

Fantasy Thulhu

POWERED BY

FATE



B. H. 2011



Starbright

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Fantasy Cthulhu, powered by Fate (Core)
A Tabletop RPG of Cosmic Horror

by
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Fantasy Cthulhu is a role-playing game set in a fantasy world that has been infected by the malign forces of the Cthulhu Mythos. Amidst the back drop of a fantasy setting, made dark by the Mythos, heroes must rise to save humanity itself from unspeakable horrors that stalk the night.

CHARACTER CREATION

Character creation is collaborative and is best done as a group activity. It can take a full session to do, as everyone talks about their characters, makes suggestions to each other, and establishes some of the detail of the setting. Creating a character is one of the best ways of being introduced to the setting and the game, and the GM and players should give it some time.

Character Name

A character's name does a lot of heavy lifting. It creates preconceptions and sets a mood. A name can be destiny, Chance, for example, is a great name for a character who is shooting for the stars. There is the potential for idiosyncratic names to do half the work of character creation for you. On the other hand, deciding not to give your character a name can be a powerful statement. It suggests mystery, obscured motivations and danger.

Some players look for inspiration in mythology, a great source of powerful and enigmatic names. Another source for character names that many players use is popular novels. TV shows and movies. You don't have to use TV character names directly, but can instead change and adapt them a bit.

It sometimes helps to find some meaning within the names, especially with surnames. Combining two ordinary words can sometimes provide an interesting name, such as Darkraven, from dark and raven.

Whatever your 'process', naming a character is one of the most important steps in character creation.

Character Species

Humans are not the only option for player characters when choosing a species. Fantasy Cthulhu also includes dwarves, elves and halflings as player character options. These various species of humanoid all get along well with each other, irrespective of stature, skin colour, pointyness of ears, or any other differences in physical characteristics.

A species provides a number of aspects; choose at least one but not more than two. Your species also gives you a special species skill. Slot your species skill into whichever empty skill slot appeals to you.

Humans

Humans are the base standard against which everything else is judged. Normal human abilities, such as two arms, ability to breathe, running speed of about 10 m/sec do not need to be written on the character sheet. It is only when a character goes above, or falls below these benchmarks that a note must be made.

Elves

Elves are a little taller than humans on average, and thinner too. Depending on the elf this tends to make them look either graceful and beautiful, or gaunt and sinister to human eyes.

POSSIBLE ASPECTS

The Experience of Centuries, I Know These Woods, The Long Game, Magic in the Blood, Perfection in Everything.

ELF SKILL

You may use the Elf skill to recognize useful flora and fauna, know your way through the woods, or notice hidden dangers.

Halflings

Halflings may be the smallest of the peoples of the setting, but their muscle fibres are longer than human, which means that their strength is equal to that of a human, even though their muscles are less massive. The upshot of this is that there is no overall difference in strength, jumping and other physical feats between the two. However the difference in height means halflings can go through gaps that big lumbering humans can't, and find it easier to hide and be stealthy. This advantage has led to halflings being prime recruits for gangs of thieves, and their employ by the great powers as assassins.

ASPECTS

Knows the Finer Things, Hale Fellow Well Met, Surprisingly Good with a Knife, Marked by Destiny.

HALFLING SKILL

You may use the Halfling skill to pass stealthily and remain hidden. In addition, pick one of the following flavours; you may pick more at the cost of one stunt or refresh each. You can use Halfling Skill to locate an exit from a trap that is just big enough for a halfling to escape through. You can also create an advantage representing the difficulty of an enemy fighting a nimble foe that seems to be able to dive between their legs and pop up behind them.



Dwarves

They live in the mountains mostly, and are renowned magical smiths. Their muscle fibres are long, as with halflings, making them the physical equal of the taller races, even if shorter in stature. Their shoulders are wide however and often their bellies are big, making them no more stealthy than a human or elf.

ASPECTS

Blood and Glory, Knowledge of the Secrets of the Underdark, Pain Is for the Weak, Warrior of the Seven Clans.

DWARF SKILL

You may use the Dwarf' Skill to resist pain and perform feats of brute strength. When you use Dwarf Skill to create an advantage representing an overpowering battle-fury, you get an extra invocation on that aspect if you succeed or succeed with style. You may use Dwarf Skill instead of Physique to determine your physical stress and consequences, and you get one additional minor physical consequence.

Language

The languages spoken by the character are a good opportunity to add a little colour to the character sheet. Everyone, unless their background is very unusual will speak Human, at least haltingly, as it is a trade language. Characters can speak an additional 1D3 languages if they desire. There is no need to choose your languages yet. Fill in your language slots as you play the game, and it becomes apparent which languages are important.

Realm of Origin

The area that the character comes from. You can select one of the areas described later in this book, or you can design your own. You can be as specific as a single village, or a city street.

Career/Previous Career

Now that we are forming a clearer picture of the character, we can delve a little into their history. A good step in defining this history is to pick a career for the character. This can be a previous career if it is a way of life that the character is leaving behind as they become an adventurer.

This is noted on the character sheet as an aspect, even if it is a previous career. Write ex-thief, for example, if the character is leaving their previous career among the underworld behind to become an adventurer. Don't feel limited by the choices below. These are here to give a flavour of the sort of lives fantasy adventurers might live. It's even more fun to come up with your own idea for a career/previous career.

Barbarian

These are peoples that have little contact with city life. They are the subject of condescension and curiosity, they are also the keepers of knowledge that has been lost, or not yet discovered, by the civilised peoples of the tall cities.

Criminal

Crime is usually a brutish thing, fuelled by necessity, but for some it is the only option available. There are also a small number of people who enjoy the kick they get from committing a crime, but most criminals will leave their life of crime behind them when they go adventuring.

Explorer

Though much of the map of the world is filled in, even more of it remains blank or is simply wrong. On huge sections, all that can be written with any confidence is, 'Here be Monsters.' The explorer thrives on discovering who and what is in those unknown places.



Forester

The forester, also known as a forest ranger, or ranger, holds a position equal to a sheriff or local law enforcer. They are responsible for patrolling the woodlands on a lord or lady's property. Their duties included negotiating deals for the sale of lumber and timber and stopping poachers from illegally hunting. Many times wanted criminals hide in the forest. When this happens it is the duty of the forester to organize armed gangs to capture the criminal. Often foresters hold titles of prominence in their local communities, and act as barristers and arbitrators. Their pay is usually above average, and often includes free accommodation in a forester's lodge.

Herbalist

A person whose life is dedicated to the beneficial and medicinal uses of plants. These are respected members of the local community with a status only a little below that of a doctor in the big cities, while out in the country the herbalist will probably have a higher status than a doctor.

Hunter

Hunting is no longer necessary for subsistence, and is now aimed primarily at killing animals which prey upon domestic animals, and driving monsters away from the borders of inhabited lands.



Knight

This character is a member of the nobility, which in such a militarized and dangerous world means they must be able to fight and command. They must also be able to raise funds from their estates and keep their lands in good order. Even the best trained fighter is of no use to their liege if they can't afford armour and a horse. Knights fallen on hard times, or whose estates are underperforming have been known to quest for treasure as an alternative source of income. Such knights are referred to as wandering knights, or knights errant.

Minstrel

Minstrels keep the legends alive, memorizing the works of others and adding to the traditional songs when legendary deeds are performed. Frequently they are retained by champions and royalty, keen to take their place among the legends of old.

Scribe

The work of the scribe involves copying books, including sacred texts, and secretarial and administrative duties such as taking of dictation and the keeping of business, judicial and historical records for kings, nobility, temples and cities. Street corner letter-writers (and readers) are also to be found providing these services.



Spy

All the realms make use of assassins, spies and secret agents, and have thoroughly developed systems for the acquisition of intelligence. They all rely heavily on espionage in their conquests. Halflings are much valued in these roles because they are perceived as being good at fast talking and have superior stealth skills.

Wildcrafter

The wildcrafter is skilled at finding and collecting medicinal herbs. They are every bit as at home in the monster infested wilds as hunters and rangers.

Enhancing the Setting through Characters

As you're making stuff up for your characters, you'll also make stuff up about the world around them. You'll end up talking about NPCs, organizations, places, things like that. That's fantastic! The GM will be very appreciative of all the help they can get in rounding out the game world and making it more real.



Gear

Now it is time to choose some gear for your character. The character can have any gear their heart desires at the start of play. The gear a character has at their disposal will constantly be changing. If a player wants to keep a particular piece of gear with them, a signature weapon or their trusted steed, it must be mentioned as part of one of the character's aspects. Otherwise the GM can take or destroy it at any time. Equipment is not important in the game unless the player makes it so by making it an aspect. If the character's sword breaks, they can simply buy a new one or gather one up from a fallen opponent.

Example Equipment

Gear can be chosen from the lists below, or the players can design their own gear, assigning one positive and one negative aspect if the gear is significant enough to warrant this.

The gear is priced gold, silver or copper pieces; 1G (1 gold piece) = 10S (10 silver pieces) = 20C (20 copper pieces).

Animals

Animals are often the most valuable possessions that a Hyropean person will own. The stealing of animals is taken very seriously, and the punishment if caught is often death.

Price List

Cat, 1S
Chicken, 1C
Cow, 6S
Dog, 1S
Draught horse, 1G
Goose, 6C
Mule, 4S
Ox, 12S
Pet Dragon, 100G
Pig, 2S
Riding horse, 10G
Sheep, 1S
War horse, 80G

Clothes

Both men and women often wear hoods, often attached to capes or jackets but sometimes standing alone. A common garment for men of the working classes is a hood attached to a short cape that covers just the shoulders.

Price List

Boots, 6C
Fashionable gown, 10-50G
Head covering (hat or hood), 10C
Linen jacket, 8C
Purse, 2C
Shoes, 4C
Woollen jacket, 3S

Food/Drink

Meat is expensive and therefore prestigious. It is common only on the tables of the nobility, and poachers and outlaws. Beef, which requires a huge investment in land, cleared of trees and kept safe from monsters, is very uncommon. Wine is commonly drunk and is regarded as the most prestigious and healthy of drinks. Unlike water or beer, consumption of wine in moderation (especially red wine) is believed to aid digestion, generate good blood and brighten the mood.

Common folk usually have to settle for a cheap white wine from a second or even third pressing, meaning that it can be consumed in quite generous amounts without leading to heavy intoxication. For the very poorest, watered-down vinegar is often the only available choice. Human wine is bad quality, you have to drink it with your teeth clenched to filter out impurities, halfling wine is the best.

Price List

Cheese, 2C per wedge
Day's food for a king, 7C
Day's food for a knight, 4C
Day's food for a commoner, 1C
Dried fruit, 1C per lb
Salt fish, 6S each
Spices, 6S per lb

Miscellaneous

Useful equipment for an adventurer will include a mule with room in its baggage to hold two sets of armour. One set is wargear such as mail or plate, and the other is light brigandine, which is the only acceptable armour option within cities.

A selection of other odds and ends will also be useful, such as rope and lanterns, water bottles, bedding and rations. Wands are used by teachers, orchestra conductors and magicians to emphasise their gestures. They are often a badge of rank that must be earned or a gift to show esteem, and it is considered 'bad form' to buy yourself a wand.

Barrel, 3C
Blank scroll, 1SP
Book (to buy), 5G
Book (to rent), 1S per month
Bottle, 4C
Bucket, 5C
Candles, 1C per 3 candles
Chair, 3C
Cooking pot, 2S
Ink, 1CP
King's bed, 200G
Pillow, 1C
Quill, 1CP
Scroll tubes, 1SP
Sheet, 4C
Table, 6C
Wand, 1GC



Rent

Ownership of property is very rare, as all property ultimately belongs to the ruler of the realm. Even huge castles, temples and colleges are often rented. Adventurers need property because it is important to have somewhere to retreat and lick your wounds. Wizards, especially, must have a safe tower or castle to return to. It is almost impossible to learn spells when on the road, or crouched in the corner of a goblin's lair. This tower must also be equipped for magical research (just furnishing the tower with this equipment costs 40G). It is funding this base cum lab that sends many magicians of more limited means off on adventures in the first place.

Price List

Castle (large), 900G/year
Castle (medium), 700G/year
Castle (small), 300G/year
City guild hall, 140G/year
City shop, 10G/year
City tavern, 70G/year
Cottage, 5S/year
Craftsman's house (with workshop), 20G/year
Fortified college, 450G/year
Large barn, 8S/year
Stately home (with courtyard), 90G/year
Wizard's tower 60G/year

Tools

The tools of a trade are prized possessions, and they are built to last. Good quality tools can be handed down from generation to generation.

Price List

Anvil, 2G
Armourer's tools, 10G
Bellows, 3G
Carpenter's axe, 5C
Chisel, 4C
Hammer, 8C
Shovel, 3C
Spinning wheel, 1S

Transport

Carriages and wagons are some of the most often-encountered vehicles on the roads, but there are more unusual vehicles too. A carriage is usually horse-drawn, with suspension using leaf springs or leather strapping. Wagons are pulled by animals such as mules or oxen, and are used for transporting goods, agricultural materials or sometimes people. Wagons have four wheels. A wagon may be pulled by one animal or by several, often in pairs. Road travel is popular, but river and coastal travel is considered safer.

Longship

The longship is a type of ship that has been developed over a period of centuries and perfected by its most famous user, the fierce Northerners. The ships are clinker-built, utilizing overlapping wooden strakes.

Knarr

a type of cargo vessel. It differs from the longship in that it is larger and relies solely on its square rigged sail for propulsion.

Galley

Galleys have been in use for trade and warfare for many years. Rowing is the primary method of propulsion, which is well-suited for the often fickle winds of the equatorial seas, where they are primarily used. The galley is also used in the waters of the north, but to a lesser extent since its low freeboard and lack of stability in rough seas make it vulnerable.

Cog

The cog is a design which is believed to have evolved from (or at least been influenced by) the longship, and is in wide use. The cog is a wide and spacious transport ship. Primitive cogs have open hulls and can be rowed short distances. More advanced versions have become larger and received a deck, as well as a raised platform in the bow and stern.

Carrack

The largest ship in use across the Realms, it is a three or four-masted sailing ship for use in the deep oceans. It has a high rounded stern with large aftcastle and forecastle. It is usually square-rigged on the foremast and mainmast and lateen-rigged on the mizzenmast.

Price List

Barge, 10G
Carriage, 8G
Carrack, 800G
Cart, 4S
Cog, 400 G
Ferry crossing, 1C
Galley 250G
Knarr, 230G
Longship, 180 G
Queenly carriage 400G
Sedan chair , 8S
Wagon, 8S



Weapons and Armour

It is mandatory for all citizens to own certain types of weapons and armour. These vary from realm to realm, but often include a mail shirt, a helmet, and a spear. All, including serfs, must own bows, and archery practice is compulsory at least once per week and holidays.

This is a double-edged sword for the rulers of the realms. It means they have huge armies of trained fighters at their disposal at a moment's notice, but it also means that any rebellion will be well equipped, armed and dangerous. Mail, plate, longswords and war hammers are therefore for military practice, protecting the village from monsters and warfare only. They are otherwise banned for public use within settlements of all sizes, though it is tolerated to wear these items in some frontier areas. Such equipment must usually be removed and stored in a locked chest.

Wearing such 'wargear' will attract the attention of the city guard. The heavy mob will be called in – usually a group of tough dwarves in war gear and an elven archer or two on roof tops. The characters caught so garbed and equipped will be engaged, and if possible arrested and interrogated, possibly using torture, to ascertain if they are attempting to incite rebellion. Rebellion is a constant worry all over the Realms, where even a medium size irregular force often proves equal to or better than the government's own regular military in combat, due in part to their compulsory military training.

Brigandine and a rapier is acceptable for wear, by both men and women, and is even a mark of rank. A lady or gentleman adventurer, and those that style themselves as such, often wear brigandine and rapier as they go about their business in town.

To defeat plate armour, the mace, for cavalry riding at head cracking hight, and the longsword for fighting on foot, are the weapons of choice. They are both expensive however, and most combatants are armed with cheaper alternatives such as pikes, mauls or warhammers.

Arming Sword

Range: hand-to-hand

Damage type: slashing

The arming sword is often worn as a backup weapon by those wielding the two-handed longsword. It is a light, but not very versatile weapon capable only of doing slashing damage.

They are typically used with a shield or buckler. When used as a primary weapon, arming sword combat is possible without the benefit of a shield. In the absence of a shield the empty (normally left) hand can be used for grappling opponents.



Battle Axe

Range: hand-to-hand

Damage type: slashing

Battle axes generally weigh far less than axes for splitting wood, because they are designed to cut less dense legs and arms, consequently, narrow slicing blades are the norm. This facilitates deep, grievous wounds. Moreover, a lighter weapon is much quicker to bring to bear in combat and manipulate for repeated strikes against an adversary.

Club

Range: hand-to-hand

Damage: clubbing

A club (also known as cudgel, baton, truncheon, or bludgeon) is among the simplest of all weapons. A club is essentially a short staff, or stick, usually made of wood, and wielded as a weapon since prehistoric times.

Composite bow

Range: 425m

Rate of fire: miss 1 round between shots for reload and draw.

Damage type: low velocity projectile

The composite bow is the most advanced bow design, and can be easily used from horseback.

Cross Bow

Range: 400m

Damage type: high velocity projectile

Rate of fire: miss 3 rounds between shots for reload, and winding the mechanism.

These are more powerful than other bows, and more accurate, but

much more expensive and very slow to reload. They can shoot an armour penetrating high velocity projectile, 'the bolt' which can be devastating to wearers of plate armour.

Flail

Range: hand-to-hand

Damage types: pummelling, and trapping

The military flail is an unusual hand weapon in which the handle is attached to the striking part of a weapon by a flexible chain or cord. It does pummelling damage like a mace, but is also very good at doing trapping damage, to catch and throw opponents and put them at a disadvantage. This leaves the opponent open to a thrusting strike at a weak point in their armour, often administered with a rondel (the knightly dagger).

Grasping Glove

Range: hand-to-hand

Damage Type: trapping

Rapiers are quick and agile, but they can still be quickly seized and held tightly by even a bare hand. There is little chance of the hand being injured in doing this. Indeed, even wider cutting swords can be held by the blade or grabbed safely if done correctly and a grasping glove is worn. Several rapier treatises depict the empty hand being used to slap away or deflect rapier thrusts. This is a common technique and if the special grasping glove, covered in mail or heavy leather, is worn then grabbing or swatting away a sword is even safer.

Halberd

Range: hand-to-hand

Damage Type: thrusting, slashing and trapping damage

The halberd is a cheap and versatile weapon. It consists of an axe blade topped with a spike mounted on a long shaft. It also has a hook or thorn on the back of the axe blade for grappling mounted combatants. The halberd is very versatile in battle. It is able to push back approaching horsemen and the hook opposite the axe head can be used to pull horsemen to the ground or pull them off balance. Additionally, halberds are reinforced with metal rims over the shaft, thus making effective weapons for blocking other weapons like swords. Expert halberdiers are as deadly as any other weapon masters on the battlefield. It is often carried by lower-ranking officers in infantry units, used to ensure that infantrymen drawn up in ranks are standing correctly aligned with each other.

Heavy Cloak

Range: hand-to-hand

Damage Type: trapping

Gentlefolk typically wear a cloak or cape which can be easily unclasped and wound around their free hand to be used to parry sword strikes and trap the blade of opponents.

Javelin

Range: 30m

Damage type: low velocity projectile

A javelin is a light spear designed primarily for casting as a ranged weapon. Some elven nations have developed a military tactic to

maximize the advantages of the combination between horse and javelin. In this tactic the horsemen ride around in circles, toward and away from the enemy, continually hurling javelins. The tactic is usually employed against heavy infantry. The constant movement of the horsemen gives them an advantage against slow infantry and makes them hard to target. The manoeuvre is designed to harass and taunt the enemy forces, disrupting close formations.

Lance

Range: hand-to-hand

Damage type: Thrusting

A lance is a spear designed to be used by a mounted warrior. The lance is longer, stouter and heavier than an infantry spear, and unsuited for throwing, or for close-in fighting. They are often equipped with a vamplate, a small circular plate to prevent the hand sliding up the shaft upon impact. As a secondary weapon, lancers carry swords, maces or something else suited to close quarter battle, since the lance is basically a one-use-per-engagement weapon. After the initial charge, the weapon is far too long, heavy and slow to be effectively used against opponents in a melee.

Longsword

Range: hand-to-hand

Damage: slashing, thrusting, pummelling, or trapping

This weapon is also referred to as the two-handed sword, bastard sword and great sword. Longswords have long cruciform hilts with grips that provide room for two hands. Versions with short grips can also be held with two hands; one hand on the grip and one hand on the lower part of the blade. They have straight double-edged blades, which are often over 1m in length, and are very heavy. The longsword is commonly held in combat with both hands, though they may also be used single-handed.

All parts of the sword are used for offensive purposes, including the, blade (slashing), point (thrusting), pommel (pummelling) and crossguard (trapping). Longswords can therefore do whatever damage the user needs depending on their opponent's armour and other circumstances. Lightly armoured foes can be slashed causing swift and grievous wounds, while armoured opponents can be pummelled to weaken them, then trapped and brought to the ground where a final thrust finishes them, all with a single weapon.

Mace

Range: hand-to-hand

Damage type: pummelling

A mace is a simple weapon that uses a heavy head on the end of a handle to deliver powerful blows. It differs from a hammer in that the head of a mace is radially symmetric so that a blow can be delivered just as effectively with any side of the weapon. A mace consists of a strong, heavy, wooden or metal shaft, often reinforced with metal, featuring a head made of stone, copper, bronze, iron, or steel. The head of the mace has flanges or knobs to allow greater penetration of plate armour. The length of maces can vary considerably. The maces of foot soldiers are usually quite short. The maces of cavalymen are longer and thus better suited for blows delivered from horseback. Maces, being simple to make, relatively

cheap, and straightforward in application, are quite common weapons.

Maul

Range: hand-to-hand

Damage: clubbing or thrusting (when equipped with a spike)

The maul is a long-handled hammer with a heavy metal head, either of lead or iron. It is similar in appearance and function to a sledgehammer but sometimes has a spear-like spike projecting from the top. It is popular with archers, who use it to drive stakes into the ground, to deter cavalry charges, and then keep it handy as a melee weapon.

Pike

Range: special

Damage type: thrusting, slashing and trapping

Special: -2 at ranges less than 6ft, +1 at ranges between 10 and 25ft.

The pike is an extremely long weapon, varying considerably in size, from 10 to 25 feet in length. The great length of these weapons allows a great concentration of spearheads to be presented to the enemy, with their wielders at a distance, but also makes pikes unwieldy in close combat. This means that pikemen have to be equipped with a shorter weapon such as a sword, mace, or dagger in order to defend themselves should the fighting degenerate into a melee. In general, however, pikemen attempt to avoid such disorganized combat, at which they are at a disadvantage. To compound their difficulties in a melee, pikemen often do not have a shield to use in close-quarters fighting.

Rondel, or Knightly Dagger

Range: hand-to-hand

Damage type: thrusting

This dagger has a rounder cross-section than a normal dagger and is designed for winking into armour and thrusting through chain and the small holes in face plates. It's the weapon of choice for threatening or finishing off a captured knight on the battle field. Almost all knights carry them for this purpose.

Quarterstaff

Range: hand-to-hand

Damage type: trapping and pummelling

A shaft of hardwood from 5 to 9 feet in length, sometimes with a metal tip or spike at one or both ends. The quarterstaff is a versatile weapon that is taught as the first introduction to the arts martial. Some foresters consider it the noblest of weapons and value it above even the longsword.

Rapier

Range: hand-to-hand

Damage type: thrusting

A relatively long-bladed sword characterized by a complex hilt which is constructed to provide protection for the hand wielding it. It allows for fast reactions, and has a long reach. The rapier is well suited to civilian combat, and as longswords have evolved to meet the needs of the battlefield, so the rapier has evolved to meet the needs of

civilian combat and decorum. It is lighter, shorter and less cumbersome to wear than a longsword.

A rapier blade is by no means fragile nor vulnerable to being easily broken or cut by other swords (though its slender tip might on occasion snap). The rapier can be quite sturdy and capable of parrying the cuts of heavier swords, but only with the thicker section of its blade or hilt and (preferably) in a deflecting action to redirect the attacking point rather than a passive, rigid block. It is, however, better to avoid or dodge cuts from broader blades than to parry them with a slender sword.

Rapiers are capable of piercing soft armours but chain is a sufficient defence against them and is often worn under clothing for this very reason. If an opponent is wearing any portion of plate armour, for example on the battlefield or within urban militias, attacks must naturally be directed to other more vulnerable areas.

Self Bow (Long Bow)

Range: 180m

Rate of fire: miss 2 rounds between shots for reload and draw

Damage type: low velocity projectile

The self bow is the most basic bow design, and requires special flexible wood to work well.

Scimitar

Range: hand-to-hand

Damage type: Scimitars do thrusting and slashing damage

Scimitars are used in horse warfare because of their relatively light weight, compared to longswords, and their curved design. They are good for slashing lightly armoured opponents while riding on a horse.

Throwing Dagger

Range: hand-to-hand, or thrown (range 6m)

Damage types: slashing, or low velocity projectile

A dagger is a small double-edged blade used for slashing and throwing. They often fulfil the role of a secondary defensive weapon in close combat.

War Hammer

Range: hand-to-hand

Damage type: trapping, slashing or pummelling

The war hammer is intended for close combat action. War hammers often have a spike on one side of the head, thus making it a more versatile weapon than a mace. War hammers transmit the impact of a blow through even the thickest helmet and cause concussions.

The spike is used against other parts of the body where the armour is thinner, and penetration easier. The spike end can also be used for trapping the target's armour, reins, or shield and bringing them to the ground. Against mounted opponents, the weapon can be directed at the legs of the horse, toppling the foe to the ground where they can be more easily attacked.

Price List

Arming sword, 2G
Battle Axe, 1G
Bow, 2S
Club, 4C
Composite bow, 4S
Crossbow, 4G
Flail, 2G
Grasping Glove, 4S
Halberd, 1G
Heavy Cloak, 5S
Javelin, 5S
Lance, 3G
Longsword 10G
Mace, 2G
Maul, 2G
Pike, 8S
Rondel Dagger, 1G
Quarter Staff, 2S
Rapier, 8G
Self Bow, 2S
Scimitar, 8G
Throwing dagger, 8S
War hammer, 6S



Armour

Armour is a common possession, with even lowly serfs being required by law to own a leather jerkin.

Armour Rating and Damage Type

Armour ratings tell you what the maximum number of shifts of stress you'll take from an attack is. Armour ratings start at 4 (for minimum protection) and go down to 1 (for the best protection). If the armour provides no protection, this is marked with N/A. There is no armour that provides protection against every damage type, however.

It is possible for armour to make you more vulnerable to a certain type of attack. Plate armour is famously vulnerable to being trapped, because of the many crevices a hook can find purchase. This is marked by a negative number indicating the extra stress this type of attack causes.

When the attacker succeeds with style, ignore the armour rating. The attacker does full damage.

Damage types include:

Clubbing – this is damage caused by blows from soft organic materials such as wood or human fists.

Constriction – this is the damage done by monsters that wind around targets and crush them.

Energy attacks – this is damage caused by heat, cold, electricity, etc.

High velocity projectile – this damage is caused by fast projectiles travelling along straight lines, such as crossbow bolts.

