"I really like working with MCDM, but I want to work on original roleplaying games someday," I said.

I had just been offered a job writing and developing books for one of the RPG industry's best third-party publishers. I was thrilled and honored, but my heart had always been set on creating games from scratch, not just expanding someone else's game.

"Me too!" Matt said. "I've got lots of things I want to make." That sealed the deal for me, and it's why I took the job as MCDM's lead game designer.

The idea for *Draw Steel* wouldn't come for another couple of years or so, when Matt and I sat down at an in-person meeting and talked about what rules would make a fantasy game explicitly heroic. We started from first principles, by asking the question, "What makes a hero?" Sure, power is important, but a lot of people have power and do very little with it to help others. Spider-Man's Uncle Ben had something to say about that. Lots of people stand up for others, but some do so only when they have the time and inclination.

Heroes stand up even when it's hard, because they know no one else will. They don't stop to rest and get their spell slots back before facing a villain, because who knows how much destruction that villain could cause during nap time? When most folks would throw in the towel, a hero stands up, stares down evil, and says, "Is that all you got?"

Heroes keep going.

With that idea established, Matt and I began to discuss a gameplay loop that eventually became Heroic Resources, Victories, Recoveries, and respites—rules that would encourage players to push their characters to the limits so they could really kick some ass and save the day. We've been testing and refining that gameplay ever since, always with the idea of a heroic narrative as our North Star.

By our definition, a lot of the folks who worked on this book are heroes. Our designers, artists, editors, and playtesters just kept going until the job was done. Thank you so much for putting your all into this game.

It is my sincere hope that you tell the heroic stories of your dreams with this game. I can think of no greater pastime, no art more enjoyable, and no escape more fantastic than saving the world with your friends—other than perhaps being the friend who gets to create the world that needs saving.

Thank you for checking out *Draw Steel*. Keep going, hero.

Ex animo,

James Introcaso
MCDM Lead Game Designer

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THIS GAME?

This is a game about fighting monsters. About larger-than-life, extraordinary heroes plunging into battle against terrifying, monstrous enemies.

That covers a lot! So let's get specific and talk about what this game is, and what it is not.

This game will absolutely feature dungeons. Ancient underground complexes filled with ravenous undead or creeping oozes. But it isn't a dungeon crawler. It's not about "clearing rooms." It's not a survival horror game where you must track light and food and the weight of every object you carry.

You can fight monsters in a dungeon, but the game is not *about* dungeons. Lots of games focus on that gameplay and do it really well! Like Shadowdark.

It's not a wilderness exploration game, aka a hex crawl. It's not about surviving in extreme weather, getting lost, or trying to navigate your way back to safety.

You can fight monsters in the wilderness, even run a whole campaign in the wilderness, but this game is not about the wilderness. We love games that focus on that fantasy, like Forbidden Lands.

You can run adventures with horror themes, but this is not a horror roleplaying game like Call of Cthulhu. Your sessions can and will feature comedy, but this isn't a comedy RPG like Paranoia.

Draw Steel is definitely a game about creating amazing stories in which the heroes fight monsters and villains using strategy and tactics. *Draw Steel* has a lot of other tools! But fighting monsters is sort of non-negotiable. If you're looking for a game featuring extraordinary heroes overcoming dramatic villains without the focus on tactical combat, maybe check out Daggerheart! Just right next door alphabet-wise!

We genuinely love all those games. But we love them because they focus on specific genres of gameplay and deliver on them really well.

Our game is heroic fantasy. That's its genre. Extraordinary people fighting dragons and necromancers.

But "heroic fantasy" is still a little too broad for our purposes, so we added two other keywords to explain how our game might be different from other games in this genre: tactical and cinematic.

These terms are just guidelines. A vibe. But we find them useful when trying to choose between different features. "Both of these ideas are cool, but which is the most cinematic? The most heroic?"

So let's talk about what we mean when we use these terms.

Tactical

Strategy is: "What are we trying to do?" Break a siege, free a prisoner, rescue a captive, steal a tome of ancient lore. Strategy is about long-term goals.

Tactics is about: "How are we going to do that?" We're going to ... surround them! Sneak around them! Pick them off one by one! Kill their leader first. Kill their priest first! "No resurrections!"

In a tactical game, *positioning matters*. So our game is played on a grid. Effects and distances are measured in squares. This means all players are focused on the same problem, and there is no ambiguity regarding where the heroes and villains are in relation to each other. The hobgoblin troopers are setting themselves up in a line to stop our tactician and fury from getting into melee with the hobgoblin war mage. We're all aware of what's happening, and we can talk about what we're going to do to stop it.

That means *teamwork matters*. That's why the order of combat works the way it does—to encourage the players to plan! "Okay, you use Concussive Slam on that trooper, it'll push him back, and on my turn, I can use Squad! Forward! to get us all into melee with the death captain." We think focusing on teamwork also makes the game more heroic!

In a tactical game, you have many choices each combat round. You are never reduced to just swinging your sword. You have options. If we do a good job, you don't feel as if you outlasted your opponents because you wore their Stamina down before they could reduce yours to 0—you feel like you *beat* those hobgoblins! Through stealth and sorcery, coordination and ferocity!

As you play with the same group of characters, you learn what they can all do. You discover synergies, "combos." Some of them intended by the designers, some not! You start to learn these unique characters, and to rely on them to do their cool things. It's a great feeling when another player comes up with a cool plan that relies on your unique abilities.

You learn which characters are the "squishies" who need to be protected or healed. You learn which characters can push themselves right to the edge and keep fighting. "Don't worry about healing Barlaca. She's our fury. She's happier with 3 Stamina." Our game is not *about* tactics. It's not a wargame. But it is tactical.

Heroic

Our game is *definitely* about heroism! For us, this means a couple of things. It means we don't assume your character is primarily motivated by greed. They might be! But we don't *assume* that. Instead we assume you're going to do the right thing. It might take some convincing, and there might be some reluctant heroes in your party, but that's part of the fun!

You should absolutely be able to run a *Chain of Acheron*-style campaign where the heroes are hard-bitten mercenaries in a morally ambiguous world. But that's not the baseline assumption. The fiction and adventures that inspire us feature epic villains trying to remake the world in their image, and the dashing, unyielding heroes who strive against them even in the face of impossible odds.

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So that's one component of the heroic keyword. But another component, equally important, is what kinds of things happen "on-screen," so to speak. This is closely related to the cinematic keyword.

For instance, you never see Indiana Jones having to find a local sporting goods store because he needs to stock up on ammo. You never see Katniss Everdeen have to stop and take a shower because she stinks.

These things do happen. No one watching *Raiders of the Lost Ark* thinks that Indy's gun is magic and doesn't need bullets—but we simply don't need to see Indy doing that stuff. We don't need to waste time on it.

Likewise in our game, we don't worry about stuff that heroes in fiction tend not to worry about. We don't worry how much everything you're carrying weighs. If you try to lift a bear, you might have trouble, sure. But nowhere on your character sheet are you tracking the weight of every item.

You don't track food such as rations, and you don't worry about how many torches you have. Light might factor into a specific environment, because that can be a fun tactical challenge, but the game doesn't expect that everyone is always worried about running out of light.

Basically, we worry only about those things you'd see your characters doing in a movie, or a comic, or a novel about their adventures. Assume all the tedious stuff happens off-screen. Speaking of things happening on-screen ...

Cinematic

Closely tied to the heroic keyword, the cinematic keyword is about how we like abilities and features to be strongly evocative. You can imagine your character doing or saying these things. "In All This Confusion" is a good name for the shadow's ability to slip out of melee and retreat to safety. The text of the ability says how it works, but the name creates an awareness that explains *how* it's working.

When Sir Vanazor the dragon knight fury leaps onto a goblin war spider, cleaving through the goblins riding the creature in a single turn, you *experience* that action in your mind. It feels like a movie. It doesn't feel simply as if you rolled well, but like an epic scene, complete with slow motion and a Carpenter Brut soundtrack.

You should imagine your tactician character leading the battle, granting your allies free strikes, extra maneuvers. *Coordinating* the battle. That's what the name implies. And if we've done a good job, when you read through your character's abilities, you think, "Yes! This is what I was imagining! I can't wait to do this!"

Fantasy

Just ... you know ... it's got dragons and stuff.

It's worth mentioning—while everyone basically already knows what fantasy means in this context, we do imagine it a little more broadly than your average classical medieval fantasy. We like that stuff! Vasloria is our medieval European fantasy analog with knights on horseback and wizards in towers. But we also like high fantasy urban intrigue, and so we're developing Capital, the City of the Great Game, the Greatest City in This or Any Age. Vasloria is mostly humans and elves and orcs and dwarves, but Capital has dozens, *hundreds* of different ancestries in it.

Looking back at movies like *Star Wars* and the work of artists like Chris Foss, that '70s stuff now seems explicitly fantastical. There's nothing scientific or even plausible about a lightsaber or a John Berkey spaceship. But damn, they look cool!

So our setting includes the timescape—our multiverse, of which the world of Orden containing Capital and Vasloria is only one part. The timescape is more explicitly "space fantasy."

These core rules mostly cover the classic fantasy stuff. But we think Capital and the timescape will help us deliver a game where more people can see their fantasy in our worlds.

For us, fantasy includes magic, like wizards casting spells, and psionics, the natural and focused ability some creatures have to manipulate and warp reality with their minds. You know, telekinesis and telepathy! Jean Grey style!

If You're Coming From D20 Fantasy

We know that many folks are coming to this game having only experienced d20 fantasy RPGs. This section details a few key distinctions between this game and typical d20 fantasy that you'll notice right away. These aren't the only distinctions, but they're the most obvious.

Character options are different. We strongly recommend you start exploring *Draw Steel* by looking through the character creation section before you decide what you want to play. You can't just assume the conduit is "basically a cleric." In some ways, it is! But in other ways, it's quite different. You might have some cool character archetype you love to play in d20 fantasy, and you're dying to see how that might work in *Draw Steel*. But you'll have a lot more fun if you start by browsing the Ancestries and Classes sections and getting inspired. Once you know a bit more about how the game works, you'll have a better handle on how to build your favorite character the *Draw Steel* way.

Smaller bonuses and penalties. *Draw Steel* is built around the roll of two ten-sided dice to produce three possible outcomes—tier 1, tier 2, or tier 3. On the surface, this might not seem that different from rolling a twenty-sided die and having two outcomes—success or failure. But we've run the math. A lot. A bonus of +1 or penalty of –2 is significant in *Draw Steel*, much more so than in a typical d20 fantasy game. That means you should feel pretty good attempting most power rolls—the rolls you make to determine success both in and out of combat—if you have a decent characteristic bonus to add to those rolls. And if you have a specific skill that applies to a power roll made as a test outside of combat, you'll do even better.

Abilities automatically deal damage. When you use an ability—one of the unique combat features that defines your character—you can still have a bad turn! A tier 1 outcome with minimal damage and effects is the worst outcome you can obtain with an ability. It's not awesome. But you're still always making progress. The question is: Who's making progress faster? You or the monsters? Since there's no, "I miss, who's next?" in this game, fights typically last 3 or fewer rounds. A fight that lasts 5 rounds is a *long* fight. Because everyone's always doing damage!

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You don't need to rest all the time. Most d20 fantasy games are games of attrition. Your spell slots and other features dwindle as the adventuring day goes on. In *Draw Steel*, you need to rest to regain your Stamina and Recoveries—the stats that determine how robust you are in combat. But all characters earn the capability to use their magic and other awesome abilities as they adventure, encouraging you to press on heroically.

Our game has a lot of skills. Your character can make use of a long list of skills, but we don't expect you to memorize that list. We get into why the Tests chapter features so many skills, but the short version is that we think having a lot of skills allows you to create more distinct and specialized heroes, which supports the sort of gameplay we want to see in *Draw Steel*. And skills in the game aren't tied to characteristics. If you're trying to lose someone in a crowd, you can use Presence—the characteristic that represents your character's force of personality—to try to hide! Why not?

We won't be able to point out every difference. Beyond what's noted here, don't assume that these rules work like any d20 fantasy game you've played. We don't have the space to point out every exception. So if you're in doubt about how something works, put d20 fantasy out of your mind and read our rules without those assumptions, and you'll find that things make better sense. If you're still confused, stop by the MCDM Discord and ask. We've got tons of awesome community members ready to help!

We don't expect you to do everything to the letter. This is actually one thing *Draw Steel* does have in common with d20 fantasy. This is a big book of rules! Don't stress if you need to look something up or make a ruling about an edge case on the fly. If everyone's having fun, you're doing it right.

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Chapter 1

THE BASICS

The flow of playing *Draw Steel* is like playing any other tabletop roleplaying game with a Director (also called a Game Master or GM in other games). Play is a conversation between the Director and the heroes that describes the story. The Director sets the scene, describing the important elements of the environment that the heroes would notice.

Director (Willy): *You stand in the doorway of the top level of the ruined necromancer's tower. The air is stale and reeks of death. A pale full moon shines through a broken ceiling, illuminating six sarcophagi upon a raised dais, each with a lid carved in the likeness of a devil. Broken flasks, beakers, and other laboratory glass covers the floor.*

After the Director sets the scene, each player describes how their character interacts with the area. The Director then describes how the environment and any creatures in it respond to the heroes' actions.

Alyssa (playing Jorn, a tactician): *I'm going to hang out at the back of the group with my warhammer drawn. I want to be ready in case any of those skeletons we snuck by on the lower levels make their way up the stairs.*

Matt (playing Linn, a talent): *Linn uses her Minor Telekinesis ability to sweep up the glass on the floor and form a path free of glass that goes from the door to the dais.*

James (playing Korvo, a shadow): *I'll light a torch as I step into the room. Is there anything new we can see now?*

Director: *With the glass cleared away and brighter light glowing in the room, you can see that the floor is covered in faded sigils.*

At some point, a player will have their hero attempt a task that has a risk of failing in a way that is narratively interesting. In such cases, the Director calls for some dice to be rolled! Don't worry—the rules outline when and how to do this.

Grace (playing Val, a conduit): *Before anyone steps on them, I want to examine the symbols and figure out what they mean.*

Director: *Okay, well for that, I need you to make an easy Reason test.*

Grace: *I got a 12! What do I know?*

Director: *You can tell these old sigils are part of a necromancy spell that has been woven into the stone floor. Also, Jorn can hear something coming up the steps. It's the clicking and clacking of bone on stone.*

Alyssa: *Uh, let's make a decision here, folks. We got boneheads incoming!*

Matt: *Linn has had enough of this dillydallying. She moves to the dais and ushers everyone inside the room so we can shut and barricade the door.*

Grace: *Uh-oh.*

Director: *Before anyone else can move, Linn's foot connects with one of the sigils. A burst of red lightning cracks from the place where her foot touched the floor, running to the walls and up to the ceiling.*

Matt: *Oh, right. Necromancy.*

Grace: *Yeah. Should have warned you.*

Director: *The whole tower starts to sway as the sarcophagus lids crash to the floor and clawed undead hands emerge from within. Six decaying devils, each tattooed with glowing green runes, rise. They're eager for violence.*

James: *I think we found the Rotting Lords of Hell.*

Director: *Draw steel!*

When combat starts, it's time to use a square-gridded map and miniatures to represent the position of the heroes relative to their enemies and the environment. The rules become a little more granular during combat to keep things interesting and fair, but the idea that the game is a conversation between the Director and the other players remains the same.

Characteristics

Each creature in the game has five characteristics that represent their physical and mental prowess.

Might

Might (represented by M in abilities and other features) represents strength and brawn. A creature's capability to break down doors, swing an axe, stand up during an earthquake, or hurl an ally across a chasm is determined by Might.

Agility

Agility (A) represents coordination and nimbleness. A creature's capacity to backflip out of danger, shoot a crossbow, dodge an explosion, or pluck keys from a guard's belt is determined by Agility.

Reason

Reason (R) represents a logical mind and education. A creature's capacity to solve a puzzle that unlocks a door, recall lore about necromancy, decipher a coded message, or blast a foe with psionic power is determined by Reason.

Intuition

Intuition (I) represents instincts and experience. A creature's capability to recognize a faint sound as the approach of a distant rider, quickly read the tell of a bluffing gambler, calm a rearing horse, or track a monster across the tundra is determined by Intuition.

Presence

Presence (P) represents force of personality. A creature's capacity to lie to a judge, convince a crowd to join a revolution, impress a queen at a royal banquet, or cast a magic spell by singing a song is determined by Presence.

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Sapient Creatures

All creatures in the game are sentient, capable of sensing and reacting to the world around them. But only some creatures are sapient, possessed of advanced intellect and consciousness. Being sapient has nothing to do with a creature's Reason score, but is determined solely by whether a creature is capable of human-like levels of thought and emotion. The Director decides whether creatures are sapient for the purpose of being affected by abilities and features that affect only sapient or nonsapient creatures.

Characteristic Scores

Each characteristic has a score that runs from –5 to +5. The higher a score, the more impact a creature has with that characteristic. A baby bunny rabbit would have a Might score of –5, while an ancient dragon would have a Might score of 5. The average human has a score of 0 in all their characteristics. Characteristic scores are added to power rolls—the dice rolls you make whenever your character attempts a task with an uncertain outcome (see Power Rolls below).

Dice

This game uses ten-sided dice (also called d10s). Each player (including the Director) should have two of these. Some ten-sided dice are numbered 0 to 9 while others are numbered 1 to 10. In the case of the former, a 0 counts as 10.

The game also makes occasional use of six-sided dice (called d6s), so it's helpful if each player has one or two of those as well.

D3s

On rare occasions, the rules ask a player to roll one or more three-sided dice (also called d3s). If you don't have a d3, you can roll a six-sided die instead, treating a roll of 1–2 as a 1, a roll of 3–4 as a 2, and a roll of 5–6 as a 3.

D100s

Some tables in the game call for a d100 roll. To roll a d100, grab two ten-sided dice. Decide which die represents the tens digit, with the other die representing the ones digit. For instance, if you roll a 5 for the tens digit and a 3 for the ones digit, the number rolled is 53.

Some ten-sided dice are numbered 0 to 9, while others are numbered 1 to 10. For the latter type of dice, a 10 counts as a 0 for the purpose of rolling a d100. For instance, if a 10 is rolled for the tens digit and a 9 is rolled for the ones digit, the number rolled is 09, or 9.

If both dice rolled show a 0 or 10, then the number rolled is 100!

Power Rolls

Whenever a hero or other creature in the game attempts a task with an uncertain outcome, such as attacking a foe, sneaking by a guard patrol without being seen, or persuading a queen to provide military aid, the creature makes a power roll to determine the outcome of their actions.

Types of Power Rolls

The game uses two types of power rolls. An **ability roll** is used when you use certain abilities to determine their impact. For instance, if a fury uses their Brutal Slam ability to strike an enemy, their ability roll determines how much damage the enemy takes and how far back the enemy is pushed. See Abilities for more information.

A **test** is a power roll you make outside of using your abilities to affect or interact with the world around you. A tactician might not have an ability that lets them climb up the face of a cliff, so climbing is an activity they can attempt with a test. An elementalist doesn't have an ability that lets them automatically intimidate a cultist into backing down from a fight, but they can make a test if they want to try. See Tests for more information.

Making a Power Roll

When you make a power roll, you roll two ten-sided dice (usually noted as 2d10 in the rules) and add one of your characteristics. The characteristic you add depends on the kind of roll you're making, as outlined in Abilities and Tests.

Power Roll Outcomes

The total of a power roll determines your outcome tier—three levels that determine how successful your power roll is.

Tier 1: If your power roll total is **11 or lower**, it is a tier 1 outcome. This is the worst outcome a power roll can have. If you're using an ability, a tier 1 outcome means you still do something, but the impact of what you do is minimal. With this outcome, a strike ability might deal a little bit of damage and not do much else. For a test, a tier 1 outcome might mean you fail at what you set out to do, and you might also incur a negative consequence.

Tier 2: If your power roll total is **12 to 16**, it is a tier 2 outcome. This is the average outcome of many power rolls, especially for heroes who are 1st level. When using an ability, a tier 2 outcome means that what you do has a moderate impact. With this outcome, a strike ability deals a decent amount of damage and has an effect that briefly helps allies or hinders enemies. For a test, a tier 2 outcome means you might succeed at what you set out to do—though depending on the difficulty, success might have a cost.

Tier 3: If your power roll total is **17 or higher**, it is a tier 3 outcome. This is the best outcome a power roll can have. When using an ability, a tier 3 outcome means you deliver the maximum impact possible. With this outcome, a strike ability deals a lot of damage and has a powerful or lasting effect on enemies or allies. For a test, a tier 3 outcome means you succeed at what you set out to do. If the test has an easy difficulty, you also get a little something extra in addition to your success.

The specific outcome of any power roll is determined by the effect or ability that requires the roll (see Abilities) or the rules for tests (see Tests).

Downgrade a Power Roll

Whenever you make a power roll, you can downgrade it to select the outcome of a lower tier. For instance, if an ability has a tier 3 outcome that lets you impose the restrained condition on a creature, but the tier 2 outcome for that ability lets you impose the slowed condition, you can use the tier 2 outcome if you would rather have the creature slowed than restrained.

If you downgrade a critical hit, you still get the extra action benefit of the critical hit (see Critical Hit in Classes).

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Natural Roll

The total of your power roll before your characteristic or any other modifiers are added is called the natural roll. The rules often refer to this as "rolling a natural X," where X is the total of the roll. For example, if you get a 20 on a power roll before adding your characteristic, this is called rolling a natural 20.

When you roll a natural 19 or 20 on certain types of power rolls, this is a critical hit (see Critical Hit in Classes).

Edges and Banes

An archer standing on a castle wall fires down into a throng of enemies, hitting the mark each time thanks to their high ground. A drunken bandit struggles to land blows on sober opponents as alcohol clouds their senses. Under certain circumstances, you need more than just a characteristic to represent the advantages and disadvantages that heroes, their enemies, and their allies might have.

Edge

An **edge** represents a situational advantage a hero or an enemy has when making a power roll. For example, a standing hero who makes a melee strike against a prone creature gains an edge on the power roll for their strike. A pair of magic gloves that makes your hands sticky might grant you an edge when making a power roll to climb walls!

When you make a power roll with an edge, you gain a +2 bonus to the roll. If you make a power roll with two or more edges, you have a **double edge**. With a double edge, you don't add anything to the power roll, but the outcome of the roll automatically improves one tier (to a maximum of tier 3).

Bane

A **bane** represents a situational disadvantage a hero or an enemy has when making a power roll. For example, if you make a strike while prone, the power roll for the strike takes a bane. A rainstorm might give you a bane on a power roll made to climb an outdoor wall because the weather makes the stone surface extra slick.

When you make a power roll with a bane, you take a –2 penalty to the roll. If you make a power roll with two or more banes, you have a **double bane**. With a double bane, you don't subtract anything from the power roll, but the outcome of the roll automatically decreases one tier (to a minimum of tier 1).

Rolling With Edges and Banes

Under certain circumstances, you might have one or more edges and banes on the same roll. For instance, you might take a bane when weakened by poison, even as you gain an edge for striking a prone creature. In general, edges and banes cancel each other out, resolving as follows:

- If you have an edge and a bane, or if you have a double edge and a double bane, the roll is made as usual without any edges or banes.
- If you have a double edge and just one bane, the roll is made with one edge, regardless of how many individual edges contribute to the double edge.
- If you have a double bane and just one edge, the roll is made with one bane, regardless of how many individual banes contribute to the double bane.

When to Use Edges and Banes

The rules tell you when to modify a roll with an edge or a bane. The Director can also modify rolls with edges and banes as a response to narrative or environmental circumstances. For instance, no rule specifically says that rain imposes a bane on power rolls made to climb a stone wall. But it makes sense that rainy conditions should make climbing that wall harder, so a Director should absolutely do so!

Why Cap?

We capped edges and banes at a maximum of two each for several reasons, including thinking about the narrative of those penalties. Every little advantage or disadvantage in a heroic story has diminishing returns, acknowledging that a creature can benefit or be hindered by short-term circumstances only so much. For example, a character who is prone and weakened by poison already finds it difficult to attack—so that becoming restrained by a net can't really make it harder.

We also liked capping edges and banes at two because it keeps play quick. It's nice to not need to count beyond two positive or negative circumstances in a battle with a lot of effects flying around.

Bonuses and Penalties

While edges and banes cover most circumstantial effects that can have an impact on a power roll, a few rules add numeric bonuses or penalties to power rolls. Bonus and penalty values are specified in the rules that impose them, and are calculated independently of edges and banes, and before edges and banes are factored into a power roll. There is no limit to the number of bonuses or penalties that can apply to a power roll, and bonuses and penalties always add together.

Though it might sound as if the math with bonuses and penalties can get confusing, fear not! Bonuses and penalties are rare except in the case of skills, which appear on your character sheet (see Skills for more information).

Automatic Tier Outcomes

Effects in the game sometimes allow a creature to obtain an automatic tier 1, 2, or 3 outcome on a power roll. Such effects supersede any edges, banes, bonuses, or penalties that might affect the roll. If you obtain an automatic tier outcome and the power roll would have an additional effect if you get a specific roll, such as scoring a critical hit in combat, you can still make the roll to determine if you obtain the additional effect in addition to the automatic outcome.

If you are under multiple effects that each grant you a different automatic outcome, those effects cancel each other out and all automatic outcomes are ignored. If multiple effects grant you the same automatic outcome, you obtain that outcome.

Hero Tokens

In all great heroic stories, luck favors the protagonists, giving them that little bit of extra fortune they need to win the day. In these stories, fate is often on the side of the righteous. To represent that tiny bit of karma, players have access to hero tokens, a special resource that they can rely on when all else fails.

Hero tokens are a group resource that is tracked by the players and kept in a pool accessible to all their characters. Hero tokens can be tracked using poker chips, stones, or other markers, or can be tallied numerically on a piece of paper or written off to the side in a virtual tabletop.

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Earning Hero Tokens

At the start of a new game session, the heroes have a number of hero tokens equal to the number of heroes in the party.

Heroes can earn more tokens through play by taking big risks to save others. A hero who leaps off a cliff to reach the bottom and aid a friend, who crosses a burning bridge to save a stray cat, or who wagers their most prized treasure as part of a negotiation to get shelter for a group of refugees might earn a hero token for the group. The Director has the final say regarding which heroic acts earn hero tokens.

Players can also be awarded hero tokens as part of a test's outcome when they succeed on the test with a reward (see Tests).

Spending Hero Tokens

Whenever hero tokens are available, you can spend them in the following ways:

- You can spend a hero token to gain 2 surges, allowing you to increase the damage or potency of an ability. (See Surges in Classes.)
- You can spend a hero token when you fail a saving throw, letting you succeed on the save instead.
- You can reroll a test. You must use the new roll.
- You can spend 2 hero tokens on your turn or after you take damage (no action required) to regain Stamina equal to your recovery value. (See below for more on Recoveries and Stamina.)

You can spend only one hero token on your turn or per test. Unless the Director decides otherwise, unused hero tokens disappear at the end of a session.

Optional Rule: Hero Tokens Don't Reset

A Director can decide that hero tokens don't refresh at the start of each session and don't disappear at the end of one. This style of play serves many groups who play short sessions consisting of only 2 or 3 hours of play, since it makes hero tokens less abundant and reliable. To use this option, one of the players must note the number of hero tokens available at the end of each session so everyone remembers how many are available the next time you play. The Director should take particular care to remember to award hero tokens for heroic behavior, since the heroes won't get any automatically.

Game of Exceptions

This game has a fair number of rules. But it also has plenty of character options, specialized equipment, and other game elements that let you break those rules. This is on purpose! Breaking the rules allows heroes to feel special and makes their foes feel extra dangerous.

If you're not sure what to do when two rules come into conflict with each other, remember that a specific exception always beats a more general rule. The Director has the final say in how rules are adjudicated.

Always Round Down

Sometimes the rules tell you to divide a number in half. Whenever you divide an odd number in half and it results in a decimal, round the result down to the nearest whole number. For instance, if a tactician takes 7 damage and uses the Parry ability in response—a triggered action that halves the damage—then the damage is reduced to 3.

Creatures and Objects

Draw Steel uses the terms "creature" and "object" when referring to the targets of abilities and other effects. Creatures are living or unliving beings such as animals, elves, humans, dragons, giants, zombies, and valok. Objects are inanimate matter such as walls, carriages, cups, swords, ropes, coins, paintings, columns, and buildings.

When a creature dies, their body becomes an object, and is affected by abilities and other effects as an object, not a creature. For example, an elementalist can't use their Return to Formlessness ability to set an enemy cult leader on fire. But if that leader dies, the elementalist can immolate their body to prevent them from being raised as a powerful undead by the temple's magic.

Unattended Objects

The game sometimes refers to "unattended objects," which are objects that aren't held, worn, or controlled by a creature. Whenever an ability or other effect targets objects, it affects only unattended objects unless the Director determines otherwise. Among other things, this prevents abilities from being used to damage a foe's armor, weapons, clothing, treasures, and so forth while those objects are worn or held.

Supernatural or Mundane

The word supernatural is used to describe abilities, creatures, objects, and effects that are magic or psionic in nature. The word mundane is used to describe abilities, creatures, objects, and effects that aren't magic or psionic.

PCs and NPCs

Two types of characters inhabit the world of the game—the player characters (also called PCs or heroes) who are created and controlled by the players, and nonplayer characters (NPCs) created and controlled by the Director. NPCs can include any of the game's monsters, but when the rules refer to NPCs, they generally do so in the context of interacting with them outside of combat.

Building a Heroic Narrative

The game takes place in a series of scenes with the heroes as the main characters. An adventure is a collection of scenes that make up a story, with a beginning, middle, and end, and a campaign is a collection of adventures that tell the entire epic tale of a group of heroes. You can think of each adventure as a movie in a saga of films, a book in a series of novels, or a season of a television show. While many heroes have their stories told over the course of a campaign, some wrap up their careers in a single adventure that takes place in one game session, called a one-shot. You can think of a one-shot as a great stand-alone novella or movie.

This game is built so that each adventure you play and each battle you fight gets more exciting as it goes on. In fantastic tales, the heroes and their foes both grow in power over the course of an adventure. But it isn't time alone that grows a hero's capabilities. Rather, it's the adrenaline that comes from battle, the danger of the hero's profession, and the pressure to save the world—or at least some small part of it—that pushes a character to do the impossible. Each small act of heroism gives a hero the confidence and bravery to perform legendary feats against all odds.

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The things a hero can achieve at the end of the story are far more daring and impactful than what they do at the start, and the final showdown against a villain's forces is more deadly and desperate than the first. The rules of the game help build a heroic narrative in this same fashion, making use of the four most important mechanics for building heroic narratives: Victories, Experience, Heroic Resources, and Recoveries.

Victories

Victories measure your hero's increasing power over the course of an adventure, as they overcome battles and other challenges. At the start of an adventure, your hero has 0 Victories.

Victories For Combat

Each time your hero survives a combat encounter in which the party's objectives are achieved, you earn 1 Victory. The Director can decide that a trivially easy encounter doesn't earn the heroes a Victory, and can award additional Victories for particularly challenging encounters.

Victories For Noncombat Challenges

When your hero successfully overcomes a big challenge that doesn't involve combat, the Director can award you 1 Victory. Such challenges can include things such as a particularly complicated and deadly trap, a negotiation, a montage test, a complicated puzzle, or the execution of a clever idea that avoids a battle. Especially difficult challenges might earn you more than 1 Victory.

Victories Reset

Whenever you finish a respite (see Respite below), your Victories are converted into Experience.

Experience

Victories temporarily increase a hero's power during an adventure, but Experience (abbreviated "XP") permanently improves their capabilities. Each time you finish a respite (see below), you gain XP equal to your Victories, then your Victories reset to 0. In other words, your Victories are converted to XP when you finish a respite.

For more information on how XP increases your hero's power, see Heroic Advancement in Making a Hero.

Heroic Resources

Your hero has a Heroic Resource determined by your class, and which you manage during play. Earning your Heroic Resources can increase your hero's power, and you spend your Heroic Resources to activate your most powerful abilities.

Your hero's class description has more information about how to use your Heroic Resource.

Bags of Rats Ain't Heroic

Some players might think that quickly starting a fight with some bar patrons or carrying around a bag of rats is a good way to gather up those sweet, sweet Victories and Heroic Resources. Those strategies don't work! The rules of the game exist to help you tell a cool heroic fantasy story, not so you can try to be clever and exploit them by harming innocent rats to "win." In order to generate Victories and Heroic Resources, you must face and overcome challenges worthy of a hero!

Recoveries

Recoveries represent the number of times your hero can take a breather and keep fighting. Spending Recoveries lets you regain Stamina—the measure of any creature's physical vitality and capacity to shrug off or avoid damage (see Stamina in Combat). Running out of Recoveries means your hero has reached their uttermost limit.

When you spend a Recovery, you regain Stamina equal to your **recovery value**, which is one-third your Stamina maximum. You can spend your Recoveries with a special maneuver (see below), or you might do so with a little supernatural help from a conduit, a boost of adrenaline from an allied tactician, or inspiration from your party's troubadour.

Spending Recoveries

During combat encounters and similarly dangerous situations when time is tracked in rounds (see Combat), you can use the Catch Breath maneuver to regain Stamina. (See Catch Breath in Maneuvers for more information.) Some heroes have abilities that allow them or their allies to spend more Recoveries without using the Catch Breath maneuver.

Outside of combat and other dangerous situations, you can spend Recoveries freely.

Regaining Recoveries

You regain all lost Recoveries when you finish a respite (see below).

Respite

A respite is a focused period of rest and recuperation that allows heroes to regain Stamina and Recoveries. During a respite, you must spend 24 hours uninterrupted and doing nothing but sleeping, eating, dressing your wounds, and recuperating. You can also undertake one respite activity, such as making a project roll (see Downtime Projects) or changing your kit (see Kits).

After 24 hours, your respite ends. When you finish a respite, you regain all your Recoveries and Stamina, and your Victories convert to Experience. You can take as many respites as you like in a row to keep accomplishing respite activities. Just keep in mind that while you're resting, your enemies are still scheming and carrying out their dastardly plans.

It is best to take a respite in a safe place where you aren't in a hostile environment or at risk of being attacked. If your respite is interrupted by enemies attacking, an earth tremor, swarms of biting insects, and similar serious distractions, the respite ends early and you don't gain the benefits for finishing it.

The standard 8-or-so hours of sleep one gets at night doesn't count as a respite. The rules assume that all heroes take the time to sleep, eat, and take care of all the other functions necessary for life even if they aren't engaged in a respite.

What's Next? Find Out on Patreon

While this book and *Draw Steel: Monsters* are both chock-full of character options and adventure ideas that could keep you playing *Draw Steel* for years, some folks want even more classes, ancestries, monsters, treasures, and encounters. You can find out what we're developing next, get a preview of that content, and read blog posts about the development of the game by joining the MCDM Patreon at *mcdm.gg/Patreon*.

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Echelons of Play

The core gameplay experience of *Draw Steel* takes place over ten levels of play. At 1st level, player characters are already known as heroes and have the power to save their local village. By the time the characters are 10th level, people all over the world—maybe even across all worlds—know the names of their saviors!

Since this game encompasses power levels from hometown to demigods, the core experience has been divided into four different echelons. Each echelon determines the types of threats the heroes can take on, the stakes of their stories, and the rewards they receive at the various levels of play.

1st Echelon (1st to 3rd Level)

The 1st echelon of play details the stories of characters of 1st to 3rd level. At this echelon, the characters are local heroes. They save lost caravans, besieged villages, and overlooked neighborhoods within cities. Characters battle bands of mortal humanoids—dwarves, elves, goblins, humans, kobolds, orcs, and more. They can also face off against the occasional larger monstrous threat, such as a bredbeddle, ogre, or chimera. Such creatures can threaten a small community but rarely have plans for world domination or the destruction of the timescape. However, any of these adversaries might work for or be manipulated by stronger threats as a foreshadowing of what awaits the heroes at higher echelons.

2nd Echelon (4th to 6th Level)

The 2nd echelon of play covers 4th to 6th level. At this echelon, the heroes are now known throughout the wider region they serve. In Vasloria, this means the characters might save and be celebrated by an entire country. In Capital, their reputation and work could encompass several different neighborhoods of the enormous city. Heroes of the timescape might be known for saving a planet!

Heroes in this echelon battle humanoids of great supernatural power, such as draconians, devils, and hobgoblins. They face bosses possessed of cunning and ambition as great as their terrible influence, such as medusas and overminds. Heroes at this level also face the humanoid threats of earlier levels, but those foes are villainous counterparts of equal power rather than bands of ruffians or marauding armies.

3rd Echelon (7th to 9th Level)

The 3rd echelon of play covers 7th to 9th level. At this echelon, the heroes are saving and are known throughout the setting where they serve. Most folks in Vasloria, Capital, or across the larger timescape know of the heroes and are grateful for their efforts saving the continent, the entire city, or multiple worlds, respectively. Foes at this echelon include beings of great power such as giants, vampires, and valok.

4th Echelon (10th Level)

The 4th echelon of play explores the stories of characters of 10th level (and might even go beyond in future products). At this echelon, heroes are saving the entire timescape from threats such as liches, powerful dragons, and overlords like Ajax the Invincible.

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Hightower Station
Unisol HQ
Axiom
Ordos
The Plane of Uttermost Law
Primordius
Proteus
The Sea of Eternal Change
Ulph'or Station
The Plane of Uttermost Chaos
Anchor Station
Quintessence
Alloy
The City of Brass
The Plane of All Elements
Orden & the Timescape
Arcadia
The Sea of Stars
Vanigar
The Great Wode
Higara
Khemhara
Orden
Rista
The Maelstrom
Khelurrir
Capital
The Bale Sea
Vaesloria
Phaedros
Dusk
Equinox
The World Below
Ormazaar
The Dark Under All
Xankarite
Acheron
Naraka
Kasyrgan
Styx
Dis
Gehennom
Sheol
The Seven Cities of Hell
The Necropolitean Ruin
Ruins of Girivrapa
The Abyssal Waste
Ruins of Xiangjian

Orden and the Timescape

A new game demands new worlds! Welcome to the timescape—a collection of worlds spanning high fantasy, dark fantasy, even space fantasy!

Our tour begins on the world of Orden, the prime manifold, where humans, elves, dwarves, and orcs share a world with dragons, goblins, kobolds, and dozens of other speaking peoples. But human civilization and politics dominate here.

Orden contains seven major regions, the largest of which is Vasloria.

Vasloria

A forested, medieval, feudal land, Vasloria is peppered with few cities, mostly just towns and villages. While there will someday be nations here with proper borders, as of now in the Age of Chaos those nations are merely geographic areas with names people use to distinguish lands that share similar terrain and subcultures.

Aendrim, the land of hills and farms. Corwell with its knights and castles. The marshlands of Tull where witches and wise women battle hags and swamp monsters. The thick forests of Farrow with its bands of archers, and the horselands of Graid home to the best cavalry in Orden.

Mountainous northeastern Vasloria is home to the small earldoms of Sednia, Olvaria, and Sărda, and the earldom of Rhöl containing the land of Glauer once ruled by a deathless count.

Scattered across it all, Vasloria boasts the densest collection of elf-haunted wodes in Orden. All regions have wodes, but Vasloria's northern border is the Great Wode where the world still works as it did before humans arrived.



Within the wodes, time misbehaves. Cause and effect are only distant cousins, as all lands were before Ord placed the dwarves in the world, imposing the Law of Time on Orden. Children's tales of villagers wandering into a wode and emerging unchanged 100 years later are based on real events. When pressed on how this "works," the elves look baffled. "How does what work?"

Omund's Land

Western Vasloria, including most of Aendrim and Corwell and parts of Graid, was until recently ruled by Good King Omund. His draconian knights, the Dragon Phalanx, protected the weak from the strong, dispensing justice. Omund's rule lasted 35 years and in his life this area was known as Omund's Land.

Under Omund's rule, order thrived. Roads were safe. People could even walk into the woods unafraid of meeting anything more threatening than a nymph or conversational manticore.

Omund died 15 years ago and so died the rule of law. Now the forest claims the towns and roads once held safe. The woods are dangerous. Their only law ... tooth and claw.

Omund was betrayed and his castle fell to Ajax the Invincible, now called the Iron Saint. His wizard Mortum unlocked the secret of the ancient sky elf flying cities, and raised the Chrysopolis, Ajax's city-fortress in the sky.

It was Mortum who used the secrets of the synliroi body banks, granting immortality to those nobles who voluntarily submit to Ajax. Those same body banks produce Ajax's war dogs, his brutal, patchwork-soldiers who owe their new lives to the Iron Saint and fight for him fanatically.

Ajax abolished all faiths and temples. He executed the dukes who organized and united the barons, leaving the far-flung baronies to try and hold human civilization together. Once, these people were loose allies. There was trade between humans, elves, dwarves and orcs.

Now there is only suspicion.

The high elves of the fallen city pay tribute with ancient artifacts they plunder from the fallen celestial city of Irranys. **The wode elves of the Orchid Court**, lacking any centralized government or cities, refuse to bow to Ajax.

The dwarves of Kal Kalavar pay tribute in prisoners they abduct from those foolish enough to travel the roads unescorted. These prisoners serve Ajax as forced labor or are fed into the body banks. Brooding under the mountains in their fabled Hanging City, the stone dwarves do not like this deal with the Overlord but lack the power—or the will—to rebel.

The Hawklords of the High Aeries, once remote and proud, almost mythical to the people below, made their own pact with Ajax to avoid extermination. They now serve as his elite counterinsurgent force. Mounted on their giant hawks, they project Ajax's power, enforce his law and extend his influence into every corner of the wilderness. Their mastery of the air means any revolt or rebellion is quickly seen and crushed.

The Dragon Phalanx is broken. Ajax placed a high bounty on its warriors' heads. Some folk still see Omund's knights as symbols of justice, heroes of a lost age before might made right. But in every town, every village, there are always desperate people willing to collect the bounty, summoning the Hawklords to pluck any dragon knight foolish enough to travel without a disguise away to the Chrysopolis.

Isolated and outnumbered, the human baronies desperately fight a losing battle against the encroaching wilderness. Order dies. Chaos thrives.

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Capital

The Greatest City in This or Any Age! City of the Great Game! Located west across the Bale Sea from Vasloria, on the eastern coast of Rioja, Capital is not only the largest city in Orden—it's the largest city there has ever been. Larger than the fabled steel dwarf capital of Kalas Valiar, larger even than Alloy, the City at the Center of the Timescape. Capital is the exception to many rules.

It is a city of playwrights and opera, of spies and sorcery. Famed throughout the world as a city of high magic where flying tapestries act as taxis, the reality of living in Capital is somewhat more mundane. Only the very wealthy can afford such luxuries.

The great houses, ancient noble families, reluctantly share power with the upstart guilds who think vast wealth entitles them to rule. The great houses are very proud of their city. They believe anyone, from anywhere, should be able to come to Capital and earn a living, own property, expect justice. They just don't think anyone else should be able to *rule*.

The guilds, by contrast, are more egalitarian, more democratic, and largely obsessed with accruing wealth, city be damned. Three of them recently used their obscene wealth to buy great house status and now play the great game with the best of them.

The "great game" is espionage, and **House Alvaro** are the best players in the world. Led by Duke Prospero, House Alvaro sponsor the Imperial University, the greatest center of learning in the world. Nobles from across Orden, including Vanigar, send their children to learn diplomacy and statecraft at the university. While the greatest spies in the world are all graduates of the Actian School, one of the colleges in the university, which has historically doubled as the prince's intelligence agency.

House Vorona run the city's navy, the largest military organization of any kind in Orden. Their engineers perfected the secret of blackpowder and guard it jealously. The Imperial Navy's cannons protect trade across Orden, placing Capital at the center of international affairs. Vorona's Far Mariners, aka the marines, are the closest thing Capital has to a city-wide law enforcement organization. Each great house is expected to police its own district.

Duke Marco Vorona sponsors the Imperial War College, also known as the Academy. A prestigious institution rivaling any college of the Imperial University, the Academy boasts graduates among all the noble families in Orden. This widespread allegiance creates a vast informal network in the city referred to cynically as the Old Class Ring that gives Vorona access to intelligence other factions can only dream of.

House Navarr, oldest of the great houses, enforces the church's law, which they call justice. Led by His Grace Orsino, Duke Navarr, archbishop of the most powerful church in the city—the Church of Saint Ysabella the Pitiless—House Navarr consolidates a vast network of different churches and orders of knights across the region under one elaborate system of patronage.

Arguably the most powerful great house, **House Valetta** controls the Arbitros Fiat, the tax collectors. Valetta is led by the Duchess Lenore who, in mourning for her assassinated husband Maximo, opened the *Codex Mortis* and spoke the ritual which should have returned her love to life. Instead, she brought about the Lilac Night, which transformed every mortal in her district, including herself, into deathless revenants. Now, the Duchess Lenore is an immortal vampire queen. A dead lady, ruling over a dead city.

After the Lilac Night, when the prince was no longer able to rely on House Valetta to deliver the taxes they collected, Lady Shirome coordinated with two other guilds to buy Great House status for themselves.



Lady Shirome runs the city's assayers guild, **the Fulcrum**. The guild controls the Trade Integrity Board, which sets lending rates and leads trade negotiations between Capital and other governments in Orden. It was the Fulcrum that convinced the prince to switch the city to paper money. As a result, Capital is the first and only city in Orden to have a robust monetary policy.

The Broadsheets, formally known as **the Font**, publish the thrice-daily news sheets everyone in the city reads. Guildmaster Inān al-Adwiyya uses a vast network of young people called the Paperfeathers to deliver and sell the broadsheets throughout the city. Lady al-Adwiyya knows almost everything happening anywhere in the city.

The Farrier's Guild, popularly known as **the Rasp**, control transport throughout the city. Led by Lord Kashimir, a heliox from Alloy who introduced the flying tapestries that metaphorically shrank Capital, allowing the rich and powerful to cross the 13-mile-wide city in just a few minutes. He created the **Kites**, couriers famous for getting a message anywhere in Capital in only a few hours. Kashimir's monopoly on importing flying tapestries from Alloy gives him enormous power, and he is not shy about seeking more.

Three years ago, the prince of Capital died leaving no heir or even a likely candidate. He was a young man, only forty-one, but the events surrounding his death are shrouded in mystery and inaccurate accounts. Was he murdered like a commoner, or assassinated by a political rival? Evidence is scant, rumor substitutes as fact.

Now the great game takes on a new meaning as the four great houses and three newly ascendant guilds jockey for position, each wanting to step into the power vacuum left by the dead prince. Everyone knows a war is coming, a war of succession that means fighting on the street. But each player in the game would much prefer it if someone *else* made the first move.

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The Myriad Worlds of the Timescape

Orden is only one world in the timescape! Each star in the night sky is another, though this fact is not known to most people living on Orden. Old fashioned people still use the archaic term "plane" to describe these worlds, while sages use geometric formulae, describing these worlds they call "manifolds," but they all mean the same thing.

Higher worlds are more energetic, affording access to alien technologies. Great starfreighters ply the space-lanes, and knights wield psionically powered hard-light blades dueling against star pirates with hard-light blasters.

The lower worlds lack the energy necessary for such extraordinary technology to function, and so rely on magic to break the rules.

On Axiom, the Plane of Uttermost Law, the memonek live on a world teeming with complex, inorganic life. UNISOL, the Universal Solar League, ensures and protects trade across the upper worlds, defending the starfreighters from the time raiders and the infamous pirate band the Starslayers on their legendary ship the K.R.A.D.[1] *Fearless*.

Meanwhile, on Proteus, the Sea of Eternal Change, the formless proteans rebelled against the synliroi who once ruled the Plane of Uttermost Chaos, exiling the voiceless talkers to the World Below. Now masters of their world, the proteans take to the stars in their living changeships, hurling their small fleet against the tyrannical unquestioned might of UNISOL.

On Quintessence, the lowest of the upper worlds, proteans and memonek alike rub shoulders with devils, fire dwarves, even humans in Quintessence's capital city of Alloy, the City at the Center of the Timescape. The Free City of Alloy, also known as the City of Brass, is the gateway to the timescape. People travelling to or from the upper and lower worlds meet here to trade goods and information, free from the inflexible law of UNISOL.

Traveling downward from Quintessence one arrives on Orden, the Plane of Gods and Sorcery, highest of the lower worlds where magic rules. The gods, forbidden from interfering directly in a world with such a low energy state, rely on saints to enact their will. Technology from the upper worlds does not function down here, unless powered by a strong psionic mind or the miracle mineral iridoss, also known as prismacore.

Almost coterminal with Orden is its sister-manifold, the World Below, the Dark Under All, a plane of exiles ruled by A Lie Cloaked In Star's Silver, the Queen of Night, first of the Three Sisters Below. The World Below is a land of vast caves, and sunless seas. There are no stars here, no sky, only endless caverns and warrens, some vast enough to hold entire cities, like Or-Mazaar City of the Black Star from which the Queen of Night rules.

The power of the World Below wanes, while the power of Equinox waxes. A smaller, parasitic manifold home to the twilight celestials and their servants the shadow elves, Equinox is ruled by Every Strike of Lightning a Lover Betrayed, the Queen of Shadows, third of the Three Sisters Below who plots to bridge the sea between worlds and colonize Orden making a new home for her people before their old world dies. A fierce, fairy-tale, weird magic, jungle world of permanent twilight also known as Dusk.

The last plane of law, the Seven Cities of Hell is among the lowest of the lower planes. A land of devils proud of their civilization, each of the seven cities is ruled by an archduke who schemes to ascend to the Throne of Hell. A world of bureaucratic law, the devil denizens of Hell have little interest in the other planes. Life is so much more *interesting* down here.

The seven archdevils conspired together once; agreeing to create the Order of Desolation—also known as the Illriggers—to extend their power into the timescape, and defend Hell from the horde of demons below.

The demons of the Abyssal Waste, the lowest plane, claw and scramble over each other, competing for souls in this heat-blasted desert under a baleful, giant orange sun. Mindless collections of organs, claws, and teeth, demons collect souls until they reach sentience and gain identity and the blessing of memory. These demons will do anything to escape upwards, out of the wasteland, lest they lose their collected souls, lose their identity, and fall into that mindless state called lethe.

At the center of the Abyssal Waste lies the Necropolitan Ruin, the Last City, a city of the dead, ruled by Khorsekef, once the Infinite Pharaoh of Khemhara, now the Ultralich. Khorsekef intends to return to Orden and sit once again on his throne in the Heliopolis.

Setting Design

Orden and the timescape were both designed over the last 25 years to be an explicitly commercial setting. A product where you could find all the things everyone expects to find in a classic fantasy setting, with new takes on classic tropes and a little more "Why are things like this?" work done to ground everything and make things feel plausible. None of this makes Orden "better" than other settings, it just gives it character.

1 Kuran'zoi Rapid Attack Dreadnought

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Orden is not explicitly a high fantasy world, even though there are some pretty high fantasy things going on in it, because the average person has *very little* access to magic. The typical village might have a priest who knows some real prayers that close wounds or cure minor ailments, or an alchemist or hedge wizard who can brew some potions or conjure minor spells, but that's the extent of it. The result is, though Orden is a pre-industrial world with technology and societies akin to 13th-century Europe, the quality of life of the people who live there is a lot closer to ours. They live about as long as we do, die from disease about as often as we do, and generally have diets similar to ours, though with vastly more basic and constricted options on their menus.

In Capital, for instance, people use flying tapestries to get around the city quickly, but these are a luxury available only to the rich. The vast majority of Capital's citizens live a life basically the same as your average Londoner in Shakespeare's time. Less plague and fire, though.

It's not clear to us, looking in, but it doesn't seem as though Orden operates according to the real-world laws of physics, chemistry, and biology. People in the middle ages here on Earth didn't know about quarks or DNA, but they still knew everything was made of "stuff" and everyone expected a child to more or less resemble their parents. Essentially, Orden works the way people living in any culture's medieval era believed the real world actually worked. Because of the presence of magic, prayer, and psionics in the world, it's unlikely anything like science or an industrial age will *ever* come to Orden.

Ultimately, while there are 10th-level characters out there, these are exceedingly rare. Most people in Orden do not have class levels. Only a few are 1st level anything! No one has ever tried to take a census of all the censors, conduits, furies, and so forth, but if they did, they'd probably end up with a chart that looks a lot like Zipf's Law.

Finally, most information about Orden and the timescape is presented from the point of view of someone living in Orden. They can tell you what they think they know, but even learned historians do not agree, and new information constantly comes to light challenging the accepted academic wisdom. Just like … you get it.

This lack of objective certainty not only makes it more fun for us to work on Orden, it makes it easier for you to make Orden yours. This comes at the price of certainty. (Are the Dragon Phalanx *really* "incorruptible?" Well, a lot of people still say that! In spite of concrete evidence to the contrary!) But we think it helps relieve some of the anxiety Directors have when they want to run a game in Orden but are afraid they don't know "enough" or "everything." Not to worry. No one knows everything!

P.S. We use the phrase "Orden and the timescape" because Orden is, as it were, the star of the show. But Orden is very clearly only one world *in* the timescape. It's like those astronomy maps hanging on the wall in your grade school science class that said, "Earth and the solar system." Like that map, any map of the timescape will be an artist's interpretation, not drawn to scale, and never wholly accurate depending on what information you're looking for.

The Timescape in Your Game

We use the timescape and its medieval fantasyland Orden as the default setting presented in these books. Doing so makes it easier for us as designers to marry our design with real examples from a real (imaginary) fantasy world. We also think it's easier for you to take the names for places, languages, and gods, and replace them with your own. We might reference some hero or villain, saint or god, whose name makes you think, "Well, I don't have that in my setting." If we do a good job, though, you might be inspired to say, "But that makes me think …" And being inspired is part of the fun!

If you're the Director, you can use as many or as few of the details of the timescape as you like. You might wish to create your own world within the timescape, or use a setting you've created that exists outside of the official MCDM manifolds. You can use details from settings published by other companies. There are no rules when it comes to worldbuilding. Feel free to take what you like from this book and change the rest. For example, you might not care for our dwarves having literal stone skin. That's fine. You can make them fleshy, stout, bearded folk, or mohawked, barrel-chested punk rockers, or anything else you wish. As long as you're running a heroic fantasy campaign about fighting monsters, then the game's rules are still likely to serve your narrative even if that narrative deviates from ours.

If you're a player, ask your Director about the setting where the game takes place and discuss with them the sort of hero you want to create. Maybe you want to play a more traditional gruff and bearded dwarf rather than go all short and stony. An open dialogue and honest discussion with your Director can lead to everyone getting what they want out of the game.

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Chapter 2

MAKING A HERO

If you're not the Director, then you create and play one of the main characters in the game's story—a hero. Your hero is a person motivated to fight forces of evil to protect the innocent, but each hero has their own personal reason for doing so. You don't have to be a pure beacon of good. Heroes have flaws and are complex, just like people in the real world. But your hero should be someone who isn't afraid to battle monsters for altruistic reasons. If you're only interested in playing a money-grubbing sellsword, you can achieve that with these rules, but you'll likely be happier playing another game.

The hero you create will be roleplayed by you. Often when referring to your hero, the rules use second-person pronouns (you/your) for shorthand, making a distinction between you and your hero only when that distinction is important.

Your First Session

Getting together with your friends to make characters can be a lot of fun. Many groups spend most of their first session talking about the campaign's story, making heroes, and going over expectations for the game. It's a great way to kick off a long-term campaign.

The Director should make an agenda for a campaign's first session—often called "session zero." Chapter 15: For the Director has all the information a Director needs to help organize a successful first session, which can include any of the following events:

- The Director and players talk about the safety tools they want to employ at the game table (whether physical or virtual), so that everyone has a good time and understands which topics should be avoided in the game's narrative and which should be embraced. For more information, check out the MCDM Tabletop Safety Toolkit at *mcdm.gg/SafetyToolkit*, which includes advice for running a successful first session.
- The Director discusses the campaign's world and the major story themes they want to introduce into the game. This often takes the form of a campaign pitch the Director presents to the players.
- The Director should tell the players if any options are limited or rare in their campaign. For example, some Directors don't want psionics to appear in their game worlds, so they might decide that heroes can't be nulls or talents. Another campaign might be grounded in more typical medieval fantasy and not have any memonek or time raiders, or those ancestries might be exceedingly rare. In the latter case, players should know that their memonek or time raider heroes are likely to get a lot of questions from curious NPCs.
- The players get a chance to tell the Director what they would like to experience in the campaign. This can include anything from "I'd love to play out some chase scenes!" to "I want to explore themes of loss and grief." These wishes should be starting points for a conversation. If not all players are comfortable with certain themes or content requested by other players, then session zero is a great time to discuss that and come to a consensus about what everyone wants out of the game.
- Make heroes! Once everyone understands what the campaign is about, it's the perfect time to get into character creation. When a group of players make heroes together, they can tie backstories together and strategize to build a tactically dominant party both in and out of combat.
- The Director runs an encounter to kick off the campaign. If all the players have the time, it's totally worth it to get some play in during the first session, even if it's just a quick brawl in a tavern with some cultists! Starting off with a little action lets you see what the game is all about—and raises anticipation for the next session.

Step-by-Step Hero Making

Use the following step-by-step guide to create a hero. These steps are presented in what we believe is the best way to approach making your first hero for *Draw Steel*. That said, the order of the steps is still a suggestion, not a hard and fast rule.

Many players like to build a hero from the backstory up, making ancestry and culture ideal first choices. However, some players like to start more in the present, choosing a career and a class—the choices with the most potential impact on what your character can do in the game—and then going back and figuring out where their hero came from. There's no wrong way to do it! (The sections below tell you where to look to learn about ancestries, classes, and other options.)

You'll want a character sheet to fill out while you make your hero.

Each option you can choose for your hero at 1st level includes a parenthetical selection labeled "Quick Build." This is for players who want to build a character faster without reading through all the available options, by choosing the most straightforward and archetypal option for a hero. Most quick build options don't select languages for you, because your Director knows better than us which languages will be most useful in your campaign. In addition to being called out in the text, quick build ability options within classes are indicated by a gold icon.

If this is your first time making a hero, don't stress! The first time you build a character for *Draw Steel*, it might take an hour or so. Don't rush the process. Set aside some time, enjoy digging into all the options, and if you can, make your character alongside friends who are playing in the same game. The process gets a lot faster after you've done it once.

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1. Think

The first thing you should do is think about the kind of hero you want to make. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you fight with weapons, magic, psionics, or some combination of these capabilities?
- Outside of combat, what do you want your hero to do well?
- What did you do before becoming a hero?
- Why did you choose to become a hero?
- What is your personality like?
- What people, places, and objects are important to you?
- How will your hero complement the strengths and weaknesses of the other heroes in your party?

Ambition is Good!

Heroes aren't just along for the ride in the Director's story. They're active participants in that story, making decisions that change their communities, their worlds, or even the entirety of the timescape! It's good for your hero to have desires—to want to found an organization, seek justice for someone who was wronged, or craft a magic sword that will help you defeat your foes. It's only when that personal ambition becomes more important than the group's story that it creates a potential problem. But if you share your character's ambitions with your Director, they can weave those desires in with the narrative. Character creation is a great time to do this.

As the story evolves, your hero's ambitions could change. That's not a bad thing—dynamic characters are awesome! But if your hero ends up pursuing different goals over time, make sure you have a conversation with your Director about it, so they can plan accordingly.

2. Ancestry

Choose your hero's humanoid ancestry from among the range of ancestries available in the game—devil, dragon knight, dwarf, wode elf, high elf, hakaan, human, memonek, orc, polder, revenant, or time raider. Future supplements will introduce additional ancestries you can choose from. See Chapter 3: Ancestries for more information.

3. Culture

Choose or create your hero's culture. Although ancestry gives your hero any number of physiological benefits, your culture describes the community that raised you and gives you languages and skills. See Culture in Chapter 4: Background for more information.

Choosing Skills

This game has lots of skills (as detailed in Skills in Chapter 9: Tests), and lots of opportunities during character creation to gain them. We recommend recording a list of all the skills you might choose from the different steps of the character creation process, then making your choices at the end of that process rather than flipping back and forth through the book.

If you gain the same specific skill from two different sources (for instance, from a career and a class), you can pick a different skill from any skill group.

4. Career

Choose your hero's career, which describes what you did for a living before you became a hero. A career provides you with skills, an inciting incident that precipitated your adventuring career, and a perk that lets you customize your hero. It might also grant you languages, Renown, wealth, or the potential to undertake crafting and research. See Careers in Chapter 4: Background for more information.

I Speak Their Language

Choosing languages at the start of a campaign can be hard because you might not know which languages are going to be most prevalent or useful. You can choose to leave some of the languages you know open until you discover what might be a good choice for the campaign you're playing in. Once you decide to take a language, you can reveal your choice in a dramatic fashion, perhaps during a negotiation where knowing a specific language would help, or when you find a tome that no other hero in your party can read.

5. Class

Choose your hero's class. This choice has the biggest impact on how your hero interacts with the rules of the game, particularly the rules for combat. Your class provides your starting characteristic scores that determine your character's physical and mental acumen, as well as the Stamina and Recoveries that determine your physical hardiness. A class also provides your character with skills, several abilities—the unique features that define what your hero can do—and other features and benefits. You can be a censor, conduit, elementalist, fury, null, shadow, tactician, talent, or troubadour. See Chapter 5: Classes for more information on each class, as well as the different types of abilities—signature abilities, heroic abilities, and more—that heroes of a specific class have access to.

6. Kit

Your class might grant your hero a kit that helps define your approach to martial combat. The kit you choose provides you with equipment and a fighting style that grants a signature ability, as well as bonuses to one or more of your game statistics. See Chapter 6: Kits for more information.

7. Add Free Strikes

A free strike is a combat ability you can use when it's not your turn, representing the simplest and most basic weapon attack you can make. An enemy is foolish enough to walk away from you in melee? Free strike! Every hero has a melee weapon free strike and a ranged weapon free strike. They're all the same—until modified by your kit or class—and it's up to you to decide what exactly your free strikes are. A thrown dagger? A punch? The design is intended to let you use your imagination.

You can also make free strikes on your turn to represent using weapons your hero isn't otherwise themed to use. A wode elf master archer can stab a too-close enemy with a dagger as a free strike, and a great-axe-wielding orc fury can use a free strike to hurl a handaxe at a flying enemy staying annoyingly out of melee range.

See Free Strikes in Chapter 10: Combat for more information on using free strikes, and see Abilities in Chapter 5: Classes for information on the ability format and how to read it.

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Melee Weapon Free Strike

Charge, Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature or object

Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11 2 + M or A damage
12-16 5 + M or A damage
17+ 7 + M or A damage

Ranged Weapon Free Strike

Ranged, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Ranged 5 — One creature or object

Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11 2 + M or A damage
12-16 4 + M or A damage
17+ 6 + M or A damage

8. Complication

Complications represent those dramatic moments in a character's backstory that give them pathos, a dramatic reason to be an outsider, doubts about the meaning of life, an urge to avoid intimacy, or an unstoppable vendetta against an enemy from the past. Each complication grants a benefit and a drawback that make a character more three dimensional, but complications aren't necessary for making a great hero. Check with your Director as to whether your game is using them, and see Chapter 8: Complications for more information.

9. Determine Details

Once you've created your hero, it's time to determine the additional details of their backstory, appearance, and personality. How do the events of their culture, career and inciting incident, and class tie together into a cohesive narrative? What's their name? What do they look like? Do they have any cool scars? Any sweet tattoos? Do they still sleep with their teddy bear? These kinds of details can help define a well-rounded hero.

10. Make Connections

Ask the Director if all the heroes start the campaign knowing each other. If they do, talk to the other players and build some connections between your characters. If you like, you can use the following prompts to make those connections, or to come up with prompts of your own:

- When you were fighting a monster, one of the party members saved your life. What were you battling and who saved you?
- In your group, who looks after everyone's health and well-being, and makes sure that all the characters get along? If it's not you, how do you view this other hero?
- Who is the grumpiest member of your party? If it isn't you, how do you react to that hero's sour nature? If it is you, how do you react to other characters teasing you or trying to cheer you up?
- What's one thing your fellow heroes know about you that other people do not?
- What's your favorite way to bond with your fellow heroes?
- You've known one of the other heroes in your party longer than the rest. Who is it, and how did you meet?
- Another hero creates food, music, clothing, trinkets, or something else that you enjoy. Who is that hero, and what do they make?
- Another hero is teaching you a new skill. Who is it, and what are they teaching you?

Answer these questions with the other players present, and be sure to get a player's approval if your answer makes use of their character.



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Adventuring Gear

Draw Steel isn't a game about tracking gear, so you don't need to list every piece of equipment you own on your character sheet. The game assumes that heroes generally have enough to eat and drink, so the rules don't expect you to track food and water either.

If your character has a skill that implicitly requires gear, such as lockpicks for the Pick Lock skill or basic alchemy supplies for use with the Alchemy skill, then you have that gear. Likewise, your character is assumed to have standard useful adventuring gear, including a torch, a rope, and a backpack at minimum.

At the Director's discretion, you might lose certain gear during an adventure, or your gear could break. If this happens, you might not be able to perform certain tasks as effectively without that gear.

Changing Character Options

If you pick a skill, ability, class, or any other option that you end up not liking after using it in the game—even your character's ancestry—you can always freely change that option between game sessions. If you want to change some aspect of your character during a session, ask your Director. If they say it's fine to swap that aspect out for something else, go for it. You shouldn't be stuck with any option that makes the game less fun for you.

If you're changing an option for some reason other than fun, you need to follow the usual rules for changing that option. For example, you might want to swap a kit out because you think the next adventure is going to require you to have better distance with weapon strikes, doing so during a respite as talked about in Chapter 6: Kits. If no rule for swapping out an option exists, such as wanting to change a signature ability granted by your class because you think a different damage type would be more helpful against undead in an upcoming encounter, talk to your Director.

Optional Rule: Respite Ability Changes

An optional rule the Director can include in your game is to allow heroes to change any number of signature and heroic abilities granted by their class as a respite activity (see Respite in Chapter 1: The Basics). This allows heroes to prepare for upcoming encounters and try new builds, but the Director and the players should all be comfortable with constantly juggling and learning new abilities.

Heroic Advancement

Your character's heroic advancement is marked by level. Each time you gain a new level in your class, your Stamina increases, and you gain new features or abilities according to your class's advancement, as detailed in Chapter 5: Classes.

In the standard setup for the game, heroes gain Experience each time they finish a respite (see Building a Heroic Narrative in Chapter 1: The Basics). When you gain sufficient Experience, you gain a level during the same respite. The Heroic Advancement table shows exactly how much Experience (XP) you need to advance from one level to the next. The amount of Experience you gain is cumulative.

Alternative Advancement

Though many games might advance using the standard setup for heroic advancement, the Director can decide that their game uses different advancement. Check with your Director about what method of advancement they plan to use.

Adjusted XP Advancement

Some Directors prefer that heroes gain new levels faster or slower to suit the pace of their story. The Adjusted XP Advancement table is set up for campaigns where heroes advance at double or half the usual pace. Directors can also create their own customized pace for XP-based advancement.

Milestone Advancement

Rather than tracking XP, some games have the heroes advance in level when they achieve a particular story milestone. For example, when a party defeats the main villain of an adventure and foils their dastardly plot, each hero gains a level for achieving this objective, no matter how many obstacles they faced along the way.

For many Directors using milestone advancement, the end of each adventure within a campaign serves as a milestone for gaining a new level. The Director can share these milestones with the players to encourage them to work toward particular goals, and to engage with the story and world the Director has prepared. For example, in a campaign where the heroes have to face nine evil mages, it makes sense that each time the heroes defeat a mage, they gain a level. The Director should keep milestone goals flexible, though. Defeating a mage could mean stopping them with violence, using negotiation to make them stand down, or anything else that thwarts their evil plans.

Director Says So

Some games don't track XP or goals at all. The heroes simply gain a level whenever the Director decides it's appropriate for the story.

Heroic Advancement

Level	XP	Level	XP
1st	0–15	6th	80–95
2nd	16–31	7th	96–111
3rd	32–47	8th	112–127
4th	48–63	9th	128–143
5th	64–79	10th	144+

Adjusted XP Advancement

Level	XP for Double Speed	XP for Half Speed
1st	0–7	0–31
2nd	8–15	32–63
3rd	16–23	64–95
4th	24–31	96–127
5th	32–39	128–159
6th	40–47	160–191
7th	48–55	192–223
8th	56–63	224–255
9th	64–71	256–287
10th	72+	288+

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Human
Devil
Polder
TimeRaider
Orc
Wode Elf
High Elf
Dragon Knight
Memonek
Dwarf
Hakaan
Revenant

Chapter 3

ANCESTRIES

Fantastic peoples inhabit the worlds of *Draw Steel*. Among them are devils, dwarves, elves, time raiders—and of course humans, whose culture and history dominates many worlds.

Your hero is one of these folks! The fantastic ancestry you choose bestows benefits that come from your anatomy and physiology. This choice doesn't grant you cultural benefits, such as crafting or lore skills, though. While many game settings have cultures made of mostly one ancestry, other cultures and worlds have a cosmopolitan mix of peoples.

In *Draw Steel*, ancestry describes how you were born. Culture (part of Chapter 4: Background) describes how you grew up. If you want to be a wode elf who was raised in a forest among other wode elves, you can do that! If you want to play a wode elf who was raised in an underground city of dwarves, humans, and orcs, you can do that too!

This chapter details twelve ancestries for the game:

Devil: Devils originated in the Seven Cities of Hell and have a supernatural charisma that helps them persuade others. They are similar in stature to humans, and their skin tones include deep blues, purples, and reds. They sport horns, eyes of all shades (including gold and red), and tails, and some have feathered or leathery wings.

Dragon Knight: Dragon knights are muscled draconic humanoids who stand between 6 and 7 feet tall. The scales covering their reptilian heads, bodies, and tails can be almost any color. All dragon knights have wings, but on only a few are those wings big enough to let them fly.

Dwarf: Humanoids with stony skin, dwarves have short and stout bodies. Many carve supernatural runes into their flesh, and some have beards made of crystals.

Wode Elf: Lithe humanoids with finely furred skin in all shades of blue, wode elves have angular features and large, pointed ears akin to a bat's. They possess a supernatural glamor that allows them to blend in with their surroundings when they wish to hide.

High Elf: Stately and graceful, high elves have tall, willowy bodies, pointed ears, and smoother skin than most other humanoids. Rare metal inlays such as gold, platinum, palladium, and iridium act as organic components within their skin. The truest form of any high elf is hidden from most—sometimes even from themself—thanks to a supernatural glamor that makes them more attractive to others, whatever that might mean to an individual. This glamor transcends physical appearance, also slightly altering a high elf's tone and smell.

Hakaan: Descended from stone giants, the mighty hakaan stand over 9 feet tall and have well-muscled bodies made of organic stone. They are the largest ancestry in this book!

Human: Humans are the most numerous people in Orden and many other fantasy worlds! In *Draw Steel*, humans have all the diversity that our species displays in real life—and they can sense the presence of supernatural energy!

Memonek: Originating on Axiom, the Plane of Uttermost Law, memonek are a machine people made of metal, marble, glass, and other inorganic materials. Their bodies are lightweight, making them easier to move and letting them fall at slower speeds.

Orc: Orcs have skin in green tones and stand slightly taller and wider than humans. A supernatural energy they call "the blood fire" flows through their veins, igniting colorful lines in an orc's skin during life-or-death battles.

Polder: The smallest of the ancestries in this book, polders stand no taller than 3-1/2 feet. They look like smaller humans, and they have the ability to blend in with the shadows.

Revenant: No hero starts their life as a revenant. Rather, these undead creatures return to the world of the living because they have dire business that must be finished. A character of any ancestry can become a revenant.

Time Raider: Travelers of the timescape, the time raiders (or kuran'zoi as they call themselves) have four arms and a single ocular sensor instead of a pair of eyes. Many have innate psionic abilities that make them capable warriors.

Other Sections

The rules for using ancestries refer to lots of other parts of the game. You can find information on specific topics as follows:

Edges and banes, Recoveries, respites: Chapter 1: The Basics

Languages: Chapter 4: Background

Abilities, conditions, potencies, saving throws, surges: Chapter 5: Classes

Skills, tests: Chapter 9: Tests

Crafting projects: Chapter 12: Downtime Projects

Main actions and maneuvers, creature size, damage and Stamina, dying and death, flanking, movement and forced movement, winded: Chapter 10: Combat

On the Origin of Species

Orden (talked about in Chapter 1: The Basics) is a fantasy world. It works on principles similar to those many people throughout history believed governed the real world. "I dunno, a god did it probably."

Humans, elves, orcs, dwarves, dragons, all have creator gods—the Elder Gods, four of whom made the world for some reason. Maybe they were bored.

The fashion among those gods for creating new, intelligent, species petered out after the orcs. Once humans came along and invented war, it stopped being fun.

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It may be all species were created by gods. That's certainly what a lot of people throughout our own history assumed. Orden has no Darwin and probably won't ever. There's still inheritance. People expect children to look like their parents, but there aren't evolutionary pressures except on a very local scale.

And in a world where powerful, world-altering magics are available, mortals sometimes try to recreate the gods' efforts. Some succeed, and new intelligent, speaking peoples are born.

However, mortals are not gods and lack their ineffable wisdom. They are, in fact, very effable. Many have sought the power to create. It is available to any sorcerer of near-godlike power with the right rituals, though these days that power is very obscure. Creating new intelligent species was easier for mortal wizards back in the youth of the world when magic was friskier.

In every instance in recorded history, attempts by mortals to make obedient servitor species backfired. The steel dwarves worked marvels with valiar, the truemetal, and the miracle mineral iridoss, known as prismacore, that grants objects a semblance of life. Eventually their science and magics produced the omnivok—machines that were self-aware. Perhaps uniquely, when the dwarves realized they had created beings equal to themselves they stopped their work and gave their creations full rights and independence, preferring to work with them rather than attempt, and inevitably fail, to be their masters.

Normally, it doesn't work out that nicely. Even with the best of intentions, things go awry. The Dragon Phalanx were created by Good King Omund's wizard Vitae to be the perfect knights, dispensing justice throughout the lands. But the same sorceries that grant self-awareness also grant independence. Agency. And though they enjoyed 30 years of peace and justice, eventually the dragon knights were betrayed by one of their own, seduced by the power offered by Ajax.

The law of unintended consequences applies to the just and the unjust alike.

Usually when some powerful being tries to create an intelligent species, it's for less-than-virtuous reasons. The synliroi are responsible for several intelligent species in the timescape, each an attempt to create a perfectly obedient servitor species. The most notorious example are the kuran'zoi—the time raiders who rebelled almost immediately and who carry a burning hate for the voiceless talkers to this day.

A perhaps less egregious use of this power is called *quickening*, used when a powerful mage lives in and amongst some clever species just on the cusp of self-awareness. These instances, which are much more numerous than creating a new species from whole cloth, are more like the concept of *uplifting* found in science fiction. The mage or witch or shaman didn't create anything. They just gave these cute, clever, frog-things a little boost. A little nudge. And suddenly there are angulotls walking around having conversations with each other, wondering when someone will invent a fabric that doesn't get moldy in the swamp.

This also carries serious ethical repercussions! "You didn't create angulotls! You screwed up some perfectly good frogs! Look at them, you gave them anxiety!"

This is only how it works on Orden. You may have completely different explanations for why there are several different intelligent species walking around in your world. Or no explanation! Or competing and irreconcilable theories on the matter! Use whatever inspires you.

At the end of the day, if you throw out all of this and replace it with something you made up, it will be better. Because it's *yours*!

Names by Ancestry

Obviously you're free to invent whatever name you want for your character! And your director might have their own setting that uses different cultures than those in Orden. But if you want to pick an Orden-appropriate name for your hero, keep reading.

Equally obviously; names are cultural, not biological. Your character probably has a name appropriate to whatever culture they were born into, or grew up in. A human raised by hakaan would probably have a hakaan name.

Last Names and Bynames

Most people living in Orden—and this is especially true of Vasloria—live in villages. They do not have and do not use last names or family names. Everyone in the village knows who you mean when you refer to "William." Even if there's more than one William in the village, you can usually tell who someone's referring to from context. Sometimes folks prepend "our" to someone's name meaning: the one related to or otherwise concerned with me and my family. "Our William" for instance.

If that's not enough, folks use another identifier known as a byname. If there were two boys in the village named Much, one of them might be called Much the Miller's Son, to distinguish them from the other lad.

If you leave your village regularly, say to trade with others in a distant market, then your byname might be the place you're from. Alan from the village in the dale, might become known as Alan from the Dale, or even Alan-a-Dale. But everyone back home just calls you Alan.

A byname might refer to your profession. Clyde the Cartwright is a perfectly normal byname. But no one you met would assume "Cartwright" was your 'family name.' People who live permanently in a very large city like Capital use family names, because almost no first name is sufficiently unique to identify you, and "Marissa the Cartwright's Daughter" quickly evolves into Marissa Cartwright.

Most nobles in Orden also use the name of the area they rule as part of their name. When someone refers to Lord Edmund Bedegar everyone listening silently, without thinking about it, adds "of" between the name and the place. Edmund is both Edmund, and the Lord of Bedegar, and Edmund, Lord of Bedegar, and therefore sometimes Lord Edmund Bedegar. Even though "Bedegar" looks like a "last name" to us, and is being used in that manner sometimes, it's not exactly his last name. It's still just another kind of byname.

Unlike remote villages, well settled areas where many towns and villages are all networked by roads often do use surnames to help differentiate one William from the other twenty within a densely populated area.

Names and Gender

Most cultures in Vasloria make a distinction between masculine and feminine names, though not all do. And for some cultures that make such a distinction, almost no one outside the culture can tell the difference.

Among those cultures which do make a distinction between masculine and feminine names, there are always names that *could* refer to a person of any gender. Here in the real world, you can't tell a person's gender just from the name "Shane." This is mostly because which names are considered masculine or feminine changes over time, and when this happens, there's a period—maybe a few generations—where the name could refer to a person of any gender.

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Of course, there's no law (neither metaphorically nor literally) that requires your character to go by their birth name. They might not even know their birth name depending on what happened after they were born. It's not unusual, especially among talents, for a hero to adopt a moniker or sobriquet instead of a name. And in some cultures, there's a tradition of changing your name—or at least how you prefer to be known—as you go through different stages of life. High elves sometimes adopt a wholly new name when they reach a certain age, or more commonly, they choose a different component of their name. When A Mist Curls Around Dying Embers was a young woman, she was known as Mist. Now that she's the master of the Tower of Translation, she's known as Embers.

Authentic or Comedic?

For some players choosing a "good name"—by which they mean "authentic to the setting"—is important and can take a while. Because the right name can ground a character in the world, and this can help the player feel more immersed in the fictional reality. It also communicates to the other players that you're serious about the game and your hero.

For other players, choosing a comedic, joke name communicates the opposite! You are here to have fun and screw around and taking things seriously is something you already have to do all week, and so you pick a ridiculous name just to get a laugh because that's what you're serious about.

The choice of name is an important one, because it says a lot about you and how you view the game as a whole.

Example Names By Ancestry

Devil Names

Feminine: Ampeth, Arrian, Cyrrik, Frissia, Illya, Oreth, Quallo, Uryalia, Yllioth, Zorri

Gender Neutral: Halciar, Illion, Karya, Moriel, Orliath

Masculine: Bulliarvik, Cenoph, Dhult, Jjaro, Kuryalkin, Radiarsk, Tessiar, Turayvik, Ullian, Villyroth

Dragon Knight Names

Feminine: Ahrijiinad, Cyrrijox, Kaikorrivar, Kalliarx, Korazajaan, Korovaamijax, Orrizarviox, Uriquexicaar, Ythirix, Zoronivaam

Gender Neutral: Baiqadrazaar, Ciniceziar, Lorikorivox, Vinkarijaan, Zaikorojax

Masculine: Aarkizovar, Dannorax, Denoxavinaax, Killexiriax, Koraavinam, Raijorozaan, Vanazor, Vorokazinaar, Zakaarior, Zexijorovox

Dwarf Names

Feminine: Dazria, Dekka, Djorva, Giria, Kirza, Kuroth, Lurza, Uur, Zareth, Ziir

Gender Neutral: Arzak, Keth, Orikk, Q'ir, Qoroth

Masculine: Darzok, Dazran, Djorek, Durok, Duur, Gavok, Kaaz, Kazaan, Zaar, Zarek

Wode Elf Names

Elves in general have a casual attitude toward gender, it having no direct bearing on procreation for them. (Normal elf upon learning how humans mate: "You mean … like animals?") They tend to view the various sex-linked traits associated among other ancestries with masculinity or femininity as a kind of fashion to be taken up or discarded as the mood suits. Over one life, any elf might wear masculine features, or feminine features, or both, many times. For wode elves, this often means adopting a new name, or a different version of the same name. Llyandros might become Llyandra for instance.

Feminine: Elvyr, Eviarwyc, Illwyv, Iorwyth, Lliarwyn, Meithennyn, Nimuë, Rhegyth, Viarwyn, Ysallwyth

Gender Neutral: Arriswyth, Gogellwyc, Hygglwyc, Lliarion, Tywso

Masculine: Calliarwyc, Cillyv, Eidior, Ffyllwyc, Gwyllmach, Llyandros, Ogllvar, Radiarwyn, Ryll, Tafirdwyn

High Elf Names

High elf names are poetic. They are an attempt to capture a fleeting, often contradictory, impulse, or emotion. They sometimes contain references to the natural world. They are never meant to be taken literally and they are not an attempt to make a character feel heroic.

Examples: The Anticipation of a Sigh Upon His Lips, A Crown of Starlight on Winter Snow, The Earth Cries the Skies Divide, Echoes of Autumn Heat, Edges of a Leaf Torn by the Wind, Every Flake of Snow a Memory, A Heart That Will Not Yield the Stars, The Last Star Fading With Morning, A Rain of Glass Over a Sea of Dreams, The Sun Reflected in a Lover's Tear

Hakaan Names

Feminine: Adrina, Arawanni, Barsina, Irdabava, Kiandot, Mavané, Osorabi, Sitarey, Tyriti, Ulivesh

Gender Neutral: Adaska, Kirashev, Oriamos, Sandauka, Ulion

Masculine: Adusiya, Artabānu, Dahyu, Farnaspa, Fravartiš, Jamaspa, Khosrau, Kithara, Sarames, Utana

Western Vasloria Human Names

Human names vary widely by culture. The following examples are from Western Vasloria.

Feminine: Brenwyn, Demelza, Elzbeth, Gwynhyvyr, Maerwyn, Margaret, Meliora, Rowenna, Tamara, Wenna

Gender Neutral: Ashley, Bryn, Jennet, Morgan, Taran

Masculine: Brys, Cadwyr, Dyfan, Edmund, Geoffrey, Gwiddon, Heden, Richard, Taegan, Taethan

Memonek Names

Feminine: Abandhaska, Ashariyaa, Devidayya, Gandahraji, Kunismyya, Priyaptaa, Ruthudeva, Urivashii, Vanarishka, Yashovalla

Gender Neutral: Jamiattra, Lotarhixa, Mitterirtra, Sattayarit, Talyana

Masculine: Ayabaskha, Dhamayana, Divarsotto, Duruvatta, Ghaurdamatta, Harakshathra, Khasimandru, Khavettra, Virabanu, Vittarkoya

Orc Names

Feminine: Askilli, Dorviath, Jeddoar, Karoskha, Khorisa, Khorva, Moraska, Vakarra, Vhorovi, Zhorva

Gender Neutral: Dorokor, Gorovik, Khettovek, Meadior, Orosk

Masculine: Dezovor, Dhorovek, Djorvok, Korjok, Medozoar, Pakadrask, Rojak, Rokore, Uvarsk, Vordokov

Polder Names

For reasons not well understood, polders in Vasloria use surnames. First names seem chosen to imply a degree of sophistication (or, at least,

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what polders consider sophisticated) while last names are typically common, compound words. No one knows why they do this.

Feminine: Agatha, Amaryllis, Beverly, Esmerelda, Marceline, Modesty, Penelope, Rosemarie, Ursula, Weatherly

Gender Neutral: Bellamy, Bethell, Carrington, Madison, Mallory

Masculine: Aimsley, Alderson, Bancroft, Beechwood, Billingsworth, Broderick, Langston, Owlswick, Patterson, Willoughby

Surnames: Bottlebrush, Bracegirdle, Cheesewright, Cobblestone, Cordwainer, Lamplighter, Pinwhistle, Thistlethrush, Twobuckle, Underhill

Revenant Names

Revenants most often keep whatever names they had in life. They may have any number of reasons to adopt a new name in which case that name would reflect their reasons for doing so. Perhaps they adopt a moniker like many talents do, or they choose a new name from their original culture, or something completely different!

Time Raider Names

Kuran'zoi names typically end with an epithet, given when the young time raider comes of age, that reflects their uniquely rebellious nature.

Feminine: Ak'karatar, Ip'pritt, Ner'radmok, Orov'vika, Phe'kala, Quix'x, Thes'srika, Thos'sivik, Um'manri, Vir'rikin

Gender Neutral: Jorut'or, Morp'phan, Mot'tira, Sonit'ir, Thir'rip

Masculine: Astro'ogor, Dak'kara, Ik'koq, Jel'lek, Kes'slik, Laz'zir, Mav'vikek, Thork'kar, Uv'vik, Va'antak

Epithet: The Acerbic, the Cynic, the Heretic, the Impious, the Irritant, the Skeptical, the Sneering, the Surly, the Unbeliever, the Unruly

Measurements

How tall is a polder? How long does a dwarf live? The Ancestry Measurements table provides the average adult height and weight ranges and life expectancy for each of the ancestries in this chapter. These measurements are just average, and many folks in the world exist outside of them, so your hero can too!

Revenants are not on the table, since they live until destroyed or moving on after completing their unfinished business and their height and weight is based on their previous ancestry.

Humans have the potential to live a little longer on Orden than they do in the real world thanks to the presence of magic.

Ancestry Measurements

Ancestry	Height in Feet/ Inches	Weight in Pounds	Life Expectancy in Years
Devil	5'0"–6'0"	120–250	70–120
Dragon Knight	6'0"–7'0"	200–350	50–90
Dwarf	4'0"–4'6"	500-1,000	700–1,500
Wode Elf	5'6"–6'6"	100–150	1,200–3,000
High Elf	5'6"–6'6"	100–150	1,200–3,000
Hakaan	9'0"–10'0"	1,000–2,000	300–500
Human	5'0"–6'0"	100–300	70–120
Memonek	5'0"–6'0"	50–100	70–120
Orc	5'6"–6'6"	150–300	50–90
Polder	3'0"–3'6"	20–50	50–90
Time Raider	5'0"–6'0"	120–250	50–90

Starting Size and Speed

Unless otherwise noted, a character from any of these ancestries is size 1M and has speed 5 and stability 0.

Where an ancestry provides you with an ability, see Abilities in Chapter 5: Classes for details of the ability format.

Ancestry Traits

Each ancestry has at least one signature trait, which your hero gets for free if they take the ancestry. This is a defining feature that other heroes of your ancestry also possess.

There are also purchased traits. You don't get every purchased trait your ancestry has to offer. Instead, your ancestry details a budget of ancestry points you can use to purchase traits. Each trait has a point cost that you pay to grant the benefit to your hero.

For example, the devil ancestry has the signature trait Silver Tongue and 3 ancestry points to spend on seven different traits. A player creating a devil hero could buy Barbed Tail, Hellsight, and Glowing Eyes, which each cost 1 ancestry point, or they could buy one of those traits and purchase Impressive Horns or Wings, which each cost 2 points. They couldn't buy both Impressive Horns and Wings, since their combined cost is 4, which is over the ancestry points budget for the devil.

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DEVIL

The native ancestry of the Seven Cities of Hell, devils are humanoids with red or blue skin expressed in a wide variety of hues, from bright crimson to deep purple. Each devil is born with some *hellmark*—horns, a tail, cloven hooves, a forked tongue, fanged incisors, or even wings.

Hell is dominated by the Seven Cities of Hell, each ruled by a different archdevil who constantly plots and schemes against the others in the hope of ascending to the Throne of Hell.

Those devils who join "the trade," as their civil service is called, spend their days in bureaucratic service hoping or scheming for promotion. Devils looking for a quick path up the bureaucratic ladder sign up for the Exchange, whereby mortals in the mundane world who perform the right rituals can summon a devil, who bargains with the supplicant on behalf of their archdevil. Archdevils can grant temporary worldly power in exchange for a supplicant's soul, with the summoned devil acting as the broker.

On rare occasions, though, the summoning goes wrong and the supplicant dies before the deal can be struck, stranding the summoned devil on Orden permanently. Some stranded devils seek to return to Hell, but most prefer life in Orden, where the phrase "stabbed in the back by a colleague" is usually a metaphor.

The majority of devils in Orden are not from, nor have ever been to, the Seven Cities. They are descendants of devils who were stranded in the mundane world decades, centuries, even millennia ago.

On Devils

Adelard scuttled across the floor of his basement, a heavy tome clutched in one hand, his index finger marking a page. Occasionally he would stop, open the book, consult a diagram, look at the chalk markings he'd made on the floor, tilt his head, then bend down and refine or rub out an esoteric symbol.

One of the red candles suddenly guttered out, making the small room noticeably darker. "Damn and blast!" he hissed. Then he relit it from another candle.

Stepping back to admire his handiwork, Adelard crossed his arms and nodded. He'd spent his last coppers on the candles—they weren't cheap. And he feared the skull might be fake, but did it matter? The book just said *a* skull—it didn't even specify a *human* skull! Did it matter if it was real? It was probably real. What kind of market was there for replica skulls? But it was awfully cheap. Anyway, did it matter? How would the ritual *know* if the skull was real?

He was wittering, putting off the inevitable. He pulled himself together. It was either going to work, or it wasn't, and wittering wasn't going to help. He opened the book and turned the page—then began to speak the ritual.

Moments later, the candles flared, there was a burst of flame, and acrid brimstone filled his nostrils. When the smoke cleared ... there was a devil standing in his basement—dark purple skin, horns, even a twitching tail.

"Aha! Yes, finally." The creature rubbed his hands together. "It's about time," he said, pulling on the bottom of his waistcoat to straighten it. "Now then! How does it go? Oh, yes." He cleared his throat. "On behalf of my lord, his grace Archduke Dispater, Lord of Dis, I am empowered to offer you ..." But his speech fell on deaf ears.

"It worked!" Adelard said, holding his clenched fists up. "Ahahaha! It worked! Finally, after *years*! I will have my revenge! Hahaha ... ! *cough* *cough*" Adelard was suddenly gripped by a coughing fit, but he kept crowing.

"Dismiss me from service, will they?! *cough* Old and useless ... am I?! I'll show *them*!" He coughed again, fighting to breathe now. "I will *hex* them and *torture* them until they ..."

He stopped cavorting and capering, and his eyes went wide. "Until they ... until ..." He clutched his chest.

"Uh-oh," the devil said, genuinely worried.

"HNNG!" Adelard grunted. Then he collapsed to the ground, curled into a fetal position, obviously in immense pain.

"Nono. Nurse!" the devil called out. "Doctor!? Is anyone ... you should lie down. Well, you are lying down. Do some ... some deep-breathing exercises. Have a cup of tea! That always ..."

Adelard gasped one last time and uncurled, muscles relaxed. Eyes open but unseeing.

"... calms me down," the devil said quietly.

Suddenly, the candles were extinguished as one, plunging the room into pitch blackness. The devil's hellsight meant this was only a minor inconvenience for him. "Um," he said to the empty room. "Uh-oh."

He poked the tip of his boot at the chalk symbol surrounding him on the floor. Nothing happened. He stepped on it. Nothing happened. He put his weight on that foot. No alarms went off.

He walked out of the circle. Nothing happened. No one, it seemed, cared.

A few moments later, the door to a small home, little more than a wooden shack, on the outskirts of a small village opened. A well-dressed devil peeked out and then slowly emerged, stepping onto the dirt road that led through the center of the village. A keep stood atop a hill in the distance.

"Ah," the devil said.

A wide woman dressed in wool, carrying a pile of clean clothes, saw him and stopped in her tracks, her mouth open.

"Oh! Good day to you, madam. I wonder if you could tell me ..."

"AAAHHHHH!!!" she screamed. For quite a long time. Then she dropped her laundry and ran.

"Ah. Um. Hmm."

A young man in a low, stone building saw this exchange, grabbed what looked like a long iron poker, and ran out to confront the new arrival.

"Have at you, devil!" he said, assuming something like a dueling pose.

"I say! Steady on!" The devil raised his hands.

The two of them stood there, frozen in the middle of the street for a few moments.

Then the devil turned and ran away as quickly as he could.

•

"And that's how I ended up here!" Riyalkin toasted his dinner companion. "Now, after years of obscurity, a legendary hero!"

"Legendarily *vain*," his dinner guest teased with a smile.

"Simply playing my part, darling. People expect a certain amount of vanity in a troubadour, don't they?"

She laughed. "Riyalkin the Red Pen is every bit as advertised."

"Thank you. And besides, accusations of vanity are a bit rich coming from my leading lady."

"Not all actors are vain." She took offense beautifully. "Just the good ones." She sipped her drink.

"Well then, you must be very vain indeed," the devil said. "Anyway, does that answer your question?"

"Mostly. Do they speak Caelian in Hell?"

"*What* a good question. Unless it's *very* old, the ritual usually grants knowledge of the summoner's language. I gather in the bad old days, we used to just show up in a cloud of brimstone and gabble at people. I'm sure it was impressive, but what did it achieve? Not very professional, I can tell you that."

"No cloud of brimstone now?" she teased.

He waggled his eyebrows. "Style counts for something."

"But wait, that was ..." She did some quick mental math. "Fifteen years ago?"

"Well, I was an accountant here in Capital for several years in between."

"An accountant!"

Riyalkin shrugged. "It's what I did before. I'm moderately good at it."

"And how does one go from being an alien accountant to a famous troubadour?"

"Well ..." Riyalkin seemed uncomfortable suddenly. "It's just that ... the thing is, accountancy in the Seven Cities is just so much more interesting than it is here. Plotting and scheming, always on the lookout for an assassin, people constantly trying to claw their way up the ladder, usually over your dead body. And I guess I just ... missed the excitement."

"The excitement of being an accountant."

"The excitement of being an accountant *in Hell*," Riyalkin said. "In any event, enough about me and the thrill of double-entry bookkeeping. Perhaps you can enlighten me. Why is it, in spite of my impeccable taste and the outrageous sums I spend looking good, I always feel *underdressed* in your presence? Do you employ sorcery? Or is it that any outfit is improved by your *unearthly* beauty?"

She blushed in spite of herself and raised her own glass in a toast.

"You silver-tongued devil."

Devil Traits

Devil heroes have access to the following traits.

Signature Trait: Silver Tongue

Your innate magic allows you to twist how your words are perceived to get a better read on people and convince them to see things your way. You have one skill of your choice from the interpersonal skill group (see Skills in Chapter 9: Tests), and you gain an edge on tests when attempting to discover an NPC's motivations and pitfalls during a negotiation (see Chapter 11: Negotiation).

Purchased Devil Traits

You have 3 ancestry points to spend on the following traits. (*Quick Build:* Beast Legs, Impressive Horns.)

Barbed Tail (1 Point)

Your pointy tail allows you to punctuate all your actions. Once per round when you make a melee strike, you can deal extra damage with the strike equal to your highest characteristic score.

Beast Legs (1 Point)

Your powerful legs improve your speed. You have speed 6.

Glowing Eyes (1 Point)

Your eyes are a solid, vibrant color that flares to show your excitement or rage. Whenever you take damage from a creature, you can use a triggered action to deal that creature psychic damage equal to 1d10 + your level.

Hellsight (1 Point)

Your eyes let you see through darkness, fog, and other obscuring effects. You don't take a bane on strikes made against creatures with concealment.

Impressive Horns (2 Point)

Your cherished horns are larger than the average devil's, and a hardened representation of your force of will. Whenever you make a saving throw, you succeed on a roll of 5 or higher.

Prehensile Tail (2 Points)

Your prehensile tail allows you to challenge foes on all sides. You can't be flanked.

Wings (2 Points)

You possess wings powerful enough to take you airborne. While using your wings to fly, you can stay aloft for a number of rounds equal to your Might score (minimum 1 round) before you fall. While using your wings to fly at 3rd level or lower, you have damage weakness 5.

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The ritual of Dracogenesis that grants the power to create a generation of dragon knights—also known as draconians or wyrmwights—is obscure and supremely difficult for even an experienced sorcerer to master. Small populations of draconians in Khemhara, Higara, and Khoursir attest to this. Descendants of original generations created millennia ago by powerful wizards, they have never been numerous. A typical clutch yields only a single egg. After only a few generations, these draconians begin to show new adaptations like feathers or frilled ridges.

The largest extant population of draconians is the remnants of the Dragon Phalanx in Vasloria. Created by Good King Omund's wizard Vitae, the Dragon Phalanx once numbered several thousand of the king's greatest knights, ensuring the rule of law across the land.

Knighthood was a title carried by every member of that first generation of dragon knights. Within the Dragon Phalanx were shadows, censors, tacticians, and elementalists. Members of virtually every heroic vocation could be found in one of the eight dragonflights that made up the phalanx. For over 30 years, these heroes were symbols of justice, protecting the weak from the strong, and standing between the common folk and those who sought power over others. Those who grew up in that place and time could not imagine any other way of life.

Then Ajax came.

On Dragon Knights

The cloaked figure at the back of the inn stood up. As they did so, their hood slipped down, revealing their head and face. A susurration rippled through the crowd. One man standing near the bar dropped his jaw, followed by his flagon of mead.

A tall, broad draconian stepped into the light. He was old, his scales battle-scarred. He rested one clawed hand on the pommel of a mace that hung from a loop on his belt, while the other carried his shield by a strap. His flat, expressionless look was more terrifying than any threatening glower.

The three human bandits took a step back. One of the dwarves just sneered—then, sensing his human compatriots' reluctance, turned to look at them. "What's this?" the lead dwarf growled.

Looking at the dragon knight, another bandit added quickly, "We didn't know there was one of you here."

The draconian didn't move. Didn't give any indication he heard the man. Just stared unblinking at the lead dwarf. "Think of the *bounty*," the dwarf hissed to the humans, but he kept his eye on the draconian. "We'll all be *rich*."

The two dwarves surveyed the tavern. The people were now all facing them. A few had stood up. They weren't afraid anymore.

"We'll be *back*," the lead dwarf said, and the group of them backed out of the inn, sheathing their shortswords before they turned and left.

As one, the people in the tavern turned to look with undisguised awe at the dragon knight. He noticed this, ducked his head to avoid their gaze. "Show's over," he growled, then he turned to go back to his seat in the rear.

A short, doughty, middle-aged man stood up, and two equally doughty women at the same table stood up with him. "Excuse me, sir knight," the man said as the dragon knight walked past their table.

The knight moved on, ignoring them. The man reached out and grabbed the massive draconian's arm. The knight wheeled on the peasant, looming over him.

The man touched his forelock. The two women with him curtseyed.

"Begging your pardon, sir, but we been lookin' for you."

The dragon knight sneered and bared a set of sharp teeth. "*Look for someone else*," he growled as he pulled his arm away.

The man scurried around to stand in front of the draconian, blocking his way. He took off his worn cap and held it over his breast. "I'm sorry sir, but there ain't no one else. And there's this new tax, you see, from the new baron. And a priest says he's of Saint Ajax."

The knight bared his impressive teeth, ready to scare Jago and the other two away—when someone else spoke.

"You might want to hear 'em out, Vaant," said a voice from the table the three peasants had been sitting at.

The dragon knight turned sharply to look at the man who'd spoken. His back was to the draconian, but the voice gave him away.

"John?"

The man turned to look up.

"Hi Vaant," he said, smiling. He rose from the table. He was middle-aged, fit. Black hair hung down to his shoulders. He was armed with many weapons. "Folks," he said, "this is Vaantikalisax, knight of King Omund in the Thunder Phalanx. He may be the last of the Storm Knights."

The man held out his hand. The dragon knight looked at it for a moment before reaching out slowly to grasp it. "What are you doing out here?" he asked.

"These people need help. I said I'd find it. Heard a rumor someone matching your description was holed up here having a drinking contest with Mr. John Barleycorn."

The draconian sniffed, released John's hand. "Sure," he said. "But why *me*?"

"Thought maybe you'd like to get back in the game."

"The game."

"Yeah." Sir John smiled. "The hero game."

The inn had mostly gone back to its business but the three peasants watched intently. Eventually the dragon knight spoke again, his voice low.

"I owe you a lot, John—but not everything."

"I'm not asking everything."

"No, that's not how it starts. But I have this feeling that's how it'll end."

"What does your oath say? 'Even should the sun stop in the sky, even should the night—' "

"John," the dragon knight said, his voice suddenly sad. Exasperated. "You don't want to quote my oath to me. You really don't. I liked serving with you. I have fond memories of that time—of you. Don't spoil it." He looked at his friend, the three peasants, then shook his head and turned to leave the inn.

"Vaant," Sir John said, following. "Sir Vaantikalisax, by your *oath*!"

The dragon knight stopped and spun around. Everyone in the inn was watching the show again. Act two.

"The people need leadership," John said.

Vaantikalisax's reptile eyes flashed in anger. "They *had it*! Thirty years, and what did it amount to?! I watched Ajax ... I watched him ..." The dragon knight's eyes flinched. His clawed hands tightened on his mace and shield. "I watched the oath ... fail."

"Vaant ... Vaant, the Dragon Phalanx didn't *fail*. You were *betrayed*. It was Mandrake! One of your own, don't you get it? You're just as fallible as the rest of us. You were never 'incorruptible.' It's just what we wanted to believe. You're just people—like the rest of us."

The dragon knight looked at the people around him, at the three peasants desperate for someone, anyone, to help them. Then he looked back to his friend.

"Exactly," Vaantikalisax said. Then he turned and left the inn.

Dragon Knight Traits

Dragon knight heroes have access to the following traits.

Signature Trait: Wyrmplate

Your hardened scales grant you damage immunity equal to your level to one of the following damage types: acid, cold, corruption, fire, lightning, or poison. You can change your damage immunity type when you finish a respite.

Purchased Dragon Knight Traits

You have 3 ancestry points to spend on the following traits. (*Quick Build:* Dragon Breath, Prismatic Scales.)

Draconian Guard (1 Point)

When you or a creature adjacent to you takes damage from a strike, you can use a triggered action to swing your wings around and guard against the blow, reducing any damage from the strike by an amount equal to your level.

Draconian Pride (2 Points)

You have the following signature ability.

Draconian Pride

You let loose a mighty roar to shake your foes' spirits.

Area, Magic — 1 burst
Main Action — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Might or Presence:

≤11 2 damage
12–16 5 damage; push 1
17+ 7 damage; push 2

Dragon Breath (2 Points)

You have the following signature ability.

Dragon Breath

A furious exhalation of energy washes over your foes.

Area, Magic — 3 cube within 1
Main Action — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Might or Presence:

≤11 2 damage
12–16 4 damage
17+ 6 damage

Effect: You choose the ability's damage type from acid, cold, corruption, fire, lightning, or poison.

Prismatic Scales (1 Point)

Select one damage immunity granted by your Wyrmplate trait. You always have this immunity, in addition to the immunity granted by Wyrmplate.

Remember Your Oath (1 Point)

As a maneuver, you can recite the following oath. Until the start of your next turn, whenever you make a saving throw, you succeed on a 4 or higher.

Even should the sun stop in the sky
Even should the night last a thousand years
I will stand forever
I shall not yield
Those who suffer and yearn for justice
I am your sword and shield
I will yield no ground
I will speak no lies
I will stand against all tyrants
Until the last villain dies

Wings (2 Points)

You possess wings powerful enough to take you airborne. While using your wings to fly, you can stay aloft for a number of rounds equal to your Might score (minimum 1 round) before you fall. While using your wings to fly at 3rd level or lower, you have damage weakness 5.

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DWARF

Possessed of a strength that belies their size, dwarves have flesh infused with stone—a silico-organic hybrid making them physically denser than other humanoids. They enjoy a reputation in Orden as savvy engineers and technologists thanks to the lore they inherited from their elder siblings, the long-extinct steel dwarves.

Dwarves are the children of the elder god Ord, and a common phrase among dwarves is "Ord made the world"—their way of saying, "What will be, will be." They take great pride in knowing that along with Aan, Eth, and Kul, their god created the mundane world, and many dwarves leave their homes to see the world and seek glory in Ord's name.

On Dwarves

"They can be stubborn," Embers said.

John smiled and gave her a look as they walked around the barn. "Yeah not like elves and humans, right?"

Embers grinned.

"They're good in a fight," John said, and his tone implied this was all that mattered. "They're natural commanders."

"Yes I can imagine why," Embers said. "Each sentence sounds like an order."

They found the dwarf at the edge of the old quarry outside of town cutting blocks of stone with a long copper saw. It normally took two people a quarter hour, but the dwarf sawed an entire block in two with a single stroke. The stones smoked as they fell, and the copper saw glowed with heat.

John and Embers watched silently as the dwarf hefted another massive stone onto the cutting block.

The dwarf spit into his hands and noticed the two out of the corner of his eye. He paused, walked over to grab his battle staff with the hourglass symbol of Zarok, Law-Giver at the tip. He walked back to the stone and leaned his staff against a tree stump within easy reach should he need to use it.

He went back to work.

"Good morning," John said.

The dwarf ignored them.

"I'm a friend of Morag the Wise Woman," John said. "She said there was a high theochron of Zarok, Law-Giver around here working to earn his keep."

The dwarf paused. "High theochron?" he said. "A lofty title. Far too lofty for a job such as this," he went back to work and a moment later there were two more smoking blocks. He cleared them away.

"There's a job for nine ..." John hesitated. *Ratcatchers* didn't seem appropriate. He went with his gut. "Heroes. In Bedegar. A village looking for someone to stand against Lord Saxton."

"Mm. I have heard of this one," the dwarf said, seemingly uninterested. He hurled the smaller blocks into a pile and went to heft a new stone to cut. "A foul tyrant. Well-suited to these times. Perhaps the people deserve him."

"No people *deserve* tyranny," Embers said, an edge in her voice. The dwarf appeared to notice her for the first time, peered at her, took in her raiment, and went back to work. "Nine against Saxton." The dwarf carried the massive block over his head to the cutting stone. He shook his head in disbelief at what was being asked. "How great the opposition?"

John told him.

The dwarf dropped the stone in astonishment and stared at the human and elf. Then he smiled. "Hah. You know our traditions well, sir knight. You seek to grant me a glorious death leading desperate soldiers against impossible odds."

"Not that desperate," John said modestly.

"Yes." The dwarf looked at Embers again. "By garb and reputation, I make you A Mist Curls Around Dying Embers, mistress of the Tower of Translation. You are no stranger to power. But your tower is fallen lady," he said. "Seek you revenge? Or justice?"

"I see no reason to choose," Embers said smoothly. "But in my case, as well as the case of these villagers, justice would *be* revenge."

The dwarf's head snapped to look at Sir John. "She speaks my language as well it seems. You are of a kind, you two."

"Three," John dared.

The dwarf failed to stifle a smile. "And what is your stake in this?"

John shrugged. "I've already been paid," he said. He fished around in a pouch on his belt. "Here, I'll split it with you, fair and square."

John flicked a coin off his finger with his thumb. It spun and glinted as it arced across the space between them. The dwarf snatched it from the air, opened his palm and stared at it. Something in his face changed. Softened. He looked at the nearby town that had adopted him. Peasants doing labor in the fields.

He clenched his fist around the coin. "A princely sum," he said, mostly to himself.

"You are Dazar," Embers dared. "High theochron in exile. Yours is the greatest dwarven church in all Omund's Land. Thousands look to you for spiritual guidance."

The dwarf said nothing. He looked at the coin in his hand.

"You left your people," Embers said quietly.

"My people left me!" Dazar barked. "When they embraced Ajax!"

Embers just watched the dwarf. His rage subsided as quickly as it came.

"I thought ... I thought leaving might inspire my people to ..."

He looked at the nearby village. "Eh, it matters not. I could not have stayed in any event. I lack the stomach for tyranny."

"Kal Kalavar's new thane is not an easy problem to solve," John said with sympathy. "Saxton is."

The dwarf looked up at Embers, "Her I know by reputation." He turned to look at John.

John bowed slightly. "John," he said.

Dazar looked at his armor, the age and weather of it, and made an intuitive leap. "You served under the Good King."

John pursed his lips. "That was a long time ago."

Dazar shook his head once. "Not to me." He picked up his battlestaff and stepped forward. "I knew him, you see. Omund was a fine king. The best we'll see even in a life as long as mine."

No one spoke for a moment. "These people," Dazar said. "These villagers. Do they know what they ask?"

John didn't answer.

"Do they know that asking us for help, asking *you*," Dazar looked Sir John up and down "... means starting something they *must* see through to the end? It means hardship, privation, *death* buying a future for their children? You told them this?"

John shook his head.

"Well why not?!" Dazar demanded. "You of all people must understand ..."

"Dazar," John said, and his measured voice was a quick counter to Dazar's protest. "These people are already at their wits' end. Just ... just surviving, putting food on the table, keeping their children warm. Giving them *hope*. It's already more than should be asked of anyone. And then coming to us, swallowing their pride. Asking us for aid.

"It's our job to understand the job *for* them." Then, quieter, John added, "And forgive them, ahead of time, for when they weaken, and give in to fear."

Dazar stared at the man, this knight of Tor, and looked at Embers quietly radiating pride in her friend.

"Hmm," Dazar grunted. He opened a pouch on his chest armor and inserted the coin. "We must find a troubadour, to tell the tale of Saxton's fall. I cannot wait to hear how it ends!" He walked between them, carrying his staff over his shoulder.

"Come!" he barked. "There's a world needs mending! Why stand we here idle?"

John was grinning madly at Embers. She held up three fingers.

Dwarf Traits

Dwarf heroes have access to the following traits.

Signature Trait: Runic Carving

You can carve a rune onto your skin with 10 uninterrupted minutes of work, which is activated by the magic within your body. The rune you carve determines the benefit you receive, chosen from among the following:

Detection: Pick a specific type of creature (such as goblins or humans) or object (such as gems or potions). Your rune glows softly when you are within 20 squares of any creature or object of that type, even if you don't have line of effect to the creature or object. You can change the type of creature or object as a maneuver.

Light: Your skin sheds light for 10 squares. You can turn this light on and off as a maneuver.

Voice: As a maneuver, you can communicate telepathically with a willing creature you have met before and who is within 1 mile of you. You must know the creature's name, and they must speak and understand a language you know. You and the creature can respond to one another as if having a spoken conversation. You can communicate with a different creature by changing the rune.

You can have one rune active at a time, and can change or remove a rune with 10 uninterrupted minutes of work.

Purchased Dwarf Traits

You have 3 ancestry points to spend on the following traits. (*Quick Build:* Grounded, Spark Off Your Skin.)

Great Fortitude (2 Points)

Your hearty constitution prevents you from losing strength. You can't be made weakened.

Grounded (1 Point)

Your heavy stone body and connection to the earth make it difficult for others to move you. You have a +1 bonus to stability.

Spark Off Your Skin (2 Points)

Your stone skin affords you potent protection. You have a +6 bonus to Stamina, and that bonus increases by 3 each time you gain a new level.

Stand Tough (1 Point)

Your body is made to withstand the blows of your enemies. Your Might score is treated as 1 higher for the purpose of resisting potencies, and you gain an edge on Might tests when called for to resist environmental effects or a creature's traits or abilities.

Stone Singer (1 Point)

You have a magic connection to the earth. When you spend 1 uninterrupted hour singing, you can reshape any unworked mundane stone within 3 squares. You can't destroy this stone, but you can move each square of it anywhere within 3 squares, piling it off to one side to dig a hole or building it up to create a wall.

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WODE ELF

Children of the sylvan celestials and masters of the elf-haunted forests called wodes, wode elves see all forests as their domain by birthright. They know and enjoy their reputation among humans for snatching children who wander too far into the woods. Humans *should* fear the trees.

The wode elves' natural ability to mask their presence, called *glamor*, complements their guerilla style of fighting, letting them strike quickly from cover and then meld back into the underbrush. These traits also make the relatively few wode elves who dwell in cities naturally adept at urban warfare.

On Wode Elves

"I'm scared," Wenna said. "We should go back." The forest felt as if it was closing in on them.

"We're not going back," Jeremy said. Normally, such a statement would be the end of the discussion, but they were alone and far from home.

"What if we're going in circles?"

"Then we *keep* going in circles!" Dade said from somewhere up ahead. "Until we find the elves."

"The elves have found *you*!" a clear, bright voice called out. The children froze. They scanned the wood, but there were no signs of the speaker.

Then, only a few feet from them, a half-dozen figures melded out of the background, as if the trees and bushes and grass had been painted on them to perfectly match the wode. They wore light armor covered in leaves, moss, and vines, and they bristled with weapons.

Meliora gasped. Credan frowned, and Wenna hushed her. Dade was ushered back toward them by two more wode elves, his bow in hand. The children huddled together, Credan's hand on the symbol of Saint Gryffyn around his neck, and Jeremy's hand on the hilt of his sword.

The elves were tall, taller than an adult human, but seemed always to crouch as soon as they stopped moving. Their eyes were unsettling, widely spaced and huge. But it was their ears, long and tall and twisting and set with great scoops to catch all sound, that marked them as elves of the wode.

"Admittedly, though, most terrans regret the experience." The voice they had heard called out again—from above. The children looked up and now saw a wode elf with long, furry, twisting ears and nut-brown skin smiling down at them. They wore a brightly colored outfit. The children watched the elf leap lightly from branch to lower branch until finally landing with a flourish on the forest floor before them.

"*Consort!*" An elf before them spoke in Yllyric as he stood from his crouch and bowed. "*We have been tracking these since they entered the wode.*"

Meliora, who understood the words, whispered to the others. "They called that one 'consort!' "

Llyander smiled, looking from Meliora to the elf who had just addressed them with a *See? I told you!* look on their face.

The tall, swashbuckling elf bowed to the children. "I am Llyander, the Lightning Strike, Consort to Queen Imyrr." They indicated the elf who had spoken. "This is my cousin, Rhythylthin."

"How did you know we were here?" Jeremy asked. Dade stood just behind him, with an arrow now nocked.

The one called Rhythylthin reached out while Dade was turned, looking at the queen's consort, and deftly plucked the arrow from the young man's bow.

"Nothing happens within the wode without our knowledge," the elf said. Dade spun on him and nocked another arrow. "And approval," Rhythylthin added, clenching his fist and snapping the arrow in it.

"You come bearing a gift for our queen—the *Codex Dryadalis*." Llyander nodded at the heavy scroll Meliora carried. "My cousin Rhythylthin here was sent to capture you and escort you to the Orchid Court. But I am the queen's consort, and have my own thoughts on the matter."

The elf smiled at the children. "But have no fear," they said. Their Vaslorian was perfect, their voice a melody. "You are safe ... now." The pause before "now" spoke volumes.

"Are you a ... a ... boy or a girl?" Wenna asked.

Llyander smiled gaily. "I am a song! I contain melodies and harmonies alike," they said. Wenna smiled.

Rhythylthin rolled his eyes. Llyander noticed this and winked at him. "Fashions change. My cousin here wears the new trends." They gestured at the other wode elf's garb and masculine appearance. "Me? I'm old fashioned." They gestured to their own outfit and appearance. "*Grace* never goes out of style."

Llyander turned to Rhythylthin and the rest of the wode elf band. "Their gift goes to Lord Tear, methinks. I will escort them." Then, suddenly imperious, they added, "You may go."

In spite of his previous skepticism toward the queen's consort, Rhythylthin straightened and bowed. As one, the elves turned and flowed into the wode. In only a few steps, they melded into the trees and undergrowth.

"How did they *do* that?" Meliora demanded, spinning to confront their benefactor.

"Hmm? Do what?" Llyander asked, looking after the elves, wondering what Meliora meant.

"Just ... disappear like that!"

Llyander looked at the other children with a combination of wonder and annoyance. "Do terran children not play hiding games?"

"Well ..." Jeremy looked at Dade, who was no help. "We do, but ..."

Llyander made a theatrical, dismissive gesture with one arm. "Well, it is the same thing, then. But for our people, it is a game we practice all our lives! We would be poor protectors of the wode if we could not conceal ourselves within it."

"But that was ..." Meliora was frustrated at the elf's seeming evasion. "That was *magic*!"

"You say? Well," Llyander mused, "terrans are a part and apart, it is said. It is your blessing and your curse methinks. Perhaps someday you can explain it to me!" The elf's eyes twinkled at Meliora's frustration.

Llyander turned and marched off. "Come!" they called. The children ran to catch up.

"Where are we going?" Wenna asked.

"I enjoy the favor of Lord Tear," Llyander said. "We are old friends. With me as your guide, he will treat you well—likely bestow favor upon you! You should be in anticipation of great treasure." They smiled.

The elf stopped suddenly and spun toward them, serious but kindly. They pointed to each of the children in turn.

"I will instruct you on the proper etiquette, but remember this: Lord Tear will test us. Some tests for you and some for me. The high elves and the wode elves are but distant cousins. You will hear much that is polite, much that is flattering, but it is all another kind of glamor. It hides deep tensions, recently exacerbated by the treaty with Ajax."

The children nodded. The elf, satisfied, marched off and they followed.

Jeremy turned to Dade. "I feel like we're in a dream," he whispered.

"You are!" their escort called out. "The wode is a dream! With a little luck, one you may soon wake safely from."

Wode Elf Traits

Wode elf heroes have access to the following traits.

Signature Trait: Wode Elf Glamor

You can magically alter your appearance to better blend in with your surroundings. You gain an edge on tests made to hide and sneak, and tests made to search for you while you are hidden take a bane.

Purchased Wode Elf Traits

You have 3 ancestry points to spend on the following traits. (*Quick Build:* Swift, Otherworldly Grace.)

Forest Walk (1 Point)

You can shift into and while within difficult terrain.

Quick and Brutal (1 Point)

Whenever you score a critical hit, you can take an additional main action and an additional move action instead of just a main action.

Otherworldly Grace (2 Points)

Your elf body and mind can't be contained for long. Whenever you make a saving throw, you succeed on a roll of 5 or higher.

Revisit Memory (1 Point)

Accessing memories is as easy as living in the present for you. You gain an edge on tests made to recall lore.

Swift (1 Point)

You have speed 6.

The Wode Defends (2 Points)

You have the following signature ability. Signature abilities can be used at will.

The Wode Defends

Thorny vines erupt from every surface and attempt to bind your foe.

Magic, Ranged, Strike | **Main action**

Ranged 10 | One creature

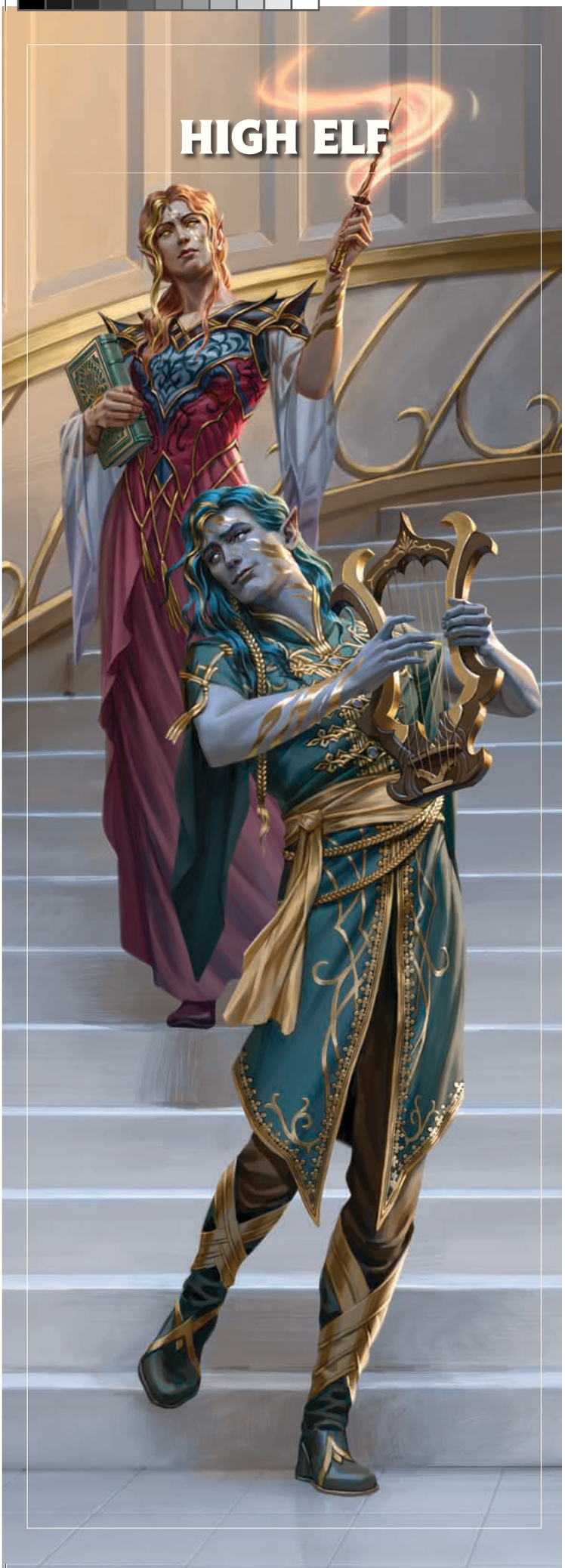
Power Roll + Might or Agility:

≤11 2 + M or A damage; A < WEAK slowed (save ends)

12–16 3 + M or A damage; A < AVERAGE slowed (save ends)

17+ 5 + M or A damage; A < STRONG slowed (save ends)

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HIGH ELF

Children of the solar celestials created to tend their libraries and attend to the true elves as heralds, high elf history describes a better age, before the coming of humans and war. A time when the celestials were still in the world, and all that mattered was art and beauty.

In the millennia since their creators retired to Arcadia, the high elves built a civilization for themselves, primarily living in and among the fallen celestial sky cities. With no creators left to please, the elves continue as they did before—collecting lore and knowledge, worshipping art, and turning more inward and distrusting of outsiders with each generation.

On High Elves

"They're so beautiful," Wenna said. "It's hard to imagine we're in danger."

"It's not that hard," Dade said darkly.

The five children stood alone in the center of a large circular courtyard open to the sky, their wode elf escort Llyander at their side. Lord Tear, King of the High Elves, sat on a marble throne, holding the scroll of the *Codex Dryadalis* in his lap. He had not spoken since Llyander made their speech and handed the codex over. The members of the court, nobles and courtiers and learned sages, gathered to watch. Implacable warriors in golden plate with fine filigree etched into the metal stood guard around the perimeter.

"They seem like ..." Meliora said, searching for the words.

"Like the lords of all the world," Wenna said with awe and wonder.

"And we are their prisoners," Jeremy said, looking at his brother Dade and Credan beside him.

"You're not prisoners," Llyander said quietly. "You are guests. You're safer here than you would be even in your own homes."

"Yes," Jeremy said, looking at the nearest guards with their longspears and swords. "We feel very safe."

"Who are you kidding?" Dade said. "Everyone knows how much elves hate humans."

At this, Lord Tear exchanged a look with Llyander, consort to Queen Imyrr. It was a knowing look, full of sadness and melancholy. Then he broke his silence.

"Show me an elf who hates humans," he said, his voice deep and sonorous, "and I will show you an elf who loved a human and watched them grow old and die." He looked at the children for the first time and smiled a melancholy smile. "Love is like sunlight for us, you see. We love completely but rarely. The loss of it means an eternity of grief for us."

The king tapped the scroll against his lap, seeming to have reached a decision.

"Well done, consort. Young humans, your escort here seeks to shame me. For they know well they could have taken this prize to their queen and earned her favor. Instead, Llyander brought it to me in the hopes that by doing so, they deliver me the power necessary to throw off the yoke of Ajax's rule. Long has Llyander resented the decision I made and sought to change it ..."—he looked at Llyander—"... by changing my mind."

Llyander nodded deferentially, silently congratulating the king on his insight.

"Alas, your escort's efforts are for naught." Then the king's face became softer. He held up the heavy scroll. "But this is not nothing," he said. "We made a treaty with Ajax to deliver unto him any artifacts our search teams discover from the ruins of this city. He benefits from this bargain more than we. But this, methinks, will stay with us. It was written by my grandmother's grandmother in the youth of the world, and there are some things which must be denied the Iron Saint, even should they violate the treaty."

Llyander turned to the children and smiled brilliantly, eyebrows waggling in a show of glee. Wenna and Credan couldn't help but smile. "Well, you see children?" Llyander said. "We only have *more* to do, not everything to do."

The king stood up and a herald beside the throne announced, "Gather ye, and attend! The Lord of Fallen Irranys, Morning Dew on a Single Leaf Like a Tear from the Sun, speaks. And know his word is law!"

Lord Tear glided down the steps until he was standing, as tall as Llyander, before the children. His face was noble and beautiful. Wisps of silver-like strands of smoke spread across his golden skin. He seemed at once eternal and youthful.

"You have heard many things about my people, but this above all you should know. We do not value lore for lore's sake, but beauty first and above all other things. And the truth, to us, is a kind of beauty. Thus do we find knowledge beautiful.

"You have returned something not only of enormous worldpower, but at the same time, a work of art my ancient relative labored over for many of your centuries. It is something of a miracle that it is returned to me now. I will not forget this. You have made an ally of the lord of the high elves. And though you lead brief lives, while you live, you shall have the favor of the elves." He turned to hand the scroll over to a sage and confer with his herald.

"He seems wise," Credan said.

"And smart," Meliora said.

"I'm surprised how kind he is," Jeremy said. "He seems a good king."

Llyander chuckled. Wenna noticed. She didn't say anything at first, but eventually she couldn't resist. "What?"

Llyander raised an eyebrow, then walked in front of the children so that as the wode elf spoke, their back was to the king.

"Do you remember when my cousin's soldiers hid in the wode?" they said, their voice low. "How astonished you were?"

Wenna and Meliora nodded. Llyander nodded to the guards and guests. "This is *their* glamor. Whatever you find pleasant and attractive in another? That is what you see in them. If you value good humor, they are jesters. If you value beauty, they are breathtaking. If you find intelligence attractive, they are sages. It is not just an effect of appearance, though it is also that. It is one of *demeanor*."

"But how do they *do* ..."

Llyander put a finger to their lips, silencing young Meliora. "It is not a thing they *do*. It is an effect in your *mind*."

"You mean they don't even know they're doing it?" Meliora asked.

"Then what do they really look like?" Wenna asked.

Llyander shrugged. "What does anyone really look like?" And while the other children chalked this up to their escort's normally abstruse mode of communication, Meliora caught a glimpse of understanding somewhere in her mind.

The king turned back to them. "Should any of you seek hidden lore or deep wisdom, please allow me to serve you first. But you, young woman, the human child who learned our language, I name thee *elf friend*. And my naming carries power. You will find the learning of our lore will come more quickly to you, and all those who still revere the elves will give you safe passage in their lands."

Llyander put their hands on their hips and regarded the children. "Not bad for your second quest. What shall you do for an encore?"

High Elf Traits

High elf heroes have access to the following traits.

Signature Trait: High Elf Glamor

A magic glamor makes others perceive you as interesting and engaging, granting you an edge on Presence tests using the Flirt or Persuade skills. This glamor makes you appear and sound slightly different to each creature you meet, since what is engaging to one might be different for another. However, you never appear to be anyone other than yourself.

Purchased High Elf Traits

You have 3 ancestry points to spend on the following traits. (*Quick Build:* High Senses, Otherworldly Grace.)

Glamor of Terror (2 Points)

When a foe strikes, you reverse the magic of your glamor to instill fear into their heart. Whenever you take damage from a creature, you can use a triggered action to make that creature frightened of you until the end of their next turn.

Graceful Retreat (1 Point)

You gain a +1 bonus to the distance you can shift when you take the Disengage move action.

High Senses (1 Point)

Your senses are especially keen and perceptive. You gain an edge on tests made to notice threats.

Otherworldly Grace (2 Points)

Your elf body and mind can't be contained for long. Whenever you make a saving throw, you succeed on a roll of 5 or higher.

Revisit Memory (1 Point)

Accessing memories is as easy as living in the present for you. You gain an edge on tests made to recall lore.

Unstoppable Mind (2 Points)

Your mind allows you to maintain your focus in any situation. You can't become dazed.

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HAKAAN

In spite of their friendly, outgoing nature, the rare presence of a hakaan in human society is considered a harbinger. An omen of dark times.

Descended from a tribe of giants in upper Vanigar, the original Haka'an tribe made a bargain with Holkatya the Vanigar trickster god. They traded some of their gigantic size and strength for the ability to see the future.

But Holkatya betrayed them, and the only future a hakaan is allowed to see is the moment and nature of their own death. These visions are never of some mundane tragedy. No hakaan ever received a vision of dying from choking on a grape. This Doomsight is always momentous. Always dramatic.

The Doomsight can happen at any moment. It does not come for all or even most hakaan, but when it comes, it is considered an act of overwhelming hubris to ignore it. Trying to escape the Doomsight means a painful, tragic death, and cursing your family to live with shame.

But the only hakaan the average human meets is one trying to fulfill their doom. The human superstition—that the arrival of one or more hakaan in human lands is a sign of great forces acting in the world, auspicious times—is literally true. In dark times, many hakaan experience the Doomsight and leave their communities to venture out into the mundane world, in search of their destiny.

Humans in Vanigar have their own word for this concept of a personal fate. "Wyrd." Traditional hakaan sometimes refer to the Doomsight as "wyrdken."

On Hakaan

The gate, or door, or whatever it was started to close. With Dazar on the other side of it.

"Embers!" John called out, but the high elf was surrounded.

At that moment, a detonation. An explosion of sound that knocked the demons back. And a giant stood before the lumbering egress.

Dust settled on the ground behind the giant, and John realized the thunderclap was the sound of the giant running to them. Air that couldn't get out of the way fast enough, tortured by the pressure of his speed.

The rectangular, toothed egress demon was twelve feet tall at least, the giant almost matching its immense size.

In the instant before the maw of teeth and eyeballs shut, the giant grabbed each side of the mouth, and pulled. Muscles the size of hounds bulged. Tendons like ship cables stood taught, quivering with strain. "Not today!" the giant shouted. "Not TODAY!!"

As the giant forced the maw open, glowing tentacles writhed out of it, wrapping around the giant's arms, legs, neck. "Hahah!" the figure laughed. "You'll find … MY flesh …" the giant's bravado hid the fact that he was at the uttermost limits of his strength. "… too RICH … for your taste!"

John knew what the giant did not—the tendrils drained life, sapped energy. The living portal would gain the strength it needed to defeat the giant by drinking his own life force.

But the arrival of the giant changed the equation. John saw a new solution. The hakaan risked his life to buy them options, and Sir John of Tor would not let the giant risk his life in vain.

Kicking the styrich back gave John room to move, and he dashed toward Embers. A shout, and a thrust into the soulraker's back, and the demons surrounding Embers turned to face Sir John.

He had to focus so intently on the demons who now surrounded him, he wasn't even sure Embers knew what to do. But he needn't have worried. When he risked a glance, she was already gone. A light fall of starstuff the only evidence she had translated into void.

Dispatching a chimeron, John saw Embers emerge from the other side of the egress demon with Dazar in her arms. John couldn't tell if Dazar was conscious. He might even be dead. Who knew what lurked on the other side of that living portal to the Abyssal Waste?

The hakaan struggled against the living gateway to that blasted world. One leg buckled and the stone warrior fell to one knee. The door would take him just as it took their dwarf conduit.

Then, rising behind the egress demon, the high theocron, his battle-staff glowing.

"Back!" Dazar conduit of Zarok, Law-Giver shouted, smashing at the flesh of the living doorway with his battlestaff. "To hell!" He swung again.

The doorway quivered and bled, and the giant stood up. "Yes!" He called out. "YES!"

John and Embers joined the fight. The gamble, unspoken, was that the summoned demons would evaporate if their living portal were destroyed. It paid off.

They only had a moment before the demons swarmed them, but a moment was all it took before the hakaan shouted and finally ripped the bloody egress demon apart with his bare hands.

The demons in midstride all turned inside out, leaving bubbling, steaming pools of organs, eyeballs, and teeth on the ground. Leaving four heroes gasping from the fight.

"I told you ..." Dazar said, hands on his knees. "Not to open! That book!"

"You didn't say 'Don't open that,'" John said, leaning back and gulping air. "You just said it was dangerous. I knew it was dangerous!"

"Well met!" The giant laughed at the two friends squabbling.

"Well met indeed," Sir John said getting his breathing under control as the group gathered before the giant. "Thank you for rescuing my friend."

"I had the situation under control," Dazar muttered, all evidence to the contrary.

"Of a surety!" The giant's humor matched his size. "It was my honor to grant thee aid, nothing more."

"You've been following us for a while," Embers said. John wondered what she meant.

"From the beginning," the giant said enigmatically.

"Don't take this the wrong way," John confessed, "but I was afraid we'd meet a barrow-man on this journey."

The giant smiled "Fear? At a meeting of friends? Ah these must be treacherous times indeed if simple folk like us have cause to fear meeting strangers."

"No offense," John said. "It's just that ... well ... we only ever see one of you when you come down from the hills. Following your doom. Which is usually a ..." John tried to find a less dramatic way to say it, but nothing came to mind. "A tide of ill-omen."

"You are following your wyrd," Embers said.

The giant shook his head. "Following my brother. He hurtles headlong to meet his doom, which I deem is bound up in this matter of this Sky Tyrant."

"Ajax," Dazar said. And the hakaan could hear the darkness in his voice.

"Aye. I did not understand why his path and yours seemed coincident, but now I think it has something to do with the thing they all seek. His demons."

John looked at Embers. "One of the Eleven Who Shall Not Be Named," she said. "The fifth, I suspect. They were the elite deathless servants of the Lord of Swords who once ruled this land, many ages ago. Ajax is collecting the artifacts of ancient emperors. And their servants too, it seems."

The giant nodded solemnly. "You are lorewise. My trust in you was well-placed. I am Ardashir," he placed one palm on his forehead, the other over his heart, and bowed his head once. "It would be my pleasure to journey with you awhile. Stalwart allies are rare and precious in these times." He grinned. "Good company even more so."

"No armor, no sword or staff," Dazar noticed. "Hakaan do not use weapons?"

"Many do!" Ardashir said. "I do not. I left the hills of my people long ago to pursue a different path. A path of order and discipline. It is my birthright perhaps."

"He's a null," Embers explained. "They eschew all weapons and implements of war. It is part of their creed, as I understand it."

"Strength alone might serve," Dazar nodded, "when the strength is such as yours."

Ardashir grinned. "Strength alone is not enough." He assumed a fighting pose, hands clenched, arms in a guarding position before him. "Discipline, training, focus. These are my implements."

"Well you can't ever be disarmed," John said. "That could be useful."

Ardashir's smile was brilliant. "I suffice," he said.

Hakaan Traits

Hakaan heroes have access to the following traits.

Signature Trait: Big!

Your stature reflects your giant forebears. Your size is 1L.

Purchased Hakaan Traits

You have 3 ancestry points to spend on the following traits. (*Quick Build:* Doomsight, Forceful.)

All Is a Feather (1 Point)

You are exceptionally strong. You gain an edge on tests made to lift and haul heavy objects.

Doomsight (2 Points)

Working with your Director, you can predetermine an encounter in which you will die. When that encounter begins, you become doomed. While doomed, you automatically obtain a tier 3 outcome on tests and ability rolls, and you don't die no matter how low your Stamina falls. You then die immediately at the end of the encounter, and can't be returned to life by any means.

If you don't predetermine your death encounter, you can choose to become doomed while you are dying with the Director's approval (no action required). Doing so should be reserved for encounters in which you are dying as a result of suitable heroism, such as making a last stand against a boss or saving civilians, or when the consequences of your actions have finally caught up to you—not because you're playing a one-shot and have nothing to lose, Hacaarl.

Additionally, when your Stamina reaches the negative of your winded value and you are not doomed, you turn to rubble instead of experiencing death. You are unaware of your surroundings in this state, and you can't regain Stamina or have this effect undone in any way. After 12 hours, you regain Stamina equal to your recovery value.

Forceful (1 Point)

Whenever you force move a creature or object, the forced movement distance gains a +1 bonus.

Great Fortitude (2 Points)

Your hearty constitution prevents you from losing strength. You can't be made weakened.

Stand Tough (1 Point)

Your body is made to withstand the blows of your enemies. Your Might score is treated as 1 higher for the purpose of resisting potencies, and you gain an edge on Might tests when called for to resist environmental effects or a creature's traits or abilities.

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Humans belong to the world in a way the other speaking peoples do not. You can sense the presence of the supernatural—that ... oily smell in the air, as I've heard it described. And the presence of deathless causes the hairs on the back of your neck to stand up. Or why do you think graveyards affect you so? Whatever magic is, its grip on you is light. Whatever drives the deathless, your nature rebels against it.

"No one knows why this should be. We elves have no such senses. Nor do the elementals or the kanin ... the dwarves and the orcs as you say. What is it that sets humans apart? I am an historian, not a physician. I cannot say. Perhaps some of you will one day find out and teach us all the reason."

On Humans

So, we arrive here at the end of your first semester of Human Culture. I hope to see you next year in the Caelian Empire course, and though it may be hard to believe now, I often see former students' names in our textbooks years later. Perhaps that will be some of you.

I will now answer the one question I am asked most often, and which I save answering until the last day of class. What do I think of humans?

I am a high elf, as you deem it in your tongue. A child of the solar celestials. And I have taught this class, mostly to young humans, for thirteen centuries I have seen generations of your people come through this classroom, and that alone would well qualify me to answer this question.

What do I think of humans? Well, I will tell you.

I was here, teaching this class during the fire of Chaos 373. The fire *leveled this city*. Can you imagine that? Can you imagine the heat, the death, destruction that such a thing causes?

Six months after the Great Fire, your ancestors had rebuilt ... everything. I have seen many miracles in my life. Witnessing that feat might be chief among them.

Liches are almost always humans. Did you know that? I think I know why. Your lives are so short—almost as soon as you're born, you're thinking about dying, and you refuse to yield.

That refusal to yield to death ... to *death* ... is what drives you, I think. Drives you to leave the world better than you found it. Causes ruined people to rebuild great city.

We studied human history in this room. Did you feel that those great ancestors of yours were perhaps made of finer stuff than you? Do not think thus. I knew them, and I know you, and your future is greater. I sometimes think each human generation greater than the last—more courageous, more generous. Quicker to forgive.

Today, Ajax's name is on everyone's tongue, but we learned of many great evils that plagued this world. We met the Pharaoh Khorsekef, desperate, his power failing, as he opened the Great Tet and drank of the time stored there, becoming the Ultralich. He was defeated, and now rules the Necropolitan Ruin in the Abyssal Waste.

We watched Cthrion Uroniziir try to reduce the timescape into one singular universe, wiping out reality as we know it. She was defeated, and we see her cage every day.[1]

Each of these great evils was defeated by a coalition. The armies and heroes of many speaking peoples. And all of them—all of them—were led ... by humans. That's a fact. That's history. You can look it up.

Is there some rare trait that makes you uniquely qualified to lead disparate peoples, bring them together to achieve great things? I think ... there must be.

Those great humans, your ancestors, did not focus on differences. They did not *weigh* different people and grade them based on arbitrary traits deemed virtues and flaws. That is what Ajax does. No, those humans focused on the future. On making a better world ... for all of us. A world many of them knew they would not live to see. That is a sacrifice ... I can scarcely imagine.

1 Professor Cilliarwn did not elaborate on this.

The people who stand against Ajax and tyrants like him will be just like you—normal people. Priests and scholars and merchants and farmers. Maybe even teachers.

Stopping Ajax will require you to become something else. You must become heroes. Conduits of saints, warmasters of great armies. Censors and shadows. That may seem unlikely now, but the future has a way of surprising us.

Some of your names, I will see written in future textbooks.

But some of your names, I will see written in the stars.

Human Traits

Human heroes have access to the following traits.

Signature Trait: Detect the Supernatural

As a maneuver, you open your awareness to detect supernatural creatures and phenomena. Until the end of your next turn, you know the location of any supernatural object, or any undead, construct, or creature from another world within 5 squares, even if you don't have line of effect to that object or creature. You know if you're detecting an item or a creature, and you know the nature of any creature you detect.

Purchased Human Traits

You have 3 ancestry points to spend on the following traits. (*Quick Build:* Perseverance, Staying Power.)

Can't Take Hold (1 Point)

Your connection to the natural world allows you to resist certain supernatural effects. You ignore temporary difficult terrain created by magic and psionic abilities. Additionally, when you are force moved by a magic or psionic ability, you can reduce the forced movement distance by 1.

Determination (2 Points)

A tolerance for pain and distress allows you to push through difficult situations. If you are frightened, slowed, or weakened, you can use a maneuver to immediately end one of those conditions.

Perseverance (1 Point)

Giving up is for other people. You gain an edge on tests made using the Endurance skill. Additionally, when you are slowed, your speed is reduced to 3 instead of 2.

Resist the Unnatural (1 Point)

Your instinctive resilience protects you from injuries beyond the routine. Whenever you take damage that isn't untyped, you can use a triggered action to take half the damage.

Staying Power (2 Points)

Your human physiology allows you to fight, run, and stay awake longer than others. You increase your number of Recoveries by 2.

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The native denizens of Axiom, the Plane of Uttermost Law, memonek dwell in a land with lakes and trees and birds and flowers. But on this alien world, the lakes are seas of mercury, the birds glitter with wings of glass stretched gossamer thin, and the flowers' petals are iridescent metal as flexible and fragile as any earthly rose.

The minds of memonek are highly ordered. Their reason is their great pride. But when descending to the lower planes, including a manifold like Orden where law and chaos mix, a sickness comes over them—an uncontrollable sensation called emotion.

On Memonek

"You want to tell me what just happened?" Sir John asked. Count Revile avoided his gaze, then turned and stamped across the bloody battlefield. "I'm fine!" Revile shouted, all evidence to the contrary.

"I know what I saw," John said as he followed his friend. "You went into a *bloodlust*. And it's not the first time. Listen!" John shouted, uncharacteristically, trying to get the count to pay attention. "You *asked* me for help, remember? You want to get home," John gestured to the sky, "... and you asked for help and I *said*, 'Do you remember?' I said, '*Is there anything else we should know?*'

"Now I *meant*, 'Is there anyone coming after you we need to know about?' But it's starting to *seem like* there's something wrong with *you*. That you *knew about* and *chose* not to tell me."

Vithyaranu, Count of the ALAV *Revile* paced back and forth, his cloak billowing. John continued.

"Listen, whether you like it or not, whether I like it or not, I'm in charge of this mission. Either you tell me what's going on, or I have no choice. I *have* to conclude you're a danger to the team and cut you loose."

Revile stopped and turned to look at the rest of the party, recovering from their wounds. The memonek's white porcelain chest heaved as he tried to calm himself. His ceramic skin looked as strong as plate, but John knew it was brittle, fragile.

Count Revile took a deep breath. "We call it *velloparatha*," he said. "In your tongue it would be ... worldsick. Or world-sickness? It is a thing that happens ... to my people ... when they come to your world. It is an illness of ... of feeling. Emotion."

"Are you going mad?" John asked, his voice quiet. He wanted to give the count a chance to answer privately.

The memonek smiled ruefully. "It feels that way sometimes. I spent an hour this morning staring at an insect that landed on my finger. A *grasshopper* the dwarf called it. I thought I had never seen a thing so perfect and beautiful. That was awe. As powerful as I have ever felt. In the battle today, anger. Just as powerful.

"I thought I could resist it. When I arrived here and felt no different I thought perhaps worldsickness was a legend. But it is a slow process, this illness. These insidious emotions."

"No emotions where you're from?"

Count Revile shook his head. "Not like this. We are creatures of reason, we of Axiom. It is our art, our pride. Our religion sometimes methinks. We have emotions; joy, sadness, wonder, grief. But they are ... a fashion. They do not *happen* to us; they are something we indulge in, out of propriety. Here ... everything is order and chaos mixed. Even in *me*. In me." Revile placed his hand on his chest.

"In the battle today. That anger was not directed at Ajax's war dogs. It was at myself."

"At yourself? Why? What did you ... ?"

"John," the memonek said, and now it was his turn to whisper. "I was afraid. Afraid of ... of being wounded, of failing you, failing my friends. Of dying. And out of that fear came ... enormous anger. At myself. Anger that I was so weak so ... useless. Anger so ... strong, so powerful ... I forgot who I was."

John chuckled. "That's just ..." He smiled broadly. "That's just normal. We all feel that way."

"What? No, you don't understand ..."

"Oh I don't understand, okay, let me guess. It felt like you were gonna *piss* yourself."

"Yes!!"

"Yeah, happens to all of us."

"Even you?!"

Sir John shrugged. "Are you kidding? Sure. But it doesn't help. You still got a job to do. In fact I'd say that *is* the job. Anyone can learn the blade." He placed his hand on the pommel of his sword. "Nothing special about that. It's learning to deal with the *fear*. That's the job. What separates the professionals from the amateurs."

Count Revile said nothing, just thought.

"Feeling better?"

Revile nodded. "I always recover afterwards. But these outbursts come unbidden. Like thunder from a clear sky."

"Hm. Yeah. Well that explains what happened when you met Embers."

Count Revile did not like being reminded of that. He looked to the sky and shook his head. "I made a fool of myself."

"Don't be so hard on yourself. If you're trying to seduce our void mage you made a good start of it. She's three hundred years old. I've known her since I was fifteen. I don't think I've ever seen her *blush*. Anyway, now that I know what's going on, now that I know you're basically a giant teenager with overactive glands, I can relax a little."

Embers approached and handed John a small, heavy object. She looked at the two men then walked away.

"She was right," John said looking at the iridoss starcore. "They didn't know what it was, but they sure as hell didn't want us to get it.

"Here," John said, handing the engine over to Count Revile. "I guess you're free to go."

Revile looked at the elaborate cage of brass and glass holding a swirling blue starfield. "I guess I am," he said. He looked at Sir John. "I didn't expect our friendship to be so short."

John smiled and maybe blushed a little. "Well," he said looking at the rest of the crew, "being one of my friends these days is a hazardous profession."

The count just got more serious. "I was lucky to meet one such as you on this world."

John shrugged. "Only world I've ever known."

Count Revile hefted the starcore. "I have responsibilities to keep. I will return home and this place will be only a memory." The count was openly sad. "And you can forget about the alien you rescued and his ship of glass and steel."

"Oh, I doubt that," John said. "But I'll tell you this. I'll never look at the stars the same way again."

John offered his hand. Revile shook it and then held it.

"If there are many like you in this world of gods and sorcery," the noble memonek star captain said, "then your victory over evil is assured."

"I don't know about many," John said, extricating his hand. He looked at the dwarf, elf, and hakaan.

"But there might be enough."

Memonek Traits

Memonek heroes have access to the following traits.

Signature Trait: Fall Lightly

Your silicone body is low in density. Whenever you fall, you reduce the distance of the fall by 2 squares.

Signature Trait: Lightweight

Your body is light for a creature of your height. Whenever another creature attempts to force move you, you treat your size as one size smaller than it is.

Purchased Memonek Traits

You have 4 ancestry points to spend on the following traits. (*Quick Build:* Lightning Nimbleness, Nonstop.)

I Am Law (1 Point)

Your lawful nature and quick reflexes mean you give no quarter to creatures trying to get past you. Enemies can't move through your space unless you allow them to do so.

Keeper of Order (2 Points)

Your connection to Axiom, the plane of Uttermost Law, allows you to manage chaos around you. Once per round when you or an adjacent creature makes a power roll, you can use a free triggered action to remove an edge or a bane on the roll, to turn a double edge into an edge, or to turn a double bane into a bane.

Lightning Nimbleness (2 Points)

You can push your body to move at incredible speeds. Your speed is 7.

Nonstop (2 Points)

Your connection to Axiom allows you to regulate your movement. You can't be made slowed.

Systematic Mind (1 Point)

You gain an edge on tests made to parse schematics, maps, and other systematic documents that aren't inherently chaotic. In addition, you treat any language you don't know as if you know a related language.

Unphased (1 Point)

Your ordered mind can't be caught off guard. You can't be made surprised.

Useful Emotion (1 Point)

Velloparatha—the worldsickness—might hinder you, but you know how to turn your pain into something your enemies feel. At the start of any combat, you gain 1 surge.

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ORCS

An anger that cannot be hidden. A fury that drives them in battle. Orcs are famed throughout the world as consummate warriors—a reputation that the peace-loving orcs find distasteful.

The fifth of the speaking peoples, orcs arrived on Orden after humans and elves. They made their homes in the borderlands between those two cultures, preferring the natural forests and avoiding the elf-haunted wodes. For generations, this put them directly in the path of humans who cut down the trees and built roads and farms.

Each orc has within them a fire that causes their veins to glow once blood is drawn. This anger propels them right to the edge of death. The dichotomy between their desire to be left alone and their zeal in battle is summarized in a dwarf proverb:

"Be thankful orcs do not hold grudges."

On Orcs

The orc pulled her greataxe from the split skull of the newly dead ogre. Prone heroes scrambled to their feet. Dazar healed the wounded.

The orc hopped down from the corpse of the defeated. "Elg was an ruin ogre," she said. "Infected with a troll disease. An inconvenience for troll-kin but to an ogre ..." She indicated the mutated ogre. "You weren't to know."

"Oh, good," Sir John said with obvious relief. "You speak Caelian."

"Yes." The orc said. She seemed distant. She gave John a look. "I speak the language of your conquerors."

John smiled. He liked this orc already.

"By the stars!" Ardashir said with open joy on his face. "You saved our lives. It *must* be you who we seek."

Khorva looked at the assembled heroes. A motley band. "You did most of the work," she said. She seemed disinterested in them and everything.

"You waited until we proved our mettle before acting!" Dazar said, and from the way he spoke it was unclear if this was an accusation or mere observation.

"If you couldn't hold your own," the orc said, "there'd be no point helping you." Her eyes rested on Sir John.

"John," he said.

"Khorva," the orc said.

"Of the Howling," John said.

"*Late* of the Howling," Khorva said, and looked into the forest with apparent disinterest. *Already on the back foot,* John thought. *Well if it was easy, it wouldn't be called a job.*

"We've been looking for you," Dazar said.

Korva nodded without looking at the dwarf.

"I surmised as much," she said. "It seemed your plan was to wander around the wood until something tried to kill you in the hopes of attracting my attention."

"Well, we didn't have a lot of other options," John said. "We seek the chieftain of the Howling."

"That is my brother."

John looked at Embers. "We were told the Howling was led by a woman."

Khorva sighed and looked away into the forest. "My sister died leaving my people leaderless. I tried to save her. I failed. I tried to lead in her stead. I failed." She said these things with no emotion, no inflection. Then her gaze dropped to the sandy ground and her eyes unfocused. A moment passed.

"How clever the dead are," she said, her voice a little hollow, "to torment us from the grave."

John saw the broken swords on her belt. "Five swords," he said. "Five broken swords." He looked at Khorva anew. "I don't think I've ever seen an orc survived three challenges."

"They couldn't kill me and I wouldn't yield." She looked at the group of them skeptically. "Four of you?"

"We just got started," John said defensively. "And I'm working on a friend of mine. We'll see. One of the Storm Knights."

Khorva frowned. "I thought the Dragon Phalanx were dead."

"Yeah well," John said, wishing Vaant was here to watch this. "They couldn't kill him," he broke out in a feral grin. "And he wouldn't yield."

Khorva nodded once, impressed.

"We need the Howling," John said. "If we get you your tribe back ... ?"

Khorva sighed and said nothing for several moments. After a while, she returned from her reverie to look at John.

"I'd rather go fishing."

John smiled. "My sister liked fishing too."

"Why not talk to my brother?"

"Because we are not fools," Embers said, and Khorva locked eyes with her, standing a little straighter. The orc's brown eyes burned and it seemed the group rose somewhat in the her estimation. She nodded once.

"The folk of farm and field go to war," Dazar said, using the orcish term for humans. "A war against Lord Saxton and his priest."

Khorva turned to John. "How is this your matter?"

John tried to find a way to tell the story that wouldn't take all day. He kicked at a stone with his boot as he thought.

"A family came to me. They're desperate. Their village is desperate. They can either die, or fight. And they cannot fight. So they hired me."

Khorva raised an eyebrow. "How much did they buy you for?"

"Nine copper bits."

Khorva stared at him. "That's nothing"

John shrugged. "It was everything they had. The village sold everything they had left."

John relaxed as he saw Khorva's eyes soften. She understood.

"A difficult offer to refuse," she said.

"Aye." Dazar nodded solemly.

Khorva looked up to watch three crows idly circling, rising, riding a heat haze into the sky. "How many is the opposition?"

"Saxton has no regulars. Just some knights, we can take care of them. But he has the Whitewater. Led by Bonebreaker Dorokor. That's three companies of elite light orc foot against a handful of peasant levies. We need the Howling."

"Perhaps," Khorva said, and turned away from the crows to look out over the heroes. "I know Dorokor, she is not like my brother. A head of meat and muscle. Dorokor is a thinker. You seek the Howling because you seek a counter to the Whitewater." She looked at John. "But even better, *talk* to Dorokor. Deny Saxton his pet orc clan, and *earn* the allegiance of the Whitewater."

"Is such a thing possible?" Embers asked.

A moment passed. Khorva didn't break eye contact with John. "It's possible," she said.

"The Howling *or* the Whitewater tribe," Dazar said. "Either would be a formidable foe in any battle, such is the reputation of orcish warlore."

Khorva shook her head. "Orcs have no great love for battle. We love trees and green things. We love an unspoiled land. For this reason did Kul place us in the world. The last of the original speaking peoples."

"But also did Kul place the fire within you," Embers said.

"Yes," Dazar added. "You are not pacifists, you are warriors!"

"We are pacifists," Khorva said with an emphasis that seemed almost a shout. Then a beat of silence and a smile played across her lips. "And we are warriors."

"We're not here to make a deal," John said. "We're not for sale and neither are you. This is about righting a wrong. It's about helping people." He paused and something unrehearsed, unbidden came from his lips.

"It's about living with yourself. Sleeping at night."

"Battles do not bring restful sleep," Khorva said. "The opposite, I find."

"Battles bring glory! Battles make heroes!" Dazar insisted, and John felt like he learned something about the dwarf in that moment. He could hear that Dazar believed this to be true, and knew it was a lie. It was a test.

"War makes only one thing. Corpses." Khorva looked down at the high theochron, who nodded. Test passed.

"And veterans," Sir John said. "Who covet peace."

Khorva nodded. Respect. "Aye," she said.

She looked at each hero then at John again.

"Well," she said. "What do we do next?"

Orc Traits

Orc heroes have access to the following traits.

Signature Trait: Relentless

Whenever a creature deals damage to you that leaves you dying, you can make a free strike against any creature. If the creature is reduced to 0 Stamina by your strike, you can spend a Recovery.

Purchased Orc Traits

You have 3 ancestry points to spend on the following traits. (*Quick Build:* Glowing Recovery, Grounded.)

Bloodfire Rush (1 Point)

The magic coursing through your veins makes you run faster in the heat of battle. The first time in any combat round that you take damage, you gain a +2 bonus to speed until the end of the round.

Glowing Recovery (2 Points)

Your bloodfire allows you to regain your strength quicker than others. Whenever you use the Catch Breath maneuver, you can spend as many Recoveries as you like.

Grounded (1 Point)

The magic in your blood makes it difficult for others to move you. You have a +1 bonus to stability.

Nonstop (2 Points)

Your bloodfire supplies you with a constant rush of adrenaline. You can't be made slowed.

Passionate Artisan (1 Point)

When you are stirred by a passion for creation, your bloodfire allows you to work longer and harder. When you gain your initial skills from your career, culture, class, or other source, choose two skills from the crafting skill group, whether you have those skills or not. Whenever you make a project roll for a crafting project that uses these skills, you gain a +2 bonus to the roll.

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POLDER

After humans, polders are the most numerous and diverse ancestry in Orden. They are not humans, but they live in and among humans and share their gods and culture. Almost every human culture in Orden has a polder saint or a human saint venerated by polder.

Short, averaging 3½ feet tall, the polders' origins are obscure. They are a young species who, like humans, have no single patron god. Their ability to *shadowmeld* means they enjoy a reputation as excellent spies and thieves. Many polders consider this a base slander and point out they're also famed as chefs, though polders can be found in every profession, especially in cities.

On Polders

The three peasants—Jago, his wife Sarah, and his sister Beth—sat together watching the three heroes talk in the crowded common room of the inn. Well, Jackson Bootblack seemed to be doing most of the talking.

"This kind of shit doesn't work if it's just a bunch of ratcatchers like us," the polder said. "You need the people to rise up. Been fifteen years since Omund died—fifteen years of fighting wolves and bandits and worse. The people welcome a tyrant after that. They like order, you know? They adapt."

"If you stand on the grass long enough, it learns to lie flat," A Mist Curls Around Dying Embers said. "But what do *you* say?"

"Eh?" the polder asked her. But he glanced at Sir John staring at him.

"You say the people have no stomach for rebellion," Embers said. "But what about you?"

"Oh," the polder said, "I say it doesn't matter much what I say. Why's he looking at me like that?" he asked the high elf and pointed at Sir John. Realizing he was being rude, John shook his head to clear it. "Sorry, I just … I never met a polder before," he said.

"Are you kidding me?" Jackson said.

"No! Sorry, I just …"

"What are you, from the moon? Where you from that you never met a polder before? There's polder in every fucking village and town from here to the sea."

"Really? That's weird. I'm from Tor, I've been all over—just never met a polder before."

Jackson looked at his friend, the high elf void mage. "Am I crazy?"

"You're not crazy." Embers smiled. She was enjoying watching two of her friends get to know each other. "John's just never run into one, it seems."

"Well, we're adorable," the polder said, and drank some ale.

"They must have been around I guess," John said. "I probably just never noticed."

The polder put his drink down. "Oh, thank you. Thank you very much. You know, it's funny. I never have any problem noticing you big assholes. One of you makes about as much noise as a cow, which … I don't even know how you manage that."

"You're talking just … my voice is just as loud as yours!"

"I mean the way you walk around. Just the way you move, the way you stand up and sit down. You make so much goddamn noise."

Jago, Sarah, and Beth all smiled at the exchange.

"Humans are loud, yes," Embers agreed.

"Do we have to … can we talk about something else, please?" John said.

"I just …" The polder wouldn't let it go. "You seriously never … you never been to an inn? Cavall's teeth, I can't count how many inns and taverns I've been to run by polders, got polders in the kitchen or waiting tables. One of the only two things we're good at, I think."

"Yeah?" John asked. "What's the other one?"

The little man smiled. "Getting into places we ain't supposed to be."

"Now we're talking," Sir John said. "You were saying we need the people behind us. I agree."

"Yeah, okay. To business: How to rally the people." The polder took the question seriously. "It's not hard. First, we need someone they'll rally around. I could make someone up, invent a local folk hero, but if we can

find the real thing? They just need to look the part, that's all. I'll take care of the rest."

"I'm working on that," John said. "But it's ... slower going than I thought. I'm betting on a long shot."

"What's the holdup?"

John thought about how to put what he knew into words. "You know ..." He shrugged. "Some people can only be heroes if they think they're better than everyone else. Some people can only be heroes once they realize they're not. And some people ..."

He looked at his drink, at the expensive clear glass the innkeep had given him because he recognized Sir John. He turned the glass slowly on the table, and now he was mostly talking to himself. "Some people still have to figure that out."

"Which is best?" Jackson asked, and Embers could tell the little man was testing John.

John took a deep breath and came back to reality. "Well. If we could be picky, we wouldn't need a hero," he said.

The polder looked at the high elf and nodded, impressed. Test passed.

"Okay. Well, if you've already got a candidate, I could get things started. The other half is: We need a good story—short, punchy. Something that'll catch on, needs to be easy to relate to, but bigger than life. A tax. A toll! Bridge toll, classic. An ogre ... no, three ogres. Yeah, three is better. Three ogres in Ajax's livery. A lone figure standing against them. See? Easy."

"Where are we going to find three ogres?" John asked.

"What do you mean?" Now it was the polder's turn to be confused.

"What do you mean, 'What do I mean?'" John said.

"I'm not ... we don't need *real* ogres." Jackson looked at the elf. "Is he for real?"

"Trust me," the void mage said.

"You mean you're going to make it up?!" John exclaimed.

"I ... " Jackson looked with incredulity at the high elf void mage, then back at the human. "Yes, I do mean that. Does he know what I do?" he asked the elf.

"He'll learn." Embers smiled.

The polder turned back to Sir John. "Hello. I lie for a living. And I'm *really good at it*. Sometimes also kill people, but only if lying or running away doesn't work."

John turned to Embers. "I thought he was a thief."

"I was a thief," the polder said.

"You *were* a thief."

"Yeah, I was with the Clock. Probably still am—they don't exactly let you just walk away. We sort of have an agreement. I agree to do what they tell me and they agree not to tell me to do anything."

"Did they kick you out, or did you quit?"

"Depends on who you ask. I don't like being told what to do. It's sort of a polder thing. Hereditary or ancestral or whatever. Everybody wants a polder chef until they start trying to tell us what to cook."

"So what are you now?"

"I'm annoying."

The elf smiled. "He's a troubadour—one of the best."

Sir John looked at him, nodded. "No lute, I notice. And you don't seem the type to sit by the hearth telling stories."

The polder grinned. "I ain't that kind of troubadour. I'm the other kind. I think the best story is the one people tell each other."

"Propaganda," Sir John said, a grin spreading across his face. The polder pointed a finger at him and smiled. John heard the door to the inn open behind him. This wasn't notable, but the gasp from the customers was.

"Hey," the polder said, looking past John to the doorway. "Hey, I think our folk hero just showed up. Damn, he looks the part all right. Or she, I can never tell with these guys."

John turned to see.

Sir Vaantikalisax loomed just inside the doorway, his scales and armor glowing in the light of the hearth fire. Sir John shot up out of his chair, a huge smile on his face.

"I, uh ..." Vaantikalisax said. The tall, broad draconian looked from John to the three peasants. Jago, Sarah, and Beth were beaming with even more joy than John, if that were possible.

The dragon knight stared at them for a moment, then turned back to his friend.

"Maybe you're right," he said.

Polder Traits

Polder heroes have access to the following traits.

Signature Trait: Shadowmeld

You have the following ability.

Shadowmeld

You become an actual shadow.

Magic — Self

Maneuver — Self

Effect: You flatten yourself into a shadow against a wall or floor you are touching, and become hidden from any creature you have cover or concealment from or who isn't observing you. While in shadow form, you have full awareness of your surroundings, and strikes made against you and tests made to search for you take a bane. You can't move or be force moved, and you can't take main actions or maneuvers except to exit this form or to direct creatures under your control, such as one you summon using an ability. Any ability or effect that targets more than 1 square affects you in this form only if it explicitly affects the surface you are flattened against. You can exit this form as a maneuver.

If the surface you are flattened against is destroyed, this ability ends and you take 1d6 damage that can't be reduced in any way.

Signature Trait: Small!

Your diminutive stature lets you easily get out of—or into—trouble. Your size is 1S.

Purchased Polder Traits

You have 4 ancestry points to spend on the following traits. (*Quick Build:* Corruption Immunity, Fearless, Graceful Retreat.)

Corruption Immunity (1 Point)

Your innate shadow magic grants you resilience against the unnatural. You have corruption immunity equal to your level + 2.

Fearless (2 Points)

Courage is all you know. You can't be made frightened.

Graceful Retreat (1 Point)

Your small size makes it easier for you to slip away from the fray. You gain a +1 bonus to the distance you can shift when you take the Disengage move action.

Nimblestep (2 Points)

A light step serves you well when speed is of the essence. You ignore the effects of difficult terrain and can move at full speed while sneaking.

Polder Geist (1 Point)

Evading others' notice gives you freedom to move. At the start of each of your turns during combat, if no enemy has line of effect to you or if you are hidden from or have concealment from any enemy with line of effect to you, you gain a +3 bonus to speed until the end of your turn.

Reactive Tumble (1 Point)

Staying light on your feet lets you quickly get back into position. Whenever you are force moved, you can use a free triggered action to shift 1 square after the forced movement is resolved.

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The dead walk among us. Some of them are happier about it than others.

Unlike the necromantic rituals that produce wights and wraiths and zombies, revenants rise from the grave through a combination of an unjust death and a burning desire for vengeance. Creatures sustained on pure will, they have no need of food or water or air—and, unlike their zombified cousins, they retain all their memories and personality from life.

These revenants are rare. Many are hunted by ignorant villagers who see only their dead flesh and assume the worst. Those who survive the pitchfork brigade either choose a solitary life, often as a wandering soul seeking out living company yet constantly in fear of it, or they migrate to a metropolis such as Blackbottom or Capital, where lost souls gather to make a home.

On Revenants

"I'm telling you, we are being *followed*."

"No one knows we're here. No one even knows this place *exists*! We got all day. We stash everything here, and take a sample to ..." The head thief pulled a vial out of a crate stuffed with straw and looked at it.

"It's just ..." The junior cutpurse spoke nervously. "There was this lady knight in Blackbottom sniffing around. She seemed serious. I got this weird ... chill when I looked at her."

"Hey," the head thief said, his brow furrowed as he looked at the label on the vial. "Where'd you say you bought this stuff? You said a ship—a ship from where?"

"I dunno, uh ... uh, Capital I think."

The head thief looked at the panicking cutpurse. "This lady knight—she have a red and blue device on her shield?"

"It can't be Lady Filliamo, can it?" one of the other thieves said.

There was a firm knock at the door to the safe house. A door which, from the outside, looked like an unremarkable section of wall.

"Oh, you've got to be kidding me."

"Nonono! How could she ... Capital was *nine months ago!*"

"She's a revenant, idiot! She doesn't even need air. She could have walked here! Just ... into the water and across the bottom of the sea! Why didn't you say anything?"

"I did! You asshole, I just did! I been trying to tell you for—"

"Man, there is a *difference* between, 'Hey I think we're being shadowed,' and, 'There's a deathless *copper* coming after us!' "

One of the four thieves opened a vial and dipped his dirk into the red oil within.

"What is *that* gonna do? *She's already dead!*" Another knock at the hidden door. "Forget it. Let her knock. Grab as many as you can, and we'll go out the back."

The head thief ran for the door out the back of the safe house. He jerked it open—and the other thieves watched as a silver flash silently flared across his forehead. Through the open door, they could see the silhouette of the knight, her open hand held up in front of her.

She clenched her hand into a fist and the *judgment* she had placed on the head cutpurse detonated, hurling him backward. He sprawled across the floor, conscious but stunned.

The gray-skinned knight walked into the room. Metal heels rang out on the wooden floor. She seemed relaxed, but her eyes burned with inner fire.

"Boys," Lady Filliamo said pleasantly. "Busy morning."

"How did you ... this is impossible, how did you *find* us?"

She looked at the man groaning on the floor. "Your boss didn't tell you about the vengeance mark?"

"You marked us. Back in Capital. You marked one of us and just ... just *walked* here."

"Don't be stupid. I marked you in Blackbottom. Capital was just normal detective work. I came here by *ship*." She smiled—black lips on pale gray skin.

"Come on." The braver of the three remaining thieves drew twin daggers. "She can't get all of us at—"

Lady Filliamo made a broad gesture with her right hand and argent marks flared across the foreheads of all three thieves. A clatter of weapons hitting the floor. Three pairs of hands slowly rose in the air.

"Good boys. Here, put these on." She tossed three pairs of manacles on the floor.

"Hang on, you can't arrest us," one of the thieves, unarmed and still holding his hands up, said. "This isn't Capital. You don't have jurisdiction!"

Lady Filliamo shrugged. "I'm a knight of the church. Jurisdiction's for the city watch." She drew her silver sword a few inches from the scabbard just to show them the blade.

"*I deal in steel.*"

Revenant Traits

Revenant heroes have access to the following traits.

Signature Trait: Former Life

Choose the ancestry you were before you died. Your size is that ancestry's size and your speed is 5. Unless you select one of the Previous Life traits (see below), you don't receive any other ancestral traits from your original ancestry.

Signature Trait: Tough But Withered

Your undead body grants you immunity to cold, corruption, lightning, and poison damage equal to your level, but you have fire weakness 5. You can't suffocate, and you don't need to eat or drink to stay alive.

Additionally, when your Stamina reaches the negative of your winded value, you become inert instead of dying. You fall prone and can't stand. You continue to observe your surroundings, but you can't speak, take main actions, maneuvers, move actions, or triggered actions. While inert this way, if you take any fire damage, your body is destroyed and you die. Otherwise, after 12 hours, you regain Stamina equal to your recovery value.

Purchased Revenant Traits

You have 2 ancestry points to spend on the following traits, or 3 ancestry points if your size is 1S. (*Quick Build:* Bloodless, plus Undead Influence if size 1S.)

Bloodless (2 Points)

For you, an open wound is indistinguishable from a scratch. You can't be made bleeding even while dying.

Previous Life: 1 Point (1 Point)

You select a purchased trait that costs 1 ancestry point from your previous ancestry. You can take this trait multiple times, selecting a different 1 point trait from your previous ancestry each time.

Previous Life: 2 Points (2 Points)

You select a purchased trait that costs 2 ancestry points from your previous ancestry.

Undead Influence (1 Point)

Your supernatural gifts allow you to influence other undead. You gain an edge on Reason, Intuition, and Presence tests made to interact with undead creatures.

