

NYGÅRD
NORDINGE
LONGMORE
PERKINS-HARBIN
MOORE



BLOOD & BRONZE

A Fantasy Game of High Adventure and Role-Playing
Playable with Paper, Pencil and Polyhedral Dice

BLOOD & BRONZE

A Fantasy Game of High Adventure and Role Playing
Playable with Paper, Pencil and Polyhedral Dice

Concept by
Johan NORDINGE

Artwork
Rich LONGMORE • Interior
Sam PERKINS-HARBIN • Map
Adam MOORE • Cover
(c) each artist, respectively. Used herein under license

Game design by
Olav NYGÅRD • Johan NORDINGE

With
Gustaf BROWALL • Jocke ANDERSSON • Mike BERGAMOTTE
Christoffer LINDAHL • Emil THUNSTRÖM

Editing
Joseph WALERKO

Thanks to
Danuta LINDEKRANTZ • Johan FAGERLIN
Måns BROMAN • Max RAVEN • Anders HEDSTRÖM MACE

Special Thanks to
Christian MEHRSTAM

Transatlantic Edition • Revision 2016-02-14
www.bloodandbronze.com



LEAGUES
1 2 3 4 5

AGADE



Ashur

GREAT ZAB

ZAGROS MOUNTAINS

WEST FOOTHILLS

ARALLI

TIGR



Dur Kurigalzu

WHITE MARSH

GREAT BARRENS

ROCKY

DESERT

STAR OF

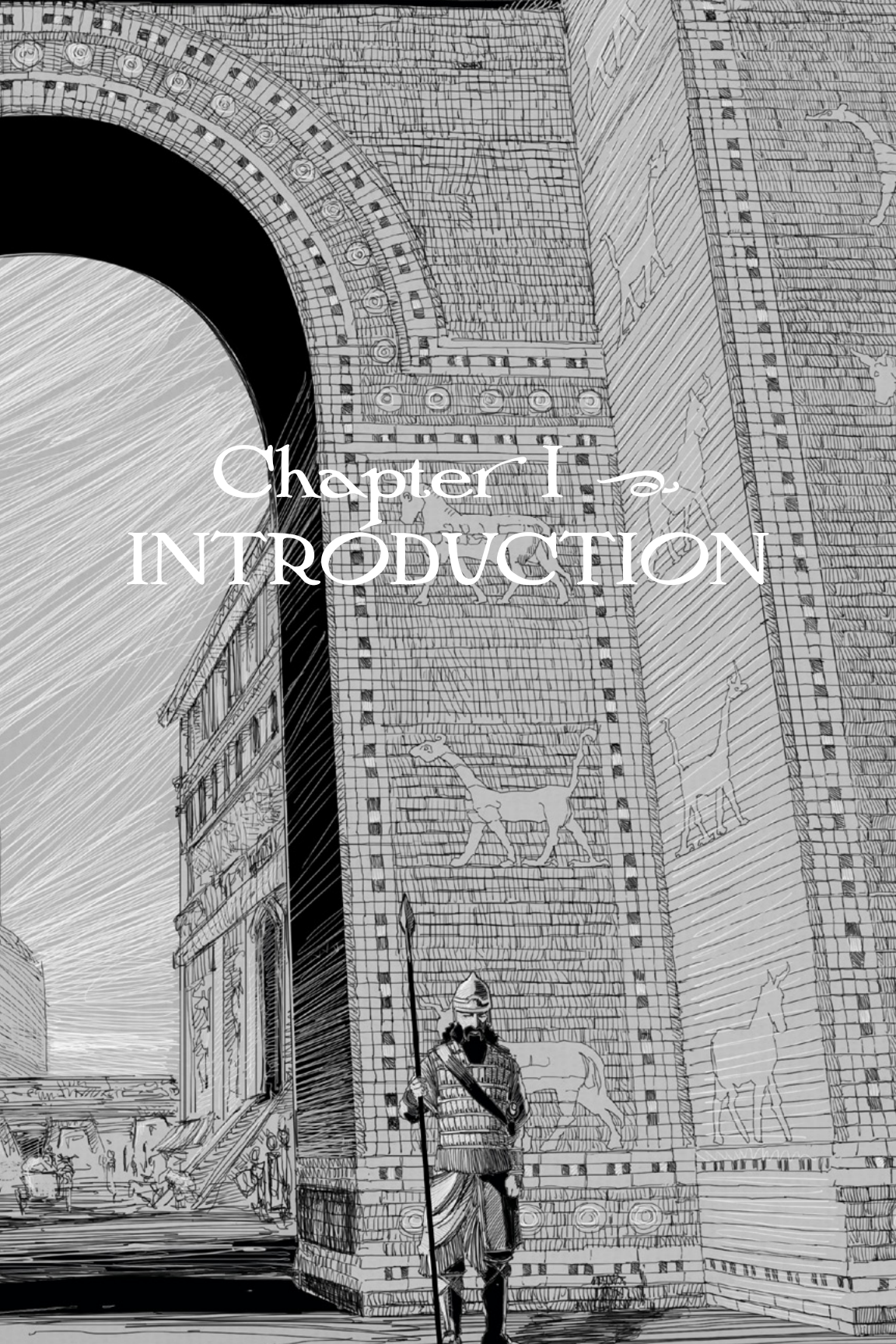
Mari



THE SHIFTING







Chapter I ~ INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Imagine that you are an adventurer: a cunning rogue, a hardened mercenary or a farseer wise in the ways of the stars. Before you lies a world rife with adventure and intrigue, wicked men and evil fiends. For this world is not like ours: it is still young, untamed and shrouded in mysteries. It is a world of BLOOD & BRONZE.

To the north, the snow-capped ridges of the Zagros Mountains rise like a dragon's spine, home to savage tribes and ravenous beasts but rich in copper and gems. Gaze west or south, and you will see vast deserts of raging sands and barren stone where nomad tribes make trade with strange civilizations beyond the edge of the world. To the southeast, a labyrinthine delta of sudden lakes and shallow canals carries merchants' rafts and the pirates that prey on them; beyond are bogs and disease-ridden marshlands where strange creatures crawl and slither.

At the heart of this world lies a barren stretch of hard soil circumscribed by twin rivers: Tigris to the north, violent and cold, and its southern sister Euphrates, feverish and slow.

Across this land great cities are strewn, like gems of ancient allure. Of them, Sippar is the adamant. Situated where the eastern steppe meets the great western deserts and the two rivers turn to approach each other before once again pursuing their separate paths, Sippar commands all trade between the wealthy Summer kingdoms and their western neighbors. Here people gather, seeking refuge from beasts and enemies behind massive walls or solace from the scorching sun under the many-colored tarps of the bazaars. Here, people bow down in the shade of the ziggurats and tremor in awe of their sacred rulers.

...But not you, for you are an adventurer. Driven by an urge for power, by curiosity or avarice, you and your band of likes travel this world, seeking glory, gold, knowledge and power.

This is the game of these adventures.

Contents

INTRODUCTION	6
What is Blood & Bronze?	7
Rules Summary	9
THE WORLD OF BLOOD & BRONZE	12
Cultures	14
Sippar	15
THE ADVENTURERS	18
Improving Your Character	19
The Mercenary	20
The Rogue	22
The Mystic	24
The Desert Farer	26
The Courtesan	28
The Seer	30
WEAPONS & GOODS	36
Encumbrance	36
Currencies and Barter	36
Common goods	37
War Gear	38
Qualities and Characteristics	39
Lotus Powder	40
Bone Salt	41
RULES	44
Abilities	44
Skill Tests	45
Saving Throws	45
Altering the Outcome	46
Zones	47
Rounds	47
Combat and Damage	48
Other Sources of Damage	49
Armor	49
Endurance Loss	50
Rest and Recovery	51
BASIC SKILLS	54
Beyond the Basic Skills	57
REFEREE'S SECTION	60
Adventures	62
The Reavers' Fort	62
Wilderness adventures	64
Expanding the World	64
Misfortunes	65
The Great Barrens of Karkal	66
NPCs	68

What is Blood & Bronze?

BLOOD & BRONZE is a game of shared imagination. In this game, you and your friends assume the roles of adventurers, exploring a Bronze Age world in search of power, riches and glory. Using your creativity, this book and some dice, you embark on mysterious quests, fight savage monsters and unravel the plots of wicked queens and kings. For this strange time is a time of strife, but also a time of wonder. Here, anything you can dream of can happen.

THE PLAYERS

As a player, you have control over one adventurer (sometimes referred to as a player character or PC for short). This adventurer is your alter ego in the game. Your goal is to explore the unknown, conquer its treasures and advance your character in power, influence and wealth. Playing BLOOD & BRONZE, you do chiefly three things:

1 You portray your adventurer. You say what your adventurer does and what she looks like, and you speak her words and voice her thoughts. You decide where she goes, and what she does.

2 You roll dice and take notes. You roll dice to see whether your character succeeds or fails in her undertakings. You record changes on your character sheet when she gathers wealth, uses up arrows or suffers damage. As the adventure proceeds, you might also want to draw maps and record names to keep track of the different locales and Non-Player Characters (NPCs) that you encounter.

3 You cooperate with your fellow players to make the adventures fun and thrilling, but also to emerge victorious from them. You employ your wits and cunning to propose smart or desperate plans. You cheer when another player does something clever or entertaining or when her character fails gloriously or manages against all odds.

THE REFEREE

One of you will assume the role of referee. As the referee, your goal is to make up and portray a fantastical world, fill it with peril and wonder, strange civilizations and sinister secrets to uncover. As the referee, you do four things:

1 You set the scene and make up things about the world and its inhabitants.

You are the ears and the eyes of the adventurers; telling them where they are, who else is there and what it looks, smells, sounds and feels like at the place.

2 You play the part of all Non-Player Characters. Non-Player Characters (or NPCs for short) are the characters and creatures the adventurers encounter. You champion their actions, saying what they say, do and look like. You roll dice for them when needed, and keep track of damage and items—just like players do for their adventurers.

3 You act as a moderator. You distribute spotlight, making sure that all players get a chance to act; and that the NPCs under your control do the same.

4 You adjudicate the rules. You resolve the outcome of the adventurers' actions using the setup, common sense, your imagination and the rules described herein. You make up new rules when no written rules apply, or alter them when they fit poorly or run counter to your intuition.

THE GENRE OF HIGH ADVENTURE

In everyday life, people have a firm sense of what can and cannot happen. In a fictional world of sorcery and high adventure this not obviously the case. There are no naturally occurring regularities to infer laws from. Instead, the intuition of what can and cannot happen come from the rules and the **genre**.

BLOOD & BRONZE draws its inspiration from the peplum genre of films, as well as authors writing in the same vein. For players new to the game and genre, a good starting point is **Cabiria** (1914). Spawning the peplum genre, the film features many of its key elements: daring adventure set in a vaguely historical epoch, spectacular feats of strength, fantastic scenery, evil gods and rulers, grimness and humor. **The Thief of Bagdad** (1924) is also highly recommended, as it is set in the same area—albeit not time—as BLOOD & BRONZE.

For books, similar sensibilities can be found in **Clark Ashton Smith's** short stories set in Zothique, Hyperborea and Poseidonis as well as **Robert E Howard's** Conan-stories or in *Salammbô* by **Gustave Flaubert**.

When adjudicating outcomes, stipulating new rules and designing setups for adventures, the referee is advised to use such films and stories as reference.

TO PLAY THE GAME, YOU NEED...

Three or more **friends** to play with.

Basic knowledge of the setting: it is Mesopotamia during a mythical Bronze Age. There are monsters, demons and treacherous gods and you are either playing an adventurer searching riches and power, or the referee that describes that world and plays those monsters.

Basic understanding of the rules. Read them or have someone explain them to you.

If you are the referee, you will need an **adventure setup**. This setup can be bought or downloaded from the Internet or it can be of your own design. The setup is a sketchy outline

of what might happen during a session of the game—places to explore, characters and monsters to encounter, treasures and vile plots to discover and so on. You will find more information on adventure setups at the end of this booklet.

If you are a player, you will need a **character sheet** to record information about your adventurer: her name and appearance, her skills and unique feats, her equipment and so on. You will also need some **pencils**.

As in any game, chance plays a part in BLOOD & BRONZE. When the outcome of an action is uncertain, you will roll one or more **dice** to determine what happens next. BLOOD & BRONZE uses both ordinary six-sided dice and polyhedral dice with four, eight, ten, twelve and twenty sides. $2d8+1$ means two eight-sided dice and one added to their total; whereas $1d6$ means a six-sided die.

For ten-sided dice 0 (zero) should be interpreted as 10. For a $d100$ (or hundred-faceted die), roll two ten sided dice and treat the first as “tens” and the other as “singulars”. Rolling two six-sided dice in similar fashion is referred to as a $d66$, even though only 36 outcomes are possible.

The game runs smoother if you have several six-sided dice, preferably more than five.

Remember that you can always substitute a larger die for a smaller (for instance, you can roll a $d20$ instead of a $d8$, rerolling all numbers outside of the relevant range).

Depending on your preference, you may also like some **visual aids**: paper to draw maps on; dominoes, building blocks or matchboxes to represent geographical features; war-game terrain or dioramas; and miniatures, pawns or tokens of varying hues to represent the adventurers and NPCs.

Rules Summary

BLOOD & BRONZE is a fantasy game of high adventure and role-playing. While some may choose to use miniatures and terrain as visual aids, the adventures take place in your imagination and are bound only by them.

One of you will be the referee, describing the world and its inhabitants and adjudicating the rules. The referee also rolls dice for monsters and foes. Everyone else will play as adventurers: speaking their words, describing their actions, rolling dice and employing wits to overcome the threats and challenges the characters face.

Normally, a character is free to do anything as long as she possesses a relevant skill. However, if her actions directly affect another character or involve something that a normal person would find hard or impossible to perform, a skill test is required. To make a skill test, roll a number of six-sided dice equal to the relevant ability rating. You need to roll at least one 5 or 6.

When your character reacts to hazards or acts on instincts, roll a twenty-sided die. If the result is lower than or equal to the relevant ability score she evades the misfortune, otherwise it befalls her. This is called an ability check or saving throw.

A character's starting endurance determines how many items she can carry. Carrying more, the character suffers one point of fatigue per three additional items, rounded up. For each point of fatigue, all ability scores are temporarily lowered by one. When an ability score reaches one in this fashion, the character is weary. Any damage dealt to a weary character will cause her to pass out.

Endurance also determines how much damage a character can withstand. Each time a character suffers damage, her current endurance is lowered equally. The exact amount depends on the source of damage. As an adventurer's endurance reaches zero, she becomes incapacitated. At minus three, she is mortally injured and may perish.

To increase her chances of survival, a character can use shields or armor. Shields offer defense, which slightly reduces all incoming damage. Armor—on the other hand—can completely negate the effect of a would-be fatal attack, but the player must roll a twenty-sided die. If the result is higher than her character's armor rating, it breaks and become useless.

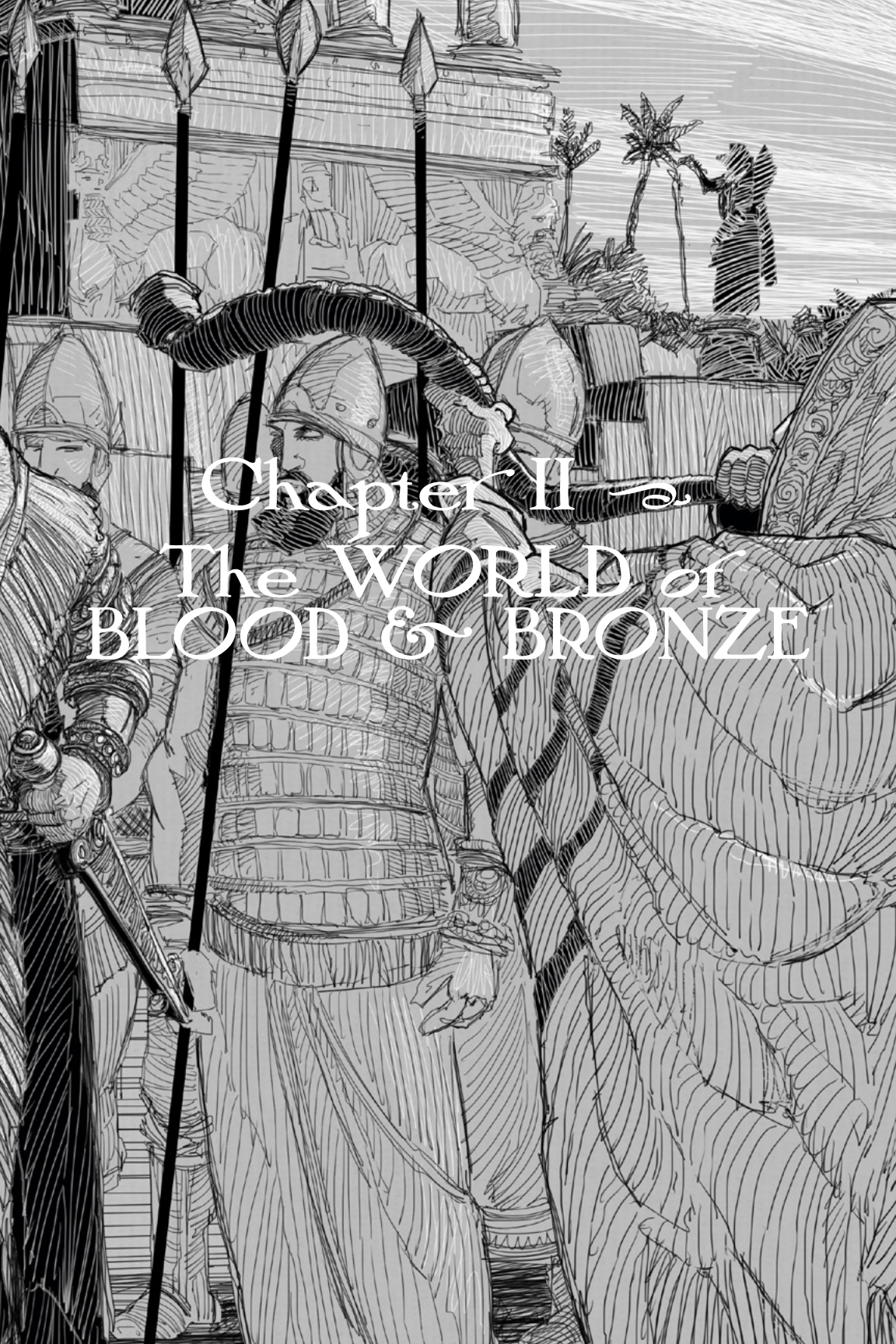
A character recovers endurance by resting, one point at a time. Another character may speed up the process by treating wounds. During short rests, a character may recover up to half of the damage she has suffered. Full recovery is only possible during extended rests, where the characters eat, drink and sleep.

In combat or during other dramatic and chaotic events, the game is played in rounds. During a round, every character gets one chance to act. To determine who goes first, roll one six-sided die for the adventurers and one for their foes. The side that rolls high gets the initiative.

To keep track of the positions of each character, BLOOD & BRONZE makes use of zones. A zone is an area of similar terrain, light or conditions. Zones scale with the scope of the actions: from entire provinces during travel to alleys and hiding spots when sneaking past palace guards.

If the adventures are successful, your character will gain treasures and wealth. Using the riches so earned, you may equip your character better for her future adventures or pay tribute to deities or powerful patrons in return for new skills and feats.