Low velocity projectile – this is the damage caused by arrows, darts and rocks.

Pummelling – this is damage caused by blows from hard inorganic materials such as metal or stone.

Slashing – this is damage caused by cutting swipes with edged weapons.

Thrusting – this is damage caused by penetrating thrusts from pointed weapons.

Trapping – this represents catching the opponent with a hook, net or grapple, or even the cross guard of a longsword, and pulling them to the ground, or otherwise immobilising them.

Brigandine

This is the most popular armour with urban civilians. It is a cloth jacket with metal plates inside, held in place with rivets – often arranged to make an attractive pattern on the outside of the cloth. It is just as effective as plate, but usually only the torso is covered.

Clubbing; 2

Constriction; N/A

Energy attacks; N/A

High velocity projectile; 3

Low velocity projectile; 3

Pummelling; 4

Slashing; 4

Thrusting; 2

Trapping; N/A

Chain Mail

The most expensive armour is chain mail (often simply called mail), due to the time consuming method of construction, where links are riveted together to make a garment of chains. It is a component of a suit of plate mail – or can be worn on its own. A mail shirt can even be worn concealed below clothing (with the same armour ratings as brigandine). The full mail hauberk, often worn under plate, can not be concealed below clothing. Depending on his or her fitness, a fighter wearing a mail hauberk can run, lie, stand up, jump, do somersaults (or even cartwheels), and even swim wearing full armour.

Clubbing; 1

Constriction; N/A

Energy attacks; N/A

High velocity projectile; 1

Low velocity projectile; 1
Pummelling; 3
Slashing; 1
Thrusting; 1
Trapping; N/A

Leather Jerkin

This is a small leather vest that provides some protection from slashing, hand-to-hand, and thrusting/stabbing damage.

Clubbing; 3
Constriction; N/A
Energy attacks; N/A
High velocity projectile; 4
Low velocity projectile; 4
Pummelling; N/A
Slashing; 4
Thrusting; 4
Trapping; N/A

Plate

Plate armour, is personal armour made from large metal plates, worn on the chest and sometimes the entire body. It gives superior protection to mail. It has largely supplanted mail on the battlefield for those that can afford it. All plate armour is lined with cloth, to pad the wearer, quiet the armour, and reduce wear between the pieces. This, along with the necessary straps, is a significant amount of the expense.

A complete suit of plate armour made from well-tempered steel weighs around 33-44 pounds. The wearer remains highly agile and can jump, run and otherwise move freely as the weight of the armour is spread evenly throughout the body. The armour is articulated and covers the entire body completely from neck to toe. Large armies, numbering thousands or even more than ten thousand, (as many as 60% of any given army) fight on foot wearing full plate, accompanied by archers with a mix of bows and crossbows.

Clubbing; 1
Constriction; 4
Energy attacks; N/A
High velocity projectile; 1
Low velocity projectile; 1
Pummelling; 2
Slashing; 1
Thrusting; 1
Trapping; -2

Silk Shirt

A silk shirt worn below armour provides excellent arrow protection, as the arrow can be pulled out more easily. It is arrow removal after all, rather than arrow strikes that are most often fatal.

Clubbing; N/A
Constriction; N/A

Energy attacks; N/A
High velocity projectile; N/A
Low velocity projectile; 1
Pummelling; N/A
Slashing; N/A
Thrusting; N/A
Trapping; N/A

Spiked Armour

Spikes give protection against constrict and bite attacks, where the monster brings delicate parts of their body – the face, underbelly – close to the wearer.

Clubbing; N/A
Constriction; 2
Energy attacks; N/A
High velocity projectile; N/A
Low velocity projectile; N/A
Pummelling; N/A
Slashing; N/A
Thrusting; N/A
Trapping; N/A

Shields

These give varying amounts of protection from weapons and make the user more susceptible to trapping attacks to varying degrees. The shield user can use either the armour protection or shield protection against an attack, not both.

Fist shield

Damage type: pummelling

This is more of a weapon than a protection and can be used to do pummelling damage. It is sometimes confusingly called a buckler (it is not buckled to the forearm). It is a small shield, 6" to 18" in diameter, gripped in the fist. It is generally used as a companion weapon in hand-to-hand combat, as its size makes it poor protection against missile weapons (e.g. arrows) but useful in deflecting the blow of an opponent's sword or mace.

There are two major forms of bucklers. The first is a simple round shield with the fist positioned directly behind the boss with a variety of shapes of face and depths of rim. The second major form is a corrugated rectangle. A buckler can be used as a 'Metal fist' to directly attack an opponent by punching with either its flat face or its rim. Most shields are too big and unwieldy to be used this way. The buckler does not however give any protection against missile weapons.

Clubbing; 4
Constriction; N/A
Energy attacks; N/A
High velocity projectile; N/A
Low velocity projectile; N/A
Pummelling; N/A
Slashing; N/A
Thrusting; N/A

Trapping; N/A

Heraldic shield

This is smaller than the kite-shield, but is more manageable and can be used either mounted or on foot. They are typically made from thin wood overlaid with leather. Some shields, incorporate additional layers of gesso, canvas, and/or parchment. Smaller versions are available with a notch to support a lance, but these are really specialised jousting equipment, and of little use outside the tournament.

Clubbing; 2

Constriction; N/A

Energy attacks; N/A

High velocity projectile; 4

Low velocity projectile; 3

Pummelling; 4

Slashing; 2

Thrusting; 2

Trapping; N/A

Kite shield

This shield is rounded at the top and tapers to the bottom, it is cumbersome but gives some protection to the legs. It is often used by cavalry.

Clubbing; 2

Constriction; N/A

Energy attacks; N/A

High velocity projectile; 3

Low velocity projectile; 2

Pummelling; 4

Slashing; 2

Thrusting; 2

Trapping; N/A

Round shield

This is the typical, simple round shield made from wood. It is very effective and cheap to produce, which means there are an awful lot of them, hanging on walls, abandoned on battlefields and also actually in use.

Clubbing; 2

Constriction; N/A

Energy attacks; N/A

High velocity projectile; 4

Low velocity projectile; 4

Pummelling; 4

Slashing; 2

Thrusting; 3

Trapping; N/A

Price List

Brigandine, 30G

Chain mail, 10G

Expensive (gilded and engraved) plate, 340G

Leather, 5S

Plate mail, 80G

Shield, 8C



Aspects

Now choose four aspects, or create them. Aspects define who a character is, and they provide ways for you to generate fate points and to spend those fate points on bonuses.

Troubles

The first aspect you choose is a 'bad' aspect. This is your trouble. Trouble brings chaos into a character's life and drives them into interesting situations.

Three More Aspects

The most important thing about aspects are that they are interesting. Aspects give you success when you need it and draw you into danger and action. Examples of good aspects that describe the characters personality are, 'Easily Swayed by Clever Folk' or 'Always in the Vanguard'. Other sources of aspects include the character's background, 'Forest Ranger Training from Father', for example, or an important possession, 'My Mother's Bloodstained Book of the Occult' The game moderator will use your aspects when they are creating scenarios. If you have trouble thinking up some aspects, leave it for now—you'll have plenty of time during play to refine it.

Invoking Aspects

Aspects are mostly there to give you an 'edge'. You get this 'edge' by invoking the aspect. Simply, explain why the aspect is relevant, (spend a fate point if it's not a free invoke), and you can choose one of these benefits:

Add +2*

Or

Reroll all your dice.

* This +2 bonus is added to your skill roll, or another character's skill roll, or even passive opposition.

You can invoke multiple aspects on a single roll, but you cannot invoke the same aspect multiple times on a single roll. So if your reroll doesn't help you enough, you'll have to pick another aspect (and spend another fate point).

Creating an advantage is a free invocation. (If you succeed with style, you get two invocations).

If you spend a fate point to 'add to' your free invocation, it becomes double power. So you can get a +4 bonus instead of a +2, two rerolls instead of one, or you could split the benefits, getting a reroll and a +2 bonus. You can also stack multiple free invocations together.

After you've used your free invocation, if the aspect in question is still around, if the fire you started hasn't gone out yet, for example, you can keep invoking it by spending fate points.

If you want, you can pass your free invocation to another character. A whole team can create an advantage and pass their free invocations onto one person, then that person stacks all of them up at once for a huge bonus.

Compelling Aspects

The other way you use aspects in the game is called a compel. If you're in a situation where having or being around a certain aspect means your character's life is more dramatic or complicated, someone, very often the game moderator, can compel the aspect.

Whoever is getting compelled then has two options:

Accept the complication and receive a fate point – or – Pay a fate point to prevent the complication from happening.

If a player wants to compel another character, it costs a fate point to propose the complication. The GM, however, can always compel for free. Suggesting ways that your aspects can complicate your character's life, so the game moderator can use them for compels, is a good way to earn fate points.

Removing or Changing an Aspect

Removing an aspect usually takes at least one action. Adversaries can try to stop you, they get to roll active opposition against you.

Skills & Stunts

Once you have chosen aspects, it's time to pick skills. Your skills form a pyramid, with a single skill rated at Great (+4), and more skills at each lower rating on the ladder going down to Average (+1):

One Great (+4) skill
Two Good (+3) skills
Three Fair (+2) skills
Four Average (+1) skills
Infinite number of Mediocre (+0) skills

As characters advance, they can improve beyond Great (+4), but it's more difficult than improving skills rated below this. Mediocre (+0) is the default for any skill you do not take.

Note: a few skills have special benefits, notably those skills that affect the number of stress boxes and consequences you have available. If you know you want a certain number of those, put those skills on the pyramid first.

Precision

Looking over the skill descriptions, you might notice that there are a few places where we give an abstraction for something that in real life depends on precise measurement. Physique and Resources are good examples. Many people who are into strength training have some idea of how much weight they can dead lift, and people spend specific amounts of money from a finite pool when they buy things.

So how much can a character with Great (+4) Physique bench press? How much can a character with Fair (+2) Resources spend before going broke? The truth is, we have no idea, and we're reluctant to pursue a specific answer. Though it may seem counter-intuitive, we find that creating minutiae like that detracts from the verisimilitude of the game in play. As soon as you establish a detail like, "Great Physique can dead lift a car for five seconds," then you're cutting out a lot of the variability that real life allows. Adrenaline and other factors allow people to reach beyond their normal physical limits or fall short of them.

Stunts

Now pick or invent three stunts. Stunts change how skills work for your character. You get three stunts for free, and you can take up to two more stunts at the cost of lowering your refresh by one.

Refresh

A player character starts with a refresh of 3. That means they'll start each session off with at least 3 fate points. If you pick four stunts, your refresh is 2. If you pick five stunts, your refresh is only 1.

Stress

Now determine how much of a beating your character can take. This is represented by stress boxes. Every PC has two different

stress tracks, a physical stress track and a mental stress track. The more boxes in a stress track, the more resilient the character is. By default, a character has two boxes in each stress track.

Consequences

Every PC also has three consequence slots. One is mild, one is moderate, and the last one is severe. Consequences are the injuries and traumas you can't just shake off after the dust settles.

Note: Skills such as Physique and Will provide more stress boxes. At Superb (+5) or higher, such skills also grant an additional mild consequence slot.

The List of Skills

These skills are intended to be broad and inclusive. There should be various ways that each skill can be turned to advantage during play.

Athletics

Athletics is physical fitness. It is good for jumping, running, climbing, swimming. You can create an advantage with Athletics, by jumping to high ground, running faster than the opponent can keep up with, or performing dazzling acrobatic manoeuvres. Athletics is also rolled for defence in conflict, representing dodging sword blows, or ducking behind scenery to avoid arrows.

Athletics Stunts

Sprinter: move two zones in a conflict

Rope monkey: +2 in rigging

Burglary

Burglary includes bypassing locks and traps, pickpocketing and filching, covering your tracks, and other such activities. An advantage can be created by discovering vulnerabilities to exploit. You can also examine the work of other burglars to determine how a particular heist was done.

Burglary Stunts

Escapology: +2 on Burglary rolls to create an advantage and escape from a location

Lock Maker: Your locks provide active opposition to thieves

Thieves' Cant: You can use Burglary in place of Contacts when dealing with other thieves and burglars

Contacts

Knowing and making connections with people. Represents using your information network to plant or acquire information.

Contacts Stunts

Ear to the Ground: on your turf, use Contacts instead of Notice for turn order, because you got tipped off in time

Rumormonger: +2 to create an advantage when you plant vicious rumours about someone else

Deceive

Lying to and misdirecting people. Use Deceive to bluff your way

past someone, or to get someone to believe a lie, or to get something out of someone because they believe in one of your lies.

Deceive Stunts

Lies upon Lies: +2 to create a Deceive advantage against someone who has believed one of your lies already

Mind Games: You can use Deceive to make mental attacks, as long as you can base it on a clever lie

Coach Driver

The Coach Driver skill is all about operating vehicles. It is used to successfully accomplish movement in the face of difficult circumstances, like rough terrain, or stunt driving. Avoiding damage to a vehicle in a physical conflict is one of the most common uses of Coach Driver.

Drive Stunts

Hard to Shake: +2 whenever you're pursuing another vehicle in a chase scene

Don't Spare the Horses: in chases or races, if you tie with your Coach Driver roll, it's considered a success

Ramming Speed! When ramming another vehicle, you ignore two shifts of damage

Empathy

Empathy involves knowing and being able to spot changes in a person's mood or bearing. It's basically the emotional Notice skill. You can use Empathy to read a person's emotional state and get a general sense of who they are. Targets can defend with Deceive or Rapport. You can also use Empathy to discover what circumstances will allow you to make mental attacks on someone, figuring out their breaking points. This is the skill to go to in order to defend against Deceive actions, allowing you to pierce through lies and see through to someone's true intent. Empathy is the main skill you use to help others recover from consequences that are mental in nature.

Empathy Stunts

The Ring of Truth: +2 to all Empathy rolls made to discern or discover lies

Nose for Trouble: use Empathy to determine turn order in a conflict

Psychologist: Once per session you can reduce someone else's consequence by one level of severity (severe to moderate, moderate to mild, mild to nothing at all) by succeeding on an Empathy roll with a difficulty of Fair (+2) for a mild consequence, Good (+3) for moderate, or Great (+4) for severe. You need to talk with the person you're treating for at least half an hour in order for them to receive the benefits of this stunt, and you can't use it on yourself.

Engineering

Engineering is the skill of working with machinery. Engineering allows you to build, break, or fix machinery. You can use Engineering to create aspects representing features of a piece of machinery, pointing out useful features or strengths you can use to your advantage (Armor-Plated, Rugged Construction) or a vulnerability for you to exploit (Flaw in the Cross-Beam, Hasty

Work).

Engineering Stunts

Improviser: You don't ever have to spend a fate point to have the tools for Engineering, even in extreme situations

Better than New! When you succeed with style on a repair, you can immediately give a new aspect to the device



Fight

The Fight skill covers all forms of close-quarters combat, both unarmed and using melee weapons. For the ranged weapons counterpart, see Shoot. Any number of special moves can be covered with advantages: a targeted strike to stun, a 'dirty move,' disarming, and so on. Fight can be used to defend, representing blocking a blow or catching a blade.

Fight Stunts

Backup Weapon: spend a fate point to declare you have a backup weapon

Killing Stroke: once per scene, you can spend a fate point to increase a consequence's severity (mild becomes moderate, moderate becomes severe, severe becomes taken out)

Investigate

Investigate is the skill you use to find things out. Analysing a battle field for clues, searching a cluttered room for the item you need, even poring over a musty old tome to try and find the passage that

makes everything make sense. Racing against the clock to collect evidence before disaster occurs is a classic way to use Investigate in a challenge. As long as you're willing to take the time, you can find out just about anything about anyone, discover nearly any detail about a place or object, or otherwise make up aspects about nearly anything in the game world that your character could reasonably unearth.

Investigate Stunts

Attention to Detail: defend against Deceive attempts by observing microexpressions.

The Power of Deduction: Once per scene, create an aspect that you can invoke for free.

Lore

The Lore skill is about knowledge and education. You might roll Lore to decipher some ancient language on a tomb wall, under the presumption that your character might have researched it at some point. More often than not, you'll be using Lore to get a story detail, some obscure bit of information that you uncover or know already, but you can use Lore to create advantages based on any subject matter your character might have studied, which gives you a fun way to add details to the setting.

Lore Stunts

I've Read about That! spend a fate point to use Lore for one roll, if you can justify having read about how to do it

Shield of Reason: You can use Lore as a defence against Provoke attempts

Specialist: in a field of specialization, such as, eldritch knowledge, or dragons, to get a +2 to all related Lore rolls

Notice

The Notice skill represents a character's overall perception, ability to pick out details at a glance, and other powers of observation. You can use Notice to create aspects based on direct observation, like finding an escape route in a debris-filled building. Notice can also be used to find a Subtle Weakness in the enemy's line of defence. For example, if you're in a brawl you could make a Notice roll to say that you spot a puddle on the floor, right next to your opponent's feet that could cause him to slip. You also use Notice to defend against any uses of Stealth, or to discover that you're being observed.

Notice Stunts

Danger Sense: Notice is unimpeded by, darkness etc, if someone or something intends to harm you

Body Language Reader: you can use Notice to learn the aspects of a target through observation

Physique

This represents the character's physical raw strength and endurance. You can use Physique to overcome any obstacles that require the application of brute force, like prison bars or locked gates. Of course.

Special: The Physique skill gives you additional physical stress and consequence slots. Average (+1) or Fair (+2) gives you a 3-point stress box. Good (+3) or Great (+4) gives you a 3-point and a 4-point stress box. Superb (+5) and above give you an additional mild consequence slot along with the additional stress boxes. This slot can only be used for physical harm.

Physique Stunts

Grappler: +2 to Physique rolls made to create advantages on an enemy by wrestling or grappling with them

Iron Jaw: You can use Physique to defend against brawling attacks made with fists or blunt instruments

Provoke

Provoke is getting inside your opponent's head and eliciting negative emotional response from them, like fear, anger, shame. You can Provoke someone into doing what you want. You might intimidate them for information, or scare them into running away. Against PCs or important NPCs, you'll need to win a contest. They oppose with Will. You can create advantages representing momentary emotional states, like Enraged, Shocked, or Hesitant. Your target opposes with Will. You can also make mental attacks with Provoke, to do emotional harm to an opponent.

Provoke Stunts

Provoke Violence: When you create an advantage, become the target of that character's next attack or action

Rapport

The Rapport skill is all about making positive connections to people and eliciting positive emotion. It's the skill of being liked and trusted. Use Rapport to charm or inspire people to do what you want, or to establish a good connection with them. You may have to enter a contest to sufficiently ingratiate yourself to a named NPC or PC.

Rapport Stunts

Influencer: Twice per session, upgrade a boost into a full situation aspect with a free invocation

Demagogue: +2 to Rapport when you're delivering an inspiring speech in front of a crowd

Resources

You can use Resources to get yourself out of any situation where throwing money at the problem will help, such as bribery or acquiring rare and expensive things.

Resources Stunts

Money Talks: use Resources to influence people, in places where material wealth is valued

Super-rich: Twice per session, you may take a boost representing a windfall or influx of cash

Shoot

Can be used for trick shots, keeping someone under heavy fire, and the like. This skill makes physical attacks from several zones away, unlike with Fight. Range is usually only truncated by line of sight

obstacles, but the GM can decide that a target is at long range or out of range. You can use it to lay down some covering fire—which acts as a defence for your allies by creating an advantage (Covering Fire or Hail of Arrows, for example).

Shoot Stunts

Called Shot: spend a fate point and declare a specific condition, like Arrow Through the Hand, in addition to stress

Quick Aim: use Shoot to determine turn order in any conflict where aiming quickly would be useful

Stealth

The Stealth skill allows you to avoid detection, both when hiding in place and trying to move about unseen. Sneaking past sentries and security, hiding from a pursuer, avoiding leaving evidence as you pass through a place, and any other such uses all fall under the purview of Stealth. Use Stealth to create aspects on yourself, setting yourself in an ideal position for an attack or ambush in a conflict. That way, you can be Well-Hidden when the guards pass by and take advantage of that, or Hard to Pin Down if you're fighting in the dark.

Stealth Stunts

Face in the Crowd: +2 to any Stealth roll to blend into a crowd

Ninja Vanish: Once per scene, spend a fate point and vanish in plain sight, using a smoke pellet etc.

Slippery Target: In shadow, use Stealth to defend against Shoot attacks from enemies, at least one zone away

Will

Represents your character's mental fortitude. Will is the main skill you use to defend against mental attacks, representing your control over your reactions.

Special: The Will skill gives you additional mental stress boxes or consequence slots. Average (+1) or Fair (+2) gives you a 3-point stress box. Good (+3) or Great (+4) gives you a 3-point and a 4-point stress box. Superb (+5) and above give you an additional mild consequence slot along with the additional stress boxes. This slot can only be used for mental harm.

Will Stunts

Strength From Determination; Use Will instead of Physique on any overcome rolls representing feats of strength

Hard Boiled: ignore a mild or moderate consequence for the duration of the scene

Indomitable: +2 to defend against Provoke attacks specifically related to intimidation and fear

The Character Sheet

You'll want to keep good notes on the character creation process. You can use the character sheet in the back of this book.



THE GAME RULES

These rules are a distillation of FATE Core the rules, with adjustments to make them a good fit for a fantasy/Cthulhu setting. They are intended to give you the game mechanics you need to play the game, without having to refer to the FATE Core manual. However the FATE Core manual is available free, and provides a lot of additional information to make running the game even easier and more fun.

The game moderator should think carefully about how much of the game rules they share with their players. The players should never have access to the rules, so that they can never know exactly how badly hurt they are going to be by attempting to cast a certain spell, or taste a certain potion. The players should only know enough of the rules to run their characters, and nothing more.



Sanity

Arguably, the defining element of Mythos gaming is the sanity check. Situations of cosmic horror, such as seeing a castle statue turn into an Elder God, actually roll a psychological attack on characters, which is resisted with Will.

These attacks will lead to consequences, such as states of fear, nausea, disorientation, and temporary insanity. These consequences take up precious slots which could have been used to soak up physical damage, and they should be noted by the game moderator, to allow them to be used to make the characters lives difficult during play.

Character's sanity can also be permanently damaged in other ways, by acquiring Mythos Lore, which also often brings uncanny powers with it.



Uncanny Powers

These uncanny powers replace the magic system to be found in most fantasy role-playing game systems. In Fantasy Cthulhu things are a little different. Magic is something not meant to be known, at least by humankind. Becoming familiar with magic causes slow insanity and the destruction of the caster's body and mind.

Magic healing, while possible, and available to powerful sorcerers, is otherwise almost non-existent. This makes monsters, or any other kind of combat, something to fear and approach with caution. Magic is not a force to be controlled, but a contagion that corrupts. This contagion may look like spells to those that don't really understand, but they are actually powers, reforming the characters that use them. If enough magic is used, the character will eventually be mentally and physically transformed.

These powers are not available to starting characters. They are powers available to Mythos Creatures, and they can only be acquired by characters by arcane researches in Mythos tomes, and other unhealthy ways. If they are willing to delve into Mythos mysteries, uncanny powers can be developed by any character. Uncanny powers depend on the Mythos Lore skill to be used effectively, employing the Uncanny Power stunt, and they can not be accessed at all without it. The Mythos Lore skill is described below.



Mythos Lore

Starting characters do not have access to this skill. This skill represents a character's understanding of the Old Ones and their ways and plans. It helps in identifying Mythos occurrences, conducting rituals, and identifying monsters. Mythos Lore can also be used to do magic, with the Uncanny Power stunt.

The most immediate disadvantage of Mythos Lore is its effect on a character's mental faculties. As characters gain more understanding of this skill, their perspective on the world changes – radically – often leading them to speak and behave in ways that others consider unhealthy or insane.

Mythos Lore is therefore unlike any other knowledge or skill that a character can acquire, which tend to be only advantageous. There are serious consequences to acquiring Mythos Lore. The most serious is creeping insanity, but there are also physical prices to pay too. The character could develop a mysterious itch, a deformity, a growth. They could start to partially occupy other dimensions, causing them to bleed even though they don't have wounds. They can start to rot and they can start to transform, usually into something foul and insectile or reptilian. Every time the character goes up a level in Mythos Lore they must roll a saving throw against a difficulty based on their Mythos Lore skill using their highest mental characteristic. If they fail, the GM applies one or more, at their discretion, of the following effects.

Aura

Being around Mythos Creatures rubs off on the sorcerers and adventurers that have dealings with them. After too much delving, characters can sometimes gain a sickly aura that can incite the mob and lead even fair minded people to shun them on first encountering them.

Madness

The strange behaviour exhibited by initiates into the mysteries of Cthulhu is often mistaken for madness, but it is not. It can not be 'cured' by potions, healing or any other form of therapy. It is actually the insane initiate who has a better grasp of the realities of the world and it is their behaviour that is better adapted to these realities. Each time this disadvantage is applied, the character goes up one level of insanity.

The levels of insanity are as follows.

1 - becoming frightened of things most people deem harmless - gain 1d6 phobias

2 - hearing voices - roll 1d6 voices that will try to persuade the character to do their bidding

3 - catatonia - the character suffers 1d6 hours of catatonia per week as their mind learns to travel to other places and times

4 - pyromania - the hideous significance of some patterns of cultivation, or urban development become clear. They are invocations of summoning inscribed over the landscape. One such will be discovered per month that must be dealt with by fire.

5 - personality change - the host body becomes able to host visiting psyches, transferring the intrinsic psyche of the adventurer to some alien body far removed in time or space. These personality swaps last 1d6 hours and the adventurer's behaviour can be very bizarre, because it is not the adventurer at all, but some other creature inhabiting their form.

6 - transcendence - the character moves on from Earthly concerns, babbling and gibbering, they confine themselves to contemplation of the true nature of the universe. They have periods where they crave human company and become lucid, but these are short - only 1d6 hours per day.

Physical Transformation

At the GM's whim, the character develops a terrible itch, a deformity, or a growth, or they start to partially occupy other dimensions, causing them to bleed at random times, or they start to rot, or transform into something foul and insectile or reptilian.

Mythos Lore Stunts

By Rote: The character may pick three spells that you know well enough that you don't need to consult tomes or notes to cast them.

Evil Eye: The character can attempt to put Bad Luck on a target

with nothing more than an obvious gesture. This lasts only a day.
Permanence: If the character puts a spell on a place or an item, the effect lasts for up to a season—or until someone dispels it.

Uncanny Power: This allows the character to perform magic and develop special powers, which they can access and control with their Mythos Lore skill. Magicians and shaman have been trying to copy the invocations of the old ones for many centuries, but they only ever manage a pale imitation. These uncanny powers are puny in comparison to the magical effects that the Old Ones themselves are capable of, but they are very dangerous and impressive to other humanoids, and minor Mythos creatures.

Characters can only acquire these powers, that are beyond the scope of normal human ability, through adventuring. Although they are often called spells, these are nothing of the kind. They are the permanent rewiring of the caster's psyche and sometimes their body, and often do great and irreparable harm to the caster.

Scope of Uncanny Powers

Assuming a single target—a person, or a thing perhaps as large as a house—about a round's time, and the appropriate ritual incantations and gestures, the Uncanny Power roll is made against a difficulty of Average. So long as the character gets a success, then the target gains the aspect of the spell for three days and three nights.

