

# EXEMPLARS & EIDOLONS

**RULES FOR LEGENDARY HEROISM  
AND ADVENTURE IN A FANTASTIC REALM**

**BY KEVIN CRAWFORD**



**HEROES & PERILS**

**A COMPLETE GAME IN ONE VOLUME**

*EXEMPLARS*

*&*

*EIDOLONS*

*BY*

*KEVIN CRAWFORD*



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# TALES OF THUNDERING HEROISM

Welcome to **Exemplars & Eidolons**. Within these few pages you'll find a game of titanic heroes and glorious paragons, living legends of every stripe banding together to accomplish deeds of deathless fame. Using the basic framework of classic old-school gaming you'll fashion fresh exemplars of daring to battle foes far beyond the compass of ordinary adventurers.

**Exemplars & Eidolons** is based on many of the same mechanics used in traditional old-school games, ones known and familiar to millions of gamers. By adjusting the way that these mechanics are used and reading the numbers just a little differently, a single hero is transformed into a figure of towering might. Together with a few companions, even fresh-made heroes are capable of facing threats that might otherwise tax the most powerful adventurers of these earlier games.

While the Game Master is generally expected to recycle many of these old-school adventures and resources for **Exemplars & Eidolons**, these pages also include rules and tips for constructing greater challenges, ones fit to test the mettle even of demigods and legendary heroes. The tools given in the final pages of this booklet will help you structure the grand ambitions and nation-shaking plans of these heroes in ways that support your game nights.

Now go forth, hero! A darkened world awaits the light of your burning name!

## Though actually...

**Exemplars & Eidolons** is really an RPG book *layout template*. Its pages are intended to provide a basic framework for other indie game publishers who'd like to print booklets in the same vein as the original "Little Brown Books" of our gaming youth. The styles, tables, and formatting are provided as a set of cues and examples to show these publishers how to reproduce the look and feel of these booklets in their own projects, whether personal or commercial.

You should have obtained the .IDD InDesign source file for this PDF at the same place you got it, along with an .IDML InDesign markup file that should be backward-compatible with earlier editions of the software, and may also be usable with the free Scribus layout software. A folder with the game art should also be included, which you are welcome to recycle in your own products, though I'd ask that you retain credit to the original artists.

**Exemplars & Eidolons** is a fully-playable game, though that's not its primary purpose. In order to demonstrate how to lay out individual sections, it's necessary to have some text to actually lay out. While I could've just stuffed it full of lorem ipsum, it's better for you if you actually have a real game for an example. You can turn on the "Commentary" layer in the PDF to see an overlay that discusses the design decisions made on certain pages. You are free to use any of the styles or other design objects from this PDF for your own projects, free or for-pay, and you are encouraged to change and adjust them to better fit your desired goals.

## CREATING A HERO

Follow the steps below to create your newly-minted hero. The following pages in this chapter explain the steps in detail, but the summary below covers all the main points.

- 1.** Roll 4d6 six times, dropping the lowest die each time. Assign the rolls to the six attributes listed on the sheet. If none are 16 or greater, drop the lowest score and replace it with a 16.
- 2.** Write down the attribute modifier for each score next to it: a 3 is -3, 4-6 is -2, 7-8 is -1, 9-12 has no modifier, 13-15 is +1, 16-17 is +2, and 18 is +3.
- 3.** Choose a class, picking the role that best fits your hero. Warriors are mighty combatants, rogues are stealthy and cunning, and sorcerers wield magic. Mark your hero down as being level 1 with zero experience points.
- 4.** Write down three facts about your hero of one sentence each. One fact should be about their past life and how they obtained their skills. Another should be about the family or social ties they have, and the third should be about some special trait or personal quality.
- 5.** Turn to page 13 and pick two Gifts from among the general Gifts or those of your chosen class. Pick a third Gift from any list. Mark down your maximum beginning Effort, which is 2 points. Grab some pennies to use as Effort counters.
- 6.** Decide whether your hero is wearing heavy, light, medium, or no armor, and whether or not they carry a shield. Write down your choice, and the weaponry they commonly carry with them. Sorcerers can't cast spells while encumbered by armor or a shield, and rogues can't use Gifts involving motion while wearing anything heavier than light armor. Note down any other gear you carry.
- 7.** Write down your saving throws. Your Toughness save is the higher of your Strength or Constitution, plus one if you're a warrior. Your Evasion save is the higher of your Dexterity or Wisdom, plus one if you're a rogue, and your Mystic save is the higher of your Intelligence or Charisma, plus one if you're a sorcerer.
- 8.** Record your maximum hit points: 8 for warriors, 6 for rogues, and 4 for sorcerers. Add your Constitution modifier, if any, to this total. Note down your beginning attack bonus, which is +1 for warriors and +0 for rogues or sorcerers. Record your armor class, which is 9 for no armor, 7 for light armor, 5 for medium armor, or 3 for heavy armor, -1 for using a shield. Subtract your Dexterity modifier from this— the lower your armor class, the harder it is for enemies to hurt you. Note down your Fray die: 1d8 for warriors, 1d6 for rogues, 1d4 for sorcerers.
- 9.** Apply a name to your hero. Sorcerers can print out the Magic section of this booklet to keep track of their spells and the arcane schools they've chosen.

And there you have it. Your hero is ready to leap forward into adventure.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

|               | SCORE | MOD   |
|---------------|-------|-------|
| STRENGTH:     | _____ | _____ |
| DEXTERITY:    | _____ | _____ |
| CONSTITUTION: | _____ | _____ |
| INTELLIGENCE: | _____ | _____ |
| WISDOM:       | _____ | _____ |
| CHARISMA:     | _____ | _____ |

CLASS: \_\_\_\_\_

LEVEL: \_\_\_\_\_

EFFORT: \_\_\_\_\_

XP: \_\_\_\_\_

MAX. HP: \_\_\_\_\_

ARMOR CLASS: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTACK BONUS: \_\_\_\_\_

FRAY DIE: \_\_\_\_\_

### SAVING THROWS

TOUGHNESS

EVASION

MYSTIC

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

### GIFTS

### FACTS

### WEAPONS

### +HIT

### DMG

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

### OTHER GEAR

### WEALTH

### CURRENT HP

## ATTRIBUTES

A hero is marked early by their capacities, but even the greatest among them have their less gifted qualities. Attributes are a measure of your hero's natural gifts. Their scores range from 3 to 18, with 3 representing a gravely limited ability and 18 the utmost human capability. There are six attributes.

**Strength** measures physical power. A hero's Strength modifier is applied to melee hit and damage rolls.

**Dexterity** marks the agility of the hero. A hero's Dexterity modifier is applied to their armor class and to hit and damage rolls with ranged or light weapons.

**Constitution** reflects the hero's hardiness and physical toughness. This modifier is applied to the hero's hit points each level, though a penalty from it can't bring the number of new hit points gained each level below 1.

**Intelligence** measures the hero's powers of reason and depth of formal education. Many intellectual tasks can test a hero's wits.

**Wisdom** reflects the hero's perceptiveness and swiftness of wits. Checks to notice carefully-hidden features or detect sinister chicanery might call upon Wisdom.

**Charisma** is the hero's strength of presence or force of will. A charismatic hero may not be beautiful or charming, but their words are heeded and their will obeyed.

### Rolling Attributes

To determine your hero's natural gifts, roll 4d6 six times, dropping the lowest die each time. Assign these scores as you wish to your attributes. If none of them are equal or higher to 16, replace your lowest score with a 16.

Heroes are marked by their imperfections as well as their glories. If your hero seems to be somewhat lacking in a particular attribute, don't worry— they're in the best of legendary company. Still, if the whims of the dice displease you, just ask the GM if you can simply assign the following scores: 16, 14, 13, 12, 10, and 9.

### Attribute Modifiers

Some rolls do not involve the entire attribute score. Hit rolls, damage rolls, and the modifiers of hit points and armor classes all involve an attribute's *modifier* instead of the whole score. The modifier for a given score is listed in the table below. When told to apply an attribute's modifier, just use this number instead of the entire score.

#### Attribute Modifiers

| 3  | 4-5 | 6-8 | 9-12 | 13-15 | 16-17 | 18 |
|----|-----|-----|------|-------|-------|----|
| -3 | -2  | -1  | +0   | +1    | +2    | +3 |

## CLASSES

The particular talents of a hero are represented by their *class*. Choose one of the three below for your hero. Not all of your talents need to fit within the role, but your class represents those things at which your hero generally excels. As you grow in might and glory, you may choose to progress in these talents or divert your focus toward the abilities of the other classes.

Each class' attack bonus, hit points, Fray die, and maximum weapon damage are provided. Any hero can use any weapon they choose, but the less martially-inclined classes might not use a blade as effectively as a warrior could. By the same token, any class may wear armor, though some Gifts and sorcery may be hindered.

As a new-forged hero, you begin with the starting values for attack bonus and hit points and add to it as you advance. Thus, a new Warrior would have a +1 attack bonus and 8 hit points, assuming he had no Constitution bonus to his hardihood. When he advances a level, he would then have a +2 hit bonus and 12 hit points.

### Rogues

Whether gifted with a silver tongue or a feathery step, a rogue is sublimely artful in the pursuit of their goals. Stealth, trickery, and sagacity are their purviews, and their Gifts grant them cunning beyond that of ordinary mortals.

| Attack Bonus     | Hit Points      | Fray Die | Weapon Damage       |
|------------------|-----------------|----------|---------------------|
| +0, +1 per level | 6, +3 per level | 1 d6     | 1 d8 maximum damage |

### Sorcerers

Wielders of the eldritch arts, the Gifts of the sorcerers allow them to summon up the arts of the myriad schools of the arcane. While less martial than their companions, the magical bolts and curses of their Fray die can harm foes even mightier than they.

| Attack Bonus        | Hit Points      | Fray Die | Weapon Damage       |
|---------------------|-----------------|----------|---------------------|
| +0, +1 per 2 levels | 4, +2 per level | 1 d4     | 1 d6 maximum damage |

### Warriors

Blessed with incomparable resilience and unflinching valor, warriors have the greatest hardiness and ferocity of the three types of heroes. Their Gifts are those of warfare, leadership, and toughness, and are unhindered even by the heaviest armor.

| Attack Bonus     | Hit Points      | Fray Die | Weapon Damage      |
|------------------|-----------------|----------|--------------------|
| +1, +1 per level | 8, +4 per level | 1 d8     | No maximum damage. |

## FACTS

A class tells much about a hero, but it does not tell enough. How did they earn their prowess? What glorious deeds honed them, and what hardships shaped their achievements? What ties do they have with others, and what special traits do they possess that set them apart from their peers?

Facts are simple statements about the hero which can be invoked to gain an advantage during play or allow otherwise impractical actions. Each fact takes the form of a single sentence written on your character sheet. As your hero's glory advances, you will be able to add additional facts that reflect your recent accomplishments and the bonds you have built with others.

To begin, write down three facts about your hero. One fact should be about their past life or how they obtained their skills. The second fact should touch on their friends, family, or past associates. The third fact should speak of some specific personal quality or skill.

For example, a newly-made sorcerer might write down the following facts: "I was trained in the art of the School of Flame by a harsh and pitiless master. I betrayed him to the Golden Templars when I discovered his demonological research, and the Templars count me an ally. Sparks fly around me when I grow angry, and my wrath is a terrible thing to behold."

What if you don't know if the Golden Templars exist at all? Just ask the GM if such a group would fit in their world. This kind of off-the-cuff creation is often a great help to a GM, as they can hardly be expected to detail every group and event in their campaign world. If you need help in establishing facts about your hero, just tell the GM what kind of background or society tie you're looking for, and ask for suggestions about what might fit in their particular campaign setting.