Chapter II ~
The WORLD of
BLOOD & BRONZE

THE WORLD OF BLOOD & BRONZE

The world of BLOOD & BRONZE is both familiar and strange. It draws inspiration from real places, cultures and events that have long since passed, but it isn't a historical era. Instead, BLOOD & BRONZE takes place in a mythical land home to demons and monsters, sorceries and gods. This Mythical Mesopotamia—like the game itself—is a place of fiction and fantasy. Below, its key concepts are listed.

A LAND OF TWIN RIVERS

The adventures of BLOOD & BRONZE take place in and around Mesopotamia, approximating present day Iraq. Here, two great rivers flow: the strong and cold Tigris to the north and the slow and dark Euphrates to the south. To the northeast, the snow-capped peaks of the Zagros range rise like a wall. Southeast, rolling grasslands and low hills give way to marshes and bogs until they in turn meet the restless waves of the salty Eastern Sea. To the south and southwest, immense wastes of sand and scorching sun stretch past the horizon. Northwest, a barren plateau of rocks and low shrubs follow the rivers upstream as they veer to reach their distant sources.

VAST CITIES AND UNCHARTED WILDERNESS

The people of this age have built the first metropolises: vast cities of lime-plaster, mudbricks and stone, circumscribed by high walls. Each city is autonomous, and the city's sovereign is also the ruler of the surrounding province. Rivalry between cities is common, and they frequently change dynasties or enter into uneasy alliances due to usurpation, war or conquest.

Outside the cities strange beasts, desperate bandits and savage tribes make life dangerous, adding to the marching hosts sent from one city to wage war on another. Thus, few remain longer than they must without the shelter of the tall city walls.

AN AGE OF BRONZE

Metalworking is in its infancy. Bronze is expensive and the methods for creating it are unknown to most. Iron is even rarer. Everyday items are commonly made from softer metals such as copper or lead, or from other materials like stone, ceramics, glass, wood and reed.

Only the most skillfully crafted swords are forged straight. Instead, sickle-swords are commonly used; their curved shape making them easier to produce and less brittle.

It is an agrarian society. Common crops include lentils, grain, chickpeas, leeks, grapes and dates. Sheep, goats, swine and geese are kept for meat; cattle and donkeys as beasts of burden; dogs and cats as pets. Horses and camels are imported at great cost from the far north or far south respectively.

FOOD IS PLentiful, RESOURCES ARE SCARCE

The land of the rivers is rich in produce and blessed with knowledge and civilization but equally poor in most other respects. Even basic resources have to be imported: timber and stone from the north; flint, obsidian and metal from faraway lands. Thus, trade expeditions often brave the wild—seeking fortunes beyond the eastern ocean or following secret paths through the mountains and great deserts.

THERE ARE MANY GODS, ALL MANIFEST AND FEARED

There are many deities in the world of BLOOD & BRONZE: from grotesque demons lurking in underground pits and presiding over the base critters that share their den, to haughty beings whose domains span the heavens. People fear them all for their power, dread them their strangeness and bow before their priests.

The ruling caste of the gods is known as the **Anunnaki**: they are the princes and empresses of the gods. Just as mankind pays tribute to their temples and rulers, so all gods in turn pay fealty to the Anunnaki.

Among the most powerful Anunnaki are **Enlil**, god of thunder and growth; **Ishtar**, goddess of war and love; **Ereshkigal**, goddess of the passage and ruler of the underworlds; and **Ea**, lord of the watery depths. Under the scorching sun where your adventures start, **Shamash** is lord.

Most cities are built around one or more deities, who reside in awe-inspiring pyramid-temples called **ziggurats**. These majestic buildings demonstrate the power of the rulers and their gods to intruders and commoners alike, while also serving as strongholds confining their weird and dismal inhabitants.

SHAMASH IS GOD OVER THE DESERT

Shamash is the tutelary deity of Sippar; his triple ziggurats looming over its squat houses, marble palaces and mud-brick walls. Even the narrow minarets and princely spires are dwarfed by their titanic presence; gleaming with gold, ivory and hellish fires as the day passes.

Shamash is the burning justice, lord of the sun and keeper of the seals. He is hideous to behold: thin but towering and perpetually smoldered by a terrible fire that melts his divine skin to reveal lumps of purple flesh and black silver bones. Bound by decree to never lift his face to the heavens, he rarely leaves his citadels but employ sorceries to work machinations and spy upon the outside world. To escape his eyes, superstitious folk take great pains to walk in the shade and to never discuss private matters without leaving a bowl of water to evaporate, as an offering to his thirst.

It is said that none can meet his gaze without bursting into flames, but madmen and zealots claim that his features can be grasped by staring into the sun. The retainers that soothe him with musk and balms made from hashish and gold-leaf are all blind, however, and when mortals are summoned before him he always bears a golden mask. Only the four judges know, but they never mention such matters to anyone else.

A CATAclysmic FLOOD BROUGHT THE WORLD TO ITS KNEES

Not a hundred years ago, the world was ravaged by a cataclysmic flood. Sent by the gods as a punishment for trespasses unknown, this black deluge dramatically changed the face of the earth. New mountains rose, old crumbled to sand. Rivers altered their course and fertile soil became desert. Foul beasts awoke in the depths and crawled up to the surface.

Now the flood has subsided and the Anunnaki have once more withdrawn in secluded slumber. But the world is still suffering the aftermath. Some cities are rebuilt; others wither down under the relentless wear of the gale. Meanwhile in the deserts, the ruins of elder tribes were revealed by the raging waves. In their dank pits, vile creatures lurk like toads waiting for the monsoon to come again.

A TIME OF ADVENTURES

This is a time of hardship and tribulation, but also the dawning of a new era. Reckless or brave, mankind has again begun exploring the unfamiliar lands that now surrounds her. Old trade routes are cleared, new one discovered. Forgetful of the flood, rivalling rulers have once more begun to hoard power and wealth; seeking to outmaneuver each other while keeping their gods sated.

The world is dangerous and wicked, but it holds unimaginable riches of gold, electrum and lapis lazuli. Queer artifacts of unthinkable might and power—treasures waiting to be seized by those brave or foolish enough. You are one of them, an adventurer, and this is your age.

Cultures

The prosperous lands of the twin rivers have been home to a myriad of different tribes, wandering up from the flaming deserts of the south or down from the hostile mountains of the north. Over the eons, countless cultures have passed: risen to their zenith before waning into naught; each consecutive kingdom building their cities on the ruins of old. Below, you will find a brief presentation of the largest cultures that currently inhabit the lands around Sippar.

AKKADIANS

Akkadians are of middle build, with brown or black hair, taupe or tanned skins and noble features. Though their culture bears many similarities with the Sumerian culture, they speak a different tongue and know other gods.

Originally hailing from the northwest, the Akkadian Empire is now spreading south and east through conquest. Not massive like the Sumer, nor graceful like the Amorites or fierce like the Kuthi, the rapid expanse of the Akkadian god-emperor's reach is based on organization and training. These qualities make Akkadian mercenaries well known outside of their empire, and highly sought after.

AMORITES

A nomadic people of the west, the Amorites is the only culture thriving in the great basalt deserts. Not methodical like the Akkadians, nor wise like the Sumer or keen like the Kuthi, the Amorite prosperity is based on their wits and skill as traders.

Amorites are slightly shorter than the Akkadians, but much more slender. Their constant travels render their faces weathered and leathery and their eyes narrow and piercing. Men often cut their beards short, and both women and men drape their bodies with long shawls to protect from the deserts' charring sun and freezing nights.

The majority of Amorite settlements are small, partly subterranean and only periodically inhabited. Only Mari, weeks west of Sippar, is a proper city and houses permanent inhabitants. For those who can find their way there, Mari offers a wealth of strange artifacts and peculiar goods, slaves with moonlight skin and vulture heads, brought across the seas of sand from far-away destinations.

KUTHIANS

To the north, in the foothills of the Zagros range, live the savage Kuthians: tawny-skinned, muscular and barbaric. Though some legends claim they derive their name from Kutha, capital of the netherworld, the Kuthians have no known cities and few monuments. Instead, they live among crumbling ruins built by masters lost to time, or in small tribes of hunters seeking shelter in caves or twig huts.

Where Akkadians value order and the Sumer treasure opulence, the Kuthians prize savagery. Akin to civilized people at birth, the Kuthians of full age resembles them little. Adults color their bodies like bone or blood with ash and hematite soil. Both women and men wear their hair long and weave bones and feathers into it. Many sharpen their teeth and the ruling families often bind the heads of their children.

The Kuthians are feared by the cultures of the south, and the cities frequently wage war on them. But the Kuthians are also important trade partners, as their mountains holds timber, minerals and other resources that the lowland cities desperately needs. This trade has led to the establishment of a permanent trade post near the northeastern city of Eshnunna. However, the skepticism towards the Kuthi is still widespread and many merchants take the precaution of claiming their goods are from distant kingdoms such as Elam rather than the northern mountains.

SUMERIANS

The Sumerian culture—wealthy and wise, ancient and degenerate—dominates the southeastern plains and marshlands. One of the oldest people, their advances in science, art and philosophy far surpasses those of their neighboring cultures. Some even claim that it was their inquiries into the stars that provoked the flood. The Sumerians are currently in decline, challenged on all frontiers.

Sumerians are towering people: tall and broad, with thick features. Their skin is olive and their thick hair borders on blue. Sumerian men let their curly beards grow long, and both women and men wears ribbons in their hair.

PERIPHERAL CULTURES

Beyond the wet Edin grassland of the Sumer kingdoms live the **Elamites**. They are a dusky people of elegant features, known for both their beauty and their skills as seafarers.

The **reed-folk**, or unclean-eaters, are merchants and river pirates hailing from the Isin delta and the great reed forests downstream. Almost as tall as their Sumerian neighbors, the reed folk are much skinnier and speak a dialect more akin to the Akkadian tongue. They eat serpents and shellfish and obey few of the taboos of other people. Their only large settlement is Isin, whose reed-houses have lent the people its name.

Strong and broad, the **Kassites** are warrior-tribes from the northeast. Long confined by the inhospitable Zagros range and the savages that inhabit them, the repeated wars between the people of the Rivers and the Kuthi have made the Kassites bold, occasionally performing mounted raids into the riverlands.

On the western fringes of the Akkadian empire live the turquoise-eyed **Hittites**. Once nomadic, the massive push from the Akkadian army have forced the majority of them to settle down in stone strongholds and swear allegiance to the God Emperor to avoid annihilation.

Sippar

Your adventures start in Sippar, a bustling trade town situated where the eastern grasslands give way to the sandy wastes of the west and the muddy swamps rise to greet the grey hills of the north. Not fully under the control of the Sumer kingdoms, not yet subjugated by the marching Akkadian empire of the west, Sippar enjoys the privileged position of wealth and influence that only control over trade routes can give.

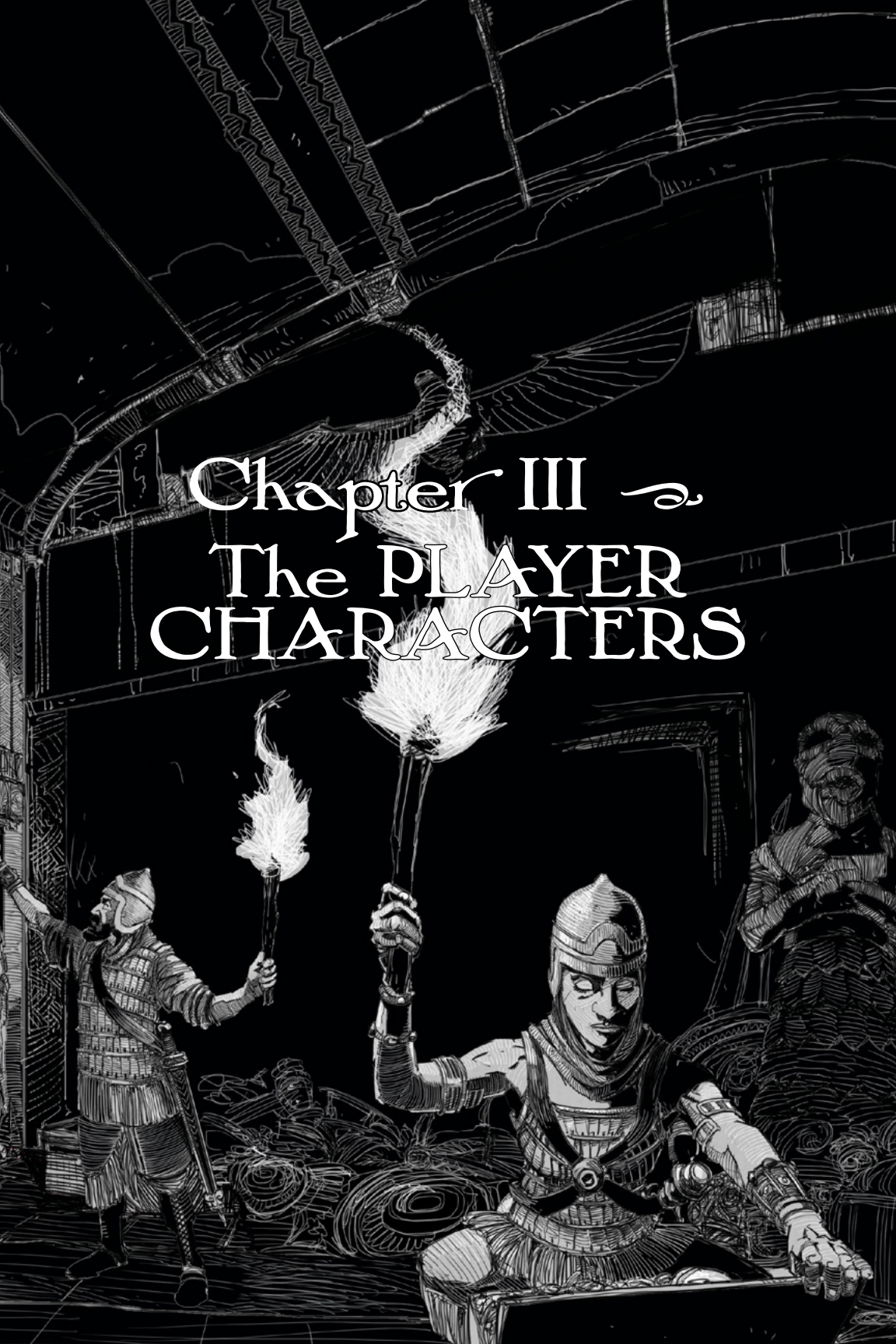
To outsiders, Sippar is famous for its merchants and notaries, but also its smugglers and templars in service of the Sun.

The people of Sippar are of varying stock and eclectic in culture. Most speak Akkadian and Sumerian with the same ease and distinct accent; most are equally oblivious to the customs and traditions of both. Instead, the city is ruled by four magnificent judges who interpret the heavenly will and enforce a strict and labyrinthine system of laws differentiating between nobles, templars, beast-folk, citizens of the northern and southern city, guests, foreigners as well as slaves by contract, birth or conquest.

Even for those with no petitions or trespasses to be arbitrated, the judges hold power over life and death as they control the distribution of water from the underground qanats that provide to most of the city.

Looming over Sippar are the three great Ziggurats of the Sun, where Shamash resides. This tremendous presence is the ultimate reason for the city's independence, but also for the judges' power. Only they are allowed to enter these sacred houses, and each only once a year. At the summer solstice they congregate with the god over five days. During that time all courts are closed and slaves and citizens join in festivities while the *barû*-priests divine the future in the blood of sacred victims and in the entrails of murdered men.





Chapter III ~ The PLAYER CHARACTERS

THE ADVENTURERS

To start playing, each player must first create an **adventurer**. The adventurer is your alter ego, the fictional person whom you will portray when playing the game.

CREATING YOUR ADVENTURER

1 Roll ability scores. For each ability, roll two six-sided dice. These scores are used for many things, most importantly in saving throws. Reroll all double-ones, so that each ability ranges from 3 to 12. In addition, you may change positions between two scores rolled. Record them on your character sheet.

2 Determine ability ratings. Ability ratings are used in most actions, and are derived from the ability score. To determine your character's ability ratings, consult the table below.

3 Roll a background (optional). Backgrounds describe what the character did before she started adventuring, or perhaps what her family still does. Backgrounds are used by the referee to determine what a character knows and is able to craft. If you want your character to have a background, roll once on the background chart (opposite).

4 Choose a character class. There are six classes in BLOOD & BRONZE: Mercenary, Rogue, Mystic, Desert Farer, Courtesan and Seer. Choose whichever appeals to you, based on your fancies or the background rolled.

5 Decide name and appearance. Sample names and appearances are given for each class. Choose one or make up your own.

ABILITY SCORE	ABILITY RATING
3-5:	1
6-8:	2
9-11:	3
12-14:	4
15-17:	5
18:	6

6 Choose a class skill. Each character has an array of special abilities or skills, unique to her class. At the beginning of the game, you get to choose one or more as detailed by your class description.

7 Record endurance thresholds. Your character's endurance shows how many items she can carry without fatigue and how much damage she can sustain without serious injuries. Write down her starting endurance on your character sheet.

8 Record starting equipment. A character starts her adventures with equipment appropriate to her class. Record it on your character sheet. If you accept all starting equipment, any further burden will cause her one point of fatigue per three items' overweight. Equipment marked (*) is non-encumbebring.

D20	BACKGROUNDS
1	Accountant
2	Architect
3	Barber or Wigmaker
4	Basket maker
5	Beggar
6	Boatsman or —woman
7	Brewer
8	Bricklayer or Canal builder
9	Courier
10	Dancer or Musician
11	Gem cutter
12	Herder
13	Orchardman or —woman
14	Perfume maker
15	Potter or Brick maker
16	Scribe
17	Smuggler
18	Surgeon
19	Weaver
20	Wood-worker

Improving Your Character

During your adventures, your character will acquire wealth and treasures. Offering her wealth to a god, temple or ruler, your character can increase her **rank** and gain new abilities: become stronger and more powerful, learn new skills or gain mastery of old.

Your character's rank is a measure of her standing within her class, culture or community. When you start playing, your character has a **class rank** of one but no other ranks. By offering wealth to the Queen of No Court, your character can increase her class rank to gain new skills as described by her class.

THE QUEEN OF NO COURT

Ninlil is the patron deity of adventurers and caravan-folk, of shipwrecks and graverobbers and runaways. She is the goddess of desert flowers, dead ends and caprice and is known by many names but her own: the Treader, the Queen of no Court or Lady Misfortune.

Of royal blood and fabled beauty, she was stolen from the island paradise of Dilmun as a bride to Enlil. She refused his embrace and was cursed to never find peace before cowing to his will. Since then she wanders endlessly through the wild, aiding or tricking others at her own whim.

Travelers raise cairns at dangerous passages to pay her respect or ward off her bad luck, leaving treasures or offerings inside. If the players choose to do so, any sufficiently large offering will gain them an increase in class rank as per the chart below.

CLASS RANK	COST IN MINA / SHEKELS
1	0 (Starting rank)
2	10 / 600
3	12 / 720
4	14 / 840
5	16 / 960
6	18 / 1080

COVENANTS

Some monsters, gods and suzerains can present your character with the opportunity to enter into a **covenant**. A covenant is a bond of allegiance where your character swears fealty to a master, who grants her access to unique abilities and powers in return for loyalty and tithe. You will encounter these masters and their covenants over the course of your adventures, bargain with them and swear allegiance to them—or betray them—when you deem it wise.