Further modifications

If the target is not present, then the difficulty is increased from between +1 to +3. +3 if the target is merely named, +1 if a powerful symbolic tie to the target is present—their blood, a treasured possession—and if it's not clearly either, then a +2 is appropriate.

If the target is large—a small group of less than a dozen or a large place like a castle or market—difficulty increases by +3. Some spells have a secondary target, such as a spell that makes the King mad at someone. The absence of that secondary target similarly impacts the difficulty—+0 if present, +3 if you only have a name, as above. The one qualifier is that if the secondary target can be made to accept some token of the spell—a potion, a trinket—then they are effectively “present”. Such tokens must be used within three days.

Success with style extends the duration to a week.

No target can be the subject of more than one spell at a time. The newest spell replaces the existing ones. This allows a mage to dispel magics by simply casting a new spell, such as a healing spell on the recipient.

Some blessings and curses have their own additional modifiers.

A spell on an area effectively creates a scene aspect that can be used normally by anyone in the location.

Magical attacks have all the power of physical attacks, but use the Cthulhu Mythos skill instead of combat.

Magic can also be used for defence, but in a similar way to 'Attack' the Cthulhu Mythos skill is substituted for making defence rolls.

Aspects put on a target are generally referred to as blessings or curses, depending on their intended effect, but collectively, they are all considered spells. Spells are complicated enough that they are very difficult to commit to memory and still get exactly right, so they are kept in notebooks, on scrolls, and in other archives. They are most commonly encountered for the first time in a Mythos tome.

Poaching another magician's spellbook, or liberating it from their still warm but very dead body, can be informative, but can also be very frustrating. Even if the, now dead, mage hasn't actively obscured their spells through codes and magical writings, they can be very idiosyncratic and difficult to understand. And, of course, there's no real way to distinguish between a spell that's a dud and a real one.

Any character can cast spells, after learning the Mythos Lore skill. Magic users and mages simply have advantages that give them access to more spells. They are literate meaning they have access to spells written in books, and they are sometimes members of magical orders, meaning they have access to libraries of spells or a teacher to impart spells. But even illiterate characters can be taught magic, however they are incapable of doing the research necessary to uncover spells for themselves.

Spell Results

Just make a Magic roll to create an advantage against the target of the spell, with special effects based on the spell description. Or to place an aspect on the target of the spell.

If the spell is not a directly targeted attack like the Fire Tongue spell, or does not pit the mage against a target, like the Telepathy and Mind Control spell, then a more abstract success roll is required. This is the case for example with the Unlock spell. The base chance of this success roll is 60%, just as with skills and attributes. The uses their Mythos Lore skill, and the roll is modified by the usual factors.



List of Uncanny Powers

Telepathy – This allows the caster to “hear” the thoughts of the target.

Create Power for magic – This is a kind of music making, a piping, that generates magical energy. All sorcerers within hearing of the piping are at +1 to cast their spells and use their abilities.

Defensive Fire: If enemies destroy the creature, or any zone of the creature, it deals two stress to each character on the map, regardless of zone.
dematerialize -

Dho Formula - Reveals the direction to be travelled in, to reach a hidden city. The real name of the city must be known, which may be different to the name it is known to legend as. Finding the old name for a lost city can require some considerable research.

Dho-Hna Formula – The Dho formula is used to travel to the hidden city, but when the adventurers start to go round in circles, this means the city has been reached. The Dho-Hna Formula is then used to locate and open the largest portal to the hidden city.

Pnakotic pentagon - Protects an area up to six m2

Cabalistical signs of protection – This protects a single building

Sabaoth – This summons creatures "from the hill and not from the air". Almost any minor Mythos creature can be summoned, at the Gms discretion.

Powder of Ibn-Ghazi – This power allows the caster to see invisible entities as "plain as day".



Magical Smiting - When the caster succeeds with style on a Fight attack they automatically gain a full situation aspect with a free invocation in addition.

Mind control - Use Mythos Lore to set a 'mind-controlled' aspect on someone

Voorish Sign – This power allows the caster to see invisible entities, but also hidden doors, traps etc.

Banish Spawn of Yog-Sothoth – This forces the Spawn of Yog-Sothoth to retreat at a human walking pace.

Banish Humanoid - This forces any creature with a vaguely humanoid form to retreat at a human walking pace.

Immortality – This does not provide immortality in the caster's original body. Instead it allows a soul to steal the bodies of others. The caster can move to a new "host" when their old body has been used up, or before if they so desire.

Magical Escape - the caster may spend a fate point to exit a conflict at any time without conceding the conflict.

Life Drain - when the caster forces an opponent to take a consequence, they can spend a fate point to increase the consequence's severity (so mild becomes moderate).

Go Dormant – the caster can go dormant. This takes 1d6 hours. While in this state, they can take no actions. The caster can remain in hibernation for as long as they wish. They do not need to eat or drink, nor do they age. Time effectively stands still for a hibernating sorcerer. If they are damaged while hibernating, they awaken in 1d6 rounds.

Robust Carapace – the caster grows a skin that allows them to survive in harsh environments.

Spirit Defense – This protects the caster from the Immortality spell.

Servant of Nyarlathotep – A secret name, given by Nyarlathotep and known only by Nyarlathotep. This allows the caster to contact the god and bargain with the treacherous creature.

Tangential Presence – This allows the caster to move to a tangential dimension. Because they are not true inhabitants of our reality while the spell is in effect, most attacks pass straight through without causing stress or consequences. Only 1 successful attack in 6, (on a roll of 6 on a d6), has its consequences recorded on the character sheet.

Tame Subterranean Raptor – Raptors can be tamed, and even trained, using this spell.

Bind Shoggoth – These are the commands and gestures used to command shoggoths, the most biddable of the creations of the Elder Things. They can be learned by humans and the relevant servitor species will obey commands, even very complex ones.

Dimensional Travel Power – Curves and angles are smeared on walls by the sorcerer with blood, or some other viscous liquid, and the sorcerer walks a path created by these lines. These are lines and curves are made to point out directions leading through the walls of space to other spaces beyond.

Dream Usurpation – This power allows a victim's dreams to be invaded. The invader can create a landscape or room or some other space. The dreamer is then lured from their dream into the space created by the caster. When they have been lured within, they are captured for the duration of the spell. The caster may conjure any ordinary item of equipment for use in tempting and torturing their captive.

Extreme Desiccation – This power rapidly destroys an organic target by sucking all the moisture out of it. The initial stages of the attack see steam pouring from the target's skin as the skin dries and cracks. Then large patches of flesh fall away in cascades of dust, before the target finally loses structural integrity and collapses into a powdery pile of debris.

Open the Gates – This spell opens up the “gates” preventing the Old Ones from easily travelling to the Realms. Yog-Sothoth is always keen to materialise in the Realms and play with the fleshy inhabitants, so is often the first to make use of an open gate. Other Old Ones will likely be attracted by the carnage and join in the

destruction.

Reduce to Essential Salts – The reduction process is long and involved and requires a mage to bring their victim to their tower, layer or other secure location. The victim is then reduced to a small pile of grey, dirty looking crystals.

Resurrect from Essential Salts - The resurrection is much easier than the reduction, requiring only a bottle of essential oils that must be poured on the salts to revivify them. Only a character with some Mythos Lore is able to pour the oils correctly however.

Reanimate Corpse – This allows the corpse to be revivified and, depending on the skill of the reanimator, could be hard to distinguish from a living being. At least while the corpse is quite fresh.

See Former Times – The character must be with human remains from these former times to be able to 'commune' with them. Bones and other body parts are usually required, but an altar steeped in blood would also provide the required connection. The character falls into a deep slumber, but feels that they physically travel back in time, where they can interact with people they meet and, potentially, change the course of history.

Wall of Electricity – A wall of blue flame bursts into existence, either around the caster, or somewhere nearby. Passing through the wall subjects the target to an attack using the caster's Magic skill. It's possible to surround a target in a wall, entrapping them. It is also possible to tighten the wall around the victim too, doing either constricting or energy damage, at the casters choice. The wall can be used to do non-lethal damage.

Brave The Inferno – Ignore damage from any single type of attack (thrusting for example, or energy) for the duration of the spell. This allows walking around in a burning house for example, or passing through a wall of fire unharmed.

Create Constructs – Constructs, also known as Golems, are magical constructs that can move and obey commands. A golem is an animated anthropomorphic being, created entirely from inanimate matter. The main disability of the golem is its inability to speak. The caster must impose their will and control over the golem at least once per year, and every time the golem is required to carry out a task that will last more than one day. This is done using the magician's Mythos Lore skill vs the golem's highest attribute. The greater the magician's skill, the more powerful the golems they can create and control. It is possible for a golem master to write the animating words onto paper rather than speak them when performing the ceremony to animate a golem, but the piece of paper must be attached to the golems forehead or placed in the golems mouth. This leaves the golem vulnerable to having the paper removed, which deactivates the golem. A golem can not be ordered to remove its animating word, and it will fight anyone and anything who tries to remove it. The golem is fighting for its life in such a situation. There is a 10% chance of a golem falling into dust or other component parts on deactivation. Golems animated by paper are

regarded as lesser golems, while those animated by words spoken to them are known as greater golems as the words can not simply be taken away. Sorcerers sometimes use the lesser method of words on paper to animate golems in order to build up an army of golems that can be stored and animated very quickly with the simple insertion of pieces of paper, rather than the usual long ceremony. Even a huge army of lesser golems could be brought to life in less than an hour this way. It would take a much longer time to perform the number of ceremonies that would be required for greater golems.

Move Object – Allows a mage to slowly lift and reposition something potentially very large. The item can alternatively be hurled for crushing damage.

Set Insides a'Boiling – This is a nasty energy weapon attack that doesn't appear to have any effect on the surface. It does internal energy damage instead.

Understand Languages – This is a strange mystical force that allows the patterns of a language, including non human languages, to be understood directly.

Healing – This is similar to normal healing, but it is powered by magic and is instant.

Mind Control - This pits the Mythos Lore skill of the mage against that of the target, in a battle for control over the target's body.

Weather Control – Weather can only be controlled in a limited area commensurate with the power of the mage. Lightning can be called down from the sky, 1 strike per round, using the mage's Mythos Lore skill and doing energy damage.

Fire Tongue - An energy weapon, similar to dragon breath, that is literally spat by the magic user.

Invisibility – The caster of the invisibility spell is still present however and can take damage. They can also be given away by things such as stark shadows on a sunny day or an outline in the rain. They can be located by noises they make. The gamemaster should determine the awareness roll required from the mage's adversaries to locate the mage, based on how noisy what the mage is doing is.

Teleport – The location to be teleported to must have been visited previously or thoroughly researched. If you know this spell you can detect people who are teleporting to your location.

Summon Void – Makes a small hole in reality. On the other side is some uncharted and far off region of deep space. This often leads to explosive decompression of the room, forest clearing or whatever location it is used in. Only areas that are already without an atmosphere will not decompress. It requires a mild difficulty roll every round to avoid being sucked through. This might seem like instant death, but there might be somewhere to hide from the void on the other side.

Summon Void Walker – There must be some void to summon them from, so use the summon void spell first. Elder Things are brought out from the void at a rate of 1d3 per round. They can not be commanded, but might be a very useful diversion.

Chasm – Opens up a chasm that starts as a crack 1 meter long and 1 meter deep and increases in depth, length and width by 1m each round. It can follow a twisting path and be targeted at people who must save at -80 to avoid falling in.

Summon Chasm Creatures – This spell causes ghouls to pour from the crack at a rate of 1d6 per round. If the caster knows some words of Ghoulish, they can be commanded.

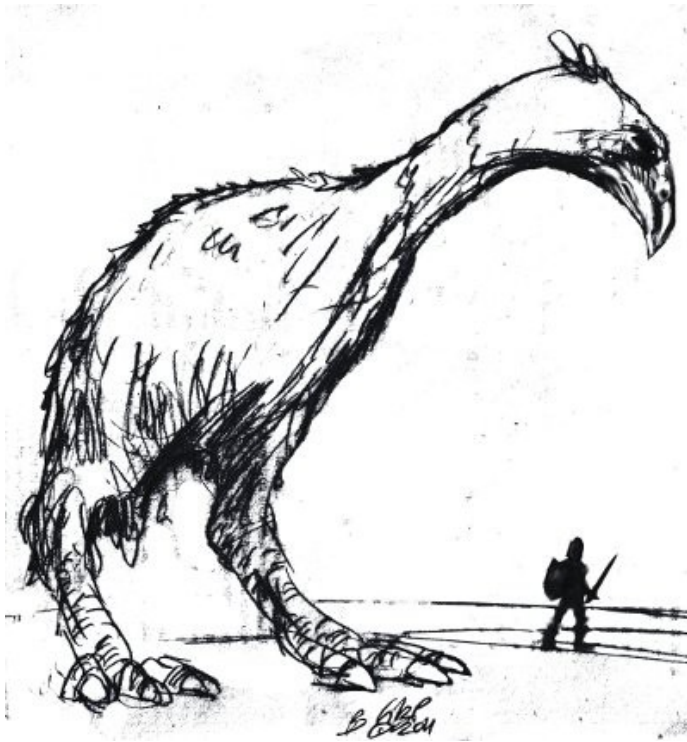
Binding Bands – The bands, which can look like snakes, metal rods or whatever the magician desires, shoot from the ground and try to restrain the victim, or victims.

Summon Tiny Creatures – Insects, rats, roaches or whatever is available in huge numbers are attracted, and there is always something. They also have tiny teeth or claws and fill up 1 square meter per round. They can cause damage to any target encountered. Only summoner and one square meter around them is immune.

Freezing Touch - A touch that can freeze the very heart of an enemy. The enemy must be successfully hit in hand to hand combat using Mythos Lore rather than the Combat skill, for the effects to apply. Or they can be shackled by some hired goons, so that the magician can use this spell on them without any of that nasty combat business.

Clarify Poison – Immunises the subject against poison, detoxifies venom in or on subject, and returns them to health.

Poison Finger – The caster infects the subject with a horrible poison, chosen from poisons the mage has knowledge of, by making a successful melee attack. The victim must save to avoid the effects of the poison. A barb grows from the end of the mage's index finger, to administer the poison with. The poison is stored in a bladder within the finger. The barb and bladder do not disappear after the first casting of the spell. The bladder is simply recharged by subsequent castings. Luckily the barb is retractable. The sorcerer will periodically suffer itching and discomfort because of the barb.



Paralyse Creature – A single creature is paralysed. It will be unable to move, unless attacked, when the effect is negated.

Interrogate the Dead – The corpse to be interrogated must be revived using magic before this spell can be used. The corpse will answer questions truthfully if bested by the mage, and simply remain silent otherwise.

Lizard Feet – The mage can walk on vertical surfaces and ceilings as though they were level ground.

Rune Carving – Any spell can be carved as a rune. The magic user carves the rune into an appropriate surface, wood, stone and metal is best. The spell is activated once per day, if the rune is touched.

Transmutation – Placing your hands on a substance and concentrating will allow you to change it from one substance to another. Metal can be turned into stone, and coal into diamond. Organic material is unaffected, except that petrified characters can be returned to their original state using this spell.

Minute Prison – Imprisons the victim within a gem, lamp or other small space. The victim is shrunk to fit – if the spell caster wins a contest using Myths Lore skill. The victim must be subdued before this spell is used, meaning that it can not be used in combat.

Create Skeletons – Raw material in the form of mostly complete sets of bones must be at hand. One skeleton per round can be animated.

Create Zombies - There is no chance of getting information from a person reanimated using this spell, unless Interrogate the Dead spell is used, they are simply a monster. The caster must have raw

material close at hand, and zombies are capable of bursting out of graves under their own power. They require 1d10 rounds to accomplish this.

Vampire Strike – Your next successful attack will provide healing equal to the damage you do to your opponent. Inflicting an injury on your opponent will heal an injury that you are suffering from.

Earth Bones – This spell summons the rocks of the earth to the surface, in an amount according to the spell casters level. These can then be shaped and positioned as the caster wishes. Architectural features can even be added.

Web Wall – Web Wall creates a thick and strong, mass of sticky ropes and strands. These trap those caught in them if they fail a contest of Mythos Lore skill with the mage.

Shape Materials - This spell allows you to reshape materials to suit your purposes. Turn a sword into a scimitar or put an aperture in a wall, for example.

Command of Returning – Command of Returning teleports the mage instantly back to their castle, tower, hovel, or wherever they feel safe, when they give the word.

Silence Command – By commanding silence, you nullify sounds around you so that you and those within the spell's area can converse normally, but no one outside can hear your voices or any sounds you make.

Truth Tongue – Creatures within the effected area (or those who enter it) can't speak any deliberate and intentional lies. Each potentially affected creature is allowed a save to avoid the effects when the spell is cast or when the creature first enters the zone.



Fate Points

Players have a pool of points called fate points to use to influence the game. You can never have a refresh of less than one.

STUNTS AND REFRESH

Three Stunts = Refresh of 3

Four Stunts = Refresh of 2

Five Stunts = Refresh of 1

Players spend fate points in order to be awesome in a crucial moment, and they get them back when their lives get dramatic and complicated. You might end a session of play with more fate points than your actual refresh. If that happens, you don't lose the additional points when you start the next session, but you don't gain any either.

Spending Fate Points

You spend fate points in any of the following ways:

Invoke an Aspect: Invoking an aspect costs you one fate point, unless the invocation is free.

Power a Stunt: Some stunts are very potent, and as such, cost a fate point in order to activate.

Refuse a Compel: Once a compel is proposed, you can pay a fate point to avoid the complication associated with it.

Declare a Story Detail: To add something to the narrative based on one of your aspects, spend a fate point.

Earning Fate Points

You earn fate points in any of the following ways:

Accept a Compel: You get a fate point when you agree to the complication associated with a compel.

Have Your Aspects Invoked Against You: If someone pays a fate point to invoke an aspect attached to your character, you gain their fate point at the end of the scene. This includes advantages created on your character, as well as consequences.

Concede in a Conflict: You receive one fate point for conceding in a conflict, as well as an additional fate point for each consequence that you've received in that conflict.

The GM and Fate Points

The GM compels for free. Whenever a scene starts, the GM gets one fate point for every PC in that scene. You can use these points on behalf of any NPC you want, but you can get more in that scene if they take a compel, like PCs do. You reset to your default total, one per PC, at the beginning of every scene.

There are two exceptions:

You accepted a compel that effectively ended the last scene or starts the next one. If that happens, take an extra fate point in the next scene.

You conceded a conflict to the PCs in the previous scene. If that happens, take the fate points you'd normally get for the concession into the next scene and add them to the default total.

If the immediate next scene doesn't present a significant interaction with NPCs, you can save these extra points until the next scene that does.



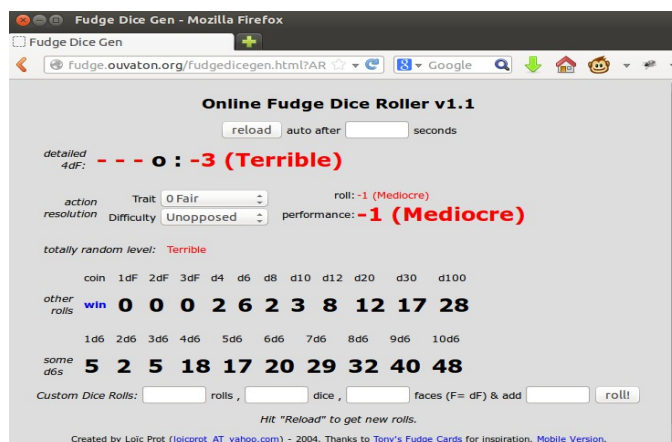
ACTIONS, OUTCOMES

You do not need to roll dice for trivial tasks, such as driving a coach or ordering a drink. Dice are rolled for more challenging situations, such as firing an arrow at a dodging enemy, jumping from a galloping horse, or persuading a guard to take a bribe.

Choose the character's skill that is appropriate to the action.
Roll four Fate dice.

Fate Dice (also called Fudge dice) are six sided dice with two sides labelled with a +, two sides with a -, and two sides that are blank. They are usually rolled in groups of four, and the + and - sides are added together to get a number between -4 and +4, with positive usually being better.

They can be bought from hobby stores, or alternately just use ordinary D6. If you have a device with internet at the table, search for 'fudge dice roller' and roll your dice with a mouse click.



The result on the dice isn't your final total, however. If your character has a skill that's appropriate to the action, you get to add your character's rating in that skill to whatever you rolled. In Fate, we use a ladder of adjectives and numbers to rate the dice results, a character's skills and the result of a roll.

Here's the ladder:

+8	Legendary
+7	Epic
+6	Fantastic
+5	Superb
+4	Great
+3	Good
+2	Fair
+1	Average
0	Mediocre
-1	Poor
-2	Terrible
-3	Terrible

Results can go below and above the ladder.

Interpreting Results

When you roll the dice, you're trying to get a high enough roll to match or beat your opposition. That opposition is going to come in one of two forms:

Active opposition, from someone rolling dice against you, or passive opposition, from an obstacle that just has a set rating on the ladder for you to overcome.

Most of the time, your target will actively oppose your roll. Targets that are not capable of active opposition, such as surprised opponents, inanimate objects, and unimportant NPCs provide passive opposition instead.

If you beat your opposition on the ladder, you succeed at your action. A tie creates some effect, but not to the extent your character was intending. If you win by a lot, something extra happens (like doing more harm to your opponent in a fight).

If you don't beat the opposition, either you don't succeed at your action, you succeed at a cost, or something else happens to

complicate the outcome. Some game actions have special results when you fail at the roll.

The difference between your opposition and your result is what we call shifts. When you roll equal to the opposition, you have zero shifts. Roll one over your opposition, and you have one shift. Two over means two shifts, and so on.

Dice-Roll Outcomes

When you roll the dice, either you're going to fail, tie, succeed, or succeed with style.

Roll lower than your opposition, you fail. There may be a serious cost.

Roll the same as your opposition, you tie. You get what you want, but there may be a minor cost or lack.

Roll higher than your opposition by 1 or 2 shifts, you succeed.

Roll higher than your opposition by 3 or more shifts, you succeed with style. You also get an added benefit.

The added benefit that the character gets could be a boost.

On an important roll, a serious cost may make the current situation worse somehow, either by creating a new problem or exacerbating an existing one. Bring in another source of opposition in this scene or the next one for example. A minor cost may just be a narrative detail, showing how the PC just barely scratched by.

Some examples of characters rolling dice include, defending against negative effects, trying to create an advantage, and directly attacking an enemy. They are all handled in a very similar way.

Creating an Advantage

If you're doing something to actively change your circumstances (like throwing sand in an opponent's eyes or setting something on fire), or trying to discovering new information that helps you (like learning the weakness of a monster through research), you are creating an advantage.

Create advantage is easier if the advantage was already there, like the monster's weakness.

If the advantage must be newly created...

When you fail, you don't create the aspect, or you do but it backfires.

When you tie, you only get a boost. (Rough Terrain becomes Rocks on the Path).

When you succeed, you create a situation aspect with a free invocation.

When you succeed with style, you get a situation aspect with two free invocations instead of one.

If the advantage was already existing, and must just be exploited...

When you fail, your attempt backfires.

When you tie or succeed, you place a free invocation on the aspect.

When you succeed with style, you place two free invocations on the aspect.

Attacking

An attack isn't always physical in nature; some skills allow you to hurt someone mentally as well.

When you fail at an attack, you don't cause any harm to your target.

When you tie an attack, you don't cause any harm, but you gain a boost.

When you succeed on an attack, you inflict a hit on your target equal to the number of shifts you got. That forces the target to try and "buy off" the value of your hit by taking stress or consequences; if that's not possible, your target gets taken out of the conflict.

When you succeed with style on an attack, it works like a normal success, but you also have the option to reduce the value of your hit by one to gain a boost as well.

Defending

Whenever someone attacks you in a conflict or tries to create an advantage on you, you always get a chance to defend. This isn't just about avoiding physical sources of danger, you can also defend against attempts to harm your mind or damage your resolve.

When you fail at a defence, you suffer the consequences of whatever you were trying to prevent.

When you tie or succeed at a defence, you successfully avoid the effects.

When you succeed with style at a defence you also gain a boost as you turn the tables momentarily.

Boosts

Boosts are a super-transient kind of aspect. You get a boost when you're trying to create an advantage but don't succeed well enough, or as an added benefit to succeeding especially well at an action. You get to invoke them for free, but as soon as you do, the aspect goes away. If you want, you can also allow another character to invoke your boost, if it's relevant.

Challenges and Contests

Most of the time, a single skill roll should be enough to decide how a particular situation in play resolves. You could use a single Athletics roll to find out whether you can safely navigate a rock face that will take twenty minutes to climb.

Sometimes, however, you'll be in a situation where you're doing something really dramatic and interesting, like pivotal set pieces in a movie or a book. When that happens, it's a good idea to zoom in on the action and deal with it using multiple skill rolls. Most fight scenes fall into this category, but you can zoom in on anything that you

consider sufficiently important – chases, court trials, high-stakes games, and so on.

A court battle might require several successful lore rolls, for example. One at opening remarks, one during the trial, and one at closing arguments, or the closing arguments roll could be attempted with charisma. These rolls could be made against a passive difficulty level set by the game moderator for the court, or an opposition lawyer could provide active opposition.

During any exchange, you can try to create an advantage before you make your roll.



CONFLICTS

In a conflict, characters are actively trying to harm one another. It could be a fist fight, or it could be a duel. It could also be a tough interrogation, or a mental assault, as long as the characters involved have both the intent and the ability to harm one another. In physical conflicts, you suffer bruises, scrapes, cuts, and other injuries. In mental conflicts, you suffer loss, loss of composure, disassociation from reality and other psychological trauma.

Setting up a conflict:

Set the scene, describing the environment, creating situation aspects and zones.

Establish who's participating and what side they're on.

Determine the turn order.

Start the first exchange:

On your turn, take an action and then resolve it.

On other people's turns, defend or respond to their actions as necessary.

At the end of everyone's turn, start again with a new exchange.

The conflict is over when everyone on one of the sides has

conceded or been taken out.

Setting the Scene

Interesting features of the environment should be made into situation aspects. Good options for situation aspects include:

- Anything regarding the general mood, weather, or lighting—dark or badly lit, storming, creepy, crumbling, blindingly bright, etc.

- Anything that might affect or restrict movement—filthy, mud everywhere, slippery, rough, etc.

- Things to hide behind—obstructions, large furniture, etc.

- Things you can knock over, wreck, or use as improvised weapons—bookshelves, statues, etc.

- Things that are flammable—traditionally, curtains

- Things that are caged – a prison, only a few days away from riot and disorder

Zones

GMs, if your conflict takes place over a large area, you may want to break it down into zones for easier reference. A zone is an abstract representation of physical space. The best definition of a zone is that it's close enough that you can interact directly with someone (in other words, walk up and get in their face). If the area is separated by stairs, a ladder, a fence, or a wall, it could be divided into zones, like two floors of a house. Above and below can be different zones, especially if moving between them takes some doing, as with the airspace around something large, like a tower.

Turn Order

Your turn order in a conflict is based on your skills. In a physical conflict, compare your Notice skill to the other participants. In a mental conflict, compare your Empathy skill. Whoever has the highest gets to go first, and then everyone else in descending order.

If there's a tie, compare a secondary or tertiary skill. For physical conflicts, that's Athletics, then Physique. For mental conflicts, Rapport, then Will.