When a fact is relevant to a check you are making, whether an ability check or saving throw, you may add a +4 bonus to the roll. Only one such bonus is possible, even if multiple facts might be helpful to a hero's attempt. Facts don't affect hit rolls.



## GIFTS AND EFFORT

Any soldier can lift a sword, and any hedge-mage can cast a curse. *Gifts* are those special powers that separate out a hero from the more ordinary run of men, those talents that overwhelm the petty arts of lesser souls. A common soldier might be skilled in battle and deft with a blade, but they lack the Gifts of a warrior. A royal vizier might know half a hundred divinations and spells, but they do not have the mastery of a true sorcerer. Gifts separate the hero from the mere veteran, and are only found among true exemplars of heroic prowess.



A beginning hero may choose three Gifts from those listed in the following pages. Two Gifts must either be from their chosen class or the general gifts allowed to all classes. The third Gift may be chosen from a different class' list if they so choose.

Each time a hero advances a level, they may choose an additional Gift from their class' list. Heroes that elect to advance in more than one class choose their Gifts according to the level they are gaining. Thus, a 4th level warrior who gains a level of sorcerer would pick from the sorcerer list. On even-numbered levels, such as levels 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10, heroes may optionally choose from another class' list.

Some Gifts function automatically as a natural part of the hero's abilities. Others, however, require a greater investment to activate. These gifts require *Effort*.

### Using and Regaining Effort

A hero begins play with two points of Effort, and gains one more for every level of experience they attain. To use certain Gifts, it is necessary to commit a point of Effort to them. Until the Effort is reclaimed, that point cannot be used to fuel other powers.

Most Gifts indicate when the Effort committed can be reclaimed. For many combat Gifts, the Effort must remain committed until the fight is over. For other Gifts, the Effort may not be reclaimed until after a good night's sleep. Some Effort remains committed for a "scene", which is to say until the immediate situation changes. Most scenes last no longer than fifteen minutes, or at the GM's discretion.

If not otherwise specified, Effort is only reclaimed after a full night's rest. Some rare and potent magical artifacts might allow for quicker restoration, or even grant their bearer additional points of Effort with which to fuel their mighty deeds.

GMs may also optionally require the commitment of a point of Effort for some special feat of skill that your hero wishes to accomplish, though this should be rare.

## CHOOSING YOUR GEAR

Unlike some other games, there is no lengthy list of equipment or specific weaponry to be found here. Your hero is a legend in the making, and it is unlikely that they will be long denied the basic equipment they find necessary for their deeds. Most heroes will have at least one favored weapon, and likely wear armor as well.

### Weaponry

The individual details of a weapon are rarely important to a hero, so weapons come in three general varieties. Most melee weapons apply the hero's Strength modifier to hit and damage rolls. *Heavy weapons* require two hands to wield and roll 1d10 damage on a hit. *One-handed weapons* such as swords and spears roll 1d8 damage. *Light weapons* such as rapiers and daggers roll only 1d6 damage, but a hero may use their Dexterity modifier on attack and damage rolls with them if they so choose. *Ranged weapons* such as bows roll 1d8 damage and use a hero's Dexterity modifier for hit and damage, while hurled weapons usually do only 1d6.

A hero can roll no more damage with a weapon than their class maximum. Thus, a sorcerer with a sword can roll no more than a 1d4 damage die for it, even though it would roll 1d8 for damage in the hands of a rogue or a warrior.

### Armor

Armor protects a hero, improving their *armor class*. The lower the armor class, the better. Light armor is usually little more than boiled leather or thick hides, and grants a base armor class of 7. Medium armor is usually of mail or overlapping scales, and gives an armor class of 5. Heavy armor is composed of solid plates and jointed metal, and allows a base armor class of 3. A shield can also be carried which improves a hero's armor class, lowering it by 1.

Heroes are unable to use rogue class Gifts which rely on nimbleness or stealth while wearing medium or heavy armor. Sorcerers cannot cast spells at all when wearing armor or carrying a shield, though they can use their other Gifts.

### Other Equipment

Simply choose whatever other equipment seems appropriate to your hero. By now they've doubtless accumulated whatever they think is necessary for their travels. The GM may choose to disallow particularly costly items or pare back equipment lists that are impractically long. Some heroes might have substantial holdings of land or notable numbers of retainers, but most such appurtenances are up to the GM to allow based on the kind of campaign that is being run.

## WEALTH AND ITS SPENDING

Traditional old-school gaming usually keeps a close track of coins and movable wealth. Most heroes know down to the bent copper how many coins are in their purse, and exactly how many pieces of shining gold it takes to buy that warhorse or night of riotous excess.

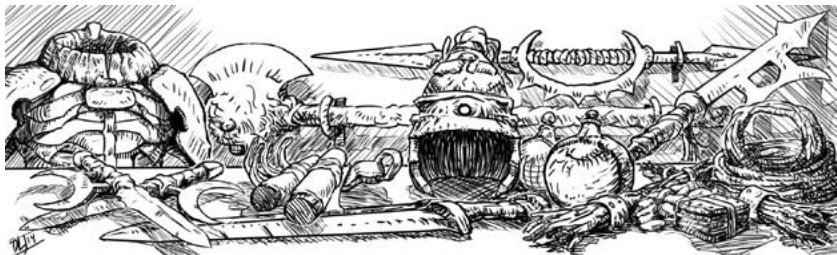
**Exemplars & Eidolons** doesn't bother with that kind of tracking. Your character is a hero, and heroes don't make budgets. Unless your hero is exceptionally impoverished or has just come off a truly spectacular bender, they're assumed to have whatever resources they need for petty purchases and day-to-day living. For larger purchases, their resources are measured in points of Wealth.

Wealth is seized from the lost troves of ancient cities and the tombs of dead kings. Wealth is what a hero finds when they plunge their arms shoulder-deep in a rotting chest of golden coins. Wealth is the kind of treasure that matters even to noblemen and kings. The contents of bandit purses and the trifling strongboxes of village misers are too petty to count as Wealth. Only true and notable treasures are worth tracking.

The smallest troves worth celebrating are worth 1 point of Wealth, while the riches of a kingdom's treasury might be worth 10. Exceptionally great finds might be so bulky with coins and ingots that help is needed to carry it off, and further help to protect it from thieves and bandits while the heroes decide how to spend it. Good friends may be needed to ensure its safety, and what hero could grudge them enjoying a little of its golden abundance in recompense?

Wealth is usually spent to further a group's goals. The Adventures chapter of this booklet describes how to set and achieve heroic goals, and the Wealth and Treasure section indicates how to spend the gold for Influence toward these ends. Riches can make a difficult task substantially easier, though the more that money is asked to do, the harder it is to spend it efficiently.

Wealth can also be used to purchase significant goods or commodities that are more than a hero could conceivably buy out of pocket, but not big enough to merit a full-scale heroic goal to obtain them. A single point of Wealth is usually sufficient to buy any particular good or service that a fair-sized city could provide: a house, a riotous celebration for a few hundred people, a small sailing ship, a high official's bribe in a dangerous matter, or anything else that might be more than could be expected from a hero's daily purse.



## FINAL TOUCHES

Your hero is almost ready for play. All that's needed now are a few final notes made on your character sheet for quicker reference when playing the game.

**Record your saving throws.** When your hero tries to throw off a magic spell or resist some foul poison or otherwise withstand an evil affliction, you roll 1d20 and try to roll equal or less than your relevant saving throw. Your Toughness saving throw is used against poisons, diseases, and other tests of physical might. It's equal to the higher of your Strength or Constitution, plus one if you chose warrior for your class. As you gain levels of experience as a warrior, you'll add them to this saving throw.

Your Evasion save is used to dodge explosions, leap back from pits, find cover against blasts, and otherwise evade trouble. It's equal to the higher of your Wisdom or Dexterity, adding your rogue level to the total. Your Mystic save defends against mental influences and arcane effects that directly assault you, and is equal to the better of your Intelligence or Charisma, plus your sorcerer level.

**Record your maximum hit points.** Your hit points are a measure of how close you are to death or defeat. If you run out of them from injuries or exhaustion, you'll be dead or incapacitated as the situation indicates. You can regain lost hit points through first aid, spells, or rest, but they can never exceed your maximum. For a new warrior, the maximum is 8. For rogues, it's 6, and for sorcerers, it's 4. You should add your Constitution modifier to this score.

**Record your attack bonus.** For warriors, this bonus is +1, while other classes start with +0. As you gain experience, this number will rise. The higher your attack bonus, the more likely you are to hurt a foe when you strike at them.

**Record your armor class.** If you're not wearing armor, this is 9. Light armor makes it 7, medium armor makes it 5, and heavy metal armor is worth an armor class of 3. If you carry a shield, reduce it by one more. Lastly, subtract your Dexterity modifier from the score. Thus, a hero with medium chain armor, a shield, and a Dexterity of 16 would have an armor class of 2. If a hero's Dexterity modifier is a penalty, it makes an armor class worse, though never worse than 9. The lower a hero's AC, the better, as it makes them harder to hurt in combat.

**Record your Fray die.** Fighting a hero is dangerous, particularly if you are but an ordinary thug or common soldier. Every round of combat, a hero gets to roll their Fray die to harm one or more petty foes within their reach, even if the hero is busy doing something other than attacking. The Fray die represents the casual blows, passing strokes, or swiftly-thrown magical bolts that a hero delivers reflexively. A warrior's Fray die is 1d8, a rogue's is 1d6, and a wizard's is 1d4. Most Fray dice can only be used against foes no stronger than the hero, but a sorcerer's bolts can harm even more powerful foes.

**Lastly, choose a name and appearance.** Now that you know who your hero is and have established their facts and abilities, give them a name befitting their accomplishments and decide the details of their appearance. If you're not certain what kind of names or fashion would fit your GM's campaign world, just ask them what sort of cultures or styles most resemble the peoples available for play.

## THE GIFTS OF THE HERO

The following pages list some of the more common Gifts possessed by heroes. Some Gifts may be chosen by any class, such as the five listed below. Most, however, are exclusive to a single profession. Gifts do not usually have prerequisites. A hero may normally pick any Gift from their class list. Unless specified otherwise, a Gift may be chosen only once. A new-made hero may pick two Gifts from the general choices listed below or from their own class' list. They may pick a third Gift from any class.

Some Gifts allow a hero to commit Effort in order to gain *Influence*. Influence is a special score reflecting background effort toward achieving some greater goal. The full meaning of Influence is discussed in the Adventures section of this book.

The following five Gifts may be taken by any hero when they are permitted to select a new aptitude. Aside from Ferocious Effort, they can be taken only once.

**Ferocious Effort:** Your maximum Effort increases by one. This Gift can be taken more than once.

**Force of Destiny:** Commit Effort to automatically succeed at a failed saving throw. The Effort remains committed until you can sleep.

**Natural Gifts:** Pick any one attribute and set it to 18 and its modifier to +3.

**Tireless Dedication:** Choose a goal or general ambition. Gain 1 Influence toward any end compatible with that goal. You can change your goal once per month.

**Unquenchable Vitality:** Your maximum hit points increase by 2 for each level you have. You regain 1 lost hit point every hour.



## ROGUE GIFTS

A rogue's talents are those of stealth, cunning, and persuasion. Those Gifts that involve nimbleness or deft motion are hindered by the bulk of heavy or medium armor. Such Gifts can only be used when the rogue is lightly armored.

**Avid Eye:** Find anything hidden at the location provided magic does not conceal it. Commit Effort to find even magically-hidden objects and notice which things are important to your current purpose. Effort remains committed until you leave the area.

**Dodge Blows:** By agility or luck, your effective base AC is 3, modified by shields and Dexterity. Armor with a worse base AC doesn't improve this.

**Expert at the Trade:** Pick a profession, sphere of knowledge, or artistic talent. Always succeed at any humanly-possible exertion of that skill, or function as a sage in that sphere of knowledge. Commit Effort to gain 1 Influence when your expertise might help.