Vengeance Mark (2 Points)

As a maneuver, you place a magic sigil on a creature within 10 squares. When you place a sigil, you decide where it appears on the creature's body, and whether the sigil is visible to only you or to all creatures.

You always know the direction to the exact location of a creature who bears one of your sigils and is on the same world. You can have a number of active sigils equal to your level, and can remove a sigil from a creature at will (no action required). If you already have the maximum number of sigils activated and you place a new one, your oldest sigil disappears with no other effect.

Additionally, you have the following signature ability. Signature abilities can be used at will.

Detonate Sigil

A magic sigil you placed on a creature explodes with energy.

Magic, Ranged, Strike — **Main action**

Ranged 10 — One creature bearing your sigil

Power Roll + Reason, Intuition or Presence:

≤11 3 + R, I or P damage; slide 1
12–16 5 + R, I or P damage; slide 2
17+ 7 + R, I or P damage; slide 3

Effect: The sigil disappears from the creature.

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The original servitor species of the synliroi—evil psions with near godlike power—the kuran'zoi liberated themselves during the First Psychic War. In the centuries since, they built their own culture and civilization as nomads of the timescape. The exonym "time raiders" was given to them by denizens of the lower worlds who, seeing the advanced technology the kuran'zoi wield, concluded they must be from the future.

Extraordinarily rare in Orden, time raiders thrive on the Sea of Stars, the Sea Between Worlds, where the winds of limbo roar.

In place of eyes, kuran'zoi possess crystalline ocular sensors that grant them high-spectral vision and which are hardened against the extreme radiations encountered in the Sea of Stars, permitting them to operate freely outside their vessels with only their portable rebreathers. Time raiders also have two sets of arms, allowing them to wield melee weapons at the same time as ranged weapons. A single well-trained kuran'zoi is like a squad unto themself.

On Time Raiders

"You will tell me the location of the ship you came here in."

Taxiarch Lycaon paced outside the ruined stone church. The four-armed woman with crystal eyes and flaming pink hair in a strip down the center of her shaved head sneered at him. She was chained to the ruin of a stone column outside the church.

"Is it that your brain is so small you must *talk* in order to *think*?" The woman's smile was a sneer.

Lycaon strode toward the alien, grabbed a length of chain around her waist and yanked on it, pulling it taut so the chain around her neck tightened. "You are going to die in any event," he said. "If you wish to deny me the pleasure of hearing you howl and scream for mercy, tell me what I want to know now and my dogs will kill you quickly."

Up close, she could see the fine stitching along Lycaon's cheeks and forehead, the very slight differences in skin tone that showed his skin was not his own.

"You seem to be made of *bits*," the alien said as she peered at Lycaon, her crystalline eyes catching and reflecting prismatic light. "And not the best bits. Leftovers? Is that what you are? A walking assemblage of cast-off *scraps*? Hahah, I thought the proteans were hideous. Someone should let them know! There are creatures even more foul-seeming and *useless* in the timescape."

The taxiarch smiled to himself, nodded with respect at the woman's epithets. He placed his foot on a low piece of rubble, once part of the wall of the stone church, and leaned his arm on his knee. He was not dressed as the other war dogs. No black leather for him. He wore a gold breastplate with the embossed head of a ram molded into it, a white cape over his back. Gold greaves and red leather boots and gloves. The other war dogs only had patches of hair but his was long and blond.

He struck a casual, jaunty pose. "Where is your worldship?" he said in a more reasonable voice. "Or came you here in a single-seater *starskimmer*?" At this, the alien's crystal eyes went wide, betraying surprise. "You see?" the taxiarch said, impressed with himself. "I am not a primitive like these peasants, who hounded you because you are alien." He nodded at the folk of the small town watching from the stables some distance away. "I am Ajax's elite. Better than his chosen. I was *made* for victory." Indeed, Taxiarch Lycaon looked almost fully human. Handsome and fit like a statue from Phaedros, which his model had almost certainly been inspired by. Unless you looked closely, there was no sign he was a product of the body banks. "If you agree to *lead me* to your vessel, I will let you go free."

The alien sighed. "'Blaap blaap blaap,'" she said. "You should hear yourself. Like barking *thrazz*, you sound to me. Who holds your leash I wonder? For surely a microbrain such as you could not command any more than these rabble." She nodded her head at the other twenty or so war dogs.

Her taunts worked. Lycaon hauled back and punched the alien in the jaw. Her head smashed into the ruined column. She was dazed but she shook it off and laughed.

"Look how easily this one is goaded!" she said. She spat out dark-blue blood and turned to the peasants gathered. "You people! Why do you let yourselves be cowed by these ... *bits*? Bits of people kludged together? Even the least of you is worth more than these."

"Perhaps from the air," Flight Captain Lyria offered, and she stroked the feathers of her giant hawk mount to calm it. "I could scout the forest around the ..."

"No!" Taxiarch Lycaon pointed a finger at the Hawklord and strode toward her. "*You* are the elite of Ajax's winged harriers, *I* am his chosen brigade commander. *We* are not scavengers! This one ..." he stabbed a gloved finger at the alien, "... will come to heel, or I will give her to my war dogs." He turned to face the chained alien, who yawned. Lycaon seethed.

"They may pull you apart," he said to her, and at this his squadron of soldiers, all in black leather and golden pauldrons, started making barking sounds. Then they laughed at each other.

"Or I may let my crucibite melt the skin from your bones." At that, a war dog clad in leather from head to foot wearing a heavy mask with glass circles where the eyes should be and some kind of canister over his mouth stepped forward. The long thin brass tube in his hands connected to a large metal tank on his back.

"Shall I let you choose?" the taxiarch said, and drew a dagger from his belt. "I will cut off one finger. If you cry out, *I* kill you. If not, another finger. And if you cry out *then* ..."

Slowly everyone assembled could make out the sounds of a conversation, quiet with a metallic ring to it. The voices got louder until eventually they could be heard.

"... should be ready for anything," one voice said, deep, commanding, and images started to form around and between the war dogs, the Hawklord, and the taxiarch. Like faded images in a manuscript they seemed, gaining pigment and clarity and, eventually, depth as their voices grew louder and clearer.

"Oh, thank you for the brilliant tactical advice," another voice, high pitched, piped up.

Suddenly, the images became three dimensional, solid, and seven heroes stood among them. A human in working battle plate. A dwarf with his battle-staff tipped with an hourglass. An orc with a huge battleaxe casually resting on her shoulder. A polder with twin rapiers in his hands. A tall willowy high elf with night-black skin and golden hair. An unarmed hakaan towering over everyone. And a dragon knight. Of all the motley band, it was the dragon knight who caused the people of the town to gasp. Even at a distance, even with the war dogs between them, they recognized the device of Good King Omund on the knight's shield.

The war dogs scrambled. For a moment, it seemed they might flee at this sudden intrusion, but the taxiarch bellowed "Hold fast!" and they held their ground, uncertainty over the unknown threat of a band of heroes battling in each of them against the certain fear of their commander.

"The hakaan looked around and saw a clump of villagers watching the scene from a distance, gathered around what looked like some stables. He waved. "Hello!" he said, smiling.

One of the villagers waved back before being shushed.

John looked at the taxiarch and immediately read the situation. It was a clear enough picture.

There was something about the war dogs. They loved Ajax's cruelty—reveled in it. John had crossed swords with other commanders in Ajax's army before. Ground Commander Vordokov was a professional—could be reasoned with, but he was an orc.

Not the war dogs—they were fanatics.

"What's this?" the taxiarch called out with a hungry grin. "Allies of the alien?" He was projecting confidence. Trying to muster his wary soldiers.

"Allies of all those who suffer, and seek justice," the dwarf announced.

Sir John ignored the war dog, tilted his head toward the alien. "Embers?"

"A kuran'zoi," the high elf said, and the alien held her head up with pride. "A time raider from the upper worlds. What the truth is I cannot say, and no people are all one thing. But by reputation? They're intractable, ungovernable, they loathe authority, hate tyranny and are totally, utterly without fear."

John watched the alien. They sneered their approval at Ember's summary. That was enough for Sir John, they could work out the details later. After everything they'd been through before, he trusted Embers explicitly.

He could see the shape of the next moments play out. All he had to do was take the initiative. If he was right, the whole thing would be over in seconds. There was no time to communicate. No time to plan, and everyone, everyone had to play their part.

John knew what came next, but he wasn't an assassin. He had his own part to play. He took a step forward, away from his teammates, and noted the taxiarch didn't react. That spoke volumes. He locked eyes with his enemy.

"She goes free," John commanded, his voice steel, "or you die here." He could feel the muscles tightening in his comrades, the whole company like a steel spring wound tight.

Lycaon cocked his head at Sir John and took a few foolish steps toward the tactician. He was just out of reach. But close enough.

"I see you are a man, like Ajax. Why do you lower yourself with these ... creatures?" The war dog taxiarch looked at the elf, giant, polder, dwarf, and dragon knight. "Little more than slimy things crawled out of the sea? Join us. Join me. Join Ajax. It'll be nice for you ..."—his voice lowered almost to a whisper—"... to be on the winning side for a change."

Sir John took a deep breath, his body language changed and that was enough. Several things then happened at once, so quickly no one would later be able to say who acted first.

Ember's eyes flashed into a starfield. The time raider's chains dissolved into starspace and reappeared around Flight Captain Lyria pinning her arms to her side. She was giving the hawklord an excuse to sit this one out. Gods, John was glad she was with them.

The time raider's right upper hand shot out, as though she'd been waiting for the void mage to do exactly what she just did, and her meson blaster leapt out of the hands of the war dog who'd chained her. The pistol made of glass and bronze slammed into her hand and its tip flared with prismatic light.

John felt his skin tighten as Dazar warded him, and from the sun's shadow cast by Taxiarch Lycaon the polder Jackson Bootblack emerged, a rapier in each hand, and no one saw him move from where he'd been a moment before.

The hakaan burst into action and sped past him like a blur.

At the same instant, a call—a horn. From directly behind John a blast of sound like a chord played by a dozen trumpets, and hope sang in his heart—the clarion call of the last Storm Knight!

At the sound, the orc dashed forward into a knot of wardog commandos, her axe already hewing about her.

John hadn't hesitated, he'd already drawn his sword and falchion. "All right, you patchwork son of a bitch." He charged Lycaon who fumbled with the shortsword on his belt.

"Draw steel!"

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Time Raider Traits

Time raider heroes have access to the following traits.

Signature Trait: Psychic Scar

Your mind is a formidable layer of defense. You have psychic immunity equal to your level.

Purchased Time Raider Traits

You have 3 ancestry points to spend on the following traits. (*Quick Build:* Beyondsight, Psionic Gift with Psionic Bolt.)

Beyondsight (1 Point)

As a maneuver, you can adjust your vision to allow you to see through mundane obstructions that are 1 square thick or less. While your vision is adjusted this way, you can't see the area within 1 square of you and you don't have line of effect to any creature or object in that area. You can restore your usual vision as a maneuver.

Foresight (1 Point)

Your senses extend past mundane obscuration and the veil of the future alike. You automatically know the location of any creature with concealment who isn't hidden from you within 20, and you negate the usual bane on strikes against such creatures. Additionally, whenever you are targeted by a strike, you can use a triggered action to impose a bane on the power roll.

Four-Armed Athletics (1 Point)

Your unique physiology enhances your movement. You gain an edge on tests that use the Climb, Gymnastics, or Swim skills when you can use all your arms in the attempt.

Four-Armed Martial Arts (2 Points)

Your multiple arms let you take on multiple tasks at the same time. Whenever you use the Grab or Knockback maneuver against an adjacent creature, you can target one additional adjacent creature, using the same power roll for both targets. Additionally, you can have up to two creatures grabbed at a time.

Psionic Gift (2 Points)

Choose one signature ability from the following options. Signature abilities can be used at will.

Concussive Slam

You slam an invisible force down upon the target.

Psionic, Ranged, Strike — **Main Action**
Ranged 10 — One creature or object

Power Roll + R eason , I ntuition or P resence:
≤11 2 + R , I or P damage;
12–16 5 + R , I or P damage; push 1
17+ 7 + R , I or P damage; push 2; M < STRONG prone

Psionic Bolt

You shoot forth a purple beam of psychic force that moves your target.

Psionic, Ranged, Strike — **Main Action**
Ranged 10 — One creature or object

Power Roll + R eason , I ntuition or P resence:
≤11 2 + R , I or P psychic damage; slide 1
12–16 5 + R , I or P psychic damage; slide 2
17+ 7 + R , I or P psychic damage; slide 3

Minor Acceleration

You fill yourself or an ally with a burst of speed.

Psionic, Melee — **Maneuver**
Melee 1 — Self or one ally

Effect: The target gains a bonus to speed equal to your Reason, Intuition, or Presence score (your choice) until the start of your next turn.

Unstoppable Mind (2 Points)

Your mind allows you to maintain your focus in any situation. You can't be dazed.

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Sage
Performer
Warden
Artisan

Chapter 4

BACKGROUND

What makes a hero? Is their desire to stand up for the innocent and protect others somehow innate? Are they born knowing that tyrants must fall? Does a higher power instill the idea that sometimes those least deserving of compassion are those who need it most?

No. A hero's life experience and background make them what they are. That background starts with the culture in which a hero was raised, and is threaded through the career that led them to a life of adventuring.

CULTURE

A hero's culture describes the beliefs, customs, values, and way of life held by the community in which they were raised. This community provides life experiences that give a character some of their game statistics. Even if a hero doesn't share their culture's values, those values shaped their early development and way of life. In fact, some people become heroes primarily from the rejection of the ways of their culture.

For our purposes, a hero's culture represents people, not a place. Yes, you might have grown up in the great city of Capital, but your culture is more specific than that. One hero's culture might be House Alvaro, a noble house in Capital where they were raised. Another's culture could be a group or organization that moves around, such as a band of pirates or a secret order of sorcerers sworn to protect books of fell magic. It helps to get specific when thinking about your culture, and working with the four aspects of a culture can help you do that: **language**, **environment**, **organization**, and **upbringing**.

Using Culture

Directors can use the rules in this section to build cultures that players can choose for their characters. Players can use these rules to build a unique culture or modify an existing culture for their character, working with the Director to find the right place for that culture within the world of the campaign.

In many worlds, at least some cultures have a majority ancestry. The people of Bedegar, a duchy in the region of Vasloria on Orden, are mostly humans. The folk dwelling in the Great Wode, a forest realm north of Bedegar, are primarily wode elves. However, you can always choose to be from one of these cultures and take a different ancestry. A dwarf raised in the culture of the Great Wode speaks Yllyric and probably knows a lot about nature, while a dwarf raised in the dwarf thanedom of Kal Kalavar speaks Zaliac and might know a good deal about smithing.

You can build your culture one aspect at a time, or you can use the following tables if you want to assess sample cultures or make your own culture quickly. To create an archetypical culture for a hero who grew up surrounded mostly by other members of their ancestry, use or modify the aspect options on the Typical Ancestry Cultures table. (Revenants are missing from this table because they don't gain their ancestry until after they die.) If you'd rather quickly create a culture based on a cultural archetype, such as a noble house or a pirate crew, use the Archetypical Cultures table, then add a language that fits the culture's concept.

Typical Ancestry Cultures

Ancestry	Language	Environment	Organization	Upbringing
Devil	Anjali	Urban	Bureaucratic	Academic
Dragon knight	Vastariax	Secluded	Bureaucratic	Martial
Dwarf	Zaliac	Secluded	Bureaucratic	Creative
Wode elf	Yllyric	Wilderness	Bureaucratic	Martial
High elf	Hyrallic	Secluded	Bureaucratic	Martial
Hakaan	Vhoric	Rural	Communal	Labor
Human	Vaslorian	Urban	Communal	Labor
Memonek	Axiomatic	Nomadic	Communal	Academic
Orc	Kalliak	Wilderness	Communal	Creative
Polder	Khoursirian	Urban	Communal	Creative
Time raider	Voll	Nomadic	Communal	Martial

Archetypical Cultures

Community	Environment	Organization	Upbringing
Artisan guild	Urban	Bureaucratic	Creative
Borderland homestead	Wilderness	Communal	Labor
College conclave	Urban	Bureaucratic	Academic
Criminal gang	Urban	Communal	Lawless
Farming village	Rural	Bureaucratic	Labor
Herding community	Nomadic	Communal	Labor
Knightly order	Secluded	Bureaucratic	Martial
Laborer neighborhood	Urban	Communal	Labor
Mercenary band	Nomadic	Bureaucratic	Martial
Merchant caravan	Nomadic	Bureaucratic	Creative
Monastic order	Secluded	Bureaucratic	Academic
Noble house	Urban	Bureaucratic	Noble
Outlaw band	Wilderness	Communal	Lawless
Pirate crew	Nomadic	Communal	Lawless
Telepathic hive	Secluded	Communal	Creative
Traveling entertainers	Nomadic	Communal	Creative

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Why Build a Culture?

Building a character is about more than adding up your stats, picking skills and abilities, and recording that information on a character sheet. You're building a hero—a main character in a story, be it a one-shot or a heroic campaign. Think about the personality and the past of who you are creating. That's why the game lets you build a culture rather than simply saying, "Pick three skills and a bonus language." We want players to imagine their heroes as complex and intricate characters.

Culture Benefits

The culture you choose or create grants you the following benefits:

- You know the language of your culture, in addition to knowing Caelian.
- From the environment, organization, and upbringing aspects of your culture, you gain access to skills. You can select one skill from each aspect's list of options. (Skills in Chapter 9: Tests has information on the part skills play in the game.)
- You gain an edge on tests made to recall lore about your culture, and on tests made to influence and interact with people of your culture. (See Edges and Banes in Chapter 1: The Basics.)

Language

Your culture's language aspect determines how the people of your culture communicate. Languages in Ordren below discusses the many languages of the world of Orden, including Caelian—the language of the fallen empire that once dominated that world.

Environment

Your culture's environment aspect describes where the people of that culture spend most of their time. Is your culture centered in a bustling city or a small village? Did you spend your early life in an isolated monastery? Or did you wander the wilderness, never staying in one place for long?

When you build a culture, select its environment aspect from the following options: nomadic, rural, secluded, urban, or wilderness. You gain skill options from your chosen environment. All of these environments can be found in any sort of terrain, whether aboveground, in subterranean caverns, deep in trackless forest, or even underwater.

Nomadic

A nomadic culture travels from place to place to survive. Members of a nomadic culture might follow animal migrations or the weather, travel to sell their wares or services, or simply enjoy a restless lifestyle full of new experiences and peoples. Those who grow up in nomadic cultures learn to navigate the wilderness and work closely with others to survive.

Skill Options: One skill from the exploration or interpersonal skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Navigate.)

Rural

A rural culture is one located in a town, village, or smaller settled enclave. People dwelling in such places often cultivate the land, trade goods or services with travelers passing through, harvest fish from the sea, or mine metals and gems from the earth.

Living among a small population, most folks in a rural community learn a trade and are handed down bits of essential knowledge to help their community survive. For example, when a rural culture has only one blacksmith, it's important to have an apprentice already learning at the anvil well before that smith starts to get old. If the only priest in town gets the sniffles, folks want an acolyte ready to wear the fancy robes should the worst occur.

Skill Options: One skill from the crafting or lore skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Nature.)

Secluded

A secluded culture is based in one relatively close-quarters structure—a building, a cavern, and so forth—and interacts with other cultures only rarely. Such places are often buildings or complexes such as monasteries, castles, or prisons. Folk in a secluded culture have little or no reason to leave their home or interact with other cultures on the outside, but might have an awareness of those cultures and of events happening beyond their enclave.

When people live together in close quarters, they typically learn to get along. They often spend much time in study or introspection, as there is not much else to do in seclusion.

Skill Options: One skill from the interpersonal or lore skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Read Person.)

Urban

An urban culture is always centered in a city. Such a culture might arise within the walls of Capital, a massive metropolis with a cosmopolitan population; within a network of caverns that hold an underground city; or in any other place where a large population lives relatively close together. The people of urban cultures often learn to effectively misdirect others in order to navigate the crowds and the political machinations that can come with city life.

Skill Options: One skill from the interpersonal or intrigue skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Alertness.)

Wilderness

A wilderness culture doesn't try to tame the terrain in which its people live, whether desert, forest, swamp, tundra, ocean, or more exotic climes. Instead, the folk of such a culture thrive amid nature, taking their sustenance and shelter from the land. A wilderness culture might be a circle of druids protecting a remote wode, a band of brigands hiding out in desert caves, or a camp of orc mercenaries who call the trackless mountains home. People in a wilderness culture learn how to use the land for all they need to live, typically crafting their own tools, clothing, and more.

Skill Options: One skill from the crafting or exploration skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Endurance.)

Organization

Your culture's organization aspect determines the functioning and leadership of your community. You might come from a place with an officially recognized government and a system of laws. Or your culture might have enjoyed a less-formal organization, with the people in charge having naturally gravitated toward their positions without any official offices or oaths.

When you build a culture, select its organization aspect from the following options: bureaucratic or communal. You gain skill options from your chosen system of organization.

Bureaucratic

Bureaucratic cultures are steeped in official leadership and formally recorded laws. Members of such a culture are often ranked in power according to those laws, with a small group of people holding the

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power to rule according to birthright, popular vote, or some other official and measurable standard. Many bureaucratic communities have one person at the top, though others might be ruled by a council. A trade guild with a guildmaster, treasurer, secretary, and a charter of rules and regulations for membership; a feudal lord who rules over a group of knights who in turn rule over peasants working the land; and a militaristic society with ranks and rules that its people must abide are all examples of bureaucratic cultures.

Those who thrive in bureaucratic cultures don't simply follow the rules. They know how to use those rules to their advantage, either bending, changing, or reinterpreting policy to advance their own interests. Schmoozing with those who make the laws is often key to this approach. Others in a bureaucratic culture might specialize in operating outside the strict regulations that govern the culture without getting caught.

Skill Options: One skill from the interpersonal or intrigue skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Persuade.)

Communal

A communal culture is a place where all members of the culture are considered equal. The community works together to make important decisions that affect the majority of the culture. While they elect leaders to carry out these decisions and organize their efforts, each person has a relatively equal say in how the culture operates, and everyone contributes to help their people survive and thrive. Individuals often share the burdens of governing, physical labor, childcare, and other duties. A collective of farmers who work together to cultivate and protect their land without a noble, a city of pirates where each person can do as they wish, and a traveling theatrical troupe whose members vote on every artistic and administrative decision are all communal cultures.

Many communal cultures operate outside settled lands, sticking to the wilds, a specific district in a larger settlement, city sewers, forgotten ruins, or other isolated places. For even when such cultures are harmless, their members know that outsiders might try to impose rules upon them if they live in the same place. As such, many folks in communal cultures focus on fending for themselves while avoiding the danger that other groups can represent.

Skill Options: One skill from the crafting or exploration skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Jump.)

Upbringing

Your culture's upbringing aspect is a more specific and personal part of your hero's story, describing how you were raised within your culture. Were you trained to become the newest archmage in a secret order of wizards, or to be a sword-wielding bodyguard who protected that arcane organization? Did you learn to delve deep into mines looking for ore in a mountain kingdom, or did you build machines meant to dig faster and deeper than any person could alone? Whatever your culture, your upbringing makes you special within that culture.

Pick your upbringing aspect from the following list: academic, creative, labor, lawless, martial, or noble. You gain skill options from your chosen aspect.

Academic

Your hero was raised by people who collect, study, and share books and other records. Some academics focus on one area of study, such as a college for wizards dedicated to the study of magic, or a church that teaches the word of one deity. People in an academic culture learn how to wield the power that is knowledge.

Skill Options: One skill from the lore skill group. (*Quick Build:* History.)

Creative

A hero with a creative upbringing was raised among folk who create art or other works valuable enough to trade. A creative culture might produce fine art such as dance, music, or sculpture, or more practical wares such as wagons, weapons, tools, or buildings. People in such cultures learn the value of quality crafting and attention to detail.

Skill Options: The Music or Perform skill (from the interpersonal skill group.), or one skill from the crafting group. (*Quick Build:* Perform.)

Labor

Your hero came of age in a culture where people labored for a living. They might have been cultivators, typically raising crops or livestock on a farm. They might have harvested natural resources, whether by hunting, trapping, logging, or mining. Or they might have excelled at manual labor tied to settlement and trade, such as construction, carting, loading cargo, and so forth. People with a labor upbringing know the value of hard work.

Skill Options: One of the Blacksmithing skill (from the crafting skill group.), the Handle Animals skill (from the interpersonal group.), or a skill from the exploration group. (*Quick Build:* Lift.)

Lawless

Your hero grew up among folk who performed activities that other people—whether within or outside their culture—considered unlawful. A band of pirates, a guild of assassins, or an organization of spies all commit unlawful acts for money. And under tyranny, people engaged in rebellion are often considered lawless in their actions and activities. People brought up in a lawless culture typically don't mind breaking the rules when it suits them—and are good at making sure no one finds out they did.

Skill Options: One skill from the intrigue skill group. (*Quick Build:* Sneak.)

Martial

A hero with a martial upbringing was raised by warriors. These might have been the soldiers of an established army, a band of mercenaries, a guild of monster-slaying adventurers, or any other folk whose lives



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revolve around combat. Heroes with a martial upbringing are always ready for a fight—and they know how to finish that fight.

Skill Options: One of the following: Blacksmithing or Fletching from the crafting skill group; Climb, Endurance, or Ride from the exploration group; Intimidate from the interpersonal group; Alertness or Track from the intrigue group; or Monsters or Strategy from the lore skill group (*Quick Build:* Intimidate.)

Noble

Your hero grew up among leaders who rule over others and play the games of politics to maintain power. Many families are nobles by birthright, but some cultures have noble titles earned through deeds or popularity. Whatever the case, heroes with this background understand why the whispered words in the right ear can sometimes be more powerful than any army.

Skill Options: One skill from the interpersonal skill group. (*Quick Build:* Lead.)

But I Really Want Alertness

If the culture you create doesn't grant a skill that you want, check with your Director about modifying what the culture's aspects offer. For instance, you can easily make the case that a culture with the noble upbringing aspect should give a character access to the Alertness skill, given that living among those who covet your power means always being aware of your surroundings.

Languages in Orden

The languages granted by your hero's culture shape their understanding of the world and their relationship to the creatures within it. The following section details the languages of Orden, the baseline world of the game, but the Director can use these languages in their own campaign world or can swap this list with their own list of languages.

If your hero knows a language, they can speak, read, write, and understand it.



Caelian Empire

The Caelian Empire dominated five of the seven regions of Orden 3,000 years ago. During the height of this most recent human empire, all humans (including folks from Vanigar in the far north, but not folks from the islands of Ix.) learned to speak the Caelian tongue. For many, especially the noble classes and the well-to-do, Caelian effectively replaced their native language.

Some 1,300 years after the fall of the Caelian Empire, the languages of the different regions of the empire are enjoying a resurgence. Still, the Caelian tongue is spoken by most humans in most regions to one extent or another.

Most people in Orden can speak and understand some Caelian, simply because the empire was so powerful and so widespread. Anyone trading with the empire or living near its borders or under its influence eventually learned to speak Caelian, including dwarves, dragon knights, elves, hakaan, orcs, polders, lizardfolk, and goblins. If a person speaks more than one language in Orden, the second language is almost always Caelian. All player characters know Caelian! As a result, that language of empire is now colloquially referred to as "the common tongue"—the language that most folk of Orden have in common.

Extant Languages

Folk have been speaking, signing, and writing in Orden for at least thirty thousand years, but most of the world's ancient languages are now dead. Many have been forgotten. Others were spoken by peoples who never developed writing, preventing those languages from being preserved. And many languages that were preserved in writing left no related descendants, so that no one now knows what sounds that writing represented.

The languages on the Vaslorian Languages by Ancestry table are the most common languages in that region, actively spoken and signed by significant populations of people. The Vaslorian Human Languages table shows the dominant languages in that region's human-centric territories. Most languages are associated with a specific ancestry and its culture, but being a member of an ancestry doesn't automatically make you part of the associated culture the language is tied to. For example, if your orc hero was raised in a culture of elves, you probably speak one of the elf languages, and might never have learned Kalliak.

Most languages have colloquial or casual names. For instance, many people in Orden call Kalliak "Orcish" and Hyrallic "Elvish," but any sage knows there are lots of orcish and elf languages, just as there are multiple human languages.

Each extant language has a spoken, signed, and written version. When you learn a language, you know how to speak, sign, and read it.

Vaslorian Human Languages

Region	Language
The Gol	Uvalic
Higara	Higaran
Ix	Oaxuatl
Khemhara	Khemharic
Koursir	Khoursirian
Phaedros	Phaedran
Rioja	Riojan
Vanigar	Vaniric
Vasloria	Vaslorian

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Vaslorian Languages by Ancestry

Language	Ancestry	Notes
Anjali	Devils, hobgoblins	Language of contract law
Axiomatic	Memonek	Native language of Axiom, and the common language of the timescape by trade
Caelian	Orden denizens	Common language of Orden
Filliaric	Angulotls	
The First Language	Elder dragons	Language of magic
Hyrallic	High elves	Language of interspecies diplomacy
Illyvric	Shadow elves	
Kalliak	Orcs	Offshoot of Zaliac
Kethaic	Kobolds	Patois of Vastariax and Caelian
Khelt	Bugbears, fey	Offshoot of Kheltivari
Khoursirian	Polder, humans	Distant offshoot of Khamish
High Kuric	Bredbeddles, giants, ogres, trolls	
Low Kuric	Elementals	
Mindspeech	Voiceless talkers	A symbolic language shared among native telepaths
Proto-Ctholl	Lower demons	Incomplete precursor of Tholl
Szetch	Goblins, radenwights	
Tholl	Higher demons, gnolls	
Urollialic	Olothec	
Variac	Gnomes, olothec, trolls, voiceless talkers	Common language of the World Below
Vastariax	Dragons, dragon knights	
Vhoric	Hakaan	Offshoot of the stone giant dialect of High Kuric
Voll	Time raiders	
Yllyric	Wode elves	Language of druids
Za'hariax	Overminds	
Zaliac	Dwarves	Language of engineering

Language Usage

Hyrallic is the primary language of the high elves in Orden. Although young for an elf language, Hyrallic is older than almost all other modern cultural languages, save those of the dwarves. As a result, while anyone who lives near or trades with a human culture probably speaks at least a little Caelian, most nobles across all ancestries make sure their children or offspring speak Hyrallic. Caelian is new from many cultures' point of view, while Hyrallic as a language for diplomacy is considered cultured and traditional.

Yllyric is the cultural language of wode elves, and also the common language among those who defend and protect the natural forests of Orden.

Within any document concerning the workings of machines, masonry, or geology, you are likely to find a healthy supply of jargon using **Zaliac**, the most popular dwarf language. Even when such texts aren't fully written in Zaliac, they use a lot of dwarf language when describing esoteric, complex ideas.

Just as Zaliac is used in engineering, contract law isn't written purely in **Anjali**, the dominant language of the Seven Cities of Hell. But a lot of the legal jargon in any contract, as well as some of the language of trial courts, features many Anjali words. People are sticklers for detail in the Seven Cities, and this makes their language popular among lawyers.

In the same way that intelligent creatures in Orden who live near or trade with other cultures use Caelian as a common language, the denizens of the World Below, the Dark Under All, often speak **Variac**, the language of the voiceless talkers.

Dead Languages

For an adventuring hero with an ambition to create great works or unlock deep lore, being able to read ancient writing is most useful. Much deep lore is attested only in ancient tomes and scrolls written in languages that no modern culture uses.

Most of these ancient writings were written by people who expected other people to read it. The lore might have been kept secret by not sharing it with anyone outside the college or cult whose members originally wrote it, but the actual writing was not intended to be difficult to read or understand. It wasn't written in code—just in a language that people stopped speaking long ago.

Sages can reconstruct many of these languages by learning which modern languages descended from them, then comparing them to related languages from the same time period that might have survived. Translating such ancient languages has been extremely useful for crafting and research.

The Dead Languages table shows some of the dead languages of Orden, and the modern languages related to those ancient languages.

Dead Languages

Language	Ancestry	Related Languages	Common Topics
Ananjali	Old hobgoblin	Anjali	Zodiakol, the bloodmetal
High Rhyvian	Sun elf	Hyrallic, Yllyric	Liannar, the sunmetal
Khamish	Beast lord	Khoursirian	Beast magic
Kheltivari	Old fae	Yllyric, Khelt	Using a wode to travel through time
Low Rhyvian	Sky elf	Hyrallic	Flying castles
Old Variac	Olothec, voiceless talkers	Variac	Kollar, the sinmetal
Phorialtic	Old elemental	Low and High Kuric	Moving between manifolds
Rallarian	Steel dwarf	Zaliac	Valiar, the truemetal
Ullorvic	Star elf	Hyrallic, Yllyric	Rovion, the starmetal

Khamish is still spoken by lizardfolk and other creatures connected to the beast lords. However, the forms spoken today only vaguely resemble their original tongues and have been adapted for use within their speakers' own circles.

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CAREERS

Being a hero isn't a job. It's a calling. But before you answered that call, you had a different job or vocation that paid the bills. Thank the gods for that, because the experience you gained in that career is now helping you save lives and slay monsters.

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Career Questions

The careers in this section don't go into great detail about the actual jobs they represent. We assume that you know the basics of what an artisan, a criminal, or a gladiator does for a living. However, each career includes a list of questions you should think about to help you define the specific details of your hero's career. For instance, if you pick the Artisan career, one of the questions is: "What did you create?"

You don't need to answer these questions, but doing so can help shape a more complete picture of your hero. And if you do answer them, consider telling your Director the answers so they can think about working those details into the game. Directors already have a lot to juggle, but they certainly can't create dramatic moments from your backstory if you never tell them what that backstory is.

Career Benefits

Your career describes what your life was before you became a hero. When you select a career, you gain a number of benefits, the details of which are specified in the career's description.

Skills

Each career grants you two or three skills, detailed in the Skills section of Chapter 9: Tests.

Languages

Some careers allow you to learn extra languages, chosen from those available in Languages in Orden above.



Renown

Some careers increase your starting Renown score (from a base score of 0.). See Renown in Chapter 13: Rewards for more information.

Wealth

Some careers increase your starting Wealth score (from a base score of 1.). See Wealth in Chapter 13: Rewards for more information.

Project Points

Some careers provide project points you can put toward crafting and research projects (see Chapter 12: Downtime Projects.). These project points can be divided among multiple projects, but they can't be used more than once. You must meet the other prerequisites for a project to start it, as usual.

At the Director's discretion, your career might also let you start the game with the materials needed for one or more projects, so you can immediately put your project points toward those projects—possibly before the adventure begins! This is especially useful for characters who are going on only one adventure. Otherwise, you can hold onto the points and spend them once you do start a project.

Perk

Your career provides you with a specific type of perk—a special feature that lets you customize your character, with a focus outside of combat. See Chapter 7: Perks for more information.

Inciting Incident

Each career has a list of inciting incidents, each of which suggests a potential reason why you gave up your career, turned away from a possibly comfortable and reliable living, and took up the sword (or axe or wand.) to become an adventuring hero. Each inciting incident represents a life-changing event that might have motivated you to change course, becoming a person who risks it all to save others.

You can roll for or choose an inciting incident from the table that accompanies each career. You can also use your career's table (or another career's table.) as inspiration as you work with your Director to come up with a unique inciting incident of your own.

What Was Taken From You?

During your inciting incident, something was taken from you. It might have been a material object, such as an heirloom sword or a locket that proves your royal heritage. Perhaps a person you loved was killed, kidnapped, or cursed. It might be something deeper and more abstract, such as a chance for happiness, belief in the future, belief in basic goodness, or a lifetime goal snatched away.

It might be the case that you're obsessed with getting back what you lost. You might be in a position where you'll never recover what was taken from you, but you want to prevent that same loss from happening to others. Perhaps your loss left you in a position where helping others is the only thing that gives your life meaning. Whatever the case, the loss you've suffered is part of what drives you to be a hero. Record what was taken from you on your character sheet, and let your Director know.

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Careers A–Z

The careers your character can select from are presented in alphabetical order.

Agent

You worked as a spy for a government or organization. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- Who did you work for?
- Who did you spy on?
- Who shouldn't know your true identity and allegiance but does?
- Who did you burn or leave behind to get a job done?

You gain the following career benefits:

Skills: The Sneak skill from the intrigue skill group, plus one skill from the interpersonal group and one other skill from the intrigue group (*Quick Build:* Disguise, Lie, Sneak.)
Languages: Two languages
Perk: One intrigue perk (*Quick Build:* Forgettable Face.)

d6	Inciting Incident
1	**Disavowed:** While on a dangerous espionage assignment, things went sideways. Although you escaped with your life, the mission was a public failure thanks to bad information your agency gave you. They denied you work for them, and you went on the run. Hero work will let you survive and clear your name.
2	**Faceless:** Your identity was always hidden. It was your way of protecting those around you because the work you did spying on powerful entities came with dangers. Then your world came crashing down when an enemy agent unmasked you, causing you to lose everything—your privacy, livelihood, loved ones, all gone in the blink of an eye. Instead of going into hiding, you became a public hero to protect the innocent in the name of those you lost.
3	**Free Agent:** There was a time in your life when you used to sell information to the highest bidder. Your acts were unsanctioned by any one organization, but you were well-connected enough to trade in secrets. Politics never mattered much to you until the information you sold wound up causing a ripple effect of harm that eventually destroyed the place you once called home. You became a hero to make up for your past.
4	**Informed:** After years of cultivating a rich list of informants, one of those informants risked everything to expose the heinous plans of powerful individuals. You promised to protect your informant, but your agency left them hanging—literally. You cut ties with your employer and swore to always make good on your word as a hero.
5	**Spies and Lovers:** While embedded in an undercover assignment, you fell for someone on the other side. They discovered you were a double agent, and though you insisted your feelings were real, the deceit cut too deep for your love interest to ignore. They exposed you, spurned you, or died because of their closeness to you. You left the espionage business to become a hero with nothing to hide.
6	**Turncoat:** You spent your life in service of your country or an organization that upheld your values. During your undercover operations, you discovered that everything you had been told was a lie. Whether you confronted your superiors or were exposed, you were stripped of your service medals before you left to become a true hero.

Aristocrat

Career? Who needs a career when you're born into money! Or marry into it! Or con your way into it! Whatever the case, you didn't need to work thanks to (someone's.) generational wealth. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- How did you become an aristocrat?
- What did you do to fill your days?
- Which aristocrats and people who worked for you were your best friends and greatest enemies?
- What sentimental heirloom from your old estate do you carry, and what does it mean to you?

You gain the following career benefits:

Skills: One skill from the interpersonal skill group and one skill from the lore group (*Quick Build:* Brag, Society.)
Languages: One language
Renown: +1
Wealth: +1
Perk: One lore perk (*Quick Build:* I've Read About This Place.)

d6	Inciting Incident
1	**Blood Money:** When you entered adulthood, you heard unsavory whispers about your family's fortune before learning that their wealth came at the cost of others' suffering. Whether you shed light on the secret or not, you left to become a hero stripped of noble title.
2	**Charmed Life:** Whether through some supernatural power or your innate persuasiveness, you were able to defraud other aristocrats. You did it for fun. And when you were found out, you lost your status. Whether you served time or escaped punishment, you decided to rehabilitate yourself and became a hero.
3	**Inheritance:** The guardians who instilled in you the virtues of doing the right thing were murdered in a senseless petty robbery. Though their wealth was bequeathed to you, it did little to assuage the guilt you felt for being unable to stop the deadly crime. You decided to use your riches to fund your life as a hero, whether publicly or using an alter ego.
4	**Privileged Position:** Life outside the manor never piqued your interest. You had everything you wanted. It thus came as a surprise when the peasants came to overthrow your family. You narrowly escaped, and for the first time witnessed the world. It caused you to become a hero for the people, fighting against inequities.
5	**Royal Pauper:** Seeking a break from noble duties, you sought a lookalike to switch identities with. It went so well that you made a habit of switching whenever you were bored. Unfortunately, your counterpart became so good at imitating you that they convinced all those around you that you were an impostor. You lost contact with your family, but now pursue a heroic path free of the pomp of your old life.
6	**Wicked Secret:** One parent passed away when you were a baby and the other remarried years later. Then that parent died under suspicious circumstances. Their spouse ousted you, and you were banished (and possibly hunted.). Rising from tragedy, you now seek to right the wrongs of the world.

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Artisan

You made and sold useful wares. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- What did you create?
- Who taught you your craft?
- Was there any particular creation you were known for?
- Did you have a shop, or did you travel to sell your wares?

You gain the following career benefits:

Skills: Two skills from the crafting skill group (*Quick Build:* Blacksmithing, Carpentry.)
Languages: One language
Project Points: 240
Perk: One crafting perk (*Quick Build:* Area of Expertise.)

d6	Inciting Incident
1	**Continue the Work:** A great hero was a fan of the things you created and gave you a generous commission to create your best work for them. While working on this commission, you and the hero became close friends. The day you finished the work was the same day they disappeared. To honor their legacy, you took up the mantle of a hero with the intent of finishing your friend's work.
2	**Inspired:** As you traveled the road selling your wares, troll bandits attacked you. One of the bandits claimed an item belonging to someone precious to you—or perhaps claimed that person's life—but the rest were driven off or slain by a group of heroes. Seeing the quick work those heroes made of the bandits inspired you to follow in their footsteps.
3	**Robbery:** A criminal gang stole your goods and harmed a number of people who worked for you. You became a hero to prevent such indignities from being visited upon others, to seek revenge for the assault, or to find the thieves and get your stuff back.
4	**Stolen Passions:** Your parents discouraged your artistic talents, instead trying to focus your passions on the family business. You refused to dim your spark and continued your work in secret. Enraged at discovering your disobedience, they sold your work to a traveling merchant. You left your hometown, seeking your lost art and encouraging others to live freely.
5	**Tarnished Honor:** A new patron commissioned some art, but on completion, they refused to pay you and claimed the work as their own. You were accused of plagiarism and run out of town. For you, heroics are about restoring your name and honor.
6	**Twisted Skill:** You had great success that caused an unscrupulous rival to curse you. For a time, everything you tried to create turned to ruin. You broke the curse through adventuring, and in doing so, discovered a new joy and purpose that now defines you.

Beggar

You lived by going to a tavern, crossroads, city street, or other busy area and begging passersby for money or food. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- What unfortunate circumstances led you to become a beggar?
- Where did you beg?
- Who made sport out of bullying you?
- Who showed you the most kindness?

You gain the following career benefits:

Skills: The Rumors skill (from the lore skill group.), plus one skill from the exploration group and one skill from the interpersonal group (*Quick Build:* Empathize, Endurance, Rumors.)
Languages: Two languages
Perk: One interpersonal perk (*Quick Build:* Spot the Tell.)

d6	Inciting Incident
1	**Champion:** You were never content with your lot. Watching yet another friend fall to preventable circumstances was your last straw. You gathered up what little you had and set off to become a hero, determined to make real change for those society forgot.
2	**Night Terrors:** Something killed the other beggars. It came in the night. You barely saw it, but what you did see of it wasn't natural. You survived by hiding, or perhaps it simply passed you over for reasons unknown to you. It still haunts your nightmares, and you kill monsters so no one else has to experience such horrors.
3	**One Good Deed:** You ran afoul of the local watch by being in the wrong place when they were in a bad mood. A passing hero intervened on your behalf, shaming the guards into moving on, then gave you enough gold to get you back on your feet. Their kindness kindled a spark in you. You took the gold, bought some secondhand gear, and went to pay that hero's kindness forward.
4	**Precious:** No matter how far you'd fallen, there was one belonging you would never part with, no matter how much money it would bring you. When a pickpocket stole that object, you chased them until you were in a part of the city you no longer recognized. With a jolt, you realized you had no desire to return to your previous stomping grounds. You kept going, and you haven't looked back.
5	**Strange Charity:** A passerby dropped something in your cup. When you counted your day's collections, you found a magic coin among the coppers. You knew immediately that it was special. When the other beggars—your friends, you thought—showed that they were ready to murder you for it, you killed several of them in self-defense before you fled, leaving behind the only semblance of community you had.
6	**Witness:** You witnessed something you weren't meant to. Others would kill you if they knew, and they might be searching for you even now. You remain on the move, terrified of remaining in one place too long lest it all catch up to you. Perhaps if you make a big enough name for yourself, you can become untouchable and finally speak of what happened without fear.

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Criminal

You once worked as a bandit, insurgent, smuggler, outlaw, or even as an assassin. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- What crimes did you commit, and why?
- Did anyone help you perform your illicit activities?
- What is one crime you botched?
- Who was your nemesis while you were a criminal?

You gain the following career benefits:

Skills: The Criminal Underworld skill (from the lore skill group.), plus two skills from the intrigue group (*Quick Build:* Criminal Underworld, Pick Lock, Pick Pocket.)
Languages: One language
Project Points: 120
Perk: One intrigue perk (*Quick Build:* Criminal Contacts.)

d6	Inciting Incident
1	**Antiquity Procurement:** You stole, smuggled, and sold antiquities. In your haste to make a quick sale, you didn't fully vet a client and they subsequently robbed your warehouse. When the items you had stolen were taken from you, you realized the harm you had caused. Now you adventure to find those items you lost and return them to where they belong.
2	**Atonement:** The last criminal job you pulled led to the death of someone or the destruction of something you love. To make up for the loss you caused, you left your criminal ways behind and became a hero.
3	**Friendly Priest:** You went to prison for your crimes and eventually escaped. An elderly priest took you in and shielded you from the law, convinced that your soul wasn't corrupt. They never judged you for your past, speaking only of the future. Eventually, the priest died, imparting final words that inspired you to become a hero.
4	**Shadowed Influence:** You spent years blackmailing and manipulating nobles for influence and wealth until a scheme went wrong. You were publicly exposed, and after a narrow escape, you reevaluated your life. Under a new identity, you work as a hero and hope no one looks at your past too closely.
5	**Simply Survival:** Stealing was a matter of survival for you and not what defined you—at least in your mind. But when your thieving actions led to innocent folk being harmed, you knew you could be better. You turned your back on your old life, though your old skills still come in handy.
6	**Stand Against Tyranny:** When a tyrant rose to power in your homeland, they began cracking down on all criminals with deadly raids and public executions. The nature of the crime didn't matter, with pickpockets and beggars made to kneel before the axe alongside murderers. After losing enough friends, you stood up and joined the resistance—not just against this tyrant, but against authoritarians anywhere.

Disciple

You worked in a church, temple, or other religious institution as part of the clergy. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- What gods or saints did your institution venerate?
- What initiation rites did you undergo to get the job?
- What were your responsibilities as a disciple?
- How was your institution viewed by members of the local culture?

You gain the following career benefits:

Skills: The Religion skill (from the lore skill group.), plus two more skills from the lore group (*Quick Build:* Culture, Magic, Religion.)
Project Points: 240
Perk: One supernatural perk (*Quick Build:* Ritualist.)

d6	Inciting Incident
1	**Angel's Advocate:** Swayed by an evil faith, your cult was about to unleash horrors upon the world when an angel (figurative or literal.) intervened. They convinced you to stop your cult's plots. Now you follow in the footsteps of the angel who showed you the righteous path.
2	**Dogma:** Although you joined your religious institution under the guidance of a kind mentor, others within the house of worship became increasingly fanatical in their convictions. Your mentor sought to be a voice of reason in the rising tide of hatred and was tried as a heretic before being executed. Leaving the institution behind, you became a hero to uphold the beliefs you hold dear.
3	**Freedom to Worship:** Your temple was destroyed in a religious conflict. The institution's leaders sought retaliation, but you saw in these actions a ceaseless cycle of destruction that would lead to more conflict. Instead, you became a hero to protect religious freedoms, so all worshippers might practice their faith without fear.
4	**Lost Faith:** You devoted your life to ministering to the sick and needy, alongside other charitable work. Time and time again, tragedy struck those you served without rhyme or reason. Your prayers went unanswered, and your efforts went thankless. Eventually, you lost your faith in a higher power, and you left your church or temple to do good outside of any religious affiliation.
5	**Near-Death Experience:** While serving at a religious institution, you almost died in an accident. When you woke, you had lost all memory of ever having worked for the church or temple. Though the clergy encouraged you to stay, you left to forge a new path. Your sense of altruism—whether instilled in you by your past work or a part of who you naturally are—guides you in your life.
6	**Taxing Times:** The faith-based organization you were once part of became corrupt. It used its status in the community to accumulate wealth through tithes, while its leaders sought political appointments. During a season of drought, the institution stockpiled resources and refused to give aid, resulting in the deaths of many. You became a hero to fight against such corruption and to honor those you lost.

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Explorer

You ventured into uncharted areas and made your living as a cartographer, researcher, resource seeker, or treasure hunter. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- For what purpose did you explore the unknown?
- Who else was part of your exploration team?
- What types of environments did you explore?
- What legend or rumor did you search for but never found?
- What is your greatest discovery?

You gain the following career benefits:

Skills: The Navigate skill (from the exploration skill group.), plus two more skills from the exploration group (*Quick Build:* Climb, Heal, Navigate.)
Languages: Two languages
Perk: One exploration perk (*Quick Build:* Wood Wise.)

d6	Inciting Incident
1	**Awakening:** In an uncharted area, you awakened some fell horror. You subsequently turned to the life of a hero to put an end to the dread you unleashed and keep other hidden dangers at bay.
2	**Missing Piece:** You made an important but dangerous discovery about a treasure or ancient ritual that could spell mass destruction. Then the unthinkable happened when an unscrupulous colleague, spy, or treasure hunter stole your research notes. You're looking for the thief now, and anyone else who might use such discoveries for ill.
3	**Nothing Belongs in a Museum:** Exploring distant lands to collect valuable artifacts for cultural institutions was once your way of life. But when people died trying to reclaim one of the objects you took, you realized the truth. Your work was part of a larger problem of cultural theft, and the best place for these significant objects wasn't in a museum but with the people who created them. Setting out to return what had been taken and to protect others from theft set you on the path to become a hero.
4	**Unschooled:** You delved into dungeons and far-off places by studying them in books. You were an explorer who never felt the need to experience the dangers your peers did. Then your theory about a lost world cost you your reputation, and gave you the impetus to go on adventures and stand up for those with different ideas.
5	**Wanderlust:** You saw yourself as an observer and operated within a code of conduct. You swore to never interfere with a group by exposing them to your technology, knowledge, or values. But when faced with a moral conundrum, you either broke your code or stood idly by—and suffered the consequences. During this incident, you lost your observation journal but became a hero who refuses to let evil stand unchecked.
6	**Wind in Your Sails:** As a seafaring explorer, you lived to chart unknown courses. Though travel on the high seas was fraught with danger, the destination was always rewarding in riches, knowledge, or some other meaningful benefit. But your luck ran out when your ship was destroyed by pirates or other enemy forces. Now you've taken to protecting those who seek safe passage while also hoping to avenge your crew.

Farmer

You grew crops or cared for livestock. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- Did you own the land you farmed, or did you farm for another?
- What crops or livestock did you cultivate?
- Who else worked on the farm with you?
- What ill omen did you witness that caused you to have a poor season of farming?

You gain the following career benefits:

Skills: The Handle Animals skill (from the interpersonal skill group.), plus two skills from the exploration group (*Quick Build:* Drive, Handle Animals, Lift.)
Languages: One language
Project Points: 120
Perk: One exploration perk (*Quick Build:* Monster Whisperer.)

d6	Inciting Incident
1	**Blight:** A horrible blight swept over your homeland, sickening the livestock and causing crops to rot. No one knows whether the blight is of natural origin or something more malevolent, but you set out in search of a way to cleanse the land of this affliction.
2	**Bored:** You've always wanted so much more than gathering eggs and milking cows. You kept a secret journal of your dreams, filled with all the things you wanted. When your parent found the journal, they burned it and told you to keep your head out of the clouds. In response, you gathered what you could in a pack and left everything else behind, seeking a life of adventure.
3	**Cursed:** While tilling your fields, you found something in the dirt. Perhaps it was a chipped and dented weapon, a piece of ancient jewelry, or something altogether unique. Excited by your find, you showed it to a loved one, but when they touched it, something happened. You now know it was a curse conveyed by the item, though you don't know why it affected them and not you. You left your old life in search of answers.
4	**Hard Times:** Your farm had always been prosperous, until the last few years. Changes in the weather caused smaller yields until you could no longer pay your tithe to the local noble. Her soldiers took what items of value they found, including a precious family heirloom. You left the struggling farm behind to find a better life.
5	**Razed:** Your animals were killed, your crops and home set ablaze. The culprits might have been wandering bandits, raiders from a nearby kingdom, or hired thugs sent by a rival farm. Whoever they were, they left you with nothing. You couldn't face the thought of starting again from scratch, so you took up a life of heroism to protect others from such villainy.
6	**Stolen:** Your family bred horses—beautiful creatures that few could rival on the track and in the jousting lists. When a local noble arrived with an offer to buy your prized stallion, your father refused. The noble struck him down where he stood and stole the horse. Without that stallion, the renowned bloodline would end. You intend to get them back—and get revenge.

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Gladiator

In the past, you entertained the masses with flashy displays of violence in the arena. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- What led you to this life of violent entertainment?
- What was your gladiator name and persona?
- Who was your biggest rival?
- What happened during your most famous match?

You gain the following career benefits:

Skills: Two skills from the exploration skill group (*Quick Build:* Gymnastics, Jump.)
Languages: One language
Renown: +2
Perk: One exploration perk (*Quick Build:* Friend Catapult.)

d6	Inciting Incident
1	**Betrayed:** A local crime lord offered you money to throw your last bout, promising that you'd live through the ordeal and get a cut of all the wagers placed on the match. You upheld your end of the deal—which made the knife in your back after the bout so surprising. You woke in a shallow grave, barely alive, and ready to mete out justice.
2	**Heckler:** As you stood victorious on the arena sands, a voice cried out among the cheering. "This violence is only for show. You should be ashamed. There are people who need you—who need your skills!" Why did that voice ring so clear? And why did it sound so familiar? You never saw the face of the person who uttered those words, but they weighed heavy on you. The next day, you fled the arena to begin a hero's life.
3	**Joined the Arena:** As a child, you loved gladiatorial matches, captivated by the fierce displays of bravery and bravado, never giving much thought to how the competitors ended up in the ring. Then your friend was wrongly accused of a crime and sentenced to compete. You went in their place. After viewing what life was like for those forced to fight, you survived your sentence and resolved to protect the unfairly condemned.
4	**New Challenges:** You earned every title you could. You beat every opponent willing to face you in the arena. Your final battle with your rival ended with you victorious—and still you were unsatisfied. Other, greater foes are out there. And you mean to find them.
5	**Scion's Compassion:** You were born a noble, but the duplicitous and power-hungry nature of your family had you seeking your own fortune in the arena. You saw that competitors brought there by circumstance and not choice suffered. You gave all you could of your family money to those less-fortunate folk, and then set out to make a real difference in this cruel world.
6	**Warriors' Home:** The orphanage you grew up in secretly supplied gladiators to the arena. Forced to fight against many childhood friends as an adult, you vowed to dismantle the arena and free other victims. You became a liberator, dedicated to ending the oppression of others until your dying breath.

Laborer

You worked as a farmer, builder, clothes washer, forester, miner, or some other profession engaged in hard manual labor. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- What type of manual labor did you do?
- What important friendship did you make on the job?
- Where did you go with your coworkers to blow off steam when the job was done?
- What aspect of the job was most difficult for you?

You gain the following career benefits:

Skills: The Endurance skill (from the exploration skill group.), plus two skills from either the crafting group or the exploration group (*Quick Build:* Blacksmithing, Endurance, Lift.)
Languages: One language
Project Points: 120
Perk: One exploration perk (*Quick Build:* Brawny.)

d6	Inciting Incident
1	**Deep Sentinel:** Spending your days cleaning and maintaining the sewers doesn't make you many friends. But you found companionship among the rats. You fought the monsters that hunted your friends, and which others ignored. After making the sewers safe for the rats, you decided to take your talents to the surface and serve other humanoids who might appreciate your efforts in the same way.
2	**Disaster:** A disaster, such as a cave-in, wildfire, or tidal wave, hit the work crew you were in charge of. You saved as many as you could, but the ones you couldn't save weigh heavily on your mind. You took up the life of a hero to save as many people as possible, vowing that what happened to you then won't happen again.
3	**Embarrassment:** A noble you worked for admonished you publicly for work done poorly—and more than once. Finally, you'd had enough. You vowed to take up a new path and show this noble you're far more than what they make you out to be.
4	**Live the Dream:** You worked with a good friend, and on the job, you would always fantasize about what it would be like to hit the road as adventuring heroes ... someday. You didn't expect that your friend would fall ill and pass away. Now it's time to live out that dream for both of you.
5	**Shining Light:** You kept a lighthouse along the constantly stormy cliffs of your village with your mentor. On a clear and sunny day, your mentor vanished. Finding only a cryptic notebook filled with his musings on the supernatural, you left to find out what really happened. The trail has gone cold for now, and you're helping others find their loved ones in the meantime.
6	**Slow and Steady:** You labored silently as an uncaring boss drove those around you into the ground, pushing you to work harder to lessen the burden on your companions. But when the boss pushed too far and killed a friend of yours, you led an uprising against them. That was the start of your adventuring life.

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Mage's Apprentice

For long years, you studied magic under the mentorship of a more experienced mage. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- Who did you study under, and what kind of person were they?
- What were your mentor's areas of expertise?
- What aspects of magic did you struggle to comprehend?
- What is your current relationship with your mentor?

You gain the following career benefits:

Skills: The Magic skill (from the lore skill group.), plus two other skills from the lore group (*Quick Build:* Magic, Monsters, Timescape.)
Languages: One language
Renown: +1
Perk: One supernatural perk (*Quick Build:* Arcane Trick.)

d6	Inciting Incident
1	**Forgotten Memories:** While practicing a spell, your inexperience caused the magic to backfire and your memories were wiped, leaving you with only fragments of who you once were. Determined to recall your past, you now dedicate yourself to helping others, hoping your actions will spark some remembrance or lead you to a way to reverse the magic.
2	**Magic of Friendship:** As a sign of your status as a star pupil, your mentor gifted you a familiar as a magic pet. Another jealous apprentice captured the familiar and slipped away in the night. Haunted by your pet's absence, you adventure to find your kidnapped friend and prevent others from feeling your loss.
3	**Missing Mage:** One day you woke up and the mage you worked for was gone. They didn't take any of their belongings and there was no sign of any foul play—only the scent of sulfur in their bedchamber. You set out on your heroic journey in the aftermath and have been looking for them ever since.
4	**Nightmares Made Flesh:** Your attempts at magic have always been unpredictable. A powerful mage promised to help you gain control. During your training, a terrible nightmare caused your body to flare with magic and pull the monster of your nightmare into the waking world. The horror escaped. You left, seeking to vanquish their vileness.
5	**Otherworldly:** While studying magic, you accidentally sent yourself from your original world to this one. Now you're stranded here, hoping to find ancient texts or powerful magic treasures that might transport you back home. A life of adventure it is!
6	**Ultimate Power:** The mage you worked for was a kindly old soul, but the basic magic they taught you always seemed like a small part of something bigger. It wasn't until you met an adventuring elementalist that you realized hitting the road as a hero was the only way to truly improve and hone your skills. You resigned your apprenticeship and found yourself walking the path of a hero the next day.

Performer

You can sing, act, or dance well enough that people actually pay you to do it. Imagine that! In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- What is the tone of your performances?
- What song, role, or dance are you most known for?
- Did you perform in the same place throughout your career, or did you travel?
- Were you part of a troupe, or were you a solo act?

You gain the following career benefits:

Skills: The Music or Perform skill (from the interpersonal skill group.), plus two more skills from the interpersonal group (*Quick Build:* Flirt, Music, Perform.)
Renown: +2
Perk: One interpersonal perk (*Quick Build:* Harmonizer.)

d6	Inciting Incident
1	**Cursed Audience:** During a performance, you watched in horror as the audience was suddenly overcome by a curse that caused them to disintegrate before your eyes. You aren't sure what happened, but seeking an answer quickly led you to places where only heroes dare to go.
2	**False Accolades:** After a poor performance, you found a script to a well-written play left in your dressing room. The accompanying note asked that if you performed the play, you should give the author credit. But after a commanding performance, you claimed to be star and playwright both—and the curse hidden on those pages activated. A small portion of your skin has begun to transform into undead flesh, and the only cure is to prove you have become selfless.
3	**Fame and Fortune:** You thought you were famous—then that hero came to your show. Suddenly, all eyes were on the dragon-slaying brute instead of on the stage where they belonged. The audience even gave them a standing ovation when they entered the room. All you got was polite applause. Fine. If people want a hero so much, then a hero you shall be.
4	**Songs to the Dead:** Your performances have always been tinged with a bit of melancholy. During a particularly soulful performance, spirits disturbed the living audience and sat in their chairs. They begged you to prevent their demise, providing no other details before disappearing. You set out to determine if you could help your most dedicated fans.
5	**Speechless:** A heckler's mocking words left you utterly speechless during a performance, stinging your pride and stirring your arrogance. The incident strained your legendary voice, and you could speak only in soft whispers. The heckler was a fey trickster who stole your voice, promising to give it back after you accomplished real good in the world.
6	**Tragic Lesson:** When a producer who once shortchanged you shouted out on the street for you to stop a thief who had picked their pocket, your spite toward them inspired you to let the thief run right on by. But that decision led to tragedy when the thief later harmed someone you loved. From that moment on, you made it your responsibility to protect others.

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Politician

You worked as a leader within a formal, bureaucratic organization or government. You might have been appointed, born, or elected into your position, but getting people to agree and making decisions for the people you serve (or who served you.) was your job. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- Who were you responsible for ruling or representing?
- What was your official title and how did you earn it?
- Who was your greatest political rival?
- What secret do you know that could tear apart the entire system you worked within?

You gain the following career benefits:

Skills: Two skills from the interpersonal skill group (*Quick Build:* Lead, Lie.)
Languages: One language
Renown: +1
Wealth: +1
Perk: One interpersonal perk (*Quick Build:* Engrossing Monologue.)

d6	Inciting Incident
1	**Diplomatic Immunity:** Your political power allowed you to be foolish without consequence. Through sheer carelessness or on a dare, you accidentally harmed or killed an innocent bystander. Due to your position as an official, you faced no consequences. But this event was the final straw for the person you loved or respected most, and they turned away from you. You left the world of political machinations behind to earn back their trust.
2	**Insurrectionist:** You secretly funded a rebel organization intent on overthrowing the corrupt establishment. Someone discovered your treason, and you were forced to flee or risk execution. You became a hero to live and fight another day on behalf of those who have no power.
3	**Respected Consul:** You were a seneschal to a leader, able to sway their opinions. But gossip convinced the leader you were plotting a coup, and you were ousted from their circle of influence. You became a hero to continue your work making meaningful change in the world.
4	**Right Side of History:** You tried to work on policy change from the inside of a bureaucratic organization. There were others like you who were more vocal. You started to notice those colleagues were disappearing overnight. Not wanting to find out if you were next on the list, you left to enact change in more direct ways.
5	**Self-Serving:** You used your skills to collect incriminating or scandalous information about your opponents to blackmail them. A rival got one step ahead of you and stole your book of dirty secrets. But instead of using it against you, they gave you an opportunity to leave the world of politics behind. Saved from public humiliation, you now use your skills for the greater good.
6	**Unbound:** The red tape required to achieve anything through your political position resulted in a crisis being mishandled and countless people harmed or killed. After that unfortunate event, you resolved to live unfettered by bureaucratic interference, seeking to do good through action, not paperwork.

Sage

From an early age, you dedicated yourself to learning, whether you shared the knowledge of the world with others or sought out secret lore only for yourself. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- What subjects did you study?
- Where did your studies take place?
- How did you acquire the books and other materials you needed for work?
- Who benefited most from your research?

You gain the following career benefits:

Skills: Two skills from the lore skill group (*Quick Build:* History, Magic.)
Languages: One language
Project Points: 240
Perk: One lore perk (*Quick Build:* Expert Sage.)

d6	Inciting Incident
1	**Bookish Ideas:** You were always content to live a peaceful life in your library, until you found that one book—the one that told the tale of heroes who had saved the timescape. They didn't spend their days behind a desk. They made a real difference. It was time for you to do the same.
2	**Cure the Curse:** You used to think knowledge could fix everything. You were wrong. When someone you loved fell under a curse, the means to cure them couldn't be found in any of the books you owned. But that wasn't going to stop you. The answers are out there, and you'll find them even if you have to face down death to do so.
3	**Lost Library:** An evil mage took all your books for themself, cackling at your impotence as they raided your shelves. Now, you're off to search through ancient ruins and secret libraries to rebuild your collection of rare tomes—and to find the mage who stole from you.
4	**Paper Guilt:** While transcribing ancient texts, you and another scribe discovered a shelf of long-forgotten books. At your suggestion, your companion started work on one and vanished along with the tome. Your guilt drove you to seek out your still-missing friend and prevent others from falling to similar dangers.
5	**Unforeseen Futures:** In your pursuit of ancient knowledge, you discovered a prophecy that has yet to come to pass. And that prophecy involves someone who might be … you. Since your discovery, strange dreams have plagued you, driving you to seek out your destiny.
6	**Vanishing:** At first you thought it was your imagination, and you brushed off the disappearance of random sentences in historical books. Then as the books changed to entirely blank pages, the disappearances became difficult to ignore, particularly those involving ancient or critical text. Driven by the desire to preserve knowledge, you have made it your purpose to restore and reverse those vanishing texts before they forever disappear.

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Sailor

You worked on a ship, whether a merchant cog, a mercenary or military craft, or a pirate vessel. You might have been a deckhand, a mate, or even the captain. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- What is the name of the vessel you sailed on, and what type of business was the crew engaged in?
- What was your job aboard the ship?
- What's the longest amount of time you've spent at sea?
- Who or what did you lose on your maritime journeys?

You gain the following career benefits:

Skills: Swim from the exploration skill group, plus two more skills from the exploration group (*Quick Build:* Climb, Gymnastics, Swim.)
Languages: Two languages
Perk: One exploration perk (*Quick Build:* Put Your Back Into It!)

d6	Inciting Incident
1	**Alone:** You joined up with your best friend, sibling, or other loved one, the culmination of a lifelong dream to sail the high seas together. When they died, you lost your taste for the seafaring life. You left at the first opportunity and haven't looked back since.
2	**Deserter:** It was in the middle of a pirate raid (whether you were part of it or targeted by it.) that you realized you no longer yearned for a sailor's life. You used the chaos of the moment to slip away unnoticed. You now work as a hero in an effort to either end the piracy of others or atone for your past deeds, but you fear the day your old crew finds you and punishes you for your desertion.
3	**Forgotten:** You awoke aboard your ship with no memory of who you were. Though the other sailors insisted they knew you, you didn't know them. The next time you went ashore, you decided to stay, determined to find out who you really are.
4	**Jealousy:** You had the favor of your captain, which earned you many rivals aboard your ship. One night, your fellow sailors pulled you from your bunk and threw you overboard. By some miracle, you were scooped from the waters by a passing vessel. You worked off your debt to them, then set out on a new life involving less pettiness.
5	**Marooned:** There was a mutiny, and you were on the losing side. You were marooned on an island and escaped when a merchant vessel was blown off course by a storm and found you. Your reputation is ruined among sailors, so you seek adventure elsewhere.
6	**Water Fear:** A catastrophic storm hit while you were at sea, destroying your ship and leaving you as the only survivor. Once you recovered, you tried to sign on with another ship, but the thought of the open water turned your legs to jelly. Instead, you've taken on the role of a traveling hero to make ends meet.

Soldier

In your formative years, you fought tirelessly in skirmishes and campaigns against enemy forces. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- In which army and company did you serve?
- What conflicts were you a part of?
- What rank did you achieve?
- What heroics did you perform in the heat of battle?

You gain the following career benefits:

Skills: One skill from the exploration skill group and one skill from the intrigue group (*Quick Build:* Alertness, Endurance.)
Languages: Two languages
Renown: +1
Perk: One exploration perk (*Quick Build:* Teamwork.)

d6	Inciting Incident
1	**Dishonorable Discharge:** You enlisted in the military to protect others, but your commander ordered you to beat and kill civilians. When you refused, things got violent. You barely escaped the brawl that ensued, but now you vow to help people on your own terms.
2	**Out of Retirement:** You had a long and storied career as a soldier before deciding to retire to a simpler life. But when you returned to your old home, you found your enemies had laid waste to it. Now the skills you earned on the battlefield are helping you as you become a different kind of warrior—one seeking to save others from the fate you suffered.
3	**Peace Through Healing:** Living with constant bloodshed took its toll on you. You seek peace through healing and have dedicated yourself to ending wars before they begin, to spare those around you from the horror.
4	**Sole Survivor:** You were the last surviving member of your unit after an arduous battle or monstrous assault, surviving only through luck. You turned away from the life of a soldier then, seeking to become a hero who could stand against such threats.
5	**Stolen Valor:** Tired of eking out an existence on the streets, you enrolled in the military. However, you were unable to escape your lower-status background until the officer leading your unit fell in battle. In the chaos that ensued, you assumed their identity and returned home a hero. But when suspicion arose, you took on the life of an adventurer, staying always on the move.
6	**Vow of Sacrifice:** You promised a fellow soldier that you'd protect his family if he ever fell in battle. When he did, you traveled to his village, but found its people slain or scattered by war. Driven by your vow, you have dedicated your life to finding any survivors and protecting others from a similar fate.

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Warden

You protected a wild region from those who sought to harm it, such as poachers and cultists bent on the destruction of the natural world. Knowing your land well, you could also serve as a guide or the leader of a rescue party for those wandering the wilds. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- What environment did you protect?
- Were you part of a formal group of wardens or did you take the job upon yourself?
- Which animal became your constant companion while you worked in the wild?
- What mysterious creature or wanderer did you meet in the forest, and what prophecy did they share with you?

You gain the following career benefits:

Skills: Nature from the lore skill group, plus one skill from the exploration group and one skill from the intrigue group (*Quick Build:* Nature, Navigate, Track.)
Languages: One language
Project Points: 120
Perk: One exploration perk (*Quick Build:* Camouflage Hunter.)

d6	Inciting Incident
1	**Betrayed:** When outsiders arrived in your lands with the intent to exploit the wilds for their resources, you spoke out against them. However, several other wardens spoke in favor of these outsiders, and allowed them in to despoil nature. Refusing to watch your homeland destroyed, you left. Now you help others avoid such a fate.
2	**Corruption:** A disease has infected the lands you protect, causing animals to become violent and twisting plants into something sinister. You've tried everything, magical and mundane, to stop the scourge, but it continues to spread. As such, you've set out in search of a cure or an unblighted land to protect.
3	**Exiled:** You made a mistake that could not be forgiven. The other wardens of the region decided your fate, exiling you from your lands with an order never to return.
4	**Honor the Fallen:** A group of heroes arrived in your territory with trouble close on their heels. You fought alongside them to turn back the evil, but it was too much. The heroes fell, and your wilderness was forever altered. Though your lands are beyond saving, there are other lands you can help.
5	**Portents:** There were signs. You tried to ignore them, but when a great beast died at your feet, you had to recognize the truth. You were meant to leave your home territory, meant to fight a battle for the fate of all lands—and so you gave up the only life you've ever known.
6	**Theft:** You were responsible for guarding something precious, something vital to your region's survival. But you let someone in, and they betrayed your trust by stealing the thing you were meant to guard. You left your chosen territory to atone for your mistake.

Watch Officer

You served as an officer of the law for a local government. You might have been a single person in a much larger city watch or the only constable patrolling a small village. In defining your career, think about the following questions:

- What type of settlement did you protect?
- What was your law enforcement style like? Were you a by-the-book officer, a more lenient-but-fair type, or totally corrupt?
- What criminal still eludes your grasp to this day?
- Whose life did you save in the line of duty?
- What is the most absurd call you ever responded to and how did you handle it?

You gain the following career benefits:

Skills: Alertness from the intrigue skill group, plus two more skills from the intrigue group (*Quick Build:* Alertness, Search, Track.)
Languages: Two languages
Perk: One exploration perk (*Quick Build:* Team Leader.)

d6	Inciting Incident
1	**Bigger Fish:** You grew bored and disillusioned with chasing down petty thieves and imprisoning folks just trying to survive. Surely there are greater threats in the world. You will find that evil wherever it may lurk, and you'll be the one to stop it.
2	**Corruption Within:** You joined the force to help the helpless and bring justice to those wronged. You weren't prepared for the rampant corruption reaching the top of your organization. You refused to cover for your fellow officers and were told in no uncertain terms to leave town or face the consequences. Now you travel as a hero, acting as the protector you always wanted to be.
3	**Frame Job:** Your partner was murdered. That much is irrefutable. But you didn't do it, despite what the evidence implies. When it became clear you'd take the fall, you fled, leaving everything behind. Not content to cower in the shadows, you decided to adventure under a new name while you work to clear your own.
4	**Missing Mentor:** You learned everything you know about the job from someone you always looked up to in a corrupt organization. One night, they sent you a cryptic message saying they had discovered "something big," but before you could find out more, they disappeared. No longer sure who you could trust, you slipped away and sought a new life. Now you do what good you can and search to find the truth.
5	**One That Got Away:** A violent or depraved criminal began targeting you—perhaps stealing something personal or hurting someone you love—after slipping through your grasp. You left your career to pursue the criminal, but the trail has gone cold ... for now. Might as well help folk in the meantime.
6	**Powerful Enemies:** You made it your responsibility to root out and bring down the region's foremost crime syndicate. They sent goons to burn down your home and teach you a lesson, leaving you bleeding in the street with nothing left except your life. You've since taken on the life of a hero to gain the power and influence you need to destroy the syndicate once and for all.

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Chapter 5

CLASSES

While all your character creation decisions bear narrative weight, none influences the way you play the game like your choice of class. Your class determines how your hero battles the threats of the timescape and overcomes other obstacles. Do you bend elemental forces to your will through the practiced casting of magic spells? Do you channel the ferocity of the Primordial Chaos as you tear across the battlefield, felling foes left and right? Or do you belt out heroic ballads that give your allies a second wind and inspire them to ever-greater achievements?

Your class provides you with many of your features, most of your abilities—your most potent combat moves and noncombat options—and a Heroic Resource that fuels many of those abilities. This book presents nine classes to choose from.

Censor: A censor is a trained warrior devoted to a saint or god. They hunt down the forces of evil using melee weapons and magic granted to them by their divine patron, specializing in confronting the wicked and locking down single enemies during combat.

Conduit: A conduit is the devoted priest of a saint or god. They wield divine magic that smites enemies with holy energy and supports their allies, and are renowned for their healing abilities.

Elementalist: An elementalist studies the elemental forces of the timescape and controls earth, fire, the void, and more with magic. Many of their abilities cover wide areas of the battlefield, and they have a versatile array of tricks that allow them to both control combat and manipulate the environment around them when the fight is done.

Fury: Coursing with the ferocity of the Primordial Chaos in their veins, a fury is a mobile warrior who gets up close and personal with enemies to dish out lots of damage. Leaping around the battlefield felling foes and breaking down walls is where the fury lives.

Null: Disciplined and calm, the null is an unarmed warrior who manifests an aura that quells the supernatural and hinders the offensive prowess of their enemies. They use psionics to make their body stronger than any steel and faster than any steed.

Shadow: Stalking from the darkness, the shadow is an expert assassin and thief who fights equally well in melee and at range as they get the drop on their foes. They utilize magic to help them stay mobile on the battlefield and sneak up on their prey.

Tactician: A brilliant strategist and weapons master, the tactician excels at granting allies more movement and actions on the battlefield. They also support allies outside of combat, always inspiring their friends to greatness.

Talent: A talent is the master of psionics, manifesting powers that manipulate objects, minds, and time. These heroes can reach far into themselves to use abilities even when they don't have their Heroic Resource to spare—if they're willing to face the cost.

Troubadour: A troubadour inspires their allies with storytelling and swordplay that is as much an art as it is an act of war. Their quips, songs, poems, and epic tales produce actual magic that harms foes and bolsters allies. They can even use their magic to tweak the campaign's story in real time to better suit their needs.

Subclasses

Each class also has a number of subclasses presented in this book. Your subclass determines many of your hero's abilities and features, and further defines how you interact with the world from 1st level on. You choose a subclass when you create your character.

Abilities

Abilities are special actions, maneuvers, and more that allow you to affect creatures, objects, and the environment. They represent the main activities your character can undertake when the game is in combat or some other time-sensitive scenario. All characters have access to a few basic abilities, including free strikes and maneuvers such as Grab and Knockback (see Maneuvers in Chapter 10: Combat). But your class, ancestry (see Chapter 3), kit (Chapter 6), titles and treasures (Chapter 13: Rewards), and other heroic options give you access to more powerful abilities that make your hero stand out.

Abilities are presented in a special format that first describes the ability, then summarizes its mechanical details, and finally breaks out the ability's power roll (if it has one) and effects.

Abilities in Combat

All the abilities appearing in this book are used as a main action, a maneuver, a triggered action, or some other part of your turn. As such, these abilities are all explicitly usable in combat or some other time-sensitive scenario where the game unfolds as combat rounds. If a creature has an ability that takes 1 minute or longer to use, that ability can't be used in combat.

Name and Story Text

Each ability has an evocative name that sets up what it does in the game, followed by a line or two of flavor text that provides a sense of how the use of the ability might appear if described in an action scene in a story.

The name and story text for abilities sometimes refers to specific ways in which the ability plays out—particularly combat abilities whose names imply specific types of weapons or tactics. However, that narrative flavor has no effect on how an ability can be used. For example, the fury's Impaled ability allows you to grab a target, setting up the idea of harpooning your monstrous foe with a sword to keep them close. But you can use that ability with an axe, a mace, a hammer, or any other weapon.

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Heroic Resource Cost

Each class has a Heroic Resource that your hero earns during combat, with some of your class's abilities—typically your most potent abilities—having a Heroic Resource cost to use them. When you use one of these abilities, you spend some of the Heroic Resource bestowed by your class, then activate the ability.

The nine Heroic Resources in the game are:

- The censor's wrath
- The conduit's piety
- The elementalist's essence
- The fury's ferocity
- The null's discipline
- The shadow's insight
- The tactician's focus
- The talent's clarity
- The troubadour's drama

Heroic Abilities

If an ability has a Heroic Resource cost to activate—as in, you can't use the ability at all without spending some of your Heroic Resource—then it is a heroic ability.

Some abilities don't cost your Heroic Resource to use but allow you to spend your Heroic Resource to enhance or add effects to the ability, such as the conduit's Healing Grace. These abilities are not heroic abilities unless the baseline ability can't be used without spending your Heroic Resource.

Signature Abilities

Some abilities granted by your class, kit, and other parts of the game are signature abilities. The rules specifically state when an ability is a signature ability. Signature abilities don't require your Heroic Resource to use, but sometimes let you spend your Heroic Resource to enhance or add to their effects.

Ability Keywords

Each ability has one or more keywords that explain how the ability functions. Keywords appear in the first line of the ability beneath the flavor text, on the left side, and can include any of the following entries. (An ability that has no keywords is noted as "—".)

Area

Abilities with the Area keyword create an area of effect. Many area abilities deal damage to targets in their area, but such abilities are treated differently than strikes made against specific targets. (See the It's Not All Strikes! sidebar, as well as Strike and Area Abilities below for more information.)

Charge

Abilities with the Charge keyword can be used with the Charge main action instead of a melee free strike. (The Charge main action is described in Main Actions in Chapter 10: Combat.)

Magic

Abilities with the Magic keyword are used by characters who can cast spells, have innate magical features, or wield magic treasures. Such abilities do magical things such as create rays of fire, open swirling portals, or summon creatures.

Melee

Abilities with the Melee keyword can be used only over very short distances, typically within a character's reach, because they require a character to make contact with a creature or object with their body, a weapon, or an implement. (An implement is a special object used by characters channeling magic or psionic power, described in Imbue Treasure in Chapter 12: Downtime Projects.)

Psionic

Abilities with the Psionic keyword are used by characters who can manifest psionic powers, have innate psionic features, or wield psionic items. These abilities might create blasts of psychic energy, move objects with telekinesis, or slow down time with chronopathy.

Ranged

Abilities with the Ranged keyword can be used to affect creatures who are too far away to make contact with.

Strike

Abilities with the Strike keyword (often referred to simply as "strikes") deal damage to or impose a harmful effect on specific creatures or objects.

Weapon

The Weapon keyword is used in abilities that must be used with a blade, a bow, or some other offensive weapon. Weapon abilities also include strikes creatures make with their own bodies, such as a character's unarmed strikes or a monster's punches, kicks, bites, tail slaps, and more.

Your character's kit determines the types of weapons you wield and use with your weapon abilities (see Chapter 6: Kits).

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It's Not All Strikes!

The Strike keyword and phrases such as "makes a strike" are reserved for abilities that have a creature targeting specific creatures or objects (not affecting creatures or objects in an area) and harming those targets in some way by making a power roll. The many abilities in the game that target areas of effect are not strikes. They instead use the Area keyword. That means if a feature distinctly interacts with a strike, that feature has no effect on abilities with the Area keyword.

Type

Each ability notes the type of activity required to use it, on the right side of the first line beneath the flavor text. Most abilities require you to use a main action, a maneuver, a move action, a triggered action, a free maneuver, or a free triggered action (with all those terms explained in Taking a Turn in Chapter 10: Combat). For instance, if you use an ability that has "Main Action" as its type entry, you must use your main action to activate the ability.

Trigger

If an ability requires a triggered action or a free triggered action to use, a "Trigger" entry is part of the ability. For example, the trigger for the tactician's Parry ability is: "A creature deals damage to the target." A tactician can use their Parry ability only when that specific triggering event occurs.

Distance

An ability's "Distance" entry, represented by this symbol , indicates how close you need to be to a creature or object to affect that target with the ability.

Melee

Melee abilities have a distance of "Melee X" and require you to make contact with a creature with your body, a weapon, or an implement. The number X is the maximum distance in squares at which you can physically make contact with another creature or object targeted by the ability. For instance, a distance of "Melee 2" can be used to target creatures or objects within 2 squares of you, while "Melee 1" limits you to adjacent targets (those within 1 square).

Ranged

Ranged abilities have a distance of "Ranged X" and can be used to target creatures or objects too far away for you to make contact with. The number X is the maximum distance in squares at which a creature or object can be targeted by the ability. For instance, a distance of "Ranged 5" can be used to target creatures or objects within 5 squares of you.

If you make a ranged strike while any enemy is adjacent to you (within 1 square), you have a bane on the strike's power roll. (See Edges and Banes in Chapter 1: The Basics.)

Melee or Ranged

Some abilities have a melee distance and a ranged distance. When you use such an ability, you choose whether to use it as a melee or a ranged ability.

An ability never has both the Melee and Ranged keywords at the same time. For example, if you have the Cloak and Dagger kit, which has a weapon damage bonus to melee abilities and a weapon damage bonus to ranged abilities, only one bonus at a time applies to an ability with both the Melee and Ranged keywords. (See Chapter 6: Kits.)

Self

If an ability has a distance of "Self," that ability originates from you, and often affects only you. The ability's description specifies how it works.

Area Abilities

Area abilities cover a number of squares on the battlefield at once, creating an effect within that area that lets you target multiple creatures or objects. When an ability creates an area of effect, it sometimes notes a distance for the effect in the form "within X." The number X tells you how many squares away from you the area can be. If an area ability doesn't have this distance, it originates from you and you are at the center of the area.

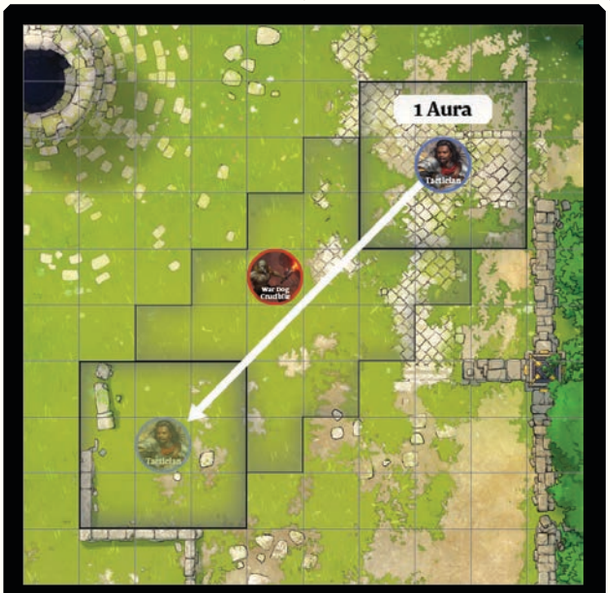
If an area ability originates a distance away from you, then one square at the center of the area of effect must be within that distance, and must also be within your line of effect (see below). This square is referred to as the **origin square** of the area of effect. The area of effect can spread from the origin square however you choose, according to the rules for the shape and arrangement of that particular area.

You can place an area of effect to include one or more squares where you don't have line of effect, as long as you have line of effect to the origin square. Unless otherwise noted, area abilities don't pass through solid barriers such as walls or ceilings, and they don't spread around corners.

An area ability might use any of the following areas of effect.

Aura

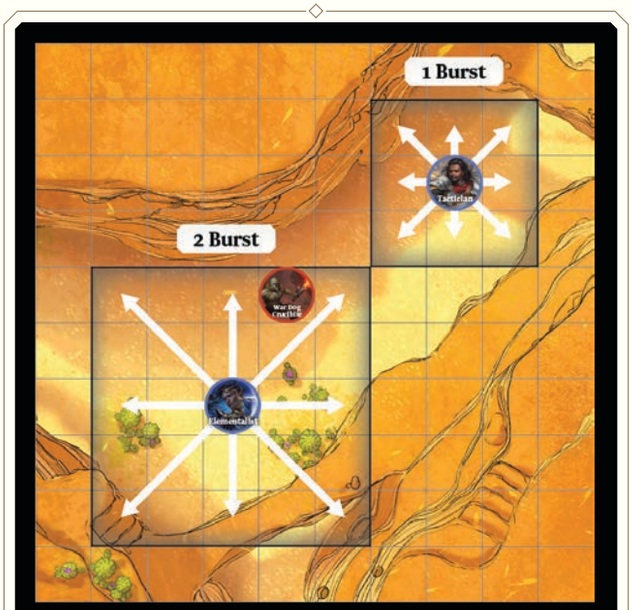
When an ability creates an aura, that area is expressed as "X aura." The number X is the radius of the aura, which always originates from you and moves with you for the duration of the ability that created it. A creature or object must be within X squares of you to be targeted by an aura ability.



Aura

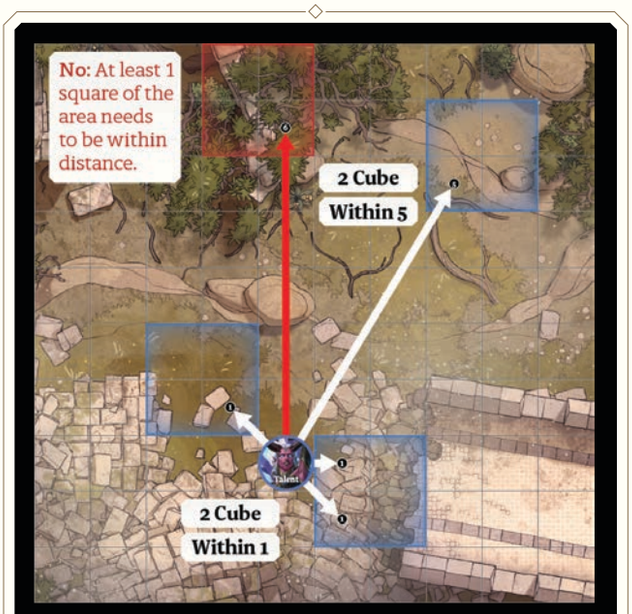
The tactician's 1 aura emanates 1 square in every direction from them. If the tactician moves, the aura moves with them. Any creatures the tactician comes within 1 square of during their move enters the aura's area of effect.

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Burst

A tactician uses a 1 burst ability, which targets all squares within 1 square of them. The elementalist uses a 2 burst ability, which targets all creatures within 2 squares of them, including the war dog crucibite.



Cube

The talent uses a "2 cube within 5" ability. The cube is 2 squares on all sides and must target an area that includes at least 1 square within 5 squares of the talent.

If the talent uses a "2 cube within 1" ability, that ability must target an area that includes at least 1 square that is adjacent to the talent.

Burst

When an ability creates a burst area, that area is expressed as "X burst." The number X is the radius of the burst, which always originates from you and lasts only for as long as it takes to affect its targets. A creature or object must be within X squares of you to be targeted by a burst ability.

Cube

When an ability affects a cubic area, that area is expressed as "X cube." The number X is the length of each of the area's sides. A creature or object must be within the area to be targeted by a cube ability.

Line

When an ability affects a linear area, that area is expressed as "A × B line." The number A denotes the line's length in squares, while the number B equals the line's width and height in squares. When you create a line area of effect, the squares in that area must be in a straight line. A creature or object must be within the area to be targeted by a line ability.

Straight Lines

Talking about a straight line area of effect on an encounter map doesn't mean the line can only be a straight vertical or horizontal line of contiguous squares. It means that an imaginary straight line traced through the center of the area of effect would be perfectly straight. Each square such an imaginary line would pass through is affected by the ability.

Likewise, abilities and effects that require a creature to move in a straight line, such as the Charge main action or forced movement that is a push or a pull, don't have to take the form of a straight series of squares on the grid. Simply move the creature one square at a time in a single direction without ever bending back in a direction opposite to where they've already moved.

Wall

When an ability creates a wall, that area is expressed as "X wall." The number X is how many squares are used to make the wall. When you place a wall, you can build it one square at a time, but each square must share at least one side (not just a corner) with another square of the wall. A creature or object must be within the area to be targeted by a wall ability.

You can stack squares on top of each other to make the wall higher. Unless otherwise stated, a wall can't be placed in occupied squares, and a wall blocks line of effect.

Target

The "Target" entry of an ability, represented by this symbol, notes the number of creatures, objects, or both who can be targeted by that ability. You can always affect fewer targets than the number indicated by this entry.

Creature

If an ability targets one or more creatures, it can affect creatures within the ability's distance or area. You aren't an eligible creature target for your own abilities unless those abilities also have "self" as a target (see below), or unless the ability indicates otherwise.

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Object

If an ability targets one or more objects, it can affect any object within the ability's distance or area. Unless otherwise noted, objects have poison immunity all and psychic immunity all. (Damage in Chapter 10: Combat has information on damage immunity.)

When an ability can target creatures and objects, the ability can damage objects. However, unless otherwise noted (as with the talent's Minor Telekinesis ability) or if the Director allows it, objects are immune to an ability's other effects. If an ability forces an object to make a test, the object automatically gets a tier 1 result on the test.

Enemy

If an ability targets one or more enemies, it can affect only creatures who are hostile to the creature using the ability. Typically, you decide who counts as an enemy for the purpose of using your hero's abilities, though the Director has the final say.

Ally

If an ability targets one or more allies, it can affect only willing creatures who are friendly to the creature using the ability. Typically, you and any other player whose character you target with an ability decide who counts as an ally, though the Director has the final say.

You aren't an eligible target for your own abilities that target allies unless those abilities also have "self" as a target, or unless the ability indicates otherwise.

Self

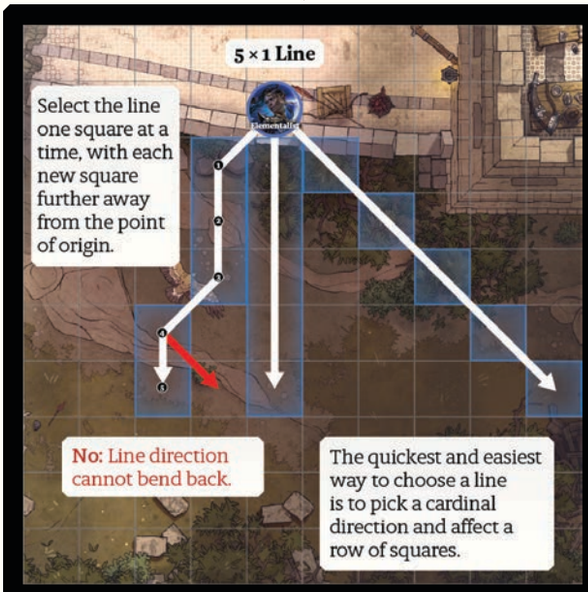
If an ability targets "self," it can affect only the creature using the ability. Your own abilities can affect you only if they target "self."

Each [Target]

If an area ability doesn't provide a number of targets but instead says it applies to each creature, object, enemy, or ally in the area, then all eligible targets for the ability are affected.

Telling Friend From Foe

There might be times when a foe disguises or obscures themself so that they're temporarily seen as an ally—or at least not seen as an enemy. Until the effect ends, such a creature can't be targeted by abilities that would usually target them by targeting enemies. Fear not, though. All classes have access to at least one ability that targets creatures, whether friend or foe.



Line

The elementalist uses a "5 × 1 line within 1" ability. Each blue-highlighted area abides by the rules for lines. The line must only move in one direction.



Wall

The elementalist uses a "4 wall within 10" ability. The blue squares indicate a few different placements of the wall that abide by the rules. The red squares show ways in which the wall can't be placed.

Ability Roll

If an ability requires a power roll, it has a "Power Roll" entry that tells you which characteristic to add to the 2d10 roll you make when you use the ability. (Chapter 1: The Basics talks about power rolls.)

Unlike power rolls made as tests (see Chapter 9), ability rolls always do something useful. You're rolling to determine the impact of the ability, including how much damage it deals and any other effects it imposes based on the tier outcome of the power roll. For instance, the fury's Brutal Slam ability is a melee strike that targets one adjacent creature (within 1 square), and which has the following effects:

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Tier 1 (11 or lower): The ability deals damage equal to 3 + your Might score, then pushes the target back 1 square.
Tier 2 (12–16): The ability deals damage equal to 6 + your Might score, then pushes the target back 2 squares.
Tier 3 (17 or higher): The ability deals damage equal to 9 + your Might score, then pushes the target back 4 squares.

Characteristics and Damage

Certain damage-dealing abilities note that damage as a number followed by a plus sign (+) and the letter M, A, R, I, or P. The indicated letter means you add your characteristic score—either Might, Agility, Reason, Intuition, or Presence—to the damage dealt by the ability. Certain abilities let you use your highest characteristic score for the power roll.

Using the fury's Brutal Slam ability as an example again, that ability uses a Might power roll and features the following damage expressions in the three tier outcomes of the power roll:

≤11 3 + M damage
12-16 6 + M damage
17+ 9 + M damage

For a fury with a Might of 2, the ability's damage breakdown would be:

≤11 5 damage
12-16 8 damage
17+ 11 damage

The damage for these abilities increases at each echelon of play, since your characteristics improve each time you reach a new echelon.

Some abilities, including your free strikes, allow you to pick which characteristic score you add to their damage. Such abilities use a format similar to "7 + M or A damage," indicating that you can add your Might or your Agility to determine the damage.

(Chapter 10: Combat has more information on damage.)

Abilities With Damage and Effects

Strikes and area abilities can deal damage and have an additional effect on a target. The damage and the strength of the effect are determined by the ability roll.

To keep things moving quickly and to make abilities easy to read during play, damage and effects are separated with a semicolon in a power roll tier entry, with effects abbreviated whenever possible. An effect determined by a power roll always applies to the target unless otherwise specified. For example, the Brutal Slam ability mentioned above has the following power roll setup in the ability format:

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 3 + M damage; push 1
12-16 6 + M damage; push 2
17+ 9 + M damage; push 4

Unless otherwise indicated, any effects that are determined by a power roll's tier outcome occur after the power roll's damage has been dealt to all targets. If an ability creates multiple effects, those effects resolve in the order in which they are presented.

"During the Move"

Certain ability effects allow you to move and affect other creatures or objects during that move, such as the shadow's One Hundred Throats ability. For such abilities, the move begins in the space you first leave when you start the move and ends in the last space you move into.

Rolled Damage

Certain effects talk about rolled damage, which refers to the variable damage determined by making an ability roll. If an ability or effect deals damage without requiring a power roll, that is not rolled damage, and effects that add to or are triggered by rolled damage don't apply.

Potencies

Many abilities and other effects impose conditions and unique statuses on targets. But creatures sometimes get a chance to resist such effects. After all, a monster with a high Might should be harder to knock prone most of the time than a creature lacking in that characteristic.

Ability effects that have a **potency** are applied to a target only if the effect's potency value is higher than the target's indicated characteristic score. The characteristic a target uses to resist a potency is based on the ability used, while the value of the potency for your hero's abilities is based on one of your characteristics and determined by your class.

Your character has a **weak**, an **average**, and a **strong** potency value, as follows:

- Your weak potency value is equal to your highest characteristic score – 2.
- Your average potency value is equal to your highest characteristic score – 1.
- Your strong potency value is equal to your highest characteristic score.

In abilities and other effects, a potency always appears as the single-letter abbreviation for the target's characteristic: M for Might, A for Agility, R for Reason, I for Intuition, or P for Presence. That characteristic is followed by a "less than" sign (<) and your potency value—for example, M < WEAK or R < AVERAGE —with the value indicating the minimum score in that characteristic that the target needs to beat the effect.

As an example, consider the conduit's Judgment's Hammer ability, which has the following power roll:

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 3 + I holy damage; A < WEAK, prone
12-16 6 + I holy damage; A < AVERAGE, prone
17+ 9 + I holy damage; A < STRONG, prone and can't stand (save ends)

At 1st level, a conduit uses their Intuition score to determine their potency values, and that score is 2. That gives the conduit the following potencies:

- Weak: 0
- Average: 1
- Strong: 2

When writing Judgment's Hammer on their character sheet, the conduit's player updates the damage and converts the weak, average, and strong potencies into their numerical values, knowing that those values won't change until the character hits 2nd echelon and their Intuition score becomes 3. That produces the following:

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 5 holy damage; A < 0, prone
12-16 8 holy damage; A < 1, prone
17+ 11 holy damage; A < 2, prone and can't stand (save ends)

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During a game session, the conduit uses Judgment's Hammer to target a bandit with an Agility score of 0. The ability thus has the following outcomes at each tier:

- With a tier 1 outcome (11 or lower), the ability deals 5 holy damage to the bandit. But the bandit resists the additional effect because they have Agility 0 (and therefore don't have an Agility of less than 0).
- With a tier 2 outcome (12–16), the ability deals 8 holy damage. But the bandit is also knocked prone, unable to resist the additional effect because they would need an Agility of 1 or higher to do so. If the bandit had Agility 1 or higher, they would have taken 8 holy damage but stayed standing.
- With a tier 3 outcome (17 or higher), the bandit takes 11 holy damage and is knocked flat and left struggling to stand, unable to resist the strong potency of the additional effect with a mere Agility 0.

Potency Presentation

Potencies are presented in an abbreviated style in abilities so they don't take up too much space, and so you can read them by saying: "If the target's [characteristic] is less than [potency value], they [suffer effect]." If our 1st-level conduit obtained a tier 2 outcome when using Judgment's Hammer, the player would say, "I deal 8 holy damage, and if the bandit's Agility is less than 1, they fall prone."

Reading the ability this way prevents a lot of back and forth. You don't need to ask, "What's the target's Agility score?", wait for a response, and then give the outcome. You can simply say, "If they don't have an Agility of 1 or higher, they fall prone." Players can let the Director figure out whether the target is prone and keep the game moving, with the Director doing the same in reverse when monsters and other foes use abilities with potencies against the heroes.

Adjusting Potencies

Potencies are made for quick resolution at the table, but a number of triggered actions and other abilities—for example, the censor's Judgment ability and the null's Null Field ability—allow you to manipulate the value of potencies. If you build a hero who can adjust potencies, pay attention during combat! You might be able to help out a friend who needs a little boost to make their ability take full effect, or hinder an enemy about to lock down one of your allies.

Spending Resources on Potencies

If an ability or feature allows you to spend your Heroic Resource on an effect that is entirely dependent on a potency and the target is unaffected because their characteristic is high enough to resist the potency, then you don't spend the Heroic Resource.

For example, the tactician's Overwatch ability allows the tactician to spend 1 focus to impose the slowed condition on a target who has **R < AVERAGE**. Since spending focus this way has no other effect, if the tactician targets a creature whose high Reason leaves them unaffected, the tactician doesn't waste any focus. However, if spending this focus had another automatic effect such as dealing extra damage to the target, the 1 focus would be spent even though the potency was resisted.

This rule also applies to Director-controlled creatures who spend Malice on abilities and features that affect a target using a potency and have no other automatic effects.

Critical Hit

Whenever you make an ability roll as a main action and the roll is a natural 19 or natural 20—a total of 19 or 20 before adding your characteristic score or other modifiers—you score a critical hit. A critical hit allows you to immediately take an additional action after resolving the power roll, whether or not it's your turn and even if you are dazed (see Conditions below).

You can't score a critical hit with an ability roll made as a maneuver or any other action type, but you can score a critical hit with a main action you use off your turn. For example, an opportunity attack made as a triggered action or a signature ability used as a free triggered action with the assistance of the tactician's Strike Now ability can be critical hits.

Roll Against Multiple Creatures

When an ability has multiple targets (whether a strike with more than one target or an area affect), you make one power roll and apply the total to all targets. If you have edges or banes (see Chapter 1: The Basics) against some but not all of your targets, you might apply a different tier outcome to individual targets.

For example, if you target three creatures with a strike ability and the power roll totals 11, each of the targets should be affected by the tier 1 outcome of the ability. However, if you gain an edge on strikes against one of the targets to add 2 to the power roll, your total against that target is 13, and they are affected by the tier 2 outcome of the ability.

Surges

A troubadour's battle song, a fury's building ferocity, and a shadow's patient insight can all make a hero more effective in a fight. These advantages are represented by surges, with many abilities granting heroes surges during a battle.

When you gain surges, you keep track of them on your character sheet. Surges can be used in combat to deal extra damage to your foes and increase the value of your potencies, as follows:

- Whenever you deal rolled damage, you can spend up to 3 surges to deal extra damage to one creature or object targeted by the ability. Each surge you spend deals extra damage equal to your highest characteristic score.
- Whenever you target one or more creatures with an ability that has a potency, you can spend 2 surges to increase the potency by 1 for one target. You can't increase a potency by more than 1 using surges, though you can spend additional surges to increase the potency for multiple targets.

You lose surges as you spend them. At the end of combat, you lose any surges you have remaining.

Effect

Many abilities that require power rolls also have effect entries describing additional effects or rules for how the ability is used. If an ability doesn't require a power roll, it has an effect entry that describes how it works.

Actions Within Actions

If an ability's effect allows you to take a main action, a maneuver, a move action, or a triggered action, the cost of doing so is subsumed in the ability's type entry on the first line below the flavor text. You never need to spend additional time to use an ability. For example, the

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shadow's Black Ash Teleport ability is a maneuver that allows you to teleport and then use the Hide maneuver as its overall effect. Using the Hide maneuver is part of the maneuver to use the ability, so that you don't need to have another maneuver available to do so.

Spend Heroic Resource

Some abilities have a "Spend X [Heroic Resource]" entry in the body of the ability. These grant additional effects to an ability, where X is the amount of your Heroic Resource you must spend to activate those effects. If an entry reads "Spend X+ [Heroic Resource]," you can spend as much of your available Heroic Resource as you like in multiples of X to increase the effect's impact, as described in the entry's details.

Stacking Unique Effects

The unique effects of different abilities are combined—effectively stacking on top of each other—if their durations and targets overlap. However, the effects of the same ability used multiple times don't stack. Instead, the most impactful effect—such as the highest bonus—from each use of the ability applies. The most recently used ability applies for determining duration.

For example, the null's Null Field ability reduces the potencies of enemies within the field by 1. If two allied nulls each have their Null Field ability active and an enemy cultist is targeted by both abilities, that cultist's potencies are reduced by 1, not by 2.

Different effects that impose the same condition (see Conditions below) don't stack to impose the condition twice. For instance, if a hero is targeted by numerous creatures whose abilities cause a target to become weakened (imposing a bane on the target's power rolls), the target isn't weakened twice to impose a double bane on those rolls. A character who is grabbed by an enemy can't be grabbed again by another enemy. The same holds true for game effects that aren't conditions. For example, if a hero is targeted by multiple abilities or effects that can halve their recovery value, the hero's recovery value is halved only once.

Ending Effects

When a creature suffers a lasting effect, whatever ability, feature, hazard, or other mechanic imposed the effect specifies how long the effect lasts. Unless otherwise noted, all effects and conditions that are imposed on heroes during a combat encounter end when the encounter is over if the hero wants them to, except for being winded, unconscious, or dying. After combat, effects and conditions imposed on other creatures end when it's convenient for the heroes, allowing characters to easily bind or slip away from unconscious foes. However, the Director is free to decide that an unconscious dragon doesn't stay that way long enough to be tied up.

End of Next Turn (EoT)

Many effects last until the end of the target's next turn, abbreviated as "(EoT)" in the tier outcomes for an ability's power roll. A creature suffers from such an effect until the end of their next turn, or the end of their current turn if the effect was imposed on their current turn.

Saving Throw (Save Ends)

If an effect has "(save ends)" at the end of its description, a creature suffering the effect makes a saving throw at the end of each of their turns to remove the effect. A saving throw represents the sheer luck involved in shaking off an effect. Because a target typically had a chance to avoid a "save ends" effect using a characteristic score to resist a potency, it's now down to fate.

To make a saving throw, a creature rolls a d10. On a 6 or higher, the effect ends. Otherwise, it continues.

End of Encounter (EoE)

Some effects last until the end of the encounter. If such an effect is used outside of combat, it lasts 5 minutes.

Creature Ends an Ability Effect

A creature who imposes an effect on another creature using an ability can end that effect as a free maneuver unless the ability says otherwise.

Adjacent

Many abilities and other options refer to creatures, objects, or spaces that are adjacent to a specified creature. Something is adjacent to a creature if it is within 1 square of that creature.

Line of Effect

To target a creature or object with an ability or effect, including making a strike against them, you must have line of effect to that target. If any solid object, such as a wall or pillar, completely blocks the target from you, then you don't have line of effect.

If you're not sure whether you have line of effect to a target, imagine drawing a straight line from any corner of the space you occupy on an encounter map to any corner of a space the target occupies. If one or more corners of your space connect to any corner of the target's space with no obstruction in between, you have line of effect to the target.

At the Director's discretion, flimsy or fragile obstructions such as a glass window or linen curtains don't block line of effect, and might be automatically broken or torn by strikes or other abilities used through them.

If you use an ability that creates an environmental effect, such as a portal, you must have line of effect to the space where you create the environmental effect. If you want to create an area of effect in a specific area, you must have line of effect to at least one of the squares in that area. See Area Abilities above.

Straight Line

Whenever a creature moves or is subjected to forced movement—a push, pull, or slide (see Chapter 10: Combat)—that movement is typically in a straight line. Abilities that allow you to move or to force move another creature often talk about moving straight toward or away from a creature or an object. But even when movement must be in a straight line, it doesn't have to be a horizontal or vertical line on an encounter map. (See the Straight Lines sidebar earlier in this chapter.)

Ground and Ceiling

Some abilities and other effects refer to a hero or their targets being "on the ground." Unless otherwise indicated, "ground" means any surface a creature could typically stand, sit, or lie upon, whether a castle's stone floor, the dirt of a road, the deck of a ship, or a metal platform suspended high in the air.

Likewise, if an effect refers to a "ceiling," that means any solid surface above a creature, whether a wooden tavern ceiling, the rocky roof of a cave, or an invisible wall of force.

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Conditions

Some abilities and other effects apply specific negative effects called conditions to a creature. The following conditions show up regularly in the game and can be tracked on your character sheet when they affect your hero.

Bleeding

While a creature is bleeding, whenever they use a main action, use a triggered action, or make a test or ability roll using Might or Agility, they lose Stamina equal to 1d6 + their level after the main action, triggered action, or power roll is resolved. This Stamina loss can't be prevented in any way.

You take damage from this condition when you use a main action off your turn. For example, a signature ability used as a free triggered action with the assistance of the tactician's Strike Now ability triggers the damage from the bleeding condition.

Dazed

A creature who is dazed can do only one thing on their turn: use a main action, use a maneuver, or use a move action. A dazed creature also can't use triggered actions, free triggered actions, or free maneuvers.

Frightened

When a creature is frightened, any ability roll they make against the source of their fear takes a bane. If that source is a creature, their ability rolls made against the frightened creature gain an edge. A frightened creature can't willingly move closer to the source of their fear if they know the location of that source. If a creature gains the frightened condition from one source while already frightened by a different source, the new condition replaces the old one.

Grabbed

A creature who is grabbed has speed 0, can't be force moved except by a creature, object, or effect that has them grabbed, can't use the Knockback maneuver (see Maneuvers in Chapter 10: Combat), and takes a bane on abilities that don't target the creature, object, or effect that has them grabbed. If a creature is grabbed by another creature and that creature moves, they bring the grabbed creature with them. If a creature's size is equal to or less than the size of a creature they have grabbed, their speed is halved while they have that creature grabbed.

A creature who has another creature grabbed can use a maneuver to move the grabbed creature into an unoccupied space adjacent to them.

A creature can release a creature they have grabbed at any time to end that condition (no action required). A grabbed creature can attempt to escape being grabbed using the Escape Grab maneuver (see Chapter 10: Combat). If a grabbed creature teleports, or if either the grabbed creature or the creature grabbing them is force moved so that both creatures are no longer adjacent to each other, that creature is no longer grabbed.

A creature can grab only creatures of their size or smaller. If a creature's Might score is 2 or higher, they can grab any creature larger than them with a size equal to or less than their Might score.

Unless otherwise indicated, a creature can grab only one creature at a time.

Prone

While a creature is prone, they are flat on the ground, any strike they make takes a bane, and melee abilities used against them gain an edge. A prone creature must crawl to move along the ground, which costs 1 additional square of movement for every square crawled. A creature can't climb, jump, swim, or fly while prone. If they are climbing, flying, or jumping when knocked prone, they fall.

Unless the ability or effect that imposed the prone condition says otherwise, a prone creature can stand up using the Stand Up maneuver (see Maneuvers in Chapter 10: Combat). A creature adjacent to a willing prone creature can likewise use the Stand Up maneuver to make that creature stand up.

Restrained

A creature who is restrained has speed 0, can't use the Stand Up maneuver, and can't be force moved. A restrained creature takes a bane on ability rolls and on Might and Agility tests, and abilities used against them gain an edge.

If a creature teleports while restrained, that condition ends.

Slowed

A creature who is slowed has speed 2 unless their speed is already lower, and they can't shift.

Taunted

A creature who is taunted has a double bane on ability rolls for any ability that doesn't target the creature who taunted them, as long as they have line of effect to that creature. If a creature gains the taunted condition from one source while already taunted by a different source, the new condition replaces the old one.

Weakened

A creature who is weakened takes a bane on power rolls.

Abilities in Class Tables

Each class in this chapter includes a table that shows the progression as a hero gains new levels in that class. Each of those tables has an Abilities column and another column that shows abilities granted by the hero's subclass, tracking all the heroic abilities a hero of that class has at each level. Each ability is represented by a numeral noting the ability's Heroic Resource cost.

For example a 6th-level censor has "Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9" in their Abilities column, and "5, 9" in their Order Abilities column (representing the censor's subclass). This means a censor of that level has a signature ability and four heroic abilities costing 3, 5, 7, and 9 wrath respectively, plus an additional two subclass heroic abilities costing 5 and 9 wrath.

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CENSOR

Demons and deathless fear you. Criminals run from the sight of your shadow. Agents of chaos, blasphemers, and heretics tremble at the sound of your voice. You carry the power of the gods, armed with wrath and sent out into the world first to seek, then censor those whose actions—or even existence—are anathema to your church.

As a censor, you're at your best against the strongest foes. Your judgment terrifies heretics, stops enemies in their tracks, and even hurls them across the battlefield.



"We FIGHT!
Until HELL!
Is EMPTY!"
Sir Vaantikalisax

Basics

Starting Characteristics: You start with a Might of 2 and a Presence of 2, and you can choose one of the following arrays for your other characteristic scores:

- 2, –1, –1
- 1, 1, –1
- 1, 0, 0

Weak Potency: Presence – 2

Average Potency: Presence – 1

Strong Potency: Presence

Starting Stamina at 1st Level: 21

Stamina Gained at 2nd and Higher Levels: 12

Recoveries: 12

Skills: Choose any two skills from the interpersonal or lore skill groups (see Skills in Chapter 9: Tests). (*Quick Build:* Intimidate, Religion.)

1st-Level Features

As a 1st-level censor, you gain the following features.

Censor Order

Censors are the will of their god made physically manifest, and you act as your god's agent in the world. As you shoulder that responsibility, you choose a censor order from the following options, each of which grants you a skill. (*Quick Build:* Paragon.)

Exorcist: You specialize in hunting your order's hidden enemies, knowing that an open mind is an unguarded fortress. You have the Read Person skill.

Oracle: Corruption has deep tendrils that can be missed, leading you to specialize in uncovering clandestine threats to your order. You have the Magic skill.

Paragon: Without a strong example and a firm hand, the weak will be corrupted. You specialize in setting an example for your order. You have the Lead skill.

Your censor order is your subclass, and your choice of order determines many of the features you'll gain as you gain new levels.

Deity and Domains

Choose a god or saint who your character reveres from Chapter 14: Gods and Religion, or ask your Director about the deities in your campaign world. With the Director's permission, you can also create your own deity and choose four domains to be part of their portfolio.

After choosing your deity, pick one domain from their portfolio. Your choice of domain determines many of the features you'll gain from this class. (*Quick Build:* Cavall as deity and War as domain.)

Censor Advancement

Level	Features	Abilities	Order Abilities
1st	Censor Order, Deity and Domains, Wrath, Judgment, Kit, My Life for Yours, Domain Feature, Censor Abilities	Signature, 3, 5	—
2nd	Perk, Order Features, Order Ability	Signature, 3, 5	5
3rd	Look On My Work and Despair, 7-Wrath Ability	Signature, 3, 5, 7	5
4th	Characteristic Increase, Perk, Skill, Wrath Beyond Wrath, Domain Feature	Signature, 3, 5, 7	5
5th	Order Feature, 9-Wrath Ability	Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9	5
6th	Implement of Wrath, Perk, Order Ability	Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9	5, 9
7th	Characteristic Increase, Domain Feature, Focused Wrath, Skill	Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9	5, 9
8th	Perk, Order Feature, 11-Wrath Ability	Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11	5, 9
9th	Improved Implement of Wrath, Order Ability	Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11	5, 9, 11
10th	Characteristic Increase, Perk, Skill, Templar, Virtue, Wrath of the Gods	Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11	5, 9, 11

Wrath

The power you serve grants you a Heroic Resource called wrath, fueling your abilities as you censor those your church deems to be heretics.

Wrath in Combat

At the start of a combat encounter or some other stressful situation tracked in combat rounds (as determined by the Director), you gain wrath equal to your Victories. At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 2 wrath.

Additionally, the first time each combat round that a creature judged by you (see Judgment below) deals damage to you, you gain 1 wrath. The first time each combat round that you deal damage to a creature judged by you, you gain 1 wrath.

You lose any remaining wrath at the end of the encounter.

Wrath Outside of Combat

Though you can't gain wrath outside of combat, you can use your heroic abilities and effects that cost wrath without spending it. Whenever you use an ability or effect outside of combat that costs wrath, you can't use that same ability or effect outside of combat again until you earn 1 or more Victories or finish a respite.

When you use an ability outside of combat that lets you spend unlimited wrath on its effect, you can use it as if you had spent an amount of wrath equal to your Victories. (Such abilities aren't part of the core rules for the censor, but they might appear in future products.)

Judgment

You pick out the enemies most worthy of your wrath and place a divine judgment upon them, censoring them with the power of your god. You have the following ability.

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Judgment

You utter a prayer that outlines your foe in holy energy.

Magic, Ranged | **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 | One enemy

Effect: The target is judged by you until the end of the encounter, you use this ability again, you willingly end this effect (no action required), or another censor judges the target.

Whenever a creature judged by you uses a main action and is within your line of effect, you can use a free triggered action to deal holy damage equal to twice your Presence score to them.

When a creature judged by you is reduced to 0 Stamina, you can use a free triggered action to use this ability against a new target.

Additionally, you can spend 1 wrath to take one of the following free triggered actions:

- When an adjacent creature judged by you starts to shift, you make a melee free strike against them and their speed becomes 0 until the end of the current turn, preventing them from shifting.
- When a creature judged by you within 10 squares makes a power roll, you cause them to take a bane on the roll.
- When a creature judged by you within 10 squares uses an ability with a potency that targets only one creature, the potency is reduced by 1 for that creature.
- If you damage a creature judged by you with a melee ability, the creature is taunted by you until the end of their next turn.

You can choose only one free triggered action option at a time, even if multiple options are triggered by the same effect.

Judgment Order Benefit

The first time on a turn that you use your Judgment ability to judge a creature, you gain the following benefit based on your order:

- **Exorcist:** You can teleport up to a number of squares equal to twice your Presence score. This movement must take you closer to the judged creature. You do not need line of effect to your destination.
- **Oracle:** You can deal holy damage equal to twice your Presence score to the judged creature.
- **Paragon:** You can vertical pull the judged creature up to a number of squares equal to twice your Presence score.

Kit

You can use and gain the benefits of a kit. See Chapter 6: Kits for more information. (*Quick Build:* Warrior Priest.)

My Life for Yours

You channel your will to mend your wounds or the wounds of your allies. You have the following ability.

My Life for Yours

You channel some of your vitality into more resilience for you or an ally.

Magic, Ranged | **Triggered**
Ranged 10 | Self or one ally

Trigger: The target starts their turn or takes damage.

Effect: You spend a Recovery and the target regains Stamina equal to your recovery value.

Spend 1 Wrath: You can end one effect on the target that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of their turn, or a prone target can stand up.

1st-Level Domain Feature

You gain a domain feature from your domain, as shown on the 1st-Level Censor Domain Features table. Additionally, you gain a skill from your domain, chosen from the skill group indicated on the table.

1st-Level Censor Domain Features

Domain	Feature	Skill Group
Creation	Hands of the Maker	Crafting
Death	Grave Speech	Lore
Fate	Oracular Visions	Lore
Knowledge	Blessing of Comprehension	Lore
Life	Revitalizing Ritual	Exploration
Love	Blessing of Compassion	Interpersonal
Nature	Faithful Friend	Exploration
Protection	Protective Circle	Exploration
Storm	Blessing of Fortunate Weather	Exploration
Sun	Inner Light	Lore
Trickery	Inspired Deception	Intrigue
War	Sanctified Weapon	Exploration

Blessing of Compassion

You exude a magic presence that can soothe those willing to socially engage with you. You gain an edge on any test made to assist another creature with a test.

Additionally, when you are present at the start of a negotiation, one NPC of your choice has their patience increased by 1 (to a maximum of 5), and the first test made to influence them gains an edge.

Blessing of Comprehension

You can interpret diagrams and charts even if you don't understand the language associated with them. You are considered fluent in all languages for the purpose of understanding the project source for any crafting or research project (see Chapter 12: Downtime Projects).

Blessing of Fortunate Weather

Each time you finish a respite, you can decide the weather conditions within 100 squares. Until you finish another respite, the weather conditions you establish follow you through any mundane outdoor locations. Choose one of the following types of weather, each of which grants a benefit to you and your allies:

- **Clear:** You and your allies gain an edge on tests that use the Search or Navigate skills.
- **Foggy:** You and your allies gain an edge on tests that use the Hide skill.
- **Overcast:** You and your allies gain an edge on tests that use the Endurance skill.
- **Precipitation:** When the ground is muddy or snowy, you and your allies gain an edge on tests that use the Track skill.

If you are in the same area as a creature using this or a similar feature who has chosen a different weather effect, the features negate each other where their areas overlap.

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Faithful Friend

You have the following ability.

Faithful Friend

An animal spirit is drawn to you, sharing their senses with you and serving you faithfully.

Magic — Self
Main action — Self

Effect: You conjure a spirit that takes the form of any animal you have seen. The incorporeal animal has speed 5 and can fly, but can't physically interact with the world. While you are within 10 squares of the spirit, you automatically sense everything that type of animal would sense, in addition to sensing your own surroundings. You can dismiss the spirit at any time (no action required). If the spirit takes any damage, they are dismissed and you take 1d10 psychic damage that can't be reduced in any way.

Grave Speech

You have the following ability.

Grave Speech

You commune with the lingering soul of the recently dead.

Magic — Melee 1
Maneuver — One dead creature

Effect: You can speak to the target if they are a creature who has died within the last 24 hours and who can speak a language you know, even if they are just a head. The target regards you as they would have in life, and you might need to make tests to influence them and convince them to speak with you. The trauma of dying can make a creature's memory of that event hazy, but the target otherwise knows all they knew in life. After 1 minute, the effect ends. You can't use this ability on the same creature twice.

Hands of the Maker

You have the following ability.

Hands of the Maker

You craft objects with the power of your mind.

Magic — Self
Maneuver — Self

Effect: You create a mundane object of size 1S or smaller. You can maintain a number of objects created this way equal to your Presence score. You can destroy an object created this way with a thought, no matter how far you are from it (no action required).

Inner Light

Each time you finish a respite, you can choose yourself or one ally who is also finishing a respite to gain the benefit of a divine ritual. You place a ray of morning light into the chosen character's soul, granting them a +1 bonus to saving throws that lasts until you finish another respite.

Inspired Deception

The gods favor your thievery with magic. Whenever you make a test that uses a skill you have from the intrigue skill group, you can use Presence on the test instead of another characteristic.



Oracular Visions

Your deity rewards you with hazy visions of things to come. Each time you earn 1 or more Victories, you earn an equal number of fate points. Whenever you or a creature within 10 squares makes a test, you can spend 1 fate point to tap into a vision of the outcome, granting that creature an edge on the test. You lose any remaining fate points when you finish a respite.

Protective Circle

You can spend 10 uninterrupted minutes to create a protective circle on the ground large enough to hold one size 1 creature. The circle lasts for 24 hours, until you create another, or until you dismiss it (no action required). Only creatures you designate at the time of drawing the circle can enter and exit the area. While in the protective circle, a creature can't be targeted by strikes.

Revitalizing Ritual

Each time you finish a respite, you can choose yourself or one ally who is also finishing a respite to gain the benefit of a divine ritual. The chosen character gains a bonus to their recovery value equal to your level that lasts until you finish another respite.

Sanctified Weapon

As a respite activity, you can bless a weapon. Any creature who wields the weapon gains a +1 bonus to rolled damage with abilities that use the weapon. This benefit lasts until you finish another respite.

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Censor Abilities

You use a blend of martial techniques and divine magic to attack your foes and defend your allies.

Signature Ability

Choose one signature ability from the following options. Signature abilities can be used at will. (*Quick Build:* Your Allies Cannot Save You!)

Back Blasphemer!

You channel power through your weapon to repel foes.

Area, Magic, Melee, Weapon | **Main action**
2 cube within 1 | Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 2 holy damage; push 1
12–16 4 holy damage; push 2
17+ 6 holy damage; push 3

Every Step ... Death!

You show your foe a glimpse of their fate after death.

Magic, Ranged, Strike | **Main action**
Ranged 10 | One creature

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 5 + P psychic damage
12–16 7 + P psychic damage
17+ 10+ P psychic damage

Effect: Each time the target willingly moves before the end of your next turn, they take 1 psychic damage for each square they move.

Halt Miscreant!

You infuse your weapon with holy magic that makes it difficult for your foe to get away.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 2 + M holy damage; P < WEAK, slowed (save ends)
12–16 5 + M holy damage; P < AVERAGE, slowed (save ends)
17+ 7 + M holy damage; P < STRONG, slowed (save ends)

Your Allies Cannot Save You!

Your magic strike turns your foe's guilt into a burst of holy power.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 3 + M holy damage
12–16 5 + M holy damage
17+ 8 + M holy damage

Effect: Each enemy adjacent to the target is pushed away from the target up to a number of squares equal to your Presence score.

Heroic Abilities

You call upon a number of heroic abilities, all of them bound to your wrath.

3-Wrath Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 3 wrath to use. (*Quick Build:* The Gods Punish and Defend.)

Behold a Shield of Faith! (3 Wrath)

A mighty blow turns your foe's vitality into a holy light that envelops you and an ally, discouraging enemies who might attack you.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 3 + M holy damage
12–16 6 + M holy damage
17+ 9 + M holy damage

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, enemies take a bane on ability rolls made against you or any ally adjacent to you.

Driving Assault (3 Wrath)

As you force your enemy back with your weapon, you use your faith to stay close.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 3 + M damage; push 1
12–16 6 + M damage; push 3
17+ 9 + M damage; push 5

Effect: You can shift up to your speed. You must end this shift within distance of the target.

The Gods Punish and Defend (3 Wrath)

You channel holy energy to smite a foe and heal an ally.

Magic, Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 5 + M holy damage
12–16 8 + M holy damage
17+ 11 + M holy damage

Effect: You can spend a Recovery to allow yourself or one ally within 10 squares to regain Stamina equal to your recovery value.

Repent! (3 Wrath)

You conjure memories of their sins to harry your foes.

Magic, Ranged, Strike | **Main action**
Ranged 10 | One creature

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 5 + P holy damage; I < WEAK, dazed (save ends)
12–16 8 + P holy damage; I < AVERAGE, dazed (save ends)
17+ 11+ P holy damage; I < STRONG, dazed (save ends)

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5-Wrath Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 5 wrath to use. (*Quick Build:* Purifying Fire.)

Arrest (5 Wrath)

"I've got you, you son of a bitch."

Magic, Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 6 + M holy damage; grabbed
12-16 9 + M holy damage; grabbed
17+ 13 + M holy damage; grabbed

Effect: If the target makes a strike against a creature while grabbed this way, you can spend 3 wrath to deal holy damage to them equal to your Presence score, then change the target of the strike to another target within the strike's distance.

Behold the Face of Justice! (5 Wrath)

You attack a foe and your enemies behold a vision of the true nature of your resolve.

Magic, Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 or ranged 5 — One creature

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 3 + M holy damage; if the target has P < WEAK, each enemy within 2 squares of them is frightened of you (save ends)
12-16 5 + M holy damage; if the target has P < AVERAGE, each enemy within 2 squares of them is frightened of you (save ends)
17+ 8 + M holy damage; if the target has P < STRONG, each enemy within 2 squares of them is frightened of you (save ends)

Effect: Each enemy frightened this way is pushed up to 2 squares away from the target and takes psychic damage equal to your Presence score.

Censored (5 Wrath)

Judged and sentenced.

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 2 + M holy damage
12-16 3 + M holy damage
17+ 5 + M holy damage

Effect: When a target who is not a leader or solo creature is made winded by this ability, they are reduced to 0 Stamina.

Purifying Fire (5 Wrath)

The gods judge, fire cleanses.

Magic, Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 or ranged 5 — One creature

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 5 + M holy damage; M < WEAK, the target has fire weakness 3 (save ends)
12-16 9 + M holy damage; M < AVERAGE, the target has fire weakness 5 (save ends)
17+ 12 + M holy damage; M < STRONG, the target has fire weakness 7 (save ends)

Effect: While the target has fire weakness from this ability, you can choose to have your abilities deal fire damage to the target instead of holy damage.



2nd-Level Features

As a 2nd-level censor, you gain the following features.

Perk

You gain one interpersonal, lore, or supernatural perk of your choice. See Chapter 7: Perks.

2nd-Level Order Features

Your censor order grants you two features, as shown on the 2nd-Level Order Features table.

2nd-Level Order Features

Order	Features
Exorcist	Saint's Vigilance, A Sense for Truth
Oracle	It Was Foretold, Judge of Character
Paragon	Lead by Example, Stalwart Icon

It Was Foretold

Your order has trained you to understand fragments of the visions granted to you by your deity, giving you a momentary advantage in challenging situations. At the start of an encounter, you can take one main action before any other creature and before your first turn. Additionally, whenever the Director calls for a montage test, you can make one free test before the montage begins, which counts as an earned success or failure as usual.

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Judge of Character

Your focus on your fragmentary visions grants divine insight into the world and its creatures beyond your usual senses. Whenever you would make an Intuition test, you can make a Presence test instead.

Lead by Example

Your devotion to your deity allows you to take command of the battlefield, letting your allies benefit from your wisdom. While you are adjacent to a creature, your allies gain the benefits of flanking against that creature. Additionally, your allies gain an edge on tests made to aid other creatures with their tests.

Saint's Vigilance

You have honed your ability to detect sin and can use it to find those who hide from justice. Any creature judged by you can't use the Hide maneuver. Additionally, you gain an edge when searching for hidden creatures. If you find a hidden creature, you can use your Judgment ability against them as a free triggered action.

A Sense for Truth

You are trained in secret techniques from your order that allow you to discern the truth with supernatural precision. If a creature is of a lower level than you, you automatically know when they are lying, though you don't necessarily know the actual truth behind their lie. Additionally, you gain an edge on tests made to detect lies or hidden motives.

Stalwart Icon

You exhibit a small spark of your deity's power, causing creatures to trust or fear you, depending on what you need. You gain an edge on tests made to intimidate or persuade others.

2nd-Level Order Ability

Your censor order grants your choice of one of two heroic abilities.

2nd-Level Exorcist Ability

Choose one of the following abilities.

It Is Justice You Fear (5 Wrath)

I am but a vessel. Your own deeds weigh upon you.

Magic, Ranged, Strike — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — One creature

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 8 + M holy damage; P < WEAK, frightened (save ends)
12–16 12 + M holy damage; P < AVERAGE, frightened (save ends)
17+ 15 + M holy damage; P < STRONG, frightened (save ends)

Effect: If the target is already frightened of you or another creature and this ability would frighten them again, they instead take psychic damage equal to twice your Presence score.

Revelator (5 Wrath)

You channel holy energy to harm unbelievers and reveal those hidden from your judgment.

Area, Magic — **Maneuver**
3 burst — Each enemy in the area

Effect: Each target takes holy damage equal to twice your Presence score. Additionally, each hidden target is automatically revealed and can't become hidden again until the start of your next turn. You can then use your Judgment ability against one target as a free triggered action.

2nd-Level Oracle Ability

Choose one of the following abilities.

Prescient Grace (5 Wrath)

Gifted by a prescient vision, you warn an ally of an impending attack.

Magic, Ranged — **Triggered**
Ranged 10 — Self or one ally

Trigger: An enemy within 10 squares starts their turn.

Effect: You can spend a Recovery to allow the target to regain Stamina equal to your recovery value. The target can then take their turn immediately before the triggering enemy.

With My Blessing (5 Wrath)

A word in prayer, and the gods show the way.

Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — Self or one ally

Effect: The target can use a free triggered action to use a strike signature ability or a strike heroic ability, and has a double edge on that ability.

2nd-Level Paragon Ability

Choose one of the following abilities.

Blessing of the Faithful (5 Wrath)

The gods reward your faith.

Area, Magic — **Maneuver**
3 aura — Self and each ally in the area

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, each target gains 1 surge at the end of each of your turns.

Sentenced (5 Wrath)

The shock of your condemnation freezes your enemy in their boots.

Magic, Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 5 + P damage; P < WEAK, restrained (save ends)
12–16 9 + P damage; P < AVERAGE, restrained (save ends)
17+ 12 + P damage; P < STRONG, restrained (save ends)

Effect: While the target is restrained this way, your abilities that impose forced movement can still move them.

3rd-Level Features

As a 3rd-level censor, you gain the following features.

Look On My Work and Despair

Your judgment has grown in divine power, instilling fear in those you condemn. Whenever you use your Judgment ability, you can spend 1 wrath, and if the target has P < AVERAGE, they are frightened of you (save ends). Additionally, whenever a creature judged by you is reduced to 0 Stamina and you use Judgment as a free triggered action, if the new target has P < STRONG, they are frightened of you (save ends). If the target is already frightened of you, they instead take holy damage equal to twice your Presence score.

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7-Wrath Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 7 wrath to use.

Edict of Disruptive Isolation (7 Wrath)

The evil within your foes detonates with holy fire that burns only the guilty.

Area, Magic — 2 aura
Maneuver — Each enemy in the area

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, each target takes holy damage equal to your Presence score at the end of each of your turns. A target takes an extra 2d6 holy damage if they are judged by you or if they are adjacent to any enemy.

Edict of Perfect Order (7 Wrath)

Within the area of your divine presence, your enemies will regret using their fell abilities.

Area, Magic — 2 aura
Maneuver — Each enemy in the area

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, whenever a target uses an ability that costs Malice (see *Draw Steel: Monsters*), they take holy damage equal to three times your Presence score. A target judged by you takes an extra 2d6 holy damage.

Edict of Purifying Pacifism (7 Wrath)

You shed a righteous energy that punishes enemies who would harm you or your allies.

Area, Magic — 2 aura
Maneuver — Each enemy in the area

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, whenever a target makes a strike, they take holy damage equal to twice your Presence score. A target judged by you takes an extra 2d6 holy damage.

Edict of Stillness (7 Wrath)

The holy aura you project makes it painful for evil-doers to leave your reach.

Area, Magic — 2 aura
Maneuver — Each enemy in the area

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, whenever a target moves or is force moved out of the area, they take holy damage equal to twice your Presence score. A target judged by you who moves willingly takes an extra 2d6 holy damage.

4th-Level Features

As a 4th-level censor, you gain the following features.

Characteristic Increase

Your Might and Presence scores each increase to 3.

Perk

You gain one perk of your choice.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice. See Skills in Chapter 9: Tests.

Wrath Beyond Wrath

The first time each combat round that you deal damage to a creature judged by you, you gain 2 wrath instead of 1.

4th-Level Domain Feature

You gain a domain feature from your domain, as shown on the 4th-Level Censor Domain Features table.

4th-Level Censor Domain Features

Domain	Feature
Creation	Improved Hands of the Maker
Death	Seance
Fate	Oracular Warning
Knowledge	Saint's Epiphany
Life	Blessing of Life
Love	Invocation of the Heart
Nature	Wode Road
Protection	Impervious Touch
Storm	Windwalk
Sun	Light of Revelation
Trickery	Blessing of Secrets
War	Improved Sanctified Weapon

Blessing of Life

Your divine presence causes those you deem worthy to recover quickly from a fight. Whenever an ally within distance of your My Life for Yours ability regains Stamina, they regain additional Stamina equal to your Presence score.

Blessing of Secrets

You have the following ability.

Blessing of Secrets

You project an illusory aura that makes you and allies harder to notice.

Magic — 3 aura
Maneuver — Self and each ally in the area

Effect: Each creature in the area has a double edge on tests made to hide or sneak. The aura lasts until you end it (no action required) or until a target harms or deals damage to a creature or object.

Impervious Touch

As a maneuver, you can touch an object with a size equal to your Presence score or smaller and place a protective spell on it. The object has immunity all to untyped damage. You can maintain this spell on a number of objects equal to your Presence score, and you can end the spell on any object at any time (no action required).

Additionally, you can place this spell on a building or vehicle (or a similar structure with the Director's approval) that is of a size larger than your Presence score. You can place the spell on only one such target at a time, and you can maintain the spell on a larger target and a number of objects equal to your Presence score simultaneously.

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Improved Hands of the Maker
When you use your Hands of the Maker ability, you can create a mundane object that is size 2 or smaller.

Improved Sanctified Weapon
The weapon improved by your Sanctified Weapon feature grants a +3 bonus to rolled damage instead of +1.

Invocation of the Heart
As a main action, you forge a bond of love and friendship with one willing creature you touch. While this bond is active, you can telepathically speak with the creature over any distance, including across different worlds. Additionally, while this bond is active, you can attempt to assist the creature with any test they make regardless of their proximity to you. You can maintain only one bond at a time, and you can end a bond at any time (no action required).

Light of Revelation
As a maneuver, you make your body shine brightly, illuminating your space and each square within 5 squares until you dismiss the light (no action required). This light shines through any darkness. Hidden creatures in the area are automatically revealed, and creatures in the light, including you, can't hide. While this feature is active, you gain an edge on tests made to notice hidden objects and entrances and to detect supernatural illusions.

Oracular Warning
Each time you finish a respite, you can share the vague dreams of the future granted to you by the gods with allies who finished the respite with you. These premonitions help you and your allies stay alive, granting each of you temporary Stamina equal to 10 + your level that lasts until you finish another respite.

Seance
You can commune with a network of spirits. As a respite activity, you speak the name of a creature who died and isn't undead. If the creature's spirit is free and willing to speak with you, they appear and you can have a conversation with them. During this time, the creature responds to you as they would have in life. If the creature isn't free or willing to appear, you can speak another name or choose another respite activity.

Saint's Epiphany
At the start of a respite, you can inspire yourself or another creature taking the same respite with divine knowledge. If the target makes a project roll during this respite, they can add 1d10 plus your Presence score to the roll.

Windwalk
While you have 5 or more Victories, you can fly. If you can already fly, you have a +2 bonus to speed while flying instead.

Wode Road
As a main action, you touch a living tree and make it part of a divine transportation network. You can maintain a number of trees in your network equal to your Presence score. Whenever you touch any tree in your network, you can use a main action to teleport yourself and any willing creatures within 10 squares of you to a tree in your network on the same world. If a tree in your network dies, it is no longer part of the network. You can remove a tree from your network no matter your distance from it, including across different worlds (no action required).

5th-Level Features
As a 5th-level censor, you gain the following features.

5th-Level Order Feature
Your censor order grants you a feature, as shown on the 5th-Level Order Features table.

5th-Level Order Features

Order	Feature
Exorcist	Evil Revealed
Oracle	Prophecy
Paragon	Stand Fast!

Evil Revealed
Your order has taught you methods to discern the disguises of both mortals and monsters. You automatically see through disguises and illusions created by creatures of your level or lower, and you gain an edge on tests made to see through the disguises and illusions of more powerful creatures. Whenever you see through a creature's disguise or illusion, you can use your Judgment ability against them as a free triggered action.

Prophecy
You can better sift through the constant fragmentary visions from your deity and act to make them manifest. Each time you earn 1 or more Victories, you can make a number of 2d10 rolls equal to the number of Victories you earned. Record each roll in order. Then whenever you or a creature within 10 squares makes a power roll, you can use a free triggered action to replace the total on the dice with your first recorded roll.

You discard each roll as it is used, and each time you earn Victories, you add new rolls to the bottom of the list. Any unused rolls are discarded when you finish a respite.

Stand Fast!
Your divine spark grows in power, allowing you and your allies to focus and endure. At the start of each of your turns, you can spend 1d6 Stamina to end one effect on you that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of your turn. Any ally who starts their turn within 5 squares of you can also spend Stamina to gain this benefit.

9-Wrath Ability
Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 9 wrath to use.

Gods Grant Thee Strength (9 Wrath)
You channel divine force for movement that cannot be stopped.

Ranged — Ranged 10
Main action — Self or one ally

Effect: The target ends any condition or effect on them that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of their turn, or a prone target can stand up. The target then gains 2 surges, can shift up to their speed while ignoring difficult terrain, and can use a strike signature ability as a free triggered action.

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Orison of Victory (9 Wrath)

You channel your god's will to overcome hardship and inflict pain.

Area 1 burst
Maneuver Self and each ally in the area

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 Each target gains 1 surge.
12–16 Each target gains 2 surges.
17+ Each target gains 3 surges.

Effect: A target can end one effect on them that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of their turn, or a prone target can stand up.

Righteous Judgment (9 Wrath)

You amplify the power of your judgment.

Melee, Strike, Weapon Melee 1
Main action One creature

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 10 + M damage
12–16 14 + M damage
17+ 20 + M damage

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, whenever any ally deals damage to a target judged by you, that ally gains 1 surge.

Shield of the Righteous (9 Wrath)

You strike a foe and create a fleet of divine shields that protect your allies.

Melee, Strike, Weapon Melee 1
Main action One creature

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 10 + M damage; you and each ally adjacent to you gain 10 temporary Stamina
12–16 14 + M damage; you and each ally adjacent to you gain 15 temporary Stamina
17+ 20 + M damage; you and each ally adjacent to you gain 20 temporary Stamina

6th-Level Features

As a 6th-level censor, you gain the following features.

Implement of Wrath

Each time you finish a respite, you can choose one hero's weapon, including your own, to channel supernatural power as an implement of your god's wrath. The weapon becomes magic and gains the following benefits until your next respite:

- Strikes with the weapon deal extra holy damage equal to the wielder's highest characteristic score.
- Any creature struck by the weapon who has holy weakness and has P < STRONG is frightened and weakened (save ends).
- Any minion targeted by a strike using the weapon dies. That minion's Stamina maximum is removed from the minion Stamina pool before any damage is applied to the rest of the squad.
- The weapon's wielder can't be made frightened.

Perk

You gain one interpersonal, lore, or supernatural perk of your choice.

6th-Level Order Ability

Your censor order grants your choice of one of two heroic abilities.

6th-Level Exorcist Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Begone! (9 Wrath)

You terrify your enemies into retreating, creating chaos in their ranks.

Area, Magic 3 burst
Main action Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 4 psychic damage; slide 3
12–16 6 psychic damage; slide 5
17+ 8 psychic damage; slide 7

Pain of Your Own Making (9 Wrath)

You reverse the effects from an evildoer.

Magic, Ranged Ranged 10
Free triggered Self or one ally

Trigger: The target gains a condition or effect that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of their turn.

Effect: The effect ends on the target and is applied to the creature who imposed the effect on them. That creature also takes damage equal to three times your Presence score.

6th-Level Oracle Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Burden of Evil (9 Wrath)

You reveal a vision of your enemies' fate that causes them to scramble as it staggers them.

Magic, Ranged, Strike Ranged 10
Maneuver Three enemies

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 Slide 3; I < WEAK, dazed (save ends)
12–16 Slide 5; I < AVERAGE, dazed (save ends)
17+ Slide 7; I < STRONG, dazed (save ends)

Edict of Peace (9 Wrath)

You anticipate your foes' moves and deny them.

Area, Magic 3 aura
Maneuver Each enemy in the area

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, whenever any target takes a triggered action or a free triggered action, that action is negated and the target takes holy damage equal to your Presence score.

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6th-Level Paragon Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Congregation (9 Wrath)

You focus your allies' wrath on a chosen foe.

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature

Power Roll + Might:

- ≤11: 8 + M damage; as a free triggered action, one ally within 10 squares of the target can use a strike signature ability against the target
- 12–16: 12 + M damage; as a free triggered action, one ally within 10 squares of the target can use a strike signature ability that gains an edge against the target
- 17+: 16 + M damage; as a free triggered action, two allies within 10 squares of the target can each use a strike signature ability that gains an edge against the target

Effect: Each ally can shift up to 2 squares and gains 2 surges before making the strike.

Intercede (9 Wrath)

You take your ally's place.

Magic, Ranged — **Free triggered**
Ranged 10 — One ally

Trigger: A creature makes a strike against the target.

Effect: The target is unaffected by the strike and you become the target instead, even if you aren't a valid target for it. You take half the damage from the strike, and the target gains 3 surges.

7th-Level Features

As a 7th-level censor, you gain the following features.

Characteristic Increase

Each of your characteristic scores increases by 1, to a maximum of 4.

7th-Level Domain Feature

You gain a domain feature from your domain, as shown on the 7th-Level Censor Domain Features table.

7th-Level Censor Domain Features

Domain	Feature
Creation	Divine Quartermaster
Death	Word of Death Deferred
Fate	Word of Fate Denied
Knowledge	Gods' Library
Life	Font of Grace
Love	Covenant of the Heart
Nature	Nature's Bounty
Protection	Blessing of Iron
Storm	Ride the Lightning
Sun	Light of the Burning Sun
Trickery	Trinity of Trickery
War	Your Triumphs Are Remembered

Blessing of Iron

The gods send divine favor to you and your allies. While you are not dying, enemies take a bane on strikes against you or any ally within 3 squares of you.

Covenant of the Heart

You can maintain bonds with up to three willing creatures using your Invocation of the Heart feature. Additionally, you have the following ability.

Guided to Your Side

You concentrate on a friend and teleport to them.

Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — Self and each ally

Effect: Each target is teleported to unoccupied spaces within 5 squares of a willing creature who you are bonded to with your Invocation of the Heart feature. You don't need line of effect to the bonded creature but you must be on the same world.

Divine Quartermaster

Each time you finish a respite, you can choose a treasure with a project goal equal to 50 times your level or less. You gain a divine version of this treasure that lasts until you finish another respite or it is consumed.

Font of Grace

Each time you use your My Life for Yours ability, you gain 1 wrath that can be spent only on that ability during the same turn. If you don't use this wrath, it is lost. Additionally, the target of My Life for Yours gains 10 temporary Stamina.

Gods' Library

You can gain access to information you need through prayer, so that you no longer require research materials for crafting and research projects (see Chapter 12: Downtime Projects). Additionally, you add your level to project rolls you make for crafting and research projects. You also have any skills in the lore skill group you don't already have, and you gain a number of skills from any other skill groups equal to the number of skills you had in the lore skill group before you gained this feature.

Light of the Burning Sun

Sun infuses your body. Whenever you use an ability to deal rolled damage to another creature, that ability deals an extra 5 fire damage, or an extra 15 fire damage if the creature is undead. Additionally, you have fire immunity equal to your level, which is added to any other fire immunity you have.

Nature's Bounty

When you finish a respite, you can prepare a magic meal using local flora for any companions who rested with you. Choose two of the following benefits for creatures who consume the meal:

- Each creature gains immunity to acid, cold, corruption, fire, lightning, poison, or sonic damage equal to your level. You can choose this benefit twice, choosing a different damage immunity each time.
- Each creature gains 20 temporary Stamina.
- Each creature gains a +1 bonus to speed.
- Each creature gains a +1 bonus to saving throws.
- Each creature gains an edge on tests made to influence other creatures.

Each benefit lasts until the creature who gains it finishes another respite.

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Ride the Lightning

Lightning and thunder infuse your body. Whenever you use an ability to deal rolled damage to another creature, the ability deals extra lightning damage equal to your Presence score. Additionally, if you use an ability that force moves a creature, the forced movement distance gains a bonus equal to your Presence score. While you are under the effect of your Windwalk feature, lightning enhances your locomotion to grant you a bonus to speed equal to your Might score. If Windwalk already grants you a bonus to speed, this bonus adds to that.

Trinity of Trickery

You have the following ability.

Trinity of Trickery (9 Wrath)

Hey! I'm over here. No, here, numbskull.

Magic, Ranged | **Maneuver**

Ranged 10 | Self or one ally

Effect: You create two illusory duplicates of the target, which appear anywhere within distance. These duplicates last until the end of the encounter. On each of their turns, the target can move each duplicate up to their speed. If the target is targeted by an ability, they can use a free triggered action to switch places with a duplicate within their line of effect, making the duplicate the target of the ability instead. When either duplicate takes damage, it is destroyed.

Word of Death Deferred

You can stop death from taking your allies. When an ally within distance of your My Life for Yours ability dies and you are not dying, you can use a free triggered action to instead have that ally fall unconscious until they regain Stamina.

Additionally, your abilities deal an extra 5 damage to winded creatures.

Word of Fate Denied

When an ally within 10 squares takes damage that would leave them dying, you can use a free triggered action to make yourself or another willing creature within 10 squares of you the target of the triggering damage instead. The creature you choose takes the damage and suffers any effects associated with it, and that damage can't be reduced in any way.

Your Triumphs Are Remembered

The gods allow you and your companions to bask in the glory of past successes. Whenever you finish a respite, you and any other heroes who rested with you regain 1 Victory after your Victories are converted to XP. This Victory isn't converted into XP at the end of a subsequent respite.

Focused Wrath

When you gain wrath at the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 3 wrath instead of 2.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice.

8th-Level Features

As an 8th-level censor, you gain the following features.

Perk

You gain one perk of your choice.

8th-Level Order Features

Your censor order grants you a feature, as shown on the 8th-Level Order Features table.

8th-Level Order Features

Order	Feature
Exorcist	Demonologist
Oracle	Their Past Revealed
Paragon	Vow

Demonologist

The most esoteric secrets of your order teach you that to defeat your enemy, you must understand them. You treat your Renown as 2 higher than usual when dealing with demons, devils, and other agents of chaos. If you successfully complete a negotiation with one of these creatures, you gain an edge on power rolls made against them and can use your Judgment ability against them as a free triggered action before an encounter begins.

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Their Past Revealed

Your constant fragmentary visions become clearer, and can be honed to understand the past of creatures you interact with. While speaking with any creature, you can make a medium Presence test to see visions from their past. On a success, you see a clear view of any subject related to the creature's past that you wish to understand. On a success with a consequence, you see two visions, one false and one true. On a failure, you lose 2d6 Stamina.

Vow

Your words take on the power of your deity, with all the authority that entails. If you convince a creature to take an oath, they can't break it for 7 days. If you take an oath, you can't break it for 7 days.

11-Wrath Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 11 wrath to use.

Excommunication (11 Wrath)

You curse your foe to become a bane to their allies.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 9 + M damage; I < WEAK, weakened (save ends)
12–16 13 + M damage; I < AVERAGE, weakened (save ends)
17+ 18 + M damage; I < STRONG, weakened (save ends)

Effect: At the end of each of your turns, a target weakened this way deals holy damage equal to twice your Presence score to each enemy within 2 squares of them. Additionally, a target weakened this way can't be targeted by their allies' abilities.

Hand of the Gods (11 Wrath)

You use your foe as a tool against your enemies.

Ranged, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Ranged 10 | One creature

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 10 + M damage
12–16 15 + M damage
17+ 21 + M damage

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, while the target is judged by you, you can choose to make them the source of any of your abilities. Additionally, the target counts as an ally for the purpose of flanking.

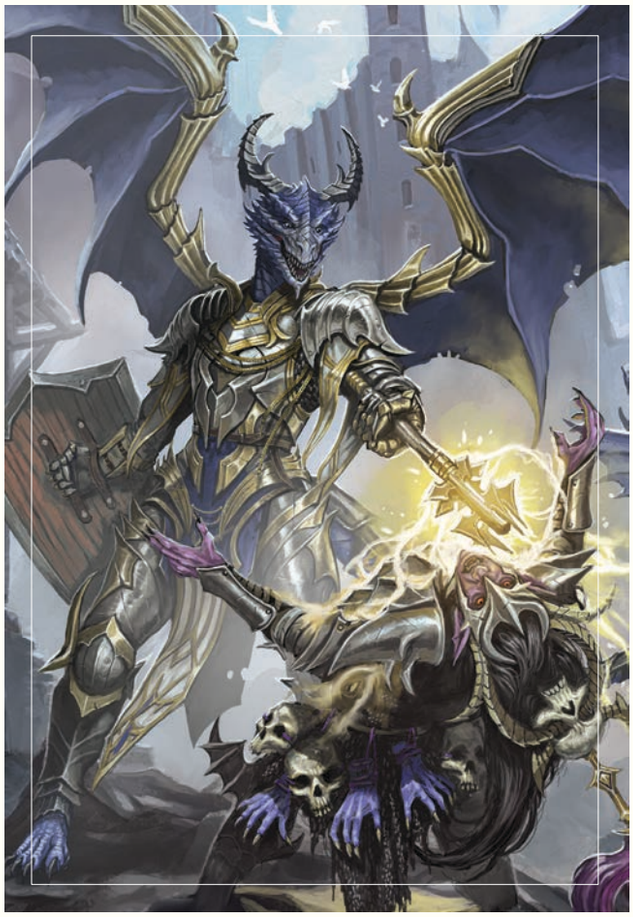
Pillar of Holy Fire (11 Wrath)

Your enemy's guilt fuels a holy flame that burns your foes.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 9 + M damage; I < WEAK, dazed (save ends)
12–16 13 + M damage; I < AVERAGE, dazed (save ends)
17+ 18 + M damage; I < STRONG, dazed (save ends)

Effect: At the end of each of your turns, a target dazed this way deals holy damage equal to twice your Presence score to each enemy within 2 squares of them.



Your Allies Turn on You! (11 Wrath)

You turn your enemies' ire to the target.

Ranged, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Ranged 10 | One creature

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 5 + P damage; I < WEAK, slowed (save ends)
12–16 9 + P damage; I < AVERAGE, slowed (save ends)
17+ 12 + P damage; I < STRONG, slowed (save ends)

Effect: While the target is slowed this way, each ally who starts their turn within 5 squares of them must use a free maneuver to make a free strike against the target. Additionally, while the target is slowed this way, each ally within 5 squares of them who can make a triggered free strike against a different creature must make the free strike against the target instead.

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9th-Level Features

As a 9th-level censor, you gain the following features.

Improved Implement of Wrath

The weapon you target with your Implement of Wrath feature gains the following additional benefits:

- The weapon's wielder and each ally adjacent to them gain a +2 bonus to saving throws.
- At the end of each of the weapon wielder's turns, each ally adjacent to the wielder makes a saving throw against each effect on them that is ended by a saving throw.
- The weapon's wielder has corruption immunity 10.

9th-Level Order Ability

Your censor order grants your choice of one of two heroic abilities.

9th-Level Exorcist Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Banish (11 Wrath)

You sever the target's tenuous connection to the world.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 5 + M damage; P < WEAK, the target is banished (save ends)
12-16 8 + M damage; P < AVERAGE, the target is banished (save ends)
17+ 11 + M damage; P < STRONG, the target is banished (save ends)

Effect: This ability gains an edge against demons, devils, undead, and creatures not native to your current world. If you know the target's true name, this ability has a double edge. While banished, the target is sent to another manifold in the timescape and removed from the encounter map. A banished target can do nothing but make saving throws, and takes 10 holy damage each time they do so. If the target is reduced to 0 Stamina while banished, they are lost to the timescape.

Terror Manifest (11 Wrath)

"I know what you fear."

Magic, Ranged, Strike | **Main action**
Ranged 10 | One creature

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 7 + P psychic damage; P < WEAK, frightened (save ends)
12-16 10 + P psychic damage; P < AVERAGE, frightened (save ends)
17+ 13 + P psychic damage; P < STRONG, frightened (save ends)

Effect: While frightened this way, if a target who is a leader or solo creature is winded, they take an extra 25 psychic damage. If a target frightened this way is not a leader or solo creature and is winded, they are reduced to 0 Stamina.

9th-Level Oracle Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Blessing and a Curse (11 Wrath)

The gods bless and damn in equal measure.

Magic, Ranged | **Triggered**
Ranged 10 | One creature

Trigger: The target makes a power roll.

Effect: The target obtains a tier 1 or tier 3 outcome on their power roll (your choice). You can then choose another target within distance, who obtains the opposite outcome on their next power roll.

Fulfill Your Destiny (11 Wrath)

You have looked at various futures, and only this one works.

Magic, Ranged | **Triggered**
Ranged 10 | One ally

Trigger: You or another hero ends their turn.

Effect: The target takes their turn after the triggering hero, and immediately removes all conditions and negative effects on themself. During their turn, the target has a double edge on power rolls.

9th-Level Paragon Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Apostate (11 Wrath)

You channel holy energy to seal an enemy's fate.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 13 + M holy damage
12-16 19 + M holy damage
17+ 26 + M holy damage

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, the target has damage weakness 10.

Edict of Unyielding Resolve (11 Wrath)

You and your allies are clad in shimmering armor.

Area, Magic | **Maneuver**
2 aura | Self and each ally in the area

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, each target who starts their turn in the area gains 10 temporary Stamina.

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10th-Level Features

As a 10th-level censor, you gain the following features.

Characteristic Increase

Your Might and Presence scores each increase to 5.

Perk

You gain one crafting, lore, or supernatural perk of your choice.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice.

Templar

You are the ultimate representation of your god's justice in the timescape. Whenever you use your Judgment ability, you can use a free triggered action to use a conduit domain effect (see Domain Piety and Effects in the Conduit section) associated with your chosen domain, or a domain you access with virtue (see below).

Additionally, whenever you take a respite, you can open a portal to rest in the presence of your deity and bring along any allies. When you do, you can ask your deity three questions, which the Director must answer honestly if your deity knows the answers (though they might answer cryptically or incompletely). When you finish your respite, you and your allies can appear at any location in the timescape where someone worships your deity.

While you rest in their presence, your god might also give you priority targets to enact justice upon. You and your allies each have a double edge on power rolls made against such targets. If you attempt to open a portal to your deity again before you have defeated your priority targets, you suffer your god's wrath, as determined by the Director.

Virtue

You have an epic resource called virtue. Each time you finish a respite, you gain virtue equal to the XP you gain. You can spend virtue on your abilities as if it were wrath.

Additionally, you can spend 3 virtue to access one of your deity's domains that you usually don't have access to. When you do, you can use that domain's features until you finish another respite.

Virtue remains until you spend it.

Wrath of the Gods

The first time each combat round that you deal damage to a creature judged by you, you gain 4 wrath instead of 3.



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CONDUIT

The power of the gods flows through you! As a vessel for divine magic, you don't just keep your allies in the fight. You make those allies more effective, even as you rain divine energy down upon your foes. While the deity or saint you serve might have other faithful and clergy, you are special among worshippers, receiving your abilities from the highest source.

As a conduit, you heal and buff your allies, and debuff your foes while smiting them with divine magic. The spark of divinity within you shines, filling your enemies with awe and making you more worldly and aware.



"The gods judge our actions, and our inaction"
Dazar

Basics

Starting Characteristics: You start with an Intuition of 2, and can choose one of the following arrays for your other characteristics scores:

- 2, 2, –1, –1
- 2, 1, 1, –1
- 2, 1, 0, 0
- 1, 1, 1, 0

Weak Potency: Intuition - 2

Average Potency: Intuition - 1

Strong Potency: Intuition

Starting Stamina at 1st Level: 18

Stamina Gained at 2nd and Higher Levels: 9

Recoveries: 8

Skills: Choose any two skills from the interpersonal or lore skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Read Person, Religion.)

1st-Level Features

As a conduit, you gain the following features.

Deity and Domains

Choose a god or saint who your character reveres from Chapter 14: Gods and Religion, or ask your Director about the deities in your campaign world. With the Director's permission, you can also create your own deity and choose four domains to be part of their portfolio.

After choosing your deity, pick two domains from their portfolio. The two domains you pick make up your subclass, and your choice of domains determines many of the features you'll gain as you gain new levels. (*Quick Build:* Adûn for deity, and Life and Protection as domains.)

Piety

Your deity grants you a Heroic Resource called piety, letting you heal and empower your allies, and unleash holy power upon your foes.

Piety in Combat

At the start of a combat encounter or some other stressful situation tracked in combat rounds (as determined by the Director), you gain piety equal to your Victories. At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 1d3 piety.

Additionally, you can gain more piety by praying to the gods—but beware! Doing so can easily draw their ire, as the gods hate to be annoyed. Whenever you roll to gain piety at the start of your turn, you can pray (no action required). If you do, your roll gains the following additional effects:

- If the roll is a 1, you gain 1 additional piety but anger the gods! You take psychic damage equal to 1d6 + your level, which can't be reduced in any way.
- If the roll is a 2, you gain 1 additional piety.
- If the roll is a 3, you gain 2 additional piety and can activate a domain effect of your choice (see below).

You lose any remaining piety at the end of the encounter.

Conduit Advancement

Level	Features	Abilities	Domain Abilities
1st	Deity and Domains, Piety, Domain Feature, Healing Grace, Ray of Wrath, Triggered Action, Prayer, Conduit Ward, Conduit Abilities	Two signature, 3, 5	—
2nd	The Lists of Heaven, Perk, Domain Feature, Domain Ability	Two signature, 3, 5	5
3rd	Minor Miracle, 7-Piety Ability	Two signature, 3, 5 7	5
4th	Blessed Domains, Characteristic Increase, Domain Feature, Perk, Skill Increase	Two signature, 3, 5, 7	5
5th	Domain Feature, 9-Piety Ability	Two signature, 3, 5, 7, 9	5
6th	Burgeoning Saint, Perk, Domain Ability	Two signature, 3, 5, 7, 9	5, 9
7th	Characteristic Increase, Domain Feature, Faithful's Reward, Skill Increase	Two signature, 3, 5, 7, 9	5, 9
8th	Domain Feature, Perk, 11-Piety Ability	Two signature, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11	5, 9
9th	Domain Ability, Faith's Sword, Ordained	Two signature, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11	5, 9, 11
10th	Avatar, Characteristic Increase, Divine Power, Most Pious, Perk, Skill Increase	Two signature, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11	5, 9, 11



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Piety Outside of Combat

Though you can't gain piety outside of combat, you can use your heroic abilities and effects that cost piety without spending it. Whenever you use an ability or effect outside of combat that costs piety, you can't use that same ability or effect outside of combat again until you earn 1 or more Victories or finish a respite.

When you use an ability outside of combat that lets you spend unlimited piety on its effect, such as Healing Grace, you can use it as if you had spent an amount of piety equal to your Victories.

Domain Piety and Effects

Your choice of domains provides you with two additional ways to earn piety during combat, as triggered by specific events. You might even have a single event trigger both your piety effects. For example, the Sun domain grants piety when a nearby creature takes fire or holy damage, while the War domain grants piety when a nearby creature takes damage of 10 + your level or higher. If you have both those domains and a nearby creature takes an appropriate amount of fire damage, you gain piety from both your domains.

Additionally, whenever you activate a domain effect by praying for piety, you can choose one of your domains and have that domain's prayer effect take effect immediately.

Creation Domain Piety and Effect

Piety: You gain 2 piety the first time in an encounter that a creature within 10 squares uses an area ability.

Prayer Effect: You summon the forces of creation and create a wall of stone within 10 squares whose size is 5 + your Intuition score. The wall lasts until the end of the encounter.

Death Domain Piety and Effect

Piety: You gain 2 piety the first time in an encounter that a creature within 10 squares who isn't a minion is reduced to 0 Stamina, or the first time in an encounter that a solo creature within 10 squares becomes winded.

Prayer Effect: You inflict a deadly curse on up to two enemies within 10 squares of you. Each target takes corruption damage equal to twice your Intuition score.

Fate Domain Piety and Effect

Piety: You gain 2 piety the first time in an encounter that an ally within 10 squares obtains a tier 3 outcome on a power roll, or an enemy within 10 squares obtains a tier 1 outcome on a power roll.

Prayer Effect: You call on the forces of fate to create a reliable future. Choose a creature within 10 squares. That creature automatically obtains a tier 1 or tier 3 outcome (your choice) on their next power roll made before the end of the encounter.

Knowledge Domain Piety and Effect

Piety: You gain 2 piety the first time in an encounter that the Director spends Malice (see *Draw Steel: Monsters*).

Prayer Effect: Choose up to five allies within 10 squares of you, or choose yourself instead of one ally. Each target gains 1 surge.

Life Domain Piety and Effect

Piety: You gain 2 piety the first time in an encounter that a creature within 10 squares regains Stamina.

Prayer Effect: Choose yourself or one ally within 10 squares. That character can spend a Recovery, can end one effect on them that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of their turn, or can stand up if they are prone. Alternatively, you or one ally within 10 squares gains temporary Stamina equal to two times your Intuition score.

Love Domain Piety and Effect

Piety: You gain 2 piety the first time in an encounter that you or any ally within 10 squares uses the Aid Attack maneuver or an ability that targets an ally.

Prayer Effect: Each ally within 10 squares of you gains temporary Stamina equal to two times your Intuition score.

Nature Domain Piety and Effect

Piety: You gain 2 piety the first time in an encounter that you or a creature within 10 squares takes acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison, or sonic damage.

Prayer Effect: Vines whip up from the floor or ground within 10 squares, wrapping around a number of creatures equal to your Intuition score. You can slide each creature up to a number of squares equal to your Intuition score. The vines then fade away.

Protection Domain Piety and Effect

Piety: You gain 2 piety the first time in an encounter that you or any ally within 10 squares gains temporary Stamina, or uses a triggered action to reduce incoming damage or to impose a bane or double bane on an enemy's power roll.

Prayer Effect: One ally within 10 squares gains temporary Stamina equal to four times your Intuition score.

Storm Domain Piety and Effect

Piety: You gain 2 piety the first time in an encounter that an enemy within 10 squares is force moved.

Prayer Effect: Each enemy in a 3 cube within 10 squares takes lightning damage equal to twice your Intuition score.

Sun Domain Piety and Effect

Piety: You gain 2 piety the first time in an encounter that an enemy within 10 squares takes fire or holy damage.

Prayer Effect: One enemy within 10 squares takes fire damage equal to three times your Intuition score.

Trickery Domain Piety and Effect

Piety: You gain 2 piety the first time in an encounter that you or a creature within 10 squares takes the Aid Attack or Hide maneuver.

Prayer Effect: You slide one creature within 10 squares of you up to a number of squares equal to 5 + your conduit level.

War Domain Piety and Effect

Piety: You gain 2 piety the first time in an encounter that you or a creature within 10 squares takes damage greater than 10 + your level in a single turn.

Prayer Effect: Choose up to three allies within 10 squares of you, or choose yourself instead of one ally. Each target gains 2 surges.

1st-Level Domain Feature

Choose one of your domains. You gain a domain feature for that domain, as shown on the 1st-Level Conduit Domain Features table. Additionally, you gain a skill from the chosen domain, selected from the skill group indicated on the table. (*Quick Build:* Revitalizing Ritual and the Heal skill from the Life domain.)

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1st-Level Conduit Domain Features

Domain	Feature	Skill Group
Creation	Hands of the Maker	Crafting
Death	Grave Speech	Lore
Fate	Oracular Visions	Lore
Knowledge	Blessing of Comprehension	Lore
Life	Revitalizing Ritual	Exploration
Love	Blessing of Compassion	Interpersonal
Nature	Faithful Friend	Exploration
Protection	Protective Circle	Exploration
Storm	Blessing of Fortunate Weather	Exploration
Sun	Inner Light	Lore
Trickery	Inspired Deception	Intrigue
War	Sanctified Weapon	Exploration

Blessing of Compassion

You exude a magic presence that can soothe those willing to socially engage with you. You gain an edge on any test made to assist another creature with a test.

Additionally, when you are present at the start of a negotiation, one NPC of your choice has their patience increased by 1 (to a maximum of 5), and the first test made to influence them gains an edge.

Blessing of Comprehension

You can interpret diagrams and charts even if you don't understand the language associated with them. You are considered fluent in all languages for the purpose of understanding the project source for any research or crafting project (see Chapter 12: Downtime Projects).

Blessing of Fortunate Weather

Each time you finish a respite, you can decide the weather conditions within 100 squares. Until you finish another respite, the weather conditions you establish follow you through any mundane outdoor locations. Choose one of the following types of weather, each of which grants a benefit to you and your allies:

Clear: You and your allies gain an edge on tests that use the Search or Navigate skills.
Foggy: You and your allies gain an edge on tests that use the Hide skill.
Overcast: You and your allies gain an edge on tests that use the Endurance skill.
Precipitation: When the ground is muddy or snowy, you and your allies gain an edge on tests that use the Track skill.

If you are in the same area as a creature using this or a similar feature who has chosen a different weather effect, the features negate each other where their areas overlap.

Faithful Friend

You have the following ability.

Faithful Friend

An animal spirit is drawn to you, sharing their senses with you and serving you faithfully.

Magic — Self
Main action — Self

Effect: You conjure a spirit that takes the form of any animal you have seen. The incorporeal animal has speed 5 and can fly, but can't physically interact with the world. While you are within 10 squares of the spirit, you automatically sense everything that type of animal would sense, in addition to sensing your own surroundings. You can dismiss the spirit at any time (no action required). If the spirit takes any damage, they are dismissed and you take 1d10 psychic damage that can't be reduced in any way.

Grave Speech

You have the following ability.

Grave Speech

You commune with the lingering soul of the recently dead.

Magic — Melee 1
Maneuver — One dead creature

Effect: You can speak to the target if they are a creature who has died within the last 24 hours and who can speak a language you know, even if they are just a head. The target regards you as they would have in life, and you might need to make tests to influence them and convince them to speak with you. The trauma of dying can make a creature's memory of that event hazy, but the target otherwise knows all they knew in life. After 1 minute, the effect ends. You can't use this ability on the same creature twice.

Hands of the Maker

You have the following ability.

Hands of the Maker

You craft objects with the power of your mind.

Magic — Self
Maneuver — Self

Effect: You create a mundane object of size 1S or smaller. You can maintain a number of objects created this way equal to your Intuition score. You can destroy an object created this way with a thought, no matter how far you are from it (no action required).

Inner Light

Each time you finish a respite, you can choose yourself or one ally who is also finishing a respite to gain the benefit of a divine ritual. You place a ray of morning light into the chosen character's soul, granting them a +1 bonus to saving throws that lasts until you finish another respite.

Inspired Deception

The gods favor your thievery with magic. Whenever you make a test that uses a skill you have from the intrigue skill group, you can use Intuition on the test instead of another characteristic.

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Oracular Visions

Your deity rewards you with hazy visions of things to come. Each time you earn 1 or more Victories, you earn an equal number of fate points. Whenever you or a creature within 10 squares makes a test, you can spend 1 fate point to tap into a vision of the outcome, granting that creature an edge on the test. You lose any remaining fate points when you finish a respite.

Protective Circle

You can spend 10 uninterrupted minutes to create a protective circle on the ground large enough to hold one size 1 creature. The circle lasts for 24 hours, until you create another, or until you dismiss it (no action required). Only creatures you designate at the time of drawing the circle can enter and exit the area. While in the protective circle, a creature can't be targeted by strikes.

Revitalizing Ritual

Each time you finish a respite, you can choose yourself or one ally who is also finishing a respite to gain the benefit of a divine ritual. The chosen character gains a bonus to their recovery value equal to your level that lasts until you finish another respite.

Sanctified Weapon

As a respite activity, you can bless a weapon. Any creature who wields the weapon gains a +1 bonus to rolled damage with abilities that use the weapon. This benefit lasts until you finish another respite.