When an adventurer enters into a covenant, she must offer wealth or sacrifices to the master of that allegiance. How much—and what—depends on the master, so you should not swear allegiance lightly. In return, your character gets a **covenant rank** which can be increased much like class ranks.

TRIBUTE

If a character serves more than one master, she is expected to pay **tribute** each time she increases her ranks. The amount demanded depends on the jealousy of the master and increases with the character's rank.

If your adventurer refuses to pay tribute, you must check for **wrath**. Roll a six-sided die: if the score is lower than or equal to the corresponding rank, the master forgives the trespass; otherwise the master will smite you character for her infidelity. On a six, you always provoke its anger.

When your character has provoked the wrath of her master, cross out that rank but don't erase it: the number will indicate the magnitude of the master's wrath.

The Mercenary

A wanderer, with war as her trade

WEAPONS: Two feathered bronze javelins: dmg 1d6, thrown, wt 1 each. A khopesh: dmg 1d6; versatile (1d8). Stiffened hide helmet: armor 2, wt 2. Great wicker shield: defense 3, wt 4.

OR: A tall bronze axe: dmg 1d10, 2-handed, wt 4; Partial bronze scale: armor 5, wt 5.

EQUIPMENT: sturdy clothes*, a bronze token (choose who gave it to you)*, six days' worth of dried meat (wt 3), a water-skin (3 uses; wt 3), snail grease*, a grindstone*, a fire glass

ENDURANCE: 16 (15+1)

STARTING ENCUMBRANCE: 16/16

SKILLS AND RANKS: Characters begin at rank 1. When creating a Mercenary, you get **hardened** and **tackle** as free class skills. In addition, you may choose any two specializations from the list below. Each specialization can be chosen up to three times for increased honing, as detailed under each entry.

When your character increases her Mercenary class rank, choose two additional specializations.

MERCENARY CLASS SKILLS

HARDENED: you may add your class rank to your maximum endurance. For a starting character, this extra point of endurance is already included.

TACKLE: you can tackle, throw or thrust-kick someone out of the zone you are currently in. Test Vigor: on a 5+ your target must make a saving throw against Might or be moved into an adjacent zone of your choice. Each additional 5+ increases the distance you tackle, throw or kick her by 1 zone and adjusts her save by -1.

#	NAME	
1	Malicar	Matho
2	Iptar	Resin
3	Blasius	Bar Hadad
4	Otho	Hasael
5	Kato	Zuru
6	Salmanassar	Rimmon
7	Aelia	Tibur
8	Nero	Mon-Utut
9	Haman	Chimal
10	Samalat	Nour

#	GUISE	
1	Bony	Jaded eyes
2	Scarred	Alert eyes
3	Strong	Missing eye
4	Disfigured	Narrow eyes
5	Handsome	Cold eyes
6	Angular	Blood-shot eyes
7	Squat	Bitter eyes
8	Proud	Burning eyes
9	Famished	Anguished eyes
10	Majestic	Sad eyes

MERCENARY SPECIALIZATIONS

WEAPON TRAINING: You get a +1 damage bonus when fighting with a weapon of your choice: small, basic, large, legendary, unarmed, bows or thrown. The bonus is added to any one damage die, making you more likely to score a critical hit. If your attack deals more than one die damage, the bonus applies only once.

2nd. You may choose an additional weapon category or increase the bonus to +2.

3rd. You may choose an additional weapon category or add +1 to the bonus for one already specialized in.

REBOUND: You recover two points of endurance instead of one when resting.

2nd. Your recovery speed increases to three points.

3rd. You recover at a speed of four points per rest.

SKILLED NEGOTIATOR: Loot and payrolls have made your character skilled in bargaining. When resupplying, she gets a 1 shekel discount per ten shekels paid. This equals 1 shekel discounted for articles costing 10 to 19 shekels, 2 for articles costing 20 to 29 and so on.

2nd. The discount increases to 2 per ten shekels—2 shekels for items priced 10 to 19; 4 for items priced 20 to 29 and so on.

3rd. The discount increases to 3 per ten shekels paid.

FIELD MEDIC: When the character treats someone's wounds during a short rest, add 1 to any one of their recovery dice. If this makes the result exceed the die's natural limit, as would a seven on a six-sided die, treat the surplus as a separate die.

2nd. As above, but the treated may instead add 2 to her recovery die, or 1 to two different dice—whichever she prefers.

3rd. As above, but the treated instead add 3 to any one recovery die or 1 to all.

TOUGH: Your character is harder to kill than others, only becoming injured at -4 endurance instead of the usual -3.

2nd. As above, but she can drop to -5 endurance before becoming injured.

3rd. As above, but she only becomes injured at -6 endurance.

STRATAGEM: By spending your turn issuing orders and commands, both sides must roll initiative anew. In addition, you may modify the roll for your side by +/-1.

2nd. As above, but you may modify your roll by up to +/-2.

3rd. As above, but you may modify your roll by up to +/-3.

CLEAVE: Whenever your character cuts down a foe in close combat, you may make a second attack (with Use Force or similar skill) provided that there are any other opponents within reach.

2nd. As above, but if she fells the second character as well she may make a third attack.

3rd. As above, but your character may now make a fourth attack if she has already slain three in her round.

ARMOR PROFICIENCY: Your character knows how to make best use of her armor. When using armor to negate damage, you may subtract one from the die roll. However, rolling a 20 is still considered a failure and piercing blow.

2nd. As above, you may subtract two.

3rd. As above, but may subtract three.

The Rogue

A scoundrel, scraping along by theft and lies

ABILITIES: You may reroll one ability score, using three dice and keeping the two best. If necessary, recalculate the ability rating using the table on p. 18.

WEAPONS: Short bow: dmg 1d6; missile: reach 2 + 12 arrows (wt 2). A small club: dmg 1d6. An obsidian awl*: damage 1d4 (backstab +1d8). Leather cap: armor 2, wt 2.

OR: A stone adze: dmg 1d6, versatile (1d8), wt 2. A bronze shield: armor 1, defense 3, wt 4.

EQUIPMENT: undersized or oversized garments (choose)*, a wicker beggar’s bowl, a length of rope made from sinews, a stolen copper bracelet*, cedar wood resin*, basic trade tools (as per background), a vagrant’s purse* (makes two items count as one).

ENDURANCE: 8

STARTING ENCUMBRANCE: 8/8

SKILLS AND RANKS: Characters begin at rank 1. When creating a Rogue, you get as free class skills **preternatural fortune** and **vocational proficiency**. In addition, you may choose an additional Rogue skill from the list below.

When your character increases her Rogue class rank, choose an additional skill.

ROGUE CLASS SKILLS

PRETERNATURAL FORTUNE: A peculiar resilience, pre-human instinct, luck or warding spirit aids you in the most unlikely moments. Whenever you suffer chance effects from philters, drugs, charms, magical devices or similar, you may roll twice and choose the least harmful outcome.

#	NAME	
1	Adak	The Rat
2	Fili	Bugeye
3	Khermud	The Hyena
4	Ilud	Crawler
5	Zedum	Flinch
6	Cyrax	Scum
7	Iddo	Gestas
8	Zilpund	Disma
9	Edal	Barabba
10	Bik	Weasel

#	GUISE	
1	Bony	Anxious eyes
2	Bulky	Keen eyes
3	Ugly	Alert eyes
4	Nimble	Young eyes
5	Graceful	Dark eyes
6	Hefty	Lost an eye
7	Creepy	Sad eyes
8	Girlish	Calculating eyes
9	Boyish	Suspicious eyes
10	Majestic	Mad eyes

VOCATIONAL PROFICIENCY: Your character gains a proficiency from her background: whenever your character does something where her background would reasonably be an asset, as agreed upon between the player and referee on a per-situation basis, you may add or subtract one from a single die during your skill test or ability check.

ADDITIONAL ROGUE SKILLS

THIEVERY: The character can steal things straight from the body, bag or purse of another, given some distraction and brief body contact. When doing so, specify what you are after and test Guile. On a 5+, the Rogue takes it, and the target and any vigilant onlookers must check Senses: on a hit they notice the theft within 1d4 rounds; on a miss they are oblivious until the item is needed. For each additional 5+, the Rouge may steal another item or gain another 1d4 rounds of head start as per the player's choice.

MIMIC: The character can imitate the voice and manners of others so well, that even their closest kin have difficulty telling them apart. When spending a day studying someone, check Guile. On a hit, the Rogue can make a flawless imitation of her voice and mannerisms. On a miss, the imitation will pass as an excellent caricature, but won't fool anyone. For each additional day spent studying the target, modify your roll by +/-1.

The Rogue can mimic one person per class rank. Beyond that, once this ability is used mimicking someone else, a previously flawless imitation is reduced to a cunning caricature, while any previous caricature(s) are lost and must be relearned.

DIRTY TRICK: Whenever initiative rolls are tied, you may perform a dirty trick before initiative is rerolled. This trick can be any action other than the most obvious for the situation. For example, a Rogue wielding an adze may not attack with it as a dirty trick but hurling her shield as a discus would qualify.

DUAL WIELDER: If your character is fighting with one weapon in each hand, you may reroll any damage die showing a one using instead the damage die corresponding to her alternate weapon. For example, a dual wielder attacking with a club and an awl would roll damage using six-sided dice for her club, but reroll all ones using the awls four-sided. Should the second die also show a one, you must accept the result.

REPTILIAN REFLEXES: As long as the Rogue has no fatigue, you may add her Senses rating to her defense.

NIGHT VISION: Allowing a moment for her eyes to adapt, you character can see in the dark albeit in black-and-white. Torches or lamplight negates this ability, and the character will be blinded by them until her eyes have adjusted back.

THIEVES' POISON: The Rogue can make a quick and dirty poison out of almost anything bitter, unsavory or unpleasant. When doing so, test Craft. For each 5+ you get one dose. If the poison is ingested or enters the blood, the target must reduce a randomly determined skill rating by one (recovers on a 5+).

If the ingredients used are in themselves harmful (such as an adder's venom) the poison deals 1 damage per round to the target for 1d10 rounds; neither shields nor armor applies.

SLY: Whenever someone follows your recommendations (as per the Advise skill), each success also grants you a reroll on any action that exploits your knowledge of their intended course of action. Should the character stop following your advice or your advice becomes obsolete before you get a chance to capitalize on your suggestions, all unused rerolls are forfeited.

The Mystic

A diviner, using the narcotic reveries of lotus flowers to conjure up shades and apparitions.

WEAPONS: A bronze axe: dmg 1d6, versatile (1d8), wt 2; Bull’s head helmet: armor 2, wt 2.

EQUIPMENT: Fine garments*, 3 doses lotus powder (special: abstinence as below), cedar perfume*, a necklace made from pink glass beads*, a small ceramic lamp, two bone needles*, a pouch of ocher dye, rations for a day.

ENDURANCE: 10

STARTING ENCUMBRANCE: 10/10

LOTUS ABSTINENCE: It is said that the lotus burdens as much in absence as when held. However few doses of lotus powder you have left, they still count as three items for encumbrance purposes. Should you at any time carry more than three doses, the blooms’ permanent weight is adjusted accordingly: four doses counts permanently as four, five as five and so on.

SKILLS AND RANKS: All characters begin as rank 1. When creating a Mystic, you get **lotus trance**, **increasing powers** and **tolerance** as free class skills. In addition, you may choose a lotus spell from the list below.

When your character increases her Mystic class rank, choose an additional lotus spell. Each spell can be chosen more than once for more powerful effects.

MYSTIC CLASS SKILLS

LOTUS TRANCE: Using the powder of the dream-inducing lotus bloom, you may cause shades and apparitions to enter the minds of others. To cast a lotus spell, expend one dose of lotus powder. Your target must immediately make a saving throw as prescribed by the spell. On a miss, she suffers its effect; on a hit the dark powers **recoil** on you, reversing the spell. Make the same saving throw or suffer the effects of the recoil, as interpreted by the referee.

#	NAME	
1	Xalath	Amun
2	Uri	Meccion
3	Zara	Zimurg
4	Barak	Yuval
5	Enoch	Hazmu
6	Balibar	Nair
7	Yaslan	Ninnih
8	Xolani	Koth-Haba
9	Yoon-Ibar	Vomba
10	Ayse	Homa

#	GUISE	
1	Graceful	Bright eyes
2	Lanky	Veiled eyes
3	Strange	Dead eyes
4	Nimble	Fiery eyes
5	Hypnotic	Deep eyes
6	Handsome	Wise eyes
7	Creepy	Enchanting eyes
8	Voluptuous	Starry eyes
9	Boyish	Different colored eyes
10	Majestic	Sad eyes

INCREASING POWERS: By spending additional doses of lotus powder, you can modify your target’s saving throw by adding or subtracting your Mystic class rank. This equals +/-1 for a starting character, +/-2 for a second-rank mystic, +/-3 for a third-rank and so on.

In addition, for each additional rank the maximum number of targets for a spell increases. A second-rank mystic can target two characters with the same spell, a third-rank three and so on. If you do, the spell can only be recoiled by the main or most powerful target, as determined by the referee.

TOLERANCE: You need not roll for random effects when you consume lotus powder, unless you choose to.

LOTUS SPELLS

DANCING SHADOWS: Expend 1 lotus powder to distort the vision of a character or creature in your zone. Your target must check Senses: on a miss, all her actions have a 1-in-2 chance of being misdirected, targeting the shadows instead of you; on a hit, the spell recoils. The effect lasts as long as you remain within eyesight of your target, whether she looks at you or not.

Choosing this spell again increases the number of shadows, leaving only a 1-in-3 chance of targeting you the second time chosen, a 1-in-4 the third and so on.

SHOCK: Expend 1 lotus powder to fill a character or creature in your zone with waking dreams of terror and awe. Your target must check Lore: on a miss, she temporarily suffers 1d12 points of exhaustion; on a hit, it recoils. This counts as items for encumbrance purposes, but recovers at a rate of Vigor points per turn. If this exhaustion reduces any ability rating to one, the character is weary; if reduced to zero the character passes out as if incapacitated.

Choosing this spell again increases the number of damage dice to two the second time chosen, three the third and so on.

DEMONIC TOUCH: Expend 1 lotus powder to target any creature or character within reach. Your target must check Vigor: on a miss, you may trade any one of your conditions for any one of hers, or all the damage you have currently suffered for all the damage she's currently suffered; on a hit, the spell recoils.

Choosing this spell again lets you give more than you take or vice versa. The second time you chose this spell you may trade conditions, including damage, on a two-for-one basis, a three-for-one the third and so on.

ILLUSION: Expend 1 lotus powder to twist the perception of a creature or character into believing the unreal. Your target must check Lore: on a miss, she perceives the illusion exactly as you describe it and acts accordingly for as long as you are within shouting distance of your target. On a hit, the spell recoils.

Choosing this spell again allows you to create two illusions the second time chosen, three the third and so on.

UNBEARABLE PRESENCE: Expend 1 lotus powder to make it impossible for a character or creature in your zone to gaze upon you without suffering. Your target must check Senses: on a miss, she must look away or suffer 1d8 damage each round; on a hit, it recoils. The effect lasts as long as you are within eyesight of your target.

Choosing this spell again increases the number of damage dice to 2d8 the second time, 3d8 the third time and so on.

MIND-SPEAK: Expend 1 lotus powder to project your thoughts into the mind of another, or have hers projected into yours. Target must check Guile: on a miss, she hears any thought you direct at her as if you were speaking it out, and in addition you may spy on hers. The targeted character will not mistake projected thoughts for her own, and will normally recognize the sender's voice in them. You have no more power over her—or her own thoughts—than your words would normally have, meaning that you can only spy on thoughts that currently preoccupy her. The spell lasts as long as you are within shouting distance of your target, whether or not you speak to her. On a hit, the spell recoils.

Choosing this spell again increases its effective distance. The second time the spell is still effective at twice your shouting distance, the third time at thrice and so on. This increased reach only affects spells already woven—the target must still be in your zone to come under the spell.

The Desert Farer

A nomad, braving the sands at the edge of the world.

WEAPONS: A bone waraxe: dmg 1d10, 2-handed, wt 4. A leather slingshot*: dmg 1d4, missile: reach 1. A leather cap: armor 2, wt 2.

OR: Two obsidian spears: dmg 1d6, (thrown: reach 1). An elliptic hide shield: armor 1, defense 2, wt 4.

EQUIPMENT: a colored cloak*, a waterskin (3 uses; wt 3), a small pouch of myrrh*, a necklace with wooden beads*, dates and bread for five days (wt 5), two fowls tied to a stick (wt 2), a tortoise-shell lute, a small urn of olive oil, a lodestone*, a leather wanderer’s sack (makes four items count as one)

ENDURANCE: 14

STARTING ENCUMBRANCE: 15/15 (see below)

SKILLS AND RANKS: Characters begin at rank 1. When creating a Desert Farer, you get **swift** and **curious constitution** as free class skills. In addition you may choose a class skill from the list below.

When your character increases her Desert Farer class rank, choose an additional class skill.

DESERT FARER CLASS SKILLS

SWIFT: Increase your Vigor score by 2. If appropriate, adjust your ability rating accordingly.

CURIOUS CONSTITUTION: For encumbrance purposes only, you may add your class rank to your maximum endurance. As a starting character you add 1, enabling you to carry up to 15 items without fatigue. However, the Desert Farer suffers more from overload than other characters, gaining one point of fatigue per two excess items carried (rounded up) instead of the normal three.

#	NAME	
1	Kabiti	Zeri
2	Ahheshu	Sumakin
3	Loth	Jasher
4	Nadin	Zerex
5	Yourian	Tukul
6	Melucc	Job
7	Ezra	Awan
8	Randh	Nodius
9	Shi-Ulgi	Azul
10	Tzannata	Malim

#	GUISE	
1	Hazy	Burning eyes
2	Weathered	Pale eyes
3	Dreamlike	Glaring eyes
4	Ghostly	Small eyes
5	Tanned	Squinting eyes
6	Furrowed	Beautiful eyes
7	Thin	Smiling eyes
8	Skewed	Wide eyes
9	Eerie	Piercing eyes
10	Majestic	Blank eyes

ADDITIONAL CLASS SKILLS

MIRAGE: Under the midday sun, the Desert Farer begins to diffuse as if she wasn't really there. During these hours, the character is as hard to discern as common folks are in twilight and may hide just as easily using the normal Conceal/Disguise skill. The effect lasts until you step out of the light or until you make yourself known.

TONGUES: You have a keen ear for languages. When spending a day listening to people speaking a language that you don't understand, check Lore. On a hit, you learn enough to communicate with them. For each additional day you spend studying this tongue, you may modify your roll by +/-1.

The Desert farer can keep this spontaneous fluency in a number of languages equal her Lore rating or Class rank, whichever is higher. Beyond that, once this ability is used to learn a new language, the previous language is lost and must be relearned.

EXPERT TRAVELER: When using the Haste or Traverse move to travel, you may forfeit your skill test and instead gain an automatic success.

SPECIALIST: When examining an old or strange object, test Craft. For each 5+, choose one:

- + You know who last possessed the object
- + You know who created the object
- + You know what is wrong with the object and how it can be mended
- + You know what it was used for or where it was used
- + You know a place where you can sell it for great profit.

