin, or shrinking a bit. In addition, once during each adventure, the Hunter can heal two medium or one heavy physical damage box as she uses the morphing ability to set bones and muscles back into place. Beast Hunters with this tattoo develop a hunger that is difficult to fully satisfy.

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LAITHURA (20/100)

This slinky tunnel-dweller is native to the catacombs beneath Rosvayan ruins but since the magical fury that destroyed that realm, laithura have spread into cave systems elsewhere in the Berengad. The laithura has a segmented, muscular body that allows it to run on its many pincered legs, or to rear upright and lunge like a snake to attack a human.



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Its head has no features other than a round mouth ringed by rows of teeth. The laithura feeds by latching onto its victim's face and sucking out his vitality. The creature prefers cold clammy places, and some Beast Hunters claim that it exudes cold that reveals it is nearby. The soft clicking of its pincers over stone is another clue. Laithura are incredibly resistant to damage and tough to kill, and they use the vitality that they suck out of their victims to heal themselves.

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LAITHURA (20/100)

INITIATIVE: P20

TRAITS:

Flurry of Pincers: PO+30

Grab for the Bite: PO+5

Incredibly Fast: PD+25

Shifting Stances: PD+5

RESOURCES:

Mouth of Horror: PO+30

Tough Hull: PD+30

Resilient: PD+25

DAMAGE BOXES: 12/10/8/5/2

SPECIAL ABILITIES: As long as the Mouth of Horror is not denied, any damage that the laithura inflicts heals an equal or lower level of damage on itself.

TATTOO POWER: Unnatural Vitality. The Beast Hunter becomes resistant to most diseases and gains a fatal physical damage box.

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UTHEQHA (25/125)

The utheqhi are among the most terrible beasts that Beast Hunters will come across. They have an elongated body with a spiked tail, wings that can carry them over short distances, and a reptilian head with long rows of teeth. They have two powerful legs but no arms. Very few utheqhi are still said to exist, and they can only be found deep in the Tarragat mountains or hidden among the ruins of Rosvaya. Utheqhi live in solitude for long periods of time, almost in hibernation. Every now and then, they go on a rampage

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and collect dozens of victims, including large animals and humans, and bring them back to their lair for future meals. Once the utheqha's appetite is satisfied, it returns to solitude. The utheqha is the most dangerous foe that a Hunter must face on her own, and earning an utheqha tattoo is a rare event that triggers a week-long ritual of celebration among the Beast Hunters. A hallucinogenic liquor brewed from the venom in the utheqha's tail helps the celebration along.

UTHEQHA (25/125)

INITIATIVE: P20

TRAITS:

Earth-Shattering Strength: PO+35

Experienced Killer: PO+10

Huge and Tough: PD+30

Limited Flight: PD+10

RESOURCES:

