



HOLLOWS

Playtest Edition

2023/01/30





WELCOME TO THE HOLLOW

A LONG TIME AGO, SOMETHING VERY BAD HAPPENED TO YOU.

NOW YOU ARE SOMETHING VERY BAD THAT HAPPENS TO
OTHER PEOPLE.

Your soul is sick with it. Your spirit leadweight heavy. Your hands
stained with rotten ichor. Your every dawn a death knell.

You have your knife. Not just any knife: *your* knife. A sliver of sharpness
that severs flesh and sinew. A perfect point through which to exact
your will. It sings to you in a thousand bloody reflections. Dying
breaths hold the words of prophets. Truth spatters from split skin.

Your knife whispers: *you are unstoppable.*

You can't stop. Even if you wanted to.

You have your gun. Not just any gun; *your* gun. A steel lightning
bolt. A sledgehammer in your palm. It speaks to you through
the reek of gunsmoke. Secrets slip through a skin of oil and
tarnish. Exit wounds burst and blossom into visceral insight.

Your gun roars: *this world is yours for the taking.*

But this world is just as sick as you.

You dreamt it. Saw it in the scatterings of birds and the wind
through the trees. Tasted it on your tongue, like rust and ashes.

The world is sour. And here, sourer still: a wretched knot of torment.
A stinking sump of loss and fear. A spreading cancer that twists
everything around it. Plague, madness, grief and ruin. A *Hollow*.

God's light can't touch this place. But you can.

You can tear it to shreds.

You are righteous. You are undying. You are every nightmare's worst
nightmare. You are white-knuckle clinging to life and death in either
hand. You are the End Times, and the Flood is coming fast.

You are a Hunter.

Words: Grant Howitt and Christopher Taylor

Development editing: Zach Cox and Maz Hamilton

Illustration: Lucas Utani, Leslie Cope and Arborwin McJanda

Layout and graphic design: Minerva McJanda

Line editing, copy editing, typesetting and proof reading: Maz Hamilton

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Rowan, Rook and Decard
6 Long Lane
Stannington
Sheffield S6 6EE
United Kingdom



**ROWAN, ROOK
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WWW.ROWANROOKANDDECARD.COM

CONTENTS

WELCOME TO THE HOLLOW	3	PLAYING THE GAME	71
INTRODUCTION	7	EXPLORATION	72
THE WORLD	8	ABSTRACT RULES	72
HOW TO USE THIS PLAYTEST RULESET	10	FIGHTS DURING EXPLORATION	73
SAFETY TOOLS	10	ZONES	73
TONE	11	THE LAY OF THE LAND	74
		ROLLING DURING EXPLORATION	74
		LORE	78
		DOOM AND BANES	80
TUTORIAL: BLOODING	15	COMBAT	81
PREGENERATED CHARACTERS	15	THE HUNT	81
THE SERGEANT	16	COMBAT RULES	82
THE DOCTOR	17	DEATH	94
THE GUARD	18	ANCHORS	96
THE PRIEST	19	REST	100
THE SCAVENGER	20	THE REFUGE	100
		THE REFUGE SHEET	103
EXPLORATION	21		
HUNT	27	HOLLOWS	104
REST	34	STEEL CITY	106
WHAT NOW?	35	THE TALE	110
		ZONES	111
CHARACTER CREATION	37	MORNINGMIRE	124
CHARACTER CREATION IN BRIEF	38	THE TALE	124
STATISTICS	38	ZONES	128
WHO YOU WERE	40		
THE WEAPONS	43	THANKS FOR PLAYING;	138
THE KNIFE	44	WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?	
THE RIFLE	46		
THE SWORD	48	HANDOUTS	
THE BLUDGEON	50	THE GRID	140
THE BOOK	52	CHARACTER SHEET	141
THE GREATAXE	54	REFUGE SHEET	142
THE PISTOL	56	EDGES, BANES AND TAGS	143
THE SPEAR	58	WEAPON SHEETS	144
THE ARMOUR	60		
THE SHOTGUN	62		
THE STAFF	64		
UTILITY EQUIPMENT	66	CHANGELOG	155
UPDATING YOUR CORE STATS	67		
ADJUSTING FOR LARGE OR SMALL GROUPS	67		
CORRUPTION	67		
A CHARACTER SHEET	68		
A WEAPON SHEET	69		



INTRODUCTION

IN WRETCHED DIMENSIONAL BACKWATERS, VICIOUS CREATURES STALK THE BLASTED LANDSCAPE AND SPREAD SICKNESS, BLIGHT AND MADNESS THROUGH THE WIDER WORLD. BORN OF TORMENT AND TRAUMA, THESE ENTITIES ARE A SICKNESS AND A STAIN ON THE LAND. YOU, SCARRED WITH YOUR OWN DARKNESS, HUNT THESE MONSTERS.

HOLLOWS is a tactical combat roleplaying game about hunting down and messily killing big monsters: slaying other people's personal demons with malevolent weapons and revelling in the cursed joy of the Hunt. Here, we provide rules for exploring Hollows, hunting the Entities that live within them, and finding some respite from the brutal horror in the Refuge. Hunters bathe in the cursed blood of their fallen foes, risking their very souls for greater power. Their innate attachment to the Hollows in which they hunt means that nothing as simple as death will stop them; each time they fall in battle, they grow more powerful and strange, until they too one day tear open a Hollow of their own.

We don't provide rules for operating outside of Hollows. As a Hunter, your character's life is a string of nightmares punctuated by hot bloodshed and brief glimpses of humanity. For the purposes of this playtest, we make contact with you when you enter a Hollow and break contact when you leave.

Once mighty,
now a ruin
populated by
scavengers
picking over
an industrial
wasteland.

Wretched unreal
spaces born of
torment and
cruelty that
poison the land.

Manifestations of
hatred and harm,
ripe with power.

THE WORLD

The Isles

The Isles – the Kingdom, the Domain, the Royal Motherland – is where the Hunters live. The Isles are a once-powerful group of countries allied together under a bickering royal family and a parliament hungry for civil war.

They used to *make* things here. The factories, now dead and rusted, once roared day and night to turn the fruits of the earth and tribute from the empire into mechanical wonders – the sharpest steel, the finest clockwork, the most fearsome guns. The train lines criss-crossing the country lay quiet where they once ferried a world's worth of goods back and forth. The countryside, no longer green and pleasant, is rotten with pollutants or overgrown with bramble and briar thanks to decades of decline.

Struggling in the death throes of their empire, the people of the Isles sift through the industrial ruin of their once-great country in search of meaning.

Hollows

A Hollow is a pocket of unreality nestled within the real world – a curdled, rotten cancer of a thing that expands year on year. There are a wide variety of theories on what causes them to appear, but the uniting factor between them is that if enough torment and hideousness happen to a place, person or thing it plants the seed of a Hollow within them, and that seed will eventually grow and burst into a cursed otherworld.

Each Hollow is unique. Within their boundaries, the world is twisted into violent and unsettling shapes, buildings spiral up nonsensical towards a smog-choked sky, pallid inhabitants live brutal lives of fear and murder, vicious creatures stalk the land and rust, decay and filth coat every surface. (This is true of Hollows in the Isles, at least; they occur everywhere in the known world.) Time passes faster inside the pressure-cooker nightmare, too – ten years can pass in a Hollow while barely a month goes by outside.

The longer a Hollow exists, the more bloated and dangerous it becomes. Even though normal people cannot perceive Hollows, the presence of one bleeds through the world around it and causes sickness, madness, and death.

Entities

Though each Hollow is home to a host of inhabitants, the most dangerous creatures within are Entities: great beasts that carry the weight of spite, grief and shame upon them and visit campaigns of violence and death on their neighbours. Some are mechanical monsters made of screeching metal and uncanny clockwork; others are flesh and blood twisted and broken into a new and unsettling shape; others still are semi-spectral, or garishly beautiful, or a mob of individuals acting with a single grim intent. It is these Entities that hold the majority of the magical essence within a Hollow, and usually most of the authority as well.

Lords

Each Hollow centres on a particularly powerful Entity: a Lord. Like the Hollows that hold them, each Lord is unique thanks to the circumstances of their creation – but all of them are deadly. They are guarded – and sometimes challenged – by Vassals: lesser Entities within the Hollow, but still formidable beasts.

The only sure-fire means of closing a Hollow is to kill the Lord, severing the link that sustains the environment – but all the guns and soldiers in the Isles are worthless against a Lord and their Vassals, for they cannot enter the Hollow itself to fight them.

Hunters

Hunters, on the other hand, *can* enter the Hollow. Hunters are individuals who have the seed of a Hollow within them, but – through force of will, strength of belief, or sheer bloody-mindedness – do not allow it to blossom into a full rift. Instead, it roils within them, and it allows them to harvest the blood of Lords and their Vassals and grow in power as a result.

Hunters are – on the whole – stronger, faster and tougher than the average human. They can withstand pain and shock that would render a normal person unconscious, but they still feel every ounce of it. As they harvest more blood, their abilities shift from uncanny to supernatural.

Finally: Hunters cannot die. If they fall in battle, they awaken hours or days later with aches and pains, but no serious ill-effects. But each death empowers the seed within them, and every Hunter knows that one day that blight will blossom and they will become Lord of their personal Hollow. The longer it takes, the worse the Hollow will be.

You are a Hunter.

⓪Petty kings
of rot and ruin
at the heart of
the ⓪Hollow.

⓪Deathless
killers of the
unnatural,
cursed to
become that
which they fight.

HOW TO USE THIS PLAYTEST RULESET

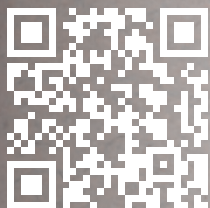
This document is designed to test the core elements of *HOLLOWS*, and make sure that it functions. It doesn't reflect the entirety of what we hope *HOLLOWS* will become, but rather a smaller subset – with some new ideas about how to present information. We hope you'll help us make it as good as it can possibly be.

Firstly, it's a good idea to play through the tutorial section (p. 15) together as a group, as this will give you all a handle on how the mechanics of the game work. This is especially important for players, as understanding their options in a fight can be the difference between success and failure, and balancing the game is much harder for a gamesmaster (GM) whose group is still learning.

Once you've finished the tutorial (and if you're interested in continuing), the players can either stick with the pregenerated characters from the tutorial, choosing a second Weapon and associated ability each to continue, or the group can make their own original player characters using the methods outlined on p. 37.

We've provided two Hollows – Steel City (p. 106) and Morningmire (p. 124) – to explore. You don't have to play these in any order and there's no connection between them. You can play either or both. Advances earned in one Hollow should carry over to the next one. This may make the second Hollow you play easier – this is part of what we're hoping to understand in more depth through this playtest.

When you decide to finish play, we'd love it if you could fill out the playtest feedback forms. There are different forms for the GM and the players, and both can be found at RRDGAMES.COM/HOLLOWS-RESOURCES.



SAFETY TOOLS

HOLLOWS is a horror game and, as such, has some pretty horrible stuff in it – but it should still be enjoyable and fun to play, not merely upsetting or distressing. Our main goal as games designers is to make sure that every player enjoys themselves at the table, and one of the ways we can help everyone do that is by encouraging the use of safety tools.

Before play starts, we recommend you discuss with your group what each of your individual 'lines' and 'veils' are. Coined by Ron Edwards in his game *Sex and Sorcery*, this is a useful tool to get everyone on the same page before you begin. Lines are topics, events, themes or subject matter that the player does not want to be present in the game at all. Veils are topics, events, themes or subject matter that the player does not want to go into in detail within the game.

Everyone at the table must respect these. If something in the game would break a player's line, remove it from the game and change it for something else. Tone, theme and story aren't as important as making sure everyone is enjoying themselves – change it and move on.

While the game is happening, we recommend the use of the X Card (originally created by John Stravopoulos). This is a physical card with

an 'X' written on it. (In online games, you can type X, say 'I want to use the X Card,' or make an X with your arms if you're on camera.) If something happens in the game that makes you uncomfortable, tap the X card. If someone taps the X card, change what's going on to something that doesn't make them uncomfortable and move on. The person who tapped the card doesn't need to explain themselves any more than is needed to clarify what's being X-ed.

The X Card is an especially useful tool because it can be difficult to outline and rank a list of your fears, particularly in unfamiliar groups or short games, and because it's impossible to know everything that could come up and how it might affect everyone. Using the X Card allows us to take care of one another in an active and dynamic way.

Each Hollow also includes content warnings, and we recommend discussing these with your group before you start play. If anyone isn't comfortable playing with these topics, please take that seriously; we don't want anyone to be distressed or discomforted by the game in ways that aren't fun.

TONE

The tone inherent in *HOLLOWS* is *bleak* and *brutal*. The player characters are all struggling with difficult pasts and, rather than healing and moving on from those pasts, they are – for the most part – weaponising them into greater and greater acts of violence. The creatures they fight are inhuman and strange but each one is drawn from the psyche of a person. The world that Hunters are striving for by scouring corruption out of the Isles is one they believe they will never see; they seem trapped in this cycle of bloodshed and death.

But: there is hope, here. A tiny thing; a shred of understanding that things can be better. Sometimes, to save the body we have to sever the limb.

The thing about bleak brutality is that it is unsustainable at the table, and that's fine and an expected part of play. You can't be expected to carry a dolorous and grim tone for an entire session – and there's no need to stamp down on moments where players, or indeed characters, enjoy themselves. Let players make jokes and goof off, celebrate their victories with them, and then mash their characters into paste with nightmare abominations. The best horror is contrasted with lightness, as otherwise it lacks real impact.

Play Structure

HOLLOWS games work in a cycle of three stages:

- **Exploration**, where the Hunters are exploring the Hollow in search of Lore and Entities. This leads to...
- **The Hunt**, (or combat) where the Hunters confront an Entity in its lair and kill it, or are killed by it. After a Hunt, Hunters can...
- **Rest**, where the Hunters hole up in the Refuge – an extradimensional space – and prepare for their next outing.

Each of these sections is covered in detail within the rules in this playtest. Depending on your group, you should be able to perform this loop once or twice per session. A Hunt should take around an hour or so; Exploration is more open-ended and can last anywhere from five minutes to an entire session. Rest is generally the shortest part of a session and operates as a downtime, so it's often glossed over in favour of something more action-oriented – but it can also provide a welcome change of tone after a dark period of play.

Player Tips For HOLLOWs

Describe your actions. What does it look like when your character does things? What do their Weapons look like? How do they react to being hurt? Work with the GM to paint the world of HOLLOWs.

Be proactive. During Exploration, ask lots of questions and act on the answers. Strive ahead and get yourself in trouble. Poke the world to see what happens. The only punishment you'll receive is a slightly more difficult Hunt, and you can handle that just fine.

Learn the rules. Pay attention during the tutorial. Make sure you know what your Weapon abilities do and how they interact with other players. This game is a lot more fun when you understand how all the pieces fit together and you can use them effectively.

Take risks. It's only a game. And if your character dies, odds are that they'll get right back up again and start causing havoc. Do the exciting thing during Hunts, trust your luck, and have a good time.

Gamesmaster Tips For HOLLOWs

Pitch the game. It's up to you to find a suitable player group to play with, and part of that is making sure that people understand what the game entails. Let them know that this is a combat-heavy game with a technical battle grid, because that's definitely not the sort of thing that Rowan, Rook and Decard have been famous for in the past. Let them know that it's a grim and brutal game about murdering horrible monsters, because that might not be everyone's cup of tea.

Describe the world. Hollows are wretched places and Entities are grisly nightmares, and it's up to you to paint the world as evocatively as possible. Mention what the Hunters can see, smell, hear, touch or taste in any given moment. If you can, stand up and stomp around to show the thunderous footsteps of a behemoth, cower and shiver to portray a terrified ghoul, and always remember that the place itself is hostile and wants the Hunters to leave.

Encourage proactive play. During Exploration, reward players that ask questions, run ahead and get into trouble, and interact with the world you put forward. When we say 'reward' we mean both in terms of Lore, which is a nice mechanical thing to have, but also in terms of interaction and excitement. Whenever a player makes an action in a game, more than anything they want *something* to happen – good or bad isn't really important. They want to feel as though their actions have consequences, so give them some.

Go hard. HOLLOWs is intended to be vicious and the mechanics mean that player characters can die, get back up, and come back for another go with better information. Be brutal and uncompromising; choose the worst thing for the player characters. Punish mistakes. If you pull your punches with Entities and your players understand their abilities, they can be a pushover. Don't give the players an inch in combat.

What We Need From You

The most important thing you can do after a playtest session of HOLLOWs is to fill out the relevant playtest form and tell us how the game went. You can find all the forms, as well as any updated play resources, at RRDGAMES.COM/HOLLOWS-RESOURCES. Each form comes with a guide on how to best complete it so we can get usable feedback from you, but in short:

- **Tell us who you are.** We want to credit you in the book once it's complete. Same goes for any players who take part but don't fill out a form.
- **Tell us what you picked.** What Weapons, abilities and equipment did the players choose? We want to see if there's a bias towards certain elements of the game and address this (if it needs addressing).
- **Tell us what you felt.** Did the game feel exciting, or frustrating? Were players scared, or bored? Did combat feel tense and nail-biting or by-the-numbers? We want to see how the game feels to play.
- **Bring us problems, not solutions.** Your role is to find problems with the game; our role is to fix them. We can learn a lot more from, *'I chose the Pistol but I felt that it was awkward to use and my attacks weren't having an impact,'* than *'increase base Pistol Capacity by 2 and up Wound damage by 1.'*

Feedback And Discussion

- The feedback form for GMs is here: BIT.LY/HOLLOWS-GM-FORM
- The feedback form for players is here: BIT.LY/HOLLOWS-PLAYER-FORM
- You can also join the Rowan, Rook and Decard Discord to discuss HOLLOWs with other players here: [DISCORD.GG/Z3HWADX](https://discord.gg/Z3HWADX)

Content Warnings

HOLLOWs is a horror game, at heart, so there will always be some content that has the potential to upset or distress players. We have included lists of content warnings at the start of each Hollow and the Tutorial, and we encourage you to discuss these as a group before you play. Generally, it's safe to assume there will be body horror, physical and psychological violence, and blood.





TUTORIAL: BLOODING

WHAT FOLLOWS IS A STRUCTURED SESSION OF PLAY INTENDED TO TEACH THE GM AND PLAYERS HOW THE MECHANICS OF HOLLOWES WORK AND FEEL. WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU FOLLOW ALONG WITH IT TO GET A HANDLE ON THE GAME.

CONTENT WARNINGS
Violence against animals.

We have provided five pregenerated Hunters for the players to use. Unlike regular Hunters, these characters only carry one Weapon and piece of Exploration equipment rather than two, so they're less powerful and easier to play. This is their first Hunt, though they might know each other from their previous lives.

If you have more than five players, you can use these characters as a base to create additional Hunters. Pick one you like the look of and then change the Weapon form and the chosen Tier 1 ability attached to their Weapon.

THE SERGEANT

THE SERGEANT USES A RIFLE TO ENGAGE AT RANGE AND INFLICT HEAVY DAMAGE. THEY'RE A GOOD SHOT, AND THEY'RE TOUGH, SO THEY CAN SURVIVE FOR A WHILE IF THEY GET CORNERED.

Faction: The Crown

Military and monarchy. Crumbling grandeur and archaic traditions.

Origin: Sergeant

Squad leaders who work hard to be respected.

Seed: Deserter

You ran from your duty, and people got hurt.

9

STRONG

13

HARD

8

QUICK

13

SHARP

8

WISE

RESOLVE

WOUNDS

WEAPONS	FORM	APPEARANCE
Rifle: Attack with Sharp at Range, Quick at Close with disadvantage (roll two d20s, and GM picks which to use for your result)	Repeating: 3/2, Capacity 3	An imported lever-action with a mean kick.
Sword: Attack with Strong at Close.	Heavy: 2/2	A stolen cavalry sabre, heavily notched and worn.

EXPLORATION EQUIPMENT

GIVES ADVANTAGE ON APPROPRIATE ACTIONS DURING EXPLORATION

Good Boots. Climb, walk, and kick in doors.

HUNT EQUIPMENT

CAN BE EXHAUSTED DURING A HUNT TO GRANT ITS EFFECT

Extra Ammo. Immediate. When a weapon you are wielding reaches 0 Capacity, restore it to full Capacity.

CORRUPTION

DEATHS	ROLL TN	BENEFIT
1 <div></div>	0	
2 <div></div>	2	+1 Resolve
3 <div></div>	4	
4 <div></div>	6	+1 to any stat
5 <div></div>	8	
6+ <div></div>	10	+2 to any other stat

BLIGHT:

WEAPON ABILITIES

RIFLE
Obscured Position. *They won't know what hit them.*
When you have a terrain tag, inflict +1 Wound damage.

SWORD
Arm's Reach. *You've got it right where you want it.*
If you hit with an attack, you may choose to remove 1 Threat token from your area.

NOTES

THE DOCTOR

THE DOCTOR USES A PISTOL TO ENGAGE AT RANGE, BUT THEY CAN INFLICT DAMAGE UP CLOSE AS WELL - THEY'RE A GOOD ALL-ROUNDER. THEY CAN SUPPORT THEIR ALLIES BY GIVING THEM OPPORTUNITIES TO DISENGAGE OR LINE UP THEIR ATTACKS, AND THEY CAN HEAL THEMSELVES AND OTHERS IF THEY PULL OUT OF THE ACTION.

Faction: The Conclave

Origin: Doctor

Seed: Betrayed

*Mystics, academics and scientists.
A secret society riven by jealousy.*

Searching for meaning in chaos.

Sold out by those you trusted.

8 STRONG

8 HARD

11 QUICK

14 SHARP

11 WISE

RESOLVE:

WOUNDS ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

WEAPONS

FORM

APPEARANCE

Pistol: Attack with **Sharp** at Range, **Quick** at Close.

Revolver: 2/1,
Capacity 3.

A heavy service revolver with an eye etched into the grip.

Sword: Attack with **Quick** at Close.

Short: 2/2

Oversized bonesaw sharpened to a wicked point.

EXPLORATION EQUIPMENT

GIVES ADVANTAGE ON APPROPRIATE ACTIONS DURING EXPLORATION

Dowsing Kit. Navigate towards weirdness.

HUNT EQUIPMENT

CAN BE EXHAUSTED DURING A HUNT TO GRANT ITS EFFECT

First Aid Satchel. In Support, restore 4 **Wounds** to yourself or an ally.

CORRUPTION

DEATHS

ROLL TN

BENEFIT

1 ☐

0

2 ☐

2

+1 Resolve

3 ☐

4

4 ☐

6

+1 to any stat

5 ☐

8

6+ ☐

10

+2 to any other stat

WEAPON ABILITIES

PISTOL

Covering Fire. Put it on the back foot. When you would inflict **Wound** damage with an attack, you may instead opt to inflict **Resolve** damage and one ally at Close may make an immediate manoeuvre.

SWORD

Rally. Guide them to victory. When you Guard, an ally in your area may Focus as an immediate action.

NOTES

BLIGHT:

THE GUARD

THE GUARD IS AN UNCOMPLICATED FRONT-LINE COMBATANT WIELDING A BLUDGEON. THEY CAN BRING THE ENTITY'S RESOLVE DOWN QUICKLY, OPENING IT UP FOR WOUNDING ATTACKS FROM OTHER CHARACTERS.

Faction: The House
A Parliament, of sorts. Civil war brews in a hundred hearts.

Origin: Militia
Armed enforcers and guards.

Seed: Betrayer
You turned on those who relied on you.

13

STRONG

12

HARD

11

QUICK

8

SHARP

8

WISE

RESOLVE

WOUNDS

WEAPONS	FORM	APPEARANCE
Bludgeon: Attack with Strong at Close	Brutal: 3/1, +1 Resolve damage at Front.	A wooden club with hobnails hammered into the head.
Spear: Attack with Quick at Close.	Heavy: 2/3	A repurposed ceremonial glaive, some tassels intact.

EXPLORATION EQUIPMENT
GIVES ADVANTAGE ON APPROPRIATE ACTIONS DURING EXPLORATION

Gin. Start a fire or start a party.

HUNT EQUIPMENT
CAN BE EXHAUSTED DURING A HUNT TO GRANT ITS EFFECT

Shield. Immediate. Upgrade a defence roll by one step.

CORRUPTION		
DEATHS	ROLL TN	BENEFIT
1 <div></div>	0	
2 <div></div>	2	+1 Resolve
3 <div></div>	4	
4 <div></div>	6	+1 to any stat
5 <div></div>	8	
6+ <div></div>	10	+2 to any other stat

BLIGHT:

WEAPON ABILITIES

BLUDGEON
Heartless. *This thing's own mother wouldn't recognise it when you're done.* Before you roll to attack, you may mark 1 **Resolve**; if you do so, your attack inflicts +1/+0 if it hits.

SPEAR
Trap. *Just try and take me down.* When you are in an area with 3 or more Threat tokens on it, inflict +1 **Wound** damage.

NOTES

THE PRIEST

THE PRIEST CAN HEAL OTHER HUNTERS, BUT THEY'RE NOT VERY TOUGH THEMSELVES. THEIR BOOK INFLECTS RELIABLE DAMAGE AT RANGE OR UP CLOSE, SO THEY CAN MOVE TO WHERE THEY'RE NEEDED MOST AND STILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE HUNT.

Faction: The Temple

The new de facto state religion, spreading fables of fire, war and conquest.

Origin: Priest

Leading the masses into glory.

Seed: Heretic

You worship forbidden masters.

8 STRONG

9 HARD

8 QUICK

10 SHARP

16 WISE

RESOLVE ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

WOUNDS ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

WEAPONS

FORM

APPEARANCE

Book: Attack with **Wise** vs **Wyrd** at Close or Ranged.

Sacred: 2/2. When you Guard, an ally in your area restores 1 Resolve.

A singed, leather bound tome of prophecies and prayers.

Bludgeon: Attack with **Strong** at Close.

Agile: 2/2

Lit steel-wire torch inscribed with countless angelic eyes.

EXPLORATION EQUIPMENT

GIVES ADVANTAGE ON APPROPRIATE ACTIONS DURING EXPLORATION

Lantern. See things in dark places.

HUNT EQUIPMENT

CAN BE EXHAUSTED DURING A HUNT TO GRANT ITS EFFECT

Sacred Relic. User restores 3 **Resolve**.

CORRUPTION

DEATHS

ROLL TN

BENEFIT

1 ☐

0

2 ☐

2

+1 Resolve

3 ☐

4

4 ☐

6

+1 to any stat

5 ☐

8

6+ ☐

10

+2 to any other stat

WEAPON ABILITIES

BOOKS

Remake. Speak their bones back into their ordained form. Attack action. Mark 1 **Wound** to restore 2 **Wounds** on an ally in your area. If performed in Support, do not mark a **Wound**.

BLUDGEON

Fearless. You never hide; you're always where you mean to be. Gain +2 maximum **Resolve**. You no longer gain the positive benefits of terrain (you gain no reduction in **Wound** damage from Shielded terrain, for example), but you can still Take Cover.

NOTES

BLIGHT:

THE SCAVENGER

THE SCAVENGER IS AN EFFECTIVE TANK (AND GOOD AT INFLECTING DAMAGE, TOO). THEY CAN USE THEIR SPEAR ABILITY TO MANIPULATE THREAT AND KEEP ATTENTION FOCUSED AWAY FROM MORE FRAGILE HUNTERS.

Faction: The People
The embittered populace of the Isles. Tired, hungry, and desperate.

Origin: Scavenger
Haunting the abandoned cities, picking over ruins.

Seed: Dispossessed
They took everything from you.

9

STRONG

12

HARD

13

QUICK

7

SHARP

8

WISE

RESOLVE

WOUNDS

WEAPONS	FORM	APPEARANCE
Spear: Attack with Quick at Close.	Heavy: 2/3.	A grim polearm made from jagged reclaimed metal and barbed wire.
Knife: Attack with Quick at Close. Attack with Sharp at Ranged.	Weighted: 2/2, and you gain a ranged attack.	A bandolier of kitchen knives, chisels and shivs.

EXPLORATION EQUIPMENT
GIVES ADVANTAGE ON APPROPRIATE ACTIONS DURING EXPLORATION

Rope. Tie something or someone up, or climb safely.

HUNT EQUIPMENT
CAN BE EXHAUSTED DURING A HUNT TO GRANT ITS EFFECT

Lure. Reposition all Hunters 1.

CORRUPTION		
DEATHS	ROLL TN	BENEFIT
1 <div></div>	0	
2 <div></div>	2	+1 Resolve
3 <div></div>	4	
4 <div></div>	6	+1 to any stat
5 <div></div>	8	
6+ <div></div>	10	+2 to any other stat

BLIGHT:

WEAPON ABILITIES

SPEAR
Goad. *The stupid creature is two steps behind you.* When you Guard, you may place a Threat token on your area or an adjacent area, or Push or Pull one Threat.

SPEAR
Dodge. *They're going to wish they'd killed you sooner.* Mark 1 Resolve to defend from an Entity attack with Quick instead of any other stat. If you roll under your Quick on the defend roll, you may Move to any adjacent area as an immediate action.

NOTES

EXPLORATION

You have been tracking this wretched beast for hours. The sky is stained bruise-black, the sun is pale and wan, the trees are sickly and rotting away beneath their bark. You find the ruin of a decrepit outbuilding and see a streak of the thing's blood smeared across the stones. It came this way.

In HOLLOWS, Exploration is loose and abstract in comparison to the structured grid-based Hunt sections. Player characters traverse the world in search of Lore and Entities, and the person playing the role of gamesmaster – the GM – describes that world and how it reacts to their presence.

This is a minor Hollow, not a fully-fledged one. Perhaps it is old and dying, or it is young and yet to develop. But the Hollowed Boar is the only Entity within, and it is injured. When the tutorial begins, the Hunters are tracking the Boar to its lair: a castle, shattered long ago by civil war, and left to crumble to ruins by a disinterested and feckless nobility.