Healing Grace

You have the following ability, which you can use once on your turn.

Healing Grace

Your divine energy restores the righteous.

Magic, Ranged | **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 | Self or one ally

Effect: The target can spend a Recovery.

Spend 1+ Piety: For each piety spent, choose one of the following enhancements:

- You can target one additional ally within distance.
- You can end one effect on a target that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of their turn.
- A prone target can stand up.
- A target can spend 1 additional Recovery.

Ray of Wrath

You have the following ability, which can be used as a ranged free strike.

Ray of Wrath

You unleash a blast of holy light upon your foe.

Magic, Ranged, Strike | **Main action**
Ranged 10 | One creature or object

Power Roll + Intuition:

≤11 2 + I damage
12–16 4 + I damage
17+ 6 + I damage

Effect: You can have this ability deal holy damage.

Triggered Action

Choose one of the following triggered actions. (*Quick Build:* Word of Guidance.)

Word of Guidance

You invigorate an attacking ally with divine energy.

Magic, Ranged | **Triggered**
Ranged 10 | One ally

Trigger: The target makes an ability roll for a damage-dealing ability.

Effect: The power roll gains an edge.

Spend 1 Piety: The power roll has a double edge.

Word of Judgment

Your holy word saps an attacking enemy's strength.

Magic, Ranged | **Triggered**
Ranged 10 | One ally

Trigger: The target would take damage from an ability that uses a power roll.

Effect: The power roll takes a bane against the target.

Spend 1 Piety: The power roll has a double bane against the target.

Prayer

Your god answers a prayer with enhancements to your body and mind. Choose one of the following prayers. You can change your prayer along with your ward (see Conduit Ward below) by praying to your god as a respite activity. (*Quick Build:* Prayer of Distance.)

Prayer of Destruction

Your god infuses wrath within your being. You gain a +1 bonus to rolled damage with magic abilities.

Prayer of Distance

Your god blesses you with the ability to stretch your divine magic farther. You have a +2 bonus to the distance of your ranged magic abilities.

Prayer of Soldier's Skill

Your god gives your mind the training of a soldier. You can wear light armor and wield light weapons effectively, even though you don't have a kit. While you wear light armor, you gain a +3 bonus to Stamina, and that bonus increases by 3 at 4th, 7th, and 10th levels. While you wield a light weapon, you gain a +1 damage bonus with weapon abilities, including free strikes. You can use light armor treasures and light weapon treasures.

If you have a kit, you can't take this blessing.

Prayer of Speed

Your god blesses your flesh and infuses it with divine quickness. You gain a +1 bonus to speed and to the distance you can shift when you take the Disengage move action.

Prayer of Steel

Your god fills your body with the light of creation, making you harder to hurt and move. You gain a +6 bonus to Stamina, and this bonus increases by 6 at 4th, 7th, and 10th levels. Additionally, you gain a +1 bonus to stability.

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Conduit Ward

Your god grants you a ward that protects you from the faithless. Choose one of the following wards. You can change your ward along with your prayer (see Prayer above) by praying to your god as a respite activity. (*Quick Build:* Bastion Ward.)

Bastion Ward

Your god grants you a holy countenance that protects you at all times. You gain a +1 bonus to saving throws.

Quickness Ward

The gods imbue a divine swiftness within you. Whenever an adjacent creature deals damage to you, you can shift up to a number of squares equal to your Intuition score after the damage is dealt.

Sanctuary Ward

In response to a foe's aggression, your god protects you. Whenever another creature damages you, that creature can't target you with a strike until you harm them or one of their allies, or until the end of their next turn.

Spirit Ward

Invisible spirits surround you if you are harmed. Whenever an adjacent creature deals damage to you, they take corruption damage equal to your Intuition score.

Conduit Abilities

Your training and faith let you specialize in magic that buffs your allies, debuffs your foes, and allows you to hold your own in combat alongside your friends.

Signature Abilities

Choose two signature abilities from the following options. Signature abilities can be used at will. (*Quick Build:* Blessed Light, Staggering Curse.)

Blessed Light

Burning radiance falls upon your foe, transferring some of their energy to a nearby ally.

Magic, Ranged, Strike — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — One creature or object

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 3 + I holy damage
12–16 5 + I holy damage
17+ 8 + I holy damage

Effect: One ally within distance gains a number of surges equal to the tier outcome of your power roll.

Drain

You drain the energy from your target to revitalize yourself or an ally.

Magic, Melee, Strike — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 2 + I corruption damage
12–16 5 + I corruption damage
17+ 7 + I corruption damage

Effect: You or one ally within distance can spend a Recovery.

Holy Lash

A tendril of divine energy shoots forth to draw in your foe.

Magic, Ranged, Strike — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — One creature or object

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 3 + I holy damage; vertical pull 2
12–16 5 + I holy damage; vertical pull 3
17+ 8 + I holy damage; vertical pull 4

Lightfall

A rain of holy light scours your enemies and repositions your allies.

Area, Magic — **Main action**
2 burst — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 2 holy damage
12–16 3 holy damage
17+ 5 holy damage

Effect: You can teleport yourself and each ally in the area to unoccupied spaces in the area.

Sacrificial Offer

Divine magic tears at your foe and defends a nearby friend.

Magic, Ranged, Strike — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — One creature

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 2 + I corruption damage
12–16 4 + I corruption damage
17+ 6 + I corruption damage

Effect: Choose yourself or one ally within distance. That character can impose a bane on one power roll made against them before the end of their next turn.

Staggering Curse

A blast of judgment disorients your foe.

Magic, Melee, Strike — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature or object

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 3 + I holy damage; slide 1
12–16 5 + I holy damage; slide 2
17+ 8 + I holy damage; slide 3

Warrior's Prayer

Your quickly uttered prayer lends aggressive divine energy to a friend engaged in melee.

Magic, Ranged, Strike — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — One creature

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 3 + I holy damage
12–16 6 + I holy damage
17+ 9 + I holy damage

Effect: You or one ally within distance gains temporary Stamina equal to your Intuition score.

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Wither

A bolt of holy energy saps the life from a foe.

Magic, Ranged, Strike **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature or object

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 3 + I corruption damage; P < WEAK, the target takes a bane on their next power roll
12-16 5 + I corruption damage; P < AVERAGE, the target takes a bane on their next power roll
17+ 8 + I corruption damage; P < STRONG, the target takes a bane on their next power roll

Heroic Abilities

You make use of a number of heroic abilities, all of which channel piety to empower them.

3-Piety Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 3 piety to use. (*Quick Build:* Violence Will Not Aid Thee.)

Call the Thunder Down (3 Piety)

You ask your saint for thunder and your prayer is answered.

Area, Magic, Ranged **Main action**
3 cube within 10 Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 2 sonic damage; push 1
12-16 3 sonic damage; push 2
17+ 5 sonic damage; push 3

Effect: You can push each willing ally in the area the same distance, ignoring stability.

Font of Wrath (3 Piety)

A brilliant column of holy light appears on the battlefield, striking out at nearby enemies.

Magic, Ranged **Main action**
Ranged 10 Special

Effect: You summon a spirit of size 2 who can't be harmed, and who appears in an unoccupied space within distance. The spirit lasts until the end of your next turn. You and your allies can move through the spirit's space, but enemies can't. Any enemy who moves within 2 squares of the spirit for the first time in a combat round or starts their turn there takes holy damage equal to your Intuition score.

Judgment's Hammer (3 Piety)

Your divine fury is a hammer that crashes down upon the unrighteous.

Magic, Ranged, Strike **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature or object

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 3 + I holy damage; A < WEAK, prone
12-16 6 + I holy damage; A < AVERAGE, prone
17+ 9 + I holy damage; A < STRONG, prone and can't stand (save ends)

Violence Will Not Aid Thee (3 Piety)

After some holy lightning, your enemy will think twice about their next attack.

Magic, Ranged, Strike **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 3 + I lightning damage
12-16 6 + I lightning damage
17+ 9 + I lightning damage

Effect: The first time on a turn that the target deals damage to another creature, the target of this ability takes 1d10 lightning damage (save ends).

5-Piety Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 5 piety to use. (*Quick Build:* Curse of Terror.)

Corruption's Curse (5 Piety)

Cursed by you, your enemy takes more damage from your allies.

Magic, Ranged, Strike **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature or object

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 3 + I corruption damage; M < WEAK, damage weakness 5 (save ends)
12-16 6 + I corruption damage; M < AVERAGE, damage weakness 5 (save ends)
17+ 9 + I corruption damage; M < STRONG, damage weakness 5 (save ends)

Curse of Terror (5 Piety)

Fear of divine judgment overwhelms your foe.

Magic, Ranged, Strike **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 6 + I holy damage; I < WEAK, frightened (save ends)
12-16 9 + I holy damage; I < AVERAGE, frightened (save ends)
17+ 13 + I holy damage; I < STRONG, frightened (save ends)

Faith Is Our Armor (5 Piety)

The heroes' armor glows with golden light, granting divine protection.

Magic, Ranged **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 Four allies

Effect: You can target yourself instead of one ally with this ability.

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 The target gains 5 temporary Stamina.
12-16 The target gains 10 temporary Stamina.
17+ The target gains 15 temporary Stamina.

Sermon of Grace (5 Piety)

You inspire your allies with tales of your saint's great deeds.

Area, Magic **Main action**
4 burst Each ally in the area

Effect: Each target can spend a Recovery. Additionally, each target can use a free triggered action to end one effect on them that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of their turn, or to stand up if prone.

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2nd-Level Features

As a 2nd-level conduit, you gain the following features.

The Lists of Heaven

Your deity is aware of your growing influence, making it easier to draw their attention and power when you heal your allies. Whenever you allow another creature to spend a Recovery, you can also spend a Recovery.

Perk

You gain one crafting, lore, or supernatural perk of your choice. See Chapter 7: Perks.

2nd-Level Domain Feature

You gain the 1st-level domain feature and ability to choose a skill for the domain you selected at 1st level but whose domain feature you didn't take at that level (see 1st-Level Domain Feature).

2nd-Level Domain Ability

Choose one of your domains. You gain a heroic ability from that domain, as shown on the 2nd-Level Conduit Domain Abilities table.

2nd-Level Conduit Domain Abilities

Domain	Feature
Creation	Statue of Power
Death	Reap
Fate	Blessing of Fate and Destiny
Knowledge	The Gods Command You Obey
Life	Wellspring of Grace
Love	Our Hearts Your Strength
Nature	Nature Judges Thee
Protection	Sacred Bond
Storm	Saint's Tempest
Sun	Morning Light
Trickery	Divine Comedy
War	Blessing of Insight

Blessing of Fate and Destiny (5 Piety)

Your enemies suffer their fate; your allies embrace their destiny!

Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — Three creatures

Effect: You can target yourself instead of one creature with this ability. Choose one of the following effects, which lasts until the end of the encounter or until you are dying:

- Whenever a target makes a power roll, they can roll three dice and choose which two rolls to use.
- Whenever a target makes a power roll, they must roll three dice and use the lowest two rolls.

Blessing of Insight (5 Piety)

The gods grant insight revealing where best to strike your enemies.

Magic, Ranged — **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 — Self and each ally

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, each target gains 1 surge at the end of each of your turns.

Divine Comedy (5 Piety)

You and your allies swap places to confound your foes.

Area, Magic — **Maneuver**
5 burst — Self and each ally in the area

Effect: Each target can choose another creature in the area, then swap places with that creature. The creature they choose must be able to fit into the space they leave and vice versa.

The Gods Command You Obey (5 Piety)

You speak with the voice of your saint, commanding your enemies.

Magic, Ranged, Strike — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — One creature

Power Roll + Intuition:

≤11 — 4 + I holy damage; P < WEAK, before taking damage, the target makes a free strike against a target you choose

12–16 — 7 + I holy damage; P < AVERAGE, before taking damage, the target uses an ability of your choice and you choose any targets for that ability

17+ — 11 + I holy damage; P < STRONG, before taking damage, the target shifts up to their speed to a location you choose, uses an ability of your choice, and you choose any targets for that ability

Morning Light (5 Piety)

Light shines at your command, burning your foes and blessing your allies.

Area, Magic — **Main action**
3 burst — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Intuition:

≤11 — 4 fire damage

12–16 — 6 fire damage

17+ — 10 fire damage

Effect: Each ally in the area deals fire damage equal to your Intuition score with their next strike made before the end of their next turn.

Nature Judges Thee (5 Piety)

Mystical thorned vines appear at your bidding and bind your foes.

Area, Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
3 cube within 10 — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Intuition:

≤11 — 2 damage; A < WEAK, restrained (save ends)

12–16 — 3 damage; A < AVERAGE, restrained (save ends)

17+ — 7 damage; A < STRONG, restrained (save ends)

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Our Hearts Your Strength (5 Piety)

An ally gains strength from their friends.

Magic, Ranged — **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 — Self and one ally

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until the target is dying, at the start of each of the target's turns, they gain a bonus to speed and a bonus to rolled damage equal to the number of allies within 10 squares of them. This bonus lasts until the start of their next turn.

Reap (5 Piety)

The gods reward those who smite their foes.

Magic, Ranged — **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 — Each ally

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, each time a target kills an enemy, they regain Stamina equal to 5 + your Intuition score.

Sacred Bond (5 Piety)

You forge a divine connection between two creatures.

Magic, Ranged — **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 — Self and one ally

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, whenever one target takes damage, the other target can use a free triggered action to take the damage instead. The original target suffers any effects associated with the damage. Additionally, whenever one target spends a Recovery, the other target can use a free triggered action to spend a Recovery.

Saint's Tempest (5 Piety)

A raging storm appears, striking your foes with lightning and throwing them around with wind.

Area, Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
3 cube within 10 — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 2 lightning damage; vertical slide 1
12–16 5 lightning damage; vertical slide 2
17+ 7 lightning damage; vertical slide 3

Statue of Power (5 Piety)

A marble statue of your deity rises from the earth.

Magic, Ranged — **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 — Special

Effect: A size 2 statue rises out of the ground in an unoccupied space within distance and lasts until the end of the encounter. While within 3 squares of the statue, you gain 1 surge at the start of each of your turns. Each ally within 3 squares of the statue gains this same benefit. The statue is destroyed if it takes 20 or more damage. It has immunity all to poison and psychic damage.

Wellspring of Grace (5 Piety)

A holy light is emitted from your body, healing your allies.

Area, Magic — **Main action**
3 aura — Each ally in the area

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, whenever a target starts their turn in the area, they can spend a Recovery.

3rd-Level Features

As a 3rd-level conduit, you gain the following features.

Minor Miracle

As a respite activity, you can perform a religious ritual and beseech the gods to restore a dead creature to life. You must have at least half the creature's remains, and they must have died within the last 24 hours from an effect that isn't age related. The creature's soul must be willing to return to life for the ritual to work. If they are not willing, you instinctively understand that as you start the respite activity and can cease it immediately.

A creature with a willing soul returns to life at the end of the respite with full Stamina and half their Recoveries. You regain only half your Recoveries at the end of the respite.

7-Piety Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 7 piety to use.

Fear of the Gods (7 Piety)

Your divine magic makes a creature appear as what your enemies fear most.

Area, Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
5 cube within 10 — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 6 psychic damage; I < WEAK, frightened (save ends)
12–16 9 psychic damage; I < AVERAGE, frightened (save ends)
17+ 13 psychic damage; I < STRONG, frightened (save ends)

Effect: Each target is frightened of you or a creature you choose within distance.

Saint's Raiment (7 Piety)

An ally becomes the wearer of an empowered golden cloak.

Magic, Ranged — **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 — One ally

Effect: The target gains 20 temporary Stamina and 3 surges.

Soul Siphon (7 Piety)

A beam of energy connects a foe to a friend, draining life from one to heal the other.

Magic, Ranged, Strike — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — One enemy

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 7 + I corruption damage
12–16 10 + I corruption damage
17+ 15 + I corruption damage

Effect: One ally within distance can spend any number of Recoveries.

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Words of Wrath and Grace (7 Piety)

Your saint grants your enemies a vision of pain and fills your allies with healing energy.

Area, Magic — **Main action**
5 burst — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 2 holy damage
12–16 5 holy damage
17+ 7 holy damage

Effect: Each ally in the area can spend a Recovery.

4th-Level Features

As a 4th-level conduit, you gain the following features.

Blessed Domain

Whenever you gain piety from a domain feature, you gain 1 additional piety.

Characteristic Increase

Your Intuition score increases to 3. Additionally, you can increase one of your characteristic scores by 1, to a maximum of 3.

Perk

You gain one perk of your choice.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice. See Skills in Chapter 9: Tests.

4th-Level Domain Feature

Choose one of your domains. You gain a domain feature for that domain, as shown on the 4th-Level Conduit Domain Features table.

4th-Level Conduit Domain Features

Domain	Feature
Creation	Improved Hands of the Maker
Death	Séance
Fate	Oracular Warning
Knowledge	Saint's Epiphany
Life	Blessing of Life
Love	Invocation of the Heart
Nature	Wode Road
Protection	Impervious Touch
Storm	Windwalk
Sun	Light of Revelation
Trickery	Blessing of Secrets
War	Improved Sanctified Weapon

Blessing of Life

Your divine presence causes those you deem worthy to recover quickly from a fight. Whenever an ally within distance of your Healing Grace ability regains Stamina, they regain additional Stamina equal to your Intuition score.



Blessing of Secrets

You have the following ability.

Blessing of Secrets

You project an illusory aura that makes you and allies harder to notice.

Magic — **Maneuver**
3 aura — Self and each ally in the area

Effect: Each creature in the area has a double edge on tests made to hide or sneak. The aura lasts until you end it (no action required) or until a target harms or deals damage to a creature or object.

Impervious Touch

As a maneuver, you can touch an object with a size equal to your Intuition score or smaller and place a protective spell on it. The object has immunity all to untyped damage. You can maintain this spell on a number of objects equal to your Intuition score, and you can end the spell on any object at any time (no action required).

Additionally, you can place this spell on a building or vehicle (or a similar structure with the Director's approval) that is of a size larger than your Intuition score. You can place the spell on only one such target at a time, and you can maintain the spell on a larger target and a number of objects equal to your Intuition score simultaneously.

Improved Hands of the Maker

When you use your Hands of the Maker ability, you can create a mundane object that is size 2 or smaller.

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Improved Sanctified Weapon

The weapon improved by your Sanctified Weapon feature grants a +3 bonus to rolled damage instead of +1.

Invocation of the Heart

As a main action, you forge a bond of love and friendship with a willing creature you touch. While this bond is active, you can telepathically speak with the creature over any distance, including across different worlds. Additionally, while this bond is active, you can attempt to assist the creature with any test they make regardless of their proximity to you. You can maintain only one bond at a time, and you can end a bond at any time (no action required).

Light of Revelation

As a maneuver, you make your body shine brightly, illuminating your space and each square within 5 squares. This light shines through any darkness. Hidden creatures in the area are automatically revealed, and creatures in the light, including you, can't hide. While this feature is active, you gain an edge on tests made to notice hidden objects and entrances and to detect supernatural illusions.

Oracular Warning

Each time you finish a respite, you can share the vague dreams of the future granted to you by the gods with allies who finished the respite with you. These premonitions help you and your allies stay alive, granting each of you temporary Stamina equal to 10 + your level that lasts until you finish a respite.

Seance

You can commune with a network of spirits. As a respite activity, you speak the name of a creature who died and isn't undead. If the creature's spirit is free and willing to speak with you, they appear and you can have a conversation with them. During this time, the creature responds to you as they would have in life. If the creature isn't free or willing to appear, you can speak another name or choose another respite activity.

Saint's Epiphany

At the start of a respite, you can inspire yourself or another creature taking the same respite with divine knowledge. If the target makes a project roll during this respite, they can add 1d10 plus your Intuition score to the roll.

Windwalk

While you have 5 or more Victories, you can fly. If you can already fly, you have a +2 bonus to speed while flying instead.

Wode Road

As a main action, you touch a living tree and make it part of a divine transportation network. You can maintain a number of trees in your network equal to your Intuition score. Whenever you touch any tree in your network, you can use a main action to teleport yourself and any willing creatures within 10 squares of you to a tree in your network on the same world. If a tree in your network dies, it is no longer part of the network. You can remove a tree from your network no matter your distance from it, including across different worlds (no action required).

5th-Level Features

As a 5th-level conduit, you gain the following features.

5th-Level Domain Feature

You gain the 4th-level domain feature for the domain whose feature you didn't select at that level (see 4th-Level Domain Feature).

9-Piety Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 9 piety to use.

Beacon of Grace (9 Piety)

You ignite a foe with holy radiance, rewarding allies who attack them.

Magic, Ranged, Strike — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — One creature

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 8 + I holy damage
12–16 13 + I holy damage
17+ 17 + I holy damage

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, whenever you or any ally damages the target using an ability, that creature can spend a Recovery. If the target is reduced to 0 Stamina before the end of the encounter, you can use a free triggered action to move this effect to another creature within distance.

Penance (9 Piety)

"If you won't kneel, the gods will make you."

Area, Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
4 cube within 10 — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 4 corruption damage; I < WEAK, prone and can't stand (save ends)
12–16 7 corruption damage; I < AVERAGE, prone and can't stand (save ends)
17+ 11 corruption damage; I < STRONG, prone and can't stand (save ends)

Sanctuary (9 Piety)

You send yourself or an ally to a divine manifold to instantaneously regain health.

Magic, Ranged — **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 — Self or one ally

Effect: The target is removed from the encounter map until the start of their next turn and can spend any number of Recoveries. At the start of their turn, the target reappears in the space they left or the nearest unoccupied space of their choice.

Vessel of Retribution (9 Piety)

You infuse yourself or an ally with the retributive energy of the gods, waiting to be unleashed.

Magic, Ranged — **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 — Self or one ally

Effect: The first time the target is dying or winded before the end of the encounter, each enemy within 5 squares of them takes 15 holy damage.

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6th-Level Features

As a 6th-level conduit, you gain the following features.

Burgeoning Saint

You are infused with the power your deity reserves for their most worthy instruments. You have the following benefits:

- You gain an edge on Presence tests made to interact with other creatures.
- Whenever you deal damage to an enemy, you can spend a Recovery.
- You have corruption immunity 10 or holy immunity 10 (your choice).
- Your clothing and equipment changes in a way that reflects your status as your deity's chosen champion, such as ordinary robes turning into gold vestments or a simple dagger becoming a wicked blade with intricate etching.

Perk

You gain one crafting, lore, or supernatural perk of your choice.

6th-Level Domain Ability

Choose one of your domains. You gain a heroic ability from that domain, as shown on the 6th-Level Conduit Domain Abilities table.

6th-Level Conduit Domain Abilities

Domain	Ability
Creation	God's Machine
Death	Aura of Souls
Fate	Your Story Ends Here
Knowledge	Invocation of Undoing
Life	Revitalizing Grace
Love	Lauded by God
Nature	Spirit Stampede
Protection	Cuirass of the Gods
Storm	Lightning Lord
Sun	Blessing of the Midday Sun
Trickery	Invocation of Mystery
War	Blade of the Heavens

Aura of Souls (9 Piety)

A whirlwind of souls of the dead flies around you at your command.

Area, Magic — **Maneuver**
4 aura — Each creature in the area

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, at the end of each of your turns, you can slide each creature in the area up to a number of squares equal to your Intuition score. This forced movement ignores stability for your allies.

Blade of the Heavens (9 Piety)

A greatsword streams down from the sky, threatening to pin your foe.

Magic, Ranged, Strike — **Main action**
Ranged 5 — One creature

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 8 + I damage; A < WEAK, prone and restrained (save ends)
12–16 12 + I damage; A < AVERAGE, prone and restrained (save ends)
17+ 16 + I damage; A < STRONG, prone and restrained (save ends)

Blessing of the Midday Sun (9 Piety)

Your body emits a heat that bakes your enemies and inspires your allies.

Area, Magic — **Maneuver**
4 aura — Self and each creature in the area

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, each enemy in the area takes a bane on power rolls, and you and each ally in the area gain 1 surge at the end of each of your turns.

Cuirass of the Gods (9 Piety)

Your allies are covered in spiritual armor.

Area, Magic, Ranged — **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 — Three creatures

Effect: You can target yourself instead of one creature with this ability. Each target has damage immunity 5 until the start of your next turn.

Gods' Machine (9 Piety)

You conjure a whirring tank made of blades and metal.

Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — Special

Effect: You conjure a size 2 rolling machine that appears in an unoccupied space within distance. The machine has 50 Stamina and immunity all to poison and psychic damage. It disappears at the end of the encounter, if its Stamina drops to 0, or if you are dying. When the machine first appears, make the following power roll once, targeting each enemy adjacent to it.

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 3 damage
12–16 5 damage
17+ 8 damage

Once on each subsequent turn, you can use a free maneuver to move the machine a number of squares up to your Intuition score then repeat the power roll.

Invocation of Mystery (9 Piety)

"Now you see us ..."

Area, Magic — **Maneuver**
4 burst — Self and each ally in the area

Effect: Each target is invisible until the start of your next turn.

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Invocation of Undoing (9 Piety)

You utter a secret word of destruction known only to deities.

Area, Magic — **Main action**
4 burst — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + I ntuition:
≤11 3 sonic damage; push 3
12-16 6 sonic damage; push 5
17+ 9 sonic damage; push 7

Special: You can choose to have this ability deal damage to and push objects, and to deal damage to buildings.

Lauded by God (9 Piety)

You beseech the gods to give your allies what they need to win the day, and the gods answer.

Magic, Ranged — **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 — Two allies

Effect: Each target gains 3 of their Heroic Resource.

Lightning Lord (9 Piety)

Lightning bursts forth from your body in several directions.

Area, Magic — **Main action**
Three 10 × 1 lines within 1 — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + I ntuition:
≤11 6 lightning damage; push 1
12-16 9 lightning damage; push 2
17+ 13 lightning damage; push 3

Effect: The targets are force moved one at a time, starting with the target nearest to you, and can be pushed into other targets in the same line.

Revitalizing Grace (9 Piety)

With a gesture, you restore your health and that of your allies.

Area, Magic — **Main action**
4 burst — Self and each ally in the area

Effect: Each target can spend any number of Recoveries. Additionally, each target can end one effect on themself that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of their turn, or they can stand up if prone.

Spirit Stampede (9 Piety)

Animal spirits run through the battlefield, trampling your foes.

Area, Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
10 × 2 line within 5 — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + I ntuition:
≤11 5 damage; M < WEAK, prone and can't stand (save ends)
12-16 8 damage; M < AVERAGE, prone and can't stand (save ends)
17+ 11 damage; M < STRONG, prone and can't stand (save ends)

Your Story Ends Here (9 Piety)

You bend the fate of a foe, willing them to die.

Magic, Ranged, Strike — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — One creature

Power Roll + I ntuition:
≤11 9 + I corruption damage; R < WEAK, weakened (save ends)
12-16 14 + I corruption damage; R < AVERAGE, weakened (save ends)
17+ 19 + I corruption damage; R < STRONG, weakened (save ends)

Effect: If this damage kills the target, you and each ally within distance can spend a Recovery.

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7th-Level Features

As a 7th-level conduit, you gain the following features.

Characteristic Increase

Each of your characteristic scores increases by 1, to a maximum of 4.

Faithful's Reward

When you roll for piety at the start of your turn, you gain 1d3 + 1 piety.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice.

7th-Level Domain Feature

Choose one of your domains. You gain a domain feature for that domain, as shown on the 7th-Level Conduit Domain Features table.

7th-Level Conduit Domain Features

Domain	Feature
Creation	Divine Quartermaster
Death	Word of Death Deferred
Fate	Word of Fate Denied
Knowledge	Gods' Library
Life	Font of Grace
Love	Covenant of the Heart
Nature	Nature's Bounty
Protection	Blessing of Iron
Storm	Thunderstruck
Sun	Light of the Burning Sun
Trickery	Trinity of Trickery
War	Your Triumphs are Remembered

Blessing of Iron

The gods send divine favor to you and your allies. While you are not dying, enemies take a bane on strikes against you or any ally within 3 squares of you.

Covenant of the Heart

You can maintain bonds with up to three willing creatures using your Invocation of the Heart feature. Additionally, you have the following ability.

Guided to Your Side

You concentrate on a friend and teleport to them.

Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — Self and each ally

Effect: Each target is teleported to unoccupied spaces within 5 squares of a willing creature who you are bonded to with your Invocation of the Heart feature. You don't need line of effect to the bonded creature but you must be on the same world.



Divine Quartermaster

Each time you finish a respite, you can choose a treasure with a project goal equal to 50 times your level or less. You gain a divine version of this treasure that lasts until you finish another respite or it is consumed.

Font of Grace

Each time you use your Healing Grace ability, you gain 1 piety that can be spent only on that ability during the same turn. If you don't use this piety, it is lost. Additionally, you can use your Minor Miracle feature to return a creature to life even if you don't have their remains.

Gods' Library

You can gain access to information you need through prayer, so that you no longer require research materials for crafting and research projects (see Chapter 12: Downtime Projects). Additionally, you add your level to project rolls you make for crafting and research projects. You also have any skills in the lore skill group you don't already have, and you gain a number of skills from any other skill groups equal to the number of skills you had in the lore skill group before you gained this feature.

Light of the Burning Sun

Sun infuses your body. Whenever you use an ability to deal rolled damage to another creature, that ability deals an extra 5 fire damage, or an extra 15 fire damage if the creature is undead. Additionally, you have fire immunity equal to your level, which is added to any other fire immunity you have.

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Nature's Bounty

When you finish a respite, you can prepare a magic meal using local flora for any companions who rested with you. Choose two of the following benefits for creatures who consume the meal:

- Each creature gains immunity to acid, cold, corruption, fire, lightning, poison, or sonic damage equal to your level. You can choose this benefit twice, choosing a different damage immunity each time.
- Each creature gains 20 temporary Stamina.
- Each creature gains a +1 bonus to speed.
- Each creature gains a +1 bonus to saving throws.
- Each creature gains an edge on tests made to influence other creatures.

Each benefit lasts until the creature who gains it finishes another respite.

Thunderstruck

Lightning and thunder infuse your body. Whenever you use an ability to deal lightning or sonic damage to another creature, you gain 1 surge. Additionally, if you use an ability that force moves a creature, the forced movement distance gains a bonus equal to your Intuition score.

Trinity of Trickery

You have the following ability.

Trinity of Trickery (9 Piety)

Hey! I'm over here. No, here, numbskull.

Magic, Ranged | **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 | Self or one ally

Effect: You create two illusory duplicates of the target, which appear anywhere within distance. These duplicates last until the end of the encounter. On each of their turns, the target can move each duplicate up to their speed. If the target is targeted by an ability, they can use a free triggered action to switch places with a duplicate within their line of effect, making the duplicate the target of the ability instead. When either duplicate takes damage, it is destroyed.

Word of Death Deferred

You can stop death from taking your allies. When an ally within distance of your Healing Grace ability dies and you are not dying, you can use a free triggered action to instead have that ally fall unconscious until they regain Stamina.

Additionally, your abilities deal an extra 5 damage to winded creatures.

Word of Fate Denied

When an ally within 10 squares takes damage that would leave them dying, you can use a free triggered action to make yourself or another willing creature within 10 squares of you the target of the triggering damage instead. The creature you choose takes the damage and suffers any effects associated with it, and that damage can't be reduced in any way.

Your Triumphs Are Remembered

The gods allow you and your companions to bask in the glory of past successes. Whenever you finish a respite, you and any other heroes who rested with you regain 1 Victory after your Victories are converted to XP. This Victory isn't converted into XP at the end of a subsequent respite.

8th-Level Features

As an 8th-level conduit, you gain the following features.

Perk

You gain one perk of your choice.

8th-Level Domain Feature

You gain the 7th-level domain feature for the domain whose feature you didn't select at that level (see 7th-Level Domain Feature).

11-Piety Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 11 piety to use.

Arise! (11 Piety)

Your deity rewards you or an ally on the verge of defeat with a miracle burst of strength and resolve.

Magic, Ranged | **Main action**
Ranged 10 | Self or one ally

Effect: The target can spend any number of Recoveries, can end any effects on them that are ended by a saving throw or that end at the end of their turn, and can stand up if they are prone. Additionally, at the start of each of their turns until the end of the encounter or until they are dying, the target gains 3 surges.

Blessing of Steel (11 Piety)

A protective aura defends your allies from harm.

Area, Magic | **Maneuver**
5 aura | Self and each ally in the area

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, any ability roll made against a target takes a bane and each target has damage immunity 5.

Blessing of the Blade (11 Piety)

"The power of the gods is within you, friends. Allow me to unleash it."

Area, Magic | **Maneuver**
5 aura | Self and each ally in the area

Effect: At the end of each of your turns until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, each target gains 3 surges.

Drag the Unworthy (11 Piety)

You conjure an angel who moves a foe and heals your allies.

Magic, Ranged, Strike | **Main action**
Ranged 10 | One creature or object

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 9 + I holy damage; slide 3
12–16 13 + I holy damage; slide 4
17+ 18 + I holy damage; slide 6

Effect: Each ally the target comes adjacent to during the forced movement can spend a Recovery.

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9th-Level Features

As a 9th-level conduit, you gain the following features.

Faith's Sword

Each time you finish a respite, you can choose a willing hero ally who finished the respite with you. That ally gains the benefits of your Burgeoning Saint feature until you finish another respite. Additionally, you can spend piety as a free maneuver to give the hero 1 of their Heroic Resource for every 2 piety spent.

Ordained

Your god elevates the power flowing through you. Your characteristic scores are treated as 1 higher for the purpose of resisting potencies. Additionally, while you have 5 or more Victories, you speak with the voice of your deity. You have a double edge on Presence tests made to influence other creatures.

9th-Level Domain Ability

Choose one of your domains. You gain a heroic ability from that domain, as shown on the 9th-Level Conduit Domain Abilities table.

9th-Level Conduit Domain Abilities

Domain	Ability
Creation	Divine Dragon
Death	Word of Final Redemption
Fate	Bend Fate
Knowledge	Word of Weakening
Life	Radiance of Grace
Love	Alacrity of the Heart
Nature	Thorn Cage
Protection	Blessing of the Fortress
Storm	Godstorm
Sun	Solar Flare
Trickery	Night Falls
War	Righteous Phalanx

Alacrity of the Heart (11 Piety)

You speak inspiring words to a friend and spur them to incredible feats.

Magic, Ranged — Ranged 10
Maneuver — One ally

Effect: The target has an additional main action they can use on their next turn, and gains 3 of their Heroic Resource.

Bend Fate (11 Piety)

The gods know you must prevail, and they bless your fate.

Magic, Ranged — Ranged 10
Main action — Self or one ally

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, each of the target's power rolls has its outcome improved by one tier.

Blessing of the Fortress (11 Piety)

A magic circle extends out from you, barring foes from getting close.

Area, Magic — Self; see below
Maneuver — Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, no target can approach within 5 squares of you by moving or by being force moved by any enemy. Targets can be force moved closer to you by you or your allies, or can move closer because of your movement.

Divine Dragon (11 Piety)

From nothing but divine will, you create a powerful ally.

Magic, Ranged — Ranged 10
Main action — Special

Effect: You conjure a size 4 dragon that appears in an unoccupied space within distance. The dragon has speed 6 and can fly, stability 4, 100 Stamina, immunity all to fire damage, and uses your characteristics. The dragon disappears at the end of the encounter, if their Stamina drops to 0, or if you are dying.

On subsequent turns, you can use a main action to command the dragon to breathe magic fire in a 3 cube within 1 square of them. Make the following power roll targeting each enemy in the area.

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 5 fire damage
12–16 9 fire damage
17+ 12 fire damage

Additionally, you can use a maneuver to move the dragon up to their speed, or to make a melee weapon strike with their claw against an adjacent creature or object. The dragon can also make this strike as a free strike.

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 3 + I damage
12–16 5 + I damage
17+ 8 + I damage

Godstorm (11 Piety)

You summon a divine storm that remains under your control.

Area, Magic, Ranged — 5 cube within 5
Main action — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 2 lightning damage, 2 sonic damage
12–16 3 lightning damage, 3 sonic damage
17+ 5 lightning damage, 5 sonic damage

Effect: A raging storm fills the area until the end of the encounter or until you are dying. At the start of each of your turns, you can move the storm up to 5 squares (no action required). On subsequent turns while the storm is active, you can use a maneuver to make its power roll.

Night Falls (11 Piety)

You summon darkness that thwarts only your foes.

Area, Magic, Ranged — 5 cube within 10
Main action — Special

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, the area is filled with magic darkness that your enemies can't see through, but you and your allies can.

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Radiance of Grace (11 Piety)

Intense light is emitted from your body, healing your allies.

Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — Four allies

Effect: You can target yourself instead of one ally with this ability. Each target can spend any number of Recoveries, can end any effects on them that are ended by a saving throw or that end at the end of their turn, and can stand up if they are prone.

Righteous Phalanx (11 Piety)

A wall of spinning swords and knives appears where you wish.

Area, Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
15 wall within 10 — Special

Effect: The wall lasts until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, and can be placed in occupied squares. Creatures can enter and pass through the wall. Each enemy who enters the area for the first time in a combat round or starts their turn there takes 15 damage.

Solar Flare (11 Piety)

You call down a sphere of fire that burns your foes to ash.

Area, Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
5 cube within 10 — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 9 fire damage
12-16 14 fire damage
17+ 19 fire damage

Thorn Cage (11 Piety)

Vines burst forth from the ground and bind your foe, slowly closing around them.

Magic, Ranged, Strike — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — One creature

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 10 + I damage; A < WEAK, restrained (save ends)
12-16 15 + I damage; A < AVERAGE, restrained (save ends)
17+ 21 + I damage; A < STRONG, restrained (save ends)

Effect: While restrained this way, the target takes 10 damage at the start of each of your turns.

Word of Final Redemption (11 Piety)

Your death will fuel our victory.

Magic, Ranged — **Free triggered**
Ranged 10 — One creature

Trigger: The target dies.

Effect: Before the target dies, you can look at their stat block and force them to use one ability that is a main action or a maneuver. If the ability costs a Heroic Resource or Malice, the creature can use it without any cost. For the purpose of using this ability, your allies and enemies are the target's allies and enemies, and you decide who the ability targets.

Word of Weakening (11 Piety)

You utter a divine word that makes a foe brittle.

Magic, Ranged, Strike — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — One creature or object

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 10 + I corruption damage; A < WEAK, weakened (save ends)
12-16 15 + I corruption damage; A < AVERAGE, weakened (save ends)
17+ 21 + I corruption damage; A < STRONG, weakened (save ends)

Effect: While weakened this way, the target has damage weakness 10.

10th-Level Features

As a 10th-level conduit, you gain the following features.

Avatar

You are now an avatar of your god! When you use your Prayer feature, you can be affected by up to three prayers at once, and you can change all those prayers and your ward as a respite activity. You can also use a maneuver to activate one of your domain effects (see Domain Piety and Effects) without needing to pray.

Additionally, whenever you take a respite, you can open a portal to rest in the presence of your deity and bring along any allies. When you do, you can ask your deity three questions, which the Director must answer honestly if your deity knows the answers (though they might answer cryptically or incompletely). When you finish your respite, you and your allies can appear at any location in the timescape where someone worships your deity.

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Characteristic Increase

Your Intuition score increases to 5. Additionally, you can increase one of your characteristic scores by 1, to a maximum of 5.

Divine Power

You have an epic resource called divine power. Each time you finish a respite, you gain divine power equal to the XP you gain. You can spend divine power on your abilities as if it were piety.

Additionally, you can spend divine power as if it were piety to use any conduit abilities you don't have, as the gods answer your prayers with temporary and unique gifts. If you use a conduit ability you don't have that usually costs no piety, you must spend 1 divine power to use it.

Divine power remains until you spend it.

Most Pious

When you roll for piety at the start of your turn and you pray, you gain 1 additional piety.

Perk

You gain one crafting, lore, or supernatural perk of your choice.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice.



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ELEMENTALIST

Air for movement. Earth for permanence. Fire for destruction. Water for change. Green for growth. Rot for death. Void for the mystery. Years of study and practice and poring over tomes brought you the revelations that allow you to manipulate these building blocks of reality. Now you use your mastery of the seven elements to destroy, create, and warp the world with magic.

As an elementalist, you can unleash your wrath across a field of foes, put an enemy exactly where you want them, debilitate foes with harmful effects, ward yourself and allies against danger, manipulate terrain, warp space, and more. Your choice of elemental specialization determines which of these things you do best.



"Understanding the mystery, requires ignorance of the mystery."

Embers

Basics

Starting Characteristics: You start with a Reason of 2, and can choose one of the following arrays for your other characteristics scores:

- 2, 2, –1, –1
- 2, 1, 1, –1
- 2, 1, 0, 0
- 1, 1, 1, 0

Weak Potency: Reason - 2

Average Potency: Reason - 1

Strong Potency: Reason

Starting Stamina at 1st Level: 18

Stamina Gained at 2nd and Higher Levels: 9

Recoveries: 8

Skills: You gain the Magic skill and can choose any three skills from the crafting or lore skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Magic, Alchemy, Blacksmithing, History.)

1st-Level Features

As a 1st-level elementalist, you gain the following features.

Elemental Specialization

Through your studies, you know and can manipulate the seven primal elements of the timescape:

Air is the element of movement. Air abilities allow you to manipulate speed, quickness, flight, and breath.
Earth is the element of permanence. Earth abilities bolster your body and grant the power to permanently create and shape physical terrain.
Fire is the element of destruction. Fire abilities devastate enemies and melt objects to slag.
Green is the element of creation and growth. Green abilities make and manipulate plants, fungi, and other forms of life to hamper foes and nourish your allies.
Rot is the element of death. Rot abilities decay and debuff enemies.
Void is the element of the mystery. Void abilities warp space and reality, allowing you to teleport, create illusions, and make things incorporeal.
Water is the element of change. Water abilities enhance your allies' power, and alter your enemies' power for the worse.

You choose an elemental specialization from the following options: earth, fire, green, or void. Your elemental specialization is your subclass, and your choice of specialization determines many of the features you'll gain as you gain new levels, including one of the following benefits. (Other elemental specializations will be featured in future products.) (*Quick Build:* Fire.)

Earth: Acolyte of Earth

You harness the flow of earth magic to become harder to move. Whenever you use an ability that has the Earth and Magic keywords, your stability increases by 1 until the start of your next turn. This benefit is cumulative.

Elementalist Advancement

Level	Features	Abilities
1st	Elemental Specialization, Essence, Hurl Element, Persistent Magic, Practical Magic, Specialization Feature, Specialization Triggered Action, Enchantment, Elementalist Ward, Elementalist Abilities	Two signature, 3, 5
2nd	Perk, Specialization Feature, New 5-Essence Ability	Two signature, 3, 5, 5
3rd	Specialization Feature, 7-Essence Ability	Two signature, 3, 5, 5, 7
4th	Characteristic Increase, Font of Essence, Mantle of Essence, Perk, Skill Increase	Two signature, 3, 5, 5, 7
5th	Specialization Feature, 9-Essence Ability	Two signature, 3, 5, 5, 7, 9
6th	Perk, Wyrding, New 9-Essence Ability	Two signature, 3, 5, 5, 7, 9, 9
7th	Characteristic Increase, Mantle of Quintessence, Surging Essence, Skill Increase	Two signature, 3, 5, 5, 7, 9, 9
8th	Perk, Specialization Feature, 11-Essence Ability	Two signature, 3, 5, 5, 7, 9, 9, 11
9th	Grand Wyrding, New 11-Essence Ability	Two signature, 3, 5, 5, 7, 9, 9, 11, 11
10th	Characteristic Increase, Breath, Essential Being, One, Perk, Skill Increase	Two signature, 3, 5, 5, 7, 9, 9, 11, 11

Fire: Acolyte of Fire

You become an expert at wielding destructive flames. Your abilities that have the Fire and Magic keywords gain a +1 bonus to rolled damage. Your Hurl Element ability (see below) also gains this bonus when you use it to deal fire damage.

Green: Acolyte of the Green

You harness the residual magic from your green spells to bolster yourself and your allies. Whenever you deal damage to one or more creatures using an ability that has the Green and Magic keywords and that costs essence to use (see below), you or one creature within 10 squares of you gains temporary Stamina equal to your Reason score.

Void: Acolyte of the Mystery

You use your immersion in the mystery of void magic to expand the reach of that magic better than other mages. The distance of all your abilities that have the Magic, Ranged, and Void keywords increases by 2 squares.

Essence

You channel the substance of creation in the form of a Heroic Resource called essence, gathering and burning it to cast and maintain spells.

Essence in Combat

At the start of a combat encounter or some other stressful situation tracked in combat rounds (as determined by the Director), you gain essence equal to your Victories. At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 2 essence.

Additionally, the first time each combat round that you or a creature within 10 squares takes damage that isn't untyped or holy damage, you gain 1 essence.

You lose any remaining essence at the end of the encounter.

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Essence Outside of Combat

Though you can't gain essence outside of combat, you can use your heroic abilities and effects that cost essence without spending it. Whenever you use an ability or effect outside of combat that costs essence, you can't use that same ability or effect outside of combat again until you earn 1 or more Victories or finish a respite.

When you use a persistent ability outside of combat (see Persistent Magic below), you can maintain it for a number of rounds equal to your Victories.

When you use an ability outside of combat that lets you spend unlimited essence on its effect, you can use it as if you had spent an amount of essence equal to your Victories. (Such abilities aren't part of the core rules for the elementalist but might appear in future products.)

Hurl Element

You have the following ability, which can be used as a ranged free strike.

Hurl Element

You cast a ball of elemental energy at a foe.

Magic, Ranged, Strike | **Main action**
Ranged 10 | One creature or object

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 2 + R damage
12–16 4 + R damage
17+ 6 + R damage

Effect: When you make this strike, choose the damage type from one of the following options: acid, cold, corruption, fire, lightning, poison, or sonic.

Persistent Magic

Some of your heroic abilities have a persistent effect entry. For example, the Instantaneous Excavation ability has an effect noted as "Persistent 1." Whenever you use a persistent ability, you decide whether you want to maintain it, and start doing so immediately after you first use the ability. If you maintain a persistent ability in combat, you reduce the amount of essence you earn at the start of your turn by an amount equal to the ability's persistent value, which enables the ability's persistent effect. All your active persistent abilities end at the end of the encounter.

You can't maintain any abilities that would make you earn a negative amount of essence at the start of your turn or have a negative amount of essence outside of combat. You can stop maintaining an ability at any time (no action required).

If you maintain the same ability on several targets and the effect includes a power roll, you make that roll once and apply the same effect to all targets. A creature can't be affected by multiple instances of a persistent ability.

If you take damage equal to or greater than 5 times your Reason score in one turn, you stop maintaining any persistent abilities. For instance, if you have a Reason score of 2 and are maintaining Instantaneous Excavation, taking 10 or more damage in one turn causes you to stop maintaining the ability.

Practical Magic

You have the following ability.

Practical Magic

Your mastery of elemental power lets you customize your conjurations.

Magic | **Maneuver**
Self; see below | Self

Effect: Choose one of the following effects:

- You use the Knockback maneuver (see Chapter 10: Combat), but its distance becomes the range of your Hurl Element ability, and you use Reason instead of Might for the power roll.
- You choose a creature within the distance of your Hurl Element ability and one of the following damage types: acid, cold, corruption, fire, lightning, poison, or sonic. That creature takes damage of the chosen type equal to your Reason score.
- You teleport up to a number of squares equal to your Reason score. If you choose this option, you can spend essence to teleport 1 additional square for each essence spent.

1st-Level Specialization Feature

Your elemental specialization grants you a feature, as shown on the 1st-Level Elemental Specialization Features table.

1st-Level Elemental Specialization Features

Specialization	Feature
Earth	Motivate Earth
Fire	Return to Formlessness
Green	It Is the Soul Which Hears
Void	A Beyonding of Vision

A Beyonding of Vision

You instantly recognize illusions for what they are, you can see invisible creatures, and supernatural effects can't conceal creatures and objects from you. Additionally, you always know if an area or object you observe is magical or affected by magic, and you know the specifics of what that magic can do.

You also gain the following ability.

Shared Void Sense

You grant allies a taste of your unearthly vision.

Magic, Ranged, Void | **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 | Special

Effect: For each Victory you have, you can target one creature. Each target gains the benefit of your A Beyonding of Vision feature until the end of your next turn, but doesn't gain the use of the Shared Void Sense ability.

It Is the Soul Which Hears

You can speak with and understand animals, beasts, and plant creatures, even if they don't share a language with you. Your ability to communicate with these creatures doesn't make them inherently more intelligent, but you can use Reason instead of Presence while making tests to influence them.

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Additionally, you can touch a living plant that is not a plant creature to communicate with it telepathically. You can use words to communicate with the plant, but it communicates with you only by transmitting feelings and sensations that can't be overly specific.

Motivate Earth

You have the following ability.

Motivate Earth

The earth rises, falls, or opens up at your command.

Earth, Magic, Melee | **Main action**
Melee 1 | Special

Effect: You touch a square containing mundane dirt, stone, or metal and create a 5 wall of the same material, which rises up out of the ground and must include the square you touched.

Alternatively, you touch a structure made of mundane dirt, stone, or metal that occupies 2 or more squares. You can open a 1-square opening in the structure where you touched it. You can instead touch an existing doorway or other opening that is 1 square or smaller in a mundane dirt, stone, or metal surface. The opening is sealed by the same material that makes up the surface.

Return to Formlessness

You have the following ability.

Return to Formlessness

With the merest touch, you cause an object to turn to slag or ash.

Fire, Magic, Melee | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One mundane object

Effect: You heat the target and cause it to melt or combust, destroying it. If the object is larger than 1 square, then only the square of the object you touch is destroyed.

Specialization Triggered Action

Your elemental specialization grants you a triggered action, as shown on the Specialization Triggered Actions table.

Elemental Specialization Triggered Actions

Specialization	Triggered Action
Earth	Skin Like Castle Walls
Fire	Explosive Assistance
Green	Breath of Dawn Remembered
Void	Subtle Relocation

Breath of Dawn Remembered

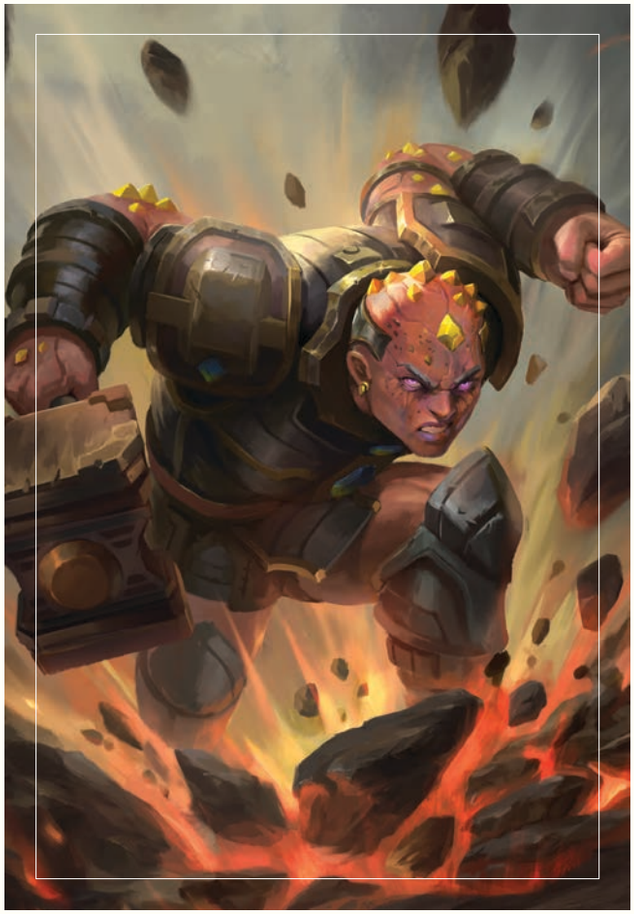
The power you channel grants the ability to get back in the fight.

Green, Magic, Ranged | **Triggered**
Ranged 10 | Self or one ally

Trigger: The target starts their turn or takes damage.

Effect: The target can spend a Recovery.

Spend 1+ Essence: The target can spend an additional Recovery for each essence spent.



Explosive Assistance

You add a little magic to an ally's aggression at just the right time.

Fire, Magic, Ranged | **Triggered**
Ranged 10 | Self or one ally

Trigger: The target force moves a creature or object.

Effect: The forced movement distance gains a bonus equal to your Reason score.

Spend 1 Essence: The forced movement distance gains a bonus equal to twice your Reason score instead.

Skin Like Castle Walls

You cover yourself or an ally in protective stone.

Earth, Magic, Ranged | **Triggered**
Ranged 10 | Self or one ally

Trigger: The target takes damage.

Effect: The target takes half the damage.

Spend 1 Essence: If the damage has any potency effects associated with it, the potency is reduced by 1 for the target.

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Subtle Relocation

You call on the void to swallow and spit out an ally.

Magic, Ranged, Void **Triggered**
Ranged 10 Self or one ally

Trigger: The target starts their turn, moves, or is force moved.

Effect: You teleport the target up to a number of squares equal to your Reason score. If the target moves to trigger this ability, you can teleport them at any point during the move.

Spend 1 Essence: You teleport the target up to a number of squares equal to twice your Reason score instead.

Enchantment

You weave an elemental enchantment into your body that enhances your statistics. Choose one of the following enchantments. You can change your enchantment and ward (see Elementalist Ward below) by performing a complex ritual as a respite activity. (*Quick Build:* Enchantment of Destruction.)

Enchantment of Battle

You can wear light armor and wield light weapons effectively, even though you don't have a kit. While you wear light armor, you gain a +3 bonus to Stamina, and that bonus increases by 3 at 4th, 7th, and 10th levels. While you wield a light weapon, you gain a +1 damage bonus with weapon abilities, including free strikes. You can use light armor treasures and light weapon treasures.

If you have a kit, you can't take this enchantment.

Enchantment of Celerity

You gain a +1 bonus to speed and to the distance you can shift when you take the Disengage move action.

Enchantment of Destruction

You gain a +1 bonus to rolled damage with magic abilities.

Enchantment of Distance

You have a +2 bonus to the distance of your ranged magic abilities.

Enchantment of Permanence

You gain a +6 bonus to Stamina, and this bonus increases by 6 at 4th, 7th, and 10th levels. Additionally, you gain a +1 bonus to stability.

Elementalist Ward

You create an invisible elemental ward that protects you. Choose one of the following wards. You can change your ward and enchantment (see above) by performing a complex ritual as a respite activity. (*Quick Build:* Ward of Surprising Reactivity.)

Ward of Delightful Consequences

A protective field of void magic absorbs violence aimed at you, then lets you hurl it back at your enemies. The first time each round that you take damage, you gain 1 surge.

Ward of Excellent Protection

You weave a shield of all the elements around yourself, channeling their full protective power. You have immunity to acid, cold, corruption, fire, lightning, poison, or sonic damage equal to your Reason score.

Ward of Nature's Affection

The green energy writhing within your body allows you to produce powerful vines when you're in danger. Whenever a creature within a number of squares equal to your Reason score deals damage to you, you can use a free triggered action to slide that creature up to a number of squares equal to your Reason score.

Ward of Surprising Reactivity

You use the magic of fire to create a ward of explosive energy. Whenever an adjacent creature deals damage to you, you can use a free triggered action to push that creature up to a number of squares equal to twice your Reason score.

Elementalist Abilities

Your understanding of elemental magic grants you unique abilities, letting you damage, move, and debuff your enemies, empower your allies, and alter the terrain around you. You can select abilities from any elemental specialization to broaden your potential, or you can focus on abilities tied to your chosen specialization to establish your mastery of elemental power.

Signature Abilities

Choose two signature abilities from the following options. Signature abilities can be used at will. (*Quick Build:* Bifurcated Incineration, Viscous Fire.)

Afflict a Bountiful Decay

Your curse causes your foe's flesh to rot off as spores that aid your allies.

Green, Magic, Ranged, Rot, Strike **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 2 + R corruption damage
12–16 4 + R corruption damage
17+ 6 + R corruption damage

Effect: Choose yourself or one ally within distance. That character can end one effect on them that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of their turn.

Bifurcated Incineration

Two jets of flame lance out at your command.

Fire, Magic, Ranged, Strike **Main action**
Ranged 10 Two creatures or objects

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 2 fire damage
12–16 4 fire damage
17+ 6 fire damage

Grasp of Beyond

You absorb the life energy of another creature and use it to teleport.

Magic, Melee, Strike, Void **Main action**
Melee 1 One creature

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 3 + R corruption damage
12–16 6 + R corruption damage
17+ 9 + R corruption damage

Effect: You can teleport up to a number of squares equal to your Reason score.

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The Green Within, the Green Without

Whipping vines erupt from a foe's body to grasp at another close by.

Green, Magic, Ranged, Strike **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 2 + R damage
12–16 5 + R damage
17+ 7 + R damage

Effect: You slide one creature within 10 squares of the target up to 2 squares.

Meteoric Introduction

You give your enemy a gentle tap—like an asteroid impact.

Earth, Magic, Melee, Strike **Main action**
Melee 1 One creature or object

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 3 + R damage; push 2
12–16 5 + R damage; push 3
17+ 8 + R damage; push 4

Ray of Agonizing Self-Reflection

You inflict pain and doubt in equal measure.

Magic, Ranged, Strike, Void **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature or object

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 2 + R corruption damage; R < WEAK, slowed (save ends)
12–16 4 + R corruption damage; R < AVERAGE, slowed (save ends)
17+ 6 + R corruption damage; R < STRONG, slowed (save ends)

Unquiet Ground

A sudden storm of detritus assaults your foes and leaves them struggling to move.

Area, Earth, Magic, Ranged **Main action**
2 cube within 10 Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 2 damage
12–16 5 damage
17+ 7 damage

Effect: The ground beneath the area is difficult terrain for enemies.

Viscous Fire

A jet of heavy fire erupts where you strike.

Fire, Magic, Ranged, Strike **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature or object

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 2 + R fire damage; push 2
12–16 5 + R fire damage; push 3
17+ 7 + R fire damage; push 4

Heroic Abilities

You channel a variety of heroic abilities, all of them fueled by your essence.

3-Essence Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 3 essence to use. (*Quick Build:* The Flesh, a Crucible.)

Behold the Mystery (3 Essence)

You open a rift into the void to harry your foes.

Area, Magic, Ranged, Void **Main action**
3 cube within 10 Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 2 psychic damage
12–16 4 psychic damage
17+ 6 psychic damage

Persistent 1: At the start of your turn, you can use a maneuver to use this ability again without spending essence.

The Flesh, a Crucible (3 Essence)

Fire engulfs your target and continues to churn.

Fire, Magic, Ranged, Strike **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature or object

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 5 + R fire damage
12–16 8 + R fire damage
17+ 11 + R fire damage

Persistent 1: If the target is within distance at the start of your turn, you can make the power roll again without spending essence.

Invigorating Growth (3 Essence)

Mushrooms erupt from a foe, sapping their vitality to spread strengthening spores.

Green, Magic, Ranged, Strike **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 4 + R poison damage
12–16 7 + R poison damage
17+ 11 + R poison damage

Effect: Mushrooms cover the target's body. While the mushrooms are on the target, you and any ally adjacent to the target gain 1 surge whenever the target takes damage. The mushrooms can be removed by the target or an adjacent creature as a main action.

Ripples in the Earth (3 Essence)

Like a stone was dropped into a pond, waves in the earth radiate from you.

Area, Earth, Magic **Main action**
2 burst Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 3 damage
12–16 5 damage
17+ 8 damage; M < STRONG, prone

Effect: You must be touching the ground to use this ability. Additionally, you can choose a square of ground in the area that is unoccupied or is occupied by you or any ally. A pillar of earth rises out of the ground in that square, with a height in squares up to your Reason score. The pillar can't collide with any creatures or objects, nor can it force creatures raised by it to collide with other creatures or objects.

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5-Essence Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 5 essence to use. (*Quick Build:* Conflagration.)

Conflagration (5 Essence)

A storm of fire descends upon your enemies.

Area, Fire, Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
3 cube within 10 — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Reason:
- ≤11: 4 fire damage
- 12–16: 6 fire damage
- 17+: 10 fire damage

Persistent 2: At the start of your turn, you can use a maneuver to use this ability again without spending essence.

Instantaneous Excavation (5 Essence)

The surface of the world around you opens up to swallow foes.

Earth, Magic, Ranged — **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 — Special

Effect: You open up two holes with 1-square openings that are 4 squares deep, which can be placed on any mundane surface within distance. You can place these holes next to each other to create fewer holes with wider openings. When the holes open, make a separate power roll for each creature on the ground above a hole and small enough to fall in. (You can't score a critical hit with this ability because it uses a maneuver.)

Power Roll + Reason:
- ≤11: The target can shift 1 square from the edge of the hole to the nearest unoccupied space of their choice.
- 12–16: The target falls into the hole.
- 17+: The target falls into the hole and can't reduce the height of the fall.

Persistent 1: At the start of your turn, you open another hole, making a power roll against each creature who could fall into the hole when it opens without spending essence.

No More Than a Breeze (5 Essence)

The material substance of a creature shreds away at your command.

Magic, Ranged, Void — **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 — Self or one ally

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, the target can move through solid matter, they ignore difficult terrain, and their movement can't provoke opportunity attacks. If the target ends their turn inside solid matter, they are forced out into the space where they entered it and this effect ends.

Persistent 1: The effect lasts until the start of your next turn.

Test of Rain (5 Essence)

You call down a rain that burns your enemies and restores your allies.

Area, Green, Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
3 cube within 10 — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Reason:
- ≤11: 4 acid damage
- 12–16: 6 acid damage
- 17+: 10 acid damage

Effect: You can end one effect on yourself that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of your turn. Each ally in the area also gains this benefit.

2nd-Level Features

As a 2nd-level elementalist, you gain the following features.

Perk

You gain one crafting, lore, or supernatural perk of your choice. See Chapter 7: Perks.

2nd-Level Specialization Feature

Your elemental specialization grants you a feature, as shown on the 2nd-Level Elemental Specialization Features table.

2nd-Level Elemental Specialization Features

Specialization	Feature
Earth	Disciple of Earth
Fire	Disciple of Fire
Green	Disciple of the Green
Void	There Is No Space Between

Disciple of Earth

Your body is strengthened by your mind's connection to the element of permanence. You have a +6 bonus to Stamina, and you gain an additional +3 bonus to Stamina whenever you gain a level past 2nd in this class.

Disciple of Fire

Your connection to fire allows you to protect yourself from it, even as you rip away the protections of others. You have fire immunity equal to 5 plus your level in this class. Additionally, fire damage you deal ignores a target's fire immunity.

At the start of a combat encounter, you gain a number of surges equal to your Victories. Whenever you spend a surge to deal extra damage, you can make that damage fire damage.

Disciple of the Green

You can use a maneuver to shapeshift into a type of creature on the Green Animal Forms table. While in animal form, you can speak, and you use your Reason score to make melee free strikes. Your statistics stay the same except as noted on the table.

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Each form has a prerequisite level that you must attain in this class before you can adopt it. Some animal forms grant you temporary Stamina. You lose this temporary Stamina when you revert back to your true form.

You choose a specific animal and appearance while in animal form. For example, if you become a rodent, you might become a mouse, a rat, a shrew, or any other size 1T animal who fits the rodent type. When you take on an animal form, your equipment either melds into your new form or falls undamaged to the ground (your choice). When you return to your true form, any melded gear reappears on your person.

You can revert back to your true form as a maneuver. You can't enter an animal form unless you are in your true form. When you are dying, you revert to your true form and can't turn back into an animal until you are no longer dying.

There Is No Space Between

You have the following ability.

There Is No Space Between

Knowledge of the mystery reveals that two spaces are the same space.

Magic, Ranged, Void | **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 | Special

Effect: You open two size 1 portals in unoccupied spaces within distance, which last until you move beyond distance from any portal, end the effect as a maneuver, or are dying. Each portal must be placed at a height of no more than 1 square above the ground. When you or any ally touch a portal, that creature can choose to be instantly teleported to an unoccupied space of their choice adjacent to the other portal. If an enemy is force moved into a portal, their forced movement ends and they emerge from the other portal in an unoccupied space chosen by the creature who force moved them.

At the start of each of your turns while the portals are active, you can open a new portal connected to the others. If three or more portals are present, you and your allies choose which portal to emerge from when entering a portal, and a creature who force moves an enemy into a portal chooses that enemy's destination portal.

Green Animal Forms

Animal Type	Level	Temporary	Speed	Size	Stability Bonus	Melee Damage Bonus	Special
Canine	2nd	5	7	1M	+0	+1/+1/+1	You gain an edge on tests that involve smell.
Fish	2nd	0	5 (swim only)	1T	+0	+0/+0/+0	You can breathe in water but can't breathe outside of it.
Rodent	2nd	0	5 (climb)	1T	+0	+0/+0/+0	You gain an edge on tests that involve smell.
Bird	3rd	0	5 (fly)	1T	+0	+0/+0/+0	—
Great cat	3rd	5	6 (climb)	2	+0	+1/+1/+1	As a maneuver, jump up to 3 squares in any direction. If you land on an enemy of you size or smaller, that enemy is knocked prone and you can make a melee free strike against them as part of the maneuver.
Giant frog	4th	5	5 (swim)	2	+0	+0/+0/+0	Your melee free strike has a distance of melee 3. When you take the Advance move action, you can high or long jump up to half your speed in addition to your normal speed.
Horse	4th	5	8	2	+1	+0/+0/+0	You can use the Charge main action as a maneuver. You can't use two Charge main actions on the same turn.
Mohler	4th	0	7 (burrow)	1S	+1	+0/+0/+0	You gain a melee distance bonus of +1.
Bear	5th	10	5 (climb)	2	+1	+2/+2/+2	You gain a melee distance bonus of +1.
Giant bird	5th	0	7 (fly)	2	+0	+1/+1/+1	After making a melee free strike, you can shift up to 3 squares.
Giant salamander	6th	5	5	1L	+3	+2/+2/+2	Your melee free strike deals fire damage. You have fire immunity 3.
Giant spider	6th	0	5 (climb)	2	+0	+0/+1/+2	You have a double edge on melee free strikes against creatures you are hidden from.
Giant snake	7th	5	5	3	+0	+0/+1/+2	Whenever you obtain a tier 2 or tier 3 result on a melee free strike, you can automatically grab the target. While grabbed this way, the target takes 2 damage at the start of each of their turns.
Kangaroo	7th	0	7	1L	+1	+0/+0/+4	If you get a critical hit with a melee free strike, the target is dazed (save ends). When you take the Advance move action, you can high or long jump up to half your speed in addition to your normal speed.
Spiny armadillo	7th	10	5	1M	+2	+0/+0/+0	Whenever you take damage from an adjacent creature's melee ability, that creature takes 3 damage.
Ostrich	8th	0	10	2	+0	+1/+1/+1	Your movement does not provoke opportunity strikes.
Shark	8th	0	8 (swim only)	2	+0	+2/+2/+2	You can breathe in water but can't breathe outside of it. Additionally, you have an edge on strikes against targets who are bleeding or winded.
Giant octopus	9th	5	5 (swim)	3	+2	+0/+0/+0	You can breathe in water. Additionally, you can target two creatures or objects with your melee free strike, and a target of your melee free strike is grabbed by you on a tier 2 or tier 3 result. You can have up to eight creatures grabbed.
Rhinoceros	9th	10	8	2	+5	+2/+2/+2	Whenever you make a melee free strike as part of the Charge main action, it gains an edge.
King terror lizard	10th	20	5	4	+3	+2/+2/+2	Your melee free strike is a 1 burst with the Area keyword and the Strike keyword.

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New 5-Essence Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 5 essence to use. Alternatively, you can choose one of the 5-essence abilities you didn't select at 1st level (see 1st-Level Features).

O Flower Aid, O Earth Defend (5 Essence)

Revitalizing plants and jagged stones grow, helping allies and hindering foes.

Area, Earth, Green, Magic, Ranged — **Maneuver**
3 cube within 10 — Special

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, the area gains the following effects:

- Once at the start of your turn as a free maneuver, you and each ally in the area can spend any number of Recoveries. Once as a free maneuver at the start of your turn, you allow yourself and each ally in the area to spend any number of Recoveries.
- The area is difficult terrain for enemies.
- Each enemy who enters the area for the first time in a combat round or starts their turn there takes damage equal to your Reason score.

Persistent 1: The area remains until the start of your next turn. As a maneuver, you can move the area up to 5 squares. This ability ends if the area is ever not within your line of effect.

Subvert the Green Within (5 Essence)

Fungal spores sprout inside your enemy's brain, allowing you to control their actions.

Green, Magic, Ranged, Strike, Void — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — One creature

Effect: The target uses their signature ability against a creature of your choice. This signature ability can target the creature even if it usually wouldn't. You then make a power roll against the target of this ability.

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 5 + R poison damage
12–16 9 + R poison damage
17+ 12 + R poison damage

Translated Through Flame (5 Essence)

Your ally disappears, then reappears in a burst of fire.

Fire, Magic, Ranged, Void — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — Self or one ally

Effect: The target is teleported to another space within distance. Make a power roll that affects each enemy adjacent to the target's new space.

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 3 fire damage
12–16 5 fire damage
17+ 8 fire damage

Volcano's Embrace (5 Essence)

Wrap them up in fire and melting stone.

Earth, Fire, Magic, Ranged, Strike — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — One creature

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 5 + R fire damage; A < WEAK, restrained (save ends)
12–16 9 + R fire damage; A < AVERAGE, restrained (save ends)
17+ 12 + R fire damage; A < STRONG, restrained (save ends)

3rd-Level Features

As a 3rd-level elementalist, you gain the following features.

3rd-Level Specialization Feature

Your elemental specialization grants you a feature, as shown on the 3rd-Level Elemental Specialization Features table.

3rd-Level Elemental Specialization Features

Specialization	Feature
Earth	The Earth Accepts Me
Fire	A Conversation with Fire
Green	Remember Growth and Sun and Rain
Void	Distance is Only Memory

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A Conversation With Fire

When you spend 1 uninterrupted minute in front of a fire, you can speak the name of another creature. If that creature is willing to speak to you, their image appears in the fire, and they can see you before them in a shimmering ball of light. The two of you can speak to each other through these images as if you were together in person. As a maneuver, you or the creature can end the conversation.

Distance Is Only Memory

Each time you finish a respite, you can open a two-way portal that leads to any place you have previously been. You and your allies can pass through the portal, which remains open for 1 hour or until you dismiss it as a main action.

Earth Accepts Me

You have the following ability.

Earth Accepts Me
You can slip into the stone.

Earth, Magic — **Main action**
Self — Self

Effect: You step into a mundane dirt, metal, or stone object (including a wall) that is as large as you or larger. You can remain inside the object for as long as you like. While inside the object, you can observe events and speak to creatures outside it, but you don't have line of effect to anything outside the object and vice versa. You can travel through the object freely until you exit it. If the object you meld with is destroyed, you take 10 damage and exit the object.

Remember Growth and Sun and Rain

You have the following ability.

Remember Growth and Sun and Rain
You stir any wood's memory and learn what it has seen.

Green, Magic, Melee — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One mundane wooden object

Effect: You see and hear any events that have occurred within 10 squares of the object within the last 12 hours, perceiving those events from the object's location as if you were there.

7-Essence Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 7 essence to use.



Erase (7 Essence)
With a flick of the wrist, you phase creatures out of existence.

Magic, Ranged, Strike, Void — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — Special

Special: The number of creatures you target with this ability is determined by your power roll.

Power Roll + Reason:

≤11 One creature
12–16 Two creatures
17+ Three creatures

Effect: Each target begins to fade from existence (save ends). On their first turn while fading from existence, a target takes a bane on power rolls. At the end of their first turn, they have a double bane on power rolls. At the end of their second turn, they fade from existence for 1 hour, after which they reappear in their original space or the nearest unoccupied space.

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Maw of Earth (7 Essence)

You open up the ground, spewing out shrapnel of stone and debris.

Area, Earth, Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
3 cube within 10 — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 5 damage
12–16 9 damage
17+ 12 damage

Effect: The ground in or directly beneath the area drops 3 squares.

Swarm of Spirits (7 Essence)

Guardian animal spirits surround you to harry your foes and bolster your allies.

Area, Green, Magic — **Main action**
3 aura — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 3 damage
12–16 6 damage
17+ 9 damage

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, each ally in the area has each of their characteristic scores treated as 1 higher for the purpose of resisting potencies, and has a +1 bonus to saving throws.

Persistent 1: You make the power roll again to target each enemy in the area without spending essence, and the effect lasts until the start of your next turn.

Wall of Fire (7 Essence)

A blazing, beautifully organized inferno erupts at your command.

Area, Fire, Magic, Ranged — **Maneuver**
10 wall within 10 — Special

Effect: The wall lasts until the start of your next turn, and can be placed in occupied squares. Creatures can enter and pass through the wall. Each enemy who enters the area for the first time in a combat round or starts their turn there takes fire damage equal to your Reason score for each square of the area they start their turn in or enter.

Persistent 1: The wall lasts until the start of your next turn, and you can add a number of squares to the wall equal to your Reason score.

4th-Level Features

As a 4th-level elementalist, you gain the following features.

Characteristic Increase

Your Reason score increases to 3. Additionally, you can increase one of your characteristic scores by 1, to a maximum of 3.

Font of Essence

The first time each combat round that you or a creature within 10 squares takes damage that isn't untyped or holy damage, you gain 2 essence instead of 1.

Mantle of Essence

While you have 3 or more essence and are not dying, you exude an aura of magic whose distance is equal to your Reason score. The effects within the area of the aura are based on your specialization, as shown on the Mantle of Essence Specialization Effects table. You can activate and deactivate the aura at will (no action required).

Mantle of Essence Specialization Effects

Specialization	Feature
Earth	Quaking Earth
Fire	Burning Grounds
Green	Flowering Bed
Void	Veiling Bed

Burning Grounds

At the end of each of your turns, each enemy in the area takes fire damage equal to your Reason score.

Flowering Bed

At the end of each of your turns, each ally in the area gains temporary Stamina equal to your Reason score.

Quaking Earth

At the end of each of your turns, you can push each enemy in the area up to a number of squares equal to your Reason score.

Veiling Bed

The area provides concealment for you and your allies.

Perk

You gain one perk of your choice.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice. See Skills in Chapter 9: Tests.

5th-Level Features

As a 5th-level elementalist, you gain the following features.

5th-Level Specialization Feature

Your elemental specialization grants you a feature, as shown on the 5th-Level Elemental Specialization Features table.

5th-Level Elemental Specialization Features

Specialization	Feature
Earth	The Mountain Does Not Move
Fire	Smoldering Step
Green	Hide of Tenfold Shields
Void	Pierce the Veil of Substance

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Hide of Tenfold Shields

Your animal forms become hardier. You gain temporary Stamina equal to your level in this class when you enter an animal form in combat, which is added to any temporary Stamina provided by the animal form.

Additionally, an adjacent ally can use a maneuver to pet you. If they do so, you can lose temporary Stamina down to a minimum of 0. The ally gains temporary Stamina equal to the amount you lost.

The Mountain Does Not Move

You stand firm and magnetize your allies to stay grounded. Your stability increases by your level in this class.

Additionally, whenever an ally within distance of your Hurl Element ability is force moved, you can use a free triggered action to decrease your stability down to a minimum of 0, then increase the ally's stability by an amount equal to the stability you lost. This change lasts until the end of the round.

Pierce the Veil of Substance

Solidity is merely a suggestion to you. Mundane barriers that are 1 square thick or less do not block your senses or line of effect. You can only sense or have line of effect past one such barrier at a time.

Additionally, whenever you use a void ability, you or one ally within distance of the ability can teleport a number of squares equal to your Reason score.

Smoldering Step

You can use 1 square of movement to walk into an area of fire your size or larger and teleport to any other area of fire your size or larger within 10 squares of the first area.

Additionally, whenever you use a fire ability or are targeted by an ability that deals fire damage, each enemy adjacent to you takes fire damage equal to your Reason score.

9-Essence Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 9 essence to use.

Combustion Deferred (9 Essence)

Your flames dance from kindling to kindling to kindling.

Fire, Magic, Ranged, Strike — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — One creature or object

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 8 + R fire damage
12-16 13 + R fire damage
17+ 17 + R fire damage

Effect: When the target ends their next turn, or if they drop to 0 Stamina before then, each enemy adjacent to them takes fire damage equal to twice your Reason score. Each affected enemy then gains this same effect.

Storm of Sands (9 Essence)

Dirt and debris swirl into a dark, pulsing hurricane.

Area, Earth, Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
4 cube within 10 — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 2 damage
12-16 5 damage
17+ 7 damage

Effect: The area lasts until the start of your next turn. It is difficult terrain for enemies, and you and your allies have concealment while in the area.

Persistent 1: The area remains until the start of your next turn, and you can move it up to 5 squares (no action required). As a maneuver, you can make the power roll again without spending essence.

Subverted Perception of Space (9 Essence)

You rip an enemy's world in twain.

Magic, Ranged, Strike, Void — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — One creature or object

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 9 + R corruption damage
12-16 10 + R corruption damage; the target has line of effect only to creatures and objects within 4 squares of them until the start of your next turn
17+ 15 + R corruption damage; the target has line of effect only to adjacent creatures and objects until the start of your next turn

Persistent 1: The target's limited line of effect lasts until the start of your next turn.

Web of All That's Come Before (9 Essence)

Threads you've been weaving through your adventures create a vibrant, pearlescent web.

Area, Green, Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
4 cube within 10 — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 2 corruption damage; A < WEAK, restrained (save ends)
12-16 3 corruption damage; A < AVERAGE, restrained (save ends)
17+ 5 corruption damage; A < STRONG, restrained (save ends)

Effect: The area is difficult terrain until the start of your next turn. Each enemy who ends their turn in the area is restrained (save ends).

Persistent 1: The area remains until the start of your next turn.

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6th-Level Features

As a 6th-level elementalist, you gain the following features.

Perk

You gain one crafting, lore, or supernatural perk of your choice.

Wyrding

You can spend 10 uninterrupted minutes to create a freeform magic spell for a variety of situations. Choose one of the following magical effects:

- You create a mundane object of a size equal to your Reason score or smaller.
- You construct a place of shelter suitable for twenty creatures that lasts for 24 hours and can't be detected by enemies.
- You restore all Stamina to a mundane object of a size equal to your Reason score or smaller.
- Choose a cube with a size up to your Reason score within 5 squares. You can fill that area with difficult terrain or natural phenomena such as fire, water, or plant life, or can clear the area of those things.
- You can preserve a corpse or up to 5 pounds of food for a week, or can cause a corpse or that amount of food to instantly rot.
- You create a seal on a surface that can't be seen or felt by anyone but you. When a creature comes adjacent to the surface, you can see and hear through the seal for as long as the creature remains adjacent to it. When you create the seal, you can decide to limit the number of creatures who activate it by choosing a creature keyword (such as Undead) or a specific name (such as Ajax the Invincible) or organization (such as the Black Iron Pact). If you do, the seal alerts you only when creatures with the keyword, name, or organizational affiliation you provide pass by it. If you create a second seal, the first one disappears. You can dispel a seal at any time (no action required).

New 9-Essence Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 9 essence to use. Alternatively, you can choose one of the 9-assence abilities you didn't select at 5th level (see 5th-Level Features).

Luminous Champion Aloft (9 Essence)

They shine vibrantly, a beautiful diamond in the night sky.

Fire, Green, Magic, Ranged, Void — **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 — Self or one ally

Effect: The target has a +3 bonus to speed, they can fly, and their abilities ignore concealment. Additionally, whenever the target gains their Heroic Resource, they gain 1 additional Heroic Resource. This effect lasts until the start of your next turn.

Persistent 1: The effect lasts until the start of your next turn.

Magma Titan (9 Essence)

Their body swells with lava, mud, and might, towering over their enemies.

Earth, Fire, Green, Magic, Ranged — **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 — Self or one ally

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, the target has the following benefits:

- Their size and stability increase by 2, with any size 1 target becoming size 3. Each creature who is within the target's new space slides to the nearest unoccupied space, ignoring stability. If the target doesn't have space to grow, they grow as much as they can and become restrained until the effect ends.
- They have fire immunity 10.
- Their strikes deal extra fire damage equal to twice your Reason score.
- When the target force moves a creature or object, the forced movement distance gains a +2 bonus.
- They can use their highest characteristic instead of Might for Might power rolls.

Persistent 2: The effect lasts until the start of your next turn. Additionally, at the start of your turn, the target can spend 2 Recoveries.

Meteor (9 Essence)

You teleport the target into the air and let the ground and the elemental force of fire do the rest.

Earth, Fire, Magic, Ranged, Void — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — One creature or object

Power Roll + Reason:

≤11 You teleport the target up to 4 squares.
12–16 You teleport the target up to 6 squares.
17+ You teleport the target up to 8 squares.

Effect: If the target is teleported to a space where they would fall, they immediately do so, treating the fall as if their Agility score were 0. The target takes fire damage from the fall, and each enemy within 3 squares of where they land takes the same amount of fire damage. The ground within 3 squares of where the target lands is difficult terrain.

The Wode Remembers and Returns (9 Essence)

You create a terrarium that spans from canopy above to underbrush below.

Area, Earth, Green, Magic, Void — **Main action**
4 burst — Special

Effect: The area becomes dark and verdant, with trees and plant life appearing in unoccupied spaces within it until the start of your next turn. The area is difficult terrain for enemies, and any ally who ends their turn in the area has cover.

Persistent 2: The area remains until the start of your next turn. Additionally, at the start of your turn, each ally in the area can spend a Recovery.

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7th-Level Features

As a 7th-level elementalist, you gain the following features.

Characteristic Increase

Each of your characteristic scores increases by 1, to a maximum of 4.

Mantle of Quintessence

Your Mantle of Essence feature no longer requires essence.

Additionally, your Mantle of Essence now radiates magic that creates a calming air. Creatures in the area of the mantle's aura have their starting patience increased by 1 (to a maximum of 5) during any negotiation. While in the area, you and any ally gain an edge on tests that use the Handle Animals skill. If you have 5 or more Victories, the bonus to patience increases to 2 and tests that use the Handle Animals skill have a double edge.

Surging Essence

When you gain essence at the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 3 essence instead of 2.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice.

8th-Level Features

As an 8th-level elementalist, you gain the following features.

Perk

You gain one perk of your choice.

8th-Level Specialization Feature

Your elemental specialization grants you a feature, as shown on the 8th-Level Elemental Specialization Features table.

8th-Level Elemental Specialization Features

Specialization	Feature
Earth	Summon Source of Earth
Fire	The Flame Primordial
Green	Chimeric Manifestation
Void	Black Hole Star

Black Hole Star

You warp gravity around your heavenly body and can pull even the sturdiest titans toward your core. At the end of each of your turns, you target one creature or object within distance of your Hurl Element ability and vertical pull that target up to 5 squares. If their stability reduces this forced movement, they are pulled a minimum of 2 squares. This forced movement ignores stability for your allies.

Additionally, your Mantle of Essence improves. While in the area of the aura, enemies and objects have their stability reduced by an amount equal to your level.



Chimeric Manifestation

Nature isn't static and unchanging, and neither are you. You can enter or exit your animal form as a free maneuver the first time you use your Disciple of the Green feature on your turn.

Additionally, whenever you use your Disciple of the Green feature, you can select an additional animal form and gain the positive benefits from both forms. You can choose the size of either animal, and if both animal forms grant you the same benefit, you can choose whichever you prefer. You gain the highest speed between the two animal forms and have all types of movement from both forms.

You can only combine animal forms whose levels add up to 12 or less. For example, you can combine a shark (8th level) with a horse (4th level), but you can't combine a shark with a bear (5th level).

The Flame Primordial

You produce a fire that entrances the fates, distracting them from aiding your foes. Whenever you deal fire damage to a creature or object, they take an extra 1d6 fire damage. If you deal fire damage to a mundane object, you can use a free triggered action to target it with your Return to Formlessness ability instead.

Additionally, any enemy who starts their turn adjacent to you has fire weakness equal to your Reason score until the start of their next turn. This increases to twice your Reason score if the enemy is made of or is wearing mostly metal.

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Summon Source of Earth

You have the following ability.

Summon Source of Earth

The ground rumbles as an elemental bursts forth, ready to serve.

Earth, Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — Special

Effect: A **source of earth** emerges from an unoccupied space within distance. The source takes their turn immediately after you, moving up to their speed and either taking a main action or a maneuver. The source is dismissed at the start of your next turn.

The source starts an encounter at full Stamina, but maintains their current Stamina throughout the encounter, even if they are dismissed and you use this ability again. They can't regain Stamina during the encounter. When the source's Stamina is reduced to 0, you can't use this ability again until you earn 1 or more Victories.

Persistent 2: The source takes another turn. They are dismissed at the start of your next turn.

11-Essence Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 11 essence to use.

Heart of the Wode (11 Essence)

You call forth one of the Great Tree's many splinters to provide for your every need.

Green, Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — Special

Effect: A size 5 tree appears in an unoccupied space within distance. The tree has 100 Stamina and can't be force moved. You and any ally can touch the tree to use the Catch Breath maneuver as a free maneuver. Additionally, when you start your turn with line of effect to the tree, you can end one effect on yourself that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of your turn, or you can stand up if you are prone. Each ally within distance also gains this benefit.

Each enemy who ends their turn within 3 squares of the tree is restrained until the end of their next turn. A creature restrained this way can use a main action to end the effect early.

Muse of Fire (11 Essence)

The fire burns hot enough to sear the face of any god watching.

Area, Fire, Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
5 cube within 10 — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Reason:

- ≤11: 7 fire damage; the Director loses 2 Malice (see *Draw Steel: Monsters*)
- 12–16: 10 fire damage; the Director loses 3 Malice
- 17+: 15 fire damage; the Director loses 4 Malice

Effect: The Director's Malice can become negative as a result of this ability.

Source of Earth — Level 8 Brute

Elemental

45 Stamina	**Immunity:** — **Weakness:** —	5 Free Strike	**Melee:** 2 **Ranged:** 10
6 Speed	**Movement:** Run, Fly, Hover, Teleport	2 Size	5 Stability

Might +3 | Agility +1 | Reason -5 | Intuition -5 | Presence -3

Boulder Bash — **Signature Action**
Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon — **2d10 +3**
Melee 2 or ranged 10 — 1 creature or object

- ≤11: 5damage; push 3
- 12–16: 9 damage; push 4
- 17+: 12 damage; push 5

★ **Earthwalk**
Difficult terrain composed of earth and stone doesn't cost the source extra movement.

★ **Tunneler**
When the source burrows, they create a size 2 tunnel.

★ **Earth Harness**
A creature that has the **Earth Accepts Me** ability can use it as a free action to meld into the source.

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Return to Oblivion (11 Essence)

You create a tear in reality that could consume everything.

Area, Magic, Ranged, Void | **Main action**
Ranged 10 | Special

Effect: You create a size 1L vortex that lasts until the end of the encounter. At the start of each combat round while the vortex is unoccupied, the vortex vertical pulls 3 each enemy within 5 squares of it. Each enemy who enters the vortex or starts their turn there is knocked prone. At the end of the round, if a winded enemy who is not a leader or solo creature is in the vortex, they are instantly destroyed.

World Torn Asunder (11 Essence)

You stomp your foot and quake the whole world over.

Area, Earth, Magic | **Main action**
5 burst | Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 M < WEAK, prone
12-16 M < AVERAGE, prone
17+ M < STRONG, prone

Effect: You create a fissure in the ground adjacent to you that is a 10 × 2 line and 6 squares deep. Each creature in the area who is prone and size 2 or smaller falls in. Other creatures can enter the fissure or can shift to the nearest unoccupied space of their choice outside it.

9th-Level Features

As a 9th-level elementalist, you gain the following features.

Grand Wyrding

You have mastered the magic of shaping a wyrd, and can use your Wyrding feature as a main action.

Additionally, when you have 5 or more Victories, choose one of the following damage types: acid, cold, corruption, fire, lightning, poison, or sonic. You have immunity all to that type.

New 11-Essence Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 11 essence to use. Alternatively, you can choose one of the 11-essence abilities you didn't select at 8th level (see 8th-Level Features).

Earth Rejects You (11 Essence)

Everyone and everything gets blown away in an eruption of rocks and debris.

Area, Earth, Magic, Ranged | **Main action**
5 cube within 10 | Each enemy and object in the area

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 6 damage
12-16 9 damage
17+ 13 damage

Persistent 2: At the start of your turn, you can use a maneuver to use this ability again without spending essence.



The Green Defends Its Servants (11 Essence)

A luminous green shield shows its true beauty the more it cracks.

Green, Magic, Ranged | **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 | Self or one ally

Effect: You conjure an elemental shield that protects the target until the end of your next turn. While the shield is active, the target can take the Defend main action as a maneuver on each of their turns. The target gains 30 temporary Stamina that lasts until depleted or until the effect ends. If this temporary Stamina disappears, the effect ends and the shield explodes, dealing 10 damage to each enemy within 5 squares of the target.

Persistent 2: The effect lasts until the start of your next turn.

Prism (11 Essence)

You split your essence, allowing you to cast multiple effects at once.

Magic, Void | **Main action**
Self | Self

Effect: You use up to three heroic abilities whose essence costs total 11 or less, spending no additional essence beyond the cost of this ability. You can shift up to 2 squares between your use of each ability.

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Unquenchable Fire (11 Essence)
You let fly a fiery missile braided with pure primal energy.

Fire, Magic, Ranged, Strike **Main action**
Ranged 10 One enemy or object

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 13 + R fire damage; I < WEAK, dazed (save ends)
12–16 18 + R fire damage; I < AVERAGE, dazed (save ends)
17+ 25 + R fire damage; I < STRONG, dazed (save ends)

Effect: This damage ignores immunity.

10th-Level Features

As a 10th-level elementalist, you gain the following features.

Breath

You have an epic resource called breath. Each time you finish a respite, you gain breath equal to the XP you gain. You can spend any number of breath to gain essence (no action required). When you do, 1 breath becomes 3 essence.

Breath remains until you convert it to essence.

Characteristic Increase

Your Reason score increases to 5. Additionally, you can increase one of your characteristic scores by 1, to a maximum of 5.

Essential Being

When you gain essence at the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 4 essence instead of 3.

One

You become the embodiment of the element of your chosen specialization. Whenever you use magic, elemental motes flit around you and your skin changes to reflect your element, taking on an earthen or stony appearance for earth, appearing like flickering flame for fire, gaining a leaf pattern for green, and becoming a starry expanse for void. Additionally, you gain one of the following benefits, as shown on the One Specialization Features table.

One Specialization Features

Specialization	Feature
Earth	Master of Earth
Fire	Master of Fire
Green	Master of Green
Void	Master of Void

Master of Earth
You have damage immunity 5.

Additionally, as a respite activity, you can shape the mundane earth around you in a 1-mile radius. You can open sinkholes, form mountains, level mundane structures or whole settlements, create canyons, raise islands or sink them in the sea, and perform similar feats. You can't use this respite activity if another creature within 1 mile is already using it. Once you use this respite activity, you can't use it again for 10 days.

Master of Fire
The damage bonus of your Acolyte of Fire feature increases to +5 and applies to all your magic abilities.

Additionally, your Return to Formlessness ability can be used on supernatural objects (but not on artifacts). When you melt a treasure (see Chapter 13: Rewards), you gain breath equal to its echelon.

Master of Green
The number of Recoveries you have increases by 2, and each time you finish a respite, you can grant each ally who finished the respite with you 2 additional Recoveries. Your allies' additional Recoveries disappear when they finish their next respite.

Additionally, as a respite activity, you can perform a ritual that causes a fruit tree to spring from the ground, grow, mature, and produce 1d6 of a treasure called Life Fruit. You can use a respite activity to cause an existing tree to produce another 1d6 Life Fruit, but it does not grow these magic consumables on its own.

As a maneuver, a creature can consume a Life Fruit or feed it to an adjacent willing ally. When a creature eats a Life Fruit, they restore all their Stamina, they can end all conditions or effects on themself, and they can stand up if prone. Additionally, if the creature desires, their aging pauses for 1d10 years. If the creature eats additional Life Fruit and chooses to pause their aging, the effects don't stack. Instead, the creature gains the benefit from the Life Fruit that pauses their aging for the longest time.

Master of Void
Whenever you willingly move, you can teleport.

Additionally, your mind is connected to the mystery and helps you find the answers you seek. You no longer require project sources for research projects. Whenever you use a respite activity to make a project roll for a research project, you automatically complete the project.

Perk

You gain one crafting, lore, or supernatural perk of your choice.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice.

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FURY

You do not temper the heat of battle within you. You unleash it! Your experience in the wild taught you the secrets of predators, and now, like the raptor, the panther, the wolf, you channel unfettered anger into martial prowess. Primordial Chaos is your ally. Let others use finesse to clean up the wreckage left in your wake.

As a fury, you devastate foes with overwhelming might, hurl yourself and enemies around the battlefield, and grow stronger as your ferocity increases. Nature has no concept of fairness—and neither do you.

"DEATH!"

Khorva

Basics

Starting Characteristics: You start with a Might of 2 and an Agility of 2, and you can choose one of the following arrays for your other characteristic scores:

- 2, –1, –1
- 1, 1, –1
- 1, 0, 0

Weak Potency: Might –2

Average Potency: Might –1

Strong Potency: Might

Starting Stamina at 1st Level: 21

Stamina Gained at 2nd and Higher Levels: 12

Recoveries: 10

Skills: You have the Nature skill (see Skills in Chapter 9: Tests). Then choose any two skills from the exploration or intrigue skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Nature, Alertness, Jump.)

1st-Level Features

As a 1st-level fury, you gain the following features.

Primordial Aspect

You are a product of customs older than warfare, older than civilization, older than most of the world. You have undergone a rite of passage that revealed the building blocks of the timescape—the Primordial Chaos—and that left an aspect of that chaos inside you. You choose a primordial aspect from the following options, each of which grants you a skill. (*Quick Build:* Berserker.)

Berserker: You channel your ferocity into physical might, acting as a living version of the forces that shape the world. You have the Lift skill.

Reaver: You channel your ferocity into instinct and cunning, challenging the order of civilization. You have the Hide skill.

Stormwight: You channel your ferocity into primordial storms and can take on the form of an animal or an animal hybrid form. You have the Track skill.

Your primordial aspect is your subclass, and your choice of aspect determines many of the features you'll gain as you gain new levels.

Ferocity

Within the heat of battle, your determination and anger grow, fueling a Heroic Resource called ferocity.

Ferocity in Combat

At the start of a combat encounter or some other stressful situation tracked in combat rounds (as determined by the Director), you gain ferocity equal to your Victories. At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 1d3 ferocity.

Additionally, the first time each combat round that you take damage, you gain 1 ferocity. The first time you become winded or are dying in an encounter, you gain 1d3 ferocity.

You lose any remaining ferocity at the end of the encounter.

Fury Advancement

Level	Features	Abilities	Aspect Abilities
1st	Primordial Aspect, Ferocity, Growing Ferocity, Aspect Features, Aspect Triggered Action, Mighty Leaps, Fury Abilities	Signature, 3, 5	—
2nd	Perk, Aspect Feature, Aspect Ability	Signature, 3, 5	5
3rd	Aspect Feature, 7-Ferocity Ability	Signature, 3, 5, 7	5
4th	Characteristic Increase, Damaging Ferocity, Growing Ferocity Improvement, Perk, Primordial Attunement, Primordial Strike, Skill	Signature, 3, 5, 7	5
5th	Aspect Feature, 9-Ferocity Ability	Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9	5
6th	Marauder of the Primordial Chaos, Perk, Aspect Ability	Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9	5, 9
7th	Characteristic Increase, Elemental Form, Greater Ferocity, Growing Ferocity Improvement, Skil	Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9	5, 9
8th	Perk, Aspect Feature, 11-Ferocity Ability	Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11	5, 9
9th	Harbinger of the Primordial Chaos, Aspect Ability	Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11	5, 9, 11
10th	Chaos Incarnate, Characteristic Increase, Growing Ferocity Improvement, Perk, Primordial Ferocity, Primordial Power, Skill	Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11	5, 9, 11

Ferocity Outside of Combat

Though you can't gain ferocity outside of combat, you can use your heroic abilities and effects that cost ferocity without spending it. Whenever you use an ability or effect outside of combat that costs ferocity, you can't use that same ability or effect outside of combat again until you earn 1 or more Victories or finish a respite.

When you use an ability outside of combat that lets you spend unlimited ferocity on its effect, such as To the Utmost End, you can use it as if you had spent an amount of ferocity equal to your Victories.

Growing Ferocity

You gain certain benefits in combat based on the amount of ferocity you have (see 1st-Level Aspect Features for details). These benefits last until the end of your turn, even if a benefit would become unavailable to you because of the amount of ferocity you spend during your turn.

Some Growing Ferocity benefits can be applied only if you are a specific level or higher, with the level of those benefits noted in the various Growing Ferocity tables in this section.

1st-Level Aspect Features

Your primordial aspect grants you two features, as shown on the 1st-Level Aspect Features table.

1st-Level Aspect Features

Aspect	Feature
Berserker	Kit, Primordial Strength
Reaver	Kit, Primordial Cunning
Stormwight	Beast Shape, Relentless Hunter

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Beast Shape

Whenever you select a kit, you can instead select a stormwight kit (see Stormwight Kits). Your stormwight kit grants you a number of benefits, including benefits tied to your Growing Ferocity feature.

Kit

You can use and gain the benefits of a kit. See Chapter 6: Kits for more information. (*Quick Build:* Panther.)

Primordial Cunning

You are never surprised. Additionally, whenever you would push a target with forced movement, you can slide them instead.

As your ferocity grows, you gain benefits as noted on the Reaver Growing Ferocity table. Benefits are cumulative except where an improved benefit replaces a lesser benefit.

Reaver Growing Ferocity

Ferocity	Benefit
2	Whenever you use the Knockback maneuver, the forced movement distance gains a bonus equal to your Agility score.
4	The first time you slide a creature on a turn, you gain 1 surge.
6	You gain an edge on Agility tests and the Knockback maneuver.
8 (4th level)	The first time you slide a creature on a turn, you gain 2 surges.
10 (7th level)	You have a double edge on Agility tests and the Knockback maneuver.
12 (10th level)	Whenever you use a heroic ability, you gain 10 temporary Stamina. Additionally, whenever you make a power roll that imposes forced movement on a target, the forced movement distance gains a bonus equal to your Agility score.

Primordial Strength

Whenever you damage an object with a weapon strike, the strike deals extra damage equal to your Might score. Additionally, whenever you push another creature into an object, the creature takes extra damage equal to your Might score.

As your ferocity grows, you gain benefits as noted on the Berserker Growing Ferocity table. Benefits are cumulative except where an improved benefit replaces a lesser benefit.

Berserker Growing Ferocity

Ferocity	Benefit
2	Whenever you use the Knockback maneuver, the forced movement distance gains a bonus equal to your Might score.
4	The first time you push a creature on a turn, you gain 1 surge.
6	You gain an edge on Might tests and the Knockback maneuver.
8 (4th level)	The first time you push a creature on a turn, you gain 2 surges.
10 (7th level)	You have a double edge on Might tests and the Knockback maneuver.
12 (10th level)	Whenever you use a heroic ability, you gain 10 temporary Stamina. Additionally, whenever you make a power roll that imposes forced movement on a target, the forced movement distance gains a bonus equal to your Might score.

Relentless Hunter

You gain an edge on tests made using the Track skill.

Aspect Triggered Action

Your primordial aspect grants you a triggered action, as shown on the Aspect Triggered Actions table.

Aspect Triggered Actions

Aspect	Triggered Action
Berserker	Lines of Force
Reaver	Unearthly Reflexes
Stormwight	Furious Change

Furious Change

In your anger, you revert to a more bestial form.

—
Self

Triggered
Self

Trigger: You lose Stamina and are not dying.

Effect: You gain temporary Stamina equal to your Might score and can enter your animal form or hybrid form.

Spend 1 Ferocity: If you are not dying, you can spend a Recovery.

Lines of Force

You redirect the energy of motion.

Magic, Melee
Melee 1

Triggered
Self or one creature

Trigger: The target would be force moved.

Effect: You can select a new target of the same size or smaller within distance to be force moved instead. You become the source of the forced movement, determine the new target's destination, and can push the target instead of using the original forced movement type. Additionally, the forced movement distance gains a bonus equal to your Might score.

Spend 1 Ferocity: The forced movement distance gains a bonus equal to twice your Might score instead.

Unearthly Reflexes

You are as elusive as a hummingbird.

—
Self

Triggered
Self

Trigger: You take damage.

Effect: You take half the damage from the triggering effect and can shift up to a number of squares equal to your Agility score.

Spend 1 Ferocity: If the damage has any potency effects associated with it, the potency is reduced by 1 for you.

Mighty Leaps

You can't obtain lower than a tier 2 outcome on any Might test made to jump (see Movement Types in Chapter 10: Combat).

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Where's My Maneuver?

Since most other classes get a bespoke maneuver, you might find yourself asking, "Where's the special maneuver for the fury?" The answer is that the class doesn't need its own maneuver, because most of the time, the fantasy of the fury has them using the Grab or Knockback maneuvers in combat. They're really good at those maneuvers too, so it doesn't make sense to give you another option that you'll rarely or never use.



Fury Abilities

You specialize in dealing massive damage on the battlefield, and have mastered unique martial abilities that allow you to strike hard and keep moving.

Signature Ability

Choose one signature ability from the following options. Signature abilities can be used at will. (*Quick Build:* To the Death!)

Brutal Slam

The heavy impact of your weapon attacks drives your foes ever back.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 3 + M damage; push 1
12–16 6 + M damage; push 2
17+ 9 + M damage; push 4

Hit and Run

Staying in constant motion helps you slip out of reach after a brutal assault.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 2 + M damage
12–16 5 + M damage
17+ 7 + M damage; A < STRONG, slowed (save ends)

Effect: You can shift 1 square.

Impaled!

You skewer your enemy like a boar upon a spit.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature of your size or smaller

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 2 + M damage; M < WEAK, grabbed
12–16 5 + M damage; M < AVERAGE, grabbed
17+ 7 + M damage; M < STRONG, grabbed

To the Death!

Your reckless assault leaves you tactically vulnerable.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 3 + M damage
12–16 6 + M damage
17+ 9 + M damage

Effect: You gain 2 surges, and the target can make an opportunity attack against you as a free triggered action.

Heroic Abilities

You fight with an array of heroic abilities, all of which cost ferocity to fuel them.

3-Ferocity Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 3 ferocity to use. (*Quick Build:* Back!)

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Back! (3 Ferocity)

You hew about you with your mighty weapon, hurling enemies backward.

Area, Melee, Weapon | **Main action**
1 burst | Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 5 damage
12–16 8 damage; push 1
17+ 11 damage; push 3

Out of the Way! (3 Ferocity)

Your enemies will clear your path—whether they want to or not.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 3 + M damage; slide 2
12–16 5 + M damage; slide 3
17+ 8 + M damage; slide 5

Effect: When you slide the target, you can move into any square they leave. If you take damage from an opportunity attack by moving this way, the target takes the same damage.

Tide of Death (3 Ferocity)

Teach them the folly of lining up for you.

Melee, Weapon | **Main action**
Self; see below | Self

Effect: You move up to your speed in a straight line, and enemy squares are not difficult terrain for this movement. You can end this movement in a creature's space and move them to an adjacent unoccupied space. You make one power roll that targets each enemy whose space you move through.

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 2 damage
12–16 3 damage
17+ 5 damage

The last target you damage takes extra damage equal to your Might score for each opportunity attack you trigger during your move.

Your Entrails Are Your Extrails! (3 Ferocity)

Hard for them to fight when they're busy holding in their giblets.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 3 + M damage; M < WEAK, bleeding (save ends)
12–16 5 + M damage; M < AVERAGE, bleeding (save ends)
17+ 8 + M damage; M < STRONG, bleeding (save ends)

Effect: While bleeding this way, the target takes damage equal to your Might score at the end of each of your turns.

5-Ferocity Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 5 ferocity to use. (*Quick Build:* Blood for Blood!)

Blood for Blood! (5 Ferocity)

See how well they fight after you've bled them dry.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 4 + M damage; M < WEAK, bleeding and weakened (save ends)
12–16 6 + M damage; M < AVERAGE, bleeding and weakened (save ends)
17+ 10 + M damage; M < STRONG, bleeding and weakened (save ends)

Effect: You can deal 1d6 damage to yourself to deal an extra 1d6 damage to the target.

Make Peace With Your God! (5 Ferocity)

Anger is your energy.

— | **Free maneuver**
Self | Self

Effect: You gain 1 surge, and the next ability roll you make this turn automatically obtains a tier 3 outcome.

Thunder Roar (5 Ferocity)

You unleash a howl that hurls your enemies back.

Area, Melee, Weapon | **Main action**
5 × 1 line within 1 | Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 6 damage; push 2
12–16 9 damage; push 4
17+ 13 damage; push 6

Effect: The targets are force moved one at a time, starting with the target nearest to you, and can be pushed into other targets in the same line.

To the Uttermost End (5 Ferocity)

You gut your life force to ensure a foe's demise.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 7 + M damage
12–16 11 + M damage
17+ 16 + M damage

Spend 1+ Ferocity: While you are winded, this ability deals an extra 1d6 damage for each ferocity spent. While you are dying, it deals an extra 1d10 damage for each ferocity spent. In either case, you lose 1d6 Stamina after making this strike.

2nd-Level Features

As a 2nd-level fury, you gain the following features.

Perk

You gain one crafting, exploration, or intrigue perk of your choice. See Chapter 7: Perks.

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2nd-Level Aspect Feature

Your primordial aspect grants you a feature, as shown on the 2nd-Level Aspect Features table.

2nd-Level Aspect Features

Aspect	Feature
Berserker	Unstoppable Force
Reaver	Inescapable Wrath
Stormwight	Tooth and Claw

Inescapable Wrath

You have a bonus to speed equal to your Agility score, and you ignore difficult terrain.

Tooth and Claw

At the end of each of your turns, each enemy adjacent to you takes damage equal to your Might score.

Unstoppable Force

Whenever you use the Charge main action, you can use a strike signature ability or a strike heroic ability instead of a free strike. Additionally, you can jump as part of your charge.

2nd-Level Aspect Ability

Your primordial aspect grants your choice of one of two heroic abilities.

2nd-Level Berserker Ability

Choose one of the following abilities.

Special Delivery (5 Ferocity)

You ready?

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Maneuver**
Melee 1 — One willing ally

Effect: You vertically push the target up to 4 squares. This forced movement ignores the target's stability, and the target takes no damage from colliding with creatures or objects. At the end of this movement, the target can make a free strike that deals extra damage equal to your Might score.

Wrecking Ball (5 Ferocity)

It's easier to destroy than to create. Much easier, in fact!

Melee, Weapon — **Maneuver**
Self; see below — Self

Effect: You move up to your speed in a straight line. During this movement, you can move through mundane structures, including walls, which are difficult terrain for you. You automatically destroy each square of structure you move through and leave behind a square of difficult terrain.

Additionally, you make one power roll that targets each enemy you move adjacent to during this movement.

Power Roll + Might:

≤11 Push 1
12–16 Push 2
17+ Push 3



2nd-Level Reaver Ability

Choose one of the following abilities.

Death ... Death! (5 Ferocity)

Your unbridled rage strikes terror in their hearts.

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature

Power Roll + Might:

≤11 3 + M damage; P < WEAK, dazed and frightened (save ends)
12–16 5 + M damage; P < AVERAGE, dazed and frightened (save ends)
17+ 8 + M damage; P < STRONG, dazed and frightened (save ends)

Phalanx-Breaker (5 Ferocity)

Organizing your forces like feckless creatures of Law. Pitiful.

Melee, Weapon — **Main action**
Self; see below — Self

Effect: You shift up to your speed and make one power roll that targets up to three enemies you move adjacent to during this shift.

Power Roll + Might:

≤11 2 damage; A < WEAK, dazed (save ends)
12–16 4 damage; A < AVERAGE, dazed (save ends)
17+ 6 damage; A < STRONG, dazed (save ends)

2nd-Level Stormwight Ability

Choose one of the following abilities.

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Apex Predator (5 Ferocity)

I will hunt you down.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Power Roll + Might:

≤11 4 + M damage; I < WEAK, slowed (save ends)
12-16 6 + M damage; I < AVERAGE, slowed (save ends)
17+ 10 + M damage; I < STRONG, slowed (save ends)

Effect: The target can't be hidden from you for 24 hours. Until the end of the encounter, whenever the target willingly moves, you can use a free triggered action to move.

Visceral Roar (5 Ferocity)

The sound of the storm within you staggers your opponents.

Area, Magic | **Main action**
2 burst | Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Might:

≤11 2 damage; push 1; M < WEAK, dazed (save ends)
12-16 5 damage; push 2; M < AVERAGE, dazed (save ends)
17+ 7 damage; push 3; M < STRONG, dazed (save ends)

Effect: This ability deals your primordial damage type (see Stormwight Kits).

3rd-Level Features

As a 3rd-level fury, you gain the following features.

3rd-Level Aspect Feature

Your primordial aspect grants you a feature, as shown on the 3rd-Level Aspect Features table.

3rd-Level Aspect Features

Aspect	Feature
Berserker	Immovable Object
Reaver	See Through Their Tricks
Stormwight	Nature's Knight

Immovable Object

You add your level to your effective size for the purpose of interacting with creatures and objects, including determining whether you can lift an object, are affected by forced movement, and so forth. This has no effect on whether you can be grabbed.

Additionally, you have a bonus to stability equal to your Might score.

Nature's Knight

You can speak with animals and elementals. Additionally, you automatically sense the presence of animals and elementals within 10 squares of you, even if they are hidden.

When you are in a negotiation with an animal or elemental, you treat your Renown as 1 higher than usual. This stacks with the increase to your effective Renown in a negotiation with an animal of your type while in animal form (see Stormwight Kits).

See Through Their Tricks

You have a double edge on tests made to search for hidden creatures, discern hidden motives, or detect lies. You also have a double edge on tests made to gamble!

7-Ferocity Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 7 ferocity to use.

Demon Unleashed (7 Ferocity)

Foes tremble at the sight of you.

Magic | **Maneuver**
Self | Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, each enemy who starts their turn adjacent to you and has P < STRONG is frightened until the end of their turn.

Face the Storm! (7 Ferocity)

Shocked in the face of your naked brutality, your enemy's instincts take over.

Magic | **Maneuver**
Self | Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, each creature you make a melee strike against who has P < AVERAGE is taunted until the end of their next turn. Additionally, when you use an ability that deals rolled damage against any enemy taunted by you, the ability deals extra damage equal to twice your Might score and increases its potency by 1.

Steelbreaker (7 Ferocity)

See how useless their weapons are!

Magic | **Maneuver**
Self | Self

Effect: You gain 20 temporary Stamina.

You Are Already Dead (7 Ferocity)

Slash. Walk away.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Effect: If the target is not a leader or solo creature, they are reduced to 0 Stamina at the end of their next turn. If the target is a leader or solo creature, you gain 3 surges and can make a melee free strike against them.

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4th-Level Features

As a 4th-level fury, you gain the following features.

Characteristic Increase

Your Might and Agility scores each increase to 3.

Damaging Ferocity

The first time you take damage each combat round, you gain 2 ferocity instead of 1.

Growing Ferocity Improvement

Your Growing Ferocity feature provides additional benefits when you have 8 or more ferocity.

Perk

You gain one perk of your choice.

Primordial Attunement

As your ferocity manifests elemental forces created by the Primordial Chaos, you are aware of how elemental power interacts with those around you. You automatically sense whether any creature within 10 squares has damage immunity or damage weakness to acid, cold, corruption, fire, lightning, poison, or sonic damage, learning whether they have immunity or weakness, the value of that immunity or weakness, and the specific damage type. Additionally, you automatically sense any source of one of those damage types within 10 squares, such as a fire or a source of elemental power.

Primordial Strike

You can manifest your ferocity directly as an elemental force created by the Primordial Chaos. As part of any strike, you can spend 1 ferocity to gain 1 surge that must be used for that strike. The extra damage dealt by the surge can be acid, cold, corruption, fire, lightning, poison, or sonic (your choice).

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice. See Skills in Chapter 9: Tests.

5th-Level Features

As a 5th-level fury, you gain the following features.

5th-Level Aspect Feature

Your primordial aspect grants you a feature, as shown on the 5th-Level Aspect Features table.

5th-Level Aspect Features

Aspect	Feature
Berserker	Bounder
Reaver	Unfettered
Stormwight	Stormborn



Bounder

Your jump distance and height double (see Movement Types in Chapter 10: Combat). Additionally, when you fall, you reduce the effective height of your fall by a number of squares equal to your jump distance for the purpose of determining damage and whether you land prone (see Falling in Chapter 10). You are not prone after falling and landing on another creature.

Stormborn

You and each ally within 5 squares of you ignore negative effects from inclement weather, such as banes or environmental damage. Additionally, you can use the Blessing of Fortunate Weather feature as if you were a 1st-level conduit (see 1st-Level Domain Feature in the Conduit section).

Unfettered

At the start of your turn, you can end any restrained condition on you. Additionally, you have a double edge on checks made to escape being confined or imprisoned.

9-Ferocity Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 9 ferocity to use.

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Debilitating Strike (9 Ferocity)

You need just one blow to sabotage your target.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 10 + M damage; M < WEAK, slowed (save ends)
12–16 14 + M damage; M < AVERAGE, slowed (save ends)
17+ 20 + M damage; M < STRONG, slowed (save ends)

Effect: While slowed this way, the target takes 1 damage for every square they move, including from forced movement.

My Turn! (9 Ferocity)

You quickly strike back at a foe.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Free triggered**
Melee 1 | The triggering creature

Trigger: A creature causes you to be winded or dying, or damages you while you are winded or dying.

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 6 + M damage
12–16 9 + M damage
17+ 13 + M damage

Effect: You can spend a Recovery.

Rebounding Storm (9 Ferocity)

You knock around enemies like playthings.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | Two creatures or objects

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 9 damage; push 3
12–16 14 damage; push 5
17+ 19 damage; push 7

Effect: When a target would end this forced movement by colliding with a creature or object, they take damage as usual, then are pushed the remaining distance away from the creature or object in the direction they came from. As long as forced movement remains, this effect continues if the target collides with another creature or object.

To Stone! (9 Ferocity)

You channel the Primordial Chaos into blows that petrify your foe ... literally.

Magic, Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 9 + M damage; M < WEAK, slowed (save ends)
12–16 13 + M damage; M < AVERAGE, slowed (save ends)
17+ 18 + M damage; M < STRONG, restrained (save ends)

Effect: While the target is slowed this way, any other effect that would make the target slowed instead makes them restrained by this ability. Additionally, a creature who fails the saving throw while restrained this way is petrified until they are given a supernatural cure or you choose to reverse the effect (no action required).

6th-Level Features

As a 6th-level fury, you gain the following features.

Marauder of the Primordial Chaos

As your connection to the power of the Primordial Chaos grows ever stronger, you automatically sense any elemental creatures or magic sources of elemental power, such as a lava pool or a lake overlapping with Quintessence, within 1 mile of you.

Additionally, you can speak with elemental creatures, and when you are in a negotiation with an elemental, you treat your Renown as 1 higher than usual. This stacks with the increase to your effective Renown provided by the Nature's Knight aspect feature (see 3rd-Level Features). When any elemental first becomes aware of you in combat, if they have P < AVERAGE, they are frightened of you (save ends).

Primordial Portal

As a main action, you can touch a magic source of elemental power and use it to create a portal to Quintessence. You can then use a main action to teleport yourself and any willing creatures within 10 squares of you through the portal and onto a safe island in Quintessence, or to teleport back again. You can maintain a number of portals equal to your Might score, each leading to the same safe island in Quintessence. If a portal in your network is destroyed, it is no longer part of the network. You can remove a portal from your network no matter your distance from it, including across different worlds (no action required).

(Exploring Quintessence is possible from your island, but continued safety is not guaranteed.)

Perk

You gain one crafting, exploration, or intrigue perk of your choice.

6th-Level Aspect Ability

Your primordial aspect grants your choice of one of two heroic abilities.

6th-Level Berserker Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Avalanche Impact (9 Ferocity)

You leap and crash down, causing a shockwave that devastates foes.

Magic | **Maneuver**
Self | Self

Effect: You jump up to your maximum jump distance and make one power roll that targets each creature adjacent to the space where you land.

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 4 damage; push 1
12–16 7 damage; push 2
17+ 11 damage; push 3

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Force of Storms (9 Ferocity)

You strike an enemy hard enough to be a projectile that knocks a crowd of creatures around.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 7 + M damage; push 3
12–16 11 + M damage; push 5
17+ 16 + M damage; push 7

Effect: When the target ends this forced movement, each creature within 2 squares of the target is pushed 3 squares.

6th-Level Reaver Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Death Strike (9 Ferocity)

Once you taste your foe's blood, you become more efficient and turn every killing blow into an opportunity.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Free triggered**
Melee 1 | Self

Trigger: You reduce a creature to 0 Stamina with a strike.

Effect: You target a creature adjacent to you with the same strike, using the same power roll as the triggering strike.

Seek and Destroy (9 Ferocity)

You break through the enemy lines to make an example.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Effect: You shift up to your speed.

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 4 + M damage; P < WEAK, frightened (save ends)
12–16 6 + M damage; P < AVERAGE, frightened (save ends)
17+ 10 + M damage; P < STRONG, frightened (save ends)

Effect: If a target who is not a leader or solo creature is winded by this strike, they are reduced to 0 Stamina and you choose an enemy within 5 squares of you. If that enemy has P < AVERAGE, they are frightened of you (save ends).

6th-Level Stormwight Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Pounce (9 Ferocity)

You strike at the target like the ultimate predator you are.

Magic, Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 8 damage; M < WEAK, grabbed
12–16 13 damage; M < AVERAGE, grabbed
17+ 17 damage; M < STRONG, grabbed

Effect: You can shift up to 4 squares, bringing the target with you. While grabbed this way, the target takes damage equal to twice your Might score at the start of each of your turns.

Riders on the Storm (9 Ferocity)

You focus your connection to the Primordial Chaos into a seething storm.

Area, Magic | **Maneuver**
3 aura | Each creature in the area

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, each enemy target takes damage of your primordial damage type equal to twice your Might score at the end of each of your turns. Additionally, you can fly while the aura is active. Each ally target who starts or ends their turn in the area can also fly until the start of their next turn or until the effect ends.

Special: When you use this ability outside of combat without spending ferocity, you must spend 1 uninterrupted minute summoning a primordial storm that fills the area, and you take 1d6 damage before the ability takes effect. The storm lasts for 1 hour or until a combat encounter begins.

7th-Level Features

As a 7th-level fury, you gain the following features.

Characteristic Increase

Each of your characteristic scores increases by 1, to a maximum of 4.

Elemental Form

You exhibit ever-stronger signs of how the force of the Primordial Chaos flow within you. Whenever you show strong emotion or increase your ferocity, elemental motes attuned to your mood flit around you, and your skin changes in appearance to reflect an element of your choice.

Additionally, if you are a berserker or reaver, you have immunity to acid, cold, corruption, fire, lightning, poison, and sonic damage equal to your Might score. If you are a stormwight, you have immunity to the damage type of your Primordial Storm feature equal to twice your Might score.

Greater Ferocity

When you gain ferocity at the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 1d3 + 1 ferocity instead of 1d3.

Growing Ferocity Improvement

Your Growing Ferocity feature provides additional benefits when you have 10 or more ferocity.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice.

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8th-Level Features

As an 8th-level fury, you gain the following features.

Perk

You gain one perk of your choice.

8th-Level Aspect Feature

Your primordial aspect grants you a feature, as shown on the 8th-Level Aspect Features table.

8th-Level Aspect Features

Aspect	Feature
Berserker	Strongest There Is
Reaver	A Step Ahead
Stormwight	Menagerie

Menagerie

You can use all stormwight kits. During a respite, you can choose to swap your stormwight kit and still take another respite activity. Your Nature's Knight feature now lets you automatically sense the presence of animals within 1 mile of you. Additionally, whenever you make a test to track another creature, you can roll three dice and choose which two to use.

A Step Ahead

You move with legendary grace. Whenever you make an Agility test, you can roll three dice and choose which two to use. Additionally, whenever you use the Disengage move action, the distance you can shift gains a bonus equal to your Agility score.

Strongest There Is

Your strength is unmatched. Whenever you make a Might test, you can roll three dice and choose which two to use. Additionally, whenever you use the Knockback maneuver, the forced movement distance gains a bonus equal to your Might score.

11-Ferocity Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 11 ferocity to use.

Elemental Ferocity (11 Ferocity)

Your primordial energy makes for instant retribution.

Magic | **Maneuver**
Self | Self

Effect: You gain 10 temporary Stamina. Additionally, choose acid, cold, corruption, fire, lightning, poison, or sonic damage. Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, whenever an enemy damages you, they take 10 damage of the chosen type. If this damage reduces the enemy to 0 Stamina, you gain 10 temporary Stamina.

Overkill (11 Ferocity)

You strike so no damage is wasted.

Magic, Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 6 + M damage
12-16 10 + M damage
17+ 14 + M damage

Effect: If the target is a minion or is winded but isn't a leader or solo creature, they are reduced to 0 Stamina before this ability's damage is dealt. If the target is killed by this damage, you can deal any damage over what was required to kill them to another creature within 5 squares of the target.

Primordial Rage (11 Ferocity)

Your ferocity manifests into primordial power.

Magic | **Maneuver**
Self | Self

Effect: Choose acid, cold, corruption, fire, lightning, poison, or sonic damage. Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, you can choose one target of any ability you use, with that target taking an extra 15 damage of the chosen type. Additionally, whenever you gain ferocity from taking damage, the source of the damage takes 5 damage of the chosen type.

Relentless Death (11 Ferocity)

You won't escape your fate.

Magic, Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Self; see below | Self

Effect: You shift up to your speed. Each enemy you move adjacent to during this movement takes damage equal to twice your Might score. Then make one power roll that targets each enemy you move adjacent to during this shift. You gain 1 ferocity for each target who dies as a result of this ability (maximum 11 ferocity).

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 Any target whose Stamina is equal to or less than 8 dies.
12-16 Any target whose Stamina is equal to or less than 11 dies.
17+ Any target whose Stamina is equal to or less than 17 dies.

9th-Level Features

As a 9th-level fury, you gain the following features.

Harbinger of the Primordial Chaos

You can create a temporary source of elemental power as a respite activity. This source of elemental power lasts 24 hours after creation, and can be used to create a portal to Quintessence with your Primordial Portal feature. If you do so, the source of elemental power lasts as long as the portal is maintained in your network.

9th-Level Aspect Ability

Your primordial aspect grants your choice of one of two heroic abilities.

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9th-Level Berserker Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Death Comes for You All! (11 Ferocity)

You use your weapon to create a destructive shockwave.

Area, Magic, Melee, Weapon — **Main action**
3 burst — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 7 damage; push 3
12–16 10 damage; push 5
17+ 15 damage; push 7

Effect: If this forced movement causes a target to be hurled through an object, that target takes an extra 10 damage.

Primordial Vortex (11 Ferocity)

You channel the power of the Primordial Chaos to pull foes to you.

Area, Magic, Melee, Weapon — **Main action**
3 burst — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 3 damage; vertical pull 3
12–16 5 damage; vertical pull 5
17+ 8 damage; vertical pull 7

Effect: If this forced movement causes a target to slam into you, you take no damage from the collision and the target takes the damage you would have taken.

9th-Level Reaver Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Primordial Bane (11 Ferocity)

You attune the target to be weaker to a specific element.

Magic, Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 11 + M damage
12–16 16 + M damage
17+ 21 + M damage

Effect: Choose acid, cold, corruption, fire, lightning, poison, or sonic damage. The target loses any damage immunity to the chosen type and gains weakness 10 to the chosen type (save ends).

Shower of Blood (11 Ferocity)

You shock your foes with the brutality of your strike, resetting the balance of combat.

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 12 + M damage
12–16 18 + M damage
17+ 24 + M damage

Effect: Each enemy within 5 squares of you is distracted until the end of the round. While a creature is distracted this way, they can't take triggered actions or free triggered actions, ability rolls made against them gain an edge, and their characteristic scores are considered 1 lower for the purpose of resisting potencies.



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9th-Level Stormwight Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Death Rattle (11 Ferocity)

You unleash an otherworldly cry that rips through your enemies, killing the weakest of them.

Area, Magic — **Main action**
3 burst — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Might:

≤11 4 psychic damage; any target who is a minion dies

12–16 6 psychic damage; any target who is a minion is reduced to 0 Stamina, as does one winded target who is not a leader or solo creature

17+ 10 psychic damage; each target who is not a leader or solo creature is winded; any target who is a minion is reduced to 0 Stamina, as does one winded target who is not a leader or solo creature

Deluge (11 Ferocity)

You summon your primordial storm.

Area, Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
5 cube within 10 — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Might:

≤11 7 damage

12–16 10 damage

17+ 15 damage

Effect: This ability deals your primordial damage type and ignores damage immunity.

10th-Level Features

As a 10th-level fury, you gain the following features.

Chaos Incarnate

Your mastery of elemental forces protects and emboldens you. If you are a berserker or reaver, you have immunity to acid, cold, corruption, fire, lightning, poison, and sonic damage equal to twice your Might score. If you are a stormwight, your damage immunity from your Primordial Storm feature (see Stormwight Kits) increases to three times your Might score.

When any elemental or any other creature whose abilities deal acid, cold, corruption, fire, lightning, poison, or sonic damage first becomes aware of you in combat, if they have P < STRONG, they are frightened of you (save ends).

Additionally, when you use Primordial Strike, you can spend up to 3 ferocity, gaining 1 surge per ferocity spent to use for that strike.

Characteristic Increase

Your Might and Agility scores each increase to 5.

Growing Ferocity Improvement

Your Growing Ferocity feature provides additional benefits when you have 12 or more ferocity.

Perk

You gain one crafting, exploration, or intrigue perk of your choice.

Primordial Ferocity

The first time you take damage each combat round, you gain 3 ferocity instead of 2.

Primordial Power

You have an epic resource called primordial power. Each time you finish a respite, you gain primordial power equal to the XP you gain. You can spend primordial power on your abilities as if it were ferocity.

Additionally, you can spend any amount of primordial power as a free maneuver, ending one effect on you for each primordial power spent.

You can also spend 3 primordial power to create a portal to Quintessence without needing a source of elemental power.

Primordial power remains until you spend it.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice.

Stormwight Kits

The stormwight primordial aspect lets you channel your ferocity into the form of an animal and grants you knowledge of one stormwight kit of your choice. You can master additional stormwight kits through play, changing them out during a respite as with any other kit (see Chapter 6: Kits).

Kit Features

All stormwight kits have the following features in common.

Aspect Benefits and Animal Form

Your primordial aspect benefits are always available to you, and you gain additional benefits while in the animal or hybrid form granted by your stormwight kit.

Aspect of the Wild

You have the following ability.

Aspect of the Wild

You assume the form of the animal who channels your ferocity.

Magic — **Maneuver**
Self — Self

Effect: You can shapeshift into the animal defined by your stormwight kit, into a hybrid form, or back into your true form.

While in animal form or hybrid form, you can speak as you usually do, and you can also speak to animals who share your form. If you are in a negotiation with an animal while in animal form, you treat your Renown as 2 higher than usual.

Spend 1 Ferocity: As a free maneuver, you can shapeshift a second time, either into another animal form, into your hybrid form, or back into your true form.

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Primordial Storm
Each stormwight kit is associated with a primordial storm, which channels a specific damage type used by some of your abilities.

Equipment
You wear no armor and wield only your unarmed strikes—which become devastating natural weapons as your ferocity grows.

Kit Bonuses
These bonuses apply in your true form, your animal form, and your hybrid form. See Chapter 6: Kits for information on kit bonuses.

Signature Ability
You gain a new signature ability from your kit.

Growing Ferocity
Each stormwight kit grants a set of benefits for your Growing Ferocity feature.

Boren

With this stormwight kit, you channel your primordial ferocity into the form of a bear, becoming large, durable, and imposing. Boren are tied to the craggy, rocky north, and this aspect is associated with the blizzard's bitter cold.

Aspect Benefits
Whenever you use forced movement to push a creature, you can pull that creature instead. Whenever you pull a creature adjacent to you and that creature has **M < AVERAGE**, you can use a free triggered action to make that creature grabbed by you.

Animal Form: Bear
While you are in your bear form, your size is 2 and you gain a +1 bonus to distance with melee weapon abilities.

Hybrid Form: Bear
While you are in your hybrid form, your size is 2 and you gain a +1 bonus to distance with melee weapon abilities. At 4th level, the first time you take hybrid form in an encounter, you gain 10 temporary Stamina.

Primordial Storm: Blizzard
Your primordial damage type is cold.

Kit Bonuses
- **Stamina Bonus:** +9 per echelon
- **Stability Bonus:** +2
- **Melee Damage Bonus:** +0/+0/+4

Signature Ability

Bear Claws
Attacks with your sharp and deadly claws grab the weak.

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 2 + M damage; **M < WEAK**, grabbed
12–16 5 + M damage; **M < AVERAGE**, grabbed
17+ 11 + M damage; **M < STRONG**, grabbed



Growing Ferocity
As your ferocity grows, you gain benefits as noted on the Boren Growing Ferocity table. Benefits are cumulative except where an improved benefit replaces a lesser benefit.

Boren Growing Ferocity

Ferocity	Benefit
2	You can have up to two creatures grabbed at time. Additionally, whenever you make a strike against a creature you have grabbed, you gain 1 surge.
4	The first time you grab a creature on a turn, you gain 1 surge.
6	You gain an edge on the Grab and Knockback maneuvers.
8 (4th level)	The first time you grab a creature on a turn, you gain 2 surges instead of 1.
10 (7th level)	You have a double edge on the Grab and Knockback maneuvers.
12 (10th level)	Whenever you use a heroic ability, you gain 10 temporary Stamina. Additionally, whenever you have a creature grabbed, any ability roll made against that creature gains a bonus to its potency equal to your Might score.

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Corven

With this stormwight kit, you channel your primordial ferocity into the form of a crow, becoming stealthy and quick. Corven are tied to the mountain passes and the hot winds that flow through them. This aspect is associated with the warm and fast-rising anabatic wind.

Aspect Benefits

You gain an edge on tests made to hide and sneak. Additionally, whenever you fall, you can use a free triggered action to use your Aspect of the Wild ability.

Animal Form: Crow

While you are in your crow form, your size is 1T and you can fly. You can use the Hide maneuver as a free maneuver, and you can use your allies as cover when you hide. You can't use any abilities while in this form.

Hybrid Form: Crow

While you are in your hybrid form, your size is your choice of 1S or 1M. At 4th level, you can fly.

Primordial Storm: Anabatic Wind

Your primordial damage type is fire.

Kit Bonuses

- **Stamina Bonus:** +3 per echelon
- **Speed Bonus:** +3
- **Melee Damage Bonus:** +2/+2/+2
- **Disengage Bonus:** +1

Signature Ability

Wing Buffet

Foes who try to close in around you do so at their peril.

Area, Melee, Weapon — **Main action**
1 burst — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 3 damage
12–16 6 damage
17+ 8 damage

Effect: You can shift up to 2 squares before or after making the power roll.

Growing Ferocity

As your ferocity grows, you gain benefits as noted on the Corven Growing Ferocity table. Benefits are cumulative except where an improved benefit replaces a lesser benefit.

Corven Growing Ferocity

Ferocity	Benefit
2	Whenever you use the Disengage move action, the distance you can shift gains a bonus equal to your Agility score.
4	The first time you shift on a turn, you gain 1 surge.
6	You gain an edge on Agility tests, the Escape Grab maneuver, and the Knockback maneuver.
8 (4th level)	The first time you shift on a turn, you gain 2 surges instead of 1.
10 (7th level)	You have a double edge on Agility tests, the Escape Grab maneuver, and the Knockback maneuver.
12 (10th level)	Whenever you use a heroic ability, you gain 10 temporary Stamina. Additionally, the potency of any effects targeting you is reduced by 2 for you.

Raden

With this stormwight kit, you channel your primordial ferocity into the form of a rat, becoming mobile and elusive. Raden are associated with the wild nature of the rat, before cities became their habitat. This aspect is associated with the rat flood—a surge of corrupted water that draws forth hordes of rats.

Aspect Benefits

You gain an edge on tests made to hide and sneak. Additionally, you ignore difficult terrain.

Animal Form: Rat

While you are in your rat form, your size is 1T and you can automatically climb at full speed while moving. You can use the Hide maneuver as a free maneuver, you can use your allies as cover when you hide, and you can stay hidden while you move through squares occupied by any creature. Additionally, you gain an edge on tests made to climb other creatures. You can't use any abilities while in this form.

Hybrid Form: Rat

While you are in your hybrid form, your size is your choice of 1S or 1M. At 4th level, you can automatically climb at full speed while moving.

Primordial Storm: Rat Flood

Your primordial damage type is corruption.

Kit Bonuses

- **Stamina Bonus:** +3 per echelon
- **Speed Bonus:** +3
- **Melee Damage Bonus:** +2/+2/+2
- **Disengage Bonus:** +1

Signature Ability

Driving Pounce

Your enemies try in vain to fall back from your pouncing attack.

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 4 + A damage
12–16 7 + A damage; push 1
17+ 9 + A damage; push 2

Effect: You can shift up to the same number of squares that you pushed the target.

Growing Ferocity

As your ferocity grows, you gain benefits as noted on the Raden Growing Ferocity table. Benefits are cumulative except where an improved benefit replaces a lesser benefit.

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Raden Growing Ferocity

Ferocity	Benefit
2	Whenever you use the Disengage move action, the distance you can shift gains a bonus equal to your Agility score.
4	The first time you shift on a turn, you gain 1 surge.
6	You gain an edge on Agility tests, the Escape Grab maneuver, and the Knockback maneuver.
8 (4th level)	The first time you shift on a turn, you gain 2 surges instead of 1.
10 (7th level)	You have a double edge on Agility tests, the Escape Grab maneuver, and the Knockback maneuver
12 (10th level)	Whenever you use a heroic ability, you gain 10 temporary Stamina. Additionally, the potency of any effects targeting you is reduced by 2 for you.

Vuken

With this stormwight kit, you channel your primordial ferocity into the form of a wolf, becoming a fleet-footed hunter. Vuken are tied to forests and open steppes, and this aspect is associated with the thunderstorm.

Aspect Benefits

Whenever you use the Knockback maneuver, you can then use the Aid Attack maneuver as a free triggered action.

Animal Form: Wolf

While you are in your wolf form, your size is 1L, you have a +2 bonus to speed, and you ignore difficult terrain.

Hybrid Form: Wolf

While you are in your hybrid form, your size is 1L, you have a +2 bonus to speed, and you ignore difficult terrain. At 4th level, the first time you take hybrid form in an encounter, you gain 10 temporary Stamina.

Primordial Storm: Lightning Storm

Your primordial damage type is lightning.

Kit Bonuses

- **Stamina Bonus:** +9 per echelon
- **Speed Bonus:** +2
- **Melee Damage Bonus:** +2/+2/+2
- **Disengage Bonus:** +1

Signature Ability

Unbalancing Attack

A wild assault forces your foe onto their back.

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**

Melee 1 — One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:

≤11: 4 + M damage; A < WEAK, prone

12-16: 7 + M damage; A < AVERAGE, prone

17+: 9 + M damage; A < STRONG, prone

Growing Ferocity

As your ferocity grows, you gain benefits as noted on the Vuken Growing Ferocity table. Benefits are cumulative except where an improved benefit replaces a lesser benefit.



Vuken Growing Ferocity

Ferocity	Benefit
2	Whenever you use the Knockback maneuver, you can target one additional creature.
4	The first time on a turn that you push a creature or knock a creature prone, you gain 1 surge.
6	You gain an edge on Agility tests and the Knockback maneuver.
8 (4th level)	The first time on a turn that you push a creature or knock a creature prone, you gain 2 surges.
10 (7th level)	You have a double edge on Agility tests and the Knockback maneuver.
12 (10th level)	Whenever you use a heroic ability, you gain 10 temporary Stamina. Additionally, whenever you make a power roll that imposes forced movement on a target, the forced movement distance gains a bonus equal to your Agility score.

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NULL

The mind is not separate from the body. Perfection of one requires perfection of the other. You strive for perfect discipline, perfect order, mastery over mind and body, becoming an unarmed psionic warrior who dampens and absorbs magic and psionics. You require no weapons, no tools. You suffice.

As a null, you resist the supernatural forces of the universe with composure and confidence. As you strive for perfect order, you are an enemy of the ultimate expression of chaos: the supernatural. Those who break the laws of nature using sorcery or psionics should fear you.



"Any weapon can be turned against the hand that wields it."

Ardashir

Basics

Starting Characteristics: You start with an Agility of 2 and an Intuition of 2, and you can choose one of the following arrays for your other characteristic scores:

- 2, –1, –1
- 1, 1, –1
- 1, 0, 0

Weak Potency: Intuition – 2

Average Potency: Intuition – 1

Strong Potency: Intuition

Starting Stamina at 1st Level: 21

Stamina Gained at 2nd and Higher Levels: 12

Recoveries: 8

Skills: You have the Psionics skill (see Skills in Chapter 9: Tests). Then choose any two skills from the interpersonal or lore skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Psionics, Read Person, Timescape.)

1st-Level Features

As a 1st-level null, you gain the following features.

Null Tradition

Through extensive physical and psionic training, you have learned to unlock the full potential of your body. As you shape the growth of your power, you choose a null tradition from the following options, each of which grants you a skill. (*Quick Build:* Chronokinetic and the Psionics skill.)

Chronokinetic: Your training unmoors you from temporal reality, allowing you to use the flow of time as another dimension that all things move through. You gain one skill from the lore group.

Cryokinetic: You can tap into absolute cold, the most essential energy of myriad manifolds, and manifest its effects in your body. You gain one skill from the crafting group.

Metakinetic: You learn to see through the illusions of the universe to more fully understand your body and its psionic potential. You gain one skill from the exploration group.

Your null tradition is your subclass, and your choice of tradition determines many of the features you'll gain as you gain new levels.

Discipline

As your mastery of your body and tradition grows, it imbues you with a Heroic Resource called discipline.

Discipline in Combat

At the start of a combat encounter or some other stressful situation tracked in combat rounds (as determined by the Director), you gain discipline equal to your Victories. At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 2 discipline.

Additionally, the first time each combat round that an enemy in the area of your Null Field ability (see below) uses a main action, you gain 1 discipline. The first time each combat round that the Director uses an ability that costs Malice (see *Draw Steel: Monsters*), you gain 1 discipline.

You lose any remaining discipline at the end of the encounter.

Discipline Outside of Combat

Though you can't gain discipline outside of combat, you can use your heroic abilities and effects that cost discipline without spending it. Whenever you use an ability or effect outside of combat that costs discipline, you can't use that same ability or effect outside of combat again until you earn 1 or more Victories or finish a respite.

When you use an ability outside of combat that lets you spend unlimited discipline on its effect, you can use it as if you had spent an amount of discipline equal to your Victories. (Such abilities aren't part of the core rules for the null, but they might appear in future products.)

Null Advancement

Level	Features	Abilities	Tradition Abilities
1st	Null Tradition, Discipline, Null Field, Inertial Shield, Discipline Mastery, Null Speed, Psionic Augmentation, Psionic Martial Arts, Null Abilities	Two signature, 3, 5	—
2nd	Perk, Tradition Feature, Tradition Ability	Two signature, 3, 5	5
3rd	Psionic Leap, Reorder, 7-Discipline Ability	Two signature, 3, 5, 7	5
4th	Characteristic Increase, Discipline Mastery Improvement, Enhanced Null Field, Perk, Regenerative Field, Skill	Two signature, 3, 5, 7	5
5th	Tradition Feature, 9-Discipline Ability	Two signature, 3, 5, 7, 9	5
6th	Elemental Absorption, Elemental Buffer, Perk, Tradition Ability	Two signature, 3, 5, 7, 9	5, 9
7th	Characteristic Increase, Discipline Mastery Improvement, Psi Boost, Improved Body, Skill	Two signature, 3, 5, 7, 9	5, 9
8th	Perk, Tradition Feature, 11-Discipline Ability	Two signature, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11	5, 9
9th	I Am the Weapon, Tradition Ability	Two signature, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11	5, 9, 11
10th	Characteristic Increase, Discipline Mastery Improvement, Manifold Body, Manifold Resonance, Order, Perk, Skill	Two signature, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11	5, 9, 11

Null Field

You project a psionic field of order around your body, dampening the effects of supernatural abilities harmful to you and your allies.

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Null Field

You project an aura that dampens the power of your foes.

Area, Psionic
1 aura

Maneuver
Each enemy in the area

Effect: Each target reduces their potencies by 1.

Once as a free maneuver on each of your turns, you can spend 1 discipline and give your Null Field one of the following additional effects until the start of your next turn:

- **Gravitic Disruption:** The first time on a turn that a target takes damage, you can slide them up to 2 squares.
- **Inertial Anchor:** Any target who starts their turn in the area can't shift.
- **Synaptic Break:** Whenever you or any ally uses an ability against a target that has a potency effect, the potency is increased by 1.

This ability remains active even after an encounter ends. It ends only if you are dying or if you willingly end it (no action required).

Inertial Shield

Your instinct for danger let you predict attacks before they happen.

Inertial Shield

You intuit the course of an incoming attack, reducing its effects.

Psionic
Self

Triggered
Self

Trigger: You take damage.

Effect: You take half the damage.

Spend 1 Discipline: The potency of one effect associated with the damage is reduced by 1 for you.

Discipline Mastery

As you advance in your chosen null tradition, you gain certain benefits in combat, including benefits based on the amount of discipline you have. Benefits based on how much discipline you have last until the end of your turn, even if a benefit would become unavailable to you because of the amount of discipline you spend during your turn.

Some Discipline Mastery benefits can be applied only if you are a specific level or higher, with the level of those benefits noted in the tables below.

Chronokinetic Mastery

Whenever you use your Inertial Shield ability, you can use the Disengage move action as a free maneuver.

Additionally, as your discipline grows, your psionic mastery of your body intensifies, granting benefits from the Chronokinetic Mastery table. Benefits are cumulative except where an improved benefit replaces a lesser benefit.

Chronokinetic Mastery

Discipline	Benefit
2	Whenever you use the Knockback maneuver, you can use the Disengage move action as a free triggered action either before or after the maneuver.
4	The first time on a turn that you willingly move 1 or more squares as part of an ability, you gain 1 surge.
6	You gain an edge on the Grab and Knockback maneuvers.
8 (4th level)	The first time on a turn that you willingly move 1 or more squares as part of an ability, you gain 2 surges.
10 (7th level)	You have a double edge on the Grab and Knockback maneuvers.
12 (10th level)	Whenever you force move a target, the forced movement distance gains a bonus equal to your Intuition score. Additionally, whenever you use a heroic ability, you gain 10 temporary Stamina.

Cryokinetic Mastery

Whenever you use your Inertial Shield ability, you can then use the Grab maneuver as a free triggered action.

Additionally, as your discipline grows, you strengthen the psionic power suffusing you, granting benefits from the Cryokinetic Mastery table. Benefits are cumulative except where an improved benefit replaces a lesser benefit.

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Cryokinetic Mastery

Discipline	Benefit
2	Whenever you use the Knockback maneuver, you can target one additional creature. Additionally, whenever you deal untyped damage with a psionic ability, you can change it to cold damage instead.
4	The first time on a turn that you grab a creature or an enemy moves 1 or more squares in the area of your Null Field ability, you gain 1 surge.
6	You gain an edge on the Grab and Knockback maneuvers.
8 (4th level)	The first time on a turn that you grab a creature or an enemy moves 1 or more squares in the area of your Null Field ability, you gain 2 surges.
10 (7th level)	You have a double edge on the Grab and Knockback maneuvers.
12 (10th level)	Whenever you force move a target, the forced movement distance gains a bonus equal to your Intuition score. Additionally, whenever you use a heroic ability, you gain 10 temporary Stamina.

Metakinetic Mastery

Whenever you use your Inertial Shield ability, you can then use the Knockback maneuver as a free triggered action.

Additionally, as your discipline grows, your psionic potential is amplified, granting benefits from the Metakinetic Mastery table. Benefits are cumulative except where an improved benefit replaces a lesser benefit.

Metakinetic Mastery

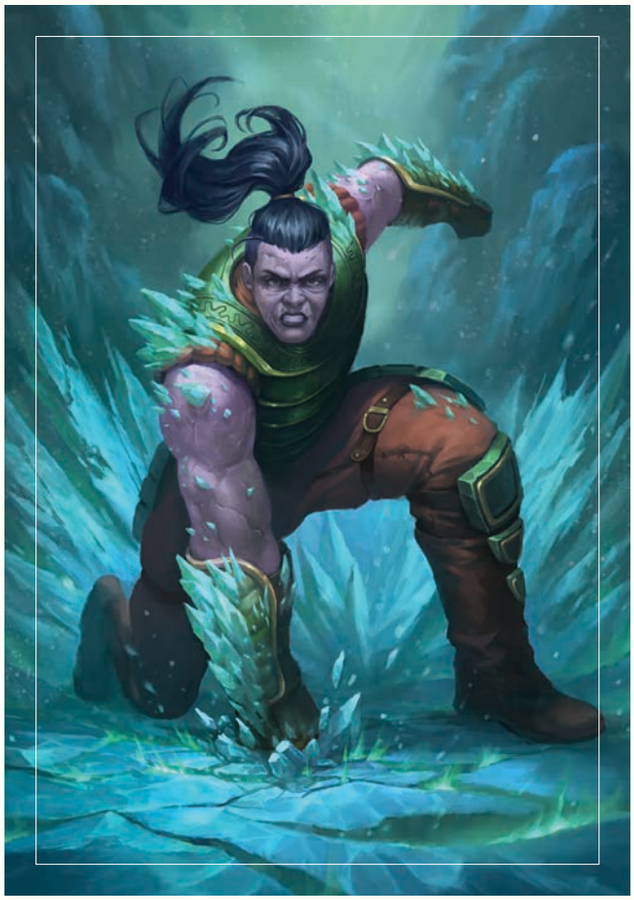
Discipline	Benefit
2	Whenever you use the Knockback maneuver, the forced movement distance gains a bonus equal to your Intuition score.
4	The first time in a combat round that you take damage or are force moved, you gain 1 surge, even if you resist the effect.
6	You gain an edge on the Grab and Knockback maneuvers.
8 (4th level)	The first time in a combat round that you take damage or are force moved, you gain 2 surges, even if you resist the effect.
10 (7th level)	You have a double edge on the Grab and Knockback maneuvers.
12 (10th level)	Whenever you force move a target, the forced movement distance gains a bonus equal to your Intuition score. Additionally, whenever you use a heroic ability, you gain 10 temporary Stamina.

Null Speed

The flow of psionic power through you allows you to achieve high velocity. You gain a bonus to speed and to the number of squares you can shift when you take the Disengage move action equal to your Agility score.

Psionic Augmentation

Your training has turned your body into the perfect psionic weapon, shaping pathways in your mind that enhance your physical form. Choose one of the following augmentations. You can change your augmentation by undergoing a psionic meditation as a respite activity. (*Quick Build:* Speed Augmentation.)



Density Augmentation

You gain a +6 bonus to Stamina, and this bonus increases by 6 at 4th, 7th, and 10th levels. Additionally, you gain a +1 bonus to stability.

Force Augmentation

Your damage-dealing psionic abilities gain a +1 bonus to rolled damage.

Speed Augmentation

You gain a +1 bonus to speed and to the distance you can shift when you take the Disengage move action.

Psionic Martial Arts

Whenever you use the Knockback or Grab maneuver, you use Intuition instead of Might for the power roll and for determining if you can target creatures larger than you. Additionally, whenever you use the Knockback maneuver, you can choose to slide the target instead of pushing them.

Null Abilities

You rely on a unique blend of martial techniques and psionic prowess to take down your foes and defend your allies.

Signature Abilities

Choose two signature abilities from the following options. Signature abilities can be used at will. (*Quick Build:* Faster Than the Eye, Inertial Step.)

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Dance of Blows

You strike everywhere at once, tricking an enemy into moving out of position.

Area, Psionic, Weapon **Main action**
1 burst Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 3 damage
12-16 4 damage
17+ 5 damage

Effect: You can slide one adjacent enemy up to a number of squares equal to your Intuition score.

Faster Than the Eye

You strike so quickly that your hands become a blur.

Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon **Main action**
Melee 1 Two creatures or objects

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 4 damage
12-16 5 damage
17+ 7 damage

Effect: You can deal damage equal to your Agility score to one creature or object adjacent to you.

Inertial Step

You flit about the battlefield and take an opportunistic strike.

Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon **Main action**
Melee 1 One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 5 + A damage
12-16 7 + A damage
17+ 10 + A damage

Effect: You can shift up to half your speed before or after you make this strike.

Joint Lock

You contort your enemy's body into a stance they struggle to escape from.

Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon **Main action**
Melee 1 One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 4 + A damage; A < WEAK, grabbed
12-16 7 + A damage; A < AVERAGE, grabbed
17+ 9 + A damage; A < STRONG, grabbed

Kinetic Strike

Your opponent staggers. They cannot ignore you.

Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon **Main action**
Melee 1 One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 4 + A damage; taunted (EoT)
12-16 5 + A damage; taunted (EoT), slide 1
17+ 6 + A damage; taunted (EoT), slide 2

Magnetic Strike

The force of your blow extends past the limits of your body, pulling your enemy closer.

Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon **Main action**
Melee 2 One creature

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 5 + A psychic damage; vertical pull 1
12-16 8 + A psychic damage; vertical pull 2
17+ 11 + A psychic damage; vertical pull 3

Phase Inversion Strike

You step momentarily out of phase as you pull an enemy through you.

Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon **Main action**
Melee 1 One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 4 + A damage; push 2
12-16 6 + A damage; push 4
17+ 8 + A damage; push 6

Effect: Before the push is resolved, you teleport the target to a square adjacent to you and opposite the one they started in. If the target can't be teleported this way, you can't push them.

Pressure Points

You strike at key nerve clusters to leave your foe staggered.

Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon **Main action**
Melee 1 One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 4 + A damage; A < WEAK, weakened (save ends)
12-16 7 + A damage; A < AVERAGE, weakened (save ends)
17+ 9 + A damage; A < STRONG, weakened (save ends)

Heroic Abilities

You have mastered a range of heroic abilities, all of them channeled through your discipline.

3-Discipline Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 3 discipline to use. (*Quick Build:* Chronal Spike.)

Chronal Spike (3 Discipline)

You foresee the best moment to strike, then exploit it.

Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon **Main action**
Melee 1 One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 7 + A damage
12-16 10 + A damage
17+ 13 + A damage

Effect: You can shift up to half your speed before or after you make this strike. Additionally, whenever an effect lets you make a free strike or use a signature ability, you can use this ability instead, paying its discipline cost as usual.

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Psychic Pulse (3 Discipline)

A burst of psionic energy interferes with your enemy's synapses.

Area, Psionic — **Maneuver**
2 burst — Each enemy in the area

Effect: Each target takes psychic damage equal to twice your Intuition score. Until the start of your next turn, the size of your Null Field ability increases by 1. At the end of your current turn, each enemy in the area of your Null Field ability takes psychic damage equal to your Intuition score.

Relentless Nemesis (3 Discipline)

You strike, and for the next few moments, your enemy can't escape you.

Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 6 + A damage
12–16 8 + A damage
17+ 12 + A damage

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, whenever the target moves or is force moved, you can use a free triggered action to shift up to your speed. You must end this shift adjacent to the target.

Stunning Blow (3 Discipline)

You focus your psionic technique into a concussive punch.

Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 4 + A damage; I < WEAK, dazed and slowed (save ends)
12–16 5 + A damage; I < AVERAGE, dazed and slowed (save ends)
17+ 7 + A damage; I < STRONG, dazed and slowed (save ends)

5-Discipline Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 5 discipline to use. (*Quick Build:* A Squad Unto Myself.)

Arcane Disruptor (5 Discipline)

Your blow reorders a foe's body, causing pain if they attempt to channel sorcery.

Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 8 + A psychic damage; M < WEAK, weakened (save ends)
12–16 12 + A psychic damage; M < AVERAGE, weakened (save ends)
17+ 16 + A psychic damage; M < STRONG, weakened (save ends)

Effect: While weakened this way, the target takes damage equal to your Intuition score whenever they use a supernatural ability that costs Malice.



Impart Force (5 Discipline)

A single touch from you, and your enemy flies backward.

Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon — **Maneuver**
Melee 1 — One creature or object

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 Push 3
12–16 Push 5
17+ Push 7

Effect: An object you target must be your size or smaller. You gain an edge on this ability. Additionally, for each square you push the target, they take 1 psychic damage.

Phase Strike (5 Discipline)

For a moment, your foe slips out of phase with this manifold.

Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 3 + A psychic damage; I < WEAK, the target goes out of phase (save ends)
12–16 4 + A psychic damage; I < AVERAGE, the target goes out of phase (save ends)
17+ 6 + A psychic damage; I < STRONG, the target goes out of phase (save ends)

Effect: A target who goes out of phase is slowed, has their stability reduced by 2, and can't obtain a tier 3 outcome on ability rolls.

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A Squad Unto Myself (5 Discipline)

You move so quickly, it seems as though an army assaulted your foes.

Area, Psionic, Weapon — **Main action**
2 burst — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 6 damage
12–16 9 damage
17+ 13 damage

Effect: You can take the Disengage move action as a free maneuver before or after you use this ability.

2nd-Level Features

As a 2nd-level null, you gain the following features.

Perk

You gain one exploration, interpersonal, or intrigue perk of your choice. See Chapter 7: Perks.

2nd-Level Tradition Feature

Your null tradition grants you a feature, as shown on the 2nd-Level Tradition Features table.

2nd-Level Tradition Features

Tradition	Feature
Chronokinetic	Rapid Processing
Cryokinetic	Entropic Adaptability
Metakinetic	Inertial Sink

Entropic Adaptability

You have cold immunity equal to twice your Intuition score. Additionally, you ignore difficult terrain related to cold and ice, and you can automatically climb at full speed while moving.

Inertial Sink

You add your Intuition score to your effective size for the purpose of interacting with creatures and objects, such as for determining whether you can lift an object, whether you are affected by forced movement, and so forth. This has no effect on whether you can be grabbed.

Additionally, when you fall, you reduce the effective height of the fall by 5 squares in addition to any other reductions. Whenever you take damage from being force moved, you reduce that damage by an amount equal to your level.

Rapid Processing

As a maneuver, you can read an entire book or process a similar amount of information. Additionally, during any respite, you can take an additional respite activity.

2nd-Level Tradition Ability

Your null tradition grants your choice of one of two abilities.

2nd-Level Chronokinetic Ability

Choose one of the following abilities.

Blur (5 Discipline)

You release stored time, allowing you to act twice.

Psionic — **Maneuver**
Self — Self

Effect: You can use a signature or heroic ability. You gain an edge on that ability's power rolls.

Force Redirected (5 Discipline)

The force of your strike moves your target in a surprising direction.

Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 3 — One creature

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 8 + A damage; slide 1
12–16 12 + A damage; slide 3
17+ 16 + A damage; slide 5

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2nd-Level Cryokinetic Ability

Choose one of the following heroic abilities.

Entropic Field (5 Discipline)

You drastically increase the local entropy.

Area, Psionic, Weapon — **Main action**
3 cube within 1 — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 6 cold damage; A < WEAK, slowed (save ends)
12–16 9 cold damage; A < AVERAGE, slowed (save ends)
17+ 13 cold damage; A < STRONG, slowed (save ends)

Heat Sink (5 Discipline)

You absorb ambient heat, coating the ground in frost and precipitating snow from the air.

Psionic — **Maneuver**
Self — Self

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, the size of your Null Field ability increases by 1, and you and any ally benefit from concealment while in the area. At the end of this turn, each enemy in the area takes cold damage equal to your Intuition score.

2nd-Level Metakinetic Ability

Choose one of the following abilities.

Gravitic Strike (5 Discipline)

Your fist emanates gravitic force that pulls a distant enemy closer.

Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 3 — One creature

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 8 + A psychic damage; vertical pull 3
12–16 12 + A psychic damage; vertical pull 5
17+ 16 + A psychic damage; vertical pull 7

Kinetic Shield (5 Discipline)

You manifest a force barrier that absorbs incoming kinetic energy.

Psionic — **Maneuver**
Self — Self

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 You gain 10 temporary Stamina.
12–16 You gain 15 temporary Stamina.
17+ You gain 20 temporary Stamina.

Effect: While you have temporary Stamina from this ability, you can't be made bleeding even while dying.

3rd-Level Features

As a 3rd-level null, you gain the following features.

Psionic Leap

You can long jump and high jump a distance equal to twice your Agility score without needing to make a test.

Reorder

At the start of each of your turns, you can use a free triggered action to end one effect on you that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of your turn. Alternatively, you can grant this benefit to one creature in the area of your Null Field ability.

7-Discipline Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 7 discipline to use.

Absorption Field (7 Discipline)

Your null field absorbs kinetic energy.

Psionic — **Maneuver**
Self — Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, the size of your Null Field ability increases by 1. While the area of that ability is enlarged this way, each enemy in the area takes a bane on ability rolls.

Molecular Rearrangement Field (7 Discipline)

Your enemies' wounds open, your allies' wounds close.

Psionic — **Maneuver**
Self — Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, the size of your Null Field ability increases by 1. While the area of that ability is enlarged this way, each enemy who has I < AVERAGE and enters the area for the first time in a combat round or starts their turn there is bleeding (save ends). Each ally who enters the area for the first time in a combat round or starts their turn there gains temporary Stamina equal to your Intuition score.

Stabilizing Field (7 Discipline)

You project order, making it harder for your enemies to interfere with you and your allies.

Psionic — **Maneuver**
Self — Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, the size of your Null Field ability increases by 1. While the area of that ability is enlarged this way, you ignore difficult terrain and reduce the potency of enemy effects targeting you by 1 for you. You can also use a free triggered action at the start of each of your turns to end one effect on you that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of your turn. Each ally in the area also gains these benefits.

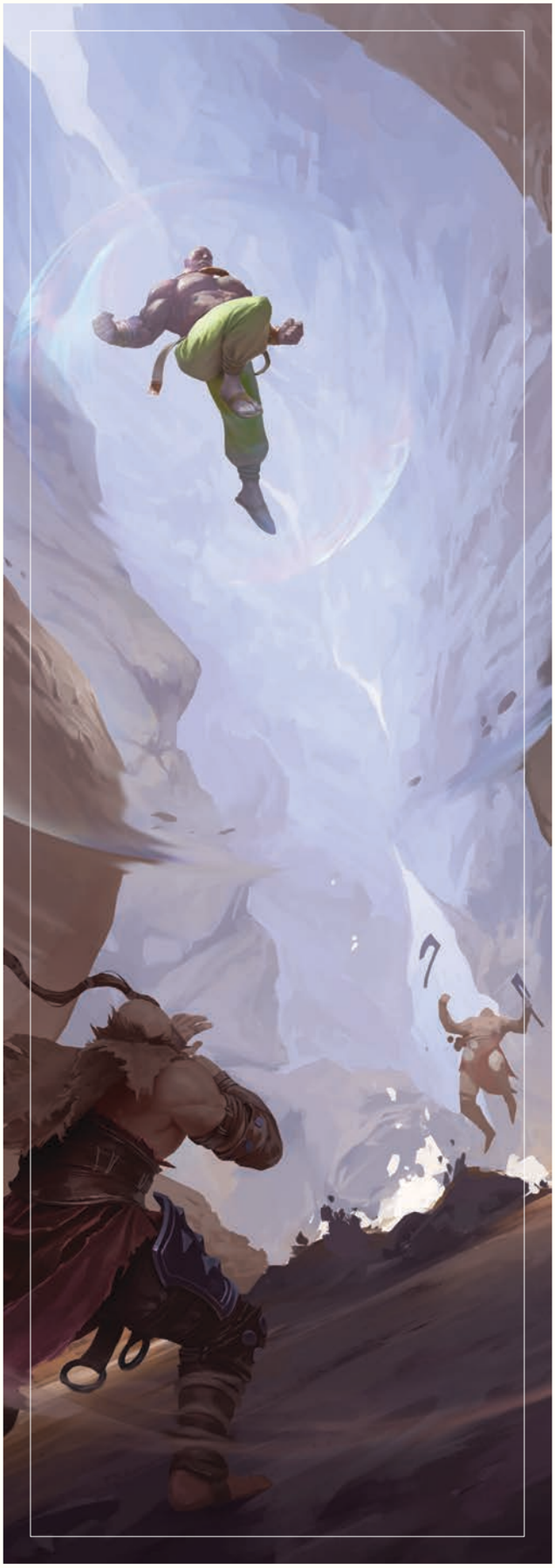
Synapse Field (7 Discipline)

Attacks made by allies in your null field disrupt your enemies' thoughts, causing psychic pain.

Psionic — **Maneuver**
Self — Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, the size of your Null Field ability increases by 1. While the area of that ability is enlarged this way, whenever an enemy in the area takes rolled damage, they take extra psychic damage equal to twice your Intuition score.

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4th-Level Features

As a 4th-level null, you gain the following features.

Characteristic Increase

Your Agility and Intuition scores each increase to 3.

Discipline Mastery Improvement

Your Discipline Mastery feature provides additional benefits when you have 8 or more discipline.

Enhanced Null Field

While using your Null Field ability, you disrupt magic and psionic power suffusing the area around you. During combat, any temporary supernatural terrain effects of your level or lower are removed when your aura partially or fully overlaps with their location. Permanent supernatural terrain effects of your level or lower are temporarily negated while your aura overlaps with their location, but return when the aura no longer overlaps with them.

Perk

You gain one perk of your choice.

Regenerative Field

The first time each combat round that an enemy in the area of your Null Field ability uses a main action, you gain 2 discipline instead of 1.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice. See Skills in Chapter 9: Tests.

5th-Level Features

As a 5th-level null, you gain the following features.

5th-Level Tradition Feature

Your null tradition grants you a feature, as shown on the 5th-Level Tradition Features table.

5th-Level Tradition Features

Tradition	Feature
Chronokinetic	Instant Action
Cryokinetic	Chilling Readiness
Metakinetic	Inertial Fulcrum

Chilling Readiness

You steel yourself for imminent danger by tapping into your body's cold energy. At the start of any combat, you gain a number of surges equal to your Victories.

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Inertial Fulcrum

Whenever you use an ability to reduce damage dealt to you or to reduce the distance of forced movement imposed upon you, you can deal damage to one enemy in the area of your Null Field ability equal to your Intuition score.

Instant Action

If you're not surprised at the start of your first turn in combat, you gain an edge on ability rolls and gain 2 surges. If you are surprised, you can spend 3 discipline to no longer be surprised and gain the benefits of this feature.

9-Discipline Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 9 discipline to use.

Anticipating Strike (9 Discipline)

You suddenly strike an enemy, then grab them in a psionically enhanced grip.

Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon | **Free triggered**
Melee 1 | One creature

Trigger: The target moves or uses a main action.

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 7 + A damage; I < WEAK, restrained (save ends)
12–16 10 + A damage; I < AVERAGE, restrained (save ends)
17+ 13 + A damage; I < STRONG, restrained (save ends)

Effect: This strike resolves before the triggering movement or main action.

Iron Grip (9 Discipline)

You grab the target with supernatural force.

Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 10 + A damage; A < WEAK, grabbed
12–16 14 + A damage; A < AVERAGE, grabbed
17+ 18 + A damage; A < STRONG, grabbed

Effect: While grabbed this way, the target takes a bane on the Escape Grab maneuver. Each time they use that maneuver, they take damage equal to twice your Agility score.

Phase Leap (9 Discipline)

You leap beyond reality, leaving an afterimage of yourself.

Psionic | **Move**
Self | Self

Effect: You jump up to your speed without provoking opportunity attacks. Until the end of your next turn, a static afterimage of you remains in the space you left, and any enemy adjacent to your afterimage takes a bane on ability rolls. You can use your abilities from your own space or from the space of your afterimage as if you were still there. Additionally, if your Null Field ability is active, your afterimage also projects the aura from that ability, which you control as if you were in the afterimage's space.

Synaptic Reset (9 Discipline)

You expand your nullifying power to mitigate harmful effects.

Area, Psionic | **Maneuver**
3 burst | Self and each ally in the area

Effect: Each target can end any conditions or effects on themself, and gains 5 temporary Stamina for each condition or effect removed.

6th-Level Features

As a 6th-level null, you gain the following features.

Elemental Absorption

Whenever you use your Inertial Shield triggered action, you gain immunity to acid, cold, corruption, fire, lightning, poison, and sonic damage equal to your Intuition score against the triggering damage.

Elemental Buffer

Whenever you reduce acid, cold, corruption, fire, lightning, poison, or sonic damage with damage immunity, you gain 2 surges that can be used only to increase the damage of your next strike.

Perk

You gain one exploration, interpersonal, or intrigue perk of your choice.

6th-Level Tradition Ability

Your null tradition grants your choice of one of two heroic abilities.

6th-Level Chronokinetic Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Interphase (9 Discipline)

You slip into a faster timestream to act more quickly.

Psionic | **Main action**
Self | Self

Effect: You can use up to three signature abilities, each of which gains an edge.

Phase Step (9 Discipline)

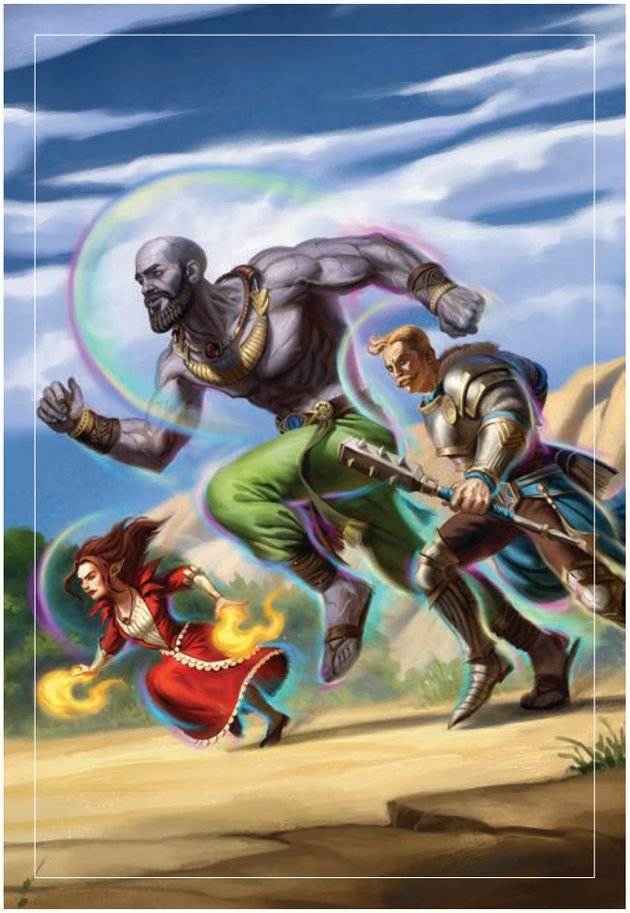
You weaken your connection to this manifold, allowing you to move through and damage enemies.

Melee, Psionic, Weapon | **Main action**
Self; see below | Self

Effect: You can shift up to your speed, and squares occupied by enemies or objects are not difficult terrain for this shift. You make one power roll that targets each enemy you moved through during this shift.

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 6 damage; M < WEAK, dazed
12–16 8 damage; M < AVERAGE, dazed
17+ 12 damage; M < STRONG, dazed

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6th-Level Cryokinetic Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Ice Pillars (9 Discipline)

Pillars of ice erupt from the ground and launch your foes into the air.

Psionic, Ranged **Main action**

Ranged 10

Three creatures or objects

Power Roll + Reason:

≤11 Vertical slide 6

12-16 Vertical slide 8

17+ Vertical slide 10

Effect: The pillars vanish as soon as the effects of the forced movement are resolved.

Wall of Ice (9 Discipline)

You create a wall of ice.

Area, Psionic, Ranged **Main action**

10 wall within 10 Special

Effect: You can place this wall in occupied squares, sliding each creature in the area into the nearest unoccupied space of your choice. The wall remains until the end of the encounter or until you are dying. The wall's squares are treated as stone squares for the purpose of damage, and you and allies can move freely through the wall. Each enemy who enters a square adjacent to the wall and has M < AVERAGE is slowed (save ends). Each enemy who is force moved into the wall and has M < AVERAGE is restrained (save ends).

6th-Level Metakinetic Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Gravitic Charge (9 Discipline)

You channel your discipline into momentum that defies gravity.

Psionic **Maneuver**

Self Self

Power Roll + Intuition:

≤11 Vertical slide 5

12-16 Vertical slide 7

17+ Vertical slide 9

Effect: This movement ignores stability. If you slide into another creature, you resolve damage to both of you as if your force movement had ended, but you keep moving through that creature's space.

Iron Body (9 Discipline)

You focus until your body becomes as hard as iron.

Psionic **Maneuver**

Self Self

Effect: You gain 20 temporary Stamina. Additionally, until the end of the encounter, your stability gains a bonus equal to your Intuition score.

7th-Level Features

As a 7th-level null, you gain the following features.

Characteristic Increase

Each of your characteristic scores increases by 1, to a maximum of 4.

Discipline Mastery Improvement

Your Discipline Mastery feature provides additional benefits when you have 10 or more discipline.

Psi Boost

Whenever you use an ability that is a main action or a maneuver with the Psionic keyword, you can spend additional discipline to apply a psi boost to it and enhance its effects. You can apply multiple psi boosts to an ability, but only one instance of each specific boost. You can use the following psi boosts.