You only get to make one skill roll on your turn in an exchange, unless you're defending against someone else's action—you can do that as many times as you want. You can even make defend actions on behalf of others, so long as you fulfil two conditions: it has to be reasonable for you to interpose yourself between the attack and its target, and you have to suffer the effects of any failed rolls.

Full Defence

If you want, you can forgo your action for the exchange to concentrate on defence. You don't get to do anything proactive, but you do get to roll all defend actions for the exchange at a +2 bonus.

Ramming

If you want to ram a coach, or a huge slobbering monster, you can attack with Coach Driver, but you take the same shifts of harm you inflict.

Resolving Attacks

A successful attack lands a hit equivalent to its shift value on a target. So if you get three shifts on an attack, you land a 3-shift hit. If you get hit by an attack, one of two things happen: either you absorb the hit and stay in the fight, or you're taken out.

To stay in the fight, you can take stress and/or consequences – or – you can also concede a conflict before you're taken out, in order to preserve some control over what happens to your character.

If you want to forego your defence and take a hit (like to interpose yourself in the path of an arrow that's about to skewer your friend), you can, but because you're not defending, the attacker rolls against Mediocre (+0) opposition, which means you're probably going to take a bad hit.

Stress

This represents the after effects when you just barely avoid taking the full force of an attack. It looks bad but is really just a flesh wound, or you wind yourself a little by diving out of the way at the last second. Mentally, stress could mean that you can feel terror like a monkey's fist in your gut, but it hasn't taken control of you yet. Stress boxes also represent you running out of luck—you only have so many last-second saves in you before you've got to face the music.

On your character sheet, you have a number of stress boxes, each with a different shift value. By default, all characters get a 1-point and a 2-point box. You may get additional, higher-value stress boxes depending on some of your skills (usually Physique and Will).

When you take stress, check off a stress box with a value equal to the shift value of the hit. If that box is already checked, check off a higher value box. If there is no higher available box, and you can't take any consequences, you're taken out of the conflict.

You can only check off one stress box per hit. You can not use multiple stress boxes.

If you take stress from a physical source, you check off a physical stress box. If it's a mental hit, check off a mental stress box. After a conflict, when you get a minute or two, maybe five, to breathe, any stress boxes you checked off become available for your use again.

Affecting Multiple Targets

Area-effect attacks create an aspect on the scene, rather than on a specific target. A Gas-Filled Room has the potential to affect everyone in it. The aspect calls for a skill roll from anyone in the scene to resist. It may cause damage, or just make things more difficult for those affected.

You don't need to apply any special rules—you roll for the attack, and everyone in the zone defends as normal. Depending on the circumstances, you may even have to defend against your own roll, if you're in the same zone as the attack!

Advantages in a Conflict

Remember that aspects you create as advantages can sometimes last until they're made irrelevant or the scene is over, and in some cases they represent as much a threat to you as an opponent.

Covering Fire

When you're trying to prevent someone else from getting attacked, the main way to do it is by creating an advantage. You can pass your buddy the invocation and make it harder to hit them. You can also use advantages to alter the environment to your benefit, creating barriers to movement by scattering Loose Junk everywhere, or setting things On Fire.

Other Actions in a Conflict

In any exchange where someone attacks you or tries to create an advantage on you, you must defend successfully in order to be able to make any other skill roll. So long as no one has successfully attacked you or stuck an advantage on you, you can use your action to roll for your non-combat task.

Free Actions

Unsheathing a weapon, shouting a warning, or quickly sizing up a room before attack, etc. These little bits of action count as free actions.

Ending a Conflict

Under most circumstances, when all of the members of one side have either conceded the conflict or have been taken out, the conflict is over. All the fate points earned from concession are then distributed. Players, take the fate points for aspects invoked against them, make a note of whatever consequences were suffered in the fight, and erase any checks in stress boxes.

Consequences

A consequence is more severe than stress—it represents some form of lasting injury or setback that you accrue from the conflict. Consequences come in three levels of severity—mild, moderate, and severe. Each one has a different shift value: two, four, and six, respectively. Your consequence slots are listed on your character sheet.

When you use a consequence slot, you reduce the shift value of the attack by the shift value of the consequence. You can use more than one consequence at a time if they're available. Any of the hit's remaining shifts must be handled by a stress box to avoid being taken out.

However, there's a penalty. The consequence written in the slot is an aspect that represents the lasting effect incurred from the attack. The opponent who forced you to take a consequence gets a free invocation, and the aspect remains on your character sheet until you've recovered the consequence slot. While it's on your sheet, the consequence is treated like any other aspect, except because the slant on it is so negative, it's far more likely to be used to your character's detriment.

Unlike stress, a consequence slot may take a long time to recover

after the conflict is over. Also unlike stress, you only have one set of consequences; there aren't specific slots for physical versus mental consequences. This means that, if you have to take a mild consequence to reduce a mental hit and your mild consequence slot is already filled with a physical consequence, you're out of luck! You're going to have to use a moderate or severe consequence to absorb that hit. The exception to this is the extra consequence slot you would get from a Superb (+5) Physique or Will is reserved for physical or mental harm, respectively.

Naming Consequences

Mild consequences don't require immediate medical attention. They hurt, and they may present an inconvenience, but they aren't going to force you to rest. Examples: Black Eye, Bruised Hand, Winded, Shaken Nerves, Temporarily Blinded.

Moderate consequences represent fairly serious impairments that require dedicated effort toward recovery (including medical attention). Examples: Deep Cut, First Degree Burn, Exhausted, The Shakes.

Severe consequences go straight to the emergency room—they're extremely nasty and prevent you from doing a lot of things. Examples: Second-Degree Burn, Compound Fracture, Guts Hanging Out, Trauma-Induced Phobias.

Recovery

Recovery can only happen through the use of a Lore stunt, representing some form of medical or psychiatric training. In order to regain the use of a consequence slot, you have to recover from the consequence. That requires two things—succeeding at an action that allows you to justify recovery, and then waiting an appropriate amount of game time for that recovery to take place.

Physical injury, requires some kind of medical treatment or first aid. For mental consequences, the action may involve therapy, or counselling. The difficulty for this action is based on the shift value of the consequence. Mild is Fair (+2), moderate is Great (+4), and severe is Fantastic (+6). If you are trying to perform the recovery action on yourself, increase the difficulty by two steps on the ladder.

If you succeed at the recovery action, or someone else succeeds on a recovery action for you, you get to rename the consequence aspect to show that it's in recovery. So, for example, Broken Leg could become Stuck in a Cast, Nearly Guttled aspect could be Bandaged, Lost My Nerve could become Night Sweats, and so on. This doesn't free up the consequence slot, but it serves as an indicator that you're recovering, and it changes the ways the aspect's going to be used while it remains. Then, you just have to wait the time.

For a mild consequence, you have to wait 1d6 days after the recovery action, and then you can remove the aspect and clear the slot. For a moderate consequence, you have to wait 1d20 days after the recovery action. For a severe consequence, you have to wait 1d6 months after the recovery action.

Conceding the Conflict

In combat, when all else fails, you can also just give in. Maybe you're worried that you can't absorb another hit, or maybe you decide that continuing to fight is just not worth the punishment. Whatever the reason, you can interrupt any action at any time before the roll is made to declare that you concede the conflict. This is super-important—once dice hit the table, what happens happens, and you're either taking more stress, suffering more consequences, or getting taken out.

Concession gives the other person what they wanted from you, or in the case of more than two combatants, removes you as a concern for the opposing side. You're out of the conflict, period.

But it's not all bad. First of all, you get a fate point for choosing to concede. On top of that, if you've sustained any consequences in this conflict, you get an additional fate point for each consequence. These fate points may be used once this conflict is over.

Second of all, you get to avoid the worst parts of your fate. Yes, you lost, and the narration has to reflect that, but this can make the difference between, say, being mistakenly left for dead - or ending up in the enemy's clutches, in shackles, without any of your stuff.

Getting Taken Out

If you don't have any stress or consequences left to buy off all the shifts of a hit, that means you're taken out. You can't fight any more, and you are at the mercy of the victor.

Character Death

There's not a whole lot keeping the victor from administering a 'death blow' and killing your character. But a decision like this might be pretty controversial depending on what kind of group you're in. Some people think that character death should always be on the table, if the rules allow it.

Others are more circumspect, and consider it very damaging to their fun if they lose a character upon whom they've invested hours and hours of gameplay, just because someone spent a lot of fate points or their die rolls or they were particularly unlucky.

We recommend the latter approach, also because, sudden character death is a pretty boring outcome when compared to putting the character through hell. On top of that, all the story threads that character was connected to just kind of stall with no resolution, and you have to expend a bunch of effort and time figuring out how to get a new character into play mid-adventure.

That doesn't mean there's no room for character death in the game, however. We just recommend that you save that possibility for conflicts that are extremely pivotal, dramatic, and meaningful for that character. If, as a GM, you've got the feeling that you're in that kind of conflict, talk it out when you're setting the scene and see how people feel. At the very least, even if you're in a hardcore group that invites the potential for character death on any taken out result, make sure that you telegraph the opponent's lethal intent. Players

then know which NPCs really mean business, and can concede to keep their characters alive if need be.

Movement

In a conflict, it's important to track where everyone is relative to one another, which is why we divide the environment where the conflict's taking place into zones. Where you have zones, you have people trying to move around in them in order to get at one another or at a certain objective.

Normally, it's no big deal to move from one zone to another—if there's nothing preventing you from doing so, you can move one zone in addition to your action for the exchange.

If you want to move more than one zone (up to anywhere else on the map), if a situation aspect suggests that it might be difficult to move freely, or if another character is in your way, then you must make a roll using Athletics, which counts as your action for the exchange.

Use the number of zones the character is moving combined with situation aspects to gauge the difficulty of passive opposition. If another character is impeding the path, roll active opposition and feel free to invoke obstructing situation aspects in aid of their defence.

If you fail that roll, whatever was impeding you keeps you from moving. If you tie, you get to move, but your opponent takes a temporary advantage of some kind. If you succeed, you move without consequence. If you succeed with style, you can claim a boost in addition to your movement.

Vehicle Movement

Vehicles often become locked in combat, dogfighting, or chasing each other. The combat may be moving forward at very high speed, on galloping horses for example, but that is not relevant to those involved.

The characters involved in the chase are stuck inside the same zone with each other, perhaps dogfighting for position, but nevertheless stuck, even as the world streaks past at high speed. Moving out and away from the zone occupied by a chase is the same mechanic as moving zones, and a combatant seeking to escape can gradually open the range between themselves and their pursuer, hopefully before they get taken out.

Teamwork

Characters can help each other out. There are two versions of helping in Fate—combining skills, for when you are all putting the same kind of effort into an action (like using Physique together to push over a crumbling wall), and stacking advantages, for when the group is setting a single person up to do well (like causing multiple distractions so one person can use Stealth to get into a fortress).

When you combine skills, figure out who has the highest skill level among the participants. Each other participant who has at least an

Average (+1) in the same skill adds a +1 to the highest person's skill level, and then only the lead character rolls. So if you have three helpers and you're the highest, you roll your skill level with a +3 bonus.

If you fail a roll to combine skills, all of the participants share in the potential costs—whatever complication affects one character affects all of them, or everyone has to take consequences. Alternatively, you can impose a cost that affects all the characters the same.

When you stack advantages, each person takes a create an advantage action as usual, and gives whatever free invocations they get to a single character. Remember that multiple free invocations from the same aspect can stack.

Generic Hazards

There are any number of hazards that a traveller could face when they are out adventuring across the wild places. Many of them will have to be designed by the GM on the fly.

Is the hazard something that can harm a PC? Give it a skill and let it make attacks just like an opponent.

Is it more of a distraction or harassment than a direct threat? Let it create aspects.

Does it have sensors it can use to discover a PC's aspects? Give it a skill for that.

And in return, let the PCs use their skills against the threat just like they would an opponent. An automated security system might be vulnerable to "attacks" from a PC's Burglary skill, or they might escape a trap by winning an Athletics contest. If it makes sense for the hazard in question to take a good deal of effort to surpass, give it a stress track and let it take a mild consequence or two. In other words, cleave to whatever makes narrative sense—if a fire is too big for a PC to put out, the scene should focus on avoidance or escape, and work like a challenge.

Disease

Disease is commonplace, and is very often fatal. Disease are not commonly infectious, but instead can be acquired at any time. They are caused by the Miasma. This is a diffuse poisonous cloud that sometimes thickens around a person, and infects them.

(This is the situation in Fantasy Cthulhu, and does not equate to the scientific realities of disease encountered in our reality)

Each disease has a severity and this is used to attack in the same way as the combat skill. The best maps have areas of miasma marked, but good maps are unfortunately all too rare. The disease stops attacking if it fails to cause damage, but if damage is caused, it will attack again. If it causes a consequence, use the consequence listed below.

Apoplexy

Severity: 2 – Paralysis of the limbs.

Bilious fever

Severity: 3 – Intestinal pain and soreness.

Black Death

Severity: 4 – Coughing fits – death.

Bloody Flux

Severity: 5 – The same as flux, but involving a discharge of blood.

Break Bone Fever

Severity: 5 – Bones spontaneously break in a sudden noisy destruction of the sufferers skeleton.

Canker

Severity: 3 – A severe, ulcer of the cheek and lip. It is often fatal.

Dropsy

Severity: 1 – Swelling of part of the body due to a build-up of clear watery fluid.

Flux

Severity: 1 – Inflammation of the large intestine and attended by frequent stools containing blood and mucus.

Galloping Consumption

Severity: 2 – Massive tissue death begins, and quickly consumes the victim's flesh – and eventually life force.

Grocer's Itch

Severity: 2 – This is a skin disease caused by miasmas attracted to food. It is not fatal, but is so distracting that those suffering from the itch are at -1 to all rolls.

Horrors

Severity: 1 – The sufferer sees more and more realistic and horrible hallucinations, until eventually – driven mad – they expire shortly thereafter.

King's evil

Severity: 4 – It evolves into cold abscesses, multiple skin ulcers, and draining sinus tracts.

Mortification

Severity: 2 – Gradual rotting of the body, starting at the extremities.

Palsy

Severity: 4 – Paralysis or difficulty with muscle control.

Purples

Severity: 3 – This is a rash with spontaneous bleeding from the skin. It is a severe illnesses that invariably results in – death.

Sweating Sickness

Severity: 5 – constant sweats – fatal sweats.

Becoming Lost

There will be many occasions where characters run the risk of getting lost. Trying to cross large forests, or following a small animal

path in the fog, is an invitation to losing your way. The difficulty level is set by the game moderator, based on the familiarity of the terrain.

The roll is made by the character with the best Notice. Negative circumstances include; unfamiliar terrain, fog, and darkness.

Characters get a second roll to realise they are lost every hour. If they fail this they will carry on in a random direction every hour until they do make a roll. If the characters see a famous landmark, or the fog lifts or the sun comes up, their roll to realise they are lost will improve.

They will then be allowed a roll to regain their bearings, with a difficulty based on factors such as how far the characters wandered from the original route.

Poison

There are various substances used to kill and harm in Hyrope. Many are naturally occurring and easily encountered by a traveller. The following list is a short selection. The potency is the number used by the poison to attack the character. The poison will continue to attack until it fails to cause damage.

Abassy Venom

Potency: 6

From demons that have teeth of iron. They look just like humans, or sometimes elves, but their metal teeth give them away as supernatural fiends. They dress as normal humans, and use swords or other melee weapons, but can also bite with their venomous teeth. It causes paralysis.

Akalon

Potency 10

A poison derived from a blood-red flower that grows in desert oases, it is odourless, tasteless, but red in colour - leading to its frequent use in red wine. It is almost immediately lethal, producing symptoms resembling those of heart disease. In small doses it can be used as a stimulant.

Grabberweed Sap

Potency: 9

Derived from the many-times boiled sap of a carnivorous plant. It is said the poison is most potent if the plant has recently been fed a human victim. The poison causes a speedy but painful death.

Gu

Potency: 7

The preparation of gu poison involves sealing several venomous creatures (e.g., centipede, snake, scorpion) into a closed box, where they devour one another and concentrate their toxins into a single survivor.

Harionago

Potency: 8

Derived from a monster that resembles a humanoid female with barbed, prehensile hair. The hair is coated with a deadly and waxy

poison. The poison causes instant death if it takes effect.

Hebenon

Potency: 11

Description: It curdles the blood, producing stiffening and death in the victim.

Lich Dust

Potency: 5

Lich dust is a white powder which kills a victim within seconds of skin contact. The powder causes the skin of the victim's body to shrivel, tighten, bleach and fall away, while causing the hair to fall out. The poor victim soon resembles the skeletal creature used to take its life. .

Lye

Potency: 4

This is among the many different alkalis leached from hardwood ashes. Eye protection, chemical-resistant gloves, and adequate ventilation are required for the safe handling of lye. A face mask is also recommended. Handling lye without this protection can result in serious injuries. If the poison takes effect it causes internal burning that deprive the victim of oxygen, and kill them slowly.

Opiates

Potency: 3

Derivatives of the poppy, these compounds have medicinal and recreational uses, but can also be used to kill.

RUNNING THE GAME

Making sure the game is fun and runs smoothly is a shared responsibility between all the players, but the game moderator has a job that is a little different from everyone else's.

Judge the Use of the Rules

It's your job to make most of the moment-to-moment decisions about what's legit and what's not regarding the rules. Most often, you're going to decide when something in the game requires a roll, and how difficult that roll is. You also judge the appropriateness of any invocations or compels that come up during play.

Narrating the Action

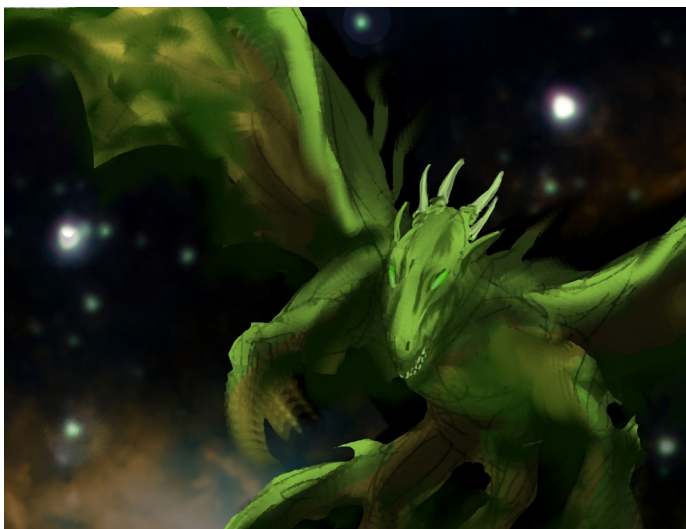
There is a bubble of action around every player, and the game moderator must make the action interesting for every player, and give each one something significant to do.

Create Scenarios

You're also responsible for making up all of the stuff that the PCs encounter and react to in the game. That not only includes NPCs with skills and aspects, but it also includes the aspects on scenes, environments, and objects, as well as the dilemmas and challenges that make up a scenario.

Discovery vs Creation

From the player's point of view, there's almost no way to know what you've made up beforehand and what you're inventing in the moment. So, when a player looks for information on something you haven't made up yet you can use what they were looking for as inspiration to help you come up with the real information. If you're really comfortable with improvising, this means that you can come to the table with very little prepared beforehand, and let the players' reactions and questions build everything for you.



Cosmic Horror

The game moderator is responsible for creating an atmosphere of rising tension and fear. Some tricks that can be used are to make

sure only to provide fleeting glimpses of the monster in act one and act two. The profound level of government infiltration and infiltration of local law enforcement by cultists can be very gradually revealed, ratcheting up the tension.

Compels can be used to make things go wrong. Aspects can be placed on the scene, the story, the campaign, and then compelled to make things more complicated whenever the characters are getting too comfortable. Having an aspect like, Assassins Lurk in the Shadows, or Everything is a Trap can be applied to the story. Then compel such aspects at moments of tension. The players will gain fate points, but that's a good thing because they'll need them in order to survive. This approach will keep them on edge, never knowing when the next compel is going to happen.

Another way to heighten anxiety and tension is to restrict the characters' movement. Make it difficult to run away from danger, by cluttering the escape route with obstacles. Use several zones to cover even comparatively small spaces. In an ordinary space the front door can be reached in a single round, but in a sunken city, where the walls subtly shift, things aren't so easy. Never let a character sprint away from a Mythos creature to safety in a single round.

Any obstacle's difficulty set at two higher than the skill to overcome it is likely to need an invoke. With players' best skills topping out at Good or Great, that means your starting level for difficulties, when Mythos creatures are around, should be in the same range. High difficulties mean higher chances of failure. This difficulty and frustration can be softened by using "succeed, but at a cost". This is especially effective when the cost actually hurts. Break their swords, take away their lanterns and have them stumbling in the dark, desperately trying to fight off Mythos nasties with rocks they gather up from the tunnel floor. Every step forward should cost just a little bit more blood, sweat and tears.

An event can occur, such as an alignment of the stars, that lowers the refresh. If the players only have a few fate points, those fate points will feel precious. They'll need to spend them if they want to succeed at all.

Have strange vapours that truncate stress tracks: Characters can be left with little more than a box or two, if any. This reduces the buffer before they start to bleed. Additionally, on the sanity stress track, lasting trauma, terror, and madness are just moments away.

When fighting Mythos creatures, have weaker consequences. The default is for mild -2, moderate -4, and severe -6, which is pretty hefty. These numbers should be at about half value against Mythos foes. For example the values can be set at -1 for mild, -2 for moderate, and -4 for severe. Any kind of conflict against Mythos creatures becomes instantly more deadly.

Give your players too much to do and not enough time to do it. The people and things characters care about are easy to threaten. Characters are given the choice of saving their mentor or the prince, but not both.

NPCs

First of all, keep in mind that you're never obligated to give any NPC a full sheet like the ones the PCs have. Most of the time, you're not going to need to know that much information, because the NPCs aren't going to be the centre of attention like the PCs are. It's better to focus on writing down exactly what you need for that NPC's encounter with the PCs, and then fill in the blanks on the fly, if that NPC ends up becoming more important in the campaign.

Background NPCs

The majority of the NPCs in your campaign world are nameless and insignificant to the story. The random shopkeeper they pass on the street, the archivist at the library, the third patron from the left at the bar, the guards at the gate. All they really need is two or three skills based on their role in the scene.

Bar-Keeper

Aspects: I Don't Want No Trouble in My Place

Skills: Average (+1) Contacts

Thug

Aspects: The Ways of the Streets, Violent Criminal

Skills: Fair (+2) Fight, Average (+1) Athletics and Physique

Supporting NPCs

Supporting NPCs have proper names and are a little more detailed than nameless NPCs. They often have a relationship to a PC or NPC, or they tend to appear in the game a great deal.

Tim Lightfoot, Thief Extraordinaire

Aspects: Scoundrel, I Just Can't Help Myself

Skills: Superb (+5) Burglary, Great (+4) Stealth, Good (+3) Lore, Fair (+2) Fight, Average (+1) Physique [Note: 3 physical stress boxes]

Stunts: Inside Man. +2 to Stealth in an indoor, urban environment.

Silberhutte

A telepath with the ability to sense the minds of alien beings.

Aspects: Distracted

Skills: Superb (+5) Lore, Great (+4) Stealth, Fair (+2) Fight

Uncanny Powers:

See Through Time

Main NPCs

Main NPCs have full character sheets just like a PC does, with five aspects, a full distribution of skills, and a selection of stunts. They are the most significant characters in your PCs' lives, because they represent pivotal forces of opposition or allies of crucial importance. Because they have a full spread of aspects, they also offer the most nuanced options for interaction, and they have the most options to invoke and be compelled. Your primary bad guys in a scenario or arc should always be main NPCs, as should any NPCs who are the

most vital pieces of your stories. You can create a main NPC on the fly if you need to, creating a partial sheet of the aspects you know for sure, those skills you definitely need them to have, and any stunts you want. Then fill in the rest as you go.

You can also upgrade a supporting NPC. This is great for when a supporting NPC has suddenly or gradually become a major fixture in the story, despite your original plans for them.

Main NPCs come in two flavours — exact peers of the PCs who grow with them as the campaign progresses, or superiors to the PCs who remain static while the PCs grow to sufficient strength to oppose them. If the PCs are currently have a maximum skill level of Great (+4), your main NPC badass should be able to afford a couple of Fantastic (+6) columns or a pyramid that peaks at Fantastic.

Eldin the Wanderer

After he died, he became a permanent resident of the Dreamlands and he remains one of its greatest figures.

Aspects: Famous Far and Wide, Knows Everyone and Everything

Skills: Fantastic (+6) Mythos Lore, Superb (+5) Physique, Great (+4) Fight, Good (+3) Provoke, Fair (+2) Will

The Corrupted One

Nyarlathep's current supreme cultist is the Corrupted One. She was once human, hundreds of years ago but is now much more formidable than a base-line human. Despite her power, she is simply an emissary, and the degree to which she has any free will at all is highly debatable. Half of her brain has been removed and replaced by a fragment of alien consciousness grown specifically for this purpose by her master. This has contaminated the eye on the left side of her face, which now looks like a black marble with a red iris and no pupil.

Aspects: Beloved of Nyarlathotep

Skills: Fantastic (+6) Mythos Lore, Superb (+5) Physique, Great (+4) Fight, Good (+3) Provoke, Fair (+2) Will

Uncanny Powers:

She knows five Mythos spells

Mutated Sorcerer

In place of blood he has a greenish-yellow ichor. Yellow and black markings cover his back. From the waist down his body is covered in coarse black fur. A sort of rudimentary eye is positioned on each hip. Immediately after death, the sorcerer's corpse disintegrates into a sticky white mass, apparently having no true skeletal structure

Aspects: Truly Alien

Skills: Fantastic (+6) Mythos Lore, Superb (+5) Physique, Great (+4) Fight, Good (+3) Provoke, Fair (+2) Will

Uncanny Powers:

He knows seven Mythos spells

Scenarios

The GM plans out the plot of the story where the player characters will become heroes, creating the setting, populating that region with villains and other NPCs, and assigning them any necessary

backgrounds, motivations, plans and resources. It is the most creative part of the game moderator's duties and many find it very rewarding. While authoring a senario, it is important to remember a few points.

Give goals

If there is to be a huge battle in the streets, and the outcome is predetermined, allow the players some small victory that they can achieve.

Names are Important

Giving your characters, and non-player characters memorable names will make them more interesting to the players. It is an opportunity to enrich your world and story.

Reuse Previous Settings

Revisiting the castle from the first adventure creates a sense of familiarity, and this time the characters may learn a strange new secret about it.

Characters Must Make Progress

Don't constantly move the party's goal further and further away, in case the players begin to get a sense that their accomplishments are meaningless. Players should feel that they are moving toward some sort of conclusion and that they are doing so because of their decisions.

Let the Setting Reveal Itself

As long as you are consistent about your universe, the players will gradually learn about it as they play. You don't need to explicitly explain anything. The characters will work it all out for themselves.

Plan for Success

If your plot requires that the villain will win, you're setting yourself up for a fall. Players are brilliant, especially when it comes to defeating your carefully planned scenes. When you're authoring a session, you're pitting your own mind against the combined minds of all of your players. Have backup plans, villains, and plot twists to handle unexpected player brilliance.