**Faultless Step:** Commit Effort for the duration of the immediate situation. Until the situation changes, you can climb vertical surfaces and cross difficult or treacherous terrain at your full movement rate.

**Great Wealth:** You can always afford anything you and your immediate allies might need, assuming it's available and doesn't cost more than 1 Wealth point. Commit Effort to gain 1 Influence whenever large amounts of money would help.

**Imperceptible:** Commit Effort to automatically and instantly hide. Creatures of greater hit dice can roll a check to find you next round; others don't until you act in a way that risks discovery. The Effort remains committed as long as anyone's looking for you. Commit Effort to gain 1 Influence whenever stealth helps.

**Knows the Type:** Pick a class or profession— criminals, peasants, merchants, nobles, or the like. Get minor favors and friendly treatment from them by default. Commit Effort to find an ally among them, commitment lasting until you no longer need them. Commit Effort to gain 1 Influence when this class can help.

**Lethal Weaponry:** Your weapon or unarmed attacks never do less than 1d10 damage. The range for your Fray dice is always out to any foe within sight, as you never run out of throwing blades or improvised weaponry.

**Master of Deception:** Commit Effort to perfectly impersonate someone, forge a document flawlessly, or pretend to a role. Impenetrable until magic reveals it, obvious disproof emerges, or you drop the commitment. You have the props for any role with you unless it's utterly implausible that you should have them.

**Master of Locks:** Defeat non-magical locks and bindings instantly. Commit Effort to overcome magical seals and barriers, the Effort returning after you leave the place. Commit Effort to gain 1 Influence whenever defeating security helps.

**Murderous Surprise:** Always hit a foe if attacking from surprise. Do triple damage on all ambush attacks and Fray dice. Always successfully hide weapons no larger than a dagger. Commit Effort to gain 1 Influence whenever assassination helps.

**Nimble Hands:** Always successfully pickpocket targets of equal or fewer hit dice. Commit Effort to do so to others, lasting until you leave their presence. Commit Effort to freely snatch or deflect arrows or thrown weapons for the duration of a fight.

**Nine Lives:** When killed, you somehow evade your fate and turn up alive later. When this happens, lose this Gift and pick another, different Rogue gift.

**Persuasive Talker:** Commit Effort to convince a non-hostile creature of equal or fewer HD to do anything they'd do for a friend. Effort is committed until the act is complete. Commit Effort to gain 1 Influence whenever persuasion helps.

**Rogue's Luck:** Commit Effort; force a reroll of any roll you or the GM has made. The Effort remains committed until you sleep. This Gift can only be used once on any single roll. Commit Effort to gain 1 Influence on almost any project.

**Spymaster:** Commit Effort to know any particular fact that a master spy could conceivably learn. The Effort remains committed until you act on the information or drop the related project. Commit Effort to gain 1 Influence whenever spying helps.

**Supernatural Liar:** Detection spells and magical abilities cannot discern your falsehoods, disguises, or impositions, showing only what you choose to show. Commit Effort to gain 1 Influence as long as deceit helps.

**The Ring of Truth:** Always know when someone is trying to lie to you, barring Supernatural Liar. Automatically save versus magical illusions. Commit Effort to gain 1 Influence when discovering deception helps.

**Trapfinder:** You automatically find any trap, and always disarm or evade non-magical ones. Commit Effort to defeat or evade magical traps. Effort remains committed until you leave the place. Commit Effort to gain 1 Influence whenever defeating security helps.

**Wide Connections:** Commit Effort to be on good terms with someone useful in any given situation. Effort remains committed until you do a matching favor for them or stop associating with them. Commit Effort to gain 1 Influence whenever connections could help.

## SORCERER GIFTS

Born of great and terrible enlightenment, the sorcerer's gifts are those of spellcraft and magic. Full rules for spellcasting are given in the Magic section of this booklet. Most of these Gifts may be used while armored, but spellcasting is impossible.

**Adept of the Art:** You can use Adept spells from a particular arcane school. You must already have the Apprentice of the Art Gift for it and have a minimum of 3 sorcerer Gifts.

**Apprentice of the Art:** Pick a magical school; you can cast Apprentice spells from that school. You may take this Gift and its more advanced forms more than once for different arcane schools. This Gift and its later forms can't be used while armored.

**Archmage of the Art:** You can use Archmage spells from a particular arcane school. You must already have the Master of the Art Gift for it and have a minimum of 7 sorcerer Gifts.

**Conjured Ephemera:** Commit Effort; you may conjure forth objects up to 500 lbs in weight, albeit not those of special value or precious matter. If the Effort remains committed for 24 hours, the objects are permanent; otherwise they vanish when the Effort is reclaimed. Commit Effort to gain 1 Influence when material goods help.

**Eclectic Arcanist:** This Gift is taken by other classes who want to use a little sorcery; you can use magic items restricted to sorcerers and can cast spells from scrolls and captured spellbooks. If you take a level of sorcerer, replace this Gift.

**Elemental Mastery:** Choose fire, electricity, acid, or cold. You are impervious to that form of damage and may cause any damage-causing spells you cast to inflict that type of damage in place of its usual type. If you have sorcerer levels, your sorcerer's Fray die increases by one size step, from 1d4 to 1d6.

**Expert Countermagic:** You may save twice against magical spells and effects, taking the better roll. If you save versus an area-effect spell, you may commit Effort to totally negate the spell for everyone affected by it. The Effort remains committed until the end of the fight.

**Extra Energy:** You can cast one more spell than your sorcerer level would allow before you become exhausted. This Gift may be taken more than once.

**Highly Sagacious:** You are remarkably learned. You may commit Effort to know the answer to any question that a specialist sage might know. The Effort remains committed until you act on the knowledge or abandon your purpose. Commit Effort to gain 1 Influence if great knowledge would help your purpose.

**Magical Artificer:** You can instantly recognize magic items and magical effects and can identify their function or specifics. You are impervious to cursed items and can commit Effort to resist any particular effect created by a magic item or permanent magical effect. The Effort returns after a night's rest.

**Magical Warding:** Your base armor class is 3, modified by shields and Dexterity, though you cannot cast spells while holding a shield.

**Master of the Art:** You can use Master spells from a particular arcane school. You must already have the Adept of the Art Gift for it and have a minimum of 5 sorcerer Gifts.

**Master of the Keys:** Choose an arcane school you have access to. Commit Effort to prevent anyone in the immediate area from using spells from that school, including yourself, until you release the Effort. You may take this Gift multiple times.

**Mastered Cantrip:** Pick an Apprentice spell from an arcane school known to you. You can cast this spell freely, without expending energy.

**Mesmeric Gaze:** Commit Effort to make a subject perform any action not directly harmful to them or their loved ones. Victims with greater hit dice than you have levels get a saving throw. The Effort is committed until the act is complete. Commit Effort to gain 1 Influence if compulsion would help your purpose.

**Pierce Wards:** Commit Effort; one spell or attack ignores the magical defenses of its target, penetrating magical barriers, warding spells, the Magical Warding Gift, or innate immunities. The Effort remains committed until the fight is over.

**Prophetic Insight:** Commit Effort and gain a short answer to any question you ask about the future or an impending course of action. The answer is that which is most true or probable as the GM sees it. The Effort returns after a night's rest. Commit Effort to gain 1 Influence when foresight would help.

**Summoner's Pact:** Commit Effort to become immune to the attacks and powers of summoned or extraplanar entities. The effect breaks if you act in a hostile manner toward an entity; otherwise the Effort remains committed until you drop it.

**Torrent of Doom:** You invoke some manner of area-effect magical attack. The blast affects everything within up to a 20-foot radius within 100 feet, and does 2 points of damage with a save for half. You are immune to your own Torrent of Doom.

**Venerated Priest:** You are considered a holy figure. Commit Effort to command even difficult services or favors from the faithful. The commitment lasts until the favor is complete. Commit Effort to gain 1 Influence if co-religionists can aid you.

## WARRIOR GIFTS

Fierce and fell-handed, the warrior is given Gifts of bloodshed and ruin. The least of these heroes can smash ten times their number of ordinary soldiers, and the great among them can put small armies to flight single-handed. Sorcerers can work marvels and rogues can trick divinities, but warriors topple thrones with their steel.

**Aura of Command:** Commit Effort to command a non-hostile creature of equal or fewer HD to do anything they'd do for a superior. Effort is committed until the act is complete. Commit Effort to gain 1 Influence whenever obedience helps.

**Bloody Reaper:** Increase the size of your warrior Fray die by one step. This Gift can be taken more than once, up to a maximum of d20.

**Breaker of Armies:** You can't be effectively attacked more than once per round by creatures of equal or fewer hit dice. Commit effort to gain 1 Influence when contesting mobs of foes.

**Cloud of Steel:** Your range for inflicting Fray damage extends to anything you can see, even with melee weapons. Reroll your Fray die if it rolls a 1.

**Crushing Fists:** Your unarmed attacks are considered magical weapons and do 1d12 damage, though you can't use a shield while attacking this way.

**Drillmaster:** Troops you personally lead gain +1 HD and attack bonus while under your command. This bonus is permanent after a month. Commit Effort to gain 1 Influence whenever military training helps.

**Guardian Arm:** Commit Effort to negate a successful attack or combat damage on an ally. The Effort is committed until the fight's over. Commit Effort to gain 1 Influence when withstanding violence or martial threats is helpful to your cause.

**Hardy Vigor:** When performing first aid on yourself, heal 4 points instead of 2. Gain 1 extra point of healing from all other sources.

**Inexhaustible:** You don't need to sleep or rest. Commit Effort to increase some other Influence you are exerting by 1 point, as your labors are incessant.

**Iron Skin:** Through agility, toughness, or luck your base armor class is 3, modified by shields and Dexterity. Armor of worse base AC doesn't improve this score.

**Master Tactician:** You spot ambushes and dangerous surprises one round before they happen, giving you time to respond or escape. Commit Effort to gain 1 Influence whenever military expertise is helpful.

**Shining Leader:** Troops under your command never fail their Morale checks, and you are impervious to all supernatural sources of fear or confusion. Commit Effort to gain 1 influence when military leadership helps.

**Slayer of Legions:** Petty foes die in windrows when they face you. Against foes of hit dice equal or less than a third of your level, rounded up, you automatically defeat a number each round equal to your level. Against mobs, inflict your level in HD.

**Swift to Battle:** Double your movement rate. Commit Effort to instantly leap or dash to any accessible location within sight. This Effort is committed until the fight ends.

**Terrifying Presence:** All non-martial or non-monstrous foes always fail Morale checks you provoke them to make, while others suffer a -1 penalty on the roll. You may Commit Effort to gain 1 Influence when intimidation helps your cause.

**Titanic Blow:** Commit Effort to double the damage inflicted by a Fray die or a melee or ranged attack. You may do so after the dice are rolled. This Effort remains committed until the fight is over.

**Unbreakable Will:** Commit Effort to resist a mind-influencing spell or effect, even after failing a save. The Effort remains committed until the fight or scene ends.

**Unerring Accuracy:** Commit Effort before hit roll dice are rolled to count anything but a 1 as a natural 20. Effort remains committed until the fight is over.

**Unstoppable Wrath:** Commit Effort; for the duration of the fight, automatically hit any foe of equal or fewer hit dice. Overflow damage caused by this can't affect creatures of greater hit dice. Effort remains committed until the fight is over.

**Wallbreaker:** You can break or ignore barriers less sturdy than a stone wall when moving or acting. Against heavier construction, you break a foot of stone or similar material per round spent smashing. You can't be impeded or blocked by foes.