Dynamic Power (1 Discipline)

If the ability force moves a target, the forced movement distance gains a bonus equal to your Intuition score.

Expanded Power (3 Discipline)

If the ability targets an area, you increase the size of the area by 1. If the area is a line, you increase the size of one dimension, not both.

Extended Power (1 Discipline)

If the ability is ranged, the distance gains a bonus equal to your Intuition score. If the ability is melee, the distance gains a +2 bonus.

Heightened Power (1 Discipline)

If the ability deals rolled damage, it deals extra damage equal to your Intuition score.

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Magnified Power (5 Discipline)
If the ability has a potency, you increase that potency by an amount equal to your Intuition score.

Shared Power (5 Discipline)
If the ability targets individual creatures or objects, you target one additional creature or object within distance.

Sharpened Power (1 Discipline)
If the ability has any power roll, that roll gains an edge.

Improved Body

At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 3 discipline instead of 2.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice.

8th-Level Features

As an 8th-level null, you gain the following features.

Perk

You gain one perk of your choice.

8th-Level Tradition Feature

Your null tradition grants you a feature, as shown on the 8th-Level Tradition Features table.

8th-Level Tradition Features

Tradition	Feature
Chronokinetic	Shared Momentum
Cryokinetic	Synaptic Triage
Metakinetic	Inertial Dampener

Inertial Dampener
You and each creature or object of your choice in the area of your Null Field ability gain a bonus to stability equal to your Intuition score. A creature who attempts to force move a target with this bonus takes psychic damage equal to your Intuition score.

Shared Momentum
When you take the Disengage move action, one ally in the area of your Null Field ability can also take the Disengage move action as a free triggered action, using your distance for that move action.

Synaptic Triage
As a free maneuver, you can spend 1d6 Stamina to remove one effect on you. Each creature of your choice in the area of your Null Field ability also gains this benefit.

11-Discipline Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 11 discipline to use.

Arcane Purge (11 Discipline)
You focus your null field into a pressure point strike that prevents your foe from channeling sorcery.

Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 13 + A damage; M < WEAK, the target is suppressed (save ends)
12–16 19 + A damage; M < AVERAGE, the target is suppressed (save ends)
17+ 24 + A damage; M < STRONG, the target is suppressed (save ends)

Effect: While suppressed, a target takes psychic damage equal to twice your Intuition score at the start of their turns, whenever they use a supernatural ability, or whenever they use an ability that costs Malice.

Phase Hurl (11 Discipline)
You throw your foe out of phase with this manifold, causing them to harm other enemies as they return.

Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 9 + A damage; push 5; I < WEAK, dazed (save ends)
12–16 13 + A damage; push 7; I < AVERAGE, dazed (save ends)
17+ 18 + A damage; push 10; I < STRONG, dazed (save ends)

Effect: The target and each creature or object they collide with from this forced movement takes psychic damage equal to the total number of squares the target was force moved. While the target is dazed this way, they see glimpses of creatures from other parts of the timescape.

Scalar Assault (11 Discipline)
You warp reality to grow a limb for just a moment and make a single devastating attack.

Area, Psionic | **Main action**
3 cube within 1 | Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 12 psychic damage; push 3
12–16 17 psychic damage; push 5
17+ 23 psychic damage; push 7

Synaptic Anchor (11 Discipline)
You disrupt an enemy's strike and create a feedback loop in their mind, preventing them from focusing on future attacks.

Psionic | **Free triggered**
Self; see below | Self or one creature

Trigger: The target takes damage from another creature's ability while in the area of your Null Field ability.

Effect: The target takes half the damage, and if the triggering creature has I < AVERAGE, they are dazed (save ends). While the triggering creature is dazed this way, they take psychic damage equal to your Intuition score whenever they use a main action.

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9th-Level Features

As a 9th-level null, you gain the following features.

I Am the Weapon

Your Stamina increases by 21 and you can't be made bleeding even while dying. You no longer age or have need of food. Additionally, you can use Intuition instead of another characteristic when resisting potencies.

9th-Level Tradition Ability

Your null tradition grants your choice of one of two heroic abilities.

9th-Level Chronokinetic Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Arrestor Cycle (11 Discipline)

You trap your foe in a looping cycle of time, where they relive the last few seconds over and over again.

Psionic, Ranged | **Free triggered**
Ranged 10 | One creature

Trigger: The triggering creature starts their turn.

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 I < WEAK, the target loses their turn
12-16 I < AVERAGE, the target loses their turn
17+ I < STRONG, the target loses their turn

Effect: If the target loses their turn, the round continues as if they had acted. A target who doesn't lose their turn takes psychic damage equal to twice your Intuition score for each main action they take until the end of their next turn.

Time Loop (11 Discipline)

You show shadows what true speed is.

Psionic | **Free triggered**
Self | Self

Trigger: Another creature on the encounter map ends their turn.

Effect: You take a bonus turn immediately after the triggering creature. This ability can be used only once per combat round.

9th-Level Cryokinetic Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Absolute Zero (11 Discipline)

You become the coldest thing in the timescape.

Psionic | **Maneuver**
Self | Self

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 You gain 20 temporary Stamina.
12-16 You gain 30 temporary Stamina.
17+ You gain 40 temporary Stamina.

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dead, you become an avatar of uttermost cold. You gain immunity to all damage equal to the cold damage immunity granted by your Entropic Adaptability trait, you ignore the negative effects of dying, and you have a +2 bonus to potencies.

Heat Drain (11 Discipline)

You drain all the heat from the target.

Melee, Psionic, Strike | **Maneuver**
Melee 1 | One creature

Power Roll + Intuition:
≤11 8 + I cold damage; M < WEAK, restrained (save ends)
12-16 11 + I cold damage; M < AVERAGE, restrained (save ends)
17+ 15 + I cold damage; M < STRONG, restrained (save ends)

Effect: While restrained this way, the target takes cold damage equal to your Intuition score at the start of each of your turns. Additionally, whenever the target damages another creature while restrained this way, any potency associated with the damage is reduced by 2.

9th-Level Metakinetic Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Inertial Absorption (11 Discipline)

You absorb an attack to empower your body.

Psionic | **Free triggered**
Self | Self

Trigger: Another creature damages you using an ability.

Effect: You take half the damage, negate any effects associated with the damage for you, and gain 3 surges.

Realitas (11 Discipline)

Your essential hyperreality disrupts your enemy's connection to existence.

Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 7 + A psychic damage; I < WEAK, dazed
12-16 10 + A psychic damage; I < AVERAGE, dazed
17+ 13 + A psychic damage; I < STRONG, dazed

Effect: While dazed this way, the target takes psychic damage equal to twice your Intuition score at the start of each of your turns. If this ability causes a creature who is not a leader or solo creature to become winded, they are instead reduced to 0 Stamina. Any creature reduced to 0 Stamina by this ability is forgotten by all creatures of your level or lower in the timescape who are not present in the encounter. Loved ones of the forgotten creature retain a faint sense of melancholy. This effect can be reversed only at the Director's discretion.

10th-Level Features

As a 10th-level null, you gain the following features.

Characteristic Increase

Your Agility and Intuition scores each increase to 5.

Discipline Mastery Improvement

Your Discipline Mastery feature provides additional benefits when you have 12 or more discipline.

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Manifold Body

At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 4 discipline instead of 3.

Manifold Resonance

Your body becomes perfected matter, beyond the whims and chaos of the timescape and the restrictions of the manifolds. Each time you finish a respite, you can shift yourself and any creatures in the area of your Null Field ability to any location in the timescape known to you, known to any other creature in the area, or where any supernatural treasure in the area has been before.

Whenever you use an ability, you gain 1 discipline that can be used only to apply a benefit from your Psi Boost feature to that ability. Additionally, you and allies in the area of your Null Field ability ignore banes and double banes on your power rolls.

Order

You have an epic resource called order. Each time you finish a respite, you gain order equal to the XP you gain. You can spend order on your abilities as if it were discipline.

At the start of a combat encounter, you can spend 1 order to increase the size of your Null Field by 1 until the end of the encounter.

Order remains until you spend it.

Perk

You gain one exploration, interpersonal, or intrigue perk of your choice.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice.



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SHADOW

Subtlety is your art, the tip of the blade your brush. You studied at a secret college, specializing in alchemy, illusion, or shadow-magics. Your training and knowledge place you among the elite ranks of assassins, spies, and commandos. But more potent than any weapon or sorcery is your insight into your enemies' weaknesses.

As a shadow, you possess abilities that deal significant damage, enable you to move swiftly across the battlefield and evade hazards, and allow you to fade from notice even in the midst of the most intense combat encounters. You also possess more skills than any other hero.



"Whenever there is doubt, there is no doubt."

motto of the College of Black Ash

Basics

Starting Characteristics: You start with an Agility of 2, and you can choose one of the following arrays for your other characteristic scores:

- 2, 2, –1, –1
- 2, 1, 1, –1
- 2, 1, 0, 0
- 1, 1, 1, 0

Weak Potency: Agility – 2

Average Potency: Agility – 1

Strong Potency: Agility

Starting Stamina at 1st Level: 18

Stamina Gained at 2nd and Higher Levels: 9

Recoveries: 8

Skills: You gain the Hide and Sneak skills (see Skills in Chapter 9: Tests). Then choose any five skills from Criminal Underworld or the skills of the exploration, interpersonal, or intrigue skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Criminal Underworld, Hide, Lie, Pick Lock, Pick Pocket, Sabotage, Sneak.)

1st-Level Features

As a 1st-level shadow, you gain the following features.

Shadow College

Shadow colleges are secret institutions that turn ordinary folk into something else. Finding a college is the first step in a rigorous initiation process that tests the mettle of an applicant. Even those who make the cut often wash out—or are kicked out—as the master shadows who teach stealth, magic, and assassination to their students are often less than gentle in their approach.

You graduated from a shadow college chosen from the following options, each of which grants you a skill. (*Quick Build:* College of Black Ash.)

College of Black Ash: The College of Black Ash founded the art of being a shadow. Its graduates are unmatched in mobility, using sorcery to teleport around the battlefield, manipulate shadows, and summon darkness. You have the Magic skill.

College of Caustic Alchemy: The College of Caustic Alchemy teaches its students recipes for the acids, bombs, and poisons used in their grim work. Graduates of the college are exceptional assassins. You have the Alchemy skill.

College of the Harlequin Mask: Graduates of the College of the Harlequin Mask learn illusion magic, which they use to infiltrate enemy strongholds and create orchestrated chaos in combat. You have the Lie skill.

Your shadow college is your subclass, and your choice of college determines many of the features you'll gain as you gain new levels.

Insight

By observing your enemy, you learn how to use their weaknesses against them, building up a Heroic Resource called insight.

Insight in Combat

At the start of a combat encounter or some other stressful situation tracked in combat rounds (as determined by the Director), you gain insight equal to your Victories. At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 1d3 insight.

Shadow Advancement

Level	Features	Abilities	College Abilities
1st	Shadow College, Insight, College Features, College Triggered Action, Hesitation Is Weakness, Kit, Shadow Abilities	Signature, 3, 5	—
2nd	College Feature, Perk, College Ability	Signature, 3, 5	5
3rd	Careful Observation, 7-Insight Ability	Signature, 3, 5, 7	5
4th	Characteristic Increase, Keep It Down, Night Watch, Perk, Skill, Surge of Insight	Signature, 3, 5, 7	5
5th	College Feature, 9-Insight Ability	Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9	5
6th	Perk, Umbral Form, College Ability	Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9	5, 9
7th	Characteristic Increase, Keen Insight, Skill, Careful Observation Improvement, Ventriloquist	Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9	5, 9
8th	College Feature, Perk, 11-Insight Ability	Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11	5, 9
9th	Gloom Squad, College Ability	Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11	5, 9, 11
10th	Characteristic Increase, Death Pool, Perk, Skill, Careful Observation Improvement, Improved Umbral Form, Subterfuge	Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11	5, 9, 11

Additionally, the first time each combat round that you deal damage incorporating 1 or more surges, you gain 1 insight.

Whenever you use a heroic ability that makes use of a power roll, that ability costs 1 fewer insight if you have an edge or double edge on it. If the ability has multiple targets, the cost is reduced even if the ability gains an edge or has a double edge against only one target.

You lose any remaining insight at the end of the encounter.

Insight Outside of Combat

Although you can't gain insight outside of combat, you can use your heroic abilities and effects that cost insight without spending it. Whenever you use an ability or effect outside of combat that costs insight, you can't use that same ability or effect outside of combat again until you earn 1 or more Victories or finish a respite.

When you use an ability outside of combat that lets you spend unlimited insight on its effect, such as Black Ash Teleport, you can use it as if you had spent an amount of insight equal to your Victories.

1st-Level College Features

Your shadow college grants you one or two features, as shown on the 1st-Level College Features table.

1st-Level College Features

College	Feature
Black Ash	Black Ash Teleport
Caustic Alchemy	Coat the Blade, Smoke Bomb
Harlequin Mask	Inertial Dampener

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Black Ash Teleport

You have the following ability.

Black Ash Teleport

In a swirl of black ash, you step from one place to another.

Magic — Self

Maneuver — Self

Effect: You teleport up to 5 squares. If you have concealment or cover at your destination, you can use the Hide maneuver even if you are observed. If you successfully hide using this maneuver, you gain 1 surge.

Spend 1+ Insight: You teleport 1 additional square for each insight spent.

Coat the Blade

You have the following ability.

Coat the Blade

A little poison goes a long way.

—

Maneuver — Self

Effect: You gain 2 surges. Additionally, whenever you use a surge before the end of the encounter, you can choose to have it deal poison damage.

Spend 1+ Insight: For each insight you spend, you gain 1 additional surge.

I'm No Threat

You have the following ability.

I'm No Threat

Taking on an illusory countenance gives you an advantage on subterfuge.

Magic — Self

Maneuver — Self

Effect: You envelop yourself in an illusion that makes you appear nonthreatening and harmless to your enemies. You might take on the appearance of a harmless animal of your size, such as a sheep or capybara, or you might appear as a less heroic and unarmed version of yourself. While this illusion lasts, your strikes gain an edge, and when you take the Disengage move action, you gain a +1 bonus to the distance you can shift.

The illusion ends when you harm another creature, when you physically interact with a creature, when you use this ability again, or when you end the illusion (no action required). If you end this illusion by harming another creature, you gain 1 surge.

Spend 1 Insight: Choose a creature whose size is no more than 1 greater than yours and who is within 10 squares. This ability's illusion makes you appear as that creature. This illusion covers your entire body, including clothing and armor, and alters your voice to sound like that of the creature. You gain an edge on tests made to convince the creature's allies that you are the creature.

Smoke Bomb

You always carry a supply of smoke bombs to use for distractions and easy getaways. You can use the Hide maneuver even if you are observed and don't initially have cover or concealment. When you do so, you can shift a number of squares equal to your Agility score. If you end this movement with cover or concealment, you are automatically hidden.

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College Triggered Action

Your shadow college grants you a triggered action, as shown on the College Triggered Actions table.

College Triggered Actions

College	Triggered Action
Black Ash	In All This Confusion
Caustic Alchemy	Defensive Roll
Harlequin Mask	Clever Trick

Clever Trick (1 Insight)

You sow a moment of confusion in combat, to your enemy's peril.

Magic — Self
Triggered — Self

Trigger: An enemy targets you with a strike.

Effect: Choose an enemy within distance of the triggering strike, including the enemy who targeted you. The strike targets that enemy instead.

Defensive Roll

When an enemy attacks, you roll with the impact to reduce the harm.

— — Self
Triggered — Self

Trigger: Another creature damages you.

Effect: You take half the triggering damage, then can shift up to 2 squares after the triggering effect resolves. If you end this shift with concealment or cover, you can use the Hide maneuver even if you are observed.

Spend 1 Insight: The potency of any effects associated with the damage are reduced by 1 for you.

In All This Confusion

You vanish in a plume of black smoke to avoid danger.

Magic — Self
Triggered — Self

Trigger: You take damage.

Effect: You take half the damage, then can teleport up to 4 squares after the triggering effect resolves.

Spend 1+ Insight: You teleport 1 additional square for each insight spent.

Hesitation Is Weakness

You have the following ability.

Hesitation Is Weakness (1 Insight)

Keep up the attack. Never give them a moment's grace.

— — Self
Free triggered — Self

Trigger: Another hero ends their turn. That hero can't have used this ability to start their turn.

Effect: You take your turn after the triggering hero.



Kit

You can use and gain the benefits of a kit. See Chapter 6: Kits for more information. (*Quick Build:* Cloak and Dagger.)

Shadow Abilities

You specialize in dealing damage, then getting out of harm's way before the inevitable counterattack. You know a number of unique martial abilities that define your presence on the battlefield.

Signature Ability

Choose one signature ability from the following options. Signature abilities can be used at will. (*Quick Build:* Teamwork Has Its Place.)

Gasping in Pain

Your precise strikes let your allies take advantage of a target's agony.

Melee, Strike, Weapon — Melee 1
Main action — One creature

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 — 3 + A damage
12-16 — 5 + A damage
17+ — 8 + A damage; I < STRONG, prone

Effect: One ally within 5 squares of the target gains 1 surge.

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I Work Better Alone

"It's better, just you and me. Isn't it?"

Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 or ranged 5 | One creature

Power Roll + A gility:
≤11 3 + A damage
12–16 6 + A damage
17+ 9 + A damage

Effect: If the target has no allies adjacent to them, you gain 1 surge before making the power roll.

Teamwork Has Its Place

You attack an enemy as an ally exposes their weakness.

Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 or ranged 5 | One creature or object

Power Roll + A gility:
≤11 3 + A damage
12–16 6 + A damage
17+ **9 + A damage**

Effect: If any ally is adjacent to the target, you gain 1 surge before making the power roll.

You Were Watching the Wrong One

They can't watch both of you at once.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Power Roll + A gility:
≤11 3 + A damage
12–16 5 + A damage
17+ 8 + A damage

Effect: As long as you have one or more allies within 5 squares of the target, you gain 1 surge. If you are flanking the target when you use this ability, choose one ally who is flanking with you. That ally also gains 1 surge.

Heroic Abilities

A range of heroic abilities define your combat prowess, all of which make use of your insight.

3-Insight Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 3 insight to use. (*Quick Build:* Get In Get Out.)

Disorienting Strike (3 Insight)

Your attack leaves them reeling, allowing you to follow up.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Power Roll + A gility:
≤11 4 + A damage; slide 2
12–16 6 + A damage; slide 3
17+ 10 + A damage; slide 5

Effect: You can shift into any square the target leaves when you slide them.

Eviscerate (3 Insight)

You leave your foe bleeding out after a devastating attack.

Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 or ranged 5 | One creature

Power Roll + A gility:
≤11 4 + A damage; A < WEAK, bleeding (save ends)
12–16 6 + A damage; A < AVERAGE, bleeding (save ends)
17+ 10 + A damage; A < STRONG, bleeding (save ends)

Get In Get Out (3 Insight)

Move unexpectedly, strike fast, and be gone!

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Power Roll + A gility:
≤11 5 + A damage
12–16 8 + A damage
17+ 11 + A damage

Effect: You can shift up to your speed, dividing that movement before or after your strike as desired.

Two Throats at Once (3 Insight)

A bargain.

Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 or ranged 5 | Two creatures or objects

Power Roll + A gility:
≤11 4 damage
12–16 6 damage
17+ 10 damage

5-Insight Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 5 insight to use. (*Quick Build:* Coup de Grace.)

Coup de Grace (5 Insight)

Your blade might be the last thing they see.

Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 or ranged 5 | One creature

Power Roll + A gility:
≤11 2d6 + 7 + A damage
12–16 2d6 + 11 + A damage
17+ 2d6 + 16 + A damage

One Hundred Throats (5 Insight)

As you move across the battlefield, every foe within reach feels your wrath.

Melee, Weapon | **Main action**
Self; see below | Self

Effect: You shift up to your speed and make one power roll that targets up to three enemies who came adjacent to you during the move.

Power Roll + A gility:
≤11 3 damage
12–16 6 damage
17+ 9 damage

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Setup (5 Insight)

Your friends will thank you.

Ranged, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Ranged 5 — One creature

Power Roll + Agility:
- ≤11: 6 + A damage; R < WEAK, the target has damage weakness 5 (save ends)
- 12–16: 9 + A damage; R < AVERAGE, the target has damage weakness 5 (save ends)
- 17+: 13 + A damage; R < STRONG, the target has damage weakness 5 (save ends)

Shadowstrike (5 Insight)

They have no idea what the college taught you.

Magic, Melee, Ranged — **Main action**
Self; see below — Self

Effect: You use a strike signature ability twice.

2nd-Level Features

As a 2nd-level shadow, you gain the following features.

2nd-Level College Feature

Your shadow college grants you a feature, as shown on the 2nd-Level College Features table.

2nd-Level College Features

College	Feature
Black Ash	Burning Ash
Caustic Alchemy	Trained Assassin
Harlequin Mask	Friend!

Burning Ash

The ash you leave behind burns your foes. The first time on a turn that you use a shadow ability to teleport away from or into a space adjacent to an enemy, that enemy takes fire damage equal to your Agility score.

Friend!

Your illusions make your enemies believe you are their friend in critical moments. Whenever an enemy uses an ability or trait that targets multiple allies and you are within distance of the effect, you can choose to be a target of the effect as well.

Additionally, when you use your I'm No Threat ability, you can take the Disengage move action as part of that ability.

Trained Assassin

You know just where to cut your enemies. Whenever you make a strike that has no bane or double bane, and that incorporates 1 or more surges, you gain 1 additional surge that you can use only on that strike.

Perk

You gain one exploration, interpersonal, or intrigue perk of your choice. See Chapter 7: Perks.

2nd-Level College Ability

Your shadow college grants your choice of one of two heroic abilities.

2nd-Level Black Ash Ability

Choose one of the following abilities.

In a Puff of Ash (5 Insight)

You enchant a strike with your teleportation magic.

Magic, Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 or ranged 5 — One creature

Power Roll + Agility:
- ≤11: 6 + A damage; you can teleport the target 1 square
- 12–16: 10 + A damage; you can teleport the target up to 3 squares
- 17+: 14 + A damage; you can teleport the target up to 5 squares

Too Slow (5 Insight)

Your foe made a big mistake.

— — **Free triggered**
Self; see below — Self

Trigger: You use your In All This Confusion ability.
Effect: You ignore any effects associated with the damage that triggered your In All This Confusion ability. Before you teleport, you can make a free strike against a creature who damaged you to trigger In All This Confusion. After you teleport, you can spend a Recovery.

2nd-Level Caustic Alchemy Ability

Choose one of the following abilities.

Sticky Bomb (5 Insight)

Explosives are best when they're attached to an enemy.

Ranged — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — One creature

Effect: You attach a small bomb to a creature. If you are hidden from the creature, they don't notice the bomb and you remain hidden. The creature otherwise notices the bomb and can disarm and remove it as a main action. If they don't, at the end of your next turn, the bomb detonates. When the bomb detonates, you make a power roll targeting each enemy within 2 squares of it.

Power Roll + Agility:
- ≤11: 4 + A fire damage
- 12–16: 7 + A fire damage
- 17+: 11 + A fire damage

Stink Bomb (5 Insight)

Putrid yellow gas explodes from a bomb you toss.

Area, Ranged — **Main action**
3 cube within 10 — Each creature in the area

Power Roll + Agility:
- ≤11: 2 poison damage
- 12–16: 5 poison damage
- 17+: 7 poison damage

Effect: The gas remains in the area until the end of the encounter. Any creature who starts their turn in the area and has M < AVERAGE is weakened (save ends).

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2nd-Level Harlequin Mask Ability

Choose one of the following abilities.

Machinations of Sound (5 Insight)

Illusory sounds make your foes reposition themselves as they cower or investigate the disturbance.

Area, Magic, Ranged — **Maneuver**
3 cube within 10 — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 Slide 4
12–16 Slide 5
17+ Slide 7

Effect: This forced movement ignores stability. Instead, the forced movement is reduced by a number equal to the target's Intuition score.

So Gullible (5 Insight)

When your enemy strikes, you reveal you were in a different place all along.

Magic — **Free triggered**
Self — Self

Trigger: Another creature targets you with a strike.
Effect: You use your Clever Trick ability with no insight cost against the triggering creature and strike. You can teleport to an unoccupied space within 3 squares of that creature and can make a free strike against them. You can then spend a Recovery.

3rd-Level Features

As a 3rd-level shadow, you gain the following features.

Careful Observation

You have the following ability.

Careful Observation

A moment of focus leaves a foe firmly in your sights.

Ranged — **Maneuver**
Ranged 20 — One creature

Effect: As long as you remain within distance of the target, maintain line of effect to them, and strike no other creature first, you gain an edge on the next strike you make against the assessed creature, and gain 1 surge you can use only on that strike.

7-Insight Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 7 insight to use.

Dancer (7 Insight)

You enter a flow state that makes you nearly impossible to pin down.

— — Maneuver
Self — Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, whenever an enemy moves or is forced moved adjacent to you or damages you, you can take the Disengage move action as a free triggered action.

Misdirecting Strike (7 Insight)

"Why are you looking at ME?!"

Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 or ranged 5 — One creature

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 9 + A damage
12–16 13 + A damage
17+ 18 + A damage

Effect: The target is taunted by a willing ally within 5 squares of you until the end of the target's next turn.

Pinning Shot (7 Insight)

One missile—placed well and placed hard.

Ranged, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Ranged 5 — One creature

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 8 + A damage; A < WEAK, restrained (save ends)
12–16 12 + A damage; A < AVERAGE, restrained (save ends)
17+ 16 + A damage; A < STRONG, restrained (save ends)

Staggering Blow (7 Insight)

There's no recovering from this.

Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 or ranged 5 — One creature

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 7 + A damage; M < WEAK, slowed (save ends)
12–16 11 + A damage; M < AVERAGE, prone and can't stand (save ends)
17+ 16 + A damage; M < STRONG, prone and can't stand (save ends)

4th-Level Features

As a 4th-level shadow, you gain the following features.

Characteristic Increase

Your Agility score increases to 3. Additionally, you can increase one of your characteristic scores by 1, to a maximum of 3.

Keep It Down

While conversing with any creature you share a language with, you can decide whether anyone else can perceive what you're conveying, even while yelling.

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Night Watch

Your sense for stealth shows those around you how to evade notice. While you are hidden, enemies take a bane on tests made to search for you or other hidden creatures within 10 squares of you.

Additionally, you have the following ability.

Night Watch

A steely dagger from out of the blue knocks another weapon off course.

Ranged, Weapon | **Triggered**
Ranged 5 | One ally

Trigger: The target takes damage from another creature's ability while you are hidden.

Effect: The target takes half the damage. You remain hidden.

Perk

You gain one perk of your choice.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice. See Skills in Chapter 9: Tests.

Surge of Insight

The first time each combat round that you deal damage incorporating 1 or more surges, you gain 2 insight instead of 1.

5th-Level Features

As a 5th-level shadow, you gain the following features.

5th-Level College Feature

Your shadow college grants you a feature, as shown on the 5th-Level College Features table.

5th-Level College Features

College	Feature
Black Ash	Trail of Cinders
Caustic Alchemy	Volatile Reagents
Harlequin Mask	Harlequin Gambit

Harlequin Gambit

Whenever you reduce an adjacent non-minion creature to 0 Stamina, you can immediately use a free maneuver to use your I'm No Threat ability and then move up to your speed.

If the creature is the same size as you, you can disguise yourself as them using I'm No Threat without spending insight. If you do, while I'm No Threat is active, the creature's body is disguised to look like your body. The illusion ends on their body if another creature physically interacts with it. When the illusion would end for either you or the creature's body, it ends for both.

Trail of Cinders

Whenever you reduce a non-minion creature to 0 Stamina, you can immediately use a free maneuver to use your Black Ash Teleport ability.

Additionally, you can now bring an adjacent willing creature along with you whenever you use a shadow ability to teleport. The creature appears in an unoccupied space adjacent to the space into which you teleported. If no such space exists, they can't teleport with you.

Volatile Reagents

Whenever you take damage, each enemy adjacent to you takes fire, acid, or poison damage (your choice) equal to your Agility score.

Additionally, your Defensive Roll ability now allows you to shift up to 5 squares, including shifting vertically. If you don't end this shift on solid ground and are not flying, you fall.

9-Insight Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 9 insight to use.

Blackout (9 Insight)

You cause a plume of shadow to erupt from your eyes and create a cloud of darkness.

Area, Magic | **Maneuver**
3 burst | Special

Effect: A black cloud fills the area until the end of your next turn, granting you and your allies concealment against enemies. While you are in the area, whenever an enemy ends their turn in the area, you can use a free triggered action to shift to a new location within the area and make a free strike against them.

Into the Shadows (9 Insight)

You sweep your foe off their feet and plunge them into absolute darkness.

Magic, Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature or object

Effect: You and the target are removed from the encounter map until the start of your next turn. You reappear in the spaces you left or the nearest unoccupied spaces. Make a power roll upon your return.

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 8 + A corruption damage
12–16 13 + A corruption damage
17+ 17 + A corruption damage

Shadowfall (9 Insight)

You vanish. They fall. You reappear.

Area, Melee, Weapon | **Main action**
10 × 1 line within 1 | Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 10 damage
12–16 14 damage
17+ 20 damage

Effect: You disappear before making the power roll. After the power roll is resolved, you appear in the first unoccupied space at the far end of the line.

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You Talk Too Much (9 Insight)

Silence is a virtue. A knife pinning their mouth shut is the next best thing.

Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Main action**
Melee 1 or ranged 5 One creature

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 10 + A damage; P < WEAK, dazed (save ends)
12–16 15 + A damage; P < AVERAGE, dazed (save ends)
17+ 21 + A damage; P < STRONG, dazed (save ends)

Effect: The target can't communicate with anyone until the end of the encounter.

6th-Level Features

As a 6th-level shadow, you gain the following features.

Perk

You gain one perk of your choice.

Umbral Form

As a maneuver, you lose control of yourself, becoming a shadow creature dripping with ash. This transformation lasts until the end of the encounter, until you are dying, or after 1 uninterrupted hour of quiet focus outside of combat. You gain the following effects while in this form:

- You can automatically climb at full speed while moving.
- Enemies' spaces don't count as difficult terrain for you. An enemy takes corruption damage equal to your Agility score the first time you pass through their space on a turn.
- If you end your turn with cover or concealment from another creature, you are automatically hidden from that creature.
- You gain 1 surge at the start of each of your turns.
- You have corruption immunity equal to 5 + your level.
- Creatures gain an edge on strikes against you.
- You take a bane on Presence tests made to interact with other creatures.

6th-Level College Ability

Your shadow college grants your choice of one of two heroic abilities.

6th-Level Black Ash Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Black Ash Eruption (9 Insight)

Your attack produces a cloud of black ash that launches an enemy into the air.

Magic, Melee, Strike, Weapon **Main action**
Melee 1 One creature

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 3 + A damage; vertical push 5
12–16 6 + A damage; vertical push 10
17+ 9 + A damage; vertical push 15

Effect: A creature force moved by this ability must be moved straight upward.

Cinderstorm (9 Insight)

You teleport your friends in a burst of ash and fire.

Magic **Maneuver**
4 burst Self and each ally in the area

Effect: Each target can teleport up to 5 squares. For each target in addition to you who teleports away from or into a space adjacent to an enemy, that enemy takes fire damage equal to your Agility score. Additionally, a target who ends this movement in concealment or cover can use the Hide maneuver even if they are observed.

6th-Level Caustic Alchemy Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

One Vial Makes You Better (9 Insight)

A well-timed throw of a potion will keep your allies in the fight.

Ranged **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 Three creatures

Effect: You ready, hand, or lob a potion to each target, who can immediately quaff the potion (no action required). If they don't drink the potion right away, they must use the Use Consumable maneuver to consume it later. The potion loses its potency at the end of the encounter.

A creature who drinks the potion can spend up to 2 Recoveries, and has acid immunity, fire immunity, or poison immunity (their choice) equal to your level until the end of the encounter.

One Vial Makes You Faster (9 Insight)

Each ally who catches a potion you throw can take the battle to the next level.

Ranged **Main action**
Ranged 10 Three creatures

Effect: You ready, hand, or lob a potion to each target, who can immediately quaff the potion (no action required). If they don't drink the potion right away, they must use the Use Consumable maneuver to consume it later. The potion loses its potency at the end of the encounter.

A creature who drinks the potion receives benefits based on your power roll.

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 The creature's speed is increased by 2 until the end of the encounter.
12–16 The creature can fly until the end of the encounter.
17+ The creature turns invisible until the end of their next turn.

6th-Level Harlequin Mask Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Look! (9 Insight)

You distract your foes, allowing your allies to take advantage of that distraction.

Area, Magic **Maneuver**
5 burst Each enemy in the area

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, any ability roll made against a target gains an edge.

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Puppet Strings (9 Insight)

You prick little needles on the tip of your fingers into the nerves of your enemies and cause them to lose control.

Magic, Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | Two enemies

Power Roll + Agility:

≤11 2 damage; if the target has R < WEAK, before the damage is resolved, they make a free strike.

12–16 5 damage; if the target has R < AVERAGE, before the damage is resolved, they use a main action ability of your choice.

17+ 7 damage; if the target has R < STRONG, before the damage is resolved, they can shift up to their speed and use a main action ability of your choice.

Effect: You choose the new targets for the original target's free strike or ability. Additionally, if you are hidden or disguised, using this ability doesn't cause you to be revealed.

7th-Level Features

As a 7th-level shadow, you gain the following features.

Characteristic Increase

Each of your characteristic scores increases by 1, to a maximum of 4.

Keen Insight

At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 1d3 + 1 insight instead of 1d3.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice.

Careful Observation Improvement

You can target two creatures simultaneously with your Careful Observation ability, observing both simultaneously. Making a strike against one target doesn't end your observation of the other target.

Ventriloquist

Whenever you communicate, you can throw your voice so that it seems to originate from a creature or object within 10 squares. If you are hidden, talking this way doesn't cause you to be revealed.

8th-Level Features

As an 8th-level shadow, you gain the following features.

8th-Level College Feature

Your college grants you a feature, as shown on the 8th-Level College Features table.

8th-Level College Features

College	Feature
Black Ash	Cinder Step
Caustic Alchemy	Time Bomb
Harlequin Mask	Parkour

Cinder Step

Whenever you willingly move, you can teleport. When you teleport this way, it counts as using a shadow ability for the purpose of using your Burning Ash and Trail of Cinders features.

Parkour

Your movement no longer provokes opportunity attacks. Additionally, your Harlequin Gambit feature now also applies to creatures reduced to 0 Stamina by your Clever Trick ability.

Time Bomb

You have damage immunity against area abilities and effects equal to your Agility score. You also have the following ability, which you can use once per round on your turn.

Time Bomb

The longer it cooks, the bigger the boom.

Area, Ranged | **Free maneuver**
2 cube within 10 | Each enemy in the area

Effect: Each target takes acid, fire, or poison damage (your choice) equal to your Agility score.

For each combat round that has passed since this ability was last used in the current encounter, the area increases by 1 and you gain 1 surge that must be used with this ability. After using the ability or at the end of the encounter, its area and surges are reset.

Spend 2+ Insight: For every 2 insight spent, you increase the cube's size by 1 and gain 1 surge that can be used only with this ability.

Perk

You gain one perk of your choice.

11-Insight Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 11 insight to use..

Assassinate (11 Insight)

A practiced attack will instantly kill an already weakened foe.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:

≤11 12 + A damage

12–16 18 + A damage

17+ 24 + A damage

Effect: A target who is not a minion, leader, or solo creature and who is winded after taking this damage is reduced to 0 Stamina.

Shadowgrasp (11 Insight)

The shadows around you give way, allowing the shadow creature within you to grasp at your foes.

Area, Magic | **Main action**
2 burst | Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Agility:

≤11 11 corruption damage; A < WEAK, restrained (save ends)

12–16 16 corruption damage; A < AVERAGE, restrained (save ends)

17+ 21 corruption damage; A < STRONG, restrained (save ends)

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Speed of Shadows (11 Insight)

You make multiple strikes against a foe before they even notice they're dead.

Magic **Main action**
Self Self

Effect: You can use a strike signature ability four times, use a strike signature ability that gains an edge three times, or use a strike signature ability that has a double edge twice. You can shift up to 2 squares between each use.

They Always Line Up (11 Insight)

You fire a projectile so fast that it passes through a line of foes, hamstringing them.

Area, Ranged, Weapon **Main action**
5 × 1 line within 5 Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 12 damage; M < WEAK, slowed (save ends)
12–16 18 damage; M < AVERAGE, slowed (save ends)
17+ 24 damage; M < STRONG, slowed (save ends)

9th-Level Features

As a 9th-level shadow, you gain the following features.

Gloom Squad

At the start of each of your turns, you can forgo gaining insight to create 1d6 clones of yourself in unoccupied adjacent spaces. A clone acts on your turn and uses your statistics, except they have 1 Stamina. They are affected by any conditions and effects on you, and last until the start of your next turn. A clone doesn't have insight and can't use the Careful Observation ability, the Umbral Form feature, or any triggered actions. On their turn, a clone has a move action, a maneuver, and a main action that they can use only to make a free strike. While making a free strike, a clone must choose targets that you or another clone aren't also striking.

Outside of combat, you can have one clone active for every 2 Victories you have. If a clone is destroyed, you must wait 1 hour before creating another one.

9th-Level College Ability

Your shadow college grants your choice of one of two heroic abilities.

9th-Level Black Ash Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Cacophony of Cinders (11 Insight)

You tumble through the battle, stabbing foes and teleporting allies.

Magic, Melee, Weapon **Main action**
Self; see below Self

Effect: You shift up to twice your speed, making one power roll that targets each creature who comes adjacent to you during the shift.

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 An enemy takes 6 damage; an ally can teleport up to 3 squares.
12–16 An enemy takes 10 damage; an ally can teleport up to 5 squares.
17+ An enemy takes 14 damage; an ally can teleport up to 7 squares.

Demon Door (11 Insight)

You create a temporary portal to allow a massive demonic hand to reach through.

Magic, Melee, Strike, Weapon **Main action**
Melee 3 One creature

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 13 + A corruption damage; push 3
12–16 18 + A corruption damage; push 5
17+ 25 + A corruption damage; push 7

Effect: On a critical hit, the target is grabbed by the demon and pulled through the portal before it closes, never to be seen again.

9th-Level Caustic Alchemy Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Chain Reaction (11 Insight)

One explosion, an offense. Three explosions, an assault. Nine explosions, a celebration.

Ranged **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature or object

Effect: Each enemy within 3 squares of the target who is not currently targeted by this ability also becomes targeted by this ability. This effect continues until there are no more available targets. The ability deals acid, fire, or poison damage (your choice).

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 7 damage
12–16 10 damage
17+ 15 damage

To the Stars (11 Insight)

You attach your most potent explosive to your foe. Under less pressing circumstances, you're sure you could launch them into orbit.

Melee, Ranged, Strike **Main action**
Melee 1 or ranged 10 One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 4 + A fire damage; vertical push 8
12–16 7 + A fire damage; vertical push 10
17+ 11 + A fire damage; vertical push 15

Effect: The ground beneath a 3-cube area around the target's starting position is difficult terrain.

9th-Level Harlequin Mask Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

I Am You (11 Insight)

Your mask reflects your foe's face. Surely they won't need it much longer.

Magic, Ranged **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 One creature

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, you gain the target's damage immunities and speed (if they are better than yours), and can use any types of movement they can use. You can also use the target's signature ability, using their bonus for the power roll.

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It Was Me All Along (11 Insight)
After everything you've been through together, you twist the blade and make the pain extra personal.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11 15 + A damage
12–16 21 + A damage
17+ 28 + A damage

Effect: If you are disguised as a creature the target knew using your I'm No Threat ability, this ability deals extra damage equal to three times your Agility score.



10th-Level Features

As a 10th-level shadow, you gain the following features.

Characteristic Increase

Your Agility score increases to 5. Additionally, you can increase one of your characteristic scores by 1, to a maximum of 5.

Death Pool

The first time each combat round that you deal damage incorporating 1 or more surges, you gain 3 insight instead of 2.

Perk

You gain one perk of your choice.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice.

Careful Observation Improvement

You can target three creatures simultaneously with your Careful Observation ability.

Improved Umbral Form

You gain full control over the shadow creature you become with your Umbral Form feature, and you can end the transformation at will (no action required). Additionally, you are always wreathed in darkness that grants you concealment while in this form, and creatures no longer gain an edge on strikes against you.

While you are in your umbral form, you can spend 1 uninterrupted minute concentrating on a location where you've been before. At the end of that minute, you and each willing creature of your choice within 10 squares of you can teleport to unoccupied spaces of your choice within that location. Each creature who teleports this way is invisible for 1 hour or until they use an ability.

Subterfuge

You have an epic resource called subterfuge. Each time you finish a respite, you gain subterfuge equal to the XP you gain. You can spend subterfuge on your abilities as if it were insight.

Additionally, you can spend subterfuge to take additional maneuvers on your turn. You can use one maneuver for each subterfuge you spend.

Subterfuge remains until you spend it.

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TACTICIAN

Strategist. Defender. Leader. With weapon in hand, you lead allies into the maw of battle, barking out commands that inspire your fellow heroes to move faster and strike more precisely. All the while, you stand between your compatriots and death, taunting the followers of evil to best you if they can.

As a tactician, you have abilities that heal your allies and grant them increased damage, movement, and attacks, even as you leave your enemies struggling to respond. At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 1d3 + 1 insight instead of 1d3.



"Your line is broken, Varrox! Your wizard is dead. Hahah! You should have negotiated!"

Sir Jon of Tor

Basics

Starting Characteristics: You start with a Might of 2 and a Reason of 2, and you can choose one of the following arrays for your other characteristic scores:

- 2, –1, –1
- 1, 1, –1
- 1, 0, 0

Weak Potency: Reason – 2

Average Potency: Reason – 1

Strong Potency: Reason

Starting Stamina at 1st Level: 21

Stamina Gained at 2nd and Higher Levels: 12

Recoveries: 10

Skills: You have the Lead skill (see Skills in Chapter 9: Tests). Then choose any two skills from Alertness, Architecture, Blacksmithing, Brag, Culture, Empathize, Fletching, Mechanics, Monsters, Search, Strategy, or the skills of the exploration skill group. (*Quick Build:* Lead, Monsters, Strategy.)

1st-Level Features

As a 1st-level tactician, you gain the following features.

Tactical Doctrine

Warfare is as old as civilization—and perhaps even older. As battle became ever more complex, military leaders invented tactical doctrine, outlining how combatants should be structured, used, and deployed. Doctrine can be learned at war colleges passing on ancient martial traditions, or directly through blood and sweat on the battlefield. Whatever path brought you to your mastery of historically proven tactics, you choose a tactical doctrine from the following options, each of which grants you a skill. (*Quick Build:* Vanguard and the Intimidate skill.)

Insurgent: Doing your duty, playing fair, and dying honorably in battle is your opponent's job. You'll do whatever it takes to keep your allies alive. You gain a skill from the intrigue skill group.

Mastermind: You have an encyclopedic knowledge of warfare, viewing the battlefield as a game board and seeking victory by thinking steps ahead of your opponents. You gain a skill from the lore skill group.

Vanguard: You have learned the stratagems of ancient heroes, letting you lead from the front lines and seek victory through sheer force of will and personality. You gain a skill from the interpersonal skill group.

Your tactical doctrine is your subclass, and your choice of doctrine determines many of the features you'll gain as you gain new levels.

Focus

The ring of steel panics others but brings order to your mind, granting you a Heroic Resource called focus.

Tactician Advancement

Level	Features	Abilities	Doctrine Abilities
1st	Tactical Doctrine, Focus, Doctrine Feature, Doctrine Triggered Action, Field Arsenal, Mark, Strike Now, Tactician Abilities	3, 5	—
2nd	Perk, Doctrine Feature, Doctrine Ability	3, 5	5
3rd	Out of Position, 7-Focus Ability	3, 5, 7	5
4th	Characteristic Increase, Focus on Their Weakness, Improved Field Arsenal, Perk, Skill	3, 5, 7	5
5th	Doctrine Feature, 9-Focus Ability	3, 5, 7, 9	5
6th	Master of Arms, Perk, Doctrine Ability	3, 5, 7, 9	5, 9
7th	Characteristic Increase, Heightened Focus, Seize the Initiative, Skill, Doctrine Feature	3, 5, 7, 9	5, 9
8th	Perk, Doctrine Feature, 11-Focus Ability	3, 5, 7, 9, 11	5, 9
9th	Grandmaster of Arms, Doctrine Ability	3, 5, 7, 9, 11	5, 9, 11
10th	Characteristic Increase, Command, Perk, Skill, True Focus, Warmaster	3, 5, 7, 9, 11	5, 9, 11

Focus in Combat

At the start of a combat encounter or some other stressful situation tracked in combat rounds (as determined by the Director), you gain focus equal to your Victories. At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 2 focus.

Additionally, the first time each combat round that you or any ally damages a creature marked by you (see Mark below), you gain 1 focus. The first time in a combat round that any ally within 10 squares of you uses a heroic ability, you gain 1 focus.

You lose any remaining focus at the end of the encounter.

Focus Outside of Combat

Though you can't gain focus outside of combat, you can use your heroic abilities and effects that cost focus without spending it. Whenever you use an ability or effect outside of combat that costs focus, you can't use that same ability or effect outside of combat again until you earn 1 or more Victories or finish a respite.

When you use an ability outside of combat that lets you spend unlimited focus on its effect, you can use it as if you had spent an amount of focus equal to your Victories. (Such abilities aren't part of the core rules for the tactician, but they might appear in future products.)

1st-Level Doctrine Feature

Your tactical doctrine grants you a feature, as shown on the 1st-Level Doctrine Features table.

1st-Level Doctrine Features

Doctrine	Feature
Insurgent	Covert Operations
Mastermind	Studied Commander
Vanguard	Commanding Presence

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Commanding Presence

You command any room you walk into. While you are present during a negotiation, each hero with you treats their Renown as 2 higher than usual. Additionally, each hero with you during a combat encounter has a double edge on tests made to stop combat and start a negotiation.

Covert Operations

While in your presence or working according to your plans, each of your allies gains an edge on tests using any skill from the intrigue skill group. Additionally, you can use the Lead skill to assist another creature with any test made using a skill from the intrigue group.

At the Director's discretion, you and your allies can use skills from the intrigue skill group to attempt research or reconnaissance during a negotiation instead of outside of a negotiation.

Studied Commander

Your encyclopedic knowledge of the history of battle lets you apply that knowledge to current challenges. While you are present, each hero with you treats the Discover Lore project related to a war or battle as one category cheaper. This makes projects seeking common lore free, but such projects still require a respite activity to complete. (See Chapter 12: Downtime Projects for more information.)

Additionally, if you have 24 hours or more before a combat encounter or negotiation, and you have one or more clues or rumors regarding the encounter or negotiation, you can make a Reason test as a respite activity. The following test outcomes apply to a combat encounter:

- ≤11 The Director tells you the number of creatures in the encounter.
- 12–16 The Director tells you the number and level of the creatures in the encounter.
- 17+ The Director tells you the tier 2 outcome information, and when the encounter begins, all enemies are surprised.

The following test outcomes apply to a negotiation:

- ≤11 The Director gives you three motivations, one of which belongs to an NPC in the negotiation.
- 12–16 The Director gives you one motivation for an NPC in the negotiation.
- 17+ The Director tells you the tier 2 outcome information, and you and each of your allies gains an edge on tests made to influence NPCs during the negotiation.

You can make this test only once for any encounter or negotiation.

Tactician Abilities Explained

Many of the tactician's abilities grant allies extra movement, damage, and actions. But what's happening in the fiction to allow this? The tactician is an incredible strategist and inspiring leader who is quick to give commands and inspiration that causes their allies to act. The tactician can quickly read the battlefield, analyze enemies, and then bark orders and encouragement that pushes their allies to greatness. Many of the names of the tactician's abilities are the actual commands they give their friends!

Doctrine Triggered Action

Your tactical doctrine grants you a triggered action, as shown on the Doctrine Triggered Actions table.

Doctrine Triggered Actions

Doctrine	Triggered Action
Insurgent	Advanced Tactics
Mastermind	Overwatch
Vanguard	Parry

Advanced Tactics

Your leadership aids an ally.

Ranged Ranged 10 | **Triggered** One creature

Trigger: The target deals damage to another creature.

Effect: The target gains 2 surges, which they can use on the triggering damage.

Spend 1 Focus: If the damage has any potency effect associated with it, the potency is increased by 1.

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Overwatch

Under your direction, an ally waits for just the right moment to strike.

Ranged
Ranged 10

Triggered
One enemy

Trigger: The target moves.

Effect: At any time during the target's movement, one ally can make a free strike against them.

Spend 1 Focus: If the target has R < AVERAGE, they are slowed (EoT).

Parry

Your quick reflexes cost an enemy the precision they seek.

Melee, Weapon
Melee 2

Triggered
Self or one ally

Trigger: A creature deals damage to the target.

Effect: You can shift 1 square. If the target is you, or if you end this shift adjacent to the target, the target takes half the damage. If the damage has any potency effect associated with it, the potency is decreased by 1.

Spend 1 Focus: This ability's distance becomes Melee 1 + your Reason score, and you can shift up to a number of squares equal to your Reason score instead of 1 square.

Field Arsenal

You have drilled with a broad array of arms and armor, and have developed techniques to optimize their use. You can use and gain the benefits of two kits, including both their signature abilities. Whenever you would choose or change one kit, you can choose or change your second kit as well. See Chapter 6: Kits for more information. (*Quick Build:* Shining Armor, Sniper.)

If both kits grant you the same benefit, you take one or the other and can't change your choice until you finish a respite. (This usually means taking the higher of two bonuses.)

For example, if you take the Shining Armor and Sniper kits, you gain the following benefits overall:

- **Stamina Bonus:** +12 per echelon
- **Stability Bonus:** +1
- **Melee Damage Bonus:** +2/+2/+2
- **Ranged Damage Bonus:** +0/+0/+4
- **Speed Bonus:** +1
- **Ranged Distance Bonus:** +10
- **Disengage Bonus:** +1
- You can use the Patient Shot and Protective Attack signature abilities.

Kit signature abilities have their kit's bonuses already applied, which might require you to adjust the bonuses of the signature abilities you gain from a kit. For example, you might take the Martial Artist kit, which gives a melee weapon damage bonus of +2/+2/+2, and the Mountain kit, which gives a melee weapon damage bonus of +0/+0/+4. If you choose to use the Mountain kit's damage bonus, then the Battle Grace signature ability from the Martial Artist kit loses the +2/+2/+2 bonus from that kit, reducing its usual 5/8/11 damage for its tier 1, tier 2, and tier 3 outcomes to 3/6/9. It then gains the +0/+0/+4 of the Mountain kit to deal 3/6/13 damage.



Mark

You know how to focus the attention of your allies as you push them toward victory. You have the following ability.

Mark

You draw your allies' attention to a specific foe—with devastating effect.

Ranged
Ranged 10

Maneuver
One creature

Effect: The target is marked by you until the end of the encounter, until you are dying, or until you use this ability again. You can willingly end your mark on a creature (no action required), and if another tactician marks a creature, your mark on that creature ends. When a creature marked by you is reduced to 0 Stamina, you can use a free triggered action to mark a new target within distance.

You can initially mark only one creature using this ability, though other tactician abilities allow you to mark additional creatures at the same time. The mastermind tactical doctrine's Anticipation feature allows you to target additional creatures with this ability starting at 5th level.

While a creature marked by you is within your line of effect, you and allies within your line of effect gain an edge on power rolls made against that creature. Additionally, whenever you or any ally uses an ability to deal rolled damage to a creature marked by you, you can spend 1 focus to gain one of the following benefits as a free triggered action:

The ability deals extra damage equal to twice your Reason score.
The creature dealing the damage can spend a Recovery.
The creature dealing the damage can shift up to a number of squares equal to your Reason score.
If you damage a creature marked by you with a melee ability, the creature is taunted by you until the end of their next turn.

You can't gain more than one benefit from the same trigger.

Strike Now

You have the following ability.

"Strike Now!"

Your foe left an opening. You point this out to an ally!

Ranged
Ranged 10

Main action
One ally

Effect: The target can use a signature ability as a free triggered action.

Spend 5 Focus: You target two allies instead of one.

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Tactician Abilities

You are a formidable combatant in your own right, but your greatest strength is the abilities you wield that let you shape control of the battlefield.

Kit Signature Ability

Each kit from your Field Arsenal feature grants you a signature ability. Signature abilities can be used at will.

Heroic Abilities

Your heroic abilities cover a range of combat tactics, all of which require focus to use.

3-Focus Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 3 focus to use. (*Quick Build:* Inspiring Strike.)

Battle Cry (3 Focus)

You shout a phrase that galvanizes your team.

Ranged | **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 | Three allies

Power Roll + Reason

≤11 Each target gains 1 surge.
12–16 Each target gains 2 surges.
17+ Each target gains 3 surges.

Concussive Strike (3 Focus)

Your precise strike leaves your foe struggling to respond.

Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 or ranged 5 | One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:

≤11 3 + M damage; M < WEAK, dazed (save ends)
12–16 5 + M damage; M < AVERAGE, dazed (save ends)
17+ 8 + M damage; M < STRONG, dazed (save ends)

Inspiring Strike (3 Focus)

Your attack gives an ally hope.

Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 or ranged 5 | One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:

≤11 3 + M damage; you or one ally within 10 squares of you can spend a Recovery
12–16 5 + M damage; you or one ally within 10 squares of you can spend a Recovery
17+ 8 + M damage; you and one ally within 10 squares of you can spend a Recovery, and each of you gains an edge on the next ability roll you make during the encounter

Squad! Forward! (3 Focus)

On your command, you and your allies force back the enemy line.

Ranged | **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 | Self and two allies

Effect: Each target can move up to their speed.

5-Focus Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 5 focus to use. (*Quick Build:* Hammer and Anvil.)

Hammer and Anvil (5 Focus)

"Let's not argue about who's the hammer and who's the anvil!"

Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 or ranged 5 | One creature or object

Power Roll + Might:

≤11 5 + M damage; one ally within 10 squares of you can use a strike signature ability against the target as a free triggered action
12–16 9 + M damage; one ally within 10 squares of you can use a strike signature ability that gains an edge against the target as a free triggered action
17+ 12 + M damage; two allies within 10 squares of you can each use a strike signature ability that gains an edge against the target as a free triggered action

Effect: If the target is reduced to 0 Stamina before one or both chosen allies has made their strike, the ally or allies can pick a different target.

Mind Game (5 Focus)

Your attack demoralizes your foe. Your allies begin to think you can win.

Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 or ranged 5 | One creature or object

Effect: You mark the target.

Power Roll + Might:

≤11 4 + M damage; R < WEAK, weakened (save ends)
12–16 6 + M damage; R < AVERAGE, weakened (save ends)
17+ 10 + M damage; R < STRONG, weakened (save ends)

Effect: Before the start of your next turn, the first time any ally deals damage to any target marked by you, that ally can spend a Recovery.

Now! (5 Focus)

Your allies wait for your command—then unleash death!

Ranged | **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 | Three allies

Effect: Each target can make a free strike.

This Is What We Planned For (5 Focus)

All those coordination drills you made them do finally pay off.

Ranged | **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 | Two allies

Effect: Each target who hasn't acted yet this combat round can take their turn in any order immediately after yours.

2nd-Level Features

As a 2nd-level tactician, you gain the following features.

Perk

You gain one exploration, interpersonal, or intrigue perk of your choice. See Chapter 7: Perks.

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2nd-Level Doctrine Feature

Your tactical doctrine grants you a feature, as shown on the 2nd-Level Doctrine Features table.

2nd-Level Doctrine Features

Doctrine	Feature
Insurgent	Infiltration Tactics
Mastermind	Goaded
Vanguard	Melee Superiority

Goaded

You have learned to leverage your marked foes' psychology and goad them into acting before they're tactically ready. Whenever a creature marked by you uses a strike that targets you or any ally within your line of effect, you can use a free triggered action to change the target of the strike to you or another ally within your line of effect.

Infiltration Tactics

You have trained your squad to work together, stay silent, and wait for the opportune time to strike. Whenever you or any ally within 10 squares of you becomes hidden, that creature gains 1 surge.

Melee Superiority

After constant drills, you can more accurately anticipate an enemy's plan and thwart their attempts to move across the battlefield. Whenever you make an opportunity attack, the target's speed is reduced to 0 until the end of the current turn.

Mark Benefit: When a creature marked by you attempts to move or shift within distance of your melee free strike, you can use a free triggered action and spend 2 focus to make a melee free strike against that creature.

2nd-Level Doctrine Ability

Your tactical doctrine grants your choice of one of two heroic abilities.

2nd-Level Insurgent Ability

Choose one of the following abilities.

Fog of War (5 Focus)

Your unorthodox strategy causes enemies to lash out in fear, heedless of who they might be attacking.

Ranged — Ranged 10
Maneuver — Two creatures

Effect: Each target is marked by you, and must immediately make a free strike against a creature of your choice within 5 squares of them.

Mark Benefit: Until the end of the encounter, whenever you or any ally makes a strike against a creature marked by you, you can spend 2 focus to force that target to make a free strike against a creature of your choice within 5 squares of them.



Try Me Instead (5 Focus)

"Try picking on someone my size."

Melee, Strike, Weapon — Self; see below
Main action — Self

Effect: You shift up to your speed directly toward an ally, ending adjacent to them, then swapping locations with that ally as long as you can fit into each other's spaces. The ally can spend a Recovery, and you can make the following weapon strike with a distance of melee 1 against a creature.

Power Roll + Reason
≤11 2 + R damage; R < WEAK, frightened (save ends)
12–16 3 + R damage; R < AVERAGE, frightened (save ends)
17+ 4 + R damage; R < STRONG, frightened (save ends)

2nd-Level Mastermind Ability

Choose one of the following abilities.

I've Got Your Back (5 Focus)

Your enemy will think twice about attacking your friend.

Ranged, Strike, Weapon — Ranged 5
Main action — One creature

Power Roll + Reason
≤11 5 + R damage; taunted (EoT)
12–16 9 + R damage; taunted (EoT)
17+ 12 + R damage; taunted (EoT)

Effect: One ally adjacent to the target can spend a Recovery.

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Targets of Opportunity (5 Focus)

You point out easy targets to your friends, allowing them to include more enemies in their attacks.

Ranged | **Maneuver**
Ranged 5 | Two creatures

Effect: Each target is marked by you, and you gain two surges.

Mark Benefit: Until the end of the encounter, whenever you or any ally makes a strike against a creature marked by you, you can spend 2 focus to add one additional target to the strike.

2nd-Level Vanguard Ability

Choose one of the following abilities.

No Dying on My Watch (5 Focus)

You prioritize saving an ally over your own safety.

Ranged, Strike, Weapon | **Triggered**
Ranged 5 | One enemy

Trigger: The target deals damage to an ally.

Effect: You move up to your speed toward the target, ending this movement adjacent to them or in the nearest square if you can't reach an adjacent square. The triggering ally can spend a Recovery and gains 5 temporary Stamina for each enemy you came adjacent to during the move. You then make a power roll against the target.

Power Roll + Might:

- ≤11: R < WEAK, the target is frightened of the triggering ally (save ends)
- 12-16: R < AVERAGE, the target is frightened of the triggering ally (save ends)
- 17+: R < STRONG, the target is frightened of the triggering ally (save ends)

Squad! On Me! (5 Focus)

Together we are invincible!

Area | **Maneuver**
1 burst | Self and each ally in the area

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, each target has a bonus to stability equal to your Might score. Additionally, each target gains 2 surges.

3rd-Level Features

As a 3rd-level tactician, you gain the following features.

Out of Position

Even before battle begins, your enemies struggle to keep up with your tactics. At the start of an encounter, you can use a free triggered action to use your Mark ability against one enemy you have line of effect to, even if you are surprised. You can then slide the marked target up to 3 squares, ignoring stability. The target can't be moved in a way that would harm them (such as over a cliff), leave them dying, or result in them suffering a condition or other negative effect.

7-Focus Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 7 focus to use.

Frontal Assault (7 Focus)

The purpose of a charge is to break their morale and force a retreat.

— | **Maneuver**
Self | Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, the first time on a turn that you or any ally deals damage to a target marked by you, the creature who dealt the damage can push the target up to 2 squares and then shift up to 2 squares. Additionally, any ally using the Charge main action to target a creature marked by you can use a melee strike signature ability or a melee strike heroic ability instead of a melee free strike.

Hit 'Em Hard! (7 Focus)

Your allies see the advantages in attacking the targets you select.

— | **Maneuver**
Self | Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, whenever you or any ally deals damage to a target marked by you, that creature gains 2 surges, which they can use immediately.

Rout (7 Focus)

The tide begins to turn.

— | **Maneuver**
Self | Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, whenever you or any ally deals damage to a target marked by you who has R < AVERAGE, the target is frightened of the creature who dealt the damage (save ends).

Stay Strong and Focus! (7 Focus)

"We can do this! Keep faith and hold fast!"

— | **Maneuver**
Self | Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, whenever you or any ally deals damage to a target marked by you, the creature who dealt the damage can spend a Recovery.

4th-Level Features

As a 4th-level tactician, you gain the following features.

Characteristic Increase

Your Might and Reason scores each increase to 3.

Focus on Their Weaknesses

The first time each combat round that you or any ally damages a target marked by you, you gain 2 focus instead of 1.

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Improved Field Arsenal

Your expertise with weapons has grown. Whenever you use a signature ability from one of your equipped kits or make a free strike using a weapon from one of your equipped kits, you gain an edge.

Perk

You gain one perk of your choice.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice. See Skills in Chapter 9: Tests.

5th-Level Features

As a 5th-level tactician, you gain the following features.

5th-Level Doctrine Feature

Your tactical doctrine grants you two features, as shown on the 5th-Level Doctrine Features table.

5th-Level Doctrine Features

Doctrine	Features
Insurgent	Distracted, Leave No Trace
Mastermind	Anticipation, I Predicted That
Vanguard	Shake It Off, Tactical Offensive

Anticipation

You have learned to be more preemptive on the battlefield, thinking more steps ahead than your opponents. You can target two creatures with your Mark ability.

Distracted

You have mastered the ability to distract your foes, allowing you and your allies to take advantage of their gaps in attention. Whenever you or any ally attempts to hide, any creature marked by you doesn't count as an observer. Additionally, you and your allies can use other allies as cover for the purpose of hiding.

I Predicted That

Your expertise in history and lore allows you and your allies to outthink rivals in the present day. You and any ally within 10 squares of you gain an edge on Reason tests.

Leave No Trace

You and any ally within 10 squares of you can move at full speed while sneaking. Additionally, enemies within 10 squares of you take a bane on tests made to search for you or your allies while any of you are hidden.

Shake It Off

As a free maneuver, you can spend 1d6 Stamina to ignore a consequence from a test, or to end one effect on you that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of your turn. Any ally adjacent to you can also spend Stamina as a free maneuver to gain this benefit.



Tactical Offensive

When you use the Charge main action to attack a creature marked by you, you can use a signature or heroic ability with the Melee and Strike keywords instead of a melee free strike.

9-Focus Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 9 focus to use.

Squad! Gear Check! (9 Focus)

You distract a foe while your allies secure their defensive gear.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 9 + M damage
12–16 13 + M damage
17+ 18 + M damage

Effect: You and each ally adjacent to the target gain 10 temporary Stamina.

Squad! Remember Your Training! (9 Focus)

You remind your allies how to best use their gear.

Ranged | **Main action**
Ranged 10 | Self and two allies

Effect: Each target gains 1 surge and can use a signature ability that has a double edge.

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Win This Day! (9 Focus)

You inspire your allies to recover and gather their strength.

Area — 3 burst
Main action — Self and each ally in the area

Effect: The target gains 2 surges. Additionally, they can spend a Recovery, remove any conditions or effects on them, and stand up if they are prone.

You've Still Got Something Left (9 Focus)

You push an ally to use a heroic ability sooner than they otherwise would.

Ranged — Ranged 10
Main action — One ally

Effect: The target uses a heroic ability with the Strike keyword as a free triggered action, and deals extra damage with that ability equal to your Reason score. The ability has its Heroic Resource cost reduced by 1 + your Reason score (minimum cost 0).

6th-Level Features

As a 6th-level tactician, you gain the following features.

Master of Arms

Your expertise with weapons has grown to true mastery. Whenever you use a signature ability from one of your equipped kits or make a free strike using a weapon from one of your equipped kits, you can negate a bane on the power roll or reduce a double bane to a bane.

Perk

You gain one exploration, interpersonal, or intrigue perk of your choice.

6th-Level Doctrine Ability

Your tactical doctrine grants your choice of one of two heroic abilities.

6th-Level Insurgent Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Coordinated Execution (9 Focus)

You direct your ally to make a killing blow.

Ranged — Ranged 10
Free triggered — One ally

Trigger: The target uses an ability to deal rolled damage to a creature while hidden.
Effect: If the target of the triggering ability is not a leader or solo creature, they are reduced to 0 Stamina. If the target of the triggering ability is a minion, the entire squad is killed. If the target of the triggering ability is a leader or solo creature, the triggering ability's power roll automatically obtains a tier 3 outcome.

Panic in Their Lines (9 Focus)

You confuse your foes, causing them to turn on each other.

Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon — Melee 1 or ranged 5
Main action — Two creatures

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 — 6 + M damage; slide 1
12–16 — 9 + M damage; slide 3
17+ — 13 + M damage; slide 5

Effect: If a target is force moved into another creature, they must make a free strike against that creature.

6th-Level Mastermind Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Battle Plan (9 Focus)

With new understanding of your foes, you create the perfect plan to win the battle.

Ranged — Ranged 10
Maneuver — Three creatures

Effect: Each target is marked by you. Immediately and until the end of the encounter, the Director tells you if any creatures marked by you have damage immunity or weakness and the value of that immunity or weakness. Additionally, you and each ally within 3 squares of you gains 2 surges.

Mark Benefit: Until the end of the encounter, whenever you or any ally makes a strike against a creature marked by you, you can spend 2 focus to make the strike ignore damage immunity and deal extra damage equal to three times your Reason score.

Hustle! (9 Focus)

You and your allies coordinate to form a new battle line.

Area — 2 burst
Maneuver — Self and each ally in the area

Effect: You mark two enemies within 10 squares of you. Each target can shift up to their speed. You and each target gain 2 surges.

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6th-Level Vanguard Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Instant Retaliation (9 Focus)

You parry with almost supernatural speed.

Melee, Weapon | **Free triggered**
Melee 1 | One ally

Trigger: A creature deals damage to the target.

Effect: The target takes half the damage. You then make a power roll against the triggering creature.

Power Roll + Might:

≤11 A < WEAK, dazed (save ends)
12-16 A < AVERAGE, dazed (save ends)
17+ A < STRONG, dazed (save ends)

To Me Squad! (9 Focus)

You lead your allies in a charge.

Charge, Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Power Roll + Might:

≤11 6 + M damage; one ally within 10 squares can use the Charge main action as a free triggered action, and use make a melee strike signature ability instead of a free strike for the charge
12-16 9 + M damage; one ally within 10 squares can use the Charge main action as a free triggered action, and can use a melee strike signature ability that gains an edge instead of a free strike for the charge
17+ 13 + M damage; two allies within 10 squares can use the Charge main action as a free triggered action, and can each use a melee strike signature ability that gains an edge instead of a free strike for the charge

Effect: If the target is hit with two or more strikes as part of this ability and they have R < STRONG, they are dazed (save ends). If the target is reduced to 0 Stamina before one or both allies has made their strike, the ally or allies can pick a different target.

7th-Level Features

As a 7th-level tactician, you gain the following features.

Characteristic Increase

Each of your characteristic scores increases by 1, to a maximum of 4.

Heightened Focus

At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 3 focus instead of 2.

Seize the Initiative

If you are not surprised when combat begins, your side gets to go first. If an enemy has an ability that allows their side to go first, you roll as usual to determine who goes first.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice.

7th-Level Doctrine Feature

Your tactical doctrine grants you a feature, as shown on the 7th-Level Doctrine Features table.

7th-Level Doctrine Features

Doctrine	Feature
Insurgent	Asymmetric Warfare
Mastermind	Grand Strategy
Vanguard	Shock and Awe

Asymmetric Warfare

You have advanced your skills in subterfuge, now directing full battlefield strategy and logistics. During a montage test or negotiation, you can obtain one automatic success on a test made using a skill from the intrigue skill group. Additionally, you can use skills from the intrigue skill group to conceal large groups of people, such as escaping civilians and groups of guerilla warriors.

Grand Strategy

You have grown your skills in strategy, wielding intricate battlefield tactics and plans. During a montage test or negotiation, you can obtain one automatic success on a test made using a skill from the lore skill group. Additionally, when you take a respite, you can make a project roll for a research project in addition to undertaking another respite activity.

Shock and Awe

You have expanded your leadership skills, strengthening your followers' morale and providing logistical support. During a montage test or negotiation, you can obtain one automatic success on a test made using a skill from the interpersonal skill group. Additionally, you can convince a group of people to help you with a crafting project during a respite. If these people are available when you take a respite, you can make a project roll for a crafting project in addition to undertaking another respite activity.

8th-Level Features

As an 8th-level tactician, you gain the following features.

Perk

You gain one perk of your choice.

8th-Level Doctrine Feature

Your tactical doctrine grants you a feature, as shown on the 8th-Level Doctrine Features table.

8th-Level Doctrine Features

Doctrine	Feature
Insurgent	Bait and Ambush
Mastermind	Pincer Movement
Vanguard	See Your Enemies Driven Before You

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Bait and Ambush

You have trained your squad to be silent ambushers.

Mark Benefit: When you or any ally makes a strike against a creature marked by you, you can spend 2 focus to let the character making the strike shift up to a number of squares equal to your Reason score and use the Hide maneuver as a free maneuver once during the shift. The creature can shift before or after the strike is resolved.

Pincer Movement

You have trained your squad to coordinate their movements to maximize combat impact.

Mark Benefit: When you or any ally makes a strike against a creature marked by you, you can spend 2 focus to have the character making the strike shift up to a number of squares equal to your Reason score before the strike is resolved. If you didn't make the strike, you can make this shift as well. If you did make the strike, one ally within 10 squares of you can make this shift as well.

See Your Enemies Driven Before You

You have trained your squad to maximize impact and break enemy lines when they attack.

Mark Benefit: When you or any ally makes a melee strike against a creature marked by you, you can spend 2 focus to have the character making the strike push the target up to a number of squares equal to your Reason score. That character can then shift up to a number of squares equal to your Reason score, ending this shift adjacent to the target.

11-Focus Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 11 focus to use.

Go Now and Speed Well (11 Focus)

You direct an attack to strike true.

Ranged — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — Self or one ally

Effect: The target gains 2 surges and can use a signature or heroic ability as a free triggered action. The ability has a double edge on the power roll, ignores damage immunity, and increases the potency of any potency effects by 1.

Finish Them! (11 Focus)

You point out an opening to your ally so they can land a killing blow.

Ranged — Free triggered
Ranged 10 — One creature

Trigger: The target is not a leader or solo creature, and is winded.
Effect: The target is killed. Additionally, the creature who caused the target to be winded can spend a Recovery.

Floodgates Open (11 Focus)

You direct your squad to strike in unison and with devastating effect.

Ranged — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — Three allies

Effect: Each target gains 1 surge and can use a signature ability as a free triggered action. That ability gains an edge on the power roll and increases the potency of any potency effects by 1.

I'll Open and You'll Close (11 Focus)

You create an opening for an ally.

Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 or ranged 5 — One creature

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 — 6 + M damage
12–16 — 10 + M damage
17+ — 14 + M damage

Effect: One ally within 10 squares of you can use a heroic ability against the target as a free triggered action without spending any of their Heroic Resource, as long as they have enough Heroic Resource to pay for the ability. If the target is reduced to 0 Stamina before the chosen ally has used their ability, the ally can pick a different target.

9th-Level Features

As a 9th-level tactician, you gain the following features.

Grandmaster of Arms

Your expertise with weapons has grown to true mastery. Whenever you use a signature ability from one of your equipped kits or make a free strike using a weapon from one of your equipped kits, you automatically obtain a tier 3 outcome on the power roll. You can still roll to determine if you score a critical hit.

9th-Level Doctrine Ability

Your tactical doctrine grants your choice of one of two heroic abilities.

9th-Level Insurgent Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Squad! Hit and Run! (11 Focus)

I had to pry this secret from the shadow colleges.

Ranged — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — Self and two allies

Effect: Each target gains 2 surges, and can use a free triggered action to use a signature ability that gains an edge. After resolving their ability, each target can shift up to 2 squares and become hidden even if they have no cover or concealment, or if they are observed.

Their Lack of Focus Is Their Undoing (11 Focus)

You trick your enemies into attacking each other and leave them confused by the aftermath.

Magic, Ranged, Weapon — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — Three enemies

Effect: Each target uses a signature ability against one or more targets of your choosing, with each ability automatically obtaining a tier 3 outcome on the power roll. After resolving the targets' abilities, you make a power roll against each original target.

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 — R < WEAK, dazed (save ends)
12–16 — R < AVERAGE, dazed (save ends)
17+ — R < STRONG, dazed (save ends)

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9th-Level Mastermind Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Blot Out the Sun! (11 Focus)

What makes a good soldier? The ability to fire four shots a minute in any weather.

Area
3 burst

Main action
Self and each ally in the area

Effect: Each target can make a ranged free strike that gains an edge against any enemy marked by you within distance of their ranged free strike. A target ignores banes and double banes when making this strike.

Counterstrategy (11 Focus)

I've identified a way to negate their strengths.

—
Self

Main action
Self

Effect: You gain 6 surges. Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, whenever the Director spends Malice (see *Draw Steel: Monsters*), choose yourself or one ally within 10 squares. The chosen character gains 2 of their Heroic Resource.

9th-Level Vanguard Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

No Escape (11 Focus)

Nothing will stop you from reaching your foe.

Charge, Melee, Strike, Weapon
Melee 1

Main action
One creature

Effect: You mark the target.

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 11 + M damage
12–16 16 + M damage
17+ 21 + M damage

Effect: If you use this ability as part of the Charge main action, enemies' spaces don't count as difficult terrain for your movement. Additionally, if you move through any creature's space, you can slide that creature 1 square out of the path of your charge.

That One Is Mine! (11 Focus)

You focus on making an enemy irrelevant.

Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon
Melee 1 or ranged 5

Main action
One creature

Effect: The target is marked by you.

Power Roll + Might:
≤11 8 + M damage
12–16 13 + M damage
17+ 17 + M damage

Effect: Until the end of the encounter or until you are dying, you can use a signature or heroic ability instead of a free strike against any target marked by you.

10th-Level Features

As a 10th-level tactician, you gain the following features.

Characteristic Increase

Your Might and Reason scores each increase to 5.

Command

You have an epic resource called command. Each time you finish a respite, you gain command equal to the XP you gain. You can spend command on your abilities as if it were focus.

Additionally, whenever you or any ally uses an ability to deal rolled damage to a creature marked by you, you can spend 1 command as a free triggered action to increase the power roll outcome for that target by one tier. Whenever an enemy marked by you makes an ability roll, you can spend 1 command as a free triggered action to decrease the power roll outcome by one tier.

Command remains until you spend it.

Perk

You gain one exploration, interpersonal, or intrigue perk of your choice.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice.

True Focus

At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 4 focus instead of 3.

Warmaster

You have mastered the entirety of possible strategies and tactics. Whenever you or any ally makes an ability roll against a target marked by you, the character making the roll can roll three dice and choose which two to use.

Additionally, whenever an ally uses a heroic ability that targets one or more creatures marked by you, they spend 2 fewer of their Heroic Resource on that ability (minimum 1).

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TALENT

A rare few people are born with the potential to harness psionic power, but only those who experience an awakening, a significant event that activates a talent's abilities, can tap into the mind's full potential. You are one of those people—a master of psionics and a source of incredible power created through sheer force of will. You can move and change matter, time, gravity, the laws of physics, or another creature's mind.

As a talent, you are limited only by the strength of your mind. But the ability to wield multiple powers at once and change reality at will involves a gamble. Every manifestation has a chance of harming you, and talents who use too much power too quickly pay a deadly price.



"I've seen what you can do! There is NO LIMIT to your power! All you have to do... is BELIEVE!"

Glass the Talent

Basics

Starting Characteristics: You start with a Reason of 2 and a Presence of 2, and you can choose one of the following arrays for your other characteristic scores:

- 2, –1, –1
- 1, 1, –1
- 1, 0, 0

Weak Potency: Reason – 2

Average Potency: Reason – 1

Strong Potency: Reason

Starting Stamina at 1st Level: 18

Stamina Gained at 2nd and Higher Levels: 9

Recoveries: 8

Skills: You gain the Psionics and Read Person skills (see Skills in Chapter 9: Tests). Then choose any two skills from the interpersonal or lore skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Empathize, Psionics, Read Person, Timescape.)

1st-Level Features

As a 1st-level talent, you gain the following features.

Talent Tradition

Psionic abilities are grouped into categories according to their effects, with each category comprising one of many talent traditions:

Animapathy abilities allow you to manipulate, meld, and exchange the souls of living things.
Chronopathy abilities allow you to view future and past events, and to manipulate time to aid allies and hinder foes.
Cryokinesis abilities allow you to manifest and manipulate absolute cold to enemies and the environment alike.
Metamorphosis abilities allow you to strengthen and manipulate your body and the bodies of others to perform preternatural exploits.
Pyrokinesis abilities allow you to create and manipulate fire by interacting with the potential energy found in all things.
Resopathy abilities allow you to manipulate matter and space to create, alter, or displace your environment and the creatures and objects in it.
Telekinesis abilities allow you to physically manipulate creatures and objects.
Telepathy abilities allow you to communicate with, read, and influence the minds of other creatures.

You choose a talent tradition from the following options: chronopathy, telekinesis, or telepathy. Your talent tradition is your subclass, and your choice of tradition determines many of the features you'll gain as you gain new levels. (Other talent traditions will be featured in future products.) (*Quick Build:* Telekinesis.)

Clarity and Strain

The focus and precision of your thoughts grant you a Heroic Resource called clarity that empowers your psionic abilities.

Talent Advancement

Level	Features	Abilities	Tradition Abilities
1st	Talent Tradition, Clarity and Strain, Mind Spike, Psionic Augmentation, Talent Ward, Telepathic Speech, Tradition Features, Talent Abilities	Two signature, 3, 5	—
2nd	Perk, Tradition Feature, Tradition Ability	Two signature, 3, 5	5
3rd	Scan, 7-Clarity Ability	Two signature, 3, 5, 7	5
4th	Characteristic Increase, Mind Projection, Mind Recovery, Perk, Skill Suspensor Field	Two signature, 3, 5, 7	5
5th	Tradition Feature, 9-Clarity Ability	Two signature, 3, 5, 7, 9	5
6th	Perk, Psi Boost, Tradition Ability	Two signature, 3, 5, 7, 9	5, 9
7th	Ancestral Memory, Cascading Strain, Characteristic Increase, Lucid Mind, Skill	Two signature, 3, 5, 7, 9	5, 9
8th	Perk, Tradition Feature, 11-Clarity Ability	Two signature, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11	5, 9
9th	Fortress of Perfect Thought, Tradition Ability	Two signature, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11	5, 9, 11
10th	Characteristic Increase, Clear Mind, Omnisensory, Perk, Psion, Skill, Vision	Two signature, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11	5, 9, 11

Clarity in Combat

At the start of a combat encounter or some other stressful situation tracked in combat rounds (as determined by the Director), you gain clarity equal to your Victories. At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 1d3 clarity.

Additionally, the first time each combat round that a creature is force moved, you gain 1 clarity.

You can spend clarity you don't have, pushing that Heroic Resource into negative numbers to a maximum negative value equal to 1 + your Reason score. At the end of each of your turns, you take 1 damage for each negative point of clarity.

Whenever you have clarity below 0, you are strained. Some psionic abilities have additional effects if you are already strained or become strained when you use them. Strained effects can still impact you even after you are no longer strained.

You lose any remaining clarity or reset any negative clarity at the end of the encounter.

Clarity Outside of Combat

Though you can't gain clarity outside of combat, you can use your heroic abilities and effects that cost clarity without spending it. Whenever you use an ability or effect outside of combat that costs clarity, you can't use that same ability or effect outside of combat again until you earn 1 or more Victories or finish a respite.

Additionally, whenever you use any ability or effect that costs clarity within 1 minute of using another such ability, you take 1d6 damage and incur any strain effect from using the new ability.

When you use an ability outside of combat that lets you spend unlimited clarity on its effect, such as Minor Telekinesis, you can use it as if you had spent an amount of clarity equal to your Victories.

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Mind Spike

You have the following ability, which can be used as a ranged free strike.

Mind Spike
A telepathic bolt instantly zaps a creature's brain.

Psionic, Ranged, Strike, Telepathy | **Main action**
Ranged 10 | One creature

Power Roll + Reason :
≤11 2 + R psychic damage
12-16 4 + R psychic damage
17+ 6 + R psychic damage

Strained: The target takes an extra 2 psychic damage. You also take 2 psychic damage that can't be reduced in any way.

Psionic Augmentation

Through meditation, you create pathways in your mind that enhance your statistics. Choose one of the following augmentations. You can change your augmentation and ward (see Talent Ward below) by undergoing a psionic meditation as a respite activity. (*Quick Build:* Force Augmentation.)

Battle Augmentation

You can wear light armor and wield light weapons effectively, even though you don't have a kit. While you wear light armor, you gain a +3 bonus to Stamina, and that bonus increases by 3 at 4th, 7th, and 10th levels. While you wield a light weapon, you gain a +1 damage bonus with weapon abilities, including free strikes. You can use light armor treasures and light weapon treasures.

If you have a kit, you can't take this augmentation.

Density Augmentation

You gain a +6 bonus to Stamina, and this bonus increases by 6 at 4th, 7th, and 10th levels. Additionally, you gain a +1 bonus to stability.

Distance Augmentation

Your ranged psionic abilities gain a +2 bonus to distance.

Force Augmentation

Your damage-dealing psionic abilities gain a +1 bonus to rolled damage.

Speed Augmentation

You gain a +1 bonus to speed and to the distance you can shift when you take the Disengage move action.

Talent Ward

Through meditation, you create a ward that protects you. Choose one of the following wards. You can change your ward and psionic augmentation (see above) by undergoing a psionic meditation as a respite activity. (*Quick Build:* Repulsive Ward.)

Entropy Ward

Your ward slows time for your enemies. Whenever a creature deals damage to you, their speed is reduced by an amount equal to your Reason score and they can't use triggered actions until the end of their next turn.

Repulsive Ward

You surround yourself with an invisible ward of telekinetic energy. Whenever an adjacent creature deals damage to you, you can use a free triggered action to push them up to a number of squares equal to your Reason score.

Steel Ward

Your ward reacts to danger, protecting you from future harm. Whenever you take damage, after the damage resolves, you gain damage immunity equal to your Reason score until the end of your next turn.

Vanishing Ward

Your ward allows you to slip away from threats. Whenever you take damage, you become invisible until the end of your next turn.

Telepathic Speech

You know the Mindspeech language (see Languages in Orden in Chapter 4: Background). Additionally, you can telepathically communicate with any creatures within distance of your Mind Spike ability if they share a language with you and you know of each other. When you communicate with someone this way, they can respond telepathically.

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1st-Level Tradition Features

Your talent tradition grants you two features, as shown on the 1st-Level Tradition Features table.

1st-Level Tradition Features

Tradition	Features
Chronopathy	Accelerate, Again
Telekinesis	Minor Telekinesis, Repel
Telepathy	Feedback Loop, Remote Assistance

Accelerate

You have the following ability.

Accelerate

To your ally, it seems as though the world has slowed down.

Psionic, Ranged — **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 — Self or one creature

Effect: The target shifts up to a number of squares equal to your Reason score.

Spend 2 Clarity: The target can use a maneuver.

Again

You have the following ability.

Again

You step back a split second to see if things play out a little differently.

Psionic, Ranged — **Triggered**
Ranged 10 — Self or one creature

Trigger: The target makes an ability roll.

Effect: You can use this ability after seeing the result of the triggering roll. The target must reroll the power roll and use the new roll.

Feedback Loop

You have the following ability.

Feedback Loop

Creating a brief psychic link between an enemy and their target gives that foe a taste of their own medicine.

Psionic, Ranged — **Triggered**
Ranged 10 — One creature

Trigger: The target deals damage to an ally.

Effect: The target takes psychic damage equal to half the triggering damage.

Minor Telekinesis

You have the following ability.

Minor Telekinesis

Wisps of psychic energy ripple visibly from your brain as you force the target to move using only your mind.

Psionic, Ranged — **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 — Self or one size 1 creature or object

Effect: You slide the target up to a number of squares equal to your Reason score.

Spend 2+ Clarity: The size of the creature or object you can target increases by 1 for every 2 clarity spent.

Spend 3 Clarity: You can vertical slide the target.

Remote Assistance

You have the following ability.

Remote Assistance

An ally gains the benefit of your intellect.

Psionic, Ranged — **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 — One creature or object

Effect: The next ability roll an ally makes against the target before the start of your next turn gains an edge.

Spend 1 Clarity: You target one additional creature or object.

Repel

You have the following ability.

Repel

They aren't going anywhere, but you might!

Psionic, Ranged — **Triggered**
Ranged 10 — Self or one ally

Trigger: The target takes damage or is force moved.

Effect: The target takes half the triggering damage, or the distance of the triggering forced movement is reduced by a number of squares equal to your Reason score. If the target took damage and was force moved, you choose the effect. If the forced movement is reduced to 0 squares, the target can push the source of the forced movement a number of squares equal to your Reason score.

Talent Abilities

You manifest a variety of psionic powers that let you impact the environment, bolster your allies, and empower yourself. You can choose abilities across different talent traditions or focus on abilities tied to your chosen tradition to dedicate yourself to its power.

Signature Abilities

Choose two signature abilities from the following options. Signature abilities can be used at will. (*Quick Build:* Incinerate, Kinetic Grip.)

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Entropic Bolt

You advance an enemy's age for a moment.

Chronopathy, Psionic, Ranged, Strike **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature or object

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 2 + P corruption damage; P < WEAK, slowed (save ends)
12–16 3 + P corruption damage; P < AVERAGE, slowed (save ends)
17+ 5+ P corruption damage; P < STRONG, slowed (save ends)

Effect: The target takes an extra 1 corruption damage for each additional time they are targeted by this ability during the encounter.

Strained: You gain 1 clarity when you obtain a tier 2 or tier 3 outcome on the power roll.

Hoarfrost

You blast a foe with a pulse of cold energy.

Cryokinesis, Psionic, Ranged, Strike **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 2 + R cold damage; M < WEAK, slowed (EoT)
12–16 4 + R cold damage; M < AVERAGE, slowed (EoT)
17+ 6 + R cold damage; M < STRONG, slowed (EoT)

Strained: You are slowed until the end of your next turn. Additionally, a target slowed by this ability is restrained instead.

Incinerate

The air erupts into a column of smokeless flame.

Area, Fire, Psionic, Pyrokinesis, Ranged **Main action**
3 cube within 10 Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Reason :
≤11 2 fire damage
12–16 4 fire damage
17+ 6 fire damage

Effect: A column of fire remains in the area until the start of your next turn. Each enemy who enters the area for the first time in a combat round or starts their turn there takes 2 fire damage.

Strained: The size of the cube increases by 2, but the fire disappears at the end of your turn.

Kinetic Grip

You lift and hurl your foe away from you.

Psionic, Ranged, Telekinesis **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature or object

Power Roll + Reason :
≤11 Slide 2 + R
12–16 Slide 4 + R
17+ Slide 6 + R; prone

Strained: You must vertical push the target instead of sliding them.

Kinetic Pulse

The force of your mind hurls enemies backward.

Area, Psionic, Telepathy **Main action**
1 burst Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Reason :
≤11 2 psychic damage
12–16 5 psychic damage; push 1
17+ 7 psychic damage; push 2

Strained: The size of the burst increases by 2, and you are bleeding until the start of your next turn.

Materialize

You picture an object in your mind and give it form—directly above your opponent's head.

Psionic, Ranged, Resopathy, **Strike** **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature or object

Power Roll + Reason :
≤11 3 + R damage
12–16 5 + R damage
17+ 8 + R damage

Effect: A worthless size 1M object drops onto the target to deal the damage, then rolls into an adjacent unoccupied space of your choice. The object is made of wood, stone, or metal (your choice).

Strained: The object explodes after the damage is dealt, and each creature adjacent to the target takes damage equal to your Reason score. You also take damage equal to your Reason score that can't be reduced in any way.

Optic Blast

Your eyes emit rays of powerful enervating force.

Metamorphosis, **Psionic, Ranged, Strike** **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature or object

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 2 + R damage; M < WEAK, prone
12–16 4 + R damage; M < AVERAGE, prone
17+ 6 + R damage; M < STRONG, prone

Effect: When targeting an object with a solid reflective surface or a creature carrying or wearing such an object (such as a mirror, an unpainted metal shield, or shiny metal plate armor), you can target one additional creature or object within 3 squares of the first target.

Strained: You gain 1 surge that you can use immediately, and you take damage equal to your Reason score that can't be reduced in any way.

Spirit Sword

You form a blade of mind energy and stab your target, invigorating yourself.

Animapathy, Melee, Psionic, Strike **Main action**
Melee 2 One creature or object

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 3 + P damage
12–16 6 + P damage
17+ 9+ P damage

Effect: You gain 1 surge.

Strained: The target takes an extra 3 damage. You also take 3 damage that can't be reduced in any way.

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Heroic Abilities

You know a range of heroic abilities, all of which cost clarity to fuel them.

3-Clarity Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 3 clarity to use. (*Quick Build:* Choke.)

Awe (3 Clarity)

You project psionic energy out to a creature and take on a new visage in their mind.

Psionic, Ranged, Strike, Telepathy **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature

Effect: If you target an ally, they gain temporary Stamina equal to three times your Presence score, and they can end one effect on them that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of their turn. If you target an enemy, you make a power roll.

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 3 + P psychic damage; I < WEAK, frightened (save ends)
12–16 6 + P psychic damage; I < AVERAGE, frightened (save ends)
17+ 9+ P psychic damage; I < STRONG, frightened (save ends)

Choke (3 Clarity)

You crush a foe in a telekinetic grip.

Psionic, Ranged, Strike, Telekinesis **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 3 + R damage; M < WEAK, slowed (save ends)
12–16 5 + R damage; M < AVERAGE, slowed (save ends)
17+ 8 + R damage; M < STRONG, restrained (save ends)

Effect: You can vertical pull the target up to 2 squares. If the target is made restrained by this ability, this forced movement ignores their stability.

Precognition (3 Clarity)

You give a target a glimpse into the future so that they're ready for what comes next.

Chronopathy, Melee, Psionic **Main action**
Melee 2 Self or one ally

Effect: Ability rolls made against the target take a bane until the start of your next turn. Whenever the target takes damage while under this effect, they can use a triggered action to make a free strike against the source of the damage.



Smolder (3 Clarity)

Smoke flows from your enemy like tears as their skin begins to blacken and flake.

Psionic, Pyrokinesis, Ranged, Strike **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature

Effect: Choose the damage type and the weakness for this ability from one of the following: acid, corruption, or fire. The target takes damage before this ability imposes any weakness.

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 3 + R damage; R < WEAK, the target has weakness 5 (save ends)
12–16 6 + R damage; R < AVERAGE, the target has weakness 5 (save ends)
17+ 9 + R damage; R < STRONG, the target has weakness equal to 5 + your Reason score (save ends)

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5-Clarity Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 5 clarity to use. (*Quick Build:* Inertia Soak.)

Flashback (5 Clarity)

The target is thrown several seconds back through time and gets to do it all again.

Chronopathy, Psionic, Ranged **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 Self or one ally

Effect: The target uses an ability with a base Heroic Resource cost of 7 or lower that they've previously used this round, without needing to spend the base cost. Augmentations to the ability can be paid for as usual.

Strained: You take 1d6 damage and are slowed (save ends).

Inertia Soak (5 Clarity)

Your psionic energy surrounds the target and pushes everything else away from them.

Psionic, Ranged, Telekinesis **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 Self or one ally

Effect: The target ignores difficult terrain and takes no damage from forced movement until the start of your next turn. Whenever the target enters a square while under this effect, they can push one adjacent creature up to 2 squares. When pushing an ally, the target can ignore that ally's stability.

Strained: You are weakened (save ends). While you are weakened this way, whenever you are force moved, the forced movement distance gains a +5 bonus.

Iron (5 Clarity)

The target's skin turns to hard, dark metal, impenetrable and dense.

Metamorphosis, **Psionic, Ranged** **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 Self or one ally

Effect: The target's stability increases by an amount equal to your Reason score, and they gain 10 temporary Stamina and 2 surges. This stability increase lasts until the target no longer has temporary Stamina from this ability.

Strained: You can't use maneuvers (save ends).

Perfect Clarity (5 Clarity)

You clear the mind of nothing but the goal.

Psionic, Ranged, Telepathy **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 Self or one ally

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, the target gains a +3 bonus to speed, and they have a double edge on the next power roll they make. If the target obtains a tier 3 outcome on that roll, you gain 1 clarity.

Strained: You take 1d6 damage, and you can't use triggered actions (save ends).

2nd-Level Features

As a 2nd-level talent, you gain the following features.

Perk

You gain one interpersonal, lore, or supernatural perk of your choice. See Chapter 7: Perks.

2nd-Level Tradition Feature

Your talent tradition grants you a feature, as shown on the 2nd-Level Tradition Features table.

2nd-Level Tradition Features

Tradition	Features
Chronopathy	Ease the Hours
Telekinesis	Ease Their Fall
Telepathy	Ease the Mind

Ease the Hours

You can increase the number of rounds in a montage test by 1 if the test would end before the heroes hit the success limit.

Ease the Mind

You gain an edge on tests made to stop combat and start a negotiation. Additionally, if you are present during a negotiation, any NPC who has a hostile or suspicious starting attitude has their patience increased by 1 (to a maximum of 5).

Ease Their Fall

Whenever you land after a fall, or if any falling creature lands within 2 squares of you, you can use a free triggered action to reduce the falling damage by an amount equal to 2 + your Reason score.

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2nd-Level Tradition Ability

Your talent tradition grants your choice of one of two heroic abilities.

2nd-Level Chronopathy Ability

Choose one of the following abilities.

Applied Chronometrics (5 Clarity)

Time slows down around you. Your heartbeat is the only gauge of the extra moments you've gained.

Chronopathy, Psionic, Ranged **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 Special

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 You target two creatures, one of which can be you.
12-16 You target three creatures, one of which can be you.
17+ You target four creatures, one of which can be you.

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, each target gains a +5 bonus to speed, they can't be made dazed, and they can use an additional maneuver on their turn. If a target is already dazed, that condition ends for them.

Strained: Your speed is halved until the end of the encounter.

Slow (5 Clarity)

Perhaps they wonder why everyone else is moving so quickly?

Chronopathy, Psionic, Ranged **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 Three creatures or objects

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 The target's speed is halved (save ends), or if P < WEAK, the target is slowed (save ends).
12-16 The target is slowed (save ends), or if P < AVERAGE, the target's speed is 0 (save ends).
17+ The target is slowed (save ends), or if P < STRONG, the target's speed is 0 (save ends).

Effect: A target can't use triggered actions while their speed is reduced this way.

Strained: The potency of this ability increases by 1 and you take 1d6 damage. At the start of each combat round while any target is affected by this ability, you take 1d6 damage. You can end the effect on all affected targets at any time (no action required).

2nd-Level Telekinesis Ability

Choose one of the following abilities.

Gravitic Burst (5 Clarity)

Everyone get away from me!

Area, Psionic, Telekinesis **Main action**
1 burst Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 3 damage; vertical push 2
12-16 6 damage; vertical push 4
17+ 9 damage; vertical push 6

Strained: The size of the burst increases by 1, and you are weakened until the end of your turn.

Levity and Gravity (5 Clarity)

You raise the target slightly into the air, then smother them against the ground.

Psionic, Ranged, Strike, Telekinesis **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature or object

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 6 + R damage; M < WEAK, prone
12-16 10 + R damage; M < AVERAGE, prone
17+ 14 + R damage; M < STRONG, prone and can't stand (save ends)

Strained: You take half the damage the target takes.

2nd-Level Telepathy Ability

Choose one of the following abilities.

Overwhelm (5 Clarity)

You overload their senses, turning all their subconscious thoughts into conscious ones.

Psionic, Ranged, Strike, Telepathy **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 6 + R psychic damage; I < WEAK, slowed (save ends)
12-16 10 + R psychic damage; I < AVERAGE, weakened (save ends)
17+ 14 + R psychic damage; I < STRONG, dazed (save ends)

Strained: You start crying, and you can't use triggered actions or make free strikes until the end of the target's next turn.

Synaptic Override (5 Clarity)

You control an enemy's nervous system. How pleasant for them.

Psionic, Ranged, Telepathy **Main action**
Ranged 10 One enemy

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 The target makes a free strike against one enemy of your choice.
12-16 The target shifts up to their speed and uses their signature ability against any enemies of your choice.
17+ The target moves up to their speed and uses their signature ability against any enemies of your choice.

Effect: You control the target's movement. The target can't be moved in a way that would harm them (such as over a cliff), leave them dying, or result in them suffering a condition or other negative effect. However, you can move them to provoke opportunity attacks.

Strained: You take 1d6 damage and are weakened until the end of your turn.

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3rd-Level Features

As a 3rd-level talent, you gain the following features.

Scan

You can extend your psionic senses beyond their usual range. Once on each of your turns, you can search for hidden creatures as a free maneuver (see Hide and Sneak in Chapter 9: Tests). Additionally, once you establish line of effect to a thinking creature within distance of your Mind Spike ability, you always have line of effect to that creature until they move beyond that distance.

7-Clarity Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 7 clarity to use.

Fling Through Time (7 Clarity)

You hurl the target through the annals of time, forcing them to witness every moment of their existence all at once.

Chronopathy, Psionic, Ranged, Strike **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature or object

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 3 + P corruption damage; P < WEAK, weakened (save ends)
12-16 5 + P corruption damage; the target is flung through time, and if P < AVERAGE, they are weakened (save ends)
17+ 8 + P corruption damage; the target is flung through time, and if P < STRONG, they are weakened (save ends)

Effect: A target who is flung through time is removed from the encounter map until the end of their next turn, reappearing in their original space or the nearest unoccupied space.

Strained: You take 2d6 damage and permanently grow visibly older (the equivalent of 10 years for a human). If you obtain a tier 3 outcome on the power roll, you gain 2 clarity.

Force Orbs (7 Clarity)

Spheres of solid psionic energy float around you.

Psionic, Ranged, Strike, Telekinesis **Main action**
Self; see below Self

Effect: You create three size 1T orbs that orbit your body. Each orb gives you a cumulative damage immunity 1. Each time you take damage, you lose 1 orb.

Once on each of your turns, you can use a free maneuver to fire an orb at a creature or object within 5 squares as a ranged strike, losing the orb after the strike.

Power Roll + Reason :
≤11 2 damage
12-16 3 damage
17+ 5 damage

Strained: You create five orbs, and you are weakened while you have any orbs active.

Reflector Field (7 Clarity)

A protective field reverses the momentum of incoming attacks.

Area, Psionic, Telepathy **Main action**
3 aura Special

Effect: The aura lasts until the start of your next turn. Whenever an enemy targets an ally in the area with a ranged ability, the ability is negated on the ally and reflected back at the enemy. The ability deals half the damage to the enemy that it would have dealt to the ally and loses any additional effects.

Strained: The size of the aura increases by 1. Whenever your aura reflects an ability, you take 2d6 damage and forget a memory, as determined by you and the Director.

Soul Burn (7 Clarity)

You blast their soul out of their body, leaving it to helplessly float back to a weakened husk.

Animapathy, Psionic, Ranged, Strike **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 6 + P damage; P < WEAK, dazed (save ends)
12-16 10 + P damage; P < AVERAGE, dazed (save ends)
17+ 14 + P damage; P < STRONG, dazed (save ends)

Effect: The target takes a bane on Presence tests until the end of the encounter.

Strained: The potency of this ability increases by 1. You take 2d6 damage and gain 3 surges that you can use immediately.

4th-Level Features

As a 4th-level talent, you gain the following features.

Characteristic Increase

Your Reason and Presence scores each increase to 3.

Mind Projection

As a maneuver, you project your mind outside your body. While you are in this state, your body remains unconscious and prone, and your mind is a separate entity with size 1T. Your mind automatically has concealment, and can freely move through solid matter. If you end your turn inside solid matter, you are forced out into the space where you entered it.

Any abilities or features you use originate from your mind. Both your mind and your body can take damage while separated, with any such damage applied to your Stamina. Your mind is instantly forced back into your body if you take any damage, and you can immediately return to your body as a free maneuver.

Mind Recovery

Whenever you spend a Recovery to regain Stamina while strained, you can forgo the Stamina and gain 3 clarity instead.

Additionally, the first time each combat round that a creature is force moved, you gain 2 clarity instead of 1.

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Perk

You gain one perk of your choice.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice. See Skills in Chapter 9: Tests.

Suspensor Field

You can fly. While flying, your stability is reduced to 0 and can't be increased. If you can already fly, you have a +2 bonus to speed while flying instead.

If you are strained while flying and are force moved, the forced movement distance gains a +2 bonus.

5th-Level Features

As a 5th-level talent, you gain the following features.

5th-Level Tradition Features

Your talent tradition grants you two features, as shown on the 5th-Level Tradition Features table.

5th-Level Tradition Features

Tradition	Features
Chronopathy	Distortion Temporal, Speed of Thought
Telekinesis	Kinetic Amplifier, Triangulate
Telepathy	Compulsion, Remote Amplification

Compulsion

Whenever you obtain a success on a test using a skill from the interpersonal skill group while interacting with an NPC, you can ask them a question using your Telepathic Speech feature. The NPC must answer the question truthfully to the best of their ability.

Distortion Temporal

While you are not dying, time behaves irregularly around you in a 3 aura. That area is difficult terrain for enemies. Additionally, when an ally enters the area for the first time in a combat round or starts their turn there, they gain a +2 bonus to speed until the end of the turn.

Kinetic Amplifier

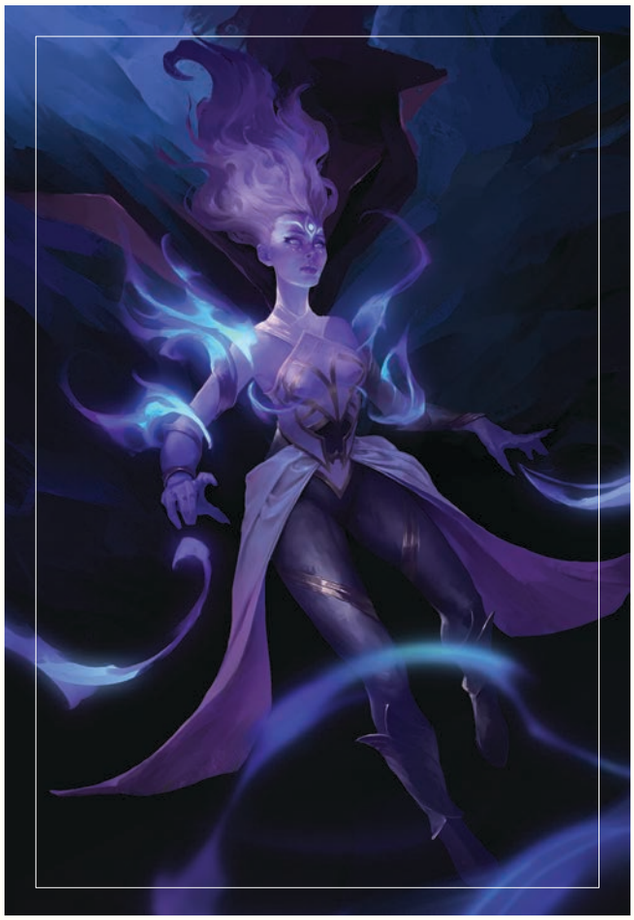
Whenever you force move a creature, you can spend up to 2 surges. For each surge spent, the forced movement distance gains a bonus equal to your Reason score.

Remote Amplification

The distance of your ranged psionic abilities increases by 5. Additionally, the range of your Telepathic Speech feature increases to 1 mile.

Speed of Thought

Once per combat round while you are not dying, you can spend 2 clarity when you use a triggered action to turn it into a free triggered action.



Triangulate

Whenever an ally uses a ranged ability while you are within the ability's distance, you can spend 1 clarity as a free triggered action to allow them to use the ability as if they were in your space.

9-Clarity Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 9 clarity to use.

Exothermic Shield (9 Clarity)

You encase the target in psionic flame and allow them to flicker without fear of burning out.

Pyrokinesis, Psionic, Ranged | **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 | Self or one ally

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, the target has cold immunity 10 and fire immunity 10, and their strikes deal extra fire damage equal to twice your Reason score. Additionally, whenever an enemy attempts uses a melee ability against the target while they are under this effect, the enemy takes 5 fire damage.

Strained: The target gains 2 surges. You are weakened and slowed (save ends).

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Hypersonic (9 Clarity)

You move fast enough to turn around and watch your foes feel the aftermath.

Area, Charge, Psionic, Telekinesis **Main action**
5 × 2 line within 1 Each enemy in the area

Effect: You teleport to a square on the opposite side of the area before making the power roll.

Power Roll + Reason
≤11 12 sonic damage
12-16 18 sonic damage
17+ 24 sonic damage

Strained: If you obtain a tier 2 outcome or better, you are slowed until the end of your turn and each target is slowed until the end of their turn.

Mind Snare (9 Clarity)

You latch onto your prey's brain and don't let go, like a song they can't get out of their head.

Psionic, Ranged, Strike, Telepathy **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature

Power Roll + Reason
≤11 10 + R psychic damage; R < WEAK, slowed (save ends)
12-16 14 + R psychic damage; R < AVERAGE, slowed (save ends)
17+ 20 + R psychic damage; R < STRONG, slowed (save ends)

Effect: While slowed this way, the target takes 3 psychic damage for each square they willingly leave.

Strained: While slowed this way, the target instead takes 5 psychic damage for each square they willingly leave. You have a double bane on ability rolls made against the target while they are slowed this way.

Soulbound (9 Clarity)

You fire a piercing bolt of psychic energy that lances through two foes and leaves a faint intangible thread between them.

Animapathy, Psionic, Ranged, Strike **Main action**
Ranged 10 Two enemies

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 8 damage; A < WEAK, the target is stitched to the other target (save ends)
12-16 13 damage; A < AVERAGE, the target is stitched to the other target (save ends)
17+ 17 damage; A < STRONG, the target is stitched to the other target (save ends)

Effect: If any target becomes stitched to the other, both targets are stitched together. While stitched together, a target takes a bane on power rolls while not adjacent to a creature they're stitched to. Whenever a stitched target takes damage that wasn't dealt by or also taken by another stitched target, each other stitched target takes half the damage the initial target took.

Strained: You target yourself and three enemies instead.

6th-Level Features

As a 6th-level talent, you gain the following features.

Perk

You gain one interpersonal, lore, or supernatural perk of your choice.

Psi Boost

Whenever you use an ability that is a main action or a maneuver with the Psionic keyword, you can spend additional clarity to apply a psi boost to it and enhance its effects. You can apply multiple psi boosts to an ability, but only one instance of each specific boost. You can use the following psi boosts.

Dynamic Power (1 Clarity)

If the ability force moves a target, the forced movement distance gains a bonus equal to your Reason score.

Expanded Power (3 Clarity)

If the ability targets an area, you increase the size of the area by 1. If the area is a line, you increase the size of one dimension, not both.

Extended Power (1 Clarity)

If the ability is ranged, the distance gains a bonus equal to your Reason score. If the ability is melee, the distance gains a +2 bonus.

Heightened Power (1 Clarity)

If the ability deals rolled damage, it deals extra damage equal to your Reason score.

Magnified Power (5 Clarity)

If the ability has a potency, you increase that potency by an amount equal to your Reason score.

Shared Power (5 Clarity)

If the ability targets individual creatures or objects, you target one additional creature or object within distance.

Sharpened Power (1 Clarity)

If the ability has any power roll, that roll gains an edge.

6th-Level Tradition Ability

Your talent tradition grants your choice of one of two heroic abilities.

6th-Level Chronopathy Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

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Fate (9 Clarity)

Your foe gets a glimpse of how it will end for them.

Chronopathy, Psionic, Melee **Main action**
Melee 2 One enemy

Effect: The target has damage weakness 5 until the end of your next turn. Whenever the target takes damage while they have this weakness, they are knocked prone.

Strained: This ability gains the Strike keyword as the vision hurts the target's psyche. You make a power roll, then are weakened (save ends).

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 8 + P psychic damage
12-16 13 + P psychic damage
17+ 17+ P psychic damage

Stasis Field (9 Clarity)

Keep everything as it was. Ignore everything that will be.

Area, Chronopathy, Psionic, Ranged **Main action**
4 cube within 10 Each creature and object in the area

Effect: The area is frozen in time until the start of your next turn. Each object in the area is restrained and can't fall until the effect ends. Until the effect ends, creatures in the area who are reduced to 0 Stamina or would die stay alive, and objects in the area that are reduced to 0 Stamina remain undestroyed.

Make a power roll that targets each enemy in the area.

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 P < WEAK, the target is slowed until the effect ends
12-16 P < AVERAGE, the target's speed is 0 until the effect ends
17+ P < STRONG, the target is restrained until the effect ends

Strained: Any creature or object force moved in the area takes 2 corruption damage for each square of the area they enter. Creatures and objects restrained in the area can be force moved. You are restrained until the effect ends.

6th-Level Telekinesis Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Gravitic Well (9 Clarity)

You bend gravity into a fine point and pull your foes toward it.

Area, Psionic, Ranged, Telekinesis **Main action**
4 cube within 10 Each enemy and object in the area

Power Roll + Reason
≤11 6 damage; vertical pull 5 toward the center of the area
12-16 9 damage; vertical pull 7 toward the center of the area
17+ 13 damage; vertical pull 10 toward the center of the area

Effect: Targets closest to the center of the area are pulled first.

Strained: The size of the area increases by 2. You also target yourself and each ally within distance.

Greater Kinetic Grip (9 Clarity)

You raise the target into the air without breaking a sweat.

Psionic, Ranged, Strike, Telekinesis **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature or object

Power Roll + Reason
≤11 Slide 4 + R; M < WEAK, the forced movement is vertical
12-16 Slide 8 + R; M < AVERAGE, the forced movement is vertical
17+ Slide 12 + R; prone; M < STRONG, the forced movement is vertical

Strained: The forced movement ignores stability. You take 2d6 damage and are weakened (save ends).

6th-Level Telepathy Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Synaptic Conditioning (9 Clarity)

It's a subtle mindset shift. It's not that they're your enemy—you just don't like them!

Psionic, Melee, Strike, Telepathy **Main action**
Melee 2 One creature

Power Roll + Reason
≤11 10 psychic damage; the target takes a bane on ability rolls made to harm you or your allies (save ends)
12-16 14 psychic damage; the target has a double bane on ability rolls made to harm you or your allies (save ends)
17+ 20 psychic damage; the target considers you and your allies to be their allies when using abilities and features (save ends)

Strained: While the target is under this effect, you no longer consider your enemies to be your enemies when using your abilities and features.

Synaptic Dissipation (9 Clarity)

You manipulate your enemies' minds and make them wonder if you were ever really there in the first place.

Psionic, Ranged, Strike, Telepathy **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 Special

Effect: You target a number of creatures with this ability determined by the outcome of your power roll. You and your allies are invisible to each target until the start of your next turn.

Power Roll + Reason
≤11 Two creatures
12-16 Three creatures
17+ Five creatures

Strained: The effect ends early if you take damage from an enemy's ability.

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7th-Level Features

As a 7th-level talent, you gain the following features.

Ancestral Memory

Each time you finish a respite, you can choose a number of skills you have up to your Reason score and replace them with an equal number of skills from the interpersonal and lore skill groups.

Cascading Strain

Whenever you take damage from a strained effect or from having negative clarity, you can choose one enemy within distance of your Mind Spike ability to take the same damage.

Characteristic Increase

Each of your characteristic scores increases by 1, to a maximum of 4.

Lucid Mind

At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 1d3 + 1 clarity instead of 1d3.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice.

8th-Level Features

As an 8th-level talent, you gain the following features.

Perk

You gain one perk of your choice.

8th-Level Tradition Feature

Your talent tradition grants you a feature, as shown on the 8th-Level Tradition Features table.

8th-Level Tradition Features

Tradition	Features
Chronopathy	Doubling the Hours, Stasis Shield
Telekinesis	Levitation Field, Low Gravity
Telepathy	Mindlink, Universal Connection

Doubling the Hours

While you have 5 or more Victories, you can undertake an additional respite activity during a respite.

Levitation Field

You have the following ability.

Levitation Field

You manipulate the air around your allies so they can move as freely through the sky as you can.

Area, Psionics — 3 burst

Maneuver — Each ally in the area

Effect: Each target can fly until the start of your next turn, and can immediately shift up to their speed. You can also shift up to your speed. While flying, a target's stability is reduced to 0 and can't be increased.

Spend 5 Clarity: The effects last for 1 hour instead.

Low Gravity

Your mind can carry your body through tough times. You ignore difficult terrain and don't need to spend additional movement while prone.

Mindlink

During a respite, you can choose a number of creatures up to your Reason score who you have communicated with using your Telepathic Speech feature, creating a telepathic link among all of you. Whenever a linked creature spends one or more Recoveries, each other linked creature can spend a Recovery.

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Stasis Shield

You have the following ability.

Stasis Shield (3 Clarity)

You freeze time just long enough to bring the victim to safety!

Psionics, Ranged **Triggered**
Ranged 10 Self, or one creature or object

Trigger: The target takes damage.

Effect: The target is teleported to an unoccupied space adjacent to you, taking no damage and suffering no additional effects if this movement would get them out of harm's way.

Strained: You can't target yourself, and you take the damage and any additional effects instead of the target.

Universal Connection

The range of your Telepathic Speech feature increases to anywhere on the same world.

11-Clarity Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 11 clarity to use.

Doubt (11 Clarity)

You tug at the strings of the foe's anima and unravel them, allowing someone else to take advantage of their drive.

Animapathy, Psionic, Ranged, Strike **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature or object

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 10 + P damage; P < WEAK, weakened (save ends)
12–16 14 + P damage; P < AVERAGE, weakened (save ends)
17+ 20+ P damage; P < STRONG, weakened and slowed (save ends)

Effect: This ability gains an edge against a target with a soul (see *Draw Steel: Monsters*). After you make the power roll, you or one ally within distance have a double edge on the next power roll you make before the end of the encounter.

Strained: You feel dispirited until you finish a respite. If you obtain a tier 3 outcome on the power roll, you and the target each have damage weakness 5 (save ends).

Mindwipe (11 Clarity)

You attempt to make them forget all their training.

Melee, Psionic, Strike, Telepathy **Main action**
Melee 2 One creature

Power Roll + Reason
≤11 12 + R damage; R < WEAK, the target takes a bane on their next power roll
12–16 17 + R damage; R < AVERAGE, the target takes a bane on power rolls (save ends)
17+ 23 + R damage; R < STRONG, the target has a double bane on power rolls (save ends)

Effect: The target can't communicate with anyone until the end of the encounter.

Strained: You take 3d6 damage.

Rejuvenate (11 Clarity)

You reshape the flow of time in the target's body to return it to an earlier state.

Chronopathy, Psionic, Ranged **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 Self or one ally

Effect: Choose two of the following effects:

- The target can spend any number of Recoveries.
- The target gains 1 of their Heroic Resource, and can end any effects on them that are ended by a saving throw or that end at the end of their turn.
- The target gains 2 surges, and gains a +3 bonus to speed until the end of the encounter.

Strained: You and the target both permanently grow visibly younger (the equivalent of 20 human years, to the minimum of an 18-year-old). Additionally, you are frightened of the nearest enemy within your line of effect (save ends).

Steel (11 Clarity)

The target's skin becomes covered in tough metal.

Metamorphosis, Psionic, Ranged **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 Self or one ally

Effect: The target has damage immunity 5 and can't be made slowed or weakened until the start of your next turn. Whenever the target force moves a creature or object while under this effect, the forced movement distance gains a +5 bonus.

Strained: You can't use maneuvers (save ends).

9th-Level Features

As a 9th-level talent, you gain the following features.

Fortress of Perfect Thought

Your mind is an impenetrable palace that shields you from danger. You gain the following effects:

- You can breathe even when there is no breathable air.
- You have psychic immunity 10.
- Creatures can't read your thoughts unless you allow them to.
- Your Reason and Intuition are treated as 2 higher for the purpose of resisting the potency of abilities.
- You can't be made taunted or frightened.

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9th-Level Tradition Ability

Your talent tradition grants your choice of one of two heroic abilities.

9th-Level Chronopathy Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Acceleration Field (11 Clarity)

You forcibly stuff more moments into a critical point in time, knowing full well you might need to steal some of your own.

Chronopathy, Psionic, Ranged — **Main action**
Ranged 5 — Three allies

Effect: Each target can use any main action available to them as a free triggered action, but they lose their main action on their next turn.

Strained: Make a power roll that targets you and each enemy within distance.

Power Roll + Presence:

- ≤11: 4 corruption damage; slowed (save ends)
- 12–16: 6 corruption damage; slowed (save ends)
- 17+: 10 corruption damage; slowed (save ends)

Borrow From the Future (11 Clarity)

You lean on future heroism to assist you in the now.

Area, Chronopathy, Psionic — **Maneuver**
2 burst — Each ally in the area

Effect: The targets share 6 of their Heroic Resource among themselves, as you determine. A target can't gain more than 3 of their Heroic Resource this way. After using this ability, you can't gain any clarity until the end of the next combat round.

9th-Level Telekinesis Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Fulcrum (11 Clarity)

You precisely manipulate the creatures around you.

Area, Psionic, Telekinesis — **Main action**
Special — Each enemy and object in the area

Effect: Make a power roll to determine the area of this ability. Each target is vertical pushed 6 squares. You can target only objects of size 1L or smaller.

Power Roll + Reason

- ≤11: 2 burst
- 12–16: 3 burst
- 17+: 4 burst

Strained: You can choose to reduce the size of the burst by 2 (to a minimum of 1 burst) to give the forced movement distance a +2 bonus. You take half the total damage all targets take from forced movement.

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Gravitic Nova (11 Clarity)

Unbridled psionic energy erupts from your body and flashes outward, hurling your foes back.

Area, Psionic, Telekinesis **Main action**
3 burst Each enemy and object in the area

Power Roll + Reason:
≤11 6 damage; push 7
12–16 9 damage; push 10
17+ 13 damage; push 15

Effect: On a critical hit, the size of the area increases by 3, and this ability deals an extra 10 damage.

Strained: You are weakened (save ends). If you scored a critical hit with this ability, you die.

9th-Level Telepathy Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Resonant Mind Spike (11 Clarity)

You fire a telepathic bolt empowered by every consciousness within reach directly into your foe's mind.

Psionic, Ranged, Strike, Telepathy **Main action**
Ranged 10 One creature

Power Roll + Reason
≤11 15 + R psychic damage
12–16 24 + R psychic damage
17+ 28 + R psychic damage

Effect: This ability ignores cover and concealment.

Strained: The ability roll scores a critical hit on a natural 17 or higher. You take half the damage the target takes, and you can't reduce this damage in any way.

Synaptic Terror (11 Clarity)

You project a terrifying image into the brains of your foes, and their fear psionically invigorates your allies.

Area, Psionic, Telepathy **Main action**
3 burst Each ally and enemy in the area

Effect: You and each target ally can't obtain lower than a tier 2 outcome on power rolls until the start of your next turn. Each target enemy is affected by the ability's power roll.

Power Roll + Reason
≤11 R < WEAK, frightened (save ends)
12–16 R < AVERAGE, frightened (save ends)
17+ R < STRONG, frightened (save ends)

Strained: You can't use this ability if doing so would cause you to have negative clarity.

10th-Level Features

As a 10th-level talent, you gain the following features.

Characteristic Increase

Your Reason and Presence scores each increase to 5.

Clear Mind

The first time each combat round that a creature is force moved, you gain 3 clarity instead of 2.

Omnisensory

You have a +10 bonus to the distance of your ranged abilities. Additionally, you don't need line of effect to a target of a ranged ability if the target is a creature capable of thought who you have previously had line of effect to.

Perk

You gain one interpersonal, lore, or supernatural perk of your choice.

Psion

At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 1d3 + 2 clarity instead of 1d3 + 1.

Additionally, you can choose to not take damage from having negative clarity. You can also choose to take on any ability's strained effect even if you're not strained.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice.

Vision

You have an epic resource called vision. Each time you finish a respite, you gain vision equal to the XP you gain. You can spend vision on your abilities as if it were clarity.

Additionally, you can spend vision to use one additional psionic ability on your turn, provided you pay the entire cost of the ability in vision. If you choose to use a psionic ability that usually costs no clarity, you must spend 1 vision to use it.

Vision remains until you spend it.

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TROUBADOUR

The whole world's a stage, and everyone on it, an actor. No one knows this better than the troubadour. You find energy in the drama of everyday life and know how to draw spectacle forth from even the most mundane of situations. You accent highs and deepen lows in service to whoever might witness your performance.

As a troubadour, you chase drama. The insurmountable dangers of the world might cause many a hero to cower. But you take to that world stage not intending to die, but to find out if you are truly alive.



"History is a tale. Each of us is just a story we tell ourselves. Change the story, and you change the world."

Jackson Bootblack

Basics

Starting Characteristics: You start with an Agility of 2 and a Presence of 2, and you can choose one of the following arrays for your other characteristic scores:

- 2, –1, –1
- 1, 1, –1
- 1, 0, 0

Weak Potency: Presence – 2

Average Potency: Presence – 1

Strong Potency: Presence

Starting Stamina at 1st Level: 18

Stamina Gained at 2nd and Higher Levels: 9

Recoveries: 8

Skills: You gain the Read Person skill (see Skills in Chapter 9: Tests). Then choose two skills from the interpersonal skill group and one skill from the intrigue or lore skill groups. (*Quick Build:* Brag, Read Person, Rumors, Society.)

1st-Level Features

As a 1st-level troubadour, you gain the following features.

Troubadour Class Act

Panache, melody, and depiction. Some troubadours have it all, but everyone starts somewhere. Your troubadour class act is your art form, summing up the manner in which the world becomes your stage. As you go about unearthing the drama of everyday life and strife, you choose a troubadour class act from the following options, each of which grants you a skill. (*Quick Build:* Virtuoso.)

Auteur: You seek drama from story and recount, using your magic to manipulate the sequence of events unfolding before you. You have the Brag skill.

Duelist: Drama infuses your every movement done in tandem with another. You perform dances of death, putting trust in your opponent to return your passion in kind. You have the Gymnastics skill.

Virtuoso: You find drama in music and song, weaving magic between vibrations and filling the audience with your pathos. You have the Music skill and can play an instrument.

Your troubadour class act is your subclass, and your choice of class act determines many of the features you'll gain as you gain new levels.

Drama

During battles, you are fueled by the dynamic ups, downs, and upside downs of the fray, from which you derive a Heroic Resource called drama.

Drama in Combat

At the start of a combat encounter or some other stressful situation tracked in combat rounds (as determined by the Director), you gain drama equal to your Victories. At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 1d3 drama.

Troubadour Advancement

Level	Features	Abilities	Class Act Abilities
1st	Troubadour Class Act, Drama, Kit, Scene Partner, Routines, Class Act Features, Class Act Triggered Action, Troubadour Abilities	Signature, 3, 5	—
2nd	Appeal to the Muses, Invocation, Perk, Class Act Ability	Signature, 3, 5	5
3rd	Class Act Feature, 7-Drama Ability	Signature, 3, 5, 7	5
4th	Characteristic Increase, Melodrama, Perk, Skill, Zeitgeist	Signature, 3, 5, 7	5
5th	Class Act Feature, 9-Drama Ability	Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9	5
6th	Perk, Spotlight, Class Act Ability	Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9	5, 9
7th	Characteristic Increase, A Muse's Muse, Equal Billing, Skill	Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9	5, 9
8th	Perk, Class Act Feature, 11-Drama Ability	Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11	5, 9
9th	Roar of the Crowd, Class Act Ability	Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11	5, 9, 11
10th	Applause, Characteristic Increase, Dramaturgy, Greatest of All Time, Perk, Skill	Signature, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11	5, 9, 11

Auteur Troubadour Reshapes the Story

The auteur troubadour has several features and abilities, such as Guest Star, Missed Cue, and Twist at the End, that allow them to rewrite bits of what happens in the story by temporarily removing creatures from an encounter, bringing people back to life, or causing a new ally to appear. These abilities and features are no more powerful than any other, but they're narratively different from shooting rays of fire or swinging a sword.

The auteur creates magic through dramatic storytelling that tweaks the heroes' adventures as they occur. Think of the auteur telling the epic tale of their party to a tavern full of listeners. The auteur changes details to make events more dramatic and their friends seem more heroic! But the auteur power for storytelling is so great that they don't have to be at a tavern to make this happen. They can edit the game's story in real time and change details as they occur.

Additionally, you gain drama when certain events occur during a combat encounter:

- The first time three or more heroes use an ability on the same turn, you gain 2 drama.
- The first time any hero is made winded during the encounter, you gain 2 drama.
- Whenever a creature within your line of effect rolls a natural 19 or 20, you gain 3 drama.
- When you or another hero dies, you gain 10 drama.

When you are dead, you continue to gain drama during combat as long as your body is intact. If you have 30 drama during the encounter in which you died, you can come back to life with 1 Stamina and 0 drama (no action required). If you are still dead after the encounter in which you died, you can't gain drama during future encounters.

You lose any remaining drama at the end of the encounter.

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Drama Outside of Combat

Though you can't gain drama outside of combat, you can use your heroic abilities and effects that cost drama without spending it. Whenever you use an ability or effect outside of combat that costs drama, you can't use that same ability or effect outside of combat again until you earn 1 or more Victories or finish a respite.

When you use an ability outside of combat that lets you spend unlimited drama on its effect, such as Artful Flourish, you can use it as if you had spent an amount of drama equal to your Victories.

Kit

You can use and gain the benefits of a kit. See Chapter 6: Kits for more information. (*Quick Build:* Swashbuckler.)

Scene Partner

Whenever you obtain a success on a test to interact with an NPC using a skill from the interpersonal group, you can form a bond with that NPC. When you enter into a negotiation with a bonded NPC, their patience increases by 1 (to a maximum of 5). Additionally, the first time during a negotiation that you personally make an argument that would increase a bonded NPC's interest by 1, you instead increase their interest by 2 (to a maximum of 5).

You can have a number of bonds active equal to your level. When you form a bond with a new NPC that would exceed the limit, you must choose which of your active bonds to lose.

Routines

You enter every battle with a set of performance abilities at the ready. Performances are magical presentations (such as songs, dances, poems, or gymnastic feats) that your allies can participate in. These abilities have the Performance keyword. At the start of each combat round, as long as you are not dazed, dead, or surprised, you can either choose a new performance or maintain your current performance (no action required). Your performance lasts until you are unable to maintain it or until the end of the encounter.

You start off with the Choreography and Revitalizing Limerick performance abilities. Your choice of class act grants you additional performances.

Choreography

Taps, kicks, steps. It's all "choreography."

Area, Magic, Performance **No action**
5 aura Self and each ally in the area

Effect: While this performance is active, each target who starts their turn in the area gains a +2 bonus to speed until the end of their turn.

Revitalizing Limerick

There once was a man from Capital ...

Area, Magic, Performance **No action**
5 aura Self and each ally in the area

Effect: At the end of each of your turns while this performance is active, you can choose up to a number of targets equal to your Presence score. Each chosen target can spend a Recovery.

1st-Level Class Act Features

Your troubadour class act grants you two features, as shown on the 1st-Level Class Act Features table.

1st-Level Class Act Features

Class Act	Features
Auteur	Blocking, Dramatic Monologue
Duelist	Acrobatics, Star Power
Virtuoso	Power Chord, Virtuoso Performances

Acrobatics

You have the following performance ability, which is usable with your Routines feature.

Acrobatics

Folks love a good tumble.

Area, Magic, Performance **No action**
5 aura Self and each ally in the area

Effect: While this performance is active, each target who starts their turn in the area can automatically obtain a tier 3 outcome on one test made to jump, tumble, or climb as part of their movement before the end of their turn.

Blocking

You have the following performance ability, which is usable with your Routines feature.

Blocking

No, no, no, you lose the audience that way. Try it like this ...

Area, Magic, Performance **No action**
2 aura Each creature in the area

Effect: At the end of each of your turns while this performance is active, you can choose up to a number of targets equal to your Presence score and teleport those targets to unoccupied spaces in the area. A target can't be teleported in a way that would harm them (such as over a cliff), leave them dying, or result in them suffering a condition or other negative effect.

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Dramatic Monologue

You have the following ability.

Dramatic Monologue

It doesn't need to make sense. Just say it with emotion.

Magic, Ranged — **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 — Special

Effect: Choose one of the following effects:

- You orate a rousing tale of victory. One ally within distance gains an edge on the next power roll they make before the start of your next turn.
- You weave a tale of high-stakes heroics. One ally within distance gains 1 surge.
- You insult a foe where they're most vulnerable. One enemy within distance takes a bane on the next power roll they make before the end of their next turn.

Spend 1 Drama: You can choose two targets for the chosen effect.

Power Chord

You have the following ability.

Power Chord

Your instrument rings true and your music blows everyone away.

Area, Magic — **Maneuver**
2 burst — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 Push 1
12-16 Push 2
17+ Push 3

Star Power

You have the following ability.

Star Power (1 Drama)

Your years of practicing fencing and dancing pay off on the battlefield.

— — **Maneuver**
Self — Self

Effect: You gain a +2 bonus to speed until the end of your turn. Additionally, the next power roll you make this turn can't have an outcome lower than tier 2.

Spend 1 Drama: You gain a +4 bonus to speed instead.

Virtuoso Performances

You have the following performance abilities, which are usable with your Routines feature.

"Thunder Mother"

All for thunder motherrr! ♪ Run and hide for coverrr!♫

Magic, Performance, Ranged, Strike — **No action**
Ranged 10 — One creature

Effect: At the end of each combat round while this performance is active, you can make a power roll against the target that ignores cover. You can't target the same creature twice with this effect.

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 Lightning damage equal to your level
12-16 Lightning damage equal to 5 + your level
17+ Lightning damage equal to 10 + your level

"Ballad of the Beast"

Teeth are bare! ♫ Eyes black! ♫ ♪ No escaping the beast!♫

Area, Magic, Performance — **No action**
5 aura — Self and each ally in the area

Effect: While this performance is active, each target who starts their turn in the area gains 1 surge.

Class Act Triggered Action

Your troubadour class act grants you a triggered action, as shown on the Class Act Triggered Actions table.

Class Act Triggered Actions

Class Act	Triggered Action
Auteur	Turnabout Is Fair Play
Duelist	Riposte
Virtuoso	Harmonize

Harmonize (3 Drama)

Give the chorus a little punch.

Ranged — **Triggered**
Ranged 5 — One ally

Trigger: The target uses an ability that targets only one enemy and costs 3 or fewer of their Heroic Resource.

Effect: The target can choose one additional target for the triggering ability. Any damage dealt to the additional target is sonic damage.

Spend 1+ Drama: You can trigger this ability when a target uses an ability that has a Heroic Resource cost of 3 + each additional drama spent.

Riposte

"I'd have brought treats had I known I'd be fighting a dog."

Melee — **Triggered**
Melee 1 — Self or one ally

Trigger: The target takes damage from a melee strike.

Effect: The target makes a free strike against the creature who made the triggering strike.

Turnabout Is Fair Play

All's fair in love and whatever.

Ranged — **Triggered**
Ranged 10 — One creature

Trigger: The target makes an ability roll that has an edge, a double edge, a bane, or a double bane.

Effect: An edge on the triggering roll becomes a bane, or a double edge becomes an edge. A bane becomes an edge, or a double bane becomes a bane.

Spend 3 Drama: An edge on the triggering roll becomes a double bane, or a double edge is negated. A bane becomes a double edge, or a double bane is negated.

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Troubadour Abilities

Your performance centers around maneuvering through the scene of battle, maintaining its momentum so that the story flows as dramatically as possible.

Signature Ability

Choose one signature ability from the following options. Signature abilities can be used at will. (*Quick Build:* Witty Banter.)

Artful Flourish

And they said practicing fencing was a waste!

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — Two creatures or objects

Power Roll + Agility:
≤11: 2 damage
12–16: 5 damage
17+: 7 damage

Effect: You can shift up to 3 squares.

Spend 2+ Drama: You can target one additional creature or object for every 2 drama spent.

Cutting Sarcasm

There you are, radiating your usual charisma.

Magic, Ranged, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — One creature

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11: 2 + P psychic damage; P < WEAK, bleeding (save ends)
12–16: 5 + P psychic damage; P < AVERAGE, bleeding (save ends)
17+: 7 + P psychic damage; P < STRONG, bleeding (save ends)

Instigator

I didn't do it! What?

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11: 3 + P damage
12–16: 6 + P damage
17+: 9+ P damage

Effect: The target is taunted by you or a willing ally adjacent to you until the end of the target's next turn.

Witty Banter

A lyrical (and physical) jab insults an enemy and inspires an ally.

Magic, Melee, Ranged, Strike — **Main action**
Melee 1 or ranged 5 — One creature

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11: 4 + P psychic damage
12–16: 5 + P psychic damage
17+: 7+ P psychic damage

Effect: One ally within 10 squares of you can end one effect on them that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of their turn.

Spend 1 Drama: The chosen ally can spend a Recovery.

Heroic Abilities

You master a range of heroic abilities, all of which cost drama to empower them.

3-Drama Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 3 drama to use. (*Quick Build:* Harsh Critic.)

Harsh Critic (3 Drama)

Just one bad review will ruin their day.

Magic, Melee, Ranged, Strike — **Main action**
Melee 1 or ranged 10 — One creature or object

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11: 7 + P sonic damage
12–16: 10 + P sonic damage
17+: 13 + P sonic damage

Effect: The first time the target uses an ability before the start of your next turn, any effects from the ability's tier outcomes other than damage are negated for all targets. Ability effects that always happen regardless of the power roll work as usual.

Hypnotic Overtones (3 Drama)

You produce an entrancing note that twists the senses in a spectacular fashion.

Area, Magic — **Main action**
2 burst — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11: Slide 1; I < WEAK, dazed (save ends)
12–16: Slide 1; I < AVERAGE, dazed (save ends)
17+: Slide 2; I < STRONG, dazed (save ends)

Spend 2+ Drama: The size of the burst increases by 1 for every 2 drama spent.

Quick Rewrite (3 Drama)

You write something unexpected into the scene that hinders your enemy.

Area, Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
3 cube within 10 — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11: 4 damage; P < WEAK, slowed (save ends)
12–16: 5 damage; P < AVERAGE, slowed (save ends)
17+: 6 damage; P < STRONG, restrained (save ends)

Effect: The area is difficult terrain for enemies.

Upstage (3 Drama)

As you bob and weave through the crowd, you can't help but leave the audience wanting more.

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Maneuver**
Self; see below — Self

Effect: You shift up to your speed. You make one power roll that targets each enemy you move adjacent to during this shift.

Power Roll + Agility or Presence:
≤11: Taunted (EoT); A < WEAK, prone
12–16: Taunted (EoT); A < AVERAGE, prone
17+: Taunted (EoT); A < STRONG, prone and can't stand (EoT)

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5-Drama Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 5 drama to use. (*Quick Build:* Dramatic Reversal.)

Dramatic Reversal (5 Drama)

Give the audience a surprise.

Area, Magic — 3 burst
Main action — Self and each ally in the area

Power Roll + Presence:

- ≤11: The target can shift 1 square and make a free strike.
- 12–16: The target can shift up to 2 squares and make a free strike that gains an edge.
- 17+: The target can shift up to 3 squares and make a free strike that gains an edge, then can spend a Recovery.

Fake Your Death (5 Drama)

O happy dagger, this is thy sheath!

Magic — Self
Maneuver — Self

Effect: You turn invisible and create a magical illusion of your corpse falling in your space. While you are invisible, you gain a +3 bonus to speed and you ignore difficult terrain. The illusion and your invisibility last until the end of your next turn, or until the illusion is interacted with, you take damage, or you use a main action or a maneuver.

Flip the Script (5 Drama)

You try a different take on events, justifying the new locations everyone ended up in.

Area, Magic — 3 burst
Main action — Self and each ally in the area

Effect: Each target can teleport up to 5 squares. Any teleported target who was slowed is no longer slowed.

Method Acting (5 Drama)

They're so hurt by your performance, you start to believe it yourself.

Melee, Strike, Weapon — Melee 1
Main action — One creature

Power Roll + Agility:

- ≤11: 6 + A damage; P < WEAK, weakened (save ends)
- 12–16: 10 + A damage; P < AVERAGE, weakened (save ends)
- 17+: 14 + A damage; P < STRONG, weakened (save ends)

Effect: You can become bleeding (save ends) to deal an extra 5 corruption damage to the target.

2nd-Level Features

As a 2nd-level troubadour, you gain the following features.

Appeal to the Muses

You can give a rousing speech, invoke your inspirations, or lift your fellows' spirits, appealing to the muses to heighten a battle's drama. However, irony is eager to hand your fortune to the villain to achieve the same end.

Whenever you roll to gain drama at the start of your turn, you can make your appeal (no action required). If you do, your roll gains the following additional effects:

- If the roll is a 1, you gain 1 additional drama. The Director gains 1d3 Malice (see *Draw Steel: Monsters*).
- If the roll is a 2, you gain 1 Heroic Resource, which you can keep or give to an ally within the distance of your active performance. The Director gains 1 Malice.
- If the roll is a 3, you gain 2 of a Heroic Resource, which you can distribute among yourself and any allies within the distance of your active performance.

Invocation

You have a specific manner that helps define your presence on the battlefield. Choose one of the following features.

Allow Me to Introduce Tonight's Players

Whenever you take the first turn in a combat encounter, you can use a main action to introduce yourself and your allies to your opponents. Each ally can shift up to their speed, and ability rolls made against them have a double bane until the end of the combat round. Additionally, any surprised enemy is no longer surprised.

Formal Introductions

As a respite activity, you can scribe a notice of your arrival (such as a calling card or a formal letter) addressed to an enemy. You can deliver the notice to the target personally if you are in the same general area, send it by courier, or leave it in a covert location for the target to find. You can have only one notice active at a time.

The Director determines when the target receives your notice. When the target receives the notice, they become alarmed and take desperate measures to stop you. The Director gains 1 additional Malice per combat round during encounters involving the target. The heroes start each such encounter with 2 additional hero tokens (Chapter 1: The Basics). These hero tokens disappear at the end of the encounter.

My Reputation Precedes Me

You can invoke your reputation at the start of a social interaction with one or more NPCs who haven't met you before, automatically creating a bond with one of those NPCs from that group as if using your Scene Partner feature (above). This bond counts against the limit on active bonds from your Scene Partner feature. While the bond is active, all heroes present treat their Renown as 2 higher than usual for the purpose of entering into a negotiation with the bonded NPC.

The Director can award the heroes 1 hero token to make you infamous among the group of creatures instead, and preventing you from forming this bond. Until you take action to improve your reputation, all heroes present take a bane on tests made to interact with creatures in the group using skills from the interpersonal skill group. You can still use your Scene Partner feature to find allies within the group.

Perk

You gain one interpersonal, lore, or supernatural perk of your choice. See Chapter 7: Perks.

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2nd-Level Class Act Ability

Your troubadour class act grants your choice of one of two heroic abilities.

2nd-Level Auteur Ability

Choose one of the following abilities.

Guest Star (5 Drama)

We offered them a percentage of the gross. So they're working for free!

Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — Special

Effect: A guest star appears to help you during the encounter: either a bystander within distance uplifted by your magic, or a mysterious new hero who appears in an unoccupied space within distance. This guest star is controlled by you, has their own turn, and shares your characteristics. Their Stamina maximum is half yours. They have no abilities other than your melee and ranged free strikes. At the end of the encounter, or when the guest star is reduced to 0 Stamina, they retreat or revert to a bystander. The same bystander can't be uplifted this way more than once during an encounter.

Twist at the End (5 Drama)

You didn't see that coming, did you?!

Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — One dead enemy

Effect: A target who is not a leader or solo creature comes back to life with half their Stamina and becomes an ally under the Director's control. The players can work with the Director to determine when the target takes their turn each combat round. At the end of the encounter, the target turns to dust and is blown away.

2nd-Level Duelist Ability

Choose one of the following abilities.

Classic Chandelier Stunt (5 Drama)

Audiences love this bit.

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — Self and one willing ally

Effect: Each target can shift up to 5 squares, including vertically, but must end this movement adjacent to the other target and on solid ground. Each target can then make a melee free strike that deals extra damage equal to twice their highest characteristic score.

En Garde! (5 Drama)

Wait, it's ... Guard! Turn! Parry! Dodge! Spin! Thrust! Ha!

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature

Power Roll + Agility:
- ≤11: 7 + A damage
- 12–16: 11 + A damage
- 17+: 16 + A damage

Effect: The target can make a melee free strike against you. If they do, you can make a melee free strike against the target.

2nd-Level Virtuoso Ability

Choose one of the following abilities.

Encore (5 Drama)

Again! Again!

Magic, Strike — **Main action**
Special — Special

Effect: You use an ability that you have observed being used this combat round. The ability must have the Strike keyword, cost 5 or fewer of a Heroic Resource, and cost no Malice. When you make the strike, you use your Presence score for any power rolls, and any damage you deal is sonic damage.

Tough Crowd (5 Drama)

Your fans don't seem to like the opening act ...

Area, Magic, Ranged — **Main action**
3 cube within 10 — Special

Effect: The area is haunted by a swirling horde of phantoms until the end of the encounter. Allies can enter any square of the area without spending movement. At the end of each of your turns, you can make one power roll that targets each enemy in the area.

Power Roll + Presence:
- ≤11: 5 corruption damage; M < WEAK, pull 1 toward the center of the area
- 12–16: 9 corruption damage; M < AVERAGE, pull 2 toward the center of the area
- 17+: 12 corruption damage; M < STRONG, pull 3 toward the center of the area

3rd-Level Features

As a 3rd-level troubadour, you gain the following features.

3rd-Level Class Act Feature

Your troubadour class act grants you a feature, as shown on the 3rd-Level Class Act Features table.

3rd-Level Class Act Features

Class Act	Features
Auteur	Missed Cue
Duelist	Foil
Virtuoso	Second Album

Foil

At the start of an encounter, choose one creature within your line of effect. You have a double edge on power rolls made against or in competition with that creature. The chosen creature also has a double edge on power rolls made against or in competition with you. If the chosen creature is reduced to 0 Stamina, you can choose a new foil at the start of the next combat round.

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Missed Cue

If you aren't surprised at the start of an encounter, you can choose one enemy within your line of effect who is not a leader or solo creature. The Director temporarily removes the chosen creature from the encounter. The chosen creature enters the encounter at the start of the second combat round. You must earn 3 Victories before you can use this feature again.

Second Album

You have the following performance abilities, which are usable with your Routines feature.

"Fire Up the Night"

Maybe you and I ♫ We can still bring the light! ♫

Area, Magic, Performance — **No action**
5 aura — Self and each ally in the area

Effect: While this performance is active, each target who starts their turn in the area doesn't take a bane on strikes against creatures with concealment. Once during their turn, they can search for hidden creatures as a free maneuver (see Hide and Sneak in Chapter 9: Tests).

"Never-Ending Hero"

And toniiight we can truly say ♫ They will alllways find a way! ♪

Area, Magic, Performance — **No action**
5 aura — Self and each ally in the area

Effect: While this performance is active, each target who starts their turn dying while in the area gains an edge on power rolls and ignores the effects of bleeding until the end of their turn.

7-Drama Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 7 drama to use.

Extensive Rewrites (7 Drama)

No, this isn't right. That foe was over there!

Area, Magic — **Maneuver**
4 burst — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 Slide 3; P < WEAK, this slide ignores the target's stability
12–16 Slide 5; P < AVERAGE, this slide ignores the target's stability
17+ Slide 7; P < STRONG, this slide ignores the target's stability

Effect: Instead of sliding a target, you can swap their location with another target as long as each can fit into the other's space. You can't slide targets into other creatures or objects using this ability.

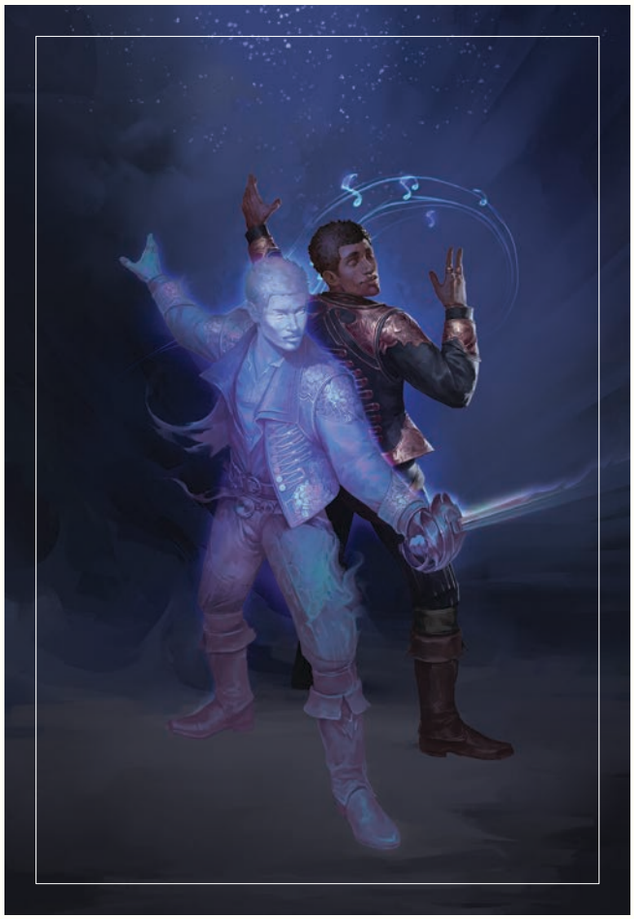
Infernal Gavotte (7 Drama)

A spicy performance lights a fire under your allies' feet.

Area, Magic, Melee, Weapon — **Main action**
3 burst — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 5 fire damage; A < WEAK, weakened (save ends)
12–16 7 fire damage; A < AVERAGE, weakened (save ends)
17+ 10 fire damage; A < STRONG, weakened (save ends)

Effect: Each ally in the area can shift up to 2 squares.



Star Solo (7 Drama)

Your performance travels and doesn't stop moving until your audience is completely rocked.

Magic, Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 or ranged 10 — One creature or object

Power Roll + Presence:
≤11 5 + P damage
12–16 8 + P damage; push 3
17+ 11 + P damage; push 5

Effect: You can choose to have this ability deal sonic damage instead of psychic damage. Additionally, you can use this ability against the same target for the next 2 combat rounds without spending drama.

We Meet at Last (7 Drama)

You magically intertwine your fate with another creature—for better or worse.

Magic, Ranged — **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 — One creature

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, both you and the target can target each other with abilities even if you are beyond distance, with the distance of this ability replacing those abilities' distances. The target can't be force moved by an ability used beyond distance this way.

Additionally, once on each of your turns, you can use a free maneuver to communicate a motivating or dispiriting message to the target, either granting them 2 surges or forcing them to take a bane on the next ability roll they make before the start of your next turn.

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4th-Level Features

As a 4th-level troubadour, you gain the following features.

Characteristic Increase

Your Agility and Presence scores each increase to 3.

Melodrama

You have more ways of getting the most drama out of a situation. Choose two of the following events to add to the events that grant you drama during battle:

- Whenever a creature rolls a natural 2 on a power roll, you gain 2 drama.
- The first time the Director deals damage to a hero using a Villain action or an ability that costs Malice, you gain 2 drama.
- The first time a hero unwillingly falls 5 or more squares, you gain 2 drama.
- The first time a hero deals damage with 3 surges, you gain 2 drama.
- Whenever a hero spends their last Recovery, you gain 2 drama.

Alternatively, you can forgo choosing a new event to choose one event you already have (including an event gained with this feature). Whenever the chosen event grants you drama, you gain 1 additional drama.

Perk

You gain one perk of your choice.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice. See Skills in Chapter 9: Tests.

Zeitgeist

You always have your ear to the ground, your finger on the pulse. When you start or finish a respite, choose one of the following effects.

Foreshadowing

You can ask the Director for two clues regarding an upcoming encounter or negotiation. One of the clues can be false.

Hear Ye, Hear Ye!

By bragging, intimidating, leading, or lying, you attempt to spread one piece of information into the local area. Make a Presence test:

- ≤11 Your information reaches no one.
- 12–16 Your information reaches the nearest populated area of town size or larger. You and each ally present when you make the test gain an edge on Presence tests in that area until one of you spends a Recovery.
- 17+ Your information reaches the nearest populated area of town size or larger, plus the next closest such population. You and allies present for your test gain an edge on Presence tests made in those areas until you start your next respite.

Latest Goss

You can ask the Director for three rumors regarding the area you're in or an area you plan on entering before your next respite. One of the rumors can be false.

5th-Level Features

As a 5th-level troubadour, you gain the following features.

5th-Level Class Act Feature

Your troubadour class act grants your choice of one of two features.

Auteur Features

Choose one of the following features.

Fix It in Post

Once on each of your turns, you can use a free maneuver to change one condition affecting a creature within distance of your Dramatic Monologue ability. Choose one of the following conditions on the target: bleeding, frightened, prone, slowed, or taunted. You change that condition to another of those conditions, maintaining the duration and origin of the original condition. A target who is no longer prone can stand up.

Take Two!

You have the following performance ability, which is usable with your Routines feature.

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Take Two!

One more, and this time make it interesting.

Area, Magic, Performance | **No action**
5 aura | Self and each ally in the area

Effect: While this performance is active, each target who starts their turn in the area can reroll the first power roll that turn that obtains a tier 2 outcome. They must use the new roll.

Duelist Features

Choose one of the following features.

Verbal Duel

Once on each of your turns while the target of your Foil feature is adjacent to you, you can use a free maneuver to exchange words with them. Make an opposed Presence test with the target. Whoever gets the higher result can make a free strike, which deals psychic damage instead of its usual damage.

We Can't Be Upstaged!

You have the following performance ability, which is usable with your Routines feature.

We Can't Be Upstaged!

Swordplay so graceful it looks like you all practiced this.

Area, Magic, Performance | **No action**
5 aura | Self and each ally in the area

Effect: While this performance is active, a target who starts their turn in the area gains a bonus to the distance they can shift equal to your Presence score until the end of their turn.

Virtuoso Features

Choose one of the following features.

Bolstering Banter

Once on each of your turns, you can use a free maneuver to exchange words with a target of your current performance, other than yourself. The target can spend a Recovery to gain temporary Stamina equal to their recovery value.

Medley

You can maintain two performances at a time using your Routines feature.

9-Drama Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 9 drama to use.

Action Hero (9 Drama)

You wield your weapon at blistering speed, leaving everyone around you fighting for their lives.

Area, Melee, Weapon | **Main action**
3 burst | Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Agility:

≤11 10 damage
12–16 14 damage
17+ 20 damage

Effect: Unless you score a critical hit, this ability can't reduce a non-minion target below 1 Stamina.

Continuity Error (9 Drama)

Your subject is written into two places at once.

Magic, Ranged | **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 | One enemy or object

Effect: The target is split into two separate entities, one of which remains in the target's space while the other appears in an unoccupied space of your choice within distance. If the target is a creature, this creates a new creature under the Director's control. Each entity has half the original target's Stamina, is weakened, and takes 1d6 corruption damage at the start of each of their turns. If either entity is reduced to 0 Stamina, the other entity persists as the original entity and this effect ends. The effect also ends if both entities occupy the same space, causing them to automatically merge and combine their current Stamina.

Love Song (9 Drama)

You play a small ditty that plants you inside your target's heart.

Magic, Ranged | **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 | One creature or object

Effect: The target gains 20 temporary Stamina. Until the end of the encounter, whenever the target takes damage while you're within distance, you can choose to take the damage instead of the target.

Patter Song (9 Drama)

Dazzle them with your fancy patter and they forget where they were.

Magic, Ranged | **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 | Special

Power Roll + Presence:

≤11 One ally within distance can take their turn immediately after yours.
12–16 Two allies within distance can take their turns immediately after yours in any order.
17+ Three allies within distance can take their turns immediately after yours in any order. One of those allies can have already taken a turn this combat round.

6th-Level Features

As a 6th-level troubadour, you gain the following features.

Perk

You gain one interpersonal, lore, or supernatural perk of your choice.

Spotlight

You have the following performance ability, which is usable with your Routines feature.

Spotlight

The audience is watching, so you'd better give them a show.

Area, Magic, Performance | **No action**
5 aura | Self and each ally in the area

Effect: While this performance is active, each target who starts their turn in the area gains 1 of their Heroic Resource. This Heroic Resource disappears at the end of the target's turn if they don't spend it.

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6th-Level Class Act Ability

Your troubadour class act grants your choice of one of two heroic abilities.

6th-Level Auteur Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Here's How Your Story Ends (9 Drama)

You give away the ending of this battle, and it's not great for them.

Area, Magic — **Main action**
5 burst — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Presence:

≤11 2 psychic damage; P < WEAK, frightened (save ends)
12–16 5 psychic damage; P < AVERAGE, frightened (save ends)
17+ 7 damage; P < STRONG, frightened (save ends)

You're All My Understudies (9 Drama)

It's important for everyone to know each other's lines, just in case ...

Area, Magic — **Maneuver**
5 burst — Each ally in the area

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, each target gains the speed bonus, weapon distance bonus, disengage bonus, and stability bonus of your currently equipped kit in addition to their own kit's bonuses.

6th-Level Duelist Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Blood on the Stage (9 Drama)

It's love and blood or drama and blood. Either way, there's always blood.

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:

≤11 12 + A damage; M < WEAK, bleeding (save ends)
12–16 18 + A damage; M < AVERAGE, bleeding (save ends)
17+ 24 + A damage; bleeding (EoT), or if M < STRONG, bleeding (save ends)

Fight Choreography (9 Drama)

You and your partner make a flashy show of derring-do, then get back to your corners.

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature

Effect: You and the target each make a melee free strike that targets each enemy within 3 squares of either of you, dividing the enemies between each of you. You choose which enemies your free strike targets and which enemies the target creature's free strike targets. You then slide the target 5 squares, ignoring stability.

6th-Level Virtuoso Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Feedback (9 Drama)

Your music pounds the crowd to the beat until their hearts can't stand it anymore.

Area, Magic — **Main action**
Three 3 cubes within 1 — Each enemy in the area

Effect: A prone target ignores this ability.

Power Roll + Presence:

≤11 7 sonic damage; P < WEAK, prone
12–16 10 sonic damage; P < AVERAGE, prone
17+ 13 sonic damage; P < STRONG, prone

Legendary Drum Fill (9 Drama)

You start a drumroll that roars like thunder with every impact the heroes make.

Area, Magic — **Maneuver**
4 burst — Self and each ally in the area

Effect: Each target gains 1 surge, then gains 1 surge at the start of each combat round until the end of the encounter.

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7th-Level Features

As a 7th-level troubadour, you gain the following features.

Characteristic Increase

Each of your characteristic scores increases by 1, to a maximum of 4.

Equal Billing

You can use your Scene Partner feature to form a bond with one willing hero instead of an NPC you interact with using a test. If you bond with another hero, you lose your existing bond with a hero.

Additionally, you and creatures you are bonded with gain a +1 bonus to saving throws. Whenever you or a bonded creature succeeds on a saving throw, you and each creature you are bonded with gains temporary Stamina equal to your level.

A Muse's Muse

At the start of each of your turns during combat, you gain 1d3 + 1 drama instead of 1d3.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice.

8th-Level Features

As an 8th-level troubadour, you gain the following features.

Perk

You gain one perk of your choice.

8th-Level Class Act Feature

Your troubadour class act grants you a feature, as shown on the 8th-Level Class Act Features table.

8th-Level Class Act Features

Class Act	Feature
Auteur	Deleted Scene
Duelist	Masterwork
Virtuoso	Crowd Favorites

Crowd Favorites

You have the following performance abilities, which are usable with your Routines feature.

Moonlight Sonata

Music pours out of your heart, filling the area with the utmost delicacy and without damper.

Area, Magic, Performance — **No action**
5 aura — Each ally in the area

Effect: While this performance is active, each target who is dead can choose to continue taking turns after death. On each of their turns, a target can move and use a maneuver, but can't spend Recoveries or use triggered actions. At the end of the encounter, each target who chose to take turns this way turns to dust and blows away.

Radical Fantasia

♫ *Viras, my Viras, will you hold their hands as they cryyy-aaaiigh?* ♪

Area, Magic, Performance — **No action**
5 aura — Self and each ally in the area

Effect: While this performance is active, each target who starts their turn in the area ignores difficult terrain, and any ability they use that imposes forced movement gains a +2 bonus to the forced movement distance until the end of their turn. Additionally, once per combat round, each target can use a triggered action as a free triggered action.

Deleted Scene

Whenever a creature within distance of your Dramatic Monologue ability makes a power roll, you can spend 1 drama as a free triggered action to use Dramatic Monologue, targeting only one creature.

Masterwork

Choose one of your signature abilities and name it after yourself. You always have this ability available, even if it is sourced from a kit you switch out. Whenever you use this ability, you gain an edge and 1 surge that you can use only on this ability.

Additionally, when your named signature ability is the last ability you use in an encounter, you can immediately use the Hear Ye, Hear Ye! effect of your Zeitgeist feature to tell tales of your exploits after the encounter ends.

11-Drama Ability

Choose one heroic ability from the following options, each of which costs 11 drama to use.

Dramatic Reveal (11 Drama)

A little stage trickery, and where once stood a foe, now stands a friend!

Magic — **Maneuver**
Self — Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, whenever you reduce a creature to 0 Stamina using an ability, you can use a free triggered action to teleport an ally within distance of that ability into the creature's space in a plume of rose petals. You or the teleported ally can then make a melee free strike.

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Power Ballad (11 Drama)

A song for the broken-hearted wraps itself around the target and blossoms into a ward of thorns.

Magic, Ranged | **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 | Self or one ally

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, whenever the target takes damage while winded, they can use a free triggered action to deal half the damage they took to the source of the damage.

Saved in the Edit (11 Drama)

You shout a word of power that allows you to rewrite reality to your whims.

Magic | **Maneuver**
Self | Self

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, whenever you deal rolled damage to a creature or object, or enable a creature to spend a Recovery, you can use a free triggered action to give that creature or object one of the following effects until the start of your next turn. If this ability is triggered by multiple targets taking damage or multiple creatures spending Recoveries simultaneously, each target receives the same effect:

- The target has damage weakness equal to your Presence score against any magic, psionic, or weapon ability.
- The target has damage immunity equal to your Presence score.
- The target has a bonus to stability and a penalty to speed equal to your Presence score.
- The target has a bonus to speed and a penalty to stability equal to your Presence score.

The Show Must Go On (11 Drama)

You shine a bright light on the players on the stage and compel them to finish the performance.

Area, Magic, Ranged | **Maneuver**
5 cube within 10 | Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Presence:

≤11 | 6 damage; P < WEAK, the target can't willingly leave the area (EoT)
12–16 | 8 damage; P < AVERAGE, the target can't willingly leave the area (save ends)
17+ | 12 damage; the target can't willingly leave the area (EoT); if P < STRONG, they can't willingly leave the area (save ends)

Effect: Each ally within distance can't obtain lower than a tier 2 outcome on the next test they make before the start of your next turn.

9th-Level Features

As a 9th-level troubadour, you gain the following features.

Roar of the Crowd

You are empowered by your audience, near and far. You can't be made frightened, and if you are prone, you can stand up as a free maneuver.

Additionally, whenever you spend a Recovery, you can forgo regaining Stamina to invoke the roar of an invisible applauding audience. You and each ally within 3 squares of you gains temporary Stamina equal to 10 + the number of active bonds from your Scene Partner feature + either your Victories or the number of players in your game (whichever is higher).

9th-Level Class Act Ability

Your troubadour class act grants your choice of one of two heroic abilities.

9th-Level Auteur Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Epic (11 Drama)

Your story tells a tale of the villain's waning power and how the heroes rose to the occasion to stop them.

Magic, Melee, Ranged | **Maneuver**
Melee 1 or ranged 10 | One creature

Power Roll + Presence:

≤11 | The target takes a bane on ability rolls (save ends).
12–16 | The target has a double bane on ability rolls (save ends).
17+ | The target has a double bane on power rolls (save ends).

Effect: Choose one ally within distance. While the target is affected by this ability, each time they use an ability, that ally can make a free strike against them after the ability is resolved.

Rising Tension (11 Drama)

You narrate the tension of the scene and put all hope into your protagonist to turn things around.

Magic, Ranged | **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 | One ally

Effect: The target gains 3 of their Heroic Resource, has a double edge on a power roll of their choice made during their next turn, is no longer slowed or weakened if they were before, and can immediately take their turn after yours if they have not taken their turn already this round.

9th-Level Duelist Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Expert Fencer (11 Drama)

If you can land the strike, the crowd goes wild.

Charge, Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 3 | One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility:

≤11 | 15 + A damage
12–16 | 21 + A damage
17+ | 28 + A damage; M < STRONG, bleeding (save ends)

Effect: This ability can't obtain better than a tier 2 outcome unless the target is at maximum distance. If you obtain a tier 3 outcome with a natural 17 or higher, you gain 3 surges that you can use immediately.

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Renegotiated Contract (11 Drama)

No, no. You don't die until the sequel.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Effect: Add your current Stamina to your target's current Stamina, then you have half that total Stamina and the target has the remainder. If either of you would gain more Stamina this way than their Stamina maximum, the difference in Stamina between what that creature would gain and their maximum is gained by the other creature. Neither of you can gain more Stamina than your maximum this way. You then make a power roll.

Power Roll + Presence:

≤11 You and the target can each end one effect on yourselves that is ended by a saving throw or that ends at the end of your turns.

12–16 You and the target can end any effects on yourselves that are ended by a saving throw or that end at the end of your turns.

17+ You can choose any of the current effects on you and the target that are ended by a saving throw or that end at the end of your turns, apply the chosen effects to the target, and end the rest.

9th-Level Virtuoso Abilities

Choose one of the following abilities.

Jam Session (11 Drama)

Your jam session creates new genres that compel everyone to get up and move.

Area, Magic | **Main action**
5 burst | Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Presence:

≤11 8 sonic damage

12–16 11 sonic damage

17+ 15 sonic damage

Effect: Each creature within distance gains a +5 bonus to speed until the end of their next turn. While under this effect, each target must use their full movement during their turn.

Melt Their Faces (11 Drama)

The power of music rips through the reality around the target and blows them away.

Magic, Melee, Ranged, Strike | **Main action**
Melee 1 or ranged 10 | One creature or object

Power Roll + Presence:

≤11 12 + P sonic damage; push 5

12–16 16 + P sonic damage; push 10

17+ 22 + P sonic damage; push 15

Effect: Forced movement from this ability ignores stability.



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10th-Level Features

As a 10th-level troubadour, you gain the following features.

Applause

You have an epic resource called applause. Each time you finish a respite, you gain applause equal to the XP you gain. You can spend applause on your abilities as if it were drama.

Additionally, whenever you or a creature within 3 squares would obtain a failure or a tier 1 outcome on a test, you can spend 1 applause to improve the outcome by 1 tier.

Applause remains until you spend it.

Characteristic Increase

Your Agility and Presence scores each increase to 5.

Dramaturgy

You gain 1 additional drama or other Heroic Resource whenever you use your Appeal to the Muses feature. Additionally, your performances no longer have a distance, but can affect any target on the encounter map within your line of effect.

Greatest of All Time

Whenever you obtain a success on a test, each NPC within your line of effect has their Impression score decreased by 4 during a negotiation (to a minimum of 1), and each ally within 3 squares of you gains an edge on their next test. These effects last until you start your next respite.

Perk

You gain one interpersonal, lore, or supernatural perk of your choice.

Skill

You gain one skill of your choice.

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Chapter 6

KITS

The knight in shining armor. The warrior priest. The sniper. Censors, furies, shadows, tacticians, and troubadours can tap into these and many more archetypal concepts using kits. A kit is a combination of weapons, armor, and fighting techniques that lets you personalize your martial hero for battle.

Changing Your Kit

Your choice of kit is always flexible, and your hero is never locked into a specific kit. If you want to change your kit, you can do so as a respite activity (see Respite in Chapter 1: The Basics).

Kit Equipment

Each kit's equipment entry details the armor and weapons the kit provides. It's important to know what equipment a kit uses, because that informs your hero's appearance and story. Equipment is part of what affects the math behind your kit's benefits, alongside the fighting techniques each kit provides. Equipment also determines the type of magic and psionic treasures your character can wield.

The description of equipment in your kit is limited to broad categories, leaving you free to decide the specifics that best align with your vision of your character. For instance, the Guisarmier kit provides medium armor and a polearm. One player using this kit could wear heavy layers of hide and wield a longspear, while another might wear a shining breastplate and carry a halberd into battle.

You can wear armor and wield weapons that aren't part of your kit, but if you do, you don't get your kit's bonuses.

Customizing Equipment Appearances

You should absolutely feel free to describe your equipment in a way that makes sense for the story of your game and hero. For instance, if your hero uses a weapon in the whip category as part of their kit, they could use a leather whip, a spiked chain, or a dagger tied to a knotted rope. A hero who wears heavy armor might wear a suit of chain mail, plate armor, or heavy wooden planks tied together. Your choices for equipment aren't limited just to the examples in this book.

Kit Armor Categories

The armor provided by each kit fits into one of five categories, indicating the kind of protection you have while using the kit.

None

If a kit provides no armor, you can wear whatever clothing you like! Robes, a fashionable tunic and pants—or your character might just loincloth it. It's totally up to you.

Light Armor

If a kit features light armor, you might wear padded cloth, leather armor, or a chain shirt.

Medium Armor

If a kit has medium armor, you might wear layers of thick hides, a breastplate, or armor made of metal scales.

Heavy Armor

If a kit has heavy armor, then you're likely wearing metal from head to toe. Chain mail, ring mail, and suits of plate armor protect you better than any other mundane defense.

Shield

If a kit has a shield, then you wield a shield that can be any shape and made of any mundane material you like. The best shields have a sweet insignia on them, so start thinking about yours!

Kit Weapon Categories

The weapons provided by a kit fall into eight categories that indicate the types of weapons you wield while using the kit.

Bow

Bows cover any weapon used to fire an arrow or bolt projectile, including crossbows, longbows, and shortbows. This weapon group also includes weapons that hurl bullets, stones, darts, or small spears, including slings and atlatls. You don't need to track mundane ammunition for these weapons unless the Director says otherwise.

Ensnaring Weapon

Ensnaring weapons include bolas, nets, and other weapons made to capture an enemy and hold them in place.

Light Weapon

Light weapons are one-handed melee weapons that can be used to make several strikes in rapid succession. Many such weapons can be thrown or used as an off-hand defensive weapon. Daggers, shortswords, rapiers, handaxes, and throwing hammers are typical light weapons.

If your kit uses a light weapon, you can wield two light weapons at a time.

Medium Weapon

Medium weapons are one-handed melee weapons that can be carried into battle while leaving one hand free, allowing you to use that hand to hold a shield or implement. Battleaxes, clubs, longswords, and warhammers are medium weapons.

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Heavy Weapon

Heavy weapons are two-handed melee weapons with weighty bladed or bludgeoning heads, made to seriously harm or kill enemies in a single mighty blow. Greatswords, greataxes, mauls, and morningstars are all examples of heavy weapons.

Polearm

Polearms are two-handed melee weapons with long hafts that increase the wielder's reach. They include glaives, halberds, longspears, and quarterstaffs.

Unarmed Strikes

Any kit that uses unarmed strikes allows you to use your body as a weapon. Punches, kicks, eye gouges, and the like are your forte.

Whip

Whip weapons include the standard whip, spiked chains, flails, and any similarly long and flexible melee weapon.

Kits and Treasures

When you find a supernatural treasure such as a magic sword, you can use the item as long as it's in one of your kit's equipment categories. A Blade of Quintessence is a medium weapon, so you can use it with the Ranger or Shining Armor kits. However, you can't use it with the Cloak and Dagger or Stick and Robe kits because those kits don't include medium weapons, meaning you haven't done the necessary preparations to use the weapon effectively. You can still swing a Blade of Quintessence around as an improvised weapon, but you don't get any of its bonuses or benefits.

If you find a piece of equipment you really want to use that isn't part of your kit, you can always change your kit as a respite activity.

Kit Bonuses and Traits

A kit can grant a bonus to your Stamina, speed, and stability, as well as the damage and distance of your weapon abilities, including your free strikes. (Abilities in Chapter 5: Classes has information on abilities, ability keywords, and more.)

Stamina Bonus

Your kit's Stamina bonus is added to your Stamina maximum and scales with your echelon.

Speed Bonus

Your kit's speed bonus is added to your speed.

Stability Bonus

Your kit's stability bonus is added to your stability.

Damage Bonuses

Kits can grant you a bonus to damage with both melee and ranged weapon abilities. If a kit has a melee damage bonus, that bonus is added to the rolled damage of any damage-dealing ability with both the Melee and Weapon keywords. A kit's ranged damage bonus is added to the rolled damage of damage-dealing abilities with both the Ranged and Weapon keywords.