Massive Tail: PO+40

Footlong Teeth: PO+30

Large Scales: PD+35

Strong Stature: PD+20

DAMAGE BOXES: 15/10/8/6/3

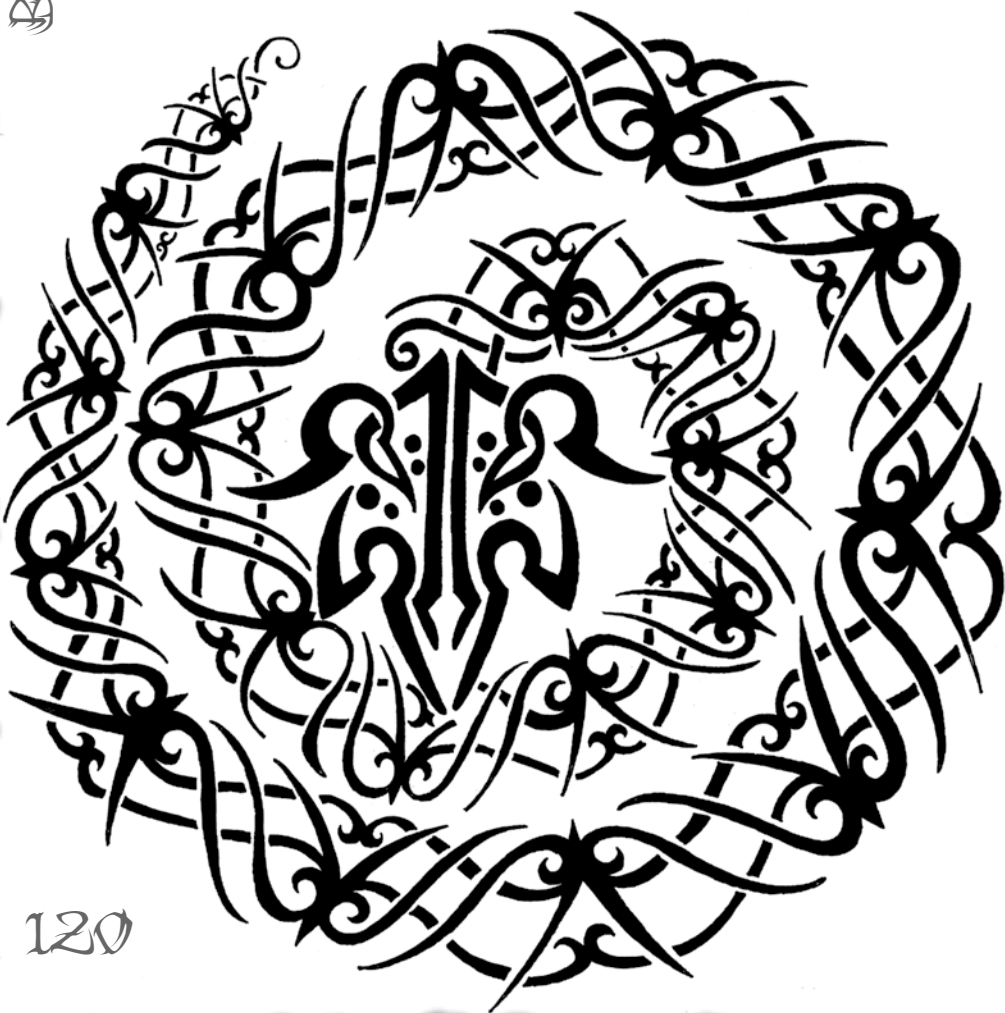
SPECIAL ABILITIES: Poison. Every time the utheqha inflicts damage, its poison inflicts an additional box of medium damage.

TATTOO POWER: The Beast Hunter gains a fatal damage box in each domain (mental, physical, and social). Beast Hunters with this tattoo tend to develop contempt for other humans, especially non-Beast Hunters, and become increasingly solitary.

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QHURYM (10/250)

Not a single living Chel'qhuri has seen a qhuryim with her own eyes, but tales of the gigantic monster are among the oldest stories told. Nobody knows how many qhuryim have lived, but it is said that only three of them have been killed since the dawning of the world. Some say that it's the same monster, coming back from death after it was slain. Qhuryim



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live underground, farther down than any Chel'qhuri could ever go, where the darkness melts with the earth and all life ends.

According to legends, a qhurym surfaces to feast on the souls of the creatures that walk the earth. It swallows them down and sends their spirits through its body into the darkness below, where they are held captive in numb horror for as long as the qhurym lives. Slaying a qhurym, therefore, is more than a gift to the living: it liberates all of the monster's prior victims and sets the world right again. Some elders say that Hoch'qhar is the nemesis of the qhurym and guides the Beast Hunters to their power for the sole purpose of preparing them to face this enemy.

The qhurym is the only beast that is hunted by a group of Beast Hunters instead of just one. All of the optional rules for multiple Hunters apply, including the multiplication of the Limit. If successful, all Hunters who at least made it to the final battle with the qhurym itself gain the tattoo. Hunters who suffer fatal damage in this battle cannot sacrifice themselves to kill the qhurym.