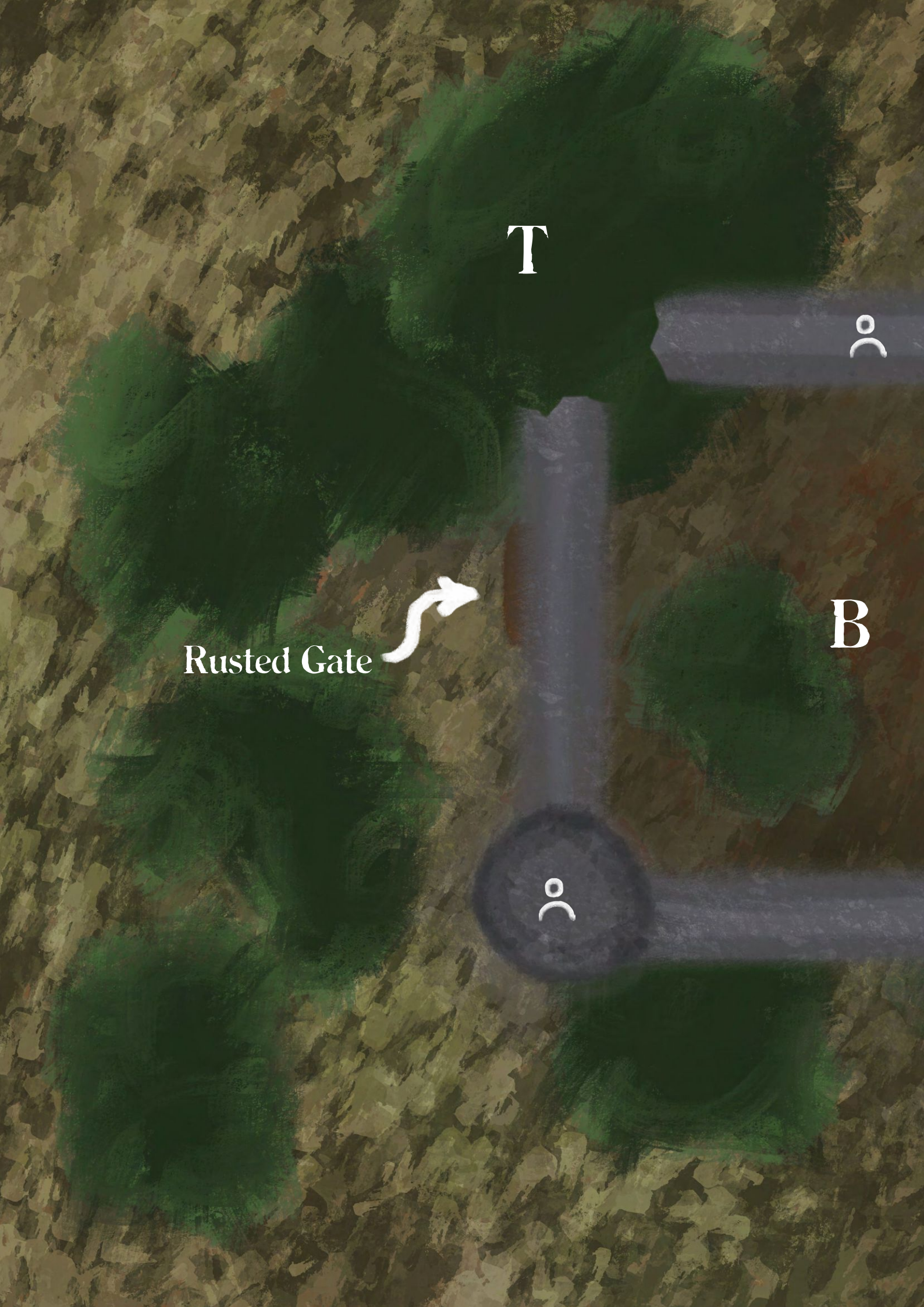
Peeking out from the ruins are members of the Boar's court: half-human, half-boar creatures wielding rotten branches and shattered masonry as clubs. They have built traps to keep intruders away from their Lord, but their time is running out.

In HOLLOWS, we make a distinction between fighting something important – an Entity – and fighting something unimportant, such as devoted cultists, wild or corrupted animals, desperate inhabitants, and so on. Rather than use the combat rules for unimportant fights, simply treat the fight like any other objective, and ask for appropriate rolls to overcome it.

You'll note that Hunters *cannot die* outside of a Hunt. They can still get hurt, slowed, endangered or otherwise messed up as part of an Exploration, but death is out of the question. We represent general misfortune with Doom, and the GM spends Doom directly before a Hunt to make the fight more difficult (see below for more details).

The castle – or what remains of it, at least – is made of broken grey stone covered in moss and lichen. Trees have grown up through the foundations, and walls have collapsed in strange patterns, leading to a mazelike structure of walkways, cut-throughs and hiding places. The closer the party approaches to the Boar at the centre, the worse the stench of piss and musk and rotting fruit becomes.

Usually, you'll improvise a description of each location, using prompts from the players and the description of the zone – but to make this tutorial as easy as possible to run, we've included a map of the area that you'll be guiding the player characters through. It's not a very detailed map, so you should use it as an inspiration for your own descriptions rather than treating it as gospel.

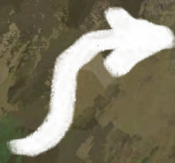


T



B

Rusted Gate





Courtier



Hollowed Boar



Trap



Lore



T

Walkway

T

Hunters'
Approach

Rolling Dice For Exploration

When a player wants to do something that isn't immediately obvious or that has a risk of failing, they should roll a single D20, aiming to roll under one of their stats. The result is compared to the Target Number of the task – the TN – which will be 8 or 10 during this tutorial. See the flowchart on p. 26 for examples of TNs for different tasks.

- If the result is over their relevant stat, the action fails. The GM marks Doom and tells them how they've made the situation more difficult.
- If the result is under their relevant stat and equal to or under the TN, the action is a partial success. The GM marks Doom and tells them how the situation changes, including how they've made it more difficult.
- If the result is under their relevant stat and over the TN, the action succeeds.
- If the result is equal to their stat, the action critically succeeds. The player gains 1 Lore and overcomes the challenge with ease.

Sometimes players might get the opportunity to roll with advantage or disadvantage. On rolls with advantage, the player rolls 2D20 and chooses which they would prefer to resolve the action. On rolls with disadvantage, the player rolls 2D20 but this time the GM chooses which they prefer to resolve the action.

WHAT STAT SHOULD THE PLAYER ROLL UNDER?

- Are they being destructive, powerful or vicious? Roll under **Strong**.
- Are they being tough, resistant or intimidating? Roll under **Hard**.
- Are they being fast, decisive, sneaky or deceitful? Roll under **Quick**.
- Are they being keen-eyed, aware and intelligent? Roll under **Sharp**.
- Are they being intuitive, introspective or mystical? Roll under **Wise**.

Lore And Doom

If the Hunters poke around the castle looking for information, they can uncover Lore. Normally Lore is randomly rolled (D3 or D3+1 per zone). In this tutorial there is only one zone – the castle – and it awards 3 Lore when explored successfully. Lore is an abstract measure of the Hunters' research and discoveries, and they can use it to unlock Edges, which make a Hunt easier to complete.

Each instance of Lore has a description attached to it, detailing what it represents in the fiction. In this castle, the Lore takes the form of a pennant displaying a crown attached to the rusted head of a boar spear.

If things go wrong while the Hunters are exploring and they fail rolls, the party will mark Doom. Each time the party marks Doom, they should add 1 to the current party Doom total. The GM will use Doom to make

the eventual fight with the Hollowed Boar harder, but it doesn't have any effects when it's acquired. The GM might like to use it to add flavour to their descriptions, for instance by including a sense of foreboding, distant bestial grunting, or shadows gathering around the Hunters' feet.

Exploration Equipment

Each Hunter has a piece of Exploration equipment listed on their character sheet. When the Hunter attempts an action that makes use of their Exploration equipment, they roll with advantage – they roll with 2D20 and may choose either result to resolve the action. Hunters can use Exploration equipment as much as they like.

FOR EXAMPLE: The Sergeant has the Good Boots Exploration Equipment. The Sergeant's player describes kicking open a mouldering door to provide access deeper into the castle. They roll 2D20 and choose either dice to resolve the action.

Exploring: Example

The Sergeant is picking their way through the ruins of the castle in search of their quarry; it's misty, damp, and dark in here, and thickets of overgrowth block clear line of sight. Their player asks: 'Can I see any sign of the boar from where I am?'

'Not especially,' responds the GM. 'How could you get a better vantage point?'

'I'll try to climb the ruins,' says the Sergeant's player, 'and see what I can see from up there.'

'Sounds good – roll under your Strong, Target Number 8.'

'Can I get an advantage for my Good Boots equipment?'

'Absolutely! Roll an extra dice.'

The Sergeant's player rolls 2D20 and scores 17 and 6. They choose the 6, as it's under their Strong (but still not enough to beat the Target Number of 8).

'Okay,' says the GM, 'that's a partial success. You can see a big smear of blood against a crumbling wall up ahead – that seems to be where it went. However,' the GM says as they mark a point of Doom, 'you also see a figure staring back at you. They're naked, you think, and their head is that of a yellow-toothed boar. They point one trembling hand at you and bolt off into the undergrowth.'

'Can I get a shot off at him?' says the Sergeant's player.

'Yeah, absolutely. You can kill this guy easily; let's say that the Doom is caused by the sound of your gunshot rather than him running back to his mates.'

'Let's keep moving. I'll tell the others what I've seen and climb back down.'



HUNT

As the Hunters come within range of the Hollowed Boar, the skies darken, the shadows coil, and the air becomes heavy and tense. The Hunt is on.

Edges And Banes

Hunters can make the fight easier by spending Lore to unlock Edges – advantages that down-power the Entity – and the GM can make the fight more difficult by spending Doom to unlock Banes.

Each Edge costs 3 Lore; each Bane costs 3 Doom. There is a list of Edges and Banes to choose from in the main rules, but for the purposes of this tutorial, use the ones below.

If the Hunters earned Lore during their Exploration, spend all 3 of it to unlock this Edge:

Weak Point. Reduce the Boar's Close defence stat by 2.

If the Hunters accrued Doom during their Exploration, the GM should apply one of these Banes (in order) for each 3 Doom marked. Don't apply more than three Banes.

Waiting.	Place 2 Threat tokens before deployment.
Bitter.	Boar has +2 maximum Resolve .
Evasive.	All Hunters suffer 2 Resolve damage at the start of the Hunt.

DAMAGING THE ENTITY AND TAKING DAMAGE

The objective of every Hunt – for the Hunters – is to reduce the Entity's **Wounds** to 0 and defeat them. The objective of every Hunt – for the GM – is to reduce all the Hunters' **Wounds** to 0 and defeat them.

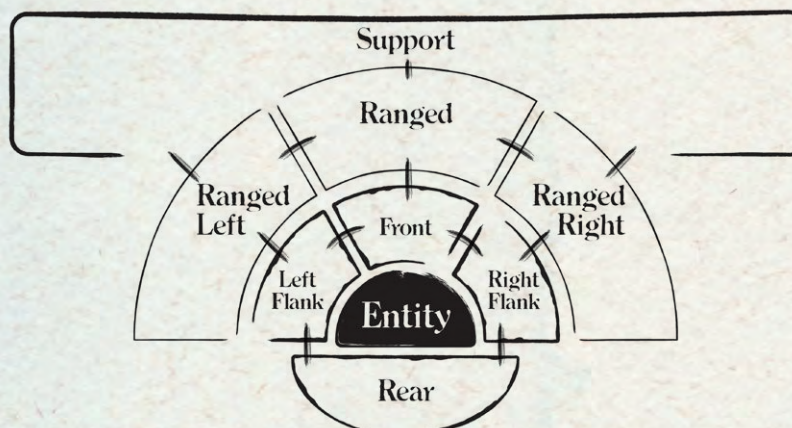
When a Hunter makes an attack action, they make a roll to hit the Entity as outlined in the Hunter Attack section on p. 29. Each successful attack deals damage to either **Resolve** (always listed on the left under Weapon abilities) or **Wounds** (listed on the right), based on the dice result.

If a Hunter's attack would inflict **Wound** damage, they can opt to damage **Resolve** instead if they prefer. Some Weapons are designed to quickly reduce **Resolve** and in some situations it can be tactically advantageous to do this rather than inflicting **Wound** damage.

When an Entity makes an attack action, Hunters targeted by the attack make a roll to defend themselves against damage. Each successful attack deals damage to either **Resolve** (listed on the left side of the Entity's abilities) or **Wounds** (listed on the right).

Unlike Hunters, Entities cannot opt to inflict **Resolve** damage when their abilities inflict **Wound** damage. The Entity does not roll to attack - so the GM does not roll dice to see if their abilities succeed. Instead, only the players roll dice to defend. The listed damage and effects of an Entity's ability will happen by default unless the Hunter's defence succeeds.

The Grid



Hunts use a grid to demonstrate the location of the Hunters in relation to the Entity, rather than their location in relation to landmarks or geography like a standard battle-map. The Entity never moves on the grid – instead, when it moves in the fiction of the game, the GM moves the tokens of the Hunters to a new position.

The grid is centred on the Entity. Immediately around the Entity are the Close areas – Rear, Right Flank, Left Flank, and Front. Beyond those are the Ranged areas: Ranged, Ranged Right, and Ranged Left. Beyond *those* is the Support area, which is far enough away from the Entity for Hunters to catch their breath.

Place the grid (p. 140) in a position where all players can access it, and give each player a token to represent their character.

Set Up And Turn Order

At the start of a Hunt, the effects of any Edges and Banes should be applied. For this fight, these are just simple stat tweaks, with the exception of Waiting, which allows the GM to place 2 Threat tokens before the players deploy their Hunters. Threat is a situational resource that can be used by both the Entity and the Hunters in different ways.

Next, as the Hunt begins, each player must roll under their **Sharp** stat. On a success, they place their token anywhere on the grid. On a failure, the GM places their token anywhere on the grid. Characters with ranged weapons do better when they are in Ranged areas; characters with close combat weapons do better when they are in Close areas.

Then, each player must roll under their **Quick** stat. On a success, they take their turn before the Entity. On a failure, they take their turn after the Entity. Any character can act in any order within their allotted bracket, and players may want to confer together to set up the most effective action order. Generally, acting before the Entity is better than acting after it, but a player who has succeeded on their Quick roll may choose to act after the Entity if they prefer.

Finally, the GM must ensure the right terrain tags are available. For this fight, you should have two Obscuring, two Shielding and two Elevated tags available. There's more on claiming terrain in this fight on p. 31.

The First Hunter Turn

Choose one of the Hunters that rolled under their **Quick** to take the first turn. (If none of the Hunters rolled under their **Quick**, skip to the Entity's First Turn below and come back to this section once it's complete.) On a Hunter's turn, they can either make one attack and one manoeuvre action each in any order, or they can choose to make two manoeuvre actions. They can also use any Weapon abilities that are relevant – some abilities use an attack action, while others trigger based on conditions or costs. If an ability targets one or more allies, that doesn't include the Hunter using the ability – you can't be your own ally.

Once the Hunter has performed both of their actions, their turn is over and the Entity has an opportunity to take an interrupt action before the next turn begins.

ATTACKS

When your Hunter attacks, first check that they are in a suitable area to make an attack, and apply any special rules. For instance, the Bludgeon and Spear can only attack from Close areas. The Pistol and Book can attack from either Close or Ranged areas. The Rifle can attack from Close or Ranged areas, but it's less accurate at Close areas.

To attack, roll a D20. If you are told to roll with advantage, roll an additional D20 and choose either to resolve the attack. If you are told to roll with disadvantage, roll an additional D20 and the GM chooses either dice. Advantage and disadvantage cancel each other out. Never roll more than 2D20 on a single action.

- If the result is over your relevant stat, you miss. You inflict no damage, and the Entity places a Threat token on your area.
- If the result is under your relevant stat and under the Boar's relevant defence, you hit. Inflict **Resolve** damage (listed on the left side of your Weapon or ability's damage).
- If the result is under your relevant stat and equal to or over the Boar's relevant defence, you strike a Wounding hit. Inflict **Wound** damage (listed on the right side of your Weapon or ability's damage). If you prefer, you can deal your Weapon's **Resolve** damage instead.
- If the result is exactly equal to your stat, you critically succeed. Inflict your Weapon's **Wound** damage +2.

BREAKING AND BEING BROKEN

When a Hunter or an Entity's **Resolve** is 0, they are Broken, and whenever an attack against them would inflict **Resolve** damage it inflicts the listed **Wound** damage of that attack instead. If there is no **Wound** damage associated with the attack, the **Resolve** damage has no effect. If an attack Breaks an Entity or a Hunter, excess **Resolve** damage does not overflow to become **Wound** damage.

MANOEUVRES

A Hunter can perform any of the following manoeuvres:

FOCUS

Gain Focus, to a maximum of 1.

You can expend Focus to roll with advantage – rolling two dice and picking the one you prefer – on any check, so it can make your attacks more accurate and your defence more sound.

GUARD

Restore 1 Resolve.

You probably won't need to restore Resolve on your first turn but it's here for the sake of completeness.

MOVE

Travel between two adjacent grid areas.

If you're in the wrong area, move to the right one!
You can't move diagonally.

RELOAD

Regain 1 Capacity on a Weapon you are holding.

If your weapon has Capacity (for instance, the Pistol or the Rifle) then Reloading it lets you fire it.

TAKE COVER

Attempt to gain a terrain tag (see p. 31).

Terrain can protect you or give you a better line of sight on the Entity for ranged attacks, but you have to succeed on a check to gain the token, so there's a risk involved.

USE

Activate a piece of Hunt equipment.

Each character has an item of Hunt equipment that has specific effects detailed on their sheet. Some of them don't need an action to use – this is listed as part of their rules. These exhaust once used and can only be refreshed at the Refuge, which we'll get to later.

SUPPORT MANOEUVRES

A Hunter who moves to the Support area of the grid gains access to the following additional manoeuvres:

RECOVER

Roll Hard. On a success, restore 2 Resolve or 1 Wound (your choice). On a failure, restore 2 Resolve.

HEAL

Roll Wise. On a success, restore 2 Wounds on another Hunter in Support or 1 Wound on yourself. On a failure, restore 1 Wound on another Hunter in Support.

In addition, when you start your turn in the Support area, restore your Weapons' Capacity to their maximum values, and restore 2 **Resolve**.

TERRAIN AND TAKE COVER

Take Cover is manoeuvre that lets a Hunter claim a terrain tag in order to access specific bonuses. Terrain tags stay attached until the Hunter moves. Move, Push, Pull and Slide movements remove terrain tags, but Reposition doesn't (see p. 83). There are three kinds of tag available, and two of each available in each Hunt.

OBSCURING

Roll under *Quick* to claim. When you suffer Resolve damage as the result of an Entity attack, suffer 1 less Resolve damage than indicated.

SHIELDING

Roll under *Sharp* to claim. When you suffer Wound damage as the result of an Entity attack, suffer 1 less Wound damage than indicated.

ELEVATED

Roll under *Strong* to claim. When you make an attack from Ranged, you roll with advantage.

After The First Hunter Turn: Interrupt

At the end of each Hunter's turn, the Entity can take an interrupt action. Most Entities have at least one interrupt ability, and many have costs that the GM must also meet if they want to use it. Interrupts usually cost Threat: the GM must spend Threat tokens they have previously placed on the area in which the attack is taking place. The Hollowed Boar's Interrupt attack, Snap, costs 1 Threat token to activate. The GM may spend a Threat token to make an attack at the end of a Hunter's turn, or save it to amplify their attack on the Entity's turn.

Once the GM has made an Interrupt action (or decided not to, or is unable to) then play progresses to the next Hunter who rolled under their *Quick* during the setup and turn order phase. The Entity does not get to make an Interrupt action after its own turn.

Subsequent Hunter Turns

Repeat the process detailed in the First Hunter Turn until all Hunters acting before the Entity have taken their actions.

The First Entity Turn

GM: your job is to kill the Hunters. This is a tutorial, so it's an easier fight than most, but you can still give the players a run for their money.

On the Entity's turn, just like a Hunter, it gets two actions - one attack and one manoeuvre, or two manoeuvres. Each Entity has their own attacks and manoeuvres listed on their sheet.

The Boar has two attacks: **Run Rampant**, which targets multiple Hunters but does less damage, and **Stomp Into The Dirt** which targets a single Hunter and does more damage. The GM should use whichever one they like.

The GM can, if they wish, spend Threat tokens on the grid to increase the damage inflicted in the areas in which they are spent. Each Threat token spent from the grid increases an attack's damage by 1.

The Boar's Interrupt attack, **Snap**, can be used at the end of every Hunter's turn - if the GM wants to spend the Threat to do so. It can't be used on the Boar's own turn, but the GM should bear it in mind when thinking about spending Threat.

The Boar also has three manoeuvres. **Thundering Hooves** allows it to reposition all Hunters in an area to Front, setting up a **Run Rampant** attack; **Tusk Flick** Slides 1 Hunter at close, setting up group attacks or pushing them out of Rear or Flank; and **Snort And Stamp** lets the Boar restore **Resolve** by removing Threat tokens from the grid. **Snort And Stamp** is the only way the Boar can restore **Resolve**, so the GM has to choose between inflicting extra damage, making Interrupt attacks, and staying alive longer.

Once the Boar has performed both actions, the GM can place Threat on the grid equal to its Threat Per Round. After doing this, if the total Threat on the grid is higher than the Threat Cap, remove Threat until it is equal to the Threat cap and end the Entity's turn.

REPOSITIONING

Your Charge attack and Chase manoeuvre let you Reposition Hunters from a Ranged area to Front. Repositioning represents the Entity moving but the Hunters staying still. When you Reposition a Hunter using the Charge attack, move their token to an adjacent area before the attack is resolved. When you Reposition using the Chase manoeuvre, move their token to Front, no matter their current location.

Repeat

After the Entity has acted and placed Threat tokens, the remaining Hunters take their turns, play returns to the first group of Hunters that acted, then back to the Entity. This process is repeated until either the Entity or all the Hunters are reduced to 0 Wounds.

HOLLOWED BOAR

THE WRETCHED
ENERGIES OF THE
HOLLOW HAVE WARPED AND
TWISTED THIS BOAR INTO A
HORRIFYING SHAPE AND A TERRIFYING
SIZE. ROWS OF TEETH BRISTLE AND CRUNCH IN
A JAW THAT JUTS ASKEW FROM THE SKULL;
MAD EYES SQUINT AND GLARE FROM
DEEP WITHIN BONE AND LAYERS OF
FLESH; SLABS OF MUSCLE, SPASMING AND STEAMING,
HAUL THE BULK OF THE CREATURE TO STAND ON ITS
SKITTERING INGROWN TROTTERS. A CROWN OF
FLEXING FINGERBONES SPROUTS FROM ITS BROW.

IT'S WOUNDED. IT HAS HOURS TO LIVE,
BUT IT'S READY TO KILL YOU IN WHAT
TIME IT HAS LEFT.

**RESOLVE 6
WOUNDS 11**

WHEN BROKEN:

MAKE AN IMMEDIATE **SNAP** INTERRUPT
ATTACK VERSUS THE HUNTER THAT BROKE
THEM IF THEY ARE AT CLOSE.

DEFENCES

RANGED

12

WYRD

10

CLOSE

11

**THREAT PER ROUND 2
THREAT CAP 6**

INTERRUPT: SNAP
TARGET ONE HUNTER IN CLOSE.
COST 1 THREAT. TN10. HARD. 2/2.

ATTACKS

RUN RAMPANT

TARGET ONE HUNTER IN FRONT. TN12, STRONG. 3/2.
ADDITIONALLY, TARGET ALL OTHER HUNTERS IN FRONT
AND ONE ADJACENT CLOSE AREA. TN11, STRONG. 2/1.

STOMP INTO THE DIRT

TARGET ONE HUNTER AT CLOSE. TN13, QUICK. 2/4.

MANOEUVRES

THUNDERING HOOVES

ALL HUNTERS IN ONE AREA ROLL QUICK. ON A
FAILURE, THEY ARE REPOSITIONED TO FRONT.

TUSK FLICK

SLIDE ONE HUNTER IN CLOSE.

SNORT AND STAMP

REMOVE X THREAT TOKENS FROM THE GRID.
REGAIN X RESOLVE.

End of the Hunt

If all the Hunters are reduced to 0 Wounds – well, they’ve been very unlucky. But skip the Baptism below and move directly to the Refuge; the Hunters awake in their beds, disoriented but no longer incapacitated.

If the Entity is reduced to 0 Wounds, the Hunters can perform a Baptism – a ritual that draws the nightmarish power out of the creature and into themselves. (Work together as a group to define what this looks like.) Each surviving Hunter chooses one new Tier 1 advance from their Weapon, and restores their Resolve and Wounds to their starting values. The group as a whole also gains 4 Bone – an abstraction of the raw materials harvested from the Entity’s corpse – that they can spend in the Refuge later on.

REST

Hunters can (and should!) access the Refuge by creating a Boneheart Key. By spending 1 Bone, the group creates a single-use item which can transform any door (or make a new one) so that it opens into their safehouse; any number of people can go through as long as the door is kept open. The Refuge is a safehouse in an uncanny pocket dimension where the Hunters can rest, recuperate, improve their equipment and manage their supplies.

Refuges can take many forms, but for the purposes of this tutorial, the Refuge takes the form of a run-down but cosy coaching inn. Run by a long-suffering bartender named Grick, the inn is trapped in a perpetual twilight on a godawful wet November evening – but the fire is warm, the beds are clean(ish) and the guy playing piano knows how to carry a tune.

If any of the Hunters died during the Hunt, they awaken in the beds above the bar in the Refuge. Normally they would incur a penalty for dying, but don’t worry about that for now.

Once all the Hunters are inside, the tutorial – and the first session – is over. Congratulations!

WHAT NOW?

If you've decided to stop at this point, please fill out the feedback forms online:

- The feedback form for GMs is here: [BIT.LY/HOLLOWS-GM-FORM](https://bit.ly/hollows-gm-form)
- The feedback form for players is here: [BIT.LY/HOLLOWS-PLAYER-FORM](https://bit.ly/hollows-player-form)
- You can also join the Rowan, Rook and Decard Discord to discuss Hollows with other players here: [DISCORD.GG/Z3HWADX](https://discord.gg/z3HWADX)
- You can keep an eye on the Hollows playtest by signing up to the mailing list, if you haven't already, here: [BIT.LY/HOLLOWS-PLAYTEST-EMAIL](https://bit.ly/hollows-playtest-email)

If you'd like to play again, players can continue with their characters or create new ones from scratch using the rules in the Character Creation section of this playtest. If they decide to build on their current character, they should check their background in the Character Creation section and, from the lists provided:

- choose an additional Weapon, picking its Form and one Tier 1 ability;
- choose a second piece of Exploration equipment.

The group will need to select one of the Hollows we've provided to play through. Steel City is a story about deranged capitalism and body-horror, and Morningmire is a story about intensely personal grief and loss. The GM should also read through the rest of the book to get a deeper grasp on the rules, so they can help players understand them.





CHARACTER CREATION

HUNTERS ARE INDIVIDUALS WHO CAN NOT ONLY ENTER OTHER UNREAL SPACES BUT CHANNEL THE ENERGIES THEY FIND THERE AND USE THEM TO PERFORM FEATS OF UNNATURAL PROWESS. THEY HOLD THE SEED OF A NASCENT HOLLOW WITHIN THEMSELVES.

CHARACTER CREATION IN BRIEF

When you make a Hunter, choose the following mechanical elements:

- A statistic array (p. 39) and which stats to assign the values to.
- A faction to act as your background, and an origin and a seed from within that background.
- Two pieces of Exploration equipment and one piece of Hunting equipment from the choices provided by your background.
- Two Weapons from the choices provided by your background.
- A form for each Weapon, chosen from the three options outlined at the beginning of each Weapon's rules.
- One Tier 1 ability from each Weapon.

You can also determine some purely fictional elements of your character, such as:

- Name, whether their given name or something new they adopted when they chose this life.
- Style and appearance.
- The precise look and feel of their Weapons and any unique embellishments.
- Their demeanour, outlook and personality.
- Their motivations for why they Hunt – pride, hate, curiosity, honour, something else?

STATISTICS

There are five statistics (hereafter called stats) that govern your performance in HOLLOW. No stat can be increased above 19. The human average is around 9 – but you're more, and less, than human.

You roll under your stats when you're trying to achieve something and there is a risk of failure. Rolls in HOLLOW work in a similar way to blackjack – you're trying to get as close as possible to your stat value, without going over. Generally, you will roll a D20 and compare the result to the relevant stat. If it's over, you fail; if it's under, then the higher you roll the better the result.

Some rolls, including Exploration checks and rolls to defend yourself from Entity attacks, have separate Target Numbers from your stat. In these cases, you're trying to roll under your stat but over the TN. For example, rolling to jump across a moving river during Exploration, you might roll your **Quick** of 14 with a TN of 10. In this case you'll succeed if you roll under your stat – so anything from 1–14 is a success. But if you roll under the TN, you'll also experience misfortune. In this case, 1–10 would be a success with consequences; 11–13 would be a success; 14 would be a critical success and 15+ would be a failure. See p. 74 for more detailed examples.

THE STATS ARE:

- **STRONG.** Roll under **Strong** when you: swing a blunt weapon, climb a tall structure, kick in a door, stand fast against a riptide or leap between rooftops.
- **HARD.** Roll under **Hard** when you: withstand damage, intimidate people, endure hardships or ignore pain.
- **QUICK.** Roll under **Quick** when you: dodge projectiles, dash for cover, attack with a bladed weapon or pass off a falsehood as truth.
- **SHARP.** Roll under **Sharp** when you: take aim and fire, see something that's out of place, spot a lie, or block an enemy's line of sight with something solid.
- **WISE.** Roll under **Wise** when you: listen to the land around you, delve into the unknown, cast spells, or charm someone.

CHOOSING YOUR STATS

Choose one of the arrays below to assign to your stats as you generate your character. These values can be assigned to any stat you wish, and will be further modified by your choices in character creation.

- **BROAD EXPERTISE:** 8, 8, 9, 9, 10
- **SPECIALIST:** 7, 8, 8, 10, 11
- **OBSESSIVE:** 7, 7, 8, 9, 13

Resolve And Wounds

RESOLVE is a measure of your stamina and reaction time; **WOUNDS** are a measure of your toughness, grit and determination. Your Hunter's values for each are derived from your stats. Once you've reached your final stat levels (after you've chosen your background, Weapons and abilities) look up the values of your maximum **Resolve** and **Wounds** on the tables below.

RESOLVE

Take the highest of your **Quick** or **Strong** stats and find it in the ranges on the left. The corresponding number on the right is your maximum **Resolve**.

<9-10	•	4
11-12	•	5
13-14	•	6
15-16	•	7
17-18+	•	8

WOUNDS

Take your **Hard** stat and find it in the ranges on the left. The corresponding number on the right is your maximum **Wounds**.

<9-10	•	6
11-12	•	7
13-14	•	8
15-16	•	9
17-18+	•	10

WHO YOU WERE

Choose an origin and a seed from one of the backgrounds below to determine your past and the tragedy that led to you becoming a Hunter; each of these will increase one of your stats. (Your Weapon choice will also increase your stats, later on.)

Each of these groups represents a power bloc within the Isles and hints at your past, although how you feel towards the faction (and whether they care about you) is your decision, and it might change during play.

THE CROWN

WEAPONS (PICK TWO)

»» Armour «« Pistol «« Sword «« Rifle «« Bludgeon ««

ORIGIN (PICK ONE)

- **BLUEBLOOD.** +1 **WISE.**
Petty nobles under pressure from their family.
- **SERGEANT.** +1 **SHARP**
Squad leaders who work hard to be respected.
- **REGIMENTAL.** +1 **HARD**
Cannon-fodder in the Crown infantry.

SEED (PICK ONE)

- **DESERTER.** +1 **HARD**
You ran from your duty, and people got hurt.
- **MURDERER.** +1 **STRONG**
You killed someone you shouldn't have.
- **SOLE SURVIVOR.** +1 **QUICK**
Everyone died, except you.

EXPLORATION EQUIPMENT (PICK TWO)

- Good Boots
- Cloak
- Tobacco
- Finery
- Telescope

HUNT EQUIPMENT (PICK ONE)

- First Aid Satchel
- Extra Ammo
- Bomb
- Lucky Bullet
- Smoke Bomb

The ruling authority of the land; once great and powerful, now fallen into disrepute and bickering. Internal politics and generational incompetence limit their sphere of influence. Technically in charge of the army, and they like to throw their weight around.

THE HOUSE

WEAPONS (PICK TWO)

» Bludgeon « Greataxe « Knife « Shotgun « Spear «

ORIGIN (PICK ONE)

- **AGENT.** +1 **QUICK**
Problem-solvers, schemers and racketeers.
- **BUREAUCRAT.** +1 **SHARP**
On the bottom rung of the political ladder.
- **MILITIA.** +1 **STRONG**
Armed enforcers and guards.