SURVIVAL INSTINCTS: Chose a favored terrain type: desert, hills, mountains, swamps, rivers, forests or another. In this terrain, your experience and instincts grants you a reroll to all saving throws. In addition, you are never surprised by monsters or foes common to these landscapes.

PATHFINDER: You know paths and passages unknown to most. If you choose to use these trails when travelling through a zone, test Sense at the beginning of your journey. For each 5+, choose one:

- + You may travel one hexagon more per day than the terrain would normally allow
- + You may travel without leaving a trace
- + You may negate the effects of a failed travel test for you or a companion.

If you fail the test, the trail you sought has been washed away by wind or floods, or has been compromised and is no longer safe for travel.

SLEEPWALKER: You can rest while performing monotonous tasks. During an uneventful day or night, you may perform a number of actions requiring skill tests, ability checks or similar equal to your class rank while recovering as if taking an extended rest. However, you still cannot treat your own wounds.

STRANGE CUNNING: You have seen so many things it is like you lived a hundred lives in a thousand different places. Once per month you can draw upon these bits of knowledge to perform actions that are normally reserved for another class. Roll a four-sided die: 1) Mercenary, 2) Rogue, 3) Mystic, 4) Seer.

Choose any one elective skill, spell or sorcery from that class, or any two specialisations if a Mercenary. For as long as you like, you may use this ability as would a first-rank character of that class. However, you must still obey other restrictions, such as the use of bone salt for sorceries or lotus powder for spells.

Once you use a Desert Farer skill, this temporary knowledge begins to fade and is completely lost at nightfall. Only after a full month has passed can it be regained—or another ability gained—as per the procedure above.

The Courtesan

An vagrant entertainer, using beauty and wits to go where others cannot

ABILITIES: You may reroll one ability score, using three dice and keeping the two best. If necessary, recalculate the ability rating using the table on p. 18.

WEAPONS: A thin bronze rapier: dmg 1d6. A thick saffron-colored robe: armor 1.

EQUIPMENT: Fine garments*, cedar perfume*, a theater mask, a marrowbone flute, a jade necklace*, a small ceramic lamp, incense*, a bronze mirror, a pouch of ocher dye, a jar of wine (2 uses, wt 2) and three drinking straws, honey cakes.

ENDURANCE: 10

STARTING ENCUMBRANCE: 10/10

SKILLS AND RANKS: Characters begin at rank 1. When creating a Courtesan, you get **favors** as a free class skill. In addition, you may choose a class skill from the list below.

When your character increases her Courtesan class rank, choose an additional class skill.

COURTESAN CLASS SKILLS

FAVORS: You start with 3d100 shekels worth of favors to collect. The favors are non-transferrable and cannot be used to increase class ranks, but can otherwise be used for anything you and the referee agree upon.

#	NAME	
1	Yalcin	the Pale Flame
2	Eitan	Stars' Beloved
3	Tara	the Summer's Cry
4	Amanak	Lamenter of Duzum
5	Eli	Enlil's Glory
6	Erduann	of the Dusk
7	Sashanna	the Manifold
8	Yana	Ninlil's leman
9	Delia	of the Firstborn Sun
10	Nehuru	the Spirit whistler

#	GUISE	
1	Noble	Emerald eyes
2	Lanky	Almond eyes
3	Pleasant	Diamond eyes
4	Queer	Amber eyes
5	Corpulent	Amethyst eyes
6	Handsome	Jet eyes
7	Dream-like	Jade eyes
8	Voluptuous	Opalescent eyes
9	Boyish	Zircon eyes
10	Proud	Olivine eyes

ADDITIONAL COURTESAN CLASS SKILLS

ALLURE: Exposing your true and unchecked beauty—by shedding your clothes, baring your soul, performing an act of sad desperation or undiluted joy—you are considered proficient in all actions relying on charm or charisma and may add or subtract one to any one die in skill tests and saving throws. In addition, all characters and creatures seeing you must check Lore or be unable to harm you until you cover, they avert their eyes, or until you do something violent or aggressive against them.

REMINISCENCE: Your presence carries the specter of yesteryears, bringing memories to the bereft and sentimentality to the nostalgic. When you exercise your power over someone yearning, test Guile. On a 5+, you remind her of someone she knew. For each additional 5+, you may convince her of a “memory” that you share.

DREAM SPEAKER: At midnight, you can inquire people in their sleep. When you whisper to someone sleeping, test Guile. For each 5+, she must give you the truthful answer to a question. The person remembers the conversation only vaguely, like one would a dream.

AURA: Your actions are infectious; your company feels your sadness when you weep, your joy when you smile, your terror when you tremble. When you focus your feelings, whether sincere or not, test Might. For each 5+, you may alter the mood of a character or creature in your presence. The target won’t necessarily associate the mood with you, but it lasts only as long as she is with or around you.

LIP READING: If you can see a person moving her lips, you can hear what she says no matter how low her voice. This ability doesn’t give you the ability to understand foreign tongues; it does, however, allow you to understand any cues that the tone of a voice would normally give off, such as being upset, fearful or excited.

SOOTHING TOUCH: When you treat someone’s wounds during a rest, they recover an additional 1d4 endurance with each of your successes.

BEAST CALL: You can give perfect imitations of the call, cries, songs and croaking of animals. When imitating an animal or beast you have seen and heard, test Guile. For each 5+, you may give a perfect imitation of a single beast. All animals and characters unaware of its true origins will respond to it as if real. A lion’s roar, for example, will unsettle cattle and scare quarries and children, attract other lions to mate or fight for territory but leave monsters unaffected.

THEATRICS: You are a master of schemes and tricks. When you willfully expose yourself to harm, check Guile twice. If either is successful, you suffer only half the harm, if both are successful you suffer none. Regardless of your rolls, the harm seems real to everyone watching.

For your theatrics to work, you must exert some control over the damage, for example by quaffing the poison yourself or instructing what cup to be used, instructing your executioner from which angle to strike or what weapon to use, choosing what cliff to jump from or similar.

The Seer

A sage, wise in the ways of the stars.

WEAPONS: A crooked meteorite dagger: dmg 1d6. Special: You can choose to roll an additional 1d6 for damage. If you do, the dagger shatters on a 1. Ceremonial bronze helmet *or* thick rawhide cap: armor 2, wt 2.

EQUIPMENT: ragged or fine garments (choose)*, an obsidian mirror, 1 clay tablet, bread and dates for three days (wt 3), a jug of water, dried herbs*, a reed stylus*, 3 doses bone salt*, a turquoise bird in a wooden cage.

ENDURANCE: 10

STARTING ENCUMBRANCE: 10/10

SPIRIT COMBUSTION: Should you become incapacitated due to damage, you must immediately roll a ten-sided die. If the result is lower than or equal to the amount of bone salt you carry, it will disappear in a hissing ghost flame. If you carry 10 or more doses, the spirits released will seize control of your lifeless body on the roll of a 10, pursuing their own strange ends until you have successfully recovered.

SKILLS AND RANKS: Characters begin at rank 1. When creating a Seer, you get **scholarly knowledge**, **immunity**, **bone sorcery** and **ceremonial casting**. In addition, you may choose a sorcery from the list below.

When your character increases her Seer class rank, choose an additional sorcery.

SEER CLASS SKILLS

SCHOLARLY KNOWLEDGE: Your area of expertise is broader than most. Roll twice on the background chart and note the extra results—in these matters you have great scholarly knowledge but little practical experience.

IMMUNITY: If you consume bone salt, you need not roll for random effects unless you choose to.

#	NAME	
1	Nimbubul	Hamuriban
2	Samara	Sanubi
3	Tidri	Dutu
4	Khaliman	Sin-Kamusin
5	Nabu-Sin	The Blind
6	Jannes	Karsuda
7	Tharbis	Hyrid
8	Sherah	Jhir
9	Hor	Jayasur
10	Ban Casban	Tarmun

#	GUISE	
1	Sickly	Cloudy eyes
2	Thin	Empty eyes
3	Dusky	Old eyes
4	Haughty	Crazy eyes
5	Pallid	Cold eyes
6	Obese	Large eyes
7	Leathery	Judgmental eyes
8	Crooked	Dead eyes
9	Imposing	Glowing eyes
10	Tormented	Wicked eyes

BONE SORCERY: By mixing bone salt with blood—from you or another creature—you can cast terrible sorceries (see below). Expend-ing an additional dose of bone salt allows you to reroll all dice of your sorcery test.

CEREMONIAL CASTING: Magic works on a tit for tat: by prolonging the casting time, your sorceries can be made to last longer or target greater areas as detailed in each entry. Additionally, your influence over the spirits increases with your class rank. On rank two, all sorcerous effects are doubled in duration or scope, on rank three they become tripled and so on. This means that for a rank-three Seer, a sorcery that took a minute to cast may last three minutes before dissolving.

BONE SORCERIES

SPIRIT WARD: You can create a sorcerous barrier to keep yourself safe. When you draw a line on the ground to keep others out, expend 1 bone salt and test Lore. On a 5+, you create a powerful ward, long as the line you drew. Anyone crossing it immediately suffers 1d8 damage per Seer rank. For each additional 5+, you may allow passage to someone, or may pass the barrier yourself without destroying it.

The effect lasts until the powder is swept away by wind or rain or by deliberate action on your part.

DEAD MEMORIES: You may see through the eyes of the dead, to learn the secrets they held in life and the fate that befell them. When you draw your mark on a skeleton or corpse, expend 1 bone salt and test Senses. On a 5+, you get a vision of her last moments in life, equal in length to your preparations. For each additional 5+, you may glimpse a useful detail from their life at referee's discretion.

The skeleton or corpse must be intact, lest the visions be fragmented.

FAR SIGHT: You may experience things connected to a place, person or object you have placed your mark on. When placing your farseer's mark, expend 1 bone salt and test Lore. For each 5+, you get an influence. Spend your influence to see, hear or speak through your mark for a period equal in length to your preparations.

Once you have spent all your influence, your mark wears off.

PREMONITION: You can scry into things yet to come. When reading the future in the skies or in blood, expend 1 bone salt and test Senses. On a 5+, you gain a vision equal in length to your preparations. Once during this period, you may nullify everything that happens during a single round by declaring that you foresaw it. During the next round, none of your allies may attempt to recreate the nullified actions.

For each additional 5+, you may nullify another round of actions within that period of time.

WITCH FLAME: Mixing bone salt and phosphor, you can create a powder that burns with a sorcerous blaze when exposed to fire. When concocting your Witch Flame, expend 1 bone salt and test Craft. On a 5+, the Witch Flame will burn for a period equal to your preparations, filling an entire combat zone and dealing 1d8 damage per round to everyone there. In addition, all neighboring zones become bright as if lit by mid-day sun. For each additional 5+, the fire either expands by one zone or increases in damage by an additional 1d8 (your choice).

EVIL EYE: You can draw a powerful glyph of misfortune, instilling bad luck in all who see it. When shaping your mark of misfortune, expend 1 bone salt and test Lore. For each 5+, you get one influence. Spend your influence to have someone gazing at the symbol suffer a -1 penalty to any skill of your choice for a period of time equal to your preparations.

BLOOD & BRONZE

rating — score — ability —

player

name

appearance

classranknext rank

covenantsranknext rank

wealthTot. rank

equipment

6

12

18

other

GVILE

LORE

SENSES

CRAFT

VIGOR

MIGHT

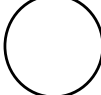
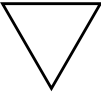
background

weaponsdmg. reachwt.

armordef. armorwt.

DefenseArmorENDURANCE

TotalTotalCurrentMAX



BurdenFatigue

TotalTotal

☐ scarred.

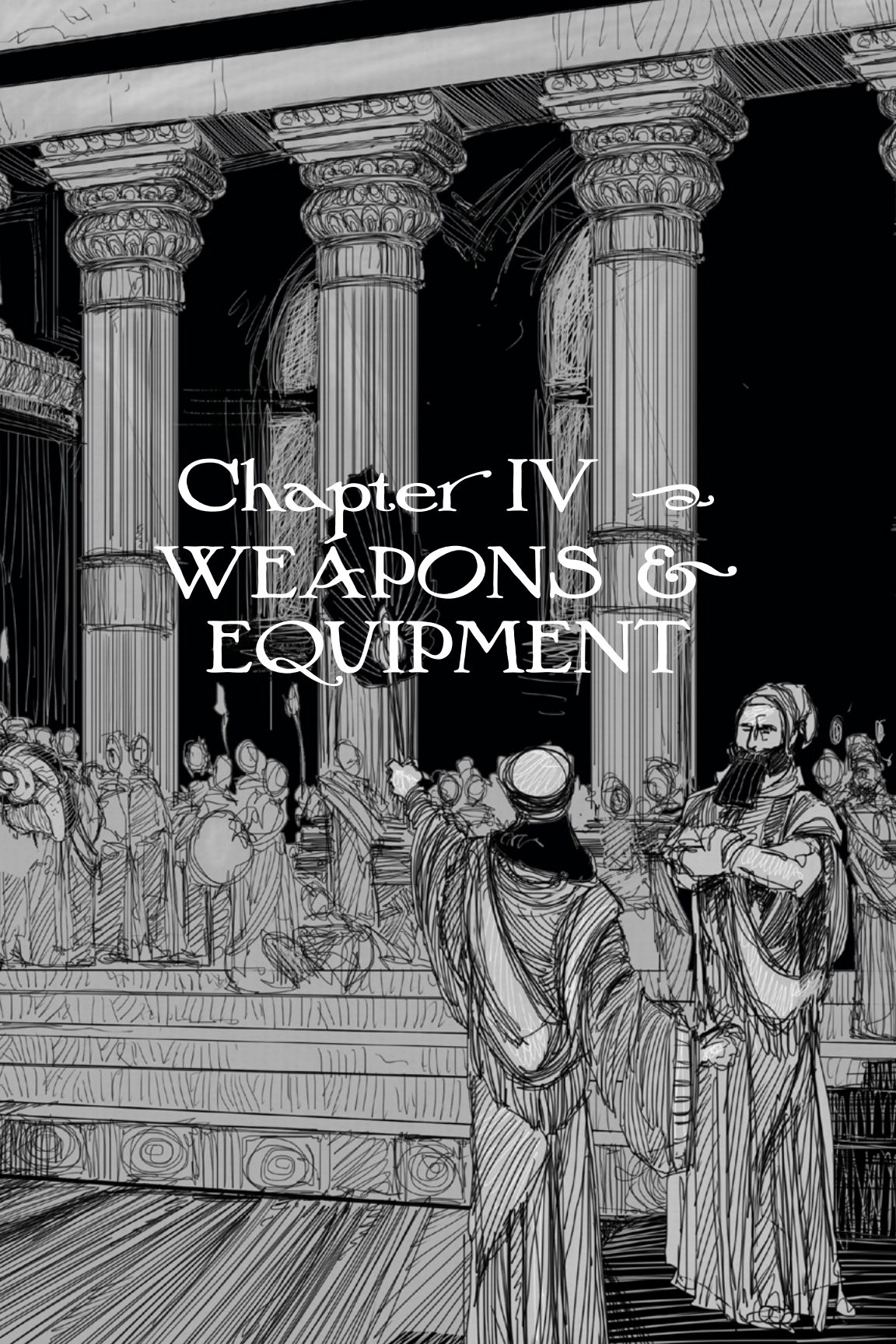
☐ maimed. Lower all ability scores by -1.

☐ dead. Perform one last action.

conditionsheals

skill	roll	effect
Manipulate (Guile)		Each 5+ grants you an influence over someone: spend it to have her reroll a die when acting against your wish.
Disguise/Conceal (Guile)		Each 5+ grants you an influence: spend it to have someone reroll a die when searching for that which you have concealed.
Expert Knowledge (Lore)		Each 5+ lets you remember or deduce something that others are unaware of: ask the referee a question relevant to your knowledge.
Advise (Lore)		Each 5+ lets you grant someone a reroll on the condition that she heeds your advice.
Search (Senses)		Each 5+ lets you find something hidden or easily missed: ask the referee any one question about the object of your search.
Assess (Senses)		Each 5+ lets you see through someone: ask the referee (or player) anything. If you act on this information, you gain a reroll.
Make (Craft)		Say what you seek to create. The referee sets delimitations: quality, time, material or similar. Each 5+ lets you double or halve any one of them.
Treat Wounds (Craft)		Each 5+ lets you grant your patient a recovery die if resting: 1d6 for short rests, 1d10 for extended.
Hurl/Shoot (Vigor)		On a 5+ you hit your mark if in reach: target may check Senses to catch or evade. Each additional 5+ adjusts reach by +1 and saves by +/- 1.
Haste/Traverse (Vigor)		Each 5+ lets you either: traverse a zone without misfortunes, get hold of something in the current zone, or bring someone with you.
Use Force (Might)		State your demand: your target must accept or suffer damage. Each 5+ equals 1 die damage as per weapon.
Guard/Defend (Might)		Each 5+ grants an influence: spend it to reroll damage taken or make yourself the target of an action intended for someone else in your zone.
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____





Chapter IV ~ WEAPONS & EQUIPMENT

WEAPONS & GOODS

The following chapter contains lists of items—equipment, weapons and other goods—that an adventurer might find in the grand bazaars of Sippar. The lists are by no means exhaustive but provide a guide for pricing, availability, encumbrance and other qualities that can be used as reference for trade.

Encumbrance

A character can carry a number of items equal to her starting or maximum endurance without tiring. If your character has an endurance of twelve, she can carry twelve items without penalty. For each three additional items, rounded up, the character suffers a point of **fatigue**. If the character above were to carry 16 pieces of equipment, she would suffer two points of fatigue.

A character's fatigue is subtracted from all her ability scores, making saving throws and ability checks more likely to fail. However, this reduction—being temporary—does not cause ratings to be recalculated. Skill tests and similar rolls are therefore unaffected.

Should any of your character's ability scores drop to one in this fashion, she becomes **weary**. A weary character will pass out if she suffers even a single point of damage, or if any one of her skills are reduced to zero.

Encumbrance must be recalculated at the referee's request. Fatigue can only be relieved during extended rests (see p. 51).

Currencies and Barter

In the world of BLOOD & BRONZE, the basic unit denoting value is called a **shekel**. Sixty shekels is called a **mina**. A shekel isn't a coin proper. Rather, it is an administrative unit, approximately equal to two days' worth of grain for a farmer, or one day's sustenance for a mercenary or a lesser official. Since the value of a shekel varies with the harvest's yield, trade is largely based on barter. For your adventurer to acquire an item, you may either pay the asked price

in shekels or trade the vendor something she wants in exchange. No trader will pay in shekels: this is reserved for high ranking officials and patrons only.

TREASURES

A **treasure** is a rare, powerful or highly sought after object that can be traded for shekels. *Only objects marked as treasure can be sold for shekels.*

OPTIONAL RULE—AN AGE OF THIEVES

By default, characters can only acquire shekels by trading in their treasures or by finding or stealing them from someone wealthy. If preferred, this rule can be altered so that all things can be sold for shekels. The referee should note that in so doing, the focus of the game will be shifted towards trade and petty theft. This approach lends itself well to low-key and “realistic” sessions rich in personal drama that can be a nice change of pace.

Markets

The land of the twin rivers is rich in produce and animal life, but poor in most other resources. Thus, the sprawling cities rely on a constant influx of trade goods: construction materials, spice, ore and gemstones. When supplies arrive, great banquets are held to celebrate the return of the trade expeditions, and the amassing wealth of the cities' rulers.