Improvised Weapons

Improvised weapons include rocks, bottles, plates, furniture, and anything else you pick up that can be bashed, hurled, or stabbed into an enemy. As well, any weapons that aren't part of your kit count as improvised weapons for you. If you're not using a kit with unarmed strikes, then your feet and fists are improvised weapons. If you're not using any kit and pick up a sword to use as part of a melee free strike, the sword counts as an improvised weapon.

Improvised weapons can be used with weapon abilities you gain from your class. For instance, many melee-focused heroes choose a kit that maximizes their melee capabilities, then make ranged free strikes with improvised weapons. However, you can't use improvised weapons with weapon abilities gained from your kit, and you add no special bonuses from your kit to a weapon ability used with an improvised weapon.

Bonuses Across Tiers

Kit damage bonuses increase based on the tier outcome of the power roll for a weapon ability, and are presented as "+X/+Y/+Z." The X bonus is added to a tier 1 outcome, the Y bonus is added to a tier 2 outcome, and the Z bonus is added to a tier 3 outcome.

For example, the Shining Armor kit has a +2/+2/+2 melee damage bonus, increasing the damage of melee weapon abilities across all tier outcomes. The Sniper kit has a +0/+0/+4 ranged damage bonus, having no effect on a tier 1 or tier 2 outcome on an ability roll, but increasing the damage of tier 3 outcomes by +4 for your ranged weapon abilities.

Distance Bonus

A kit's melee distance bonus increases the distance of abilities with the Melee and Weapon keywords. A kit's ranged distance bonus increases the distance of abilities with the Ranged and Weapon keywords.

A distance bonus doesn't increase the size of any ability's area of effect.

Disengage Bonus

A kit that has a disengage bonus increases the number of squares you can shift when you take the Disengage move action (see Chapter 10: Combat).

Kit Signature Ability

Each kit grants a signature ability, whose distance and damage already includes the kit's bonuses. For instance, the Guisarmier kit's Forward Thrust, Backward Smash ability has a distance of melee 2 and deals 4, 7, or 9 damage depending on the tier outcome, with that distance and damage including the bonuses from the kit.

For details on the ability format, see Abilities in Chapter 7: Classes.

Kits A to Z

This section details each kit, whose bonuses and benefits are summarized in the Kits table.

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Arcane Archer

The Arcane Archer kit allows you to combine magic and ranged weapon strikes. Your lack of armor keeps you mobile, and your magic makes your arrows explode to devastate your foes.

Equipment

You wear no armor and wield a bow.

Kit Bonuses

Speed Bonus: +1
Ranged Damage Bonus: +2/+2/+2
Ranged Distance Bonus: +10
Disengage Bonus: +1

Signature Ability

Exploding Arrow

Your ammunition explodes with magical energy.

Magic, Ranged, Strike, Weapon **Main action**
Ranged 15 One creature or object

Power Roll + Agility, Reason, Intuition, or Presence:
≤11 5 + A, R, I, or P fire damage
12–16 7 + A, R, I, or P fire damage
17+ 10 + A, R, I, or P fire damage

Effect: One creature or object of your choice within 2 squares of the target takes fire damage equal to the characteristic score used for this ability's power roll.

Battlemind

Who says lightly armored heroes can't also be hard to move? You just need to employ some psionics! The Battlemind kit harnesses the power of your mind to make you harder to move—and to make your foes easier to push around.

Equipment

You wear light armor and wield a medium weapon.

Kit Bonuses

Stamina Bonus: +3 per echelon
Speed Bonus: +2
Stability Bonus: +1
Melee Damage Bonus: +2/+2/+2

Signature Ability

Unmooring

Your weapon unleashes psionic energy that reduces your target's weight.

Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon **Main action**
Melee 1 One creature

Power Roll + Might, Reason, Intuition or Presence:
≤11 5 + M, R, I, or P damage
12–16 8 + M, R, I, or P damage
17+ 11 + M, R, I, or P damage

Effect: Until the end of the target's next turn, any forced movement that affects the target has its distance increased by 2.

Cloak and Dagger

Providing throwable light weapons and light armor easily concealed by a cloak to confuse your enemies, the Cloak and Dagger kit makes you more mobile while increasing the effectiveness of your short-range strikes.

Equipment

You wear light armor and wield one or two light weapons.

Kit Bonuses

Stamina Bonus: +3 per echelon
Speed Bonus: +2
Melee Damage Bonus: +1/+1/+1
Ranged Damage Bonus: +1/+1/+1
Ranged Distance Bonus: +5
Disengage Bonus: +1

Signature Ability

Fade

A stab, and a few quick, careful steps back.

Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon
Main action
Melee 1 or ranged 10
One creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11 3 + M or A damage; you can shift 1 square
12–16 6 + M or A damage; you can shift up to 2 squares
17+ 8 + M or A damage; you can shift up to 3 squares



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Dual Wielder

The Dual Wielder kit is for folks who want to excel at using two weapons at the same time. Your fighting style maximizes the power of each weapon you have in hand, making you a whirling dealer of death.

Equipment

You wear medium armor and wield a light weapon and a medium weapon.

Kit Bonuses

Stamina Bonus: +6 per echelon
Speed Bonus: +2
Melee Damage Bonus: +2/+2/+2
Disengage Bonus: +1

Signature Ability

Double Strike

Why strike once when you could do it twice?

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — Two creatures or objects

Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11 4 damage
12–16 6 damage
17+ 8 damage

Effect: If you use this ability on your turn, you can use it against one target, then use your maneuver and your move action for that turn before using the ability against a second target. You still use the same power roll for both targets.

Martial Artist

If you want to be fast in a fight, then Martial Artist is the kit for you. Unencumbered by weapons or armor, this fighting style rewards quick, focused unarmed strikes against opponents, and allows you to be the ultimate skirmisher.

Equipment

You wear no armor and wield only your unarmed strikes.

Kit Bonuses

Stamina Bonus: +3 per echelon
Speed Bonus: +3
Melee Damage Bonus: +2/+2/+2
Disengage Bonus: +1

Signature Ability

Battle Grace

You feint to move your enemies into perfect position.

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11 5 + M or A damage
12–16 8 + M or A damage; you can swap places with the target
17+ 11 + M or A damage; you can swap places with the target

Effect: If you obtain a tier 2 or tier 3 outcome and can't swap places with the target because one or both of you is too big to fit into the swapped space, you both remain in your original spaces and the target takes 1 extra damage.

Guisarmier

The Guisarmier kit is for those who want to use a polearm for extended reach while remaining protected by sturdy armor. This is the kit that allows you to become the ultimate halberd, longspear, or glaive fighter.

Equipment

You wear medium armor and wield a polearm.

Kit Bonuses

Stamina Bonus: +6 per echelon
Stability Bonus: +1
Melee Damage Bonus: +2/+2/+2
Melee Distance Bonus: +1

Signature Ability

Forward Thrust, Backward Smash

In your hands, the haft is as good as the head.

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 2 — Two creatures or objects

Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11 4 damage
12–16 7 damage
17+ 9 damage

Mountain

The Mountain kit does exactly what it says on the tin. You don heavy armor and raise a heavy weapon to stand strong against your foes, quickly demolishing them when it's your turn to strike.

Equipment

You wear heavy armor and wield a heavy weapon.

Kit Bonuses

Stamina Bonus: +9 per echelon
Stability Bonus: +2
Melee Damage Bonus: +0/+0/+4

Signature Ability

Pain for Pain

An enemy who tagged you will pay for that.

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11 3 + M or A damage
12–16 5 + M or A damage
17+ 13 + M or A damage

Effect: If the target dealt damage to you since the end of your last turn, this strike deals additional damage equal to your Might or Agility score (your choice).

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Panther

If you want a good balance of protection, speed, and damage, the Panther kit is for you. This kit increases your Stamina not by wearing armor, but through the focused battle preparation of body and mind, letting you be fast and mobile while swinging a heavy weapon at your foes.

Equipment

You wear no armor and wield a heavy weapon.

Kit Bonuses

Stamina Bonus: +6 per echelon
Speed Bonus: +1
Stability Bonus: +1
Melee Damage Bonus: +0/+0/+4

Signature Ability

Devastating Rush

The faster you move, the harder you hit.

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature or object

Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11 3 + M or A damage
12–16 6 + M or A damage
17+ 13 + M or A damage

Effect: You can move up to 3 squares straight toward the target before this strike, which deals extra damage equal to the number of squares you move this way.

Pugilist

Meant for brawlers and boxers, the Pugilist kit gives you access to a melee fighting style that grants a boost to Stamina and damage while allowing you to float like a butterfly. If you want to be a tough, strong hero who doles out punishment with your fists, then this kit is for you.

Equipment

You wear no armor and wield only your unarmed strikes.

Kit Bonuses

Stamina Bonus: +6 per echelon
Speed Bonus: +2
Stability Bonus: +1
Melee Damage Bonus: +1/+1/+1

Signature Ability

Let's Dance

Keeping your enemies stumbling around the battlefield is second nature to you.

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11 3 + M or A damage
12–16 6 + M or A damage; slide 1
17+ 8 + M or A damage; slide 2

Effect: You can shift into any square the target leaves after you slide them.

Raider

The Raider kit keeps you protected while granting you full mobility, providing a boost to speed and distance that lets you run around the battlefield like a Viking warrior.

Equipment

You wear light armor and wield a shield and a light weapon.

Kit Bonuses

Stamina Bonus: +6 per echelon
Speed Bonus: +1
Melee Damage Bonus: +1/+1/+1
Ranged Damage Bonus: +1/+1/+1
Ranged Distance Bonus: +5
Disengage Bonus: +1

Signature Ability

Shock and Awe

You execute a brutal strike that leaves your foe reeling.

Melee, Ranged, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 or ranged 10 — One creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11 3 + M or A damage
12–16 6 + M or A damage
17+ 8 + M or A damage

Effect: The target takes a bane on their next power roll made before the end of their next turn.

Ranger

The Ranger kit outfits you with light armor and weapons for every challenge, letting you easily switch between melee and ranged combat. This kit provides a good balance of bonuses to defense and offense to create a hero who is a jack-of-all-trades.

Equipment

You wear medium armor and wield a bow and a medium weapon.

Kit Bonuses

Stamina Bonus: +6 per echelon
Speed Bonus: +1
Melee Damage Bonus: +1/+1/+1
Ranged Damage Bonus: +1/+1/+1
Ranged Distance Bonus: +5
Disengage Bonus: +1

Signature Ability

Hamstring Shot

A well-placed shot leaves your enemy struggling to move.

Ranged, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Ranged 10 — One creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11 3 + M or A damage; A < WEAK, slowed (save ends)
12–16 5 + M or A damage; A < AVERAGE, slowed (save ends)
17+ 7 + M or A damage; A < STRONG, slowed (save ends)

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Rapid-Fire

The Rapid-Fire kit is for archers who want to deal maximum damage by shooting as many arrows as possible into nearby enemies. With this kit, your fighting technique focuses on peppering foes before they can get close enough to counterattack.

Equipment

You wear light armor and wield a bow.

Kit Bonuses

Stamina Bonus: +3 per echelon
Speed Bonus: +1
Ranged Damage Bonus: +2/+2/+2
Ranged Distance Bonus: +7
Disengage Bonus: +1

Signature Ability

Two Shot

When you fire two arrows back-to-back, both hit their mark.

Ranged, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Ranged 12 — Two creatures or objects

Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11 4 damage
12–16 6 damage
17+ 8 damage

Retiarius

The retiarius is often depicted as a lightly armored warrior with a net in one hand and a trident in the other, and this kit gives you the equipment and fighting technique to make that happen. Tie up your foe with a net and then poke them to death!

Equipment

You wear light armor and wield several ensnaring weapons and a polearm.

Kit Bonuses

Stamina Bonus: +3 per echelon
Speed Bonus: +1
Melee Damage Bonus: +2/+2/+2
Melee Distance Bonus: +1
Disengage Bonus: +1

Signature Ability

Net and Stab

The well-thrown net that follows your main attack leaves your foes right where you want them.

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 2 — One creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11 4 + M or A damage; A < WEAK, slowed (EoT)
12–16 6 + M or A damage; A < AVERAGE, slowed (EoT)
17+ 8 + M or A damage; A < STRONG, restrained (EoT)



Shining Armor

The Shining Armor kit provides the most protection a kit can afford, providing you with the sword, shield, and armor necessary to play the prototypical knight.

Equipment

You wear heavy armor and wield a shield and a medium weapon.

Kit Bonuses

Stamina Bonus: +12 per echelon
Stability Bonus: +1
Melee Damage Bonus: +2/+2/+2

Signature Ability

Protective Attack

The strength of your assault makes it impossible for your foe to ignore you.

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11 5 + M or A damage
12–16 8 + M or A damage
17+ 11 + M or A damage

Effect: The target is taunted until the end of their next turn.

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Sniper

The Sniper kit gives you the tools and techniques to take down enemies from afar. This kit can help you become the archer who lurks behind trees or down tunnels, picking off enemies with a bow or crossbow as they approach.

Equipment

You wear no armor and wield a bow.

Kit Bonuses

Speed Bonus: +1
Ranged Damage Bonus: +0/+0/+4
Ranged Distance Bonus: +10
Disengage Bonus: +1

Signature Ability

Patient Shot

Breathe ... aim ... wait ... then strike!

Ranged, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Ranged 15 — One creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11: 3 + M or A damage
12–16: 6 + M or A damage
17+: 13 + M or A damage

Effect: If you don't take a move action this turn, this strike deals extra damage equal to your Might or Agility score (your choice).

Stick and Robe

Armed with a simple reach weapon, often a quarterstaff, a character using the Stick and Robe kit is highly mobile thanks to their light armor. This allows your hero to make maximum use of their weapon's length.

Equipment

You wear light armor and wield a polearm.

Kit Bonuses

Stamina Bonus: +3 per echelon
Speed Bonus: +2
Melee Damage Bonus: +1/+1/+1
Melee Distance Bonus: +1
Disengage Bonus: +1

Signature Ability

Where I Want You

When your stick speaks, your enemy moves.

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 2 — One creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11: 4 + M or A damage
12–16: 7 + M or A damage; slide 1
17+: 10 + M or A damage; slide 3

Spellsword

The Spellsword kit combines melee strikes and a little bit of magic, letting you create a warrior who doesn't have to choose between the incantation and the blade.

Equipment

You wear light armor and wield a shield and a medium weapon.

Kit Bonuses

Stamina Bonus: +6 per echelon
Speed Bonus: +1
Stability Bonus: +1
Melee Damage Bonus: +2/+2/+2

Signature Ability

Leaping Lightning

Lightning jumps from your weapon as you strike to harm a nearby foe.

Magic, Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature or object

Power Roll + Might, Reason, Intuition or Presence:
≤11: 5 + M, R, I, or P lightning damage
12–16: 8 + M, R, I, or P lightning damage
17+: 11 + M, R, I, or P lightning damage

Effect: A creature or object of your choice within 2 squares of the target takes lightning damage equal to the characteristic score used for this ability's power roll.

Swashbuckler

If you want to be mobile and deal a lot of damage with melee strikes, then you should reach for the Swashbuckler kit. This is a great kit for heroes who want to be master duelists.

Equipment

You wear light armor and wield a medium weapon.

Kit Bonuses

Stamina Bonus: +3 per echelon
Speed Bonus: +3
Melee Damage Bonus: +2/+2/+2
Disengage Bonus: +1

Signature Ability

Fancy Footwork

All combat is a dance—and you'll be the one leading.

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11: 5 + M or A damage
12–16: 7 + M or A damage; push 1
17+: 10 + M or A damage; push 2

Effect: You can shift into any square the target leaves after you push them.

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Sword and Board

The Sword and Board kit doesn't just give you a shield—it makes the shield part of your offensive arsenal. With a medium weapon in one hand and a block of steel or solid oak in the other, you protect yourself while you control the battlefield.

Equipment

You wear medium armor and wield a shield and a medium weapon.

Kit Bonuses

Stamina Bonus: +9 per echelon
Stability Bonus: +1
Melee Damage Bonus: +2/+2/+2
Disengage Bonus: +1

Signature Ability

Shield Bash

In your hands, a shield isn't just for protection.

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11 4 + M or A damage; push 1
12–16 7 + M or A damage; push 2
17+ 9 + M or A damage; push 3; M < STRONG, prone

Warrior Priest

The Warrior Priest kit imbues the power of the gods into your weapon, making it a smiting instrument. You wade into the fray without fear, thanks to the power of the divine ... and the heavy armor you wear.

Equipment

You wear heavy armor and wield a light weapon.

Kit Bonuses

Stamina Bonus: +9 per echelon
Speed Bonus: +1
Stability Bonus: +1
Melee Damage Bonus: +1/+1/+1

Signature Ability

Weakening Brand

The impact of your weapon brands your target for destruction.

Magic, Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature or object

Power Roll + Might, Reason, Intuition or Presence:
≤11 3 + M R I or P holy damage
12–16 5 + M R I or P holy damage
17+ 8 + M R I or P holy damage

Effect: Until the end of the target's next turn, they have damage weakness equal to the characteristic score used for this ability's power roll.

Whirlwind

The Whirlwind kit makes effective use of whips, granting you mobility, damage, and reach. If you want to be a fast-moving warrior who lashes foes with a chain or whip, then this is the kit for you.

Equipment

You wear no armor and wield a whip.

Kit Bonuses

Speed Bonus: +3
Melee Damage Bonus: +1/+1/+1
Melee Distance Bonus: +1
Disengage Bonus: +1

Signature Ability

Extension of My Arm

When you draw your whip back after an attack, your enemy is drawn ever closer.

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 3 — One creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11 4 + M or A damage; vertical pull 1
12–16 7 + M or A damage; vertical pull 2
17+ 10 + M or A damage; vertical pull 3

Optional Rule: Losing Equipment

The rules of the game expect that heroes always have access to their equipment. That's because for most of the time in the game, heroes aren't worried about surviving for days on end in a dungeon and tracking every piece of gear they carry. However, there might be times where your group wants to tell a story of heroes who are captured and stripped of their equipment, or who find themselves at a masquerade where weapons need to be checked at the door. For those kinds of scenarios, you can use the following rules:

- If your kit has armor and you aren't wearing it or wielding it (in the case of a shield), you lose your kit's Stamina bonus and stability bonus. If you lose your shield but keep the rest of your armor, your Stamina decreases by 3 per echelon. As long as you are carrying your shield, you don't lose its Stamina bonus, even if you aren't actively wielding it.
- If your kit has a medium or heavy weapon you aren't wielding, you lose the kit's melee damage bonus.
- If your kit has a light weapon you aren't wielding, you lose the kit's melee damage bonus, ranged damage bonus, and distance bonus for a weapon you throw. If your kit also has a bow, you don't lose those benefits for the bow.
- If your kit has a polearm or whip you aren't wielding, you lose the kit's melee damage bonus and melee distance bonus.
- If your kit has an ensnaring weapon you aren't wielding, you lose the kit's signature ability.
- If your kit has a bow weapon you aren't wielding, you lose the kit's ranged damage bonus and distance bonus.

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Kits

Kit	Armor	Weapon	Stamina per Echelon	Speed	Stability	Melee Damage	Ranged Damage	Melee Distance	Ranged Distance	Disengage
Arcane Archer	None	Bow	—	+1	—	—	+2/+2/+2	—	+10	+1
Battlemind	Light	Medium	+3	+2	+1	+2/+2/+2	—	—	—	—
Cloak and Dagger	Light	Light	+3	+2	—	+1/+1/+1	+1/+1/+1	—	+5	+1
Dual Wielder	Medium	Light, medium	+6	+2	—	+2/+2/+2	—	—	—	+1
Guisarmier	Medium	Polearm	+6	—	+1	+2/+2/+2	—	+1	—	—
Martial Artist	None	Unarmed strikes	+3	+3	—	+2/+2/+2	—	—	—	+1
Mountain	Heavy	Heavy	+9	—	+2	+0/+0/+4	—	—	—	—
Panther	None	Heavy	+6	+1	+1	+0/+0/+4	—	—	—	—
Pugilist	None	Unarmed strikes	+6	+2	+1	+1/+1/+1	—	—	—	—
Raider	Light, shield	Light	+6	+1	—	+1/+1/+1	+1/+1/+1	—	+5	+1
Ranger	Medium	Bow, medium	+6	+1	—	+1/+1/+1	+1/+1/+1	—	+5	+1
Rapid-Fire	Light	Bow	+3	+1	—	—	+2/+2/+2	—	+7	+1
Retiarius	Light	Ensnaring, polearm	+3	+1	—	+2/+2/+2	—	+1	—	+1
Shining Armor	Heavy, shield	Medium	+12	—	+1	+2/+2/+2	—	—	—	—
Sniper	None	Bow	—	+1	—	—	+0/+0/+4	—	+10	+1
Spellsword	Light, shield	Medium	+6	+1	+1	+2/+2/+2	—	—	—	—
Stick and Robe	Light	Polearm	+3	+2	—	+1/+1/+1	—	+1	—	+1
Swashbuckler	Light	Medium	+3	+3	—	+2/+2/+2	—	—	—	+1
Sword and Board	Medium, shield	Medium	+9	—	+1	+2/+2/+2	—	—	—	+1
Warrior Priest	Heavy	Light	+9	+1	+1	+1/+1/+1	—	—	—	—
Whirlwind	None	Whip	—	+3	—	+1/+1/+1	—	+1	—	+1

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Chapter 7

PERKS

Heroes don't just fight monsters. They engage in exploration, investigation, negotiation, and more. Perks are features you can use to customize your hero and give them heroic moments outside of combat. Along with skills and many class features, perks make your character more than just a monster fighter. But although these features are designed to be used outside of combat, many are versatile enough that they can also be used in battle.

You are granted one perk from your career and can choose other perks from your class as your level increases.

Perk Types

Six types of perks are available to your character. Five of those types reflect the setup of the five skill groups (see Skills in Chapter 9: Tests), and feature many perks related to the skills from those groups. The sixth type of perk allows characters of all types access to supernatural power.

Crafting perks improve your talent for crafting materials, and let you become an expert in the things you create.

Exploration perks let you better traverse and explore different environments.

Interpersonal perks improve your interactions with other creatures.

Intrigue perks make you more effective at investigating mysteries and finding the truth, even as you keep your own secrets hidden.

Lore perks improve your mastery of memory, language, and knowledge across a range of topics.

Supernatural perks let you use magic and psionics to influence the world around you.

Whenever a feature allows you to gain a perk, that feature tells you which type of perk to choose.

Crafting Perks

This section presents crafting perks in alphabetical order.

Area of Expertise

Choose one skill you already have from the crafting skill group. Whenever you obtain a tier 1 outcome on an easy or medium test using this skill, you treat it as a tier 2 outcome instead. Additionally, if you spend 1 minute inspecting an object related to the chosen skill, you can estimate its value and learn of any flaws in its construction.

Expert Artisan

Whenever you make a test as part of a crafting or research project that uses a skill you already have from the crafting skill group, you can make the power roll twice and use either roll.

Handy

Whenever you make a test to craft something and don't have a skill that applies to the test, you gain a +1 bonus to the power roll.

Improvisation Creation

Without needing to make a test—and even without tools—you can quickly jury-rig or repair a mundane item or piece of equipment related to a skill you have from the crafting skill group. That item lasts for 1 hour or works for one use or activation (whichever comes first, as the Director determines), then breaks beyond repair. For example, if you have the Carpentry skill, you could repair a rickety wooden bridge long enough for a group of creatures to cross it, or build a simple shovel made of wood that can be used for 1 hour.

Inspired Artisan

When you make a project roll using a skill from the crafting skill group, you can spend a hero token to make another project roll for the same project as part of the same respite activity. You can't use this perk more than once per respite.

Traveling Artisan

On any day when you don't take a respite, you can spend 1 uninterrupted hour working on a crafting project using a skill you have from the crafting skill group. If you do so, you gain 1d10 project points toward that project.

Perks and Tests

The existence of specific perks doesn't mean that a hero can't attempt the task related to a perk without having that perk. Aside from supernatural perks, a Director can always allow a hero to attempt a mundane task mentioned in a perk by making a test. Perks are special because they allow a hero to attempt a specific task without a test, and often give a better result than a successful test—or even a test with a reward—would give.

For example, can a hero catch a falling ally if they don't have the I've Got You perk? A Director can absolutely allow it, but might decide that the hero needs to succeed on a Might test to accomplish the task, using an action or maneuver to prepare for it. Being able to catch an ally automatically as a free triggered action is what the perk gets you!

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Exploration Perks

This section presents exploration perks in alphabetical order.

Brawny

Whenever you fail a Might test, you can lose Stamina equal to 1d6 + your level to improve the outcome of the test by one tier. You can use this perk only once per test.

Camouflage Hunter

Whenever you are in wilderness, once you are hidden from a creature, you don't need cover or concealment to stay hidden from them.

Danger Sense

Whenever you are in a natural environment (but not in a settlement in that environment), you gain an edge on tests made using the Alertness skill, and you can't be surprised. Additionally, you have a connection to nature that warns you if any natural disaster is imminent within the next 72 hours, though you don't know exactly what it will entail (an earthquake, a wildfire, and so forth).

Friend Catapult

As a maneuver, you grab a willing adjacent ally or object of your size or smaller, then vertical push that target up to a number of squares equal to twice your Might score. If a creature you push falls as a result of this movement, the effective distance of the fall is reduced by a number of squares equal to twice your Might score. When you use this perk, you can't use it again until you earn 1 or more Victories.

I've Got You!

Whenever a willing ally falls and would land on you or adjacent to you, you can safely catch them as a free triggered action. Neither of you takes damage from the ally's fall.

Monster Whisperer

You can use the Handle Animals skill to interact with nonsapient creatures who are not animals.

Put Your Back Into It!

During montage tests, whenever you make a test to assist a test and obtain a tier 1 outcome, you don't add a bane to the assisted test. Additionally, once per montage test, you can turn an ally's tier 1 test outcome into a tier 2 outcome.

Team Leader

At the start of a group test or montage test, you can spend a hero token. If you do, all participants make tests as if they also had any skill you have from the exploration group.

Teamwork

When you take your first turn during any montage test, you can both make a test and assist another hero's test.

Wood Wise

When you make a test using a skill from the exploration skill group and at least one of the d10s rolled is a 1, you can reroll one d10. You can use this perk only once per test.

Interpersonal Perks

This section presents interpersonal perks in alphabetical order.

Charming Liar

If you fail a test using the Lie skill, you don't suffer any consequences associated with the failure. Additionally, during a negotiation, you can be caught in one lie without negative consequences. When you use either benefit of this perk, you can't use this perk again until you earn 1 or more Victories.

Dazzler

Whenever a creature watches you sing, dance, or perform a role (as an actor, not just in disguise) for 1 uninterrupted minute or more, you gain an edge on any test made to influence that creature for 1 hour after the performance ends.

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Engrossing Monologue

Whenever you are not in combat, you can shout to get the attention of hearing creatures within 10 squares of you. Each such creature who is not hostile toward you listens to what you have to say for 1 uninterrupted minute or more, or until they sense danger or any form of imminent harm. While creatures are listening to you, each of your allies gains an edge on tests made to avoid being noticed by those creatures.

Harmonizer

You can make a Presence test using the Music skill to influence creatures who don't have emotions or can't understand you. Additionally, once during a negotiation when an ally makes an argument, you can play music to give that ally an edge on their test.

Lie Detector

In response to another creature communicating information to you, you can spend a hero token to determine whether that information contained any knowing lies. If so, you know what the lies are, but not what the truth is.

Open Book

Whenever you speak one-on-one with a creature, you can ask them one question about themself that might typically offend them or raise suspicion. If they choose not to answer honestly, they simply deflect or redirect the question, with no further complications. If they choose to answer honestly, the creature can immediately ask you a question about yourself in turn, which you must answer honestly.

Pardon My Friend

When an ally within 5 squares fails a Presence test, you can step in and make a Presence test that takes a bane, with your roll replacing the ally's roll. This perk can be used only once per test, even if more than one character has it.

Power Player

Whenever you make a test that uses the Brag, Flirt, or Intimidate skills, you can use Might instead of any other characteristic the test calls for.

So Tell Me ...

Whenever you succeed on a Presence test to influence one or more creatures, you can ask one creature you influenced a follow-up question after the test resolves, which they must answer honestly. At the Director's discretion, the creature doesn't have to answer the question completely—or at all—if the response would put them or a loved one in danger.

Spot the Tell

Whenever you make a test to read a person and obtain a tier 3 outcome, you notice several tells that give away their true feelings. Any test you make to read that person in the future gains an edge.

Intrigue Perks

This section presents intrigue perks in alphabetical order.

Criminal Contacts

You have access to a network of criminal contacts. As a respite activity while you take a respite in a settlement, you can ask a question of your contacts by making a Presence test. On a tier 2 outcome, you learn one piece of information that would be common among criminals—the secret entrances into a building, the location of a local criminal in hiding, the name of a local thieves' guild leader, and so forth. On a tier 3 outcome, you can instead gain knowledge that would be uncommon among criminals as long as such information exists—the location of a local treasure cache, the location of a murder weapon used in a noble's assassination, the name of an NPC secretly bankrolling a local assassin's guild, and so forth.

Forgettable Face

If you spend 10 minutes or less interacting with a creature who hasn't met you before, you can cause them to forget your face when you part. If asked to describe you, the creature gives only a vague, blank, and unhelpful description. Additionally, if you spend 1 hour or more assembling a disguise, you automatically obtain a tier 2 outcome on any test that could make use of the Disguise skill. If you have the Disguise skill, you automatically obtain a tier 3 outcome on the test.

Gum Up the Works

Whenever a mundane trap activates within 3 squares, you can use a triggered action to move up to 3 squares toward it. If this movement brings you adjacent to any of the trap's mechanisms, you can jam the trap, preventing it from activating. As long as you stay adjacent to the mechanism, the trap can't go off unless an attempt to disarm it fails.

Lucky Dog

Whenever you fail a test using any skill from the intrigue skill group, you can lose Stamina equal to 1d6 + your level to improve the outcome of the test by one tier. You can use this perk only once per test.

Master of Disguise

You can don or remove a disguise as part of any test you make using the Hide skill, or while using the Hide maneuver.

Slipped Lead

You gain an edge on tests made to escape bonds. Given 1 uninterrupted minute, you can escape any mundane bonds without making a test. Additionally, it's not immediately obvious when you've escaped bonds until you do something that makes it clear you have done so (cast them off, use an ability that harms one or more creatures, and so forth).

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Lore Perks

This section presents lore perks in alphabetical order.

But I Know Who Does

Whenever you fail a test to recall lore using a skill from the lore skill group, you instinctively recall the nearest location where the information you seek might be found. This could be the tower of a local sage, a library in a nearby city, somewhere deep in a dungeon, or any other location of the Director's determination. The Director can decide that certain lore can't be revealed this way.

Eidetic Memory

Your mind is an encyclopedia, though not always an easy one to organize. When you finish a respite, choose one skill from the lore skill group that you don't have. You have that skill until you finish your next respite. Additionally, if you spend 1 uniterrupted minute or more reading any page of text, you can memorize its contents, allowing you to memorize entire books with sufficient time.

Expert Sage

Whenever you make a test as part of a crafting or research project using a skill from the lore skill group, you can make the power roll twice and use either roll.

I've Read About This Place

Each time you enter a settlement you've never been to before, you can ask the Director one of the following questions:

- Who is the most influential public figure in this settlement?
- Who in this settlement would be the friendliest to us right now?
- What does this settlement need most from outsiders?

If the Director doesn't have an answer to the question you ask, or doesn't want to answer, you can instead ask a different question.

Linguist

You automatically learn two new languages, as long as you have regularly heard those languages spoken or seen them written before. Additionally, if you spend 7 days or more in a place where you regularly hear or read a language you don't know, you can pick up enough of that language to hold a conversation or understand basic written information. Having picked up a language this way, you can subsequently learn it using the Learn New Language research project at half the usual project goal cost (see Chapter 12: Downtime Projects).

Polymath

Whenever you make a test to recall lore and don't have a skill that applies to the test, you gain a +1 bonus to the power roll.

Specialist

You are a leading expert on a particular subject. Choose one skill you have from the lore skill group. You always have a double edge on tests made to recall lore using this skill. Additionally, your specialist knowledge grants you notoriety in fields related to the chosen skill. You treat your Renown as 1 higher when negotiating with an NPC who knows your reputation, or 2 higher if they have the same skill you chose for this perk.

Traveling Sage

On any day when you don't take a respite, you can spend 1 uninterrupted hour working on a research project using a skill you have from the lore skill group. If you do so, you gain 1d10 project points toward that project.

Supernatural Perks

This section presents supernatural perks in alphabetical order.

Arcane Trick

You have the following ability.

Arcane Trick
You cast an entertaining spell that creates a minor but impressive magical effect.

Magic — Self; see below
Main Action — Self

Effect: Choose one of the following effects:

- You teleport a size 1S or smaller object adjacent to you into an unoccupied space adjacent to you.
- Until the start of your next turn, a part of your body shoots a shower of harmless noisy sparks that light up each square adjacent to you.
- You ignite or snuff out (your choice) every mundane light source adjacent to you.
- You transform up to 1 pound of edible food you touch to make it taste delicious or disgusting.
- Until the start of your next turn, you make your body exude a particular odor you've smelled before. This smell can be sensed by each creature within 5 squares of you, but can't impose any condition or other drawback on those creatures.
- You place a small magical inscription on the surface of a mundane object you touch, or you can remove an inscription that was made by you or by another creature using Arcane Trick.
- You touch a size 1T object to cover it with an illusion that makes it look like a different object. Any creature who handles the object becomes aware of the illusion. The illusion ends when you stop touching the object.

Creature Sense

As a maneuver, choose a creature within 10 squares. If that creature is your level or lower, you learn the keywords in their stat block (Demon, Humanoid, Undead, and so forth).

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Familiar

A supernatural spirit who has taken the form of a specific small animal or animated object has chosen to be your familiar—or to adopt you as their familiar.

The spirit uses the familiar stat block.

Familiar
Familiar

2 × your level **Stamina**	**Immunity:** — **Weakness:** —	0 **Free Strike**	**Melee:** 2 **Ranged:** 0
5 **Speed**	**Movement:** Run, Fly, Hover, Teleport	1T **Size**	0 **Stability**

Might -3 **A**gility +2 **R**eason -5 **I**ntuition +0 **P**resence +1

★ **Telepathic**
While you and your familiar are within 10 squares of each other, you can communicate telepathically and share each other's senses. While sharing senses, each of you also benefits from your own senses at the same time.

The familiar can hold small objects in their mouth or claws, but can't perform activities that would typically require hands (opening a door, unrolling a scroll, and so forth). They can't harm other creatures or objects. They can flank in combat, but only with you.

If your familiar is destroyed, you can restore them as a respite activity, or by spending a Recovery as an action to bring them back into existence in an unoccupied space adjacent to you.

Invisible Force

You have the following ability.

Invisible Force
You manipulate a tiny object with your mind.

Psionic, Ranged — **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 — One size 1T object

Effect: You can grab or manipulate the target object with your mind, moving the object up to a number of squares equal to your Reason, Intuition, or Presence score (your choice). You can use this ability to turn doorknobs, pull levers, and so forth. You can manipulate any small movable piece of a larger object as long as the piece is unattended and size 1T. You can't use this ability to break a smaller piece off a larger object.

Psychic Whisper

You have the following ability.

Psychic Whisper
You send a one-way telepathic message to a friend.

Psionic, Ranged — **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 — One ally who understands one or more languages

Effect: You send a telepathic message to the target that takes 10 seconds or less to speak. The target knows who the message is from and can decide to ignore it and subsequent messages.



Thingspeaker

When you hold an object in your hand for 1 uninterrupted minute, you can sense whether it bears emotional resonance. Objects with emotional resonance could include treasured gifts, murder weapons, or personal keepsakes. If the Director determines that the object bears emotional resonance, you learn the most dominant emotion associated with the object, then receive a vision that answers one of the following questions:

- What was the name of the person whose emotion is imprinted on this object?
- Why does this emotion linger on the object?
- How long has it been since the object was held by the person whose emotion lingers on it?

After asking one question, you can choose to delve deeper by asking one additional question from the list, but you are then overcome with emotions that do not belong to you. You take a bane on Intuition and Presence tests until you finish a respite, and you can't use this perk again while you suffer this bane.

Ritualist

You can spend 1 uninterrupted minute to perform a magic ritual of blessing, targeting yourself or one willing creature you touch. The target has a double edge on the next test they make within the next minute. A target can't use this benefit on an activity that takes longer than 1 minute.

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Chapter 8

COMPLICATIONS

Beyond the abilities and features bestowed by ancestry and class, your hero might have something else that makes them ... unusual. Perhaps an earth elemental lives in your body. Maybe your eldritch blade devastates enemies but feeds on your own vitality. A complication is an optional feature you can select to enrich your hero's backstory, with any complication providing you both a positive benefit and a negative drawback.

Because complications are optional, check with your Director before taking one. And even if you get to determine your hero's complication, remember that the Director ultimately determines how your complication affects the story. Your complication's drawback might play a big part in the campaign, whether you have a chance to remove it or whether you always have it looming over you, forcing you into hard decisions. Either option leads to great narratives, so embrace the control you give to the Director when you take a complication. The story will be richer for it!

Benefit and Drawback

Your complication gives your hero both a benefit and a drawback. Some of these benefits and drawbacks are mechanical, while others are narrative. The benefit and drawback of a complication makes your connection to the game deeper and more interesting, and provides hooks to let the Director better draw your hero into the campaign's story.

Not all complication benefits and drawbacks carry equal weight, but each benefit is balanced by its drawback. If you have a powerful positive side to your complication, be prepared to have an equally influential bit of negative backstory as well.

Modifying the Story

In consultation with the Director, you can modify the narrative of a complication to better fit your vision of your character's backstory—or change it entirely. For instance, if you choose Infernal Contract as a complication, you might have your hero strike a deal with an archfey or an undead general instead of a devil!

Many of the details of each complication are purposefully left vague, so that you can connect the complication to the rest of your backstory. If your complication took place during an attack, accident, or other event, you decide the specific details of those events and any other creatures involved.

Choosing a Complication

You can choose your character's complication from any of the available options below. Or to maximize the sense of it being an unexpected part of your life, you can roll on the Complications table.

Complications are presented in alphabetical order.

Complications

d100	Complication
1	Advanced Studies
2	Amnesia
3	Animal Form
4	Antihero
5	Artifact Bonded
6	Bereaved
7	Betrothed
8	Chaos Touched
9	Chosen One
10	Consuming Interest
11	Corrupted Mentor
12	Coward
13	Crash Landed
14	Cult Victim
15	Curse of Caution
16	Curse of Immortality
17	Curse of Misfortune
18	Curse of Poverty
19	Curse of Punishment
20	Curse of Stone
21	Cursed Weapon
22	Disgraced
23	Dragon Dreams
24	Elemental Inside
25	Evanesceria
26	Exile
27	Fallen Immortal
28	Famous Relative
29	Feytouched
30	Fiery Ideal
31	Fire and Chaos
32	Following in the Footsteps
33	Forbidden Romance
34	Frostheart
35	Getting Too Old for This
36	Gnoll-Mauled
37	Greening
38	Grifter
39	Grounded
40	Guilty Conscience
41	Hawk Rider
42	Host Body
43	Hunted
44	Hunter
45	Indebted
46	Infernal Contract
47	Infernal Contract ... But, Like, Bad
48	Ivory Tower
49	Lifebonded
50	Lightning Soul
51	Loner
52	Lost in Time
53	Lost Your Head
54	Lucky
55	Master Chef
56	Meddling Butler
57	Medium
58	Medusa Blood
59	Misunderstood
60	Mundane
61	Outlaw
62	Pirate
63	Preacher
64	Primordial Sickness
65	Prisoner of the Synlirii
66	Promising Apprentice
67	Psychic Eruption
68	Raised by Beasts
69	Refugee
70	Rival
71	Rogue Talent
72	Runaway
73	Searching for a Cure
74	Secret Identity
75	Secret Twin
76	Self-Taught
77	Sewer Folk
78	Shadow Born
79	Shared Spirit
80	Shattered Legacy
81	Shipwrecked
82	Sibling's Shield
83	Silent Sentinel
84	Slight Case of Lycanthropy
85	Stolen Face
86	Strange Inheritance
87	Stripped of Rank
88	Thrill Seeker
89	Vampire Scion
90	Voice in Your Head
91	Vow of Duty
92	Vow of Honesty
93	Waking Dreams
94	War Dog Collar
95	War of Assassins
96	Ward
97	Waterborn
98	Wodewalker
99	Wrathful Spirit
100	Wrongly Imprisoned

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Advanced Studies

You somehow obtained the notebook of a brilliant but eccentric member of your class. The knowledge held within those notes should help you unlock powerful new abilities—if you can ever figure out what the notes mean.

Benefit and Drawback: As a respite activity, you can study the notebook. Make a test using your highest characteristic score:

- ≤11 You summon a hostile demon of your level or lower who attacks you at the end of the respite. The demon acts first in the combat, regardless of the traits or abilities of you or any other creature involved.
- 12–16 You learn nothing and your time is wasted.
- 17+ You learn one bonus heroic ability from your class that you qualify for. You can use that ability until you finish your next respite.

Amnesia

You have no memory of your past before the ... incident. Hopefully, you'll regain your memory soon and find out what the incident was. In the meantime, you need friends so you won't be alone when your past catches up to you.

Benefit: You have a supernatural possession—a 1st-echelon trinket of your choice (see Treasures in Chapter 13: Rewards) that might have some connection with your former life.

Drawback: You take a bane on any test made to recall lore.

Animal Form

Due to a magical accident, your being has fused with that of a small, harmless animal. You turn into this animal when it's convenient—and sometimes when it's inconvenient as well.

Benefit: As a maneuver, you take the form of a specific animal of size 1T. You retain all your other statistics aside from your size, but you can't talk or use actions, and the only maneuvers you can use are Escape Grab, Hide, and Stand Up. Based on the animal you can turn into, you might be able to burrow or fly, or to automatically climb or swim at full speed while moving. If your animal form doesn't provide such additional movement, you have a +2 bonus to speed.

Unless you use this benefit again, you return to your true form at the start of your next turn.

Drawback: At the start of any turn while you are winded, the Director can spend 1 Malice to force you to take your animal form. Once the Director has done so, they can't do so again until you have finished a respite.

Antihero

You used to be a villain. You're (mostly) reformed now, but in desperate moments, you sometimes draw on the rage and hatred that fueled your old life. In those moments, even your friends aren't sure whose side you're on. They don't need to worry, though. Once you leave evil behind, you can't go back. You've made too many enemies on the other side.

Benefit: You have 3 antihero tokens. Whenever you use an ability or other effect that costs your Heroic Resource, you can spend 1 antihero token in place of 1 Heroic Resource. Whenever you have fewer than 3 antihero tokens and you would earn a hero token for your party through your deeds, you instead regain 1 antihero token.

Drawback: While you have fewer than 3 antihero tokens, you exude a villainous aspect. You and each ally within 5 squares of you take a bane on any test made to interact with other creatures.

Artifact Bonded

A powerful artifact has bonded to you, though you don't know whether you're destined to wield the artifact or to destroy it. You're not powerful enough to use it at the moment, although you might be someday. For now, though, the artifact has no effect beyond getting you in trouble.

Benefit: Choose an artifact (see Treasures in Chapter 13: Rewards). The first time in an encounter that you are reduced to 0 Stamina against your will, the artifact appears on your person. It disappears at the end of your next turn, when you benefit from one of its properties, or when you have more than 0 Stamina, whichever comes first.

Drawback: Each time the artifact appears, you lose a Recovery. If you have no Recoveries remaining, you take 1d10 damage instead, which can't be reduced in any way.

Bereaved

The most important person to you—perhaps a family member, mentor, or lover—was killed. The only thing that keeps you going is the faint connection you have with this person's spirit, and the hope that one day you can tie up their unfinished business and let them rest.

Benefit: Whenever you don't know what to do, you can appeal to your loved one's spirit for help. You spend a hero token to let the Director determine the next thing you do, whether in or out of combat. The Director chooses the best course of action they can think of for you, even if it relies on information you don't have. If the Director can't think of a particularly good course of action for you to take, you don't spend the hero token.

Drawback: You have corruption weakness 5.

Betrothed

Your parents made a deal, and as part of that deal, you're supposed to marry someone—or something—you didn't choose. But no one is going to tell you what to do! They'll all be sorry to find that you've run away to become a mighty adventurer.

Benefit: You escaped with a dowry present—a 1st-echelon trinket of your choice (see Treasures in Chapter 13: Rewards).

Drawback: All those who learn of you running out on your commitment think less of you and spread nasty rumors about you. Your Renown can't ever be more than your level – 1.

Chaos Touched

You came into contact with a mote of pure chaos energy, or were subjected to a supernatural effect or object that fused chaos into your very being. Now you can sprout and retract your limbs in a way that horrifies unprepared onlookers.

Benefit: You gain an edge on the Escape Grab, Grab, and Knockback maneuvers. Additionally, you can hold an additional item even when your hands are full.

Drawback: While dying, you grow and retract uncoordinated limbs at random, imposing a bane on your power rolls.

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Chosen One

Perhaps the stars marked you out at birth, or maybe your name appears in an ancient prophecy. In any case, a sinister cult has decided that you're important to their plans—though you don't particularly like the fate those plans have in store for you.

Benefit: You have 3 destiny points. Whenever you spend your Heroic Resource for your class, you can spend 1 or more destiny points instead. Each time you earn a Victory, you regain 1 destiny point.

Drawback: Whenever you spend 1 or more destiny points, you take 1d10 psychic damage that can't be reduced in any way, and the cult that seeks you becomes aware of your location.

Consuming Interest

Ever since you were a kid, you've been obsessed with a certain topic. During your travels, you spend your free time gleaning all the information you can on that obsession. You might not be the world's leading expert quite yet, but people should certainly trust your opinion on the topic.

Benefit: You have one skill of your choice from the lore skill group, and you can use the Study Lore project (see below) up to three times for that skill. Each time you use the project, you must use a different project source, and the project goal increases. (See Chapter 12: Downtime Projects.)

Drawback: You can't imagine ever being wrong on the topic of your obsession. Whenever you make a test to recall lore using your chosen skill, the Director makes the test in secret. Instead of informing you whether you're right or wrong, they provide you with correct information if you succeeded and false information if you failed.

Study Lore

Item Prerequisite: None
Project Source: A significant source of information on the topic of your obsession, such as a major library or a world-renowned sage
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason
Project Goal: 120, 150, 180

Each time you complete this project, your knowledge of your chosen field expands, and the bonus to tests provided by your chosen skill increases by 1.

Corrupted Mentor

Your mentor taught you everything and you trusted them completely—until they went rogue, betraying you or the organization you both belonged to. Their current whereabouts and activities are unknown, though disturbing rumors are heard from time to time. Even worse, as their former pupil, you're now under suspicion as well.

Benefit: You know the Corrupt Spirit maneuver, taught to you by your mentor. (In retrospect, that probably should have aroused your suspicion.)

Corrupt Spirit

You unlock the sinister secrets of pain.

Magic — Self
Maneuver — Self

Effect: Until the end of your turn, whenever you use a damage-dealing heroic ability against a single target, you can weaken that target's life force. The ability deals extra corruption damage equal to your highest characteristic score.

Drawback: You have holy weakness 1. Each time you use Corrupt Spirit, your holy weakness increases by 1, to a maximum equal to your recovery value. Whenever you take holy damage, this weakness resets to 1.

Coward

Some call you a coward, just because you shriek and run when you encounter danger. Sure, you might not have the natural bravado of less-imaginative people. And sure, you're always imagining the many horrible ways you could die, but you're used to fear. When you run in terror, you run *toward* the enemy.

Benefit: While you are frightened, you can move toward the source of your fear.

Drawback: Whenever you make a saving throw to end the frightened condition, you roll a d10 twice and take the lower roll.

Crash Landed

You used to flit around the stars in your own ship. But an ugly run-in with a pirate (or a pirate hunter) has left you marooned on this backwater world. You're prepared to carve out a life here—at least until you can hitch a ride somewhere else.

Benefit: You have the Timescape skill (from the lore skill group). Additionally, you have a power pack that you can activate or deactivate as a maneuver. When you activate the power pack, choose an energy type from cold, fire, lightning, or sonic. Until you deactivate the power pack, your damage-dealing abilities deal that damage type.

Drawback: You take a bane on any test made to know about anything related to the world where you crash landed.

Cult Victim

Cultists captured you while raiding your home, then began an unholy ritual to turn your body into an undead spirit. Though the ritual failed, your body became infused with corrupted magic, turning you partially incorporeal.

Benefit: Once per turn, you can move through solid matter 1 square thick or less. If you end your turn inside solid matter, you are forced out into the space from which you entered it and you take 5 damage that can't be reduced in any way.

Drawback: You have corruption weakness 5.

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Curse of Caution

When you were young, you did something reckless and unthinking that endangered a hag or cost them something dear. The hag cursed you to always take your time, forcing you to be cautious and thorough—even to your detriment. The curse has saved you from trouble a few times, but not being able to get away from trouble might be your downfall if you can't shake it.

Benefit: Until you've taken your turn in a combat round, any strike made against you takes a bane.

Drawback: You have a –1 penalty to speed.

Curse of Immortality

For as long as you can remember, you've never gotten older. You've simply adventured through one age after another. Still, your memory of past events—even those you were involved with—is a little hazy. Apparently, your memory isn't as long-lived as you are.

Benefit: You don't age. Additionally, whenever you would die, you instead enter a state of suspended animation indistinguishable from death. If your body isn't destroyed by dying or while you remain in this state, you come back to life after 12 hours and regain Stamina equal to your recovery value.

Drawback: You take a bane on any test made to recall lore.

Curse of Misfortune

You should have never pissed off that mage! Maybe they deserved your ire, or maybe you were just being a bully. But whatever the case, they cursed you before skipping town. Now, in moments of pressure that require great skill, you have a tendency to choke, falling and flailing in such a dramatic fashion that you take everyone else with you.

Benefit and Drawback: Whenever you make a test in combat and incur a consequence, you ignore that consequence. Instead, you and each ally adjacent to you fall prone.

Curse of Poverty

A soothsayer once predicted you would have a long life, even as they told you you'd never be rich. But you're determined to prove them wrong. You'll get rich or die trying!

Benefit and Drawback: Whenever you take a respite while your Wealth is higher than 1, some improbable event occurs that causes most of your money to vanish—including money you've hidden, loaned to others, or given away. Your Wealth is reduced to 1. For each point of Wealth you lose this way, your number of Recoveries increases by 1. Your Recoveries reset to their usual value the first time you take a respite with fewer Recoveries than your maximum.

Curse of Punishment

Through ignorance, fear, spite, or selfishness, you refused to help someone in need. To teach you a lesson, a deity offered you what seemed to be a blessing—extra power to help you heal yourself in times of need, but harsh consequences should your need become excessive. You took the deal, and now benefit from the blessing but also suffer from a curse.

Benefit: You have 1 additional Recovery.

Drawback: When you are out of Recoveries, you are dying, no matter what your current Stamina is.

Curse of Stone

As a child, you met a creature who turns people to stone, such as a medusa. You escaped half petrified, avoiding the fate of others who stand as statues now.

Benefit: You have a +1 bonus to stability. Additionally, you can use a free maneuver to cause your body, gear, and any items you hold to take on the appearance of stone, making you appear to be a mundane statue while you remain unmoving.

Drawback: You have sonic weakness 5. Additionally, while you are winded, you are dazed.

Cursed Weapon

When you were young, you found or were given a magic weapon. Since then, you've carried it always at your side, letting it inspire you to lead the life of a hero—even though the weapon is cursed.

Benefit: You have a leveled weapon of your choice (see Treasures in Chapter 13: Rewards).

Drawback: You have damage weakness 2.

Disgraced

You're a disgraced member of a powerful family or guild, having been turned out by your relatives or peers. Those you were once close to won't give you the time of day anymore, much less lend a helping hand, until you clear your name or clean up your act.

Benefit: You earn 1 Renown, and you have one skill of your choice from the interpersonal or intrigue skill group.

Drawback: Anyone who has heard of you and is influenced by your Renown treats you as infamous. Whenever you are part of a negotiation with an NPC who has an interest of 2 or lower, that NPC makes a plan to hurt you personally after the negotiation ends—and carries that plan out.

Dragon Dreams

You sometimes have strange dreams of a raging inferno ... a gleaming pile of treasure ... of spreading your wings and taking flight. You haven't told anyone about these dreams, except for your one strange relative who seems to know more than they're letting on.

Benefit: Choose 2 ancestry points' worth of purchased dragon knight traits (see Chapter 3: Ancestries). You can use these traits whenever you have 5 or more Victories.

Drawback: Whenever you are reduced to 0 Stamina, you explode with heat and fire. You and each creature within 5 squares of you takes fire damage equal to twice your level. You can't reduce this damage for yourself in any way.

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Elemental Inside

When an evil mage threatened someone you loved, you blocked that foe's summoning of an elemental creature by absorbing their magic with your body. You are now infused with the power of that elemental—who isn't at all happy about it.

Benefit: You gain a +3 bonus to Stamina at 1st level, then again at 4th, 7th, and 10th levels.

Drawback: While you are dying, your possessing elemental takes control of your body. The elemental yearns for destruction, causing you to attack the nearest creature you notice without regard for your desires or your body's safety. If you don't do your best to fulfill the elemental's rage, the Director can take temporary control of your hero.

Evanesceria

You have contracted a rare magical disease called evanesceria. From time to time, you're not quite yourself—or anyone else either. You simply ... vanish, then return later with no memory of your absence.

Benefit: At the start of any combat round, you can attempt to absent yourself from reality by rolling a d10. On a 6 or higher, you disappear, then reappear in the space you left or the nearest unoccupied space of your choice when you take your turn. You can't attempt to absent yourself again until you earn 1 or more Victories.

Drawback: Whenever you start a respite activity, roll 2d10. If you roll a 1 on either die, you inadvertently absent yourself from reality, reappearing at the end of the respite. You gain the benefits of taking a respite but don't perform the respite activity.

Exile

Whether you're a convicted criminal, a noble stripped of their title, or a person who made one too many enemies, you've been cast forth from your homeland, never to return. At least not until you're strong enough to set things right.

Benefit: You know one extant language of your choice (see Languages in Orden in Chapter 4: Background).

Drawback: If any NPC from your homeland recognizes you, whether in your homeland or elsewhere, they attempt to harm you at the Director's discretion.

Fallen Immortal

You used to be an immortal creature, dispensing justice and doing the bidding of the gods. Now, whether as punishment or reward, you have been ordered to set your true nature aside and become a mortal. Your remaining years will be short, but living alongside your fellow mortals gives your life new meaning.

Benefit: You have the Religion skill (from the lore skill group). Additionally, whenever you use an ability that deals untyped damage, that ability can deal holy damage instead.

Drawback: You will never fully gain a mortal's comfort with untruth. Any test you make to deceive another creature takes a bane.

Famous Relative

Sure, you're a promising young hero in your own right—but people always ask you about your famous relative. Will you equal or surpass your relative's accomplishments, or will you always live in their shadow?

Benefit: You have a piece of magic jewelry such as a signet ring. As a maneuver, you can use this item to summon your relative to your aid. Your relative starts with a Renown of 10 but otherwise has the same statistics you do. They make power rolls with an edge but don't gain the benefits of any of your treasures. Your relative does their best to help you out of the current perilous situation, disappearing when the situation is resolved or after 1 hour. Once you summon your relative, you can't do so again until you gain a level.

Drawback: You earn no Victories from combat encounters or other challenges for which your relative was present. Additionally, each time you summon your relative, the next time you gain Renown, your relative gains that Renown instead.

Feytouched

Your birth was attended by faeries. A friendly fairy blessed you, granting you strength so you could defend yourself. In response, an unfriendly fairy granted you a life filled with peril so that you might prove your strength.

Benefit and Drawback: At the start of each combat encounter, you can choose to gain 1 additional Heroic Resource. If you do so, the Director gains 3 Malice.

Fiery Ideal

A spirit beyond your comprehension instilled in you a special purpose, choosing you to be the guardian of a place, a cause, or a philosophy. The flame that now burns in your soul can sear your enemies—or you if you fall short of expectations.

Benefit: While you fight on behalf of your special purpose, whenever you obtain a tier 3 outcome with a damage-dealing ability, the ability deals extra fire damage equal to your highest characteristic score.

Drawback: Whenever the Director determines that you act against your purpose or fail to live up to the high standards associated with it, you take fire damage equal to 5 + your level. This damage can't be reduced in any way.

Fire and Chaos

A great monster who breathed fire burned your home to the ground. While everything around you was consumed, you somehow stood strong amid the inferno, your body adapting to ignore the effects of the flames.

Benefit: You have fire immunity 5.

Drawback: You have cold weakness 5.

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Following in the Footsteps

Your personal idol was a mighty hero, and you have modeled yourself after them. From studying the many heroic tales told of them, you hope to someday learn your idol's most famous battle technique.

Benefit: Choose a heroic ability for your class of a higher level than you currently are. When you take this ability in future, its Heroic Resource cost is permanently reduced by 2 (to a minimum of 1).

Drawback: In your quest for advanced techniques, you have neglected the basics. Choose a heroic ability you already know. That ability's Heroic Resource cost is permanently increased by 1.

Forbidden Romance

You are in love with someone powerful, but tragic circumstances mean you cannot be with them. Whether your lover is from a feuding family, betrothed to another, or has been driven from your side, you are fated to always be apart.

Benefit: You can secretly call on your betrothed for favors. Though they support you from afar, they might be constrained in how much aid they provide—and they can't openly reveal their connection with you.

Drawback: When your lover is in trouble, they might call on you for help. But if your relationship is discovered, the circumstances that keep you apart will be made worse.

Frostheart

At the edge of the world, you were lost in a winter storm and presumed dead. But an unknown fate or power kept you alive, bringing you back with frosty skin and pale eyes.

Benefit: You have cold immunity 5. Additionally, whenever you make a strike that deals untyped damage, that strike can deal cold damage instead.

Drawback: You have fire weakness 5.

Getting Too Old for This

You were once a renowned hero, but you've been living the last few years in blissful peace. Now you're coming out of retirement for one last hurrah. Your fighting skills might have atrophied to the point where you're no stronger than a wet-behind-the-ears novice adventurer, but you still remember some of your old tricks.

Benefit: On your turn, you can choose a heroic ability that you would be able to learn if you were one level higher. Provided you meet the ability's other prerequisites and can spend any required Heroic Resource, you can use the ability. Once you use this benefit, you can't do so again until you earn 2 or more Victories.

Drawback: While you are winded, you take a –2 penalty to speed.

Gnoll-Mauled

As a child, you survived a gnoll attack. But that attack left you with a jagged scar and the occasional fit of bloodlust.

Benefit: Whenever an ally within 5 squares is reduced to 0 Stamina, you can use a triggered action to move up to your speed and make a free strike.

Drawback: While you are dazed, if you start your turn adjacent to one or more creatures, you must use your main action to make a melee free strike against an adjacent creature.

Special: You can't take this complication if you can't be made dazed.

Greening

You once felt the call of a great tree in the middle of a forest, whose life force was being drained by a parasitic supernatural moss clinging to its roots. As you removed the moss, you felt as if you were being filled with green elemental energy. Sadly, the great tree withered before you could finish the job, but left behind a golden sapling you now carry with you, seeking the perfect place to plant it.

Benefit: You have corruption immunity 5.

Drawback: You have fire weakness 5.

Grifter

You used to be a con artist, but those days are pretty much behind you. Being a hero is an even better racket. After all, if you're saving the world, who can be mad at you for stealing a few coins along the way?

Benefit: You have one skill of your choice from the intrigue skill group.

Drawback: Whenever you meet an NPC for the first time, the Director can decide that NPC was a victim of one of your previous cons and remembers you. If they do so, the party gains a hero token.

Grounded

Once when you were a child, your settlement was in danger and you called out to the earth for aid. That call was answered by a summoning of protective dirt-and-stone walls, and ever since then, you've felt the earth's presence as a friend and protector.

Benefit: You have the 1st-level Elementalist Specialization feature Motivate Earth (see Chapter 5: Classes). If you also gain this feature in any other way, the Motivate Earth ability becomes a ranged ability for you with a distance of ranged 5.

Drawback: You attract lightning. Whenever any creature within 2 squares of you takes lightning damage, you take 5 lightning damage that can't be reduced in any way.

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Guilty Conscience

The world is in trouble—and it's partly your fault. Maybe you helped a villain rise to power or inadvertently released a demon from imprisonment. Now it's your mission to repair the damage you caused.

Benefit: You're determined to stay alive so you can set things right. When your Stamina reaches the negative of your winded value, you can use a free triggered action to spend a Recovery.

Drawback: Many people blame you for the evils you caused. They might be unfriendly or hostile to you—and you can understand their point of view. You take a bane on any test made to interact with those who know what you did, and on strikes made against such creatures.

Hawk Rider

You travel with a giant hawk who you stole from the Hawklords (see Vasloria in Chapter 1: The Basics). You might once have been a Hawklord yourself, or perhaps you escaped their captivity. Having a giant hawk companion comes with its share of inconveniences and dangers, but those are a small price to pay for the freedom of the open sky.

Benefit: As long as you are not in a building or other structure, you can spend 1 uninterrupted minute to summon your giant hawk (see the Humans entry in *Draw Steel: Monsters*), which acts as your mount. You can dismiss the hawk at any time (no action required). The hawk won't go inside buildings, dungeons, or other structures, and it won't accept anyone but you as a rider. If the hawk takes damage or dies, you can restore them to full Stamina as a respite activity.

Drawback: People aware of the origin of your mount are afraid to interact with you, since they worry the Hawklords will come after them by association. You take a bane on any test made to influence anyone who knows of the Hawklords and who has observed you with your giant hawk. Such people might also report you to the Hawklords, who come looking for you at the Director's discretion.

Host Body

"Do not be alarmed! We are not the humanoid we appear to be. We are an intelligent fungal collective, using this body as a host. No, we are doing nothing unsavory! This body was dead when we found it, and we merely gave it another chance at life. We are friendly. Please put down those torches!"

Benefit: You are a sapient fungus who inhabits a humanoid body. Your host body follows all the usual rules for a character and is considered to be alive. At any time while your host body is alive, or for 24 hours after it dies, you can use a main action to move to a dead humanoid within 10 squares of the body and use it as your new host body, provided the body belongs to a playable ancestry. When you do so, your original host body dies if it was alive. Your new host body gains all your statistics except size, ancestry traits, and other statistics related to your former host body's ancestry, which you instead gain from your new host body. When you inhabit a new host body, you start with 1 Stamina and can immediately spend a Recovery.

Drawback: You have fire weakness 5. Additionally, you take a bane on any test made to read a humanoid creature's emotions or body language.

Hunted

You have long stayed one step ahead of a pursuer—perhaps a bounty hunter determined to bring you to justice, a revenant, or an assassin intent on your death. Someday, you'll be strong enough to face your pursuer. But for now, you live your life on the run.

Benefit: You have one skill of your choice from the intrigue skill group. Additionally, whenever one or more creatures are pursuing you, you can lay low as a respite activity. When you do so, anyone pursuing you loses track of your and your party's location and must start their search again.

Drawback: Each time you earn Renown, your pursuer learns your location. Unless you lay low or move to a new location, you'll be visited by agents of the pursuer within 1d10 days. If you linger after that, your pursuer finds you.

Hunter

You are hunting someone or something—perhaps a wanted criminal, a person who wronged you, or a dangerous monster or beast. You won't rest until you face off against your quarry!

Benefit: Choose one skill from the following:

- Interrogate (from the interpersonal skill group)
- Alertness, Eavesdrop, Search, or Track (from the intrigue skill group)
- Criminal Underworld, Rumors, or Society (from the lore skill group)

You have that skill, and you gain an edge on tests made to find or learn clues about your quarry.

Drawback: You are so obsessed with finding your quarry that you take a bane on any test made to track other creatures.

Indebted

A deal you made went south, or you got involved with the wrong people. Now you owe a debt or a ransom that would bankrupt a minor noble. To pay it off, you'll need to take some dangerous risks.

Benefit: You're good with money—because you've had to be. Whenever you earn Wealth, you earn 1 more than usual.

Drawback: Your starting Wealth is –5. While your Wealth is lower than 1, you can purchase items as if you had 1 Wealth, but you're frequently visited by threatening creditors, and shopkeepers often lock their doors when they see you coming.

Infernal Contract

You made a deal (perhaps unknowingly) with an archdevil that has tied you to that fiend's service. When you first learned of this deal, you were taken to the Seven Cities of Hell, where some of the timescape's best minds taught you the ways of battle. The archdevil allows you to use these gifts as you will … until they require a favor from you.

Benefit: Whenever you are present for a battle in which both sides have creatures who aren't surprised, your side determines who goes first if the d10 roll is a 4 or higher (see Combat Round in Chapter 10: Combat).

Drawback: The archdevil occasionally asks you to defeat enemies on their behalf. If you refuse, your fiendish patron sends devils after you and those you care about.

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Infernal Contract ... But, Like, Bad

You made a deal with a devil. Not a very good deal, because it wasn't a very good devil. It's too late for regrets, though, because your soul is forfeit unless you find a loophole or can convince the devil to void the deal.

Benefit: Choose one of the following benefits:

- You earn 2 Renown.
- Your Wealth increases by 2.
- You gain a +3 bonus to Stamina.

Drawback: Your body bears a fiendish mark. Any creature who understands religion and notes the mark can tell that your soul belongs to Hell, imposing a bane on any test you make to interact with those creatures (unless they're into that). Additionally, when you die, your soul goes to Hell and you can't be restored to life.

Ivory Tower

You studied in an academy or other educational institution. Your training was thorough and your reading list was wide-ranging. But when you left school, you discovered there were serious gaps in your education. Maybe some of those books were a little out of date.

Benefit: You have three skills of your choice, and you know one dead language of your choice (see Languages in Orden in Chapter 4: Background).

Drawback: The Director chooses one of the skills you have from this complication. You lose that skill and can't ever learn it again. Additionally, you take a bane on any test to which that skill would apply.

Lifebonded

In a sinister ritual, your soul has been bound to that of another creature. This might be a companion, a creature you are beholden to, or an enemy. When they die, you die—making you the perfect bodyguard.

Benefit: Choose another creature who doesn't have the Lifebonded complication. When you die, your body disappears until that creature finishes a respite or earns 1 or more Victories. You then appear next to the creature, fully healed.

Drawback: If the creature you're bound to dies, you die as well, no matter what other traits or features you have.

Lightning Soul

You were caught in a storm and struck by lightning—but something saved you from death. Perhaps it was a gods-given miracle, a latent psionic gift, or the magic of a helpful elementalist, but you absorbed the lightning into your body. It's always there now, simmering under the surface.

Benefit: Whenever you regain Stamina in combat, you gain 1 surge. Whenever you spend a surge to deal extra damage, you can make that extra damage into lightning damage.

Drawback: Whenever you are wet, you have damage weakness 5.

Loner

You've always been a lone wolf. With no one else to lean on, you've picked up a million survival tricks. Which made it all the more surprising when you joined your current adventuring group and found the family you'd never known you needed.

Benefit: When you finish a respite, choose a skill you don't have. You have that skill until the end of your next respite.

Drawback: Now that you finally have people who care about you, you won't let anyone take them away! Whenever a creature reduces one of your allies to 0 Stamina, you are taunted by that creature until your ally's Stamina is higher than 0, another creature makes you taunted, or the end of the encounter.

Lost in Time

In a long-ago age, a cataclysm overtook your city. You weren't killed, but some arcane accident caused you to be suspended in time until now. Alone, you must navigate the world around you with a head full of outdated memories—and a few ancient secrets.

Benefit: Choose a damage type from acid, cold, corruption, fire, holy, lightning, poison, psychic, or sonic. Whenever you use a signature ability, you can have it deal your chosen damage type instead of its usual damage.

Drawback: You automatically fail any test made to recall information from the period during which you were suspended in time.

Lost Your Head

A bredbeddle stole your head! Usually, being beheaded by one of those magical giants is fatal (see *Draw Steel: Monsters*), but your latent psionic ability allows you to survive despite your decapitation.

Benefit: You have the following ability.

Share Head

You don't have a head, but you can psionically borrow another.

Psionic, Ranged | **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 | One willing creature

Effect: You can see, hear, and smell as if you were in the target's space. Additionally, you can borrow their mouth to speak when you wish to do so, speaking in your own voice. This effect ends when you use Share Head on a different target, when the target moves more than 10 squares away from you, or when the target is no longer willing to share their head with you.

Drawback: Having no head, you can't see, hear, smell, taste, or verbalize except by using the Share Head ability. Additionally, you can't wear gear that requires a head, such as a helmet or hat.

Lucky

You've always had a lucky streak. When you leave things in the hands of fate, you succeed more than you fail. But luck is fickle—and when you don't trust it, it deserts you.

Benefit: When you spend a hero token to succeed on a saving throw or to reroll a test, roll a d10. On a 6 or higher, you gain the benefit but don't spend the hero token.

Drawback: Whenever you obtain a tier 1 outcome on a test and don't spend a hero token to reroll, you take a bane on the next test you make.

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Master Chef

Before you were a hero, you were a chef—and when you retire, you have big plans for your next restaurant or inn. In the meantime, you're on the lookout for rare ingredients that only a wandering adventurer can find. After all, it's food that makes the world go round.

Benefit: You have the Cooking skill (from the crafting skill group). Additionally, whenever you finish a respite or wake up after a night's sleep, you can spend 1 uninterrupted hour to prepare an excellent meal for up to ten creatures, provided you have ingredients and cooking tools. Once over the next 24 hours, each creature who eats the meal can gain the benefit of spending a Recovery without spending a Recovery.

Drawback: The first time each day you eat food you didn't prepare, you lose 2 Recoveries.

Meddling Butler

You're not sure what you did to deserve it, but for some reason, your family saddled you with an old, trusted, and extremely irritating family servant. They're supremely competent, of course, but they sometimes seem to forget who's in charge.

Benefit: You have a retainer, in addition to any followers you acquire through Renown or other means. As usual, you can have only one retainer in your service at a time. (See Renown in Chapter 13: Rewards and Retainers in *Draw Steel: Monsters*).

Drawback: Outside of combat, your retainer is under the Director's control. The retainer sometimes acts without orders—always with your best interests at heart, but often in embarrassing or inconvenient ways.

Medium

You can perceive ghosts and spirits that others don't sense. These supernatural entities constantly whisper unsettling secrets in your mind—when they're not trying to kill you.

Benefit and Drawback: Incorporeal undead within 10 squares of you can communicate telepathically with you. Additionally, you have the Contact Spirits ability.

Contact Spirits

The restless dead speak to you.

Magic — **Main Action**
Self — Self

Power Roll + Intuition or Presence:

≤11 You take corruption damage equal to 5 + your level.

12–16 The spirit of anyone you know of who has died speaks to you, provided they are on the same world as you. You learn how they died and can ask them one question, which they can answer truthfully or untruthfully. The spirit knows everything they knew in life, and is aware of events that took place in their immediate surroundings since their death.

17+ As tier 2, but you can ask three questions.

Effect: If any sapient creatures have died nearby within the last 24 hours, you have a double bane on the power roll for this ability if any of those creatures were hostile to you, or a double edge if any of them were friendly to you. When you use this ability, you can't do so again until you earn 1 or more Victories.

Medusa Blood

Your mother and father never saw eye to eye. You know this because your father is still alive and your mother is a medusa. This made your childhood difficult, and now it's making your adulthood complicated as well.

Benefit: You have the following ability.

Stone Eyes

Your looks don't kill—they petrify.

Magic, Ranged, Strike — **Main Action**
Ranged 10 — One creature

Power Roll + Might or Presence:

≤11 2 damage; M < WEAK, slowed (save ends)

12–16 4 damage; M < AVERAGE, slowed (save ends)

17+ 6 damage; M < STRONG, slowed (save ends)

Effect: This ability has no effect on a creature who can't see you or who purposefully avoids looking at your eyes. A creature reduced to 0 Stamina by this ability is turned to inanimate stone.

Drawback: Out of combat, you use your Stone Eyes ability on anyone who meets your gaze, whether you intend to or not. Your companions know not to make eye contact, but strangers are likely to trigger the ability unless you cover your eyes.

Misunderstood

Your appearance marks you as part of a group that is universally feared. You might be a gentle soul, but you're not often given a chance to prove it. It's no wonder you usually wear a hood.

Benefit and Drawback: When you reveal your appearance to creatures who don't know you personally, you gain an edge on any test involving those creatures where the Brag or Intimidate skill could be applied, but you take a bane on any test where the Flirt, Lead, or Persuade skill could be applied.

Mundane

You're hopelessly nonmagical. When you try to use magic abilities, or even when they're used on you, they never work right. Even magic devices seem to fizzle in your presence.

Benefit: You have immunity to corruption, holy, and psychic damage equal to your level.

Drawback: Whenever you carry more than three magic treasures, you take a bane on power rolls.

Outlaw

You might be a common bandit or an idealistic freedom fighter, but in any event, the authorities don't approve of your actions. You've managed to stay one step ahead of the law so far, but until your name is cleared, you've got to keep a low profile.

Benefit: You earn 1 Renown.

Drawback: Law enforcement officials and bounty hunters who recognize you attempt to arrest you.

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Pirate

You have a piratical past (and maybe a piratical present and future as well). Though you're not well-known ashore, other pirates have a way of recognizing their own.

Benefit: When interacting with pirates or pirate hunters, you treat your Renown as 2 higher than usual. Additionally, you hold a piece of a pirate map, with a handful of other pirates in different locations holding the other pieces. With all the pieces, you'd know the location of a fabulous pirate treasure.

Drawback: The pirates holding the other pieces of the map would very much like to get their hands on your piece, and have no qualms about killing you to get it. Furthermore, the pirate treasure is said to be cursed or haunted.

Preacher

When you were young, you almost died in an accident or attack, but a vision of a god or saint showed you the way to save yourself and others you loved. That event drove you into the church and gave you a strong belief in a particular religion or cause—and you can't wait to tell other people all about it.

Benefit: As a respite activity, you can attempt to convert members of a community to your cause. Make a Presence test with a difficulty determined by the Director based on the community's receptiveness to your ideas. On a success, you convert one NPC into a follower (see Renown in Chapter 13: Rewards), which you gain in addition to any followers acquired through Renown or other means. The Director determines the type of follower. Once you have converted an NPC into a follower this way, you can't use this benefit again until you gain a level.

Drawback: If you fail in your conversion attempt, one of your existing followers of the Director's choice (whether gained through this complication or your Renown or other means) leaves you, their faith in you shaken. If you have no followers, your Renown is reduced by 1. If you need to reduce your Renown and it's already 0, you gain no benefits from the respite during which you make the conversion attempt.

Primordial Sickness

You once contracted a terrible illness for which no one could find a cure. You sought out a primordial swamp said to be either cursed or miraculously salubrious. It turned out to be both, keeping your illness at bay while corrupting your body with its unnatural energy.

Benefit: You have corruption immunity 5 and poison immunity 5.

Drawback: Your number of Recoveries is permanently reduced by 1.

Prisoner of the Synlirii

You were captured by the psionic beings known as voiceless talkers (see *Draw Steel: Monsters*). You escaped them, but you can't escape a feeling that's lingered since then in the back of your mind—the feeling of being watched.

Benefit: You can telepathically communicate with any creature within 10 squares of you if they share a language with you and you know of each other. A creature you communicate with this way can respond telepathically if they choose.

Drawback: Any voiceless talker within 1 mile knows your location, and can overhear and understand your telepathic conversations.

Promising Apprentice

You were apprenticed to learn a crafting trade. Your mentor said you had a special gift and might well become a master of your craft someday. But before your training was complete, your mentor was killed.

Benefit: You have one skill of your choice from the crafting skill group. Additionally, choose one of your skills from the crafting group. You gain an edge on any test that uses that skill.

Drawback: Whoever killed your mentor cursed you. You take a bane on any test that doesn't use one of your skills.

Psychic Eruption

In times of stress, you get headaches. Psionic energy builds up in your mind until you feel as though your head might explode. And if you're not careful, it actually does explode, radiating psychic waves that harm friends and enemies alike.

Benefit: You have the following heroic ability.

Psychic Blast (Special Heroic Resource Cost)

Psionic energy bursts from your body in an iridescent shimmer.

Area, Psionic — 3 burst
Main Action — Each creature in the area

Effect: Using this ability costs all your Heroic Resource.

Power Roll + Highest Characteristic Score:

- ≤11: 1 psychic damage for each Heroic Resource you spend, to a maximum equal to your level
- 12–16: 1 psychic damage for each Heroic Resource you spend, to a maximum equal to your level + your highest characteristic
- 17+: 1 psychic damage for each Heroic Resource you spend

Drawback: Whenever you become bleeding, frightened, or weakened, you must use Psychic Blast as a free triggered action.

Raised by Beasts

You were orphaned or lost in the wild, and a friendly animal pack (perhaps apes, bears, or wolves) took you in. Returning to so-called civilization was a shock, but you're now determined to learn all you can about your own kind.

Benefit: You have the Handle Animals skill (from the interpersonal skill group). Additionally, choose a type of animal related to the animals who helped you, such as wolf. You gain an edge on tests that use the Handle Animals skill when interacting with animals of this type. You can also communicate with animals of this type as if you shared a language, and animals of this type aren't initially hostile to you unless they're supernaturally compelled to be.

Drawback: You don't have a culture (see Culture in Chapter 4: Background), though you can speak Caelian.

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Refugee

A hostile army—perhaps the forces of Ajax, the Iron Saint—conquered your homeland. Your family escaped, but you can't return home until your oppressors are defeated once and for all.

Benefit: When your family fled your homeland, they left their most valuable asset behind. Work with the Director to determine whether this asset is a trinket or leveled treasure, several points of Wealth, the project source to create a treasure, or the like. This asset is in the hands of the invaders but can be won back as the Director determines.

Drawback: The faction that invaded your homeland wants you captured or dead. Any of their agents or sympathizers attempt to harm you if they recognize you, as the Director determines.

Rival

Whatever your accomplishments, you'll forever measure yourself against a former companion who always seemed to stay one step ahead of you.

Benefit: Choose one of your skills. That skill grants a +3 bonus to tests instead of +2.

Drawback: Your rival has similar statistics to yours, but always had one skill they excelled at, as determined by the Director. Intimidated by their prowess, you take a bane on tests using that skill.

Rogue Talent

You are the only survivor of a cataclysmic psionic event—an experiment gone wrong, a voiceless talker attack, or some naturally occurring phenomenon of a far-off part of the timescape. It left you with a psionic talent, but also made you vulnerable to telepathic attacks.

Benefit: You have the following ability, which you can use as a ranged free strike.

Telekinetic Grasp

You reach out with your mind to move a creature or object.

Psionic, Ranged, Strike **Maneuver**

Ranged 10 One creature or object

Power Roll + Might, Intuition, or Presence:

≤11 Push or pull 1

12–16 Push or pull 2

17+ Push or pull 3

Drawback: You have psychic weakness 5.

Runaway

To your embarrassment, no sinister omens attended your birth and your closet contains no skeletons. You're just an ordinary person raised in a hardworking family. You're expected to carry on the family business—but who can settle down to a boring job when adventure calls! That's why you ran away.

Benefit: You have one skill of your choice from the crafting skill group.

Drawback: Members of your extended family are looking for you, intending to drag you home—and you've never been able to stand up to them.

Searching for a Cure

Your homeland has been corrupted by some terrible curse or plague, and you're the only one who escaped it. The members of your family still exist, but in changed forms—perhaps as vampire spawn, zombies, or living statues. People tell you the situation is hopeless, but you're determined to find a cure that can undo your loved ones' suffering.

Benefit: Choose a type of monster connected to your homeland's plight, such as a vampire, ghost, or medusa. You have a +1 bonus to saving throws related to that monster's abilities, and you treat your characteristic scores as 1 higher than usual for the purpose of resisting potencies related to those abilities.

Drawback: You have started to succumb to the curse or plague, and will suffer the fate of your family if you don't find a cure soon. Work with the Director to determine the timeline of your transformation, which should be something that could happen during the campaign!

Secret Identity

You're secretly important—but it's not safe for your true identity to be known. Perhaps you're the witness to a crime or a member of a royal family on the run from a usurper. Until you are no longer at risk of being hunted, you'll maintain the guise of an ordinary adventurer.

Benefit: You have a skill of your choice from the intrigue skill group. Additionally, you can resume your true identity temporarily. While in your true identity, your Renown and Wealth are treated as 2 higher than usual, and you might gain other benefits in consultation with the Director.

Drawback: Each time you resume your true identity while you are still hunted, you have a 20 percent cumulative chance each day that your enemies will find you. This chance resets if you resume your secret identity for 1 day.

Secret Twin

You have an identical twin—either a sibling or someone who looks so much like you that no one would ever know the difference. Your secret twin had a life you coveted, or perhaps had obligations that couldn't go unfulfilled. So when they went missing, you stepped in and started living their life. Most folks are none the wiser.

Benefit: You have a 1st-echelon trinket of your choice. This was a signature treasure of your twin, and has their name or sigil written, sewn, or emblazoned on it somewhere.

Drawback: Your twin disappeared because someone wanted them dead. Whenever you finish a respite, roll a d10. On a 1 or 2, the Director can decide that your past catches up with you in the near future in some way—an assassin seeking your twin, someone who knows your real identity and threatens to reveal it, and so forth.

Self-Taught

While your peers were learning their trades in fancy schools, you honed your capabilities on the mean streets with nothing but your own instinct as a guide. What you lost in polish and tactical acumen, you now make up for in raw power.

Benefit and Drawback: At the start of each of your turns during combat, you can forgo gaining your Heroic Resource until the start of your next turn. If you do, your strikes gain a damage bonus equal to your highest characteristic score until the start of your next turn.

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Sewer Folk

Impoverished or on the run, you spent your formative years living in the sewers of a major city. There, you learned lessons that have served you well, although the miasma of the sewers did permanent damage to your health.

Benefit: You can automatically climb or swim (your choice) at full speed while moving, and you never get lost while underground. Additionally, while in a city with sewers, you and your companions can move from place to place without being detected, as the Director determines.

Drawback: You have poison weakness 5.

Shadow Born

You were born in the dusk land ruled by the Queen of Shadows, and its darkness has seeped into your bones. (See The Myriad Worlds of the Timescape in Chapter 1: The Basics.)

Benefit: Whenever you start your turn with concealment, you gain 1 surge.

Drawback: You have holy weakness 5.

Shared Spirit

A supernatural spirit occupies your body, with each of you controlling your body by turns. You and the spirit share the same short-term goals and work equally well with your companions, though you might have different personalities, mannerisms, and long-term goals.

Benefit and Drawback: At the start of each day, roll a d6. On a 1–4, you control your body. On a 5–6, the spirit does. Alternatively, if you and the spirit are on good terms, you can choose each day who is in control. Choose three of your skills. You can use those skills only while you are in control of your body. Then choose three new skills, which you have and can use only while your spirit is in control.

Shattered Legacy

You're the heir to a powerful supernatural treasure that has been in your family for generations. One problem, though: that treasure is broken. Some ancestor of yours sundered it while saving the world. Or maybe they tripped and smashed it on a rock. Either way, it's your job to fix it.

Benefit: You know one language of your choice. Additionally, you have one leveled treasure of your choice (see Treasures in Chapter 13: Rewards).

Drawback: The chosen leveled treasure is broken and completely inoperative. Repairing the treasure requires that you complete the Craft Treasure project for it. The project goal is half of what it would cost to create such an item, and you already have the project source you need. You must seek out any item prerequisite.

Shipwrecked

You are the sole survivor of a shipwreck that left you stranded on a remote and inhospitable island for years. Your struggle to survive there granted you insight into the natural world but distanced you from who you once were.

Benefit: You have two skills of your choice from the exploration skill group.

Drawback: You have forgotten one language you know of your choice.

Sibling's Shield

You were tasked with delivering a ceremonial shield to your older sibling, a celebrated warrior, for their years of service. When you arrived at their homestead, you found them dead on their doorstep with their own sword lodged in their back. To find out who did this to them—and why—you decided to step into their shoes. It will take a while to match up to your sibling's legacy, though.

Benefit: While you wear your sibling's shield on your back, you can't be flanked.

Drawback: Visions of your dead sibling haunt you at night. Whenever you take a respite, make an Intuition test that can't make use of any skill. On a tier 1 or tier 2 outcome, you regain 1 fewer Recoveries than usual when you finish the respite.

Silent Sentinel

You were trained by a group of spies, who psionically infused silence into your every step and enhanced your ability to hear distant whispers. But your enhanced hearing has some nasty side effects.

Benefit: You have the Eavesdrop and Sneak skills from the intrigue skill group, plus one skill of your choice from the lore skill group. Additionally, you can telepathically communicate with any creature provided they share a language with you and you can observe each other. A creature you communicate with this way can respond telepathically if they choose.

Drawback: You have sonic weakness 5. Additionally, whenever you take sonic damage, you are dazed until the end of your next turn.

Slight Case of Lycanthropy

Maybe you were bitten as a child, or maybe it's a family curse. Either way, you have a malady that is best not discussed in public, lest torches and pitchforks make an appearance.

Benefit: Whenever you make a non-minion creature winded or kill a non-minion creature, you gain 1 surge.

Drawback: At the start of each of your turns, if you have five or more surges—or one or more surges while in moonlight—you lose all your surges and become a wolfish hybrid until the end of your turn. While in that form, you have your usual statistics, but you must make a melee free strike against the nearest creature if you can. You can shift up to your speed toward that creature if necessary. If allies and enemies are equally near, you target an ally.

Special: You can't take this complication if you are a fury with the stormwight primordial aspect.

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Stolen Face

An evil fairy cursed you, leaving you with a blank visage instead of a face. Although you're able to imitate other peoples' features, you'd like to have your own back.

Benefit: You can spend 5 uninterrupted minutes to rearrange your face to resemble the face of another creature of your ancestry who you've observed before. You have a double edge on tests made to impersonate that creature or to disguise your identity. You are unable to change your hair or other nonfacial features.

Drawback: Whenever you take damage, your face becomes blank, with no eyes, nose, mouth, or ears. This doesn't affect your senses or your ability to speak. Your face doesn't return until you use the benefit of this complication to restore it.

Strange Inheritance

Your siblings each inherited money or land, but you received a strange, seemingly useless trinket—along with the advice that maybe you weren't cut out for an ordinary, peaceful life.

Benefit: You have a somewhat inoperative 2nd-echelon trinket of the Director's choice (see Treasures in Chapter 13: Rewards). This trinket functions only while the total of your level plus your Victories is 5 or higher. You don't learn what the trinket's powers are until the first time it becomes operative.

Drawback: With no other inheritance, you accumulated debts. The first time your Wealth exceeds 1, you lose 1 Wealth.

Stripped of Rank

You were trained as an officer, but you no longer serve. Whether you fled from a battle, were dishonorably discharged, or defected from an evil army, you make your own way in the world now—though your military training will never truly leave you.

Benefit: You have the following ability.

Issue Order

"Move or die, folks."

Ranged — Ranged 10 | **Main Action** — One ally

Effect: The target can use a triggered action to take a main action, a maneuver, or a move action.

Special: If you have the **Strike** Now tactician ability, the target can use a free triggered action instead of a triggered action to gain the benefit of this ability.

Drawback: Rather than attracting followers at 3, 6, 9, and 12 Renown, you can attract followers only when your Renown reaches 4, 8, 12, and 16. See Renown in Chapter 13: Rewards.

Thrill Seeker

You live for danger. Whether in battle or mundane peril, you can transcend your usual limits—and once you've tasted that excitement, you want more.

Benefit: Each time your party reaches 2, 4, and 6 Victories, you earn the party a hero token.

Drawback: At the start of a new game session, the party doesn't earn a hero token for your character.



Vampire Scion

A vampire has bitten you. You're not undead—or not yet, anyway—but your connection with your vampire progenitor fills you with urges you fight to control.

Benefit: Whenever you make a melee free strike against an adjacent creature, you can do so by biting that creature. If you obtain a tier 3 outcome on the free strike, you gain temporary Stamina equal to the damage dealt. If not lost beforehand, this temporary Stamina lasts until the end of your next respite.

Drawback: While you have temporary Stamina from this complication, you grow visible fangs, you take a bane on Presence tests made to interact with humanoids, and your vampire progenitor can sense your location.

Voice in Your Head

You occasionally hear a voice in your head, giving you orders or offering advice. You don't know who the voice is or why it comes to you, but when you've followed the advice, it's usually proved to be sound.

Benefit: The Director tells you when you hear the voice. The voice seems to be aware of your surroundings, and its advice is usually vague but helpful. Someday its motivations might be different from your own, but for now, the voice seems keen on making sure you survive.

Drawback: Eventually, the voice reveals it wants something from you that you might not want to provide. If the voice is displeased with you, it can interrupt your rest during a respite, causing you to regain 2 fewer Recoveries than usual.

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Vow of Duty

You have sworn an oath to an organization. That organization is your rock, and as long as your faith in it remains unshaken, you are immovable.

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus to stability.

Drawback: If you are ever forced to disobey your organization's orders, your stability becomes 0 until your doubts are resolved or you find a new organization to pledge yourself to.

Vow of Honesty

You were brought up to a strict standard of behavior. You cannot tell a lie.

Benefit: If a creature is of a lower level than you, you automatically know when they are lying, though you don't necessarily know the actual truth behind their lie. Additionally, you have a double edge on any test made to persuade a creature of some specific fact.

Drawback: When you lie, your honor is stained and you lose this complication's benefit. Additionally, you take a bane on any test that uses a skill from the interpersonal skill group. You can lose the bane and regain this complication's benefit only by doing penance, such as gaining the forgiveness of the creature you lied to.

Waking Dreams

You broke a magic amulet, immersing your mind in weird energy that granted you the power of premonition. However, you struggle to control this new gift. Whenever you take a respite, make a Reason test to determine whether you gain this complication's benefit or drawback.

Benefit: With a tier 2 outcome, you experience a vision of an event currently happening in your world. The vision lasts for only a few seconds, but the information you glean is helpful to you. With a tier 3 outcome, the vision lasts for 1 minute or more.

Drawback: With a tier 1 outcome, you receive a painful vision that is fractal and inscrutable. When you finish the respite, you lose 1 Recovery.

War Dog Collar

You wear a loyalty collar from one of Ajax's war dogs (see *Draw Steel: Monsters*). You've managed to rig the collar so it explodes outward while keeping you safe.

Benefit: Even if you are a war dog yourself, other war dogs can't use their Posthumous Promotion ability on you while you wear your collar. Additionally, you have the following ability.

Posthumous Retirement

You make your modified collar explode.

Area, Magic — **Maneuver**

1 burst — Each enemy in the area

Effect: Your loyalty collar detonates, dealing fire damage equal to 5 plus your level to each target. Once you use this ability, you can't use it again until you spend 1 uninterrupted minute out of combat resetting the collar.

Drawback: Each time you use your Posthumous Retirement ability, the Director can spend 3 Malice to make your collar malfunction and deal its damage to you in addition to the usual targets.

War of Assassins

Being in the wrong place at the wrong time saw you caught in the middle of a conflict between two warring assassins' guilds. Whether by choice or by accident, you wound up helping one faction at the expense of the other.

Benefit: Having gained the favor of the faction you helped, you can call on its members three times for favors. If a favor is reasonable and within the faction's power to grant, its members do it, no questions asked.

Drawback: The faction you wronged hates you, and its members would love to see you pay for your transgression.

Ward

Your childhood sweetheart was royalty, and the two of you stayed close throughout the years. When your former sweetheart died, you swore an oath to dedicate your life to become a role model for their child, advising them in the ways of being a benevolent monarch.

Benefit: You know how to talk to monarchs, aristocrats, and other wealthy leaders. When you engage with any such NPC during a negotiation, their patience increases by 1 (to a maximum of 5).

Drawback: Your royal ward can be a burden. Whenever you take a respite, roll a d10. On a 1, your ward contacts you and requires your help during the respite, requiring you to spend your time helping them instead of undertaking a respite activity.

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Waterborn

You nearly lost your life at sea, but then you heard the voice. Someone—or something—in the water called out to you, telling you to swim. The ocean was suddenly no longer your doom but your parent, granting you a fragment of its power. But for what purpose, you can't be sure.

Benefit: You can automatically swim at full speed while moving, and you can breathe underwater. Additionally, you have the following ability.

Rogue Wave

You summon a wave of water to batter your foe.

Magic, Ranged, Strike | **Main Action**

Ranged 10 | 1 creature or object

Power Roll + your Highest Characteristic Score:

≤11 2 damage; push or pull 1

12–16 5 damage; push or pull 2

17+ 7 damage; push or pull 3

Effect: You can forgo dealing damage with this ability.

Drawback: You have lightning weakness 5. Additionally, the ocean or a creature it sends to seek you can assign you a quest. If you don't do the ocean's bidding, it might temporarily deny you this complication's benefits—including being able to breathe underwater—at an inconvenient time.

Wodewalker

You were dying in the wode, collapsing while starving and wounded. When you woke, you discovered that a group of green elementalists had saved your life by infusing the regenerative bark of a tree to your body.

Benefit: Your recovery value increases by an amount equal to your highest characteristic score.

Drawback: You have fire weakness 5.

Wrathful Spirit

You're quick to anger, never letting an insult go without slinging one right back. In combat, you fight as if possessed by a literal spirit of wrath. No matter the tactical circumstances, when someone injures you, you feel compelled to answer blood with blood.

Benefit: While you are taunted by a creature, you gain an edge on strikes against that creature. Additionally, you can spend 1 Heroic Resource to have a double edge instead.

Drawback: In combat, whenever a creature makes a strike against you and you are not taunted, you are taunted by that creature until the end of your next turn. Additionally, whether in casual conversation or if you are involved in a negotiation, whenever a creature insults you, you must either spend a Recovery or be compelled to reply with an insult.

Wrongly Imprisoned

You spent many years imprisoned for a crime you didn't commit. During your long hours of solitary confinement, you honed your skills and recited the names of those who framed you. Someday, you will have your revenge.

Benefit: You have two skills of your choice, neither of which can be from the interpersonal skill group.

Drawback: Your health suffered in prison. Whenever you are winded, you are stricken with a hacking cough that makes it impossible for you to hide or sneak.

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Chapter 9

TESTS

When you want your hero to rifle through a desk and locate a specific document, scale a castle wall, negotiate a treaty with a monarch, or undertake any other activity with a chance of failure, you'll need to make a test to determine how successful you are at the task. A test is any power roll that has failure or consequences as an option.

When to Make a Test

The Director should ask a player to make a test only when the player's hero attempts a task where the consequences of failure are interesting or dramatic, and where failure won't grind the story to a halt. For example, if a hero wants to leap over a waist-high wall while casually walking through a peaceful city neighborhood, the worst case for failure is probably that the hero falls on their butt, takes no damage, and can stand up to either try again or walk around the wall. As such, no test is required. But if the hero were being chased by enemies, failing to leap over the wall means the pursuers can catch them, so the Director might decide to call for a test to determine what happens.

The advancement of a story shouldn't be halted by failing a test. For instance, the heroes might need to know the color of a dwarf king's crown to solve a puzzle, with that puzzle opening the only entrance to a tomb they must enter to stop a world-ending ritual. It could be that a successful Reason test allows the heroes to recall that lore, but the test shouldn't be their only option to get the information. If the test fails, perhaps the heroes need to go to a flying library to do research, or they might be able to delve into a ruin to find the ancient monarch's portrait. A failed test should always result in a story becoming more interesting, not in the action coming to an end.

It Just Works!

When a hero attempts to solve a task that typically requires a test with clever, outside-the-box thinking, the Director can instead decide that no test is required and the attempt automatically works! For example, if a hero who wants to climb a wall first covers their hands and feet in giant strands of sticky spider webs, the Director might decide that they can climb up the wall without needing to make a test.

That said, such clever ideas often work for free the first time, but the Director could decide they require tests if they are used again.

How to Make a Test

Each test has the following steps:

The Director decides that a hero's activities call for a test and asks the hero's player to make a power roll using an appropriate characteristic (see Characteristics and Tests below). The Director then selects a difficulty for the power roll, either secretly or publicly (see Test Difficulty below).

The player makes the power roll. If the character has a skill that applies to the test (see Skills later in this chapter), they can ask the Director if the skill applies and justify the use of the skill. If the Director agrees the skill applies, the hero gains a +2 bonus to the roll.

The player reports the total of the roll, and the Director interprets its success or failure.

Characteristics and Tests

When you describe a task you want your hero to undertake and the Director determines that a test is necessary, they then determine which characteristic the test uses based on the nature of the task. For instance, if you're scaling a wall, the Director could ask for a Might test to determine how far and how quickly you're able to climb. If you're attempting to plead your innocence in court for a murder you didn't commit, the Director might ask for a Presence test if you're attempting to win over the jury with your personality, or a Reason test if you're laying out a logical argument to support your innocence.

Though the Director can decide to call for tests in any circumstances, a number of tasks that heroes routinely undertake are commonly set up as tests.

Might Tests

You make a Might test whenever a risky task calls for the use of physical strength. Might tests are most often used for breaking down doors and other structures, hurling heavy objects, pulling your body up a sheer wall, swimming against a mighty current, and other feats of physical power.

Agility Tests

You make an Agility test whenever a risky task calls for the use of your physical coordination and nimbleness. Agility tests are most often used for tumbling, sneaking quietly, picking locks, and engaging in sleight of hand.

Reason Tests

You make a Reason test whenever you attempt a risky task that requires the use of your mental acumen and education, formal or otherwise. Reason tests are most often used to recall lore, deduce information based on clues, complete a puzzle, forge counterfeit items or documents, break a code, convince others of a logical argument, or make an estimation.

Intuition Tests

You make an Intuition test whenever you attempt a risky task that requires the use of your powers of observation and instinct. Intuition tests are most often used to notice hidden creatures or details, discern another person's motivations or honesty, calm and reassure others, and train animals.

Presence Tests

You make a Presence test whenever you attempt a risky task that requires the use of your force of personality. Presence tests are most often used to gain trust, project confidence, and influence and lead other creatures.

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Influencing Player Characters With Tests

The things player characters do can't be influenced by any creature making a test, whether a monster, an NPC, or another player character. Many players feel that their agency is taken away if they're compelled to jump into a pile of gold filled with hidden scorpions because an NPC convinced them to do so with a Presence test. For most players, it's not fun to be in control of a hero and lose some of that control.

Instead, Directors should do their level best to have an NPC suggest that a character dive headlong into the gold like a billionaire duck, then let the player decide what their character does. Similarly, a Director might decide that one player character can't make an Intuition test to discern another PC's motivations or honesty.

That said, if everyone in your gaming group decides to lift one or more of these restrictions after talking about it, go for it! There's no wrong way to play as long as everyone is having fun. The MCDM Safety Toolkit (available for download at *https://mcdm.gg/SafetyToolkit*) discusses how to talk about potentially problematic topics such as limiting character agency at your table.

Test Difficulty

The Director decides how difficult a task that requires a test is: easy, medium, or hard. If a task seems as though it's easier than easy, then no test is necessary. The hero simply accomplishes the task. If the task seems harder than hard, then the Director is free to decide that it's impossible to complete with a test.

On a test-by-test basis, the Director can share the difficulty of a task before the player makes the test, which makes interpreting the outcome faster at the table. The Director can also keep a test's difficulty secret until after the player rolls the test, for dramatic effect.

The Test Difficulty Outcomes table shows all the possible outcomes of the different difficulties of tests. The Director will keep this information handy so as to be able to compare the different difficulties and their outcomes during play.

Test Difficulty Outcomes

Power Roll	Easy Test Outcomes	Medium Test Outcomes	Hard Test Outcomes
Less than 11	Success with a consequence	Failure	Failure with a consequence
12–16	Success	Success with a consequence	Failure
17+	Success with a reward	Success	Success
Natural 19 or 20	Success with a reward	Success with a reward	Success with a reward

Whenever the rules talk about obtaining a success on a test, that includes a straight success, a success with a consequence, or a success with a reward. Whenever the rules talk about a failure on a test, that includes a straight failure or a failure with a consequence.

Whenever you make a test whose outcome you don't like, you can spend a hero token to reroll the test. You must use the new roll.

Easy Tests

An easy test has some risk of consequence, but most heroes will likely overcome it. The power roll you make for an easy test determines the outcome (see Test Outcomes below):

- ≤11 You succeed on the task and incur a consequence.
- 12–16 You succeed on the task.
- 17+ You succeed on the task with a reward.

Medium Tests

A medium test has some risk of failure that most heroes will likely overcome—but with a cost. The power roll you make for a medium test determines the outcome:

- ≤11 You fail the task.
- 12–16 You succeed on the task and incur a consequence.
- 17+ You succeed on the task.

Hard Tests

A hard test has a greater risk of failure, and most heroes are likely to suffer some hardship while trying to overcome the intended task. The power roll you make for a hard test determines the outcome:

- ≤11 You fail the task and incur a consequence.
- 12–16 You fail the task.
- 17+ You succeed on the task.

Natural 19 or 20: Success With a Reward

Whenever you get a natural 19 or 20 on the power roll for a test—a total of 19 or 20 before adding your characteristic score or other modifiers—you score a critical success. This critical success automatically lets you succeed on the task with a reward, even if the test has a medium or hard difficulty.

Test Outcomes

Depending on a test's difficulty and the power roll made to accomplish the task represented by the test, you can obtain one of the following outcomes.

Failure With a Consequence

If you fail a hard test and incur a consequence, you don't do what you set out to do—in addition to which, you suffer an impactful setback. The Director determines the exact nature of the consequence, which is typically related to the specific task.

For instance, if a hero suffers a consequence while trying to climb a wall, they might make it halfway up the wall and then fall, taking damage and landing prone. A hero trying to sneak by cultists might be spotted by those foes, who immediately attack. If a consequence strikes when a hero attempts to bribe a prison guard, the guard might decide to arrest the hero or lead them into a trap. If a hero suffers a consequence on a Reason test made to recall lore about the king's favorite meal, they might confuse it for a dish to which the monarch is deathly allergic.

Not all consequences need to be immediate or apparent. For example, a hero might fail with a consequence on a test made to cheat at a high-stakes game of cards with a noble. The failure means the cheating is noticed, but the Director decides that the noble doesn't say anything. This consequence isn't made apparent until later in the evening, when the noble has guards surround the hero, intent on taking the cheater down to the dungeon for stacking the deck.

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Common consequences for failing a test include the following:

- Making an NPC so upset that they storm off, or betray, attack, or otherwise attempt to harm you
- Drawing the attention of a group of foes
- Triggering a trap or hazard that captures or significantly harms you or an ally
- Breaking an important piece of equipment that is difficult to replace or repair
- Thinking you know something that you don't
- Getting stuck in a situation that must be resolved with a negotiation or a montage test you didn't need to make before

In lieu of other consequences, the Director also has the option to gain 2 additional Malice—a resource that creatures run by the Director use in combat—at the start of the next combat encounter.

Failure

If you fail a test without incurring a consequence, you simply don't do what you set out to do. A hero attempting to climb a wall finds no purchase. A hero trying to recall lore can't remember the desired facts. If a hero attempts to bribe a guard, they don't take the bait.

On a failed test, the Director can decide that there might still be a small penalty for failure, depending on the circumstances of the test. This penalty shouldn't be as harsh as rolling a failure with a consequence, though. For instance, a hero who gets this outcome on an Agility test made to sneak by a group of cultists might draw the attention of one cultist with their failure. Now that cultist is coming to investigate, but they haven't raised the alarm ... yet.

When a hero rolls a failure without a consequence, the Director can offer to let them succeed with a consequence instead. For instance, when a hero rolls a 10 on a medium Might test to break down a locked door, that's a failure and the door stays closed. But the Director could suggest to the player that instead of not breaking down the door, they can break down the door and lose 1d6 Stamina from being injured in the effort.

Success With a Consequence

If you succeed on a test and incur a consequence, you do what you set out to do, but with an added cost. A hero might succeed in climbing up a wall, but the surface of the wall crumbles and becomes unstable as they do, making the climb more difficult for the ally ascending after them. When trying to sneak by a cultist, a hero successfully does so, but leaves footprints or other evidence of trespassing behind. If a hero bribes a guard to be allowed to sneak into a prison, the guard lets them in—but then demands a gemstone the hero needs for an important crafting project before they let the hero out.

Just like failure with a consequence, the consequences accompanying success don't need to be immediately apparent. In lieu of other consequences, the Director has the option to gain 2 additional Malice at the start of the next combat encounter.

When a hero rolls a success with a consequence, the Director might give them a chance to fail instead. For instance, when a hero rolls a 10 on an easy Agility test to pick the lock on a chest, that's a success with a consequence. The Director could suggest that the character has opened the lock but broken their lockpicks in the process (knowing the picks can't be replaced until the hero returns to town), but can also give them the option of failing to pick the lock but keeping their lockpicks intact.

Success

If you succeed on a test without consequence or reward, you simply achieve whatever you set out to do. A hero climbs that wall, sneaks by those cultists, or bribes that guard just as they planned. Smooth.

Success With a Reward

If you succeed on a test with a reward, you accomplish whatever you set out to do. But you also gain a little something extra, in the form of momentum or luck that makes the immediate future easier for you or your friends.

The Director determines the reward for a success, which is most often related to the task at hand. For instance, if a hero succeeds with a reward while climbing a wall, they might find a ladder at the top they can lower so that any allies climbing up after them can do so without needing to make a test. A hero trying to sneak by cultists who succeeds with a reward might be able to dose the cultists' nearby water barrel with sleeping poison as they pass by unseen. Succeeding with a reward while bribing a prison guard could mean that the guard unlocks a door for the hero in addition to forgetting they were ever there.

As with consequences, the reward that comes with a success doesn't need to be immediate or apparent. For example, a hero succeeds with a reward on an easy test made to cheat at a high-stakes game of cards with a noble. Not only does the hero win the game, but the Director decides that their reward comes from a servant watching the game who's impressed with the character's performance. After the game, the servant approaches the hero, offering magic from the noble's private stash in congratulations and admiration.

Common rewards accompanying success on a test include the following:

- Automatically accomplishing a related follow-up task that would typically require a test
- Allowing an ally engaged in the same task to accomplish the task without needing to make the test as well
- Obtaining a consumable treasure or useful piece of mundane equipment
- Learning a piece of helpful information
- Impressing or ingratiating yourself with someone who grants you a small favor
- Noticing a hidden danger well before it strikes, giving you time to avoid or prepare for it

In lieu of other rewards, the Director can also decide that a hero who succeeds on a test with a reward earns the players a hero token (see Hero Tokens in Chapter 1: The Basics).

Optional Rule: Pitching Consequences and Rewards

Coming up with consequences and rewards for tests can be a big part of the fun for many Directors, but even the best Directors occasionally run low on ideas. That's why the game gives the default option of consequences and rewards in the form of Malice and hero tokens. However, a Director who prefers narrative consequences and rewards can ask the players to pitch different consequences and rewards when they make a test. The Director can reject, add to, or modify the players' ideas as they choose, and will remind the players that they need to pitch real consequences, and not minor rewards disguised as consequences.

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How Long Does It Take?

The amount of time required for a task involving a test is determined by the Director. A task such as recalling lore with a Reason test might take no time at all. Ducking behind a barrel to hide with an Agility test might require a maneuver or a main action, while tracking a band of voiceless talkers through the World Below could take hours or even days.

Tests During Combat

Many (but not all) tests that a hero might make during combat are made as maneuvers. See Maneuvers in Chapter 10: Combat for more information.

Can I Try Again?

In many cases when you fail a test, you can't attempt the test again unless the circumstances of the test change. For instance, if you attempt an Agility test to pick a lock and fail, you can't attempt to pick the lock again unless you get better lockpicks, oil the lock, have someone demonstrate how to pick a similar lock, and so on.

The Director decides when the circumstances have changed enough to allow a new attempt at a test.

Heroes Make Tests

If a hero attempts to sneak by an enemy guard unnoticed, should the hero make an Agility test to sneak, or should the guard make an Intuition test to catch the hero in the act? If a cultist lies to a hero about the location of a secret temple, does the cultist roll a Presence test to conceal the truth, or does the hero roll an Intuition test to discern the cultist's honesty?

Except in certain scenarios (explored at NPCs Roll for Deceptive Tasks and Opposed Power Rolls below), heroes make tests and NPCs do not. Heroes are the stars of the story, and the consequences and rewards of tests have longer-lasting implications for them. There are exceptions to this rule, of course. If a hero travels with an NPC retainer or companion, that NPC will almost certainly make tests from time to time. But for the most part, NPCs and other creatures never need to make tests when what they do opposes what the heroes do.

To quickly assess the difficulty of a task opposed by one or more creatures and the test made to attempt it, the Director can use the following guidelines (though these are not hard and fast rules):

Easy Test: A test is easy if only one creature opposes the hero, and that opposed creature would have a lower bonus to their test roll for the task than the hero does. If a hero with an Agility score of 2 attempts to sneak by a guard with an Intuition score of 0, the test is easy.

Moderate Test: A test is moderate if multiple creatures oppose the hero and those creatures would have lower bonuses to their test rolls than the hero, or if only one creature opposes the hero and has the same test bonus as the hero.

Hard Test: A test is hard if an opposed creature would have a higher bonus to their test roll than the hero, or if multiple creatures with the same test bonus as the hero oppose the hero.

The failure consequences of opposed tasks are some of the easiest to create on the fly. Fail to hide from someone, and they notice you. Fail to lie to someone, and they catch your duplicity. Fail to arm wrestle someone for a free ale, and you're picking up the tab. The consequence is that the opposition bests the hero.



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NPCs Roll for Deceptive Tasks

At times, the Director might choose for an NPC to make a test when engaged in a deceptive task, rather than having characters attempt to note the deception. By having the NPC roll in these scenarios, the Director doesn't tip their hand to the players that subterfuge is afoot.

For example, when an assassin attempts to ambush the heroes while they sit around a campfire, if any player says their hero is on the lookout for danger, that hero would make an Intuition test to notice the danger. But if no one is keeping watch, the assassin makes an Agility test to sneak up on the heroes unnoticed. If the assassin fails the test, the heroes notice immediately as their assailant loudly steps on a twig. If the assassin succeeds, the heroes don't notice until the assailant is right on top of them.

An NPC might also make a Presence test if they lie to the heroes, as long as the heroes have no reason to believe the character would be deceptive. The Director knows if the heroes are wary in that way because the players will ask if they can make a test to discern the NPC's honesty.

As an optional rule, the Director is also free to ask the heroes to make a reactive test to a deceptive NPC instead (see Reactive Tests below) whenever they choose.

Opposed Power Rolls

When two creatures are engaged in a particularly dramatic struggle that requires them both to make tests, the Director can have all the creatures involved make a test. The creature with the highest power roll wins. You can't earn a reward as part of these opposed power rolls, and they don't follow the typical difficulty structure or have three different tiers of possible outcomes.

For example, if your hero attempts to sneak by a demon lord, you make an Agility test to move stealthily while the demon makes an Intuition test to notice you. If your hero gets the higher power roll, you sneak by without the demon noticing. If the demon gets the higher roll, they catch you in the act of sneaking. If multiple sneaking heroes attempt to get by multiple demons, then each creature makes a test and all the totals are compared to determine which demons notice which heroes.

In the event of a tie in an opposed test, the state of the scene doesn't change. In the previous example, a tie means that if a demon on guard duty didn't know a sneaking hero was there, the demon remains oblivious. If the demon did know the hero was out there somewhere while trying to avoid being noticed, a tie means the demon still knows the hero is there but hasn't determined their location.

Reactive Tests

At certain times when a hero isn't engaged in overcoming a task, the Director might ask the player of the hero to make a test without context, explaining the test only after the power roll is made. This often happens when a hero has a chance of knowing or noticing something of significance that the player doesn't know to look for or ask about.

Reactive tests are typically made in the following circumstances, though the Director can call for them in any appropriate scenario:

Hidden Environmental Features: The Director asks for an Intuition test to notice a secret door, a hidden trap, or some other disguised environmental feature.



Hidden Foes: The Director calls for an Intuition test to notice a hidden foe (or they could use the rules in NPCs Roll for Deceptive Tasks above).

Hidden Motives: The Director can ask for an Intuition test during a conversation to gauge how well a hero can read an NPC, judging whether they're lying, withholding information, or concealing an emotional response. (The Director could also use the rules in NPCs Roll for Deceptive Tasks.)

Recall Lore: The Director might ask a hero to make a Reason test when dealing with a new object, a piece of information, or an event to determine what history or details the hero might already know about it.

Creature Tests: Some creatures in *Draw Steel: Monsters* have features and abilities that require heroes to make reactive tests. These tests can't be modified by skills.

Optional Rule: Secret Reactive Tests

Some Directors prefer to make the power rolls for reactive tests for the heroes rather than asking the players to do so. This allows the Director to make the rolls when appropriate for hidden objects, creatures, motivations, and information without tipping off the players that there is information to be gained. Having the Director roll requires the Director to have everyone's characteristics and skills recorded (whether physically or digitally) for easy reference.

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Skills

Skills represent the different specializations a hero has outside of attacking, defending, and using their ancestry features, class features, and equipment. Whenever you make a test, having a particular skill associated with the test increases your chance of success.

Applying Skills

If you have a skill that applies to a test you make, you gain a +2 bonus to the test. For instance, if your hero has the Hide skill, you have a +2 bonus to any test you make that involves hiding yourself. This might include an Agility test to hide behind a barrel, or a Presence test to disappear into a crowd.

The +2 bonus gained for a skill isn't an edge. A player can make a test that has both the +2 bonus for a skill and the +2 bonus for an edge.

You can't apply more than one skill to a test.

Justify the Skill

It's not the Director's job to know every task potentially covered by the skills in the game, or to know the specific skills your hero has. Instead, the Director asks you to make a test using a characteristic and you tell the Director if you think you have a skill that applies. If it's not obvious why the skill applies, tell the Director how your hero is approaching the task and justify why that approach uses the skill. The Director then decides if you get the +2 bonus the skill represents. If the Director disagrees with you, that's the final word.

Approaching problems creatively while remaining reasonable can help you get the most out of your skills. For example, if you're making a Presence test to impress a noble at a party, using the Brag skill is an obvious choice. But what if you don't have that skill? Maybe you could instead try to impress the noble with a brief but exciting lecture about the nature of the elements, making a Presence test using the Magic skill that you do have!

Sometimes you won't have a skill that applies to a test. That's okay! If your characteristic score is decent, you likely have a good chance of success without a skill.

Mixing Characteristics and Skills

Although certain skills are often paired with one characteristic more than others, a skill can apply to a test made using any characteristic that makes sense. The Director has the final say on which characteristic is used to complete a task, and can call for a different characteristic based on the circumstances.

For example, intimidating someone with a purely verbal threat is a Presence test. But if a player describes their character tearing a log in half with their bare hands to intimidate a foe, the Director is likely to call for a Might test instead. The Intimidate skill can apply to both tests. In the same way, scaling the side of a building is covered by a Might test, but if a hero does a series of leaps from one balcony to another to reach a roof, the Director could call for an Agility test instead. The Climb skill applies to both of these tests.



Many Specific Skills

Draw Steel includes a big list of skills, and each is fairly specific. For example, instead of one Athletics skill that covers climbing, jumping, swimming, and lifting heavy objects, your character might use separate Climb, Jump, Lift, and Swim skills. Instead of a Thievery skill that covers picking locks, picking pockets, and disabling traps, the game has three skills: Pick Lock, Pick Pocket, and Sabotage.

Having a wide range of specific skills means you'll frequently make tests that don't use one of your character's skills, simply applying a characteristic. By not having a few broader skills, it means that having a character who covers the spread of every skill is actually impossible. Luckily, the math of the game doesn't require you to have a skill to have a decent chance of success on a test. That means heroes can attempt tasks without the help of a skill just because someone needs to do it, and that's pretty darn heroic!

Since you don't need to worry about your character covering a wide spread of skills, you're free to choose the skills you think fit your hero best and are the most fun to work with. Maybe you're thinking about an elementalist who has a gymnastic background in jumping and tumbling, and who also studied religion and blacksmithing. Having that kind of specific backstory is a big part of cinematic storytelling.

Edges on Tests With Specific Skills

Certain features and abilities grant a creature an edge on tests made with a specific skill. A creature making a test where the specific skill would apply gains an edge on the test even if they don't have the skill. For example, the conduit's Blessing of Fortunate Weather can create foggy weather that grants creatures who make tests using the Hide skill an edge on those tests. Any creature who attempts to hide in the fog gains an edge on the test as long as the Hide skill would apply to that test, regardless of whether they have that skill or not.

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The rules for skills allow for them to be flexibly applied to any test that is appropriate for the skill. This encourages clever thinking. A player can ask the Director, "I want to impress the duke with a story about how I ascended the sheer Cliffs of Azgahnan. Can I use my Climb skill for a +2 bonus to my Presence test?" Getting creative like that is a lot of fun. It paints a visual picture, and it's good tactical thinking! However, if the skills in a game are too broad in the kinds of activities they represent, players inevitably end up applying the same skill over and over again to as many tests as possible. This isn't fun for anyone, and doesn't make a very compelling story.

Skill Groups

Skills are broken down into five skill groups: crafting, exploration, interpersonal, intrigue, and lore.

For the Director: Make Your Own Skills

Directors should feel free to make their own skills that they feel are relevant and useful to their campaigns and adventures. For instance, the game doesn't have a Brewing skill for brewing ale or a Painting skill for making art because those aren't tasks that typically come up in a game about fighting monsters and saving the world. However, a Director could decide that their campaign involves poisoned barrels of ale and large amounts of counterfeit art, and that adding these two new skills to the game would make it more fun for the players. The Director simply needs to pick a group for these new skills—in this case, crafting makes sense. They then let the players know that they can swap out any crafting skill they have for these new skills.

Crafting Skills

Skills from the crafting skill group are used in the creation and appraisal of goods and for jury-rigging contraptions. They are especially useful during rests and downtime.

Rewards for tests made with crafting skills typically include having leftover rare material used in the creation process, knowing a buyer willing to pay extra for goods or items you're appraising, or making a jury-rigged device so amazing that it lasts for more uses than it should.

Consequences for tests made with crafting skills typically include wasting rare materials used in the creation process, greatly overestimating or underestimating an item's value, and poorly jury-rigging a contraption so that it harms people (or at least the wrong people).

Crafting Skills

Skill	Use
Alchemy	Make bombs and potions
Architecture	Create buildings and vehicles
Blacksmithing	Forge metal armor and weapons
Carpentry	Create items out of wood
Cooking	Create delicious dishes
Fletching	Make ranged weapons and ammunition
Forgery	Create false badges, documents, and other items
Jewelry	Create bracelets, crowns, rings, and other jewelry
Mechanics	Build machines and clockwork items
Tailoring	Craft clothing of cloth or leather

Exploration Skills

Skills from the exploration skill group are used to physically explore the environment around the characters, and to overcome physical obstacles.

Rewards for tests made with exploration skills typically include helping another creature engaging in the same task succeed without needing to also make a test, automatically succeeding on a follow-up test while engaged in the same task, reaching a destination faster than anticipated, and learning about or avoiding an upcoming hazard.

Consequences for tests made with exploration skills include harming yourself, your gear, or your allies; becoming lost; or stumbling headlong into a hazard or a place you were trying to avoid.

Exploration Skills

Skill	Use
Climb	Move up vertical surfaces
Drive	Control vehicles
Endurance	Remain engaged in strenuous activity over a long period of time
Gymnastics	Move across unsteady or narrow surfaces; tumble
Heal	Use mundane first aid
Jump	Leap vertical and horizontal distances
Lift	Pick up, carry, and throw heavy objects
Navigate	Read a map and travel without becoming lost
Ride	Ride and control a nonsapient mount, such as a horse
Swim	Move through deep liquid

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Interpersonal Skills

Skills from the interpersonal skill group are used to socially interact with other creatures, and are particularly useful during negotiations (see Chapter 11). Aside from the Handle Animals skill, you can generally only use interpersonal skills when you attempt to influence creatures who have emotions and who can understand you.

Rewards for tests made with interpersonal skills typically include gaining an extra favor, item, or piece of information from the people or creatures you interact with.

Consequences for tests made with interpersonal skills include making the creature you're interacting with angry, sad, embarrassed, offended, or otherwise upset or uncomfortable. This might cause them to ignore you, storm off, spread rumors about you, attack you, betray you, blackmail you, or otherwise attempt to harm you.

Interpersonal Skills

Skill	Use
Culture	Knowing about a culture's customs, folktales, and taboos
Criminal Underworld	Knowing about criminal organizations, their crimes, their relationships, and their leaders
History	Knowing about significant past events
Magic	Knowing about magical places, spells, rituals, items, and phenomena
Monsters	Knowing monster ecology, strengths, and weaknesses
Nature	Knowing about natural flora, fauna, and weather
Psionics	Knowing about psionic places, spells, rituals, items, and phenomena
Religion	Knowing about religious mythology, practices, and rituals
Rumors	Knowing gossip, legends, and uncertain truths
Society	Knowing noble etiquette and the leadership and power dynamics of noble families
Strategy	Knowing about battle tactics and logistics
Timescape	Knowing about the many worlds of the timescape

Intrigue Skills

Skills from the intrigue skill group are used in tasks centered around investigation, thievery, and spycraft.

Rewards for tests made with skills from this group typically include helping another creature engaging in the same task succeed without needing to also make a test, automatically succeeding on a follow-up test while engaged in the same task, discovering helpful information in addition to what you set out to learn, and performing an extra bit of clandestine activity in addition to what you set out to do.

Consequences for tests made with intrigue skills include getting caught in the act or failing to notice a detail that places you in danger, such as triggering a trap or walking into an ambush.

Intrigue Skills

Skill	Use
Alertness	Intuitively sense the details of your surroundings
Conceal Object	Hide an object on your person or in your environment
Disguise	Change your appearance to look like a different person
Eavesdrop	Actively listen to something that is hard to hear, such as a whispered conversation through a door
Escape Artist	Escape from bonds such as rope or manacles
Hide	Conceal yourself from others' observation
Pick Lock	Open a lock without using the key
Pick Pocket	Steal an item that another person wears or carries without them noticing
Sabotage	Disable a mechanical device such as a trap
Search	Actively search an environment for important details and items
Sneak	Move silently
Track	Follow a trail that another creature has left behind

Lore Skills

Skills from the lore skill group are used to research and recall specific information. They are especially useful during rests and downtime.

Rewards for tests made with lore skills typically include learning an extra piece of useful information.

Consequences for tests made with lore skills typically include learning an incorrect piece of information that seems useful, but which actually works against your interests or wastes time. (It's fun to roleplay these kinds of moments, so lean in!) Alternatively, the Director can make medium and hard tests with lore group skills for each hero in secret, then let the players know the narrative outcome without revealing the outcome of the power roll (see the Optional Rule: Secret Reactive Tests sidebar earlier in this chapter).

Lore Skills

Skill	Use
Criminal Underworld	Knowing about criminal organizations, their crimes, their relationships, and their leaders
Culture	Knowing about a culture's customs, folktales, and taboos
History	Knowing about significant past events
Magic	Knowing about magical places, spells, rituals, items, and phenomena
Monsters	Knowing monster ecology, strengths, and weaknesses
Nature	Knowing about natural flora, fauna, and weather
Psionics	Knowing about psionic places, spells, rituals, items, and phenomena
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Strategy	Knowing about battle tactics and logistics
Timescape	Knowing about the many worlds of the timescape

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Are All Skills Equal?

When choosing skills for your character, deciding which skills will be most useful depends a lot on the campaign. For instance, the Swim skill might be used constantly during a campaign that takes place on the ocean and has heroes exploring underwater ruins, but it won't come up as much in a campaign that takes place entirely in a vast desert. The Psionics skill might come up a lot in a campaign where voiceless talkers are the main foes, and Magic might be more useful in a game where the heroes take on a circle of evil wizards. If you're worried about whether a skill you'd like to take will be useful, discuss your skill list with the Director after you create a hero. And if a skill doesn't work out, you can always trade it for another skill as you wish (see Changing Character Options in Chapter 2: Making a Hero).

Example Tests

In this scenario, a trio of adventurers want to scale the 40-foot-high walls surrounding a castle known as the Star Chamber, hoping to covertly obtain information about their enemy, Lady Morgant.

Director (Matt): *The towering walls that surround the Star Chamber stand before you, the single iron gate closed and locked, with a platoon of armed guards outside.*

James (playing Korvo, a shadow): *Let's move to the side of the wall opposite the gate and make our ascent there.*

Grace (playing Val, a conduit): *Agreed.*

Director: *Okay. It'll be a Might test to get up to the top of the wall.*

The Director knows that the walls around the Star Chamber, the headquarters of the evil knights Lady Morgant leads, are smooth and hard to climb, designed to repel invaders. The test's difficulty is hard, but the Director keeps that information a secret for now.

Alyssa (playing Jorn, a tactician): *Let me go first. I've got good Might and can throw the others down a rope once I'm up there. And I've got the Climb skill.*

Director: *For sure. Okay, roll it up.*

Alyssa rolls 2d10 and gets a 13. She then adds her Might score of 2 and her +2 bonus for having an applicable skill to the roll, for a total of 17.

Alyssa: *A 17! That's tier 3, baby!*

The Director checks the Test Difficulty Outcomes table to confirm that a tier 3 outcome is a success on a hard test.

Director: *Okay, you're on top of the wall. You notice a few guards patrolling atop the opposite side of the wall in the distance, but they're looking out at the city right now.*

Alyssa: *Great! I toss down a rope. Val, you're next.*

Grace: *So it's a Might test. Would you let me use Endurance? It's a lot of physical exertion to climb.*

Director: *It's not a climb that would take you hours, so I don't think Endurance applies here. But hey, the rope does make this an easier test.*

Grace: *Fair. Okay, dice. Let's do this.*

Given the rope, the Director decides that this second climb attempt is an easy test. Grace rolls 2d10 and gets an 11. With her Might score of 2, that's a 13.



Grace: *13! That's a tier 2 outcome for Val.*

The Director checks the Test Difficulty Outcomes table once more, confirming that a tier 2 outcome is a success on an easy test.

Director: *Good news! You make it to the top of the wall alongside Jorn.*

James: *Ah, crap. I have a might of –1 and no skills to use. Unless I can Intimidate the rope into lifting me up?*

Director: *Wishful thinking.*

Alyssa: *What if Korvo grabs onto the rope and I lift him up while he just hangs on for the ride?*

Director: *Sure. That'll be a Might test if Korvo's down for it.*

James: *Nothing risked, nothing saved. Let's do it. Just be careful. Any loud noises could attract those guards.*

Alyssa: *Please. I'm a pro. Since I'm lifting this polder off the ground, does the Lift skill apply?*

Director: *Yes, it does. Roll it up. That's a medium difficulty test.*

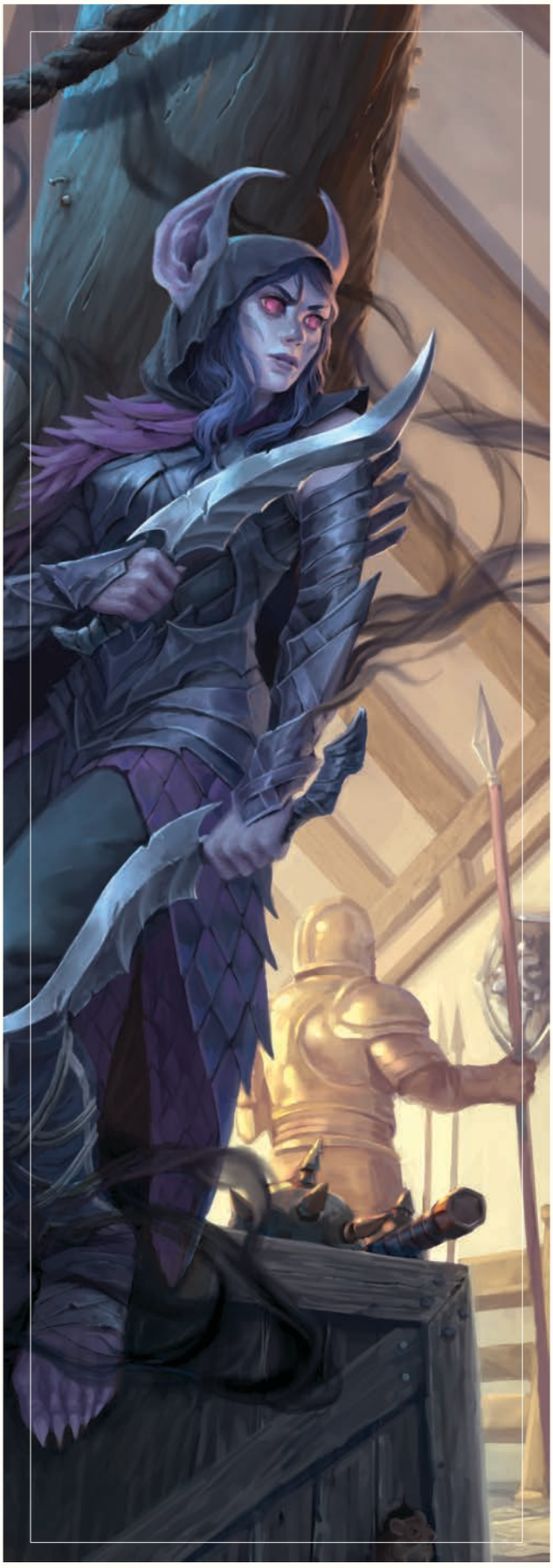
Lifting the diminutive polder, Alyssa rolls 2d10—but gets a 2! With her Might score and Lift skill bonus of +2, the total is 6.

Alyssa: *A 6! Oof. That's tier 1.*

Director: *Which is a failure, but with no consequence. You realize you just can't lift Korvo off the ground without making a lot of noise.*

The Director then decides to make the failure potentially more interesting, by allowing the players to decide if they want a failure without consequence or a success with a consequence.

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Director: *I'll give you a choice, though. You can leave Korvo on the ground, or pull him up and suffer the consequence of making some noise while doing so.*

Grace: *Ah, pull the polder up.*

Alyssa: *Yeah. We have to face these guards sometime.*

James: *Thanks for not leaving me behind!*

Director: *As Jorn yanks Korvo off the ground and pulls him up to the top of the wall, a guard turns a bullseye lantern your way, calling out, "Who goes there?"*

Assist a Test

You can attempt to assist another creature with a test they make, provided you have a skill that applies to the test, the other creature isn't using that same skill on the test, and you can describe how your character helps to the Director's satisfaction. In other words, your attempt to help has to make sense, and you have to bring some useful expertise to the table. Helping another creature sneak by shouting encouragement at them isn't going to make them stealthier.

When you attempt to assist another creature, make a test using the skill you choose, and using a characteristic chosen by the Director based on the activity you use to help. The outcome of that test determines the bonus applied to the test you're assisting:

- ≤11 You get in the way or make things worse. The creature takes a bane on their test.
- 12–16 Your help grants the other creature an edge on their test.
- 17+ Your help gives the other creature a double edge on their test.

For example, when an ally tries to pick a jailer's pocket, you might attempt to assist by using the Flirt skill to distract the jailer. The Director accepts this, and asks you to make a Presence test using Flirt. The outcome of that test determines the bonus you provide to the other hero's Agility test to pick the jailer's pocket—or whether you fumble the distraction and potentially draw attention to the attempt.

Hide and Sneak

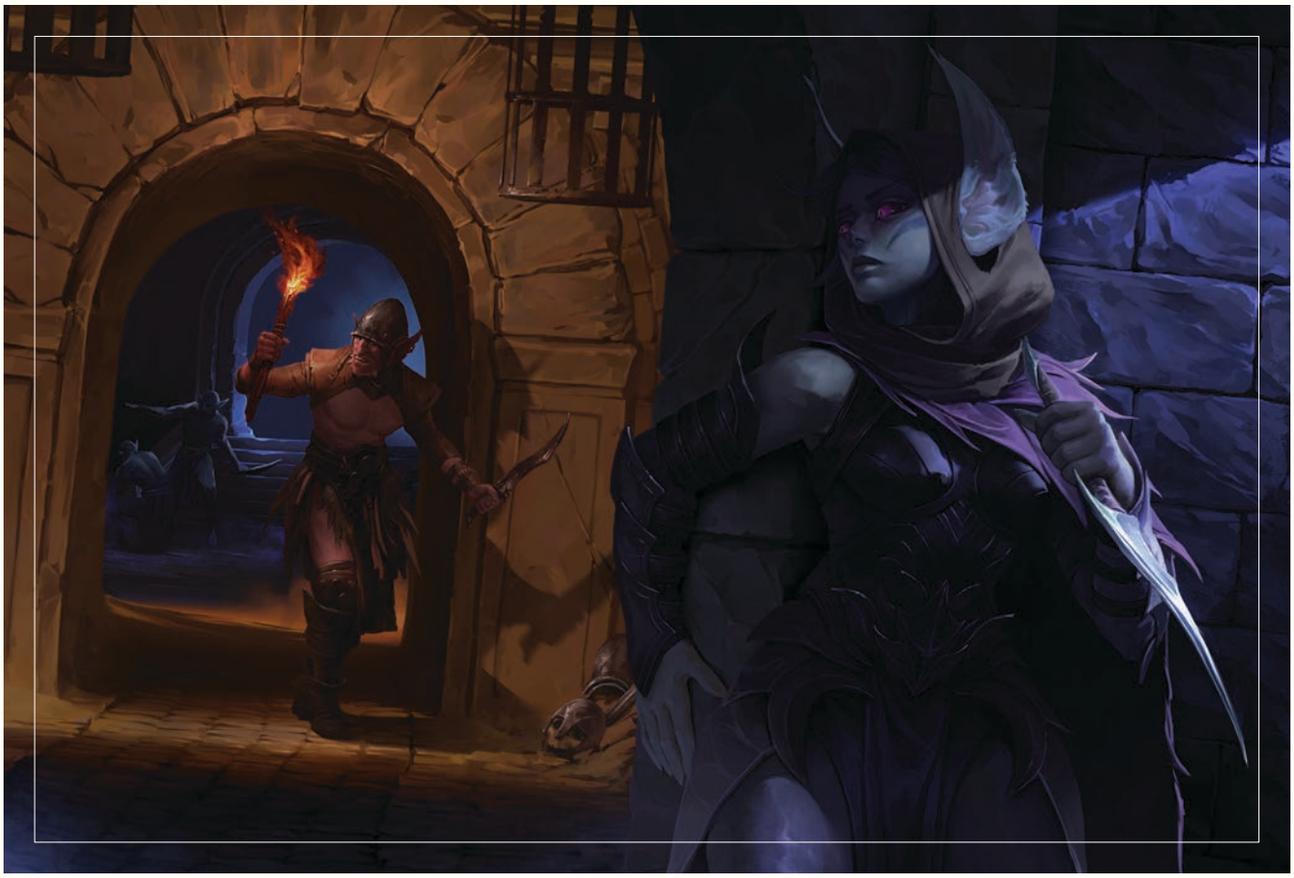
Hiding and sneaking are important tools for heroes and their foes. You might want to avoid another creature's notice to eavesdrop on conversations, steal items, set up an ambush, or avoid a combat encounter.

Hiding

To hide from a creature, you must have cover or concealment from that creature (see Chapter 10: Combat), who can't observe you attempting to hide. A creature is observing you if they're aware of your specific location before you attempt to hide. This means they can pinpoint you with their senses and point a finger (or paw or tentacle) at you as if to shout, "There they are!" If you duck behind a barrel to hide from a foe, your attempt to hide has a chance of succeeding only if your foe doesn't notice you doing so. If you're being chased by a hungry dragon, you can hide only if you first move to a location where the dragon can't observe you—for instance, by turning a sharp corner into a tunnel full of giant stalagmites before the dragon does. You then make your hide attempt.

When you use the Hide maneuver to hide during combat while you have cover or concealment from a creature who isn't observing you, you are automatically hidden from them unless the Director deems otherwise. If you hide outside of combat, the Director might ask you to make a test using the Hide skill to determine how well hidden you are.

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While you are hidden from another creature, the creature can't target you with abilities that don't have the Area keyword. This benefit ends as soon as you are no longer hidden from that creature.

Additionally, while you are hidden from another creature, you gain an edge on ability rolls made against that creature. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn in which you are no longer hidden. This means you can be hidden from another creature at the start of your turn, move out of cover or concealment toward them and use an ability against them, and still gain an edge on ability rolls made against the creature as long as you use the ability before the end of that turn.

You are no longer hidden from a creature if you don't have cover or concealment from them. If you use an ability, interact with an enemy, move without sneaking, or otherwise make noise or reveal yourself while hidden, you are no longer hidden once the activity that reveals you resolves. For instance, if you are hidden and then make a strike, you resolve the strike first, then are no longer hidden.

What Does It Mean to Be Observed?

Most of the time, if a creature has line of effect to you, they're able to observe you—especially if you're an active threat to them, such as in a combat encounter. However, the game leaves what it means to be observed open to interpretation, because there are circumstances where a creature might have line of effect to you but isn't observing you, giving you a chance to hide. For example, a guard in a crowded marketplace likely isn't able to observe every creature within their line of effect, so slipping away to hide in that situation is probably easier than hiding from them in an otherwise empty street. The Director has the final say on who is observing you, and who you are able to observe.

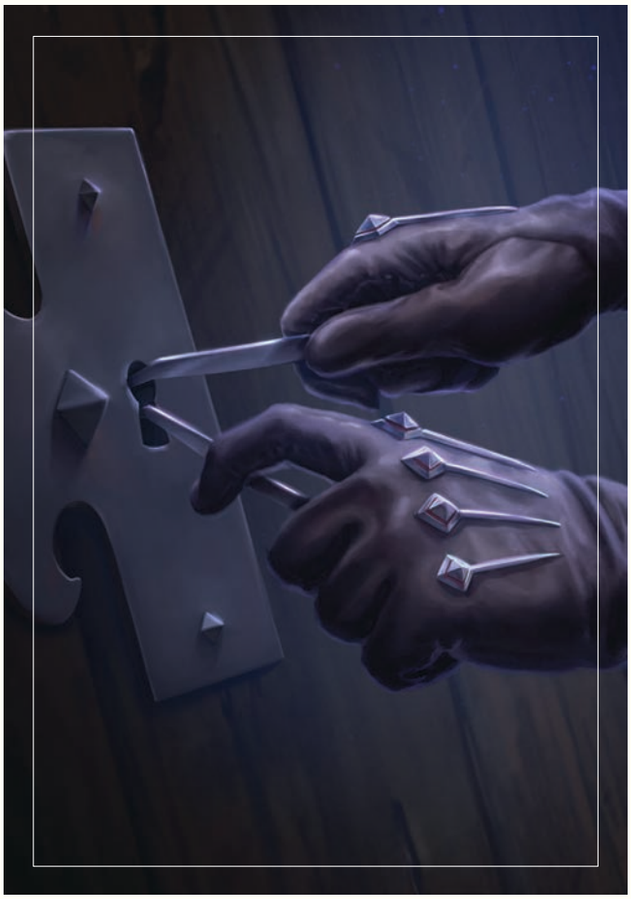
Searching for Hidden Creatures

You can search for creatures who are hidden from you as long as those creatures are within 10 squares and you have line of effect to them. To do so, you use a maneuver to make an Intuition test using the Search skill, and any hidden creatures within 10 squares of you each make an opposed Agility test using the Hide skill (see Opposed Power Rolls earlier in this chapter). At the Director's discretion, different characteristics and skills can be used in this opposed test. For example, your foe might make a Presence test using the Handle Animals skill to hide among a flock of sheep without disturbing them, or you could make a Reason test using the Eavesdrop skill to pick out the breathing of a creature hidden in the dark.

If the total of your test is higher than that of a hidden creature, they are no longer hidden from you. Otherwise, they remain hidden from you. As part of the maneuver used to search for hidden creatures, you can point out any creatures you notice to allies within 10 squares of you, making those creatures no longer hidden from those allies.

If a creature is hidden from your allies but not from you, you can use a maneuver without making a test to point that creature out to your allies.

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Sneaking

While you are hidden from another creature and not in combat, you can attempt to sneak—avoiding the senses of other creatures as you move around them in the open—to remain hidden. While sneaking, your speed is halved. To sneak, you make an Agility test using the Sneak skill with a difficulty set by the Director. If you succeed, you remain hidden during your movement. This test can use another characteristic at the Director's discretion, such as using Presence to blend in with a crowd on a packed city street.

Group Tests

Whenever two or more heroes attempt to overcome a single, simple task together that calls for them to make the same test, the Director can call for a group test. For example, if several heroes are all attempting to climb the outside of a tower at the same time, giving each other assistance and advice, they could be asked to make a Might group test. If a group of heroes attempt to sneak by a sleeping ogre, they might make an Agility group test.

Group Test Difficulty

The Director determines the difficulty of a group test the same way they do for individual tests. Group tests can be easy, medium, or hard.

Making a Group Test

Each hero participating in the group test makes the test individually as usual, but the Director waits until all the tests have been made to interpret the outcome. A hero who is participating in the group test can't assist another hero participating in the test.

Group Test Outcome

When interpreting the outcome of a group test, the Director first determines if the task succeeded or not before figuring out rewards and consequences. If half or more of the heroes making the group test succeed, then the group test succeeds. Otherwise, the group test fails.

If the heroes succeeded and half or more of them obtained a reward from the test, the Director gives the group a collective reward and ignores any consequences incurred in the test. This collective reward should be equivalent to earning two individual rewards. In fact, it could be two consumable items, juicy pieces of information, or hero tokens. However, it could also be something more tailored to the task. For instance, if the heroes earn a collective reward while sneaking through the camp of an enemy army, the Director might allow them to sabotage a bunch of war engines or steal a few horses on their way out.

If the heroes failed the group test and more than half of them incurred a consequence as a result, the Director gives the group a collective consequence and ignores any earned rewards. This collective consequence should affect everyone. An easy option is for the stress of failing the test to cause each hero to take a bane on their next power roll, or for the Director to gain 2 Malice per hero at the start of the next combat encounter. But the consequence could also be tailored to the task. For instance, if the heroes fail in their attempt to sneak through the camp of an enemy army, they're spotted and the camp immediately goes on alert as waves of enemies attack them.

If fewer than half the heroes incur a consequence or earn a reward on their individual tests, then the group test simply succeeds or fails.

Montage Tests

When a group of heroes works together over time to accomplish a common goal that requires more than a single characteristic, the Director can call for a montage test. Such tests typically take place over a prolonged period and focus on collective or shared activities. Navigating a vast desert, convincing farmers to rise up against a tyrannical leader, and performing a ritual to open a magically sealed gate can all be accomplished with montage tests.

In a montage test, the players take turns making tests as their characters tackle a task together in a montage test round. Each hero has a chance to make a test (or to assist another hero's test; see Assist a Test above) intended to influence the outcome of the task.

A hero can also spend their turn using an item, ability, or other option they have available that they believe can help in the montage test. For example, if a group of heroes want to cross an ocean on a sailing ship before a storm begins, one hero might make use of a magic fan that creates wind to keep the sails full day and night. The Director decides that this clever action gives the heroes 2 automatic successes in the montage test, with no individual tests necessary (see Total Successes and Failures below).

Once a hero makes a test, assists with a test, or uses an ability or other option, they can't do anything else as part of the montage test until each other hero involved in the montage test does so as well. A hero can also choose to do nothing, most often if they have no one to

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assist and fear that their actions might make the situation worse (see Montage Test Outcomes below). Once every hero has had a chance to act, the montage test round ends and a new one begins.

Time and Stakes

As the name suggests, montage tests create a kind of cinematic montage in the action of the game. A montage test can take place over the course of several hours or days, with each individual test or other activity set up as a brief vignette within the montage that stars one of the heroes. Combat encounters, negotiations, and other challenges and scenes can break up a montage test (see Sample Montage Test below).

The Director should deploy montage tests only when the players are engaged in overcoming a goal that has stakes for the story and some sort of pressure, such as a looming deadline or impending harm. A montage test is great for a race to get to another location before an enemy army does, a chase to escape or catch up to a foe, weathering a hazard, preparing a village for war, or similar activities. Low- or no-stakes activities such as travel through a forest with no time pressure, or training during a respite to use a new kit, can be narrated in montage style, but they don't require a montage test.

Director Sets the Scene

At the start of a montage test, the Director should describe the scenario underlying the task at hand, and the various challenges the heroes might face as they attempt to collectively accomplish it. For example, if the heroes are chasing down a pickpocket through a crowded market, the Director might talk about the throngs of innocent people blocking the way forward, obscuring the characters' vision, and making noise that complicates attempts to hear the thief's nimble footsteps. There are also traveling carts to dodge, the speed and dexterity of the pursued character to contend with, and a pack of stray dogs who chase after anyone who sprints through the market. Describing these obstacles gives the heroes ideas about what they're trying to overcome as they attempt to achieve their goals.

Individual Tests in Montage Tests

The difficulty of each individual test in a montage test is set by the Director and can vary from test to test. For instance, if the heroes are preparing the defenses of a village threatened by a band of approaching raiders, the Director might decide that a character who wants to dig a trench around the village needs to make an easy Might test. Another hero wants to train the untested farmers of the village in the ways of war, and the Director decides this is a hard Reason test.

The same rules and guidelines that apply to all individual tests apply in montage tests. If a hero has a clever, out-of-the-box idea that the Director thinks should automatically succeed without rolling dice, it does. If the circumstances of the test should grant an edge or a bane, they do. Individual test outcomes shouldn't halt the story.

The Director should couch each success or failure as it relates to the overall goal of the montage test. If the heroes are trying to reach an ancient temple, failing a Might test to ford a river in their path doesn't mean they don't cross the river and are stuck on the other side. But it could mean that failing to cross the river in a timely manner gives a rival group of villains the chance to beat the party to the temple.

The rewards and consequences of individual tests made during a montage test are handled on an individual basis. The Director can use

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the default of gaining additional Malice in the next combat encounter for consequences and having the party gain hero tokens for rewards to keep the montage moving.

Can't Use the Same Skill Twice

An individual character can't use the same skill more than once in a montage test. Though multiple heroes can use the same skill, a test or an assist with a specific skill represents each characters' entire contribution to the montage test with that skill. At the Director's discretion, this restriction can be lifted for prolonged montage tests, or for montage tests that are limited in scope and have only a small number of skills that apply to them.

New Challenges for Each Test

In general, when a hero makes a test as part of a montage test, they should choose new obstacles to overcome that haven't already been overcome as part of the test. If the heroes are chasing a thief through the marketplace and one of them has already distracted the pack of stray dogs with a deft hand and a piece of meat, additional tests made to distract the animals don't count toward the outcome of the montage test.

When it fits the scenario, the Director can adjust this restriction. If part of a montage test involves searching for people trapped in a burning building, the Director is likely to allow multiple tests to fight or avoid the fire, since this will happen throughout the montage test, not just once.

Introducing More Challenges

During a montage test, a Director can introduce new challenges for the heroes to face. While attempting to run out of a burning building from the top floor, the characters might discover that by the time they reach the second floor, beams are starting to fall and glass windows are exploding as the structure starts to collapse. These new challenges can be incorporated into the tests the heroes subsequently make.

Total Successes and Failures

The Director or another player will track the total number of successes and failures the heroes earn during a montage test. Every montage test has a success limit and a failure limit. When the number of successful tests equals the success limit, the montage test ends and the heroes achieve total success (see Montage Test Outcomes below). The montage test can also end when the number of failed tests equals the failure limit, and the heroes suffer total failure.

Limited Rounds

A montage test should last only 2 montage test rounds. If the heroes don't end the montage test by achieving the success limit or failure limit, the montage test ends when the second montage test round is over. This time limit helps to keep a montage test from becoming a slog, and prevents heroes from simply using their turns to assist the one hero with the best chance of success. This can inspire each hero to be a more active participant in the montage test. That said, the Director can increase the number of rounds a montage test lasts if they wish to create a particularly grueling challenge.

Montage Test Difficulty

The Director determines the success limit and failure limit of a montage test. They can share this information or keep it secret, depending on what feels the most fun and dramatic for the situation and the players.

In general, the higher the success limit, the harder and more complicated it is for the heroes to overcome the montage test, since a hero can't make the same test twice. The Montage Test Difficulty table gives a recommended success limit and failure limit for easy, moderate, and hard montage tests for groups with five heroes.

Montage Test Difficulty

Difficulty	Success Limit	Failure Limit
Easy	5	5
Moderate	6	4
Hard	7	3

For larger or smaller groups, the Director can make the following adjustments to keep montage tests achievable but challenging:

- For four or fewer heroes, decrease the success limit and failure limits by 1 (to a minimum of 2) for every hero fewer than five. For example, if a group has only three heroes, an easy montage test has a success limit and failure limit of 3.
- For six or more heroes, increase the success and failure limits by 1 for every hero more than five.

Montage Test Outcomes

A montage test can have three different outcomes:

- If the heroes hit the success limit before hitting the failure limit or before the time runs out for the test, they achieve total success.
- If the heroes hit the failure limit or time runs out, and if they've achieved at least two more successes than failures, they achieve a partial success.
- If the heroes hit the failure limit or time runs out, and if they don't have at least two more successes than failures, they suffer total failure.

Total Success

If the heroes earn a total success, they achieve what they set out to do without complication. For instance, if the heroes engaged in a montage test to cross a desert and reach a city before a tyrant's army arrives there and levels the place, a total success sees them arrive at the city gates with plenty of time to warn people of the impending assault.

The heroes earn 1 Victory when they achieve total success on an easy or moderate montage test, and 2 Victories on a hard montage test.

Partial Success

If the heroes earn a partial success, they succeed at what they set out to do, but there is a complication or a cost involved. For instance, when crossing the desert to reach and warn the city of the tyrant's army, a mixed success sees the characters arrive at the city gates with the enemy forces just behind them. Alternatively, the Director might allow the heroes to arrive well before the army, but they don't cover their movements well enough. The tyrant realizes the city has been warned and decides to call in a favor to have a powerful dragon join the siege.

The heroes earn 1 Victory when they achieve partial success on a hard or moderate montage test.

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Total Failure

If the heroes suffer total failure, they don't achieve what they set out to do. Just as with standard tests, failure on a group test shouldn't bring a story to a halt. Total failure should make things more interesting and challenging! With a total failure in a montage test to cross the desert and warn the city, the characters arrive at the city to find it already under siege by the tyrant.

Sample Montage Test

Four heroes must cross the vast and inhospitable Infinite Desert to warn the city of Ahset that the tyrannical Empress Vardo is coming to conquer them. If the characters arrive in time, they can organize the defenses of the city, giving its people a greater chance of defeating the tyrant.

The Director determines that crossing the desert is a montage test of hard difficulty. With four heroes involved, the success limit is 6 and the failure limit is 2 as the montage test begins.

Montage Test Round 1

When the test begins, the Director sets the scene. They tell the players that the desert has extreme temperatures, sudden sandstorms, high dunes to cross, deep sand, chasms, and quicksand lakes. The Director decides that the challenges of dunes, deep sand, and quicksand can be tackled multiple times in the test, since the Infinite Desert is filled with these hazards.

Urdoncara, a fury, starts things off by asking to make an Intuition test using the Nature skill to predict the best times of day to travel and rest. She wants the party to avoid the worst of the desert's extreme temperatures and any sandstorms or other weather phenomena, so that the journey is quickened. The Director decides this is an easy test. Urdoncara makes the test and gets a total of 12, earning 1 success for the montage test.

Jorn, a tactician, wants to make a Reason test using the Climb skill to lead the party over dunes and other hazards with minimal effort. The Director allows the attempt, but says that knowing what makes one dune easier to climb than another is tricky, setting the difficulty at hard. Jorn gets a 9 on the test and fails with a consequence, which the Director decides will cause him to take a bane on his next power roll due to the exertion. The montage test has 1 success and 1 failure.

Karrel, an elementalist, thinks the group might cross the desert faster if they have specially modified sandshoes that distribute their weight and prevent their feet from sinking into the sand. The Director loves the idea, and decides that making four pairs of the shoes while traveling the desert is a medium Reason test. Karrel gets to use their Tailoring skill and winds up with a total of 13—a success with a consequence. The Director decides to gain an additional 2 Malice at the start of the next combat encounter as a consequence, but the group now has 2 successes and 1 failure on the montage test.

Val, a conduit, offers to scout ahead for the group with an Intuition test, using the Navigate skill to find the best path forward and avoid hazards such as chasms and quicksand. The Director thinks that acting as lookout in a vast desert is an easy task. Val smashes it with a 21—a success with a reward—and the Director decides to get creative. Val's lookout skills grant the next hero to act in the montage test an edge on their test. At the end of the first montage test round, the heroes have 3 successes and 1 failure.

Interlude

Before the next montage test round, the Director pauses the montage test to run a battle with a kingfissure worm, who attacks the heroes as they cross over an ancient ruin partially buried in the sand. After the heroes defeat the kingfissure worm, the test continues.

Montage Test Round 2

Urdoncara wants to make a Might test using the Lift skill to carry most of the group's equipment as they cross the desert, allowing her allies to move more quickly while she keeps up with her superior fortitude. The Director thinks this arduous task has a hard difficulty. Urdoncara gets a 17 on the test thanks to the edge from Val's earlier success. The montage test has 4 successes and 1 failure.

Jorn, eager to prove himself after his last failure, asks to make a Might test using the Lead skill, representing tying a rope around his waist to drag his weaker friends over the tallest dunes. The Director likes the idea but doesn't think the Lead skill applies to the task. They tell Jorn that Lift is more appropriate, since the tactician is using his physical skill to aid his friends and not really doing anything interpersonal. Jorn agrees, and the Director sets the test at medium difficulty. Making the test with a bane because of his previous failure, the tactician rolls a 15, which is a success with a consequence. The montage test has 5 successes and 1 failure, but the consequence gives the Director another 2 Malice at the start of the next combat encounter.

Since the group needs only one more success to achieve total success, Karrel says she'd like to assist Val in whatever task she decides to take on. Val wants to recall lore about the Khem-hor—the inhabitants of the Infinite Desert—to remember their time-honored travel techniques using the History skill. Karrel has the Culture skill, which she can use to assist by providing information about the lives and society of the Khem-hor. She makes a Reason test to assist and gets a 16, granting Val an edge on her upcoming test.

Val attempts to recall lore about the Khem-hor, wanting to know if she can remember any of their travel from her studies of the history of the region. The Director has her make a hard Reason test with an edge, thanks to Karrel's input on the current state of Khem-hor culture. Val gets a 17, and the Director decides that the conduit recalls a shortcut through a canyon tunnel that leads directly to Ahset, avoiding a vast lake of quicksand. The heroes get their sixth success in the montage test, achieving total success, and earn 2 Victories.

Other Options

The heroes could have attempted other tests during their travels, such as an Agility test using the Sneak skill to lead the group through dangerous shortcuts in the desert without being seen or waylaid by predators, a Reason test using the Nature skill to find enough food and water to keep the group hydrated and fed, or a Presence test using the Music skill to inspire allies to travel faster with song.

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Chapter 10

COMBAT

When the heroes face a problem that can be solved only with action, or when they come up against creatures who want to harm them, it's time to throw down!

Set the Map

When combat begins, the Director should position miniatures or tokens on a gridded map to represent the environment, the heroes, their foes, and any other creatures in the battle.

How Big is a Square?

t's helpful to know how big a square is for abilities and features that heroes and NPCs can use outside of combat. By default, a square is 5 feet on all sides. But the Director can change this measurement to 2 yards, 2 meters, 1 meter, or any other measurement you prefer, as long as that scale stays consistent throughout your game.

Size and Space

A creature's size indicates how many squares they occupy during combat, which defines the creature's space. If a creature's size is 1, they occupy a space of 1 square. If a creature is larger than 1 square, their size equals the number of squares they take up in length, width, and height. For example, a horse has a size of 2, which means that during combat, they occupy a space that is 2 squares long, 2 squares wide, and 2 squares high. You could also think of that space as a cube that is 2 squares on all sides.

The minimum amount of space a creature can take up during combat is 1 square, but size 1 creatures can run the range from tiny pixies to small polders, medium humans, and large hakaan. As such, for creatures of size 1, that size is further broken down as 1T, 1S, 1M, or 1L—abbreviations for tiny, small, medium, and large. Size 1T is one size smaller than size 1S, two sizes smaller than 1M, three sizes smaller than 1L, and four sizes smaller than size 2. If a mechanic mentions size 1 creatures, that mechanic applies to all creatures of size 1.

Objects also have a size rating, which usually indicates how many squares they occupy. Some objects are identified as having an irregular size, with that size instead representing the object's mass and weight relative to a creature of the same size. If a mechanic mentions objects of a certain size, that mechanic includes all objects of that size, including irregular objects.

The Creature Sizes table shows example sizes for creatures up to size 5, but larger sizes are possible. There is no limit to what a creature's size might be.

Creature Sizes

Size	Example Creature
1T	Pixie
1S	Polder
1M	Human
1L	Hakaan
2	Ogre
3	Shambling mound
4	Hill giant
5	Omen dragon

Sides

Every combat encounter is a conflict between two sides. The heroes and any of their allies are one side, controlled by the players. Any creatures who oppose the heroes are the other side, controlled by the Director. All creatures who oppose the heroes are on the same side, even if those creatures also oppose each other. For example, if the heroes are battling a group of bandits when a kingfissure worm suddenly bursts into the fray to devour player characters and brigands alike, the worm is still on the side of the bandits for the purpose of the game's combat rules.

NPC Allies

If an NPC ally fights alongside the heroes, the Director should give the players the ally's stat block and let them control the NPC during combat. The Director has enough to worry about. As well, any missteps, mistakes, or triumphs the ally makes will be thanks to the decisions of the players and not the Director, which can make the outcome of the battle more satisfying for the players.

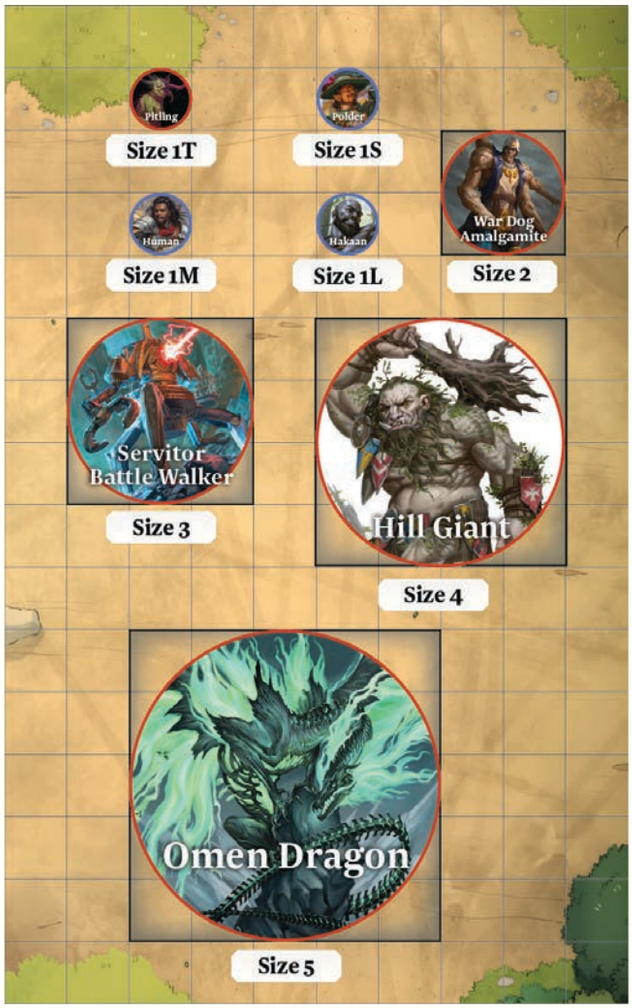
Combat Round

Combat takes place over a series of combat rounds. During a combat round, each creature in the battle takes a turn. Once every creature has taken a turn, a new round begins.

When Does Combat Start?

Combat starts as soon as one creature intends to harm another, or when some environmental effect is in a position to deal damage to or impose other negative effects on one or more creatures. This means that even before the action happens, a hero can't use a heroic ability without spending their Heroic Resource on it, because combat has already begun!

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Determine Surprise

When battle starts, the Director determines which creatures, if any, are caught off guard. Any creature who isn't ready for combat at the start of an encounter is surprised until the end of the first combat round. A surprised creature can't take triggered actions or free triggered actions, and ability rolls made against them gain an edge.

For example, if the heroes sneak up unnoticed on a camp of marauders and attack, each marauder is surprised. Likewise, if the heroes fail to notice that all the cloaked figures in a tavern are actually brain-devouring zombies, then the heroes are surprised. If one of the heroes notices the disguised undead before the zombies attack but has no opportunity to warn their allies, that hero isn't surprised but the rest of the characters are.

Determine Who Goes First

Sometimes figuring out who gets to take the first turn in combat is automatic. If all the creatures on one side are surprised, then a creature on the other side gets to act first. But if both sides have creatures who aren't surprised, the Director or a player they choose rolls a d10. On a 6 or higher, the players determine who goes first—the heroes' side or the other side. Otherwise, the Director decides which side goes first.

Creatures Take Turns

Whichever side goes first chooses a creature (or sometimes a group of creatures on the Director's side) to act at the start of combat. Whenever the rules talk about a creature acting in combat, that creature gets to take their turn. When that turn is over, the other side chooses a creature to act. Play continues back and forth this way as each creature takes their turn.

Unless an ability or special rule allows them to do so, any creature who has taken a turn during a combat round can't act again until a new round begins. To help track which creatures have already acted in the current round, each creature can have a coin, token, or card they flip over on the table, or some kind of flag they set on their virtual tabletop token, once they've taken a turn. That way, all the players know who has already acted and who hasn't.

In many encounters, a point comes when one side has creatures who haven't acted yet but all the creatures on the other side have. The creatures who have yet to act get to take their turns in any order they choose, without turns in between from the other side. For example, consider four heroes taking on six enemies. When all four heroes have taken their turns and four of the enemies have taken theirs, the two enemies who are left take their turns one after the other to end the round.

Determining Who Acts Next

When it comes to the heroes' side, the choice of who should act next is intended to give players the opportunity to comment, strategize, and plan. Some tables, in some encounters, might find that the choice of who should act next isn't obvious, leading to debate. That's fine. Deliberating about what the group should do next is classic roleplaying.

In general, though, most groups find that it's usually only one or two players in a given round who think it best if they act next. And as soon as those players explain why they want to act next and what they plan on doing, the issue is quickly resolved.

Argument Timer

If the players do end up arguing in circles about what to do next, the Director can place a timer on the discussion. Usually, giving the players a warning and 30 seconds to decide who goes next does the trick. If they can't choose by the end of that time, the Director chooses a hero to act.

Alternative Turn Order

If planning everyone's turn order isn't fun for your group, you can leave it to the dice instead. At the start of combat, have each hero, enemy, and group of enemies make an Agility test, then record the totals. When it's time for someone on the heroes' side to act, the hero with the highest total goes first. On the next hero turn, the hero with the second-highest total takes their turn, and so on. The Director-controlled creatures act the same way. Creatures on the same side should reroll tied Agility tests to determine who among the tied creatures acts before the others.

At the Director's discretion, a hero can swap their turn in the initiative order with another willing hero at the start of a new combat round. This allows certain abilities that interact with the core initiative system, such as the shadow's Hesitation Is Weakness ability, to better work with this alternative system.

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Enemies Act In Groups

Director-controlled creatures act in groups, with information for building groups found in *Draw Steel: Monsters*. When a group of enemies acts, the Director chooses a single creature or minion squad to take a turn. Once that turn is over, the Director chooses another creature in that group to take a turn, continuing until all members of the group have taken their turn.

End of Round

Once all creatures on both sides of a battle have acted, the combat round ends and a new combat round begins. The side whose members acted first during the during the initial combat round goes first in all subsequent rounds.

Taking a Turn

Each creature in combat—whether hero, adversary, or something in between—gets to take a **main action**, a **maneuver**, and a **move action** on their turn (explained later in this chapter). Each combatant can perform their maneuver and main action in any order, and can break up the movement granted by their move action before, after, or between their maneuver and main action however they like. You can also turn your main action into a move action or a maneuver, so that your turn can alternatively consist of two move actions and a maneuver, or two maneuvers and a move action.

The Movement section below breaks down how your move action works, while the Maneuvers and Main Actions sections break down the baseline maneuvers and main actions your character can undertake. For any activities not specifically covered in those rules, such as cutting down a chandelier to drop on enemies, the Director decides whether such an activity is a maneuver or an action.

Triggered Actions and Free Triggered Actions

Your hero might have one or more unique triggered actions, each of which has a specified trigger that allows the action to be used. You can use one triggered action per round, either on your turn or another creature's turn, but only when the action's trigger occurs. For instance, a fury hero can use the Lines of Force triggered action to force move a target, but only after an enemy has first tried to force move the fury or another nearby creature.

A free triggered action follows the same rules as a triggered action, but it doesn't count against your limit of one triggered action per round. For instance, a shadow hero can use their Hesitation Is Weakness ability to take their turn in response to the trigger of another hero ending their turn. But because that ability is a free triggered action, the shadow can still use their In All This Confusion triggered action later in the round.

If multiple triggered actions occur in response to the same trigger, any heroes and other player-controlled creatures taking a triggered action or a free triggered action decide among themselves which of those triggered actions are resolved first. Then the Director decides the same for creatures they control.

Any effect that prevents you from using triggered actions also prevents you from using free triggered actions.

Free Maneuvers

Boring stuff like opening an unlocked door, picking up an arrow from the ground, giving an object to an adjacent ally, or drawing a weapon doesn't require a maneuver or a main action. Rather, you can undertake such straightforward activities as free maneuvers on your turn. A free maneuver follows the same rules as a regular maneuver, but you can typically take as many free maneuvers as you like.

At the Director's discretion, circumstances could make something that is typically boring more impactful and exciting. For instance, if you need to pick a magic arrow up off the ground during a violent earthquake, what would otherwise be a free maneuver could require a maneuver or a main action to accomplish.

Likewise, the nature of an activity might make it too complicated for a free maneuver. For example, picking up the body of an unconscious talent ally to carry them to safety can probably be done as a free maneuver. But if your Might is lacking and you need to pick up a tactician ally decked out in the Shining Armor kit, the Director might determine that you need to use a regular maneuver to hoist their armored form over your shoulders.

Any effect that prevents you from using maneuvers also prevents you from using free maneuvers.

No-Action Activities

Free maneuvers cover most of the simple activities you might want to undertake on your turn. When it isn't your turn, you can typically undertake even simpler activities requiring no action with the Director's approval. For instance, shouting out a warning to an ally or dropping an item so another creature can pick it up require no action.

The Director can limit what kinds of no-action activities you can attempt when it isn't your turn. For instance, shouting out a warning about an unseen foe to an ally on the ally's or the foe's turn requires no action. But the Director might stop you from giving that ally complex tactical advice when it isn't your turn, saying that doing so instead requires a free maneuver on your turn.

Movement

During combat, creatures can employ multiple mechanics that allow them to move around the battlefield. The most common of those mechanics is the Advance or Disengage move action (detailed under Move Actions below), but abilities granted by your class, equipment, ancestry, title, or other options might allow you other ways to move.

Your hero starts with a speed granted by their ancestry—usually 5. This represents the maximum number of squares you can move when you take the move action or when another effect allows you to move. Your speed can be increased by your kit and other game options.

All squares adjacent to your character cost 1 movement to move into. No, there's no Pythagorean theorem on the grid. It's a game, don't overthink it.

Your hero can move freely through an ally's space. You can move through an enemy's space, but that space is difficult terrain (see below). You can't stop moving in any other creature's space, including to make a strike or use a main action or maneuver while in that space and then continuing your move, unless that creature's size is two or more sizes greater or smaller than your own.

At the Director's discretion, you can be forced into the same space as another creature whose size is within 1 of yours, such as by falling down a narrow shaft with such a creature already at the bottom. When you are squeezed into the same space as another creature whose size is within 1 of yours, your ability rolls and tests take a bane.

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Can't Exceed Speed

A single move or other effect can never allow a creature to move more squares than their speed, unless the effect states otherwise. For example, a creature with speed 5 might have that speed reduced to 2 by the slowed condition (see Conditions in Chapter 5: Classes). If an ally then targets them with an effect that allows them to move up to 3 squares, the creature can move only 2 squares because that's their current speed.

Can't Cut Corners

A creature can't move diagonally when doing so would involve passing through the corner of a wall or some other object that completely fills the corner between the creature's space and the space they are moving to. This rule applies only to moving past objects, not moving past other creatures.



Cut Corners

The tacitian moves 3 squares to exit the building without cutting corners. The war dog eviscerite can't move around the side of the build in just 2 squares of movement, since they'd have to cut a corner to do so.

Shifting

Shifting is a careful form of movement that allows a creature to move safely past dangerous foes. Certain abilities, features, and other rules allow you to shift a specific number of squares, sometimes up to your speed. Whenever you shift, creatures can't make opportunity attacks against you triggered by that movement (see Opportunity Attcks later in this chapter).

You can't shift into or while within difficult terrain or damaging terrain (see below). If a rule allows you to shift, you can choose to instead move up to the number of squares you would have shifted (for example, to get out of difficult terrain). However, you can't combine moving and shifting within that movement.

Movement Types

Creatures in the game can use eight types of movement: walk, burrow, climb, swim, jump, crawl, fly, and teleport.

Walk

Walking is the most common movement type, whether it refers to ambulating on legs, rolling, slithering, or some other default method of movement. Unless specified otherwise, all creatures can move over solid horizontal ground without any problem.