Plan Failure

If the players must make a check to continue on the plot, such as to uncover a stealthed assassin, they will probably fail. Have fall back plans. Can the characters call in a professional to help? Will another attack by the villain reveal them this time?

Have Mini-Encounters Ready

Players can be very unpredictable. Things you thought would take a while happen quickly, or the players just ignore them all together. It's good to have some small adventure ready at hand, to use to fill unexpected gaps when you run out of preplanned scenario to run. Build up a store of generic encounters which can be tossed in almost anywhere.

Hit Their Aspects

A good way to figure out the interesting action for a scene is to turn

to the PCs' aspects, and create a complication or an event-based compel based on them. This is especially good to do for those PCs whose aspects did not come into play when you made up your scenario problem, because it allows them to have some of the spotlight despite the fact that the overall story does not focus on them as much.

Campaigns

A campaign is a series of linked adventures. In Fantasy Cthulhu, the adventures at the start of a campaign will be very different to those at the end of the arc of a campaign.

The Underworld

Below the lands trodden by most humanoids, even below the dwarven halls, are descending spheres, each controlled by a different form of life. The first sphere is the hidden world of the undead. Then brave adventurers who manage to delve even deeper will find sphere after sphere of heat, flames and gateways to other realities. The creatures are the most mind bending of Cthulhu monsters. As the characters become more powerful, they will be able to delve deeper, and encounter greater dangers. This happens in three stages.

Early stage

At this early point adventures are characterised by mysteries where the Mythos creatures are still hidden and the characters are still very confused. The characters encounter minor Mythos creatures such as ghouls and deep ones.

Mid stage

After several sessions, and after they acquire at least one Mythos tome, the characters become armed with more knowledge. They can learn spells and become more powerful. They start to learn what is actually going on and become less confused.

Late stage

At this stage characters must travel throughout the Realms to try to avert disaster and major cultists are aware of them. Great forces swing into action to thwart their efforts.

WORLD GUIDE

Now it's time to take a look at the world that the player characters will be adventuring in. Some game masters prefer to keep all of this information secret. The game master then dolls out the information as the players encounter it.

A fantasy game set against a backdrop of the Cthulhu Mythos is different from other fantasy games. Usually the eventual victory of the characters is assured. In a universe overshadowed by the Mythos, the opposite is the case. The eventual **doom** of the PCs is pretty much assured.

Compared to other Mythos Creatures, humans are very fragile and short-lived entities. Mythos Creatures are alien to the point that they can not be predicted or understood. Their motivations and actions seem capricious and unfeeling. Some seem little different to bloodthirsty monsters, but this is a misunderstanding. They are much more advanced and intelligent than any representative of humanity. Our inability to understand their cruelties and random behaviour is a limitation of our intelligence.

The Old Ones are served by human cultists, and these servitors have been irrevocably altered. There is no way back for them. They are so divorced from their original human concerns now, that they are seeking the destruction of the entire planet, and everything they once held dear.

In the face of super advanced, super intelligent monsters served by world-spanning networks of fanatical cultists weaving conspiracies of labyrinthine complexity, victory is impossible. The schemes of the Old Ones are so involved and intricate that every possible action of the characters has been predicted. The PCs may sometimes think they have thwarted some scheme, but they are, in fact always advancing some larger agenda. Small personal successes are possible, perhaps substituting a cultist on a sacrificial altar instead of a character's sweetheart, but a final victory against the Old Ones is absolutely impossible.

There are dark cults, hideous monstrosities, truths so terrible that none may comprehend them and remain sane. Creatures gibber in the tunnels beneath the characters' feet. Extradimensional phantoms hover unseen, overhearing and mocking every thought and secret. And even for those familiar with the Mythos, things are worse than they might imagine.

History

This history is often told to princes, princesses and students. It is as good a history as any that has been compiled about the Realms, but the game moderator should feel free to change it as desired to fit with their adventures.

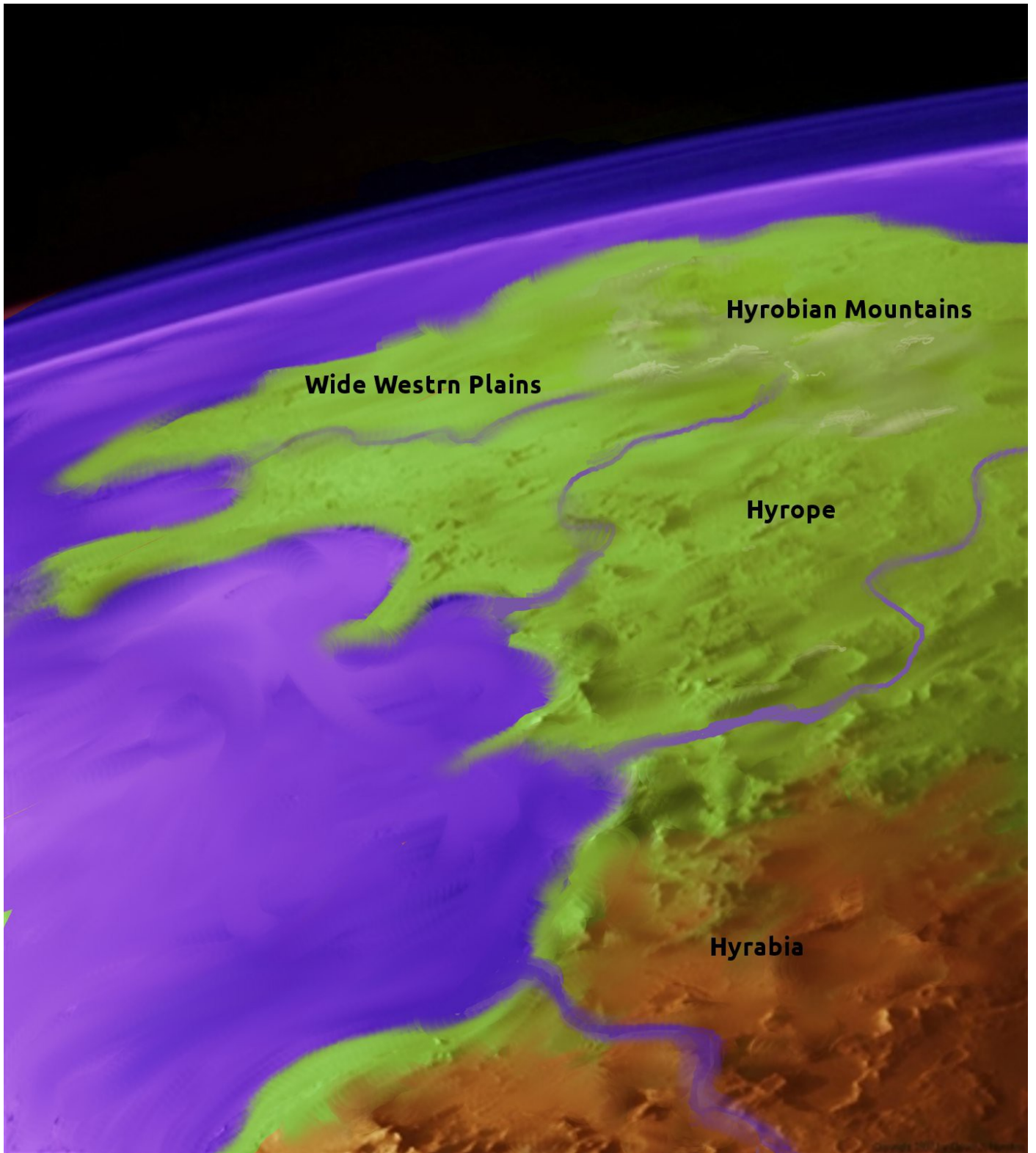
This history has been playing out on a single giant landmass, often referred to, by the peoples living there, as the Realms. The planet itself is referred to as Deep Rock. Hyrope is the most north-easterly corner of this giant continent. With so much history, most residents of Hyrope only have a sketchy idea about the past of their land.

History, folklore, legend and religion are all intertwined in the Realms story, and it is long. It usually starts with the creation myth.

When the fog of the early universe first cleared, it revealed Azathoth, along with his court. Then the Realms themselves were formed. The Hounds of Tindalos were the first denizens of the Realms. They came to dwell in the most distant past, when normal life had not yet spawned, and the world was a terrible and evil place.

Then Cthulhu himself came down to the young world from the sky, wounded in a terrible battle. He establishes various cities, including R'lyeh. Cthulhu then slept, and sleeps still, intent on healing and recouping his eldritch power.

The Snake People then populated the Realms. Their ancient serpent empire collapsed uncounted ages later. Then humanity and the other peoples of the Realms appeared. They proved better able to survive successive ice ages than the Serpent People, and have usurped large swathes of their territory. Now the Realms are divided between various Humanoid kingdoms.



Hyrope

This is the area in the north-west corner of the continent. Hyrope roughly equates to the 'Western' European cultures of our world. Hyrope is bordered to the east by great mountains and lakes, and to the south by the badlands. On the other side of the badlands is Nubiania. Sloanian is the wilder more open country on the other side of the mountain lakes, and it is only now starting to be explored. The existence of Choran, to the far south east, is widely known, but few except the sailors on the coastal circuit have ever visited any of its countries. Gagazan, the last remnant of the Snake People empire that once spanned the entire continent, is located in the nook of the great lake mountains and the badlands.

Sloanian

This is the group of countries in the north east corner of the continent. This roughly equates to the 'New World' cultures of the Americas of our world, but also includes traditions of Polynesia and the Aborigines of Australia.

Nubiania

This is the group of countries in the south west corner of the continent. It roughly equates to the original African cultural centre of our world, and is the oldest country. It also includes the traditions of the Indian sub continent.

Choran

This is the group of countries in the south east corner of the continent. This equates, very roughly, to the Far East of our world. Including China, Tibet and Japan. It is almost as advantaged by geography as Hyrope.



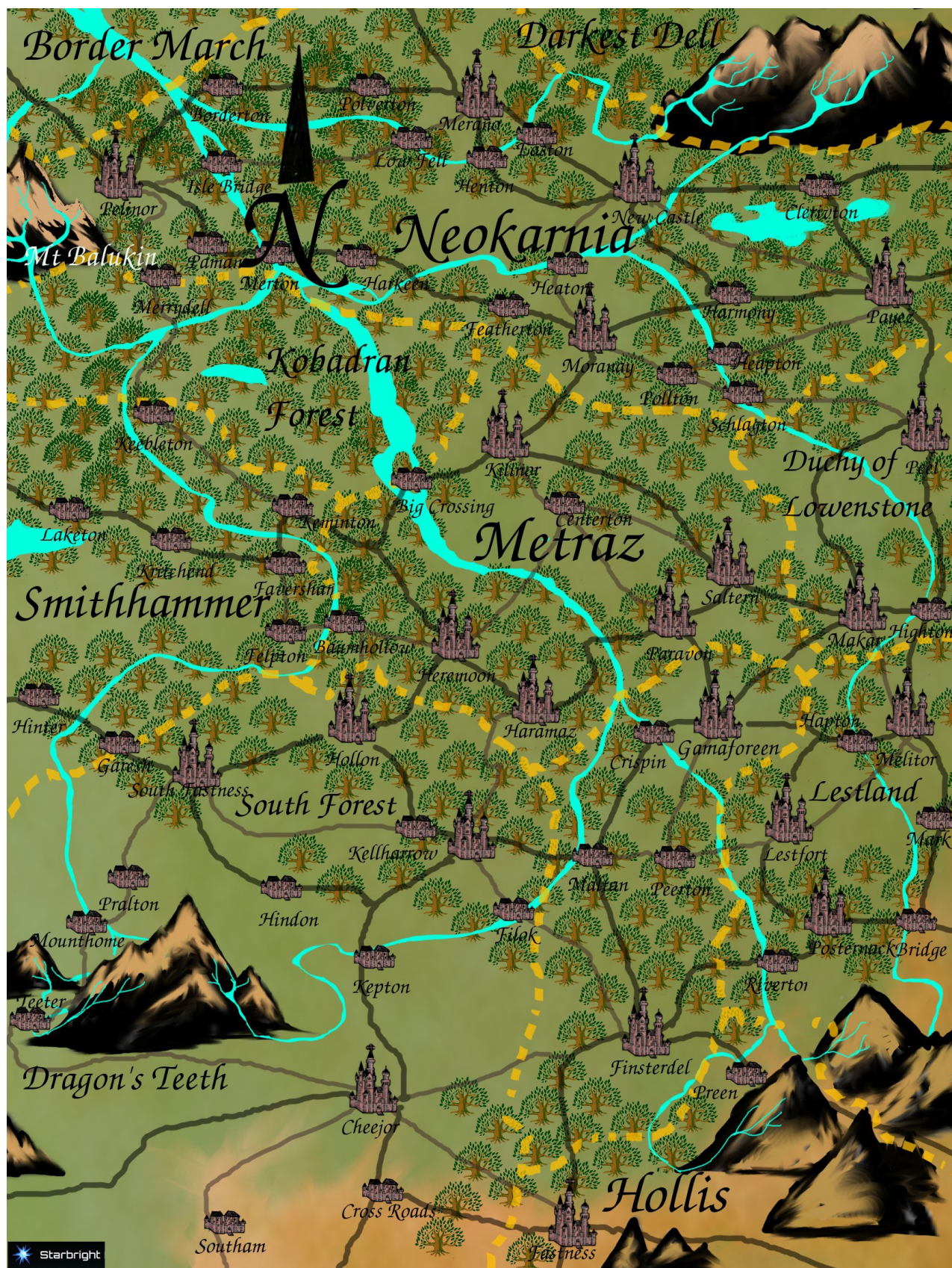
Common Culture

Hyrope is united by a lot of common elements in their culture. The whole corner of the continent worships a fairly limited pantheon of gods, although there is still room for schism and holy war. They have inherited a common language, though it has some very strong dialects and many other features are similar too.

Combat, both armed and unarmed, is also an integral part of education for both boys and girls of all the humanoid folk of the Realms. The emphasis might vary slightly, dwarves emphasising the warhammer over the longsword for defeating armour for example, or the elven preference for self bows as opposed to the human crossbow, but weapons training is done by all.

This means that there is a ready supply of swordspeople to protect goods being moved around between the Realms, but it also means that governments must be careful how intensely they try to exploit their subjects. The populace is so well trained and well armed that any revolutionary force that emerges is often very difficult to put down.

Children also receive extensive schooling in herbs and wildcrafting, wilderness survival and the basics of bargaining with supernatural powers. This is all done more by storytelling and learning songs rather than getting lessons and doing exercises, though they do this too. Literacy and numeracy is not seen as important for most. Most people learn a reduced set of characters used for sending messages and simple bookkeeping. True writing and numeracy is reserved for the brightest.



Dwarven Kingdoms

The lands of the dwarves may not look very extensive when seen on maps of the surface of the Realms' land mass, there seem to be just a handful of realms on high, rocky infertile and mountainous ground, all isolated from each other, landlocked and surrounded, but this impression is deceptive.

In fact, the dwarven realms extend far underground. The crust of the Realms is like Swiss Cheese, riddled with giant tunnels left by the Dholes, ancient cave systems, lost cities buried by time and the excavations of dwarves, ghouls and many other creatures. Within this dark space, some dwarven realms are so big that they actually have underground borders with each other. It is a domain known as the Underworld, or the Underdark.

The Underworld

The Underworld is the subterranean region underneath the Realms inhabited by various monsters, the most common being the ghouls. The underworld lies beneath the whole of the Realms and has a few entrances to it in various places, most notably within Dwarven citadels. It is dimly lit by a mysterious phosphorescence known as the 'death fire'.

The Underdark is bisected by a huge river. The river flows into pits and galleries of panic where poison springs feed frightful and remote waterfalls. Another feature of the Underdark is a giant lake with a vast fungous shore lit by a belching column of sick greenish flame and cut by wide oily rivers that flow from deep abysses to join the blackest gulfs of immemorial ocean. The Underdark is extensive, and the nethermost caverns are not for the fathoming of eyes that see; for their marvels are strange and terrific.

The food source for these underground kingdoms is giant fungi. There are huge underground caves full of huge fields of giant mushrooms underground, and they are the dwarves' most jealously guarded treasure. They are constantly under attack by the wild and gigantic creatures of the pits.

Dwarven architecture consists of strengthening the tunnels, left behind by the burrowing of the great worms, with columns and gantries of stone. They build defensive walls across the tunnels and excavating large complexes of corridors and rooms into the tunnel sides, some of them as big as, or bigger than human cities. Natural caverns are given over to mushroom cultivation, but the most precious chambers are lava pits, these are given a false floor with wells and plunge holes, and water is diverted here into pools, to make the famous dwarven smithies.

Dwarves do not have complete control of this subterranean domain however, there are chasms and crevasses down to deeper darker levels that the dwarves can not seal up or cover, no matter how hard they try. Even the caves and galleries closer to the surface, where the dwarves are strongest, are contested by ghouls, orcs and many other twisted horrors.

Dwarves only enter the Underdark through a dwarven citadel, if they have any choice in the matter. There are also cracks that connect to the above ground world in other locations, but usually in undead and unholy places. These are shunned by the dwarves, and marked by signs in Dwarvish.

Rock Home

This is the powerful dwarven realm located below the Dragon's Teeth mountain range. It shares borders above ground with several human, elven, halfling and mixed lands. Under ground it borders Smithhammer, another equally powerful dwarven realm, and has well defended borders with other less wholesome undead, orc and baleful titan kingdoms.

SmithHammer

This is a dwarven kingdom with an unusually large holding of land above ground. The gains all came at the expense of Neokarnia, when that ancient land was carved up between the Elves of Kobadran and the Dwarves of Smithhammer.

Elven Kingdoms

The elves rule the areas away from the roads. Their domains are the hidden forest valleys and high grassy plains. These kingdoms are no less sophisticated because of their remote locations however. Their cities are designed to be open, and have tall, vaulted architecture that is the true envy of the Realms. Elves are long lived, compared to the other peoples of the world, and their kings and queens tend to stay in power for periods measured in centuries, and this lends a certain continuity and stability to elven politics and geographical borders. Treaties about land hold for longer and wars over resources are less frequent among the elves.

This stability brings prosperity with it and the elves are rich. They are the best customers for light and strong dwarven armour and weapons. They are virtually the only customers who can afford the very best military weapons and armour. Some say this stability and prosperity makes the elves a little conservative however, even boring. The last new elven poem was written hundreds of years ago for example. The theatre groups of the elven woods are justly famous, and they set up in the woods just outside human towns, halfling mounds and dwarven mountains. The locals then come to see the shows for a week or so, before the elves move on.

After the fall of the Snake People, it was the elves who were first to create an empire across the Realms. That empire is broken and fragmented now, overpowered in many places by younger human kingdoms. The eleven powers are still the richest and most rich in magic of the surface people though, and they can wait for the period of human expansion to pass.

Quanar

A powerful elven realm in a long valley leading right up to the Dragon's Teeth. This gives them a border with the dwarven realm of Rock Home, where they trade food and timber for weapons.

Darkest Dell

The forest here is lush and dark. The trees and bushes provide cover, but undergrowth slows movement. In Darkest Dell it must also be remembered that a healthy covering of lush vegetation is no guarantee of the stability of the terrain below. Darkest Dell is one of the realms that has the most tunnels, underground complexes and other entrances to the underworld. The ground has been so undermined and excavated that it is not unheard of for it to give way beneath the feet of an unlucky traveller, sucking them down into the tunnels and dungeons below.

The elves rule the areas away from the roads. Roads are not encourage across elven lands. Their domains are the hidden forest valleys, but this kingdom is no less sophisticated because of their remote location.

Kobadran Elves

This nation is very numerous, for elves, and their ruler, Onjaro, is hungry for even more power. It is a traditional realm, ruled from a network of cities woven into the forest canopy. The elven gods are strong in Kobadran forest, and possibly the only check on Onjaro's greed for power is the powerful clergy.

The Silver Bark Elves

This nation is very numerous, for elves, and is one of the most welcoming to non elven members. Dwarven artisans provide their weapons and armour, humans negotiate good trade deals and charge into battle for them. Halflings provide their wine and entertainment, and the elves of the nation provide their eerily accurate archery, convoluted strategies and deep, dark magics. They are a hungry nation, who want to stamp their unique camaraderie on the continent. Many are predicting that they will soon take over from the Central Empire as the most powerful force in the Realms. Of course soon can mean thousands of years according to the glacial pace of change among elves.

Halfling Realms

Halfling powers are relatively small as a rule, few of them meriting titles more exalted than a dukedom or principality.

Mounds of Merriton

This is a very large halfling settlement. The largest mounds are as big as any human castle, dwarven chamber or elven tree hall.

Human Realms

The realms of the humans are the most expansive and most populace of any species.

The Central Empire

This is the most powerful force across the Realms. It is a huge power created from the ashes of defeated dukedoms and earldoms. But the Empire has never held together peacefully or cohesively. There are constant rebellions and insurrections, all aimed at usurping the current Queen, Eugeniana III. The Queen is a patron of philosophers and progress, even though she is constantly at war to keep control over the mighty dukes and

duchesses that make up her realm.

The mightiest of her subjects is Duke Marchanto, who is in thrall to Nyarlathotep. A change has come over the Queen recently too, and Nyarlathotep is getting to her through one of her favoured philosophers and magic users, Lord Grangan. Whoever wins the struggle for control of the Empire, the Queen or the Duke, they will inevitably brand all their adversaries as traitors. Anything but a negotiated end to the civil war will unleash the tide of blood letting that Nyarlathotep loves so much.

There are a number of potential outcomes to the problems besetting the Central Empire, but all of them will result in a change in the balance of power across the entire Realms. Once Duke Marchanto, or Lord Grangan, has taken control of the Empire, Nyarlathotep is not too concerned which of them wins out, they will dedicate the entire resources of the realm to opening the gates.

The Free City of Haradad

One of the major powers in the area around a feature called the Dragon's Claws. The free city has become very wealthy as a staging post for the distribution of treasure from the deserts. These treasures have made the local Magical University, in a central location within the city, into a very powerful and influential institution. It has also irrevocably corrupted the organisation, turning it into a den of cultists and a source of terror that spreads across the Realms, just as the trade in artefacts from the desert spreads along trade routes.

Vinarea

This is a city located at the centre of a lagoon on the coast of Vinaremo. Vinaremo is a country providing one of the precious few safe harbours on the coastal circuit taken by the never-ending trade ships.

Lower Faringdon

This is a principality in the south. It has a small sliver of coastline, and the rest of the country is like a long corridor stretching into the continent.

Stormharbour

A coastal city on the rough Tanamarian Sea. Though theoretically a free city, Stormharbour is in actuality a possession of Maranay, a small realm, but wealthy, and Stormharbour is the centre of Maranarian trade. A large proportion of the local exports and imports go through the docks here.

Metraz

As a realm, Metraz is ruled by a council of clerics of Set. The Cthulhu Cult has subjugated more than half of the council, and the whole realm is working hard on finding a way to open the gates.

Neokarnia

This realm has a truly ancient history, dating back to when humans were just primeval and savage border raiders on the more advanced snake person cities that then covered the continent. Humanity was more interested in warring with each other than supplanting the serpent people at that point. The snake people,

ruled by their God-Queen, seemed unconquerable to the primitive human tribes.

Later humans tamed horses and became the fastest and most agile cavalry on the steppes, easily outpacing the sabre-tooth cavalry of the serpent people.

The serpent people hired human cavalry to form units called 'light brigades' which they employed in their constant warring with the frog people. This situation lasted thousands of years until humans grew more numerous and overthrew the serpent people.

Humans had no idea how to keep the fabulous cities and advanced systems of the serpent people, such as air conditioning and running water, in good repair. The cities gradually fell into ruin, and a dark age descended on the world. The downfall of the previous snake people empire was sudden, leaving cities and ruins behind.

Humans then gradually spread across the entire land mass. There was a relatively brief period of elven domination that lasted thousands of years, before the first real human empires worthy of the name started to fight for power with them. The Karnian empire was one of the great powers of the golden age that then rose.

The new realm of Neokarnia occupies some of the former Karnian lands, and have had some success in driving the packs of wargs that terrorise the land underground. But they have far from eradicated this menace. The current patchwork of warring feudal realms is what has risen to replace the Karnian Empire.

Duchy of Lowenstone

The Duchy is an ancient realm, and despite its modest name, is equal in power to most other kingdoms and empires. Lowenstone is an eastern border land. The eastern borderlands tend, despite summers hot enough to grow wine in the most southerly of them, to be cold and dark during their long winters. Snowfall is heavy and regular.

Hollis

Festness, one of the most northern cities of Hollis is a centre of activity for the Magician Hunters. They are a group of vigilantes that draws its recruits from the various backwaters where magic is, quite rightly, regarded with suspicion and contempt. They try to prevent the introduction of magic into these areas, and hunt down the magicians behind these attempts, wherever they may be.

Borderlands

The borderlands are the countries along the mountains to the east, and the desert to the south that separate the Realms from the other three corners of one giant continent.

The southern borderlands tend to be very hot and arid. The houses of the wealthy are built around fountains and have channels of water running through them to bring cooling and humidity. These areas are plagued by skeletons bleached and become restless in the sun, the deserts are strewn with them, the relics of countless

ancient battles. The great power in the area is Fortura. This country is very advanced, benefiting from the best Hyrope has to offer, and many advances brought by visitors from the south. The deserts surrounding Fortura are travelled by nomads called the Wanderers. They trade spices from far to the east for manufactured goods from Hyrope.

The eastern borderlands on the other hand tend to be cold and dark for most of the year. Snowfall is heavy and regular and there are also great problems with vampires and other undead, who love the long nights and lack of running water. Summer is traditionally vampire hunting season, and winters are a time of fear. The most dominant power in the east is the Twin Empire, formed by the uniting of two already formidable empires over a thousand years ago. Their emblem is a two headed eagle and they are one of the great powers vying for control across the Realms.

The Wilds

These are the areas that have not been subdued enough to have a border drawn around them by any humanoid species.

The Badlands

This is a southern desert well known to be full of deserted cities and terrible monsters. It was once a hub of snake people society, but the snake people caused some kind of environmental damage known to tales of prehistory as 'the scorching'. Their cities remained but the snake people here are just one band of desert nomads among many now.

The Lost Plateau

A cold, arid plateau that has strange geological features, which are hard to explain by weathering or geophysical processes. The plateau is covered in spikes, jutting up from the ground to enormous heights.

The Drowned City

The drowned city is located out in the oceans of the north. It is surrounded by a black, slimy salt marsh with the skeletons of marine animals poking out of it. The city is created of exotic materials that bend and twist space time, making the architecture behave in strange ways. A flat surface will appear to rear up to vertical as space time curves, but will settle down to horizontal again when approached. Everything seems to writhe and shift as the observer moves around. The nightmare corpse-city was built in measureless eons behind history by vast, loathsome shapes that seeped down from the dark stars. Great Cthulhu and his hordes slumber here, hidden in green slimy vaults.

Sunken City of the Snakes

The sunken city at first appears to be human, but then it becomes apparent that the humans were a servitor species. The actual inhabitants are Snake People, dreaming in their tombs.

Y'ha-nthlei

This is one of the Undersea cities of the Deep Ones. It is located quite close to Stormharbour and is a scourge to their shipping.