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QHURYM (10/250)

INITIATIVE: P50

TRAITS:

I Swallow the World: PO+75

Strength Beyond Anything: PO+10

Long Reach: PO+10

Large as a Mountain: PD+40

Indomitable: PD+10

Hard to Reach: PD+10

RESOURCES:

Gaping Maw: PO+50

Twisted Horns: PO+35

Wurm Body: PO+30

Massive Scales: PD+50

Impenetrable Skin: PD+35

DAMAGE BOXES: 50/25/20/15/10

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Aura of Death. Every round during the qhurym's turn, all Hunters automatically take one box of light physical damage. In addition, the Wurm Body and Impenetrable Skin resources cannot be denied.

TATTOO POWER: This ultimate tattoo imbues the Beast Hunter with a power unknown to any other mortal. The Beast Hunter's abilities expand exponentially. Any and all rolls that the Hunter makes receive a +10 bonus.

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MULTIPLAYER GAMES

OVERVIEW

You can play adventures in this game with more than one Hunter, except Beast Hunts, which are always individual (with the exception of the qhurym). However, having more than one Hunter introduces a few complications. While the rules can easily accommodate this, they need to be tweaked and clarified in some ways, which are described below.

In addition, handling challenges becomes a bit trickier. First, the Challenger can run challenges with just one of the Hunters or with several or all of them, depending on the events in the game. Second, you need to take the salute very seriously and recognize that you are leaving your real life relationships behind when you play the game. That means the Challenger is honor-bound to avoid favoritism. It would be detrimental to the game if the Challenger offered more advantage points to a close friend or a person she is involved with, for example. And while this might not consciously happen, players who are very close in everyday life will think

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along similar lines and tend to give each other the benefit of the doubt. The Challenger needs to actively counter this subtle favoritism by giving everyone the same chance for input and by making the Challenger's basis for advantage point offers very clear.

CHALLENGES

All Hunters must agree on a basic Limit and on one Pool. The Pool should be rather large or the adventure will be short and not challenging.

The Hunters do not have to stick together and may face challenges individually, in which case they are handled as usual. If multiple Hunters participate in the same challenge, the Limit for that challenge is added up accordingly. If the basic Limit is 10 and three Hunters participate in the same challenge, the Challenger can buy adversity up to a base cost of 30 points. The Challenger always needs to buy adversity in multiples of the number of Hunters involved, so that the reward points can be distributed evenly at the conclusion of the challenge.

The Challenger may split the expenditure for a multiplayer challenge into two or more parts, which are called threats. For every Hunter above one, an additional threat can be established. That means three Hunters might

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face one, two, or three threats. Each threat is bought separately, but the total base expenditure may not exceed the Limit as multiplied by the total number of Hunters involved.

Each threat has its own damage boxes, traits, resources, and an initiative rating. In effect, this gives the Challenger two or more actions per round, one for each threat, as if the Challenger were controlling multiple characters. Once the Hunters inflict incapacitating or fatal damage on one of the threats, it is defeated and cannot act anymore, but the challenge is only won once all threats are defeated. If the Hunters give after defeating some but not all of the threats, they gain the appropriate reward points and the Challenger expends points from the Pool only for those threats that were defeated.

On the Challenger's turn, any one threat's action must be directed against only one of the Hunters. Advantage points are gathered separately per threat against each Hunter and cannot be transferred among the different threats, just as a Hunter gathers advantage points against one particular threat per action. It often works best to establish fewer threats than there are Hunters involved, in order to keep the game flow manageable.

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Multiplayer Games

MULTIPLAYER ACTIONS

Hunters can use an action to transfer advantage points from one player to another. However, they must state how they work together as a team. If the Challenger is persuaded by the description, it works. If not, make an opposed roll without any modifiers. The Hunter needs to roll higher than the Challenger on the 2D10, which means there's a greater than 50% chance that the action is wasted (in this case, the points simply remain with the initial player).

Hunters can also aid one another. When one Hunter proposes an action, another Hunter can use up their next action prematurely to assist the first Hunter. This allows the first Hunter to gain the bonus of *one* of the second Hunter's active traits for the action. Only two Hunters can work together in this way on any one action.