Other than food, availability of goods is limited and strongly dependent on the arrival of trade caravans. This means that markets in BLOOD & BRONZE are much like today's flea markets: people offering up what they can spare, in order to buy the things they need more.

Living Costs and Upkeep

For each day spent in a city, your character is required to pay at least 1 shekel in upkeep, reflecting the cost for simple food and lodging. If she cannot, she must rely on the hospitality of her contacts within the city or on her ability to steal what she needs, or otherwise go starving (see p. 49).

Common goods

FOOD AND DRINKS

A two liter **jar of beer** (12 s; wt 2) brewed by temple artisans, and a set of drinking straws.

An urn (3 liters) containing **tart, dark-hued wine** of medium quality (17 s; wt 3).

Six rations of **wheat bread and lentils** (6 s; wt 6).

Six rations of **dried meat** (13 s; wt 3).

A **hearty meal** of goat and chick-pea porridge (1 s).

A cup of **grape sherbet** or two **honey cakes**, depending on season (2s).

TOOLS

A **needle and thimble*** made from bone (4 s).

A **copper saw** (20 s).

A **bowdrill** made from roots of the ziziphus tree (3 s).

A ceramic **oil lamp**, with enough oil to burn through the night (30 s).

Olive **lamp oil** (18 s; wt 6). Expendable (6): refills a lamp to burn through the night.

A cup of **cedar oil paint** (24 s).

WILDERNESS EQUIPMENT

A **fowler's net** (15 s).

3 men's length of **hempen rope** (6 s).

A **barbed fishing spear and net** (18s; wt 2).

A **linen bedroll** (20 s; wt 2). +1 endurance recovery during extended rests.

Three **torches** (6 s; wt 3).

A **wicker sunshade**, decorated with mythical motives (30 s).

CLOTHES*

A **wool shawl**, with petal embroideries (20 s).

A **wool turban**, white as a cloud (14 s).

A **long linen shirt** of akkadian cut (24 s).

A **fringed gown** (30 s).

A **green linen breast-band** (12 s).

A **loin cloth** made from wool (10 s).

A **layered skirt** of pale blue flax (20 s).

Bright red Elamite **trousers** (30 s).

A pair of **palm leaf sandals** (12 s).

A pair of **steerhide shoes** (30 s).

BEAUTY

A knee-length **raven black wig*** (40 s).

A set of **bronze razors*** (22 s).

A small box of rhinoceros horn with **blush powder** (16 s; wt ½). 6 uses.

A clay cup of **sandalwood body oil*** (12 s).

Cedarwood perfume* from faraway Tyre (20 s). 6 uses.

A **headdress** of magpie feathers (60 s).

LEISURE

A wooden **checkers game** (10 s).

Four many-faceted **granite dice*** (3 s).

A large **obsidian mirror** (35 s; wt 3).

A **clay tablet**, containing two chapters of an epic tale (25 s).

Reed stylus and a copper sharpener (12 s).

A **bone flute***, intoned for songs of joy (30 s).

A **reed pipe***, intoned for songs of woe (12 s).

An arched, silk-stringed **harp** (120 s; wt 2).

A **lyre**, made from turtle shell (80 s).

Three **contraceptive ointments**, made from laserwort resin (20 s). There's a 1-in-12 chance that they have no effect.

War Gear

WEAPON	DMG	SPECIAL	COST	
Small weapons	1d4	wt 0	25 s	
Punch, Bite, Strangle-hold...	1d4	wt 0; no crit	-	
Awl	1d4	wt 0; backstab (+1d8)	70 s	
Lead dart	1d4	wt 1 / 3; thrown	30 s	
Slingshot	1d4	wt 0; missile: reach 1	50 s	
Basic weapons	1d6		100 s	
Staff, Rock, Clay tablet...	1d6	no crit	-	
Cudgel	1d6	no crit; bludgeon (1d4)	300 s	
Meteorite dagger	1d6	iron	400 s	
Khopesh	1d6+1		300 s	
Duck-billed axe	1d6	versatile (1d8)	160 s	
Javelin	1d6	thrown	120 s	
Bow	1d6	2-handed; missile: reach 2	250 s	
Great weapons	1d10	wt 4; 2-handed	250 s	
Mace	1d8+1	wt 4	300 s	
Tall spear	1d8	wt 4; piercing +2	350 s	
Crescent axe	1d10	wt 3; guard breaking	700 s	
Obsidian warclub	1d10	wt 6; bludgeon (1d8)	500 s	
Great bow	1d10	wt 4; missile: reach 4	700 s	
SHIELDS & ARMOR	ARMOR	DEF	SPECIAL	COST
Shield	-	2	wt 2	120 s
Great wicker shield	-	3	wt 4	100 s
Bronze shield	1	3	wt 4; adds to other armor	400 s
Helmet	2	-	wt 2; adds to other armor	200 s
Thick cloth	3	-	wt 3	150 s
Primitive	4	-	wt 6	150 s
Stiffened leather	6	-	wt 6	360 s
Bronze scale	8	-	wt 8	600 s
Full bronze	10	-	wt 10	1000 s
OTHER WAR GEAR		SPECIAL	COST	
Quiver		Holds up to 12 arrows	12 s	
Six clay-headed arrows		Breaks when used	4 s	
Six bronze-headed arrows		Breaks on a 1-in-6	12 s	
Whetstone			50 s	
Limestone warpaint		6 uses	24 s	

Qualities and Characteristics

Most of the time, your imagination and creativity will suffice to determine how an item can be used. However, some items have special rules to govern their usage, called **qualities**. Below is a list covering common qualities and their meaning.

LIST OF QUALITIES

2-HANDED: Must be wielded with both hands.

ARMOR: Can be used to negate the effect of an attack. When you do, roll a twenty-sided die under or equal to its armor score. On a miss, the armor is destroyed. On a 20, the armor both breaks and is useless against the attack.

BACKSTAB: When attacking an opponent who is unprepared, pre-occupied of unaware of your presence, you deal extra damage as indicated by the weapon.

BLUDGEON: Upon impact, this weapon deals one or more dice of temporary exhaustion in addition to any physical damage. For example, a weapon with the bludgeon (1d6) quality deals a six-sided die points of temporary exhaustion; a weapon with bludgeon (1d12) deals a twelve-sided die. A player can recover half her character's temporary exhaustion during a short rest, on the condition that the remaining part is transformed to normal exhaustion. Unless otherwise noted, all NPCs are considered fully burdened and at fatigue 0.

COST: The amount of shekels your character must pay to acquire it.

DMG—DAMAGE DIE: When you deal damage using this weapon, the **damage dice** determine how much. 1d6 means you roll one six-sided die, 2d4 means you roll two four-sided dice and sum them. For each point of damage dealt, your opponent's endurance is lowered by one.

Whenever you roll the highest number possible on a damage dice (4 on a 1d4, 6 on a 1d6 and so on) you deal critical damage: roll another damage die and add it to the total.

DEFENSE: When equipped, this item reduces all damage with the number indicated. For example, if your character has a shield with defense 3 and is hit twice for 7 and 9 damage the effect of both attacks are reduced by 3 points, leaving 4 and 6 damage respectively.

GUARD BREAKING: Shields are ineffective against this weapon.

IRON: Made from sharp but brittle meteorite iron. You may reroll one damage die, but if you do the weapon breaks on a 1.

MISSILE: This ranged weapon requires sling-bullets, arrows or similar. Fired using the Shoot skill, missile weapons deal one damage die per success. In addition, missile weapons still deal half damage when evaded.

NO CRIT—NO CRITICAL DAMAGE: This weapon doesn't allow you to roll additional dice when you score maximum damage.

PIERCING: Opponent must add this number to her armor check.

REACH: This weapon can be used against opponents in another zone on the battlefield. A weapon with reach 1 can be used against opponents in an adjacent zone; reach 2 can be used against opponents two zones away and so on.

VERSATILE: Though normally a one-hand weapon, you can use this weapon with two hands to deal more damage or gain another bonus as indicated by the weapon.

WT (X)—WEIGHT: For encumbrance purposes, this piece of equipment counts as X items. A weight 3 item counts as three pieces of equipment; a weight 1/3 item counts as one third.

THROWN: This weapon is designed to be flung, hurled or thrown. Hurling using the namesake skill, weapons with the thrown quality deal one damage die per success. However, the target may evade or catch it by checking Senses.

Lotus Powder

Lotus powder is a powerful hallucinogenic poison, diffusing the border between the waking world and the gods' dark reveries. When a character consumes it, roll on the chart below to determine its effects. Mystics need not roll; Rogues roll twice and choose. All effects lasts 1d6 hours, unless otherwise stated.

LOTUS ABSTINENCE: Using or even possessing lotus powder causes abstinence. A character carrying a dose of lotus powder will still suffer its weight when the dose is gone. Should she at any time hold more than one dose, the permanent burded increases proportionally.

D66	LOTUS POWDER EFFECTS
11	Oily blood gushes from your nose.
12	Your ears ring with mad chimes, cancelling out all sounds from the surrounding world.
13	Your sight become blinded with tears, unless under water where vision is crystal clear.
14	Everything you stare at is accompanied by a twin, doing other things for other purposes.
15	Vertigo besets you, as you feel the world swirl through the vast emptiness of time.
16	A ravenous hunger torments you.
21	Your senses sharpen, but your body becomes heavy and feeble.
22	Your body becomes locked in cramps.
23	You become surrounded by figures only you can see, scrutinizing you with vulture eyes and speaking in a language you cannot understand.
24	Every crevice crawls with insects, speaking to you in drilling voices.
25-26	Cured from diseases and curses.
31	Slow. You act last in every round, regardless of initiative.

32	Quick. You act first in every round, regardless of initiative.
33	Tireless. You may carry twice your endurance in items without suffering fatigue.
34	Babble. The words you say don't make sense to anyone else.
35	You can see with your eyes closed, but colors become inverted.
36	You become shook by violent mood-swings. Every minute, roll a die: odd, mirth; even, gloom.
41	You feel neither pain nor joy, only the slight undulations of the earth.
42	Thirst. You must drink 1d4 urns of water each hour, or lose 1d4 endurance per urn missed. In addition, you cannot recover until you have drunk your fill.
43-51	You fall into a baleful sleep.
52-53	All poisons, illnesses or evil spirits lose their grip of you.
54-61	You experience ecstatic dreams.
62-63	Strange effect: roll again but target someone else with the effect.
64	Enlightened. 1d4+1 questions are answered by a demon savant.
65	Grazed. A god passed you by in your sleep. You cannot rest nor recover the following week, for fear of falling into the same dream again.
66	Beheld. A god has seen you in the black dreams and marked you with its ominous curiosity. Check Might: on a miss your death is instant, on a hit it will come within a week.

COST AND AVAILABILITY

Lotus powder is heavily addictive. Its cost varies with the desperation of the seller. The referee should assume that a dose of lotus powder costs 1d100 shekels. In addition, the component may only be available on a roll of 5 or more, using a die appropriate for the market's size.

Bone Salt

Bone salt is a crystalline dust of unknown origin used in sorceries or to bring glorious or horrible memories of lives past. When a character consumes bone salt, roll on the chart below. Seers and other sorcerers need not roll; Rogues roll twice and choose. Effects last 1 day unless otherwise stated.

SPIRIT COMBUSTION: Taking damage while carrying bone salt carries the risk of a spontaneous spirit combustion. Should you become incapacitated due to damage, you must immediately roll a ten-sided die. If the result is lower than or equal to the amount of bone salt you carry, it will disappear in a hissing ghost flame. If you carry 10 or more doses, the spirits released will seize control of your lifeless body on the roll of a 10, pursuing their own strange ends until you have successfully recovered.

D12 BONE SALT EFFECTS

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1-3 | Recollections of a life that isn't yours. Roll once on the background chart: the haunting knowledge grants you a +1 proficiency bonus to all skill tests where this knowledge is relevant. |
| 4 | Fragmented visions. Roll twice on the background chart, as above. However, the mental strain halves your endurance. |
| 5 | Fortitude. Your endurance is increased by +2d4. |
| 6 | Celerity. You may add +1d6 to your weapon speed. |
| 7 | The spirit can write and read all languages. After the first day has passed, this ability lasts for +1d4 additional texts. |
| 8 | The spirit offers you a permanent proficiency, in return for a costly favor (at the referees discretion). |

- | | |
|----|---|
| 9 | The salt is bitter like ash and fills you with overpowering grief over a loss you hadn't known but that is now part of you. |
| 10 | If the spirit ever was human, it has long since devolved. You can speak the language of all beasts, but you forget that of mortals. |
| 11 | Possessed. The words you utter aren't yours anymore. |
| 12 | Profound knowledge. In life, the spirit now haunting your soul must have been a scholar or a fool for it seemingly possesses an all-encompassing knowledge. You may ask the spirit any 10 questions, and it will answer. However, for each answer the referee will roll a twenty-sided die under the number of questions previously asked to determine if the answer is deceitful or not. |

COST AND AVAILABILITY

Bone salt is a finite resource, and is highly sought after by seers and sorcerers, despite common folks' fear for it. The referee should assume that whenever available, a dose of bone salt costs no less than 2d100 shekels. In addition, the component is only available on a roll of 5 or more, using a die appropriate for the market's size ranging from 1d4 (thus impossible) for common vendors to 1d12 for truly massive and bustling bazaars.



Chapter V ~
RULES of
the GAME

RULES

In this chapter, you will find all the rules needed for playing BLOOD & BRONZE.

Abilities

In BLOOD & BRONZE, all characters have six different **abilities** measuring how apt they are at various tasks. The six abilities are presented below.

GUILE

Guile is used for tricking and charming as well as sneaking and hiding. Two basic skills are associated with Guile: **Manipulate** and **Disguise/Conceal**. With a success on the basic Guile skills, you get influence which allows you to affect the outcome of someone else’s actions by having them reroll a die.

LORE

Lore is used for knowledge and deduction, as well as for devising plans and thinking on your feet. Two basic skills are associated with Lore: **Expert Knowledge** and **Advise**. With a success on the basic Lore skills, you—or your allies—gain some helpful insights from your character’s wisdom.

SENSES

Senses is used for careful observations and scrutiny, as well as empathy and instincts. Two basic skills are associated with Senses: **Search** and **Assess**. With a success on the basic Senses skills, you find something hidden or see through someone’s lies.

CRAFT

Craft is used for creating and altering things, as well as mending them and curing others. Two basic skills are associated with Craft: **Make** and **Treat Wounds**. With a success on the basic Craft skills, you get to create or alter the state of something using certain guidelines. If you create or tamper with an object, the referee will set up delimitations for you: things you need, time and so on. If you treat someone’s ailments or wounds, the delimitations will be described by the condition you wish to cure.

VIGOR

Vigor is used for running, leaping, swimming, scaling and traveling the world, as well as hurling objects and shooting bows. Two basic skills are associated with Vigor: **Haste/Traverse** and **Hurl/Shoot**. With a success on the basic Vigor skills, you are allowed to move your adventurer or send a projectile across a zone (see p. 47).

MIGHT

Might is used for destroying objects and attacking or threatening people, as well as for thwarting their attempts. Two basic skills are associated with Might: **Use Force** and **Guard/Defend**. With a success on the basic Might skills, you may impose your will on someone or thwart her actions. If you impose your will, the target suffers damage if she refuses (see p. 48).

ABILITY SCORES & RATINGS

Two numbers are associated with each ability: the ability score and the ability rating.

Ability scores normally range from 3 to 12, though they can reach as high as 18. When making a saving throw, you try to roll equal to or under this score with a twenty-sided die.

The **ability rating** is derived from the ability score, using the chart below. It commonly ranges from 1 to 4, but can reach up to 6. The ability rating indicates the number of six-sided dice you roll during skill tests.

If your character’s ability scores change during the game, consult the conversion chart and recalculate her ability ratings if appropriate.

ABILITY SCORE	ABILITY RATING
3-5:	1
6-8:	2
9-11:	3
12-14:	4
15-17:	5
18:	6

Skill Tests

When a situation is so uncertain that it can't be resolved using common sense, when there are conflicts of interest or too much at stake, your character must depend on her skills to perform her intended actions. If the skill requires you to test an ability, follow the steps below.

MAKING A SKILL TEST

1 Decide which ability to use. The skill description will tell you which; if you are unsure, ask the referee.

2 Roll dice. Roll a number of six-sided dice equal to the relevant ability rating.

3 Count successes. In the ability test, each 5+ (5 or 6) that you roll counts as a success. If you roll at least one success, the action results in a positive outcome. More successes indicate an even better outcome. A failure may result in a misfortune or other negative effect at the referee's discretion.

4 Determine the outcome. The skill will give mechanical consequences, like dealing more damage. Exactly what happens is determined by your action and the referee.

Saving Throws

Saving throws—or ability checks—are used for reactive actions and to determine whether or not a character is affected by a looming threat. Like a trap, for example: it just sits there, ready to spring when someone makes an unfortunate move. The saving throw simply determines if your character avoids making that unfortunate move or not.

MAKING A SAVING THROW

1 Decide the appropriate ability score to check against. The referee describes the hazard and determines an appropriate ability.

2 Roll a twenty-sided die. As always, you roll for your character and the referee rolls for hers.

3 Compare the result with the ability score. If the result is higher than the ability score, your character suffers the misfortune. Otherwise, her instincts and experience save her.

On the roll of a 1, your character always evades; on a 20, she always fails.

Saves

GUILE is used for saving throws to withstand truth serums and mind reading, to pass unnoticed or avoid angering a foe, and in all other situations where stealth, trickery and deceit are key to survival.

LORE is used for saving throws to withstand paralyzation and petrification, fear, repulsion, mind controlling magic, and in all other situations where wisdom, willpower and seniority are key to survival.

SENSES is used for saving throws to dodge rays and missiles, to avoid tripwires and pressure-plates, as well as in all other situations where instincts, reflexes and vigilance are key to survival.

CRAFT is used for saving throws to avoid baleful effects when tinkering with magical and other devices, to see whether equipment holds or breaks during a fall, as well as in all other situations where deftness, dexterity and know-how are key to survival.

VIGOR is used for saving throws to evade area effects and fire breaths, as well as all other situations where speed, agility and physique are key to survival.

MIGHT is used for saving throws to withstand poisons and maladies, to break free from strangle-holds, to see whether an arm remains functional after being crushed under a boulder, as well as in all other situations where strength, resilience and toughness are key to survival.

Altering the Outcome

Many skills and actions give you the opportunity to swing the balance to your favor by altering the outcome of a skill test, saving throw or other die roll. Below is a list of the most common ways to alter a character's chances of success.

REROLLS

Some skills, like Assess and Advise, let you aid your comrades by granting them **rerolls**. Unless the skill says otherwise (as with influence) the character's player chooses what die or dice to reroll, thus increasing her chances of success.

INFLUENCE

Skills like Manipulate and Conceal give you **influence** over another character's actions. This means that you can hinder her efforts by making her reroll one or more dice. In contrast to regular rerolls, your influence lets *you* decide which dice and when your target must reroll. This way, you can radically lower her chances of success.

MODIFICATIONS

Skills like Hurl and Shoot let you **modify** the outcome of a die roll. This means that you may add or reduce a number of pips from the die. For example, a modification of +/-2 would allow you to alter a roll of 8 to either 10 or 6.

Whether to add to or subtract from the die roll (thus making it more or less difficult) is entirely up to you. However, you must decide *before* the check is made.