City of the Gugs

The City of the Gugs is a colossal, horrifying cityscape of huge towers. It is located far below the surface of the Realms, in the underworld. Its most prominent landmark is the Tower of Koth, which contains a legendary stairway that leads to the surface. Close by the city is the cemetery of the gugs, its graves marked by huge stone monoliths. Ghouls often dine here on the huge carcasses of the Gugs.

Crag of the Ghouls

This is a rugged cliff in the Peaks of Thok from which the ghouls of the deeper reaches of the Underdark pitch the leftover bones of their sepulchral feasts. Uncounted miles below the crag is the bone-filled vale of Pnath.

Dylath-Leen

Dylath-Leen is built mostly of basalt, and its streets are dark and uninviting. It is said to be one of the most mysterious cities of the East. It trades in rubies transported in sinister black galleys (whose rowers are never seen). They are not regularly seen in the ports of the Realms and they cause quite a commotion when they do dock. A black galley comes from the East to visit the Realms once every 1d3 years.

Cursed Forest

The most numerous inhabitants of the Cursed forest are hideously malformed rats, many with three tails, multiple eyes, and matted fur dripping with ichor. It contains a unique, haunted tree. This tree's sap can be fermented to create a potent drink, capable of restoring life. A stone trapdoor in these woods leads to the top of the Tower of Koth and from there into the kingdom of the Gugs in the Underworld.

Great Abyss

This is a massive cavern within the underworld. It is home to a huge number of night-gaunts.

Pnath

Pnath is a vast pit in the underworld. It is flanked by the Peaks of Thok and is almost completely dark. The vale is filled with a mountain-sized heap of bones and is the place into which all the ghouls of the world above cast the refuse of their feastings. Enormous worm-like creatures, known as dholes, burrow through the vale. Night-gaunts often carry helpless victims to the vale, where they are left to die.

Sarkomand

This is a ruined city on the northern shore of the Cerenerian Sea, somewhere in the fabled East. The most prominent feature of Sarkomand is the winged monsters guarding the trapdoor beneath which a spiral staircase descends into the dark abyss of the underworld.

Vaults of Zin

This is a huge cavern in the underworld. The ghosts who dwell in the Vaults of Zin prey on ghouls and gugs, and sometimes even one another.

Religion

It is common, in terms of religion, to adopt the local habits. So a human who lives in a predominantly dwarven community, for example, might well follow the local dwarven religion, especially if their family has been among that community for more than a generation. This means that although some gods are referred to as a god of a specific species, this does not mean that only members of that species will be found among the worshippers.

Set

An evil and strange god, inherited from the creatures who once shared the primeval swamps, and grassy plains with humans. This is Yig, god of the serpent people, worshipped by humans as Set. This god is a brutal and jealous creature, who is not above appearing in person (if you can say 'in person' about this gibbering inhuman thing) to forward its aims.

Set is a savage and unthinking beast, uninterested in the humans, whose energies it feeds on. Set is the focus of a snake worshipping cult that is growing in power. Set organises its cultists to spread its worship and increase its power. The only thing it offers is respite from its own anger, and the only thing that will appease it is humanoid sacrifice.

The Horned One

An ancient god with a powerful body covered in horns.

Dagon, the Dragon King of the Sea

The worship of the Dragon King of the Sea is mostly restricted to coastal areas. Its promises of expensive gold artefacts and increased fish catches are primarily attractive to fishing towns. The central beings venerated by the Order are Deep Ones but they are seen largely as intermediaries between the cult and their god. The god that the cult worships is Cthulhu, but the cult knows him as Dagon. The cultists sacrifice captives to the Deep Ones at specific times in exchange for a limitless supply of fish. The Esoteric Order of Dagon has three oaths which members have to take. The first is an oath of secrecy, the second, an oath of loyalty, and the third, an oath to marry a Deep One and bear or sire its child.

The Lich King

Alamaar Aneen became embroiled in the Cthulhu Mythos thousands of years ago. He became enormously powerful, by imitating the magics of the old ones, and ruled the biggest human empire yet seen. Hundreds of years later, his body finally drained, he became a lich. He disappeared for centuries, only to return as the Lich King at the head of the greatest undead army that the Realms has ever seen. He was defeated, but whether he was really killed is a subject of much theological debate. He has become both a god and a devil, worshipped and feared.

The Storyteller

Many elves believe that the world is not real, but that it is instead just a very good story. The storyteller is an ancient elf, whose sex name and whereabouts have become lost to remembering, but they must still be there telling their story.

The Red Elf

This is a minor elven deity, worshipped in wine growing areas. He is a kind of elven devil who demands the sacrifice of thousands of barrels of red wine every year. Every barrel short, he will collect in blood.

The Cult

All the Realms have been thoroughly corrupted by the nameless god. Victims of the corruption have strange dreams, changes in personality, and they start to work towards tightly defined goals. The recipients of these dreams often, but not always, become fanatical and dangerous. The dreams seem strange to human minds. The victims of the dreams, in thrall to their sleeping god, are damned to a life of following the god's mental bidding. Few are allowed any measure of free will or any time off. This dislocates them from society, sometimes making their language and behaviour odd, making it possible to spot them.

The cult has infiltrated the court of every kingdom in the Realms. There are agents of the Old Ones everywhere, clearing the path, seeking to open the gates.

Temple of Starry Wisdom

The Temple of Starry Wisdom is an offshoot of the Cult that worships Nyarlathotep in his aspect as the Haunter of the Dark. Every temple has a sacred relic known as the Shining Trapezohedron to summon the Haunter of the Dark, who demands outrageous sacrifices in return for limitless knowledge of the universe. The temples are hidden underground below cities, and are reached by descending deep spiral staircases.

Sport

Sport is an important part of life in the Realms of Hyrope. There are large sporting festivals during the summer and there are winter games too.

Canes

This is a sport popular across Hyrope involving teams of horsemen who hurl javelins made of cane at one another. These are not lethal, and the aim is to dodge or deflect with the shield. Like many Realms' sports, it is also good training for battle.

Quarterstaves

The quarterstaff is seen as one of the noblest weapons by many of the people of Hyrope, and fighting techniques for all other melee weapons are said to derive from it. Gladiatorial 'prize playing' bouts between exponents of the quarterstaff can attract huge crowds, and skilled combatants are often local celebrities.

Magical University

Magic is a product of Mythos Lore, and magicians tend to be unhinged individuals that delve into things that would be better left undisturbed. They tend to be antisocial loners and most unlikely to form societies. Despite this, one great institution has arisen to serve the needs of sorcerers and those looking to engage their services.

The primary organisation of magic users across Hyrope is the magical university system. There are universities in many great cities, and others tucked away in hidden corners and obscure towns, and they all try to stay on more or less friendly terms with each other. The universities see themselves as guardians, standing between the horror of the Old Ones and what is left of humanoid society. They are dedicated to preserving the writing of the ancients. Their bases are huge libraries of esoteric knowledge and they prefer to speak an obscure and ancient Elvish among themselves. They tend to be conservative, and are against newfangled devices like the plough and the wheel.



BESTIARY

The following bestiary of monsters that can be encountered by adventurers exploring the planet is far from exhaustive, and the game master should not hesitate to add to it.

Each monster has one monstrous aspect. This is like a normal aspect, but the monster may add +3 to their roll instead of +2 when they invoke it. Monsters are often singularly driven to obtain their goals, and the players will have to work to overcome these foes.

Zombies, for example, have the monstrous aspect Hungry for Brains. Anytime that a zombie invokes their aspect, they get a +3 to their roll.

Abassy

Size: human

Attack: +2 – crushing (constrict) or thrusting (fangs)

Defence: +2 – Agility and leather skin

Stress: 2

Senses: +1 on rolls to smell

Stealth: N/A

Poison: Potency 5, Delivery Bite

Monstrous aspect: Monstrous metal teeth.

Demons that have teeth of iron. They look just like humans, or sometimes elves, but their metal teeth give them away as supernatural fiends. They dress as normal humans, and use swords or other melee weapons, but can also bite with their venomous teeth.

Appalling Yard Watchers

Size: human

Attack: +2 – slashing (scythe)

Defence: +0

Stress: 2

Senses: senses life within 10 miles

Stealth: N/A

Poison: Potency 5, Delivery Bite

Immunity: non magical weapons

Magic: 2

Spells: x2

Monstrous aspect: Hate Life as Unnatural

Skeletal grave lurkers with a lantern and a scythe. The yard watchers are the henchman of Death. They protect graveyards and the souls inside from necromancers, and are very suspicious of the living. They see life as an unnatural state, and attack to bring people to the more natural states of death or undeath. They are minor royalty among the undead and have subjects, mostly skeletons and zombies, who have their own particular paths along which their sacred processions move.

Baleful Titans

Size: 12m tall

Attack: +5 – trapping (whip) – pummelling (hammer)

Defence: +4

Stress: 5

Senses: 360 degree vision

Stealth: N/A

Poison: N/A

Immunity: non magical weapons

Magic: 5

Spells: x5

Monstrous aspect: Lords of the Underworlds

These are giant 12 metre tall creatures, with skin like burning coal, hot enough to burn flesh, wood and fabric. They are the subjects of their ruler, in his fiery realm deep down in the underworld, but also rulers in their own right across many other realms and planes of existence. They are immune to all but magical weapons and are powerful magic users. They are the reason the dwarves have become so good at forging magic weapons.



Basilisk

Size: 5 – 15m

Attack: +3 – bite

Ranged Attack: +2 breath weapon 4x1m cone

Defence: +2

Stress: 5

Senses: N/A

Stealth: N/A

Poison: potency 4/delivery, breath

Immunity: non magical weapons

Magic: 5

Spells: x5

Monstrous aspect: All Wilts and Dies

This is a huge multi-limbed, venomous lizard. It is so venomous that it leaves a wide trail of deadly venom in its wake, and its gaze is likewise lethal. The basilisk's hole, (recognizable because all the surrounding shrubs and grass has been scorched by its presence), can be home to many hundreds of the creatures.

It destroys all vegetation, not only by its contact, but those even that it has breathed upon. It burns up all the grass too, and breaks stones and causes earthquakes, so tremendous is its noxious influence. If a knight kills one of these creatures while mounted, the poison will run up the weapon and may kill, not only the rider, but the horse as well. For this reason it is advisable to use ranged

weapons against the basilisk.

Despite its killing glare and its poisonous breath, many are willing to hunt basilisk. Basilisk venom is highly prized, because a skilled magic user, with access to a lab, can use it to transform copper into gold.

Its ashes are less potent, only turning silver to gold, but are also much in demand. Caution is advised when hunting basilisk however, because the beast is capable of breathing fire and killing with the sound of its voice. It can kill not only by touch, but also by touching something that is touching the victim, like a sword held in their hand.



Bone Wolf

Size: human

Attacks: x2

Attack: +3 – slashing and thrusting (fangs) – pummelling (claws)

Ranged Attack: N/A

Defence: +2

Stress: 3

Senses: N/A

Stealth: N/A

Poison: N/A

Immunity: non magical weapons

Magic: N/A

Spells: N/A

Monstrous aspect: Guard Beast Created by Mage

A particularly terrible type of bone golem. They are usually encountered in packs and have found some way of reproducing. They are intelligent, and use tactics when hunting, such as using bait. They will often keep one character alive from a group of victims, to use as bait to attract a new group. Their clawed forelimbs are clumsy, but with some time and effort, they can tie victims to a tree, gag them and even set traps. They can both bite and claw in the same exchange, their hide is equivalent to plate armour and their skill in combat is Great.



Cave Dragon

Size: horse

Attack: +2 pummelling tail

Defence: +2

Stress: 4

Senses: echo location

Stealth: N/A

Poison: N/A

Immunity: N/A

Magic: N/A

Spells: N/A

Monstrous aspect: Hunt by Dark Flee by Light

This is a composite creature, a monster that is part dolphin, part dragon. They have the sneaky nature of an ambush killer. They prefer to hide in the depths of caves, and pounce on unsuspecting targets. They are also very cunning.

Copper Golem

Size: human

Attack: +1 – pummelling (fists)

Ranged Attack: N/A

Defence: +2

Stress: 4

Senses: N/A

Stealth: N/A

Poison: N/A

Immunity: non magical weapons

Magic: N/A

Spells: N/A

Monstrous aspect: Absolutely Will Not Stop

The copper golem looks a little like an antiquated suit of copper armour. The armour has a beaten and hammered look.

Cyclops

Size: 3m tall

Attack: +2 – as weapon

Ranged Attack: +1 – pummelling (hurled rocks)

Defence: +2 – as armour

Stress: 4

Senses: N/A

Stealth: N/A

Poison: N/A

Immunity: N/A

Magic: N/A

Spells: N/A

Monstrous aspect: Artisans of the Giants

One-eyed giants, each with a single eye in the middle of their forehead. The Cyclopes are builders of near impregnable fortifications. To say the walls of a castle are 'Cyclopean' is a huge compliment, of which most humanoid fortifications are unworthy.

They also make magic weapons, jewellery and other artefacts, but all of course on such a giant scale that it is useless to humanoids. They often build their fortresses in the underworld, right down at the sources of some of the continent's mightiest volcanoes. The noises they make pounding on metal can be heard all the way up on the surface sometimes. The dwarfs look up to them for their prowess in shaping stone and metal.



Dogsbody

Size: large hound

Attack: +3 – slashing and thrusting (bite) or as weapon

Ranged Attack: N/A

Defence: +0

Stress: 3

Senses: Can track by scent

Stealth: +2

Poison: N/A

Immunity: N/A

Magic: N/A

Spells: N/A

Monstrous aspect: Stealthy and Sly

These are large and dog-like. They are used as servants by many evil sorcerers. The creatures are quite intelligent and are capable of using a weapon in the hands growing from their back.



Doppleganger

Size: human

Attack: +1 - as weapon

Ranged Attack: +1 – as weapon

Defence: +2 – as weapon

Stress: 2

Senses: N/A

Stealth: N/A

Poison: N/A

Immunity: N/A

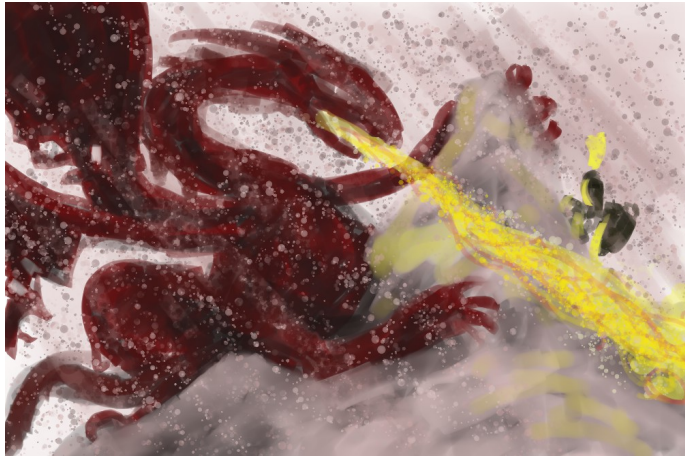
Magic: N/A

Spells: N/A

Monstrous aspect: Completely Takes On the Character

Melted looking creature that can steal someone's identity, by stealing a mirror from them. As the original ages and they can no longer pass for their target, using their credit and rooming with their friends, they must steal another mirror and begin the process again.

Sometimes the double will impersonate the victim and go about ruining them, for instance through committing crimes or insulting the victim's friends. Sometimes, the double even tries to kill the original or use their fame to advance a nefarious political agenda, but these dopplegangers are rare, most just try to live at their victim's expense.



Dragon

Size: 6 – 10m

Attacks: x3

Attack: +2 – slashing, pummelling (tail)

Ranged Attack: +2 – energy (fire breath)

Defence: +2

Stress: 5

Senses: N/A

Stealth: N/A

Poison: N/A

Immunity: non magical weapons

Magic: N/A

Spells: N/A

Monstrous aspect: Fierce in Loyalty and Emnity.

These are large creatures in the region of 8m in length, which makes them fearsome, but also a manageable size to use as a steed. They can breath various different types of attack. Red ones breath fire, while green ones breath poison gas, and all have a metal axe shaped like an arrowhead on the end of their tale which they can use on targets behind them, beside them or even in front of them, striking over their shoulder like a scorpion.

Fomorian

Size: 3m

Attack: +2 – pummelling (horns)

Ranged Attack: +2 – energy (eye rays)

Defence: +2 – as armour

Stress: 4

Senses: N/A

Stealth: N/A

Poison: N/A

Immunity: heat

Magic: N/A

Spells: N/A

Monstrous aspect: Ancient and Calm, but Deadly.

These have the body of a giant humanoid and the head of a goat. They can shoot heat rays from their eyes. Rays powerful enough to burn a hole for a well. The ray will continue beaming for 1d10 rounds, if the fomorian is decapitated while using it. The beam can then be used as a weapon by picking up the fomorian's head.



Forest Lurkers

Size: bear

Attack: +1 – pummelling (claws)

Ranged Attack: N/A

Defence: +2

Stress: 2

Senses: N/A

Stealth: N/A

Poison: N/A

Immunity: non magical weapons

Magic: 3

Spells: 1 (brain bolt)

Monstrous aspect: Shadow Lurkers

Lurkers are large fierce creatures, of animal intelligence, that nevertheless have an innate psionic ability that makes them very dangerous indeed. It is a raw spike of pure psionic energy directed at the brains of their prey. Lurkers hunt human through the forests with enormous relish.

Frost Giant

Size: 5m

Attack: +2 – as weapon

Ranged Attack: +2 – energy (breath weapon)

Defence: +1

Stress: 4

Senses: N/A

Stealth: N/A

Poison: N/A

Immunity: N/A

Magic: N/A

Spells: N/A

Monstrous aspect: Cold as Ice

They inhabit a world of mist, chill and ice, and its gate can be found in the lower levels of the underworld. Their skins are white and blue and they wear clothes fashioned from the hides of woolly mammoth and woolly rhinoceroses. They can breath a chill cloud of cold that

instantly frostbites or even kills a humanoid. They find heat uncomfortable and are rarely encountered anywhere remotely warm. They rarely venture to the surface world at all, and if they do it is almost always in freezing northern latitudes that they have some errand to run.



Giant Crocolion

Size: 20-50ft long

Attack: +3 – pummelling (tail) or thrusting (fangs)

Defence: +3 – Agility and leather skin

Stress: 5

Senses: +2 on rolls to smell

Stealth: +2 on rolls to hide and sneak

Poison: Potency 3, Delivery Bite

The crocolion is an example of the capricious experiments of the Elder Things. They are common in desert locations and were probably designed as guard beasts, though it is impossible to truly guess the intentions of the Elder Things. They are very patient, and will sit guarding doorways for days, and even weeks, without even blinking.

Ogre

Size: bear size

Attack: +2 – pummelling (fists)

Ranged Attack: N/A

Defence: +1

Stress: 3

Senses: N/A

Stealth: +3

Poison: N/A

Immunity: N/A

Magic: N/A

Spells: N/A

Monstrous aspect: 'Almost' invisible.

Camouflage skin. Skin is as hard as plate mail.

The ogre is a large, cruel, and hideous humanoid monster. They are found ugly and repellent even by other monsters. This creature has a face like the bark of an old and wizened tree. The rest of their skin is similarly gnarled, and they often, horribly, go naked to take advantage of the camouflage their gnarled skin affords in a forest environment.

Goblin

Size: human child

Attack: +0 – as weapon or slashing (bite)

Ranged Attack: +0 – as weapon

Defence: +2

Stress: 1

Senses: N/A

Stealth: +3

Poison: N/A

Immunity: N/A

Magic: N/A

Spells: N/A

Monstrous aspect: Mischievous

Goblins are very common and numerous monsters. They have green reptilian skin, like Kobolds, but they are small, weak, uncoordinated, and just a little below human intelligence.

Only about half of those encountered have weapons, and those that do have very poor quality weapons that have been allowed to fall into disrepair. When not armed, they attack with their mouths like a dog, leaping at the opponents and going for the jugular. Their strength is in numbers.

They also have a warrior class of 'hobgoblins' which can be given higher stats - if normal goblins are proving no challenge at all to the players. Goblins make their lairs wherever they can, but will only turn to actually digging a primitive tunnel complex if forced to by bad climate and a lack of other structures to appropriate.



Hook Horrors

Size: human

Attacks: x2

Attack: +2 – trapping and slashing (hooked tentacles)

Ranged Attack: N/A

Defence: +0

Stress: 2

Senses: N/A

Stealth: N/A

Poison: N/A

Immunity: N/A

Magic: N/A

Spells: N/A

Monstrous aspect: Flailing Tentacles.

These are ugly green humanoids. These denizens of the underworld have long hooked tentacles for arms, and large circular mouths for grinding up whatever prey comes their way.

Jack-In-Irons, or Road Giants

Size: 5m

Attack: +3 – pummelling (giant club)

Ranged Attack: N/A

Defence: +2

Stress: 7

Senses: N/A

Stealth: +1

Poison: N/A

Immunity: N/A

Magic: N/A

Spells: N/A

Monstrous aspect: Silent – for a Giant.

Malevolent giants who haunt lonely roads. They sometimes wear a belt made of a drawbridge chain, and from it they hang the heads of their victims. They wield large, spiked or studded clubs.

Kobold

Size: human

Attack: +4 – pummelling (fist) or as weapon

Ranged Attack: +0 – as weapon

Defence: +2 – as armour

Stress: 4

Senses: N/A

Stealth: N/A

Poison: N/A

Immunity: N/A

Magic: N/A

Spells: N/A

Monstrous aspect: Ancient and knowledgeable

They are very similar to Dwarves, and share their love of dark underground habitats, but they are even stronger and their skin is thick and tough, and looks like rock. This is great camouflage underground. Many are naked, but some have been influenced by Dwarven culture and wear clothes and armour, and various weapons, although they do not need them.

Kraken

Boss Monster Incarnation 1

Size: vast - 1d6 zones

These stats are for a single zone, all zones must be destroyed to defeat this monster – unleashing the second incarnation.

Attacks: x8

Attack: +2 – slashing and pummelling (tentacles)

Ranged Attack: +2 – energy (electricity)

Defence: +2

Stress: 7

Senses: Knows all

Stealth: +6

Poison: N/A

Immunity: non magical weapons

Magic: 5

Spells: x3

Monstrous aspect: Cthonian Elder God

If the boss monster type 1 incarnation is defeated, this monster

splits into 1d6 boss monster type 2 creatures per original zone.

Boss Monster Incarnation 2

Size: bear

Attack: +2 – pummelling and slashing (single tentacle)

Ranged Attack: +1 – energy (electricity)

Defence: +2

Stress: 2

Senses: N/A

Stealth: N/A

Poison: N/A

Immunity: non magical weapons

Magic: N/A

Spells: N/A

Monstrous aspect: Cthonian Entities.

These giant sea monsters are a cross between a whale and a squid, then monstrously mutated. The Kraken has eight tentacles per zone and they are equipped with sharp hooks. Some swivel, others are three-pointed. The colossal kraken also has very large eyes.

Lich

Size: human

Attack: +0 – as weapon

Ranged Attack: +0 as weapon

Defence: +0 as weapon

Stress: 2

Senses: N/A

Stealth: N/A

Poison: N/A

Immunity: non magical weapons

Magic: 9

Spells: 1d6+10

Monstrous aspect: Combat is for Undead Minions.

Liches have a natural commanding presence felt by other undead, they also know at least ten spells and usually have superior or magical equipment, including their wargear.

They are the result of a transformation, as a powerful magician, king or queen striving for eternal life uses spells or rituals to bind their intellect to their own animated corpse and thereby achieve a form of immortality. Liches are skeletal and have an innate power to command hordes of lesser undead creatures, using them as their soldiers and servants.

Unlike a zombie, which is often depicted as mindless and/or under the control of some magician, a lich retains its independent thought and is as intelligent as a living human - and often, far more so. They are necromancers who are unsatisfied with the level of power that they currently have, wish for longer lives, and seek to unburden themselves from the necessities of bodily functions (such as eating and sleeping) so that they might dedicate every moment of their existence to the attainment of knowledge and power.



Minotaur

Size: slightly larger than human

Attack: +2 – thrusting (horns)

Ranged Attack: N/A

Defence: +2 – as armour

Stress: 4

Senses: N/A

Stealth: +2

Poison: N/A

Immunity: N/A

Magic: N/A

Spells: N/A

Monstrous aspect: Stealthy Brutes in Labyrinths.

This is a creature with the head and tail of a bull on the body of a man. They devour humanoids for sustenance, and construct gigantic labyrinths as strongholds. Each minotaur labyrinth can be home to hundreds, or even thousands of these creatures.



Orcs

Size: human

Attack: +2 – as weapon

Ranged Attack: +1 – as weapon

Defence: +2 – as weapon

Stress: 2

Senses: N/A

Stealth: N/A

Poison: N/A

Immunity: N/A

Magic: N/A

Spells: N/A

Monstrous aspect: Strength Comes from Numbers

Orcs are very human looking, though their skin is much paler and often has livid red scars from their many battles for rank and dominance. They also have smaller eyes, with strange colourless grey irises. Their lips are thin, making their mouths resemble an ugly red slit across the front of their faces. Their mouths are also very big, more like an animal's, with a collection of impressive teeth and tusks.

There are a few characteristics of orc society that set it apart. The orcs see themselves more as an army than a society, and their rulers - often liches or baleful titans - take advantage of this to more easily organise and control them.

Although rank and file orcs are poorly equipped and badly trained, their leaders, heroes and champions are a different matter

altogether. They are formidable opponents who rival the very best dwarf warriors for melee abilities, are as swift as humans, as stealthy as halflings and as accurate with the bow as elves. Their equipment is the best and they have the mental discipline to use any magic item, weapon or armour. (They should be created as NPCs)

Their only real disadvantage is that they are opportunistic, untrustworthy and evil.

Leaders who rely on orcs for the majority of their forces must liberally distribute more trusted lieutenants to make sure that their army does not quickly destroy itself through, looting, corruption, dereliction of duty and bloody infighting between the various orc nationalities.



Skeleton

Size: human

Attack: +0 – as weapon

Ranged Attack: +0 – as weapon

Defence: +0 – as armour

Stress: 1

Senses: N/A

Stealth: N/A

Poison: N/A

Immunity: N/A

Magic: N/A

Spells: N/A

Monstrous aspect: Automaton Warriors

These are the remains of humanoids, reanimated as undead monsters. The skeletons do not usually spontaneously reanimate, although that is not impossible, and instead require a lich to force them back into the pretence of living. They have usually been so long dead that they retain little or no free will, and can be easily ordered around by their master.



Warg

Size: warhorse

Attack: +3 – slashing and thrusting (bite) or as weapon

Ranged Attack: N/A

Defence: +0

Stress: 3

Senses: N/A

Stealth: +2

Poison: N/A

Immunity: N/A

Magic: N/A

Spells: N/A

Monstrous aspect: Stealthy and Sly

These are giant wolves, about the size of a warhorse. They are used as mounts by many evil warriors and champions. These creatures are so debased and demonic that they will allow themselves even to be ridden by the undead, making them a favourite of liches.

Zombie

Size: human

Attack: +0 – slashing (bite)

Ranged Attack: N/A

Defence: +0

Stress: 1

Senses: N/A

Stealth: N/A

Poison: N/A

Immunity: N/A

Magic: N/A

Spells: N/A

Monstrous aspect: Hungry for Brains

These are often encountered in large numbers, and have an instinct to swarm, victims are at -1 to combat rolls per swarming zombie within 2m of them, from crowding stench etc.