EXPLORATION EQUIPMENT (PICK TWO)

- Gin
- Tobacco
- Crowbar
- Lantern
- Hammer and Nails

SEED (PICK ONE)

- **BETRAYER.** +1 **HARD**
You turned on those who relied on you.
- **COWARD.** +1 **SHARP**
Your courage was tested and you were found wanting.
- **HEARTBROKEN.** +1 **STRONG**
You lost someone you loved.

HUNT EQUIPMENT (PICK ONE)

- Lucky Bullet
- Shield
- Extra Ammo
- Weighted Net
- Lure

THE CONCLAVE

WEAPONS (PICK TWO)

» Book « Knife « Pistol « Staff « Sword «

ORIGIN (PICK ONE)

- **DOCTOR.** +1 **SHARP**
Searching for meaning in chaos.
- **MYSTIC.** +1 **WISE**
Occultists delving into deeper truths.
- **SHADOW.** +1 **QUICK**
Killers, thieves and spies.

EXPLORATION EQUIPMENT (PICK TWO)

- Cloak
- Shovel
- Dowsing Kit
- Rope
- Lantern

SEED (PICK ONE)

- **BETRAYED.** +1 **QUICK**
Sold out by those you trusted.
- **CURSED.** +1 **SHARP**
Wracked with magical backlash.
- **HUBRISTIC.** +1 **WISE**
Meddled with forces beyond your control.

HUNT EQUIPMENT (PICK ONE)

- Book of Lore
- Bomb
- Vitriol
- Flare
- Mantrap

A parliament, of sorts. Democratically elected busybodies and jobsworths who carve up counties into slivers of dominion and cling to what little power they have through bribery and deft legalese. Caught between the people and the Crown, they amass militias and jostle for position in a civil war they view as inevitable.

Scientists, doctors and occultists in a (barely) secret society. Tasked by an ancient Queen with protecting the Isles, but centuries of corruption draws the worst of the worst to the organisation. Fascinated by Hollows and frantic to keep them under control, or better yet, exploit them for their own gain.

The new state religion. They venerate gods of war, blood and dominion; one day the whole world will bow to their strength, and their vaults will swell with offerings. Scattered pockets of other faiths remain, but open persecution for heresy is becoming more and more common.

Hungry and desperate. The land has been farmed to dust, the mountains mined out, and the rain is sour. A golden age of expansion and bounty has collapsed in on itself and the survivors take shelter in the carcass of what came before.

THE TEMPLE

WEAPONS (PICK TWO)

»» Armour «« Bludgeon «« Book «« Shotgun «« Sword ««

ORIGIN (PICK ONE)

- **INQUISITOR.** +1 SHARP
Scouring the land for heretics, real or imagined.
- **FAITHFUL.** +1 STRONG
(Devoted members of the congregation.
- **PRIEST.** +1 WISE
Leading the masses into glory.

SEED (PICK ONE)

- **HERETIC.** +1 WISE
You worship forbidden masters.
- **OUTCAST.** +1 STRONG
Your beliefs saw you exiled from your community.
- **SINNER.** +1 HARD
Your crimes cannot be absolved.

EXPLORATION EQUIPMENT (PICK TWO)

- Lantern
- Shovel
- Finery
- Good Boots
- Dowsing Kit

HUNT EQUIPMENT (PICK ONE)

- Sacred Relic
- Shield
- Smoke Bomb
- Book of Lore
- First Aid Satchel

THE PEOPLE

WEAPONS (PICK TWO)

»» Bludgeon «« Greataxe «« Knife «« Spear «« Staff ««

ORIGIN (PICK ONE)

- **LABOURER.** +1 STRONG
(Not enough jobs to go around.
- **SCAVENGER.** +1 QUICK
(Haunting the abandoned cities, picking over ruins.
- **WITCH.** +1 WISE
Miracle workers, confidence trickers and wise folk.

SEED (PICK ONE)

- **DISPOSSESSED.** +1 HARD
(They took everything from you.
- **FALLEN HERO.** +1 STRONG
(People used to look up to you.
- **HOLLOW-BORN.** +1 WISE
Your soul was stained from the start.

EXPLORATION EQUIPMENT (PICK TWO)

- Tobacco
- Hammer and Nails
- Shovel
- Dowsing Rod
- Rope

HUNT EQUIPMENT (PICK ONE)

- Lure
- Mantrap
- Shield
- Weighted Net
- Sacred Relic

THE WEAPONS

Humans can't use magic without tools.

In the hands of a Hunter, a weapon is more than steel and gunpowder. It's a means of channelling the power that resides within them and swells up wretched and pustulent in a Hollow.

It becomes a *Weapon*. An icon of wrath and blood. Hunter Weapons are often unusual or unique in their construction because they aren't bound by the same physical laws as mundane equipment – as long as they *look* the part, it's enough.

Each Weapon has an agenda. These things aren't here to help you; they're hungry, vicious, cruel. They whisper sin to you in your dreams. They spin stories in the back of your mind and tell you: you are the strongest, the most righteous, the most powerful. They say the world is yours for the taking.

Weapons lie.

Reading Your Weapon

Each Weapon changes your character's basic stats, as it makes them more powerful in their work as a Hunter.

Each Weapon has an attack – some have more than one. This shows you which stat you normally roll under to attack, and which areas you may attack the Entity from. These are specific to the Weapon they are listed under – you can't make a Knife attack using your Book, for example.

Some Weapons have Capacity, which is usually a measure of ammunition. It signals how much you can use the Weapon before needing to replenish it in some way. Some attacks cost more than 1 Capacity, and some may replenish it. Normally, a Reload manoeuvre replenishes 1 Capacity. If you have two Weapons with Capacity, track each one separately. Reload actions only replenish Capacity on one Weapon per action, but abilities that trigger a Reload may be used to replenish Capacity on either Weapon.

Weapons have three Forms, of which you will choose one at character creation (or if you change weapons later in your career). As well as dictating the physical form of the Weapon, these affect its nature in different ways; it might affect the way you attack, or the damage inflicted on a hit.

Each Weapon Form has its own damage stats, displayed as X/Y, which show how much damage it does to an Entity's Resolve (the first number) and Wounds (the second).

Finally, Weapons have abilities, which your character can use in combat. A fresh Hunter will have access to one Tier 1 ability per weapon, but you can choose more over time as you take on Entities and defeat Lords. See the Refuge section on p. 100 for details on how your character gets stronger.

Non-attack Weapon abilities are generally universal. For example, if you wield the Knife, you can use its ability Dodge regardless of which weapon you have recently made an attack with.

Choose Your Weapon

When you create your character, select two Weapons that they have chosen (or that chose them) from the options provided by their background, then select a Form for each one from the three options provided. Then, choose one Tier 1 ability from each Weapon.

You can choose the same Weapon twice if you want. It's up to you whether that means your character has one, doubly powerful Weapon, or two different ones, different Forms. If you take the same Weapon twice, it counts as two different Weapons for mechanical purposes.



THE KNIFE

STAT CHANGES: **QUICK** +1, **SHARP** +1, **WISE** +1

ATTACK WITH **QUICK** AT CLOSE

THE WORLD IS TRYING TO HURT YOU BUT YOU WON'T LET IT - YOU WON'T BE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF - YOU'RE SHARP AND CRUEL AND QUICK AND CLEVER - AND THE KNIFE IS HERE RIGHT ALONGSIDE YOU, PRESSED INTO YOUR PALM, GUIDING YOU THROUGH THE DARKNESS AND CHAOS. YOU'RE GOING TO SHOW THEM THEY WERE STUPID TO UNDERESTIMATE YOU.

FORMS

PICK ONE AT CHARACTER CREATION

WEIGHTED 2/2
In addition to the Knife's Close attack, you may now attack at Ranged with Sharp. Also: *throwing stars, darts.*

KEEN 2/3
Also: *stiletto, punch dagger.*

VERSATILE 3/2
Also: *trench knife, knuckledusters.*

ABILITIES

PICK ONE FROM TIER 1 AT CHARACTER CREATION

TIER 1

Backstab. Inflict +1/+1 damage when in Rear.

THEY LEFT THEMSELVES OPEN; IT'S MORE THEIR FAULT THAN YOURS.

Dodge. Mark 1 Resolve to defend from an Entity attack with Quick instead of any other stat. If you roll under your Quick on the defend roll, you may Move to any adjacent area as an immediate action.

THEY'RE GOING TO WISH THEY'D KILLED YOU SOONER.

Whisper-Quick. Mark 1 Resolve to attack with Quick instead of any other stat. If this attack inflicts Wound damage, restore 1 Resolve.

KILL THEM BEFORE THEY CAN HURT YOU.

TIER 2

Vanish. When you are at Ranged or Support, you may mark 2 Resolve to Move into the shadows as an immediate action. While you're in the shadows, remove your token from the grid; you cannot attack, make manoeuvres, be attacked, or otherwise interact with the Hunt. At the start of your next turn, place your token anywhere on the grid.

IT'S LIKE YOU WERE NEVER THERE.

Ghostly. When you miss with an attack, after the Entity places Threat on your area, you may Move as an immediate action.

SLIP AWAY BEFORE IT GETS YOUR SCENT.

Lightning-Fast. When you Move, you automatically Guard as an immediate action.

KEEP MOVING. IT'S TOO SLOW TO HIT YOU.

CHOOSE THE KNIFE IF YOU WANT TO...

- Rely on your speed rather than your brawn
- Keep moving to stay out of trouble
- Attack weak spots and vulnerable areas



THE RIFLE

STAT CHANGES: **SHARP** +1, **WISE** +1

ATTACK WITH **QUICK** AT CLOSE. ATTACK WITH **SHARP** AT RANGED.
ROLL WITH DISADVANTAGE WHEN YOU ATTACK FROM CLOSE WITH THE RIFLE.

The world is dangerous but you are more dangerous; you are the apex predator.

You are calm; you are methodical; you are operating far above your base instincts. There is no wilderness or threat that you cannot tame or kill. The land is rotten and corrupted but you, paragon of patience, stand pristine above it all.

FORMS

PICK ONE AT CHARACTER CREATION

REPEATING 3/2

Capacity 3. Also: carbine, lever-action.

HIGH CALIBRE 2/4

-1 Sharp, Capacity 1.
Also: elephant gun, small cannon.

ACCURATE 2/3

+1 Sharp, Capacity 1.
Also: hunting rifle, target rifle.

ABILITIES

PICK ONE FROM TIER 1 AT CHARACTER CREATION

TIER 1

Take Your Time. When you expend Focus, you may add +1 Wound damage to your attack and place a Threat token on your area instead of rolling with advantage; this takes place before the attack is rolled.

Don't rush around like some kind of animal.

Obscured Position. When you have a terrain tag, inflict +1 Wound damage.

They won't know what hit them.

Pristine. While you still have your maximum number of Wounds, +1 to all stats.

Don't let them touch you.

TIER 2

Eye Of The Storm. Mark 1 Resolve to make an attack from Range. If you attack through an area that contains Threat tokens, increase your Sharp for this attack by the number of Threat tokens in that area.

Watch the beast scurry and fret.

Evasion. When you have a terrain tag, destroy it to move to Support at any time. You can do this as an immediate action in response to an attack; you take no damage from the attack if so.

No sense in dying if you don't have to.

Pin Down. When you are at Ranged Left or Right and the Entity uses a manoeuvre, mark 2 Resolve and make an immediate attack against it. If you hit, you cause no damage, but the manoeuvre is cancelled without effect.

Not on your watch.

CHOOSE THE RIFLE IF YOU WANT TO...

- Attack at range.
- Hold your ground.
- Inflict Wound damage to finish the Hunt decisively.

COMPLEXITY



THE SWORD

STAT CHANGES: **STRONG** +1, **QUICK** +1, MAXIMUM RESOLVE +1

ATTACK WITH **QUICK** OR **STRONG** AT CLOSE.

PICK ONE AT CHARACTER CREATION.

There are fighters and there are warriors and you, friend, are a warrior. You are a professional. You have earned the right to lead an army, to seize the reins of civilisation, to cut and stab and kill. In your hand is the Sword, the tool of a master, and the key to victory. Show them what you can do.

FORMS

PICK ONE AT CHARACTER CREATION

NOBLE

2/2

+1 Wise. Also: rapier, ceremonial sword.

HEAVY

2/2

+1 Hard. Also: cavalry sabre, claymore.

SHORT

2/2

+1 Sharp. Also: gladius, machete.

ABILITIES

PICK ONE FROM TIER 1 AT CHARACTER CREATION

TIER 1

Charge. If you Move to a Close area, Entity suffers 1 Resolve damage.

Lead from the front.

Arm's Reach. If you hit with an attack, you may choose to remove 1 Threat token from your area.

You've got it right where you want it.

Rally. When you Guard, an ally in your area may Focus as an immediate action.

Guide them to victory.

TIER 2

Lone Wolf. When you are the only character in your area, inflict +1 Wound damage.

You don't need anyone's help.

Back-To-Back. When you are in an area with one or more other Hunters, inflict +1 Resolve damage.

Gather them around you.

Hamstring. When you are at Rear or Flank and you inflict Wound damage, clear all Threat tokens from an area of your choice.

One cut is all it takes.

CHOOSE THE SWORD IF YOU WANT TO...

- Support and lead other Hunters.
- Inflict reliable damage.
- Be adaptable and dynamic.



THE BLUDGEON

STAT CHANGES: **STRONG** +1, **HARD** +1, **QUICK** +1

ATTACK WITH **STRONG** AT CLOSE.

YOU ARE STRONG. YOU ARE THE STRONGEST. THE ALPHA. A PERFECT MACHINE.

AN IRRESISTIBLE FORCE. THE WORLD BREAKS AROUND YOU. DON'T HESITATE.

DON'T THINK. DESTROY THOSE WHO WOULD TRY TO SLOW YOU DOWN.

FORMS

PICK ONE AT CHARACTER CREATION

AGILE

2/1

+1 maximum Resolve,
+1 maximum Wounds.
Also: hammer, cosh,
gauntlet.

BRUTAL

3/1

+1 Resolve damage at
Front. Also: mace,
morningstar.

MASSIVE

3/2

Also: maul, tree trunk,
big rock.

ABILITIES

PICK ONE FROM TIER 1 AT CHARACTER CREATION

TIER 1

Fearless. Gain +2 maximum Resolve. You no longer gain the positive benefits of terrain (you gain no reduction in Wound damage from Shielded terrain, for example), but you can still Take Cover.

Gleeful. When you Break an Entity, restore 2 Wounds or 3 Resolve.

Heartless. Before you roll to attack, you may mark 1 Resolve; if you do so, your attack inflicts +1/+0 if it hits.

YOU NEVER HIDE; YOU'RE ALWAYS
WHERE YOU MEAN TO BE.

SEE THE FEAR IN ITS EYES.

THIS THING'S OWN MOTHER
WOULDN'T RECOGNISE IT
WHEN YOU'RE DONE.

TIER 2

Cruel. When you would inflict Wound damage, you may instead choose to inflict Resolve damage; if you do so, inflict +2 Resolve damage.

Vicious. You can no longer perform the Guard manoeuvre. When you inflict Resolve damage, restore Resolve equal to half the amount you inflicted (rounding up).

Tireless. At the end of your turn, mark 2 Resolve and place 1 Threat token on your area to make an additional attack action.

YOU'RE NOT TRYING TO KILL IT.
YOU'RE TRYING TO RUIN IT.

BREAK ITS GUARD AND
MAKE IT BEG.

I DON'T CARE IF IT HURTS. WIN.

CHOOSE THE BLUDGEON IF YOU WANT TO...

- Inflict lots of Resolve damage and Break Entities.
- See if you can kill the enemy before it kills you.
- Sacrifice standard tactical choices to do more damage.



THE BOOK

STAT CHANGES: WISE +1, SHARP +1

ATTACK WITH WISE VS WYRD AT CLOSE OR RANGED.

Words have power. If you name something, you can know it, and if you know it, you can control it. Speak a word aloud and the ground trembles at your approach; the beasts of the land recoil and cower; eyes are struck blind, muscles wither and crops die. A chain around the neck of the world, binding it to your will. Nothing is beyond your comprehension and nothing is outside of your reach.

FORMS

PICK ONE AT CHARACTER CREATION

SACRED

2/2

When you Guard, an ally in your area restores 1 Resolve. Also: Illustrated family Bible, Lost apocrypha, Hallowed parchments.

PROFANE

1/3

+1 Quick. Also: Codex Malignatus, banned texts, impish familiar.

ELDRITCH

3/1

When you Focus at Close, Entity suffers 1 Resolve damage. Also: Litanies of the Outer Dark, bag of astral runes, strange device.

ABILITIES

PICK ONE FROM TIER 1 AT CHARACTER CREATION

TIER 1

Remake. Attack action. Mark 1 Wound to restore 2 Wounds on an ally in your area. If performed in Support, do not mark any Wounds.

Speak their bones back into their ordained form.

Brand. Attack and mark 1 Resolve. If this attack hits, an ally in your or an adjacent area can Focus as an immediate action.

Carve your dominion into its flesh.

Leash. When you are at Close and the Entity Repositions an ally or uses an Interrupt ability, it suffers 1 Resolve damage.

Down, wretch.

TIER 2

Rebuke. Close attack action. If you inflict Resolve damage, remove 1 Threat token from your or an adjacent area. If you inflict Wound damage, remove 3 Threat from your or an adjacent area. If you miss, place 2 Threat on your area (rather than 1).

Chastise it for daring to stand against you.

Sacrifice. Once per turn, when you inflict Wound damage, restore 1 Wound on yourself or an ally in your area.

Blood for blood; the oldest accord.

Miracle. Mark 1 Wound and 1 Resolve to activate this ability. As an attack action, make a Use manoeuvre as though you were activating any one of the following pieces of Hunt equipment (see p. 66): Weighted Net, Smoke Bomb, Flare, Lure, Lucky Bullet, Bomb.

The world is at your disposal.

CHOOSE THE BOOK IF YOU WANT TO...

- Heal other Hunters.
- Control the battlefield.
- Play a support role.

COMPLEXITY



THE GREATAXE

STAT CHANGES: **STRONG** +2, **HARD** +1, **WISE** -1, **QUICK** -1

ATTACK WITH **STRONG** AT CLOSE.

YOU ARE THE EDGE THAT TEARS THE WORLD ASUNDER. YOU ARE BORN OF THE BREED THAT RIPPED THE ROCKS FROM THE DARK OF THE EARTH TO MAKE IRON. BUTCHER. DISSECT. TRANSFORM BEAST INTO MEAT; AN ALCHEMY IN YOUR UNDOING.

The Greataxe uses Capacity. Unlike a ranged weapon's ammunition, Capacity here is a measure of your stamina and ability to lift and swing a massive weight.

FORMS

PICK ONE AT CHARACTER CREATION

KEEN

2/4

Capacity 3. Also: greatsword, cleaver, mining pick

HEAVY

3/3

Capacity 3. Also: sledgehammer, ship's anchor, enormous saw blade tied to a stick.

VERSATILE

2/3

Capacity 5. Also: glaive, battleaxe.

ABILITIES

PICK ONE FROM TIER 1 AT CHARACTER CREATION

TIER 1

Break Bones. Close attack action. Expend 2 Capacity to make this attack. Inflict 2 additional Resolve damage on a hit, regardless of whether you inflict Wound damage.

No Nonsense. When you are in Front and you suffer Wound damage from an Entity attack, suffer 1 less damage.

Roar. When you Focus, you may Pull 1 Threat token. When you inflict Wound damage to an Entity, you may remove 1 Threat token from your area.

BUTCHER IT TO THE MARROW.

GET IN THERE.

HOWL YOUR DEFIANCE.

TIER 2

Cleave. Expend 2 Capacity to make this attack. If this attack Wounds an Entity, choose one of its attacks and reduce its damage by -1/-1. If the Entity Breaks a Hunter, return the damage to its original value.

Chaos. When a Threat token is consumed in your area, restore Capacity equal to the number of Threat tokens removed as an immediate action.

Seeing Red. When you are Broken, you inflict +1/+1 damage and take 0/+1 damage.

**SPLIT BONE AND TENDON
LIKE FIREWOOD.**

NOTHING BETTER THAN A GOOD FIGHT.

TIME TO DIE.

CHOOSE THE GREATAXE IF YOU WANT TO...

- Cause massive amounts of damage.
- Fight on the front lines.
- Not worry too much about being quick or clever.



THE PISTOL

STAT CHANGES: **SHARP** +2, **QUICK** +1, **WISE** +1

ATTACK WITH **SHARP** AT RANGED, AND **QUICK** AT CLOSE.

You're strong. Smart. Capable. The world's set against you but with the Pistol resting on your hip or howling in your hand you can weather any storm. You're a force to be reckoned with, and those fools will be left in your wake when you show them what you can do.

FORMS

PICK ONE AT CHARACTER CREATION

AUTOMATIC 1/1

Capacity 5. When you Reload, restore Capacity to full. Also: pepperbox.

REVOLVER 2/1

Capacity 3. Also: shortbow, javelin, throwing axe.

HAND CANNON 3/3

Capacity 1. Also: crossbow.

ABILITIES

PICK ONE FROM TIER 1 AT CHARACTER CREATION

TIER 1

Covering Fire. When you would inflict Wound damage with an attack and instead opt to inflict Resolve damage, one ally at Close may make an immediate manoeuvre.

Put it on the back foot.

Momentum. When you inflict Wound damage, restore 2 Resolve.

Feels good, doesn't it?

Unload. Expend both your attack and manoeuvre actions to make a number of Pistol attacks equal to your current Capacity.

Keep shooting until it can't get up.

TIER 2

Last-Ditch. When you are at Close and the Entity targets you with an attack, mark 1 Resolve and expend 1 Capacity from the Pistol then roll Quick. On a success, the attack is cancelled and you or an ally in your area can make an immediate attack against the Entity. On a failure, you suffer 2 Wound damage in addition to any other damage taken.

Too slow.

Hotfoot. When you inflict Wound damage, you may make an immediate, free manoeuvre.

You make this look easy.

Come Out Shooting. +1 Capacity. Discard a terrain tag to Reload the Pistol to full Capacity and make an additional manoeuvre.

Caught your breath? Okay, now get out there.

CHOOSE THE PISTOL IF YOU WANT TO...

- Attack from range or up close, whatever's best.
- Power up when you inflict Wound damage.
- Adapt to changing situations.

COMPLEXITY



THE SPEAR

STAT CHANGES: **QUICK** +1, **STRONG** +1, **HARD** +1

ATTACK WITH **QUICK** AT CLOSE.

THERE IS A LINE BETWEEN US AND THEM AND ACROSS THAT LINE IS THE SPEAR, KEEPING THEM AWAY FROM US. PROTECTING THE SACRED FROM THE PROFANE. DEFENDING RIGHT AND KILLING WRONG. THE WORLD IS TRYING TO SWALLOW YOU AND THOSE YOU CARE ABOUT, BUT IT'LL HAVE TO GET THROUGH YOU FIRST.

FORMS

PICK ONE AT CHARACTER CREATION

LIGHT

2/2

Quick +1.

Also: sharpened stick.

LONG

3/2

Also: pike, boar spear.

HEAVY

2/3

Also: halberd, glaive.

ABILITIES

PICK ONE FROM TIER 1 AT CHARACTER CREATION

TIER 1

Goad. When you Guard, you may place a Threat token on your area or an adjacent area, or Push or Pull 1 Threat token.

THE STUPID CREATURE IS TWO STEPS BEHIND YOU.

Trap. When you are in an area with 3 or more Threat tokens on it, inflict +1 Wound damage.

JUST TRY AND TAKE ME DOWN.

Pierce. When you expend Focus to roll with advantage on an attack, inflict +1 Wound damage if you hit.

LIKE A PIG ON A SPIT.

TIER 2

Decoy. When an ally makes a ranged attack through your area, they inflict +2 Resolve damage.

A SACRIFICE WORTH MAKING.

Flanking. When there is a Hunter in an area directly opposite your own (i.e. Front and Rear, Left Flank and Right Flank), you or one Hunter in the opposing area may Focus as an immediate action at the start of your turn.

IT CAN'T STOP US.

Fend off. Mark 1 Resolve to cancel an interrupt action in your area, or mark 2 Resolve to cancel a Reposition in your area. Threat tokens are not consumed.

STAY BACK!

CHOOSE THE SPEAR IF YOU WANT TO...

- Support other Hunters in combat.
- Manipulate Threat to control the fight.
- Wound the Entity to bring it down quickly.



THE ARMOUR

STAT CHANGES: **STRONG** +1, **HARD** +1

Your stance is inviolate, your approach implacable. You are prepared for every eventuality. You watch others fall beside you ~ they're weak. Deluded. Poor. They didn't have what it takes. You have what it takes, and what it takes is the Armour ~ a wall built around what little fragility remains.

FORMS

METAL

+1 maximum Wounds. Once per Hunt, ignore all damage from an Entity attack. Also: heavy plate, chainmail.

LEATHER

When you suffer Resolve damage from an Entity attack, you suffer 1 less damage. Also: cloak and cowl, camouflage, heavy coat.

SILK

+1 Quick, +1 Sharp. When you gain a terrain tag, you become Protected. When you discard or destroy a terrain tag, you become Exposed. Also: three-piece suit, expensive hat, lit cigarette.

PICK ONE AT CHARACTER CREATION

WEAPONS

61

When you bear the Armour, you are always in either the Protected state or Exposed state. Some abilities can only be accessed while Protected, some whilst Exposed, and others still have variable effects based on your current state.

You begin each Hunt Protected. If you are Protected and you suffer Wound damage, you become Exposed. You can mark 2 Resolve to voluntarily become Exposed during your turn. When you Guard or enter Support, if you are Exposed, you become Protected. Some abilities grant alternate means of switching states.

ABILITIES

PICK ONE FROM TIER 1 AT CHARACTER CREATION

TIER 1

Bulwark. While you are Protected, allies in your area (aside from you) have the terrain tag Cover with the following ability: Guard manoeuvres restore +1 Resolve. If an ally destroys this Cover tag, you become Exposed.

Everyone cowers while you alone weather the storm.

Control. While you are Protected, at the start of your turn, you may Push or Pull 1 Threat token. If at the end of your turn you are in an area with no Threat, you become Exposed and add 1 Threat token to the area.

Unburdened by fear, the chaos of combat unravels into reason.

Counterattack. When you are Exposed and an enemy inflicts Resolve damage on you, you may make an immediate attack against them. If you inflict Wound damage with that attack, you become Protected.

Take the hit, and give back tenfold.

Martyr. While you are Exposed, when an ally in your area would suffer Wound damage from any source, you may mark Wounds instead and shift to Protected.

Your body is a litany of scars; a testament to your selflessness.

TIER 2

Block. While you are Protected and at Close, mark 1 Resolve to cancel a Push, Pull or Reposition from or into your or an adjacent area. While you are Exposed, when the Entity Repositions an ally in your or an adjacent area, you may Reposition yourself instead, leaving the ally where they were.

You decide who goes where.

In The Way. When you are in a Close area and the Entity makes an attack which targets a Ranged area that you are adjacent to: if you are Protected, that attack deals -1/-1 damage; if you are Exposed, you may choose to have that attack target your area instead.

A thousand arrows will pierce your flesh before your brother sheds blood.

Grit Your Teeth. While you are Exposed, when you Guard, instead of restoring 1 Resolve, you may mark 4 Resolve to restore 4 Wounds.

Your reserves of vigour are unmatched.

CHOOSE THE ARMOUR IF YOU WANT TO...

- Protect your allies better than anyone else.
- Play with different abilities in the Protected and Exposed states.
- Limit Entity options, forcing them to attack you instead.



THE SHOTGUN

STAT CHANGES: **SHARP** +1, **HARD** +2

ATTACK WITH **SHARP** AT RANGED OR CLOSE.

ROLL WITH DISADVANTAGE WHEN ATTACKING FROM RANGE.

THERE ARE THINGS OUT THERE THAT WANT TO KILL YOU - TERRIBLE THINGS, WRETCHED THINGS, BESTIAL THINGS. YOU'RE NOT SCARED OF THEM. THEY SHOULD BE SCARED OF YOU. YOU'RE MESS AND YOU'RE CHAOS, YOU'RE INDISCRIMINATE, YOU'RE A MASSACRE WAITING TO HAPPEN. THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN'T KILL, NOTHING YOU CAN'T BREAK, NOTHING YOU CAN'T RUIN.

FORMS

PICK ONE AT CHARACTER CREATION

NO ESCAPE 2/2

You no longer roll with disadvantage on Shotgun attacks at range. Also: pump action shotgun, Mare's Leg.

CARNAGE 2/2

Attack with Strong instead of Sharp at Close. Also: *sawn-off*, *Obrez rifle*.

SMOKE 2/2

When you switch from Loaded to Empty, Guard as an immediate action. Also: *blunderbuss*, *bandolier of flintlocks*.

WEAPONS

63

The Shotgun doesn't have Capacity like other ranged weapons; it is either Empty or Loaded. When it's Loaded, you can flip it to Empty to make an attack; when it's Empty, you can make a Reload manoeuvre to flip it to Loaded. You may only use the sections of your abilities matching the current state of your weapon.

ABILITIES

PICK ONE FROM TIER 1 AT CHARACTER CREATION

TIER 1

Sustained Fire. When you end your turn in an area with Threat placed on it, switch from Empty to Loaded as an immediate action.

YOUR BLOOD'S UP, YOUR HANDS ARE LIKE LIGHTNING.

Gore-Soaked. When you have suffered total Wound damage greater than half of your maximum Wounds, +1/+1 to all attacks.

SHOW THIS THING WHAT YOU'RE CAPABLE OF.

Fumes And Flames. When you switch from Loaded to Empty, an ally in your area may Guard or Move as an immediate action.

SEND SHELLS SMOKING LIKE THE FLAMES OF HELL.

TIER 2

Get Right In There. LOADED: Mark 2 Resolve to attack with advantage at Close. EMPTY: Gain the manoeuvre Smash: Make a Close attack with Strong at 1/1 and Reload.

DON'T GIVE IT AN INCH.

Stand And Fight. Discard a terrain tag to re-roll an attack dice after you see the result.

DON'T HIDE LIKE SOME WHIMPERING CUR.

Iron-Banded Barrel. LOADED: Make an attack at 0/4 and switch to Empty. EMPTY: Make a Close attack at 4/0 and switch to Loaded.

GOOD! NOW, SMASH ITS FUCKING HEAD IN.

CHOOSE THE SHOTGUN IF YOU WANT TO...

- Mix it up in the front line.
- Soak up damage with few ill-effects.
- Play with different abilities in Empty and Loaded states



THE STAFF

STAT. CHANGES: **STRONG** +1, **HARD** +1, **WISE** +1

ATTACK WITH **STRONG** AT CLOSE. ATTACK WITH **WISE** VS WYRD AT RANGE.

THE WORLD IS RIDDLED WITH POWER THAT ROILS AND PUSHES AT THE SEAMS OF THE REAL, AND: IT IS YOURS FOR THE TAKING. YOU WERE BORN FOR THIS. THE WORLD IS YOUR BIRTHRIGHT. YOU DRAW CHAOS UP FROM THE ROOTS AND IT IS SHAPED BY YOUR HAND, YOUR MIND AND YOUR WILL. THE WORLD IS STUMBLING, PRIMITIVE, BLIND — YOU ARE SHARP. YOU ARE AWARE. YOU ARE IN CONTROL. NO-ONE IS READY FOR WHAT YOU CAN DO.