PROFICIENCIES

Some characters, like Rogues and those under the influence of bone salt, may have one or more proficiencies. Whenever your character does something where this proficiency would reasonably be an asset—as would deciphering a text for a character with proficiency as a scribe or accountant—you may modify a die rolled during a skill test or ability check by +/-1, for example making a 4 into a 5 and thus a success.

OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES

If you devise a cunning plan, if circumstances are to your advantage or if you advocate your cause well, the referee may grant you an additional die for your skill test.

For example, if you try to persuade someone (using the Manipulation skill) and you give compelling reasons for her to trust you, the referee might allow you an extra die. If your words are moving enough, the referee might even decide that the NPC is convinced, letting you skip the skill test altogether. The reverse is also true: if an NPC is trying to persuade your character, you are free to decide that the words ring so true that the attempt succeeds without a skill test on the referee's part.

On the other hand, if you say something really thoughtless or provoking, the referee might remove a die or even decide that the NPC stops listening to you...

CHANCES OF SUCCESS FOR SKILL TESTS

Ability rating	Number of successes						% Success
	0	1	2	3	4	5	
1	67%	33%	-	-	-	-	33%
2	44%	44%	11%	-	-	-	55%
3	30%	44%	22%	4%	-	-	70%
4	20%	39%	30%	10%	1%	-	80%
5	13%	33%	33%	16%	4%	1%	87%
6	9%	26%	33%	22%	8%	2%	91%

Zones

To keep track of where your adventurer is, where her adversary stands and where the treasure is hidden, **BLOOD & BRONZE** uses **zones**. A zone is a smaller or larger portion of the world, characterized by a certain surrounding, circumstance or scenery. Zones between Sippar and Eshnunne, for example, would include the Great Barrens, the crossing of the Tigris River, and Sardun. In the city, a zone can be a neighborhood, a landmark building, a town square or the catacombs below. And inside a large mansion, each room would be a zone. Zones scale with your actions.

On the battlefield, zones can be anywhere you fight: a narrow ledge, a lookout tower, a copse of cypresses, a dry riverbed, a pond or a rope swinging from the gallows. As the battlefield changes, so do its zones: when a giant serpent tries to swallow your character whole, its mouth may become a new zone.

To keep track of zones and the characters' positions, it is handy to use maps. A map can be drawn in detail, like a "real" map, or consist of circled words with lines showing their connections like a mindmap. The referee can also create three-dimensional scenarios using miniatures and war-game terrain—or by using dominoes, books, boxes and soda cans as terrain and pawns or chess-pieces in lieu of miniatures. However, zones work equally well if they are purely in your shared imagination.

RULERS AND GRIDS

If your group favors using rulers for measuring distance or counting squares or hexagons on a battle-grid, assume a zone to equal four units. Thus, any character can move up to four units freely (as it would be considered moving within a zone or crossing from just shy of its "border" into the next), and four additional units for each success with the Haste or Traverse skill. Suitable units would be inches, centimeters, squares or finger-widths depending on scale and preferences.

Rounds

Most of the time, the game will flow just like a normal conversation. First the referee sets a scene. Then you and your fellow players describe what your characters do, taking turns talking and listening, asking questions, commenting and chatting. The referee responds by telling what happens around you—what other characters or creatures do, what they say, how the scenery changes. Sometimes you will roll dice, sometimes the referee does and once it is resolved you go back to taking turns talking.

At times, however, it may be important to know who does what and when. Maybe you face a threat so dire that your life depends on whether you or the opponent acts first. Or maybe there are dozens of things happening simultaneously. In these cases, you use rounds to structure the action. A **round** is a segment of time, just long enough or short enough for each character to do something. During a frantic combat, a round might be a few heartbeats, while during a journey across *The Shifting Sands* it might be several days. Rounds scale with your actions. The essence of the round is just this: everybody gets an opportunity to act and react. That is why it is called a round.

INITIATIVE

To decide which side gets to act first, you may roll for **initiative** at the beginning of a combat, chase or other hectic scene. For the initiative roll, the referee rolls a die for the NPCs and one of the players rolls a die for the party. Whichever side rolls highest gets to act first. On a tie, you roll again or face a simultaneous pandemonium.

SURPRISE

If one or more characters are **surprised**, their players forfeit their turn during the first round. Starting with the second round, they once more act according to their initiative.

Combat and Damage

The world of BLOOD & BRONZE is a perilous place. The wilderness is home to savage beasts, cutthroats and vile monsters, while the cities house evil rulers, sinister gods and their lackeys. Death is an ever present threat to all, including your character. In this section, you will find the rules covering damage, death and recovery.

MELEE

A character can attack in melee any other character in her zone, making use of the Use Force skill. The skill allows for all-out attacks with the intent to murder, as well as attempts to disarm, subdue, crush, trip, be-hand and so forth. The target chooses whether to accept the outcome or to suffer damage instead. If no options but death are given by the assailant player, the target might be given a chance to plead for her life at the referee's discretion.

RANGED ATTACKS

A character can attack opponents not in her zone, making use of the Hurl/Shoot skill. The target must be within reach of the weapon used: a successful skill test amounts to naught if the projectile falls short of its target.

Ranged attacks normally grant their target a chance to evade by checking Senses. Thrown weapons deal no damage if evaded and might even be caught in the flight if the player so chooses. Bows and other missile weapons, on the other hand, being smaller and more difficult to evade, still deal half damage when evaded.

CALLED SHOTS

A character can choose to suspend the resolution of her ranged attack, instead making a **called shot**. To do so, the player specifies both a target and a zone during her turn but makes no skill test until the end of the target's next turn. If the targeted character is still in the same zone at that point, a successful attacks deals an additional damage die. If not, damage is reduced by one die per zone the character has moved.

DAMAGE DICE

A character suffers damage when something harmful happens to her: as the effect of a skill or action or because of environmental hazards such as traps, falls, fires, poisons and so on.

To determine the amount of damage suffered, the assailant player (or referee for NPCs and environmental hazards) rolls damage dice. For willed attacks, the number of damage dice inflicted equals the number of successes rolled, whereas the size of the damage dice depends on the weapon used. Damage dice commonly range from four-sided for small weapons to twelve-sided for massive. For environmental hazards, spells and similar, both the number of dice and their size are determined by the rules, adventure setup, or referee.

CRITICAL HITS

If you roll the highest possible number on a damage die (a 4 on a 1d4, a 6 on a 1d6, an 8 on a 1d8 and so on), you may roll another die and add it to the total. This is called a **critical hit**. If your second roll also maxes, you get to roll a third and so on.

Note that improvised weapons and (human) natural weapons don't normally inflict critical hits. These weapons are tagged with "no crit" in the equipment lists.

FLANKING BONUS

When attacking an opponent who is already engaged in battle with someone else, you gain a **flanking bonus** equal to the number of allies who fight her. The flanking bonus is added to the damage dealt. So, if three allies fight a single opponent, all gain a +2 flanking bonus to the damage they deal.

TWO WEAPONS

Any character can fight with a weapon in each hand, altering between them as necessity demands. Unless otherwise noted by a skill or similar, fighting with two weapons neither grants two attacks nor increased damage. However, the character so doing suffers no penalties when using her off-hand weapon.

Other Sources of Damage

FALLING

A falling character suffers 1d6 damage per three meters fallen. A successful saving throw against Vigor halves the damage.

FIRE DAMAGE

Just like weapons, fires and flames deal damage depending on their size. A torch deals 1d4, a campfire 1d6, a large fire 1d8 and a hellish blaze 1d10. Prolonged exposure increases the damage one step each round: from 1d4 to 1d6, from 1d6 to 1d8 and so on. Fire doesn't deal critical damage like normal weapons; instead it spreads on a damage roll of 5+. A spreading fire means that the character or creature is now engulfed in flames, suffering one die damage from this fire *as well as* from the original fire if still present.

DROWNING

All characters can stay afloat as long as they have no fatigue and the water is calm. Swimming is considered as moving through difficult terrain. A failed skill test means that the character suffers 1d6 points of exhaustion. Each point of exhaustion counts an item when calculating encumbrance. A fatigued character instead suffers 1d10 points of exhaustion with a failed test and 1d6 on a success.

Once a swimming character becomes weary, she is drowning and loses one point of endurance per round until she dies or is brought to shore. Exhaustion from swimming is temporary and up to half can be recovered during a short rest; full recovery requires an extended rest.

STARVATION

A starving character doesn't recover during extended rests, whether left alone or treated by others.

THIRST

Each day without enough water to drink, a character suffers a -1 penalty to all ability scores. Should a score reach zero, the character falls unconscious. Below zero, she dies.

Armor

If your character is wearing armor, you may choose to negate all damage suffered from a single attack and instead let her armor take the hit. When you do, roll a twenty-sided die under or equal to your character's **armor score**. On a hit, her armor withstands the blow; on a miss, it is destroyed. Either way, the character suffers no damage from the attack. However, rolling a 20 means that the blow pierced, sliced or sundered the armor: the armor is ruined and the attack deals full damage.

Naturally, damage from drowning, poisoning and similar cannot be avoided in this fashion.

NPC ARMOR

Armor can save a character's life multiple times, which can make combat between armed opponents lengthy to the point of tedium. To avoid this, the referee is advised to let NPCs, but not player characters, suffer full damage if they fail their armor check. This way, even armed opponents can be felled in a single blow.

Player characters, on the other hand, will not be so easily slain but will suffer the long-term pecuniary punishment of having to part with their hard-earned wealth to acquire new armor or repair their old.

SHIELDS

Unlike armor, shields and similar items offer a constant, albeit less drastic, damage reduction determined by their **defense rating**. As long as the shield is donned, this value is subtracted from each and every hit. If your character's shield has a defense of two, each hit she suffers deals two less points of damage to her—even if she is hit consecutive times during a single round.

As with armor, damage from drowning, poisoning and similar cannot be avoided in this fashion.

Endurance Loss

The higher your character's endurance, the more damage and hardships she can withstand. Each time your character suffers a point of damage, you lower her **current endurance** by one. Leave maximum endurance unchanged as this indicates your character's potential for recovery.

INCAPACITATED

When your adventurer's endurance reaches zero, she is **incapacitated**. An incapacitated character cannot do anything, except wail, moan or twitch in agony and pain.

Once incapacitated, a character must be cared for during one or more extended rests to recuperate. The character remains incapacitated until restored to full endurance.

INJURED

At -3 endurance, your character is **injured**. When this happens, you must immediately choose a permanent consequence of the damage:

- + scarred. Your character will forever bear scars to remind her of this defeat.

- + maimed. All of your character's ability scores are reduced by -1.

- + dead. Your character cannot be saved. However, she may immediately perform a last action ignoring her incapacitated status.

Regardless of your choice, your character is out of action for the remainder of the combat. Like with incapacitated characters, injured characters can only recover during extended rests.

DEATH & LAST ACTIONS

The permanent consequences of injuries are listed on your character sheet. As a default, you can only choose each consequence once for your character. This means that, if not sooner, the third time your character becomes injured she will die.

Once you let your character die from her wounds she may immediately perform a **last action**, momentarily ignoring her incapacitation. After that, she's dead. Make a new character. The referee will let your new character join the adventure at first opportunity.

ENCUMBRANCE & FATIGUE

Endurance isn't used only for keeping track of damage; it also determines how many items a character can carry without being overburdened. For each three item in excess of her maximum endurance, rounded up, she suffers one point of **fatigue**.

Fatigue lowers all ability scores, making saving throws more likely to fail. Each point of fatigue lowers all ability scores by one. Ratings and skill tests are unaffected, however, leaving active rolls equally likely to succeed as normal.

EXHAUSTION

Blunt weapons, swimming or difficult conditions may cause **exhaustion**. Each point of exhaustion is considered as one item, for purposes of calculating fatigue.

Unless otherwise noted, NPCs are considered fully equipped. Any exhaustion they suffer results directly in fatigue.

WEARINESS

Should your character's fatigue reduce one or more of her ability scores to one, she is **weary**. A weary character is on the brink of collapsing. If she suffers even a single point of damage she will pass out and become incapacitated. In addition, any further burdens will require a Vigor test as if traversing difficult terrain. Failure on such a roll will also result in the character collapsing from strain.

The referee should assume that a collapsing character drops all excess load. Since fatigue is recalculated each extended rest, the character will normally recover and come to after a single night's rest.

Rest and Recovery

To recover endurance, your character must rest. In BLOOD & BRONZE there are two categories of rest: the short rest and the extended rest, detailed below.

SHORT RESTS

A short rest is a quick breather, nothing more. You can take a short rest at any time, as long as you are not attacked or otherwise disturbed. When taking a short rest you forfeit your action this round to recover 1d4 points of endurance.

During a short rest, your character can regain no more than half of the endurance lost since her last extended rest. Older wounds and further healing both require an extended rest.

Incapacitated or injured characters cannot benefit from short rests.

EXTENDED RESTS

When taking an extended rest your character makes a camp, eat, drink, and sleep for a full night or equal. Pay upkeep or reduce your characters rations by one, and regain 1d4 endurance points. During an extended rest, your character can heal old and grave wounds up to her starting endurance.

An incapacitated or injured character can only regain endurance during extended rests, and will remain incapacitated until fully recovered.

THE RECOVERY DIE

If someone treats your character's wounds, you roll one or more dice to determine how much you recover. These dice are called **recovery dice**. During a short rest, you roll six-sided dice; during an extended rest you roll ten-sided dice. Your character recovers endurance equal to the score rolled.

But recovery dice can also be used to remove conditions or other ongoing effects, provided you roll high enough. How high you need to score is determined by the condition when applicable, otherwise the referee. As a rule of thumb, a 5+ will remove almost any temporary ailment, whereas an 8 or even a 10 might be required for sickness and other severe and lasting effects.

Recovery dice are resolved separately. This means that some conditions can only be cured during extended rests.

RECOVERING FATIGUE

Fatigue can only be recovered during extended rests. Each time you take an extended rest, you may recalculate your character's burden and adjust her fatigue accordingly.

Exhaustion can normally be halved once during a short rest, while full recovery requires an extended rest. In some cases, however, recovery can be much slower. Consult the source of exhaustion for further details.

DURING A SHORT REST, YOUR CHARACTER...

- ...forfeits her actions during one round.
- ...can recover no more than half her lost endurance.
- ...recovers 1d4 point of endurance.
- ...gains 1d6 as recovery dice by having her wounds treated by another character.
- ...may recover from conditions.
- ...may not recalculate fatigue.

DURING AN EXTENDED REST, YOUR CHARACTER...

- ...forfeits all actions during a night.
- ...can recover up to her maximum endurance.
- ...recovers 1d4 point of endurance.
- ...gains 1d10 as recovery dice by having her wounds treated by another character.
- ...may recover from conditions.
- ...may recalculate fatigue.



Chapter VI ~
The BASIC
SKILLS

BASIC SKILLS

In **BLOOD & BRONZE**, all characters share twelve basic skills. In this chapter, these twelve skills are detailed.

ADVISE (LORE)

When your adventurer aids someone, whether by giving advice, using her lantern to show them the way or devising a clever plan, you are using the Advise skill. Say what you think is the wisest thing to do and test Lore.

If you score at least one success, a character of your choice can profit from your wisdom by rerolling a die during her skill test. The result before the reroll is how well or poor she performed on her own; the reroll is the effect of your added insight.

On a miss you might lead her astray, make your operation vulnerable to someone else's actions or suffer other misfortunes as per the referee.

ASSESS (SENSES)

The world of **BLOOD & BRONZE** is inhabited by a myriad of humans, beasts, monsters and demons. Some of them might help, some will hinder and some will harm—and most will want something from your character. Telling them apart is difficult but might prove key to success. When your character scrutinizes someone or tries to learn their motives or weaknesses, you are using the Assess skill. Test Senses.

If you score at least one success, you may learn something useful that she'd hesitate to admit—perhaps even to herself. Ask a question, and if you use the information to your advantage you get to reroll a die during a skill test. You gain this reroll even if the answer is “nothing” or similarly uninformative.

On a miss you might reveal something about yourself, anger someone with your rude behavior or suffer other misfortunes—it is up to the referee.

DISGUISE OR CONCEAL (GUILF)

When your adventurer conceals herself, her demeanor or an object, test Guile.

If you score at least one success, you have hidden your location, your appearance or an object. If someone gets suspicious, searches for you or whatever you have hidden, tries to see through your disguise or otherwise tries actively or instinctively to reveal what has been hidden, you may counter her attempt by having her reroll a die during her skill test or ability check.

On a miss there might be a witness or worse, your disguise or the hiding place might have a serious flaw that is unknown to you, or you might suffer other misfortunes—it is up to the referee.

EXPERT KNOWLEDGE (LORE)

As your adventurer recites facts or draws on her expert knowledge, she uses the Expert Knowledge skill. Test Lore.

If you score at least one success, you can ask the referee a question or have something revealed. If you ask a specific question, you may fail to learn anything helpful but at least you get your answer. If you choose to have something revealed, it will always be helpful but it might not be what you hoped to learn. It is up to you how you choose to spend your successes.

On a miss you might waste precious time with peripheral knowledge, learn something that might just as soon be true as terribly false—without any way of knowing before it is too late—or suffer other misfortunes as per the referee.

Note that a character's area of expertise depends on her class and background (see p. 18). For example, a mercenary knows warfare, a farmer crops and weather, a sage can interpret the meaning of stars or strange hieroglyphs, whereas a lion's expertise is hunting grounds.

GUARD OR DEFEND (MIGHT)

Sometimes it may be wiser to be reactive rather than proactive: to prevent someone from getting away, to increase your character's chances of survival or to hinder another character's actions. When your adventurer guards or protects someone, or defends against someone, she uses the Guard or Defend skill. Test Might.

A successful skill test means you get an influence. However, this influence is not of the same sort that you get from Guile. Rather than using it to reroll a die during your opponent's skill test you use it to either reroll a damage die affecting you—hopefully rendering you less damage—or to redirect someone's action against you instead of its intended target.

On a miss you might stumble, make yourself an easy target, lose grip of something or suffer other misfortunes—it is up to the referee.

Keep your influence until you use it, attempt the same action again or until you and your target are no longer in the same zone.

HASTE OR TRAVERSE (VIGOR)

Most of the time, your character moves about as you wish. On the battlefield, you can normally move your character freely within a zone or between two adjacent zones at the end of the round. However, sometimes your character will attempt things far more daring and strenuous: jumping across a chasm, scaling the cliffs around the Sacred House in Nippur, travelling the wild or carrying her comrades to safety. When she does, she uses the Haste or Traverse skill. Test Vigor.

A successful skill test means that you can move your character into an existing zone, or make up a new zone and have her move there.

A failed skill test means you got tangled up, lost your breath, slipped in your (or the enemies') blood or misjudged the distance. This is called a misfortune. The nature of the misfortune is normally determined by the referee.

HURL OR SHOOT (VIGOR)

Throwing spears or grappling hooks, passing a spear to your defenseless ally, pushing boulders or discharging a slingshot or a bow, your adventurer uses the Hurl or Shoot skill. Test Vigor.

A successful skill test means that you can throw an object to someone in an adjacent zone, throw a weapon at someone in an adjacent zone or fire a missile at someone within your weapon's reach. Thrown projectiles can be evaded or caught with a successful Senses check: fired missiles cannot be caught and still do half damage if evaded. Each additional success increases the reach by one zone and lets you modify your target's ability check by ± 1 . Like melee attacks, ranged attacks do one damage die per success.