## MAGIC AND SPELLCASTING

A mage with the proper Gifts may cast a number of spells equal to one plus their sorcerer level before their mystical energies are exhausted. A sorcerer may revive their flagging powers by resting for fifteen minutes and performing those small meditations and rituals which restore their communion with the forces they command.

Casting a spell takes up the character's action for that round. A caster who is struck or damaged during a round cannot cast later in that round. Many spells have a varying effect based on the level of the caster. In such a case, *all* of a caster's levels are counted, not just their sorcerer expertise. Some spells may only be cast upon a creature the mage can touch, while others have a range extending as far as the wizard can see with their unaided eyes.

### The Limits of Sorcery

Some spells require that the caster commit Effort to the enchantment. For spells that enchant another creature for good or ill, the Effort remains committed until the caster releases the cursed victim or ends the beneficial effect. For spells with an instant effect, such as an attack spell, or those with a lasting effect, such as a healing enchantment, the Effort returns after a night's rest.

Healing spells cast during combat feed upon the desperate energies of violence, and heal the listed number of hit points for their target. Outside of such struggles, the caster can be more careful with the spell's energies and will always heal all the missing hit points from the target. Without the ambient force of bloodshed to fuel the spell, however, such mending drains the recipient and they must commit Effort to benefit from it. If they can't do so, the spell has no effect. Effort committed this way returns after a full night's rest.

Many spells require that a saving throw be made to resist them. Spells that launch projectiles or bolts at a target are usually resisted with an Evasion saving throw, while those that directly assault a mind or spirit are resisted with a Mystic save. The choice of an appropriate save is up to the GM.

Spells cannot be cast while wearing mundane armor. The unsanctified metals and base hides used in such harness interfere with the gathering of arcane power. By the same token, carrying a shield will encumber a hand that needs freedom to gesticulate. Some magical armors may not be so hostile to the use of sorcery.

### Adding Spells to Schools

The schools of magic teach a traditional list of spells. Using the rules for a minor goal as described in the Adventuring section of this book, a sorcerer might be able to add new spells to a given school, pulling them from other old-school games or devising entirely new enchantments that fit the school's flavor. Others might be found as loot.



### Scrolls and Spellbooks

As heroic exemplars of the arcane arts, player characters do not need spellbooks or other paraphernalia to wield their powers. Other magi might need these things, and if these texts are captured they may be used by a sorcerer to cast one or more spells. Once invoked, the power in the scroll or spellbook page is exhausted. Some exceptionally potent books might allow a sorcerer to add certain spells to those they are allowed to cast so long as the tome remains in their possession.

## THE SCHOOLS OF THE ARCANE ARTS

These schools are the most common among the practitioners of the arcane, though others are not unknown to the learned adept. Common magi rarely learn more than the rudiments of two or three, and never attain to great mastery in more than one. Those of a more heroic capacity might master several, or even devise their own new school out of fragmentary lore and intrepid investigations.

### The School of Domination

| <b>Apprentice</b>        | <b>Adept</b>             | <b>Master</b>            | <b>Archmage</b>   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Blight Friendship</i> | <i>Bewitch Mind</i>      | <i>Buried Compulsion</i> | <i>Mind Slave</i> |
| <i>Clear Thoughts</i>    | <i>Sudden Compulsion</i> | <i>Dominate Mind</i>     |                   |
| <i>Incur Favor</i>       | <i>Sway Passions</i>     |                          |                   |
| <i>Perceive Alliance</i> |                          |                          |                   |

### The School of Flames

| <b>Apprentice</b>       | <b>Adept</b>        | <b>Master</b>         | <b>Archmage</b>        |
|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Extinguish Fire</i>  | <i>Fireburst</i>    | <i>Firestorm</i>      | <i>Consuming Blaze</i> |
| <i>Flame Resistance</i> | <i>Shape Flames</i> | <i>Inflammability</i> |                        |
| <i>Gout of Flame</i>    | <i>Wall of Fire</i> |                       |                        |
| <i>Smoke Barrier</i>    |                     |                       |                        |

### The School of Healing

| <b>Apprentice</b>   | <b>Adept</b>         | <b>Master</b>          | <b>Archmage</b>     |
|---------------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Cure Wounds</i>  | <i>Cleanse Toxin</i> | <i>Restore Limb</i>    | <i>Restore Body</i> |
| <i>Stay Life</i>    | <i>Cure Disease</i>  | <i>Revive Vitality</i> |                     |
| <i>Ward Disease</i> | <i>Mass Healing</i>  |                        |                     |
| <i>Ward Toxin</i>   |                      |                        |                     |

### The School of Necromancy

| <b>Apprentice</b>        | <b>Adept</b>          | <b>Master</b>           | <b>Archmage</b>       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Animate Skeleton</i>  | <i>Animate Wraith</i> | <i>Animate Revenant</i> | <i>Animate Legion</i> |
| <i>Interrogate Bones</i> | <i>Cure Malison</i>   | <i>Restore Life</i>     |                       |
| <i>Still the Dead</i>    | <i>Still the Many</i> |                         |                       |
| <i>Ward Undead</i>       |                       |                         |                       |



## The School of Perception

### Apprentice

*Baffle Detection*

*Detect Magic*

*Locate Object*

*Noonday Sight*

### Adept

*Far Gaze*

*Mute the Senses*

*Perceive Meaning*

### Master

*Distant Mirror*

*Piercing Gaze*

### Archmage

*Inescapable Eye*

## The School of Space

### Apprentice

*Distortion Field*

*Mental Map*

*Sidestep*

*Spatial Awareness*

### Adept

*Lesser Teleport*

*Spatial Ward*

*Transposition*

### Master

*Greater Teleport*

*Open Path*

### Archmage

*Gateway*

## The School of Summoning

### Apprentice

*Banish*

*Call Minor Servitor*

*Command Servitor*

*Summoner's Ward*

### Adept

*Call Major Servitor*

*Call Minion*

*Subvert Binding*

### Master

*Call Far Prince*

*Greater Banish*

### Archmage

*Call Outer Lord*

## The School of Winds

### Apprentice

*Cloudbank*

*Crackling Bolt*

*Fresh Air*

*Leap of Winds*

### Adept

*Boreal Barrier*

*Flight*

*Thunderstorm*

### Master

*Command Weather*

*Lightning Bolt*

### Archmage

*Hurricane*

**Animate Legion:** As *Animate Skeleton*, but the single point of Effort allows up to twenty-five hit dice of undead to be animated by the caster, of such types as they choose to call up.

**Animate Revenant:** As *Animate Wraith*, but it revives a revenant. Revenants are undead, but fully recall their breathing days and may retain attitudes and ambitions related to that life. They are not suicidally loyal to the necromancer, and when the Effort of their calling is reclaimed they remain animate.

**Animate Skeleton:** Commit Effort. So long as the Effort remains committed, a mostly-intact corpse can be animated as a skeleton. The skeleton will serve mindlessly but with perfect loyalty until the Effort is reclaimed. A skeleton destroyed by violence will be too damaged to be re-animated.

**Animate Wraith:** As *Animate Skeleton*, but calling forth a wraith instead. Wraiths have a human degree of intelligence, but animated ones can remember little or nothing of their living days. If the wraith is destroyed, the corpse it was summoned from disintegrates into dust.

**Baffle Detection:** The subject must commit Effort. While committed, the subject gets a bonus saving throw to resist scrying or detection attempts by spells from the school of Perception.

**Banish:** A summoned or extraplanar entity within Sight range takes 1d10 damage per level of the caster. If reduced below half its maximum health it must save or be banished back to its native realm.

**Bewitch Mind:** Choose a target within Sight range and commit Effort. Those with more hit dice than you have levels may make an unconscious saving throw to resist. While the Effort remains committed, the target will do anything for the caster that they'd do for a good friend.

**Blight Friendship:** Focus on a target within Sight range and mentally name another person you have seen. Both the target and the person named make unconscious saving throws. If both succeed, nothing happens. If one fails, any friendship between them becomes indifference. If both fail, they start to oppose each other.

**Boreal Barrier:** As *Wall of Fire*, but the barrier is of ice. It causes no damage, but cannot be crossed until one point of damage is done to a given 10x10 section per level of the caster.

**Buried Compulsion:** Commit Effort, choose a target within Sight range, and think on a non-suicidal action you wish them to commit at a particular time or situation. The victim may make an unconscious saving throw to resist. If failed, they will perform that action at that time or in that situation, completely forgetting that they have done so. The compulsion lasts until the Effort is reclaimed.

**Call Far Prince:** As *Call Minor Servitor*, but it summons a Princely Power.

**Call Major Servitor:** As *Call Minor Servitor*, but a Major Servitor is summoned to obedience instead.

**Call Minion:** As *Call Minor Servitor*, but a Minion is called forth. While weak, Minions are exceptionally docile, flexible, and intelligent, and will serve even suicidal purposes for their summoner. Their loyalty cannot be subverted with the *Command Servitor* spell and they will never attack their summoner.

**Call Minor Servitor:** Commit Effort. A Minor Servitor is summoned forth and will obey the caster in non-suicidal ways so long as the Effort remains committed. The spell must be cast again to safely banish the servitor; if the Effort is simply reclaimed, it will remain and attack its summoner.

**Call Outer Lord:** As *Call Princely Power*, but it summons an Outer Lord. Two points of Effort must be committed to maintain control of this entity.

**Cleanse Toxin:** The recipient must commit Effort, but is cured of all poisons. The spell has a Touch range.

**Clear Thoughts:** Choose a target within Sight range and commit Effort. While the Effort is committed, the effects of any other spell of domination are held in abeyance. When the Effort is reclaimed, the victim can make a saving throw to throw off the charms before they can reestablish their grip.

**Cloudbank:** Commit Effort to call forth a thick bank of mist within Sight range, the cloud extending up to twenty feet on a side per caster level. Those within it can't see past arm's distance, but the caster can see through it. The cloud lasts as long as the Effort remains committed.

**Command Servitor:** Target a summoned entity within Sight range and give it a single command, which it may save to resist. If the save fails, it will obey the command for up to an hour, provided it is not harmful to itself or its summoner.

**Command Weather:** Commit Effort. This spell controls the weather in a half-mile radius per level of the caster. Anything from torrential downpours to baking heat can be summoned regardless of season. It takes up to half an hour for the weather to build, and it remains as long as the caster commits effort.

**Consuming Blaze:** Commit Effort. The caster targets a single object or enemy in Sight range and expends a number of hit points at most equal to their level. The target erupts in inescapable flames and automatically burns for that same amount of damage, even if otherwise impervious to fire. The caster may only regain these spent hit points through natural rest and recovery.

**Crackling Bolt:** Target a victim within Sight range to blast them with a spray of sizzling electrical bolts, inflicting one point of damage plus one more for every two full caster levels. This spell can't hurt the same target two rounds in a row.

**Cure Disease:** The recipient must commit Effort, but is cured of all diseases.

**Cure Malison:** Touch range. The caster cures or removes any diseases, poisons, energy drains, or other negative effects produced by an undead creature. Hit point damage is not cured.

**Cure Wounds:** If cast in combat, heal 1d6 points of damage. If cast outside combat, the recipient must commit Effort until they next sleep, but are healed of all damage. Touch range.

**Detect Magic:** Commit Effort. While it remains committed, the caster can instantly notice any magical objects or enchanted entities within Sight range.

**Distant Mirror:** Commit Effort. The caster picks a location they have been or a person they have seen. If a person, the target makes an unconscious saving throw to resist. While Effort remains committed, the caster can observe and hear that place or person.

**Distortion Field:** Choose one target within Sight range per level of the caster. Each target must make a saving throw. Those who fail are stuck in their current location, unable to move from it. They can defend themselves, make missile attacks, and attack adjacent foes normally. They can roll new saves each round.

**Dominate Mind:** Commit Effort and choose a target within Sight range. The victim may make an unconscious saving throw to resist. On a failure, they become slavishly devoted to the caster for as long as the Effort remains committed, performing any act not entirely and drastically against their nature or self-interest.