FORMS

HEAVY

2/2

All ranged Staff abilities may be made in Close areas using Strong vs Wyrd. *Also: rod, shillelagh, cane.*

ORNATE

2/2

When you or an ally in your area gains a terrain tag, you or they restore 1 Resolve. *Also: wand, runes, orb.*

TWISTED

2/2

If you Move while you have one or more terrain tags, you may retain one terrain tag. *Also: talisman, fetish, puzzlebox.*

PICK ONE AT CHARACTER CREATION

ABILITIES

PICK ONE FROM TIER 1 AT CHARACTER CREATION

TIER 1

Strangle. Attack from Ranged. If you inflict Wound damage, remove a Threat token from the grid.

Syphon. Once per round, when you inflict Wound damage, restore 1 Wound.

Blight. Destroy a terrain tag on you or an ally in your area and mark 1 Resolve to make an attack from Ranged. If it hits, it deals 3/3 damage.

TWISTED ROOTS AND GRASPING CLAWS BURST UP FROM THE CURSED EARTH, HUNGRY FOR NOURISHMENT.

PLUCK LIFEBLOOD FROM THE WRETCHED AND BESTIAL.

WRENCH THE POWER FROM THE WRETCHED GROUND.

TIER 2

Transfigured Landscape. When you Take Cover, you use Wise to do so, and you can apply the terrain tag to any character in your or an adjacent area. If there are no unassigned terrain tag available, create an Obscured terrain tag when you use this ability.

Bloodthirsty Briar. Inflict +2 Resolve damage when you have two or more terrain tags.

Bounty Of The Land. When you Focus, you may destroy a terrain tag on an ally in your or an adjacent area. The ally restores 1 Resolve and 1 Wound.

THE WORLD BLOSSOMS AND SHIFTS IN RESPONSE TO YOUR WHIM.

YOUR BODY THRUMS WITH THE POWER YOU CONTROL.

RIP THE WORLD TO SHREDS AND FEAST ON THE MEAT.

CHOOSE THE STAFF IF YOU WANT TO...

- Support your allies.
- Create, destroy and manipulate terrain tags.
- Engage in battlefield control.

UTILITY EQUIPMENT

In addition to the Weapons you wield, you can carry up to two pieces of Exploration equipment and one piece of Hunt equipment. (You have more kit than this on you in the fiction, but as far as mechanics are concerned, you have three important pieces.) Your background dictates which of the items below are available to you at character creation.

Exploration Equipment

When you use an item of Exploration equipment, roll with advantage to resolve the challenge as long as the item fits the description of your action; the descriptions below are just suggestions. They cannot be used for mechanical advantage during a Hunt. Exploration equipment may be used as often as needed.

- **LANTERN.** See things in dark places.
- **GOOD BOOTS.** Climb, walk, and kick in doors.
- **ROPE.** Tie something or someone up, or climb safely.
- **CLOAK.** Sneak, creep and hide.
- **CROWBAR.** Break into buildings, move heavy items.
- **TOBACCO.** Pass the time or make a new friend.
- **GIN.** Start a fire or start a party.
- **HAMMER AND NAILS.** Board something up, or fashion a repair.
- **FINERY.** Impress common folk and make a good first impression.
- **SHOVEL.** Dig holes, or smash something up.
- **DOWSING KIT.** Navigate towards weirdness.
- **TELESCOPE.** See further and clearer than ever before.

Hunt Equipment

When you use a piece of Hunt equipment, you exhaust it in order to trigger the effect described. Using an item during a Hunt counts as your manoeuvre for the turn unless it's marked as an immediate action. These items cannot be used for mechanical advantage during Exploration. Once exhausted, your Hunt equipment cannot be used again until you next rest at the Refuge.

- **FIRST AID SACHEL.** In Support, restore 4 Wounds to yourself or an ally.
- **BOOK OF LORE.** *Immediate.* When you inflict Wound damage on the Entity, gain 1 Lore.
- **WEIGHTED NET.** At Close, remove 3 Threat tokens from the grid.
- **EXTRA AMMO.** *Immediate.* When a weapon you are wielding reaches 0 Capacity, restore it to full Capacity.
- **SMOKE BOMB.** You and all allies in your area gain an Obscured terrain tag. These are created fresh, and not drawn from the central pool. If an Obscured tag created by Smoke Bomb is discarded, it is destroyed.
- **FLARE.** Pull all Threat tokens on the grid.
- **MANTRAP.** *Immediate.* At Close, cancel Entity manoeuvre.
- **SACRED RELIC.** User restores 3 Resolve.
- **LURE.** Reposition all Hunters 1.
- **LUCKY BULLET.** Reload. Next attack with Pistol, Rifle or Shotgun is +1/+2.
- **SHIELD.** *Immediate.* Upgrade a defence roll by 1 step.
- **BOMB.** Make a free Sharp vs Ranged attack. 4/2. All Hunters in Close suffer 2 Resolve damage.
- **VITRIOL.** *Immediate.* At Close, when the Entity would restore Resolve, it does not do so. It still pays any costs for the action.

UPDATING YOUR CORE STATS

As a reminder, once you've chosen your Weapons and their Forms, you'll need to confirm your starting maximum **Resolve** and **Wounds**. Use the table here to see if anything has changed.

RESOLVE

Take the highest of your **Quick** or **Strong** stats and find it in the ranges on the left. The corresponding number on the right is your maximum **Resolve**.

<9-10	•	4
11-12	•	5
13-14	•	6
15-16	•	7
17-18+	•	8

WOUNDS

Take your **Hard** stat and find it in the ranges on the left. The corresponding number on the right is your maximum **Wounds**.

<9-10	•	6
11-12	•	7
13-14	•	8
15-16	•	9
17-18+	•	10

ADJUSTING FOR LARGE OR SMALL GROUPS

The more Hunters that show up to destroy an Entity, the easier the Hunt will be. To keep things interesting, we recommend modifying the player characters' **Resolve** and **Wounds** depending on the size of the group.

- 3 OR FEWER HUNTERS: Increase maximum **Resolve** by 1 point and **Wounds** by 2 points.
- 4 OR 5 HUNTERS: Use the rules as written.
- 6 OR MORE HUNTERS: Decrease maximum **Resolve** and **Wounds** by 1 point each.

CORRUPTION

Corruption is a measure of how close your Hunter is to succumbing to the blight inside of them and becoming a Hollow themselves. For the purposes of this playtest, your starting Corruption is 0. For more on Corruption, death and rebirth, see p. 94.

A CHARACTER SHEET

Note down general information about your Hunter here.

Keep track of your stats here.

Resolve and Wounds are tracked here. Draw in the outlines of the boxes to equal your starting values.

Each of your Weapons are detailed here.

Note down your equipment here. You can tick off your Hunting equipment once you've used it.

When you die, keep a record of it here and roll to see if you resist the pull of Corruption. Assuming you come back to life, note down your Blight here too.

HOLLOW

Name _____ Player _____ Look _____

Faction _____ Origin _____ Seed _____

☐ Strong ☐ Hard ☐ Quick ☐ Sharp ☐ Wise

Resolve ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Wounds ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Weapon _____
Form _____
Appearance _____

Weapon _____
Form _____
Appearance _____

Exploration Equipment

Hunting Equipment

☐ _____
☐ _____

Deaths	CORRUPTION ROLL	CORRUPTION BENEFIT
1 <input type="checkbox"/>	0	
2 <input type="checkbox"/>	2	+1 max Resolve
3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4	
4 <input type="checkbox"/>	6	+1 to any stat
5 <input type="checkbox"/>	8	
6+ <input type="checkbox"/>	10	+2 to any other stat

Blight: _____

Notes

A WEAPON SHEET

Note: you will have two of these sheets, one for each weapon.

THE SPEAR

There is a line between us and them and across that line is the Spear, keeping them away from us. Protecting the sacred from the profane. Defending right and killing wrong. The world is trying to swallow you and those you care about, but it'll have to get through you first.

STAT CHANGES: QUICK +1, STRONG +1, HARD +1

ATTACK WITH QUICK AT CLOSE

FORMS

Pick one at character creation

- ☐ **Light.** 2/2 Quick +1 (Also: Sharpened Stick)
- ☐ **Long.** 3/2 (Also: Pike, Boar Spear)
- ☐ **Heavy.** 2/3 (Also: Halberd, Glaive)

ABILITIES

Pick one from Tier One at character creation

TIER ONE

- ☐ **Goad.** *The stupid creature is two steps behind you.* When you Guard, you may place a Threat token on your area or an adjacent area, or Push or Pull 1 Threat token.
- ☐ **Trap.** *Just try and take me down.* When you are in an area with 3 or more Threat tokens on it, inflict +1 Wound damage.
- ☐ **Pierce.** *Like a pig on a spit.* When you expend Focus to roll with advantage on an attack, inflict +1 Wound damage if you hit.

TIER TWO

- ☐ **Decoy.** *A sacrifice worth making.* When an ally makes a ranged attack through your area, they inflict +2 Resolve damage.
- ☐ **Flanking.** *It can't stop us.* When there is a Hunter in an area directly opposite your own (i.e. Front and Rear, Left Flank and Right Flank), you or one Hunter in the opposing area may Focus as an immediate action at the start of your turn.
- ☐ **Fend Off.** *Stay back!* Mark 1 Resolve to cancel an interrupt action in your area, or mark 2 Resolve to cancel a Reposition in your area. Threat tokens are not consumed.

USE THIS TO.

Support other
Hunters in
combat
Manipulate
Threat to control
the fight
Wound the
Entity to bring
it down quickly

COMPLEXITY: 2

Introductory text for the weapon.

Weapon statistics.

You can use the space next to the Forms to write more about the weapon's appearance.

Put a line through a box when you unlock it; put a second line to make an X when you make it permanent. The ability you take at character creation is always permanent.





PLAYING THE GAME

As a reminder, **HOLLOWS** games work in a cycle with three parts:

Exploration, where the Hunters are exploring the Hollow in search of Lore and Entities. This leads to...

The Hunt, where the Hunters confront an Entity in its lair and kill it, or are killed by it. After a Hunt, Hunters can...

Rest, where the Hunters hole up in the Refuge – an extradimensional space – and prepare for their next outing.

Depending on your group, you should be able to perform this loop once or twice per session. A Hunt should take around an hour or so; Exploration is more open-ended and can last anywhere from five minutes to an entire session. Rest is generally the shortest part of a session and operates as a downtime, so it's often glossed over in favour of something more action-oriented – but it can also provide a welcome change of tone after a dark period of play.

EXPLORATION

EXPLORING ALLOWS A PARTY TO FIND THEIR WAY THROUGH THE HOLLOW, LOCATE ENTITIES, DISCOVER LORE (P. 78) AND GET THEMSELVES IN TROUBLE.

ABSTRACT RULES

The rules governing Exploration in HOLLOWs are much more abstracted and freeform than the detailed combat rules (p. 81). Simply put: Exploration is more about creating a story together than it is about careful mechanical play, so there are fewer mechanics devoted to it.

Exploration generally progresses like this:

- The GM describes the situation.
- Players ask questions and take actions based on the answers. The GM describes how the situation changes as a result.
- If they encounter an obstacle and it would be interesting for their action to fail, the GM calls for a roll.
- If they roll under the relevant stat, they achieve their goal. The GM describes how the situation changes as a result.
- If they roll over the relevant stat, they fail to achieve their goal. The GM describes how the situation changes as a result and marks Doom, a resource that makes Hunting harder for the player characters.
- Repeat until players discover Lore (p. 78) or an Entity (p. 91) or opt to enter the Refuge (p. 100)

‘Obstacles’ is a broad category and covers all kinds of difficulties, hazards, enemies, traps and challenges. A high wall is an obstacle, as is a rushing river; a guard on watch is an obstacle, as is the garrison of madmen they stand to summon if they discover something; a collapsing building is an obstacle, as is a *collapsed* building from which you must crawl out.

FIGHTS DURING EXPLORATION

In HOLLOWs, we make a distinction between fighting something important – an Entity – and fighting something unimportant, such as devoted cultists, wild or corrupted animals, desperate inhabitants, and so on. Rather than use the grid for unimportant fights, simply treat the fight like any other objective, and ask for appropriate rolls to overcome it.

Hunters *cannot die* outside of a Hunt. They can still get hurt, slowed, endangered or otherwise messed up as part of an Exploration, but death is out of the question. General misfortune is represented with Doom, and the GM spends Doom directly before a Hunt to make the fight more difficult.

ZONES

The map of a Hollow is broken up into zones, but the geographical scale and scope of a zone is determined by the local reality of the Hollow in which it exists. Broadly speaking, each zone is a distinct area that contains something interesting and has its own flavour.

Smaller Hollows are made up of around eight zones while larger ones have up to twenty; twelve is a good standard. For examples of zones, see the Hollows included with this playtest pack (Steel City on p. 106 and Morningmire on p. 124).

A lair is a special type of zone that contains an Entity. While in a lair, players can spend Lore they have earned to unlock Edges – advantages that make the fight against the Entity easier. The GM can spend Doom to make the fight harder, too.

Moving between zones that share a border is determined by the fiction of the game, rather than any strict mechanical concern – if the barrier between two zones is a rushing river, it would make sense for players to roll to cross it, but if it's an open plain then there's no need to do so. In general, it's unwise to block players' progression behind substantial barriers, so reward ingenious ideas with lower TNs or advantage on traversal rolls.

The only exception to this is the Lord's lair; protected by wards and curdled magic, it cannot be entered without first spending 10 Lore to open it (see p. 79).

Successfully Exploring each zone gives the players more information about the Hollow as well as other rewards – see p. 76.

The Seed

A zone's seed is the secret behind it – the reason why it appears in the Hollow and the events that led to its current state. Given the supernatural origins of Hollows, a zone is allegorical or reflective of something connected to the Lord and their past. Understanding a zone's seed can be helpful to players trying to decipher the nature of the Lord. When the players are exploring a zone, the GM should bear the seed in mind during their descriptions and use it to inform details.

THE LAY OF THE LAND

During Exploration, the Hunters are attempting to find out more about the Lord, their Vassals, the world around them and the things that hold the Hollow together.

Firstly, the GM establishes the fiction as it stands. They should give details about:

- The physical location of the Hunters
- The surrounding environs and inhabitants
- Threats or dangers nearby
- Suggested routes onward and associated challenges
- Opportunities to gather Lore

Then: the players describe their characters' actions, the GM responds with answers to questions and actions of their own in turn. They might ask questions themselves to spur the players into action or to clarify their intent.

Once a player character looks to significantly change the situation or to resist significant change to the situation, the GM asks them to make a roll.

ROLLING DURING EXPLORATION

When a player rolls, they're checking both whether they succeed or fail at their attempted task, and also whether or not they mark Doom – an overall measure of the group's misfortune, spent by the GM to make Hunts more difficult.

When you're asked to make a roll, first decide what stat is applicable to the task you're trying to achieve:

- Are you being destructive, powerful or vicious? Roll under **Strong**. For instance: swing a blunt weapon, climb a tall structure, kick in a door, stand fast against a riptide or leap between rooftops.
- Are you being tough, resistant or intimidating? Roll under **Hard**. For instance: withstand damage, intimidate people, endure hardships or ignore pain.
- Are you being fast, decisive, sneaky or deceitful? Roll under **Quick**. For instance: dodge projectiles, dash for cover, attack with a bladed weapon or pass off a falsehood as truth.
- Are you being keen-eyed, aware and intelligent? Roll under **Sharp**. For instance: take aim and fire, see something that's out of place, spot a lie, or block an enemy's line of sight with something solid.
- Are you being intuitive, introspective or mystical? Roll under **Wise**. For instance: listen to the land around you, delve into the unknown, cast spells, or charm someone.

Your options are not limited by a list of specific moves that can be applied to a situation. Instead, discuss with your GM which stat you might want to use – if it's not immediately obvious. For example, if you're trying to get information out of a non-player character, you might want to use **Quick** to trick them into letting something slip, or **Strong** to intimidate them into telling you what you want to know straight out.

Once you've chosen your stat, roll a D20. If you are told to roll with advantage, roll an additional D20 and choose either to resolve the action. If you are told to roll with disadvantage, roll an additional D20 and the GM can choose either dice. Using Exploration equipment in a suitable fashion allows you to roll with advantage on Exploration checks.

Advantage and disadvantage cancel each other out. Never roll more than 2D20 on a single action.

- If the result is over your relevant stat, the action fails. The GM marks Doom and tells you how you've made the situation more difficult.
- If the result is under your relevant stat and equal to or under the TN, the action is a partial success. The GM marks Doom and tells you how the situation changes, including how you've made it more difficult.
- If the result is under your relevant stat and over the TN, the action succeeds.
- If the result is equal to your stat, the action critically succeeds. Gain 1 Lore and overcome the challenge with ease.

Doom is used by the GM to make subsequent scenes more challenging, while Lore can be spent in a variety of ways that are useful for the Hunters.

The Target Number (TN)

The GM determines a Target Number (TN) for each roll based on the guidelines below:

Uncertain actions are the least dangerous, but still carry a measure of risk – there's no safe bet in a Hollow. Climbing to the crest of a rise to survey the horizon, rummaging through an old library, or taking your time to examine a problem fully and get more information are Uncertain actions.

Risky actions are the 'standard' difficulty from which other actions derive. Climbing the wall of a crumbling tower, tracking an Entity through a forest, or ducking out of sight of a prowling Entity are Risky actions.

Perilous actions come with clear danger attached. Leaping over a rushing river, escaping a collapsing building, or springing an ambush on some hostile locals are Perilous actions.

THIS ACTION IS...	TN
Uncertain	8 or less
Risky	10
Perilous	12
Treacherous	14
Vicious	16+

Treacherous actions involve serious opposition. Killing a Hollow-born warlock in single combat, holding a door shut against a horde of mindless beasts, or decoding a cypher intended to drive you mad are Treacherous actions.

Vicious actions are as dangerous as they come without being a full-blown Hunt. Driving off an Entity, leaping from a four-storey building, or escaping a burning building are Vicious actions.

If a player comes up with a particularly suitable or unsuitable method for resolving a problem, the GM can shift the TN down or up a few points to reflect that. If a player fails an action but it still makes narrative sense for them to try again, the GM can increase the TN by one or two points to represent the situation growing more fraught.

If something is basically certain to occur, or if the game can't proceed without the players succeeding at a challenge, then it doesn't require a roll. Only roll the dice when failure would be a relevant and interesting occurrence.

Rewards

Successful Exploration generally results in one (or more) of three rewards:

- Access to an adjacent zone
- Weapon materials and upgrades (not yet implemented in this playtest)
- Lore, which can be spent on Edges (which make Entities easier to Hunt), to access the Lord, or to build an Anchor (see p. 96 for more details).

Generally, rewarding the player characters with D3 Lore per zone explored is fair if they specifically search for it. Although Lore is an abstract concept representing information on the Entities and Hollow itself, it has a form that is relevant to the area's seed and the Lord's history – books of knowledge, rumours from concerned locals, newspaper reports, letters, scrawled warnings on walls or feverish waking dreams. Lore is crucial to the players' ability to complete the Hollow by facing the Lord, so GMs should be aware of how much Lore the group possesses and ensure they are rewarding the players in a way that doesn't block off their progress. See the Lore section on p. 78 for more details.

Exploring: Step By Step



LORE

The flow of time inside a Hollow doesn't necessarily make sense when viewed from the outside. While a particular area might have only been afflicted with blight and nightmares for six months as far as its neighbours are concerned, inside the Hollow the situation might have been terrible for decades – if not centuries. Legends about the Vassals and Lords are passed down through generations and grow warped and inaccurate, which in turn shapes the Vassals and Lords to reflect those new stories. Temples devoted to Entities are built by zealots then crumble and fall into disrepair; books are written, warning stones are erected, and the landscape and people are scarred and marked by the Hollow. This gives rise to a super-local form of mythology and information known as Lore.

Lore is an abstract measure of the characters' knowledge and understanding of the Hollow and the Entities within. While in the fiction of the game Lore might be described as ancient texts, rumours from terrified locals, tracks and spoor or any other means of illuminating these mysterious creatures, in mechanical terms, it's simply a number of points which are earned and spent during play. GM might want to write down a list of interesting ways that Lore might appear during play, and encourage players to keep a list of items or clues acquired rather than treating it purely as a number.

Lore is held by the group of Hunters as a whole, not allocated individually.

Spending Lore

Lore has four main applications. Players can:

- Spend 10 Lore in the Lord's lair to **gain access to the Lord of the Hollow**. Hidden behind protective wards and twisted geography, the Lord simply cannot be interacted with directly until the Hunters have gained an understanding of their insidious influence on the land around them.
- Spend 3 Lore in an Entity's lair before a Hunt to **unlock an Edge**. Edges provide the Hunters with advantages over the creatures they Hunt – in game terms, they downpower the Entity's abilities, hopefully making them easier to kill.
- Spend 5 Lore and 5 Bone (p. 103) in the Refuge to **build an anchor** (p. 96) – a powerful totem that can hold the Lord's spirit when they are defeated, rather than destroying it.
- Spend the listed number of Lore to **power certain esoteric higher abilities**, as outlined in those ability descriptions. These have not been included in this playtest.

Lore is not transferred over between Hollows and can only be spent in the Hollow in which it was earned. The GM might make an exception to this rule in ongoing campaigns to represent a broader, linked threat that has created a number of Hollows across the land; in this case, the group can retain D6 Lore that can be spent in subsequent Hollows when they eliminate a Lord.

EDGES

When Hunters are in an Entity's lair, they can spend earned Lore to unlock Edges. These might represent cornering the beast in a kill-zone, exhausting it by chasing it down, observing and understanding its behaviour, taking special precautions to defend themselves against particular attacks, or springing an ambush on it. While the fiction of Edges is left up to the players and the GM, there are a list of eight universal advantages that can be applied to any Entity.

Each Edge can only be unlocked once per Entity. Once unlocked, Edges persist until the Entity is slain or the Hunters leave the Hollow. However, they do not pass from one Entity to the next – if the players decide to unlock Cornered on a Vassal, the Lord does not suffer the same effects.

Chase Down.	Entity has -2 maximum Resolve .
Cornered.	Entity has -1 Threat Cap.
Favourable Terrain.	All Hunters begin the Hunt with a terrain tag of their choice; when discarded, these tags return to the central pool.
Got The Drop.	Hunters roll with advantage to determine deployment and action order.
In The Open.	Reduce Entity's Ranged stat by 2.
Knowledge.	Examine the Entity's stats and abilities.
Warded.	Reduce Entity's Wyrd stat by 2.
Weak Point.	Reduce Entity's Close stat by 2.

DOOM AND BANES

Hollows are actively hostile to Hunters; Doom is a mechanical representation of that hostility. As the player characters explore the world they'll accrue Doom – usually by rolling lower than the TN on an Exploration check.

Like Lore, Doom remains abstract until it is spent in a lair – in this case, on Banes rather than Edges. And like Edges, each Bane costs 3 Doom to unlock. Unlike Edges, Banes can only be unlocked at the start of a Hunt, and they persist until the end of that Hunt – they don't remain in play indefinitely. Each Bane may only be purchased once.

Any Doom unspent when the Lord is killed and the Hollow is sealed is lost.

Bitter.	Entity has +2 maximum Resolve .
Evasive.	All Hunters suffer 2 Resolve damage at the start of the Hunt.
Fierce.	Entity has +1/+1 to an attack of the GM's choosing.
Hungry.	Entity has +1 Threat Cap.
Killer.	One Hunter, determined at random, suffers a Blight (p. 94) of the GM's choice.
Undying.	Entity has +4 Wounds .
Waiting.	Place Threat equal to half the Entity's Threat Cap (rounded up) before the Hunt deployment.

COMBAT

THE HUNT

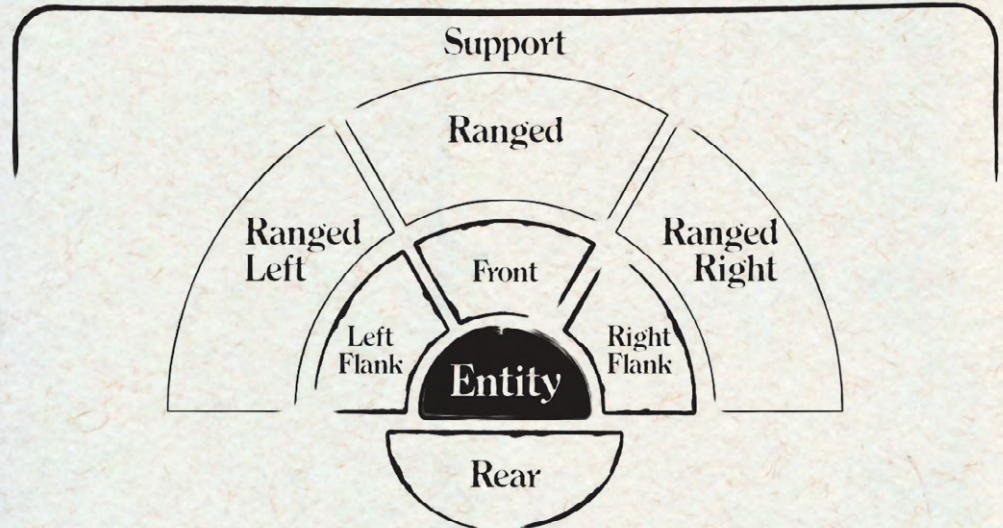
When Hunters track and corner an Entity the skies darken, the shadows crawl, and the scent of blood fills the air. This physical transformation of the environment is known as the Hunt. The Entity and the Hunters are now bound to one another as opposing forces attempting to impose their will on the world through terrible violence. Fleeing a Hunt is impossible for either party as the Hollow dissolves into chaos and blackness outside of the creature's last stand.

Every Hunt either culminates in the brutal deaths of all Hunters involved, or if they're lucky, the swelling and burst of power that heralds a Baptism as the Entity is slain and its raw form is unmade with steel and sinew.

The Hunt is the pinnacle of a Hunter's existence: in a world of uncertainty and terror, here they can destroy what stands against them with unrelenting viciousness. Should they be successful, they can drink deep of the curdled and rotten magic in the soul of this place, push back their doom by another dawn, and grow ever more dangerous.

COMBAT RULES

The Grid



See p. 140 for a full-size version of the grid with quick-reference rules.

CLOSE, RANGED AND SUPPORT

The grid is divided into three main sections: Close, Ranged and Support. Many Weapon and Entity attacks and abilities will specify whether they work from Close or Ranged.

Close areas are next to the Entity. These are: Front, Right Flank, Left Flank and Rear. The majority of Entity attacks will target Close locations, so these are more dangerous positions to fight from.

Ranged locations are more distant, providing greater ability to avoid the Entity's attacks, at the cost of making a Hunter unable to land their own more powerful strikes.

The Support area represents a place where a character may recuperate and regroup, out of reach of most Entities, but still in the fight. A Hunter in Support recovers Weapon Capacity and Resolve at the start of their turn, and gains access to the Recover and Heal support manoeuvres (see p. 88).

ADJACENCY AND OPPOSITES

Adjacent areas share an edge with each other; diagonal moves are not permitted.

Opposite areas are directly across from one another, with the Entity in between. Front is opposite to Rear; Left Flank is opposite to Right Flank. If there is another area between the two areas (for example, Ranged and Rear, which has the Front area in the middle) then those areas are not considered to be opposite one another. The areas must be the same distance from the Entity as each other in order to be considered 'opposite'.

MOVING ON THE GRID

The grid is not representative of a single geographical place in the manner of a map, but instead shows the positions of the Hunters relative to the Entity. There are five different ways that a Hunter can move – or be moved – on it, and they have different effects.

The first four – **MOVE**, **PUSH**, **PULL** and **SLIDE** – represent the Hunter moving in physical space. The last one, **REPOSITION**, represents the Entity moving in physical space.

The **MOVE** action indicates that a Hunter physically travels from one location to another under their own volition. Move the token representing the Hunter from their current area to any adjacent area of the player's choosing.

The **PUSH** keyword on an Entity ability with a Hunter target indicates that the Entity has pushed the Hunter away from itself. Move the token representing the Hunter from their current area to an adjacent area in a more distant range bracket (from Close to Ranged, and from Ranged to Support). A Hunter in the Rear or Support areas cannot be Pushed.

In other cases, Push can be used by various abilities to move Threat or Hunters away from a target zone. Generally, tokens are Pushed one zone away from the target, along their straight line edges (ie nothing can move diagonally). Tokens cannot be Pushed into the Support area.

The **PULL** keyword on an Entity ability with a Hunter target indicates that the Entity has pulled the Hunter closer to itself. Move the token representing the Hunter from their current area to an adjacent area in a closer range bracket (from Ranged to Close). A Hunter in Support or Front cannot be Pulled. A Hunter in Rear that is Pulled is moved to either Left or Right Flank, and a Hunter in either Flank that is Pulled is moved to Front.

In other cases, Pull can be used by various abilities to move Threat or Hunters towards a target zone. Generally, tokens are Pulled one zone towards the target, along their straight line edges (ie nothing can move diagonally). Tokens cannot be Pulled from the Support area.

The **SLIDE** keyword on an Entity ability with a Hunter target indicates that the Entity has shifted, shoved or tricked the Hunter into a different position. Move the token representing the Hunter from their current area to any adjacent area of the GM's choosing.

In other cases, Slide can be used to rearrange the battlefield. Anything that Slides should be moved to any adjacent area of the ability user's choosing.

When a Hunter Moves or is subject to the Push, Pull or Slide keywords, they discard all terrain tags on them as they leave the physical space in which they were before.

The **REPOSITION** keyword indicates that the Entity has moved, rather than the Hunter. Move the token representing the Hunter from their current area to any adjacent area of the GM's choosing. The specific

rules for an action with the Reposition keyword supercede this, so – for example – a Hunter might be Repositioned to the Front area even if they are not adjacent to it, if an ability dictates this.

When a Hunter is Repositioned, they retain all terrain tags on them, as they remain in the physical space they were before but the Entity has changed position.

Terrain

During a Hunt, Hunters can use the environment to protect themselves from harm. On a players' turn, they can use the Take Cover manoeuvre to attempt to take advantage of terrain with a successful roll under the relevant stat. No more than one player can use each terrain tag. A Hunter can have multiple terrain Tags at once.

When you attempt to gain the same type of tag that an ally in your area already has, roll with advantage.

When you Move between areas, or you are Pushed, Pulled or Slide, discard all terrain tags. When you are Repositioned, maintain all tags. You can voluntarily discard terrain as an immediate, free action on your turn unless the terrain rules text says otherwise.

When a terrain tag is discarded, return it to the central pool. When a terrain tag is destroyed it is discarded and not returned to the central pool. Some abilities or Entity attacks destroy terrain tags as part of their activation.

TERRAIN TAG TYPES

There are four common terrain tags: Elevated, Shielded, Obscured and Cursed. Each Hunt has two each of the first three available for players to take, and as many Cursed tokens as is required by the Entity's specific rules (usually a maximum of six).

Towers, gantries,
monoliths and cliffs.

Elevated

Roll **Strong** to claim. Ranged attacks are rolled with advantage.

Rocks, structures,
earthworks and ditches

Shielded

Roll **Sharp** to claim. When the Entity inflicts **Wound** damage, take 1 less damage.

Smoke, foliage,
fences and ruins.

Obscured

Roll **Quick** to claim. When the Entity inflicts **Resolve** damage, suffer 1 less damage.