HUNTER VERSUS HUNTER

There can only be a conflict with another Hunter if the two players salute in. If you do not want inter-character conflicts at all, do not salute each other, only the Challenger. Conflicts between Hunters will make it less likely that the Hunters succeed in the adventure, because they use up resources and accumulate damage without adversity pool

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expenditure by the Challenger. That's only an issue if one Hunter starts bullying others by threatening to take them into a challenge conflict. In those cases, or any others where the Hunters have trouble working things out, remember to salute out for a break to discuss the issue at hand.

SUPPORTING HUNTERS

If a Hunter receives a fatal wound in a multiplayer game, the adventure is not quite over for that player. Instead of losing the adventure and dropping out, a player whose character takes fatal damage becomes a supporting Hunter. Contrary to single player games, in a multiplayer game the Hunter cannot sacrifice himself to win the adventure unless that option is specifically adopted prior to starting the game by every player, including the Challenger, agreeing to it (and it cannot be used at all when fighting a qhurym).

The supporting Hunter can still participate in the game, but can no longer make any rolls. Instead, the supporting Hunter can assist other Hunters by adding his character's actions to other players' maneuver descriptions. This can lead to the Challenger offering more advantage points for offensive maneuvers, for example, but it has no guaranteed numerical advantage. Supporting Hunters earn no reward points for completed challenges, but if the group wins an

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adventure with the optional showdown rule, the supporting Hunter receives the bonus reward as well. Further, if you are using the optional karma rules, the supporting Hunter is allowed to give any remaining karma to another Hunter when that player is about to take a Strike action (but the supporting Hunter cannot earn any new karma).



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Optional Rules

KARMA

Sometimes, a Hunter will first inflict some damage during a challenge and then finish it with incapacitating or fatal damage. In a sense, even though the prior damage had a chance to make a difference, in the end it did not. This can be especially frustrating in multiplayer games, where several characters inflict low damage and a different character simply wins the challenge with incapacitating or fatal damage regardless of the contributions of the other Hunters.

If this bothers you, you can use this optional rule to value those “wasted” contributions. Be aware that it makes the game a bit less challenging.

Every time you finish a challenge, any Hunter who inflicted light, medium, or heavy damage during the challenge receives a karma point. In terms of game events, the spirits reward the tribal warrior with good luck for the valiant effort extended in the recent challenge. During any future challenge, whether it is of the same domain that earned

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the karma or not, the Hunter can expend one karma point during a Strike action to add 4 points to the chart for damage dice. You could spend 2 advantage points and a karma point to gain 1D6 of damage, 16 advantage points and one karma point to gain 2D10, and so on. You can only use one point at a time and can never store up more than 3 karma points.

SHOWDOWN

This is our favorite optional rule, and we strongly recommend using it outside of Beast Hunts. We don't suggest using this rule with Beast Hunts because facing the beast is the natural climax of the adventure.

When using this optional rule, if doing so uses up the remaining points in the Pool, the Challenger can double the Limit for the final challenge. In other words, once the Pool gets down to twice the Limit or less (for example, 12 for a Limit of 6), the Challenger can use all of those points at once. This makes for good final challenges that pack an additional punch and really feel like the climax of the adventure.

In order to compensate the Hunter for the difficulty that this option introduces, the Hunter receives bonus reward points in the amount of the original Limit at the successful conclusion of the adventure. For example, if the adventure

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had a Limit of 6 and the players agreed beforehand that the Showdown rule would be used, the Hunter would receive 6 additional reward points when he successfully finishes the adventure.

This rule cannot be used if you select a Limit that's larger than a quarter of the starting Pool.