**Extinguish Fire:** A blaze up to the size of a house fire within Sight range is instantly extinguished. If the fire is magical in nature the caster must succeed in a saving throw to extinguish it.

**Far Gaze:** The caster must pick a location within 300 feet and commit Effort. While it remains committed, they can see and hear as if standing at that location.

**Fireburst:** The caster chooses a location within Sight range. A 20-foot radius explosion of flame bursts there, doing 1d6 damage per level of the caster to friend and foe alike within the area.

**Firestorm:** The caster chooses a square area of effect somewhere within Sight range, up to 10 feet on a side per level of the caster. Each victim within the area takes 1d8 fire damage per caster level.

**Flame Resistance:** Touch range. The target must Commit Effort. While committed, fire does one fewer point of damage per die rolled, and smoke does not hinder their breathing or sight.

**Flight:** Sight range. Commit Effort. The target may fly at twice their normal movement rate as long as the caster's Effort remains committed.

**Follow the Path:** If anyone has teleported anywhere within Sight range of the caster within the past week, they perceive the teleport's origin and target location. The vision is clear enough to allow them to teleport after the escapees.

**Fresh Air:** Commit Effort. The caster and up to six additional allies per caster level are bubbled in clean, fresh air. They may breathe freely underwater and are immune to noxious gases and fumes as long as the Effort remains committed.

**Gateway:** Commit Effort. The caster opens up a gate between their current location and a spot they have been within 100 miles per caster level. The gate is 10 feet in diameter and remains open as long as the Effort remains committed. Creatures can see and travel through both sides of the gate.

**Gout of Flame:** Automatically hit a target within Sight range with a 1d10 damage bolt of flame. At caster levels 3, 5, 7, and 9 an additional target may be struck for the same damage.

**Greater Banish:** As *Banish*, but the damage die is 1d12 per caster level and any amount of damage forces the summoned or extraplanar entity to save or be banished.

**Greater Teleport:** As *Lesser Teleport*, but the maximum range is one hundred miles per caster level.

**Hurricane:** Commit Effort. The caster summons a hurricane to the vicinity, which arrives within half an hour. All light structures within a mile will be flattened, all

crops destroyed, and any unprotected creatures must save or take 1d6 damage. This spell can be cast only once per week.

**Incur Favor:** Choose a target within Sight range and request a favor from them. The subject will grant the favor if it is minor and requires no special effort from them. More dangerous or costly favors allow them an unconscious saving throw.

**Inescapable Eye :** Commit Effort. The caster automati-

cally dispels all illusions within Sight range, reveals all magical items, highlights all hidden objects and persons, and translates all written inscriptions, sharing this awareness with all nearby allies. The supernatural clarity lasts for three rounds.

**Inflammability:** Commit Effort. The caster targets a structure within Sight range. The structure becomes as inflammable as dry wood for as long as the Effort is committed, even if of stone or earth. Up to ten square feet of the structure may be burnt for each caster level.

**Interrogate Bones:** The caster may ask a largely-intact corpse up to one question per caster level, which will be answered as "Yes", "No", or some other one or two-word answer. The same corpse may not be interrogated more than once by any one caster.

**Leap of Winds:** Sight range. The caster or target may instantly leap to any point within sixty feet. The spell may also be cast quickly enough to spare a falling victim from injury.

**Lesser Teleport:** Commit Effort. The caster can teleport himself and up to one ally per caster level to any location he or she has seen before up to one mile distant, assuming it is not warded against such sorcerous intrusion.

**Lightning Bolt:** The caster targets a single enemy within Sight range. A lightning bolt gouts between the caster and the target, also affecting any victims in between. The bolt does 1d12 damage per caster level.

**Locate Object:** The caster names a particular type of object or type of material. If the target is within 100 feet, the caster gets an impression of its direction.

**Mass Healing:** Commit Effort. Acts as the *Cure Wounds* spell, but it affects every ally within Sight range.

**Mental Map:** The caster receives a sudden sense of the layout of their immediate surroundings, out to a 50 foot radius. They can discern doors, rooms, and major architectural features but not fine details or room contents. Secret and hidden doors are perceived clearly by the spell.



**Mind Slave:** As *Dominate Mind*, but there is no limit to what the caster may demand of their victim. Orders to behave in a suicidal fashion allow the victim another saving throw to break free, however.

**Mute the Senses:** The target must save versus magic or lose a sense of the caster's choice. They may make a second save at dusk to regain the sense; otherwise it remains lost until magically healed.

**Noonday Sight:** The subject is able to see even through clouds or in total darkness for the next hour, and is immune to blinding effects. If Effort is committed by the recipient the enchantment lasts until the Effort is reclaimed.

**Perceive Alliance:** Choose a target within Sight range and think of another person you have seen. You become aware of the existence of any connection between the two of them and the degree of importance they each feel about the connection—though you can't tell what kind of tie it is.

**Perceive Meaning:** Commit Effort. While it remains committed, the caster can read any text or inscription or understand any speech. Any intelligent entities that hear the caster speak can understand them clearly.

**Piercing Gaze:** Commit Effort. While committed, the caster can see through solid objects, requiring one round to focus their attention through barriers.

**Restore Body:** Cures all injury or mutilation on the subject, including congenital defects. The caster must commit Effort to cast this spell and can use it only once a day on any single subject. Sight range.

**Restore Life:** Commit Effort. A dead person's spirit is invited back into their corpse. Normally, only heroes and those with gravely unfinished life duties will return to life. The process costs the once-dead victim one experience level or hit die.

**Restore Limb:** A missing limb or organ is regrown on the target. Touch range.

**Revive Vitality:** As *Cure Wounds*, but supernatural blights on a target are also removed, including those such as energy drains or premature aging. Touch range.

**Shape Flames:** The caster can control any flames within Sight range, forcing them back, channeling them in patterns, or extinguishing them. The control lasts for ten minutes, and each change of shape requires an action to enact.

**Sidestep:** The caster may use this spell in place of their normal movement action, teleporting to any location within range of their normal move rate. They need not see the target location, but if the target is within a solid object they bounce back immediately and roll 1d20 for damage.

**Smoke Barrier:** Commit Effort. A wall of thick smoke is created somewhere within Sight range until the Effort is recovered, 10 feet high and up to 30 feet long per level of the caster. Sight through the smoke is impossible; those who cross it must save or take 1 point of choking damage.

**Spatial Awareness:** Commit Effort. While the Effort is committed, the caster or a chosen target is aware of their surroundings out to Sight range, able to perceive objects even in darkness or clouds. Colors cannot be perceived but even very fine details are clear.

**Spatial Ward:** Commit Effort. The caster can ward an area up to fifty feet in radius per caster level. Only creatures permitted by the caster may teleport into or out

of this area. Another adept of Space can cast this spell again to negate the ward, but must do so from inside its area of effect and must make a Mystic save to succeed at the attempt. The spell is permanent if the Effort remains committed for one week, after which it can be reclaimed without ending the ward.

**Stay Life:** If cast on someone who died no more than three rounds ago, they will be restored to life and revive with 1 hit point or hit die five minutes later. This spell cannot aid those who have been torn to pieces or otherwise badly mutilated. The caster must touch the downed ally to use this spell.

**Still the Dead:** A single undead target within Sight range immediately suffers 1d10 damage per level of the caster.

**Still the Many:** Commit Effort. As *Still the Dead*, but it affects every undead creature within Sight range.

**Subvert Binding:** Commit Effort and target a summoned entity within Sight range. The entity's summoner may make a saving throw to resist this spell; if unsuccessful, the creature now serves the caster as long as the Effort remains committed. Banishing it safely requires casting the appropriate Call spell.

**Sudden Compulsion:** Choose a target within Sight range and think of an action you wish them to take that is not obviously self-destructive. The victim may make an unconscious saving throw to resist, otherwise it immediately performs that action for reasons it cannot say. It regains control of itself the next round.

**Summoner's Ward:** Commit Effort to summon a glowing dome of a twenty-foot radius or a glowing wall up to twenty feet square per caster level within Sight range. So long as the effort remains committed, summoned or extraplanar entities must save to cross this barrier, unless someone on the other side attacks them. The dome moves with the caster.

**Sway Passions:** Commit Effort and focus on an emotion. While the Effort remains committed, all those within Sight range with equal or fewer hit dice feel that emotion strongly, and will act on it to the degree their natures and circumstances allow. Most will not break laws unless in the company of a mob or naturally given to criminal behavior.

**Thunderstorm:** Sight range. This spell only functions outdoors; up to two targets per caster level are selected, whereupon lightning bolts strike them for 1d8 damage per caster level.

**Transposition:** The caster chooses two creatures within Sight range and switches their positions. If a creature does not want to be moved it may attempt a save; success means that it remains where it is, though the other entity might still move.

**Wall of Fire:** As per *Smoke Barrier*, but the wall is of flame and rolls 1d4 damage per two full levels of the caster to anyone who crosses it.

**Ward Disease:** The recipient must commit Effort. While committed, they are immune to diseases and any disease in them has its effect suspended. Touch range.

**Ward Toxin:** The recipient must commit Effort. While committed, they are immune to poisons and any poison in them has its effect suspended. Touch range.

**Ward Undead:** As *Summoner's Ward*, except applying to undead rather than summoned creatures.

## PLAYING THE GAME

Heroic adventurers must meet with challenges from time to time. Whether a test of artful skill or bold hardihood, there are enough trials, foes, and afflictions in the world to try even a hero's capabilities.

In most cases, it's going to be fairly obvious what the outcome of a given action will be. A nimble rogue is not going to slip off a window ledge or fumble a bumpkin's purse. An iron-thewed warrior is not going to lose a drinking contest to an asthmatic scholar. Heroes are capable men and women and they are not going to botch ordinary exercises of their abilities.

Yet inevitably there will be true challenges to their capabilities. Even simple tasks might become difficult under exceptionally harsh conditions, and even trifling foes can become dangerous in large groups, or in a relentless succession of battles. These pages describe how to handle such situations where a hero's victory is not a foreordained outcome.

**Ability checks and saving throws** describes how to handle tests of a hero's talents or their ability to resist some dire event. When opposed by a dangerous enemy or pushing the ordinary limits of their heroic competence, an ability check can tell the GM whether or not their efforts bear fruit. In the same vein, a saving throw is rolled to resist dark magic, foul poisons, or other blights that might assail them.

**Combat and healing** covers an activity much-beloved by heroes. Smiting foes and hewing down legions of wretched minions is a traditional heroic pastime, and these pages explain how to run such combats. Classic foes from other old-school games can be imported to test heroic mettle, all with no change to their original statistics or abilities.

**Advancement** marks the steady growth of a hero's abilities. As they accomplish great deeds and overcome grave perils, a young hero can attain truly magnificent levels of skill and capability.

An experienced GM will doubtless think of other situations that might need adjudication. Overland travel, the details of poisons or diseases, social negotiation with others... such things may be resolved as the GM and players think most likely.



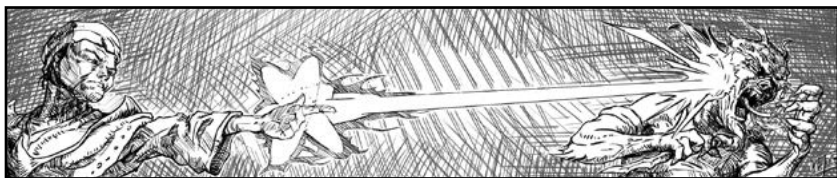
## ABILITY CHECKS AND SAVING THROWS

Heroes are *heroic*. Even the least gifted among them are capable of tremendous feats of skill, especially in those spheres that touch on their particular gifts. Most of the time there is no reasonable chance that they will fail at their exertions. Climbing a wall, crossing a slippery log, persuading the innkeeper to let them in after nightfall... these things do not tax a hero.