On a miss you might sprain yourself, hit someone else by accident or suffer other misfortunes—it is up to the referee.

MAKE (CRAFT)

Digging a tunnel under the palace walls, disarming a trap you have found, repairing damaged equipment or cooking a hearty meal, your adventurer uses the Make skill. Say what your character attempts to create, and test Craft. The referee will set delimitations concerning time, material needed, tools needed or similar based on your class and background. Crafting a fine vase will take a long time for a fowler; setting a trap is more difficult for a potter.

On a success you create the object within the delimitations set by the referee. With each additional success, you may halve or double a delimitation of your choice: if the referee said you could do two you make four, if it would take a week it takes a half, if you needed the tail of a scorpion you now only need half, if you needed a well-equipped smithy you can do without half of the equipment and so on.

On a miss, something goes awry: you use up valuable resources to no avail, your tools get dented, you waste your time or the item has a hidden but fatal flaw as per the referee.

MANIPULATE (GUILE)

When using lies, trickery or charm to make someone do something for her, using dust, smoke or the sun's reflection to blind her enemy or haggling over the price with a sly merchant, test Guile.

If you score at least one success, the character believes you, or is at least willing to give you the benefit of a doubt. If you ask too much, she might refuse to help you, choosing instead to give you influence over her. Now, when she does something that you would rather she didn't, use your influence to have doubt, guilt or confusion set in and make her reroll a die.

On a miss you might reveal your true motives, fall prey to someone else's scam or suffer other misfortunes—it is up to the referee.

Influence will last until you reveal your stratagem whether by will or mistake, until they become irrelevant or you attempt to manipulate the same target anew.

SEARCH (SENSES)

Following the tracks of the war band that captured your comrades, seeking a cudgel when cornered and defenseless or noticing the hidden trap, your adventurer uses the Search skill. Test Senses.

If you score at least one success, you must choose: either have the referee reveal something hidden to you or ask her for something specific. If you choose for the referee to reveal something, it will be useful but it might not be what you hoped for. If you chose to ask a question instead, you might learn that what you sought isn't there, but now you know for sure.

On a miss you might waste your time studying something insignificant, find something that may be useful or disastrous with no way to know for sure, or suffer other misfortunes—it is up to the referee.

TREAT WOUNDS (CRAFT)

All characters heal naturally when they rest, but occasionally time alone won't suffice to cure their wounds. Putting out the flames that engulf your comrade, sucking the venom from a viper's sting, boosting the morale of your allies or comforting a terrified or grieving character, your adventurer uses the Treat Wounds skill. Test Craft.

On a success you may aid someone with her wounds, helping her recover more quickly. With each success, she may roll a recovery die and use it either to recover lost endurance or alleviate negative conditions affecting her. For short rests, recovery dice are six-sided; for extended they are ten-sided. Note that a character normally cannot treat her own wounds as she can't both perform an action and rest at the same time. More information on resting and recovery can be found on p. 51.

On a miss you might use up valuable resources in vain, attract savage animals with the noise and smell of blood or suffer other misfortunes as per the referee.

USE FORCE (MIGHT)

Attacking someone, prying open a door or leading your troops in assault, your adventurer triggers the Use Force skill. Test Might.

If you score at least one success, say what you wish to achieve with your might: to cut off their hands, disarm them, stab out their eyes, pin them down or scare them into submission. If the opposing player won't let you, her character will suffer damage instead. Roll many successes to increase your leverage: your attack deals one damage die per success.

Always let your opponent decide after you have made your Might test but before rolling damage. This way, you can both make an estimate of the outcome without knowing for certain how much danger her character is really in.

On a miss you might aggravate the situation, flinch, lose grip of something or suffer other misfortunes—it is up to the referee.

Beyond the Basic Skills

While designed to address most key actions coming up with some frequency, the skills of BLOOD & BRONZE cover but a fraction of the things that players can and will think of. These vast lacunae should not be taken as indication that such actions shouldn't be available. Rather it means that whenever the general rules and broad skills presented herein are deemed inapplicable, the group should agree on impromptu rulings that take the specifics of the situation into account.

Coming up with these rulings-on-the-fly is generally the responsibility of the referee. Players will say what their characters strive to do, then look to the referee to arbitrate the outcomes of their undertakings or to get estimates of their chances of success. Unless the referee says something outrageous, players will not generally veto the decisions. For the game to run smoothly, it is therefore important that the referee is able to make both quick and just rulings tailored to each situation. Below are some guidelines that you—as the referee—should consider, to help you do that.

Generally, a character may always perform routine and/or non-dangerous actions. In these cases, there is generally only one possible outcome. For example, buying supplies for a desert passage is a simple matter for anyone possessing the wealth required. Thus, under normal circumstances you should just acknowledge that it happens, perhaps noting that it takes the full afternoon to have everything packed and in order. Simply state the outcome based on common sense and the circumstances already established.

If there are several likely outcomes of an action, let a die-roll decide. Assign probabilities to each outcome and tell the players what the different options are, or—if the exact outcomes are unknown to them—whether it is more favorable to roll high or low.

Unless logic or some other reason strongly suggests otherwise, different outcomes should be assumed equally plausible. This is especially the case if a player asks for some detail that you have omitted, but that suddenly becomes relevant. Were the village beset by famine, for example, it would be of great consequence to the decision to shop for provisions there. If you had previously neglected to state this suddenly important detail, you could rule that the characters have a half chance of finding the sought supplies to prevent bias, even though logic would put their chances closer to nil.

If a character does something that another character would oppose, you should probably call for a skill test. For example, if the problem wasn't shortage but that the villagers were reluctant to do business with outsiders, you could rule that a skill test or similar was needed to persuade the vendor to part from her goods.

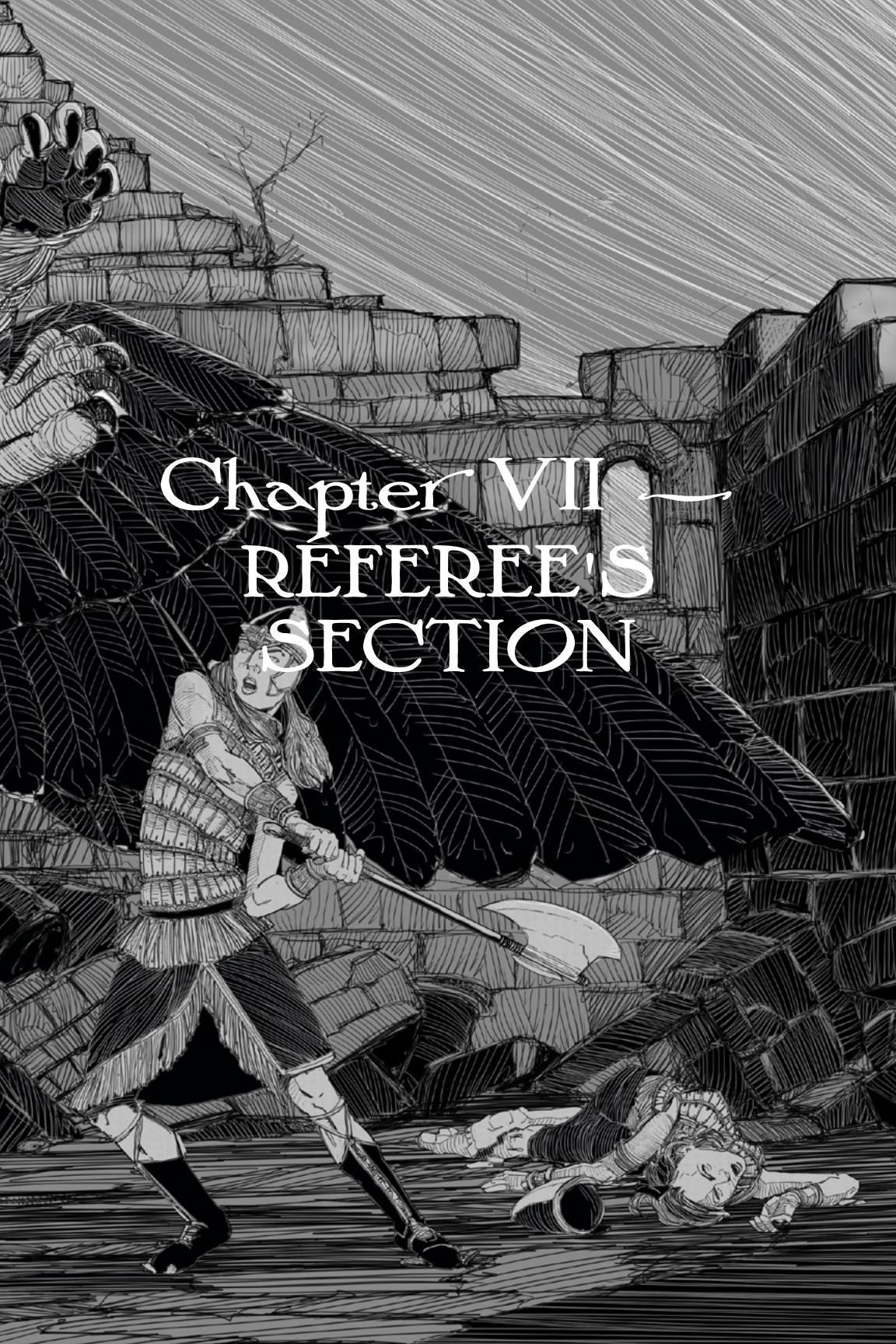
If a player wants her character to do something that seems difficult or in opposition to common sense, you should normally rule that she cannot do it unless a specific skill or ability allows it. Casting magic, for example, should never be allowed without a suitable skill.

Unless stated by the description or deemed otherwise by the referee, lasting effects granted by skills aren't cumulative. If a character hides and the player rolls two successes, then hides again rolling one, the character shouldn't be assumed to have hid for three successes worth. Rather, you should rule that she has changed hiding places for one that turned out to be less favorable.

A BRIEF NOTE ON CLASS AND OTHER SKILLS

Depending on their classes and the covenants they enter, all characters gain access to a number of special skills that are more or less unique to them. Once you are comfortable with the basic skills, you will be more than capable of interpreting any special skills to make them fit into your game, or even create your own.



A black and white illustration of a warrior in a ruined city. The warrior, a woman with long hair, is wearing a detailed, layered tunic and a skirt with a fringed hem. She is holding a sword with both hands, ready for combat. In the background, there are large, broken stone blocks and a large, dark, leaf-like structure. The sky is filled with diagonal lines, suggesting a storm or a dramatic atmosphere. In the foreground, another person is lying face down on the ground, with a sword nearby. The overall style is a detailed, hand-drawn sketch.

Chapter VII — RÉFÉRÉE'S SECTION

REFEREE'S SECTION

As the referee, you have four important functions. First, you set the scenes by describing the world. Second, you act as moderator during the game. Third, you portray the creatures and characters that the adventurers encounter. Last, you adjudicate the rules and interpret the set-up. This section will give you tips on how to do that. You will also learn how to create adventures for your players, as well as NPCs to populate them with.

TIPS FOR REFEREES NEW AND OLD

There are as many styles of running a game as there are referees. Already in the first session, your group will start developing conventions of their own. How do people speak? What are considered moral behaviors, if any, and what are not? Do the players seek out combat, or try to avoid it? Are their characters trying to do good, or just to get by? All these nuances, and many more, will make your group of players and their playstyle unique.

For a successful game, you will adapt to the players, just as they adapt to your rulings and the NPCs you populate the world with. Thus, no two games will be alike and whatever works well for any given group may not be suitable for another. Still, some tips are more generally applicable and are included below. If you are a new referee, you should use them as a starting point for developing your own praxis with increased experience. If you are a more experienced referee, you could instead use these tips to reflect on your own style of refereeing. What tips do you already follow, what things have you discarded and what tips would you give instead and why?

Let the players introduce their characters.

A good way to start the session and invite the players to act is by asking them to describe their characters. What are they called? How do they look? Have they changed since last time?

Make the world seem real. Real, in this sense, does not equate to “everyday” or “ordinary”, nor does it mean “exactly like our world”. Rather, it means that the world and its inhabitants should follow their own logic. If you have established something, it is now part of the world. You can add to the established or modify it using the logics of the world, but you can never eliminate it. However good you destroy it, it will always leave its residue: a ruin, a memory or a legend.

Use colorful language and dramatic imagery. Words like deserted, barren, ominous, vulturous, ravenous and festering describe how a place looks, sounds and smells. In addition, they set a particular mood. Try to include as many senses as possible; don't forget taste or touch.

Give glimpses of ordinary life. The world of BLOOD & BRONZE and the people that populates it are busy with their own preoccupations. Sometimes there are market-days and the villages are full of harvest and produce. Other times people are dying from famine or drowned by floods. Even other times, there were festivities yesterday and the village is now a big mess. Show the ordinary life of common people, to contrast the adventurous lives of the PCs.

Vary the scope. As the referee, you will be the players' eyes, ears and noses in the world. Change your scope with the scope of the players' actions: when they study something closely you should zoom in on details, at other times, you should zoom out and give a summary. Should the players choose to spend much time on a particular task, it is a signal that they find it entertaining or interesting. Use these opportunities to reveal new layers of information: first the basics, then some detail, then more complex or even dissonant details. Let the players' interests guide you.

Take notes. Note the important NPCs and locations that the players encounter, the major events that transpire and so on. This makes it easy to reference or reincorporate them in future sessions. If you use a calendar, you can easily keep a log and note potential trajectories important to the game: the five murderers-in-disguise will arrive in eight days' time, the flood season begins in two months, or similar.

Show the passage of time. Whenever the adventurers return to a place they have been before, show its subtle or abrupt changes: an acquaintance is absent or avoids them, a custom is changed or suddenly enforced, a tax is levied or an old one discontinued, a new garment or food is in fashion, power has been usurped or is consolidated. Avoid the status quo.

Address the characters, not the players. Say "Amadaj, what do you do?" not "Evelyn, what does your character do?"

Provide things for the players to interact with. If the characters do nothing, or just do mundane things, it could be a sign that the players are at a loss—either having too little to do or too much to choose from. Address this by narrowing their choices, either by introducing something that begs for interaction—a thief stealing from them, a soldier picking a fight or similar—or by highlighting some of their possibilities—for example stealing the sage's treasure or seeing the heavenly house at Nippur.

Give all players the same opportunities to act. If some players are louder or hog the spotlight, address the silent ones either directly or through your NPCs. For example, you could say "The old woman comes up to you, clearly spooked. She has something urgent to tell you". Alternatively, have one character notice something that the others don't. Say "While the others are occupied with haggling for axes, you notice that the vendor's child is talking to someone you have never seen before, and they are whispering and pointing in your direction. What do you do?"

Act out your NPCs. Give them names, agendas, personalities, dialects and mannerisms. When the PCs interact with them, portray them as vividly as you can. A simple trick is to give every NPC a stand-out feature—a booming voice, a nervous tick, a volatile temper or similar—or to base them on characters from books or tv shows that you are familiar with.

Consider what your key NPCs are doing when the PCs aren't around. Think about their agendas and what they have done to advance them. Also, think about their interactions with the PCs. Consider if any of them are plotting revenge, setting up ambushes or hiring mercenaries to hunt the adventurers down.

Offer more interaction than constant bloodshed. Use the reaction chart (p. 68) to determine outlooks, but remember that no sentient creature will want to die if they can negotiate a truce, and only the most corrupt will prefer to kill over gaining wealth or other rewards.

See the rules as guidelines, not as set in stone. Feel free to expand, omit or change them as to better suit your game.

When makings rulings on the fly, agree on a probability before rolling dice. Neither you, nor the players, should roll dice when there is only one reasonable outcome.

When stakes are high, roll all dice openly. This way, your players will know that, for weal or woe, you didn't alter the outcome.

Improvise. The key skill of any good referee is the ability to quickly fill in the blanks with his or her own imagination. When improvising, start with common sense and your own experiences. What would you expect to find in a city? How would you react if someone threatened your life? How difficult would it be to you to do the task that the players propose? Second, follow your associations. If the adventurers enter an uncharted desert, what do you associate with that? Borrow from books, films, comics and your own experiences.

Adventures

In advance of each game session, the referee must prepare an **adventure setup**.

The setup should contain outlines of an adventure, including its key locations, the NPCs found there and their agendas and relations, as well as the events that the adventurers are likely to encounter and deal with. But the setup is not a script; rather, it is an invitation to adventure. During your preparations you will explore different possible courses of actions that the players might pursue, but the purpose of this is not to outwit them but to allow you to improvise when they do things you hadn't foreseen.

ADVENTURE LOCATIONS

Location-based adventures present the players with a limited space to explore and interact with, such as a ruin, palace, mountain or forest. Adventure locations are great setups since they offer both confinement and freedom, making them easy for you to prepare while also providing the players with both freedom and a coherent setting.

Included in this booklet is a location based setup in a bandit's stronghold. Using this locale as a blueprint, you can easily create any number of location-based setups in preparation for future game sessions. Keep the game fresh and exciting for the players by changing the number of rooms, the number of tiers or the ratio of passages to rooms—but most importantly by changing the theme and setting.

The Reavers' Fort

Imagine a reavers' fort. Imagine it in mud-bricks or stone, ruined and seemingly derelict or boasting of stolen wealth. Think it wide or narrow, tall or stout. Set it on a hillock, by an oasis or in a pest-ridden swamp with hidden tunnels below.

ROOMS: Draw eight rooms of this fortress on a paper, distributing them according to your vision or by pouring eight dice and circling the places they land. Key the rooms 1 through 8.

PASSAGES: Give each room passages, connecting them with one or more other rooms. Vary the number of passages, giving players choices of what paths to pursue. Alternately, you can assume that each room has 1d4 passages to its neighboring rooms. If so, note that a room can have more than four passages leading to it, as a result of passages from other rooms.

CONTENTS OF ROOMS: Stock each room using your imagination or the chart opposite. Note the results on a separate paper and adjust the map if needed. Once an entry has been used, replace it with one of your own design. The new entry can be as similar or dissimilar as you like, but not identical.

When something in a room description refers to a “room [d8]” roll an eight-sided die to determine what room it refers to.

ELABORATE: The entries provided give only fragmentary information like “a golden treasure” or “guard dogs”. Preparing the fortress, you should spend some time fleshing out the entries using your own imagination. When you do, think about connections and contexts. Why is this golden treasure here? Is it hidden or on display, is it stolen or a heirloom, is it a gift (or to be given as a gift) or simply part of a gleaming heap, hoarded for no reason but avarice?

PREPLAY: When you are done with your preparations, take a moment to walk through the fort in your imagination. If you were an adventurer, what would you do? Where would you go? What would happen then? Preplaying the adventure location in this fashion is an excellent way to find out if there are any loose ends or things you have missed. Windows, for example—surely there must be windows in at least some of the rooms? Can you then climb from one room to another? What about light? Are there doors, or will the light from a lamp travel from room to room, alerting whoever is there? Preplay to catch these things, and be better prepared for running the adventure.