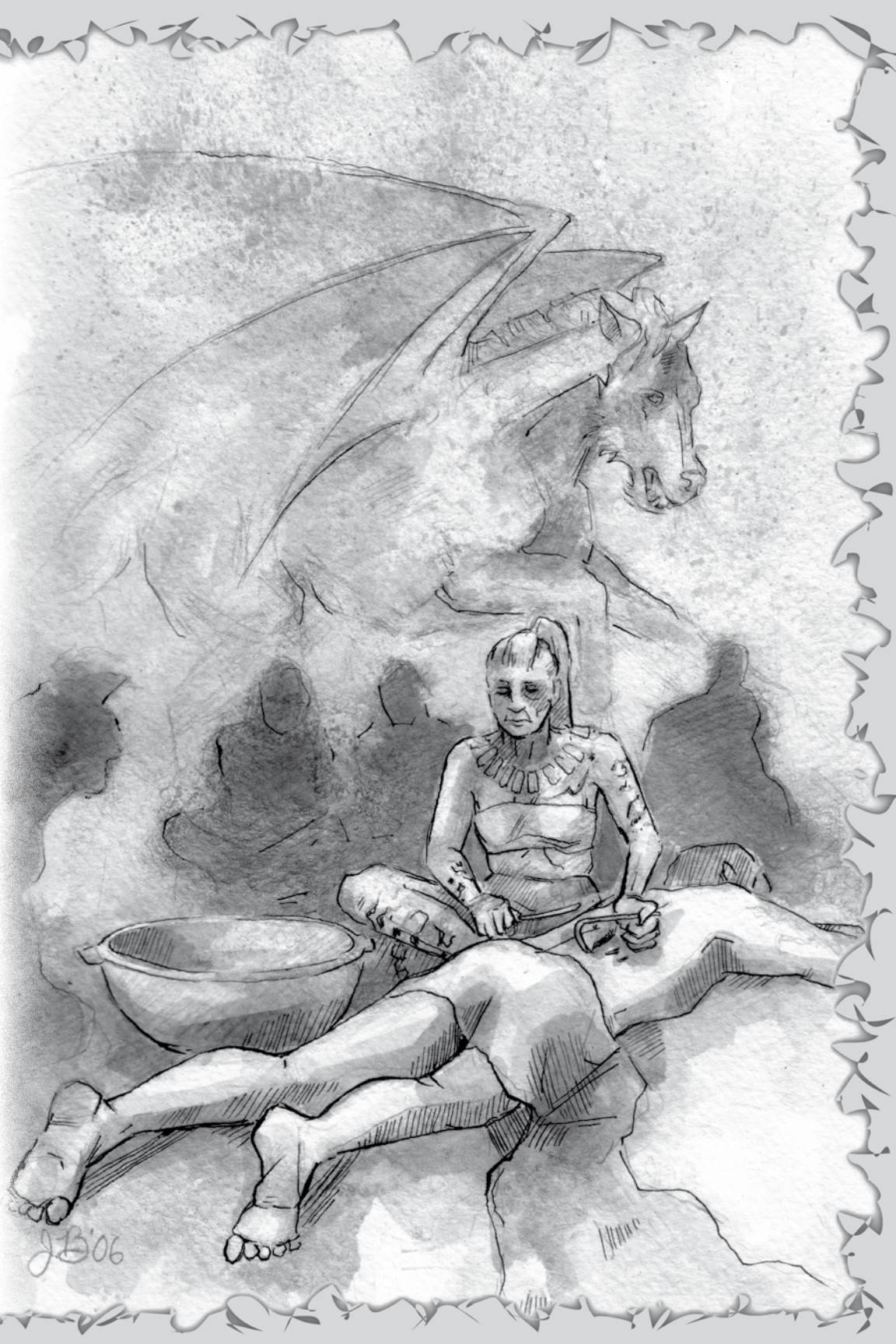
Carefully consider whether to use this rule in multiplayer games. All of the Hunters are likely to participate in the final challenge, which already multiplies the Limit accordingly. With this rule, the final challenge could become immensely powerful. If you do use this rule, every Hunter receives the Limit as bonus reward points at the successful conclusion of the adventure (in other words, the reward is not split up among the Hunters).