Cursed

Cannot claim. Some Entities can create Cursed terrain; refer to their specific rules for more info. Cursed terrain cannot be voluntarily discarded, but can be destroyed – refer to the Entity description for more details.

Setup And Turn Order

At the start of a Hunt, the GM may spend Doom to activate Banes, and the players may spend Lore to unlock Edges. See p. 80 for the list of Banes and p. 79 for the list of Edges. Many of these will affect the resulting combat in some way; these effects should be taken into account from the start of combat onwards. If this is not the first time the Hunters have fought this Entity, there may be Edges unlocked from previous combats; if so, their effects should also be applied. Players cannot purchase the same Edge twice.

If the players are fighting a Lord and they are trying to anchor it, this will also have an effect on the Lord's stats and available attacks. The GM should ensure they are taking these into account. See p. 96 for more on anchoring.

Next, each player must roll **Sharp**; on a success, they place their token anywhere on the grid. On a failure, the GM places their token anywhere on the grid.

Then, each player must roll **Quick**; on a success, they take their turn before the Entity. On a failure, they take their turn after the Entity. Characters can act in any order within their allotted bracket, and players may want to confer together to set up the most effective action order. Players who succeed on their **Quick** roll may choose to act after the Entity if they prefer.

The GM should build the central pool of terrain tags (see previous page), which is usually composed of:

- **Elevated** x2
- **Shielded** x2
- **Obscured** x2
- As many **Cursed** tags as are needed to work with the Entity's abilities – generally between 0 and 5

Turns

A 'turn' is an individual character's 'go'. Each Hunter and Entity gets one turn each before any of them may act again. All of these turns in order are a 'round'; once one round is complete, the next begins. Once turn brackets are decided at the start of combat (see above), it remains the same until the combat ends, but Hunters can change order within their brackets each round.

A Hunter or Entity can perform an attack and a manoeuvre in any order on their turn. Some immediate abilities can be triggered out of the standard turn order; unless otherwise stated, they do not count towards a character's actions taken on their turn. Both Hunters and Entities can swap their attack for a second manoeuvre if their players wish.

After each Hunter's turn but before the next character's turn, the Entity has a chance to react with an interrupt action – each Entity has its own interrupt abilities, many of which also have a cost that must be paid in Threat tokens.

Hunter Turns

HUNTER ATTACKS

A Hunter's basic attack is an attempt to harm an Entity with a Weapon; each Weapon has its own core attack, and Hunters may use whichever they prefer. Some abilities add different attack options or change what happens when an attack occurs. A few abilities 'count as' attack actions but inflict no damage; this is made clear in their associated text.

Most attacks can only be made when in Close areas, but some weapons allow you to attack from Ranged areas.

When you attack, roll a D20. If you are told to roll with advantage, roll an additional D20 and choose either to resolve the action. If you are told to roll with disadvantage, roll an additional D20 and the GM may choose either dice.

Advantage and disadvantage cancel each other out. Never roll more than 2D20 on a single action.

- If the result is over your relevant stat, you miss. You inflict no damage, and the Entity places a Threat token on your area.
- If the result is under your relevant stat and under the Entity's relevant defence, you hit. Inflict **Resolve** damage (listed on the left side of your Weapon or ability's damage).
- If the result is under your relevant stat and equal to or over the Entity's relevant defence, you strike a Wounding hit. Inflict **Wound** damage (listed on the right side of your Weapon or ability's damage). If you wish, you may deal your Weapon's **Resolve** damage instead.
- If the result is exactly equal to your stat, you critically succeed. Inflict your Weapon's **Wound** or **Resolve** damage +2.

CRITICAL SUCCESSES

A D20 roll equal to your stat is a Critical Success. This has a variety of different effects depending on the situation:

- For attacks, your weapon is at +2/+2
- For defence, you take no damage
- For healing, restore +2 **Resolve** or +2 **Wounds** (your choice)
- For weird edge cases, increase a numerical value by +2 (work it out with the GM)
- Out of combat, you gain +1 Lore and overcome the challenge with ease

The GM never rolls dice; only players roll dice.

ATTACK

SUMMARY

1. ROLL 1D20

WITH ADVANTAGE: Roll +1D20, and pick one to use as the result.

WITH DISADVANTAGE: Roll +1D20, and the GM picks one to use as the result.

2. COMPARE THE RESULT TO THE STAT BEING TESTED

UNDER YOUR STAT	<i>Equal to or over Entity's Defence</i>	HIT. Deal your weapon's Wound damage, or downgrade the hit to deal its Resolve damage instead.
	<i>Under Entity's Defence</i>	HIT. Deal your weapon's Resolve damage.
EQUAL TO YOUR STAT		CRIT! Deal your weapon's Wound damage +2.
OVER YOUR STAT		MISS. Deal no damage, Entity places 1 Threat on your area.

If the hit fully depletes the target's Resolve, they are **BROKEN**. So long as they remain at Resolve 0, all Resolve damage dealt to them instead deals the same amount of Wound damage.

MANOEUVRES

You have access to six basic manoeuvres. Some Weapon abilities may also be used as manoeuvres. You can always take one manoeuvre each turn, and you can choose to swap your attack action for a second manoeuvre if you want. The basic six are:

FOCUS

Gain Focus, to a maximum of 1.

GUARD

Restore 1 Resolve.

MOVE

Travel between two adjacent grid areas (see p. 83).

RELOAD

Regain 1 Capacity on a Weapon you are holding, up to its maximum.

TAKE COVER

Attempt to gain a Terrain tag (see p. 84).

USE

Activate a piece of Hunt equipment.

THE SUPPORT AREA AND SUPPORT MANOEUVRES

The Support location alters or augments certain manoeuvres and abilities and gives access to new ones for individuals in it.

RECOVER

Roll Hard. On a success, restore 2 Resolve or 1 Wound (your choice). On a failure, restore 2 Resolve.

HEAL

Roll Wise. On a success, restore 2 Wounds on another Hunter in Support or 1 Wound on yourself. On a failure, restore 1 Wound on another Hunter in Support.

In addition, when you start your turn in the Support area, restore your Weapons' Capacity to their maximum values, and restore 2 **Resolve**.

INTERRUPTS AND IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

Immediate actions represent teamwork, unusual advantages, tactics and strange magics. When the rules say that a character may perform an immediate action, it happens instantly – often outside of the normal turn order. Immediate actions do not count towards a Hunter's maximum actions on their turn; there is no action cost to be paid.

For example: a Hunter has an ability that allows an ally in their area to make an manoeuvre as an immediate action when the Hunter inflicts Wound damage. The ally would make that manoeuvre during the first Hunter's turn immediately after the damage is inflicted.

An Interrupt is an Entity action that can only take place at the end of a Hunter's turn. Each time a Hunter turn ends, the GM may choose to pay any associated costs to trigger one of the Entity's Interrupt abilities.

FOCUS

Focus is a resource which represents a Hunter's ability to act with intent and care. Characters can expend Focus to roll with advantage on their next roll. They cannot have more than one Focus – either you have it or you don't.

TARGETING AND ALLIES

Some abilities target one or more allies. These can't be used on the Hunter who is using the ability – for the purposes of these rules, you can't be your own ally.

If an ability lists targets 'at Close', this applies to every Close area: Front, Rear and both Flanks. If it lists targets 'at Ranged', it applies to every Ranged area on the grid.

Damaging And Healing

RESOLVE AND WOUNDS

Resolve is a measure of a Hunter or Entity's stamina, defensive capability, and spirit. It is easier to remove (and restore) than Wounds.

Wounds are a measure of a Hunter or Entity's toughness, willpower and survivability. They are harder to remove and restore than Resolve, and most Entities do not have a way to restore them.

Each Hunter or Entity starts each Hunt with their Resolve and Wounds set to their maximum values. Both Resolve and Wounds are restored in full by any undefeated Hunters and Entities after the Hunt ends.

TEMPORARY RESOLVE AND WOUNDS

Temporary Wounds and Resolve are added to your starting Wounds or Resolve and removed before standard Wounds or Resolve. They cannot be restored until the next time you gain temporary Wounds or Resolve; once they're gone, they're gone. The main ways of gaining temporary Wounds and Resolve are from your Refuge (see p. 101).

DAMAGING THE ENTITY AND TAKING DAMAGE

The objective of every Hunt – for the Hunters – is to reduce the Entity's Wounds to 0 and defeat them. The objective of every Hunt – for the GM – is to reduce all the Hunters' Wounds to 0 and defeat them.

When a Hunter makes an attack action, they make a roll to hit the Entity as outlined in the Hunter Attack section above. Each successful attack deals damage to either Resolve (always listed on the left under Weapon abilities) or Wounds (listed on the right), based on the dice result.

If a Hunter's attack would inflict Wound damage, they can opt to damage Resolve instead if they prefer. Some Weapons are designed to quickly reduce Resolve and in some situations it can be tactically advantageous to do this rather than inflicting Wound damage.

When an Entity makes an attack action, Hunters targeted by the attack make a roll to defend themselves against damage. Each successful attack deals damage to either Resolve (listed on the left side of the Entity's abilities) or Wounds (listed on the right).

Unlike Hunters, Entities cannot opt to inflict Resolve damage when their abilities inflict Wound damage.

The Entity does not roll to attack - so the GM does not roll dice to see if their abilities succeed. Instead, only the players roll dice to defend. The listed damage and effects of an Entity's ability will happen by default unless the Hunter's defence succeeds.

BREAKING AND BEING BROKEN

When a Hunter or an Entity's Resolve is 0, they are Broken, and whenever an attack against them would inflict Resolve damage, it now inflicts the listed Wound damage of that attack instead. If an attack Breaks an Entity or a Hunter, excess Resolve damage does not overflow to become Wound damage. One viable approach for defeating an enemy is to reduce their Resolve to 0 and finish them off while they're Broken by landing Wounds on them.

HEALING

Hunters can restore Resolve with a Guard manoeuvre – performing it increases their current Resolve value by 1. Guard cannot increase a Hunter's Resolve above its maximum value. Hunters can restore Wounds by performing a Recover support manoeuvre.

Abilities granted by Weapons and Equipment offer other ways of restoring Resolve and Wounds.

Some abilities (including those granted by terrain tags) may reduce the amount of Resolve or Wounds taken from an Entity attack. This can reduce the damage to 0. They do not affect Resolve or Wound damage that is marked by Hunters as a cost of activating other abilities – the maximum amount is marked as normal.

Every Entity has a way to restore Resolve listed as part of its rules. Sometimes this will be a manoeuvre they can make on their turn; sometimes it will be triggered by succeeding at a particular attack action; sometimes it will be in response to an event, such as Breaking a Hunter. If an Entity can keep its Resolve above 0, it is less likely to suffer Wound damage and will survive for longer.

Entity Turn

An Entity may make one attack and one manoeuvre – or two manoeuvres – on its turn, just like a Hunter can. They cannot use Interrupt abilities on their turn – only during the Interrupt phase at the end of Hunter turns.

ENTITY ATTACK

GMs choose the Entity's attack from the ones listed in their specific rules. Here's one broken down as an example.

SMASH¹

One Hunter in a Close area.² TN12, Hard.³ 3/2.⁴

If the Entity inflicts Resolve damage, clear all terrain tags from the target.⁵

When an Entity makes an attack, they may spend Threat tokens in their target area to increase damage inflicted by +1/+1 per Threat token spent. Certain attacks may have different effects when Threat is spent on them – these are outlined in the specific rules text. If there is no information about spending Threat on an attack, assume it uses the rules above.

No attacks or actions can target the Support area or any Hunters in it.

Most Entities have no way of restoring Wounds.

1 The name of the action.

2 Target type. The target/s of the attack must satisfy these conditions.

3 The Target Number and stat associated with the attack. Players must roll equal to or over the TN but under the listed stat to avoid all damage from the attack.

4 Damage dealt by the attack, listed as Resolve/Wounds.

5 Special effects triggered as a result of the attack, if any.

HUNTER DEFENCE

Remember: the GM never rolls dice. Instead, the Entity's target may roll to defend themselves. Each attack has a Target Number and a stat listed alongside it; the target should roll a D20 and compare the result to the TN and their rating for that stat. As with other rolls, the Hunters use blackjack rules to judge success, aiming to roll as close as possible to their stat without going over.

- If the result is over the Hunter's relevant stat, they suffer Wound damage (the number on the right).
- If the result is under the Hunter's relevant stat and under the Target Number (TN), they suffer Resolve damage (the number to on the left)
- If the result is under the relevant stat and equal to or over the Target Number, the Hunter takes no damage.
- If the result is equal to the Hunter's relevant stat, the Hunter takes no damage.

In effect, each level of success downgrades the damage by 1 step: Wounds > Resolve > No damage.

A Hunter can expend Focus to roll with advantage to defend.

BROKEN

When an Entity or a Hunter is reduced to 0 Resolve they are Broken. Attacks made against a Broken individual automatically inflict their Wound damage if they hit, no matter the roll. Broken Entities and characters may also have alternate rules, and may have the ability to restore Resolve on certain triggers. Most Entities have some response to being Broken, ranging from a sudden lash-out attack to a full change in form.

ENTITY MANOEUVRES

Like Hunters, Entities also choose from a list of manoeuvres detailed in their rules. Most Entities will have a means of restoring lost Resolve via an appropriate manoeuvre.

Threat

Threat is a measure of an Entity's intent, attention and likely behaviour over the course of a Hunt. It is allocated to locations on the grid rather than to individual Hunters. A GM will mainly place Threat tokens on the grid in response to one of the following triggers:

- A Hunter misses with an attack.
- A Hunter uses an ability that specifies Threat is placed on an area.
- The end of the Entity's turn.

After the Entity has made both of their actions, they place Threat equal to their Threat Per Round anywhere on the grid (except Support).

The total Threat on the grid may not exceed the Entity's Threat Cap at the end of the Entity's turn; if it does, remove Threat tokens until it equals the Threat Cap.

INTERRUPTS

At the end of any player character turn, the Entity can consume placed Threat tokens to make an interrupt action. Interrupt attacks usually have a listed Threat cost which must be removed from the targeted area to make the attack. See p. 89 for more on interrupts.

DEATH

When a character or Entity has 0 Wounds remaining, they die.

If the Entity was a Vassal, the Hunters may perform a Baptism and harvest Bone (p. 95). If the Entity was a Lord, the Hunters will also claim its Heart in addition to any other benefits, the Hollow is destroyed, and the Hunters go back to the Refuge. The precise details here will depend on whether the players have anchored the Lord or not – see p. 96.

Hunters, however, don't get to stay dead.

When your character dies, tick off one of the Death boxes on your character sheet and roll a D20. If you roll under the number written in the relevant box, you are lost to Corruption and become a Hollow. It is your job to write and run the next

Hollow (ask the GM for help if you need it) focusing around your character's trauma and turmoil. (We have not included rules for this in this version of the playtest.) The surviving Hunters must put you to your final rest the only way they know how: hideous violence.

If you survive, you gain access to any benefits written in parentheses after the Corruption roll.

Within the Refuge, there are means of arresting this process, if you want to take them. If you remove Corruption associated with a death and untick the box, you lose any associated benefits too.

After dying, if they do not become a Hollow, a Hunter awakens in the Refuge (p. 100) with a metaphysical headache and one of the following blights (chosen by the GM):

DEATH	CORRUPTION ROLL
1	• 0
2	• 2 (+1 maximum Resolve)
3	• 4
4	• 6 (+1 to any stat)
5	• 8
6+	• 10 (+2 to any other stat)

Blights

TAINTED	At the start of the GM's turn, all allies in your area suffer 1 Resolve damage.
HUNTED	At the start of the Entity's turn, place 1 Threat token on your area.
BRANDED	At the start of the Entity's turn, suffer 1 Resolve damage if you are in Close.
UNREAL	You cannot use the Focus manoeuvre.
ENERVATED	Reduce your maximum Resolve by 2.

The blight, and its associated symptoms, is removed when the Hunter takes part in a Baptism after a successful Hunt.

Spores, necrotic flesh, buboes and vile miasmas.

Jitters, pungent odours, obvious footprints and prey animal traits like antlers and hooves.

Raised scars, red-raw burns, itching runes and crawling tattoos.

Flickering form, disjointed thoughts and ghostly after-images.

Pallid skin, blank eyes, wheezing coughs and shaking legs.

Baptism

When you slay an Entity you anoint yourself with its blood, draining energy out of the Hollow and into your body. Broken bones snap and set, torn wounds close and blood runs back into the rift, and shattered teeth settle back into their sockets.

This Baptism grants the group Blood and 4 Bone.

Blood immediately grants all surviving Hunters a single Weapon ability from the Weapons they are holding and the Tiers to which they have access (Tier 1 by default; higher Tiers through Refuge upgrades). This ability is temporary and will only function within the Hollow where the Baptism occurred.

Bone is the physical remnants of Entities, still roiling with oilslick black blood and the essence of the Hollow. Bone can be used in a number of ways:

- Use 1 Bone to immediately to create a Boneheart Key, allowing access to the Refuge. (See The Refuge, p. 100)
- Take the bone to the Refuge where it can be shaped into a number of other items and upgrades (see p. 101).

When you slay a Lord and bathe in its blood, you gain a Grand Baptism. You receive the Lord's Blood, 4 Bone, and a Heart.

The **Lord's Blood** must be used immediately to render one previously purchased upgrade permanent. To do this, each Hunter involved in the Hunt may choose one Weapon ability on their character sheet and make it permanent, meaning it will last between Hollows; all non-permanent abilities are removed as the Hollow crumbles and the Lord's power fades.

If you change Weapons, you retain access to any permanent abilities you have, but you do not retain the stat changes. Reverse the stat changes from your old Weapon, and take the ones from your new Weapon instead.

The **Heart** is used to access Forge upgrades in the Refuge; when placed in the furnace, it beats unnatural and fierce, and allows the creation of strange tools.

ANCHORS

It would seem as though the retirement options for Lords and Hunters alike are the same – death, brutal and vicious, after blossoming into a Hollow and corrupting the world around themselves. The Weapons long for this bloodshed and whisper the inevitability of the end into the minds of their bearers, pushing them towards a cycle of destruction.

But: death is the easy way out.

It is far harder to *not* tear the Lord's soul asunder and scatter their ashes to the four winds. With knowledge, resources and a little luck, the Hunters can fashion a place for the Lord's spirit to reside after the destruction of their body. They can do the same for their own soul, too, should they wish it.

Violence isn't inevitable. It's just what works.

Anchoring Vassals

Vassals aren't real, in the same way that Hollows aren't real – they are manifestations of the Lord's torment. They can't be anchored in the same way as a Lord because there simply isn't a soul within them to save.

Anchoring A Lord

Before attempting to enter the Lord's lair, the Hunters can spend 5 Lore and 5 Bone in the Refuge and use some of the items they have picked up during your travels to create an anchor for the Lord. It's up to the group to choose how this looks, and what fictional items to use as a focus. This anchor occupies the Hunting Item slot of one of the Hunters.

When the Hunters have an anchor and fight a Lord the following mechanical changes occur:

- Threat Cap increases by 4
- Threat Per Round increases by 1 (if the Lord has multiple specific ways of applying Threat, the GM chooses one of them to take this bonus)
- The Lord gains the following attack:

Outpouring of Blight. Target the Hunter carrying the anchor or a Hunter in their area. TN14, Wise. 2/1. Any Hunter who suffers Wound damage from this attack raises their Corruption by 1. Boosting this attack with Threat does not change the Corruption value gained.

Examples Of Anchors

There's no one form for an anchor to take, and each can be as personal as the Hollow in which it was forged and the Hunters that forged it. We leave the specifics regarding the fictional appearance and function of Anchors up to the players and the GM. Here are some ideas:

- A heavy chain made of precious metal that loops around the Lord's neck and chokes the life out of them; it also acts as a metaphysical leash.
- A portrait or statuette of the Lord as they were before they were pulled into the Hollow.
- A weighty steel cylinder, open at one end and ringed with inscribed sigils, designed to catch the Lord's soul before it dissipates.
- A woven black drawstring bag placed over the Lord's head (or head-analogue) at the moment of death.
- A whirring, sparking device that resonates in frequency with the Lord's spiritual energy, drawing their essence into itself and earthing it as their physical form is ripped apart.
- A course of pharmaceuticals that opens the user's body to accept the fleeing spirit, coupled with belts, cilices and restraints that can be pulled tight to stop the possessor misbehaving before it can be safely exorcised in the Refuge.
- A beautifully-cut gem, sparking with prismatic bursts of light, that holds the Lord's tortured spirit.
- A coffin, often lashed to the bearer's back or otherwise rigged up to a cart or sled, that is propped open and snaps shut upon the Lord's death.

Anchor or not, you're still killing an Entity, and it's still bloody and brutal and dangerous. The difference is that when the Lord breathes their last (if they're the sort of Entity that breathes), their spirit is caught within the anchor and held in the possession of the Hunters rather than crumbling apart to nothingness with the rest of the Hollow.

An Entity in the presence of an anchor will fight harder and longer than it otherwise would. Anchor magic isn't the standard ultraviolence granted to Hunters by their Weapons, and some people think that the Lord's increased vigour is a punishment for trying to salvage the lost soul rather than grinding it to dust.

After The Fight

When the Lord is defeated, rather than being torn to shreds, its essence is now bound to the anchor and can be stored within the Refuge, which alters itself to accommodate its new guest. Rooms materialise to allow them a place to sleep, and courtyards appear to stable the more animalistic Lords.

Crucially, the defeated Lord can live within the Refuge quite happily as *themselves*, free of the torment of their personal hell. (Having a Hollow form around you and then seeing your innards strewn about the place while a group of violent do-gooders shove your soul into an improvised spirit trap is startlingly good at putting your other problems in perspective.) While it doesn't fix all their woes, it purges their toxicity, and lets them function as the people or creatures they were before their life took them down a dark path.

With this new addition to the Refuge the players gain access to a range of benefits. First and foremost there is someone new to talk to – someone who was once innately connected to the corrupted magic of the Hollow, and who may have leads or insights into other Hollows around the Isles.

They can also offer the party mechanical benefits. Below you will find some examples, but the reward should always be tailored to the theme and tone of the Lord.

- One immediate upgrade to a relevant Refuge location as the Lord takes over control of it or lends their expertise.
- One permanent weapon upgrade as the Lord teaches you knowledge.
- One stat boost as you draw on their remaining power or receive training from them.

Anchoring A Hunter

The principles of anchoring – establishing a fetish or totem for the spirit to connect to after death – can be extended to Hunters, as well.

The process is largely the same, except that:

- The anchor costs 10 Bone and 1 Heart to create
- The Hunter's Corruption score must be 5 or lower (it can be reduced at the Shrine in the Refuge)

Once their anchor is built, the Hunter sacrifices their Weapons and is permanently bound to the Refuge in the same way as a Lord; the party receives a benefit as above. Other than the violent desecration of being overcome with Corruption, this is the only way a Hunter can retire.

REST

THE REFUGE

The world is dangerous; the Refuge is safe. Accessed with black magic through an extradimensional snicket, the Refuge provides a safe space for Hunters to rest, recuperate and maybe even enjoy themselves when on a Hunt.

The Refuge can take any form; when the Hunter opens the door, it forms itself around their expectations. For many Hunters, used to a life travelling and making few friends along the way, it appears as a warm pub with a bed for the night – but it might resemble a sacred grove, a hidden bunker, a ship on placid seas or the empty halls of a run-down abbey.

Your Patron

The factions that govern the Isles have a vested interest in Hunting, and each of them has access to different Refuges. When the Hunters first enter the Refuge, determine which faction is the Patron. This doesn't necessarily mean that they're in charge of it, or providing access (although they might), but more that the space operates according to their ideals. There are several suggestions for how your chosen Patron affects the look and feel of your Refuge below, but no associated mechanical effects, and you are free to describe the Refuge however you wish.

Accessing The Refuge

Accessing the Refuge deliberately – rather than dying and waking up there – requires a Boneheart Key (see Baptism, p. 95), and the Key is consumed upon entry. The key opens any door to deliver you into the Refuge but it can also open trees, holes in the ground or rocks with suitable holes in them – it just prefers doors. The door persists for as long as it is held open, and can admit any number of Hunters or other Entities – but once it closes, it disappears.

You can use a Boneheart Key to access the Refuge from any safe location; a safe location is one that does not contain an active Entity.

Hunters who die in the course of their Hunt wake up at the Refuge without the need to consume a Boneheart Key in the process.

When a Hunter enters the Refuge they may take a single Refuge action. Hunters awakening in the Refuge after death during a Hunt are assumed to have used their Refuge action to revive themselves. Hunters entering at the same time may choose any combination of Refuge actions between them, including multiple Hunters taking the same action, unless specified otherwise.

The Keeper

Each Refuge has a Keeper. The Keeper is an extension of the Refuge's spirit and maintains the space (physically with a broom and a mop, metaphysically with inscrutable wards, or both) and is perpetually present – in fact, they can't leave. Or if they were to leave, it wouldn't be very good for them or the Refuge.

Refuge Abilities And Actions

The Refuge grants access to certain abilities. Some of these have a resource cost to unlock, while others can be accessed on arrival in the Refuge at no additional cost.

Upgrading The Refuge

The more you invest in a Refuge, the more resources it will have at the Hunters' disposal. A starting Refuge contains:

- **Backrooms**, for restocking equipment.
- **Beds**, to sleep in, and to wake up in after death.
- The **Forge**, to make Weapons.
- The **Shrine**, to lower Corruption.
- The **Library**, to research Entities.

Bone harvested from Entities can be invested into these elements to increase their effectiveness as detailed on the Refuge sheet below. This playtest version of the rules has fewer upgrade options available than the final document.

Patron Themes And Allies

PATRON	THEMES	THE REFUGE	THE KEEPER
THE CROWN	Military, Nobility, Class, Decay.	An apartment draped in mouldering finery.	A grumbling royal caretaker.
THE PEOPLE	City, Soil, Steel, Folk Magic.	A run-down pub.	A long-suffering bartender.
THE CONCLAVE	Occultism, Academia, Nepotism, Secrecy.	A labyrinthine doctor's office.	An attentive nurse.
THE TEMPLE	Ritual, War, Relics, The Dead.	A draughty chapel.	A maudlin nun.
THE HOUSE	Greed, Brutality, Politics, Power.	A decrepit back- alley club.	A mysterious voice through a grate in the wall.

THE REFUGE SHEET

THE REFUGE

PATRON:

KEEPER:

APPEARANCE:



FREE ACTION.



REFUGE ACTION (ONE PER VISIT).

THE BACKROOM

STRONGBOXES, SACKS AND CUPBOARDS.



DEPOSIT ANY HELD BONE AND HEARTS.



REGAIN ANY SPENT UTILITY ITEMS.



CHOOSE AN ALTERNATIVE PIECE OF HUNTING EQUIPMENT FROM YOUR CLASS' LIST.



CHOOSE TWO ALTERNATIVE PIECES OF EXPLORATION EQUIPMENT FROM YOUR CLASS' LIST.

☐ 5 BONE: A WIDE ARRAY OF OLD-FASHIONED EQUIPMENT.

CHOOSE AN ALTERNATIVE PIECE OF HUNT EQUIPMENT FROM ANY BACKGROUND LIST.



CHOOSE UP TO TWO ALTERNATIVE PIECES OF EXPLORATION EQUIPMENT FROM ANY BACKGROUND LIST.

THE LIBRARY

AN ARMFUL OF ALMANACKS, LOCAL MAPS AND NEWSPAPERS.



GAIN 1 LORE.

THE BEDS

A PLACE TO REST ONE'S WEARY HEAD.



WAKE UP AFTER YOU ARE KILLED, AND GAIN A BLIGHT OF THE GM'S CHOOSING.

☐ 5 BONE: DECENT MATTRESSES, PRIVATE ROOMS.

+3 TEMPORARY RESOLVE.

THE SHRINE

DARK STONE CARVED INTO AN ELDRITCH SHAPE.



LOWER YOUR CORRUPTION BY 1.



SPEND 5 LORE AND 5 BONE TO CRAFT AN ANCHOR.

THE FORGE

AN ANVIL, A FURNACE, AND SOME RUDIMENTARY TOOLS.



GAIN ACCESS TO TIER 1 WEAPON ABILITIES.



MODIFY A WEAPON YOU OWN WITH TIER 1 PARTS.



CHANGE A WEAPON YOU OWN TO ANOTHER WEAPON.

☐ 1 HEART: UNNATURAL FIRES LEND UNNATURAL STRENGTH.

GAIN ACCESS TO ACCESS TIER 2 WEAPON ABILITIES.

HOLLOWS



HOLLOWS ARE ADVENTURES, OR SCENARIOS, FOR THIS GAME. EACH ONE IS A SELF-CONTAINED HELL BUILT AROUND ITS LORD - A CURDLED, ROTTEN SUMP OF BAD MAGIC AND PSYCHIC TORMENT.

THE OBJECTIVE FOR EACH HOLLOW IS TO DESTROY THE LORD IN COMBAT. BY KILLING ENTITIES AND PERFORMING BAPTISMS, THE HUNTERS CAN GROW IN POWER; BY COLLECTING LORE AND SPENDING IT TO UNLOCK EDGES, THEY CAN MAKE THE FIGHTS EASIER TO WIN.

We've given you two Hollows to experiment with:

STEEL CITY, which is an internecine nightmare as rival factions in the realm of an industrial necromancer fight each other for supremacy.

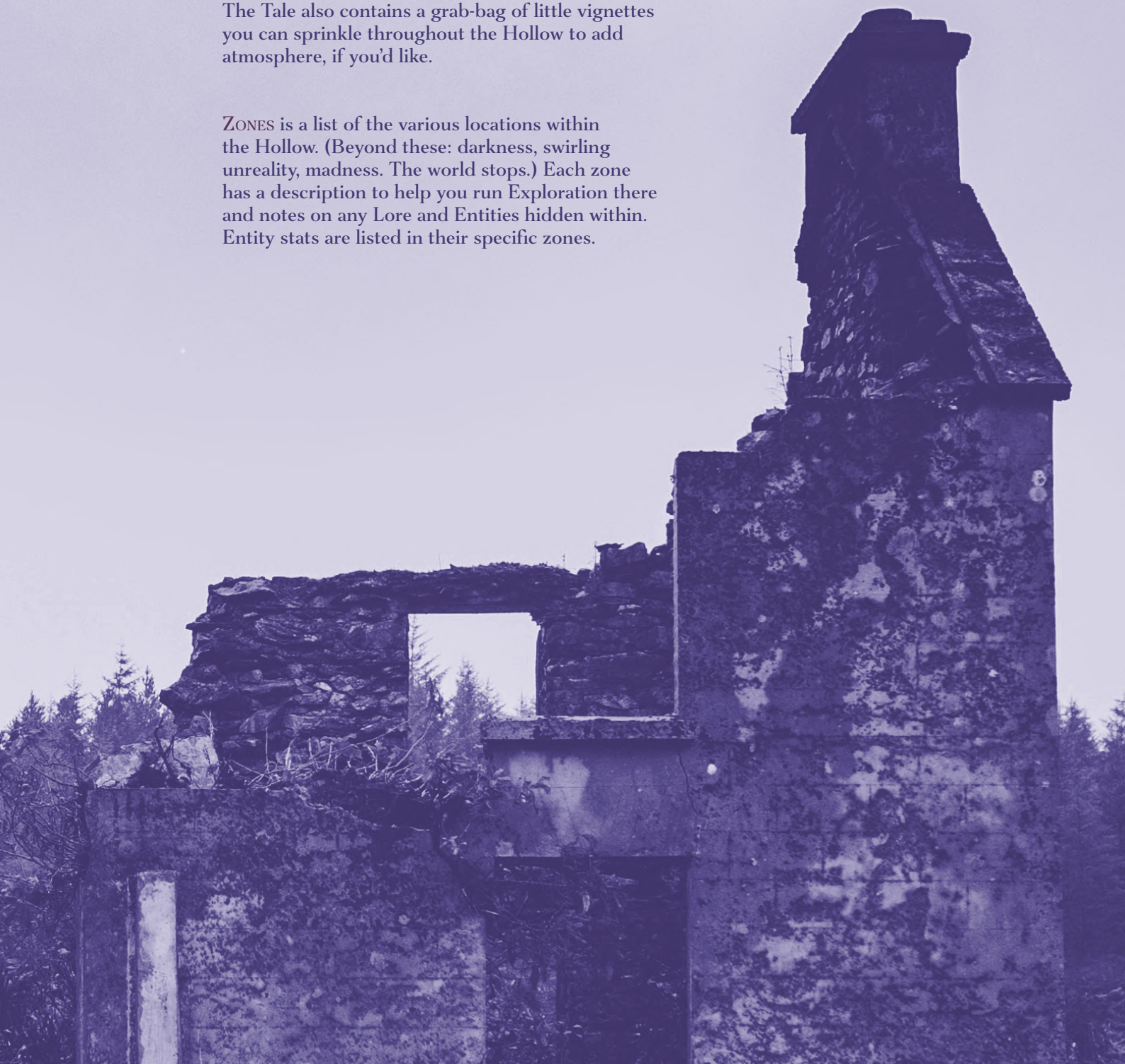
MORNINGMIRE, which is a personal story of loss and grief focusing around a widow and the community that turned against her after the death of her husband.