Burrow

A creature who has "burrow" in their speed entry, or who gains the temporary ability to burrow, can move through dirt horizontally, and either has the means to breathe while doing so or doesn't require air to live. Such creatures can't move through more solid ground, such as stone, unless their stat block or the effect that lets them burrow says otherwise. Similarly, a burrowing creature doesn't leave a tunnel unless the rules say so.

Dig Maneuver

It takes extra effort to dig vertically through the ground as opposed to tunneling horizontally, requiring a creature to use a special maneuver. To use the Dig maneuver, a creature must have "burrow" in their speed entry, they must have a speed that is equal to or greater than their size, and they must be touching terrain that can be burrowed through.

When a creature uses the Dig maneuver, they can move vertically up to a number of squares equal to their size. If a burrowing creature has a creature who is not unconscious grabbed, they can't willingly move deeper into the ground. It's too difficult to dig with a flailing enemy in your claws.

Targeting Burrowing Creatures

If you are on the ground, you have line of effect to a burrowing creature if that creature occupies 1 or more squares of terrain that can be burrowed through and that touch the ground, and if you have line of effect to any of those squares. The burrowing creature gains the benefit of cover from you.

If you are completely beneath the ground while burrowing, you don't have line of effect to any creature on the surface unless a rule states otherwise.

If you are completely beneath the ground while burrowing and are adjacent to another creature who is burrowing, you have line of effect to that creature, though you both have cover from each other.

You can't gain the benefit of high ground (see below) against creatures who are completely beneath the ground while burrowing.

Non-Burrowing Creatures

If you are on the ground and adjacent to a creature who is beneath the ground while burrowing, you can use a maneuver to pull that creature up 1 square out of the ground, provided the creature is willing.

If a creature who can't burrow wants to dig into the ground, they can use the following ability provided their speed is 2 or more.

Claw Dirt

—

Self

Maneuver

Self

Power Roll + Might:

- ≤11 You can move 1 square into, out of, or through ground you are touching that can be burrowed through, and you are slowed and weakened (EoT).
- 12-16 You can use your main action this turn to move 1 square into, out of, or through ground you are touching that can be burrowed through, and you are slowed (EoT).
- 17+ You can move up to 1 square into, out of, or through ground you are touching that can be burrowed through.

Burrowing Forced Movement

While a creature who is completely beneath the ground while burrowing is force moved by movement that isn't vertical, they aren't

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moved, and they take 1 damage for each square they would have been force moved. If the forced movement is vertical, the creature is moved through the dirt as is if were air.

Climb or Swim

A creature who has "climb" in their speed entry, or who gains the temporary ability to automatically climb, can climb across vertical and horizontal surfaces at full speed. Likewise, a creature who has "swim" in their speed entry, or who gains the temporary ability to automatically swim, can swim in liquid at full speed.

Creatures without those types of movement can still climb or swim when a rule allows them to move, but each square of climbing or swimming costs 2 squares of movement. If a surface is difficult to climb (for instance, a sheer cliff or ice-covered wall) or a liquid is hard to swim through (a raging river or whirlpool), the Director can call for a Might test. On a failure, a creature can't climb or swim but wastes no movement in the attempt. The Director can also impose other consequences to failure, such as being caught in the spinning current of a whirlpool.

Climbing Other Creatures

You can attempt to climb a creature whose size is greater than yours. If the creature is willing, you can climb them without any trouble. If the creature is unwilling, you make the following test:

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- ≤11 You fail to climb the creature, and they can make a free strike against you.
- 12–16 You fail to climb the creature.
- 17+ You climb the creature.

While you climb or ride a creature, you gain an edge on melee abilities used against them. The creature can use a maneuver to attempt to knock you off, forcing you to make the following test:

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- ≤11 You fall off the creature into an unoccupied adjacent space of your choice, taking falling damage and landing prone as usual (see Falling below).
- 12–16 You slide down the creature into an unoccupied adjacent space of your choice and don't land prone.
- 17+ You continue to hold on to the creature.

If you are knocked prone while climbing or riding a creature, you fall and land prone in an adjacent space of your choice, taking damage as usual from the fall.

Jump

Whenever an effect allows you to move (including using the Advance move action), you can automatically long jump a number of squares up to your Might or Agility score (your choice; minimum 1 square) as part of that movement. The height of your jump is automatically 1 square as part of that movement.

If you want to jump even longer or higher than your baseline jump allows, make a Might or Agility test:

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

- ≤11 You don't jump any farther than your baseline jump allows.
- 12–16 You jump 1 square longer and higher than your baseline jump allows.
- 17+ You jump 2 squares longer and higher than your baseline jump allows.

You can't jump farther or higher than the distance of the effect that allows you to move. You can't jump out of difficult terrain or damaging terrain (see below).

Crawl

If you are prone (see Conditions in Chapter 5: Classes), you can remain prone and crawl on the ground. Doing so costs you 1 additional square of movement for every square you crawl. If you intentionally want to crawl, you can fall prone as a free maneuver. While voluntarily prone, you can choose to stand as a free maneuver.

Fly

A creature who has "fly" in their speed entry, or who gains the temporary ability to fly, can move through the air vertically or horizontally at full speed and remain in midair. If a flying creature is knocked prone or has their speed reduced to 0, they fall (see Falling below).

Hover

A creature who has "hover" in their speed entry (most commonly alongside "fly" or "teleport"), or who gains the temporary ability to hover, can remain motionless in midair. They don't fall even if they are knocked prone or their speed is reduced to 0.

Teleport

When a creature teleports, they move from one space to another space instantaneously. The following rules apply to teleporting:

- Teleporting doesn't provoke opportunity attacks or other effects that are triggered by a creature moving.
- When a creature teleports, they bypass any obstacles between the space they leave and their destination space.
- A creature teleporting themself must have line of effect to their destination space. A creature teleporting another creature must have line of effect from the space the teleported creature leaves and to their destination space.
- A teleporting creature's destination space can't be occupied by another creature or object.
- The effect that lets a creature teleport indicates how far they can teleport. That distance can be greater than the creature's speed.
- If a creature can teleport as part of their usual movement, they can use the Advance move action to teleport a number of squares up to their usual speed, unmodified by conditions or effects.
- If a creature teleports while prone, they can be standing when they reach their destination space provided they are able to stand. If a prone creature is teleported by another creature, it is up to that creature whether the teleported creature remains prone or stands if they are able.
- If you teleport while affected by the grabbed or restrained conditions, those conditions end for you.
- When a creature teleports, they must leave the space where they start and enter a new space. A creature can't teleport to and from the same space.

Falling

When a creature falls 2 or more squares and lands on the ground, they take 2 damage for each square they fall (to a maximum of 50 damage) and land prone. A creature who falls can reduce the effective height of the fall by a number of squares equal to their Agility score (to a minimum of 0). Falling into liquid that is 1 square or more deep reduces the effective height of a fall by 4 squares (to a minimum of 0).

Falling is not forced movement, but being force moved downward is considered falling (see Forced Movement below). Movement from falling doesn't provoke opportunity attacks (see Opportunity Attacks below).

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Falling Onto Another Creature

A creature who falls and lands on another creature causes that creature to take the same damage from the fall. The falling creature then lands prone in the nearest unoccupied space of their choice. If the falling creature's size is greater than the Might score of the creature they land on, that creature is knocked prone.

Falling Far

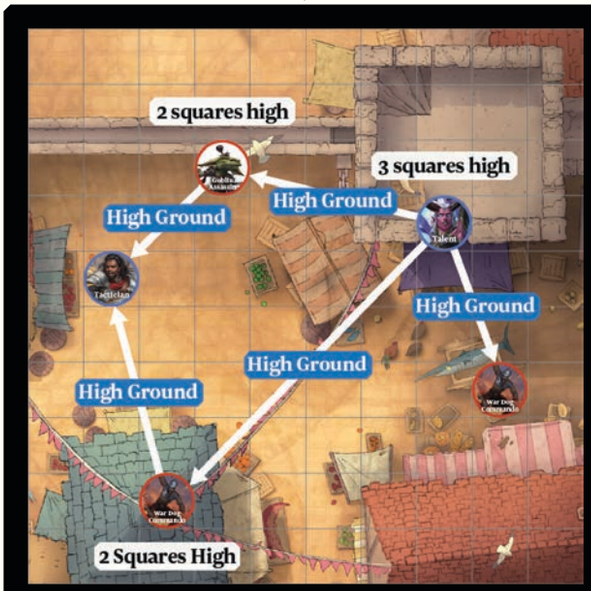
When a creature first falls from a great height, they fall 100 squares in the first round. At the end of each subsequent round that they remain falling, they fall another 100 squares.

Difficult Terrain

Areas of thick underbrush, rubble, spiderwebs, or other obstacles to movement create difficult terrain. It costs 1 additional square of movement to enter a square of difficult terrain.

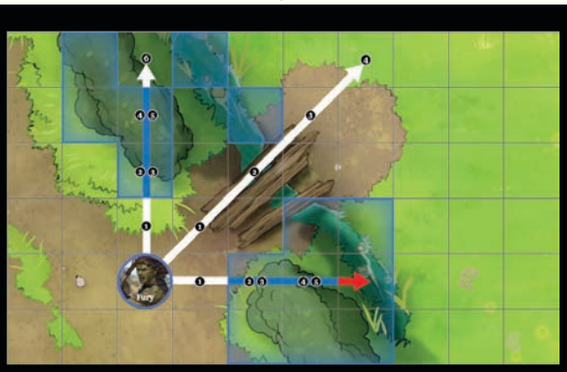
Damaging Terrain

Areas of acid, fire, sharp rocks, lava, or any other terrain that causes damage to creatures within it is damaging terrain. The damage dealt by damaging terrain is noted in the terrain's description or in the description of the effect that creates the terrain.



High Ground

The talent stands atop a 3-square-high tower, which is higher than any other creature. They gain an edge on all power rolls made against their enemies in the diagram. The goblin assassin and war dog commando stand on structures that are 2 squares high. They gain an edge on ability rolls against the tactician, who is standing on the ground, but not against the talent.



Difficult Terrain

A fury with speed 6 takes the Advance move action across a field with water and bushes that create difficult terrain (indicated by the blue squares on the map). Each highlighted path indicates how many squares of movement they must use while moving through or avoiding difficulty terrain. Their movement can't exceed 6 squares.

High Ground

Whenever a creature uses an ability to target a creature or object while standing on the ground and occupying a space that is fully above the target's space, they gain an edge on the power roll against that target. To be fully above a target, the bottom of a creature's space must be higher than or bordering on the top of the target's space.

A creature can gain this benefit while climbing only if they have "climb" in their speed entry or can automatically climb at full speed while moving.

Forced Movement

Some actions and maneuvers allow a creature to push, pull, or slide a target creature or object a specific distance across the battlefield. Collectively, these types of movement are called forced movement.

Push X: The creature moves the target up to X squares away from them in a straight line, without moving them vertically. Each square the creature moves the target must put the target farther away from them.

Pull X: The creature moves the target up to X squares toward them in a straight line, without moving them vertically. Each square the creature moves the target must bring the target closer to them.

Slide X: The creature moves the target up to X squares in any direction, except for vertically. Unlike a push or a pull, a slide doesn't need to be a straight line.

When you force move a target, you can always move that target fewer squares than the number indicated. For example, when the conduit obtains a tier 3 "push 3" outcome with their Call the Thunder Down ability, they can push targets any distance up to 3 squares, including choosing to not move certain targets at all.

Forced movement ignores difficult terrain and never provokes opportunity attacks. When you force move a target into damaging

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terrain or into terrain that produces an effect, they are affected as if they had moved into it willingly.

Vertical

If a forced movement effect has the word "vertical" in front of it, then the forced movement can move a target up or down in addition to horizontally. For example, if a forced movement effect says "vertical push 5," then a creature targeted by the effect can be pushed up to 5 squares in any direction, as long as the forced movement is a straight line.

If a creature who can't fly is left in midair at the end of a vertical forced move, they fall. Forced movement made against a creature who is flying is always a vertical forced move, whether or not the effect specifies it.

Though you can't freely push, pull, or slide a target up and down unless that forced movement specifies "vertical," you can move them along a physical slope such as a hill or staircase. For a target to be force moved along a slope, each square of the slope can be no more than 1 square higher or lower than the previous square.

Big Versus Little

When a larger creature force moves a smaller target with a melee weapon ability, the distance of the forced movement is increased by 1. If a smaller creature force moves a larger target with a melee weapon ability, the distance doesn't change.

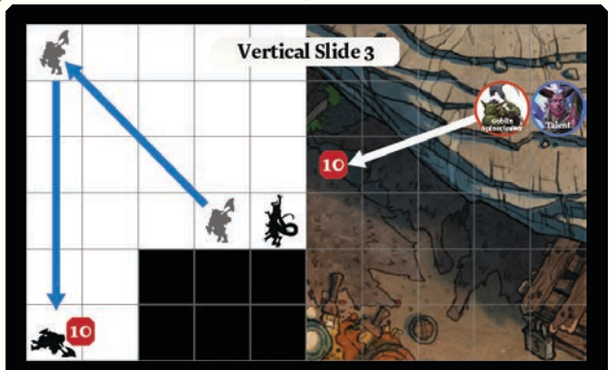
Slamming into Creatures

When you force move a creature into another creature, the movement ends and both creatures take 1 damage for each square remaining in the first creature's forced movement. You can also force move an object into a creature. The object's movement ends, and the creature takes 1 damage for each square remaining in the object's forced movement.

It's possible to move a creature or object of a larger size into several creatures of a smaller size at the same time. When this happens, the larger creature in the collision takes damage only once, not once for each smaller creature they slam into.

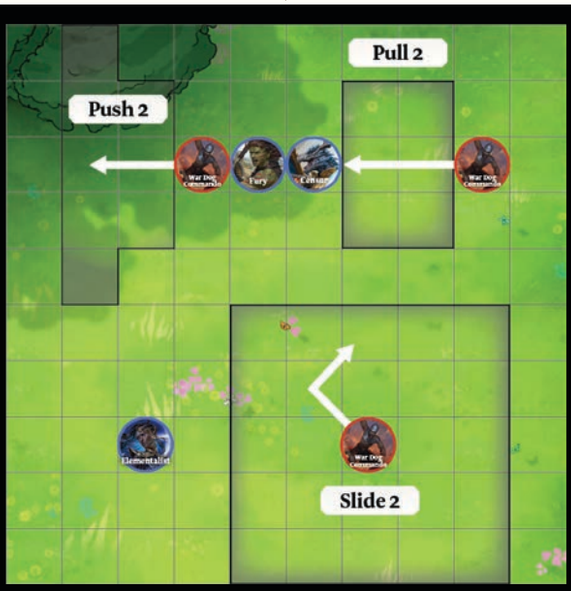
If a creature is killed by damage from an ability or effect that also force moves them, a second creature they are slammed into still takes damage unless the Director deems otherwise.

You can force move another creature into yourself with a pull or a slide.



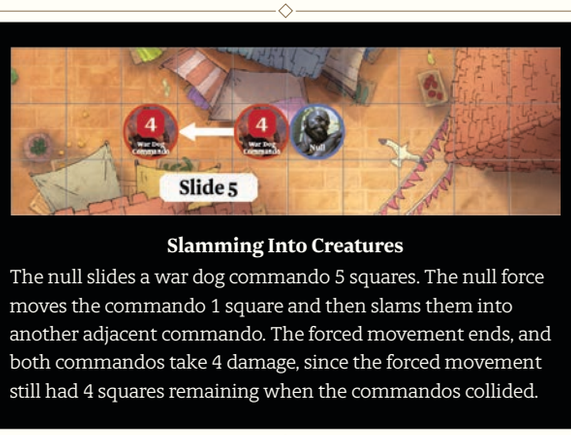
Vertical Forced Movement

The talent verically slides the goblin spinecleaver 3 squares up into the air and off of a cliff. The goblin falls 5 squares, taking 10 damage and landing prone from the fall.



Forced Movement

The fury pushes a war dog commando 2 squares. The censor pulls a commando 2 squares. The elementalist slides a commando 2 squares. Each commando can end up anywhere in the indicated area of their forced movement on the diagram.



Slamming Into Creatures

The null slides a war dog commando 5 squares. The null force moves the commando 1 square and then slams them into another adjacent commando. The forced movement ends, and both commandos take 4 damage, since the forced movement still had 4 squares remaining when the commandos collided.

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Slamming Into Objects

When a creature force moves a target into a stationary object that is the target's size or larger and the object doesn't break (see below), the movement ends and the target takes 2 damage plus 1 damage for each square remaining in their forced movement.

If you force move a creature downward into an object that doesn't break (including the ground), they also take falling damage.

Tracking Object Forced-Movement Damage

At the Director's discretion, mundane objects that are force moved into creatures or other objects take damage as if they were creatures. Sturdy objects can take damage as follows before they are destroyed:

- **Wood object:** 3 damage for each square it occupies
- **Stone object:** 6 damage for each square it occupies
- **Metal object:** 9 damage for each square it occupies

More fragile objects are destroyed after taking any damage.

Hurling Through Objects

When you move a creature into a mundane object, the object can break depending on how many squares of forced movement remain. The cost of being slammed into an object is tied to the damage a target takes for being hurled through it:

- It costs 1 remaining square of forced movement to destroy 1 square of glass. The creature moved takes 3 damage.
- It costs 3 remaining squares of forced movement to destroy 1 square of wood. The creature moved takes 5 damage.
- It costs 6 remaining squares of forced movement to destroy 1 square of stone. The creature moved takes 8 damage.
- It costs 9 remaining squares of forced movement to destroy 1 square of metal. The creature moved takes 11 damage.

If any forced movement remains after the object is destroyed, you can continue to move the creature who destroyed the object.



Hurling Through Objects

The null slides a war dog commando 5 squares. The null force moves the commando 1 square and then slams them into a thick wooden wall. The null forces the commando through the first square of the wall by using 3 squares of forced movement, resulting in the commando taking 5 damage. The commando still has 1 square of forced movement left, so they are pushed into the next square of the wall, which doesn't break but does result in the commando's forced moment ending and them taking another 3 damage: 1 for the square of forced movement leftover and 2 for colliding with an object.

Forced Into a Fall

If you can't fly and are force moved across an open space that would cause you to fall, such as being pushed over the edge of a cliff, you continue moving the total distance you were moved first. If you are still in a position to fall when your move ends, you fall.

Stability

Each creature has a stability that allows them to resist forced movement. When a creature is forced moved, they can reduce that movement up to a number of squares equal to their stability. Heroes start with stability 0 and can increase their stability through ancestry, class, and kit options.

A creature's stability can't be less than 0, even when reduced by a penalty.

"When a Creature Moves ..."

Certain abilities and effects trigger when a creature moves into a particular area. Forced movement triggers these options unless otherwise noted, including an effect stating that a creature must willingly move to trigger it.

Death Effects and Forced Movement

Some creatures have traits or abilities that trigger when they die or are reduced to 0 Stamina. If such a creature is reduced to 0 Stamina by damage from an ability or effect that also force moves them, the forced movement takes place before the triggered effect.

Move Actions

A move action allows a creature to move around the battlefield. Sometimes you'll already be exactly where you want to be so that you don't need to use a move action on your turn. That's okay! The decision to not move is just as tactical as the decision to move.

Advance

When a creature takes the Advance move action, they move a number of squares up to their speed. They can break up this movement with their maneuver and main action however they wish.

Disengage

When a creature takes the Disengage move action, they can shift 1 square. Certain class features, kits, and other rules allow a creature to shift more than 1 square when they disengage. A creature who does so can break up their shift with their maneuver and main action however they wish.

Ride

A creature can take the Ride move action only while mounted on another creature (see Mounted Combat below). When a creature takes the Ride move action, they cause their mount to move up to the mount's speed, taking the rider with them. Alternatively, a creature can use the Ride move action to have their mount use the Disengage move action as a free triggered action. A creature can use the Ride move action only once per round. A mounted creature can only have this move action applied to them once per round. This movement can be broken up with the rider's maneuver and main action however they wish.

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Maneuvers

A maneuver typically involves less focus and exertion than a main action (see below). It can be an opportunity to move other creatures, drink a potion, or undertake similar activities.

Sometimes you might not have anything you can do with your maneuver. That's totally fine! Often, the best thing to do on your turn is take a main action and move on.

Aid Attack

A creature who uses the Aid Attack maneuver chooses an enemy adjacent to them. The next ability roll an ally makes against that enemy before the start of the aiding creature's next turn gains an edge.

Catch Breath

A creature who uses the Catch Breath maneuver spends a Recovery and regains Stamina equal to their recovery value. (See below for Stamina. See Recoveries in Chapter 1: The Basics.)

A creature who is dying (see Dying and Death in Stamina below) can't use the Catch Breath maneuver, but other creatures can help them spend Recoveries in other ways.

Escape Grab

A creature who is grabbed by another creature, an object, or an effect (see Grab below) can attempt to escape by using the following ability.

Escape Grab

—
Self

Maneuver
Self

Power Roll + Might or Agility:

≤11 No effect.

12–16 You can escape the grab, but if you do, a creature who has you grabbed can make a melee free strike against you before you are no longer grabbed.

17+ You are no longer grabbed.

Effect: You take a bane on this maneuver if your size is smaller than the size of the creature, object, or effect that has you grabbed.

See Conditions in Chapter 5: Classes for information on the grabbed condition.

Grab

A creature seeking to keep a foe close and locked down can attempt to grab a creature using the following ability.

Grab

Melee, Weapon
Melee 1

Maneuver
One creature

Power Roll + Might:

≤11 No effect.

12–16 You can grab the target, but if you do, the target can make a melee free strike against you before they are grabbed.

17+ The target is grabbed by you.

Effect: You can usually target only creatures of your size or smaller. If your Might score is 2 or higher, you can target any creature with a size equal to or less than your Might score.

Unless otherwise indicated, a creature can grab only one creature at a time.

See Conditions in Chapter 5: Classes for information on the grabbed condition.

Hide

Using the Hide maneuver, a creature attempts to hide from other creatures who aren't observing them while they have cover or concealment. See Hide and Sneak in Chapter 9: Tests for full details.



Hiding

To become hidden, the shadow can't be observed by the war dog crucibite, so they must get out of the crucibite's line of effect. In this situation, the shadow could do this by moving to put a wall between them and the crucibite or moving up onto a roof.

Knockback

A creature wanting to push an adjacent creature away from them can attempt to shove that creature using the following ability.

Knockback

Melee, Weapon
Melee 1

Maneuver
1 creature

Power Roll + Might:

≤11 Push 1

12–16 Push 2

17+ Push 3

Effect: You can usually target only creatures of your size or smaller. If your Might score is 2 or higher, you can target any creature with a size equal to or less than your Might score.

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Make or Assist a Test

Many tests are maneuvers if made in combat. Searching a chest with a Reason test, picking a door's lock with an Agility test, or lifting a portcullis with a Might test would all be maneuvers. Assisting a test is also a maneuver in combat (see Assist a Test in Chapter 9: Tests).

Complex or time-consuming tests might require an action if made in combat—or could take so long that they can't be made during combat at all. Other tests that take no time at all, such as a Reason test to recall lore about mummies, are usually free maneuvers in combat. The Director has the final say regarding which tests can be made as maneuvers.

Search for Hidden Creatures

The Search for Hidden Creatures maneuver allows a creature to attempt to locate creatures hidden from them (see Hide and Sneak in Chapter 9: Tests).

Stand Up

A creature can use the Stand Up maneuver to stand up if they are prone, ending that condition. Alternatively, they can use this maneuver to make a willing adjacent prone creature stand up.

Use Consumable

Unless otherwise noted in its description, a creature can activate a consumable treasure such as a potion with the Use Consumable maneuver. A creature can use this maneuver to administer a consumable treasure that benefits the user either to themself or to a willing adjacent creature. See Consumables in Chapter 13: Rewards.

Main Actions

When you take a main action, you most often do so to use a unique ability granted by your class, kit, or a treasure (see Abilities in Chapter 5: Classes). These abilities represent the most unique, flavorful, and impactful things you can do with your main action.

You can also use your main action to catch your breath, help another creature regain Stamina, charge into battle, defend yourself, or make a free strike.

You can convert your main action into a maneuver or a move action, allowing you to take two maneuvers or move actions on your turn."

Charge

When a creature takes the Charge main action, they move up to their speed in a straight line, then make a melee free strike (see Free Strikes below) against a target when they end their move. If the creature has an ability with the Charge keyword, they can use that ability against the target instead of a free strike.

A creature can't move through difficult terrain or shift when they charge. They can fly or burrow as part of the Charge main action if they have that movement available to them, but they can't climb or swim while charging unless they can automatically use that movement at full speed.

Defend

When a creature takes the Defend main action, ability rolls made against them have a double bane until the start of their next turn. Additionally, you have a double edge on tests when called for to resist environmental effects or a creature's traits or abilities. A creature gains no benefit from this action while another creature is taunted by them (see Conditions in Chapter 5: Classes).

Free Strike

A creature can use this main action to make a free strike (see Free Strikes below). Most of the time, you'll want to use the more impactful main actions granted by your class, kit, or other feature, just as the Director will use the actions in a creature's stat block, but free strikes are available for when all else fails. For instance, a fury who has no other options for ranged strikes might use the Ranged Weapon Free Strike ability with an improvised weapon when battling a flying foe.

Heal

A creature who uses the Heal main action employs medicine or inspiring words to make an adjacent creature feel better and stay in the fight. The target creature can spend a Recovery to regain Stamina, or can make a saving throw against one effect they are suffering that is ended by a saving throw.

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Free Strikes

Every creature can use a free strike ability as a main action on their turn, though doing so typically isn't the most effective choice. Most of the time, you'll use free strikes when the rules call for it. Specific rules let you use free strikes as part of an action that allows you to also do something else impactful, such as how the Charge main action lets you move and use a melee free strike in one main action (see Charge above).

Many rules and abilities allow heroes to make free strikes when it isn't their turn, such as the tactician's Overwatch ability. As well, all characters can make an opportunity attack free strike.

Granted Abilities

Some abilities, such as the tactician's Strike Now or I'll Open and You'll Close abilities, allow another creature to use a signature ability or heroic ability when it isn't their turn. Unless otherwise stated, a creature can always use a free strike instead of a granted signature ability or heroic ability.

Opportunity Attacks

Whenever a creature has an enemy adjacent to them and the enemy willingly moves to a space that isn't adjacent to the creature without shifting, the creature can take advantage of that movement to quickly make a melee free strike against the enemy as a free triggered action. This is called an opportunity attack.

If a creature has a bane or double bane on the power roll against the enemy, they can't make an opportunity attack.

Standard Free Strikes

Every hero has two standard free strike abilities available to them. Your class might give you additional free strike options, and your kit can improve the standard options (see Chapter 6: Kits).

A melee weapon free strike is a melee strike made with an unarmed strike or an improvised weapon. A ranged weapon free strike is a ranged strike made with an improvised weapon. At the Director's discretion, the damage type of an improvised weapon can change based on the object used. For example, if you use a burning torch as an improvised weapon, it could deal fire damage when used for a free strike.

Melee Weapon Free Strike

Charge, Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature or object

Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11 2 + M or A damage
12–16 5 + M or A damage
17+ 7 + M or A damage

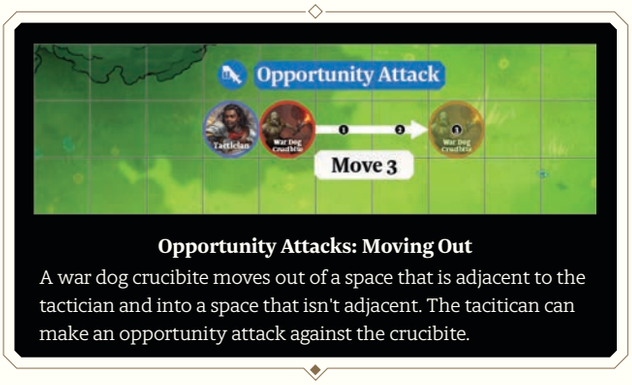
Ranged Weapon Free Strike

Ranged, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Ranged 5 — One creature or object

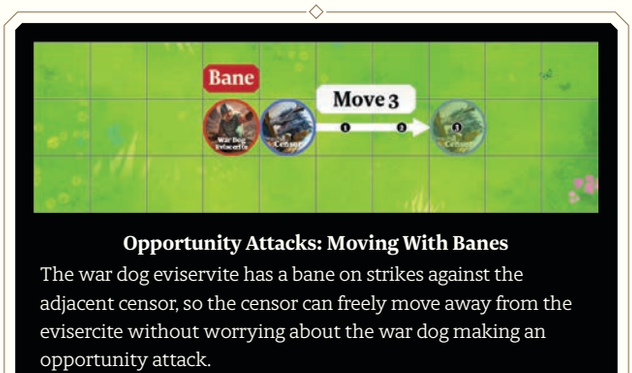
Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11 2 + M or A damage
12–16 4 + M or A damage
17+ 6 + M or A damage



Opportunity Attacks
The tactician can't make any opportunity attacks against these adjacent war dogs as they move. Despite moving, the commando never stops being adjacent to the tactician, and the crucibite shifts away instead of moving.



Opportunity Attacks: Moving Out
A war dog crucibite moves out of a space that is adjacent to the tactician and into a space that isn't adjacent. The tacitican can make an opportunity attack against the crucibite.



Opportunity Attacks: Moving With Banes
The war dog eviservite has a bane on strikes against the adjacent censor, so the censor can freely move away from the evisercite without worrying about the war dog making an opportunity attack.

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Flanking

The tacitician flanks the war dog amalgamite with the elementalist and talent, since they are on directly opposite sides of their enemy. No heroes flank the other amalgamite. The censor, using an ability with a distance of melee 2, isn't adjacent to the amalgamite and so can't flank with the shadow. The fury and null aren't on directly opposite sides of the amalgamite, and so they aren't flanking their enemy either.



Flanking

The censor flanks the war dog commando with the fury, since they are on directly opposite sides of their enemy. The troubadour isn't flanking the creature with the censor though, since they aren't on directly opposite sides. The shadow can't flank the crucibite with the conduit because the conduit is dazed, which prevents them from taking triggered actions.



Concealment

The tactician is shrouded in fog, which provides them with concealment against a strike from the war dog crucibite. The crucibite's strike takes a bane as a result.

Flanking

When you and one or more allies are adjacent to the same enemy and on opposite sides of the enemy, you are flanking that enemy. While flanking an enemy, you gain an edge on melee strikes against them.

If you're unsure whether your hero and an ally are flanking a foe, imagine a line extending from the center of your space to the center of your ally's space. If that line passes through opposite sides or corners of the enemy's space, then you and your ally are flanking the enemy.

You must have line of effect to the enemy and be able to take triggered actions to gain or grant the flanking benefit.

Cover

When you have line of effect to a creature or object but that target has at least half their form blocked by a solid obstruction such as a tree, wall, or overturned table, the target has cover. You take a bane on damage-dealing abilities used against creatures or objects that have cover from you.

Concealment

Darkness, fog, invisibility magic, and any other effect that fully obscures a creature or object but doesn't protect their physical form grants that creature or object concealment. Even if you have line of effect to such a target, a creature or object has concealment from you if you can't see or otherwise observe them. You can target a creature or object with concealment using a strike, provided they aren't hidden (see Hide and Sneak in Chapter 9: Tests). However, strikes against such targets take a bane.

Invisible Creatures

Invisible creatures always have concealment from other creatures. If an invisible creature isn't hidden, they can still be targeted by abilities, though strikes against them take a bane. The test made to find a hidden creature who is invisible takes a bane.



Cover

The war dog commando has cover against a strike from the tacitician, since a low wall between them covers half of the commando's body. The tacitician can't attack the crucibite, since much higher walls completely block the crucibite's body, and therefore the tactician does not have line of effect to the crucibite.

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Damage

Strikes, area attacks, environmental effects, and other hazards can all deal damage to the heroes and their foes. Whenever a creature takes damage, they reduce their Stamina (see below) by an amount equal to the damage taken.

Damage Types

Typical damage, such as that caused by weapons, falling, traps, and monstrous claws, has no type associated with it. That's because for most creatures, there's no difference in the amount of harm caused by being run through with a pike, dropped from a height onto a stone floor, slashed by a pendulum scythe, or skewered on a minotaur's horns.

However, when it comes to elemental and supernatural damage sources, some creatures might have an immunity or weakness to that damage. As such, abilities and effects note when they deal any of the following damage types: acid, cold, corruption, fire, holy, lightning, poison, psychic, or sonic.

Damage Immunity

Damage immunity means that a creature can ignore some or all of the damage they would usually take from certain attacks or effects.

Damage immunity might have a damage type associated with it, expressed as "[damage type] immunity." Damage immunity often has a value associated with it, so that one creature's stat block notes "damage immunity 5" (representing immunity to all damage), while another creature has "lightning immunity 5." Whenever a target with damage immunity takes damage of the indicated type, they can reduce the damage by the value of the immunity (to a minimum of 0 damage). If the value of the immunity is "all," then the target ignores all damage of the indicated type.

Damage immunity should be the last thing applied when calculating damage. For instance, if your hero has fire immunity 5 and takes 8 fire damage, they take 3 damage. But if an ally first halved the damage with a triggered action, your hero would take 4 damage before immunity is applied, with immunity then reducing the damage to 0.

If multiple damage immunities apply to a source of damage, only the immunity with the highest value applies. For instance, a creature with damage immunity 5 and fire immunity 10 who takes 12 fire damage reduces the damage by 10 points.

Damage Weakness

Damage weakness works like damage immunity, except that creatures take extra damage whenever they take damage of the indicated type. For instance, if a creature has fire weakness 5 and is dealt 10 fire damage, they take 15 fire damage instead.

A creature who has "damage weakness X" with no specific type or keyword indicated has weakness of the indicated amount when they take damage of any type.

If a creature has both damage immunity and damage weakness for a source of damage, apply the weakness first, then the immunity.

If multiple damage weaknesses apply to a source of damage, only the weakness with the highest value applies.



Stamina

Your hero's survivability is represented by your Stamina. Think of Stamina as a combination of a creature's physical vitality and their overall energy for dodging and resisting incoming blows, spells, and other violence. It's not that every instance of damage deals a bleeding wound to you, but that each one chips away at your ability to fight effectively. One attack might make you sweat as you leap back to avoid an arrow, while another might graze your elbow with a dagger nick, leaving a dull, distracting pain. Eventually, this draining of energy leaves you open for bigger blows that can truly harm your body—or possibly kill you.

After any damage you take is reduced by damage immunity or other effects, your Stamina is reduced by an amount equal to the remaining damage. Some effects can also reduce your Stamina maximum, limiting the amount of Stamina you can regain.

Recoveries and Recovery Value

Each hero has a number of Recoveries determined by their class. A hero also has a recovery value that equals one-third of their Stamina maximum, rounded down. When you use the Catch Breath maneuver in combat (see Maneuvers above), you spend a Recovery and regain Stamina equal to your recovery value. Outside of combat, you can spend as many Recoveries as you have remaining. Some abilities, items, and other effects allow you to spend a Recovery to regain Stamina equal to your recovery value plus a little extra (as described by the effect), or to regain Stamina without spending a Recovery.

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Winded

Your winded value equals half your Stamina maximum. When your Stamina is equal to or less than your winded value, you are winded. Although being winded has no effects on its own, certain ancestry, class, item, title, and monster abilities affect winded creatures.

You can tell when other creatures are winded and vice versa.

Dying and Death

When your Stamina is 0 or lower, you are dying. While dying, you can't use the Catch Breath maneuver in combat. Additionally, you are bleeding, and this instance of the condition can't be negated or removed in any way until you are no longer dying. While you are dying, you can still act, your allies can help you spend Recoveries in combat, and you can spend Recoveries out of combat as usual.

While your Stamina is lower than 0, if it reaches the negative of your winded value, you die. When you die, you can't be brought back to life without the use of a special powerful item, such as a Scroll of Resurrection.

Director-Controlled Creatures

In most circumstances, Director-controlled creatures die or are destroyed when their Stamina drops to 0.

No Recoveries

Director-controlled creatures don't have Recoveries or a recovery value. Any such creatures who regain Stamina during a battle do so by way of a special item or an ability in their stat block. However, there are times when a hero might wish to use an ability that allows another creature to spend a Recovery or to regain Stamina equal to their recovery value on an injured NPC. In such cases, a Director-controlled creature regains Stamina equal to one-third of their Stamina maximum.

Knocking Creatures Out

If you damage a creature with an ability and would kill them, you can choose to instead knock them unconscious. If a creature takes damage while unconscious in this way, they die.

Director-controlled creatures remain unconscious for 1 hour if no one does anything to wake them. They then gain 1 Stamina and are no longer unconscious.

Heroes remain unconscious for 1 hour if no one does anything to wake them. After 1 hour, they can spend a Recovery and are no longer unconscious. If the hero has no Recoveries left, they can't wake up until they finish a respite.

Unconscious

While you are unconscious, you can't take main actions, maneuvers, triggered actions, free triggered actions, or free maneuvers; your speed is 0; you are unaware of your surroundings; and you are prone. Ability rolls against you have a double edge. If you wake up from being unconscious, you can stand up from prone as a free maneuver.

Temporary Stamina

Some abilities, treasures, and other effects grant a creature temporary Stamina. Temporary Stamina shouldn't be included in a creature's Stamina total when figuring out a creature's recovery value or winded value. If you have temporary Stamina while winded, dying, or dead, the temporary Stamina doesn't change those states.

Whenever you take damage while you have temporary Stamina, the temporary Stamina decreases first, and any leftover damage is applied to your Stamina as usual. For instance, if you have 10 temporary Stamina and take 16 damage, you lose the temporary Stamina and then lose another 6 Stamina.

There is no maximum to how much temporary Stamina you can have. Regaining Stamina can't restore temporary Stamina. If you have temporary Stamina and then gain more temporary Stamina, you get whichever amount of temporary Stamina is greater, rather than adding the two pools together. For instance, if an ability grants you 10 temporary Stamina when you already have 5, you have 10 temporary Stamina, not 15.

Unless otherwise indicated, temporary Stamina disappears at the end of an encounter.

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Object Stamina

Mundane objects in the game have Stamina based on the material they're made of. When an object's Stamina is reduced to 0, the object is destroyed. Objects have poison immunity all and psychic immunity all, though the Director can remove one or both of these immunities in the case of living objects, such as plants. A size 1 object or 1 square of a larger object made of common materials has Stamina as follows:

- Glass: 1 Stamina
- Wood: 3 Stamina
- Stone: 6 Stamina
- Metal: 9 Stamina

The Director can decide that a well-made or poorly made object has more or less Stamina. Destroying a supernatural object often (but not always) requires a specific quest, such as throwing a magic ring back into the volcano where it was forged.

Underwater Combat

If a creature is fully submerged in water, they have fire immunity 5 and lightning weakness 5. If they can't automatically swim at full speed while moving, their power rolls take a bane.

Suffocating

During combat or under similarly stressful circumstances, you can hold your breath for a number of combat rounds equal to your Might score (minimum 1 round). At the end of each combat round after that, you take 1d6 damage while holding your breath.

Out of combat, you can hold your breath for a number of minutes equal to your Might score. Being unable to breathe after that time counts as a stressful condition, causing you to run out of air as above.

Mounted Combat

A willing creature with the Mount role (see Creature Roles in *Draw Steel: Monsters*) can serve as your mount as long as their size is greater than yours. You can climb onto your mount freely (see Climbing Other Creatures above). You determine which space you occupy. While mounted, you can take the Ride move action, but a mount can only be ridden this way once per round. Both mount and rider each take a turn during combat.

If a creature riding a mount is force moved, they are knocked off the mount and must make a test to determine how they land (see Climbing Other Creatures). If a mount is force moved, they carry any riders with them. Riders and mounts teleport separately.

If your mount dies, they fall prone, and you fall off them and land prone in the nearest unoccupied space of your choice.

End of Combat

At the end of combat, the Director determines if the heroes earn any Victories. Any effect or condition on you that you suffered during combat (except for being winded, unconscious, or dying) ends if you want it to.



Fleeing Foes

If you've played a fantasy RPG before, odds are you've had an encounter where you didn't chase down every last fleeing foe—and then one such foe grabbed another bunch of evil buddies and came back to ambush you. It takes only one experience like this to create players who promise, "No survivors. No mercy!" whenever foes break ranks. Chasing down every last foe can be fun once in a while, but it can easily turn a tactical encounter into a slog.

Luckily, this is a heroic game. Although the Director can surprise the players with dramatic reveals and twisty-turny stories, "Gotcha!" moments that make players suspicious of every fleeing bandit shouldn't be part of those stories. If a bandit is fleeing an encounter, they're running away to rethink their life. If they're going for help, the players should get some sense of that—for example, the bandit screaming at the top of their lungs for help as they run toward their leader's tent. That way, the players can process what's happening, and will understand that stopping that fleeing bandit is part of the challenge of the encounter.

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How Combat Ends

The Director determines when a combat encounter is over. While some battles—especially showdowns with important villains—can be about a fight to the bitter end, many other encounters can become a tedious slog if the heroes need to fight until every last enemy's Stamina is reduced to 0.

To avoid a battle dragging, the Director can set objectives when they build the encounter. Once the heroes achieve those objectives, or if it becomes clear that they can win the fight with minimal effort, the Director can end the encounter. They might do so by calling "Cut!" like a film director, or they can use some other phrase or indicator.

When the Director ends combat this way, the players typically choose how the battle ends by narrating a dramatic finish. Or in rarer cases when the heroes achieve a major objective that sets off a story-defining event, the Director narrates the end of the battle with a positive outcome for the players, called an event ending (see below).

Objective Endings

While planning a combat encounter, the Director can set one or more objectives the heroes can achieve to end the encounter without dropping every last foe. Some broad categories of objectives are described in this section, but the Director should feel free to create their own. As well, Directors can always end combat anytime it becomes clear that the heroes are going to win an encounter with minimal effort, even if they haven't achieved all the objectives.

Each of the objective endings in this section is explored in detail—including looking at monster roles, map advice, success conditions, and more—in the Introduction section of *Draw Steel: Monsters*.

Diminish Numbers

The simplest combat encounter objective is almost always "defeat them before they defeat us." Though the heroes don't have to kill every last enemy in this type of encounter, winning the day requires that they push their opponents to the point where they are broken, flee, or surrender.

Defeat a Specific Foe

An encounter built around defeating a specific foe includes one or more of the heroes' enemies commanding the rest, such as a hobgoblin bloodlord leading a group of mercenaries, or one or more particularly powerful foes among a group of weaker ones, such as a pair of tusker demons in a gnoll war band. Because these more-powerful enemies are the stars of the encounter, if only weak foes are left once the stars are gone, the battle loses its challenge and it's time to wrap it up. It makes sense for those weaker foes to flee or surrender once their strongest allies have gone down.

Get the Thing!

Classic heroic fantasy is full of important objects that the heroes must protect from the forces of evil: magic rings, royal birth certificates, dragon eggs, and the like. Heroes often find themselves at violent odds with their enemies as they race to collect a valuable or important item from a guarded temple or castle, or when they need to steal the item from a group of enemies already in possession of it.

Objectives in this category work well when paired with other objectives, such as defeating a specific foe. For instance, the heroes must steal a ledger containing a record of criminal activity from an overmind and her lackeys. However, even if they obtain the ledger, the battle won't be over until they also defeat the overmind, who won't let the book go without a fight!

Destroy the Thing!

Combat doesn't always have to be about destroying your enemies. Sometimes it's about destroying their stuff! Burning a pirate captain's vessel, closing a portal to the Abyssal Wasteland before it lets in an army of demons, or shutting down a massive kobold trap made of spinning blades could so hamper the heroes' foes that the battle is no longer worth fighting once the damage is done.

Save Another

No one earns the mantle of hero without saving a few lives. Sometimes the point of an encounter isn't to kill, but to save as many folks as you can. If the heroes rescue powerful allies from the clutches of their foes during combat, the added strength of those allies might be enough to make the remainder of the encounter trivial. When you and your companions save a griffon from a crew of poachers, the hunters become the ... well, you know the rest.

Escort

Surprising as it may seem, sometimes the fate of the mission doesn't rest on the heroes' shoulders at all! Sometimes it rests on the shoulders of someone standing next to the heroes. The heroes' job is to keep this important person safe as they travel to a specific destination.

Not every escort encounter is on behalf of a wise or mighty ally. Sometimes the heroes are tasked with protecting a helpless or even an actively troublesome creature, such as a hapless noble or a wayward child. They might even have to protect a bulky or inconvenient inanimate object. Whatever the case, the enemies just keep coming until the heroes get their charge to their destination.

Hold Them Off

Sometimes the heroes just need to buy time. They might need to battle a conquering tyrant's army to allow innocent villagers time to escape. They might need to hold off wave after wave of zombies while a group of priests completes a ritual to lay the undead to rest for good. To achieve this objective, the heroes need to stay alive and protect a particular position for a number of rounds determined by you.

Assault the Defenses

The enemy holds a strategically important position and the heroes want it. The encounter ends when the heroes secure the objective defensive location for themselves, even if there are more enemies outside it. Sometimes an encounter with this objective is part of a combined objective, as when heroes must first assault the defenses, then hold that defensive position against counterattack.

Stop the Action

Sometimes combat is complicated by the fact that the heroes need to stop the villainous actions of their foes. It's not enough to simply defeat the warriors in a cult. The heroes must also stop the zealots' archdevil-summoning ritual! Or it might be that the heroes need to interrupt a wedding and make sure an evil mage doesn't marry the heir to the throne. Despite combat, the mage forces the ceremony to continue! Objectives in this category have a timer associated with them. If the heroes don't achieve the objective in a certain number of rounds, the conditions of the battle could well change. For instance, if the cultists summon the archdevil, defeating the devil suddenly becomes the heroes' new objective!

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Complete the Action

This encounter objective sees the characters charged with initiating an event, performing a ritual, and so forth. For instance, if the heroes are attempting to launch an airship while repelling a time raider boarding party, the encounter could be over the moment the heroes manage to activate the vessel and take off with just a few time raiders actually aboard.

Dramatic Finish

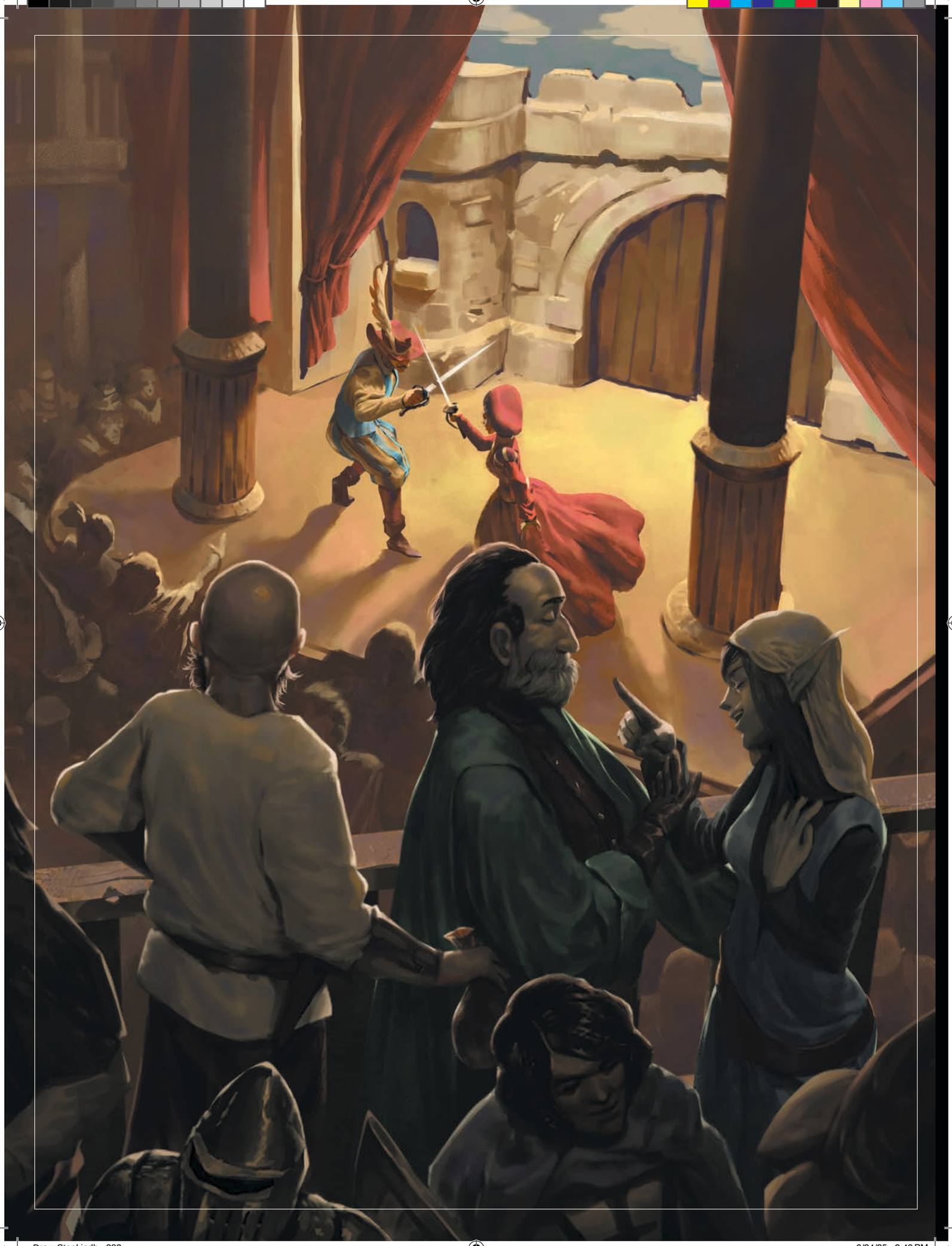
If the heroes are able to end a fight with a dramatic finish, the Director assigns each hero one or more of their remaining enemies, then asks that hero's player to describe how the hero neutralizes that threat. The hero might deliver a killing blow, knock their foe out, or let the enemy flee with their tail between their legs (literally or figuratively). If the fight has more heroes than Director-controlled enemies, the Director can assign more than one hero to an enemy, then ask the players how their characters work together to bring that enemy down. After everyone gives a description, the battle ends.

Event Ending

If the Director calls the end of combat when a specific objective in an encounter is achieved, the event ending creates a big narrative finish. The Director can pick a narrative trigger for an event ending before an encounter begins, or can come up with one on the fly if that makes more sense.

Event endings can cover big scenarios such as the characters destroying a dam to unleash a river upon their enemies, or completing a ritual that causes all the demons they've been battling to be sent back to the Abyssal Wasteland, accompanied by visual details. For example, if the heroes are battling a necromancer who controls a horde of zombies, the undead might all crumble to dust when the necromancer is defeated. If the heroes destroy an eldritch machine sapping the land of its natural energy, the shockwave from the device's destruction could vaporize the cultists attempting to protect it.

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Chapter 11

NEGOTIATION

Negotiation gives the heroes a chance to get what they want without combat ... or at least without further combat! You might negotiate with a king to obtain military support against an incursion of demons in a neighboring country. You could enter into talks with a bandit leader to convince her to stop attacking merchant caravans on the road, and instead target nobles loyal to a tyrant. You might attempt to convince an archmage to allow you access to their secret library so you can research the location of a dragon-slaying axe. Negotiation covers all these scenarios and more.

Think of negotiation as something like learning a new system for combat, exploration, or investigation in an RPG. This set of rules provides a framework for roleplaying. The negotiation rules are meant to be read by players and Directors, so that both understand the rules of negotiation. If a player hasn't read these rules, the Director and other players who have can explain them to that player during their first negotiation.

Negotiation is a framework for important roleplaying encounters when the heroes want to convince an NPC to take a particular course of action, such as lending the heroes an artifact or pardoning a prisoner. This framework tracks the NPC's interest in the hero's arguments and their patience, so that the Director know what the NPC is willing to offer and when it's time to end the scene. This framework shouldn't replace roleplaying (though it certainly can if your group doesn't enjoy that part of RPGs). It's here to help players and Directors understand the structure of a give and take conversation and give some rules that can make a high-stakes conversation even more dramatic!

When to Negotiate

In order for a negotiation to occur, an NPC must have an interest in negotiating with the heroes—but must also have a reason to not simply jump on board with whatever the heroes propose. Negotiations happen only when an NPC has that internal tension between interest and reluctance. For example, if the characters ask a king to send his army into a neighboring kingdom to battle a demon incursion, the king needs to be conflicted. He wants to stop the incursion, but he doesn't want to risk the lives of his soldiers defending a foreign nation while leaving their own people unprotected. If the heroes want the help of the king's army, they need to negotiate.

Heroes aren't expected to use the negotiation rules every time one character tries to convince an NPC to see things their way. For instance, if a hero wants information about a cult leader from a captured cultist, a single Presence test using the Lie skill or a Might test using Intimidate is likely all that's needed. A character who wants to flirt with the local alchemist to obtain a free Healing Potion likely just needs to make a Presence test using the Flirt skill.

By contrast, negotiations typically involve all the heroes interacting with one or more important named NPCs who can provide information, items, or services that dramatically change the course of an adventure. Often, this involves the heroes seeking an item of great power, a retainer or companion, the services of an influential organization or nation, or a plot-twist-worthy piece of information. Convincing a lich to lend the party the legendary *Codex Mortis*, trying to convince a dragon to halt an attack on a wizard's tower, or talking the leaders of an enemy army into standing down means that a negotiation is in order.

To negotiate successfully, the heroes must make persuasive arguments to convince NPCs to do what they want. "Do it or we kill you" is a threat that might well accompany a single Might test using the Intimidate skill, but it's not a negotiating tactic.

Limits of Negotiation

Some players might instinctively feel that the negotiation rules should give them something akin to mind-control superpowers. They're not used to imagining NPCs complexly, and might attempt to negotiate in situations where negotiation is either completely unreasonable or literally impossible. No matter how persuasive or well-spoken a hero is, there's no argument to be made that might convince the vile Lord Syuul to give up his pursuit of evil and become a gardener. A negotiation typically can't convince a queen to hand over her crown to the heroes and name them the new rulers of the land, or inspire a dragon to fork over every piece of treasure in their hoard. Negotiations only work when the heroes ask for something from an NPC that the NPC is willing to seriously consider giving them.

Negotiation is not a process that changes an NPC's character. Rather, the heroes are trying to make an NPC understand how behaving differently would be *in* character. You might well be able to get the hitherto loyal lieutenant of an evil boss to reconsider the error of their ways. That's a classic dramatic trope. But even then, you're not changing their character—you're convincing them that their current evil ways are out of character. "Is this who you are? Is this how you want to be remembered?!"

If some players want to use the negotiation system as a means to an end by having their characters say, "Just do what we tell you, or else!", you can remind them that that's not how most people, including NPCs, work. Any heroes who open with that attitude are likely to lose the negotiation before it begins.

The Threat of Violence

In the real world, negotiations rarely come with a threat of immediate violence. Ambassadors don't usually get into fistfights. But this is a heroic fantasy RPG, featuring heroes who are armed to the teeth and able to alter reality with their minds. The threat of violence is already implied. Everyone involved knows that the characters could draw steel at any moment.

The Director typically assumes that the underlying potential for events to turn violent is already factored into every negotiation. However, if the heroes decide to bring that threat to the forefront, then they've exited the realm of negotiation and have entered into a different type of relationship—and it's probably time to determine initiative.

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Negotiation is about persuading someone to help you willingly because you've convinced them that meeting your objectives is a good idea. Working with you is wise or logical, or might make them look good. A hero can absolutely threaten someone with violence and force them to do what they want, but this is an incredibly temporary state. A threatened NPC isn't willingly doing what they've been asked. They're doing it on threat of violence, and will comply only while that threat is evident—after which, they'll likely go back to their previous behavior as soon as they think they can get away with it.

Negotiation Stats

During negotiation, the Director assigns NPCs four temporary statistics—interest, patience, motivations, and pitfalls. The heroes can strike a favorable deal if they maximize an NPC's interest by making arguments that invoke the NPC's motivations and avoid their pitfalls—but they have to do all that before the NPC's patience wears out.

Interest

An NPC's interest represents how eager they are to make a deal with the heroes. Interest is graded on a scale of 0 (no interest) to 5 (the most possible interest). When a negotiation begins, an NPC's interest is between 1 and 4. If the NPC's interest goes to 5, they make a final offer and the negotiation ends (see Keep Going or Stop, below). If the NPC's interest drops to 0, they end a negotiation without offering the heroes any deal.

Interest increases and decreases during the negotiation based on the arguments the heroes make.

Patience

An NPC's patience represents how much time and effort they're willing to devote to a negotiation. Patience is graded on a scale of 0 to 5, with each NPC starting a negotiation with their patience higher than 0. If an NPC's patience reaches 0, the NPC makes a final offer and negotiation ends (see Keep Going or Stop).

Patience can decrease each time the heroes make an argument during a negotiation.

Language and Patience

If at least one hero negotiating with an NPC speaks the NPC's native language (not including Caelian), then the NPC's patience increases by 1 at the start of the negotiation (to a maximum of 5). If three or more heroes negotiating with an NPC speak the NPC's native language, the NPC's patience increases by 2 (to a maximum of 5).

Motivations

Each NPC has at least two motivations the heroes can appeal to with their arguments. Arguments that appeal to an NPC's motivation require an easier power roll to increase the NPC's interest. Arguments that don't appeal to a motivation require a more difficult power roll. See Making Arguments for more information.

Each motivation can be successfully appealed to only once during a negotiation. To successfully appeal to a motivation, the heroes must use the motivation in an argument without mentioning one of the NPC's pitfalls or being caught in a lie.

Pitfalls

Pitfalls are motivations that spark ire, discomfort, shame, fear, or some other negative response in an NPC. Using a pitfall in an argument causes an NPC's interest and patience to wane. Each NPC has at least one pitfall, and many have two or more.

Pitfalls and motivations are two sides of the same concept. They're presented below as a single list, so that what might be a motivation for one NPC is a pitfall for another. Whenever the heroes make an argument, they risk stumbling into one of an NPC's pitfalls unless they do their research beforehand or read the NPC well.

List of Motivations and Pitfalls

An NPC can have any of the following twelve motivations or pitfalls.

Benevolence

An NPC with the benevolence motivation believes in sharing what they have with others. However, an NPC involved in a negotiation must be limited in their benevolence, so that they don't just give the heroes what they need.

Sometimes an NPC's benevolence might extend only to a specific group of people, so that a benevolent pirate captain might share their plunder freely with the rest of their crew—but they're still plundering! Other times, an NPC's charity might be limited by the fact that they don't have much to give. A benevolent NPC might be hesitant to give the heroes help because they believe their limited resources are more necessary or could do more good somewhere else.

An NPC with the benevolence pitfall has a cynical view of the world, believing that no creature has a right to anything just by being alive. The idea of helping others because it's the right thing to do is a preposterous, immature, or inexperienced idea to be laughed off or snuffed out.

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Arguments that appeal to a benevolence motivation contend that if the NPC strikes a deal with the heroes, the people the NPC cares about will benefit from the deal. Example arguments include the following:

- "If you lend us the Sword of Agathor, we can make Capital safer for your guild by using it to lay your enemies low."
- "If you can teleport us into the dragon's cave, we'll give you half the wyrm's hoard once we cut off the creature's head. That could benefit generations of students at your academy!"

Discovery

An NPC with the discovery motivation wants to learn new lore, explore forgotten places, break ground with new experiments, or uncover artifacts lost to time. Their curiosity and quest for knowledge might be driven by a specific goal, such as seeking the cure for a rare disease or a portal to a specific far-off world. Or they could be a naturally inquisitive person who simply wants to understand all they can about the timescape.

An NPC with the discovery pitfall has no interest in finding new places, peoples, or ideas. It might be that the unknown scares them or makes them so uncomfortable that they'd rather remain ignorant. Alternatively, a previous pursuit of discovery might have turned out poorly for them.

Arguments that appeal to a discovery motivation contend that striking a deal with the heroes will allow the NPC to gain new knowledge or acquire unique property. Example arguments include the following:

- "Allow us to use your cipher to translate the only copy of the *Codex Mortis*, and then we'll let you read the book when we're done."
- "We know the journey to Decant Isle is dangerous, but we're going into uncharted territory. We thought that your crew of sailors might want to be among the few mortals to lay eyes on the place."

Freedom

An NPC with the freedom motivation wants no authority above them and desires no authority over others. They might already have personal freedom and wish to maintain that status quo, or they might wish to liberate themself or others from someone else's authority.

An NPC with the freedom pitfall believes that a world without authority is one in turmoil and chaos. They might even believe that they are the right person to rule, and that their ideals should be the ones that become the law of the land.

Arguments that appeal to a freedom motivation contend that by helping the heroes, an NPC will maintain or grant freedom to themself or other people. Example arguments include the following:

- "I know you want to have the queen's authority revoked forever. She has no heirs. Give us the key to her study so that we can prove her corruption and give you a chance to topple the monarchy henceforth."
- "If you promise to give us ten vials of Assassin's Kiss, we'll see to it that the baron's prison is emptied."

Greed

An NPC with the greed motivation desires wealth and resources above almost anything else. Sometimes these NPCs are misers, much like wyrms who hoard coins and gems but never spend or donate them. Others flaunt their wealth, viewing it as a sign of their station in life.

Greed-driven NPCs might share their wealth with a select group of people they love, such as a noble lord who indulges his children's every desire. Some NPCs might be greedy for resources other than money, such as a demon who wants to collect and devour souls, or a troll lord who hungers endlessly for the flesh of others.

An NPC with the greed pitfall has no interest in accumulating wealth or other resources, and becomes offended if anyone tries to buy their partnership. They hold their ideals above material desires.

Arguments that appeal to a greed motivation contend that helping the heroes will increase the NPC's wealth or assets. Example arguments include the following:

- "You should help us battle the overmind. Xorranox's wealth is legendary, and we'll see to it that you get your fair share."
- "Give us a week to do research among your private collection of books, and we'll give you another ten unique tomes we found in an ancient star elf sanctuary."

Higher Authority

An NPC with the higher authority motivation remains staunchly loyal to a person or force they perceive as more important than themself. This higher authority could be an organization, a deity or being of great power, a formal leader such as a noble or monarch, a mystical presence or force the NPC might not fully understand, or a person the NPC sees as an informal authority figure (an older sibling, a personal hero, and so forth).

An NPC with the higher authority pitfall scoffs at the idea of serving another. The NPC might not believe that all people should be free, but they certainly believe that they personally shouldn't have to answer to anyone.

Arguments that appeal to a higher authority motivation contend that it's in the interest of the higher authority for the NPC to strike a deal with the heroes. A hero might even tell the NPC that if the higher authority were in the NPC's position, they would take the deal. Example arguments include the following:

- "All great creations honor your god, Malus. If you teach me to forge the Hammer of Azdul, that will be a great honor to bestow upon your god."
- "You know what Jarith the Bold would do? He'd guide us through the vast wasteland of the desert to reach the tower. Will you be our Jarith?"

Justice

An NPC with the justice motivation wants to see the righteous rewarded and the wicked punished, however subjective their sense of who or what is good and evil. A priest who venerates a god of nature might believe that all who protect plants and animals are righteous, and that those who harvest natural resources as miners and lumberjacks do must die. Having a justice motivation doesn't necessarily make an NPC kind or charitable.

An NPC with the justice pitfall doesn't believe that the timescape is an inherently just place, and has no interest in making it one. The world is eternal conflict, there is no such thing as justice, and anyone who thinks otherwise is a naive fool.

Arguments that appeal to a justice motivation position the heroes on the good side of an NPC's sense of right and wrong. Example arguments include the following:

- "You despise those who steal from nature. Allow us peacefully into your wode so we may bottle the Blessed Spring's water. We're going to use it to stop an army from felling every tree and tearing up the earth wherever they go."
- "You think nobles are lazy barons who get rich off the backs of peasants. We want to dethrone Lord Saxton. Lend us your crew of thieves, and we'll make sure that when Saxton falls, the people can choose their own leaders."

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Legacy

An NPC with the legacy motivation desires fame while alive and acclaim that lasts long after their death. They hope others will know and remember their deeds, great or terrible. Some of these NPCs might even seek immortality through deification or undeath, so that the eventual shedding of their mortal coil doesn't prevent them from continuing to make history.

An NPC with a legacy pitfall cares nothing about leaving a personal mark on the world. To them, such vain thinking is nothing but a waste of time.

Arguments that appeal to a legacy motivation contend that striking a deal with the heroes increases the likelihood that people will talk about the NPC for centuries to come. Example arguments include the following:

- "If you give us the vizier's itinerary, I'll compose a song about your bravery in defying him, then sing it in every tavern from here to Ix!"
- "Yes, losing the battle is a possibility. If we do, the gnolls will still come for you eventually. But if we crush our foes, imagine the honors, the histories, the poems, the statues—all of it created for you because your siege engines turned the tide."

Peace

An NPC with the peace motivation wants calm in their life. Under typical circumstances, they want to be left alone to run their business, farm, kingdom, criminal empire, or whatever small slice of the timescape is theirs. Some such NPCs don't have peace and need help obtaining it, while others want their peaceful status quo to be maintained.

An NPC with the peace pitfall hates being bored. They want excitement, drama, and danger in their life. For them, there's nothing worse than the status quo.

Arguments that appeal to a peace motivation contend that helping the heroes will earn the NPC some peace, at least for a little while. Example arguments include the following:

- "You have a good thing going here. A little burgling of nobles, some alcohol smuggling, and some illegal gambling dens. No one's getting hurt, but Constable Cofax is closing in on you. We could redirect him toward some real danger to the community, if you can help us set a trap for the Watchmaker."
- "I know you don't sell to outsiders, but we need that helm. I'm going to use it to turn back a group of hobgoblins marching this way. They're not going to be as friendly as us."

Power

An NPC with the power motivation covets the authority of others. They want to increase their influence, no matter how great it already is, and maintain their domain. They might seek power through conquering others, the collection of artifacts, or through the infusion of supernatural rituals—though why choose one method when all three together achieve the best results? Some such NPCs are world-traversing tyrants, but the petty administrators of village organizations and shrines can covet power just as hungrily.

An NPC with the power pitfall has no interest in authority for themself. They might respect the authority of others, but they hate the thought of ruling over other people and roundly reject any suggestion of the idea.

Arguments that appeal to a power motivation contend that working with the heroes will increase or protect the NPC's power. Example arguments include the following:

- "Everyone knows you should be running the watch, Percy. The old lady's retiring, and our friend Baron Kuglar is naming the replacement. Now, you let us into the restricted armory, and we'll put in a good word."
- "We know he's your brother, Your Highness, but he's older—first in line for the throne. If you help us prove he's in a cult, you become the favorite son."

NPCs Change Over Time

Just like the heroes, NPCs in negotiations are complex individuals who can change over time. It's possible that the heroes might have to negotiate with the same NPC for several different favors during the course of a campaign, over which time the NPC's motivations and pitfalls might change. If the heroes turn a bandit captain with the greed and power motivations into a temporary ally, that criminal might learn from them, changing their ways to rob only those who exploit the poor and giving those earnings to people in need. The next time the heroes negotiate with the bandit captain, they have the benevolence and protection motivations.

Protection

An NPC with the protection motivation has land, people, information, items, or an organization they want protected above all else. Keeping their charge safe is a duty they hold dear, and aiding in that protection earns their favor. Most people have friends or family they wish to protect, but an NPC with the protection motivation believes in doing so at any cost.

An NPC with the protection pitfall is happy to leave others to fend for themselves. They don't believe it's their responsibility to protect anyone other than themself, and might be outright disgusted at the thought of risking their life or their property to protect others.

Arguments that appeal to a protection motivation contend that helping the heroes allows an NPC to better protect their charge. Example arguments include the following:

- "Dead soldiers grow the necromancer's ranks. Total annihilation is the only way to defeat her. March with us now, while her army is small, and we'll defeat her. Or you could gamble that someone else tries, fails, and suddenly she's at the border, ready to overrun your kingdom with an army tenfold larger than what it is now."
- "I understand your grandchild is hell-bent on joining the service. I happen to have a magic suit of armor that could help them ward off the blows of monsters and ruffians. I'd be happy to give it to you, in exchange for borrowing your griffons for a few days. After all, I won't need the armor if I can simply fly over the marsh's monsters."

Revelry

An NPC with the revelry motivation just wants to have fun. They enjoy socializing at parties, thrill-seeking, or indulging in other hedonistic activities. Getting pleasure out of life while spending time with people they like is paramount to such NPCs.

An NPC with the revelry pitfall sees social encounters and hedonism as a waste of time. They take pleasure only in work or in building their own skills and character. Others who suggest immature debauchery are not worth their time.

Arguments that appeal to the revelry motivation contend that striking a deal with the heroes will allow the NPC to get back to reveling sooner, longer, or harder. Example arguments include the following:

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- "How would you like to have the most exclusive songs for your exclusive birthday celebration next week? I'll write you a whole original set list, free of charge … provided you extend me and my band here an invitation."
- "I know you don't want to forge five Chronokinesis Crowns. How's this instead? You do that for me, and I'll give you the fourteen kegs of whiskey we found in a steel-dwarf ruin. This stuff is old, unique, and forget-your-first-name potent. You can crack a keg with your friends to celebrate a job well done."

Vengeance

An NPC with the vengeance motivation wants to harm another who has hurt them. Their desire for revenge could be proportional to the harm that was inflicted upon them, or they might wish to pay back their pain with interest. In some cases, a desire for vengeance can be satisfied only by the death of another, but an NPC might wish to pay back their own suffering with embarrassment, career failure, or some other less permanent pain.

An NPC with the vengeance pitfall believes that revenge solves nothing. They might have gained this belief firsthand, or they might simply not have the ambition to seek revenge—and they take a dim view of others who do.

Arguments that appeal to the vengeance motivation contend that the NPC can gain payback for their pain by helping the heroes. Example arguments include the following:

- "The servants of Ajax killed your sister as she scoured the city for his cults. The Black Iron Pact works for the Overlord. Give us her diaries, and we might uncover the pact's hideaway and deal a great blow to your hated foes."
- "That prankster Huckable made your trousers tear at the last council meeting. Don't you want to pay him back? We can arrange a delicious prank at the next gathering, but we need you to guarantee the safety of the orc refugees."

Opening a Negotiation

A negotiation begins when the heroes ask something of an NPC and the Director deems that the circumstances require a negotiation. Those circumstances always involve the heroes requiring assistance that could change the course of the adventure, and having the NPC conflicted about working with them. Unlike combat, which can be thrust upon the heroes by violent allies or unexpected circumstances, the heroes must be the ones to willingly start a negotiation. Characters must want something from an NPC. Otherwise they have no reason to negotiate!

The Director can decide that an NPC who has something the players want could show up at their door and ask if the heroes want to negotiate. But it's always okay for the characters to say, "Not interested," and refuse to do so.

Stop Combat, Start Negotiation

If a hero wants to halt hostilities to negotiate with the other side, they can use a maneuver to make a hard Presence test (or another applicable test, as the Director determines) in an attempt to stop combat and start a negotiation. The test has a chance of success only if the Director believes the other side is willing and capable of negotiating. A foe who has the upper hand, who hates the heroes beyond measure, or who lacks sapience is unlikely to negotiate.

Starting Stats

An NPC's starting negotiation stats depend on their attitude toward the heroes, as shown on the Negotiation Starting Attitudes table, and can be adjusted by the Director as they see fit. A naturally irascible NPC might have lower patience, while a hostile NPC with a greater-than-expected stake in the negotiation topic might have a higher-than-typical interest.

Uncovering Motivations

If a hero wishes to figure out an NPC's motivations, they can begin by simply asking, "What do you want out of this deal?" In response, the NPC can willingly hint at or reveal one of their motivations, usually by asking for something. For instance, a monarch NPC with the greed motivation and a penchant for collecting rare animals might suggest that the heroes retrieving a griffon egg would earn the monarch's gratitude. The Director can also decide that during the natural course of the negotiation, the NPC might offer up similar suggestions without the heroes asking, provided the NPC already has an interest of 3 or higher.

If an NPC isn't as forthcoming, or if the heroes want to learn one of the NPC's pitfalls, a hero can make a Reason, Intuition, or Presence test while interacting with the NPC during the negotiation, based on the tactics used to draw out the NPC. The test has the following outcomes:

Power Roll + Reason, Intuition, or Presence:

- ≤11 The hero learns no information regarding the NPC's motivations or pitfalls, and the NPC realizes the hero is trying to read them and becomes annoyed. As a consequence, the NPC's patience is reduced by 1.
- 12–16 The hero learns no information regarding the NPC's motivations or pitfalls.
- 17+ The hero learns one of the NPC's motivations or pitfalls (their choice).

After this test is made, the heroes can't make another test to determine the same NPC's motivations or pitfalls until they make an argument to the NPC or the negotiation ends.

Outside of Negotiation

While the heroes can discover an NPC's motivations or pitfalls through tests made during negotiation, they can employ other methods of investigating motivations or pitfalls before negotiation. Research or a little reconnaissance (for instance, reading the NPC's diary or talking to their closest friends), can reveal quite a bit about a person!

Making Arguments

As part of their initial request to an NPC in a negotiation, a hero makes an argument as to why the NPC should give the heroes what they want. The hero might offer to do something in exchange as part of their argument, such as clearing bandits from a forest, handing over a piece of treasure, or slaying a dragon for the NPC. Or instead of offering something, the hero could attempt to convince the NPC that it's in their own best interest to help—or even that it's a moral imperative. For example, a hero could appeal to a knight's sense of duty, the potential wealth a mercenary could make, or the final wish of a queen's dearly departed grandmother as part of an argument. NPCs who admire the heroes are more likely to respond to compliments and buttering up, while those who fear the heroes are more likely to respond to intimidation and awe.

Arguments need a justification as to why they're true. "Helping us defeat Lord Saxton is good for you in the long run," is half an argument, but the hero also needs to explain why this is the case. "Helping us

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defeat Lord Saxton is good for you in the long run, because we know he's coming for your kingdom after Bedegar falls!" If a hero makes half an argument, the NPC might follow up with questions such as, "Why do you say that?" or "What makes you think that's true?" to get the full argument from them.

One hero makes an argument to an NPC, but the players can discuss the details of the argument out of character beforehand. It's up to the group to decide how much discussion to have before making an argument, and to decide what argument the players think will best sway the NPC.

This is a good topic for discussion before a group actually gets into a negotiation, so everyone knows the other players' thoughts. Some groups have the most fun without any around-the-table discussion, while others prefer being able to strategize as often as possible.

Appeal to Motivation

If an argument doesn't include a pitfall and appeals to one of the NPC's motivations that hasn't already been appealed to, the hero making the argument can make an easy test to attempt to sway the NPC with the argument. Depending on the argument, this can be a Reason, Intuition, or Presence test using any applicable skill—most commonly a skill from the interpersonal skill group. The test has the following outcomes.

Power Roll + Reason, Intuition, or Presence:

- ≤11 The NPC's patience decreases by 1.
- 12–16 The NPC's interest increases by 1, and their patience decreases by 1.
- 17+ The NPC's interest increases by 1, and their patience doesn't change.

At the Director's discretion, a particularly well-roleplayed or well-reasoned argument automatically counts as a tier 3 outcome without a test. Good roleplaying should be rewarded!

If the heroes attempt to appeal to a motivation that's already been appealed to, the NPC's interest remains the same and their patience decreases by 1.

Appealing to Multiple Motivations

If a hero makes an argument that appears to appeal to more than one of an NPC's motivations, the Director can ask for clarification. After listing the motivations it seemed as though the player was trying to appeal to, they can ask the player to pick one from the list. If the player had another motivation in mind, it's up to the Director whether the argument appealed to that specific motivation or not.

No Motivation or Pitfall

If an argument doesn't include one of the NPC's motivations or pitfalls, the hero who makes the argument must make a more difficult test to appeal to the NPC. The test has the following outcomes.

Power Roll + Reason, Intuition, or Presence:

- ≤11 The NPC's patience decreases by 1, and their interest decreases by 1.
- 12–16 The NPC's patience decreases by 1.
- 17+ The NPC's interest increases by 1, and their patience decreases by 1.

Effect: On a natural 19 or 20, the NPC's patience remains the same.

If the heroes try to use the same argument without a pitfall or motivation twice, the test automatically obtains a tier 1 outcome.

Everyone Can Participate

Since Reason and Intuition with creatively applied skills can be used to make arguments, all heroes can actively participate in the process of negotiation. The hero with the highest Presence who has the Persuade skill doesn't automatically have to be the one who makes all the tests.

Caught in a Lie

If a hero lies to an NPC with an argument that fails to increase the NPC's interest, the Director can decide that the NPC catches the lie and is offended by it. The NPC's interest decreases by 1, in addition to any decrease imposed by the failure.

Pitfall Used

If an argument uses one of the NPC's pitfalls, it automatically fails and the NPC's interest and patience each decrease by 1. The NPC might also warn the heroes not to treat them in such a way again.

Renown and Negotiation

Renown determines whether a hero's fame (or infamy) has any sway over an NPC. A hero's reputation can make a negotiation easier, provided that hero knows how to capitalize on it.

During a negotiation, an NPC has an **Impression score** that determines the amount of Renown needed to influence them with fame alone (see Renown in Chapter 13: Rewards). This score matters only if the NPC knows of the heroes. A dragon who slumbered away the last hundred years and was just woken up to negotiate can't be influenced by a hero's Renown. (By the way, it's a terrible idea to wake a dragon, even if they do know you're famous.) If the NPC does know of the hero and has an Impression that is equal to or lower than the hero's Renown, the NPC can be influenced by that hero's reputation.

The higher an NPC's Impression, the harder they are to influence with Renown. A small-time brigand has a lower Impression score than a monarch who meets with powerful and famous people all the time. The NPCs and Impression table provides examples of different archetypical NPC Impression scores. If a creature has a level, then their Impression equals their level unless the Director deems otherwise.

Fame or Infamy?

If a hero has enough Renown for their score to influence an NPC during negotiation, the Director decides if they are famous or infamous to the NPC. If the NPC appreciates a character's deeds and views them as a hero who makes the world a better place, that hero is famous to them. If the NPC believes the hero's accomplishments make the world worse and views them as an enemy, the hero is infamous to the NPC.

Influencing Tests

If a hero is famous to an NPC, they gain an edge on tests when making arguments to which the Flirt, Lead, or Persuade skill could be applied. If they are infamous to the NPC, they gain an edge on tests when making arguments to which the Brag, Interrogate, or Intimidate skill could be applied. A hero gains this edge even if they don't have the appropriate skill.

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NPC Response and Offer

After a hero makes an argument, the NPC responds in one of three ways:

- An NPC responds positively if the heroes increase the NPC's interest. "That's an excellent point." "You've given me much to consider." "Fair enough." "Makes sense to me."
- An NPC responds negatively if the heroes decrease their interest. "I don't buy that." "Poppycock!" "I hear you, but I disagree." "That's not going to sway me."
- An NPC responds with impatience if the heroes fail to increase or decrease their interest. "I've heard that before." "Are you going to offer me anything real?" "This debate is tiresome." "BORING!"

Unless the NPC is deceitful, it should be clear to the heroes if their argument helped convince the NPC, if they need to take a new approach, or if the argument actually did more harm than good.

The initial response should come with an offer (or a refusal to make an offer) based on the NPC's current interest. If a hero's argument reduces an NPC's patience to 0, the NPC lets the heroes know that this is their final offer.

Interest 5 ("Yes, and ...")

If the NPC's interest is 5, they offer everything the heroes initially asked for—and then sweeten the deal. This represents the best possible outcome for the heroes. If they offered to perform any services or make payments as part of the deal, the NPC might waive those obligations, allowing the heroes to get what they want for free. Alternatively, the NPC might hold the heroes to any offers they made and instead offer an extra service or item on top of what was asked for.

For example, if the heroes asked the boss of a thieves' guild for that organization's help in standing against Lord Saxton, the guildmaster might pledge to send a unit of elite assassins to aid in the battle against that tyrannical noble, and then offer the heroes a quiver filled with explosive arrows to give them an additional advantage in the fight.

The NPC should let the heroes know that this is the best offer they can make.

Interest 4 ("Yes.")

If the NPC's interest is 4, they offer the heroes everything they asked for but won't sweeten the deal. The NPC also accepts anything the heroes have offered as part of the deal with this outcome.

For example, if the heroes offered to help spring a guild thief from prison in exchange for the elite assassins of the thieves' guild standing against Lord Saxton, the guildmaster agrees to those terms without attempting to adjust anything. This likely ends the negotiation, but it's possible that the heroes could push for a little more, provided the NPC has the patience for another argument. A Director could prompt the heroes to push for more by having the NPC ask a leading question, such as, "Is there anything else?" or "What else do you want from me?"

Interest 3 ("Yes, but ...")

If the NPC's interest is 3, they offer the heroes what they want in exchange for everything the heroes offered ... then they ask for a little extra, such as a favor or a payment from the characters. If the heroes offered to free a thieves' guild member from prison in exchange for the service of the organization's assassins, the guildmaster might ask them to free an additional prisoner, or to grant the prisoner they rescue a sum of cash or a magic weapon.

Interest 2 ("No, but ...")

If the NPC's interest is 2, the NPC can't give the heroes what they want. However, they are willing to offer other less impactful goods or services in exchange for whatever the heroes have promised. The guildmaster might not be willing to spare any troops to fight Lord Saxton, but could instead offer the latest spy reports on Saxton's movements in exchange for the jailbreak.

Interest 1 ("No.")

If the NPC's interest is 1, they outright reject the heroes' idea without a counteroffer. If the NPC still has patience, they might press the heroes for a better deal, saying something like, "Why should we risk our necks to help you fight Lord Saxton? What's really in it for the thieves' guild, other than a short, brutal end when you inevitably fail?"

Interest 0 ("No, and ...")

If an NPC's interest is 0, they offer nothing, refuse to negotiate further, and seek to harm the heroes. The NPC might attack immediately, or they could take a different approach, perhaps spreading malicious rumors about the characters, sending assassins after them, or otherwise making their lives difficult. If the heroes don't want to be at odds with the NPC, they'll need to offer a valuable gift or undertake a quest just to make amends.

It is impossible to continue a negotiation when an NPC's interest drops to 0.

Keep Going or Stop

If an NPC still has patience after making an offer and their interest is between 1 and 4, the heroes can make another argument to attempt to improve the deal. Alternatively, they can accept the offer and end the negotiation. Let the players drive this decision. You can always have an NPC show they have patience remaining by asking, "Is there anything else?"

If the NPC's patience is 0 or their interest is 5, then the offer the NPC makes is their final offer to the characters. The heroes can accept the offer or not, but either way, the negotiation ends.

If the NPC's interest is 0, the NPC ends the negotiation without accepting a deal. The heroes can walk away from a negotiation without accepting a deal at any time.

Sample Negotiation

After killing the true lord of Bedegar, the tyrannical Lord Saxton took over the barony's capital, and is presently gathering forces to march on the rest of Bedegar's settlements. The heroes recently saved Edmund, the true heir to Bedegar's throne, and are now attempting to build an army that can stand against Saxton and defeat the tyrant.

The heroes are engaging in a negotiation with Zola Honeycut, the human guildmaster of the Clock—a thieves' guild whose headquarters is located in Bedegar's capital. The guild openly opposed Saxton when he first seized power, but the tyrant was quick to crack down on all known members of the Clock, forcing them into hiding or hanging them as a warning to others. The heroes' hope is that they can convince Zola to support their armed resistance.

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Zola's Negotiation Stats

Zola is neutral toward the heroes when the negotiation begins. She knows them only by reputation, though she understands that they too believe Saxton is a tyrant who must be stopped. However, standing up to that tyrant has cost her people dearly, and she's not sure she's ready to rejoin the fight. One wrong move could spell the end of the Clock!

Zola Honeycut Negotiation Stats

Interest: 2 **Patience: 3** **Impression: 3**

Motivations

Benevolence: Zola's name, Honeycut, comes from the fact that she always gives her fellow thieves a bigger cut than her own on jobs.

Protection: The members of the Clock are the only family Zola's ever known. The guild's motto is "The Clock is always ticking," because they're always planning the next job and their ever-richer future. Zola doesn't want to be the guild's last master.

Pitfall

Higher Authority: Zola has no interest in serving anyone other than herself, and she scoffs at the suggestion of taking orders.

Revelry: Zola is all business and has no time for frivolity, especially while living under Saxton's threat.

Roleplaying Zola

Zola is glad that people are finally opposing Lord Saxton, but is angry that no one rose up with the Clock months ago when the tyrant first staged his coup. She's passionate about protecting her people, quick to call out dangerous plans in arguments she doesn't like, and fast to praise statements she agrees with. She's not afraid to speak her mind to the heroes, knowing that they share her desire to see Saxton gone. She's just not sure she can risk more of her found family in the current fight.

Negotiation in Action

Here's how the negotiation with Zola might play out.

Director (Djordi): *The windows are boarded up, allowing no light to enter the seemingly abandoned Goat's Eye tavern. The whole place smells of charred wood, evidence of the fire that burned most of the building's interior three years ago. As the door shuts behind you, light from a hooded lantern on the opposite side of the tavern suddenly fills the room. Amid the blackened walls and pillars, you note where six burly ruffians flank your group on both sides. The human holding the lantern smiles. "Welcome. I'm Zola. Willoughby told me you were coming. Have a seat." She motions to a few crates arranged in a circle around a wide barrel.*

James (playing Korvo, a shadow): *I have a seat and say, "Korvo at your service, Ms. Honeycut. And these here are the finest companions a polder could ask for: Linn, Jorn, and Val."*

Director: *Zola nods to each of you in turn, then says, "You'll excuse me if I dispense with more pleasantries. These days, no place is safe for the Clock. We keep moving. So tell me, what are you here for?"*

Alyssa (playing Jorn, a tactician): *"We're building an army to take down Saxton once and for all."*

In this scenario, all the heroes have a Renown of 2 except for Jorn, who has a Renown of 3 and is therefore famous to Zola.

Director: *Zola gives a mirthless chuckle as she shakes her head. "Oh is that all? I have to tell you, I don't think the four of you stand much of a chance. Unless you're hiding a legion or two of dwarves in your pockets. Yes, you have Jorn the Mighty with you, but you'll need more than one famous warrior to win the day."*

Alyssa: *Ah! So she has heard of me at least! Thanks, Renown.*

Grace (playing Val, a conduit): *"We don't. But we do have Lord Edmund—the true heir to the Bedegar throne."*

Director: *Zola nods, impressed. "I'm glad the boy is safe, but that's all he is—a boy, not an army."*

Matt (playing Linn, a talent): *"He's a boy people will rally around. We have no army, but that's why we're here. We're planning on changing that. Can you spare any soldiers for our cause?"*

The negotiation officially starts. The heroes have stated what they want from Zola. The Director begins by prompting them to make an argument.

Director: *Zola leans back on her crate. "There it is. The Clock has sacrificed much against Saxton. Why should we risk more to help? No one was here to help us months ago when we stood up to tyranny."*

Alyssa: *I nod along as Zola speaks, listening before I say, "We didn't hear of your struggle until after Saxton had already hanged many of your brave people. We're here now. How can we help?"*

Before making an argument, Alyssa is attempting to learn what Zola's motivations are by simply asking. The Director decides to reveal one of Zola's motivations: protection.

Director: *"If I were to make a deal with you, and that's a big 'if,' I'd need assurances that you can end this. Proof would be even better. The protection of my people is my top priority. We can earn freedom from Saxton once we regain our strength."*

James: *Aha! I got this, folks. I stand atop my crate and say, "Well, we can surely offer that, Ms. Honeycut. We have convinced Lord Edmund to grant amnesty to any who swear to serve him." I'd like to roll a Presence test to convince her.*

Director: *Hold it there, champ. Zola's eyes narrow as you speak, and she holds up a hand to cut you off. "I will not swear to serve any ruler, no matter how benevolent. I'll consider being a partner, but even that outlook is grim if you tell me again that I need to bend the knee."*

Korvo inadvertently made an argument using a pitfall by appealing to a higher authority. The Director notes that Zola's interest drops to 1 and her patience drops to 2. Zola gave a pretty firm "No" response here, which is what an NPC with an interest of 1 would say. However, the Director phrased Zola's response in such a way that the heroes know they can keep making arguments if they wish, since her patience hasn't run out.

James: *Sorry! I thought that'd work. Seems like higher authority is a pitfall for her.*

Grace: *Let's try to avoid any others. Val says, "We're sorry, Zola. We don't want to do anything else to offend you." I'd like to make an Intuition test and use my Read Person skill to gauge her reaction and try to discern any other pitfalls.*

Director: *Cool. Hard difficulty.*

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Grace: *I got a 17! Success.*

Director: *Zola sits back, chuckling. "There's two things I can't stand—anyone telling me to kiss a ring and merry fools who would rather go drinking than fight for their freedom. Luckily, you're not the latter." You can tell that revelry also won't go over well with Zola.*

The heroes now know both of Zola's pitfalls: higher authority and revelry.

Matt: *Linn is going to say, "We're recruiting more than just the Clock. We have a good chance of recruiting the elves of the wode and the orcs of Forest Rend, and we're already training the people of Gravesford to put up a fight. If we strike before Saxton can fully build his forces, we all stand a better chance of survival. If you don't stand with us, Saxton will still come for you. He's already coming for you. The Clock stands less of a chance alone."*

Director: *I think that's a Reason test, since you're using logic to point out that you have a better chance together than on your own. It's easy too, since you're appealing to one of her motivations.*

Matt: *Great! Can I use Lead here, since I'm demonstrating our ability to bring people together?*

Director: *I'll allow it.*

Matt: *That's a 14!*

Because Linn appealed to a motivation, Zola's interest increases to 2, and her patience remains at 2. The Director gives a "No, but ..." response based on Zola's interest. At this point, the heroes haven't promised anything, so she offers them something for free.

Director: *Zola nods along as you speak. "You're correct, but I'm not sure I can spare the people. I'll tell you what I can do. I have spies watching Saxton still. I can give you information about his troops' movements. Will that suffice?"*

The Director makes it clear in Zola's response that the negotiation can still continue if that's what the players want.

Alyssa: *I don't think so, right?*

James: *No. We need an army.*

Matt: *Yeah, let's push it.*

Grace: *Agreed.*

Alyssa: *I wonder if we can try to figure out another one of her motivations.*

James: *Is there anything I know about Zola's reputation? I have the Criminal Underworld skill.*

Director: *Make a hard Reason test.*

James: *That's an 18! Success!*

Director: *Korvo would know that Zola got the name Honeycut because she's generous with the guild's earnings. She gives all her fellow thieves a nice cut of every job.*

Korvo's success has revealed Zola's benevolence motivation.

James: *Brilliant! I think I probably would've shared that with the group before this.*

Director: *Yeah, that makes sense.*

Alyssa: *Great. Jorn will say, "It would be worthwhile in other ways for your crew if you joined our side."*

Director: *Zola's interest is piqued. "What makes you say that?"*

Alyssa: *"Even before his coup, Saxton had a considerable amount of wealth. If he's deposed, those riches need to go somewhere. The Clock will get a cut—a honey of a cut, you might say. Edmund has also promised to share his family's fortune with any who stand with him against Saxton—no oath of fealty necessary. After the young lord reclaims the throne, that is."*

Director: *You're appealing to one of her motivations, so make an easy Presence test.*

Alyssa: *Can I use my Persuade skill too?*

Director: *Absolutely. And you gain an edge because you're famous to her.*

Alyssa: *I needed that edge. I got a 12!*

Because Jorn appealed to a motivation, Zola's interest increases to 3, and her patience is reduced to 1. The Director gives a "Yes, but ..." response while making it clear that the negotiation can still continue.

Director: *Zola contemplates this for a moment. She nods, "I'm starting to see the benefits. I think I can spare some folks to help you, but you have to help them first. See, my best warriors are locked up in Bedegar Keep. They're supposed to be hanged in two days. If you free them, I'll see to it they stand with you against Saxton. We were making a plan to free them ourselves but could frankly use the help."*

Grace: *We could push the Clock to do it themselves, but I can't see Val turning her back on people in need.*

James: *Hear, hear. I'm done pushing my luck on this one.*

Matt: *It'll mean less time to recruit the other troops, so we'd better work quickly.*

Alyssa: *Then we're in agreement. I offer a handshake to Zola. "You've got yourself a deal."*

The heroes could have pushed for a better deal, but they're satisfied with the offer from Zola, so they accept her terms. The negotiation ends.

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Chapter 12

DOWNTIME PROJECTS

As a team, you and your fellow heroes can achieve great things. But the time between adventures gives you a chance to pursue your own individual goals: uncover forbidden lore in ancient tomes, forge weapons of great power, build ships that can sail the skies, and more. *Draw Steel*'s rules for downtime projects allow heroes to use their time during respites to obtain important information, make new equipment, and engage in other activities to support their adventuring.

Tracking Projects

You start a downtime project during a respite. You can start as many projects as you like, but you can't work on more than one project at a time during a respite. Eventually, you'll be able to hire creatures who can work on additional downtime projects for you.

You track project progress on your character sheet. As you work on a downtime project, you might look over old books that you've found in your travels, perform experiments, converse with experts and scholars, or work with tools to create something.

Project Prerequisites

All downtime projects have prerequisites you must meet before you can undertake them.

Item Prerequisite

Many downtime projects have one or more special items you must possess or obtain before you can start the project. For instance, you can't build an airship without first finding a Wind Crystal of Quintessence, a rare and key component in that vehicle's construction. Other projects have a prerequisite that involves undertaking certain activities during the project process.

Project Source

To start a downtime project, you must have access to specific lore detailing how the project is to be undertaken. This can take the form of written information (a book, scroll, schematic, and so forth), an expert tutor with wisdom to share, a master artisan with skills to teach, a supernatural manifestation of the project's scope and secrets, or any other form of the Director's determination. This project-focused lore is referred to as a project source. Not only do you need project sources to start a downtime project, but you must have access to those sources whenever you make a project roll for that particular project (see Project Roll below).

Some project sources are relatively easy to find. Building a castle doesn't require tomes filled with ancient lore, but it's also not something every stonemason knows how to do. However, the location of the tomb of Ashrya, the mummified protector of one hundred slumbering sorcerer-sovereigns, might exist only in a single tome that requires an accompanying adventure to unearth.

The language with which project sources are set down or can be shared is chosen by the Director. The sample projects below have suggestions using languages in Orden (see that section in Chapter 4: Background), though you might be able to find a version of a source in other languages as well.

Whenever the Director determines that a creature with needed knowledge can be used as a project source, another hero can serve as this source of knowledge. However, they must use a respite activity to be your project source whenever you make a project roll related to the project.

Search for Common Project Sources

If you need a project source for a particular project, ask your Director if the source is common enough that it might be found in a substantial library, among a group of sages or guild artisans, and so forth. If the Director says yes, then the next time you take a respite in a place with a library or access to creatures with the knowledge you seek, you can locate the project source you need as a respite activity.

Project Roll

As a respite activity (see Respite in Chapter 1: The Basics), you make a project roll for one of your own projects. You can also make a project roll to contribute to another hero's project, with their permission. A project roll is a test with a special outcome that isn't divided into tiers. The characteristic used in the test is determined by the project.

When you make a project roll, the total—no matter how low—becomes project points that are accrued by the project. Even if you have a penalty on a project roll, the minimum total for the roll is 1. If you obtain a critical success—a natural 19 or 20—on a project roll, this is called a **breakthrough**, and you can make another project roll for the same project as part of the same respite activity.

A downtime project is complete when it accrues project points equal to or greater than its **project goal**—the number of points it takes to complete the project, noted in each project's description.

As you work on a downtime project, the Director can add events that help form the narrative of your research, crafting, or other activities. These events might provide unexpected benefits or challenges as you work on your project, to help make the journey as dramatic as arriving at the destination. See For the Director: Project Events below for more information.

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Project Roll Edges and Banes

Since project rolls don't use success tiers, they don't follow the usual rules for double edges and double banes. If you gain an edge on a project roll, you add 2 to the roll, as usual. But if you have a double edge, you add 4 to the roll. Likewise, you subtract 2 from a project roll that takes a bane, and you subtract 4 from a roll that has a double bane.

Skills and Project Rolls

You can apply skills from either the crafting or lore skill groups to project rolls that directly relate to a downtime project (see Skills in Chapter 9: Tests). For example, you could use the Tailoring skill for project rolls related to making a magic cloak, and you could use the History skill while attempting to research the location of an ancient battle where a magic crown was lost. At the Director's discretion, you can also use skills from other skill groups, but a skill used for a project roll must be directly related to the project.

Language and Project Rolls

If you know the language of a project source, you can make a project roll without any issues. If you don't know the language of the source but you know a related language, the project roll takes a bane. If you don't know the source's language or a related language, the project roll has a double bane.

Guides

Heroes sometimes find guides—special books, schematics, knowledgeable NPCs, supernatural recordings, and so forth—providing important and easy-to-understand information relating to a downtime project. Each guide has a knowledge value and a connection to a specific project that greatly decreases the time required to complete the project. When a hero studies a guide as a respite activity, they gain the guide's knowledge value as project points toward its project. The guide can't be used with that specific instance of the project again, though it can be used for a different project of the same type.

Guides are awarded at the Director's discretion, usually as a tool that can be used to increase the speed of complex projects for campaigns with little downtime. For example, the Build Airship downtime project has a project goal of 3,000, requiring a fair bit of downtime. But if a hero finds a manual that describes how to craft an airship and grants them 1,000 or more project points toward the Build Airship project, the crafting time can be significantly reduced.

A guide must provide its information in a language you understand for you to gain its full benefit. If a guide uses a language related to one you know, you gain only half the guide's knowledge value (rounded down) as project points toward your project.

For the Director: Project Events

Project events are story events that present boons and challenges to heroes as they complete research and crafting projects. These events are entirely optional. If your group prefers a game where the heroes simply work toward their goals by making project rolls, that's fine. But using these events can help a Director inject more drama into the processes of research and crafting.

When To Use Project Events

Projects don't need an event every time a hero makes a project roll. If they did, the heroes would likely spend all their time trying to manage their projects and never do any adventuring. Instead, you as the Director pick one of the following methods to determine when an event occurs during a downtime project. You can always switch up the method you use during a campaign, doing whatever you think works best for the current situation.

Roll for Event

If you want events to be a surprise for you as much as for the other players, then once during any respite when one or more heroes makes a project roll, roll a d6. On a 6, an event occurs. This is a good option if you enjoy coming up with story on the fly during play.

Event Milestones

If you want to guarantee that events occur during a downtime project, use event milestones based on project points. When the project accrues a certain number of points, an event occurs the next time a hero wants to make a project roll. This approach works well if you want to plan your event in detail before it occurs.

You can use the Suggested Event Milestones table to determine when an event should occur during a project.

Suggested Event Milestones

Project Goal	Milestones
30 or fewer	None
31–200	One event halfway to the goal
201–999	Two events at one-third and two-thirds of the way to the goal
1,000 or more	Three events at one-quarter, one-half, and three-quarters of the way to the goal

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Whenever You Want

Whenever you think the heroes could use a little drama during a respite, throw in an event. This approach allows you to plan an event in detail when a downtime project starts, then deploy it at the most dramatic moment—or even throw it in during an encounter if you're feeling saucy!

Deploying Events

A project event occurs when a hero makes a project roll. You can roll for or choose an event from the appropriate events prompts table, or use the tables to inspire your own events. Each event entry on the table is a narrative prompt written for you as the Director, and which you can change and flesh out as you determine. Each event specifies whether it occurs before or after the project roll is resolved.

Automatic Breakthrough

If an event grants an automatic breakthrough on a downtime project, the project gains 20 project points and the hero can make another project roll for the same project as part of the same respite activity.

Crafting Projects

Crafting projects enable heroes to create vehicles, supernatural treasures, and more. When you start a crafting project, other creatures can also work on the project, using their respite activity to contribute a project roll in order to get the work done faster.

Unless a project has a complication table of its own, the Director uses the Crafting and Research Events table for crafting project events.

Build Airship

Item Prerequisite: Wind Crystal of Quintessence
Project Source: Texts or lore in Low Rhyvian
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Presence
Project Goal: 3,000

When you start this project, you hire a crew of carpenters, mages, and shipwrights who work in the area where the project is undertaken, with these artisans building the ship for you. You can make a project roll whenever you are overseeing the project, which you might be able to do remotely through the use of magic or psionics.

When the project is completed, you have an airship. You and any creatures you designate can operate the ship by touching the ship's wheel. During combat, a creature touching the wheel can use a maneuver to make the ship move up to 10 squares. The ship can be moved only once per round. Out of combat, the ship has a speed of 130 miles per day.

An airship is an object (giving it damage immunity all to poison and psychic damage) and can take 200 damage before it is destroyed. If the damage the ship takes is not too severe (as the Director determines), as long as you have access to materials that can repair the ship, you can restore it back to its original condition as a respite activity.

Build or Repair Road

Item Prerequisite: Three writs of approval, from an engineers' guild, a masons' guild, and a guards' guild
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Presence
Project Goal: Varies

When you start this project, you hire a crew of masons, engineers, and guards who start work at the location where the project begins and build or repair the road for you. You can make a project roll whenever you are overseeing the project, whether you do so in person or remotely through the use of magic or psionics.

The number of project points required to complete work on the road equals 10 × the road's length in miles. The goal is cut in half if you are repairing an existing road, or if someone else starts work on a second road project that connects to your project.

When you complete the project, you earn Renown among people in the area where the road is built, depending on the length of the road.

Build or Repair Road Renown

Project	Renown Earned
25 miles or less	1
26–50 miles	1
51–100 miles	2
More than 100 miles	3

Time spent traveling between locations on the road is cut in half. Access to resources and knowledge is improved in locations along the road, giving you and your allies an edge on project rolls to discover lore while you are in those areas.

Build or Repair Roads Events

d10	Event
1	Before the roll, crews uncover an ancient road following the intended route, crafted with remarkable techniques that make it a sturdy base on which to build. The project gains an automatic breakthrough and the project goal is halved if it was not already halved.
2	After the roll, the local population grows in excitement with each completed portion of the road. The name of the hero making the project roll spreads as a builder of bridges both literal and social. If the project roll is 12 or higher, the local community comes together to complete the project alongside the hero's hired crew. The hero doubles the renown earned at the end of the project.
3	Before the roll, a local religious or civic authority hears of the project and sends laborers to accelerate it—in exchange for a future favor. The hero gains an immediate 50 project points for the project if they accept the help.
4	After the roll, local hired hands and the project engineers find themselves at odds, hindering the project. If the hero can't help defuse the situation, the project requires an additional 50 project points to complete.
5	Before the roll, supply caravans are disrupted by bandits, requiring extra guards. If the hero can't deal with the bandit threat personally, the project requires an additional 50 project points to complete.
6	After the roll, word is heard that not everyone in the local area is happy about the road being built. The project is hindered by supernatural curses that cause stones to move, vines and overgrowth to reclaim sections already built, or churning earth to restore the road back to its previous form. The hero must make amends to the local supernatural community or have the renown earned by completing the project not extend to that community.
7	After the roll, ditchers working on the project hit an ancient well, retaining wall, or hidden stream that results in an immediate flood. The work is delayed, but the new water source ultimately provides a boon to local farming communities. Project points earned by this roll are halved, but upon the project's completion, the hero earns 1 additional renown.
8	Before the roll, a new engineer arrives with specialist experience such as building sturdy wooden bridges, using bilge pumps to keep rainwater from slowing the work, and so forth. They want to work on the project, but insist on receiving a consumable treasure first. If they are hired, the project gains an automatic breakthrough.
9	Before the roll, the proposed road touches on a supernatural intersection—a crossing place between multiple worlds that draws interest from a powerful devil. The completion of the project becomes the personal interest of this being, who offers to increase progress—but demands a future favor from the hero. If the deal is accepted, each project roll for the project is doubled until its completion.
10	After the roll, a guildmaster has it out for the hero. Whether from a past conflict or something about the way this project has unfolded, the guildmaster has made it their mission to hinder the project by dragging the hero's name through the mud. The hero's renown is treated as 1 less than usual while these rumors persist.

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Craft Teleportation Platform

Item Prerequisite: One spatial navigator
Project Source: Texts or lore in Voll
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason
Project Goal: 1,500

When you complete this project, you end up with a 3-square-by-3-square teleportation platform activated by a supernatural password. The platform is permanently affixed to the ground in the location where you create it. Any creature with the password can use the teleportation platform to instantly teleport any creatures or objects on the platform to a location they know, including another teleportation platform whose supernatural password they know. You and any creature you designate upon completion of the activity can change the password as a respite activity.

Each time the teleportation platform is used, the chance of it malfunctioning and teleporting creatures or objects on it to a random platform increases by 1 percent (to a maximum of 50 percent). You can restore the platform back to its original condition and reset this chance of malfunction as a respite activity.

Craft Treasure

You can craft the items found in Treasures in Chapter 13: Rewards. Each treasure notes its item prerequisite, project source, project roll characteristic, and project goal.

Find a Cure

Item Prerequisite: Varies (see description)
Project Source: None
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: Varies

You research a cure for a disease, curse, or supernatural affliction whose text states that it can be ended by the Find a Cure downtime project. If the affliction was caused by the innate feature of a creature, you need the remains of that creature or another creature of the same kind as an item prerequisite for crafting the cure. For example, you can research the cure for the affliction of a werewolf's Accursed Bite by studying the corpse of any werewolf, not just the one who did the biting.

The number of project points it takes to complete this project is equal to 50 times the level of the creature who caused the affliction. If the affliction was created by an environmental or supernatural effect, that effect notes the item prerequisite and project points required to complete this project.

When you complete this project, you craft one dose of an alchemical cure for the affliction. Once the project is completed, you can craft subsequent doses for the same affliction for half the number of project points required for the initial project.



Imbue Treasure

You can create leveled treasures by imbuing items with magic or psionic power. You must have a mundane version of the item you plan to imbue, such as a sword or shield, when you start this project.

You can imbue any item three times. The first time you imbue it, you pick a 1st-level enhancement. The second time you imbue it, you pick a 5th-level enhancement. The third time you imbue it, you pick a 9th-level enhancement. A hero using armor or a weapon can't benefit from an enhancement unless they are using a kit that includes the armor or weapon type, and their level matches the enhancement's level.

If an enhancement has a Roman numeral greater than I after it, such as the Phasing III enhancement, that enhancement can't be applied unless the item has all previous versions of the enhancement. This means you can't imbue armor with the Phasing III enhancement unless it has the Phasing I and Phasing II enhancements first. The effects of numbered enhancements are cumulative unless otherwise noted.

Enhancements are broken out by item type (armor, implement, or weapon) and level. Each item type and level features a table showing the name, item prerequisite, and project source language of each enhancement. Imbued items take the Magic or Psionic keyword (your choice) and are part of any kit categories appropriate to the type of item (light armor, medium weapon, and so forth).

Imbuing treasure with supernatural power as a downtime project typically means you undertake that project to make use of the treasure yourself. As such, all the features of imbuing refer to "you" as the user of the item. However, imbued items can be created for other creatures, or created by other creatures and found as treasure.

Imbue Armor

Armor imbued with an enhancement grants you special benefits while it is worn. Additionally, when your armor receives its 1st-level enhancement, it also grants a +6 bonus to Stamina. A 5th-level enhancement increases the Stamina bonus to +12, and a 9th-level enhancement increases it to +21.

Clothing as Armor Treasures

A hero who has a kit that provides no armor, such as the Martial Artist or Sniper kit, can create and make use of leveled armor treasures that imbue mundane clothing with supernatural power. At the Director's discretion, heroes who don't use kits, such as elementalists and nulls, can also benefit from such treasures.

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1st-Level Armor Enhancement

Item Prerequisite: Varies
Project Source: Texts or lore in a language determined by the enhancement
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 150

1st-Level Armor Enhancements

Enhancement	Item Prerequisite	Project Source Language
Awe	A lock of hair from a fey, taken in amicable bargain for Charming or in violence for Threatening	Khelt
Damage Immunity I	Elemental sand left behind when an elemental enters Orden from Quintessence	Zaliac
Disguise	The blood of a lycanthrope	Khelt
Iridescent	Fur from a lightbender	Hyrallic
Magic Resistance I	A scale from a dragon	The First Language
Nettlebloom	A rose from the enchanted hedge of a hag	Khelt
Phasing I	Ichor from a destroyed wraith	Szetch
Psionic Resistance I	Rare crystals that resonate with psionic energy, often found at sites of psionic experimentation	Voll
Swift	The feather of a falcon slain as it was diving	Yllyric
Tempest I	A strip of starmetal struck by lightning	Ullorvic

Awe: When you start this project, choose either Charming or Threatening. If you choose Charming, you gain an edge on Presence tests made to win other creatures over or make a good impression. If you choose Threatening, you gain an edge on Presence tests made to intimidate, coerce, or bully.

Damage Immunity I: When you start this project, select three damage types. You have immunity 5 to those damage types.

Disguise: You can use a maneuver to cause this armor to take the form of any type of clothing that you have been in the presence of—a noble's dress, a guard's uniform, a cultist's robes, and so forth. The armor loses none of its protective qualities while transformed into other clothing.

Iridescent: When you are the sole target of an ability, you can use a free triggered action to reveal that the ability was targeting an afterimage of you in the same space as you. The power roll for the ability is treated as an 11. You can't use this enhancement again until you earn 1 or more Victories.

Magic Resistance I: Your characteristic scores are treated as 1 higher (to a maximum of 2) for the purpose of resisting the potencies of magic abilities.

Nettlebloom: Whenever you are grabbed by an adjacent creature, your armor sprouts toxic nettles. While that creature has you grabbed, they are weakened.

Phasing I: Once per turn, you can move through 1 square of solid matter. If you end your turn inside solid matter, you are forced out into the space from which you entered it and you take 5 damage that can't be reduced in any way.

Psionic Resistance I: Your characteristic scores are treated as 1 higher (to a maximum of 2) for the purpose of resisting the potencies of psionic abilities.

Swift: You gain a +1 bonus to speed.

Tempest I: As a maneuver, you infuse this armor with the essence of a storm. The first time an adjacent creature deals damage to you before the end of your next turn, they take lightning damage equal to your highest characteristic score and you can push them 1 square.

5th-Level Armor Enhancement

Item Prerequisite: Armor with a 1st-level enhancement; varies
Project Source: Texts or lore in a language determined by the enhancement
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 150

5th-Level Armor Enhancements

Enhancement	Item Prerequisite	Project Source Language
Absorption	A mirror blessed by a priest of a god of magic	The First Language
Damage Immunity II	The essence of an elemental who is still alive	Zaliac
Dragon Soul	A scale from a dead dragon	Vastariax
Levitating	A palm-sized crystal grown in the subterranean lair of an overmind	Zaliac
Magic Resistance II	A scale from a mature dragon	The First Language
Phasing II	The remnants of a slain ooze	Szetch
Psionic Resistance II	A fresh crystalline scale from a gemstone dragon	Voll
Reactive	A complex, hand-engineered set of brass gears inscribed with runes in silver dust	Zaliac
Second Wind	The sweat of a troll	Kalliak
Shattering	A pound of volcanic obsidian, formed naturally as a single piece	Zaliac
Tempest II	The armor must be laid out under a clear sky as a comet passes over	Ullorvic

Absorption: Whenever you are targeted by a magic or psionic ability that targets only one creature, you can use a free triggered action to cause this armor to absorb the ability after the ability's effects resolve. While the armor has an ability absorbed, you can't absorb another.

You can use an absorbed ability as if you knew it, making power rolls for the ability using your choice of Reason, Intuition, or Presence. You don't need to spend any Heroic Resource to activate the ability. Once you use the ability, the armor loses it, and you can absorb another.

Damage Immunity II: The damage immunity conveyed by the armor increases to 10.

Dragon Soul: When another creature causes you to be winded or dying, you can use a free triggered action to cause the soul of a dragon to emerge from this armor and hurtle toward the creature. Make the following power roll against the creature.

Power Roll + Your Highest Characteristic Score:

- ≤11 8 damage; push 3
- 12–16 12 damage; push 4
- 17+ 15 damage; push 5

Levitating: On your turn, you can treat up to 5 consecutive squares of movement as flying movement. If you are still in midair at the end of your turn, you fall prone.

Magic Resistance II: Your characteristic scores are treated as 2 higher (to a maximum of 3) for the purpose of resisting the potencies of magic abilities. This benefit replaces Magic Resistance I.

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Phasing II: When you use the armor's Phasing I enhancement, you can move through 3 squares of solid matter per turn.

Psionic Resistance II: Your characteristic scores are treated as 2 higher (to a maximum of 3) for the purpose of resisting the potencies of psionic abilities. This benefit replaces Psionic Resistance I.

Reactive: Whenever you take damage, you have damage immunity 2 until the end of your next turn after the triggering damage is resolved.

Second Wind: Whenever you become winded, you can use a free triggered action to spend a Recovery.

Shattering: Whenever an enemy scores a critical hit against you, they take 10 sonic damage.

Tempest II: When you use the armor's Tempest I enhancement, the affected creature takes 8 lightning damage and you push them up to 3 squares.

9th-Level Armor Enhancement

Item Prerequisite: Armor with a 5th-level enhancement; varies
Project Source: Texts or lore in a language determined by the enhancement
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 150

9th-Level Armor Enhancements

Enhancement	Item Prerequisite	Project Source Language
Devil's Bargain	The wing of an archdevil	Anjali
Dragon Soul II	An offering of gems, coins, and art stolen from a dragon's hoard, sacrificed in ritual fire	Vastariax
Invulnerable	Repurposed metal plates from a servok war engine	Rallarian
Leyline Walker	A cutting from an ethereal tree that manifests in the mundane world only once a year	Yllyric
Life	The tear of a saint	High Kuric
Magic Resistance III	A scale from an ancient dragon	The First Language
Phasing III	Perfectly clear glass from a house that disappeared into the Ethereal Plane	Szetch
Psionic Resistance III	The skull of a voiceless talker at least a century old	Voll
Temporal Flux	An experimental temporal capacitor invented by the kuran'zoi	Voll
Unbending	A spearhead or other weapon broken off in the body of a stone giant, and ossified for a year or more	High Kuric

Devil's Bargain: You can fly. Additionally, if an effect would make you prone while flying, you can choose to not go prone by losing Stamina equal to the distance you would have fallen from becoming prone.

Dragon Soul II: While you are winded, your head transforms into a dragon's head and you gain the following ability.

Dragon's Fire

You open your maw and unleash hell.

Area, Magic — 5 × 1 line within 1
Main action — Each enemy in the area

Power Roll + Your Highest Characteristic Score:
≤11 5 fire damage
12–16 8 fire damage
17+ 11 fire damage

Invulnerable: When an ability roll made against you obtains a tier 1 outcome, you can ignore its damage and effects.

Leyline Walker: Once per turn as a move action, you can spend any amount of your movement to instead teleport that distance.

Life: Whenever you would die, you can spend a Recovery to regain Stamina instead. If you have no Recoveries to spend, you die.

Magic Resistance III: The benefit of the armor's Magic Resistance II enhancement extends to each ally within 3 squares of you.

Phasing III: Your movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks, and you can move through the space of any enemy as if they were an ally. You can't end your turn in an enemy's space.

Psionic Resistance III: The benefit of the armor's Psionic Resistance II trait extends to each ally within 3 squares of you.

Temporal Flux: Whenever you move out of a square, you can choose to leave an imprint behind that lasts until the end of the encounter, until your imprint takes 20 or more damage, or until you create a new imprint. The square is occupied by your imprint, and you can share that space with it.
On your turn, you can teleport to the imprint's space as a free maneuver. When you are targeted by an ability, you can use a free triggered action to teleport to your imprint, and the power roll for the ability is treated as an 11.

Unbending: You can't be subjected to forced movement unless you choose to be. Effects that ignore Stability also ignore this enhancement.

Imbue Implement

Implements are jewelry, spectacles, orbs, staffs, tomes, wands, weapons, and other objects used by those who channel magic and psionic power to focus that power. You decide what object to imbue when you create an implement treasure, but it must be an object you can carry or wear. You must have a mundane version of the item you plan to imbue when you start this project.

An implement imbued with an enhancement grants you special benefits while it is wielded. Additionally, when an implement receives its 1st-level enhancement, it grants your magic or psionic abilities that deal rolled damage a +1 damage bonus. A 5th-level enhancement increases the bonus to +2, and a 9th-level enhancement increases it to +3. Censors, conduits, elementalists, nulls, talents, and troubadours benefit from using implements more than the other classes in this book.

1st-Level Implement Enhancement

Item Prerequisite: Varies
Project Source: Texts or lore in a language determined by the enhancement
Project Roll Characteristic: Agility, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 150

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1st-Level Implement Enhancements

Enhancement	Item Prerequisite	Project Source Language
Berserking	The tusk of a feral boar	Kalliak
Displacing I	Slime from an ooze	Khelt
Elemental	Ashes or other leavings from a natural disaster	The First Language
Forceful I	A lead slingstone that killed a giant	High Kuric
Rat Form	One hundred rat pelts	Khamish
Rejuvenating I	A singing quartz crystal	The First Language
Seeking	An inch-long needle carved from a diamond	Caelian
Thought Sending	The brain of a psionic creature	Variac
Warding I	Three skulls from the same chimera	Zaliac

Berserking: Whenever you damage a creature using a magic or psionic ability and obtain a tier 3 outcome, that creature must make an opportunity attack against their nearest ally if possible after the ability's effects resolve. This strike deals extra damage equal to the highest of your Reason, Intuition, or Presence scores.

Displacing I: Whenever you damage a creature using a magic or psionic ability and obtain a tier 3 outcome, you can teleport that creature up to 2 squares after the ability's effects resolve. If the creature started on a horizontal surface, they must end on a horizontal surface.

Elemental: Whenever you use an ability with the Air, Earth, Fire, Green, Rot, Void, or Water keyword, you can attune this implement to that element until the end of the encounter. While the implement is attuned, you gain an edge on power rolls with that elemental keyword. The implement can be attuned to only one element at a time.

Forceful I: Whenever you use a magic or psionic ability to push or pull a creature, you can move that creature an additional 2 squares.

Rat Form: As a maneuver, you transform into a rat. Your equipment transforms with you. As a rat, you have a speed of 5 and can automatically climb at full speed while moving, your size is 1T, and you can see in the dark. You can speak and keep your skills while in rat form, but your Might is –5 and you lose all your regular abilities, features, and benefits. You can revert to your natural form as a maneuver, and do so automatically if you take any damage.

Rejuvenating I: Whenever you use an ability that costs 1 or more of your Heroic Resource, roll a d10. On a 9 or higher, you gain 1 Heroic Resource.

Seeking: Your ranged magic or psionic abilities gain a +2 distance bonus. Additionally, if you think the name of a specific creature, place, or object to the implement, the implement points toward that target, provided you are on the same world.

Thought Sending: Your ranged magic and psionic abilities gain a +2 distance bonus. Additionally, you can telepathically communicate with any willing creature who knows a language and whose name you know, provided they are on the same world as you. You must initiate the conversation, but once you do, the creature can respond until you end the conversation.

Warding I: You gain a +6 bonus to Stamina.



5th-Level Implement Enhancement

Item Prerequisite: An implement with a 1st-level enhancement; varies
Project Source: Texts or lore in a language determined by the enhancement
Project Roll Characteristic: Agility, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 150

5th-Level Implement Enhancements

Enhancement	Item Prerequisite	Project Source Language
Celerity	A dire falcon's beak	Khelt
Celestine	A still-warm piece of a meteorite	Ullorvic
Displacing II	The wing of a pixie	Voll
Erupting I	Obsidian from an active volcano	Vastariax
Forceful II	A marble stone giant's fingernail	High Kuric
Hallucinatory	A night hag's hairpin	Variac
Lingering I	Slow-acting poison refined from rare fungi	Szetch
Rejuvenating II	A still-growing bonsai tree at least 30 years old	The First Language
Warding II	A metallic dragon's horn	Zaliac

Celerity: Immediately after using a magic or psionic ability that requires an action, you can shift up to 3 squares, or you can use the Escape Grab maneuver as a free maneuver (see Maneuvers in Chapter 10: Combat).

Celestine: As an action, you conjure up to three stars, which hover in unoccupied squares of your choice within 5 squares of you. The stars remain in place, and disappear if you create more stars. When an enemy enters any star's space, the star detonates and is destroyed, and the

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enemy takes 10 fire damage. If you have line of effect to the enemy, you can also slide them 1 square. Otherwise, the enemy slides 1 square in a random direction.

Displacing II: When you use the implement's Displacing I enhancement, you can teleport the creature up to 4 squares. Additionally, the creature takes a bane on their next power roll made before the end of their next turn.

Erupting I: Whenever you damage a creature using a magic or psionic ability that targets only a single creature and obtain a tier 3 outcome, each enemy within 2 squares of the creature takes 3 fire damage after the ability's effects resolve.

Forceful II: Whenever you use a magic or psionic ability to push or pull a creature, you can move that creature an additional 3 squares. This replaces the benefit of Forceful I.

Hallucinatory: As a maneuver, you create an area of sensory instability in a 2 aura centered on yourself. The area is difficult terrain for your enemies until the end of the encounter.

Lingering I: Whenever you damage a creature using a magic or psionic ability and obtain a tier 3 outcome, that creature takes 8 damage at the start of your next turn.

Rejuvenating II: Whenever you use an ability that costs 1 or more of your Heroic Resource, roll a d10. On an 8 or higher, you gain 1 Heroic Resource and you can spend a Recovery. This replaces the benefit of Rejuvenating II.

Warding II: The Stamina bonus for the Warding I enhancement becomes +18. Additionally, you and each ally within 3 squares of you has their characteristic scores treated as 1 higher for the purpose of resisting potencies. Additionally, your characteristic scores are treated as 1 higher for the purpose of resisting potencies.



9th-Level Implement Enhancement

Item Prerequisite: An implement with a 5th-level enhancement; varies
Project Source: Texts or lore in a language determined by the enhancement
Project Roll Characteristic: Agility, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 150

9th-Level Implement Enhancements

Enhancement	Item Prerequisite	Project Source Language
Anathema	An olothec tentacle	Variac
Displacing III	The keystone from a gate used for crossing between worlds	Voll
Erupting II	A sealed geode containing explosive gas	Vastariax
Forceful III	A scale from the kraken	High Kuric
Lingering II	A venom gland from a mature dragon	Szetch
Piercing	Black iron harvested from a slain blood elemental	Anjali
Psionic Siphon	The frontal lobe of an overmind	Variac
Rejuvenating III	A live flower that blooms only once a decade	The First Language
Warding III	Heartwood from a two-century-old tree	Zaliac

Anathema: Whenever you damage a creature using a magic or psionic ability and obtain a tier 3 outcome, that creature is also weakened (save ends). If the creature is within 10 squares when this weakened effect ends, you can use a free triggered action to make a free strike against them.

Displacing III: When you use the implement's Displacing I enhancement, you can teleport the creature up to 5 squares. Additionally, the creature takes a bane on their next power roll made before the end of their next turn.

Erupting II: The fire damage dealt by the implement's Erupting I enhancement increases to 6.

Forceful III: Whenever you use a magic or psionic ability to push or pull a creature, you can move that creature an additional 3 squares and that movement can be vertical. This replaces the benefit of Forceful II.

Lingering II: Whenever you damage a creature using a magic or psionic ability and obtain a tier 3 outcome, that creature takes 15 damage at the start of your next turn. This replaces the benefit of Lingering I.

Piercing: Your magic and psionic abilities ignore damage immunities.

Psionic Siphon: Once per turn when you damage one or more creatures using a magic or psionic ability and obtain a tier 3 outcome, you gain Stamina equal to your highest characteristic score, and one creature you damage takes an extra 5 damage.

Rejuvenating III: Whenever you use an ability that costs 1 or more of your Heroic Resource, roll a d10. On a 7 or higher, you gain 1 Heroic Resource, and you or a creature of your choice within 3 squares can spend a Recovery. This replaces the benefit of Rejuvenating II.

Warding III: The Stamina bonus for the Warding I enhancement becomes +18. Additionally, you and each ally within 3 squares of you has their characteristic scores treated as 1 higher for the purpose of resisting potencies. This replaces the benefit of Warding II.

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Imbue Weapon

A weapon imbued with an enhancement grants you special benefits while it is wielded. Additionally, when a weapon receives its 1st-level enhancement, it grants your weapon abilities that deal rolled damage a +1 damage bonus. A 5th-level enhancement increases the damage bonus to +2, and a 9th-level enhancement increases it to +3.

Unarmed Strike Treasures

A hero who has a kit that uses unarmed strikes, such as the Martial Artist and Pugilist kit, can create leveled weapon treasures that enhance their unarmed strikes by imbuing hand wraps, rings, shoes, or any other item worn on the body with supernatural power. At the Director's discretion, heroes who don't use kits, such as elementalists and nulls, can also benefit from such treasures.

1st-Level Weapon Enhancement

Item Prerequisite: Varies
Project Source: Texts or lore in a language determined by the enhancement
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 150

1st-Level Weapon Enhancements

Enhancement	Item Prerequisite	Project Source Language
Blood Bargain	The blood of a devil	Anjali
Chilling I	A piece of ice from Quintessence that never melts	Yllyric
Disrupting I	A vial of blood from a living saint	Anjali
Hurling	A magnet made from rare metals	Variac
Merciful	A sprig of dockwart, a rare plant with natural anesthetic properties	Yllyric
Terrifying I	The preserved, intact amygdala of a mindkiller	Variac
Thundering I	The heart of a lion, bear, or other large predatory animal	Low Kuric
Vengeance I	The crown of a usurper	Kalliak
Wingbane	The pinfeather of a giant hawk	Yllyric

Blood Bargain: As a maneuver, you can harm yourself with the weapon, taking 1d6 damage that can't be reduced in any way. An ally within 5 squares can then spend a Recovery.

Chilling I: Whenever you damage a creature with an ability using this weapon and obtain a tier 3 outcome, that creature takes 3 cold damage.

Disrupting I: Whenever you damage an undead using this weapon and leave that undead with 15 Stamina or less, they drop to 0 Stamina.

Hurling: Whenever you use a melee ability using this weapon, you can throw the weapon by treating the ability's distance as ranged 3 instead. When the ability is resolved, the weapon returns to your hand. Any ability used when you throw this weapon can't impose the grabbed or restrained conditions.

Merciful: Whenever you reduce a non-undead creature to 0 Stamina using this weapon, the creature falls unconscious and wakes up 1d6 hours later. A creature with the Heal skill can wake the unconscious creature early with 1 uninterrupted minute of medical treatment. Whenever the creature wakes, they regain 1 Stamina.



Terrifying I: Whenever you damage a creature with an ability using this weapon and obtain a tier 3 outcome, that creature takes 2 psychic damage.

Thundering I: Whenever you deal rolled damage to a creature using this weapon, you can push that creature 1 square after the other effects of the ability resolve.

Vengeance I: Whenever you use a damage-dealing ability using this weapon against a creature who has dealt damage to you since the end of your last turn, the ability deals an extra 2 damage.

Wingbane: Whenever you damage a flying creature using this weapon, that creature is also bleeding (save ends). While bleeding in this way, the creature takes 1 damage per square they fly. If the creature starts and ends their turn on the same solid surface, the bleeding condition ends.

5th-Level Weapon Enhancement

Item Prerequisite: A weapon with a 1st-level enhancement; varies
Project Source: Texts or lore in a language determined by the enhancement
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 150

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5th-Level Weapon Enhancements

Enchantment	Item Prerequisite	Project Source Language
Chargebreaker	An adamantine spearhead	Zaliac
Chilling II	Frozen bones from the lair of a white dragon	Yllyric
Devastating	A slaughter demon's horn	High Kuric
Disrupting II	A cutting from a century-old living tree in a graveyard	Anjali
Metamorphic	Oil from an olothec's liver	Variac
Silencing	An executioner's hood worn during the execution of a mage	The First Language
Terrifying II	Riverbed silt harvested from the Abyssal Wasteland	Variac
Thundering II	An iron rod charged by the death throes of an essence of storms	Low Kuric
Vengeance II	The remains of a sworn foe of the creature imbuing the item	Kalliak

Chargebreaker: While you wield this weapon, you have the following ability.

Stop Right There

Their momentum, your impact.

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Free Triggered Action**
Melee 1 | One enemy

Trigger: The target willingly moves adjacent to you.

Effect: The target takes 5 damage.

Chilling II: Whenever you damage a creature with an ability using this weapon and obtain a tier 3 outcome, that creature takes 6 cold damage and is slowed (save ends). This replaces the benefit of Chilling I.

Devastating: Whenever you make an ability roll using this weapon, the number you need to roll to score a critical hit is reduced by 1.

Disrupting II: Whenever you damage an undead using this weapon and leave that undead with 30 Stamina or less, they drop to 0 Stamina. This replaces the benefit of Disrupting I.

Metamorphic: You can change this weapon's shape and form as a maneuver, granting one of the following benefits of your choice:

Concealed: The weapon shrinks to the size of a piece of jewelry and can be worn as an earring, necklace, or similar accessory. While in this form, the weapon can't be used for weapon abilities.

Large: Abilities using this weapon gain a +1 melee distance bonus or a +3 ranged distance bonus.

Vicious: Whenever you damage a creature using this weapon, you deal 1 extra damage on a tier 1 outcome, 2 extra damage on a tier 2 outcome, and 3 extra damage on a tier 3 outcome.

Silencing: Whenever you damage a creature with an ability using this weapon and obtain a tier 3 outcome, that creature also can't use magic abilities until the end of their next turn.

Terrifying II: Whenever you damage a creature with an ability using this weapon and obtain a tier 3 outcome, that creature takes 4 psychic damage and is frightened (save ends). This replaces the benefit of Terrifying I.

Thundering II: Whenever you deal rolled damage to a creature using this weapon, you can push that creature up to 3 squares after the other effects of the ability resolve. If you obtained a tier 3 outcome, the creature is also knocked prone after being pushed. This replaces the benefit of Thundering I.

Vengeance II: Whenever you use a damage-dealing ability using this weapon against a creature who has dealt damage to you since the end of your last turn, the ability deals an extra 4 damage. This replaces the benefit of Vengeance I.

9th-Level Weapon Enhancement

Item Prerequisite: A weapon with a 5th-level enhancement; varies
Project Source: Texts or lore in a language determined by the enhancement
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 150

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9th-Level Weapon Enhancements

Enhancement	Item Prerequisite	Project Source Language
Chilling III	The weapon must be dipped in the Glacial Forge in the coldest depths of Hell	Yllyric
Disrupting III	Wrappings from a mummy buried at least a century ago	Anjali
Draining	The intact, still-thinking brain of a voiceless talker	Voll
Imprisoning	A chain once used to restrain an angel	Anjali
Nova	A piece of metal touched by a sun	Ullorvic
Terrifying III	The central eye of an overmind	Variac
Thundering III	An oracle of storms must willingly bless the weapon with lightning while it is being wielded, and its wielder must survive this trial	Low Kuric
Vengeance III	The true name of a devil who hunts other devils	Kalliak
Windcutting	A feather from a bird, once thought extinct, who dwells at the eye of an ever-whirling tornado	Yllyric



Chilling III: Whenever you damage a creature with an ability using this weapon and obtain a tier 3 outcome, that creature takes 9 cold damage and is slowed (save ends). This replaces the benefit of Chilling II.

Disrupting III: Whenever you damage an undead using this weapon and leave that undead with 50 Stamina or less, they immediately drop to 0 Stamina. If you instead leave the undead with 100 Stamina or less, they are frightened (save ends). This replaces the benefit of Disrupting II.

Draining: Whenever you damage a creature with an ability using this weapon and obtain a tier 3 outcome, that creature is also weakened (save ends). Each time you weaken a creature with this weapon, you gain 1 surge.

Imprisoning: Whenever you damage a creature with an ability using this weapon and obtain a tier 3 outcome, that creature is also restrained (save ends). While restrained in this way, the creature can't use magic or psionic abilities.

Nova: Whenever you damage a creature using this weapon, each enemy adjacent to you takes damage based on the tier outcome of the power roll—2 damage for tier 1, 6 for tier 2, or 10 for tier 3. Additionally, while you are winded, you gain the following ability.

Nova

I am an eternal flame, baby!

Area, Magic — 3 burst

Main action — Each enemy in the burst

Power Roll + Your Highest Characteristic Score:

≤11 — 7 fire damage

12–16 — 11 fire damage

17+ — 16 fire damage

Terrifying III: Whenever you damage a creature with an ability using this weapon and obtain a tier 3 outcome, that creature takes 6 psychic damage and is frightened (save ends). This replaces the benefit of Terrifying II.

Thundering III: Whenever you deal rolled damage to a creature using this weapon, you can vertical push that creature up to 5 squares and knock them prone after the other effects of the ability resolve. If the creature takes or deals damage as a result of this movement, they also take 5 thunder damage. This replaces the benefit of Thundering II.

Vengeance III: Whenever you use a damage-dealing ability using this weapon against a creature who has dealt damage to you since the end of your last turn, the ability deals an extra 6 damage. This replaces the benefit of Vengeance II.

Windcutting: Whenever you use a melee signature ability that normally targets one creature, you can take a bane on the ability to target each enemy in a cube 3 within distance. If your signature ability would normally cause its target to become grabbed or restrained, each target in the area is instead slowed until the end of their next turn.

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Crafting and Research Events

d100	Event
01–02	After the roll, a thief who wants the project source or an item needed for the project approaches the hero and pretends to be someone who wants to help. The thief might want to sell the project source or item, or use it to undertake the same project as the hero.
03–04	Before the roll, a traveler in need of food, shelter, or some other necessity happens upon the heroes and asks for their help. If the heroes show kindness, the traveler reveals I to be an artisan or sage who can help with the project. The traveler can contribute one project roll to the project with a +3 modifier.
05–06	Before the roll, an NPC who is already friendly with the characters and has helped them before asks the hero to let them join the project. The NPC explains that they need the project source or the object being crafted for a personal matter of great importance (saving someone's life, righting a great wrong, and so forth). The NPC can contribute one project roll to the project with a +3 modifier, but the characters must commit to letting the NPC use the finished project before they can do so.
07–08	After the roll, the hero receives a mysterious note from a person who wants to exchange a magic item or other reward for the project source when the project is complete. The buyer could be someone with their own interest in a similar project, an enemy eager to exploit what the hero is working on, or a superfan who wants to emulate the hero.
09–10	Before the roll, a pest starts devouring important components of the project. This could be rats gnawing at alchemical components, moths eating rare silks, mites devouring a printed project source, and so forth. If the pests aren't dealt with quickly, some of the components will need to be replaced.
11–12	Before the roll, a powerful supernatural entity sends an agent or premonition to the hero, offering them knowledge that will let them complete the project immediately. In exchange, the hero must agree to do a favor for the entity, which might not be specified at the time of the bargain.
13–14	Before the roll, a rumor arises that the project is being worked on in service to an evil entity. People start showing up to the hero's place of respite, demanding that they repent their wicked ways. If the rumors aren't disproved, locals form a mob to stop the project.
15–16	Before the roll, the hero's rival comes to visit and shows off a guide for the project. The rival is willing to hand the guide over … provided the hero publicly humiliates themself by proclaiming that the rival is their better.
17–18	The project source is cursed. Before the roll, the hero must succeed on a hard Intuition test or become obsessed with the project. Until the project is complete, the hero can't use Victories to increase their Heroic Resource. The curse can be broken by slaying the creature who bestowed it, or by finding a priest to perform a holy ritual over the project source.
19–20	Before the roll, the hero finds that a significant amount of the project has been completed by a group of fairies. The fairies might have completed the job out of boredom, or they might want something from the hero in return.
21–22	After the roll, the hero realizes that the project source contains only half the information they need, and they must find the rest of the information to complete the project.
23–24	After the roll, the hero discovers a new bit of knowledge or a technique that allows them to immediately start and finish a second project with a project goal of 50 or lower.
25–26	Before the roll, the hero finds that someone has attempted to sabotage their project, resulting in damage to notes, the project source, or crafting components. The damage is negligible, but the creature responsible will strike again to worse effect if not discovered.
27–28	Before the roll, the project source is found to hold additional information, letting the hero treat the project roll as an automatic breakthrough. The note could have been left by a helpful visitor, or by someone who wants the hero's work to be finished for their own gain.
29–30	After the roll, the project draws the attention of a devil, who tries to subtly change the project source from the Seven Cities of Hell. If the hero doesn't notice, the devil is summoned the next time the hero makes a project roll, with goals of the Director's determination.
31–32	Before the roll, the hero stumbles upon a tool, expert, or book that helps them with the project, letting them treat the project roll as an automatic breakthrough.
33–34	After the roll, the project source suddenly becomes impossible to understand. A psionic NPC has used a mighty power to obscure or corrupt the project source to prevent a potential catastrophe they foresaw. If the heroes can help prevent the catastrophe in another way, the NPC will end the effect.
35–36	After the roll, the hero discovers that the project source contains a piece of helpful knowledge unrelated to the current project.
37–38	Before the roll, the hero learns that several sages working on similar projects have all mysteriously disappeared. Someone or something is abducting these experts for some nefarious purpose … and the hero could be next!
39–40	After the roll, a group of scholars approach the hero and ask if they can review the project source, promising to help the hero complete the project in return. If the hero accepts, the scholars take the project source until the end of the hero's next respite. Three of the scholars then contribute project rolls during the following respite, each with a +3 modifier.
41–42	After the roll, a physical project source or crafting components come to life and attack the hero. Magic within these items has become corrupted! If the hero can fix the corruption without destroying the items, the project is saved, but doing so requires a special ritual.
43–44	After the roll, an otherworldly specter appears and warns the hero not to complete the project, explaining that they died attempting the same project and are now attached to the project source. If the hero can convince the spirit that they will not die similarly, the creature shares their knowledge, contributing one project roll to the project with a +3 modifier.
45–46	Before the roll, the servants of a dragon appear and demand that the hero hand over the project source. If the hero refuses, the servants warn that the dragon will come to claim the project source for themself.
47–48	Before the roll, the hero notices a contract written on a physical project source or other accompanying materials that appears only under certain conditions (in the presence of magic, in the light of a full moon, and so forth). The contract promises that anyone who signs it in blood will receive the true and full answer to three questions, in exchange for a week of service to the hag Corrine Withersnipe. The hag appears instantly if the contract is signed.
49–50	After the roll, an unexpected total eclipse of the sun occurs, lasting 1 hour. Once per respite when any creature makes another project roll for the project, another eclipse occurs and lasts twice as long as the previous. Some take this phenomenon as a sign of impending doom that will descend when the project is completed. Others believe that a powerful enemy is trying to scare the heroes into not finishing the project.
51–52	Before the roll, the hero gets a visit from an NPC who they helped in the past. The NPC has found a guide that relates to the project and gives it to the hero as a gift of thanks.
53–54	After the roll, a local officer of the law appears and tells the hero to stop working on their project. The nature of the hero's project has just become outlawed in the region, and the constable insists on locking up the project source and arresting anyone who gets in the way.
55–56	Before the roll, the hero determines that the research or crafting they are planning requires only part of their attention. They can either make two project rolls for their current project, or can make one for that project and one for another project.
57–58	After the roll, a component or tool the hero is using for the project suddenly reveals itself to be magic or psionic as it starts to hum with energy and glow red hot. If the item isn't quickly cooled, it explodes, and work on the project can't continue until a replacement is found.
59–60	Before the roll, the hero realizes they're at a critical point in the project, and can achieve more if they just shave off a few hours of rest. By choosing to lose some sleep, the character can make two project rolls for the project, but when they end the current respite, they do so with 1 fewer Recoveries than usual.
61–62	Before the roll, a sage approaches the hero and offers to help with the project. This NPC isn't really a sage, however—they're an assassin hoping to catch the hero off guard.
63–64	Before the roll, a sage approaches the hero and offers to help with the project. This NPC isn't really a sage, however—they're a bard who wishes to compose a song about the hero's deeds. The Is to ingratiate themself to the hero while contributing nothing to the actual project.
65–66	After the roll, a physical project source or a component of the project creates an unstable portal to another world related to the nature of the project. Tiny devils, elementals, or other creatures start clawing their way out of the item and causing mischief.
67–68	After the roll, the hero realizes that the project source also holds information regarding the location of another project source or certain items, which are needed for another project the hero or one of their allies wants to pursue.

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Crafting and Research Events

d100	Event
69–70	Before the roll, a group of enemies working for the campaign's villain attacks the hero, intent on destroying as much of the projects source or other resources as possible.
71–72	Before the roll, a storm moves into the area that threatens to persist until the project is completed. The closer to completion the hero gets on the project, the more violent the storm becomes. It's possible that the storm is conscious, or that someone is controlling the storm to stand in the hero's way.
73–74	After the roll, the hero falls asleep. They go on to complete the project in their dreams, but they have no access to that progress while they're awake. The hero can rectify this by finding a way to physically enter into their dreams, where the completed project can be found.
75–76	Before the roll, a band of goblins barge in on the hero. If the hero has been fighting goblins on their recent adventures, the goblins attempt to run away with the project source. Otherwise, the goblins are merely curious about the project, and the hero can make two project rolls if they choose to explain it and have the goblins help.
77–78	After the roll, the hero watches as any progress made is reversed—as if the project were moving backward through time. Any character familiar with psionics recognizes the phenomena as a chrono-anomaly. The project loses the same amount of progress each successive night until the hero finds and stops the source of the anomaly, which restores the project's progress.
79–80	Before the roll, the hero hears a voice beckoning them into the nearest wode to work on their project. Each time the hero makes a project roll in the wode, they make three times the progress but feel more pressure to stay in the wode forever.
81–82	After the roll, the hero stumbles upon knowledge of an expert a day's travel away who could complete the project, and who possesses a project source or guide for another hero's project.
83–84	Before the roll, fire rips through the hero's project source or other materials and threatens to destroy the entire project. If the hero puts out the fire before everything is lost, they find that the fire activated secret notes that double each subsequent project roll for the project.
85–86	After the roll, a skald NPC approaches the hero and asks if they would like to make the project "a little more exciting." If the hero agrees, the skald narrates the hero's progress on the project, prompting another project roll. If the second roll is lower than the first, the hero subtracts the second roll from the original roll. If it's equal or higher, the hero adds the second roll to the original roll.
87–88	Before the roll, the hero's rival reluctantly comes seeking the hero's help on their own project. If the hero agrees, the hero makes their project roll toward the rival's project, and the Director makes the rival's project roll toward the hero's project.
89–90	After the roll, the hero completes their work on the project earlier than expected, and can either relax or go carousing with other heroes who are free. The hero and every character who joins them starts the next encounter with 10 temporary Stamina.
91–92	Before the roll, the hero is approached by a wagoneer who needs help fixing their wagon. If the hero helps, they find out that the wagoneer is allied with the campaign's villain. If the hero doesn't attack or threaten the wagoneer, then in some future combat, an NPC of the Director's choice turns out to be a friend or relative of the wagoneer. They leave the battle peacefully when they recognize the hero.
93–94	After the roll, the project source and any evidence of the project disappear into thin air. Any investigation of the area turns up footprints fleeing the scene and traces of gnoll hair.
95–96	After the roll, the hero suddenly no longer understands or comprehends the project source after focusing on those materials for too long. If they continue with the project, they take a bane on its project rolls for the next two respites. If they leave the project alone for the next two respites, they'll be able to comprehend the research again, gaining an automatic breakthrough before the next project roll.
97–98	Before the roll, part of the hero's project source or other materials shrinks and is pulled through a mousehole. A group of radenwights sent magical mice to steal the resources so they can finish their own project. The radenwights are willing to negotiate if the hero doesn't approach them aggressively.
99–100	Before the roll, an elemental springs forth from the project source and pulls the hero into a duel. If the hero can survive 3 rounds of combat with the elemental on their own, the elemental vanishes and leaves behind a completed project. If the hero flees, falls unconscious, or gets help from an ally, the elemental destroys the project source as they disappear.



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Research Projects

Heroes can undertake many different types of research downtime projects, which can involve seeking out new lore, improving existing knowledge with study, uncovering rumors or secrets, and more.

Unless a project has a complication table of its own or a special complication entry, the Director uses the Crafting and Research Events table for research project events.

Discover Lore

Item Prerequisite: None
Project Source: Texts or knowledge related to the subject you wish to research
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason
Project Goal: Varies (see the table)

If you want to track the location of a lost treasure, decipher a ritual, or trace the lineage of a royal family to find the next heir to the throne, you can start a downtime project to delve into whatever mysteries you seek to unravel. You might start a project to discover lore because the information can't be discovered through a single test, or you could do so because you failed a test to recall information and now want to learn it through research.

When you start a downtime project to discover lore, you choose the lore you want investigated and the questions you want answered. The Director tells you if the lore you seek amounts to common, obscure, lost, or forbidden knowledge. The more esoteric the knowledge, the more project points are required to find the answers you seek.

Discover Lore Project Goals

Project	Goal
Common knowledge	15
Obscure knowledge	45
Lost knowledge	120
Forbidden knowledge	240



Common Knowledge

Common knowledge is generally easy to discover with a day or so of research. It's not known by every passerby and takes time to uncover, but with plentiful local sources for the information, you don't need to spend a lot of time searching. It could be that you need to question several members of a rumor mill to figure out who a noble is not-so-secretly courting, or you might need to spend a few hours in a temple to find the particular religious text that carries a seldom-used alternative name for a deity.

Obscure Knowledge

Obscure knowledge is known only to specialized sages and is typically of interest only to those scholars. As such, precious few tomes are written on obscure subjects. Finding the right expert to interview or the best book to read typically requires several days of research. Uncovering the details of a ritual used to open and close a portal to the Sea of Stars isn't easy information to come by, but there are people out there who know how to do it—and who wrote the instructions down.

Lost Knowledge

Lost knowledge is so esoteric that even among a field's most dedicated scholars, there might be only one or two individuals who have dug deep enough to know that lore. Lost knowledge could come from a time so long ago that only a single text in a dead language now holds the lore you seek. Such lore often takes more than a week to hunt down. The location of a legendary steel dwarf's workshop is most likely lore that is lost—except for one map hidden in a private collection.

Forbidden Knowledge

Forbidden knowledge is lore that a powerful individual or organization is attempting to keep secret. Those who know the secrets speak of them in whispered codes after passwords are exchanged, and write texts using ciphers. Hunting down leads and making sense of them typically takes weeks. The location of the dagger that slit the throat of the god of death is hidden behind layers of encoded text and written in a dead language known only to that god's most devout followers.

Go Undercover

Item Prerequisite: Special
Project Source: None
Project Roll Characteristic: Intuition or Presence
Project Goal: 15

Going undercover to spy on a group of people is a cheap and easy way to find information you're looking for. Choose an organization when you undertake this activity. Completing this project grants you access to maps, knowledge about an organization's operations, or some other piece of knowledge that would be considered common or obscure (see the Discover Lore project).

At the Director's discretion, you must have a disguise, a signet ring, a special tattoo, or some other indication that you belong to the organization in order to start this project. Additionally, the Director can decide that the knowledge you seek can't be gained through this project, but must be sought out by infiltrating the organization as part of an adventure.

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Complications

This project has its own special complications. The first time you complete this project for an organization, you have a 25 percent chance of being caught. Each time you complete this project again with the same organization, the chance of being caught increases by 25 percent and the project goal increases by 30. If you are caught while going undercover, members of the organization pursue you ruthlessly as the Director determines.

Additionally, while you work to complete this project, you might be called upon by the organization to complete a task you might not want to do. Failure to complete the task leads to you being caught. You can avoid the task by fleeing the organization, but this prevents you from completing the project and makes it impossible for you to undertake this project again with the same organization.

Hone Career Skills

Item Prerequisite: None
Project Source: None
Project Roll Characteristic: Intuition
Project Goal: 240 if your career granted you two skills, or 360 if your career granted you three skills

You revisit your previous life to freshen up on the experience it provided you. When this project is complete, you gain an edge on tests made using the skills provided by your career.

Hone Career Skills Events

d10	Event
1	Before the roll, an old colleague from the hero's past asks the hero to give up adventuring and come back to their former career. A hero who reaffirms their intent to remain a hero gains a hero token. However, if they do so—or if they lie to say they will return to their old career—the project goal increases by 50 points as their old colleague refuses to help them.
2	After the roll, the hero is hurt on the job. They end the respite with 1 fewer Recoveries than usual.
3	Before the roll, the hero stumbles upon an individual seeking guidance about entering the same career as the hero. If the hero forgoes their project roll to help this NPC, the individual becomes one of the hero's followers, which they gain in addition to any followers acquired through Renown or other means. The follower is an artisan or a sage depending on the hero's career, as the Director determines.
4	After the roll, the hero finds inspiration from their old life that helps out with a different project they or another hero are currently working on. The hero working on the second project can immediately make a project roll for that project.
5	Before the roll, the hero stumbles into a negative aspect of their career that they forgot was particularly grueling. If the project roll is 11 or lower, it is halved.
6	After the roll, the hero learns rumors of a treasure of the Director's choice that other members of the hero's previous career are seeking. If the hero doesn't seek the treasure ahead of time, they automatically determine where the treasure is to be found when they complete their project.
7	Before the roll, a vaguely familiar stranger in the same career asks if they can work with the hero on their project. If the hero accepts their help, the stranger makes one project roll for the project with a +2 modifier. Only afterward does the hero learn whether the stranger supports their motivation for working on the project or whether they work for the campaign's villain.
8	After the roll, the hero strangely feels 5 years younger. Any character familiar with psionics recognizes the phenomena as a chrono-anomaly. The hero grows younger each time they make progress on the project—but will cease to exist if they complete the project without first finding and stopping the source of the anomaly.
9	Before the roll, the hero stumbles upon an old memento from when they worked their former career. They can choose between gaining an automatic breakthrough on the project roll or gaining a hero token.
10	After the roll, the hero gets back into the rhythm of their former career. They can make two additional project rolls.

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Learn From a Master

When you seek to learn from a master, you choose the goal you wish to work on as well as the benefit you would gain from it. The Director tells you whether the master or the materials they've left behind are able to teach you what you want to learn.

Discover Lore Project Goals

Project	Goal
Hone ability	120
Improve control	500
Acquire ability	1,000

Acquire Ability

You gain one signature ability of your choice from the master's class (gaining a second signature ability if the master is of the same class as you). If the master is a tactician, you can gain the Strike Now ability instead. You can't gain this benefit again for the same class.

Hone Ability

You sharpen the effectiveness of one of your abilities of your choice. Choose between adding a +1/+1/+1 damage bonus to the ability, or improving the distance of a ranged ability by 2. An ability can be honed only once this way.

Improve Control

You learn to use one of your heroic abilities more efficiently, reducing its baseline Heroic Resource cost by 1 (to a minimum of 1). You can gain this benefit only once for any ability.

Learn From a Master Events

d10	Event
1	After the roll, the hero experiences a revelation and all their training snaps into place. The hero makes two additional project rolls for this project.
2	Before the roll, the master dies midway through training, or the lore they left behind is found to be incomplete. To complete the project, the hero must seek out another master who was trained by the first master, or find another copy of the records of their teaching.
3	Before the roll, the hero discovers that although the master's knowledge is sound, they are less adept at the teaching of that knowledge. The project requires an additional 50 project points to complete.
4	Before the roll, the master requires the hero's aid with manual labor before their training can begin. The hero must spend this respite completing that labor, earning a hero token for their efforts instead of making a project roll.
5	Before the roll, the hero must undertake the master's grueling training regimen. The hero rolls an additional d10 for the project roll during this respite, but when the respite ends, they lose 1 Recovery.
6	After the roll, the hero's relationship with the master deepens. In addition to the current project, the master provides information relevant to the hero's goals, another project, or a surprising connection to a mystery from the hero's past.
7	Before the roll, the hero discovers that the master has been working with an enemy of the hero by covertly providing them information about the hero's activities. The hero can continue learning from the master, but risks exposing themselves and their allies to danger by doing so.
8	After the roll, an accident, fire, or other natural disaster disrupts the hero's training. The project points rolled for this respite are halved, but if the hero acts to stop the disaster, their heroism sees them earn 1 Renown.
9	After the roll, the master gifts the hero with an item prerequisite for a crafting project.
10	After the roll, the hero uncovers a secret in their studies, something that the master had never anticipated or that their teachings hadn't covered. The project goal is halved.

Learn New Language

Item Prerequisite: None
Project Source: Texts or instruction that teaches the language you want to learn
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 120

When you start this project, choose a language taught by the project source. When the project is complete, you understand the language.

Learn New Skill

Item Prerequisite: None
Project Source: Texts or instruction that teaches the skill you want to learn
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 120

When you start this project, choose a skill taught by the project source. When the project is complete, you have that skill.

Perfect New Recipe

Item Prerequisite: Varies
Project Source: A recipe in a language you know, or someone who can tutor you in that recipe
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 100

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When you start this project, you choose a recipe for a specific type of dish. The item prerequisite for the project is the ingredients required, which depend on the recipe and which might be difficult to acquire depending on the recipe and its place of origin. You gain a +3 bonus to the project roll if the recipe is one from your culture.

When you complete the project, you can make five servings of food from the recipe as a respite activity whenever you have access to the ingredients. You and other creatures taking a respite with you can eat a serving of the food and gain its benefits (see below).

Recipes

Type of Recipe	Item Prerequisite	Benefits
Modern	Common ingredients (flour, carrots, beef, and so forth)	Hearty
Vintage or home	Key ingredients (starfruit, kindleseeds, oarfish, and so forth)	Comforting
Ancient or lost	Rare or extinct ingredients (honeylilies, steel apples, and so forth)	Supernatural power

A creature who eats a serving of food from a particular type of recipe gains one of the following benefits, which lasts until the creature takes another respite.

Comforting: When the creature fails a saving throw, they can choose to succeed instead. This benefit then ends.
Hearty: The creature increases their Recoveries by 1 at the end of the respite in which the food is consumed.
Supernatural Power: The creature temporarily increases one of their characteristic scores by 1 (to a maximum of 6).

A creature can benefit from the food of only one recipe at a time, and can't benefit from more than one serving of a recipe at a time.

Other Projects

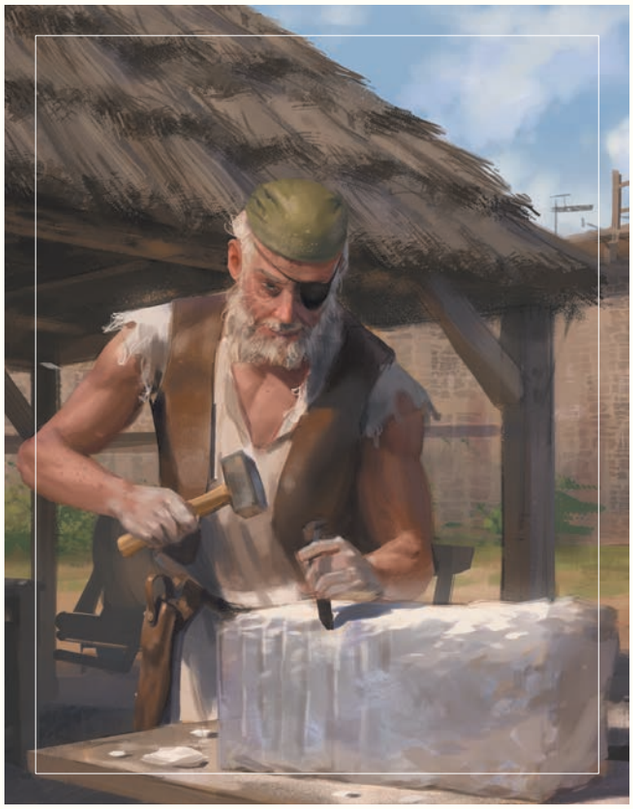
Not all heroes want to craft or research during their time between adventures. Some might wish to build organizations, reconnect with family or friends, or just go fishing.

Community Service

Item Prerequisite: None
Project Source: None
Project Roll Characteristic: Varies
Project Goal: 75

When you start this project, you must be in a settlement or other location where people gather, and you must be in that same place each time you make a project roll for the project. You can undertake several Community Service projects at the same time, but each one must be in a different community.

While undertaking this project, you provide help to people in need, doing odd jobs, tutoring life skills, cleaning streets or public spaces, finding lost valuables, and the like. The Director determines the characteristic that applies to the project roll based on the activities you undertake. When you complete this project, you receive a random consumable treasure of the Director's choice from someone in the community as thanks for your hard work.



Community Service Events

d10	Event
1	After the roll, the hero's service is recognized by the local nobility or authorities. Upon completion of the project, the hero earns 1 Renown.
2	Before the roll, a mysterious force hinders the work in an unfortunate way, with tools going missing, tutoring materials vanishing, cleaning supplies turning up already filthy, and so forth. The hero can't continue the project until the culprit—a maligned devil or spirit connected to the hero's past—is identified and dealt with.
3	Before the roll, the community is so excited by the project that they join in to lend a hand. The project gains an automatic breakthrough.
4	Before the roll, a sympathetic NPC—perhaps a friend or ally from the community or from the hero's past—offers to assist with the project. The hero gains a +3 bonus to the project roll.
5	Before the roll, work on the project unearths a previously lost detail of the community—a lost or hidden section of a settlement, a surprising historical detail, a secret regarding a prominent local, and so forth. The locals take a keen interest in the development, but the revelation threatens to tear the community apart. If the character can't take steps to undo this strife, they take a bane on the project roll.
6	After the roll, a seemingly benign action taken by the hero curses them with bad luck. Until they break the curse, all project rolls they make are halved.
7	After the roll, a saint blesses the hero's work. The hero feels supernaturally rejuvenated, increasing their Recoveries by 1 until the end of their next respite. If the character is a conduit, they also gain an automatic breakthrough on the project.
8	Before the roll, the hero becomes aware of a previously unknown radenwight warren within the community, which has the potential to become a point of tension and conflict. The hero must engage with the radenwights and other locals to create understanding between the two communities or take a bane on the project roll.
9	Before the roll, a local malcontent has turned their focus on the hero and roused the people against them. The hero must either contend with angry locals preventing them from resting (losing the usual benefit of the respite) or find the malcontent and win them over before proceeding.
10	Before the roll, a thief, assassin, or other criminal offers to assist the hero. They can offer 50 points toward the completion of the project, as long as the hero looks the other way if they ever cross paths again.

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Fishing

Item Prerequisite: None
Project Source: None
Project Roll Characteristic: Agility, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: Varies

Whether for sustenance, relaxation, or bragging rights, you've gone fishing, provided you are near a body of water. The project roll for this project has the following changes:

- The project points earned by your roll represent the relative size of the fish (or some other fishlike creature) you catch.
- During each respite when you undertake this activity, you continue making project rolls until you obtain a tier 1 outcome (indicating that a fish got away, earning you no points) or a breakthrough.
- When you obtain a breakthrough, the Director rolls on the Fishing Events table rather than you gaining points from the roll and making another project roll.
- When you've made your last Fishing project roll for the respite, you can spend the project points you accrued on a reward from the Tackle table. Any points you don't spend during the current respite are lost.

Tackle

Reward	Cost	Effect
Hearty meal (1 serving)	50	A creature who eats a serving of a meal prepared with the fish caught during the project increases their Recoveries by 1 until the end of their next respite. A creature can benefit from only one serving of this meal or another like it (such as from the Perfect New Recipe project) at a time.
Great meal (1 serving)	100	A creature who eats a serving of a meal prepared with the fish caught during the project increases their Recoveries by 1 until the end of their next respite, and gains 10 temporary Stamina that lasts until the end of their next respite if it isn't lost first. A creature can benefit only from one serving of this meal or another like it (such as from the Perfect New Recipe project) at a time.
Better tackle	120	You gain the following title and benefit. **Angler:** You gain an edge on Fishing project rolls.
Fishing event	200	You roll on the Fishing Events table.
Legendary fisher	300	You gain the following title and benefit. **Goldenrod:** Each time you undertake the Fishing project, you can reroll one project roll.

Fishing Events

d10	Event
1	While fishing, the hero reels in a talking fish. The fish informs the hero of any events that have occurred within 10 squares of the body of water where they were caught over the last week, or provides one piece of Forbidden Knowledge (see the Discover Lore project), as the Director determines.
2	While fishing, the hero reels in a note in a bottle. The note is written in Anjali and binds the reader into a deal with a powerful devil if read out loud. This gives the devil ownership of the reader's soul in exchange for rolling an additional d10 on all future Fishing project rolls.
3	While the hero is fishing, passersby inform them of a rumor of a magic fishing rod that allows the fisher to double the size of the fish they reel in. The Director can decide whether the rumor is true, and if so, where the rod might be found.
4	While fishing, the hero reels in an **angulotl daybringer** (see *Draw Steel: Monsters*). The angulotl is insulted by the hero catching them, and threatens to summon heavy thunderstorms and drown the region in a flood. However, they can be negotiated with, and might provide the hero with one serving of an amazing meal if they stay on good terms. A creature who eats a serving of this meal increases their Recoveries by 1 until the end of their next respite, and gains 25 temporary Stamina that lasts until the end of their next respite if it isn't lost first. A creature can benefit only from one serving of this meal or another like it (such as from the Perfect New Recipe project) at a time.
5	While fishing, the hero reels in half of a mysterious ancient treasure of the Director's choice. If the other half is found, both halves magically meld together to restore the treasure.
6	While fishing, the hero is energized by fond memories of their life up to that point. They gain an edge on Presence tests until the end of their next respite.
7	The hero reaches a new fishing milestone, gaining the following title and benefit. **Master of Reels:** Whenever you deal damage to a target who is 2 or more squares away from you and that target isn't also force moved, you can pull the target a number of squares equal to your Agility, Reason, or Presence score (your choice).
8	While fishing, the hero engages in relaxing meditation that grants an automatic breakthrough on another project they're working on. Alternatively, they gain insight that grants an automatic breakthrough on another hero's project of their choice.
9	While fishing, the hero is pulled into the water by an ancient fish and must make a hard Might test. On a success, the hero reels in a humongous fish worth 100 points. On a failure, they end the current respite with 1 fewer Recoveries than usual. On a success with a complication, the hero obtains both outcomes.
10	While fishing, the hero notes what appears to be an underwater cavern. If the cavern is explored, it reveals a treasure of the Director's choice guarded by a revenant knight fulfilling their duty until their captain returns.

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Spend Time With Loved Ones

Item Prerequisite: None
Project Source: None
Project Roll Characteristic: Presence
Project Goal: 60

You revitalize your spirit by spending time with people you love who you haven't seen in a long while. You must be able to communicate with those people to undertake this project or make project rolls for it. When you complete this project, your Stamina maximum increases by 12 + your level until the end of your next respite, and you can't start another Spend Time With Loved Ones project for a month.

Spend Time With Loved Ones Events

d10	Event
1	Before the roll, the hero is presented with an heirloom, artifact, or secret that aids another project they've undertaken or want to undertake. They can immediately make a project roll for that project as well as for this one.
2	Before the roll, the hero's people embrace their loved one's companions as their own. Additional party members can make one project roll each for this project without doing so as a respite activity. When the project is completed, each character who contributed a project roll gains the benefit of completion.
3	Before the roll, the hero's enemies track them to the home or community of their loved ones. These enemies immediately launch an attack, hoping to catch the hero off guard.
4	After the roll, the hero learns that a distant friend or family member has joined the cause of their enemies. Their loved ones plead with the hero to bring this person back home safely.
5	After the roll, a loved one gives the hero a consumable treasure to aid them in their travels.
6	After the roll, the hero's loved ones share that they have been subjected to a curse. The only way to lift the curse is by returning an heirloom to its place of origin.
7	Before the roll, the hero meets an old friend who is a more experienced adventurer. They offer to mentor the hero in exchange for a treasure or favor. If the hero accepts, they also complete the Learn From a Master project when this project is complete, with the Director choosing the NPC's class.
8	Before the roll, the hero discovers that by returning, they've put the community surrounding their loved ones in danger, either with the authorities or an opposing power in the region. To complete the project, the hero needs to earn the trust of that community.
9	After the roll, the hero learns that spending time with loved ones isn't always as rejuvenating as one hopes. Completing the project requires an additional 20 project points thanks to difficult friends or relatives.
10	Before the roll, the hero's loved ones ask if the hero would like to cook with them. If the hero accepts, they can apply their project roll both to this project and to the Perfect New Recipe project. If the hero is not currently undertaking the Perfect New Recipe project, they start that project and their loved ones provide the item prerequisite and project source.



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Chapter 13

REWARDS

Virtue is its own reward ... but wouldn't a magic sword also be kind of nice? As heroes adventure, they find and craft treasures even as they are awarded titles, earn renown, attract followers, and amass wealth. This chapter presents all the various rewards a hero can earn during their career! As you read over the rewards within, make note of the treasures and titles your hero would like to earn. Then you can start pursuing them during your adventures.

TREASURES

You've helped save the world! Or at least a corner of that world important to you. Now you deserve the treasures that can help you do so even more efficiently next time. So claim your magic sword, psionic shield, and Catapult Dust, and ride to your next adventure!

Treasures are the supernatural items that heroes find on their adventures, or that they craft themselves to help with their heroics. You might claim a magic whip from a bandit captain or create a psionic necklace that will help you take down a dread cult.

Treasures come in all shapes and sizes, and are broken down into four types.

Consumables are the most numerous treasures. These include potions, dusts, and other items that are consumed by you when you activate them. Most consumables can be used only once!

Trinkets are treasures with supernatural properties that never fade. These include magic bags, boots, cloaks, gloves, jewelry, and other oddities.

Leveled treasures are treasures that become even more powerful in the hands of a higher-level hero. They connect with their user, building a bond that fuels the item's supernatural power. Armor, implements, and weapons are the most common types of leveled treasure.

Artifacts are treasures of legendary power that can change or shape an adventure—or even an entire campaign. Each of these game-breaking items is unique, highly coveted, and well guarded.

Found, Earned, or Crafted

The rules of the game account for worlds where the average person—sometimes even the average noble—doesn't have regular access to treasures. There might be an apothecary in the capital city of a region, but they're selling herbal remedies, not supernatural potions. In Vasloria, a town blacksmith isn't selling magic maces, and the local tailor doesn't make psionic capes. There simply aren't enough treasures readily available to create a good trade economy. Word sometimes gets around of mysterious clubs where heroes and treasure seekers can meet up to swap items, but the constant threat of thieves makes such markets difficult to find.

Most treasures are found as part of adventures. Many people concoct dastardly schemes, but only those with the will and power to enact that vision become villains—and acquiring treasures of great power is often part of a villain's plans. As such, the heroes who vanquish those evildoers often get to claim those treasures for themselves. At other times, generous and well-off individuals such as monarchs and powerful mages can reward treasures as thanks for heroic deeds.

Heroes can also craft their own treasures, forging the tools they need to get the job done using the rules in Chapter 12: Downtime Projects. Items that can be crafted have their item prerequisite, project source, project roll characteristic, and project goal (the number of project points needed to complete the project) noted in their descriptions.

What Does This Treasure Do?

When a hero finds a treasure, they learn its properties if they examine it for 5 uninterrupted minutes, unless the item's description says otherwise.

Treasure Item Prerequisite

Each treasure has an item prerequisite necessary for crafting it. The exact nature of many of the materials used as an item's prerequisite is left nebulous so that the Director can more easily work those materials into a campaign. What's a mindspider, and how rare is their silk? That's for the Director to decide, whether they want to drop prerequisite items into their planned adventures or craft an entire side quest around finding them.

Wearing Treasures

Many treasures, such as cloaks, jewelry, hats, and boots, must be worn. Unless the Director deems otherwise, these items supernaturally resize themselves to fit the creature using them.

Wearable treasures have keywords that indicate which part of the body they are meant to adorn—Arms, Feet, Hands, Head, Neck, or Waist. The Ring keyword marks treasures typically worn on the finger. You can wear any number of treasures that have the same body keyword as long as the Director deems it reasonable. For example, it might be fine for a four-armed time raider to wear two pairs of bracers, but the Director might decide that the same hero can't benefit from wearing two magic cloaks at once. If the Director decides you're wearing too many treasures with the same body keyword, none of those treasures function.

Though body keywords indicate where a treasure is meant to be worn, treasures can still function if worn on other parts of the body. For example, a hero without ears or who just wants to have a different look might wear an earring as a piercing anywhere else they desire.

If a wearable treasure comes as a set, such as a pair of bracers, boots, or earrings, all items in the set must be worn to gain the treasure's benefits.

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Wielding Treasures

Some treasures are wielded in the form of weapons or implements. A weapon might have the Light Weapon, Medium Weapon, or Heavy Weapon keywords, or might have a keyword denoting a specific category of weapon (Bow , Polearm, and so forth). An implement might have the Implement keyword or a keyword denoting the type of implement (Orb, Wand, and so forth). Armor is also considered a wielded treasure, with the Light Armor, Medium Armor, or Heavy Armor keywords, or the Shield keyword.

A hero can wield as many weapons, implements, suits of armor, or shields as they can feasibly hold or wear. However, an ability can benefit only from one weapon or implement at a time.

Treasures and Kits

To gain the benefits of a weapon or armor treasure, the treasure must have keywords that match the equipment of your kit. For instance, a hero using the Warrior Priest kit can benefit from wearing a heavy armor treasure and wielding light weapon treasures, since those are part of that kit. But they gain no benefit from using treasures that are light armor, medium armor, shields, medium weapons, or heavy weapons.

If your hero doesn't use a kit, they can't gain benefits from using armor or weapon treasures unless they have a feature that says otherwise, such as the conduit's Prayer of Soldier's Skill.