OVERLAPPING CHALLENGES

As an advanced feature of play, you can have ongoing long-term challenges. These are typically social challenges. Say you are trying to achieve a certain status within a town or city and the local power structure resists. You could set this up as a long-term challenge. You need to keep track of the advantage points and turns. Between turns, the players can play out other challenges that may or may not be related to this overarching challenge. For example, someone could

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be attacked, or may want to resolve a different situation. If the main challenge was intended to be long-term, simply write down where the long-term challenge paused and resume it after the smaller challenge. If you think the smaller challenge had a possible effect on the larger one, such as gaining more prestige or alienating the locals, include the effect through offering more or fewer advantage points in the long-term challenge's next actions.



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BEAST HUNTERS

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

The following example of play is somewhat abbreviated and low in descriptive detail to provide a quick demonstration of how the game structure and rules work. It's intended as a guide to understanding the basics of the Beast Hunters game.

Ben and Sarah decide to play an adventure. Sarah will be the Challenger and Ben the Hunter. Ben has only recently created his character and is a little unsure of what he can handle. He tells Sarah that he'd like to go with a Pool of 25 and a Limit of 6. Sarah is okay with that.

SARAH: So tell me about your character.

BEN: His name is Chadral. He comes from a long line of Beast Hunters in his nadan. He is looking to prove himself, as he hasn't earned his first tattoo yet. I'd like to have him go on his first Beast Hunt.

SARAH: Which creature would you like to hunt?

BEN: I'll go after the hektratan. With 25 AP in the Pool and a Limit of 6, I meet the requirements.

At this point, Sarah and Ben salute in to start the adventure.

SARAH: Okay. I see that you mention your mentor on your sheet. We begin at one of the Beast Hunters' meetings at the Spirit Stone, when your mentor

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Example of Play

tells you that the stars told him last night that you might be ready for a Hunt. However, he first has to test your determination. You will participate in a ritual that tests your resolve.

BEN: Cool. Is that going to be a challenge?

SARAH: Definitely. This is a mental challenge, even though it involves physical strain. In the middle of the night, the other Beast Hunters will lift you up to balance on top of a narrow tree stump. Then, they will dance around you with torches and swipe them across your naked skin as they pass, not enough to inflict serious damage, but it'll sure hurt. If you can stay up until the first rays of the sun shoot across the horizon, you will pass.

Sarah called the challenge, so her description of it started Phase One of the Negotiation. Ben can now ask questions and then propose his solution.

BEN: So I'm going to be all naked?

SARAH: Yep.

BEN: Can I have any of my belongings with me?

SARAH: Hmm, no, but you can still refer to them in your actions and use the bonuses.

BEN: Okay. Chadral is very proud of his heritage. Thinking of his family will give him strength, because he would never disappoint his ancestors' spirits. He will stand fast, looking over the heads of the gathered crowd, focusing his will and passing

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the time with remembering all the stories that his elders have told him.

Ben has just offered his solution to the challenge, how his character attempts to overcome the trial in his path.

SARAH: What does he do specifically whenever the flames touch his skin and cause the pain? I guess we're moving to Phase Two because I am asking you questions now. Let me know if you want to preactivate any traits.

BEN: Chadral will yell out "Glory to" and the name of one of his ancestors whenever the pain washes through him, to focus his mind and honor his family. I preactivate "Long Line of Beast Hunter Ancestors," a mental defense trait at +2.

SARAH: Wow, that's cool. Okay, I give. The other Beast Hunters dance around Chadral, their torches painting black stripes over his skin while he proclaims his pride in his ancestry. When the sun comes up, he can see that his friends are equally proud of him. The Beast Hunters have a festive breakfast in your honor, and you are sent on your way. Write 2 reward points on your sheet for passing the challenge in Phase Two, and I pay 2 AP for it, which leaves me with 23.

BEN: So when I set out to hunt the hektratan, does my path cross that of my nadan?

SARAH Sure, if you want. Why?

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Example of Play

BEN: I want to get the blessing of my nadan's leader. I would like to know that she and the tribe fully support me.

SARAH: Well, the chieftain is torn on the subject. After all, her son is your enemy, as I can see from your traits. It seems you two had a hard time growing up together.