There's no particular order to play them in; pick whichever one you're interested in and go from there. Feel free to change the fiction behind them, but please use the mechanics as printed. The second Hollow played will likely be easier than the first, but that's something we're looking to understand more about as part of the playtest.

Hollows are broken down into the following parts:

THE TALE is the backstory of the Hollow and the Lord who commands it (or who is the most important prisoner, depending on your perspective). It lets us show our working and, rather than allude to the themes through allegory and metaphor, we can just say them out loud to allow you to integrate them with your own ideas. The Tale also contains a grab-bag of little vignettes you can sprinkle throughout the Hollow to add atmosphere, if you'd like.

ZONES is a list of the various locations within the Hollow. (Beyond these: darkness, swirling unreality, madness. The world stops.) Each zone has a description to help you run Exploration there and notes on any Lore and Entities hidden within. Entity stats are listed in their specific zones.

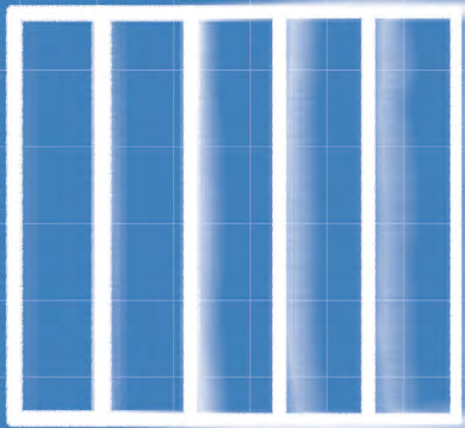
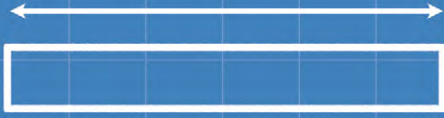


STEEL CITY

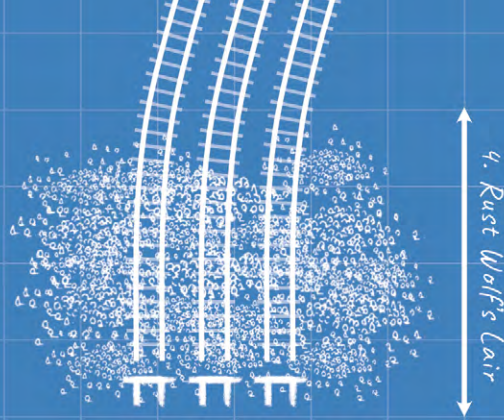
CONTENT WARNINGS: Exploitation, violence, illness, poverty,
funerals, mutilation, ghouls, people being hunted,
imprisonment, surgical modification.



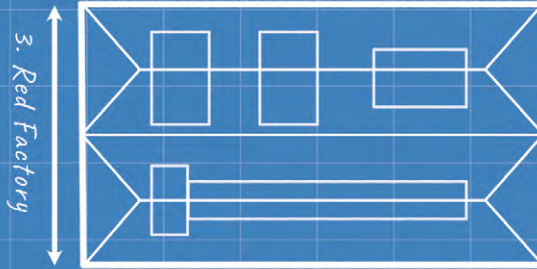
1. Nyad Square



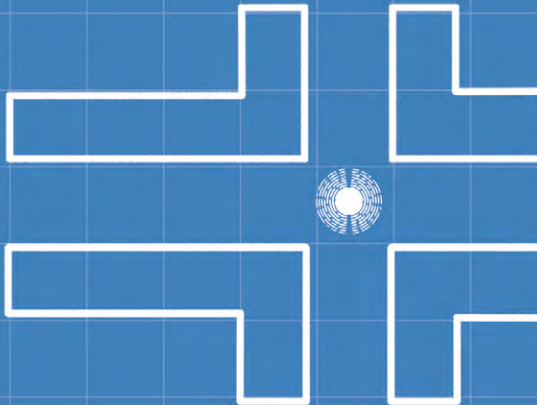
2. Threnody Row



4. Rust Wolfe's Lair



3. Red Factory



5. Contested Territory

STEEL CITY

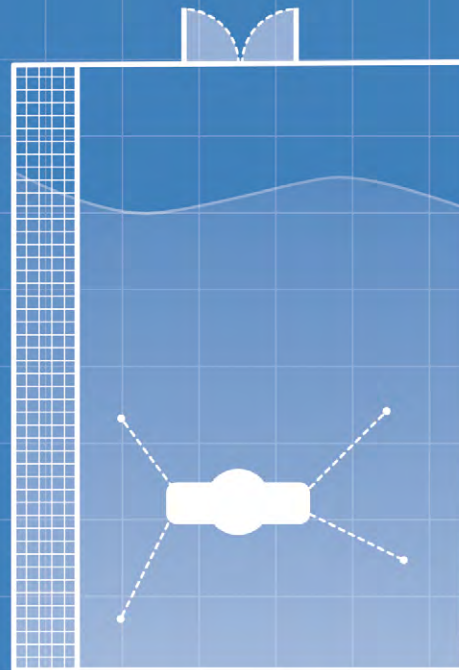
*Plans drawn up by V. Milcroft
and Associates under commission*

STRANGE THINGS

Use these as prompts to colour your descriptions or react to Hunters accruing Doom whilst exploring the Hollow.

- A machine buried beneath the ground bursts to life.
- A dead-eyed ghoul carries heavy slag from one pile to another then repeats in reverse.
- A factory bell rings and a crowd of workers limp back to their tenements; another crowd shuffles past them to replace them on the next shift.
- A salvo of rusted knives streaks through the air and impales a bystander.
- A company hymn rings out across the city.
- A pack of ghouls tears machinery out of one factory to add it to another.
- A guttural mechanical moan makes the ground shake.

6. Mechanical Gestalt

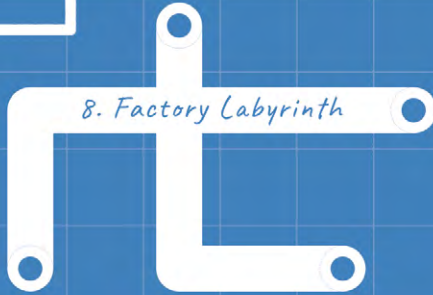




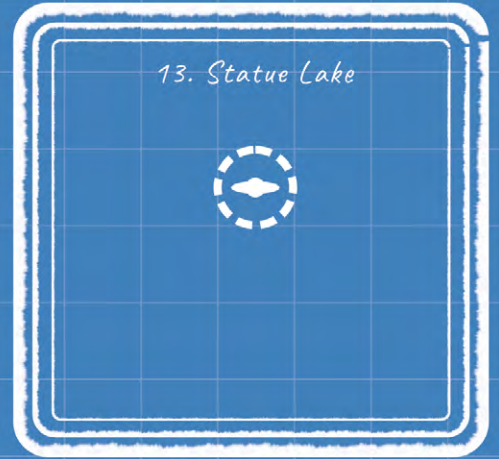
9. Feast Hall



10. Forge
Mother's
Lair



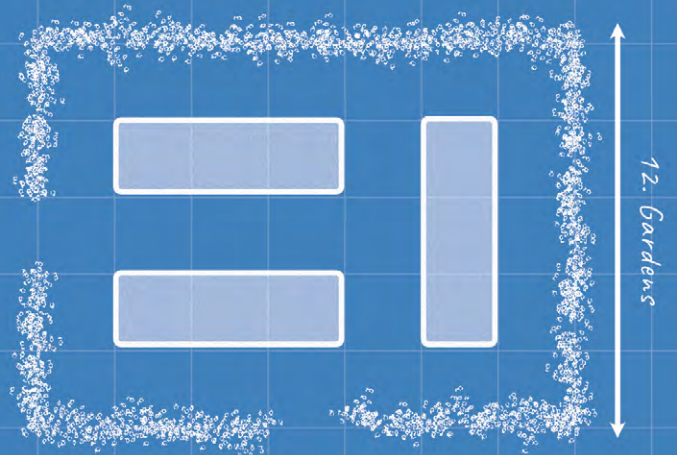
8. Factory Labyrinth



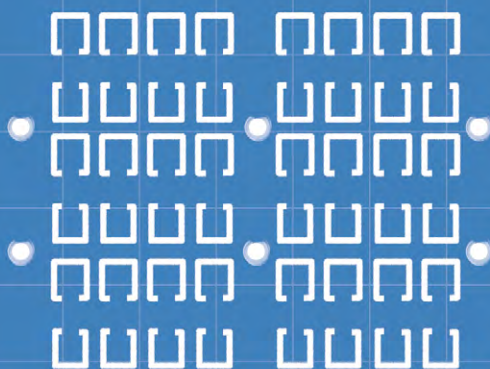
13. Statue Lake



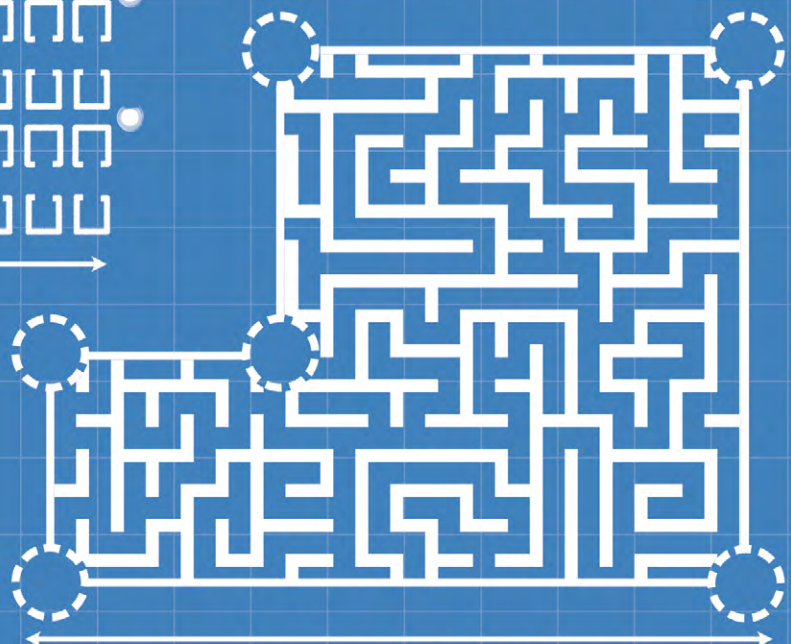
7. Quarry Run Estate



12. Gardens



11. Kennels



14. Furnace Lich's Castle

The Tale

Victor Millcroft was the pride of the Isles. He transcended his humble roots to become a prominent industrialist; his factories and workhouses were the talk of the House, and his self-sustaining company villages heralded as a prime example of intelligent, forward-thinking business.

Which is to say: Victor Millcroft built an empire on the backs of his countrymen by forcing them into wage slavery and destroying their communities, and despite his vast riches he would never be accepted into the upper echelons of culture as anything more than a curiosity.

Isolated from both sides of society, Millcroft became desperate to make his impact on the world and cement his legacy. Attempts at marrying his children off into high society were met with derision. He gambled away his riches by investing in new, unreliable and ultimately unprofitable technologies. His workers – little more than serfs – were forced into more and more dangerous working conditions, and many died.

His legacy, it seemed, would die with him. Feeling betrayed by those around him, he sank into a wretched pit of loathing, and when the seed of the Hollow took root in his soul he welcomed it. Emboldened, he wished for a world where he *mattered*. Where he was at the helm of a perfect, eternal machine.

It doesn't matter that his world isn't perfect just yet. He cannot die; he has bound his life to the heart of it. He has all the time in the world and no-one left to turn on him.

Zones

1: Nyad Square

Seed: The Lord built company housing here – a horrible nest of tenements, neglected and collapsing, rife with disease.

A block of filthy tenements around a central statue of a proud businessman wearing a crown. The statue is in a fountain; Hunters emerge from beneath the stagnant water as they enter the Hollow.

Dead-eyed inhabitants – desperate and sick – peer from behind greasy lace curtains and clutch rusted weapons, looking to steal enough to survive.

Navigating the slum labyrinth leads to the patched-up rooftops. Improvised walkways lead to more tenements where hymnal singing can be heard, or stairs lead deeper into the Hollow through a rust-red factory.



D3+1 LORE

If the Hunters can climb above the choking monochrome smog, they reveal the rest of the Hollow stretching out in the dim half-light of a perpetual dusk and get their bearings.

2: Threnody Row

Seed: Hundreds if not thousands of workers died in the Lord's factories to bring him profit. Their grief was too great to bear.

Rows upon rows of tenement housing stitched together into a single unit; Hunters enter through the upper levels, and the deeper they go the more flooded and unsafe the units become.

Mourners in ragged veils roam the streets and corridors, wailing and weeping, looking for a funeral to attend. A Priest directs them, waving the company handbook like a bible, and will sic them on intruders – though weak, there's enough of them to overpower a Hunter and stuff them in a casket.

Remember: unless the combat is against an Entity, handle it like any other obstacle presented during Exploration and move on – roll under an appropriate stat and narrate the outcome.



D3+1 LORE

Prying the company handbook from the Priest's hands allows the Hunters to learn more about the brutal working practices of the factories here.

3: Red Factory

Seed: There used to be wilderness here, before the factories choked the life out of the landscape.

A knife factory where rust grows up the walls like moss and the tang of it fills the air. Knives – big things, all metal, with blood and matted fur stuck to the thin handles – are lodged into the walls as if thrown with a terrible force.

A man covered in animal skins with antlers stapled to his skull runs, panicked and cackling, from one industrial press to another. A salvo of knives thuds into the ground behind him, thrown from the shadows in the rafters.

Some other people weren't quick enough, and their corpses are pinned in place by blades; barbed wire sprouts from their bodies like creeping vines.

Following the trail of corpses and organic-looking metal leads the Hunters onwards.



'Safety' posters showing a stylised version of the Rust Wolf ('If you want to get paid – don't get caught on the blades!').

4: Rust Wolf Lair

Seed: The Rust Wolf, a renegade and bitter Entity of the wilderness, has built a parasite domain within the Lord's Hollow.

Vassal Lair: Hunters may spend Lore to activate Edges against the Rust Wolf.

Two long train lines are overgrown with a replica forest made from metal, knives, scalpels, razor blades, barbed wire, and more. In the centre, a great tree of rusted iron houses a cult of rust-smeared people (the Prey) who dress themselves as sacrifices to the Wolf and will happily offer up other people to their god.



Track the Rust Wolf down or get it to reveal itself, and the Hunt is on.



The strange practices of the Prey – mutilation, sacrifice and impromptu surgery – reveal how little willpower the inhabitants of the Hollow have remaining after decades of subjugation and abuse.

*The last wolves were hunted to extinction a century ago,
but their spirits curdled with the destruction of the forest.
Their predator ghosts haunt the places where they once hunted,
growling infrasonic amongst a forest of rust-red blades.*

RUST WOLF

CLOSE 10

RANGED 14

WYRD 14

RESOLVE 10

WOUNDS 10

WHEN BROKEN: REVENGE
Place 2 Threat on the area
containing the character that
broke the Entity.

THREAT/ROUND 4

THREAT CAP 12

SPECIAL: TREACHEROUS
GROUND. At the start of the
Entity's turn, all characters in
areas that contain Threat or
that have a terrain tag suffer
1 Resolve damage.

INTERRUPTS

SLASH. Cost: 1 Threat. One
Hunter in any area. TN10,
Hard. 1/2

ATTACKS

BLOODLETTING. One Hunter in a
Close area. TN 9, Hard. 2/3. Threat tokens
spent on this attack increase the TN by 2 for each
token spent, but do not increase the Wound damage
inflicted. Rust Wolf restores Resolve equal to the amount
of Wound damage inflicted.

HAIL OF KNIVES. All Hunters in a Ranged area. TN11,
Quick. 2/2. Rust Wolf restores Resolve equal to half the
amount of Wound damage inflicted (rounding up).

MANGEOUVRES

REND. All characters in Flank Left and Flank Right.
TN9, Hard. 1/1.

SET A TRAP. Reposition two Hunters who are both
in areas that contain Threat; swap their positions.

LURE. Move one Hunter to any area that contains
less Threat than their current area.

5: Contested Territory.

Seed: The Lord turned his people against one another to distract from the misery he inflicted upon them.

A mix of factories, housing and shops, all burnt-out and smashed to bits. Several fires still burn in the streets and storefronts. At a crossroads, bent and smashed knives are made into a fierce-looking effigy of the Mechanical Gestalt (see Zone 6), facing towards the rust-red factory across the city. An unstable-looking bridge provides passage across the stagnant canal that bisects the city.

Pallid, half-formed people limp naked and scared in the distance. They have built traps to dissuade intruders – pits, swinging weighted bars, collapsing masonry, and so on. All the traps are protecting a big warehouse in the distance from which a great thudding can be heard ringing out like a church bell.



Getting close enough to one of the weird misshapen figures to examine it reveals a manufacturer's stamp punched between its shoulders. They're not born – they're made.

6: Mechanical Gestalt Lair

Seed: The Lord imagined a future of perpetual company housing churning out generations of debt-bound families to die in service of profit.

Vassal Lair: Hunters may spend Lore to activate Edges against the Mechanical Gestalt.

A sprawling warehouse with a four-or-five storey ceiling of corrugated iron and a floor underneath several inches of filthy river-water.

In the centre, the slumbering bulk of the Mechanical Gestalt is restrained with chains and weighed down with scrap metal put there by the ghoulish creatures that haunt this place. All around the exterior, machines produce dozens of these ghouls every hour by compressing and stamping scavenged organic matter into humanoid shapes.



Wake up the Mechanical Gestalt, despite the wordless protests of the attendant ghouls, so you can kill it.



Blueprints for the Gestalt reveal the extent of the Lord's power; he built this thing to control a manufactured workforce.

MECHANICAL GESTALT

The Mechanical Gestalt is a steel behemoth filled with the restless bodies of workers who died in an industrial catastrophe. These undying wretches swarm around the Gestalt's lair and drag those who enter into the howling mass of bodies to strengthen the pack.

THREAT

THREAT PER ROUND 1/3

THREAT CAP 6/9

INTERRUPT

GHOUL PACKS

Cost: 2 Threat. One Hunter in a Close or Ranged area. TN9, Hard. 2/1. If this inflicts Wound damage, Pull target.

ATTACKS

BROAD SWIPE

All Hunters in two adjacent Close areas. TN8, Hard. 4/2.

SLAM

One Hunter in a Close area. TN11, Quick. 2/4

MANOEUVRES

SMASH

All Hunters at Close discard all terrain tags.

RELENTLESS

Mark 2 Wounds to restore 8 Resolve.

LURCH

Reposition all Hunters in Close areas 1.

DEFENCES

RANGED 13/11

CLOSE 11/13

WYRD 9

HEALTH

RESOLVE 11

WOUNDS 18

(UNRESTRAINED TRIGGERS AT 9)

SPECIAL

UNRESTRAINED

When the Gestalt has suffered 9 Wound damage in total, switch Ranged and Close Defences (so Ranged is now 11 and Close is 13). Increase Threat Per Round to 3 and increase Threat Cap to 9.

COLOSSAL

If a Hunter in a Close area claims an Elevated terrain tag, they are considered to be climbing the Mechanical Gestalt. Instead of the standard benefits of Elevated terrain, they gain +0/+1 on Close attacks. At the start of each turn, they must mark 1 Resolve (to hang on) or discard the terrain tag. Hunters may Move to an adjacent Close area and maintain the terrain tag.



7: Quarry Run Estate

Seed: The Lord thought of other people as nothing more than animals.

Many of the buildings here have been levelled, creating wide avenues and large swathes of open ground. Sheltering in what little cover remains are inhabitants from all over the Hollow that the Lord has rounded up and trapped in here – mourners from the tenements, manufactured ghouls, bedraggled and frantic prey, and sputtering molten imps cower in what little cover remains.

The hounds, dog-shaped creatures stitched together from the strongest specimens from the factory ghouls, haunt this place.



D3 LORE

Digging through the ruins here reveals pamphlets written in simple English detailing the incredible opportunities available in the new Quarry Run Estate, including the monthly lottery.

8: Factory Labyrinth

Seed: Ceaseless overcomplication and bureaucracy prevented the Lord's subjects from escaping their servitude.

A twisting maze of pipes, walkways, manifolds and maintenance tunnels that allows access to the glowing factories in the distance. A distant screech heralds the opening of a valve, and a wave of chattering, obscene fire-imps swarms down a pipe in search of an exit. It seems as though these things are providing power for the place with their ceaseless movement.



D3 LORE

Accessing a control panel allows the Hunters to sabotage the flow and gain an understanding of the mechanical processes underpinning the Hollow.

9: Feasting Hall

Seed: The Lord had many children but ignored most of them – he only gave attention to the strongest and cruellest.

The labyrinth of pipes opens out into a wide open space within the factory complex criss-crossed by gantries overhead. Beneath, several rings of tables seat increasingly large imps who are messily consuming platters of chopped-up or near-dead ghouls whilst cackling, jeering and kicking the tar out of one another. The seat at the head of the table is empty but the biggest imp of all sits on its right hand side.

Beyond the feasting hall, a massive pipe manifold glows from within.



It's risky, but killing the largest imp would give you access to the smouldering coal heart beating within its chest – a powerful amulet.

10: Forge Mother's Lair

Vassal Lair: Hunters may spend Lore to activate Edges against the Forge Mother.

Seed: The Lord locked away his wife out of jealousy and spite – no-one was even allowed to look at her.

A great iron door guards the Forge Mother's prison within an oversized crucible; inside, the Entity endlessly retches up imps that scurry out through pipes and into the Hollow at large.



Open or bypass the enormous vault door and confront the Forge Mother directly.



Shattered mirrors reflect a beautiful woman who is no longer there. Slashed portraits lie in tatters around the walls.

FORGE MOTHER

A shambling construct built around a crucible overflowing with molten iron. The factory in which it has made its lair is filled with red-hot impish constructs that harass and burn Hunters who stray into dense terrain. While it isn't as strong or as fast as other Entities, the metal it drools and flings around the area is deadly.

DEFENCES

RANGED 12

CLOSE 11

WYRD 13

HEALTH

RESOLVE 9

WOUNDS 15

WHEN BROKEN: RUPTURE.

One Hunter in a Close area.

TN9, Quick. 2/1.



THREAT

Threat Per Round 2

Threat Cap 7

INTERRUPTS

Detonate. Cost: 1 Threat. Any Hunter with a Cursed terrain tag. TM10, Quick. 2/3. Additionally, destroy the terrain tag. Spend additional Threat to increase TN by 2 for each token spent.

SPECIAL

Swarms Of Molten Young. While a Hunter has a Cursed terrain tag, they suffer 2 Resolve damage at the end of their turn.

When a Hunter Moves, they can discard the tag with a successful Strong or Quick check.

ATTACKS

Vomit Horde Of Imps. One Hunter in any Ranged area. TM12, Sharp. 2/4. If this attack inflicts Resolve damage, target gains a Cursed terrain tag.

Claw. All Hunters in one of the following areas: Front, Right Flank or Left Flank. TM10, Hard. 3/2.

MANOEUVRES

Retch. All Hunters in one area gain Cursed terrain tag.

Consume. Destroy any Cursed terrain tags on all Hunters in one Close area. Restore 3 Resolve for each terrain tag destroyed.

Drag To Mother. Reposition two Hunters with Cursed terrain tags in adjacent areas. Swap their locations.

11: Kennels

Seed: The Lord strove to be accepted amongst the upper classes, but his common upbringing left him unable to fit in.

Rows and rows of low-roofed kennels lit by flickering gaslight. From within, wretched keening howls and guttural barks echo across the stone training yard.

Here, the Lord attempted to make hunting hounds; unable to find dogs, he instead cut up and reassembled the manufactured ghouls made in the factory across the river. Some experiments were successful, but most were a mess of red-raw flesh and inexperienced sutures granted unnatural vigour from frustration at their own cursed existence.

In the distance, atop a mound of rust and slag, the Lich's castle looms large over the landscape.



D3 LORE

Releasing the 'hounds' from captivity will cause problems for the Entities in the Hollow, allowing the Hunters to take advantage and strike.

12: Gardens

Seed: The Lord never shared his wealth with anyone for free.

From the bleak chaos of Quarry Run Estate, the Gardens seem eerily quiet and well-maintained. Acres of manicured lawns and ordered flower beds dotted with abstract statuary surround the Lord's palatial castle-factory – but there is only one chair, situated in the centre of the grounds, for the Lord to sit and enjoy it.

A glint from a high castle tower betrays a sharpshooter in the upper levels of the structure with their rifle trained on the gardens – each shot echoes out across the lawns and the impact tears up clods of dirt and grass. (It's the Lord's groundskeeper; he will be executed for his incompetence before the Hunters get within sensible engagement range.) Howling and barking in the distance, approaching with a sound like a one-beast stampede, is Halcyon – the Lord's favoured hound, and the strongest of all of the stitched-together monstrosities that he uses to hunt.



D3 LORE

Kill the Lord's favourite dog and you could goad him into making a mistake.

13: Statue Lake

Seed: The Lord was desperate to display his wealth.

A great statue of the Lord stands proud in the middle of a murky, greasy lake, though the smog hides it from view from further away than the water's edge. The statue is idealised and overwrought; the lower levels of it are a labyrinth of bone that transitions into spiralling walkways made of hammered copper, silver and bronze. A crown of gold easily the size of a carriage sits atop a severe face that looks over the Lord's domain; the eyes within glitter and gleam with stolen gems.



D6 LORE

The Lord has placed some of his power in this statue (focusing on those eyes) as a means of strengthening his hold over the domain. Toppling or sabotaging it would significantly weaken him, and using the metals harvested to make Weapons might give you an edge in combat.

14: Furnace Lich Lair

Lord Lair: Spend 10 Lore to access the Furnace Lich's lair: overcome the labyrinth, unlock the warded gates and identify the secret entrances. Hunters may spend additional Lore to activate Edges against the Furnace Lich.

Seed: The Lord, terrified of death, built a legacy of machinery and profit above all else.

The Furnace Lich's castle is under continual development and construction; the new castle is built upon the old castle, and the next one will be built upon the new one, and so on. The factory-mansion is a nightmare maze of deathtrap dead-ends, hexed corridors and stairs to nowhere built and rebuilt by a legion of exhausted company serfs.



HUNT

Navigate the mind-bending passages of the castle to confront the Lich in his throne room. Killing him (twice, see below) seals the Hollow.



D3+1 LORE

Exploring the castle allows you to find a portrait of the Lord as a human marked with his true (human) name – speaking it aloud can weaken him.

FURNACE LICH LORD OF THE HOLLOW

THE FURNACE LICH USED TO BE A MAN: A MAN DRIVEN TO TAKE, CONSUME AND ENDURE. NOW, A DEATHLESS LORD OF HIS HOLLOW, THE LICH HAS BUILT HIS EVER-BURNING FURNACE TO CATCH HIS ESSENCE WHEN HIS BODY IS DESTROYED. HE SITS ATOP A TWISTED THRONE OF IRON AND STOLEN SOULS; YOU'LL HAVE TO KILL HIM TWICE TO DESTROY THIS WRETCHED PLACE.

SPECIAL: SOUL FURNACE

The first time Furnace Lich is reduced to 0 Wounds these events happen in order:

- 1 All Hunters may make an immediate manoeuvre
- 2 Pull all Threat at Ranged to adjacent Close areas
- 3 Furnace Lich's Resolve and Wounds are restored to their maximum values
- 4 Furnace Lich's Close Defence increases to 15, Wyrd Defence becomes 13

The second time Furnace Lich is reduced to 0 Wounds, it dies.

ATTACKS

HUNTING HOUND. Target one Hunter in any Ranged area. TN14, Strong. 2/3.

SOUL DRAIN. Target one Hunter in any Close area. TN15, Hard. 3/4. Furnace Lich restores Resolve equal to the amount of Wound damage inflicted.

INTERRUPTS

LABYRINTH HEX. Cost: 1 Threat. Target one Hunter in any area. TN12, Wise. 1/1. If the target takes damage, they take 1 Cursed terrain tag. This Cursed terrain tag cannot be discarded.

PULL THE STRINGS. Cost: 0 Threat. Target one Hunter with a Cursed terrain tag. Discard it and Slide the target.

YOU WORK FOR ME NOW. Cost: 2 Threat. Target one Hunter in any Close area where a second Hunter is present. GM chooses a weapon the Hunter possesses; apply the damage for that weapon to a different Hunter in the area. The second Hunter rolls Sharp to defend, using the first Hunter's attack stat as the TN.

MANOEUVRES

RUIN. Discard all terrain tags in two adjacent areas. Furnace Lich restores 2 Resolve for each tag removed.

BURN. All Hunters at Close suffer Resolve damage equal to the Threat in their area.

ANCHOR ABILITIES

If the players are carrying the anchor when they fight the Furnace Lich:

THREAT CAP increases by 4

THREAT PER ROUND increases by 1

NEW ATTACK: OUTPOURING OF BLIGHT. Target the Hunter carrying the anchor or a Hunter in their area. TN14, Wise. 2/1. Any Hunter who suffers Wound damage from this attack raises their Corruption value by 1. Boosting this attack with Threat does not change the Corruption value gained.

If the Furnace Lich is anchored and his physical form destroyed, he will set up shop in the Refuge creating equipment for the Hunters. The drive to control and make an impact has been burned out of him, and he is happy to craft useful things. Once per Hollow, each Hunter can pick up one of the following pieces of Hunting Equipment in addition to their carried item: Extra Ammunition, Mantrap, Lure, Shield.



DEFENCES

CLOSE 13 (15)

RANGED 14

WYRD 15 (13)

HEALTH

RESOLVE 7

WOUNDS 12 (SEE SOUL
FURNACE)

WHEN BROKEN: DREADFUL ATTENTION.