#	DESCRIPTION
1	Disused chamber. Some stray goats. A secret passage leading to room [d8].
2	A natural cave. Soot and flaking paint on the walls, bones of small animals on the floor.
3	Private quarters. Nearest passage can only be opened by operating a machine or contraption in room [d8].
4	Dining room. Fine but maltreated furniture. A trapdoor leading to a lower floor or level.
5	Ill-kept watchtower. Nearest passage is blocked by rubble or similar. A hole in the ceiling, leading to a higher floor or level.
6	Toilet. 10% chance of being occupied by a reaver. Reaver: pwr 3, save 9, end 12. Unarmed (dmg 1d4; no crit).
7	Beast Pen. 1d6 guard dogs bark loudly when noticing the PCs, drawing the attention of anyone in adjacent rooms. Guard dogs: pwr 1, save 4, end 6. Teeth (dmg 1d6).
8	Crumbled tower. A deep pit trap: first to enter must check Vigor or suffer 1d8 damage. In addition, she lands on a lower level.
9	Treasure room. A golden treasure, worth 400 s. A blood red gem, slightly cold to the touch, worth 320 s. Spices and perfume. Fine fabrics, now eaten by moths.
10	Guardroom. 1d6+1 reavers, alert. Will arrange ambush if they notice the PCs intrusion. A gem worth 200 s. Guards: pwr 2, save 7, end 15. Shields (def 2), spears (dmg 1d6), and daggers (dmg 1d4).
11	Armory. A spear trap: first to enter must check Senses, on a miss she suffers 1d8 damage; on a hit the spear misses her but the second-in-line must check or suffer damage. 1d6 weapons, 1d20 arrows and a broken shield with a toad painted on it.
12	Courtyard. A broken cart. Two meager donkeys, resting during daytime. A shallow pit trap: first to enter must check Vigor or suffer 1d6 damage.
13	Bedroom. Clothes and linen. 1d20 shekels, game pieces. 50% chance of reavers (1d6) 50% chance of sleeping. Reavers: pwr 3, save 9, end 14. Helmets (armor 2), clubs and maces (dmg 1d8).
14	Former banquet hall, now housing a large wooden cage. 1d6 prisoners. Prisoners: pwr 2, save 5, end 5. Naked and unarmed (dmg 1d4; no crit).
15	Storage Food for 1d100 days. 1d6 barrels of wine.
16	Kitchen. 1d6 slaves preparing meals. Slaves: pwr 2, save 5, end 8. Improvised weapons (dmg 1d6; no crit).
17	Prison cells. 2d4 reavers. Reavers: pwr 3, save 9, end 14. Helmets (armor 2), clubs and maces (dmg 1d8).
18	Torture chamber. A veteran mercenary: En-nanna the many-scarred pwr 4, save 13, end 16. Bronze scale (armor 6), a crescent axe (dmg 1d10).
19	Infirmiry. 1d6 bandits wounded during a recent raid, are recovering or slowly dying from infected wounds: pwr 1, save 5, end 4. Daggers (dmg 1d4).
20	Throne room. Broken sandstone throne. Mystic: Gorgath the mist-eyed. pwr 4, save 14, end 12. Bronze helmet (armor 2), a silver khopesh (dmg 1d6; versatile 1d8; worth 300 s). Knows 1d4 lotus spells and carries 5 doses of lotus powder.

Wilderness adventures

When traveling the wild, all characters must test Vigor. If the traveling party totals at least one success per adventurer, they may exit the zone they are currently in or arrive at a specific location within the zone. Otherwise the party suffers **misfortunes** (opposite), and the referee decides where they end up. Regardless, the referee rolls for chance encounters.

A journey's length is determined by the number of hexagons traversed; its duration is determined by dividing this length by the travel speed for the zone.

CHANCE ENCOUNTERS

Roll two eight-sided dice and check the corresponding entry (p. 66).

Interpret the result as imaginatively as you can. Elaborate on the entry, using your imagination and inspiration from things you have seen, heard, read or experienced. Sometimes you will find that an entry inspires an adventure in its own right. Others will feel less engaging, and still other times the players will devise a plan to avoid the encounter altogether.

Mark it on the map. If the entry provides a location that the adventurers can return to, mark it on the map.

Once the encounter has played out, cross it out and write your own. The new entry can be as similar or dissimilar to the old one as you like, as long as it isn't identical. This way, the charts will continue to provide you and your friends with literally endless adventures.

HUNTING & FORAGING

If the player characters lack food and water, they may attempt to hunt and forage for survival. Doing so will force the adventurers to slow their pace, reducing the travel speed by 1 hexagon per day. For particularly barren landscapes the referee can require each player to make a Search test, equating each success with food and water for one person.

Expanding the World

Due to space constraints, this booklet only provides chance encounters for one zone: the Great Barrens of Karkal. As a referee, you are encouraged to populate the other zones of the map in similar fashion, changing details, creatures and events to suit the different climates and conditions found therein. Start with the zones adjacent to the Barrens, and proceed towards the fringes as the adventurers venture there.

CREATING A ZONE

Set a theme. A zone is recognized by its terrain and climate. When you create a new zone, start by outlining the general look, feel, smell and sound of the area.

Decide the zone's dominant feature. Each zone should contain one thing that is truly extraordinary: a powerful foe, a supernatural event, a volcano, ghost city or other dangerous location, a sorcerer, demon or deity, or anything else you can think of. This feature can be small or large, but its presence will dominate the zone physically, mentally or both. Make sure that this feature suits the theme, either by reinforcing it—like a fire-sorcerer in the Desert of Shifting Sands—or contrasting it—like a snow-capped mountain in the same place.

Populate the zone. For the most part, your chance encounters should contain a location, someone or something encountered there and a small treasure, trap or other secret to uncover. Consider the zone's location, its theme and dominant feature. For example, a populated area might have a lot of soldiers, bandits and intrigues, whereas less-traveled zones might have more monsters, savage tribes and lost ruins.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The chance encounter table is a simple tool for running wilderness exploration, but you can also add keyed locations to your map. Mark a hexagon and key it like a room in an adventure location. If the adventurers pass through that hexagon—and only then—will they have a chance of encountering this specific location.

Misfortunes

When the adventurers suffer misfortunes during their travels, roll a twenty-sided die.

#	MISFORTUNE
1	Minor mishap. A sprained ankle, broken rib, or larger abrasion slows the party down. Increase travel time by 1 day.
2	Bad weather. Travel time is prolonged by 1d4 days.
3	Bad terrain. Travel time is prolonged by 1d6 days.
4	Lost. One of the PCs must check Senses: on a hit they are finally able to recover their path—increase travel time by 1d8 days; on a miss they end up in another zone or location than they were heading for—roll twice for chance events, once for this zone and one for the new zone they stumbled into.
5	Circling vultures, stray dogs or similar make travel unpleasant and make stealth and surprise impossible.
6	A menacing pack of 3d4 jackals: pwr 1, save 5, end 4. Bite (dmg 1d6).
7	2d4 wild beasts. Hyenas, baboons, reptiles or similar, depending on terrain: pwr 2, save 7, end 10. Claw (dmg 1d8).
8	2d4 large beasts. Lions, gorillas, hippopotami or similar, depending on terrain: pwr 3, save 9, end 16. Natural weapons (dmg 1d10).
9	An marching enemy host forces the PCs to flee, hide or risk being caught or worse. 4d10 soldiers: pwr 2, save 8, end 14. Armor 5. Spears (dmg 1d8).
10	2d6 bandits: pwr 2, save 8, end 12. Armor 3, clubs and maces (dmg 1d8).
11	2d6 hired fighters: pwr 3, save 9, end 14. Armor 5, spears (dmg 1d8). Someone thinks the adventurers owe a debt and hired fighters to collect it—decide who it is and what they want.
12	2d6 assassins: pwr 3, save 11, end 16. Armor 5, hidden weapons (dmg 1d6). The assassins are masquerading as common folks. Someone wishes the adventurers dead—decide who and why.
13	Lack of water. Unless the PCs carry water themselves, they are dying from thirst (see p. 49).
14	Hunger and thirst. All rations and water the PCs carry are spoiled or spent. The adventurers must forage or suffer thirst and starvation (see p. 49).
15	Broken equipment. Perhaps the merchant was a liar, the craftsman a fool or it is simply wilderness taking its toll on the artifacts of men. All PCs must check Craft: on a miss, one of their carried items breaks.
16	Exhausted. The road takes a tremendous toll. All PCs get one point of exhaustion per day's travel. These points of exhaustion counts as equipment for encumbrance purposes, and recovers at a rate of 1 per day in a city, inn or similar.
17	Major mishap. A mud slide, flood or wildfire, depending on terrain. All PCs must check Vigor: on a miss they are caught and must enter their next encounter or adventure bloodied (half endurance).
18	Sun-sickness. All adventurers must check Might: on a miss they are beset by nausea and must roll twice and choose the worst outcome for all checks and saving throws, until spending a full day indoors or underground.
19	Roll again and combine the result with a chance encounter.
20	Roll twice and combine.

The Great Barrens of Karkal

The land surrounding Sippar is arid, consisting of sand and stone interrupted by occasional boulders of limestone or basalt. Vegetation is sparse, mostly thistles and thorny bushes of stunted growth, but here and there small copses of date palms and twisted citruses offer their shade and meagre produce. The proximity to Sippar makes it relatively civilized, but reavers often brave the area to prey upon the caravans carrying wealth to and from the merchant city.

FLAT: Travel speed is three hexagons per day.

CHANCE ENCOUNTERS (2D8)

2 The warm wind brings the laughing voices of a group of women, bathing in an azure pond of remarkable depth. The group is led by Amala, a young woman of dusky complexion. They hail from a cavernous settlement of hog-farmers an hour's travel away, and Amala will allow the adventurers to follow them there to eat and rest if treated with courtesy.

BATHING WOMEN: pwr 2, save 7, end 10. Crude tools (dmg 1d6; no crit).

AMALA: pwr 2, save 10 (+Guile –Senses), end 6. Small axe (dmg 1d6).

3 A long line of prisoners of war are being escorted to Sippar by a troop of well-armed soldiers. One of the prisoners is an Akkadian prince, promising a bountiful reward if he were to be freed and brought to his kinsfolk in Ashur.

PRISONERS: pwr 2, save 6, end 6. Naked and unarmed (dmg 1d4; no crit).

SOLDIERS: pwr 2, save 7 (+Lore –Guile), end 16. Bronze armor and shields (armor 6; def 2). Spears (dmg 1d8).

PRINCE UDDUT: pwr 2, save 8 (–Might) end 8. Naked and unarmed (dmg d4; no crit).

4 In an abandoned quarry lies an incomplete statue of a winged beast. At daybreak it shivers as if trying to break free.

5 A mourning woman, her hair pale from sorrow and her name lost to grief, seeking her daughter Vana. The daughter was taken by a band of slavers and the woman carries 400 s in silver to buy her back.

MOURNING WOMAN: pwr 2, save 5 (+Vigor –Craft) end 18. Unarmed (dmg 1d4; no crit).

6 A rabble of paupers start following the PCs. They cry for alms and curse the adventurers, clinging to their clothes and slurring unintelligibly. If the PCs drive them off they will try to retaliate by stealing rations and luring out a giant lizard to eat the adventurers.

PAUPERS: pwr 1, save 3, end 5. Crude tools (dmg 1d6; no crit).

GIANT LIZARD: pwr 4, save 12 end 36. Armor 8. Saw-like teeth (dmg 1d10).

7 The site of a recent battle. 2d10 measly Amorites led by Ezial are scavenging the battleground. If the PCs spend a day searching as well, they will find a bone crown but the Amorites will become hostile if they notice, demanding that it is given over to them.

AMORITES: pwr 2, save 8, end 8. Bronze javelins (dmg 1d6; thrown: reach 1).

EZIAL: pwr 3, save 9 (+Vigor –Craft), end 18. Slender bronze axe (dmg 1d6+1).

BONE CROWN: Treasure: 1800 s. Restores to life a recently dead on whose head it is placed. If the crown is removed, the head detaches from the body and she immediately returns to death.

8 A group of eight ragged men have sought shelter amongst some large boulders. They are escaped slaves from Sippar, and will lie as best they can to avoid being caught. They will prefer to assassinate the PCs in their sleep over going back into slavery, but are helpful if treated well. Should the slaves be brought back, they are worth 150 shekels each.

RAGGED MEN: pwr 2, save 6, end 7. Armed with cudgels (dmg 1d6).

9 A caravan carrying purple clams to Eshnunna for a wealthy merchant named Zusul-Sabar. The caravan consists of 2d4 carts, 6d8 slaves and 2d12 armed guards. The cargo of each cart is treasure worth 700 s in Eshnunna, but only 240 s outside of that area.

CARAVAN GUARDS: pwr 2, save 7 (+Might – Guile), end 14. Armor 6. Spears (dmg 1d8).

ZUSUL-SABAR: pwr 2, save 6 (+Senses – Lore) end 10. Armor 5. Bronze khopesh (dmg 1d6+1).

10 The adventurers are hailed by a dozen toll-collectors, expecting a tenth in tax for all goods they are carrying. The toll collectors are led by Farrak, a corrupt notary secretly keeping half of the collected wealth from his masters in Sippar.

TOLL COLLECTORS: pwr 2, save 6 (+Guile – Vigor), end 12. Armor 6. Spears (dmg 1d8).

FARRAK: pwr 2, save 7 (+Senses – Guile), end 6. Armor 7. Bronze mace (dmg 1d8).

11 A group of bandits has surrounded a surprisingly well-defended caravan. The caravan has dug in on a stony hill, hesitant to attack but unwilling to give up. The caravan is bound for Mari and carries precious goods for a noble family there. If the adventurers are spotted, both sides will try to persuade them to help their cause.

BANDITS (10): pwr 2, save 8, end 18. Salvaged armor 4. Axes (dmg 1d6).

CARAVAN GUARDS (12): pwr 2, save 7, end 14. Bronze armor 5. Spears (dmg 1d8).

12 An oasis, where the male sage Dinah has set up camp. Dinah is searching for the carcass of a great crawler god that collapsed onto the earth at the end of the second era according to myth.

DINAH: pwr 2, save 8 (+2 Lore), end 18. Simple robe and wooden staff (dmg 1d4).

13 Khemal the Fair, a beautiful young prince, carried on a palanquin by two massive slaves. A third and shorter slave by the name of Gobo scurries alongside, babbling reassuringly about the prince's qualities and the fine outlooks of his future. They are headed for a city of tents to attend a great festivity (see 14).

MASSIVE SLAVES: pwr 3, save 10 (+Might), end 32. Sickles-swords (dmg 1d6; versatile 1d8).

GOBO: pwr 2, save 6 (+Lore – Might), end 16. Bronze dagger (dmg 1d6).

KHEMAL THE FAIR: pwr 2, save 8 (+Guile – Vigor), end 12. Armor 7. Mace (dmg 1d8).

14 In the middle of the desert, a city of tents has sprung up. Here, a drunken revelry is held to the deafening sounds of countless cicadas. The ecstatic festivities culminate in an ancient ritual—led by Tuol Aham, a copper-skinned priest from Borsippa—where two teenage boys are sacrificed to summon the vile cockroach demon Bahaga.

BAHAGA, THE COCKROACH DEMON: pwr 4/3, save 14 (+Lore – Senses), end 45. Carapace (armor 9). Spiked legs (dmg 1d12).

Paralyzing shriek. All hearing must check Might or lose their next action.

TUOL AHAM: pwr 3, save 9 (+Guile – Vigor), end 18. Cloak (armor 4). Meteorite khopesh: (dmg 1d8; iron).

REVELERS: pwr 2; save 6, end 10. Miscellaneous weaponry (dmg 1d6).

15 Among limestone pinnacles clawing the skies like fingers of a dying man, a fiery red Lamasu hunts.

HARAGAL THE LAMASU: pwr 4/4, save 14 (+Vigor – Craft), end 60. Thick fur (armor 5). Old man's teeth (dmg 1d6+2; piercing +2) and lion claws (dmg 1d10; roll twice, choose highest). Outruns a horse and can fly.

16 The Reavers' Fort, or roll twice and combine.

NPCs

Non-player characters—or NPCs for short—are all the characters, monsters and creatures inhabiting the world of BLOOD & BRONZE, except for the adventurers. NPCs differ from the adventures in three chief ways.

First, NPCs are run by you—the referee—and not the players. You decide what they do, what they say and how they look, you roll dice for them and so on. When portraying your NPC, you should alter your voice and manners to reflect their personalities.

Second, NPCs don’t normally have abilities. Instead, they have two unified values—**power** (pwr) and **save**—corresponding to their ability rating and ability score respectively. Some NPCs may have a strength and/or a weakness. If so, add/remove 1 die for skill tests and modify ability checks with power level.

Third, for NPCs you are advised to interpret a failed armor check (higher than the armor rating with a twenty-sided die) as if the blow pierced the armor for full damage, to allow for shorter and more intense combats.

REACTION ROLLS

When the PCs encounter a creature or character by a chance encounter, you should roll 2d6 to determine the creature’s reaction. This is called a **reaction roll**. The reaction roll ensures that not every encounter results in bloodshed, but also that there may be treacherous hearts even in civilized locales. Of course, certain creatures or characters can have motives or dispositions that already dictate their behavior. Use common sense.

2D6	REACTION
2-3	Murderous
4-5	Hostile
6-8	Suspicious
9-10	Curious
11-12	Cordial

CREATING NPCs

To create new NPCs, use your imagination, import them from legends or books or model them after those presented above. To quickly create new NPCs on the fly, do as follows:

First, decide what it is. Give it a suitable name and appearance. Sample names are given for each class, pick one or make up your own.

Second, decide its power level. A creature’s power level determines how many dice you roll for it during skill tests. Use the chance-of-success table on p. 46 for reference, keeping in mind that a power level of 2 roughly equals a starting character.

Ancient or powerful creatures may have more than one power level, meaning that they have more than one action each round. The first action is resolved using the first power level, the second using the second and so on.

If you want, you can also give the NPC a strength, a weakness or both.

Third, determine saves. Roll one six-sided die per power level, adjusting for strengths and weaknesses if applicable, and keep half (rounded up). These are the creature’s saves. If an NPC has pwr 2 (+Vigor –Lore) you would roll one die to determine its Lore save; three dice and discard the lowest for its Vigor save and two dice, keeping only the best, for all other saves.

If you are math-savvy, you could also multiply the NPCs power level by three to get an approximate result.

Fourth, set endurance. To quickly determine an NPCs total endurance, roll a number of ten-sided dice equal to the creature’s power level (or levels, if more than one). This is how much damage the creature can bear before dying.

Fifth, decide its armor and weapons. Choose from the weapon list, or use it as reference. The “no crit when unarmed” rule doesn’t apply to beasts. As a rule of thumb, an ordinary creature deals 1d6 damage, a large 1d8, an extraordinary 1d10, while a truly monstrous deals 1d12.

Some people gather in their cities,
seeking refuge from monsters and foes behind massive walls
or solace from the scorching sun
under the many-colored tarps of the bazaars.

Some people live their lives bent before the ziggurats
tremoring in awe of their sacred rulers.

But not you, for you are an adventurer!

Driven by an urge for power, by curiosity or avarice,
you and your band of likes travel this world
seeking glory, gold, knowledge and power.

This is the game of these adventures.

BLOOD & BRONZE is a fantasy game
of high adventure and role-playing,
set in a mythic Mesopotamia.

Contained herein are all the rules needed to play.

BLOOD & BRONZE
(c) 2015

All art used under licence
Interior (c) 2014 Rich LONGMORE
Map (c) 2014 Sam PERKINS-HARBIN
Cover (c) 2015 Adam MOORE