Magic and Psionic Treasures

The Magic and Psionic keywords for treasures refer to how those treasures are created, not how they are used. Just as magic potions and swords aren't limited only to characters who wield magic themselves, the Magic and Psionic keywords don't restrict the use of treasures to only certain types of characters, so that an implement with the Magic keyword can be used to enhance abilities with the Psionic keyword, and vice versa. Treasures that have the Magic or Psionic keyword and are used to enhance an ability don't add those keywords to the ability.

Stamina Bonuses and Damage Bonuses

If two treasures give a creature a bonus to their Stamina or a bonus to the rolled damage of their abilities, only the higher bonus applies unless the treasure's description notes otherwise. Stamina bonuses and damage bonuses from consumables ignore this rule, and can be stacked with other Stamina bonuses and damage bonuses granted by treasures.

Other Sections

The rules for using treasures refer to lots of other parts of the game. You can find information on specific topics as follows:

Recoveries, respites, Victories: Chapter 1: The Basics

Languages: Chapter 4: Background

Abilities, conditions, potencies, surges: Chapter 5: Classes

Item creation rules, crafting and research projects: Chapter 12: Downtime Projects

Actions and maneuvers, creature size, damage and Stamina, dying and death, movement and forced movement, winded: Chapter 10: Combat

Consumables

Consumables are treasures that can be used a limited number of times before they expire, losing whatever makes them supernatural. You can drink a potion once, and when you do so, that's it. It's consumed. Other consumables might have a specific number of charges that can be spent. Once those charges are gone, the treasure is useless.

Consumables are organized by echelon to make life easy for the Director handing them out (see Echelons of Play in Chapter 1: The Basics). As a guideline, a hero should always be able to find consumable treasures or the materials required to craft consumables of their echelon and lower. For example, heroes who are 5th level should be able to find consumables of 1st and 2nd echelon. In some cases, the Director might decide to award consumables of an echelon higher than the heroes' echelon, but such a choice means giving the heroes more power than the encounter-building guidelines in *Draw Steel: Monsters* accounts for.

Your character can carry any number of consumables at a time.

1st-Echelon Consumables

This section presents 1st-echelon consumable treasures in alphabetical order.

Black Ash Dart

A diamond-shaped dart holds a shimmering black vial at its core.

Keywords: Magic
Item Prerequisite: Three vials of black ash from the College of Black Ash
Project Source: Texts or lore in Szetch
Project Roll Characteristic: Agility or Intuition
Project Goal: 45 (yields 1d3 darts, or three darts if crafted by a shadow)

Effect: As a maneuver, you make a ranged free strike using a black ash dart. The strike deals an extra 1 damage and adds the following effects to the tier outcomes of the power roll:

- ≤11 You can teleport the target up to 2 squares.
- 12–16 You can teleport the target up to 4 squares.
- 17+ You can teleport the target up to 6 squares.

Blood Essence Vial

A brittle glass tube has a ruby set atop it, attached by a hinge.

Keywords: Potion, Psionic
Item Prerequisite: A ruby purloined from a vampire
Project Source: Texts or lore in Proto-Ctholl
Project Roll Characteristic: Agility or Reason
Project Goal: 45

Effect: When you damage an adjacent creature who has blood, you can capture the target's life essence in this vial (no action required). Record the damage you dealt. You can capture life essence in the vial only once. As a maneuver, you drink the contents of the vial to regain Stamina equal to half the damage dealt. If you spend 1 Heroic Resource while you drink, you regain Stamina equal to the damage dealt. Once you drink from the vial, it crumbles to dust.

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Buzz Balm

This cooling orange salve crackles and pops when exposed to the air.

Keywords: Magic, Oil
Item Prerequisite: An ounce of demon honey
Project Source: Texts or lore in Kalliak
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 45

Effect: As a maneuver, you rub the balm on your body and feel it tingle across your skin. You immediately end the bleeding and weakened conditions on yourself, and you gain a +2 bonus to speed until the start of your next turn.

Catapult Dust

A small leather pouch is filled with this fine blue powder.

Keywords: Magic
Item Prerequisite: An ounce of witherite crystal
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 45

Effect: Catapult Dust was developed as a cost-effective magic siege weapon. As a main action, you pour the dust out in an adjacent unoccupied space to fill an area as large as a 2 cube. At the start of your next turn, the ground at the bottom of the area erupts violently upwards and in a direction of your choice. Any unattended objects in the area, or creatures who have entered the area since the dust was poured, are launched in an arc that is 6 + 1d6 squares long and 3 + 1d6 squares high.

Giant's-Blood Flame

A small pot is filled with a viscous, ochre oil that smells of sulfur and burnt hair.

Keywords: Magic, Oil
Item Prerequisite: One vial of fire giant blood
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 45

Effect: As a maneuver, you coat a weapon in this oil and ignite it. The weapon burns persistently and without harming itself until it is extinguished as a maneuver. Whenever you use a weapon ability that deals rolled damage using a weapon that is ignited this way, the ability deals an extra 2 fire damage.

Alternatively, you can use a maneuver to throw the pot up to 5 squares, coating the square where it lands and any creatures or objects in that square with a sticky flammable oil. If the oil takes any fire damage, it burns persistently and deals 5 fire damage at the end of each of your turns to anything it has coated. A creature covered in the oil or who can reach it can use a main action to extinguish the flames and end the effect.

Growth Potion

This thick green liquid tastes of licorice and potatoes.

Keywords: Magic, Potion
Item Prerequisite: A half-pound of seagrass
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 45

Effect: As a maneuver, you can drink this potion or pour it over an object of size 2 or smaller, causing the target's size to increase by 1. If you are the target, your Stamina and Stability are doubled, you gain an edge on Might tests, and your weapon abilities that deal rolled damage gain a damage bonus equal to your highest characteristic score. You shrink back to your original size after 3 rounds, halving your current Stamina and Stability, and losing the potion's other benefits. Objects maintain their new size permanently.

Healing Potion

Thick and red, this liquid tastes of sour beer.

Keywords: Magic, Potion
Item Prerequisite: An ounce of costmary leaves
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 45

Effect: When you drink this potion as a maneuver, you regain Stamina equal to your recovery value without spending a Recovery.

Imp's Tongue

The tongue of an imp has been dried and preserved. Yuck.

Keywords: Magic
Item Prerequisite: One imp's tongue
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 45

Effect: As a maneuver, you place the imp's tongue on your own tongue, causing it to reconstitute and attach itself to your tongue. While attached, the Imp's Tongue allows you to speak any language and understand any language spoken to you. This benefit ends after 1 hour, when the tongue is absorbed into your body.

Lachomp Tooth

A thumb-sized serrated tooth manages to scratch your flesh in some way whenever it is handled.

Keywords: Psionic
Item Prerequisite: A leftover carcass of a lachomp meal
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 45 (yields 1d3 teeth)

Effect: As a maneuver, you attach a lachomp tooth to a weapon, allowing that weapon to supernaturally flicker in and out of reality. Your next strike that uses the weapon can tear through multiple targets in a line (for a ranged strike) or surrounding you (for a melee strike). The strike adds the following effects to the tier outcomes of the power roll:

- ≤11 You can affect one additional target with this strike.
- 12–16 You can affect up to three additional targets with this strike.
- 17+ You can affect up to seven additional targets with this strike.

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Mirror Token

A gold-rimmed, mirror-faced coin trembles in the hand as if it were repelled by your touch.

Keywords: Psionic
Item Prerequisite: Three sheets of glass, sunbaked gold dust
Project Source: Texts or lore in Variac
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 45

Effect: While the Mirror Token is on your person and you are targeted by a ranged strike, you can use a triggered action to crush the token and ignore the strike. Half the damage you would have taken and any effects of the triggering strike are imposed on the creature making the strike.

Pocket Homunculus

A densely interlocking sphere of clockwork gears features facets that show the countenance of the item's wielder.

Keywords: Psionic
Item Prerequisite: A strip of starmetal coated in the blood of the item's crafter
Project Source: Texts or lore in Zaliac
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason
Project Goal: 45

Effect: When activated as a maneuver, this item erupts in a bright flash, you can shift 1 square without your enemies noticing your movement, and a homunculus perfectly resembling you appears in an adjacent space. The homunculus is a creature with Stamina 15, a 0 in all their characteristics, and a speed and stability equal to yours. They appear indistinguishable from you but can't use any abilities.

While you have line of effect to your homunculus, you can use a maneuver to issue them a telepathic command. The homunculus performs the command to the best of their ability. If not commanded, the homunculus mimics your movements and speech. When you move, the homunculus moves with you, matching your pace. The homunculus crumbles to dust after 1 hour or if reduced to 0 Stamina.

Portable Cloud

This thin glass sphere holds a tiny roiling cloud.

Keywords: Magic
Item Prerequisite: A cup of rainwater from a sacred fey grove, plus an optional prerequisite (see below)
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 30 or 45 (see below)

Effect: As a maneuver, you throw this delicate glass sphere up to 5 squares, breaking it and creating a 4 cube of fog. The fog dissipates after 10 minutes or if a strong gust of wind created by a storm or magic passes through the area.

Enterprising mages within various thieves' guilds have developed variations of the Portable Cloud. Each variation has a secondary item prerequisite and a project goal of 45.

Noxious Cloud: Filled with a green or putrid yellow haze, this sphere spreads a choking, foul-smelling mist when broken. Each creature who enters the cloud for the first time in a combat round or starts their turn there takes 5 poison damage. Additionally, any creature is weakened while in the fog. *Additional Item Prerequisite:* An ounce of undead flesh.

Thunderhead Cloud: Small lightning bolts arc around the black cloud in this sphere, which creates a 3 cube of cloud and lightning when broken. Each creature who enters the cloud for the first time in a combat round or starts their turn there takes 5 lightning damage. Additionally, any creature is slowed while in the cloud. *Additional Item Prerequisite:* A spool of copper wire.

Professor Veratismo's Quaff 'n Huff Snuff

This tiny compact holds a colorless powder with the slightest astringent smell.

Keywords: Potion, Psionic
Item Prerequisite: The roots of a just-budded nightshade
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason
Project Goal: 45

Effect: As a maneuver, you sprinkle a dose of this powder onto food or drink, or blow it at an adjacent creature who is grabbed, restrained, or unconscious. A creature who is exposed to blown powder (even if they hold their breath) or consumes a dose of the powder must communicate in only true statements for 1 hour. Additionally, other creatures gain an edge on Intuition and Presence tests made to convince the target to communicate, or to read the target's emotions. Any such creature has a double edge on the test if the target doesn't realize they've been affected by the snuff.

Snapdragon

This delicate orange blossom has a sickly-sweet smell.

Keywords: Magic
Item Prerequisite: Fifty snapdragon seeds
Project Source: Texts or lore in Yllyric
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 45 (yields 1d6 + 1 snapdragons)

Effect: As a maneuver, you sniff a magic snapdragon blossom, causing it to whither and making your movements more forceful and explosive. The next damage-dealing ability you use deals an extra 5 damage and gains a +2 bonus to the distance of any forced movement it imposes. If the ability does not impose forced movement, you can push each creature targeted by the ability up to 2 squares.

2nd-Echelon Consumables

This section presents 2nd-echelon consumable treasures in alphabetical order.

Breath of Dawn

A glass flask contains a whirl of gentle sunlight.

Keywords: Psionic
Item Prerequisite: The breath of a mystic sage captured at sunrise
Project Source: Texts or lore in Hyrallic
Project Roll Characteristic: Intuition or Presence
Project Goal: 90

Effect: As a maneuver, you inhale the Breath of Dawn and are overcome with tranquility. You immediately end the frightened, slowed, and taunted conditions on yourself, and you gain a +8 bonus to Stability until the end of the encounter.

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Bull Shot

Tiny chips of white bone float within this dark potion, which carries the scent of beef broth.

Keywords: Magic, Potion
Item Prerequisite: One vial of pure bovine essence
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 90

Effect: When you drink this potion as a maneuver, you sprout 3-foot sharpened horns from your forehead. Whenever you use the Charge main action, the target of your strike is gored upon your horns and grabbed. While grabbed this way, the creature is bleeding. You can also grab another creature with your limbs. The horns harmlessly fall off your head at the end of the encounter.

Chocolate of Immovability

This decadent-looking treat feels strangely heavy in the hand.

Keywords: Magic
Item Prerequisite: A chocolate made by a gnome confectioner
Project Source: Texts or lore in Variac
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 90

Effect: When you consume this delicious piece of candy as a maneuver, you gain 15 temporary Stamina and a +10 bonus to stability. Additionally, if you don't use your movement during your turn, any strikes you make on that turn deal an extra 5 damage, and any strikes against you take a bane until the start of your next turn. This effect and the bonus to stability lasts until the end of the encounter, after which you are sleepy. If not reduced beforehand, the temporary Stamina lasts until the end of your next respite.

Concealment Potion

This dark, viscous liquid tastes like burnt leaves.

Keywords: Potion, Psionic
Item Prerequisite: An ounce of sap from a tree damaged by psionic fire
Project Source: Texts or lore in Yllyric
Project Roll Characteristic: Agility or Intuition
Project Goal: 90

Effect: When you drink this potion as a maneuver, light shifts around your body, letting you blend into the environment around you for 10 minutes. While this effect is active, you have a double edge on tests made to hide and sneak, and you can use the Hide maneuver even while you are observed.

Float Powder

A glass vial holds translucent flakes that twinkle in the light.

Keywords: Magic
Item Prerequisite: Several strands of hag hair
Project Source: Texts or lore in Khelt
Project Roll Characteristic: Intuition or Presence
Project Goal: 90 (yields 1d3 vials)

Effect: Dousing yourself in this powder as a maneuver causes you to weightlessly float off the ground. For 1 hour, your stability is reduced to 0, and you can fly and hover. Additionally, the hag that the powder is sourced from knows exactly where and when you use it.

Purified Jelly

This clear, pasty substance has a bitter aroma.

Keywords: Potion, Psionic
Item Prerequisite: A cup of algae from glacial water
Project Source: Texts or lore in Yllyric
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 90 (yields 1d3 doses)

Effect: Consuming this potion as a maneuver causes your skin to shimmer and a set of tiny gills to appear on your neck or shoulders. For 1 hour, you can breathe in any environment, and you ignore the effects of harmful gases, vapors, and inhaled poisons.

Scroll of Resurrection

This scroll is marked by sigils of power, death, and life.

Keywords: Magic, Scroll
Item Prerequisite: A sheet of paper infused with the dust of a painite
Project Source: Texts or lore in the First Language
Project Roll Characteristic: Intuition or Presence
Project Goal: 90

Effect: As a respite activity, you repeatedly chant the contents of this scroll over the remains of a creature who has been dead for less than 1 year. The creature's soul must be willing to return to life for the scroll to work. If they are not willing, you instinctively understand that as you start the respite activity and can cease it immediately. The scroll is not consumed, and you can undertake a new respite activity.

A creature with a willing soul returns to life at the end of the respite with full Stamina and half their Recoveries. You regain only half your Recoveries at the end of the respite, and the scroll is consumed.

Telemagnet

A short iron wand shaped of interlocking segments leaks greasy black oil from its joints.

Keywords: Psionic
Item Prerequisite: A shard of prismacore, an ounce of ferrous metal
Project Source: Texts or lore in Zaliac
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 90

Effect: As a maneuver, you snap this wand in half, letting you vertically pull one object or creature of size 3 or less a number of squares based on that target's size:

- **Size 1L or smaller:** vertical pull 6
- **Size 2:** vertical pull 3
- **Size 3:** vertical pull 1

If you pull a size 1T object adjacent to you, you can catch it.

Vial of Ethereal Attack

Clear liquid seems to constantly churn within an obsidian vial, even when at rest.

Keywords: Psionic
Item Prerequisite: A signed agreement with a ghost, a large obsidian disk
Project Source: Texts or lore in Anjali
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 90

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Effect: As a maneuver, you throw this vial up to 10 squares, destroying the vial and creating a 2-cube ethereal vortex centered on the spot where it lands. The vortex dissipates at the end of the encounter or when you dismiss it (no action required). Any creature who enters the vortex for the first time in a combat round or starts their turn there takes 10 psychic damage. At the start of each of your turns, you can move the vortex up to 5 squares (no action required).

3rd-Echelon Consumables

This section presents 3rd-echelon consumable treasures in alphabetical order.

Anamorphic Larva

A cloudy glass vial holds a writhing monstrous grub.

Keywords: Psionic
Item Prerequisite: A grub steeped in voiceless talker bile
Project Source: Texts or lore in Variac
Project Roll Characteristic: Might or Intuition
Project Goal: 180

Effect: When you release the larva as a maneuver, it feeds on psychic energy to grow exponentially, creating a 10 wall of larval flesh adjacent to you. The wall can't be created to fill any square occupied by a creature with stability 1 or higher. Each other creature in the wall when it is created is pushed to the nearest unoccupied space.

At the start of each of your turns, each creature adjacent to the wall takes psychic damage equal to three times their Intuition score, and you can add 1 square to the wall for each creature who takes this damage. If no creature takes damage at the start of your turn, the larva dies and the wall disappears.

Bottled Paradox

Liquid constantly swirls within a cut glass bottle that is ice cold to the touch.

Keywords: Magic, Potion
Item Prerequisite: A month's lifespan from the creator or another willing creature, ground sapphire
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 180

Effect: As a maneuver, you can drink this potion or throw it up to 10 squares. If you drink it, you choose a test you made in the last minute, then reroll that test repeatedly until the outcome changes. If the potion is thrown, it creates a 3-cube area of shimmering magic. Any event that took place in that area in the previous minute changes at the discretion of the Director, who has full freedom to decide what happens. The energy then dissipates.

G'Allios Visiting Card

A card bearing the Eighth City Advocacy Services crest smells faintly of smoke and spices.

Keywords: Magic
Item Prerequisite: One vial of archdevil's blood, an expired contract
Project Source: Texts or lore in Anjali
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 180

Effect: Whenever you would take damage, you can use a triggered action to tear the card and summon a devil. You avoid the damage and any accompanying effects, and the devil redirects the triggering effect to a target of their choice anywhere on the same manifold. You are treated to a clear vision of whoever suffers the damage. The devil then disappears.



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Personal Effigy

This tiny humanoid effigy appears unnervingly lifelike and is always warm to the touch.

Keywords: Magic
Item Prerequisite: A brief period of contact with the creature the effigy is tied to
Project Source: Texts or lore in Khemharic
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 120

Effect: The Personal Effigy is crafted to depict a specific humanoid creature it is tied to, and activates only for the first minute after the creature dies. While you are within 5 squares of the remains of the creature the effigy is tied to, you can use a maneuver to manually light and burn the effigy and bring the creature back to life. The creature returns to life with Stamina equal to their winded value and 10 temporary Stamina that lasts until the end of their next respite. If the creature has been dead for more than 1 minute, they remain dead and the effigy dissolves into dust.

Stygian Liquor

This muddy brown whiskey tastes of peat and death.

Keywords: Magic, Potion
Item Prerequisite: An ounce of scrapings from a coven's used cauldron
Project Source: Texts in Anjali
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 180

Effect: When you drink this potion as a maneuver, you gain a tenacious will to cling to life for 24 hours. If you are dying during this time, you don't die until you reach the negative of your Stamina maximum rather than your winded value. Additionally, while you are dying, you gain on edge on power rolls and you take half the damage dealt by the bleeding condition. Once the potion's magic is triggered, it ends when you are no longer dying.

Timesplitter

This spiked crystal makes a beautiful ringing sound when first touched.

Keywords: Psionic
Item Prerequisite: A time crystal
Project Source: Texts or lore in Voll
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 180

Effect: As a maneuver, you make a ranged free strike using the Timesplitter, which shatters upon impact. The strike deals an extra 1d6 psychic damage and adds the following effects to the tier outcomes of the power roll:

- ≤11 The target and each creature within 3 squares of them a slowed (save ends).
- 12–16 The target and each creature within 5 squares of them is slowed (save ends).
- 17+ The target and each creature within 8 squares of them is slowed (save ends).

Ward Token

This smoothly polished quartz stone feels strangely warm to the touch.

Keywords: Psionic
Item Prerequisite: A small quartz
Project Source: Texts or lore in Zaliac
Project Roll Characteristic: Might or Intuition
Project Goal: 180

Effect: As a maneuver, you toss this stone above you and it shatters, showering you in dust. Until the end of the encounter, any enemy ability that targets you has a double bane.

Wellness Tonic

This thick purple liquid has a bitter scent that lingers.

Keywords: Potion, Psionic
Item Prerequisite: An ounce of troll's blood, raw honey
Project Source: Texts or lore in Variac
Project Roll Characteristic: Might or Intuition
Project Goal: 180

Effect: When you drink this tonic as a maneuver, you feel a surge of physical and spiritual immunity. You can immediately end up to three conditions or effects affecting you. Additionally, until the start of your next turn, you can ignore any effect that would last until the end of your next turn or be ended by a saving throw.

4th-Echelon Consumables

This section presents 4th-echelon consumable treasures in alphabetical order.

Breath of Creation

A glass flask holds a roiling storm of astral plasma.

Keywords: Psionic
Item Prerequisite: The captured breath of a god, an ounce of condensed dreams
Project Source: Texts or lore in the First Language
Project Roll Characteristic: Intuition or Presence
Project Goal: 360

Effect: When you inhale the Breath of Creation as a maneuver, you are imbued with cosmic power. You earn 1 Renown, and you create a size 2 portal to a new demiplane in an adjacent square. The demiplane is a 20-cube area whose form and mundane features are chosen by you. The portal appears only to you and creatures you designate, and only you and those creatures can enter the demiplane. When a creature moves into the portal, they emerge from a corresponding portal inside the demiplane, and vice versa. Objects created within the demiplane turn to dust if removed from it.

Each time you use another Breath of Creation, you can create a new demiplane or expand a demiplane you have already created or visited. The size of an expanded demiplane increases by 20, and you create a second portal to the demiplane with a corresponding portal inside.

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Elixir of Saint Elspeth

This thick red liquid smells of cinnamon.

Keywords: Magic, Potion
Item Prerequisite: An ounce of the blood of Saint Elspeth
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Presence
Project Goal: 360

Effect: When you pour the elixir onto your forehead as a maneuver, it vanishes and you protect yourself against effects that might harm your body, mind, or soul. For a number of rounds equal to your current Victories, any enemy ability targeting you automatically obtains a tier 1 outcome against you. Additionally, the ability can only deal damage to you, letting you ignore its other effects.

Page From the Infinite Library: Solaris

This page is covered with writing and diagrams detailing the release of limitless energy—and the dangers of that process.

Keywords: Magic
Item Prerequisite: One vial of sacred ink, blessed parchment
Project Source: Reference materials in the First Language from the Infinite Library detailing incomplete instructions for building a sun
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 360

Effect: As a maneuver, you spend 1 Heroic Resource to destroy this page and create a 4-cube area within 20 squares. The area is filled with the energy of a tiny sun that lasts until the end of the encounter. Any creature who enters the area for the first time in a combat round or starts their turn there takes 20 fire damage and is dazed until the end of their turn.

Restorative of the Bright Court

An ornately decorated golden vial smells of summer rain and subtle zesty fruits.

Keywords: Magic
Item Prerequisite: A year's lifespan from the creator or another willing creature, the laughter of a young hero
Project Source: Texts or lore in Khelt
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Presence
Project Goal: 360

Effect: When opened as a maneuver, this vial bursts into a storm of multicolored lights. You and each ally within 5 squares of you regain 1d6 Recoveries. However, any mortal using this treasure draws the interest of a powerful fey noble.

Trinkets

Trinkets are treasures that can be used at will without a reduction in their potency. They generally provide a small benefit, such as allowing you to see farther or become a bit better at picking locks.

Like consumables, trinket treasures are organized by echelon. You can carry any number of trinkets.

1st-Echelon Trinkets

This section presents 1st-echelon trinket treasures in alphabetical order.

Color Cloak (Blue)

This silky-blue hooded cloak is emblazoned with a golden Anjali sigil meaning "ice."

Keywords: Magic, Neck
Item Prerequisite: A pint of blue ichor, soul chalk
Project Source: Licensing agreements in Anjali
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 150

Effect: While worn, a blue Color Cloak grants you cold immunity equal to your level.

Additionally, when you are targeted by any effect that deals cold damage, you can use a triggered action to shift a number of squares equal to your level. If you do so, the cold immunity granted by the cloak becomes cold weakness with the same value until the end of the next round. You can't use this triggered action again until this weakness ends.

Color Cloak (Red)

This red woolen hooded cloak is emblazoned with a golden Anjali sigil meaning "fire."

Keywords: Magic, Neck
Item Prerequisite: A pint of red ichor, soul chalk
Project Source: Licensing agreements in Anjali
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 150

Effect: While worn, a red Color Cloak grants you fire immunity equal to your level.

Additionally, when you are targeted by any effect that deals fire damage, you can use a triggered action to reduce the damage to 0. If you do so, the fire immunity granted by this cloak becomes fire weakness with the same value until the end of the next round. You can't use this triggered action again until this weakness ends.

Color Cloak (Yellow)

This yellow rubbery hooded cloak is emblazoned with a golden Anjali sigil meaning "lightning."

Keywords: Magic, Neck
Item Prerequisite: A pint of yellow ichor, soul chalk
Project Source: Licensing agreements in Anjali
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 150

Effect: While worn, a yellow Color Cloak grants you lightning immunity equal to your level.

Additionally, when you are targeted by any effect that deals lightning damage, you can use a triggered action to cause the next damage-dealing ability you use to deal extra lightning damage equal to your level. Once you deal this extra damage, your lightning immunity becomes lightning weakness with the same value until the end of the next round. You can't use this triggered action again until this weakness ends.

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Deadweight

Though this humanoid femur is coated in lead, it feels impossibly heavy for its size.

Keywords: Magic
Item Prerequisite: One humanoid femur, one bar of lead laced with starmetal
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 150

Effect: While holding the Deadweight, you fall twice as fast, taking an extra 1 damage for each square you fall (to a maximum of 75 total damage from a single fall). If you fall 5 or more squares this way, you can make a melee free strike as a free maneuver once during the fall before you hit the ground.

Displacing Replacement Bracer

A wooden bangle is etched with an ambigram sigil of the Zaliac word for "transfer."

Keywords: Arms, Psionic
Item Prerequisite: Petrified wood from a tree that has not been observed since falling
Project Source: Texts or lore in Zaliac
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason
Project Goal: 150

Effect: As a maneuver, you transfer an object of size 1S or 1T held in one hand with another object of the same size that is within 10 squares. The objects change locations instantaneously and without creating any auditory or visual disturbance. If another creature is wearing or holding the object you transfer to your hand and they have **I < 4**, they fail to notice the transfer.

Divine Vine

A coil of emerald-green vines is topped with the jaws of an enormous Venus flytrap.

Keywords: Magic
Item Prerequisite: Three withered mundane vines, a tree's blessing
Project Source: Songs in Yllyric
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Presence
Project Goal: 100

Effect: As a maneuver, you call upon the Divine Vine in Yllyric, causing it to extend up to 5 squares from you and attach its jaws to a creature or object, allowing you to use the Grab maneuver at a distance. If the target is grabbed, you can choose to keep the divine vine extended, pull the target adjacent to you, or pull yourself adjacent to the target. The divine vine stays attached to the target until it takes damage from a strike, the target escapes your grab, or you call upon the vine to release the target (no action required).

Flameshade Gloves

These finely stitched gloves appear to flicker in and out of reality when first handled.

Keywords: Hands, Psionic
Item Prerequisite: A humanoid's shadow disconnected from its source
Project Source: Texts or lore in Khelt
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason
Project Goal: 150

Effect: When you use a move action while wearing these gloves, you can place one hand upon a mundane object as part of that move action. If the object is 1 square thick or less and has open space on the other side (for example, a door or wall), you pull your body through it as though the object wasn't there.

If the object is too thick or has no open space on the other side, your hand becomes stuck inside the object. Removing your hand takes a successful **hard Might test** made as a main action.

Gecko Gloves

These scaled gloves have palms and fingers covered in near-invisible sticky hairs.

Keywords: Hands, Magic
Item Prerequisite: Ten gecko tails
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 100

Effect: While you wear these gloves, your grip is all but impossible to break. You can't be disarmed, you can't lose your grip while climbing unless you are force moved, and any creature grabbed by you takes a bane on the test for the Escape Grab maneuver.

Hellcharger Helm

A steel helm is set with two curved ebony horns, a crackling plume of fire floating between them.

Keywords: Head, Magic
Item Prerequisite: One broken contract, one ingot of steel
Project Source: Texts or lore in Anjali and Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Might or Reason
Project Goal: 150

Effect: Whenever you use the Charge main action while wearing this helmet, you gain a +5 bonus to speed until the end of your current turn. After charging, you can use the Knockback maneuver as a free maneuver, regardless of the target creature's size.

Mask of the Many

A plain white mask is lined with soft black velvet—which smells faintly of blood.

Keywords: Head, Magic
Item Prerequisite: One used death shroud
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 150

Effect: While you wear this mask, you can use a maneuver to transform into any humanoid of equivalent size that you have previously seen. The humanoid's appearance reflects the last time you saw them, including whatever they were wearing. Your clothing and gear are transformed into the figure's clothing and gear, absorbed into your body, or retain their original forms, as you determine. If the figure possessed any treasures when you last saw them, they are duplicated as mundane copies while you are transformed.

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Quantum Satchel

A woven metal drawstring seals this plain-looking leather bag, which is affixed with an opal brooch.

Keywords: Magic
Item Prerequisite: One uncut opal
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 150

Effect: When the brooch is removed from this bag and placed in a container or room, it magically entangles that location to the bag. Any item that can be placed in the Quantum Satchel appears near to the brooch and can be recovered by reaching inside while picturing the desired object. The capacity of the satchel is dictated by the size of the container or room where the entangled brooch is. If an item is removed from the container or room containing the brooch, it can't be retrieved through the satchel.

Unbinder Boots

A pair of ornately embroidered leather boots are covered in images of broken chains.

Keywords: Feet, Magic
Item Prerequisite: One battered gold chain of at least fifty links
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 150

Effect: These boots can temporarily unbind themselves from the chains of the earth, letting you move through the air as high as 3 squares above the ground from where you started. If you end your turn while you are still airborne, you fall.

2nd-Echelon Trinkets

This section presents 2nd-echelon trinket treasures in alphabetical order.

Bastion Belt

This thick leather belt features a bone clasp and feels unusually heavy when handled.

Keywords: Magic, Waist
Item Prerequisite: A giant's tooth
Project Source: Texts or lore in High Kuric
Project Roll Characteristic: Might or Intuition
Project Goal: 300

Effect: While worn, this belt grants you a +3 bonus to Stamina and a +1 bonus to Stability. This Stamina bonus adds to the Stamina bonus granted by other treasures.

Evilest Eye

A perfectly preserved eyeball hangs unnervingly from a gold chain.

Keywords: Neck, Psionic
Item Prerequisite: An eyeball from a pirate captain who drowned at sea
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 300

Effect: As a maneuver, you target one enemy within 10 squares. You and each ally within 2 squares of the target each gain 1 surge.

Insightful Crown

Shaped of polished crystal, this shimmering circlet shifts through myriad colors in the presence of strong emotions.

Keywords: Head, Psionic
Item Prerequisite: One measure of pure crystal, a jarred memory of true joy
Project Source: Texts or lore in Variac
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 300

Effect: While wearing the crown, you gain an edge on Intuition tests made to read the emotions and discern the honesty of other creatures. If you succeed on an Intuition test to read the emotions of another creature within 5 squares, you can ask the Director one question about something the creature knows, which the Director must answer honestly. At the Director's discretion, you might not be able to tap into the creature's deepest secrets this way.

Key of Inquiry

A foot-long platinum key is set with three opals.

Keywords: Psionic
Item Prerequisite: The finger bone of a creature with telepathy, three black opals
Project Source: Texts or lore in Ullorvic
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 300

Effect: As a maneuver, you touch the key to an adjacent willing, grabbed, or restrained creature and twist the key 90 degrees clockwise. That creature must answer the next three questions they are asked truthfully and fully. If twisted 90 degrees counterclockwise instead, the creature forgets the last 30 minutes they experienced. A creature affected by the key can't be affected again by any Key of Inquiry for 1 year. If the key is ever destroyed, all the memories it has erased are restored. Memories erased by the key can't be restored in any other way.

Mediator's Charm

A fancy gold earring is set with a small ruby.

Keywords: Head, Psionic
Item Prerequisite: The gold nib of a fountain pen used to sign a major treaty or compact, a ruby once worn by a devil
Project Source: Texts or lore in Hyrallic
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Presence
Project Goal: 300

Effect: While you wear the Mediator's Charm, the patience of any NPC you negotiate with increases by 1 (to a maximum of 5). Additionally, at the start of a negotiation, you learn one of an NPC's motivations or pitfalls of the Director's choice.

Necklace of the Bayou

A worn leather circlet bears a lizard-shaped pendant of rotting wood.

Keywords: Magic, Neck
Item Prerequisite: A gallon of swamp water, the limbs of four different newts
Project Source: Texts or lore in Yllyric
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 300

Effect: While you wear this necklace, you can breathe underwater, you can automatically swim at full speed while moving, and you ignore difficult terrain created by water or in marsh and similar terrain.

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Scannerstone

This flat, palm-sized triangular stone is decorated with a starfield of tiny gems.

Keywords: Psionic
Item Prerequisite: A piece of polished obsidian, seven flawless pea-sized diamonds
Project Source: Texts or lore in Variac
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 300

Effect: When held against a wall or other solid surface 1 square thick or less, the Scannerstone creates an image floating in the air beside it that shows a rough miniature approximation of the space on the other side of the surface. The image displays floors, walls, and other barriers but doesn't show other objects. It shows representations of any moving creatures on the other side, but not creatures who are still.

Stop-'n-Go Coin

This small, featureless coin is solid green on one side and solid red on the other.

Keywords: Magic
Item Prerequisite: A coin minted during an earthquake
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 300

Effect: As a maneuver, you toss the coin in the air and let it fall to the ground in front of you. Roll a d3 to determine the coin's effect, depending on which face shows when it lands:

1—Red: The area within 2 squares of you is difficult terrain for enemies until the end of your next turn.
2—Green: You and each ally who starts their turn within 2 squares of you gains a +1 bonus to speed until the end of your next turn.
3—Spinning Coin: Both the red and green effects occur while the coin continuously spins.

The coin must be picked up before it can be used again. If any creature picks up the coin, its effects immediately end.

3rd-Echelon Trinkets

This section presents 3rd-echelon trinket treasures in alphabetical order.

Bracers of Strife

Each of these metallic blue bracers ends in an oversized glove.

Keywords: Arms, Magic
Item Prerequisite: The severed hand of a giant
Project Source: Texts or lore in Yllyric
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

Effect: While you wear them in combat, these bracers magically double the size of your hands and any melee weapons you wield, automatically compensating for the extra weight. You gain a +2 damage bonus for any weapon ability that deals rolled damage, and a +1 bonus to the distance you push any target with any weapon ability. This damage bonus adds to the damage bonus granted by other treasures.

Mask of Oversight

This angular electrum mask is set with an excess of eye holes and a horrifying maw.

Keywords: Head, Magic
Item Prerequisite: An overmind egg, the skin of any shapeshifter
Project Source: Texts or lore in the First Language
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

Effect: While wearing this grotesque mask, you can use a maneuver to cause your eyes to erupt from their sockets and multiply until six eyes orbit your head. This grants you a 360-degree arc of vision and prevents you from being surprised. Additionally, you have a double edge on tests made to discover hidden creatures, items, or mechanisms, but you have a double bane on Presence tests that don't use the Intimidate skill. As a maneuver, you can return your eyes to your head and make the additional eyes disappear.

While the eyes circle your head, you can use a maneuver to launch up to three of the eyes at one creature within 10 squares. Each eye you launch deals 5 damage to the target before it is destroyed. You can't reduce the number of eyes to fewer than two in this way. If you reduce the number of eyes to two, those eyes return to your head, and you can't use the mask again until you earn 1 or more Victories.

Mirage Band

A sable blue circlet shimmers with finely woven threads of sparkling white.

Keywords: Head, Psionic
Item Prerequisite: A spool of mindspider silk, an ingot of white gold
Project Source: Texts or lore in Higaran
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

Effect: While wearing the Mirage Band, you automatically perceive illusions for what they are, you can see invisible creatures, and supernatural effects can't conceal creatures and objects from you.

Additionally, you have the following ability.

Hallucination Field

A blanket of illusion twists around you and your allies, making you seem as if you belong wherever you are.

Psionic, Ranged — **Maneuver**
Ranged 10 — Self and any ally

Effect: Each target is covered by an illusion causing them to appear exactly as any creature (humanoid, animal, undead, and so forth) an observer most expects to see. The illusion ends for all targets if any creature under its effect harms or physically interacts with any creature not affected by the illusion, if you use this ability again, or if you choose to end the effect (no action required). The illusion also ends for any affected ally who moves more than the distance of this ability away from you.

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Nullfield Resonator Ring

This simple band of copper vibrates slightly when handled.

Keywords: Psionic, Ring
Item Prerequisite: A wafer of gallium arsenide
Project Source: Texts or lore in Mindspeech
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

Effect: You must be a null to wear this ring. While you do so, the area of your Null Field ability increases by 1.

Additionally, you have the following ability.

Nullring Strike

Your punch delivers a devastating burst of psionic energy.

Melee, Psionic, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature or object

Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11 3 psychic damage
12–16 5 psychic damage; I < AVERAGE, slowed (save ends)
17+ 8 psychic damage; I < STRONG, slowed (save ends)

Effect: While slowed in this way, the target takes a bane on magic or psionic abilities.

Shifting Ring

This silvery metal ring seems to momentarily vanish when observed from certain angles.

Keywords: Psionic, Ring
Item Prerequisite: One-third of a pound of diamond dust, one nugget of pure silver
Project Source: Texts or lore in Khelt
Project Roll Characteristic: Agility or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

Effect: Once per turn, you can use a maneuver to teleport up to 3 squares. Additionally, when targeted by any other effect that causes you to teleport, you can teleport up to 3 additional squares.

4th-Echelon Trinkets

This section presents 4th-echelon trinket treasures in alphabetical order.

Gravekeeper's Lantern

This ancient wooden tablet is inscribed with eldritch runes and stained with dark blood.

Keywords: Magic
Item Prerequisite: The powdered jawbone of a powerful spellcaster, wood from a tree marking multiple graves
Project Source: Texts or lore in Hyrallic
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 600

Effect: The Gravekeeper's Lantern can temporarily trap a nonhostile spirit of the dead—either an incorporeal undead or the wandering spirit of a creature who died within the last 30 days—allowing you to interrogate them. Trapping a spirit requires you to be within 10 squares of them and succeed on a **hard Intuition test** as a main action. Once a spirit is trapped, you make a **Presence test** to coax them into answering your questions:

≤11 You can ask two questions of the spirit, one of which they must answer fully and honestly.
12–16 You can ask three questions, two of which the spirit must answer fully and honestly.
17+ You can ask five questions, all of which the spirit must answer fully and honestly.

A trapped spirit remains in the lantern for 10 minutes. They remember being trapped by you, and might become hostile thereafter.

Psi Blade

This wide metal bracer is set with a glowing gemstone.

Keywords: Arms, Psionic
Item Prerequisite: Steel alloy, one fine-cut topaz
Project Source: Texts or lore in Mindspeech
Project Roll Characteristic: Agility or Presence
Project Goal: 600

Effect: While wearing this metallic band, you can use a maneuver to project a glowing blade of rippling psychic energy that extends parallel to your arm. While the blade is active, you can use a maneuver once per turn to make a melee weapon free strike that deals an extra 3 psychic damage.

Leveled Treasures

Like trinkets, leveled treasures can be used at will without a reduction in potency. However, leveled treasures tap into their wielder's will in a way that trinkets don't, becoming more powerful and increasing their capabilities as you gain new levels.

Leveled Benefits

Each leveled treasure has benefits that you gain at 1st, 5th, and 9th levels. You can't use a treasure's benefit until you achieve the appropriate benefits level. Leveled benefits are cumulative.

Carry Three Safely

Your connection with leveled treasures doesn't just make them useful. It also makes them dangerous. Each leveled treasure is a quasi-sentient, purpose-driven entity. A magic sword wishes to be used in combat. A psionic implement yearns to unleash its powerful magic. As such, a creature can safely carry a maximum of three leveled treasures at a time. If you carry more leveled treasures, those items become jealous of one another and fight for your attention, attempting to subconsciously influence you into using them—and leaving your other items behind.

It's fine to own or possess more than three leveled treasures, as long as the extras are stored away or in the possession of other creatures. But if you carry more than three leveled treasures, you must make a **Presence test** during each respite:

≤11 One of your leveled treasures (chosen by the Director) grabs hold of your psyche. It forces you to sleepwalk or otherwise enter an active fugue state and discard the rest of your leveled treasures in locations you can't remember. If you want those items back, you'd better get looking before someone else finds them.
12–16 Your items work together to prevent you from moving until you pick three items and leave the rest behind.
17+ Nothing happens.

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You Don't Need Three

Because you can carry up to three leveled treasures safely, it's easy to assume that your hero should always seek out and carry three such treasures. The truth is that many heroes find carrying just one or two leveled treasures a perfect thematic and mechanical fit, and have no real need for more. That's totally fine! You'll still be super powerful with just one leveled treasure, especially if you obtain or craft trinkets and consumables that might serve you better.

Leveled Armor Treasures

Magic and psionic armor and shields are the primary tools of heroes always ready to hurl themselves into combat. This section presents leveled armor treasures in alphabetical order.

Adaptive Second Skin of Toxins

This suit is shaped of tough leather and set with thousands of tiny barbs on the inside, all thankfully pain-free to the touch.

Keywords: Light Armor, Magic
Item Prerequisite: Five rabid honey badger pelts, the quills of a hedgehog
Project Source: Texts or lore in Yllyric
Project Roll Characteristic: Agility or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wear this armor, you gain a +6 bonus to Stamina, and you have immunity to acid and poison damage equal to your highest characteristic score.

5th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +12. Additionally, whenever an adjacent creature deals damage to you, they take 3 acid or poison damage (your choice).

9th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +21, and an adjacent creature who deals damage to you takes 6 acid or poison damage. Additionally, you can use a maneuver to transmute a 2-cube area of liquid or gas adjacent to you into liquid acid or poison gas until the start of your next turn. Any creature who enters the area for the first time in a combat round or starts their turn there takes 6 acid or poison damage, as appropriate.

Chain of the Sea and Sky

This set of heavy chain mail is created to allow free movement in extreme environments without sacrificing protection.

Keywords: Heavy Armor, Magic
Item Prerequisite: A set of wings from a flying carp, a set of chain mail rusted by seawater
Project Source: Texts or lore in Zaliac
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wear this armor, you gain a +6 bonus to Stamina, you can automatically swim at full speed while moving, and you can breathe underwater for up to 1 hour. Returning to the surface to breathe air again for any length of time reset's the armor's water-breathing benefit.

5th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +12, and you have cold immunity 5. Additionally, whenever you fall, you can extend your arms (no action required) to unfurl a thick membrane between your arms and your body, slowing your fall and allowing you to glide. While gliding this way, you move downward at 1 square per round, and you can glide up to 6 squares horizontally as a free maneuver once during each of your turns.

9th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +21, and you have cold immunity 10. Additionally, whenever your feet are not touching the ground (including floating in water or being in midair), you gain an edge on ability rolls, and any ability takes a bane when targeting you.

Grand Scarab

The blue-purple carapace and wings of a gigantic scarab beetle have been formed into an ornate breastplate.

Keywords: Magic, Medium Armor
Item Prerequisite: A giant scarab beetle carapace
Project Source: Texts or lore in Phaedran
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wear this armor, you gain a +6 bonus to Stamina and you can fly. If you don't end your turn on the ground, you fall.

5th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +12/ Additionally, you no longer need to end your turn on the ground to avoid falling.

9th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +21. Additionally, if you fly any distance before making a strike, that strike gains an edge.

King's Roar

A sunmetal kite shield bears the face of a lion on its front, its mouth opening wider over the course of battle.

Keywords: Magic, Shield
Item Prerequisite: A ballad of heroism, two ingots of sunmetal
Project Source: Songs in High Rhyvian
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason, Intuition, or Presence
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wield or carry this shield, you gain a +3 bonus to Stamina. This Stamina bonus adds to the Stamina bonus granted by other treasures. Additionally, you can use a maneuver to make the shield's lion face roar, choosing one adjacent creature or object and pushing that target up to 3 squares.

5th Level: The shield's bonus to Stamina increases to +6. When you cause the shield to roar, you target one creature or object within 3 squares and push that target up to 4 squares.

9th Level: The shield's bonus to Stamina increases to +9. When you cause the shield to roar, you target one creature or object within 6 squares, you push that target up to 5 squares, and the target is slowed until the end of their next turn.

Kuran'zoi Prismscale

Each scale of this iridescent armor shimmers with the faint image of a frozen moment of time.

Keywords: Medium Armor, Psionic
Item Prerequisite: The eyes of a time raider who died valiantly in battle
Project Source: Texts or lore in Voll
Project Roll Characteristic: Intuition or Presence
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: You gain a +6 bonus to Stamina while you wear this armor. Additionally, whenever a creature within 5 squares deals damage to you, you can use a triggered action to capture a moment of time in the armor, making that creature slowed until the end of their next turn.

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5th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +12. Additionally, when you capture a moment of time in the armor, the triggering creature also takes corruption damage equal to twice your highest characteristic score.

9th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +21. Additionally, whenever you capture a moment of time in the armor, you can immediately release it to gain a +3 bonus to speed that lasts until the end of your next turn.

Paper Trappings

This delicate robe is made from thousands of pages torn from books, intricately folded together without a single thread to bind them.

Keywords: Light Armor, Magic
Item Prerequisite: Ten pages from each of a hundred different books
Project Source: Texts or lore in Anjali
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wear this armor, you gain a +6 bonus to Stamina. Additionally, you can use a main action to fold in on yourself until you and your gear are paper thin. This effect lasts for 1 minute, letting you easily slip through any opening that is 1 inch wide or more. When you return to your three-dimensional form, you are dazed for 1 minute. If you return to your true form while in a space that is too small for you, you are violently expelled into the nearest open space of your choice and take 3d6 damage.

5th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +12, and when you return to your true form, you are dazed only until the end of your next turn. Additionally, while you are paper thin, you can use a maneuver to wrap yourself around an adjacent target who is the same size or smaller than you, automatically grabbing them.

9th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +21, and you are no longer dazed when you return to your true form. Additionally, while you have a target grabbed when you are paper thin, you can use a maneuver to constrict the target, dealing 10 damage to them. A creature damaged this way takes a bane when using the Escape Grab maneuver against you and when making strikes against you.

Shrouded Memory

This midnight-dark leather coat is embossed with fractal patterns that appear different each time they are observed.

Keywords: Light Armor, Psionic
Item Prerequisite: The will of a deceased person with no heirs
Project Source: Texts or lore in Khelt
Project Roll Characteristic: Agility or Presence
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: You gain a +6 bonus to Stamina while you wear this armor. Additionally, you gain an edge on tests made to lie about or conceal your identity.

5th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +12. Additionally, whenever you take damage, you can use a triggered action to teleport up to 5 squares. If you do, you create an illusion of you dying in your previous space, which fades at the end of your next turn.

9th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +21. Whenever you use the armor's triggered action to teleport, you can teleport up to a number of squares equal to the damage taken (minimum 5 squares). Additionally, if a creature dealt you the triggering damage, you become invisible to that creature until the end of your next turn.

Spiny Turtle

This heavy mechanized plate armor of gnomish make is designed to create its own cover on the battlefield.

Keywords: Heavy Armor, Magic
Item Prerequisite: Ten steel gears from an ancient construct
Project Source: Texts or lore in Variac
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wear this armor, you gain a +6 bonus to Stamina. Additionally, you can use a main action to expand the armor on your back to create a 4 wall of metal behind you. The wall is an object that retracts if you move, or if it takes 15 damage. It then requires a main action to recalibrate before it can be deployed again.

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5th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +12, and the damage the wall can take before retracting increases to 25. Additionally, while the wall is expanded, spikes extrude from it, and any creature who deals damage to the wall while adjacent to it takes 3 damage.

9th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +21. Additionally, spikes cover the armor, and any adjacent creature who deals damage to you takes 6 damage.

Star-Hunter

Shimmering light flows like liquid along this suit of crystalline armor.

Keywords: Heavy Armor, Psionic
Item Prerequisite: A large vessel of astral ice, a pint of supercooled mercury
Project Source: Texts or lore in Voll
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wear this armor, you gain a +6 bonus to Stamina, but any magic ability gains an edge when targeting you. Additionally, you instinctively know the location of any creature with concealment within 2 squares. You can also turn invisible as a maneuver. Your invisibility ends if you take damage or use an ability, or at the end of your next turn.

5th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +12, you instinctively know the location of any creature with concealment within 5 squares, and your invisibility no longer ends at the end of your next turn. Additionally, you have psychic immunity 5.

9th Level: The armor's bonus to Stamina increases to +21, and you instinctively know the location of any creature with concealment within 10 squares. Your invisibility no longer ends when you use an ability, and you have psychic immunity 10.

Telekinetic Bulwark

An unseen force seems to draw this steel shield toward nearby creatures.

Keywords: Psionic, Shield
Item Prerequisite: Three ingots of steel, six crystals that resonate with psionic power
Project Source: Texts or lore in Variac
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wield or carry this shield, you gain a +2 bonus to Stamina. This Stamina bonus adds to the Stamina bonus granted by other treasures. Additionally, once per turn when an adjacent enemy uses an ability, you can use a free triggered action to use the Grab maneuver against that enemy. You can have any number of enemies grabbed in this way.

5th Level: The shield's bonus to Stamina increases to +5, and you can use the shield's free triggered action against any enemy within 10 squares who uses an ability. Additionally, any enemy who uses the Escape Grab maneuver while grabbed this way takes a bane on the test.

9th Level: The shield's bonus to Stamina increases to +9. Additionally, you can use a maneuver to pull any number of targets the shield has grabbed up to 5 squares.

Leveled Implement Treasures

Implements are pieces of jewelry, orbs, staffs, tomes, wands, and other objects used by magic and psionic heroes to focus their power. This section presents leveled implement treasures in alphabetical order.

Abjurer's Bastion

An ornate ring is set with a large diamond that swirls with blue light, and whose inner surface is etched with protective runes.

Keywords: Implement, Magic
Item Prerequisite: A diamond ring
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wield this implement, your magic or psionic abilities that deal rolled damage gain a +1 damage bonus. Additionally, whenever you deal rolled damage to a creature using a magic or psionic ability, you gain temporary Stamina equal to your highest characteristic score.

5th Level: The implement's damage bonus increases to +2. Additionally, whenever you deal rolled damage using a magic or psionic ability, you can use a maneuver to create an immobile field of protection that is a 1 cube, around yourself or around an ally within 5 squares. While in the area, you or the chosen ally has damage immunity 5. The field disappears at the start of your next turn.

9th Level: The implement's damage bonus increases to +3. Whenever you deal rolled damage to a creature using a magic or psionic ability, you and each ally within 5 squares of you gains temporary Stamina equal to your highest characteristic score. Additionally, the size of your field of protection increases to a 3 cube, and it can be placed anywhere within 10 squares of you. You and each ally in the area gain its benefits.

Brittlebreaker

This crystal wand thrums with power, yet is so thin and brittle that it feels as if even a slight squeeze will shatter it.

Keywords: Psionic, Wand
Item Prerequisite: A handful of shattered quartz
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wield this implement, your magic or psionic abilities that deal rolled damage deal an extra 2 psychic damage. Additionally, you have damage weakness 3, and you gain an edge on magic or psionic abilities if you aren't at full Stamina, or a double edge if you are winded.

5th Level: The implement's extra psychic damage increases to 3. Additionally, once per round when you take more than 20 damage from a single source, the implement's extra damage is doubled until the end of your next turn.

9th Level: The implement's extra psychic damage increases to 4. Additionally, whenever you use a damage-dealing magic or psionic ability, you can take half as much damage as is dealt to the target to immediately use the same ability again. The damage you take can't be reduced in any way. You can repeat this process until you become winded.

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Chaldorb

A perfectly clear sphere is embossed with fine ivory and crystal that is frigid to the touch.

Keywords: Implement, Magic
Item Prerequisite: An ounce of primordial ice, an ounce of mammoth-ivory shards
Project Source: Texts or lore in Zaliac
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wield this implement, your magic or psionic abilities that deal rolled damage gain a +1 damage bonus. Additionally, if you make a magic strike, the strike must deal cold damage instead of its usual damage.

5th Level: The implement's damage bonus increases to +2. Additionally, whenever you use a magic or psionic ability, a whirlwind of sleet and ice whips around you, dealing 3 cold damage to each adjacent enemy.

9th Level: The implement's damage bonus increases to +3, and the whirlwind you create when you use a magic or psionic ability deals 6 cold damage to each enemy within 2 squares of you. Additionally, the whirlwind creates a 2 aura around you that lasts until the start of your next turn. Each enemy who enters the aura for the first time in a combat round or starts their turn there takes 6 cold damage.



Ether-Fueled Vessel

This bronze bottle has been shaped into the form of a ghostly figure.

Keywords: Implement, Psionic
Item Prerequisite: Incense distilled from the essence of ether
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wield this implement, your magic or psionic abilities that deal rolled damage gain a +1 damage bonus. Additionally, whenever you deal rolled damage to a creature using a magic or psionic ability, they become insubstantial to you until the end of their next turn, allowing you to pass through them freely. While insubstantial, a creature can't make opportunity attacks against you.

5th Level: The implement's damage bonus increases to +2. Additionally, when you move through a creature who is insubstantial to you, you can use a free triggered action to deal damage to them equal to your highest characteristic score. If you do, the insubstantial effect ends immediately after you pass through the creature and into an adjacent space outside them.

9th Level: The implement's damage bonus increases to +3. Additionally, any creature who is insubstantial to you and isn't a leader or solo creature also can't make opportunity attacks against your allies while they remain insubstantial.

Foesense Lenses

These spectacles feature pink-tinted glass lenses held in a silver frame.

Keywords: Implement, Psionic
Item Prerequisite: Two clear lenses carved from volcanic glass
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wield this implement, your magic or psionic abilities that deal rolled damage gain a +1 damage bonus. Additionally, whenever you deal rolled damage to a creature using a magic or psionic ability, you can use that creature's senses until the end of your next turn, allowing you to experience all they observe and to use your abilities as if you were in their space. You also benefit from your own senses at the same time.

5th Level: The implement's damage bonus increases to +2. Additionally, whenever you deal rolled damage to a creature using a magic or psionic ability, you can also cause intense pain in one creature whose senses you are already using. That creature takes a bane on power rolls until the start of your next turn.

9th Level: The implement's damage bonus increases to +3. Additionally, any creature you have damaged with an ability using this implement in the previous minute is dazed while you are using their senses.



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Words Become Wonders at Next Breath

This ornate high elf tome seems to sigh each time it is opened.

Keywords: Implement, Magic
Item Prerequisite: Written permission from a high elf magistrate
Project Source: Texts or lore in Hyrallic
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: You can open or close the tome as a maneuver while speaking or thinking its full name. While the tome is open, it floats in an adjacent space and flips to specific pages at your command, you gain an edge on Reason tests made to recall lore, and you gain a +3 bonus to distance for your ranged magic or psionic abilities.

5th Level: While the tome is open, the bonus to distance for your ranged magic or psionic abilities increases to +5. Additionally, when you or a creature you have line of effect to uses a magic or psionic ability, you can use a triggered action to grant a +3 bonus to the power roll.

9th Level: While the tome is open, you automatically obtain a tier 3 outcome on Reason tests made to recall lore, and when you use a heroic ability, its Heroic Resource cost is reduced by 1 (to a minimum of 1).

Leveled Weapon Treasures

For combat-focused heroes, weapons channeling magic and psionic power can easily tip the balance of any battle. This section presents leveled weapon treasures in alphabetical order.

Authority's End

This long, sinuous chain is composed entirely of broken links held together by unseen power.

Keywords: Psionic, Whip
Item Prerequisite: A lash used to punish a mutineer
Project Source: Texts or lore in Khelt
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason, Intuition, or Presence
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any weapon ability that deals rolled damage using this weapon gains a +1 damage bonus. Whenever you damage a creature with the weapon, you can immediately use a maneuver to end one effect imposed by that creature on you or another creature within 5 squares of you.

5th Level: The weapon's damage bonus increases to +2. Additionally, you and each ally within 2 squares of you gains a +1 bonus to saving throws.

9th Level: The weapon's damage bonus increases to +3. Additionally, you no longer need to use a maneuver to end one effect when you damage a creature with the weapon. The weapon also refuses to vie for control of your psyche, and no longer counts against the limit of leveled treasures you can carry safely.

Blade of Quintessence

This crystal blade houses a stormy vortex of fire, ice, and lightning.

Keywords: Magic, Medium Weapon
Item Prerequisite: A ruby hardened in the fires of the City of Brass, a sapphire that has been struck by lightning
Project Source: Texts or lore in Zaliac
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any weapon ability that deals rolled damage using this weapon gains a +1 damage bonus. Additionally, you can change the damage type of such abilities to cold, fire, lightning, or sonic.

5th Level: The weapon's damage bonus increases to +2. Additionally, the weapon can be used with ranged weapon abilities, and returns to you when a ranged ability is resolved. Ranged abilities used with the weapon increase their distance by 3, and must deal cold, fire, lightning, or sonic damage (chosen when you use the ability).

9th Level: The weapon's damage bonus increases to +3. Additionally, while you wield or carry the weapon, you have immunity 10 to cold, fire, lightning, and sonic damage.

Blade of the Luxurious Fop

Despite sporting an outrageously ornate hilt adorned with far too many jewels, this blade remains perfectly balanced.

Keywords: Light Weapon, Magic
Item Prerequisite: A personal blessing from the greatest duelist in the land, six fake and extremely shiny gemstones
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Agility, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any weapon ability that deals rolled damage using this weapon gains a +1 damage bonus. Additionally, whenever you deal rolled damage with this weapon, you can immediately shift 1 square. As well, while you wield or carry the weapon and are present in a negotiation (see Chapter 11), if an NPC in the negotiation has the greed, legacy, power, or revelry motivation, their starting interest increases by 1 (to a maximum of 5).

5th Level: The weapon's damage bonus increases to +2. Additionally, when you make an opportunity attack against an enemy of your size or smaller, you can use fancy footwork to knock them prone. You also earn 1 Renown.

9th Level: The weapon's damage bonus increases to +3. Additionally, you have a double edge on any test you make using a skill you have from the interpersonal skill group.

Displacer

This crystal battleaxe seems to pull at the hands that wield it, as if anxious to leap across the battlefield.

Keywords: Medium Weapon, Psionic
Item Prerequisite: An ancient bronze gear covered in indecipherable runes
Project Source: Texts in Zaliac
Project Roll Characteristic: Might or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any weapon ability that deals rolled damage using this weapon deals an extra 1 psychic damage. Additionally, whenever you deal rolled damage to a creature, you can use a maneuver to teleport you and that creature, letting you trade places provided you both fit into each other's spaces.

5th Level: The weapon's extra psychic damage increases to 2. Whenever you deal rolled damage to a creature, you can use a maneuver to trade places with that creature or any creature within 4 squares of them, provided you both fit into each other's spaces.

9th Level: The weapon's extra psychic damage increases to 3. Whenever you deal rolled damage to a creature, you can use a maneuver to trade places with that creature or any creature within 8 squares of them, provided you both fit into each other's spaces. Additionally, you can cause the creature you traded places with to be weakened until the end of their next turn, or you can spend a Recovery.

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Executioner's Blade

This blade exudes a faint hum that grows louder as its quarry weakens.

Keywords: Heavy Weapon, Psionic
Item Prerequisite: The skull of a convicted criminal
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any weapon ability that deals rolled damage using this weapon deals an extra 1 psychic damage, or an extra 2 psychic damage if the target is winded. Additionally, the first time in an encounter that you cause an enemy to become winded with an ability using the weapon, you gain 10 temporary Stamina.

5th Level: The weapon's extra psychic damage increases to 2, or to 4 if the target is winded. Additionally, whenever you cause an enemy to become winded with an ability using the weapon, you gain 2 surges that you can immediately spend.

9th Level: The weapon's extra psychic damage increases to 3, or to 6 if the target is winded. Additionally, you gain an edge on any ability using the weapon against a winded target.

Icemaker Maul

The head of this iron hammer is cold to the touch and encases whatever it strikes in a thin layer of ice.

Keywords: Heavy Weapon, Magic
Item Prerequisite: Eight iron bars cooled in a glacier, the branch of an ancient evergreen
Project Source: Texts in Zaliac
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any weapon ability that deals rolled damage using this weapon deals an extra 1 cold damage. Additionally, you can use a maneuver to create an ice field in a 3 burst. The ground in this area is difficult terrain for enemies, and lasts until the end of the encounter or when you use this ability again.

5th Level: The weapon's extra cold damage increases to 2, and the ice field becomes a 4 burst. Additionally, whenever you use a weapon ability using this weapon against one or more enemies in the ice field, you gain 1 surge that you can use immediately.

9th Level: The weapon's extra cold damage increases to 3, and the ice field becomes a 5 burst. Additionally, any enemy in the ice field who is reduced to 0 Stamina by an ability using the weapon can be shattered, killing them and dealing 15 cold damage to each enemy within 3 squares of them.

Knife of Nine

This ivory dagger features nine faintly glowing indentations along the blade.

Keywords: Light Weapon, Psionic
Item Prerequisite: Eighteen daggers—nine taken from personal enemies and nine gifted by friends
Project Source: Texts or lore in Variac
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any weapon ability that deals rolled damage using this weapon deals an extra 1 psychic damage. This extra damage increases by 1 each time you deal rolled damage using the weapon to the same target during the same encounter (to a maximum of 3).

5th Level: Whenever you reduce a creature to 0 Stamina with an ability using this weapon, one of its indentations glows brighter. When you use a signature ability using the weapon, you can use a triggered action to expend any number of bright-glowing indentations, with the ability dealing extra psychic damage equal to the number of indentations. The expended indentations then return to a dim glow.

9th Level: If you make a weapon strike using this weapon against a target after dropping down on them from a height of 2 squares or more, the attack deals an extra 10 psychic damage. You can distribute all extra psychic damage dealt by the attack between the target and any enemies adjacent to them.

Lance of the Sundered Star

This needlelike lance is cast of shimmering metal and induces a yearning for the skies in those who handle it.

Keywords: Magic, Polearm
Item Prerequisite: Night-blooming flower petals, a starmetal meteorite
Project Source: Texts or lore in Hyrallic
Project Roll Characteristic: Agility or Presence
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any weapon ability that deals rolled damage using this weapon deals an extra 1 holy damage. Additionally, when the weapon is used with a weapon ability that allows you to push a target, you can shift to any square adjacent to the target after the push.

5th Level: The weapon's extra holy damage increases to 2. Additionally, whenever you use the Charge main action and use an ability with the Charge keyword, or whenever you use an ability that allows you to shift, you can fly as part of the charge movement or the shift. If you don't end your flying movement on the ground, you fall.

9th Level: The weapon's extra holy damage increases to 3. Additionally, whenever the weapon is used with a weapon ability that allows you to push or slide a target, that forced movement can be vertical.

Molten Constrictor

This flexible black-iron net burns with the heat of a volcano.

Keywords: Magic, Net
Item Prerequisite: Four iron bars coated in magma slag
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any weapon ability that deals rolled damage using this weapon deals an extra 1 fire damage. Additionally, whenever you make a strike using the net and obtain a tier 3 outcome, you can automatically grab the target. A target grabbed in this way takes a bane when using the Escape Grab maneuver.

5th Level: The weapon's extra fire damage increases to 2. Additionally, a target grabbed by a strike using the net takes 8 fire damage each time they attempt to escape using the Escape Grab maneuver.

9th Level: The weapon's extra fire damage increases to 3, and the damage taken by a grabbed creature attempting to escape increases to 15. Additionally, you can use a maneuver to make a free strike with another weapon against a target grabbed using the net.

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Onerous Bow

This mechanized bow is set with magical reservoirs that carry the faint tang of toxins.

Keywords: Bow , Magic
Item Prerequisite: A venom sac from a giant spider, one valok gyroscope
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian and Variac
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any weapon ability that deals rolled damage using this weapon deals an extra 1 poison damage. Additionally, any signature ability using the weapon that obtains a tier 3 outcome also makes the target weakened until the end of their next turn.

5th Level: The weapon's extra poison damage increases to 2. A signature ability made using the weapon that obtains a tier 3 outcome also makes the target weakened and slowed until the end of their next turn.

9th Level: The weapon's extra poison damage increases to 3. Additionally, if you use an ability using the weapon that targets one creature and you don't have a bane or double bane on the ability, you can take a bane. Doing so lets you target another creature adjacent to the original target. Alternatively, you can have a double bane to target two creatures adjacent to the original target.

Steeltongue

This sinuous whip reflects all light off its plated steel surfaces.

Keywords: Magic, Whip
Item Prerequisite: One hundred steel arrowheads stained with blood
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian and Kalliak
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: You gain a +1 bonus to melee distance with weapon abilities using this weapon. Additionally, any damage-dealing weapon ability using the weapon against a target who has A < AVERAGE also leaves that target bleeding (save ends).

5th Level: The weapon's bonus to melee distance increases to +2. Additionally, any weapon ability that deals rolled damage using the weapon gains a +3 damage bonus against any target who is bleeding.

9th Level: The weapon's bonus to melee distance increases to +3. Additionally, if you use a signature ability using the weapon that targets one or more bleeding creatures, you can use the same ability again immediately as a maneuver.

Third Eye Seeker

The shifting patterns on this bow's crystalline grip resemble dozens of blinking eyes.

Keywords: Bow , Psionic
Item Prerequisite: Heart strings of a tapir, a pound of tiger's eye gemstones
Project Source: Texts or lore in Variac
Project Roll Characteristic: Reason or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any weapon ability that deals rolled damage using this weapon deals an extra 1 psychic damage. Additionally, any damage-dealing weapon ability using the weapon that achieves a tier 3 outcome also leaves the target dazed until the end of their next turn.

5th Level: The weapon's extra psychic damage increases to 2. Additionally, whenever a creature within distance of your ranged weapon free strike uses a triggered action, you can use a triggered action after their triggered action resolves to make a ranged weapon free strike using this weapon against the creature.

9th Level: The weapon's extra psychic damage increases to 3. Additionally, you have a double edge on weapon abilities that use the weapon against creatures who have used a psionic ability since the end of your last turn.

Thunderhead Bident

This bident is made from two pieces of moon metal twisted together, and hums like a tuning fork.

Keywords: Magic, Medium Weapon
Item Prerequisite: A jar of captured thunder, two ingots of moon metal
Project Source: Texts or lore in Zaliac
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any weapon ability that deals rolled damage using this weapon deals an extra 1 sonic damage. Additionally, when the weapon is used with any ability that pushes a target, you gain a +1 bonus to the forced movement distance. If the weapon is used with a damage-dealing ability that doesn't impose forced movement, you can push the target 1 square.

5th Level: The weapon's extra sonic damage increases to 2, and the additional distance or distance of a push for abilities using the weapon increases to 2 squares. Additionally, the weapon can be used with ranged weapon abilities, and gains power the farther it is hurled. For each 2 squares the weapon travels to the target of a ranged strike, the strike deals an extra 1 sonic damage.

9th Level: The weapon's extra sonic damage increases to 3, and it deals an extra 1 sonic damage for each square it travels as part of a ranged strike. Additionally, whenever you make a weapon strike using this weapon, each enemy adjacent to the target takes 6 sonic damage.

Wetwork

When first held, this naginata whispers the names of its past victims.

Keywords: Polearm, Psionic
Item Prerequisite: A folded metal blade infused with blood
Project Source: Texts or lore in Higaran
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: Any weapon ability that deals rolled damage using this weapon deals an extra 1 psychic damage. Additionally, if you kill a creature using this weapon, you can immediately use a maneuver to make a melee free strike.

5th Level: The weapon's extra psychic damage increases to 2. Additionally, if you kill a creature using the weapon, you can use a maneuver to make a melee free strike and can move up to 2 squares before or after the strike.

9th Level: The weapon's extra psychic damage increases to 3. Additionally, if you kill a creature using the weapon, you can use a maneuver to move up to your speed and make either a signature ability strike or a melee free strike.

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Other Leveled Treasures

In addition to armor, shields, implements, and weapons, heroes can make use of a wide range of magic and psionic treasures. This section presents other types of leveled treasures in alphabetical order.

Bloodbound Band

This ring appears to be traced by dried blood, which returns each time it is rubbed away.

Keywords: Magic, Ring
Item Prerequisite: A pair of obituaries that each mention the subject of the other
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wear this ring, you gain a +6 bonus to Stamina. Additionally, during a respite, you can touch the ring to any number of other Bloodbound Bands worn by willing creatures to form a bond among all of you. Creatures related by blood can't form bonds in this way. Bonded creatures can each use the highest recovery value of any bonded creature in place of their own, and can spend each other's Recoveries as if they were their own. Whenever any other bonded creature takes damage, each bonded creature takes 1 damage that can't be reduced in any way. Your bond ends if you remove the ring, use it to bond with one or more other creatures, or die, but other rings continue to be bonded to each other.

5th Level: The ring's bonus to Stamina increases to +12. Additionally, you have damage immunity 2.

9th Level: The ring's bonus to Stamina increases to +21. Additionally, if a creature bonded with you dies, you can choose to die in their place. Your sacrifice twists fate to remove the creature from danger, and they regain Stamina equal to their winded value. Your ring then teleports into their possession and ceases to be magic.

Bloody Hand Wraps

These rough hand wraps are stained with blood that never comes clean.

Keywords: Hands, Psionic
Item Prerequisite: One cotton bolt soaked in the blood of six adventurers
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Agility, or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wear these hand wraps, any weapon ability that deals rolled damage using your unarmed strikes gain a +1 damage bonus. Additionally, once per turn, you can take 5 damage that can't be reduced in any way to use the Grab maneuver (no action required).

5th Level: The damage bonus granted by the hand wraps increases to +2. Additionally, once per turn, you can take 10 damage that can't be reduced in any way to make a melee free strike (no action required). On your turn, you can use the wraps' melee free strike option or Grab maneuver option, but only one.

9th Level: The damage bonus granted by the hand wraps increases to +3. Additionally, once per turn, you can take 15 damage that can't be reduced in any way to use a signature ability (no action required). On your turn, you can use the wraps' signature ability option, melee free strike option, or Grab maneuver option, but only one.



Lightning Treads

Sparks strike from these boots whenever they touch the ground, increasing in number as the wearer gathers speed.

Keywords: Feet, Magic
Item Prerequisite: One jar of lightning
Project Source: Texts or lore in Yllyric
Project Roll Characteristic: Agility, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wear the boots, any weapon ability that deals rolled damage using your unarmed strikes deals an extra 1 lightning damage. Additionally, you gain a +2 bonus to speed.

5th Level: The extra lightning damage granted by the treads increases to 2. Additionally, for each square you move on your turn before you use a weapon ability that deals rolled damage using your unarmed strikes, this extra damage increases by 1 (to a maximum of 4).

9th Level: The extra lightning damage granted by the treads increases to 3, and your movement can increase that extra damage to a maximum of 6. Additionally, you can use a maneuver to perform a flying lightning kick on one adjacent creature. That target is pushed up to 5 squares, and you can move to any square adjacent to the target after the push.

Revenger's Wrap

When first handled, this tattered cloak fills the mind with thoughts of revenge.

Keywords: Neck, Magic
Item Prerequisite: A cloak worn by a murdered monarch
Project Source: Texts or lore in Caelian
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Intuition
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wear this cloak, any creature who damages you is marked for revenge until the end of your next turn or until another creature damages you. Any strike you make against a creature marked for revenge deals extra damage equal to your highest characteristic score, and whenever you damage a creature marked for revenge, they are also bleeding until the end of their next turn.

5th Level: Each creature who damages you is marked for revenge until the end of your next turn. Whenever you damage a creature marked for revenge, they are also bleeding (save ends).

9th Level: When you have three or more creatures marked for revenge and you target one of them with an ability that targets only one creature, you target all the creatures marked for revenge, regardless of their distance from you and even if you don't have line of effect to them.

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Thief of Joy

This burnished copper torque thrums with a sense of judgment.

Keywords: Neck, Psionic
Item Prerequisite: A pound of feathers, a pound of bricks from the Seven Cities of Hell
Project Source: Texts or lore in Anjali
Project Roll Characteristic: Might, Reason, or Presence
Project Goal: 450

1st Level: While you wear this torque, you gain a bonus to Stamina equal to twice your highest characteristic score. Additionally, you can use a maneuver to choose a creature in your line of effect and learn their level. If their level is higher than yours, the torque grants you envy. If their level is equal to or lower than yours, the torque grants you disdain. You can have both envy and disdain from different creatures, but not more than one instance of either.

Whenever a creature within 10 squares of you deals damage to another creature, you can use a triggered action to expend your envy or disdain. If you expend envy, you deal damage equal to the triggering damage to a creature adjacent to you. If you expend disdain, you reduce the triggering damage by half. At the end of the encounter, you lose any envy or disdain granted by the torque.

5th Level: The torque's bonus to Stamina increases to three times your highest characteristic score. Additionally, when you use the torque's maneuver and the target creature is the same level as you, you gain your choice of envy or disdain.

9th Level: The torque's bonus to Stamina increases to five times your highest characteristic score. Additionally, you can have multiple instances of envy and disdain, with no limit on either.

Artifacts

Artifacts are powerful treasures, with entire campaigns to be built around finding, using, hiding, protecting, or destroying one. Make no mistake—these items unbalance the game. If the heroes or villains have access to such a treasure, their power is far beyond what the encounter-building guidelines in *Draw Steel: Monsters* expect. That's part of the fun!

Typically, one creature never holds onto an artifact for too long. Most of these treasures have a sentience of their own and an eagerness to move on. Since many powerful entities might want to get their hands on an artifact, characters might see armies, dragons, and even gods come to collect one from a wielder who refuses to let go.

Blade of a Thousand Years

This fabled sword features a hilt made of glittering starlight, out of which its gleaming metal blade extends.

Keywords: Magic; Light Weapon, Medium Weapon, or Heavy Weapon

Whether drawn from a stone, gifted by a lake spirit, forged by a god, or used to kill one, there is a sword that exists outside of time and space. It is always where it needs to be precisely when it needs to be there—then is gone in a flash when the need for it has waned. The sword is depicted in art, song, and story across many living cultures—and even more frequently among cultures long buried, often after proving the deciding factor in a battle. It's been wielded by numerous heroes of legend, and even more who have slipped into the forgotten shadows of history.

Though its size and make are often debated, the sword is consistently described as a hilt with no crossguard, made from pure starlight. When wielded, a brilliant metal blade springs forth from that hilt, suiting the holder's taste in weapons. Those who touch the blade are filled with the vigor and power of the heroes who have held it before.

Suited for Victory: This sword takes on the size, shape, and make that the wielder wills into it. It can be a light, medium, or heavy weapon, and you can change its weapon type and appearance as a free maneuver. Any weapon ability that deals rolled damage using the Blade of a Thousand Years gains a +5 damage bonus, and that ability always deals holy damage. Any creature with weakness to holy damage who takes damage from this weapon is also frightened and weakened until the end of their next turn.

Rally the Righteous: This blade fills all around it with hope and courage. Each ally within 1 mile of the weapon gains an edge on weapon abilities and magic abilities, and has damage immunity 5. Additionally, each such creature's Stamina maximum increases by 15 and they gain a +15 bonus to Stamina when this ability first affects them.

Turn the Tide: Each enemy minion within 1 mile of the sword is dazed. Any enemy leader or solo creature in that area takes a bane on ability rolls.

Victory's Assurance: This weapon always appears on the eve before what will later come to be known as a historic battle. It disappears after 24 hours or when the battle is won, whichever comes first. By taking the blade, the wielder unwittingly enters into a pact with the weapon. If they don't secure victory against monumental odds or some great foe by the time the sword disappears, they are pulled into the sword, preventing any chance of resurrection, and forever dooming them to lend their strength to the heroes of other ages.

Soul of the Martyr: If the wielder dies while holding this blade, their soul is drawn into the starlight hilt, where it remains for the rest of time to prevent any chance of resurrection. The sword disappears, but

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the lingering feeling of hope that spreads from it remains. For the next hour, the effects of Rally the Righteous increase to provide a double edge on weapon abilities and magic abilities, damage immunity 10, an increase to Stamina maximum of 30, and a bonus to Stamina of +30.

Encepter

A bejeweled scepter with a spiraling porcelain handle balances an orb of light above its crown.

Keywords: Magic

This scepter waits high in the sky, resting within an endlessly raging cyclone. It waits for the one who will unify all people under its light. It awaits its champion.

The Encepter is said to have first manifested in a young world doomed to apocalypse—unless every last inhabitant of that world could stand together. The scepter is said to impose either dominion or obliteration over any threat its light is drawn around. Today, it is most commonly known as a bad omen, and should the Encepter reveal itself, folk know that the world teeters on the brink of destruction. Whether any of the stories are true, few can say, for the only living eyes that have witnessed the Encepter belong to dragons deep in slumber.

Shining Presence: The one who wields the Encepter is always cast in a brilliant glow. Any power roll made by the wielder that uses Presence automatically achieves a tier 3 outcome, though the wielder can still roll in an attempt to score a critical success or critical hit.

Champion's Lasso: As a free maneuver, the wielder of the scepter can trigger a glowing line of light that traces their path as they move, or can dismiss the glowing line. If the wielder crosses over this line, each creature and object of the wielder's choice enclosed inside the line and within 2 squares above and below it are considered lassoed by the Encepter. Creatures remain lassoed until the lasso is released or until a new line is drawn.

Dominion: Each creature lassoed by the Encepter is restrained and can't teleport. A creature caught in midair while lassoed stays in place rather than falling.

Obliteration: As a main action, the wielder raises the Encepter to the sky. Each target lassoed by the Encepter erupts in a prismatic burst of light, taking 10 psychic damage for each square horizontally encircled by the lasso. The lasso is then immediately released.

At World's End: If the Encepter was not taken from its cyclonic resting place with the purpose of vanquishing a terrible peril, then a terrible peril emerges to threaten the world within 3 days of the scepter being taken.

Mortal Coil

This floating helix of golden metal spins ever faster as it activates, crackling with crimson sparks.

Keywords: Psionic

Change is the engine of existence. Permanence begets stagnation. When the past refuses to relinquish control, a path must be cleared for the future. Energized by the flickering of minds and souls passing through the void, the Mortal Coil taps into the entropic potential inherent in every living creature to cast a shadow capable of felling even gods. For the true gift of life is death, and gifts are meant to be given.

Only one destined for death can contain the power of the Mortal Coil. A mortal creature who carries this artifact serves as its host, gaining an additional action on each of their turns, aging at ten times the usual rate, and becoming unable to ever regain Stamina. A host with no natural maximum lifespan permanently reduces their Stamina maximum by 10 each year.



When the Mortal Coil is left unattended or is in the possession of a creature who is not mortal, it activates and can't be deactivated until a mortal creature becomes its host once more. While active, the artifact extends a penumbra of influence for 10 miles in every direction. Every creature in the penumbra is subject to the following effects.

One Foot in the Grave: Any creature in the penumbra has damage weakness 2 and can't regain Stamina.

Get Busy Dyin': Each creature in the penumbra ages at 10 times the usual rate, and diseases and poisons affecting creatures in the penumbra run their course at 10 times their usual rate. A creature with no natural maximum lifespan permanently reduces their Stamina maximum by 10 each year. Each creature can undertake one additional respite activity during each respite.

If You Meet God on the Road, Kill Them: Every non-mortal entity in the penumbra is granted the gift of mortality. Previously immortal or invulnerable entities—from planar creatures to the gods themselves—can be killed while in the penumbra, though not necessarily easily. Any creature or entity who dies in the Mortal Coil's penumbra experiences perfect death. They are permanently, irrevocably dead, and no magic, psionics, or technology can restore them to life.

Perpetual Motion: If there are ever no creatures or entities within the Mortal Coil's penumbra, the radius of the penumbra doubles.

Beneath Contempt: Deities and their servants always overlook the Mortal Coil and its host—either unable to notice it, or not considering it a threat. If the artifact is somehow destroyed or unmade through godly power, it consumes a year of life from every humanoid in the manifold where it was destroyed, then reforms in a hidden place.

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TITLES

Titles are special benefits earned by heroes through adventure and mighty deeds. Heroes must win titles—sometimes individually, sometimes as a group—by accomplishing heroic tasks. Titles are the record of a hero's accomplishments, forming the basis of the stories told of them in taverns or whispered in the halls of the mighty.

Each title comes with a new ability or other special benefit. By earning titles, heroes gain a unique set of capabilities that sets them apart from other adventurers.

Title Requirements

Players don't simply choose their characters' titles. Like treasures and Renown (in the next section), titles must be won. Each title has a unique requirement, so that earning a title might mean your character needs to defeat a specific monster, research dangerous forbidden lore, or—in the case of the Monarch title—win a kingdom!

Titles aren't given out on a schedule. Instead, the Director grants one whenever heroes perform a deed worthy of it. Just as a hero doesn't automatically find a magic weapon simply because they meet the requirements for using it, they don't automatically earn a title unless it's granted by the Director.

Although the Director gives out titles, if you want to earn a specific title, let your Director know. For instance, you might say, "I'm interested in the Dragon Blooded title. Can my hero listen for rumors of any wicked dragons nearby that need smiting?" Having ambition is good! Pursue the titles you want that will make you a better hero.

Title Echelons

Each title is assigned to an echelon of play where it is most likely to be earned. For instance, knighthood is something that can be typically earned by the 2nd echelon, but becoming a monarch can usually only be achieved in the 4th echelon. But don't let the rules get in the way of a good story! If the Director decides that your character somehow wins a knighthood at 1st level, bask in the glory of this great accomplishment.

For the Director: Granting Titles Early

Granting titles before characters reach the recommended echelon can be fun, but it's worth noting that doing so might have unwanted effects on the game. Higher-echelon titles often grant more significant benefits than lower-echelon titles. If a hero becomes queen at 1st level, her royal responsibilities might overshadow her other adventures. Don't grant a title more than one echelon early unless you know what you're getting yourself into!

Customizing Titles

This section details a number of ready-to-use titles. But the Director can also create custom titles, both to reward specific player accomplishments and to flesh out organizations, locations, and foes within their own game world. When a hero finally achieves a long-term goal after many game sessions of struggle, the Director can memorialize the moment by granting a unique title. Similarly, the Director can grant custom titles when the heroes befriend specific factions, defeat notorious villains, or learn new moves from skilled NPCs.

The easiest way to create custom titles is to modify an existing title's requirements to fit the adventure at hand. For instance, your world might contain a secretive organization of freedom fighters—the Jesters—who never carry weapons, defeating foes with unarmed attacks and improvised weapons. Creating a Jester title can be as easy as modifying the Brawler title by changing its requirements to "Fight alongside the Jesters against a mutual foe."

For the Director: Perks as Custom Titles

You can turn a perk into a 1st-echelon title simply by giving it a prerequisite (see Chapter 7: Perks). For example, a hero might gain the Familiar perk as a title instead if they complete a quest for an archmage, who then teaches the hero the conjuring ritual as a reward.

How Many Titles?

Just because a hero meets the prerequisite for a title doesn't mean it is granted to them. The Director decides when a hero earns a title and its benefits. Odds are you'll be adventuring quite a bit and qualify for more than a few , but gaining too many titles all at once can make for a complicated hero. In general, a hero typically earns one title per echelon of play, though they can earn more or fewer at the Director's discretion.

Title Benefits

Some titles have only one benefit. These are typically earned by heroes individually instead of together as a group. Only the hero doing the studying or meeting a particular fate reaps the reward!

Most titles, however, are earned by all the heroes at once for accomplishing a great task, benefiting them all. These titles typically offer a selection of three or four different options. When the party earns the title, each player decides which benefit their hero takes. For instance, if the party triumphs in a tavern fight and gains the Brawler title, one hero might become more adept at fighting with improvised weapons, another might learn a special dodge to use when flanked by multiple enemies, and two others might simply revel in the increased notoriety. A hero can take any of a title's benefits they qualify for, and multiple heroes can take the same benefit.

Granting Titles

Titles are rewards for heroic activities, and they often go hand in hand with treasure and other goodies. If the party defeats a fearsome monster and earns Renown, or accomplishes a quest and wins a magic leveled treasure, one or more characters might earn a title at the same time.

There is no hard-and-fast rule for the number of titles characters should accumulate by a certain level. If a character wins a title whenever they accomplish a truly notable deed—once every few adventures—then they might earn about one title per echelon. Sticking to this rate isn't a requirement, though. Characters might easily earn twice or half as many titles, making them a bit more or less powerful than they otherwise would be. A Director can even skip granting titles altogether if they wish.

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For the Director: Planning Titles

While running a game session, it can be hard to track the heroes' actions and remember which titles they might qualify for. As such, it's easier to plan titles ahead of time. If the heroes might face a demon or dragon in an upcoming adventure, you can include the Demon Blooded or Dragon Blooded titles as potential rewards alongside that magic cloak or psionic dagger. You can even use titles to inspire adventures. What challenges should a hero face to earn the Demigod title?

Optional Rule: Players Choose Titles

If the Director doesn't want to track player accomplishments, they can let the players do it instead. In this case, whenever a hero enters a new echelon of play, they gain one title of their choice for which they qualify.

1st-Echelon Titles

Titles suitable for 1st-echelon characters are presented in alphabetical order.

Ancient Loremaster

It's astonishing what you find in old books. Look at this—nearly complete schematics for a war automaton, gathering dust because nobody here reads Zaliac.

Prerequisite: You find a trove of forgotten books.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Leverage: You know a priceless secret. The Director chooses the type of person who would value this secret—usually a member of a particular faction, such as a Higaran noble, or a type of person, such as a fence of stolen goods. When engaged in a negotiation with this type of person, you can offer this secret. If they accept, their interest increases by 3 (to a maximum of 5). You can share this secret only once.

Rare Books: You add rare, ancient books to your collection. Whenever you undertake a research project, roll 1d6 for each dead language you know and add the total to the project roll.

Susurrus Codex: You find a sinister book that whispers advice in a voice no one else can hear. As long as you follow the book's advice, you gain an edge on Reason tests and take a bane on Presence tests. You can stop following the book's advice at any time, but the book won't speak to you for the rest of the day.

Battleaxe Diplomat

We seem to be equals in might and combat prowess. Perhaps we should bandy words awhile instead.

Prerequisite: You gain the friendship or alliance of a creature you once battled.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Iron Hand in Velvet Glove: The first time during a negotiation that you make a test using the Intimidate skill and don't make an argument that appeals to an NPC's motivation, you don't lower the NPC's patience or interest no matter the outcome of the roll.

Truce!: You have a double edge on tests made to stop combat and start a negotiation.

Warriors' Understanding: You gain an edge on Presence tests made to interact with creatures you have fought against in combat encounters.

Brawler

We won't kill you. But you might wish we had.

Prerequisite: You triumph in battle without killing any of your foes.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Duck!: When an enemy strikes you while a second creature is flanking you, you can use a triggered action to redirect the strike against the second creature. Once you use this benefit, you can't use it again until you earn 1 or more Victories.

Furniture Fighter: When you use a weapon ability with an improvised weapon or a weapon that isn't part of your kit, the ability benefits from your kit's melee weapon damage bonus.

Headbutt: While you are grabbed or restrained, your free strikes don't take a bane when those conditions would impose one.

If I Wanted You Dead, You'd Be Dead: Whenever you defeat foes without killing any of them (including the foes you defeat to meet the prerequisite for this title), you gain an edge on tests during negotiations with those foes.

City Rat

Stay out all night, visit the dives. Get in a fight, run from the cops. That's the real city.

Prerequisite: You have spent at least five respites in a metropolis.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Discerning Shopper: When looking for an item prerequisite for a crafting project, you can remember meeting someone who might have the item—or at least information about it.

One with the Crowd: While you're using one or more creatures as cover, you gain an edge on tests made to hide and sneak.

Street Smart: While in a settlement, you can't be surprised.

Doomed

I don't know what it meant, but when I watched her die, I saw a vision. I watched her die and saw my own death. Am I losing my mind?

Prerequisite: You aren't a hakaan but have witnessed the death of a hakaan.

Effect: You aren't destined for a meaningful death, but you still might achieve one. When you're reduced to 0 Stamina but remain conscious, you can become doomed. If you do, you can't regain Stamina, you automatically obtain a tier 3 outcome on tests and power rolls, and you don't die until your Stamina reaches the negative of your Stamina maximum. At the end of the encounter, you die.

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Dwarven Legionnaire

I have learned much. It might be your courage that inspires others. Watch your opponent's shield as well as their sword. And above all, stand fast, and do not yield.

Prerequisite: You fight alongside three or more dwarves.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Close Formation: While adjacent to two or more allies, you gain a +2 bonus to stability.
Rune of Alarm: You can spend 10 uninterrupted minutes to inscribe a magic eye-shaped rune on a surface. The rune sheds light for 2 squares. The rune is dispelled 1 minute after it is activated or if you inscribe the rune elsewhere. The rune activates when an enemy comes within 2 squares of it. When the rune is activated, you wake up if you are nonmagically asleep, and you can perceive through the rune for 1 minute as if you were in its square.
Stonemeld: While adjacent to a stone wall, you can use a maneuver to gain concealment. This concealment lasts until you leave the square or use an ability.

Elemental Dabbler

Spirit of fire, I command you!

Prerequisite: You defeat a creature with the Elemental keyword, such as a crux of fire.

Effect: Choose a damage type to which the defeated creature had an immunity (such as fire). Then choose one of the following benefits:

Elemental Blaster: You have the Elementalist 1st-level Hurl Element feature, dealing the chosen damage type.
Elemental Immunity: You have immunity to the chosen damage type equal to your highest characteristic score.
Elemental Weapons: Whenever you use a damage-dealing weapon ability, that ability can deal damage of the chosen type instead of its usual damage type.

Faction Member

In six months, I'll be running this place.

Prerequisite: You join an army, guild, or similar organization.

Effect: You gain membership in a faction. You're regarded as a promising but untested agent, and you're allowed to operate independently. You can be assigned tasks to further your faction's goals, and you can expect rewards and promotion if you succeed. When engaged in a negotiation with any member of your faction, their patience increases by 2 (to a maximum of 5).

Additionally, the Director assigns you one of the following benefits, as appropriate to the faction in question. The Director can also create a custom benefit for a type of faction not noted here. You can use this benefit only in a settlement where your faction has a presence, and once you use this benefit, you can't use it again until you complete a task for your faction.

Academic Faction: You find a sage who can make up to three Reason tests to recall lore or make project rolls for research projects on your behalf. The sage has a +5 bonus to these tests. These project rolls take 10 minutes each and don't need to be made during a respite.
Guild Faction: You find an expert crafter who can make up to three project rolls for crafting projects on your behalf. The crafter has a +5 bonus to these tests. These project rolls take 10 uninterrupted minutes each and don't need to be made during a respite.
Martial Faction: You recruit up to three minions with levels no greater than your own, of a type appropriate for the faction (such as **human guards**). These minions follow your orders for a day.
Spy Faction: You find an agent who can provide you with three pieces of information about the settlement you're in, such as the location of a hidden person, a secret entrance into a guarded area, or the negotiation motivation or pitfall of an important person.

Special: You can gain this title multiple times, once for each faction. You can be stripped of this title if you act against the faction's interests.

Local Hero

Your coin won't spend here. The Heroes of Gravesford drink for free in this tavern!

Prerequisite: You save a community from certain destruction.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

A New Dawn: Each time you finish a respite while in a community you have saved, the party gains a hero token. This hero token disappears at the end of your next respite if it hasn't been used.
Easy Marks: You gain an edge on tests made using skills from the interpersonal and intrigue skill groups when influencing members of a community that you have saved.
Local Fame: You earn 1 Renown.

> **Renown and Wealth**
> Many titles bestow Renown, followers, and wealth upon heroes. Those topics are covered later in this chapter.

Mage Hunter

Their power is dangerous. Unnatural. Someone needs to do something.

Prerequisite: You defeat three leader or solo creatures who each have at least one ability with the Magic keyword.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Arcane Dampening: When resisting potencies from magic abilities, your characteristic scores are considered to be 1 higher than usual.
Oh No, You Don't!: Whenever an adjacent creature uses an ability with the Magic keyword, you can make a free strike against them as a triggered action.
Stink of Magic: As a maneuver, you open your senses to the residue of magic. Until the end of your next turn, you are aware of whether each creature within 5 squares is a construct, an undead, or a creature from another world, and whether they have used a magic ability in the previous hour. Additionally, you can't be surprised by constructs, undead, or creatures from another world.

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Marshal

I said you had twenty-four hours to leave town. That was … what, about twenty-four hours ago?

Prerequisite: You join an organization that hunts criminals, such as the Far Mariners (see Orden and the Timescape in Chapter 1: The Basics), or you are deputized to act for the local authorities.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Guess It's the Hard Way Then: When combat begins and you aren't surprised, the first time you take damage before taking your turn, you halve that damage.
Heedless Pursuer: Once on each of your turns, you can use a free maneuver to deal yourself 1d6 damage that can't be reduced in any way. When you do, you ignore difficult terrain and you can increase the distance of any jump you make by 1 square, both until the end of your turn.
Silver Shield: You have a badge granted to you by your organization. While you wear it, you gain the My Life for Yours feature from the censor class. When you use that ability, you can't spend wrath unless you have the Wrath class feature.
Trained Tracker: You gain an edge on tests made to track criminals.

Monster Bane

You dare mock Blunwin Mousebane? You think my deed trivial? Ah, but you didn't see the size of the mouse!

Prerequisite: You defeat a leader or solo creature with a Reason score of –2 or lower, such as an ankheg.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Beast Bane: Creatures with the Animal keyword take a bane on strikes made against you.
Monster Soother: You gain an edge on tests made to calm or tame nonsapient creatures.
Monster Trophy: You decorate your equipment with a trophy from a creature you defeated. While the trophy is visible, you gain an edge on tests made to intimidate sapient creatures.

Owed a Favor

The Guild's gratitude knows no bounds! We'll repay you in any way we can … short of actually paying you.

Prerequisite: You successfully perform a service for a powerful faction.

Effect: The faction will perform one favor for the party, provided it doesn't interfere with the faction's goals.

Additionally, the faction is a good source of information. The Director chooses a skill from the crafting or lore skill groups appropriate to the faction, such as the Criminal Underworld skill for an outlaw gang, the Blacksmithing skill for a blacksmith's guild, or the Society skill for a noble house. While in a settlement where the faction has a presence, you gain this skill if you don't already have it. If you already have the skill, you instead gain an edge on tests made using the skill.

Presumed Dead

But … you're dead. We went to your funeral.

Prerequisite: You die in a way that prevents your body from being recovered or examined (for instance, by falling off a cliff).

Effect: While it might appear that you died, you did not. Instead, you regain 1 Stamina and can spend 1 or more Recoveries. Additionally, you gain a 1st-echelon trinket of the Director's choice (see Treasures earlier in this chapter).

At a dramatic moment determined by the Director, you rejoin your party with an explanation for your narrow escape, and how you found your new trinket along the way.

Ratcatcher

I like fighting these little guys. Means I don't have to waste money on a helmet.

Prerequisite: You defeat a leader or solo creature who is size 1S or smaller, such as a goblin monarch.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Come Out to Play: You have the following ability, which can be paid for using the Heroic Resource of your class:

Come Out to Play (1 Heroic Resource)
Come out to play-yay!

Area, Magic — **Maneuver**
5 burst — Each enemy in the area hidden to you

Effect: Each target who has P < AVERAGE is taunted by you until the end of their next turn, and you know the location of each creature taunted in this way.

Death From Above: Your strikes gain a +3 damage bonus against creatures whose size is smaller than yours.
Everybody Move!: When you use the Knockback maneuver, you can target one additional creature of your size or two additional smaller creatures.

Saved for a Worse Fate

Drink this. You'll need all your strength for what lies ahead!

Prerequisite: The entire party is killed or captured by sapient foes.

Effect: After being defeated, each character awakes, alive and with full Stamina and Recoveries. You are all captives of the creatures who defeated you, and a gruesome end awaits you—unless you can escape or overcome the nefarious challenge your captors have planned.

The Director chooses one of the following benefits, based on the fate your captors have in mind for you. Each hero gains the same benefit. Additionally, you must face an encounter, montage test, or adventure related to the benefit, as the Director's determines.

Gladiators: You must fight to the death for your captors' amusement. Your intended opponents wield or guard a trinket or leveled treasure, which you can earn if you are victorious.
Prey: Your captors plan to release you and hunt you down, but it's no fun unless you offer a challenge. Each of you is given a medicinal draught that grants a +1 bonus to speed and increases your Recoveries by 2. This benefit lasts until the end of your next respite.
Sacrifices: You are to be dropped in a volcano, fed to a sacred monster, abandoned in a desert, or otherwise sacrificed to a higher power. You are bedecked with holy jewelry. Each hero earns 1 Wealth.
Saviors: Your captors fear an even stronger foe, and they want you to defeat this enemy for them. You can even keep any treasure you find while doing so.

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Ship Captain

Up anchor, shipmates! 'Tisn't gold but glory we seek!

Prerequisite: You acquire a ship, airship, or similar vessel.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Deep-Sea Diver: You can automatically swim at full speed while moving.
Ship Speaker: You magically know the location of any ship controlled by your party even while you aren't aboard. You can telepathically communicate with anyone on board one of your ships who understands a language, and they can respond, no matter your distance from the ship.
Signal Flags: While aboard a ship, you can communicate with and conduct negotiations with another ship up to 5 miles away, as long as you and creatures on the other ship have line of effect to each other. You gain an edge on Presence tests made while negotiating in this way.
Trained Crewmember: You gain an edge on tests made to handle air or sea vessels.

Troupe Leading Player

We're actors! We're the opposite of people!

Prerequisite: The party has successfully performed as a troupe of actors, circus performers, or other entertainers.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Flying Circus: When you are adjacent to a willing ally on their turn, you can use a triggered action to push them up to 2 squares if their size is the same as yours, or 4 squares if they are smaller. If this push causes the ally to fall, they can use a maneuver before they fall to reduce the height of the fall by 2.
Spotlight: You magically cause a creature within 10 squares to shed light for 5 squares. This light lasts for 1 minute, until the creature is more than 10 squares away from you, or until you dismiss the effect (no action required). While illuminated, a creature can't sneak or hide, they take a bane on tests made to perform any action secretly, and they gain an edge on tests made using the Lead, Music, or Perform skills.
Supporting Player: You gain an edge on group tests using Presence and on tests made to assist another creature with a Presence test.
Work the Crowd: While any of your allies is playing music or performing, you gain an edge on tests made to conceal objects, hide, pick pockets, or sneak.

Wanted Dead or Alive

A hundred silver?! An insult! I turned my father in for fifty golden crowns. And he was innocent!

Prerequisite: You are declared an outlaw by a governmental authority.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Honor Among Thieves: When negotiating with criminals, your Renown score is considered to be 2 higher than usual.
Minion Mower: When you make a melee strike that targets a minion and at least one more minion is within distance of the strike, the strike gains a +3 damage bonus.
No, You're Under Arrest!: You gain an edge on the Escape Grab maneuver. Additionally, when you succeed on a test to escape bonds or manacles, as part of the same maneuver, you can transfer the bonds or manacles to an adjacent creature of the same size without them immediately noticing.

Zombie Slayer

Why won't you die?! You've already done it once, you should be good at it by now!

Prerequisite: You defeat a leader or solo creature with the Undead keyword, such as a ghost.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Blessed Weapons: Whenever you use a damage-dealing weapon ability, that ability can deal holy damage instead of its usual damage type.
Divine Health: You gain corruption immunity equal to your highest characteristic score. Additionally, you can't be turned into an undead creature.
Holy Terror: You have the following ability, which can be paid for using the Heroic Resource of your class:

Holy Terror (3 Heroic Resource)

Return to your grave!

Area, Magic — **Maneuver**
3 burst — Each undead enemy in the area

Effect: Each target takes holy damage equal to your Reason, Intuition, or Presence score (your choice). Additionally, each target who has **P < STRONG** is frightened (save ends).

2nd-Echelon Titles

Titles suitable for 2nd-echelon characters are presented in alphabetical order.

Arena Fighter

You've never seen the showstopper? The move so brutal it was banned in the arena? Come closer and I'll show it to you.

Prerequisite: You are victorious in battle in an arena or some other public contest of combat.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Dirty Fighting: While you are standing, your melee strikes gain a +3 damage bonus against prone creatures. Additionally, being prone doesn't impose a bane on your strikes.
Foes as Weapons: Whenever you have a creature of your size or smaller grabbed, you can use them as a weapon when you make a melee weapon free strike. Both the target and the grabbed enemy take the strike's damage.
Instant Celebrity: You earn 1 Renown.
Showstopper: You have the following ability, which can be paid for using the Heroic Resource of your class:

Showstopper (5 Heroic Resource)

Show's over, kids!

Melee, Strike, Weapon — **Main action**
Melee 1 — One creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11 6 damage; **I < WEAK**, slowed (save ends)
12-16 10 damage; **I < AVERAGE**, frightened (save ends)
17+ 14 damage; **I < STRONG**, dazed (save ends)

Effect: If you kill a non-minion opponent using this ability, each enemy within 3 squares of you is frightened (save ends).

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Awakened

I was grappling with them, and when they died … I felt something happen. To me.

Prerequisite: You defeat a leader or solo creature who has at least one ability with the Psionic keyword, such as a voiceless talker evolutionist.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Foresight: You don't take a bane when using abilities against creatures with concealment.
Rogue Talent: Choose one triggered action that the talent class has access to at 1st level. You gain that ability regardless of whether your class and subclass allow you to take it. If this ability allows you to gain or spend clarity, you can't do so unless you have the Clarity class feature.
Telepathy: As a maneuver, you communicate telepathically with a creature within 10 squares who understands a language you know. The creature can respond telepathically as part of the same maneuver.

Battlefield Commander

Spells and shadows have their place, but it takes soldiers to hold the field.

Prerequisite: You lead an army in battle and win.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Charge!: You have the following ability, which can be paid for using the Heroic Resource of your class:

Charge! (9 Heroic Resource)
Follow me!

Area 3 burst | **Main action** Self and each ally in the area

Effect: Each target can use the Charge main action.

Renowned Warrior: You earn 1 Renown.
Student of War: Choose a 1st-level doctrine feature from the tactician class. You gain that feature even if you don't have the Tactical Doctrine feature.

Blood Magic

Flow , blood, thou fiend's libation, and catch my foes in conflagration!

Prerequisite: You participate in a Discover Lore project to learn forbidden knowledge.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Blood Mage: When you use an area ability with the Magic or Psionic keyword, you can take damage equal to your level to increase the ability's area by 1. This damage can't be reduced in any way. You can use this benefit only once per use of an ability.
Bloody Murder: When you deal rolled damage to a creature with a strike, you can take damage equal to your level to deal twice that much corruption damage to the creature. This damage can't be reduced in any way. You can use this benefit only once per ability. If the creature is reduced to 0 Stamina by this corruption damage, the creature explodes in a shower of blood and you regain the Stamina you lost. You can't use this benefit on creatures without blood, such as constructs, elementals, or undead.
I Reject This Evil Power! You gain corruption immunity equal to your level.

Corsair

Haul down your flag or we'll burn you to the waterline!

Prerequisite: You have the Ship Captain title, and you sink or capture a ship of equal or greater size than your own.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Artillerist: You gain a +5 damage bonus when using a ship's weapons.
Black Flag: You have a recognizable flag that strikes terror on the high seas. While your flag is flying from your ship, crewmembers of other ships who have line of effect to the flag take a bane on strikes made against your ship or its crew.
Fearsome Reputation: You earn 1 Renown.
Scoundrel Tactics: While aboard a ship, you can use the following skills to make a test to influence another ship up to 5 miles away whose crewmembers have line of effect to you, and you gain an edge when you do so. You can use Disguise to hide your ship's identity or general type, Intimidate to convince another ship's crew to flee or surrender, or Hide or Sneak to let your ship avoid notice.

Faction Officer

If you want or need something, talk to me. I have a certain … influence in these parts.

Prerequisite: You have the Faction Member title, and you greatly advance the faction's goals.

Effect: You are given a position of great authority in your faction. Additionally, you gain the following benefits:

Requisition: When you gain this title, you gain a 1st- or 2nd-echelon magic trinket of your choice from your faction (see Treasures earlier in this chapter). Whenever you gain a level, you can swap the trinket out for another one.
You're the Boss: Lower-ranking members of your faction follow your routine orders. In nonroutine matters, you gain an edge on tests made to influence those characters' behavior.

Fey Friend

Do you enjoy the vintage? Yes, you can understand my tongue now. One does not drink at my table and leave unchanged.

Prerequisite: You eat and drink with an elf monarch or archfey.

Effect: You know the Khelt language. Additionally, choose one of the following benefits:

Gift of Charm: You have a skill of your choice from the interpersonal skill group.
Gift of Foresight: When resisting potencies, your Intuition score is considered to be 1 higher than usual.
Gift of Knowledge: You gain an edge on tests you make that use any skill from the lore skill group.

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Giant Slayer

Come back here, puny one, and let me crush you!

Prerequisite: You defeat a leader or solo creature with the Giant keyword, such as a fire giant chief.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Smallfolk Dodge: Any creature of size 2 or larger takes a bane on strikes against you.
The Harder They Fall: You have the following ability, which can be paid for using the Heroic Resource of your class:

The Harder They Fall (7 Heroic Resource)

Timber!

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11 7 damage; M < WEAK, prone and can't stand (save ends)
12–16 11 damage; M < AVERAGE, prone and can't stand (save ends)
17+ 16 damage; M < STRONG, prone and can't stand (save ends)

Special: If the target is size 2 or larger, you gain an edge on this ability.

Up the Beanstalk: You have the Climb skill. If you already have this skill, you instead gain an edge on tests made using the Climb skill. While you're climbing a creature, the creature has a double bane on strikes against you and you have a double edge on tests made to stay on the creature.

Godsworn

He seemed like he needed help! Now the dead speak to me. I think maybe that old man was more than he appeared.

Prerequisite: You do a favor for an agent of a god or saint, or promise to do so.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Healing Gift: You can use the 1st-level conduit feature Healing Grace as if you had spent 1 piety. Once you use this benefit, you can't use it again until you earn 1 or more Victories.
Last-Ditch Prayer: As a free maneuver, you recite a prayer for help, gaining a pool of 2d10 of the Heroic Resource granted by your class. This pool disappears at the end of your turn if you haven't used it. Once you use this benefit, you can't use it again until you perform another service for a god or saint, or until you gain a level.
Touched by the Divine: Choose a god or saint from the Deities and Domains Table in Chapter 14: Gods and Religion. From that god or saint's domains, choose a conduit 1st-level domain feature (see Chapter 5: Classes).

Heist Hero

Everybody know their assignments? All right, let's go.

Prerequisite: You have the Troupe Leading Player title, and you have used planning and teamwork to execute a theft that went (reasonably) according to plan.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Mother Hen: You can spend 10 uninterrupted minutes to psionically enhance up to five willing creatures within 10 squares of you who understand a language you know. For the next hour, you and each target can communicate telepathically with each other no matter the distance between you.
Sneakers: You gain the Sneak skill. If you already have this skill, you instead gain an edge on tests made using the Sneak skill. During group tests, you can both use the Sneak skill and assist another hero using the Sneak skill.
Timely Distraction: You gain the following triggered action:

Timely Distraction

Coming through with hot soup!
I better watch out for that banana peel!

Ranged | **Triggered**
Ranged 10 | One creature

Trigger: An ally makes a test to lie to, pick the pocket of, hide from, or sneak by the target and doesn't like the outcome.

Effect: You momentarily attract the target's notice to let your ally reroll their test. Once you use this ability, you can't use it again against the same target for 1 hour.

Knight

Kneel, heroes. Arise, knights of Tor, and may your swords be ever sharp in our service.

Prerequisite: A noble or monarch grants you knighthood or a similar rank.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Heraldic Fame: You earn 1 Renown.
Knightly Aegis: Your Stamina maximum increases by 6.
Knightly Challenge: You have the following ability, which can be paid for using the Heroic Resource of your class:

Knightly Challenge (5 Heroic Resource)

Have at thee!

Melee, Strike, Weapon | **Main action**
Melee 1 | One creature

Power Roll + Might or Agility:
≤11 7 damage; taunted (save ends)
12–16 11 damage; taunted (save ends)
17+ 16 damage; taunted (save ends)

Effect: You can end the taunted condition on the target as a free maneuver.

Special: If you take this title, you might occasionally be called upon to perform duties for the person who knighted you.

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Master Librarian

You want to know the exact coordinates of the Gem of the Waves *shipwreck? I came across that just the other day in an unpublished memoir of its second mate. Let me get that for you.*

Prerequisite: You have the Ancient Loremaster title, and you have completed a Discover Lore project to learn lost knowledge or forbidden knowledge.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Arcane Improvisation: When you use a damage-dealing magic signature ability, you can change its damage type to acid, cold, corruption, fire, lightning, poison, or sonic damage.
I Have Just the Book: If you start a Discover Lore project in your hero's stronghold or other a permanent base of operations you immediately gain 60 project points toward the completion of that project. If the project costs 60 or fewer points, you complete it in 10 uninterrupted minutes without needing to use a respite activity.
Picked Up a Few Things: You know a skill from the lore skill group.
Polyglot: You know two languages. Additionally, the project goal for the Learn New Language project is halved for you.

Special Agent

And this is interesting ... if you twist the third button on your overcoat—no, don't do it now!

Prerequisite: A spymaster gives you an important secret mission.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Boffin: You gain a small magic spy device called a boffin. Once per encounter, you can activate a boffin property as a maneuver (see below).
Caustic Alchemy: You have your choice of the 1st-level shadow college features Coat the Blade or Smoke Bomb (see Chapter 5: Classes). When you use that feature, you can't spend insight unless you have the Insight class feature.
Spy Ring: You gain a piece of magic jewelry, such as a ring. As a main action while wearing the jewelry, you can take on the illusory appearance of an individual within 10 squares who you have line of effect to. This disguise lets you automatically succeed on tests made using the Disguise skill based solely on visual identification.

Boffin Properties

Taking the Boffin benefit lets you use the following boffin properties as a maneuver:

- Make a test that uses the Disguise skill. You gain an edge on the test.
- One mundane lock you touch is unlocked.
- Choose a square within 10 squares, even if you don't have line of effect to it. You can observe the area around that square as if you were in it.
- You throw the boffin up to 10 squares, where it explodes in a 5 cube. Each creature in the area takes fire damage equal to 2d10 + your level. The boffin is permanently destroyed but can be replaced by your spymaster ... though they don't like doing so too often.

Sworn Hunter

I will follow you to the ends of the earth—just so I can kick you off the edge.

Prerequisite: You have the Marshal title, and you take down an entire criminal organization.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Hunter's Oath: As a main action, you swear a hunter's oath against a creature within 10 squares who you have line of effect to. This oath lasts until the target dies or until you swear a hunter's oath against a different creature. As long as the hunter's oath lasts, you magically know the direction to the target if they are within 50 miles of you, and your damage-dealing abilities gain a +5 damage bonus against the target.
Particular Set of Skills: You know a skill from the intrigue skill group.
We're In This Together: When you have a creature grabbed and take damage from an ability not used by that creature, the grabbed creature takes the same damage.

Undead Slain

No, I didn't get bitten. And yes, I'm fine!

Prerequisite: You are killed by an undead creature.

Effect: You return to life 1 minute after being killed with Stamina equal to your winded value. You gain corruption immunity equal to your level and one of the benefits below , based on the type of creature who killed you. If you die again, you rise as an undead creature under the Director's control.

Ghoul or Vampire: When you make a melee free strike against an adjacent creature, you can bite that creature. If you do so and obtain a tier 3 outcome, you gain temporary Stamina equal to the damage dealt. If not lost beforehand, this temporary Stamina lasts until the end of your next respite.
Incorporeal Undead: You can move through other creatures and objects. The first time in a combat round that you pass through a creature, that creature takes corruption damage equal to half your level. You don't take damage from being force moved into objects.
Other Corporeal Undead: When you are reduced to 0 Stamina by damage that isn't fire or holy damage and your body isn't destroyed, you can regain half your Stamina and fall prone. Once you use this benefit, you can't use it again until you earn 10 or more Victories.

Unstoppable

I seen the goblin king run 'im through with a spear. Then I seen 'im pull 'imself back up, spear still in 'im, and headbutt the goblin king ... then he pulls out the spear and throws it on the goblin king's corpse.

Prerequisite: You defeat a foe while at or below 0 Stamina.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

From Hell's Heart: While you are winded, your melee strikes gain a +3 damage bonus.
Furious Attack: Choose one signature ability from the fury class. You gain that ability regardless of whether your class and subclass allow you to take it. If this ability allows you to gain or spend ferocity, you can't do so unless you have the Ferocity class feature.
Furious Charge: When you use the Charge action, your strike made as part of that action gains a damage bonus equal to the number of squares you moved as part of the charge.

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3rd-Echelon Titles

Titles suitable for 3rd-echelon characters are presented in alphabetical order.

Armed and Dangerous

I'm not picky. Any tool will suffice. A sword seems a most appropriate tool for this job.

Prerequisite: You can't use kits, and you defeat five non-minion enemies using weapon abilities that don't have the Magic or Psionic keyword.

Effect: You can use and gain the benefits of kits.

Back From the Grave

Hi! Remember me?

Prerequisite: You die at the hands of your greatest foe, that foe still lives, and you aren't a revenant.

Effect: You are restored to life. You gain the Tough But Withered signature trait from the revenant ancestry.

Demon Slayer

F'lath v'korr en zaratha g'rrack.

Prerequisite: You defeat a leader or solo creature with the Demon keyword, such as a soulraker hivequeen, or you are possessed by a demon.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Demonic Lore: You know the Proto-Ctholl language. Additionally, when you deal damage using a magic ability, you can change the ability's damage type to holy.
Lethe: While you are winded, your strikes gain a +5 damage bonus.
Made of Teeth: Your body can sprout teeth in unusual places. Whenever a creature makes physical contact with you or starts their turn touching you, you can deal 5 damage to them (no action required).
Soulsight: Any creature within 2 squares can't be hidden from you.

Special: When you make a Presence test and roll a natural 5 or lower, you are cursed to communicate in only Proto-Ctholl for 1 minute, whether you know that language or not.

Diabolist

If you can't beat 'em, join 'em.

Prerequisite: You defeat a leader or solo creature with the Devil keyword, such as an archdevil, or you make a deal with a devil.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Devil Lore: You know the Anjali language, and your understanding of this language helps you create irresistible supernatural effects. The potencies of your magic or psionic abilities that target Reason, Intuition, or Presence increase by 1.
Infernal Legacy: You gain 3 ancestry points to spend on purchased devil ancestry traits (see Chapter 3).
Sly Devil: You gain the Silver Tongue signature trait from the devil ancestry.
Untouched by Corruption: Whenever you use a damage-dealing ability, that ability can deal holy damage instead of its usual damage type.

Dragon Blooded

I stabbed the wyrm Axarthan in the heart and their silver blood washed over me, leaving me ... as you see.

Prerequisite: You defeat a leader or solo creature with the Dragon keyword, such as a gloom dragon.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Dragon Scaled: Dragon scales grow on your body wherever the heart's blood of the dragon touched you. You gain the Wyrmplate signature trait from the dragon knight ancestry (see Chapter 3).
Dragon Touched: You gain 3 ancestry points to spend on purchased dragon knight ancestry traits.

Fleet Admiral

All hail the Pirate Queen!

Prerequisite: You have the Corsair title, and you lead a fleet of at least three ships.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

First Mate: You have a pirate retainer, such as a **human warrior**, chosen by the Director from *Draw Steel: Monsters*. This retainer's level increases to your level.
Swashbuckler: You can automatically climb at full speed while moving.
Treasure Keeper: You earn 1 Wealth.
Weather Wizard: Once per day, you can spend 10 uninterrupted minutes to magically alter nonmagical weather in a 5-mile radius around you. The weather moves with you and persists for 6 hours or until you dismiss it as a free maneuver. Choose from one of the following weather types:
Calm: Wind-powered vessels and technology cease working.
Fog: Visibility is reduced to 6 squares.
High Winds: The speed of wind-powered vessels is doubled.
Light Winds: No effects due to weather.
Storm: The crew of an unsheltered wind-powered vessel must make a medium group Reason test. On a failure, the vessel needs repairs and moves at half speed until those repairs are made.

Maestro

When I saw the bloodstained manuscript under Fellwander's arm, I knew his quest for the Opera was over—and with it, his chance for redemption.

Prerequisite: You visit the realms of gods, devils, or other immortal beings and hear a note of the Music of Creation.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Angelic Chorus: You can use the lessons of musical improvisation in combat. Choose one class act triggered action from the troubadour class. You gain that ability regardless of whether your class and subclass allow you to take it. If this ability allows you to gain or spend drama, you can gain or spend the Heroic Resource of your class in place of drama.
Devil's Opera: You have the following ability, which can be paid for using the Heroic Resource of your class:

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The Devil's Chord (9 Heroic Resource)
Helloooo Orden!

Area, Magic — 5 burst
Main action — Each creature in the area

Power Roll + Presence:

≤11 You take 4 sonic damage unless you have the Performance skill.

12–16 6 sonic damage; M < AVERAGE, weakened (save ends)

17+ 10 sonic damage; M < STRONG, weakened and bleeding (save ends)

Effect: The soul of any creature killed by this ability is dragged to Hell.

Music of the Spheres: As a main action, you sing or play a note as delicate and sharp as glass—and just as easily shattered. Until the start of your next turn, whenever a creature within 10 squares makes a strike, they take 8 sonic damage. Whenever you make a strike during that same period, you also take 8 sonic damage.

Master Crafter

The sword Vanartha has been remade, mightier now than on the day it was forged.

Prerequisite: You complete a downtime project to imbue armor, an implement, or a weapon with a 9th-level enhancement.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Masterpiece: The armor, implement, or weapon can be imbued a fourth time, with any enhancement the item qualifies for.
Research Dividends: You gain the item prerequisite for an armor, implement, or weapon enhancement of your choice. Additionally, you learn the project source language for that enhancement.
Skilled Hands: You have a skill from the crafting skill group that would have been used during the creation of the prerequisite item. If you already have that skill, you instead gain an edge on tests made using the skill. Additionally, you gain a second skill of your choice from the crafting skill group.
Strong Hands Make Light Work: Whenever you make a project roll, you can use Might as the project roll characteristic.

Noble

Technically, I'm called Lord Morninghill these days. I did a little favor for Duke Kenway at the Battle of Black Forest.

Prerequisite: A monarch or important noble grants you a noble rank.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

I Know How to Talk to These People: You gain an edge on Presence tests made to interact with royals, nobles, and their feudal followers, provided they are aware of your noble rank.
Noble Splendor: You earn 1 Renown and 1 Wealth.
Retinue: The number of followers you can recruit increases by two.

Special: If you take this title, you might occasionally be called upon to perform duties for the person who granted your noble rank.

Planar Voyager

I've seen skywhales floating above the seas of Primordius. I've seen star freighters dancing around the moons of Axiom. So I guess you're right, I'm not from around these parts.

Prerequisite: You voyage in strange vehicles on different worlds.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Prismacore Eyes: Exposure to prismacore has given your eyes a mirrorlike sheen. You have psychic immunity 10, creatures can't use magic or psionic abilities or other effects to determine your location or read your thoughts unless you allow them to, and you gain a +3 bonus to stability against magic or psionic abilities.
Stellar Knowledge: You gain the Mechanics skill. If you already have this skill, you instead gain an edge on tests made using the skill. Additionally, you gain the item prerequisite and project source for a psionic trinket.
Time Raider Training: You gain 2 ancestry points to spend on purchased time raider ancestry traits (see Chapter 3: Ancestries).

Scarred

Last time we fought, I gave you a little token to remember me by … now it appears you need another reminder of my power.

Prerequisite: An enemy leader or solo creature reduces you to 0 Stamina.

Effect: You gain a visible scar in a location of your choice. Additionally, when you finish a respite, you gain the following benefits, which last until the end of your next respite:

- Your Stamina maximum increases by 20.
- The creature who scarred you takes a bane on abilities used against you.

Special: You can gain this title multiple times, but only once per respite.

Siege Breaker

Best way to deal with a castle siege? Be on the outside.

Prerequisite: You have the Battlefield Commander title, and you lead the defense of a settlement or fortification.

Effect: Choose one of the following benefits:

Death From Above: When you gain an edge on an ability due to high ground, the ability gains a +8 damage bonus.
Hold the Line: While you're within 5 squares of an ally, you and each ally within 5 squares of you gains a +3 bonus to stability.
Last Defender: Whenever an ally within 5 squares is reduced to 0 Stamina, you gain temporary Stamina equal to the ally's level (or 1 if they have no level). If you already have temporary Stamina granted by this title, you increase your temporary Stamina by the amount you would have gained.

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Teacher

Someday, I'll understand how peeling these carrots for dinner relates to my elementalist training.

Prerequisite: You train or command at least three lower-level members of your class.

Effect: You can travel with a student who shares your class. The student has the statistics of a 1st-level member of your class and has the same skills as you, but doesn't engage in combat. They can perform any out-of-combat tasks a 1st-level member of your class can perform. Whenever they make a test to assist you in a task, they can't obtain less than a tier 2 outcome on the test.

4th-Echelon Titles

Titles suitable for 4th-echelon characters are presented in alphabetical order.

Champion Competitor

Marduk uses the Beldoit Gambit! Avanna counters with the Iron Defense and goes on the attack! Marduk's last tower is knocked down! And just like that, we have a new ... world ... champion!

Prerequisite: You beat the best in the world at a game or sport.

Effect: A characteristic used during the competition increases by 1 (to a maximum of 6). Additionally, choose one of the following benefits:

Best of the Best: Choose a skill you used during the competition. You gain a +4 bonus to tests made using that skill instead of a +2 bonus.
Glory and Riches: You earn 2 Renown and 1 Wealth.
I'll Just Take the Prize: You gain a trinket or leveled treasure of the Director's choice.

Demigod

The ritual is complete. I feel your power flow through me. I am become a god! Ah-ha-ha-ha-ha!

Prerequisite: You have the Godsworn title, and hundreds of worshipful mortals complete a divine ritual in your name.

Effect: You gain the following benefits:

Immortal Excellence: A characteristic of your choice increases by 1 (to a maximum of 6).
Longevity: Your natural lifespan doubles and you can appear to be any age.
Worshippers: You magically hear prayers directed to you.

Additionally, choose one of the following benefits:

Acolytes: The number of followers you can recruit increases by two.
Divine Weapons: Whenever you use a damage-dealing weapon ability, that ability can deal corruption or holy damage instead of its usual damage type.
Missionaries: You earn 2 Renown.

Enlightened

Don't you see? This world that seems so real to you is nothing but a game, and all the people merely pieces!

Prerequisite: You learn a cosmic truth that alters your understanding of reality.

Effect: Your choice of your Reason or Intuition increases by 1 (to a maximum of 6). Additionally, choose one of the following benefits:

Cosmic Revelation: When you make a test with a skill from the lore skill group and obtain a tier 1 or tier 2 outcome, you can instead obtain a tier 3 outcome. Once you use this benefit, you can't use it again until you earn 1 or more Victories.
Mind Over Matter: Whenever you spend a Recovery, you can end one condition on yourself.
Rearrange the Game Pieces: You can reach behind the curtain and alter reality. At the start of combat, choose yourself or any creature within 5 squares. The chosen target must move up to their speed to a space you choose, but can't enter damaging terrain or terrain that could impose a condition on them. The target doesn't appear to move or teleport to that space—they are simply there. No one but you has any memory of the target's previous position.

Forsaken

The quest is done, the enemy is defeated, and the Blade of a Thousand Years has passed from our hands. What do we do with the rest of our lives?

Prerequisite: Your party loses, destroys, or otherwise parts with an artifact.

Effect: A characteristic of your choice increases by 1 (to a maximum of 6). Additionally, choose one of the following benefits:

Brief Reunion: While you're winded, you can use a maneuver to summon the artifact to your hand. It disappears at the end of your next turn. Once you use this benefit, you can't use it again until you earn 1 or more Victories.
Perfect Protection: The Director chooses a damage type that is dealt by or thematically related to the artifact—for instance, holy for the Blade of a Thousand Years, psychic for the Encepter, or corruption for the Mortal Coil. You have immunity all to the chosen damage type.
Poor Compensation: Instead of disappearing or otherwise departing, the artifact turns into a trinket or leveled treasure of the Director's choice that has the same approximate shape as the lost item—for instance, any magic sword for the Blade of a Thousand Years, any implement for the Encepter, or a Thief of Joy or any other torque for the Mortal Coil.

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Monarch

The tyrant is dead! Long live the new king!

Prerequisite: You or a member of your party becomes the monarch of a nation.

Effect: You gain the following benefits:

Royal Authority: Inhabitants of your nation must obey your lawful orders or suffer the consequences.
Royal Majesty: Your choice of your Might or Presence increases by 1 (to a maximum of 6).

Additionally, choose one of the following benefits:

Crown Jewels: You gain one of your nation's treasures—a trinket of the Director's choice.
Royal Fame: You earn 2 Renown.
Royal Retinue: The number of followers you can recruit increases by 2.
Royal Wealth: You earn 2 Wealth.

Special: If you take this title, you might be called upon to perform duties for your nation.

Peace Bringer

There goes Diana, peace bringer. She has won many a victory with her sword, but her greatest deed was convincing two nations to stop fighting.

Prerequisite: You conduct a successful negotiation on which the fate of a nation or a world stands.

Effect: Your choice of your Reason or Presence increases by 1 (to a maximum of 6). Additionally, choose one of the following benefits:

Calm Heads Prevail: When you make a test to stop combat and start a negotiation, you always obtain a tier 3 outcome.
Drop Your Sword: When you succeed on a test using the Intimidate skill, you can cause affected creatures to drop any items they are holding.
Hear Me Out: While you are present in a negotiation, an NPC's starting patience increases by 3 (to a maximum of 5).
Many Paths to Peace: When you make a test with a skill from the interpersonal skill group, you can use any characteristic of your choice for the test.

Reborn

I remember this world. I suppose my task is not yet complete.

Prerequisite: You died in glorious battle while on a quest for a higher power.

Effect: A god or other powerful being has determined that it is not yet your time to die. Your body fades away, but you reappear alive 24 hours later in a location of your choice. You regain all your Stamina and Recoveries, and your choice of your Intuition or Presence increases by 1 (to a maximum of 6).

Additionally, choose one of the following benefits:

Holy Weapon: You have a leveled treasure of the Director's choice.
Kill Me Once, Shame On You: Choose a creature keyword belonging to one of the creatures who defeated you. Any creature with that keyword takes a bane on ability rolls against you.
Memories of the Beyond: You have two skills of your choice.

Special: If a hakaan gains this title as a result of using their Doomsight trait, they lose that trait.

Theoretical Warrior

I've read about this tactic in books—it looks fairly straightforward.

Prerequisite: You have the Master Librarian title, and you complete a Learn From a Master project with a project goal of 1,000.

Effect: Your choice of your Reason or Intuition increases by 1 (to a maximum of 6).

Additionally, choose a heroic ability belonging to any class. You gain this heroic ability, which can be paid for using the Heroic Resource of your class. You can't use a heroic ability that requires a class feature you don't have.

Tireless

To reach Giant's Foot by dawn, we'll have to run every step of the way. Let's get moving.

Prerequisite: You have the Unstoppable title, and you make or assist on a test as part of a montage test that obtains a full success.

Effect: Your choice of your Might or Agility increases by 1 (to a maximum of 6). Additionally, choose one of the following benefits:

Bounce Back Fast: Whenever you rest for 8 hours or more, you can gain the benefit of a respite. Once you use this benefit, you can't use it again until you have taken a regular respite.
Reserves of Strength: Your recovery value is half your Stamina.
Undying: You can't be affected by the bleeding condition.

Unchained

I'll never get away with it? My dear, I already have.

Prerequisite: You have the Heist Hero title, and you have stolen a precious object or escaped from captivity while evading guards of 8th level or higher.

Effect: Your choice of your Might or Agility increases by 1 (to a maximum of 6). Additionally, choose one of the following benefits:

Bye-Bye: You can use a maneuver to teleport yourself and each willing ally within 5 squares of you to new positions within 10 squares of your original starting point. Once you use this benefit, you can't use it again until you earn 1 or more Victories.
Laughs at Locks: Whenever you make a test to open a lock or break a restraint, you don't need any tools and you automatically obtain a tier 3 outcome.
Slippery: You can't be grabbed against your will.

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RENOWN

As you accomplish heroic deeds, your fame allows you to influence NPCs and attract followers. Your infamy among your enemies also grows. Every hero has a Renown score that represents how they can use their reputation to influence others. The higher the score, the greater your impact with those who know of your legend.

At the start of character creation, your Renown is 0. Some careers can increase your initial Renown score (see Chapter 4: Background).

Increasing Renown

Some perks (see Chapter 7), downtime projects (Chapter 12), and treasures (part of Chapter 13: Rewards) can increase your renown. But for the most part, you earn Renown at the end of an exciting adventure, often after the acknowledgement of a powerful NPC that you helped save them, their family, their home, their organization—or even their nation or world. That NPC and anyone else who witnessed your heroics can tell the tale, and from there, your legend grows.

In most campaigns, the Director sets the characters up to earn 1 Renown per level, but some campaigns will feature heroes who are more or less famous (or infamous) than that.

Influence Negotiation

Renown changes the way NPCs respond to heroes during negotiations (see Chapter 11), whether that renown takes the form of fame or infamy.

Attract Followers

Your Renown score allows you to attract and employ followers who perform different duties or favors for you. The Renown and Followers table shows how many followers a hero can have at one time based on Renown. You can always let go of a follower in your employ to hire a new one.

You can recruit followers up to the maximum your Renown allows as a respite activity, provided you are in a place or have a means of communication that allows you to recruit such followers.

Renown and Followers

Renown	Number of Followers
3	1
6	2
9	3
12	4

Stronghold

Many followers stay at a stronghold, which is a home base you designate and can change. Your stronghold is typically a location shared by your fellow heroes. It could be a few rooms at an inn in a sleepy village, an old castle you claimed after clearing it of monsters, or a fleet of sailing ships.

Follower Types

When you attract a new follower, you decide on their name and ancestry, and choose what role they play in their service to you.

Artisan

Artisans are crafting experts who can contribute to your research and crafting projects (see Chapter 12: Downtime Projects). An artisan can contribute one project roll per day to a downtime project you choose, whether you spend those days in respite, adventuring, or other activities. They must remain at your stronghold or at the site where the project is undertaken, and must have access to the necessary materials.

When you recruit an artisan, choose four skills from the crafting skill group that they know (see Skills in Chapter 9: Tests). An artisan has a Might or Agility score of 1 (your choice), a Reason score of 1, and a 0 in all other characteristics. They know Caelian and two other languages of your choice.

Retainers

Retainers are heroic NPCs who adventure alongside the player characters. They are controlled by players in combat and are both simpler to run and less powerful than player characters. A hero can have only one retainer in their service at a time unless the Director deems otherwise. Because retainers and their stat blocks are combat focused, the Director can also decide that a large party can have only one retainer in total—or can't have any retainers at all—to keep combat from getting long and tedious.

Rules for retainers are found in *Draw Steel: Monsters*.

Sage

Sages are research experts who can contribute to your research and crafting projects. A sage can contribute one project roll per day to a downtime project you choose, whether you spend those days in respite, adventuring, or other activities. They must remain at your stronghold or at the site where the project is undertaken, and must have access to the necessary materials.

When you recruit a sage, choose four skills from the lore skill group that they know. A sage has a Reason and Intuition score of 1, and a 0 in all other characteristics. They know Caelian and two other languages of your choice.

WEALTH

Draw Steel isn't about accumulating and counting every piece of copper you acquire. Instead of tracking a bank account, the amount of stuff your hero can purchase is based on their Wealth score. As you accomplish more deeds, you acquire more treasure and rewards from grateful NPCs that allow you to be an even more effective hero.

The Hero Wealth table shows the types of items, gear, services, property, and more that you can purchase in the game. For a hero to make a purchase, the item must be available to them. Being able to afford a suit of armor or a stay at an inn doesn't do much good in the middle of a trackless forest, an empty desert, or a remote dungeon ruin. As well, the Director can also decide that a hero can afford only a limited number of purchases. For example, a hero with Wealth 3 can easily buy a small house, but that Wealth doesn't mean they can buy up every available small house in the local area to become a landlord.

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The table isn't meant to be an exhaustive list, but you and the Director can use it to judge what your character can and can't purchase. For instance, the relative value of an ox isn't on the table, but you can reasonably assume that if you can buy a horse, you can probably afford an ox as well. (Don't @ us, farm nerds.) And if you can't afford something you want, fear not! You might still be able to acquire a specific good or service through negotiation, or by trading your heroic services instead of spending cash.

Treasures such as magic swords, psionic crowns, and even healing potions are rare to the point where they don't appear on the Hero Wealth table. Such items typically can't be purchased, and are instead found on adventures, traded for other treasures, given as rewards by NPCs, or crafted by the heroes.

Hero Wealth

Score	Affordable
1	Mundane clothing, gear, armor, implements, and weapons; meals or drinks at a common tavern; a stay at a common inn; passage on a boat
2	Horse and cart; dinner at a fine tavern; a stay at a fine inn
3	Catapult; small house
4	Library; tavern; manor home; sailing boat
5	Church; keep; wizard tower
6	Castle; shipyard

Earning Wealth

Each hero starts with a Wealth score of 1 that can be improved by their choice of career during character creation (see Chapter 4: Background). Your hero earns Wealth whenever you find and keep a massive amount of monetary treasure, such as a hoard of coins and gems from a dragon's lair, or several unique and valuable paintings gifted by a monarch as a reward for a job well done.

In general, a hero earns 1 wealth every second level of play. The Director can increase this rate if they wish.

Losing Wealth

As an optional rule, the Director can allow a hero to make a purchase that is one above their Wealth score. If this occurs, the hero's Wealth is reduced by 1 (to a minimum of 0) after making the purchase.

Heroes Don't Do It for Gold

In *Draw Steel*, being a hero isn't a transactional job—it's a calling. As such, using the promise of treasure to motivate the players to accept quests comes up much less often than in many other games. Sure, the heroes need money to live, and some might even enjoy getting rich from their adventures. But money isn't the reason they put their lives on the line. Each time you create a hero, think about why your character answers the call to adventure—and make it about something more than gold.

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Chapter 14

GODS AND RELIGION

Orden is a fantasy world in which the gods are objectively real. In spite of this the people of Orden, regardless of ancestry, do not believe the gods control everything that happens in the world. They believe the gods created a natural world with its own cycles that are sometimes predictable, but which cannot be understood. It rained last Lyleth, and the Lyleth before that, so it'll probably rain this Lyleth—but maybe not! And if not, that may be because the gods are displeased. But it might just as easily be because the gods are bored, or fickle or—even more likely, it has nothing to do with the gods, and there's no way to know which.

When a river floods or crops fail, some people may curse the gods, but those people do not all believe a god caused these events. They may curse simply because the gods didn't prevent catastrophe. They do not think, "Why did the gods do that?" They think, "Why did the gods make a world that behaves like this?"

The gods are powerful, but forbidden from acting directly upon or within the world. To enact their will, they use intermediaries—beings of demigod-like status, once mortals, who now serve their patron god in eternity. Many humans call these beings saints, while the other speaking peoples use the term heroes, or legendary heroes, not to be confused with the heroes you make using the character creation rules in this book.

Each god has many saints, some obscure. They sometimes manifest in the world. These encounters are always brief, leading sages and theologians to conclude there must be some limit to how much time or energy these saints and legendary heroes can spend on the prime manifold. Who created or enforces these limits?

No one knows.

As a result of this complex tapestry of belief and personalities, a farmer in Aendrim might call upon Adûn for strength while tilling the earth. But if a cool breeze suddenly came along, easing the bite of the sun on their back, they would almost certainly not thank Adûn or any of his saints. They would probably thank Saint Elspeth the Blithe, sometimes called the Summer Breeze. If they had a neighbor or relative with a shrine to Saint Elspeth in their home, they might give that person a small gift or offering and ask them to place it on their shrine. More likely, they would silently promise to do this, and then forget or get distracted.

If questioned about this—"Why did you call upon one god, but thank the saint of a completely different god?"—they would first be surprised by the question. It would not have occurred to them to examine this behavior. If pressed they would say, "Oh, I'm sure they worked it out between them." They would not imagine, "Adûn told Viras, who told her saint, Elspeth, to send a cooling breeze," but they would assume something like that happened and not worry overmuch about the details. They called out, they received aid—that's what's important.

If no aid is forthcoming folks assume this is because the gods and saints are all very busy and cannot be arsed to answer every prayer. People are never surprised when the gods and saints are silent. They are usually silent.

Churches and Temples

Most religions in Orden organize themselves into hierarchies and build temples or cathedrals, but some religions are little more than traditions handed down from shaman to shaman, or wise-woman to wise-daughter. Some religions are secret!

Because the gods are forbidden from acting directly upon the world, churches and temples in Orden are consecrated to saints, or heroes. There are no temples to Ord or churches of Cavall. Instead, there is the Church of Zarok the Law-Giver and the Church of Saint Llewellyn the Valiant. Everyone knows which god these heroes and saints serve, it's common knowledge. A human in Vasloria might call out to Cavall for aid in times of need but they know that, should Cavall choose to help, it will be by sending one of his saints.

The most popular saints and heroes can have several churches—meaning distinct organizations—devoted to them, each with their own rituals. In Corwell, there is the Church of Saint Llewellyn the Valiant, but there is also the smaller Church of Saint Llewellyn the Charitable with only a few temples.

Usually, these churches recognize each other as expressing different, equally valid teachings of the same saint, but occasionally churches compete to see which among them is the "true" church. The saints don't discourage this, so they must, in some sense, approve.

There are churches dedicated to nature or knowledge or the sun, with no clear moral or ethical component to them. There are evil churches, churches devoted to dark saints and tyrant gods. But the saints and heroes listed here each have churches that, however esoteric their teachings (usually referred to as the "speech" or "words" of the saint or hero) expect their clergy to go forth into the world and perform good deeds—tend to the sick, ease pain, perform birth, death, and union rituals. These churches all have acolytes and abbots, censors and conduits. It is not so much that Grole the One-Handed was, in life, principally concerned with the spiritual wellbeing of his *people*, but rather that this is what people expect of *churches*. So, as a religion grows, it soon conforms to the expectations of the people such that even the church of Khorvath Who Slew A Thousand has conduits who heal the sick and tend to the souls of their people.

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Interspecies Worship

Elves, dwarves, and orcs revere their own creator gods. Val, Ord, and Kul respectively. Humans, uniquely, worship many gods. The difference between the Innumerable Younger Gods of the humans and the Elder Gods who created the other speaking peoples is not well understood.

Dwarves mostly venerate dwarf heroes, humans mostly worship human saints, and so on ... But this is just a side effect of the fact that members of the same ancestry share the same culture and language and self-assemble along those lines. Any sufficiently large city, regardless of which species founded it, has churches and temples to gods of many species because cities attract people of many different species.

Each culture's pantheon reflects the mores and folkways of the people who live there. In far northern Vanigar, villains in folktales often gain their power by tricking others through clever wordplay. Riddles. Though they are villains, they are clever, and this earns them some respect even from their enemies. So the Vanigar pantheon includes Holkatya, a trickster god.

Whereas Vasloria has no folk tradition of trickster figures, and so has no trickster god. Instead, villains in Vaslorian folktales tend to be people who seek quick ways to power in order to avoid honest work. So Vasloria has the dark god Cyrvis who teaches that magic can subvert fate and make you master of not only your destiny, but also the world. This also reveals the common Vaslorian's attitude toward magic.

The gods of each pantheon tell you what the people of that region value, and what they fear, disapprove of, or distrust. The Vaslorian pantheon is wholly different from the pantheon of Vanigar which is different from the pantheon of Rioja. The gods and saints can hear their worshippers anywhere in the timescape and even small cities can have temples to distant gods of other peoples and regions. All it takes is one dedicated conduit to establish a church of their saint or hero in some distant land.

For instance, the High City of Dalrath, a small barony in northern Aendrim, has a temple to Sektahre the Boatman, a saint of Khemhara, a distant desert region. The people of Dalrath do not find this strange. The priestess of Sektahre does all the same things any native curate would do: perform rituals, heal the sick, and otherwise tend to the spiritual and physical wellbeing of the locals without asking much in return. Some people may be suspicious of a stranger peddling their religion far from home, but yet more people consider the presence of such a priestess a sign that their city must be very important indeed.

Because of all these gods and saints, religion in Orden is a very à la carte affair. There are human heroes in the elf pantheon. There are dwarf saints in many human pantheons. Elder or younger, the gods do not care much about their followers' biology. If you devote your life to the teachings of a god and do good works in their name, you can expect to be rewarded regardless of your ancestry. And, though the Age of Saints is long past, most folk believe it is still possible for a mortal to ascend to sainthood or herodom, even in this late age.

Lastly, though rulers across the land instinctively believe the gods are paying more attention to them because they are queens or dukes or the heads of a powerful wizard order or guild ... there is no evidence of this. As far as theologists can tell, the gods seem to view every soul as equally worthy. Many of the tales of saints and heroes feature characters of enormous divine power battling over the soul of a normal person with no station or power or inheritance.

As much as it annoys the great and the good, the gods view all mortals as equals.

Evil Gods and Saints

The gods and saints presented in this chapter are popular and well-known. Their priests, shamans, or god-callers serve the public weal and tend to the souls of the people.

But the world is not for heroes alone. There are villains, as well as those who are simply misguided or desperate. Every pantheon has saints, even gods, who teach the virtues of selfishness, cruelty, the pursuit of power for its own sake, and the right of the strong to do as they please.

These religions do not usually build public temples and worship in the open, but most communities know, or very strongly suspect, who among them serve evil gods and saints.

Among the people of Vasloria, there are the gods Nikros the Tyrant and Cyrvis the Lich, evil gods, each with their own saints. When tyrants rule, these religions tend to come out from the basements and sewer-temples and start worshipping openly.

Afterlife in Orden

Folk in Orden believe that most, maybe all, living things have a soul, which is the source of personality, creativity, and memory. The loss of one's soul, either through bargaining with a devil, or being consumed by a demon or otherwise trapped by a warlock, results in slowly losing your personality, your distinctiveness—even memory.

However, there is no popular idea that everyone's soul is immortal and persists forever after death. Most people believe their soul dissipates after death and becomes one with creation. When asked where the soul goes after death, the elf sage responded by blowing out a candle and asking, "Where did the fire go?"

In some cultures, exceptions are made for those mortals who lived an especially virtuous life.

Much the same way the humans of Vanigar believe the bravest among them live on after death drinking and telling tales at the vigbordh—the wartable—most elves believe that should they live a life of sufficient meaning, should they do great deeds and embody Val's ethos, they earn the right to join Val in Arcadia after death. There they will live in a timeless faerie world, "the world that should have been."

Most dwarves believe that those members of each generation who best distinguish themselves earn the right to live forever in Ord's memory. This, they believe, is where their heroes go after death. Uniquely among the speaking peoples, the dwarves believe their god is watching them, watching the world. Ord cannot act, but he judges and remembers.

Some people in Orden, like the hakaan and the orcs believe their ancestors watch over them, although there is no agreement whether their ancestor's souls are watching over them, or just their memory. Or something in between. Sages differ. This belief among the orcs and hakaan is more of an attitude, an assumption, than a religion.

Conduits and Censors

"Conduit" and "censor" are not a titles within any church—they are jobs or ranks. An abbot, rector, even a bishop may be, or may have been, a conduit or a censor. Conduits and censors are those members of the church expected to go out into the world and actively, sometimes very actively, represent their saint's ethos. It is for this purpose conduits and censors are given access to powerful prayers.

Any sufficiently large organization has conduits and censors just like they have shadows and wizards. The thieves' guild needs healers, just as the church needs spies! A conduit who works for the thieves' guild still

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serves their saint which implicitly means the church approves of the guild's activities and the two organizations are at least pointing in the same direction if not actively allied.

Churches have bureaucracy just like any organization and while some prelates, abbots, bishops, or hierarchs are conduits, many are not. They are normal people who serve the church in administrative, political, or bureaucratic roles. While they know the same minor orisons every acolyte and abbot know, they do not go out into the world righting wrongs, and so do not gain access to the powers of the conduit or censor.

The prayers acolytes perform in churches are little more than magical rituals. They say the right words, make the right gestures, touch the appropriate fetish or talisman, and wounds close, curses are lifted, blessings bestowed. There's no direct connection in these examples between the acolyte and their god or saint. Though, even a lowly acolyte can expect to find their prayers fall on deaf ears if they fail to uphold the tenets of their faith.

Should the acolyte continue in their studies and deeds and earn the rank of conduit or censor, they gain access to greater prayers granted them by their saint. As they advance in their faith they call upon their saint more directly, and they begin to form a personal relationship with their saint. It is a feeling that develops whereby the conduit learns the ... mood, for lack of a better term, of their saint or hero.

As they gain experience, a conduit or censor may even enter into dialogue with their saint. When they call upon their saint for power in battle, their saint personally answers them. They might literally be on first-name terms. At even higher levels, conduits begin to get a sense of the greater power behind the saint or legendary hero: their god, who begins answering prayers directly. They become, in effect, little mini-saints. The pathway from high-level conduit or censor to saint is now obscure, but was once well-known. In earlier ages of the world, it was expected that certain holy heroes who had served their god and saint well would—should appropriately dramatic circumstances reveal themselves—be elevated to sainthood.

The Deities and Domains table and the Saints and Domains table summarize each of the gods and saints mentioned in this chapter and their available domains.

How To Use This Chapter

Draw Steel isn't about religion any more than it is about language or treasure, but understanding how religion works in a day-to-day sense can help make the game world feel more real. The people in Orden aren't any more religious than the people of Earth were in the premodern era. It is a factor in their lives, but not the only factor—and for some people, not a very important one.

Obviously, conduit and censor players can use this chapter to choose a saint, each saint's entry also lists which domains they represent. But each god also has a list of domains, so an enterprising player could just invent a new saint, hero, or herald choosing two domains from a god's list.

But any player might wonder, "Does my character follow the teachings of any saint or god?" Think about the people you know in the real world who wear religious or quasi-religious talismans every day. A symbol on a necklace, a sticker on their car, a tattoo. Normal people often carry religious talismans, your character in *Draw Steel* might not be particularly religious, but they might still carry a religious talisman just because it's a family tradition or to remind themselves of the religious instruction they received in church as a child.

We wrote a lot of words in this chapter because we wanted to give characters from all ancestries a few choices when it comes to saints and heroes. But your character can ignore all of this if you think religion isn't a big part of their life.

Deities and Domains

Deity	Domains
Adûn	Creation, Life, Love, Protection
Cavall	Life, Love, Protection, War
Cyris	Death, Fate, Knowledge, Trickery
Kul	Knowledge, Life, Sun, Trickery, War
Nebular the Star Mother	Creation, Life, Love, Sun
Nikros	Death, Fate, Storm, War
Ord	Creation, Knowledge, Protection, Sun, War
OV the Wave Pilot	Fate, Knowledge, Storm, Sun
Salorna	Life, Nature, Storm, Sun
Val	Creation, Knowledge, Life, Nature, Protection

Saints and Domains

Saint	Domains
Atossa the Shepherd	Fate, Protection, Trickery
Cho'kassa the Time Rider	Storm, Sun
Draighen the Warden	Nature, Sun
Eriarwen the Wroth	Nature, Storm
Eseld the Eye	Knowledge, Trickery
Gaed the Confessor	Love, Protection
Grole the One-Handed	Life, War
Gryffyn the Stout	Creation, Life
Gwenllian the Fell-Handed	Protection, War
Illwyv li Orchiax	Nature, Protection
Khorvath Who Slew a Thousand	Sun, War
Khravila Who Ran Forty Leagues	Knowledge, Trickery
Kyruyalka the False Principle	Death, Trickery
Lady Magnetar	Life, Sun
Llewellyn the Valiant	Life, Protection
Mahsiti the Weaver	Creation, Knowledge, Trickery
Pentalion the Paladin	Death, War
Prexaspes the Stargazer	Nature, Protection, Sun
Ripples of Honey on a Golden Shore	Life, Protection
A Sea of Suns	Creation, Life
Stakros the Engineer	Creation, Knowledge
The Taste of Morning	Creation, Knowledge
Thellasko the Great Designer	Knowledge, War
Thyll Hylacae	Life, Nature
Uryal the Subtle	Knowledge, Trickery
Valak-koth the Seeker	Knowledge, Sun
Yllin Dyrvis	Knowledge, Nature
Zarok the Law-Giver	Protection, War

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Val

Domains: Creation, Knowledge, Life, Nature, Protection

Val, the Noble Lord, First Among Equals, is the patron of the elves. He created the celestials—the true elves, second of the five speaking peoples—who then created the younger elves: the high, wode, and shadow elves. His name is the root of the Caelian word "valiant," and the dwarves named the most precious ore in Orden—Valiar, the truemetal—after him.

Val holds that the greatest purpose a thinking being can commit themselves to is the creation of art and the appreciation of beauty. He keeps the magical, elf-haunted forests called wodes close to his heart because they represent his vision for Orden. What the world could have been. His growing disgust with the concept of war led him to leave Orden and take up residence in his private manifold, *Arcadia* where all elves hope to someday join their patron.

Heroes of the Elves

The legendary heroes of the elves are once-mortal heroes who now dwell in Arcadia and make up Val's court there. They answer prayers and dispense blessings and boons, even manifest in the world during times of great need. (Though, like all the speaking people's saints and heroes, what these legendary figures consider "great need" is very personal and has little to do with politics or great kingdoms.)

The high elf heroes detailed in this book are A Sea of Suns, the Taste of Morning, and Ripples of Honey on a Shore of Gold. The wode elf heroes are Yllin Dyrvis, Thyll Hylacae, and Illwyv li Orchiax.

A Sea of Suns

Domains: Creation, Life

A Sea of Suns, also known as the Composer.

Credited with inventing harmony, it is said that after she discovered the power of blending many voices into one, the elves sang for an entire century uninterrupted[1]. The harmonics so complicated they created new beings like faeries, dryads, and the elgenwights.

The Composer discovered, or invented, the power of music to manipulate reality. Her troubadours, it was said, could return the dead to life. "In the music, you can live forever." Legend has it she was at the battle of Kalas Valiar when the first Army of Night besieged its walls. When their corruption engines weakened the impenetrable walls, she stood alone on the parapets and sang. For forty days did her voice bolster the walls, stemming the flood of evil. Her song ended only when her life was taken by A Heart Trapped in Amber, the sorcerer-assassin of the star elves.

The Taste of Morning

Domains: Creation, Knowledge

The Taste of Morning, also known as the Librarian.

Credited with building the first library, most scholars consider this a real, historical event (never a certainty with the tales of the legendary heroes) and adventurers through all ages have sought this legendary building. If, indeed, it was a building.

He canonized the idea that knowledge, truth, was a kind of beauty. The Library of Morning was a temple to thought, wisdom, scholarship. It

1 If this story wasn't invented by the dwarves or humans, it must at least have passed through one of their cultures. The celestials did not reckon time the way younger species do and would not have said "for an entire century."

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contained plays, poems, histories, treatises on the nature of reality. The knowledge held within was incalculable. Legends say it held codices written by the elder dragons, though modern scholars suspect this is a literary conceit, as there is no evidence the elder dragons bothered with writing.

Ripples of Honey on a Shore of Gold

Domains: Life, Protection

Ripples of Honey on a Shore of Gold, also known as Warkiller, the Diplomat, was both scholar, sage, and soldier. She served as emissary between the humans and the dragons when the former sought war against the latter. For many years she brokered peace, but she could not stem the tides of war forever.

In the end, her efforts failed, and the elder dragons live no more in this world. Like Val, the Diplomat hated war so much, after her failure she sought to pen a new codex. A work so powerful it would bind the world. The Codex Pax Universalis would banish the concept of war from Orden. Alas, in the end she realized there was only one way to finish her great work, and she was not willing to take that final step.

Yllin Dyrvis

Domains: Knowledge, Nature

Yllin Dyrvis, also known as the Beast Heart, the Wodespeaker, the Warden, witnessed the Composer's first song, and took it upon themselves to communicate with and care for the speaking creatures A Sea of Suns created. The dryads, elgenwights, the giant birds and intelligent fish who populated the ancient wode that once covered all Orden, all came under the Beast Heart's care. Dyrvis learned their speech and taught them who they were.

To this day, many ages of the world later, the wode elves consider themselves the stewards of the speaking creatures, and those creatures rely upon the wode elves for protection.

Thyll Hylacae

Domains: Life, Nature

Thyll Hylacae, the Forestal, Apothachron, also known as the Sacrifice. Thyll spoke to the plants, learned their truths—discovered many magics hidden within. The power to heal, harm, change. It was Hylacae who first sensed, then learned, the language of trees. She studied, cared for them, and protected them when the folk of farm and field came to cut them down.

Though she was mighty in warlore, she could not be everywhere. In the end, she sacrificed herself for the trees, the ritual she performed uplifted a small population of trees, creating the derwic—the thinking speaking tree-peoples few of whom remain in Orden.

Illwyv li Orchiax

Domains: Nature, Protection

Illwyv li Orchiax, the Moonknight, Marshall of the Gloaming, Manslayer. When humans first arrived in Orden—it is said—they were welcomed by the other speaking peoples. But they were unlike the other creations in the world. While the dwarves cut rock for the ore within, humans cut down trees simply because they were in the way. Other ancestries had their own territories and homelands, but humans sought constant expansion into even the most inhospitable territories.

Illwyv it was who first realized the folly of treating with these creatures. A great hunter of the Quercus Court, she gathered her band of elite Helriath Harriers and made war on the humans who would kill the wode.

Ord

Domains: Creation, Knowledge, Protection, Sun, War

Ord, the Maker, the Engineer, is the patron of the dwarves. Ord, along with his siblings Aan, Eth, and Kul, created Orden. These four saw the world as a dynamic expression of their philosophies.

Ord values integrity, honor, faithfulness to an ideal. Courage in battle and fair play. Treating your opponent honorably, Ord teaches, is an expression of your own worthiness. Ord is associated with permanence, which some elder dwarves take to mean a kind of slavish devotion to tradition. But Ord teaches permanence is the quality of reliability, of steadfastness. Young dwarves who chafe at the stale and stifling traditions of their elders remind the greybeards that Ord is the Maker. He expects his children to create marvels, to bring forth new discoveries, new insights. To remake the world anew each generation.

Heroes of the Dwarves

The following heroes are venerated by many dwarves and others who follow Ord.

Zarok the Law-Giver

Domains: Protection, War

Zarok the Law-Giver. Zarok the Teacher. Zarok who is Justice.

The first, great hero of the dwarves, Zarok was a noted general, diplomat, and poet. In his time each dwarf city-state had its own laws which were mostly just lists of offenses with punishments listed next to them. There was no consistency from one city to another and no underlying theory of law. The strong ruled, the rest obeyed.

It was after Zarok retired from his career as a warmaster and became the ambassador to the elves that he undertook a study of how different cultures express the idea of justice. He surveyed the various traditions of elves, humans, and orcs and wrote *The Conversations*—a series of fictional dialogues in which two characters, deliberately chosen from dwarf theater so as to be familiar to his audience, debate the question: "What are the characteristics of a just society?"

The Conversations marks the beginning of legal theory in Orden. It sought not only to state what a just society was, but to prove it ethically through a series of logical statements. Most of the work concerns itself with the proper, ethical uses of political power. The adversarial system of legal representation is his.

Zarok teaches that all people should be equal under the law. His is the principle of fair play—sportsmanship. Respect for your adversary. The responsibility of the strong to protect the weak.

Zarok's *The Conversations* are still quoted today. There is a long legal tradition, when a prestigious lawyer in Capital wishes to write an amicus brief without revealing their identity, they sign it "Z."

Valak-koth the Seeker

Domains: Knowledge, Sun

Valak-koth the Seeker, the Delver, the Unquenchable Fire, Koth Who Brought Light to Darkness, said she heard voices in the rock as a child. These days this would result in a visit to the apothecary or a change in diet, but in those days the world was young and a child who heard voices might turn out to be a prophet of Ord. Her parents listened and soon none doubted.

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She would run, heedless of danger, into the dark caves below and wherever she pointed, marvels were found: metals, gems, fantastic ores. Caves as big as nations. It was Valak-koth it was who first discovered aerithyst, the Sungem, a crystal mineral which glows upon contact with living things.

Valak-koth teaches bravery in the face of the unknown, the virtue of curiosity, to seek endlessly and quest for knowledge, not to fear the darkness. To bring light into dark places. Valak-koth it was who first discovered the World Below, the Dark Under All, though it was not recognized as a separate manifold until after her death. After her death, the original Sungem she found refused to dim. It was enshrined in her temple-tomb, now lost along with the ancient stone dwarf city of Kas Koriar.

Stakros the Engineer

Domains: Creation, Knowledge

Stakros the Engineer, the Machine Mind, the Operator, founder of the Order of Fabrication.

Stakros it was—*not* a steel dwarf—who forged the first strife-engine, a great war-walker manned by thirty dwarves. At the battle of Kalas Mithral, the war-walker grappled with the legion of yllindyr the star elves summoned to defeat the walls of the steel dwarf capital.

After the war, Stakros turned his talents to peaceful pursuits. He forged the first magma diver, designed to withstand enormous temperatures and pressures, all the while protecting the operator within. Inside his marvel Stakros personally dove into the great volcano Oxor-myr, returning with marvelous ores never before seen in Orden. His design soon evolved into a variety of armored frames to suit a variety of purposes.

Stakros teaches the value of knowledge for knowledge's sake, and the power of the mind to overcome any obstacle. He also teaches that knowledge is power, and in unready hands can only be dangerous.

Kul

Domains: Knowledge, Life, Sun, Trickery, War

Kul, Father of Flames, Lord of the Forge, the Cleansing Fire who put fire and magma within the world at its creation.

He saw his sibling gods creating their own children and placing them within the world, and so followed suit, creating the orcs, the last of the original five speaking peoples.

Kul's fire is the fire that destroys, but it is also the fire that creates, the fire of the forge, the fire that makes meat safe to eat, the fire that cauterizes wounds. Kul teaches that action is the defining characteristic of being. Kul's heroes are not philosophers or poets, but warriors and hunters.

Uniquely among the Elder Creator Gods, Kul does not desire worship—finds it distasteful. Orcs still call out to Kul in desperate times as "Kul Who Once Spoke." But in those moments, they do not call out for aid—only that Kul witness them, and that they might prove worthy of his attention.

Heroes of the Orcs

The following heroes are venerated by many orcs and others who follow Kul.

Khorvath Who Slew a Thousand

Domains: Sun, War

When Khorvath, warleader for the Lightning orc clan set out with her warband of bloodrunners, they numbered less than fifty. When they finally arrived at the Heliopolis, seat of the pharaoh of Khemhara, they had grown to over two thousand orcs from over thirty orc clans, all eager for battle. Legends later swelled that number to ten thousand.

Upon their arrival, the bloodrunners found their prospective employer embattled and surrounded by enemies, the pharaoh's brother having raised rebellion against him. Principally due to Khorvath's help, the pharaoh's brother was killed and his army defeated. But the pharaoh died in the battle, and Khorvath found herself and her warband without a patron in an alien land surrounded by enemies fighting a war of succession.

"What do we do, warleader?" Her death captain asked.

Khorvath oriented herself and pointed northwest. "Home is that way. We march!"

Death Captain Voyrik's eyes went wide. "It's three thousand miles," he pointed out—and the journey to Khemhara had not been uneventful!

"Best get started," Khorvath said, and set off.

How long it took the bloodrunners of the Lightning to cross the desert is not well-attested. It took four or six months depending on which accounts you read, but even six months would make their march a legendary journey.

Opposed at every turn by the local noble houses and then eventually the desert clans who sought the bounty placed on Khorvath's head, the ten thousand grew in battle prowess as they demolished any enemy foolish enough to get in their way. Given the many tens of thousands of warriors the bloodrunners dispatched over the course of four (or six) months, it may well be that Khorvath's sobriquet was literal.

Success was a double edged sword. The more victories they earned in battle, the easier they were to follow. "Our enemies walk the red road," Voyrik once said, looking at the vast swath of blood they left in their wake.

"We have nothing to fear," Khorvath said. "These people fight for pride, or a bounty. We're fighting for our lives. All it takes is one good punch in the nose and they retreat." And indeed this proved true for many weeks.

Eventually three of the desert tribes allied themselves and this was a coalition that could take a few bloody noses without giving up. They cornered the bloodrunners in a ravine that led to a mountain pass. It was possible to navigate the narrow pass, but only two or three orcs at a time. It would take hours to retreat that way. And the three tribes blocked their way out.

Khorvath saw the way. She unwound her mother's hand wraps from her forearms and wrapped them around her own fists. The brown stains on the knuckles made Khorvath proud.

"I will take the best warrior from each of the 30 tribes," Khorvath pronounced, and word spread almost instantly. Within minutes, the thirty best warriors among the ten thousand stood with Khorvath. "We thirty will hold the pass."

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Death Captain Voyrik, eyes wide, whispered Khorvath's name.

Khorvath removed her torque of leadership and handed it to Voyrik. "When you arrive home, give this to my son." She looked at the torque in Voyrik's hands. "Tell him my last thoughts were of him. And that it is my wish that this torque inspire him to great deeds."

The tale of Khorvath's Thirty is still popular among the orcs, though everyone listening understands the "three days of war" is pure fiction, as none of the thirty survived. It is nonetheless broadly taken as true.

Khorvath's Thirty bought the bloodrunners the time they needed to escape through the pass, and onward unimpeded.

By the time they reached the eastern side of the Myr, Khorvath's name was already a legend, and many bloodrunners wore her clan fetish as their talisman. Scaling the slopes of the Myr was not easy but as the orcs descended down the western face, through the clouds, and saw the endless sea of green that was the Great Wode, they cried out together "Cekana! Cekana!" *The trees! The trees!*

The ten thousand were not home, but they were home free. For this was territory held by their allies. The church of Khorvath Who Slew a Thousand spread quickly and now all orcs invoke her name whenever faced with a seemingly impossible task.

Khorvath, like most orc heroes, teaches the virtue of endurance. That great problems are often just many tiny problems in disguise and that by fighting each day as it comes, great battles can be won.

Khorvath Who Slew a Thousand would probably prefer to be remembered as she was in life—Khorvath Who Brought Ten Thousand Home, but even as one of the chief orc heroes, she has little influence over the way the people choose to remember her.

Voyrik gave his warleader's torque to her son, who grew to lead the Lightning first as warleader, then chieftain. He was a good ruler for the Lightning.

Grole the One-Handed

Domains: Life, War

Grole the One-Handed, Grole who Slew the Saint of Skulls, lost his left hand at the Battle of Dur Mothe where he stood alone against the horde of deathless and their master, the living saint Morath of Many Tendrils. Grole thought to buy time for his army to escape the flood of death, but when they saw their warleader grappling alone with the Saint of Rot, they reversed their retreat. When Morath lashed out with his greataxe Viscerator and severed Grole's left hand from his arm, Grole's army surged forward, breaking the tide of deathless.

His army watched as Kul's light descended on their wounded leader, and they knew Grole had been chosen by Kul in that moment. At the last, Grole and Morath fought as equals. Orc hero and dark human saint grappled atop the ancient hill. With his one good hand Grole plunged the Green Fire, his grandmother's saber, into Morath's heart, ending the Saint of Many Tendrils.

Grole teaches the extraordinary deeds common people can accomplish if they cast fear from their minds. It was Grole who said, "Even should an orc be pierced by many arrows, they should still be able to perform one last act of revenge."

Grole is the orcish hero of those facing impossible decisions. He is favored by most orcish leaders. Grole teaches that, even alone, even against impossible odds, extraordinary victories are possible. Censors of Grole often dip their left hand in ink before battle to symbolize Grole's missing hand.

Khravila Who Ran Forty Leagues

Domains: Knowledge, Trickery

Khravila who Ran Forty Leagues, The Eternal Runner, Khravila The Unstoppable.

On the eve of a war between elves and humans that would certainly result in the death of many orcs caught between the two great powers, Khravila's dying father had been incapable of deciding what should be done. Equally incapable of choosing who should succeed him as chieftain—his son or daughter.

At the moment of his death, when the god-caller rang the bell of souls officially announcing her father's passing to the tribe, Khravila looked at her brother and saw hesitation. Khravila had never known doubt.

She snatched her tribe's oriflamme from her father's dead hands ... and ran. For many leagues she ran and the tales of the creatures—manticores, griffins, chimeras—who barred her passage passed into legend. Orc children still delight at the tricks and wordplay Khravila employed to thwart the beasts, avoid fighting, and continue her epic run.

Less than five hours after her father died, Khravila arrived at the Astragalus Court, forty leagues from home and while many elements of her legend are certainly mythical, the time and distance are well attested. Khravila held forth the oriflamme and announced that, should the elves continue their assault on the humans, there would be war between them and her tribe. "Chose quickly," she said. "My people are right behind me, and eager for battle." They could not have known she was bluffing.

The elves called off their attacks and Khravila brokered peace between them and the humans. When her brother arrived with their kin folk some hours later—itself an impressive feat—Khravila handed him the oriflamme, and collapsed, dead. It was Khravila the chieftain who ran. It was Khravila the Unstoppable who died, a legendary orc hero.

Khravila teaches the virtue of persistence, endurance, and—above all—wits. Not only the wits necessary to foil the tests that barred her way, but to conceive her legendary plan in the first place, and the dedication to pull it off. "Perhaps another orc could have run," her brother said. "But only Khravila could have bluffed."

Heroes of the Hakaan

Most hakaan in Orden are animists. They know and respect the four Elder Gods who created the world and believe these gods watch the world and see what happens within it. But the Hakaan do not create churches or formal belief systems around this attitude.

Instead they believe the world is filled with innumerable nature spirits. Each river, tree, stone, has their own spirit, which the hakaan revere. They have no organized religion in the way the other ancestries in this chapter do, though a hakaan brought up in a city, or among another people, would naturally venerate in whatever gods and saints are worshiped by the folk who raised them.

The hakaan know they are descended from stone giants, but they do not think of themselves as stone giants. They know their ancestors were tricked by Holkatya, one of the gods of Vanigar, into trading some of their great strength for the doomsight. But while they respect Holkatya, they do not worship her. Nor do they resent her. She's merely a detail of their history.

Hakaan conduits and censors venerate hakaan heroes who, after doing great deeds in life, were chosen by the gods to take their place among the stars, becoming constellations. They see the stars at night as a complex map of legendary hakaan heroes, and their own ancestors who watch from above.

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Mahsiti the Weaver

Domains: Creation, Knowledge, Trickery

Mahsiti the Weaver was a fresco painter and mathematician of the hakaan who discovered, or invented, a way of drawing very precise geometric shapes following patterns that repeat at any scale. Believing it could be a new way to devise spells, she took to weaving tapestries using lines of thread to better understand the numerical relationships within the patterns.

It took time to master weaving, but she took to it quickly and produced a series of essays, each a tapestry, proving correct her suspicions. The Tapestries of Mahsiti are a series of thirteen legendary artifacts of varying sizes, one as small as a napkin, one over two hundred feet long. Each has a powerful spell written into it, available for use by anyone who can read the patterns.

One of Mahsiti's weavings, titled *The Shepherd and the Sheep*, was used by her whole clan when war came to them. The hakaan had no doubt they could defend their home but were equally certain there would be enormous loss of life. Mahsiti suggested they use the tapestry, but the people of her clan did not understand. Use it how? It was simply a picture of a tree in a field with many sheep gathered around it.

But this image, as Mahsiti showed, was formed out of thousands of repeating geometric patterns. The tapestry had been a gift from Mahsiti to her chieftain who hung it in their great receiving hall. Mahsiti cast the spell within the tapestry—and walked *into* the tapestry. The people were amazed and followed.

When the enemy army arrived, they found the clan's villages empty, and did not notice the tapestry with hundreds of hakaan depicted within. Once the enemy left, Mahsiti finished the spell, and her people emerged, safe.

Mahsiti teaches that art and science, creativity and knowledge, are the same thing. Those who follow her teachings believe that the act of creating, of bringing a new idea or work of art into being, is the act of participating in the same process the gods used to create the world.

Prexaspes the Stargazer

Domains: Nature, Protection, Sun

Prexaspes Stargazer, the Astronomer, the Sun-sage mapped the skies and was one of the first people in all Orden to correctly calculate the repeating pattern of Orden's three moons. Because of his growing mastery of the cycles of nature, he predicted a coming famine and prepared his clan. When the famine came but the people had storehouses of food ready, he became a hero of his tribe.

After receiving the doomsight, Prexaspes turned his attention to the sun itself. He studied ancient tomes written by scholars of many people, believing eclipses were predictable events. His research yielded a pattern, but his insight led him further. What if, he wondered, an eclipse was more than a celestial event? What if it was an opening, a portal? Prexaspes studied the stars and prepared a ritual.

Years later, Prexaspes' tribe was besieged by hobgoblins and all hope was lost. He begged his chieftain to continue fighting—not abandon their homes. The Astronomer promised an eclipse, and though none doubted his calculations, no one could guess how this could help the beleaguered and besieged people.