Pull all Threat adjacent to the
attacker to the attacker's area.

THREAT

THREAT PER ROUND 2 RANGED,
1 CLOSE

THREAT CAP 8

Morningmire

The Tale

In the shady woods of Morningmire, in a little wooden house, in the middle of the deepest river, lived a young family. Roland, the father, was called to the war. He took up his fathers' rifle, kissed his wife and young son goodbye and went off to do his duty. Orson, the young son, missed his father terribly. His mother would never show him the letters she received, said his father was well and that he should be proud of him. That one day he too would be called and Orson would take up the rifle and do his duty.

Leah, the mother, hid her sadness from the boy. She missed her husband, and spent weeks reading and re-reading his letters of anguish and fear. One day she received a letter with a different stamp, in a different envelope. This caused her to cry and cry and even Orson could not console her.

While she wept and slept, Orson knew how to help. He took up his little wooden sword and his little wooden shield. He rowed his little wooden boat to shore and went off to war to find his father. When Leah awoke she found Orson gone. His little wooden sword was not in his room, and his little wooden boat was not on the shore.

Leah screamed and searched and screamed and searched for days all throughout Morningmire. With her loves lost she sat and she wept. She wept so much that she soaked the boards of the little wooden house. She wept so much that the deepest river burst its banks and all of Morningmire was drowned in her tears. The water made the animals sad too. Soon all of Morningmire cried with Leah, for the loss of Roland and Orson.

CONTENT WARNINGS

WAR, VIOLENCE, INFANT DEATH, TICKS, CRUCIFIXION, VIOLENCE VS ANIMALS, GRIEF, SPIDERS, DROWNING, VIOLENCE VS WOMEN





A MAP OF MORNINGMIRE

BY ORSON, AGE ?????

b: Tick-Covered



d Stag's Lair

5: Stinking Mire



4: The King's Arms

1: Calloway Ruins

7: Playground Battlefield

9: Orson's Lair

KEEP OUT!

8: Deep Water



12: Leah's Lair

Strange Things

You can use these prompts for improvised details in response to player investigation, accruing Doom or just to mix things up.

- Writhing things in the mud and muck.
- Sudden rain of tears.
- Spider trees; fat orange spiders that look like fruit.
- The bloated corpse of an animal, rotting in the mire.
- Out of place patches of bright white lilies.
- Sudden change of the time of day.
- A funeral, the gravedigger struggling as the hole keeps filling itself in with slurry.
- Barely audible crying.
- A lost child. Can either lead you into danger or away from it.

Zones

1: Calloway Ruins

Seed: Collateral damage from the war stretches back to the Isles, ruining the lives of thousands of families.

The Hunters enter the Hollow here; they awaken in darkness, as they are several feet beneath the mud, and must dig themselves out. Once they emerge, their bodies are covered in hungry ticks and leeches, sucking blood and writhing beneath their clothes.

Around them, the ruins of wooden and stone buildings crumble into water-sodden ground, and crows call to one another from the eaves of decrepit houses. A handful of scavengers live here, women and children mainly, and will drown folk travelling through their territory then rifle through their pockets for valuables. As the Hunters already look half-drowned, they take the chance and leap on them as they emerge.

Ahead of them, a group of more intact buildings climb out of the muck and flickering lights shine from within; behind them, a pub standing eerily intact amongst the chaos.



D3 LORE

Fighting off the scavengers leads the Hunters back to their hideout atop the village's sinking war memorial, and the strange newspapers they've hoarded detailing the Miraculous Bog of Morningmire. The town began to sink almost overnight, and those who could left for better places.

2: Calloway Village

Seed: The fine ladies of Calloway turned their back on Leah, abandoning her to her grief.

A terrified and ramshackle rural village of largely innocent people caught in the middle of something they can neither understand nor do much about.

As the village sank deeper and deeper into the mire, the inhabitants began to build additional storeys on their rooftops to keep out of the muck; now, a handful of families survive and hold themselves to higher standards atop the heap. At least they're better off than *her*. They rip ticks off themselves without a second thought, and are covered in infected-looking wounds.



D3+1 LORE

The meagre population of Calloway has plenty of gossip about Leah and her family, and will pass it on without much prompting.

3: Hanging Gardens

Seed: Eventually, Leah's husband stopped responding to her letters.

A gnarled and leafless willow tree sways to and fro – not in the wind, but with a malevolent intellect. Bound into the branches like a crucified criminal is the desiccated corpse of a postman, his bag bulging with letters bearing military stamps.



D3+1 LORE

Overcoming the guardian tree allows access to letters from Leah's husband, detailing his time in the War as much as he was allowed. The final letter reports that he's missing in action.

4: The King's Arms

Seed: Leah's husband went to the war following a conscription effort that claimed most of the village's men.

A two-storey pub stands unmarred amongst the debris of the Hollow. It was here that the Crown set up shop in the village one day and recruited every able-bodied man to die in the War. Calloway has never been the same since.

In the upper floor, three or four soldiers are holding out against the Hollow with what little supplies they have left – two rifles, a box of bullets, and a rapidly-dwindling supply of gin. They'll shoot at anyone or anything that comes close.



D3 LORE

Conscription propaganda and scattered newspapers talk of the War and every man's Duty to Serve the Crown. Framed on the wall, pride of place, is a recruitment form for Roland Carmichael.



5: Stinking Mire

Seed: Leah is trapped in her grief and feels unable to free herself.

Miles of reeking bog with twisted, half-dead trees jutting out of it at tortured angles. The ground sucks at boots and saps strength, and every few hundred yards a deer is trapped in the mud unable to free themselves. They are covered with ticks, each the size of a man's clenched fist, and they moan in pain and distress as their lifeblood is drained from them.

In the distance, the keening mating call of a stag can be heard.



Extracting a doe from the mire and dissecting it – no easy feat – can shed light on the way that the Hollow has warped and twisted the natural life trapped within it.

6: Tick-Covered Stag's Lair

Vassal Lair: Hunters may spend Lore to activate Edges against the Tick-Covered Stag.

Seed: Leah's mental breakdown hangs off her and drains her energy.

A blasted wasteland with sodden muck underfoot, stretching out into infinity under a grey-white sky. Ticks the size of walnuts bob and scud through the water while flocks of crows circle and caw overhead. Within the skeleton of a once-verdant forest, a knot of dead trees conceals the sleeping body of the Tick-Covered Stag.



Traverse the hazardous terrain and confront the Stag where it sleeps.



Within the guts of the Stag is a battered locket engraved with the initials LC; inside the locket is an amateur portrait of a handsome military man.



TICK-COVERED STAG

A hideous symbiosis of parasite and prey. The great deer, half-dead and swollen with hunger, is covered in pulsing ticks each the size of a man's clenched fist; they feed on it, but in return their strange anticoagulants unlock ancient bloody secrets buried in the creature's hindbrain.

DEFENCES

Close 9 Range 19 Wyrd 14

HEALTH

Resolve 6 Wounds 19

When Broken: Spill. Target all Hunters in two adjacent Close areas. TN14, Hard. 2/2.

THREAT

Threat Per Round 2 Threat Cap 6

Special: Parasites. Cursed terrain tags cannot be removed with Move, Push, Pull, or Slide actions. At the start of each Hunter's turn, they suffer Resolve damage equal to the number of Cursed terrain tags on them. They can destroy all Cursed terrain tags by spending an attack action to remove them..

INTERRUPTS



Biant Tick. Cost: 1 Threat. Target one Hunter in any area.
Place a Cursed terrain tag on target.

ATTACKS

Nuller Gore. Reposition one Hunter at Close 1 before you make this attack. Target one Hunter at Front. TN12, Hard. 3/4.

Exsanguinate. Target one Hunter in any area. TN16, Wise. 2/2.
Against a Broken target, +0/+3. If the stag kills a Hunter with this attack, place a Cursed terrain tag on all Hunters in the target's area and adjacent areas.

MANOEUVRES

Feast. Destroy all Cursed terrain tags on Hunters in any two adjacent Close areas.
Tick-Covered Stag restores 2 Resolve per tag destroyed.

Limp Onward. Reposition all Hunters in one Ranged area to an adjacent Close area.

7: Playground Battlefield

Seed: Orson, Leah's son, was obsessed with being a soldier like his dad.

A badly-built assault course made from scraps of wood, rusted sheets of corrugated iron and home-made barbed wire. Everything is scaled for (and built by) a child, which makes it both harder to navigate and more dangerous as a result. Targets dressed in improvised enemy uniforms loom menacingly from behind little barricades.

The ground on either side of the course is a mixture of sucking mud and barbed wire; it looks as though it'll be easier to go through it than round it.



D3 LORE

Climbing a barbed-wire wreathed tree gives the Hunters access to Orson's drawings of him and his dad fighting the War together. His mum's in the drawings too, and she's stopped crying now.

8: Deep Water

Seed: Leah grew increasingly isolated, shutting herself off in her grief.

Leah's house is on an island in a lake at the outskirts of the village; the water around it is deep and hungry, and pulls down anyone who ventures across it. Just touching the water fills the Hunters with overwhelming despair, so swimming across it will be an effort of both strength and will.

Maybe a boat could help – but even then, the water laps at the gunwales and seeks to capsize the craft.



D3 LORE

Searching the shoreline around Leah's house reveals the remains of dozens of red boats, just like Orson's.

9: Orson's Lair

Vassal Lair: Hunters may spend Lore to activate Edges against Orson.

Seed: Orson sailed down the river in his little boat to help his dad, but quickly drowned.

Thick muck traps everything around; even the trees and frogs look like they are struggling to escape. Stuck half in a tree and half in the reeking mud is a boat that almost looks like a toy, and its faded red paint makes a colourful home for the rotting bones of Orson.



HUNT

Convince Orson to come out and play, then end him.



D3+1 LORE

Orson's diary, though written by a child, talks at length about his mother's descent into despair. It's a good thing crayon is waterproof; ink would have smeared into illegibility.



Orson

In the real world, Orson drowned in a fast-flowing river after setting sail to rescue his father from the War. Here in the Hollow, his waterlogged corpse has grown to three or four times its original size and is adorned with driftwood, algae and reeking plant life. His little red boat is still with him – but this time wielded in one clumsy fist as a shield.

Defences

CLOSE 14

RANGED 11

WYRD 10

Health

RESOLVE 14

WOUNDS 9

WHEN BROKEN: SHATTERED SHIELD.
Orson restores 7 Resolve, and all attacks gain +1/+1 damage.

Threat

THREAT PER ROUND: 1 in all Ranged Areas, 1 in any Close Area

THREAT CAP: 10

Interrupts

GRASPING WEEDS. Cost: 2 Threat. Target all Hunters in any area. TN11, Strong. 2/1. If this attack Wounds a Hunter, they take a Cursed terrain tag. While a Hunter has a Cursed terrain tag, they may not Move, and all Push, Pull or Slide effects on them are cancelled. They may make a Strong check at the end of their turn; on a success, destroy a Cursed terrain tag on them.

Attacks

DROWN. Cost: mark 2 Resolve. Target one Hunter in a Close area. TN9, Hard. 5/3.

RIVER RUN. Target all Hunters in one Ranged area. TN11, Strong. 4/1. If Orson inflicts Resolve damage to a target, Pull that target.

Manoeuvres

WHIRLPOOL. Shift all Hunters clockwise. A Hunter in Ranged Right will move to Rear; a Hunter in Rear will move to Left Flank.

PULL UNDER. Target all Hunters at Close or Ranged. TN8, Strong. 1/1. For each hit, Orson restores 1 Resolve.

10: Rooftops

Seed: Leah's cat killed every animal near her house, and no birds would ever visit.

The carrion-birds that caw and spiral in the air throughout this Hollow are nowhere to be seen. The entire place reeks of cat piss.

As the Hunters move out of Calloway, the buildings become at first uninhabited, then more sunken into the ground, then less and less sensical as they progress. None of them have doors, they're covered in protrusions and outcroppings, and before long they're a jungle of roofs protruding out of the mud with no houses beneath them.



D3 LORE

Searching the houses – which are not built for humans to move around in – reveals not one but dozens, perhaps hundreds, of dead cats. Each one is stuffed in a shoebox, wrapped in newspaper or sack-cloth, or otherwise hidden. Some of them show signs of additional limbs, eyes or fangs.

11: Nine-Lives Cat Lair

Vassal Lair: Hunters may spend Lore to activate Edges against the Nine-Lives Cat.

Seed: Acting out of frustration, Leah accidentally killed her cat. Now it haunts her.

The rooftops form a bridge over deeper water before descending into the mouth of a cave that drips with water – but inside, it's dry. Bathed in the half-light of dusk no matter what time of day it is outside, the internals of the cave are packed with alleyways, storm drains, guttering, patchy hedgerows, misshapen crates and anywhere else a cat might like to hide.

The Nine-Lives Cat *likes* it in the Hollow, and the Hollow seems to like the cat in return.



HUNT

Corner the Nine-Lives Cat (or smoke it out of hiding) to begin the Hunt.



D3+1 LORE

A dying white carrier pigeon coos and sputters atop a pile of dead birds and animals; attached to its leg is a message indicating that Roland Carmichael has been killed in action.

NINE-LIVES CAT

THIS BASTARD THING! YOWLING AND SCRATCHING AND SPRAYING EVERYWHERE. THE WHOLE HOUSE REEKED OF IT, EVEN AFTER IT DIED AND ORSON WEPT FOR A FORTNIGHT. BUT IT'S BACK – IT LOOKS LIKE A BIG UNNEUTERED TOMCAT THAT'S DRAGGED ITSELF OUT OF A SHALLOW GRAVE, BUT IT NO LONGER LIMITS ITS TARGETS TO RATS AND PIGEONS. NOW IT KILLS PEOPLE. EACH TIME IT DIES, IT COMES BACK BIGGER AND STRONGER AND STRANGER. SHARPER **TEETH**. MORE **EYES**. LEGS THAT **SPINDLE** AND **SKITTER**.

HEALTH

RESOLVE 5

WOUNDS 3

WHEN BROKEN: **BITE AND SCRATCH**. TARGET ALL HUNTERS AT CLOSE. TN12, HARD. 1/0.

SPECIAL: NINE LIVES. EACH TIME THE NINE-LIVES CAT IS REDUCED TO 0 WOUNDS, MARK 1 DEATH ON THE TABLE BELOW. RESTORE ITS RESOLVE TO 5 AND ITS WOUNDS TO 3. AFTER 4 AND 7 DEATHS, CHANGE ITS ATTACKS AND THREAT VALUES AS SHOWN. WHEN YOU HAVE MARKED 9 DEATH, IT'S DEAD.

DEATHS



+0/+0



+1/+1, +1 THREAT CAP,
+1 THREAT PER ROUND



+2/+2, +2 THREAT CAP,
+2 THREAT PER ROUND

THREAT

THREAT PER ROUND 1

THREAT CAP 6

INTERRUPTS

POUNCE. COST: 1 THREAT. TARGET 1 HUNTER IN ANY AREA. PULL TARGET TOWARDS FRONT.

ATTACKS

GO FOR THE JUGULAR. TARGET 1 HUNTER IN FRONT. TN12, HARD. 2/2. IF THE TARGET IS THE ONLY HUNTER IN THEIR AREA, +0/+2. IF THE NINE-LIVES CAT KILLS A HUNTER WITH THIS ATTACK, ADD A BOX UNDERNEATH THE NINE ABOVE: IT GAINS BACK ONE OF ITS LIVES.

FRANTIC SCRATCHES. TARGET ALL HUNTERS IN 3 ADJACENT AREAS. TN12, QUICK. 1/1.

MANOEUVRES

SCURRY. ALL HUNTERS ROLL SHARP. REPOSITION ANY THAT FAIL.

QUARRY. TARGET 1 HUNTER. TARGET GAINS A CURSED TERRAIN TAG, WHICH GIVES THE CAT +0/+2 ON ATTACKS AGAINST THAT HUNTER. HUNTER CANNOT REMOVE THE TAG THEMSELVES. IF THE CAT USES THIS ABILITY A SECOND TIME IT REMOVES THE TAG FROM THE ORIGINAL TARGET.

12: Leah's Lair

Lord Lair: Spend 10 Lore to access Leah's lair: navigate the dangerous waters, overcome the waves of grief, and steel yourself against the island's malaise. Hunters may spend additional Lore to activate Edges against Leah.

Seed: One day, Leah Carmichael gave in to despair, and waited for death to take her. Well: here you are.

A little hut in the middle of the lake that emanates the sound of crying constantly. A trickle of water seeps from every crack in the wooden walls and from under doorways and windows. Inside, Leah sits at her table, weeping. She *cannot* stop crying, and her tears have turned the land to bog and drowned her son a thousand times. When she sees the Hunters, she runs. Her house distends and reshapes around her so neither she nor her pursuers are able to escape.



Overcome the house's transformation, and confront the twisted form of Leah. Killing her seals the Hollow, and ends the scenario.

Leah, Lord of the Hollow

At first glance Leah appears normal, although her eyes are reddened from perpetual crying; but upon closer inspection, a great and wretched sadness has nested within her body and twisted it into strange shapes. Sodden roots quest out from beneath her skirts and her ribs shift and reform into bony, cracking tendrils. She sees you, sees the murder in your eyes, and runs away.

Close 13

Ranged 15

Wyrd 15

Health

Resolve 6

Wounds 18

Threat

Threat per Round 3

Threat Cap 9

When Broken: Floods Of Grief. Place a Cursed terrain tag on Leah. When Leah inflicts Resolve damage, increase the amount inflicted by the number of Cursed terrain tags on her.

Interrupts

Tears Like Tides. Cost: 1 Threat. Target a Hunter in any area. TIII, Strong. I/I. If Leah inflicts damage, Push the target I.

Attacks

Anguished Howl. Target all Hunters in 2 adjacent Ranged areas. TN13, Wise. 2/2. If Leah reduces a Hunter to 0 Resolve with this attack, reduce their maximum Resolve by 1 until the end of the Hunt.

Desperate Claw. Target all Hunters in Front, Right Flank or Left Flank. TN13, Hard. 2/2. If Leah reduces a Hunter to 0 Resolve with this attack, place a Cursed terrain tag on her.

Manoeuvres

Get Up. Use only when Leah is Broken. Leah restores Resolve to maximum.

Run Away. All Hunters at Close test Quick. On a failure, they are Repositioned to an adjacent Ranged area. Hunters in Rear may be Repositioned to either Flank.

Anchor Abilities

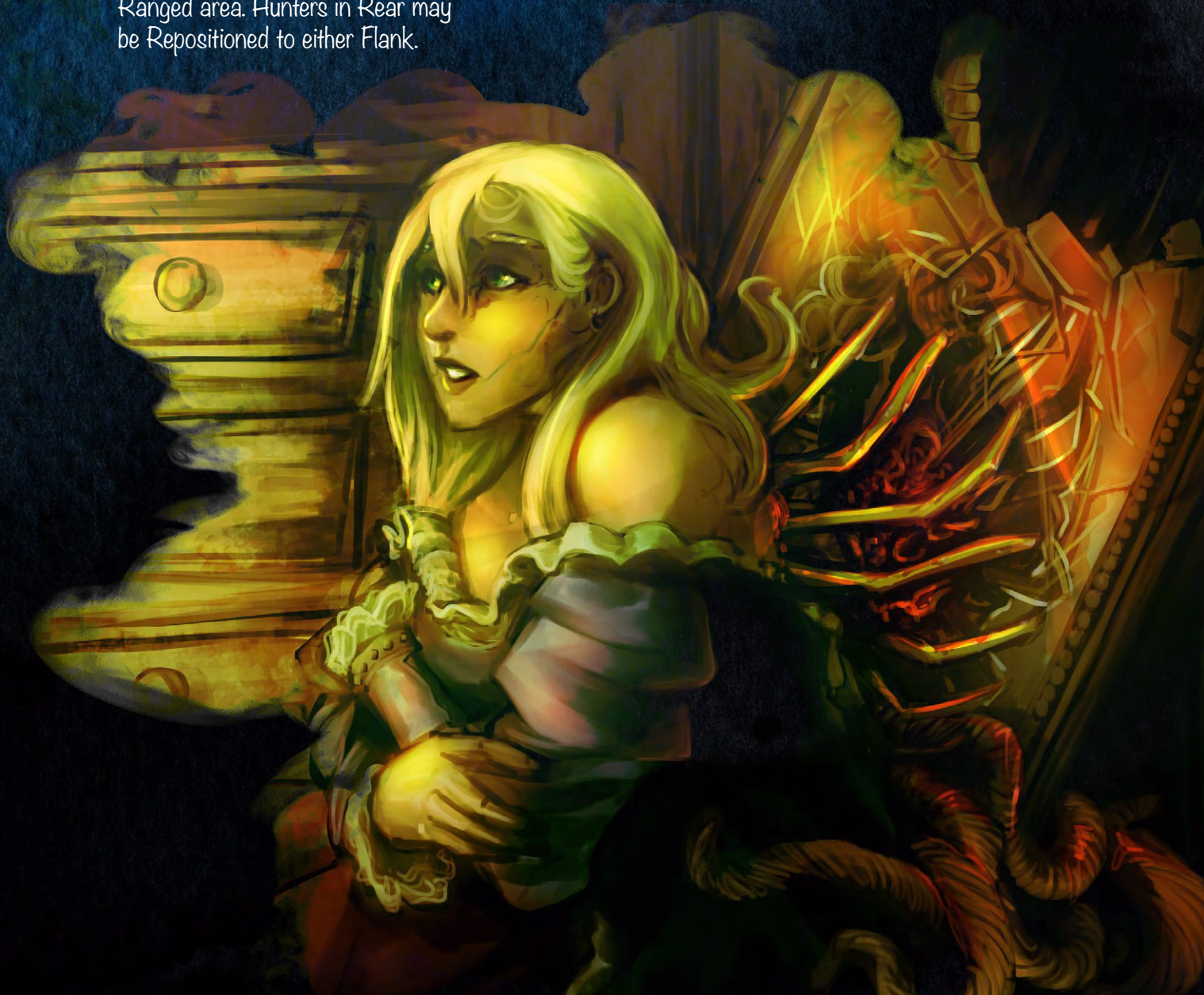
If the players are carrying the anchor when they fight Leah:

Threat Cap increases by 4 **Threat per Round** increases by 1

Leah gains the following attack:

Outpouring of Blight. Target the Hunter carrying the anchor or a Hunter in their area. TN14, Wise. 2/1. Any Hunter who suffers Wound damage from this attack raises their Corruption value by 1. Boosting this attack with Threat does not change the Corruption value gained.

If Leah is anchored and her physical form destroyed, she will appear in the Refuge alongside the other inhabitants. Though she still grieves for her husband and son, she is able to make sense of the world (as strange as it is) and bitterly hates what the curdled magic in a Hollow can do to otherwise innocent people. Once per Hunter per Hollow, when a Hunter would inflict Resolve damage with an attack, they can mark 3 Resolve and instead inflict Wound damage.



THANKS FOR PLAYING

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

That's it! The playtest is over.

Please let us know how your game went by completing the feedback forms.

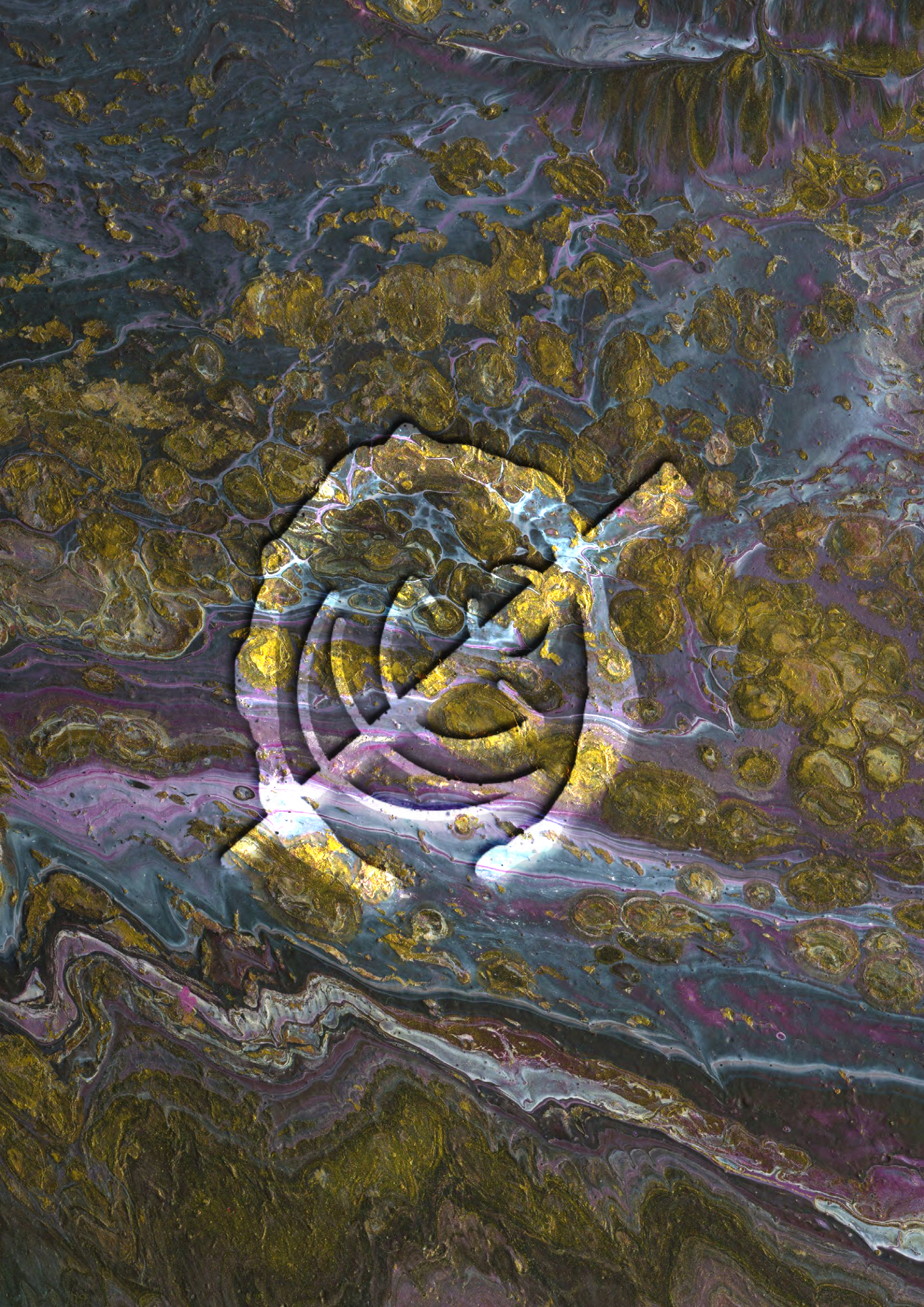
The feedback form for GMs is here:
[BIT.LY/HOLLOWS-GM-FORM](https://bit.ly/hollows-gm-form)

The feedback form for players is here:
[BIT.LY/HOLLOWS-PLAYER-FORM](https://bit.ly/hollows-player-form)

You can also join the Rowan, Rook and Decard Discord to discuss Hollows with other players here:
[DISCORD.GG/Z3HWADx](https://discord.gg/z3HWADx)

Keep an eye on the HOLLOWs mailing list to be informed about development and when the crowdfunding campaign goes live. If you're not already signed up, you can find it at [BIT.LY/HOLLOWS-PLAYTEST-EMAIL](https://bit.ly/hollows-playtest-email)

Thanks for being part of the development of HOLLOWs.

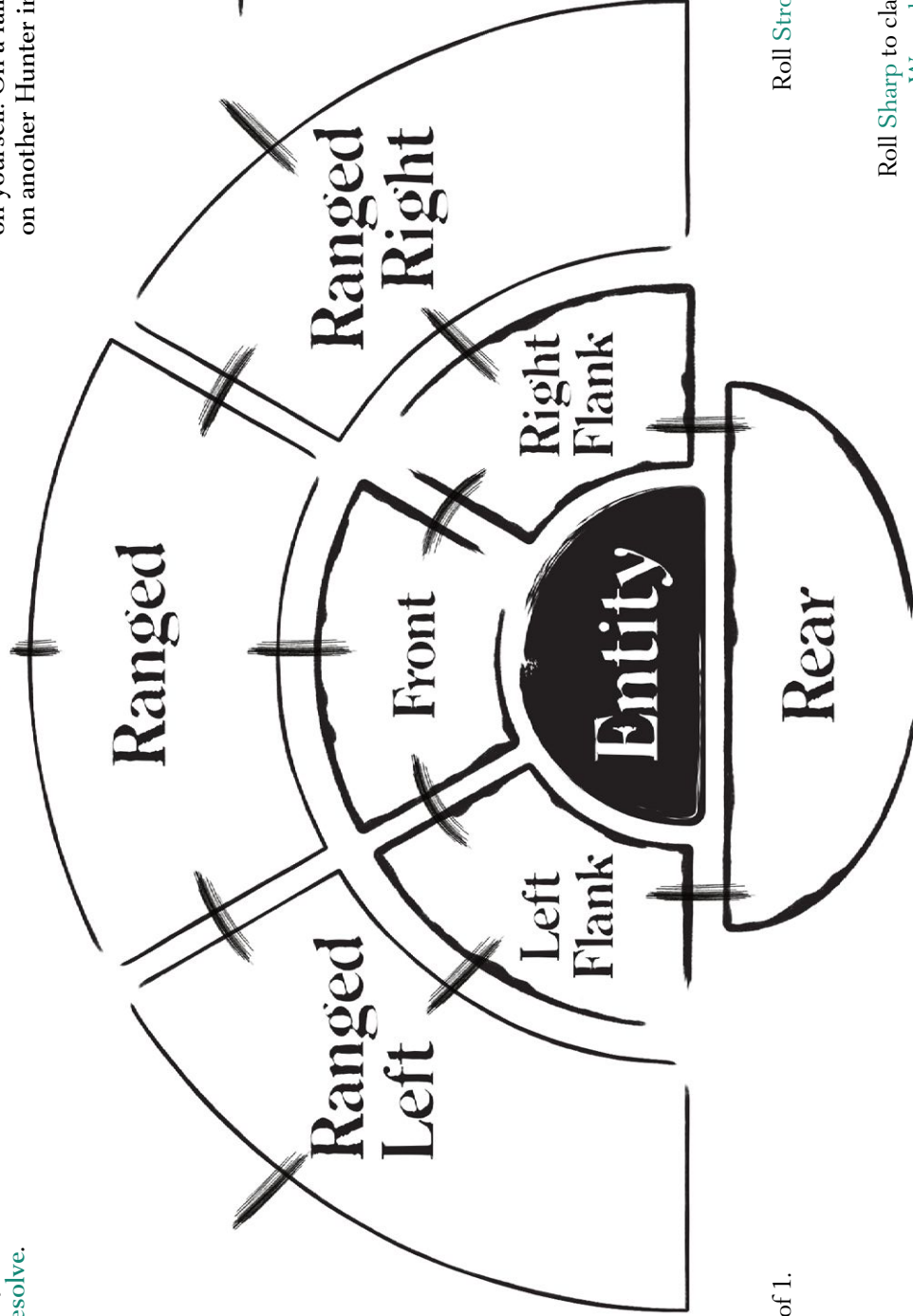


COMBAT START: 1) Hunters roll **Sharp**. Pass: Place yourself anywhere on the grid. 2) Hunters roll **Quick**. Pass: You may choose to act before the Entity. Fail: You act after the entity.