BEN: Yeah well, all the more reason to make her change her mind, that'll upset my enemy as well.

SARAH: It's a challenge, then. Obviously a social one. How are you going about it?

BEN: First, I'll make sure that she hears of how I passed the ritual. Then I will tell her my hunt is important for the tribe because it'll make me stronger.

SARAH: Hmm, I think this is going to be a little difficult. Let's roll for it. Since this is Phase One, I have to pay double, so I'm spending 8 AP to get a challenge with a rating of 4. I buy an offensive trait at +2, a defensive one at +2, a defensive resource of 1, and the basic damage boxes, with an initiative of 1.

Sarah writes down descriptions for the traits and resources that apply to the challenge. Making up fitting descriptions is important for understanding how the challenge plays out, how the traits are activated, and how the resource could be denied.

BEN: I have the initiative then. Okay, offensive move. I talk to some of my friends first and send them to

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Example of Play

the chief to tell her about how gloriously I passed the ritual.

SARAH: Very nice. I'll give you 8 advantage points for that.

BEN: Sure, I'll take them!

SARAH: Now, the chief's son is nearby as your friends talk to her. He tells them of a time not too long ago when you slipped during a fight, and says that you really are too young and inexperienced yet. That's an offensive maneuver. I'll roll for him, and I got... 13, though no activated traits.

BEN: I'm sure my friends stick by me. I didn't activate any traits yet, though. Hmm. Regular roll, an 8.

SARAH: Okay, that means I scored 5 advantage points against you.

BEN: Chadral is upset, but he knows that he is in good standing among his people. I activate "Family Honor," a social defensive trait at +2.

SARAH: My turn. The chief's son tells your friends that you frequently embellish your stories and that your word should not be trusted. Offensive Move. I roll a... 9 for this one.

BEN: I got an 8, but with the +2, that's 10. See, his accusations bounce off my family honor; my nadan members would never believe that I would embellish stories.

SARAH: Apparently so. I don't get any points for this one. What's your next move?

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Example of Play

BEN: Another offensive maneuver: Chadral is outraged and reminds everyone about his ancestors' heroic part in fighting the Karakaan at the borders.

SARAH: Well, I'd let you have 3 advantage points for that one.

BEN: No thanks, I think I deserve more than that. Offensive roll... and I get a 17. Sweet!

SARAH: Well, I only rolled a 5, so you get 12 more advantage points for a total of 20. And because you got 12 points in one go, you can take a free Strike if you want.

BEN: Cool. I strike. I take off my shirt and show the marks from the night's ritual, invoke my lineage, and demand that the chief take a stand. I spend 20 advantage points for 2D10 of damage. I get a 15, plus 2 for my social offensive resource makes 17. Yeah!

SARAH: Your opposition has a defensive resource of 1, so 16 make it through. That causes incapacitating damage; you win the challenge. The chief lifts a hand before her son can answer and declares that you and your family are highly respected in this tribe, and that the tribe's blessings are with you.

BEN: Cool. Do I get a bonus from that?

SARAH: You can't get actual bonuses as challenge outcomes. But you get 4 reward points, so you can spend those later on a trait or resource that's linked to

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Example of Play

your tribe's blessings if you want. And I have 8 points less in my pool, so I only have 15 left. In a way that means you'll have it easier on your hunt because there are fewer adversity points left, and you didn't get hurt in this challenge.

BEN: Works for me. Let's go!

A little while later, Chadral picks up the trail of the hektratan. Sarah presents following the tracks as a mental challenge, and Ben provides a good narrative on how Chadral follows the tracks, using his knowledge of the area and a hunting trait connected to his mother. Sarah is happy with this and pays two adversity points while Ben receives one reward point. This leaves Sarah with 13 adversity points in her Pool.

The trail leads Chadral to a river, and he finally finds a bridge that would allow him to cross over. However, the bridge is guarded by two Tarrag outlaws who demand payment for letting him cross. Ben decides that Chadral will fight his way through. After discussing how he confronts them and plans to toss one over the side into the river, Sarah moves from Phase Two to conflict resolution. Ben did not preactivate any traits, because he's saving his preactivation for the hektratan.