Sometimes, however, a hero faces a truly meaningful challenge. Cooling the wrath of an infuriated mob, holding up a massive stone column, leaping a tremendous chasm, or outdoing the artifice of the King's favorite jeweler might all be worthy tests of their abilities. In these cases, a *check* is rolled.

To roll a check, the player rolls 1d20 and attempts to roll equal to or under their most relevant attribute score. If a fact about the hero is relevant, such as a famous musician seeking to charm a princess with song, then the hero may add +4 to their attribute. If the task is especially difficult even for a hero, the GM might impose penalties of up to -4 on the attribute. A roll of 1 always succeeds, and 20 always fails.

If two contestants oppose each other, then both roll their checks and the one who wins by the largest margin— or loses by the smallest— is the victor.



### Saving Throws

A *saving throw* is a special kind of ability check rolled when a hero is trying to evade some calamity. Heroes have three saving throws. Their Toughness saving throw is the better of their Strength or Constitution attributes, plus their level in the warrior class. Their Evasion saving throw is the better of their Wisdom or Dexterity, plus their level in the rogue class. Their Mystic save is the best of their Intelligence or Charisma scores, plus their level as a sorcerer.

Toughness saves apply to tests of a hero's physical hardihood, such as poisons, diseases, or exhaustion. Evasion saves are used when a hero must dodge a danger, such as a sudden trap or roaring bolt of sorcerous flame. Mystic saves are for magical effects that directly target the hero's mind or body, like a curse or a magical transformation.

A hero rolls a saving throw when attempting to fend off poison, resist a dark enchantment, dodge a falling boulder, outdrink an ogre prince, or otherwise withstand some test of their mettle. As with other checks, a relevant fact may add a +4 bonus to their attribute, but most perils also impose a penalty equal to the hit dice of the foe that is trying to inflict the condition. The more powerful the enemy, the harder it is to resist their might.

## COMBAT AND HEALING

Combat begins when blades are drawn or teeth are bared. It progresses in *rounds*, each one lasting about six seconds, during which each participant is allowed to act once. Heroes always act first in a round unless they have been ambushed.

When it's a participant's turn in combat, they may move up to sixty feet and take an action. This action may be to attack, to cast a spell, to cut a rope, or to do any other single thing that takes no more than six seconds to complete. Very simple actions such as dropping things or shouting a warning may be done freely.

### Attacking and Damaging A Foe

To smite an enemy, an assailant rolls 1d20 and adds their attack bonus, their target's armor class, and their relevant attribute modifier. For melee weapons, this is Strength, though light weapons such as daggers or rapiers may use Dexterity instead. Ranged weapons use Dexterity. If the total is 20 or more, the blow hits. A roll of 1 always misses, and a roll of 20 always hits, regardless of a foe's armor class.

If the blow is a hit, the attacker then rolls the damage die for their weapon, adding their relevant attribute modifier once more. This roll is then compared against the table below to find out how many points of damage are inflicted.

#### Damage Inflicted by the Roll

| A Roll of 1 | 2-5     | 6-9      | 10 or more |
|-------------|---------|----------|------------|
| No damage   | 1 point | 2 points | 4 points   |

For attacks or spells that do multiple dice of damage, the attribute modifier is applied only to one die, but each is counted separately. Thus, a hero with a +2 Strength modifier who swings a sword that does 2d6 damage might roll a 1 and a 6 on the dice. The hero decides to apply the +2 to the first roll, resulting in 3 and 6, for one plus two points of damage, or three in total.

This damage is subtracted from the hit points of heroes, or the *hit dice* of other foes. Targets who lose all hit points or all hit dice are either killed or defeated as the attacker wishes. Thus, an ordinary but well-trained soldier with 1 hit die is killed by one point of damage, while a novice warrior-hero with 10 hit points requires ten such blows to lay her low. Certain mighty foes may also have hit points, however.

An attack that is more than sufficient to kill a foe can spread the excess damage to any other foe within range that has an armor class no better than the target. Thus, if the hero's greatsword inflicts 4 points of damage on a wretched soldier with only 1 hit die, the remaining 3 points of damage may be shared out among his similarly-armored comrades within the blade's reach, killing three more in the same round. If one of them were better-armored than the victim, however, they would not be subject to this generously-shared inhumation.

## The Fray Die

The Fray die is a special ability of heroes, one representing their casual strokes, blows in passing, or minor blasts of sorcerous power. A Fray die can always be rolled in a round, even if the hero is doing something other than attacking. Warriors have a base Fray die of 1d8, rogues have 1d6, and sorcerers roll 1d4. Multi-classed heroes can use the Fray die of any of their classes, but only one die per round.

When the hero uses the Fray die, they simply roll it, compare it to the damage table, and then apply the resulting damage to any foe within range of equal or fewer hit dice than they have levels. Thus, a third-level warrior who rolls a 6 on his Fray die can inflict two points of damage on any single foe within reach of his sword, so long as they have 3 hit dice or less. He might also choose to split the damage up, and inflict 1 point on two different valid targets within range.

While sorcerers have the weakest Fray die, their magic is difficult to shrug off even for mighty foes. Sorcerer Fray damage applies to foes of any hit dice.

## Healing

After a battle or a chance-met injury, heroes may take five minutes or so to catch their breath and bind their wounds. Such first aid heals two points of damage from injuries inflicted during the battle or the immediate misadventure. First aid cannot cure damage inflicted in earlier conflicts.

A hero who gets a good night's sleep heals all lost hit points. Some magical spells also can be relied upon to cure some or all of the hero's injuries.



## ADVANCEMENT

While even a novice hero is capable of great things, time and further achievements will enhance their power. A hero's capacity is measured in *experience levels*. A new hero starts at first level, and through effort and great deeds will gradually rise.

A new level is earned through accumulating *experience points*. A hero gains two experience points after achieving a minor accomplishment, four points after a medium goal, and eight points for overcoming a truly realm-shaking problem or achieving a truly remarkable purpose. The GM decides what qualifies as an accomplishment based on the guidelines in the Adventure section of the booklet.

When a character attains a new level, they must choose which class in which they are to advance. This need not be their original class; a warrior can learn the canny ways of a rogue, or a sorcerer might learn to wield a blade with a warrior's skill. Such levels are tracked separately. Thus, a 1st level warrior who learns a mage's arts becomes a 1st level warrior/1st level sorcerer. The hero's total levels are used for all Gifts or spells that involve character levels, however, so if a spell says that it inflicts 1d6 damage per character level, that hero casts it for 2d6 damage.

When a new level is earned, the hero adds the class' additional hit points to their own, plus their Constitution modifier. Thus, a hero with a Constitution of 13 who takes a level of sorcerer gains 3 more hit points. A Constitution penalty cannot reduce this gain below one hit point. A hero also adds one to their maximum number of Effort points available for commitment.

A hero then adds the class' attack bonus progression to their attack bonus. For example, a first level rogue who gains his second level in the class adds a +1 bonus to his starting bonus of +0, for a total add of +1 to his hit rolls. Sorcerers only add one point for every two full levels of the sorcerer class.

Heroes also adjust their saving throws, adding their newly-attained class level to the appropriate saving throw for its type: warrior levels add to Toughness saving throws, rogue levels to Evasion saves, and sorcerer levels to Mystic saving throws.

The hero may then add a new Gift. If their total levels are even, they may choose from any class' Gift list. If odd, they must choose from the list of the class they just advanced in, or from the general list of Gifts allowed to any class.

Finally, the player may add a new Fact to their hero. This fact should describe some social tie, great feat, or notable personal accomplishment they attained in the past level. This new fact grants the usual +4 bonus to attribute checks relevant to it.

Heroes who advance past tenth level no longer gain attack bonus improvements or additional hit points. Their tremendous might has reached the outermost limits of mortal capacity. They may still add new Gifts, however, or possibly create entirely new expressions of might.

| Level | Total XP |
|-------|----------|
| 1     | 0        |
| 2     | 2        |
| 3     | 5        |
| 4     | 9        |
| 5     | 14       |
| 6     | 20       |
| 7     | 27       |
| 8     | 35       |
| 9     | 44       |
| 10+   | +10      |

## FOES AND OTHER CREATURES

Foes comprise all the manifold beasts, tyrants, minions, monsters, and other mobile impedimenta that confront a band of heroes. Many other characters might inhabit a GM's campaign world, but most of the time it's not necessary to give them statistics or worry about how well they'd hold up in battle against a legendary warrior. Foes tend to provoke this question more regularly, so it's necessary to have some guidelines for creating them.

### Statistics for Foes

Foes have fewer statistics and scores to track than heroes do, as they're rarely worth that much mental investment from the GM. It's possible to use other heroes as foes, of course, or to give them particular Gifts or other special abilities, but the ordinary foe has just a handful of basic statistics.

A basic enemy has an armor class, an attack bonus, a damage roll, a morale score, and a hit die total. Hit dice for foes simply take the place of hit points for heroes. One point of damage to a hero knocks off one hit point; one point of damage to a foe eliminates one hit die. Why call them hit dice? Because many other old-school games describe monsters in terms of their hit dice, and it makes it clearer when you import enemies from these other sources.

Morale is a number reflecting how willing the creature is to face up to the heroes. It's measured from 2 to 12; a monster with a morale of 2 will flee at the first sign of resistance, while one with a 12 will fight to the death against impossible odds. When a foe needs to make a morale check, the GM rolls 2d6, and if the number rolled is



greater than the creature's Morale, it will flee, surrender, retreat, or otherwise try to stop fighting in the safest way possible.

Some foes get multiple attacks in a single round, which they can split up among enemies within range. Other foes are unusually fast or slow, moving at a different rate than the usual sixty feet per round, or might have additional special abilities mentioned in their description.

## **Encountering Foes**

Even bloodthirsty abominations might not be immediately inclined to savage a band of heroes. When a group of foes is met under uncertain circumstances, the GM rolls 2d6. On a 2, the foes are as violent or hostile as they might plausibly be. On a 7, they react as seems most likely given the situation, and on a 12, they're as friendly or helpful as it's possible for them to be. Other rolls shade toward whichever response is closest. A successful Charisma check by the heroes might cant this reaction in a more helpful way, if the heroes have time to parley before the foes attack.

Gaping wounds discourage further hostilities. If a group of foes is facing serious opposition and losing members, they must make a Morale check. If they pass, they continue fighting. If the group continues to take losses and is obviously losing badly, they must make a second check to keep fighting. A group that is faced with certain destruction will always flee, or will surrender if mercy seems possible, unless they are so fanatical, so frenzied or so desperate that their very lives mean little to them.

Remember that foes have their own goals and purposes, and being slaughtered by a band of legendary heroes is rarely high on their list. Even a pack of truly malevolent entities might think twice before challenging the might of a group of heroes, and seek instead to strike a deal more to their advantage.

## **Creating New Foes**

Innumerable new foes can be stolen from other old-school games, often with few or no changes to their statistics. When you want to make your own, however, there are a few simple guidelines to follow.

Start with its hit dice. Ordinary humans have 1 hit die, while elite warriors might have as many as 3. Scores beyond that are usually the province of supernatural power, with truly fearsome enemies having up to 11 hit dice, or even more. Its attack bonus should equal its hit dice, plus or minus a few points. Its armor class should reflect its usual harness or toughness of hide, down to a usual minimum of 0 for iron-plated dragonhide or agile steel-armored warriors with shields.

For damage dice, match their attack to the closest weapon type. Monstrous beasts and amazingly nimble warriors might even get more than one attack. Morale is usually 8 for trained soldiers, up to 10 for the elite or 12 for creatures that know no fear. Ordinary folk have no more than 7, even assuming they'll fight at all.