RECOVER Roll **Hard**. On a success, restore 2 **Resolve** or 1 **Wound** (your choice). On a failure, restore 2 **Resolve**.

Support

HEAL Roll **Wise**. On a success, restore 2 **Wounds** on another Hunter in Support or 1 **Wound** on yourself. On a failure, restore 1 **Wound** on another Hunter in Support.



MANOEUVRES

FOCUS
Gain Focus, to a maximum of 1.

GUARD
Restore 1 **Resolve**.

MOVE
Travel to an adjacent grid space.

RELOAD
Regain 1 Capacity on a Weapon you're holding, up to its maximum.

TAKE COVER
Attempt to gain a Terrain Tag.

USE
Activate a piece of Hunt equipment.

TERRAIN TAGS

ELEVATED
Roll **Strong** to claim. Ranged attacks are rolled with advantage.

SHIELDED
Roll **Sharp** to claim. When the Entity inflicts **Wound** damage, take 1 less damage.

OBSCURED
Roll **Quick** to claim. When the Entity inflicts **Resolve** damage, suffer 1 less damage.

CURSED
Cannot claim. Some Entities can create Cursed terrain; refer to their specific rules for more info. Cursed terrain cannot be voluntarily discarded, but can be destroyed.

HOLLOWS

Name _____ Player _____ Look _____

Faction _____ Origin _____ Seed _____

☐

Strong

☐

Hard

☐

Quick

☐

Sharp

☐

Wise

Resolve ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Wounds ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Weapon

Form

Appearance

Weapon

Form

Appearance

Exploration Equipment

Hunting Equipment

☐

☐

Deaths	CORRUPTION ROLL	CORRUPTION BENEFIT
1 <input type="checkbox"/>	0	
2 <input type="checkbox"/>	2	+1 max Resolve
3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4	
4 <input type="checkbox"/>	6	+1 to any stat
5 <input type="checkbox"/>	8	
6+ <input type="checkbox"/>	10	+2 to any other stat

Blight:

Notes

THE REFUGE

PATRON:

KEEPER:

APPEARANCE:



FREE ACTION.



REFUGE ACTION (ONE PER VISIT).

THE BACKROOM

STRONGBOXES, SACKS AND CUPBOARDS.



DEPOSIT ANY HELD BONE AND HEARTS.



REGAIN ANY SPENT UTILITY ITEMS.



CHOOSE AN ALTERNATIVE PIECE OF HUNTING EQUIPMENT FROM YOUR CLASS' LIST.



CHOOSE TWO ALTERNATIVE PIECES OF EXPLORATION EQUIPMENT FROM YOUR CLASS' LIST.



☐ 5 BONE: A WIDE ARRAY OF OLD-FASHIONED EQUIPMENT.



CHOOSE AN ALTERNATIVE PIECE OF HUNT EQUIPMENT FROM ANY BACKGROUND LIST.



CHOOSE UP TO TWO ALTERNATIVE PIECES OF EXPLORATION EQUIPMENT FROM ANY BACKGROUND LIST.

THE LIBRARY

AN ARMFUL OF ALMANACKS, LOCAL MAPS AND NEWSPAPERS.



GAIN 1 LORE.

THE BEDS

A PLACE TO REST ONE'S WEARY HEAD.



WAKE UP AFTER YOU ARE KILLED, AND GAIN A BLIGHT OF THE GM'S CHOOSING.



☐ 5 BONE: DECENT MATTRESSES, PRIVATE ROOMS.



+3 TEMPORARY RESOLVE.

THE SHRINE

DARK STONE CARVED INTO AN ELDRITCH SHAPE.



LOWER YOUR CORRUPTION BY 1.



SPEND 5 LORE AND 5 BONE TO CRAFT AN ANCHOR.

THE FORGE

AN ANVIL, A FURNACE, AND SOME RUDIMENTARY TOOLS.



GAIN ACCESS TO TIER 1 WEAPON ABILITIES.



MODIFY A WEAPON YOU OWN WITH TIER 1 PARTS.



CHANGE A WEAPON YOU OWN TO ANOTHER WEAPON.



☐ 1 HEART: UNNATURAL FIRES LEND UNNATURAL STRENGTH.



GAIN ACCESS TO ACCESS TIER 2 WEAPON ABILITIES.

LORE

Gained by exploring zones.

Spend 10 Lore to open the way to the Hollow's Lord.

Spend 5 Lore and 5 Bone in the Refuge to create an Anchor.

At the start of a Hunt, spend 3 for each Edge you wish to activate for the Hunt's duration.

Edges

CHASE DOWN

Entity has -2 maximum Resolve.

CORNERED

Entity has -1 Threat Cap.

FAVOURABLE TERRAIN

All Hunters begin the Hunt with a terrain tag of their choice; when discarded, these tags return to the central pool.

GOT THE DROP

Hunters get advantage on the roll to determine deployment and action order.

IN THE OPEN

Reduce Entity's Ranged stat by 2.

KNOWLEDGE

Examine the Entity's stats and abilities.

WARDED

Reduce Entity's Wyrld stat by 2.

WEAK POINT

Reduce Entity's Close stat by 2.

DOOM

Gained whenever the Hunters gain the ire of the Hollow – generally when they fail a roll.

At the start of a Hunt, the GM may spend 3 Doom for each Bane they wish to unlock for the rest of this Hunt.

Banes

BITTER

Entity has +2 maximum Resolve.

EVASIVE

All Hunters suffer 2 Resolve damage at the start of the Hunt.

FIERCE

Entity has +1/+1 to an attack of the GM's choosing.

HUNGRY

Entity has +1 Threat Cap.

KILLER

One Hunter, determined at random, suffers a Blight of the GM's choice.

UNDYING

Entity has +4 Wounds.

WAITING

Place Threat equal to half the Entity's Threat Cap (rounded up) before the Hunt deployment.

TERRAIN TAGS

Gain by taking the Take Cover manoeuvre.

When you Move between areas, or you are Pushed, Pulled or Slide, discard all terrain tags. When you are Repositioned, maintain all tags.

When a terrain tag is discarded, return it to the central pool.

When a terrain tag is destroyed it is discarded and not returned to the central pool. Some abilities or Entity attacks destroy terrain tags as part of their activation.

ELEVATED

Roll Strong to claim. Ranged attacks are rolled with advantage.

SHIELDED

Roll Sharp to claim. When the Entity inflicts **Wound** damage, take 1 less damage.

OBSCURED

Roll Quick to claim. When the Entity inflicts Resolve damage, suffer 1 less damage.

CURSED

Cannot claim. Some Entities can create Cursed terrain; refer to their specific rules for more info. Cursed terrain cannot be voluntarily discarded, but can be destroyed - refer to the Entity description for more details.

THE A R M O U R

Your stance is inviolate, your approach implacable. You are prepared for every eventuality. You watch others fall beside you – they're weak. Deluded. Poor. They didn't have what it takes. You have what it takes, and what it takes is the Armour – a wall built around what little fragility remains.

STAT INCREASES: +1 HARD. +1 STRONG

Start each hunt Protected. Swap to Exposed when you mark a Wound or voluntarily mark 2 Resolve on your turn. Swap to Protected when you Guard or enter Support.

FORMS

Pick one at character creation

- ☐ **Metal.** +1 maximum Wounds. Once per Hunt, ignore all damage from an Entity's attack. (Also: heavy plate, chainmail)
- ☐ **Leather.** When you suffer Resolve damage from an Entity attack, you suffer 1 less damage. (Also: cloak and cowl, camouflage, heavy coat)
- ☐ **Silk.** +1 Quick, +1 Sharp. Become Protected when you gain a terrain tag. Become Exposed when you discard/destroy one. (Also: three-piece suit, expensive hat, lit cigarette)

ABILITIES TIER ONE

Pick one from Tier One at character creation

- ☐ **Bulwark.** *Everyone cowers while you alone weather the storm.* While Protected, allies in your area (aside from you) have the terrain tag Cover with the following ability: Guard manoeuvres restore +1 Resolve. If an ally destroys this Cover tag, you become Exposed.
- ☐ **Control.** *Unburdened by fear, the chaos of combat unravels into reason.* While Protected, at the start of your turn, you may Push or Pull 1 Threat token. If you end your turn in an area with no Threat, become Exposed and add 1 Threat token to the area.
- ☐ **Counterattack.** *Take the hit, and give back tenfold.* While Exposed, if an enemy inflicts Resolve damage on you, you may make an immediate attack against them. If you inflict Wound damage with that attack, you become Protected.
- ☐ **Martyr.** *Your body is a litany of scars; a testament to your selflessness.* While Exposed, when an ally in your area would suffer Wound damage from any source, you may mark Wounds instead and shift to Protected.

TIER TWO

- ☐ **Block.** *You decide who goes where.* While Protected and at Close, mark 1 Resolve to cancel a Push, Pull or Reposition from or into your or an adjacent area. While Exposed, when the Entity Repositions an ally in your or an adjacent area, you may Reposition yourself instead, leaving the ally where they were.
- ☐ **In the Way.** *A thousand arrows will pierce your flesh before your brother sheds blood.* When you are in a Close area and the Entity makes an attack which targets a Ranged area that you are adjacent to: if you are Protected, that attack deals -1/-1 damage; if you are Exposed, you may choose to have that attack target your area instead.
- ☐ **Grit Your Teeth.** *Your reserves of vigour are unmatched.* While Exposed, when you Guard, instead of restoring 1 Resolve, you may mark 4 Resolve to restore 4 wounds.

USE THIS TO...

Protect your allies better than anyone else
Play with different abilities in the Protected and Exposed stats
Limit Entity options, forcing them to attack you instead

THE B L U D G E O N

USE THIS TO...

Inflict lots of
Resolve damage
and Break Entities
See if you can kill
the enemy before it
kills you
Sacrifice standard
tactical choices to
do more damage

You are strong. You are the strongest. The Alpha. A perfect machine. An irresistible force. The world breaks around you. Don't hesitate. Don't think. Destroy those who would try to slow you down.

STAT CHANGES: STRONG +1 HARD +1 QUICK +1

ATTACK WITH STRONG AT CLOSE

FORMS

Pick one at character creation

- ☐ **Agile:** 2/1. +1 maximum Resolve, +1 maximum Wounds (Also: Hammer, Cosh, Gauntlet)
- ☐ **Brutal:** 3/1. +1 Resolve damage at Front. (Also: Mace, Morningstar)
- ☐ **Massive:** 3/2. (Also: Maul, Tree Trunk, Big Rock)

ABILITIES

Pick one from Tier One at character creation

TIER 1

- ☐ **Fearless.** *You never hide; you're always where you mean to be.* Gain +2 maximum Resolve. You no longer gain the positive benefits of terrain (you gain no reduction in Wound damage from Shielded terrain, for example), but you can still Take Cover.
- ☐ **Gleeful.** *See the fear in its eyes.* When you Break an Entity, restore 2 Wounds or 3 Resolve.
- ☐ **Heartless.** *This thing's own mother wouldn't recognise it when you're done.* Before you roll to attack, you may mark 1 Resolve; if you do so, your attack inflicts +1/+0 if it hits.

TIER 2

- ☐ **Cruel.** *You're not trying to kill it. You're trying to ruin it.* When you would inflict Wound damage, you may instead choose to inflict Resolve damage; if you do so, inflict +2 Resolve damage.
- ☐ **Vicious.** *Break its guard and make it beg.* You can no longer perform the Guard manoeuvre. When you inflict Resolve damage, restore Resolve equal to half the amount you inflicted (rounding up).
- ☐ **Tireless.** *I don't care if it hurts. Win.* At the end of your turn, mark 2 Resolve and place 1 Threat token on your area to make an additional attack action.

THE BOOK

Words have power. If you name something, you can know it, and if you know it, you can control it. Speak a word aloud and the ground trembles at your approach; the beasts of the land recoil and cower; eyes are struck blind, muscles wither and crops die. A chain around the neck of the world, binding it to your will. Nothing is beyond your comprehension and nothing is outside of your reach.

STAT CHANGES: WISE +1, SHARP +1.

ATTACK WITH WISE VS WYRD AT CLOSE AND RANGED

FORMS

Pick one at character creation

- ☐ **Sacred:** 2/2. When you Guard, an ally in your area heals 1 Resolve. (Also: Illustrated family Bible, Lost apocrypha, Hallowed parchments.)
- ☐ **Profane:** 1/3. +1 Quick. (Also: Codex Malignatus, banned texts, impish familiar.)
- ☐ **Eldritch:** 3/1. When you Focus at Close, Entity suffers 1 Resolve damage. (Also: Litanies of the Outer Dark, bag of astral runes, strange device.)

ABILITIES

Pick one from Tier One at character creation

TIER ONE

- ☐ **Remake.** *Speak their bones back into their ordained form.* Attack action. Mark 1 Wound to restore 2 Wounds on an ally in your area. If performed in Support, do not mark any Wounds.
- ☐ **Brand.** *Carve your dominion into its flesh.* Attack and mark 1 Resolve. If this attack hits, an ally in your or an adjacent area can Focus as an immediate action.
- ☐ **Leash.** *Down, wretch.* When you are at Close and the Entity Repositions an ally or uses an Interrupt ability, it suffers 1 Resolve damage.

TIER TWO

- ☐ **Rebuke.** *Chastise it for daring to stand against you.* Close attack action. If you inflict Resolve damage, remove 1 Threat token from your or an adjacent area. If you inflict Wound damage, remove 3 Threat from your or an adjacent area. If you miss, place 2 Threat on your area (rather than 1).
- ☐ **Sacrifice.** *Blood for blood; the oldest accord.* Once per turn, when you inflict Wound damage, restore 1 Wound on yourself or an ally in your area.
- Miracle.** *The world is at your disposal.* Mark 1 Wound and 1 Resolve to activate this ability. As an attack action, make a Use manoeuvre as though you were activating any one of the following pieces of Hunt equipment (see p. 66): Weighted Net, Smoke Bomb, Flare, Lure, Lucky Bullet, Bomb.

USE THIS TO...

Heal other
Hunters
Control the
battlefield
Attack Wyrd
defence instead
of Close or
Ranged

THE GREATAxe

You are the edge that tears the world asunder. You are born of the breed that ripped the rocks from the dark of the earth to make steel. Butcher. Dissect. Transform beast into meat; an alchemy in your undoing.

STAT CHANGES: STRONG +2 HARD +1 WISE -1 QUICK -1

ATTACK WITH STRONG AT CLOSE.

FORMS

Pick one at character creation

- ☐ **Keen:** 2/4. Capacity 3 (Also: Greatsword, Cleaver, Mining Pick.)
- ☐ **Heavy:** 3/3. Capacity 3 (Also: Sledgehammer, Ship's anchor, Enormous saw blade tied to a stick.)
- ☐ **Versatile:** 2/3. Capacity 5 (Also: Glaive, Battleaxe.)

ABILITIES

Pick one from Tier One at character creation

TIER ONE

- ☐ **Break Bones.** *Butcher it to the marrow.* Close attack action. Expend 2 Capacity to make this attack. Inflict 2 additional Resolve damage on a hit, regardless of whether you inflict Wound damage.
- ☐ **No Nonsense.** *Get in there.* When you are in Front and you suffer Wound damage from an Entity attack, suffer 1 less damage.
- ☐ **Roar.** *Howl your defiance.* When you Focus, you may Pull 1 Threat token. When you inflict Wound damage to an Entity, you may remove 1 Threat token from your area.

TIER TWO

- ☐ **Cleave.** *Split bone and tendon asunder.* Expend 2 Capacity to make this attack. If this attack Wounds an Entity, choose one of its attacks and reduce its damage by -1/-1. If the Entity Breaks a Hunter, return the damage to its original value.
- ☐ **Carnage.** *Nothing better than a good fight.* When a Threat token is consumed in your area, restore Capacity equal to the number of Threat tokens removed as an immediate action.
- ☐ **Seeing Red.** *Time to die.* When you are Broken, you inflict +1/+1 damage and take 0/+1 damage.

USE THIS TO...

Inflict massive damage

Fight on the front lines

Not worry about being quick or clever

THE K N I F E

The world is trying to hurt you but you won't let it – you won't be taken advantage of – you're sharp and cruel and quick and clever – and the Knife is here right alongside you, pressed into your palm, guiding you through the darkness and chaos. You're going to show them they were stupid to underestimate you.

STAT CHANGES: QUICK +1, SHARP +1, WISE +1

ATTACK WITH QUICK AT CLOSE

FORMS

Pick one at character creation

- ☐ **Weighted:** 2/2. In addition to the Knife's Close attack, you may now attack at Ranged with Sharp (Also: Throwing stars, Darts)
- ☐ **Keen:** 2/3. (Also: Stiletto, Punch Dagger)
- ☐ **Versatile:** 3/2. (Also: Trench Knife, Knuckledusters)

ABILITIES

Pick one from Tier One at character creation

TIER ONE.

- ☐ **Backstab.** *They left themselves open; it's more their fault than yours.* Inflict +1/+1 damage when in Rear.
- ☐ **Dodge.** *They're going to wish they killed you sooner.* Mark 1 Resolve to defend with Quick instead of any other stat. If you roll under your Quick on the defend roll, you may Move to any adjacent area as a free action.
- ☐ **Whisper-Quick.** *Kill them before they can hurt you.* Mark 1 Resolve to attack with Quick instead of any other stat. If this attack inflicts Wound damage, regain 1 Resolve.

TIER TWO

- ☐ **Vanish.** *It's like you were never there.* When you are at Ranged or Support, you may mark 2 Resolve to Move into the shadows as an immediate action. While you're in the shadows, remove your token from the grid; you cannot attack, make manoeuvres, be attacked, or otherwise interact with the Hunt. At the start of your next turn, place your token anywhere on the grid.
- ☐ **Ghostly.** *Slip away before it gets your scent.* When you miss with an attack, after the Entity places Threat on your area, you may Move as an immediate action.
- ☐ **Lightning-Fast.** *Keep moving. It's too slow to hit you.* When you Move, you automatically Guard as an immediate action.

USE THIS TO...

Rely on your speed rather than your brawn

Keep moving to stay out of trouble

Attack weak spots and vulnerable areas

THE P I S T O L

You're strong. Smart. Capable. The world's set against you but with the Pistol resting on your hip or howling in your hand you can weather any storm. You're a force to be reckoned with, and those fools will be left in your wake when you show them what you can do.

STAT CHANGES: SHARP +1. QUICK +1. WISE +1

**ATTACK WITH SHARP AT RANGED.
ATTACK WITH QUICK AT CLOSE.**

FORMS

Pick one at character creation

- ☐ **Automatic:** 1/1. Capacity 5; when you Reload, restore Capacity to full (Also: Pepperbox)
- ☐ **Revolver:** 2/1. Capacity 3. (Also: Shortbow, Javelin, Throwing Axe)
- ☐ **Hand Cannon:** 3/3. Capacity 1. (Also: Crossbow)

ABILITIES

Pick one from Tier One at character creation

TIER ONE

- ☐ **Covering Fire.** *Put it on the back foot.* When you would inflict Wound damage with an attack and instead opt to inflict Resolve damage, one ally at Close may make an immediate manoeuvre.
- ☐ **Momentum.** *Feels good, doesn't it?* When you inflict Wound damage, restore 2 Resolve.
- ☐ **Unload.** *Keep shooting until it can't get up.* Expend both your attack and manoeuvre actions to make a number of Pistol attacks equal to your current Capacity.

TIER TWO

- ☐ **Last-Ditch.** *Too slow.* When you are at Close and the Entity targets you with an attack, mark 1 Resolve and expend 1 Capacity from the Pistol then roll Quick. On a success, the attack is cancelled and you or an ally in your area can make an immediate attack against the Entity. On a failure, you suffer 2 Wound damage in addition to any other damage taken.
- ☐ **Hotfoot.** *You make this look easy.* When you inflict Wound damage, you may make an immediate, free manoeuvre.
- ☐ **Come Out Shooting.** *Caught your breath? Okay, now get out there.* +1 Capacity. Discard a terrain tag to Reload the Pistol to full Capacity and make an additional manoeuvre.

USE THIS TO...

Attack from
range or
up close,
whatever's best
Power up when
you inflict
Wounds
Adapt to
changing
situations

THE R I F L E

The world is dangerous but you are more dangerous; you are the apex predator. You are calm; you are methodical; you are operating far above your base instincts. There is no wilderness or threat that you cannot tame or kill. The land is rotten and corrupted but you, paragon of patience, stand pristine above it all.

STAT CHANGES: SHARP +1, WISE +1

ATTACK WITH SHARP AT RANGED OR CLOSE.

Roll with Disadvantage when you attack from Close with the Rifle.

FORMS

Pick one at character creation

- ☐ **Repeating:** 3/2. Capacity 3 (Also: Carbine, Lever-Action)
- ☐ **High Calibre:** 2/4. -1 Sharp, Capacity 1 (Also: Elephant Gun, Small Cannon)
- ☐ **Accurate:** 2/3. +1 Sharp, Capacity 1 (Also: Hunting rifle, Target Rifle)

ABILITIES

Pick one from Tier One at character creation

TIER ONE

- ☐ **Take Your Time.** *Don't rush around like some kind of animal.* When you expend Focus, you may add +1 Wound damage to your attack and place a Threat token on your area instead of rolling with advantage; this takes place before the attack is rolled.
- ☐ **Obscured Position.** *They won't know what hit them.* When you have a terrain tag, inflict +1 Wound damage.
- ☐ **Pristine.** *Don't let them touch you.* While you still have your maximum number of Wounds, +1 to all stats.

TIER TWO

- ☐ **Eye of the Storm.** *Watch the beast scurry and fret.* Mark 1 Resolve to make an attack from Range. If you attack through an area that contains Threat tokens, increase your Sharp for this attack by the number of Threat tokens in that area.
- ☐ **Evasion.** *No sense in dying if you don't have to.* When you have a terrain tag, destroy it to move to Support at any time. You can do this as an immediate action in response to an attack; you take no damage from the attack if so.
- ☐ **Pin Down.** *Not on your watch.* When you are at Ranged Left or Right and the Entity uses a manoeuvre, mark 2 Resolve and make an immediate attack against it. If you hit, you cause no damage, but the manoeuvre is cancelled without effect.

USE THIS TO...

Attack at range

Hold your ground

Inflict Wound

damage to

finish the Hunt

THE S H O T G U N

USE THIS TO...

Mix it up in the front line

Soak up damage with few ill-effects

Play with different abilities in EMPTY and LOADED states

There are things out there that want to kill you – terrible things, wretched things, bestial things. You're not scared of them. They should be scared of you. You're mess and you're chaos, you're indiscriminate, you're a massacre waiting to happen. There's nothing you can't kill, nothing you can't break, nothing you can't ruin.

STAT CHANGES: +2 **HARD**. +1 **SHARP**

ATTACK WITH SHARP AT RANGED OR CLOSE. ROLL WITH DISADVANTAGE WHEN ATTACKING FROM RANGE.

The shotgun is either Empty or Loaded. When it's Loaded, you can flip it to Empty to make an attack; when it's Empty, you can make a Reload action to flip it to Loaded. You may only use the section of the ability matching the current state of your weapon.

FORMS

Pick one at character creation

- ☐ **No Escape:** 2/2. You no longer roll with disadvantage on Shotgun attacks at range. (Also: pump action shotgun, Mare's Leg.)
- ☐ **Carnage:** 2/2. Attack with Strong instead of Sharp at Close. (Also: sawn-off, Obrez rifle.)
- ☐ **Smoke:** 2/2. When you switch from Loaded to Empty, Guard as an immediate action. (Also: blunderbuss, bandolier of flintlocks.)

ABILITIES

Pick one from Tier One at character creation

TIER ONE

- ☐ **Sustained Fire.** *Your blood's up. Your hands are like lightning.* When you end your turn in an area with Threat placed on it, switch from Empty to Loaded as an immediate action.
- ☐ **Gore-Soaked.** *Show this thing what you're capable of.* When you have suffered total Wound damage greater than half of your maximum Wounds, +1/+1 to all attacks.
- ☐ **Fumes and Flames.** *Send shells smoking like the flames of hell.* When you switch from Loaded to Empty, an ally in your area may Guard or Move as an immediate action.

TIER TWO

- ☐ **Get Right in There.** *Don't give it an inch.* Loaded: Mark 2 Resolve to attack with advantage at Close. Empty: Gain the manoeuvre Smash: Make a Close attack with Strong at 1/1 and Reload.
- ☐ **Stand and Fight.** *Don't hide like some whimpering cur.* Discard a terrain tag to re-roll an attack dice after you see the result.
- ☐ **Iron-Banded Barrel.** *Good! Now, smash its fucking head in.* Loaded: Make an attack at 0/4 and switch to Empty. Empty: Make a Close attack at 4/0 and switch to Loaded. 4/0 and switch to Loaded.

COMPLEXITY: 3

THE S P E A R

There is a line between us and them and across that line is the Spear, keeping them away from us. Protecting the sacred from the profane. Defending right and killing wrong. The world is trying to swallow you and those you care about, but it'll have to get through you first.

STAT CHANGES: QUICK +1. STRONG +1. HARD +1

ATTACK WITH QUICK AT CLOSE

FORMS

Pick one at character creation

- ☐ **Light:** 2/2. Quick +1 (Also: Sharpened Stick)
- ☐ **Long:** 3/2. (Also: Pike, Boar Spear)
- ☐ **Heavy:** 2/3. (Also: Halberd, Glaive)

ABILITIES

Pick one from Tier One at character creation

TIER ONE

- ☐ **Goad.** *The stupid creature is two steps behind you.* When you Guard, you may place a Threat token on your area or an adjacent area, or Push or Pull 1 Threat token.
- ☐ **Trap.** *Just try and take me down.* When you are in an area with 3 or more Threat tokens on it, inflict +1 Wound damage.
- ☐ **Pierce.** *Like a pig on a spit.* When you expend Focus to roll with advantage on an attack, inflict +1 Wound damage if you hit.

TIER TWO

- ☐ **Decoy.** *A sacrifice worth making.* When an ally makes a ranged attack through your area, they inflict +2 Resolve damage.
- ☐ **Flanking.** *It can't stop us.* When there is a Hunter in an area directly opposite your own (i.e. Front and Rear, Left Flank and Right Flank), you or one Hunter in the opposing area may Focus as an immediate action at the start of your turn.
- ☐ **Fend Off.** *Stay back!* Mark 1 Resolve to cancel an interrupt action in your area, or mark 2 Resolve to cancel a Reposition in your area. Threat tokens are not consumed.

USE THIS TO...

Support other
Hunters in
combat

Manipulate
Threat to control
the fight

Wound the
Entity to bring
it down quickly

COMPLEXITY: 2

THE S T A F F

The world is riddled with power that roils and pushes at the seams of the real, and: it is yours for the taking. You were born for this. The world is your birthright. You draw chaos up from the roots and it is shaped by your hand, your mind and your will. The world is stumbling, primitive, blind – you are sharp. You are aware. You are in control. No-one is ready for what you can do.

STAT INCREASE: **HARD** +1, **WISE** +1, **STRONG** +1

ATTACK WITH STRONG AT CLOSE.

ATTACK WITH WISE VS WYRD AT RANGE.

FORMS

Pick one at character creation

- ☐ **Heavy:** 2/2. All ranged staff abilities may be made in Close areas using Strong vs Wyrd. (Also: rod, shillelagh, cane)
- ☐ **Ornate:** 2/2. When you or an ally in your area gains a terrain tag, you or they restore 1 Resolve. (Also: wand, runes, orb)
- ☐ **Twisted:** 2/2. If you Move while you have one or more Terrain tags, you may retain one Terrain tag. (Also: talisman, fetish, puzzlebox)

ABILITIES

Pick one from Tier One at character creation

TIER ONE

- ☐ **Strangle.** *Twisted roots and grasping claws burst up from the cursed earth, hungry for nourishment.* Attack from Ranged. If you inflict Wound damage, remove a Threat token from the grid.
- ☐ **Syphon.** *Pluck lifeblood from the wretched and bestial.* Once per round, when you inflict Wound damage, restore 1 Wound.
- ☐ **Blight.** *Wrench the power from the wretched ground.* Destroy a terrain tag on you or an ally in your area and mark 1 Resolve to make an attack from Ranged. If it hits, it deals 3/3 damage.

TIER TWO

- ☐ **Transfigured Landscape.** *The world blossoms and shifts in response to your whim.* When you Take Cover, you use Wise to do so, and you can apply the terrain tag to any character in your or an adjacent area. If there are no unassigned terrain tag available, create an Obscured terrain tag when you use this ability.
- ☐ **Bloodthirsty Briar.** *Your body thrums with the power you control.* Inflict +2 Resolve damage when you have two or more terrain tags.
- ☐ **Bounty of the Land.** *Rip the world to shreds and feast on the meat.* When you Focus, you may destroy a terrain tag on an ally in your or an adjacent area. The ally restores 1 Resolve and 1 Wound.

USE THIS TO...

Support your allies

Create, destroy and manipulate terrain tags

Engage in battlefield control

THE S W O R D

There are fighters and there are warriors and you, friend, are a warrior. You are a professional. You have earned the right to lead an army, to seize the reins of civilisation, to cut and stab and kill. In your hand is the Sword, the tool of a master, and the key to victory. Show them what you can do.

STAT CHANGES: STRONG +1, QUICK +1, MAXIMUM RESOLVE +1

ATTACK WITH QUICK OR STRONG AT CLOSE

Pick one at character creation.

FORMS

Pick one at character creation

- ☐ **Noble:** 2/2. +1 Wise (Also: Rapier, Ceremonial Sword)
- ☐ **Heavy:** 2/2. +1 Hard (Also: Cavalry Sabre, Claymore)
- ☐ **Short:** 2/2. +1 Sharp (Also: Gladius, Machete)

ABILITIES

Pick one from Tier One at character creation

TIER ONE

- ☐ **Charge.** *Lead from the front.* If you Move to a Close area, Entity suffers 1 Resolve damage.
- ☐ **Arm's Reach.** *You've got it right where you want it.* If you hit with an attack, you may choose to remove 1 Threat token from your area.
- ☐ **Rally.** *Guide them to victory.* When you Guard, an ally in your area may Focus as an immediate action.

TIER TWO

- ☐ **Lone Wolf.** *You don't need anyone's help.* When you are the only character in your area, inflict +1 Wound damage.
- ☐ **Back-to-Back.** *Gather them around you.* When you are in an area with one or more other Hunters, inflict +1 Resolve damage.
- ☐ **Hamstring.** *One cut is all it takes.* When you are at Rear or Flank and you inflict Wound damage, clear all Threat tokens from an area of your choice.

USE THIS TO...

Support and lead
other Hunters

Inflict reliable
damage

Be adaptable
and dynamic

COMPLEXITY: 1

CHANGELOG

1st Release Revision

2023/01/30

- Tutorial section overhauled: Map added. Hollowed Boar made significantly more dangerous. Tutorial Hunters now have two Weapons and appropriate abilities and stats.
- Success/failure threshold standardised for all rolls.
- Combat grid updated to more clearly communicate adjacency.
- Furnace Lich interrupt attack modified to function on mechanics rather than vibes, as it did initially.
- Made it as clear as possible that player characters can choose to forgo their attack action in exchange for a second manoeuvre during a Hunt.
- Clarified that surplus Resolve damage does not “tick over” into wounds when an Entity is Broken, nor does Resolve damage ever translate into Wounds damage.
- Split up the Tick ability in the Tick-Covered Deer to make it easier to understand.
- Lots of other grammar changes and rules clarifications.