These are very similar to skeletons, but have more of a memory of their lives, and, for the necromancer who created them, that makes them just a little harder to control.

Mythos Creatures

The ultimate horror, upon black cosmic foulness born in night-black gulfs beyond the reach of a madman's wildest dreams. These are the Old Ones.

Old Ones and their spawn and servitors come in an infinite variety of shapes and sizes, but they have some characteristics in common. The first characteristic is that there is a hierarchy among them. Species of a lower rank on the hierarchy find it very difficult to harm creatures from a higher rank. There is a penalty of -1 for every rank of difference between species. For example, Humans are Minor Things and are at -1 in any encounter with an Avatar, and -2 in any encounter with a Great One.

Power Hierarchy

All Powerful - eg Azathoth

Great One - eg Cthulhu

Avatar - eg Nyarlathotep

Minor Thing - eg Deep Ones, Humans, non-Mythos monsters

Various levels of immunity to damage.

Mythos creatures have an immunity to damage which represents the fact that the technology of species of less power or younger age has little effect on the more advanced creature. The GM can decide what they are immune to based on the needs of the scenario.

Mythos creatures are commonly immune to swords, but might be wounded by a cannon or other explosives.

Amorphous Piper

These creatures squat amorphously, far away from the light, piping noisomely on what looks like a separate device that resembles a flute, but is in fact one of the Piper's organs. Amorphous Pipers are popular at the courts of a large number of species. These creatures are also not above attending rituals initiated by human cultist. They can also be communicated with by humans who master their piping language.

Pipers are basically a brain, a teleportation and dimensional travel 'gland', a 'piping' organ, and an amorphous body wrapped in scaly skin. They can quickly exude a few legs arms and eyes to better interact with whatever environment they find themselves in. Their pipe interacts with the fabric of space and time to release power. This is what makes them so popular at ceremonies. The power they release makes the ceremony more likely to succeed. The ceremony is +1 for every attending Piper.

Aspects: Amorphous, Piping power

Zones: N/A human size

Actions: 2

Skills: Great (+4) Music Lore, Good (+3) Deceive

Stunts: Create power for magic. All sorcerers within hearing of the piping are at +1 to cast their spells and use their abilities.

Magical flight: the Piper may spend a fate point to change the arrangement of his zones or exit a conflict at any time without conceding the conflict.

Azathoth

Azathoth is so powerful, that even its minions are considered god-like. Its minions include the avatar, Nyarlathotep, a dangerous and powerful entity, but little more than a lapdog to Azathoth. When not out in the universe causing havoc, the minions crowd around the royal throne, enjoying being close to their god.

Azathoth is a kind of caretaker of our universe, requiring it to be aware of the universe in its entirety at all times. Contacting Azathoth is a bad idea because even a glimpse of this giant construct can boggle the human mind.

Aspects: Kill With a Thought

Zones: 10

Actions: 7

Skills: (+8) Lore, (+7) Deceive, (+6) Stealth

Uncanny Powers

Magical flight: Azathoth may spend a fate point to change the arrangement of his zones or exit a conflict at any time without conceding the conflict.

Defensive Shield: If the players destroy any zone of the creature, it deals two stress to each character on the map, regardless of zone.

Blackness from the Stars

The Blackness from the Stars is an immobile blob of living, sentient darkness, torn from the primal fabric of the cosmos at the centre of the universe. Some call it an outcast from the court of Azathoth. It is distinguishable in darkness only as vaguely shimmering oily pitch. Although intelligent, it speaks no known language and ignores attempts to communicate.

Aspects: Kill With a Thought

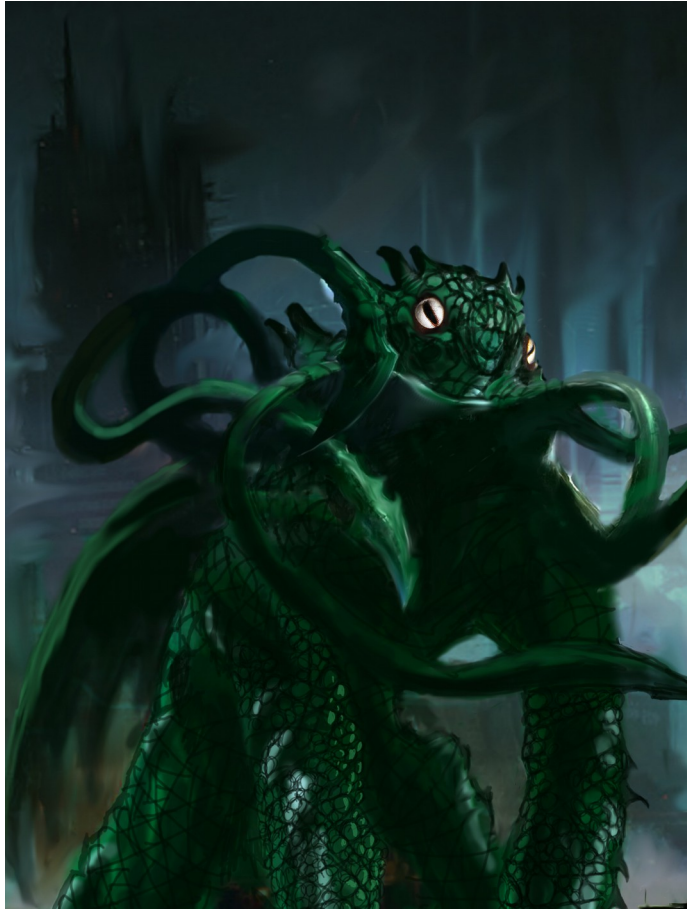
Zones: 5

Actions: 4

Skills: (+8) Lore, (+7) Deceive, (+6) Stealth

Uncanny Powers

Magical flight: The Blackness may spend a fate point to change the arrangement of its zones or exit a conflict at any time without conceding the conflict.



Cthulhu

Cthulhu is a scaly humanoid with an octopus head and small deformed wings. Pulpy and amorphous, it is a monster of vaguely anthropoid outline, but with an octopus-like head whose face has a mass of feelers, a scaly, rubbery-looking body, prodigious claws on hind and fore feet, and long, narrow wings behind. Cthulhu is a mix between a giant human, an octopus, and a dragon, and is hundreds of meters tall, with human-looking arms and legs. Cthulhu's head is similar to the entirety of a giant octopus, with an unknown number of tentacles surrounding whatever it uses for a mouth. Cthulhu is able to change the shape of its body at will, extending and retracting limbs and tentacles as it sees fit.

Aspects: Stomp and thrash,

Zones: 7 (1-head, 2-thorax, 3&4-arms, 5&6-legs, 7-wings)

Actions: 7

Skills: (+8) Lore, (+7) Deceive, (+6) Stealth

Uncanny Powers

Magical flight: Cthulhu may spend a fate point to change the arrangement of his zones or exit a conflict at any time without conceding the conflict.

Defensive Shield: If the players destroy any zone of Cthulhu, it deals two stress to each character on the map, regardless of zone.

Magical Smiting: When Cthulhu succeeds with style on a Fight attack he automatically gains a full situation aspect with a free invocation in addition.



Deep Ones

The Deep Ones are semi-aquatic creatures, a hybrid of human and fish, under the command of Cthulhu, who they worship as Dagon. They have acquired the knowledge necessary to manufacture and command shoggoths, and they have huge influence on a religious cult known as the Esoteric Order of Dagon.

They also have a liking for interbreeding with humanity to produce monstrous offspring. The offspring all eventually return to the ocean to be with their own kind.

Aspects: At home in water, Reek of fish

Skills: Superb (+5) Physique, Good (+3) Provoke, Fair (+2) Will

Stunts:

Horrid skin: Deep ones have a defensive bonus of -1 because of their thick and horrid skin

Dhole

Dholes, which are also called Cthonians, live below ground, and some areas 'below' are festering with gigantic Dholes. They can rear up several hundred feet. They look bleached and viscous. Dholes are huge, slimy worm-like creatures, of up to a thousand feet long. They exist in the Underdark and in the Vale of Pnath in the Dreamlands, implying some deep physical connection between the two places.

Aspects: Huge, At Home in the Dark

Zones: 11

Actions: 1

Skills: (+6) Stealth, Great (+4) Fight and Physique

Stunts:

Heavy Hitter: When a Dhole succeeds with style on a Fight attack and chooses to reduce the result by one to gain a boost, it gains a

full situation aspect with a free invocation instead.



Elder Things

Elder Things are six feet end to end, with three and five-tenths feet central diameter, tapering to one foot at each end. Like a barrel with five bulging ridges. In furrows between ridges are curious growths – combs or wings that fold up and spread out like fans, which gives almost seven-foot wing spread. They are vegetable-like in shape, having radial symmetry instead of the bilateral symmetry of bipeds. They also differed in that they have a five-lobed brain. The Elder Things exhibit vegetable as well as animal characteristics, and reproduce using spores.

The bodies of the Elder Things are incredibly tough, capable of withstanding the pressures of the deepest ocean. They are also capable of hibernating for vast epochs of time. They prefer chilly temperatures. They have created various huge black cities, seen from a human perspective, but just small settlements from the perspective of the Elder Things.

Aspects: Huge, At Home in the Dark

Zones: N/A

Actions: 5 (one per tentacle)

Skills: (+6) Stealth, Great (+4) Lore

Stunts: 360° vision: It is very difficult (-2) to creep up on an Elder

Thing.

Darkvision: Elder Things are at no disadvantage in darkness, even complete darkness.

Unnaturally Tough: Elder Things are immune to cold, resistant to fire, and can even survive in complete vacuum.

Uncanny Powers

Go Dormant: an elder thing can go dormant when it needs to. This takes 1d6 hours. While in this state, it can take no actions. An elder thing can remain in hibernation for as long as it wishes. It does not need to eat or drink, nor does it age. Time effectively stands still for a hibernating elder thing. If it is damaged while hibernating, an elder thing awakens in 1d6 rounds.

Spaceflight: an elder thing can survive in the void of outer space, and its wings allow it to travel between planets. Journeys between planets in the same system take just a few days, the Elder Thing goes dormant while it travels longer distances between the stars.



Ghoul

Ghouls are seldom completely human, but often approach humanity in varying degree. Most of their bodies, while roughly bipedal, had a forward slumping, and a vaguely canine cast. The texture of the majority is a kind of unpleasant rubberiness. They can grow to colossal size. They have glaring red eyes, and bony claws. The less human-looking versions have dog faces with pointed ears, bloodshot eyes, flat nose, and drooling lips. Some have scaly claws

and a mould-caked body. They move on hooved feet.

Ghouls can be bargained with by those that learn their language. The language is a howling, gibbering mess to human ears. Only the most learned of ghoulish sorcerers usually bother to learn any human language.

Humans must interbreed to produce deep ones, but this is not true of humanity's relationship to the ghouls. The easiest transformation for humans is becoming a ghoul, which does not necessitate interbreeding, but instead simply requires some incantations and thought disciplines. There is, in fact, essential no difference between human and ghoul. They are considered by some to be the same life form.

Ghouls and humans are so closely related that a human can become a ghoul by fairly simple mental reprogramming. Physical changes, such as sharp digging claws, come later, triggered by the mental changes. The return transformation is also fairly simple. This can be tested by any character who learns the incantations of transformation. Each transformation lasts longer and makes more deep changes, until the transformation becomes permanent.

Ghouls are quite sick puppies indeed, fond of collecting corpses, and delving deeply into the exotic and macabre. They consider themselves to be artists of the macabre, creatures of grace and style who just happened to rob graves. Ghouls who have not yet fully transformed can easily pass for human, though on close inspection they give the impression that they are not quite human, the faint stench of someone who delves into forbidden things.

Once the transformation is complete, there is little left of their humanity. Their human voices are replaced by the faint deep-toned baying of some gigantic hound. Human teeth are replaced by long, pointed teeth. Ghoul features are repellent in the extreme, savouring at once of death, bestiality and malevolence. They have large eye sockets, reflecting their preferred subterranean habitat.

Ghoul society has a symbol that they venerate, a crouching winged hound, or sphinx with a semi-canine face, often worn round the neck as a green jade amulet.

Ghoul sorcerers are famous for triumphing over death and becoming immortal. As long as their skeleton is not disrupted, they can regenerate their flesh and return from seemingly mortal wounds. The process where the skeleton recovers itself with rotting flesh takes 1d6 days.

Aspects: Stinky Rotten Creature

Skills: Superb (+5) Physique, Good (+3) Provoke, Fair (+2) Will

Stunts

Darkvision: Ghouls are at no disadvantage in darkness, even complete darkness.

Horrid skin: Ghouls have a defensive bonus of -1 because of their thick and horrid skin

Hounds of Tindalos

A Hound of Tindalos is lean and always athirst. They have lean and hungry bodies. They dwell in the distant past, when normal life had not yet advanced past one-celled organisms. They travel via the angles of time, while other beings (such as humankind and all common life) are constrained by curves. The Hounds are thought to be immortal and are believed to lust after something in humankind and other normal life, and will follow victims through time and space to get it. They have long, hollow tongues or proboscis to drain victims' body-fluids, and excrete a strange blue ichor.

The Hounds are somewhat bat-like in appearance, but their tangential relationship with reality means that their entire form is never visible at one time. Layers of skin, muscle, and bone appear and disappear constantly as the creature moves. The reference to hounds in their name refers more to the creatures' habits than their appearance.

Because of their relationship with the angles of time, they can materialize through any corner if it is fairly sharp, 120° or less. When a Hound is about to appear, it materializes first as smoke pouring from the corner, and finally the head emerges followed by the body. It is said that once a human becomes known to one of these creatures, a Hound of Tindalos will pursue the victim through anything to reach its quarry. A person risks attracting their attention by viewing or travelling through time.

Aspects: Never Relent

Skills: Great (+4) Stealth, Good (+3) Empathy, Fair (+2) Fight

Uncanny Powers:

Tangential Presence: Because the hounds are not true inhabitants of our reality, most attacks pass straight through without causing stress or consequences. Only 1 succesful attack in 6, (on a roll of 6 on a d6), has its consequences recorded on the hound's character sheet.

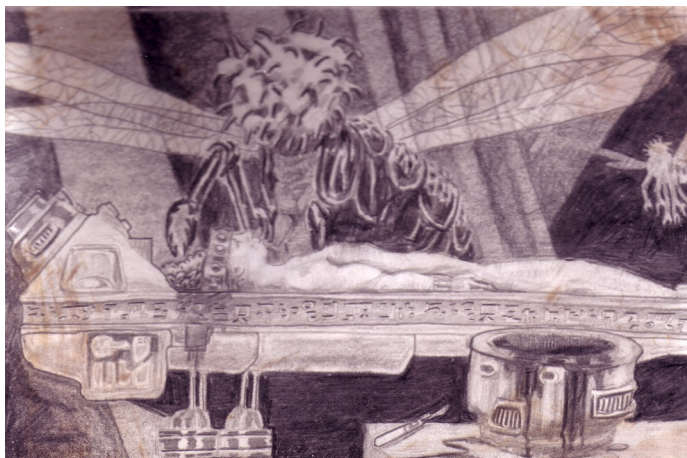
Life Drain: when a Hound of Tindalos forces an opponent to take a consequence, it can spend a fate point to increase the consequence's severity (so mild becomes moderate).



Mi-go

These are human-sized, with wings and globular heads covered with cilia. While technically fungi, Mi-go bear a great resemblance to crustaceans. They have elongated bodies covered in an exoskeleton.

Mi-go have mastered various fields of science, and are especially adept at surgery, and can do things such as extensively modify their own bodies.



They seem to assume that other species are as keen on surgery without anaesthetic as they are. They like to remove human brains then hook them up to special machines for interrogation.

Aspects: Psychotically Alien

Skills: Great (+4) Lore, Good (+3) Deceive, Fair (+2) Stealth and Rapport

Stunts:

Skilled surgeons, +2 when conducting any type of medical or surgical procedure.

Uncanny Powers:

Spaceflight: Mi-go can survive in the void of outer space, and their wings allow it to travel between planets. Journeys between planets in the same system take just a few days. They must piggy-back on the travels of other species to travel between the stars.

Nyarlathotep

Nyarlathotep is a malign deity who is also called the Crawling Chaos. In a human form resembling that of an attractive eastern man or woman, he (or often she) wanders the earth gathering legions of followers. He gains converts through demonstrations of strange and seemingly magical instruments.

Nyarlathotep is a kind of itinerant showman or lecturer who holds forth in temples and guild halls, and arouses widespread fear and discussion with his exhibitions. Visitors to the shows whisper in awe of his horrors, and warn against going near him. Before a show, throngs of people are seen plodding through the night, all whispering in fear and trepidation, all bound in one direction. They aren't yet cultists, they are still afraid, yet eager to see and hear the great, the obscure, the unutterable Nyarlathotep. These followers then gradually lose awareness of the world around them, becoming enthralled cultists.

It is possible for a very powerful sorcerer to make a pact with this entity, but they would be foolish to count on Nyarlathotep holding up his end of the bargain.

When not sporting with unfortunate human victims, Nyarlathotep rests among the Dholes at the Earth's core, taking the form of a huge but faceless god. Nyarlathotep can also take the form of a nocturnal tentacled, bat-winged monster.

As well as his relationship with humanity, Nyarlathotep has built up a close relationship with the Mi-Go, where his cult has become their dominant religion. The Mi-go venerate Nyarlathotep even above Cthulhu.

Nyarlathotep has thousands of other forms, most of these reputed to be maddeningly horrific. Nyarlathotep seems to serve the interests of Azathoth, and may be a fragment, an avatar or even an aspect of that deity. Nyarlathotep uses human languages and can be mistaken for a human being. While the other Old Ones are mindless or unfathomable, Nyarlathotep delights in cruelty, is deceptive and manipulative, and even cultivates followers and uses propaganda to achieve his goals. In this regard, he is probably the most human-like of the Old Ones.

Nyarlathep is a servant of Azathoth, his father, whose wishes he immediately fulfils. Causing madness is more important and enjoyable than death and destruction to Nyarlathep.

Aspects: Kill With a Thought

Zones: Variable, from N/A (human size) to 10

Actions: 7

Skills: (+8) Lore, (+7) Deceive, (+6) Stealth

Uncanny Powers

Nyarlathep knows every spell in every Mythos Tome and can cast them without the need of performing a ceremony or requiring any ingredients or devices.



Serpent People

Serpent People worship the Great Old One Yig, who, as the flip side of Tulu, is an aspect of Shub-Niggurath. The Serpent People were created untold aeons ago by Yig. Serpent people have hypnotic gazes and lethally venomous bites, as well as terrible crushing strength.

The ancient serpent empire was based on sorcery and alchemy, but collapsed many many years ago. They built subterranean cities, of which only ruins remain. Their downfall came when they abandoned their patron deity Yig to worship a new god. As retribution Yig placed his curse upon them.

Serpent People are humanoids with scaled skin and snake-like heads. They possess magical abilities, the most common of which is the use of illusion to disguise themselves as a human.

Aspects: Serpentine, Terrible Crushing Strength.

Skills: Superb (+5) Physique, Good (+3) Lore, Fair (+2) Will

Stunts:

Darkvision: Serpent People are at no disadvantage in darkness, even complete darkness.

Uncanny Powers:

Hypnotic Gaze: Serpent people can disguise themselves as human, or any other creature.

Venom: They have lethally venomous bites, which increase any consequence one level.

Shoggoth

The Shoggoths are a kind of artificial life, created by the Elder Things. They were created to function as slave labour and cannot reproduce unless the Elder Things initiate reproductive protocols. They are an example of an experiment that the Elder Things consider very successful. This is in sharp contrast to humans, which are considered by the Elder Things to be a joke or mistake.

Since the time of the Shoggoths' creation, a very long time ago, the Deep Ones have learned the secrets of creating and controlling Shoggoths. They currently serve as beasts of burden for the Deep Ones in their cities, including Y'ha Nthlei.

Shoggoths are terrible things, vaster than a horse and cart. They are shapeless conglomerations of protoplasmic bubbles, faintly self-luminous, and with myriads of temporary eyes forming and un-forming as pustules of greenish light all over their bodies. They are massive amoeba-like creatures made out of iridescent black slime, with multiple eyes 'floating' on the surface. They lack any default body shape and instead are able to form limbs and organs at will. An average shoggoth measures fifteen feet across when a sphere, though they can grow to much, much greater size.

They are intelligent to some degree, but they tend to deal with problems using their great size and strength. The shoggoths build and maintain the underwater cities of their masters, first the Elder Things and now the Deep Ones.

Aspects: Robotic, Only Following Orders

Zones: 3

Skills: Great (+4) Physique, Good (+3) Lore *Engineering*, Fair (+2) Stealth

Uncanny Powers:

Enormously Strong: Shoggoths can move objects much bigger than themselves and weld them in place with glue secreted from orifices that form in their skin.

Ubbo-Sathla

One particularly huge and powerful Shoggoth is called Ubbo-Sathla, or Abthoth. It is a huge protoplasmic mass resting in a grotto deep beneath the frozen earth. The being is of a monstrous fecundity,

spontaneously generating primordial single-celled organisms that pour unceasingly from its shapeless form. It guards a set of stone tablets believed to contain a huge trove of knowledge. The tablets that Ubbo-Sathla guards have been oft sought by sorcerers, though no sorcerer has yet succeeded in acquiring them.

Shub-Niggurath

Shub-Niggurath an evil cloud-like entity located somewhere in interplanetary space within our solar system. This form has long, stretching tentacles and its main body is a pulsating mass of muscle. There are black shapes and many yellow eyes among the flesh. Shub-Niggurath is a bestial, flesh eating presence, interested primarily in eating and all other organic bodily functions, and also in the torturing and destruction of flesh. She cares little whether the flesh she is enjoying is snake people, human or some more exotic Mythos creature.

She is a Great Old One. Her followers have evolved over time from Serpent People, who knew her as Yig, all the way to her present day human followers. The serpent people had long since deserted Shub-Niggurath, who was unworshipped and alone for thousands of years, until humans, and some other Mythos species, turned to her.

Shub-Niggurath is frequently mentioned or called upon in incantations, venerated with the words, 'lä! Shub-Niggurath!' The centre of human worship of this deity is in the Crimson Desert, in the City of Pillars, where Shub-Niggurath is worshipped at underground shrines.

She has many incarnations, including the All Mother, the Lord of the Wood and, the Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young. Her most human form is the Black Goat, who is male. The Black Goat is the most common earthly form of Shub-Niggurath.

Aspects: Kill With a Thought

Zones: Variable, from N/A (human size) to 10

Actions: 7

Skills: (+8) Lore, (+7) Deceive, (+6) Stealth

Uncanny Powers

The Black Goat knows every spell in every Mythos Tome and can cast them without the need of performing a ceremony or requiring any ingredients or devices.



Subterranean Raptor

Raptors can be tamed, and even trained but it is a sanity bending task that requires a great deal of Mythos lore. They are hybrid winged things, with black wings and a lizard-like snout, their legs and arms are covered in rotting flesh. To control a raptor, the rider must hide their face behind some kind of mask.

Cowled figures seize and mount them, and ride off one by one along the reaches, the unlighted rivers of the Underdark, into pits and galleries of panic where poison springs feed frightful waterfalls. Raptors can also be cajoled and persuaded to carry riders up into the open air above ground, but they do not like to tarry.

Aspects: Stubborn, Sly.

Skills: Great (+4) Physique, Good (+3) Fight (+2) Stealth

Uncanny Powers:

Flight: the subterranean raptor can fly at a leisurely 40 km/h but is slower above ground, only reaching 30km/h

Tsathoggua

Tsathoggua (the Sleeper of N'kai) is an Old One, a supernatural entity described as an amorphous, toad-like creature. It's shape changes slowly, almost imperceptibly, but it retains some characteristics in most of its forms. It is very squat and pot-bellied, with a head more like a monstrous toad than a deity, and the whole body is covered with an imitation of short fur, giving somehow a vague sensation of both the bat and the sloth. Its sleepy lids are usually half-lowered over globular eyes. Its belly is of great girth and it has batlike furriness and the look of a sleepy black toad. But Tsathoggua can perform more radical transformations, for example moulding itself from a toad-like gargoyle to a sinuous line with hundreds of rudimentary feet.

It dwells in a temple of basalt blocks without a single carving, and containing only a vacant onyx pedestal. It was built in imitation of

the temples depicted in the vaults of Zin. Tsathoggua does not rise from this place, even in the ravaging of hunger, but instead waits in divine slothfulness for sacrifice. It was once widely worshipped as a god, by species that came long before humanity.

Aspects: Kill With a Thought

Zones: 3 (1-body, 2-head, 3-limbs)

Actions: 4

Skills: (+8) Lore, (+7) Deceive, (+6) Stealth

Uncanny Powers

Tsathoggua knows every spell in every Mythos Tome and can cast them without the need of performing a ceremony or requiring any ingredients or devices.

Formless Spawn

Tsathoggua is served by the formless spawn, shape-shifting entities made of a black viscous substance. Swellings, as if by the action of some powerful yeast, often bulge forth to gradually produce perhaps an uncouth amorphous head with dull and bulging eyes on an ever-lengthening neck. Arms, alien looking and misshapen, likewise arise inch by inch. Or they can create tentacle-like appendages in lieu of claws or hands.

They rest in basin-like beds, and when they are awoken the whole mass of the dark fluid of its body begins to rise and 'pour' over the rim of the basin like a torrent of black quicksilver.

They take on a snake form to move quickly, with dozens of short legs emerging from the undulating belly. They are surprisingly flexible and plastic, and can quickly flow into a room through the tiniest of cracks. Formless spawn can take any shape and can attack their targets in nearly every conceivable way, cutting, slashing, biting, trampling. They are extremely resilient and very difficult to kill.

Aspects: Oily and Slimy

Zones: 1

Actions: 2

Skills: Great (+4) Physique, Good (+3) Lore *Engineering*, Fair (+2) Stealth

Uncanny Powers:

Enormously Tough: One successful attack in 3 is absorbed by their body with no visible effect.

Ghasts

Ghasts are about the size of a small horse with a scabrous and unwholesome hide. They have a curiously human face, despite the absence of a nose, a forehead, and other important particulars. They can see in the dark and have a strong sense of smell. They have a pair of hoofed, hind legs, and are swift, strong, and agile. Ghasts prefer to dwell in complete darkness and have no tolerance for natural light, sunlight will kill them quickly, in a matter of minutes. They prey mostly on the gugs, but have no qualms about eating other denizens of the underworld.

Aspects: Wild and Hungry

Actions: 2

Skills: Superb (+5) Physique, Good (+3) Fight, Fair (+2) Will

Stunts:

Darkvision: Ghosts are at no disadvantage in darkness, even complete darkness.

Gugs

Gugs are a race of horrifying giants. They are mute, and their method of communication is unknown. A single paw is fully two feet and a half across, and equipped with formidable talons. Each arm has two paws, attached by short forearms to a great black-furred arm. The head of a gug is large as a barrel with two pink eyes. The eyes jut two inches from each side, shaded by bony protuberances overgrown with coarse hairs. But the head is chiefly terrible because of the mouth. The mouth has great yellow fangs and runs from the top to the bottom of the head, opening vertically instead of horizontally.

The gugs were banished to the underworld for a forgotten blasphemy. Now they reside in a terrifying, underground city, in tall, round, cyclopean towers. Nearby, colossal monoliths mark the cemetery of the gugs.