SARAH: Alright, let's fight this one out. I'm buying damage boxes for two points and two offensive traits at +4 each. That adds up to 6 points in cost. You have the initiative, and this is the scene: The two outlaws are standing side by side on the bridge. They are Tarrag, probably exiled from their lands.

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Example of Play

The big guy on the left has a broadsword in hand, and the skinny one on the right is holding his spear with both hands. They just told Chadral that he can't cross if he can't pay, and that they may take his things anyway. The skinny guy smirks and says, "You dirteaters don't deserve to own nothing, anyway."

BEN: Once that son of a goat taunts him, Chadral charges forward and grabs the outlaw's spear, trying to push him against the other one so that the big guy will fall off the bridge. That's an offensive maneuver, obviously.

SARAH: Hmm. That guy's pretty heavy, and they knew trouble was coming. I'll let you have 3 points for that, and the big guy stays.

BEN: No thanks, I'd rather roll. No traits are active on either side, so... dang. I just got a 7.

SARAH: I got a 10, so you get nothing. The big guy is a little slow, but the little one reacts and moves as swift as a weasel. He pushes you back and brings his spear up between you. He activates his "Taste my Speartip" trait, so I'm at +4 for offensive maneuvers now.

BEN: Chadral readies his own spear and lowers himself into a defensive position, so that he won't be overwhelmed by the two. I activate his "Swift Like the Clouds" defensive trait at +3.

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Example of Play

SARAH: The outlaws are a careful bunch, apparently. The big guy finally brings up his sword, and they both advance toward you without creating an opening that you could run through. I activate the second trait, called "Massive Stature," so I'm at a total +8 for offensive attacks now.

BEN: Hmm, this is looking worse and worse, but Chadral won't be intimidated. He remembers how he fought the bully when he was a kid. You know, the chief's son. I activate "Spirit of Defiance," an offensive trait at +3. Chadral gets ready to charge right at the big guy, which they won't expect.

SARAH: Neat, but they charge before you do. While the little guy distracts you with a spear thrust, the big one stomps ahead and swings right at your head. I roll a... 17, wow. Plus 8, that makes 25.

BEN: Let's see now. I roll... 2! With my +3 defense, that makes 5. I'm screwed.

SARAH: Well... the guy swings at you and catches your shoulder with the side of his sword. You fall to the ground, with the two of them towering over you. They have 20 advantage points now, so I can take a free Strike for 2D10 if I want to...

BEN: Ah damn. Let me think for a moment. Nah, this isn't worth it. I give.

SARAH: Chadral runs away?

BEN: I don't want to get heavily wounded when I still

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have to fight the hektratan... but I don't want Chadral to run either. That doesn't fit with the character.

SARAH: Alright. Let's say the fall knocked the wind out of him, and the last thing he sees above him is a big fist before everything goes dark.

BEN: Then what?

SARAH: Well, since you gave, I don't have to pay for that challenge after all, and you don't get any reward points. But you're not taking any damage. And Chadral wakes up in a dark cave, his hands bound together and tied to a metal ring in the ceiling. There's a fireplace in the center of the room, with the flames casting a play of shadows across the dark rock walls. Chadral's belongings are all piled up on the opposite side of the fire...

Ben now has a chance to start a challenge so that Chadral can escape the cave and resume his hunt. The adventure goes on in this way until the Pool is empty, at which point (because this is a Beast Hunt) Ben gets to fight the hektratan to earn his character's first tattoo.

Example of Play



Name: _____

Hunter: _____

Reward Points

_____ M _____

Initiative

P _____ S _____

Offensive Traits

Defensive Traits

Resources

Resources

Tattoos

Tattoos

Damage Levels Mental

Light ○
Medium ○
Heavy ○
Incapacitating ○
Fatal ○

Physical

○
○
○
○
○

Social

○
○
○
○
○