But the hakaan trusted their sage, and kept up the fight. When the eclipse came, Prexaspes performed his experimental ritual opening a portal to the sun. A line of golden fire erupted from the portal, evaporating many hobgoblins, but this was just a side-effect of the ritual.

With his people watching, shielding their eyes from the brilliant light, Prexaspes entered the portal, and emerged on the surface of the sun. In that moment, the people knew this was his doom. He was only gone a few moments, but when he emerged from the portal his flesh was solid sunstuff, and he waded into the remaining battalions of hobgoblins, destroying them with rays of heat and purifying flame.

Though he died in the act, Prexaspes saved his people becoming a hero of all hakaan, taking his place among the stars as a new constellation.

Prexaspes teaches that nature is a moral good and is worth defending, and that the sun is the source of power for all life on Orden.

Atossa the Shepherd

Domains: Fate, Protection, Trickery

The great dam built by their ancestors that created Lake Tospah was going to fail, Atossa's doomsight said. The people would not listen, they said she read the signs wrong.

When the rains came and would not stop, and the water in Lake Tospah rose putting more pressure on the dam, Atossa opened the gates to the sheep pen and let the tribe's herd of sheep out.

The people ran after them, effectively evacuating the village. But the rains stopped, and the damn did not burst. The people returned to their homes, put the sheep back in the pen, and blamed the shepherd for worrying too much and leading them on wild goose chases.

The next year, the rains came again. And this time the lake was already near capacity. When the shepherd tried to warn the people, they reminded her that it had rained the year before and there was no danger—and so would not listen.

When the first cracks appeared at the base of the dam, Atossa knew her wyrd was before her. She took a piece of the broken dam back to the village to show the elders. They frowned and wondered what Atossa was up to now, but agreed amongst themselves to go up the valley and inspect the dam in person.

Atossa tried to warn them they were walking to their doom, and became even more agitated when the rest of the village followed. When the elders reached the cracked dam, they sounded no alarm. Instead, they argued and debated, "Chewing their beards"—*rish javid*—the hakaan say about elders who argue instead of acting.

Desperate, Atossa climbed to the top of the dam, and dove into the water, swimming down to the bottom of the lake where she could see the stone cracking. Her people were on the other side.

When the crack widened and water began to pour through at incredible pressure, the people panicked and ran. But Atossa was not worried. This was her doom. She knew what to do.

She let the flowing water carry her toward the widening crack until her body slammed against the stone, blocking the water. The hakaan are famed for being able to hold their breath, but though her people ran as quickly as they could, there was no way Atossa could block the water long enough.

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When the dam eventually burst and washed away the village, the people were not there. Atossa had bought them the time to run to safety. They walked among the ruins and found her crushed body among the rubble. They knew they would see her again.

That night, there was a new constellation in the sky.

Atossa teaches that it is not for the shepherd to judge the flock—only to protect and care for them. Even though they might be foolish, or cowardly. "Let the gods judge," Atossa said. "We have sheep to worry after."

Devil Gods

Devil heroes in Orden usually serve the gods and saints of the culture in which they were raised. Few devils in Orden are from the Seven Cities, most are descended from devils who were stranded on Orden hundreds or thousands of years ago. Devils who are from the Seven Cities have their own unique pantheon.

The Seven Cities have saints just like humans in Orden do but in place of gods, these saints serve the seven Archdukes of Hell, also known as Archdevils or the Lords of Hell. Unlike the gods of Orden, the Lords of Hell are corporeal. Giant figures, 30 feet tall, who each sit upon the throne of their city, projecting their consciousness out into the world, dealing with politics, sorcery, and treachery, manifesting avatars when necessary. They are, effectively, the Gods of Hell.

Like the other gods of the timescape, the Lords of Hell are too busy to attend to every petition and request and so employ saints just like other gods. Religion in Hell is superficially similar to religion among the peoples of Orden. There are churches and rites and rituals, but devils tend to view attending church and performing the expected rituals at the appropriate times as akin to paying taxes. Annoying but necessary.

Saints of Hell

Like Orden, there are dozens of saints in Hell, some obscure. These three are some of the most popular and the most likely saints for a conduit or censor to follow.

Thellasko the Great Designer

Domains: Knowledge, War

Thellasko the Great Designer, the Game Master, Saint of Strategy did not invent war—humans in Orden hold that honor. Thellasko invented war simulation. Creating what were effectively games to train cadets and lieutenants at the wartable to ensure victory on the field.

Thellasko served in Dispater's army, rising to the rank of major general. He retired with honors after the Battle of the River Rhye, intending to take what he had learned on the field and write a book about the proper way to conduct a war.

He felt the high command of Hell's armies fought battles on outdated principles. Which side had the best fighting spirit, which side's officers had the greater noble pedigree. Thellasko's treatise, never published, was titled *The Proper Application of Force*. As he wrote, he created a kind of ideal battlefield to use as his running example. The example became more and more critical to the text, more robust, such that eventually Thellasko put his manuscript down to develop the example into a proper game.

This first game was played on a board of sixty-four squares arranged in an eight-by-eight grid. There were two armies each with sixteen pieces. Eight serfs, two soldiers, two prelates, two towers, a king and queen. The game was superficially simple but held hidden depths. It taught the principles of sacrifice and territory control, of thinking like your enemy.

The game evolved into the game of *Shere*, played throughout the timescape. But while the game was immediately popular far outside its intended audience, Thellasko grew dissatisfied with it, and began work on his masterpiece simply called *The Game of War*. It was complex, using hexagonal tiles to build modular terrain boards, and featuring dozens of different unit types with extensive tables that factored supplies, morale, visibility. Unlike Shere, which was an abstraction, The Game of War was a true simulation.

Expensive to produce, *The Game of War* was never very popular outside the Academy of Dis, but Thellasko used it to train a generation of lieutenants on the art of war. His students and best players led the armies of Dis from victory to victory. Thellasko taught his students that an army must fight. All other things being equal, the army with the most experience wins.

In Thellasko's time, the most senior noble was always the senior commander, regardless of experience or, indeed, sanity. After Thellasko and *The Game of War*, commanders were chosen from among the soldiers with the most battlefield experience.

Thellasko was granted sainthood on his deathbed after a generation of successful battles won by his students, all of whom carried a symbol of graduation from Thellasko's school—three adjacent hexagons. The students praised him on the battlefield during his life, and his church continues to advance his theories

Thellasko teaches the virtue of accepting the battle as it is, not as you wish it might be. To take action based on available data, not what tradition says. That wars are not won based solely on the size of one's army, but based on which side is best able to bring its force to bear against the opponent.

Uryal the Subtle

Domains: Knowledge, Trickery

Uryal the Subtle, Deception, the Hidden Hand, Saint of Lies rose to the rank of senior adjudicator in the Bank of Vorilom in Styx. His manager had been permanent undersecretary of finance for over three hundred years, which Uryal felt was taking the title a *tad* literally.

A dozen senior adjudicators had tried to usurp the permanent under-secretary for generations. Their corpses made excellent lamps and even better examples. But Uryal believed he was different. He knew the game the finance managers played, and thought it was stale. Lying, double-dealing, and backstabbing have their place, but there are even subtler tools in the deceiver's toolbox.

During a critical trading session, it was Uryal's job to ferret out the text of the upcoming bloodfruit futures report from the Ministry of Goods and Services. Already an accomplished spy before he moved into finance, this Uryal did easily.

Uryal faithfully relayed the contents of the report. Every detail, unredacted, no embellishments. In other words, he told the truth. The permanent undersecretary never considered this, and interpreted the report assuming Uryal had edited it to favor his own placed wagers.

The permanent undersecretary ordered the bank to corner the market on bloodfruit futures, believing the price would skyrocket. Uryal, meanwhile, shorted bloodfruit. When the report was finally published, saying exactly what Uryal said it would, the Bank of Vorilom was left owing billions in futures trades, causing the entire bank to default.

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The permanent undersecretary was, of course, fired. Literally. Uryal awaited his promotion and counted the enormous sums he made betting on cheap bloodfruit. He was not disappointed.

Uyral's use of truth in a war of lies attracted Moloch's attention, but lining his own pockets in the bargain and becoming one of the single richest people in Hell earned Moloch's favor. He raised Uryal to sainthood and a privileged position in the court of Styx, the City of Lies.

Uryal teaches that deception is only one tool in the art of lies. That the point is *manipulation*, and that any tool, including the truth, should be used to achieve one's ends. Uryal teaches the virtue of flexibility of character and morality. The virtue of unpredictability—always behaving in a manner that is open to interpretation so as to prevent your opponent from learning your tells.

Uryal is the Saint of Hell's diplomatic corps. His *unofficial* motto, falsely attributed to him but oft-repeated: "*Do unto the other guy as he would do unto you. But do it to him first.*"

Kuryalka the False Principle

Domains: Death, Trickery

Kuryalka the False Principle, Soulstealer, Audacity, Saint of Ambition is credited with inventing the trading scheme known as the Kuryalka Ploy. Daughter and eldest child of Orliath IX—Marquis of Naraka, the City of Blood—tradition held Kuryalka would ascend to the house throne upon her mother's death and rule, but from childhood Kuryalka was obsessed with what was informally known as "the Trade"—the buying and selling of mortal souls from Orden and elsewhere in the timescape.

It occurred to Kuryalka that as long as people saw their soul-power increasing on paper they wouldn't inquire too closely about her stewardship of their investment. They signed their accumulated souls over to young Kuryalka, who promised them great returns. It seemed too good to be true! But she published a report every quarter showing marvelous gains, and while no one could understand her math or references to "integrals," they were well pleased with their growing wealth. Whenever someone complained about the lack of disbursements, Kuryalka would quickly pay them out of her growing hoard of souls.

Of course, there was no investment taking place. She simply kept the souls and grew in power, using new investors' souls to pay out old investors. She was not the first to use this technique, but she became the most famous and successful—and the scheme was named after her—because of one innovation. Kuryalka had developed an equation that showed exactly when the ploy would collapse.

Days before that moment, supreme in the fullness of her soulpower, Kuryalka did not withdraw her souls and escape into the timescape with her near-infinite wealth. She went to the Archdevil Sutekh, Lord of Naraka, and offered him her vast soul wealth in exchange for immortality and a place in the Court of the Seven Cities.

Sutekh's terrifying hollow laughter could be heard throughout Hell. No mortal, he said, had ever embodied such naked ambition. He accepted her offer, making her the first Saint of Hell. Sutekh took Kuryalka's souls and founded the Exchange, making the trade in souls an official government department in Hell, and building an entire bureaucracy around it.

Kuryalka teaches the virtue of ambition—that if you are willing to risk everything, you can gain everything. "The world is yours, if only you tell a lie big enough." That the greatest ambitions are those that are so audacious, no one else has even imagined them yet. In this manner does one avoid competition.

Kuryalka features in many folktales in Hell, including "Of the Childe Whomst Kepte the Sheeps," in which she appears to a young shepherd boy warning him against getting caught telling his first lies. Kuryalka instructs him in the proper use of manipulation: "*Never tell the same lie twice*!"

Human Gods of Vasloria

Like all the Innumerable Younger Gods, the gods of Vasloria embody the attitudes of the people who live in that region. This includes the humans, polder, and draconians of Vasloria.

Vasloria is a polytheistic, pre-industrial, pre-Enlightenment, feudal culture. Its people have many superstitions and prejudices, some of which are reflected in the teachings of their gods. Adûn, for instance, teaches that hard physical labor is a moral good and people who work hard every day are honest. Most people in Vasloria, especially Aendrim where Adûn's faith is most popular, believe this to one extent or another.

Some of them take it more seriously than others though. People in the most distant villages tend to believe it more literally, while people in the cities are perfectly aware than one may work and work and be a villain. And this is true of most of the beliefs presented in this chapter. Some people take it very seriously; some not so much.

Like all peoples of Orden, the people of Vasloria are well aware there are other gods. They do not particularly think their gods are *better*, just, "These are the local ones who matter to us." A priest of Cavall who journeyed far from Corwell and found themselves in the distant desert land Khemhara could still act as a conduit of Saint Llewellyn the Valiant, but they would look around the Heliopolis and see the animal-headed gods of the Khemharans and the astonishing feats of masonry and astronomy the Khemharans achieved and think: "Well. Obviously the gods of Vasloria aren't that big a deal here, but these gods certainly are!" The peoples of each region of Orden prefer their own gods because they understand them best, not because they think they are "more powerful."

Adûn

Domains: Creation, Life, Love, Protection

Adûn believes that truth and hard work are virtues. He embodies the Vaslorian belief that hard work is honesty. Someone who works hard—real physical labor—is an honest person. Anyone who does no obvious work for a living is someone not to be trusted. Adûn is more worshiped in the field than in the city. Farmers distrust city folk because many of them make a living writing, or counting money, and never break a sweat.

Vaslorians in remote villages still use the ancient test of strength to determine truth. Two individuals in a legal dispute may find the reeve asking them to fell a tree or build a wall. Whoever finishes first is in the right, because they worked harder and are therefore more honest. Many walls and fields owe their existence to this ancient legal tradition.

A priest following Adûn expresses their faith through labor. They build things. Many priests are also masons or carpenters. Joining the church for them did not mean abandoning their former trade. It intensified it.

A knight following Adûn spends their time aiding others through hard work, inspiring people to honest speech and hard labor, as opposed to Adûn's brother Cavall who seeks to right wrongs.

Adûn and Cavall are brothers and the line between them is not a sharply defined one. Truth and justice are close companions.

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Gaed the Confessor

Domains: Love, Protection

Gaed the Confessor, son of Malgen, son of Germoc, was the abbot of a small monastery dedicated to Saint Anthony—Shield of the North—in eastern Aendrim during the rule of the tyrant Baron Kaveran. Kaveran was a secret censor of the church of Saint Pallad, winning the baronial throne though a combination of treachery and good strategic battle principles. Once on the throne, he threw off the black cloth covering the device on his shield, revealing himself to be a servant of Pallad, Saint of Nikros.

Kaveran sought to consolidate his rule by extinguishing the church of Saint Anthony, Shield of the North specifically, and worship of Adûn generally. In this, he almost succeeded. Gaed's monastery was small, his province obscure. But as he refused to renounce his faith, his monastery attracted more and more refugees, making it harder and harder for Kaveran to deal with him without causing a revolt.

Kaveran abducted Gaed, his knights dragging the abbot out of his monastery in the middle of the night, and tortured him for seven days, hoping to break his faith and force him to convert to Saint Pallad. Gaed neither renounced his faith nor called out for aid.

Kaveran was no fool, and knew killing Gaed would make a martyr of him, and so attacked the abbot's flock. Hoping—by putting their homes to the fire—to pressure Gaed into recanting his faith. Kaveran barred several families in a tavern, set fire to it, and brought Gaed to witness the horror.

But Kaveran had not thought to shackle Gaed, and the abbot countered by lifting the bar on the burning building and walking into the tavern in full view of hundreds of his followers. He spoke Saint Anthony's words as he did so, but it was Adûn who clothed him in a shimmering blue light.

It was Gaed, son of Malgen, son of Germoc, who entered the tavern—it was Saint Gaed the Confessor who emerged, unscathed, leading the people inside to safety. In that moment the people and many of Kaveran's own followers turned on the cruel Baron, dragging him off his horse and spitting his body with kitchen knives and pitchforks.

Gaed teaches the virtue of being true to one's principles even—especially—when doing so is the most difficult thing in the world. The title "confessor" is granted to those who persisted in their faith in public, even when doing so was dangerous or deadly.



Gryffyn the Stout

Domains: Creation, Life

Gryffyn the Stout was an infant dwarf when his parents' cart was waylaid by bandits who killed his mother and father, stole all their wares, and set fire to the cart. They were unaware of the child nestled within.

A nearby farmer saw the flames and rode out to investigate. When she arrived, she could hear the bawling of the dwarf babe. Though wreathed in flame, the infant's skin was too hardy to feel the heat. In the horse's pack were a pair of tongs the farmer used to extract the child without harming herself, and she took the baby dwarf home to her husband.

Naming the child Gryffyn, the farmers raised him as one of their own. The boy grew up wanting to be a farmer like his adoptive mother and father, but they encouraged him to take up masonry, believing stonework to be a natural part of his ancestry.

Gryffyn had no particular aptitude for stonework, but desirous to please his parents he worked hard until eventually he was apprenticed

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to a mason and, after many years effort (more years than most, it was noted) he produced his master work and became a master mason.

One day, years later after his parents had passed, hundreds of people from other nearby towns and villages arrived at the quarry where Gryffyn worked. Cinis the necromancer had discovered an ancient tome of lore and summoned a horde of ghouls. She used her new army to conquer the surrounding barony, causing a flood of refugees. Gryffyn's quarry could not shelter a tenth this number of refugees, so he proposed the people cross the White Ravine to the north and seek asylum among the elves of the Orchid Court.

The people were appalled, the White Ravine was impossible to cross for any but the most experienced ranger. "There is no choice" Gryffyn said. "Cinis's army will be here in a matter of days, and there is nowhere else to run."

The people cried and prepared for death. Gryffyn saw this, and his heart felt like it would burst. "There are stones enough in the quarry," he said enigmatically. "Yoke the oxen and bring the stones to the ravine and do not stop, even in darkness, even in rain, until the ghouls come or the quarry is empty."

When the army of Cinis the Pale arrived, the people fled to the ravine, the path being easy as their carts and oxen had worn a clear road. Thinking they would throw themselves into the ravine rather than be eaten by the ghouls, they were astonished to discover ... the miracle. A great stone bridge crossing the ravine. It had not existed three days prior, and all agreed it could not have taken less than a year to build.

Fleeing across the bridge, the refugees found the body of Gryffyn, author of this marvel, his fingers bleeding, hammer in his hand, his heart having finally failed. He knew his labors would cost his life. But Gryffyn's Arch still stands, almost a thousand years later.

Saint Gryffyn the Stout teaches that despair is the enemy of action. That unyielding endurance is the cure for impossible odds. That more than sword and spell, hard work is the savior of the people.

Cavall

Domains: Life, Love, Protection, War

Cavall believes that mortals cannot live where injustice thrives. To followers of Cavall, the unjust society is the Wasted Land, where people live false lives. The concepts of civil law and just punishment are his.

A watchhouse chaplain is almost certainly a priest of Cavall. A rector serving a small town may be welcome on the town council, but would consider passing judgment on a fellow citizen a breach of duty. The maxim of the church of Saint Gwiddon the Vigilant translates as: "To watch, report, but not to judge." The law, Cavall says, belongs to mortals.

Censors of Cavall, on the other hand, have no such motto. The nobility often sponsor knights of Cavall to roam the countryside and dispense justice in remote wilderness areas where the noble's influence cannot reach.

Brother to Adûn and patron of the country of Corwell, Cavall also believes that people, no matter how vile, can be bettered. "Let the law judge," said Saint Llewellyn, "Let us forgive."

Llewellyn the Valiant

Domains: Life, Protection

Llewellyn the Valiant was a knight in service to Duke Melianus of Gant known as Melianus the Bright. His mother the duchess died from a withering illness none could cure, and Melianus, her only son, assumed the throne.

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Almost from the beginning of his rule, there were rumors that a sorcerer in the marsh was behind Melanius's power, poisoning his mother to hasten his ascent, but as the marsh was nigh impassable this could not be proven and was taken for little more than a spiteful rumor.

Duke Melianus's reign was cruel almost from the outset. He accused all those loyal to his mother of treachery, and found occasion to have them each imprisoned and executed without trial. Sir Llewellyn had served the duchess loyally and strove to acquit himself of his duty under the new duke. But he struggled to reconcile his sense of duty with the new duke's capricious malice.

The new duke yearned to imprison his mother's favored knight, but all the guards, the reeves, the people of city and village, looked up to Llewellyn. Melianus instead contrived to send Sir Llewellyn on a series of quests, each more deadly than the last.

The Trials of Llewellyn, as they came to be known, passed into legend and their tale is still told in Corwell. Llewellyn and the Dragon With Seven Eyes, Llewellyn and the Witch of the Fen, Llewellyn and the Onyx Tower.

When Llewellyn slew Ghruk the Trollhag, she cried out, "Follow Melianus!" as she died. These words echoed in Llewellyn's ears and his heart. He assumed she meant, "Obey him—be loyal to him." But as he rode his great destrier Silverheart back to Castle Gant, Llewellyn began to suspect what Ghruk meant.

That night, Llewellyn waited in the stables and, at midnight, Melianus appeared. He mounted his great black warhorse Coalfire and rode. To where, Llewellyn could not guess. But the knight followed the duke as he rode east toward the marsh, he remembered the rumors.

At the edge of the marsh, Coalfire's eyes began to glow with a baleful flame and his mane burst into crimson fire. Llewellyn's breath caught in his throat. "A nightmare!" he realized. The rumors were true! The sorcerer had given Melianus a devil steed.

On flaming nightmare hooves was Melianus able to cross the impassable swamp. Llewellyn balked, no one could cross the cursed bog. But Silverheart champed at her bit, pulled on the reins. She would not yield. Placing his trust in his steed, Llewellyn let the reins lie slack, and Silverheart took the lead.

Llewellyn and Silverheart plunged into the bog and though it was night and the mud sucked at her hooves, Silverheart pushed on. In the hour before dawn, they arrived at an island with an ancient tower. "The tower of the sorcerer," Llewellyn thought. Thunder rolled, and rain began to fall.

Looking to the upper window of the tower, Llewellyn saw someone performing a dark ritual. A flash of lightning illuminated the figure. It was Melianus! Melianus was the sorcerer! Llewellyn called out, and the duke descended the tower and mounted his hellsteed. On his shield now—the screaming-skull symbol of Cyrvis, the Lich, god of malice.

Cyrvis had rewarded his loyal servant for years of cruelty, and the figure astride the nightmare was Saint Melianus the Bright. The Dark Saint charged Llewellyn, his lance gleaming with balefire. Llewellyn and Silverheart returned the charge and the two clashed together, Melianus's blow strong enough to unseat a giant. But Llewellyn was not thrown. His strength was the strength of ten, for his heart was pure.

Coalfire struck with flaming hooves at Silverheart but the destrier struck back, blow for bite and bite for blow. Then the hellsteed, roared and a rotting green flame burned Silverheart's flesh and stole her breath until, choking, she fell to the ground, dead.

Llewellyn's heart burst. He threw his body over the corpse of his loyal steed, and Melianus's lance pierced his armor, his back, and his heart. Knight and horse, dead. Melianus crowed as the lightning flashed again. But, in that moment, the miracle.

Cavall stood between the Dark Saint and loyal knight. Cavall pulled the lance from Llewellyn's back. "Rise my son, and rise thy steed. Thy work shalt never be done."

Saint Llewellyn the Valiant and Silverheart his Eversteed rose, immortal, and the battle against evil renewed itself, the two armored saints clashing on barded steeds.

Weeks later, neither having returned, the people of Gant laboriously forded the swamp and found the tower of the sorcerer. The ground around the tower turned black from the baleful energies unleashed. Though no bodies were found, the armor of both knights lay on the ground—Melianus's breastplate having been pierced.

Llewellyn and Silverheart had rid the people of their cursed, hateful duke.

Saint Llewellyn is Cavall's greatest saint. He teaches that the greatest loyalty is to the well-being of the people, and that it is the responsibility of the strong to protect the weak. That the only proper use of power is in pursuit of justice.

Gwenllian the Fell-Handed

Domains: Protection, War

"*Work your ritual, loremaster. And I will make your life worthy of a god's memory.*"

The Red Sun hobgoblins seemed unstoppable. The baron began to think he might need to evacuate the entire barony, else allow his people to be slaughtered. His greatest knights perished against the Red Sun, who wielded some magic that granted them invulnerability.

Then the loremaster came. Zür the wizard, dwarf and master of the Tower of Enchantment arrived. Seeing the need, he opened his tomes and researched what might the hobgoblins might wield. He presented himself to the baron's court with a solution. The Red Sun had found an ancient spring dedicated to a Gol demon-god. The Red Sun hobgoblins had bathed in the spring and awoken the blessing of the demon within and, having bathed in the river, they were now invulnerable.

Zür believed he could remove the enchantment and rob the Ren Sun of their power. But the way to the spring was dangerous and he had no guard. The baron was at a loss, his greatest knights were almost all dead, thanks to the Red Sun.

"I will attend," Lady Gwenllian volunteered. The baron objected. Lady Gwenllian was his personal knight and bodyguard, just as her mother had been to his father. "If we succeed," Gwenllian said, "you will have no need of bodyguards. If we fail, it will be the same."

The baron could not say no to his closest and most loyal knight, and so Lady Gwenllian, daughter of Morwetha, rode out with Zür the Enchanter. "It will take time to perform the ritual," Zür said. "Once I start, the demon will send creatures to stop me. They will be terrible."

Gwenllian swore to defend the dwarf against all who might come for as long as it might take. In later years, Zür professed he felt the weight of her vow and knew the gods were watching. "How long to work your ritual?" she asked, and she could tell the answer would be dire.

"Ten days," Zür said. "Ten days must I work this weaving without pause or rest or food or water." Dour Gwenllian merely nodded. "So be it."

Arriving at the spring which ran red, Zür prepared his weaving. "You understand," he said coating his hands in a rare powder, "that once we

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begin, we cannot stop, no matter how horrible the fiends the demon sends at us."

Well-versed in the faith of Ord and the dwarves, Gwenllian responded. "Work your ritual, loremaster. And I will make your life worthy of a god's memory."

For ten days and nine nights, Zür spoke his weaving and lighting sprang from his fingertips as he grappled with the demon of the spring. And horrors came as he did so.

Creatures unseen in Orden, assemblages of organs, teeth, and claws. Animals with too many legs or too few heads. The dead came, trees that walked whose branches dripped blood came. The tale of all detailed in the Lay of Lady Gwenllian. And while the endurance of the dwarves is well documented, Lady Gwenllian did not falter, did not rest.

On the seventh day did a group from the Barony come to tell the dwarf the Red Sun had been defeated. Zaar hesitated, but Lady Gwenllian did not. Exhausted, spent, she could not be fooled. She saw through the demon's guise and the men who were not men erupted in tentacles and spines.

Lady Gwenllian dispatched them all.

Twelve days after they rode out, Zür returned with Lady Gwenllian's body on her horse. The spring had been consecrated by the green. The Red Sun had lost their invulnerable skin and were beaten. Lady Gwenllian protected Zür as she swore, but she died upon dispatching the last demon spawn.

"I bring you her body," Zür said to the baron. "And one thing more will I do for you. I shall build you a church here. A cathedral worthy of the life of Saint Gwenllian."

Gwenllian is the saint of those who stand watch, of all those who must carry a burden ceaselessly. Gwenllian teaches that vigilance is its own reward.

Salorna

Domains: Life, Nature, Storm, Sun

Salorna believes that nature is a moral good. That to behave in a manner not in accord with the natural balance (she would never use the word "order") is to commit offense against the gods.

Salorna teaches that humans are a product of nature, so then a tilled farm is as much a natural phenomenon as a forest. Indeed, tilling the land is a form of caring for it. But she also teaches balance in all things. A land of farms and no trees would be just as unnatural to her as a land of all trees and no people.

Felling a tree for lumber is natural. People need lumber to make homes for shelter. This is proper and good. Felling a tree because it's in the way of a road is mere convenience and therefore a moral wrong. Salorna curses a straight road.

Killing for food is likewise natural. People need to eat and the pig knows this as well as the person. Killing for sport is a moral wrong, however. It is unnatural, Salorna says.

A wheel that harnesses the power of the river is a beautiful thing. Humans and river physically connected. A dam that blocks the river is a desecration.

Some of Salorna's priests are conduits; some are mages of the green. Both seek to preserve the balance and respect for nature. Because much of Vasloria is covered in elven forest, Salorna's druids are also often diplomats to the elves.

Salorna has few censors, but not none! Favoring light armor and ranged weapons, her censors are often mistaken for rangers. They seek to punish those who hunt for sport, or those who would defile the natural order.

Draighen the Warden

Domains: Nature, Sun

Saint Draighen the Warden, the Ranger, Draighen of the Wood was known in her life for her mastery of the elf haunted wodes which she could cross without incident. Draighen it was who first treated with the derwic, whom even the wode elves had not seen in many ages of the world.

The awakened trees were happy to hear news of the world and while it was impossible for her to satiate their endless curiosity ("How fare the steel dwarves?"), Draighen provided many services for them. Chief among those—locating the Stone of Hyllc a large flagstone infused with magic, which the derwic used as a kind of altar for communing with their creator. Many traditions had the derwic forsworn after the loss of their symbolic meeting-stone, and they were sore grateful to the human who took their problems as her own.

Years later, a fire threatened to engulf the local wode, and the elves within refused all aid. Their stoic refusal to prevent their own extinction infuriated Draighen, whom they already resented because of her special relationship with the walking trees.

Draighen proposed a trick the humans—"the men of farm and field"—used when fire threaten to burn their crops after a drought. "Starve the fire," she proposed. The elves, initially curious, rejected her idea as soon as they understood it. "Cut down the trees?!" they exclaimed, and exiled the human.

Refusing to give up on the elves, even after they chose to die with their forest, Draighen went to the derwic, who immediately praised her plan and were eager to help. The elves of the wode were astonished when Draighen returned with a dozen derwic who immediately began uprooting a line of trees ten miles long and a thousand feet wide. What would have taken the elves or humans many days even working together, the derwic did in an hour. The fire reached the edge of the break the walking trees had made … and died out.

When the elves remarked upon this, taking the derwic to task for their actions, Hurolathornindrascyl, derwic's chief, looked at Draighen in confusion and then pointed to the sea of uprooted trees. "They would have moved on their own if they could! We just helped them along."

The elves were properly chastised and realized their shame. Though the derwic disappeared back into the wode, the elves celebrated Draighen, naming her Elf-Friend and Wode Warden. In the ceremony, Draighen was surrounded by a golden light and her brown eyes turned green. The elves knew she was Saint Draighen now.

Draighen teaches solutions can always be found if people are willing to talk. That even the darkest forest is not a thing to be threatened by if you carry wisdom and an open heart with you. That the proper reaction to unknown territory is curiosity.

Eriarwen the Wroth

Domains: Nature, Storm

Eriarwen the Wroth apprenticed to her mother as a witch just as her mother had apprenticed under her mother. Her family were witches in service to Halcyon the Moonmaiden, saint of Viras, the Lady of Spring. They had tended to the souls and health of the people of five villages for two centuries. Eriarwen was not yet of age, and so not yet a full mistress of the craft when the blight came.

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At first it was a newborn foal born with seven eyes and a writhing grasping tentacle where it tongue should have been. It took three farmers to kill the infant beast and though they dismissed it as an accident of birth, the three were harrowed.

Soon, it was a cat, then a herd of cows. Then every kind of beast and bird in the wood emerged with hideous mutations, defects, and deformities. The creatures had not just been driven mad, they were filled with hate for the people of the farms and villages. Though they could not know it, it was the Red Blight of Caswyn the Plaguemaster.

In a matter of a week, the people were forced to all gather together in one town for protection, and they feared they were doomed. All attempts to stop the blight had already failed.

Her mother and grandmother, the other witches of their coven, spent their time trying to protect the people and heal the afflicted animals, but this was not possible. There could be no cure, for these creatures were not sick. Caswyn had changed their nature making new things out of the wildlife.

When her grandmother's horse changed underneath her, turning into a merging of horse and crab, Eriarwen saw her mother summon a killing spell, but her grandmother forbade it and turned to try and calm and reason with the steed who had carried her for twenty-seven years.

Then Eriarwen saw the beast rip her grandmother apart with a single bite.

Her mother raced to her mother's corpse. And Eriarwen called out.

Eriarwen did not scream or cry, nor call out for aid or even mercy. She did not call to Viras, nor any of her saints. She called out to Salorna the Summer Storm and demanded the Woodland Mistress act.

Eriarwen felt a growing heat and joy in her heart, and, feeling like she could fly, she suddenly saw the world through a million eyes all at once, and where she had stood, a humanoid figure composed entirely of bees filled the space. Eriarwen the Swarm exploded in a cloud of bees and each bee was Eriarwen. She sped across the countryside from one village to the next, stinging every animal affected by the Red Blight, and the villagers watched as the woodland creatures, their own pets and livestock, returned to normal. Good as new! None knew then that it was Eriarwen who saved them, but all knew it must be a member of her family. Who else?

But Eriarwen was just getting started. Returning to her grandmother's corpse, the swarm coalesced and Eriarwen emerged, a young woman again. But her hair was flame and lightning crackled where she walked.

"CASWYN!" she thundered. "I SUMMON THEE! COME! YOU CANNOT RESIST! I COMPEL THEE!"

Caswyn, furious at the death of his blight, furious at the girl who dared oppose him, could not resist. He revealed himself and in that moment, it was Caswyn the Pestilent, saint of Cyrvis who appeared.

Saint Caswyn and Saint Eriarwen battled and grappled with each other, each growing to great size infused with the power of their gods. But their figures were unrecognizable. Caswyn was a rotting giant, a mutated dragon, a griffon oozing blood.

Eriarwen was a wolf made of fire, a crow made of lightning, a bear made of stone.

Caswyn the Chimera hurled Eriarwen the Lion to the ground and it was Caswyn the Cobra who struck. But it was Eriarwen the Elk who spit Caswyn upon her antlers, banishing the saint from the mundane world.

Eriarwen returned to herself, and though she was now an immortal saint, she sensed that Salorna had given her yet more power. She saw her mother weeping over her grandmother's body. The old woman's horse, restored by Eriarwen's sting, nuzzled at her mistress's curled gray hair.

Eriarwen smiled, and knew the task before her. She conjured lightning from her fingertip, and her grandmother was renewed. Mothers and daughters reunited.

Eriarwen teaches that nature holds the power to destroy—that Mother Nature is also the fury of a hurricane. She preaches revenge against those who would pervert the natural world. And that those who seek to preserve the balance between humans and nature must be willing to take violent action if necessary.

Evil Gods

Most heroes are hero-heroes, but some heroes are anti-heroes, and some are anti-villains! This section presents one archetypal saint from each of Vasloria's evil gods; the brothers Nikros and Cyrvis for those players who wish to play such heroes.

Nikros the Tyrant

Domains: Death, Fate, Storm, War

Nikros is strength. He is dominance. His is the right of the strong to rule over the weak. He is the Tyrant.

Nikros believes that strength is the only virtue, and those who are born strong were born to rule. Because of this, followers of Nikros are often mistaken for followers of Adûn—a mask they are happy to wear. Both teach that strength is good. But for Adûn strength is a tool for helping others. For Nikros, strength is power to enact your will heedless of the consequences. Might is right.

Many is the baron or duke who attained power through sheer strength and ruthlessness, seeing their people as mere resources to be spent. Many of these rulers only come to Nikros after achieving power, their ears poisoned by a priest of the Tyrant.

Though he and Cyrvis are brothers, Nikros hates Cyrvis because Cyrvis is feeble and weak. Both teach that strength is the only virtue. But Cyrvis teaches that the weak can exploit treachery and sorcery to become strong. Nikros spits upon these feeble wastes and preaches to the strong to take what is theirs by right.

Like Cyrvis, his priests worship in secret. Like Cyrvis, folk hate followers of Nikros, while sometimes secretly admiring them. Bullies always have their sycophants.

Nikros's censors take what they want, ignore the law heedless of consequence, and teach that all folk should live thus. To subjugate one's will to the law, or the community, or the family, is to be weak! Weakness is a disease and it must be eradicated!

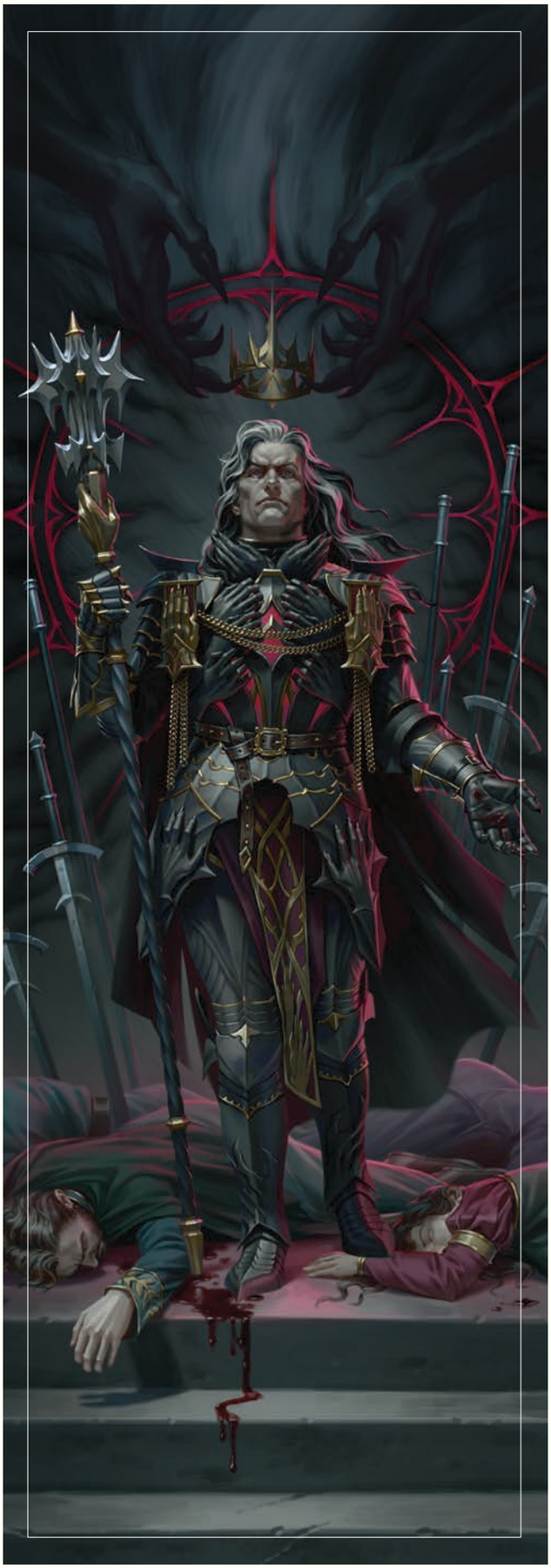
Pentalion the Paladin

Domains: Death, War

Pentalion the Paladin, the Usurper, served at the right hand of Uther the Callous, aiding him in his ascent to the throne. Uther mastered fell sorceries under the tutelage of a priest of Cyrvis. In public, Uther's illusions kept him hale seeming, but in reality his addiction to sorcery had withered him.

Pentalion was Uther's greatest knight, general, and chief of his secret police. He ferreted out conspiracies and rebellious coalitions. His tactic: infiltrate the rebels with his own agents—give them a taste of success but at the cost of relying on his power. Then, in their moment

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of triumph, Pentalion's agents revealed themselves and the insurgents found themselves surrounded by enemies without and within.

Eventually serving at the right hand of the conqueror was not enough. Pentalion loathed Uther for his physical weakness and growing dependence on sorcery. After Pentalion helped Uther depose a nearby duke, the paladin helped the dead duke's daughter plot revenge.

He used all his usual tactics. His agents aided the duke's daughter and helped her build her insurgency, but in a critical moment when she confronted Uther with only Lord Pentalion as witness, the evil paladin killed first Uther, then the duke's daughter assuming leadership of both the kingdom and the rebellion.

Savior to all, Pentalion was made a saint of Nikros for this act. He ruled well into old age, always finding new enemies within and without to be cruel to. And the more cruel he was to his invented enemies, the more the people loved him.

Saint Pentalion teaches that one should bide their time and build their power before striking. That treachery in service to growing your own power is no vice.

Cyrvis

Domains: Death, Fate, Knowledge, Trickery

Cyrvis is the enemy of fate. He is the god of those who believe they have been wronged by life, and seek revenge. Cyrvis is a god of magic, because through magic one can gain power to exert their will over others. He is brother to Nikros but because he is frail and Nikros values only strength, Nikros hates Cyrvis, and Cyrvis is happy to return the sentiment.

A person bullied, a criminal arrested, a servant dismissed—all who harbor secret hate whisper Cyrvis' name, and that whisper is a prayer. A suitor rejected by a consort who loves another finds themself walking in Cyrvis' shadow. He is the god of assassins, conspirators, and the bitterly frail.

It is dangerous to worship Cyrvis in public, but those who gain power through his worship often parade this fact gladly and teach Cyrvis' hatred as virtue. Many is the knight who rides with Cyrvis's screaming-skull talisman on their shield, teaching folk to take what they want, the law be damned. The law is a coward! The law is a system designed by cowards to keep us from seeking real power!

His churches are often underground—in dungeons, cellars. His priests worship in secret, plotting against those with power, or those who are merely popular. To be liked and loved is reason enough for a follower of Cyrvis to hate you.

Eseld of the Eye

Domains: Knowledge, Trickery

Eseld of the Eye, the Eye of Hate, sought mastery of the Tower of Summoning. But though she studied hard, there were always other mages more fortunate.

Cursing those who succeeded where she failed, Eseld sought the *Tome of Boiling Hate*, written by Cyrvis himself during his life. Acquiring the tome required years of research and treachery. Eseld left a trail of poisoned librarians and tortured loremasters behind her before finally unearthing the tome from its resting place at the bottom of the inverted Tower of Blood.

But though the tome was written in an ancient dialect Eseld knew, the words moved under her gaze and she could not extract meaning from them. Many oracles were consulted and tortured before she learned the prophesy.

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"Only one with singular vision will see the secrets in the Lich's writing."

With a flash of certain insight, Eseld understood the riddle. She took a dagger and carved out her own eye. With only one good eye remaining, blood from her eyesocket pouring onto the page, she could read the lore within.

In that moment was Eseld made a saint of Cyrvis.

Filled with sorcerous power, Eseld no long sought mastery of the Tower of Enchantment, returning instead to the hidden Tower of Blood, restoring it to its former glory—there to start her own cult. Eventually Eseld was overthrown by the Darkling Shades, her own cadre of elite sorceresses who pass on her lore to this day.

Eseld teaches that spite is a virtue. Only fools follow rules, and sorcery is a route to ultimate power.

Space Gods of the Timescape

The nature and origin of the gods of the timescape is not well understood. Unlike the gods of Orden, the Space Gods are corporeal beings, usually of immense—even planetary-size. Some are humanoid, others, like Nebular the Star Mother and XXAXX, decidedly not so.

They have god-like power—greater it seems than the Innumerable Younger Gods. But there is no evidence that they can create whole realities like the Elder Gods. They are not, as far as sages can make out, the authors of the worlds or people of the timescape. They may represent the last survivors of previous realities, High Science experiments run amok, or ascended beings from ancient civilizations who outlasted the fall of their people.

Rather than moral principles, the Space Gods represent abstract concepts and often alien points of view. They are more inscrutable than the gods of Orden, more capricious in their dealings with mortals. In some ways more accessible. In others, more dangerous.

Only a handful of those who dwell on Orden have ever heard of these figures, or know that the stars are anything other than pinholes in the curtain of night.

Lords of Law and Chaos

The Space Gods do not concern themselves overmuch with what humans call "ethics." They embody older principles— order, chaos, balance. Each faction thinks their fundamental principles are morality. The universe needs stability, predictability, say the Lords of Law. The only constant is change, say the Lords of Chaos. The truth lies between, say the Lords of Balance.

Heralds of the Space Gods

Whether it is a tradition or some real limitation, each Space God has, instead of saints, a single herald—a mortal chosen to be the voice of the Space God and communicate with their worshippers where the god themself cannot due to their alien mind.

These heralds function much the same way as saints. They grant conduits and censors power in battle, but without the moral expectations of Orden's gods. The Space Gods themselves are more capricious, but their heralds often arrive in person to aid their followers and take an active interest in the mortal affairs of the timescape.

Religion in the Timescape

The people of the timescape know and believe in their gods just like the people of Orden do. There are churches throughout the worlds to Quasax the Ultra Nova, temples to Mynoth the Way. Even XXAXX the Anti-God has his worshippers: the Cult of Undoing.

But most citizens of the timescape do not carry the gods with them in their daily lives the way the people of Orden do. The gods of the timescape are powerful and reward their worshippers, but they are remote and unknowable. Most denizens of the upper worlds view a church as just another kind of shop. A place to go to renew your soul and speak the rites that your parents spoke. For many denizens of the upper worlds, religion is more of a cultural phenomenon than a way of life.

The closest analog to worship in Orden to be found in the upper worlds would be in Alloy, the City at the Center of the Timescape. The great port city where civilizations across the timescape come to trade is also a city of temples. Temples to every god and saint and hero and herald in the timescape—some dead, some forgotten—can be found somewhere in the ancient city's limits. Folk from Orden arriving in Alloy (an incredibly rare event, as it takes enormous energies to lift one's ship up out of the slow-time of the lower words) remark at how familiar Alloy seems to them. It is a city where the upper and lower worlds mingle and steel sabers sometimes cross with swords made of hard light.

Nebular the Star Mother

Domains: Creation, Life, Love, Sun

The Queen of Suns. A living nebula. Desperate ships in need sometimes find themselves enveloped within Nebular, their systems repairing, their injuries healing.

She is a stellar nursery leaving a trail of infant stars in her wake. Hers is the Engine of Law transforming darkness into light, chaos into order. She is the most popular god among the memonek and the senior god among the Lords of Law insofar as their hierarchy can be discerned by mortal minds.

She is the goddess of creation and for some of her followers, life itself, as her children's energies feed all life on all worlds. Her priests teach that life is the opposite of entropy, and the natural byproduct of her solar incubator.

The Calling of Lady Magnetar

Domains: Life, Sun

Captain Kalisdrossa was the leader of Sword Squadron an elite cadre of legendary UNISOL fighter pilots. Her crew believed unwaveringly that with Kalisdrossa as their leader, though one or two may perish in battle, the squadron would always come home.

In the legendary Battle of Cassiar IV against Grotenhulk the Evolver, flagship of the protean fleet, the protean mutate-commander Oruth-phor intended to break Sword Squadron's winning streak, and from the body of PCS Grotenhulk, a giant swam of living drone-sprites, each specially evolved to seek and destroy UNISOL Arrestor-class ships, spawned.

Sword Squadron's meson repeaters were too imprecise to target the tiny drone-sprites. Not only were the pilots unable to carry out their orders, they were being picked off one by one. Many privately believed this was the final flight of Sword Squadron.

When one of her pilots dropped his countermeasures and temporarily distracted the swarm, Captain Kalisdrossa had a flash of insight.

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Seeing an opportunity to destroy the swarm, save her crew, and give them a fighting chance to complete their mission, she ordered Sword Squadron to ignore the drone and proceed with their attack on the protean flagship.

Her wingman sent back, "The drones will kill us before we're halfway there!"

"No they won't," she responded—and then sent her last message. "Squad, you have your orders. First lieutenant Vachsimnatta is in command. Kalisdrossa out."

As her squad peeled away to begin their final run at the protean capital ship, Kalisdrossa dropped all her countermeasures and flipped on her turbothrusters, believing the overheating engines would ignite the metal sensor-chaff she had jettisoned.

Her instincts were precise and correct. The resulting chemonuclear reaction generated so much light and heat—the entire swarm of drone sprites turned to pursue Sword-1.

There was only one place to lead them. The surface of Cassiar Prime was a boiling sea of plasma condensate powerful enough to rip planets apart. "It should make short work of these drones," Captain Kalisdrossa thought.

Sword-1 plunged into the fermionic sea, the hull boiling away moments before impact. A million drone-sprites followed into oblivion. Commander Oruth-phor howled his fury into empty space and ordered his ship to envelop the UNISOL capital ship, literally swallow it whole. Grotenhulk the Evolver understood the command and knew it was suicide, but the ship was compelled to obey.

Watching the great maw of the living changeship open to swallow an entire flagship struck terror into every memonek in the fleet.

Then, crackling across every signal unit, a voice. "COME FORTH LADY MAGNETAR, CHOSEN OF THE MOTHER OF STARS." And out of the blue plasma sea that was the surface of the star Cassiar Prime arose a figure, humanoid, made of solid boiling plasma.

It was Kalisdrossa, still wearing the helmet that marked her captain of Sword Squadron, holding in her hand the blue-topaz Fusion Rod—a powerful artifact that would serve as her weapon, and the symbol of her office as Herald of Nebular.

Lady Magnetar flew across the void of space at lightning speed, evaporating protean fighters as she went. Until finally she faced Grotenhulk the Evolver, his maw poised to envelop the UNISOL capital ship.

She punched a hole right through the hullskin of the changeship and battled her way, deck by deck, toward the heart of the beast. Though a thousand protean soldiers stood in her way, none could touch her or slow her relentless progress.

The memonek officers and soldiers of UNISOL watched the bleeding changeship convulse, then explode as brilliant shafts of blue light tore the ship apart. Ending the Battle of Cassiar IV.

Lady Magnetar is the Herald of Nebulon the Star Mother aiding those who fight in the cause of light and life and order. She is invoked whenever a great sacrifice must be made. "Lady Magnetar, let my sacrifice not be in vain."

OV the Wave Pilot

Domains: Fate, Knowledge, Storm, Sun

OV the Wave Pilot, the Navigator, an enigmatic humanoid figure described as masculine, appears to live inside the pilot-wave. In those rare instances where a mortal is directly exposed to the energies that propel ships across the sea of stars, they occasionally report seeing a figure that matches the description of OV.

Lost ships sometimes find their navigation systems lighting up, a clear path home suddenly visible where no such path was possible before. OV aids those who are lost regardless of their affiliation with law or chaos, and is one of the Lords of Balance. His herald works to stop conflicts by guiding ships around and past routes that might cause them to intercept hostile entities.

OV is the god of navigators and those who seek safe passage through treacherous scenarios. Because he cares little for the politics of the timescape, he is respected by the time raiders, though none would call him or any other being their "god."

When a time raider swears, "OV guide me," the meaning is not, "Show me the right thing to do." But: "Show me a way out of this mess."

The Calling of Cho'kassa the Time Rider

Domains: Storm, Sun

"*Take the helm and damn them all!!*"

Cho'kassa and her family-clan were prisoners of UNISOL being taken to Ordos, the capital of Axiom for trial on charges of piracy and insurgency. UNISOL, she deemed, made arrests first and invented whichever laws were convenient afterwards.

Halfway through their journey, the UNISOL corvette was attacked by a protean heavy patrol vessel. The smaller protean ship latched itself onto the hull of the UNISOL corvette, lamprey-like, and its digestive acids quickly burned a hole in the plasteel, allowing the protean boarding party to invade.

Though the rest of her captured clan believed the proteans had, for some reason, come to free them, Cho'kassa was not so optimistic. Eventually, the boarding party made it to the prison deck and opened the cells. They were evidently as surprised to find the imprisoned kuran'zoi as the time raiders were to be rescued by proteans!

"You were prisoners, now you are our thralls. Obey and earn your freedom."

The rest of her clan were unsure of their options, but Cho'kassa grabbed the protean captain's hardlight pistol out of his hand and shot him in the chest. Her clan were now sure.

With that pistol shot, the fight for the UNISOL corvette became a running battle between three factions. The time raiders stole weapons from the bodies their enemies left behind, and the small band fought their way to the bridge, none knowing what they would do once they got there.

On gaining the bridge, messages blared from every signal receiver. Each side demanding the time raiders join them and defeat their enemies. Many promises and threats were made. The kuran'zoi looked to Cho'kassa.

"Take the helm and damn them all!" she called out. "There must be a way home!" And in that instant, the navigation screens sprung to life. "Look!" her brother said. A route had already been plotted. One that made no literal sense. Was the ship's logic system malfunctioning?

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Was there a way out? Could the impossible course on the star chart be trusted? It was a moot point, as the ship was still caught in the grip of the protean's ship's sucker-mouth.

"There is a way" her brother said, but pulling away from the protean ship would require disabling all the safety circuits preventing the star-engine from going into overload. It might damn them all, but for at least a moment, the ship would have enough power to rip itself away from its parasitic attacker.

Cho'kassa ordered her clan to hold the bridge and seal the door behind her, and she fled alone to the engine room. She picked up a protean rifle as she ran, and though she could hear the battle between the memonek and proteans raging, her path was mercifully clear of enemies.

Finally facing the great star-engine of the UNISOL ship, Cho'kassa punched in the override codes, and used her recovered rifle to blast the shielding off the star core. Bathed in brilliant yellow light that was killing her second by second, Cho'kassa leapt off the gangplank across the safety gap, and into the star core itself.

Others thought this a strange way to end one's life. But Cho'kassa had seen the sign of the Wave Pilot when the navigation screens on the bridge came to life, and instinct compelled her. Some insight said that only if she joined with the ship could she save her clan. When her consciousness continued even after the engine disintegrated her body, she knew her faith proved correct.

Now part of the ship itself, Cho'kassa could see the relationship between time and space. The Wave Pilot appeared before her, an enigmatic figure made of gold-green light, and conveyed without words the secret. The dark star, Procellon Beta, warped space and time around it, and that was why the plotted chart that appeared on the bridge could not be understood.

The energies of the wounded star-engine ripped through the ship killing the memonek and proteans onboard, but did not breach the door to the bridge. Cho'kassa piloted her new body with her family nestled safely inside through the course the wave pilot had set.

The harrowing, twisting path brought the ship close to the horizon of the dark star, through an inverted waveform, and they emerged weeks before they set out. Cho'kassa followed the course until it brought them to the UNISOL ship well before the events that led to the capture of her people.

With her clan manning the blaster turrets, Cho'kassa destroyed the memonek ship. Erasing the timeline in which they had originally been captured.

"What just happened?" one kuran'zoi asked. "How can we be here, now?"

The ship returned to manual control. Cho'kassa was no longer the ship. Her brother looked through the viewscreen at the starry sea outside, and said, "Only the stars know."

Cho'kassa the Time Rider is the herald of OV the Wave Pilot invoked by those who are lost and yearn for home. She sometimes appears riding her single-seat metal star bike, the Wavebreaker which she employs as a tug, pulling ships that ventured too close to a dark star out of danger.

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Chapter 15

FOR THE DIRECTOR

In film and TV, the director collaborates with writers, actors, designers, and the many other people working together on a collective story, then makes that story shine. That's also what the Director in *Draw Steel* does! If you plan on being the Director of a Draw Steel session or campaign, this chapter of the book focuses on your role in the game.

Before we dive into helpful advice for Directors, we want to make you aware of the *Running the Game* series of videos on Matthew Colville's YouTube channel. Hey, we know that guy! He's the Design Director of this game! Most of these videos reference the world's oldest roleplaying game, but their advice is universal to folks running tabletop RPGs everywhere.

You're Not Being Tested

You don't need to memorize every single rule and exception before you start running *Draw Steel*. This is a big book, and you're allowed to use it while you play! Whenever a question comes up at the table, you can tell the other players, "Let me reference the old texts," and find the right answer.

You absolutely don't need to know every ability or feature that the heroes have access to. Let the players be the experts on their characters. And if a player is ever unsure of how an ability works, have them read it out loud so you can talk it through, or you can look up the answer together.

What's a Campaign?

A campaign is the entire story of a group of heroes told while playing the game. It starts with a campaign pitch from the Director to the other players. During the pitch, the Director tells the players about the setting where the game takes place and what kinds of stories the heroes will undertake.

If the players like the pitch, they create heroes and then the game begins! The Director prepares and runs adventures which are played out over a series of game sessions. During these sessions, the heroes play out scenes that include combat encounters, negotiations, montage tests, investigations, downtime projects, and more.

The best way to think of a campaign is to compare it to a film saga, a series of novels, or an epic television show. Each adventure that makes up a campaign is one film, book, or season of television in that series. Each game session is then an act of the adventure's film, a chapter of its book, or an episode in its TV season. Adventures might be tied together by an overarching villain who the heroes face in a thrilling final encounter. Or they might have connected goals, such as the heroes hunting and destroying evil artifacts, that tie them together in a campaign. These ties between adventures aren't necessary, but many players are drawn in by a cohesive campaign story.

Some campaigns are short, spanning only a single adventure or even just one session of play. Most last a good while longer than that, and contain multiple adventures. The longest campaigns feature many adventures and take the heroes from 1st to 10th level.

The Director's Role

The Director has a number of key jobs in this game, which we'll go over in this chapter:

- Before a campaign starts, the Director pitches the idea of their campaign to the players.
- Before each game, the Director prepares the adventure by building scenes that include encounters, negotiations, and downtime activities.
- During the game, the Director presents the scenes they've prepared to the players.
- During the game, the Director is responsible for how the NPCs and the environment react to the actions of the heroes. This includes changing and skipping prepared scenes and running new scenes on the fly.
- During the game, the Director acts as a referee, adjudicating the rules. If something isn't covered by the rules, the Director decides how to determine what happens next in the game.
- After the game, the Director makes or reviews notes covering what happened during the game, then starts planning for the next game session.

First Time Running a Game

If this is your first time ever running a *Draw Steel* game, good for you! Directing a game is a super rewarding experience that allows you to lead your friends in group storytelling. It's also a lot of work, but that work is fun for folks who enjoy creative activities. You're running a game for your friends. They want to have fun, but they also want to see you succeed. Remember that this is a collaborative experience—it's not all on you.

This chapter covers the basics of running a *Draw Steel* game. While you're learning to run the game, or if you're playing with new players, don't be afraid to start small and easy. A low-level adventure pitting the heroes against bandits will not only be exciting and fun, it'll give you the experience you need to eventually play a world-crossing, branching-scenario, multilevel campaign in the future.

Of course, if the other players in your gaming group all like to jump right into the deep end and learn as they go, then have at it! Either way, at the end of each session, take a few minutes for everyone to talk about the highlights of your game, and the things you and they would like to see more of in the next session. It won't take long, and it'll quickly help you to improve your campaigns.

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Personal Problems at the Table

Sometimes a player might talk over others. Sometimes a player makes a snarky comment that hurts someone else's feelings. Sometimes a player might cheat on their dice rolls. When personal problems pop up at the table, it's best to talk about those issues at the player level rather than try to solve them by punishing a player's hero.

If the problem is serious enough, you can stop play and talk to anyone who needs it. If the problem is just an annoyance, you might wait until your game session ends. It's best to have these conversations with just the players involved to get their perspectives, rather than in front of everyone and increasing the chance of someone getting embarrassed and defensive. Most of the time, a person doesn't even realize they were creating a problem for the other players. Once the issue has been talked out, they get a chance to change their behavior and solve the problem.

Campaign Pitch

Before you start running or even preparing adventures, you need to find a group of people who want to play this game with you. You probably already have a group of friends in mind, so prepare a quick campaign pitch for them.

A campaign pitch is a document or a quick spiel you give to your players to make sure they're interested in the campaign you want to play. This helps them understand the sort of game you're planning on running and what's in store for them as players. If something in your pitch doesn't appeal to a player or if they have questions, you can address those concerns much more easily before you all start playing.

The pitch is all about communication. Nothing halts everyone's enjoyment of a campaign faster than a player not having a good time, so let them know what kind of game you want to run and what you're expecting of them. A campaign pitch allows a player to discuss any reservations they have, or even to gracefully bow out of the campaign before it starts.

If you can, present your pitch to the players before the first session, so they can be fully on board and thinking about the hero they want to create before it's time to put pencil to character sheet. Otherwise, present your pitch during your first session.

Opening Overview

A campaign pitch starts with a few paragraphs of information that provides an overview of your campaign's theme, settings, and conflicts. Your initial overview should answer these questions:

- Where does the campaign take place?
- What major events important to the campaign's plot have occurred before the campaign starts?
- What kinds of adventures might the heroes have over the course of this campaign?

This overview doesn't give away any of the campaign's secrets—for example, that the key to defeating the boss villain is destroying the artifact known as the Mortal Coil. It doesn't spoil surprises such as the Baron of Dalrath secretly being a lich. Rather, the overview gives the players an idea of how their story starts and what kinds of adventures they'll go on. The best pitches leave players wanting to know more and ready to dive into the action.

Here's an example of an opening overview that Matthew Colville created for his gaming group.

Overview: Wards of the Last Emperor

Long before the time of Good King Omund, the lands of Vasloria and all of Orden belonged to the Caelian Empire. The last emperor, Marcus Octavius, held near-omnipotent power, which he used to protect his citizens and extend the borders of the empire. But his greatest general, Actius Vispania, betrayed him and schemed to usurp the throne.

Knowing he had discovered this betrayal too late to stop it, Octavius took his knowledge and his weapons and spread them across Orden, sealing them behind powerful wards. All this was done in secret. Even his closest allies did not know the location of the wards, the number of which is now lost to the mists of time. Were there seven? Nine? Legends differ.

The rebellion against Ajax begins here. Surely the wards of the emperor contain the power to stop the Overlord. The heroes must travel across the world and brave many dangers to find and unlock the last emperor's wards. Whoever does will wield the lost empire's power.

As you can see, this opening overview introduces the setting—Vasloria (see Orden and the Timescape in Chapter 1: The Basics). It also gives just enough history and background information for the players to understand their heroes' goal—to recover the knowledge and weapons of the last emperor, sealed behind powerful wards, in order to stop the tyrant Ajax.

Gameplay Breakdown

After your opening overview, you should break down roughly how much time you think the players will spend engaged in various types of challenges and scenes.

Gameplay Categories

You can break down your game into the following categories:

Combat: How often are the heroes using violence to overcome challenges?

Exploration: How often are the heroes exploring new environments that are difficult to traverse? How often do you expect the heroes to make tests using skills from the exploration skill group?

Interpersonal: How often are the heroes using negotiation and conversing with NPCs to overcome challenges? How often do you expect the heroes to make tests using skills from the interpersonal skill group?

Intrigue: How often are the heroes solving mysteries, finding double agents, and skulking about the shadows to achieve their goals? How embroiled will they get in the politics of competing people and factions? How often do you expect the heroes to make tests using skills from the intrigue skill group?

These are the primary types of scenes found in many campaigns, but you could also add your own. For instance, if you want to run a campaign full of diabolical brain teasers and traps, you could add a "Puzzles" category to your campaign pitch document.

Category Frequency

Give each category a rating to show the players how often you expect them to experience scenes in the campaign that involve that type of gameplay.

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High: If a category has a high rating, you expect the heroes to experience multiple scenes involving this type of gameplay during each session.

Medium: If a category has a medium rating, you expect the heroes to experience at least one scene involving this type of gameplay every session or so.

Low: If a category has a low rating, you expect the heroes to experience a scene involving this type of gameplay less than once per session.

Category frequencies aren't hard and fast rules. They're simply meant to give the players an idea of what kinds of scenes you'd most like to run for them. There might be a session or two where you skip a category type you marked as high or medium because the heroes do something unexpected, or because you and the other players are all having fun playing out the story in a different way.

Breakdown: Wards of the Last Emperor

The Wards of the Last Emperor campaign pitch has the following gameplay breakdown:

Combat: Medium. The heroes might tussle with the forces of Ajax, guardians of the lost wards, and other factions who desire the last emperor's treasures.

Exploration: High. The heroes must traverse Vasloria's most remote locations to find the wards.

Interpersonal: Low. Heroes will likely interact with other NPCs as they track down leads on wards, but won't have frequent conversations or negotiations with them.

Intrigue: Medium. Heroes will regularly contend with all the other entities who want the prizes hidden behind the wards, engaging in counterintelligence and sabotage.

Player Buy-In

After the gameplay breakdown, tell the players what's expected of them so that the group gets the most enjoyment out of the game. Let them know details such as how often you expect the characters to be traveling from one place to another, the types of rewards or accolades they might be earning, and what kinds of adventures they're about to go on.

You want to be upfront about what kind of buy-in you need from the players. So it's a good idea to let them know, "Hey, in order to get the most out of this game, you'll need to enjoy diving into ancient ruins." Or tell them, "This game has some horror themes. If you're not interested in playing heroes who have fears they need to face, we should do something else."

Buy-In: Wards of the Last Emperor

Visiting lots of different locations and cultures has to sound cool. You won't start in a town and eventually become the heroes of the barony, but will instead become legendary heroes across multiple realms. You'll constantly be leaving the people you've met behind, but you'll eventually have a base you return to after completing each quest. You'll have allies and enemies all across the world!

The buy-in tells the players that their heroes are going to travel to far-flung locations, and that it might take them a while to find a home. If a player is looking for a different experience, such as a game that takes place entirely in the city of Capital, they now know that your game isn't for them!

Player Option Restrictions

Some campaigns include restrictions on the character options players can choose. For example, a Director might be interested in running a game where the heroes are all memonek and time raiders who have come to Vasloria searching for a secret incursion of voiceless talkers. In this case, the Director might restrict all ancestries (see Chapter 3) except those two. A campaign about citizens forming a rebellion to take on a tyrannical leader might restrict career options (see Chapter 4) so that no one can take Aristocrat or Politician.

Put any restrictions your campaign has into your pitch!

Presenting Multiple Pitches

If you have multiple ideas for campaigns that you want to run, put together a pitch for each of them and ask the players to decide which sounds the most interesting. It's a good idea to have the players rank each pitch and tell you which ones they love, which ones aren't their favorites but they'd still enjoy playing, and which ones they definitely have no interest in. That way, if most people love two of your pitches but one of those favorites makes one player say, "No way!", you know which one to pick.

Discussing the Pitch

Once you give a pitch to the players, ask them to give you their honest opinions. If someone doesn't like an aspect of your pitch, don't get defensive. Hear them out. You might be able to accommodate them. You might be willing to tweak your gameplay breakdown or buy-in to play a game with your friends. You might be willing to lift one of your restrictions for a single player to add some spice to your campaign. For instance, an aristocrat who joins a group of farmers in a rebellion is an interesting plot point!

It's also okay if, after hearing out potential players, you're not interested in running the kind of game they want to play. This happens, and it's why we recommend that you pitch your campaign. There's no harm in having different interests, but there is in forcing people to play a game together that won't be fun for everyone. If you can't see eye-to-eye with a player, it's okay to agree that they or you should find a different group.

Pitching a Published Campaign

Writing your own campaign setting and adventures takes time! Maybe you want to save yourself some of that work and instead run a campaign in an official MCDM setting such as Vasloria, using our published adventures that take place in that setting. We also allow third-party publishers to make their own *Draw Steel* settings and adventures, so you might want to use one of those instead.

If you want to run a campaign built on published material, give that material a read, think about anything you'd like to change, and then pitch it as you would any campaign you create yourself. When you're running published material, you're still the Director. You can change anything you don't like or that you think isn't a good fit for your group.

If your players participate in other games of *Draw Steel*, it's a good idea to ask them if they're familiar with published adventures when you pitch them. Sometimes it's okay for a player to experience an adventure twice, but most adventures involve some sort of mystery or plot twist. It's best to run something new for your players, so it's good to know what else they've played before you pitch.

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House Rules

You can always change the rules of the game to fit your campaign and taste! Maybe it better suits the pace of the campaign to have a respite last 8 hours, or perhaps a respite should take a week. You might prefer if critical hits are super rare and happen only on a natural 20. You could allow heroes to spend hero tokens to reduce the amount of Malice you have (see *Draw Steel: Monsters*). You might decide that all heroes have a free +1 bonus on any characteristic of their choice at 1st level.

The rules you create or modify to suit your group are called house rules. You can have as many house rules as you like, but you should discuss these rule changes with the players before implementing them. If you decide that critical hits only occur on a natural 20, the worst time for a player to find that out is right after they roll a natural 19 in combat.

Talk to the players about the house rules you want to use in your campaign, and discuss any ideas they bring to you for house rules during your first session.

Building the Campaign

After your players agree to your pitch, it's time to start building the setting where your game takes place.

Reading a Published Setting

If your campaign takes place in a published campaign setting, read the material that pertains to the campaign you've pitched. You shouldn't feel as though you need to read the entirety of the setting if it isn't pertinent to your campaign. For instance, if you're building a campaign that takes place entirely in the Barony of Dalrath, you probably don't need to read about the city of Blackbottom many miles beyond Dalrath's borders.

As you read, make notes on anything interesting in the setting that you might want to incorporate in your campaign, as well as anything you want to change.

Your top priority should be the campaign's starting location. In which district of Capital do the players start their first adventure? Which world of the timescape will be the first the heroes visit? What settlement in Vasloria holds their first adventure? Answer that question and get familiar with that place first. You'll have plenty of time to read further as you plan out your games.

Building Your Own Setting

If you plan on building your own campaign setting, the work of world-building can be overwhelming. But don't worry! You don't have to build the whole thing before the campaign starts. Your world is more likely to feel layered, interesting, and authentic if you start small and build out the locations, people, and organizations within it as you go.

Start Small

If you're planning on making your own campaign setting, start small. Instead of detailing every settlement on every continent on every planet in a universe, build a starting town or an initial district in a city, then work up the surrounding area in which the first adventure takes place. Use the following steps as a guide:

Locations: Make a list of any important locations in the campaign starting point, such as an inn or house where the heroes are staying, merchants they might want to visit, and the headquarters of organizations that might be important to them.

NPCS: Write the name, ancestry, age, gender, and a brief note on personality for each NPC the characters might interact with in the locations you've created.

Adventure Sites: Repeat the above two steps for any adventure sites the heroes might visit during their first adventure. Detail the sites, as well as any important NPCs and villains the heroes might interact with.

Organizations: You can also detail the laws and function of organizations the heroes might interact with during their first adventure. What governments, churches, and guilds could they come across? How might these organizations interact with the characters? You don't need to write up every bylaw in a pirate code, but it would be good to know how the pirates react to adventurers asking to sail the seas on their ship.

Map: Make a map of the starting area. It doesn't need to be good! Just a few clearly labeled dots and squiggles showing the setup of city neighborhoods or the locations of forests, deserts, mountains, bodies of water, and other landforms should be plenty.

Each time you need a new location or adventure site for an upcoming adventure, detail it in a similar way and add it to your map!

Keep Things Vague

There might be other details of your campaign you'll want to establish before your first adventure. For example, you might want to know the nearest settlement to the heroes' starting town or the name of the monarch who rules over the country where that town is found. Go ahead and sketch out the names of any places you know will be an important part of your campaign, along with a single sentence or so of detail. You'll be able to add more detail to these items as needed while preparing the campaign.

The main reason you shouldn't overprepare for the future is that you can't know how the players' choices and the characters' actions might change the world. Those actions should matter and have consequences. That's what makes the game fun and authentic. When what happens during a session surprises you, it should be a moment of delight—not a moment of grumbling because you just lost a lot of preparation work.

Overpreparing means you'll end up doing work that you'll later throw out. So do the minimum you need to do to be comfortable running the game and no more.

Campaign Styles

You can run many different types of campaigns in *Draw Steel*, with some of the most common types discussed below. Any of the following concepts can be modified as you see fit to work for your campaign.

Long Arc

The long arc is a campaign model in which one villain or organization is behind almost every threat the heroes face. If every adventure sees the heroes battle the forces of Ajax or the vampire Count Rhodar von Glaur before eventually facing this main villain in their final adventure, then you've got yourself a long-arc campaign. Long arcs allow the heroes to learn of and even meet the villain several times before the final showdown, allowing for the creation of personal drama with the main antagonist and their underlings.

If you're planning on running a long-arc campaign, you might want to make sure the villain's threat is quieter at certain times. Doing so gives the heroes a chance to take a respite now and then and work on their downtime projects.

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Adventure of the Week

An adventure-of-the-week campaign lets the heroes face an entirely new threat each time a new adventure kicks off. During their first adventure, they might face cultists bringing an undead horde to life. In the next, they battle a band of pirates hell-bent on taking control of a peaceful island. Then it's a race to catch a group of time raiders before they disappear across the timescape with their kidnapped victims.

Adventure-of-the-week campaigns can give the heroes plenty of downtime between adventures, since the quests aren't connected. However, they often lack the personal drama that comes from a campaign with recurring threats and villains.

Looming Threat

A looming-threat campaign is a combination of the long-arc and adventure-of-the-week-types of campaigns. Although many adventures in the campaign contain individual threats, a few have events orchestrated by a recurring villain who the heroes face at the end of the campaign. The villain's forces might make brief appearances to harass the heroes in adventures that otherwise have nothing to do with them.

A looming-threat campaign allows the heroes to create personal drama with the main campaign's villain, while experiencing the variety of an adventure-of-the-week campaign.

Multiple Fronts

In a multiple-fronts campaign, several villains threaten people or locations the characters are bound to protect, with the heroes forced to prioritize the threats they face. While the heroes deal with one of their foes, the other adversaries advance their plans, growing in power and resources.

Multiple-front campaigns make the world feel authentic and alive, but they require more preparation, since you're juggling multiple villains and storylines at the same time.

Echelon Outline

As part of your worldbuilding, you can create an outline of the events that might occur in each echelon of your campaign. The farther these events get from the start of the campaign, the vaguer you can leave the details. The actions of the heroes should matter and influence the course of events, so don't plan too much. Otherwise, you might end up throwing out earlier preparation to make player and character decisions matter.

Your outline should include the plans of the villains in your campaign. Review Echelons of Play in Chapter 1: The Basics to get an idea of the threat level and stories the heroes should be experiencing at each stage of the campaign. An echelon outline might look like this:

1st Echelon: The heroes protect the village of Gravesford in the Barony of Bedegar from the forces of Lord Saxton, an usurper and tyrant loyal to Ajax. Eventually, they must bring the fight to Lord Saxton's keep in Bedegar City.

2nd Echelon: After toppling Saxton's keep, the heroes find a letter from Ajax detailing plans to amass powerful treasures from throughout Vasloria. The heroes can race to these locations to claim the treasures before Ajax's forces do.

3rd Echelon: With some or all of the treasures secure, it's only a matter of time before Ajax's army seeks out the heroes. The characters can build a coalition of allies to face Ajax, but those allies first require help getting out from under the rule of the Iron Saint.

4th Echelon: Ajax brings the fight to the heroes. If the Iron Saint loses, he retreats to his sanctum, where the heroes can follow if they dare.

Complications and Campaigns

If the heroes in your game took complications during character creation (see Complications), you should think about how the story of their complications might factor into the campaign. Complications aren't just a chance to add a benefit and a drawback to a hero. They're narrative hooks you can use to further draw the players into the campaign story.

Discuss the details of a hero's complication with that hero's player. Complications are intentionally vague, and any of their narrative details can be modified to make the hero's personal story fit into the campaign. With the details worked out, ask the player how the hero feels about the complication? Does the hero think the benefit is worth having the drawback? Are they actively trying to find a way to rid themself of the drawback but keep the benefit? Or maybe they want to be rid of the entire complication, benefit be damned!

Echelon Complication Outline

Once you understand a hero's desires for their complication, you can create an echelon outline for the complication to give the hero's backstory some narrative teeth throughout the campaign. Consider the following example.

Matt, playing Linn the talent, has the Elemental Inside complication. After discussing the details with the Director, Matt decides that years ago, Linn threw herself in front of a spell cast by Sorin the Brown, an evil earth elementalist. Sorin wanted to abduct Linn's talent mentor, a dwarf who was a perfect subject for her next deadly experiment. In taking decisive action, Linn saved her mentor but absorbed an angry force of earth named Bruulv. Sorin escaped and desires the return of her pet elemental. Meanwhile Linn is tougher thanks to the elemental within, but whenever she is dying, Bruulv takes control of her body and goes on a violent rampage.

Matt tells the Director that Linn enjoys the extra protection afforded to her by Bruulv, since it makes her a tougher hero, and she would like to find a way to keep her benefit while losing the drawback. The Director comes up with an echelon outline for Linn that will enrich the talent's story and have ties to the main campaign (which happens to be the example campaign in the echelon outline above).

1st Echelon: After the heroes start riling up Lord Saxton's forces, Sorin offers her services to the tyrant for a chance to face Linn. During the heroes' assault on the keep, Sorin attacks.

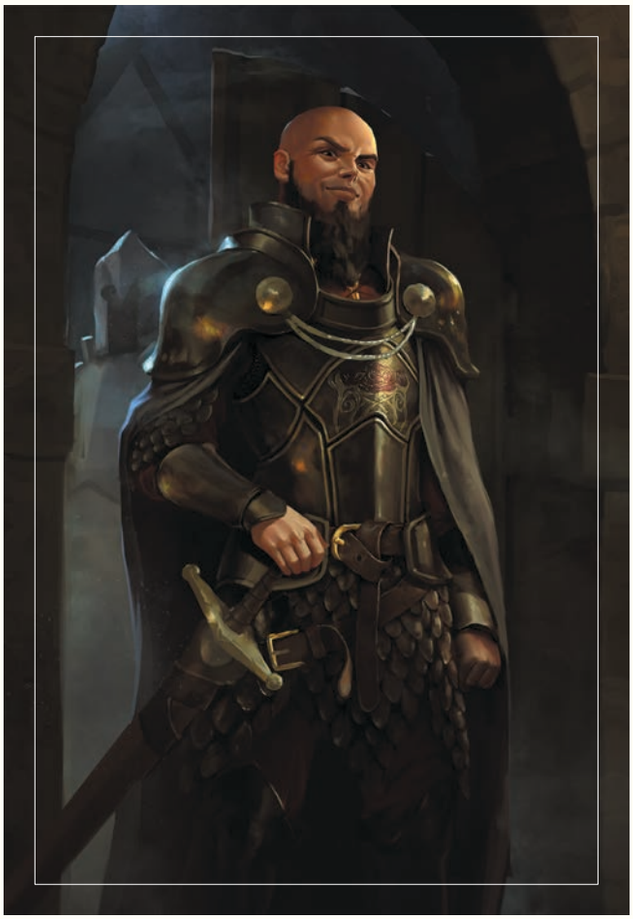
2nd Echelon: Assuming Sorin's defeat, Bruulv becomes even angrier, and can now try to wrestle control away from Linn whenever she is winded in addition to when she is dying. Linn finds a Crown of Elements, a special magic treasure that allows her to force Bruulv back to a "takes control only while dying" state as long as she wears it. The crown has other elemental powers too—and is one of the items desired by Ajax.

3rd Echelon: As Linn and the other heroes build a coalition, an elderly high elf named Leaves of the Autumn Wind offers to enhance the crown, allowing the talent to speak directly to Bruulv. The catch is that Leaves needs a magic fire opal from the lair of a fire giant to enhance the crown.

4th Echelon: With the crown enhanced, Linn can speak directly to Bruulv. By learning the elemental's history and desires through negotiation, she can see that Bruulv mostly wants to return to the City of Brass so they might once again see the raw elemental powers come together. If Linn can visit this city that is literally worlds away, she earns Bruulv's trust and the elemental stops taking over her form.

At each echelon, you should revisit your complication echelon outlines, since the actions of the players could change your plans. In the example

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outline above, if Sorin gets away after the battle with Saxton during the 1st echelon, the elementalist is likely to return and try to free Bruulv once again!

Creating Adventures

A lot of Directors prefer to make their own adventures rather than use published ones. Creating your own adventures lets you tailor the story to perfectly fit the motivations of the heroes in your game, thus maximizing the fun for the players.

Every good adventure includes villains, a task to accomplish, NPCs, and interesting locations and adventure sites.

Player Ambition Writes Adventures

Players have ambition driven by their characters' complications, personal stories, and desires for titles, supernatural treasures, and other rewards. Indulge these desires! If a hero wants to go on a quest to gain a Blade of Quintessence, let them know where they can find one (after they put in the proper research or questing time, of course). You can then plan an adventure, even just a short one, around the weapon's retrieval!

Villain

Every good adventure has a villain behind the trouble the heroes are trying to solve. This is a game about fighting monsters, after all, so give the heroes something to fight!

Villain Sins

You probably know the old idiom, "Actions speak louder than words." This applies to heroes and villains alike. The thing that primarily makes a villain a force of evil the heroes—and players—will stop at nothing to defeat? The villain's actions.

The best way to let the players know that your villain must be defeated is to have the villain do some unquestionably evil stuff! Before the heroes even meet the villain, they should find the corpses left behind, witness the burning villages, or be harrowed by the accounts of those lucky enough to survive the villain's wrath. The outcomes of the villain's actions let the players fully understand the depth of the evil they face. Villains don't hesitate to take or ruin the lives of others to get what they want, and most have no qualms against collateral damage.

The two most important things that make your adventure's villain worth the heroes' time is what they've done—and what they're planning to do. What they've done shows that they're not just evil but capable. What they plan to do is worse than what they've done, and by golly, someone needs to stop it.

Give your villain a history of evil that the heroes can uncover. It might be a short history. Maybe the villain just performed the first in a series of murders a few hours before the heroes come to town. Or it could cover years spent as a warlord, tyrant, or entity of destruction leaving behind entire worlds reduced to rubble. Let the sins of the villain be what hooks the heroes into the adventure—and remember that there's no motivation stronger than the players deciding they must stop the villain before being asked to. A self-inspired goal works better than having an NPC beg or pay the heroes to get the job done. Still, what starts out as a job often becomes a personal mission, so don't be afraid to start there if doing so feels like the best idea.

Once a villain discovers that the heroes are meddling in their plans, they don't sit idly by and wait for the fight to come to them. No! Great villains are proactive, sending lackeys to battle the heroes, frame them for crimes, capture their loved ones, or burn their hometowns.

Villain Goals

Many villains don't see themselves as evil. In fact, most heroes and villains have similar motivations—ambition, revenge, and even protecting others and saving the world. The difference is that villains believe their personal goals are more important than anything else, and they are willing to sacrifice the well-being and lives of others to get what they want.

Any of the following options make a great quick villain goal, or can serve as inspiration for goals of your own:

- The villain has a deadly personal vendetta against another person or group of people who wronged them.
- The villain believes that rulership is theirs by birthright, or because they see themself as the most qualified.
- The villain wants to live forever to protect their people, possessions, land, or legacy.
- The villain knows of a great threat, and they require ultimate power to defeat it.

Instead of achieving their goals through diplomacy and heroics, villains take what they require to achieve their goals, and destroy anyone and anything in their way.

Of course, some villains want to cause violence and mayhem just for the sake of it! These villains can be fun to throw into an adventure from time to time, but many are the type of folks who are typically being manipulated by villains with even greater motivation. As such, they shouldn't be the focus of every adventure in every campaign.

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Stealing is Encouraged

When you're coming up with ideas for campaigns, adventures, and scenes, you should feel free to steal plots, action set pieces, characters, and anything else you want from your favorite movies, television shows, novels, comic books, and podcasts. You can then modify a few cosmetic details to make things your own. Borrowing a character who's a human man in your favorite novel to make an NPC? Make the NPC a dwarf woman with a new name and no one is the wiser. Got an idea for an encounter based on a battle scene from your favorite science fiction flick? Make those invading aliens gnolls instead! Let your favorite stories inspire you, especially when you're looking for new ideas.

Adventure Goal

Every adventure should give the heroes a clear goal to accomplish. While most every goal can be boiled down to "stop the villain from doing a bad thing," it helps if the heroes have a specific idea of how to stop or minimize the consequences of the villain's plans. Ideally, they'll be able to accomplish this goal in more than one way.

The heroes' ultimate adventure goal should be one that stops or prevents the total achievement of the villain's goal. If the heroes live under the oppressive rule of a tyrant who usurped a lordship and imprisons any who question his authority, they could fight to help the rightful heir regain the lordship. They might engage in political intrigue to get close to the tyrant before deposing him. They could lead others in a wide rebellion that creates a new form of government. "Depose the tyrant and install better leadership" is the heroes' ultimate adventure goal, though they have many ways to accomplish that goal.

An adventure's goal doesn't always result in a total failure for the villain. Sometimes the heroes need to simply prevent as much destruction as they can while surviving to fight another day. For example, if Ajax the Invincible attacks the port city of Blackbottom to force its leaders to bend the knee, a group of 1st-level heroes lacks the resources and power to stand directly against the siege and stop it. As such, the adventure's goal might be to escape the city leading as many innocent folk as possible to safety—and staying alive to face the villain later. The heroes are still heroes for saving people, even if they can't stop the villain's plans.

Discovering the Goal

An adventure's goal isn't always clear to the players at the start, but the heroes should always have a good idea of how to keep pursuing the story. Gameplay and fun can grind to a halt if the players don't have any idea what their characters should do to further their goals.

Every adventure should have an inciting incident that either sees the heroes discovering the adventure's goal, or that puts them on the path to discovering it. If the characters start an adventure by finding the freshly murdered body of a noble in the streets of Capital, they're likely to look for clues that could lead them to catching a murderer—a solid, straightforward adventure goal. Or it could be that the murder leads them to uncovering a grand conspiracy in which one of Capital's Great Houses is planning a coordinated and violent takeover of the city. The heroes must stop those plots—an adventure goal that might take them several scenes to fully uncover. But each of those scenes should lead directly to the next without leaving the players wondering, "What should we do?"

Complications and Adventures

If the heroes in your campaign have taken complications (see Complications and Campaigns above), it's a good idea to have at least one complication make trouble for a hero during an adventure, or play some other part in the adventure's story. Rotate the hero whose complication is highlighted each time, so that every player gets a chance to be at the center of the story.

Creating NPCs

The heroes and the fell monsters they slay shouldn't be the only folks in an adventure. A few friendly (or at least nonhostile) NPCs can supply the characters with information, equipment, and—most importantly—a good reason for putting their lives on the line. If all the people the characters come across are villainous, apathetic, or selfish, the players won't feel very motivated to get their heroics on.

The NPCs the heroes meet during their adventures should be complex people. They have personal motivations for helping the heroes, personality and behavioral quirks, and character flaws. An adventure typically features at least three or four NPCs you'll want to flesh out, depending on how many scenes you plan to play out and how many NPCs each scene requires.

When you create an NPC, quickly jot down the following information about them.

Personal Details

What's this NPC's name? What do they do for a living?

Features

What's notable about the NPC's appearance? Do they have distinguishing features such as a streak of gray or color in their hair, a bushy beard, a tattoo of a snake skull, or a scar over one eye? Do they have a specific scent (good or bad)?

Voice

When the NPC speaks, how does their voice sound? You don't have to put on a character voice every time you speak as the NPC, but telling the players, "This elf talks like a pirate," or "This dwarf has a high-pitched voice that keeps cracking," helps them remember and differentiate that NPC from others.

Behavior

What noticeable behavior does the NPC have? Maybe they maintain constant, unbreaking eye contact, or maybe they rarely look up from their feet. They could pick their nose, repeat a catch phrase, talk to themself, bite their nails, whisper whenever they say something profound (or profane!), or constantly clear their throat. Giving an NPC just one distinct behavior helps cement them in the players' minds and makes them more authentic.

Flaw

What character flaw does this NPC have? They might be selfish when it comes to wealth, ignore their personal hygiene, lie to cover up their insecurities, or act cowardly in the face of threats. A single flaw does the trick. Too many flaws, and your NPC will go from authentic to authentically unlikable fast.

Helping the Heroes

Why would this NPC want to help the heroes during this adventure? They don't have to be fully on board with helping the characters at first.

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It might take some convincing, in the form of a test, a negotiation, or a task the heroes need to accomplish to win the NPC's help. But there should be at least a kernel of motivation in the NPC already—or they have no reason to help. It could be that they don't want the villain to succeed, they see a profitable opportunity in working with the heroes, or they feel they owe the heroes a favor thanks to a previous adventure.

Denying Aid

What would prevent this NPC from helping the heroes? It's possible that the answer is "nothing," but most people have something or someone they're not willing to risk even if the fate of the world hangs in the balance. What could the villain threaten that makes the NPC think twice about helping out the heroes? It might be a loved one, a meaningful location, or a valuable treasure.

Interesting Locations

A good adventure has interesting locations for the heroes to visit. Such locations don't need to be fantastic to be interesting (though it doesn't hurt to throw in one or two fantastic locations in any adventure). A small farming village can be an interesting location if it's home to engaging events and intrigue. Even small-time drama such as who has been poisoning farmer Yelena's crops or who Jon the shepherd seeks to marry can make a location engaging.

Make a list of the different locations the heroes might visit during the adventure, including both general locations and specific adventure sites.

General Locations

A general location is a settlement or a defined wilderness region that the heroes visit during the adventure.

If the adventure takes place in a giant, sprawling metropolis like Capital, then different city districts and large landmarks such as catacombs and parks count as general locations. If the adventure takes place in and around a regional area larger than a city but no bigger than a planet, then full settlements and biomes such as deserts and forests count as general locations. If the adventure takes place across the timescape (or in a similar milieu of many worlds), then a general location could be an entire world and any specific settlements or biomes the heroes visit in that world.

You don't have to define everything about these general locations, because you'll develop more in-depth information about the specific sites the heroes might visit in any location later. You can use the following questions about each general location as a starting point for what you'll want to cover (and you might already have done some of this when creating a starting area during your campaign preparation):

Mood: What is the mood of this location? Is it safe and peaceful? Dire and gloomy? Tense and dangerous? Do the hairs on the back of your neck stand up when you're here, or is it the kind of place where you can relax?

Senses: What are the first things you notice about this location with your senses? What do you see, hear, or smell? What does the air taste like? How does it feel on your skin? Which of the things you observe stand out or are unique?

Creatures: What nonhostile creatures can be encountered here? This might include passersby, street merchants, animals, or unknown somethings moving in the shadows.

Having these details will help you set the scene as the heroes travel through these general locations to get from one specific site to another.

Specific Sites

A specific site is a location where an adventure scene takes place. It could be a building, a complex of buildings, a city street or square, a forest clearing, an oasis, a bridge, or the like. Combat encounters and noncombat scenes in an adventure happen in specific sites.

When you create a specific site, ask the following questions in addition to the questions you would ask about any general location:

- Why would the heroes come here during the adventure?
- What types of scenes might play out at this site?
- Which NPCs who the heroes might interact with are found here?
- What information, items, or confrontations might the heroes discover here that will help them advance the story of the adventure?

Plan Scenes

Once you have your villain, your adventure goal, your NPCs, and your general locations and specific sites, it's time to start stitching those elements together to create scenes. Your adventure will have combat encounters, montage tests, negotiations, respites, and scenes of exploration and social interaction. Creating Scenes below has more information about detailing the scenes in your adventures, but planning out those scenes is the first step.

When you're thinking about scenes, write down which sites and NPCs are tied to those scenes, then try to arrange the scenes in an order that makes sense for the story. It might be that after your inciting incident, certain scenes can be tackled in any order. For example, if the adventure goal is to recover three pieces of an ancient staff before the villain does, the heroes might be able to explore the three sites where the pieces are hidden in any order they choose. Their choice might even have consequences. It might be that the first site they choose has none of the villain's lackeys investigating it yet, the second site features a showdown with those lackeys, and the third site has already been cleaned out by the villain by the time the characters get there! Other scenes might have to happen more linearly. An investigation typically includes a trail of clues that takes the heroes from one scene to the next, but the players can surprise you.

Don't get married to the order in which you plan your scenes. If the heroes have terrible luck with dice in a couple of combat encounters, they might stop to take a respite and regain their Stamina and Recoveries before you anticipated they would. If the heroes are unraveling a mystery, they might make unexpected deductions or good guesses that allow them to skip a scene altogether! This is part of the fun of the game. The dice and the players will surprise you.

Embrace this unpredictability by keeping an open mind as you plan out your scenes and allowing yourself to be flexible. Odds are that a combat encounter the characters skipped over during one session can be tweaked and moved to another session, so don't sweat it. The game is most rewarding for you and the other players if you let the heroes' choices and actions mean something and affect the game.

Once you have all your scenes planned, it's time to put together the adventure outline.

Adventure Outline

Your adventure outline is a document you can use to run your game sessions. It contains information about the villain, the adventure goal, NPCs, locations and sites, and scenes. You can format this outline however you like, whether as fully written sentences, bullet points, a plotting web, or anything else that makes sense to you.

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A standard adventure outline contains a bit of overview information regarding the adventure's villain, goal, and NPCs. It then contains a list of locations and sites, with specific sites breaking out the details of each scene that occurs there. The outline then wraps up with a conclusion section discussing the impact the heroes' actions have on the overall campaign and the game world.

Creating Scenes

When you're preparing scenes for an adventure, keep in mind that **you cannot and should not try to control how the heroes interact with the challenges set forth in a scene**. As a Director, much of the fun of the game comes from seeing the players creatively solve the challenges you set forth with their own ingenuity and their heroes' abilities and features. You want to plan obstacles for the characters even while knowing that they'll think of solutions you haven't. So let them try those solutions and see where the story goes!

It's best to set up scenes along the lines of: "Here's the situation when the heroes arrive." The game world is an authentic setting. Whether or not the heroes show up, bandits still pillage and plunder, politicians still plot and backstab, and vast sandstorms still sweep across the desert. Each scene should thus start with the question: "What's happening when the heroes arrive?"

After setting up your scene, make a list of the narrative elements the heroes can discover or achieve in that scene that can advance the story of the adventure. When running the game, you'll allow the players to approach how they discover or achieve those elements in their own way. However, you might have ideas as to how they could accomplish those goals, such as which tests they might make to find clues leading to a murderer, or a possible negotiation to secure safe passage across the sea. Note these possible solutions and any rules you need to prepare to make use of them as you set up your scenes.

Not everything the heroes do is worthy of a scene, and you don't need to play out adventures in real time. If the characters want to walk from a farm to a castle, don't turn the walk into a scene unless doing so is fun for you and the players, or if something significant happens along the way (for instance, a bandit attack or the discovery of a dead body). You don't need to narrate every shopping trip or boat journey if they're just going to be a bore. It's a game! Run the scenes that are fun for you and that move the campaign story along, and your games will be better for it.

Director Sheets

Director sheets are a resource you can use to prepare and track the progress of characters during combat encounters, negotiations, and montage tests. These sheets allow you to track the objectives and numbers relevant to the challenge, such as the Stamina of enemies, NPC interest and patience, and the number of successes and failures in a montage test. Each sheet has an optional second page you can use to track narrative details, potential rewards, and supporting NPCs in the scene. You can download these sheets at *https://mcdm.gg/DS-Resources*.

Creating and Running Combat

There's a lot to be said about building and preparing great combat encounters for . So much so that we had to put that advice in another book—the one with all the monsters and other stuff you need to build combat encounters. Go check it out in *Draw Steel: Monsters*.

One tip that we *will* note here (and it's also in the other book because it bears repeating) is that combat encounters should hold narrative weight. isn't a game of attrition, where a few small, trivial combat encounters are meant to weaken the heroes, winnowing down their resources to make the final, important, epic clash with the villain more of a struggle. A quick combat encounter with two bumbling guards at a gate is likely over in a matter of less than a round and shouldn't award the heroes a Victory. These can be fun scenes to roleplay, but they aren't going to make full use of the characters' features and should occur infrequently. Most of the time when combat takes place, the stakes for the heroes and the story should be high!

Creating and Running Exploration

Exploration scenes are narrative-driven moments where the heroes investigate their surroundings to advance the story or uncover rewards. Any such setup, from searching a murder scene for clues, to scouring ancient ruins for a portal to Axiom, the Plane of Uttermost Law, is an exploration scene.

When running exploration, your job is to set the scene, listen to the players describe their heroes' actions, and then respond with how those actions affect the environment.

Necessary and Unnecessary Information

When preparing an exploration scene, you'll want to come up with answers to the following questions:

- What information or objects do the heroes need to recover in this scene that will help them advance the story?
- What bonus pieces of information and other rewards can they earn during this scene if they explore fully and successfully?

Information or objects the heroes need to obtain from an exploration scene to advance the story should have some way of being found without a test. Simply by entering a monarch's private chambers, the heroes learn that the king is dead and has been slain by a knife, because his body and the murder weapon are plainly visible. They should also automatically notice that the knife bears the crest of a noble house, providing an obvious path to continue the adventure. Other details in the room might help speed along their investigation of who killed the king, but they can find the bare minimum of what they need to continue for free.

It's okay for a test to be the *best* way to get necessary information or objects. But if the heroes fail or don't make the test, make sure there's another way—likely a more difficult way—for the story to continue. When searching a necromancer's tower for a book that will help stop a ritual, characters might miss all the clues pointing to the book. But they can later run into the necromancer's apprentices, who know where the book is—and who aren't willing to give up that information without a difficult fight.

Other information and rewards the heroes can earn in an exploration scene can be hidden behind tests that can be failed or missed. If heroes don't think to check under the dead king's desk, they don't find the chalice that rolled under there. If they do find the chalice but fail a Reason test to examine it, they don't learn that the chalice carries the residue of a rare poison, potentially leading them to a nearby alchemist who sells it. They can still solve the mystery without this information, but it'll take them a little longer. However, the longer it takes them, the more time the assassin has to prepare for their arrival, so missing those details has consequences!

Once you have your list of information and objects the heroes can find, make a list of where those things can be found, and how. Some reveals

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might require a test. Some might simply require a player to say that their hero performs a certain action, such as searching a bookshelf or desk. But as you note what's required to find information or objects, don't try to cover every option. Even if you do so, the players with their multiple brains will think of other options that you never would have, and you'll have to adjudicate their choices on the spot. Knowing where and how information and objects are hidden or guarded from the heroes is more important than knowing how they're going to obtain those things. If you can think of at least one option and are open to other possibilities, the heroes have a fair shot.

Setting the Scene

When an exploration scene starts, tell the heroes what they notice around them. Opening with what sighted heroes can see is a good idea, but all characters have other senses. Mention what they can smell, hear, and feel in the environment if it's applicable to what they're investigating. These little details can help the players better imagine the scene, and can lead them to important narrative beats within it. Before you run the scene, write these details down so you can give them to the players right at the start, rather than trying to think them up off the cuff.

You don't need to list every single detail of an environment. That can lead to players spending a lot of time having their characters interact with details you included just for flavor, and can have you saying things like, "Yes, I know I described the tapestries for 5 minutes, but there's really not much more to them. Now, the pile of bones at the center of the floor, on the other hand ..." Many players will also zone out if you provide too much environmental detail, even if you're giving an Oscar-worthy narration. Instead, stick to the pieces of the environment that are worthy of the characters' notice.

As an example, if the heroes are exploring an abandoned bandit hideout in a cave for information about where the criminals relocated, you might describe a refuse pile in a corner of the cave, a mud-covered floor, and the smoking remains of a doused fire. Why point these things out? Because the refuse pile holds a torn-up map to the bandits' new hideout that the heroes can assemble, the muddy floor means the bandits left tracks that can be followed, and the smoking fire means that at least a few of the bandits left not long ago and might still be en route to the hideout. You've given the characters and players three important elements to interact with, each of which gives them information they can use to advance the story or get an idea of events to come. You don't need to describe the stalactites hanging from the ceiling, or the sound of the wind blowing through the entrance to the cave, or the wood pile next to the campfire, or the slugs crawling on that wood. Though one or two such details can be atmospheric, too many will distract folks and pull them out of the game. Instead, fill in those secondary details as the players ask questions while their characters explore.

Heroes Investigate

After you've set up your exploration scene, let each player ask questions about the environment and describe how their hero is interacting with it. If a player asks a question their hero wouldn't know the answer to, you can encourage them to explore more. For instance, if a player whose character is standing at the cave mouth asks, "What can I see in the refuse pile?", you might answer, "From where you're standing, it looks like mostly scraps of cloth and old bones, but there might be more if you dig through it." This encourages players to be more active in the process of searching.

Allow the heroes' investigation to drive the action. In an exploration scene, you take on the role of the environment, reacting to the characters' and players' choices. Don't tell the players what their heroes do. Instead, describe the consequences of their actions. If characters take the time to carefully search the bandit hideout for traps, they should have a chance of finding any traps you've set up there. But if a hero runs into the cave and triggers a hidden trap because they didn't move into hostile territory carefully, that's on them! It's an important lesson the player can learn for next time.

The Players Will Surprise You

Even the best-prepared adventures rarely survive first contact with the heroes. Your session notes expect the players to have their characters enter the bandit hideout from a secret back entrance, but one player has the bright idea of entering through a crack in the cave roof. It's perfectly fine to go off script and adapt to the players' plans if doing so is fun for everyone.

This isn't to say that it's okay for the heroes to ignore the bandit hideout entirely and go looking for cultists somewhere else. But as long as the players are participating in the spirit of the adventure, rolling with the unexpected is some of the most fun you'll have running the game.

When to Call for a Test

The heroes can usually obtain basic information just by interacting with their environment. If a player asks, "Does it look like the muddy floor of the cave would cling to someone's boots?", getting confirmation doesn't require a test. However, following the tracks that lead out of the cave toward the bandits' new hideout does require a test, because that's a harder task whose failure gives the bandits extra time to prepare an ambush for when the heroes arrive! If a character wants to meticulously dig through the refuse pile and examine each piece of trash, no test is required to find the torn-up pieces of the map unless they're under serious time pressure to do so. However, a character piecing the map back together needs to succeed on a Reason test to do so, because failing that task means the heroes obtain only incomplete information as they continue their search.

Chapter 9: Tests explains tests in detail and provides examples of different difficulties of tests. A lot of other fantasy games reflexively ask for a roll of the dice anytime a hero attempts a task. However, is built around the idea that the Director calls for tests only when failure would make the story more interesting for the heroes and not grind the game to a halt. You might end up asking for fewer tests than you're used to—and that's the way the game is meant to be played!

Additionally, if a player has a particularly clever and plausible idea for attempting to overcome a challenge, you can have them automatically succeed on a task even if failure would make the story more interesting. It's important to reward clever thinking with success once in a while, so that the players are encouraged to think outside the box and create memorable moments!

By contrast, sometimes a player will propose what they think is a plausible or clever idea, but you'll think there's no way it could ever succeed. It's fine for you to tell the player, "That's not going to work." You're under no obligation to allow a player to attempt a test that should automatically fail.

Test Difficulty

Tests in have three levels of outcome, and all players know those outcomes and the dice rolls that generate them. Making a test always means something because every test comes with risks and stakes! Before you call for a test, you need to set a difficulty for the test of easy, moderate, or hard.

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A hero always succeeds on an **easy test**. It's just a question of whether they might incur a consequence or earn a reward alongside success. For this reason, you should use easy tests sparingly in your adventures.

A hero who has a modifier of +1 or more on a test will likely succeed on a **moderate test**. Success with a consequence is common for heroes if their bonus to the test is lower than +4, so they're succeeding at a cost. Odds are that most of the tests you'll call for in your games will be moderate tests. They give most heroes a decent chance of success without it being a sure thing, and the story gets interesting whenever consequences are involved.

Hard tests do exactly what it says on the tin. Success on a hard test requires a roll of 17 or higher, which means a hero has better than a 50 percent chance of success only if they have a +6 or higher bonus on the test. At 1st level, that means a character using their highest characteristic, using a skill, and having an edge on the test. Failure on a hard test often means consequences beyond failing, making hard tests really risky! You likely find that hard tests aren't as common as moderate tests in your game, but they're used more than easy tests.

Setting Difficulty During Play

When you call for a test, you can tell the player making the test the difficulty. Saying "Make a hard Reason test" can create a dramatic moment at the table as everyone holds their collective breath to see whether the outcome is success, failure, or failure with an additional consequence.

On the other hand, not sharing the difficulty of every test with the players lets you do a little fudging of those difficulties if you want to. You might call for a test and then realize that a test really wasn't necessary even as the player makes the roll. It's easy to simply say, "Hey, sorry. I shouldn't have asked for a test. You just do the thing." But if you want to play it cool, remember that every level of an easy test is a success. It's simply a matter of whether a consequence or reward comes with it. If a hero gets an 11 or lower on a test and you think they should still succeed, then the test was easy difficulty.

Test Outcomes

After a hero makes a test, it's up to you to narrate and decide the outcome, keeping some basic guidelines in mind.

If a test is a **failure with a consequence**, the hero doesn't just fail—they make things worse. This might mean drawing the attention of nearby foes, setting off a hazard or trap, taking damage or causing an ally to take damage, taking a bane on a future test, losing a mundane item, making a friendly NPC angry, or even earning you a little future Malice. The consequence is up to you!

If a test is a **failure**, the hero doesn't do what they set out to do. But even though they don't incur a formal consequence, negative effects can still accompany a failed test depending on circumstances. If a hero attempts to move silently past a group of guards, a failure on the test might draw the guards' attention, but the character should have a chance to react before the alarm is raised. But if the character had incurred a failure with a consequence, they would be spotted immediately as the shouting guards rush to the attack.

If a test is a **success with a consequence**, the hero succeeds but suffers a significant negative effect. They might sneak past the guards successfully but lose their belt pouch in the process, forcing them to decide whether to return for it or move on.

If a test is a **success**, the hero does what they set out to do! You can even let a player narrate the outcome of a successful test by asking them, "How did you pull this off?"

If the test is a **success with a reward**, the hero does what they set out to do—and then some. A reward might grant another character who needs to make the same test an automatic success, grant a boon on a future test for the hero, reveal a hidden treasure the hero wasn't looking for, inspire a nearby NPC to come forth and offer aid, or earn the group a hero token. A reward on a test is yours to choose.

Sample consequences and rewards for tests are detailed in Chapter 9: Tests.

Creating and Running Hazards

Hazards include traps, natural dangers such as quicksand and avalanches, and supernatural dangers such as magic-irradiated ruins or floating clouds of unstable psionic energy. Hazards can appear in combat and exploration scenes as dangers the heroes need to contend with as they solve other problems. An elaborate hazard can be a scene all on its own as well, whether tackled in a montage test or run round by round as if it were a combat scenario.

> **Terrain as Hazards**
>
> Some of the best hazards are the terrain options found in *Draw Steel: Monsters*. These dynamic options work great in combat encounters, but you can also use many of them as hazards the heroes must cross (such as acid pools and lava) or contend with (such as the arcane object known as the black obelisk) as they travel from one destination to another. You can use these hazards as is, or rework them to match your story. For example, you might convert an acid pool to a pool of toxic sludge by having it deal poison damage instead of acid damage.

A good hazard presents a real threat to the heroes and stands in the way of something they want. Crossing a pool of lava isn't much of an issue if the heroes can simply walk around it. But if the pool is too big to walk around, or if the treasure the party seeks is at the bottom of it, it becomes something they can't easily ignore.

The hazards you'll create and use in your adventures come in one of three types:

Activated Perpetual: An activated perpetual hazard might be triggered by a tripwire, a loud noise, a pressure plate, or some other mechanism that responds to the heroes' actions. The hazard then remains active until it's dealt with, such as a pendulum scythe trap that's activated by a tripwire and then swings indefinitely across a bridge.

Activated One-Time: An activated one-time hazard is triggered and then creates one instance of danger. Sometimes that danger ends almost as soon as it begins, such as a trap that fires a single poison dart. Other times, that one instance of danger can create other lasting problems the heroes must deal with, such as a cave-in that deals damage, then leaves the party trapped in an abandoned mine.

Obstruction: Obstructions are hazards the heroes must find their way over or around, such as pools of acid, chasms, and rivers of lava. Since obstruction hazards are typically static, a hero takes damage or suffers other effects from an obstruction only as the result of a failed test made to traverse the hazard.

Activated Hazard Triggers

All activated hazards have some kind of trigger, and the heroes should be allowed to make tests—typically Reason or Intuition tests— to

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notice and then disable that trigger. The deadlier the hazard, the harder the test.

If a hero doesn't think to search for a trigger before stumbling into a hazard, you can still call for a test to let them notice the trigger when the hazard is about to activate, provided it makes sense to do so. If a hero is about to cross over a tripwire that triggers a trap, you might call for an Intuition test to notice the wire at the point when it can be clearly seen. On a failed test, the character walks into the tripwire and activates the trap.

Once a trigger is noticed, the heroes might get a chance to disarm it if that's possible. There's probably nothing to be done short of renovating an old mine to stop it from collapsing when anyone damages its walls, but the characters can try to disable a magic rune in a corridor that teleports any creature moving over it into the middle of an ocean. Just remember that trying and failing to disarm a trigger might trigger the hazard!

Hazard Damage

The damage dealt by a hazard depends on two factors. First, how deadly would you like the hazard to be? Do you want it to leave the heroes just a little banged up, or should it cost them a Recovery or two? Second, is the hazard a perpetual hazard or a one-time hazard? If it's an obstruction, answer this question by asking whether you expect a creature to be able to take damage from the obstruction more than once? If the answer is yes, treat it as a perpetual hazard in terms of damage. If not, it's a one-time hazard.

A hero might get a chance to mitigate damage from a hazard, such as by making an Agility test to outrun or dodge an avalanche, or making a Reason test to resist the psychic damage of a psionic cloud. You can decide what sort of test needs to be made based on the circumstances.

The One-Time Hazard Deadliness and Perpetual Hazard Deadliness tables show the damage dealt by hazards. Hazards are organized by level, indicating their relative threat compared to the level of the heroes. Each entry features three damage expressions for a tier 1, tier 2, and tier 3 outcome on the test made to mitigate the hazard's damage. The worse the test outcome, the higher the damage.

Hazard Effects

Some hazards deal effects in addition to or instead of damage. A hazard that is part of a combat encounter can impose just about any effect, including conditions, and can have a real impact on the story. However, if the heroes are facing a hazard outside of combat, you want any effects it imposes to be something more impactful and lasting. The following effects each reflect the interesting and lasting consequences a noncombat hazard should have:

- A character loses a Recovery.
- A curse leaves a character with a demonic-sounding voice that imposes a bane on Presence tests.
- A character receives a gaping wound that causes them to take 1d10 damage whenever they roll a natural 2 before they next finish a respite.
- A character is teleported into the middle of a nearby body of water.

But although lasting and interesting consequences are fun, make sure they don't derail your story to the point where the whole game becomes about solving the problems created by a hazard—unless your group thinks that's fun!

Creating and Running Interaction

Interaction scenes are similar to exploration scenes, except that the heroes obtain the information and objects they need by talking to one or more NPCs instead of exploring an area. Just like with an exploration encounter, you make a list of necessary information that

One-Time Hazard Deadliness

Level	Not Deadly	Little Bit Deadly	Very Deadly
1	7/5/3	9/7/5	11/9/7
2	10/7/4	12/9/6	15/12/9
3	11/8/5	14/11/8	17/14/11
4	12/9/5	16/13/9	19/16/12
5	13/10/6	17/14/10	21/18/14
6	14/11/6	19/16/11	23/20/15
7	15/12/7	21/18/13	25/22/17
8	16/13/7	23/20/14	27/24/18
9	17/13/8	25/21/16	29/25/20
10	18/14/9	27/22/18	31/27/22

Perpetual Hazard Deadliness

Level	Not Deadly	Little Bit Deadly	Very Deadly
1	5/4/2	7/6/4	9/8/6
2	6/4/3	8/6/5	10/8/7
3	7/5/3	9/7/5	11/9/7
4	8/6/4	11/9/7	14/12/10
5	9/7/4	12/10/7	15/13/10
6	10/8/5	13/11/8	16/14/11
7	11/9/5	15/13/9	19/17/13
8	12/9/6	16/13/10	20/17/14
9	13/10/6	17/14/10	21/18/14
10	14/11/7	19/16/12	24/21/17

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the NPCs can offer to the heroes freely. NPCs might then have other information or objects they can be convinced to give to the heroes if they make a persuasive argument, do something kind for the NPC, or succeed on a test.

Interaction scenes aren't full negotiations, which are reserved for adventure-changing conversations. Still, keep in mind that different NPCs react differently to various forms of persuasion. A coward might be easy to intimidate, while a battle-hardened soldier might be impossible to awe with displays of ferocity. A bribe might work for a corrupt noble, but a goodly queen who already has wealth beyond measure likely has no interest in whatever riches the heroes possess.

Refer to the details you wrote down for your NPCs while you roleplay them. Keep in mind any distinct behaviors or attitudes you can throw in to help make the scene fun. You don't have to be a great actor to create a memorable interaction scene! Simply describing how an NPC looks, sounds, and acts goes a long way even without doing funny voices. If you want to put on a character voice, go for it—but there's no obligation to.

Creating and Running Negotiations

When you're preparing for a negotiation (see Chapter 11: Negotiation), you'll want to pick an NPC and give them their negotiation stats—a starting interest and patience, motivations and pitfalls, and an Impression score. The Starting Attitudes table in the Negotiation chapter should give you an idea of where to start with some of these stats, but you should feel free to adjust the numbers as you see fit.

When assigning negotiation stats, keep the following guidelines in mind:

- The higher an NPC's starting interest, the more likely the heroes are to end the negotiation with everything they want—and then some—from the NPC.
- The higher an NPC's starting patience, the longer the negotiation and the more chances the heroes have to make arguments. If you want a long, rich negotiation, give your NPC a higher patience score.
- The more motivations an NPC has, the more likely the heroes are to make easier tests while engaging the NPC.
- The more pitfalls an NPC has, the more likely the heroes are to stumble into a topic that turns negotiation sour. However, too many pitfalls can feel like a "Gotcha!" setup to players, especially if they don't have time to do a little research or reconnaissance on the NPC before going into the negotiation.

Plan the Outcomes

It helps to know the various outcomes an NPC might offer during a negotiation ahead of time. An adventure or campaign continuing should never hinge entirely on the outcome of a negotiation. You don't want the story to come grinding to a halt if the heroes fail to secure information, treasure, or help from an NPC. A failed negotiation might mean the adventure gets a lot harder, but should always provide options for continuing when the characters' negotiation skills fail them.

A negotiation has six possible outcomes, but two of those are predetermined. If a negotiation ends with the NPC at interest 4, then the heroes get what they want. If the heroes end the negotiation at interest 1, the NPC can't offer them anything. Even with four options left wide open, however, setting up outcomes actually requires less prep work than you might think.

If a negotiation ends with the NPC's interest at 2 or 5, you need to know what the NPC might offer the heroes instead of or in addition to their main ask. It's also a good idea to have a list of two favors, items, pieces of information, or other help the NPC can offer the heroes, so that you aren't scrambling to think of something if these results come up.

Likewise, if the NPC's interest hits 3, they'll ask the heroes for a favor in exchange for what's being asked of them. The heroes might also directly ask the NPC what they can offer to cinch the negotiation. In this case, it helps to have in mind two favors, items, pieces of information, or other help the NPC could ask for from the heroes.

Finally, if the heroes really offend the NPC and end the negotiation with their interest at 0, have some idea of what the NPC might do to try to punish the heroes. If you don't have this ready, though, don't sweat it. Revenge is a dish best served cold—and maybe a few sessions from now—so you've got time to plan.

Multiple NPCs

The negotiation rules are built around the idea of the heroes facing off against a single dominant NPC—a powerful leader, a ranking diplomat, a warlord, a key villain, and so forth. But this isn't to say that you can't run a negotiation with the heroes interacting with a group of NPCs, each with their own slightly different take on wheeling and dealing.

If you set up a negotiation using more than one NPC, you don't give each NPC their own negotiation stats, motivations, and pitfalls. Rather, you assign stats to the group as a whole, then have different NPCs step to the fore in the negotiation when a particular motivation or pitfall is in play. For example, if you assign the greed pitfall to a group of knights, the well-dressed captain of that group might appear as though they're open to being bribed by the heroes. But when the dour sergeant-at-arms who resents the captain's flamboyant lifestyle angrily rejects the characters' offer, the captain must go along with it to keep the peace among their followers..

Hero Negotiation Stats

Many heroes have class features, titles, or other character options that make them better in negotiation. When you're preparing a negotiation, it helps if you know each hero's Renown score and any features they have that might impact a negotiation, such as the troubadour's Scene Partner feature. Ask your players to tell you if any of their character options influence negotiation at the start of a campaign, and ask again whenever they level up.

Heroes Must Initiate

A negotiation should always be initiated by the heroes, and the character (as with people in general) can't be forced to negotiate for something they don't want. As you prepare your negotiation, remember that the players might decide to gain what the characters need from the NPC in some other way—calling in a favor from someone else who has the means to help them, stealing what they need from the NPC, simply pushing forward without the NPC's help, and so on.

Framework for Roleplaying

New Directors and players might feel a bit overwhelmed by negotiation, wondering if they need the rules at all for roleplaying a quid pro quo discussion. If you'd rather play without the negotiation rules, go for it! The *Draw Steel* designers aren't going to come to your

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house and take your books if you do so. However, the negotiation rules exist to provide you with robust mechanics that create an exciting back and forth between two parties, with high stakes and drama.

An NPC's interest helps you determine their attitude toward the party's proposals, while their patience indicates how much time they're willing to give the heroes. In the same way that Stamina tells you when a monster is done with a fight, patience tells you when an NPC is done talking and is ready to deal. The negotiation rules mean you never have to just roleplay a conversation until you and the players become bored with the scene, then someone makes a single test to see what happens. The negotiation rules let you roleplay with structure, risks, and rewards!

The most important thing to remember when it comes to negotiation is that the rules are meant to work with you—not against you. They're flexible on purpose. If a hero makes an excellent argument that you think should work without a test, then it does. If a hero makes an unfortunate argument that should fail no matter what, then they're out of luck. You're empowered to run negotiation in whatever way will be the most fun for you and your players.

If players are having trouble roleplaying during a negotiation, try running your next negotiation without announcing that the characters are now in a negotiation. Simply ask them for tests when appropriate and have the NPC respond based on the test outcomes and their motivations and pitfalls. This approach might help your players shake off focusing on the rules to simply roleplay as you track interest and patience on the side.

Research and Reconnaissance

If the players want to negotiate with an NPC and the heroes have some time before the conversation starts, they might think to do a bit of research and reconnaissance into the NPC, hoping to discover their motivations and pitfalls. Characters have multiple ways to tackle this. They might do research into the NPC as a downtime project, they could employ a montage test to gather rumors and grease a few palms, or they might attempt to do favors for people close to the NPC and earn information in exchange.

It's always a good idea to let the heroes do a little recon before jumping into a negotiation. Doing so makes for a richer story and can help the players better engage with the negotiation system, since they'll feel more prepared for it.

Roleplaying Negotiators

When it comes time for you to roleplay an NPC during a negotiation, remember that the NPC, like all sapient creatures, is complex. Every NPC has their own way of approaching negotiation. Some might be full of bluster. Others might say everything with a smile even while rejecting the heroes. One NPC might be verbose, while yet another says as little as possible to keep the heroes guessing as to their real desires. As a starting point to figuring out how a specific NPC might negotiate, you can refer to the notes on the NPC that you created while preparing the adventure, reviewing their voice, behavior, and flaw, in addition to any motivations for helping or denying characters in need.

One important decision you should make ahead of time is how upfront the NPC will be regarding what they want from the heroes. A straightforward NPC can make for a faster negotiation if the heroes are willing to give the NPC whatever they need. An unreadable NPC can be a puzzle for the heroes to figure out, and can be more difficult to roleplay. If it's your first time using the negotiation rules, you should start out with a more straightforward NPC before playing a coy customer.

During negotiation, let the players talk freely about their strategy if that fits their playstyle and sense of fun. You can intervene if an argument crops up, but otherwise, let the players plot, scheme, and guess while you play it cool.

Once a negotiation starts, the players and characters can obtain information about the NPC involved only by making tests, using their characters' features, or through engaging in conversation with the NPC. Whenever the NPC makes an offer to the heroes after a test, make it clear what the terms of the offer are. While some NPCs might speak cryptically, it's best for the players to understand what they're getting their heroes into. It can be fun to trick the heroes, but many players don't feel the fun when they get tricked instead.

Sharing Interest and Patience

It's up to you as the Director to decide whether to share an NPC's interest or patience during a negotiation. Sometimes sharing this information can make an encounter more dramatic, with the players watching their progress rise and fall in real time. Other groups might find negotiation more fun and immersive if those exact numbers are hidden from the players, just as some groups like knowing the Stamina of every creature in a battle and others prefer to keep that information secret. Talk to your players about what they'd prefer.

Sample Negotiators

This section contains a number of sample NPCs you can use for negotiation, sorted by their Impression scores. Each of these NPCs is an archetype that you can easily adapt to specific situations. For example, the bandit chief could be the leader of a brigand gang, a pirate captain, or a rebel who redistributes wealth by stealing from corrupt nobles and giving the booty to those less fortunate.

Each archetype includes a list of motivations and pitfalls an NPC could have. You should pick at least two from each list for any NPC you create using the archetype. Feel free to change the wording on motivations and pitfalls and adjust numbers as you see fit.

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Bandit Chief

Impression Score: 1

The bandit chief is a bully and a braggart, typically negotiating using intimidation and bluster before softening.

The bandit chief archetype can be used for any other local big shot, such as the privileged child of a local lord, an arrogant tavern darts champion, or any bully.

Motivations

The bandit chief has the following possible motivations:

Freedom: No one tells me what to do—not if they want to keep their head on their shoulders. And no one tells my toughs what to do except *me*!

Greed: Gold! I love the feel of shining, clinking coins running between my fingers. I never found anything to spend it on that I like as much as just *having* gold.

Power: I want a stronger hideout, more toughs, and a bigger share of the loot. Get me that, and I'll do your dirty work for you.

Revelry: If you don't get drunk after a raid, then why have a raid?

Pitfalls

The bandit chief has the following possible pitfalls:

Higher Authority: By order of the baron? You can keep your fancy titles and lands. I give the orders around here!

Justice: Only the weak whine for justice. The strong make their own rules.

Legacy: Listen, I don't care what happens when I'm gone. I want my followers shouting my name now, not in a hundred years.

Peace: In times of peace, if you pick up a silver coin that's not yours, the sheriff comes knocking on your door. In war, whole caravans disappear and nobody blinks. Give me war.

Knight

Impression Score: 2

Although not always an idealist, the knight is a loyal servant of their liege and a stickler for duty. A knight knows their place in a regimented society, and believes that everyone else should keep to their own place.

The knight archetype can be used for any other local authority, such as a village elder, town guard officer, or academic professor.

Motivations

The knight has the following possible motivations:

Higher Authority: That's above my pay grade. If my superiors sign off on it, then so do I.

Justice: Thank you for bringing this to my attention. I agree, this must be put right. The only question is how.

Peace: People like us, we fight so that the common folk don't have to. If I must, I'll draw my sword again to keep the peace.

Revelry: Every agreement should be sealed with a toast. Huzzah!

Pitfalls

The knight has the following possible pitfalls:

Benevolence: These people don't need charity, they need order. Let them go to the town hall and they'll get a full belly in exchange for an honest day's work.

Freedom: None of us are free, from the lowliest servant on up. Even a monarch has a duty to their people.

Power: My power comes to me through my lawful oath, not by some dirty deal made in secret.

Vengeance: I believe in law, not vengeance, and law is decided by higher courts. I'm just a functionary.



Guildmaster

Impression Score: 3

The guildmaster knows the value of a coin, but understands that knowledge—inside information and trade secrets alike—is the most valuable currency. They bargain accordingly.

The guildmaster archetype can be used for any other local information broker, such as a cult leader, hag, or spy.

Motivations

The guildmaster has the following possible motivations:

Benevolence: The people can't take care of themselves. Somebody's got to look after them, the poor lambs.

Discovery: It would be highly unethical for you to show me those schematics you obtained from a rival guild. Likewise, it would be highly unethical for me to slide you this bag of gold.

Power: Who do you think will be in charge in the next age? The nobles? Pah! They still count their wealth in cows. Whoever controls information will rule the world—and I intend for that to be us.

Protection: We have rivals—hungry opportunists who will stop at nothing. If I want to protect my guild, I've got to do unto them before they do unto us.

Pitfalls

The guildmaster has the following possible pitfalls:

Higher Authority: My loyalty is to the guild—not the burgomaster, not the king, not Ajax himself. But don't tell them I said that.

Justice: We're reshaping the world here. Of course, some people who can't adapt are going to find themselves on the bottom. But why should anyone blame us for that?

Peace: Conflict isn't bad in and of itself. It drives innovation. The key is to not be on the losing side.

Revelry: I don't have time for this foolishness. Come talk to me again when you have something of value to show me.

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Warlord

Impression Score: 4

The warlord has raised their banner and troops flock to their cause. Some say a warlord never negotiates, but that's not true. They're happy to listen to terms of surrender.

The warlord archetype can be used for any other local-level threat, such as a vampire, hobgoblin bloodlord, or rebellious noble.

Motivations

The warlord has the following possible motivations:

Freedom: I'm not paying a single coin to some weakling liege lord for the privilege of being told what to do. I've raised my banner. I defy anyone to pull it down.

Legacy: Did you see that young captain out there putting the fear of the gods into her troops? That's my kid, but she earned her title. Someday, this will all be hers.

Peace: Look around you. Everywhere you look—weakness, corruption, waste. Peace is a noble goal, but we won't have peace until the current regime is swept away.

Vengeance: Have you suffered as I have at the hands of that accursed villain? If so, then I'll gladly call you friend.

Pitfalls

The warlord has the following possible pitfalls:

Benevolence: Go back to your street corner and beg for alms if that's what you're after. You'll get nothing from me.

Discovery: What does that have to do with me? I'm a soldier, not a scholar.

Justice: You dare call me unjust? I make the laws here. Justice is mine to give or take away!

Protection: I'm not some sniveling coward who begs for protection, and neither are my troops. Anyone who asks for safety doesn't deserve it.

Burgomaster

Impression Score: 5

The burgomaster's power comes from their constituents, and for the most part, they aim to serve their people. Most burgomasters are experienced negotiators, never giving up any more than they mean to.

The burgomaster archetype can be used for any other local ruler, such as a baron, governor, or a watch captain in a metropolis.

Motivations

The burgomaster has the following possible motivations:

Greed: Keep talking. I'm sure we can come to an agreement that benefits all parties. A rising tide and all that.

Higher Authority: No one can accuse me of being disloyal. What my duty demands, I do—but let's determine the most sensible way to go about it.

Justice: The rule of law must be preserved. If you have evidence of crimes, those responsible must be punished.

Protection: The weak, the helpless—they depend upon me. And, to a lesser extent, civic-minded heroes like yourselves. Together, we'll make sure the people come to no harm.

Pitfalls

The burgomaster has the following possible pitfalls:

Discovery: Trust me. No good is going to come from poking that particular beehive.

Freedom: Freedom, eh? What's next, freedom from taxes? No one is born free except the gods, and only fools believe otherwise.

Revelry: Put that bottle away. I'm a public figure! I can't be seen carousing and gallivanting and who knows what else.

Vengeance: In politics, you have to have a short memory. Your enemy today might be your ally tomorrow. There's no need to make things personal.



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Virtuoso

Impression Score: 6

The virtuoso is the preeminent musician in the land—perhaps a celebrated opera singer or composer. If you need a cause popularized or an enemy's name tarnished, you come to them.

The virtuoso archetype can be used for any other local celebrity, such as a master crafter, inspired artist, famous gladiator, or world champion.

Motivations

The virtuoso has the following possible motivations:

Freedom: I follow my muse, my only master. Who would dare put handcuffs on art?
Legacy: Castles will crumble. Empires will fall. But if only I can produce a work worthy of my talents, my name will live forever.
Peace: In war, bronze statues are melted down for armor. Money is wasted on ballistae instead of ballads. War is a crime against the god of art.
Revelry: Yes, tonight let us celebrate! Inspiration looks down kindly on those who drink life to the dregs.

Pitfalls

The virtuoso has the following possible pitfalls:

Greed: You offer me money? Money comes to geniuses—it is our due. I can get it from a thousand admirers.
Power: I have no ambitions beyond this opera house. For me to leave this place, even for a palace or a throne ... it would be an exile for me.
Protection: I'm not afraid. The god of music will look after her own.
Vengeance: Perhaps there are some who hate me—those who think I stand in their way, or whose accomplishments I have eclipsed. But I hate no one and am jealous of no one.

High Priest

Impression Score: 7

The high priest might be a high-ranking member of their faith, but as they are quick to tell you, that doesn't make them free to act as they wish. The commands of their deity must be paramount.

The high priest archetype can be used for any other national authority, such as a count, judge, or general.

Motivations

The high priest has the following possible motivations:

Benevolence: We are agreed on this matter. If this threat puts people in danger, we must come to their rescue.
Discovery: Why, yes ... I would be interested in looking at that document further. Surely no harm can come from being aware of the snares and dangers in the world.
Higher Authority: Indeed, my appointed duty is to serve all folk—whether it be my deity, my liege, or the poorest person crying out in need.
Justice: Rest assured, the good will receive their just reward and the evil will be punished. I will see to it.

Pitfalls

The high priest has the following possible pitfalls:

Greed: Don't offer that to me. Donate it to the faith if you have no need of it.
Legacy: Me? I am no one. Any good deeds I might have accomplished are to my deity's credit, not my own.
Power: My current responsibilities are quite enough. I have no desire for more.
Revelry: For shame! Do you boast of doing evil and expect me to join you in it?

Duke

Impression Score: 8

As the duke gestures you to join them at their card table, spies whisper in their ear. The duke never plays a game or enters a negotiation unless they think they can gain the high card.

The duke archetype can be used for any other royal counselor, such as an archmage, spymaster, vizier, or even a beloved jester.

Motivations

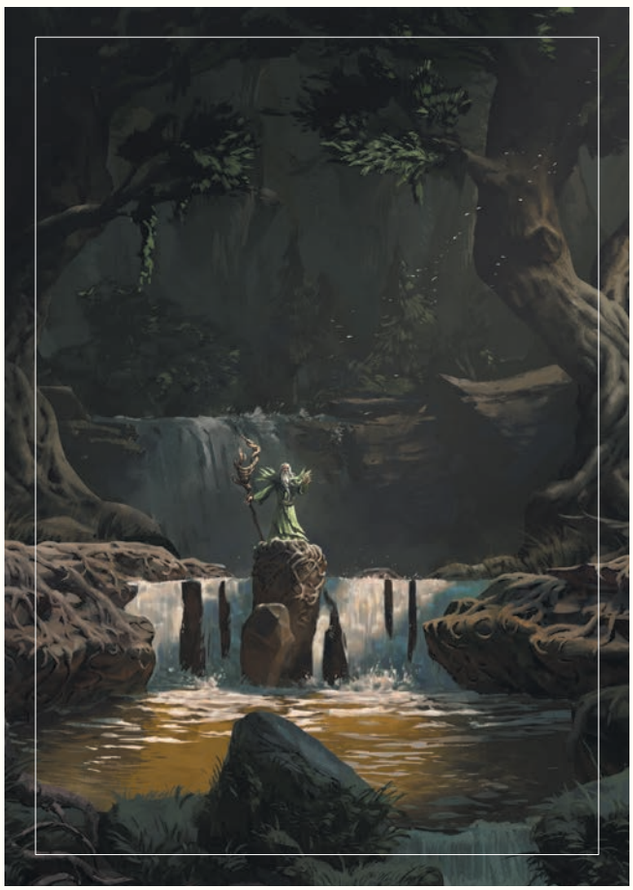
The duke has the following possible motivations:

Discovery: My agents have brought me many whispers, but this is news to me. Who else knows of this?
Higher Authority: I must do as my liege commands. So tell me how you seek to serve them as well.
Peace: We must have stability. I will sacrifice anything—and anyone—for this.
Vengeance: There is one—I will not speak their name—who thinks I have forgotten what they did to me. Someday they will discover that I have a long memory.

Pitfalls

The duke has the following possible pitfalls:

Benevolence: Do you think I act because I love my fellow people? Half of them are worthless, and the other half are villains. But without them, I'd be the Duke of Nothing, so I must preserve them.
Greed: Put away your gold. I'm far too busy to spend it.
Justice: Right and wrong? There is no right except what strengthens the kingdom, and there is no wrong except what hurts it.
Protection: I don't care about saving lives. We're all doomed to die. The question is, what will live on after us?



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Dragon

Impression Score: 9

The dragon's tremendous might is overshadowed only by their boundless ambition and pride.

The dragon archetype can be used for any other kingdom-level threat, such as a fire giant chief, a contender for a throne, or the dread synliroi Lord Syuul.

Motivations

The dragon has the following possible motivations:

Freedom: Yes, my ambitions have been bound to the earth for far too long. It's time I took flight.
Greed: Bring me tribute now, and when I rule, I will not forget you.
Protection: My people have been mistreated for centuries. It ends now!
Vengeance: This land, these people, their treasures, all rightfully mine. Stolen from me!

Pitfalls

The dragon has the following possible pitfalls:

Legacy: No heir will outlive me, no legend will remember my past glory … for I shall never die!
Peace: You want to make peace? When there are still things in the world that are not yet mine?
Power: How can *you* possibly offer *me* power?
Revelry: My pleasures are as far beyond your comprehension as yours are to a worm.

Monarch

Impression Score: 10

Whether they're good or evil, a monarch is accustomed to authority—and wants to keep it. They respond better to pleas than to demands.

The monarch archetype can be used for any other kingdom-level ruler, such as a tyrant, a theocracy's archpriest, or a republic's consul.

Motivations

The monarch has the following possible motivations:

Benevolence: It's not for nothing I'm called "the Good."
Greed: Your offer intrigues me. In truth, our coffers are not as full as I should like.
Justice: Ah, do the villains ignore my laws? They must be punished!
Legacy: If I should die, promise me this: You will serve my heir as loyally as you have served me.

Pitfalls

The monarch has the following possible pitfalls:

Discovery: Keep your secrets to yourself. I'm a monarch, not a spymaster.
Freedom: Freedom? Some of my disloyal subjects speak that word a little too often for my liking. I hope you're not one of them.
Higher Authority: You dare give orders to me? Never forget, no matter who sent you, I rule here!
Vengeance: Revenge is an exciting sport. Sadly, it's one I've had to give up. It's policy, not revenge, that rules here.

Lich

Impression Score: 11

The lich spent centuries alone, studying and building their power … but now the time for studying is over.

The lich is willing to negotiate with strong heroes who might make loyal lieutenants—or powerful undead servants if the talks don't go well.

The lich archetype can be used for any other world-shaking threat, such as a would-be emperor or the vampire lord Count Rhodar von Glauer.

Motivations

The lich has the following possible motivations:

Discovery: Give me that book at once! Your very touch corrupts it.
Power: Yes … yes … power! Ahahahaha! Bring me this power and you will be rewarded.
Revelry: Join my court for the coming feast! We shall know such entertainments as were never seen in this world before.
Vengeance: The world despised me … banished me … forgot me. The world shall regret it.

Pitfalls

The lich has the following possible pitfalls:

Benevolence: Do you ask the farmer to pity the wheat before it's harvested?
Legacy: I don't care what the common people think of me. The less they think of me, the better—as long as they obey my commands.
Peace: Yes, yes, peace will come … but not now.
Protection: If you're so intent on saving lives, then save your own by bowing down before me! No harm will come to my servants.

Deity

Impression Score: 12

The deity will listen to your prayers—and might perhaps answer them as well, if the mood strikes them.

The deity archetype can be used for any other world-transcending power, such as the legendary time dragon Cthrion Uroniziir, or the dread pharaoh Khorsekef the Infinite.

Motivations

The deity has the following possible motivations:

Benevolence: Worry not, for I have sent champions to save the world. Perhaps these champions … are closer than you think.
Legacy: When that blessed day arrives, all shall come before me to pray, and I shall offer my blessings to the world!
Power: Although I am all-powerful on the spiritual realm, my hands are bound in such worldly matters. But if you act for me, I can offer a little assistance.
Protection: Have faith, little one … none will be forgotten or left behind.

Pitfalls

The deity has the following possible pitfalls:

Discovery: Mortal, what can you tell me that I do not know?
Freedom: True freedom lies in service to me. Surrender your freedom and I shall raise you up high.
Greed: Fool! Do you seek to offer me what is already mine?
Higher Authority: Who do you speak of? Who is beyond me, who is above me? Who will live to see me die, and who drew breath before I gave it? Let them come forth and say their name!

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Creating and Running Montage Tests

You can use montage tests to play out chases, escapes, investigations, wilderness travel, attempts to track other creatures, and any other exciting moments in a story that can be told by transitioning or cutting back and forth among the heroes.

Preparing Montage Tests

When you prepare a montage test, you'll want to write down some key information.

First, make a list of potential challenges the heroes can face during the montage test. This list should be at least as long as the number of successes the heroes must achieve to earn a total success. You might also prepare a list of consequences and rewards that could come up for individual tests made during the montage test, but since you can't predict what approaches the players will take to their characters' tests, don't worry about covering every scenario. You can always fall back on earning Malice and giving out hero tokens as a default consequence and reward (see Test Outcomes in Chapter 9: Tests).

You'll then need to create the three outcomes of the montage: total success, partial success, and total failure. With a total success, the heroes should accomplish whatever they set out to do. With a partial success, they should accomplish their goal at a cost, create a new problem for themselves after doing what they set out to do, or not quite accomplish their full goal. With a total failure, the characters fail to do whatever they set out to do, but this result should not grind the story to a halt. Maybe they lose track of the fleeing lackeys they were pursuing, but they know they can now raid a mage's tower to find that information. Even if failure costs the characters dearly, they should still have options for continuing the adventure.

Running Montage Tests

When you run a montage test, start by setting the scene for the players and listing the various challenges the heroes must overcome. Allow the players to strategize about the order in which they'll tackle these challenges and make tests.

When you adjudicate individual tests as part of a montage test, do so as you would any other test (see Adjudicating Tests in Chapter 9). Individual tests should have rewards and consequences when appropriate. In addition to the usual options for rewards or consequences, you can choose to have those outcomes grant an edge or impose a bane on a test made later as part of the montage test. Do whatever makes sense for the heroes' actions in the narrative.

After each test, narrate the hero's failure or success in such a way that the other players can understand if and how the challenge has been overcome. Your description might even spark some new ideas for what the characters can do next.

If a hero decides to tackle a problem using an ability, trait, or other feature instead of a test and it makes sense for them to do so, allow it. In a lot of cases, you can treat that approach as an automatic success that allows the group to overcome one of the challenges of the montage test, but you could decide that the success incurs a consequence. Alternatively, maybe the use of an ability or trait is beneficial enough to provide an edge on a future test, or maybe it's so effective that it counts for multiple successes or solves the entire montage test in one fell swoop! Always reward the clever actions of the players.

At the end of a montage test, narrate the outcome for the players as you describe the overall success or failure and any consequences. Then let them know the montage test is done!

Montage Twist!

You can break up the individual tests within a montage test by introducing a quick combat encounter, negotiation, or trap into the scene, or by adding more challenges to overcome. Keep track of the heroes' successes and failures, and decide how many tests they must attempt before introducing your twist. A single twist in a montage test can often be introduced at the end of the first montage test round.

When a twist is introduced, make sure the players understand that the montage test has been paused but isn't over. Then when the twist has been established and dealt with, continue the montage test.

Example Montage Tests

You can use any of the following montage tests in your game, or as inspiration that you can modify to your heart's content.

Fight Fire

Fire has broken out in the town! The heroes must prevent the conflagration from spreading while saving as many townsfolk as possible. Their efforts might be made more difficult if the cause of the fire—such as a marauding dragon or an invading army—is still around causing trouble.

Setting the Scene

Fire blazes in several buildings whose occupants need to be rescued. Elsewhere, some townsfolk flee while others throw water on the fire with no organization or plan. Without leadership and a way to stop its spread, the fire could easily consume everything. In a nearby stable, horses are panicking as their hay smolders. Burning rubble blocks pathways everywhere.

Montage Challenges

The following challenges can be part of the montage test:

Bucket Brigades: Characters can organize the would-be firefighters into disciplined bucket brigades, or can fight the fire directly in some other way. *Suggested Characteristics:* Presence, Reason. *Suggested Skills:* Architecture, Intimidate, Lead.

Clearing a Firebreak: Preventing the fire from spreading might involve clearing the ground of flammable materials, either by moving it or burning it away under controlled conditions. *Suggested Characteristics:* Might, Reason. *Suggested Skills and Abilities:* Endurance, Lift; abilities that deal fire damage. *Special:* A creature loses a Recovery if they incur a consequence on the test for this challenge.

Evacuating Buildings: Characters must save people trapped in burning buildings. *Suggested Characteristics:* Might, Presence. *Suggested Skills:* Climb, Endurance, Persuade. *Special:* A creature who doesn't have fire immunity loses a Recovery if they incur a consequence on the test for this challenge. The heroes can attempt this challenge twice during the montage test.

Find More Firefighters: By finding groups that aren't fighting the fire, such as fleeing civilians, characters can convince them to help. *Suggested Characteristic:* Presence. *Suggested Skills:* Intimidate, Lead, Persuade.

Free the Horses: Characters can loose the stabled horses threatened by the fire and lead them to safety. *Suggested Characteristics:* Might, Presence. *Suggested Skills:* Handle Animals, Lift, Ride.

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Move Burning Rubble: Shifting burning debris blocking doorways can allow people to escape the blaze. *Suggested Characteristic:* Might. *Suggested Skills:* Endurance, Lift. *Special:* A creature who doesn't have fire immunity loses a Recovery if they incur a consequence on the test for this challenge.

Use the Freed Horses (if the Free the Horses challenge was successful): Characters can put the horses to work clearing rubble or bringing people to safety. *Suggested Characteristics:* Reason, Presence. *Suggested Skills:* Drive, Handle Animals, Ride.

Optional Twists

At the end of the first montage test round, an emergency crops up. One or more heroes, selected by the players, must deal with the situation before the end of the round. If the heroes successfully deal with the twist, they earn a success for the montage test. Otherwise, they earn a failure.

Building Collapse: While a hero is in or near a blazing building, it starts to collapse. The hero must escape before the building crumbles. *Suggested Characteristics:* Agility, Intuition. *Suggested Skills:* Climb, Gymnastics, Jump.

Cause of the Fire: At the end of the first round of the montage test, the hostile cause of the fire appears—a squad of an invading army, a dragon, a team of arsonists, and so forth. The characters must engage in a standard or hard encounter with this threat.

Help! Townsfolk are about to run into a burning building to save a trapped relative. This twist requires two tests, each of which nets a success or a failure for the montage test. One hero can try to prevent the townspeople from entering the burning building while another rescues the relative. *Suggested Characteristics:* Might, Presence. *Suggested Skills:* Lift, Persuade.

Montage Test Outcomes

One of the following outcomes ends the montage test:

Total Success: The fire is extinguished. Buildings are damaged but no lives were lost. Each character earns 2 Victories if the montage test was hard, or 1 Victory if it was easy or moderate, in addition to any Victories earned from combat during the montage test.

Partial Success: The fire is quenched, although many buildings burned and a few lives were lost. Each character earns 1 Victory if the montage test was moderate or hard, in addition to any Victories earned from combat during the montage test.

Total Failure: When the fire finally burns out, the town lies in ruins. Townsfolk mourn their dead or grimly prepare to find a new home. Characters earn no Victories from the montage test, but might earn Victories from combat undertaken during the montage test.

Infiltrate the Palace

Whether the heroes are trying to reach a tyrant's throne room, pull off a daring art heist, or rescue royalty from captivity, they're somewhere they're not supposed to be—and they'd prefer to keep their presence a secret.

Setting the Scene

The palace is well defended, with exterior patrols always on the alert. The few obvious entrances are locked and guarded, and once the party is inside, no one knows the way to the goal. Guards patrol the interior of the site as well, forcing the characters to sneak or bluff their way past them.



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Montage Challenges

Half the work of any successful infiltration is done before setting foot in the target site. The players can choose to have the heroes make individual tests as part of the montage test before they attempt to enter the palace. One round of tests can be made this way, and those tests don't affect the alarm level within the palace (see below).

The following challenges can be part of this initial preparation:

Bribe Guards: The heroes can pay off the guards outside the palace to look the other way. If successful, one or more heroes' Wealth is lowered by 1. *Suggested Characteristic:* Presence. *Suggested Skills:* Criminal Underworld, Flirt, Persuade.

Find Blueprints: Researching secret entrances and little-known passageways can be undertaken in forgotten libraries or well-guarded town halls. *Suggested Characteristics:* Agility, Reason. *Suggested Skills:* Architecture, History, Sneak.

Identify Unguarded Entrances: Scouting around or consulting contacts can reveal a forgotten back door or accessible window. *Suggested Characteristics:* Agility, Intuition. *Suggested Skills:* Alertness, Architecture, Criminal Underworld.

Learn Guard Schedules: By keeping their ears and eyes open, characters can learn when guards go off duty. *Suggested Characteristics:* Intuition, Reason. *Suggested Skills:* Alertness, Eavesdrop, Track.

Use False Identities: By procuring forged documents or badges, characters can prepare to walk into the palace in plain sight. *Suggested Characteristics:* Presence, Reason. *Suggested Skills:* Disguise, Forgery, Lie.

When the heroes start their infiltration, the alarm level of the palace starts at 0. While they infiltrate the site, whenever any hero fails a test as part of the montage test, the alarm level increases by 1, to a maximum of 2. Each time the heroes succeed on such a test, the alarm level decreases, to a minimum of 0. While the alarm level is 1, tests made inside the palace by the characters as part of the montage test take a bane. While the alarm level is 2, such tests take a double bane.

The first time any hero fails a test made as part of the montage test while the alarm level is 2, they encounter guards and must engage in a hard combat encounter. The second time any hero fails such a test while the alarm level is 2, the montage test is a total failure.

The following challenges can be part of the heroes' infiltration:

Aerial Route: Characters can follow a path that leads along catwalks or high ledges. *Suggested Characteristics:* Agility, Might. *Suggested Skills:* Climb, Gymnastics, Jump.

Avoid Traffic: By finding the dustiest, least-traveled areas and sticking to them, characters can avoid notice. *Suggested Characteristics:* Intuition, Reason. *Suggested Skills:* Navigate, Search, Track.

Lie Low: Once while the alarm level is greater than 0, the heroes can find a place to hide for a bit, reducing the alarm level by 1. This activity doesn't require a test or generate a success or failure.

Make a Diversion: After causing a ruckus, the characters quickly go the other way. *Suggested Characteristics:* Might, Presence. *Suggested Skills:* Alchemy, Perform, Sabotage.

Pose as Guards: Using stolen or specially prepared uniforms can let the characters move freely through the palace. The test for this challenge gains an edge if the characters prepared disguises in advance (including succeeding on the Use False Identities challenge) or defeated guards during their infiltration. *Suggested Characteristics:* Intuition, Presence. *Suggested Skills:* Disguise, Lie, Search.

Skulk in the Shadows: Keeping out of sight is the simplest way for characters to move through the palace. *Suggested Characteristic:* Agility. *Suggested Skills:* Hide, Sneak. *Special:* The heroes can attempt this challenge twice during the montage test.

Optional Twist

At any time during the infiltration section of the montage test, immediately after one hero's turn, the characters run into another group breaking into the palace at the same time, and possibly after the same prize. The characters can choose to fight or negotiate with the other party, or simply let them pass—in which case they might meet them again when they reach their final goal.

Montage Test Outcomes

One of the following outcomes ends the montage test:

Total Success: The heroes reach their goal and secure an escape route that lets them leave the palace safely. Each character earns 2 Victories if the montage test was hard, or 1 Victory if it was easy or moderate, in addition to any Victories earned from combat during the montage test.

Partial Success: The heroes reach their goal, but they need to fight a standard combat encounter to escape the palace. Each character earns 1 Victory if the montage test was moderate or hard, in addition to any Victories earned from combat during the montage test.

Total Failure: The palace is locked down and the heroes' goal is out of reach. The characters need to fight a hard combat encounter to escape. Characters earn no Victories from the montage test, but might earn Victories from combat undertaken during the montage test.

Prepare For Battle

Whether it's a village threatened by bandits or a great city preparing for a siege, enemies are on their way and ready to attack. The heroes have a limited time to fortify the settlement's defenses and bolster its troops.

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Setting the Scene

The walls or palisades around the settlement (if any) are in poor shape. Roads or rivers through the area give the invaders free access to the settlement unless barricades, traps, or ambushes can be set up. Supplies of food, weapons, and ammunition are too low to survive a long siege. The area is home to few experienced fighters compared to the numbers of the invaders, and the local militia is poorly equipped and untrained.

Montage Challenges

The following challenges can be part of the montage test:

Arms and Armor: Crafting or repairing weapons and armor of all kinds can help rebuild the defenders' stores. *Suggested Characteristics:* Might, Reason. *Suggested Skills:* Alchemy, Blacksmithing, Fletching.

Evacuation: Heroes can help get noncombatants to safety before the invaders arrive. *Suggested Characteristics:* Intuition, Presence. *Suggested Skills:* Handle Animals, Lead, Persuade.

Fortification: Characters can help build or repair walls and other defensive structures. *Suggested Characteristics:* Might, Reason. *Suggested Skills:* Architecture, Endurance, Lift.

Inspiration: Improving morale with rousing speeches or performances can help prepare the locals for the fight to come. *Suggested Characteristics:* Intuition, Presence. *Suggested Skills:* Brag, Lead, Perform.

Propaganda: Characters can attempt to sow confusion or rebellion in the ranks of the approaching army. *Suggested Characteristics:* Agility, Presence. *Suggested Skills:* Disguise, Forgery, Lie.

Stockpiling: Characters can hunt, forage, or supernaturally conjure food or water to augment the settlement's supplies. *Suggested Characteristics:* Agility, Reason. *Suggested Skills:* Nature, Sneak, Track.

Training: Heroes can help to train the settlement's defenders. *Suggested Characteristics:* Might, Presence. *Suggested Skills:* Endurance, Intimidate, Lead.

Trapmaking: Digging concealed pits, placing hindrances, and setting up ambushes will make it harder for the invaders to approach the settlement. *Suggested Characteristics:* Might, Reason. *Suggested Skills:* Conceal Object, Endurance, Mechanics.

Optional Twist

At the end of the first round of the montage test, a fast-moving enemy vanguard attacks before the settlement's defenders are ready. The heroes must engage in an easy combat encounter.

Montage Test Outcomes

One of the following outcomes ends the montage test:

Total Success: The settlement is fully fortified, and even if the heroes don't fight in its defense, the settlement and its people survive. If the heroes wish, they can leave the settlement and fight a standard combat encounter against the leader of the invaders and their lackeys, possibly killing or capturing the leader. Each character earns 2 Victories if the montage test was hard, or 1 Victory if it was easy or moderate, in addition to any Victories earned from combat during the montage test.

Partial Success: The settlement's fortifications are improved, but the settlement will still fall unless the heroes fight in its defense. To save the settlement, the heroes must triumph in a hard combat encounter against the leader of the invaders and their lackeys. If the heroes lose the encounter, the settlement falls. Each character earns 1 Victory if the montage test was moderate or hard, in addition to any Victories earned from combat during the montage test.

Total Failure: The heroes each lose a Recovery from their failed efforts to defend the settlement, which is taken over by the invaders. If the players wish, the characters can fight two hard combat encounters against waves of invaders to allow some of the settlement's inhabitants to retreat to safety. Characters earn no Victories from the montage test, but might earn Victories from combat undertaken during the montage test.

Track the Fugitive

The heroes are on the trail of someone. An escaped criminal? A dangerous beast? A lost or kidnapped child? The difficulties of the chase depend on whether the quarry knows they're being pursued and whether they want to be found.

Setting the Scene

The fugitive's route is easy to follow, but could they be setting a false trail? Did anyone see them pass by, and is there any sense of where they might be headed? The goal is for the characters to do whatever they can to find and stay on the fugitive's trail.

Montage Challenges

The following challenges can be part of the montage test:

Ask Around: Characters can gather clues from locals or bystanders—or if they have access to the proper magic, from animals or the dead. *Suggested Characteristics:* Intuition, Presence. *Suggested Skills:* Interrogate, Persuade, Rumors.

Follow the Trail: Looking for tracks or other signs of the fugitive's passage can lead the characters on. *Suggested Characteristic:* Intuition. *Suggested Skills:* Alertness, Search, Track. *Special:* The heroes can attempt this challenge twice during the montage test.

Obtain a Good View: Characters can climb up high to get the big picture of where the fugitive might have gone. *Suggested Characteristics:* Agility, Might. *Suggested Skills:* Climb, Gymnastics, Jump.

Predict the Next Move: The heroes might have an idea where the quarry is headed. A character gains an edge on the test for this challenge if they know the quarry well. *Suggested Characteristics:* Intuition, Reason. *Suggested Skills:* Navigate, Read Person, an appropriate skill from the lore skill group (Nature to follow an animal, Criminal Underworld to follow a criminal, and so forth).

Push Ahead: While the quarry is resting, the heroes have a chance to close in. *Suggested Characteristic:* Might. *Suggested Skills:* Drive, Endurance, Navigate, Ride. *Special:* The hero making the test for this challenge loses a Recovery.

Optional Twist

At the end of the first round of the montage test, the heroes stumble upon a trap set by the quarry or a problem they left behind. This might include such things as a pit trap set with poison spikes, a mob of angry locals who've been told the characters are criminals, or an intentionally set fire. The heroes must deal with the trap or problem before they continue the montage test.

Montage Test Outcomes

One of the following outcomes ends the montage test:

Total Success: The heroes catch their quarry before the fugitive reaches their destination, or before a lost or kidnapped creature comes to harm. Each character earns 2 Victories if the montage test was hard, or 1 Victory if it was easy or moderate, in addition to any Victories earned from combat during the montage test.

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Partial Success: If the quarry was trying to evade capture, they reach their destination. They find allies and a fortified position from which to defend themselves, or they might have time to cause more harm. If the quarry was lost or kidnapped, they are grievously injured when found. Each character earns 1 Victory if the montage test was moderate or hard, in addition to any Victories earned from combat during the montage test.

Total Failure: The trail has gone cold, and the heroes will need to seek fresh clues or a different approach before they can resume the hunt. Characters earn no Victories from the montage test, but might earn Victories from combat undertaken during the montage test.

Wilderness Race

The heroes must cross trackless wilderness, perhaps to reach a besieged city before it falls or seek the site where a curse is about to be activated. Getting there fast is a priority—but so is getting there alive.

Setting the Scene

The wilds hold unknown dangers. Characters need to figure out the best route while maintaining a good pace, watching out for hazards, and avoiding predatory monsters.

Montage Challenges

The following challenges can be part of the montage test:

Avoid Hazards: Characters can determine ways to overcome the natural hazards of the wilderness, such as finding insect-repelling herbs in a swamp or making snowshoes to cross tundra. *Suggested Characteristics:* Intuition, Reason. *Suggested Skills:* Heal, Nature, appropriate skill from the Crafting skill group (such as Alchemy to make bug repellent).

Carry Baggage: By carrying supplies for weaker party members, characters can increase the whole party's speed. *Suggested Characteristic:* Might. *Suggested Skills:* Endurance, Lift.

Find the Path: Avoiding getting lost is a major challenge for the characters. *Suggested Characteristics:* Intuition, Reason. *Suggested Skills:* Alertness, Nature, Navigate.

Keep Up Spirits: Characters can keep up the party's morale during a forced march with cheer and song. *Suggested Characteristic:* Presence. *Suggested Skills:* Lead, Music, Perform.

Keep Watch: Characters must be on constant guard against danger. *Suggested Characteristic:* Intuition. *Suggested Skills:* Alertness, Eavesdrop, Track.

Push On: Characters must be ready to pick up the pace and push past their fatigue. *Suggested Characteristics:* Might. *Suggested Skills:* Endurance, Lead; Drive, Handle Animals, or Ride if the party has mounts or vehicles.

Scout Ahead: Investigating the path ahead lets the characters avoid dead-ends and arduous terrain. *Suggested Characteristics:* Agility, Intuition. *Suggested Skills:* Alertness, Navigate, Sneak.

Optional Twist

At the end of the first round of the montage test, the characters' journey is interrupted by one of the following threats:

Predatory Monster: The characters stumble into or are stalked by a monstrous predator, and must engage in a standard combat encounter to overcome the threat or drive it off. If any character has obtained a success on the Scout Ahead challenge, you can let the characters make a group test to sneak past or set an ambush for the monster.

Unexpected Hazard: A natural hazard such as an avalanche, rockslide, or wildfire interrupts the journey. Each hero must make a test of your choice to avoid the hazard, losing a Recovery on a failure.

Montage Test Outcomes

One of the following outcomes ends the montage test:

Total Success: The heroes reach their goal in time. Each character earns 2 Victories if the montage test was hard, or 1 Victory if it was easy or moderate, in addition to any Victories earned from combat during the montage test.

Partial Success: To reach their goal in time, the heroes must sprint over the last leg of the journey, with each character spending 2 Recoveries to do so. (If even one character doesn't have 2 Recoveries remaining, the characters instead earn a total failure for the montage test.) Each character earns 1 Victory if the montage test was moderate or hard, in addition to any Victories earned from combat during the montage test.

Total Failure: The heroes don't arrive in time to avert catastrophe. Characters earn no Victories from the montage test, but might earn Victories from combat undertaken during the montage test.

Running Respites

When the heroes decide to take a respite (see Respites in Chapter 1: The Basics), your role as Director changes a bit. Most of the heroes' activities during respites revolve around downtime projects, which are typically self-directed. However, you still have levers you can pull to make the story interesting.

Safe Place

Heroes can't take a respite unless they're in a safe place. This typically means a place with a bed and four walls and a roof around them, where they're unlikely to get stabbed in their sleep. Characters aren't going to find 24 hours of peace to take a respite in a villain's lair, even if they barricade a door. However, this can become more of a gray area if the heroes attempt to take a respite while traveling in the wild.

"Why can't we camp in this seemingly peaceful wode for a day?" is the kind of thing you might decide is fine if you want the characters to be able to regain Stamina and Recoveries. Alternatively, you might want them to work harder for those resources, marking the wode as a dangerous place in the story. If the players want the heroes to take a respite in a place you deem unsafe, let them know it's impossible to get any meaningful rest or make progress on projects in that place while remaining constantly on guard for danger.

Too Many Respites?

It's up to the players how many respites the heroes take in a row. Characters eager to take a long series of respites to undertake downtime projects (Chapter 12) is fine, but they should always feel pressure to get back to the fight. Remember that villains don't stop plotting and conquering while the heroes rest. Their plans continue! If the characters are taking their sweet time with respites so they can create as many Healing Potions as possible, have them get wind of the latest evil actions that nearby villains are taking. Heroes wanting to defend the people and values they love had better stop respiting and start adventuring.

If you prefer a campaign that has few respites, you might want to deploy artisans, sages, and readily available project sources to allow the heroes a chance to craft useful items and do research, since their available time to do so will be limited.

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Project Events

Downtime project events are a Director's time to shine during downtime. Remember that these events (detailed in Chapter 12) are optional, and you can use them as frequently as you like. In general, more than one or two events per respite can be disruptive to the overall campaign. It's also fine to have no events if you just want to keep the campaign's main story rolling along.

When you're running downtime events, be sure to rotate which heroes are in the spotlight of the action. Don't focus on the same hero over and over again. You can also do a little preparation for events before you play them out, reading the event prompt and fleshing it out into a scene. Prompts are intentionally vaguely written so you can modify them as you see fit or easily create your own.

Respites Between Sessions

If your play time is limited, you can have the players do everything they need to do during a respite between your game sessions, provided they end a game session by taking a respite. Doing so lets you run any events over email or through a chat app. Then when folks return for the next session, they'll be ready to go with project rolls completed, XP tallied, and Stamina and Recoveries restored.

How Many Respites?

There's no right number of respites that works for every group. If you want the characters to be able to craft and research, you'll want to give them more downtime to do so. If you prefer to hand out all the treasure and secrets through adventuring, then they'll need fewer respites. A good pace for many games sees the heroes taking between ten and twenty respites during each level of play, with many of those respites strung together.

Victories and Respites

Ultimately, the players, not the Director, decide when the heroes take a respite. So even though you adjudicate whether the conditions are safe enough for a respite, this part of the pacing is effectively out of your hands. Typically, most heroes want to rest after every 4 to 6 Victories they earn, depending on how many Victories were earned in combat encounters.

Optional Rule: Average Roll

When the heroes take a long series of respites, it might not be fun for the players to do a ton of die rolling covering many projects. Instead of rolling, you can calculate the progress for each respite as if a hero had rolled a natural 11 on their progress roll, then adding appropriate bonuses. Although rolling lots of dice and hoping for breakthroughs can be a lot of fun, taking the average of the 2d10 roll allows players to get through a lot of downtime with minimal math.

Optional Rule: Easier Crafting

Every crafting project requires that a hero obtain the project's item prerequisite and a project source in a specific language before the project can be started. These requirements exist so you can control the pace at which heroes can craft an arsenal of treasures to defeat their foes.

That said, you can make it easier to craft treasures and other items by changing the rules to require either the item prerequisite or the project source but not both, or by removing the language restrictions on project sources. This works well in campaigns that don't have a lot of respites. Just keep in mind that removing these barriers can lead to the heroes crafting more items and unbalancing the game in their favor.

Granting Rewards

You should have as much fun giving out treasure, Renown, wealth, and titles to the characters as the players have earning those rewards (see Chapter 13: Rewards). But what's the right amount of treasure to give out without turning the heroes into total badasses who can simply cut down every dragon they meet? How often do the rules of the game expect a hero to earn Renown? What about titles? This section has answers for you!

Granting Treasures

Whenever you're planning on awarding treasures to the heroes, focus on items that are useful. Finding a magic bow isn't likely to excite a group that doesn't have a hero who loves ranged weapon combat. The players might even tell you (or you can ask) which treasures their heroes most desire.

Once you have treasures in mind, you can use the following progression as a baseline for the heroes to earn those treasures:

- A party should earn two leveled treasures per hero by 10th level. Some heroes need only one leveled treasure to be happy, though, so if you feel as if giving out another leveled treasure wouldn't actually help a character, you can swap that item out for a trinket of the character's current echelon.
- A party should earn one trinket per hero per echelon. Any trinket earned should be of a character's current echelon or lower.
- A party should also earn one to three consumables of their current echelon or lower each level.

You don't have to award the full complement of treasure to heroes—especially those using their downtime to craft things! You can spread out the pace at which characters earn treasures by having them find the project sources and item prerequisites for crafting an item instead of finding an item outright.

When you're planning an adventure, put the treasures and crafting materials the heroes can earn into your adventure outline (see Creating Adventures earlier in this chapter). Enemies who have access to treasures that can help them against the heroes don't keep those treasures hidden away. They use them in battle, after which victorious characters can claim them!

Treasures Above 1st Level

For a campaign in which the heroes start at 2nd level or higher, you can give those heroes the following starting treasures:

- At 1st echelon, each hero starts with a 1st-echelon trinket.
- At 2nd echelon, each hero starts with a leveled treasure and a 1st-echelon trinket.
- At 3rd echelon, each hero starts with two leveled treasures, a 1st-echelon trinket, and a 2nd-echelon trinket.
- At 4th echelon, each hero starts with two leveled treasures, a 1st-echelon trinket, a 2nd-echelon trinket, and a 3rd-echelon trinket.

The players can choose their hero's treasures, and can replace any leveled treasure or trinket for a consumable treasure of the hero's echelon or lower.

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Making New Treasures

You can easily create new types of leveled treasures for heroes to find using the enhancements from the Imbue Treasure project in Chapter 12: Downtime Projects.

You can also take any of the treasures in this book and easily reskin them. Do you wish Gecko Gloves were actually boots? Just change the description and the Hands keywords and you're good to go. Do you want the Icemaker Maul to be a dagger that creates pools of acid instead of an ice field? Change the Heavy Weapon keyword and swap the damage types, and you're ready to rock! Simply changing keywords, damage, and descriptions for treasures isn't going to break the game.

Awarding Titles

You don't need to grant heroes every title they qualify for. In fact, you probably shouldn't, lest they become too powerful too fast. As a general guideline, a hero should gain a new title about every other level, which you can accomplish using either of the following options:

- You can grant a hero a title during a significant moment in a campaign, such as after defeating a villain. The heroes are each awarded a title they earned that is chosen by you.
- You can allow a hero to choose a title they've earned from the titles available at their echelon each time they achieve an even-numbered level.

You should check in with your players occasionally to see if they have any specific titles they want to earn, then give them a chance to earn those titles. Doing so gets the players more involved in the campaign and gets the characters more driven to adventure.

Awarding Renown

The heroes earn Renown whenever they do something of significance, such as saving a town or … well, saving the world! As a general guideline, heroes should earn 1 Renown per level.

If you want the characters to be less famous than in a standard heroic tale, you can adjust this to give out Renown every other level. Alternatively, you can award Renown after each adventure if you want the heroes to become power players in the world more quickly.

How Many Retainers?

You can set limits on the number of retainers the heroes can have in their service. For a large group of heroes, having too many retainers can make combat complex, long, and unwieldy. Likewise, retainers are a great way to help a smaller group of heroes stand up to larger challenges. In general, it's a good idea to use retainers to help the heroes get the size of their party up to four but no larger than seven.

Granting Wealth

The heroes increase their wealth whenever they score a big payday or recover a huge hoard of treasure. Characters should earn 1 wealth every second level.

Awarding Hero Tokens

You can award hero tokens to the players for taking risks with their heroes beyond what the game typically expects of them. For instance, battling a group of monsters is part of the game and doesn't earn a hero token. However, the following activities might:

- A hero stands alone against a group of enemies to allow their comrades to escape.
- A hero willingly jumps into quicksand, into lava, off a cliff, or into similar peril to save another character.
- The group is presented with an easy way out of a difficult situation that involves lying, cheating, stealing, or the like, but they take the more arduous and honorable path.
- A hero gives away an important resource, such as a Healing Potion, to help another creature in need.

Awarding Victories

Use the following guidelines for awarding Victories to the heroes, increasing these values as desired for notably difficult challenges.

Combat Encounters

A successful combat encounter in which the party's objectives are achieved earns each hero 1 Victory. Particularly difficult encounters are worth 2 Victories when completed successfully. *Draw Steel: Monsters* has more information about Victories and combat difficulty.

Montage Tests

Each hero earns 1 Victory when they achieve total success on an easy or moderate montage test, and 2 Victories for total success on a hard montage test. They earn 1 Victory if they achieve a partial success on a moderate or hard montage test.

Negotiation

Each hero earns 1 Victory if the party ends a Negotiation with an NPC's interest at 3 or higher, with that interest 2 or more higher than it started, and with agreement on a deal.

Hazards and Traps

If the heroes overcome a complicated hazard or trap that required multiple tests to detect and survive, each earns 1 Victory.

Puzzles

If the heroes solve a complicated puzzle that feels to you as if it would take most people at least 10 minutes to complete, each earns 1 Victory.

Story Goals

If the heroes achieve a major story goal that accomplishes a quest, such as saving a prince trapped by an evil baron or stopping a necromancer from performing a world-ending ritual, each earns 1 Victory.

Clever Thinking

If the heroes use clever thinking to easily and surprisingly overcome or bypass a combat encounter, a negotiation, a montage test, a trap, a puzzle, or some other challenge that would have awarded them 1 or more Victories in a more difficult fashion, award each character the Victories they would have earned had they faced and overcome the problem head on.

Campaign: First Session

Ah, that new-campaign smell! The first session of any new long-term campaign is all about getting the players excited, comfortable, and ready to play. The first session of a campaign is sometimes referred to as "session 0" because of its focus on setup and character building—but when character building is done, you want to make sure your first session kicks off with maximum excitement!

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First, Business

At the start of your first session, you'll want to get some business out of the way before you dive into the fun of making characters.

Schedule

Talk to your players about the game's schedule. Determine with the group how often you'll play, what you plan to do when one or more players can't make it, and how you plan to communicate about the game when not playing.

Handling Disputes

Talk over and decide how you're going to settle rules disputes. We recommend that you make a ruling in the moment and then look up the rule after the session to keep the flow of play going.

Safety Tools

Talk about the safety tools you plan to use at the table. For more information about safety tools and a safety tool checklist you can use for your games, check out the MCDM Tabletop Safety Toolkit at *mcdm.gg/SafetyToolkit*.

Campaign Pitch

Go over your campaign pitch again (see the start of this chapter), and answer any questions the players have about it.

Player Suggestions

Ask the players what they'd like to see in the campaign and make notes around their responses. This can include anything from, "I'd love to play out some chase scenes!" to "I want to explore themes of loss and grief." These suggestions should be starting points for a conversation. If not all players are comfortable with certain themes or content requested by other players, this is a great time to discuss that (looping back to your safety tools discussion as appropriate), and to come to a consensus about what everyone wants out of the game.

House Rules

Go over any house rules you have with the players, and ask them if they have any house rules they'd like to add. House rules should always be discussed with the players, but ultimately, you get to decide which house rules are used in the campaign.

Make Heroes

During the first session of a new campaign, the players will likely spend most of their time building heroes. While they do so, it's a good idea for you to be available to answer any questions they have about the campaign and the setting. They might ask about everything from the name of the town where their first adventure starts, important organizations in the game, or if a specific language or skill will be useful in the campaign.

As your players make their heroes, you can take notes. It's a good idea to record each hero's name, ancestry, background, class, and complication (if any). Also record any important backstory details a player shares with you, such as their character's hometown, the names of rivals, loved ones, or enemies, and any organizations with which they have history.

Start With a Bang

When all else is done, it's a great idea to play an opening scene during your first session—ideally a scene that includes a combat encounter. This first encounter should give the players a taste of the delicious campaign you're cooking up for them and leave them eager for the next session.

Your opening encounter should introduce or hint at the villain the heroes face during their first adventure. You can use any of the following encounter ideas to get you started:

- While traveling to the settlement where their first adventure takes place, the heroes and their caravan or ship are attacked by brigands.
- The heroes enter a new town to find war dogs (see *Draw Steel: Monsters*) ready to publicly execute a noble who refused to bend the knee to the brutal tyrant Ajax.
- The heroes are at a tavern enjoying a night off when a band of gnoll raiders attacks and lights the place on fire.
- The heroes are camped in a swamp when undead emerge from the muck and surround them.
- While watching a theatrical performance, an actor (perhaps by accident) performs a ritual that opens a portal to the Abyssal Wasteland and summons a horde of demons.

The encounter you craft should be connected to the first adventure you plan to run. Keep this first encounter simple, and let each player get used to running their hero. You can always have a couple of villainous reinforcements arrive if the encounter is too easy!

If you've got still more time, you can keep playing a little longer, either by expanding the combat encounter or adding some exploration or travel. Otherwise, wrap the combat up, thank the players for a great first session, and start planning your next session.

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"Life's like a movie

Write your own ending

Keep believing

Keep pretending

We did just what we set out to do

Thanks to the lovers,

the dreamers,

and you."

Kermit T. Frog

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