In the midst of the gug city, the Tower of Koth contains a stairway that leads to the Enchanted Wood in the upper Dreamlands. There it is sealed by a huge stone trapdoor with a large iron ring. Because of their divine banishment, no gug may open that door.

Gugs prey on the ghosts that live in the Vaults of Zin. When in sufficient numbers, ghosts may likewise prey on the gugs. Though gugs are much bigger and more powerful, for some unknown reason they nonetheless superstitiously fear ghouls. The gugs often indulge in great feasts and, once engorged, retire to their great towers to sleep.

Aspects: Ravenous and Vile

Zones: 3 (1-body, 2-head, 3-limbs)

Actions: 4 (one per paw)

Skills: Superb (+5) Physique, Good (+3) Fight, Fair (+2) Will

Stunts:

Darkvision: Ghosts are at no disadvantage in darkness, even complete darkness.

Night-Gaunts

Nightgaunts are black humanoids with bat-like wings, rubbery bodies, inward pointing horns, barbed tails, and no face. They guard the entrances to the Underworld from dreamers.

They inhabit this entrance, located on the mountain Ngranek and are the reason people fear to climb too high on that mountain. They also guard the entrance to the Underworld at Sarkomand and the tops of the mountains that circle the Lost Plateau. They attack at night and are said to 'tickle' their prey into submission. The Nightgaunts have been known to take the dreamers who are close to the entrances of the underworld and leave them in the Vale of Pnath, at the mercy of the dholes that dwell there but are never seen.

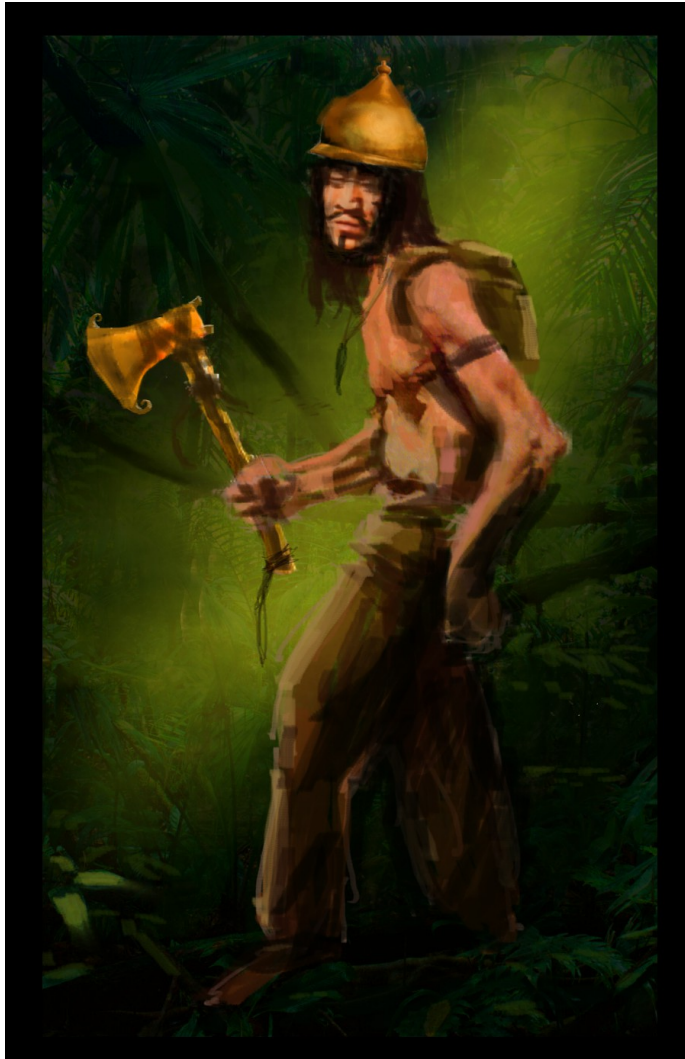
Aspects: Stubborn, Sly.

Skills: Great (+4) Physique, Good (+3) Fight (+2) Stealth

Uncanny Powers:

Flight: the subterranean raptor can fly at a leisurely 40 km/h but is slower above ground, only reaching 30km/h

Tickle: if the gaunt succeeds in combat with style they cause a fit of laughter in their target that debilitates them for 1d6 rounds.



MAGIC ITEMS

Magic items add wonder to a fantasy role-playing game. They keep things fresh and are a great reward for players who have overcome great odds. The strange and secret places of Hyrope are littered with artefacts that are dangerous, super-powerful or sometimes just impossible to understand.

Armour

Protection in combat has long been a goal of those exposed to this danger, and some of them are able to bring the powers of magic to bear on the problem. The following are items, or full suits of magical armour, created by wizards and dwarven smiths for the mighty heroes of old.

Arrow Turning Armour

This plate armour gives a +10 bonus to defence, but only against ranged weapons. Arrows, daggers and javelins can be seen to turn magically in the air as they approach the wearer, and sometimes this effect is enough to make the missiles miss their target entirely.

Dragon Plate

This plate is made of dragon scales and is totally silent. It is much easier to be stealthy in than normal plate, or even chain.

Ghost Armour

This powerful mail armour allows the wearer to become ghost-like, and float through walls and other obstacles. The wearer moves slowly in this state and can not attack opponents. They are also immune to non-magical weapons in this state.

Hidden Armour

This armour – it could be brigandine, mail, or plate – looks like normal clothing of the wearers choice. It can appear to be the most delicate lace garments, or a beggars rotting rags.

Scorpion Armour

This suit of plate has a pointed tail. The wearer gets an extra tail attack, with a skill level of 90. This armour is bound to excite mistrust and negative reactions in NPCs, as the tail is difficult to hide, and has a demonic look to it.

Weapons

One of the most popular uses of magic is, unfortunately, to cause damage and injury. Magical weapons are just that much better at intimidating and causing injury to enemies.

Autonomous Blade

Many bladed weapons, such as long swords and rapiers, can be found as magical autonomous blades. The wielder must fight an exchange with the intended target. The wielder can then let go of the blade and it will continue to fight with the same skill as the wielder until the target is taken out, or the blade itself is taken out, by being disarmed.

If the blade is taken out, it is slapped to the ground, and may then be picked up and used by anyone. It will once again become autonomous after a round.

If the target is taken out, the blade will return to its scabbard, where it can be drawn and used again.

Far Shot

This magical property can only be added to a ranged weapon. A weapon of far shooting has double the range of a comparable weapon and a +10 magic bonus to hit.

Fire Tongue

If the wielder desires, a fire tongue weapon bursts into flame. The fire does not harm the wielder. The effect remains until another command is given. The fire gives the weapon a +1 magical bonus and an extra energy attack per round.

Ice Brand

This magical blade is incredibly cold, giving the weapon +1 to attack.

Severely Venomous Sword

This magical blade is incredibly venomous, giving the weapon +1 to attack, and an extra poison attack per round, using a random poison.

Sword of Stern Smiting

This magical blade hits with an incredible impact, giving the weapon +1 to attack, and an extra pummelling attack per round.

Sword of Cleaving

This magical blade is vorpal, giving the weapon +1 to attack, and an extra slashing attack.

Returning

A returning weapon flies back to the creature that owns it, immediately after their attack. It is therefore ready to use again in the very next exchange. Returning javelins are often encountered, and rarely returning throwing daggers.

Searching

The weapon, usually a ranged weapon, searches out its target, negating any negative modifiers to the roll that would otherwise apply, such as from concealment and cover.

The Dreaming Sword

When it injures an opponent it forces them to roll to avoid being drawn into its dream world. If the victim fails their roll, they disappear from this world, to become one of the sword's playthings in its private prison dimension. It is possible, occasionally, for beings to escape this dimension. They magically reappear near the sword, disorientated, and often driven half mad. The sword is a malevolent presence, but ingratiates itself with its wielder. It can communicate telepathically with those within a five foot radius. It only whispers, never shouts.

Speedy Strikes

The wielder of a speed weapon may make one extra attack with it.

Rune Weapon

A weapon with a spell stored in it. Any spell can be stored, and is activated when the weapon strikes either its target, or some other object.

Poison Barb

This +1 dagger has the ability to inject poison into its victim. Only one type of poison is available.

Cloak of Shadows

Closing this cloak around the wearer gives them a +1 to hide rolls, due to the excellent camouflage it provides in dimly lit conditions. It is useless if there are no shadows nearby to take advantage of though, for example, at noon in the open desert.

Helmet of Mind Control

This device allows the user to dominate any one creature's mind. The target is mentally dominated by the user, forced to do their bidding.

Ring of Shivaraj

Two extra ghostly arms grow from the wearer's torso, giving an extra attack each.

Stave of Splitting

When this stave is struck against a wall, no roll is required for this, the wall splits in two. This creates a gap big enough for one human size creature to squeeze through. The gap does not reseal and there is a small chance that real structural damage is done.

Undead Masters Helm

This is a helmet decorated with skulls, and gives the wearer power over undead creatures. Zombies and Skeletons do not get a saving roll to avoid its effects, but other undead do. The wearer pits their best mental skill or characteristic against that of the undead target.

Viper

If thrown to the ground this staff grows to become a giant viper, in a single round. It is ready to attack in the very next round.

Healing Potion

If the character is dead, but still warm, they will come back to life when this potion is poured into their mouths. A live character drinking the potion is healed of all wounds injuries and other damage, and they feel revitalised too. A potion is a magic liquid that has an instant effect upon the drinker. If there is no label on the bottle, or no linguist capable of reading the label, then there is no real way to know what the effect of the potion will be.

Horn-Headed Ring

This ring induces two horns to grow on the wearers head, giving an extra clubbing attack, at the same level as the wearers combat skill.

Invisibility Ring

This ring gives the character the power of invisibility. They may still be given away by such things as a shadow in strong sunlight and an outline in the rain.



Magician's Books

These are magicians' recipe books, their study notes, observations and diaries. They are invaluable to another magic user. However to be useful the magic user must be able to;

- 1 – read the language the writer used. This requires an intelligence roll against the obscurity of the language.
 - 2 – They must be able to break any codes that were employed, (which requires a roll against the complexity of the code) and
 - 3 – then understand the arcane secrets being written about. (this requires a roll against the Mythos Lore of the magic user writing the scroll)
 - 4 – The mage can then learn the new spell, which takes 1d6 days.
- Alternatively the spell can be cast from the page, which shrivels and scorches the page, making the spell unreadable.

Belt of Arrow Attraction

Not all magic items are always a boon for their finder. Some are a curse. The owner of this item becomes inexplicably attractive to enemy archers, and missile weapon users of all types.

Boots of Dancing

A dancing character becomes absorbed in the dance, and can do nothing else.

Poisoned sword

The handle of this magic item turns into a snake and administers a poisoned bite.

Mythos Tomes

It is possible to learn a few morsels of eldritch magic 'first hand' in conversation with ghouls and the like, but this is extremely dangerous, only to be attempted by the most powerful of sorcerers. Usually, the best way to learn magic is via Myths Tomes. The books point the way, taking PCs into adventure and peril. And sometimes the works themselves are sources of extreme danger. Characters can seal their doom by casting a spell from an arcane scroll.

TRAVELLING

The world outside city gates is so dangerous and inhospitable that travel is a very serious business for the inhabitants of the realms.

Accommodation

When travelling, characters will not run into convenient inns very often. For the most part, they will have to camp on their own or seek shelter in people's homes.

Provided they are friendly and not wearing mail or plate and longswords or war hammers (rapiers and brigandine is acceptable), the latter option should be no trouble. A farmer can live in a single place all his life, and he will welcome news and stories of adventures, not to mention any money the heroes might offer.

Settlements

Settlements tend to cluster tightly along the arteries of travel between the cities. Between these clusters are relatively large gaps of wilderness in the middle, even along well travelled roads.

There are roughly five types of settlement that might be encountered as adventurers travel along the roads of Hyrope.

Village

Villages range from 50-300 people in size. Most realms will have thousands of them. Villages are agrarian communities with their houses usually huddled together for safety. They are much more open and healthy than cities and towns. The village usually has wide streets and a central green and pond.

Hamlet

This is usually a village that cultivates orchards (instead of grain fields or animals). These tend to be smaller than normal villages, and have populations of only 20-150.

Town

Towns typically have populations of two or three thousand. Towns tend to have walls and train and prepare for sieges. This siege training is additional to the military training expected of almost men and women judged able-bodied enough.

City

Cities tend to be tens of thousands of people in size. A typical large realm will have a few cities in this population range. Magic colleges can sometimes even be found in cities of this size.

Big City

Big Cities can be of any size from 100,000 people to millions of people. A city is able to grow particularly huge if it has a stable history and some magical source of food.

Cavern Complexes

These are often referred to simply as dungeons. Heroes entering these must navigate a labyrinthine environment, battling various monsters, and looting any treasure they may find.

These elaborate structures are very common across Hyrope and only a fraction have been investigated to any degree. They may have been designed and built by the fairy folk, as gateways to their underground realms, or survivals from the times when the serpentpeople ruled the planet.

These labyrinths are modified and added upon at various times, and used and reused again and again over the millennia .

Visual aids such as maps, models, or miniature figures are often used to represent the landscape of a dungeon.

Bridges

The association of ogres and trolls with bridges has some basis in fact. The arches of rural bridges are often home to an ogre shunned by his pack, finding shelter in a place that must seem little different to a natural cavern, at least to the troll's minuscule brain.

Castle

Active castles are much more common than ruined ones, because ruins that are at all solid are constantly put back into service. The role of castles is something too various to be easily described. Most castles mark the landholdings of Barons and Dukes, but some may be local strong points, treasuries, prisons, even bandit strongholds, or the outposts of goblin warlords.

Farm

Farming dominated the lives of most of the people of Hyrope. It is very rare that an isolated farm is encountered though, the landscape is just too dangerous. Most people live in villages where they can help each other fight off threats.

Huge Castle

Huge castles may be founded by orders of knights to use as forward bases as they push back their enemies, or grow organically as the surrounding community that will need to flee there in time of trouble grows.

Huge castles are often the result of smaller castles being expanded several times to host growing number of knights as its importance increases. Huge castles may have 146,621 square meters of space contained within their walls. Crossing through tens of gates may be required to reach the central section, and a complex of sites may have been contained.

These sites might include a huge temple, a keep, barracks, armouries, smithies, stables, grain stores and many other structures. These castles often exhibit a mixture of architectural styles, as they are rebuilt after each sacking in the style of the new occupants, or according to the changed tastes of the surviving original occupants.

Mansion

These large walled structures are a cross between a large village and a small castle. The mansion is located very near outlying houses and is built for defence. Often having a moat wall and gatehouse.

Ranger Towers

The roads of Fantasy Cthulhu are so dangerous that a special force has been established to keep them clear. The forest rangers also have the duty to regularly patrol the forests, on the lookout for large build ups of evil forces that might threaten the lives and lands of the peoples of Fantasy Cthulhu. They are particularly watchful for unusually large orc forces, or necromancers, or liches building large undead armies.

They are based in fortresses that are often placed half way between settlements in the longer and more dangerous roads, but they range far and wide from there.

Ruins

The landscape is covered in overgrown ruined temples left by the serpent people and even more ancient inhabitants of the realms. They tend to open onto artificial cavern complexes beneath, and these in turn often open onto the underworld.

Simple House

Most houses are half-timbered and jettied, which is a building technique used in timber frame buildings in which an upper floor projects beyond the dimensions of the floor below. This has the advantage of increasing the available space in the building without obstructing the street.

In most cities on Orb houses are taxed according to ground-floor area (square footage) extensive jettying is employed to create higher storeys of greater area, and jettied houses seem to almost touch above the street. Jettying is even used in villages, where space is abundant, because of the tax advantages.

Shop

A shop usually occupies the ground floor of a building, and one wall is often completely open, like an unglazed display window.

Temple

Temples are also a medium of disseminating news. Travelling priests and holy people bring news back, and it is spread among the populace. There are two or three temples on almost every street, providing information, small markets and hospitality. They are an excellent place to start, for an adventurer hunting their nemesis.

Worm Tunnels

These tunnels are big enough to accommodate any monster, even

huge dragons. They criss cross the centre of the planet and connect the whole subterranean ecosystem of ancient dungeon complexes left by civilisations long dead, fairy underworld, demonic gates, realms of the giants and dwarven citadels together.

City Streets

Typical city streets are narrow and twisting, sometimes no broader than a person's shoulders. These glorified alley ways double as gutters, slaughterhouses, and latrines. Cities are noisy and smelly. Little light and air reaches the reeking streets. Streets are pitch-black at night (there is no light pollution), and watchmen and thieves patrol these arteries. Cobblestones in good condition allow normal movement, but ones in poor repair and heavily rutted dirt streets can reduce speed significantly.

Crypt

A place of the dead, or the undead. These are often tunnel complex with numerous rooms with tombs and bone heaps, and sometimes treasure.

Services

Most people across Hyrope are very self reliant, butchering their own meat, and making their own clothes. It takes a relatively large population to support any business, and so particular services are not always available in every location. The chances of finding particular services are listed below.

Business	Village	Town	City	Big City
Shoemakers	20%	30%	50%	70%
Bookbinders	20%	30%	50%	70%
Booksellers	20%	30%	30%	70%
Hatmakers	20%	50%	70%	90%
Harness-Makers	30%	50%	70%	90%
Bakers	30%	50%	70%	90%
Inns	30%	50%	70%	90%
Merchant	30%	50%	70%	90%
Ropemakers	5%	20%	50%	70%
Chandlers	5%	20%	50%	70%
Weavers	30%	50%	70%	90%
Locksmiths	30%	50%	70%	90%
Carpenters	50%	60%	70%	90%
Illuminators	20%	30%	50%	90%
Blacksmiths	50%	70%	80%	90%
College of Magic	2%	4%	20%	50%
Doctors	30%	40%	70%	90%
Masons	20%	30%	50%	90%
Roofers	20%	30%	50%	90%
Taverns	30%	50%	70%	90%
Spice Merchants	5%	20%	30%	50%
Barbers	30%	50%	70%	90%
Fishmongers	20%	30%	50%	90%
Butchers	30%	50%	70%	90%
Jewellers	5%	20%	30%	50%
Tailors	5%	20%	30%	50%

Trade

Coastal Trade

The main shipping trade route for the planet's super continent is a large circuit that is timed to pass the pole in summer, when there is less chance of the sea being frozen. Many of the boats do not have a home port, and have very cosmopolitan crews.

Pirate castles can be found all around the coasts of the single giant continent. They tend to be improvised structures, often a mix of rock, drift wood, salvage and other improvised materials. They are used as bases by pirates, and some of the larger ones also become centres where trade is carried out.

Shipping on the coastal circuit often has to bribe the local pirate princes and princesses, fight them off, or try to sneak past each of the big well known fortresses.

Terrain

Realms that share borders can often have very different characters based purely on their terrain. A list of some terrains that can be encountered across Hyrope is included below.

Beach

The thin ribbons of sand between ocean and land are good places to haul a pirate ship ashore for repairs.

Caverns

The most important feature of caverns is the high probability that they will lead down to the underworld. They are shunned and avoided by travellers, who prefer to set up a lean to, even in the heaviest downpour, than shelter in a cavern where they might be accosted by the fee, the undead, or worse.

Gravel Flats

These are mostly stable, but there can be dangerous areas, where a thin covering of gravel covers deep crevasses.

Forest

These can be lush, sparse, or dark. The trees and bushes provide cover, but undergrowth slows movement.

It must also be remembered that a healthy covering of lush vegetation is no guarantee of the stability of the terrain below.

Pathways wind through some forests, allowing normal movement and providing neither cover nor concealment. These paths are not common in the forests of Hyrope, but even unexplored forests will have occasional game trails. All stealth rolls are at +1 in a forest.

Hedgerows

Hedgerows are tangles of low trees and thorny bushes. They provide cover, and take time to get through. A tool or weapon may be required to hack a way through a particularly thick hedgerow. Hedgerows are hugely common across the realms, and often

contain goblins and other monsters.

Marsh Terrain

In these moors, swamps, and bogs, deep mud or standing water of at least 1 foot in depth, slows movement by half. Athletics is much harder in this type of terrain (-1 to athletics rolls) but the water and undergrowth in this terrain can provide cover.

Orchard

Orchards are rarely found alone, usually they are near other orchards, and there will often be a hamlet nearby containing the people who cultivate it and keep it free of monsters.

Quicksand

A character approaching a patch of quicksand at a normal pace is entitled to a Notice check to spot the danger before stepping in. Charging or running characters get the same roll, but at an increased difficulty level.

Characters in quicksand must be pulled out, or they will eventually be sucked under. They must make a swim roll each round, Each fail sucks them another 5% further into the hazard.

Pulling out a character trapped in quicksand can be difficult. A rescuer needs a branch, spear haft, rope, or similar tool that enables him to reach the victim with one end of it. The rescuer must make a successful strength check for every 5% the victim was pulled under to rescue them. A failed check results in them being sucked 5% further in.

Rock Blisters

These look like solid terrain, but are fragile, and will collapse on a failed roll. Below might be an ordinary crevasse, a dungeon complex, or even the underworld.

Sandy Dessert

This is a huge expanses of sand dunes, almost impossible to map, with rock islands poking up between them. They slow movement to a quarter of normal, or less.

Sea of Ooze

This has the same dangerous character as quicksand, but there is a huge expanse of it. It can only be navigated by flat-bottom barge, and even then there are many dangers.

Scree

An area of small unstable stones, characters must slow to one quarter speed to negotiate the scree or risk sliding, possibly towards a cliff edge.

Tundra (cold deserts)

Because snow and ice cover much of the tundra landscape, it's easy to find water. Cold is an ever present danger however.

ADVANCEMENT

Your characters aren't going to remain static through the entire campaign. As their stories play out, they'll have the chance to grow and change, sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse, in response to the events that happen in play.

Character advancement in Fate comes in one of two flavours: either you can change something on your sheet to something else that's equivalent, or you can add new things to your sheet. The opportunities you get to do this are collectively called milestones.

Milestones

A milestone is a moment during the game where you have the chance to change or advance your character, often the end of a session, the end of a scenario, and the end of a story arc, respectively.

Minor Milestones

Minor milestones usually occur at the end of a session of play. It is more about changing your character rather than making him or her more powerful, about adjusting in response to whatever is going on in the story. Sometimes it won't really make sense to take advantage of a minor milestone, but you always have the opportunity if you should need to.

During a minor milestone, you can choose to do one (and only one) of the following:

- Switch the rank values of any two skills, or replace one Average (+1) skill with one that isn't on your sheet.

- Change any single stunt for another stunt.

- Purchase a new stunt, provided you have the refresh to do so. (Remember, you can't go below 1 refresh.)

- Rename one character aspect that isn't your high concept.

In addition, you can also rename any moderate consequences you have, so that you can start them on the road to recovery, presuming you have not already done so. You should be able to justify the change you're making in terms of the game's story.

Significant Milestones

Significant milestones usually occur at the end of a scenario or at the end of two or three sessions. Significant milestones are about learning new things. In addition to the benefit of a minor milestone, you also gain both of the following:

- One additional skill point, which you can spend to buy a new skill at Average (+1) or increase an existing skill by one rank.

- If you have any severe consequences, you can rename them to begin the recovery process, if you haven't already.

When you spend your skill point, it's worth one step on the ladder. You can use it to buy a new skill at Average (+1), or you can use it to increase an existing skill by one step on the ladder—say, from Good (+3) to Great (+4).

Skill Columns

During character creation, you organized your skills into a pyramid. You don't have to stick to that for character advancement.

However, there's still a limitation you have to deal with, skill columns. This means you can't have more skills at a certain rank than you have at the rank below it. So if you have three Good columns, you have at least three Average (+1) skills and at least three Fair (+2) skills to support your three Good (+3) skills.

Major Milestones

A major milestone should only occur when something happens in the campaign that shakes it up a lot—the end of a story arc (or around three scenarios), the death of a main NPC villain, or any other large-scale change that reverberates around your game world. Achieving a major milestone confers the benefits of a significant milestone and a minor milestone, and all of the following additional options:

Take an additional point of refresh, which allows you to immediately buy a new stunt or keep it in order to give yourself more fate points at the beginning of a session.

Reaching a major milestone is a pretty big deal. Characters with more stunts are going to have a diverse range of bonuses, making their skills much more effective by default. Characters with higher refresh will have a much larger fountain of fate points to work with when sessions begin, which means they'll be less reliant on compels for a while.



EXTRA COLOUR

A lot of situations are covered very well by the rules of a role-playing game, but there will always be places where advice and guidance can really help bring the rules alive, and make them do what you want.

Describing the Setting

Howard Lovecraft is very florid in his descriptions, so keep a thesaurus handy when you are writing descriptions of the sites that characters visit. Don't be frightened of giving individual rooms their own descriptions, and it helps the atmosphere to describe what the characters see, of course, but also what they hear, smell, the temperature etc.

Sharing the Load

As the characters learn more about the Cthulhu Mythos it is possible that they may become regular travellers to the dreamlands, the ancient past, the far future and other dimensions. This is an opportunity to share the game moderator duties. One player could be the game moderator responsible for present-day Earth adventures, another for the Dream Worlds etc.

The Role of Combat

If done well, combat doesn't take long. Try not to insist that every fight must last until every NPC has taken 3 consequences. This should only happen in important fights with main NPCs. This is because it drains PC resources and the combats end up taking up a lot of valuable game time. If every fight is a struggle to the death every time, it's going to drag. Sane opponents will not normally fight to the death - they'll try to run away or surrender long before that.

Lethality

Fate points have a huge influence on how dangerous, or not, combat is. If you keep the characters low on fate points, they become much more vulnerable to having combats go against them and not have anything to do about it.

The Mythos for Fantasy

The Cthulhu Mythos used in the game is a stripped down reinterpretation of the bloat that has built up around the Mythos. For example, August Derleth's additions and alterations have been completely removed, to bring the Mythos back to the unique cosmic horror that its creator, H P Lovecraft, originally intended. This means, for example, that there is no moral conflict between 'good' Elder Gods and 'evil' Old Ones.

The terms Elder Gods and Old Ones refer to the same unknowable beings. There are benign deities, able to try to intercede on humanity's behalf, but they are the new gods of humanity, puny in comparison to the Elder Gods, the Old Ones, who are not gods at all, but strange and unknowable alien entities.

This is a version of the Cthulhu Mythos is not in any way analogous to Christianity. There is no expulsion of a Satan figure from any version of a heaven. August Derleth also assigned elements to the Old Ones and Elder Gods. This seems to be an attempt to align them with traditional occult ideas about demons and devils. He even invented new Old Ones to fill in elements that were vacant. This game strips out all this. The Old Ones are not demons or elementals. They have no connection to earth, air, fire, or water. They are utterly alien and resist any human attempt to project morality or myth onto them.

But I must add that although the game is based on the original conception of the Mythos, as created by H P Lovecraft, which is full of ideas that are visionary and unique, it seeks to avoid including some of the more unsavoury aspects of Lovecraft's stories. Specifically, this game makes a conscious effort to avoid the racism and misogyny that can be found in some of Lovecraft's original fiction.

This core of Mythos information is then vastly expanded by adding a huge number of experiments, created by the Elder Things, that more or less closely resemble the monsters of a generic fantasy setting. They are not these monsters, however, they are genetic experiments gone wrong or other Mythos monstrosities.