## Mythic Foes

Legendary heroes tend to seek out legendary foes. While even common alley-bashers can be threatening in sufficiently vast numbers, Mythic foes are the great and terrible monsters of whispered tales. Some come in human shape, cankered by black sorcery or hideous bargains, while others were birthed in the shambling dawn of the world. Any type of foe can be made Mythic by adding a few special traits to it.

Mythic foes are immune to mundane weapons. Only magical artifacts or spells can harm them. They have hit points instead of hit dice, usually about five times as many hit points as their base type would have hit dice. They have at least double the normal number of attacks per round. And perhaps most importantly, their damage dice are read *straight*. If they're listed as doing 1d10 damage on a hit, that means they do from one to ten hit points of damage on a hit.

For purposes of Fray dice and other Gifts, they're treated as if they had their original hit dice. Thus, a minor Mythic foe such as a petty angel of some dark deity might have only 1 hit die, even though it has 5 hit points and inflicts 1d8 points of damage on a hit. Fray dice and Gifts that allow the instant killing of 1 HD foes can kill it, assuming the hero has a magical weapon to hand or is hurling sorcerous bolts.

Mythic foes almost always have at least one trademark power to represent their particular focus. An energy-draining touch, a breath of killing flame, a hypnotic gaze, a spellbook full of sorcery, or any other ability can be grafted on to round them out. Their hit dice apply as a penalty to any saving throws against these powers, as with other foes, but many of them apply an additional -4 penalty due to the force behind their skills.



## Skill Checks, and Saving Throws for Foes

Foes can have rolled attributes, but it's often easier to just assume that they have a given attribute score of 12. If they sound like they should be very good at something, call it 16, and if it's something they should be bad at, call it 8.

Saving throws work on the same basis; assume a basic score of 12 for each. Monsters suffer the hero's level as a penalty to all saving throws they make, so a foe with a save of 12 trying to resist a 5th level hero's spell must roll 7 or less to save. Mythic foes and other great enemies can add their HD to their saving throw scores, thus making it much harder to affect them with heroic spells and abilities.

## A SAMPLE COLLECTION OF FOES

| <b>Human Foes</b> | <b>AC</b> | <b>HD</b> | <b>+Hit</b> | <b>Dmg</b> | <b>ML</b> | <b>Special</b> |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|------------|-----------|----------------|
| Thug              | 9         | 1         | +0          | 1d6        | 7         |                |
| Soldier           | 6         | 1         | +1          | 1d8        | 8         |                |
| Elite Veteran     | 4         | 2         | +3          | 1d8+1      | 10        |                |
| Mighty Swordsman  | 2         | 5         | +6 x 2      | 1d10+2     | 11        | 2 attacks      |
| Skilled Mage      | 7         | 3         | +2          | 1d6        | 8         | Spells         |
| Great Sorcerer    | 4         | 9         | +5          | 1d6+1      | 10        | Spells         |

### Called Entities

|                |   |    |     |      |    |          |
|----------------|---|----|-----|------|----|----------|
| Minion         | 9 | 1  | +0  | 1d6  | 12 |          |
| Minor Servitor | 7 | 2  | +2  | 1d8  | 12 | Mindless |
| Major Servitor | 5 | 4  | +4  | 1d10 | 8  |          |
| Far Prince     | 3 | 8  | +8  | 1d12 | 8  |          |
| Outer Lord     | 1 | 10 | +10 | 2d8  | 8  | Proud    |

### Undead

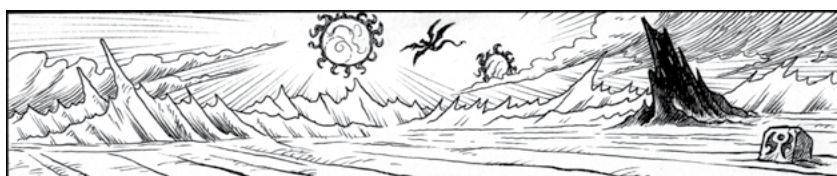
|          |   |    |        |       |    |          |
|----------|---|----|--------|-------|----|----------|
| Skeleton | 8 | 1  | +1     | 1d6   | 12 |          |
| Wraith   | 6 | 3  | +3     | 1d8   | 10 | Ghostly  |
| Revenant | 6 | 8  | +6 x 2 | 1d8+1 | 9  | Lifelike |
| Lich     | 4 | 12 | +6     | 1d10  | 10 | Spells   |

### Animals

|                  |   |    |        |      |    |           |
|------------------|---|----|--------|------|----|-----------|
| Wild Animal      | 8 | 1  | +1     | 1d6  | 7  |           |
| Hulking Creature | 7 | 3  | +4     | 1d8  | 9  |           |
| God-Beast        | 5 | 8  | +8 x 2 | 1d10 | 10 | Spells    |
| Vile Swarm       | 9 | 10 | +1 x 4 | 1d8  | 10 | 4 attacks |

### Mobs

|                  |   |    |        |       |    |          |
|------------------|---|----|--------|-------|----|----------|
| Angry Peasants   | 9 | 10 | +1 x 4 | 1d6   | 8  | Mob      |
| Military Squad   | 6 | 16 | +1 x 6 | 1d8   | 10 | Mob      |
| Barbarian Throng | 7 | 12 | +1 x 8 | 1d8+1 | 9  | Mob      |
| Demonic Horde    | 4 | 20 | +4 x 8 | 1d10  | 11 | 4 HD Mob |



**Human foes** may vary in their statistics depending on the kind of armor or weapons they bear. Truly outstanding warriors might not have the gifts of true heroes, but could have multiple attacks or other special abilities. Sorcerous foes usually have access to one or two spell schools and can cast these spells at a level equal to their hit dice. A skilled mage might have access to one school up to Master level and another as an Apprentice. A great sorcerer might have complete mastery of two schools and Adept-level expertise in two more.

**Called entities** are summoned forth by sorcerers. Minions may appear in whatever humanlike aspect the caster wishes, and are loyal until dead or dismissed. Minor servitors have an inhuman seeming, but obey with mindless fidelity. Greater servitors are more powerful, but if convinced that destruction awaits them they will flee back to their realm. Outer Lords in particular are proud, and if called upon to perform any service not sufficiently important or fitting to their dignity they will resist for 1d4 rounds before obeying, and run a cumulative 5% chance every minute afterwards of breaking free from their insolent summoner's control.

**Undead** are impervious to the cares of living flesh, called forth by necromancers or unquiet deaths to walk the living lands. Skeletons might appear as bony remnants or fleshy hulks, but are mindless save for their hate of the living. Wraiths are ghostly and intangible, able to pass through unconsecrated walls and harmed only by spells, magic weapons, or blessed implements. They have human intelligence but little memory of their lives, and a great bitterness toward those who yet live. Revenants appear to be living humans, but wither and rot in sunlight. They have their full powers of reason and memory, but are driven by a hunger for human flesh and blood and must sate it weekly or become frenzied. Liches are a type of revenant gifted with magical powers, casting spells as a great sorcerer among the living.

**Animals** behave as fits their nature. Wild beasts might attack for hunger, but will flee a dangerous foe. God-beasts are an exception, being fueled by the worship of bestial cults or warped by residual sorceries. They attack all foes of their worshippers, and can cast any spell from one school of sorcery along with their usual attacks. Some are mindless, while others have the intelligence of men. Vile swarms are packs of foul vermin, dangerous in great numbers. They are subject to Fray dice and Gifts as if they had only 1 hit die, but take 10 damage before dying.

**Mobs** are a convenient way to represent a great number of foes who would ordinarily be a relatively minor obstacle to heroes. A mob fights and defends as a single creature, though it can deliver its listed number of attacks against each and every hero it opposes, without needing to split them. Most mobs count as only having 1 hit die for purposes of Fray dice and Gifts, though Gifts that automatically kill petty foes reduce a mob by only 1 hit die. Most mobs are assumed to consist of about 50 participants; particularly large battles may involve several mobs of foes.. Area-effect spells and Gifts do double damage to mobs.

## WEALTH AND TREASURE

Legendary heroes don't count coppers. The wealth they seek is that of fist-sized rubies, chests of shining gold, and the fabulous jeweled artifacts of dead empires. It is not necessary to track every platinum diadem and legendary jacinth the heroes happen to possess. Instead, the dry accountancy of coins and carats is abstracted into *Wealth*.

Wealth is measured in points. A substantial cache of plunder, such as the accumulated earnings of a bandit clan or a buried treasure in a long-abandoned ruin, might be worth one point of Wealth, while the marvelous gems of a rich nation's treasury could be worth as many as ten. Pocket change, small caches, and other minor rewards are too trifling to count as Wealth.

For those GMs using pre-made adventures for other OSR games, ignore small treasures. They're just ale money to heroes, swiftly spent or simply ignored. Substantial treasures such as those of a significant monster or encounter should be worth about one point, while the hoard of the adventure's main antagonist or richest trove should be worth around three.

Wealth is spent as part of the Influence system described in the Adventures section of these rules. Assuming that money is helpful in accomplishing a goal, a party of heroes can spend one point of Wealth to gain one point of Influence toward their success. Even more money can be hurled at a problem, but eventually there comes a point of diminishing returns; each additional point of Influence costs an additional cumulative point of Wealth. Thus, the second costs 2 points, the third costs 3 points, and so forth.

Wealth can also be spent when the hero wishes to acquire some object or service that is too significant to be handwaved but not important enough to form an actual goal for Influence. A small ship, a mercenary group's aid, a riotous village festival, or some other such benefit can be had for one point of Wealth. If it seems like it should cost more than that, it's probably best represented as an Influence goal.

Some efforts might require a certain amount of Wealth to be achieved at all. The heroes might decide to approach a particular goal in a way that simply requires vast sums of gold, and the heroic deeds and fearless delving necessary to accumulate such great wealth. Wealth might be traded for Influence on a 1:1 basis in such cases.

Wealth can be somewhat cumbersome. If the sheer bulk of the treasure is too great to carry on the available shoulders, the heroes might need to come back later with faithful minions. They might also need to establish a relatively safe, secure place to keep their shining treasures— a goal well worthy of their Influence.



## Magical Artifacts

Heroes have a habit of finding mystical artifacts and relics of ancient power, often in the bloodied hands of recently-defeated foes. Most other old-school games can be cheerfully plundered for a list of suitable magic items, though there are a few special rules or unique qualities of interest to heroes.

**Influential Artifacts:** Some magic items have effects so pervasive or puissant that they can act to grant a point of Influence toward relevant goals. This usually requires a commitment of Effort by the wielder to take proper advantage of the effect and control its influence, however. Some relics of kingship might grant free Influence to those who hold them, as even a perfectly mundane diadem can still be the One True Crown by which the king shall be known.

**Scrolls and Spellbooks:** Magical scrolls and spellbooks are not unknown in a heroic world, though true adepts of the arcane have limited use for them.

Scrolls may be used by anyone with a level of sorcerer or the Eclectic Arcanist Gift. The spell within is cast at a level equal to that of the mage who inscribed it, or level five if otherwise unknown. Once used, a scroll crumbles to ash or otherwise becomes useless.

Spellbooks are necessary for ordinary mages and lesser practitioners of the arcane. They contain the spells of their school that they have learned and perhaps some other enchantments. Those capable of using scrolls may use a spellbook's pages in the same way, their power fading after use.

Grimoires are special spellbooks containing deep wisdom and one or more new spells. A sorcerer who obtains a grimoire may add its spells to the ones they are allowed to cast. They need not carry the grimoire with them all the time, but if it is ever stolen or lost, so too are the spells.

**Magical Arms and Armor:** Magical weapons and armor usually have "plusses" ranging from +1 to +3. Weapons add this bonus to the hit rolls and damage rolls they make, while armor subtracts it from its armor class. Shields might have special magical abilities, but should not usually improve armor class by more than one point. To keep numbers from getting unreasonable, a GM might simply decide that no armor class can be better than zero, no matter what gear the hero wears.

**Healing Items:** Some potions or magical items heal damage a hero might have suffered. As hit points scale differently here than they do in other games, the healing dice they roll should be counted the same way as damage dice. Thus, a potion that heals 1d6+1 points of damage would heal between 1 and 2 heroic hit points.

**Gifts Against Magic Items:** When a Gift allows a hero to do or inflict something that a magic item would prevent or defend against, the Gift wins. Sorcerer spells are not so potent, however, and are treated like any other form of magic.

## ADVENTURES AND INFLUENCE

Before starting a game, it's necessary need to establish some facts about the campaign setting and a few immediate problems for the heroes to face. Unlike in many games of this genre, even beginning heroes are capable of working great changes in the world around them. It's important to give them some material to work with from the start. This section will discuss some basic tips to help the GM accomplish this.

### Building Your Setting

The quickest and easiest way to get a setting is to simply grab one off the literary shelf. "Traditional medieval fantasy" doesn't require a great deal of explanation to the players, nor does "sword and sorcery pulp", "high fantasy", or "gritty Renaissance intrigue". These generic settings may need a few specifics attached to them in terms of important places, persons, and events, but any experienced RPG player should be able to hum along without much hand-holding.

Alternatively, you might want to snaffle a specific fictional setting, such as the Hyboria of Conan's day, Middle-Earth, a favorite D&D setting, or some other mutually-comprehensible venue. The advantage here is that these settings are all fairly detailed to begin with, and there's usually ample published reference when more material is needed. Some of them can be a trifle "overbuilt" for some tables, however, providing too much detail and burdening those players who feel obligated to maintain canon. If you do grab an existing world, you'd do well to make it clear to your players that you might change even major facts about it.

The third alternative is the most traditional for sandbox gaming; you pick a basic genre for the game, slap down a starting point, stuff it with a few immediate problems, and then unleash the players on the setting. You have no plot and no story arc in mind, just a place with a number of things going on. While this is the sort of play style that this game is built to encourage, there are a few basic techniques that you can employ to help ensure that everything comes in the most playable way possible.

### Starting Trouble

Start with a problem, preferably a large one. Rebel nobles, a terrible plague, a natural disaster, an all-consuming war, a magical apocalypse, or a demonic invasion can all serve very nicely for this end. Whatever the problem, it should be very large in scale. It may not affect all parts of your setting and it may not be an omnipresent factor in daily life, but it should be a *problem*, large and clearly visible from the starting point of the campaign.

Next, define the participants in the problem. If you decide the problem is a usurpation, then name the monarch and the foremost nobles involved. If the calamity is a plague, pick the rulers of the affected areas and the groups that are

worst-afflicted by the sickness. You don't need to define them in great detail, but you should have a basic idea of what the struggle is about and what the participants are trying to gain from it.

Now break that large problem into four smaller ones, maybe issues that are only relevant to a particular city or province. These can be consequences of the big problem, side-effects of its existence, or just random pieces of trouble that have washed up on the shores of the calamity. A war might leave behind famine-stricken locals, rampaging bands of deserters, a brutal petty warlord seeking to fill the vacuum, and a merciless noble pressing peasants as spear fodder. Again, you don't need to spell out every detail of these problems, but you should know the names of the major figures involved and have a rough idea of the elements in play.

Finally, dab in a relatively small problem right where you expect the players to start the campaign. Ideally, this is a problem that clearly points to the four other maladies of the realm you just made. It doesn't have to be a large problem. It may just be something that's troubling a single town or urban neighborhood or particular noble clan, but it's an immediate situation that should be obvious to the players and have some clear benefit to them should they get involved in its solution.

You've now created a basic hierarchy of problems and conflicts for your setting. Now it's time to get a little bit technical and create some Influence goals.

## **Solving Problems**

Heroes are capable of incredible feats of skill and puissance. It's to be expected that they should be able to solve a great many problems with their abilities. The process of solving a problem is abstracted into accumulating *Influence* over that problem.

Each problem has a Difficulty score. Very basic problems have a Difficulty equal to twice your group's number of players. More complex problems that affect an entire city or significant region, like the four you've just established, have a Difficulty equal to four times your group's number of players. The very biggest problems, like the one you've established as the overarching conflict of your game, have a Difficulty equal to eight times your group's number of players.

To beat a problem, the heroes have to accumulate Influence. Some Gifts allow a hero to build Influence to overcome a difficult situation, committing Effort and gaining the benefit of their talents. A hero can invoke such a Gift whenever they see fit, but it can only be applied toward solving one problem at a time, and the player must describe specifically how they are using their Gift to advance their purpose. Exceptionally pertinent abilities or clever uses of them might be worth an additional point of Influence.

In most cases, however, the heroes need to do something constructive towards resolving the problem. These actions form the adventures and great deeds that occupy play at the table. Each adventure grants a varying number of Influence points toward the problem the heroes are trying to resolve. The precise number to grant will depend on the scope and significance of the adventure, as discussed later in

this section. It is usually not possible to solve a problem without an adventure, even if the heroes have enough Gifts and knacks to build otherwise sufficient Influence. They need to actually do something specific to topple the warlord, cow the noble, feed the peasants, or smash the roving bands of deserters, even if that specific act is simply the culmination of their other, earlier efforts.

## **Accomplishing Great Things**

Of course, the heroes might do more than simply solve problems. They might want to accomplish new things, to create new structures of power, to build splendid edifices, or to improve a society's condition. To do this, you simply create a new problem to fit the scope of the ambition. Lifting a village out of poverty might count as a very small problem. Smashing the centuries-old thieves' guild that rules a great city might count as a mid-range problem. Abolishing slavery as an accepted cultural practice in a vast nation might be a feat as difficult as overcoming the central conflict of a campaign.

Extremely large accomplishments are often best broken into bite-sized pieces. If you have three players and a mid-ranged problem has a Difficulty of 12, just chop it into three smaller parts that the players have to resolve. In the case of the thieves' guild, they might have to smash its ancient hidden sanctum below the city, identify the noble who's really its guildmaster, and strengthen the feeble chief constable to withstand the inevitable reprisal. If the players solve each lesser problem, they can wrap things up in a final great adventure where they confront the remaining powers of the guild and attempt to crush it utterly.

You should make these steps clear to the players when they decide to seek such an accomplishment. The players should always know of at least one thing they need to do to get further in their ambitions. Clever players may also come up with their own angles to advance their cause; if their ideas are good ones, let the Influence they earn in their efforts count in attaining their ends.

## **Creating Adventures**

With the enormous power of even a novice hero, it can be difficult to come up with suitable challenges for a group. Of course, given the fact that they are heroes, not every situation *should* be a challenge for them. There's no glory in being a living sword-god if you have to worry about the city watch, and peerless master thieves should not be wondering if they can sneak into a burgomaster's house without tripping over the cat. These challenges might be real and significant in other old-school games, but here, the PCs are already far beyond being tested by such things.

One of the simplest ways of creating challenges is just to let the PCs' ambitions expand to reach the limits of their abilities. Once the silver-tongued rogue's player realizes that their PC can actually bend almost anyone to their plausible plans,

they'll naturally seek to push this as far as it can go, and eventually reach a situation where it's genuinely difficult. Just go along with the ride here, letting the players push it until they find true difficulty.

Another is to put down Mythic foes that obviously require the effort of an entire group to bring down. Such foes usually have a small legion of minions or spawn to act as sword fodder, and the rabble alone might be more than the natives can handle without heroic aid.

One easy way to produce quick content is to grab an old-school adventure module and file off the identifying marks. A band of first-level heroes should be able to tackle a module for fifth or sixth-level ordinary adventurers, if not even higher. The monsters and foes in these modules can make for good fodder, and the maps and social situations can be recycled for your own games.

An alternative option is to create situations where the victory conditions aren't necessarily clear. Both sides in a conflict might have just reasons to fight, or the success of one may result in something the heroes find undesirable happening to the other. The obstacle in this case is not so much the conflict itself, but finding a way to resolve it to the heroes' liking.

## **Adventure Rewards and Influence**

Having drawn up an adventure or pulled one off the shelf of another old-school game, what rewards should their efforts produce? If you're using a premade adventure from another game, you'll have at least a vague idea about monetary rewards, but how do you translate that into Wealth?

As a general rule, you give out experience points for achieving goals. Going on adventures may be part of that, and it may be necessary to succeed at an adventure to finally reach a goal, but the heroes don't get XP simply for adventuring. They need a purpose, and they need to achieve that purpose to get rewarded. A small Influence goal is worth 2 XP for each of them, a medium one is worth 4, and a grand one is worth 8. If they accomplish things in exceptionally clever or complete fashion, you might hand out a bonus of as much as half as many additional points.

Treasures worth mentioning are worth Wealth. Pocket change, minor baubles, incidental loot, and other such trifles are too petty to count. Only actual caches or troves deserve to be counted as Wealth. For premade modules, this is usually a matter of a GM's own judgment. For adventures you create yourself, assuming treasure makes sense, you can spread out a total number of Wealth points equal to the Difficulty of the associated goal. Thus, for adventures related to a small goal, the heroes might find a total of 2 points of Wealth, while the central problem of the campaign might yield 8 points in its various excursions.

Rewards also take non-tangible forms. The friendship of a king, the fanatical devotion of a band of zealous templar-monks, or a pact with a potent celestial power might all be rewards for heroes who accomplish the right goals. Calling on these favors later might grant one or more Influence toward a relevant goal.

## EXAMPLE CONFLICTS AND ANTAGONISTS

### Major Conflicts

| 1d8 | Calamity             | Strife               | Opportunity           |
|-----|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1   | Plague               | Extraplanar invasion | Gold rush             |
| 2   | Famine               | Royal usurpation     | New noble opening     |
| 3   | Earth upheaval       | Rebel secession      | Resource discovered   |
| 4   | Ruler dies heirless  | Violent new faith    | Magic artifact found  |
| 5   | Rapid climate change | Neighbor invades     | New lands opened      |
| 6   | Magical curse        | Class rebellion      | Neighbor collapses    |
| 7   | Divine wrath         | War of conquest      | Divine avatar appears |
| 8   | Leaders are idiots   | Unleashed horror     | Magical ruins found   |

### Local Conflicts

| 1d8 | Sociopolitical          | Security              | Economic               |
|-----|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1   | Corrupt leadership      | Bandit attacks        | Industrial collapse    |
| 2   | Oppression of a group   | Extortionate mercs    | Economic blockade      |
| 3   | Feuding faiths          | Nonhuman raiders      | Crushing exactions     |
| 4   | Contested election      | Violent criminal ring | New merchant princes   |
| 5   | Class hostilities       | Rapacious neighbor    | Discovered treasure    |
| 6   | Lost token of authority | Savage local feud     | Trade route loss/gain  |
| 7   | Ethnic conflict         | Enforced tribute      | Loss of vital resource |
| 8   | Leadership split        | Treacherous military  | Tax revolt             |

### Types of Antagonists

| 1d8 | Social               | Martial                 | Magical            |
|-----|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 1   | Noble leader         | Bandit warlord          | Ancient lich       |
| 2   | Wealthy oligarch     | Renegade general        | Demon prince       |
| 3   | High priest          | Barbarian chieftain     | Necromancer lord   |
| 4   | Great clan patriarch | Warrior-monk abbot      | Undead king        |
| 5   | Thieves' Guildmaster | Templar commander       | Alien entity       |
| 6   | Court intriguer      | Peasant rebellion chief | Divine avatar      |
| 7   | Important Ethnarch   | Mercenary captain       | Ambitious archmage |
| 8   | False prophet        | Pirate king             | Arch-Summoner      |

